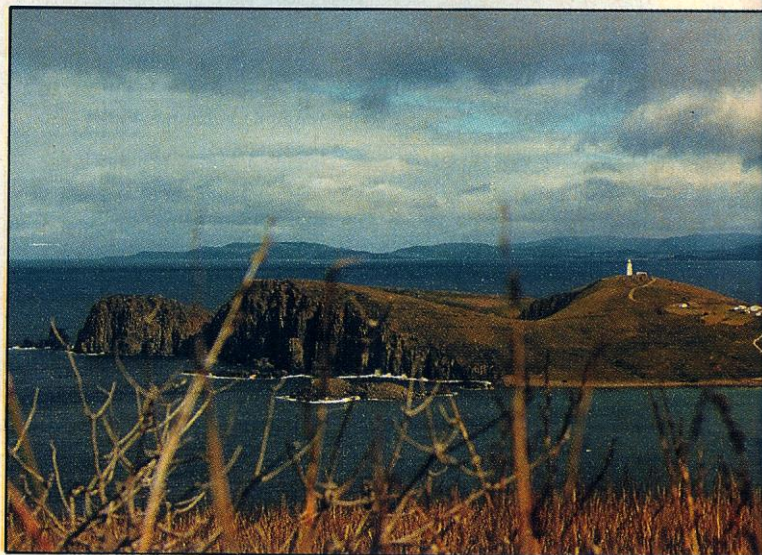




Tasmanian reader Robyn Parsey takes us on a delightful adventure to one of the most popular 4WD spots down south — the picturesque Bruny Island.



# FOUR WHEEL FEEDBACK

Not only does Bruny Island offer a range of interesting driving conditions, but the scenery — an important part of any bush trip — is spectacular and changing.





Bruny Island, located off South East Tasmania, has much to offer 4WD fans. Members of the Devonport Four Wheel Drive Club and their families discovered this when spending a long weekend there recently. Eighteen vehicles with 50 people took part.

We drove south to Kettering, and boarded the vehicular ferry, Harry O'May. Fifteen minutes later we arrived at Roberts Point, North Bruny Island.

Quarries Bay, South Bruny Island, was our immediate destination. It was here, after a 1½ hour drive from the ferry, that we set up our base camp. Quarries Bay is so named for the sand stone quarries established there in 1860, on the actual point of the bay, called Vetenant Point. The sand stone quarried here was used in Tasmania as well as exported. Work in the quarries was still taking place in 1887.

After setting the nets on the first morning, some of the group drove out to Vetenant Point. One of the vehicles experienced a spot of bother in a wet patch, but a quick change into 4WD soon remedied the situation. A walk down a steep track was necessary before exploring the quarry, which extends back into the cliff face. It's quite eerie — almost as if time has stood still. Going there in the height of summer would be for the bold



only. Pools of water and countless frogs provide a haven for snakes.

Following lunch we set out for Cloudy Bay, which boasts a beautiful long beach. This is a popular venue for surfers. We drove 3 km along the beach, picking up a

track which we hoped would link us to Coolangatta Road and Mount Mangana. Not far along the track, the first vehicle became stuck in a hole. After several unsuccessful attempts to get free, a snatch rope was used to extricate him.



## FOUR WHEEL FEEDBACK

The rest of the track being impassable, the vehicles backed down until a suitable turning area was located.

Eventually we found ourselves on Coolangatta Road. Known by the locals as the Mountain Road, it traverses Mount Mangana. Driving over the mountain is interesting due to the contrast in the bush. High rainfall causes some areas to appear similar to rainforests.

The descent of the other side of the mountain affords a superb view of Adventure Bay. Captain Furneaux in the ship *Adventure*, was part of Captain Cook's second voyage in the southern seas. The *Adventure* anchored here for five days, hence the name Adventure Bay. An annual invasion of campers and holiday makers in the summer enjoy boating, swimming and fishing here.

Returning along the Mountain Road, we turned off to Mavista Falls. It is a 1½ hour round trip, walking at a brisk pace, to the falls. The track had fallen into disrepair, making it necessary to cross the creek several times. The walk itself was the highlight here. Some of the trees reached as high as 140 ft. Typical of rainforests, the ferns are prolific. The earthy smell and sound of the running creek are most relaxing. Most of us completed the round trip, despite the leeches. A couple of Mums took advantage of the creek to rinse muddy jeans. The children found the track slippery, and spent a lot of time picking themselves up.

We proceeded along Forestry tracks to Lockley's Lookout where an exhilarating view back over Adventure Bay caused the shutterbugs to become busy with their cameras. Meanwhile the rest of us relaxed after the long walk at Mavista Falls.



**There were plenty of suitable places for sheltered camping, and most of them had some history attached.**

Having a navigator was a bonus to the lead vehicle when exploring the Forestry tracks and plantations around the mountain. As it happened, he had actually established some of these tracks. He also provided a running commentary on the CB radio. Finally we emerged onto a familiar road, after manoeuvring the vehicles around a fallen tree.

Our main objective for the next day was to see Variety Bay, North Bruny Island. Access can only be gained in 4WD through private property. William

Lawrence, great-great grandfather of our aforementioned navigator and commentator, received a grant of 320 acres at Variety Bay in 1830. Here he spent most of his life with his family, and died in 1884. He now lies in the family vault at Barnes Bay, North Bruny Island, with his wife and two daughters.

On the way we stopped at the ruins of an old church built from convict bricks. Residents travelled up to 20 miles by horse and buggy to attend this church. Further on, a few bricks complete with thumb print are all that remains of the homestead at Variety Bay.

Heading over the hills, we emerged from the treeline onto the most spec-

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An excursion to nearby Lunawanna for abalone proved fruitful. These were prepared and cooked on the barbecue for supper.



tacular view of the weekend. Locally known as "The Neck", it is an isthmus between the North and South of the island. Approximately 150 metres wide, the neck separates the channel from the ocean. Miles of beach stretch along the ocean side. A mutton bird rookery exists not far from here, at a place called Cape Queen Elizabeth.

The fresh water lagoon, alongside which we had lunch, hosts water fowl and black swan. The kids had a great time here filling bottles with tadpoles.

Cape Bruny was our next destination. Here we visited the oldest manned lighthouse in Australia. The Headkeeper gave an interesting talk on the history and function of the lighthouse. Built in 1836, it has seen quite a few shipwrecks. Although accessible by road now, this wasn't always the case. Early lighthouse keepers received their stores by boat into nearby Little Taylors Bay.

On our final evening back at camp, we dined on the fish caught in the nets. This was followed by a cake to celebrate the birthday of one of the ladies. Lighted matches were substituted for candles. An excursion to nearby Lunawanna for abalone proved fruitful. These were pre-



pared and cooked on the barbecue for supper.

It was unanimously agreed that Bruny Island had been a successful weekend, whetting the appetite for a return visit.

**Though much of the terrain covered was relatively easy, you still have to be careful where you put your wheels!**

**4X4**