



Free Wheeling

Official Newsletter of the Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club

Registration No A0002184F

30th Anniversary Edition
1974-2004

AUGUST 2004



"Bringing Four Wheel Drivers Together"



The Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club Inc is an affiliated club of the Victoria Association of Four Wheel Drive Clubs Inc (VAFWDC) www.vafwdc.org.au, and a member of Tread Lightly! Australia www.treadlightlyaustralia.com.au





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President	John Partridge	0428 331211
Vice President	Ian Warburton	9754 2341
Treasurer	Roger Baird	9704 9045
Secretary	Lesley Peters	9540 0007

GENERAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Assistant Secretary	Stephen Boyle	9754 4412
New Member Contact	George Pledger	9547 4021
Trip Coordinator	Ashley Martin	0438 600904
Social Secretary	Rosalie Hughes	9706 2966
Projects Coordinator	Carl Surtees	9706 2692
Insurance Officer	Gerrard Clarke	9707 3013
Librarian	Barry Leitch	5996 6662
Web Manager	Anthony Van Buiten	0413 784074

Association Delegate	John Partridge	0428 331211
Club Historian	Phil Alder	9754 8487
Training Officers	Mark Kochan	9763 2052
	Ashley Martin	0438 600904
	John Partridge	0428 331211
Newsletter Editor	Lesley Peters	9540 0007
	lespet03@hotmail.com	

Registered Name: Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club Inc

Registration No: A002184F

All correspondence: *The Secretary*

VFWD Inc
PO Box 778
Dandenong Vic 3175

Web Site: www.vfwdc.com

Meetings: Held first Tuesday of each month excluding January (no meeting). The November meeting is held on the 2nd Tuesday due to Melbourne Cup.

Location: Library Meeting Room
Stuart Street
Dandenong Vic 3175

PRESIDENT'S REPORT August 2004

Welcome to our 30th Anniversary edition of *Free Wheeling*.

It was around this time, 30 years ago, that the Club was formed by some like-minded fellows that wanted to see more of this great country that we live in. Over the years, there wouldn't be many places in Oz that this Club hasn't visited. In fact, as I write this we have a group of 6 vehicles exploring the Cape York area. It has been great to see some of the longer standing members of our Club at the meetings this year. The insight into their time with the Club, trips they've been on, and the vehicles that they were driving all those years ago has been fascinating.

Whilst getting out into the bush is the main focus of the Club and its members, there have been many other projects that the Club has undertaken over the years. Some of these are: removal of car bodies from the bush, cleaning up camping grounds, restoration work of Craigs Hut, and the Christmas Tree deliveries for Oxfam International to name but a few.

This long held tradition has continued. This year we have worked on the restoration of Collins Hut, held a special Christmas party for disadvantaged children from the Dandenong area, participated in the Christmas tree deliveries, and held a working bee at Merringtons camping ground which involved the planting of some 130 trees. It is projects such as these that makes our Club one of the most respected in the Association and one which I have been honoured to be the President of for the past year.

It is time once again for our Annual General Meeting. I would like to thank the outgoing Committee for the time and effort that they have put into running our Club. There are many things that are achieved behind the scenes that largely go unrecognised, but without which the Club would struggle. Thanks also to the many people who help out at the Club meetings, such as setting up the room, tea duties, selling raffle tickets and cleaning up at the end of meetings. Most of all thanks to the many people who have run trips throughout the year, as this is the reason why we're in a 4WD club.

Hope to catch up with you at the meeting.

Oh!... I'd also like to thank my pet budgie Max.

Regards

John

johnpartrid@hotmail.com

MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING 6 JULY 2004

Meeting held at Dandenong Library and opened at 8.10pm by John Partridge.

ATTENDANCE: 27 members present.

APOLOGIES: Aline Van Buiten, Maxine Ryan, Yvonne Hempston, Graeme Ralph, Judy Murray, Rosalie and David Hughes, Ray and Dawn Brown, Michael and Verrille Rodger, Don and Thelma Montague, and the Cape York crew.

VISITORS: Welcome to Julian Adler and Robyn Baddams, Steve Wilson and Renee Woods, Paul and Duncan Gillis, Mark and Marcelle Hall, Danny Wingard.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:

Minutes of June meeting as per Newsletter.
Accepted: Carl Surtees. Seconded: Gerard Clarke.

MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES: Nil.

CORRESPONDENCE IN:

Promo material from: Melton Offroad Centre; AJ Thomas Campers, Auswide 4WD Services; Ridepro Suspension; and Piranha Off Road Products including details of their Open Day on 11 September 2004.

CORRESPONDENCE OUT:

Letter to Red Hill Retreat seeking sponsorship for AGM Dinner Door Prize.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Roger reported that due his absence on holidays full report not available this month. Will submit full report next month, in meantime:

Bank:	\$1437.30
Petty Cash:	\$ 200.00
Term Deposit:	\$7094.98

TRIP CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT:

➤ Trip Reports:

Buffalo River: Anthony reported on the Queen's Birthday weekend trip to this area (as reported in detail in July newsletter).

Warburton Day Trip: Derek and Carl provided a quick overview.

➤ Forthcoming Trips/Events:

In Ashley's absence, John reviewed forthcoming trips as listed in calendar. Also, Cup Weekend at Wonnangatta,

Mayford Fishing trip (26-28 November) and the Christmas Party which will be held on 4 December.

It was noted that the proposed date for the Mystery Pub-to-Pub falls on Father's Day. Show of hands indicated that this may need to be changed.

GENERAL BUSINESS:

- *AGM Dinner:* 28 August 2004 at Stamford Hotel, Rowville. Deposit required asap. Tickets available to those who pay total amount. Several door prizes available, including accommodation package, \$300 service from Murphy's 4X4. **All tickets are numbered for this purpose, so remember to bring them with you.**
- *Personal Information Form:* This will be distributed soon and should be completed by all members. Suggested it be kept in vehicle glove box.
- Mark Kochan asked what was happening in relation to Wombat State Forest issue and JP gave an overview. See FourWDVic update in this edition.
- JP reported on further damage to Merringtons and culprits being charged.
- *Club Database:* JP requested that all members advise date of joining club so that we have record of members' years of membership. (On renewal form.)
- Two radios available which have been donated by Carl Surtees.

OTHER TRIP REPORTS:

In addition to the "official" club trips mentioned above, Roger and John reported on their respective trips to Cairns/Cape York environs, and the Flinders Ranges. John also showed some photos of his trip to this beautiful part of South Australia.

Pat Casey gave a brief overview of his hiking trip in the NT – more detail in the Trip Report section this month.

RAFFLE: Tickets sold by Gary and Tania.

1st Prize: Bottle of Buller's Port – won by Steve Utting.

2nd Prize: Video (donated by ProComp) won by ?? ☹

3rd Prize: Bottle Wine – won by Leigh Pettigrew.

MEETING CLOSED at 9.40pm.

NEXT MEETING: Will be held at Dandenong Library on Tuesday, 3 August 2004 and will incorporate the Annual General Meeting. All members welcome.

NEW MEMBERS: JULY 2003-JULY 2004:

Steve & Tania Utting

1993 Maverick

Andy & Isabel Riordon	1997 Kia Sportage
David & Joanne Dawn	1996 Pajero
Carissa & Joe Galovic	2003 Nissan Patrol
Bas Swart	2003 Nissan Patrol
Jay Gould & Jackie Fell	1984 Pajero
Mike & Joanne Leggett	2004 Ford F250
Mark & Julie Capper	1991 Nissan Patrol
Paul Gillis	1999 Pathfinder
	2000 Prado

I would like to thank our regular contributors and all those members who submitted trip reports, photographs, articles, jokes etc this year. And thanks also to those who once again assisted with the printing of our newsletter.

Lesley Peters
Editor, *Free Wheeling*

Welcome to

The Corner

A nice little recipe for the "girlie" afternoons..

★★★★ LEMON STARS ★★★★★

Ingredients:

125g unsalted butter cubed and softened
125g caster sugar (one and a half cups)
2 egg yolks
2 tspns finely grated lemon zest
155gms plain flour (one and a quarter cups)
110g coarse cornmeal (three quarters of a cup)
icing sugar to dust

Method:

Preheat oven to 160 degrees C, line baking tray with baking paper.

Beat the butter and sugar till creamy, mix in the egg yolks, lemon zest, flour and cornmeal until they form a ball of soft dough, roll out on a lightly floured surface to about 1cm thick.

