

Victorian High Country Snow Trip – August 2026

Dates: 15th to 21st August 2026

Trip Leader: Craig M

Participants: Michelle and Leon, Andrew M, Leigh B, Peter B and Jeff C

Day 1 – Team Meet, Drinks and Dinner at a Brewery

We all met at the Mansfield Holiday Park at 5pm for our team meet and greet. The usual paperwork was completed, and being a warm and sunny afternoon, we sat around for a little while, having beer o'clock and re-acquainting ourselves.

The Mount Buller Brewery is an easy 10-minute walk from the caravan park, so we made the most of the nice weather and strolled around for another drink or 2. The brewery does nice pizzas, so with this potentially being our last night before 7 days off grid, we made the most of it, and ordered lots of food.

The pizzas are quite a decent size and some of us were able to control ourselves, planning to use food warmers to heat up left overs for lunch/dinner tomorrow. It was a good evening, and a nice way for a couple of the crew who hadn't met the others, to get to know each other.



Day 2 – A winter morning, Mountain ascents and an Alpine Hut

We woke to a chilly high-country morning. -1c so the cars had an ice covering on them. It was a perfect winters morning. Clear, no wind and once the sun rose, so did the temperature, and steam started rising off the damp ground.



It needed to be an early start this morning as we had 140km to do before ascending beyond Woods Point. We were on the road at 8:30am, with spirits high and the excitement building as we passed Jamieson and onto the Woods Point road. Following the Goulburn River as it gently ascends the valley, it's a great drive.

Arriving at Woods Point, we aired down and had morning tea by the river. 4c at 10:30am, it was a little reminder of how different it is once you ascend the mountains. Before leaving Woods Point, we had to get the iconic photo of the crew in front of the Commercial Hotel.



It's a dirt road from Woods Point (Woohoo!) which continues to ascend to 1,000m before we turned onto the Walhalla Road and headed east to Mt Selma. At about 1,300m, you would normally expect to see a smattering of ice and snow but not today. It had been one of the warmest starts to winter they'd had in a while, so unfortunately for us, no snow! 😞

The trig point at Mt Selma is 1,450m and a popular place to go if you want to do some snow driving. Even at this altitude, it was unseasonably warm. We spent an hour up there having lunch. Barely any wind and warm sunshine, it was amazing to be this high up and be able to stand around chatting away, having our left-over pizza and sandwiches, in what could be considered summertime weather.



The original itinerary had us continuing on the Mt Selma Road, then South Rd and onto our camp spot, but with the weather being so warm and the conditions perfect for a bit of cross-country driving, we decided to take a more adventurous route south.

Mt Selma Tk takes you down to the Aberfeldy River and is an easy drive in dry conditions. When wet though, you need to be more careful as there are sections that are a bit muddy and slippery.

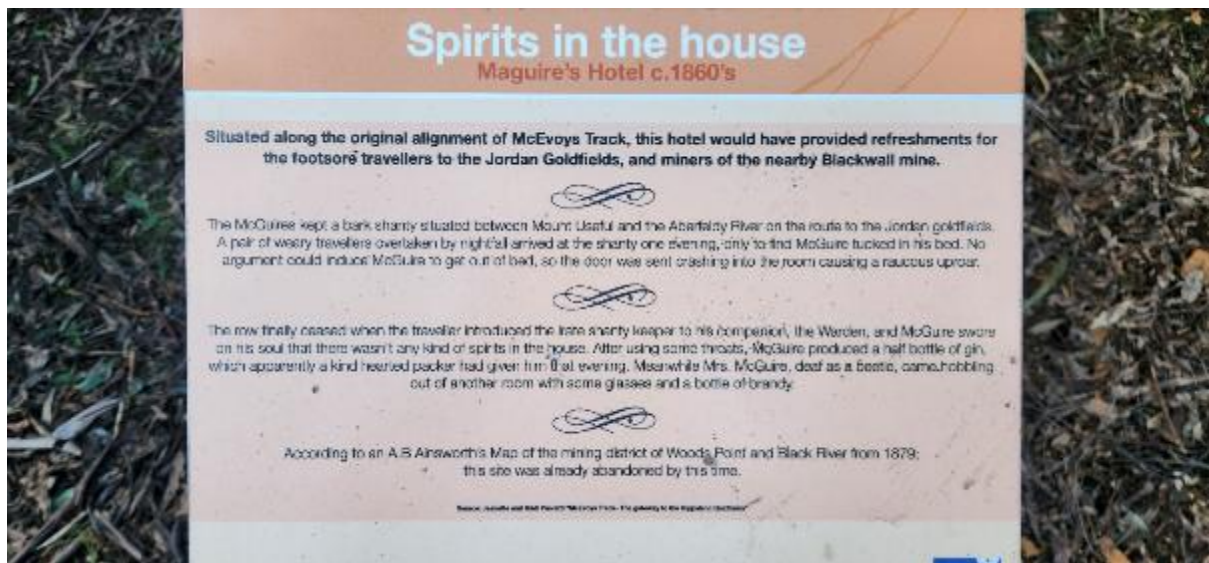
Particularly the last section just before the river, that has a clay base, is steep, off camber and rutted. You need to drive the ruts carefully to avoid panel and underbody damage, and keep your car under control.

