



SOUTHERN TRAILS

August 2016

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President's Post

Welcome to new committee member Terri Giuretis, who has been appointed to the Publications Coordinator position. Terri has a background in publications and website activities and also recently served on a club committee prior to moving to Canberra. It is fantastic to see a new member join the committee (and also significantly reduce its average age).

As mentioned in the July newsletter, work is continuing on the review of the club's governance documents. An additional committee meeting will be held on Tuesday 16th August to finalise the documents for general members to vote on the changes in September. Advice of a Special General Meeting to be held preceding the general meeting on Tuesday 12th September will be issued in accordance with current constitution requirements. The finalised draft documents will be posted on the website with details of the proposed changes for members' consideration prior to voting. Members will also receive e-mail notification of the SGM etc. and details will be discussed at the August general meeting.

The NSW and ACT 4WD Association has also been busy and members would have seen the various newsletters providing updates on activities. The Association is holding a track classification refresher and track grading exercise at the Glen in the Abercrombie National Park on the weekend of 13th-14th August. Also the Association's quarterly general meeting is being held at the Lithgow Workers Club on Saturday 20th August – if anyone is interested in attending the meeting please contact Alan Jones via e-mail president@st4wdc.com.au or mobile on 0428236284. The Australian 4WD Drive Association has also launched the member awards program for clubs affiliated with state 4WD associations. While some teething problems are being experienced these are currently being addressed by club delegate, Alan Jones.

On a personal note, last weekend I had the pleasure of taking part in Glen and Jane Watt's 'Mt Clear in the Snow' club trip. Although disappointing that we didn't get snow on the day and couldn't cross the Murrumbidgee River behind the Bredbo Hotel (with the property owner's permission) as planned, we had a fantastic trip thanks to Glen and Jane's efforts in negotiating access through three private properties as a contingency to ensure the trip proceeded.

Tickets to the club's 40th anniversary function on 5th November are available for purchase from Lynne Donaldson, Membership Secretary, at the general meetings. Get your tickets to celebrate this significant club milestone – details are available in the newsletter.

See you at the next general meeting on 9th August or on a track somewhere. Jim.

Editor's Feed

Thank you to my predecessor Graeme Booth for his dedication as Publications Coordinator, as well as Michael Patrick for his contribution as interim Publications Coordinator. I would also like to thank the committee for their support as I transition into the role and my duties as a committee member. I'm looking forward to working with everyone.

As Publications Coordinator, I will draw from my experience in publishing and communications to make the newsletter as entertaining, informative and relevant as I can. But to do this, I need members' feedback and input. If you have photographs, suggestions for articles, or ideas to improve the newsletter, please send them to publications@st4wdc.com.au.

Regards,

Terri Giuretis



Lynne's Latest

There was a good crowd for the meeting in July being the middle of winter. We had no visitors at the meeting but expect to have a few at the August meeting. Come along before the meeting and have dinner at the Club.

Rob and I have spent a couple of weekends out at Talooge over the last month. It is such a great place to go and relax, and also help out at the Musters. We thought that we may not be able to handle the cold but it turned out to be not too bad. In saying that though, we had hot water bottles, thermal underwear and good bedding.

If you do not have a round State Association sticker or 2016 date sticker please come and see me at the meeting.

We have had former members re-join this month:

Garry and Gretta Firth – Ford Ranger

Membership numbers:

Ordinary – 234

Life – 9

Associate – 2

Partners – 184

Family – 5

Total memberships – 434

It will be a busy year with the **40th Anniversary** of the Club. If you know of any old members that you are still in touch with, please tell them to email or give me a call so that I can put them on the mailing list to invite.

Tickets will be on sale at \$50.00 each at meetings until November. Come and buy a ticket or give me a call to organise a bank transfer if you cannot get to a meeting.

Please put your name up on the website so that we can get an indication of numbers.

We are also after any old photos for the night. Scott Cumming has kindly agreed to organise the slide show for the evening. Contact him by phone 0490 000 913 or email property@st4wdc.com.au if you have anything for him – it would be much appreciated.

Looking forward to catching up with you either at a meeting or on a trip. If you have any membership queries at all, please contact me. Safe travels, Lynne.

Trips Register

Start Date	End Date	Activity	Type	Leader
13/Aug/16	14/Aug/16	It could be cold at Bendethera Caves	Grade 3	Michael Patrick
17/Aug/16	17/Aug/16	Basic Training 4WD Vehicle Evaluation	Training	Peter Butterfield
20/Aug/16	21/Aug/16	Talooge Park Muster	Muster	Scott Cumming
27/Aug/16	28/Aug/16	Train the Trainer	Training	Peter Butterfield
27/Aug/16	28/Aug/16	Drive-in At Talooge	Grade 3	Jamie Ericson
27/Aug/16	11/Sep/16	Mungo, Menindee, Murray and more...	Grade 2	Alex & Andrea Szabo
8/Sep/16	11/Sep/16	Safe One Basic Driver Training at Talooge Park	Training	Peter Butterfield
17/Sep/16	18/Sep/16	Talooge Park Muster	Muster	Scott Cumming
18/Sep/16	18/Sep/16	Brindabella Ramble	Grade 3	Gary McLaughlin
24/Sep/16	26/Sep/16	Towards Batemans Bay	Grade 2	Alex & Andrea Szabo
24/Sep/16	25/Sep/16	Explore The Tracks of Abercrombie River National Park	Grade 2	Michael Patrick
1/Oct/16	3/Oct/16	Bush Skills Weekend	Event	Michael Patrick
5/Oct/16	5/Oct/16	Basic Training 4WD Vehicle Evaluation	Training	Peter Butterfield
14/Oct/16	16/Oct/16	SES Landsearch Exercise	Trip	Marj Jones
20/Oct/16	23/Oct/16	Safe One Basic Driver Training at Talooge Park	Training	Peter Butterfield
29/Oct/16	30/Oct/16	Talooge Park Muster	Muster	Scott Cumming
30/Oct/16	30/Oct/16	Brindabella Ramble	Grade 3	Michael Patrick
5/Nov/16	5/Nov/16	40th Anniversary Celebration	Event	Lynne Donaldson
11/Nov/16	13/Nov/16	Safe One Basic Driver Training at Talooge Park	Training	Peter Butterfield
12/Nov/16	20/Nov/16	Victorian High Country Ramble	Grade 3	Michael Patrick
19/Nov/16	19/Nov/16	Safe One Basic Driver Training Course Follow-up Day	Training	Peter Butterfield
26/Nov/16	27/Nov/16	ST4WDC Christmas Party at Talooge	Event	Rob Donaldson
4/Dec/16	4/Dec/16	Brindabella Ramble	Grade 3	Gary McLaughlin
10/Dec/16	11/Dec/16	Talooge Park Muster	Muster	Scott Cumming
29/Jan/17	29/Jan/17	Backyard Explorer and Blue Waterholes	Grade 2	Alex & Andrea Szabo
11/Mar/17	13/Mar/17	Stockton Beach	Grade 2	Robert Azzito
18/Mar/17	26/Mar/17	Search for the missing huts of the Vic High Country	Grade 3	Michael Patrick
1/May/17	27/Aug/17	Chain Saw Awareness Training (Expression of Interest)	Training	Michael Patrick
6/May/17	26/Aug/17	First Aid Training (Expression of Interest)	Training	Michael Patrick



Photo: High Country Weekender, courtesy of Vicki Mckenna

Talooge Park

Dinner at the July Muster





High Country Weekender

Vicki Mckenna

11-13 December 2015

Leader:

Greg Taylor & Vicki

200 Series Landcruiser

Participants

Kevin & Vicki Mckenna

NT Pajero

Gavin Neilsen

GU Patrol

Chris Nichols & Julie

GQ Patrol

Phil Hendersen (& 'Blow-up Julie')

100 Series Landcruiser Sahara

Garry & Pauline Lymberry

Ford Ranger Ute



Braving the Gale

A party of five vehicles headed off for Jindabyne on Friday afternoon led by our Fearless Trip Leader Greg Taylor.

