



# Free Wheeling

Official Newsletter of the Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club

Registration No A0002184F

MAY 2004

A Grade Trip  
Big River/Woods Point  
March 2004



Easter 2004  
Murray-Sunset NP



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), and a member of Tread Lightly! Australia [www.treadlightlyaustralia.com.au](http://www.treadlightlyaustralia.com.au)

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## 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

## GENERAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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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	

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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 May 2004

Welcome all to this month's *Free Wheeling*. We have had some great trips over the last month. The Easter trip to the Murray River was fantastic. It was around 28-30 degrees every day and plenty of time to relax and go for a swim. While a few of us went for a drive on the Saturday, most stayed at camp and enjoyed each other's company.

Congratulations to Anthony on the running of his first trip, it was a great success. We visited Tallarook State Park where, as far as I know, the club hasn't been before. What's more, he's talking about running another trip next month! Now who's next??

Coming up on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May is the all-important Community Forest Management meeting in Daylesford where we will be asked to vote on five important issues. So far it looks as though we will have 20 plus members going, which is great, but there's always room for some more. Check the Forthcoming Trips section for more details.

While we're talking about up-coming trips, my O'Tooles night run has unfortunately been moved back a couple of weeks. The new date should be in the calendar.

We are planning to hold a vehicle awareness night at a service workshop. We hope to be able to have a few different vehicles up on hoists so that we can inspect the different set-ups the vehicles have. We also plan to explain some of the more common mechanical problems you may encounter in the scrub and what can be done to fix them, and also cover some basic preventative maintenance.

There is a new locally produced four-wheel drive show which can be seen on Channel 31, 6.30pm on Tuesdays. Covered in previous episodes were vehicle recoveries, Navruns, replacing broken cv joints, sand driving at the Portland sand dunes, and readers vehicles.

The VFWDC Yahoo Groups is up and running and so far has about 24 members. This can be used by all members of our club to keep up with latest trip info, ask for technical information, post photos of trips, and interesting website links. The site can be found on

<http://autos.groups.yahoo.com/group/vfwdc/>

Hope to see you all at the next meeting, until then take care.

Regards

*John*

[John Partridge]

# MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING 6 APRIL 2004

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

31 members present.

## APOLOGIES:

Ray and Dawn Brown, Peter and Janine Frankland, Murray Ogden, Ivan Santurini, Liz Beaton, Rosalie Hughes, Barry and Yvonne Hempston, Gary and Paula Johnston.

**VISITORS:** Welcome to Bastiaan Swart, Duane Thompson, Mark and Julie Capper, Judy and Ron Simpson.

## MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:

Minutes of March meeting as per Newsletter.

Accepted: Peter Petrou. Seconded: Tom Brachna.

## MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES:

Nil.

## CORRESPONDENCE IN:

- Renewal advice from Tread Lightly! Australia.
- Renewal notice for Post Office Box.
- Letter from Sitro Group advising that due to "staffing and insurance issues". They are unable to host our April meeting or any future meetings.
- Promotional material for Winton Car Race 29/30 May.
- Promotional material from All Terrain 4x4 P/L advertising their vehicle rear drawer system priced from \$495.00. Info provided by Anthony.
- Promo letter from Paja Automotive re Cross Country Suspension Components.
- Promo information from Filter Mag Australasia.
- News release from Motorway Tyres announcing release of the "new" 16 inch *Mongrel* tyre.
- Email from the Association enclosing minutes of Wombat Forest Governance Working Group held in Daylesford on 29 March, together with notification of further meeting to be held 1 May.
- Various club magazines.

## CORRESPONDENCE OUT:

- Cheque to Prime Promotions for payment of 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary travel mugs.
- Cheque to Paddy's Wombats – payment for bush dance.
- Cheque to Tread Lightly! Australia – renewal of membership.
- Cheque to Australia Post – renewal of post office box.
- Various email exchanges between John and Four Wheel Drive Vic re:
  1. Opening of bridge on Donnelly's Creek Road near Toombon.
  2. Works being carried out by DSE at Merringtons.
  3. RUG (Recreational Users Group) meeting
  4. Confirmation of attendance at Presidents Meeting 4 April.
  5. Formal response re proposed Trip Leaders Guide.

- Email to members advising details of Wombat State Forest Meeting – Daylesford 1 May – urging members to attend this important meeting.
- Email from Barry Leitch re costing for laser printer.
- Email from Rosalie announcing birth of baby Owen Maxwell Hughes – congrats to Jacki and Glenn.
- Flowers sent to Jacki and Glenn with message of congratulations from the committee and members.
- *Free Wheeling*.

## TREASURER'S REPORT:

Petty Cash: \$ 200.00  
Cheque Account: \$1,690.00  
Term Deposit: \$6,797.47

Accepted: Carl Surtees. Seconded: Michael Rodger.

Roger raised the issue of outstanding monies for the Bush Dance. A considerable number of members are still to pay and it was requested that these payments be made forthwith.

## TRIP CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT:

### ➤ Forthcoming Trips/Events:

Ashley reviewed the trips as listed in the Club Calendar.

### ➤ Trip Reports:

*Whitfield Wine Trip:* Anthony Van Buiten reported on the good time had by all on this trip (see also his detailed report in the "Trip Reports" section).

