

September 2019



SUBARU 4WD NEWS

Subaru 4WD Web Site: <http://www.subaru4wdclubwa.asn.au/>

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SUBARU 4WD CLUB of WESTERN AUSTRALIA INC.

P.O. BOX 434, SOUTH PERTH, W.A. 6951

Next meeting

Tuesday 10 September, 7.30pm

Moresby Street Hall, Kensington

SUBARU 4WD CLUB OF W.A. INC.

2018/2019 COMMITTEE

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Jim Wilcox **0419 040 969**, Ross Mead **0417920848**

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Club member of the Year 2018-2019: Robert Griffiths

Life members: Fred Offer, Keith Anderson, Jonel Householder, Ray Stewart, Ian Johnson, Peter Andruszkiw, Ron Counce, Jim Wilcox and Tony Richards

Club 40th anniversary commemorative trip

We've been everywhere, man ... and we're back



We went tropical on the first leg to Karratha, found that Gary Junction was not a scary road on

An adventure over seven deserts, four states and 9,500km ... for six Subies

the second, broke some cars on the Simpson Desert's dunes on the third and found on the last leg that the Anne Beadell Highway could play nicely with others. Oh, and a couple of cars took the first part of Australia's longest shortcut to meet the others in Alice. Those who did the whole trip crossed seven deserts, entered four states, and did around 9,500km in six weeks. And we have **David Peck** to thank for the impeccable planning and organization that combined five separate trips into one epic journey across the heart of the Outback. Some cars have scars, but you'll be hearing about that, and all of us felt rightly relieved and proud when we came down the back of Big Red at the end of the Simpson and headed into Birdsville. The word 'epic' is overused, but it is the right word for this wonderful trip. **The first reports start on p.14 .**

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Hello everyone and welcome to the September edition of Subaru News. At our September meeting we're welcoming **Chris from Western 4WDer Magazine**. WA's only local 4WD mag. Come along and hear from Chris himself.

The group that went the long way home from Karratha (via the Simpson Desert) has now returned safe and well, so pop along to the meeting to hear how their journey went.

And there's plenty happening now. We have the annual **Mundaring Powerlines Clean-up** this coming Saturday the 7th from 8.30.

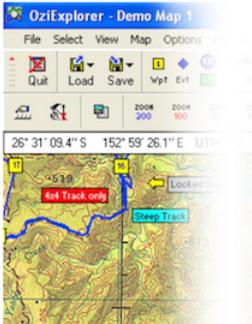


Please head down there for half a day representing the club to ensure the area is kept neat and tidy. We use the track every year and it's important to keep access open.

The **Tending the Tracks Alliance** also has many wonderful events lined up. I suggest following their Facebook page to see what's on and contacting them directly to secure a spot. A report on the **TTTa trip to Hill River is on pp. 21-23**. The Committee is pleased to announce that the Club is ordering a once-off batch of **40th Anniversary Key Rings**. There's a "trip" setup on the club website to put your name down on, if you want one of these key rings. There is a deadline of the October GM for final numbers.

Last weekend we welcomed two members of the **Subaru Wangara** sales team on the Lancelin sand dunes trip. They were in the latest model **Forester** which got around the dunes fairly well, especially as it was in factory condition with 18" alloys. With a change to 17" alloys and a 1" lift kit, we would probably get it up some of the 20m high dunes that a few modified cars got up. For this month's general meeting I will bring some new **compact and light-weight fire extinguishers**, including an automatic stick on extinguisher. **Cont. p. 5**

OziExplorer
GPS Mapping Software



**Get some GPS
mapping training**

We've received an offer from the Mitsubishi 4WD Club of WA to join them in a series of OZI Explorer (GPS Mapping) Software Training sessions.

Please register ASAP if you're interested in a spot. It's likely to be a free course run over a few sessions. Sessions times and days are not yet set. Once final numbers are confirmed they will get it under way.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

From p. 4. Come along and see if its bigger or smaller than your purse. The **Annual Dinner** is fast approaching and numbers will be capped. Set the night aside in your calendar and come on down. It's a big party this time as we will have **40th Year celebrations** at the same time.

Also, the 4WD Association is running a **raffle for a 40L Engel Fridge** and tickets are now on sale. Tickets can be purchased by anyone (including the general public). Grab them from me at any trip or meeting.

Happy camping and safe travels.

The Pres, Adrian Longwood

Biosecurity 4WD awareness

Everyone who drives off-road in Australia has to be aware of the damage such driving can do to the environment we drive in. In the south-west of WA two of the biggest dangers we pose are: spreading dieback and spreading noxious weeds.

