

**Competitor Feedback, some via HRA e-group, some by direct e-mail**

**Car 1**

Old BP Thanks

All,

What a great tradition and what a great event this weekend's B.P. was.

What a privilege it was to be an entrant.

Thank you Ross and the Ellis's and Geoff Boyd and everyone else who made this event happen again. Long may the B.P. tradition continue.

Thanks for the badge, it goes up in the bookcase next to my 5 others.

Sometime on Saturday night blasting along one of those fabulous river-hugging roads I had the thought that this must be one of the GREAT drives of the world. 2000 ks in 55 hours of relentless go, go, go. From the steep and twisty high country to the shire roads and stock routes of middle Victoria before the bigger open and station country of the northwest on Friday night. Saturday am was a mix of cresty sandy tracks of the barrier country before the real sand started as we headed south back into the wheat belt. Saturday night was a mixture of gridded shire roads, stock routes and river roads before what felt like an almost vertical climb up the face of Mt Cole over very rocky roads and I'm not talking Darryl Lea!

For us it was most likely one of those rocks that holed our sump and saw our retirement from the event with less the 80 k to go. We made our errors early in the event and had worked our way from 10th back to 3rd with half a chance to grab second but it just wasn't to be. Thanks for the 4 crews who lent us oil, it meant that we were able to get off the mountain and make our recovery much easier.

The presentation lunch was very enjoyable as was bed last night.

Thank you Ross, your three B.Ps have been a generous gift to those of us who have been lucky enough to have competed in them, it's appreciated.

Kim

Kim G Harper.

**Car 3**

BP Epic- Thanks

Posted by: "rsmaps" [robin.smalley@roads.vic.gov.au](mailto:robin.smalley@roads.vic.gov.au) rsmaps

Date: Thu May 16, 2013 4:10 am ((PDT))

Just wanted to pass on Neil's, our service crews & my thanks to Ross and the all BP team and to all the officials that made such a wonderful and memorable event. Thankyou all very much indeed.

Our event started not as we planned with our car letting us down with drive-shaft issues on the way to the start. Meaning we had to cut & run to Mansfield to enjoy the last stage of the division.

Division 2 was a good run for us, except for me forgetting to answer a couple of Observation questions. Doh!

Division 3 out of Kerang was a bit of a further disaster having fuel pump issues in the middle of Lake Wahpool. I apologise for those that had to

drive around us but we had no choice but to stop where we did. Then getting busted on Radar trying to make time didn't help. Doh! We then cut to Ouyen where we diagnosed a blocked outlet from the fuel tank making it necessary for our service crew to pull out the tank completely from the car to clean it and to blow air through it.

All fixed we then cut to Mildura in a hope for a clean run at Division 4 & 5 the next day.

Unfortunately the fuel tank issue reappeared on the bumpy first stage out of Mildura in Division 4. With no chance of properly cleaning the inside of the tank and the engine running like the previous night and not wishing to get stuck in the sand in the middle of Woop Woop, (I assume the event went near there) we pulled the pin.

Looking back at the road variety and the places we went it was an absolutely fantastic epic event. Each time we do this event, our comment at some point is how does he find this stuff! I think we all appreciate the thought that has gone into these events from the scheduling, the way the instructions are carefully worded, the maps, the choice of roads, the lengths of transports so we can plot etc etc.

On our way home, while looking at the maps to see what we were missing out on. I was amused to see that on the 100L map of division 4, about 5km west of Albacutya, the event didn't cross Ross Lake. Maybe next time hey Ross!

Robin Smalley.

#### **Car 4 Re The Bearded Boys**

How many will admit to talking to the bearded boys near Outlet Creek north of Lake Hindmarsh on section 37 (Saturday afternoon)?

We did, but it was a waste of time, they had little idea of where they were other than at the end of their driveway!

Mark Laidlay

(Datsun 1600 - one of only two in the event, how times have changed)

#### **Bearded Boys Follow up**

Mark,

**Car 1** We might have been their first inquisitors, it was like an episode of "Dumb and Dumber Goes Bush",

They were very blunt tools made all the worse by various intoxicants consumed over the day or week.

Amusing though in a dentally-challenged way.

Kim Harper.

**Car 8** We obviously got there either before they had consumed too much or after they had sobered up a bit as we found them to quite helpful.

