



Free Wheeling

Official Newsletter of the Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club

Registration No A0002184F

SEPTEMBER 2004

"Bringing Four Wheel Drivers Together"



Marysville - June 2004
Toolangi - July 2004



Cape York - August 2004



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



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COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT 2004-2005

President	John Partridge	0428 331211
Vice President	Carl Surtees	9706 2692
Treasurer	Roger Baird	9704 9045
Secretary	Lesley Peters	9540 0007

GENERAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Stephen Boyle	9754 4412
Ashley Martin	9540 0007
George Pledger	9547 4021
Michael Rodger	0412 530666
Paul Ryan	9807 5193
Anthony Van Buiten	0413 784074
Ian Warburton	9754 2341

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

Registered Name: Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club Inc

Registration No: A002184F

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

Web Site: www.vfwdc.com

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

Location: Dandenong Library
Stuart Street, Dandenong 3175

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

PRESIDENT'S REPORT September 2004

Welcome all to this month's *Free Wheeling*.

Well, the AGM has come and gone and we have a couple of new faces on the committee. Paul Ryan has joined the committee for the first time and Michael Rodger has returned after a year's break. Together we will do our best to help our club progress and build on our success. But remember, this is your club. If there is anything that we could be doing better, or if there's something you're not happy with, come and talk to me. Constructive comments are always welcomed.

Last year was a great year and we're hoping that this year will be bigger and better. However, this can't happen without a bit of input from other club members. If you haven't had a go at leading a trip, there's no better time than now. It is much easier than it seems (plus there's no dust when your up front). Come and talk to the Trip Co-ordinator and he'll be more than happy to help you out. We are also looking out for new places to visit. So if there is somewhere you have been wishing to see, talk to us and we'll help you organise it or arrange for someone to lead the trip.

Throughout the last year we heard from some of our longer standing members about their years with the club as part of our 30th anniversary celebrations. One of the things that stood out from these talks is the freedom they had to travel where they liked. Most of us joined this club to get out and explore this country and escape the pressures of our modern lifestyle. However, it's not that simple anymore. The biggest issue with four wheel driving at the moment is track closures. If left unchecked there will be very few places for our children to explore. Once they go, we wont get them back. It has already happened in New South Wales. If they want to travel in the mountains they either go and pay at a privately run 4wd park or they travel down to Victoria. We have to fight against every track closure. That means that sometimes we might have to change our plans and travel to a rally or meeting and ensure our voice is heard. Considering how much money we have invested in our pastime, it's a small price to pay.

We have a guest speaker from Raw Sales coming to the next meeting with a variety of camping lights, torches and solar panels and batteries – no doubt with a few good specials for club members.

Hope to catch you there,

Regards

John

johnpartrid@hotmail.com

MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING 5 AUGUST 2004

The August General Meeting – incorporating the Annual General Meeting – was held at Dandenong Library and opened at 8.15pm by John Partridge.

35 members present.

APOLOGIES:

George Pledger, Ashley Martin, Stephen & Jill Boyle, Tom & Sheila Corrigan, Sue & Graeme Lyne, Geoff Petersen & Rochelle Brammer, Neil & Norma Stephenson, Leigh & Anne Pettigrew, Paula Johnston, Lisa Petrou, Steve & Nicole Pitcher, Aline Van Buiten, Joe & Carissa Galovic, Yvonne Hempston, Don & Thelma Montague, Maxine Ryan, Glenn & Jacki Hughes, Derek & Janet Hymas.

VISITORS:

Welcome to Carol, Tony, and Chris Waghorn.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:

Minutes of July meeting as per Newsletter.
Accepted: Peter Petrou. Seconded: Dawn Brown.

MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES:

Nil.

SUPPER DUTIES: Thanks Rosalie and Dawnie.

CORRESPONDENCE IN:

- Email from Scott Wiseman advising that for personal reasons he will not be renewing membership this year. He passed on his appreciation to the committee. Scott who has been a member for 5 years expressed his wish to re-join if circumstances change.
- Letter from Just Corporate Wear thanking us for our letter of appreciation and prompt payment of account for club merchandise.
- Various emails and correspondence from Four Wheel Drive Victoria:
 - VEAC Otways Park Submission. Copy of 4WDVic press release enclosed.
 - Exchange with VicRoads regarding the proposed restrictions on AWD vehicles visiting alpine resorts and the requirement for vehicles to be fitted with wheel chains.
 - Notification that membership fees are due.
 - Notification of AGM to be held on 25 August 2004 and minutes of 2003 meeting.
 - Notification of Otways Protest Meeting "Reclaim the Forest" to be held at Apollo Bay on Sunday 15 August. Email circulated to Club members.
 - Advice of Regional Representatives Meeting to be held on Saturday 14 August 2004.
- Promo material from Victorian Camper Trailers – State distributor of Kimberley Kampers and Cameron Canvas.
- Letter from Octagon Australia enclosing newsletter and details on 2004 Australian Safari.

