S. Jones (Holden), L. Squires (Holden) and W. Price (Zephyr) waiting to cross the river near Mt. Doran just after the lunch control.

"BLUE RIBBON" TRIAL 1954

Conceived originally as a trial purely for experienced and prize-winning competitors, the V.S.C.C.'s Blue Ribbon has now run to three editions, as it were, and undoubtedly the current version, the Blue Ribbon of 1954, was the toughest of the lot. We ourselves, as the original instigators of this event, are happy to say that in our opinion the standard set by this year's directors, Vic. Cox and Fred Clarke, was the highest yet, and we speak as a battered participant at this writing, not from the snugness of a theoretician's armchair.

We will go further and say that the Redex may produce more extensive areas of so-called "horror" sections, but they cannot be more intensively horrible than the primeval Dore landscapes appointed to be crossed by the wretched competitors this year.

Mile upon mile of outsize gibber, rocky outcrops, half-visible ruts amid the grass, concealed drains and unmapped terrain confronted the 24 cars which faced the starter. The route was like something from Dante's Inferno, yet let it be said the whole field, or at least the survivors, voted it a top-class trial of its kind, and were in a high state of enjoyment most of the day. Make no mistake, it was a real chassis-buster, like we had a few years back, but on the other hand, the crews were well and frankly warned at the briefing, and they were all old hands at the game.

It would not have been desirable for novices or for an ordinary Club event, for such a battering is too hard on the average car. But it was eminently suitable and appropriate for a classic event, and both the Club and the directors deserve and have our praise. Like Bob and Bing, they certainly do get around.

Start was in Batman Avenue, uncomfortably close to the Morgue, and at the ungodly hour of 8.30 a.m. on a Winter's Sunday, June 20, 1954. First Control was easy enough to find and reach, Ardeer being the required spot. Control 2 was a taste of things to come, however, being a mile or two north-west of Werribee and involving the passage of Cobbledick's Ford. Some miles of route-charting followed, which led via Kirk's Bridge, and the biggest series of boulders in the surface of any "road" in the world, to Staughton Vale.

Control 4 was at Ingliston, and as this had to be reached from the south-east, a fairly high standard of driving and navigation was called for. The first few miles was a steep and poor track through the Brisbane Rangers, via the first two of the many gates we opened and closed. Thence to McPhail's and east nearly to Rowsley, followed by an unbelievably bad 10 miles beside the railway into Ingliston. Or one could go by the Cut Hill Road, which was even worse. Had it been raining, this section would have been impassable—completely; but it wasn't, praise Allah.

A break of 45 mins. at Ballan was followed by what could have been the really outstanding test of the whole event, a trip to Mt. Doran via a ford across the Moorabool River near Lal Lal. And we say "could have been" for here unnecessary confusion reigned while the two available fords were completely blocked by half-submerged cars. Meanwhile half the field sat ready and willing (and able, as it turned out) to cross.

The time they lost by this delay was not allowed for by the directors, though (a) it was not their fault, and (b) this delay did not apply to all the field. Let us not stress the point; we know all too well the woes of Directors: but it would have been easy to sign cars in and out at this Passage Control and save some heartburnings later.

Mt. Doran having been reached, the correct road at Lal Lal having been carefully chosen (by tossing a coin!), we left for "Greystones" via the unexpected and colourful valley of Yaloak Vale, which is so striking, and rugged cow-country that we fully expected to see Hoppy and California ridin' by. Control 7 involved the possession of secret knowledge, infernal hide and pioneering spirit, as one was obliged to enter the Gisborne-Bacchus Marsh Road, near Coimadai from the west.

It has now been proved that cars will climb a 1-in-2 slope with no traction, as a result; we were cowards—we came in from the easy side where the slope was only 1-in-5. Control 8 was 1½ miles east of Melton, and presented no troubles beyond a bridge closed just where yet another creek happened to be, but Control 9, was really the piece-de-resistance of the trial, as it could only be found by (a) instinct, (b) higher mathematics, (c) prayer, or (d) luck; and even when found was not easily seen to be approachable. However, we had heroic memories of the Midnight a couple of years back, and remembered

two fences betwixt which there lay, if not a road, at least an area of earth.

Along this we battled, at speeds which are even yet incredible, and actually, arrived early; some of the field, we add smugly, used all their allowed time just finding one of the reference points! Feeling like Johnny Horner with the plum, we set out for the finish at Coburg, and arrived there despite a nasty moment when delayed by the gates at North Essendon. Here the Club very hospitably put on a fine meal and drinks in a Hall—a touch which indubitably made the trial an even more memorable event. And here we saw the wisdom of the early start, for we were finished at 3.30 with time on our hands. More cheers still for this thoughtfulness; we have many times commented on the misery of a long and cheerless drive home from some remote pub in the bush, an anti-climax if ever there is one to trials and rallies.

