

CANBERRA CARAVAN CLUB HISTORY

INTRODUCTION

This “overview” of the history of the Canberra Caravan Club shows the following:

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CHRONOLOGICAL EVENTS

- Mar 1972 An advertisement was placed in the Canberra Times, by Jack and Pam Pemberton, seeking interest in forming a Caravan Club.
- 17 Apr 1972 A first get together and discussions take place as a result of responses to the advertisement.
- 01 May 1972 The inaugural meeting of the Canberra Caravan Club was held with nine members present.
- These members set down the foundation for the club's future including deciding on a name and to become incorporated, and met every fortnight until July.
- The first Annual General Meeting occurred on 9 April 1973, with some 35 members and \$1000 in the bank account.
- 1972 First club outing was a gold fossicking barbecue to Captain's Flat. This was followed in September 1972 by a rally to Cooma.
- Aug 1972 The Department of the Interior advised the Caravan Club that it could not use the Canberra Coat of Arms as part of its emblem.
- Pam Pemberton provided a proposed emblem design, which was accepted by the members.
- A proposed Constitution was forwarded to solicitors.
- Sep 1972 The Queanbeyan Caravan Centre (Coronet Caravans) gives support for a Club caravan raffle.
- Department of the Interior approved the raffle.

- Oct 1972 The Queanbeyan Council refused permission to sell raffle tickets in Queanbeyan.
This raffle gave a profit to the Club of \$1500, less \$400 donated to the Handicapped Children's Association.
- Jan 1973 The Club's Magazine (Newsletter) commenced - the "Gas Bottle".
- Apr 1973 Brochures from Colourful Canvas Co Pty Ltd obtained in relation to purchasing a marquee. The Club also considered the purchase of a trailer.
First Joint Rally held with another Caravan Club - Caravan Club of Australia, at Kiama - 4 CCC and 66 CC of A members attended.
- May 1973 The Registrar rejected the proposed Constitution on a couple of technical matters.
The Club purchased a trailer.
- Jun 1973 The raffle of a second caravan was proposed, and the Queanbeyan Caravan Centre (Coronet) again agreed to support the Club. Department of Interior approval was obtained.
This second raffle realised a profit of \$2200, after donating \$500 to Koomarri.
- Oct 1973 The Registrar approved the Club's Constitution.
- Dec 1973 The Caravan Club of Australia (Sydney based) sent an invitation for the Club to send members to the 2nd National Rally of Caravan Clubs, to be held at Dubbo from 29 December 1974 to 6 January 1975.
- Jun 1974 The Executive Committee approved the purchase of a marquee (24 ft x 20 ft) from Kangaroo Tent City Sydney at a cost of \$1370.40 - purchased in July.
- Dec 1974 The first CCC members attended the 2nd National Rally of Caravan Clubs of Australia.
Two Club members were part of a month long safari to W.A., hosted by the CCC. There were six caravans representing four States.
- 29 May 1976 The Annual General Meeting considered restricting membership numbers, due to the numbers wanting to attend rallies, and the availability of sites at Parks. Restricting membership numbers was rejected.
- Nov 1976 A Caravanning Safety Day was successfully held at Woden - from an idea promoted by the Club. A second attempt, a Safety Weekend at the Leisure Show the following year was not a success.
- 14 Sep 1977 A Club Flag was purchased for \$135.75.
- 5 Feb 1978 A sub-committee was formed to conduct a feasibility study into the CCC hosting the 5th National Rally of Caravan Clubs of Australia.
- 8 Oct 1978 The Caravan Club of Australia sought views on the feasibility of a State Federation of Caravan Clubs.