Cut stars from the dough using a star shaped cutter. Place on tray and bake for about 15-20 mins or until lightly golden. Cool on a wire rack and dust with the icing sugar.. This recipe makes about 20. Happy munching!



Something I found handy after being so ill this year after Dargo... something I have used every morning since and thought it may be of use to those who have a delicate constitution:

Deodorant: Add 3 drops of lavender and 2 drops of tea tree oil to 10 ml of moisturising cream and apply a small amount... *Fabulous.*

And for my poor old skin... soak a face cloth in a solution of one cup of hot milk and one drop of lavender oil, wring it out, use as a compress on face, hands, neck, and body... *Wonderful!!*

The Corner: If anyone has an interesting snippet they would like included, just email to: anniesinternet1@primus.com.au
Don't be shy. All contributions will be gratefully received!



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Can you guess where this photo was taken??



Answer this question at Yahoo Groups and Annie will advise you if you are correct...

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CLUB CALENDAR AT A GLANCE

AUGUST

Tuesday 3rd Club Meeting John Partridge
Incorporating Annual General Meeting

Saturday 21st Annual Snow Trip Carl Surtees
to Sunday 22nd Licola

Saturday 28th AGM Dinner John Partridge

Tuesday 31st Committee Meeting TBA

SEPTEMBER

Sunday 4th Murrundindi Day Trip John Partridge

Tuesday 7th Club Meeting TBC

Sunday 12th Rodney Fountain James Holden
Memorial Car Rally

Friday 17th Mystery Pub-to-Pub Rosalie Hughes
to Sunday 19th **Note change of date**

Saturday 25th Advanced Training Ashley Martin
to Sunday 26th

Tuesday 28th Committee Meeting TBA

OCTOBER

Tuesday 5th Club Meeting TBC

Saturday 16th Proficiency Training John Partridge
Sunday 17th

Saturday 21st **NATIONAL 4 X 4 SHOW**
Sunday 22nd Melbourne Exhibition Centre

Tuesday 28th Committee Meeting TBA

Melbourne Cup Weekend

Saturday 30th Wonnangatta Roast John Partridge
Tuesday 2nd Nov

NOVEMBER

Tuesday 9th Club Meeting TBC

Friday 26th to Annual Mayford Ashley Martin
Sunday 28th Fishing Trip

Tuesday 30th Committee Meeting TBA

DECEMBER

Saturday 4th Christmas Party John Partridge

Tuesday 7th Club Meeting TBC

Tuesday 21st Committee Meeting TBC



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Four Wheel Drive Radio Show
"Talking Four Wheel Drive"
Saturday at 10.00am

ANNUAL SNOW TRIP

Date: Friday 20th to Sunday 22 August 2004

Trip Leader: Carl Surtees

Contact Nos: Mob: 0403 024490 AH: 9706 2692

Destination: Licola

Meeting Time/Place: 4.30pm, Officer Weighbridge.

Vehicle Limit: *Min:* 3, *Max:* 10.

Grade: *Wet:* Medium or as Hard as we want to make it on the day. *Dry:* Medium.

Equipment: Standard recovery gear, including shovel and warm clothing.

Maps: N/A

Radio Channel: Channel 12

Trip Activities: Camp on Saturday night with a big fire (hopefully). After breakfast drive up past Arbuckle Junction and look for some snow to have a play in. For the more adventurous, we may try some side tracks along the way.

MURRUNDINDI to TOOLANGI DAY TRIP

Date: Sunday, 4 September 2004

Trip Leader: John Partridge

Contact Nos: Mob: 0427 331 211 H: 9789 6985

Destination: Murrundindi/Toolangi

Meeting Time/Place: 9.00am, Lilydale McDonalds

Vehicle Limit: *Min:* 2, *Max:* 10

Grade: *Wet:* Easy *Dry:* Easy

Approx Distance: 50 kms.

Equipment: Basic recovery and lunch.

Maps: N/A

Radio Channel: Channel 12

Trip Activities: Leisurely day's drive, commencing in northern Murrundindi and working back to Toolangi.

RODNEY FOUNTAIN MEMORIAL CAR RALLY

Date: Sunday, 12 September 2004

Trip Leader: James Holden – 9755 5790

Destination: Unknown

Meeting Place: Officer Sports Ground, Cnr Starling Road and Princes Highway.