At the bottom of the ruts, and after crossing the river, one of the crew admitted “that was the most uncomfortable I’ve ever felt in my car!”

We turned onto McGuires Tk and continued SE through the forest. The track was in good condition, making it an easy drive as we coasted along passed tall gums, big ferns and gently flowing streams.



There's so much interesting history in the area relating to the gold rush period. It is worth stopping and reading some of the historical markers.



Continuing onto Springs Rd, then Donnelly Creek Tk, we were at our camp spot by 4pm, Store Point Hut. A really nice location, with an alpine hut in great condition and an open fire, it made the perfect overnight camping spot for our group.



It wasn't long before we had the fire on, and were able to sit down in the relative comfort of a warm alpine hut having beer o'clock. As the evening approached, we stoked up the fire, opened a bottle of Brown Brothers Port, and with plentiful amounts of dark chocolate, had an enjoyable evening of laughs and banter.



Day 3 – More alpine views, amazing weather and camping at altitude

We woke to a crisp winters' morning (-1c) with the cars having a nice layer of ice on them. Another calm morning, the sun rose and started defrosting the cars. The fire was restarted in the hut, to give us some reprieve from the cold while we had breakfast and got the day underway.

This morning's tea break was McMillians Lookout, a nice drive that 1st takes you down to the Macalister River, then further east on Hickeys Creek Tk to the lookout. On the way Peter discovered his auxiliary battery was not charging. Oh no, with a weeks' worth of food inside, this was not good.

Once we got to the lookout, Andrew was able to diagnose the problem. Using a multi-meter to trace the circuit from the cranking battery, it was quickly spotted that the cable connecting to the auxiliary battery had some loose connections. It may have been spotted just in time, as the terminals had started to melt due to the poor connection, potentially creating a bigger issue.

From the lookout, you get great views of the Licola valley, and west towards Burgoyne Tk and the Macalister River.



With another perfect day weather wise, we continued cruising along, turning north on Mt Margaret Tk. This is one of the longest ridge line tracks you can do. From the Hickeys Creek Tk turn off, its 40-50km to the Tamboritha Rd. So quite a drive in low range as you crest the ridge lines and drop down into the saddles.



We stopped at the base of Mt Margaret for a well earned lunch. Once again, the weather was warm and pleasant, so surprising for this time of year. Our planned camp spot for the night was a popular one. This generally means firewood can be scarce, so we took the opportunity to collect up some easily accessible logs and load up the roof racks.

Another 12km had us arriving at the Tamboritha Road before the ascend commenced to Arbuckle Junction. We left camp at 9am this morning and with it now getting onto 3pm, we'd spent the majority of the day in low range, ascending and descending some great high-country tracks. It was at this point, one of the crew called out they thought their transmission was overheating. Oh no for a 2nd time today!

A discussion on the radio concluded it was likely still ok and within its operating range. We'd keep rolling on, and see if it slowly came down now that we were doing a high range ascend at between 40-60kph.

It certainly highlighted the need for everyone to know what normal looks like for their vehicle. What engine and trans temps generally look like on the Hwy vs long beach runs vs mountain driving for example. Operating ranges can be quite large and every vehicle is different. Some handle it better than others in OEM spec, and some makes/models can benefit from inter-cooler or transmission cooler upgrades for example.

Just like how the crew was able to fix the auxiliary battery issue, it was another example of the benefit of going on club trips. There's only so much you can learn and experience on training weekends. It's not until you go out and really start stressing your vehicle, will you learn all its ins and outs.

We continued on and not long after Arbuckle Junction at about 1,300m success! Our 1st snow citing! Woohoo. Well ice really. And you'd probably find more in your deep freezer, but it was at least a start. While a few of the crew helped Craig resecure the firewood on his roof, the others went off to have a play with the snow.