- **Initial** notification from organisers of the National 4X4 Show which will be held this year from Thursday 21 October to Sunday 24 October. Once again they are offering discounted tickets for 4WD clubs.
- Membership Renewals from Maggie Melcher, Neil & Norma Stephenson, Peter Rowe, Rod Lee; New Membership Application from Paul Gillis.
- Various Club magazines.

CORRESPONDENCE OUT:

- Letter of thanks to Just Corporate Wear enclosing cheque for payment of current order and further order.
- Email response to Scott Wiseman thanking him for his support and sending our best wishes.
- Email from Secretary to members requesting return of membership renewal forms and payment prior to the August meeting.
- Fax sent to organisers of National 4X4 Show advising club contact details.
- Newsletter.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Petty Cash: \$ 165.05
Cheque Account: \$3,330.30
Term Deposit: \$7,094.98

TRIP CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT:

- **Forthcoming Trips/Events:**
 - *JP reviewed the forthcoming trips as per calendar, in particular the AGM Dinner – members asked to ensure monies paid tonite. Also advised that his day trip to Healesville-Murrindindi area was on Saturday 4th not Sunday as previously listed.
 - *David Hughes distributed flyer for the forthcoming Mystery Pub-to-Pub (17-19 September). Meeting place will be Yarragon Hotel on Friday night. Participants advised to "travel lightly". Numbers required asap.
 - *Larbatouche Day Trip: Carl reported he would be leading a day trip to the area on Sunday 10 October.
 - *Michael also planning a weekend trip to Mt Cole (Ballarat) – date TBC.
 - *John may be leading a Nav Trip in November – TBC.
- **Trip Reports:**
 - JP reported on the Toolangi "extreme" trip which was held on 18 August (see more details in Trip Report section).
 - JP stressed – once again – that members are encouraged to lead a trip. Also that all members who intend to lead a trip ensure that the trip is noted in the trip log and trip data forms are submitted for placement in newsletter. **When submitting trip data forms, make sure new trip classifications are adhered to.**

GENERAL BUSINESS:

Library: When borrowing items from the library, members were asked to ensure their name was registered and when items were returned, the book was signed off.

Pro-Comp Tyres: New store opened in Bond Street Ringwood. Special opening offer to members of 8000lb Warn Winch @ \$1150.

Merringtons: JP reported on latest update. Noted copy of newspaper article copied in newsletter.

Membership Renewals: Due and payable. Thanks to those members who have renewed and paid.

Wombat CFM Update: Ian Warburton will submit latest info for inclusion in next month's newsletter.

RAFFLE: Tickets sold by Gary Johnston.

1st Prize: Book *Michael Palin's Sahara* won by Liz.

2nd Prize: Picnic Set won by Rosalie.

3rd Prize: Camp Oven won by Terry.

General Meeting closed at 9.00pm.

The committee stood down and the Annual General Meeting was convened by Patrick Casey and Peter Petrou.

MEETING CLOSED at 10.15pm.

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, 7 September 2004 at Dandenong Library.

CLUB NOTES:

Re Non-financial Members

All Club members who have not yet paid their annual membership subscription will be considered unfinancial with effect from 30 August 2004. If membership renewal is not received by 30 September 2004 you will be ineligible to receive further copies of the Club newsletter and deleted from all circulation lists.

Re Personal Information Form – **Important!**

Self-explanatory form enclosed with this newsletter.

VFWDC MERCHANDISE

For Sale

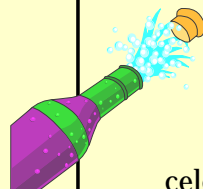
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Stubbie Holders	\$ 6.00 ea

A hearty congratulations
to

Don Montague

on the occasion of his
70th birthday
celebrated on 8 August 2004

Our warmest wishes to Don,
one of our longest serving
Club Members



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Yahoo Groups

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

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

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

Any problems, email

anthony@ctsmoash.com.au

CLUB CALENDAR AT A GLANCE

AUGUST

Tuesday 31st Committee Meeting John Partridge

SEPTEMBER

Saturday 4th Murrundindi Day Trip John Partridge

Tuesday 7th Club Meeting John Partridge

Sunday 12th Rodney Fountain
Memorial Car Rally James Holden

Friday 17th
to Sunday 19th Mystery Pub-to-Pub David Hughes

Saturday 25th
to Sunday 26th Advanced Training Ashley Martin

Tuesday 28th Committee Meeting Carl Surtees

OCTOBER

Tuesday 5th Club Meeting John Partridge

Sunday 10th Larbatouche Day Trip Carl Surtees

Saturday 16th
to Sunday 17th Proficiency Training John Partridge

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

Tuesday 28th Committee Meeting Roger Baird

Melbourne Cup Weekend

Saturday 30th to
Tuesday 2nd Nov Wonnangatta Roast John Partridge

NOVEMBER

Tuesday 9th Club Meeting John Partridge

Saturday 13th to
Sunday 14th Nav Run John Partridge

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

Tuesday 30th Committee Meeting Lesley Peters

DECEMBER

Saturday 4th Christmas Party John Partridge

Tuesday 7th Club Meeting John Partridge

Tuesday 21st Committee Meeting TBC



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Welcome to

The Corner

And this month we introduce....

