



MAY 2018

SOUTHERN TRAILS

NEXT CLUB MEETING

Tuesday 8 May
Deakin Football Club
3 Grose Street

NATIONAL LIBRARY CATALOGUE NO. ISSN 2207-2144





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PRESIDENTS REPORT

Hi Everyone,

This month, I had the pleasure of meeting with the presidents of the ACT 4x4 Club and the Land Rover Club of the ACT to discuss the 4WD Spectacular funding allocations. This year's Spectacular was big success with significant increases in attendance and vendors. As a result, the club will receive approximately 37% more revenue than the 2016 show. We agreed to start planning for the 2020 Spectacular as soon as possible and are looking for two members to be on the Spectacular committee. If you are interested, please let me know.

A new Social Committee and Track Building Committee were also established. The Social Committee met on the 3rd of May and have come up with a number of events they plan to host this year, so stay tuned for what they have in store. The Track Building Committee will have their first meeting at the May working bee. They will start planning the work needed on our existing tracks and looking at locations for potential new tracks.

I would like to thank Lynne Donaldson for organising the roast chicken dinner event at Talooge this month; the food was delicious and I'm definitely looking forward to the next one. It was a great night all round by the fire, as winter is definitely upon us.

Looking forward to seeing you all at this month's meeting.

Regards,
Matthew Maddigan

FIRST AID TRAINING



Check out our new First Aid Training course scheduled for **Saturday 14th July** run by Brindabella First Aid Services.

The cost per member is **\$130.00** each but if we get 20 members participating the cost will be \$110.00 each

If any member is interested in doing this course during the week please contact **Michael Patrick**

More details are on the web site under Events and Trips



MEMBERSHIP MOMENTS

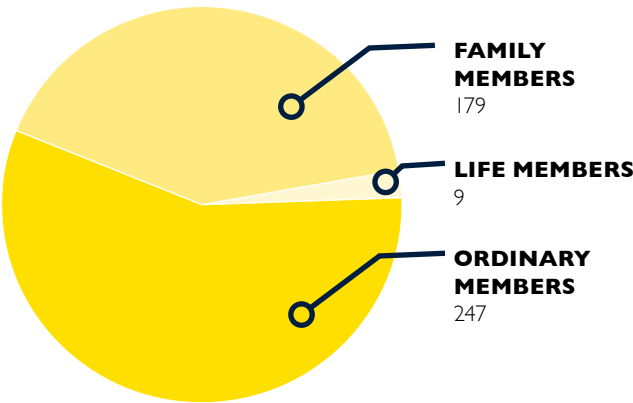
INFORMATION ON CURRENT MEMBERSHIP AND OTHER MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Membership Renewal

Many thanks to all those members who have already paid their membership fees for 2018.

We still have 51 memberships unpaid. If you are yet to pay your fee for 2018 please remember that for members who joined in 2016 or before the membership renewal fee is \$100 (for an individual or family). For members who joined in 2017 you may be eligible for a pro-rata membership fee for 2018. If you are not sure please email me and I can confirm your fees for 2018.

Also please check the Club account details (see below) and please add your Name and the words "Membership Fees" as the comment or reference,



NEW CLUB BANK DETAILS

The Club's new bank provider is "Bank Australia" and our bank details now are:

Bank: Bank Australia
Account Name: ST4WDC
BSB Number: 313 140
Account Number: 1213 0617

Members should use these account details in all transactions with the club, including for membership fees and clothing purchases when using direct deposit. Members who use Internet Banking and Mobile Banking please update your "PAYEE Listing" for ST4WDC with the new details.

New members

There have been six new memberships for the month of April. The new memberships were:

- JEREMY GUERIN**
MITSUBISHI TRITON
- JOHN WILLIAMS & GEORGE VLAHOS**
NISSAN PATROL
- PETER CAREW & RACHEL MAJOR**
TOYOTA LANDCRUISER
- PETER SHAW**
TOYOTA LANDCRUISER
- PHILLIP GROBLER**
MITSUBISHI PAJERO SPORT
- MATTHEW THOMPSON**
MITSUBISHI PAJERO SPORT
- In addition two members have upgraded their membership from family to full members this month, they are:
 - NATHAN KENNEDY**
LANDCRUISER 79 SERIES
 - THOMAS HINCKSMAN**
GQ PATROL CAB CHASSIS

Please say hello to our new members and visitors if you are at the Club meeting - if you see a new face, make them welcome and say G'day.

Welcome to the Club all.

Dim Veteri

Please feel free to contact me regarding any membership matters you may have either by email, phone or grab me at the meeting.

Please note that I will be away for 3 months commencing in June and Lynne Donaldson has generously agreed to fill in during that time.



MEMBERSHIP GIFT CERTIFICATES

These certificates are a great way to give the gift of membership to friends and family and are available for both current member's Annual Membership Fee (Cost/Value \$100) or for new members for their Joining fee and Annual Membership Fee (Cost/Value \$330).

If you would like to give a gift of ST4WDC Membership please contact:
Membership Secretary
membership@st4wdc.com.au.



