



DECEMBER 2007

Free Wheeling

Official Newsletter of the Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club

Registration No A0002184F



LAKE COBBLER – NOVEMBER 2007



The Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club Inc is an affiliated club of
the Victoria Association of Four Wheel Drive Clubs Inc (VAFWDC)
www.vfwdvictoria.org.au

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COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT 2007-2008

President	Ashley Martin	0438 600 904	president@vfwdc.com
Vice President	John Partridge	0428 331 211	vicepres@vfwdc.com
Treasurer	Craig Major	0432 876 699	treasurer@vfwdc.com
Secretary	Paul Ryan	0438 121 148	secretary@vfwdc.com

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	Michael Rodger	0412 530 666	training@vfwdc.com
New Member Contact	Paul Ryan	0438 121 148	secretary@vfwdc.com.au
Web Manager	Paul Ryan		

Forward Articles & Photos for the Newsletter to:

editor@vfwdc.com

Please forward all contributions prior to the 20th of each month

CLUB DETAILS

Registered Name:	Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club Inc
Registration No:	A002184F
All Correspondence:	The Secretary Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club Inc PO Box 778 Dandenong Vic 3173
Email:	secretary@vfwdc.com.au
Web Site:	www.vfwdc.com
Meetings:	Held first Tuesday of each month excluding January (no meeting). The November meeting is held on the 2 nd Tuesday of the month due to Melbourne Cup public holiday.
Location:	Dandenong Library Stuart Street Dandenong 3175

The opinions given herein are those of the individual contributors and are not necessarily those of the Editor, the Committee of Management, or the Member body of the VFWDC Inc.

President's Report



Hello and welcome to another year of *Free Wheeling*.

Well it has been another year and they seem to pass by quicker and quicker as I get older, but I still try to fit as much in as possible, if not more. It has been a great year for the Club in many respects, but I am very pleased with the fantastic array of trips. With the restrictions in the High Country due to the fires and floods, we have had to look outside the square to some areas that we have not been to for a long time, if at all. I still marvel at the diversity Victoria has to offer and consider myself lucky to live in this great State. These trips would not be possible except for the effort put in by the trip leaders, so many thanks to them and all the trip participants.

We are looking forward to next year which should be bigger and better. There are already proposed trips to some great destinations and you will see these in this newsletter or in the February edition. We have also decided to promote the Club by having a stand at the Victorian Four Wheel Drive Show (Wandin). We are in the final planning stages, and our intentions are to attract more members to help lift the active membership. We do not wish to attract a huge club membership, but a few more fresh faces will help the Club, and hopefully some of these may take an active role in the form of joining the Committee.

With the flood restoration works being conducted around the Walhalla area and nearly completed, we will be able to revisit this destination that has become a favourite four wheel driving location for the Club over many years. Unfortunately, the recent floods around the Licola area have once again delayed the road and bridge works. The temporary Cheynes Bridge has been destroyed again and is hampering access to Licola. The township can't take a trick this year, firstly with the fires then the two floods. The new permanent bridge has been given the go ahead but won't be completed until around mid next year, and the Tamboritha Road is not expected to be restored until late next year. Let's hope that once all this work is completed the area doesn't see any more natural disasters for quite some time.

I would like to thank each member of the Committee for their continued support and thank them for a job that is not always easy, but they have done a fantastic job over the year. I would especially like to thank Lesley who continues to put up with my passion for the Club and four wheel driving.

My fellow Committee members and I would like to wish everyone a happy festive season. If you are travelling over the holiday period make sure you are patient on the roads, be safe, and we look forward catching up with you all next year for more adventures.

See you on the next trip – or at the next meeting.

Ashley

Ashley Martin
President

NOVEMBER 2007 MEETING

As the November meeting was held at the ARB premises in Kilsyth there will be no official Minutes of Meeting this month.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, 4 December 2007.

