



SOUTHERN TRAILS

ISSUE 361 July 2009



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General meetings are usually held at the Canberra Deakin Football Club, Grose St, Deakin at 7.30 pm on the second Tuesday of each month.

Next General Meeting — 14 July at Canberra Deakin Football Club

Mr Rod Brewer from Monaro Off Road Centre, will speak on
Differentials

The deadline for material to be included in the next issue
of *Southern Trails* is the Friday following the General Meeting
i.e. 17th July 2009

Many members contribute articles and photos to Southern Trails; the role of editor is shared.

This month's magazine has been compiled and edited by Bob and Sylvia Allen.

Cover Photos this month by Peter Watson and Chris Nicholls

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All magazine correspondence should be directed to the Publications Coordinator.

Trip reports & articles of interest are very welcome. Contributions may be edited.

We gratefully acknowledge the support given to this magazine by our advertisers and encourage our readers to support and patronise them whenever possible.

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General Meetings are held at the
Canberra Deakin Sports Club, Grose St, Deakin
at 7.30pm on the second Tuesday of each month.

General Meetings are a focal point of the club where members can meet and get information about past and future club activities. Meetings are structured with a minimum of formality. Meetings regularly feature talks from experts on topics of interest ranging from vehicle mechanics to bush lore. Reports on past trips are presented and new trips are announced. Visitors introduce themselves, there is a raffle with generous prizes and a coffee break for catching up with other members. Don't forget to wear your name badge.

Ideas for guest speakers are welcome. Contact Vivian Henderson if you know of someone who could make an interesting and topical presentation. Many members gather before and after the meeting to enjoy a meal or drink at the club.

Publications

Website www.st4wdc.org. The site is used to provide timely information regarding Club activities and variations from previously announced plans. When visiting the site, always check the "What's New" page for recent announcements and current news. Especially, check for any last minute variations to trips you are undertaking.

Southern Trails is the ST4WD Club monthly Magazine.

Trip reports, and articles that are relevant to Club members are welcome, as are photographs and illustrations.

Closing date for all material is the Friday following the monthly meeting. Send contributions to publications@st4wdc.org

Talooge Park

Talooge is the Club's 600+ ha bush block in rugged country east of Bredbo. It is used for training and other club activities, and members are welcome there for private camping, recreation and the simple pleasure of enjoying the bush. Several areas have been set aside for basic bush camping. Some have firewood and long drop toilets, but no other services – no water, no electricity, no phone, very limited mobile phone coverage. Pets and the discharging of firearms are not permitted on the property. Visitors should assume that they are solely responsible for their own wellbeing and be conscious of the risks of fire, snakebite, etc. In an emergency, neighbours Mr Richie Southwell and his sons, can usually be contacted using UHF channel 18.

Many details are on the Club's website, and intending visitors should check there for current access details and other information. Committee members can advise regarding the combination locks securing the gates.

Code of Ethics

These are the rules of conduct that we should all observe when using our vehicles in the bush. We should all take them to heart. Image is a difficult thing to change!!

1. Obey the laws and regulations for Recreational Vehicles that apply to public lands.
2. Respect the cultural, heritage and environmental values of public/private land, by obeying restrictions that may apply.
3. Respect our flora and fauna. Stop and look, but never disturb.
4. Keep to formed vehicle tracks.
5. Keep the environment clean. Carry your own, and any other, rubbish, out.
6. Keep your vehicle mechanically sound and clean to reduce the environmental impact.
7. Adopt minimal impact camping and driving practices.
8. Seek permission before driving on private land. Do not disturb livestock or watering points, leave gates as found.
9. Take adequate water, food, fuel, basic spares and a first aid kit on trips. In remote areas travel with another vehicle and have Royal Flying Doctor Service, or equivalent, in radio contact.
10. Enjoy your recreation and respect the rights of others.
11. Plan ahead and lodge trip details with a responsible person.
12. Support four wheel driving as a responsible and legitimate family recreational activity. Consider joining an affiliated four wheel drive Club.

Training

The Southern Tablelands Four Wheel Drive Club is devoted to providing the best driver training possible. The Driver Training Team provides a range of courses throughout the year. Students are assigned an instructor over the period of the course. The 1:1 instructor/student ratio ensures maximum transfer of skills and experience.

The current courses are:

Main Courses

Basic Driver Training,
Very Difficult Terrain, and
Advanced Recovery (for Grade 4 and 5)

Supplementary Courses

Water Crossing,
Sand Driving,
Mud and Snow,
Practical Map Reading,
Navigation,
Route Planning,
GPS, and

Other specific training relating to Club activities such as camper trailers etc may also be introduced..

Training for Driver Training Instructors

Trainee Instructor,
Assistant Instructor,
Instructor, and
Chief Instructor

Visit the ST4WDC web page for full details which are expanded on in detail in the Driver Training Policy document located under the Training menu tab.

Partners are encouraged to undertake the Basic Driver Education course, and any of the other courses offered from time to time. Unfortunately couples cannot undertake the course at the same time as only one driver per vehicle can be instructed during a training course. Training of a member's child is subject to approval by Club management and only when spare places are available. Couples may attend the Navigation, Map Reading & GPS courses.

A special offer to travelers - Sewing Machine - medium/heavy duty - available for short term loan.

I have custody of a medium duty Singer sewing machine that is ideal for all those small canvas repair jobs or to create new tent peg bags, tool rolls, billy can bags, camp oven bags, etc. How far does your creative imagination go? The machine will handle up to three layers of medium weight canvas and uses very strong upholstery weight nylon thread that is great for reasonably heavy jobs.

Don 02 6161 1880. 0408 649 732

ROSEMARY'S RAMBLINGS

Rosemary Orr



How cold is it! Hopefully, not cold enough to discourage members from joining in the activities of the club.

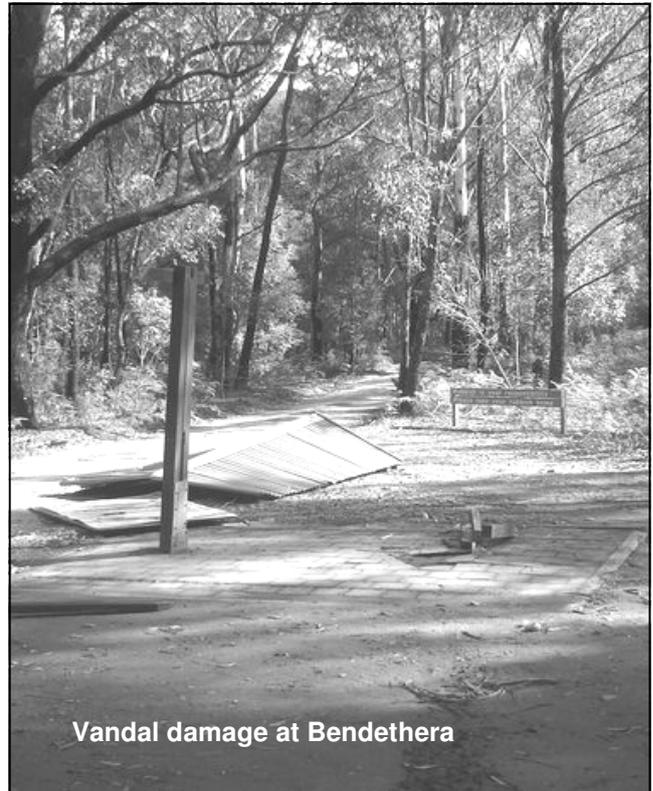
Christmas in July at Laurel Hill Park is our next big activity. It would be great to see heaps of members there. I can guarantee a great time with great food, great entertainment and a great trip there and back. I would encourage all new members to come along and get to know fellow club members in a relaxed and enjoyable setting.

Then we have those who are heading for warmer parts. Our dash to the Centre and our second trip to Lake Eyre. Hopefully they will find the warmer weather, the birds and lots of other interesting things. AND hopefully they will all send or bring back great stories and photos for the magazine.

I know that sitting down to write a trip report is not always easy and sometimes it is hard to find the time. BUT trip reports and photos are the very best things in our magazine and our verbal reports can be entertaining at our meetings. So please, if you have volunteered, carry through and write your report, and collate the photos from everyone on the trip so we all can see them in the magazine. Great for those who were not able to go on the trip, and great for those who might like to run a similar trip in the future.

We all know how entertaining trip reports can be at the monthly meetings, so make sure to turn up at meeting and give us a short and concise description of your trip. Because of our wonderful technology we can present a slide show or video to make your presentation more interesting. But please remember NOT to be too long – 5 to 10 minutes will keep everyone interested. So guys, I look forward to your trip reports, both in the magazine and at meetings.

We have been informed that there was a great deal of vandalism at the Bendethera Camp area (Joey's Flat) over the June long weekend. A trip planned by this club did not go ahead, otherwise we may have been in a position to help NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) track down the culprits and see them charged. However, if anyone in the club did go to Bendethera for that weekend and can help in any way please contact the Narooma office of the NPWS on 02 4476 2888.



Vandal damage at Bendethera

As we all know it is important for us as a club to abide by the rules which govern many of the camping areas and tracks which we use. Our continued support and good conduct when in these areas will help both the environment and our relationship with those who control the areas and other users. I cannot stress enough that for us to continue using many of our favourite areas we must be vigilant and we must take care of these areas.

As you can see on the opposite page, the Chief Minister of the ACT has thanked the Club for our contributions to the 2009 Balloon Spectacular and especially the efforts of Dennis Collins for his ongoing sterling efforts. The Balloon Spectacular is a good example of our Club's positive contributions to the wider ACT community. So well done to all members who helped out this year.

Well guys, that's about it from me for this month. By the time you read this we will be racing towards spring and warmer weather! I am looking forward to some great trips.

Travel safe and enjoy - until next time.

Rosemary





Jon Stanhope MLA

CHIEF MINISTER

MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT MINISTER FOR TERRITORY AND MUNICIPAL SERVICES
MINISTER FOR BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
MINISTER FOR INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS MINISTER FOR THE ARTS AND HERITAGE

Member for Ginninderra


Ms Rosamary Orr
President
Southern Tablelands 4WD Club
PO Box 661
FYSHWICK ACT 2609

Dear Ms Orr

On behalf, of the ACT Government I would like to thank the Southern Tablelands 4WD Club for their contribution to the 2009 Canberra Festival Balloon Spectacular by providing assistance to pilots when transporting, inflating, tethering and retrieving their balloons.

The Balloon Spectacular is a truly unique event in Australia and a great opportunity to showcase our National Capital. The 2009 event was a great success.

I understand the 4WD Club has a long history of involvement in Balloon events and that the skills, equipment and professionalism the club brought to the 2009 event were highly regarded and appreciated by the event organisers and registered pilots.

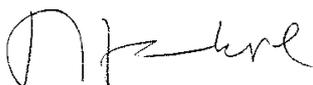
Please convey my personal thanks to all the members of the 4WD club, along with their friends and family, who so willingly contributed their time and skills to the event.

I would also like to make special mention of Dennis Collins as the primary contact for the event organisers. I understand that he did a fantastic job and was very helpful at all stages of the event.

I hope that your members enjoyed the experience and we look forward to welcoming you back for the 2010 event. I trust that the Special Events Unit of the Chief Minister's Department will be in touch with you once they commence planning.

Once again, thank you for your contribution to the success of the Canberra Festival Balloon Spectacular.

Yours sincerely



Jon Stanhope MLA
Chief Minister

14 MAY 2009

ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

London Circuit, Canberra ACT 2601 GPO Box 1020, Canberra ACT 2601
Phone (02) 6205 0104 Fax (02) 6205 0433 Email stanhope@act.gov.au

Talooge Topics

John Kjar



Calendar of events at Talooge

Please advise any additions or corrections by E-mail to Property@st4wdc.org

From	To	Activity	Contact	On
17 July	19 July	Track clearing	Robert Tiele	0418 661 162
29 August	30 August	Advanced Driver Training	Peter Reynolds	0428 623 458
12Sep	13 Sep	Safe One Basic Driver Training	Peter Reynolds	0428 623 458
October (tbc)		Talooge Working Bee	John Kjar	6287 7574
14 Nov	15 Nov	Safe One Basic Driver Training	Peter Reynolds	0428 623 458

Three new documents have been placed in the Documents Section of the Club Web page. The first deals with policies relating to Talooge (who can use what etc). The second document, still in draft and open for comment, sets out the procedures for the access and use of Talooge Park – including Opening and Closing procedures. The third document provides details on how to get to Talooge – both via Strike-a-Light Fire Trail (preferred access route) and via Southwells. I encourage all members to read these documents before they visit Talooge. Copies will also be available in the DTU shed at Talooge. The following information is especially relevant for anyone visiting Talooge.

