



# Free Wheeling

Official Newsletter of the Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club

Registration No A0002184F

FEBRUARY 2004



Christmas/New Year - Dargo



Photographs courtesy of John Partridge & Anthony Van Buiten



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](http://www.vafwdc.org.au)



## COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT 2003/2004

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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
Assistant Secretary	Stephen Boyle	9754 4412

## GENERAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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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
	Peter Pink	9752 9771
Newsletter Editor	Lesley Peters	9540 0007
	lespet03@hotmail.com	

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*Registered Name:* Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club Inc

*Registration No:* A002184F

*All correspondence:* The Secretary  
VFWDC Inc  
PO Box 778  
Dandenong Vic 3175

*Web Site:* [www.vfwdc.com](http://www.vfwdc.com)

*Meetings:* Held first Tuesday of each month  
excluding January (no meeting). The  
November meeting is held on the 2<sup>nd</sup>  
Tuesday due to Melbourne Cup.  
At Dandenong Library  
Stuart Street, Dandenong 3175

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*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.*

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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome back everybody. Hope you all had a great Christmas and I wish you all a safe and happy New Year.

We had a great time up at the hut over the New Year period. We now have some new steps leading up to the toilet rather than scrambling up the dusty track. We also went on some great drives including Billy Goat Bluff to the Pinnacles, the Grant Historical Area where we looked at the Union mine and the Grant Cemetery. Some of us also went up to Blue Rag Range, and it was amazing to see the difference in re-growth from the fires since we were there on the Cup Weekend.

We sent out an e-mail requesting numbers for the Proficiency Training weekend. Hopefully all that want to go have responded, so that we can make preparations.

We also have the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Bush Dance on the 28<sup>th</sup> of February and we need firm numbers and payments by the February General Meeting. Don't leave it to the last minute to let us know as it makes it too difficult to organise the catering.

As this year is our 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, we will be running a series of events to mark this special occasion. We are very interested in getting some of our long-standing members to come to our General Meetings throughout the year and perhaps recount some stories of the earlier days of the Club, and of trips taken to areas not available to us anymore. Please get in contact with me, as it would be great if we could have something for each of the General Meetings.

Keep an eye on the calendar for forthcoming trips, and if there is an area or place you particularly want to visit, let us know and we'll try to organise it.

We are gradually building up numbers of members who have joined our Yahoo group. If you haven't yet signed up, please do so as it is a great way for everybody to keep in touch and to notify you of changes to trips etc.

Hope to see you all at the meeting.

**John**

(John Partridge)

# MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING 2 DECEMBER 2003

Meeting held at Dandenong Library and opened at 8.15pm by John Partridge.

38 members present.

## APOLOGIES:

Janet and Derek Hymas, Jill and Steve Boyle, Yvonne Hempston, Ivan Santurini, Karyl McGlinn, Debra Potts, Lisa Petrou, Patrick Casey, Jessie Smith, Neil and Norma Stephenson, Rosalie Hughes.

**VISITORS:** Welcome to Les and Liz Beer.

John also welcomed Rudi Paoletti from Adventure Maps. Rudi once again brought along a vast array of his publications, including new maps of Wombat State Forest and the Otways, together with a new and very detailed camping book called *Camp Australiawide*, a copy of which he donated for the Club Raffle. A special offer of 20-25% off RRP on all books.

## MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:

Minutes of November meeting as per Newsletter.  
Accepted: Peter Petrou; Seconded: David Hughes.

## MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES:

Nil.

## CORRESPONDENCE IN:

- Letter from VAFWDC requesting confirmation of details of registered club driver training instructors.
- Letter from Rainer Kallenberger seeking permission to advertise his vehicle – Troopy – for sale in our newsletter.
- Letter from GM Corporate (Mensland) offering discounts to club members at their Malvern store 24/11-7/12.
- Email from Anthony, Aline and Riley Van Buiten announcing the birth of their new son, Connor.
- Various Club magazines.

## CORRESPONDENCE OUT:

- Email response to VAFWDC re club instructors.
- Email to Tread Lightly! re promotional material for the Club.
- Flowers and card sent to the Van Buiten family.
- Newsletter.
- Contact made with Parks Victoria for promo material.

## TREASURER'S REPORT:

Petty Cash:	\$ 120.10
Cheque Account:	\$3,812.86
Term Deposit:	\$6,797.47

Accepted: Peter Petrou; Seconded: Dawn Brown.

## TRIP CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT:

### ➤ *Forthcoming Trips:*

*Saturday 13 December:* Christmas Tree Deliveries.  
Contact: Ashley Martin.

*Sunday 14 December:* Day Trip to Warburton.

Contact: Scott Wiseman.

*26 December-New Year:* Collins Hut. A few minor jobs to be done, ie grass slashing and steps to toilet. And of course, the New Year's Eve party.

Contact: John Partridge.

*Australia Day Weekend:* Mt Hotham area. Hunt for Dibbins Hut which will entail some uphill walking. Campsite unknown at this stage.

Contact: Michael Rodger.

*28 February 04:* Bush Dance. Sub-committee to be set up to assist Rosalie with organising this function. Volunteers include Annie Simpson, Dawn Brown, Gary Johnston, Karyl and Chris McGlinn.