VFWDC MERCHANDISE

For Sale

Club Polo Shirts	\$25.00 ea
Club Polar Fleece ½ Zip Jumper	\$36.00 ea
Club Polar Fleece Full Zip Jumper	\$48.00 ea
Club Sleeveless Reversible Vest	\$42.00 ea
Club Caps	\$15.00 ea
Travel Mugs	\$ 5.00 ea
VFWDC Stickers (long)	\$ 6.00 ea
Stubbie Holders	\$ 6.00 ea

We encourage all members to purchase a Club Polo Shirt.

Yahoo Groups

Sign yourself up as a Yahoo user at
<http://groups.yahoo.com>
(There is no charge for this service.)

Then go to

<http://autos.groups.yahoo.com/group/vfwdc>
and click on "Join this group".

To keep non members out of the group, your membership will need to be approved.

Any problems, email

anthony@ctsmonash.com.au

☺☺☺ Funny File ☺☺☺

Went to the cemetery the other day and saw four men carrying a coffin.

Three hours later, I saw the same four men with the same coffin.

Thought to myself, "They've lost the b..... plot!"

Thanks Mark

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Anyone wishing to advertise in the Club Directory,
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WEDDING BELLS

*Congratulations and Best Wishes
to Craig and Marijke
(now Mr & Mrs Major)
on the occasion of their wedding
held at Labassa in Caulfield
on Saturday 27 November 2007*



Four Wheel Drive Radio Show
"Talking Four Wheel Drive"
Saturdays at 10.00m

Forthcoming Trips

Destination	OMEO WHEELERS HUT & SURROUNDS
Trip Leader	John Partridge
Contact No	0428 331 211
Date	26-31 December
Meeting Place:	Omeo Caravan Park
Vehicle Limits	MINIMUM: 2 MAXIMUM: 6
Equipment Required	You will need to be self sufficient with all camping and cooking gear. Bring own water.
Last Available Fuel	Petrol: Omeo Diesel: Omeo
Approx Kms	Unknown. <i>Be prepared Be prepared for long distances without fuel.</i>
Maps Required	TBA
Radio Channel	12

Trip Activity Details:

Most of us will be heading up on the 26th or 27th and staying at Omeo for a day or two. From there it's a couple of hours drive to Wheelers Hut where, conditions dependent, we will stay for a couple of days. Not far from here are some great drives including Mt Pinnibar, Mt Sassafrass and Tom Groggin, where we may stay a night or two.

Additional Information:

This trip is going to be flexible, the duration of where we stay will be dependent on conditions and how many other people are nearby.

Destination	COLLINS HUT NEAR DARGO
Trip Leader	Ashley Martin
Contact No	0438 600 904
Date	25-28 January 2008
Meeting Place:	Officer Weighbridge
Vehicle Limits	MINIMUM: NA MAXIMUM: 10
Equipment Required	Basic Recovery
Last Available Fuel	Petrol: Sale Diesel: Sale
Radio Channel	12

Trip Activity Details:

Due to the fires, the club has not been to the area for some time. In the past we have tended to relax around camp when visiting this area, but we plan to explore it a little more this time. Sunday will be the preferable day but the direction we take will all depend if my left and right is working. It will be interesting to see the terrain a year after the fires and it will no doubt make for an interesting drive. The remaining days will be yours to do what you like. We will have a look at the hut and if any there is any basic cleaning or tidying up required we will put in a few hours work followed by a refreshing swim.



CLUB CALENDER AT A GLANCE

DECEMBER

Saturday 1st	Christmas Party Bimbimbie Wildlife Park	Ashley Martin	0438 600 904
Tuesday 4 th	Club Meeting	Ashley Martin	0438 600 904
Saturday 8 th /Sunday 9 th	Oxfam Christmas Tree Deliveries	Ashley Martin	0438 600 904
Wednesday 26 th to Monday 31 st	High Country Touring Trip Omeo	John Partridge	0438 331 211