To help 4WD Clubs minimise the risks, the 4WD Association is sponsoring a biosecurity awareness workshop for environment officers (and others interested).

The workshop is at **322 Mills Road East, Martin 6110 on Saturday 21 September, 9am-noon.**

Skills covered include: understanding Phytophthora dieback signs, how to clean your vehicle and how to plan a trip to minimise biosecurity risks. **Contact Adrian Longwood.**

TRIP COORDINATOR'S REPORT

It's a good time of year for camping and we have lots on

Firstly thanks to Joy for doing the report for the magazine last month whilst I was away, and thanks to the committee for continuing to plan trips and put them on the website. We do have a fair bit coming up in the next couple of months with the **Club's 40th anniversary and Annual Dinner** being one of the highlights. Put your name down quickly as places are limited and it's filling up nicely.

As this is probably the best time of year for camping we have something happening nearly every weekend, with lots of variety: from **working with TTTa**, to sitting around the campfire with **Cocktails and Jaffles**. The long weekend trip to the **Mellenbye Station** should be good but the wildflowers have already started so we might only catch the tail end of the season. There is the choice to camp, take your camper trailer/caravan or book into accommodation.

Thanks to everyone who helped out on the **epic 9600km /39 day deserts trip**. I must admit that the majority of the dirt roads we did (about 6000km) were in better condition than I had expected and even the Anne Beadell Highway was OK. We did have a few problems: like



Control arm: beaten and welded!

four flat tyres (2 unfixable on the same car), 3 cars with chipped windscreens, various electrical problems in auxiliary circuits such as second batteries and lights. One problem that three cars had (and I had previously) was the mounting bolts for the roof rails worked loose on the corrugations and needed to be retightened and secured with Loctite. Doing this would be a good job for the next Fiddles and Nibbles. The biggest problem we had was that one car managed to bend the lower control arm on one of the rear wheels which caused the car to 'crab' instead of driving straight. On the Simpson Desert sand this wasn't a major problem but it made for a nervous drive on the graded gravel and bitumen roads. Luckily it was able to be straightened and reinforced at Birdsville and we all continued on as planned. Cheers, **David**

10-pin bowling and Chinese dinner

Saturday 7 September

Break out your bowling socks, grab the family, and join us for an evening of 10 Pin Bowling at ZONE BOWLING, Morley.

Afterwards, we can go across the road to Wah Sun Chinese Restaurant for dinner.

This is a Club Social night that has been quite popular in previous years, so get your name down on the Club website or call Joy on 0429 473 709 to have your name added to the trip.

Bowling Start Time: 5 pm. We've booked two lanes for the Club. **Address:** Zone Bowling, 176 Walter Rd West, Morley WA 6062 **Bowling Cost:** \$16.90pp for 1 game for adults and \$13.90 for kids and concessioners.

Plus \$2 for shoe hire. Bring your own socks.

One game of bowling at ZONE BOWLING lasts around 45 minutes to 1 hour for 5 to 6 people. Plenty of time to score a perfect 300. To be more specific, it translates to each game lasting approximately 10 minutes per person on the lane

RAC MEMBER OFFER: Buy one game of bowling at any ZONE BOWLING™ centre and get one free, saving \$7. *Shoe hire is an extra \$2 per person.

Chinese Dinner: about 7 pm

Address: Wah Sun Chinese Restaurant - 189 Walter Road West, Dianella.



Coast care at Greenhead Sept 7 – 8

Join with others from the Tending the Track Alliance to help look after the coast area near Milligan Island.

These are usually great trips and a chance to work on the ground to protect endangered areas of our coast.

Contact

Alison Goundrey

talliance@ccwa.org.au

TRIP PROMOTIONS

An easy overnighter with a bit of history at Brockman's Hideout: 14 - 15 September

Wildflowers and granite outcrops with a bit of colourful history.

This trip is a simple overnighter out to Mollerin rock. An easy as, 4 hour road trip through the wheatbelt, stopping of at a few granite outcrops along the way to have a look at the wild flowers in bloom.

Nothing hard about this one. Bring camping gear and water as there is no drinking water out there. There are toilets, but no showers, so a good introduction to most camping



trips the club runs. This will be good for new members and families. I'm not expecting we'll be able to have fires. So far there hasn't been a lot of rain, and it looks that will be the case when we travel through the area. I'll keep an eye on the fire bans in the shire. If there aren't fire bans, we can use the fire rings they have. Bring Marshmallows just in case. This trip will involve some gravel roads. No bush bashing, so no scratches. We won't be going 4WDing, so leave the recovery gear at home. All the towns we'll go through have 24hr credit card fuel stations, so we can top up as we go. **Trip Leader: Travis Maskey**

Cocktails and Jaffles with the LandCruiser Club: 4-6 October.

