



SEPTEMBER 2009

Free Wheeling



Lesley's and Ashley's Big Trip – Mitchell Falls 2009

Notice Board



VFWDG GENERAL MEETING VENUE

The committee has finally found and booked a new permanent venue for our Monthly meetings. The venue has a very good Bistro so some may wish to take advantage of that before the meetings **Please note the change to Wednesdays!**

First **WEDNESDAY** of each month 8.00PM Start

Venue:

Upstairs Meeting room (Above the Bistro)

Noble Park Football Club
46-56 Moodemere Street
Noble Park
Melways ref: 89 D4



FREE WHEELING

It seems like only yesterday it was Autumn, and here we are with the days warming up again. Well this month we don't have a lot of trip reports because of the quiet winter, so I took the opportunity to include the entire unabridged text of Lesley and Ashley's big adventure from Part 2 onwards.

The great news is the huge number of upcoming trips! I had to put the calendar on it's own page to make everything fit! The trips seem to cover every type too. The Fishing trip to be laid back, Wine trip for socialising, Pub to Pub to Pub for ... Well, you know! There is a number of day trips to get out and about and even a hard trip for a bit of a challenge.

As you know by now we have a new committee, so congratulations to them and good luck. And you may have picked up that I have taken on the editor role. Who knows, I may even get an edition out on time!

Cheers and see you on a trip,

Shane Michelin



COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT 2008-2009

President	Ashley Martin	president@vfwdc.com 0438 600 904
Vice President	Mark Kochan	vicepres@vfwdc.com 0412 544 668
Treasurer	Phil Griffith	treasurer@vfwdc.com 0419 261 405
Secretary	Paul Ryan	secretary@vfwdc.com 0438 121 148

GENERAL COMMITTEE

Assistant Secretary	Bruce Cremonesi	assist@vfwdc.com
Trip Co-ordinator	Daniel Robinson	trips@vfwdc.com
Newsletter Editor	Shane Michelon	editor@vfwdc.com
Association Delegate	Ashley Martin	
Training Officers	Ashley Martin	John Partridge
	Michael Rodger	Mark Kochan
New Member Contact	George Pledger	
Web Manager	Paul Ryan	web@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 8pm, first Wednesday of each month, excluding January (no meeting). The November General Meeting is held on the 2 nd Wednesday of the month due to the Melbourne Cup public holiday.
Location	Noble Park Football Club 46-56 Moodemere Street Noble Park Melways ref: 89 D4
Newsletter	All articles and photographs to be submitted prior to 20 th of each month to editor@vfwdc.com
Front Cover	Photograph courtesy of : Phil Griffith
	The Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club is an affiliated club of the Victoria Association of Four Wheel Drive Clubs Inc (VAFWDC)

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Hello and welcome to another year of *Free Wheeling*. First of all, a big thank you to the new Committee for committing themselves to contribute to the running of the Club for the coming year. It is very pleasing to see three fresh faces that have not previously represented the committee who will bring new ideas to benefit us all, including new areas to explore. While the management positions were appointed at the AGM we have finalized the committee positions (see below) so please support them.

- Dan Robinson – Trip Coordinator
- Bruce Cremonesi – Assistant Secretary
- Shane Michelon – Newsletter Editor
-

Remember, we are there to represent you the members so if you have any questions or ideas please speak to one of the committee.

The last year has been a difficult one for reasons we have discussed before, but with a new Committee there has to be a vision of what direction the Club takes. During my last term as President, it was all about enjoying Club activities and ensuring we continue the unofficial motto of the Club "*We are a family club*". Based on this, I would like to see more day trips of an easy to medium standard, and camping based weekends. In the past these have been well attended and are suitable for the majority of members. We are planning trips in new areas, as well as the traditional areas visited in the past, so there will be something for everyone.

There has been an agreement signed between 4WD Vic and Parks Vic to open up approx 400 MVO tracks for clubs to explore. The great advantage of this is it opens areas we have been unable to enter and should make for some great trips. We are looking at what areas to explore so keep an eye on the calendar.

As some members may be aware, Mt Skene Road has been closed to all traffic affecting those wishing to take a snow drive. 4WD Vic and the Mansfield Shire have introduced a permit system allowing affiliated clubs to use this road during the closure. An application must be completed and returned to 4WD Vic seven days prior to the trip. If you are thinking of heading up in that direction, please contact Dan for further information.

I hope you to see you on a trip enjoying the great outdoors and of course all the Club has to offer. See you on the next trip – or at the next meeting.

Ashley Martin
President

Minutes of General Meeting – 5 August 2009

Meeting held at Noble Park Football Club and opened at 8pm by John Partridge.

Members Present: There were 30 members present as per the attendance book

Apologies: Maxine Ryan, Aline Van Buiten, Nick Johnson, Catherine Thorne, John Wimetal, Karen Walter, Paula Johnston, Ray & Dawn Brown

Visitors:

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:

Accepted: Bruce

Seconded: Sally

MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES:

NIL

CORRESPONDENCE IN:

NIL

CORRESPONDENCE OUT:

Newsletter

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Petty Cash: \$
Cheque Account: \$1439.00
Term Deposit: \$3000.00
Accepted: Bruce
Seconded: Mick

TRIP CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT:

➤ **Forthcoming Trips/Events:**

AGM Dinner Aug 29
Shane McNiell Sep 5-6 Cheynes Bridge
John Partridge Sep 9 Trip Leader Course
Shane Michelin Sep 20 Neerim

➤ **Trip Reports:**

Ashley Martin gave a report on his recent trip through SA, NT and WA.
Shane Michelin spoke about a recce trip he did in Neerim with Nick Johnson

ASSOCIATION NEWS:

NIL

GENERAL BUSINESS:

Modification guidelines that were pushed through in NSW which limits vehicles to a total of 2" maximum lift have been put on hold. This is due to 4WD Action magazine running a promotion that urged people to write to government asking them to reverse the decision.
David Hughes questioned the term deposit amount stated

in the Treasurers' report. Craig clarified that the figures were not exact as he had not gone into the bank. John asked that members do not consume alcoholic drinks during the meeting. We promote ourselves as a family club and don't want an image of having drinks at the meeting now we are out our new venue. Enjoy drinks at the venue either before or after the meeting.

AGM Dinner did not make it to the newsletter. It is on the 29th Aug at the Pavillion restaraunt in Dandenong at 7pm. John will send an email out and post to those who receive the newsletter via snail mail.

MEETING CLOSED at 9:00pm

Next Meeting:

8.00pm, Wednesday 2nd September 2009 at Noble Park Football Club
46-56 Moodemere Street
Noble Park

Melways ref: 89 D4



CLUB MERCHANDISE For Sale (Revised Price List)

Club Polo Shirts	\$28.00 ea
Club Polar Fleece ½ Zip Jumper	\$38.00 ea
Club Polar Fleece Full Zip Jacket	\$48.00 ea
Club Sleeveless Reversible Vest	\$44.00 ea
Club Caps	\$15.00 ea
Club Bucket Hat	\$16.00 ea
Club Wide Brim Hat	\$18.00 ea
Club Beanie	\$12.00 ea
VFWDC Sticker (long)	\$ 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.