Before visiting Talooge : one of the following should be contacted advising of the date and duration of your visit, and to obtain the combination for the combination locks:

Property Coordinator (John Kjar on 0432 737 440)

President (Rosemary Orr on 0414 568 358)

Vice-President (Marj Jones on 6284 3456)

Preferred Access : is via Strike-a-Light Fire Trail. Prior to using the Fire Trail, you **MUST** contact Steve Collins, (ph 6454 3063 and leave a message if necessary) to advise him when you propose to travel, because the fire trail traverses his property.

Combination Locks: are used on the Gates, and Buildings. The locks may sometimes be sticky – after setting the correct combination, you may need to push the lock closed on several occasions in order for it to open. **Spin the combination off** immediately to hide the combination.

1. Entrance Gates are locked with combination locks - the combination will be given to you when you make your call to one of the above committee member to advise of your visit.

2. Buildings are locked with a different combination to the gates, in the event of your needing access to a building that combination should also be obtained when advising one of the above committee members of your intended visit.

3. Chemicals Shed is not for general access and has a unique combination.

4. Equipment Shed is locked with keys – it is not for general access.

Camping Areas: Members are encouraged to use the camping facilities on Thurbon Flat. The location and facilities (large shelter, toilets, fire pit, wood supply, etc) provide excellent camping.

Please do not use the tractor, fire truck or water pump unless you have been trained in its use. **In the event of exceptional inclement weather developing**, members may access the Driver Training shed or the shed nearest the firepit in the Driver Training Area.

Trip Leaders, intending to use Talooge need to check with the Property Officer to see if any items need to be brought to Talooge for Club use (eg gas for cooking or petrol for the generator).

Opening and closing procedures are detailed in the Document section of the web page. A copy is on the wall of the kitchen area in the DTU Shed. **Any enquiries** should be directed to the Property Officer on property@st4wdc.org or by phone – 0432 737 440.

If you are interested in participating in a working group to develop Talooge (as discussed in the June magazine), or want further information, please email me at property@st4wdc.org . I look forward to hearing from many Club members.



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Exhibitor enquiries to Mr Greg Ebeling

02 6553 2659 or 0409 992 810

www.4wdspectacular.org.au

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EVENTS AND TRIPS

Richard Brand



No fewer than five long distance trips should have started by the time you get this magazine, to iconic destinations, including the Canning Stock Route and Lake Eyre. It seems that much of the Committee has taken time off to escape the Canberra cold. I can't think of better outcomes from joining the club – get trained in four wheel driving and vehicle preparation, meet up with like-minded folk on shorter trips and then head of on adventures of a lifetime with your new mates and skills.

If you cannot afford the time for a long trip, Christmas in July provides an ideal winter weekend away. No matter what the weather is doing, we will be staying in heated rooms with a great Devonshire tea on arrival, plus a fully catered Christmas dinner and a cooked recovery breakfast after the fun and games, which usually run late into the night.

Advanced Driver Training

It has been about five years since we bought Talooge Park and a great milestone is coming up. For the first time ever we will be using it for advanced driver training, which means we have confidence in new terrain recently opened up by Rob Tiele that provides grade 4 and 5 challenges! I had the pleasure of being on the same advanced driver training course as Rob a few years ago at Yalwal and one evening when there are not too many trip reports I'll replay a 10-minute video for old times sake.

Spectators are always welcome – and you are especially encouraged if you think that one day you would like to tackle the really hard stuff, or know how to recover safely from extreme situations, or even what gear you must carry for safe recovery. Bring along a camera or camcorder and share your insights. This training only happens every few years, so make the most of it.

Continuing Education

I've been really impressed by the driving behavior displayed by club member's on public roads – at least when vehicles display the club badge. I suspect we collectively realize that training and assessment never really finish, and most of us do try to improve our driving in all situations.

I've recently sampled a range of vehicles, from Action buses to small front-wheel drive cars, often from passenger seats. I am also struck by reports that some

drivers use 25% more fuel covering the same journeys in the same vehicles with about the same travel times as other drivers. Given that most vehicles are automatics nowadays, does it boil down to hands and feet and how they are used?

London bus drivers were taught with a bottle of milk standing on the floor. If the bottle fell over, they were being too harsh with the controls. A goal was always to bring the vehicle to a stop without any sort of jolt, by carefully modulating the brake pedal, feathering to next to nothing as the vehicle came to rest.

Of course, every time you use the brakes you are wasting momentum and fuel. By planning well ahead, and slowing early, good drivers can often smooth out the stops and starts of urban traffic crawls. This is good for fuel consumption, the environment, the vehicle and passengers' nerves. For me there is little worse than on-again off-again throttle application when traffic is flowing smoothly all around. Brakes can fail, so leave a little leeway. Really good drivers will have a planned escape route for every contingency, and will be looking at what is going on many vehicles ahead.

By and large, good brakers also seem to be good steerers. From the Mini on, most small front-wheel drive cars have had exceptionally sharp steering. Even the cheapest Korean import follows the rule – I know this because as a recent passenger in one, I could feel the car react crisply to every jerk of the steering wheel as the driver treated it like an early Holden with a couple of inches slack in the box.

I experienced something similar when a mate of mine bought an early Mini and complained there was something severely wrong with the steering. Over-correction followed over-correction as the car darted from side to side down the road, until we could persuade George to just lightly touch the wheel and feel what was going on.

The extra sense may be seat-of-the-pants feeling, feedback through the steering, a balance effect, or some combination. When I mentioned Pat Moss as somebody who had exceptional control, I got a surprised reaction "Wasn't she in the British Show

Jumping Team?" Well she was, but then she became an incredibly successful rally driver, and married Erik Carlsson of Saab rally fame. Carlsson's Saab's were grossly underpowered and needed high revs, so he invented left foot braking to get the tail to slide out while keeping his right foot planted firmly on the throttle. Someone else was paying for his fuel and brake-pads.

One day Pat's brother was pulled over for speeding. "I suppose, sir, you think you are Stirling Moss?" It took quite a while to convince the constable he actually was.

Anyway, to me the perfect road cornering is when the steering wheel is moved progressively into the corner, and then fed progressively out again, in one smooth movement with no see-sawing movements in between. Sudden direction changes add to tyre wear and increase fuel consumption.

These comments apply to normal driving on normal roads, but I can remember invitation Mini races being put on at Brand's Hatch as warm-ups for Formula racing. Racing drivers were pitted against rally drivers of the likes of Monte Carlo winner Paddy Hopkirk. The rally drivers would throw the car into a corner, and wrestle it round with armfuls of lock scrambling to find traction, the front wheels darting from side-to-side. The racing drivers would set up for a corner with a quick flick of the wrist, then basically just hold the line with slight throttle and steering adjustments. By and large, on the smooth road surfaces of Brand's Hatch, the racing drivers were slightly faster.

On the dirt and ice roads commonly used for European rally sections, drivers discovered the limits of friction by deliberately probing to break traction, and Stirling Moss used to flick the wheel at high speed on sealed roads for the same reason.

As a passenger round Canberra, I am happier to travel a heck of a lot slower. And our guys on the Advanced Driver Training won't even have to try to lose traction.

Goals

An unspoken personal goal of mine was to open tracks to the very highest parts of Talooge Park. I thought it would take ten years. We did discover a track which ran through the saddle between the summits, but it requires travel through neighboring properties at each end. It is very steep and the safest way down was to zig-zag, doing one traverse in reverse

gear. Now Rob is getting close to the same area, but entirely within our property.

Rob has not only been pioneering routes into the higher parts of Talooge Park, he has also taken responsibility for designing and organizing the test track for the next 4WD Spectacular. I know it will be a good one, and lots of help will be on hand when asked for.

See you down the track!

Richard Brand



Trip Leaders Handbook

This useful handbook has been updated. It contains new material and should be read by all trip leaders.

Look for it in the **Documents** section of the Southern Tablelands Four Wheel Drive ClubWeb Page.

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The advertisement features a background image of various car batteries and a small illustration of a car, a boat, a motorcycle, and a truck.

ABOUT TRIPS

TRIP GRADING

For trips in the club's calendar a grading system of levels 1 to 5 is used to assist members in deciding which trips they would most enjoy and which grade suits the driver's level of skill and experience. This system of grading is a guide only. The grade assigned to a trip may change due to weather conditions, and the trip leader should be consulted in such circumstances. The trip leader has the right to deny a request from a driver who is considered not to have the necessary level of skill in 4W driving, or whose vehicle is deemed inadequate.

- ***GRADE 1:** very easy with little, if any 4w driving involved; will usually consist of a scenic tour or a trip to camp. No 4WD skills are needed.
- ***GRADE 2:** a relatively moderate 4WD trip with winching and/or towing unlikely. Moderate level of 4WD skills needed, as well as completion of Basic Driver Education Course.
- ***GRADE 3:** a medium 4WD trip which requires cautious driving; winching should not be required. Good level of 4WD skills needed, as well as completion of Basic Driver Education Course.
- ***GRADE 4:** a moderately difficult 4WD trip with some winching and/or towing almost a certainty. High level of 4WD skills needed, as well as completion of both the Basic and Advanced Driver Education Courses.
- ***GRADE 5:** an extremely difficult 4WD trip. Participants must be experienced at traveling over difficult terrain. Winching and/or towing will definitely be required and participants must have all their own recovery equipment. Skill levels the same as Grade 4.

DRIVER EXPERIENCE

Conditions on some trips at Grade 3 and above may prove too difficult for inexperienced drivers. Please advise the trip leader of the level of skill, and vehicle equipment when signing up for such a trip. Members must have attended the 'Safe-One' Basic Vehicle Operation Course before driving on a Club trip above the Grade 1 level, unless they have satisfied the Club's Education Coordinator that they have the necessary experience.

TRIP PLANNING

If you are planning a Trip or Social Event for the Club contact the Club Trips Co-ordinator, preferably at least two months in advance of your chosen dates. This will allow time to give your event a 'good plug' in the Southern Trails, and it helps to avoid clashes with other people's plans. However, if a good event opportunity comes up at short notice our rules are sufficiently flexible to enable a quick approval. Club policy requires that a Club event shall be publicised in the Club magazine, or at a General Meeting of the Club, or on the Club's website in order for it to be considered a formal Club event and so be covered for the purposes of insurance, subsidies and so forth.

For a trip using tracks that are not public roads it is Club policy to confirm with the appropriate authorities that access is permitted on the chosen dates. This includes National Parks, State Forests as well as private property.

CB RADIOS

The Club strongly recommends that a UHF radio be carried to facilitate convoy procedures. UHF channel 14 is used as the standard channel for trips.

FIREARMS & PETS

Firearms are not permitted on club trips. Pets are not allowed in National Parks, otherwise refer to Trip leader.

TRIPS AND EVENTS



11 - 12 Jul **Christmas in July** (2009-031)

Trip Leader: Marj Jones
Email: marjorie.jones@det.nsw.edu.au
Phone: 6284 3456
Vehicles: unlimited
Grade: 1
Start: 8:15 AM
Departure: Uriarra Homestead
Fuel: Full tank
Requirements: Well maintained vehicle, good tyres, water for the day, morning tea plus lunch for both days, and bring happy hour nibbles and drinks for the evening

Bring your own bedding for the supplied bunks
Description: A five-year old 'tradition' in the making! Great drives there and back, in 'easier' and 'harder' convoys. We stay overnight in bunkhouses in a converted low-security gaol "Laurel Hill Forest Lodge" set in picturesque alpine grounds - see <http://www.laurelhillforestlodge.com.au/index.htm>. Our hosts provide warm scones and cream on arrival, a great 3-course Christmas dinner and a memorable breakfast to set us up for the trip home. Unspeakable games have been played into the early hours. A great social weekend with a choice of easy or harder drives there and back
Comments: Costs \$70 per person which is unbelievably cheap for accommodation, tea, dinner and breakfast. Please book as soon as possible so numbers can be locked down at the gaol!