CLUB CLOTHING

Clothing Item	Cost
Polo Shirts	\$35.00
Chambery Shirts	\$45.00
Jackets	\$110.00
Hoodies	\$45.00
Rugby Tops	\$50.00
Caps	\$15.00
Bucket Hats	\$15.00
Beanies	\$20.00
Name Badges	\$10.00



Here are examples of the club clothing options. To order talk to Marie McDonald at the meeting to order for pickup at the following monthly meeting.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

FOR BUSH SKILLS WEEKEND

TALOOGE PARK 29 SEPTEMBER TO 1 OCTOBER 2018

This is a relaxed weekend socialising with members of our club and invited clubs, driving the tracks, happy hour as well as informative bush and 4WD related demonstrations and talks.

To make it a successful event we are looking for volunteers who can deliver or assist with the following demonstrations and activities.

- JACK DEMONSTRATIONS
- TYRE INFLATORS/DEFLATORS
- BEAD BREAKING
- GPS TALK
- BUSH TOILET SETUPS
- CAMP OVEN AND BUSH COOKING
- VEHICLE AND CAMP SETUPS (WALKAROUND)
- COMMUNICATIONS
- CHAINSAW MAINTENANCE AND SAFETY
- RECOVERY GEAR/SOFT SHACKLES/WINCHING DEMONSTRATIONS
- LED DRIVING LIGHTS
- SOLAR POWER /DUAL BATTERY SETUP / FRIDGES
- DRIVING THE TRACKS
- CAMPER TRAILERS - WEIGHTS, PACKING AND TOWING

We are also looking for suggestions for additional demos and activities.

If you can help out or have suggestions please contact:

Jim Anderson
e-mail treasurer@st4wdc.com
mob. 0408283496



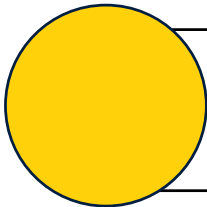
UPCOMING TRIPS

DON'T MISS OUT — NOMINATE ONLINE

START DATE	END DATE	ACTIVITY	TYPE	LEADER
5/May/18	6/May/18	Talooge Park Muster	Muster	Jim Anderson
12/May/18	29/May/18	The Red Centre unfinished Business	Grade 3	Lindsay Jones
12/May/18	12/May/18	West of Bredbo PackSaddle Hut	Grade 3	Glenn Watts
17/May/18	20/May/18	"Safe One" Basic Driver Training at Talooge Park	Training	Joe Briguglio
25/May/18	27/May/18	Socialising Too Far South	Grade 3	Andrew Squire
25/May/18	28/May/18	Shoal Bay and Stockton Beach		Scott Broadhead
27/May/18	27/May/18	Brindabella Ramble	Grade 3	Winston Bucknall
9/Jun/18	10/Jun/18	Talooge Park Muster	Muster	Peter Reynolds
16/Jun/18	16/Jun/18	Basic Winching and Recovery Course	Training	Joe Briguglio
16/Jun/18	17/Jun/18	Intermediate Winching and Recovery Course	Training	Joe Briguglio
23/Jun/18	24/Jun/18	Chain Saw Awareness Training	Workshop	Neil Ellison
30/Jun/18	30/Jun/18	Will we find snow ?	Grade 3	Lynne Donaldson
14/Jul/18	14/Jul/18	First Aid Training (Expression of Interest)	Training	Michael Patrick
28/Jul/18	29/Jul/18	Bendethra Caves	Grade 3	Michael Patrick
28/Jul/18	29/Jul/18	Bendethra Caves Reverse	Grade 3	Glen Watts
11/Aug/18	18/Aug/18	Flinders Ranges	Grade 3	Dim Veteri
15/Aug/18	15/Aug/18	Basic Training 4WD Vehicle Evaluation	Training	Peter Butterfield
25/Aug/18	26/Aug/18	Talooge Park Muster	Muster	Peter Reynolds
13/Sep/18	16/Sep/18	"Safe One" Basic Driver Training at Talooge Park	Training	Joe Briguglio
23/Sep/18	23/Sep/18	Brindabella Ramble	Grade 3	Michael Patrick
29/Sep/18	1/Oct/18	Bush Skills Weekend	Grade 3	Michael Patrick

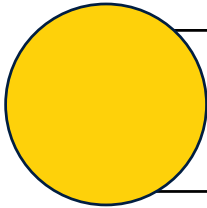
START DATE	END DATE	ACTIVITY	TYPE	LEADER
17/Oct/18	17/Oct/18	Basic Training 4WD Vehicle Evaluation	Training	Peter Butterfield
20/Oct/18	21/Oct/18	Explore The Tracks of Abercrombie River National Park	Grade 3	Michael Patrick
20/Oct/18	21/Oct/18	Talooge Park Muster	Muster	Peter Reynolds
1/Nov/18	4/Nov/18	"Safe One" Basic Driver Training at Talooge Park	Training	Joe Briguglio
11/Nov/18	11/Nov/18	Brindabella Ramble	Grade 3	Michael Patrick
17/Nov/18	23/Nov/18	Victorian High Country Ramble Vers 3	Grade 3	Michael Patrick
18/Nov/18	24/Nov/18	Fraser Island	Grade 3	Scott Grogan
1/Dec/18	2/Dec/18	Talooge Park Muster	Muster	Peter Reynolds
22/Jun/19	23/Jun/19	OziExplorer Nav X	Grade 3	Michael Patrick

TRIP SPOTLIGHT



West of Bredbo PackSaddle Hut

Packsaddle is a hut that is suppose to be West of Bredbo with a track that is lucky if it is driven at least once a year, therefore this trip is graded as a high grade three trip as it will be unknown. We tried to find the hut two years ago and didn't succeed as there was no track, so with the river at its current low level its time to try again.



