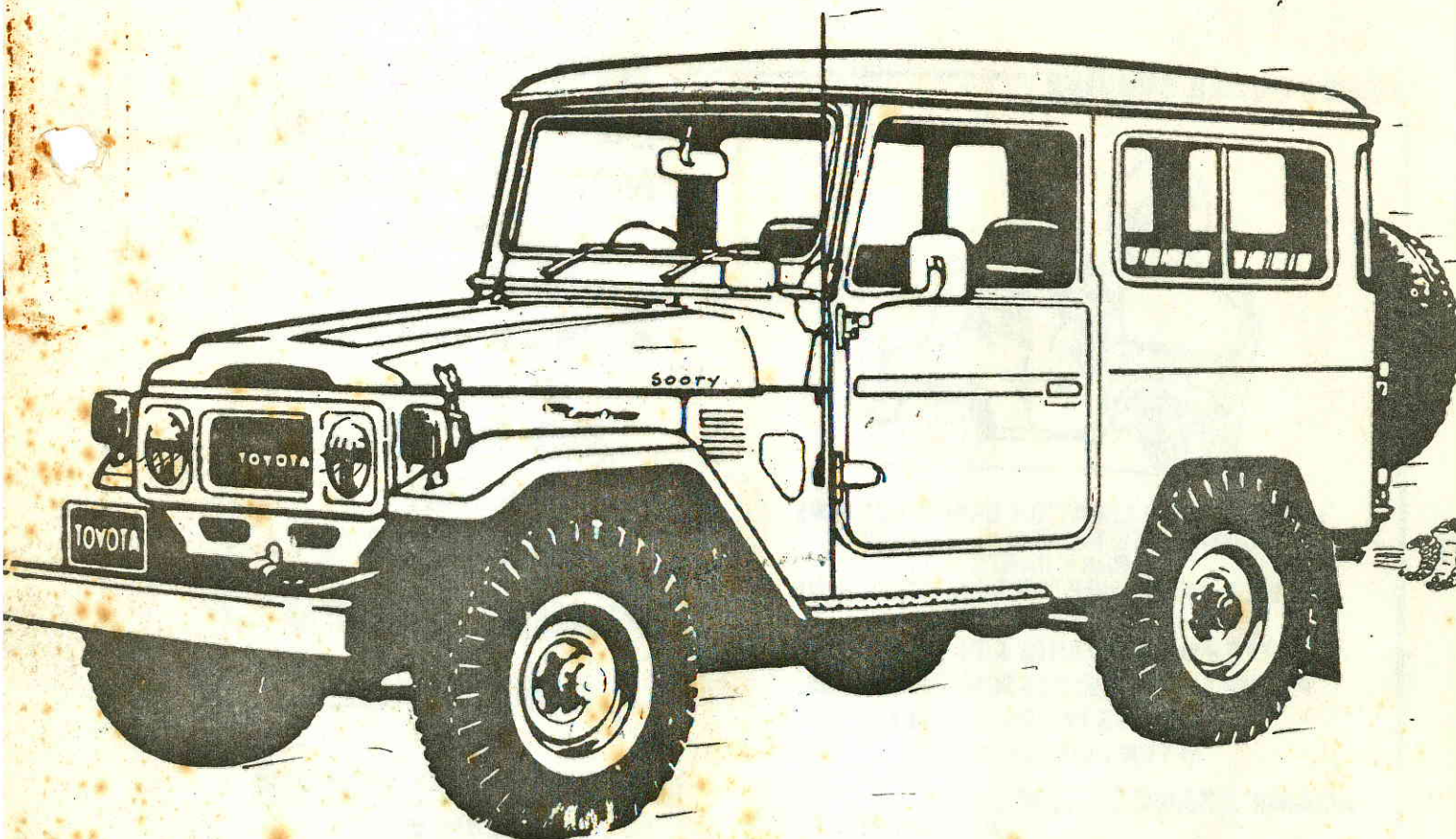


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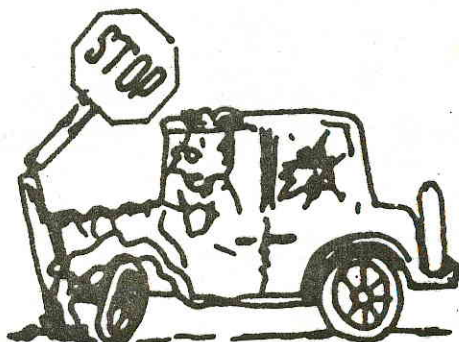