This is an old-fashioned weekend of easy driving, camping at a country race track and an evening of light-hearted competition making cocktails and Jaffles. All with a fancy-dress theme of 'A Night at the Opera'. Bring a tent or a camper, but no dogs. Toilets and showers are on site.

Contact Jo Norton.



Mellenbyne wildflower long weekend

28 –30 September

We're out to see what the wildflower season brings us after the winter rains. We'll be staying at Mellenbyne Station, a working cattle station about 50 km north-east of Morawa, where we can "enjoy sitting by a campfire, watching the night sky and exploring the area's stunning display of seasonal wildflowers." <https://www.mellenbye.com.au/>

There are three types of accommodation: Camping (\$10pp), Shearers Quarters (\$15pp), and Dongas (\$70 queen bed)

The wreath flower - *Lechenaultia macranta* and other flowers such as everlastings and orchids can be seen on the property.

A day's outing will take us to the Coalseam Conservation Park where we can explore the picturesque geology of the Irwin River valley (including coal exposures and fossil shells) and view the spectacular display of colourful wildflowers.



When we started in 1979, these were the new kids on the block.
A lot has happened since ... and now, like the car, we're 40!



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do more of the
fun stuff



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SUBARU 4WD CLUB OF W.A. INC.

CLUB CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER 2019						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

Tues 3. Committee
Tues 10. General meeting
Sat 7. Tenpin bowling. Morley
Sat 14-Sun 15. Mollerin Rock
Thurs 19-Sun 22 TrackCare busy
 bee at Warriedar
Sat-Mon 28-30. Coalseam
 Conservation Park wildflower tri

OCTOBER 2019						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Tues 1. Committee
Tues 8. General meeting
Fri-Sun. 4,5,6 Cocktails and
 Jaffles
 Sat 19. Cryptic Cruise –
 navigation exercise
 Sun 27. Subaru Alliance Show

NOVEMBER 2019						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

Saturday 2. 40th
Anniversary Dinner.
Woodvale Reception
Centre
Tues 5. Committee
Tues 12. General meeting
Fri 8 – Sun 10 4WD Show
Sun 17. Preston Beach run

CLUB CALENDAR

DECEMBER 2019						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
15	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Tues 3. Committee
Sat 7. Christmas at Jo's
Tues 10. General meeting

The B(loody) back-up fuse that no-one knows about

I have a 2010 Forester with an LED light strip on the tailgate which normally comes on automatically when the tailgate is opened.

On a recent trip it stopped working and I noticed the tailgate open warning light had also stopped working so I figured it must have been the switch that was common to both. When testing the switch with the multimeter I touched something which shorted and there were no interior lights at all. I also lost remote locking, radio with GPS and reversing camera, dash lights, OAT/clock/fuel economy, and puddle lights, which was unusual.

I started by checking the illumination fuses and audio fuses and they were all OK so I continued pulling fuses trying to find the right one, and testing each one with a multimeter. This wasn't successful so I went searching through the

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wiring diagram on my tablet to see if there was a common fuse and found a 20 Amp one in the engine bay fuse box labelled "B" which was a Back-up. It was blown and after much anxiety the problems were fixed.

David Peck

THE GREAT DESERTS TRIP

Day 1, Perth to Oakabella: 8 July



Joy, Keith W, Daniel, David, Jason, Stephan, Keith L. (Leanne on the roof, behind).

I was up early as Marian was going to babysit our granddaughter Charlotte as her mum, Veronica, was working. It was 7 degrees so a good test for my new shoes and gloves, which seemed ok. I got the car out of the garage and put the spare tyre and antenna on the roof. As Jason was getting ready I made a last-minute decision to take some firewood, which I put in a bag on the roof. We said our goodbyes and were on the road at 8am and stopped for fuel before heading up the newly-opened Tonkin highway extension to Ellenbrook. It was a good run and will be better when finished. We arrived at Muchea a couple of minutes late and met with Stephan and Keith Low (who was travelling in Stephan's car), Keith Wilcox, Daniel, Joy and Leanne (who had her dog Hondo as a passenger in her Cruiser).

