



Free Wheeling

Official Newsletter of the Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club

Registration No A0002184F

"Bringing Four Wheel Drivers Together"

DECEMBER 2004



Season's Greetings



Top End – July/August 2004

Labertouche – October 2004



Wonnangatta Valley
November 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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2004-2005**

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Secretary	Lesley Peters	9540 0007

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Barry Leitch	Librarian	5996 6662
Ashley Martin	Events Coordinator	9540 0007
George Pledger	New Member Contact	9547 4021
Michael Rodger	Trip Coordinator	0412 530666
Paul Ryan	Assistant Secretary	9807 5193
Anthony Van Buiten	Web Manager	0413 784074
Ian Warburton		9754 2341

Association Delegate	Roger Baird	9704 9045
Club Historian	Phil Alder	9754 8487
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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

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

Location: Dandenong Library
Stuart Street, Dandenong 3175

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

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT
December 2004**

Welcome all to the December edition of *Free Wheeling*.

Thanks to the guys at All Terrain 4x4, for hosting our November General Meeting. It is an excellent shop and a well-set out workshop. The evening was most informative evening with some great bargains to be had. Keep them in mind the next time you're after that needed 'extra', for your fourby.

Yesterday I was reading the feature article in *The Age Good Weekend*. It was a story about 4WD's and how people either love or hate them. There were a few good and valid points in the article, many of which I'm sure most of you have experienced yourselves. However, once again, they used statistics from the USA that are hardly relevant to us in Australia. How can you compare spinal injuries from accidents and rollovers when: 1) they drive different vehicles with different standards; and 2) it's not mandatory in many states of USA to wear a seat belt? A recent AAMI survey found that: 7 in every 10 do not feel safe sharing the road with 4WD's; 3 in 5 want us to get a special licence; 1 in 2 think we're aggressive and arrogant; and 1 in 2 don't want 4WD's in the city! Interesting figures, considering that 1 in 5 are now buying 4WD's.

In one section they described the reactions of people when a 4WD stopped partially on the pedestrian crossing. If it had have been a normal vehicle, the pedestrians might simply shake their head and walk around. But as it was a 4WD, one slammed his hand on the bonnet, the second called the driver an "arrogant p***k", whilst the third said "bloody 4WD'er, you're all the same!" Now, I don't know about you, but I'm getting pretty tired of constantly having to defend my right to own and drive a 4WD vehicle in the city!

It is unfortunate that the manufacturers, parts suppliers, and accessory makers don't come to the party and defend the use of 4WD's. Sure, there are some who give us a bad reputation by doing the wrong thing. But it is the same with any group, there will always be a minority who do the wrong thing and make it difficult for the rest. It is more important now, than ever before, that we need to be aware of the perception the general public has of 4WD's and their owners. Pay particular attention to other road users when driving around town. Give them plenty of room. Be as courteous as you can be. Let that car merge in that can't be bothered to put his indicator on. What's the worst that could happen, it'll take you another minute or two to get to your destination?

Unless we strive to keep our chosen recreation by doing the right thing in the eyes of the public, and encourage others to do likewise, we are going to be up against more and more rules and regulations that will make it more and more difficult to continue.

Pat Callinan, Editor and Publisher of *4WD Monthly*, has generously granted us permission to use some articles featured in *4x4 Monthly* for our newsletter *Free Wheeling*. *4x4 Monthly* is the leading 4WD magazine, which is now selling an amazing 28,560 informative and entertaining copies each month! Oh, and next month, Jay and Jackie Gould's Ford F250 'Big Red' is featured. So, do yourself a favour, and grab yourself a copy and see what everyone is raving about.

Cont'd

I hope everyone has enjoyed themselves this year. We've had a great variety of trips, from close-by Toolangi, to as far away as Cape York, and from easy to extreme standards. One thing's for sure, there's no excuse for not finding a trip suitable to your liking. If I don't see you at the next meeting, have an enjoyable and safe Christmas and we'll catch up in the New Year.

Regards

John

John Partridge

gujohnno@yahoo.com.au

MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING 9 NOVEMBER 2004

The November General Meeting was held at All Terrain 4x4 Moorabbin and opened at 7.45pm by John Partridge.

44 members present.

APOLOGIES:

Derek and Janet Hymas, Paula Johnston, Ian Warburton and Liz Beaton, Steve and Tania Utting, Maxine Ryan, Judy Murray and Graeme Ralph.

VISITORS:

Welcome to Sophie Ellich and Trina Clarke.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:

Minutes of October meeting as per Newsletter.

Accepted: Dawn Brown. Seconded: Tom Brachna.

MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES:

Nil.

SUPPER: Thanks Annie for bringing the cake.

CORRESPONDENCE IN:

- Flyers for Victorian 4WD Show to be held on Sunday 20 February 2005.
- Promotional material from CARZF4KIDZ with \$35 discount offer for club members.
- Cheque in the amount of \$100 from Highway Tyres for continuance of their advertising.
- Letter from Kevin Richardson advising of stolen camper trailer. Notice was emailed to members.
- Further info on 2005 Variety High Country 4WD Bash.
- Email correspondence between John Partridge, Michael Coldham and DSE regarding Thompson River Forest Reserve issue.
- Association:
 - Letter of Acceptance of Carl Surtees' application to become Trainee Instructor for the DTU. Letter and manual also sent direct to Carl.
 - Letter of thanks to all those who attended October meeting.

- Various Club magazines.

CORRESPONDENCE OUT:

- Letter to Tyrepower seeking confirmation of their involvement with our "Preferred Provider" program.
- Just Corporate Wear: Cheque in payment of current order and further order.
- Newsletter.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Treasurer on holidays. Report will be submitted next month.

TRIP CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT:

➤ **Trip Reports:**

- Larbetouche.
- Proficiency Training
- Wonnangatta

Brief overview submitted. See reports on all of the above trips in the Trip Report Section of this month's newsletter.

- **Forthcoming Trips/Events:** Michael Rodger reported on the following upcoming trips as per calendar, including additional trips into 2005:
 - 12-14 November: Nav Run.
 - 27-28 November: Annual Mayford Fishing Trip.
 - 4 December: Christmas Party. Ashley reported that arrangements progressing. Chef Peter Petrou confirmed. Numbers **must** be confirmed at tonite's meeting. Payment also required.
 - 11 December: Oxfam Christmas Tree Deliveries. Ashley reported that due to great response from members, we will have 15 vehicles assisting with this great cause. Still room for more volunteers.
 - Christmas/New Year: Collins Hut. No confirmed trip leader. Members can make their own way up at any time over the period. Maps available.
 - 22-24 January: Otways – John Partridge. Camping at Dandos.
 - 26 January Australia Day: Michael Rodger – Day trip TBC.
Carl also running a 4 days touring trip during this period.
 - 6 February: Michael Rodger – Mt Cole.

Michael reiterated the need to include your name in the trip log if you plan to attend any of the forthcoming trips. This is becoming a problem with few names being recorded in then log, then many members turning up and trip leaders being unaware of their intention to join the trip.

Trip Scribes were reminded that outstanding reports must be submitted by 15th of the month.

GENERAL BUSINESS:

Merchandise Officer: In addition to his position of Librarian, Barry Leitch has taken over this position. All orders for club items to be placed with Barry. Barry asked (again) for any outstanding items to be returned to the library asap.

Driver Training Certificates: Proficiency Certificates (2003) presented to Graeme and Sue Lyne, and Gerrard Clarke. Apologies for late hand over.