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P R E S I D E N T ' S R E P O R T November 1985

Sorry I missed the last meeting, but Cummins had other plans for me at the last minute. In-considerate truck drivers, breaking down on meeting night. By the time you read this most of us will have been on our little Christmas cruise; hope you enjoyed it.

Don't forget Bim-bimbi, as in the past, this is a good fun day and a treat for the kids. Santa will be there, as well as Prancer (or was that Rudolph?) on the spit, not to mention heaps of snags, soft drinks, (for the kids and me) and lollies etc. B.Y.O. plates, cutlery, salad and grog. Rob Gell says the weather will be good, so who knows.

Patrick tells me there was no response to a Christmas trip at the meeting. If you want one, then start thinking before the next meeting or you'll miss out. Unfortunately I have to work this year, but someone must have some plans. It doesn't require any great skills to lead a Christmas trip, just name a base camp and tell the members how to get there or lead them yourself. Not too hard eh!! Day trips will work themselves out, around the campfire. Hey Presto! A Christmas trip. Don't let the club down.

See you at the meeting
(hopefully!)

Dave Heard



G U L F T R I P

Saturday 17th August 1985

It was wet and cold when we left Donvale at 7.10 a.m., all looking forward to a great trip. First stop Elmore, morning tea, then again at Echuca to see paddle steamers. Lunch at Deniliquin. I went for a spin across the road in the mud when the vehicle ran out of fuel. Everyone was slipping and sliding in the mud - plenty of it, that's for sure - Peter Handley and I got bogged. Then more slipping and sliding and suddenly over we went - fortunately landed right side up. Car's a mess. Peter Rowe bogged up ahead. Dogs feasting on our Stras and Polish sausage as fridge emptied all over the road. Peter's vehicle was pulled out by Margaret and John.

Cleaned up, retrieved what we could and decided to find camp site. We (two Rays) were unsure whether to continue the trip or return home.

Sunday 18th August.

Cool, fresh morning. Decided to continue trip. Applied First Aid to the car with the help of ropes, tarps and hammer. We left at 8.30 a.m. Fuelstop at Hillston, morning tea a little further on. The roads were very slippery. John's vehicle got itself bogged down to the axle. Peter Handley snatched him out. We had lunch at Yathong Nature Reserve. Peter Rowe and John Smith both hit Emus. Result: John's car was dented and his Emu dead - other Emu seemed O.K. Fuel stop Cobar. John's horn set up a non-stop blaring - had to be fixed. We had a pleasant evening around the campfire.

Monday 19th August.

Frosty but weather looked good. A quick look at Wanooring, then on to Hungerford. Just out of Eulo we saw the mudflats - fuel stop at Eulo. Then we headed off for Yowah - Peter Rowe hit and killed a sheep. We failed to find Yowah - 69 k. off course. Camped beside Pardoo River.

Tuesday 20th August.

Another lovely day, as we crossed the river. Stopped at Cheepie for morning tea. Plenty of activity here today - saw one man and one woman in 30 minutes. Lunched at Adavale near Artesian hot bore, which was 1,400 foot deep. We looked at the cemetery - some very old graves. Then we continued and after being lost a few times we eventually found the Gorge we were seeking. Water in Bosses Gorge was only suitable for washing. We decided to camp there.

Gulf Trip cont...

Wednesday 21st August

Had an early start. There was a very strong wind overnight - thought the tents would take off. Well, it's 10 a.m. and we're lost on a crossroad. A keen compass study for a second time. We passed through some lovely country, deadend roads covered with trees and bush. Now we're bushed. Peter Rowe nearly went over a cliff on the shotline and lost all his dogfood.

