



DRIVE TORQUE eNEWS

DECEMBER 2023





COMMITTEE MEMBERS

President: Mark Honor Email president@subaruclub.com.au 0418 406 118

Vice President: Michael R Hamilton Email vicepresident@subaruclub.com.au 0407 223 843

Secretary: Michael R Hamilton Email secretary@subaruclub.com.au 0407 223 843

Treasurer: Brett Hampson Email treasurer@subaruclub.com.au 0408 409 634

Membership: Stephen Bennett Email membership@subaruclub.com.au 0413 368 007

Trip Convener: Jo Quinn Email trip_convener@subaruclub.com.au 0409 771 019

Trip Convener: Bill Twyman Email trip_convener@subaruclub.com.au 0418 681 237

Trip Convener: Dave Cook Email trip_convener@subaruclub.com.au 0417 258 272

Driver Awareness: Brian Flood Email 4wdtraining@subaruclub.com.au 0425 270 385

Driver Awareness: Mark Honor Email 4wdtraining@subaruclub.com.au 0418 406 118

Driver Awareness: David Wellham Email 4wdtraining@subaruclub.com.au 0407 089 071

Driver Awareness: Michael R Hamilton Email 4wdtraining@subaruclub.com.au 0407 223 843

NSW 4WD Assn. Delegate: David Wellham Email delegates@subaruclub.com.au 0407 089 071

NSW 4WD Assn. Delegate: Daniel Sorrasson Email delegates@subaruclub.com.au 0433 304 200

NSW 4WD Assn. Delegate: Bill Twyman Email delegates@subaruclub.com.au 0418 681 237

Webmaster: Troy Strickland Email webmaster@subaruclub.com.au 0409 908 977

Editor: Stephen Bennett Email editor@subaruclub.com.au 0413 368 007

Social/Catering: Alex Gatward Email catering@subaruclub.com.au 0402 734 110

Fundraising: Fiona Hampson Email fund_raising@subaruclub.com.au 0418 677 990

Public Relations Officer: Jo Quinn publicity@subaruclub.com.au 0409 771 019

Serjeant-at-arms: Bill Twyman 0418 681 237

Equipment & Merchandise Officer: Alex Gatward 0402 734 110



**The Club Committee is always here to help
you. If you want to email us, please use this
address ...**

secretary@subaruclub.com.au



SUBARU & RECREATIONAL 4WD CLUB INC.

Treasurers Report

Nov-23

Cash Book Balance Brought Forward	\$10,563.92
Plus Income	\$100.00
Less Expenditure	\$1,057.60
Closing Balance	<u><u>\$9,606.32</u></u>

<u>Income</u> -	Memberships	\$100.00
------------------------	-------------	----------

<u>Expenditure</u> -	Paypal Fees	\$3.20
	Meeting Catering reimburement to Alex	\$54.40
	Christmas Party Fund to Jo	\$1,000.00

Bank Reconciliation

Bank Account Balance as at 30/11/2023	ANZ	\$6,517.77
---------------------------------------	-----	------------

<u>Plus</u>	Funds held in Pay Pal as at 30/11/2023	\$2,793.80
	Cash on Hand	\$294.75
	Available Funds as at 30/11/2023	<u><u>\$9,606.32</u></u>



Association News & Updates: December 2023

Hello from Bill Twyman, Daniel Sorrasson and David Wellham – your friendly Delegates to Four Wheel Drive NSW & ACT (Association). Association documents are located on our website. Please contact via email at - delegates@subaruclub.com.au for information about these topics or in relation to the Association. Looking forward to seeing you all on the tracks or at a meeting soon.

November Quarterly meeting & AGM – 2023 - A Year in Review

HIGHS

- President being asked to sit on the Stake Holders Committee for the management of parks by local Aboriginals.
- National Parks finally starting to realise that they are not universally liked.
- ARB sponsorship total of \$10 000 over 3 years.
- Very successful Adventure Show in September with great club participation.
- Australian Automobile Aftermarket Association Conference in June.
- Ongoing involvement with Transport of NSW and its working group on the effects of aftermarket equipment on crash avoidance systems on our four-wheel drives.
- Successful DAFS workshop and DTU training courses.
- Gardens of Stone working committee and other future projects for the creation of the recreation area including recognition that 4WDDriving is not dangerous.
- Continued improvements in communications with the clubs.

