

20th George Derrick Memorial Trial

CONTROVERSIAL WIN TO BROWN

MOUNT COLE, SUNDAY JUNE 25th — CHRIS AND SIMON BROWN were declared provisional winners of the 20th annual George Derrick Memorial Trial here this morning.

A somewhat controversial decision was made regarding an incident that occurred during the daylight section when the Browns' Datsun 1600 left the road to avoid another vehicle which had entered the "closed" roads.

The Browns have been allowed some seven minutes time and this places them a single minute ahead of provisionally second placed crew of Chris Power and Mike Mitchell in the Brad Boydon Datsun 1600.

Third were series leaders, Warwick Smith and Paul Paterson in their Lancer.

The remaining placegetters were Geoff Portman/Shane Blandford, Mick Ellis/Jim Maude and Ian Richards/Kate Niblett all in Datsun 1600's.

The event was sponsored by Windscreens O'Brien and started from Ballarat at midday Saturday with a full field of fifty cars gathering in drizzly and cold weather. For most of the afternoon, intermittent showers of rain made conditions extremely slippery and in some places downright diabolical. The field comprised fifteen grade one crews, eighteen grade twos and seventeen grade threes.

Competition commenced in the Ben Major Forest west of Lexton, with fast cresty track with the occasional mud hold and water splash.

The Browns, Armitage/Rainer (180B), Portman/Blandford, Harrowfield/Boyd, Power/Mitchell, Bell/Hollowood, crews, eighteen grade twos and seventeen grade threes.

A longer section followed along Baranga Creek Track and down Reservoir Road to Victoria Mill. Browns struck their problems with an interloper on the route whilst Evans/Maniatakis retired with brake problems. Smith, Armitage, Portman, Harrowfield, Power and Bell dropped twos to be quickest.

A short three kilometre run down Buckingham Creek Road seemed straightforward but it was so slippery on one left hander that most people lost control. Nowacki slipped off without damage but then Hugh Bell gave him a nudge with some damage to both vehicles. It was so slippery that no-one could be blamed. Only Kilgyle/Gauday (Lancer), Power/Mitchell (Datsun 1600) and Coleman/Birrell (Galant) cleaned.

A loop around Ben Nevis was next and included a very dangerous slippery descent which gave most drivers heart failure. One particular tree got a lot of scares until finally Colin Sichlay used it to reshape the boot of the Fiat. Most of the leading cars dropped four minutes but scores increased through the field as the roads deteriorated.

The divisions final section up Harvey Flat Road and down Divide and Glut Roads presented few problems. Brown, Smith, Portman and Barber dropped two minutes. This left Portman in a clear lead for the division down 18 with Brown and Power next, both on 20, then Armitage equal with Smith on 21, then Ashton equal with Jones and also Bell/Hollowood and Ellis/Maude all down 24 points.

The night division commenced with a long transport section up towards St. Arnaud. Bell failed to start suffering from a bent rear crossmember on his Datsun 1600. The first night competitive

IAN RICHARDS REPORTS

Richards/Niblett, Wilson/Marsh and Fitcher/Fitcher set the pace dropping three minutes. Graeme Trounce started badly when he clipped a tree, but continued with time loss.

The action then moved into the Mount Cole state forest where the rain had made the clay roads impossibly slippery. Over Mount Lonarch was very tight and most crews oversteered straight past the turn left at the top of the climb. A dozen crews dropped four minutes whilst Dalle and Baldock struck problems dropping 18 minutes. Mike Henry retired the Civic with a broken gearbox.

Seventeen crews cleaned down Kings and Gillingham Roads into the central contol on the main Raglan-Elmhurst Road. Similarly, everyone dropped a minute up Fiery Creek Road, but everyone enjoyed it!

The first real problems were struck on the next section up Sandersons Road and Camp Road. Firstly, Peter Corkran slipped off the road and then whilst winding across the road, his winch jammed blocking the track. Both Richards and Pat Barber were held up until the cable was cut! Just up the road, the uphill hairpin on Sandersons Road became very chopped up and many of the later crews had to have a couple of tries to get up the hill.

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through the Clover Valley Forest just north of Stuart Mill saw Smith, Brown, Armitage, Portman, Dalle, Ashton, Jones, Power, Sichlay, Barber, Ellis and Richards drop two minutes on the fast roads which, in contrast to Mt. Cole, were in ideal condition.

The next two sections through the St. Arnaud and Carapooee Forests were both cleanable.

After a refuel in St. Arnaud, a thirsty kilometre run southwards through the St. Arnaud Forest saw eleven crews clean, although a number of these were more than a minute early over the fast cresty roads.

At the Service Point on the Navarre-St. Arnaud Road, Geoff Lawson was having engine problems before starting the long 76 kilometre section which followed. The section contained a wide variety of roads from tight forest tracks to fast cresty roads and included a run through the tiny town of Kanya where crews were requested not to skittle the monument which stands in the middle of the road. Consistency of navigation and driving was the key to a fast time and only Chris Power/Mike Mitchell cleaned the section with Ian Richards/Kate Niblett on one and the Browns on two. Jim Uttleymore and Tony Bond dropped three in their Lancer with Mike Ellis/Jim Maude next on four. David Jones retired with a blown clutch whilst Harrowfield bogged his Datsun 1600 on one of the tricky grassy easements. Kilfoyle retired the Corolla with a blown gearbox.

The final section before the Stawell refuel started with some fast easements and concluded with some tight tracks in the Darlington Mine Forest. Brown, Smith, Power, Ellis, Rob Willett (Renault), Uttleymore, Peter Hurrey (Celica) and Andy Fraser (Datsun 1600) all dropped three to be best. This left Chris Power with a handy lead down 25 to Unis Brown's 27 and Portman on 30, then came Smith 33, Ellis 34, and Richards 35.

Two fast cleanable sections between Stawell and Ararat presented no hassles to most crews except Portman and Dyball, both who lost valuable time on the second of these sections. This moved Portman back into sixth but he was to regain fourth place over the final sections in Mount Cole.

A quick run up Mount Langi Ghiran saw over a dozen crews down two then into Mount Cole which was still wet and slippery in spite of the fact that the rain had stopped some six hours earlier and the night was clear and cold.

Firstly up Sandy Pinch Road had most cars one down then a very enjoyable run up Water Race Road and Grazing Right and McGees Tracks took cars back to the central control. Smith, Armitage, Brown, Portman, Powers and Richards each dropped three minutes to be quickest.

The events final section was a thirty kilometre loop over roads which changes surfaces very quickly from sand base tracks in the pines which offered good traction to the slippery clay roads which offered no traction. Some

roads had been used earlier in the day and these one offered less than no traction!

Power had his dramas leaving the road at least once and losing the event when he dropped ten to the sevens of Brown, Smith and Armitage. Dyball became bogged for a short time in his 120Y whilst Sichlay slipped off the road with no starter motor! Ellis also became bogged then slipped up a wrong road losing ten. Richards clipped two trees, followed Ellis up the wrong road and did the last ten kilometres with no accelerator return spring but managed to loose eleven.

Such was the eventfulness of the final section of a long, demanding and quite eventful event.

Provisional Results:	
1. Chris Brown/Simon Brown, Datsun 1600	40 pts.
2. Brad Boydon Datsun, Chris Power/Mike Mitchell, Datsun 1600	41 pts.
3. Warwick Smith/Paul Paterson, Lancer	45 pts.
4. Geoff Portman/Shane Blandford, Datsun 1600	49 pts.
5. Mike Ellis/Jim Maude, Datsun 1600	51 pts.
6. Ian Richards/Kate Niblett, Datsun 1600	52 pts.