Between Boss's Gorge and Emmett I became bogged to the axles. Peter Handley pulled me out, then he got bogged so I pulled him out, then J.B. bogged and Peter Handley pulled him out. At the end of the shotline we found a track through a station and finally the road to Emmett. At Emmett railway siding, we were told there was no fuel till the next town, so we camped in a Reserve. Windy night - so Ray and I slept in the Ladies' showers, Peter Rowe and Keith Brown slept in the Men's showers. We topped up our water supply here.

Thursday 22nd August

Stopped at Ilfracombe Folk Museum and Jail, then at Australian Stockmen's Hall of Fame, also visited the First TAA Terminal. Further on a quick look at Longreach, then to Winton, the cleanest town in the outback so far. We tried to find a plane that crashed in 1966, but at our first attempt we got lost; after 1½ hours we found a monument to crew and 20 passengers. We camped 56k. from Winton at Workingham Creek.

Friday 23 August

We found a couple of very old graves about 30 k. from Kyuna. Morning tea was at Combo waterhole where Banjo Patterson wrote "Waltzing Matilda". Kyuno was a bit of a dump but the Road Board's units and caravans were airconditioned. Lunched at Cloncurry. Then stopped at Burke and Wills camp 102 at Corella River. We reached Mt. Isa at 4.30 p.m. and met Don and Thelma at the Post Office, then out to the Caravan Park for everyone, except Ray and me. We went to a motel. It was great to have a shower after 6 days on the road.

Saturday 24 August

We had a relaxing day sightseeing and shopping at Mt. Isa. We went to the lake that afternoon, Chinese restaurant for tea, then up to Lookout, to see the lights. John and Andy added variety to their life by sleeping in their tent for 2 nights. (Usually it was the vehicle)

Sunday 25th August

We were off again. Lovely lake before we reached Gunpowder and deserted mining area all fenced off. Stopped at Chidna Station for drinks - very hot - 110° in the cars. John Smith found a salt lick and hitching rail and also an old pack saddle from a nearby rubbish dump. Stopped at Mt. Oxide mine camp for lunch - miners walked out 40 years ago and left a lot of belongings behind. Joy and Peter had a flat. We waited in the shade and R2 discovered he was sitting on a Bullant's nest but he was either too tough or they'd already eaten.

Gulf Trip cont...

5.12 p.m. Peter Rowe bogged again in the sand in the River bed, whilst looking for a camp site. The third time in the same spot. Don winched him out. We saw a Copperhead snake so we camped further on.

Monday 26th August

Morella Homestead had some friendly brown and black pigs. The owner's wife told us we were the first Victorians to come through this station and reach the Burke Highway as far as she knew. We used a compass to get through the scrub. She kindly offered us morning tea and to watch the branding but Peter refused as there were too many of us. Lunched at Burke and Wills Roadhouse. Terribly hot - 106° at 1.24 p.m.

2.41 p.m. and Monty's got a flat. When we reached the Caravan Park we had a swim. It was lovely to be cool. Central Hotel at Normanton provided free beer between 7 and 8 p.m. as new owners were taking over, so we decided on a counter tea. Only macaroni and cheese was left, served with bread and butter. Don complained to the cook that his serve was too small, but there was none left, so she offered him a beef luncheon salad but Don requested bread and butter with hundreds and thousands - a real masterpiece. We asked if we could buy the stubbie holders so the owner brought out T-shirts, leather stubbie holders and hats - we spent \$109 between us so got the stubbie holders for nothing. When we returned to camp had port with Peter and Joy before retiring. Today was Leigh's 6th birthday so before going to the hotel we sang Happy Birthday and had ice-cream cake.

Tuesday 27th August

After an early lunch we left for Karumba. Had a couple of drinks in the hotel, then went to look at the fishing trawlers. We went to the point to take photos - very windy and sandy. Then we returned to camp and prepared to the train trip the following day. There was a fight in camp because a White Carpenter took Aboriginal girl into his caravan - 4 Aboriginal men came to get her and tried to break in when she wouldn't go out. The Carpenter threatened them with a gun, they left, then three returned. The Carpenter jumped into his car to get the police but by the time they arrived only one Aboriginal was there. He ended up in the Clink.