LOWS

- National Parks and the ongoing problems with the booking system.
- Plans of management and NPWS lack of understanding of the greater community.
- Transport of NSW and the Vehicle Standard Working Groups and on-going issues with police targeting engineered vehicles.
- Membership with Australian National Four-Wheel Drive Council was not renewed because of ongoing issues that cannot be resolved at this time.

Association AGM & committee

The committee was re-elected with Roger Pollett standing down and John Barnsley taking his place.



National Parks & Wildlife Service

President Craig Thomas has had meetings with the minister's advisory council, mostly talked about evasive species and feral animals. NP are happy with current weather front and forecast rain. They have been a bit slammed by the Northern bushfires. Areas which were burned in 2019 were hit hard again and NP are worried about a third event within the next seven years which would render the area non-regenerative. Fire Trails in the past were simply a road you could drive down. New Fire Trail standards are such that the roads must be virtually a 2 lane highway. (Old "fire trails" would now be considered "management" trails) - For this reason, Gees Arm Fire trail will be turned into a "Highway". Cultural Burning - has not been done in over 200 years in NSW and the vegetation has changed, the environment has changed, farms have been put in etc - so Parks are questioning the wisdom of re-introducing this. Wetlands - discussion regarding the water that runs through the wetlands - water rights need to be purchased from the Murray-Darling precinct - but it can be resold as it exits the other side. Kosciusko NP - Brumby update - there has been a lot of social media negative publicity which have been blatant lies - NP having trouble competing with this and are looking at trying to do media releases to help control the information that is being released.

Park Fire Bans –National Parks

Many parks have park fire bans for 5 to 6 months each year. During the past year there have been 15 fires of significance that started from campfires, so they are left with little choice then to introduce these Park Fire Bans. Check NPWS website for details of each park status and restrictions that apply.

Driver Training Unit

DAF Driver Awareness Facilitator Day was on 11th November in ASQUITH, Michael & Bill attended. Dates for 2024 training will be announced soon.

Hipcamp.com

Lots of private properties all over the state. App available - no log-in needed. positive feedback. Especially if you contact property owner directly and negotiate privately outside the app.

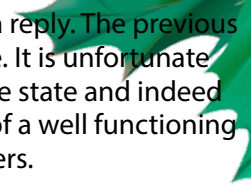
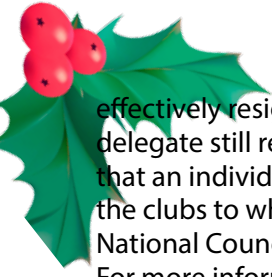
First Aid Course – Provide First Aid Blended Course – HLTAID011B – Australian Red Cross

A First Aid Course (Basic) will be held on Saturday February 2024, from 9.30am to 3.30pm at Camden RSL, 23 Cawdor Road Camden 2570. Only 20 spots available. Choice of one day training or additional 4 hours online learning before the day.

National Council Update

In May 2022 your State Committee recalled the delegate from his role as your representative on the National Council. This happened because it was felt that he did not follow instructions from the State Committee and he was not acting in the best interests of the members of NSW, ACT and SEQ. The concerns that the committee had were the way our state was portrayed, our ability to maintain insurance, the ownership of our logo and our ongoing membership to the National Council. All of these things were in jeopardy. Recalling the delegate and replacing them with someone new should have been the end of the issue. However, the delegate was asked by the Council members to stay on the Council and act as an advisor. Never in the past has a delegate been removed by a state and then been kept in place by the Council against the wishes of the state. This new low point in Council history has effectively stated that one volunteer has more value to the Council than a member.

