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## *In this issue*

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FORD FALCON WINS THE 1963 B.P. RALLY

SIMON FORD DISCUSSES U.S. ENGINED SPORTS CARS

EXOTIC ALFA ROMEO SPORTS COUPES FOR AUSTRALIA

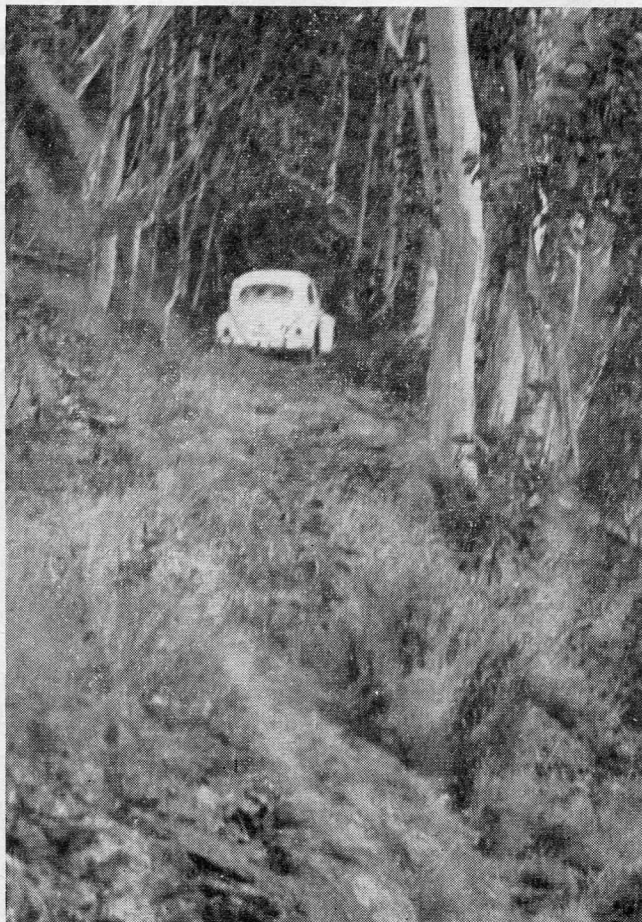


Kevin Lott (Cortina) finds that at times the road can disappear.

## Firth and Falcon win 2nd BP Rally

**For the second year in a row Harry Firth and Frank Kilfoyle have won the Blue Ribbon trial of Australia.**

A Volkswagen takes it easy along the rugged "Knocker" track.



**I**T LOOKS as though the Ford Company is getting a stranglehold on the BP Rally. Harry Firth's win in the 1963 event made it the second time in a row that a Ford car has won Australia's most rugged trial.

This year the rally followed its traditional format of a 500 mile assembly stage bringing the entrant from starting points at Adelaide, S.A., Goulburn, N.S.W., Hobart, Tas., and Melbourne, Vic., followed by four trial stages over another 1500 miles.

Each of the stages were divided into two parts each of which contained from four to eight controls. At the start of each section competitors were given instruction slips telling where each control was situated, which roads had to be used to reach it and which roads were out of bounds. On paper nothing could be simpler but when navigators tried to plot the route on their maps and then direct their drivers where to go it became obvious that Director, Donald Thomson, had been doing plenty of homework over the past 12 months. Roads which were listed on the map did not exist, or were surrounded by many other roads which were not on the map and which looked more like the right road than the one competitors had to follow.

Thomson maintained, as always, that his route could be followed according to the map and afterwards competitors ruefully agreed with him — "But it would take a long, long time to get round the course" they said.

Heavy rain just before the event made everybody but the 39 entrants rub their hands with glee but a couple of fine days dried out most of the route and left the surface just damp enough to keep down dust and make sand tracks, where the cars would be bogged in dry weather, solid.

So there was not much chance of cars being bogged anywhere along the route, water crossing were few and gave little trouble and apart from one section, the "Knocker track" there was little rough road.

This should have made things fairly easy but speeds were high and although controls could be reached on time if drivers kept to the correct route the slightest mistake meant only the fastest cars had a chance of making up lost time. For this reason the rally was a big car benefit although the abundance of twisty roads still gave smaller cars a fair chance. Had it rained during the event the advantage would have swung decidedly in favour of Volkswagens and Ford Anglias.

The Ford Motor Company entered a team of seven cars — four Falcons, two Cortinas (one fitted with a 1500 c.c. engine) and an Anglia. There was also a privately entered Falcon and an Anglia. Privately entered, but sponsored by BMC Australia, were a team of three Morris Major Elites and a Ballarat crew entered a Morris 850.

Three Holdens were entered by the "Victorian-Tasmanian Holden dealers". Since G.M.H. has at times prevented dealers from entering cars in motor sporting events we can assume that these three cars had the company's blessing. The sight of three Holdens (service vehicles?) which dogged the field from start to finish seemed to indicate that G.M.H. may have given more than its blessing to the entry.

Another three Holdens were entered by private entries.