Although they had no idea where they were they were able to accurately describe the way to reach the road skirting the northern edge of Lake Hindmarsh - even to the extent of warning about a couple of deep bulldust holes encountered along the way.

Pity they did not also warn us about the radar trap cunningly placed

just after the start of the bitumen on the run down the west side of the lake

Geoff Floyd

**Car 11** the bearded boys

Posted by: "Steve Ashton" [sashton@internode.on.net](mailto:sashton@internode.on.net)  
[steve.ashton@rocketmail.com](mailto:steve.ashton@rocketmail.com)

Date: Thu May 16, 2013 10:12 pm ((PDT))

Well we certainly talked to them, and they only had a vague idea of where they were on the map, but they could give us quite clear directions about how to get from there down the west side of Lake Hindmarsh, which fortunately took us right past the via we had given up on! And yes it did seem to be the land that modern dentistry forgot..

Steve and Ro

**Car 5**

G'day Ross,

Just a quick note to thank you personally for your great efforts in creating yet another wonderful event. Dave and I, although embarrassed and frustrated many times, enjoyed every part of the challenge to both crew and chariot. There is no better way to get the most out of a driving and competitive situation over 3 full days. Well done!!

Is there any chance I could get a copy of that film which was shown at the function? Seeing my father was an unexpected and emotional joy.

Regards,

John Rawson

ps: Rest assured that I will be a starter at your next one.

**Car 9**

Hi Ross,

Thanks again for a fantastic event - from my perspective I'll provide a couple of points of interest.

Thursday:

First couple of sections were straight forward with a couple of pauses to check we were in the right spot. Took a hard landing off a monster bump (bent the sump guard!) but generally car survived the night quite well. The cruising section on the bitumen over the mountains generated some tyre wear but was good fun. Only other point to note was that we were overtaken by Harper/Snooks in 60km/h RSZ who were promptly pinged on the speed trap - karma.

Friday:

Had a great day on Friday with car & crew starting to gel (only our 3rd event back since rolling my previous car in Alpine 2007). We got much amusement from seeing you pop up randomly through the day at various start/finish controls. The trap on section 15 got us fair and square but we weren't the only ones and looked like all the crews had dropped one during the course of the day. Dinner was a fantastic opportunity to sit down and regroup before the night section and catering was first class.

Night section had some navigational and dust issues with a detour through a paddock (and back) and our little investigation around the railway that

seemed to create some amusement for the spectators as Steve refused to believe that there was no trap involved.

Saturday:

Having been sitting in a provisional 2nd place we were a little nervous at the start but once going in the first section settled down quickly (section 28 was a blast). On section 30 we were cruising along at the specified maximum speed when overtaken by Rawson/Smith who were promptly caught by the speed trap over the following crest (more karma). The sand and paddocks were a challenge and in the final section of deep sand on section 34 we came out with no 3rd gear and a noisy gearbox. After some exploratory gear shifts through the latter part of the stage and finding that first & second gear would intermittently lock-up we made the difficult decision to cut and run to service where the car was loaded up for the trip back to Melbourne. Subsequent investigation showed fatigue failure of 2 of the 3rd gear idler teeth with another 3 going out in sympathy - the down side of running a largely standard 40yr old car.

Was very disappointed that the car let us down in the latter phases of the event but was also glad that we had made it as far as we had and in the end it's all about the adventure and enjoying the journey which we most certainly did. Was also pleased that we were able to stick within the spirit of the event and be competitive without needing to exceed the speed limits (but were still able to drive it hard in the twisty stuff!) and that the car and crew were working well again.

Really hope that the event will find a place in the 2015/6 calendar as for us it is more doable than a classic outback and provides an experience that you can't get with normal weekend rallies. Thanks again for making it possible.

David Burn.

## **Car 10**

Congratulations to the HRA and specially to Ross and all his crew , what a great event !

I only wish I could have got to the finish, but the sleep deprivation on the 80 (almost) year old body caused a bit of melt down and some very elementary mistakes came in during the second half of Division 5.

I had hoped to increase my percentages of finishing the BP. After failing to finish with Ken Tubman in about 1964 and Fergie in 68 and making it to the end in about 66 with Jack Murray my average has gone down from 33% to 25%. The BP may have to be the one that eludes me.