14 Jul **Monthly Club Meeting** (2009-012)

Start: 7:30 PM

18 - 19 Jul **Track clearing at Talooge Park** (2009-052)

Note: **New since June magazine**

Trip Leader: Robert Tiele
Email: roberttiele@grapevine.com.au or robert.tiele@cit.act.edu.au
Phone: 6166 2500 (h); 6205 3174 (w); 0407 377 527 (m)
Vehicles: 4
Grade: 4
Start: 8:00 AM
Departure: Thurbon Flat, Talooge Park
Requirements: Full working winching gear and general recovery. Chainsaw with qualified operator
Description: A love for the cold is essential. The aim of the weekend is to open some new tracks that have been made and plotted already. We need at least 4 qualified chainsaw operators with chain saws and about 12 other people including drivers to help them. The expedition will comprise 4 very capable vehicles (double diff locks, electric winches) to ferry people and drive the new tracks. If all goes really well we will be done and dusted by Sunday lunch. If it is raining or snowing we will postpone the weekend to the 1st and 2nd of August. I expect a few of the driver training instructors to attend for their analysis of the new tracks.

TRIPS AND EVENTS



22 Jul **Cooma Diesel Open Night** (2009-055)

Note: New since June magazine

Trip Leader: Ian Goodacre

Email: newtricks@bigpond.com

Phone: 6291 0455 (h); 0403 304 505 (m)

Vehicles: 20

Start: 6:30 PM

Departure: Cooma Diesel Service, 64 Kembla St, Fyshwick

Description: Visit Cooma Diesel for evening information session covering the latest developments in diesel technology, including high pressure common rail technology. Cooma Diesel has world leading diagnostic capabilities and is used by major manufacturers to solve the most complex issues arising in the field. Capacity for up to 20 people, to be held in Cooma Diesel's air-conditioned seminar room, light refreshments will be available (I suggested members' gold coin donation). Session planned for two hours but acknowledged that they usually last three

26 Jul **New Trip Leader's Seminar** (2009-057)

Note: New since June magazine

Trip Leader: John Kjar

Email: Property@st4wdc.org

4WD TRAINING SERVICES P/L

ABN 008 545 980

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0428 623 458**

TRIPS AND EVENTS



Phone: 6287 7574 (h); 0432 737 440 (m)

Start: 10:00 AM

Departure: Weston Club

Requirements: Sense of humour, willingness to participate and, hopefully, lead a trip afterwards. Open to all Club members, including previous trip leaders.

We will assume all participants have read the ST4WD Club Trip Leaders Handbook, which is available on the Club web page under the documents section.

This will enable the seminar to focus on some important issues and participants will have more time to discuss matters of interest to themselves.

Description: You asked for it and here it is. This is an information and participation day to help you lead successful trips, presented by highly experienced club members. Lots of opportunities to interact, share experiences and gain confidence

Comments: Bring your own lunch or order from the Weston Club bistro. Tea, coffee, juice and biscuits will be provided. Will finish before 5:00pm.

11 Aug Monthly Club Meeting (2009-013)

Start: 7:30 PM

16 Aug Advanced Preparation Day (2009-053)

Note: New since June magazine

Trip Leader: Peter Reynolds

Email: debpete1@bigpond.com

Phone: 6251 1258 (h); 0428 623 458 (m)

Grade: 4

Start: 8:30 AM

Departure: Uriarra Homestead

Description: This is a shakedown and qualification day for people wanting to participate in the Advanced Driving and Recovery Course. Participants must demonstrate their driving ability in some of the harder tracks of the Brindabella ranges, and that they have suitable recovery equipment

29 - 30 Aug Advanced Driving and Recovery Course (2009-054)

Note: New since June magazine

Trip Leader: Peter Reynolds

Email: debpete1@bigpond.com

Phone: 6251 1258 (h); 0428 623 458 (m)

Grade: 4

Start: 8:30 AM

Departure: Bredbo

Requirements: Must have completed several grade 3 trips, and the preparation day

Full, high quality recovery gear in working order. Capable vehicle

Description: This is only put on every few years, and this is the first time at Talooge Park. The course will take you to the next level, capable of handling difficult terrain and recovering from difficult situations.

8 Sep Monthly Club Meeting (2009-014)

Start: 7:30 PM

TRIPS AND EVENTS



12 Sep **South Coast National Parks and Forests** (2009-056)

Note: New since June magazine

Trip Leader: Ian Goodacre

Email: newtricks@bigpond.com

Phone: 6291 0455 (h); 0403 304 505 (m)

Vehicles: 6

Grade: 2

Start: 8:00 AM

Departure: Williamsdale

Fuel: Full tank at start

Requirements: Basic driver training, basic recovery gear, UHF radio, good tyres, well maintained and reliable vehicle, food and water.

Description: Day trip to South Coast National Parks and Forests (Badja, Wadbilliga, Deua, Wandella) via Belowra, Wandella, Yowrie (and Duck Hole) and Two River Plain. It will be a dry weather only trip, due to slightly awkward and rocky river crossing and possible damp surfaces. Total distance Williamsdale to Williamsdale is 350 km.

12 - 13 Sep **"Safe One" Basic Driver Training at Talooge Park** (2009-035)

Trip Leader: Peter Reynolds

Phone: 6251 1258 (h); 0428 623 458 (m)

Start: 8:00 AM

Departure: Bredbo Service Station

Description: This is the Club's official and accredited basic driver education course

20 Sep **"Safe One" Basic Driver Training Course Follow-up Day** (2009-036)

Trip Leader: Peter Reynolds

Description: This is day three of the basic driver education course on the 12th and 13th September and MUST be attended before participating on any Club trips where the proposed route is expected to be at Grade 2 or above

5 Oct **Labour Day long weekend**

13 Oct **Monthly Club Meeting** (2009-015)

Start: 7:30 PM

24 - 25 Oct **Water Crossing and Sand Driving Course** (2009-037)

Trip Leader: Peter Reynolds

Phone: 6251 1258 (h); 0428 623 458 (m)

Description: This is the Club's official water crossing and sand driving course. For more information contact Peter Reynolds

TRIPS AND EVENTS



30 Oct - 3 Nov Stockton (2009-047)

- Trip Leader: Warren Shardlow
Email: warren.shardlow@hotmail.com
Phone: 0409 321 213 (m)
Vehicles: 8 — More convoys can be organised if demand is high)
Grade: 3
Start: 8:00 AM
Departure: Shell Service Station at EPIC on the Sydney Road
Fuel: Full tank at start
Requirements: Basic Driver Training, Sand Driving training, basic recovery gear including snatch strap, strong recovery points on vehicle, UHF radio, good tyres, well maintained vehicle.
Also required will be a long pole attached to the vehicle with a flag. Porta-potti or similar if possible.
- Description: Stockton Beach is a popular venue for sand driving. It tests to the full the skills learnt on the Sand Driving course and stands you in good stead for an assault on the Simpson Desert, Canning Stock Route etc. We will drive to Newcastle on Saturday, returning on Tuesday, leaving us a full day (or more) of driving on sand. The second day can be spent either doing more sand driving or exploring the Nelson Bay area. We will stay at the Birubi Beach Holiday Park (<http://birubibeachcaravanpark.com.au/showpage.asp?id=1>), which is very close to the entrance of Stockton Beach. Group bookings are possible and is best done through me. They offer cabins, and ensuite powered camp sites. We also need to purchase permits for the beach/sand. These can be purchased at the Holiday Park on arrival. Costs for the permit and camping to be advised, but we need to book early. This trip involves two days of driving on bitumen and 1-2 days of fun. These 4 days have been selected as it is connected to the ACT Family & Community Day and most people will take the Monday off as well. Hence it should not be as crowded as other holidays. Camping trailers are welcome, but not on the sand!
- Comments: We will use the M7 tollway. You can pay the toll via a phone call after using the tollway or purchase an electronic tag from either the RTA (<https://ols2.rta.nsw.gov.au/myEToll/>) or Roam

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TRIPS AND EVENTS



3 Nov **Family and Community Day**

10 Nov **Monthly Club Meeting** (2009-016)

Start: 7:30 PM

14 - 15 Nov **"Safe One" Basic Driver Training at Talooge Park** (2009-038)

Trip Leader: Peter Reynolds

Phone: 6251 1258 (h); 0428 623 458 (m)

Start: 8:00 AM

Departure: Bredbo Service Station

Description: This is the Club's official and accredited basic driver education course

22 Nov **"Safe One" Basic Driver Training Course Follow-up Day** (2009-039)

Trip Leader: Peter Reynolds

Description: This is day three of the basic driver education course on the 14h and 15th November and MUST be attended before participating on any Club trips where the proposed route is expected to be at Grade 2 or above

28 Nov **Driver Trainer's Christmas Party** (2009-043)

Trip Leader: Peter Reynolds

Email: debpete1@bigpond.com

Phone: 6251 1258 (h); 0428 623 458 (m)

8 Dec **Monthly Club Meeting** (2009-017)

Start: 7:30 PM

25 Dec **Christmas Day**

Travel guides

I love to travel but hate to arrive — **Albert Einstein**

If you actually look like your passport photo, you aren't well enough to travel — **Sir Vivian Fuchs**

It is far easier to travel than to write about it— **David Livingstone**

“SAFE ONE” BASIC 4WD VEHICLE OPERATION COURSE

The Southern Tablelands Four Wheel Drive Club conducts **two-day weekend Driver Training** exercises, with **Follow-up Days** on the **Sundays, 1 week later.**

Purpose:

To introduce new & old club members to vehicle equipment, daily maintenance, recovery techniques & equipment, and in particular teach them the skills necessary to safely operate their 4WD in a variety of terrains.

Meeting Time/Place:

Service Station in Bredbo (right hand side of highway) no later than 7.30pm on the Friday evening preceding the course.

**The Club's Education Coordinator is Peter Reynolds,
Tel (h) 6251-1258 or (m) 0428 623-458.**

PLEASE BOOK A PLACE ON ONE OF THESE COURSES WELL IN ADVANCE AND ALSO RING PETER ONE WEEK BEFORE THE COURSE TO CONFIRM ATTENDANCE!

IF YOU DON'T, YOU WILL LOSE YOUR PLACE ON THE COURSE

ONLY ONE DRIVER PER VEHICLE PER COURSE, THOUGH A SUPPORT CREW IS WELCOME.

COURSES FOR 2009 WILL BE HELD ON

12TH, 13TH SEPTEMBER	WITH FOLLOWUP ON	20TH SEPTEMBER
14TH, 15TH NOVEMBER	WITH FOLLOWUP ON	22ND NOVEMBER

WHAT TO BRING

- Yourself & family and a 4WD in good mechanical condition
- Camping gear for overnight stay
- Food and Cooking gear for 2 days
- Chairs to sit on in lessons and around the fire
- Recovery gear, if you have it, but not essential
- Garbage bags for all your rubbish to take home
- Notebook & pen
- Camera
- A full tank of fuel
- Torch
- Drinking water.
- UHF Radio (optional – talk to Peter)
- Front and Rear Recovery Points preferred.

There is a large First Aid Kit at Talooge. Also a large gas BBQ

PLEASE DO NOT BRING PETS OR FIREARMS.

Geehi 28-29 March

Ian Goodacre



Richard and Sebastian Arranz (trip leaders) - Prado
Rob and Kerry Lejsek - Landcruiser
Ian Goodacre and Ben - Hi Lux

Mustered at Uriarra Station at 8.30, low in numbers but high in quality, we headed out through the Brindabellas, across the Goodradigbee River towards Tumut. We wheeled away onto Barnetts Road then onto Broken Cart for a major surprise. For me, at least. Face to face with a BMW X5, of all things. On a fire trail with wall to wall undergrowth. Miles and miles from Manuka. I wouldn't have thought it possible. Ok, so it's possible. But likely?

Dubbo Flat was free of abandoned burnt-out wrecks, so we stopped for coffee and mingled with a mob of curious and hopeful local beasts. The wide open spaces of the Flat hold great appeal for camping, it's a shame there's nothing else but cows. Which is fine if you like that sort of thing, but they do have their drawbacks. I won't dwell on those. Ask your father.