You do not want to miss this event!

The National 4x4 Show, Fishing & Outdoors Expo opens its doors on the 4th of September until the 6th of September at the Melbourne Show Grounds.

We have all that the great outdoors has to offer, including 4WD's and Accessories, Fishing Tackle and Rods, Camping and Outdoors gear, Travel Destinations and Tours, not to mention prize giveaways and plenty of fun stuff to entertain the kids.

This year we would like to offer **half price tickets** to you and your members. To purchase tickets simply go online at www.4x4show.com.au/melbourne, click the ticketing link and enter the Promotional Code **4X409**. Remember to print a copy of your confirmation (including the barcode provided) and present this at the door to gain immediate entry to the show.

SPREAD THE WORD - this offer is exclusive to your club members!!!

For more information on the shows please visit www.4x4show.com.au

! BEWARE !

On a recent trip to Woods Point with friends, a VFWDC member experienced a nasty incident with a butane cooker.

He took out the butane cooker - which some of you have - only to have the unit explode. His son was close by and suffered shrapnel in his eyes and loss of eyelashes; he was very lucky not to lose an eye.

Gas inspectors have taken the unit away and Energy Safe Victoria (ESV) is also involved in the investigation.

If you use these units, please be extremely careful to make sure they are placed in a position that will not cause injuries to yourself or other people.



Good Afternoon Club Presidents, Secretaries and Delegates,

It is that time again where we would ask you all to think about whom you would like representing you on the Board of Management of Four Wheel Drive Victoria.

Please Note: Nominations for the Board **MUST** be received by close of business on Tuesday 8th of September 2009. Upon receiving all nominations, we will inform clubs who the nominees are prior to the night of the AGM.

If you have any queries, please contact me on 03 9857 5209 or at gm@fwdvictoria.org.au.

Yours faithfully,



Russell Sturzaker

General Manager

Four Wheel Drive Victoria



CLUB KITCHEN

Well, last month was a dessert recipe, so this month a side dish. I made some of this as a side dish for a roast the other day.

Scalloped Potatoes



Ingredients

- 20g butter
- 1 onion, halved, thinly sliced
- 1kg Desiree potatoes
- 300ml carton pouring cream (see variation)
- pinch of ground nutmeg

Method

Preheat oven to 200°C. Lightly grease a 6cm deep, 15cm x 24cm (base) ovenproof dish.

Melt butter in a frying pan over medium heat. Add onion. Cook for 4 minutes or until soft. Remove from heat. Set aside. Slice potatoes into 5mm-thick rounds. Pour cream into a jug. Add nutmeg, and salt and pepper. Whisk with a fork to combine.

Arrange a layer of potatoes over base of prepared dish. Top with a layer of onion. Drizzle with a little cream mixture. Repeat layers until all ingredients have been used.

Cover dish tightly with foil. Bake for 30 to 40 minutes or until potatoes are just tender. Remove foil. Cook for a further 30 minutes or until top is golden.

Notes & tips

Variation: For a lower-fat version of this dish, you can replace the cream with chicken or vegetable stock.



VFWDC ADVERTISING DIRECTORY

ALL CEREMONIES

Flair-Excellence-Sensitivity
Sue A Lyne
 Civil Celebrant
 Ph: 9787 5665

BUSH-B-Q

Manufacturer of the Barbeque of the Outback
Don & Thelma Montague
 Ph: 9808 1200 Mob: 0414 355488
 Email: info@theldon.com.au
 Web: www.theldon.com.au

CAMSEW-SEWRENT

Domestic & Industrial Sewing Machine Repairs
Ron Camm
 Mob: 0419 884920 Fax: 9766 4598
 Email: sewrent@camsew.com.au

FRANKLAND ELECTRICS PTY L TD

Electric Motor Sales, Service, Repairs & Modifications
 Power Tool Service & Repairs
Peter & Janine Frankland
 Ph: 9555 6624 Fax: 9555 6565
 Email: fralecpete@aol.com

METALAIR INDUSTRIES

4x4 Camper Trailers, Accessories & Camping Equipment
David Hughes
 Ph: 9798 1492 Fax: 9798 2593
 Email: metalair@tenex.com.au

R & D BROWN PAINTING SERVICES

Quality Workmanship at the Right Price
Ray & Dawn Brown
 Ph: 5967 1437 Fax: 5967 1439 Mob: 0411 799054

TECOMA ELECTRICAL SERVICES

Industrial, Commercial & Domestic
 24hr Emergency Service
Ian Warburton
 Ph: 9754 2341 Mob: 0409 797675

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



CLUB CALENDAR AT A GLANCE

2009				
September	Wednesday 2nd	General Meeting	Ashley Martin	0438 600 904
	Friday 4th	Trip—Cheynes Bridge	Shane McNeill	0409 359 385
	Friday 4th	Annual 4x4 show		
	Wednesday 9th	Trip Leaders Course (Postponed)	John Partridge	0428 331 211
	Tuesday 15th	Committee Meeting	Paul Ryan	0438 121 148
	Sunday 20th	Trip—Neerim Hard trip	Shane Michelin	0417 784 599
	Sunday 20th	Trip—Kinglake & District	John & Marianne McNeil	03 9707 2838 0417 072 838
October	Friday 2nd	Trip—Winery Weekend—Bendigo	Ashley Martin	0438 600 904
	Wednesday 7th	General Meeting	Ashley Martin	0438 600 904
	Sunday 18th	Trip—Cobaw State Forest	Craig Major	0432 876 699
	Tuesday 20th	Committee Meeting	Phil Griffith	0419 261405
	Friday 23rd	Trip—Mystery Pub to Pub to Pub	David or Rosalie	WK: 9798 1492 HM: 9706 2966 MOB: 0427 865 592
November	31 Oct—3 Nov *Cup Weekend	Trip—Talbotville & Billy goats bluff	Dan Robinson	0407 334 169
	31 Oct—3 Nov *Cup Weekend	Trip—Haunted Stream	David Jackson	0408 333 313
	Wednesday 4th	General Meeting	Ashley Martin	0438 600 904
	Tuesday 17th	Committee Meeting	Dan Robinson	0407 334169
	Friday 20th	Trip—Annual Fishing Trip—Twelve Mile Reserve, Goulburn River	Ashley Martin	0438 600 904
December	Wednesday 2nd	General Meeting	Ashley Martin	0438 600 904
	Sunday 6th	Xmas Party		
	Saturday 12th	Oxfam Christmas Tree Delivery	Ashley Martin	0438 600 904
	Tuesday 15th	No Committee meeting		
	Saturday 26th	Trip—Snowy River National Park - McKillops Bridge	Ken Beard & Jane Spence	5971 4683
2010				
	Tuesday, 29/06/10	Trip—North Simpson Desert - Madi-gan Line	Ken Beard & Jane Spence	5971 4683

FORTHCOMING TRIPS

Destination	Cheynes Bridge Saturday; Ben Cruachan Reserve Sunday
Trip Leader	Shane McNeill
Contact No	0409 359 385
Date	FRI 04/09/09- SUN 06/09/09
Meeting Time/Place	Longwarry BP 5-6pm 19th approx Merringtons camp ground 20th; 8am
Vehicle Limits	MIN: 3, MAX: 10
Grade	Wet; hard, Dry; medium
Approx Kms	Approx;100Klms
Last Available Fuel	PETROL/DIESEL: Moe
Distance Between Supplies	
Maps Required	Walhalla - Woods point
Equipment Required	Wet conditions; mud terrain tyres, Snorkel or water bra. Dry conditions; Good allter-rains, Snorkel or water bra. Basic recovery
Radio Channel	12
Trip Activity Details: Travel from merringtons on Saturday head east to Burgoyne gap track Lunch at the Macalister and finish at Cheynes Bridge. Sunday; travel along the MT Margaret track towards Ben Cruachan Scenic Reserve then south home.	

