



Big T of "Masters" Harry Firth (left) and Graham Hoinville repeated their 1964 Ampol success with a runaway win in the Rothmans.

FIVE of Australia's best rally drivers are Harry Firth, Greg Garard, Ian Vaughan, Reg Lunn and Frank Kilfoyle. They filled the first five placings in the 2,500-mile Rothmans "Southern Cross" rally run from October 5-9.

The "Southern Cross" was not run for amateurs and all who finished showed talent and ability, making the first crews home truly earn their share of the \$18,000 prize money.

Firth in particular won the rally on his merit — and that of his Cortina GT. After commencing with relatively easy stages the rally intensified as the miles passed until the final miles were all any enthusiast could ask for.

Months of work by the organising club, the Australian Sporting Car Club, and Rally Director, Bob Selby-Wood, soon showed up in the clear, explicit, navigation-free instructions.

This was a driver's trial through and through, and as the times became tighter the novices became aware of what lay ahead.

The "Southern Cross" began at the giant Sydney suburban shopping complex, Roselands, on the night of October

OFFICIAL RESULTS

OUTRIGHT

1. Ford Motor Co.: H. Firth/G. Hoinville (GT Cortina) 130
2. Pat Cullen's Garage: G. Garard/F. Goulbourn (Holden HR) 155
3. Ian Vaughan: I. Vaughan/R. Vaughan (GT Cortina) 164
4. H. C. Dusting Pty. Ltd.: R. Lunn/G. Thomas (Holden HR) 180
5. Ford Motor Co.: F. Kilfoyle/R. Forsyth (GT Cortina) 184

CLASSES: Series Production

- 0-1000cc:** 1. R. Gudgeon/A. Platt (Honda S600) 646; 2. D. Gibb/S. Purdy (Imp) 1269; 3. Carol Shaw/Lyn Keeffe (Mini de Luxe) 1357.
1001-1300: 1. J. Laing-Peach/P. Smith (Renault R10) 556; 2. J. Murphy/J. Sweeney (Cooper S) 576; 3. P. Walz/R. Cain (Cooper S) 880.
1301-2000: 1. I. Vaughan/R. Vaughan (Cortina GT) 164; 2. F. Kilfoyle/R. Forsyth (Cortina GT) 184; 3. G. Russell/M. Hartigan (Peugeot 404) 345.
Over 2000: 1. T. Roberts/P. Haas (Holden HR) 222; J. Garard/P. Meyer (Holden) 253; 3. L. Williams/W. McGreal (Holden X2) 296.

Improved Production

- 0-1000:** 1. C. Ryder/T. French (Cooper) 654; 2. W. Burns/B. Kaye (Fiat 850) 1558; 3. T. Crawford/B. Graber (Cooper) 1727.
1001-1300: 1. E. Green/J. Keeffe (Cooper S) 208; 2. R. Drane/J. Wellard (Ren. 1100) 308; 3. R. Holden/G. Shephard (Cooper S) 353.
1301-2000: H. Firth/G. Hoinville (Cortina GT) 130; 2. M. Winkless/A. Smith (Volvo 122S) 187; 3. P. Hopkirk/G. Chapman (Cooper S) 264.
Over 2000: G. Garard/F. Goulbourn (Holden HR) 155; 2. R. Lunn/G. Thomas (Holden X2) 180; 3. R. Watson/J. McAuliffe (Holden HR) 319.

TEAMS AWARD: Ford Motor Co. 478.

5. A large enthusiastic crowd had gathered to farewell the 69-car field.

Mindful of the confusion which occurred with traffic in the 1964 Ampol, the organisers scheduled an easy run up through Kurrajong and along the Bell Road.

After Bell and Lowther the first swift run, to Hampton, came; and then a "feel" of good gravel roads to the first meal break at Crookwell. Incidents

Watson (Holdens), Green (Mini), Drane (R8), Russell (404), Hilton (V & L M1100 S) and Hodgins (Citroen).

The second night's run became competitive. There were swift times through Pulletop, Wesby, Yarrara and a couple of special stages complete with a pall of dust to complicate things.