### ➤ **Proposed Trips:**

*Proficiency Training Weekend* mid February 2004. JP stated that he would like to see every driving member attend a Club Proficiency Training trip.

*30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Family Weekend* March 2004. Suggested venue Stanleys Homestead.

### ➤ **Trip Reports:**

*Macallister River:* Carl Surtees reported on this trip which included a few scary moments for himself and his daughter!  
*King River* (Mayford alternative): George Pledger reported that although there was plenty of rain, a good and relaxing time was had by all (3) members who attended this trip.

## GENERAL BUSINESS:

- Thanks were passed on to Dean Pettigrew for his excellent contribution to the newsletter. Dean has been responsible for printing of the full colour front cover.
- Thanks also to Michael Rodger for his contribution and also printing the revised/updated version of the Club's Member Brochure, copies of which will be provided to the Association for their various show stands.
- Newsletter:
  - JP asked whether members would like/prefer to receive the newsletter by email, which would be a quicker and more cost effective way of distribution. Approximately one-third of attending members agreed. Members were asked to provide Lesley with their email details for this purpose.
  - JP also raised the issue of trip reporting. Nominated reporters are to submit reports to the editor within a timeframe of two weeks from the date of the trip.
  - LP asked members to be aware that it is not the sole responsibility of the editor to provide material for the newsletter. Members were requested to seek out articles/information and submit for publication.
- JP said he would like to run a "GPS" weekend trip next year solely for the purpose of becoming au fait with the GPS equipment. A good show of hands was a sign that this trip will go ahead. No dates as yet. Rudi Paoletti is obtaining relevant books on this subject.
- Ian Warburton thanked everyone involved in the organisation of the Christmas Party and said it was a good day, particularly for those families and children invited from outside the Club.
- John Partridge thanked everyone for their contribution to a good year gone by and wished all the members a Happy and safe Christmas and New Year.

TEA DUTIES: Thanks Tom and Carl.

**RAFFLE:**

1st Prize: Ian Webber – Book donated by Rudi Paoletti.

2nd Prize: Les Beer (visitor) – Set of coffee mugs.

**NEXT MEETING:**

Tuesday, 3 February 2004 at Dandenong Library Meeting Room.

Welcome to our first edition of

## "THE CORNER"

Our recipe of the week is **Char Grilled Asparagus..**

We need:

24 asparagus spears

1 tbsp of extra virgin olive oil

2 tbsp of balsamic vinegar

and some parmesan cheese shavings

 first we wash the asparagus spears, trimming the woody ends;

 put the asparagus in a bowl, add the olive oil and toss well;

 heat a griddle or char grill and cook the asparagus for about 10 minutes, or until "al dente";

 drizzle with the balsamic, sprinkle over the parmesan and serve.



Our herb of the month is **Aloe..**

Some uses for Aloe are burns, scalds, scrapes, sunburn, hinders infection, and general skin care. Just break off a piece of the leaf and rub the gel from the leaf on the sore, then wrap the piece of aloe in glad wrap..it will store in the fridge for some time.

When you want to use it again, just slice off the very end where it was previously cut and apply it... then re-wrap it and put back in the fridge.

The plant itself is so easy to grow... just stick it in and watch it grow. It is happier outside, but will grow indoors with lots of sunlight... and not too much T.L.C.



see you soon

**Annie**

**The Corner:** A column created as an alternative to hearing about wheel lifts, difflocks, who has the biggest tyres, etc etc. If anyone has an interesting snippet they would like included, please email to: [anniesinternet1@primus.com.au](mailto:anniesinternet1@primus.com.au)

## CONGRATULATIONS

to  
Aline and Anthony  
on the arrival of their second son  
*Connor Raffi Van Buiten*



Born 28 November 2003  
3.73kg

### *Message from our Web Manager...*

## YAHOO GROUPS

We have established a new service which is limited only to club members of a moderated email subscription list. The list is for members to contact each other to organise last minute trips, upload photos, provide interesting links you have found and want to share, a calendar of events, and whatever else we can find to use it for.

It is fairly unobtrusive, with members opting for how they want to access the messages. You can decide that you only want to view the messages on the web if you wish. This group can be used anywhere you have web access.

You will need to 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'.

If you have any difficulty, email me at [anthony@ctsmonash.com.au](mailto:anthony@ctsmonash.com.au) and I will send you an email inviting you to join.

Your membership needs to be approved, so if your email is cryptic please provide some details to verify who you are. This is to keep non-members out of the group.

*Anthony Van Buiten*  
VFWDG Web Manager

## CLUB CALENDAR AT A GLANCE

### JANUARY

Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> to Monday 26<sup>th</sup> Australia Day W/end Mt Hotham Area Michael Rodger

Wed 28<sup>th</sup> Committee Meeting Steve Boyle

### FEBRUARY

Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> Club Meeting John Partridge

Sat/Sun 7-8<sup>th</sup> Proficiency Training Ashley Martin

Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> Day Trip Destination TBC Scott Wiseman

Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> VFWD (Wandin) Show

Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> Dandy Ranges Swap Meet

Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> Committee Meeting Anthony VB

Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> Bush Dance Rosalie Hughes

### MARCH

Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> Club Meeting John Partridge

Friday 6<sup>th</sup> to Monday 8<sup>th</sup> Labour Day W/end Wine Trip Ashley Martin

Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> to Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Family weekend John Partridge

Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> A Grade Trip Ashley Martin

Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> Committee Meeting Rosalie Hughes

### APRIL

Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> Club Meeting John Partridge

Friday 9<sup>th</sup> to Monday 12<sup>th</sup> Easter Murray River Michael Rodger

Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> Committee Meeting Barry Leitch

## 4WD INSURANCE

The ANFWDC Insurance Program is available to all members of the VFWDC and other affiliated four wheel drive clubs.