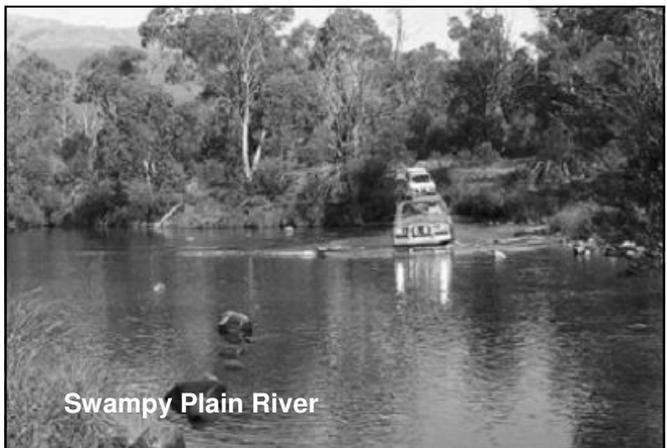
If you know where to look along Broken Cart there is a lot of interesting history. Our leader had done his research and we were also lucky that some of our company had personal memories and experience of the area. It was a shame we couldn't stop and look around some, but we had plans to be elsewhere. Oddly, some thought there was a strong resemblance to our own "Duck" amongst some campers just before we swung up towards the power line on Long Plain Road, but we pressed on. Plans elsewhere, you know.

Brumby-spotting's the name of the game on Long Plain and everyone can be a winner. The trick is to find those standing in the trees close to the road. Richard called one with spots and I thought "Crikey, he has good eyesight. Those critters are about a mile away". Then his horse broke cover in the trees nearby and the game was up.

For some reason there aren't many trees on Long Plain itself so you can see for miles. We had lunch beside the Murrumbidgee River meandering in its infancy through the tussock grass in the wide open spaces. It was obviously a popular spot for a break as many vehicles had worn away the grass and young Sebastian did some mighty circle work despite the training wheels on his tiny treddy.

Kiandra and Cabramurra came and went but it was lovely and sunny in Khancoban so we stopped for an ice-cream and fuel. A Mini-minor club on a run was fuelling up when we arrived. It is just as well Mini's get 35mpg (mpg? - ask your father) as they have only a 5 1/2 gallon tank. I used to have to stop at Goulburn for fuel on a trip Sydney/Canberra trip in my particular BMC fun buggy.

It was a nostalgia trip watching and listening to those Mini's drive off. Which one sounded most like the original fresh-from-the-factory? Not the one towing the trailer (who'd have thought it — a Mini towing a trailer?). Which had twin 1 1/2in or 1 3/4in SU's, which had a Weber (no, not the BBQ—the carburetor), extractors, been bored out to 1310cc? Were those genuine Minilites? The game went on, too briefly.



Now, what were we doing here? And just where is Geehi, anyway? Richard seemed to know, but my mind was still seeing and listening to those Mini's. I can't remember much of the rest of the way to Geehi but suddenly we were bouncing across open paddocks, fording a rocky-bottomed river, and there we were. Had it almost to ourselves, too.

Our particular chosen spot was beside a charming river stone construction, corrugated iron roofed cottage in quite remarkable condition. The sign outside claimed it as Old Geehi Hut, but it has had many names including Ibis, Geehi, YHA, and Commission (after one of the first hydrographers). Apparently the locals always knew it as Commission Hut, despite whatever officialdom called it. It was built in 1948 at a contract price of \$950, plus \$100 for furniture, and was one of five in the area. We saw three or four of them. I understand the hut is now maintained by the Land Rover Club as a temporary shelter for any who cares to use it and I must say it is a real credit to them.



Old Geehi Hut

After choosing our favoured campsites we set off in search of firewood. Rob “The Lumberjack” Lejsek hauled back huge dead trees bare-handed while Ben and I wandered around aimlessly, armed with axe and bow saw, picking up sticks which we thought were useful.

Rob set about his mile-high stack with a bow saw and Kerry as stabilizer turning it into manageable fire-sized logs. Next morning Mr & Mrs “Lumberjack” reduced the many leftovers into more useful firewood, this time cabin-sized, and stowed it neatly inside the hut for any who might need it. Surely the Land Rover Club should make them honorary members.



Mind my leg Rob

With the fire roaring along nicely we relaxed over Happy Hour. Too young for Happy Hour, Sebastian relaxed in his own way, roughly timed at 100mph through his father’s carefully laid out kitchen. As Richard became a little more articulate, the fruit salad and thoughtful order were the only identifiable casualties. Sebastian remained delightfully oblivious, absorbed in his determined circle work, interspaced with full power sprints to his next chosen site. Lord only knows just how fast he will be when those training wheels finally come off. I’m thinking he might be fast enough already.

Strange happenings during the night were reported next morning. Rob and Ben had heard dingoes howl-

ing up and down the valley, at times so near they could have been in the camp. Ben was excited but anxious as well, concerned they might have been running through the camp looking for babies. Rob was a great help. He encouraged Ben’s interest talking about what had happened, where they might have been, and who had heard what during the night. Me, I slept through it all until morning when Ben and Rob competed to see who could sound most like the real thing. I think Ben won on numbers. And their calls followed us all the way home. Thanks, Rob.



Where to for our next trip?

After breakfast Richard led us down the valley to see the Geehi Walls and visit Major Clews’ Hut. What a die-hard pioneer that man was. A former army man and one of the leading surveyors for the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme, Major Clews raised a family here and stayed on when the job was done, planting ornamental trees and cultivating prize geraniums, pelargoniums, roses and dahlias, encouraging the local wildlife to share his retreat. Softies like me can barely imagine the rigors and challenges of living without today’s mod cons. But I guess in those days it was a challenging life no matter where you lived.

Back in camp it was time to pack up and head home. One last piece of excitement for Rob and Kerry “Lumberjack” Lejsek came at Jindabyne with the realization that their computerized navigation system had incorrectly re-set itself for the end of daylight saving cutting two hours from what should have been a leisurely drive home to re-claim their pet from its weekend home. Richard, Sebastian, Ben and I pie-shopped at Jindabyne and Mc Donald’d in Cooma on the way home. We dragged just that little bit extra out of a wonderful weekend. Thank you Richard, Sebastian (especially), the “Lumberjacks”, and Ben.



Driver Training Course

16-17 and 24 May 2009

Matt Warmington



Course Participants: Scott Allen, Mary Biddle, Doug Brown, Tom Layton, Lyn Massey, Alister Nairn, Greg Newton, David Robinson, Anthony Sciberras, Mike Sharp, Matt Warmington and Phillip Webster.

Friday evening saw us all standing around in the brisk night air at the service station at Bredbo. Introductions were made and nametags handed out. A short wait for a latecomer ended when we realised he'd been there all along and hadn't heard the roll call. So with a briefing on convoy procedures by PB and Darryl, we set off in the dark to Talooge.

After leaving the Bredbo to Jerangle Road and airing down, I found myself imagining the landscape we were travelling through, as visibility was limited to what was immediately ahead in the headlights. Luckily this didn't include any kamikaze wildlife. We turned off the main track and entered Home Paddock and, after a short introduction to the kind of driving that was to follow, were greeted by the smiling faces of our instructors who directed us to the camping areas. With camp set we gathered for Happy Hour and a briefing in the Driver Training Unit (DTU), but soon wandered off to bed.

Saturday morning gave those of us new to Talooge the first look at the Club's property and its facilities. I must say it's an impressive sight. I marvelled at the obvious time, effort and ingenuity that our fellow Club Members have invested in this place. The sheds, generator, water tanks, toilet facilities, fireplace, and even the rock garden and kids' playground are testament to their efforts.

Breakfast over, we knuckled down to four hours of 4WD theory with Peter Reynolds. Joining us in the classroom, and afterwards in the practical sessions, were observers from the ACT 4WD Club and the ACT Jeep Traction Club. Traction, in fact, was discussed at length with Pete giving us a practical demonstration by accidentally stepping into the handle of his blue shopping bag and hopping round the stage trying to shake it off. Duck finally got him to stand still long enough to pull it free.

In the afternoon after lunch, and armed with the new-found knowledge that we'd just paid \$60,000 for a **two** wheel drive that needed new suspension, diff lockers,

seats, tyres, and a pile of recovery gear, we headed off for our first practical lessons and demonstrations.



Back to camp for a debrief, dinner and happy hour around a roaring fire, which many were very glad of, because as the sun disappeared the temperature plummeted. Those of us who were camping, and those who decided to set up a swag on top of their vehicle or in the machinery shed, discovered the meaning of inadequate insulation. Others with perhaps a little more privilege and sense bunked down in the heated sheds and couldn't understand at breakfast the next morning what all the fuss was about it so being cold.



Soon enough we were in convoy again and discovering just how close we could bring our vehicles to trees, rocks, the ground, and other such obstacles. The tailpipe of the 2½" aftermarket exhaust system on Kenny (our GU Patrol) managed to work loose towards the end of the day necessitating some bush mechanics and a handy D shackle to stop it waving around until we got home and could confront the exhaust shop for a more permanent repair.

For those aware of the “four stages of learning”, I believe we were at the “consciously incompetent” stage about the time we headed home to Canberra on the Sunday evening.

Follow-up Day

The follow-up day was held in the Brindabella Mountains the following Sunday. We met at Uriarra Homestead at 8am, aired down and headed off in convoy after a briefing on the day’s activities.

You’ll have to excuse the lack of track names or directions, as we were totally in the hands of the instructors when it came to navigation.

The first order of the day was snatch strap practice. Kenny the GU Patrol got to practise towing Toyotas out of trouble, and the first victim was Anthony in his Landcruiser. Out came the recovery gear, and, what’s this?, Anthony’s brought a couple of 500kg shackles, and I don’t mean 500kg **rated** shackles - that’s what they must have weighed!! With the strap hooked up, Kenny took off, though apparently a little too vigorously for Tony who complained that he’d hit his head on the rear window.

Morning tea at the top of our first hill had lovely views of the Brindabellas with Tidbinbilla deep-space tracking station in the distance. Chocolate cake was the flavour of the moment and Mary came up with the goods, though not before Pete Reynolds knocked off a slightly used portion of Anne’s chocolate cookie instead.



The Brindabella’s hide some really fun tracks as we were soon to discover. If I hadn’t been with an Instructor I wouldn’t have even considered taking Kenny up most of them. Alistair managed to get the Pajero up our second and more difficult hill climb with a couple of scratches to the underside of his side steps. The track was subsequently modified for the rest of us thanks to Dave Buckley’s civil engineering and Mick Hines’ tree surgery skills.

Correct tyre pressures, correct lines, and sufficient momentum were the order of the day. The latter was proved several times by Mike in his new V8 diesel Landcruiser who tended towards discovering his own lines rather than following the ready made ones.



Lunch was taken at a crossroads where, out of the blue, a Toyota Camry appeared carrying four bushwalkers. It seems there are other ways to this spot that don’t require a great deal of traction and clearance.

Everyone was enjoying the day and learning heaps according to the feedback session after lunch, so we decided to go and do some more. On the way down one particular hill, Lyn showed off her new balancing skills angling the HiLux through a rut the size of a small house and looking distinctly proficient.

And so the follow-up day drew to an end. We found our way out on to Blue Range Road and stopped to air up before debriefing, hitting the black top and heading home — thoroughly convinced that we should jump at the next trip opportunity that presents itself.

This Club is so fortunate to have within its membership so many dedicated and selfless people who share their leisure time, extensive knowledge and skill with their fellow Club Members as volunteer instructors. I’d like to thank each and every one of you. The quality and professionalism evident in this course, and I’m sure each of the other driver training courses offered by this Club, as well as our facilities, are second to none in my opinion. It is no wonder that this Club is so strong with people like these in our ranks.



Lake Eyre 19 May — 2 June 2009 (Part 1)

Complied by Jeanette Flanagan



Jeanette and Ian Flanagan (Trip Leaders)	Prado and Kimberely Kamper	“Icymus”
Kerry Blakston	HiLux and canopy	“Freedom 2”
Jenny and Brian Delroy	Nissan Patrol and Ultimate	“BJ”
Doreen and Plod McEncroe	Toyota Landcruiser and Tent	“Turbo”
Sue and Peter Watson	Toyota Landcruiser and Tent	“Roller”
Robin and Laurie Westcott	Prado and Ultimate	“U2”

Our trip was planned to extend over 15 days with the primary objective being to see Lake Eyre with water in it and the birdlife that had been reported as flocking to the area. Planning had taken place largely by e-mail and phone allowing a final itinerary to be e-mailed to all participants in the week prior to departure with the suggestion that we need to be flexible, little did we know at the outset how important flexibility would be.