“CHEATS MOUSSAKA”

[Moussaka – the Greek’s answer to Shepherd’s Pie]

- 1 tblspn olive oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 500g minced pork or lamb [or combination]
- 2 tspns dried oregano
- 2 x 400g cans chopped tomatoes
- salt and pepper
- 1 aubergine, cubed
- 300ml carton of cheese sauce
- 2 eggs, beaten



Heat oil and fry onion for about 5 minutes until softened. Add the mince and fry quickly and evenly until browned. Sprinkle the oregano, then tip in the tomatoes, salt and pepper. Bring to the boil, then stir in the aubergine. Cover and simmer for 20 minutes until the aubergine is tender. Preheat the oven to 180 degrees C/350 degrees F. Mix in the cheese sauce and the eggs. Tip the meat into a 1.4 litre ovenproof dish, then pour over the cheese sauce. Bake for 20-25 minutes until lightly set and golden. Leave to cool for 5 minutes, then serve with a green salad. Yummo!!!!



FOOT BLISS

Your feet carry you through life and this is a wonderful way to reward them... and you. Three drops of lavender and two drops of tangerine oils into a bowl of warm water and soak while you read a good book, snooze, or just have some quiet time. Then ask a loved one to massage your feet with a tablespoon of carrier oil and two drops of lemon essential oil. Sit back, close your eyes and relax... Have a good month folks... **Annie**



No-one guessed my little photo thingy in last month’s mag, so I will let you know where it was... It was a small bridge over a creek in Woodend. Terry and I stopped there for lunch on our way home from Mildura last easter... it is in a lovely park – might be worth some of you finding it and enjoying the little walks around it. It has a fauna reserve, and a native plant garden...well worth a look.

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



TRADING POST

FOR SALE

6x4 TRAILER, 18" sides, near new 245/75R16 BFG all terrain tyres, jockey wheel, rear stabiliser leg, facility to attach bike rack at rear. Has been used mainly for camping. **\$850.00**. Contact Michael Rodger ph: 0412 530 666 email: mjrodger@optusnet.com.au

1999 DAEWOO LANOS (Manual), EC, 45,000 kms, December 04 rego, full service history. **\$8300** ONO. Great little on road vehicle. Contact Lesley Peters on 9540 0007 or email lespet03@yahoo.com.au. Lauren’s gone overseas and left us with the job of selling her car, tyvm!!!



Four Wheel Drive Radio Show
“Talking Four Wheel Drive”
Saturdays at 10.00m



Four Wheel Drive Victoria ‘e’ News
at www.fwdvictoria.org.au

Smile Time...



The Meaning of “Happiness”

To be happy with a man, you must understand him a lot and love him a little.
To be happy with a woman, you must love her a lot and not try to understand her at all!

[Thanks Dawnie!]

FORTHCOMING TRIPS

MURRUNDINDI to TOOLANGI DAY TRIP

Date: Saturday, 4 September 2004
Trip Leader: John Partridge
Contact Nos: Mob: 0427 331 211 H: 9789 6985
Destination: Murrundindi/Toolangi
Meeting Time/Place: 9.00am, Lilydale McDonalds
Vehicle Limit: *Min: 2, Max: 10*
Grade: *Wet: Easy Dry: Easy*
Approx Distance: 50 kms.
Equipment: Basic recovery and lunch.
Maps: N/A
Radio Channel: Channel 12
Trip Activities: Leisurely day's drive, commencing in northern Murrundindi and working back to Toolangi.

"RODNEY FOUNTAIN MEMORIAL" CAR RALLY

Date: Sunday, 12 September 2004
Trip Leader: James Holden – 9755 5790
Destination: Unknown
Meeting Place: Officer Sports Ground, Cnr Starling Road and Princes Highway.
Time: 8.30-9.00am
Grade: Scenic/Social
Vehicle Limit: Min: 4, No Max
Radio Channel: Ch. 12
Trip Activities: James won the privilege to lead this year's rally by winning last year's event! Come along and support his first effort as trip leader. Enjoy a fun day out, and don't forget to pack those weird and wonderful bits and pieces that always appear on the "things you need to you have?" list.

