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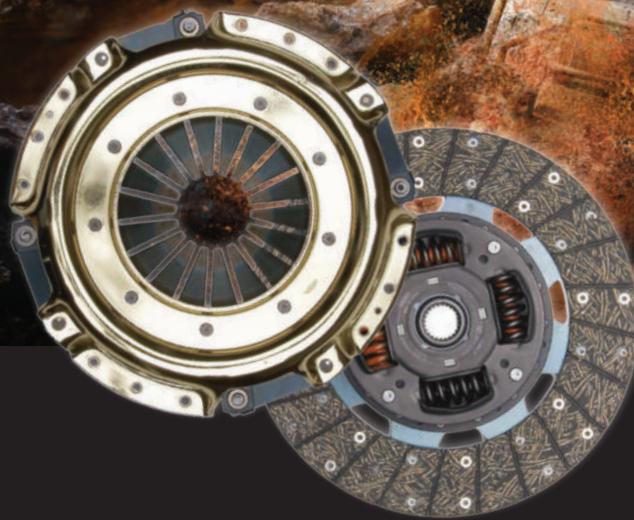


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## BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

### EXECUTIVE

**President** Eric Bishop (TLCCV)

**Vice President** Fred De Gooyer (LROC)

**Secretary** Eric Bishop (TLCCV)

**Treasurer** -

### BOARD MEMBERS

David Roberts (Toyota 4WD Club), Gordon Porter (Everest 4WD Club), David Van Zanten (Albury-Wodonga 4WD Club, High Country & Beyond Inc. and Wangaratta 4WD Club).

## STAFF

**Chief Executive Officer** Wayne Hevey  
(Just Mates 4WD Club)

**Office Administrator** Alison McLaughlin  
(Mansfield Alpine 4WD Club)

**Accounts** Di Hodgson

**Projects & Events Officer** Daniel Whitby

**Training Officer** Sheila Douglas

## TRACKWATCH

**Editor** Brian Tanner (Toyota Land Cruiser Club of Victoria, Geelong FWDC)

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# From the President



As the 2021 AGM has come and gone the 15th of November, I am proud to be elected as the new President of FWDV. It's not an easy task, however, I believe I have the confidence of the Board and the members and the energy to provide a service to the clubs.

The new Board consists of Fred De Gooyer (Vice President) Dave Roberts, Gordon Porter, and a newcomer from Northern Victoria, David Van Zanten.

There are two vacancies on the Board that is of the Secretary and the Treasurer Doug Mitchell, who retired from the Board as he has taken on the Chairmanship of a major not for profit organisation. My role as the Secretary is vacant due to the election of being the new President, however, I am taking on the role as caretaker Secretary until a replacement is selected.

The role of Secretary and Treasurer are really the engine room of the Association and so anyone out there in club land that wishes to volunteer for either of these roles please contact Allison McLaughlin in the office.

My approach for the future is to allow the CEO to run the Association in accordance with FWDV strategies and procedures as set by the Board from time to time and not interfere with operational matters.

i. Set out achievable strategies and plans focussing on the needs of the Clubs. Identify a 3-year plan accounting for future changes in Govt and the Land Managers in the first year to ensure our tracks remain open.

ii. Bring back the Board members engagement with at least 10 Clubs each per year to improve communication from the Board to the members first hand.

iii. Bring back the Regional Reps meetings state-wide with the Land Managers.

iv. Bring back the Presidents meeting with the full Board in attendance

v. Ensure that all Board members are engaged with the policies and procedures of FWDV Ministerial Advisory Committee

vi. Improve the Board use of the website and allocate a Board Member to provide feedback from their allocated Clubs to assist the office in keeping up with Club feedback particularly with items for E-News

vii. Push the Camp Host program again engaging a Board member to assist the CEO

viii. Provide leadership with Association Polices advising the Government

ix. Collaborate with the CEO to develop a succession plan for the CEO to be replaced when he chooses to retire from FWDV

The current CEO is a testament to the fantastic staff and working environment we have at FWDV, and the positive workings of the Association with business and Government. The creation of the Four-Wheel Drive Advisory gives us first hand knowledge of future Govt policy.

The Toolangi Quarry Licence has been signed allowing confidence for FWDV to move forward with the setting up of a professional training ground. The CEO, Vice President and myself are meeting with the Insurers very soon to establish a Risk Profile for the facility. This activity will feed into the Risk Workshop the Board will be having in February to set a manageable Risk Register for the next year.

The CEO and Gordon Porter have been busy in the background meeting with the Koori Groups in Gippsland and the Shepparton District, to establish a greater relationship with them for various advantages to FWDV and the Koori Groups as well. (More on that later)

So, all in all the first Board meeting post the AGM will begin the process of implementing the Strategy Plan approved by the AGM, and adding some more Strategic Items considering what I have stated above.

Next stop Christmas, so get prepared and stay away from any areas that may be prone to bushfires.

**Eric Bishop**  
**President**

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## TOYOTA LAND CRUISER CLUB OF VICTORIA



# Training facility opens

*The Toyota Land Cruiser Club of Victoria has opened a new multi-purpose building on its property at Yarck*

The Toyota Land Cruiser Club of Victoria has expanded its facilities at its Club property at Yarck, with the addition of a new multi-purpose building. Originally planned for Club training activities, the project expanded to embrace a comprehensive multi-use building that can be utilised for

various Club activities - both social and educational.

TLCCV President Ian Ross declared the facility opened, with around 100 members attending the ribbon cutting.

Star of the day was a new GR Land Cruiser 300 Series, which was



obtained by TLCCV Marketing for the event. Considering the scarcity of the new flagship model, the Club was very grateful to Toyota Motor Company for their support. The facility is a valuable addition to the Club.



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## News from FWDV CEO



At our recent Annual General Meeting held on November 15th, Eric Bishop was elected as our new President after having previously served as our Secretary. Thank you to Colin Oates for his time on the Board, the last two years in the President's role. Fred De Gooyer was re-elected to the Vice President role unopposed. Doug Mitchell resigned as our Treasurer, due to an increase in his obligations to other Boards he is involved in. We also wish him well in his future endeavours. David Roberts was also re-elected unopposed into an ordinary member's position and David Van Zanten from the Wangaratta and Albury Wodonga 4wd Clubs, has joined the board filling the vacancy left by Fred Schenck, who sought not to be re-elected. This now leaves open vacancies for both a Secretary and Treasurer, which we are looking to fill in the very near future.

There is a fair amount of work setting up an Annual General Meeting event and this year we added the ability for online voting prior and Zoom attendance on the night. Thank you to our Office staff for their work in the lead-up. Our thanks to the Land Rover Owners Club and their member Steve Kellar for hosting the voting process, Glenn Arkell from the Ballarat Club who ran the Zoom room and shared the Returning Officer's duties with Gordon Porter of the Everest Club. Also to Ian Fletcher of MJOC for driving the Power Point. A great effort by all!

Whilst the new Board structure takes effect, we will still look to continue the work undertaken over the last year or so with regards to putting in place our newly updated human resources commitments, strategic plans, policies and procedures which are still being worked on.

It goes without saying that we will be undertaking our usual efforts in looking to bring about financial stability and assurance in our funding arrangements. This also will include the continued development of our RTO training abilities and facilities, giving us the opportunity to procure more public and corporate based training courses with confidence and sustainability.

With the Covid situation allowing us to get on with the required job, we hope to put plans in place in the very near future with our Risk Management scheme and works program to commence work on the recently acquired training ground in the Toolangi Forest region. Other programs which have been shelved in recent times, will be resurrected in the new year as restrictions unfold and allow us to get together to perform them. These will include Clean Up the Bush activities, which were planned to happen prior to Covid 19 stopping all things, as well as Camp Host and track clearing as and when the authorities ask us to become involved.

We also hope that 2022 allows us to get out and visit our Clubs to talk one on one about what matters to you most

and assist in whatever way we can. Please give the office a call if you have a date in mind.

