



SOUTHERN TRAILS

ISSUE 336 April 2007



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**April Meeting 10th April 2007 at
7:30pm
Deakin Sports Club**

This Month's Speaker

One of our members, **Ian Goodacre** will discuss volunteer work with the disabled and marginalized.

SOUTHERN TRAILS - is the magazine of the ST4WDC Incorporated,
PO Box 661, Fyshwick ACT 2609.
Registered by Australia Post
Print Post No. PP248831/00046
National Library Catalogue No. ISSN 0314-0814
Web Address <http://www.st4wdc.org>

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

The opinions expressed in the articles and letters in this magazine are not necessarily those of the The Southern Tablelands Four Wheel Drive Club. This edition of Southern Trails was printed by: ELECT PRINTERS, 112 Wollongong Street, Fyshwick ACT 2609.
All magazine correspondence should be directed to the Publications Coordinator. Trip reports & articles of interest are very welcome.

**General meetings are held at the Deakin Sports Club at
7.30 pm on the second Tuesday of each month.**

Closing date for inclusion of articles in the next issue of SOUTHERN TRAILS is April 13th.

EDITORIAL

John Wiseman

A new year, a new committee, and some new faces. I'm one of them, taking on the role of Publications Coordinator. This position has been filled for the past five years by Neil Craven, whose commitment and dedication will be very hard to match. I am particularly grateful for his assistance to me in my blundering into this new role

With virtually no editorial assistance, Neil has produced for five years, a substantial monthly magazine averaging about 36 pages. The time frame is always tight, dictated by the need to have the magazine in our mailboxes a reasonable time before the next meeting, but finalised after the committee meeting while allowing ten days for printing and mailing. Neil's will be a very hard act to follow, and I apologise now for the (almost) inevitable publication calamities that are yet to happen. (By the time you read this, they probably have!)

At the AGM, a number of changes were made to the constitution and by-laws. Previously it was intended that the various core responsibilities would be handled by teams, rather than solely by individuals. The Training Officer for example was not solely responsible for all training - he was responsible for leading a training team. This has worked very well and the strength of Peter's training team evidences just how effective the team approach can be.

Teams have evolved around the activities at Talooge. A team is dealing with weed problems, others with buildings and track construction. Most of the changes to rules approved at the AGM are aimed at strengthening the team approach.

Two areas where teams have not functioned as intended in the past are the Publications and Website responsibilities. Both require a degree of specialised understanding or experience, so perhaps it's simply been easier to leave it with those who seem to be able to do it. As a result, these people are then the only ones who can. They have no successors, no understudies waiting in the wings to take over. For the past few years, if the Publication Coordinator had taken a two month trip (we are in it for the trips aren't we?) either there would have been no magazine for two months, or someone inexperienced and unfamiliar with the processes would need to step in. Also, with the Publications Coordinator solely responsible for the magazine, there's one weekend each month which he must commit to the magazine. This will change! Similarly, the webmaster's responsibilities have been onerous and in the past have not been shared. This too will change!

When the website was established, communication meant paper, and the website was something special and different. It was kept separate from Publications. The new changes to our rules bring paper and electronic publication together, to be steered by the Publications Team so as to integrate their functions. Each has its strengths, they complement each other, and will offer some interesting diversity for members. The magazine will continue to provide a permanent repository for articles, trip reports etc, while the website can provide virtually instant update of information. Cost dictates that photos in the magazine must be small and cannot be in colour. On the website however, photos from trips or elsewhere may be far more numerous and in colour. Little point announcing last minute trip changes in the magazine, easy on the website. The two are com-

plementary and we aim to integrate them so as to make best use of the strengths of each.

I envisage that the Publications Team will include the skills necessary to ensure that the magazine is reliably published, and the website operated and updated, without any member of the team becoming indispensable. Members may already have, or may wish to develop, the skills that will ensure that our paper and electronic publications can function well without being a burden for any individual. I'd like very much to hear from everyone interested in contributing to the club as a member of the Publications Team. Please email me at

John.Wiseman@exemail.com.au
or give me a call on 6230 2459.

John Wiseman
Publications Coordinator

The camaraderie of the road less traveled

Seen at Mt Dare, a remote fuel stop in NE SA

*There are no strangers here,
just friends you haven't met.*

EVENTS AND TRIPS

Richard Brand

Keeping on Track

Since there was no nomination for Event and Trip Coordinator this year, your committee has co-opted me to take over the role for the next year. I happen to think it is probably the most important role on the Committee and there have been many superb coordinators in the past to live up to. The role has been explicitly expanded in title to include Events, and because I work full-time it is vital that other club members volunteer to deliver some of the programs – for example, updating the Trip Leader's Handbook, organizing social events, cajoling experienced members into leading trips and organizing a seminar for future trip leaders.

It is a Canberra tradition that we always leave bookings to the last minute. Probably dozens of members intended to go to the Meet The Committee weekend planned for Bendethra, although in fact only two members had booked in. Confession time: I intended to go but had not booked. So we decided to postpone the event from balmy autumn in Bendethra to 2nd 3rd June! To minimize the pain, we have booked a delightful sheltered campsite on private land at

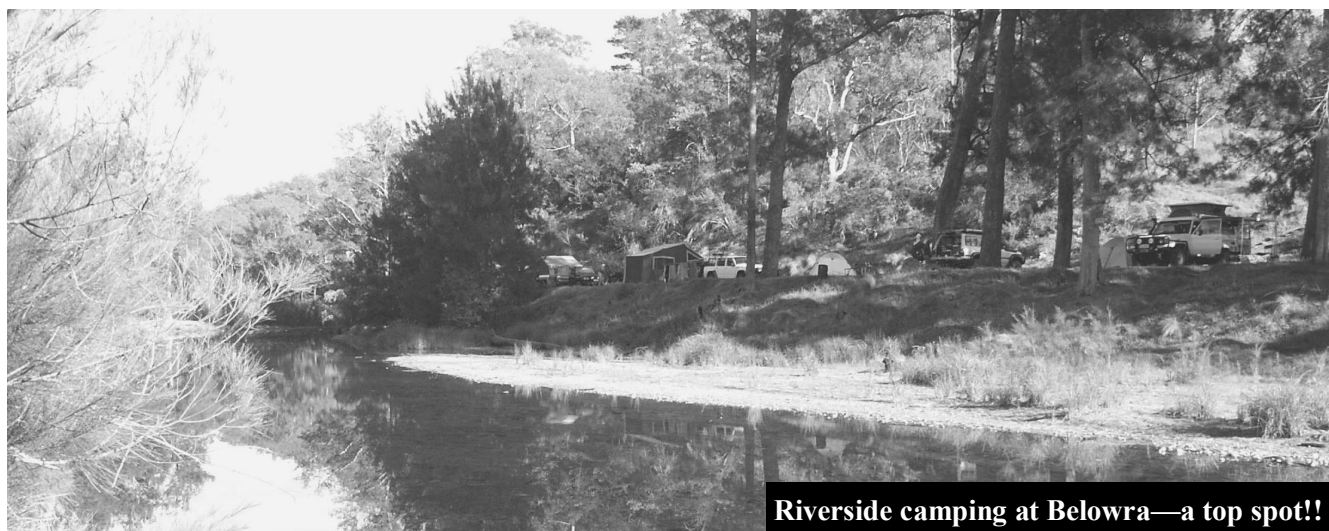
Belowra, close to the coast near Bodalla and right on the beautiful Turross river. There will be a formal black tie dinner, restaurant-style with maitre'd, candelabra, plus sumptuous desserts provided by the Club. Only your top half needs to be black tie – shorts and thongs are fine down-under. A number of the Committee will likely be cross-dressing ... and will then be inducted as only your maitre'd knows how. Please book as soon as possible so we can plan the campsite booking, dessert catering, convoys and convoy routes. Off-road camping trailers will be catered for, and expect some entertaining competitions en-route and great prizes on the night.

When I was President, one of the things I wanted to do was to establish a trip database covering all the trips the club runs. Now I won't be able to complain if it does not happen! There are some challenges in tying together the database, the magazine calendar and the web site and I'll need lots of help and cooperation. The ultimate benefit should be an electronic record of most of the club's activities. In time, this could become an

active system, where you could browse for past trips, find out who was on them, download an information pack, submit a new trip nomination, book a trip and maybe see your personal calendar of trips you have been on, and are booked to go on.

Your out-going committee made sure the current trip calendar is pretty full. Because there were only three days between my appointment and the editor's publishing cut-off (and I had an intervening conference), Jillian and the team have got the current event calendar together. A big thank you for all the hard work Jillian in particular put in last year. Getting you lot to volunteer to lead trips is pretty hard, but isn't that fundamentally what the club is about?

Richard Brand
Event and Trip Coordinator



Riverside camping at Belowra—a top spot!!

PRESIDENT'S PONDERINGS

Peter Fenwick

As usual after an AGM, committee membership has changed a little (see front of magazine for details).

I'd like to thank the following outgoing members for their support and for all the hard work they put into the club this past year. All have contributed significantly and deserve our acknowledgement.

Jenny Collins – Vice President

Neil Craven – Publications Coordinator

Jillian Hayes – Trip Coordinator

Bryan (Thommo) Buttriss – Property Coordinator

Jarrold Coleman – Webmaster

(now part of the Publications team)

David Buckley – General Committee Member

And I look forward to working with the new committee on your behalf.

I ask you all to think about the direction you would like the club to take in the next twelve months or few years. This is a moderately large club and like any living entity change is part of its reality. The decisions you as members and leaders of this club make will determine the viability and success or otherwise of the club in the future. As returning president I'll do my best to ensure your decisions are implemented honestly and faithfully but I wish to highlight three key issues for you. Let me assure you that the financial status of the club is sound, thanks to the committee's efforts in the last few years.

The first of the three issues is trips. I've heard many grumbles about a lack of trips but believe that many of those complaining never offered to lead a trip. Some members say and to some extent I agree that the reduction in trips in the last 12 months has not helped us retain member numbers (renewals are only down 20 on this time last year) Those saying this most loudly are a little one-eyed and seem to believe that trips should be the club's only focus.