ANNUAL MYSTERY PUB-TO-PUB

Date: Friday 17th to Sunday 19th September 2004
Trip Leader: David Hughes
Contact Nos: B: 9798 1492, H: 9706 2966
Destination: Mystery
Meeting Place: Yarragon Motel – Friday pm. Or Yarragon Hotel – Saturday am. (Melway Ref: Map 528 B7)
Time: Friday pm.
Grade: Scenic/Social
Vehicle Limit: Min: 30 people.
Approx Kms: 300
Radio Channel: Ch. 12
Equipment: Good sense of humour. BYO (drinks) for Saturday night.
Trip Activities: This year's Pub to Pub to Pub will be full of fun and mystery like other years, but with a difference. You will need to travel light as you will have to carry everything to a bus for your final climb up the mountain! Which mountain, keep guessing. Could be some 4x4, so you may need good tyres.
Cost: \$105 per person includes Friday/Saturday night accommodation, Saturday lunch and dinner, Sunday breakfast and lunch, bus transfers.

ADVANCED TRAINING WEEKEND

Date: 25-26 September 2004
Trip Leader: Ashley Martin
Contact Nos: Mob: 0438 600 904 H: 9540 0007
Destination: Little O'Tooles Camping Ground
Meeting Time/Place: Time TBA. Officer Weighbridge.
Vehicle Limit: *Min: 3, Max: 10.*
Grade: *Wet: Hard Dry: Medium.*
Equipment: As per new classifications.
Maps: N/A
Radio Channel: Channel 12
Trip Activities: We will be discussing and then putting into practice some of the more advanced driving techniques, including winch recovery, driving rocky and rutted tracks. Also incorporating *Advanced Port Drinking and Morning Recovery 101.*

LARBETOUCHE DAY TRIP

Date: Sunday, 10 October 2004
Trip Leader: Carl Surtees
Contact Nos: 9706 2692
Destination: Larbetouche (near Powelltown)
Meeting Time/Place: TBA.
Vehicle Limit: *Min: 3, Max: 8.*
Grade: *Wet: Hard to Extreme. Dry: Medium.*
Equipment: As per new classifications.
Maps: N/A
Radio Channel: Channel 12
Trip Activities: Just a day trip to an area that I have heard is similar to Toolangi but without the rocks!

2004 NAV RUN

Date: 13-14 November 2004
Trip Leader: John Partridge
Contact Nos: Mob: 0427 331 211, AH: 9789 6985
Destination:
Meeting Time/Place: Officer Weighbridge. Time TBC.
Vehicle Limit: *Min: 5, Max: 15*
Grade: *Wet: Medium Dry: Medium*
Approx Distance: 160 kms
Last Available Fuel: Moe
Equipment: All basic recovery gear, GPS, compass and camping gear.
Maps: TBA
Radio Channel: Channel 12
Trip Activities: The event will be run using the notes from the ProComp NavRun held recently. You will be given a series of photos with GPS coordinates on them. You will have to find these and take an exact replica of the photo with the Polaroid camera supplied. You may take whatever tracks necessary so you can make it as easy or hard, driving wise, as you like. This is an untimed navigational event that promises to be a lot of fun. A GPS is not essential but will make it easier. You will need a navigator to assist.
I am hopeful of arranging accommodation at very cheap rates, but to do this I will need an idea of numbers at the September meeting.

TRIP REPORTS

WARBURTON DAY TRIP – 27 June 2004

<i>Trip Leader:</i>	Carl Surtees	GQ Patrol
<i>Participants:</i>	Gerard	Passenger w/CS
	Paul & Ashley	80 Series LC
	Derek & Mike	Discovery
<i>Visitors:</i>	Mark & Marcelle	MQ Patrol

We started by turning off the Marysville Road on to Telford Road just after the Narbethong Pub.

After adjusting tyre pressures, we headed for a reported bog hole, but missed it somehow and ended up on Acheron Way. Instead we turned on to Fishers Creek Tk and then on to Stricklands Spur Tk.

Mark had some trouble getting through the first mud hole before we found ourselves at a big bog hole that Carl had had trouble getting through on his earlier trip. The car was now "bigger" and Carl showed no problems



as the Patrol powered through. Which is more than I had on a slippery upslope just a little further along. I couldn't



seem to get out of the rut on the right hand side and didn't have the clearance at one particular point. It took me three attempts before a new line on the left hand side got me through.

A little further on, a rocky climb gave Gerard a few problems. We couldn't see him above us and around a corner, but in the end he had to back down the hill and have another go – this time successfully.

On the same hill, I had plenty of practice at stall stops as Carl looked on. The tracks in this area seemed to be quite rocky and although wet and slippery, there was little clay.

