



Free Wheeling

Official Newsletter of the Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club

Registration No A0002184F

SEPTEMBER 2003

Photograph courtesy of Murv Oaredn





The Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club Inc is an affiliated club of the
Victoria Association of Four Wheel
Drive Clubs Inc (VAEWDC)

Victoria Association of
Four Wheel Drive Clubs Inc
1985 Feb 1966 5260



TREASURER'S REPORT:

July Report:

Term Deposit	\$6721.24
Cheque Account	\$3006.26
Petty Cash	\$ 104.60

Accepted: Ashley Martin.

Seconded: Roger Baird.

EVENTS CO-ORDINATOR REPORT:

Glenn Smith: Snow Trip Friday 8th to Sunday 10th August

Rosalie Hughes: AGM Dinner Sat 16th August

Derek Hymas: Toolangi Day Trip 24th August

Ashley Martin: Day Trip 21st September

Ray Brown: Car Rally tentative for October

David Hughes: Powerworks tentative for September

Gerrard Clarke: School Trip for Berwick Secondary College.

ASSOCIATION REPORT: N/A.

TRIP REPORTS: N/A.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

As per the Newsletter.

GENERAL BUSINESS:

- ❖ Dawn Brown commented on how good the Training Day was.
- ❖ BF Goodrich will be our guest for the September Meeting.
- ❖ David submitted a President's Report for the past 12 months.
- ❖ Ashley said thank you to Michael Rodger for copying this month's Newsletter.
- ❖ Brett Gale has a source for Birko Hot Water Urns if anyone is interested.
- ❖ It was suggested that we buy a 30 litre Urn for the Club – this was accepted by all Members present.
- ❖ Ashley presented Certificates of Proficiency for those who had participated in the Training Day.
- ❖ Membership Kits presented to New Members.

RAFFLE:

Tickets sold by Glenn Smith.

Won by Steven Young: Bottle of Wine

Scott Wiseman: Bottle of Wine

TEA DUTIES:

Thanks to everyone for helping.

NEXT MEETING:

Tuesday 2nd September 2003.

Meeting closed at 9.30pm.

CLUB CALENDAR AT A GLANCE

SEPTEMBER

Tuesday 2 nd	Club Meeting	John Partridge
Sunday 21 st	Day Trip Mt Disappointment (See attached Trip Data Form)	Ashley Martin
Sunday 28 th	Annual Car Rally (See attached Trip Data Form)	Ray Brown
Tuesday 30 th	Committee Meeting	Ian Warburton

OCTOBER

Tuesday 7 th	Club Meeting	John Partridge
Friday 10 th to Sunday 12 th	Advanced Training Weekend	Ashley Martin
Saturday 25 th	BAT Program Day Trip (See attached Trip Data Form)	Gerrard Clarke
Tuesday 28 th	Committee Meeting	Lesley Peters

NOVEMBER

Saturday 1 st to Tuesday 4 th	Cup Weekend Trip	TBC
Tuesday 11 th	Club Meeting	John Partridge
Friday 14 th - Sunday 16 th	Macallister River	Carl Surtees
Friday 21 st to Sunday 23 rd	Annual Mayford Trip	Ashley Martin
Tuesday 25 th	Committee Meeting	Steven Boyle
Saturday 29 th	Christmas Party	Rosalie Hughes

4WD INSURANCE

The ANFWDC Insurance Program is available to all members of the VFWDC and other affiliated four wheel drive clubs.

To obtain an insurance quote, the agents – TCIS – require you to fax details regarding your vehicle one month prior to seeking insurance.

See the Club Insurance Officer, Gerrard Clarke, for relevant form.



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Anyone wishing to advertise in the Club Directory, email details to the Editor: lesleyp@raptorinternational.com

Free Wheeling is now available (in pdf format) on the VFWDC web site each month.