To obtain an insurance quote, the agents – TCIS – require you to fax details regarding your vehicle one month prior to seeking insurance.

See the Club Insurance Officer, Gerrard Clarke, for relevant form and further information.



## VFWDC ADVERTISING DIRECTORY

### BUSH BQ

*Manufacturer of the Barbeque of the Outback*

**Don & Thelma Montague**

Tel: 9808 1200 Mob: 0414 355 488

Email: info@theldon.com.au

www.theldon.com.au

### B&Y CARPENTRY

*Home & Office Maintenance*

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Email: fralecpete@aol.com

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*4x4 Camper Trailers, Accessories & Camping Equipment*

**David Hughes**

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### RAYDAW PAINTING SERVICES

*Quality Workmanship at the Right Price*

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**Ian Warburton**

Tel: 9754 2341 Mob: 0409 797 675

Anyone wishing to advertise in the Club directory, contact the editor at [lespet03@hotmail.com](mailto:lespet03@hotmail.com)

## FORTHCOMING TRIP INFORMATION

### *AUSTRALIA DAY WEEKEND 2004*

**Date:** Saturday 24 January-Monday 26 January 2004

**Trip Leader:** Michael Rodger – 0412 530 666

**Destination:** Mt Hotham area

**Meeting Time/Place:** 8.00am Ford Factory, Campbellfield

**Equipment:** Bush camping, basic recovery.

**Radio Channel:** Channel 12

**Trip Activities:**

**Saturday:** Travel to Mt Hotham and set up camp.

**Sunday:** Search for Dibbens Hut – situated between Mt Feathertop and Mt Hotham. Check out the area and then head back to camp.

Should be an interesting long weekend with a bit of driving and walking combined.

### *BUSH DANCE 2004*

**Date:** Saturday, 28 February 2004

**Trip Leader:** Rosalie Hughes – 9706 2966

**Destination:** Glenburn

**Time:** From 5.30pm onwards/Dinner at 7.30pm.

**Equipment:** Chairs, crockery, cutlery, and of course refreshments! Camping gear if you plan to stay overnight.

**Radio Channel:** Channel 12

**Trip Activities:** Details as per flyer sent with November newsletter. This night is all about having a good time with good friends. Come along and join in the fun, and enjoy the music and dancing.

### *30<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY FAMILY ACTIVITIES WEEKEND*

**Date:** Saturday 21<sup>st</sup>-Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2004

**Trip Leader:** John Partridge - 0428 331211

**Destination:** TBC but most likely Stanleys Homestead

**Time:** From 10.30am Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> onwards

**Equipment:** Usual weekend camping gear.

**Radio Channel:** Ch. 12

**Trip Activities:** This weekend has been planned as the first of the Club's ongoing 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations. We are planning to run a series of activities for all ages. Camping and cooking facilities available. More details should be available at the February General Meeting.

***The brain is a marvellous work of creation!  
Just read the following sentence straight through  
without really thinking about it:***

According to an elgnsih unviesity study the order of letters in a world dosen't mttær, the only thing that's iopmrantt is that the frsrit and Isat ltteer of every word is in the crcreot ptoision. The rset can be jmbueld and one is still able to raed the txet wiohtut delftfuiiy.

*[from Leigh Pettigrew]*

## CLUB LIBRARY



For those of you who are new to the Club, or have never been made aware of the purpose of the galvanised iron display cabinet installed on the table at the meetings, it is the Club's lending library.

The reason I lug this back and forth to each meeting is to give members the opportunity to take home videos and books to read at their leisure. We all know how expensive a hobby can get, and having a wide range of literature on your favourite pastime made available on loan is most cost effective.

The method of recording items taken is by writing in the exercise book kept in the cabinet, and equally important is recording their return. We welcome members availing themselves of the service, but request that they return items in a timely manner.

Some of the books and videos were purchased by the Club, while others have been generously donated by members. Anyone having similar material at home that they think would be of interest to fellow members can donate items by handing them to me at the meetings.

**Maps:** The club also has some maps available to people wishing to lead trips, or wishing to reconnoitre for a club trip. The areas covered are mainly from Walhalla north through Woods Point. Again, any maps donated would be gratefully received. I personally have maps of other areas that I would be prepared to lend anyone putting a trip together.

**Club Equipment:** We also have a couple of UHF hand-held radios that are lent to newer members or potential members for trips. Trip leaders can get them and/or the Club's GPS from me. Check first, as they are either going to be repaired or replaced.

