



Newsletter No. 41 August 2016

G'Day, Outback Vic here

Its been 3 months since the last newsletter and we have had some awesome trips over Winter and I have some big news on a couple of major developments here at Great Divide Tours, so I'll keep this newsletter short and bring you up to date on the trips we've been on and the big NEWS!



I can't wait to be part of this trip and hope you can join us. Email me for more details or to make your booking. I am having the website updated early next week with this trip so you can book online from 24 August.

I have attached to this email a copy of the African tour itinerary with all the details of where we go and what is included. Actually, just about everything is included, you just have to fly yourself to the start point and from then on everything else is taken care of, hire of the 4wdrive and the camping gear, meals, fuel and access to some of the most amazing scenery and wildlife.

*The Big news first
Africa here we come
2-20 April 2017*

We've been doing New Zealand for 6 years now, so it's time we spread our wings and saw more of our great world. To make sure we do it safely and responsibly we have partnered with the experts in African self drive tours, Self Drive Adventures, and asked them to put together a trip specifically for our clients. So now we can offer an exclusive tour for our clients taking you on a Wilderness and Wildlife adventure to Namibia in 2017.



This is an awesome 4wd trip allowing you to safely experience Namibia, a dramatic and different country, its incredible scenery and abundant wildlife, its friendly people and political stability. We are guided throughout the tour by a highly experienced guide from Self Drive Adventures and you will be accompanied by Vic Widman. There are so many highlights including elephants,

rhinos, antelope and giraffe, we will meet the native Himba people and see dramatic scenery like none other including huge canyons, dry deserts and salt lakes, painted deserts, the Skeleton coast and the highest free standing sand dune in the world. I can't wait to experience it.

But wait, there is more!

Outback Icons Tour Fully accommodated

3-11 September 2017

Well, you asked for it so here it is, a fully accommodated outback 4wd tour to some of the most iconic locations in our vast outback. If you are not into camping, or you just want a break from setting up the tent, this is the trip for you. It includes accommodation every night of the tour, dinner and breakfast. All you have to do is pack your clothes and something for lunch each day and your camera to record some of the best outback scenery you will see.



**We will visit Big Red on our
Accommodated Outback Icons tour**

We haven't missed anything on this journey from fabulous Trilby Station on the Darling River to the Underground

Motel at White Cliffs and the Family Hotel at Tibooburra, Cameron Corner and Cooper Creek at Innamincka, the famous Dig Tree and the more famous Birdsville Hotel, as well as visiting Big Red and the Simpson Desert. You get to drive the length of the Birdsville Track, stop overnight in the historic Marree Hotel and enjoy lunch at the Road Kill cafe in the Prairie Hotel. This tour is fully escorted by one of our expert outback guides with all the usual support that Great Divide Tours can provide from its 28 years of outback travel experience.



**Each night we are in a famous hotel
for dinner and a good sleep.**

Details on this trip and a booking form are on my website at www.4wd.net.au and I've attached the full itinerary to the accompanying email.

Flinders Ranges in a couple of weeks

Starting 5 September we have our 12 day Flinders Ranges tour. I am expecting that the wildflowers this year may well be the best we have ever seen, so if you have a couple of weeks spare I suggest you consider joining us on this fabulous trip. It commences in Port Augusta, just 2 days west of Sydney and then we spend 10 days in the Ranges exploring some beautiful 4wd tracks covered in wildflowers and affording some of the best views you can enjoy on any

2

GREAT DIVIDE TOURS

4WD Driver Training, 4WD Tag-along tours, Team Building, OH&S 4WD Training
02 99131395 info@greatdividetours.com.au www.4wd.net.au

