

OCTOBER 2008

Free Wheeling

Official Newsletter of the Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club

Registration No A0002184F



Hawthorn Creek Crossing – August 2008



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

NOTICE BOARD



OXFAM AUSTRALIA CHRISTMAS TREE PROJECT



Where: Scout Hall, Pakenham Street, Blackburn (Melway Map 47 H 12)
When: Saturday 6 December
Time: 11.00am sharp

You will be given a very well organized list of addresses with Melway grid references, all in close proximity to each other. All you do is drop off the tree that has already been paid for. The smiles you receive from the younger recipients would be second only to that of them greeting Santa Claus. It will take each team 1 to 3 hours, and we encourage you to meet for a BBQ or social get together before or afterwards.

We encourage members to give up a few hours of their time for this great cause.

Contact: Tim Axtell, Trip Co-ordinator VFWDC to advise your availability.



Australia's No 1 event for touring, towing and off-roading is BIGGER than ever!
The National 4x4 Show, Fishing Show & Outdoors Expo will once again be held in October at the Melbourne Exhibition Centre from 23-26 October.
The 2008 exhibition will run for 4 BIG DAYS from 3pm Thursday right through the weekend.

Exhibition Hours:
Thursday 23 October 2008
Friday 24 October 2008
Saturday 25 October 2008
Sunday 26 October 2008
Melbourne Exhibition Centre

MELBOURNE LEISUREFEST – 2-5 OCTOBER – SANDOWN

(formerly known as RV & Camping Leisurefest)

For four days in October, Sandown Racecourse will be jam packed with a huge range of boats, fishing gear, marine accessories, touring vehicles and genuine off road accessories from leading brands.
This new look event, whilst in keeping with its past tradition, is coming together at one great venue to bring you the ultimate lifestyle show.
New interactive attractions include testing of caravans, campers, motorhomes and towable boats on the motor racing circuit, in addition to off-roading demonstrations on the new 4x4 track.
This is your first chance to sit in the passenger seat and fully experience on and off road touring and towing in one location.
It's a great day out for the whole family with free kids' activities over the weekend.

**That's the new Melbourne Leisurefest at Sandown Racecourse
Thursday 2 to Sunday 5 October 2008
BE THERE!!**



Four Wheel Drive Victoria will be participating in this event. As well as having their own stand, Hugh Mc Laren will be working with FWDV Driver Training instructors who will coordinate the four wheel drive circuit. The circuit will take approx 8 minutes and interested spectators will be able to be a passenger as their qualified instructors navigate the course.



COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT 2008-2009

President	John Partridge	president@vfwdc.com 0428 331 211
Vice President	Ashley Martin	vicepres@vfwdc.com 0438 600 904
Treasurer	Craig Major	treasurer@vfwdc.com 0432 876 699
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GENERAL COMMITTEE

Assistant Secretary	Anthony Van Buiten	asstsec@vfwdc.com
Trip Co-ordinator	Tim Axtell	trips@vfwdc.com
Newsletter Editor	Lesley Peters	editor@vfwdc.com
Association Delegate	Ashley Martin	
Training Officers	Mark Kochan	
	Ashley Martin	
	John Partridge	
	Michael Rodger	
New Member Contact		
Web Manager	Paul Ryan	vfwdc@vfwdc.com

CLUB DETAILS

Registered Name	Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club Inc
Registration No	A002184F
Correspondence	PO Box 778 Dandenong Vic 3174
Email	secretary@vfwdc.com
Website	www.vfwdc.com
Meetings	Held first Tuesday of each month, excluding January (no meeting). The November General Meeting is held on 2 nd Tuesday of the month due to Melbourne Cup public holiday.
Location	Dandenong Library Stuart Street Dandenong Vic 3175
Newsletter	All articles and photographs to be submitted prior to 20 th of each month. editor@vfwdc.com
Front Cover	Photograph courtesy of : Michael Harris

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

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

It won't be long now and the weather will be better and more inviting to take a weekend away camping. Now is a great time to give the ol' truck a good look over and make sure everything is right for the rigors that we tend to put them through. One of the great things about being in a club like ours is the wealth of experience that we collectively have. If you have an issue with your vehicle or you're not sure about setting it up for trips, drop us a line on the Yahoo forum and one or more of us should be able to help you out.