**Barry the Book Bug**

## TRIP REPORTS

### **MACALLISTER RIVER/CALEDONIA RIVER** **14-16 November 2003**

*Trip Leader:* John Partridge            GU Patrol  
*Participants:* Barry Leitch            GU Patrol  
                  Carl & Bethany Surtees    Toyota Surf  
                  Steve, Jill & Kate Boyle    80 Series LC  
                  & Dineke  
                  Paul & Robert Ryan        Hilux

*[Don't expect much accuracy on this one people because the notes I am working from look like chicken scratches and I am having trouble remembering when we did what.]*

#### **Friday 14 November**

After meeting up with Paul, Robert, Carl and Bethany at Pakenham we headed off towards Traralgon. Before we reached Traralgon, Carl received a call from John to say that Barry was behind us so we decided to wait at Traralgon for him to catch up. He didn't show up, how could we know that he would stop in at a pub for a counter tea? Then again, we probably should have guessed! Anyway we continued on to a spot by the Macallister River to spend the night. Barry and John arrived not long after us. The main entertainment for the night was sitting around an imaginary campfire (arrived a bit late to collect wood) watching the kids throw pistachio shells at each other. The biggest kid was Carl.

Saturday morning we packed up to head towards Licola. Before we left, John found a huge pile of firewood already cut. Would have been great to find that a bit earlier. Just past Licola we turned down a track which turned out to have quite a few corrugations and potholes. (Whose idea was that?) At one spot there was a great river crossing but we took the bridge instead. I still think it would have been worth a go. Why? Because it was there. A bit further on we headed down a road that seemed to be marked on the map as OK for public use but we came across a sign stating private property. I think it was called Bull Plain Road. They got the bull part right! Anyway, we turned around and headed towards Butcher Country track? We made a couple of stops because the doors on Barry's camper kept lifting up – it just took a bit of rope for a quick fix. A bit further along at one of the river crossings Carl saw his reversing light go floating down the river. Will have to keep an eye out for it the next time we go past Lake Glenmaggie.

*Handy Hint* – when your two rear seat passengers say "Dad I can smell smoke, the car is on fire" don't say "It's just dust". The bloody car was close to being on fire. A lead had shorted out causing it to burn off

the plastic insulation and melt a few other things in the process. I pulled over in a hurry but was unable to call for assistance because we lost the power to the radio. As everyone else drove off into the distance I was busy disconnecting batteries and trying to ascertain what had gone wrong. The high lift jack had been resting on a wire and had rubbed through. I had forgotten to put a fuse at the battery end of the cable hence the reason for it just heating up rather than blowing a fuse. Once we got going again it didn't take too long to catch up with everyone else. Around 14:30 we camped at a nice spot not too far from the Caledonia River, which was pretty shallow so we spent a bit of time building a rock pool which was a great way to cool off.

We left camp around 10:00 and wandered along a nice track (sorry don't know the names of any of these tracks) towards another track which had a little bit more of a challenge to it. It was around about here that Carl started wishing for the tooth fairy, the crown wheel tooth fairy! He developed a very disconcerting noise in his front diff which meant the remainder of the trip would be done in rear wheel drive. The group of us traveled through some pretty scenery that is definitely worth another look and eventually ended up at Licola for lunch. All bitumen from here on and the end of another great weekend.

*Steve & Jill*

### **KING RIVER – TOP CROSSING HUT** **21-23 November 2003**

*Trip Leader:* Ashley Martin            100 Series LC  
*Participants:* George Pledger            Musso  
                  James Holden                    Jeep

As the track leading into Mayford was still closed, we were forced to change our plans and decided to head to Top Crossing Hut on the King River. This is an area I was yet to visit and usually there are fish to be caught on the King near Pineapple Flat so how could we go wrong.

George and I met Friday morning and arrived at the Hut at approx 1.00pm to the quiet sounds of cicadas. After a quick clean up around camp, swags were rolled out and the rest of the day was spent relaxing. The skies started turning grey so in George's wisdom it was decided to erect the tarp to prevent the rain. This theory did not quite work, for early in the morning the sound of rain on the swag made me head for cover under the tarp.

We woke up to rain the next morning and heard the river running; the wet at least keeps the cicadas away. George asked the heavens for more rain - it did until he thought he should stop before we got washed away. James arrived late in the morning and we sat around and discussed the one that wouldn't get away. By mid afternoon the rain had stopped so

the waders were on for the big fishing expedition. An hour and a half later we were back at camp with nothing – other than wet clothes. The weather improved enough for us to collect firewood, dinner was had and into bed.

Sunday, and we awoke to another wet morning. We packed up and headed for home, lunching at Mansfield. Although it was a wet weekend it was good to sit, relax and talk about the one that didn't even come close to getting away. *Ashley*

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## **CHRISTMAS-NEW YEAR – COLLINS HUT, DARGO & SURROUNDS**

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### **Roll Call**

Terry and Annie  
Ashley and Lesley  
Carl and Bethany  
Barry  
John and Stephanie  
Michael, Verylle, Liberty and Elizabeth  
Anthony, Aline, Riley and Connor  
Leigh and Anne  
Steve and Tania  
Graham and Sue  
Geoff and Rychelle  
Craig and Paul  
Steve and Jill  
Terry's friends, Frank and Louise  
Rudi, Louise and Cassidy

### **Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> December**

We met at Pakenham McDonalds and left on time for a change. In our group were Ashley and Lesley, Barry Leich, and myself with Bethany. After a text book trip down to the Wonnangatta caravan park, we arrived there to find Craig camped at the park because some deer hunters had left a deer carcass at the hut and there was a bit of a smell with guts at the doorway. I was sent as the sacrificial lamb to check out the smell, but as Craig had already buried it, the smell was gone.