Peter Rowe: Dawn reported that Peter (long time member who now lives in Darwin) had serious meeting with bolt of lightning. Peter was quite ill for a few days but is on the mend. We all send him our best wishes for a speedy recovery. And would we love to see the video!!

MEETING CLOSED at 8.20 and President handed over to Dragan Vasic of All Terrain 4X4 who in turn handed over the showroom to the members.

RAFFLE:

Tickets sold by Gary and Carissa.

"Black Snake" Snatchem Strap: Donated by All Terrain 4X4 and won by Carl Surtees.

Décor "Chilly" Insulated Cooler: Won by Tony Waghorn.

A huge thank you to Dragan and Adrian of **All Terrain 4X4** for hosting our November meeting. A successful night for all concerned.

NEXT MEETING: Will be held at Dandenong Library on Tuesday, 7 December 2004.



Victoria's Biggest Outdoor 4WD Event

Sunday 20th February 2005.

9:30 am to 4:00 pm.

Click [here](#) to go to the Melways site for online maps you can print.

The address of the Show is:

Wandin Park Equestrian Centre

Victoria Road

Wandin North Victoria 3225

Melways map 119 G7.

Entry \$10 per adult. Children under 16 FREE.



VFWDC MERCHANDISE

For Sale

New Club Polo Shirts	\$25.00 ea
Polar Fleece ½ Zip Jumper	\$36.00 ea
Polar Fleece Full Zip Jacket	\$48.00 ea
Sleeveless Vest	\$42.00 ea
Caps	\$10.00 ea
30 th Anniversary Travel Mugs	\$15.00 ea
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Stubbie Holders	\$ 6.00 ea



4WD Monthly Quick Tips

Rims: Steel vs Alloy

You see plenty of fancy rims on 4WDs getting about the place these days. Flash looking gear – polished, sleek and sexy – designed to make your fourby look the goods.

Yes alloy rims have advantages – lighter unsprung weight, heat dissipation, corrosion resistance – but there are drawbacks to using them off-road.

Rims often cop a hiding, especially when driving over logs, rocks, high-speed corrugations and into unseen potholes. For this reason, steel rims are preferred in the bush. Sure, they can be damaged just like an alloy, but they can easily be repaired by most people trackside. Once an alloy rim has been bent, it's usually time for the scrap heap, unless you happen to be an expert welder and X – ray/safety inspection person.

With the steelie, all that's needed is a hammer, a few blocks of timber and good aim. While the timber is not necessary, it's a good idea to use it as a dolly to prevent damage to the rim from the hammer face – especially the ballpeen end.

Generally, it's the lip of the rim that cops the damage, so the tyre doesn't need removing from the rim during the repair. Being careful not to over do it, you can relatively easily knock the steel rim back into shape. If you have a careful eye, a bit of patience and some care, the only evidence of damage you'll see once you're finished will be a bit of scuffed paintwork from the steel.

A word of warning: Keep your fingers away from the hammer – it'll hurt if you hit' em!

Note: These suggestions are intended as 'getting you back to base' fixes in the outback. Rim damage should be inspected by professionals as soon as possible.

This article has been reproduced with permission of 4WD Monthly [submitted by John Partridge]

CLUB CALENDAR AT A GLANCE

NOVEMBER

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

Tuesday 30th Committee Meeting Steve Boyle

DECEMBER

Saturday 4th Christmas Party Ashley Martin

Tuesday 7th Club Meeting John Partridge

Saturday 11th Oxfam Christmas Tree Deliveries Ashley Martin

Tuesday 21st Committee Meeting TBC

Christmas/ New Year Dargo – Collins Hut TBC

JANUARY 2005

Sunday 2nd to Sunday 16th South East of South Australia Anthony VB

Friday 21st to Sunday 24th Otways John Partridge

Tuesday 25th Committee Meeting George Pledger

Wednesday 26th Australia Day Detination TBC Michael Rodger

Wednesday 26th to Sunday 30th Alpine National Park Tour Carl Surtees

FEBRUARY

Tuesday 1st Club Meeting John Partridge

Saturday 4th to Sunday 5th Mt Cole (Ballarat) Michael Rodger

Sunday 20th **Victorian 4WD Show Wandin**

Tuesday 22nd Committee Meeting Michael Rodger

MARCH

Tuesday 1st Club Meeting John Partridge

Friday 11th to Saturday 14th Buchan Caves Anthony VB

Thursday 24th to Moday 28th Easter Hattah-Kulkyne NP Michael Rodger

Tuesday 29th Committee Meeting Paul Ryan



VFWDC ADVERTISING DIRECTORY

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Welcome to

The Corner

Have a lovely sweet for you this month. One of my mum's favourites - hope you enjoy it.

Peach & Pear Pudding

2 large cans of sliced peaches
1 large can of pear halves
250 gms of butter
3/4 cup sugar
2 eggs
1 cup plain flour
1/3 cup milk
3/4 cup ground almonds...

Drain canned fruits and dry with kitchen paper. Cream butter and sugar till pale and creamy, then add eggs one at a time. Fold in flour alternatively with milk, spread mixture into a greased springform pan, sprinkling with almonds.

Arrange peaches and pears over the top and sprinkle with a topping made from 75g of butter melted with a teaspoon of cinnamon, and another 2 lightly beaten eggs. Cover with foil and cook in a moderate oven for about 90 minutes.

There can be any amount of variations. I loved cooking this with fresh strawberries, or pineapple or just about any other fruit.

Enjoy!!!



This is a good time of the year for a few phrases of wisdom:

- ❖ Blessed are they who can laugh at themselves, for they shall never cease to be amused.
- ❖ Not one shred of evidence supports the notion that life is serious!
- ❖ A conscience is what hurts when all your other parts feel so good.

Merry Christmas and a happy and safe New Year to all.

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

ARB SIDE RAILS and STEPS to suit 100 Series LC, live axle, never fitted, **\$680.00.**

5 x 100 SERIES FACTORY GXL STEEL RIMS to suit live axle, new, gunmetal grey powdercoated, EC, **\$400.00.**

Contact: Ashley on 0418 600904

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



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



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

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

FORTHCOMING TRIPS

CHRISTMAS PARTY

Date: Saturday, 4 December 2004
Trip Leader: Ashley Martin
Contact Nos: Mob: 0438 600904 H: 9540 0007
Destination: Gilwell Park, Launching Place Road, Gembrook.
Equipment: Chairs, eating utensils. Camping gear if you plan to stay overnight (\$6 p/night fee). Refer to flyer distributed with October newsletter.



OXFAM CHRISTMAS TREE DELIVERIES

Date: Saturday, 11 December 2004
Time: Before 11.00am.
Trip Leader: Ashley Martin
Contact Nos: Mob: 0438 600904 H: 9540 0007
Destination: Scout Hall, Pakenham Street, Blackburn Melway Reference Map 47 H12.
Equipment: Vehicle and trailer.



NEW YEAR TRIP SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Date: Sunday 2 January to Sunday 16 January 2005
Trip Leader: Anthony Van Buiten
Contact Nos: Mob: 0413 784 074 H: 9764 3381
Destination: South-East of South Australia
Meeting Time/Place: TBC:
Vehicle Limit: *Min:* 1, *Max:* 10.
Grade: *Wet:* Easy. *Dry:* Easy.
Approximate Kms: 650 kms.
Last available fuel: N/A
Equipment: Standard recovery.
Maps: N/A.
Radio Channel: Channel 12
Trip Activities: This will be a relaxed touring trip. We will be towing a camper trailer, so trailers are welcome. Travel to Naracoorte, camping at Narracoorte Cave NP. Then to Robe, camping at Little Dip Coastal Park. Also would like to see Beachport and Tantanoola. Then home via a short stay at Glenelg NP.