The Parkers Corner DSE has put out a great press release on the working bee we did with the graves last month. The article has been picked up by the Latrobe newspapers and as a result our club has had some excellent coverage.

Noel Lees from the Parkers Corner DSE contacted me last month with the unfortunate news about the mess that has been caused by a mindless few at the O'Tooles camping ground. As a result he has closed this camping ground for the winter, to be re-opened before the Cup Weekend. Noel plans to make this camping ground a seasonal closure for each winter. I have been in discussion with him to see if we can come to a solution to stop this happening in the future, as it seems to me that closing the camping ground is a bit of a bandaid solution.

Well, that's all for this month. The next Club meeting will be back at our usual haunt at the Library.

Until we meet next, take care.

John Partridge

Minutes of the General Meeting – 2 September 2008

As we had no keys to get into the hall, the venue was changed to La Porcettas and opened by President John Partridge.

Present: There were 14 members present as per the attendance book.

Apologies: Shane McNeil, Anne Pettilner.

Visitors: Peter Cox, Don Hughes, Simon Kovacic, Sally and Mick Harris, Jim O'Brien.

Minutes of the previous meeting:

Accepted: Mark Felton

Seconded: Ian Warburton

Matters Arising: No matters arising from previous minutes.

Correspondence In:

- Certificate of Currency from Affinity Insurance Brokers.
- Cross Country Jeep Club Newsletter August 2008.

Correspondence Out:

- Insurance form faxed through to Affinity.
- Newsletter

Treasurer's Report:

Not available as Craig away this month.

Trip Co-ordinator's Report:

Trip Reports:

AGM Dinner: There was a bit of confusion as to the starting time at The Pavilion. When the meals arrived they were great and large sizes (except for dessert). Everyone was able to few wines over a friendly chat; everyone was satisfied with the dinner. We might go again next year, but would prefer a quieter place for speeches.

Car Rally: Our rally took us through the back of Lysterfield and Mt Dandenong. The organizers tried for harder questions this year. Speed doesn't help you win; Shane and kids would have won with only half a point in it. Ashley and Lesley had two sets of answers to see who was right, not what was right. Craig and Marijka were happy to come in third. Final destination was the Birdsland Reserve for a well deserved rest and lunch.

Noojee-Walhalla: We ended up starting our trip just out of Neerim East, most of the members went up Friday night with a few having a few drinks till very early in the morning. Phil and Tim came up early Saturday morning. In all there were 12 vehicles, we found a few interesting tracks, some got stuck coming down hill, and we made a few u-turns along the way.

Found our campsite just out of Moe, but road was closed, went other way, bridge was out, tried the 1st one again and we were able to get through and set up camp there. It was a nice early night to bed for some except for someone falling asleep on the long drop and many enjoying a drink or two into the early hours of the morning. Woke up Sunday with a few sore heads, cleaned up and left to tackle a few more tracks, this morning we found plenty of mud and a track Ashley and John would like to come back and have another go at. It was a hard track.

Pub to Pub: No report as nobody at the meeting had gone to the trip.

Forthcoming Trips:

SEP 21	Gembrook Day Trip	Tim Axtell
OCT 14	First Aid Course Pt 1	John Partridge
OCT 17-19	Annual Wine Trip	Ashley Martin
OCT 23-26	4x4 Show	
OCT 26	Toolangi Day Trip	John Partridge
OCT 28	First Aid Course Pt 2	John Partridge
OCT 31- NOV 4	Cup Weekend	TBC
NOV 21-23	Annual Fishing Trip	Ashley Martin
NOV 30	Christmas Party	Tim Axtell
DEC 6	Oxfam Christmas Tree Deliveries	

If you have your name on attendance list and cannot attend a trip, make sure notify the Trip Leader.