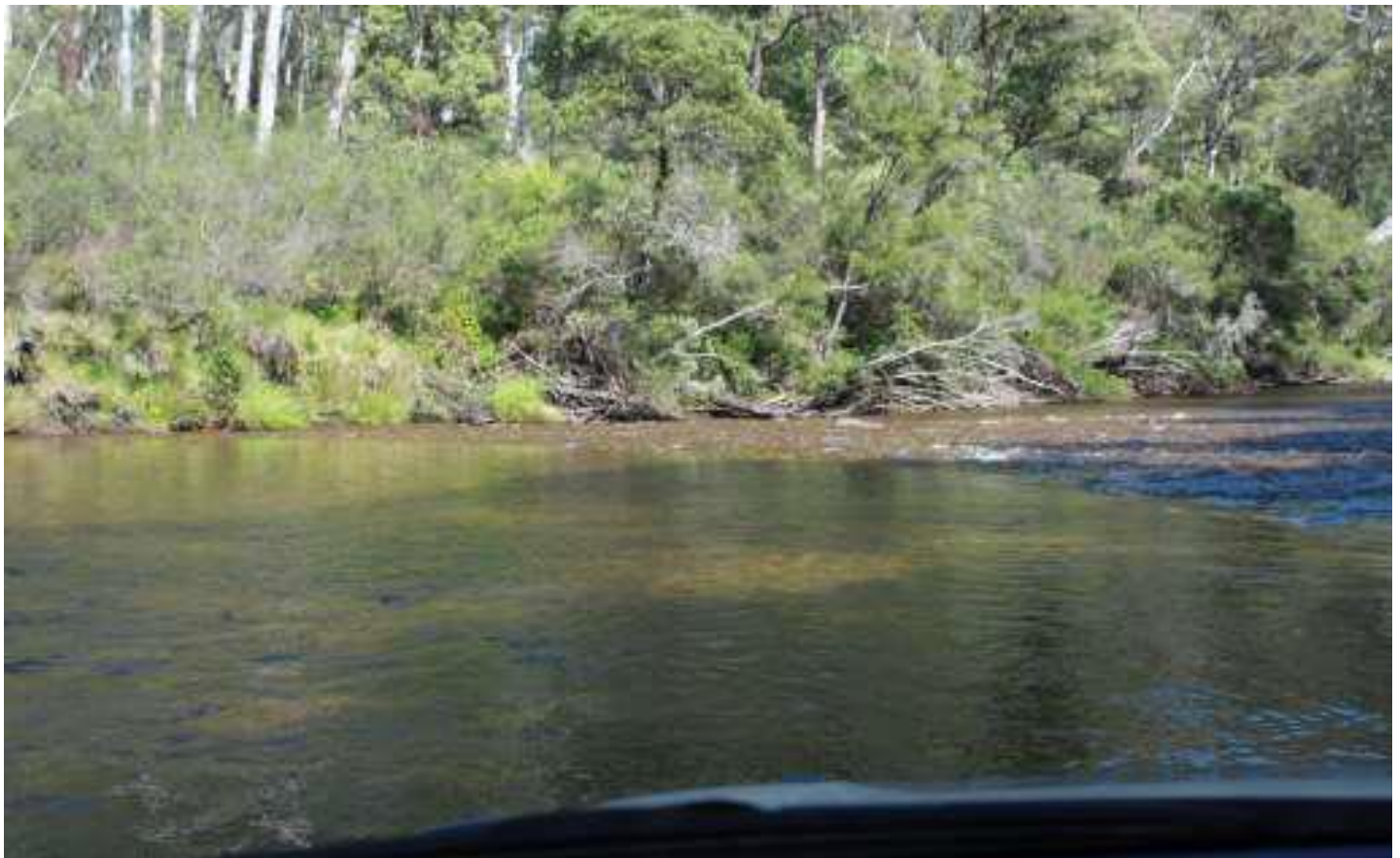
Phil was taking his Sahara to test his car for the first time on the steep and challenging Alpine tracks. Greg had some concerns about the weather improving as the winds were strong. By the time we arrived in Jindy they were truly gale-force. Our

campsite was in the caravan park overlooking the lake. The wind was roaring through the valley across the lake with a chill factor that didn't resemble summer conditions. To reduce the discomfort level of our campsite, we parked the vehicles against the wind direction which formed a good windbreak. We had dinner and a few drinks at the Brumby Bistro in Jindy before heading back out into the cold to camp and luckily the winds eased overnight.

Clear and Crisp Driving Conditions

We were greeted by a cool, clear sunny Saturday that was ideal for driving. After meeting Garry and Pauline Lymberry in their Ford Ranger Ute in town, we headed off via the scenic Alpine Way to Tom Groggin Crossing on the NSW/Victorian border. Driving adjacent to Crackenback Ridge, we noticed a few gullies that still had snow in them, which was a surprise for some of us. Garry was testing his Ranger during this trip as he'd not been off-road much since buying it and kitting it out. He wasn't disappointed.

Once we arrived at Tom Groggin Crossing and checked it out – noting that the conditions were perfect with the water level low on the Murray River – we had a trouble-free crossing. There was some banter going about regarding 'Blow-up Julie' as Phil was going solo (Julie, his wife, was unfortunately unable to come). He was accompanied by his trusty airbed, 'Blow-up Julie', named by his fellow travellers. Blow-up Julie kept him warm and comfortable during the nights of the trip which became a standing joke over the airwaves and during smokos. Enough said!



Davies Plain Drive to Native Dog Flat, Alpine National Park

We had morning smoko at Buckwong Creek. It was unusual to have two Vickis and two Julies on a trip; apparently it was a first on a club trip. When Greg or Kevin called Vicki or mentioned Vicki on the radio, it was a little confusing for us. While Gavin and I were reading the Davies Plain Track sign stating that the track is classified as Very Difficult in dry conditions, I began to feel excited as I took over the driving from Kevin. As we headed up into the beautiful and steep Victorian Alps, there is still evidence of the devastating bushfires of the past. The scenic and green High Plains are magical with the backdrop of the mountain ranges. The landscape is inspiring and unique.

There were lots of wildflowers of many different colours in the grasslands of the plains we passed by. After our scenic drive we stopped at Davies Plains Hut to check out the site and the fantastic views and have a break. I've since learnt that this hut was not burnt down in the 2003 fires. The hut was originally built by the Gibson family for cattlemen's use in 1939, but the last cattle were grazed here in 1956. John Gibson took up the first lease in 1892. The hut was substantially rebuilt in about 1995.



While admiring the views at the Hut we noticed several Gang Gang Cockatoos, which were a real treat to see. We stopped for lunch at Charlies Creek Plain Campground at the southern end of Davies Plain Track which is north of the junction

of McCarthy's Track. It's a picturesque site to rest. We travelled onto McCarthy's Track, which involved many steep ascents and descents with the condition of the tracks being pretty good. The brakes and gearboxes had a good workout down the mountains, up the mountains, along the ridges and into beautiful grassy green gullies.



