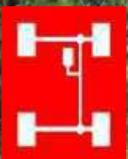


BEYOND THE BITUMEN

MARCH 2019



THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE
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FEATURE TRIPS:

- Victorian High Country
- ditto

:



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This Month's Cover photo was taken in the Victorian High Country. Read the trip report inside....

Closing date for next month's magazine:
27th March 2019

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



G'day

Well, I had a month off - did you miss me?

My thanks to Kirsten for deputising so well for me in my absence. She has done a magnificent job! I hope I can maintain the high standard...

This month we have two trip reports from the week-long trips to the high country in February, along with heaps of photos.

We seem to be missing one or two reports from other trips...maybe next month we'll name names :-) ...don't be shy, take lots of photos (or borrow someone else's) and there are tips down the back of the magazine.

Keep it fun

Kevin

Trip reports articles and photos can be sent to me by: Email: editor@awdc.com.au Or in person at the meetings. This magazine is printed solely for the benefit of our members and any article appearing may be wholly or partially fictitious. Therefore, nothing printed herein should be construed as a true interpretation of the Club, its members or their activities. Please support our Club sponsors, give them a chance to quote the best price. Where a discount is available it will be offered on production of your Membership card.

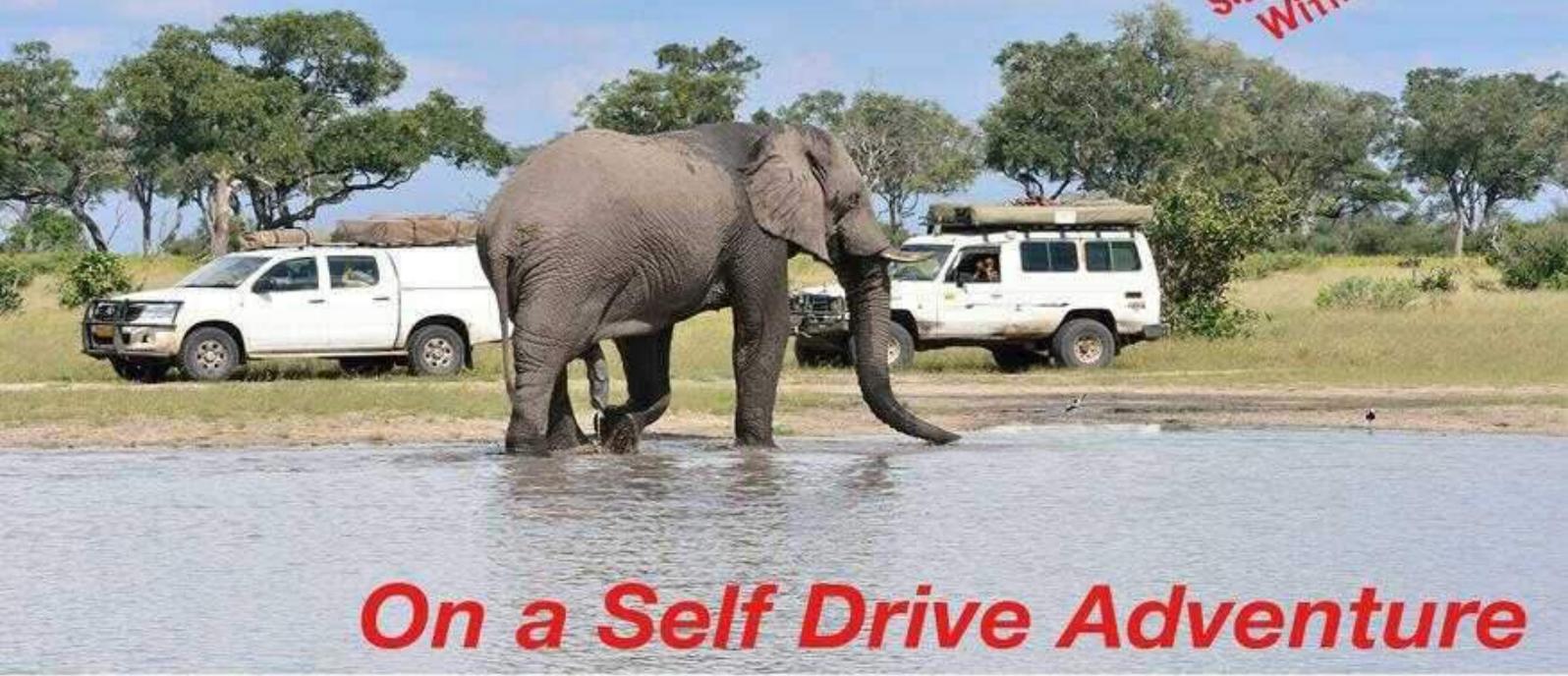


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From the Victorian High Country...





ALL WHEEL DRIVE CLUB OF SYDNEY INC.

P.O. BOX 82 ROSEVILLE NSW 2069 | COMMITTEE@AWDC.COM.AU | WWW.AWDC.COM.AU
ABN 45 4585 086 298

ADMINISTRATION

CLUB MEETINGS

Are generally held at 8pm on the second Wednesday of every month at the Forestville RSL Club,
22 Melwood Ave, Forestville NSW.

Note: Bistro meals are available

VISITORS ARE MOST WELCOME!

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Are generally held on the fourth Wednesday of every month commencing at 7.30pm. Should Club members wish to attend please contact the President or Secretary to confirm the date and venue.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Is held in conjunction with the October Club General Meeting.

MEMBERSHIP FINANCIAL YEAR

The Membership financial year is from 1 July to 30 June.

NOMINATED CHARITY FY 2017/2018

All funds raised by the Sergeant-at-Arms for misdemeanours, real or imagined, will be donated to Drive4Life



LIFE MEMBERS

- Kevin Couter
- Steve Dalli
- Sue Dutfield
- Neil Follett
- Steve Hedges
- Brian Mitchell
- Brian Sommerville

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VICE PRESIDENT REPORT

BRIAN SOMMERVILLE



Battery House,
3 Vuko Place,
Warriewood

Hi all,

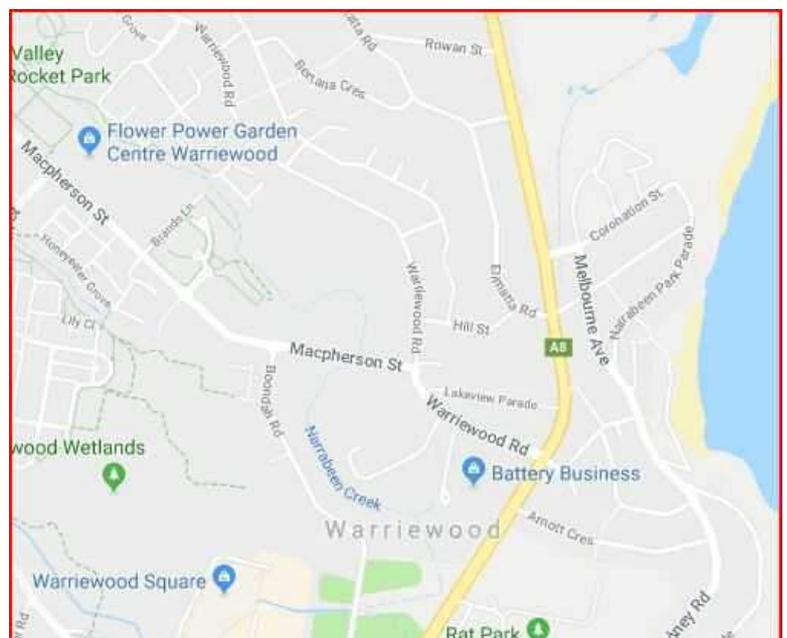
Thanks to Ian Ferret from RFI last month presenting their new Cel-Fi product. I hope you found it informative and hopefully you'll find a place for it amongst all the other accessories that you have accumulated over the years.