With the summer season coming on and the potential bushfire threat associated with it, I would ask all member Clubs to consider not allowing any trips that may be planned if they are anywhere near an area affected by or in the vicinity of approaching fires. I received a complaint from a member about an article which I admit slipped through to this magazine last June, with concerns that we were in fact advocating it was Ok to journey into the areas which were under threat of fire. It is imperative that we do not make the work of our partners, DELWP and PV, any harder by having groups of our people cruising around the countryside, whilst they are frantically trying to protect lives, assets, and livestock. I have had to face the hierarchy from these bodies once before to answer the question of what your members were thinking, and I would certainly not like to have to go there again. Let's please make some commonsense commitment to this action in the future.

We hope that Christmas brings all that you wish for, and that we all can enjoy each other's company somewhere near what we were used to.

**Wayne Hevey**  
CEO

## Planning and Navigating with Ozi Explorer

There are a number of navigation programs available for 4WD use but one which has stood the test of time and in my opinion still leads the pack is Ozi Explorer.

Designed by Des Newman in Brisbane, the program runs on your home PC and Android based phones or tablets. It's important to note that the programs for each platform are different in structure but they complement each other to allow the transfer of files between each one. It should also be noted that Ozi Explorer does not run on Apple devices.

For more information, the website is: <https://www.ozieplorer4.com/au/>

Once purchased, you have lifetime use with free software upgrades as they are released, which means the only additional cost would be your



maps. These are available from many outlets like Hema, but there is also a website offering FREE high resolution maps covering all of Australia. These are down to a resolution of 1:25K in Victoria and NSW with the remainder being 1:75K for other states and territories, and upgrades to the maps are being added frequently.

The site is [www.getlost.com.au](http://www.getlost.com.au)

For anyone not familiar with Ozi Explorer or perhaps if you are just starting out on your 4WD journey and would like to know more about navigating the High Country and beyond, the Idlers 4WD Club have a 15 video series which takes you from beginner to more advanced use of both tablet and PC versions. These are available on the Idler's YouTube page which can be accessed using this link:

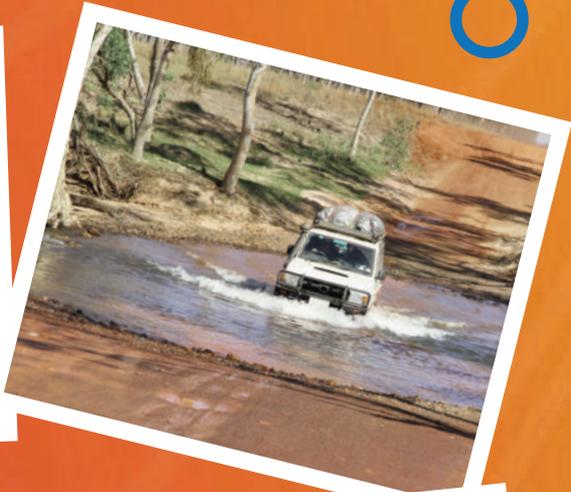
<https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLCx5Db4InL9XXDwjYEuV-FrDDghEL0Rgb>

If you have any questions, please contact the Club directly, we'd be happy to help.

**Ian Hughes**  
President Idlers 4WD Club  
[www.idlers4wdclub.org.au](http://www.idlers4wdclub.org.au)

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# Melbourne Jeep Owners Club Partnership with Narbieview Wildlife Shelter - Buxton, Victoria -

Narbieview

Wildlife Shelter support is a volunteer wildlife shelter registered with DEWLP and run by the Stafford family. All funding for this is private fund raising

Since June 2019 Melbourne Jeep Owners Club (MJOC) have been actively involved with Hands on Support for the Shelter. Narbieview see our Club as the maintenance team that support them to perform tasks that the family can't do on their own, or don't have the time or resource to do the work required

Since the relationship started, we have completed 4 official working bees and many members now privately visit to support either Rod or Shelley in their day to day tasks of looking after all the wildlife

What's been achieved within these 4 visits is amazing as every visit the team assist Shelley with day-to-day tasks

- Clean out inside wombat pens, possum cages and bird cages.
- Clean all the dirty linen and bedding.



- Assist with feeding the animals.
- Bottle feed the baby wombats.
- Clean outside enclosures including taking grass and rubbish to the tip

The 4 major working bees -

- Cleared a track at the wombat release property on South Cathedral Lane.
- Removed over 30 dangerous dead trees.
- Built 2 new release shelters.
- Built 7 feeding stations for released possums.
- Built 2 outdoor above ground shelters.
- Rebuilt fences.

These working bees over 8 days include over 200 hours of volunteer time with over 30 people involved, and with every working bee we celebrate with a BBQ and social time. This partnership has enabled the shelter to house over 30 wombats and 20



possums at any one time over 3 physical sites in the Buxton area. All wildlife at Narbieview is released back into the wild, and will ensure we have our amazing wildlife thrive in our bush settings in and around Buxton and surrounds

MJOC community works also extend to Bushfire relief, High Country Huts – maintaining and rebuilding – Keppels hut, 15 mile hut and Ryans Spur hut, Track clearing with DEWLP and tree clearing with Help the Hills Dandenong task force.

So if you want to join a Club that's community focused consider MJOC as a great community Club.

Information about MJOC can be found at [www.mjoc.org.au](http://www.mjoc.org.au) and Narbieview has a Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Nonprofit-Organization/Narbieview-Wildlife-Shelter-535543963271311/>

**Rob Sharp**

MJOC Community Coordinator and 4WD Vic Regional Rep



*On top of the World!*



# Easter trip to Wonnangatta

BushTrek 4WD Club



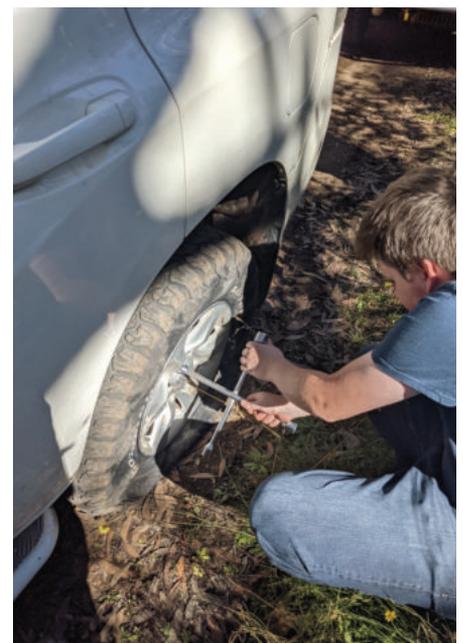
**Participants:** Garry (trip leader), Peter, John & Glenn all in GU Patrols, Anthony (co-trip leader) & Ingo both in Mitsubishi Tritons, and the Worlands (Ken, Jarryd & Katelyn) in a Land Cruiser Prado.

After enduring the lockdowns of 2020, the Club needed a big trip to get away for a bit, and a 4-day 2021 Easter trip to Wonnangatta fit the bill. The idea was to get into the High Country, do a big loop around Wonnangatta and the Crooked River, and out via Billy Goats Bluff Track and the Pinnacles. The weather was forecast to be kind for most of the trip, and we were all eager to go.

**Day 1 (Good Friday, April 2nd)**

We all met up in Mansfield (like apparently most of Melbourne did

given the crazy traffic) to put last minute fuel in the vehicles, and coffee in the drivers. After playing musical vehicles at the bowsers with everyone lining up for fuel, we eventually headed off for a late start in the direction of Mt Buller and Clear Hills Spur. Quite a bit of that crazy traffic was going in that direction too, but found a nice spot to air down, get off the bitumen and we were making good time. That was until we had just got on to Clear Hills Track. I started to feel a vibration under the car and heard a noise. Stopping briefly, I sent my kids Jarryd and Katelyn to look under the car for a stick or something. They reported all clear and we continued on, but so did the noise. Deciding I had better check things myself, I was in the process of stopping on the track again, when I





### **Chowing down at Bindaree Hut**

heard Ingo on the radio (travelling right behind me) announce that there was a terrible smell of burning rubber. With a sinking feeling, I quickly checked the tyres and sure enough the left rear had a serious hole in the sidewall. If that wasn't enough, it seemed that I had continued to travel on it long enough to cook the tyre beyond repair. Admittedly it was my first flat tyre...like ever...so I suppose it was forgivable, but the pressure was on to change it as we had traffic banking up behind us and also in front coming from the other direction... and I was blocking the lot. Thankfully many hands made light work of changing the tyre and we got going in short order, but I was still rather annoyed with myself that I had killed a \$300 tyre less than an hour into a 4-day trip, and now had no spare. Thinking back, the impressive fist-sized hole in the sidewall meant that the tyre would have been unreparable anyway. Oh well.