Wednesday 28th August

We arrived at the train at 7.45 a.m. There were two bus loads of people also waiting to board. The ticket seller was also the train driver. We departed at 8.30. It was a very rough ride. Stopped for some passengers to alight, then a post box stop. Next stop everyone but us left the train. A woman with 2 children and a big Esky staggered into view. The Esky contained iced cake, apple turnovers and lemon pie at 50¢ each and free lemon cordial. Enterprising lady, and a welcome treat for us. Then were all aboard again. John B. on this half, while Andy drives the car to Croydon. John went for a twinkle and came out with a cut above his right eye caused when the train lurched. At Croydon we were met by the owner with 2 cars to drive us to the

Gulf Trip cont...

hotel, which was rustie but clean. Andy arrived 30 minutes later as he had given the Esky lady and kids a lift back to their Homestead about 1 k. away.

Thursday 29th August

Dinner, bed and breakfast was \$24 a head. Others walked to the station. John B. and I returned to Normanton in the car. At Maroo Station the Esky lady serviced the train again. The train picked up more bus passengers for the last 30 minutes of trip. Arrived back at Normanton at 11.45 a.m. where we lunched, packed and then departed at 2.23 p.m. Some time later Peter Handley went down a big hole and I pulled him out with snatch strap. We visited Little Byng River campsite of Burke and Wills. We had Barramundi for tea - delicious! Thanks R2. Joy, Peter and family returned to Mt. Isa where we rejoined them before going to Birdsville.

Friday 30th August

We reached Burketown today. Went to Shire Hall and paid for passports, which entitled us to free fish and chip lunch and a free stubbie. Left Burketown, crossed Nicholson River where we had a swim in a rock pool beside the River. Drove through an Aboriginal Mission, and eventually reached Hells Gate Roadhouse - just a fridge outside a house, but the cool drinks were welcome. Drove through Westmoreland Station, then stopped for a beer at Wollogorang Station, N.T. Later found out they were selling it illegally as they did not have a liquor licence. Station was very big and also provided food and accommodation if needed. We made a late camp beside Calvert River. What a beautiful place, palms, trees and birds. Four of us slept under the stars.

Saturday 31st August

Now at Borroloola. We ran into some blokes from the Club up here on a fishing trip.

Sunday 1st September

Very hot and muggy - temperatures over 100°. Stopped at Heart-break Hotel for fuel and a cold drink. We couldn't take the route planned as there was no more fuel until Mt. Isa. The roads were very dusty. Camped at Brunette Creek. Gale force winds all night.

Monday 2nd September

Travelled along Barkly Stock Route. Heavy dust storms, and it was hard to see. Alexandria is owned by the Australian Pastoral Co. and is the largest property in Australia, being 6½ thousand sq. miles. They supplied us with fuel, luckily, as fuel economy was non-existent in such strong winds. Further on people at Gallipoli Station confirmed we were on the right road. Lost again; had to backtrack past deserted mining camp to the river. We stayed there the night as it was already 6.35 p.m.

Gulf Trip cont...

Tuesday 3rd September

Peter and John had found a track. Watered and fed the chooks before we left - they badly needed it. Morning tea beside a lovely lagoon, then further on climbed a very steep rough mountain. With a bit of effort we all eventually made it. Scenery magnificent. Very difficult to find a continuing track. One led to a beautiful gorge but deadend, so we had to go back. Finally we were back on the main road, and headed for Mt. Isa. We bought tea at Camooweal and arrived at Mt. Isa at 10.30 p.m.

Wednesday 4th September

Washing, shopping, car maintenance and postcard writing took up most of our day. Don got a parking ticket while in the bank. Chinese takeaway with wine for tea, then watched a video of part of Don's trip and our trip to the Lorne Hill Gorge the previous day. Didn't expect open air movies under the stars.

