

Typo Station Support Driver - 24-28 Nov 2005

Thursday 24/11/05

I arrived at Typo Station in the late afternoon and settled in to wait for Barbara and Eddie who arrived about two hours later. We had gone to Typo Station to assist them with backup driver support for a hiking party that had left on Wednesday on a nine day hike through the High Country. Typo Station is an independent, not-for-profit organisation operating an early intervention, alternate education, life skills and mentoring program for young men aged between 14 and 17 years who are experiencing problems at home, school or in their community.

We had a late dinner with Matt and Darren, two carpenters doing some work at the property, and had a nice evening talking before we turned in close to midnight.

Friday 25/11/05

We got up at 7.30 am and after breakfast; we were briefed by Dan on the backup requirements for this trip. We had a food and water drop and two other water drops for the hikers. After loading up the two Typo troopies with the food and water and our own camping gear we were off at around 11 am to Lake Cobbler, which was nearly an hour's drive.

When we were close to Lake Cobbler we photographed Dandongadale Falls, which are quite spectacular as they are down a sheer cliff on the opposite side of the valley. At this point Eddie realized he had left the tent pole and pegs in his car back at Typo Station. We continued the short distance to Lake Cobbler, where Eddie unloaded Barbara and drove back to Typo for the forgotten equipment. I set up my tent and Barbara and I had lunch.



Typo Station main building



Typo Station cabin



Lake Cobbler

Once Eddie got back they quickly set up their tent and by 3 pm we were all set for an enjoyable weekend. The weather was fine and sunny with the temperature in the low 20's. As I was preparing dinner I realized I had left the rods to the camp fire cooking set in my car, Eddie and I must be suffering from 'Old Timers'.

Lake Cobbler is a small lake with some ducks and other water birds inhabiting it. The camping grounds are mostly around the north and west sides of the lake, there is a split log High Country Hut and a long drop toilet that has had half its door removed and the burnt hinges were evidence at it was used for firewood by some bastards who were too lazy to collect firewood like everyone else does. The hut is in need of a good clean out as the fireplace is over flowing with ash and coals which as turned the dirt floor into a black sooty dirt. We were also regularly visited by some Kookaburras who were not afraid to be close to humans.

We stayed up until 11.30 pm waiting for a youth worker with the hikers to call on the sat phone but the call didn't eventuate. They usually call each night but as I found out on the Wyperfeld Hike they are not always able to do it every night.

Saturday 26/11/05

We woke up to a very foggy morning and what turned out to be a very event filled day. We were off at 9.30 am to do the food and water drops. On the way to Little Cobbler Track we drove down out of the clouds, the drive along Little Cobbler Track was interesting but it was mostly high range.

Typo Station Support Driver - 24-28 Nov 2005



Lake Cobbler Hut



Dandongadale Falls



King Hut Crossing the King River

After locating the camp site and putting the food containers and water out of sight behind a large log, we headed off to the King River. We stopped to talk to some hikers and found that one of the rear tyres on the troopie I was driving was going flat. After changing it we continued on to King Hut, a corrugated iron hut near the river. There is a long drop toilet near the hut that some vandals had taken to with a chainsaw, cutting out the back wall and the bowl. I wonder what pleasure they got out of doing it.

We then drove along the King Basin Track crossing the King River six times, checking the depth each time for the hikers as they were going that way a few days later. Five of the crossings were only axle height with the sixth near the top of the wheel rim. The crossings were all solid bases and easy to cross.

We then headed up Burnt Top Track to The Razorback where the next water drop was. This is a good drive, not hard but a good drive all the same. We had lunch at the top of The Razorback with great views of the surrounding valleys.

After lunch we came across a fallen tree right across Stockyard Track. There was a detour around it but as we had a chainsaw in one of the Typo Troopies, we cleared the track within an hour. After completing the water drop and picking up some firewood we headed back to camp, I took a detour to Typo Station to pick up the rods to the camp fire cooking set.