Moving on from the scene of the crime, we turned off at Monument track to head towards Bindaree. My kids had never been to the falls, so I stopped there to let them check it out whilst the rest of the convoy headed towards our lunch stop. For those who



*Sunset on Mt Lovick*

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have never been to Bindaree Falls, the track leads behind the falls so you can look outward through the water. Very enchanting. We then caught up for a very quick lunch with the rest of the group who had stopped at Bindaree Hut.

From there, we headed up 16 Mile Jeep Track to Bluff Hut for a look-see. As the day was getting on, we were going to camp at Lovicks Hut, but we had a feeling that it might be full given the number of travellers on the road. We found an empty spot big enough for us all right on top of Mt Lovick whilst Gary quickly went on to see if there was space at the Hut. It was looking a bit crowded there, so we stayed where we were and set up camp just off the track.

After setting up a fire in the middle of our circle of wagons, we were treated to a lovely sunset overlooking the Howqua River valley. As night fell, we could see the Mt Buller Resort all lit up in the distance to the northwest, but the best view of all was straight up. The kids and I found a small clearing just to the east of camp where there was nothing but sky and stars. Away from the lights of Melbourne, and on a moonless night, the view of the Milky Way was just stunning, and we just stared at it picking out constellations and the odd satellite.

The next morning, we were off early to secure a good spot in the Wonnangatta Valley, but not before checking out Lovicks Hut. My son Jarryd was in the driver's seat this time, as it was his turn (I always get kicked out when my adult kids are with me), however I secretly suspect they didn't want to risk another tyre incident. Turning on to King Billy Track, we were treated to spectacular views going on for miles and miles in



*The little cemetery at Wonnangatta Station*

the clear weather. We still had quite a few cars coming the other way who all said that they were enjoying the show. We got on to Howitt's High Plains Road and made a bee-line to Howitt's Hut for morning tea and another look around.

Back tracking north, we turned onto Zeka Spur Track and worked our way down into the Wonnangatta Valley, and were pleasantly surprised that it wasn't nearly as busy as we feared. We got a nice spot by the river to set up camp in the vicinity of the Wonnangatta Station and had a late lunch. Seeing as we had the afternoon free, we all went for a bit of a walk in the sunshine to see what we could see. There were some people restoring the little cemetery in the distance under the fir trees, so we wandered over. It turned out they were from the local historical society "Friends of Wonnangatta", and not only do they maintain the cemetery and historical sites, but they also run night tours of the sites with stories of the Wonnangatta murders that occurred 100 years ago....and their first tour in 18 months was to start at 8pm that

night. Bonus!

At 8 o'clock, when it was fully dark, we grabbed our torches and (as creepy as it sounds) headed for the cemetery where the tour was to start. The senior members of the FOW society were there in full period costume, and we went from plot to plot where they shared the history of the Barclay family who lived there. Moving carefully from site to site, we looked at the layout of the homestead all marked out in stone so we could move from room to room, as well as outbuildings such as the piggery. All the while they were telling stories and anecdotes about the unsolved mystery of the Wonnangatta Murder in 1918. My favourite tale is about how the local constabulary travelled for two days in heavy rain bringing the body of the victim back to Mansfield slung over the back of a horse, and how they had to sleep next to the body overnight to protect it from a pack of wild dingoes. Life was brutal back then. After a couple of hours, we headed back to camp in the dark where some of the group had stayed behind to simply chill out by the river.

*The top of Eaglevale Track*





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### Day 3 (Easter Sunday, April 4th)

It was clear and very cold overnight with everything wet with dew. The goal was to make camp at Eaglevale at the end of the day, but nobody was really interested in a wet pack-up, so we all gathered around the fire and watched the sun creep into the valley over the treetops. I decided to maximise the drying time for my 270 degree awning, and so I drove into the middle of the valley to meet the sun with my awning still out. This caused a few looks from others camped nearby, but it worked, and a couple of people got the idea and moved their own tents and swags.

Crossing the creek, after we got going, we went to visit the tent that the historical society had set up to show off all the photos and memorabilia they had collected over the years. We thanked them again for their efforts the previous night and had a good look at the merchandise they had on sale. One history book, some pens, a hat, a teddy bear, some stickers, and a few stubby holders later, we got back on the Wonnangatta Track heading south.

There were quite a few deep muddy ruts on the way out as we crossed quite a few tributaries of the Wonnangatta river running alongside the track. It wasn't long before we encountered a victim of the track conditions - a poor family from NSW who had broken an axle on their camper trailer. They were close to help, and despite some unhappy kids, they were Ok, so we kept moving, crossing the Wonnangatta River and turning east on to Humffray River Track. My daughter Katelyn was in the driver's seat today. She was still on her green P plates and having already encountered a casualty of the track I

was a little nervous being in the passenger seat. I went into full Driving-Instructor-Dad-mode and started rattling out instructions and observations to Katelyn (who was quite competent and largely ignoring me). In fact, I didn't realise just how nervous I was until Jarryd pointed out my white-knuckle grip on the radio mike. Whilst hanging the mike back, the radio suddenly blared into life. It was Ingo (still behind me in proper convoy order) politely observing that the instructions and observations were informative and helpful, but asking if someone else in the car could please take the mike out of my hands so that someone else in the convoy could transmit for a change. Apparently, I had been squishing the mike long enough for people to wonder what was wrong with their own radios, as they could hear this voice prattling in the background, and nobody could hear anyone else. Hanging my head in shame, I was summarily banished to the backseat for the rest of the day, and Jarryd took over radio duties.

Climbing up out of the valley, the mud turned to dust and we headed south

down Wombat and Cynthia Range Tracks. The views were marvellous as there was hardly a cloud in the sky and you could see forever. We stopped for a bite to eat at the Eaglevale Track intersection, and really took in the vistas (once the dust had settled). After the steep climb down to Eaglevale in the early afternoon, we re-crossed the Wonnangatta River and found a nice shady spot to set up camp and have afternoon tea.

Finding ourselves with some more free time on our hands, we did some exploring. We eventually found the drop dunny at the far end of the campsite shrouded in trees (where you would not find it at night if you didn't already know where it was). We also found a creaky old wire suspension bridge where we got some wonderful shots of the river - if you were brave enough to risk dropping your camera or falling in yourself if anyone else stepped on that bridge.

Apart from the occasional entertainment of other vehicles and some trail bikes doing the wide crossing of the river, we had a quiet and relaxing night.



#### Day 4 (Easter Monday, April 5th)

The next morning was misty and grey with the tops of the nearby ridges lost in cloud. It would seem our luck had run out with the weather, which did not bode well for our climb up Billy Goat Bluff Track and our visit to the Pinnacles Fire Lookout. After a mercifully dry pack-up, we set off east down Wonnangatta road, again following the River on our left. Katelyn was driving again, but after some negotiations it was decided that Jarryd would drive on from the Pinnacles until we aired up again. Still bearing a measure of shame from the tyre and radio incidents on the trip, I would handle the boring stuff going home after airing up.

After a nice lazy drive to the south end of the valley, we reached the start of Billy Goat Bluff Track. The weather was still murky, and I had not driven this track before, but I had faith in

Katelyn. Determined not to embarrass my kids again, I found something to bite on, and we set off. We had an easy time of it for the lower part of the track, but we soon hit the steeper, scallier parts, and not long after that we entered the low cloud layer. Everything off the track went white, and our hopes of seeing, well... anything... when we got the Pinnacles was fading fast.