Destination	Neerim (Day Trip)
Trip Leader	Shane Michelin
Contact No	0417 784 599 or (03) 9800 1105
Date	Sun 20 Sep 09
Meeting Time/Place	Longwarry BP 9am
Vehicle Limits	MIN: 3, MAX: 5
Grade	Wet; Very hard, Dry; Hard
Approx Kms	Approx;100Klms
Last Available Fuel	PETROL/DIESEL: BP Lonwarry
Distance Between Supplies	
Maps Required	Rooftop, Yarra Valley–West Gippsland Adventure Map
Equipment Required	Mud terrains or better, Full recovery kit, Winch preferred, lockers useful.
Radio Channel	12
Trip Activity Details: A hard to extreme day out. Likely winching. Tracks include: Hard Uphaul, Fencline, Youngs Whitelaws Spike.	

Destination	Trip Leaders Course (Postponed)
Trip Leader	John Partridge
Contact No	0428 331 211 gu-johnno@yahoo.com.au
Date	Wed 9th September 8.00PM
Meeting Time/Place	Venue TBA
Vehicle Limits	MIN: 4, MAX: 12
Grade	N/A
Approx Kms	N/A
Last Available Fuel	N/A
Distance Between Supplies	N/A
Maps Required	Any map of an area you would like to visit and run your first trip to
Equipment Required	Note book, pen, maps, enthusiasm
Radio Channel	N/A
Trip Activity Details: This trip leaders course is designed to give you the knowledge and confidence to be able to run a club trip. There are some basic steps to learn and by the end of the course you will be able to confidently run an organized and enjoyable club trip to a destination of your choosing. This course is a must for those that have not run a trip before. We will team participants up with some experienced club members to help you plan and run your first club trip. Running a club trip is very enjoyable and rewarding and we encourage all to help out.	

Destination	Kinglake & District
Trip Leader	John & Marianne McNeil
Contact No	TEL: 03 9707 2838 MOB: 0417 072 838
Date	Sunday 20th September
Meeting Time/Place	9:30am McKenzie Reserve, Yarra Glen (past shops L/H side)
Vehicle Limits	MIN: 2, MAX: 4 (Diesel Only)
Grade	WET: Medium DRY: Easy
Approx Kms	150–200
Last Available Fuel	N/A
Distance Between Supplies	N/A
Maps	(optional) Vic Roads Country Directory Map 61, Vic Map - Broadford 7923-4.3, Strath Creek 7923-4-2
Equipment Required	Basic Recovery Gear.
Radio Channel	12
Bushfire Recovery Trip We will be using both bitumen and 4 WD tracks exploring areas around: Kinglake (morning tea), Flowerdale (optional counter lunch), Tallarook Sate Forest ending our trip in Strath Creek.	

Well Done on Trips!

Destination	Winery Weekend—Bendigo
Trip Leader	Ashley Martin
Contact No	Mob: 0438 600 904
Date	Friday 2 nd - Sunday 4 th October
Meeting Time/ Place	Will depend on when members are leaving
Vehicle Limits	N/A
Grade	Easy
Approx Kms	150
Last Available Fuel	Bendigo
Distance Between Supplies	N/A
Maps	N/A
Equipment Required	Headache tablets
Radio Channel	12

This year we have decided to visit another area close to Melbourne. Bendigo has a reasonable number of wineries with the main varieties being reds. We

I will be leaving Melbourne on the Friday afternoon from Port Melbourne. I have not stipulated a meeting time and place for most members will make their own way up.

I have yet to confirm a caravan park but all details will be available in the October newsletter. There will be both powered sites and cabin accommodation available and of course a full amenities block. If you are contemplating a Unit I need to know by ASAP and how many nights to ensure one will be available, I cannot guarantee one if you leave it till the last minute. Units do require full linen.

As we did with last years wine trip Saturday will be spent visiting several wineries 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 again, some members can do happy hour and others dinner and maybe a cheese platter. As we get closer and numbers are confirmed we can sort out who is brining 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 MMMM).

Destination	Cobaw State Forest
Trip Leader	Craig Major
Contact No	0432 876 699
Date	18 October 2009
Meeting Time/ Place	BP Service Center, Calder Park (Next to Thunder Dome) Departing : 8.30am
Vehicle Limits	3–10
Grade	Medium
Approx Kms	60
Last Available Fuel	PETROL: Calder Park DIESEL: Calder Park
Distance Between Supplies	N/A
Maps	N/A
Equipment Re- quired	Basic recovery equipment – snatch etc
Radio Channel	12

With the restricted access into most of the eastern parks due to track closures and fire damage it was time to look for other areas. I have known about this area for some time but the club has never run a trip there.

Recently a few members decided to conduct a recce and turned out to be a small but interesting area. The majority of tracks range from easy to medium so will be suitable for everyone.

Destination	Mystery Pub to Pub to Pub
Trip Leader	David or Rosalie Hughes
Contact No	WK: 9798 1492 HM: 9706 2966 MOB: 0427 865 592
Date	23rd–25th October 2009
Meeting Time/Place	Yet to be determined
Vehicle Limits	3–10
Grade	To be advised (easy to medium probably)
Approx Kms	A Mystery at the moment.
Last Available Fuel	
Distance Between Supplies	
Maps	
Equipment Required	First Aid Kit(Panadol) Good sense of humour
Radio Channel	12

Meeting at a designated place, travelling from there to somewhere else, and then on to somewhere else. (ALL A MYSTERY)

Morning and Afternoon tea is provided. All other information will be determined at a later date.

Just come with a good sense of humor, and prepared to have a lot of fun. Stay somewhere on Friday night and somewhere else on Saturday night, and home sometime Sunday. All information provided closer to the date.

Destination	Talbotville & Billy goats bluff
Trip Leader	Dan Robinson
Contact No	0407 334 169
Date	Cup Weekend 31/10-3/11
Meeting Time/ Place	Longwarry BP 7:30am
Vehicle Limits	3–6
Grade	Medium
Approx Kms	500
Last Available Fuel	Dargo
Distance Between Supplies	
Maps	Talbotville
Equipment Required	Standard recovery equipment, Blind or snorkel, Wet weather gear.
Radio Channel	12
Travel some iconic tracks around Talbotville, including Billy Goats, Pinacles & Blue Rag range. Base camping at Talbotville.	

