



SOUTHERN TRAILS

ISSUE 367 February 2010



C O N T E N T S

Directory	2	Report - Christmas Party at Talooge	30
Ro's Ramblings	4	Report - Victorian High Country	32
Events and Trips	5	Remote Area Travel	36
Membership Matters	8	Why Join a 4WD Club?	39
Golden Oldies' Memories	9	Lifting Your 4WD	41
Annual General Meeting	14	My next truck will be..	43
About Trips	18	Spotlight on Sponsor	46
Trips and Events Calendar	19	Unclassified Advertisements	50
Promo Volunteer Form	21	Membership Details	51
Membership Matters	23	New Member Application Form	52
Report - Cowarra Gold Mine	28		

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

Next General Meeting — 9 February

There will be no guest speaker at this meeting because among other things we will be discussing final arrangements for the 4WD Spectacular at the Queanbeyan Showgrounds 13-14 February 2010

The deadline for material to be included in the next issue of *Southern Trails* is the Friday following the General Meeting i.e. 12 February 2010

**Please consider nominating for the Committee
a nomination form is enclosed - nominations close on 27 February.**

**This month's magazine has been compiled by Bob and Sylvia Allen
Cover photos this month by Val. Wiseman and Julie Nicholls**

SOUTHERN TRAILS - is the magazine of the ST4WDC Incorporated,
GPO Box 2122, Canberra ACT 2601
ABN: 49 507 780 060
Registered by Australia Post
Print Post No. PP248831/00046
National Library Catalogue No. ISSN 0314-0814
Web Address <http://www.st4wdc.org>

The opinions expressed in the articles and letters in this magazine are not necessarily those of the The Southern Tablelands Four Wheel Drive Club.
Southern Trails is printed by INSTANT COLOUR PRESS, 21 RAE ST, BELCONNEN, ACT 2617.
All magazine correspondence should be directed to the Publications Coordinator.
Trip reports & articles of interest are very welcome. Contributions may be edited.

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

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Page 2

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

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

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

Publications

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

Southern Trails is the ST4WD Club monthly magazine.

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

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

Talooge Park

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

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

Code of Ethics

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

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

Training

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

The current courses are:

Main Courses

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

Supplementary Courses

Water Crossing,
Sand Driving,
Practical Map Reading,
Navigation,
Route Planning,
GPS, and
Other specific training relating to Club activities such as camper trailers etc may also be introduced..

Training for Driver Training Instructors

Trainee Instructor,
Assistant Instructor,
Instructor, and
Chief Instructor

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

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

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

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

Don 02 6161 1880. 0408 649 732

Rosemary's Ramblings

Rosemary Orr



Welcome to the year 2010, hopefully everyone has had time to relax and recharge their batteries for the year ahead. So, what do we have in store for 2010?

First and foremost is our Promo weekend on 13-14 February 2010 at the Queanbeyan Showground. This event will enable us to showcase our Club to the public and encourage our members to work together to make a success of the weekend. It's an opportunity to see what is new in the world of four wheel driving and to see everything new under the sun. Hopefully we will see you all there at some time over the weekend working and enjoying yourselves. Don't forget our Club tent is your home base where you will find love and laughter, food and drink and shelter from the sun.

Also we have our Annual General meeting in March. All of the positions on the Committee will be declared vacant and a new Committee will be elected to steer the Club for the next 12 months. I encourage those members who feel that they have something to contribute to nominate for a position. Being on the Committee is a great way to give something back and to also have a say about the future of the Club. Having said that, I would hope that all members of the Club feel that they can approach members of the Committee at any time to discuss any ideas or suggestions they have.

A lot of what happens to the Club in 2010 will be the territory of the new Committee but I would hope that some of the following issues will be on the agenda for action:

1. I would encourage everyone to think seriously about trips undertaken by the Club. Richard, our trip coordinator, has been working hard for the past three years to ensure that there are many varied and interesting trips in our calendar. He needs help and the new coordinator will need help. So I would hope that the Committee and the members of the Club will get involved in organising trips and helping to have our trip calendar full for the year. We are a 4WD club and we should be 4wheel driving.
2. I would like to see more people using Talooge as a camping destination. A lot of work has been done at our property by many people to facilitate our driver training and also to facilitate our bigger functions. However, there are many areas away from Thurbon Flat that are wonderful for real bush camping. Here is a destination within two hours from Canberra

with a range of facilities. None of these facilities are comparable to modern camping parks but Talooge offers a wonderful bush setting, brilliant stars at night and a wonderful ambience. During 2010 we hope to name our tracks and alternative camping areas and produce a map so that every member of the Club is able to locate and explore them. So watch this space.

3. The Committee has been working hard to produce a new web site for the Club. Once the site is completed and up and running we will be encouraging everyone to become familiar with it and to use it as a tool for communication with each other and to keep up to date with the activities of the Club. The new site will have new features and will become an interactive tool for all Club members. We are working hard to get this up and running as soon as possible.
4. Our driver training unit will continue to offer training of a very high standard. Our philosophy of safe driving and the proper use of our vehicles in the environs in which we drive is the very basis on which our Club is built. Once our new members have completed their basic training, we encourage them to continue to implement those things which they have learnt. We have a dedicated team of trainers who give up many hours to provide training to the members of our Club.

One thing that stands out above everything else is the companionship and friendship which is offered by the Club. The fun times, and the serious times, the great trips, and the not so great trips. The wonderful work done by the members, the helping hands when they are needed. For me it has been a great experience being part of this Club. There is so much heart and so many good memories.

Now it's your turn, it's all there for you; all you have to do is get involved. It can be in a small way or a big way – BUT GET INVOLVED – you are the future of your Club. Until next time, enjoy.

Rosemary



Events and Trips

Richard Brand



Going for a drive is surely still the most popular pastime in Australia, despite the environmental impact, the calculated risk we take each time we get in or near a vehicle, and the reporting of holiday road fatalities.

When you think about it, the Club is essentially about going for drives, often to great destinations. I will argue that many of our trips represent the most fun you can legally have in a vehicle while travelling very slowly, and for the most part, very safely!

I always get worried when somebody gets on the soap box to tell everybody else how they should be driving. I am going to take this risk, though my only qualifications are that I am still alive, have survived two fatal accidents, and have done a fair amount of driving over the last forty years. For example, I drove to Sydney four times last month, and used to drive Melbourne / Wollongong every month for several years. I do have a deep personal interest in road safety.

Unsafe at any Speed

Ralph Nader's pivotal book with this title took aim at car design, but cars of any type can kill when nearly stationary. Three of my friends have parked on slopes and forgotten to secure the vehicle properly. One car just ran into a tree, but could have careered across a main road (I've seen that happen across six busy lanes in Sydney). Another trapped the driver against another car, breaking his arm as he tried to hold his car back. The third ran over the driver, causing near fatal crush injuries requiring years of rehabilitation.

I have been trapped by a car I was working on, and it is a scary experience. When I lived in the UK, I had a big 3-litre Rover which needed a new exhaust and rear brake work, so I raised the back on to a pair of car ramps. Space was cramped so these pointed forwards into the garage. I also used two hydraulic jacks to raise the front wheels. The work was not finished until well after midnight, and I was so tired I must have forgotten to apply the handbrake. When I let the hydraulic jacks down, the car rolled forward down the ramps and trapped me by the hips against the brick wall of the garage. I only escaped by wedging a jack handle between the wall and the bumper, which at least stopped further movement. After many painful minutes, I worked out that if I could lift the front of the car a bit, the handle might lever the car back a tad. It did, just enough to let me wriggle out.

These incidents happened with normal cars on slight slopes in driveways. In the bush, we might be on 30-degree slopes, where a runaway 4WD can accelerate away like a supercar. On those slopes most handbrakes are pretty useless, so our basic driver training becomes invaluable. But wherever you are, try to use at least two methods to secure a parked vehicle, and think about where the steered wheels are pointing. Towards a bank or kerb beats a downhill slope any day.

Small children are at particular risk in driveways, especially where they cannot be seen from reversing vehicles like packed 4WDs and cars like Commodores with high boot lines. Think about reversing into your driveway, when you can see it is clear as you arrive, rather than out of it. Reversing sensors and cameras are getting cheaper all the time, too.

Safer Vehicles

Ralph Nader jolted the industry into making safer vehicles, surely the biggest contribution to the ongoing slow reduction in the road toll. Australia has been right at the forefront, with mandatory safety belts and Australian Design Rules. Odd then that the government sees no imperative to fit ACT buses with safety belts. I have been on a crowded double-decker bus that drove into a single-decker railway station awning and it was not pretty. I suppose ACT buses mostly just hit cars.

Moving Traffic

There is a lot of press about the dangers of mixing heavy vehicles with 'normal' traffic. I think normal traffic itself comprises under-protected types - pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists, wildlife - as well as light vehicles including cars and 4WDs. In an accident involving a mix of traffic types, the lighter almost always comes off worse due to laws of physics. These suggest that colliding head on into a concrete block is equivalent to a head-on collision with a similar vehicle at twice the combined approach speed. But if the other vehicle is much heavier, it is as if the concrete block is moving towards you at their speed.

We happily limit freeway speeds to 110-kph, where there should be very little chance of head-on collisions. But on undivided roads with 100-kph speed limits, meeting a B-double head-on could be equivalent to 200-kph freeway speeds (which are common and relatively safe on many German autobahns).

Even more frightening, the sideways margin for error is just a metre or so. By this measure, even suburban roads with a 60-kph limit are more dangerous than freeways.

Off road, we are much safer because we rarely encounter other vehicles, we can often pick up other convoys on scanning radios, and we can hear speeding trail bikes well before they see us. There is a real danger of head on collisions with other 4WDs on crests, especially in sand dunes, which is why we should have highly visible flags mounted high over the vehicle.



Overtaking

Overtaking on bending undivided roads is the most hazardous manoeuvre, especially for the over-taker and on-coming traffic. There is a fair bit we can do to reduce the risk.

Our convoys often travel a bit slower than other traffic, which can cause frustration for motorists who are being held up. Make sure you allow plenty of space between you and the vehicle in front so that non-convoy vehicles can overtake. You can let your mates know when a vehicle is moving through the convoy. It does not matter if your predecessor is so far ahead, you cannot even see it. Most likely you can talk to the convoy by radio, and in any case somebody will wait for you at any significant turn-off. If following traffic starts to bank-up, find a spot to pull off the road to let them pass.

Our UHF radios are a great advantage - we can talk to truck drivers and Club members. But even without talking, we can communicate by our actions. Moving towards the left can signal to a following vehicle that you know they are there, and that you are providing extra safety margin should they choose to overtake. Be aware of truckies' use of lights, especially when a long rig overtakes another. You can use the same system. As soon as an overtaking truck is clear of your vehicle, flash your headlights on to high beam

and make sure the driver has seen the signal by watching his face in his left mirror. He will normally say thank you by giving a couple of left turn indications, then a couple of right flashes, then a couple more left ones.

In turn, trucks often try to help motorists overtake when they think it is safe (and they may well be talking over the radio to a mate up ahead). Unfortunately in Australia they signal by using the right turn indicator. Motorists have been killed when they have mistaken a genuine right turn indication for an 'it is safe to overtake' signal. I much prefer the system in

France where trucks have unambiguous green lights.

Single Vehicle Accidents

Amazingly, in Australia there are more single vehicle fatalities than multi-vehicle ones. Statistical analysis of impact points shows that some are intentional and I am sure that many result from tiredness exacerbated by boredom or day-dreaming. Lots more result from poor car control at high speed, particularly with young

male drivers, and even more so when they have young passengers to impress. Fortunately most of us are over that.

Road Design

Surely the key to good road design should be 'no surprises'. Despite the best efforts of the ACT road paint engineers, I think we still have the best roads in Australia, which can stress some Canberra drivers when they get on to much narrower interstate highways and byways. There are still plenty of traps in Canberra, though. For example, my nearest roundabout on the Barton Highway is not actually round - it tightens most unexpectedly where the side roads enter. Roughly once a year a heavy vehicle overturns at this spot.

A bit further up, at the Kuringa Drive turn-off, there are plenty of signs but none is anywhere near the real turnoff, which has raised concrete covered in black from tyres. I have retrieved a fallen motor-cyclist from this spot, in broad daylight. Anyone not familiar with the set up is likely to miss the turn - it is bad enough during the day, but on a dark rainy night it is downright dangerous.

On the other side of Kuringa Drive, a paint line seems to form a bike path on the right. Almost universally, local drivers straddle this half-lane when queuing to

turn right, in order to clear a path for traffic turning left. I get perverse pleasure from seeing so many drivers doing the sensible thing, against the clear intent of the paint engineers. Other government lures are markings which look like turning lanes, but turn out to be bus stops, and then inexplicably taper to a bike lane just as the real turning lane comes up.

Back to Speeding

How often have you heard that speed was a factor in a road accident? Road authorities clearly think we were born to over-speed. Victoria has the most rigorous radar regime, and after years of hefty fines, very few motorists in Victoria exceed the posted limits. However, their Deputy Commissioner for Road Traffic, who was in charge of getting the road safety message out over the Christmas holidays, was himself caught for speeding through a Victorian country town over Christmas.

The ACT's Commissioner was reported over Christmas as saying a reduction in speed from 100 to 90-kph would only add 20-minutes to a Canberra-Melbourne trip. By my calculations, at a distance of roughly 660-km, the trip would take 6 hours and 36 minutes at 100-kph and 7 hours and 20 minutes at 90-kph. For the difference to be as low as 20 minutes, more than half the trip would have to be equally slowed by other limits, which it clearly is not.

If we really wanted to eliminate most fatal road accidents, we could revert to the days of the man carrying a red flag walking in front of each vehicle, or we could use modern technology to electronically govern top speeds to say 15-kph, even if it means taking a week to drive to Melbourne. However collectively we would rather save some time and take extra risks.

European studies have shown that despite the obvious increase in wear and tear, fuel cost and risk of accidents, Europeans are actually very good at balancing the value of their time against the other economics. They also tend to drive much faster than we do.

Hot Air Balloons and Retrieving

Driving unexpectedly slowly can also be dangerous. If you are involved with the hot-air balloon event, please remember you will be on public roads during peak traffic times and please drive at normal speeds. It is terribly easy to become so engrossed in what your balloon might be up to that you lose touch with the traffic flow. Almost certainly some rubber-necking motorists will have accidents, but let's make sure it is not us.

Holidays

Most of us probably drive a bit slower when on holidays, and time is less pressured. A big fuss is made of

holiday fatalities, but the daily rate is about the norm – just over four a day nation-wide. These fatalities are just the tip of an iceberg of physical and emotional trauma that happens day after day all year round. At a personal level, my nine-year old sister was mown down on an Easter Sunday by a driver who never even saw us. It was over 50 years ago but the emotional pain does not go away.

35 years ago I was a passenger in a car hit from behind by a motorcyclist estimated to be doing three times the speed limit. His pillion passenger survived, while I just got some minor whiplash so I can't turn my head properly. It does force me to use my mirrors when reversing, though! In this environment, we should all work to continuously try to improve our skills and situational awareness. Remember you can repeat driver training whenever there are vacancies.

We have some great trips in the Calendar – enjoy them safely!

See you down the track

Richard



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Membership Matters

Jim Raleigh



We currently have 253 Memberships comprising 3 Life Members, 238 Owner Members, 11 Competition Members, along with 199 Partners and 1 Family Member – a grand total of 453 people belonging to the Club. This is the highest we have been for a number of years. And after Promo in February we traditionally see a slight surge in New Member applications.

New Members

This month we would like to welcome the following new Members and their partners who have joined since 1 December.

Peter Welsh	Nissan Patrol
Robert & Carol Moore	Toyota Prado
Alan Fraser	Toyota Troopy
Dan & Ann O'Hara	Toyota Landcruiser
Lalinda Senanayake & Jane Thomson-Senanayake	Nissan Patrol
Leslie & Millie Paton	Toyota Prado
Darryl & Colleen Alexander	Nissan Patrol
Shirley & Paul Conn	Toyota Prado
Tony Cirina	Toyota HiLux

Membership Renewals for 2010 have been flowing very well and the pre-filled Renewal Forms, electronically distributed to those who have registered Email addresses, have been well received. If you did not receive one or have mislaid it, please let me know, by Email so that I can be sure we have the right Email address, and I will send you one.