March's meeting will be at Battery Business for another great BBQ and lots of chat about "Why is my beer is getting warm?". The BBQ starts at 6:30 with all the necessities (pork snags, rolls, onions, soft drinks) provided. If you wish to bring a more "relaxing" drink then feel free to bring one along. Oh and don't forget to bring a camp chair.

For April I'm hoping to line-up a canvas expert and Chris from Self Drive Adventures will be joining us in May. If you have any suggestions for June onwards please let me know.

From a sunny & hot (32c) Hobart.

Cheers
Brian



WEBMASTER REPORT

Mark Kortink



Hi 4x4 trippers,

I have consolidated the photos and videos on the website under a single page called [[Pics & Vids](#)]. From here you can access the [DVD Library](#), a [gallery of photos](#) that the club has accumulated over the years, and photos and videos [members have shared](#).

To share the photos from a trip, or that amazing video of you 4x4ing an impossible obstacle, send me a link. It is becoming common that all the members on a trip share their photos on one cloud or another. If you are happy to make the cloud folder public and leave it on the cloud forever send me the link, I will make you famous (in the club at least).

If you have a few pictures from a trip that you think are awesome, *then upload them into the gallery!* It is easy, just go to the gallery and click the [Upload] button. The gallery is for those really extra special photos we should keep for posterity, after all we don't have infinite amounts of storage.

As always, if you have any suggestions about anything to do with the website or "going digital" in general please email me or if you prefer post it to the suggestions form for member discussion.

Cheers

Mark

webmaster@awdc.com.au

[Suggestions](#)



MEMBERSHIP REGISTRAR REPORT

Liz Hayes



WOW, we nearly have 300 members, at this stage we have 293 members. I would like to welcome our newest members **Tony Eastwood, Olivia Willows, John Chobocky** and **Kasey Hills**. Tony drives Toyota 200 series, Olivia drives Toyota Prado 120, John drives Toyota 80 series and Kasey drives Jeep Cherokee.

If you haven't received a name badge come and see my lovely assistant (my husband) and he will make one up for you at our monthly meeting.

Thanks

Liz
Membership Registrar

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GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

SUE DUTFIELD



MINUTES OF A GENERAL MEETING OF MEMBERS: Held Wednesday, 13th February 2019

AT: Forestville RSL Club

MEETING OPENED: 8:02pm

CHAIR: Brad Paul, President

MINUTES: Sue Dutfield, Secretary

ATTENDANCE BOOK: The attendance book was circulated and signed

VISITORS: Chris, Toyota Hilux

MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES:

- None

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: The minutes from the previous meeting were taken as read and it was resolved that:

"The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 10th October be confirmed and signed as a true & correct record".

Moved by: Dave Knight

Seconded by: Ricky Morales

PRESIDENT'S REPORT *Brad Paull*

- Thanked Brian for chairing last months meeting whilst he was in Thailand.
- Club now has a DeFib machine for general use if required. I am in charge of it and if you are leading a trip you will need to book this and the Sat phone and pick it up from either my place in Forestville or Brookvale where I work.

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT *Brian Sommerville*

- Ian Ferari From RFI have donated a UHF aerial pack for the raffle prize tonight.
- Next months meeting is at Battery Business at Warriewood. 6.30pm start. BBQ supplied by Battery Business. Bring a chair
- Each table has various information and brochures supplied by the Association. Please take home with you
- St Johns Ambulance will be with us in April to demonstrate the DeFib machine. There is also a video on their website. The Defib is available for all trips and is strongly recommended for long club trips.
- If club members have their own DeFib machine, we would like to explore the possibility of listing this in the members profile and also it being available for other club members on the Defib owners trip.
- Looking into insurance for both the DeFib machine and the Sat phone.



SECRETARY'S REPORT *Sue Dutfield*

- As per magazine

TREASURER'S REPORT *Fiona Wilson*

- As per magazine

MEMBERSHIP REGISTRAR'S REPORT *Liz Hayes*

- We now have 282 members.
- Handed out badges and advised if you don't have a badge come and see me
- As per magazine

EDITOR'S REPORT *Kevin Couter (absent) Kirsten Sommerville (Assistant Editor)*

- There is a space available at a really big discount on the African Safari trip for April. A really good deal for the 30 day trip.
- If you are having trouble with the magazine check your spam.

4WD TRAINING OFFICER'S REPORT *Steve Cox*

- As per magazine
- Next Driver Training is in this weekend which is full.
- Next one is April and there are still some trips available

TRIP CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT *Joc McManus*

- As per magazine
- Please check your Spam if you haven't received notification from me two weeks prior to your departure date on a trip.
- Harold will talk to you about the ARB Trip. Harold then asked for a couple of people to change their times to attend. Done
- Always looking for C grade trips

WEBMASTER *Mark Kortink (absent)*

- No report

PURCHASING OFFICER'S REPORT *Jenny Cammell*

- As per magazine
- See me if you wish to purchase anything and or collect orders.

DVD OFFICER'S REPORT *Chris Walker*

- See me if you want to hire some DVDs. Still waiting for a couple to be returned

GENERAL BUSINESS

- Nil

SERGEANT- AT- ARMS

- Lots and lots of fines

RAFFLE OFFICER *Sandra Parkin*

- Winner of the raffle: Bruce Mann (RFI Aerials)
Sharon O'Keefe (Blanket)



DRIVER of the MONTH AWARD

- Not Awarded

MEETING CLOSED at 9:38pm

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held at Forestville RSL on 13th March 2019 at 8:00pm.

Pic: "I'll race you down..."





TREASURER'S REPORT

Fiona Wilson

AWDC Treasurer's Report for the month of February 2019

The summer is now behind us with mild camping weather and colourful Autumn season approaching.

1. For the month of February we raised a net of \$217 towards our October 2019 AGM raffle.
2. The fines collected in February were \$132.90. As voted at the January meeting, the Club's charity for 2018/19 is "Drive4Life".
3. The Club has collected \$2,200 of the advertising invoices for the year. There is an outstanding \$1,200 which will be followed up in March 2019.
4. The short term deposit of \$50,000 matured on 18 February 2019. The Committee has rolled over these funds for a further 12 months at a rate of 2.4%.
5. In an effort to reduce the stock of receipt books, the sale price has been reduced to \$15. If interested in purchasing a booklet, please speak to Kirsten Sommerville.
6. If there are any queries on the financial statements, do not hesitate to contact me.

Until next month.

Fiona



TRIP CO-ORDINATOR REPORT

Joc Mannes



Hi Folks, well it nearly Easter and no sign of any Easter Bunny activity in my garden!

We are still struggling with enough spaces on trips for everyone that wants to go.

Harold's Sofala trip that was put up was full in a day or two.

Paul Brennan's Abercrombie NP the same.

Michael DeZwart's Sunny Corner was also full very quickly.