Destination	Haunted Stream
Trip Leader	David Jackson
Contact No	0408 333 313
Date	Cup Weekend 31/10-3/11
Meeting Time/ Place	TBA
Vehicle Limits	
Grade	Medium
Approx Kms	500
Last Available Fuel	Swifts Creek
Distance Between Supplies	
Maps	Omeo
Equipment Required	
Radio Channel	12
Travel tracks around the Haunted Stream.	



Destination	Annual Fishing Trip—Twelve Mile Reserve, Goulburn River
Trip Leader	Ashley Martin
Contact No	Mob: 0438 600 904
Date	Friday 20th— Sunday 23th Nov
Meeting Time/ Place	Lilydale Macas Friday Morning - 9am Friday night - 6.30pm
Vehicle Limits	Min 0, Max 10
Grade	WET: Easy to get there, medium drive Sunday DRY: Easy to get there, easy/medium on Sunday
Approx Kms	200
Last Available Fuel	PETROL: Mansfield DIESEL: Mansfield
Distance Between Supplies	N/A
Maps	N/A
Equipment Required	Basic recovery equipment Fishing equipment
Radio Channel	12
<p>On the last occasion we camped here the weather was not kind to us so second time lucky. The area is well grassed (and hopefully still will be), easy access to the river and has drop toilets The river is suitable for those wanting to wade up stream or like most of us just throw a line in from the side (if we even get that energetic). The camping area is an easy drive out of Jamieson along the Jamieson/Woods Point Rd and is a well maintained dirt road.</p> <p>I set 2 departure times for some members will be leaving Friday morning and another's Friday night. If you can't make either let me know and will advise directions (don't be afraid).</p> <p>If weather permitting and the well being of everyone I will probably take a scenic way home via a few tracks. These I have not been on for some time but they will not be difficult.</p>	

Destination	Snowy River National Park - McKillops Bridge
Trip Leader	Ken Beard & Jane Spence
Contact No	5971 4683
Date	Saturday, 26/12/09 - Saturday, 02/01/10
Meeting Time/Place	BP service station Princes Hwy Longwarry DEPART 0600hrs
Vehicle Limits	MIN: 2, MAX: 5
Grade	WET: Moderate DRY: Easy
Approx Kms	Approx 500km.
Last Available Fuel	PETROL: Buchan (Seldom Seen if they have any) DIESEL:
Distance Between Supplies	N/A
Maps Required	Optional - Rooftop: Snowy River, McKillops Bridge, Lakes Entrance Adventure map.
Equipment Required	Drinking water & food for 8 days. Basic recovery gear, clothing for hot/cold climate
Radio Channel	12
Trip Activity Details:	
Camp by the Snowy River. Bring an inflatable tube/canoe, do the Deddick Trail, help us celebrate the New Year or just do nothing at all!	

Destination	(Expression of interest) North Simpson Desert - Madigan Line
Trip Leader	Ken Beard & Jane Spence
Contact No	5971 4683
Date	Tuesday, 29/06/10 (depart Copley, SA) to Birdsville, QLD (Approx 10-14 days later)
Meeting Time/Place	Copley Caravan Park, S.A.
Vehicle Limits	MIN: 2, MAX: 4 (Diesel Only)
Grade	WET/DRY: Difficult
Approx Kms	Approx 800kms, Mt Dare to Birdsville.
Last Available Fuel	PETROL: N/A DIESEL: Mt Dare
Distance Between Supplies	260 litres diesel required for 6 cylinder. Detours/Deviations may be required.
Equipment Required	Desert experience necessary. Vehicle must be in A1 condition. 2x spare tyres/4 tubes. Other specified equipment in detail later on.
Radio Channel	12
Trip Activity Details:	
Following Dr Cecil Madigan's 1939 track from Old Andado to Birdsville. THIS IS VERY REMOTE & ISOLATED COUNTRY, MUST BE PREPARED FOR ISOLATION AND IN THE EVENT OF BREAKDOWN VEHICLE RECOVERY MAY BE AN ISSUE DOLLAR WISE Commitment by Feb 2010 - Permits required	



Trip Reports

A word from the new Trip Coordinator

As the new trip coordinator I'd like to introduce myself.

I've been 4wding for 9 years, & was previously a member of another 4wd club for 7 years.

Over that time I was involved in running many trips & also a Trip Leader course with Bruce.

The previous club had a property out near Hayfield so the majority of my experience has been in that area. But we also did a few trips further abroad throughout the high country.

Over the coming months I'd like to see new Trip leaders & new members attending & running trips to where they feel comfortable. I will be bringing to the meetings some personal trip notes with turn by turn instruction or a marked map. I will also gladly accept others input on places to go see & visit or even requests of where they would like to see. Hopefully we can encourage people to

take a drive out to an area they may not be familiar with, but with detailed notes to guide them through they will have a successful trip.

Another event that I will try to get off the ground is a mass group gathering, where multiple trips can be run on the same day at the same time. This way we can have varying difficulty of trips run simultaneously & accommodate everyone.

Anyone with any thoughts or assistance in trips or planning or notes please come see me.

Dan

**LESLEY & ASHLEY'S BIG ADVENTURE
CENTRAL/WEST/SOUTH AUSTRALIA
16 MAY to 24 JULY 2009**

Continued from Last Month ...

Part 2: Alice Springs to Home Valley Station

Participants:
Ashley and Lesley
Derek and Jan

DAY 14

Left Alice at around 10.30am and on to the famous Tanami... or should I say the dreaded Tanami! Drive drive drive... all ok except for constant dust from two B-triples which we were following for some way. Stopped off road at Renahans Bore at around 4pm. Usual stuff - setting up camp, dinner etc etc, until the rain started at around 10pm. And down it came - relentlessly lashing the canvas, together with thunder and lightning, all night long. No-body slept - sorry, correction, only Derek slept.

DAY 15

We made a very early start, packing up a soaked trailer (not much fun) and on road by 7.30am. Now, after a 12 hour downpour (more than 20mms), the Tanami was wet, greasy, muddy - just the right condition for a rubbish day's driving... extremely taxing on both driver and passenger. ADM did sterling job to keep us out of trouble in a 4km stretch before Rabbit Flat (just one big slide almost into the gutter) while Derek was slip sliding his caravan along the middle of the road. Stopped at Rabbit Flat for fuel (Derek). Drove and drove till we reached the WA Border and decided to stop at around 4pm for another night bush camping at Sturt Creek, which turned out to be a perfect little oasis after a gruelling day. By this time, the weather had much improved and we were able to dry out



all our wet bedding. The sun goes down early - 4.30pm - and rises early - 6am - in WA, so it's early to bed and early to rise from this day forward.