During our trip we spotted wild Brumbies in the bush. They left many tell-tale signs – huge piles of dung – along the tracks that marked out their territory. We drove past the Poplars Campground on the Limestone Creek Track and since we were making good time we continued onto Native Dog Flat Campground where the Buchan River flows. There were no issues with any of the vehicles after the day's drive. After setting up camp, some of the guys headed off to collect firewood for the campfire to beat the chill and cook dinner. We all shared happy hour treats and relaxed with a beer or liquid beverage of some kind. A herd of wild brumbies of all colours wandered past our camp at around dusk, which was an awesome sight. Another good night was had by all with much banter before heading off for bed and Phil to his Blow-up Julie who, he says, is much quieter than his wife.

[The Pilot, The Coberras and Mt Menaak](#)

We headed off early in the morning to test our skills and enjoy the scenery on the Cobberas Trail, MacFarlane Flat Track and Ingeegoodbee Track. I still managed to have driving duties this morning as I was the quickest in the driver's seat, so Kev had

to wait until morning smoko to take the wheel. I was so glad that I did as it tested my driving skills and I had an absolute ball.

While driving on the Cobberas Trail we passed a well-known snow meadow called the Playgrounds which looks like a large horse paddock where brumbies graze and campers camp. The Cobberas landscape consists of open forests and grass or herb groundcovers. We passed The Cobberas wilderness (Alpine National Park) on our left which joins the Pilot wilderness (Kosciuszko National Park). Our convoy was near the region of the headwaters of the Murray River but I'm not exactly sure where as there was some discussion about this topic between the experts. There were a few trees over this track and we all negotiated the drive arounds with no problems.

We did encounter some challenging and technical driving on the Cobberas Trail where essential wheel placement was needed to get over a boulder formation on an ascent. The view of the Cobberas at the top was amazing. Further on we negotiated a series of rocky ledges on a very steep descent which we all made through without incident.



The track is rated difficult due to several long steep climbs to the Ingeegoodbee River crossing, but all tracks were in good condition and we had no issues. I realised that we needed to further reduce the tyre pressures on the steep, loose and slippery



descents, which differ in surfaces to the Brindies. This was to gain more traction and to reduce my pulse rate. So deflated tyres = a lower pulse rate and a longer life!

[The Way Home](#)

We stopped for a photo opportunity at the junction of the Ingeegoodbee Track and the Snowy River Road at Mountain Hut Saddle and later lunched by the Snowy River before heading home via Barry Way. At Jacobs River, Barry Way leaves the Snowy River carving its way through the Byadbo Wilderness and follows Jacobs River and Wild Bull Creek up out of the valley.

The road climbs steeply with spectacular views to Wallace Craigie lookout where we aired up before heading to Jindabyne Bakery, saying our goodbyes and heading home. Thanks to all of the wonderful people on the trip who contributed to a fun and memorable weekend with spectacular scenery, interesting stories, varied tracks and perfect weather! I can't wait to get back up the High Country in March on the next club trip. It was one of the best drives I've had in ages. A special thanks to Greg for being such a great Trip Leader and funny too, and to Vicki for making us all feel welcome. 😊

Backyard Explorer

David Hart

Participants

Alex and Andrea

Kevin and Vicki

Alexey, sons Feodor and Vladimir

Thomas and Julie

Eric, son Brinley

Warwick

Alex and Sarah

Marie

David and Sue

Lyn

Leader BT50 MIA

Mitsubishi Pajero

Land Rover Discovery 3

Nissan Patrol 2011

Toyota Prado 90 series

Nissan Patrol 2003

Landcruiser 100 series

Holden Colorado 7

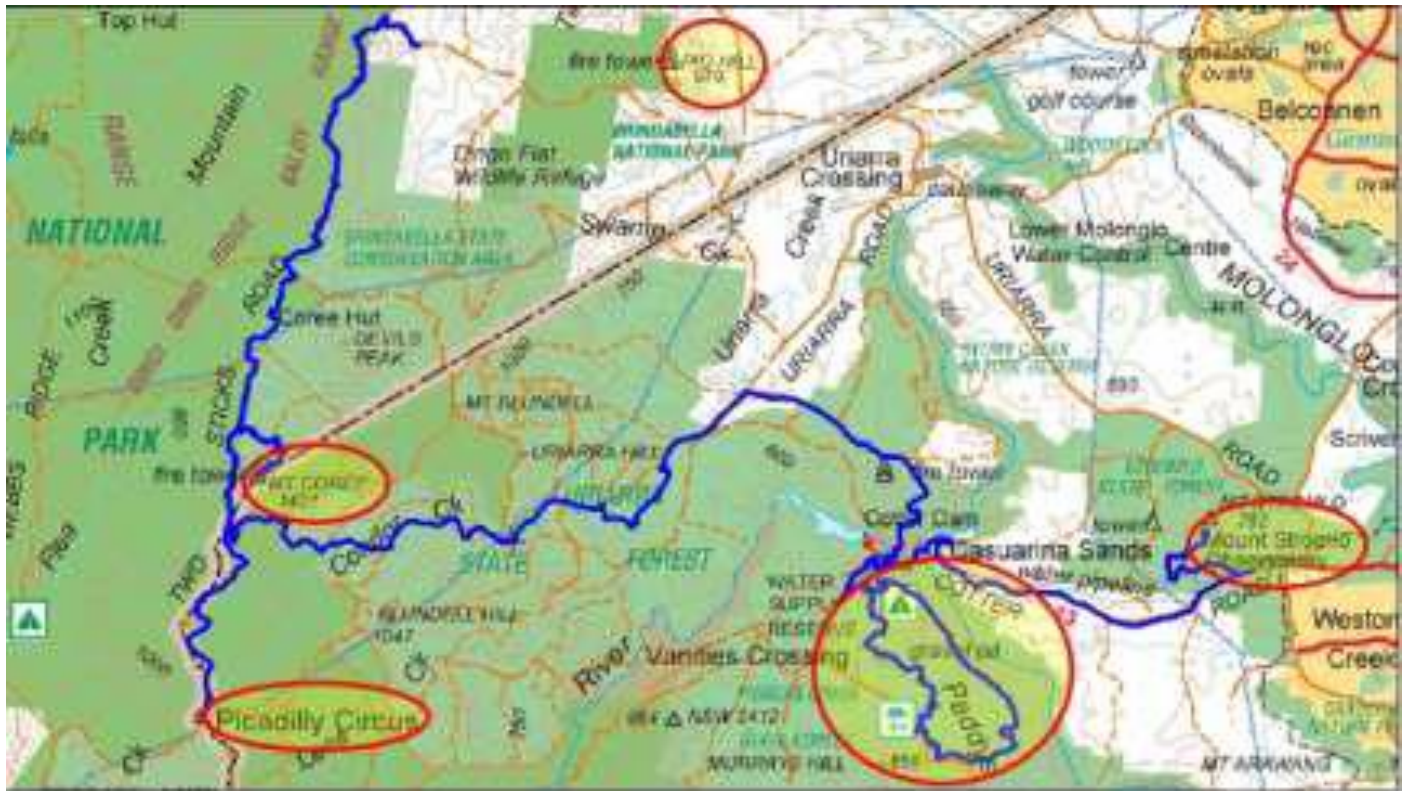
Mitsubishi Triton

Toyota Troop carrier



Due to the recent rains our trip leader Alex completed a short recy on Saturday afternoon and he confirmed that the trip was still on.