This initiative has facilitated the correction of a surprisingly small number of errors in our Membership database and has resulted in a much smoother renewal process - but please remember to inform the Membership Secretary of any changes to your details, particularly your Email addresses.

Direct debit payments

Some Members have questioned the reason for the preference for Direct Debit payment of Renewal Fees – the reasons are many but mainly: it saves the Club a small amount of money in bank fees; the Club benefits from the funds being credited more promptly; it significantly expedites the processing of

Renewals; and most importantly, it saves the Membership Secretary lots of time.

Late fees

If you have not yet renewed your membership, please remember that under the Club Constitution and By-Laws, you will become liable for a 'Late Fee' of \$5.00 if you have not done so by the end of the February Meeting (9 February) and you will not be eligible to vote at the March AGM unless you have renewed at least 10 days prior to that meeting i.e. 28 February.

For the information of all Members, both the New Member Application and the Membership Renewal forms on the Web Site have been updated to the current versions.

In coming months we plan to undertake some analysis to identify why some of our Members do not renew each year, and in particular to see if there is anything we can do to encourage them to remain or even rejoin. While there will always be good reasons such as relocating out of the area, obviously we would like to encourage our Members to remain with us as long as they can. If you happen to be aware of the reason why a former Member did not renew their Membership, I would be pleased to hear from you.

Family Members

One valuable source of additional Members can come from Family Members (other than Partners). We have not been good at keeping track of them in the past, but with the Membership rule changes introduced in 2008, young Family members who have completed their Driver Training before they turn 21 are exempted from the Joining Fee provided they lodge their New Membership Application before their 22nd birthday.

To take advantage of this opportunity, they need to be registered in the membership database. If you have Family Members who fall into this category, please let me know - all I need is a copy of their Drivers Licence and information as to when, if at all, they completed driver training.



Golden Oldies' Memories

Bob Allen



We have finally coaxed more of those shy baby boomer golden oldies to come out of hiding and tell us why they are still members of ST4WDC after twenty years or so. The remarkable thing about their stories is the recurring themes that define our Club – excellent training, fantastic trips and great camaraderie. It's almost as if they got together and prepared their replies as a committee. But remember these are your rugged individual baby boomer, we did it our way types, the ones that landed on the moon and really did invent the internet - so I don't think they did that.

Peter Reynolds with 33 years of membership and a life member of the Club wrote.

We joined in 1977. Our current vehicle is an 80 Series Landcruiser Turbo Diesel with a dual battery system and twin alternators, ARB bull bar, IPF driving lights, Warn winch with plasma rope, Old Man Emu suspension system, Stratos bucket Seats, long range fuel tanks (265 l), sill protector side rails, cargo barrier, false floor and drawer system with sleeping platform, rear protection bar and spare wheel carrier, 285-75x16 Cooper STT Tyres on 80 Series rims, alloy heavy duty roof rack with side and rear awnings, UHF radio and satellite phone.

The many friends we have made, the great camaraderie among members on trips and the opportunity to form the Club's driver training team to the level it is today have all contributed to my staying in the Club. Trips to anywhere in the Simpson Desert are my favourites because they are always challenging. My favourite camping spot is at Jackson's Crossing on the Snowy River because it's fairly isolated and a very peaceful spot. I have two travel tips - always go with heavy duty tyres and be over-prepared. I would like to go to Arnhem Land because I consider it to be the last wilderness area in Australia with magnificent wildlife, remote camping and exploring opportunities - and still accessible today.

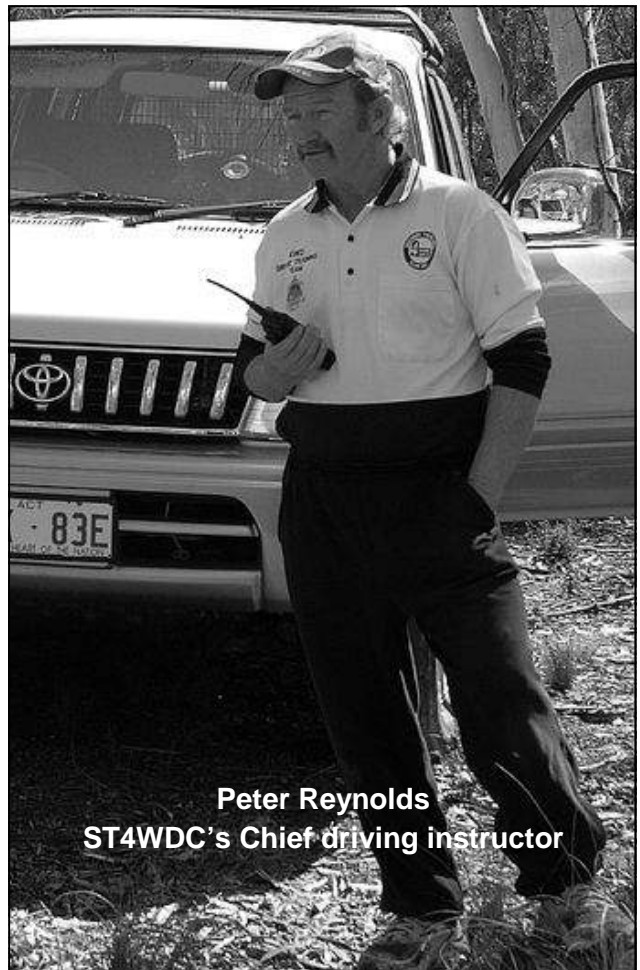
The Club is a progressive club and I suggest more trips would be good to keep our members satisfied. But I see trips becoming more difficult as a lot of areas in Australia continue to be closed to us.

David Whight with 25 years membership wrote.

I joined the Club around February 1985, the proud owner of a red GLX model FJ60 which I'd bought new in 1984. I'd become interested in 4WD'ing after many years of car camping, bush walking and white water canoeing. I knew that a 4WD club would enable me to

learn the necessary skills to enjoy the vehicle's capabilities and meet a group of people from all walks of life interested in the bush and getting out and about. This proved to be the case. I've spent about five years on the Committee.

I sold the FJ60 towards the end of 2001 and bought a 1994 Toyota 80 series, petrol engine and automatic. Modifications are: Old Man Emu suspension upgrade (medium stiffness I think); home-made drawers and fridge slide with support around the fridge so that gear can be packed above and to the side; Tekonsha electric trailer braking controller; heavy duty wiring to enable charging of a trailer battery while the engine is running; UHF radio; two 12V power outlets in the rear bumper bar; half height cargo barrier built to my design (has sliding panels) and fitted by me; and a Hayman Rees heavy duty tow bar.



Peter Reynolds
ST4WDC's Chief driving instructor

My reasons for joining are still valid and are some of the reasons for staying. While people come and go the current membership always consists of an

interesting mix of people from all walks of life. The range of trips is broad in terms of duration, destination and degree of difficulty and there is a variety of other interesting activities from time to time. There is a strong sense of community service. The Club has gone from strength to strength with respect to its governance. Driver training has also developed and improved with more courses now available for different levels of difficulty and terrain. After many years leasing properties for driver training and much discussion about buying a property, the Club now owns, and is continuing to develop, a property that is being used for driver training and social activities. The Club participates strongly in the broader 4WD community through State and National Associations.

I consider any outback trip is appealing but the mountains run a close second. And I like to camp any place in the bush provided it is away from the crowds. My travel tips are: plan well in advance; be flexible when on the trip; have a fall-back position should things go not to plan; make sure the truck is properly serviced and take appropriate equipment including spares, depending on the trip; minimise one night stops; reduce the daily driving load (even for one day trips) and take time out “to smell the roses” There are several trips I would like to do: the Simpson Desert; Victorian High Country; re-visit the Gibb River Road and its surrounds, and the Canning Stock Route.

I suggest for the future that the Club continue with the good governance which has steadily improved over the years, keep the interesting Club meetings with plenty of time to socialise, run more new members picnics, particularly when we have members waiting to do their driver training – that’s why they were introduced, keep up the good work with the trip and

event calendar showing what’s on as far ahead as possible, keep up the mix of one day, weekend and longer trips; and somehow attract younger members so that the Club doesn’t grow old – the average age of our members has been creeping up over the last few years.

I am very optimistic that the Club will become an even more significant force in the 4WD world and in further developing relationships with other organisations such as National Parks. I also see the Club becoming a more significant force in its community activities. I’m sure that the Club will continue to provide an enjoyable and professional environment for people to enjoy the bush and 4WDing in all its forms including competition.

Robert Tiele with 23 years membership wrote.

I joined the Club in December 1987 at the tender age of 16 and 11 months – I was still on my learners permit. I have just sold my competition Nissan Patrol. I am now using a 1997 Pajero which so far, has no modifications. I have stayed with the Club because of the amazing camaraderie that develops and the long-term mentoring relationships.

My favourite Club trip is quite specific; it was a trip to the Victorian Alps in January 1993. And it was the best fun with great participants and non-stop action, day and night. My favourite camping spot is at Canoolie which is a good days drive in, with interesting tracks, excellent camping and it is located next to the Deua river. I have four travel tips: be prepared for anything; have your 4WD vehicle in good working order; take lots of food and have FUN! Some day I would like to cross the Simpson Desert from east to west.



New members’ picnic — Micalong Creek, 2006



Rob Tiele in his Nissan Patrol testing a new track at Talooge

enjoyed the companionship of the members. I left Canberra in 1993 but have remained a member and occasionally returned for trips and I also ran some trips to Stockton Beach (I was living in Newcastle at the time). The Club has many members with good driving and good socialising skills and they are happy to teach other members how to use those skills to make 4WDing safer and more enjoyable.

I personally think the Club is the best club in the ACT as it caters for all types of 4WD activities and personalities. Obtaining our own land a few years ago is an absolute blessing because all the members can use it whenever they like all year round. I think we need younger members to join as they will bring new life in to the Club and we can train them about driving to the conditions - on and off the road.

Les Bannister with 21 years membership wrote.

I joined the Club in 1989 after having moved to the Canberra area the year before. I do not currently own a 4WD vehicle but I previously had a Nissan Patrol and Toyota HiLux Dual Cab. I have owned 4WDs for almost 20 years, but I got rid of the HiLux in 2008 because I was living in Sydney and it did not get much use.

I have enjoyed many a Christmas Party, Meet the Committee Weekend, and other social events as well as 4WDing.

Where do I start with my favourite trip? I enjoy new members' picnics - to meet and greet the new members and make them welcome. I also liked the driver training and follow-up days - both as a participant and also as an instructor after being accredited in the early 1990s. Stockton Beach trips - I led one with 29 vehicles, and trips to the Brindabellas to catch the sunset on Mt Coree. But probably the trip I am proudest of was the Camp Quality Brindabella Day Trip in March 1993 where we had 32 vehicles - which was more than we needed. The Club did themselves proud and I was honoured to have been able to run such a worthwhile trip to bring joy to some many Camp Quality kids and families.

The main reason why I stuck with the Club is that I

I do not have any favourite camp site, but I always



A Les Bannister-led trip to Stockton Beach - 1990s

like a spot near a river. My travel tips are simple - plan, plan, plan and then plan for what happens when the plans fail. Enjoy the trips and do not be afraid to ask for help if you need it. And remember the Club is there to help each other. I would like to do Cape York and also drive the Canning Stock Route – I have just finished reading one of Len Beadell's books on how the Canning Stock Route was built.

I have not been involved too much recently with the Club but it still appears to be a strong and happy club. As I have said, the best thing you can do for the Club is to get involved, run trips, go on trips, and help each other to learn to be better drivers. As a member who gets involved in the Club you will get back much more than you put in if you are willing to get involved.

Editor's note: Les was Treasurer of Southern Tablelands Four Wheel Drive Club Inc for 2 years and was awarded a "Certificate of Appreciation" for services rendered to Southern Tablelands Four Wheel Drive Club Inc.

Neil and Sandra Telfer with 18 years membership wrote.

Like many other families, we loved exploring the great outdoors in our spare time, but found restrictions in the places we could go in the 2WD vehicle we owned. So a change to a 4WD was mandatory and over a 12 month period we test drove every 4WD vehicle we could find. We settled for a new 1992 petrol Jackaroo, auto /air / cruise control and importantly, a good turning circle.

A 4WD show at the Hall Showground opened our eyes to the full capabilities of these vehicles and that there were a number of 4WD clubs in Canberra that we could join to improve our knowledge. We picked up a copy of the Southern Tablelands Club magazine and read with interest the activities and training provided. In our search for 4WD equipment we read more magazines picked up at the various 4WD equipment outlets. It soon was obvious to us that we needed training as well as an understanding of our vehicles limitations. We decided to join a club.

In mid-1992 we joined the Southern Tablelands Club for training and quickly realised that members of the Club came from all walks of life, each with skills to contribute and share with others. We participated in many of the Club activities, even leading 4WD trips. Over the years Neil served on the Club Committee in various positions including Club President for 7 years. Membership with the Club has allowed us to expand our social base as well as form a number of life-long friendships.

In 2001, after some 280,000Kms of hard travel and exploring, we decided to replace the Jackaroo. The reliability and low maintenance costs of the existing unit weighted out judgment towards purchasing another Jackaroo, this time a 3litre diesel unit for our ongoing 4 wheel driving experiences.

We encountered two main restrictions with our first vehicle: limited ground clearance - mostly due to the heavier loading on long remote area trips and adequate but softer shock absorbers; and easily damaged mag wheel rims - due to the rugged terrain on many remote area trips.



So in selecting a replacement vehicle we retained the auto /air/ cruise control features but added rear uplift springs with the front torsion bar tension being increased slightly. Existing shocks were replaced with heavy duty shock absorbers and the mag wheel rims replaced with 'white' steel rims. These have been small but successful changes for long distance, remote area, travel.

We have undertaken scores and scores of trips during our time with the Club, ranging from day trips to those exceeding three months. The opportunity to explore with friends the remote areas of the Victoria's High Country, cross many of Australia's more desolate regions and sit around the evening camp fire swapping yarns has been, and still is extremely rewarding.

We have three travel tips. Despite the usefulness of satellite phones and HF radios, travelling with a group that carry vehicle spares and has the expertise to deploy them in the event of a breakdown is extremely comforting – a simple collision with a sand dune, clay pan or a rock can play havoc in remote areas and it is usually extremely expensive and time

consuming. Secondly, it is also extremely important that you know and understand how to manage your tyre pressure – this can make or break a trip in the Australian outback.

Bay, NSW) to the Australia’s most westerly point (Steep Point, WA) and then to other ports north, held some years ago. Setting up camp in the long spinifex grass along the abandoned Gun Barrel Highway was also very memorable.