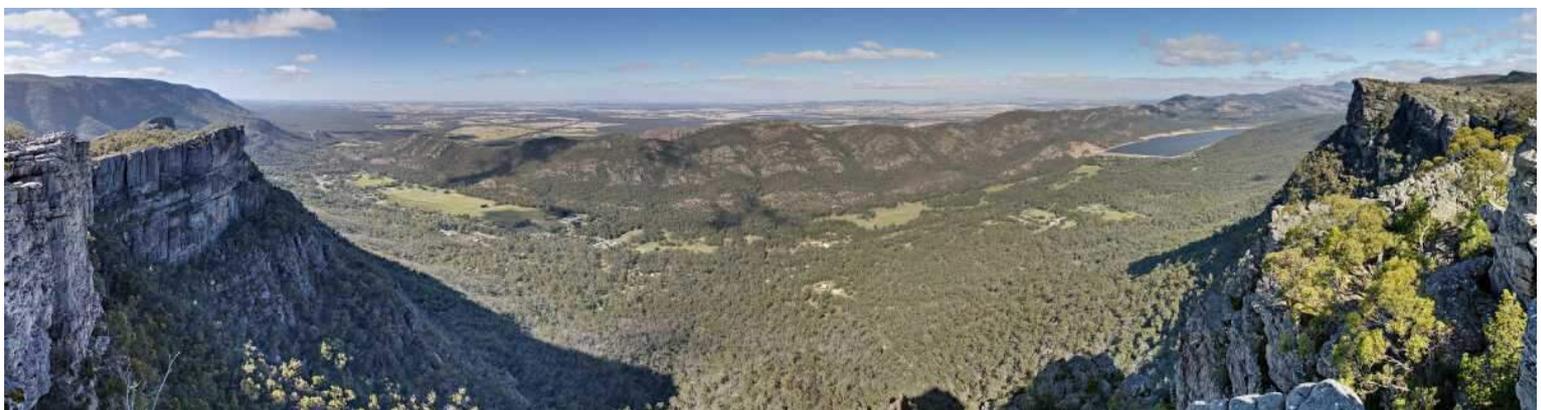
On top of which Peter Newell has had to cancel his range of mystery trips.

That all sounds like doom and gloom, or is it Pom'ie wingeing, but we have lots of people going on trips. Both Michael and Harold doubled the available spaces. Our long distance trips go from strength strength.

There are many members who can only spare a weekend, most likely as they are pre retirement. If you are thinking of a weekend away just list a trip. It need not even involve any 4WD eg Myall Lake Campground or Turon camping only. Or for those who can't help but succumb to their addiction how about Newnes for B grade tracks?

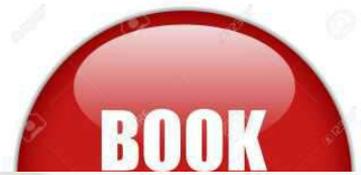
Keep watching those email inboxes, especially if you are booked on a trip. As per last year i will be listing some trips without a "Leader" soon.

Joc



TRIP CALENDAR

See Website for full details!



awdc.com.au



Admin view | Log out

January 2019

Jan 02 North Thailand confirmed
Jan 09 Club Meeting January
Jan 19 Mt Airley grade B
Jan 23 Mgmt Meeting January
Jan 25 Bendethra Grade C

February

Feb 04 Victorian High Country
SW base camp C grade
Feb 04 Victorian High Country
Upper Dargo C grade
Feb 09 Northern Beaches
Brewery Tour
Feb 13 Club Meeting February
Feb 19 Driver Training Theory
February
Feb 23 Driver Training
Practical.....register here
Feb 27 Mgmt Meeting February

March

Mar 09 ARB Brookvale SAUSAGE
SIZZLE ***HELPERS***
Mar 13 Club Meeting March
Mar 16 Sunny Corner, Dark
Corner Lithgow.
Mar 23 Yalwal grade B
Mar 27 Mgmt Meeting March

April

Apr 06 Abercrombie NP Grade C
Apr 06 Sofala/Hillend Weekend
Grade C Trip full sorry.
Apr 09 Driver Training Theory
April
Apr 10 Club Meeting April
Apr 13 Driver Training
Practical.....register here
Apr 19 Vic High Country East to
West..C Grade
Apr 24 Mgmt Meeting April

May

May 08 Club Meeting May
May 11 Bendethra Grade C
May 22 Mgmt Meeting May
May 25 Bylong Creek 4X4 Grade
A-X Weekend opens Mar 24

June

Jun 12 Club Meeting June
Jun 17 Cape York .grade C (some
B sections).... opens Friday 8th
March
Jun 26 Mgmt Meeting June
Jun 29 Brindabellas Grade C
opens April 27

July

Jul 01 Central Australia C Grade.
Jul 10 Club Meeting July
Jul 20 Yalwal grade B opens May
18
Jul 24 Mgmt Meeting July

August

Aug 03 Inner City Brewery Tour
Aug 14 Club Meeting August
Aug 20 Driver Training Theory
August
Aug 24 Driver Training
Practical.....register here
Aug 25 ZigZag Newnes grade B
opens June 22
Aug 28 Mgmt Meeting August

September

Sep 11 Club Meeting September
Sep 14 Cape York Grade B-D
Sep 25 Mgmt Meeting
September

October

Oct 09 AGM Club Meeting
Oct 15 Driver Training Theory
October
Oct 19 Driver Training
Practical.....register here
Oct 23 Mgmt Meeting October

November

Nov 13 Club Meeting November
Nov 26 Driver Training Theory
November
Nov 27 Mgmt Meeting
November
Nov 30 Driver Training
Practical.....register here

December

Dec 11 Club Meeting December





TRIP GRADINGS

ALL WHEEL DRIVE CLUB

Grade A – Extremely Difficult

Suitable for very experienced drivers who want a challenging trip with extreme track conditions. Vehicles must be equipped with suitable modifications such as snorkel, high ground clearance, significant wheel articulation, oversized tyres and at least one diff locker. Both driver and vehicle must be prepared to handle situations that test their ability. Specialised recovery equipment may be required.

Grade B – Moderate to Difficult

Suitable for experienced drivers only. Vehicles to have increased ground clearance and wheel articulation. May involve very steep hills, large washaways, mud, rock steps, deep ruts, soft sand, difficult creek crossings, deep bog holes and deep snow which may involve winching and other specialised recoveries. Both driver and vehicle must have the ability to handle situations.

As approved by the AWDC Committee
27th August 2009

Grade C – Moderate

Suitable for experienced drivers with unmodified vehicles, may involve soft sand, steep hills, washaways, bog holes, ruts, mud, snow, slippery tracks and deeper creek crossings.

Grade D – Relatively Easy

Suitable for all Club vehicles. May involve sand, mud, forest tracks, moderate hills and shallow creeks.

Grade E – Very Easy / Social

Little or no four wheel driving involved, driving on unsealed roads. Trips usually designed for touring, camping and social events. May involve easy to get to base camp then optional four wheel driving from there.

Grade X – Exploratory

Exploratory, generally suitable for experienced drivers as the degree of difficulty is often unknown. Enquire with the Trip Leader.



VICTORIAN HIGH COUNTRY

4 - 9 FEBRUARY 2019

Attendees:

- John & Sharon O'Keefe (Trip Leader John) and Sally Shaw – 200 Series LandCruiser
- Chris & Margaret Donkin – Mitsubishi Triton
- Stuart Bassett and friend Tony Vis – 100 Series Landcruiser
- Maurice Robinson – Mazda BT50
- John Clayton – 79 Series

Trip Report – team effort

Meeting Point – Sunday 3 February 2019

Trip leader John O'Keefe had arranged for us to all meet at the Colac Colac (referred to as Clack Clack by the locals) Caravan Park the day prior to the official start date of our trip. Colac Colac is about 8kms from Corryong in Victoria, just south of the NSW boarder. There's not much at Colac Colac, however the caravan park is quite delightful with plenty of grassed and shady sites.

By late afternoon, all vehicles and participants with the exception of Maurice had arrived. As we set-up for the evening we experience the first drops of rain, something we were not really expecting given the hot weather and number of bush fires that had been burning in the general area over the previous couple of weeks.

Given the rain, a decision is made to cook dinner under the cover of the park camp kitchen. This provides a great opportunity for all to get to know each other and talk about plans for the coming days.

John & Sharon have been AWDC members for many years and it was good to hear about their 4wd experiences. Sally who is also a Club member had joined John & Sharon for this trip.

This was to be the first AWDC trip for Chris and Margaret so it was great to meet them.

Stuart had invited Tony, a friend from Perth to join him on the trip and this was to be Tony's first 4wd experience.