*30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Family Day:* Michael Rodger reported that this was a successful event for both children and adults. Special thanks to Verylle for her creative efforts and Peter for his culinary expertise.

*A Grade Trip:* John gave a detailed report of another eventful and enjoyable A Grade weekend.

## REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT ON CURRENT ACTIVITIES:

### 1. FWDVic President's Meeting held 4 April 2004

- Reviewed notes from previous Presidents' meeting.
- Reviewed proposed Trip Leaders Guide.
- Appointed the Regional Representatives
  - Heyfield VFWDC
  - Baw Baw VFWDC
- Milton Oliver updated us on the Wombat Community Forest Program.
- We talked about the way ahead, including:
  - Communication
  - Tread Lightly
  - Vehicle advertising
  - Recovery points
  - Tires
  - Seasonal Closure surveys
  - Track survey
- Clubs may be designated certain tracks to survey each year.
- Clubs to look after designated "RED" tracks.
- In the agreement with the DSE and Parks Vic, RED tracks are to stay RED tracks

### 2. The Wombat State Forest – Community Forest Management (CFM)

In February 2002 the Victorian Premier, Steve Bracks and the then Minister for Environment and Conservation,

Sherryl Garbutt, announced significant forest management reforms for Victoria. The document *"Our Forests, Our Future"* foreshadowed a significant new agenda in forest management under the guise of more community participation in forest management processes. In May 2002 a steering group was formed to guide the introduction of a "Community Forest Management" pilot project in the Wombat Forest in Central Victoria. This is a pilot program that once adopted, will be applied to all State Parks Australia wide.

In August 2003, a public meeting was held to commence this process. Four Wheel Drive Victoria was not represented, nor were any 4WD clubs. Several working groups were established, *viz.*:

- o Governance
- o Education
- o Weeds
- o Water
- o Forest Heritage
- o Biodiversity
- o Forest Resource – non-timber
- o Forest Resource – timber

After much lobbying by Milton Oliver of the City West 4WD Club, an 8<sup>th</sup> working group was established. The Recreational Users Group (RUG). The first RUG meeting was held at the RSL in Graythorn on the 23 March 2004. 263 people attended this meeting with 59 organizations represented.

There's two ways we can go with this.

1. Not support it and try to make it fall over
  - o If this happens it will become a National Park. *Not good.*
2. Throw all of our support behind it.
  - o For the first time we have a chance to have a real say in what happens in our forests. *Very good.*

At the May 1<sup>st</sup> meeting there will be four motions put forward that will be voted on.

1. *To commit the Council of Stewards when it takes office on 1 July to ongoing community consultation regarding structure and directions for CFM*

This is a good thing. Up until recently there has been very little consultation with the wider community.

2. *To establish the Wombat Forest Community Association*  
Another good thing as to ensure it doesn't become a National Park.

3. *To determine the composition of the Council of Stewards*  
The 8 / 3 plus 3 option (the preferred option) is defined as:

- o 8 members directly appointed by the community by the process to be determined by Motion 4.
- o 3 appointed by the Minister for the Environment.

the Council having the power to coopt up to 3 additional members to achieve more balanced representation of community interests, including indigenous representation as determined in consultation with local indigenous communities.

4. *To determine how community-appointed members of the Council should be selected.*

The preferred method here would be by proportional vote.

Hopefully this has made what is happening on 1 May a little clearer. It is vital that we have a good representation at this meeting so that the preferred motions are voted in.

This will, hopefully, ensure that the CFM is a great success and that we have continued access to our forests.

#### GENERAL BUSINESS:

- Merringtons Working Bee: JP has been in discussion with local DSE and offered our assist with planting of trees at Merringtons.
- Toombon Bridge opening: JP attended. Locals put on BBQ for the DSE and others. JP met with Noels Lees (DSE) to discuss problems in the area. Also caught up with a local who has an "interesting" property which includes cabin accommodation and other out of the ordinary artifacts. Plan to run a trip some time this year.
- Collins Hut: Area around the hut is badly overgrown with weeds, blackberries etc. Locals will be dozing in the next few weeks. Unfortunately there will be an ongoing problem with maintaining the area due to excessive weed growth etc.
- O'Tooles: On the improve. Has been slashed for the first time in ages.
- 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Club Travel Mugs: On sale at \$15.00 each – members encouraged to purchase.
- Club Membership Fees: Will be increased for the first time in five years, ie by \$10 with effect from 1 July 2004.
- Discount Suppliers: To be included in next month's newsletter.
- Newsletter: Barry Leitch investigating pros and cons of purchasing laser printer and other options for printing the newsletter each month.
- New 4WD show on Channel 31 – 6.30pm Tuesdays.
- Otway National Park: Petition against the formation of an expanded national park – form for members to sign and submit to State Government.
- Dandenong Library to be informed of unclean state of the Meeting Room – again this month.

**TEA DUTIES:** Thanks Steve and Terry.

#### RAFFLE:

- 1<sup>ST</sup> Prize: Tom Brachna – Easter Egg
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize: Mark Capper – Knife thingy
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize: Leigh Pettigrew – set of Espresso Coffee Mugs

#### NEXT MEETING:

Tuesday, 4 May 2004 at the Dandenong Library.

