



Newsletter August 2008

What have we been up to?

It's been a couple of months since the last Newsletter and there's been a lot on in the GDT camp. We have been flat out with trips and driver training, but the big news is our new look website!!

New Website

Take a look at www.4wd.net.au and let me know what you think. We have tried to spruce up the site, make it easier to navigate and quick to load. One of the most exciting features is found in the Gallery section where we are listing photos from our recent trips. The plan is, immediately after a weekend trip or an outback adventure, we can load a selection of photos into the site for you to have a look at and re-live your trip. Take a look at the weekend trips over the past couple months, you may even see yourself in one of the photos.

Thanks to Brian Douglas and his brother-in-law Jeff from Graphical Constructions for burning the midnight oil on this project and getting it up and running.

Recent Trips

Canning Stock Route

Wayne or WD40 as we call him led another group up the CSR during June. It was an enormously successful trip once again. The CSR is a trip of a lifetime without doubt, with months of preparation required and then a battle against the elements and the worst that the desert can throw at you. Our group were only a few days into the trip when flooding rain hit them. Being held up in a soggy camp for 24 hours can quickly lose its appeal but not knowing if you can move forward adds to the despair of the situation. Wayne kept in touch with me via satellite telephone and through the wonders of the internet I was able to tell him what the weather patterns were doing. After 24 hours

they were able to move on and experience the rest of the desert country without any detrimental effects from the weather.



Wayne at Canning's Cairn, note the bandaged finger!

But the true value of travelling in company with an experienced guide came into play when a couple of the vehicles suffered failures in the brackets holding up their long range fuel tanks. Wayne loves a challenge and he set about making up some new brackets and welding them back into place. The task took nearly all day but those vehicles were able to complete the trip and return home with his bush repair.

The fragile nature of our own well being was also brought home when Wayne suffered a minor cut to his hand whilst collecting firewood for the group. Unfortunately this small cut became infected and Wayne was a very sick boy indeed. Fortunately some medical supplies being carried were put to good use and he made a good recovery, but it demonstrated how careful we all have to be when out in the wilds of Australia.

Simpson Desert Safari

Well, I'm not sure what Eric & Anne got up to on this trip but all the feedback has been excellent. Eric even saying it was the best group he had had the pleasure of leading. No

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hiccups, good weather, and even the sight of green grass covering Sturt's Stony Desert, now that's a rare sight. It appears a number of people on this trip want to visit Cape York next year with Eric at the helm, so if that's the case I suggest you register real soon.

Cameron Corner

Alex took a full tour group (no they weren't drunk, it means we were booked out) away for 7 days on our Corner Country trip. Alex is so passionate about his trips, he does a lot of research on the areas he travels though and is especially excited about our early explorers who ventured through these parts 150 years earlier. Whilst it was a great trip we did find there was so much to see and do that we had long days and some late arrivals in camp. As you know, we evaluate each of our trips and the overwhelming response was to make some of the days shorter and perhaps add some more time. So we have revamped this trip for next year in the July school holidays to make it more enjoyable. I have the new itinerary that can be emailed to you if you are interested.



The Group at Cameron Corner

Snow Tours

We have a trip down to the snow each year, in fact this trip is so popular we always get booked out despite running a second trip the weekend after. This year we even had some people on the reserve list who missed out attending, if you were one of these please don't read on as it will make you very unhappy that you didn't book this trip much earlier.

The idea of a snow trip is to drive through snow. There are not many places you can do that these days, but we have found a beauty. Thankfully the snow Gods rained down the white stuff on us. The first trip was a real cracker with lots of snow, mud and fun times. But the second trip was just out of this world with our accommodation being blanketed in 15 centimetres of snow and Sunday being spent driving in thigh deep snow at times. Of course Santa visited each group and the fun at night whilst it was snowing outside was just fantastic. Thanks to everyone who joined us on these trips, we had just the best time.



It snowed and snowed and snowed!

South Coast Explorer

This has to be one of the best trips we offer. Great scenery both days, great 4Wdriving, great lunch stops, great accommodation, a great meal in the local Golf club and always great weather. I only had a small group a couple of weeks ago, but we had a great time. What else can I say?



It didn't rain, they just wanted to show off their new umbrellas.

Driver Training

We have had heaps of driver training courses over the past couple of months. To say that it is cold at Braidwood at this time of year is an understatement but we still get loads of bookings (thank you) the skid pan at Castle View has become the river crossing as it has remained full of water over the past couple of months, yes we have had that much rain! We have had a couple of our standard driver trainings and an Advanced Driver Training where we got a lot of practise recovering vehicles out of bog holes and even getting through some bog holes that have not been conquered in several months.