- Dec 1978 21 caravans from the Club attended the 3rd National Rally of Caravan Clubs of Australia, held at Shepparton Vic.
- 20 Apr 1980 The Annual General Meeting was informed that the Association of Caravan Clubs of NSW and ACT had been formed. The first secretary was Denise Kite of the Canberra Caravan Club, and she was followed by another Club member Barbara Bates.
- This AGM also decided with voting “37 for and 4 against” to go ahead with plans to host the 5th National Rally. This idea was first mooted at the 3rd National Rally at Shepparton. The Committee was Ray Swift (Chair), Ted Donnell, Ray Galpin, Mal Holgate, Doug Meredith and George Watt.
- Mid 1980 A Rally fee of \$3.00 per caravan was introduced.
- 1980 Stan Holgate donated a small marquee for “teen scene”.
- Oct 1980 Club members took part in a Road Safety Week, with caravan demonstrations.
- 9 Nov 1980 An Extraordinary Meeting voted on whether the Club would make an official bid to host the 5th National Rally. The vote was “36 yes and 14 no” - the motion was carried.
- 1 Mar 1981 The 5th National Rally Committee was formed, consisting of Ray Swift (Chair), Barbara Bates (Secretary), Pam Pemberton (Treasurer), and Ted Donnell. Initial funds of \$2,000 to place a deposit on the Showground, were obtained by some members making cash loans to the Club.
- 1981 The marquee was extended by 12 ft, arranged and paid for from the funds of the 5th National Rally Committee.
- 18 Apr 1982 Jack Pemberton took over as Secretary of the Association of Caravan Clubs of NSW and ACT.
- Mar 1982 The Club took part in the Canberra Festival Procession.
- Oct 1982 No interest being shown in the NSW State Association by other Clubs, and no member from Canberra Club attending a State Rally. The State Association would be allowed to lapse for the time being. Reported by the then Secretary Jack Pemberton.
- Dec 1983 The Canberra Caravan Club hosted the 5th National Rally of the Caravan Clubs of Australia, at E.P.I.C. in Canberra. This was the first National Rally to have more than 600 caravans in attendance. For more information, see *5th National Rally of Caravan Clubs of Australia*.
- 20 May 1984 A Rally Points System was introduced, allowing “prizes” for the number of Club rallies attended.
- Oct 1984 Small marquee purchased.
- Sept 1985 Information brochures, on the Club, were arranged to be placed in letter boxes where a caravan was seen to be situated. Some 2,000 brochures were printed.

- 26 Apr 1986 The Annual General Meeting decided to host a Bi-Centennial Rally in 1988.
- Dec 1986 10 Club caravans attended the 6th National Rally of Caravan Clubs of Australia in Perth.
- Apr 1987 The Club entertained the Wally Byam Caravan Club.
- 31 Mar 1988 A Bi-Centennial Rally was held at Goulburn South Caravan Park, hosted by the CCC. Attendees included caravans from CCC, Newcastle, Blue Mountains and North East Victoria Caravan Clubs; a total of 17.
- 26 Nov 1988 A Bi-Centennial dinner was held, at which 50 current and 26 former members attended.
- Dec 1989 At the 7th National Rally at Nuriootpa SA, a decision was made to form a National Association of Caravan Clubs.
- 29 Apr 1990 The AGM took discussion on whether Canberra might host the 11th National Rally, for “turn of the century” 2000 / 2001. This would have meant this National Rally would have been held only two years after the previous one. Problems envisaged were that Summer Nats held the booking of the National Exhibition Centre (then called) over the period that the National Rally would normally be held. Suggestions included that the National Rally be commenced two weeks later. No decisions taken.
- 1990/1991 Three General Meetings were held in addition to the normal Committee Meetings.
- 5 May 1991 The AGM reminded that the dates of the National Rallies (28 December – 6 January) were agreed by the Caravans Clubs of Australia, at a meeting in Nambour during the 4th National Rally.
- Jun 1991 Updated Duty Statements for all Officer Bearers and Committee positions were provided.
- Aug 1991 Maintenance Levy of \$15.00 per annum, was reduced to \$10.00 for single members.
- 1991 Winter Edition of the Gas Bottle published that the Club Committee would hold quarterly general meetings in August, November and February each year, in lieu of the scheduled Committee meetings. The quarterly general meetings would be preceded by a community tea or similar, and the evening would finish with supper.
- Nov 1991 Discussion with ACT Racing Club about the availability of their area to hold the 11th National Rally Dec 2001/Jan 2002.
- 1991 Much discussion during the year on where meetings should be held - in member’s own homes or in a hall type situation.
- Feb 1992 The Rally Points and New Members Introduction Schemes were abolished.
- Mar 1992 General Meetings commenced to be held at the Hughes Community Center.

