

Naish wins BP Rallye

THIRTY-NINE RALLY crews subjected themselves to 1600km of old-style endurance rallying throughout rural Victoria in the Olde BP Rallye.

This year's Olde BP Rallye – like those in 1979, 1984 and 1989 – was staged as a re-run of the original event, which ran between 1958 and 1973.

This year's event commenced at BP's Somerton outlet and took competitors through Diggers Rest and Myrning, with a short refuel at Meredith.

The route then travelled through Grenville, Lismore, Woorndoo and Penshurst prior to the first-division finish at Hamilton.

The leaders at this stage were Paul McLaughlan and Geoff Floyd (142 Volvo), followed by Alan Upton and Mark Laidlay (1967 Datsun Sunny) and Graham Wallis and Phil Nicholas (504 Peugeot).

The second division commenced with some challenging sections though the south-western edges of the Grampians, the Black Range State Park and the northern side of Lake Kanagul.

In the early hours of Saturday morning this leg provided the most challenging navigation – road surfaces varied from sand to rock to sand mixed with rocks and the proverbial Australian bulldust.

A break at Horsham allowed only enough time to refuel, check vital vehicle functions, plot the next section onto the map, head off into Wail and onto the River Road north west of Dimboola.

The tracks in and around Lake Hindmarsh and Lake Albacutya often host BP Rallies and any other events which dare to travel this far from the larger cities.



Perkins and Bashford were competitive in their ex-factory HK Holden.



Original BP Rallye competitors Reynolds and Osborne piloted a vintage VW.

The event continued this tradition with a section along Outlet Creek and another with a 5km run straight across a dry lake bed.

Most crews were in this area as the sun broke the horizon and the section had sufficient impact to ensure it will be recorded in history and discussed in bars for decades to come.

The end of the second division and Saturday morning breakfast was at the Hopetoun Football Ground.

Most crews at this stage, however, were far more eager to sample the overnight break in Swan Hill.

By Hopetoun Terry Naish and Ross Runnalls were first in their Datsun 1600 from second-placed Wallis and Nicholas and third-placed Rob Devenish and Phil Wylie in their Datsun 240Z.

The event reached Swan Hill by mid-afternoon on Saturday and only 22 of the original 39 entrants were still competing.

For most, the Swan Hill break was the first rest of more than a few minutes since they departed the outskirts of Melbourne some 22 hours earlier.

Naish and Runnalls won the City of Swan Hill Trophy for the leading crew into Swan Hill.



Devenish and Wylie were easily the quickest on the Olde BP Rallye's final section, moving them up to third outright at the finish.

Next best in this division was Ted Perkins and Gerry Bashford in the ex-factory HK Holden – once driven successfully by event director Bob Watson – with David Quill and David Gallacher third in their Datsun 180B SSS.

A combination of the temporary

misplacement of the route instructions, together with an abundance of duck shooters in the area for the season-opening weekend meant the Sunday morning sections between Swan Hill and Kerang were cancelled.

The remainder of this final divi-

sion was supposed to be straight forward in order to allow a timely arrival at the finish at Diggers Rest.

Navigational issues, however, were still to have an influence on the results.

Naish and Runnalls recovered

well from their first division disasters to finish first ahead of 1989 Olde BP winners Wallis and Nicholas.

Devenish and Wylie easily won the final division, which lifted them from fifth to third outright.

– Geoff Byron