Shoal Bay and Stockton Beach

Lots to do. Depart Canberra around 4pm and drive to Shoal Bay Holiday Park - must book early or find alternative accommodation



TRIP REPORTS



DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO TELL?

Please email items for the ST4WD Club monthly newsletter or hand it to the 2018 Publications person at the monthly meeting.

Cut off for Items for the Newsletter is now the last Friday in each month. Anything received after that date will be placed in the following months newsletter.

Michael Jackson-Rand
2018 Publications Coordinator
publications@st4wdc.com.au

CAMPRED TRAILER DRIVER TRAINING

April
Max Cornwall

THE MAN FROM SNOWY RIVER FESTIVAL – CORRYONG

5 - 8 April
Jim Raleigh

MID-WEEK AT MCKILLOPS – SNOWY RIVER

11 - 13 April
Michael Patrick

WALHALLA BOUND

April
Michael Patrick



MID-WEEK AT MCKILLOPS

11-13 APRIL, SNOWY RIVER

Michael Patrick Trip Leader

Dim Veteri had been planning this trip for some months and had even carried out a Recce a couple of weeks before hand. However, due to his failure to successfully negotiate with other key members of his household, other priorities on these dates were imposed and resulted in a rescheduling of Dim's time. So, this is how I ended up leading Dim's trip.

The convoy formed up at Williamstown at 09:00. I was impressed that Brony was in a good mood at that hour of the morning and she had not had her morning coffee. We headed off to McKillops with the standard morning tea stop at Nuggets Crossing at Jindabyne. (Yes, I know I don't stop for morning and afternoon tea but the motley crew were threatening mutiny if I did not stop)

Departing Jindabyne we headed down Barry Way to Willas and onto McKillops bridge. I will not go into more detail about the trips as the participating club members have added their comments below.

However, I do wish to point out to some confused club members??? that the reason the Seismic team were doing a geomorphic survey for Geoscience Australia and the Victorian Government is they had serious concerns as to where the Delegate Tunnel had disappeared to. I have now had official confirmation from the Victorian Government that the tunnel has been located and put back into it's original position.





PARTICIPANT COMMENTS

Michael Marsalek

This was my first trip with the club. I had a fantastic time. The people were awesome, the scenery and camping brilliant and Deddick’s track was great fun. I’m looking forward to many more trips.

Stuart and Sarah

McKillops bridge was a great first camping trip with the club.

The tracks were extremely dusty as expected given the lack of rain in the area. The views were sensational. Brumbies in valleys, kookaburras in the trees, cows on the roads and no Delegate tunnels in sight.

Deddick track was an experience and well worth the trip. Looking forward to doing in reverse (uphill) next time.

We had a great few nights around the camp fire with good friends and are keenly looking forward to the next trip.

Big thanks to Michael P and Dim for organising.

Winston Bucknall

The midweek trip to McKillops transitioned the convoy of 9 vehicles on day 1 from bitumen to a range of grade 1 and 2 tracks before reaching our camp site at McKillops Beach, home for 2 nights, a stone’s throw from the iconic McKillops Bridge that spans the Snowy River. As soon as you cross the border into Victoria you notice how well their high-country roads are maintained as are the picnic areas each with their own drop toilet.

Day 2 saw the convoy driving through some truly spectacular high-country scenery which included great sightseeing, native timber forests and some awesome four-wheel driving experience. Afternoon of day 2 the convoy tackled the Deddick trail which includes a steep and rocky section known as the ‘Staircase’. Happy to go down but certainly not up. An earlier recce had identified a large tree had fallen and was blocking the northern end of the trail. I breathed a deep sigh of relief when we reached it to discover park rangers had already cut an opening large enough for vehicles to maneuver through, thus avoiding the need to turn around and drive up the staircase to return to the base camp.

Day 3 took in some more of the beautiful high-country scenery and after several attempts to locate the ‘Tunnel’, the convoy headed towards Delegate en-route to Canberra. The 3-day trip was exceptional for the comrade, the campfires, a challenge or two, but above all the feeling of peace and serenity derived from a brief immersion in the high country alpine region.

Jake

This was my third trip to McKillops bridge and second drive of the Deddick Track.

Weather was brilliant, if somewhat hot for the mid-week excursion. Michael P was very brave to lead the trip to Suggan Buggan down the Barry way as this road is among the most dangerous in Australia, with its blind corners and steep drop offs on a single way road. On the drop to the Snowy we came across geotechnical people doing a survey of the ground, they placed small seismic recorders beside the road about every 3 metres to record something after they shook the aground with Hugh plate shakers. I guess there were many thousands of sensors and many workers.



Camped two nights at the camp ground and did the obligatory photo shoot on the amazing bridge.

Both nights were warm but we still had a camp fire both nights. No wind and vertical smoke.

The second day we proceeded up McKillops road to the southern end of the Deddick track.

Easy run on the track, south to north however it was very dusty with bull dust. As Charlie, I followed a lot of dust. We returned home via an attempt to find the Delegate diversion tunnel, however true to Michaels leadership, many turn backs were made without finding the tunnel.

Lunch in Bombala before the drive home. Very pleasant 3 days with good company.

Glen Heward

Adventure kicked off once we got onto Barry Way. This was a great way to enter the high-country areas. A couple of stops for views and history appreciation. Interesting to develop an understanding of the history of the area. Barry Way transition to the Snow River Road and as its name suggest there were opportunities to drive along the river for a time being observed by Brumbies on the river bed. A stop at Suggan Buggan for another history lesson treading in the footsteps of children educated in a timber slab hut from the 1800’s. All along this drive there were well sign posted tracks so made a note to make another trip in the future to explore these.