Then the field moved into a carnival setting in Tumberumba's main street. At least a thousand locals gathered from

FIRTH / HOINVILLE TAKE RICH "STHN CROSS" RALLY

Story by JOHN BRYSON & BOB WATSON.

Photos by SCOTT POLKINGHORNE.

started with a Peugeot dropping a tailshaft, a Cortina balancing on a rock and a Mini up a bank whilst the Healey's sump proved vulnerable.

65 of the starters left Crookwell towards Wyangala Dam and the first "Special Stage". The "special" bit was losing four points a minute if late. This was an easy one.

After Boorowa and Nannong the next one was a little swifter. Most clean-sheeted the fourteen minute dash over ideal dirt roads. And then the pendulum swung to the opposite type of roads in the last special stage before Wagga.

This would have been a VW benefit if the times had been tighter with mud for miles and an endless stream of granite outcrops to chasten the unwary. Thirty-one through on time.

Two Coopers and two VWs retired in the second division — a broken oil cooler pipe, no brakes, a prang and a dropped valve.

The internationals Paddy Hopkirk and Rauno Aaltonen proved to be as good as reported — if not better — but they had car preparation problems. It seemed local BMC parts proved better than the U.K. components but they lost a lot of time whilst an overworked service team made their cars competitive.

Working on cars was permitted but it was done in running time which costs points. With cars impounded at overday stops like Wagga the Rothmans Rally turned out to be a genuine test of car and driver on the open road.

At Wagga a dozen crews were without points lost. Kennedy (Gloria), Ferguson (VW), Hodgson and Kilfoyle (Cortinas), John and Greg Garard with Roberts and

up to a hundred miles away to cheer the cars.

This wasn't an isolated case of local interest either — but — in Tumberumba, fancy being asked to do "wheelies" in the main street to amuse the locals!

After Jingellic and Talgarno came four special stages around Bethanga. Little beauties, wonderful.

The whole field is grateful to the people of this town who were enlightened enough to let Selby-Wood stage a fantastic cloverleaf through Bob Taylor's superb control in the town square.

There were lights everywhere, cheering crowds and frantic drivers who could barely make the times.

The run in was a thirty minute dash over a switchback forest trail. Like 99 per cent of the "Southern Cross" roads the surface was good (for gravel) but oh, what a multitude of hairpin bends.

Aaltonen in his Cooper S went best losing 33 points (1 every 15 secs.), then Firth (Cortina—34), Nolan (Gordini—35), Hopkirk (Mini S—37), Ferguson (VW—38), and Roberts (Holden—40).

The good drivers generally made the next two sections and then came a five mile bit in six minutes.

By my figuring Doug Stewart (V & L M1100 S) was the only cleansheet. The Morris 1100 had a 1310 cc. motor and was highly competitive after the faulty coil was replaced and before the centre main bearing web collapsed.

But times in this section could have been unfair because there were three gates en route that Garard, for one, had to open and close which Stewart and I found open.

Probably Australia's best-equipped Trials car, Firth's Cortina GT enters the final arena to the cheers of a record crowd.





Our reporter, Bob Watson, pulls his Holden round a bend past the unlucky Stubber Holden.



Paddy Hopkirk checks the wheels clearance on his 'S' after the displacers blew out.



N.S.W. Champion, Greg Garard, forges through a creek in his HR Holden. Greg drove brilliantly to score second place.

So the points that matter here are Ferguson down 2, Winkless (Volvo—3), Hopkirk and Green (Mini S) with Bourke (Anglia), Forrest (Volvo) and Vaughan (Cortina) all 4.

One of the few criticisms by Hopkirk and Aaltonen was about gates on special stages.

Our involvement in the rally ended near Wangaratta when the chariot's motor packed up. The rest of the field had a fair sort of a run from Albury to Myrtleford, Whitfield and Mansfield.

Thence it was into Healesville, Hawthorn and to Olympic Park for a short sleep in Melbourne.

Gone were the clean sheets now. Barry Ferguson on 40 led Firth (49), Kilfoyle (50), Vaughan (52), Garard (53) and Green (54). With the hardest two nights to come Hodgson and Winkless (61), Lunn (63), and Drane (65) were well placed if the leaders made a mistake.