We were so busy just navigating up the track that it caught us...ok...me...completely by surprise when we burst out of the top of the clouds not far short of the Link Track. It was amazing. The tops of the clouds were white, fluffy, and almost completely flat. Just a sea of cloud like you were flying in a plane. We stopped for a bit to let a couple of the vehicles cool down after the climb before heading on to the Pinnacles. When we got there, the views were

the best I have ever seen. It was one of those had-to-be-there moments.

After the requisite photo ops and the traditional "wish-you-were-here" video calls home, we headed west on Moroka Road to have some lunch at Horseyard Flat in the bright sunshine.

With home beckoning, Jarryd jumped in the pilot's chair and we turned south down Castle Hill Track and Marathon Road. Wasn't long until the clouds closed in again, and with the tall forest on both sides, it was rather spooky, but very serene. Inevitably though, we got through the cloud layer, found the blacktop, aired up, and returned to civilisation just north of Sale.

A very good time was had by all, and a special thank you went out to Garry & Anthony for organising and leading the trip. One of the more memorable ones.



*Perched on a ridge on Billy Goat Bluff Track*



# Victorian High Country Huts Trip



Lake Cobbler Hut and convoy

In the past couple of years Andy and myself have been invited by the Wagga Wagga 4WD club in NSW to lead trips through the Victorian High Country for them. This year's trip was to visit as many huts as we could in a weekend around Mt Buller. The information that follows is a brief history on each of the huts they planned to visit; we printed it out for everyone on the trip so they could take it home with them.

**Lake Cobbler Hut;** The original hut at Lake Cobbler was built in the early 1900s as part of the Lovick grazing licence, followed by another built by Sam Christopher and Frank Gorman who had the Cobbler grazing licence from 1929 to the 1940s. The original hut was a log hut with a bark roof, the second was built of timber palings, and both with gabled roofs. Both of the old huts stood beside each other at the same time for quite a while in use for grazing and recreation.

A 3rd hut (maybe a forestry hut) may also have been here on the lake in the 70s and a 4th hut in the early 80s which was a log hut and very similar to the present hut.

The present Lake Cobbler Hut (the 5th hut recorded at this site) was built in July 1988 by the Wangaratta 4WD Club and they have helped to maintain this hut for public use ever since.

**King River Hut;** Also known as "King Hut" was originally built as a slab hut and cattle yards in the early 1900s to 1920s by Jim Hearn about 20m north of its current location. By the 1940s, this hut was needing some TLC and by the mid-1950s a new larger two roomed hut of weatherboard was built by some cattlemen to replace this dilapidated slab hut. George Robinson built the weatherboard hut for Fred Ross and other cattlemen in 1957. The two huts stood side by side for quite a few years (there is a photo dated 1964 with both huts in it).

The CFA 4X4 Club looked after the hut and helped organise working bees prior to 2008 to keep it maintained and repaired. Unfortunately, the hut was burnt to the ground by careless users in 2008 and King River Hut had to be rebuilt again on the same footprint. The rebuild was two years in planning by a co-operative effort between the Huts Association and Parks Victoria. Over Easter 2011 about 14 volunteers and Parks Victoria rangers largely completed the rebuild.

The new hut is completely insulated and occupies the exact footprint of the old hut, a combined effort by Parks Victoria, the Victorian High Country Huts Association (VHCHA), Mansfield Shire Council and 4WD

Clubs. King Hut was opened January 2012.

**Razorback Huts;** also known as Razorback Hilton or Purcell's Hut, is 1365m above sea level and is still used to this day by the Purcell family at cattle muster time on Mt Stirling. The Purcell family were pioneers of the Merrijig area in the 19th century. The first part of this hut was built in 1953 by Jack and Tom Purcell and over the years it was extended and added to. As it stands today it will sleep up to 40 people in bunks and is used often by many groups when camping and riding in the area. A large horse corral is adjacent to the hut and you will also find drop dunnies have been constructed near the camping area. The huts were refurbished in 2007/2008 by DSE with new fireplaces and chimneys, and other work was later done repairing walls by VHCHA volunteers.

**Howqua Gap Huts;** The Howqua Gap huts consist of 2 huts, one is a 1960s small portable hut (5x3m) that was brought to the logging campsite complete on the back of a truck and still sits on two skid logs to this day. It's a weatherboard hut, with an iron roof and wooden floor and a brick fireplace and iron chimney that was presumably added to the hut after it was transported here.



*The majesty of High Country splendor - Bindaree Hut*

The walls are lined with tongue and groove timber. Howqua Gap Hut is an old logging hut and does have historical significance to the area and it is the last logging hut left on Mt Stirling. If you need to use this hut for emergency shelter, please keep the fire small; you can see this hut has almost been lost in the past to a fire too large for the fireplace. This hut has been used by many seeking refuge, including GGS Timbertop first

year students and other schools hiking and camping through here. The hut has been managed as a cross country ski refuge ever since logging ceased in the area.

The second hut is one of a couple of new huts and shelters that has been built on Mt Stirling over the last 20 years, built as a refuge for hikers and cross-country skiers, due to the many trails that surround this area. It has a pot belly stove and water tanks,

providing shelter and warmth for those in need.

**GGs Hut; GEELONG GRAMMAR SCHOOL HUT.** The original much smaller hut was built in 1965 for the Geelong Grammar School after they had applied to have a hut built on top of Mt Stirling for their Timbertop students to use; it was granted with a fee of \$5 a year for the land lease. After 20 years the small hut had fallen into disrepair and Ian Stapleton used an army of students to upgrade the hut and clean it out in 1986. The Alpine Resort people installed a two-seater toilet in 1985.

It is now actively used by Grammar students to support bushwalking and cross-country skiing, but is open to others to take shelter in with the understanding that the school have priority on scheduled weekends which is on the notice board in the hut and on the front door at different times of the year.

Despite appearing small on the outside, this well used hut consists of five



*Howqua Gap Huts*



rooms, a locked room for private storage of supplies for GGS, the main room with the large fire place for cooking and a pot belly for heat, a ladder leads up to the large sleeping loft, which has outside access in case of heavy snow. It has a coat and ski room and a firewood room inside and out plus a water tank.

GGs Hut is often completely buried in snow, as the back of the hut is built into the slope of the mountain so the roof of the hut blends into the mountain when covered in snow. The ladder and opening at the front from the loft in the roof sometimes being the only access in and out of the hut in winter.

**Craigs Hut;** (also known as Clear Hills Hut) Most people know it's not a genuine cattleman's hut as it was built as a set for the movie, "The Man from Snowy River" produced in 1982, and the sequel in 1988. Authenticity aside, Craig's Hut is now an iconic destination and important for tourism in the area. It also serves an important

function as a refuge hut for walkers and skiers in emergencies during winter. However, in normal circumstances you cannot sleep in the hut and must camp in the adjacent camping area. The hut is located east of Mt Stirling in the Victorian High Country and accessible by 4WD except for winter months, when only cross-country skiers and walkers can visit. Although not genuine, it's the most popular hut in the High Country and is a great representation of the style and techniques commonly used by the pioneering cattlemen. The location also offers great views over the valleys of the Victorian High Country.

The hut is named for the family of the characters in the movie, Jim Craig (Tom Burlinson) and his father Henry Craig (Terence Donovan). Arguably the real stars of the movies are the horses and local well-known cattle families such as the Lovicks, Purcells, Stoneys and McCormacks who were employed to provide a genuine touch to the horse-riding

scenes and stunts.

The hut was also used for the movie 'Cool Change' in 1986. The film set was a temporary mock-up only and had no floor or back wall. Due to its popularity, it was continually patched up until it deteriorated. In late 1991 the Victorian Association of 4WD Clubs advised that the Mansfield-Alpine 4WD Club were seeking assistance for a total rebuild of the hut. A major build was conducted in February 1993 in conjunction with the CFA 4WD Club. Unfortunately, the hut was burnt to the ground in the devastating 2006 bushfires that also took out Ritchie's, Bluff Hut and a number of others. Due to its importance to tourism, significant Government funding was allocated, and it was again rebuilt in 2007 using contractors and volunteers. Traditional skills and techniques were employed using suitable timbers such as iron bark and red gum that can last over 100 years.