AUSTRALIA DAY NO. 1 – DAY TRIP

Date: Wednesday, 26 January 2005
Trip Leader: Michael Rodger
Contact Nos: Mob: 0412 430 666 H: 9504 3839
Destination: TBC
Meeting Time/Place: TBC at 9.30am
Vehicle Limit: *Min:* 2, *Max:* 10
Grade: *Wet:* Easy *Dry:* Easy
Approximate Kms: 150
Equipment: Basic recovery gear.
Maps: N/A
Radio Channel: Channel 12
Trip Activities: A day trip in the hills. Not sure whether we will be heading to Mt Disappointment or up past Gembrook, but more details will be available closer to event.

AUSTRALIA DAY NO.2 – TOURING TRIP

Date: Wednesday 26 January to Sunday 30 January incl.
Trip Leader: Carl Surtees
Contact Nos: Mob: 0403 024 490 H: 9706 2692
Destination: Alpine National Park
Meeting Time/Place: Lilydale McDonalds, Time TBC.
Vehicle Limit: *Min:* 3, *Max:* 8
Grade: *Wet:* Medium *Dry:* Medium
Approximate Kms: 250-300 from Mansfield
Equipment: Standard recovery gear. Area very remote so all supplies will need to be carried.
Maps: None required but will be travelling on the Vic Map, Howitt-Selwyn map.
Radio Channel: Channel 12
Trip Activities:
Wednesday: Camp Wednesday night at Bindaree Hut on the Howqua River; stay for 2 nights; tourist trip to Craigs Hut.
Friday: Drive to Lake Cobbler Track camping area.
Saturday: Drive south to Wonnangatta Spur Track and camp somewhere.
Sunday: Return home.

LABOUR DAY LONG WEEKEND – BUCHAN CAVES

Date: Friday 11 to Monday 14 March 2005
Trip Leader: Anthony Van Buiten
Contact Nos: Mob: 0413 784 074 H: 9764 3381
Destination: Buchan
Meeting Time/Place: TBC:
Vehicle Limit: *Min:* 1, *Max:* 10. Maximum of 10 on cave tour.
Grade: *Wet:* Easy. *Dry:* Easy.
Approximate Kms: 325 kms.
Last available fuel: Buchan.
Equipment: Standard recovery.
Maps: N/A.
Radio Channel: Channel 12
Trip Activities: This trip will be to the Buchan area to explore the caves. I have contacted a local guide who will take us caving for 2hrs at \$30pp or \$35pp if overalls are supplied. For those who are not as adventurous, the Buchan Caves Reserve conduct guided tours through two lit caves with hand rails. This is also an excellent picnic ground so we will probably take the opportunity to have lunch there. We are planning to camp at a place known as 'The Junction' which was recommended by our guide as a great camping spot. It is located on the junction of the Snowy and Buchan Rivers. I will need definite numbers by 14th of Feb and a \$10 deposit by the same date to secure our booking. This is only if you are planning on the adventurous tour as bookings are not required for the other tours. We will also do a day trip and explore the area further.

Strange Language:

If a *vegetarian* eats vegetables, what the heck does a *humanitarian* eat?

Why does *quicksand* take you down slowly?

AVB

EASTER – HATTAH-KULKYNE NATIONAL PARK

Date: Thursday 24th to Monday 28th March 2005
(some may stay on longer)

Trip Leader: Michael Rodger

Contact Nos: Mob: 0412 430 666 H: 9504 3839

Destination: Hattah-Kulkyne – somewhere on the Murray River.

Meeting Time/Place: TBC: 6.00pm Service station near the Westgate Bridge (Todd Rd Exit).

If you plan to travel up during the weekend, please ensure you make arrangements with me to meet. The place we will be camping is quite secluded and may be difficult to find.

Vehicle Limit: *Min:* 2, *Max:* No maximum.

Grade: *Wet:* Impassible. We will be camping elsewhere.
Dry: Easy. 2wd towing a trailer no problems.

Approximate Kms: 600 kms.

Last available fuel: Petrol: Colignan/Nangiloc/Hattah
Diesel: Nangiloc/Hattah

Distance between supplies: 10 km from camp, 60km from Mildura (approx)

Equipment: Bush camping gear, basic recovery gear if you want to explore the area.

Maps: There are several maps of the Hattah area, most that I have seen have very little information and have errors on them. Best way to get there is follow someone who has been before (perhaps not Ashley!).

Radio Channel: Channel 12

Trip Activities: Watch the river flow past and occasionally jump in it. The Hattah Lakes are only a short drive from where we will camp, and Lake Mungo could be explored on a day trip. There are many great wineries in the area and Mildura is an interesting place, with art galleries and airconditioned shopping centres if it gets too hot. There are several other National Parks in the area that could be explored by the adventurous.

☺☺☺☺ Humour File ☺☺☺☺

A young boy is walking home from school one day when a shifty looking car pulls up beside him, the window rolls down, and a man says "Hey kid, I'll give you a bag of lollies if you hop in the car with me."

The kid says "No" and walks on.

The same car pulls up beside him, the window rolls down: "Hey kid, I'll give you a bag of lollies and \$100 if you hop in the car with me".

The kid says "No" and quickens his pace.

The car pulls up again and the window rolls down, "Hey kid, I'll give you a bag of lollies, \$100, and a brand new Playstation 2."

The kid walks up to the window and says, "Look Dad, you bought the **Toyota**, now live with it!".

From the one and only Barry Bo Sandals.

Nissan drivers make of this what you will!!!

TRIP REPORTS

MYSTERY PUB-TO-PUB

17-19 September 2004

Trip Leaders: David and Rosalie Hughes

Participants:

Craig, Jason and Brent; Ann and Patrick; Brian and Aggie; Vanessa, Ray and Dawn; Jill and Steve; Ian and Liz; Ralph and Judy; Barry, Helen and Jenny; Isabeel and Andy; Gary, Paula and Angela; Paul and his son; Derek and Janet; Glenn and Jackie; Joe and Carissa; Barry and Yvonne; Anne and Laurie; Terry and Annie.

On a very pleasant Friday afternoon we left Melbourne on our journey to Yarragon for our very first Pub to Pub. Yarragon is a quaint little township with lots of speciality shops and has certainly benefited from the freeway bypassing Warragul.

We initially met up with Dawn and Ray and had dinner at the local Yarragon hotel whilst awaiting the arrival of our tour guides Rosalie and David. A few new members joined us at dinner, a pleasant evening was had by all. My sister Angela joined us on this tour. Angela comes from New Zealand so we figured and rightly so, that by the time the weekend was over we would have heard all the New Zealand jokes. Before we left to have a little shuteye, David informed us that he wanted us all to meet outside the hotel sharp at 8.45am next morning.



Forty-three four wheel drive enthusiasts were all eager to get started the next morning. Naturally, as the tour is dubbed Pub-to-Pub we had to start the day with champagne and orange juice, just enough to wet our appetites for the weekend that was to follow.

We left and headed out the back of Yarragon winding our way through beautiful scenery until we stopped at Mount Worth State Park for morning tea. Those of us who had not been there before went for a short walk to see the Giant Tree. Giant tree it certainly was. We had by then wetted our appetites for the delicious morning tea that Rosalie had prepared for us all.