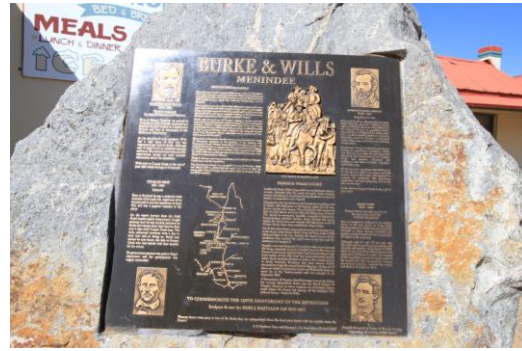
4wd trip in the country. We visit no less than 7 private stations to utilise their 4wd tracks including the amazing Skytrek, Merna Morna and Alpana station tracks, We also include a visit to Arkaroola and you have the chance to do the Ridge Top tour. After exploring the length and breadth of the Ranges we lead you up the Strzelecki Track to Merty Merty and onto Cameron Corner and then through Sturt National Park for our final night at the impeccable White Cliffs Underground Motel. I have a few spots available so if you wish to see the outback like it is rarely seen, with all the wild flowers, drop me an email to receive the detailed day by day itinerary.



The scenery in the Flinders Ranges is as good as it gets

Burke and Wills tour

This great historic trip leaves Melbourne on 4 September and we still have spots available on it also. We will be tracing the ill fated Burke and Wills Expedition along its exact route from Melbourne to Swan Hill, then through Mungo NP and along the Darling River to Mootwintje NP, then across to the infamous and tragic Dig Tree on the Cooper Creek before arriving at Birdsville. After Birdsville we trek through the Diamantine Channel country to Boulia and onto Cloncurry and all the way to Burke and Wills northern most camp on the Gulf of Carpentaria, the trip concludes at Karumba.



Given how spectacular the outback looks at present after all the rain, this trip is going to be another cracker, apart from the amazing historical aspect and the vast outback travelling, the wild flowers in the desert regions will make this very special.

For details see our website www.4wd.net.au or drop me an email for the day by day itinerary.

GPS Course

We ran one of these in May and it proved so popular that it booked out almost immediately so we have arranged a second one now on 29 October with Brian Sommerville from GPSOZ again conducting it.



For those that were wondering, the light shield on my HEMA is a HEMA product, let Brian know you want one and he will bring them along to the course, they only cost a few dollars.

GREAT DIVIDE TOURS

**4WD Driver Training, 4WD Tag-along tours, Team Building, OH&S 4WD Training
02 99131395 info@greatdividetours.com.au www.4wd.net.au**

This is what it will cover in the HEMA GPS course:- :

A comprehensive training session that covers the use of EziOzi 4WD Off Road Navigation (main emphasis) and iGO Street Navigation.

In 4WD navigation become an expert in changing and finding the best map adding your own maps creating and planning a route working with waypoints saving, deleting and changing track logs intro to Hema Navigator Explorer Windows Software

In Street Navigation learn about the Map Screen - what does it all mean, customisation, Routes - how to find places, multiple stops, find POIs Quick Find How to update maps

This 3 Hour course is offered at \$75per GPS unit, so if there are two of you with one HEMA Navigator GPS, the cost is just \$75. The courses are held in beautiful Bayview on the northern beaches of Sydney.

To enrol in this course just drop Vic or Jenny and email at info@4wd.net.au. This would make a great Father's Day present, 3 hours of learning followed by lunch or dinner overlooking beautiful Pittwater sounds great to me.

A snow trip next Winter

We ran a few of these about 4 years ago, I am planning another one over the Bank Holiday weekend in August 2017, stay tuned as I research it and post up the details on the website later this year, let me know if you are keen for 3 days of 4wd touring in the snow (BTW - we

won't be camping but will have some nice accommodation and meals included on this trip).



"Nice hat Vic." But it keeps my ears warm, so who cares how weird I look!

Bush survival workshop, prepare respond, prevail 12 November 2016

Great Divide Tours has teamed up with Scott Heiman from Heiman Habitat to provide a day long workshop on survival in the bush, what would you do if you became lost, or injured or your vehicle broke down miles from any help – could you survive?

Come along and learn new skills, challenge yourself and be prepared.