We raised our concerns on numerous occasions to no avail and ultimately put in a formal written complaint late 2022. The complaint process was a waste of everyone's time as regardless of the information provided the Council decided in May 2023 that he was only guilty on a state level and not on a national level. So, they refused our request to remove him. This interference with the running of our state is at the heart of the vote held at the AGM on November 18, 2023. The motion that was moved from the floor was that our membership of the National Council not be renewed. A resignation letter was sent to the Secretary of the National Council at the end of November,



effectively resigning our membership as of December 31st, 2023. To date we have not received a reply. The previous delegate still remains an advisor to the Council and has not commented to this State Committee. It is unfortunate that an individual would put themselves above the best interests of the membership of his home state and indeed the clubs to which he belongs. While the State Committee believe wholeheartedly in the value of a well functioning National Council, they could not support a Council that interferes in the operations of its members. For more information on the details of our resignation please see Web Site

Clean up Australia Day

G'day Clean Up champions, It's official! Registrations for Clean Up Australia Day on Sunday 3 March 2024 are now open! The time to register is now – before all the end-of-year fun and festivities. Join the fabulous Clean Up community and help to tackle our national waste challenges and protect our environment. Get in early

and register for your chance to WIN, see below for details.



4WD driver fined after illegally entering national park ... and getting stuck!

A 4WD driver has been left almost \$5,000 out of pocket after illegally entering a flood recovery work zone and becoming stuck in a remote part of a NSW national park. The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) has issued a fine and formal cautions against the driver, who entered Mooball National Park, south east of Murwillumbah, through closed gates, ignoring the park signage advising that the park was closed. The driver was charged with offences under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 and ordered to pay \$4,800 in fines and vehicle recovery costs. Mooball National Park is currently closed to the public until early next year due to ongoing flood repairs. A number of significant landslips have impacted Baranbali Road and Wabba Road and heavy plant and machinery are currently operating in and out of the park working through the necessary repairs. NPWS Principal Project Officer, Silas Sutherland, said the roads in Mooball National Park are closed because there is a legitimate risk to the safety of visitors driving on those roads. "By ignoring the closures, you not only put yourself at risk but you are exacerbating the damage and making it more difficult for us to repair," he said. "The driver ignored three separate signs stating, 'Park Closed' and 'Road Closed', to reach their final destination." The vehicle was found abandoned in steep terrain, and a number of NPWS staff, tow trucks and large plant were needed to retrieve it. The floods of 2022, and subsequent rainfall, has resulted in a number of significant landslips and sections of the road have been undermined.



Trip Convener December report - Bill Twyman

Since the November "Drive Torque" magazine the club has had 3 outings.

- November 25th - Saturday - Five Waterfalls of the Southern Highlands Day Trip
- November 29th - Weekday Wanderer #22: Barrenjoey Lighthouse Day Trip.

This trip was postponed.

- December 2nd - This years' **Club Christmas Party** at Coolendel.
- December 6th - Weekday Wanderers **Christmas Party** Shark Island (Boowambillee) midweek picnic, ferry trip on Sydney Harbour.

Upcoming trips

Additional information can be found on the Club's "Upcoming Trips" page.

(New midweek & weekend trips will be posted early next year.)

- January 12th 2024 - Join us for the Annual Barefoot Bowls contest at Camden with a short General meeting and dinner. Camden Sports Club, 22 Cawdor Road. Bowling at 6:30pm. Dinner in Bistro afterwards. Please register so that we know numbers.
- February 9th, 2024 - February General Meeting at Ermington Community Centre.
- March 8, 2024 - Join us for our March General Meeting and BBQ in the park at Ermington
- April 12, 2024 - Join us for our April 2024 General Meeting at Ermington Community Centre.

Merry Christmas to all



WANTED!

I am assuming we all originally joined the club for the same reason; to get out and about in our vehicles and explore, camp, 4wd and socialise with like minded people. We share laughs, ideas, skills, experiences and stories. I personally have learnt so much from so many different people in the club and have also made some fantastic friends. There is something about travelling together to remote areas, working through unforeseen circumstances and sharing drinks around a campfire under millions of stars that forge lasting friendships in such a short period of time. None of this would have been possible if these trips were not on offer.

We are currently in desperate need of trips in our calendar. If every member ran just one trip in 2024 we would have over 60 trips on offer for everyone to choose from! Even if half of us ran 1 trip, that would give us a choice of about 30. Trips can comprise of any multitude of ideas, day trips, social trips, mid-week trips, weekend camps, extended trips, BBQ get togethers, information sessions.....the list goes on. If you think that there is no way you could run a trip or you don't know where start, we can help.

I have never been on a Club trip that has been bad – I have been on heaps that haven't gone to plan, where we have gotten lost, where weather has been extremely pour, vehicles have broken down in the middle of nowhere and roads closed have caused rapid change of plans. But every single one of those trips has been memorable, lessons were learnt and adventures were made for great future campfire stories. Basically, everyone is happy just get out with friends, no matter where we go or what trip is on offer.

