

# Victoria High Country – Trip 1

Week 1:- Saturday Jan 30<sup>th</sup> to Saturday Feb 6<sup>th</sup> 2010

Trip Leader - Mark Crowley  
Dave Pedersen  
Richard Cowan  
John & Pam Fisher  
Mark Swansborough  
Grahame Norris  
Carol & Harris Johnston

GQPatrol  
Pathfinder  
GU Patrol  
New Pathfinder  
Toyota Hilux  
GU Patrol  
GU Patrol

We all met up Saturday afternoon at Tom Groggin campsite on the NSW/VIC border in the Snowy Mountains. An afternoon swim helped shake off the tiredness after a drive from Sydney. Passed Graham's empty Patrol almost on the outskirts of Cooma and wondered why it was there. Later in the afternoon he turned up and his story was he had seen a Police checkpoint so because he had a few wines the night before he decided to walk back to town to kill a few hours.

Sun 31 Jan: - A standard 9.30am departure and we forded the Murray River into Victoria for our first hut. Nice to be greeted by a sign "Alpine Parks welcomes you".

We then started along the track towards the Mt Pinnabar lookout, visiting Darkies Hut, then Wheeler Hut. It was a great day with great views from the lookout. We made camp at 4.30pm off the Omeo/Corryang Road. There was time for another swim and to pick a few blackberries that hadn't been sprayed before Happy Hour.



A few March flies were about as we sat around the fire and Carol & Harris must have used up at least 2 cans of fly spray killing them. We also decided they were attracted to blue shirts but a blue thong/jandal (for the NZers) was their demise.

Mon 1<sup>st</sup> Feb: - Another great day's driving along the tracks with a few more huts. Weather was cool but a few flies around. Left the campsite 30kms before Taylors Crossing where we forded the Mitta Mitta River. The water level was down from a visit Mark had done a month earlier.

We followed Wombat Creek/Lightning Track then onto the Mitta Mitta Road before taking the Knocker Track. During lunch we heard the sound of a tree falling but didn't see it.

Camp was made at the Ferni Campsite and I cooked up my Blackberries with some nectarines I had. I think I allowed a tasting the following day after the puree had cooled for anyone who ate cereal for breakfast. A bit of wind was around so everyone checked the overhead limbs of trees before they put up their tent.

Tues 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb: - No toilet at the camp site but Omeo was only 25km away so I think most held off until then. A bit of a light fog hung over the river in the morning. A few hours were spent in Omeo restocking supplies and just relaxing. There were a few pictures and commentaries displayed of the fires that had swept through in 1939 burning most of the town.

As we left town, we had a quick look at the Livingstone Creek mining area on the outskirts. We followed the Bald Hills Track towards the Bentley Plains Track. We came across a tree blocking the track and Mark C went off to explore detours. He got a bit sidetracked and we all thought he had gone walkabout because we couldn't raise him by yelling. Finally after we had almost called in the Search and Rescue he returned to show a wide detour across a farmer's paddocks to reconnect with the track.

Richard got a flat tyre during the day, probably due to the lack of tread (?) or not paying attention to the road. A side wall case so it was a write-off. We camped at Bentley Plains close to the Moscow Villa Hut.

We had a fire at night and the temperature had become a fraction cooler. Mark S took advantage of a hut in the camping area and slept there overnight - tough luck for anyone who wanted to use the fire in the morning because he transferred all the coals into the hut. He did have a warm and good night's sleep though so it was worth it.

Wed 3<sup>rd</sup> Feb: - A quick look at the Moscow Villa and a walk around the reserve before we started off again. The huts seem to come in similar shape and design ie. rectangle with a chimney - but the materials and interior design seemed to differ. Tin of course is the most common (although we did get to a log hut) - they all seemed to be unique, some had beds built in, while others had folding stretchers that will probably last another 50 Years. Different fireplaces and bottles left inside all create the unique atmosphere. (I think I've gone "Hut Crazy" mentioning all this)



After following the Bentley track we came across an old Ford bus. This was one photo opportunity we all could not "AFFORD" to miss.

The drive to the Cassils Mining Area for lunch allowed for some sightseeing of the old relics. Seemed appropriate having lunch where there was warning signs of contamination everywhere - by default we assumed it was cyanide from the gold mining. This gave the sandwiches a bit of zing.

Followed a few more tracks, one of which had a fallen tree. Mark C brought out a new chainsaw and, after having to re-tension the chain and a few tips on technique, cleared the way. We ended up on the Haunted Creek Track just before making camp.



Thurs 4<sup>th</sup> Feb: – Followed Haunted Creek Track which had 54 river crossings. Luckily we cut in early so only had 50. A pleasant day's drive crossing the rivers etc and we end up at the Deptford campsite for the evening.

Happy Hours were done on all nights and we also managed a few swims each evening.

A large picnic table was useful for group discussions and the newbies, John, Pam and Graham, were always getting helpful hints from us.

Fri 5<sup>th</sup> Feb: – Some overnight rain but it had stopped enough for us all to get our tents packed up in the morning. We headed into Bairnsdale for restocking of supplies and a bit of relaxation due to the rain and wet tracks. McDonalds seemed to be the venue of choice for lunch - they had a \$5 special from 12.30 so I was feeling hungry by the time that came along. Everyone else had eaten. I was lucky enough to see the new McAngus hamburger because Carol and Harris had one for lunch and my standard burger didn't seem to look so inviting after that.

We passed through Dargo to the Italian Flat campground about 7kms north. Set up a communal tarp and managed to get the fire going despite the wet timber.

Sat 6<sup>th</sup> Feb: - Got a visit from a few cows and some seemed particularly fond of Mark S's tent or maybe just his overnight guests trying to get out. Set off for a short loop drive which was quite interesting, passing by Dog's Grave before returning to Dargo just in time to have lunch in the pub.

Back at Italian Flats most of the people for Trip 2 of Mark's 2<sup>nd</sup> week had arrived so there was a large group for the night.



Thanks Mark for the trip – Great tracks and scenery and enjoyed by all I'm sure. Dave P.