Volkswagens are still a popular trials car in Victoria and, with some support from VW to entrants and the supply of a service vehicle manned by two mechanics, 11 competed.

Remaining entries consisted of one Hillman, one Vanguard, one M.G.-A sports car, one Renault Gordini, one Ford Zephyr and two Peugeots.

Any points lost during the assembly stage did not count unless there was a tie on the trial and this was just as well. The last three controls fooled many competitors when Thomson tossed some tricky navigation into what is usually a straight-forward run to the start.

The event started at Melbourne's Chadstone Supermarket at 8.30 on Wednesday, May 1. The Assembly stage took up most of the night and everybody assembled at Ballarat at 7.30 next morning for the briefing and start of the trial proper. The



Water splashes were included in the route but did not seem to worry competitors unduly. A VW churns through one at speed.

Traffic in busy streets in the provincial cities where the rally stopped for meal breaks could not waken exhausted drivers and navigators who caught up on their sleep wherever possible.

competitors would not see their beds until they reached Donald 366 miles and 10 hours driving later. Allowing time out for a stop at Donald for lunch and petrol, average speeds for the two stages were high — generally over 40 miles per hour but there was little rough road.

Thomson sent the competitors on a hide and seek route through old goldfields where mapped roads had fallen into disuse and been replaced by brand new ones which looked precisely like those on the maps. In places cross roads were non-existent and in others drivers found themselves in a maze of tracks which led in all directions.

By Swan Hill everybody had lost points — mainly at a control just outside Maryborough just 51 miles outside Ballarat.

The trial went to a point some eight miles from Maryborough and competitors then had to head for the control, entering it from the north at a road junction just outside the town.

It looked simple and the cars motored merrily along a bitumen road to find, when they arrived at the junction that the map was wrong and the control was situated on another road. The area was surrounded by thick scrub with tracks made by local farmers running everywhere.

Cars roared in all directions trying to find a track which would lead them into the control from the right direction. Eventually everybody located it but not without losing time and, of course, points. A protest appeal questioning the validity of this control is still to be heard at the time of going to press.

At Swan Hill, Geoff Russell in the Ford Motor Company's 1500 c.c. Cortina led with a loss of only four points. Two other Ford entries, Kevin Lott (Cortina) and Don Opie (Anglia) were second with five points lost and Ken Tubman (Morris Major) was next with seven points lost.

After a night's sleep at Swan Hill the trial continued through Friday, Friday night and Saturday to an overnight stop at Sale on Saturday night.



From Swan Hill cars were sent along low lying ground by the Murray river where new roads had not yet reached the maps or, if they had, had shifted to a new position. At one stage a cavalcade of about 18 competitors found themselves neatly packed amongst the rose bushes in a farmer's garden when a track they were following changed to a road ("it's getting better, we must be on the right road") and then went through the man's front gate.

The cars roared around the house and back into the scrub before the startled occupants could recover from the shock of thinking all their relatives were visiting them at once.

Dinner was at Wangaratta and the night was spent trying to get from point to point along new roads in a Soldier Settlement area. The roads were good, some of them were even bitumen, but the roads consistently refused to follow the map. What appeared on the map as a crossroad at time turned out to be two T junctions, leading in different directions, half a mile apart.

It was on this section that the first injury of the trial occurred. Making up for lost time the cars were pounding at high speed over a bridge on which the decking consisted of heavy sleepers at right angles to the road. Several sleepers became loose and, as one car passed over them, sprung out of position and rolled along the bridge. Next car along, a Morris Major driven by Alf Long, was caught up in a hole in the bridge.

Long's navigator climbed out carefully to warn another car speeding towards the bridge but forgot to take a torch. Long heard the car roaring closer, grabbed the torch and leapt from the car — straight through the hole. A badly gashed leg prevented him from continuing. Another Morris Major, driven by "Gelignite" Jack Murray, had struck a stone on a rough track and bent its steering gear so that he had to exert all his strength to turn the wheel. Murray continued but his hands were severely blistered by the end of the trial.

After this had sapped everybody's confidence the tired drivers and navigators were brought back to Wangaratta by a circuitous route, given breakfast, and sent on a hazardous journey over the Alps to Sale in South Eastern Victoria.



Firth's winning Falcon plows through the scrub on the rough "Knocker track" from Glen Wills to Omeo.

Photograph— Laurie Thomas.

Thomson's choice of roads over the alps was one of his prime contributions to the event. At a crucial point cars had to use a 12 mile track which the instruction slip said was last used by Stage coaches travelling from Glen Wills, once a thriving gold settlement, to Omeo. People living in the district said later they did not know a car could negotiate the track which was used only occasionally for moving cattle from one side of the mountains to the other.

On this track the remaining Morris Major, driven by Ken Tubman, bounced off a stump into a tree and wrecked its radiator.

After an overnight rest at Sale the remaining 33 competitors travelled to the finish at Melbourne via the scenic winding Grand Ridge Road. The surface was wet and slippery and many crews found it all but impossible to keep to time. The Morris 850 rolled over the side of the road and down a 100 foot cliff. Blackberry bushes broke its fall considerably and despite severe damage it was able to continue to the finish with driver G. Crown and L. McCall little the worse for their experience.