John was travelling on his own in his trusty 79 Series.

It was early evening when a somewhat flustered Maurice finally arrived at the Clack Clack Caravan Park. Maurice had lost his way between Sydney and Corryong and had travelled some 180kms and two and a half hours more than intended – the GPS in the Mazda BT50 was blamed for the error!



Monday 4 February – Day 1

Our official start time was 10am, providing a leisurely start to the day for everyone. After packing up, breakfast and obligatory morning coffee we all assembled at the entrance of the caravan park for a quick briefing from trip leader John.

The instructions were pretty clear – we proceed to Staceys Bridge which is a thirty minute drive on bitumen, set up camp followed by lunch. We would then assess the situation and make a decision about an afternoon drive.

John then asks if there are any questions? Following a moments silence Maurice pipes up and says he would like to mention two things:

1. He has just purchased a new UHF radio but can't get it work. It's agreed that we will work with his hand-held radio.
2. He then tells us his hearing is not the best so we will need to speak up.

After a good laugh we all set off to Staceys Bridge. Following our radio check, Stuart asks trip leader John O'keefe if it's ok to call him J.O'K as we have two John's on the trip – agreed, John O'Keefe is now to be referred to as J.O'K.

Staceys Bridge camping ground is a quiet waterside spot at the head of the Nariel Valley, 46kms south of Corryong. The level ground at Staceys Bridge is ideal for camping and has enough trees providing ample shade. It's also where the road surface changes from bitumen to gravel.



After lunch we decide to take a drive to the Glen Dart historic mine site. By this time the rain from the previous night had cleared and it was quite warm, so the tracks had dried out quite well. This was a short but pleasant drive providing some indication of the types of tracks we would encounter over the coming days.

The afternoon drive was pretty much “plain sailing” with only one tricky turn for John’s 79 Series requiring a couple of attempts.

By mid-afternoon it was quite hot, and the decision is made to return to camp and hit the creek for a refreshing swim.

Given the total fire ban in the area, there was to be no camp fire however the usual “happy hour” made for a pleasant start to the evening. As meals were being prepared there were ominous sounds of thunder over the mountain ranges but none of us expected the rain that we were about to experience. Talk about four seasons in one day – but this Victoria!

We were in for a torrid night.

Tuesday 5 February – Day 2

Not much sleep for anyone overnight with incredibly loud thunder, lightning, wind and torrential rain striking about 12.30am. By 7am the torrential rain had eased however during the course of morning we experienced continual drizzle with the frequent heavy shower.



J.O’K’s plan for the day had been to visit Mt Pinnibar however this was aborted due the significant overnight rain and prospect of a very slippery steep track. The prospect of slippery tracks also prompted J.O’K to ask everyone to check their winches to ensure they were all in good working order. All good everyone said – but more on that later!

Plan B for the day was devised. Coffee/morning tea in Corryong before heading to Mt Elliot Lookout.



Prior to leaving camp Maurice once again provided us with some light entertainment by driving off and losing an unsecured storage box from the back of his BT50. It was quite comical watching this happen but not so for Maurice who had a lot of picking up to do.

While in Corryong we checked the fire situation at the Visitor Centre to be advised that the fire ban had been lifted due to the wet weather conditions – beauty we thought, a camp fire tonight.

We headed off to Mt Elliot Lookout via the Mt Elliot Ridge Track which was wet but also quite rocky. The climb to the top was reasonably steep but no problems for our vehicles.

Our only issue was that the automatic transmission warning light on Chris and Margaret's Triton came on while driving up the hill. There were immediately five male heads under the bonnet of the Triton trying to diagnose the problem – check the fluid level said one, where's the dip stick said another – that should easy was the reply, there's already five of them under the bonnet. But of course, there is no transmission dip stick on a Triton. This was all a bit confusing however the problem appeared to correct itself and was a non-issue for the rest of the trip.



The view from the top of the Mt Elliot Lookout is quite spectacular and is the take off point for many keen Hang-Gliders.





The drive back down from Mt Elliot Lookout was via McCormack Gap Track which was wet due to the constant rain however the track was quite firm.

We arrived back at camp about 4pm and to our delight the rain had cleared, and the sun was shining. That evening we elected to set up our camp fire in Chris's portable fire box, close to J.O'K's gazebo just in case there was more rain. The fire lighting exercise proved interesting with J.O'K reaching for his fire lighting fluid only to find he'd mistakenly brought along bar oil instead.



Nevertheless, we managed to get the fire going and enjoyed a great evening swapping stories and some interesting comments like Sally asking Stuart where did you get those girlie orange thongs?

Another great day finishes – bring on tomorrow.

Wednesday 6 February – Day 3

We wake to damp morning and 15 degrees temperature.

At 9am we're off heading south on the road to Omeo with Mt Pinnibar our destination. We turn left Wheelers Creek Road and head east towards Wheelers Creek Hut. J.O'K's plan to tackle the Six Mile Ridge Track is thwarted as we find the track closed. He's disappointed as we all know he's keen for some real 4wd adventure.



As we assess the situation, Maurice makes some adjustments to the reserve fuel tank he has sitting on the roof rack of his BT50. Diesel has been spurting out of the tank drenching the tonneau cover of his ute.

After a pleasant morning tea break at Wheelers Creek Hut we start the climb up Shady Creek Track towards Mt Pinnibar. This is quite a steep climb and the clay surface following the rain makes the track quite slippery.

Chris in his Triton fails a few attempts to get up one section but has success after lowering tyre pressures. Then Stuart in his 100 Series fails to get up the same section but has slipped sideways making reversing and trying again dangerous.

We decide that the best recovery option is to engage Stuart's winch but alas, the cable is twisted and tangled and impossible to unreel (how well do you check the winch back camp Stu?). We finally decide to tow him out using a snatch strap – thanks Maurice for providing the tow vehicle.



We finally make it to the top of Mt Pinnibar – 1770mts above sea level and “views as good as they get” - it really was worth the steep drive up.



Our decent is via Walters Track and we collect fire wood before arriving back at camp at 3.40pm. There's plenty of reasons why people deserve fines on this trip (Maurice & Stuart?) but trip leader J.O'K bringing along a blunt chainsaw is near the top.

Back at camp and it's warm – great, time for a swim. A good chance to refresh in preparation for happy hour.

How good is this! Drinks, nibbles, great company and an evening around the camp fire to look forward to. But alas, just as we sit down for diner we hear thunder and within a few minutes we are experiencing torrential rain. We all retreat to our own camps to escape the downpour.

Half an hour later the rain stops and we're around the camp fire again enjoying a Muscat.

Hello, here comes more rain so that's it for the night.

Thursday 7 February – Day 4

We roll out of camp at 8.30am but not before having to remind Stuart to close the rear doors of his 100 Series.

A bit of good news for Maurice this morning though, he's managed to get his UHF radio to work.

Again, we were headed south on the road towards Omeo, past the Wheelers Creek turnoff and down through Mt Sassafras Gap where the winding road and low cloud pockets kept us ever on the lookout for logging trucks. We turn right at Blacksmiths Corner, over the Gibbo River on to Ah Sye's camping ground where we enjoyed morning tea.



After morning tea, we head north and then east onto the RWAP track where we immediately encounter a tree across the track. Having cleared the path we travel on to Pheasant Creek Track which is steep and rocky, and then down to a river crossing. We all handle the river crossing well and then commence a steep climb up the mountain to a spot J.O'k has marked on his map but all we find is a "no through road" – oh well, it was time for lunch anyway!



The drive back to camp takes us along Wild Boar Track and Zulu Track, both quite rutted due to the amount of rain that had fallen over the previous few days. We also experience a sizable tree across the track but we able to move this with the aid of a snatch strap and some good old-fashioned man power.

