



Wyperfeld Trip. 19th and 20th February 2011.

Trip leaders: **Linda and Terry Curran**

Report by Desley Reid-Orr

Participants: Mildura

Terry & Linda (Patrol wagon)
Beno & Anne (Patrol ute)
Dave Featherston (Rodeo ute)
Desley & Greg [guests]
(Navara & Camper Trailer)

Participants: Swan Hill

Rod (Patrol ute)
Ron (Patrol ute)
Noel (Patrol ute)
Michael & Sue (Toyota Forerunner)
Warren & Mariette (Landcruiser)
Daniel & Warren (Toyota Hilux)
Brian (Toyota Hilux)



Greg and I were accepted as guests on this trip, and happily joined the party at Big Lizzie on Saturday morning 8:00am for the kick-off. The morning was overcast but not too cool, with a light breeze playing with the tops of the trees. Our group met the Swan Hill contingent in Ouyen,

arriving within minutes of each other. Linda, Noel and Rod pored over some of the maps to agree on the best tracks, or to see if anyone knew of tracks which might be inaccessible, and then we set off along the Walpeup Road to find the first dirt track which would take us into Wyperfeld. Finally turning onto Munro Road we all stopped for a cuppa, and to air down tyres.

Gunners Road took us into the park proper, beginning on a solid sandy track snaking through the mallee scrub. With recent rains, the dunes

KULKYNE KAMPERS

<http://www.kampers.com.au>

brett@kampers.com.au

Showroom

(03) 5024 2200

Camper Hire

0419 008 720

Calder Highway
Red Cliffs Vic. 3496

Fax: (03) 5024 2122
Mobile: 0438 008 730

- * Camper Trailers
- * Camper Trailer Hire
- * Camper Parts & Accessories
- * Used & Budget Campers
- * Fishing tackle
- * Outback Clothing
- * Camping Equipment
- * 4WD Fit-outs & Accessories



were quite firm; there was a lot of new growth crowding out any signs of the drought or bushfires. It was evident early in this trip that the drought has gone; both the wildlife and the greenery are returning to the world.

Several muddy puddles provided some fun for the drivers – we quickly had to put up our windows as the splash was quite large at times. Unfortunately the vehicles towards the rear of the convoy only got a bit of slush and not much spray, as Terry C in the lead was diligent in clearing it out for the rest of the convoy. Several of the dune ridges were pitted and rutted where heavy rains had washed down over them.

We emerged from this track onto an expansive open area, and turning right we found that we had entered the Wirrengun Plain which is very grassy, and dotted with more dead trees than green ones. We immediately also saw many 'roos bounding along at a distance, and then suddenly up close – they even bounded between the vehicles at times! One of the Swan Hill crew commented that "kangaroos don't give way", and another reminded him that "it is their back yard after all". Slipping and sliding in another series of muddy puddles on the track, we then had to make way for a mob of emus crossing the track with no regard for our safety or their own.

Linda then led us all up to O'Sullivan's Lookout to get a better view of this area that we were discovering. There are many more trees bordering the plain, although now more green than dead. To get to the lookout we parked at the gate, and then hiked the 1.2 km walking track to the peak – it was worth the effort, and gave us a great photo opportunity. Next stop The Snowdrift.

The area was becoming increasingly sandy, and at one point there was a small sign advising that this was the site of an historic SAND PIT. Stopping to read the sign was almost a mistake for us – we just managed to get going again (towing a camper trailer). We did encounter a pine tree fallen across the track on the way to the Snowdrift, but it was easily bypassed by "going bush". We had lunch at The Snowdrift – a beautiful large sandhill – while several of the convoy had a go at using the toboggans that Linda had bought along for that purpose. Actually it was

SPRINT
AUTO PARTS

G&P **ENGINE**
RECONDITIONERS

Email: gpreco@ncable.com.au

32 Eighth Street, Mildura Vic. 3500
☎ (03) 5021 1712
☎ (03) 5023 7759



Top: Greg seriously out of shape

Middle: Mariette and Ron reach the bottom of the Snow-drift, just before coming off in a heap

Bottom: Noel lost his hat, but kept control of the toboggan



⌘ Ute canopies
⌘ Tents
⌘ Canvas awnings

⌘ Caravan annexes and modifications
⌘ Swags
⌘ Shade sails

Terry & Anne Benson

3 Industrial Court, Irymple 3498 ☎ 5024 5979

tbenson@irymplecanvas.com.au

<http://www.irymplecanvas.com.au>



only Noel, Ron, Mariette and Greg who braved the descent, with one of the Warrens giving them a little helping hand to get started. Great fun, and I believe that most of the others were as jealous of their bravery as I was. Ron wants his own toboggan now.....

Reluctantly leaving the Snowdrift behind, we retraced part of the track back to Red Hill Track where we turned south along another sandy stretch. Unfortunately Greg was caught unawares by deep sand up a rise, and our Navara bogged quite quickly. Undaunted, Rod following behind us drove to our rescue and snatched us out of it, although for a while there it seemed that he also was in difficulty. Thanks Rod!!