And so the trial finished with Harry Firth, who had lost only 13 points at the early Maryborough control and no more after that, winning for the second year in succession. His navigator, Frank Kilfoyle, has now found his way to three victories.

Until the appeal on the validity of the Maryborough control has been heard it will be difficult to trace the progress of each car through the event and for that reason this year's report is not as comprehensive as we would like.

Provisional results as they stand at the moment follow. No matter how the appeal turns out Firth will probably still win the event and the appeal, if anything, could help Ford to gain more places.

### PROVISIONAL RESULTS

	Class	Pace	Pts. Lost
1. Ford Motor Co. of Aust. Pty. Ltd., Dvr. Harry Firth, Ford Falcon		1D	13
2. Ford Motor Co. of Aust. Pty. Ltd., Dvr. Don Opie, Ford Anglia		1A	20
3. T. Theiler, Esq., Dvr. Tony Theiler, Volkswagen		1B	25
4. Ford Motor Co. of Aust. Pty. Ltd., Dvr. George Hughes, Ford Falcon		2D	29
5. R. S. Christie, Esq., Dvr. Ray Christie, Volkswagen		2B	40
6. The Vict./Tas. Holden Dealers Team, Dvr. Mal McPherson, Holden		3D	43
7. D. N. Scott, Esq., Dvr. Des Scott, Volkswagen		3B	62
8. Ford Motor Co. of Aust. Pty. Ltd., Dvr. Doug Hughes, Ford Falcon		4D	68
9. The Vict./Tas. Holden Dealers Team, Dvr. Ross Farmer, Holden		5D	71
10. Ford Motor Co. of Aust. Pty. Ltd., Dvr. Kevin Lott, Cortina		4B	84
11. Smithfield Roadhouse, Dvr. P. K. Osborne, Holden		6D	93
12. Ford Motor Co. of Aust. Pty. Ltd., Dvr. Ken Harper, Ford Falcon		7D	100
13. Ford Motor Co. of Aust. Pty. Ltd., Dvr. Jack Ellis, Ford Falcon		8D	102
14. Callary's Service Station, Dvr. Adrian Callary, Volkswagen		5B	117
15. Ford Motor Co. of Aust. Pty. Ltd., Dvr. Geoff Russell, Cortina		1C	124
16. Neville Price Pty. Ltd., Dvr. Reg. Lunn, Ford Anglia		2A	126
17. T. R. Stanley, Esq., Dvr. Trevor Stanley, Hillman		2C	159
18. Kruger Motors Limited, Dvr. Garnet Kruger, Volkswagen		6B	173
19. B. C. Carins, Esq., Dvr. B. C. Carins, Peugeot 403		3C	212
20. Ray Long Motors, Dvr. Ray Long, Holden		9D	214
21. J. Murray, Esq., Dvr. Jack Murray, M.M. Elite		4C	231
22. R. Lunn, Esq., Dvr. Rex Lunn, Volkswagen		7B	236
23. The Vict./Tas. Holden Dealers Team, Dvr. Peter Chapple, Holden		10D	254
24. Lanock Motors, Dvr. Arthur Andrews, Volkswagen		8B	307
25. A. P. Conrad, Esq., Dvr. A. P. Conrad, Vanguard		5C	833
26. L. C. Grosser, Esq., Dvr. L. C. Grosser, Renault Gordini		3A	1036
27. H. G. Harvey, Esq., Dvr. Harold Harvey, Ford Zephyr		11D	1176
28. G. W. Morphett, Esq., Dvr. G. W. Morphett, M.G.-A		6C	1218
29. Superior Services Pty. Ltd., Dvr. A. B. Van Vemde, Volkswagen		9B	2250
30. Vict. Police Motor Sports Club, Dvr. M. Prentice, Peugeot		7C	2255
31. J. K. Gamble, Esq., Dvr. Keith Gamble, Datsun		10B	2611
32. G. L. Crown, Esq., Dvr. G. L. Crown, Morris 850		4A	3843

### CLASS PRIZES

<b>Class A</b>	Don Opie (Anglia) Reg Lunn (Anglia) L. Grosser (Renault)	<b>Class C</b>	Geoff Russell (Cortina) Trevor Stanley (Hillman) B. Carins (Peugeot)
<b>Class B</b>	T. Theiler (VW) R. Christie (VW) Des Scott (VW)	<b>Class D</b>	Harry Firth (Ford Falcon) George Hughes (Ford Falcon) Mal McPherson (Holden)

### TEAMS PRIZE

Scott, Christie and Theiler (Volkswagen), 127 points  
Firth, Hughes and Ellis (Ford Falcon), 146 points

### INTERSTATE PRIZES

N.S.W. — Arthur Andrews (Volkswagen)  
S.A. — A. P. Osborne (Holden)  
Tas. — Ross Farmer (Holden)

The Ladies Prize was not awarded — no eligible starters.