We arrive back to camp at Staceys Bridge at 3pm, it's warm and yes, you guessed it – time for a swim.

Maurice provided some interesting stats for the day. We travelled 114kms, driving time 4 hours and 44 minutes at an average speed of 70.7kph (24kph while on the tracks). Maurice, not sure about this given your experience operating the GPS in the BT50!!

We all enjoyed a pleasant evening around the camp fire in the absence of rain.

Friday 8 February – Day 5

This is the last official day of our trip and everyone is up early preparing for the day. We're all rolling at 8.30am and heading south from Staceys Bridge (again). 19kms along the Omeo road we turn right on to Dart Track, through Eustace Gap and then onto Dartmouth Track.

It's not long before we come across another fallen tree, the first of a few we would encounter today. This one required some chainsaw work, but no problem for "us experienced" woodsmen!

14kms further along after negotiating some steep climbs and descents we arrive at Greens Creek Battery. A 1.6km return walk is required to get to the historic site and not all decide to tackle the steep conditions – very smart people – as the walk back up was demanding.



The battery is the only known example of a 19th century steam powered quartz crushing plant in Victoria. The three main machinery elements surviving in situ today are boilers, steam engine and stamp battery. The equipment at Green Creek is in pretty good condition given its' age which dates back to the 1880's.

From Green Creek Battery we head on towards Lake Dartmouth but soon come across a large fallen tree over the track. More chainsaw work and clearing and we've made a narrow side track that enables all 5 vehicles to get through.



The track now resembles a steep goats trail where the heavy rain had cut deep ruts into the clay.

5kms further along, and within a stone's throw of Lake Dartmouth we come across a very large gum tree blocking our path. We need to size this one up, so we decide to have a lunch break and think about it.

Nah, we can't let this one last obstacle stop us from getting to Lake Dartmouth so aided by Maurice and his trusty chainsaw, we tow the fallen gum tree off the track.





We've made it – construction on Dartmouth Dam was completed in 1979 and the reservoir has a storage capacity of 3,856 gegalitres or approximately 6.7 times the capacity of Sydney Harbour.

After wetting out feet in Lake Dartmouth we head back to camp, arriving at 3.30pm.

Our final night around the camp fire was enjoyable as we talked about the week's events and laughed about the weather conditions – from bush fires and total fire bans to torrential rains – yes, this is the beautiful Victorian High Country.

Saturday 9 February – Home Time

Everyone is busy packing up getting ready to leave camp. Some are heading to other locations, others are heading directly back to Sydney.

We all agree that it's been a great week, and everyone has enjoyed themselves.

Special thanks to J.O'k and Sharon for leading the trip.



VICTORIAN HIGH COUNTRY TAKE 2

4 - 9 FEBRUARY 2019

After being waitlisted for the original Victorian High Country trip, I for one was ecstatic to find out Malcolm Crabb had volunteered to lead a second trip for the waitlisted crew. Destination: Dargo!

We met in Albury on the morning of Monday 4th February: Trip leader Malcolm and Maija Crabb in their Mitsubishi Pajero and Jayco camper, Roger and Joan Perkins in their Mazda BT50 with pop-top camper on the back (Roger has verbal trip report honours), John Pyle in his Land Rover Discovery 3 and Scamper Kamper trailer, Christine Kirkpatrick in her Toyota Prado 120 (written trip report for 4-6 Feb) and David Bentley in his Ford Ranger (written trip report for 7-9 Feb).

L to R David, John, Roger and Joan, Christine, Malcolm and Maija



We took off in convoy to Dargo and after a few false starts and U turns we headed through a number of very cute towns including Bright and Yackandandah. We stopped for lunch in Harrietville before heading up the mountain on the alpine road.

Malcolm requested we obey the signposted 80km speed limit though in reality we barely got above 40! A lot of the trees were very dead and Maija shared that they were so dead, they wouldn't sprout new shoots like eucalypts usually would.



We turned onto the Upper Dargo Road and began our inspection of the 4 campsites we were to check out for our base camp. The one Malcolm was most keen on eluded us and we were all happy with the final campsite to check, Ollies Jumpup. It was on the river, had lots of space, a few monitor lizards and a drop toilet.

We began to set up camp and though a light rain came over, we were all excited for the week ahead. Nibbles under the Crabb Canopy was where Malcolm detailed his plans and disclaimers that we'll see what we actually come across on the tracks and how far we can get in a day!



Tuesday we convened just before 9.30am for Malcolm to brief us on the day's tracks, and possible alternative routes if we find the intended route is taking longer than expected. We first headed to the Grant Township. I forgot to bring my imagination to conjure up the "town" which was actually just a grass paddock. A few signs with photos of what the town had looked like helped. Malcolm told us about his Rule of Thirds when travelling and checking out various sites:

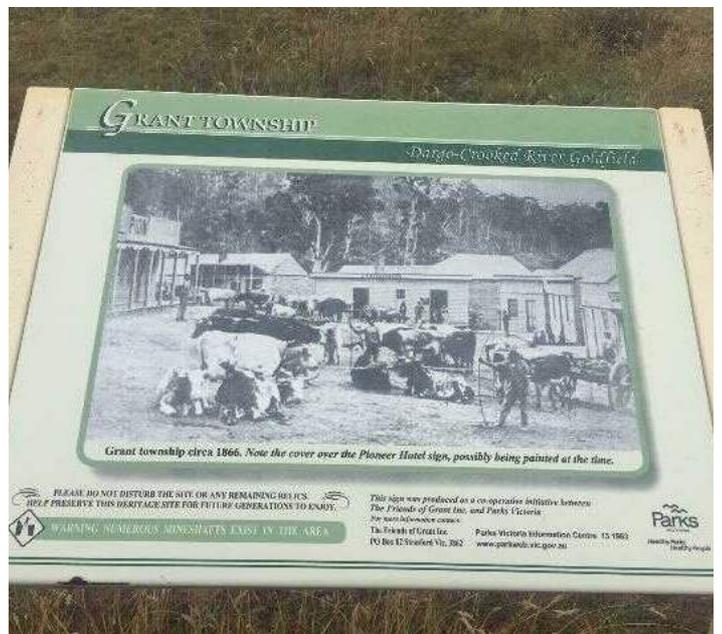
- 1/3 are really great
- 1/3 are ok, glad you've seen them but probably wouldn't come again
- 1/3 not really worth it

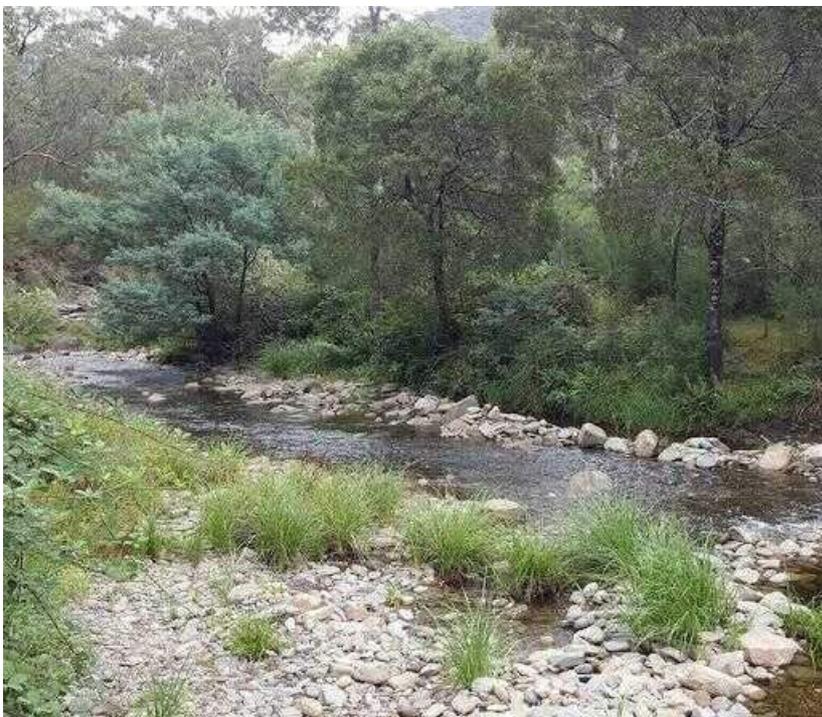
The trouble is, you don't know which third it is until you get there. It was clear that the Grant Township fell into the last category!

