

decided to move us to another area. We were disappointed as these sites were not as sheltered as the sites selected by Rod & Loris. A very cold and windy happy hour only lasted an hour or so, even though we had a lovely fire in Alan Harlow's portable fire pit. We retired earlier than we would have to the warmth of our vans. During the night it was very windy, causing awnings to flap etc. This didn't deter the fishing (lobster) vessels from going out to sea at 3.45am.



**Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2017; John Kerr**

The activity for the day was to visit Mount Gambier for a look around followed by a visit to Mount Schanck, the youngest extinct volcano in Australia, for those interested. Many of us met for a morning coffee at the Metro Café where the variety of cakes and coffee were delicious and company great. We witnessed the making of an advertisement across the road in Commercial Street. Three "old dears" dressed in their '80's tracksuits who starred in it and came into the Metro for refreshments reminded some of our younger ladies what they can look forward to. After morning tea we went our separate ways looking around this picturesque town and met up for lunch at Jens Hotel where we enjoyed each other's company over a delightful lunch. After lunch Rod and Loris ordered the chooks and other goodies for our Melbourne Cup Day extravaganza and we did our own thing – some went shopping, looked at the Sunken Garden, or went to view the magnificent Blue Lake, with some of us walking off the earlier food intake around the 4 kilometres circumference, whilst others braved the 500 steps at Mount Shank in the blustery conditions. Our lovely day concluded with our daily 5 o'clock camp fire and drinks appointment where stories from the day as well as jokes, banter and bulls..t. When the sun went down boy was the wind cold so the less brave sought refuge in their caravans or hill top presidential suite or Jimmy's cabin.



**Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2017; Mal Trull**

After our initial exploration of the Mt Gambier and port MacDonnell area on Friday we were looking forward to an action packed Saturday and it did not disappoint. The plan was to visit Donald Feast's Car/Folk Museum first thing then to have a bit of a reconnoitre of Piccaninnie Ponds in the afternoon.

As to be expected all went to plan, we arrived at the museum around nine am to be greeted by Donald and his wife Sheila.

Don then proceeded to



show us around. As it is advertised as a car museum some of the ladies had an escape plan. However once Don started his spiel with plenty of dodgy stories and jokes the time flew and we ended up having morning tea there and not leaving until lunch time. Judging by the laughter and smiles I believe a good time was had by all. After returning to camp for lunch we headed off in convey for "Piccaninnie Ponds Conservation Reserve" a few kilometres along the coast. The whole area sits atop a huge limestone deposit which has crystal clear water bubbling up through it forming beautiful ponds which eventually empty into the Southern Ocean.



Some of the group had organised to do a snorkelling trip later in the week to view the underwater chasms and caves, but that is a story for someone else! The whole area is fascinating with limestone caves and extinct volcanoes dotting the whole southwest area. After a short halt to rescue an echidna from the middle of the road, it was back to Port MacDonnell once again. Later that evening we all adjourned to the Victoria Hotel for an enjoyable dinner. As Port MacDonnell calls itself the "Lobster Capital" lobster was featured on the menu and one or two of our group did splurge on the \$60 half lobster meal. A good day was had by all!!



**Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> November 2017; Ian Blake**

Left Port MacDonnell at 9.30am and travelled to Nelson. Members had morning tea then strolled along the Glenelg River Waterfront. Everyone boarded the Nelson Endeavour in time for 12-noon departure on a 2 hour cruise, a 2 course lunch included. There were numerous shacks of various sizes, shapes and condition, also a few canoes and other small watercraft. On the return trip to Port MacDonnell, some members visited Ewan Ponds and Adam Lindsay Gordon's cottage. Others went to the maritime museum.

**Monday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2017; Terry Heskey**

Strong winds during Sunday night had us hoping for a fine Monday, however I woke to "Get up you lazy *what's it*, its 7am and where's my cup of tea!. (That's not for real) At 9.00am our Captain Mannering gave final instructions and we set forth from Port MacDonnell in 6 Discoveries and 2 Defenders. En route we stopped for morning tea at the lighthouse. On the road again, but several crews decided to withdraw due to track conditions. The track we were to follow to "Oil Rig Square" was principally soft sand or sand-



stone rock and consisted of steep long dunes (time to edit, it was like riding on a ship in gale force winds) massive rock formations or water hazards. Several of the drivers of the D4's did a lot of learning about their vehicles' capabilities. The experience gained for newer vehicle drivers was tremendous, as very hazardous conditions were encountered, and so was the familiarization of the newer technology installed in the vehicles. On one occasion whilst one D4 was reversing at reasonably high speed in soft sand on a dune a 2<sup>nd</sup> D4 was aiming for the same spot – oops- but all's well because both bogged about 1/2 metre apart. The convoy then headed to Millicent and back to base. A very "Happy Hour" was had by all.



Summary – a fantastic day spent in magnificent area with great companions.