We set up camp near Terry and Annie and some of their friends and were all done by 2:30pm. There must have been a cicada convention on at the camp site because the noise was horrific, even the sound of the club whipper snipper (aka mine) couldn't compete.

After a shower (compliments of the cicadas!), Bethany, myself and Ashley went in the river for a cool down and a bit of a wash. The river was very high and running quite quickly compared with the same time last year.

### **Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> December**

We went to the hut today to start on the steps up the hill to the toilet. After finding some suitable logs to use for the steps, Barry, Ashley, Terry and myself

spent a couple of very hot hours lugging logs up the hill and chopping out steps about ¾ of the way up to the toilet. It was very hard work on a very hot day...

During the day (back at camp) we had a visit from a very unwelcome guest – a red bellied black snake made a very unfortunate mistake by entering our camp.

Some time during the afternoon, the Partridge family – John and Stephanie, the Rodgers and the Van Buitens arrived – the camp was growing.

The cicadas were still singing Christmas carols but they stopped at about 7:30pm. After a couple of ales I made my way to my swag, with Bethany in tow to try out her new swag, compliments of Santa, and of course it's better than mine. *Carl*

### **Monday 29<sup>th</sup> December**

After a relaxing breaky we took off, heading towards Blue Rag Range. Just past the Glenlea homestead we came to our first river crossing. It wasn't as deep as it was on the Cup Weekend but it still came up to the bonnet. After all precautions were taken; low range selected, blinds fitted, fingers crossed, mouth open/eyes closed we all made it across safely. Connor decided that this looked like a great place for morning tea.

Before too long we were on our way again with a few more crossings to negotiate before the long climb up Basalt Knob Track. Although it's a very steep track it is quite easy as it's well graded; the hardest part is keeping your eyes on the track when there's such amazing views of the Great Dividing Range. Our lunch spot was at the old train carriage.

The road from here to the turnoff to Blue Rag Range passes through areas burnt during the bush fires last year. Although it hasn't been long since we were up here last, there has been quite a dramatic change. There's been a lot more re-growth on the trees, grass is everywhere and the wildflowers were out in abundance. The track up to the trig point upon the summit of Blue Rag Range had deteriorated somewhat from the traffic that had been through here over the last four weeks or so. One thing that hasn't changed is the magnificent 180-degree view from the Barry Mountains to Mount Hotham and across to the Wonnangatta Valley.

On the way back to the Dargo High Plains Road we came across a Mazda Tribute that had gone a bit further than it should have. They had just turned around on the track and managed to get the rear wheel a couple of feet in the air. The things you see. The rest of the trip down the High Plains Road went without incident. After a short stop for ice creams, we went back to the hut for a swim. *John*

### **Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> December**

The planned day was to take a drive to visit the Dog's Grave and whatever we could find along the

way, but all good plans don't always work out especially if I am leading the trip.

We headed out into Dargo about 10ish and made our way along the Lower Dargo Road. Crossing the Dargo River and along Jones Road, I thought we would go via Gidley Track and onto Camms Top Place, up Murdering Spur and on to the Dog's Grave. All was going well I thought until I became geographically embarrassed. Maybe Lesley needs a few map reading lessons or I need to return to school and learn my left from my right – Johnno can vouch for that. Eventually we came out along the Dargo River in the opposite direction to which I had intended. Due to Lesley getting us lost (not true!) and the weather becoming hotter, we decided it was best not to go to the Dog's Grave but to have lunch by the river. We returned via Dargo for an icecream and then back to camp for a much needed swim.

What was meant to be an enjoyable drive to see something different turned out to be just a drive in a comfortable airconditioned car on a hot day. Maybe next time.

**Ashley**

PS. Annie you don't have to say a word – I know!!!

Carl headed off home today for a New Year's Eve party in town, leaving Bethany in our care (her choice) for the next three days – didn't know what she was letting herself into!

Graeme and Sue had arrived during the day, as had Rudi, Louise and Cassidy – the group continued to grow.

### **Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> December – New Year's Eve**

The plan was to go for a drive and be back by 2.30pm to build up the fire for the roast dinners. Sometimes things just don't go to plan. This was one of those times.

We were on the move before 10.00am and headed across Kingwil Bridge and over to Billy Goat Bluff and then up and up we went. What a fantastic drive this is. Tricky, very rocky and a few holes and ledges to negotiate and rewarded for our efforts with some spectacular views. Everyone did very well with only Geoff needing help in one section when he was caught with his diff stuck on top of a rock. Once up the top we headed across to the East Pinnacles to take in some more of the breathtaking scenery. Time for lunch and for Geoff to do a bit of fly-fishing; the fact that there was no water seemed lost on Geoff. Never a dull moment when you have Geoff and his many alter egos on a trip.

Off again. This time we thought we would go the back way to camp rather than going down Bill Goat. After having a quick look at the condition of Moroka Road (we missed the turnoff), we started down a track that passes through Dairy Farm Flat with a very interesting creek crossing.

The creek was low but the exit wasn't, about a 40-degree ramp going up about a meter with vertical sides just as wide as a vehicle. Never one not to have a go, the best I could do was to get the front wheels up. First the water built up at the front, second the bull bar hits the slope on approach and then the tow bar digs in as you go up.