High Country stockmen used



*The iconic Craigs Hut*

the High Country for summer grazing during the mid 1800's. Banjo Paterson's famous poem *The Man from Snowy River* recalls this era. The cattle graziers have left a legacy of mountain huts scattered across the area lending to the unique character of our High Country. Whilst these historic huts may seem quaint and rustic, when it came to surviving the wild mountain weather, they literally meant the difference between life and death to cattlemen and women.

**Bindaree Hut;** You will find BINDAREE HUT in the shadows of Mt Buller and Mt Stirling.

The first hut was built here about 1914 and was of vertical slab format. It was presumed to have been built by Jim Ware whose family had the first cattle grazing lease on the Howqua from 1909 to 1932 and built mustering huts and stockyards throughout the area. The Ware family also had a family property in Merrijig named Bindaree. There is a photograph of Jim Barclay in front of the hut dated 1916.



*Next to GGS Hut on top of Mt Stirling*

(Jim Barclay was the Wonnangatta Station manager that was mysteriously murdered in 1917. ) The current hut is either the second (early 1930s) or possibly the third (about 1937) built of logs standing only eight feet high (it is small and you need to duck through the doorway when you enter). The floor is said to have originally been of stone, but this has disappeared over time.

Arthur Dale, the first Forestry Officer for Mansfield who also built the similar Tomahawk Hut is reported to have built this hut in the early 30s as he needed huts along his patrol lines to find shelter in. In 1937 Bindaree Hut was reported to have been built or rebuilt by Fred Fry (also a Forestry Officer and the builder of Frys hut and many more in this area), Harry Norris (who also worked for the State Forestry Commission and was employed to build forestry camps and huts in the area, including 8 Mile Hut which was burnt down by hikers in the 1960s). Harry O'Brien and Joe McIlroy. It is reported to have been paid for by the Mansfield Tourist Association.

In the 70s all that remained of the old chimney was the interior stack of stone as the old log frame and iron had collapsed and disappeared over time. Working with the current Parks Ranger, it was replaced with a completely new fireplace that was rebuilt in 1983 of river stone and mortar (the rocks in the chimney all came from the Howqua out front. It was a club project at the time, my brother Peter had not long joined the Goulburn Valley 4WD Club and I went along to help. We did it from the ground up with a really good mortar mix and it would have had some "boncrete" mix in for good measure. Peter and I took the cement mixer up with the ute. - story from Maurice Mo Dent).

Over the last 35 years the stone and mortar has begun to crumble and the chimney is cracking and collapsing, so the Victorian High Country Huts Association with Parks Victoria and the help of the Mansfield 4WD club have taken on the task of rebuilding the chimney in iron, as it was built over 70 years ago (completed stage 1 in December 2016) and then raise the hut to remove the old rotten base logs and replace with new logs, constructing a new/old door and completing the wood frame around the iron chimney (completed stage 2 in February 2018). This hut is very simple, without any windows or furniture and is very picturesque in this beautiful area beside the Howqua River,

**Pikes Flat Hut;** Pikes Flat Hut, (also Known as Murphy's Hut) was built as a grazing hut in the 1970's by Terry Murphy. What we see today may look like an old garage garden shed, but that is only because the rest of the structure was reported to be in poor condition and was demolished by Parks Victoria about 20 years ago. The hut once consisted of 4 rooms, veranda and two fireplaces. The well-known High Country icon, Ian Stapleton once had the idea of building a genuine slab hut here, but realised that the high amount of traffic that passes through here would have put the log hut at high risk. This large open flat beside the Howqua River is a very popular destination and camping area for 4WDs, fly fishing and horseback trips.

**Howfield Refuge Shelter Hut;** On the opposite side of the Howqua River to Pikes hut is a nice little flat camping area and a small refuge shelter with a couple of bunks. It was built about 2002 by the Geelong Grammar Timbertop Campus. Unfortunately the lack of access by anyone due to a very boggy area on one side and a steep closed off track on the other has lead to the hut becoming neglected and overgrown by blackberries and in desperate need of some care or it will be lost.

**Bluff Hut;** In 1943 Eadley Stoney joined the cattle grazing licence on the Bluff and went on to organise the building of the original Bluff Hut in 1955. With the help of his son Graeme Stoney (age 15) who used a string of pack horses to carry the iron and building materials up the steep bridle track in the summer of 1956 to the hut site on the lowest saddle on the Bluff Range beneath the later named Mt Eadley Stoney. In February 1956, the



**Bluff Hut**

cattlemen grazing the Bluff (Jack Ware, Ray Kelly and Archie Cameron) helped Eadley build the original Bluff Hut. Jack Ware was responsible for the most important job of shaping the frame timbers from local snow gum and ash.

Jack used the classic construction methods (using adze and axe) that he learned as a boy working for Jim Barclay and Jack Bullock who were the first men to run cattle on the High Country beyond the Howqua River from 1909.

The original site was chosen for its shelter from the prevailing winds. In the early 80's the hut was extended by the Stoney's and partners to accommodate their cross-country ski tours and summer horse riding tours in conjunction with their grazing licence. Sadly, Bluff hut was lost in the 2006-7 Great Divide fires that was started by a lightning strike and the rebuild started in November 2007.

The original Bluff hut had many extensions and add-ons over the years but the replacement hut has been built more in the style and to the plan of the original hut with thanks to Eadley's grandson David Stoney drawing up the plans. Silcar, ARB and David Muir made significant financial contributions to the rebuilding of Bluff Hut, as did the Stoney's and others who wished to remain anonymous. Graeme Stoney managed the donations and finances, which paid for materials and transport. He supervised the sourcing, stockpiling and delivery of the materials for the rebuild. Graeme and Wendy spent many hours on the job. The rebuilding had strong support from the local businesses, the Victorian High Country Huts Association and Parks Victoria. Over 2000 hours of volunteer work went into completing the hut in time to serve as a refuge for skiers in the winter of 2008. The majority of the work done, however, was by the Stoney's friends and family.

Cattle grazing ended in the National Park in 2005 but the Stoney Family are still the custodians of Bluff hut and work with Parks Victoria towards its future care so that its history can be shared with everyone.



**Inside Lovick's Hut**

**Lovicks Hut;** Over the last 150 years, the Lovick family have been one of the pioneering families of Merrijig, Buller, Howqua area, pioneering cattle into the Victorian High Country from the early 1900s. William Lovick was the licensee of the Merrijig Hunt Club from 1873 and the family held that licence till 1956.

The Lovicks have links with other huts in the High Country including the original hut at Lake Cobbler being built in the early 1900s as part of the Lovick grazing licence. The first hut built by Jack Lovick Snr in 1925 was about one mile from the summit of Mt Buller, but was later burnt down and called "The Burnt Hut". Jack Jnr (son of George, grandson of Jack Snr) took over the Buller lease in 1939 but some of his lease was taken by the resort in 1959, and he was given some other leases at King Billy and Mt Clear. In 1960 Jack Lovick Jnr built this hut here on Barclays Flat nestled in a little saddle between Mt Lovick and the King Billy because the well

known James Barclay had also in the earlier years built a hut here and he was a very knowledgeable man. When this hut was first built Jack's young son Charlie Lovick, remembers the remains of Barclays hut could still be seen opposite. With a licence for running cattle in the High Country, the Lovicks were allowed to build a mountain hut for safety and wellbeing. It was erected in stages; it had a gabled form over large poles with iron roof and walls. Features in the old hut included iron bunks, combustion stoves, hot water, shower and other amenities. There was a simple veranda along the front and the floor was concrete.

Other additional huts were also moved here in 1985 but removed in 1993.

In 1980 Jack Lovick Jnr was declared a "State Living Treasure" after helping in a number of mountain SAR missions. Jack and his family also worked with the production of the Man from Snowy River movies, which was produced by a close relative of the family, Geoff Burrowes. The Lovicks also supplied all the horses and rode in both movies.