More cars had not completed the second night's running. A VW and the Jaguar XK140 went right on a left hand corner, while Clyde Hodgins' cleansheeting Citroen suffered suspension maladies.

Harry Firth's run to Melbourne was amazing. Barely out of Albury he was beset by a cracked cam follower, and his engine ran only on 2 cylinders.

Two hundred miles later he found time to take a look — and found one spark plug lead adrift. That replaced gave him 3 cylinders and he was able to again make fastest time on many special sections!

Once in Melbourne Harry was set. Making full use of the hour's free time to maintain one's car, Harry whipped into his well equipped workshop at Auburn.

In 52 minutes the engine was out, camshaft and followers replaced, and the engine refitted! "The Fox" was away again, ready for anything.

MELBOURNE — SYDNEY

AFTER the hour's work break allowed on cars in Melbourne, there was much speculation as to whether Harry Firth had successfully repaired his sick engine—to remove the motor, replace a camshaft and set of followers in less than an hour was fantastic work.

The action began almost immediately. After an easy run to Pakenham, a loop north of the Princes Highway through Tonimbuk cost all but the "Mini S" drivers points.

Then followed a long run down the Princes Highway to several snappy

Veteran of seven Round Australia trials, Bob Gudgeon churns through the mud in his Honda, on the way to a class win. Terry Crawford wasn't so lucky.

sections, starting near Yarragon.

Although there were no "special sections" as such in Victoria, due to a ruling by the Victoria State Council, the pace was just as fast as in N.S.W., except that one only lost one point per minute late instead of four, which was a pity for the faster drivers. The Gormandale section cost heavily, Aaltonen dropping five, Hopkirk six, and Green and Firth seven.

The Minis were really proving their speed on good surfaces—we followed Aaltonen briefly after he passed us; it was most impressive to watch the car being flicked into position for a corner, and then powered through with gravel spurting out from both front wheels.

After replenishment at Bairnsdale, on to Buchan and the long grind through Suggan Buggan to Cooma. This was a rough ride, although the leading cars had no trouble achieving the time.

After a refuel at Cooma, a special stage to Callamondah via Yaouk was familiar territory to Southern Mountain Trial competitors, and presented no difficulty in spite of the usual 48 m.p.h. average. A fast run to Tharwa followed, and thence into Canberra for a welcome few hours sleep.

Several cars were showing the effects of the long run by this stage—Green's Mini S was dropping points regularly, and Robert's Holden suffered wheel bearing problems over the latter stages.

Once again the rest period at Canberra seemed to be just enough to allow one to drop off to sleep before being shaken into action again. Bob Selby-Wood, at the briefing meeting and around the course, had promised competitors he would show no mercy over the final stage of the trial—and this was to prove true.

At Canberra, Ferguson (VW—57) was leading narrowly from Harry Firth (Cortina—59), Kilfoyle (Cortina—60), and Vaughan (Cortina—63), with quite a few others within striking distance.

The trial was still wide open, because with most of the remaining sections being run as "special sections" at one point per 15 seconds late, the margin between the first half dozen cars was virtually negligible.

Starting from the outskirts of Canberra, the pace was "on". Everyone was late on the dash to Cavan; Hopkirk was best—one point down, then Firth five, and Green and Garard

Ferguson's VW, after hitting a tree only 500 miles from victory, was drivable but had no lights.

eight.

Ferguson was obviously feeling the hot breath of the opposition on his neck, and on the run across to Collector, overdid it on a blind crest and nosed the VW heavily into a tree.

This put Barry out of the event, after a magnificent drive, and left Firth in the lead. Greg Garard was handling his Holden beautifully, and had only dropped two more points than Firth to the meal break at Collector.

After Collector it was more of the same—by this time drivers were automatically driving at nine-tenths continually, and thinking nothing of it.

Kilfoyle had troubles, blowing a tyre in the deep river crossing before Charleyang; this cost him 34 valuable points.

We made a navigation error on this section, which cost some 66 points—very discouraging after 2,000 miles of hard driving!