Gembrook DT - We are going along with other clubs to help out at a working bee, to clean up a campsite, that was complete destroyed by some low life's. We will have some lunch then depending on time to go and enjoy some of the tracks. If you would like to attend could you please fill in form.

First Aid Course Parts 1 & 2 - We have a good meeting room to hold the course in. Course is \$145.00 for level 2. It will come in handy when we're out there in the bush and no help for miles. Final details to follow.

Annual Wine Trip - This will be a social tri. Ashley will be putting some plans into place. The trip will take place around the Heathcote area. On Saturday night there will be a communal dinner where everyone will bring a plate of food for dinner and happy hour.

4x4 Fishing Show - Details to follow.

Toolangi Hard Trip - This weekend is only for the experienced drivers. Your vehicle needs to be set up. If your still want to go please contact trip coordinator and will sort out an arrangement to travel with somebody else. We want to tackle some of the hard/steep tracks.

Melbourne Cup Weekend - The details of this weekend still need to be confirmed, there are a few possibilities, somewhere further away from Melbourne with a base camp. Possibly travel to Swifts Creek/Haunted Stream.

Annual Fishing Trip - 2-3 people usually bring their fishing rod, with about one person actually fishing for the weekend. It's a good relaxing weekend, near Jamieson, possibly 12 Mile Reserve (where we camped at this year's snow trip).

Christmas Party - There will be \$12.50 entry fee for adults, kids free at the Healesville Hedgend Maze; Santa will be visiting, BYO BBQ lunch; well worth going to this event.

Oxfam Christmas Tree Delivery - Need to have a trailer or ute (no roof racks) we will be given a map of an area to deliver Christmas trees to. The club has been involved since this event started 16 years ago. The funds will go towards relief victims of the tsunami. It is for a good cause. For further details please see the letter attached to the September 08 newsletter.

Association Report:

Noel Lees had contacted John and has been fed up with O'Toole's campsite been destroyed again so he has closed the camp site for the rest of the year and will be applying the campsite for seasonal closure. This will put pressure on the other surrounding campsites and haven't found who was responsible. What could be done in regards to this matter, ballot, permit to camp, to have some kind of records, easier to track the culprit.

At Seninis campsite the bridge from the Moe-Erica side and access from the Tanjil Brein side, however it is second on the list to be fixed in the area out of 5 bridges to be replaced. The pilot program of Bunyip MVO has been put on hold.

General Business:

- The club library has been sorted out into smaller boxes with a list of their contents. We will manage better of how the items are signed in and out. We have made copies of some of the items, easier to replace. This is a small role in the club and we are looking at a volunteer to please take on this role. Possibly a buddy system could be put into place. Shane possibly to take on the role, he will get back to us with his decision.
- The members of the club would like to see more day trips as some can't make the full weekend trips, but do have a little time up their sleeves.
- The November meeting is going to be held at an interesting place, instead of meeting at the library. If you have any ideas could you please pass them onto the committee
- Johan would like to participate in a navigation exercise. Possibly be more involved on trips instead of just following the vehicle in front. It's always best to contact the trip leader and they will be able to give you advice on what maps are needed and ask them plenty of questions. Also get involved with helping plan the trip with them.

- Club forum: Shane has set up a "dummy one" and has printed out the relevant information. He asks the club members who use forums on the internet and who would like to use one. Most members raised their hands.
- New membership packs were given out.

Tea Duties: No tea break as not many people at meeting

Other Business: Nil.

Raffle: No raffle this month.

Meeting Closed: 10.00pm

Next Meeting: Tuesday 7 October at Dandenong Library Meeting Room.

VFWDC MERCHANDISE

For Sale

Club Polo Shirts	\$25.00 ea
Club Polar Fleece ½ Zip Jumper	\$36.00 ea
Club Polar Fleece Full Zip Jacket	\$48.00 ea
Club Sleeveless Reversible Vest	\$42.00 ea
Club Caps	\$15.00 ea
Club Beanie	\$12.00 ea
VFWDC Stickers (long)	\$ 6.00 ea
Stubbie Holders	\$ 6.00 ea

We encourage all members to purchase a Club Polo Shirt.