**MEETING CLOSED** at 10.10pm.

☺ ☺ ☺ **HUMOUR** ☺ ☺ ☺

A police officer stops a blonde for speeding and asks her very nicely if he could see her license.

She replied in a huff, "I wish you guys would get your act together.

Just yesterday you take away my license and then today you expect me to show it to you?!"

Welcome to

# "THE CORNER"

## Recipe



Berry Ricotta Muffins



### Ingredients:

75g butter  
175g reduced fat ricotta cheese  
½ cup of caster sugar  
1 teaspn vanilla essence  
2 eggs  
1½ cups self raising flour  
1/3 cup of milk  
150 g fresh or frozen raspberries or blueberries

### Method:

preheat oven to 180° C  
line a 12 x ½ capacity muffin tin with paper muffin cases  
using an electric beater, beat butter, ricotta, sugar and  
vanilla till light and creamy  
add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition  
sift flour over butter mixture, add milk, gently fold in flour  
and milk until combined  
fold in berries and spoon into muffin cases  
bake for 20 minutes or until a skewer inserted in the  
middle comes out clean  
let stand for 5 minutes, cool on a wire rack.

Nice for arvo tea... on the sand bank overlooking the  
Murray River... Thanks again Michael and Verylle.

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**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, just email to:  
[anniesinternet1@primus.com.au](mailto:anniesinternet1@primus.com.au)



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that's what they call what I do), or (03) 5996 6662  
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## CLUB CALENDAR AT A GLANCE

### APRIL

Friday 23 <sup>rd</sup> to Sunday 25 <sup>th</sup>	Macallister Springs	George Pledger
Friday 23 <sup>rd</sup> to Monday 26 <sup>th</sup>	Otways	Patrick Casey
Tuesday 27 <sup>th</sup>	Committee Meeting	Barry Leitch

### MAY

Saturday 1 <sup>st</sup> to Sunday 2 <sup>nd</sup>	FWDVic/Wombat Forest Mgt Meeting Daylesford	John Partridge
Tuesday 4 <sup>th</sup>	Club Meeting	John Partridge
Saturday 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Morwell <i>Powerworks</i>	Rosalie Hughes
Saturday 22 <sup>nd</sup> to Sunday 23 <sup>rd</sup>	O'Tooles Night Run <b>Note date change</b>	John Partridge
Tuesday 25 <sup>th</sup>	Committee Meeting	Rosalie Hughes

### JUNE

Tuesday 1 <sup>st</sup>	Club Meeting	John Partridge
Queen's B'day Saturday 12 <sup>th</sup> to Monday 14 <sup>th</sup>	Dandongadale Hut TBC	Anthony VB
Tuesday 29 <sup>th</sup>	Committee Meeting	Lesley Peters

### JULY

Tuesday 6 <sup>th</sup>	Club Meeting	John Partridge
Sunday 4 <sup>th</sup> August 8 <sup>th</sup>	Cape York <b>TRIP FULL</b>	George Pledger
Tuesday 29 <sup>th</sup>	Committee Meeting	John Partridge

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



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## FORTHCOMING TRIPS INFO

### MACALLISTER SPRINGS

**Date:** Friday 23 April to Sunday 25 April  
**Trip Leader:** George Pledger – Mob: 0427 547 402  
**Destination:** Macallister Springs via Licola  
**Meeting Time/Place:** 6.30pm, Officer Weighbridge  
**Equipment:** Normal camping and recovery gear. Good walking footwear.

**Radio Channel:** Channel 12

**Trip Activities:**

*Friday:* Travel to Licola and camp on Wellington River.  
*Saturday:* Travel to Howitt High Plains Road, approx 70km to a car park. Pleasant walk of approx 4km to Macalister Springs, look at the hut and the spring and the toilet with a view, then return to the vehicles. Drive down Butcher Country Spur to the river and set up camp for the night.  
*Sunday:* Leisurely drive home.

### OTWAYS

**Date:** Friday 23 April to Monday 26 April 2004  
**Trip Leader:** Patrick Casey – Tel: 9570 6452  
**Destination:** Otways  
**Meeting Time/Place:** pm Friday 23/4  
**Equipment:** ALL recovery gear (just in case!)  
**Radio Channel:** Channel 12  
**Trip Activities:** Tour tracks in area. Otways Fly Walk. Relax.

### WOMBAT COMMUNITY FOREST MGT MEETING

**Date:** Saturday 1 May to Sunday 2 May 2004  
**Trip Leader:** John Partridge – Mob: 0428 331 211  
**Destination:** Daylesford  
**Meeting Time/Place:** 8.45am, Shell Servo Westgate  
**Equipment:** N/A  
**Radio Channel:** Channel 12  
**Trip Activities:**  
**Saturday:** 10am-5pm Attend meeting. Evening dinner and relax. Accommodation: Boomerang Holiday Ranch.  
**Sunday:** Leisurely drive around the area? Home early.

### MORWELL "POWERWORKS"

**Date:** Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> to Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2004  
**Trip Leader:** Rosalie & David Hughes – 9706 2966  
**Destination:** Morwell Power Station  
**Meeting Time/Place:** **TBC**  
**Equipment:** N/A  
**Radio Channel:** Channel 12  
**Trip Activities:** The Powerworks Centre offers an evening tour which commences with finger food and soft drink, then a bus ride around the open coal cut and power generating plant. Tour lasts approximately 3 hours, then 2-course dinner is served. Cost is \$45 p/head inc beer, wine, soft drinks.