On our first day we covered the “housekeeping” tasks including, **confirmation of call signs** to simplify communication whilst in transit — the only new call sign was Kerry’s – “Freedom 2” as this was her first trip in her new HiLux which had been fitted with a canopy and converted to a cosy little camper. **The written trip report** was to be completed by a different vehicle each day according to a roster. Excerpts from that report were used to compile this report. **Happy Hours** were to be catered for by two vehicles each evening. This was also done on a roster system which enabled different combinations of contributors each evening. This system we found worked extremely well and we are indebted to Doreen who suggested it. **Charlie** was also changed each day, the vehicle behind “Icymus” dropped back to “Charlie” and all other vehicles moved up one position in the convoy.

DAY 1 Tuesday 19 May - Yass to Balranald

Our designated departure time was 0900 at the Yass Roadhouse, amended to 0930. The sun was just peeping through the clouds as we left Yass. There was no-one in the convoy who had not travelled with at least two of the other participants, we were a very enthusiastic group.

We travelled through really lush countryside with paddocks ploughed ready for planting in anticipation of rain. Passed through Harden, Murrumburrah and Cootamundra. In the Cootamundra Shire we encountered the Milestone Sculptures paying tribute to the significance of the wheat industry in the Coota-

mundra and Wallendbeen areas. It is an area that has seen some of the nation's finest high quality award winning wheat crops. The sculptures are made from cast concrete and use patterns that represent wheat stalks cut from compressed fibrous cement, painted in the soft colour of wheat. Each sculpture is topped with an acrylic panel inlaid with the motif of a huge head of wheat. Fibre optics has been used to light the sculptures making them visible from dusk until dawn. At night the colours of green and gold can be seen as they simulate the growth cycle and the subtle movement of a dense crop of wheat.

Morning Tea was scheduled for Junee where we headed straight for the Green Grove Organics Licorice and Chocolate Factory, which is housed in the historic Junee Flour Mill. Built in 1934-35, the Mill was not only a town landmark, but a major player in Junee's industrial progress following the Great Depression. The Mill employed 25 workers on site and ran around the clock producing 5.6 million bushels of flour per year, which in today's dollars would be worth many tens of millions of dollars. A modern stone mill has been installed converting grain grown on the Green Grove farm into product for inclusion in licorice, flour and bread mixes.

We indulged ourselves in the chocolate and licorice tasting, including freeze-dried chocolate-coated strawberries and cherries. But we were not able to stay for the licorice making demonstration — something to look forward to on another trip. We then took a loop through the township — picturesque with a magnificent railway station and healthy white roses in the main street. Possibly the town had experienced recent rain. The sky was overcast as we left at 1215. The roads were excellent as we continued past more fields prepared for winter crops. We stopped on the highway before reaching Narranderra at the Fruit Fly bins to dispose of the last of our fruit and vegetables prior to entering the exclusion zone.

We arrived at the Balranald Caravan Park at 1730. It is well maintained and has a wonderful old bridge relic in the middle. After setting up camp and Happy Hour, we

wandered into town to the Ex-Servicemen's club for a delicious Chinese meal — if travelling this way it's a good place to stop.

Day 2 Wednesday 20 May – Balranald to Burra

Oh dear an injury! Kerry was limping this morning after injuring herself last night getting into her bed — her foot slipped off the milk crate she uses to get into the back of the HiLux and she twisted her ankle, grazed her shin, and went to bed in pain. This morning her ankle was swollen and she bound it to minimize the swelling and provide some support.

All packed up and ready to go by 0830. As we were about to pull out Freedom 2 stopped and would not start again. Needless to say the “white knights” appeared to assist the damsel in distress! It was not long before the battery terminals were cleaned and we were on our way at 0850. This being another day on the blacktop we anticipated an easy day driving.

The clouds were high but we did expect some showers around Mildura. We drove through some fairly desolate salt bush country with very little vegetation until we got to Euston where the scenery and vegetation changed to orchards and vineyards — we had reached the Murray Irrigation System. Driving through Mildura, our trip leader did a good job of keeping the convoy together until we lost Charlie. We reassembled on the outskirts of Mildura and made our way to Lake Cullulleraine. This was a pleasant stop, a beautiful lake surrounded by large trees, lush green grass and birds galore! Black Swans, Wood Ducks, Water Hens, Cormorants, Egrets, Eastern Rosellas, Honey Eaters, and Noisy Minors.

We arrived at Morgan at 1430 for a late lunch in a pleasant park by the river— and then on to Burra, arriving around 1600 at the Caravan Park. Burra is a nice town, with a wealth of tin and copper mining history. Fortunately they have retained a number of the old buildings and they are still in use. The miners' cottages are available for tourist accommodation. Two

shepherds, Thomas Pickett and William Streair simultaneously discovered copper in two localities near the Burra Creek in 1845. Revealing their lodes to two rival companies proved costly for the shepherds, with both of them receiving only a few miserable pounds.

Day 3 Thursday 21 May - Burra to Roxby Downs

We awoke to a thick mist. Jeanette was advised by a contractor installing wind turbines that they were given accurate weather forecasts and that it was going to be “a crap day”. They say one man's meat is another man's poison. In our experience one man's crap is another man's sunshine. The hills outside Burra were covered with a flush of green grass and the skyline dominated by wind turbines. The group was divided over whether this technological “advance” enhanced or marred the landscape.

We passed through Hallet, Yarcowie, Terworrie, Peterborough, Orrorro and on to Willmington. From there we climbed through the southern end of the Flinders Ranges, on a winding road with stunning eucalypts that would have warmed the cockles of Hans Heysen's heart — eventually to the top end of Spencer's Gulf and into Port Augusta. Here we filled the larder, our fuel tanks and our tummies.

As we continued to head north we were impressed by the attention given to the single female member of our party – everyone was flashing lights at her! Sadly it was a fault in the electrical wiring to her driving lights that was stirring the masses — better luck next time Kerry.

Day 4 Friday 22 May – Roxby Downs to Halligan Bay

By 0940 we were heading off on the Borefield road, passing the Olympic Dam Mine which has been in production since 1988 - producing copper, uranium oxide, gold and silver. Around 3,000 people are employed at the mine site. The majority live in the booming Roxby Downs, the town boasting the highest birth rate in South Australia. The Borefield Road links Roxby

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Downs to the Oodnadatta Track (120 kms of dirt road) - and it was in good condition . The countryside was desolate but the vegetation and scenery were interesting with sand hills and clay pans — and Wedge Tailed Eagles the only wildlife visible.

We turned north on to the Oodnadatta Track, following the route of the Old Ghan Railway. It was not long after we turned that we had our first sighting of Lake Eyre South. We had passed through areas of Mint bush, Sand Hill Cane grass, Mitchell grass and Salt-bush. The vegetation and topography were fascinating. We had a late morning tea at Lake Eyre South which is 12 metres below sea level, and then headed off to William Creek.

The William Creek Hotel is an attraction that should not be missed, although the golf course could be - \$5 for 9 holes. And there should also be a search fee to find where it is! We confirmed scenic flights on Sunday and Tuesday and then headed off to Halligan Bay. The road into Halligan Bay was somewhat corrugated but not bad. The track had been topped with gravel that contained gypsum, and the crystals caught the sun and provided a glittering outback road. On arrival at Halligan Bay we found a small campground, and as we had been warned, a number of campers were already there. After some negotiations we all fitted in amicably.

Day 5 Saturday 23 May – Halligan Bay

We were now in the driest part of Australia. Lake Eyre fills only when the rains from the northern monsoons move southwards and flood the deserts and river system. When it floods it takes three months to fill, but it can take three years to dry. When full the lake is 2 to 3 metres deep. In the area around the lake the group



Halligan Bay campsite — Lake Eyre NP, SA

spent time with heads down walking slowly, admiring the vegetation — many small bushes were in bloom, lizard holes and rabbit skeletons were evidence of a recent eradication program, ancient coral was scattered on the ground as was beautiful driftwood.. After our walks and a bit of lunch some decided that it was time to read or have 40 winks as the day was designed for relaxation after 3 big days on the road. Peter and Sue

decided that they could not come to Lake Eyre with water in it without reaching the water. Our adventurers set of, bucket in hand, to get us some Lake Eyre water!



On their return they had some dubious looking salty water in a bucket and their legs were covered in muddy ooze up to their knees. As we listened to Sue's account of exhaustion from the effort of extracting her feet from the mud to take a further step, the rest of us were very pleased that we had not risen to the challenge and accompanied them, although we did assure them that we were poised to mount a rescue mission had it been necessary, and if we had been awake.

We enjoyed Happy Hour while watching a gorgeous sunset tingeing the clouds with pinks and gold before it finally disappeared in a blaze of red and orange, to be replaced by a night sky full of stars reaching right down to the horizon with some hanging above looking as though you could reach out and touch them!

Day 6 Sunday 24 May – Halligan Bay to William Creek

After a windy night and a radiant sky prior to sunrise the wind dropped, and as all of our fellow campers pulled out we found ourselves alone in this magnificent landscape. A short walk in any direction enabled one to wonder at the magnitude and the solitude of the area — an uplifting almost spiritual experience.

Peter and Brian were booked on a scenic flight from William Creek at 1230, so both Roller and BJ packed up early. The fellows looking forward to the flight and the girls to an early shower at William Creek. The rest of us remained to enjoy a leisurely breakfast and planned to follow on later. We saw many birds at Halligan's Bay. Initially it was the Orange Chats that were close to our campsite. We found that they were gathered in the scrub by the

lake and as we walked we frequently had a couple of Orange Chats “escorting” us. We also saw the Red Capped Plover, Nankeen Kestrel, White Faced Heron, Banded Lapwings, Gala’s, Pelicans, Red Capped Robins, Banded Stilts, Silver Gulls, Richard’s Pipit, Zebra Finches, Welcote Swallows, Little Crow, Variegated Fairy Wrens, Whiskered Turns, Ravens and the inevitable Willy Wag Tails that seemed to frequent every area we went during the trip.

After a relaxing morning the four remaining vehicles departed Halligan Bay around 1145. We passed several cars coming into the lake, mostly day visitors. We stopped for several photo opportunities and to examine the quantities of gypsum lying in large sheets making the hillsides and valleys sparkle. A few trees in a dry creek bed provided shade for a lunch break. Some of the saltbush had red berries, while others were adorned with bright yellow berries. We also found a plant with mulberry-like berries which stained our fingers a brilliant reddish purple.

Once again we passed the memorial to Gabriele Caroline Grossmeuller, a German tourist who perished on the Halligan Bay road on 11 December 1998. The car that she and her partner were traveling in became stuck in sand, she decided to walk rather than wait with the car and she perished on the track. A stark warning of

the dangers of traveling in the outback. Plod said it was ironic that when rescuers arrived, they only had to lower the pressure in the tyres and the car was able to be driven out.



On arrival at William Creek we were surprised to find that Peter and Brian had not left on their scenic flight. It had been rescheduled to 3pm because “the plane could not get off the ground”. At 3pm these two brave fellows took off — their wives making sure that they retained their husband’s wallets – just in case.

One of the occupants of the caravan park was a fellow we had seen on the road on Friday, he was pushing a four-wheeled barrow and as we passed him, he



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had his head down and was not very communicative. One wonders at how much of the countryside he sees on his travels, where he has been, and where he is going? Unfortunately he was no more talkative in the park.



The William Creek Hotel has an almost legendary status and is the only 'watering hole' on the Oodnadatta Track between Marree and Oodnadatta. With the closure of the hotel at Tarcoola, the William Creek pub is the only iron hotel left trading in South Australia. As an original pub it provides a rare insight into an aspect of outback history and is filled with unique mementoes left by thousands of visitors. We had to have a drink there.

Day 7 Monday 25 May – William Creek to Coward Springs

During the previous night the dingoes had been howling and the rain continued to fall - reportedly 9mm - enough to close the roads except the one to Coober Pedy which could be traveled only by 4x4 vehicles that were not towing. We were grounded! When the sun rose the sky was clear and blue, but then the temperature started to drop and a thick fog rolled in — it was freezing cold. Fog hadn't been seen in the area for many years, and it was a surprise for even the locals! Jeanette checked out the possibility of a flight today and as a consequence of the fog six people had cancelled, so at 0845 we were booked on the 0800 flight!