I have to apologise for not staying at the finish for very long but I had a driver who was anxious to get home and it is a long way to hitch a ride to the Southern Highlands of NSW.

I did wish to get around and catch up with a few more of you as I really enjoyed running with you all.

To the other competitors, thank you for the camaraderie and thank you to the officials, without you the events just do not run and competitors need to remember that, when you finish a section that was particularly testing that they are there waiting for hours for just a couple of minutes of your time. They didn't choose the road so don't take it out on them.

Thank you also to the really great team that were there at the starts and finishes of the divisions. It was always a pleasure to do business with you.

Thanks again Ross for a great event. I will be using a few of your concepts in the event I run each May, The Barry Ferguson Classic, in which I use the same old maps from the 60s with the challenge of finding the roads just like during that era.

Cheers

Dave Johnson

### **Car 10**

Ross,

Thanks for the results.

The reason for Car 10's DNF was due to being stuck on a very steep uphill wrong road for over 2 hours, (Section 44, 1km N of Via 1). A lot of Tirfor work was required and by then we were out of Late Time, so we cut and ran then the half shaft broke after leaving Lexton and 30 km from Ballarat around 3am.

Regards,

Mike Batten

### **Car 11**

Sounds like he has been reassured by Col, but I would still call him in a few days, when he has calmed down even more. Because I said you would, and Col has also said that you would!

Hope you are home safely and puppies well.

Thanks for a wonderful experience...yet again! I texted Mrs Runnalls to thank her for all her work too. Possibly forgot to highlight to her our meteoric rise from 23<sup>rd</sup> last time, to 8<sup>th</sup> ! Who cares if half the field fell by the wayside?! Officers were 8<sup>th</sup> last time, so this could be an omen. But I think you hit the proverbial nail...you do need a driver with a real interest in participating in the navigational experience, and I think the McKenzie pairing has a lot of potential.

THANKS!

Ro

### **Car 11**

Hi Ross

Hope you have recovered somewhat. What a great event – it had everything as usual. We thought the new format was really good –treading the line between being tough on crews and being responsible very well. Some may pine for the truly epic –no sleep, driving hours in fog, entire field lost or stuck in mud and sand, but not me! As I may have said slightly flippantly at the finish, I think you have lost the ability to tell what is hard or what is easy for mere mortals –but that is a cross you will have to bear!

I also thought the consistent and frequent use of the radars with real time penalties was a very good innovation –it is actually making it into a fairer competition, because there were enough of them to make people actually pay attention to what they had been told about maximum speeds – and so people with really quick cars were not (in the main) pulling back time lost in navigating through anti social means. It is also a good story to be able to tell from a community relations view point, should that be necessary.

Even the service crew really enjoyed themselves!

I've attached a very rough map I did in Acrobat to tell people here what I was doing. It is actually mostly wrong, done from memory only, but they wouldn't know. However it did occur to me that it would be very interesting to put up a more accurate map on your Facebook page and the HRA web site for the interest and possible attraction of future entrants, if you had the time to do it. Or if you can draw it on something I can have it made into a digital file.

Is that film available to be shown at an HRA clubnight eg the BP presentation? I assume it has a sound track. It was a pretty good piece of film making considering the technology available at the time.

Well done to you, Chris, Boydie and Ian, and the rest of the travelling band. It has been a great privilege to have competed in all of your long distance epics –thank you!

Cheers Steve and Ro, Tom and Derek

### **Car 12 [Old BP Thanks](#)**

Like Scott, Stephen and Kim before me, I would like to express my profound gratitude to those involved with running the BP.

There are the many hardy souls that we continuously saw over the four days right across the state. The Quayles, Digger, Liz and all the others who put in nearly as many miles and just as many hours as the competitors.

There were also the officials we never saw such as Geoff and Roger Byron, running ahead of the field to ensure everyone was where they needed to be. The course checkers, zero and sweep cars, recovery and extraction teams ready and waiting in the toughest parts of the rally.

There was Ian Ellis, Geoff Boyd and the rest of the management team (I'll apologise here for those who I haven't mentioned by name). As relentless as the rally itself, the work leading up to and during this event saw them put in an amazing effort.

And then there is Mr Runnalls.

Continuing in the tradition of great events organised by Old BP directors, he put in what is to me an unimaginable amount of work for this event. Thank you Ross.