DAY 16

What a difference a day makes... blue sky and sunshine, so casual rise this morning and a well-awaited cooked breakfast, TG... big thanks Ashley. Followed the remainder of the Tanami - stopping off to check out Wolfe Creek Meteorite Crater (not as scary as the film ☺) but amazing site. Reached the Great Northern Highway and made it all but 6kms out of Halls Creek before Derek ran out of fuel ☹ ADM siphoned some out of his tank for \$5 p/litre (can hear you all smirking). Fuelled up at Halls Creek, but as we were running out of time to make Purnululu NP that night, we stopped at Leycesters Rest (another free of-froad camping site).

DAY 17

ADM and LP up at 6.30am to drive to Purnululu (Bungle Bungle) NP. D&J heading directly to Kununurra. After 53km drive into the Rangers HQ we were all set up by 9.30am, so headed off to start our siteseeing/walking at Cathedral Gorge. I can hear you all saying, not another gorge... but truly these places are simply breathtaking. Ashley then followed up by going for a lone walk along Piccaninny Creek. Back at camp around 2.30pm for a well



deserved rest. It's HOT.

DAY 18

Packed up and ready to drive to the northern part of the NP to check out Echidna Chasm and the Mini Palms Gorge, both of which were very different but again astounding. Walked to lookout with view of Bungle Bungles and Osmand Ranges (which just happen to have been formed 1.6 billion - yes billion - years ago). Compared to BB's which are only 300 million years old, man those ranges are OLD! Drove the next 280kms to reach Kununurra by nightfall. Derek and Jan were set up at Hidden Valley Tourist Park and we were fortunate enough to get a spot next to them under the shade of a fabulous huge mahogany tree.

DAY 19

Visited Lake Argyle - HUGE. Spent rest of day on chores readying for trip to the heart of the Kimberley.

DAY 20

After a few hiccups, on the road by midday. Drove to Wyndham and up to Five Rivers Lookout for lunch. Took

the King River road (more like a track than a road) from Wyndham into El Questro. As time was getting on before we were to arrive at ELQ Station, we decided to spend nite in bush and head into ELQ early next morning (turned out to be a good idea). Another impressive drive with the Cockburn Ranges as backdrop.

DAY 21

Early start and straight into El Questro Station where we were fortunate to acquire a "private campsite" on the banks of the Pentecost River - very nice quiet spot. Laziness got the better of us so we just set up camp and relaxed for rest of day - well earned! Drove up to Saddle Ridge Lookout later in the afternoon, then down to the Station for Happy Hour and back to camp site for dinner.

DAY 22

Time to explore ELQ. First stop Zebedee Springs where



the boys had a dip in the hot springs until the tour bus arrived! Off to ELQ Gorge where we walked and clambered over rocks and boulders and water to reach the stunning waterpool at the end. Welcome relief in 33 degree heat. Fortunately not crowded here and opportunity for swimming. Boys climbed over big boulders and further up the gorge to investigate, girls remained in calm waters. Paddled around here for about an hour and then scambled our way back to carpark. Returned to camp for late lunch and another restful afternoon. Ashley cooked roast lamb for all - yummo. Jan cooked Rosella crumble for dessert - more yummo. Rosella is a small bush with edible flowers that taste a little like rhubarb.

DAY 23

So much to do here, we decided to stay another nite. Spent day mostly driving: 1. Explosion Gorge - 4WD track into great waterhole but no swimming so Ashley threw the line in for a few mins with no luck. 2. Sandwich Hole - 4WD track into another waterhole (more like small lake), no swimming, once again ADM tried the fishing, once again no luck. 3. Branco's Lookout - here you get to view the vastness of the Kimberley and river system. 5. Pigeon Hole - more water, more no swimming. All this no swimming cos this is crocodile territory! Another lookout and back to camp to start packing up for early exit next day.

DAY 24

Left ELQ by 9am and drove to Emma Gorge which is still part of the ELQ "Wilderness Park" experience. ADM and Derek walked into the gorge while Jan and I had a coffee and relaxed in the plush surrounds of the Resort. Very pleasant here. Boys reported back on very nice swimming hole at end of gorge where ADM had the proverbial swim. Continued along the Gibb River Road, crossing the Pentecost River and into Home Valley Station for the night. For those interested (?) this is where "Australia" (the movie) was filmed, but unfortunately Hugh not here at this time... ☹ Drove up to lookout to see the sunset over the Pentecost River with the Cockburn Range as backdrop - stunning. FYI, the Cockburn Range (pronounced Coburn) is a famous landmark of the Kimberley, rising 600 metres above the plains of El Questro Wilderness Park. Very impressive indeed.

On to the Mitchell Plateau via Drysdale Station, then we will be sitting on the beach north of Kalumburu for a few days.

We're into our fourth week and yes, I'm still here!!!!

PART 3

For those still interested, the journey continues...

DAY 25

Destination Mitchell Falls... but as day was nearing its



usual WA early end, we stopped for an o/nite stay at King Edward River - very nice spot speshly as free camping.

DAY 26

Off early next morning so we could make the 86km rough drive into Mitchell Falls (Punamii-Upuu) at a reasonable time. Some great scenery of Mitchell Plateau and tropical savannah along the way. We arrived at camp ground at around 10.30am, set up and decided this would be an R&R day after much heavy four wheeling over past few days.

DAY 27

Up and at 'em ready for the walk into the Falls. This is described as a "moderate to difficult" 6km return walk which passes Little Merten Falls, Big Merten Falls along the trail. Spectacular site of the falls on arrival - you probably all know that Mitchell Falls is another famous landmark of the Kimberley and it certainly did not disappoint. Would have been even more so if there had been more water, but it is the dry season here. Spent quite a bit of time exploring and of course taking a myriad of photos. The fitness trio took the walking trail home, while LP opted for the luxury return to camp - by helicopter! First time for me and it was a great experience, as the pilot took us over the falls several times - brillo. Everyone tired after big day, so early nite.

DAY 28-31

Next stop Kalumburu for a fuel-up (only \$2.60 p/l !) and to obtain permit into Honeymoon Bay (Ken and Jane Beard recommendation). Arrived at Honeymoon Bay Resort and checked out camping options which actually were not very good. Decided to explore a bit and ended up on the sand dunes away from the madding crowd. Remind us to tell you story of the guy that runs this so-called "9-star resort" where the facilities leave a lot to be desired but the view and the sunsets are to die for! Spent a rather lazy three days here. Ashley fished, rest of us watched. Regrettably, we didn't get to have fish for dinner. No swimming either as this is salt water crocodile territory, although didn't happen to see any.

DAY 31

On way out of HB didn't get far as Derek reported rear brake problems. ADM checked and discovered the rear brake pads cactus! Drove into Kalumburu - via the tip - to try to find some parts but no luck. Checked at the servo where we were informed that there was a local car dump nearby. Ashley, alias "Blackbird", who by now had convinced Derek that trawling tips and wreckers yards was a pretty good pastime, clapped eyes on a Landy and minutes later had Derek's rear pads ready to roll. We checked out of town somewhat later than expected, heading for Manning Gorge (near Mt Barnett) but again too late in the day so stopped for roadside o/nite camping at Hann River.