JANUARY 2008

Tuesday 22 nd	Committee Meeting	Craig Major	0432 876 699
Friday 25 th to Monday 28 th	Australia Day Weekend Collins Hut	Ashley Martin	0438 600 904

FEBRUARY 2008

Tuesday 5 th	General Meeting	Ashley Martin	0438 600 904
Sunday 17 th	Victorian 4WD Show	John Partridge	0438 331 211
Tuesday 19 th	Committee Meeting		

MARCH 2008

Tuesday 4 th	Club Meeting	Ashley Martin	0438 600 904
Friday 7 th ro Monday 10 th	Labour Day Weekend Destination TBC	Paul Ryan	0438 121 148



MELBOURNE CUP WEEKEND – BUFFALO RIVER **2-6 November 2007**

Trip Leader: Ashley & Lesley
Participants: Derek & Janet
 George
 Steve, Nicole & Mia
 John
 Michael, Verrille, Liberty & Elizabeth
 Anthony, Aline, Riley & Connor
Visitors: Carissa, Shani, Lachlan & Nicholas
 Mr D Coy

Friday/Saturday/Sunday

The weather was looking wet for the weekend my optimism suggested it wasn't going to be too bad so full steam ahead.

Derek had phoned Wednesday morning to say they were at the meeting place, once again I had to remind him they were 2 days early. At least they would be early to the camp site to secure the area we were hoping for.

Friday came around and Lesley and I left Port Melbourne around 2.45 and met Steve and family just past Craigieburn. From there it was an easy drive up with a few stops for the baby (and us), arriving at camp to find George and the crew all set up relaxing around the fire. As daylight was disappearing, Lesley was under instructions (if you believe that) to halt the chitchat and make sure camp was organised before dark. Thankfully the area we wanted was secured by Derek, although there was a tent close by owned by a Mr D Coy whom we never met but his tent kept moving as the troops arrived. Before long we were set up and enjoying dinner. Eventually John, Michael and family, Anthony and family, and Carissa and family arrived. The usual chat and relaxing around the fire filled the rest of the evening and some of the next morning.

Saturday arrived and while there had been some rain during the night the morning was reasonably clear and dry. The latecomers spent the morning setting up the remainder of their camps and some of us erected a tarp preparing for the rain. We had nothing planned for the day other than to collect some timber for the night's activities, so the day was enjoyed by all relaxing and catching up. While we had occasional showers during the day the night was clear and enabled us to sit around the fire. Eventually the stressful day caught up to us all and we made our way to bed.

Ashley

Sunday

The night was wet and the rain just kept coming (so I was told as I didn't hear it). In the morning Verrille sent Michael out of the tent, like Noah releasing the dove, to see if there was dry land about. Unfortunately Michael did not return with an olive branch, but the rain had eased. Eventually we all emerged from our tents to make the most of the day.

A drive was the plan for the day. The idea was to go to Cobbler Lake, which was a great idea for us as last time we were in the area we tried to go there but it was such foggy and terrible weather that we didn't get to see it, we only saw the edge as we drove past. We left camp at about 10.30am and it rained and rained which made progress pretty slow going. In some places visibility went down to a few metres, with the fog and the track so slippery from the rain that it made some pretty easy hill climbs more challenging. The views were magnificent, if only we could have enjoyed them, but unfortunately the fog was following us.



We arrived at Lake Cobbler at approx 1.30pm for a spot of lunch and whatever else we could get in before the fog rolled in again and the rain started.





Aline and Anthony attempt to shelter from the rain and "enjoy" their lunch.

The fog cleared enough for us to see the lake in all its glory for about 10 minutes.



There were plenty of people at the lake, day trippers, campers and plenty of walkers. I felt sorry for the walkers on our way out as of course it started raining again. The dedication to walk in the bush in that weather... no thanks, give me a 4X4 any day. The trip back was very interesting. We had a few muscle tightening moments coming down the hills where there was no grip and all you could do was get in the rut and slide to the next bit.