Respect.

I'm glad that there were so many distance-rally virgins at this event. The BP really is the strongest link to our rally heritage and while it is different is so many respects to VRC or VCRS type events, it is no

less enjoyable. It is very accessible, either using a PRC type car or an economically priced road car with some basic modifications. Look at Mike Conway and Jenny Cole in the completely outrageous stock standard \$800 long wheelbase Benz with only a 2.8lt motor - and they came 4th outright! (mind you, I think Mike can drive a bit.....)

It has been interesting to see Scott and Stephen's take on what is required. We used my basically stock 1979 Volvo 242 yet were able to still finish 7th. The suspension is standard as is the motor. It has Recaro seats and good underbody protection, but that's about it. We used 4 generously donated half worn rally tyres (thanks, Spedds) with two old SilverRocks from my Commodore days as spares. As such I really had to drive conservatively to make them last (just!). I really don't think a service crew is necessary however, good car preparation is absolutely essential - as is driving within the vehicles limits. Drive the vehicle at 10/10ths for nearly 2,000kms and something will break. End of.

As with the others, if another BP was to be announced tomorrow, I would send in my entry form immediately. I would also start saving for six new tyres!

Congratulations to Alan and Mark on the well deserved win and to all the others who gave it a go. Particularly those who entered the EBay Special class - I think it is really in the spirit of these events.

Finally, a huge thanks to my navigator, Ross Kelly, who flew over from Hobart for the event. It never ceases to amaze me the trust that navigators put in drivers, especially first time out. It was a pleasure to gently chauffeur Ross around the country side.....

Mr Runnalls, your services are desperately required once more.

(Oh, and on behalf of all the selfish competitors, I would also like to thank Carolynne and all the other rally widows for putting up with our addiction.)

Stephen Coutts-Smith & Ross Kelly

## **Car 12**

Hello all.

Ross has asked competitors for their stories - good or bad - from the BP. To set the ball rolling, here are my confessions!

Section 4 - went for an excursion a bit far past the turn-off on to the unmapped road- just to be sure - would've been better not to! Then we hit the big hole - the unsigned one - just a couple of hundred metres past the signed caution. The doors haven't opened since!

Section 7 - three overshoots - firstly 3 km along the bitumen past Wrightly, then the unmapped road at the top of the hill & finally at the next via after the quiet zone. You can't afford 3 overshoots in a cruising section, let alone a touring one.

Section 9 - Didn't believe that Moss Road was the right one - so continued on to find no other roads, and had to make a retreat.

Section 13 - 7 points for a puncture on a cruising section.

Section 16 - Nearly got written off by an overtaking B-double when entering the Highway to start the Gunbower section. Didn't find Coughlans Road, and

copped two penalties for missing it. Only discovered afterwards that there was an extra map provided which showed it!

Section 30 - Didn't see the 'D' board near the railway crossing at Pirlta - recorded the red "P" sign which was actually nearer to the via - but this wasn't enough to satisfy the gods.

Section 32 - Negotiated the sand over Mt Crozier only to blunder into the Pink Lakes control WD, despite having the route correctly plotted and even seeing the start of the correct track!

Section 36 - Had a short winching exercise in the sand by Lake Alacutya - within 200 metres of the picnic area where my wife Jenny & I had lunched a few weeks previously! Better to be nowhere near the lake - despite the description in the route instructions.

Section 37 - Didn't see the bearded yokels that others have spoken of - but had to do a little backtracking to find the route through Outlet Creek.

Section 40 - Got only one out of the two decision points correct and ended up north of the passage control - so back in for another go.

Section 41 - A very elusive track from the Wimmera River to find the passage control. Looked at it from the wrong direction before eventually finding our way in. At Deep Lead, didn't believe the main track would go straight to control in view of Deep Lead's BP history - kept looking for a non-existent road on the left.

Section 44 - Followed an oil trail along the road over Mt Cole. We knew it wouldn't be long before we found where it was coming from. Bad luck, Kim & Steuart.

Section 45 - Tried to follow the mapped road to the control at Raglan but ended up deep in the pine trees on a deteriorating track. Came out and simply followed our noses (and compass) to control.