Carl, Gerard and I made it to the top of the next hill and Carl went on ahead to look for a spot to stop for morning tea. When I'd made it to the top, I waited with Gerard while we listened on the radio to Mark having a lot of problems on the rocky surface. Eventually he made it to the top and we caught up with Carl for a morning cuppa.

We followed Paradise Plains Road and made our way along some other tracks and Olsens Road to Tommy's Bend Road before following a track that had gone "feral" because it seemed that it had been shut for a while.

We came out on to Cumberland Road where we had lunch while the kids played in the snow. Mark and Marcelle left us after what had been a really exciting first 4WD trip for them.

After lunch we took the Lake Mountain turnoff and turned on to Camerons Cascade Tk. Here we found a tree across the track which Carl removed with his chainsaw. The chopped up logs were loaded into the back of Gerard's car, giving him some pretty light steering.

Carl said, "Don't worry, it's pretty flat from here on," as we turned into a steep uphill section. Gerard soldiered on despite frequent claims of "no steering". After more up and down sections, thick with sticky mud, Gerard gave up on the logs, got out of his car and threw them all out on the roadside.

However, I thought I heard him say that it hadn't made much difference on a steep, winding, slippery downhill section and there were some suggestions that he should go back for them.

Along Sonds Tk, we came across a tree that had fallen across the track in spectacular fashion. It had fallen into another tree and split it straight down the centre, ending with its trunk suspended about 2.5 metres above the track. It was a recent fall. We moved some of the debris and drove over the rest.



We turned into Lady Talbot Drive which had been graded recently and followed the creek along for a while. Carl thought there might be a crossing and I took a brief diversion to see if I could find it, without luck.

We made our way back on to Cumberland Road just East of Marysville where we reinflated our tyres for the return trip home.

Derek Hymas

TOOLANGI "EXTREME" – Sunday 18 July 2004

Trip Leader: John Partridge GU Patrol
 Michael Rodger passenger

Participants: Paul Ryan 80 series
 Murray Ogden passenger
 Craig Rea 60 series
 Carl Surtees GQ Patrol
 Bethany – not so silent passenger

We all met at Lilydale Maccas at 8:30am and made a quick getaway for a change.

After an uneventful drive up, we turned off the main road at Rocky Tk and now I know why it is so named.

John went first and got up about half way before coming to an abrupt halt, the track was wet and quite slippery. He stopped and had a look at a the rock drop off that had stopped him, after which he had another attempt and was successful.

Then it was my turn, I stopped at the same spot but I failed in my mission to prove that my new monster truck could leap small buildings in a single bound.

At the top of the track Murray said he could see coolant coming out of the radiator of my car so I reached under the front and found it was coming from the drain plug; when I tried to tighten up the plug it came off in my hand.



Q: Where to find a plastic drain plug in the bush.

A: On the Toyota recovery point on Johns rear bumper, a 10mm bolt.

Next question: how to seal the bolt. Simple, with Teflon tape which we all carry (don't we). Well John does...

Next was Wee Creek Tk to Marginal Rd and to the servo to fill up my radiator.

We then entered Toolangi again on an unnamed track with an interesting dip in it. John went first but ended up

with one set of wheels in one rut and one in another just to make it a bit more fun.

Next another unnamed track where John at one time had all four wheels off the ground (pretty impressive when going up a very steep track) but had to admit defeat and went up the chicken track.



We proceeded down Martins Tk and found some very deep rutted bog holes where some of us sustained a bit of body damage. Craig lost a tail light, mirror, two panels slightly damaged. Then a right turn at Kalatha Creek Tk where we found a very large bog hole and I had to try out my new tyres – to Bethany's horror (I need new ear drums now). I got through without any problems.

Just after this section, Paul rolled a tyre off its rim. The day trip was a good test for all involved drivers and vehicles.

Damage report:

John	None
Paul	Sill bent Rolled tyre
Craig	Two panels damaged Mirror Engine mount Rear brake locked on brake pads fell apart 5 wheel studs on one wheel on drive home
Carl	very slight body damage.

As you can see from the damage report, sometimes it just is not your day.

Carl Surtees



Watch out Dad!

CAPE YORK

26 June to 6 August 2004

Name	Nicknames from trip		
George	Duke		
Geoff	Scarface	Captain 4WD	Big Boy
Rochelle	Jerky Girl		
Ashley	Rudolph	Stealth	
Brian	Little Boy Lost		
Steve	Nigel Caruthers		
Jill	Half Moon		
Kate	Idjit		
Steve's Car	DC-9	Bush Pig	
Tom	Pogue		
Sheila	Crusher		
Sue	Pussy		
Graeme	Skippy		

The journey begins...