*Some days are just better than others! [pic avb]*

It was Craig's turn next. Having reached the same



spot it was time to winch over the top. He then winched me over the top – and then it was Geoff's turn. Deep water and no snorkel (or funnel as some call it) is not a good mix.



*Ouch! Geoff checks for damage. [pic jp]*

Ashley snatched him back, then it was time to pull out the spark plugs. We had a bit of practice doing this on the Cup weekend. Before long we had his car going and it was decided that Craig and I would continue on and the rest would head back along the next track that joins up a bit further on.

As I was saying, sometimes things don't go to plan. The rest of the group had little trouble but it was a different story for Craig and myself. The track we

were on was interesting as it wound through the trees which took some careful negotiation to get around and there were a few more bog holes to get through. Some time later, a mud flap missing and damage to the rear bar and tail light on the Patrol, we were through. Ashley's group had moved on as we were now about an hour behind them. After a short break for drinks and nibbles (we knew we were going to miss "happy hour"), we found Scrubby Track which heads down to the hut; not much longer now! Yeah right!

First Craig was hearing crunching noises from the front end of his truck so he put it into 2WD. No worries. The first river crossing wasn't too much drama as we were heading down stream, but the second crossing had a large tree across it. It was possible to drive around the tree but it would have been too deep (over my hips) and it was flowing too fast. We were less than a kilometre from the camp but we had to turn around and find another way. Craig had a bit more trouble with the river crossing the second time around and had to get Terry to hop out and lock the front hubs in half way across the river. Once we were back up to the top we headed across on Junction Spur track to 65 Fire track which Ashley's group took earlier and leads onto the main road to Dargo. Not much longer now! How does it go? Yeah right!!!

The 65 Fire Track is a lovely track which crosses the Castleburn creek numerous times, similar to the Haunted Stream Track near Omeo. It was along here that I got a call from Craig that I better come back as he had a bit of a problem (what number are we up to now?). It turned out that the pin that locates the leaf springs and the axle had sheared off on the passenger side allowing the axle to move backwards on an angle and causing the shackle on the other side to invert. In true bush mechanic style, Craig cut a tree stump so as to allow him to jack up the chassis and then with a thick branch lever the wheel back into place and the shackle into its proper position. He then managed to get the pin back in and held into place with a wooden block he fashioned out of a tree branch with his chainsaw and held it in place with some fencing wire I had in the back of the truck! Back on the road and this time no more dramas. As we headed along the Wonnangatta road I managed to reach Ashley and let him know that we were not too far away. As it turned out he was just hopping in his truck to come looking for us as it was now 8.30pm!! What a day!

But wait there's more! Remember it is New Year's Eve. We had our communal roast meal. Michael, Verylle and myself were lucky to be able to share in Graham and Sue's and Ashley and Lesley's roast as it was too late to put ours on. Thanks guys. Paul had Craig's dinner under control.

There was much merriment and stories around the campfire that night as we saw in the New Year. Some

went to bed in better condition than others, but a great night was had by all. *John*

*\*\* New Year's resolution made that night:*

***There will be no day trips taken on New Year's Eve!***

#### **Thursday 1 January 2004**

Recovery day! Just a lazy one – still hot, so most of us went for a soak in the river. The "boyz" had fun doing their Tarzan and Steve Irwin impressions, jumping off the rocks and floating downstream with the rapids – quite entertaining considering some of them had quite big heads from the night before! Geoff of course kept us amused with his Gollum (Lord of the Rings) impersonation as he climbed out of the rapids! This man is incorrigible.

Steve and Jill arrived some time during the afternoon. I was having a quiet afternoon kip, but I knew Steve was in the camp when I was woken to the dulcet tones of guys talking about tyres, lifts, springs etc etc etc.

The Rodgers and Partridges headed off into Dargo for dinner at the pub while the rest of us had an easy one back at camp. *LP*

#### **Friday 2 January 2004**

##### ***The Trip To Grant***

Participants: John & Stephanie  
Paul & Craig  
Steve & Jill  
Michael, Verylle, Liberty & Elizabeth

A leisurely start and we headed in the direction of Dargo to get fuel. Paul had a few problems getting his truck into FWD but this was soon overcome and we were all on the move.

A short drive to Grant where we stopped at the cemetery for a look at the graves. As we returned to the cars water was evident on the ground under the Land Rover so the bonnet was popped and all heads were looking at a split water hose. A bit of glue, some duct tape and a bit of knowhow and it would be as good as new – well it got us half way to Sale the next day and we needed to fix it again. While fixing the leak we had lunch and a chat as the kids played Game Boy in the back of the car.

We then headed into the site of the Grant Township to have a look at the information shelter and use the toilets. We initially went to have a look at ??Jewelers?? mine but it was closed. We did, however, stop for a drink from the tap that is just sitting there on the side of the road.

John knew of another mine just around the corner, so we went to explore it. Torches in hand and Liberty wearing her "Night Vision Spy Glasses" (supplied by Santa Claus) we all went in. The mine

was cold, which was a pleasant relief from the heat of the day, and several hundred meters deep. When we turned out the torches it became apparent just how difficult it would have been working in the mine with nothing but a candle.