Sunday morning dawned with low cloud and misting showers, just the weather for a drive. So the intrepid 4WDers gathered at Mount Stromlo at 8.30am to decide the plan of attack and obtain instructions. Alex informed the group that, after his drive on the Saturday afternoon to confirm road conditions, all was good to go except for his vehicle. His vehicle decided it didn't want to go out two days in a row so he and Andrea hopped a ride with Kevin and Vicki. This may be a first for the club – a trip leader without his vehicle and leading a trip from the passengers' seat in someone else's vehicle!



After a discussion and instructions, we were assigned our convoy number and went to air down. Lyn found a nail in her tyre and decided it wasn't worth the risk and withdrew from the day's adventures. We were now eight cars for the day. We departed from Mount Stromlo at about 9.30am with hopes the drizzle would lift into a lovely day.

We drove to a small lookout just past the Cotter and had a quick look back to the dam wall and over some of the tracks we were about to drive on. The vehicles were corralled ready to hit the dirt.

We stopped for morning tea at about 10.40am at Murrays Corner rest stop on the Paddys River Road before we went across Paddys River and started the climb up the hill heading along the Bullen Ridge. There was some great calling between

drivers to ascend some steeper parts of the tracks. As Charlie we were the last to arrive at the top of Bullen Ridge for a rest stop and view the scenery down to Tidbinbilla across to Canberra and over the mountains behind us. As normal, the comment was passed that now Charlie has arrived we can all continue on (but Alex did wait just a little). Vicki took control of the lead vehicle with Alex in the front passenger seat, Andrea and Kevin had a chance to watch the scenery go by from the back seat. Vicki said she would slow down a little, not much though. On the track the lead vehicle had to make a quick stop; Andrea had spilled hot beverage on herself. Vicki said that it was not her driving that caused the spill, and Alex nor Kevin commented either way – very diplomatic of them.

It was turning into a lovely day of clear skies and 26 degrees.



We drove along the ridge line and back down to the Cotter and then around past Uriarra and around the base of Mount Coree where we stopped for lunch. We finally all got parked and sat and chatted over lunch. It was lovely sitting under the trees. We organised the group and reduced down to four vehicles to go up to the top of Mount Coree.

Sarah and Alex went up first to check on how many vehicles were already up at the top of Mount Coree. We were given the all clear so the rest of us went up the track. What a wonderful view: many, many photos were taken! We descended from Mount Coree about 3pm.

Once everyone was back in their own vehicles we headed off to Pig Hill Summit Lookout along Two Sticks Road and Baldy Range trail. After driving up some quite nice little hills it was obvious the track had not been driven in a while. We then went to turn onto Doctor Flat road, but the map did not quite represent true life. Funny how they can't get maps right! We then came to a closed gate and decided not to go on and we had to turn around (private land – right of access, not public access). The comment was made that it wouldn't be a ST4WDC trip without a turn around. After we finally all managed to get facing the way we came we stopped for a quick chat, some group photos and then headed back to Piccadilly Circus where we were to air up, have another chat and then head home.

Thank you to Alex for being our illustrious leader and Kevin and Vicki for allowing him to lead from your vehicle, everyone got to meet new club members and enjoyed a great day driving through some great scenery which is so close to home.

Huts of the Victorian High Country

Elton Willis

12-20 March 2016

Leader:

Michael Patrick with James (aka KB1) and Rob (aka KB2) Prado 120

Participants:

Jim Anderson Prado 150

Rob and Lynne Donaldson 100 Series

Phil and Sue Rayner 100 Series

Elton and Kolby Willis 79 Series

with BAILEY (Elton's son)

and WILL (Bailey's mate)

Sen and Waruni Wit Jeratne 100 Series

Garry and Harris Mc Laughlin Prado 90

Jamie Walker Ranger

Leah Bowman Twin Cab

Rob Calvert Prado 120

Tail End Charlie:

Scott Cummings GU Patrol

(aka The Pie Van)



Saturday, 12th March

Canberra to Mansfield and on to Sheeppark Flats

It was a warmish start on the Saturday morning when we gathered at the Dinosaur Museum to start 'Michael's Magical Mystery Tour' of the Victorian High Country Huts. When I say we, I mean they had gathered ... waiting for me to arrive ... so I got the trip report being last to arrive.

There were to be 19 huts on our itinerary and I suspect some were 'virtual huts'. Fearless leader claims some 'move around a bit' or 'possibly even hibernate' ... yes Michael we believe you ... a bit like the caves at Bendethera migrate in winter.

We set a pretty good pace down the Hume to almost Holbrook where a rest stop became an absolute necessity. Male bladders of a certain age don't travel particularly well.

Morning tea, at the Bakery in Holbrook, became lunch and we headed for Mansfield where we were to rendezvous with Rob aka KB2 (Michael's long suffering son-in-law).



Most decided to fuel up for the several days ahead with the prospect of a few long transits and a bit of low range crawling and climbing before we got to Dargo. We arrived a little earlier than expected so some of us were able to take a look around Mansfield and others found the pub – fortunately, all in moderation. Our

staging point to transit out of Mansfield coincidentally became the site of a Random Breath Testing Station. We got short shrift from the constabulary and headed for the Howqua Hills to camp for the night.

There had been some rain in the High Country before our departure but the unseasonably warm weather we were enduring in Canberra had followed us.

Sheepyard Flat was packed out with Victorians. It was like another gold rush had started. So we moved on to Pickerings Flat where we found enough room and fewer Mexicans. A quiet night ensued; the only highlight was a visit by a friendly and very cute Pug (pictured), appropriately called Yoda, who kept us entertained for a while.

Sunday, 13th March

Pickerings Flat to Bindaree Hut

The next morning was a little cool, but that did not deter Leah who went for a run while the rest of us snoozed. Most of us slept well despite a chainsaw somewhere in or around the camp that had been running on idle for a good part of the night.

Once on the road, Michael assured us we had passed Fry's Hut (nothing there so I expect that was the first of the virtual huts) and Noonan's as well (same deal).

Upper Jamieson Hut was real (we took photos as evidence), so we stopped for morning tea and a spot of blackberry picking.





We then headed for Lunch at Lovick's Hut – set in a brilliant clearing at the top of a mountain with lots of very gnarled trees surrounding it.

We then headed off to camp for the night at Bindaree Hut on the Howqua River.

While KB1 and KB2 got his dinner ready,; our fearless leader donned his shower cap, a towel and hung his camp shower up next to the hut.

The sight of Michael wandering around the camp in his shower attire ensured that no one else stopped there that night. Jim headed for the shower after Michael. His screams as he poured 10 or so litres of river water over his newly presidential personage suggested that heating it might be a good move. Next time.





Monday dawned. The night was coolish and the morning crisp. Leah went for another run and I looked around the camp for the bloody chainsaw that someone left on idle again for most of the night. No luck, again.