- May 1992 A change to the Club's Constitution was carried out to re-institute monthly general meetings. These had been ceased some years before, due to lack of member numbers attending meetings. The Club's business was then conducted by a Committee of 13 members. This change, to four Office Bearers and a further four Committee members, has seen excellent numbers attend monthly meetings.
- Mar 1993 Due to changes in the Legislation of the ACT Incorporated Bodies Act, we had to make further changes to the Club's Constitution.
- Sep 1993 Name Plates for members' caravans proposed. Plates provided via Bill Thompson.
- Jan 1994 First Club Rally held at Dalgety over the Australia Day period.
- May 1994 At the AGM, it was proposed that a Steering Group be constituted at the next General Meeting, to investigate the feasibility of the CCC hosting the 11th National Rally December 2001 - January 2002.
- Jun 1994 This Steering Group appointed Paddy O'Brien (Chair), John Seeley, Rupert Hewitt and Bob Dal Santo (Club President).
- Mar 1995 The Club celebrated its 200th Rally at Bowna, at the northern end of Hume Weir, north of Albury. Twenty one Club caravans attended, from a total of 27 members.
- 10 Sep 1995 A Special General Meeting was held at the Wanniasa Girl Guides Hall in relation to the CCC hosting the 11th National Rally December 2001 / January 2002. The motion to host was lost in voting 21 for and 8 against. In accordance with the Club's Constitution, a 75% majority was required, and on the numbers present at the meeting, this required a vote of "22 for".
- Dec 1995 At the 9th National Rally, at Horsham, our Club informed the National Association that we would not be hosting the 11th National Rally. The W.A. Association of Caravan Clubs said that their State would come forward three years. We were asked to re-consider, and inform W.A. and the National Association by July 1996.
- 5 May 1996 This AGM was asked to reconsider the previous decision to not host the 11th National Rally. A 2/3 majority was required, and the motion lost in voting 28 for 17 no and 1 abstaining. W.A. then hosted the 11th National Rally.
- 23 Nov 1996 The first wine bottling held at Bill and Vivian Thompson's house (Charnwood).
- 8 Dec 1996 It was suggested that the Hughes Community Centre was now not big enough to hold the numbers attending Monthly General Meetings. The suggestion that we seek room at the Deakin Soccer Club was agreed.
- 9 Feb 1997 The first General Meeting held at the Deakin Soccer Club - the venue currently still being used. As a result of interaction by Bill Thompson, all

CCC members become members of this Soccer Club, and the Caravan Club pays the small annual fee.

10 May 1997 Ray and Helen Galpin had Life Membership bestowed upon them at this AGM.

On completion of this AGM, the Club held a celebratory dinner, following the Annual General Meeting, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Club's beginning. A number of former members, most of whom had held a position as one of the Club's Officer Bearers, were invited to attend. For more information, see *25th Anniversary Dinner*.

Jun 1999 The new Committee recommended that the Club hold monthly weekend rallies, as opposed to previously mainly only at long weekends only. This was agreed by the membership, and has been an excellent decision. Currently in some months, two Club Rallies are held.

13 May 2000 The question was raised at this AGM, whether the CCC would consider hosting a future National Rally. It was suggested that the Club consider hosting an Invitational Rally outside the normal National Rally circuit. This Rally to be for all and any caravanners, not being restricted to members of Caravan Clubs, as is the case with National Rallies.

26 Jan 2001 Australia Day this year will be remembered for the fatal heart attack of one of our members, during the Club Rally at Dalgety. This being the first time that a Club member passed away during a Club Rally.

Sep 2000 In the space of the next four months, three wives passed away - an unprecedented occurrence.