Thursday 5th September

Lunched about 100 k. South of Mt. Isa. Saw a couple of very big Eagles and lots of rock formations. Camped at Boulia Caravan Park the night. A nice clean town. Went to the hotel after tea.

Friday 6th September

The man next door brought a baby Emu over for us to see. Stopped at Bedourie to take photos. Population 60. It was very windy and hot when we stopped for lunch. Photographed Sir Sidney Kidman Homestead. At 4 p.m. we were 2 k. out of Birdsville. Took a side track over sanddunes for a while, then made camp. We fellas decided to go sand-duning in the cars - great fun. Returned to camp about 6.30 p.m. Peter Rowe and Keith went to town to pick up Mark who flew in - had to make second trip as there were five of them.

Saturday 7th September.

Went in early to Birdsville to have a look around before the Races. Crowded with planes, busses cars and people. We arrived at the Race Course at 1 p.m. We found a good spot, didn't win much but had a good day. Back at camp we had had a Willie Willie. Joy and Peter's, Thelma and Don's and our tent were a mess and things were blown everywhere. Ray and I had decided to head back home in the morning as our travelling conditions weren't too good.

Sunday 8th September

We made our farewells, then detoured to airport to see Mark and friends off. Reached Innamincka by late afternoon.

Monday 9th September

Came down through Cameron's Corner to Silver City Highway and Broken Hill. Stayed at a motel in Mildura the night.

Gulf Trip cont...

Tuesday 10th September

Arrived back at Margaret's at 20 to 6 p.m. At the time of writing this she is delighted we left the trip early, as she hadn't much to write.

Good on you, Peter, great trip and well led!!

Ray Brown

N A V I G A T I O N A L T R I A L - 1985 - WOMBAT STATE
FOREST

Roll Call: V.F.W.D.C.

Trevor Nelson and son, Rob and Julie Ayton, Gerry Lavery and Peter Walsh, Ricky and Tanya Rycken, Jack Craven and Martin Cory, Rod Lee and Mark Templeton, Peter and Debra Pink, Keith Brown and kids, Murray Shaw and Brian Tuck, Kim Ferrier and Dennis Merlo, Ross Ferguson and Ann Stillwell, Dave Hocking and Andy Merlo.

OTWAY 4 W.D. Club

Joe and Gay Lavery, Lyn and Des Symonds, Ron Topp and Rachael Lavery, Chris and Lesley Currer, Graeme Veitch and kids.

OFFICIALS

Ross Lyster, Terry and Wayne Baker, Dave and Michelle Heard, Gary and Patricia Burt, Alan Wade, Peter Handley, Tom Brachna, Elo and Brian Olsen, Patrick Casey.

With this year's Navigational Trial we aimed to provide the drivers with a good variety of 4 W.D. tracks and challenge the navigators on their increased navigational knowledge. With any trip or trial the weather is always an unknown quantity. The week prior to the event caused some tracks to be extremely wet (e.g. Ruth Tk. Greateyre Tk.) and others to be relatively dry (e.g. Digger Tk. XL Tk.).

Anticipating wet weather, we allowed for winch vehicles to be placed in strategic positions, to assist people up the last stages of the hills. But after the first few vehicles, it became painfully apparent that the tracks were in worse condition than first realised. Inevitably this meant frequent long winching of vehicles, long delays and frayed tempers - all this in the first 20 kilometers. These tracks were eventually "closed".

The fun did not stop there - in Section Two some unknown "forest creatures" removed many of the Information Boards off the trees and threw them into the bush. Many vehicles did frequent reconnaissance loops - searching in vain and cursing aloud. The din became even louder when a few accurate navigators discovered a typing error (i.e. 0.30 instead of 0.03), leading to a few trips up and down Possum Track.

PTO

The Third Section went off smoothly, and was enjoyed by the competing vehicles. So as not to relive the frustrating morning winching, the Fourth Section (The Night Run through the Bog Hole) was cancelled as this was extremely muddy, wet and rutted.

Despite all this everyone seemed to enjoy themselves, especially the visiting Otway Club members. Some teams even finished all three sections. The heroes of the weekend were the winching teams - their efforts were most appreciated by everyone. All officials did a great job and again deserve to be thanked.