Day One: Saturday 3rd July – Melbourne to Dubbo

Early start for all, met at 5:30am at Ford factory Campbellfield. Steve was up to a good start with the jack out before we left with the group. First stop Nagambie, for breakfast and to meet up with Geoff and Rochelle who had a slight problem, both their headlights blowing up.

We followed Highway "39" out of Victoria and stopped for an early lunch on the banks of the Murrumbidgee River just before Narrandera. After lunch we headed north and encountered a lot of drivers of both sedans and trucks who appeared to have a death wish and spent a number of kilometre vying for Australia's most stupid driver award.

During the afternoon the weather improved to brighter, sunny conditions. We arrived at Dubbo around 5:00pm. George, Ashley, Brian, Sheila and Tom set up camp while Rochelle, Geoff, Kate, Steve and Jill decided to stay in cabins at Dubbo City Caravan Park.

Day Two: Sunday 4th July – Dubbo to Taroom

We got close to the planned 6:30am start leaving at 6:45am (not bad for holiday mode!). We past by the Warrum Bungle Ranges, and decided we will have to run a club trip up there one day. Quick stop at Coonabarabran. The quizmaster Geoff started with some trivia questions; we had a number of questions answered by other travellers.

Just before Moree a few of us got pulled over for a breath test – Steve's car got a second look from one of the police officers. While chatting on the radio another car recognized Geoff's voice and it ended up being one of his friends from Tecoma. We had a quick stop for lunch at Goondiwindi. Then we headed up towards Taroom, it was a long dry drive. We saw a few emus and some dead wild boar.

Day Three: Monday 5th July – Taroom to Charters Towers

"HAPPY BIRTHDAY GEORGE!!"

Early start at 6:30am, and we are heading towards Emerald. Took the Fitzroy development dirt road. Just before we came to Emerald, Tom heard a loud bang and after all the guys looking at it they found he had broken a

front universal joint. So they removed the front tail shaft and after we had a quick lunch we headed off to Clermont. George discovered that 2 cameras had been stolen, we think near Dubbo. (What a great birthday present.) The road narrowed considerably and a couple of times we had to move off the road while a road train came barrelling through. Arrived at Charters Towers at around 6:30pm and stayed at the "Mexican Caravan Park".

Day Four: Tuesday 6th July – Charters Towers to Cairns

Headed off to Cairns in the thick fog at 7:00am. We arrived at Cairns at around 2:00pm and set up camp at The Coconut Resort on the outskirts of Cairns. This was the first night everyone set up tents. Tom went and had his uni joint fixed and George got new tyres and his police report. Had an early night after the long drives from the previous days. During the night, some were awakened by the madman from hell who was screaming abuse at something unknown.

Day Five: Wednesday 7th July – Cairns

Day off. Was a day to catch up on shopping and for George to collect his insurance for his cameras. Jill, Steve and Kate had a day out with friends on a reef tour, while the others caught up on some much needed rest.

Ashley, Brian, Geoff and Rochelle went into town for some shopping. "Don't worry Rochelle, the Billabong shop is just down this way." "You need white Ashley, it's your colour."

Day Six: Thursday 8th July – Cairns to Cape Tribulation

All out by 9:00am, on the road again towards Port Douglas, time to reminisce for Sue and Graeme who had been there 30 years ago. During our time at Port Douglas, Kate was slowly placed in the water by Ashley; comments made by Kate were "don't wet the hat!" and "I don't want to die!". On to Mossman Gorge for a pleasant swim and a bite to eat. We were all keen to get on the road away from the crowds, and made our way to the Daintree River barge crossing. Pretty lucky we all were on the same barge, and made our way up to the lookout at Mt Alexander, quick photo shoot session before making our way towards Cape Trib. Staying the night at Jungle Lodge was an interesting experience if you like sleeping on rocks. However, if you were Geoff and Rochelle you could set your tent up and sleep inside a shed as their site was bitumen. First bit of rain for the trip but nothing major.



Day Seven: Friday 9th July – Cape Tribulation to Lakefield National Park

Up and out by 8:45am. Went across the road for a quick stroll along the beach, a bit of palm climbing by Geoff and a bit of inflatable doll holding by Jill. Continued our drive up the Bloomfield track stopping at the Bloomfield Falls. After a brief walk it was back on the road and on our way to Lions Den pub for lunch and some pleasant liquid amber refreshments. Once leaving our mark on the wall it was off to Cooktown for the final shopping spree and registering to stay at Lakefield NP. While making our way down the corrugated roads for the final stretch it was great to hear Geoff off the air due to breaking both uhf and am aerals within an hour (bliss). Once filling out the registration form and paying our fee it was off to 12 Mile Water Hole for the night.