Arrived at McKillops late afternoon and got all set up. Really good location to camp and with wood piled up from a stop earlier settled in for the night around the fire. Opportunity to meet new people and hear different experiences and stories. The next day was a track driving day and Deddick’s south to north was the mission. First stop was McKillops Bridge. A great way to start the day. A lengthy drive to get there was rewarded with an enjoyable drive back through a range of alpine vegetation. Track was straight forward but very enjoyable with some good views as a reward. Back to the camp late afternoon for another session around the fire.

Headed for home the next morning with a magical mystery tour on the way to find an elusive tunnel. It was not to be. An opportunity for more local history missed but with GPS coordinates it will be located

in the future and the history unveiled. With search aborted it was a blacktop drive back to Canberra.

This was a good first taste of what is on offer just south of Canberra and it provides a good chance for driving new tracks and having new experiences

Rob Calvert

Little Boxes little boxes

As we descended the many kilometers into the depths of the McKillops Gorge towards the famous bridge on the Snowy River we all started to wonder what the little blue and white boxes that were lining the edge of the road were.

Hundreds of them about every 10 metres all the way down the descent. They were about 100mm square and as high with a little green diode on the top that blinked.

Speculation ranged from a solar powered road marker to some sort of survey gizmo to guides for an alien landing strip.

We soon had an answer, about half way down the gorge we were halted by a work party of several vehicles. As we waited for them to finish their task and clear the road I wandered down to the head of the convoy and asked one of the guys what they were doing.

Nothing quite as sinister as guiding aliens, they were doing a geomorphic survey for Geoscience Australia and the Victorian Government.

Each of the boxes had a mini “seismic” sensor and a GPS locator in them and in addition the numerous 70 Series Utes there were these huge shaker units; based on Caterpillar type scraper used in earth moving. After the sensors were set up the shakers would crawl out and lower a huge metal plate on the road and literally shake the “shit” out of the ground and the sensors would record all the bounces off the substrata. They were looking for a Faultline that apparently ran all the way to the coast.



The teams were setting out the sensors at exactly 10 meters apart all the way along the road. The guy I spoke to said they had been on the job for a couple of weeks and would eventually end up in Eden. Usually the crew worked in the Cooper Basin searching for gas and oil but they landed this job because the government wanted to find out about this fault.

And the boxes went on and on all the way past McKillops Bridge and past the next few little hamlets along the road to Bombala. There must have been thousands laid out; we traveled the out the next day to the start of the Deddick Track and they only stopped when we turned off the McKillop Road

Andy & Brony Squires

The Midweek at McKillops was supposed to be run by Dim, but due to an absence of Red Frogs, family issues, and a rumor that there might be some bushwalking involved to look at a waterfall he pulled out and handed the reigns to Jim. And that worked. Apparently, he had mechanical problems. Something about his brakes needed fixing, or his clutch was playing up, or someone stole his engine or something. So the baton was passed to Michael Patrick and there was grave concern that we wouldn't get where we were going, wouldn't know what to do when we got there, and might spend 5 of the 3 days of the trip doing turn-arounds. It was lucky there were some very willing and knowledgeable trip participants who constantly gave advice, provided guidance, questioned his sense of direction, and assisted with running the convoy, otherwise it might have not have been the successful trip it was.

“C’mon guys grow a pair! We were the ones towing the trailer, you all had it easy!”

Everyone was at the scheduled meeting place at the designated time, most being 10-15 minutes early and our trip leader arriving with 2 minutes to spare. All were enthusiastic, and the weather was perfect. Even a certain someone who is not an early starter and had not yet had coffee was smiling. Fuel top-up in Jindabyne and the long-awaited coffee and the day just improved.

Down Barry Way, stopping at the obligatory lookout (Wallace Craigie) and following the Snowy River down the valley before stopping at the border for lunch, the mandatory stop at Suggan Buggan schoolhouse for a look (what an awesome name ‘Suggan Buggan’), and Little River Gorge to look at the deepest gorge in Victoria. The valley is spectacular and the Snowy would have been something to see before it was dammed and diverted.

McKillops Road down to the bridge and our campground became a bit more interesting with the narrow windy road and a seismic crew doing surveying along the road meaning we had to stop and wait for them to bring their equipment up to a point where we could pass – and a couple of those trucks were big – designed to pound the ground so the seismic equipment can do their survey thing they were tall, wide and long. Travelling car 2 meant not too much dust for us, and following Michael clearly showed his aversion for heights. Every time there was a drop-off on the side (and some were steep and high) Michael left paint on the rocks in his effort to get away from the edge. In all fairness, McKillops Bridge Road does

rate a mention on the 'dangerous roads' website which states “It’s said to be the most hazardous & dangerous road to drive on in the country”. Bollocks – just watch out for dropkicks doing 80 in the opposite direction.

Arriving at camp without drama everyone picked their spot, set up and settled in for the night.

McKillops Bridge is pretty cool and long and high with an interesting history – the original bridge was built between 1931 –and 1936 and a week before its official opening was washed away by a flood so needed rebuilding. A bit embarrassing really (a bit like Duck’s Crossing?) The bridge surface is now about 50 meters above the river (unlike Duck’s Crossing).