Let me put the trip shortage in context for you because our club does not exist in a vacuum. There were a number of reasons for the reduction in trips in the last 12 months, including but not limited to the fact that members were busy elsewhere. Many of our members and trip leaders are volunteers in Bush Fire Brigades and Emergency Services. They faced other demands on their time, skills and generosity. Our club membership demographic is not exactly young. Retirement and moves to other climates have diminished

our trip leader ranks. A new trip coordinator was learning the process and could have had a bit more support from experienced members. A couple of long trips took experienced trip leaders away for large blocks of time. The committee also needed to develop other aspects of the club. Most disappointing was the fact that although members recognised the need; few stepped up to run trips.

My second issue is the political situation we find ourselves in as four wheel drivers. Just think back to all the bad media coverage we had in the last 12 months to 3 years. If it wasn't a story about baby killing dangerous 4WDs it was one of fuel guzzling or environmental vandalism. Much effort went into refuting these false claims and creating a balanced view in the media.

Three years ago the club's ability to run trips seemed perilously threatened by potential track closures agitated for by "Green movements" and other lobbyists. The committee took a brave and wise decision to secure our future by buying a property so we have a place to do our 4WDing if park access ceased.

The establishment of Talooge Park is an achievement we can all be proud of. Other clubs have asked how we did it and the answer is hard work, dedication and giving up on some other pleasures for a short time. It has taken three long, hard years to establish Talooge Park as a viable training and driving venue. Sometimes this was at the detriment of the trip calendar. The emphasis on this development has been necessary to ensure its effective infrastructure and operation to train members to participate in trips. Let me say that again. **The key reasons for establishing Talooge Park are 1) to train members so that they can go on trips and 2) to provide a club venue for other activities** such as camping, nature activities and social activities. The establishment of Talooge Park necessitated much energy from a small band with assistance from many others at working bees. The major task of relocating from "the lease," which could always be sold out from under us, to Talooge Park was only completed in 2006.

We are now at a stage where Talooge can be maintained with less effort than during its establishment phase. I hope all members will use the facility regularly and appreciate the achievement and contribute to its upkeep.

We must also acknowledge that our club exists in a very politically contentious time with environmental

groups having increasing clout. The current proposal to create a nature corridor from "Kosciusko to the Sea" (K2C) has great political, financial and environmental support. The proposal began in 2005 and has been gaining momentum since. The proposal actually places Talooge Park smack in the middle of the K2C corridor. If we do not wish to be ignored, and later potentially be steam rolled over we must get involved and establish a credible rapport with the planners before they can possibly affect our access to and the viability of Talooge Park.

What I believe we must do is participate in the broader environmental debate. We have the opportunity to demonstrate that organized 4WDers are responsible environmentalists, should be taken seriously and can offer meaningful input whilst protecting our own investment and goals. After all we are the first 4WD club to receive an Envirofund grant. This political issue is of paramount importance for the next few years and if handled well may ensure the growth and viability of our club. It may lead to greater understanding, better appreciation and the establishment of common ground with some of the environmental groups as we have already established with NPWS.

To more effectively support this activity and strengthen our political influence we must work more closely with the state and national Four Wheel Drive associations. I have been asked by Four Wheel Drive NSW and ACT if our club will support a local regional sub-committee of the association and form a regional council to work more closely with other clubs in our region. The presidents of the ACT Landrover and ACT Four Wheel Drive Club have agreed to further explore this matter with us in 2007.

My third issue and one for all members, not just the committee, is the recent shortage of actively contributing members as it impacts on the viability and range of activities the club can offer.

I offer praise and have great respect for "all the usual suspects" who regularly contribute. But I am concerned that some are over extended and need to step back a little. This can be achieved by encouraging other less active or newer members to help out, initially perhaps as assistants and gradually taking on more as confidence and experience are gained. The committee has restructured the By Laws (see website) to facilitate this process.

The rising average age of our membership has meant retirement and moves interstate. We have not recruited sufficient members to offset this change. We have the opportunity to do so at Promo 2008 and potentially have other members coming from any successful association we create with the environmentalist and other groups. I'd like to see more, younger members learning from older members' wealth of knowledge

and experience.

Unless we maintain a strong and interesting Events Calendar (not just trips) we will not recruit enough new members to maintain our present membership numbers. The hike in fees three years ago made the first year's membership \$330.00. This causes some "sticker shock" to prospective new members. This once only fee is easily explained by the excellent training provided, resources such as Talooge Park and an exciting Events calendar all representing excellent value and great potential fun and involvement.

I believe the main foci of the club have always been and should, remain trip participation and driver training which enables members to go on trips. However there are other activities such as those I have just focussed upon which support and enable these two activities. We overlook them at our peril as, properly handled; these aspects will ensure we maintain an active, viable, interesting and diverse club which is socially and politically relevant to members and the society we operate in. It is also great fun.

As always, I look forward to seeing you at the next meeting, at Talooge Park or on the track as ***we are going places.***

Peter Fenwick
President

On Travel:

The traveler was active; he went strenuously in search of people, of adventure, of experience. The tourist is passive; he expects interesting things to happen to him. He goes "sight-seeing."

~Daniel J. Boorstin

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Jim Hanigan

Welcome to two new owner-members this month:-

Matt and Christine Gaul
Richard and Rachelle Arranz

Dunlop
Monash

Landeruiser
Prado

So far this year the membership stands at:

new members	14;
renewals	161;
associate members (competition)	3; and
life members	3.
giving a total of	181.

The renewal rate is behind where we were at this time last year by about 20 members. If you know any member who has forgotten or for any other reason has not renewed, urge them to reconsider. The stronger your club the better voice we have to keep facilities maintained. The example set in Victoria is a shining one.

By the time you receive this edition of Southern Trails, I will have been in contact with all members who have not yet renewed their membership. However, don't let me stop you adding your voice of encouragement. If you come across any member who is disgruntled with the club, tell them to write, email or call myself or any other member of the committee so that we are aware of any problems and can attempt to rectify the situation. – **"If we don't know it's broke, we cain't fix it!"** See you at the next General Meeting on 10 April – until then safe traveling.

Jim Hanigan - Membership Secretary — Phone / Fax 02 6291 6392

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Major Trip Report 29—30 July 2006

Hay River Part 2— Birdsville to Alice Springs

David Sutton

Leaders

David & Helen Sutton

Participants

Peter Butterfield & Craig

Bruce & Jenny Collins

Kevin & Megan Dawes

Peter Fenwick & Catherine Panich

Stan & Daphne Hillier

Rick & Wendy Holland

Edward (Woody) Patching

with Adam & Suzie

Jim & Jane Raleigh

Peter & Debbie Reynolds

John & Val Wiseman

Troopie (Leader)

80 Series with Trailer

GU Nissan Patrol

00 Series with Trailer

Pajero with Trailer

100 Series with Trailer

Pajero

Land Rover

100 Series with Trailer

60 Series

Troopie

for the moment without fitting the available spare.

Lunch had been a brief stop reflecting the harshness of the environment but we stopped for the night at a great spot among the Gidgee trees. The usual evening 'cone of silence' around the camp fire provided an opportunity for all to raise issues of concern however tonight consisted mostly of prolific and deserved praise for the leadership of David and Helen.

Sat 17 Jun

There was a beautiful blue sky and best of all no wind. A few of the ladies decided to walk ahead until the convoy got moving and found dingo tracks quite near the camp. The many photo opportunities delayed progress slightly before we reached the clay pans and made rapid progress to Poepel's Corner.

Morning tea, a good look around, many photographs and we were back to the sand dunes northward. Past the airstrip, a pause at Poepel's No1 Oil Well and on to Beachcomber Oil Well for lunch. The 'walkers' set off again and found camel droppings and a large indent in the sand where a camel had spent the night.

We were all well fed and watered and back on the track by 1330 for the slow and very bumpy transit across the 'shotline' before turning north again at around 1500. After another hour we began trackless navigation across a desolate desert before setting up camp for the night in a lovely gidgee grove.

A good day's travel had been enjoyed by all and after setting up camp many of the ladies walked to the top of a nearby sand dune for a look around and photo opportunity. After a gourmet selection from the assorted chefs we enjoyed another pleasant evening around the camp fire topped off



Ready for lift off

Fri 16 Jun

An 0820 start with cloudy skies and cool temperatures saw us assembling outside the Birdsville Pub for the customary group photograph. A pause at 'Little' Red allowed tyre pressures to be reduced in readiness for the day's assault on the sand dunes. With no problems over the first several, some large, dunes, confidence was rising, however two members who shall remain nameless did find that it was much easier when the 4WD lever was engaged.

During morning tea at Eyre Creek we saw a number of groups travelling east towards Birdsville, and further groups were encountered

throughout the day. A flat tyre on the Dawes' trailer caused a brief delay, however our excellent progress continued despite the dry and dusty conditions. Two brief snatches were required to get trailers over the last few metres of very loose dunes.

The landscape was desolate with the strong winds making conditions quite unpleasant at times. The afternoon continued much as the morning apart from the sand becoming even drier. The Dawes had a second stroke of misfortune when a spring shackle bolt on the trailer sheared but it was deemed safe to continue



Lunch stop on the Hay River

by some damper and jam courtesy of Jenny. Catherine named our city with everyone choosing various names for their 'streets' and localities. All in all another great day was had by all.

Sun 18 Jun

Another glorious day in the desert. Some musical chairs were played today with Suzie travelling with PB and Craig accompanying Jerry. Suzie became quite the GPS expert as the day progressed even working out that she was 1,575km from home.

Initial progress was slow, the first two hours seeing us cover only 5km as we 'trail blazed' among virgin sand dunes. The forward 'scout' (Dave) ably assisted by his

lookout (Helen) went ahead to locate potential crossing points, usually with little or no assistance available by way of previous vehicle tracks, as we headed for preset GPS waypoints.

Multiple attempts were necessary to get one trailer over a particularly loose sand dune but the 'Cavalry' (Dave) came to the rescue and we finally reached the 'Small Claypan' before joining the course of the Hay River for our trek further north.