Day Eight: Saturday 10th July – Lakefield NP

After a big driving day everyone had a slow start, except the two fishermen. Eventually the rest of the group headed off on a walk down the river to catch up with Geoff and George and to hear about the one that got away. Even with an audience still no fish appeared, nor a crocodile to break up the boredom. So the group headed back to camp for a quick bite of lunch and then explored the park. First up was the Old Laura Homestead where there were hundreds of red tailed cockatoos. This was also the first sighting of the Belgium family. The homestead was interesting but fairly barren. A few of the original buildings exist, with the main homestead fenced off, allowing only a small amount to be viewed close up.



Cruising back towards camp we took sidetracks as the whim took us. First visit was to Four Mile Watering Hole and then to Six Mile Watering Hole. But neither of these compared to the site at Eight Mile Swamp. Here was a magnificent lagoon that had an abundance of white flowers, as far as the eye could see. The track wound its way around the entire perimeter of the swamp. There was prolific bird life and numerous photographic moments. All present agreed that Sue, Graeme, George and Geoff had missed out on the best piece of the park. Returning back to camp meant hearing more stories about the one that got away.

Sheila and Sue's bird watching had success with the discovery of a Papuan Frogmouth in the trees. Graeme's fauna encounter was a little more dramatic when he crossed path with a snake on a midnight walk with Sue.

Day Nine: Sunday 11th July – Lakefield NP to Coen

For those who missed out on Eight Mile Swamp the opportunity was given to leave early; only Sue and Graeme took the offer. An hour later, at half past, the rest of us left and headed directly for Old Faithful Watering Hole.

Day Ten: Monday 12th July – Coen to Chili Beach

Usual time of half past for leaving was set. Geoff and Rochelle were more organised than usual to leave on time, but were relegated to last once again by the petrol pump breaking down.

First break of the day was taken at the Archer River Roadhouse for Hobbit Second Breakfast (which for most people consisted of a Mrs Macs pie). We didn't stay for long as we were headed for Chili Beach. The road in is only about 100km, but you have to allow approximately 4 hours for the trip.

Crossing the Wenlock River was no problems but at the Pascoe River we encountered a couple in a hired 4WD who had pulled off to the left a little too far and was stuck.



Ashley came to the rescue and snatched him out, but we were all left confused because he promptly did a U-turn and took off.

No-one minded the distraction,

as the Pascoe River is beautiful. Everyone wanted to stop for lunch but there was no room for parking. Just down the road George found a turnout to the left which took us to a spectacular spot by the river to stop. The order of the day was swimming, with Geoff, Ashley, Steve and Kate getting in quickly to throw the ball around. Jill wasn't keen to go in, but Ashley and Steve wanted to help her in. There wasn't a full dunking but she did get fairly wet.

No-one really wanted to leave but we had to keep moving, Chili Beach is a popular camping spot and we didn't want to miss out. So it was off to the Ranger Station to register. We had three other vehicles pull in behind us, so to save time we decided to quickly dash off and see if we could get a camp site before paying. The God's must have been shining on us as the 3 vehicles took off in the wrong direction. It didn't take long for them to catch up with our tailend Charlie but it was too late. We came in and managed to claim the last camping spot that would hold us all, and provided some shelter from the incessant, howling wind (the 3 vehicles had to take a spot right on the beach where the wind never stopped – they only lasted the night).

Geoff decided his car needed a little remodelling and used a stump to create some texture on the front left fender. Some damage was done to the wheel flare and and panel, but the main consequence was the passenger door could not be opened. Geoff got out the crowbar and did some serious panel beating. The door once more became useable but the with no mud flap the mud was going to flick up the side of the car.

To be continued...

Four Wheel



Drive Victoria

Regional
Saturday

Representatives Meeting
14/8/04

On Saturday, 14 August 2004 the Regional Representatives met at the Association's office to discuss the duties and terms of reference for Regional Representatives. The meeting was unanimous in its resolution of the issues.

This was started in part from our success with the DSE at Parkers Corner and the Merringtons camping ground. Now there are some 40 people making contact with Parks Victoria and the DSE. At the meeting seven people were selected to head up the Regional Representatives Committee, of which I am now one.

The objects of the committee are to manage the local representation issue. This involves the mutual sharing of information across the State and to ensure that policy decisions are not implemented in regional areas without reference to the whole of statewide policies and back to the Association for sign off.

The best way to describe this role is to ensure that local officers of government agencies do not make policy decisions affecting tracks and park management without reference to the Association. By passing the information to the Committee of Management, the Tracks Committee can deal with the political issues and ensure we do not get picked off in local areas one by one.