Day 2 we lost one vehicle due to ignition problems and a concern that not being able to restart the car could be an issue... no-one really wanted to do a rescue in the middle of nowhere if we could avoid it, so they stayed back at camp while the rest of us set of to drive through Deddick and Tabbut to the top of Mt Joan Staircase where we had a quick lunch. The drive to this point was pleasant but uneventful apart from passing 2 B-Doubles on the road, but the valley was nice enough and the sunshine was glorious – what is going on – it was hot in the middle of April.

The Staircase and Deddick’s became a bit more of a challenge with a couple of steep loose bits, some windy bits and a couple of long climbs, but nothing anyone who has done the club’s training couldn’t cope with (although there was a rumor of one car doing the whole trip in high range..... hmmm). The big tree that had come down across the track and had turned the recce around had been cut and dragged off the track leaving plenty of room to get through. A few spots of

rain which threatened to become something a bit more significant combined with smoke in the distance meant no mucking about as the last 5 or so kilometers of the track were yellow clay that could get real ugly real quick if the rain came or the smoke was something other than a controlled burn, but the rain held off and the weather cleared. No dramas at all.

Arriving back in Deddick the views down to the bridge were worth a stop and photograph, and then a short drive back to camp for happy hour and dinner. Most people were in bed pretty early.

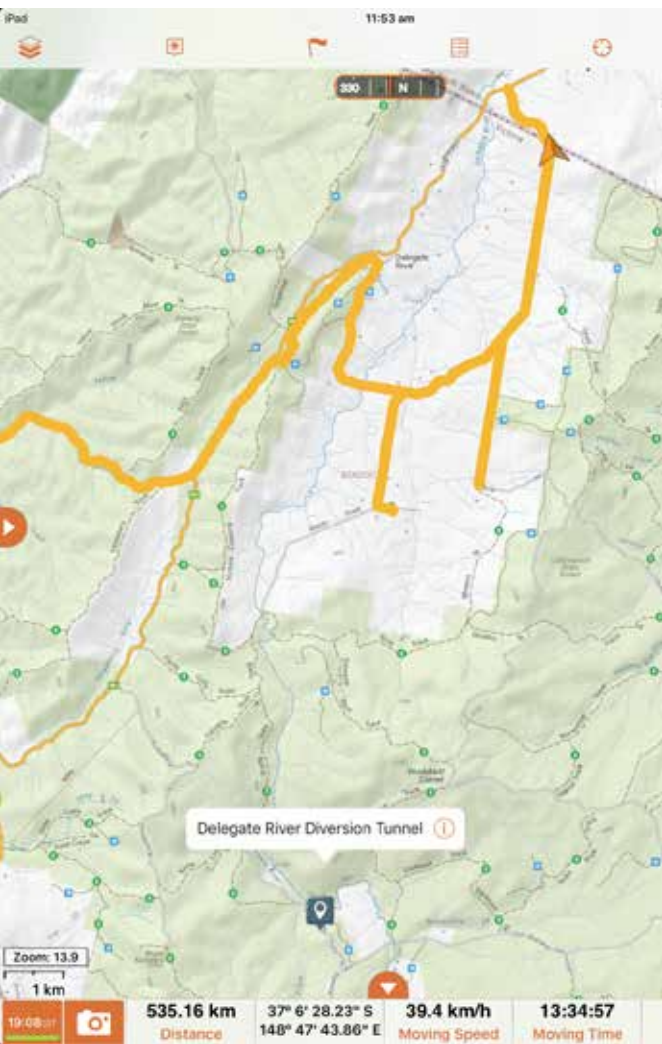
On the final day started with a leisurely pack-up before heading off. A short stop at the Ambyne Road suspension bridge which is listed

on the Vic Heritage register and is actually built from bits of the original McKillop’s bridge washed down in the flood. The bridge is pedestrian only now, and even then is a bit creaky.

The rest of the trip was supposedly an easy drive through Delegate and back to Canberra, but Michael had a surprise for us – he had heard about ‘The Delegate River Diversion Tunnel’ which was dug in the 1860s by miners to divert the Delegate river for gold mining/prospecting and could be interesting to have a look. Well, it was a bit like his Huts of the High Country and Bendethra caves. Apparently it had moved during the night and was now in a completely different location, so we got our quota of turn-arounds and redirections, and after asking the local farmer (since were parked in his front paddock anyway) were given confusing and ambiguous directions but were prepared to go exploring. Well, some of us were, others didn’t want to push through the bush, others wanted a pie in Delegate, and some just had no sense of adventure. C’mon guys grow a pair! We were the ones towing the trailer, you all had it easy!

So, majority rules and a pie in Bombala it was. The tunnel remains on Michael’s mystery list of places unknown and unseen..... saved for another day. From Bombala the convoy split up with some wanting to get back early, some heading other directions, and some hanging around for a while before heading back.

Thanks to Dim and Jim for the recce, and Michael for stepping up and leading the trip – a great few days and mid-week meant not being at work which is always a bonus. This is somewhere we will head back to for a longer period to do more exploring.



THE MAN FROM SNOWY RIVER FESTIVAL

5-8 APRIL, CORRYONG



“If you can tolerate the inevitable whip cracking by many young aspiring future contestants continuing from dawn to well after sunset, it is a very relaxing few days away that can be recommended. A very well-run event put on by a host of local volunteers.”