All hands to the task — Kimberley, WA, 2006

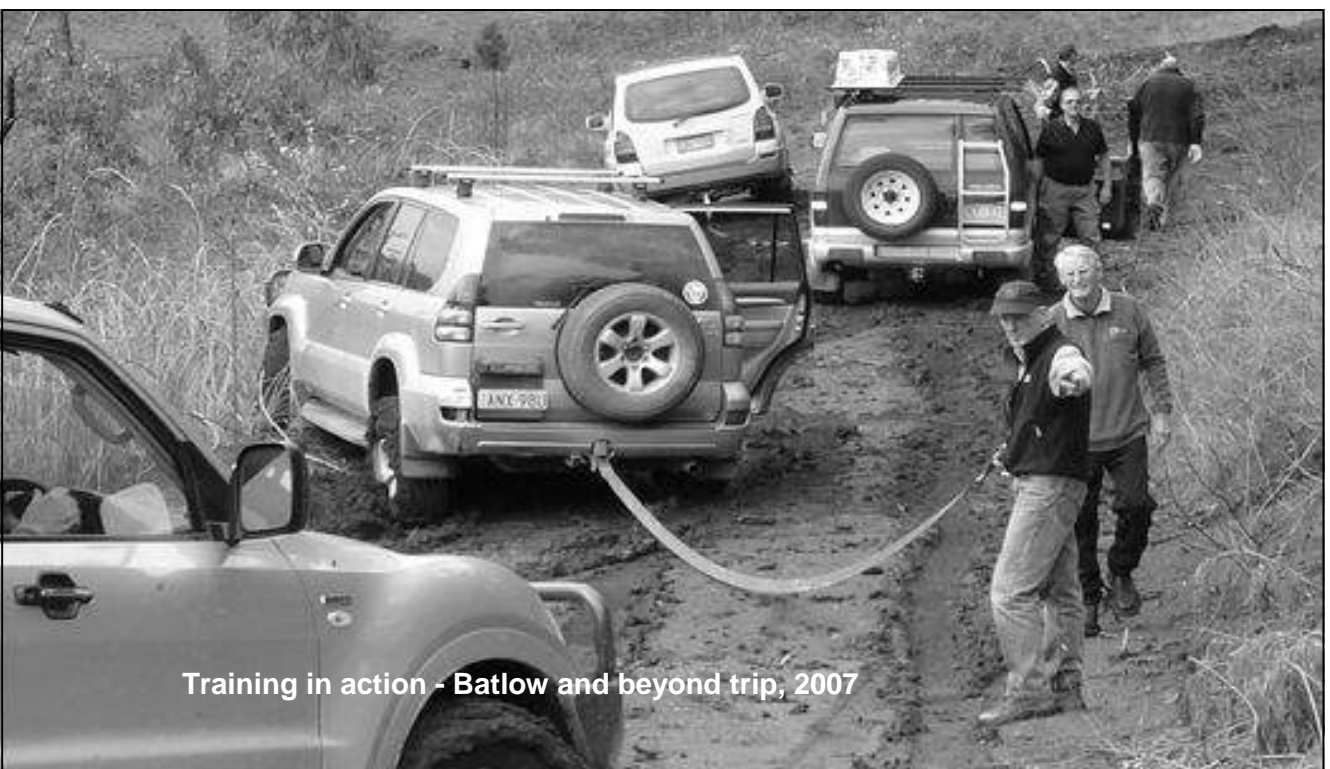
Sandra has a hankering to drive to Cape York but as Neil has already been there with a job he had for many years that took him to many of the remote areas around Australia’s coastline and offshore islands, it has not yet reached the travel radar screen. Of course there are always more tracks in the Simpson, but we seem to knock one more off every other year. However, we understand from a Camel driver friend that there is a large tourist

And our final tip, is to suggest that you minimise third party modifications to your 4wd. Motor vehicle engineers spend a lot of time and expense in calculating turning moments and loadings on vehicle parts. We have seen many accidents from added third party products be it driving lights, or aerials falling off, extended range fuel tanks falling off, broken trailer couplings, broken vehicle or trailer springs, you name it. Roads in remote areas of Australia are very, very unforgiving.

demand to ride across the Simpson Desert on a Camel. He does this each year - maybe this is a new experience one should try?

We always enjoy the opportunity to get away, be it a short or long trip but we have no clear favourite. However we did enjoy the fellowship and organization of a two month trip from the most easterly point (Byron

So that’s it for a while from the golden oldies. But if you want a view of ST4WDC from the perspective of a newer member, read Kerry Lesjek’s report on pages 39-40. Kerry and husband Rob have only been with the Club for around two and half years, but already they have been doing heaps of trips and contributing significantly to all aspects of the Club.



Training in action - Batlow and beyond trip, 2007

Annual General Meeting



In accordance with By-Law 31, notice is hereby given that the 2010 Annual General Meeting of the ST4WDC Inc will take place at 7:30PM on Tuesday 9 March at the **Deakin Sports Club**. In accordance with By-Law 18, Owner Members, Family Members and Life Members are eligible to join the Committee, however only Owner Members and Life Members are eligible to vote at the Annual General Meeting.

Members are also reminded that in accordance with Rule 25(1)a of the ST4WDC Constitution, nominations for positions on the Committee "shall be made in writing signed by two members of the Club and accompanied by the written consent of the candidate (which may be endorsed on the form of nomination" and must be lodged with the Secretary by Saturday 27 February (**10 days before the meeting**).

The positions to be filled at the Annual General Meeting are:

President	Secretary
Treasurer	Membership Secretary
Education Coordinator	Events & Trips Coordinator
Publications Coordinator	Property Coordinator
Membership Secretary	Public Relations Coordinator
General Committee Members (four positions)	

For the information of members and particularly potential nominees, relevant extracts of the current Constitution and By-Laws are reproduced below.

Extract from the Constitution of the ST4WDC Inc.

25 Election of Members of Committee

1. Nominations of candidates for election as committee member - (a) shall be made in writing signed by two members of the Club and accompanied by the written consent of the candidate (which may be endorsed on the form of nomination), and (b) shall be delivered to the Secretary of the Club at least ten days before the date fixed for the holding of the Annual General Meeting.
2. If there is only one nomination received for a committee position the person nominated shall be deemed to be elected.
3. If there is more than one nomination received for a committee position then a ballot shall be held
4. The ballot for the election of a committee member shall be conducted at the Annual General Meeting in such usual and proper manner as the committee may direct.
5. If insufficient nominations are received to fill all the vacancies on the committee then further nominations as per rule 25 (1)(a) shall be received at the Annual General Meeting.

Planning a trip?

The following experienced trip leaders have offered to assist new trip leaders in planning their trips.

Budding trip leaders are encouraged to seek their advice.

Name	Phone	Mobile	Email
Peter Watson	6254 7118	0418 649 823	pwatson1@tpg.com.au
Neville Simpson	6295 9021		bl.ng@bigpond.net.au
Dennis Collins	6292 7423	0418 969 452	margden1@actewagl.net.au
Chris Nicholls			calypso1@gmail.com
Doreen & Plod McEncroe	6241 8188	0429 008 436	doreen.mcenroe@act.gov.au
Neil Telfer	62919683	0427 263 805	ntelfer@tpg.com.au
David Whight		0438 882 696	tdavidwhight@hotmail.com

Extract from the ST4WDC By-Laws

PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

• Structure

3. For the purposes of the Committee's management functions the following teams shall be maintained -
Driver and Trainer Education
Events and Trips
Publications
Public Relations
Club Property
Membership
4. The **Driver and Trainer Education Team** shall be responsible for implementing an education program for club members so as to -
improve driver skills with particular regard to safety and environmental issues;
improve the standard of trainers;
provide a training timetable to integrate into the Club Events and Trips calendar;
train Club members wishing to participate in 4WD trips to a minimum driver skill standard, as defined by the committee from time to time;
ensure that four wheel drivers operate their vehicles in a responsible fashion, regardless of terrain;
promote awareness of the environment through appreciation of flora, fauna and landforms and their conservation; and
Support the Property Coordinator in the management of the Club Driver Training facility.
5. The **Events and Trips Team** shall be responsible for an Events and Trips Program for members to enable members to participate in the sport of four-wheel driving, and must:
provide a calendar of ongoing Driving trips to integrate into the Club Events and Trips calendar;
publicise the established Club policy and procedures related to the running of Club events and trips;
maintain a register of trip leaders and promote the clubs trainee trip leader program by fostering the interest of members in trip leadership;
monitor Club trip activity to ensure Club trip leaders do not take members, or friends of members, on Club trips as drivers, unless they have met the Club's minimum driving standard, as published from time to time;
seek endorsement of all events and trips by the Club Committee.
6. The **Publications Team** shall be responsible for:
ensuring the publication and distribution to members and other nominated recipients, the Club magazine;
ensuring the development and maintenance of the club website;
encouraging articles from members and others on various topics aimed at promoting and encouraging the sport of four wheel driving for inclusion in the magazine and on the Website;
soliciting and managing appropriate advertising for placement in the Club's magazine and on the website. Submit to the Club committee for ratification an annual schedule of advertising charges;
overseeing the production of any promotional materials that depict club activities and which encourage and promote the sport of four wheel driving;
submitting to the club committee for ratification proposed major changes to material displayed in the magazine and on the Web site.
7. The **Public Relations Team** shall be responsible for -
all Club pronouncements of a public nature including -
written submissions to statutory authorities, governments, and other organisations and individuals
press releases
liaison with State and National Four Wheel Drive organisations, National Parks, Forestry and Lands authorities, Emergency Services, and other similar authorities;
ensuring that good relations are maintained between the Club and other organisations or individuals;
oversighting design, production and sales of Club stickers, badges, logos, posters;
providing a calendar of community based events to integrate into the Club Events calendar;
organising Club participation in externally-organised community events, and other charitable and community service activities with a view to encouraging and promoting the sport of four wheel driving amongst the community;
welcoming visitors and members to club meetings.

8. The **Club Property Team** shall be responsible for:
 management of the Club Property TALOUGE (meaning To Always Look Over Our Great Environment) commonly known and henceforth called Talooge Park, with the support of the Education Coordinator, including:
 preparing policies on management and use for approval by the Committee
 preparing and maintaining development plans
 promulgating the approved Talooge Park usage and development plans to the wider membership
 coordinating routine maintenance
 preparing budget proposals for any recurrent and/or capital expenditure on Talooge Park
 managing the relationship, where related to Talooge Park, between the club, its neighbours, local council and authorities
 managing the Club's assets by:
 maintaining a register of assets
 maintaining the assets in good working order
 ensuring secure storage of all assets
 overseeing asset use by Club members
 developing budget proposals for any recurrent and/or capital expenditure on assets
 arranging for club members, the competitive bulk purchasing of goods relevant to the activities of the Club.
9. The **Membership Team** shall be responsible for:
 managing Club records, including , but not limited to, membership details, details of Club magazine advertisers, interested organisations lists (eg. other 4WD Clubs, 4WD Associations, Government Authorities and Instrumentalities);
 providing the Publications team with mailing labels for each issue of the Club magazine;
 publication of financial member lists from time to time as directed by the committee;
 authorising access rights to the Club Web site for all members upon membership approval by the committee;
 promoting the Club to prospective new members.

• **Duties of the Committee**

10. For the purposes of paragraph 24(1)(b) of the Club Constitution, the members of the Committee other than the Officers of the Club, and their titles and duties are defined as follows -
Education Coordinator who shall chair the Driver and Trainer Education Team;
Events and Trips Coordinator who shall chair the Club Events and Driving Trips Team;
Publications Coordinator who shall chair the Publications Team;
Property Coordinator who shall chair the Club Property Team;
Membership Secretary who shall chair the Membership Team;
Public Relations Coordinator who shall chair the Public Relations Team;
General Committee Member (four positions) who may be responsible for one or more tasks as agreed with the President. Tasks may include, but are not limited to:
 organising venues for meetings
 organising the General Meeting such as, the physical venue, suppers, guest speakers, slide and video presentations, demonstrations of equipment
 assisting Public Relations team with welcoming of visitors and new members to Club meetings
 managing Club social functions and undertaking fund-raising activities
 assisting in the provision of a calendar of social activities to integrate into the Club Events and Trips calendar.
11. The duties of the Officers of the Club shall be defined as follows -
 The **President** shall be responsible for the general coordination and management of the club including:
 chair of the Club Executive
 chair of the Club Committee
 chair of the general meeting
 chair of AGM.
- The **Vice-President** shall deputise for the President in his/her absence and:
 nominate and brief delegates to national and regional association meetings with which the Club is affiliated
 oversight and assist, where appropriate, the activities of the Public Relations Team

undertake duties as Club Insurance Officer
undertake duties as Sergeant-at-Arms.

The **Treasurer** shall be responsible for:

budget analysis and review
correspondence relating to financial matters
financial management including:
investment of Club funds
each cash float for Committee members
each cash advance to a Club member
overview of budgeted expenditure
dispatch of accounts for the Club's debtors
payment of accounts to the Club's creditors
subscription fees and/or levies to Club affiliates
all arrangements with the Club bankers
all arrangements with the Club auditor.

The **Secretary** shall be responsible for:

receipt of correspondence and its distribution for action as appropriate
preparation of general correspondence consistent with Committee policy
compilation of the agenda and papers, and preparation of minutes of General and Committee Meetings
role of Returning Officer for Club elections, referenda and surveys; and any legal contracts.

The immediate **Past President**, shall be involved in tasks, as agreed with the President, including but not limited to:

special projects
membership of function Groups.



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ABOUT TRIPS

TRIP GRADING

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

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

DRIVER EXPERIENCE

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

TRIP PLANNING

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

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

CB RADIOS

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

FIREARMS & PETS

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

TRIPS AND EVENTS



9 Feb **Monthly Club Meeting** (2010-002)

Start: 7:30 PM

12 Feb **4WD Spectacular - Final Touches** (2010-015)

Departure: Queanbeyan Showground

Description: The Club needs lots of helpers on the Friday to help set up the Club Tent and add finishing touches to the test track

13 - 14 Feb **4WD Spectacular and Camping Show** (2010-016)

Departure: Queanbeyan Showground

Description: This is the major bi-annual event for our Club. Put these dates in your diary now! We expect well over 10,000 paying visitors. Please find time in the days before to help build the test track, put up the Club marquee & Exhibition display areas. The Club needs lots of help during the weekend to staff the Club tent, talk to visitors, help with parking control, and take part in demonstrations and competitions. There will be at least 120 commercial stands exhibiting camping, 4WD gear, fishing gear, off-road trailers etc. Many exhibitors will offer significant discounts on their products. There really is no better way in Australia to try out 30 new 4WDs on the same track on the same day! Be there to help YOUR club and enjoy the benefits & bargains, and help contribute to charities.

6 - 8 Mar **Canberra Day long weekend** ()

6 - 14 Mar **National Autumn Balloon Spectacular** (2010-034)

Note: **New since December magazine**

Trip Leader: Catherine Panich

Email: capan@homemail.com.au

Phone: 0412 866 375 (m)

Vehicles: Unlimited

Grade: 1

Description: The Club has been asked to provide crew support for the National Autumn Balloon Spectacular! For many members, this is the best time of the year, with glorious mornings and spectacular sights around the city and the lake. Crewing for part or all the event means early starts to assist pilots set up, follow and retrieve their balloons. Many people do this before heading off to work, but it is more relaxing to join in the social events or just hang out with the pilots. Consider booking your holidays to coincide with this event.

6 - 8 Mar **Yerranderie & Kanangra Walls** (2010-040)

Note: **New since December magazine**

Trip Leader: Greg and Vickie Taylor

Email: vickie.taylor@bigpond.com

Phone: 6241 3547 (h); 0411 281 087 (m)

Vehicles: 6

Grade: 3

Start: 8:30 AM

TRIPS AND EVENTS



Departure: Car park behind Shell Service Station, Federal Highway, Mitchell

Fuel: Full tank

Maps: Richlands 1:25000
Mt Armstrong
Bindook
Yerranderie

Requirements: Basic driver training, basic recovery gear, UHF radio, good tyres, well maintained and reliable vehicle, camping gear including gas stove for cooking, food and water, happy hour and pot luck dinner supplies. Bowsaw and axe for track clearing. Tyre chains useful for steep mountain fire trails

Description: Yerranderie Township is a privately owned historic township and wildlife sanctuary within a large volcanic (extinct) crater in the Blue Mountains National Park. It is 44kms west of Camden and on the opposite side of the Burragorang Valley. The camping area is within the village precincts and has showers and a flush toilet. Onsite firewood supplied by the caretaker. For a small fee a fascinating walking tour of the village can be arranged with the caretaker on arrival. For the more active and energetic there is a walking track up to the peak of the volcanic core with its stunning views. The trip will also take in Kanangra Walls.

9 Mar **Annual General Meeting** (2010-003)

Start: 7:30 PM

20 - 21 Mar **"Safe One" Basic Driver Training at Talooge Park** (2010-025)

Note: New since December magazine

Trip Leader: Peter Reynolds

Email: debpete1@bigpond.com

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

Start: 8:00 AM

Departure: Bredbo Service Station

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

26 - 27 Mar **Inward Bound - Support** (2010-019)

Trip Leader: Rosemary Orr

Email: president@st4wdc.org

Phone: 0414 568 358 (m)

Start: 6:00 PM

Description: The Australian National University has an Interhall Sports Committee, whose biggest event is a grueling Inward Bound event. They have asked us to become involved in providing support vehicles to escort buses to drop-off points and retrieve exhausted competitors. The event finishes around 8PM on Saturday.