At one interesting stage Verrille got on the radio after a short nap only to open her eyes at a very *interesting* bit. You could hear the delight in her voice. The radio banter continued the whole way down, although I did notice the usual suspects did not have the radios... I wonder was that because the passengers wanted the drivers to have both hands on the wheel and concentrate. Thinking back on it now, it made no difference if they were steering or not, the car was going where gravity took it.

Once at the bottom we all stopped and had a good laugh at our nerves. Thanked each other for the advice and the help on which line to attempt to take and basically relaxed all those tense muscles that slowly clench without realising it.

We got back to camp at 4.30pm (which I heard was a couple of hours after the expected time) which meant that roast night was off. Did I mention that it was raining.

Finally, on evening, it cleared up and we got the fire going and everyone was around recalling wonderful moments from the day and of course previous trips. The stars came out and we all had hope for the next day...

Aline

Monday

We woke to blue skies and sunshine, although the easterly wind was keen. At last, the long grass was dry and we could walk through it without getting wet up to our knees.

After breakfast, we sat in the middle of the track through the camp enjoying the warm sunshine and watching as Carissa and Anthony and Aline packed up their trailers. Aline told us that she had reluctantly decided to go into work that afternoon as she was concerned that the person she had left some tasks to do might not complete them properly.

After they had left, we dragged ourselves away from our seats and everyone except George, Janet and I drove into Myrtleford where they later reported finding some unexpected shopping treats.

Janet and I relaxed while George practised his whip-cracking skills.



Some time during the slow afternoon, as its job was done, we packed up Mr. Decoy's tent before George lit a fire to make sure there would be enough coals for the camp ovens that evening. George had remarked to some visitors who stopped by to chat to us on Friday that we had a pyromaniac or two in

the group. As I watched him stacking the fire higher and higher, I could see that he was a bit of a pyro himself.

When the others returned, they were full of the fabulous shops they had discovered in Myrtleford.

From the descriptions, it sounded as if they had ventured further than Myrtleford, perhaps even as far as Morocco. That, or some traders must have come in over the mountains with the wondrous goods. While the ladies sat and discussed their purchases, the men set about cutting and chopping enough wood to satisfy even the most demanding of pyromaniacs – in our case, Ashley, John and the recently appointed George. The “Three Pyros” made a great team with Ashley cutting, John chopping and George rescuing the witchetty grubs revealed by the axe. With George stacking the fire to even greater heights, we spent Happy Hour dodging the wind-blown sparks, listening to the roasts crackling and popping in the camp ovens and being entertained by Elizabeth as she asked questions from a trivia quiz book. Despite the wind, we set up our tables in a row and enjoyed a communal dinner sharing various bits and pieces with each other. Some good people got together to do the washing up before we all settled in around the fire for the evening. It was a quiet evening enlivened for me by the increasing competition between Ashley and George for the award of Trip Pyromaniac. John and I were the last to bed at about 11.30.

Tuesday

Another sunny day under blue skies. By 8.00am most people began to emerge, or at least so it appeared to me because that’s when I emerged. George had already packed up and left, leaving behind a disappointingly large pile of unburnt wood despite the prodigious efforts of the night before. Everyone was leaving today so the next couple of hours were spent packing up. A last check on the river revealed that the water level had dropped by three or four inches from the previous day. In the sunshine, the days and nights of rain were a fading, unpleasant memory. We were all ready to leave by 10.30. John headed off first to make a direct run for home. Ashley and Lesley and Michael and Verylle followed him planning to stop for lunch, while Janet and I brought up the rear with our mobile road block (aka caravan). Despite the wet weather earlier in the weekend, everyone had a great weekend, enjoying the good company. Our thanks to Ashley and Lesley for organising a great trip.

Derek Hymas

PS: When we passed through Myrtleford on our way out, it seemed to us to be the same Australian town that it had been on our way in. Clearly, the traders with their marvellous merchandise must have moved on...