With the afternoon ticking away, we pressed on as we were past our normal beer o'clock time. By 5pm we'd arrived at The Pinnacles. Almost 1,500m but still no snow (Grrrr!) Oh well, the positive was that it was another calm and warmish evening. Incredible at this altitude.

The Pinnacles was severely impacted by the Dec / Jan '26 bush fires and it was amazing to see the extent of it. We had to laugh though when we stopped and got out of our cars. We'd spent quite a bit of time and effort collecting firewood at our lunch stop, only to end up camping in an area with more fallen trees and park ranger chopped up logs than anyone could ever utilize!



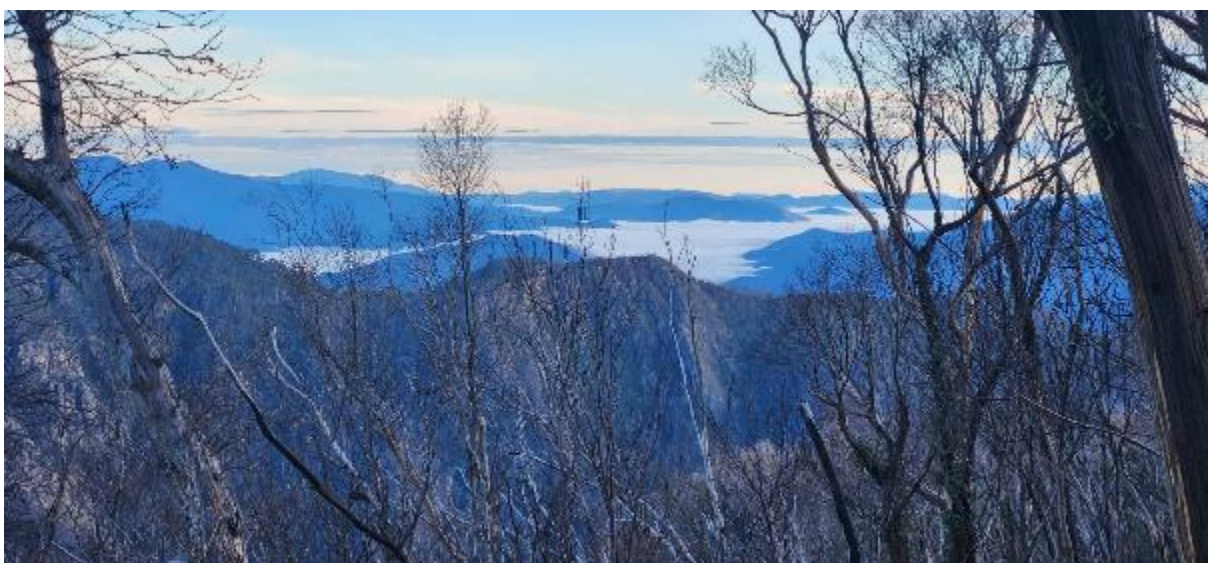
Oh well, so we left all the firewood strapped to our vehicles, and quickly collected some fallen timber before making a big fire.



By the time we'd got the fire on and had beer o'clock, it was 6pm, so the crew made their dinner before settling down around the fire. After dinner treats tonight were Muscat and more dark chocolate. Yum! After a long day, we didn't stay up too late, with everyone tucked up in their warm beds by 10:30pm.

Day 4 – The Dragons Neck, A pub lunch and sunburn in winter

The travel gods continued to shine on us. An unusually calm night had the mercury sitting at 3 degrees this morning. With no wind, there was barely a chill factor, incredible at this altitude. Most of the crew went for early morning strolls, taking in the amazing views. It's not every day you can wake up above the clouds.



We all had simplified camp setups, so even with a casual pack up, everyone was ready to go by 9am. When the call goes out to engage low range straight out of camp, you

know it is going to be a good day 😊 A couple of minutes after leaving camp, we were descending Billy Goats, and out on the Dragons Neck. With its drop offs on either side, it's not a spot you want to stop if you suffer from vertigo! But it does provide for some stunning panoramic view.



We spent 15 minutes up here, amazed again how in the middle of winter, and at nearly 1,500m it was so calm and warm. There should have been patches of snow and ice on the ground but we weren't complaining. Stunning views and you could also see the extent of the recent bushfire. The whole area was blackened, with it now being in the early stages of recovery.