After many years, Lovicks Hut succumbed to age and in 2003 the hut was removed due to safety issues with the intension of replacing it with a smaller hut on this historic site that has been used by many – Cattlemen, horse riders, four wheel drivers, bushwalkers and skiers. While Lovicks Hut rebuild (a few poles in the ground at this stage) escaped the 2006 bushfires, other huts in the area like Bluff, Ritchie's, Craig's and Mt No3 Huts weren't so lucky and burnt to the ground. With all the Huts to be rebuilt in the Park, unfortunately

Lovicks hut took a bit longer than planned, and in 2012 Lovicks Hut was finished being rebuilt by the Lovick family and friends on the same footprint as the original. This new hut has a new and improved steeper roof pitch to better shed snow and the stone work on the floor of the hut was brought up from the Lovicks Milking Shed from Merrijig.

The Lovicks are strong believers in the mountain traditions and heritage, always leaving mountain huts open, never locked, everyone always welcome. It is important to teach future generations, that if there were no huts, people would certainly have perished. The best memories come from the stories and education that gets passed around the open fire in a hut. - *Researched and written by Sharyn Chambers, 2017 (ref interview with Charlie Lovick) (ref Victorian Alpine Huts Heritage Survey 2004/2005)*

**Upper Jamieson Hut;** situated beside the Jamieson River, Fred Fry originally built this hut in the 1930s for his Forestry Patrol.

Fred was an excellent bushman and with his own personal style of workmanship he erected many huts in the region, using split timber and the classic method of rolling roof poles into place over the centre ridge of the new hut, using a horse and a long chain.

One of the first huts Fred constructed was the Upper Jamieson hut in about 1938-1940, and then Frys Hut on the Howqua River in about 1943-44 both while working for the Forest Commission. Fred Fry helped build many huts for fishermen in the valley and these included Ashwin's, Gardiner's, Ritchie's, Pickering's and

Helen Schusters' at Howqua Hills.

In 1991 the Hut had some repair work done by a stone mason and a DCNR worker on some of the roof and fireplace after fire damage and a veranda was added.

By the early 2000's, Jamieson hut had become very run down, so in 2008 the hut was restored with thanks to DEPI, Keith Leydon and VHCHA

**Pickerings Hut;** was built over two summer seasons in the early 1950's by Norman Pickering and some of his friends. One person to assist with the construction was local identity Fred Fry accompanied by his horses. In those days the Howqua Track was just that, a track that stopped at Sheeppark Flat, so the materials had to be brought in by pack horse. Norman & Daphne Pickering after their marriage in 1932 had been camping along the Howqua in this area for many years prior to the war and eventually Norman obtained permission to construct a "permissive occupancy" building on this site. The hut was constructed from two trees felled on the site, the stumps of which formed the foundations for the floor. The slabs were cut using a swing saw and were fitted together without the use of any nails. There was a gap left at the top of each panel of slabs to allow for the expansion of the slabs due to winter moisture. The Pickerings loved their hut and shared it with family, their staff & a wide range of friends for many years till they both passed away on separate occasions in the year 2000. Norm & Daphne's ashes were scattered around the area of the hut at their request and they are now at rest at the place they loved so much and where they gave so much to so many.



Lovick's Hut



Fry's Hut

**Fry's Hut;** was built by a legend, a master bushman, fisherman, stockman and hut builder. Fred Fry built his home in about 1943-44 while working for the Forest Commission using his own unique style of workmanship that you can see here and on many other huts along the Howqua River that he also built. Fry's Hut stands on 7 beautiful acres of the Howqua Hills Historic Area at 415 meters above sea level.... camping is encouraged around Fry's Flat but not in Fry's Hut please.

**Professor's Huts;** Professor Ian Ramsay Maxwell (born 1901/died 1979) built these huts in this place he loved so much. The first being built in

1946. A plaque left in loving memory marks the spot where these huts still stand, but only just, as time has left them rundown and deteriorating. These hard-to-find huts are only known about because of a dot on a map that takes you by foot across a river and into the bush. They are built from bush poles and flattened kerosine cans.

**Blackbird Hut;** In 1959, two men, Constable Kirby & R.G. Kelly applied for a permissive occupancy to build a fishing hut here at the same time. Kelly won the lease but ended up passing his ownership to an engineer, Thomas Loaring. Thomas died in

1975 and his family managed to retain the lease till 1980. The department used the hut to house workers who were removing weeds such as blackberries, and is now locked and used by Parks Victoria as a base for Parks Management and this is where the rebuild of Ritchie's hut was first constructed, numbered and transported from here to its rebuild site on the Howqua River where the original Ritchie's hut burnt down in the bush-fires.

\*\*\*Remember huts are not for accommodation, although they can be used for emergency shelter if it is needed. If you need to use the fireplace inside the hut to cook, please keep the fire small and extinguish before leaving, and follow the huts Code of Etiquette.

*Information attached has been researched and written by Sharyn McGregor (ref. Victorian Alpine Huts Heritage Survey 2004-2005) Victorian High Country Huts Association Facebook Page and interviews with local identities.*

**By Sharyn McGregor (March, 2021)**

## News



### On Patrol for 70 years

Legendary Nissan celebrates significant milestone

The Nissan Patrol has turned 70, and this iconic 4x4 shows no signs of resting on its laurels.

In 2021 year-to-date sales of the Patrol are up by more than 20 percent compared to the same period 2020. While the current Y62 Patrol is an extremely technologically advanced vehicle, the Patrol has not always

been well known for luxury and ride comfort.

Nissan's first-generation four-wheel drive, the 4W60, was launched in 1951 and featured a 3.7-litre in-line six-cylinder engine that produced 56kW and drove a part-time four-wheel transmission via a four-speed manual gearbox. It was sold



1956 Nissan Patrol

exclusively in Japan and adopted the Patrol nameplate when it was updated with the 4W65 model in 1958.

The second-generation G60 arrived in Australia in 1961 as the Datsun Patrol with a modern overhead valve 4.0-litre in-line six-cylinder that generated 92kW and was offered in soft-top, wagon or cab-chassis body styles. It went largely unchanged for almost 20 years until it was replaced by the hugely popular MQ-Series Datsun Patrol in 1980.

The MQ Patrol was also the first model to introduce a turbo-charged diesel engine option in 1984 with addition of the optional SD33T six-cylinder engine producing 81kW of power and 255Nm of torque. Nissan re-set the benchmark for four-wheel drives in 1987 when the hugely popular GQ Patrol arrived with all coil spring suspension that offered an ideal blend of long-travel articulation

for off-roading and comfortable on-road dynamics for everyday driving. It was initially offered with a choice of all-new 4.2-litre petrol or diesel six-cylinder engines with either a five-speed manual or four-speed automatic. The powertrain range was expanded in 1990 with the addition of a 3.0-litre petrol six – a unique version of the iconic RB30 from the Skyline sedan – in entry-level models and again in 1995 with a 2.8-litre turbo diesel.

The fifth-generation GU Patrol launched in 1997 brought a sleeker, more spacious body as well as significant improvements to chassis, suspension and driveline components that increased overall refinement. It was powered by either an improved version of the 2.8-litre turbo-diesel six, which now featured electronic fuel injection and an intercooler, or a revised 4.2-litre naturally-aspirated six. A turbo charged variant of the big six arrived in 1999, an all-new ZD30 3.0-litre turbo four-cylinder replaced the smaller six in 2000 and the petrol six-cylinder increased its capacity to 4.8-litres in 2001, producing 185kW and 420Nm - making the Patrol the most powerful four-wheel drive in its class.



With the arrival of the high-tech Y62 series in 2014, the Patrol shifted up a gear and took on a more refined character. It was exclusively available as a wagon with a 5.6-litre petrol V8 and focused more intently on its on-road performance than ever before, bringing world-first technologies such as the digital Intelligent Rear View Mirror (introduced in 2017) and a sophisticated fully-independent suspension set-up with Hydraulic Body Motion Control.



## Simpson Desert historic re-enactment crossing



One of the Nissan Patrol's earliest – and most significant – achievements happened in September 1962 when renowned geologist Reg Sprigg, along with his wife Griselda and children Marg and Doug who were aged just 10 and 7 at the time, became the first to cross the Simpson Desert in a motor vehicle.