Discussions and postmortems around the campfire that night, made it clear - that in all fairness - no team could be singled out for the trophy. Despite the problems encountered it was still a very successful inter-club activity, and plenty of good humour and port was shown around the campfires.

On Sunday, we ventured down to the Night Run Section and again vehicles became bogged and required winching. The descent into, the three areas of bog holes and the deeply rutted climb out of the area, attracted comments like - "what!! we were to come through here at night", "there is nothing like this in the Otways - even if we dig". Other club members did their own thing on Sunday trying out the various tracks in the Wombat - e.g. Gribble Tk.

Sure we were disappointed with the problems encountered, but we have all learnt from the experience and this will make future Navigational Trials better. But setting out the trial, doing the course checking, preparing the instructions and getting the trial organised, was all well worthwhile and good fun.

Patrick Casey

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F O R S A L E

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I T S A N D B I T S

Who's car has just got a blow job?

Who didn't get winched on the Navigational Trial?

Rob Ayton's diffs are going for a hat trick on next year's Navigational Trial.

Who from the Otways Club has bruised fruit and vegies?

Rumour has it that Keith Brown has turned into a swinger.

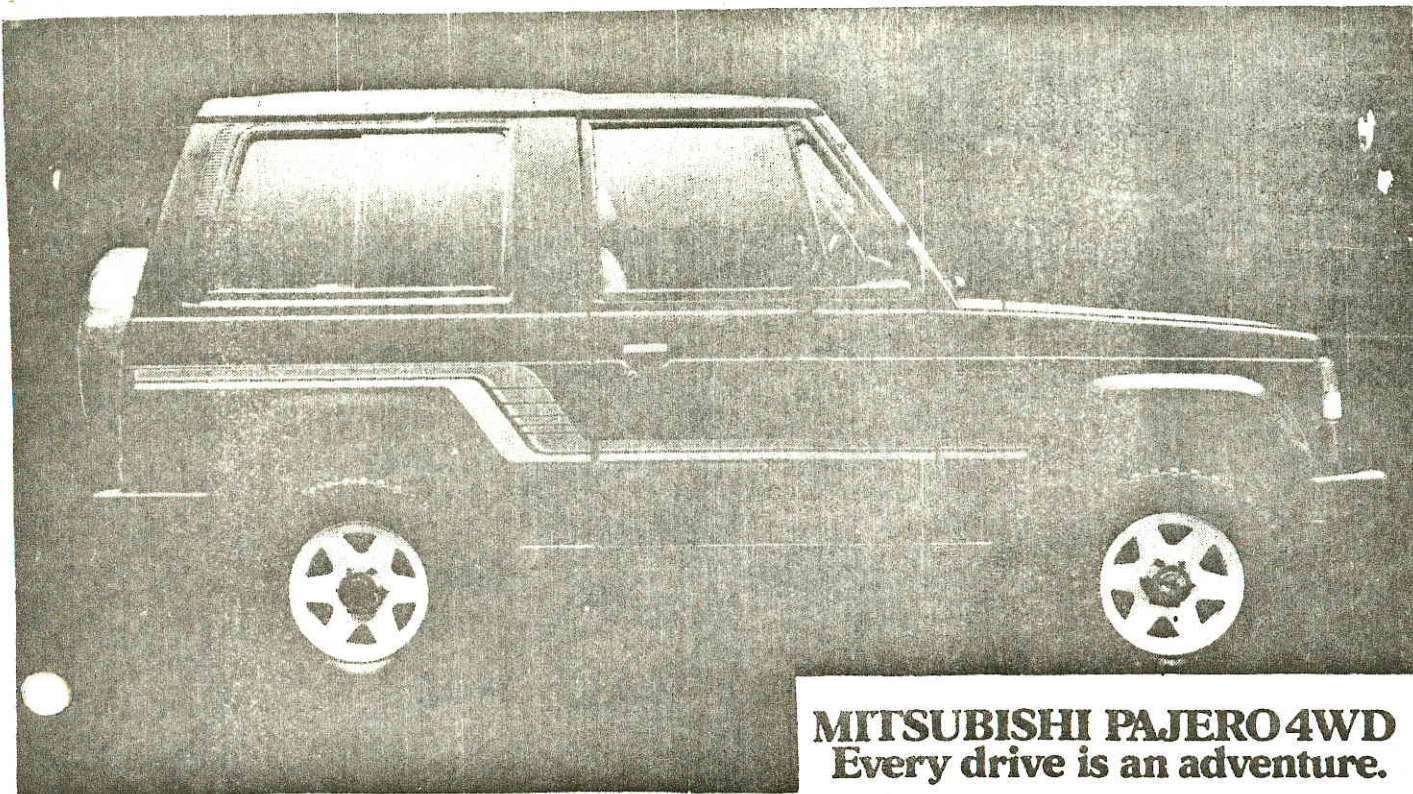
Peter winched away from Committee Meeting!