Section 46 - Things looked promising after Waterloo when we found "North-South" track, but we continued along it past the correct road to control - another case of over-caution in wanting to be sure. Driver Stephen had it right!

Others must have more exciting stories!

Ross K

### **Car 15**

Below is the story of car 15. We did have a depressing BP but our problems were mainly off route so that was our fault.

I have to say that Rick Hartman as Sweep and Barry and Bruce in the Recovery 4WD were superb in their assistance.

I had joked about painting the Volvo roof red so the helicopters could find us, I now feel it was a great idea for the future!

I congratulate and thank Ross and the organising team for this 'hero' event. Looking at the results you can only admire the results of Alan and Mark and the other top finishers for deciphering so much of the route and then proceeding with so little trouble along the way.

Its a bit of a long story, but it was a long event. Driver written so no map or section information

CAR 15 - VOLVO 240 - Keith Winter and Peter Maurer

The first night we couldn't find a track (Arthur's?) described as steep start with a 'moundy' surface. We retraced and found a track which we thought might not be correct but might lead us through. The descent was steep and there were high mounds every few metres, so we thought we were probably OK. We had just about decided to retrace our steps when the engine stopped. We are now 3-4 kms down a very narrow twisty track not on the rally route with an apparent fuel problem.

Peter did the right thing and said 'Let's walk out, and the sweep car which follows the route behind the last car might not have yet gone past'. Now Peter is a bit younger and fitter than this 71 year old pensioner scribe. He ran the distance, hailed the sweep 4WD and cried help!

With the sweep car was the Recovery 4WD who said we will see if we can tow you out. To cut a long story short they were able to turn the car around and tow it back to the main track. We thought the car would have to be abandoned there and we would need to find a trailer or some other solution the next day. They guys then said we are prepared to tow you to Jamison. They towed us for about 40 kms down very twisty and hilly first gravel and then bitumen road. No power steering or power brakes, a short snatch strap and eventually the headlights failed and we were being towed on parkers only. It tends to keep you alert!

About 2 am they dropped us on the forecourt of a small local garage and we slept in the car. No reclining seats, windows couldn't wind right up because battery was flat, and it was cold but not freezing. The next day we discovered a fuel line had been pulled off by the grazing of the mounds on the little track and with some help from the garage, new fuel hose and a hose clamp we were mobile again by about 9.15 am.

We realised we could rejoin the event so proceeded directly to Benalla.

We started and completed most of the night section but lost some time looking for an information point that was not there. We were then running late so decided to shortcut a section and in so doing took a turn into a sandpit and failed to proceed. We had got the winch out round a tree and were pulling it out when the Recovery 4WD duly appeared and said 'Hello Keith and Peter, in need of another tow?' We said Yes Please so they pulled us out and we drove directly to Mildura for a motel sleep.

Next day, Saturday, we start out Ok. The route takes us through a gate around the edge of a dusty paddock, its sandy! We come round a corner and there is a bogged Falcon, he waves us through, we get past him and get stuck, someone else powers through OK, then a third car comes up and he gets bogged as well. We are just getting the winch out again when the farmer turns up in his 4WD ute and pulls us all out. If the farmer hadn't come we would probably have met Recovery guys Barry and Bruce once again as we were on the route.

We are then going OK, but took a wrong turn through a gate and followed wheel tracks across a huge featureless undulating paddock. We thought this was correct and was appropriate terrain for this sort of event. After a while we topped a rise and the track petered out and was sandy and you looked out across miles of flat paddocks, not a house or person in sight. We decided to retrace and immediately bogged in the soft sand. We are now miles off any rally route. Peter got the shovel and I was able to drive down the slope to where it looked firmer, do a u-turn and charge the slope in second gear and just got over the crest and on to the rudimentary track we had come up on.

We returned to the gate and decided the correct route was to follow the farm track around the paddock perimeter. WRONG, WRONG, WRONG, we are then not on the rally route and driving around some farmer's paddock - miles from anywhere.

We creep for a couple of ks along the fenceline and then get sandbogged again. Out with the shovel and winch. We knew we were on the wrong track so tried to winch the car back to the fenceline thinking we might be able to do a protracted 10 point turn and creep back alongside the fence, We are now getting concerned about our predicament.