Time: 8.30-9.00am

Grade: Scenic/Social

Vehicle Limit: *Min:* 4, *No Max*

Radio Channel: Ch. 12

Trip Activities: James won the privilege to lead this year's rally by winning last year's event! Come along and support his first effort as trip leader. Enjoy a fun day out, and don't forget to pack those weird and wonderful bits and pieces that always appear on the "things you need to you have?" list.

ADVANCED TRAINING WEEKEND

Date: 25-26 September 2004

Trip Leader: Ashley Martin

Contact Nos: Mob: 0438 600 904 H: 9540 0007

Destination: Little O'Tooles Camping Ground

Meeting Time/Place: Time TBA. Officer Weighbridge.

Vehicle Limit: *Min:* 3, *Max:* 10.

Grade: *Wet:* Hard *Dry:* Medium.

Equipment: As per new classifications.

Maps: N/A

Radio Channel: Channel 12

Trip Activities: We will be discussing and then putting into practice some of the more advanced driving techniques, including winch recovery, driving rocky and rutted tracks. Also incorporating Advanced Port Drinking and Morning Recovery 101.

AND, OF COURSE, THE AGM DINNER – DON'T LEAVE IT TOO LATE TO ADVISE YOUR ACCEPTANCE !!

This is going to be a really good night – so you won't want to miss out...

1974-2004 30th Anniversary AGM DINNER

When: 7.00pm til Midnight
Saturday, 28 August

Where: McArthur Room
Stamford Hotel
Cnr Wellington & Stud
Roads, Rowville

Cost: \$40.00 per head
Payment required at
August General Meeting

Contact: John Partridge
0428 331 211

* * * * *

Cost includes 3-course meal,
great door prizes.

We look forward to seeing as many
of our members as possible at this
year's AGM dinner to celebrate the
Club's

30th Anniversary –



Four Wheel Drive Victoria: Wombat State Forest Update

A new Council of Stewards will take over on the 1st August. This Council will comprise a single representative from each working group in the Wombat forest, community groups, recreational users, motorised users and three from the local indigenous communities. It will have an advisory role to the DSE which retains overall responsibility for the forest.

Agreement on the new Council of Stewards has been reached after much hard work following the May 1st meeting. The outcome is in line with the proposals being made by the majority of the people at the Daylesford meeting and has been achieved through consultation rather than a long drawn out balloting process. The proposed ballot will not now go ahead, all of the objectives having now been achieved. Thanks go to everyone who travelled to Daylesford to support your association, this result would not have been received without your support.

I keep talking about the terrific progress that has been made in the Community Forest Management project and the barriers that have been broken down because of our involvement in this process.

The Wombat May Day meeting was a stepping stone for our Association in breaking out and breaking down its old stereotype image. Four Wheel Drive Victoria and its members drive in a sustainable environment. We are involved in a myriad of community projects and have a very important management role to play in the forests and parks of Victoria.

There is now a new reference group called TFRO (Tracks, Forests, Roads and Operations). This reference group represents vehicular users, our Association, CAMS and AMTRA, all doing what we do best.

The formation of the CFM as an advisory body to DSE on issues that affect the forest from a local perspective is a terrific move to the future of sustainable forest management involving the local community and major stakeholders. We look forward to a successful outcome and a CFM that represents the interests of all Victorians in this important initiative.

[From Four Wheel Drive Victoria 'e' News July 2004]

The following article regarding the problems encountered this year at Merringtons was published in the local newspaper.

Public appeal to catch vandals

THE public is asked to help identify vandals who destroyed a revegetation and rehabilitation project at Merringtons Camp Ground.

Merringtons is in state forest on the Aberfeldy River, 20 kilometres north of Walhalla.

The camp ground was recently repaired and improved by the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) and community members after the area was severely damaged by vehicles following wet weather last year.

The Latrobe Valley Four Wheel Drive Club and Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club joined with DSE to plant 150 trees at the end of May to rehabilitate the area.

More than 20 Four Wheel Drive Club members helped DSE with the tree planting, which added the fin-

ishing touches to the camp ground repairs.

A new road network, drainage and barbecues were also installed.

President of the Victoria Four Wheel Drive Club John Partridge said it was great to have the opportunity to put a bit back into the bush and forge a better relationship with DSE.