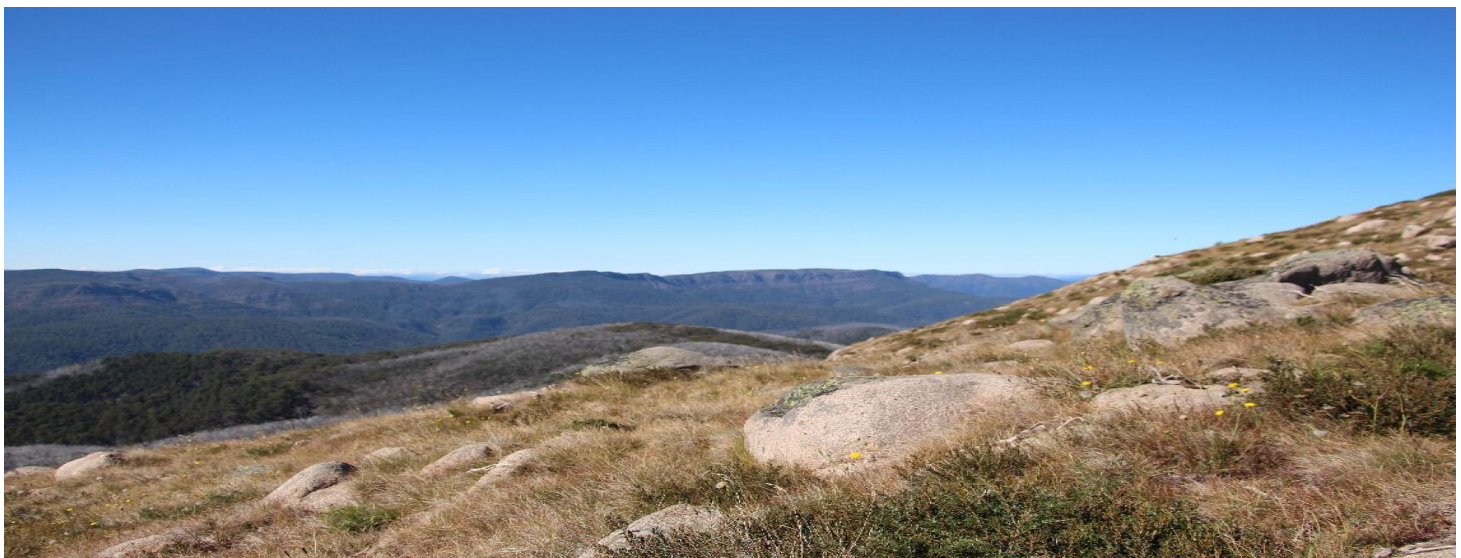
The morning run along the Howqua River and up to Howqua Gap Hut was fantastic; the road was smooth and it was difficult to keep your eyes off the scenery and watch the road. Then we got to Mt Stirling via Stirling Mystery Hut. There is no point trying to describe the views, just look at these: [next page]





The panorama was a full 360 degrees, and spectacular just doesn't cover it, the mountains just go on and on and on. Looking back to Mt Buller helped put some scale to it and showed how vast the area was.

Clear Hills Track out from Mt Stirling was a little technical and a bit steep, but without too much drama we arrived at Craig's Hut.







The hut – in its third or fourth version – was originally a film set built for the film *The Man from Snowy River* and subsequently burnt down. It looked a little surreal, plastic even with its perfectly laid random rubble stone work, gapless slab sides and flagstone flooring. But it might get blown off the mountain one day it is so exposed. No High Country man (or woman!) would build there. Still, it is a must see destination if you travel to the area.

But the views were again amazing out to Mt Cobbler, Little Cobbler and beyond to the Cobbler Plateau.

Morning tea extended into an early lunch. The hut is apparently one of the most visited spots in the Victorian High Country, which is a bit of a shame. If people go away thinking this is like what the High Country cattlemen built and lived in they are getting a Hollywood impression of this part of our history. Half of Victoria was there that day though. I'd hate to be there on a weekend or in school holidays.



My track notes are a bit sketchy here but we went through Pineapple Flat (I think?? at some stage) and eventually ended up at Razorback Camp for the night.

We arrived early with plenty of time to set up. Razorback could easily be renamed 'Land of the Flies'. The campsite was a bit like last night's fireside conversation: lots of horse s--t! It must be a favourite spot for the horsy people; there was even a resident 'Brumby'.

Despite the horse poo and flies it was a great campsite, although we were promised a riverside spot. I guess it was one of those virtual rivers (like the virtual huts).

The flies came out in force when Scott put his Cobb on to roast some pork. The buzzing was incredible, louder than his drone.

While waiting for the pork to cook, Lynne started a game of *Cards Against Humanity* and we gathered round the fire. The fire pit was huge and came with some massive chairs carved out of logs. They reminded me of some 4WDs: large, difficult to maneuver, unrefined and hard on the backside (no specific brand in mind ... insert your pet hate here or just one you don't drive).



We all managed to insult each other and most of humanity before the pork was ready.

After dinner the more sensible (and sensitive) of us headed off to bed and the cards resumed. Lynne continued her domination (of the cards game!) but was pipped at the post by Scott.

Tuesday, 15th March

Razorback to Cobbler Lake

Lots of kookaburras heralded another clear and warm day. The local Brumby was the main attraction before we headed off past Bus Hut to stop at No 3 Refuge Hut. The hut, which looked to be only recently built, was really well set up. It had a pot belly stove, a steel bed, and some emergency rations/food.



There was also chopping block and axe which Lynne used to demonstrate what to do with a recalcitrant trip leader who won't stop for morning tea.





Next stop was Tomahawk Hut, a much more traditional little hut nestled into the side of a small swale. We stopped for a group photo and were soon underway. Then on to Lake William Hovell along Buckland Spur with great views back down to the low country and Mansfield.





Morning tea at the lake was Hot Cross Buns! Scott's pie warmer was definitely becoming a popular piece of equipment.

After lunch at Mt Typo (and some Dad jokes about the name) we transited to a now-deserted Pineapple Flat for a 'pit stop', after which the ladies vetoed it as a potential future camp site for the November High Country Ramble. It is so popular that it suffers badly from overuse. The facilities were very grotty.

Just out from Pineapple Flat, Phil Rayner managed to cut the side wall of a rear tyre. After a communal tyre change we caught up with the trip leader and headed for Lake Cobbler. Garry Mc was running low on fuel so he made a detour to Mansfield with Harris to top up.

We passed by King River Hut and negotiated The Staircase without any trouble, making our way to Lake Cobbler.

The lake was in a really pretty setting, but the campsite itself was bare and rocky. As we arrived the wind was picking up from the south and it looked like the run of unseasonably warm weather we had enjoyed so far was at an end.

The water tempted Bailey and Will to crack out the fishing gear and they headed off. Unfortunately one of the 'boyz', as we had dubbed them, managed to get a little tangled up and ended up 'A over T' in the lake and totally drenched. He quickly got out of his waterlogged waders, dried off and warmed up. But no fish.

A cold and windy night followed; the clouds scudding through on the wind looked like bringing rain. We had picked up a big load of firewood on the way into camp and the

fire that night was very welcome. The wind stoked it right up and what we thought would last all night very quickly burned down to coals.

Wednesday, 16th March

Lake Cobbler to Wonnangatta Valley

Sadly, Lynne and Rob had to disengage this morning; business matters at home were pressing. So they headed off early to sort things out. Phil and Sue – reduced to no spare and some rough country ahead – also decided to head off and get their tyre replaced.



Surprise! The airwaves were a little quieter from then on. Scott and Rob's radio banter during the last few days had been quite entertaining. Just how much to believe I am still working out. Is there a bull s-t filter for two way radios? Maybe someone could invent one.