DAY 32

Again, not a good start to the day - this time the Patrol had engine start problems, and that was just the beginning! Drove 200 mtrs, engine stopped again. Primed it, got it running, only to drive another 200 mtrs and stop. This time it wouldn't start and it was Derek to the rescue, towing us to Mr Barnett Roadhouse for vehicle mainte-

nance. To cut a very long (sad) story short, we refueled to full capacity, the mechanic got it going, only to drive 200 mtrs out of the Roadhouse for it to stop again. By this stage tempers frayed to the max, but Ashley investigated problem further to find the fuel pickup in fuel tank had broken off. Derek fortunately had some hose which we had collected from the car dump at Kalumburu and ADM did a bandaid fix on the problem which TG got us to next stop, Mornington Wilderness Park. Ashley still venting - expletive deletive - about the so-called mechanic!!

DAY 33-34

First priority for day was to ascertain whether there was any welding equipment here. Luckily enough there was a MIG welder on site which Ashley organised to use later in the day to fix the car problem. In meantime, we spent the day exploring the Mornington Wilderness Park which is located on the Fitzroy River. Plenty to do here. We visited Dimand Gorge, Cajeput for lunch and a swim, and then went for a walk at Sir John Gorge - all of this was more great viewing.

DAY 35

Mornington to Silent Grove. Checked out Bell Gorge and had a swim at the bottom of the waterfall. This was an easy day and we were back at camp early afternoon.

DAY 36

An early start today, heading to Winjana Gorge - a



spectacular limestone reef many millions of years old. Walked along the gorge where freshwater crocodiles were sunning themselves on edge of the water. ADM walked to end of the gorge while others returned leisurely to carpark. Left here for Tunnel Creek - an underground cave carved out of the limestone reef, with a creek running through it. Derek and Ashley walked the 1.7km return. Then on to Fitzroy Crossing and luxury of caravan park - Fitzroy River Lodge - camped on grass and checked out the well-appointed amenities. Porcelain at last!

DAY 37

ADM and LP took a boat trip on Fitzroy River at Geike Gorge - I know you must think we would be gorged out by now, but this one was definitely worth looking at (not

that they all haven't been) speshly as no walking involved!! Spent the afternoon doing chores - ADM washed 2.5 weeks of filth of the truck while LP did the laundry etc. Dined out as this was our last night with Jan and Derek.



DAY 38

Up very early to say our sad farewells to Jan & Derek - they were heading east to Kununurra (long day 570 odd kms) to pick up their caravan, and we were heading west to Broome via Derby.

Well, that's the end of Chapter 3... we're on our own now with lots more to see and do.

Catch up with you all in the next instalment.

Part 4:

Bit of catching up to do in this episode. It's a bit long, so here goes...

DAY 38

Fitzroy Crossing to Broome. Up very early to say our good-byes to J & D - they were heading east to Kununurra (long day 570 odd kms) and we were heading west to Broome via Derby. In Derby we stopped for a quick look around town - not that much to do here so we did the touristy stuff such as checking out the wharf, which has the highest tide variation in Australia, had a look at the old jail and the Boab Prison Tree, both of which were used in the late 1800s to house aboriginals who had committed very minor criminal offences. Left for Broome where we arrived mid afternoon, checking into Tarangau Caravan Park at Cable Beach for two nites. Broome... definitely aimed at the high end of the market is Broome/Cable Beach. Township itself quite disappointing. Many many tourist resorts and bars etc located mainly at Cable Beach... all very expensive.

DAY 39

The morning was spent doing mundane duties. Ashley went for run along Cable Beach, then we had a look around town, restocked for next leg. Late afternoon was

spent on Cable Beach (drove along beach and found quiet spot) where ADM had a swim, we watched the camel trains, and enjoyed a couple of coldies while watching the sunset - extremely pleasurable late afternoon/evening. The weather was brilliant - about 30 degrees each day.

DAYS 40-41

Broome to Cape Leveque. Drove the 220kms north to



Cape Leveque on fairly ordinary sandy, corrugated road (what's new!) and into Kooljaman Resort. Let me tell you, the word "resort" is certainly used loosely in WA! Camping here was a bit iffy but the beaches more than made up for it. Of course there was the option of staying in bungalow style accommodation, but why would we when we have a 5-star trailer! Stunning coastlines here that show off WA's true colours - that fabulous Kimberley red - at sunset (yes again - another great sunset) and the azure blue of the water. Probably sound like a broken record, but was truly stunning. Two beaches here - one east side/one west side - both of which were great.

DAY 42

Back to Broome for a further look around at stuff we missed earlier. Had lunch at Matso's Brewery - a boutique style brewery which came highly recommended by Melbourne girl working at the Visitor Centre. Beer and food ok, but service left a lot to be desired. Left around 2ish heading for next major stop, the Pilbara and into Karijini NP. This was a big day's driving so we decided to stop at around 4.30 at Stanley roadside rest stop.

DAY 43

Early start and drove into Port Hedland - mainly for internet check and shop stop. Then kept driving til late afternoon - 100kms west of Karijini, another roadside stop at Bea Bea Creek. No sleep here due to continuous all nite "hum" of the road trains passing through the cutting.

DAYS 44-45

Arrived at Karijini NP early morning to ensure good camp spot. Called in at Visitor Centre and then drove to Dales Campground where we found camp site in designated area called Dingo Loop. Set up and Ashley immediately took off for a couple of hours to explore Dales Gorge (and

of course had a swim). We returned to the gorge that afternoon as Ashley had forgotten to take his camera and wanted to quickly redo the walk to take some snaps. LP drove the Patrol - for the first time - to the other end of the walk to collect him. All good reports on another gorge walk. We returned to camp for a relaxing evening.

Day 46

Karijini to Millstream-Chichester NP for two nites. This NP is in the heart of the Pilbara and the change in the



landscape here is dramatic - the dark red soil covered by the green of the spinafex is a sight to behold. Actually looks as though the planting has been done by man - so evenly spaced are the clumps of spinafex - but all created by mother nature - amazing. Arrived late afternoon so not much happening first nite. Next day we drove the 80kms to Chichester (more fab scenery) where WE decided to do a small walk, 8kms! This hike was once the camel track used to transport wool through the Pilbara. Well, all good plans are meant to go awry... 2kms in LP was stung on the head by a bee!!! After much hysterical behaviour from LP and laughter by ADM (RAT!) he removed the sting and we continued along the track. This little adventure was obviously not meant to be for LP... next disaster, fall over in dry, rocky creek bed - this time not so amusing!!! Hurt left leg, not nice... not funny... but as we were almost half way through the walk we continued up hill and down dale til we reached the end. By then LP not feeling very happy, so ADM had to walk back to retrieve car from car park, drive back to collect me and then back to camp.