There were a number of intriguing track names in the area – Nine Mile Square Track, Racecourse Track, Meridian Track, and Moonah Track, Ginap Track, Dattuk Track. We crossed Callitris Clearing, seeing sandhills ahead, then passed North Callitris Track and left this 'clearing'. In light of our recent bogging, Terry C warned us that there was a 'very loose' corner, so Greg gunned the engine and we were more in danger of bouncing out of the ruts than of becoming bogged! Rod ahead of us now had stopped just around the curve waiting to see if we would need rescuing, but his services weren't required this time.

We now drove 38 km to the Wonga Campground. Again there were many muddy holes to play in along a track bordering private land. I was intrigued to see 40 kph restriction signs here. The last 7 km to the campground is on solid gravel road across a forested plain.

The Wonga Campground is HUGE, with excellent toilet blocks, lots of picnic tables, wide grassy spaces and a multitude of campsites. We took the opportunity for refreshments, then took the bitumen from Wonga towards our intended overnight campsite – O.T.I.T. Camp on the edge of Lake Albacutya. Once we located this wide open campground we each chose our spots and set up camp. We quickly discovered someone who can out-Beno Terry B; Noel from Swan Hill collected the firewood, lit the fire, chopped up some redgum sleepers (Beno regretted not bringing his



☎ (03) 5022 2428 📠 (03) 5021 0894 E: rsautos@ncable.com.au
34 ANDRISKE CRT, MILDURA.

⚙ Starter Motors / Alternators
⚙ Batteries
⚙ Cruise Controls
⚙ Motorbikes

Authorised  Distributor
PETRO-JECT

⚙ Fuel Pumps ⚙ Computers
⚙ Air Flow Meters ⚙ Ignition Parts



splitters and axe with him), and even organised sandalwood mozzie sticks around the circle of chairs.

We sat about yarning and quenching our collective thirst before individually cooking tea and eventually crawling into bed. Michael & Sue did not camp with the rest of us, but returned to Swan Hill after a day of enjoyable driving.

Sunday

We woke to the glorious sounds of magpies carolling nearby, accompanied by a collection of smaller birds. One kookaburra made a start, but didn't go on with it. Once we had broken our fasts and de-camped we took Wembulin Track heading north to go up and around Lake Albacutya to the sandy playground on the other side. I believe that most of the Swan Hill crew were salivating over the sandpit, but they remained loyal to the convoy and stayed in line; there was a lot more soft sand on the track for them to play in anyway. There were also a lot more 'roos out today, and one VERY confused emu that almost broke its neck when it ran into the fence, plus a clutch of youngish emu chicks which were panicking because they couldn't find dad. Somebody queried the size of an emu's brain, and Dave estimated that it "is just large enough for them to be an emu"

We eventually came off the sandy track onto a solid gravel road heading out of the Park, and followed this down to Rainbow for re-fueling and a refreshment stop. Many of the pastures that were visible from the road still have large tracts of water lying in them. We were now off to have a look at Lake Hindmarsh however; Beno wanted to see how the water levels had risen, and Ron wanted to show us all the sandhills around the perimeter. We entered via the Birdcage Nature Conservation Park, then down to Shulze's Beach where we did indeed see how large this lake is. It still has a little way to go to reach capacity, but is an impressive expanse of water, as a result of the floods.

Ron's sandhills appeared to be on the other side of the lake, so we retraced our path along the bitumen around the top of the lake until we entered via a track alongside Outlet Creek. The dunes didn't disappoint and the boys used the available tracks to practice their sand-driving skills, before drifting back down to the bottom where they could reinflate tyres and catch up on a bit of lunch. Rod took the wrong line on one of the dunes, but Terry C was ready to help him out.



We started the return trip via Hopetoun, then the bulk of the Swan Hill crew left us heading for Woomelang. Brian stayed until Lascelles, and then he too headed off home. As we were saying our goodbyes over the 2-way, Beno assured Swan Hill that Mildura club does include Toyota-owners. Mariette stopped all further conversation by stating that "we have Toyota-owners, and those who aspire to be Toyota-owners". This rivalry will never have a successful conclusion.

Thank you to Mildura 4WD club for allowing us to join this expedition, and to the Swan Hill members who were part of it. It was a wonderful weekend which on reflection seemed to have been much longer than just one night away from home, and took us into parts of Wyperfeld I haven't previously seen.



LMCT 9714

ABN 41 739 893 570

**SALES AND HIRE OF
QUALITY CAMPER TRAILERS**

Home of
Mahindra
4x4 Turbo Diesel

Cnr 15th Street & Deakin Avenue
MILDURA. 3500

DAVE CURRAN
MANAGER
MOBILE 0418 544 962

TELEPHONE
(03) 5023 5223