I have always found our members to be extremely helpful with no question ever being a dumb question. I joined the club with a Nissan x-trail and no 4wd experience whatsoever. I have since run many trips including extended trips to Cape York & across the Simpson and numerous day trips. I was able to do this from what I have learnt from many members over the years and the great support that our Club offers.

If you have enjoyed a trip or learnt something from our Club, I urge you to have a go, run a trip and give a little back. Without trips we don't have a Club. Start by deciding personally where you would like to go or what you would like to see and go from there. Our Trip Convenors, and any other member for that matter, will be more than happy to answer any questions you may have and offer ideas and support for your trip. Maybe 2 members can combine and jointly run one trip together if that makes you feel more comfortable. Due to work circumstances most of my trips have been mid-week. I have notes for over 20 of these trips and you are more than welcome to run the exact same trip on a weekend – all the work is done and ready go, please just contact me and I am happy to help you out.

Our 3 Trip Convenors, Bill Twyman, Dave Cook & myself are all willing to help if you are unsure where to start or need assistance. Give a little back and remember, no trips = no Club. I look forward to seeing more trips on offer for us all soon.

Jo



Serjeant at Arms December Report

With few outings this month there has been little opportunity to reward anyone for doing something unusual, out of the ordinary or unexpected.

The Coolendel Camping Trip saw a couple of incidents which were related to the hammering we received from the weather, some of our members equipment was damaged, fortunately no one was hurt. Lyn & Dave Cook had to pack up their gear after the 1st afternoon storm on Saturday afternoon, heading home after the festivities.

Shark Island ferry trip was also incident free apart from Kath trying to flag down the ferry captain to pull up at our wharf.

Remember - *As slow as possible - As fast as necessary ...*

DRIVER AWARENESS NEWS

We have already begun planning our Driver Awareness activities for 2024. These trips are not yet confirmed, so you won't see them on the calendar, but here's a little preview of what to expect ...

In January - Return to the Turon (hopefully the National Park will be open this time)
In April - A weekend focussing on recoveries (possibly at the Watagans)
In June - A sand driving weekend at Stockton Beach

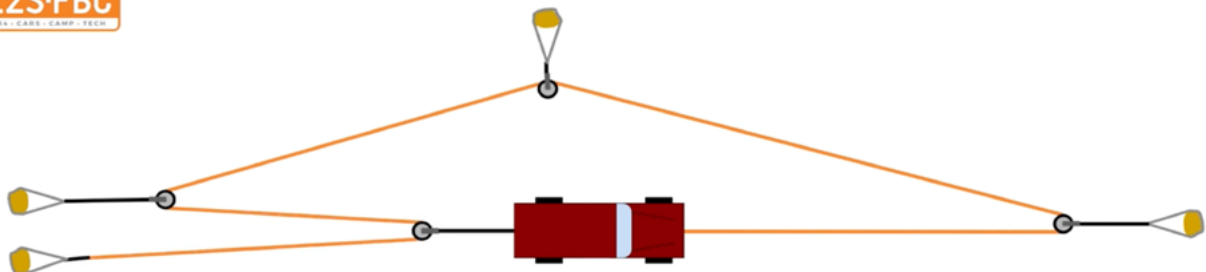
Whilst driver awareness trips are especially relevant to new members, remember that experienced members are also welcome to attend, both to help out the newer members and to refresh their knowledge and skills.

Our main focus is always safety, so in any recovery situation, please remember to manage the risk by working through the Hierarchy of Recovery.



Bill and I recently attended a winch training course at the Getabout Training Services property at Gemalong, near Lithgow. We came away knowing a lot more about winch safety, mechanical advantage, estimating the loads on recovery equipment, and the gear needed for complex winching setups.

Here's a tricky little puzzle for you. Have a look at the unusual winching operation below, which has a single line pull from the winch at the front of the vehicle, going through a series of pulleys back to the rear of the vehicle. What would happen if you started winching in the rope ??



Michael Hamilton.
For the Driver Awareness Team.

“As slow as possible ...
Only as fast as necessary.”



FIVE WATERFALLS DAY TRIP.