Email your order to committee@vfwdc.com.
Please ensure you advise size required.

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.



CLUB KITCHEN

Chicken and Corn Cakes

Ingredients

2 cobs corn
 400g chicken breast fillets, roughly chopped
 2 spring onions, finely chopped
 2 kaffir lime leaves, finely sliced
 1 egg white
 1 tbsp sweet chilli sauce
 1½ tbsp fish sauce
 ¼ cup chopped coriander
 sea salt and cracked black pepper
 peanut oil for shallow frying

Method

Place corn in a large saucepan of boiling water and simmer for 1-2 minutes. Drain and cool. Cut the kernels from the cobs (you should have about 1½ cups of corn kernels). Place chicken, corn, onion, kaffir lime leaves, egg white, chilli sauce, fish sauce, coriander, salt and pepper in a food processor and process until combined.

Roll mixture into walnut-sized balls and flatten lightly. Place on a tray lined with non-stick baking paper.

To cook, heat oil in a large non-stick frying pan over medium-low heat. Add corn cakes and cook for 4 minutes each side until golden brown and cooked through.

Serve with extra sweet chilli sauce and green salad.

Tip:

When buying fresh corn on the cob, look for bright green, tight fitting husks and golden brown silk at the stem. The corn kernels should be plump with a milky-coloured juice and form an even layer over the cob.



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Anyone wishing to advertise in the Club Directory,
 contact the Editor at editor@vfwdc.com



CLUB CALENDAR AT A GLANCE

SEPTEMBER	Sunday 21 st	Gembrook Day Trip	Tim Axtell	0414 848 753
	Tuesday 23 rd	Committee Meeting	John Partridge	0428 331 211
OCTOBER	Thursday 2 nd to Sunday 5 th	Melbourne Leisurefest @ Sandown		
	Tuesday 7 th	General Meeting	John Partridge	0428 331 211
	Tuesday 14 th	First Aid Training Course (Pt 1)	John Partridge	0428 331 211
	Friday 17 th to Sunday 19 th	Annual Wine Trip - Heathcote	Ashley Martin	0438 600 904
	Tuesday 21 st	Committee Meeting	Ashley Martin	0438 600 904
	Thursday 23 rd to Sunday 26 th	4x4 Show Fishing & Outdoors Expo		
	Sunday 26 th	Toolangi Day Trip	John Partridge	0428 331 211
	Tuesday 28 th	First Aid Training Course (Pt 2)	John Partridge	0428 331 211
NOVEMBER	Friday 31 st Oct to Tuesday 4 th Nov	Melbourne Cup Weekend	TBC	
	Tuesday 11 th	General Meeting	John Partridge	0428 331 211
	Tuesday 18 th	Committee Meeting	Craig Major	0432 876 699
	Friday 21 st to Sunday 23 rd	Annual Fishing Trip	Ashley Martin	0438 600 904
	Sunday 30 th	Christmas Party	Tim Axtell	0414 848 753
DECEMBER	Tuesday 2 nd	General Meeting	John Partridge	0428 331 211
	Saturday 6 th	Oxfam Christmas Tree Delivery Project	Ashley Martin	0438 600 904

Forthcoming Trips

Destination	GEMBROOK
Trip Leader	TIM AXTELL
Contact No	0414 848 753
Date	SUNDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2008
Meeting Time/Place	TBA
Vehicle Limits	MIN: 3 MAX: 10
Grade	WET/DRY: Easy
Approx Kms	N/A
Equipment Required	Basic recovery gear
Maps Required	N/A
Radio Channel	12
Trip Activity Details:	
The morning will be spent assisting in cleaning up a camping ground in the Gembrook area. This is part of a joint venture with a few 4WD clubs and ParksVic. After lunch it will be time to hit the tracks and enjoy some wheeling.	
A meeting place will be advised as soon as confirmation of the camp site is received.	

