

"THE SCOUT BREAKER"



Jamieson – Woods Point 12th & 13th November 2011

After a quick stop at APCO on the Friday evening to pick up Brett, (Pajero), Tom and Dave, (GQ Patrol) set off for Swanpool to rendezvous with Frank and friend, (130 Defender) and Stan, (GU Patrol). After a trouble free run through Mansfield and Jamieson, we finally arrived at Wren's Flat campsite where a welcoming fire was already going courtesy of Pete and Kate, (80 Series Cruiser), who had arrived much earlier in the day.

After a bite of breakfast the next morning and a quick pack up, we left camp for a bit of adventure! We continued along Mt Sunday Rd for a little then turned right up a little used track that had previously been very challenging with a bit of moisture about, but, on this occasion with dry conditions was simply great fun. A couple of drivers had to have a second go at a few obstacles but nothing that couldn't be overcome with a different line choice. It was along this bit of track that Pete and Kate struck trouble whilst trying a different line. Those who were watching grimaced as they heard a loud, sharp bang. Pete was not pleased and was heard to say something along the lines of "far out!", or something to that effect! Upon further investigation it was found that the left front tyre had simply come off its' bead. Generally not a problem but on this occasion the vehicle was on quite an angle, with the front left buried well down in a crevice. First the vehicle was secured with the winch, and then with a lot of careful jacking, both front and rear, we were able to stabilise the vehicle and re-seat the tyre with the aid of Stan's air compressor. Thanks Stan.

We continued on and found ourselves on the Barkly River Jeep Tk. Tom couldn't help himself, he had to have a crack at the top end of this track. It is renowned for being "mega difficult" and on this occasion it didn't disappoint! So Tom and Dave headed up in the GQ, with Stan, not to be outdone, following in the GU. It was extremely tough, VERY rutted out, quite steep, and lots of holes. But conquer it they did!

However, upon reaching the top, it was obvious that the other vehicles were going to struggle with ground clearance, (both Patrols had big tyres and still dragged diffs' several times) so it no choice but to go back down again. I'm not sure who had the most fun, Tom or Stan, but the trip down was about as much of a challenge as going up!

We continued along some more interesting but less challenging tracks before ending up in Woods Point, our destination for Saturday, and made camp at Comet Flat, just east of the township.

The next morning as we were packing up camp, we were joined by Craig in a near new FJ Cruiser, having made an early morning drive from Benalla. We left Comet Flat and headed east on Johnson Hill Tk until we came to Abbott's Creek Tk, or the "Scout Breaker" as it had become known to the group. It had been on Dave's recommendation that we do this track as many years ago it had been challenging enough to leave a couple of vehicles out on the track for a few days while waiting for recovery! Alas, after the long awaited attempt to get there we found the track was well and truly closed. Dirt mounds bulldozed up, a few BIG trees felled over the track, and a rickety fence with a sign saying "Temporarily closed", which we all interpreted to say "never to be re-opened".

So, after back tracking a little way, we headed along Abbott Link Tk, which would have been our way out from Abbott's Creek Tk. We found this track had been bulldozed and graded into submission and no longer had any resemblance to the challenge Dave remembered from years ago. It was along this bit of track that we pulled over to sort out the rest of our trip, and while we were stopped Tom decided to take a look under his

Patrol to try and sort out a persistent knocking noise. Unfortunately he discovered that the cause was the left rear shocker had become a "2 piece" shocker!



After a bit of head scratching, Craig came up with a solution to keep the coil spring in place under full articulation. With a good length of nylon rope, doubled over several times, and measuring the broken shocks' full extended length, he made what was effectively a suspension limiting strap that Tom was able to attach in place of the shocker. Well done Craig! Apart from the left rear of the Patrol behaving a bit like a pogo stick, it all stayed together for the rest of the trip!



Fortunately Craig also knew of a few interesting tracks around the Wood's Point area, so we made a bee-line for those.

The first one was a steep little down hill, un-named and not marked on the maps, which branched off Clarkes Spur track and headed almost directly into the township. It was fairly challenging going down so the trip back up was going to be good! Again, careful line selection was going to be paramount. Tom and Dave headed up first, and with the "rope shocker" being put to the test, made it up with barely a wheel spin. Pete

and Kate came up next, followed by Craig. Brett was doing an awesome job in the Pajero but ground clearance was not his friend, and the mighty Pajero was left waving its' left front wheel to the crowd at the top, with those below looking on with apprehension. Pete's winch was pulled out, and with an extension rope, Brett was pulled up to a point where he could complete the drive. Frank came up next, and after doing a bit of "road building" at the base, he promptly drove around his handy work and let the ol' Landy come up, with the long wheelbase being an advantage at this point. Stan came up next, making it look all too easy. It's hard to beat experience!

After a quick bite of lunch, and with the day disappearing, it was decided to start making our way home via a few new tracks. After a couple more river crossings, some interesting tracks, great scenery, and taking note of a couple of good camping spots for the future, we all made our way back to Jamieson, aired up tyres and said our farewells.



It had been a great weekend, just like they are supposed to be. A big thanks to Tom for organising the trip, and thanks to all who participated, making it good fun!

A bug on the bullbar.