The track down to the Wonnangatta River is now easy going. Still steep in places but having been graded, there's no longer any big wombat holes, rock steps or rough sections. We were down at the heli-pad in 15 minutes. From the bottom you got an even better view of the extent of the bushfires.



With the weather and track conditions being more accommodating than expected, we had some spare time, so it was decided to take a detour to Dargo for a pub lunch. It's a nice drive to Dargo from Billy Goats. The road weaves it's way alongside the river, and you get great views across the valley to the mountains on the other side.

Before lunch though, we had to line the crew up for that iconic photo!



Such a great pub, always great food and so much history. We couldn't help ourselves in wanting some mementos. A bar mat and various shirts were purchased, before we sat down and gorged ourselves on schnitzels and spare ribs.



With tummies full, it was time to get back in the Cruisers for the short run to Talbotville. There is an easy way to get there, but that's also a bit boring, so we took the much more interesting Collingwood Spur Tk instead. Steep and shaley in places, you need to be careful but we all made it down no problems, before being greeted by a big herd of cows!

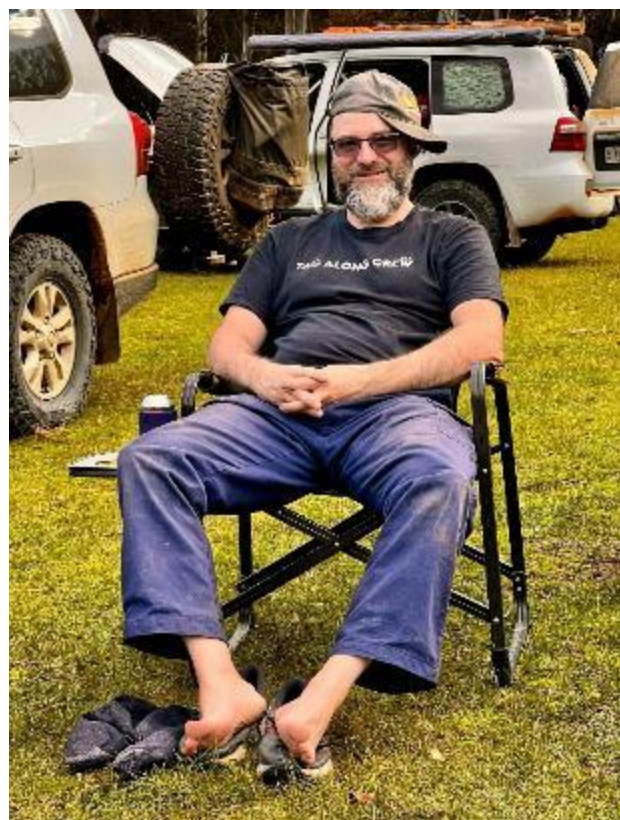


We had the place to ourselves, so the only problem we had when selecting a campsite, was finding one without too many cow patties. After driving around for a few minutes, we settled on a spot and beer o'clock commenced not long after 3pm 😊

The perfect weather continued, to the point where by 4pm, we could feel ourselves getting a little sunburnt. It was so warm, all we wanted to do was be able to put a pair of shorts on. Which just so happened to be about the only piece of clothing we hadn't brought with us!

The best we could do was take our shoes and socks off, turn our backs to the sun, and for those without broad brimmed hats, wear our caps like ratbag teenagers, in a vain attempt to shield our faces from the sun.

Poor Michelle ended up having to cop the full suite of old man toe nails....



It was a relief once the sun dropped behind the hills, and the temperature started to fall. With plenty of firewood, we got the fire on and enjoyed the stillness of the late afternoon.



It was another relaxing evening around the fire, with more laughs and stories told. A busy day though, starting at 9am, then a big lunch and an early beer o'clock, so everyone was tucked up in bed by 10pm.

Day 5 – 24 River Crossings, Harrisons Cut and a Dogs Grave

This morning started like the others. Cool, calm, and as the sun rose over the hills and the temperature rose, once again steam started to rise off the Cruisers.

Another slowish start to the morning as there wasn't a need to get going too early. The fire was restarted and as we stood by the gently flowing Crooked River, you couldn't help but quote that famous line "How's the Serenity".



By 9:30am we'd all had breakfast and packed up, and it was time to take on the Crooked River Tk. From Talbotville to the Bulltown Spur Tk, you cross the river 24 times. The track had not seen a lot of maintenance over the last few years, so a few of the river crossings were hopefully going to be quite interesting.