The best drivers' section of the rally came after Braidwood—the notorious Araluen loop. Again, Hopkirk was best with 17 points lost. Firth and Greg Garard 20 and Geoff Russell 24. From here to Reidsdale—also impossible. Best were Firth and Kilfoyle, 42 points down.

After a refuel at Nowra, competitors were pointed towards the Kangaroo Valley area—plenty of steep climbing here; brakes were suffering considerably, particularly on the larger cars, but this was the final fling, and the leading cars held their positions to the finish at Pat Cullen's Garage at Liverpool.

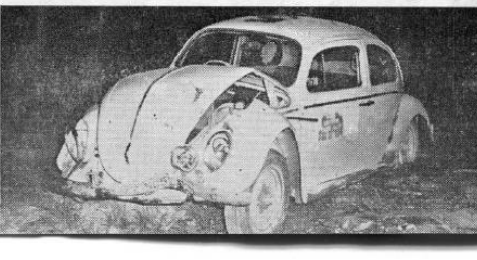
Once again the "old fox" proved himself to be Australia's No. 1 Trials Driver, and that he can hold his own with the world's best in a suitable car. Bad luck for "Fergie"—he crashed on the worst corner of the course, when the pressure was really on.

The Internationals were very fast, but showed little regard for their vehicles—Aaltonen had continual suspension troubles, and finally retired at Collector with a blown head gasket. Greg Garard drove the big Holden extremely well to finish second in what was basically a small-car course.

A fantastic event, organised extremely well—all credit to Bob Selby-Wood and the ASCC: let us hope Rothmans see fit to stage it again next year.

cont. overleaf

Lionel Williams' Holden leaps high over a cattle grid. The car had already rolled once, still made the finish.



The "Southern Cross" Rally was an exciting event during which so much happened. Out of the thousands of incidents many can be recalled.

First of all the results are undeniably a triumph for Harry Firth and Cortinas; three of these in the first five placings. Reports as usual decry the Firth effort, especially about his motor.

The Victorians showed by the way that they figure in the top placings that they don't need to win trials on navigation alone. Their sportsmanship was also quite evident.

Typical praise for the Rally came from men such as small class winner Bob Gudgeon (Honda). He has been in seven "Round Australia" runs; and he stated at the presentation that the Rothmans had been better than any of them. Whilst on the subject of praise for the Rothmans, Hopkirk and Aaltonen said it was an outstanding event and was far better than the "Monte Carlo Rally".

With such fierce competition—every mainland state represented, and the internationals—it is no wonder that quite a few cars overdrove. However, many drivers proved they were near, or in, world class to have mechanical troubles spoil their chances.

Ray Christie's VW had electrical trouble from the start; Evan Green (Mini) had suspension and motor worries; Doug Chivas' Alfa had its generator pack up and trouble with tyres; John Schwartz split the sump of his VW.

Brian Hilton's Morris 1100 had no

third gear after the first day; the rear axle on Keith Hutchison's Citroen worked loose; Bill Nolan looked like winning his class when his Gordini broke an oil pipe; Bill Burns likewise when his Fiat's rear sub-frame gave up the ghost; plus all the others who had their share of troubles.

And four nights in the "Southern Cross" were tough enough to give anyone a share of trouble.

Hopkirk and Aaltonen displayed amazing ability in their Minis. In their turn they were astounded by a few of our drivers.

In particular Greg Garard, then the other Holden drivers such as Bob Watson, Reg Lunn and Tony Roberts. They found it hard to believe that such big cars could cover the testing route and finish unmarked.

It wasn't only the "name" drivers who impressed those who followed the rally.

Bill Nolan in the Milk Board's Gordini was one plus the other two Renault pedallers, Bob Drane and Jim Laing-Peach. The latter, although a comparative novice, drove sensibly fast to win his class.

Ford could also get a new star shortly in Lionel Bourke whose Cortina powered Anglia took three people around the course faster than many bigger cars with only two aboard.

Griffiths Brake Service operator Bruce Hodgson looked like giving Cortina another major place until his battery packed up.

Few drivers in the rally would be as fast as Lionel Williams. He and Tony Theiler are in a class of their own. Williams recovered from an early episode off the road to earn third in his class, for Holden.

