

Bridle Track – Ippinitchie Campground  
Wirrabarra Forest

**June 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> 2009**

Club members who braved the elements on this weekend were:

Cuffs, John & Niall, Henry, Debby, Ray & Caroline, CJ, June & Jerren, Keith & Di, Rob & Barb.

Also not to forget the smaller furry friends, Duke, Missy & Cooper.

We were due to meet at Crystal Brook at 10.00am Saturday morning and to then proceed via some tracks to Wirrabarra Forest. Unfortunately though everybody except us (Rob & Barb) arrived on time. Just to be different, plus the fact we got the time wrong, we were running late and did not arrive till 11.00am. (Sorry guys). By the time we got there the rest were considering setting up camp there.



All patiently waiting for you know who

Once there we all promptly set off on the dirt tracks to the forest, and after a couple of wrong turns we finally reached the Rangers Station where we all registered and paid our dues.

From there it was a short trek to the Ippinitchie camp ground where we were staying. Keith and Di had come down the night before and brought their caravan so they were already set up.

For the rest of us it was time to choose a site to set up our tents. For me the choice was easy, not too far from the loos (it's a female thing), and while we set out our camp sites Keith and Di set about getting the camp fire under way.

Setting up our tent is usually an easy job, but not this time. The centre pole screw that stops it from collapsing decided to snap in half as we were tightening it. Oh no, but have no fear Rob had remembered his trusty box of assorted screws and after rummaging for a while found one that would do the job. Phew

Time to relax now and soak up our surroundings and the glorious fire.



Nothing like a roaring campfire

Sunday morning. We were all up with the Kookaburra's and for an early breakfast so we could set off about 9.00am for the Bridle Track

Friends of ours Sean and Shari joined us for the trip up the track; they had stayed in Crystal Brook for the night.

It was a cool morning, with dark clouds but at ground level appeared to be quite clear as we set off.

As we got a little further into the forest though it became quite eerie because we were driving towards fog that at first appeared to be high in the trees.

Before long though we were right in the thick of it and you could only just see the vehicle in front's tail lights as long as you were not too far behind them. The chatter on the radio increased between us checking to make sure where everyone was and that we warned each other if we were stopping for any reason.

Coming out of the forest and turning toward the Bridle Track the fog cleared but was still visible up on the hills which is where we were heading.



Sunday morning



Heading into the fog

Off we set up the Bridle Track. This track winds its way up and over the hills one after another, narrow in places, and a little rocky at times. The scenery below would have been spectacular but we could not see it only the track, the fog blocked out everything else.

Stopping at the top, Cuffs showed us a track that led down into the valley below called Devils Pass (I hope I got that right). You could only see the start of the track winding steeply down. It looked very steep but that did not faze Rob, Sean Jerren, CJ and June, they all decided to give it a go. Rob went first followed by Sean and CJ. Once over the edge of the track they just disappeared into the fog. Cuffs kept in touch with them on the radio.

The rest of us (Yes me included) waited up the top, it was bitterly cold and windy. As you looked out all you could see was dark clouds above then a narrow window of the coast in the distance and under that fog.

Then the strangest thing happened, as we stood there all of a sudden the fog seemed to clear quickly and we could see everything. The hills all around, the valley below and way off in the distance Rob, Sean and CJ heading back up the track they had disappeared down.



At the top of the Bridle Track



Heading back up from Devils Pass

Time to head off again, up over another hill and then winding our way down the other side. Being up there and looking out over towards Spencer Gulf and the surrounding countryside you get a great feeling of why we love going four wheel driving.



Down the other side and what a view - Breathtaking

Once down on the flat Cuffs tried to take us on some other tracks but to no avail, they were all closed off. So we decided to head back but on the way we stopped at the Stone Hut Bakery for some goodies. Some stayed there and ate their lunch while some headed back to camp.

We all got back to camp at different stages throughout the afternoon; some had decided to do a little sightseeing. As the day wore on we watched the clouds roll in again and by late afternoon it started raining.

Tired of trying to huddle under our awning we all decided to adjourn to the little hut opposite our campsite, where we stayed till time to prepare dinner.



Nice and cozy



Just not quite enough room for everyone

During dinner preparations though poor Henry was busy digging a trench around his pop tent so the water that was building up would drain away and not float him away during the night.

After dinner some braved the soggy camp fire while the rest of us sat in the hut with Ray and Caroline's gas heater. Yes I know what some of you are thinking (a gas heater), but it's a camping one that goes on your gas bottle, pretty neat and oh so cozy.

At bedtime we all retired to our respective tents except Deb who retired to the back of her car with Cooper (the dog) because unfortunately her tent had decided to leak, so she made her bed up in the back and said there was just enough room for both of them.

After a wet night Sunday and by the time the Kookaburra's woke us up Monday morning it had stopped raining. Breakfast over it was time to start packing up. The plan had been to pack up and head out over the Bridle Track again without the fog, leaving our trailers packed up at the camp site for pick up after. Because of the heavy rain the night before this plan was decided against.

Instead we left the camp site with trailers and van and went to look at the King Tree. This is a 400 year old River Red Gum that stands 36.5 meters tall and has a circumference of 11.35 meters at it's base, it's HUGE.

After this and a little slipping and sliding through mud puddles we headed off to the bitumen and home. Some went via Claire and the rest of us went via Pt Wakefield.

In all I think everyone enjoyed the weekend despite the rain and fog, in fact we were privileged with the fog, the ranger said it only happens like that about once every three years. It was certainly an experience I won't forget. That's it for me now, thanks for the company guy's and we'll see you all on the next trip.

### Photo Gallery





Thank you to CJ and Keith and Di for supplying all the photos in this report.