The family took over 12 days to drive a G60 Patrol from Andado Station in the Northern Territory to Birdsville in Queensland, charting the route that would eventually be known as the French Line – the most popular East-West track across the spectacular 176,500 square kilometre region that contains the world's longest parallel sand dunes.

The Sprigg family recorded an average speed of just 5km/h and often risked their lives when the vehicle, which carried a 200L drum of petrol in the back, became 'beached' on giant outcrops of saltbush and the hot exhaust ignited the dry desert scrub.

Reg Sprigg went on to create Australian energy company Santos and then Beach Petroleum as a result



of his outback explorations and established his Arkaroola Station in the Flinders Ranges as a wilderness conservation area which is still in place today and managed by Marg and Doug.

In 2012, Nissan Australia created a re-enactment of the Sprigg's Simpson Desert Crossing with Marg and Doug driving a similar G60 Patrol from Dalhousie Springs to Birdsville. This time, it took them just five days.



*Doug and Marg Sprigg arrive in Birdsville in 2012 in their original G60 Patrol*



# Why I drive a Series 1!

Actually, it was Ian Malkin's fault. Fred de Gooyer had asked for volunteers to run the 4WD adventure circuit at Lardner Park for the Farmworld exhibition a couple of years ago. I had my Defender and Ian had brought along a Series 3 long wheel base ute with a tray back. At the end of the day I was chatting with Ian about his car and how I had owned one as my first car many years ago. I had bought it from Don who owned the car yard beside the old 4x4 shop in Middleborough Rd. Ian said why not jump in and take it for a drive! As soon as I got in I smelt the familiar petrol odour that permeates these machines and as we drove around the circuit I found my hand instinctively positioning itself oddly behind the gear stick. Then I remembered that I had learnt to do this with my old Series 3 as it used to jump out of second gear sometimes! That little drive sparked an interest in owning another Series vehicle someday.

I know I had always liked the look of the cars. Something about the boxy shape was appealing. I had travelled in a few on cadet camps, where they broke down on us of course, but when I finally had my license I had been determined to buy one of my very own. The one I bought was an ex-army long wheel base GS. I drove it to Uni every day and for long trips into Alpine areas for bushwalks with friends. Driving that car was my first experience of the Land Rover wave Don had told me about. Its carrying capacity was legendary and still is. On one occasion I had been supervising a cricket team and the bus to take the players home had left early! So the whole team piled into the back and I drove them home. One day I was on a wet road and the stock bar treads on the rear. With the brakes applied the car just slid on the road with no control. The next day I was in a tyre shop buying new tyres! Ultimately, as a family came along I sold that car and people thought, oh yes he is over his Land Rover fetish... Fast forward over twenty years to



Farmworld and my interest was back. There was still something appealing about the old world charm of these cars and preserving the driving heritage of an iconic vehicle. I started looking at Car Sales and noted the sad sight of so many unloved and dilapidated Series vehicles on farms. I hoped I would never see my old car in that condition in one of those ads. I test drove a few cars. I had never had a short wheel base. They looked fun, so I focussed on locating one of those. An old Series 2 'Recon' short wheel base was interesting, but needed lots of work. Another club member, Joel, had a nicely restored Series 1 for sale. It had been restored by yet another club member Joel told

me. I liked the feeling that members look after each other as they are joined by a common love of the marque. Joel happily took me for a test drive with the canvas tarp off, the windscreen down and driving goggles on. What a blast! Around that time I acquired my first Perentie, so funds were tight and I couldn't purchase that lovely car. A year or so later a nice looking Series 3 popped up for sale. I noticed the club sticker in the photos immediately and looked it up. The owner was none other than Roger Purser! I visited Roger in Healesville and we had a long and most pleasurable chat about the club and I test drove 'Larry the Larrikin'. Larry was just what I was





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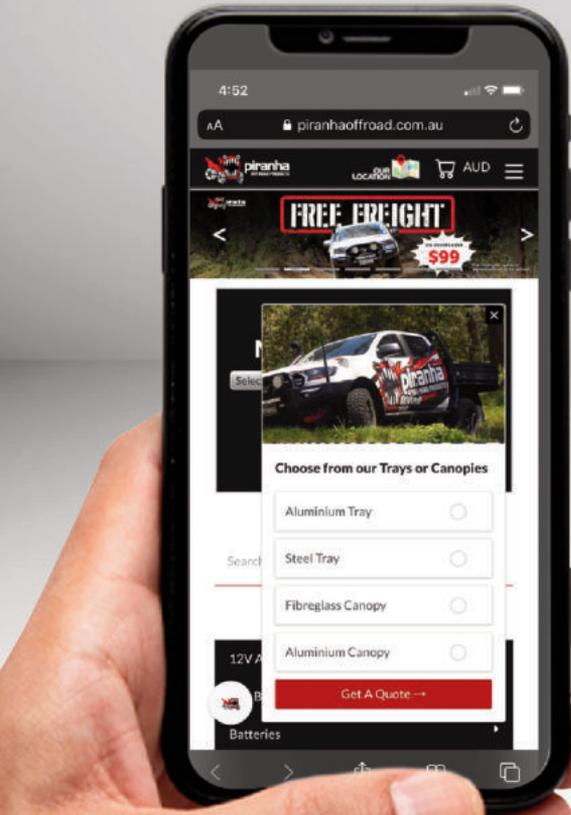
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looking for. Good condition for a 45 year old vehicle, but with just enough dents to not be overly worried if a few more bush stripes were added on a trip. And what is it with old Land Rovers that the wings are often bashed in? After the kids stopped freaking out about the fourth Land Rover parked in the carport they rechristened Larry as 'Colonel Mustard' because of that distinctive Camino Gold colour we all know and love.

The 'Colonel' received a good work out last year. With my Defender stuck in a garage, disassembled and waiting for spare parts from the UK whilst everyone was locked down, this was the car of choice for the various driving tasks I had to perform. Being the only one of the four cars I own that can fit into a covered shopping centre car park was a real bonus! I find that of all my cars, the Series 3 is the one that most people ask me about. If I am working on it in the street local people walking past stop to chat. Often, it turns out that they used to own one or grew up on a farm with one, or have seen them and are just interested in what they are all about close up. These chats are always fun and informative. On one occasion a nice guy from the UK pulled out his phone and showed me his own large collection back at home. It included a beautifully restored 101. Although, I thought it was a bit much one morning when I came out to find another guy lying across the bonnet taking selfies. He looked a little sheepish when he noticed me standing there and apologised. Such is the attraction of the Series cars! I wouldn't say the Colonel is 'fun' to



drive, but there is a certain adventurous feeling you get when sitting in the driver's seat that you just don't get from something like a Toyota Camry. It rattles, is draughty and is noisy, but you can take the window tops off in summer in lieu of air conditioning (bonus!) You feel as if you could either go to the shops, or equally, randomly head off on a journey around Australia. (Well, maybe not right now!) The Colonel has popped up in a couple of trips to date. The most recent ones being the 'New Members' trips I started this year. I thought that because many members have Defenders (older and brand new models) and Discoveries, that seeing a Series vehicle might be a novelty. Members have said to me that a reason for joining the club was to experience some of the iconic vehicles that they don't necessarily own, so it seemed fitting to bring an old Landie along. It also helps remind people just how capable even these old Land Rovers still are. I am sure

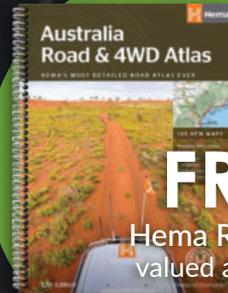
Richard Groom will attest to that with his South Australia trips involving Series vehicles. I also remembered how the kids on an Eildon trip a couple of years ago, flocked to sit in the back of John and Sally Gilbert's Series 2 (which served in Vietnam) at various stops. An hour into the January New Members trip and Mark had already offered to buy my car. So, I guess in answer to my question, I drive the Series vehicle for my own pleasure (and pain), but also to share it with others who are interested and whose heads are turned whenever a car like that trundles past. If it makes someone's day happier by seeing such an old clunker, then that is something worth striving for. I would encourage other Series owners (and owners of similar Toyotas, Nissans and whatever else!) to pull their cars out of the garage more often and drive them around proudly. After all, they are an iconic piece of motoring history in which we can all share and enjoy. Oh and to Ian ... Thank you!  
**James Lawson**



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### Amendment

Track Watch September 2021.