A sea of Akubra's and a tsunami of caravans greeted us on arrival at the Golf Course in Corryong. Like so many others, we were inspired to visit for the festival having seen an episode of “Back Roads” on the ABC late last year after Heather Ewart visited last year's festival.

We were accompanied by Pauline and David Bennison; and Jennifer and Grahame (Macca) Macdonald. It seems that the ‘Back Roads’ episode encouraged a lot of other first timers with attendance up an incredible 250% on last year - tickets had been sold out some weeks before.

The Festival is a true country celebration of ‘horsepersonship’ with contestants competing in a range of contests such as camp drafting, brumby catching, horse breaking, bareback riding, horse shoeing,

cattle dog handling, rodeo riding (horses & cattle) and whip cracking. Basically any form of horsey activity other than the better known ones seen at the Olympics and other show events, some of which we had not seen or even dreamt about before.

Needless to say, the drive to Corryong takes you through some magnificent Snowy Mountains scenery and the on-site 1-week camping was an included component of the ticket. The event is conducted at the Corryong sporting complex, a component of which is the Golf Course, on which every fairway was swamped with thousands of caravans, tents and camping trailers down both sides and in most cases down the middle as well. With sites booked out weeks before,



there was even a need to activate ‘overflow’ camping at the nearby racecourse.

We lucked in with an excellent campsite with shade almost all day, very useful considering the daytime temperatures reached 30 degrees. Of course, overnight was another matter with the temperature dropping to a cold 4 degrees but with camp fires permitted and wood readily available, the evenings were very pleasantly spent huddled around the ‘Pig’. A bonus was the presence of a coffee caravan a mere 50m from our campsite which sold excellent coffee. Large toilet and shower trailers were present and kept very clean throughout.

Apart from the formal competitions and the inevitable re-enactment of the ‘ride’, we were entertained by such notables as Becky Cole, Johnny Huckle, Greg Champion and many others leaving us to ponder whether we had inadvertently ended up in Tamworth. The usual stalls were present but with a heavy emphasis on ‘horsey’ things such as leather products, saddles and the like.

The festival ran from Thursday 5th to Sunday 8th April and one of the opening events on the Friday was an impressive street parade in which the entire town, even the pre-schoolers, must have participated.

If you can tolerate the inevitable whip cracking by many young aspiring future contestants continuing from dawn to well after sunset, it is a very relaxing few days away that can be recommended. A very well-run event put on by a host of local volunteers.

Thank you, Pauline, for the original suggestion to attend and bookings for next year are understood to be available from October.

Jim & Jane Raleigh



WALHALLA BOUND

APRIL, WALHALLA

Day one

Seven trucks and 11 passengers gathered at Williamsdale for an early morning 8.00 am start, trucks loaded and enthusiasm at its maximum all were ready to engage in Michaels 7 day Vic High Country trip.

After coxing Michael that a morning tea stop would not ruin his reputation he allowed all to refresh with coffee and bakery delights though it was within our allotted fuel top up in Jindabyne.

With bodies refuelled it was not long before we arrived and started airing down at the Tom Groggin/Murry River crossing which was easy but had an interesting exit with some trucks getting cross axeled in the holes.

Taking in the magic views we arrived and lunched at Mount Pinabar after an easy drive up the loose and shaly track, Bruce needing a helping hand with the use of our max tracks.

After lunch we had a good drive through Pheasants Track (boy did this have the radios blurring with some Pheasant Plucking comments) unfortunately John tore his tyre apart in the Disco having him limp through the rest of the upper shady creek track prior to camping for the night.



Day two

With One tyre unrepairable and a leaking radiator hose it was decided to drop John and Julie off in Omeo to seek assistance from Landrover road service. Five minutes from camp though we had our first tree down which saw five chainsaws and eleven gloved attendants quickly removed the barrier. After an hour of sweat and tears we convinced Michael that coffee and pies (morning tea) were needed at Omeo and was a pleasant way to say our goodbyes to John and Julie

After Omeo we headed via numerous tracks to Dargo where we received the news of ever increasing severe winds and storms that were continuing to pound the high country and a major bush fire near Butcher Country track, this saw us heading to Bairnsdale via the black top to ride out the weather. (from a trip leaders perspective, this is a hard decision for any trip leader to make as you could see the disappointment from all that Billy goats Bluff was off the cards.) MP a good call.

Day three

We woke to a pleasant day with the previous gusting winds now at a gentle breeze, this had everyone ready to hit the tracks again with renewed vigour. A quick run to Licola had us arrive again at morning tea (Michael old dogs can be changed)

After a quick snack and refuel we caught up with the Post Office to get the news on the tracks due to the weather over the previous days. Bad news again we were informed that a truck had rolled over the night before on the Burgoyne track which was another of the tracks that were going to be a highlight of the trip.

Again the decision was made to reroute our way to Walhalla as the truck hadn't been recovered and was blocking the track. (the bloke that had the miss hap was not new to the area and apparently it was the dryness and looseness of the track which caused his undoing. Lucky he escaped with no injuries, a big hike out, and a bruised ego and truck.)

Michael with his trip leader management in no time had a new route plotted and headed off on unfamiliar tracks reaching our destination Walhalla in the early afternoon. Most made camp in the well-kept campground with Jane and I settling into one of the little miner's huts previously booked.



Day Four/Five

Tuesday and Wednesday were relaxed with most taking tours around the town of Walhalla, including the local coffee shop, Long Mine, Cemetery, and the local train ride, with the last night having a great feed at the local Wally Pub. I grabbed a couple of hours to fish the fishless Coopers creek though enjoyed the serenity of a high country stream.