The fog remained and the eerie sound of the runway being rolled to dry it out before takeoffs could be heard through the camp. Finally, the sky cleared and Kerry, Robin, Jeanette, Ian and Laurie flew off at 1145 for a two hour flight over the Painted Hills and Lake Eyre.

The flight was fantastic, the sky cleared completely and there were large patches of water lying across the countryside. We flew first over the Painted Hills

which are within Anna Creek Station which the pilot said was bigger than Israel and Australia's largest cattle run. The Station surrounds William Creek entirely and covers an area of 23 800 sq km. The Head station for Anna Creek is only 20 km from the township. They have had a run of dry years and have de-stocked as it got drier. Towards the end of each year they cut their numbers right back to look after the country and the cattle as much as possible. The stocking figures are normally up around 16,000 but now they are back to around 3,000.

We flew over the Oodnadatta Track and were able to photograph it with the Ghan Railway line running parallel in a straight line and disappearing over the horizon. Once over the Lake we flew to an island where the pelicans were nesting, a wonderful sight!

Those on the ground kept a check on the road closures and although the Closed Signs remained in place they were able to get permission to travel to Coward Springs, provided that the vehicles were less than 3 tonnes. By the time the flight was finished the road was opened to Marree and we packed up and headed out at 1530. The road was OK but it was obvious why it had been necessary to close the road after only a small amount of rain.



What a beautiful place Coward Springs is! We were met by Prue, the owner who had organized a double campsite for us. Jeanette had booked and paid for our stay prior to departure, knowing that they limit the number of people at the site. The cost is \$8 per person per night and well worth it. The site was great, amazingly dry despite the rain. The fire places were made from old gas cylinders cut in half and the ground around each fireplace had been raked in a circular pattern. The campsites were clean and neat.

Coward Springs was a flourishing siding for the Ghan railway, the Springs being named after a

member of exploration party of 1858. A hotel was built on the site in 1887 and remained in operation until 1965. All that remains of the Hotel now is the stone water tank which is in a poor state of repair. During WW 2 up to 56 troop trains passed through Coward Springs each day. Originally the trains stopped for 10 minutes, however because of the delays caused by the soldiers jumping off to get a drink it was reduced to two minutes, much to the displeasure of the publican. But the soldiers overcame the problem as they would begin to jump from the train prior to it stopping or run along the track to catch up with it as it slowly accelerated out of the station.

There are many relics of the old railway incorporated into the buildings around the park. The owners are resident in a stone building that was previously the station masters residence. Another stone building previously the Engine Drivers Cabin houses a museum covering every facet of the area, history, dreaming stories, flora and fauna.

Day 8 Tuesday 26 May - Coward Springs to Cooper Creek Crossing

Some arose before sunrise to use the spa while no-one could see them. Jeanette arrived shortly after sunrise for a refreshing dip, then Kerry closely fol-

lowed by Doreen. The water was a pleasantly warm and there were two jets of water conveniently at both back and calf height, it was very revitalizing. Peter started the donkey boiler so one way or another we all had either a shower a spa or both and were refreshed for the day.



After breakfast we explored the area and it was unanimous that when we next travel this way we will schedule a couple of days here. This is a real oasis in the desert! Birds that were seen here included Ravens, Little Corellas, White Winged Trillers, Welcome Swallows, Galahs, Crested Pigeons, Willy Wag Tails, Singing Honeyeaters, Zebra Finches, Magpies and the Grey Shrike Thrush.

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Leaving at 1040 we traveled 6kms to the east to the mound springs. We visited both the Bubbler and Blanches Cup, two springs in different stages of their lifecycles. Blanches Cup was very tall and less active than the younger Bubbler. Nearby was an extinct spring that had built itself to a considerable height. It was a thrill to watch water bubbling up through the ground that had taken between 1.5 and 2 million years to arrive at this point. A very interesting stop!

Back on to the Oodnadatta Track our next stop was the very isolated Curdimurka Siding — the tracks and the water tower are still there. The station is divided into three sections, each section with three rooms, possibly a living room and two bedrooms.



We continued towards Maree until we came across a place called “Plane Henge” – the first sculpture we saw was a huge dog, then a bus that looked like a hydrofoil, statues of many types and finally two planes standing on their tails with wings touching – someone had a good sense of humour. We arrived at Maree at approximately 1400, all vehicles fuelled up at \$1.77.9 a litre. We then had lunch, and a few wandered off to the hotel for a beer. The Hotel was well maintained — it has 10 cabins and a swimming pool out the back. They even have free camping. Everyone agreed this was another spot that warrants a longer stopover next time.

We left Maree around 1500 and drove up the Birdsville Track heading for a bush camp at Cooper Creek Crossing. The track was very good and we cruised along at 90kph. We pulled into the area located on Etadunna Station designated as a bush camp. There was no sign of any water in the creek and it looked rather dry. We had expected this would be a site where we would be erecting our “Toilet Tent” however we were surprised to see a sign which read “Camping permitted within 1 km of the toilet”. We were even more amazed and delighted to discover that the toilet facilities were two very clean, with paper supplied, hand basin in each, FLUSHING toilets!!

The campfire was lit, a couple of semi-trailers with cattle on board roared past, a few galahs flew into the trees. “Happy Hour” and dinner were both enjoyed by the fire, the usual campfire chatter followed, a tiny crescent of a moon dipped over the horizon glowing reddish orange as it disappeared seemingly in pursuit of the sun. Later we drifted off to our respective sleeping spots.

Day 9 Wednesday 27 May – Cooper Creek Crossing to Birdsville

A dawn visitor – a Willy Wagtail skittering over our camper roof collecting the insects that had settled with us over night. We watched him systematically clean up the abodes of each of our fellow campers. The Cooper Creek Crossing is reported to be usually dry which was the way we had found it. The Creek traverses a floodplain about 5km wide, dotted with Coolibah trees which had provided lovely lacy silhouettes against the sky the previous evening. The landscape was very dry with pale fawn to white sand hills running north/south across it.



The Mungerannie Roadhouse is located beside a beautiful green wetland with a good sized warm spa pool. The birds spotted here were the Welcome Swallows, Blacked Faced Wood Swallows, Willy Wagtails, Fairy Martins, Ravens, Pee Wees, Scarlet Chested Parrots, Black Fronted Doterells, Masked Lapwings, Swamphens and Black Winged Stilts. At the roadhouse “Hair Bear” was holding court, he recommended that we try the bakery at Birdsville. “Try the curried camel and rice pie! Get it microwaved for two minutes to stop the rice moving!”

Our next stop was Warburton Crossing (about 8km off the Birdsville Track on the Simpson Desert access road leading to The Rig Road and to K1 Line road). What a surprise, evidence of recent high water levels, lush green growth on the floodplain of Warburton Creek and a strong flow in the main channel. No-one will be

crossing here for a while! We lunched with several billion flies, took time to explore the banks of the Creek then off again. The verdant surrounds of the Creek provided a striking contrast to the flat empty gibber plains, the breakaway country and the red and cream sand dune areas we had passed through.

Tippipilla Creek bush camp, which had been on our original itinerary, looked uninviting as we passed. Not much further on U2 got its second puncture in the same tyre. Turbo and Icymus broke from the rest of the convoy and returned to assist with the repair job. From here into Birdsville we travelled as two separate convoys on a sandy, smooth road surface for the most part – a far cry from the challenges it presented to travelers of earlier times.

We booked into the Birdsville Caravan Park which has a total area of 30 acres, with unpowered sites on the river banks. A well-appointed park with grassed areas, flowering gums, barbeques, and gardens. On arrival some chose to head straight for the showers and then the laundry, whilst others, once set up, thought the iconic Birdsville Hotel was worth a visit

Day 10 Thursday 28 May – Birdsville

A relaxed day – no driving. Everyone had free time to do their own thing in Birdsville. What a surprisingly interesting place. It is not exactly a large town but Birdsville has an interesting art gallery, two museums, pub (of course), information centre, a couple of garages, the caravan park, airport and some historic sites.



First on the agenda for Ian and Laurie was to have patched tyres checked out at the service station. The mechanic is “a pilot first” so he was in his helicopter doing scenic flights. Later in the day when Ian picked up his car, a message from the pilot told him that the tyre had to be replaced as the damage had torn the belt (\$350). Laurie also had to replace his tyre but was able to use the spare he was carrying. The rest of the group had breakfast at their campsites and then em-

barked on a tour of the various attractions of the town. The geothermal power station was not open for inspection but the steaming hot water (98 C) could be seen emerging from a pipe and flowing down to the cooling tanks prior to being piped around the town.

The Blue Poles Gallery is a must-not-miss attraction – the artist in residence, Wolfgang John is a seventy year old German who came to Australia at the age of 21. He worked in Sydney for many years as a fabric designer and more than 1.5 million yards of material using his designs have been produced. Wolfgang is also the Commodore of the Birdsville Yachting Club and showed us the places to find his craft throughout the river system, inviting us to use the boats if we so desired as long as we returned them — how generous. Wolfgang uses watercolours to capture skilfully the desert colours. Some purchases were made at his gallery whilst others were left with a great admiration of his work but not the where-with-all to purchase.

The Old Birdsville Hospital Historic Display was well worth a look and provided a glimpse of how it was in the early days of the Royal Flying Doctor Service. The Bourke and Wills tree just out of town was worth a visit even if it was just to see the enclosures and the signs for the yards used by the participants in the race meetings. Sue and Jeanette were very impressed with two mosaics that were a feature of the town and took numerous photos. The local road workers looked at us curiously as we walked around the back to see how the mosaics were constructed – no boys they are much too heavy to carry away!

Birds spotted included Pelicans, Rufus Night Herons, Greater Egrets, Yellow Spoonbills, Cormorants, Letter Winged Kites, Darters, Striated Bitterns, Black Tailed Kites, Willy Wagtails, Budgerigars, Masked Plovers, and Swallows. The Pelicans were migrating south in considerable numbers, and they were passing continually from sun-up until sunset in flocks numbering from seven to in excess of 30, with about ½ km between each group. We enjoyed Happy Hour at the campsite and adjourned to the Hotel for dinner and to celebrate the birthday of Brian and Laurie. What are the odds of two people in a group of eleven having the same birthday during a trip of 15 days?

Day 11 Friday 29 May - Birdsville to Innamincka

Timing for departure was determined last night, as some of us had not seen the photographs of the flood in January this year. We were to meet at the

Information Centre at 0900, have a quick look and then form up outside the hotel for a quick photo opportunity. After a delay because of a slow leak in one of U2's tyres, we were on the road by 1010. We travelled back down the Birdsville Track for 117kms at speeds between 50 – 90 kms depending on the dust. And then turned off the Track to follow the Walkers Crossing Track to Innamincka.



This was new experience because no-one in the convoy had previously travelled on this track. It's a public access road for four-wheel vehicles only and traverses a working cattle property. Signs say that gates must be left as they are found although we found the gates had all been replaced by grids. As a precaution for this section, Turbo took the lead as we did not know how sandy the track was and thought it best to have a single vehicle ahead rather than one that was towing. All recent reports had identified sand drifts across the road particularly at the Innamincka end.

Kerry drove her Hilux in H4 because of the sand and corrugations — travelling mostly between 40 and 60 kms. It was quite a windy sandy road sometimes with sand mounded up beside the road. The scenery was constantly changing — initially we were on gibber plains where we passed drovers mustering cattle, and soon we found ourselves travelling between sand dunes, red dunes on the right grey dunes on the left, dead scrub and small trees on either side. We passed a bike rider travelling in the opposite direction, his partner who was following on behind saw Turbo approaching and, although they were travelling slowly, took fright and went into the deep sand falling off his bike. Plod and Ian helped him to right his bike and checked out that he was OK.

We then happened upon a couple of fellows out of their truck on the sand hills, Turbo stopped to ask if they were OK — yes they were just counting rabbits! Obviously they were tuned to our radio, when Roller stopped to speak to them Roller was informed that they were scientists involved in research on the now exploding rabbit population in the area – not rabbit counters – didn't we recognize them? Sorry guys we will know you next time!