AVOCA

Friday 16-Saturday 17 November 2007

Participants: Ashley GU Coil Cab
John GQ Patrol
Paul 80 Series

We had originally planned to go on Bruce’s High Country trip this weekend, but due to a series of unforeseen problems and demands from wives that trip had to be postponed. I was therefore

expecting to be mowing and painting all weekend when Ashley rang and said that he and John were going up to Avoca on Friday night and coming back on Saturday. A quick phone call later and I was joining them.

Anyway, John and I left around rush hour and crawled out to Deer Park before we finally got motoring and headed up the highway. Ashley had left earlier in the day and was tasked with finding firewood and making sure the pub had a couple of beers ready. Not that we need have worried because it became apparent that Steve at the Elmhurst Pub must have been listening to our chat on the radio, so that by the time we arrived he was already out the front to welcome us and bag Nissans.

Dinner was pretty standard fare because one of the locals had taken out the town’s power supply earlier in the day, so we were limited to pies and pasties. Luckily the beer was still cold. Anyway we headed to the Glenpatrick Oval which is our regular campground and settled in for the night with a few light refreshments and the soothing purr of our neighbour’s generator to lull us to sleep. Next morning was a leisurely start before airing down and heading into the state forest in search of some tracks. We started by looking for an interesting little track that heads down from the summit of Mt Avoca but after a few false starts found that it had been closed, by the looks of it, permanently.

So from there we drove down Fraser Track, up Old Bluff (which didn’t pose any major problems, although the swirl marks on my drive shaft might indicate otherwise) before heading over to Donkey Hill Track and Turpin Track. Following lunch down by the Old Slate Quarry, we drove up Slate Quarry track which is certainly a lot more interesting than the last time we drove it. In particular there is a nasty little section which has a double step with opposing high points where it is very easy to get crossed up. Anyone with lockers should be able to drive it easy, but for those on open diffs it could be a bit of a challenge. Anyway once we had finished Slate Quarry we decided to err on the better side of caution, air up and go home. Watching me try to pack away the new compressor gave Ashley and John their last bit of amusement for the day before it was off to Avoca for icecreams.

Thanks to John and Ashley for an enjoyable night / day out.

Paul



*Wishing everyone a
very Merry Christmas and
a safe and Happy New Year*



**PARKS VICTORIA MEDIA RELEASE
FROM THE MINISTER FOR ROADS AND PORTS**

DATE: Friday, November 16, 2007

NEW BRIDGE NEAR LICOLA A STEP CLOSER

Minister for Roads and Ports Tim Pallas today announced a \$2.5 million contract for the construction of a new permanent bridge to replace Cheynes Bridge which was washed away in the June floods.

Mr Pallas said the new, permanent, concrete bridge being built over the Macalister River would ensure Licola is better flood-protected in the future.

"Licola residents and others who use this vital link will be able to enjoy the new bridge by the middle of next year," Mr Pallas said.

"The new bridge will be built higher than the previous bridge to avoid a repeat of the damage caused during the June floods.

"It will be over 130 metres long and made of reinforced concrete. It will restore access to Licola for the future and be a vital piece of infrastructure for locals and tourists who visit this lovely part of Victoria.

"People will still be able to travel from Heyfield through to Licola while the new bridge is erected."

Mr Pallas said that with a total approximate cost of \$5 million, the bridge is a major component of the Government's \$70 million flood recovery package announced in the wake of the floods.

"Thirty million dollars of the flood recovery package is being used to repair roads and bridges throughout the Gippsland region," Mr Pallas said. "While the new Cheynes bridge is being built, a temporary bridge has been erected in its place.

"Part of the structure of the temporary bridge was washed away by flood waters earlier this month and has already been repaired by VicRoads."

Mr Pallas said that the new flood-proof bridge is one of many initiatives to help Gippsland's recovery post the June floods.

"Other initiatives included new flood warning systems for the Macalister, Avon and Thomson rivers, low interest loans for flood-affected farmers and businesses, and funding for regional tourism promotion," he said.