Just go to www.vfwdc.com

FORTHCOMING TRIP INFORMATION

ANNUAL CAR RALLY

Date: Sunday, 28 September 2003

Trip Leader: Ray Brown – Tel: 5967 1437 AH

Destination: Unknown

Meeting Place: Officer Weighbridge

Time: 8.30-9.00am

Grade: C-C

Radio Channel: Ch. 12

Trip Activities: The car rally is always a fun day and with Ray and Dawn at the helm, this year should be no exception! Come along and enjoy a good day out and don't forget to pack those weird and wonderful bits and pieces that always appear on the "things you need to you have?" list.

ANNUAL MAYFORD FISHING TRIP

Date: 21-23 November 2003

Trip Leader: Ashley Martin – Tel: 9540 0007

Destination: Mayford

Meeting Place: TBA

Time: TBA

Grade: B

Radio Channel: Ch. 12

Trip Activities: The annual fishing trip is back. Mayford is on the Dargo High Plains road and the track leading into the area is closed during the winter months. It re-opens toward the end of November but we will need to confirm whether the track will be open for this particular weekend. If so, as it is a long drive some will be leaving on Friday morning to take advantage of the weekend.

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST INVITED

A trip to Cape York is being planned, leaving Melbourne on or about 4 July 2004.

Any members interested in taking part please contact

George Pledger on
9547 4021 or 0427 547402

Note: 8 vehicle limit.

CONGRATULATIONS

to
Lisa and Peter
on the safe arrival of the latest
addition to the Petrou family –
a bouncing baby boy named **Lucas**.



TRADING POST FOR SALE

1 x Freedom Tent 9 x 9 Canvas, PVC floor, protective bag, poles, pegs and ropes, EC, \$550.

1 x set Drawers (2) suitable for back of 4wd vehicle, carpet covering, rattle proof, EC \$150.

Contact Dale Nicholls on 0409 012 056



1 x set Wrought Iron Double Gates and Posts for removal. \$50.00.

1 x set 4 Roller Drawers, cabinet style for tray or dual cab or LWB wagon. 12mm plywood construction, varnished. \$500 ono.

1 x plastic Carry Case for Chainsaw, unused. \$45.00.

Contact Barry Leitch on 5996 6662 (AH) or 9794 3172 (BH).



CLUB TRIP REPORTS

TOOLANGI DAY TRIP Sunday 24th August 2003

Participants

Derek & Jan (Trip Leader)	Disco
Ian	Disco
Anthony	Prado
Carl	Hilux
Gerrard	Hilux
Paul & Robert	Hilux
Ashley, Lesley, Johnno	100 series
Craig, Paul & Lachlan	60 series

It's been a while since I've been on a trip and as this was the first time I'd get to try out the rebuilt gearbox I was quite looking forward to the trip. Driving downhill without having to hang on to the gearstick was going to be a novelty. It had also been raining pretty heavily all day Saturday so it was going to be pretty interesting to see what the tracks through the State forest were like.

We all met at Lilydale Macca's at about 9.00am on Sunday ready to head off into the hills. From there it was on to Yarra Glen and Dixon's Creek before turning off onto Old Toolangi Road and Paul's Range Track. A quick stop to lock in hubs and adjust tyre pressures and we were off again.



From Paul's Range we turned left onto Link Track and soon came across a downed tree which Anthony took care of with the chainsaw while everyone else looked on and offered destructive advice. We were soon back on the road turning right on to Paul's Creek Track and on up to Toolangi. The weekend rain had made the tracks a bit slippery so we had to take it carefully in one or two spots. Anyone that says they saw me about to leave the track because I

stamped on the go pedal a bit hard through an S bend is definitely making it up as they go along.



We stopped at Toolangi for morning tea before heading up Spraggs Road. From there it was right on to Downies Road and then left into Luke Ck Track No 1. Across Katy Creek Road and the track started to get a bit rutted and slippery. We had to head through a narrow section that drops down pretty sharply to a boggy area before climbing up a short steep slope on the other side. Ashley went first in order to help anyone who got into trouble on the other side, but as it turned out everyone made it through without too much trouble. Carl wasn't too impressed with the conventional approach and tried to get up sideways, but even he relented and decided to go nose first like everyone else.