Paul and Craig headed back to camp from here while the rest of us continued along the road towards Talbotville and then west up Collingwood Spur. At the top, the kids decided they wanted to change cars and travel with John (probably Stephanie), so Verylle decided she would like to drive. We continued down Collingwood Spur and then along the Crooked River Track and onto Talbotville Road. Several river crossings added a bit of fun to the trip but didn't seem to do much towards cleaning the cars. **Michael**

Friday was pack up day for quite a few of us. Anthony, Aline and the boys were on the move fairly early – considering Connor's tender age (all of 5 weeks!). Annie, Terry, Geoff and Rochelle were next, then Ashley and I headed off at around midday. We hooked up with the others for lunch in Rosedale and then it was head 'em up, roll 'em out... We dropped Bethany off at Endeavour Hills and arrived home at around 6.00pm. Ooooh, all that lovely white porcelain! **LP**

### Saturday 3 January

Today is the day that Michael, Verylle and myself had to drag ourselves away and head back home, and what a hot day it was. After finally getting our gear packed up we headed over to the river with the girls for our last dip and to freshen up, after which we said our goodbyes and out we went. Just before we reached Stratford, Michael's radiator hose decided to let go again. After closer inspection we decided to cut off the section with the hole and stretch the hose further on and re-clamp it. It was a bit of a worry as the hose was quite perished but it managed to hold on until we got home. Apart from this it was an uneventful trip with the highlight being McDonalds lunch in Sale, well uneventful if you don't count the tarp on Michael's trailer working loose and losing the boogie board.

Thanks to everyone who joined us. It's a great area made even better by the people that we shared it with. **John**

*Sue and Graeme Lyne have been good enough to do some investigative work regarding the behavioural patterns of the cicadas we were unlucky enough to have experienced while at Dargo. Here's what they discovered:*

### Cicadas (Acid Rain ?)

Those who ventured to Collins Hut for the Christmas break will reminisce over the many memories that such a wonderful experience created.

Foremost will be the never-ending and delightful sounds of the cicadas, *in their millions*, serenading us from their tree top perches. Such was the applause for this musical delight that the cicadas kept it up from sunup to well after sunset.

Another memory of these creatures was the frequent showers of debris and water that rained down throughout the entire day. To many it was a messy or stinging experience, perhaps one that few would want to repeat.

But what was it? Yes there were many theories, but no common consensus agreed to by all.

In an endeavor to determine the origin of this downpour, a number of sources were checked. The first was the Reader's Digest, *Encyclopedia of Australian Wildlife*. This source provided the following information:

"There are over 200 species of cicadas in Australia and some species are well known for their loud mating calls in summer. The female responds to these calls... After mating the female cuts slits in a branch... into these she lays her eggs. A few weeks later a shower of tiny nymphs fall to the ground, where they quickly burrow into the ground."

*PS. typical isn't it: the females can hear but are silent themselves!!!!*

This article did not provide the complete information as to the cause of the downpour, so Museum Victoria was contacted for their views on the matter. Their response was:

'Thanks for contacting InfoZone regarding cicadas and what the liquid is that they spray. The following text is from the book *Australian Cicadas* by M.S. Moulds, "Nutrients are extracted from the sap, and the clear water-like waste is squirted at frequent intervals from the end of the body. Some large species, including *Cyclochila australasiae* and *Psaltoda moerens*, consume



*large volumes of sap, and when populations are high the 'rain' that showers down from their trees on a hot summer's day is, no doubt, well known*

*to many readers."* It was once thought that only the females did this, but it is now known that both sexes exude their waste like this.

'A search on the Internet suggested that there is some research going on at the Arizona State University into whether cicadas living in desert situations possibly exude water to lower their body temperatures. We are not aware of this as one of the Cicadas survival mechanisms, but further research may show cicadas exude watery fluid as waste and

also as a cooling measure in some American desert species.'

So next time you listen to the sounds emitted by these lovable creatures be sure not to stand under the tree where they are located!

Many thanks Sue and Graeme – perhaps there's a role in the Club for you: "Nature Expert" !!

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### ***THE DEDDICK TRAIL***

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*Roll call:* Steve Boyle  
80 series skyscraper LandCruiser  
John Partridge  
not as high, but getting higher, GU Patrol

*While up at the hut over New Years, I mentioned that I planned to come back in the next week to finish off the steps to the toilet as we had run out of pickets to hold back the red gum we were using to make the steps. Steve said he had a bit of spare time so we arranged to meet up and after the work was done go for a drive for a couple more days. This wasn't a club trip, but it was a very interesting trip so I thought I'd write a few lines for the newsletter.* **JP**

#### **Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> January**

I met up with Steve at the Officer Weighbridge and we headed off to the hut, arriving there at lunchtime. After having a bite to eat and setting up camp we finished off the steps up to the toilet. It was a hot day and it was dusty work, what else would you do but spend an hour or so in the river. It's a hard life but there's no point complaining. The Mountain Cattleman's Race was on over the weekend and this time was held along the Wonnangatta River just before the turnoff to the hut. We were entertained by some interesting (dodgy) country music that went on after we went to bed at about 11.30pm.

#### **Monday 12<sup>th</sup> January**

After a relaxing start (I slept in till after 10.00am) we headed up through Dargo and onto the Upper Dargo Road. After a short distance we turned onto Jones Road, which took us to Mount Baldhead Bruthen Road and further on we turned left onto a little used track called Joes Track. This track was slightly overgrown and looked like only a few vehicles had used it over the last couple of years, and led us down to the Haunted Stream Track. This is a nice track that crosses the stream some fifty odd times!