Alan Wade and Gary Burt's Warns are now worn.

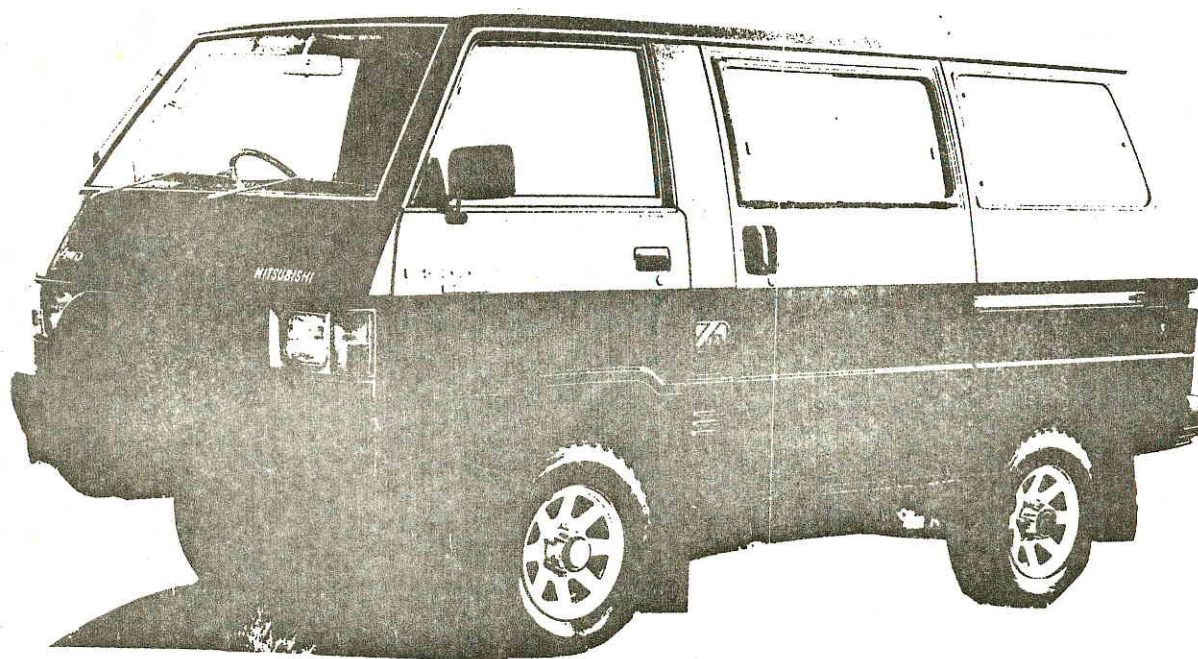
Rod's vehicle has a phobia about water.

Dave Heard's snatchum needs dry cleaning.

Note: CLUB CALENDER AS PER LAST MONTH



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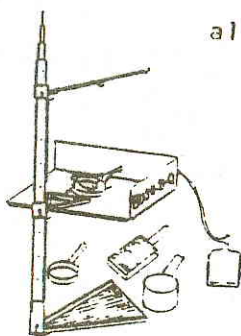
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