We headed down Bulltown Spur Track to another settlement, Naarun. Unfortunately I can't remember much about this so it must have been in the same category as Grant Township!



We headed on to lunch which involved 25 river crossings (thank you to Maija for counting!) and a few steep, ruddy exits for a bit of excitement. The very first one was probably the 'worst' though the only person who had to give it 2 cracks was Laid Back John who just didn't give it enough momentum the first time. Malcolm later spoke to a local who said had thought that first river crossing exit was pretty challenging and may have been impassable. Personally I'm glad we hit it up before hearing what the local thought!





We got to Talbotville for lunch – an expansive grassy campsite, and Joan lost a filling. We Headed onto Crooked River Road and had 4 more river crossings, taking Tuesday’s total to 29. None were deep nor flowing fast so the only challenges were those steep and loose exits.

We continued to drive alongside the river, saying hello to a number of cows who were happily enjoying the middle of the track.

We got to Randall’s track, stopped and checked it out. Okay well Malcolm checked it out. Malcolm asked the group if we were keen to go up this one, as it was long, steep, and rutted. Christine eagerly said YEP and so we were committed. Malcolm made his way up first. David then checked out the track and came back to give a report on where the worst ruts were. It was nothing we couldn’t conquer – we all easily made it to the top first time.

We continued to ascend through the mountains before Roger came on the radio with words no one wants to hear, “I’m in drive but nothing is happening” Uh-oh! We were all spread out halfway up a long steep track with not much space for turning around. Malcolm made multiple suggestions and if I knew what any of them meant I would report them here. Roger thought it may have overheated. He tried a few different tricks but nothing was happening. John and Christine began to walk down the hill while Malcolm returned to where we had stopped and David collected his diagnostic equipment. The situation was concerning as there was no way to snatch a dead weight up the hill we were on... would we need to leave their car there and come back tomorrow...? Nek Minnit we hear John hollering, “HE’S COMING! CLEAR THE ROAD!”





We all jumped back while the Mazda powered to the crest of the hill. A glance of Joan and her face just said "Not Happy Joan!"

We carried on taking an easier pace and no challenging tracks on the way back to camp. Roger advised us he had worked out what had happened but it needed to be shared over a drink at happy hour.

Under Crabb Canopy Roger explained how he noticed the powertrain warning light in his dash was flashing, instead of being solidly lit upon putting the car in low range. He read the manual and was reminded of a previous time the same thing happened, and the fix... Roger was in high range all day! Who needs low range! The poor BT50 had been put under pressure all day and just needed a rest earlier that day. High Range Roger and Joan said they would see if the car had any issues the following morning and all being well, would see out the week, though Joan did say she would be putting her foot down re what tracks to do!

All up on Tuesday we did 83km in just under 7 hours. After getting a sense for how long high country tracks might take, Malcolm said he would have a think about whether the tracks for the remainder of the week were achievable and come up with alternatives if required.

Wednesday we again met just before 9.30am and Malcolm showed us the planned route, and the short cut depending on our progress through the day. High Range Roger and Joan said the Mazda seemed fine and they would continue with the trip, though would not be pushing the limits, and they would definitely stick it in low range and ensure there were no flashing lights!

We headed off and Malcolm's map took us to a property instead of the intended track. Perhaps he just really wanted a fresh pot of tea? We left without even saying hello and attempted to get on the track we wanted again. Again, we were turned away by the map leading us to another non-existent track. Third time being a charm, we got onto McDonald Gap Track. An enjoyable morning with great scenery, a bit of fun driving without it being so challenging for the Mazda to give up the ghost again.

We stopped for morning tea at the junction of McDonald Gap Track, Black Range Track and Reedy Creek Road before continuing along McDonald Gap Track.





About 20 minutes along Malcolm and Maija found themselves in a mud bath. About 30 minutes work but still no traction, and no amount of road building allowed passage. McDonald Gap Track beat us – we reversed one by one to a safe turning location back to morning tea's junction.

We ate lunch in 30 degree heat and implemented a new plan. We dutifully followed Malcolm as he led us down 65 Fire Track, I think it was named that because it felt like 65km long on a 65degree angle! A few of the group were concerned they had all of a sudden run out of fuel on the way down. However upon reaching the flat bottom, all that fuel suddenly came back! Surprise! We took the Rock of Gibraltar Track back to camp, a few people stopping in town to get fuel (\$1.89 for those who are interested). Wednesday saw us complete 103km.

Being a warm arvo a few of us changed into our togs for a bath in the lovely river so that we were a degree more presentable for that night's dinner at Dargo Hotel! After nibbles we carpoled and headed into town. The hotel is famous for its big schnitties and we were not disappointed! Luckily they offer half-size schnitties which were still ginormous! We highly recommend getting French chef Seb to cook your dinner if you're in that part of the world. The only incident on Wednesday was the Stain of Joan after red wine ended up all over freshly-washed Malcolm but he was a good sport about it!



Thursday - we had our morning briefing led by Malcolm on plans for the day and tomorrow. It wasn't raining, but there was lots of cloud, pretty much the same as all week. We left camp around 9:30, headed along the Upper Dargo Rd, (a different direction from previous days so we didn't have to see the dead wombat), over the bridge and then on to Jones Road. This road is in poor condition, badly eroded in places (more on Jones Rd later). Turned off onto the Gidley Track, very narrow and bushy, but welcome after Jones Rd. We steadily climb and then stop at a very picturesque hilltop for morning tea.

We continued along the ridge line but stopped on a steep downhill section on Storer Track where a badly cut up berm (or a "woopsi-do" in Crabb speak) required some guidance to get through – we all managed to navigate through successfully.





Next stop was near the valley base at the Owen Waller Hut which was a good spot for our group photo.

The morning tracks had been quite challenging, steep and tricky ascents and descents, a lot of low range work.

We left the hut and climbed up again following the ridges. The lunch stop was near a helipad on the Storer Track, Christine (too much young energy) climbed a large stump then found she couldn't get down – Sir John came to the rescue!

On leaving we turned onto Morris Peak Rd, which followed the ridge line and was a reasonably good quality track. Then onto Mt Baldhead Rd, which was also in good condition. Turned onto Marthavale Rd and descended down to what should have been Marthavale Hut, there was a nice grassy area, creek running past but no hut - only a shiny new toilet there. Apparently the hut burnt down in September 2017.

We backtracked up Marthavale Rd before discussing which way to get back to our campsite - quick & boring vs interesting. Interesting won so we turned onto Morris Creek Track – a narrow bush track, then onto Friday Spur Track – a lovely, interesting drive basically up and down the ridges and with lots of berms. Onto Mt Steve Track, we were still quite high so I was expecting a major descent to come. We stopped at another Helipad with some great views, especially of the track on the other side of the valley to which we were heading.

It's amazing that it looked so far away but we were soon onto it, another beautiful track with some challenges thrown in to keep us on our toes. A steep descent followed, a creek crossing, then back up again – repeated a few times, a lot of fun, low-range work, reasonably technical so quite tiring.





We turned off Mt Steve Track onto the Gidley Track before getting back onto Jones Rd, which is not a 4WD track but an access road – possibly used by loggers, it's rough as...



