

# THE 1967 BP WAS HARD AND DUSTY

## RENAULT MAKE CLEAN SWEEP WITH 1st AND 2nd PLACES

Renault made a clean sweep of the 10th BP Rally, 1967, with an outright first and second place, first and second in class and the team's prize. Mal McPherson, of Wendouree, Ballarat, navigated by Robin Sharpley of Melbourne (Car 34) won the event in a Renault R8 Gordini by six minutes from Bruce Collier and Lindsay Adcock of Sydney (Car 2) in a similar vehicle.

Third member of the Renault team, Gerry Crown and Nigel Collier (Car 37) finished equal eleventh with a loss of 130 points — but it was high enough to give Renault the teams prize. Of the 37 crews which started from Sydney, Adelaide, Hobart and Melbourne, 32 finished at Melbourne after five days and 2,055 miles.

The 10th BP Rally was also the driest. Competitors drove through parts of south-eastern Australia which had not seen rain for five months, spending much of their time in a pall of dust.

From the four starting points, cars drove through Wednesday night, 3rd May, to the rallying point at Wangaratta in north-eastern Victoria but any points lost on this section would be used only to break ties at the finish.

But already they had had a taste of the dust of the route and director, Don Thomson's tricky navigation problems.

Cars wound north from Wangaratta across river flats to the Riverina town, Culcairn, before swinging east and heading through Holbrook to the mountains of southern New South Wales. Sections had been quick but navigation was little problem. Then, just south of Tumut competitors were led into a pine forest and many lost points. Turning east again, they struck across sharp, stony roads into Canberra for the first overnight rest.

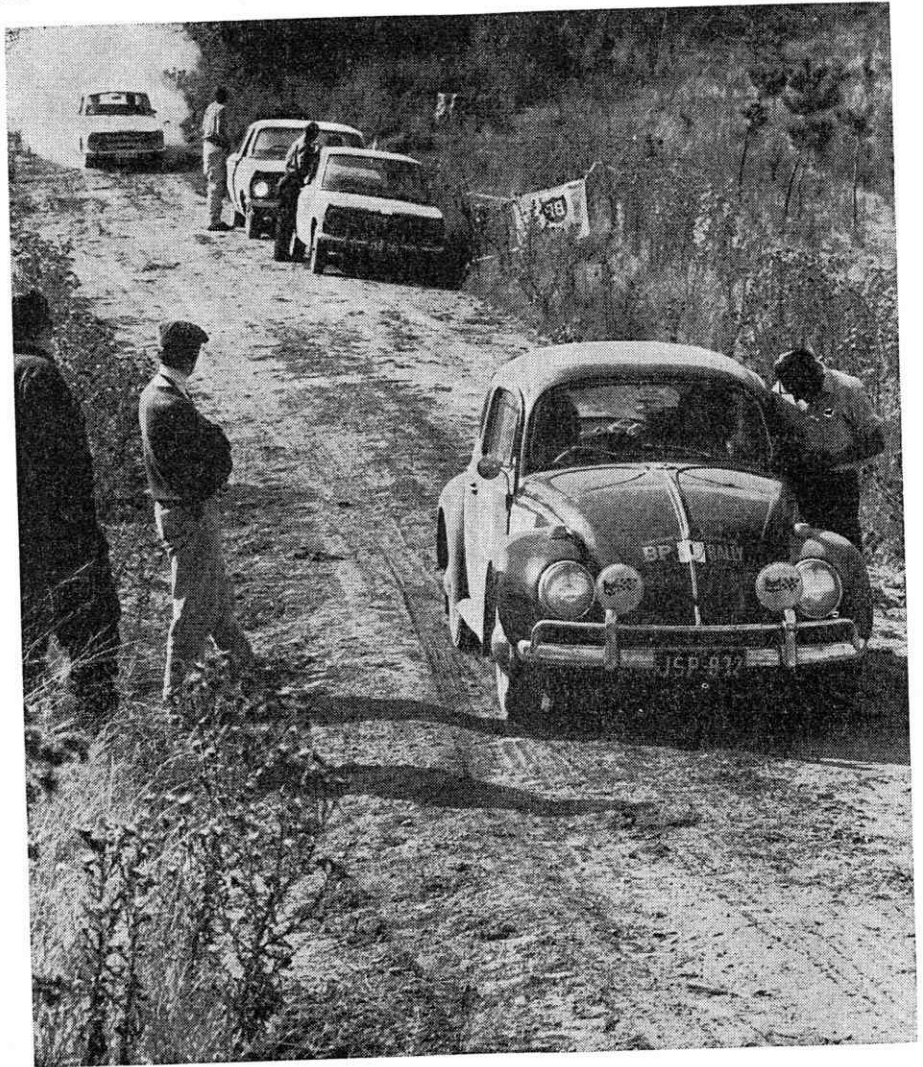
Already, some cars were in trouble mechanically and two, a Hillman Imp and a Volkswagen, were extensively serviced. A Cortina and a Mini Cooper S had holed their sumps on the rocky run into Canberra and these were quickly repaired. The only girls' crew in the rally, driving a Volkswagen, became lost near Tumut and this cost many points.