This was a sparsely vegetated desert landscape, beautiful sand dunes, few trees, and even a little spinifex. What little vegetation existed was black and charred, an indication of a large fire through the

area in recent years.

We had morning teas at 'The Claypan' and found the going much easier on a more established track as we made our way north past the 'Eagles Nest' towards "Madigan's Camp 16" and the Blaze Tree. The scenery changed as we headed north – smaller trees, more spinifex and even small gum trees. We found the Blaze Tree surrounded by a chain barrier and many plaques and mementos marking the earlier visits of many groups. We read the visitor's book and found the entry made by Dave, PB and Jerry on their visit three years ago.

We moved off again towards our planned camp site at Camp 15 passing the eastern end of the apparently well used Madigan's Line track leading in to the desert towards Camp 14 and points west.

The camp site tonight is well spread out to maximise our enjoyment of a two night layover with lots of fresh spinifex, complete with seed and flower, stumpy gidgee trees and a few coolibahs.

The pyromaniacs had a delightful campfire burning in no time and most made use of it for a relaxing evening meal. We enjoyed a wonderful desert sunset with the clouds catching the last rays providing a pink/purple tinge to the sky.

After an adventurous day, the campfire chatter was particularly entertaining and rowdy probably



Dave under trailer!

It's tough being a trip leader!

Sketch by Megan Dawes

(Continued on page 10)

due to an anticipated 'sleep-in', but maybe helped by an abundance of red wine.

Mon 19 Jun

Despite the previous night there were still the usual early risers on this our 'lay day' although there were many who took advantage of the opportunity for a sleep-in.

one almost reaching Camp 13 before returning.

An entertaining game of Boulé was played by a few after which some of the ladies prepared the most magnificent camp oven cooked scones with jam and cream. Camp ovens were the order of the day for dinner in-

conditions and it was deeply rutted as a result. A large eagle's nest was to be admired – not so some 200 litre drums from an earlier fuel dump, reminding us that we were again approaching the bounds of civilisation.

We continued along the river bed among the many River Red Gums and one could see clear signs of where the river had been running in flood with debris well up in some of the trees. There were many camel prints but the flies were all over us as we collected the wood for the nightly fire from within the river bed as we crossed to the western side.

It was then on to Lake Caroline which was another picture again with black stones, mirages and golden grasses – what memories are made of. We set up camp in a lovely sheltered valley clear of the wind and gathered around the Reynold's vehicle for happy hour. There was much laughter and chatter as per the norm and an excellent night for star gazing.

Another day in paradise – easy driving around Lake Caroline albeit with no water this time

Wed 21 Jun

Everyone was packed up and ready to go on this balmy 13°C morning. Most of the ladies decided to walk in various directions across Lake Caroline, a long walk on the shortest day of the year. Some vehicles skirted the lake in a clockwise direction while others went anti-clockwise all meeting up with the walkers on the far side of the lake.

The convoy set off again at just after 0900 when Stan spotted a dingo off to the side. It crossed between two cars in the convoy and finally by the time the last cars came upon it, it had decided that we were no threat and just trotted along beside the vehicles.

After retracing our steps and crossing back over the river we meandered north on a winding and sometimes bumpy road following the eastern bank of the Hay.

On the journey north we encountered camel bones, gums in bud, and some 'red stinky bush' flow-



Multi-skilled trip leader

Lavish cooked breakfasts were the order of the day however great interest was shown in the rice/dates/apricot/coconut cream concoction being prepared by Woody on the camp fire. Breakfast concluded with an excellent example of the affect of supply and demand in a free market economy when Jim offered to solve Woody's catering shortfall with the supply of a small box of spare Vita Brits for \$50 until Jane intervened and handed them over.

At this point most people started to get stuck into their laundry and bathing. The camp fire came to life in a flurry of agitators, buckets and dirty clothes.

One could not help but think that this was a normal activity on club trips when a bloody big heavy clothes wringer clamped to Dave's bull bar was spitting out clothes quicker than Jerry heading to his fridge for another beer.

One group ventured on foot in towards Camp 14, others stayed at base camp checking equipment or just relaxing. Two vehicles set out along the Madigan Line with

cluding some excellent roasts.

Tue 20 Jun

Departing by 0830 at a cool temperature of 8.5°C, we continued our path north along the Hay River. Twenty minutes in and the tyre had rolled off the rim on Kevin's trailer. Dave and Bruce turned back to assist and the front half of the convoy assembled at the 'Midden'. After some further delay when the tyre did not seal it was decided to proceed with the repair of the previously sheared shackle as well as fixing the tyre. A surprisingly short hour later we were on our way again.

The vegetation was changing all the time - gums, grasses and native flowers all to be admired. Today we had just a couple of small dunes to traverse and then we were twisting and turning between the trees. A herd of 20 camels was sighted by the leaders while tail-end-charlie sighted a lone emu. More camels were sighted soon afterwards.

Some earlier drivers had clearly traversed the track during wet

ers which Val identified as 'no idea plants'. We stopped at a long abandoned bore site for morning tea where there was a water pump, building materials and a lot of corellas.

Soon after setting off again, the leaders came across a small herd of camels which on our approach started to move on. Dave went tearing ahead and turned them back for others to see and photograph before they finally escaped across the river.

We carried on in dusty conditions to the Tropic of Capricorn coming across some kangaroos, another dingo and an emu on the way. The temperature climbed during the day to a lovely 22°C at noon. We continued under a clear blue sky winding our way between some magnificent River Red Gums, through acres of wild flowers, with Mt Winneke standing out on our right. We stopped for lunch on the banks of the river for about 45 minutes and it was then a short run in to Batton Hill Camp where the temperature was a delightful 25°C – but there were a million flies!

Most took the opportunity to do some washing and everyone was very pleased to be able to have a HOT SHOWER in the impressive facilities despite the remoteness of the camp site.

The communal oven and hot plates were an excellent facility enjoyed by most to cook on/in and we sat around discussing the events of the day and the planned activities for tomorrow.



Thu 22 Jun

Today was devoted to the 'Bush Tucker Tour'. Billie and Lindsay were our guides when we set off at 1015 in 10 ST4WDC vehicles and one from another group that had arrived late the previous evening.

We stopped frequently to be shown a surprisingly wide variety of mainly plants used by the Aborigines as 'tucker'. These included:

Native Orange – Twagia Tree – none available to taste.

Pig Weed – Portulacca – used to make damper from the seeds.

Bush Onions – crisp bland taste.

Grass seeds to grind up being careful not to mix the seeds from different sources.

Bean Tree – with a 'V' shaped leaf.

Wild Cucumber – big as a

thumb, but very tasty and just like the real thing.

Paddy Melons – striped ones are poisonous.

Bush Tomato

Bush Banana - growing on a vine found entwined around Blue Mallee and looking like an oblong mini-mango. Good to eat when green and soft.

Witchetty Grub – extracted from a hole in a tree with a hooked stick.

We dug for and found water in the bed of the Hay River at the base of a tree where there was a natural depression and saw a small snake.

After lunch we saw perentie tracks as we explored further into the range of hills to the east of Batton Hill returning to camp around 1615.

A small group set off almost immediately with Lindsay to watch the sun set over Goyder's Pillar. It was a wonderful experience.

Around the fire in the evening we were entertained by Lindsay telling stories about the area and answering many questions from the group.

Fri 23 Jun

It was cold so most were reluctant to face the morning but slowly the circle around the fire grew although firewood was for the first time a little scarce. We planned to leave at 0900 but some were leaving the group today so farewells to them and to our host



ST4WDC group with our Aboriginal Hosts



Lindsay and his family were being said.

A final group photograph was organised with everyone draped over and around Dave's truck. Tyres were pumped up and it was then out to the good straight road for the 70km to the Plenty Highway and on to Jervois Station.

We crossed the Hay River one final time and then followed the fence through flat red sand spinifex and mallee country. We arrived at Jervois for fuel (Diesel \$1.72 – cash only) and other transactions for the first time since leaving Birdsville 8 days earlier.

Final farewells were said as some headed east while others headed west towards Alice Springs. For those headed west it was onto the Plenty Highway – plenty of corrugations! Before long the flat plains were broken by rugged hills as we approached Harts Range and the scenery became more spectacular.

After a late lunch the majority of remaining vehicles turned south along Cattlewater Pass while others proceeded directly to Alice Springs. Cattlewater Pass was a '4WD only' track although fairly easy going through rugged picturesque country into the East MacDonnell Ranges.

We continued down into the Hale River plain, past some sleek cattle, across sandy rivers to the Arltunga Historic Reserve. As it was another 50km

to Ruby Gap (our planned objective) it was decided to stop for the night at the camping ground adjacent to the Arltunga Pub.

An unplanned chance for another beer and a hot shower as well as happy hour with our now reduced group. Then it was dinner and the by now customary and enjoyable fireside gathering.

Sat 24 Jun

Another beautiful day – we all packed up and set off in different directions to explore the old mining area of Arltunga. Most began at the visitor centre with some staying to watch a video on the history of the area while others set off to look at the old government works. There was the old Police Station to explore and the opportunity to climb down into one of the old mines.

We regrouped at 1030 for morning tea following which we headed for Ruby Gap. The scenery through the mountain range was truly spectacular. We found a lovely spot to camp in the river bed and after much discussion as to whether to continue on or to camp, we set up camp. Once camp was established most of the group set off to explore the gorge – it was hot and quite a long way, especially for those who missed the shortcut and followed the river bed, but well worth the effort with spectacular high cliffs and magnificent colours in the rocks.

When we had all returned to camp our thoughts turned to happy hour and what was for dinner. Another good night around the camp fire was enjoyed by all with an early retirement.

Sun 25 Jun

We began the day by gathering garnets (once thought to be rubies and hence the name of the gorge) and saying goodbye to Val & John who decided to spend another night at this spectacular campsite. The drive out was every bit as beautiful as the drive in with the added bonus of seeing a group of photogenic donkeys and a dingo close to the road.

We headed towards N'Dhala Gorge Nature Park with a quick detour to Ross River Resort for lunch and a much needed ice-cream.

