

## Mount Lewis Trip

Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2007

This was the first trip that the club has done to Mount Lewis. The trip had several alternative plans. Plan "A" failed when the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service advised that the Mount Lewis road was still closed. Tricia and Nigel had been to Mount Lewis in November and knew that not all the road was closed, so we decided to see how far we could go.

A well coordinated group of a red Wrangler, two blue Wranglers and two silver Cherokees assembled at the Smithfield car par at 0800 for an 0815 start.



We travelled up the coast road in convoy and Picked up Marco and friend at Port Douglas before turning left up the road to Julatten. The Mount Lewis turnoff begins at the Highlander hotel which was an excellent place to stop for a break and something to eat.



After a long chat, food and drink, we began our journey along the road towards Mount Lewis. The recent dry weather ensured that the track was not difficult and so it provided a pleasant drive through the rainforest, one of the planet's oldest. About 10 Km in, we stopped at the side track to the Brooklyn Wildlife Sanctuary, a property owned by the Australian Wildlife Conservancy. It was decided to take a walk up the track for a look. About half way up the steep incline, we were stopped by a large red-bellied black snake sunning itself in the middle of the track. Craig identified the snake and declared it poisonous.



There were various reactions to the presence of the snake. Nigel crept cautiously around it to the left and managed not to disturb it. Craig and Nigel then tried to encourage it to get off the pathway. Obviously upset, the snake finally decided to slither away into the trees. Meanwhile, Tricia had decided to veer off to the right and go around the snake. Tricia was soon lost amongst the thick trees and creepers but did manage to find her way back to the path again.

We continued up the path again until a couple of screams brought us to a stop. A section of the pathway was covered with small leeches. The little black critters tried to climb about everyone. Ian gallantly escorted those with leech-a-phobia back to the Jeeps. The rest of us went forward and upward.

At the top of the hill, the path split into two. One path went over the ridge and disappeared down the other side at a steep angle. The group split again and Jaimelle, Robyn, Craig and Nigel decided to follow the path along the ridge

for a while. The rest began the trip back down the hill. The remaining trekkers continued on along the path but the slightly descending pathway seemed to go on and on. Off to the right a creek could be heard at the bottom of a steep slope. Eventually we turned back to join the rest.

The snake meanwhile, decided to return to the path for more sunshine and had to be chased away again. We all met back at the Jeeps after passing a small group of bird watchers and warning them about the snake.



We continued on for another 50 meters around the bend to be faced with a locked gate and sign informing us that the road was closed. Plan "B" was initiated.

Plan "B" was to drive back to the top end of the Black Mountain Road, have lunch and then return to Cairns via the Black Mountain Road. Marco decided to come with us for lunch and then return down the Julatten Road back to Port Douglas.



After lunch, we bade Marco farewell and headed back down the Black Mountain Track. When we reached Quaid's Road, we had a brief stop. Tricia thought it would be a good idea to drive down it for a while and have a look. Due to time constraints, it was agreed to limit the drive to 10 minutes. We set off in a Westerly direction at high speed. The road undulated up and down and was in reasonable condition. After reaching the top of a ridge, the 10 minutes was nearly up. Tricia wanted to know what was just around the corner, and then the next corner and the next....Eventually we turned back and resumed our return journey along the Black Mountain Track to Kuranda.

The trip was a pleasant drive, not a rugged 4WD experience, but was enjoyed by everyone.