We stopped for lunch at Walker's Crossing, named after Syd Walker. He worked for Santos Field Services on their Moomba gas and oil project, supervising the rebuilding of a vital crossing of Cooper Creek which was prone to regular flood damage. The construction was completed in late 1986 when seismic surveys were being carried out all over the Cooper and Eromanga basin taking in areas like the Simpson Desert, Strzelecki Desert and Sturt Stony Desert. An idle drilling rig could cost thousands of dollars a day, so reliable tracks were important — being able to cross the Cooper was essential.

Soon after the project was completed Syd Walker had a massive heart attack while practising for the Cooper Cup cricket match, a popular event for the people of Innamincka and Moomba. The men of the Field Services decided to name the crossing after their friend and built a memorial cairn nearby.



After following the road, the GPS and signs, we found ourselves discussing which way to go. We had missed the turn to Innamincka (Icymus had ignored the Navman's prompt to turn). So we did a loop around the Moomba gas fields and passed the Moomba installation which was an eye opener for those who had not seen it before. We then headed towards Innamincka travelling first on the New Strzelecki Track which was like a four lane highway. We then turned onto the Old Strzelecki Track which was a mish-mash of tracks trying to avoid corrugations. We arrived at Innamincka at 1720 and found a lovely spot by Cooper Creek, set up camp, and lit a fire using the wood that we had earlier loaded on to Icymus's trailer.

It had been a long day with some challenging driving but as Kerry commented "I enjoyed today's long drive as the scenery was forever changing around every corner, and there were plenty of those! I also practised some of my sand driving skills". This is a shake-down trip for Freedom 2 and all agreed that both the driver and the vehicle are proving to be extremely capable.

Day 12 Saturday 30 May - Innamincka to Noccundra

Woke early this morning to a beautiful morning, numerous birds calling. A Swamp Harrier was flying above, drifting on the thermals and as it glided it was eating a fish. As the rest of the camp began to stir, the breeze also started to increase in intensity and the temperature began dropping. We lit a fire and cooked breakfast.



Cooper Creek campsite, Innamincka

Today was going to be a rest and explore day. Turbo and Freedom 2 were preparing to drive out to Coongie Lakes, Robin and Laurie (U2) had already set out on a walk along the creek to do some bird watching, and BJ had departed on a “historic” circuit incorporating the graves of both Bourke and Wills and the Dig Tree. Icymus and Roller had not finalized plans for the day when the ranger and his partner arrived and asked us if we had decided to stay? Apparently rain was on its way, a big front had already passed through Tibooburra and closed all roads. Their advice was to move today to an area where there was “black top” or be prepared to stay here for at least three to five days.

Fortunately Turbo and Freedom 2 had not departed, so they drove up to the Trading Post to try to raise BJ on the radio. Ian and Jeanette drove to the end of the track and walked along the ridge and the river bank calling for Robin and Laurie (U2) - it did not take long to find them. Plod and Ian were preparing to drive in different directions to find BJ when they answered the radio call.

During our short stay we had spied White Necked Herons, Swamp Harriers, Black Tailed Kites, Ravens, Cormorants, Little Corellas, Magpies, Fairy Martins, Welcome Swallows, White Fronted Wood Swallows, Crested Pigeons, and Nankeen Kestrels.

We took an opportunity to have a look at the alterations to the Innamincka Hotel and then we headed out around midday for Noccundra taking a detour

via the Dig Tree. So another change in direction and departure from our original plan — the trip had definitely turned into the “The Flanagan’s Flexible Mystery Tour”.

Icymus, BJ and Freedom went into the Dig Tree reserve whilst the remainder of the convoy chose to stay outside and have lunch. Although Icymus had been there before it was still a moving experience to visit the scene of such a tragic episode in our early history. After lunch we drove back to the Adventure Way and continued on past gas and oil fields. The scenery was constantly changing — different coloured soils and sands, some hilly country and distance vistas. Increasing numbers of kangaroos, a few dingoes, some brilliant green budgerigars, corellas and some raptors were sited during the trip. Suddenly we came across a dingo, some crows and nine wedge tailed eagles gathered around a road kill. As we approached the crows flew off but most of the eagles stayed around to maintain their claim on the carcass, the dingo also remained nearby.

Finally we reached the blacktop and the clouds which had been following us all day were closing in. We approached our destination as the light was fading. The tenters elected to get cabins as it was already threatening to rain. The trailer folk camped out on the flat where the cattle trucks had been. A somewhat “country” aroma pervaded the camper trailers. The publican would accept no payment from those who were camped on the flat.



Back on the blacktop - Adventure Way

The Noccundra Hotel was a delight, very old with low doorways. They were happy to prepare a meal for those who wanted it although they were not expecting this number — some opted out as they had already thawed their evening meal. After dinner we agreed on a new route and declared a starting time of 0800 for the next morning. This news seemed to scare the troops as they went scurrying for their beds, leaving only the most hardy to consume a few ales. So much for a quiet relaxing rest day!

Part 2 of this report will be published in next month’s magazine.



Point Hicks - 25-29 May

Bob and Sylvia Allen



Bob and Sylvia Allen (Trip leaders)	Landcruiser
Peter Fenwick and Catherine Panich	Pajero
Bob and Maureen Calder	Pajero
Richard Nipperess and Oung Niennatttrakul	Pajero
Stuart and Helen Allan	Pajero
Chris and Julie Nicholls	Patrol
Richard Brand and Jen Martin	Adventra

ers) camped at the Thurra River camping ground and among other things walked to and admired the Lighthouse – a majestic white tower standing on an exposed and isolated piece of coastline. And several of the romantics amongst the group thought why don't we go back and rent the assistant lighthouse keepers' cottages and explore the place a bit more.

Some trips are mainly about the journey – the Birdsville track, the Canning Stock route, and crossing the Simpson Desert. Those trips involve a fair amount of serious four-wheel driving, camping out and generally everyone enjoying the journey with other like-minded folk. Other trips are mainly about the destination – Belowra, Cape Leveque and Kakadu. This trip was definitely in the latter category – but in common with all trips, the people factor was the key ingredient. It was a grade one trip, all blacktop down the Monaro Highway from Canberra to Cann River, and more blacktop into Croajingolong National Park and then a short drive on a reasonable dirt road through to Point Hicks – and the Lighthouse.

Point Hicks was the first Australian landfall sighted by Cook in 1770. The Lighthouse was built in 1887-88 from cast concrete and first lit in 1890. Access to the Lighthouse was originally by sea and the trip from Cann River, 47 kilometres away, took 2 days. And even in the 1950s, after a track of sorts had been carved through bush, the trip took 12 hours. Our trip from Cann River was much shorter (about 50 minutes) and by around 2.30 pm on Monday afternoon we were unpacking our meager belongings, basic food and a little alcohol to complement four nights of fantastic not-so-pot-luck dinners.



The Ghost

The Lighthouse and its surrounds are privately leased and managed by three couples who rotate two weeks on and four weeks off. On the Monday we arrived Ray and Helen were in charge - the last day of their two week shift. Helen explained everything about the cottages to the group, including the suggestion that we should enjoy the sunset from the top of the Lighthouse, perhaps with a glass of wine. What a good idea. Everyone felt great about this and all was going very smoothly until some fool (me) asked about the Ghost.

Some of us had researched the history of the Lighthouse and knew that an assistant lighthouse keeper, one Robert Christorfen, ex-Victorian Police Trooper, ex- WW2 POW in Germany, had died tragically on 9 April 1947 while setting a cray pot at the rocks at the base of the Lighthouse. He was reportedly still hanging around as a ghost. So was he active?

The Lighthouse

The genesis of this trip was the November 2008 trip to Croajingolong National Park led by Peter F. and Catherine P. On that trip we (about 8 vehicle-load's of travel-

As if on cue, but very genuine, Helen soon beguiled us with several stories. "He doesn't stay in any one cottage – he's a ghost, he can walk through walls." "He wears hobnail boots and they make a distinctive sound on the wooden

floor.” “One recent guest drew me a diagram of all the places she had heard the Ghost roaming about.” “He lives mainly in the Lighthouse.”



We were to hear more Ghost stories from the next couple who arrived on Tuesday for their two week shift. Space precludes a full report here, but I can verify the stories were also told with conviction. “I was cleaning the brass on the top level of the lighthouse when I heard the sound of footsteps ascending the spiral steps – I called out to my husband, but he wasn’t there.” “I returned four times to turn off a light over the stairs in the lighthouse, but each time it came back on – finally I left it on.” “Robert lived in Cottage number one and is usually heard rambling around in the big pantry room — we keep it locked.” “Some say it was no accident - he was murdered by his wife who was allegedly having an affair with the other assistant lighthouse keeper.” I have no reason to doubt these stories.

The Cooks

We fourteen decided to eat our main evening meal together in Cottage number one. So we drew up a roster before leaving Canberra so that two couples would host the nibbles for Happy Hour and prepare the dinner



each evening. Not that we are a competitive lot, but the dining seemed to be the most elaborate and sumptuous I have encountered on a Club trip. I will not record each evening’s menu, but simply say it was not the sort of food one whips up on the tailgate of the Landcruiser after six hours of dodging bull dust holes on the Plenty Highway. So thanks to all the cooks, and cooks assistants. Naturally, the fine food was complemented by Southern Tableland’s excellent camaraderie, conversation and friendly banter that one always looks forward to on Club trips.



The Fishing

Croajingolong National Park has some great fishing spots. And at this time of the year the beaches and lakes are virtually untouched. One of the Lighthouse keepers generously gave us some good tips and directed us to some of his favourite fishing spots to try our luck. About eight of us tried beach, rock and estuary fishing over the four days. Beach fishing was the most successful, with Chris Nicholls setting a fine example for catching Australian salmon on Tuesday – three casts and three fish, and that was only the beginning. The Tuesday session was very successful – we kept about seven or eight fish for the table and released about the same number. Despite what you may read and hear, Aus-

tralian Salmon are great eating – but only if caught, prepared correctly, cooked and eaten on the same day.

The Ghost Stories

Rather than be scared and shaken only by tales of the Point Hicks Lighthouse Ghost, we agreed on a ghost story/ tales of the bizarre competition. Each evening around the fire after dinner several people volunteered a few stories – and with a majority of extroverts in the group, there were plenty of stories. The real scary bit was that several of the group actually believed what they were saying – naturally they were the best story tellers. We never got to vote on the winner, so the trip leaders, trip report writers and oral report presenters have put their heads together, and after much deliberation have voted on a winner – his/her name will be announced at the next meeting.

The Walks, the Whales ...and other activities

Many of us, but not all rambled around the various tracks and walks. Some spent their time photographing (See Chris Nicholls' photos on the Flickr website), others reading or consulting their lap-tops. Helen Allan sighted 25 different species of birds on the trip down and within the National Park.

Some of us just sat on the verandah and watched pods of whales cruise slowly northwards towards their appointments with whale-watching tourist boats in Hervey Bay, Queensland. On Wednesday we all set off for a drive to Mueller Inlet - great fishing potential, but not that day. At some stage all of us checked out the very picturesque and Honeymoon Bay. One of the



assistant Lighthouse Keepers built a little hut here for his wife who was dying from a terminal illness.

And all of us climbed the 162 steps within the Lighthouse to watch fantastic sunsets and marvel at the rugged beauty of Point Hicks - it was that type of trip.

Thanks to all who participated in this little excursion for their great company and enthusiasm. This was our first time as trip leaders – we haven't completed a Trip Leader's Seminar yet and that is why we are writing the report and presenting the oral version. Please learn from this and if you haven't already done so – attend that Seminar on 26 July.



This is a true ghost story — one night fourteen people were having dinner when.....



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This serious off road camper trailer built by Track Trailer in Melbourne was awarded "Campertrailer of the Millennium"



The Tvan lets you camp wherever your vehicle can go. It is compact, light – 750Kg dry, sets up in 3-4 minutes with a hard floor under the tent. A solar panel and battery ensures continuous power. Sleep in comfort under a solid roof in a queen size bed and cook on a stainless steel kitchen with running water. The tent packs in the hatch away from the bed so no damp canvas on your pillow!

Independent Trailers in Canberra has 2 fully equipped Tvals available for hire at \$550 per week. Price reduced for hires of more than 6 weeks.