"This is a terrific example of everyone working together to improve our environment for all to use," he said.

However a week later vandals pulled out many of the trees that were planted, as well as spreading litter throughout the area.

DSE forest ranger Noel Lees said help from the community was vital in creating this project and it would

also be the key to catching the people who tried to wreck it.

"Projects like this would not get off the ground without cooperation between the department and the public," Mr Lees said.

"It's that kind of positive attitude that will help us to catch these vandals and prevent future attacks.

"The 4 x 4 clubs are not only keen to help out, they also provide valuable information to DSE regarding tracks that are unsafe and on many occasions have helped in giving evidence to us about people damaging our camp grounds."

Several leads are being followed to try and track down those people responsible for the damage but anyone with further information should contact police or their local DSE office.

TRIP REPORTS

JATBULA TRAIL – NT

"If you can not drive there, it is not worth going!"

I have heard a few people in the club express this opinion – however there are exceptions to this rule. **PC**

In June this year, Patrick and Ann Casey, Tom and Marianne Brachna, Matt and Trish Hope, Vern and Anne Hynes and son James, set off to do this 66 kilometer hike from Katherine Gorge to Edith Falls in 5 days.

It was a late wet season and there was plenty of water with the rivers and waterfalls really flowing. We encountered many river crossings from ankle to knee depth, many water soaks and creeks (some knee deep) and every afternoon was spent swimming under waterfalls, in rapids and crystal clear rivers.

The main highlights on the hike were The Northern Rockhole, Biddlescombe Cascades, Crystal Falls, The Amphitheatre, 17 Mile Falls, Edith River Crossing, Sandy Camp Pool, Sweetwater Pool and Edith Falls. Absolutely fantastic.

Average daytime temperature 30, night-time temperature 17. Fly on tent not required.

Wildlife encountered included multiple birds, many small fish and cheripins, many cane toads and other frogs, heaps of lizards and skinks and two snakes, and buffalo wallows and wild pig scratchings.

Some recommendations for future trips would be to take 7-10 days, or walk upstream from Edith Falls to Sweetwater Pool and camp 1-2 days.

Patrick Casey



1. Leaving Northern Rockhole
2. Lunch and swim at Edith Crossing
3. Another river crossing

**UNLISTED
NIGHT TRIP –
BALLARAT –**

Saturday 17 July

Trip Leader: Steve & Tania Utting

Participants: Terry, Annie & Rocky

What are friends for?????

Rugby Union, what a magic game... Especially when its between Aus and NZ...

That was the scene Saturday night 17 July, sitting in the lounge chair enjoying a sherbet or two (hic) watching an epic battle being waged on a soaking arena in the land of the friendly sheep. A massive game that had me rising out of my seat with every thrust forward by the Aussies (few and far between) and successful repulsion of the black armada (more often than not)... Huge. In every sense of the word.

Half time came and we were trailing on the score board so that meant a massive second half was just around the corner. But... The phone rang.. that's right, picture my face... its like "who dares to interrupt when the stakes are so high (Bledisloe Cup), have they no idea of timing"

Tania handed me the phone after a quick explanation of an extremely tricky situation. It was Annie (bless her heart) with Terry (ok his heart too) marooned in Ballarat. Annies car/ute had thrown a timing belt and the car didn't wanna go. They got the RACV man in Creswick to look at it and he pushed it into the pits for a revival attempt over the next few days. Safest place for the car too, if Annie had got her hands on it the revival process might have been a touch more expensive.

The kind RACV man suggested they take a taxi to Ballarat station and catch the last train to Melbourne – the 730 train. So they did just that. Annie, Terry and Rocky... yep Rocky. She had been an unsuspecting passenger on a trip to Maryborough for a bit of a look at the block of land newly purchased by Terry. Now she was the one that would hold em to ransom. Go girl.

They got to Ballarat only to find the last train had already gone and no more till the morrow. They thought, OK we'll get accomm for the night... nope, not with Rocky. I'm sure Terry (as we all know him) would have even tried the Guide dog routine, but nothing was available for Annie and her pet – and Rocky wasn't welcome either!

Annie asked if we were able to pick them up. Without hesitation yes was the next word that passed my lips. What are friends for.