### O'TOOLES NIGHT RUN

**Date:** Friday 21 May to Sunday 23 May 2004  
**Trip Leader:** John Partridge – Mob: 0428 331 211  
**Destination:** Little O'Tooles Camping Ground  
**Meeting Time/Place:** 6.30pm Friday, Officer W'bridge  
**Grade:** Wet B+/Dry B+  
**Last Available Fuel:** Moe  
**Equipment:** FULL recovery and usual camping gear.  
**Radio Channel:** Channel 12  
**Trip Activities:**  
*Friday pm:* Dinner at the Stockyard in Rawson, then set up camp at Little O'Tooles.  
*Saturday:* Short drive to Morning Star Tk. Walk into the waterwheel and explore the surrounding area for other mining relics. Back to camp in the afternoon to relax. After dinner, we will have the night run driving – some challenging tracks.  
*Sunday:* Relaxing start to the day. Leave via Sullivans Tk, visit the Aberfeldy Cemetery, and head home shortly after lunch.

## CONGRATULATIONS

to  
Jacki and Glenn Hughes  
on the safe arrival of their son  
*Owen Maxwell*



Born 30 March 2004  
6.5 lbs

Another boy!

## VFWDC MERCHANDISE

30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Travel Mugs  
now in stock  
at \$15.00 each.

Members requiring Club merchandise, eg

- ❖ Polo Shirts
- ❖ Chambre Long Sleeved Shirts
- ❖ Caps
- ❖ Stubbie Holders

contact Rosalie on 9706 2966.



## TRIP REPORTS

**30<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY FAMILY DAY/WEEKEND**  
**Saturday 20 March 2004 – Mortimer Picnic Area**  
**Bunyip State Park**

### **Roll Call:**

Beaton, Liz  
Boyle, Steve & Jill  
Brachna, Tom  
Dawn – David, Joanne, Christopher, Michael & Abby  
Harwood, Bill & Coral  
Johinke, Terry  
Kochan, Mark  
Lyne, Graeme & Sue  
Martin, Ashley  
Partridge, John  
Peters, Lesley  
Petrou – Peter, Lisa, Olivia, Elise & Lucas  
Pledger, George  
Rea, Craig & Fran  
Rodger – Michael, Verylle, Liberty & Elizabeth  
Simpson, Annie  
Stephenson, Norma & Neil  
Surtees – Carl, Terry, Bethany & Paige  
Van Buiten – Anthony, Aline, Riley & Connor  
Warburton, Ian  
Webber – Julie, Christopher & Dylan  
Rosalie & David Hughes arrived late into the night.

To celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Club, what better way than to involve not only the adults but run a day for the kiddies.

Lesley and I made our way to Mortimer camping ground around 12.30 where we found John, Michael and co, and Terry and Annie already there. After setting up camp and munching on some lunch it was time for the fun to begin. Using a tarp, Terry set up a cubby house for the kids which kept them busy for a number of hours. Verylle did a fantastic job on face painting – I even thought about one for myself it was so good.



Time had come to begin the games and up first was the sack race which one big kid won (Ashley); we did run another for the little kids only! The plank race was next, with John leading one group and me leading another. John was out of the blocks early and required a little slowing down (ask the kids how) but recovered to win. Tug-o'-war was next and it was Ashley versus the rest of the kids – eight were way too many for this big kid, I was still to come out with a gold medal! There were ribbons for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place, which were a huge hit with those fortunate enough to win. I believe just about everyone managed to receive a ribbon!

We then took the kids for a walk around a nature trail which they all enjoyed. Balloons were handed out and it certainly appeared as though they were all having a good time.

Back at camp it was time to get ready for the feast. Peter Petrou had organised a gourmet BBQ and Lesley and Verylle the salads. While the kids were off entertaining themselves, the adults started into happy hour.



Dinner was served on time at 7.30, and what a meal it was: marinated calamari for starters, steak, gourmet sausages, marinated chicken, baked potatoes and salad

- YUM. This was followed by a fantastic selection of desserts, ranging from Verylle's home-made chocolate mousse to passion fruit cheesecake, berry and cream pav, and a fruit platter. Oh, and don't forget jelly for the kids.

The weather held out for most of the day, but unfortunately we did have a few drops of rain just as we were tucking into dessert.

After the cleaning up, it was time to sit around the fire and enjoy the company.

Many thanks must go to Lesley, Verylle, and Peter for the effort put into the catering etc; many people commented on the great food. Thanks also to John for the organising of the games and prizes.

Last but not least, thanks to all the members who were able to attend, and all the kids who made it a fun day.

**Ashley**

*Epilogue:* Thanks to Ashley for entertaining the kids in his inimitable style. Is he Peter Pan or the Pied Piper in disguise??

*The family day...*  
*by Liberty Rodger*

When we went to the four wheel drive club family day I had lots of fun. My favourite part was the games and the cubby house. We had a sack race, Ashley just had to be in it but we didn't include him so I came third. We also had a plank race and Ashley cheated, but as we all know "cheats never win" - and he didn't!