Our new water crossing at Castle View

Just last weekend we conducted a special off road camper trailer training course for our friends at Ultimate Campers. It certainly made for a sight to see 6 4wdrives with 6 Ultimate Campers hooked up to them parading around my property. We also had a new 200 series Landcruiser attend this course and to say that they are a superb machine off road is an understatement. There has been a bit of criticism for the new Landcruiser mainly aimed at its high cost, but I can assure you that their owners are very very pleased with their outlay. By far the best 4WD available at present.



6 Ultimate camper trailers at Castle View

4WD Shows

The next 4WD show that we are attending is the Penrith Caravan Camping and 4WD show at Penrith Panthers on the weekend of 12-14 September. This year we have a small stand inside where we can display our trips and driver training in comfort rather than being concerned about the wind blowing us away as it usually does in September. Whilst Eric & I will be deep in outback South Australia at this time, Brian, John and WD40 will be at the show. This is a free show, no entry fee or parking fee so make sure you come out and say high to the boys. I hope to have the dates ready for our 2009 outback trips by then so you can pick up one of our flyers.

Exciting trips coming up

Pete & Ngaire set off in few days on the Simpson Desert/Hay River trip. We have 6 cars booked on this amazing trip and Pete and Ngaire will have just returned from another of their retirement trips down the west coast of WA, so they will be full of stories on their adventures.

WD40 is currently in the Kimberley having the time of his life with his clients, he seems to be anyway as his satellite calls to me each night indicate that he is as happy as Larry. As he says when he is chippa it means the clients are chippa and if they are chippa, then they must be having a good time. It was WD40's birthday on 16 August, and he was in Cape Leveque, what a great place to spend your birthday!

Eric, Anne and I head out in just 2 weeks on our Ocean to the Outback trip. We have 4 other vehicles joining us on this great outback trek which I have designed. I always look forward to getting away and 21 days in the outback is a great break from the daily routine. On this trip we are also flying over Lake Eyre and the Simpson Desert and this is something I am really looking forward to.

Pete is taking another group into the Flinders Ranges in mid September, honestly, if you have a couple of weeks to spare hop

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onto this trip as it contains the best mix of scenery, 4WD action and idyllic camp sites of any of the trips we offer. After this, in the October School holidays Pete is leading another group on our Simpson Desert Safari, yes there are still spots available for this popular trip.

Closer to home Alex is returning to his weekend Yerranderie ghost town tour on 30-31 August, we now offer accommodation on this trip if you don't wish to camp. Then on 6-7 September he is taking a group up to the beautiful Barrington Tops, Greg will be back from Cape York where he is presently leading one of our trips and on 7 September he is taking the day trip to the back of Lithgow to the beautiful Cliffs & Canyons.

4WD Tip

Tyre pressure, a few simple rules. On the highway use the manufacturers recommended pressures. On good dirt roads and in the outback don't have pressure too high as you increase dramatically the chance of punctures. What is too high? Anything over 40 psi should be avoided.

In normal 4wdrive terrain pressures of less than 35 are good but if you drop your tyres to around 25 psi you will increase the opportunity for the tyre to grip the terrain. On sand drop your tyres to at least 20 psi and no lower than 15 psi.

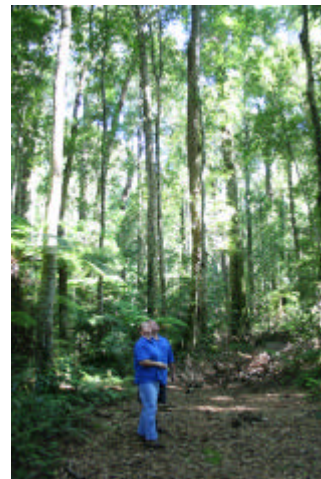
Remember, after your off road excursions and if you have dropped pressures to below 30 psi, you need to re-inflate them before proceeding with high speed driving.

I have been using a set of Tyredog Tyre monitors over the past 6 months and found these to be a fantastic asset. The actual monitor replaces the original valve cap on each tyre. It transmits a signal to a gauge suction capped to the windscreen which provides an instant read out of the tyre pressure in each tyre and this can even display the tyre temperatures. An alarm even sounds if the pressure falls below a set level. This can save destruction of a slowly deflating tyre or even an accident if the tyre

blows out, so for \$350 it is great value. Naturally you can purchase the Tyredog Tyre Monitor system from Great Divide Tours.

Employee Profile

Introducing Wayne & Jenny. There's nothing like a husband & wife team when it comes to 4WD instruction and tour leading and we are lucky to be joined by Wayne & Jenny. Past clients of GDT, I asked the happy duo to join the team and immediately they went out and purchased themselves a Toyota Troopy with all the gear, including the infamous rear door bell. You see, Wayne & Jenny can sleep in their camper converted Troopy, so a door bell makes this home away from home complete.