Tania and I drove up to Ballarat, picked em up and delivered them safe to Annie's house, where we enjoyed a cuppa and a few more jibes then headed home. I guess we rolled into bed at around 1130. Was a great night (for us anyway)

BTW, I taped the second half and watched it on Sunday... we lost but what a great game.

Steve Utting

[What a shame there's no pictorial evidence available... tee hee!!]

Our Cape York Trip
by Liz Beaton and Ian Warburton

Continued....

Our first stop on driving out of Cobourg Peninsular was at the lagoon in Arnhem Land that I had been at in 1995 to

view a magnificent sunset. I had been on a Military Exercise where we had free reign of the area just up from Oenpelli. As the sun went down one of my fellow colleagues, the Padre mind you, on seeing a crocodile traverse the lagoon asked "Where was the virgin to sacrifice?" As I was the only female fortunately I had to decline his request. Ian and I were able to view a sunset here again but I must admit it was not as good as the one in 1995.

On arriving back in Kakadu after spending most of the last 2 months bush camping we decided to lash out and booked into the Gagudju Crocodile Holiday Inn in Jabiru. They had a special on, dinner/bed and breakfast for \$280. Definitely good value as the buffet evening meal and buffet breakfast provided us with quite a supply of food for the next few days. During this part of our Kakadu adventure we took in the sights of Ubirr and the Mamaluka wetlands. We were also able to get a permit for Oenpelli (Arnhem land) to travel in to the Injalak Art and Craft Centre where we bought a few original goodies and Dean, our aboriginal guide, took us to Injalak Hill so we could see the rock art. This was quite fascinating to view.

From here our travels will now take us to Darwin. We rang Peter, Denise and Katie Rowe as soon as we arrived in Darwin. We will now be here for a week and during this time we will visit heaps of places. First stop was the Museum and art gallery where the exhibit of Cyclone Tracy is astounding. Next, the Aviation Heritage centre where they have from a Tiger Moth to a B52 Bomber on display. Boy are those planes huge. Next on the agenda was tea (our mackerel) with Denise and Katie; Peter was working. Over the next few days we walked along the esplanade of Darwin taking in the sights of the cenotaph and memorial plaques to many. The USS Peary memorial, Lyons cottage, Old Admiralty House, Government House, and the WW2 Oil Storage tunnels. We also visited the East Point Military museum. Each day we were rewarded with a fly over of USA Hornet jet fighters. The Squadron is based in Japan but come to Darwin every year for 3 months bombing practice as the Japanese won't let them practice on Japanese soil. We also took in the delights, smells and tastes of the Mindil beach market. Now Ian is not one for going to markets, but he could not resist all the yummy food sensations, the music and of course the sunset. We lunched at the wharf precinct as well as having tea there with the Rowe's. We took in a sunset harbour cruise from Cullen Bay aboard the *Cape Adieu* and finished off our action-packed week in Darwin by stayed with Peter, Denise and Katie for the weekend to rest before we started our southward journey. Thanks guys heaps for your hospitality. From Darwin we headed to Litchfield National Park for a couple of days. Whilst here we visited the termite mounds, Buley rock holes, Florence falls, the Lost city, Tabletop swamp (heaps of birdlife), Wangi falls, Tolmer falls, Blyth homestead and Surprise creek. Our next camp spot is to be at Mataranka. Boy is it hot – 40C, especially when you have to fix a puncture. You are treated to a wonderful bird feast at the caravan park. They have peacocks, brolgas, egrets, ducks, pigeons, galahs to name a few. We swam in the Bitter Springs thermal pool as the main pool at Mataranka was closed due to the smell of the bats. From here we headed to Camooweal via Cape Crawford and then Mt Isa. We arrived in Mt Isa just in time to do the mine tour. I am

still wondering why you need closed in shoes as you don't get off the bus at all. Oh well, one of those quirks in life. Shortly they will have a new tour which will take you underground which should be quite interesting. We didn't realise they mined lead, zinc, silver and copper in this small town. Had lunch at the Irish club where they have a Melbourne tram and went up to the lookout at night. A spectacular sight looking over the township and the mine. On arriving at Mt Isa we were to make our decision whether to come home via Birdsville or do we stick to the black stuff. Decision made, our first place of interest we stopped at for lunch on our journey south was the Walkabout Creek hotel. We just cannot get away from Mick Dundee.