26 - 28 Mar **Water Sports at Honeymoon Bay, Jervis Bay** (2010-023)

Note: New since December magazine

Trip Leader: Catherine Panich and Peter Fenwick

Email: capan@homemail.com.au

Phone: 0412 866 375 (m)

TRIPS AND EVENTS



- Vehicles: 8
- Grade: 1
- Start: 4:30 PM
- Departure: MacDonalds carpark, Queanbeyan
- Fuel: Full tank, refuel at Nowra
- Requirements: Trailers and boats welcome. Basic driver training unnecessary. Bring UHF CB radio, food, water and camping and water sport gear for the weekend. The bush camp is roomy with toilets, no showers, plenty of shade, sandy underfoot.
- Description: Travel the Nerriga Rd heading towards Nowra. This is a good all weather dirt road which is rapidly being sealed. All going well we should arrive at Honeymoon Bay on Point Perpendicular with enough daylight to set up camp. We will drive straight through with no stop at Braidwood, so take munchies to keep you going until 7pm. Point Perpendicular is a Defence Force area and camping is limited to Friday and Saturday nights and school holidays. We will be checked in and out so make sure your 'security credentials' are up to scratch! Friday night - Pot luck dinner to get to know one another. Bring something pre cooked so we don't eat too late. Saturday will be a relaxing day; sleeping, eating, swimming, snorkelling, fishing, canoeing, water skiing. Bring your own equipment. Fisher folk must look after their own licences. Check the NET for fishing restrictions etc. The light house makes an interesting visit but it may be a bit early for whale watching. Sunday after more relaxing we will head for home mid afternoon. Some of the group may wish to leave earlier to visit Nowra or other parts of Jervis Bay on the way home

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TRIPS AND EVENTS



28 Mar **"Safe One" Basic Driver Training Course Follow-up Day** (2010-026)

Note: **New since December magazine**

Trip Leader: Peter Reynolds

Email: debpete1@bigpond.com

Description: This is day three of the basic driver education course on the 20th and 21st March and MUST be attended before participating on any Club trips where the proposed route is expected to be at Grade 2 or above

2 - 5 Apr **Easter** 0

10 - 11 Apr **Meet The Committee at Talooge Park** (2010-020)

Trip Leader: Richard Brand

Email: trips@st4wdc.org

Phone: 0148 568 358 (m)

Vehicles: unlimited

Grade: 1

Start: 8:30 AM

Departure: Williamsdale

Fuel: Full tank at start

Requirements: Basic recovery gear. UHF radio. Happy hour snacks. Pot luck main course for dinner on Saturday.

Description: A major club tradition is to welcome the new committee in some style. On Saturday night 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. Please book as soon as possible so we can confirm dessert catering, and convoys. Combine with the Working Bee if you are up to it.

10 - 11 Apr **Working Bee at Talooge Park** (2010-037)

Note: **New since December magazine**

Trip Leader: John Kjar

Email: property@st4wdc.org

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

Vehicles: unlimited

Grade: 1

Start: 9:00 AM

Departure: Talooge Park

Requirements: Plenty of enthusiasm and good humour. Bring your gloves and chainsaw if you have one as it will get a good workout. BYO own food and drinks – and the usual happy hour rituals will be observed.

Description: Participants are welcome to lend a hand or two on Saturday and/or Sunday. Subject to interest, we could arrange a tour of Talooge for interested participants on Sunday – visiting such exotic locations as Hole in the Wall, Bottle Shop, Honeymoon Bay, Devils Hole waterfall or even Dicks Folly. Work activities will include wiring up a fence, some land care (spraying, staking, pruning, relocating some timber branches etc) and, most importantly, clearing timber from the area above the DTU sheds to reduce the fuel load in the event of a bush fire.

TRIPS AND EVENTS



14 - 15 Apr **Tantangara Trout Expedition** (2010-039)

Note: **New since December magazine**

Trip Leader: Bob Allen

Email: sylbob@velocitynet.com.au

Phone: 6291 1300 (h); 0408 638 942 (m)

Vehicles: 6

Grade: 2

Start: 8:00 AM

Departure: Uriarra Homestead

Fuel: Full tank

Requirements: Basic driver training, basic recovery gear, UHF, good tyres, well-maintained and reliable vehicle, camping gear if staying overnight, and NSW fishing licence and fishing gear if you want to fish.

Description: This is a mid-week trip and could be done as a day trip for those not wanting to camp at Tantangara. Travel is via Brindabella Road, Broken Cart Trail, Long Plain Road and Port Philip Trail into Tantangara Reservoir and Kosciusko NP. Those who only want a day trip can exit to the Snowy Mountains Highway via Tantangara Road and return to Canberra. This trip will depend on the weather and fire conditions. Tantangara is an alpine region and people wishing to camp must be prepared for sudden cold weather

24 - 26 Apr **Anzac Day long weekend** ()

8 - 9 May **Mystery Bay** (2010-035)

Note: **New since December magazine**

Trip Leader: Marj Jones

Email: marjorie.jones@det.nsw.edu.au

Phone: 6284 3456

Vehicles: unlimited

Grade: 1

Start: 8:30 AM

Departure: Williamsdale

Fuel: Full tank at start

Requirements: Basic recovery gear. UHF radio. Happy hour snacks. Off-road trailers welcome, preferably with tyres matching towing vehicle, and working brakes. Canoe if you have one

Description: Mystery Bay is one of the most beautiful spots on the South Coast, just a few kilometers from Narooma. We stay in a primitive but delightful camping area for a small daily charge. The camp area is huge, shaded by trees and close to beaches and fishing spots. A nearby lagoon is ideal for canoes. The trip is suitable for off-road camping trailers. Outbound convoy options will include a detour to the Cascades, and for the energetic, a walk to Turross Falls. Home bound convoy options include a coastal return via Moruya and Araluen, or easy and harder 4WD inland trails. If you forget happy hour supplies, Narooma is just a few minutes away. It is also worth considering an extended stay

TRIPS AND EVENTS



15 - 16 May "Safe One" Basic Driver Training at Talooge Park

(2010-027)

Note: New since December magazine
Trip Leader: Peter Reynolds
Email: debpete1@bigpond.com
Phone: 6251 1258 (h); 0428 623 458 (m)
Start: 8:00 AM
Departure: Bredbo Service Station
Description: This is the Club's official and accredited basic driver education course

22 May - 20 Jun Trip to the Tip (2010-038)

Note: New since December magazine
Trip Leader: Dave Hay
Email: dhay@pcug.org.au
Phone: 6258 7310 (h)
Vehicles: 7
Grade: 3
Fuel: Full tank at start
Requirements: Basic driver training, recovery gear, UHF, good tyres, well-maintained and reliable vehicle. Must be self sufficient in all foods, water, fuel and camping equipment. Deep water crossings expected.
Description: A small convoy will leave Canberra travelling quickly inland to Mossman, just north of Cairns, via Lightning Ridge, Rockhampton and Charters Towers. The trip proper starts at Mossman on 27th May, finishing at Normanton on 16th June, and covering a flexible itinerary including Lakefield National Park, Coen, Lockhart River, Thursday Island and Weipa. From Normanton, follow the leader on a fast black-top run to Canberra, or make your own way back at your leisure.

23 May "Safe One" Basic Driver Training Course Follow-up Day

(2010-028)

Note: New since December magazine
Trip Leader: Peter Reynolds
Email: debpete1@bigpond.com
Description: This is day three of the basic driver education course on the 15th and 16th May and MUST be attended before participating on any Club trips where the proposed route is expected to be at Grade 2 or above

12 - 14 Jun Queen's Birthday long weekend 0

10 - 11 Jul Christmas in July (2010-036)

Note: New since December magazine
Email: marjorie.jones@det.nsw.edu.au
Phone: 6284 3456
Vehicles: unlimited

TRIPS AND EVENTS



Grade: 1
Start: 8:15 AM
Departure: Uriarra Homestead
Fuel: Full tank
Requirements: Well maintained vehicle, good tyres, water for the day, morning tea plus lunch for both days, and bring happy hour nibbles and drinks for the evening. Bring your own bedding for the supplied bunks
Description: A five-year old 'tradition' in the making! Great drives there and back, in 'easier' and 'harder' convoys. We stay overnight in bunkhouses in a converted low-security gaol "Laurel Hill Forest Lodge" set in picturesque alpine grounds - see <http://www.laurelhillforestlodge.com.au/index.htm>. Our hosts provide warm scones and cream on arrival, a great 3-course Christmas dinner and a memorable breakfast to set us up for the trip home. Unspeakable games have been played into the early hours. A great social weekend with a choice of easy or harder drives there and back

21 - 22 Aug **"Safe One" Basic Driver Training at Talooge Park** (2010-029)

Note: New since December magazine
Trip Leader: Peter Reynolds
Email: debpete1@bigpond.com
Phone: 6251 1258 (h); 0428 623 458 (m)
Start: 8:00 AM
Departure: Bredbo Service Station
Description: This is the Club's official and accredited basic driver education course

29 Aug **"Safe One" Basic Driver Training Course Follow-up Day** (2010-030)

Note: New since December magazine
Trip Leader: Peter Reynolds
Email: debpete1@bigpond.com
Description: This is day three of the basic driver education course on the 21st and 22nd August and MUST be attended before participating on any Club trips where the proposed route is expected to be at Grade 2 or above

13 - 14 Nov **"Safe One" Basic Driver Training at Talooge Park** (2010-031)

Note: New since December magazine
Trip Leader: Peter Reynolds
Email: debpete1@bigpond.com
Phone: 6251 1258 (h); 0428 623 458 (m)
Start: 8:00 AM
Departure: Bredbo Service Station
Description: This is the Club's official and accredited basic driver education course

TRIPS AND EVENTS



21 Nov **“Safe One” Basic Driver Training Course Follow-up Day** (2010-032)

Note: **New since December magazine**

Trip Leader: Peter Reynolds

Email: debpete1@bigpond.com

Description: This is day three of the basic driver education course on the 13th and 14th November and **MUST** be attended before participating on any Club trips where the proposed route is expected to be at Grade 2 or above

27 - 28 Nov **Driver Trainer’s Christmas Party** (2010-033)

Note: New since December magazine

Trip Leader: Peter Reynolds

Email: debpete1@bigpond.com

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

No one realizes how beautiful it is to travel until he comes home and rests his head on his old, familiar pillow - *Lin Yutang*



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“SAFE ONE” BASIC 4WD VEHICLE OPERATION COURSE

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

Purpose:

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

Meeting Time/Place:

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

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

**PLEASE BOOK A PLACE ON ONE OF THESE COURSES WELL IN ADVANCE AND ALSO RING PETER ONE WEEK BEFORE THE COURSE TO CONFIRM ATTENDANCE!
IF YOU DON'T, YOU WILL LOSE YOUR PLACE ON THE COURSE**

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

COURSES FOR 2010 WILL BE HELD ON

20-21 MARCH	WITH FOLLOW-UP ON	28 MARCH
15-16 MAY	WITH FOLLOW-UP ON	23 MAY
21-22 AUGUST	WITH FOLLOW-UP ON	29 AUGUST
13-14 NOVEMBER	WITH FOLLOW-UP ON	21 NOVEMBER

WHAT TO BRING

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

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

PLEASE DO NOT BRING PETS OR FIREARMS.

Cowarra Gold Mine - 15 November 2009



Greg Taylor

Participants

Tina and Michael Patrick (Trip Leaders)
Greg and Vickie Taylor
Ian Goodacre and Ben
Senerath Wijeratne
Kevin and Barbara Rowe
Adrian Gallman

A later start at Williamsdale is always good on a Sunday morning, particularly for those heading over from the north side of town. Four vehicles mustered at Williamsdale with the others to be picked up nearer to Talooge on the other side of Bredbo. So, a short run down the highway to Bredbo and our illustrious trip leaders suggested a cuppa at the gourmet coffee shop. We were a little early for meeting Adrian and Senerath at the quarry turn off, so a morning tea pit stop was called and we enjoyed coffees, hot chocolates and homemade sausage rolls. The shop also stocks rabbit pies, smoked trout and other game food stuffs among some old memorabilia.

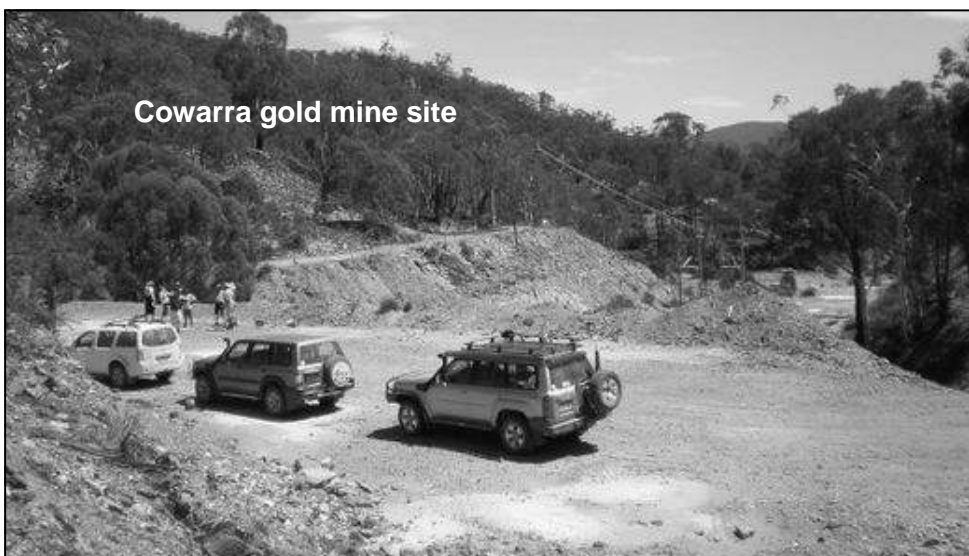
We headed off to Bredbo quarries to pick up Adrian and Senerath. Some sledging about choice of chariot and we were off. Dry and dusty past the quarry and through the minor water crossing of Bredbo River. Following the Chakola Fire Trail we turned up to a gully that was an old mining pit. This was the start of what we came to enjoy as 'Turn around Tours'. We tagged along and we also turned around when told to. Some of the remnants of mining were very interesting and there were also some pretty serious minor holes about the place. One we investigated would have caused anyone falling into it without injury some difficulty in trying to get out. Don't walk around this

place at night! It was at this point that Adrian cracked a side mirror. Some unkind person mused that he caught his own reflection but what is said on trip stays on trip...sometimes. Ben was in good form and his cracks (and Ian's) kept us in good humour all day.

A bit more banter and back to the tour and air conditioned trucks (the outside temperature was getting rather hot). We went down the mountain to the Cowarra mine remains and parked at the top of the old mine workings. From here, Michael and Tina led us on a walk down the hill following what appeared to be the old sediment ponds. We walked to the side as this area seemed to be obviously contaminated with past industrial processes. The smell was also a bit overpowering in the heat of the day.

Interestingly, when we returned to where the trucks were parked, Michael showed us a half sealed mine entrance in the side of the hill. This entrance was intended to be buried and sealed but had an opening of approximately one metre square. What came out of the hole was a cold draught from the heart of the hill that smelled very earthy. We sat there for a while enjoying this natural air conditioning in the heat of the middle of the day. Then it was back to the trucks and off again to see the next point of interest. This happened to be the manner of disposal of old mine telephones being tossed over the high voltage cables.

After a turn around, we headed back up the fire trail to the remains of an old settlement that sits above the Cowarra mine workings. This settlement is strewn with old cans, bottles, bricks and other rubbish from the inhabitants. The only remaining building of any sorts is a dunny with a fabulous view. It was difficult to determine what many of the ruins were used for and to estimate how the occupants may have lived. A number of concrete structures remain throughout the bush, apparently randomly distributed, but also without any clear purpose. It is an interesting site, but from Michael's





Not yet approved by council

information it could all soon be gone if the proposals for new development go ahead. All of the historical sites will be gouged out and pushed to the side of a several kilometre long open-pit gold mine.

We lunched at Cowra Creek which was quite a bit lower than when Michael did the recce for this trip. Neverthe-

less, with a temporary shade and a few butane stoves, lunch was enjoyed by all. We had a look at the old dam wall and marvelled at its early purpose and use. Clearly this feature was an important part of the mining in the area but now interesting as to how this concrete structure was built.

Off again, but wait, our intrepid leader has forgotten something or is that someone? Never mind, Tina hitched a ride with Charlie, and Michael was duly paid out by all. He was paying for some time...might still be?

Heading up the hillside there were also some interesting homestead or miner hut sites that are in ruins. A track off to the side gave a few of us a minor 4wd rush as we ventured down a bit of steep rough track but then back to the reasonably good tracks. We found our way eventually back to Jerangle Road and saw a great deal of new country side near Talooge that none of us had ventured into previously.