Wayne runs his own mobile automotive electrical business and is a whizz when it comes to tracking down automotive computer glitches. He is an avid dirt bike rider too despite the fact I keep telling him he's getting too old to keep falling off his bike. Jenny is a horse person with two of her own in a paddock at Ingleside, and even when we arrive home late from Driver Training, she has to stop off and tuck the horses into bed. She too works in the automotive industry with Scuderia Veloce motors.

Since joining GDT last year they have completed the Hay River/Simpson Desert trip with that other mad Troopy man, WD40

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and lead our Brindabella and Werrikimbe Wilderness tours and have conducted many of our 4WD training courses.

Do you drive a Soft Roader?



Are you like me, I have a real 4WD, my Landcruiser, and Julie drives a soft roader a RAV 4. Now Julie's RAV4 will never go off road, she likes it for the versatility it provides in terms of space and its constant 4WD which provides more safety along with the higher stance and tougher appearance than say my MINI. But as she never goes off road selecting tyres for her RAV has been a bit of a problem. Up to now, my mates at Cooper tyres have not had a strictly on road tyre for SUV's or soft roaders. But now that has all changed with the release of their Cooper CS4 tyre. I have now fitted a set of these to Julie's RAV and immediately noticed the improvement in ride and handling. As with all Cooper tyres we expect an extremely long tyre life, only time will tell but we should see at least 70,000 k's if not a lot more. So if you too have an SUV or soft roader in the garage that does not go off road and you need an excellent on road tyre, I suggest you have a look at the new Cooper CS4 tyre, these are available from my friends at Tyrepower in Nth Narrabeen on 02 9970 6670 or find your nearest stockist by phoning 1800 050 060

I need a good electrician

If you are an electrician I need you for some work at home (at Elanora Heights) and possibly even down at the Driver Training

property at Braidwood. Please give me a call on 9913 1395 if you think you can help.

A new face at TJM Blacktown

After many many years at the helm of 4WD Warehouse/TJM Blacktown Craig, who many of you will have met either at our frequent talk fests at the various 4WD shows and on many of the outback trips that I have lead over the past 10 years, well, Craig has retired and moved on. At present he is touring down the coast of Western Australia with Pete & Ngaire before he decides which direction his new life will take. In his place at Blacktown is one of our very own, Ian Shepperd. Ian previously worked with Kangaroo Tent City, he is one of GDT's guides and trainers and is now the head man at TJM Blacktown. So you still have a friendly face when it comes to purchasing the right after market gear for your 4WD. Although they do tell me he has had to trim his beard somewhat.



Need some 4WD Recovery gear for a short period then hire it from GDT

I have put together every conceivable piece of 4WD recovery gear you could think of and now offer it for hire rather than outright purchase. If you are heading off for a weekend and don't want to outlay all the \$'s to purchase some gear that you may never use, then why not hire it from GDT. Hire fees are just 25% of full purchase price for up to 4 weeks. Give me a call on 9913 1395 or email at info@greatdividetours.com.au for a full price list.

Swags for sale

Have you ever bought something and then before you've even used it, discovered that you don't really need it? Well, Irene & Dave have done just that, they purchased a couple of brand new swags and stretchers with the view of using these on some of their private camping trips. But, before they got to use them they suddenly found it a lot easier to take their caravan and camp in it! So now they have two swags complete with foam mattress and two stretchers for sale. Brand new the swags are going for just \$200 each and the stretchers are for sale for \$30 each, give me a call on 9913 1395 if you are interested.



The OzTrail swags and stretchers are yours for a few dollars .

More improvements at Castle View

We had another one of my working bees at Castle view during early June and managed to get the Bob cat in to make a new hill climb, we are also developing a second wheel placement area and did a lot of cleaning up around the skid pan. Of course these working bees also mean big bonfires as Winter presents a great time to burn off some of the piles of scrub that we have cleared to make our 4WD training areas. The big bonfire near the skid pan get us warm during the chilly Winter days and night.



If you don't want we will have to burn it.

Free Firewood!

Okay, if you need some firewood for your open fire at home and have a trailer and don't mind going for a drive down to Braidwood, then you are welcome to come down and help your self to the huge amount of firewood we have scattered around the property. We are working on developing a great campsite half way up the property for large groups to use such as scout groups or mountain bike riders, in the process we have a lot of really good firewood piled up around the area waiting to be burnt off. Before we torch it you might be interested in coming down and helping your self to the firewood, you will need to have your own chainsaw and trailer and you will need to collect the firewood your self. Just give ma call on 9913 1395 to make the arrangements.

That's all for now from the crew at
Great Divide Tours:-

Vic, Julie, Wayne D, Wayne V, Wayne B & Jenny, Peter & Ngaire, Alex, John, Eric & Anne, Brian, Dave & Irene, Richard, Greg, Ian B & Skippy/Yarn/Ian.

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