Then we notice that the other side of the fence, through about 20 metres of bush and scrub there is actually a main gravel road. So we grab a triangle place it on the road and hope that a friendly local might turn up, stop and assist. We were so lucky, Gary Gibbons and Martin Forbes were shortcutting down this gravel road and stopped to assist.

We found a possible route through the scrub from fence to gravel road and progressively winched the car back. We then had two people stand on the wire fence while we winched the car over the fence and I bush-bashed through to the main road. Terra Firma was a great place.

This had all taken several hours and Dear Reader, our enthusiasm had long since waned. We looked at each other and said "Which Way Is Home". Martin said 40 kms straight down this gravel road you will meet the main highway and then its a seven-hour drive to Geelong. So we did that.

### **Car 17**

Genuinely looking forward to the directors account of it all. The bit I did was great, even with losing what little dinner I indulged in on the road in to Jamieson - a first for me.

When I left the start I thought it could be a short night - how do I string all this together? but it fell in to place within minutes and we did better than I expected, despite a dodgy car losing power and all the electrics failing intermittently, routinely resetting the terra trip. Many times I just decided (especially around Stockmans Reward) what to do from the compass which pleased me greatly. We had Ward/Pollock buzzing us for a lot of the night. Passing us, wrong roading, passing us again. On one section, 3 times! Funny as.

I was really pleased to find with ease the unmapped road'S' at White Gate up to Kilfeera. I thought you kept your promise about the navigation and the added info on the maps was helpful.

regards  
Alan Baker.

### **Car 20**

G Thompson

Thank you Ross Runnalls and your team for this latest inspirational adventure. And an adventure it was, with so many memorable moments; the fatigue, the navigational frustrations (most of which were of our own making), mechanical issues, late time pressures, the camaraderie, the superb landscapes, the variety of challenging and occasionally extraordinary roads. Only one road was used in all three Old BPs in which we have competed; a little easement track of 1.6km which is overarched for much of its length by scrub; and was greeted like an old friend.

Ross had decided that the previous format which was largely two 22 hour stints, was asking too much for the increasingly aging crews and controllies, but we did not find the five 7 hour stints any easier. Of course having to drive our Volvo 244 to the start in Healesville from Benalla via Ballarat to drop the Jackaroo and trailer (520km!) did not help, particularly as it followed a late night with Mike Batten and Dave Johnson, so we were tardy getting away. The discovery that I had left the Volvo's fuel cap at the servo in Ballarat (TG I carry a spare), and the required white door plates on the bench at home, meant we were not really in the best frame of mind when the flag dropped.

In the following ramblings I have referred in general terms to locations on the route so you can join in on your Hema to get an overview of our travels.

The Director shattered the confidence of many navigators only 12 km from the start, with roads on the map not aligning with the compass. With hesitation and dithering we proceeded steadily, on constant alert for earlier starters coming back to have another go, or being passed by those more certain of the route. Mike Batten and Dave Johnson who had started 20 minutes before us, blew past in a shower of stones, clearly anxious to make up time. We dropped 8 minutes, but Harper/Snooks (Escort), Rawson/Smith (Stanza) and Ashton/Nixon (Galant) were clean.

The next stage took us north about 40km along the Great Dividing Range from a point 20km east of Marysville to the Lake Eildon National Park, narrow and slippery with lots of nasty stones and washouts, with a particularly difficult to see turn down Arthur's Track, which we happened to jag. Fastest was the Officers in their Galant, dropping 8 minutes; we dropped 19; being particularly cautious about the big rocks.

This was followed by a comfortably cleanable drivers delight, a sinuous tarmac strip of some 25km uphill, then 4km downhill towards Jameson, on the run up to Mansfield and service. Matt Searle was looking after Matty T and Geoff Floyd in the Skyline and had waited on to check on us, but we were OK. Later we had cause to be in his debt.

The next stage, first on shire roads, went via Tolmie and Tatong. A difficult to see TR caught many, but our slower pace has some advantages, and we picked it up. A few km down a twisting track we came upon Mike Batten slowly winching the Datsun back onto the road. He had clearly been at it for some time, so we put the snatch strap on the Volvo and popped him out effortlessly. The stage deteriorated into a track with metre high grass, with a hard to see gateway immediately to the left of another which we had to open. All gateways on the correct route are marked with a small strip of red and white tape, and I was lucky to glimpse this as we passed through and thus revealed its existence to another competitor (that turned out to be Matty) that was coming back towards us after a protracted jungle safari. Rawson/Smith and Burn/Dunbar (Galant) were quickest on 7; we dropped 26 including our rescue effort.