We left Mount Worth and meandered our way through the Strzelecki Ranges going through Hallston, the back of Leongatha, Mirboo, and Mirboo North. We stopped on the way to look at some beautiful waterfalls which no-one seemed to know the name of. We reached the

Grand Ridge Brewery at Mirboo North where we stopped for lunch. The brewery manager gave us a short talk on how the beer was made and explained what made it so special. Many of the men purchased special six packs which included beers such as Midstrength Moonlight, Natural Blonde, Pilsener, Yarra Valley Gold, Stout, and Dark Strength Moonlight. The brewery is 100% Australian owned and is advertised as being the world's most awarded brewery.

During the morning we had all made guesses as to where we would end up. So as not to give anybody an advantage our guesses had to be given to Rosalie at morning tea. As the afternoon progressed we all became somewhat confused as Rosalie and David had done such a fine job of turning us around in circles that it was anyone's guess where we would end up. During the day there was lots of fun and laughter coming across the airwaves, naturally the NZ jokes came thick and fast, but Angela gave back as good if not better than what she got.

The afternoon was every bit as scenic as the morning had been. We stopped at the Tynong North airfield for a short look at all the small planes leaving and/or landing. On leaving the airfield we travelled through Tooradin, Pearcedale, Somerville, and Hastings before we arrived at Crib Point. We all unloaded our luggage and headed for the wharf where we boarded a ferry which was to take us to French Island. Some passengers were lucky enough to see the dolphins come alongside the boat.

On reaching French Island we were greeted by staff from the Macleod Echo Farm. Two buses took us along some quite rough roads until we reached the farm. The farm was formally home to convicts and owned by the Victorian State Government.

After finding where we were to sleep for the night, most people gathered in the lounge for drinks and nibbles prior to dinner. Rosalie and her team of helpers went to work preparing dinner for us all. Dinner was simply magnificent. I think Rosalie could open her own restaurant without any trouble.

After dinner many of the group adjourned to the community hall to play some team games. Much fun and laughter echoed around the room.

Some of us went to bed reasonably early, others not until the wee small hours of the morning.

Sunday morning dawned all too soon. Bacon and eggs was the order of the day for breakfast, after which we went on a tour of the farm with the manager. The tour was very interesting and enlightening except for the mosquitos which seemed to like our juicy blood. The operation of the farm is fascinating and whilst it has a regular staff also relies on volunteers to assist with its development. We heard how many of the trees are slowly being replaced by natives as the present ones use up to 300 litres of water a day. After the tour many of us went for a variety of walks or played golf.

Once again, as lunch time approached, Rosalie and her band of helpers were preparing what was to be a delicious lunch. We could never say we starved on this trip.

After lunch we packed up, had photos taken and boarded the buses to head back to the wharf for our trip back across the water and then home.



The weekend was wonderful, the company was good and lots of fun.

A big thanks must go to Rosalie and David for their wonderful organisation, without which the whole trip would not have happened. **Paula Johnston**

Thankyou to all who participated in this year's Pub to Pub in September.

David and I have enjoyed the past few years of organising the Pub to Pub. This year was no exception. We try and come up with as interesting a weekend as we can, we get just as much enjoyment out of the planning as we do the actual event.

This year was a joint effort by everybody who helped out with the preparation of meals and the cleaning up afterwards. Without everybody pitching in, it would have been very difficult for us.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everybody for the tremendous surprise that was presented to us a couple of weeks ago. This was totally unexpected, but will certainly be very enjoyable. We will do a trip report when we have had our night away. For those of you who do not know what we were given, it was a night's accommodation at a historic Homestead at Maldon.

Once again thankyou to everyone, but this is really not necessary as we get just as much pleasure and appreciation in knowing that everyone has had a good time.

David and Rosalie.

LABERTOUCHE DAY TRIP – 10 October 2004

Trip Leader: Carl Surtees & Bethany

Participants: Craig & Steve

Barry

Derek

Paul & Robert

Steve & Jill with Tim & Leanne

We turned off Princes Highway at the Labertouche turnoff and followed the road through Spring green paddocks before stopping on the gravel under the

power lines to reduce our tyre pressures. We splashed through the first bog hole of the day, followed the power lines and then turned right on to Bunyip Ridge Tk.

Carl spotted a steep track with deep ruts on the left and decided to display his athleticism by running off up the track to see where it went. Puffing a bit, he said that those who didn't wish to try the deep ruts could follow the track along and around and we could all meet up again at the top.

Carl was the first to turn his mud terrains into slicks as he almost made it to the top of the slippery side track.



Craig had a good try and managed to splash thick sticky mud over a few of us observing from the bottom. Then Steve made it as far as Carl, before very reluctantly conceding that the last metre could not be negotiated – it required a turn to the left which drew all momentum away.

Goanna Tk was next and up a long stretch that was a bit slippery. All agreed that it would have been much worse (i.e. more fun) in the wet. We turned on to Anderson Tk where again it seemed to be very green everywhere – lots of fuel growing for the promised long hot summer? Anderson Tk led us along a wet and slippery downhill stretch where a couple of bikes passed us and we passed two cars in a series of bog holes. One of the cars had a flat.

At the end of the track, we stopped for morning tea. Afterwards, we came back to the power lines and everyone had a play on a steep rocky section. Carl managed to manoeuvre himself over a 1 metre deep hole where he couldn't drive forward or backward without rearranging some part of his car. A few rocks were piled into the hole, which was just enough to allow his rear bumper to stay attached as he tiptoed his way forward and down the slope.

We went back along the power lines and turned on to Anderson Tk to negotiate the bog holes and slippery section uphill. At the bog holes, first Barry needed a snatch from Carl and, after swapping places on the narrow track with Steve, Derek needed the same treatment from exactly the same spot. In both cases,

both Barry and Derek were stuck on their diffs and could go neither backward or forward.



That snatchem won't be clean for long, Derek !

Lunch was further up the track at around 1.15. Everyone was obviously having fun because there were no grumbles about the late lunch break.

We continued up the greasy track with Steve taking a little side trip on a steep, rutted and slippery loop to the right.

We came out on to Beenak East Road and followed this towards Gembrook before turning left on to Ash Landing Rd. We followed this all the way and then turned left on to Black Snake Creek Rd. A short way along, we turned right onto Lawless Tk where we had a couple of navigation checks for cross-roads that "shouldn't have been" where they were.

After some discussion amongst the expert navigators, Carl apparently took us the easy way as we had a pleasant drive along Pines Tk and then Helmet Tk – although to begin with we didn't know this. Steve was implicated in this decision and Carl laid the blame at his door for advice which led us to "an uninteresting track with no mud".

We were still finding our way as we needed another navigation check and Barry wondered what we would have done before GPS? Arrived home after dark, I suppose.

Carl decided we *were* on Helmet Tk after all and declared he knew where we were. Following along, Steve passed a road sign saying 'Helmet TK'. Steve queried, "So that sign there is correct?"

After more mudless tracks, we turned right on to Burgess Road and re-inflated our tyres at the "Four Brothers" lookout before heading into Gembrook and then home in various directions. **Derek Hymas**

PS: My thanks to Paul Ryan for supplying a GPS record of the route taken.

PROFICIENCY TRAINING WEEKEND – TOOLANGI
16-17 October 2004

Trainers	Ashley Martin John Partridge	100 Series LC GU Patrol
Trainees	Rosalie Hughes Isabel Riordon Verylle Rodger Aline Van Buiten Leanne Young Carissa Galovic Barry Hempston Joe Galovic Bas Swart Brian Martin Peter Davies Alan Curphey	GQ Patrol Pajero Discovery Prado Hilux GU Patrol GQ Patrol GU Patrol Pajero 100 Series Hilux Navara
Participants	Michael Rodger Liberty & Elizabeth Andy Riordon	

Trip Diary – Training Weekend 16 October 2004

5:20 pm What! ... Me?
Trip report "Oh damn it"

JP "1st one stuck .. I'll drop off a list of the tracks we went on"

V(thought) What do I need those for?