Pages 2 and 3. Article Titled, "Bushwalkers and 4WDers Collaborate".

The article quoted the dates for this event as 'Friday 12 to Monday 15 November', however, due to covid restrictions the event will be deferred to 'Friday 25 to Monday 28 March 2022'.

**Russell Dent**

Macalister 4WD Club



## Toyota Land Cruiser Club of Victoria

# Wheel Bearing Course 2021

The 2021 Wheel Bearing Course was held at Yarck on July 11th and 12th, with Tony Swinden as the instructor. With temperatures 20C overnight and only 8OC during the day, 12 eager participants dressed more for the snow than a mechanics workshop fronted for the course. The day started with some theory, with Tony holding in front of him his fantastic poster size hand drawing of both the front and rear wheel bearing assemblies. As Tony lent his face over the drawings to point out the various

components, one of the participants asked if he could turn the drawing over so we could read the writing. Tony thought it read fine to him.

The theory lasted no more than an hour and then it was time to do things for real. Tony offered to use his Troopy as the demo and practice vehicle. A brave move given none of us had any idea what we were doing.

The Troopy was moved into the new multiple purpose building when we noticed the first issue with the new building. There was no hoist. So, with creaking knees, frozen fingers and very cold cement floor, the practical lesson began.

Tony is a man of many talents and one of them is knowing how to weld his alloy rear wheels to the hubs. With no wheel nuts and an excessive amount of kicking and whacking with a 5 pound hammer, the first wheel stayed firmly planted.

With 12 more 'experts in offering opinions' standing around, we concluded that by placing two blocks of wood between the tyre and rear springs and then hammering a star picket between them as a wedge, we might be able to pry the wheel off. And guess what, it worked, offering credibility to the 'experts in offering opinions' status of the group. How proud we all were – peacocks one and all.



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It's worth mentioning at this time that this was not a one off. Tony made sure his second rear wheel would also not come off. What he would have done if he got a flat tyre on the way to Yarck is anybody's guess, but with all us experts on hand, we had the situation in control. For the second rear wheel, we knew what to do and did so with efficiency, knowing our reputations as 'experts in offering opinions' was now officially changed to 'bush mechanic' experts in removing rear wheels so long as we could find a star picket and had a few blocks of wood.

Tony then showed us how to disassemble everything in the rear axle bearing assembly, right down to removing the axle, all the bearings and seals. There were a few special tools needed that make the job easy and not risk damage to any of the

surfaces or threads, so we took careful note of what we would need to add to our tool kits.

It was at this stage a practice axle hub was brought out so we could all punch out the bearings and replace them. While Tony was happy to use his car, having 12 people all learn to punch out a bearing and replace was asking a bit much.

Being something that might need to be done on the side of the track, we limited the cleaning fluid (e.g. petrol or white spirits) to a litre, an amount you could easily carry in a camping fluid bottle e.g. Trangia Fuel Bottle. The limited amount of cleaning fluid also meant that we needed to remove most of the grease by hand before using the cleaning fluid. Keeping a role of Chux superwipes with the camp kitchen is a good idea.

Using the club's practice bearings,

we all learnt how to pack the bearing with fresh grease before inserting them back into the axle hub.

With everyone now knowing how to disassemble, clean and pack the bearings, we proceeded to reassemble everything on the car, ensuring the right torque setting and bearing locking nut pressures. We were amazed how something under such tremendous strain relied on nuts and bolts so small.

Next came the front wheel bearings. While a bit different and requiring some special tools, there were no surprises. That is until it was time to remove the axle oil seal. This one refused to budge, but knowing his business, Tony knew he could use a gentle persuader to ease out the seal. His gentle persuasion was a screw driver and hammer smashing the seal to the point it fell out.

I am glad I got to see Tony do this, because I don't think I would ever have attempted the same if I had not watched him first.

The course talked a lot about mechanic short cuts, where they did not have the right tools or would not remove all the seals, believing the old ones were still OK. We were able to compare the edges of new seals with ones worn and the difference is obvious when you know what to look for. For us LC200 owners, that lesson was a good one because most 200 series owners never go off road and never immerse their hubs in water or mud. So, mechanics who like to take short cuts can get away with it. For those minority of LC200 owners, like us, this practice (or lack of), is not a good thing and something we need to be mindful of.

Of course, now that we have all completed the course, none of us will ever ask a mechanic to do our wheel bearings and seals. At least, that is what we would like to think.

An added benefit of doing the course was not only in being able to tighten or replace bearings, but knowing how to remove your axle or CV joints if you were ever faced with a break on an outback trip.

Course participants were: John Vanderleest, Graham Beer, Kevin McDonald, Michael Tran, Fergus Nightingale, Greg Howarth, John Price, Timothy Kay, Robert Duff, Piers Thompson, Tony Bryant and Richard Woodthorpe.

**John Vanderleest**  
**TLCCV**





# TOWING... THE BASICS

Your 4WD is a versatile vehicle and towing a camper trailer or caravan can open up new horizons for you and your family and friends but many people are not fully aware of the risks involved.

### Do your Homework

Before you head out and hook up your trailer or caravan, read your vehicle's owner's manual to determine the maximum load limit and to find out if the manufacturer has included any special notes associated with towing. It is a good idea to learn about different types of trailer hitches to ensure your hitch is rated for the towing weight and appropriate for where and what you want to tow.

The key safety tips when preparing to tow a trailer or caravan are to check your tyre pressure on the tow vehicle and the trailer, make sure you check all the lights and indicators are working properly, the safety chains are connected properly (with rated shackles), that your brakes are in good working order and your mirrors have been adjusted properly.

### Loading a Trailer

The way a trailer or caravan is loaded is very important. Put too much weight at the front or too much at the back of the trailer or caravan and it will negatively affect the handling. Balance weight from side to side and along the length of the trailer and secure any loose items to

keep them from shifting. If your loaded trailer isn't level with the ground, then you are going to compromise your steering and stopping ability.

### Pulling a Trailer

Connecting a trailer or caravan to your 4WD changes just about everything about the way the vehicle will drive. It takes a harder push on the accelerator to get moving, a greater distance to get it up to speed, and an extended distance to stop.

Drive changes mean you have to be more prepared than ever to avoid cars that pull out in front of you or a ball rolling into the street, possibly with a child not far behind. But since quick braking can cause jack-knifing, and abrupt steering changes can make the trailer sway, it's important to train yourself to look as far ahead as possible so that you can anticipate what might be in your path, and make slow and steady movements to handle the problem.

Slow it down in built up areas or in traffic. Put more space between you and the vehicle ahead of you than you normally would. Watch what is happening several vehicles ahead.

Pass only on straightaways. Allow more distance between you and potential oncoming traffic and make sure there's enough room to pull back into your lane after you pass.

### Make Wider Turns

When you are pulling a trailer, remember that as you go around curves and corners the trailer's wheels may not track the same as the tow vehicle. They will generally track tighter. So if you are making a curve to the right, and the tow vehicle's right wheels are just left of the centre line, the trailer's right wheel will be on or past the line, putting the trailer in the path of oncoming traffic. Make wider turns to compensate for the tracking difference.

### Towing Uphill and Downhill

Downshifting provides more uphill power and helps slow the vehicle on a downhill grade. Brakes will overheat if you keep your foot on the brake pedal when going down long and steep hills.

### Backing Up

Move slowly and don't over-steer when backing up -- slight movements of the wheel are all it takes.

### Practise, Practise, Practise

Read everything you can find before you head out, but safe towing takes practise. Get out there and practise your curves and back-ups in empty parking lots and take some trial towing runs on roads that aren't packed with traffic. Ask a friend who is experienced in towing to go with you for a drive, there is always more to learn when towing!

### ENJOY.

Perhaps the most important!



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