It wasn't long before we got to our 1st interesting river entry. A steep clay drop off into a muddy bottom before you crossed the river. Good thing we weren't going the other way! And then a few more crossings later, our 1st decent rock step on an exit. These weren't as bad as they 1st appeared, as it was sharp rock, so with the correct tyre pressures, there was plenty of grip.

You just have to pick your line to make sure you don't bottom out and go crunch on anything. And just as importantly, let your car do the work and crawl up, as if you go too hard, you can easily break something. Just like some deer hunters found out, with their Toyota Hilux parked up next to one of these exits, with a blown Diff! Obviously not that unbreakable after all. And clearly, they hadn't done any TLCCSA training!

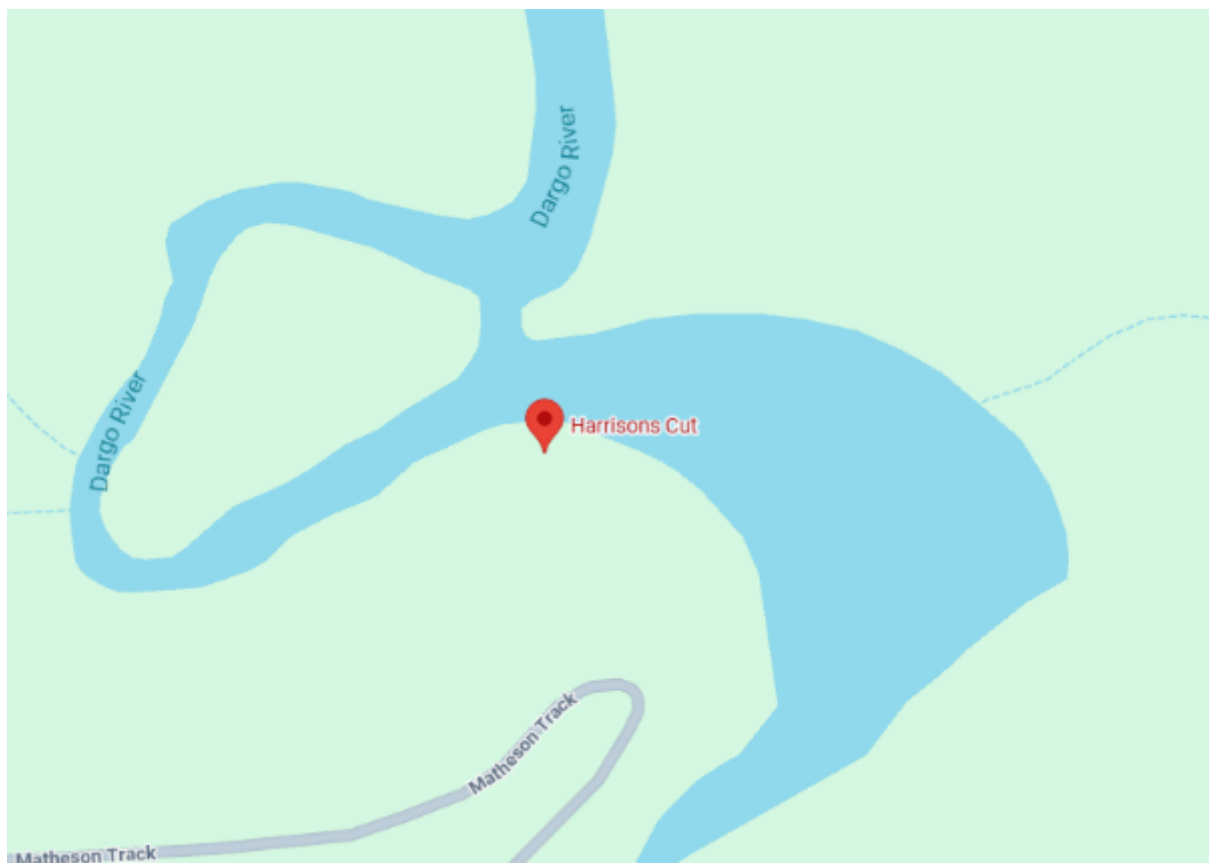


As you head west to east, up the valley, the river crossings get shallower, and the entries and exits easier. We'd made good progress, much quicker than anticipated, and we'd reached Bulltown Spur Tk within an hour. This track like so many had been graded over the last year or 2, so it was an easy climb back up to McMillians Road.