May 2002 Proposals to cap the Club membership, for our Club to subsidise a second Caravan Club, and to limit the number of years that Office Bearers could continually remain in office, were all rejected.

Oct 2002 The Club hosted an 'Invitational Rally' to all caravanners, to come to Canberra for Floriade, and to help celebrate the Club's 300th Rally. Some 58 caravans from several States attended, and this event was deemed to be successful.

Jan 2003 The annual Club Rally over the Australia Day long weekend was all but cancelled due to the severe bush fires that raged into Canberra on 18th January 2003, and continued to threaten other parts for more than 10 days after. This was the first such cancellation of this Rally.

Jan 2004 Some 11 caravans were damaged, including awnings and vehicles, in a sudden and vicious hail storm on Wednesday 21st January.

MEMBERSHIP

There were four Foundation Members, one of whom is still an active caravanner. By the end of 1972, there were 29 members (families), with each family being given a Membership No. This number (29) remained more or less fairly constant over the years. Membership took on a real growth spurt during the period of Presidency by Bill Thompson.

Initially, "Member/Membership" meant the number of families/caravans in the Club. Membership was made "individual" in 1993, whereby both partners of the family were able to vote on issues before the Club. In order to abide by the Club's Constitution, a lesser annual subscription was afforded single members, with a couple paying only a little more.

In the mid 1990's, membership began to increase from around 30 (caravans) each year. At the time of this History being finalized at 01 May 2004, there were 166 members, which can be broken down into the following statistics -

Membership 01 May 04	By Membership Number	By Member Count
Single ¹	8	8
Family	79	158
Total	87	166
Foundation Members		2
Caravans²		84

Note 1: Includes two lady friends sharing a caravan, as well as 2 widows and 2 widowers.

Note 2: Some Life Members no longer have caravans, and thus this figure will not relate to any others.

A number of members have left the Club over the years, for various reasons, and rejoined the Club at a later date.

LIFE MEMBERS

Life membership, for service to the Club, in particular in relation to the Club's hosting of the 5th National Rally, December 1983/January 1984, has been awarded to the following people:

When	Names	Member No.	
April 1979	Jack and Pam Pemberton	1	For founding the Club, and their efforts in keeping it going.
July 1984	Barbara Bates	69	For 5th National Rally Service.
	Ted Donnell	72	
	Pam Pemberton	1	
	Ray Swift	65	
May 2000	Ray and Helen Galpin	2	Only founding members still active.

Where one partner receives Life Membership, the other partner automatically is deemed to be a Life Member also.

OFFICE BEARERS

A list of the Club's Office Bearers is attached, separately, so that it can remain updated easily.

A separate list is attached showing Committee members' names, excluding those who were Office Bearers.

As the Club provided members attending National Rallies, it became convention that the Club's President remained in office, being re-elected each year, for a period of three years, beginning at the next AGM following a National Rally, and standing down at the AGM following the next National Rally. This came about as the then President invariably attended the National Rally. However, on more than one occasion, a vote was required to elect the President at several AGM's, and on one occasion one President was not re-elected at the AGM after two years in office.

MEETINGS

In early years, the Club was administered by a Committee only, and there were generally no General Meetings, except for an Annual General Meeting. These early meetings were normally held at members' own houses.

When the Club's Constitution was changed in 1993, and Monthly General Meetings became the "norm", suitable venues had to be found.

The venue for monthly general meetings has had some changes over the years, mainly having to find a larger venue, due to the popularity of these meetings, which in the current Club climate, in the main, are considered a social event. Places where the majority of General Meetings were held, include:

- Methodist Church Hall Yarralumla
- Wanniasa Girl Guides Hall
- Lyons Church of Christ
- Hughes Community Centre
- Croatia Deakin Soccer Club/Deakin Sports & Social Club

CONSTITUTION

The Club's Constitution was first approved by the (then) Department of Interior in December 1973, after a lengthy period of preparation, amendments and legal advice. The first change was in January 1976, which included the naming of Committee positions.