7:30 am Kids in the car

7:31 am Raid fridge, butter, strass', soft drink, a tomato – that'll make it healthy. Better raid the fruit bowl – we'll grab some rolls from Safeway on the way.

7:40 am Lock house – wow it's cold!
Has anyone got a jumper?

7:45 am Lock house again.
Haven't driven the truck for a while... foot on the accelerator...a little bit harder...Ok a lot harder... and off we go.

8:30 am Lots of happy faces at Macas...Its great to see so many women doing the course, Rosalie, Isabel, Leanne, Myself for the second time just to be sure to be sure.
...Need a coffee and an OJ – out to the car park and on our way.

9:00 am Arrived at camp site to a welcoming committee – Aline, Carrissa, Anthony, Joe... kids a dog and a camp fire.
New trailer – oh their well set up – I think I'll have that cold coffee now.

10:00am Time for a review of the theory. Some are looking a bit nervy with those "please don't ask me" looks on their faces as John and Ashley do their positive, reassuring synopsis of what we're all supposed to know.
Yep! That all sounds good – but then it is my second time.

10:45 am Into groups – 5 in one, 6 in the other. We're doing stall recovery.
The men are ready to strut their stuff and hope it's *really* challenging, the women all know they should be able to do this – after all, how many

times have we been passengers and didn't say a word?

♂

Simple! Drive up. Stop. Reverse back.

♀

Look how steep it is!... Who's my instructor?

☺

Does he know how I feel about reversing I'm going up with Ashley...He won't yell or pray too loudly. Relax – Deep breath – It'll be fun...
Kids – No talking – Share your BBQ shapes with Ashley.

And up we **GO**.

...I must have done OK, Ashley hasn't broken into a visible sweat, the kids are still alive and I don't think I babbled continually.

Why is John removing a boulder from behind my wheel?

I think everyone did really well.

♂

Need more challenges.

♀

Still smiling.

12:00 noonish Back to the camp for lunch.

12:45pm Vehicle Inspection – yep I know where the hooks at the front are – oh yeah recovery points.
Cargo barrier, all heavy things tied down – don't want any missiles in the car when we go over a bump. Mmm recovery gear would be in the bag marked "recovery gear" I guess. I think we pass.

1:15pm To the next exercise – convoy procedure – Oh and I'm "tail end Charlie". Who was Charlie? It doesn't matter.

Gee it's slippery straddling the ruts. Mmmm concentrate. Keep the rut in the middle of the vehicle, plan your route. Key word TRACTION. Oh god its slippery – where's the rut? I'm still slipping.

Advice: Stop!!! STOP!!! STOP!!!

Oops.

Outside the vehicle standing back to see where the car had ended up. Ooh, bite lip, must not cry, could have happened to anyone, why me?
Ashley !!!

Rosalie to the rescue. A lot of reversing, Ashley digging the bank away, and secured to Rosalie's truck, and Michael drove it back onto the track.

Michael seems to be enjoying Brian's company now and Ashley's still calm. Up and down a few more tracks – Time for a cuppa.

3:45pm A baby pink birthday cake for me! How sweet, that makes me smile. It must be the recovery cake.

4:30pm Back to camp to do a winching demo. Look, anyone can do it – even the kids.

5:15pm A quick run around to say bye and pump the tyres back up to 35psi and into the car.

5:20 pm What! ... Me?

Trip report "Oh damn it"

JP

"1st one stuck .. I'll drop of a list of the tracks we went on"

V(thought) What do I need those for?

Many thanks to all those who helped me in my moment of, well moments of, and those who shared in a fun day. Thanks to Ashley, John and his pet budgie Max for organising the trip.
Verylle Rodger

Sunday

Well it's Sunday 17th October, Day 2 of the Proficiency training course and having a great time. A few of us braved the elements and spent the night at Luke's Creek Camp Ground, while Rosalie, Isabel and Barry and company spent the night in comfort and rejoined us in the morning.

Well everyone got their act together by 9.30 and we did a bit of recovery practice at the camp site... the bungie was really jerky compared to the snatchem by the way – I'd stick with the snatchem.

Anyway we headed out along Marginal Rd to Breakoday Tk which was a pleasant ridge track with little bog holes. We actually did get out and check the first one but after passing through several more without any mishaps our luck ran out and Tubby got a dunking. A pity John didn't follow. Oh well, at least I now know that Tubby leaks... really needed to know that one!

After getting snatched out – thank you Aline – and draining the contents of the bog from Tubby, we meandered on to the SEC pylons. A few of us went down some unnamed track, only to find it impassable so we turned back and went in search of some more tracks. We all succeeded to get up a fairly steep rutted track, with no mishaps and it was good practice in straddling ruts.

We then started back towards camp and found a lovely little area to have lunch along the way.

A few had another go at emergency stall on the newly named 'Rosalie Tk', so named in honour of our fearless Rosalie who was out to have a bit of fun. Oh, and I really feel sorry for David as someone has caught the bug... 'Go Girl'.

I would like to thank John and Ashley on behalf of all the trainees for organising the training weekend. Your effort in organising the event was very much appreciated by all and the knowledge gained from the theory and hands-on training will be put to very good use in the not so distant future, I'm sure.

Leanne Young

Post Script:

"DIRECTIONS 101"

There seems to be a need to define directions:

1. When telling the driver to stop at a specific point, please take care to be more specific! As the driver is likely to stop...and stop... and stop again until they are able to find that unique little spot at which you wanted to stop.
2. Again, 'Stop at that tree'... In most cases this may be sufficient information, but in the case of driving through 'Closed Grassy Woodland' it is most likely that a totally different tree will be chosen before the designated tree can be found... if at all.
3. Also the last time I looked, there were two tyres at the front of the vehicle, a little hint to the specific tyre would be helpful, otherwise there is a 50% chance

- that the wrong tyre will be placed in the right spot; or was that the right tyre in the wrong spot... I give up.
4. Pointing the finger towards the front of the car and telling the driver to take that track will create confusion... especially if the driver is concentrating on the approaching intersection and not the wavering finger.
 5. To the left of the ROCK! Well... need I say more... Hey! but I will... Which rock, darling!!
 6. In conclusion, a little bit more information would relieve much of the build up of cabin pressure... I'm thinking... ☺ LY

[Regrettably, no photographic evidence of this weekend submitted. ? LP]

***"WONNANGATTA ROAST" – CUP WEEKEND
29 OCTOBER – 02 NOVEMBER 2004***

Friday Leader	John Partridge Leanne Young	GU Patrol
Participants	Rodger Family	Discovery
	Tom & Marianne	60 Series LC
	Galovic Family	GU Patrol
Saturday Leader	Ashley Martin Lesley Peters	100 Series LC
Participants	Mark & Julie	Pathfinder
	Brian	100 Series LC
	Craig	60 Series LC
	Barry	GQ Patrol
	Richard	Jackaroo
	Derek & Janet	Discovery
	Van Buiten Family	Prado
Visitors	Vetesi Family	GQ Patrol

Friday, 29 October

An early 6.30am start to the day to ensure that we could pick a suitable camping spot before the masses assembled. We finally caught up to the Rogers at the Moe Mc Donald's where we had breakfast. From there it was an easy, but at times, quite breathtaking trip to Licola. After Michael refuelled his truck we headed north on Tamboritha Rd. Before long the road turned to gravel and the corrugations started. It seems to always be bad along this stretch of road. Just passed the turnoff for Moroka Rd the surface improves; you now just need to watch out for the potholes. Not far past the car park for Guys Hut I had to hit the brakes to miss a small rockslide at the aptly named The Bastards Neck. This is a section where the embankments rise up leaving a narrow passageway to drive through. With the rocks moved out of the way, it was onto Howitt Hut where we stopped for a sticky-beak. A rattle had developed under the Patrol, which turned out to be a loose sway bar linkage.