There were six crews at Canberra who had not lost a point, two had lost only one and another, with a loss of only two minutes in almost 24 hours was ninth.

A series of sections designed to favour good driving took points from more competitors next morning as they circled north to Goulburn for lunch. Harry Firth with Mike Osborne (Car 26) and Gerry Crown with Nigel Collier (Car 37) were equal first without loss of points at this halfway stage. Jack Locke with Stewart McLeod, P. Winkless and P. Myer, and Colin Bond and Brian Hope were equal third and the private entry of Roger Bonhomme and Rod Goode (Car 5) were sixth.

The first retirement was that of Tony Theiler and Garry Chapman (Car 22) when their VW1600TS developed engine troubles and expired near Goulburn.

After Goulburn, competitors struck south-east into hilly country to Cooma.



ABOVE: The Volkswagen of Mrs. S. Vaughan and Mrs. J. Cash checks in at a control point. This entry lost many points after becoming lost near Tumut.

On the last section into Cooma, many became lost and Harry Firth and Mike Osborne were leading the rally still without loss of points. P. Winkless and P. Myer in a Volvo were lying second with two points lost and the Victorian team of Ron Phillips and Jim McAuliffe in a Holden and Colin Bond and Brian

Hope in a Colt 1000 shared third place with five points lost.

The pressure was on as they struck south-west towards Berridale and Dalgety. A navigational trap at Dalgety caught many, including the leaders and at a control point near Bombala, Bruce

Woodfull and Bob Forsyth in a Cortina GT (Car 12) took the lead.

A tricky loop navigational problem near Bendoc near the border of New South Wales and Victoria added points to many scores and after the run down the highway into Orbost for breakfast, Mal McPherson and Robin Sharpley in their Renault Gordini improved their position from equal eighth to second and the Vaughan brothers in their Cortina from twelfth to third.

Crews had now been on the road for 24 hours and faced another day's driving before the overnight stop at Bairnsdale. As soon as they had eaten at the football ground at Orbost, most stretched on the grass and dozed. During the night, they had driven across the Alps through fog, over rough, dusty tracks and they had still another 300 miles of the rally to complete.

From Orbost, they drove east into forests and early competitors near the head of the field had an advantage in the lighter dust cloud. Officials spaced



them at three instead of the usual two minutes to give the dust time to settle but still several damaged their cars in the poor driving conditions. No one

was hurt and all involved in accidents continued to the finish, except the Williams-Lawson Holden which struck a slippery patch of mud moistened by a light isolated shower and slid into a bank. With the radiator jammed onto the motor, they were forced to retire.

Roads were generally good gravel or sand on the sections into Bairnsdale but navigation was difficult in forests to the north. On one section, two trees blocked the road and competitors drove over steep banks beside the road and into deep, slippery dirt to avoid them.

On the last few sections to Bairnsdale, Woodfull and Forsyth in their Cortina GT made a slip which cost them 50 points and the lead.

McPherson took the lead and was never headed. He had eight minutes up his sleeve and deliberately gave away two when he slowed for a sharp shower which made roads in southern Gippsland slippery on the final sections to Melbourne.

The fight for second place was close. The Vaughans and Bruce Collier and Lindsay Adcock had equal points lost to Bairnsdale — 33 — sharing second place.

On the tie-breaking assembly stage to Wangaratta, the Vaughans had lost fewer points giving them second place if they finished equal but during the Sunday run through a pine forest near Sale, they arrived a minute late — and lost their second place.

Bruce Woodfull and Bob Forsyth slipped to fourth with 63 points lost at Bairnsdale and they finished fourth after losing another three points on Sunday.

Tony Roberts and Peter Haas (Car 9) in a trade entered Holden X2 passed Frank Kilfoyle and Doug Rutherford (Car 24) in a Cortina GT to take fifth place ahead of them.

First private entry home was the Melbourne University Car Club crew of John Taws and Geoff Sproat in a Cortina GT. They lost 128 points and finished tenth.

Competitors agreed the rally was the best "BP" yet and praised director, Don Thomson, and the Light Car Club's organisation.

ABOVE: Fast gatework as the Class 'C' winning Volvo of P. Winkless and P. Myer battle against the clock. This car was in second outright position at Cooma with a loss of only two points.  
BELOW: Driver of the winning Renault R8 Gordini of M. McPherson and R. Sharpley receives a congratulatory handshake at the Chadstone, Victoria, finish.