*According to some sources, Haunted Stream is supposed to take its name from the murder of 'Ballarat Harry' alias Roger Tichbourne, a member of a wealthy English family. 'Harry' was believed to have been murdered near the headwaters of the stream, his body burnt, and remains scattered through the bush. A prime suspect was the*

*notorious Thomas Toke, who once had a store on the Gibbo River, and who was implicated in up to seven other murders. Another popular theory regarding the name, is from the tremulous call of the 'Barking Owl' at night resembling the sound of a screaming woman. (Excerpt from Luke Steenhuis's book *Ghost Towns of the High Country*).*



Near the end of this track we went up Sterling Track looking for a bit of a climb, then continued on towards the Omeo Hwy. Shortly before the highway we came across a large tree which was blocking the track and Steve pulled it out of the way and nearly ended up with it taking out the back of his truck! Heading north we stopped briefly for supplies at Ensay before once again hitting the dirt and looking for the tracks that would lead us to our next camping spot. The problem was that the tracks led straight through a pastoral lease. We tried to get permission to pass through but as there was nobody home we decided to continue. You could hardly see the track across the pasture but it seemed to head off in the right direction. At the top we passed through a gate, continued on Nunniong Track to Marble Gully Track and to our camping spot at Hells Gate, on the Garron Point Track. It had been a long day but an interesting one, having used tracks that were hard to find and had seen very little traffic over the years.

#### **Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> January**

Off again on our little adventure and not sure what we'll find as we were going into the fire affected areas and previous phone calls to Parks Vic. didn't help in finding out what was open and what wasn't. From Garron Point Track we turned on to the super highway called Nunniong Road (very wide and very well graded) before turning on to Jam Tin Track. Luck was on our sides and the gates were open so we followed this, at times barely visible track, stopping a few times to marvel at the extent of the fire damage. Numerous times we had to deviate to go around fallen tress and it seemed that we spent

more time off the track than on. Jam Tin goes into Diggers Hole Track and it was along here, by a river crossing, that we had lunch. Through some more gates, then we followed Bald Hills Track along the ridgeline to Seldom Seen Track. We had a short stop to talk to some loggers that had been working in the area since March last year logging the many burnt trees in the area. Just a bit further on we detoured up to the lookout of Mount Seldom Seen. Ironically, the original fire tower had burnt down in the fires and a new one had been constructed out of galvanised steel.

The view was spectacular, and the mountain ridges were clearly discernible, as all the trees had been reduced to not much more than poles by the fire.



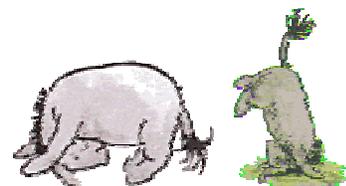
Onto McKillops Road and turning off onto an unmaintained track that looked like it hadn't seen any traffic in a number of years. Once again dodging fallen burnt trees, we made our way down a steep and rocky track that lead us to some amazing views of Little River Gorge. A rather deep gorge with very rocky outcrops, reminiscent of some of the gorges found in the Flinders Ranges, with the Little River down the bottom winding its way to the Snowy River. A good drive back up the rocky track and then on to McKillops Bridge, with its vast views of the Snowy River. The campgrounds here were very disappointing; rocky and dusty, \$8.00 camping fees and a very long walk down to the Snowy River. We decided to continue on and started down the Deddick Trail. Once again we find a great track that has been spoilt by being graded within an inch of its life, with switchbacks making it an easy drive. There was a couple of sections where we drove the old track, which was a bit of fun, and it was on one of these that we found an old track that led its way down to the Snowy. Unfortunately, at the bottom, prickly weeds surrounded the area and there wasn't a suitable place to set up camp. We backtracked our way to the main track and continued on looking for a suitable camping spot. Once again I heard that hissing sound as another stick pierced through the side of one of my tyres. Two trips and two tyres – bugger!

And we were only 15 minutes from the campsite! It had been another long day (we made camp at about 7.00pm), but there were no complaints as it again been very enjoyable. The only hissing sounds to be heard later that night was from a can or two of "Vitamin B".

### Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> January

A pleasant drive through the rest of the trail, passing through some very old growth forest, with some of the trees around 100 feet tall. Lunch was had in Orbost where we also re-fuelled ready for the long drive home. It had been a very memorable trip, covering some 1,000kms, with about 450kms of that off road.

*No wonder the law is an ass...*



**Lawyer:** Doctor, how many autopsies have you performed on dead people?

**Doctor:** All my autopsies are performed on dead people.

**Lawyer:** Before you performed the autopsy, did you check for a pulse?

**Doctor:** No.

**Lawyer:** Did you check for blood pressure?

**Doctor:** No.

**Lawyer:** Did you check for breathing?

**Doctor:** No.

**Lawyer:** So, then it is possible the patient was alive when you began the autopsy.

**Doctor:** No.

**Lawyer:** How can you be so sure, Doctor.

**Doctor:** Because his brain was sitting on my desk in a jar.

**Lawyer:** But could the patient have still been alive, nevertheless?

**Doctor:** It is possible that he could be alive and practicing law somewhere!!

(This exchange did take place)

*[submitted by Chris McGlinn]*