Saturday 25 November 2023

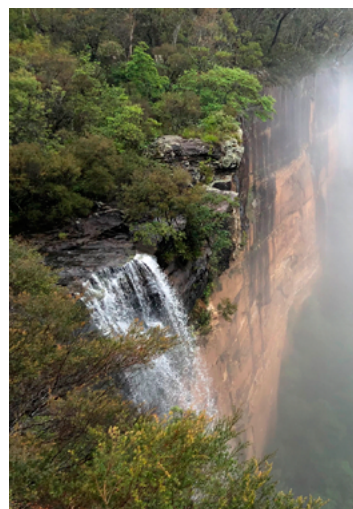
It was a cool, wet, misty and rainy Saturday morning down on the Southern Highlands.

The meeting point was Fitzroy Falls for our touring day trip.

There were three options for walks at the meeting point.

8am for the long walk to the lockouts for Twin Falls & Lady Hordern Falls

9am for the medium walk to lookouts and to look at wild flowers



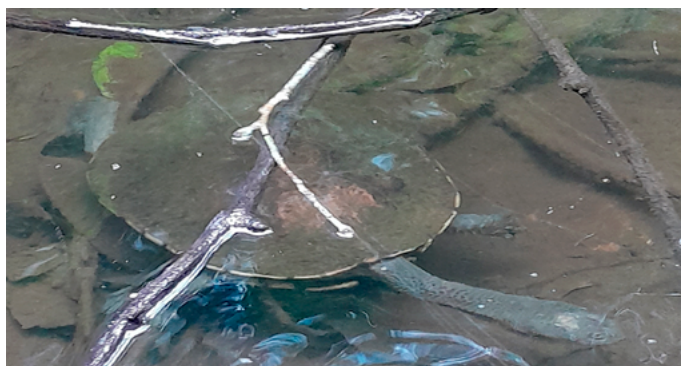
10am for a short walk along Wildes Meadow Creek just to Fitzroy Falls lookout

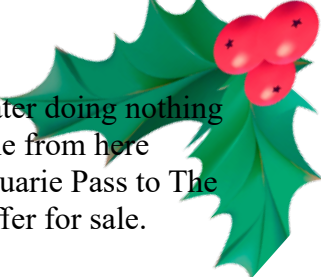
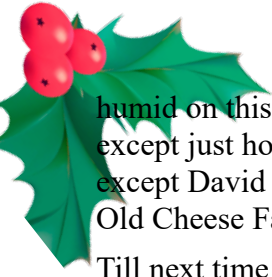
Four of the Five of us opted for the short walk due to the weather – David, driving a Colorado, and his son Aaron were the only members to walk any further then the 5 to 10 minutes to Fitzroy Falls. The view of Fitzroy Falls was very limited due to low clouds and so we decided to move onto the next lookouts over Belmore Falls. The drive was on some lovely country roads and across a causeway over Barrengarry Creek which is very close to where the creek drops over the falls. The two lookouts for Belmore Falls had even less of a view. The cloud was very low and thick, we could hear the water going over the fall but couldn't see a thing. So again, we decided to move onto the next falls, Carrington Falls which is on Kangaroo River and luckily, we had a much better view with no cloud at all. We were able to walk to all of the vantage points for this over 90m

drop and even went around to be very close to the top of the falls.

We were now starting to get a little bit hungry, so we did a short drive to a picnic area near Nellies Glen for a bite to eat for lunch. A short walk and we could view the beautiful Nellies Glen which is on Missingham Creek, this is a must see location and maybe even a spot to swim on a hot day. On the way back to the cars we looked over and there was blood all over Michael's pants on his leg – his new Ineos Grenadier had not protected him from the sharks and crocodiles at the Glen – but then we saw that it was only a little leech or two that had done the damage. Now we were all checking over our legs and in our shoes for the little blood suckers. Angela was in the near new Forester with her sister Joanna and she also had a leech, but it didn't take hold, so no blood drawn there.

The final falls of the day was down and around and almost at the bottom of Macquarie Pass – The Cascades. There was a great little walk along the creek to the falls and Scott who had parked his Triton guided us to these wonderful falls. Due to the rain it was quite





humid on this trail but well worth the effort. There was a turtle, or was it a tortoise, in the water doing nothing except just holding its breath. This was the end of the trip and we all made our own way home from here except David & Pam – trip leaders in the old Forester – who went back up and around Macquarie Pass to The Old Cheese Factory at Robertson for a hot beverage, cake and look around at the items on offer for sale.