There's a spot along here you can pull over and see Mt Hotham in the distance. Pretty cool to see it on the horizon with its peak covered in snow. It was here we had our morning tea stop. Pies and sausage rolls were the order of the day, all nicely reheated in our food warmers / travel buddy ovens 😊



Having made good progress, we had time for a detour. Once we'd made our way back to the Dargo High Plains Rd, we turned left and continued ascending for more great views until we reached Downey Rd. This then becomes Matheson Tk, which descends steeply down to the Dargo River. This is where you can see Harrisons Cut.



The history of Harrisons Cut is not 100% clear, but it is believed to have been blasted and cut by hand somewhere between 1860 the 1880. Most probably by miners of Chinese descent. The purpose was to divert the Dargo River, so the bend on the western side would dry out, enabling the miners to mine the river bed for gold.

Incredible how they did this all those years ago. The physical effort and manual labor to do it, hard to comprehend. These days though, it just serves as a great photo opportunity 😊



There are a few large designated camping areas along this section of the Dargo River. We stopped at Collins Flat for lunch. A great spot with fire pits, tables and access to the river. Definitely a spot worth staying, but not on long weekends or school holidays! Being close to Dargo, it gets crazy busy and apparently a bit feral in peak periods. Lucky for us, the trip was planned to avoid these periods, and we had the place to ourselves.

During the seasonal road/track closure period, once you are east of Licola, all the way through to Dargo, the only way to head north is to keep going east from Dargo until you eventually get onto Jones Rd and then Birregum Rd. Birregum then takes you north towards the Great Alpine Rd and Mt Hotham.

Jones Rd ascends quite quickly to about 1,100m so you once again get great views. It is an easy drive and we made good time, so we took a little detour up to the top of Mt Birregum. At about 1,450 metres, this is another spot that should have had some snow. Not today though 😞, but we did get great views of storm clouds on the horizon.



From Mt Birregum, it was only a short drive to our campsite, Dogs Grave. And as luck would have it, no-one was there, so we had another alpine hut for the night. Although there was already some firewood inside the hut, with the weather being accommodating and us having plenty of time, we did the right thing and collected up some firewood before chopping it up, and adding it to what was already there.

It's a great hut in excellent condition. A big pot belly stove and plenty of room inside, we made the most of it with a few of the crew prepping their meals inside.



It even had an old broomstick. Someone had gone to a lot of trouble sanding down an old branch to replace the original broom handle. Wonky and with still a lot of nobs on it, it was so much like what you'd see in a fairy tale. So much so, we wondered whether it was the real thing. So, we got Michelle to hop on, and see if she could fly away!



Another relaxing evening, sitting around chatting the night away. Although we did need to open the hut door a few times, it got so hot inside with the big pot belly stove. Leigh wasn't complaining though, he'd decided to setup his swag inside the hut, so was looking forward to nice warm bed a bit later on!

Day 6 – Snow! And Rain and Going a Bit Soft

We woke to another nice morning. Quite calm and hardly any chill to the air. Once again amazing, considering we are camping at around 1,000m. The crew had quite a few eggs, plus packs of bacon and bread that needed to be used up. So, we decided to make use of the hut, and cook up a big communal breakfast.

With the pot belly restarted and a big breakfast clean up, it was a relaxed and slowish start to the day. We were on our way though by 9:30am, hoping that today was the day we would see snow! It's another very enjoyable drive from Dogs Grave to the Great Alpine Road. All weather roads for about 30km slowly descend until you reach some farmland in a picturesque valley, before reaching the bitumen.

We stopped at Dinner Plain Alpine Resort as you don't have to pay to stop here, unlike Mt Hotham (grrrrr). At 1,500m this was meant to have lots of snow for us to play in. However, there was literally none of the white stuff, just a few small piles of ice that remained after a bit of cleaning up of the paths around the village. So disappointing. Oh well, it was still nice to drive around an alpine village. It had quite a European feel about it. And the crew got a chance to get some proper coffee so in the end, we were all still happy travelers.



Upon leaving Dinner Plain, we got our 1st experience of the harsh alpine winter. While on the way to Mt Hotham, the heavens opened up, so with heavy rain, thick fog and strong winds, it made for an interesting drive. It got even worse as we neared Mt Hotham. At 1,800m, the fog was so thick it was getting close to a white out. We had to slow down to 20 kph at times, as you just couldn't see anything.

Unfortunately, you cannot go to Mt Hotham resort even for a short visit without paying a small ransom (it's all electronically monitored with a \$192 fine). So, if you want to stop near the summit for photos or experience an arctic blast like we did, the best you can do is pull over in one of the snow chain fitting areas.