At the gorge we did the 1Km walk and were rewarded by the sight of beautiful cliffs with trees surely growing in solid rock. We also enjoyed the aboriginal rock paintings before heading for John Hayes Rock Hole near Trephina Gorge where we set up camp for the night.

Later that evening the camp tranquillity was threatened by the arrival of a number of Scouts who were to meet their absent leader at the camp. After finally contacting their leader they set up camp and we heard nothing more – they had obviously walked a long way.

Mon 26 Jun

Further dispersal of the remaining five vehicles occurred as we all chose to undertake differing walks around the waterhole and in Trephina Gorge before airing up tyres for the final run into Alice Springs.

There was considerable sadness in realising that a wonderful trip had come to an end. We had experienced many challenges, enjoyed great weather, excellent company and fantastic leadership – a trip we will all long remember.

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 member/driver who is considered not to have the necessary level of skill in 4WD driving.

- *GRADE 1:** very easy with little, if any 4wd 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 travelling 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. You should advise the trip leader of your level of skill, and vehicle equipment when signing up for such a trip. New members must have attended the 'Safe-One' Basic Vehicle Operation Course before attending a Club trip above the Grade 1 level, unless you have satisfied the club's Education Coordinator that you have the necessary experience.

TRIP PLANNING

If you are planning a Trip or Social Event for the Club contact the Club Trips Co-ordinator 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. Club policy requires that a Club event shall be publicised in at least one copy of the Club magazine, and at least one General Meeting of the Club, 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 that you must confirm with the appropriate authorities, in advance, that access is permitted on the dates you choose. This includes National Parks, State Forests as well as private property.

CB RADIOS

Most club members have a UHF radio fitted to their vehicle, which allows convoy procedure to be carried out. The Club standard is UHF radio. The Club uses Channel 14 as the standard channel for trips.

FIREARMS & PETS

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

MEMBERSHIP PROCESSING

Membership applications are processed at the monthly committee meeting held on the third Tuesday of each month. Until applicants are formally accepted as a member and have met the skill requirements as set out above, they are not eligible to attend club trips involving 4WD driving.

TRIPS AND EVENTS



The trip leader has the right to deny a request from a member/driver who is considered to not have the necessary level of skill in 4WD driving.

14th 15th April Duck's Crossing Maintenance Day or weekend

Trip Leader: Peter Reynolds
 Contact: 6251 1258 (h) 0428 623 458
 Vehicles: Unlimited
 Grading: 2
 Departure: Convoy will depart Williamsdale at 8:00 am., or make your own way to Talooge.
To minimise inconvenience to neighbours, please use the firetrail access.
 Fuel: Full Tank
 Comments: Track maintenance around Duck's crossing to complete. A timber wall to be built in the training room. If you have some great carpentry skills please bring them with you. We will need to bring all the tools that you need the use, as well as shovels, picks.

15th April Monga Fire Trail

Trip Leader: Bruce and Jenny Collins
 Contact: 6248 1352, 0417 381 352
 Vehicles: 8
 Grading: 2
 Departure: 8.15 for 8.30, Caltex Service Station, coast road, Bungendore
 Fuel: Full tank
 Requirements: Basic driver training well maintained vehicle, good tyres, water for the day, morning tea and lunch.

28th -29th April "Safe One" Basic Driver Training

This is the Club's official and accredited basic driver education course to be held at Talooge.

Contact: Peter Reynolds 6251 1258 (h) 0428 623 458

6th May "Safe one" Basic Driver Training Follow -Up Day

This is day three of the basic driver education course starting on the 28th -29th April 2007 and MUST be attended before participating on any Club trips where the proposed route is expected to be at Grade 2 or above.

12th May Badja Fire Trail Day Trip

Trip Leader: Rosemary Orr
 Contact: 6241 0454, 0414 568 358
 Vehicles: 8
 Grading: 2
 Departure: 8.15 for 8.30
 Fuel: Full tank
 Requirements: Basic driver training well maintained vehicle, good tyres, water for the day, morning tea and lunch.

TRIPS AND EVENTS



2nd-3rd June

Belowra – Meet The Committee

Trip Leader	Richard Brand 0418 568 358
Grade	2
Maximum vehicles	Unlimited
Departure	Several convoys tba
Departure time	8:00 to 8:30
Fuel	Full tank
Maps	tba

Requirements

Basic recovery gear including Berocca (use Google but turn down the volume). UHF radio. Happy hour snacks. Pot luck main course for dinner. Table decorations. Black tie. Lunch for two days plus breakfast. Off-Road Trailers welcome if tyres match towing vehicle. Canoe if you have one.

Comments

This is a major Club Event and this year combines a social evening with a great 4WD trip through the mountains nearly to the sea. The Club has booked a delightful sheltered campsite on private land at Belowra, close to the coast near Bodalla and right alongside the beautiful Turross river. There will be a formal black tie dinner, restaurant-style with maitre'd, candelabra, plus sumptuous desserts provided by the Club. Only your top half needs to be black tie – shorts and thongs are fine down-under. A number of the Committee will likely be cross-dressing ... and will then be inducted as only your maitre'd knows how. Please book as soon as possible so we can confirm the campsite booking, dessert catering, convoys and convoy routes. Off-road camping trailers will be catered for, and expect some entertaining competitions en-route and great prizes on the night.

16th June Micalong Ramble Day Trip

Trip Leader:	Catherine Panich
Contact:	6281 5175
Vehicles:	8
Grading:	2
Departure:	8.15 for 8.30
Fuel:	Full tank

30th June -1st July "Safe One" Basic Driver Training

This is the Club's official and accredited basic driver education course to be held at Talooge.

Contact: Peter Reynolds 6251 1258

TRIPS AND EVENTS



8th July

"Safe one" Basic Driver Training Follow Up Day

This is day three of the basic driver education course starting on the 28th -29th April 2007 and MUST be attended before participating on any Club trips where the proposed route is expected to be at Grade 2 or above.

14th -15th July

Christmas in July at Tumarumba

Trip Leader: Marg Jones
Contact: 6284 3456
Vehicles: Unlimited
Grading: 2
Departure: 8.15 for 8.30
Fuel: Full tank

Requirements: Basic driver training well maintained vehicle, good tyres, water for the day, and morning for both days and lunch.

July 2007

Centre of the Simpson & Geo Survey Hill

Trip Leader: Dave Sutton
Ph: (h) 6281 1484 (m) 0427 811 484
Vehicles: 8, sorry no trailers on this one; too difficult to tow.
Grade: 3 if wet and many sand dunes, big ones with big saw tooth tops
Departure: Approx middle of July
Fuel: 250 litres for medium petrol, 400 litres large petrol, 300 litres large diesel.
Maps: Hema Desert Mamps, Simpson Desert: 1:250,000 Simpson Desert South, Hale River and McDills.

Requirements: Basic Driver Training, basic recovery gear, UHF CB. You need a well maintained vehicle, with recent drive train and wheel bearing service. Vehicles need to be fitted with off-road tyres of LT construction with plenty of tread and carry tyre repair plugs and extra spare or tyre case. Due to amount of weight carried, after market, high quality, upgraded suspension is a necessity. Vehicles will need compressors and fitted, rated recovery hooks, basic tools and spares, fire extinguishers, Spinifex hooks and a 2 litre pressure sprayer. Participants will need to carry enough water and food for 10 days, not including weather delays and breakdowns. For those vehicles prone to Spinifex fires, it would be a good idea to remove the bash plates. This is a group trip and the whole group needs each other to get through; participants will be chosen by what they can offer to the group in the way of various life experience and expertise. Low tyre pressure will be the way to travel, and low mean very low!!!

Description: The plan is to start from Finke go to Old Andado and then head east on the start of Madigans Line. Continue east across country to Geo-Survey Hill and then head south down the dune corridors to the Centre of the Simpson. From there, try and follow the seismic shot lines to the east until we make it to the QAA line and then onto Birdsville. How we get to Finke is optional at this stage.

This should be the mother of all trips. It is a trip that few people attempt. Not a lot of info is available, but have been researching for 3 years now. This is all cross country, to areas not visited much by people. Many of the shot lines have disappeared and the sand dunes are big with a lot of shifting sand that can play havoc on hard tyres along with torturous Spinifex hummocks. Fifty kilometre a day will be normal, long and enjoyable day, but great campfires at night and the stars are fantastic.

19th August

Tallaganda State Forrest Day trip

TRIPS AND EVENTS



Trip Leader: Peter Fenwick
 Contact: 0412 866-375
 Vehicles: 8
 Grading: 2
 Departure: 8.15 for 8.30
 Fuel: Full tank
 Requirements: Basic driver training well maintained vehicle, good tyres, water for the day, morning tea and lunch for the day.

8th -9th September “Safe One” Basic Driver Training

This is the Club’s official and accredited basic driver education course to be held at Talooge.

Contact: Peter Reynolds 6251 1258

16th September “Safe one” Basic Driver Training Follow Up Day

This is day three of the basic driver education course starting on the 28th -29th April 2007 and MUST be attended before participating on any Club trips where the proposed route is expected to be at Grade 2 or above.

8th - 23rd September 2007 History, Wine & Animals

Trip Leaders: Kerry Blakston & Barry Woodyatt
 Contact: 62546695, blakston@westnet.com.au
 Vehicles: 6
 Grade: 2
 Departure: 8.15 for 8.30am start from National Dinosaur Museum, Barton Highway
 Fuel: Full at start

Requirements: Basic Recovery gear, UHF radio, good tyres, plenty of water.
 Vehicle Fees will apply in the National Parks.
 Gas stove for meal cooking as some camp sites in the National Parks do not allow open/fireplace cooking. No pets

Description: Destinations – Hay – Mungo NP – Little Desert NP – Grampians NP – Ballarat – Rutherglen – Weddin Mountains NP – Dubbo – Hill End Historic Site.

- We will be meeting up with the Milton-Ulladulla NP walking group at Mungo NP.
 There will be a 3 night stay to see the ancient history of this magic place.
 Some 4WD driving through the other National Parks.
 Australian history at Sovereign Hill - Ballarat
 Wine tours in Rutherglen.
 Animals at the Dubbo Zoo
 Big 4 camping at Hay, Ballarat & Dubbo
 Campsite camping in the National Parks
 This trip will be 2 weeks at a fairly leisurely pace, enjoying Australia’s beautiful landscape and some of Australia’s best wine.