A pleasant morning drive took us back down to low country via Abbeyard to morning tea at Buffalo River (I think). This time we had banana cake courtesy of Jim's wife Jane (thank you Jane!). The entry to Razor Track was closed so we had to bypass it. Strangely, the exit end further along Buffalo Track was not blocked. Along the way, Elton and a few others had some fun in the mud. Sen managed to get a bit of mud under his tyre bead, which meant a bit of maintenance when he got to camp that night.



We were well ahead of time and after lunch, which we ate near the Wonnangatta River, we went for a brief preview drive along Zeka Track. Again when we turned round and went back, although Michael was insistent it did not constitute a turnaround! So we headed for the beautiful Wonnangatta Valley.



We camped on the riverside a little way down from the old station ruins. Michael set up his shower again and most of the camp enjoyed a warm clean up. Jim again had a bit of trouble, this time with a large 'blowie' that harassed him in the shower.

The early arrival prompted a spontaneous 'pot luck dinner' and KB1 (James) and KB2 (Rob) set about fixing up a BBQ of Brazilian Beef, lamb veg and coal roasted spuds. It was excellent.





Not to be outdone Garry, with some help from Waruni, knocked up a sensational Apple Damper in his camp oven for dessert.

That evening Scott set up his projector and screened some of his adventures shot by drone.



Thursday, 17th March

Wonnangatta Valley to Dargo

The next morning was cool and foggy, but the valley where we were camped looked stunning swathed in the morning mist, shrouded by tree covered hills. It is no surprise this area is one of the most popular camping and 4WD destinations in NE Victoria.



We had a leisurely pack up and went for a quick tour of the Wonnangatta Station Ruins, the cemetery and the Elm Grove. The trees were just starting to turn their autumn colours and it was another memorable morning. This trip just continues to get better with each day ... but maybe not for one Victorian who crossed the very rocky dry ford to the Elm Grove. We noticed an oil trail, so someone was going to have an expensive trip home if they didn't check.

We headed out of Wonnangatta Valley and on to Zeka Track which was festooned with all sorts of interesting bushes, some with red and some with white berries. The grey trunks of the thousands of Mountain Ash trees, charred in earlier bush fires, cover the slopes and made for some spectacular scenery as we wound our way along this iconic track.





Morning Tea was party pies and sausage rolls at another iconic location: Howitt Plains Hut. On a clear crisp morning we munched away on our pies and had a good look around the hut.



After Howitt Plains we headed for the Pinnacles to be greeted with even more spectacular views. The Pinnacles Fire Tower Lookout allows 360 degree views all the way down to parts of the Wonnangatta River Valley with glimpses of the Grant

Historical Mining area to the north east and Moroka Range to the south west; Mt Kent, Mt Dawson and Dawson Ridge in the north west; Bleak Hill, Castle Hill and Mt Valencia in the south.



Next challenge was negotiating our way down Billy Goat Bluff Track to get to Dargo our destination for the day.



Winding along a narrow ridge with shear drops either side, followed by a long descent on loose rock and steps made the drive a little nerve-wracking. I don't mind admitting it was a little daunting and my left leg almost cramped up by the time we got to the bottom.



Scott got a little bored at the back. He reckoned we were going too slowly and he skipped through the convoy to shoot some downhill action with the drone. This was fine until it saw a Ford Ranger coming down the hill. It freaked out (a Ford out here??) and hit the ground. Luckily there was only minor damage to a couple of the props.

Sen was very low on fuel and with closing time at the shops/servo in Dargo looming we set a pretty quick pace along the Crooked River Road and into Dargo. He made it in time to fuel up and the rest of us headed to the Dargo Pub for a beer.

Somewhat refreshed, we headed out of town to Italian Flat to camp the night under some magnificent 100-year-old walnut trees.

A couple of things changed in the night. The weather finally turned and soft rain started to fall early the next morning and that bloody chainsaw started up again! It ran most of the night, on idle, but enough to be heard and enough to keep you awake.

Friday, 18th March

Dargo to Omeo

With the morning rain, Fearless Leader had to reconsider some of our plans for the day. But we packed up early enough to duck back into Dargo for bacon and egg sambos and coffee for breakfast at the General Store.



The rain came and went so it was difficult to know which tracks would be drivable. We made good use of the garbage drop off point at the local footy field and wondered what the day would bring ... but first the mandatory photo stop at the Dargo Pub.



As we headed back along the Dargo River on the High Plains Road, the rain resumed and by the time we had turned into Birregun Road it had well and truly set in. We cut and ran through the torrential rain, bypassing by our intended tracks Murdering Spur and Messmate we arrived at a soggy Dog's Grave Memorial, which has been graced with a very new 'refuge' hut built by some local service and 4WD club members. Quite flash it was too and a very welcome respite from the rain!

Here Scott's pie oven really came into its own and we chowed away on two sorts of crispy pizza for morning tea. And so all we could do with more rain pelting down was head to Omeo.

We booked into the Omeo Caravan Park and while the rain eased we looked for things to fill in the balance of the day. An early lunch was the first priority (excellent bakery in town!).

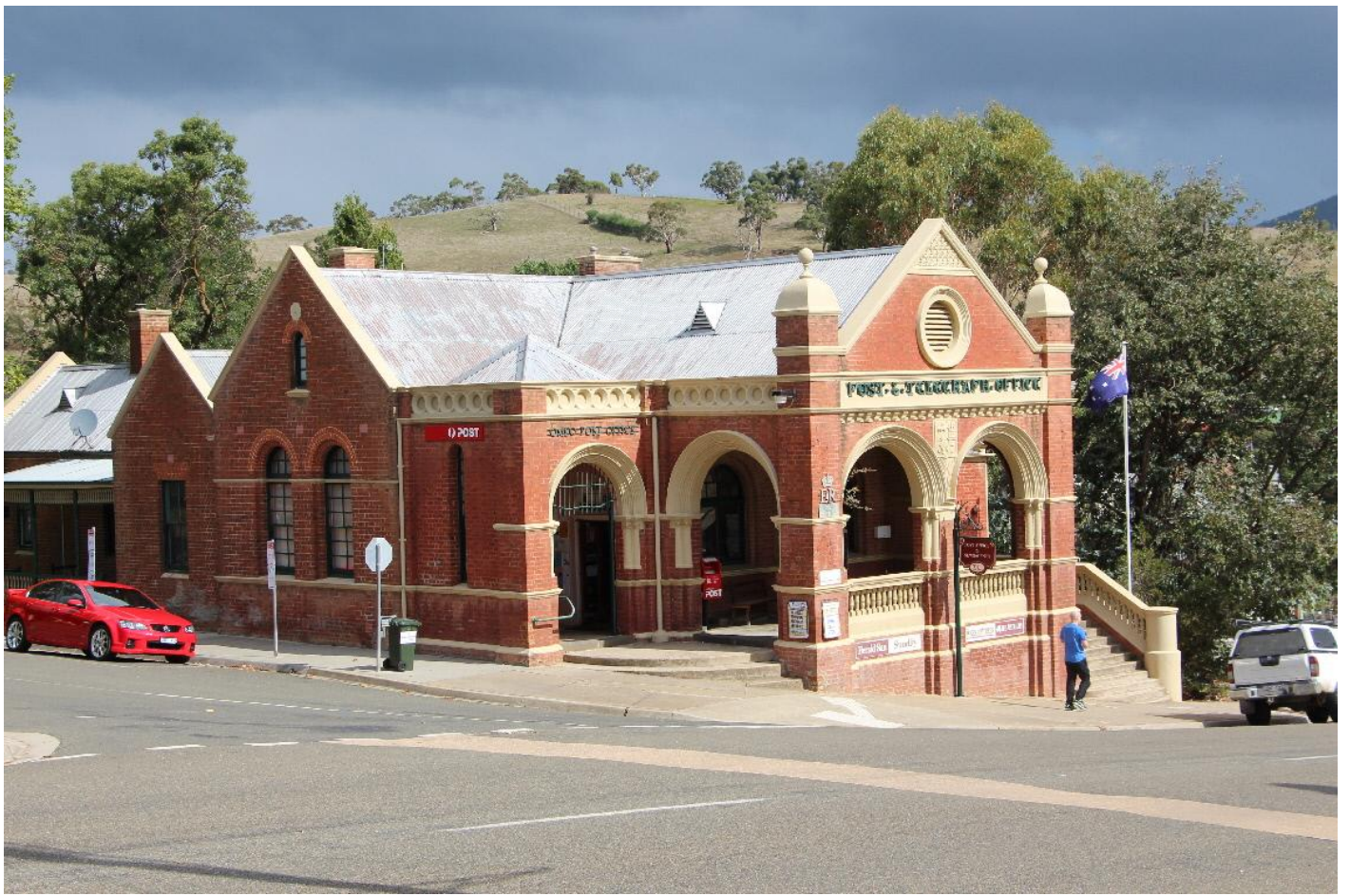
Elton, Kolby and The Boyz got lucky and were able to secure Phil and Sue's cabin. The smart ones who had booked in advance retreated to their cabins and the rest of us contemplated whether to set up or take up the offer to camp in the covered kitchen/amenities area.