Destination	ANNUAL WINERY WEEKEND HEATHCOTE
Trip Leader	ASHLEY MARTIN
Contact No	0438 600 904
Date	FRIDAY 17 TH TO SUNDAY 19 TH OCTOBER 2008
Meeting Time/Place	TBA. Will depend on members are leaving.
Vehicle Limits	MIN: N/A MAX: N/A
Grade	WET/DRY: Easy
Approx Kms	150
Last Available Fuel	Heathcote
Maps Required	N/A
Equipment Required	Headache tablets ☺
Radio Channel	12

Trip Activity Details:

This year we have decided to visit an area close to Melbourne which is becoming well renowned for its Reds.

I will be leaving Melbourne on the Friday afternoon from Port Melbourne. I have not stipulated a meeting time and place as most members will make their own way up. If you choose to come up on Saturday morning it is an easy drive but please be at the caravan park by 10am. Camping will be at Queens Meadow Caravan Park which has both powered and unpowered sites, plus units and of course a full amenities block. If you are contemplating a unit, I need to know by September 15th and how many nights to ensure one will be available. I cannot guarantee one if you leave it till the last minute. You will need to bring full linen if you plan to book a unit.

Costs:

Unpowered sites \$16 for 2 people.

Powered sites \$22 for 2 people.

Units \$40 per double.

As we did with last year's wine trip, Saturday will be spent visiting several wineries and stopping at one for a picnic lunch. We should be back at the Park around 4.30 which will give us time to relax (maybe another game of bocce) before getting ready for dinner. Dinner on Saturday night will again be an all-in affair. As we had heaps of food last year, we plan to scale it down somewhat, eg some members could do happy hour and others dinner, and others maybe a cheese platter. As we get closer and numbers are confirmed we can sort out who will bring what and go from there. I will cater for breakfast and the final tally for the food can be divided between the group. From memory, last year was \$4 pp for bacon, snags, tomatoes, eggs and bread (and maybe Soujouk this year mmmmm).

Destination	TOOLANGI
Trip Leader	JOHN PARTRIDGE
Contact No	0428 331 211
Date	SUNDAY 26 OCTOBER 2008
Meeting Time/Place	Lilydale McDonalds
Vehicle Limits	MIN: 2 MAX: 6
Grade	WET/DRY: HARD
Approx Kms	200
Last Fuel Available	Lilydale
Equipment Required	A full recovery kit is mandatory, as are mud terrain type tyres. Diff locks would be an advantage
Maps Required	TBA
Radio Channel	12
Trip Activity Details:	
This is a trip for the boys and their toys. We will be tackling the hardest tracks in the area. Therefore, only those with the experience and vehicles suitable for such a trip will be allowed. You will need to have completed the Advanced Training Course.	

Expressions of Interest	NULLABOR 2008-09
Trip Leader	BOB MCKERROW
Contact No	0430 014 001 lowmacbob@aaptnet.au
Date	29 DEC-??JAN 09

Trip Activity Details:

See last month's newsletter for a detailed description of this proposed trip.

Is this a definite? No, just getting a list of interested people. There are things happening which I am still not sure about but in reality, to organise a trip like this doesn't take a brain surgeon. I have a journey I would like to take, there is no destination just a date to be completed. Even if I cannot go, maybe someone else is fired up enough to say, "Stuff it, I'll lead this trip".



NEERIM-WALHALLA TRIP 29-31 AUGUST 2008

Trip Leader: Ashley Martin & John Partridge
Participants: Johan, Amando & Bianca Liebenberg
Paul & Robert Ryan
Anthony, Connor & Riley Van Buiten
Mark Felton & Catherine Thorne
Shane McNeill
Tim & Travis Axtell
Phil Griffith
Mark Kochan
Bruce Cremonsi
Tim ?
Michael, Sally, Ashley & Emily Harris

29/08/2008

The weekend started out by the majority of us meeting at the BP Longwarry.

Shane led us on a direct route to the Neerim South Pub for a counter meal. Along the way Michael and Family tried very hard to notify us via UHF that they were running late. Unfortunately Ashley was busy learning new directions (on how to get somewhere with no U turns!)