We'll be kicking off first thing Saturday morning at our Castle View Training Centre, just 14 kilometres north Braidwood. Our 240 acre property is great for getting our hands dirty with practical demonstrations, with the added bonus of a well-appointed training room and dining facility, and bunk accommodation

We never think of what we would do if somehow we became lost or stranded in the bush or the outback. The reality is, many of us do venture into remote areas without adequate knowledge of how to survive. It may just be a day trip into the mountains or that long dreamed of outback trip. Even with one of our tag-along trips, you may wander off to enjoy the beauty of the outback and become disorientated. This workshop will give you practical ideas on how to survive if the worst occurred. From building a shelter, to

GREAT DIVIDE TOURS

**4WD Driver Training, 4WD Tag-along tours, Team Building, OH&S 4WD Training
02 99131395 info@greatdividetours.com.au www.4wd.net.au**

capturing water or making a fire without matches. This is a brilliant course, a must for those that love our country and an even greater must for those travelling with loved ones". See more details on Scott here www.heimanhabitat.com.au



If all else fails pray for water

Great feedback

It is always nice to receive emails like the following one.

We would like to express our thanks to Great Divide Tours for organising a fantastic trip that we have just finished. Kimberly tour from 9th July. During the tour we visited some of the greatest areas in Australia, meet lots of great people and had the experience of a life time. Your tour guide Tony (Captain Underpants) Davys is a major asset for Great Divide Tours, his interactions and friendship with all of us during this epic 26 days tour was very much appreciated and enjoyed, from his animated story telling around the camp fire, his enjoyment at sharing his knowledge and love of birds and other animals in the wild, through to the assistance he gave all of us as we required it on the many tracks we explored.

We also appreciate the new friendships we made along the way with our other adventures, which made this tour one we

will remember for a very long time. We also meet with one of your new employees Tom Savage and his delightful wife Dawn during this trip, we will be looking forward to joining them and Tony on one of there adventures with Great Divide.

David and Leanne Parry

Thanks David and Leanne, but I am a bit worried about the reference to "Captain Underpants", I guess what goes on tour, stays on tour, or at least I think Tony hopes so!!

Driver Training

Despite being away for about 7 weeks over the past 3 months, it seems like I haven't been home at all, well I haven't, as I've been down at the training centre delivering more training. We have had several corporate groups visit us from the ADF & AFP, Essential Energy and even the Bureau of Stats (don't mention the census!) Plus we have had our usual weekend courses and of late a lot of individual 4wd training, imagine being stuck with me all on your own for a day or two of full on training. Great value for money and a great way to really learn the ins and outs of your own vehicle, I have to admit though that after two solid days of instructing my old voice box does get a bit croaky, I even surprise myself as to how much I can talk!



ADF boot camp!

We've also had a heap of rain down at Braidwood, in fact we managed 6 inches in one 24 hour period and had several rivers running through the property, we even postponed one course because it was just too deep in water to conduct the training. And we've had a few trees down with the high winds but lets look on the bright side, we've now got plenty of firewood. I have noticed that my local wildlife population has exploded with wombats and kangaroos visiting the grounds every day, even the frogs are having a croaking good time in our dam, makes it hard to sleep at night with all the nocturnal activity going on!



The flooded entrance to Castle View in June

Where have we been

Since the May Newsletter we have had heaps of trips on. My Maralinga trip, two Simpson Desert trips, the Big Red Bash, the Canning Stock Route trip, the Kimberley tour, Cape York x two and now two Arnhem Land trips, just have a look at our Spot trackers to see where everyone is at the moment, especially the Arnhem Land trips, some of the places we get too up there are simply stunning. Speaking of Arnhem Land, we have found a new beach location to add to our itinerary in West Arnhem Land and Brian's trip just spent two days there on a boat, check out the Spot tracker here

<http://www.4wd.net.au/4wd-tours/follow-us-on-our-trips>

Here are some photos from my Maralinga Trip, it was close to one of the best trips I have ever done, so we have added it to our 2017 calendar and have bookings for it already.



The Anne Beadell Hwy



Vic made it to Surveyor Generals corner on his 62nd birthday, Yay!



The things you see on Lake Gairdner



One of the best red sand dunes in Australia, and we know where it is



Gotta Luv corrugated iron



Camp on Googs Track



**You wouldn't want to have been here on
22 October 1956
Atomic bomb test site at Maralinga**



Beach driving near Ceduna



Hook used to tie down the bomb





Sunset on the Anne Beadell Hwy



Big Red Bash trip

This year's trip was almost washed out with rain falling the week before the concert and flooding the camp site, this necessitated the concert being moved to the sports oval in Birdsville. With a stroke of luck I managed to book our group 10 camp sites in the Birdsville Caravan Park for the 4 nights of the concert making for a very comfortable concert experience indeed, see the photos following for a pictorial of the trip.