Jim scored the best welcome though, having been advised of his new status as Club President, the owners of the park offered Jim a complimentary breakfast.

Sen and Waruni found the Cuckoo Clock Shop and invested in a cute little clock. The rest of us just wandered round town or headed for the bakery. The rain had eased by this stage and the Boyz ventured to the out of town, finding a suitable fishing spot where they managed to get a couple of nibbles and some small trout.



Omeo is a pretty little town that grew exponentially during the gold rush of the mid 1800s and still has numerous classic buildings despite being almost wiped of the map in the Black Friday Bushfires of 1939. The courthouse, built in 1892, is now a history precinct and is well worth the time to visit. The fine bank buildings and the post office reflect the wealth gold brought.



Next Jim managed to strand himself in the Main Street. After frantic calls to Canberra Toyota and NRMA (RACV) he was spotted, tools in hand, by the local RACV agent in his Special GU Turbo Patrol. Turns out he was the same guy who had helped Scott on an earlier trip when he damaged his suspension.

Despite his worst fears Jim got mobile again. Initial diagnoses of terminal mechanical or electronic gremlins were dismissed. He had just managed to lock up his steering a little too tight when he parked. Lucky there isn't too much kerb and guttering in the bush: we Prado drivers could be in trouble!

Later some of us went for dinner at the Golden Age Pub, a beautiful art deco hotel built after the original was burnt down in the 1939 Black Friday fires. Others made good use of the huge camp amenities area at the caravan park. The facilities have been upgraded at park and the shower block and toilets were first class. The hot and free-flowing showers were particularly welcome.

With a couple of warming fires going we made the best of a coolish, damp evening. Meanwhile Fearless Leader wrestled with the decision of whether or not to abandon the remaining plan to tackle Mt Pinnibar and some further challenging tracks in their soggy state.

With violent storms reported in Melbourne and the potential for more rain the following day, those of us not canny enough to book a cabin bunkered down for a night under solid cover.

As I crawled into my sleeping bag there it was again – that bloody chain saw idling away in the corner! A persistent droning rattle, not loud, but penetrating enough to disturb your night's sleep. It was coming from Fearless Leader's swag/stretcher. All along it was Michael Patrick, sleeping like a log – one being cut up that is!

Saturday, 19th March Omeo to Canberra via Albury

Saturday dawned a bit overcast and Fearless Leader decided that disengagement was necessary given there were some relatively inexperienced drivers amongst the group and the conditions were expected to be steep and muddy.

So we broke camp to head back to Canberra. Scott, Elton Kolby and the Boyz together with Jamie and Leah decided to disengage as a group and attempt the tracks Michael had planned to take near the Vic/NSW border including Mt Pinnibar and return through Thredbo and Jindabyne . Scott was well briefed before their departure.

Sen and Waruni had booked another night in their cabin and were intending to explore some more of the traditional sights in the Victorian Alps.

The remaining party headed along the Omeo Highway through Anglers Rest, Mitta Mitta and on to Albury.

We dropped KB2 (Rob) off at the station so he could travel back to home in Melbourne, had a fuel and lunch break at Albury North. Then it was back on the Hume Highway back to Canberra

So the Magical Mystery Tour 2016 Version was over. We had travelled around 1700km by the time we hit Canberra. Several iconic tracks had been visited. Warm autumn weather prevailed for the early part of the trip followed by some crisp mornings and some fairly heavy rain to finish off.

We saw numerous historic huts (skipped past a few others) and travelled to some famous towns and iconic locations.

It's hard to nominate one particular highlight but if pressed I would say the mountains themselves. They were an ongoing feast of broad vistas and narrow tracks intermixed with Alpine forests and some treeless plains.

I for one am now officially hooked on the Victorian High Country, although we saw a lot, we hardly scratched the surface of what is on offer. I can't wait until my next trip down that way.

During our time, we were fortunate to be guided by our Trip Leader Michael, backed up by a very capable 'Tail end Charlie' in Scott. Michael's experience in the Victorian Alps is long and extensive and, as much as I hate to admit it, he managed to keep his record of 'no turn-backs' intact (even if some of his explanations were a bit dodgy).

This was the first extended trip I had been on with the club and I certainly was challenged on a couple of tracks. There were no recoveries during the eight days and no one even went close to being in any difficulty thanks to the guidance and support of our Leader and Charlie.

It was a memorable time. I got to know some club members better, had a lot fun and learnt quite a few things (including to camp well away from a certain swag!).

Traveling in a group with a number of very experienced people was reassuring and underlines the value in joining an active and involved club such as ST4WDC.

Thanks to Michael, Scott and the entire group for good company and great experiences.

Supplementary Trip: Return to Canberra via Mt Pinnibar

Participants:

Elton, Kolby, Bailey & Will

79 Series Cruiser

Jamie & Leah

Ford Ranger Twin Cab

Scott

Nissan GU Patrol

Three cars set off from Omeo at 8am. Due to the rain the previous day and night, we were unsure if we would be able to stick to the original route or be forced to detour.

First stop was at the Omeo bakery for a quick bite and coffee and away we went.

First words heard across the CB were: 'What time is morning tea Scotty?'

We had a bit of time on the black top to start with, and travelled through Benambra, and then back on the dirt along Benambra-Corryong Road. We then ventured up Mount Sassafras via Wild Boar Road, and the rain hadn't affected the traction until we headed down the Zulu Creek track. With the Eucalyptus bark on the ground from the wind, accompanied by the wet, the track was very slippery in areas.

A stop at Wheelers Creek hut for morning tea, and straight into a nice river crossing.