Some chose different ways home including Adrian to pick up his trailer from Talooge from the working bee on the previous day. Ian finally let Ben on the radio and he was not going to give it up easily! So, with what was left of the convoy, a quick blast back to Canberra from Bredbo.

A great day out with good company which we all enjoyed immensely. Thanks to Michael and Tina for their interest in this area, their knowledge and for arranging this trip before this is lost to all.



LEE & THOMAS

Auto Electrics

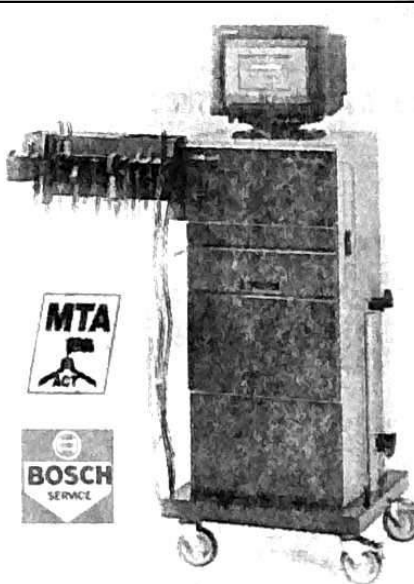
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Christmas at Talooge

Rosemary Orr



This was a different Christmas party for me as my daughter Jo and my grandson Will came along for the weekend. We decided to head down to Talooge on Friday to get some extra time camping. Our weekend did not start on a good note as Jo locked her keys in the car at Giralang and we had to wait for the NRMA. An hours wait – a minute to unlock the car!!!

As Jo was driving their Ford Territory we headed in via Southwell's. We stopped to visit a while with Ritchie and were treated to a lovely cup of tea and biscuits. This lovely stop made up for our poor start and we set off towards Talooge in great spirits. There were a few members already there with tents and camper trailers set up and they were enjoying the warm afternoon and the peace and quiet.

We set up camp and then had a kick of the football with Will. A meal and then wonderful sitting around the camp fire chatting and just kicking back. Then off to bed and a great sleep. It must have been the good country air as Will slept in the next morning giving his mum and granny a sleep in as well.



STWDC's President with Santa

People arrived all through the day on Saturday with the driver training team working on setting up the funkhana. People catching up, looking and comparing everyone else's camper trailers and trying to escape the flies!!! Eating behind gauze was the only way to go. Then about 5.00pm the activities started. First the kids with egg and spoon races – throwing the thong and much more. Prizes for those who excelled. Then the mums and dads took their turn. Throwing tongs and throwing eggs.

Then came Santa riding on the back of the fire truck. He had his trusty sack and all the children received a present. Will who had not wanted to go near the fire truck in the morning had no difficulty in walking boldly up to the fire truck when his turn came.

Then the gift grab. If you thought that the members of our Club were generous and thoughtful people – think again. Calculated pinching of presents (within the rules) scheming and plotting to try and end up with the gift you wanted. It all happened together with much laughter. I think in the end everyone ended up with something even if it was a bright red cowboy hat with white fur around the brim!!! Jo said that it was perfect for her work Christmas party.

Then the eating and drinking. What can I say, as always there was plenty of food and lots of variety. Edward's Christmas pudding. How great was that!!!! A big thank you to Edward for making it again this year. Lots of time and effort – but the result was truly special.

The shelter on Thurbon flat looked a treat with many decorations and Christmas lights. A consortium led by Jayne and Mick Hines won the best decorated table by a nose. What a night – finished off by again sitting around the camp fire and just enjoying the peace, the night and the company, not to mention the stars! A truly magnificent night sky.

Sunday morning dawned hot and hotter. The funkhana got underway with "Balls Up" – a great test of driving skill and thinking. Then came "Spear a Spud" – it is truly hard to spear potatoes leaning out the window of a vehicle in 3 seconds. Then on to "Go to Whoa" a straight dash as quick as you can and finishing with the centre of your hubs lined up with the finish post. "The dart board" – a pendulum hanging from the front of your vehicle, having to

Well , it 's Christmas, so enjoy yourselves



Frisbee, driving around a course which had tight corners, backing and much more and having to complete the course as quickly as you can without losing your ball!

The winners were Mark Pritchard closely followed by his wife Kim. Third spot was filled by Julie Buttriss and Peter Reynolds. The

secret – a small vehicle as well as great driving skills and knowing your left from your right!!!!

stop when you think you are over the dart board and on a good score – it's easy to score zero on this event. Almost last was "Blindfold". The driver is blindfolded and the navigator is out of the vehicle with a hand held radio. The navigator must navigate his/her blind driver around the course and finish by guiding them backwards into the "garage". This event sorts out your left from your right – or was that your right from your left!!!!

secret – a small vehicle as well as great driving skills and knowing your left from your right!!!!

What a packed weekend and what great fun. For all of the helpers thank you very much and for all who joined in the fun – thank you. For those who did not come – sorry you missed a great weekend.

Last was the "Frisbee ball". A magnetic Frisbee on the bonnet of your vehicle with a ball sitting in the

See you all at the next great event.

Rosemary



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Return to the High Country - 7-12 December



Bob & Sylvia Allen

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Jim & Jane Raleigh	100 Series
Chris & Julie Nicholls	GQ Patrol
John & Andrea Kjar	100 Series
Theo Cassidy	60 Series
Peter & Jill Jolly	Lexus
Rod Baker	Prado
Bob & Sylvia Allen	100 Series

fun. Morning tea at Jindabyne, airing down before a very shallow Murray River crossing at Tom Groggin, lunch at Buckwong Creek and then up and into the Victorian High Country. And after leaving dry and dusty Canberra, and the equally dry Monaro region, we were suddenly surrounded by green – green grass, green shrubs and green trees, sprinkled here and there with wild flowers of all colours, against a backdrop of clear blue alpine sky.

We arrived at Davies Plain Hut around 3 pm and decided to camp in this delightful place for the first night. After a relatively short drive on this first day there was plenty of spare time to wander around, take photos or just relax around our tents reading, chatting or whatever one fancied till happy hour and dinner around a campfire not far from a running creek.

Day 1- Monday 7 December

Car is packed, house is locked, quick can't be late - we're off on one of Neville Simpson's "must do" Victorian High Country trips. We've wanted to do this trip ever since we joined the Club in 2006. Last year we had to cancel and a fierce summer cold/flu almost had us pulling out again this year.

With the unseasonably high spring temperatures and last year's horrendous bushfires in Victoria we had been apprehensive in the weeks leading up to this trip. But Neville had been in contact with rangers in the region and had been told that the recent rains should prevent any bushfire threat until after Christmas. And as we were to discover several times over the next few days, because our leader knows the High Country like the back of his hand, he always has a plan B.

After a quick meeting and introductions all round at the Hume lay-by we were rolling down the Monaro Highway with the usual radio chatter - a mix of serious and silly talk telling everyone that this was going to be

After dinner Neville introduced us to his friend "The Duck" who always accompanies him on his Club trips. "The Duck" is not to be confused with our own Graeme "Duck" Tonge one of the stalwarts of the Club's driver training team. "The Duck" is a legend and each night after dinner he became the life of the party. However protocol, decency and respect for his privacy dictate that what "The Duck" does on Neville's trips stays on the trips.

Day 2 - Tuesday 8 December

We departed at a leisurely 9 am and some of the ladies were driving today – guys need to rest, to think, plan, be ready for any emergency and recharge their egos. And as it turned out, Tuesday provided some of the most challenging driving of the trip. After passing through Charlie Creek camping area, it was up on to the Buckwong Track and Mount Hope Road towards Mount Gibbo - we're not going up there are we? Yes we are, and the dirt track became a gravel track and finally the gravel became a rocky path - as challenging as the toughest tracks on the Basic Driver Training course at Talooge. And the male passengers are to be congratulated for few instructions and lots of encouragement.



Campsite at Davies Plain Hut

At around 1750m the 360° views from Mt Gibbo were spectacular. A tangle of gnarled and twisted snow gums and then further out in the distance, hazy blue-

green foliage with stark silhouettes of burnt-out trees defining the peaks and ridges – and reminding us of the bushfires in 2003 that had ravaged this huge alpine area. Julie Nicholls' picture on the cover of this magazine says it all. From then on it was mainly a down-hill drive for the rest of the day. The vigorous regrowth after the bushfires has narrowed the tracks and we literally scraped our way down into Wheelers Creek Hut camping grounds for another relatively early halt at about 3.30 pm. We pitched our tent about 20m from the Creek - the sound of running water is a great soporific.

It rained that night (it always rains on Victorian High Country trips) and we gathered on the verandah of the Hut for happy hour, dinner and the usual friendly discussion to right the wrongs of the world.

Day 3 Wednesday 9 December

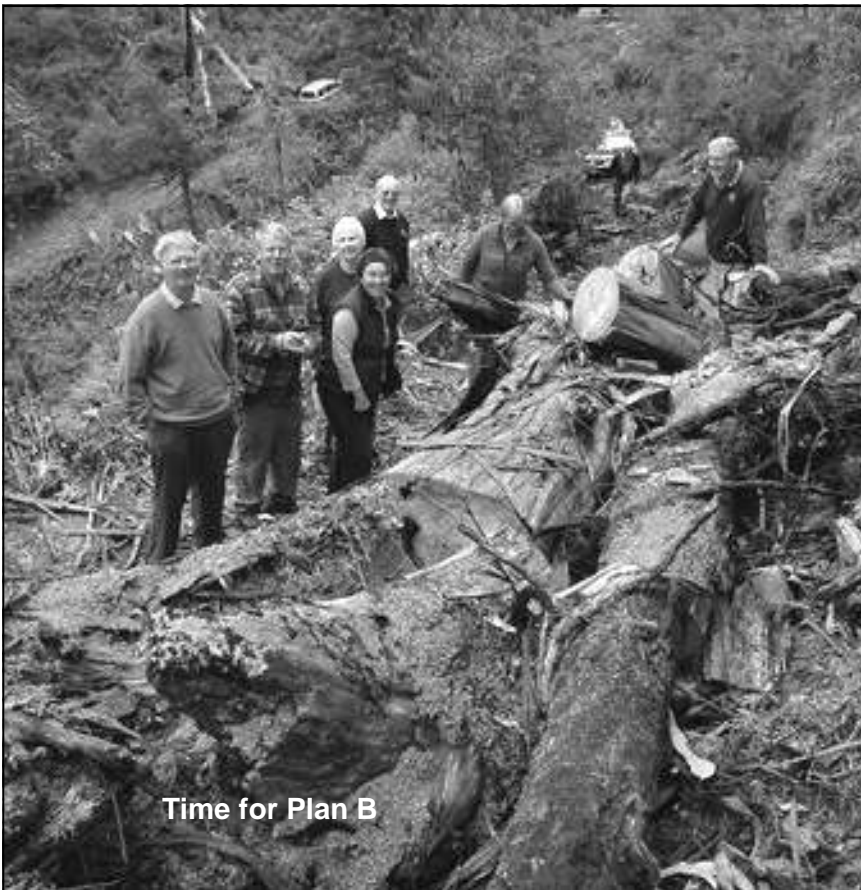
A slightly earlier, but nevertheless relaxed start at 8.45 am and we were off for what was to be our longest day of driving – we didn't reach our destination until about, heaven forbid, 5 pm. The plan for today was to travel along Wild Boar Track and then on to the Corryong Benambra Road, drive across the Mitta Mitta River and then take a fairly scenic meandering southerly route to Swift's Creek. We were travelling very nicely until Neville's voice crackled over the radio; Oh no! I don't believe it... blast and damnation – or words somewhat similar.

As someone remarked much later, we were very lucky the fallen tree that blocked the Wild Boar Track had not been a bit smaller, because we may have tried to shift it – and been stuck for several days. But plan B kicked in and our leader turned the convoy around and we back-tracked to Wheelers Logging Road and then on to the Corryong Benambra Road – our intended route.

This was a long but pleasurable drive – plenty of high country scenery and well-watered grazing country. The Mitta Mitta water crossing was uneventful – although the river was flowing fast it was no more than knee-deep and the bottom was stable gravel. The camping ground at Swifts Creek was an oasis – our first hot showers for three days and the delights of a home-cooked meal in the local pub.

Day 4 Thursday 10 December

It is amazing what a home-cooked meal, hot shower and an easy campsite does for travellers – we were all packed and ready to go by about 8.15 am. This was to be a relatively easy drive travelling in a roughly south west to west direction to Dargo and then on to Eaglevale on the Wonnangatta River for our campsite. Morning tea at the well-named Seldom Seen Hut and then on to Dargo via some great campsites (and fishing spots) along the Dargo River – and sincere farewells to the Bennison's and the Kjar's who had commitments elsewhere.



So far the rain gods had been kind to us – yes we had been rained on, but nothing so heavy to impact on comfort, traction and safety. As we ate a late lunch beside the Wonnangatta River the clouds were looking ominous and we decided to head for Eaglevale promptly and pitch camp before the rain. We did that, and after six tents had gone up and the seventh, our little blue hike tent remained unpegged, if on cue the rain came down. And then it stopped long enough for us to complete our campsite preparations.

Eaglevale is an idyllic place to camp and it was very comfortable sitting under Neville's giant shelter awning beside a roaring fire watching pelting rain for about two to three hours until we said – enough of this and we toddled off to our tents and dry beds.

Day 5 Friday 11 December

It was a bright clear morning as we looked North West from the Eaglevale campsite to see Cynthia's Range Track in the distance snaking its way up Wombat spur – our intended route to begin the day. But it had rained heavily last night, the track was very steep and rutted and by now, probably very slippery. So rather than “court disaster” our leader suggested and all agreed, it was time for plan B.



Approaching Hotham Heights in convoy

We back-tracked along the all-weather road from Dargo and then continued on via the Dargo High Plains Road up to Hotham Heights – the Road traversed more of the spectacular high country Eucalypt forests and then rose suddenly into steep tree-less alpine country as we approached the ski village. Before the final turnoff into the ski village we said more goodbyes – this time to Theo, as he continued on to Bright and other commitments.

Plan B meant that we would not be camping at Beveridges Station. The program had moved forward by a day and we were soon to experience the delights of camping at the Benambra Recreational Grounds – the camping arrangements and price negotiated by Neville before the trip. We travelled from the Hotham ski village down the Great Alpine Road to Omeo and then on to Benambra. Some chose to pitch their tents on the oval, others opted for the “married” quarters or the “single quarters” within the Recreational Club building. We had hot showers and a well-equipped

kitchen to use, but for some reason everyone elected to head into the Benambra pub for a great meal and the usual heavy intellectual discussions that follow a great day's driving – do we need another bottle?

Day 6 Saturday 12 December

Our last day of the trip - we headed off at around 8.30 am after a lazy breakfast, climbed up out of Benambra along Limestone/Black Mountain Road – and before long we were back into that marvellous high country again. After turning on to the Barry Way, we were soon into a totally different vegetation zone – scrappy conifers, rocky bare ground badly in need of rain and on the tops of the ridges and peaks the ubiquitous signs of bushfires past.

Suggan Buggan, Wallace Craigie Lookout and the Clay pits parking area by the side of Lake Jindabyne were all worth a stop, a few photos and finally our last goodbyes – a great trip, great company and a wise and steady trip leader. Thanks to all and especially to Neville.



Here's to a great trip — thanks Neville

And by the way, if you want to meet the Duck, you will have to join one of Neville's Victorian High Country trips.

But don't think about it for too long, do it quickly because most of us on this trip have already signed on for his next one.





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The Future of Remote Area Travel

John and Val. Wiseman



Sometimes we travel of necessity; to school, to work, to the shops but what about optional travel. Why do we seek to travel? Travel brings us new experiences in unfamiliar places and in meeting different people. It takes the sameness out of our lives and allows us a fresh view of ourselves from outside the humdrum of familiarity.

What's special about remote area travel? The urban environment relies on interdependence, even in such primary needs as food, water and shelter. When we travel to remote places we assume far more responsibility for meeting our own needs. We seek the liberation of self reliance.

So what's changing?

Sit beside a dusty outback track for a day and watch the passing traffic. There might be the occasional local going about his business, but there are also lots of 4WDs and other cars, many looking as though they shouldn't have left the bitumen. Caravans and expensive looking camper trailers, the occasional motorbike, even a European back packer in a hire van or on a push bike who couldn't comprehend the distances printed on the map. That the track is horribly corrugated isn't mentioned on his map either.