Other minor changes took place over the years.

In May 1992, the Constitution was rewritten, to allow for Office Bearers, a lesser number of Committee Members, and the requirement of hold monthly General Meetings. In Mar 1993, a further change was required due to changes in the ACT Legislation in relation to Corporations.

INFORMATION BOOKLET

An Information Booklet was published in 1997, and reprinted in 2001. This booklet provides an overview of the Club's history, and provides information to prospective members, of the caravan club and caravanning.

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS AND DECISIONS

Some successful and worthy events and decisions are noted here, along with some names being mentioned. These have been placed in alphabetical order. The listed order does not signify one event to be more important than the other.

Anniversary Dinner

For many years an Anniversary Dinner was held mid year, sometimes to coincide with the Annual General Meeting (May), at various restaurants or clubs. This has been replaced by other social events, and sometimes these (like Christmas in July) were held close to "anniversary time).

On completion of the 1997 AGM, a 25th Anniversary Dinner was held at the Deakin Soccer Club, to celebrate that occasion.

Some 78 members attended, along with a number of former members who had held positions on the Club's Committee, plus members' children who had been active in the Club in years gone past.

Previous members who attended were:

Jack & Pam Pemberton (Foundation Member and Member No.1), Roger & Marj Holgate, Brian & Lyn Davies, Helen Moorehouse, Tim & Peg Perry, Barbara Bates, Ivan & Pat Grove, Vernon Berry, Hilda Bee, Bob & Shirley Anderson, Heather McGlew & Charles Smith. Children who attended include: Christine Cullens (Bates), Sharon Beresford (Swift) & Martin, John Grove & Melinda Hrvojevcc, Grahame Hamilton & Sharon, David Hamilton.

Bob Lloyd made his apologies.

Plus one of our advertisers, John & Susan Shinerock (Novus Windscreen Repairs).

Auction

During the annual Club Rally to Dalgety, an annual auction has been undertaken, and has always raised some good funds. Auctioneers have included Ray Swift and Richard Hay.

Club Rallies

Club Rallies have been held in a multitude of places, usually not far from Canberra, to allow members still working to be able to attend. A small number of Club rallies were also held at NATEX.

Over the years, a number of joint rallies have been held, with such other Clubs as Blue Mountains Caravan Club, Caravan Club of Australia, Central West Caravan Club, East Gippsland Caravan Club, Forbes Caravan Club, North East Victoria Caravan Club (Kelly Gang), Wagga Wagga Caravan Club.

As well, some Club members have attended NSW State Association of Caravan Clubs Rallies.

Christmas Party

For several years in a row, the Club members entertained themselves with a Christmas Dinner. These dinners provided some great vaudeville acts, particularly in 1996 to 1999 inclusive at the International Airport Motel Queanbeyan, and were greatly appreciated by members.

In earlier years, the Club marquee used to be set up at Weston Park for the Club's Christmas party, due in no small way because of the number of children of Club members.

Other venues included the White Ibis Tourist Park on the Federal Highway at Sutton.

Many thanks need to be made to Vivian Thompson and Angela van Aalst for their drive, determination and enthusiasm in arranging these acts. Also much appreciation to those members who got up and "gave it a go"!

Currently (2003), the Club has been gathering at the Bungendore Showground for several years, with quite a few members taking their caravans and staying over.

Dalgety

The Club commenced going to Dalgety for a Rally for Australia Day in January 1994. This proved such a success, that by 1997 sites were nominated in advance, as there were more caravans than powered sites.

Water sports played a very important part of this annual rally, the caravan park being on the bank of the Snowy River, and over some years, Regattas were run, involving sailboards (without sails) and surf skis.

In 1997, after visiting the Australia Day ceremony at Berridale in 1996, the Club decided that an Australia Day ceremony should be held, and Paddy O'Brien was given the task of arranging this. As a result, and in particular, as the Club invited the town's people to attend, Dalgety decided to run an Australia Day ceremony, commencing in 2001, to which the Club was invited to attend. As a result, the Club ceased its own ceremony.