We left Muchea just after 9am and headed up the Brand Highway. The traffic wasn't too bad considering it was the start of the school holidays. **Cont. p. 16**



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Day 1: From p. 16. We had a good run through to morning tea at Badgingarra but when we reached Indian Ocean Drive the traffic got much heavier. Luckily we only had a short way to go as we stopped at Port Denison, for a look at the lookout then lunch by the boat ramp. It was a lovely 21 degrees with blue skies and light winds.



The buttressed barn and grain store at Oakabella

Just before we were going to leave I realised I couldn't find my car keys. I had them to drive in and hadn't gone anywhere so they had to be close by. After searching high and low I found them between the seat and centre console hidden by the new big fluffy sheep skins. We headed off and (of course) had to stop at the Dongara bakery before continuing through Geraldton.

We refuelled at the 440 roadhouse and were at the turnoff to Oakabella soon after. We took a back track in from the south which was dirt with some small washaways and a few puddles after the rain they'd had the previous week. We were surprised by the number of caravans and motorhomes already there and there weren't many options to put up tents so we had to squeeze in amongst them.

Stephan cooked chicken and rice, which was served with salad and after dinner we went and sat around the communal fire chatting with the owners and regular guests. Whilst



Shearing shed, Oakabella



sat there, which was on brick paving outside the tearooms, a fox came boldly up to within 5 metres and just stayed there. Hondo saw it and started barking but it wasn't afraid. Jason went over to chase it away and got within a couple of metres. We later found out that it was a regular and had been fed. The wind had dropped off and it was starting to get cold so we all drifted off to our tents by 8:30. **David Peck**

Day 2: Missing keys and faulty electrics, 9 July

It was a cold damp start to the second day, as the tents had attracted a heavy dew overnight. I got up early to have a shower, and then the troubles started: I could not find my car keys. I went back to the ablution block several times, checking in waste bins, in the shower cubicle to no avail. I went through the tent, my bags and the car but failed to find them. Others also pored over the car, but ... nothing. I had a spare set that we used that morning, but the thought of heading into remote Outback areas without two sets of keys was deeply worrying, so in Carnarvon **Cont. p. 18**



From p. 17 while others went to the Carnarvon Space and Technology Museum, Keith Low and I went in search of a key. This turned out not to be a simple affair: it would become a saga that would not be resolved until the next week when we were due to depart Karratha for the Northern Territory, via the Gary Junction Road. In Carnarvon, the Repco store had a catalogue of keys and located one that was designated for my 2014 Forester. They could get it in by overnight courier, so I paid them many dollars and (with hope that this would be an answer) set off to join the others and head to Quobba Station – a beautiful spot right on the



coast. It was a slow business in the Quobba office to sort out our tent sites, but we eventually settled in, setting up tents behind the dunes and in the lea of bushes to escape the prevailing wind.

With tents set up and dinner being made (we were cooking communally according to a roster) and the hope of a replacement car key, I started to relax. But then I noticed the fridge was not working! In fact I had no power at all coming from my secondary battery: no fridge; no lights; no compressor... nothing. David came to help and we spent around three hours troubleshooting, to no avail. We started on the troubleshooting again the next morning and spent another four hours. Then we had a breakthrough, then a fail, then success, then a fail, then we think we found the key issue. The 240 Volt inverter connected to the second battery had failed and was repeatedly shorting out the fuse board. But this was not the only issue.

When it comes to electricity, I know very little and my skill level is a bit like someone painting by numbers. I had wired the back of the car myself and had been meticulous in following wiring diagrams, and checking and checking. However, I had managed to reverse the polarity on the solar input. The combination of these two (probably unrelated) things meant **Cont. p. 19**

From p. 18 that the battery had not been receiving a charge from the new DC/DC charger I had installed to charge a new Lithium (LiFePO₄) battery. The battery had managed to keep a fridge, compressor and lights running for at least five days of active use (I trialled the set up over the Hill River trip earlier) without being re-charged. By the time we identified this, the battery was below 9 Volts (it should be more than 13) and would not receive a charge via the DC/DC charger even though we had sorted the problems. A call to Jim brought the suggestion to bulk charge the battery by bypassing the DC/DC charger. Doing this would enable the charger eventually to recognise the battery and start providing power. In doing this the wires started smoking as the Lithium battery sucked up as much power as it could. We stopped, let things cool, then tried again. Soon the battery was showing above 11 Volts and the DC/DC charger was connected ... and it has all worked perfectly since. Well, not the inverter which I checked back in Perth and it is stuffed.