Till next time – cheers and hope to see you on the tracks sometime soon.
Maybe next time we will head over to Minnamurra Falls.





Subaru & Recreational 4WD Club

Coolendel Christmas Party - Trip Report. by Bill Twyman

Date of trip: Saturday & Sunday - 2nd & 3rd December 2023

Trip Leaders: Jo Quinn, Kelly & Chris Mifsud

Trip Participants: Jo Quinn	Adrian McCormack
Chris & Kelly Mifsud	John & Jean Hocking
Kevin McCormack	Cath & Tom De Santis
Craig Fitzpatrick	Evan & Jessica King
Mark & Karolyn Honor	Joanna & Angela Hill
Geoff Adcock	Roger & Amanda Vella
Dave Cook	Alex Gatward
Scott Ashurst	Brett & Fiona Hampson
Ray & Cheryl Bonello	Jim & Rowena Carroll
Stephen & Susan Bennett	Brett Atkins
David & Julie Bennett	Bill Twyman





A few members arrived on the Thursday - Steve & Sue, David & Julie, Kevin, Geoff and staked out our claim at the campground.

More on the Friday, Jo, Chris & Kelly, Craig, Cath & Tom, myself with the balance getting in on Saturday.

The sealed 20 odd km of road in from Nowra was pretty good with several stoppages at the traffic control check points for road works - repairing landslides and road subsidence's. The last 10km from the quarry turn off as most know is dirt, rough & quite narrow with steep & winding bits. Unfortunately, I come up against a truck & dog trailer on a downhill hairpin bend meaning I had to reverse the camper trailer about 30m back uphill & around the bend to get out of his way.

We had a great shady area at the campground protecting us from the sun with a campfire ring with bench seats right in the centre of us all, John & Jean went flashy & stayed in the glamping tents. I needed help with my camper trailer awning, just as I unraveled it a gust of wind come up, I hadn't even put any pegs in the ground yet, so it all blew over.

Friday evening, we had our fivesies at about 3o'clock & once we lit the fire & the wine started flowing the stories & frivolity also started, as predicted it rained so it was umbrellas & raincoats for a while. Steve & I stayed up till late chewing the fat & burning more timber. The Peacocks had us up early the next morning, one had nested in a tree right above where Ray & Cheryl put their tent.

Saturday started with great weather, Jo & Chris put up a Christmasy backdrop for some photo opportunities while Evan played the entertainer with his massive bubbles for the kids. The local wildlife kept making appearances with the world's fastest wombat (that I've ever seen) plus goannas of all sizes and peacocks walking through our campsites. We got our 1st storm just after lunch which took out Dave & Lyn Cook's awning and camp gear, also Cath & Tom had a tarp blown down & got water in their tent. When the rain stopped, we decided to commandeer the camp kitchen area for our festivities. With a big team effort, we got all the food, tables & decorations under cover & that storm come back & hit us again. We had a brief meeting (8min - Mark timed it), and after few words from our President we started the fivesies and more storytelling.



• The start of the second storm



The beginning of the first storm

Jo, Kelly & Chris put on a magnificent feast for our dinners and desserts and I reckon nobody walked away hungry.

Our final entertainment for the evening was Cath doing an air guitar and miming of a Johnny O'Keefe song.

Some headed off on the Sunday - the rest of us who were leaving on Monday were advised of 2 coaches that were coming in to the campground about 10 o'clock, so it was a crazy dash to pack up "wet" to get out of the camp area and off the narrow road before the coaches turned up, luckily, I didn't see them on my way out.

A great weekend, thank you again Jo, Kelly & Chris.
eNews



More photo's can be found on the club web site.



Weekday Wanderer Christmas Party – Shark Island

Date: 06/12/23

Trip Leader: Jo Quinn

Just 3 short days after our Club Christmas party at Coolendel the mid-week Christmas party rolled around. 20 of us headed to Shark Island in Sydney Harbour to further spread the Christmas cheer.