A little further on and the group split while some of us tried out the bogholes on Luke Creek Track No2. The less adventurous amongst us carried straight on and we joined up again on Marginal Road. From there it was left onto North Track, left again onto Breakoday Track and then another left onto Campsite Track. There are plenty of bogholes

around here to play around in and easier routes around them for those that don't want to risk it. We stopped at Campsite for a spot of lunch and the rain, which had been pretty constant all day, really set in. I decided it was time to hide in the truck on the pretext of listening to the football on the radio, but it was really because I'm just a big girls blouse.

After lunch we continued up Kalatha Creek Track before turning on to Martins Road. Ian, who was 2nd last at this point, rolled a tyre off the rim but was quickly moving again with help from Ashley and Johnno. From there it was left onto Marginal Road and the group split with Paul & Craig, Ashley, Anthony and Ian deciding to head back to town along Two Hills Road. The rest of us went off in search of more bogholes, but after coming across another downed tree on Victoria Range Road we turned back and headed off up Curly's Track. However, we hadn't got far before we had to stop and reinflate one of Derek's tyres that had lost air due to dirt getting in the bead. Whilst this was happening the other group had also turned back and were now on Victoria Range Road taking care of the tree that had stopped us earlier. They were soon on the radio to say that Ian had another flat so we turned around and joined up with them again. Derek lent Ian his spare to get him back home while Anthony had the chainsaw out again and took care of the trees. At least I imagine that is what happened, as Carl, Gerrard and I were too busy mucking about near a boghole at the junction of Marginal Road and Vic Range Road. Once we were moving again the group split again as before and the homeward party took Marginal Road back on to the Melba Highway. The three Hiluxes and Derek (in the Disco) decided to explore the bogholes along the track that runs parallel to the Highway.

We were at the last of these when Sods Law stuck and Derek, who had decided to go round the drier route, unfortunately dropped his passenger side rear wheel into a hole left by a fallen tree. In the process his wheel arch was hung on the roots of the tree and he was unable to go forwards or backwards without seriously rearranging the back of the Disco. After a lot of head scratching we decided that the only way out of this was to winch the Disco to one side while Carl dragged the tree to the other so the we could get in and cut the roots free.



It probably only took about 45 minutes to get Derek free but I'm sure that what galled most was that it happened so close to the end of the trip. Once we were through the boghole it was probably only a matter of 50 meters or less to the Highway and the road home.

On behalf of everyone who participated I'd like to thank Derek and Jan for an absolutely terrific day. Robert and I had an absolute ball and are both hanging out for the next trip.

Paul Ryan



What Fits Your Needs

Ever stopped to think what made you buy your first 4wd???? And which vehicle you picked and why? In my case I only knew that I had wanted to own one for a long time, but was not aware of what one was truly capable of or what use I would put it to. Like a lot of people, I had a vision of doing the 'Big Trip', but didn't know how to go about it. Hence my ill-informed decision to buy a Holden Jackaroo Turbo Diesel in 1988. I thought it would be a pre-requisite to joining a club that I had a vehicle. Silly me; how I could have benefited from some advice from people who had not only owned one, but used it as it was intended: off-road.

The club I joined was the Gold Coast 4wd Club, which held their meetings in Southport, conveniently opposite a pub. They were friendly enough, and catered for different interests. Members like Mal Storey, who manufactures diff locks etc for Land Rover products, and his kind were into the serious stuff like looking at a river on a map and deciding to try and drive as far along it as possible, (not driving on the map of course, but actually up the river). This wasn't quite my thing for two reasons; I didn't have a suitable vehicle for one, and couldn't afford the repairs for another. At the time I was working as a marine trimmer for a boat building company, so had not, (and still don't have) the skills or money to repair my own vehicle.

However, a group of us DID get adventurous on many occasions, often arranging among ourselves to take off for a weekend. These weekends often included looking for the muddiest, steepest tracks, and often trying to make our own if the ones we found weren't difficult enough. This led to the demise of the Jackaroo. One trip, which became it's last, I ruined the rear diff and broke a CV joint. The diff was cosmetically fixed, the CV left alone as it worked OK in 2wd, and the vehicle traded in for more than I paid for it on a new diesel Troopy (mistake number two).

