

## 2008 Old BP Rally to be sponsored by BP! ...and other pre event planning progress

*from Ross Runnalls*

**I**t may sound surprising, but it has been difficult to raise interest from BP in Old BP rallies in the recent past. I received a prompt and enthusiastic response from BP to a modest sponsorship proposal. It is great that a global company like BP has found some sentimental space for us in its considerable motorsport program. One of the conditions of BP support is that they would like the event, for obvious marketing reasons, to be known publicly as the BP Ultimate Rally. My hope and intent is that it would be the ultimate in terms of quality of experience, and not the final event. The dates are now confirmed also for 1-4 May.

It was great to come back from Africa to find everyone in post-Alpine euphoria, with many looking forward to the BP as the major HRA event for 2008 before the Alpine comes around again in 2009. They will not be disappointed by an event that offers 1800 km of hugely varied and interesting roads as part of a rally experience not to be forgotten.

I did not pick up too many ideas from the East African Safari for the BP. Ian and Val Swan would be relieved to know that our event will be a lot smoother, but I can report that the natives are just as friendly. I have been amazed at the support from local land-holders when seeking permission to cross their land on the odd occasion. It helps when the last rally they had in the area was a BP.

Thanks for those offers in response to my plea for clean Broadbents maps. Many wanted route information in exchange, but the offer from Bob Watson of a version never dribbled on by navigators was too good to refuse. Still chasing up some leads for the elusive 1959 route instructions. The intent is to produce a single map of Victoria, showing the routes of all BP rallies, as a work of art for the post event 50 year celebration. As part of further plans for the post event function, John Emery has agreed to chase down some old BP competitors, particularly those who may not be able to make it on 4 May, and record their BP recollections on video. We are now looking for a technically competent owner and operator of a video camera to assist John. Please let me know if you can help.

On another moving picture front, event videos have been successfully compiled in the past from different individual's efforts. If someone out there, or someone you know would be interested in putting together a video film of the 2008 BP, then we can offer a filming schedule in advance that maximises prize filming locations on the event. Expressions of interest to me please.

I will keep stressing that my philosophy for trial type events is to make them enjoyable for all navigators, and drivers to be more than just chauffeurs, so requiring a very even contribution from driver and navigator, whereby endurance tests crews, rather than traps or confusion created by the organisers.

The small pool of experienced navigators is another reason to try and limit the mystery for navigators. We want inexperienced navigators who apply themselves to be able to complete the course. To assist, there will generally be two official maps for any section; Broadbents to describe via and control locations, and a larger scale map, usually at 1:250,000 with the locations already marked. There will not be a single grid reference to plot either. The approach required to successfully navigate the course will be outlined in some detail in a briefing document to accompany Further Regulations.

There are restrictions on the maps that can be carried by competitors, as modern maps are so good that the challenges become too intricate and confined to minute map variations, when we want to retain the old broader challenge, of finding the right road to a locality on Broadbents with enough assistance from other maps. Current Touring Road Event Regulations ban the use of GPS units, and mobile phones must be placed in the boot of the car. One of the challenges that technological progress has given the organisers is how to address the GPS and satellite mapping capacity of modern mobile phones. While it should be possible to appeal to competitor's sense of sporting fair play not

to engage in gaining an unfair advantage, you never can tell. In addition to spot checks for other maps and GPS units, the current proposal is for mobile phones to be placed in sealed bags in the car, able to be used for emergency purposes. If anyone has a simpler, and just as effective way to address this little challenge, then let us know.

Other than that minor one, planning is ticking along fine in the calm before the storm. Supplementary Regulations should be available in late January.

In order to keep whetting the appetite, elsewhere in this edition is a copy of a story at the time of the 1987 High Country Trial, which I organised, and which contained some similar elements to the 2008 BP.

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