When we stopped, the rain was still coming down. It was about 4 degrees, and the wind must have been at least 50kph. So, we literally lasted about 30 seconds out of our cars! But at least we finally saw some proper snow!





Cold and wet, it was nice to get back into the warmth and comfort of the Cruisers. We continued on slowly, with the rain continuing to pelt down and the fog persisting, it made driving quite treacherous.

Once we'd got down to 1,000 metres the fog cleared and as we continued descending, so did the rain. We stopped at Harrietville for a comfort break which also gave us a chance to check the weather forecast. It appeared our luck had run out. 5-25mm of rain over the next 24-48 hrs. Bugger.

We continued on, arriving at Bright at 1:30pm for a late lunch. With the weather looking very threatening, it was decided to try for another alpine hut. Google estimated it could be circa 3hrs drive so we didn't hang around Bright too long, and got going to the Buckland Valley.

Once we'd crossed the Buckland River there was a sign stating Mt Selwyn Rd shut. Damm it! This meant either a big detour along a high elevation ridgeline for about 15 kilometers, or an even longer detour heading south towards Wonnangatta. Both not great options with the impending weather and with it already getting onto 3pm, it was decided to change plans.

Most of the crew liked the idea of a hot shower and some protection from the weather. There were a couple of diehards though that were keen to still camp out and rough it. So it was decided to split the group. Jeff and Peter stayed at a designated campsite, while the rest of a crew went back to the Porepunkah Pines Caravan park.

It's a great caravan park and in the winter, they have a pay 2 nights, stay the 3rd free. We ended up taking their house option, with everyone having their own bedroom. Splitting the cost 5 ways made it quite economical. After 4 full days without a shower, the hot

water felt pretty good it had to be said. After we'd all made ourselves respectable, we sat down for a civilized beer o'clock, hoping Jeff and Peter were not too uncomfortable.

After dinner we indulged in more treats, as its bad luck to take any home. Port (Brown Brothers) and dark chocolate. Yum. Entertainment was Five Crowns. A fun card game best played with at least 4 people, and something you can do while chatting the night away.

Day 7 – Mt Buffalo, A Ridge Line Drive and a Play in the River

It felt very luxurious this morning waking up in a proper bed, and having a kitchen as well to make our breakfasts! Eggs and Bacon were the go, as we still had some to use up. Another casual start to the day, the crew took a detour to the Porepunkah Pantry on the way out, for fresh coffee and pastries.

This morning's excursion was to Mt Buffalo. An easy 20-minute drive from Porepunkah, it's another spot you can usually go to have a play in the snow, without having to pay any fees. As you wind your way up the mountain, great views of the Buckland Valley emerge along with various waterfalls.

As we passed the snow chain fitting areas, you couldn't help but think "geez I wish!" There was no chance of snow today, another perfect morning with sunshine and barely any wind. At around 1,300 metres, the road flattens out and you arrive at a plateau. An amazing alpine feature, it's around 35 square kilometres and has lakes and large open marsh areas, which at this time of year, are usually covered in snow and ice.



We stopped at the Mt Buffalo Chalet which when built in 1910 by the Victorian government. It was Australia's first official ski resort. Unfortunately, it has been closed

since 2007, but the Victorian government has partnered with private enterprise to bring it back to life, with most of the renovation now complete.



There are also viewing platforms that extend out over large granite boulders and the cliff edge. Being Perspex, it's a bit off putting walking out onto them and being able to look straight down. Unfortunately, the cloud rolled in while we were up there, so we weren't able to observe what would have been great views. It did though allow a few of us to create our own version of Gorilla's in the Mist....