The back packers are a minority; they are sunburned, young and fit. Many of the drivers are of mature years, their remaining hair greying at the temples. There are family groups; the young kids have been taken out of school to travel, to learn to be observant, self reliant, to experience their country. Some drivers have seen friends and colleagues die prematurely before retirement when they'd planned to travel.

It's easy to forget that a decade ago you couldn't sit beside this track and watch the traffic. There wasn't enough traffic to watch then. Over the past decade when we've embarked on big trips we've noticed the increase in "remote area" traffic. It's a common topic of conversation when travelers camp for the night and share a campfire. "Never used to be like this". A traveler to the Cape recently described the adventure as "a dusty traffic jam interspersed with idiots". Even the ultimate iconic trip, the Canning Stock Route (CSR), is fast succumbing to the traffic onslaught. The track has never known maintenance but on a recent trip we encountered lengthy sections damaged by tourists driving at dangerously high speeds with high tyre pressures, and a general lack of regard for the territory and other travelers. Too many simply want to "do" the Canning rather than savouring the experience.

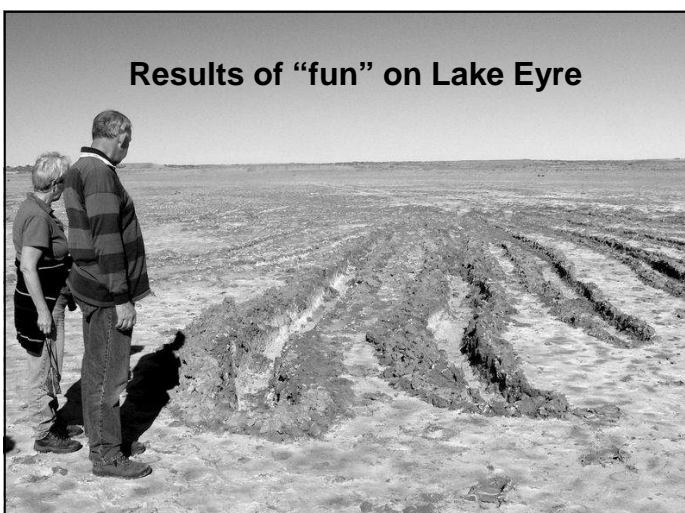
When, quite some years ago, we first traveled the Gibb River Road (GRR) through the centre of the Kimberley, it was a serious undertaking. It called for careful preparation, plenty of fuel

and spares, and especially extra tyres and tyre repair gear. There was very little traffic. It was one of the iconic tracks; to come out the other end without replacing a tyre or two and with the vehicle largely intact was an achievement. On a recent trip though, much of the GRR had been upgraded to 100 kph standard and appeared in readiness for bituminizing. Some of the more difficult stretches had already been sealed. Parts of the once iconic Tanami Track leading northwest from Alice Springs, and of the Plenty Highway running from western Queensland to the centre of the Territory are being sealed. More travelers' calls for better roads lead to more travelers traveling even faster.

The opportunity to appreciate and experience our remote areas, the landscape, the solitude, even the unpoluted night sky, is becoming increasingly rare. It is becoming harder to have a truly remote experience. A core factor is the popularizing through the mass media of areas of outstanding natural beauty, majestic scenery or rich heritage such as the Great Barrier Reef, Kakadu, the deserts, the gorges of northern WA, the forests of the south west, Increasing numbers are drawn to "see" these wonders. Increasing affluence, more intense marketing of more capable vehicles and after-market add-ons, better roads, better communications, all contribute to the allure of remote travel. In the process they destroy its remoteness.

And it's not just the numbers of people involved. It's the uncaring self-absorbed people who have a disproportionate impact on the environment and those around them. Escaping this mindless minority and their impacts is becoming harder. At Lake Eyre and at Lake Disappointment in the centre of the CSR the scars carved by their vehicles on the salt pans will show for many years an offensive lack of regard for the splendour that lies around.

Elsewhere on the Canning we came upon some travelers who were engaged in some "real" four wheel driving,



up and over the rugged hills at suicide speed scattering rocks in all directions and leaving scars that will last for decades. Such foolhardy behaviour deserves censure at any time, but when the nearest mechanical workshop or medical assistance is 1000 km away?

Apart from the loss of remoteness due to numbers of travelers and the human evidence they leave in their wake, what else is changing?

Access to remote places is increasingly restricted by artificial factors. Suites of permits from various bureaucracies are required to venture into many areas. Many of the iconic tracks established by Len Beadell not so very long ago are now entangled with red tape. And these permits are restricted to the track; to venture off the track by more than a few metres is not on. The permits restrict travel to particular times and deny the traveler the flexibility needed to do anything more than traverse the track.



To camp overnight beside the Gibb River Road is now unacceptable. To leave the tracks in the Simpson to camp is now unacceptable. To travel outside the three day permit window for the Great Central Road is unacceptable. Where tracks cross state borders and two sets of permits are required the problem compounds. Permit issue is haphazard, often slow and unreliable, sometimes expensive. It can become simply too hard to do "the right thing", especially in remote areas where phone and internet access simply don't exist.

And in the future?

At present, the permit system is mainly used to show "control" by traditional owners over access to vast areas of Australia. It could be readily expanded to protect those areas, deemed by vocal minorities that need protection on environmental, cultural or other grounds. There can only be more, rather than less, of these restrictions in the future.

The rising price of fuel will probably have some impact, though a tax on kilometres traveled (as in the Netherlands) might have a greater effect. A

vocal conservation movement may cause further indiscriminate closures. Vandalism may lead to access being restricted to only accredited operators, such as commercial tours and 4WD associations. Restrictions may be placed on access to special places such as Fraser Island to prevent them being “loved to death”.

Who will be traveling?

Certainly the Grey Nomads group will expand over the next decade as more baby boomers enter retirement. This part of the population tends to be cashed up, past the house repayment phase and past educating the kids. Some sell the family home and downsize, or take permanently to the road, creating a cash surplus. They’ve had the dream of doing the big lap around the big island, have bought the big 4WD, the big caravan and lots of maps. They are hitting the road. The most recent census in 2006 showed there were close to twice as many people aged 40 to 50 years as there were aged 60 to 70 years, the Grey Nomad age. So, in around ten year’s time, we can expect to see twice as many of them on the road. Remote tracks will resemble caravan parks!

Speaking of caravan parks - they aren’t really a part of the remote experience, but essential when the traveler must check into civilization, to shop, service their vehicle, maintain contact with family, etc. In the northwest many are filled with mining company employees; some have been bought outright by the mining companies. The number of travelers is increasing while accommodation is decreasing. Roadside stopping areas are being created to help alleviate the shortage.

Who else will be traveling? Probably the most important group will be families. Kids will benefit for the rest of their lives from a remote experience, while retirees benefit from the intellectual stimulation and physical exercise of climbing hills and exploring

gorges. But it is the kids who will benefit most with memories, experiences and life skills long after the retirees have moved on.

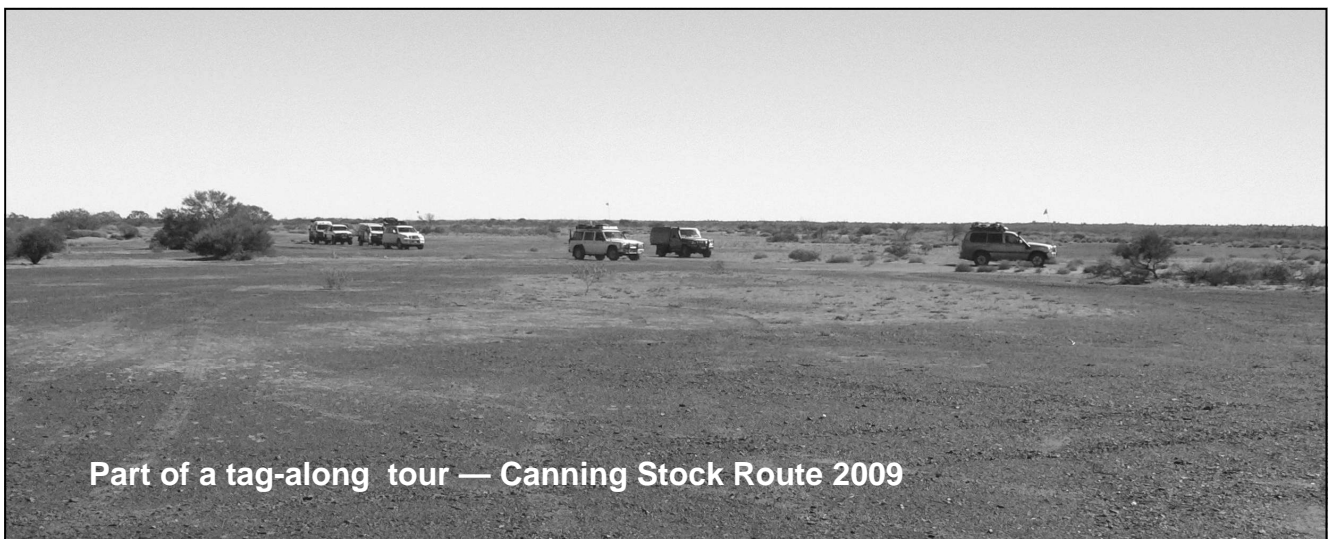
A few final thoughts

We are faced with a dilemma when accessing these special places. On the one hand we need our special vehicles and a well developed ability to use and maintain them. We need self reliance, a well founded belief in our own abilities. But, on the other hand we must recognize our limitations and how accustomed we are to relying on outside support. There are places it isn’t prudent to travel without a backup vehicle, an alternative driver, good communications equipment, and mechanical expertise. We need self reliance, but paradoxically we also need backup resources for when self reliance isn’t enough. The company of like-minded friends and their sturdy vehicles enhances our experiences and provides a safety net when things go pear shaped.

Our Club plays a vital role in developing self reliance and understanding of the abilities and limitations of our vehicles and our selves. The Club’s training program is excellent. The camaraderie and mutual supportiveness of our membership is very special and can be quite overwhelming. We, like others, have valued it in remote places, on the Canning, in the Simpson and the Kimberleys.

These remote places though are becoming less remote and more congested.

So don’t wait until the kids leave school. Don’t wait for retirement. Don’t wait until illness or injury take remote travel out of reach. Go now!!!



Part of a tag-along tour — Canning Stock Route 2009

Why would you join a 4WD Club?

Kerry Lejsek



Two years ago my husband, Rob and I were looking around for a four wheel driver training course in preparation for a trip to Tasmania that we had planned. We had gotten hold of a guidebook that listed more than 60 four wheel drive tracks around Tasmania and our plan was to do as many of these as possible in our six week holiday.

In our search for a 4WD course we came across the Southern Tablelands 4WD Club Inc. which offered 4WD driver training as part of the first year membership cost. We reckoned that this was pretty reasonable as the membership was \$330 for the first year and \$100 for each year thereafter. Most of the courses that we had found on the internet were around the \$300 so we figured we got membership to the Club for the first year thrown in. We sure underestimated what good value joining the Club was going to turn out to be.

I was a bit sceptical (more like ignorant) about joining a 4WD club, I figured that we would be joining a club full of rednecks who tore around in the mud, drove through the bush tearing up tracks who then left their empty bourbon cans behind. However the driver training seemed to be good value so off to our first Club meeting we went. I sure did underestimate the Club and the great bunch of people we would soon find ourselves going on trips with and learning a lot more about driving, camping and travelling in our great country.

The first Club meeting we attended blew my ignorant preconceived ideas wide apart. We were greeted at the door by a member who introduced himself as Gary who

welcomed us and invited us to sit with him at the visitors' table. The master of ceremonies for the evening was a tall slim lady in stilettos, her hair being the only red thing about her (This turned out to be lovely Rosemary who is the Club's President for 2009-10). The guest speaker for the night was a fellow from the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) who gave a very informative presentation about changes that were occurring with regard to distress beacons and the need to update the Personal Locator Beacon that we used in our boat and in our car. Nothing red here.

At that meeting Rob signed up for the "Safe One" Basic Driver Training course which was planned for August. The course was conducted over two days at the Club's property, Talooge, (which is in the mountains just east of Bredbo) with a third follow-up day trying out new skills while touring the Brindabella Mountains. We both had a great time on this course, we made new friends and I was able to sit in and learn too. Driver training is conducted by qualified trainers with oversight by the Chief 4WD Instructor and Club life member, Pete Reynolds. Extraordinarily, training is conducted on a one-on-one basis with a trainer allocated to each trainee - training course done and we ready for Tasmania.

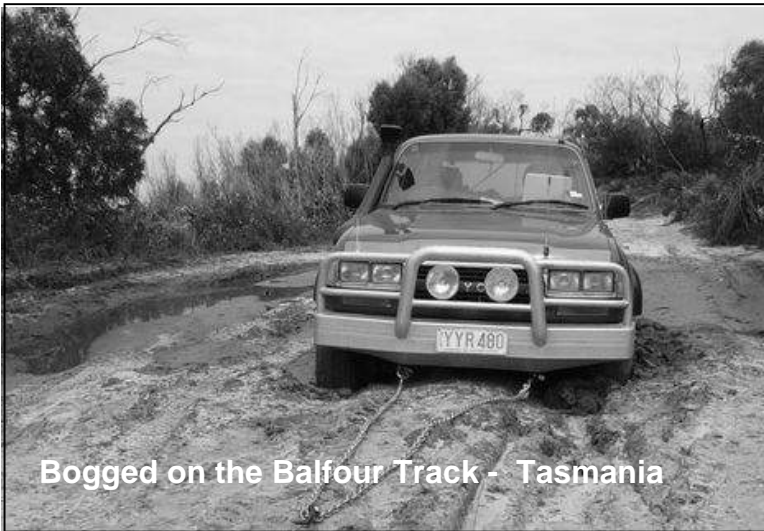
But wait there's more - as Club members we were also entitled to participate in the water crossing, sand driving, map reading and navigation courses where we learnt to use OziExplorer GPS navigation software. So with much more training under our belts than planned, the laptop loaded with maps and attached to the dashboard and the guidebook in hand, we set off for Tasmania.



The Lejsek's Camp set-up — the dog is a non-optional extra

We had a great time in Tasmania: we hired a tinnie and explored the Arthur River on the West Coast, travelled the ABT rack and pinion railway from Queenstown to Strahan, fly fished the Central Highlands, visited Cockle Bay in the south and walked to Wine Glass Bay from Freycinet National Park in the east. Along the way we completed as many of those 4WD tracks as we could find using that guidebook and our laptop loaded with OziExplorer.

Some of our more memorable Tasmania experiences were:



Bogged on the Balfour Track - Tasmania

Getting bogged in black stinky peat mud on the Balfour Track on the west coast not once but twice! We had to use every piece of recovery equipment that we carried to hand-winch ourselves out of the first bog.

Things I learnt from this were: it's much easier for Rob to winch a 3 tonne of vehicle if it's not in gear and the handbrake is off! This track was also covered in water for long stretches and plastic "Croc" shoes proved to be good protection for Rob's feet whilst he waded each length of track. Some of these stretches were hundreds of metres long and were a very uncomfortable depth... Lucky we did the water crossing course. At the end of a track was a sign: "*Winches and Snorkels required. Travel in Convoy Recommended*". We obviously started from the wrong end. We were also glad that we followed the advice of the Guidebook which recommended that drivers stick to the made road as it had a hard base (in all except two places where we got bogged). We saw plenty of evidence where others had not waded the water-logged track and had then tried to traverse around the water only to become bogged in the peat.

We drove along the rail track near Zeehan to Montezuma falls – passing through the old railway cutting to the falls which were spectacular. We saved ourselves a two hour bushwalk and experienced some of the mining history of the area.

We also drove into the Spray Tunnel near Zeehan. This is a keyhole-shaped tunnel made to fit a train only two thirds the size of a standard train and it is just big enough for an 80 Series Landcruiser with only centimetres to spare on each side. In this tunnel we found out what commitment means - too tight to reverse.

We also found out about "commitment" near St Helens on the East Coast when an old track collapsed behind us as we travelled down a mountain.