After dinner we got a call from the hikers, everything was going well for them. We then sat around the fire talking and listening to the frogs in the lake croaking away.

Sunday 27/11/05

Sunday looked like it was going to be a nice day even though it started out cold. After breakfast we were off for a day's driving, all we had to do was not be too far away from the hikers and keep the sat phone on in case we were needed. We drove along the Lake Cobbler-Abbeyard Track, which had some steep challenging sections. It took us two hours to drive to Abbeyard Track and the Buffalo River. On the way pulled a few branches and logs off the track and stopped at the helicopter landing area where you get 360° views of the surrounding valleys and mountains with Mt Buffalo being prominent.

Lunch was partaken beside the Buffalo River then it was north along Abbeyard Track, which is not really a track but a gravel road. We then turned onto the Dandongadale-Buffero Divide Track, which provided plenty of low range driving. We again cleared branches and logs off the track and had to get the chainsaw out again as someone had cut a tree off half the track and left the rest. They probably ran out of petrol or time. The trip back to camp took 3½ hours but we were taking our time with numerous stops to appreciate the views. During dinner Eddie was feeding the Kookaburras, who were quite happy to be only 5-6 metres away from us.

Typo Station Support Driver - 24-28 Nov 2005



Blocked track



Wayne & Eddie clearing track



Monday 28/11/05

After breakfast we packed up camp and headed back to Typo Station arriving there just in time for lunch, homemade lasagna. We loaded all our gear back into our own cars and topped up on diesel from the Typo Station fuel shed, which is all sponsored by Shell. I headed off before Barbara and Eddie as they were intending to make a few stops on the way home; it was a great weekend and very rewarding having assisted in a small way to help the kids that Typo Station takes away on the hikes. Barbara, Eddie and I intend to help out again.



Lake Cobbler camp

Wayne Morgan

Typo Station – Barb's View

Yes, the trip was scenic, easy and most informative. You go through the King Valley (nothing but wineries), past Dandongadale Falls (Victoria's longest falls with a 255 m drop) and precariously balance along The Razorback (lovely views of deep valleys from both sides of the track). But sitting on top of Razorback really had us aghast; a few times we had to go 2L because of the incline or in a few spots let the engine take us down yet those fully backpacked boys are to climb it- we all agreed that we might have managed 100 metres before turning back defeated.

The enchanting view of Lake Cobbler from the toilet seat was soured somewhat on finding the burnt hinges, so it wasn't an unusual half door design. Why do people do that? There's ample firewood everywhere, just take a look inside the hut and on the tracks. Especially the tracks, quite a few trees had to be cut up and moved under my strict direction (only because I had the camera) Wayne was the master chef a la carve and Eddie a rather colourful maitre d', hopefully that chain saw course will be held soon some of those trees were more than big. Wayne was also a first class chef with the ample food Typo gave us, all good nutritional basics. Luckily there were quite a few pasta and sauce packets, it being somewhat difficult to create a meal of potatoes, carrots, cuscus, bread and more than a handful of different herbs and spices. Next time we won't forget to bring sausages.

Typo Station Support Driver - 24-28 Nov 2005

How those kids can do it, up and down mountains cooling their feet by walking across rivers, sleeping on top of a hill where you had to hang onto a rock to avoid getting blown off, not only watching wonderful lightning shows all night but getting drenched in the bargain, waking up one morning so foggy you couldn't see your hand in front your face and hack through the ice in the bucket - well it felt like it, we were in the alpine region and not even all the tracks had been opened yet, but it was more than cold that night; then almost fainting in Sunday's 30 degree heat. Those young men were alone all that time to work things out, totally unaware of our existence, but with 40,000 on the clock troopies we could really move in an emergency. Having to remain within reasonable range of the group we couldn't really go exploring, but some of the tracks we passed definitely held potential for our next visit to Lake Cobbler and by then those troopies will have proper tyres.

And my final memory of the trip, ever tried taking a shower when the man before you has tightened the nozzle?

Barbara Tabaka



Lake Cobbler - Abbeyard Track view