Works teams battling for honour were Ford, B.M.C., Renault and VW. As well there were two Holdens from Liverpool dealer Pat Cullen and the three car Victorian Holden Dealers team representing H. C. Dusting, S. A. Cheney and Preston Motors.

Ford showed the way with results from a well prepared team. Drivers Harry Firth, Frank Kilfoyle and Ian Vaughan are outstanding. B.M.C. had Evan Green and Bob Holden to back up the visitors.

Aaltonen set many of the fastest times before his Cooper blew a headgasket.

Volvos were expected to feature higher than they did but at least they all did finish, the four of them and Winkless did get a class award. Even Ferguson's

PETER WALZ: "I wouldn't get out that side if I were you, Bob!" A nasty situation for a Cooper S.



As George Shepheard (Bob Holden's nav.) said: "The roads were good, the times were good—but the trees were a bit anxious!" They were one of four who hit Ferguson's tree near Collector.

tree didn't stop Jack Forrest altogether.

Tyres cost the Wheelmar Gloria too much time in a special stage — three of them blew. Just how high did Kennedy have that Gloria flying before he landed?

Not only the crews who competed deserved praise. The event was an Australian Sporting Car Club triumph with good organising, prompt results and the official presentation arranged and over by Thursday, 13th.

The fact it was a triumph was made possible by some 525 officials who represented clubs from Bathurst, Cooma, Canberra, Goulburn, Yass, Wagga, Wangaratta, Benalla, Gippsland, the Light Car Club, Cronulla, Wollongong, the Hills District and members from many others. The route is to the credit of Bob Selby-Wood. His checker was Bede McNabb. The clerks of the course were Pat and John Lawless plus Rex Shearer and John Sykes.

The scrutineers from C.A.M.S. had a complicated job with many queries. Headed by Fred Pearse, they did such good work that everyone was satisfied.

Colin Barnes drove the director around the course in a VW provided by the factory whilst Steve Halloran and John Arter handled the two course cars lent by Renault Australia.

The start and finish was at Roselands. The Roselands people deserve special praise for the facilities they made available.

And anyone who wanted a story should have been with Les Barron who guided the "tail-end-Charlie" Toyota Land Cruiser around picking up the pieces.

Cars on the edge of precipices, bogged to the door handles, straddling rocks or just plain fatigued — the Toyota mob struck the lot, rendered assistance and proved an angel of mercy.

All in all the Rothmans "Southern Cross" Rally was a superb event which was a credit to Bob Selby-Wood and the A.S.C.C. It had far more press publicity than any other rally for many years which alone must justify another event of such magnitude for 1967.

But Rothmans' greatest contribution was providing an incentive to the best drivers, navigators and cars in Australia to compete against each other.

Next year the quality of the field should be even greater because crews are already working out which car they will be taking. Consequently the Rothmans will be the premier proving ground for just who is the best driver and what is the best rally car.

Who will win next year? Will it be Holden or Ford, will VW beat B.M.C. or Renault — or who?

RACE & RALLY ACCESSORIES..

RACEMASTER
LIGHTWEIGHT DRIVING SUITS & SHOES

LIGHT BLUE
YELLOW
WHITE
BLACK
AQUA
RED

FRACTIONAL SIZES 5 TO 11
TWO COLOURS
BLACK OR WHISKY TAN
ONLY 79/11 \$7.99

SIZES: SM, M, OS OR MADE TO MEASURE
ONE-PIECE — \$12.00
TWO-PIECE — \$15.00
FLAMEPROOFED — \$1.50

GET WITH IT — "RACEMASTER" SPORTS CAR CAPS
SIMULATED LEATHER
45/- \$4.50
SIZES: 6 3/4 — 7 3/4
COLOURS: B/W CHECK, RED, BLACK

IMPORTED 39/6
CHROME SPEED MIRRORS

324 ACCURATE COMPASS ILLUMINATES COMPENSATES £6-15-0 \$13-50
ADHESIVE PLASTIC SPOTS .50¢ NOS .25¢ EA.

RALLY RACING TEAM
EMBROIDERED CLOTH BADGES — FROM ONLY — 10/- \$1.00

129 Liverpool Road, Burwood, N.S.W. 748-603

