

Pilliga Expedition

(Tuesday, 31 January 2006) - Contributed by AYR ADMIN

Pilliga Expedition as seen by Dean.

After a 15 hour drive via Taree to Coonabarabran, myself, Trevor, Gary Opit and Geoff Nelson finally arrived to base camp at 3pm. The other guys had been there since almost 6am and had set up the tents. During the day a couple of locals had dropped by to see us including some local Roo hunters. The "Australian Newspaper" reporter Luke McIlveen had been sent there from Sydney with strict orders to spend every moment of the night with us despite our requests for NO media, with the exception of a quick interview for Prime news and a couple of radio interviews. Some photographer from the "Australian" was running around ordering our guys to perform for his camera during the day which took a lot of attention away from the job at hand. As night came closer, the dull "Australian Newspaper" people turned up again, this time asking for a "quick" shoot in the bush before we headed out. We thought if we granted them this request, and providing it was quick, they would leave us alone - not so. Three hours of shooting with a couple of guys that made sleeping pills seem like a wake up drug, we finally got ourselves away.

We set up at camp, then headed out in two teams to two different areas, while Geoff stayed back at camp to look after things. Myself, Trevor and Gary drove out to an area deep in the bush and set up a tape of a baby crying to try and spur some action. It wasn't until we actually saw how vast the bush land was, that we realized this trip would be nothing short of a needle in a haystack. The reports that we were counting on fall short of our expectations, and all we could do was run with the older ones that we had. The baby crying tape worked really well and sounded authentic, however there was simply no Yowie where we were, so we drove on. We found a great water source connecting to a creek which we tracked for a couple of hours. Gary was great at explaining the different animal tracks, but the ones we were looking for weren't there. It was now about 3am, and we had lost radio contact with the other group, so we decided to head back to camp to see if they had arrived back. We got to camp close to 4.30am, Geoff was asleep and Zee had arrived during the night, but the others were still out. Trevor and Gary went to bed, while myself and Zee headed out again. We parked down dark roads and walked the bush, but nothing.

Day 2.

Only 1 hour sleep and thoughts of disappointment began my day. The two local Roo hunters turned up with two Roos for bait, which I thought was totally unnecessary. Phil had some video footage from the night before, but proved to be nothing. Luke McIlveen (reporter) turned up again, and I wondered to myself what he would have told his Editor seeing he didn't come out with us last night. He took notes as if he were there, and explained that he had spent the night at the local bar drinking beer while he was supposed to be with us (He grinned and called it research). As the middle of the afternoon approached, we set up another camp deep in the bush. The reporter came out with us to this location briefly, the whole time acting extremely uninterested, almost as uninteresting as his lack of personality. He managed to stay away from the local bar for about two hours, and again left us just on dark telling me that he would just make things up to his Editor.

Steve strung the bait up, then after Ash and Trevor pondered the maps, we all went our separate ways.

Hours went by and we met up again at camp just after midnight. Everyone had the same stories - nothing! During the day we had no footprints and NO physical evidence.

So off we went again, this time I took Nat with me and we sat on the edge of a dam and talked for a couple of hours. We saw plenty of wild life in the dam, but noticed no typical noises or sounds associated with these creatures except something moving the whole time in the bushes on the other side of the dirt road behind us, just a Roo we thought. We talked more and discussed the fact that if there WAS something here in this area of bush, then this would be the most likely area to be, however after hours of being there we again labeled this area as a waste of time.

Seeing we were out of radio contact, we decided to head back to camp and see if anyone else had more luck than us. Nat got into the car and I loaded my gear in. As I was getting in the drivers side I suddenly heard a noise resembling a man talking to himself deep in the bush near where we were hearing the noises the whole time. I stopped and listened a little more, thinking to myself it must be the tones of a cow many miles away carrying through the dead of the night. With Nat still in the car, I walked towards the road then stopped and listened some more. "Well I'll be....." I thought to myself! "It IS some guy out here, only he's not talking, he's RAMBLING!" It was 4am in the morning and there was some guy out there "rambling jibberish". At this stage I had no equipment on me and even left the torch in the car. I walked closer and closer struggling to see in the bushes when it happened. "RRRRRRRAAAAHHHHHH!!!!!!
GGGGRRRRRRRRRAAAAHHHHH!!!!!! RRRRRRAAAAHHH! HHHHHHHRRRRRRRRRAAAAAAAHHHHH!!!!
etc, etc....."

It wasn't screaming as you may imagine, it was more like it was across the road telling me off. It had a Human like vocal capacity, except absoluteley NO diction or Human dialect. I turned tail back to the car as fast as I could to get the camera. I ran and ran, the whole time feeling a great excitement more than fear, although I was looking over my shoulder to see if I was being chased. I got in the car and slammed the door! Nat immediately saw my jubilation and became quite

excited too. We drove to where it was, turned off the engine and sat and listened. CRUNCH, CRUNCH, CRUNCH, the noise was still emanating from the bush. I turned on the night vision, but didn't have the distance. I had two options, either hit it with the spot light and get some fleeting footage or take my chances and hope it would attack the car with all the lights off, I took the second option. We knew it was bipedal from the foot steps, and the vocal sounded very human.

We sat there for a long time, but no more action. We then heard it walk through the bush behind the car, so I rolled back to where we thought it may have gone. Still the foliage noises were there, then after a while some more rambling. We thought this was getting a little boring. and I couldn't go in there myself not knowing whether it was a mad man or Yowie, so we decided to get the team. We raced all the way back to camp for back up. Trevor and Zee jumped straight in, then another guy who insisted we didn't leave without him took almost 30 MINUTES to get himself together. Frustrated, we raced back but it was all too late, it was just on daylight and it had gone.

The interesting thing was that there were NO footprints.

Next day.

Back at camp in the morning ol' Luke McIlveen turned up again to get the news on the night to cover his a\$\$, again he was only half listening, I think he was too busy thinking about his girl friend who he told me had left him and had a hang over from the night before. He then said that he wanted to go back to Sydney. All in all he spend NO time with us, but felt he could write on the whole trip.

That night we had no more action and the rest of the guys were getting very tired of the whole trip. Nobody had really seen anything except a few shadows, so the next day we packed up and went home. We learnt a valuable lesson about this whole thing, never go to unknown areas without concrete leads. It's our opinion that we have better locations close to home. Whatever it was that yelled at me that night, I can't be certain, but I can say that we DO have other reports similar to this in the past. It WAS either Human or Yowie, but my guess is Human due to the vocal capacity. One thing is for sure, it was not your everyday Human. The bait that was hung up came away unharmed.

Oh yeah, and Luke McIlveens story in the paper? Well you guessed it, it was about Geoff drinking warm beer and lies about things that didn't happen! He even had to make up quotes from us that we didn't say (How sad and pathetic!). He behaved badly and represented a very bad image for the "Australian Newspaper", which we have now barred from anymore exclusives in the future. Stay in the bars and pubs Luke and sort out your personal life, writing is NOT your forte', leave it to the people who know what they're doing.