As the Shady Creek upper track was closed, we drove a bit further and took the Shady Creek lower track. There were areas where the track was freshly graded and was super soft. With the rain it was like driving on ice.

All was easy going until we came across a series of three descents into a small creek crossing. We all got out of our cars and had a look. The mud was incredibly slippery and there were some nice big trees either side of the track to make things interesting.

There were two cars attempting to climb the hill, an Amarok and a 200 Series Land Cruiser. The Amarok had three good goes and luckily grabbed a bit of traction and made it up, plowing through a dead tree at the top. The 200 had three goes also and was sitting about half way up – all 4 wheels spinning – and again, just managed to grab a tiny bit of traction and made it up.

We were all a bit anxious after seeing the trouble the other guys had. We all let some extra air out of our tyres and slowly went down one by one. We were at the mercy of the wheel ruts which guided us down nicely.

After that little bit of excitement, we set our sights on Mount Pinnibar. A very nice drive up and the views were spectacular. At 12pm it was five degrees up the top. Understandably, we didn't hang around for long.



We then headed down to Tom Groggin, and took on the mighty Murray River and crossed it nicely. We all enjoyed it so much, we spun around and crossed it again!



From there it was back on the tar and on to Thredbo then home.

A great way to finish a fantastic trip!

A big thanks to everyone on the trip, and a massive thanks to Michael for his entertaining trip leading, and Scotty for the trip home (and his travel buddy and cinema set up)

Loved it!

Talooge Terrain – Grass Files

Victoria Jewett

Photographs: Luke Pope

This edition of Southern trails features **African lovegrass**. Specimens have been found in the SE section of Talooge. The blue green, wiry weed may be drought resistant but is unpalatable to livestock. In fact it threatens the dairy and livestock industries. It is opportunistic, particularly in over-grazed pasture land and will kill if sufficient quantities are consumed. The feathery grey seeds heads contain thousands of tiny black seeds which generate in temperatures above 10 degrees Celsius. Spreading occurs in the hoofs of grazing animals, slashing, vehicles, water, fodder and by wind over short distances.

African love grass does well in light sandy soil and can be confused with Poa which is more wiry and has longer blades. If you find any on the property, please notify Property Coordinator Scott Cumming. This weed is best controlled before becoming established. Fortunately such is the case at Talooge.

A really handy app issued by NSW Dept of Primary Industries is *NSW WeedWise*. This free app provides extensive information and pictures where you need it, on your phone. Thanks to Luke Pope and Linda Ayres, authors of the information provided for this grass file.



Things You Learn – Windscreen Damage

Peter Blunt

On a recent trip into the Simpson a 15cm-long crack appeared in my windscreen at morning tea on day two of an eight-day trip across the QAA Line and up the Hay River Track. I had visions of it shattering and falling in and then driving through dust and rain and mud with no windscreen. Game over? We decided to do a repair and monitor it as we continued. Resin from the emergency windscreen repair kit was drizzled along the crack and left to go off in the UV. The crack very slowly extended but not enough to be a major concern. On return to Canberra the screen was replaced and I questioned the technician at length.

Modern windscreens are three layers with an outer and inner layer of glass sandwiching a layer of vinyl. In most instances, the outer layer is damaged and forms stars, chips or cracks. The inner layer of glass generally stays intact. As the screen absorbs force through driving, cracks and damage can spread. In a worst-case scenario, a crack may spread across to the side of the screen. Once at the side it cannot go any further. Windscreens are designed not to shatter or fall in. A few vehicles have laminated side and rear glass but most have toughened glass in these areas.

The windscreen is part of the structural strength of the vehicle especially in conjunction with the front pillars. In a rollover with a badly damaged windscreen the pillars are weaker and may fold in. In a crash, the airbags are designed to deploy and generally the front passenger's side airbag deflects from the windscreen. If the airbag deflects off a badly damaged and weakened windscreen it may not deploy correctly.

Windscreen repair kits may be useful. The resin is designed to work best inside the crack or small spaces within a damage zone. Various kits have different methods of providing pressure to force the resin into these spaces. It may improve the quality of a repair to use a lighter to warm the inside of the glass which will lead to expansion of the glass and opening of the crack/damage zone to enable resin to make its way inside. Gentle pressure inside the glass may also achieve this. It is important to do repairs as soon as possible — before damage spreads and before water and dust enters the damaged glass. Windscreen insurance – i.e. \$55 per year NRMA – covers replacement through your choice of supplier at no cost without affecting your no-claim bonus.

Windscreen companies do professional repairs as well as replacements. NRMA will replace a screen if a crack is bigger than a \$1 coin or a chip is bigger than a \$2 coin.

Replacements will cost \$450–\$600. Repairs cost approximately \$100 for the first and decrease to about \$40 for each additional.

Prevention – drive slowly especially when other vehicles pass or overtake, pull over completely when road trains approach, don't drive anywhere near Birdsville around the time of the Big Red Bash.

Repair kit examples – Ufixit, Rain-x and Permatex are available from car parts outlets like Autobarn and Supercheap Auto for around \$30. Small round clear plastic patches keep chips clean and dry prior to repair.

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=3U0iLP-xeqQs>

Club Clothing

Shirts

Polo (cotton/polyester, lightweight)	\$38
Chambery (long-sleeve)	\$45

Outerwear


Jacket	\$95
Hoodie	\$45
Rugby Jumper	\$50

Headwear

Baseball Cap	\$15
Bucket Hat	\$15
Beanie	\$20

Other

Name Badge	\$10
Polo – small size *ideal for older children	\$20



**Come along and join us
for ST4WDC's
Christmas Party
at Talooge.**

When: Sat 26th November - 27th November

Time: Festivities start 12pm 26th Nov

Where: Talooge

**This is ST4WDC'S annual big get together to
celebrate Christmas.**

**Put these details in your calendar and join
us for a fun filled weekend of games, Santa,
Pot luck dinner and lucky gate prizes**



40th Anniversary

1976 - 2016

**Where – Deakin Sports Club ,2 Grose street
Deakin**

When – Saturday 5th November 2016

Come along and celebrate the last 40 years of the Club.

There will be Entertainment, games and fun.

Please put your name down on the website to show your
interest.

\$50.00 per head

Tickets are on sale at each meeting.

If you have any queries, please call

Lynne 0418 631 669.

For Sale

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392,000km

6-cylinder Turbo Diesel

Long-range 145L fuel tank

CODAN X2 SSB Transceiver pre-set with VKS737 & RFDS frequencies

Storage unit in rear

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One extra spare wheel

Spare belts & hoses

Contact Jim Hanigan

0427 483 911

jim.hanigan@bigpond.com

Roof Rack Tray – \$80

110x186mm

Designed to go on Rhino roof racks

Contact Michael Patrick

0412 377 941

m-patrick@bigpond.com



Wanted

Talooge has a DVD player but no DVD's, for bored children to watch on a miserable rainy day. If you want to donate suitable DVD's to the club please bring them along to the club meeting and give them to Michael Patrick.

Volunteer's to assist in helping run the Bush Skills weekend.

We are looking for people who want to demonstrate their skills or assist in organising different activities:

- Bush cooking
- Tyre repairs
- Communications & GPS
- Vehicle recoveries
- Vehicle/Trailers/Tents/Swags
- Anything you can think of!

Lost & Found

Found!

License Plate: ACT YKL69F

Found on Rayners Fire Trail

Contact Michael Patrick 0412377941

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