Onto this vehicle I lavished a lot of money and extras, selling my house to do so. Mistake number three; some people never learn. However, for a while the vehicle performed it's tasks well enough considering what was asked of it at our club and un-official club weekends. It managed to forge tracks where none existed before, and stay on formed tracks without much damage.

And then came the 'Big Trip'. I had happened to mention, during a day trip in the Nerang Forest, that I was interested in a trip when the topic was discussed. This was taken by a friend as my agreement to go. Opened my mouth once too often I suppose. And too far. Hence the need to upgrade to something more reliable than the Jackaroo. I didn't fancy having to get towed around Cape York or any other part of Australia's outback, and wanted to carry a few more luxuries that can be fitted in a vehicle of that size.

So the Troopy was prepared for the trip; including, of course, the all important features like bull bar, electric winch, (as the 3200 Tirfor was too much like hard work), water tank, roof top tent, (mistake number what is it up to now?), interior cabinets, radios, and not forgetting a 60 litre fridge. Took the weight beyond the limit, but what the hell, it had all I thought I needed and couldn't do without.

The trip itself, taking about a year, was done with two vehicles. The other, a two year old version of the same vehicle as mine, and set up almost identically, was manned by Flipper and his wife and their then 6 month old baby.

But I digress. This was to be a short article on types of vehicles and their uses, and how they fit our needs, and I got side tracked, as I have a tendency to do.

How many of us blundered into 4wd'ing without knowing enough to pick a suitable vehicle first off? I'd like to think I wasn't the only one; I couldn't have been, because look how many Jackaroos were sold in the '80's. They couldn't have all been sold to people who had previously owned 4wd's. Maybe just not to people who used them off road. Apart from the fact that the vehicle couldn't stand up to the work I did with it, it was a 2 door with limited carrying capacity, and deluxe trim and carpets which did not suit water crossings at bonnet height. The upholstery didn't like mud being dragged in onto it either. So I had to remove the carpets and replace them with marine carpet, take out the seats other than the driver's, and use the extra space to store recovery gear like the Tirfor and Barocca.

The second attempt at getting the vehicle selection right was closer to the mark. It had the space to carry everything I believed I couldn't go without, my home for a year on the roof, and it was new, so must be reliable, right? Wrong, it was a Tojo, with the inherent problems that go with owning one. But I won't go into that, as it may offend the members who have yet to see the light (other than those Tojo owners who were sensible enough to at least buy a Hi-Lux).

Believe it or not, it was not my intention to get into any sensitive areas of comparison and rivalry between brands, but to discuss the factors for consideration when choosing whether or not and what type of 4wd is most suited to our needs.

1. What sort of use will the vehicle be put to; this requires us to accurately assess, without compassion, what we intend using it for. If you are a club member reading this article (assuming Ashley publishes it), you probably intend using it off-road as against occasional trips to the beach or snow resorts. This means some minimum requirements need to be met. This would normally mean the vehicle needs to have a full chassis as against a monocoque construction for strength, a dual range transfer case, respectable ground clearance, and decent sized wheels and tyres. This means that if you intend seriously going off road,

some vehicle types, called soft roaders, would not be suitable. This type includes, but is not exclusive to, RAV 4's, Honda CRV, Mitsubishi IO etc. But then again, if you are already the proud user of a 4wd, you already know these things and more, so it is likely you have already moved on to the next article. In case you haven't, read on for fun. This article was never intended as a serious piece of journalism.

2. How many people will you be carrying and how much crap, sorry, luggage. If you have a need to carry more than 2 adults, then sorry, your restrictions have increased. You will now be excluded from the single cab ute class, and have to limit your searching to either dual cab utes or long wheel based wagons. The short wheel based wagons are great handlers in the scrub, but restricting in carrying capacity. I have seen some of the club members trying to carry 2 adults, teenage children against their will, and numerous tents and stretchers in wagons when perhaps they should have been considering Hummers or MAN buses. Those choices however would restrict their travels to the openness of desert regions, but give excellent carrying capacity for everything their hearts desired. The dual cab, while usually not as well appointed as a wagon, gives the seating capacity for up to 5 adults at a pinch, while leaving plenty of room in the rear for luggage that cannot hit you on the head when descending steep hills or braking.