Once we arrived at the Pub several of us convinced Ashley that someone was missing - Michael and Family. Once we had enjoyed the meal and a drink or two we decided to leave the warmth of the pub and be led by Ashley to camp site.

After many of U turns along the way we eventually arrived at Bilstones campsite and set up camp. The camp fire was underway with thanks to the girls. Several yarns and a few ales later we realized that the time past us, 2:30-3:00am time to hit the sack.

30/08/2008

We all rose at around 8:00am and enjoyed breakfast; the rest of the crew joined us.



Ashley got the group moving, we started out along Bilsons track which was heavily in the logging stage. We continued along Memory land & Beards track, then into Young's track in which keeping with tradition as we got to a section of the track we had to do the U TURN!!!

We got back onto Beards track and turned into Hard Haul track; at this stage Phil ran into some trouble and managed to get stuck going downhill.



This leaving Phil quite embarrassed as gravity didn't do the job. Ashley came to the rescue and got Phil safely down the hill.

Once we were all through this section of the track we made it to Hawthorne Creek and had some lunch (the girls were starving).

After lunch we followed Hawthorne Creek track and turned left onto Tolleys track which took us on a big circle and back onto Hawthorne Creek road. We then followed it along to another track Ashley had no idea of, which would lead us to Ferguson track.

Making our way along Willow Grove Rd, we enjoyed lovely scenery along the roads which led us to Costins & Rowley roads then back to Costins Link road.

Ashley and co navigator John thought it was time for a play so we did a small river crossing and right hand turn into Lady Manor Sutton. This corner was very slippery and several of us liked to show how much lead was in our right foot. This track turned slippery the further we went up, however we all managed to get through even though at times we had lost momentum.

We then made it onto a main road (Tanjil Bren) which led us to Senins Rd in which the camp site was.



On arrival to the camp site there was a lone camper that Bruce thought was (IVAN MILAT). With camp set up we had a lovely afternoons yarn. Mark enjoyed a little to drink and was the evening's entertainment. The late night troopers had a hilarious time when Tim came back from a 30min toilet stop where he informed us that he fell asleep whilst on the loo. It was a wonderful weekend enjoyed by all. Thank you to Ashley the Trip Leader.
Shane McNeil

Sunday - Day 2
Camp Highlights.

Left Seninis camping grounds at quarter to ten. We had to leave Tim and Bruce behind because Tim had a problem with his clutch and Bruce stayed to tow Tim back if he had any problem. Paul went straight home after we left camp. Got to Great Hopes Creek at 10:15. The track was slippery, bumpy and wet, so it was fun. At Wombat Ridge road at 10:31. It was also bumpy and a little bit more muddy, so a little bit more fun. At Burns road 10:33. Lots more mud. Our troop leader Ashley went ahead with John to check out the track. We all had to do u-turns because the track was too muddy and dangerous. Ashley met us back on the road at 11:15. We basically retraced our steps after that. Back to Wombats Ridge road at 11:31. Back on Great Hopes Creek at 11:36. Mark and Catherine had a few hitchhikers and we had a big stick attach itself to our car too. There were lots of washouts that hurt as we went over them. Especially the ones round the corner on Stuart Mind road at 12:01. At Tanjil Creek 12:02. We made it to the main road at 12:08. We all put air in our tyres. Had lunch at McDonalds in Moe. After McDonalds we all said bye and went our own way home. It was the best weekend ever.