The 1.5ha Island sits in Sydney Harbour, just 1km from Rose Bay, is accessible by ferry & is operated by NSW National Parks. The island was known by the local Aboriginal people as Boambilly, and the current name comes from its shape, which is claimed to resemble a shark. The island has been the site of drownings, shipwrecks, and at least one shark attack, when, in 1877, Australian rules footballer and cricketer George Coulthard was

sitting in a boat anchored offshore and was pulled overboard by a large shark. Coulthard managed to return to the boat, his attack and escape were widely reported. Parts of the island were set aside as a recreation reserve as early as 1879 and it was also used as an animal quarantine station and naval depot until 1975. At that time, it became exclusively a recreation reserve and part of the Sydney Harbour National Park.

Unlike the weekend at Coolendel, the weather was perfect, clear blue skies and warm sunshine. It was a perfect summer day to spend on our Harbour. We caught the Captain Cook cruise boat to the Island via Taronga Zoo. We were lucky enough to see Richard Bransons cruise ship the Resilient Lady docked at the international wharf. The ship was absolutely massive dwarfing even the Harbour Bridge as we cruised past.

We arrived on Shark Island to basically have the entire place to ourselves. We set up in the large wooden gazebo that provided us with shade, tables and seats. The Island, being small, was easy to explore with small walking tracks around the edge which led us to sandstone grottos, caves, sandy beaches and encompassing 360-degree views of Sydney Harbour. There is also a small active pile lighthouse just offshore.

Lunch was a combination of “fivsie” style contributions, and the spread certainly didn’t disappoint or leave us hungry. With everything from sandwiches, Christmas cake, dips, meat platters, lollies, cheeses, and chocolate dipped fruit it was a very generous feast considering we had to carry everything with us. We even managed to bring a long a small Christmas tree, personalised baubles and wine glasses with the latter used for ice cold beer or wine to celebrate the upcoming festive season.

A great day with great company, I thank all those who have attended the Weekday Wanderer trips this year and made them so successful. I wish all our members and families a Safe, Happy & Merry Christmas and best wishes for 2024.

Jo





More photo's can be found on the club web site.



FOR YOUR INFORMATION

PAGE

Extract from The Hills - Neighbourhood Watch December 2023 Newsletter

What impact, if any does crime have on the cost of living?

Petrol and diesel prices are currently above \$2.00 a litre which means the price to fill the average family car now exceeds \$100.00. Drive Off's "FTP" (fail to pay), is the terminology used to identify people who fail to pay for the fuel at service stations. Thieves use stolen cars or stolen number plates to commit this crime. According to authorities this is a growing problem, with offences up 42% in one year. 11,673 cases of FTP were reported over a 12 month period ending October this year. The estimated cost nationally of this crime, according to the oil industry, was \$82million last financial year.

A recent FTP incident captured on CCTV showed two men in a flatbed truck, with three empty 1,000 litre containers on the tray, drive into a South West Sydney service station. While the driver remained in the cabin the other man proceeded to fill each of the three containers with diesel. When completed he climbed back into the truck and they subsequently drove off without paying. The total bill for 3,000 litres of diesel that day was \$6,300.00.

Their getaway was short lived when the driver rolled the truck while trying to make an illegal turn on the M7, spilling its load of diesel. Uninjured, both men climbed out of the overturned truck, leaving the scene on foot. The incident left behind a huge clean up mess, causing major traffic delays on the M7. Charges for FTP come under the crimes act for fraud.

The Committee Members Wish You A





WHERE AM I

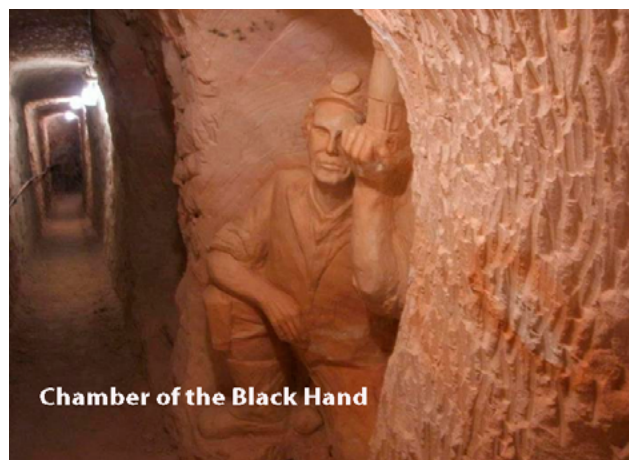
Last Months co-ordinates were 29°25'38.6"S 147°58'43.9"E which places me in Lightning Ridge NSW. Lightning Ridge is a unique and historic opal mining town in Outback NSW, Lightning Ridge is famed for its rare black opal, mining history and colourful locals. Get up close to an array of beautiful gems at markets and opal stores, try your hand at fossicking and relax in artesian bore baths as you savour the outback wonders of this iconic town.