3. What other uses will the vehicle be put to: if the vehicle is only going to be used for weekends in the bush by say 2 people, it can be purpose built or accessorised to your needs. Anything from a bush pig with 37" tyres and double diff locks powered by a 455 3" V8 to a camping van or wagon. If it is the only vehicle you have, or has to serve another role like taking the kids to school, operating a business etc, these have to be considerations that will affect your final decision. The dirty swear word is "compromise". There is no one vehicle that can be customised to suit ALL applications. Much like a woman, you can either have one for looks, cooking and/or housekeeping skills, intelligence, warmth, firewood gathering and lighting skills, but preferably with a couple of the qualities mentioned. A dual cab is probably overlooked by a lot of people who try to cram more into a wagon than their steel sides were meant to carry. They are quite an acceptable compromise when the right brand is chosen.

4. *Price:* controls everything. Someone described a boat as a 'hole in the water that you keep pouring money into'. I don't know what the equivalent saying is for 4 wd's, but it would be in line with throwing a lot of money into a sport which usually we can't take advantage of as often as we would like. It isn't just the initial cost of the base vehicle, but the 'accessories' that we need before we can take it out of the garage. Hence, don't only think of the initial cost, but what you have to outlay before you are comfortable with your acquisition. That sometimes means you have spent so much on the vehicle that you can no longer afford to go away. It is possible to sometimes find a second-hand vehicle which has at least SOME of the toys we

need, but beware that the vehicle with the toys may also be the one that has been most 'used'. Those of us in the market for a used vehicle would all like to buy a used Toorak Tractor type with low mileage, used only for shopping by a little old lady, but with bull bar and winch, diff locks, long range tanks, oversized wheels and tyres, and plenty of extra grunt that miraculously still returns better than 30 mpg. (Sorry, my age is showing now. Who can convert that to litres per 100 km?) I'm sure we all have visions of the vehicle we would love to own if only, and usually the 'if only' means 'enough spare money to go mad with'.

5. *Power:* how much is enough? And what type? To answer the first part, as much as you can afford and the manufacturer is able to produce. You get what you pay for, and no matter what we buy, we normally want more. But some of you married types may have difficulty demonstrating the need to the co-pilot/navigator/cook/carwasher. If re-powering, beware of over-taxing the other components like brakes, gearbox and diffs. As for the debate over WHICH fuel, we can spend many nights by the campfire and several units of chateau cardboard debating, and still not arrive at a conclusion that is acceptable to all parties. That debate would require a separate article from someone more knowledgeable than I (anyone over the legal drinking age).

6. *Size:* personal choice based on need. I, personally, would like to own the 4wd equivalent of the Tardis (remember Dr Who)? Small enough on the outside to get through the narrowest of tracks, but big enough inside to have all the necessary rooms like kitchen, bathroom, bedroom. Until that is achievable, or until I get bored with my current fantasy, I'm going to have to be content with the limitations of what I have now. I'm sure we have all experienced times when we would like more room for the new deck chair or banana lounge, or a second fridge for the food, but we often find novel ideas of how to cram more into a vehicle than the manufacturer intended. Manufacturers of over-cramming products such as roof racks offer solutions to some families who require room for the 'absolute necessities' like camp stretchers, toilet tents, food and other non-essential items. I think we have all been guilty of overloading at some time or other, but you can be sure that no matter how big the capacity of your current vehicle, you could also find items to take along if only there was more space.

Well, probably the only time I'm likely to leap into print, so hope you were able to get a glimmer of a smile on a corner of your face at some point in the article, assuming you made it this far. If you didn't make it this far, I don't blame you. I had trouble writing it too. Must go now; have a date with a cool drink and a hot meal. What more is there to life? Oh yes! Silly of me. A 4wd to take me to places where I can enjoy the cool drink by an open fire.

Your tax dollars at work.

Barry Bo Jandals