By Emily and Ashley

THANKS SO MUCH EVERYONE

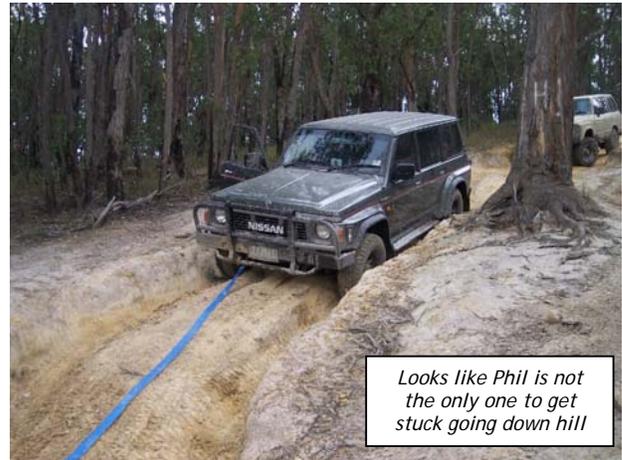
On the weekend I went four wheel driving with my family. We met everyone at the pub at Noojee South. They seemed really nice and they were. It was really fun. I felt as if I could trust them with anything I wanted. They were very understanding of why we were late. They welcomed us as if we had been with them before. We had a lot of fun. Ashley was a fearless leader and John was a good help with trying to make sure we all didn't get lost. Even though we had to back track I didn't care because we were having lots of fun. I would love to go away with you again. IT WAS THE BEST WEEKEND EVER.

THANKS TO EVEYONE.
Emily Harris



Last weekend I went 4x4 wheel driving. With the group that I was with, I felt comfortable and safe. They welcomed all of us into the group as if we had been there before. Everyone was funny and understanding. It was great fun and I loved it. Ashley was a great leader but we would probably be stuck at the camp sites if it wasn't for John. Other than the fact that we had to stop a lot, I think that it was a great trip and I would come again.

Ashley Harris



Looks like Phil is not the only one to get stuck going down hill



Bruce carefully picking his line



The crew airing up to head home

Media Release

Graves discovered and marked after fires

The Great Divide fires of 2006-07 caused much devastation, but also uncovered some significant historic relics such as mines, old house sites, machinery and ancient bridle tracks. One of the most important finds has been grave sites in the Aberfeldy River catchment, north of Erica.

DSE Forest Ranger, Noel Lees was shown a lone grave at Merringtons, 23 kilometres north of Erica earlier this year and said that one of the pleasing things that stood out to him about the site was the quartz rocks that had been placed around the grave.

Mr Lees became interested in learning more about these sites and visited Edwards Reef cemetery on Donnellys Creek Road, 27 kilometres north of Walhalla.

"To my astonishment I found at least another nine grave sites there, visible after the fires, which I realised would be lost once the vegetation had grown back, so, remembering the grave at Merringtons I thought I would do something about it," he said.

"I also had a look at Toombon cemetery, east of the Aberfeldy Road on Donnellys Creek Road, where I found at least another fourteen graves. I spoke to Graeme Code who is the Trustee of both the cemeteries and suggested placing quartz rocks on the graves to mark them and show respect for their sites."

Mr Code agreed this would be a great idea, so Noel Lees followed up by asking the Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club if they would be interested in helping to mark the graves at Edwards Reef and Toombon with quartz rocks.

"This club has helped DSE with other projects over the years and members are always keen to be involved in community projects," Mr Lees said.

The Four Wheel Drive Club members were happy to help and in late July, on a very frosty morning 20 people had gathered around a blazing fire at the Merrington campgrounds.

"Once every one had warmed up, we headed for Edwards Hill along Williamson Spur Road to a site where early in the week I had found a lot of quartz rocks. Within an hour we had a trailer full and made our way to Edwards Reef cemetery."

"Everyone pitched in, including the kids and the dog and we collected large rocks for the head of the graves and smaller ones to mark the foot.

The group then headed for Toombon Cemetery to repeat the exercise.

Toombon settlement once had a population of up to 1500 people and the cemetery was gazetted in 1870. There are up to 44 known graves here, situated on very steep ground just west of Toombon.

"When I first came to Erica in 1979, the graves at Toombon cemetery were marked, but over the years souvenir hunters have taken all the markers," Mr Lees said.

The steepness of the ground at Toombon and the distance between the graves meant that marking them took a bit longer, but a chain gang was formed and soon made light work of the task.

"I have to say that in the 29 years I have been working for DSE this was most satisfying task I've done and both the cemeteries look great with their new markers," Mr Lees said.

Mr Lees thanked John Partridge and all the other members of the Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club on behalf of the department for their help in restoring two historic sites.

"The work that they've done will be enjoyed by other people for hundreds of years to come, I am sure," he said