DAY 47

Another long driving day with the intention of travelling to Exmouth-Cape Rang NP, but once again we stopped for an overnight stay rather than arrive in darkness. Pleased we did 'cos this was a good one... on a sheep station which has recently been taken over by a young couple with the intention of turning it into a "station stay". Great place with accommodation for all types... a little like Alpana Station (for those who did the Flinders trip last year) but with quite a bit more character. Here we met a nice couple from Tasmania who we ran into a number of times along the way.

DAYS 48-49

Headed into Exmouth Visiting Centre and found out that National Park camping was full so we booked into Yardie Creek Homestead (caravan park) for a couple of nights (been told not to use the "nite" abbreviation!) The park was absolutely packed and we were fortunate enough to get a decent site. Unfortunately the weather decided to turn a little nasty so we hastily set up and headed straight out to have a look at the lighthouse, a ship wreck, and check out the NP information center. The next day we drove all the way to Yardie Creek, stopping to look at NP camp sites along the way. At this stage I'm thinking TG we couldn't get a site here - would not want to spend a couple of nights right on the coastline with the wind blowing a gale. It was disappointing though 'cos Ashley had intended to get in some fishing and swimming during our stay here.

DAY 50

Exmouth to Denham. Well, this turned into a real "holiday" - 4 nights in the one place! Original plan was to stop in Denham for couple of days, but Hamelin Pool Telegraph Station and caravan park - 100kms south of Denham - had been recommended by a couple we met at Millstream. Happy we made with this decision as it was quaint, quiet, lots to see, lots of history, and included a character named Shane who manages the place and who just happened to build a huge communal fire each night - brillo.

DAY 51

Next morning woke up to sunshine and blue sky and prepared for drive into Steep Point - the most western point on Australian mainland. We had heard a lot of adverse talk about the drive into Steep Point, but we didn't find it



to be a problem... fairly easy with only about 8kms of corries. Took around 2.5 hrs to reach ranger's station where we purchased permit (\$22!) and then another 10kms to the actual signed point on the WA coastline. LP had been a little tentative about doing this drive, but it was so absolutely worth it. What an amazing sight! The fabulous blue of the Indian Ocean (huge), the reds and yellows of the rugged coastline on one side and then down to the white sandy beach and blue waters of the South Passage/

Blind Strait between the mainland and Dirk Hartog Island on the other. While at the Point, we saw green turtles and a couple of whales offshore. We drove around for a bit checking out all the touristy points, then went down to the beach where ADM threw in a line and actually caught a really nice sized fish (don't ask what type but we had it for dinner that night and it was delicious and we're still alive ☺). It was such a great day that we almost



had to drag ourselves away to get home before dark. We didn't (get home before dark that is) and were fortunate enough to drive into a brilliant sunset (yep, another one).

DAY 52

No rest for the wicked... off to Cape Peron which incorporates Francois Peron NP just north of Denham. Visited the old homestead and then headed into the park - not particularly exciting so just looked at the two main points of interest and by then the weather started to turn nasty - very nasty. By the time we had returned to Denham it was absolutely pelting down... by the time we got back to the caravan park it was VERY wet! But fortunately the weather abated and although we had to slop around in a bit of water outside our camp that evening, by next morning it was all dried up and the sun was shining again. That was when we decided to stay another day - not just cos we liked it, but also to dry out the trailer.

DAY 53

Rest Day. Hamelin Pool is known for being one of the very few places in the world where stromatolites exist and can be viewed. I can just hear you all saying what the hell is a stromatolite... well, I won't go into the scientific description here except to say they are ancient and very rare... look 'em up. So we did the tourist walk and checked out all the historical bits around the park. Just a moochy sort of day which we both needed. We did happen to meet some really nice people during our stay here.

DAY 54

Off to Kalbarri - still more cars, vans, trailers etc coming up the highway to get away from the winter down south. Why then are we travelling south??? Looking at all the brochures, Kalbarri NP looks fabulous. BUT, by now the weather is becoming less than pleasant and we decided to

look at the tourist points before we reach town. Regrettably, the NP was closed due to bad weather... shame because this is why we came and were going to stay for a couple of days. Booked into caravan park for one night and oh what a night it was. Gale force winds had been promised further down the coast, but decided to visit Kalbarri as well. So much rain and wind all night long. Great lump of bark fell off tree onto our car, setting off alarm at 3.00am. Nobody happy by this stage. Miserable is a mild word to describe this night.

DAY 55

Still raining... pack up very wet trailer and head off for Cervantes.

Well, we're on the back straight now, and not much longer to go. We have travelled a little further than the last day mentioned here but bit tired so will do further update as soon as...

Derek and Jan... glad to hear you arrived home safe and sound.

Part 5: Last chapter of our Central/West/South Australian odyssey...

Well folks, I think you've heard all the superlatives regarding WA... the weather has not been kind to us for the remainder of our journey. But we must remember that it is after all winter in Australia, although we have been constantly reminded that the bad weather - particularly north of Perth - has been "quite unseasonal" !

DAY 55 - JULY 10

Kalbarri to Cervantes... Up very early and left soaking wet Kalbarri by 8.00am. Continued along the coast road and into Geraldton where we fuelled up and left almost immediately as still raining. Stopped for a portside lunch at Point Dennison (still raining - and cold) and then drove the coast road through Jurien Bay into Cervantes, arriving early afternoon. Checked into the caravan park and it's blowing a gale... so after much hooah about site choice (club friends will know exactly what I'm talking about here!) we found a reasonable spot and set up for 2 day stay - needed a bit of a rest after the last few days constant driving.

DAY 56

Went for a drive into Jurien Bay for a look around - lot of housing development here - don't quite know what the money-earner is (other than lobsters) but they are asking really big (as in \$1m) cashola for the properties! On the way back to the caravan park, we visited the Pinnacles Desert in Nambung National Park just 17kms north of Cervantes. Flyer describes this "unique landscape" as... *"Rising mysteriously from the dune sands are thousands of limestone pillars, a landscape in eerie contrast to the surrounding heath. Nambung NP is one of many protected areas in this world-renowned biodiversity hotspot..."* Well, they are right... this place has to be seen to be believed - it was like walking through a moonscape or similar (never been to the moon or similar, but...) and the pe-

cular yellowy mustard colour of the sand here - completely different from anything we had seen previously - was a standout. Fortunately, although a little chilly, the sun was shining and we were able to take the 1.2km desert view walk in comfort. Definitely well worth the visit. Returned to camp and ran into friendly couple (from Sanctuary Cove but originally from UK - what is it with us



and Poms?) we had met in Hamelin Pool and also caught up with for dinner in Kalbarri. As weather not particularly pleasant for outdoor cooking (windy just for a change!), we all decided to go to Cervantes Country Club for lobster dinner special. Good night had by all. Back to park where Ashley watched a bit of cricket in the camp kitchen.

DAY 57

Cervantes to Perth via New Norcia. We took this side trip as it had been talked up by several people along the way as well worth a visit. As background, New Norcia is the only monastic town in Australia - the entire town being run by Benedictine monks. We took the two hour history tour which included all the monastery buildings, the school buildings, both Aboriginal and European (segregated!), the Abbey Church, the museum etc etc. Very interesting. The town was founded by a Spanish monk who was sent to Australia in the mid 1800s to "spread the word". This he did and was apparently well loved and respected. There are now only five monks remaining - one of whom is now aged 98, arriving from Spain when he was only 18... the others are all Australian. Today, the main source of income for the town is tourism, and school groups who come to study the history. Oh, probably most importantly, they make their own wine and do an especially good port (a bottle of which Ashley and Darren managed to polish off in one night!).

