

Veteran driver wins

1963 BP RALLY

VETERAN trials driver, Mr. Harry Firth, driving a Ford Falcon, was the winner of the 2,000 miles 1963 BP Rally, which finished at Melbourne's Chadstone shopping centre on Sunday, 5th May. With his navigator, Mr. F. Kilfoyle, he lost only 13 points over the course. Second was Mr. T. Theiler, Volkswagen, minus 25 points and third Mr. G. Hughes, Ford Falcon, who lost 29 points.

Fine weather and dry conditions experienced over most of the course disappointed the organizers, who had routed the course through areas which would have been extremely difficult to negotiate had they remained wet. The roughest section of the trial was over the original bullock track which linked Omeo and Glen Wills on the Omeo Highway. Local residents said that they had not believed it possible for cars to negotiate the ten mile long, boulder-strewn track which dropped steeply from the mountains to the plains. Driver K. Tubman, of New South Wales, who was in third place during this stage, hit a concealed stump and

bounced into a tree, damaging his radiator and putting him out of the rally.

Firth took the lead at Wangaratta, almost half way through the course and held it effortlessly over the rest of the rally.

This was the sixth BP Rally, the longest and hardest motor sports event in Australia.

Consisting of an assembly stage, during which competitors from start points in Melbourne, Adelaide and Goulburn converged on Ballarat, and a 1,500 miles trial stage, the course covered over 2,000 miles of roads and tracks in the Wimmera, Central and Eastern Victoria.

Details of the route covered were only given, piecemeal, at each control point and the roads traversed were invariably anything but a direct route. This procedure differs from that adopted by the organizers of major European rallies, where the full route is known prior to the start. In the BP Rally it is not possible for a



The winning car, No. 36, a Ford Falcon, driven by veteran trials driver, Mr. H. Firth, comes in for final checks. Mr. Firth also won last year's rally.

well supported crew to examine the route or arrange for major car servicing. At best, only intelligent guesses as to the general line of movement can be made.

Members of the Victorian Police Department, which approves the route and timings for the BP Rally, played an important part in the scrutiny of competitors' cars.

This year, 39 entrants from Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia and N.S.W. competed. All expert rallyists, they have been described as the best trials field ever to assemble in Australia. ●

Mrs. S. G. Mitchell, wife of BP's Victorian Manager, flags away entrants in the 2,000 mile 1963 BP Rally.



Car 18, a Holden, driven by Mr. M. McPherson, splashes over a crossing on the Omeo Highway.



A section of the spectators who welcomed drivers at Melbourne's Chadstone Drive-In Centre.

