

## **Cold at Bendethera 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2015**

### Trip Leader

Michael Patrick and James - Prado 120

### Participants

Sen and Waruni Wijerante – Landcruiser 100

Andy and Bron Squire – Navara

Dan and Rosina Mansson – GU Patrol Ute

Jake Vanderstok and friend Patrick – Hilux

Ashley Hartge – Suzuki Vitara

Rob Calvert – Prado 120

Tony Warren – Prado 120

Jim Anderson – Prado 150

This is Michael Patrick's annual trip to the Bendethera valley in the Deaua National Park. In the past it has been listed as "Freezing" at Bendethera and it certainly can be if there is a cracker of a frost. However this year the weather was magic, around 23 degrees on Saturday and very mild overnight prompting participants to suggest maybe it needs to be renamed to "Mild" at Bendethera.

We met at McDonalds Queanbeyan around 8am and after coffee or breakfast for some departed for Braidwood arriving about 9:15. Stopping at the pie shop has become a bit of a ritual on this trip and after grabbing another coffee or stocking up on a sausage roll or apple pie for desert, Michael gave his trip briefing, outlined the route we were taking and we were on our way to Bendethera.

A leisurely drive down the Araluen Mountain passing through the sleepy rural area we travelled along the Araluen Road and turned off onto the Mericumbene fire trail. Before crossing Dry Creek, the area where the club's water driving / crossing training is held, we stopped for morning tea and let the vehicles' brakes cool off before crossing the river.

Depending on recent rainfalls Dry Creek can be quite deep requiring blinds to be fitted and plans in place should a recovery be necessary – best to be prepared. However no blinds or straps were required on this trip as the water was probably only half a metre deep in one section near the exit and it was flowing reasonably slowly.

All vehicles across the river, we proceeded on our journey along the fire trail which has some nice steep climbs and descents providing great views of the valley particularly during August with wattle tress in bloom displaying long patches of yellow between normally green foliage on the mountain sides. The trail was very well maintained which (unfortunately) did not present any challenges on this occasion. On a previous trip, one particular uphill section had very loose deep soil in areas

causing some vehicles to come to a standstill. Once stuck, vehicles were pulled clear to avoid damage to the track. No such action required this time.

After stopping along the fire trail for lunch we set off for the Bendethera camping ground arriving around 4pm. Camps set up, the campfire going, dinner had and the dishes done we settled into the usual tall tales and true around the campfire before retiring for the evening.

Sunday morning of course arrives too quickly. Breakfast done and vehicles packed we were off to inspect the infamous bakery ruins, exploring around the creek and a drive up to the parking area at the Bendethera caves. This involved a short reasonably deep water crossing deeper than the two crossings over Con creek coming into the campground the previous evening. We departed via Dampier fire trail, which has some good switchbacks, and had lunch near the trig. From here we travelled Krawarree road onto Snowball in the Tallaganda National Park. This was an interesting drive as strong winds had felled a lot of trees along the road and although there had been some clearing done, branches were still on the road on both sides requiring drivers to zig zag between these obstacles for several kilometres.

Arriving at Michelago we aired up and headed for home. An enjoyable trip with good company and it was really good to have Dan and Rosina along before they leave later in the year to live in the sunshine state. On this occasion we all agreed that it was "Mild" at Bendethera. Our thanks to Michael for running this annual trip.