“As this is the Victorian High Country be prepared for all extremes of weather form blistering heat to snow. Be aware that every thing can change as Bushfire’s snow and rain can change the course of events.”

Day Six, (Seven to Four)

Prior to leaving camp Bruce discovered that the Jeep had a reoccurring problem with one of the the main engine pulley mounts vibrating. The last two instances had the truck off the road for a couple of days whilst trying to source parts. Unfortunately Bruce made the decision to head for home via the blacktop to save risk of breaking down on one of the tracks. Garry and Pauline also left us at Walhalla as they had a previous engagement booked in Melbourne. So that left four to finish the trip it was also coincidental that all were Toyotas!!!!

Due to rain on both Tuesday and Wednesday again the route was changed with the likely hood of not being able to negotiate a number of the steep tracks exiting Walhalla. So the black top was taken until we reached the outskirts of Jamison where we decided to try a number of tracks all with the description of being difficult. (Finally)

Difficult they weren't, every track we picked was being graded or had just been graded bugger it just shows how tracks in the high country are forever changing.

The day ended with another great camp site on the Jamison river and an early happy hour with the local European Wasps taking a liking to the cabanossi and dinner being eyed off by the local Kookaburras or re named Cookaburras.

All in all we had a great trip trip accompanied by great like minded people with plenty of laughs and jibes with one another.

Day Seven

It was everyone for themselves with an early morning pack up and back on the Blacktop heading for home.

I take my hat of to Michael for his adaptability and knowledge of the high Country as during the week he had to make a number of hard decisions due to weather and other circumstances relating to track conditions. It just shows how things planned can change so quickly especially in the high Country. We may not have done some of the Iconic tracks but the breath taking scenery and companionship made for an enjoyable and relaxing trip. We will be back next year.



Glen and Jane

Lessons learnt:

- MICHAEL PATRICK DOES DO TEA BREAKS
- IF YOU WANT TO EAT LUNCH OR DRINK A COFFEE BE UP FRONT AND NOT CHARLIE AS THE TIME STARTS FROM WHEN THE LEADER STOPS. (POOR JIM WE HAD TO REFRESH HIM WITH SNACKS ON THE WAY.
- JIMS RADIATOR IS FINE EVEN THOUGH HE LIKES TO CHECK IT EVERY 30 MINUTES
- MICHAEL APPARENTLY DOESN'T DO TURNAROUNDS JUST REALIGNMENTS
- 19 INCH RIMS ARE HARD TO GET TYRES FOR IN THE HIGH COUNTRY
- THEY AREN'T FLIES OR BUSH BEES THEY ARE BLOODY EUROPEAN WASPS
- EUROPEAN WASPS DON'T WANT TO EAT HUMANS JUST THEIR CABANOSSI
- COOKABURRAS WILL LOOK AFTER YOUR SAUSAGES NOT.
- GREAT UPDATES FROM LOCALS ON TRACK CONDITIONS
- WITH THE HIGH COUNTRY EXPECT TRIP CHANGES AS IT IS A DIVERSE, WILD AND MAGNIFICENT ENVIRONMENT.

PARTICIPANTS COMMENTS

John and Julie

The Reis's joined the convoy and were allocated the 2nd slot in the convoy because of our relative lack of experience. This was fine by us as we had only done one serious trip since the training weekend. The one serious trip was over 3 days travelling McFarlane's track and then Cobberas the weekend before. Since the training we added a long range fuel tank and fitted LT Maxxis Bravo AT tyres. Once we got past Thredbo and went to Tom Groggin we all stopped to look at the Murray crossing. The water level was low but the other side was badly cut up with a deep hole on the left but not much joy on the right either. We selected rock climbing mode and, for some reason, ended up going into the deep hole on the left, but the technology and revs got the disco through without any drama.

There was some radio chatter about finding the turnoff to Mt Pinnibar (and some observations re the merits of OziExplorer and Hema, but also about who configured what.) having neither we were in blissful ignorance.

The drive to Mount Pinnibar was excellent. You constantly thought that you had climbed the last ridge but there was more. It was steep in parts but not very challenging, although one vehicle did get caught up on a mound.

One advantage of being behind the trip leader is you get there early. We could have had a hot lunch and packed up by the time the last vehicle arrived. There was a total fire ban in place but there were 2 fire risk assessment officers surveying the surrounds when we got to the top. They told Michael that they had cancelled the fire ban which was great news for the nights camp. The top of mount Pinnibar was spectacular. A much nicer trip than across Cobberas.

We all headed off over fairly rough tracks but everything was fine until, getting close to our destination for the first night it was decided that we would take a track that no one had been on and would add about an hour to our time. The track was very steep (uphill) with a lot of sharp rocks and the occasional fallen timber that we either drove around or had been cut and we drove through. That is where we destroyed a tire. Not having a 6th that meant the end of the trip for us, but later we also lost coolant through a hole in a radiator hose. We camped the night with the group and stopped at Omeo while the convoy moved on.

It was great to have the help in changing the tyre and with assistance with the hole in the radiator hose.

Looking forward to the next trip. Thanks Michael.