TRIPS AND EVENTS



15th September MacIntyre's Hut and Flea Creek Day trip

Trip Leader: Peter Fenwick
Contact: 0412 866-375
Vehicles: 8
Grading: 2
Departure: 8:15 for 8:30, Uriarra Homestead
Fuel: Full tank

Requirements: Basic driver training well maintained vehicle, good tyres, water for the day, morning tea and lunch.

29th -30th September Willow Glen Competition

Trip Leader: Peter Reynolds
Contact: 6251 1258, 0428 623-458
Vehicles: Unlimited – Let's support our teams as we are the club champions for 2005 and 2006
Grading: 2
Departure: 8.15 for 8.30
Fuel: Full tank

13th -14th October Mount Dowling and Cowra Creek

Trip Leaders: Alan and Marj Jones
Contact: 6284 3456
Vehicles: 8
Grading: 2
Departure: 8.15 for 8.30, Williamsdale
Fuel: Full tank

Requirements: Basic driver training well maintained vehicle, good tyres, water for the day, morning tea and lunch.

27th October Water Crossing and Sand Driving Course

This is a club's official water crossing and sand driving course. For more information contact Peter Reynolds.

TRIPS AND EVENTS



3rd -9th November Snowy Mountains Trout Festival

Trip Leader: Peter Reynolds
Contact: 6251 1258 (h) 0428 623 458
Vehicles: 8
Grading: 2
Departure: TBA
Fuel: Full tank

Requirements: Basic driver training well maintained vehicle, good tyres, water for the day, morning tea and lunch.

17th November Postman's Track Ramble Day Trip

Trip Leader: Rick and Wendy Holland
Contact: 6292 6537, 0412 335-962
Vehicles: 8
Grading: 2
Departure: 8.15 for 8.30
Fuel: Full tank

Requirements: Basic driver training well maintained vehicle, good tyres, water for the day, morning tea and lunch.

9th 10th February 2008 4Wheel Drive Spectacular and Camping Show - a fun weekend!!!!

The advertisement is for Lee & Thomas Auto Electrics. It features a large red banner at the top with the company name in white. Below this, a list of services is provided, including general auto electrical repairs, batteries, air conditioning, and car immobilisers. The ad also mentions a showroom and workshop at 95 Grenville St, Phillip, with a phone number 6281 1455. Logos for Battery World, MTA, and Bosch are included. On the right side, there is an image of a green and black mobile service unit on wheels with a monitor on top.

LEE & THOMAS
Auto Electrics
EST. 1960

- General Auto Electrical Repairs
- Batteries & Accessories
- Airconditioning Servicing
- Exchange Alternators & Starter Motors
- Car Immobilisers

SHOWROOM & WORKSHOP
@ 95 Grenville St.
Phillip
6281 1455
Fax 6285 2737

OPEN MON - FRI
8.00am - 5.00pm
SATURDAY
8.00am - 12.00

Battery World
Mobile Service Unit

MTA

BOSCH

"SAFE ONE" BASIC 4WD VEHICLE OPERATION COURSE

*The Southern Tablelands Four Wheel Drive Club will conduct **two-day Driver Training** exercises on 28th - 29th April, 30th June—1st July, and 8th—9th September 2007*

Follow-up Days** will be held on **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 8.00 am on Saturday.

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 COURSE TO CONFIRM ATTENDANCE!
IF YOU DON'T, YOU WILL LOSE YOUR PLACE ON THE COURSE**

ONLY ONE DRIVER PER VEHICLE PER COURSE ALLOWED

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.

Propagating Seeds from Talooge Park

March 22

Graeme Kruse

Participants:

Marj Jones
John Kjar
Theo Cassidy
Marg Swindley
Ros Hanigan
Graeme Kruse

Recently I emailed some ST4WDC members regarding an Envirofund working bee where I proposed we try our hand at propagating some of our seed freshly collected from Talooge. In reply Val Wiseman suggested that I approach Greening Australia to run a propagation workshop for us using our own seed. So a couple of days later I contacted Greening Australia with my enquiry. "Yeh, that's possible", and within moments I had arranged to meet Brian at the GA premises at Aranda to sort out the details and have a sticky beak at their set up.

Meeting day with GA. Well, living in Theodore which north side wags refer to as North Cooma, I better check the street directory before charging off. Ah ha, just beside Aranda Primary School on Bandjalong Crescent. Easy!

Within minutes of meeting Brian and outlining how the plants were to be used Brian asked, "When would you like to do this?" Not wanting to miss an opportunity, I suggested Thursday March 22. Ten o'clock to 12? That will be fine! I discussed a few more details with Brian while we toured the propagation area. I departed a very happy person having been able to arrange a seed propagation workshop so easily.

The workshop would enable ST4WDC members to learn how to grow our own plants from the seed we had already collected. In

addition to using our own seed we would also be able to propagate other native species from seed supplied by GA. These other native species can be used for amenity plantings at Talooge where they will help develop micro-environments that small birds, reptiles and insects will be attracted to.

The next step was to get a small group together for the propagation workshop. A short announcement at the AGM and I had the required small group keen to try their hand at something new and different.

Propagation day! After a short talk and demonstration by Brian we are ready to begin. The process was remarkably simple. Plastic propagating tubes are placed into a tray that holds 20 tubes. Each tray is then placed onto a long, open-mesh topped trolley that holds 20 trays - 400 tubes per trolley load. When the trolley is fully loaded with trays it is wheeled over to the heap of potting mix. We shovelled potting mix into the pots and levelled them off - very fast and efficient. The trolleys were returned to the workbench where the contents of the pots were firmed down before adding the seed.

We began with seeds of Eucalyptus (gums), Melaleuca (ti-tree) and Callistemon (bottle brush). All these have extremely fine seed - so fine a pinch would do about 20 to 30 tubes! Each tube only needed the smallest sprinkle of seed. As these tubes were starting out in the hot house there was no need to cover the seed. If they were to be propagated outside then a very thin topping would be required

to prevent the seed from being dislodged from the tube during rain. For each tray of tubes a label was made up indicating the species and date sown.

After the fine seeded species were sown we moved onto the larger seeded species, in this case Acacias or wattles. We selected 6 species, three indigenous to Talooge - *Acacia rubida* (Red-stem Wattle), *A. dealbata* (Silver Wattle) and *A. penninervis* (Hickory Wattle), and three that occur elsewhere in the Southern Tablelands - *A. convenyi* (Bluebush), *A. boormanii* (Snowy River Wattle) and *A. melanoxylon* (Blackwood).

Acacia seeds need special treatment prior to sowing to allow water to penetrate their very hard coat. The treatment however is simple. Place the seed in a container and pour on just-boiled water and leave for a few hours. The seed we used had already been treated so it just needed to be placed on top of the mix in the tube. Acacia seed has to be covered with sand even if it is going into the hot house. If this seed is not covered the new roots circle round on top of the propagating mix rather than burrowing down into it, and the new plants end up dying.

By 12:15pm we began tidying up. The last trolley of trays was placed into the hot house, loose potting mix swept up and unused tubes and trays stored away. It was now 12:30pm - the workshop was only scheduled to run until 12:00. All agreed that they had found the workshop most interesting. We were amazed at how simple the whole process was and the number of tubes we were able to sow with seed in a little over 2hr - all up 1600!!! In the coming weeks we will wait for the seedlings to emerge then return to thin them out to one strong

seedling per tube – a small pair of scissors and nimble fingers does this job nicely.

Many thanks go to Brian Cumberland of Greening Australia and to the members of ST4WDC who turned out for this most enjoyable morning.

ST4WDC will probably not use all the plants that result from this and subsequent workshops, but they will not be wasted. Those that we do not plant out for environmental improvement at Talooge Park will go towards community tree planting projects conducted around the region by Greening Australia.

These seedlings have the potential grow into plants ranging from medium to tall shrubs to medium size trees. As they grow these seedlings will take carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Consequently, by growing these seedlings we are not only improving the environment at Talooge Park, we are benefiting the environment at large by contributing to a reduction in green house gases.

Another way of looking at it - the Club has established and is actively engaging in our very own carbon-offset scheme!



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	\$70.00
Shirts:	\$35.00
Vests:	\$45.00
Caps:	\$15.00
Hat:	\$15.00
Beanies:	\$15.00
Name Badges	\$10.00

Look for the sign on a table at
Meetings



Equipment Report

Trailers—Part 2

Kevin Dawes

Tyres, Air Pressures and Off-Road Trailers.

When we bought our off-road trailer four years ago, the manufacturer, dealer and tyre suppliers all stressed how important it was to run the trailer tyres at 40psi. There was never any mention of load, speed, road (or track) surface or type of tyre. The magic number was always 40. In my ignorance we took our trailer to Coburg Peninsular nicely inflated to 40psi. The 'roads' in Arnhem Land are not maintained and the corrugations can hold their own in any company. The damage to the contents of the trailer could only be described as horrific. Every item that could come to pieces did so and anything that could impact itself into tiny remnants soon joined the rest of the sorry lot. At this stage I was concentrating only on the contents and had yet to focus on the damage that must be going on to the trailer. Back on bitumen was never such a welcome experience.

Back home and battle-worn, I talked to numerous people of this problem. The magic 40 number just kept coming up until I came across a bloke who suggested that I keep letting the tyres down until the trailer stopped bouncing. Thinking to myself that even a trailer without wheels would bounce I nevertheless liked the logic in the idea so much that I decided to try it and ignore the fact that my tyres would wear out in a few kilometres.

On my next 15,000km trip north, I ran the trailer tyres on 18 – 20 psi. The difference in every aspect was unbelievable. On both gravel and bitumen the tyre temperatures remained well within expectation. The trailer even stopped bouncing on bitumen, which it had been doing at 40 psi.