Our sand driving course and a little bit of advice from the local ARB shop came in handy while travelling through the dunes near Bridport on the North Coast. We were told whatever we did, stay away from the seaweed on the corner of the beach, stay high on the firm sand and don't be tempted to take a shortcut across the seaweed covered in sand – it's boggy. Rounding the headland we came across a dead seal and washed up upon the shore a little further on we came across a lifeless sea lion. I don't know who was more surprised when we got closer, it suddenly jumped up and took off into the water protesting loudly. The beach was beautiful but some of spots behind the dunes were used as unofficial camping areas and were strewn with old tyres, rubbish and toilet paper. Some people don't know how lucky they are to be able drive on the beach and enjoy the less accessible parts of the country without the confines of bollards.

We had a great time in Tasmania and learned that a good 4WD travel guide combined with first class driver training, OziExplorer and a bit of local knowledge will allow you to access areas off the beaten track. Such guidebooks are informative and often contain history and other snippets of local information that is often not available at Tourist Information Centres.

Since returning from Tasmania we have consolidated friendships with Club members and been on many great Club trips around our local area and in NSW. I have also completed the Basic 4WD Training course which, as a partner of a Club member, I was entitled to as part of the initial joining fee and annual membership (we have received far more than we initially bargained for when we first joined the Club). We have also been privileged to learn from the experiences and the vast knowledge of many Club members with similar interests to us. We have recently returned from three and a half months travelling around Western Australia where we carried with us information, advice and knowledge shared by many of the Southern Tablelands 4WD Club members who had been there before us. But that's another story.

I can honestly say without exaggeration, joining Southern Tablelands 4WD Club has turned out to be one of the best things that we have done.



Lifting your 4WD - the Rules

Graeme Kruse



Earlier in 2009 the NSW Government announced Vehicle Standards Information #50 - **VSI 50 – Raising and lowering Vehicles**. The rules contained in VSI 50 are rules published by NSW Centre for Road Safety, a department of the NSW Government, and applicable to vehicles in NSW.

This document caused quite a bit of controversy from our sector – the 4wd fraternity. Not long after the announcement of VSI 50, its implementation was put on hold while further consultation took place. After reading about issues concerning VSI 50 in magazines and the '4WD NSW&ACT Mailout to Members' I became involved in the issue by writing to our Chief Minister, as the ACT would most likely follow NSW – or so I assumed. A few days later I was contacted by the Manager Vehicle Safety (Transport Regulation and Planning, Office of Transport, Dept of Territory and Municipal Services) to talk about the issue because he was preparing a response to my email for the Chief Minister.

What came out of the conversation was very informative and enlightening.

- The ACT currently has regulations in place that cover raising and lowering a vehicle.
- The ACT adopted the 'model national rules' as developed by the National Transport Council on vehicle lifting and other related suspension issues back in 2006 and this is the current situation in the ACT. These particular model rules are published in Vehicle Safety Bulletin 14 - **VSB 14**
- Currently NSW **does not** have regulations that cover raising the height of a vehicle by means of 'taller springs' or raising the body via a 'body lift'. It only has guidelines for alternative rim and tyre sizes (VSI 9).

So, before I explain in detail the current regulations (ACT and NSW) it would be best to have a quick overview of raising a vehicle.

What methods are used to raise the height of a vehicle?

A vehicle's clearance is generally increased by doing one or more of the following:

1. Changing the standard springs for taller ones,

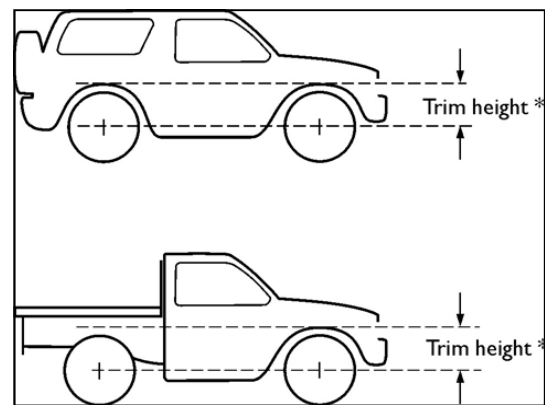
2. Increasing the length of the body to chassis mounting blocks, or
3. Increasing the diameter of the tyres.

How is raised height determined?

Before the raised height, that is the change in height, can be determined the standard height must be known.

Standard height

This height is the vertical distance from the centre of the axle hub to the mudguard or attached trim. This measurement is taken from the vehicle manufacturer's specifications. Obviously, if the vehicle's mudguards have been changed in any way then this will have to be taken into account to obtain a reference value for that vehicle.



Raised height

After installing the lift a measurement is taken from the centre of the axle hub to the mudguard or attached trim – some times this is also called the 'eye brow height'. If you have not changed tyre size then subtract the standard height from the new height to arrive at the lifted height. If you have increased tyre size then this must be taken into account as well – this is determined from the manufacturer's specifications of a new tyre.

In summary, total lifted height equals the measured height from the centre of the axle hub (after installing the lift) plus change in height due to the larger tyres minus the standard height.

In the ACT

So, what is the situation in the ACT at this point in time? Vehicles garaged in the ACT have to comply with **VSB 14**.

Under **VS** 14 there are two height bands set for raising a vehicle's height. The first is 0 to 50mm. Vehicles that fit into this band do not require any testing. Nor does the ACT require the Registrar of Vehicles to be notified of the modification – this does not mean that your insurance company has no need/requirement of notification of this modification.

The second band applies to vehicles that are raised beyond 50mm and up to 150mm. **VS** 14 requires the vehicle falling into this band to be tested (for example a lane change test, braking test and brake fade test) by an appropriately qualified signatory. Also, the Registrar of Vehicles has to be given proof that the work was carried out by a qualified installer and a copy of the vehicle tests results. Of course your insurer would have to be advised of the modification as well.

VS 14 does not permit vehicles lifts beyond 150mm.

In NSW

As mentioned above currently NSW does not have regulations that cover raising a vehicle by changing springs or adding a body lift. It only has guidelines for alternative rim and tyre sizes (VSI 9). So at the moment it appears lift height may only be limited indirectly by rules that govern headlight height.

Where are things going?

After the outcry in NSW earlier this year more consultation is taking place. With regard to input from industry the Australian Automotive Aftermarket Association (AAAA), represented by King Springs, ARB and BF Goodrich, has made a submission. In that submission AAAA is proposing a 0-75mm lift height for 'self-certification' that is, no testing for compliance with ADR be required.

Another issue that comes into play is if the vehicle is fitted with electronic stability control. A lane change test on a vehicle equipped with electronic stability control revealed that the vehicle could only comply with the requirements of the test when its vehicle stability control system was turned off. The problem with turning off the vehicle stability control is that this is illegal under the regulations. However, it is interesting to note that in a different context, that of lowering a vehicle (a sedan not a 4wd), this problem has been overcome by some vehicle manufacturers enabling the vehicle's stability control computer to be re-programmed.

The upshot of the AAAA proposal of 'self certification' for 0-75mm is that the authorities are not enthusiastic about it and industry (AAAA and others) has to do more work.

However, the 'elephant-in-the-room' question is what is happening elsewhere? Very briefly, the answer is as follows (as far as I can find out using the internet and searching the various relevant government sites).

QLD – No apparent direct restrictions (Queensland Transport, Vehicle Standards Instruction, Light Vehicle replacement Modifications)

VIC – Relative to original travel (Vic Roads, Vehicle Standards Information 8, Guide to Modifications for Motor vehicles)

TAS – **VS** 14 (Tasmania, Vehicle Modification Application)

SA – No apparent direct restrictions (Dept of Transport, Energy and Infrastructure, Track and Suspension Specifications)

WA – **VS** 14 (Gov' WA, Dept of Transport, Modification Application, Light (production) Vehicles.

NT – **VS** 14 (NT Gov', Dept of Planning and Infrastructure, Motor Vehicle Registry Information Bulletin V32 – Vehicle Modifications).

So, of the six states and two territories, four (ACT, TAS, WA and NT) have implemented **VS** 14, one (NSW) has a proposed document (VSI50) that is very similar to **VS** 14 and three (QLD, SA and VIC) have no direct limitations on lift for a vehicle.

Finally, **VS** 14 **version 2** is about to be released and I believe it will be adopted immediately in the ACT. I understand that there are no major changes.

And on another piece of legislation. If you are a traveller to the NSW ski fields, then Google VSI 57 – it's about driving in snow and ice conditions and carrying and using snow chains – first published in June 2009.



My next truck will be...

John Kjar



When I became interested in four wheel driving a few years ago I did not think about my needs as well as I should have and I was confused by the range of trucks and equipment available. After four years with the Club I am (hopefully) a little more aware. So, this article distils some of the information I have learnt and which I hope to apply when I purchase my next 4WD. And I hope you find this helpful to think about your needs, the features you want in your next 4WD and the trade-offs you will inevitably have to make when purchasing your next truck. A follow-up article will discuss some possible add-on features to my ideal truck

Needs

I already have a town car and so my 4WD will be used mainly for outback trips. But I also want to be able to take the grandkids for a drive into the bush, so I do need to be able to accommodate at least four people at various times.

My 4WD will be used for day, weekend and extended trips of up to 10 weeks duration (max three weeks without access to shops (eg CSR). I expect about 70% of my driving will be on bitumen, about 20% on gravel roads and about 10% on sand/steep hills etc.

I want to go on trips up to Grade 4 – but mainly grade 2 and 3. I am not keen on winching– but I do want the capability to extricate myself from difficult positions. I am not technically or mechanically minded or capable, so I want my truck to be simple to operate, reliable and able to be repaired quickly anywhere in Australia.

I need lots of space inside my vehicle. I don't want to tow a camper trailer (they involve more things to go wrong, eg wheels, mechanicals, electrical, extra drag, parking, etc – heresy/rubbish I hear some say, but that's my view), and initial cost, where to park at home, irregular use, etc. But I do want to be able to tow my trailer to Talooge with a load of bricks, and a boat/caravan to/from the coast, etc.

And I don't want a roof rack – because of the extra wind drag/noise, and I want all my equipment locked inside.

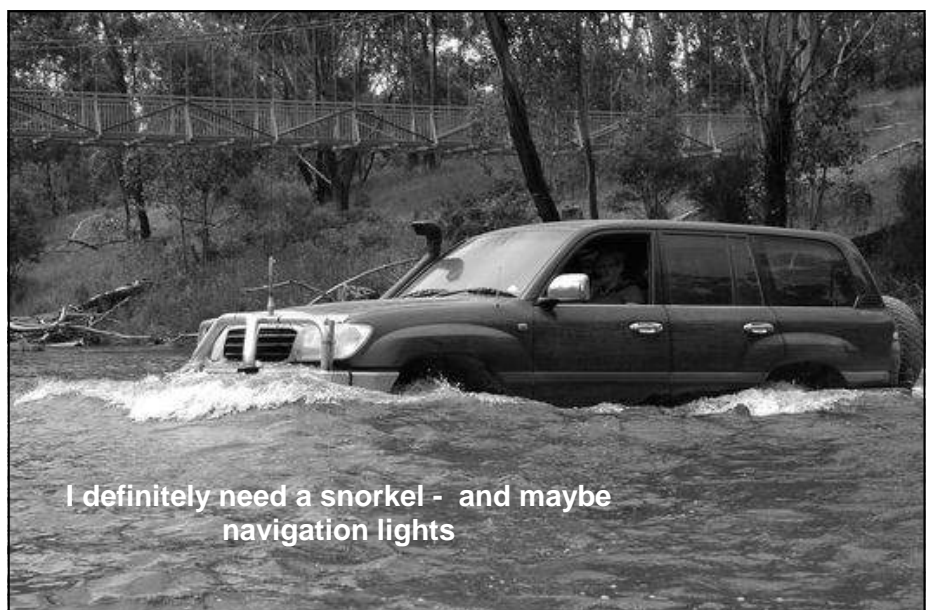
Safety, quietness and comfort (including leg room for a tall person and good, strong comfortable seats and air conditioning) are important considerations.

And also very important to me — the total cost must be reasonable.

Features of my next truck

Automatic transmission – no more stall starts on precipitous hill climbs for me! But I want extra low range (for climbing slowly up those precipitous slopes and down steep, hair raising descents) and several low and intermediate range gears so I can maintain momentum on lesser slopes and also overdrive (help with engine noise and fuel consumption). Probably five or six gears would be adequate. And I will just have to remember not to leave the transmission in “Park” on steep hills.

Plenty of “grunt” especially as I will lose some power with an automatic transmission. What type of grunt is required? Well, I want to be able to ascend a steep, difficult hill at a low speed (ie safely) without losing speed/momentum – so I need lots of torque at low revs. Diesel powered vehicles typically best meet this requirement (petrol vehicles only deliver maximum torque at high revs). I also need something that can accelerate reasonably quickly – so it needs to lots of



power! Typically petrol and LPG powered vehicles have high power outputs – but diesel turbo-charged vehicles are now matching their petrol cousins. While some 3 litre engines may have these attributes they have to work very hard – a 4litre engine is preferable.

Reliability – all parts. I don't want a problem on the CSR or in the Kimberleys or Simpson Desert even if Dave Sutton or Rod/Michael Brewer are with me. What are the problems most likely to be faced out-back? Apart from tyres and electrical/battery problems which can be encountered on most vehicles, I think the major problems encountered on outback trips include fuel, suspension, steering and brakes/bearings.

I also want a vehicle that can be fixed relatively quickly if a problem occurs anywhere in Australia. So ready access to spare parts and trained mechanics are important considerations, as well as an appreciation of what vehicles are actually doing the outback trips I like to do. They are most likely to have the capability and reliability features I am looking for, and they may also be able to help me. Again, from my limited experience, I think about 50-60% of vehicles I see on outback trips are Toyota's (especially 80 and 100 series), about 35% are Nissan's (especially GQ's) and the rest are many and varied. And sorry, but Pajero's and Landrovers seem to spend a higher proportion of their time on the side of the road than Toyota's and Nissan's.

A low fuel consumption vehicle reduces carrying loads, reduces costs, and increases my flexibility as to where I can go. This probably means I need to choose a diesel-fuelled vehicle. LPG is good (and low cost, especially with the Federal subsidies) but LPG is often not available outback – so I would need a dual fuel system. Petrol consumption rates are higher than diesel, especially off-road, and petrol is not available at some outback areas (but is available at many more places than LPG). But diesel has its own issues – including adding petrol to your tank instead of diesel (beware, it does happen) and water in fuel.

Large fuel tanks – at least two (in case one breaks). Preferably I would like them to be capable of at least 1000 km in rough/sandy terrain (where fuel consumption rates can double/treble). I don't like carrying jerry cans in/on my truck – although I accept that for some trips some additional fuel needs to be carried in jerry cans- so I probably need at least 200L capacity in my fixed fuel tanks.

Suspension must be able to take extensive and extended periods of corrugations (a feature of many of the great places I want to visit), so a suspension upgrade will almost certainly be required, together with a

lift of the suspension to get over rocks and through potholes. I will also need to cross some steep gullies/rivers so I need to have good front and rear exit angles – which are helped by suspension lifts. Purists believe 'live' front axles provide better rock climbing ability than independent (front) suspensions and are more robust.

I need a tyre that performs well on bitumen and gravel and has strong sidewalls. Most tyres, when adequately deflated work well in sand. I don't need the aggressive treads of mud tyres or advanced rock climbing ability, but I do want something with a wider tread and stronger sidewall than most All Terrain tyres. Tyres with a 16 inch radius are likely to be adequate.

Do I need more traction? Possibly. Some trucks already have a central differential locking system (eg Landcruiser 100 series) so drive is available to a front and a rear wheel. Do I really need front and/or rear diff lockers in addition to give me a guaranteed 4 wheel drive? I would not put them on my high priority list, given their cost, my list of needs for the truck, and the other features of my perfect truck listed above which will get me to most places I want to go to.

And I don't want such 'features' as traction control and electronic stability control as I think they do not provide the same level of control as an 'alert' driver and this equipment can sometimes cause problems. Call me a technological Luddite, but I think the more technology we add to our trucks increases both the potential for problems and the difficulty in diagnosis and repair. This is an especially important consideration in remote areas.