*Riley the Tiger*

*Liberty the Leopard*



*Elizabeth the Dog*



*Stephanie the Rabbit*



**A-GRADE TRIP – WOODS POINT**  
**Saturday 27-Sunday 28 March 2004**

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<i>Trip Leader:</i>	Ashley Martin	100 Series LC
	with Anthony Van Buiten	
<i>Participants:</i>	Roger Baird	60 Series LC
	George Pledger	Musso
	John Partridge	GU Patrol
	Steve Pitcher	
	Mark Kochan	60 Series LC
	Carl Surtees	Surf
	Phil Alder & boys	Patrol
	Steve & Rob Boyle	80 Series LC
	Derek Hymas	Disco

**Saturday**

After fighting my way through unexpectedly heavy City traffic, I was late meeting Steve and Rob Boyle at Lilydale. The urgency to “be there by 9.30” had been impressed upon us and we made good time through the Black Spur, through Marysville and on to the Big River Road.

We arrived at the Frenchman’s Creek Camping Ground at 9.00 o’clock to find the group only partially emerged from camp. Clearly it had been a good night because the 9.30 start time gradually moved back and it was 10.45 before we hit the tracks. No worries, though, thanks to Roger’s entertaining display of the rapidity with which he could stow his tent.

The bush mechanics were called into action prior to leaving to help with problems Steve Pitcher was having locking in his hubs.

George and Roger left the group as it turned on to Frenchman’s Creek Track and then up Shortcut 1. The plan was to meet up with them further along the way. Shortcut 1 presented a deep-rutted uphill section. Too much for the Disco, so I went around. The rest of the group, except Steve P, made it through. Steve was still having problems so he headed back along the track to catch up with George and Roger. After the climb, Ashley announced that he was “going to get some 35’s.”

We turned down Shortcut 2 and near the bottom, Steve Boyle demonstrated an impressive bit of rut straddling, even if his left rear couldn’t quite keep up.

I used Shortcut 2 to display the balance and not-so-low centre of gravity that a Discovery is renowned for. Not satisfied with lifting the two right wheels off the ground at one spot, I then followed Ashley’s instructions and lifted the two left wheels in similar fashion. I have never seen Ashley move so fast. It didn’t feel too bad inside the car, but I have to admit that when I saw Carl’s video later it prompted an involuntary “Oh, \*\*\*\*” from me.

As we reached the bottom of the track Dave Hughes called over the radio. He and ? were at the top of Shortcut 2, so we waited for them to catch up.



Jill said to Steve, “Have fun!” [pic Derek]

We went up Camp Track, an uneventful section, and then turned down Boundary Track where, for me at least, some of the fun went out of the day. It was steep and rocky and I was having trouble going slowly enough in low first. Near the bottom, there was a fair drop over a ledge and my front left dropped into it. Inside the car, everything that was in the back ended up in the foot wells. For a moment, all was still and then with a lurch, the car righted itself.

Mark and Steve and Rob were behind me. According to them, it was a spectacular pirouette but, like fishermen, 4WD drivers are prone to exaggeration. John commented later, “for a while there Derek, you had one-wheel drive.” (See evidence on front cover)

Whether it was cause or effect, the car came out of the incident with a badly bent steering damper and I had to make it down the last thirty metres without steering - which gave the bush mechanics another opportunity to show their skills. The usual committee assembled and proposed the usual variety of solutions. Eventually, Phil wrapped a snatch strap around the bent damper rod and Mark attached it to his winch. A few deft winds of the winch and the rod was straight



Jan said to Derek, “Drive safely!” [pic Anthony]

After a quick lunch, I was grateful to Steve and Rob for accompanying me as I went around and back up Camp Track to join George, Roger and Steve Pitcher who had been waiting patiently all this time. The rest of the group went back up Boundary Track and we all met up on Frenchman's Spur Track.

We turned on to the Marysville – Woods Point Road and then on to Tinger's Spur Track which led us into the back of Woods Point where we stopped for ice creams and cold drinks.

The plan was to camp at Comet Flat but the camp ground was dry and dusty and the stagnant water around the area was infested by mozzies, so we headed north out of Woods Point to Scotts Reserve. It was empty and we set up camp near a shelter and a group went off to collect wood.

Some more bush mechanics emerged, intrigued by the idea of making the bent rod straighter. George and Steve and Rob Boyle gathered under the Disco until the front wheels were almost aligned.

Phil's kids set up their own camp fire, which blazed into the night. The wood collected for the main fire was a bit green and burned lower. Eventually, someone went over and nicked some of the kids' wood. We enjoyed a few laughs and, in contrast to the previous evening, an early night.

[My thanks to all the bush mechanics for their help – the car drove back to Melbourne with no problems at all, the front tyres hardly scuffed. My son, Daniel, took it into the workshop, straightened the rod, fixed a second-hand shocker and it's as good as new for under \$120. Phew!]

*Derek Hymas*

### **Sunday**

We left the camp site at about 10:00 am – after Steve straightened out his tent pegs – and headed into Woods Point. Just before the bridge we turned left onto Brewery Gully Tk, the map said this track was very steep and loose (sort of mountain goat country) and it was! After a very sharp right three point turn we headed up the track, a quick left and we were into the loose stuff, a few minutes later we were confronted with a healthy gum tree deliberately cut down to close the track from the top (but nothing at the bottom). With no way to turn around and go down the track, which would have been very dangerous, we removed the tree to continue on our way.