Jim Anderson

Weather conditions can impact any trip but it seems to be more so when travelling in the Victorian High Country. So in the preamble of his Vic High Country trips description, trip leader Michael Patrick always advises the following. . ."As this is the Victorian High Country be prepared for all extremes of weather form blistering heat to snow. Be aware that every thing can change as Bushfire's snow and rain can change the course of events." Well Michael you nailed it for this one and then add the gale force winds in the peaks.

Day one. Williamsdale to Ashea camp - weather warnings for gale force winds on the peaks It was certainly very windy. We drove Pheasant Creek track which had some very nice steep descents which all vehicles handled well. Camped overnight on the riverside at Ashea camp site, The next morning people were commenting on the unusually warm to almost hot wind gusts. Packed up and off on our way to Benambra but were soon stopped by a large fallen tree. Four chainsaws and everyone helping to remove the obstacle we were soon on our way to Omeo. From here, after coffee etc, we headed to Dargo on the Dargo road minus John and Julie whose vehicle had tyre and radiator issues.

On the way to Dargo the winds had really picked up so the decision was made to skip our planned drive up Billy Goat Bluff to the Pinnacles. Imagine clearing fallen trees on that track or trying to turn six vehicles around. Instead we took the safe option and headed to Bairnsdale for the comfort of cabins or motels. Next day off to Licola on the blacktop and a very scenic drive in. We couldn't drive the Burgoyne South track as planned due to the condition of the track and a vehicle rollover the previous evening.

From Licola mostly took the blacktop to the historic settlement of Walhalla where we experienced rain for two days. We couldn't drive the local tracks but enjoyed the sightseeing, shops, old gold mine and small gauge railway train ride. On the morning we left the weather was absolutely perfect (funny about that) so we drove some of the tracks on our way to Jamieson but who would have guessed they had recently been or were in the process of being graded.

Despite the weather and condition of the tracks I really enjoyed the company of a great bunch of people and the treasures of the Victorian High Country.

CAMPER TRAILER DRIVER TRAINING

APRIL, TALOOGEE



We joined 7 other camper owners at Taloogee for the inaugural Camper Trailer Driver Training weekend on the 14 and 15 April 2018. There were 3 Ultimates, 2 Cubs, a Trax, a Stirling, and a hybrid off-road caravan. The aim was to learn how to drive 4WD tracks with our trusty campers in tow and to arrive at our intended destination with our vehicle and camper intact. I arrived expecting to be the novice in the group but quickly learnt that we all had similar concerns.

Glen started off the course with a class room session explaining the many weights and associated laws we need to understand to ensure we are both legal and safe when we load up our trucks and campers. It included acronyms like ATM, GVM, GCM, GTM, GCVM, and terms like Kerb Weight

and Tare Weight. There were a few comments about "wow that's simple... not" and "I feel like I'm in a maths class". However, it was well presented and we all ended the session a little wiser. We also covered off issues with the ramp over angle between the truck and camper; and the fact that the "track" of camper is a little different to that of the truck.

We then set off for the fun part...driving around Taloogee with our campers in tow. We started at the offset mounds - full of trepidation. I found the mounds difficult enough during the basic driver course; and that was without the camper! We quickly learnt that our trucks and campers are very capable; and slowly does it. Clearly the weak point was the drivers! We also learnt that we need to consider "ramp over"

angles and the additional side clearance required as the campers lurched from side to side. Glen also highlighted the usefulness of maxtrax and branches to build up low points in the track to reduce the impact of "ramp over". Everyone enjoyed the mounds so much (or decided we had much more to learn?) that we went over the mounds again on Sunday morning. We spent the rest of the day driving the tracks at Taloogee to get a better feel for the momentum and lines we needed. And the more I drove, the better I felt!

However, somehow, the driver of the hybrid (who shall remain nameless to protect the guilty!) managed to do a demolition job on the side awning... something about clearances!



We cut the afternoon driving short as a big storm was building up and we all wanted to set up our campers before the rain hit. However, I suspect it was also a good excuse to start "happy hour(s)" early!

After a great night of camaraderie and an extremely windy night, most of us packed up early to avoid the rain that was approaching (I'm still recovering from packing up my Ultimate in torrential rain in February!). We did a quick clean up of the site, and headed off to the offset mounds again...this time we did much better. We all went a little slower and paid more attention to the terrain.

Now full of confidence in our new found awareness and skills, we headed off for a leisurely drive across the Bredbo and Murrumbidgee Rivers and across some beautiful (and hilly) farm land that Glen had been able to arrange access to (PS: whatever gifts Glen gave to the farmer for providing us access, it was well worth it!).

Pictured Clockwise:
the course attendees
the offset mounds
the offset mounds & ramp over issues
The convoy plus a ring in.





We basically drove parallel to the Murrumbidgee River to what appeared to be an old fishing/hunting hut for lunch and then returned back to Bredbo along the same route.

We all “played around” with our electric brake controllers to get better control of our campers. We focused on reducing the “push” from the camper going down hill by applying the camper brakes more than the truck brakes to create a pull effect. Similarly – but in reverse – we adjusted the camper brakes to reduce the “pull” going up hills. Many thanks to Joe for his advice on the differences between auto and manual modes...and his patience when we couldn't change modes! We also did a bit sand driving and a few more water crossings to get a feel for the impact of different terrains on the truck and camper. Plus it was great fun!

It was a great weekend, I learnt a lot, and got to know a few more club members...and I forgot about work!

My heartfelt thanks to Glen (with great support from Jane) for a great course. I know he spent a lot of time and effort in putting it together.

Max Cornwall



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