Lightning Ridge is also popular for its naturally-heated artesian bore baths. Water from deep inside the Great Artesian Basin flows into an outdoor pool, maintaining a constant temperature of around 40C. Relax in the heated bubbling waters as you gaze up at the starry night sky above.

Visit the Chambers of the Black Hand to see fascinating sculptures carved into the walls of an underground mine. You'll find carvings of Jack Sparrow, Shrek, a Samurai warrior and much more.

The John Murray Art Gallery displays vivid acrylic and watercolour paintings that capture life in Lightning Ridge.



These are just a few attractions to be found in Lightning Ridge.

Nathan & Bill, good work for finding me and for being so precise.



Last month's WHERE AM I, I added some questions, to see if anyone had some ideas. (See below)

If you were going to this place for a trip. Which way would you go? Would you use back roads instead of Highways? Where would you stop, look around/camp? What places of interest are on your route?

There were no suggested routes received, so I put together a route for you to have a look at.

Meeting point Little Hartley.

Travel to Mudgee.

From Mudgee to Ulan on the Ulan Road.

Ulan to Coolah via Turill and onto the Warrumbungles Way to Coolah.

Coolah to Coonabarabran via Binnaway.

Coonabarabran to Baradine via Bugaldie.

Baradine to The Sculptures in the Scrub Campground via Walker St, Beveridges Rd, Duggins Rd, Top Crossing Rd and Dandry Rd to the campground. Set up camp and do the Sculptures in the bush walk.

Pack up camp the next morning and go to the Salt Caves and the Pilliga Forest Lookout Tower. Then head for the Aboriginal Sandstone Caves. After doing the caves walk, head up to the Pilliga Hot Spring Baths and camp ground. Set up camp and then enjoy a soak in the hot springs.

Next morning pack up and head to Collarenebria via Burren Junction. If time permits have a soak in the thermal pool at Burren Junction.

Collarenebria to Lightning Ridge via Angeldool Rd and Lightning Ridge Rd.

When ready to leave Lightning Ridge, head for Brewarrina via Hebel (Qld). At Brewarrina you can visit the Aboriginal Cultural Museum and fish traps. I found it very interesting.

Brewarrina to Bourke via Collerina. When traveling from Collerina take the Weilmoringlie Rd and this will take pass the start of the Darling River. When in Bourke I suggest you stay at Kidmans Camp at North Bourke. Make sure you visit the Back Of Bourke Centre. There are a number of other place's to visit and things to do in and around Bourke.

When you leave Bourke you have options. One is to head back to Sydney via Cobar and/or Nyngan. OR Follow the Darling River until it meets the Murray and then put together a route home.

I did not suggest a lot of places to stay or camp, as it depends on whether to free camp or caravan parks, how long the stay is and the number of people on the trip. If anyone would like to put together a trip using what is here or part there of and would like help, the trip conveners and myself are available to help in anyway we can.



WHERE AM I THIS MONTH

30°32'02.6"S 145°06'52.8"E
30°56'08.3"S 144°25'01.9"E

This month there are two locations that I am at. Can you find me?

When you think you have found the secret destination, email me at s_bennett51@outlook.com with your location. If you have visited this location, send a photo and/or write a few paragraphs of your visit there, or a funny experience you may have had there and what you liked/disliked about the place. There is no prize.



**A BIG shout out
to JO, KELLY and
CHRIS
for putting
together TWO
GREAT Chrissy
get togethers.**



How Aussies Measure Distance:

Next door = 1-2 minutes

Just up the road = 10-20 minutes

Couple a k's = 20-30 minutes

Not too far = 30-60 minutes

A decent drive = 5+ hours



Until Next Time
STAY SAFE