We next travel to Longreach where we will stay a few days. All the street names in Longreach are named after birds, it was quite neat and the town is the largest in the Central West. The Qantas Outback Museum is a place not to be missed, especially the Boeing 747. It is the only Boeing on display in the world and it will always be there as the runway is not long enough for take off. Opposite Qantas is the Australian Stockman Hall of Fame which stands as a tribute to the people who pioneered and developed outback Australia. It has just had a \$4.3million upgrade and you are able to get a re-entry pass and you certainly need it as it took us 2 days to look at everything. Just out of Longreach is a little town called Ilfracombe. They have an amazing 1km long outdoor display of machinery. From here we have headed to Barcaldine where we stopped at the Tree of Knowledge – the birth of the Labour Party. All the streets here are named after trees. Blackall is famous for anything west of here as being "beyond the black stump" and the sinking of the first bore for the great artesian basin. Home unfortunately is getting closer but the weather is still wonderfully warm. On arriving in Bourke we are just in time to catch them starting up a restored historical Crossley engine. This is a twin cylinder oil fuelled stationary engine which is an engineering delight. At Cobar we looked at the open cut mine from the Fort Bourke lookout and then walked around the relics of the Peak gold mine as well as looking at the operational part of the mine. Both Ian and I had never travelled this part of the world from Mt Isa to Bourke and we were quite glad that we decided to take the bitumen as it was very interesting indeed. (We had had enough of dirt by this stage).

We have arrived in Jerilderie and we have to put on jeans for the first time in nearly 3 months.

On arriving home it is cold and it's raining and the temperature is the same as when we left. It is Grand Final day, we planned that well. Did we really leave Melbourne for winter? Were we away for 3 months? Oh yes, we were and it was fabulous. And now our delightful, wonderful journey has come to a close... our next trip will be.....



The older we get, the fewer things seem
worth waiting in line for.

My 4x4 Experience and Memories of the Early Days of the Club

by Peter Pink (former President)

My first taste of 4x4 was a Land Rover Station Wagon 10 seater which was owned by my oldies. The only 4wding that we did was scoot up the odd dirt road.

My first 4x4, at age 17, was a 1948 Series 1 Land Rover which was bright orange in colour and had a massive 10 HP four cylinder motor engine, but boy could it pack a punch if you didn't crank start it correctly.

I got mixed up with Tom Brachna who took us on a couple of early club clean-up trips around the country, eg Woods Point, Walhalla, Merringtons. These events were fun and the nights were even funnier.

The thing I remember about travelling in the back of Tommy's Landy was that it certainly was not all that comfortable in a vehicle that had suspension equivalent to a few blocks of red gum. The old rag top was freezing cold and the dust(!); half the time I couldn't see the guys in the front and it was only a short wheel base.

Well, I was bitten by the bug and purchased a 1968 Series 2 Landy. It was rough but it went: no heater, no door locks, no wind up windows, separate wiper motors - his and hers or whoever's - rattles everywhere, noisy gearbox, 3 foot dia steering wheel, lumps of foam for seats. But hey, it did have two diffs!!

You had to be crazy to go 4x4ing. I think people thought we were farmers that had taken the wrong turn somewhere.

Maintenance, always working on the thing, so many pictures of us hanging over the bonnet or changing axles or something...

I joined the club 25 years ago when going bush took so much preparation in organizing spare parts and the like. The club at that stage consisted mainly of Land Rovers and the odd "rice burner" as we called those Toyotas and Nissans.

Our favourite haunt was O'Tooles which used to take the best part of the day to get to. No cargo barriers so some-one would be holding back the dog and all the gear as we drove down Flats Track which was rather steep and nasty; it certainly didn't have the zig zags that it does today. Donnelly's Creek Road used to be a major feat, with some serious angle nibbling which was ok as long as it was passenger side down so you had something soft to fall on if you did happen to go over on your side!

You could go to those places and not see anyone for days. The camp sites were pristine - no toilet blocks but people seemed to do the right thing. Although back then the rules with rubbish were the three Bs - burn, bash and bury.

As time went on more and more Japanese vehicles infiltrated the ranks. They had heaters, wind down windows, and even a radio.

In 1985 it got the better of me and I weakened and bought a Duel Cab Diesel Hilux. What a truck! Nothing

ever seemed to break; you could just bounce your way over all types of rock ledges and terrain.