I was also nicely shocked to notice that there was minimum wear on my trailer tyres. This was a surprise as I had already made the advanced decision to include the tyres in with the other consumable costs for the trip. I have since learnt that many experienced 4Wdrivers consider both car and trailer tyres as one of their consumable costs. This seems a great way to go. Back on track – the trailer tyres don't have any driving force as do the 4WD tyres and therefore there is minimum wear. The trailer tyres just roll along.



Megan

On a recent Club trip through the Simpson Desert/Hay River our convoy was lucky enough to have extensive training on hot, dry, powdery sand dunes, including Big Red. The convoy included six trailers and their pressures were taken as low as 7 psi. Towing vehicles were let down to 15psi back and 10psi front. Most people that I've related this to shake their head in disbelief. It would only be provocative to tell them that we were prepared to go even lower if needed. Other convoys watched in disbelief as the trailers so successfully crossed dune after dune where single vehicles were having serious difficulties.

I found that there was little point in taking my trailer below about 12psi. At lower pressures I rolled two tyres, wrecking one of them. I had no problems at 12 psi because the tyres are only trailing the vehicle and have no driving force to cut them into the sand. The vehicle tyres are the ones doing the real work and these really perform at such low pressures.

Between the dunes, along creeks, corrugations and ruts, the low tyre pressures were so good that I found myself reluctant to inflate them. The vehicle and the trailer were using the soft tyres to absorb most of the shocks. The more I appreciated just how much, the happier I was to go slowly, save my rig and to treat my tyres as a consumable.

Going south on the CSR we crossed the “Big Red” dune equivalent known as “The Whopper” near Well 22. Our trip notes indicated that from here the dunes were much smaller. To save the tyres a bit, as I could see the tell-tale wear signs of under-inflated tyres and it was still a long way to home, I pumped a few extra pounds into them. I immediately felt the tyres cutting into the small dunes and felt the extra hammering of the corrugations. Our decision was simple. Take the air back out!

Those lucky members who have crossed the Old Abandoned Gunbarrel will never forget the corrugations. They’re no worse than the OTL – they just go on forever! We kept the tyres on the 4WD and the trailer at their low pressures. At camp one night I changed a faulty shock absorber on the front of the 4WD. (I later had this replaced under warranty) but no other damage was evident to any of the rig.

Back home from our recent trip I considered the consumable tyre theory. We had done 18,000 km and 110 days on some of our best outback challenges, including many detours such as Patjar Art Community 100km north of Million Dollar Corner on the Old Abandoned Gunbarrel, Blackstone, Wingelina, etc. The results were great. The score for the whole trip was one destroyed tyre on the trailer, another rolled tyre on the trailer, and a slow leak on the trailer (from sand in the nozzle). There was one screw puncture on the 4WD. The tyres on the 4WD were

not new when we left but in good condition. Now, they have lots of tread in the middle but are fairly worn on the outside edges – the classic symptoms of an under inflated tyre. The trailer tyres show similar signs of under inflation but have nowhere near as much wear. I would have no hesitation on using the trailer tyres on the next trip. I think I would use the 4WD tyres again but take another extra new tyre. I carried 3 spares for the 4WD last trip and 2 spares for the trailer.

Were we lucky? Possibly, but listening to the experience of others I would do all my future trips using the tyres as consumables. It also reinforced for me the theory that low pressure tyres don’t get as many punctures.

Most of the above is not particularly new but I hope some is thought provoking and may prompt you to put your own ideas or experiences forward.



Have you been to these places?

(Hint—They are on a forthcoming trip led by Barry and Kerry)

Answers Page 37

**PLACES TO
GO
WHERE ARE THEY?**



Major Trip Report

Simpson Desert

August 2006

Peter and Gwen Henderson

Leaders

Peter and Gwen Henderson

GQ Patrol Turbo Diesel

Participants

Gus and Judy Sinclair

Prado Turbo Diesel

Charlie and Frances Dalli

80 Series Diesel (non turbo)

Gordon and Roger (aka the Love Bunnies)

Prado Petrol

Steve and Jane Burgin

80 Series Petrol

Peter and Chas Jolly

Lexus V8 Petrol

Day 1 – Canberra to Mildura - Gwen

Up very early 4am (not slept well, too excited) to meet the Dalli's and Love Bunnies at Hall by 6am. Very cold!! At 5.20am Peter realized he had lost his leather man times two and remote thingy for his mini disc player. An anxious 20 minutes trying to find it. Then the palm thingy went on the blink, a trip with no music and no maps (so what!!) We are the trip leaders we CAN NOT be late!! Finally met the others at Hall then on to Yass to meet the Berg's then on to Gundagai (still very cold). Here I managed to find the leather men and remote thingy so 2 out of three problems solved, we have music and handy tools but still no digital maps. Back on the road and lots of chat. Bergs had verbal diarrhea, though we all had lots of laughs.

Morning Tea at the Dog, clean cars, clean people!



Made very good time all day and arrived in Mildura 4ish, where everyone set up camp and opened beers or whatever. A very mild and pleasant evening, no rugby for Roger aka Peach Blossom. All were in bed by 9.30pm, very early for the Hendo's.

Day 2 - Mildura to Hawker - Peter H

Lay there at night pondering issue of palm thingy (really an iPaq) – brainwave! Find an internet connection, download OzExplorer CE! Not easy in Mildura on a Sunday morning. But there was an internet café, solved, found had maps again!

The rest of the group had headed off to Renmark, all met up at Woolies for the veggies shop, lunch by the beautiful Murray River. Then over to Morgan, crossed Murray River on a ferry, and thence to Burra for smoko, and on to Peterborough, where we met Peter Jolly and his brother Chas.

Highlights of the day:-

Clear blue skies and no wind (we all know the “W” word is forbidden when camping).

Jane's story about her chickens and her beautiful cock, called Bruce.

Burgin's jerry cans being blown off the roof rack by a speeding semi, luckily Charlie and Francis saw them and recovered them.

Much discussion about the Hendo's microphone technique (or lack thereof).

Arrived Hawker 5.30ish not 6.30ish (gosh when you cross the border do you put your watch forward half an hour or back half an hour, lucky someone knew, not me). Met Gus and Judy, occupants of our 6th and final vehicle on the trip, set up camp, drank beer, dinner, red wine, and all gathered in the camp kitchen for a social time. This set the theme for the rest of the trip. Jane announced her quiz/quest which would run for the trip, with a winner at the end. Some people chose to cheat (a legal maneuver) from the outset.

Day 3 – Hawker to Coward Springs - Gus

The morning was crisp (no “W”) suggesting a beautiful day to come. We left Hawker and headed north past the

Flinders Ranges. They looked great with the morning sun and a mist hanging over them. Parachilna township came next and we passed the historic township of Beltana.

We had morning tea at Leigh Creek Coalfield lookout. Steve had a lovely time playing in the cabin of a big old drag line, obviously not in use anymore. A tyre off a dump truck was on display it had done 289,000 km, a world record at that time. Lyndhurst next town, went past the Elsewhere Hotel and out to Talc Alf's place, a must see if in this area. Alf carves art pieces out of talc stone. Lunch stop was at the ruins of Farina where they tried unsuccessfully to farm wheat. Looking at it now we couldn't believe that anyone would even dream of growing anything at all in the rough rocky ground.

Next up was Maree where the Oodnadatta track meets the Birdsville track. We stopped briefly at Lake Eyre South and then on to the Bubbler Mounds just before pulling into our night camp at Coward Springs where we enjoyed our first campfire.

Day 4 – Coward Springs to Dalhousie Springs - Chas

Today began with an early start, cranking up the chip heater for a hot (hot?? Mine wasn't. Brrrr!) shower. Coward Springs was an excellent bush camp and many of us were a little slow following our convivial gathering around the camp fire last night (no "W"). We planned a 9.00 am start and were well on the way by 9.20am, heading for Dalhousie over 400 km away, across a series of mound springs and the Old Ghan railway line.

Our first port of call was William Creek where we ate morning tea and checked out the famous pub with its walls lined with business cards and graffiti greetings. The track was in top condition and it felt more like riding in a Toorak Taxi rather than supposedly roughing it out in the outback. At lunch time we detoured a short distance to the Peake Telegraph station to check out the ruins. It was active for a decade in the late 1800's as a repeater station, but telegraphic technology soon made it redundant.

Then back on the road by 13.30, heading for the Pink Roadhouse at Oodnadatta for fuel and another FAT FIX. On the way some of us detoured to inspect the Algebuckina Bridge where the old Ghan used to cross the Neales River. It is South Australia's longest single lane bridge and was notorious in its time as the site of a number of murders.

The Oodnadatta Roadhouse was a hive of activity as we filled with fuel and calculated fuel efficiencies. Needless to say, Peter and Chas on their LX470 were the least efficient but still managed a creditable 18L/100km from Hawker.

Dropping the tyres to about 20 psi – a very rocky road to Dalhousie

We still had another 183km to travel when we left Oodnadatta to reach Dalhousie Springs where we planned to spend the night. Tyre pressures were reduced to cope with the corrugations and sharp rocks that littered the track. At dusk, the wind dropped, tail end Charlie, Charlie and Frances had a really hard time of it and had to drop back about four kilometers. It was dark by the time we reached the campsite but



we were soon organised and back around the campfire.

Day 5 – Dalhousie to Mt Dare and back - Frances & Charlie

Woke up to another beautiful day, (no 'W'). Much more relaxed than the days before because we did not have to pack up tents today. Most of us went for a dip in the warm spring, which felt like heaven. How amazing it is in the middle of nowhere to come to such wonderful places. We all went to Mt Dare to refuel and fill jerry cans as tomorrow we would be starting the Simpson Desert crossing.

Chas, Charlie and Frances Swimming in Dalhousie Springs

Gus and Judy stayed behind and watched the tents, many thanks. Arriving at Mt Dare Steve noticed his shovel was missing. We all know the trusty shovel is essential when bush camping, oh dear where was it? The next car to pull in said they had seen a shovel on the road not far from Dalhousie, so all the way back we were on shovel alert. But we never saw a single shovel. We had lunch at Mt Dare Hotel, the menu was very limited, had steak on the menu for dinner



(Charlie was keen) but for lunch we could only get pies or sandwiches.