Even though that road is poor, it goes through beautiful country, with very deep valleys and steep drops from the road, slip over the edge and you'd be gone forever, although the bush is so thick a tree would probably stop you before long. The trees are on an amazing angle to the ground to point perpendicularly. No wonder this place is so popular especially with 4WD'ers and campers. Day 4 finished with our happy hour, then dinner and some more rain.



Friday - the sun appeared in the morning, its warming up as we leave camp around 9:30, heading along Upper Dargo Rd as per yesterday. Roger and Joan will be leaving us early during the day to travel back to Sydney. We're expecting an interesting day but nothing too demanding.



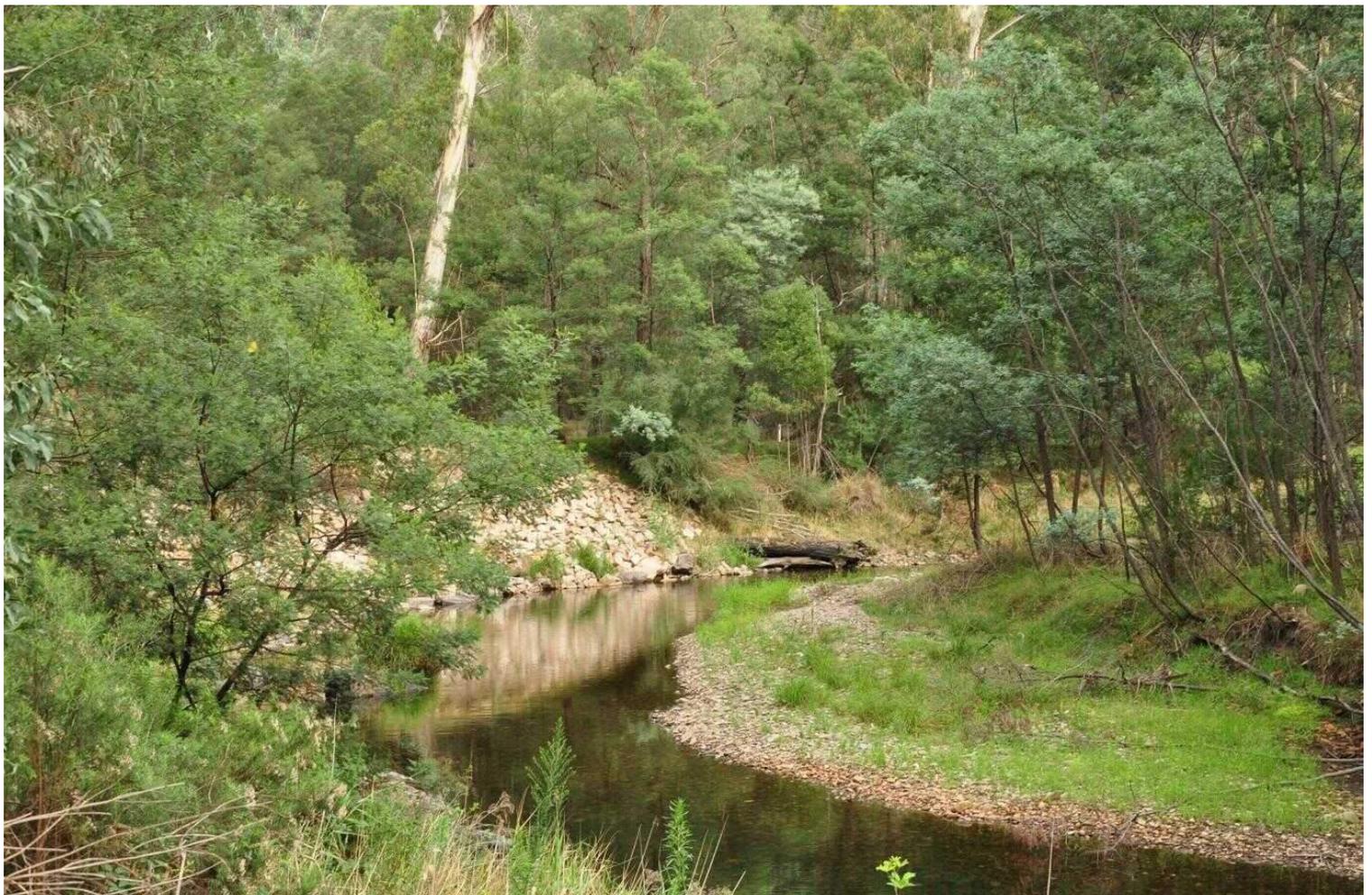
We drove into Collins Flat Campground – a lovely vast grassy area which looked as if it hadn't been used for quite a while. We continued through it and onto the Stockroute Spur Track via an awkward creek crossing. Shortly after, we were confronted with a steepish section up the hill, quite rough and slippery with deep holes and a long drop on the side.





Ed note: you put your left arm in, you put your left arm out,...

After some discussion we agreed not to re-build the road and to back-track alongside the very pretty Dargo River, connecting up with Jones Road - what a crappy road it is. We then turned onto Birregun Road which was easy driving on good dirt. The surrounding forest looked like it had suffered from fire some time ago, there was also evidence of firebreaks being put in place. After turning onto Murdering Spur Track we stopped for morning tea. We then proceeded down this track which started off okay then became very slow and bumpy. Although the track didn't quite live up to its name, it was a long slow descent, requiring good line picking, using low-range and was challenging, but there were no major issues.





We crossed the creek at the bottom then onto Dane Track which was quite rough with some dirty water and creek crossings, slow progress. Turned onto Wild Horse Creek Track heading towards the Wentworth Falls. The track condition was good but a very heavy mist slowed us and visibility was poor – fortunately there were no oncoming vehicles. As it was getting late Malcolm suggested we forgo the falls and instead followed McDonald Road for a while before stopping for lunch, in the mist.



After lunch we continued in the mist on the well-formed, clay based McDonald Rd which continued along the ridges, passing the McDonalds Hut. We headed onto Wentworth Rd, then Mt Delusion Rd, another good road high in the hills and passed the Mt Delusion Hut. Mt Delusion Road became Brookville Rd which was easy going on good dirt.

At the Browns Track junction we stopped and said goodbye to Roger and Joan who were heading back to Sydney. We then backtracked to Gordon's Track but didn't get very far before being confronted by a large tree across the track. With no way past and no equipment to remove the tree, we turned back onto Gordon's Link Track and followed this to Browns Track deep in the forest, an easy, pleasant trail with lots of forest litter on the ground suggesting very little usage. This led us to Burwood Rd, another quality, easy trail, past Collins St (eh?). Burwood Rd then quickly changed, becoming narrow with dense forest but still easy going. From there we climbed again, up into the mist, heavily forested, huge trees, but with large cleared sections on the lower side of the road, then onto and along a very misty and eerie Dorothy Cutting.



This took us onto Mt Baldhead Rd where we tried to locate the 'Seldom Seen Hut' at the junction with Jones Rd but for us it remained 'un Seen'. We did turn onto the dreaded Jones Rd which was our exit route and then Upper Dargo Rd.

About 15 mins from the campsite, Malcolm made the bold announcement over the radio that we had not met another car through the 4 days on the tracks, only to then, within a couple of minutes, have a car come from the opposite direction!

We enjoyed a last happy hour of nibbles for the remaining 5 of us plus showers or creek baths. We were almost completely relaxed when Christine found she had a long screw in her front tyre. The screw was removed and Malcolm (what a champ) repaired the tyre which was then swapped for the spare. Malcolm's Muscat helped finish the evening.

Highlight for me on the last 2 days was the Murdering Spur Track, a long section which was technically challenging and required a lot of concentration. Lowlight was Jones Rd - what a shitter of a road – Mr (or Mrs) Jones after whom it was named must have been a horrible, nasty person as the road was atrocious and for a so called road needs a lot of maintenance.