The duties of the Regional Representatives will be to:

1. Act as a sub committee of the Association.
2. Represent the Association in direct and day to day dealings with land management agencies, Parks Victoria and DSE, up to the level of Park Ranger equivalent.
3. Report and make recommendations to the Association on all proposals by local management with respect to the land under its stewardship.
4. Represent and make decisions on behalf of the Association as the Regional Representative to the local Land Management agency.
5. Attend such meetings as required to carry out the function with the local area Land Management agency and attend and report to the Committee on a regular basis and attend at least one annual meeting of the Committee at such place as the Committee directs.
6. Make notes, obtain papers and reports and advise the Committee of all matters in relation to local area Land Management.
7. Include park rangers in club activities
8. Develop the Terms of Reference regarding decision-making.

As club members you can help by making contact with the park rangers in the areas that you plan to run trips. Try to find out about the local conditions and any problems that they have encountered in recent times and pass all information on to me.

John Partridge
Regional Representative

Otways Meeting: Sunday 15th August 2004

On Sunday over 500 members attended Apollo Bay to support the local community oppose the expanded National Park in the Otways. Channel 7 reported a tremendous and positive story during their Olympic coverage. I write this to pass on the message of thanks that has been given to me on your behalf by the local organising committee who only started today's rally process three weeks ago. Please tell all your members that Four Wheel Drive Victoria stands up for local communities and this social capital and empowerment is something very special and appreciated. If you were unable to attend for whatever reason, the fact that are a member is important.

Michael Coldham
President, FWDVictoria

The Battle for the Wombat!

(the aftermath of May 1st)

By Milton Oliver, Facilitator RUG Committee and President CITWEST 4X4 Club

The battle for the rights of recreational users of the Wombat State Forest is almost done and all but won!

Since May 1st, when more than 1400 concerned four wheel drive recreationists turned up at Daylesford at the invitation of the Forest Assembly organisers, much has happened. It has been a constant battle between then and now to ensure that the voices of vehicular recreationists have been heard. The battle has been hard fought for several key reasons, the chief one being the insidious and very deep-seated green ideology that became embedded in the Community Forest Management process from the outset. From day one of this process politicians and DSE representatives have cultivated certain narrow ideals that are not broadly supported by the wider community, and have subtly recruited key players to insist on this very dark green ideology to ensure the state government retains the vital and powerful green vote in coming state elections.

As a club, CITYWEST has no problem with the doctrines of conservation and sustainability. But we do have a problem when green politics and ideologies distort doctrine going far beyond what is reasonable, fair, and what is inclusive.

At the core of the Wombat CFM process an ideology has been embedded that virtually says "the forest itself has rights, the forest comes first, the forest is all". That ideology is fundamentally flawed. It elevates the forest to a level where it almost becomes a deity – a nature god to be worshipped.

Indeed, some green ideology that has synthesised itself with indigenous spirituality does basically that – it worships nature. Anyone interfering with that is opposed on spirituality grounds. Not all the greens I have encountered in the battle for the Wombat are like this. But several key players at the core of the Wombat process are very much of this ilk. I would argue that the forests exist for the people not the other way around. Naturally, this does not mean that people can do whatever they like to the forest and think there will be no repercussions! We are acutely aware that the health of any forest will have a direct impact for good or ill on humanity, depending on how well it is managed. Opposing this "green spirituality" (which no one will admit to, but is clearly there) has been the toughest aspect of this battle.

The other major challenge has been dealing with the deception that has been deployed against us in order to ensure that the greens keep control of the process. We have battled against this on an almost daily basis. It is a standard tool. Assurances we have been given are invariably broken or conveniently forgotten, poor minutes of meetings are kept, decisions are made with no consultation, so that the ISC cannot be kept to account, blatant lies have been told to us to throw us off the scent, and the spread of misinformation has been a standard device.

The best weapon we've had to overcome all this is truth. The facts cannot lie. We have kept accurate records of meetings and have been able to challenge lies,

so-called reports, and attempts at manipulation and deception; sometimes two or three of us swaying whole meetings to reconsider the facts. It has been unpleasant. We have been personally attacked.

Recently I discovered that seven key CFM players are poised to submit applications for grants in the order of \$33,000 each. They've been aggressively pushing for certain hasty legal structures for CFM so that these grants could be quietly slipped through (by them!). But not a single one of these people declared their conflict of interest. When I challenged one person about this, they suddenly withdrew from proceedings. Not pleasant!

But we stuck at it for the sake of our rights. All along the way we have been rebuked by the ISC for suggesting that they were anti four wheel driving. Yet, we have been opposed and refused access as key players in the CFM decision making process. They may not publicly oppose us, but privately they are resentfully opposed because of our leadership influence. We continue to demand accountability – something they dislike.

Despite all this though, we have prevailed. A new council is about to be formed and we will be part of it. The battle for the Wombat has been won – for now. The work of shaping our future recreation in it begins.

[Article sourced from *Off the Beaten Track*, CITYWEST's newsletter, and submitted by Ian Warburton.]