Just a couple of kms further we chucked a righty onto Zeka Spur Tk. Not far to go now! Well... There was a huge tree across the track. After half an hour we managed to chop about 150mm off. Not much but we

managed to get around... Just. Interesting with Michael's trailer.

Normally it would be possible to get down Zeka Spur in about an hour. We ended up taking about three hours as we moved/removed about six trees and another small rockslide.

Once we reached the site of the Homestead, we chucked another righty and found a lovely camp spot, big enough for the expected group, alongside the Conglomerate River. This was a dead-end track, so we expected that there shouldn't be much 'through' traffic. After a quick set up of camp we relaxed by the campfire. Some time after dinner Joe, Carrissa and family arrived, and then Tom and Marianne. **John P**

Saturday, 30 October

Julie and I were the first to meet Ashley and Lesley at the Officer Weighbridge. However, it was not long before the others arrived: Craig & Lee, Richard, Brian, Janet and Derek, and Barry. At approximately 7.30am Ashley gives the command to take off and with him taking the lead and Derek being "Tail End Charlie" we head off east. Derek informs Ashley we are all on the road, unfortunately our fearless leader appeared not to have his ears on and could not hear any of us. I finally got along side Ashley and he and Lesley start to play charades trying to tell us that his radio is not working as his battery is not yet charged. It was not long before we pulled over and handed them our hand-held and we are back on the road. Not long after that Ashley lets us all know that potential new members were back at Officer waiting for us. Apparently John had forgotten to tell Ashley and Lesley about them. Luckily Anthony and Aline were running a little late, so they met up with them at Traralgon. After a quick stop for us also just outside Traralgon we head to Licola, arriving there around 10am to find a large number of 4WD's there. I have never seen so many there at any one time. A couple of us got in the queue for fuel at 119.9c a litre, while others got ice-creams and coffee, the coffee being the more difficult to purchase.

Once we were fuelled and had used the facilities we once again headed off, back over the Wellington River bridge and left into Tamboritha Rd. From there we headed further north. Passed the camps sites we leave the bitumen and hit the gravel road; however, with a large group already pulled over to let their tyres down, we continue further up and we start to spread out as the dust was rather bad. Stopping at Dingo Hill for our turn to do our tyres, and thankfully so, as the corrugations were the worst I had seen/felt up there.

Away again and left into Howitt Rd, we once again spread out and the radio signal began to break up to the point we had to relay messages, one being that Brian had stopped. Not sure why but whatever it was, it was not serious. Arriving at the Zeka Spur Track junction, we re-group before heading down the steep track into the Wonnangatta Valley. After some time Ashley asks us all if we would like to stop for lunch as it was still some

distance to our camp spot, so at a safe and convenient spot for all of us, we enjoyed a break, food and a refreshment. After lunch, and as we get closer to camp, we start to hear familiar voices on the radio; John tries to guide Ashley to the camp site, however his transmission broke up a number of times and at the critical part of John's directions.

Once in the valley the road got a lot better and after the Dry River crossing even better again. Finally after approximately 7 hours we arrive at camp at around 2.30 pm. The camp site John had chosen was alongside the Conglomerate Creek behind the Wonnangatta Homestead ruins, a very nice spot! After being greeted by Michael, Verrille, Liberty and Elizabeth, John, Joe, Carissa, Aaron, Shani and Lachlan, and Tom and Marianne, we set up our respective camp sites, after which Julie and I start to mingle and get to know everyone. At one stage a lone figure ventures into camp – Leanne had been exploring the area for a number of hours and had returned to find the group had grown. Anthony, Aline, Connor and Riley arrive with the visitors Jason, Amy, Jasmine and Dylan, who looked just as tired as we did when we first arrived. Eventually we are all were relaxing with a drink and after eating dinner we gathered around the camp fire and enjoyed the atmosphere and each others company.

At one stage a vehicle drove through camp, stopping to ask us to look out for two female hikers who had not returned. It was dark and their friends were starting to worry. Apart from that, nothing had spoiled what was our first day of our first trip with the club. Julie and I, although not really knowing everyone that well, felt very comfortable and enjoyed sitting around the campfire talking and listening to some music Anthony had put on. We were all very tired and as the night grew older, one by one we departed to bed, looking forward to the Sunday roast! **Mark C**

Sunday 31 October

The day was sunny, the birds were chirping and the kids were bright eyed and bushy tailed. I can't say as much for the adults.

The word was passed around if anyone wanted to go for a drive, but everyone was content to enjoy the beautiful day in the sunshine doing whatever else they wanted to do. After the many hours drive that most endured getting there the day before, I am sure that last thing they wanted to do was sit in the car and drive more. Some people went to the river for a play, and the kids went in for a swim. Some brave adults also went in the freezing water. Verrille and I tested the water and recoiled when our ankles cramped up from the freezing cold. We were just happy to sit and watch the others enjoy.

John and Leanne went for a hike which took them all day. Tom went fishing (again) and came back with a successful catch of trout as usual. The men



talked boys talk (trucks and tracks); the girls talked girl talk (cannot reveal what, as then the men would be in the know). A group walked to the homestead and the cemetery. The kids played and played around the camp. During the morning we had two female hikers turn up who had been missing overnight. Their partners had come to our camp site on the Saturday afternoon/evening to check if we had seen them; they were anxiously looking for them. When they arrived and we identified who they were we radioed their partners to come and get them. The reunion was very touching. It made some of us wonder if our partners would be that happy to see us after we had been missing for the night!

car) the CD's came out (Mark and Julie) and drinks were flowing. There was fun, merriment and someone falling off a chair. I won't mention who it was... (OK it was Barry)... tho this was through no fault of his own as the chair ripped from under him and he fell through it; needless to say the chair ended up on the fire in disgust.

I had finally had enough and hit the sack just after 1.00am, but the diehards were still going strong. The next morning I tried to find out what time they all went to bed, but I think that this is a secret that was not going to be told – the culprits all claiming ignorance of the time. HmMMMM.

Aline VB

Tuesday 2 November

Pack up day! Always the worst day of any trip – particularly after rain the night before!

Well, the race was on to see who could be on the move first. It was John and Leanne who were off and at 'em by about 9.30. Considering the condition of Zeka Spur Tk on the way in on Friday, there had been some deliberation regarding the best direction to take for the return home. John decided on the Zeka option, which we heard was much easier and faster than the incoming trip. Tom and Marianne, and Barry followed soon after. The rest of the group decided to take the longer (but apparently less difficult) option of going home through Myrtleford. We left at around 10.40am. On the way through the valley we saw at least a dozen SES vehicles lined up on the edge of the forest – they were obviously fighting the fire that we had seen from our camp site the day before.

The drive through to Myrtleford is very pretty, but this was definitely the loooooong way home, even though the Hume was not too busy. Of course the rain didn't help! Ashley and I arrived home at 7.00pm!

In all the years I've been a member of the club, I have never been to Wonnangatta Valley. Great spot, with a lot of history. Another good weekend spent with good friends. And of course, yet another successful roast night.