Steve filling the Camel at Mt Dare

Back at camp every one relaxed some more and went for another dip. It is not something you can do everyday so we need to make the most of the opportunity. The 30mm Dalhousie goby fish graze on algae, eat snails and pick at human hairs, it is all part of nature.

Many thanks to Peter and Gwen for having us on this trip, we have been on other trips before but with Peter and Gwen we feel safe, and appreciate how they care for every member of the group. Well done.

Day 6 – Dalhousie to Georges Corner (154 kms) -



Gordon

We woke to another fine morning (still no “W”), cold and very clear. But the water was warm and the fish were biting, so it was breakfast and swim (not necessarily in that order) and then a 10.00 am departure. The road to Purnie Bore was like the curate’s egg - good in parts. We had a long detour that offered different driving conditions and a few load settlers.

Magnificent Poles at Purnie Bore

Steve took the fashion award – most colour coordinated. Flag wise, the long poles had a mixed day. Our fearless leader and Gordon and Roger (love bunny and peach blossom) had pole failures and had to stop for running repairs. Steve was the only one who kept his up all day. Short poles fared better, even if less spectacular.

The desert was in bloom with wildflowers on the French Line. We stopped to capture them on film/digital. Lunch a Purnie Bore. Some other selfish people had commandeered the picnic table, so we had to use our own facilities.



Both the French Line and the Rig Road were better than expected in parts, but there were quite severe ridges and dips that caused the loads to move about and flexed the suspension. Part of the convoy stopped when Steve showed his dangly bits – a nitro charger cylinder had come unglued due to metal fatigue in a bracket. After some temporary repairs we were under way again.

Steve repairing his shock absorber mounting brackets

Overall, the vegetation varied from scant bushes to reasonably well treed. We set up camp just below a sand dune between Jinnie’s and George’s corners. Then it was time for a beer and Boule (see full separate sports report for Simpson Desert Boule Championship). The winners of the first round were Frances and Charlie and second round were Peter and Chas (were they cheating again!)

An evening meal beneath the stars was a communal cook-your-own event. We were treated to a glorious moonrise and a spontaneous rendition of "Advance Australia Fair" by the (almost) entire ensemble. Thus the birth of the Southern Tablelands Outback Choir. Thanks to Charlie the fireman for the largest, hottest



fire I've seen in ages.

Day 6 – Georges Corner to Knolls Track (154 kms) - Judy

The Lone Gum Tree on the Knolls Track

Another beautiful morning in paradise (and unbelievably still no "W"). Left camp at 10.00am as planned with the temperature at 17 degrees (thanks PJ). We turned on to the Erabena Track and headed up to the Lone Gum Tree for lunch. The tree is actually a coolibah and these trees usually grow around watercourses. There is no water here, and the origin of the tree is not known.

We encountered only one vehicle today, a couple travelling without a radio. Then along the K1 Line and left at Knolls Track. The scenery was very similar to yesterdays but perhaps not so many flowers. Camp was set up 20 kms short of the French Line and we had another great fire.

The Boule championship continued, the Jollys at first



led by 6-0 but eventually folded 7-6 after an on rush

by Roger and Gordon. All sorts of tricks were used, such as playing in the rough, to no avail! A brutal encounter by all reports, the only light note being a flasher with yellow underpants on – an ant being the excuse.

By dark the milky way was enthralling us, then the huge moon popped over the sand dune. The Choir formed again to sing Waltzing Matilda and several Australian poems were recited. Thanks Jane for the poems. Another great night!

Day 7 - Knolls Track to French Line (97 kms) - Peter J

Only 100km today but it was all interesting. We got away ten minutes earlier than planned from our overnight camp on the Knolls Track, 15 km south of the French Line. We stopped 1km short of the intersection to collect wood and then proceeded along the French Line to a clay pan 11 km short of Poeppels Corner. The pogo like sand hills were causing excessive pitching in the Lexus so we firmed up the suspension on the fly. Much better.

Along the French Line the sand dunes were becoming more challenging (interesting) by the hour. At Poeppels corner we paused to celebrate the three state boundaries (SA, QLD, NT) with some photographs before proceeding to the K1 Line adjacent to salt lakes to head north to join the QAA Line.

Poeppels Corner Group

Steve and Jane lost some wood from their roof rack that landed on their bonnet and caused minor damage. At 4pm as planned, we set up camp about 100 km short of Big Red. The grand final of the Boule Desert Challenge occurred with Charlie (Camillo) and Frances defeating Gordon and Roger. Charlie and Frances were immediately challenged unsuccessfully by Peter and Chas Jolly. Our second group dinner in the Desert provided Peter and Chas the opportunity to wear ties, display their tablecloth and enjoy the fireside. Gus and Judy won the table decoration stakes with flower arrangement by marshmallows. Chas recited most of the "Man from Ironbark" from memory.

Frances and Charlie, ST4WDC Desert Boule Champs

Only 2 vehicles were encountered on the day – one on the K1 line (he wasn't taking his trailer over



Peter H 3 attempts, (must remember to engage diff lock) then the pensioner pass, but still OVER Big Red

Gordon 3 attempts, successful

Steve 3 attempts, 1 on the right hand track, then successful on the main track.

Charlie 2 attempts – pensioner route (right hand track)

Gus – 2 attempts – pensioner route

All eventually made it OVER Big Red on one track or another. Star of the day – Steve for getting up Big Red in the oldest vehicle. The other oldest vehicles made it over via the pensioners pass!!

From Big Red to Birdsville the sand hills are separated by very broad plains of red gibber.

1500 arrived at Birdsville – shower (first since Tuesday), shave, shit and a shampoo - oh bugger its civilization

the dunes, he was heading south) and the second on the QAA line. Steve broke his second shock absorber bracket, so much for Old Man Emu suspensions. His temporary repairs have kept him mobile.

Day 8 – French Line to Birdsville (127 kms)
- Roger (in a hurry PUB TIME)

We left the campsite heading along the QAA Line to Big Red (100km). The desert was white or red undulating sand spaced by sand hills of increasing height. We encountered a group which had just broken camp and were heading West.

The next change of terrain was to relatively flat valley with gibber stones interspersed with the occasional saltpan. The desert floor was awash with plenty of small fresh



Fuel Consumption Challenge

growth. We encountered a 4 vehicle group from Canberra going west. Just prior to Eyre creek there was a significant vegetation change to Coolibah trees and thicker scrub. The sand hills were getting higher. Across one of the wider flats we passed through the now dysfunctional dog proof fence. We arrived at Big Red.

Steve and Jane get over Big Red

Attempts at Big Red:

PJ 1st time

Distance Mt Dare to Birdsville - 609 kms

Driver	Car	Fuel	litres/100
Charlie and Francis	80 Diesel	85	13.96
Hendos	GQ Diesel	97.13	15.94
Gus and Judy*	Prado Diesel	120	16.66
Gordon and Roger	Prado Petrol	120.5	19.79
Steve and Jane	89 Petrol	123.5	20.28
Peter and Chas	Lexus V8	137.5	22.58

*Gus's distance is from Oodnadatta

Dinner at the Birdsville Pub - Gwen & Peter

We all enjoyed a few beers before dinner in the famous bar, where the decorations are really interesting. We all looked so fresh and clean and smelled so good. Nothing like that shower after how many days? We sat outside in the warm evening air for a lovely dinner and plenty of that Birdsville red.

Marvellous what a shower will do!

Gwen, Judy, Jane and Frances on their big night out.

Still the weather amazes us - we have had very warm (mid to high 20's) days, absolutely no "W". The insects have been very kind to us, hardly any mosquitoes and minimal flies; our biggest insect problem was on our first night in the desert with moths, but they only get in the way they don't bite. Jane had the biggest problem



when the moths decided to take a dip en mass in the oil for her

chips.

Dinner at the pub over, Peter J found the wonkiest piano ever, and the ST4WD Choir gathered for more singing now we could practice with accompaniment. Chas played "Hit the Road" with Peter H improvising blues, Peter H played, then back to Peter J much to the delight of all pub patrons. We all strolled back to the caravan park for more fun (beer) around the campfire. Not all other campers appreciated this so we quietly slunk off to bed. I guess being clean, well fed and watered (beered) had made some a little frisky.

Peter H finally managed to locate and purchase a new microphone for his UHF radio. Hopefully now he won't have to repeat everything he says. We finally worked out it was not his microphone technique that made him sound like he was underwater with a mouth full of marbles but the dodgy old microphone. No one recognized his voice when he asked for a radio check.

Day 9 – Birdsville to Innamincka (378 kms) - Chas J

We made a leisurely start to the day with individual tours of Birdsville. (Still warm still no "W") For most of us this meant finding a cup of coffee somewhere and a look at the Birdsville Bakery. (How many camel pies and hamburgers did Charlie eat?) After a stop at the pub to replenish supplies and with fuel and air topped up we headed out on the Birdsville Track until we got to the Walker's Crossing Track turn off. We kept a look out for the Page memorial where the whole family perished, unfortunately we missed it.

The Track was in excellent condition, rather like a "major highway" and we sat on about 90 kph with tyre pressures in the mid 20's. We assembled at the Walker's Crossing turn off and headed down the track to Innamincka and the driving challenge started. It was one of those roads which vary constantly and full concentration was required every second. We passed a stationary vehicle that had stopped to retrieve a broken aerial and passed two antique red fire engines from Clare in SA also heading for Innamincka.. Why were they out there? Because they can.



Very bleak country at the Birdsville/Walkers Crossing track intersection

We stopped for lunch at Walker's Crossing and settled under the shade of Coolibah trees with temperature on 25 degrees (as usual). After a pleasant break we continued on the track to Innamincka. According to GPS readings the track seemed sometimes to actually be heading away from our destination and the track became very dusty. We saw lots of oil and gas wells between Walker's Crossing and Innamincka.

Our ETA slipped back an hour or so and we rolled into Innamincka around 5 pm. We decided to set up camp at the Cullyamurra Water hole on Coopers Creek about 12 km from town. Jane again set up the entertainment around the campfire and amused us with a series of charade scenarios.