A right turn onto Clarke Spur Tk brought us to a hut (which had only just been finished) built into the hollow of a large gum tree, with a chimney to boot.

After a discussion about the instructions (supposedly) given to the trip navigator (me) we found ourselves on Abbot Creek Tk; this was about the time Anthony found himself in the potentially dangerous (lethal) position of being in

Ashley's car after curry the night before. Abbot Creek Tk was a nice descent into the valley, at the bottom of which we came across a Subaru (I think), with a trailer in tow, camping – he may be still there!

It was at about this point we were talking to another group of drivers who were at the top of the next section of the track looking down contemplating the section of track we were discussing driving up.

After walking the entire hill looking at every rock as if it were a bomb placed there by a middle eastern terrorist, Steve (the hero of the story) went first and very nearly made it up in a single bound, but ran out of fuel at the top. Next was Johnno who made it up the first 20 metres with a bit of stone throwing and then ran out of forward propulsion (where are those diff locks when you need them). A second attempt saw him at the top. The rest of the drivers – Mark, Craig, Ashley, Daddio and Phil made it up without any difficulties at all. From there the rest of the climb was quite uneventful apart from one spot where we lifted both left wheels and I was referred to as "*the ballast*".

We all stopped at the top where we met up with Roger, George and Steve and had lunch.

The convoy turned left onto Walhalla track and parted ways at the turn off to the Thomson Dam with John, Steve, Phil and Dave heading down Beardmores Tk for a swim in the river until about 4:30.

Thanks to Ashley (not) the first trip leader to lead a trip from the middle. What I meant was John for a well planned trip that was fun for all.

*Carl (the Ballast) Surtees*



*"Need a little help from my friends", sings Phil... [pic Anthony]*

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## ***EASTER ON THE MURRAY (Near Mildura)***

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**Trip Leaders:** Michael, Verylle, Liberty & Elizabeth  
**Participants:** Sue & Graeme  
John & Stephanie  
Lesley & Ashley  
Annie & Terry  
Anthony, Aline, Riley & Connor  
Barry & Helen  
Tania & Steve  
Derek & Janet  
**Visitors:** Mark and Jessica  
Chris, Mark, Teagen, Natasha & Thomas

### ***Thursday pm, 8 April***

After traveling through Easter traffic from Dandenong to the Westgate, it was nice to stop and relax for a minute before going any further, so we hung around and waited for the members of our little troop to gather and prepare ourselves for the trip north to the "river", where we looked forward to sitting, sipping, swimming, gossiping, munching... doing the things that we love to do on our Easter sojourn north to the "dura". We caught up with Barry and Helen at Calder Park Thunderdome while well on our way – the traffic thick and fast. After a couple of meal and rest breaks – and a lot of driving, and then a couple of fuel refills and driver changes – we found ourselves on the home straight. We contacted Michael and Johnno and finally reached our destination, found ourselves somewhere to set up camp for the night – or what was left of it as it was around 2.00 am – had a drinkies around the welcoming campfire that was awaiting us, then to bed and a well deserved rest for us all. **Annie**

### ***Friday 9 April***

As most of us had a very late (or early) arrival at camp, the day was very much one of relaxation and companionship. With beautiful weather, most took the opportunity to "veg" out. Several of the more energetic went swimming, canoeing, and fishing (no catch) whilst others organised camp aspects that had been difficult to complete in the dark. Like all good church-going people, most respected the need to eat fish on Good Friday.

We were all impressed by the site Michael and co. had co-tped, although once again we found the flight path! The camp ended up spread for quite some distance which meant we had our daily exercise just by saying good morning and goodnight.

Thanks to Mark for providing such a great wood collection vehicle. **Barry**

### ***Saturday 10 April***

A few us decided to go for a drive into the Murray Sunset National Park. Derek lead the way through the Hattah-Kulkyne National Park, followed by John, Anthony and family, Terry and Mark, Barry and Helen. Once we reached the Calder Highway we traveled south to Hattah to refuel, while Anthony and Aline waited for us at Ironclad Tank and refueled Connor. Once we were all together again we zigged, instead of zagging, and had an interesting drive through a private pastoral lease, before

retracing our steps to the tank. We then headed east on Nowingi Line Track following, and at times traveling on top of an old dismantled railway line. About 25kms along, we came across a large hopper, which was used to load gypsum onto the train carriages from the nearby gypsum mines. From here on the corrugations started, and by the time we turned north onto Rocket Lake Track, our fillings were nearly falling out. We shared lunch at the very crowded Rocket Lake camping ground (shared with about a million flies that is).

Rocket Lake got it's name when men at a railway construction camp sent up flares from the lake to let workers in the scrub know when it was smoko or knock-off time.

After lunch, we skirted around the edge of the lake and then traveled south to Pheenys Track, which headed west to Last Hope Track. This track traveled through the Raak Plain State Forest (I thought forests contained trees??), which consisted primarily of numerous salt lakes.

Back to Hattah where we enjoyed an ice-cream, before arriving back at camp in time to cook our roast meals.

Yet another great night was enjoyed by all. **Johnno**



*Murray-Sunset NP [pic Anthony]*

***Sunday 11 April*** – A quiet day where not much happened...

The Easter Bunny came early – he had to, Riley was up at 5.30.

The bunny had some help the night before, when late revelers distributed small eggs all over the sandbar. Or were they just throwing them at each other?

Terry and Annie decided the weekend needed some mystery and with the aid of a stencil and some flour created a magical trail of rabbit footprints along the path. The mystery was still entrancing the kids two days later.

Barry and Helen brought a plentiful supply of eggs and all the parents had lots of eggs for their kids. Riley seemed to have his own supply which he distributed to egg-less adults. (Yes, I did say egg-less – it was mid-morning at the time).

The eggs that had been distributed on the sandbar the night before were beginning to work their way up through the sand and the kids were running around collecting them. There were eggs everywhere. In fact, the scene looked more like the cormorant breeding season on a south Atlantic island than a sandbar on the Murray.

Sadly, Jan and I stood to one side of all the festivities since we never had the fabulous bunny as part of our

childhood Easters – must have been exported to Australia with all those rabbits a couple of centuries ago, I suppose.

Once the early eggstement (groan) had passed, the day settled down lazily with little effort being expended on anything. Michael and Verylle's friends Mark, Chris and family left late morning accompanied by a few intrepid explorers desperate for ice creams who made it as far as the store in Nangiloc.

The rest of us relaxed on the river bank and in the river. Graeme silently paddled off upriver in his kayak.

Another phase of the mystery began. Stephanie, Liberty and Elizabeth came and told us that flour, fur and Easter eggs were being found in many parts of the river bank and sandbar. They had gathered a lot of evidence, most of it now eaten, but no actual sightings. I have my suspicions that Terry may secretly be an agent of the fabled bunny.

Such a lot had happened that it just had to be recorded and Helen came to the rescue round the camp fire that night with her "Ritual of the Shifting Sands". Beginning with some sand sculpturing with Tania, the ritual involved Helen in a lot of crawling around on hands and knees while everyone in turn drew a picture in the sand of what they had done that day. Bingo, I thought! I've got myself out of writing the trip report. But, when I returned with my camera in the morning, I discovered just how unreliable sand is for making any kind of permanent record.

Like the gentleman that Ashley reportedly isn't, Terry responded to Lesley's plea for something to rest her coffee cup upon by fashioning a table from a small log. Everyone then wanted one, but only Verylle and John were favoured, although John converted his to a footstool before nodding off quietly for a short nap.

Graeme and Anthony engaged themselves and us in some riddles before the conversation turned to discussions of the forthcoming Cape York trip. Soon after, everyone started to drift off to bed.

Graeme's riddles had turned philosophical at the end and, after everyone else had left, Barry and I were inspired into one of those late night, deep and meaningful in which we attempted, without success, to resolve the question "What is the meaning of Life?"

Like a good Trip Reporter keen not to miss any of the day's events and excitement, I was the last into bed at the relatively early time (for this club) of 12.30. In the silence and with all the camp lights off behind me, I took in the sweep of the river around the sandbar, lit by the bright half moon hanging between a few lines of thin cloud.

The perfect end to a day on which not much happened.

*Derek*



*"Sailing down the river..." Ashley, Liberty and Thomas*

## ***Easter Monday***

### ***The Journey Home – a Graeme and Sue Perspective***

Do you ever get the feeling that sometimes things are meant to be, that someone is looking after you? But I am getting ahead of myself so let me go back to the beginning.

Monday was another sad departure day after yet another fantastic Easter on the Murray River. To maximise our time away we decided to leave sometime after lunch, about 1.00pm. To further extend the break, our way home was to be via the back roads away from trucks and traffic.

Time to depart arrived, farewell to those lucky people staying another night (the Rodgers family, Janet and Derek) and we were off. Last to leave, with the exception of the President, his daughter Stephanie, Lesley and Ashley, we headed south along River Track fixing the last images of the Murray River until our next visit.

From the River Track it was left on to the black top heading towards Manangatang. Well as we neared this fair rural establishment a red Landcruiser became visible, no prizes as to who the occupants were.

Conversation revealed that Annie and Terry had been exploring some old ruins left behind by the drain of farmers from the rural scene caused by the expansion of the corporate giants. Such a pity that the country style of living has been so dramatically affected by the corporate greed for more wealth, that goes under the guise of efficiency and progress. Seeing all the abandoned houses and sheds left to rot !!!!!!! Well that's a story for another time.

Back to the Landcruiser that was not only exploring old ruins but the occupants had also managed to pick up some watermelons by the roadside. By this time, a break is required and the nearest town was Sea Lake. This is where you wonder if things are meant to happen.

Following the break and heading out of town we notice that the battery warning light was on and the indicator on the battery was also saying that something is wrong. At the same time the "Tail end Charlies" are heard on the two-way. A call for help brings a welcome response, but no joy as to the cause of the problem.

So its "Let's see how far we can get", but a relief to have support in case we don't get very far, even though it meant that our trip along the back roads was cancelled. At this point Johnno decides to move on, leaving Ashley to travel with the slow vehicle. You could think that the story ends there but!!!!!!