LP



With the afternoon came the stoking of the fire and getting the coals ready for the many, many, many camp ovens. Ashley dug numerous holes around the camp fire to get the roasts sizzling. Everyone prepared their ovens and chose a hole to cook in.

There were a few late additions into some camp ovens with the extra pumpkin that Anthony had bought along.

When he opened Carissa and Joe's oven to put it in theirs, he noticed that the roast was very shiny(?) He took a closer look and saw that the reason why it *was* so shiny was that they had left the meat wrapped in the many layers of plastic!! Luckily it had not got hot enough to do any damage, so Anthony pulled off the plastic and they had a fine roast (without the plastic taste).

When the roasts were ready, the tables were joined, and the 'last supper' was started. The novelty of the evening was that we ate our dinner in daylight due to daylight savings starting the evening before. It is very exciting to be able to see what you are eating.

Roast night was fantastic. During dinner we had a few cars go though our camp area and I'm sure they were very jealous of our feast. If they had stopped, we would have had plenty of food to feed them because as usual everyone had leftovers.

The many holes were then filled in and the festivities of the evening began. The music was turned up (Anthony's



INSURANCE

Am I insured?

If the answer to any of the following questions is Yes, then the reply will probably be No.

- Do I have larger than standard tyres?
- Do I have a suspension lift more than 1/3 the distance between the bump stops on my vehicle as standard?
- Do I have non-standard seats?
- Do I have a body lift?
- Do I have bead locks or wheel spacers fitted?
- Do my wheels protrude past my body?
- Have the mud flaps that were fitted as standard on my vehicle been removed?
- Can the rear lights be seen past my spare wheel at 45 degrees?
- Etc
- Etc

These are just a few items which when fitted or omitted affect the roadworthiness of the vehicles we drive. As we are all aware, insurance companies are not known for their generosity and if it is possible for an insurance company to deny liability for a claim because the non-roadworthiness of the vehicle contributed to the accident then they probably will.

Any modification, no matter how small in our eyes, that alters the vehicle so that it no longer complies with the relevant ADR (Australian Design Rules) is an escape route for the insurance companies.

For example, Larger Tyres:

The maximum allowable size for a rim and tyre on a vehicle is only 15mm larger in diameter than the maximum specified by the manufacturer for that model or vehicle series. Any larger than this by law requires the owner of the vehicle to have the modification signed off by an automotive engineer to prove to the insurance company that the vehicle is still roadworthy and complies with the relevant ADR.

The *OUT* for the insurance company in the situation where a vehicle is involved in a rear end collision would be the claim that the braking ability of the

modified vehicle was adversely affected thus causing or at least contributing to the accident, or a vehicle involved in a rollover where the owner had removed or modified the sway bars to gain extra inches in suspension travel.

The cost involved in obtaining the engineer's certificate is usually the major hurdle in gaining peace of mind and the approval of the insurers; the expense can be in excess of \$500. The engineer will want to inspect the vehicle thoroughly and may want to conduct some tests, such as a stability test at speed, to ascertain whether the vehicle is a rollover risk or a braking test to confirm that the modifications are within the relevant ADRs.

The next question is, do I tell the insurance company that I have modified the vehicle?

Or do I just hope that they don't find out about them?

My advice is full disclosure, tell them about your modifications and that way at least you know what you are in for in the case of a claim and your insurance company can't reply after you submit the claim form and say (you didn't tell us you had 35" tyres fitted).

If after you inform them of the mods and then they ask for proof of roadworthiness then you will have to get a certificate from an engineer if you want to be covered in the case of an accident caused by the changes made to your vehicle and can be proved as such by the insurer.

Most insurance companies have a standard line in their policies: *"All modifications are allowable as long as the vehicle is roadworthy and is maintained in a roadworthy condition"*, which is pretty black and white in layman's terms.

There is a modifications guide available from Vic Roads at this link

<http://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/vrpdf/rdsafe/vsi%208.pdf>

Carl Surtees

Club Insurance Officer

CAPE YORK**26 June to 6 August 2004**

*The story continues...**[Just a reminder of the trip roll call]*

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		

Day Fourteen: Friday 16th July – Elliot Falls to Siesha (Punsand Bay)

After a few more waterfall photos it was back up the OTL. Well it was for some. The Boyles and Corrigan took a wrong turn and headed for the development road. It didn't take them long to realise their mistake and did a U-turn to meet again with the group at the first creek crossing of the day. It's not surprising that they took a wrong turn as there are very few signs pointing the way, making instinct and guess work an essential ingredient in travelling this part of the country. This part of the Old Telegraph Track proved to be a very interesting section of road. Some of the ruts and wash-aways were so deep you would have difficulty finding the "DC9" should it have ventured too far off course. After a number of water crossings we came to the "awesome" log bridge, yes it is just that a number of loose logs laid 1 to 2 metres above the creek which you have to negotiate. After we had all crossed the bridge needed some repairs to re-position the logs moved during the crossing. After watching a group of motor cyclists cross the creek then jump into the water fully geared in their leathers, we pushed on to the very famous Jardine River crossing (now unusable) for lunch. Over lunch there was much discussion about the possibility of attempting this crossing, but it was decided that the \$88 ferry fee was still the safest option. The possible presence of crocodiles should one become stranded in the middle of the Jardine River was a deciding factor in taking the expensive option. Safely across we tackled the last part of the journey before hitting civilisation. hekked out Bamaga and Seisia, stocked up on food then headed to the Punsand Bay to

establish a base camp from where we would explore the top end.

Day Fifteen: Saturday 17th July - Punsand Bay

A day devoted to much needed rest. Well that was for some, but for Steve it was a trip back to Seisia to have the rear training arms re-bushed again (once before leaving home not being enough). Tom also decided that he did not want to be left out so decided to check the carburetor as the car had been playing up. For the rest of us it was casual walks along the sun drenched, sandy beach soaking up the beauty of this section of the coast. Even though we were in fishing heaven fishing was not on the agenda just yet. The water looked inviting, however, no one was game to go swimming, something to do with the fact that a crocodile had been seen cruising past only a few days prior to our arrival.

Day Sixteen: Sunday 18th July - Punsand Bay to the tip

After 4000 km and 15 days of travel we were only 28 km from the very "tip" of Australia and this was to be the day to complete for some, that which had become a burning ambition. There are mixed feelings as we drive, then walked towards the fulfillment of our objective. Wow!!!!!! what can one say about feelings as you top the last rocky outcrop and see the very tip, a sense of awe, a sense of achievement, a time to just sit and ponder the moment and the achievement. Jill and Steve as usual planned for the occasion and produced a bottle of champagne to celebrate this great mile stone in our Cape York adventure.



Photos taken to prove that we were there, then it was back to the vehicles for more exploration. This time it was to explore Somerset, a settlement that was to have been the administrative centre for the north end of Australia. Natural conditions made this an undesirable location so the administrative centre was relocated to Thursday Island. From here the trip took us to some

sand driving adventure along the coast where George and Graeme and Sue decided to fine tune the crews recovery techniques.

Day Seventeen: Monday 19th July - Punsand Bay

Today was to be a bit of a 'do your own thing' day, to savour the achievement, to enjoy the north and to prepare for the next phase of the journey. George said that "reaching the top was the culmination of years of planning and dreaming and from here anything was a bonus". Fishing was the talk about camp as preparations were made to tackle the 'big one' at dusk. A trip to Thursday Island was the order of the day for Sue and Graeme, first by boat from the mainland, then a bus tour around the island. The evening meal was a round table affair and all enjoyed a range of delicacies including camp roast, pizza, corned beef and **Barramundi**. Yes the fishing expedition produced the biggest and best and was enjoyed by all, both the catcher 'our own Geoff', and the tasters. One fish for 12 people gives an idea of its size. This fish was definitely a tease as it was declared that the chase was on for an even bigger one the next day.