We have had a long challenging day with driving but the cars all behaved beautifully. Steve was the only one to have a problem and that was a stress fracture to a plumbing bracket that held the "water pipe" pole storage compartment on his roof rack. As he had done about 80,000 km with the bracket in place it would be difficult to class this problem as a design fault. Peter H's new microphone greatly improved communications.

Day 10 – Around Innamincka - Peter J

A rest day at Innamincka (no "W"). The Cullyamurra Water hole was a beautiful camping spot on the banks of Cooper Creek. In the morning we traveled in convoy to the Dig Tree – a base camp for the Burke & Wills Expedition from Melbourne to the Gulf of Car-

pentaria. Many of the expedition members perished. After a good meal at the Pub for lunch, we individually visited the memorial stones for Burke's Grave, Wills Grave and King's marker. King survived with the help of the local aborigines and died ten years later in Melbourne. This has been an intriguing trek through history.

Another meal in the pub – a very social group

An attempt at fishing the Cooper Creek was unsuccessful so we settled in to our usual camp dinner (in our case cooked on the supplied barbeques). Another great day was capped by an evening of entertainment led by Jane. As this was the last night for Gus



& Judy Sinclair we had the final of the Quiz/Challenge that had been running for the whole trip. The winners were Gwen and Peter Henderson by a narrow margin.

Day 11 – Innamincka to Tibooburra via Camerons Corner - Gwen

Another fine and sunny morning, we have really been blessed with the weather. Our weatherman Pete J gives us a temperature reading throughout each day. Today was a balmy 25-26. Then the four letter word (“W”) came up!

Sad parting from Judy and Gus, as with all ST4WD trips you might set out with strangers but you come home with lovely new friends. Then into Innamincka for refueling and airing up for the high speed dirt run down to Tibooburra along the Old Strezlecki Track. This is not a track now, but an excellent highway, that has probably been upgraded to service the Moomba oil and gas fields.

Stopped at Cameron’s corner for lunch, best steak and onion sanger ever! A couple we met there had been there for a week with broken bits on their 1 year old camper trailer, this was its first big outing. Cameron’s corner is not a place you want to spend a week in, they were still waiting for parts when we left. A good reason to carry spares.

Warri Gate – leave gates how you find them. Leaving Camerons Corner

The wind was following us, and it was really strong and very unpleasant, still this is the first day the weather was less than ideal. After we were blown into Tibooburra Charlie mentioned he was having brake problems, so once we all set up camp we had the communal bleeding of the brakes – you know – it was like bonnet up – bees to honey! Thank you to

By dinner the wind had dropped, so after dinner it was decided to do a trip to the Family Hotel to view the Clifton Pugh nudes. What a good idea! This turned into a very convivial evening of art appreciation, the paintings being very nude and graphic. Back at camp another communal event, the fixing of something to make Steve’s fridge work. The wind that had died down before dinner picked up severely through the night, flapping bits of tin and stirring the squeaky windmill. The early morning birds made for an early start.

Day 12 – Tibooburra to Broken Hill - Gwen

Our last day of the Trip. As trip leaders we feel very sad, but all Pete’s planning has come out right, and that’s an achievement! Everyone seems happy with the trip, but we are still sad that we will all go our separate ways tomorrow.

Another fantastic high speed dirt run to Broken Hill - well it was actually dirt, bitumen, dirt, bitumen, dirt, bitumen. A whistle stop tour of Milparinka, morning tea/lunch at Packsaddle (love the name) then on to the Hill where some took cabins. Our early arrival at Broken Hill gave time to look around, and for some a trip out to the sculptures on the hill to watch that famous sunset.

A bus picked us all up at 7 pm from the campground, and we were off to dinner at the Musicians Club sans musicians. Our last gathering as a group. Sad sad sad. Big thank you to Peter for all his organization. Big thank you to all our new and old friends for their company, for joining us and for being on time when needed. Although Peter was heard muttering it was like herding cats a few times.



Steve and to all the others who helped out by holding car doors open or leaning on the car to keep it up right and holding Steve’s beer, as well as their own.

Advanced Driver Training Course

25th-26- November 2006

Jillian Hayes

Participants:

Dave Buckley & co-driver
Thommo and Chris
Jillian & Richard
Chris & Nick

Well the time had come - it was my turn to do the advanced driver training course. I thought that I was ready, both mentally and in my driving ability. Little did I have to learn? Leaving the pre training session I was asking myself three questions that Peter always asks - although mine may have been slightly different. I asked "what am I doing?" "are you crazy Jillian?" then "do I have to do this?".

Well I did it. Why was I so scared, I have driven hills like this before? But the hills - or I should say slopes - we went up on the pre-day session I had not done before. Luckily (or unluckily for the instructor) I had an instructor who was fantastic the whole day. However I did get stuck and they had to winch me up. This was my first time ever to be recovered by winch and it was very scary. However, I guessed there was more to come of that, considering the course I was about to do.

After this first day we had another two weeks to think about the whole course that was about to hit us. Finally the day came and it was time to do this almighty course, the one to "make or break you". That is what I had been told. I drove down to the course by myself, and my trusty sit-in friend Richard Brand was to meet me there the next day. I was hoping that he remembered my chains.

When we arrived at the training site I wondered "what are they talking about; I didn't even have it in 4wd to get here. It can't be that hard?" We set up camp had a very early night. Apparently I had a hard day in front of me.

The next day we split up into our two groups. My group was the B team and our instructors were Duck and Simon. My sit in buddy did turn up and he brought my chains but said that he forgot the tent. I replied "well you will be cold tonight". He was later informed that we had a Tifor instead of a winch and he was devastated.

So we went off for our little drive in the county and I then saw what every one was talking about. Again I thought "do I have to go down this?" Nevertheless we drove around and did some fantastic tracks after I got my line right - and it was not a good idea to get the line wrong out there.

After lunch we went up to the ledge - the ledge that we all feared. We sat there, or in Richard's case slept, on the back of Dave's truck for over an hour, listening to Peter talking over the radio in his ever-so-calm voice trying to get us up the hill. By this stage I just wanted the radios off so we heard no more. I was now really scared - the nerves had kicked in big time and all the tummy butterflies were going.

Then it was our turn to head up the hill. Dave was first up and did a great job as he got to at least the second ledge. Then he had the winch so that was an easier recovery. Thommo was second up but he got held up on the first ledge. So he went back and had a another try and this time made it up to about where Dave had got to. Then came the first manual winch, and although it was about 40 in the shade we had to get him up the hill. We did it!

Now it was my turn. I didn't get far on the first attempt so backed down and had another go and made it up past the second ledge. I also had a Tifor, so the guys were complaining that they had to get me up the hill. On came Chris who was the last one in our group. He also got to about the same spot as Dave, but then he had a winch. We had all made it up, and felt fantastic at having done that. Our confidence soared after the ledge.

We made our way back to camp, thankful that I did not have to cook, as I was exhausted. Plod gave us a fantastic diner; he had been back at camp fighting goannas all day and cooking up a storm. Thank you Plod.

The next day we had a challenge between the two teams. The instructors had made up a course and we had to get all four of our vehicles up in the fastest time. That was a challenge and lots of fun.

During the course I had a ball and learnt so much. I drove to the best of my ability and didn't kill Richard or myself. I was not too scared in the end, and I was the only person not to damage their vehicle! The instructors were the best and I would like to thank them for the time and effort that they put in for us on this great weekend.

Go and do it!!!!

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Abandoned Tin Dredge—Atherton Tablelands N Qld

Where is it? (from page 27)

1. Mungo National Park, SW NSW : Moving sand dunes near Vigars Well on the eastern side of the lunette. The well contains water and was dug as a watering stop for Cobb and Co. Coaches before the teams (and passengers!) took the coaches over the dunes.
2. Grampians National Park, Victoria.

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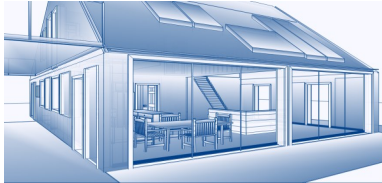
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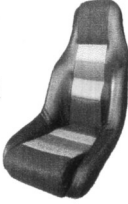
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NEW MEMBER APPLICATION

SOUTHERN TABLELANDS 4WD CLUB INC.

PO BOX 661 FYSHWICK ACT 2609



First year membership \$330. Ongoing Years \$100

The Club membership year runs from 1 January to 31 December. (Rates effective 1st January 2004.)

Please forward this form and your cheque/money order to ST4WDC at the above address.

Membership entitles the member and partner to attend the Club's training courses, including Basic 4WD Vehicle Operation Course, Very Difficult Terrain & Advanced Recovery, River Crossings, Sand Driving, Mud & Snow Driving, and Navigation, Map Reading & GPS courses.

Full membership of the Club (and participation as a driver on Grade 2-5 trips) requires successful completion of the Club's Basic Driver Education course, or recognised equivalent prior learning/qualification approved by the Club's Education Coordinator.

Following the Club's acceptance of your membership application, you should contact the Club's Education Coordinator (Mr Peter Reynolds, 6251 1258 ah or 0428-623-458 w.) to be allocated the next-available position on a scheduled Basic course. If you are unable to attend the allocated course, you will be allocated the next-available position on a later course.

Member 1: (Preferred first name, last name)

Member 2: (Preferred first name, last name)

.....

Address:

Suburb: State: Postcode:

E-mail:

Preferred contact phone (h) (w) (m)

Vehicle Make: Model: Registration No.

(Optional) Personal Details: Member 1

Member 2

(Occupation)

.....

(Relevant skills/additional info.)

.....

Upon acceptance of this application, then for the duration of my membership, I agree to abide by the Constitution of the Southern Tablelands Four Wheel Drive Club Inc, together with any Club By-laws as they apply from time to time.

Signed: (Member 1)..... Date:

Signed: (Member 2)..... Date:

Form & fees received: Fees forwarded to Treasurer:

Membership database updated: Membership package despatched:

Membership Card: Receipt Number:

Training Surcharge (\$200) paid Total received: \$.....

Other comments: