

CAIRNS-LAURA-MAYTOWN (EASTER TRIP) 6-9 APRIL 2007

Trip Leaders: Mick Clements & Sally Birchall

Level: 4

Vehicles: 12

Departed Caravonica 7.30am heading for Mareeba where the convoy was to join myself & Greg and then collecting Terry Barclay at Rex Range. Leaving Mareeba at 8.45am we headed past Quaid Dam, stopping quickly to fix a loose tarp on the top of our car (might be a fine in that) reaching Mt. Molloy at 9.45am just in time for a quick pie at the Mt Molloy Pie shop. We just about cleaned the stock out and enjoyed a cuppa in the park. *(After waking up a sleeping Scot –ed.)* The convoy moved then to Mt Carbine and 178klms to Laura.

The road was good and everyone was excited about what was ahead. We left the drizzle and rain behind and headed off into the bush. The country was green and cattle grazed along the way. I spotted some Red Winged Black cockatoos following the convoy, obviously escaping for the weekend also.

11.15am we reached the Laura turnoff for a comfort stop. Lots of quick trips to the shop at Lakeland Coffee House. All refreshed and then we jumped into vehicles and headed towards Laura. It was a little drizzly at this stage with blue skies ahead. Finally hit the gravel road, it was dusty but not too rough. Land around was flat and the convoy sorted itself out nicely. Everyone was chatting on the UHF and enjoying the ride. Past Crocodile Station & Gallop Creek crossing, dust in the air and travelling with anticipation.



As the road stretched out it was obvious there were cattle moving on the roadside cause there was ‘poo’ everywhere. *(crappy road conditions-ed.)* We ventured back into the bitumen at Double Barrel Creek. About midday Terry Barclay ended up with a flat tyre, we all stopped and chipped in to aid the recovery. A big fine for this one as it delayed the trip. 12.30 Back on the road, will we ever get to Laura? On the Peninsula Development Road, dirt trailing behind us we reached the Laura Roadhouse and flashed past the Quinkan Regional Art Centre. The area is renowned for its Aboriginal Rock Art. We had lunch at the Mary Harris Memorial Park. *(Terry the lucky Scot was able to purchase a new spare on Good Friday at Laura. How much did that cost Terry?-ed.)*



Continuing on our way we finally reached Jowalbinna (37klms from Laura) where we discovered the Bush Camp. Only just recently opened to the public the park was beautifully appointed. (*Actually not officially opened to the public yet-ed.*) There were toilets, showers and dongas (if that's what you needed). The owner is still in the process of preparing the park for the Public and there is brochure to have a look at if anyone is interested in returning to the site. \$8.00 per night per person, certainly a must for a return trip. They tell us that the wallabies visit the site regularly and the creek flows through the boundary. Very clean and comfortable. Passed Olive Vale Station and meandered our way through a dusty bush track, suitable only for 4WDs. Passed the Jowalbinna airstrip, hardly noticeable due to over growth. We picked our camp sites and settled in for the night, nibbles at sunset and then early to bed. A big day.



(As we were staying with the Land Drover Club of Cairns, Our own Landies, Put a show on for the guys so they felt like they were home.... Stuck ed.)



On Saturday morning we prepared to leave Jowalbinna, however, John Britton had problems with his vehicle and everyone rallied around to assist. However, the problem was bigger than we could handle and members were able to get his vehicle going but he decided to head back to Cairns directly. This delayed the take off, but by 10.00am we were on our way. We had split the convoy into two to make easier travelling time. Six vehicles left camp and the remaining



vehicles stayed to assist John for a little longer.





The rocky climbs were very exciting as we headed towards Maytown, stepping up sandstone rocks, the bush was lush and plenty of Kangaroo Paw (red ones) peaked over the grasses. Grass Trees & bottle brush were everywhere.

12.50 We reached the summit and stopped for a cuppa at the Robert Logan-Jack memorial (1845-1921). He was the geologist that established this trig (north) station during a survey of the Palmer River Goldfields in 1895.



We all gathered for a group photo then on our way. 1.35pm leaving monument for the slow track to Maytown. Views from the monument were breathtaking, 280degree mountain ranges, far as the eye could see. The decent was slow and very tricky. Our truck was over at 40degree with the back wheels off the ground at one time. Everyone had there turn of hair-raising descents and climbs. 2.30pm finally on the flat again. A true challenge of a track. Double creek crossings, up steps of rock and then down the hill on steep rocky washed out tracks. More creeks crossings. Stradling ruts down to Cradle Creek. 4.00pm we passed the



homestead. The views were once again awesome. The homestead was set amongst the bushland and backed onto a dam. Very picturesque. But very, very remote.

As we reached the last summit before Maytown the view was spectacular. Miles and miles of untouched bush beauty, it was certainly worth the trip. We moved slowly down the hill, aching for swim in the river below.

5.00 We reached Maytown and selected our campsites on the river front. Another early night as it was late when we reached camp. But the skies were clear and the night was very warm. A few mossies about.

Sunday morning there was lots of activity at the site. Sally & Mick decided to take some vehicles for a look around the old township of Maytown. We visited the old mine sites, gravesites/cemeteries and the township itself. A ghost town, but well maintained by the Historic Society. It was really something else seeing and imagining how the pioneers of this area struggled in the remote, relentless land. Gold mining brought people from all over the world to this site. There is evidence of the Chinese Community everywhere. Not much left of the township, but you can still see the town plan and evidence of kerb and guttering.



By late afternoon we were bushed and headed back to base camp to settle in for the evening. Not many mossies tonight.

Next morning we were all startled and woken up by one disgruntled club member hitting pots and pans in the early hours. Apparently he didn't like the noise the birds were making? Funny about that? Bush – bird noises, goes hand in hand.

Anyway, we are prepared for the busy day ahead and took off in convoy for the trip home. We were to exit via Development Rd, south to Lakeland and come out north of the Mt Carbine.

Off down the track taking Dog Leg Creek crossing on the Palmer River. What a beautiful spot. The day was warm and the road was dusty, but everything was a pleasure. We moved slowly in convoy chatting on the UHF. Traversing the ridges and treating ourselves to spectacular views.

Logan was hitting those water crossings with a vengeance. His car nearly disappeared in sea of waves. But all in the fun. The crossing was a wide river crossing with sandy banks, Terry Barclay got a little bogged and so did Wendy. However, Wendy was dug out and decided to repeat the crossing for practice. Good on you Wendy. Spotted some red winged parrots flying overhead and hawks looking for their breakfast.





Passed another airstrip about 11.55, the road was really dusty but we were all still enjoying the views. We passed Granite Creek, Cannibal Creek and the Diane Mine). Stopped at 12.30 for lunch then at 1.10 left the dam after lunch to head home.

We came out of the track about 2 klms north of the 'welcome to Cook Shire' sign on the Development road. We were approximately 80 klms out of Mt Molloy and it was good to get back on the bitumen and some speed under the wheels.

All up the trip was fantastic, but many thanks and congratulations are due to Mick and Sally for going the extra mile and ensuring that we had access to this spectacular area. There was lots of paperwork, but we can honestly say the work was worth it.

Maytown should be a regular destination on the Club trip calendar.

