

The BP Rally in Retrospect

"I've been talking to my mate Harry," said Frank Kilfoyle one day, "and having seen the way you blundered through the Pound Motors Trial with me, we figured that the only way to drive anything through that thick skull of yours, is to give you a five days saturation course in the BP - if you can make it."

That's how it started.

And, if you have been reading the advertisements lately, you would know that it finished pretty well too, not only for we participants, but also for M.U.C.C. who, on the results as they stand at the time of writing, are represented by three of the five crew members of the first and second placed cars. Doug Rutherford put up a tremendous performance with Don Opie to gain second place against so many good three man crews.

Some recollections of the event;

The quick shakedown run in the Motor Show Trial, in which we gained fifth place and showed signs of working as a team.

On the Assembly Stage, the harassed appearance of the cafe owner in Benalla, who, when just closing up for the night, was horrified to find more than seventy people heading for the door wanting to be fed.

The unexpected checkpoint on the assembly stage where, when many drivers had previously announced their intentions of ignoring this stage and sleeping at Ballarat in preparation for the Trial proper, we were handed an envelope containing a subtle message from Donald Thompson, the director, reading, "The quick brown fox is too smart for the lazy dogs," which we read through the envelope with the aid of a spotlight and which we had to hand in to Donald the next day.

The emphatic statement by Donald Thompson at the Ballarat briefing that this year, no controls or checkpoints would be misplaced and the laughter it produced in the more psychic of the competitors.

The anxious moments at Maryborough discovering that the control could possibly be on any of three or four intersections and the loss of 13 points whilst finding the right one.

The sight of Des Scott, having forgotten to get route information, coming in to Donald and trying to convince the officials that the signpost had been removed since the route was surveyed.

The welcome bed at Swan Hill.

The multitude of gates on the second control the following morning and having my foot run over whilst opening one.

Admiring the flowers and inspecting the washing in a farmer's back garden while following a specified mapped road later that day and discovering that we were the first to find it. Also the realisation that we had wasted a lot of time looking for it and having to hurry along to get to control. This was the first time we had to break the well known navigators' rule: "Never tell the Firth to go faster because he will!" Suffice to say he got us there.

Seeing a red faced Kilfoyle emerge sheepishly from the comfort station at Nagambie claiming that he had always thought they labeled those things "Laddies" and "Lassies".

The reproving comment from Harry as we motored round and round Strathbogie and Frank admitting that he had never managed to work out just exactly where he was round here.... "Really Mr. Kilfoyle, I fail to see how you successfully ran a major trial through this area such a short time ago." (He was referring of course to last year's Shell.)

The Comment from the back seat as we parked out of sight of the control at Hansonville and watched eight cars rocket past in close formation... "Boy, I'm glad I'm not an officil on this control".

Wondering, when we reached Tallangatta, whether there were any cafes in Victoria that serve anything but grills.

The pallid face of the semi-trailer driver we met on a blind left bend on Omeo highway and the report from the thirtieth crew that he was as white as a sheet when they reached him.

Wondering how they were going to extricate Ken Tubman's vehicle after he had struck a tree on an old coach track North East of Omeo

Reaching Sale and realizing the last time that we had seen a bed was at Swan Hill, thirty six hours before.

The realisation that, because of the possibility of protests on the Maryborough control being upheld, we could not afford to lose a single point from Sale to Melbourne.

The tremendous exhibition of driving skill Harry gave us along the Grand Ridge Road in order to make control on time.

The arrival at the finish to find that to be sure of winning we had to beat Roger Abrahams in the sub-event, and the moment of panic when Harry headed for the wrong side of the last "garage".

The sight of half the M.U.C.C. up to their ears in timing gear to welcome us back.

The good news heard over a welcome cup of tea that, after protests had been heard, Doug Rutherford had made second place.

The sadistic delight in correcting the very few mistakes of Frank during the event and Frank's remarkable lack of exasperation in correcting mine, especially my complete lack of ability to add two times together and come up with the right answer.

And _____ the determination to be in it again next year if it's at all possible.

Geoff Thomas.