The weather had been quite mild for the week, lots of cloud and overcast sky but only a little rain. Temps were in the low to mid 20s. Evenings were comfortable, warm to begin but getting cooler as the week progressed.

Saturday - a lovely sunny morning welcomed us for our departure with everyone planning to go in different directions. Christine was up early and the first to leave, heading to Sydney via the Vic and NSW coast over the coming week. Malcolm and Maija packed up their Penguin Camper and headed to Melbourne to visit family. I wanted to jump in the creek one last time but wasn't expecting company - a black snake entered the creek from the other bank adjacent to where I was settling in to the cool water. A quick exit for me before the snake went downstream to worry a couple of gold panners. John and I left together late morning heading to Dargo - John was going off to the Little Desert but stopping in Melbourne to catch up with his daughter. I took on some fuel to head directly back to Sydney via Bright. For me, the trip back over the mountains on the Dargo High Plains Rd, then the Great Alpine Rd was relaxing – the temperature dropped to 7C early afternoon before the rain set in – at least my car got a good wash so excess mud and dust was not transported back to Sydney.

Many, many thanks to Malcolm Crabb for taking on the challenge and leading us on this trip. It was a very comfortable and relaxed group and Malcolm took us along many interesting tracks, kept us out of trouble and made it fun.



And the trials and tribulations that can sometimes present a difficulty:

Day 5 appeared slowly, with rain and heavy overcast. Everything was sopping wet after the night rain, which made for a soggy pack-up.

As we left the campsite, I noticed a strange feel to the steering. Stopped to have a look, but could see nothing, so continued on.

Martin had decided to head home today, so we changed direction from the plan, and headed towards Woods Point and a welcome hot lunch at the pub.

Along the way my steering became more sloppy, so on a bend with plenty of space, we stopped for a look. Once under the Troll, it didn't take long to find that the nut and washer were missing from the Panhard rod bush. The rod was moving around on the bush and causing the sloppy steering.

Michael found a washer and old nut in his bits box, but the thread did not seem to match, so some of the others offered to go back to the camp site and search for the nut-bit like searching for a needle in a haystack.

After much fiddling about we finally worked out that the nut Michael found in his spares box actually did fit, so we re-installed the Bush and all was well. The others were recalled, and we finished the trip to Woods Point.

At Woods Point the rain was still falling, and Horrors, the pub didn't open till 5:00 pm. Martin and wife said their goodbyes and headed off. The rest of us had a vote and decided it was better to call it a day and head home early. Off we went, with the rain getting heavier as we got closer to the Hume highway. Lots of water around as we hit the flat area, and more and more flooding. I opted to stay at Wangaratta, but the others kept going through the floods, and eventually made it home.

Next morning, there was flooding everywhere. I had to detour via the high ground at Beechworth and evidence of the overnight flooding was everywhere. Just glad everyone made it home safely. Quite an eventful trip.



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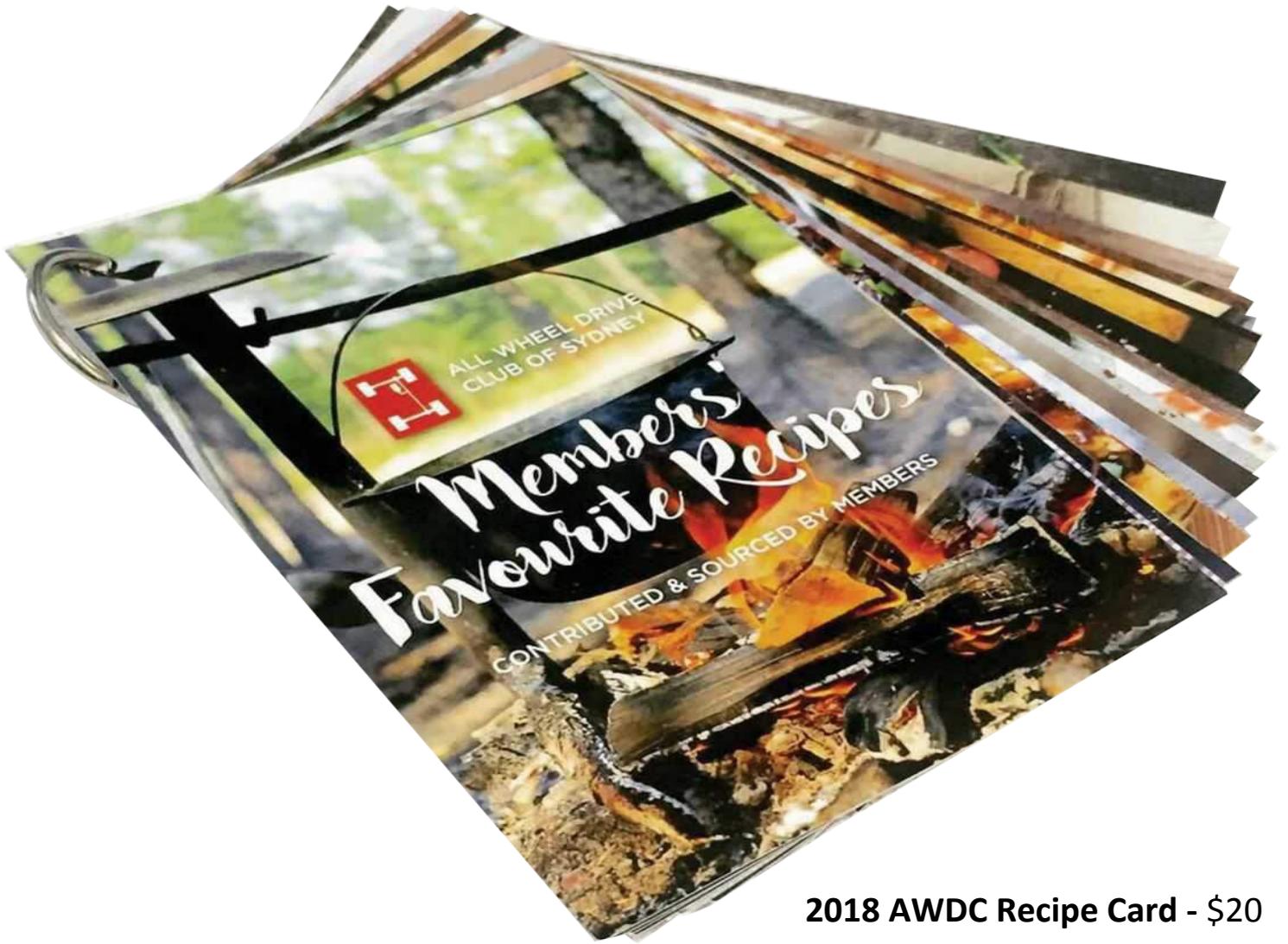
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- 3) When you get home, **submit your report** in two parts via email
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 - c) Let the editor know which photo goes with which part of the report, by labelling the photos with names that match the report. Ie "Photo A to go here" with "Photo A.jpg"

Have a look at the club website
<https://awdc.com.au/writetriprpt>

If you need help or have a question let us know by emailing editor@awdc.com.au or chatting to Kevin or Kirsten at the next meeting.

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Occupation			
Drivers Licence No	Current First Aid Yes [] No []		

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May 2016





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7 AWDC Bucket Hat, Cap and Beanie \$20 each

8 AWDC Key Ring \$4.00

9 AWDC Logo Car Sticker \$3.50

10 [UHF Antenna Pack \\$192 NEW](#)

11 AWDC Recipe Cards \$20

PURCHASES: Please contact the purchasing officer - shop@awdc.com.au



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**JOHN ON HIS WAY TO THE NEXT MEETING!
Via Victorian High Country**

Wednesday 13 March, 2019

At our sponsor Battery Business, Warriewood @ 6.30pm

Don't you be lost too!