If you are thinking of buying one but want to try it first, this is your opportunity. We give you back your hire fee (up to one week) with an order placed within 3 months. Download an application from www.independenttrailers.com.au or ring Catherine on 0412 866 375 or email catherine@independenttrailers.com.au

Ask us about the new Topaz off-road caravan by Track Trailer.

Club Clothing

The Club clothing or a name badge can be ordered from Kathy Solomos at the monthly Meetings.
Payment for any item is expected when ordering.

Jackets:	\$75:00
Shirts:	\$37:50
Vests:	\$47:50
Caps:	\$15:00
Hats:	\$15:00
Beanies:	\$15:00
Name Badges:	\$12.00
Rugby Tops:	\$48:00

Look for the sign on a table at Meetings
Kathy Solomos 0402 051 623





Four Wheel Drive NSW & ACT, INC

GPO Box 1371, Parramatta, NSW, 2124
Phone: 1800 646 630, Fax: 1800 650 664
@4wdnsw-act.asn.au

May Bulletin

Please register on the [Association's website](#). We now have over 1100 members registered, of which 655 are on the [forum](#). Don't miss out on what's going on.

Please don't forget the [electronic Trip Reports](#); make them a routine for Trip Leaders.

The agreement with the ACT Dept. of Parks Conservation and Lands (PCL) was signed on Friday, 22 May, 2009. A separate press release and details will be put on the website. All ACT Clubs were at the signing ceremony and the atmosphere between the Clubs and PCL staff was very constructive and enthusiastic to get moving on projects.

To Brian Bird and all involved with the organisation of the [Sydney Club Expo](#) on Sunday, 24 May congratulations. First impressions were that the show had stepped up a good notch from the previous year and that there were more Clubs and each had put more effort into their displays. The consensus at the gate was that there seemed to be more visitors. In walking around, it seemed that many Clubs had successfully signed up new members. We look forward to feedback.

The proposal for the Association to hold its own Sydney 4WD & Outdoor Expo in March, 2011 was discussed at the last quarterly meeting and received the unanimous support of the Delegates present. The outline of the proposal is in the [quarterly papers](#) but a more direct link to the paper and the project will be established for Members and there is the opportunity to comment in the Forum. The next step is setting up the Management Group and progressing the planning of which the first part is an event budget with a very clear understanding of cash flows. We will keep you informed as we progress.

Appointment of a Paid employee. [A proposal](#) was included with the quarterly papers and it was discussed at the last quarterly meeting. The Executive acknowledged that this was a major step for the Association and should not be taken lightly. A poll showed many Delegates in favour but also many who were unsure or unconvinced. It was agreed the issue should be taken back to Clubs for support and Delegates were asked to do so and to report back by the 31 July, 2009 which would enable a decision to be taken at the August quarterly meeting. A direct link will be put in place on the website and discussion is welcome through the Forum.

[Business Plan](#). Amongst the quarterly papers were draft action plans prepared by Roger Sheath (VP) and myself based on a planning exercise done by the whole Executive. The Executive had completed a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis, and from that prioritised their relative importance and impact value. From that work, Roger and I prepared the draft Action Plans. If agreed those action plans would be fleshed out and allocated to individuals for implementation with appropriate measurements in place. Again, it was agreed that [Delegates should consider these more fully](#) and report back by the 31 July, 2009 which would enable plans to be finalised at the August quarterly meeting. [A more direct link to these papers](#) will be put in place on the website and discussion is again encouraged through the Forum.

Greg Redfern,

President, 25 May 2009

FOR SALE/WANTED/LOST/FOUND



Advertising on this page is **free to members** but is restricted to **Two Months**. Non-members will be charged \$20 per advertisement for 5 lines for the same period.



Tyre Step Up (Bushranger brand). Place over your rear tyre and use as a step to the roof rack. Folds away for easy storage. Adjustable for all tyre sizes. **As new \$50.**

Richard 0402 333 747 or marketing@emailme.com.au

Bridgestone Dueller tyre. 694 A/T 265/70/16, brand new, never used and always a spare for the past two years. **\$100.**

Richard - 0402 333 747

85 Watt Suntech Mono-Si Solar Panel

Dimensions 1195 X 541 X 30 (mm). **\$450.**

Rob - Mob 0409 307 533 Home 02 6161 7597

BFG All Terrains (5 x 285/75R16) on 16" Toyota 6 stud white wheels. Tyres as new; wheels some stains. **\$1700.**

Peter - 0406 379 913

Black Wolf Turbo 300 Canvas Touring Tent.

In as new condition. Used only three times. Reluctant sale - a bit too heavy for the wife to put up, pack up and get into the truck by herself. Great tent. Quick to set up and pull down. Waterproof. We have down sized to the 240. 220g Ripstop poly/cotton canvas, Weight: 23 kg, Size: 300 x 300 x 210cm, Fits inside most 4WD's

<http://www.blackwolf.com.au/turbo/>

New price is \$1200. **Selling price \$850 neg.**

Thommo - 0428 280406

ARB roof rack with wind deflector for 100 series Cruiser **\$200**, plus

Genuine Toyota towbar (similar to Hayman Reese) with 50 mm towball: **\$150.**

Tony Preston-Stanley - 0419 991 052,

tonyp_s@yahoo.com.

2004 Mitsubishi Challenger LS 4WD.

One owner, 80,000kms, leather interior, new brakes and tyres, tow bar. Full genuine Mitsubishi logbook servicing. Metallic silver. Registered until October 2009. Family car with true 4WD capability.

Asking price \$17,000.

Ron - 0414 365639 or thompsons@netspeed.com.au

2006 Nissan Patrol 4.2 Turbo Inter-Cooled.

Manufactured in May 2006. 58500Km.

Front ARB air diff lock , heavy duty factory rear limited slip diff. 3" Exhaust. Bull bar and side steps / rails.

Heavy duty OME suspension with air bags (leaf springs on rear). Tow bar. Dual batteries. UHF radio. Winch. Central locking.

\$35,000 ono

Peter - 0417480856

Wanted - Dead or Alive - Pavers for Talooge

We will apprehend, lift and remove at no cost to you

Contact the paving police - Graeme 62923073 or Don 61611880

Rear coil springs (standard) from 2006 Mitsubishi Pajero (\$20); **Rear coil springs** from older Rangie (They have been in the shed for a few years, not sure of exact details) (\$20); **Dickie seat** (2 seater) to suit Nissan Patrol (88 model) (\$50)

Side steps to suit Nissan Patrol(88 model) (\$50); **Haynes manual** to suit Nissan Patrol 88-97 (\$10); **Gregorys manual** to suit 1900 Torana LH-LX & Sunbird LX series (\$10); **Gregorys manual** to suit Torana LH-LX 6cyl (\$10); **Assorted spares to suit Austin A40**, includes windows, fuel pump, manifolds, manual, distributor and assorted items (\$80); **Set of new balljoints** to suit HQ-HZ (with nipples) (\$50); **Starter motor** to suit HQ-HZ V8 (\$50)

Rod Cahill - 02 6296 2742



SOUTHERN TABLELANDS FOUR WHEEL DRIVE CLUB Inc

GPO Box 2122, Canberra ACT 2601

MEMBERSHIP

Categories of Membership

Full details of the categories of Membership of the Southern Tablelands Four Wheel Drive Club Inc. (ST4WDC) can be found in the Constitution of the club. The following is a summary of the key differences:

'Owner' Member

Owner membership of the Club may be open to any person interested in the furtherance of the objects of the Club, who is an owner or part owner (at least 10%) of a four wheel drive vehicle registered in Australia. The partner of an owner-member has all the privileges of an owner-member.

'Associate' Member

Any person interested in the furtherance of the objects of the Club may be eligible for associate membership and entitled to vote at any general meeting but shall not be entitled to a vote at the annual general meeting or at any special general meeting. An associate member is not able to be a committee member of the club.

'Competition' Member

Any person interested in the furtherance of the objects of the Club but wishing to join the club for the principal purpose of participating in 4WD competition events may join as a 'Competition Member'. A competition member is not entitled to a vote at the annual general meeting or at any special general meeting, and is not able to be a committee member.

'Family' Member

Family membership is extended free of charge to those persons who are the immediate family of an owner-member or an associate member provided that they are under the age of 21 and are domiciled under the same roof. Family Members who have already completed the Basic Driver Training course are not required to pay the Joining Fee if they become Owner Members before their 22nd birthday.

'Life' Membership

Life membership of the Club may be extended to any owner member who has been a member of the Club continuously for at least 10 years and has in the opinion of the Club Committee, contributed significantly to the endeavours of the club. Life members pay no annual membership fee.

Approval of Membership

Applications for membership of the ST4WDC are subject to approval by the club committee. The Club reserves the right to refuse a person membership. Reasons may be given at a meeting of the committee and the applicant.

Membership Entitlements

Membership of the ST4WDC entitles Owner Members (including Partners), and licensed Family Members to attend the Club's training courses and to make use of the Clubs 700ha property Talooge Park. Participation as a driver on other than Grade 1 trips requires successful completion of the Basic Driver Training course, or recognised equivalent prior learning / qualification approved by the Club's Education Coordinator. Grades 4 and 5 trips also require advance training. Details of Trip Grading can be found in **Southern Trails**, the Club magazine issued monthly (except January) to all Owner Members and Life Members.

Membership Fees

An initial joining fee and an annual membership fee are payable as follows:

Membership Category	Joining Fee	Annual Membership
Owner Member	\$230(Note 1)	\$100 (Note 2)
Associate Member	Nil	\$50
Competition Member	Nil	\$50

1. A re-joining Member may be entitled to a reduced fee
2. The Annual Membership Fee for new applications received after the July General Meeting is reduced to \$50

The Club membership year extends from 1 January to 31 December.

To Join the ST4WDC

Please complete the New Member Application form on the reverse and forward with your cheque / money order to:

**Membership Secretary, ST4WDC,
GPO Box 2122,
Canberra ACT 2601**

Payment can also be made by Bank Transfer to: Account Name: ST4WDC; BSB 112-908; Account 040 037 027 - please include your name as a reference to identify the payment. You may also attend a monthly meeting (held on the second Tuesday at Canberra Deakin Football Club, Grose St, Deakin at 7:30PM) and hand the form and payment (cash acceptable) to the Membership Secretary who can be contacted at Membership@ST4WDC.Org.au



SOUTHERN TABLELANDS FOUR WHEEL DRIVE CLUB Inc

GPO Box 2122, Canberra ACT 2601

NEW MEMBER APPLICATION

Membership requested (Tick): - Owner Member - Associate Member - Competition Member

Please complete the following. Completion of shaded boxes is essential, others are optional.

If applicable, attach details, including date of birth, of nominations for Family membership.

Essential entries	Member 1	Member 2 (Partner)		
Preferred first name, last name:				
Address:				
City/Suburb:		State:		Postcode:
Home Phone:				
Work Phone:				
Mobile Phone:				
Home Email:				
Work Email:				
<i>As a means of rapidly disseminating priority information, the Club occasionally makes use of Email to all members who have provided an Email address (which is hidden from other recipients), or SMS to all those who have provided a Mobile Phone number. You will receive these automatically unless you indicate otherwise. Default is shown in Bold Print.</i>				
Accept Club SMS:	Yes / No		Yes / No	
Send Club Email to:	Both / Home / Work / Neither		Both / Home / Work / Neither	
	of the Email Addresses provided above.			
Vehicle (Make & Model):				
Registration (Please include State if not ACT):				
	Registration details are requested as they are used for log-on to the 'Members Only' portion of the web site.			
Occupation:				
Employer:				
Are you a returning Member?	Yes / No	If 'Yes', what was your last Membership Year?		
How did you find out about the ST4WDC?				
Signature(s)*: Upon acceptance of this application, then for the duration of my membership, I agree to abide by the Constitution and By-laws of the Southern Tablelands Four Wheel Drive Club Inc, as they apply from time to time.				
Signed:				
Date:				
Payment of fees (\$) made by (Please indicate): Cheque (enclosed) / Money Order (enclosed) / Bank Transfer / Cash				

Completed Form and payment should be submitted to the Membership Secretary at a monthly meeting or mailed to the above address.

Membership Secretary use only.		
Form & fees received:	Fees forwarded to Treasurer:	Application Accepted:
Joining Fee paid \$.....	Total received: \$.....	Receipt Number:
Database updated:	Membership package despatched:	Membership Card Issued.....
Other comments:WEB access arranged.....		

Revision 2 – May 09