The wildflowers were amazing near Cameron Corner



Our bush camp near Arrabury



Dried puddles in the desert



Making it over Big Red



The Concert

Check this video clip from our recent Maralinga trip

<https://youtu.be/DHfkr53YbM8>

Fantastic footage filmed by John and Anne Morton, simply stunning.

Two days in 1st gear, 70 k's in 2 days

On my way back from the Maralinga trip which ended in Alice Springs, Ian Bragg, Michael Alexander, John and Anne Morton from Lifestyle Video Productions and myself set off on a true off road adventure. We drove down the Hay River Track to Batton Hill camp and then, with the Bookie family's permission, we drove to Lake Caroline and turned due east. The next 70 k's took us 2 days and I never got out of 1st gear high range as we blazed a new track for

the Bookie family to the Queensland border. This was a true off road adventure and I have to go on record and say what an amazing job Ian Bragg did with our navigation and track blazing over those two days, check out some of the photos from this epic adventure.



The Hay river track



Lake Caroline



Driving east

GREAT DIVIDE TOURS

**4WD Driver Training, 4WD Tag-along tours, Team Building, OH&S 4WD Training
02 99131395 info@greatdividetours.com.au www.4wd.net.au**



Driving East again



Rocking and rolling as I drove east



You guessed it, still driving east



Red dunes as we drove east

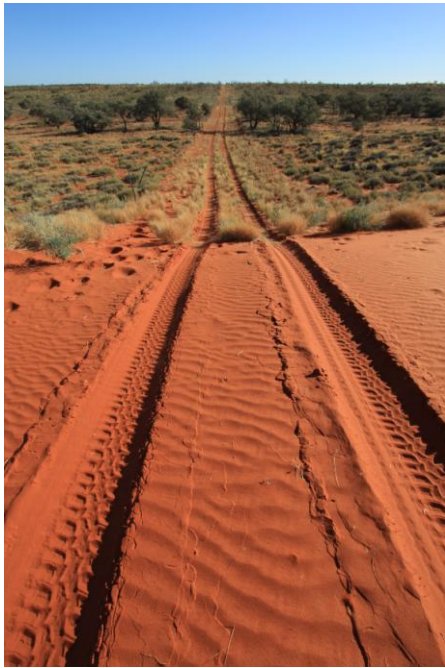


Driving east through spinifex



The sun rising in the east





Finally a track.

Luke King Racing

As you may know I sponsor my nephew Luke King in his motor sport career. He recently scored a drive in the Brian Hilton Motor sport Toyota 86 Racing series. They had their first competitive race at Winton Raceway at the V8 Supercars event in May. With over 36 entries it sure was a packed field so Luke was pretty happy to be 8th fastest in practice. Race one saw him move up to 7th outright and Race 2 got him up to 6th outright.

He certainly had some great speed against more experienced drivers and teams. Race 3 was looking really promising but when vying for 4th outright he was tapped heavily from behind and sent spearing off the circuit. Unfortunately, the beautiful Toyota 86 hit a large steel grid which was mysteriously left in the infield, this did a lot of damage to the 86, ripping off one

front wheel and dashing Luke's hopes for a possible podium finish.



I've been sponsoring Luke in his motor sport career since he was 12 years old

But the car has been rebuilt and I just spent today with him at Eastern Creek testing again for the next round with the V8's next weekend at Eastern Creek. He was turning some very respectful lap times today at around 1.49 so it looks like he should perform well again. Well done Luke and good luck for next week.

Well that's it for now, As you see I've had a fantastic Winter, and we didn't even get to see what else happened on all our other trips.

I'm off for another little trip now for the next month, more on that in the next newsletter, but if you have any questions on our fabulous new Africa trip or our Outback Accommodated tour or any other event for that matter please feel free to email us at info@4wd.net.au and stay safe.

Regards

Vic Widman