How much carrying capacity do I need? Lots, as I carry lots of 'stuff' including recovery gear, tools, spare tyres and oils, a bulky tent, camp stretchers, folding chairs, bedding, water, clothing, food, kitchen sink and, sometimes, spare fuel. And ease of access to all this stuff is important especially on long trips. Some tray-top trucks have lift up side flaps (Gull wings) that provide immediate access. Combined with large drawers (on good rollers) this is a great choice. But these trucks only accommodate two people – not four – so where do I put the grandkids? Drawers that are accessed from the rear of the traditional station wagon, and hence only go part of the way (about one metre), do enable me to retain the capacity to hold four people but are a second best storage solution.

Air bags and ABS braking provide enhanced safety

although my techno phobia makes me a cautious customer for these aids.

Low purchase cost. This is another of the really hard trade-offs. How low is low cost? The type of vehicle I would 'like' (if it exists) would cost about \$100,000 when new. So I may want to look for a second-hand vehicle – but that makes it even harder to find one with the features I would 'like'. I would not expect to sell my new truck any time soon, but some trucks do depreciate at a faster rate than others. And while the purchase cost of diesel vehicles can be \$10,000 or more than an "equivalent" petrol vehicle – this may be recovered in reduced fuel costs after about 150,000 km.

Low operating and maintenance costs. More trade-offs. Reliability (as well as good driving habits and vehicle servicing) can significantly reduce these costs. In addition, diesel-fuelled vehicles typically need servicing (mainly an oil change every 5000 km) at more regular intervals than petrol/LPG vehicles (oil changes every 10,000 km), and some engine/fuel repairs can cost significantly more than petrol vehicles. But diesel fuel costs can be significantly lower than for petrol-fuelled vehicles.




I also need lots of power for those special moments

So what will my next truck be? Nothing on the market meets my 'ideal' list. And my list of add-ons (in a future article) will add another \$20,000 to the cost of my ideal vehicle. So, as with most things, compromises need to be made and this is where the list of "needs" provides an important reality check. A turbo-diesel 80 or 100 series Landcruiser or a Nissan GQ probably best meets my (compromised) needs.

But before I buy, I would appreciate any comments or suggestions – maybe these could be incorporated into a future magazine article?

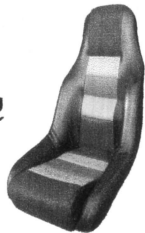


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Est. 1974

Spotlight on Sponsors Monaro Off Road Centre

Mick Hines



Continuing with our regular Spotlight on Sponsors series, we look this month at long standing ST4WDC supporter Monaro Off Road Centre.

MORC was founded in 1977 by our very own Peter Reynolds. Peter operated the business until it was bought out by Marina, Michael and Rodney Brewer in February 1999 on coincidentally, the anniversary of the 4WD Spectacular.

MORC operates a showroom and workshop that provide a full range of mechanical services at 25 Stephens Road Queanbeyan. They also supply and fit a huge range of accessories from most of the major manufacturers.

I've spent a little bit of time out at MORC over the last three or so years because they service, repair and have "transformed" the 1999 Prado that Jayne and I drive. I recently spent some time playing question and answer with Michael, Marina and Rodney for this article.

MORC is operated by a small and tightly-knit team of five, with Michael looking after quotes, accessory fitting and the office. Rodney runs the workshop side of things with mechanics Alex and Brenton. Marina does the bookwork and most importantly - pays the bills !

Michael, Marina & Rodney have been active members and supporters of the Southern Tablelands club since 1996 - they were part of the Class of 96 that has recently been highlighted in Southern Trails' membership matters pages.

They're all passionate 4 wheel drivers and campers, with Michael having recently returned from a month-long trip to Cape York. You don't have to travel that far for a memorable trip though - Marina's favourite destinations include Blue Waterholes and Charlie's Creek in the beautiful and rugged Victorian high-country, with Rodney having a passion for desert travel.

One of the Brewer's most memorable trips was in our own backyard - a trip to Bendethra, which turned into a massive multi-vehicle recovery exercise. "We ended up using every piece of recovery gear we had between us" Rodney told me. "In winter, parts of Mericumbene fire trail don't get any sun. We were driving out in the afternoon and the track was pretty greasy. It took a lot of recovery work and equipment, but we all got through in the end" he said.

Many members already know of the Club trip where Rodney turned back from near Wagga and did an overnight engine change on his 60 series Cruiser before a mad 1700km dash to catch up with the rest of the convoy in Port Augusta !

I asked for one hot tip each from the Brewers. Rodney was first off the block. "Maintain your truck properly. You need to know it has been properly serviced and maintained and will be reliable. You can't call the NRMA when you're broken down on the Oodnadatta Track" he said

"Get proper 4 wheel drive training, focus on skills development and get to know your limitations and your truck's limitations" was Marina's tip.

Michael offered some very wise advice on accessories. "Fit out your truck BEFORE you go on that big trip so you get the use and enjoyment out of it" he said. "There's no point getting it decked out for travelling when you get back home".

There was general agreement that one of the most





The Team at Monaro Off Road Centre

useful accessories was a suspension lift and a good set of tyres that will suit the terrain where you plan on doing you're off road driving.

Rodney is a regular feature at most of the Basic Driver Training courses the Club runs. "It's great to keep in touch and meet new members of the Club and to see their confidence develop as they learn how to drive their trucks" he said. "It's also good to be able to help them out with advice on servicing and accessories".

The Brewers aim to build long-term relationships with all of their customers – and are very successful at doing exactly that. With around 1100 customers, there's more than enough work to keep everyone busy. Their focus is always on providing good, sound advice and top quality mechanical work based on expert knowledge and their long experience in the industry.

MORC also do pre-purchase and pre-trip inspections of all 4WD vehicles and this service is well worth using. Michael said, "people aren't just buying another car. It's their hobby and their holiday. They want to know more about their vehicle – understand

how it works and how to look after it to make sure they get the most enjoyment out of it."

I couldn't resist the temptation to ask what was the most reliable truck and Michael was lightning fast with a response. "My 4.2 litre GQ turbo diesel Patrol" he said with a huge grin. The least reliable truck was answered with knowing smiles from everyone. "Any truck that isn't properly serviced and maintained will let you down". A very diplomatic and very true answer.

The Brewers and MORC have long-standing relationships with ST4WDC and with the 4WD Spectacular, and they see both continuing well into the future. MORC are a big exhibitor again at this year's Promo – pop in and say g'day.

Monaro Off Road Centre is located at 25 Stephens Road Queanbeyan.

Phone 6297-6006 Fax 6297-0896 or look them up on the net at <http://monarooroad.com.au>



Last year, the local company The Elvin Group greatly assisted ST4WDC by providing and laying the concrete slab in our new shed. In our next Spotlight on Sponsors we will find out more by shining the spotlight on the Elvin Group.

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Hire rates for the Tvan: \$600 per week; \$330 long weekend; \$250 weekend

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ACT agent for Tanami Pumps, Auspitt and Camperback Tray-top campers.

Club Clothing

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

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

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





Four Wheel Drive NSW & ACT, INC

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

November Bulletin

The events of the last month have such that time has been at a premium.

- The first & most important issue was, as Greg reported in the last report, he did not stand for re-election at the AGM and this role has not been filled at the election of officers, so will now be open for appointment by the Executive as a casual position. Our thanks to Greg for his commitment & drive to strengthen our Associations image.
- During November the final selection of a paid employee was completed and I am pleased to announce the appointment of Michelle Sayahan as our Business Development Manager. Michelle comes with extensive experience in working at a senior level with a range of external organisations, including government departments and statutory authorities. Her experience in managing digital, broadcast and new media projects ensures an understanding how to exploit these new mediums to reach an audience. Her sound understanding of social media as well is of particular importance to Associations such as our own.
- The issue of a revised VSI50 document continues, as negotiations progress with the RTA and revised submissions at a national level VSB 14 (National Code of Practice) is still under review with strong submissions from the 4WD Council. There is still a number of issues to resolve that will be in the best interest of our members.
- The initial steps in reorganisation of the member training facilities has commenced with the establishment of the METC (Member Training & Education Committee), which is the co-ordinating committee to facilitate new course access to clubs as well as extend the established activities of the DTU, by the election of Ben Sweetnam to the Executive, who will lead the new committee. To strengthen this initiative we have been offered the full support of our related organisation Four Wheel Drive Victoria, who have developed & are running a number of training courses for clubs, their members as well as commercial organisations & the general public. We wish Ben well on his endeavours in this regard.
- As regard to our endeavours to establish a 4WD & Camping Expo in Sydney, our initial evaluation has been delayed with the resignation of our co-ordinator but we have been fortunate in securing the services of Greg Ebeling to finalise this investigation and we expect a preliminary report within the next few weeks. It should be noted that our ACT clubs expressed concern on the effects of this proposed event on the Bi-annual 4WD Show at Queanbeyan run by three ACT clubs, and the Executive made a commitment to consider this issue in their planning.
- There are currently 4 positions on the executive Committee which need to be filled by the committee. These are the President, an additional Vice President, plus 2 Executive members. Interest has been expressed by a number of persons, with one formal application, but additional submissions would be welcomed.

Roger Sheath – Vice President
30 November 2009.

FOR SALE/WANTED/LOST/FOUND



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



85 Watt Suntech Mono-Si Solar Panel

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Rob - Mob 0409 307 533 Home 02 6161 7597

Winch Bar to suit 100 Series Landcruiser. **\$1000**

Dave Buckley - 0410 625 734

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

Asking price \$17,000.

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

Several plastic jerry cans (fuel) – 20l and 5l. \$8 and \$5 respectively.

Mike 0427 553 410

Aluminium full-size 6 point roof rack for Nissan Patrol GU - 1800 x 1300mm. Rhino Rack brackets. Good condition – only used twice. **\$450**

4 x Goodyear Wrangler tyres 255x60/R18 HT suit Landrover Discovery, 80+% tread. **\$400 the lot.**

Hi-lift jack adapter to fit wheel hubs on Nissan Patrol.

\$40

Ian Goodacre - 0403 304 505

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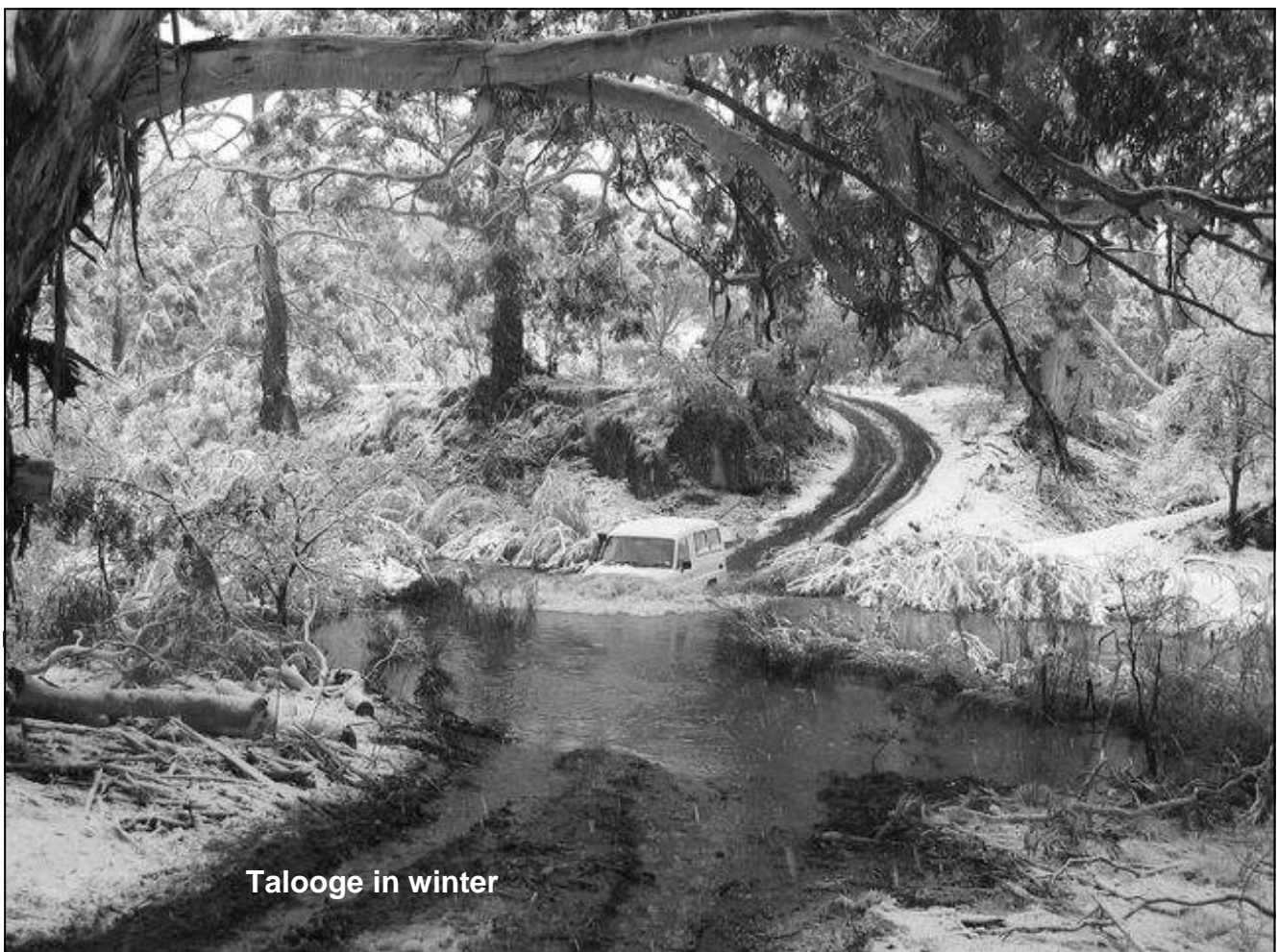
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SOUTHERN TABLELANDS FOUR WHEEL DRIVE CLUB Inc

GPO Box 2122, Canberra ACT 2601

MEMBERSHIP

Categories of Membership

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

'Owner Member'

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

'Associate Member'

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

'Competition Member'

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

'Family Member'

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

'Life Member'

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

Approval of Membership

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

Membership Entitlements

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

Membership Fees

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

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

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

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

To Join the ST4WDC

Please complete the New Member Application form on the reverse and forward together with your payment to:

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

Payment can be made by Bank Transfer to: **Account Name:** 'Southern Tablelands 4WD Club Inc'; **BSB:** 112-908; **Account No:** 040 037 027 (please include your name as a reference to identify the payment), or by Cheque or Money Order payable to the Account Name above.

You may also attend a monthly meeting (held on the second Tuesday at Canberra Deakin Football Club, Grose St, Deakin at 7:30PM) and hand the form with payment (cash acceptable) to the Membership Secretary. For additional information, contact the Membership Secretary at Membership@ST4WDC.Org.au.



SOUTHERN TABLELANDS FOUR WHEEL DRIVE CLUB Inc
GPO Box 2122, Canberra ACT 2601

NEW MEMBER APPLICATION

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

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

Essential entries	Member 1	Member 2 (Partner)
Preferred first name, last name:		
Address:		
City/Suburb:	State:	Postcode:
Home Phone:		
Mobile Phones:		
Home Email:		
Work Phones:		
Work Email:		
<i>As a means of rapidly disseminating priority information, the Club occasionally makes use of Email to all members who have provided an Email address (which is hidden from other recipients), or SMS to all those who have provided a Mobile Phone number. You will receive these automatically unless you indicate otherwise. Default is shown in Bold Print.</i>		
Accept Club SMS:	Yes / No	Yes / No
Send Club Email to:	Both / Home / Work / Neither	Both / Home / Work / Neither
	of the Email Addresses provided above.	
Employer:		
Occupation:		
Vehicle (Make & Model):		
Registration (Please include State if not ACT):		
	Registration details are requested as they are used for log-on to the 'Members Only' portion of the web site.	
Please register these 'Family' Members? <small>Must be under 21 years, reside with Principal Member or Partner, and be Licensed to Drive.</small> Please provide both Names and Dates of Birth.	Name(s):	Date of Birth:
	_____ _____
Are you a returning Member? Yes / No	If 'Yes', what was your last Membership Year?	
How did you find out about the ST4WDC?		
Payment of fees (\$) made by (Please Indicate): Bank Transfer / Cheque (enclosed) / Money Order (enclosed) / Cash		
Signature(s)*: Upon acceptance of this application, then for the duration of my membership, I agree to abide by the Constitution and By-laws of the Southern Tablelands Four Wheel Drive Club Inc, as they apply from time to time.		
Signed:		Date:

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

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

Revision SA - Jan 10