Day Eighteen: Tuesday 20th July - Punsand Bay

Bouyed on by the previous days success, fishing was definitely on the minds of all who wanted to experience the thrill of the big catch. Everyone was looking forward to a second night with fish on the menu. The day started with a trip to a creek that was supposed to be known for its fishing, but in the end it was probably a ploy by the locals to side track the tourists. Not defeated Geoff, Brian, George and others headed to the surf beach at dusk to try their luck.

By this time people were starting to think about an alternative menu for the evening meal, when news came that it was fish and chips for tea. Two very large salmon, but how do we cook fish and chips for twelve while on camp miles from anywhere. To the rescue came the unflappable Sheila, Jill and Sue to coordinate the cooking. First it was a raid through everyone's camp securing all the potatoes, cooking oil and cooking utensils. Then a production line was established to clean fish, peel potatoes and to produce the best feast ever. Delicious!

Day Nineteen: Wednesday 21 July - Punsund Bay to Moreton

With some reluctance we all managed to pack ready to continue the adventure by retracing steps back to the Jardine River crossing. On the way up north we were told that the ferry had broken down, but was still operating. To our surprise we found that on one side of the river the ferry was fixed to a large grader and on the other side it was fixed to a 4x4 vehicle. Thank goodness the ferry was secured to the banks by a thick cable. On return we found the ferry was operating under its own power creating a little more confidence with travellers. The return journey was via the Development Road rather than the Old Telegraph Track, but was this the right decision? One way the road was rutted and slow,

the other was corrugated, slightly faster but shook the living daylight out of both vehicles and occupants. Either way the beauty of the countryside has to be seen to be appreciated, breath taking views, exquisite trees, shrubs and flowers and termite mounds of all sizes and shapes (two mounds were nicknamed the "two towers" by Geoff). The Old Morton Telegraph Station was a very nice place to stop over, that is until you check out the high level flood markers. Then you realise why the all the buildings are built some 3 meters above ground level.

Day Twenty: Thursday 22 July - Moreton to Weipa

The short cut to Weipa, from Morton, was via a bush track 23km from Morton. At 32km it was decided that we had missed the turn off. And no wonder we missed it for it was another example of no signage and the track gave all the appearance of being an access road into private property. Appearances can be deceiving, for the track turned out to be a picturesque drive through some interesting countryside. The track was literally that, a two wheel track winding its way through grass land and trees. As we left the track, at the Weipa road, we crossed over a cattle grid further giving the impression that we had been driving through private property.

The road to Weipa was a veritable highway, a gravel road well maintained so before we knew it we were in Weipa. As you approached the township there is a cross road with very large stop signs. It soon became obvious why these signs were so prominent, for the cross road is used by dump trucks carting Bauxite from the mine to the processing plant. Weighing in at a massive 270 tonnes these are not the sort of vehicles you would want to tackle. That is unless you were the driver of one of these monsters.



The company is looking for more staff, but more about this later. Weipa is a mining town and the company basically owns everything. As there is only one caravan park, there was no need to debate as to where we would be setting up camp for the next four days. The park was well located close to the supermarket and on the shores of the bay, from where we could watch the lovely sunsets.

Day Twenty-one: Friday 23rd July - Weipa

Next morning we were wondering just what sort of place Weipa was. Could only guess that the previous day must have been pay day, for in the early hours of the morning we were awoken by yelling, screaming and people staggering through the park. One of the activities

on today's agenda was the restocking of fresh supplies. Note the word 'was' for this activity had to be deferred a day as the ship had not arrived to restock the supermarket. Something that we in the big city don't have to think about. So if the ship is late, as it was on this occasion, you just have to wait. Sometime the locals have to wait and wait, as one lady said she had been waiting three weeks for a film, sent away for processing. The activity for today also included a tour of the mine, a meal at the local bowls club and the football match (between Sheila and Tom), what a busy schedule. The mining of Bauxite was fascinating, a simple operation that involves stripping the surface, removing the Bauxite to a depth of 1 to 2 metres, reinstating the surface and revegetating the area. At the current rate of removing the Bauxite it is estimated that it will take over 50 years before the ore runs out. The company have plans to increase the rate of removal and will be putting on extra staff in the new year. What a thought, a well paid job with a base salary of \$75,000 in an area where the fishing is also tops.

The evening meal was at the local bowls club but the main feature of the night was the football match between Tom's team and Sheila's team. To make the evening more interesting we all lined up behind either Tom or Sheila barracking and creating quite a disturbance in the club. So much so that we disturbed one lady who then took a liking to Geoff and called him *Big Boy*. The evening wound up with the best team winning and Big Boy escaping the clutches of a strange lady. But the fun did not end there for some of the crew had consumed sufficient beverage to become disoriented. All managed to find their sleeping quarters, except Brian who became lost only 10 metres from his tent (hence the name: *"Little Boy Lost"*).

Day Twenty-two: Saturday 24th July - Weipa

Fishing was the order on this day for Geoff, Ashley and Steve who had hired a boat for the full day. An essential piece of equipment when boating at Weipa is a current tide chart. Weipa is one of two places in the world where there maybe only one tide change in a day. The run of the tides is constantly changing. This phenomenon is caused by the interaction of three ocean masses meeting at this location. It proved to be a long day for the wives as they waited for the safe return of their hunter gathers. A long day but a successful day with tales of crocodiles, wild pigs and the one that got away, but there were the ones that



That fish is definitely worth a kiss... Go Geoff!

did not get away. Fish for dinner and what a feast, a fitting meal for the last supper at Weipa. For those not on the fishing trip other activities were undertaken including checking out the town. This proved to be an interesting exercise as it was difficult to fathom the layout of a town so widely spread. The shopping centre was not near the residential area, but the bowling club was, the hardware store was in the middle of the industrial area and the dense vegetation made it difficult to get a picture of a typical residential area. The other activity was trying to get George to wash his vehicle. All other vehicles had been washed (some sort of virus through the camp) even Jill and Steve's car (courtesy of Kate) received a thorough clean inside and out. But despite all attempts George stood his ground.

Day Twenty-three: Sunday 25th July - Weipa to Musgrave

"Happy Birthday Kate"



We are all packed ready to go, however this is a very special day for a member of the group. It's Kate's birthday. Before we begin the journey it's presents for the birthday girl, the first of a number of surprise events planned to make Kate's day. Farewell to Weipa, some saying they will return another day, especially for the fishing. It was probably just as well the Weipa road could sustain higher speeds, as it enabled us to quickly travel through this part of Queensland which was flat and rather uninteresting. Soon we were on to the main north south road heading to Musgrove, however the focus for many was on the famous Mitchell River crossing, but more about that later.

The camp at Musgrove was on soft green grass, a change from the dust of many of our camps. Soft and green it may have been, but for Geoff and Rochelle not exciting enough, as they elected to take a cabin, or was it a container, for the night. With many travellers in

camp for the night it was not long before a rather large fire was burning, and tales about a birthday, the birthday! Some of the group decided to eat in and some decided to dine out this night. While Jill, Steve and Kate were eating out, a birthday table was set up for Kate. With the help of other travellers, the table was laden with lots of goodies including a cake with sparklers, balloons, etc, you know all those items that make for a surprise.

Happy Birthday Kate.

[To be continued... last issue next edition.]