At that stage about 60-70% of the club had a Hilux. On some of our outback trips there would be 7 or 8 of these vehicles. We learned to love those little tojo's.

Then things started to change again. People were going for even more refined vehicles such as Land Cruisers and Nissan Patrols. Bigger vehicle, more comfort, and people were realising that these vehicles could cut the mustard without abusing your body.

People were getting soft!

*Pete
succumbs
to the
pressure
and
purchases
an 80
Series
diesel...
and names
it
"Sootie"...*



The vehicles have just progressed from there and got softer and softer but they do the job a lot easier.

That's where the problem lies now with the use and abuse of the bush. In the old days, I think a lot of it was appreciation in getting to a pristine place and enduring torture to get there and not knowing whether you would be driving home or getting towed.

Tracks have become so much easier over the years which has meant travel times are less so more people are putting pressure on all these once pristine areas.

And the ugly hoon element. I bet if these guys had to spend the time and effort that we used to they wouldn't be out in the scrub wrecking it for everyone else.

Some other good memories of the early days were printing the magazine. I can remember turning up to places when we were printing using the old Gestetner machine, we'd all be hi on the smell of the metho or whatever it was that we used. Natural progression was to buy our own printing press that certainly had its moments as well when the printing plate would shoot off the roller and everyone would be trying to catch it before it got damaged.

Anyway that's some of my memories.

What a great club and even better members. Keep up the good work.

Regards, Pinky

YESTERDAY

Tom Brachna

Approximately 30 years ago, a group of people with similar interests got together hoping to combine friendship and safety with their hobby.

In the early days, our vehicles were comparatively rough, noisy, dusty and damp. You had to be a real enthusiast to be involved with this past-time. There were Landrovers, Toyotas and Nissans and not much else. We crazy people were there; ready to go out as often as we could to get away from the crowds, work, and pressures of our normal lives.

We mostly frequented areas in Victorian high country. The tracks were rough and our vehicles regularly broke 'bits' on our pilgrimages to our favourite campsites. Now with fellow members of the newly formed Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club, our broken beasts were assisted home to be repaired, ready to participate on the next adventure.

We had little external politics, few restrictions and a lot more area to visit. As different people joined our club and as time went on, more areas became known, so that only finances or commitments kept us from participating in trips. Many of those who came away on these adventures, became hooked, purchased their own 4WD and became members. On these excursions the bug embedded itself into our being, distant areas beckoned. A lifestyle was born.

The travels involved all the activities you enjoy now and more. We found the tracks they forgot to put the bottom into and hills they put in as staircases! We explored new tracks and areas, and all the time we had 4WD club mates with us. At the end of the day, around the campfire, we would discuss the highlights (and the lowlights) of the day. We lubricated our dusty throats, cooked meals and simply had a damn good time. You could often tell who had had the most fun in the morning, by the looks on faces when hearing any loud noise.

While we were waiting for the GPS to be invented, we became lost – geographically embarrassed – and fiscally misplaced, but because of this, we found more new places to visit. Sometimes knowing where you are going takes some of the excitement out of the journey.

When conditions didn't allow travel, a social side of the group developed (mostly to please the ladies of course!). These were restaurant nights, trivial pursuit nights, fancy dress nights, theatre nights and plain 'ol

party nights. Wine trips, cricket matches and footy matches (I can still recall the pain). Of course, we gave birth to the VFWDC Bush Dance. The event evolved from a band in a tent playing bush dance music (during the **worst** storm I have seen in Victoria), to the band in the truck playing music to the ever-growing number of jiggers. Those who attend are never disappointed.

We have succumbed to political pressures and attended rallies, conferences, discussions, meetings, talks, lectures and protests – just to keep our beloved bush open to us and our kind.

There are many people who throughout the years have worked tirelessly on all the requirements the club needed. Some people have left to join other clubs, but many of these return. Some sadly have passed away over the years. One even had his ashes spread by friends and club members in the desert.

All in all, the 28 odd years I have been in the club I have enjoyed immensely. I am proud to be a member and have made many long lasting friendships, which I consider an extension of my families. I hope to be with them, and new friends I will surely be introduced to, for the years to come.

Yours in 4WD'ing

Tom Brachna



Nice headgear Thomas!

Memories