The issue of the key, however, was not resolved. It turns out that in the catalogue of keys Subaru lists the wrong part for SJ Foresters. And the key itself is useless without a correctly coded electronic fob – a bit of electronic wizardry that uses 80-bit encryption so even a master locksmith cannot copy the code to write onto another key. All that came to light in Karratha after the key sent to Repco in Carnarvon

The moral of the story: be prepared, but mostly don't be stupid and do make sure you have looked EVERYWHERE when your little black key disappears near a car with black floors, black seats and an inattentive driver.

Quiz: who in this mag appeared to take a little bit of pleasure in another's misfortune while on a club trip.

turned out to be the wrong blank. Not Repco's fault, either. Even if I had managed to get a blank key, it would not have worked without the fob being re-coded and would have shut down the car semi-permanently if I had tried to use it. The happy end to the key saga happened in Karratha after we started to pull my car apart... again. The key had become caught up in a pair of socks in my clothes bag and dropped out on to the ground as I started to remove and shake everything in the car. **Stephan Millett**

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Tending to the last of its type

Hill River, 29-30 June

The mouth of the Hill River is about 15km north of Cervantes and is the last of its type. This small river with a seasonal sandbar across its mouth is the last of the barred rivers to remain relatively unspoiled by development and our trip there at the end of June was to help with the first-ever scientific survey of the health of the river and the surrounding habitats.

The trip was under the banner of the Tending The Tracks alliance (TTa), a group comprising shires in the Northern Agricultural Catchment Council, the Conservation Council of WA, Track Care WA, and the Four Wheel Drive Association of WA. The Four Wheel Drive Club of WA (not in the Association) has also taken on a strong role.

What we found after a very early start from Perth and (for me) three hours on the road, was a river mouth biotic system under pressure but with significant natural values that may not be too late to save. **Cont. p. 22.**

From p. 21. There is access to the river bar only by high-lift four wheel drive (because the rains had flooded the track in). But too many of these vehicles had made their own tracks in, causing blow-outs in the sand dunes, damage to the edge of the sedge marshes and leaving rubbish in places that made me cry to see.

We arrived just after 9.30am, set up base in a gravel car park about 80m from the start of the beach, and joined three staff from the Conservation Council, three marine biology scientists from Murdoch University, several concerned locals and a member of the TTTa steering committee.



Tony did help get the Prado out of the sand, but couldn't help smiling! The word is epicaricacy, or schadenfreude, Tony.

The scientists were

there to conduct a small study of the fish life in the river and to take measurements of water, mud and small creatures to determine the health of the river. Ross, Karen and Karen's guest Jude took their kayaks on to the water to take samples from the river bottom, take measurements while there and report back to the lead scientist, James. I led the others plus the CCWA people on a reconnaissance of tracks leading to the backwaters of the river, to identify boat launching places and to help Alison and Katie from the CCWA undertake bird surveys. Did someone say 'birds'? Yes, and of course Tony was there too with his camera and his good eye for movement. The most surprising part of this part of the trip for me was to watch and listen as Alison and Katie identified bird after bird by the calls the birds were making. The bird watchers found more than 25 species over the two days, at a time of day and time of year that had led them not to expect to find many. It was encouraging. **Cont. p. 23**

From p. 22. The water samplers found that there was a layer of thick muddy water on the river bottom that was very salty and had almost no oxygen. This was overlain by a layer of fresh water from recent rains, creating two distinct strata. The lack of oxygen was a significant issue for the health of organisms that would normally feed and breed on the bottom.

The scientist took their tinny along the river, using a variety of nets to find, tag and record fish. During the day they found disappointingly few, including



none of the small Hardyheads they were expecting to find. The news was better after they went out at night. A group of us that had been out looking for feral animal footprints crossing the tracks caught up with the scientists the next morning as they prepared to launch into the river. They reported good numbers of mullet and bream and some other fish of good size overnight. They still sought evidence of the smaller fish though, and were setting out to net in the reedbeds to look for them as we started to pack up for home.

The weather was kind to us, except for a bitter wind on the first morning and a cold snap at sunset, but nothing detracted from the pleasure of being in a beautiful part of the coast, with good people doing good work for a good cause. If the Club gets a chance, it should think about starting a continuing relationship with the Hill River as part of the TTTa program.

This site has some very beautiful places, is home to diverse wildlife and healthy vegetation and has little evidence of feral animal invasion but has a new land development on its south-eastern border and will face increasing pressure as Jurien and Cervantes continue to expand and continued uncontrolled access to the area poses a significant risk. In all a great trip. Thanks to **Joy** for coordinating the Club's role in this science-based outing. **Stephan Millett**

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