Some distance down the road a message is received from Anthony that there has been a serious accident south of Bendigo and to take an alternative route. Out with the maps to plot a route to the Western Freeway via Daylesford. It is now dark, we are in Maldon, the radio crackles to life and a white Nissan (traveling in the opposite direction) looks familiar; hello it's the President. Talk about the hare and the tortoise.

Well from there to Melbourne it was an easy journey (via the back roads) thanks to the tremendous camaraderie of the club members who will do whatever they can to help. Thank you.

PS ...It was the alternator.

## Our Cape York Trip

Liz Beaton and Ian Warburton

*Continued...*

Where does one start with the delights of Nhulunbuy. Apart from the fact that they all barrack for Collingwood and it is the most eastern extremity of the Northern Territory mainland, it is a beautiful place. The water as I said is so sweet coming from New Guinea and you never needed conditioner as your hair was so soft. Our first stop when we arrived at lunchtime was to check into the Motel. It is a great place to stay for the night with a refreshing pool, heaps of tropical trees and wonderful hospitality. What a great job the 2 couples who own and run this place have. They take it in turns by working 10 weeks on and then 10 weeks off staying at their apartment on the Gold coast. I think we could handle that as a job. There are a number of places that we visited within the town precinct consisting of Gadalathami (town beach), Roy Marika lookout, Nambara Arts and craft centre, CapeWirawawoi (port area where the bauxite gets shipped from), the Yacht club (what a great view this place has), and the Arnhem Club for tea. In order to visit the areas outside the town boundary you require a visitors' recreation permit which is obtained from the Dhimurru Land management council. With permit in hand and fee paid we headed out of town for the next week. Our first stop was the Arts and craft centre at Yirrkala, where I bought a bark painting. Now the beaches of Nhulunbuy are renowned for their vast pristine stretches of white sand washed by brilliant blue ocean waters. With what we had seen in town and now at Yirrkala, this is certainly the case. From Yirrkala we headed out to Nanydjaka (Cape Arnhem), our glorious camp spot for the next 5 days. Only 10 vehicles on any day are allowed into this area. From the turnoff, to get to Cape Arnhem it is a slow and steady drive firstly through the Range, down the hill and then along the beach. The views of what we were heading into were magnificent. The magical aura of the area is created by unspoilt wilderness, white sands, so many different shades of blue about the water and the absence of people. With a couple of bay areas where you could camp we had the 20odd kilometers of beach all to ourselves. The next 5 days were very strenuous consisting of sitting back and enjoying the view, walking along the beach, collecting shells, exploring and much more of the same. It will be so hard to drag ourselves away. Do we really have to leave? Unfortunately yes and from here we headed back out and into Goanna lagoon for lunch. This appears to be an artists' haven as the banks of the river had heaps of holes from people digging out the clay. It appeared as if the clay would be ideal for pottery or the likes and even mud facials. From here we headed into another beach area Baringura (Little Bondi) for an overnight stay. This is another lovely beach spot which we had all to

ourselves again. In the morning we headed up the cliff and took the coastal walk to find the lost city. After following the arrows and path for 30mins we did not find our objective but did arrive at the next lovely bay Ngumuy (Turtle beach). This is also a fabulous spot to camp. The coastal walk was quite interesting as you are walking thru eucalypt forest, eucalypt grasslands, monsoon vines and the like. On returning to Little Bondi beach we took our first and only plunge into the sea, keeping a keen lookout for any nasties. We packed up our camp and headed back into Nhulunbuy for a bit of a restock and a lovely shower at the yacht club for free. All we had to do was talk nicely to the girl. What the yachties do that live on their boats in the bay, is pay \$15 for a key to the shower and laundry block and this is for any length of stay. On departure they are refunded \$10. We made lunch and ate it sitting at the yacht clubs tables and enjoyed their magnificent view. From here we headed to our next lovely camp spot, the Giddy River which also meant the start of our departure from this lovely area. The Giddy River is about 40klms from Nhulunbuy and there are 2 ways of getting to the river. The easy way which we discovered the next morning, and the other interesting way that we had taken. The track was rough, rocky and had a number of washaways which were enjoyable challenges. We had crossed the river and then drove about 8klm along it and then of course we had to cross back over it. After much deliberation we decided to do this as we really did not want to go back the way we had just been. The water level wasn't that deep; it was just that you could see that not many vehicles had crossed at this point. As you came out of the river bed you drove up the embankment which had a mean wash away on the drivers' side. Keeping to the left Ian forgot about the tree stump at the top of the embankment. It speared right thru the left side tyre destroying it. We changed the tyre and then started setting up camp right on the waters edge. Ian's priority was checking out the tyre and mine was collecting firewood etc. After about 30mins Ian said – "what's this, come and have a look." Lo and behold, about 15feet from where we were set up was a very well concealed crocodile trap with a fresh dead chicken in it. Decisions, decisions, do we pack up or do we stay. We decided to stay and after tea as the sun went down each time we got up from our chairs the torch was shined fully at the waters edge. On going to bed (thank heavens we sleep in the back of the vehicle) Ian made the comment – "what if the trap goes bang during the night." Never again will I let Ian make a comment like that because sure enough the trap did go bang at about 11pm. Guess who didn't sleep after that. (Ian) In the morning we tried to call Macca (774 radio station) to tell him of our up close and personal experience of sleeping with a crocodile...

Our next stop – Kakadu or Kaka don't...