And on to Perth to spend four days R&R with Darren, Pauline and kids (Darren = ADMs friend and Valcor colleague who moved to Waikiki (Perth suburb near Rockingham) last year). Weather here was good to us TG - sunshine each day. First day LP spent at hospital to check on leg as Pauline was worried about DVT 'cos still very badly swollen and bruised. Had scan next morning and all AOK. ADM and Darren had a more pleasurable time - spent afternoon checking out three pubs! Next day did Perth city.

Caught up with Carissa and Joe for dinner... good to see some more familiar faces. Next day did Fremantle - walked around the town, had a look at the port, had a beer at Little Creatures, and back to Waikiki for bbq dinner.

It was great to catch up with the Davidson's and especially nice to have a roof over our heads for four nights. Thanks heaps for putting up with us.

DAY 61-62

Perth to Margaret River. Couple of stops along the way, one at Busselton where it was so windy and cold we had to eat lunch (fish and chips - yummo) in the car watching a very dirty sea lap the shore. The brochure shows beautiful summery pictures of blue sky and turquoise water at this coastal town... unfortunately not the hour or so we spent there. So it was straight through to Margaret River where, by the time we arrived, it was raining! As it was latish, we booked into accommodation - yes, again a roof over our heads - and went to check out dinner options. Pizza at the local pub.

Next morning, guess what - raining. Disappointing because MR also promises all things beautiful. But we braved it and headed out on our winery tour - why else were we here? It was a good day and although we had to dodge the showers, we managed to visit five wineries (purchases at all), the cheese factory, the chocolate factory (madhouse full of adult chocoholics and noisy children), and have lunch at the Woody Nook Winery - a cosy little restaurant where LP had best meal of the entire journey so far - lamb pie and veg cooked to perfection... perfect cold weather fare. Fave wineries were Hay Shed and Juniper Creek - excellent host/winemaker at Hay Shed and fun girl at Juniper which was in lovely setting by babbling brook - nice on a good day! Back to apartment to put feet up for an hour before dinner.

DAY 63

Margaret River to Albany via Pemberton, Walpole and Denmark. OK, now the weather is really getting ridiculously unfriendly. Still cold and raining when we left MR at around 10.00am. We had initially decided to take the south-west coast road through to the Nullabor due to recommendations of many people along the way, and also because Brian (Happy) had told us how good it was. But he and George had gone through in May and it's now the middle of July. The gale force winds predicted for the coast did not make things any better. But we were on our way and on we continued.

Just out of Pemberton, Ashley noticed something wrong with the trailer and stopped to check... luckily, because the left side wheel bearings were mush! Luckily - again! - Ashley was carrying a spare set of bearings and did a quick but greasy roadside fix and we were on our way. Nice guy pulled up and asked if he could assist, but of course ADM's knowledge of all things mechanical meant we were aok. Stopped in Pemberton to purchase new set of bearings and visit the Gloucester Tree - a local landmark. This Karri tree was used as a fire tower in the 1920s

and to this day still has the climbing spikes inserted and may be climbed by those who dare. Drove on through Karri forest and reached Albany in darkness, checking into "Happy Days" caravan park. This is always dangerous because you don't know what you will wake up to. Fortunately, the morning brought a pleasant surprise... green grass... goats grazing by the river. Didn't manage to see any of the highlights in Albany due to lousy weather again, so headed off to Esperance. Sorry, just been told to stop waffling so...

DAY 64

Esperance - not much to tell because it was darn cold and windy and miserable, but managed to share a good night and a few reds in the camp kitchen with others in same predicament. We are sure that this region would be something special in the warmer months (a future trip with pals says ADM ☺).

DAY 65



The overnight winds got the better of us and we were up at 5.00am, packed up by 6.00 and headed off to fuel up and on our way to Norseman the town that leads you onto the Eyre Highway (Nullabor). Very long day in car - 10 hrs! Free camp stop on roadside.

DAY 66

More driving across the Nullabor... only 9 hrs(!), stopping on roadside again about 30kms short of Ceduna.



For those skeptics who think the drive across the Nullabor is dead boring, our opinion - for what it's worth - is that this drive while not exactly scenic is still better than the Stuart Hwy leading from Port Augusta to Alice Springs erkkk.

DAY 67-68

Ceduna to Mt Remarkable via Port Augusta. We did stop along this part of the highway to have a look at the Great Australian Bight. Regrettably no whales, but vast amount of beautiful sapphire blue water and rugged coastline. Stopped in Port August for refuel and restock of f&v's as had to hand over leftovers to fruit fly check at Ceduna. Rolled into Mt Remarkable at around 4.00pm - and what a pleasant surprise this was... thank you Michael. Decided to stay here for two nights, mainly to rest up before long drive home. Although sunny weather on arrival - yes, back in t-shirts this day - the weather turned cool and damp on second. But the river red gums and walks and scenery here definitely worth the stopover. ADM enjoyed his relaxing time with an 18km walk - NUTS! Then back at it again when we for a 3km hike later in the day.



The end is getting closer !!! ☺

DAY 69

Easy start to the day, as we had planned one more overnight stop on way home. Made our way to Renmark through the Riverland, took the ferry across the Murray and stopped at Waikerie for lunch by the river - sunshine at last. Stopped at one winery - Mallee Estate - to pick up some cheap cleanskins, and through to Mildura. At this stage we still had not made a decision about accommodation for the night. No prize for guessing - nope, not a 5-star hotel, but a riverside stop in Nangiloc just south of Red Cliffs. [For our Club mates, we camped at Spences Bend and went to Nangiloc pub for a great \$8 counter meal - brillo. For non-Club friends, Nangiloc is a tiny Sunraysia town surrounded by beautiful orange groves - well known to us because we visit it every year when we camp on the Murray at Easter.] After dinner, we returned to a cold campsite where Ashley set to building a beautiful big fire which we enjoyed for a couple of hours before bed.

DAY 70

After a very cold night (ice on the canvas), we woke up to sunshine and that wonderful million dollar Murray River view. Ashley got the fire going again, cooked jaffles for breakfast, and then we packed up and were onto the Calder by 10.00am heading for home. An uneventful drive and we arrived at Manton Road around 5.00pm. Well, it's cold and windy here but it is now the middle of winter...

We had a great time and have seen some absolutely wonderful sights over the past 10 weeks. Ashley would love to have just kept driving, but you have to come back to reality at some stage - perhaps unfortunately.

We have enjoyed sharing our trip through these updates and hopefully haven't bored you too much. With a bit of luck, you will get the chance to experience some of the areas we visited to see what this magnificent country of ours has to offer.

Look forward to seeing you soon.

Lesley and Ashley