Guest speakers included David Glasson a Snowy River Shire Councillor in 1999, and Mr. Peter Lloyd AO OBE Chairman of Safeski in 2000, listed in Who's Who in Australia 2000. In both these years, Mr. Clarrie Baines from Melbourne, whose son lived in the area, recited "Clancy of the Overflow" and "The Man from Snowy River".

Gas Bottle

The Gas Bottle is the Club's monthly Newsletter, and the method by which Club members and prospective members, are kept informed of what is happening with the Club, and other matters of interest.

Artist supreme, Bill Thompson in particular, has produced numerous covers for the Gas Bottle. While other members have also contributed, Bill has "set the scene".

International Caravanning

Oct 1976 41 Good Sam International CC

Oct 1980 18

Feb 1983 American Wally Byam Caravan Club
Apr 1983 American Wally Byam Caravan Club International
Aug 1986 17 International Caravanners Assoc
Apr 1987 American Wally Byam Caravan Club

Invitational Rally

The Club hosted an Invitational Rally in October 2002, at EPIC. This, unlike National Rallies, was not limited to caravanners who were members of a caravan club. Some 58 visiting caravans attended from a number of States, and this was considered a successful event.

National Rallies

A rally of members of Caravan Clubs is held each three years, and called the National Rally of the Caravan Clubs of Australia. Caravan Clubs from all States and the ACT, but not the Northern Territory (which does not have any Caravan Clubs), take part in these events.

National Rallies commenced in 1971, from an idea of several Clubs in S.A., and was held at Mildura Vic. A total of 6 Clubs were represented.

The timing of these National Rallies was over between Christmas and New Year. Why this time of the year? Simply because that was the best time for families to be able to travel. A check of CCC's attendances at National Rallies shows that at three successive National Rallies we had 36, 36 and 40 children attending.

The CCC hosted the 5th National Rally held in Canberra December 1983 to January 1984. For more information, see *5th National Rally of Caravan Clubs of Australia*.

A list of CCC members and children who have attended the various National Rallies is attached.

5th National Rally of Caravan Clubs of Australia

The Club hosted this 5th National Rally, at the National Exhibition Centre Canberra, now (May 2004) called Exhibition Park in Canberra (EPIC), from 28 December 1983 to 6 January 1984. Office Bearers at the time of this Rally included Ray Swift (Chairman), Barbara Bates, Frank Bee, Leslie Berry, Ted Donnell, Ed Hamilton, Doug Meredith, Paul Murphy, Pam Pemberton, Dennis Wicklander.

Viscount Caravans requested that it be allowed to launch a new model during this National Rally – rejected. Lloyds Caravans provided a second hand caravan to be used as a security van at the gate. Marquees were loaned by both the Caravan Club of Australia and the Caravan Club of South Australia.

This Rally was the first time that in excess of 600 caravans attended a National Rally. The Rally was, and still is, hailed as a great success.

Road Safety Council of the ACT

In the early 1970s, the Club decided to apply for a representative on the Road Safety Council of the ACT. The Club's first representative was Jack Pemberton. Doug

Meredith replaced Jack May 1979. Other representatives were Ray Swift (June 1980), Doug Meredith again (May 1983), and Paul Combridge (May 1984). The Club decided that it had not further role to play in the Road Safety Council, and preferred its resignation in may 1985.

Wine Bottling

Over a period of years, a very successful fund-raiser was a wine bottling.

Stocks of both red and white wines were arranged from the Murray River wineries. Members rinsed out and kept used empty wine bottles. Labels were arranged. The bottling day normally commenced around 11am, with a stoppage for a BBQ lunch (bring own meat and salads to share) - some stayed on for a further BBQ tea.

The “brains” behind this enterprise was Bill Thompson, and he will be remembered for some fantastic bottling days.

However, like most enterprising events, members began to think that a change was required. Unfortunately, nobody else took up the challenge of a different fund-raising event.

*Edited by Paddy O'Brien
Original Edition April 2004
Amended October 2004*