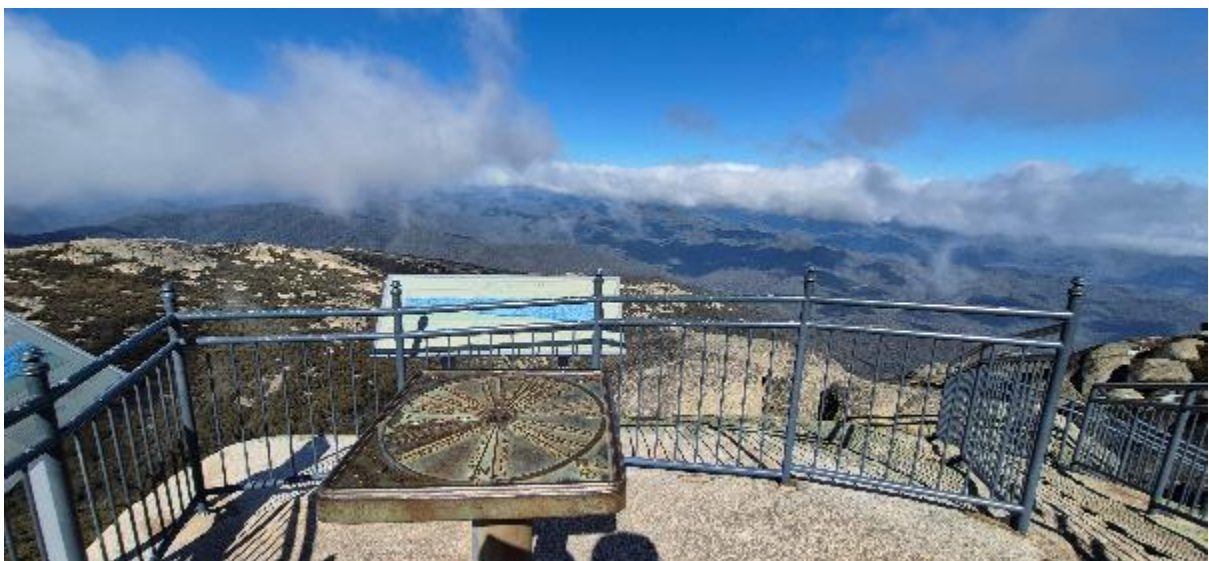


The other main attraction at Mt Buffalo is The Horn. In the summer time you can drive all the way to the base, and then walk the last few hundred metres. In winter though, they shut the last 2 kilometres of road, so you have to hike all the way to the top.

We started off with the best endeavors, but after a kilometre, with some of us still rugged up expecting it to be super cold (when will we learn), we took the easy option and thought yeh nah, that will do!



Only one of the crew had the necessary commitment. Leigh went all the way to the top. At 1,753 metres, not a bad effort at all. Stunning views, definitely worth the effort as the last section contains some stairs and tight spots that you need to negotiate, before reaching the final summit.



You also see the parts of the plateau in more context. The giant granite boulders, peat bog areas and the alpine vegetation that make up the overall area.



After our morning exercise, tummies were starting to rumble so we made our way down the mountain, and back to the Buckland Valley. Our lunch stop was at the Buckland Bridge. Another area with some interesting history but also a bit sad.

It was an area back in the mid 1850's that experienced gold mania. So much so, that it led to the Buckland Riot. American and European settlers had become so enraged by the thousands of Chinese settlers, that a large group armed themselves with axe handles and other makeshift weapons, and drove the Chinese out of the valley. Many were beaten and some killed, with the Buckland Bridge becoming a bottleneck during the exodus.



Lucky for us though, it was another calm and warm winters day, so we were able to sit by the river in peace and quiet, and have our lunch.



After lunch, it was time for a little more offroading. Goldie Spur Tk starts at the Buckland Bridge and heads west as it ascends the hill side. You quickly start getting great views of Mt Buffalo, and in particular the waterfalls that flow off the plateau.

Goldie Spur Tk is also the spot where you can pick up another epic ridge line drive. Yarrabuck Tk heads south, and stays at elevation gently ascending and descending the ridge line saddles. It's an easy drive as the track doesn't get much traffic, but you'll still need to be in low range 😊

There are various spots to stop for more great photo opportunities.





It's about 16km until you reach Buffalo Range Tk, which then continues the ridge line drive. With the afternoon getting away from us, we didn't have time to do the full ridge line, as it was another 18km until it reached the Mt Selwyn Rd (which may have still been closed anyway), so after 4km we took a left down Scotchman Creek Tk and back to the Buckland Valley.



This ended up being the end point of the trip. With 1 of the crew already heading home, and Jeff and Peter continuing on towards Mansfield, this was going to be our last day of adventure 😞 Leon was saying his CV was still making some noises and it needed a wash. But I think all he really wanted to do was have a final play in the river. So we took 1 last detour for old time sake!



Another fantastic LandCruiser Club trip to the high country. No major dramas or vehicle issues. Easy going days, great tracks, epic views, perfect camp spots along with a couple of alpine huts for something different at night.

Although we did not get the weather we were expecting, and therefore missed out on the snow experience, it did make for a much more comfortable and relaxing time. Summer like weather meant we were comfortable during the day, and the night times very pleasant. Another thoroughly enjoyable adventure 😊