It was a long (200 miles) trial, a hard one and a thoroughly testing event: without doubt, if this standard is kept up, it will be one of the really worthwhile events in Victoria, if indeed, it isn't already. Let us only say, in farewell, that we still think directors should consider "force majeure" as something with which competitors should not have to cope; and let us add our hearty thanks to the many officials whose task was made hard by a bitingly cold wind throughout the long day.

Outright winner for the second time running, was popular Bob Foreman in the 1,100 Fiat; "Sun Rally" winner Harry Firth was second in the Alpine, and N. Firth in the Plymouth was third. Just to make absolutely certain of the Team's Prize, moreover, these three were in the one team. A fourth prize went to R. Mills in the Consul.

Results:—

		Pts.
1.	R. Foreman (Fiat 1,100)	
2.	H. Firth (Sunbeam "Alpine")	
3.	N. Firth (Plymouth)	
4.	G. P. Manton (A30)	
5.	S. J. Jones (Holden)	
6.	H. C. Dean (Zephyr)	
7.	R. Mills (Consul)	
8.	E. J. Brotherton (A30)	
9.	K. Chenhall (A30)	
10.	E. Steet (Minor)	
11.	L. Riley (Holden)	
12.	W. Bail (Holden)	
13.	R. Smith (Zephyr)	
14.	G. Stroud (Holden)	
15.	P. Chapple (Holden)	
16.	W. and N. Price (Zephyr)	

There were five retirements during the course of the trial.

—D.K.T.

V.A.D.C.

Third Beveridge Motorkhana

Once again the Club was fortunate in being able to conduct another "Motorkhana," on the property of Club member Ian Stevenson, at Beveridge. The weather was fine, if a little windy, and over 60 cars and nearly 200 people attended with 45 entrants facing the starter. This is considered a very good entry, and indicates the keenness of Club members for "Drivers" events.

The roll-up of "sporting" type cars was quite surprising, and added considerably to the interest. For example, the sight of a beautifully prepared G.P. Bugatti in this type of event has to be seen to be believed.

The first event was in the nature of a "burn," consisting of two laps of a short circular circuit. Control of wheelspin on the fairly dry ground was a major factor in obtaining a good time in this event. N. McGurgan (TC) was fastest, with S. Baker (TF) and K. Best (TD) equal second.

Event No. 2 was of the Monte Carlo stop-and-restart type, except that instead of stopping abreast the stop-and-restart line, a flag around which competitors reversed was used. This had the effect of eliminating the human element of the official at the stop-and-restart line. N. McGurgan (TC) was again fastest with T. Rule (TC) second.

The Third event was a forward slalom through 5 flags and back again. The faster cars were very spectacular to watch, in this event, and the boys really worked on those steering wheels. Noel McGurgan (TC) was in terrific form and again recorded fastest time, closely followed by Stuart Baker (TF).

The 4th event called "Chicanery," by the Directors (A. W. Quinn, R. J. Veale and L. G. Viney), called for a cool head as well as driving skill. Cars had to weave their way around 4 flags which were widely spaced to form two "chicanes." As the cars were now throwing up quite a lot of earth it was sometimes difficult to see the flags on the return run. A really polished display of drifting by Stuart Baker (TF) earned him fastest time here, with Bruce Leslie (TC) and Dick Joyce (SM) equal second.

The 5th event, the "Southern Cross," had 4 pairs of flags laid out in the approximate form of an oval. Cars had to make two circuits between the pairs of flags. This was really very spectacular, and when I mention M.G.'s with inside rear wheels two feet off the ground, you'll perceive what I mean. Several officials nearly dropped their flags with shock watching some of the fast boys at work here.

Fastest was Maurie Chambers (TD), and Dick Joyce (SM) and Graham Whitlock (Peugeot) were equal second. New member Dick Joyce, from Romsey, was competing in his first "motorkhana," but was displaying very promising form indeed.

When the aggregates were added by the officials, it was seen that Bruce Leslie's "internally" chrome-plated and very potent TC had the rare distinction of filling the first two places, driven by N. McGurgan, and its owner respectively. Third place went to G. Whitlock (Peugeot), a remarkable result and the highest placed saloon in a motorkhana for a long time.

A happy touch was as usual provided by Tony Quinn, on the P.A. system, aided and abetted by Peter Jenkins. Some of the colourful background information they supplied would have had our radio stars green with envy.

The Directors wish to thank all the hard working officials including Bruce Ford, Brian Hay, Barry Darke, Ian Lemon, Peter Peacock, Neil Middleditch, Brian Barnes and Ken Pimblett.

So ended a really enjoyable day, with well over 200 individual starts. After this taste of "Drivers" events, the boys can hardly wait for the official opening of the Club's new Hill Climb, at Tuerong Valley. It's terrific! Bring your own oxygen!

—L.G.V.