It was then a clear run into Benalla to division end. Winton had had a really good evening with the maps, and despite some hesitations we had not had to backtrack at any point. It was now about 1.30am so we had a beer to wind down and hit the sack; our sleep punctuated by the later arrival of other cars.

We started about 19th on the road next morning which was a big improvement over our previous years' efforts, where we had had mechanical problems from the outset. As is often the case after a good day, Winton struggled to separate left from right and we spent a lot of time retracing our steps while pushing steadily W through the one mile grid country, dropping time unnecessarily, despite generally good shire roads. The Officers and Wallis/Nicholas (Peugeot 205) were clean; we did 14 minutes; whereas the fancied crew of Harper/Snooks dropped 36. In this event it can happen to anyone, as so it proved.

A little drop-off stage (where you are taken part-way via route chart, then asked to go via unmapped roads to control, say 5 km away as the crow flies, entering from a specific direction) to Toolamba caught finally caught us WD (30 points), only one of four to stuff it up, so our problems escalated. Burn/Dunbar cleaned the stage with many on 1. We managed a similar drop-off into Rushworth better, but had to back-track dropping 4. Four cars lost 1.

We were forced to diverge into Rushworth for fuel due to poor calculations and were consequently 6 minutes late into the following control. We then fiddled around on the next stage and did another 9 on the run to Service in Echuca; way to go guys!

The route led us NW along the Murray towards Gunbower, where another drop-off awaited in the red-gum forests, after following only sign-posted roads in a specific order. That was managed without problem apart from the setting sun, but we fouled up at the end; forgetting that we had to enter the control from E, rather than the obvious route from S. We wondered at the time why the Allwright/Rainbow Lancer took off across country about 1km from control.

I can't remember the stage to the mealbreak at Kerang, but we dropped another 15 minutes while the leaders were clean. We hoped that was to be our bad division; fortunately the car was fine and we felt better after a feed.

The route took us NW along the Murray Valley Highway to Lake Boga, where we turned west towards Ultima. The instructions asked us to enter Waitchie from the SE on an unmapped road. Like many others we dismissed the track in railway property alongside the line as being out of bounds, and travelled on the opposite side of the fence in an adjacent ploughed paddock for the best part of a km, before coming to a dead-end. Back we went and finally found our way in from the correct direction, down another 24; the locals at the control said it was their short-cut despite being railway property!

I cannot recall the route up to service at Ouyen but after a fuel top-up we headed N towards Hattah, on tracks left then right of the railway. We were held up for 6 minutes or so while the Sylvia of Kaitler/Blum was extracted from deep sand by one of the Peugeot 504s, and was blocking the path. We did another 20 minutes, but the Officers were on time.

Pushing N to the west of the Calder Hwy, we skirted a salt lake on a two wheel track in softish sand. Having almost bogged, we stopped to deflate the rear tyres to 18 psi and struggled through the lumpy stage; the Volvo lacking adequate clearance for the berm in the middle. Our time penalty was 25 minutes, but others were worse. Coutts-Smith/Kelly in a high-rise 242GT Volvo was quickest on 5; that must have been a ride! It must have been the final straw for Phil Nicholas in the bouncy Peugeot 205 as he retired so apparently car sick he was unable to continue next morning.

It was 3am when we hit the sack in Mildura, but were on our way south west into more sand country by 10.30 am, hardly fully rested, but encouragingly starting 13th. The route took us along the Underbool Track through the eastern edge of the Murray Sunset National Park and around Pink Lakes. Along with half the field we got bogged in soft sand, having not again adequately deflated the tyres. With them let down to 15psi, we dug ourselves out quite quickly as we have long sand plates, but Winton had a 400m walk to catch up carrying them when I finally found a firm spot to stop. The Allwright/Rainbow Lancer also buried itself at this spot and ultimately retired.

The Volvo was suddenly having engine issues, not wanting to idle and only pulling cleanly on full throttle, indicating an air-leak somewhere. We only proceeded another half km before we were stopped on firm ground by one of the recovery crew who were

trying to clear the last 800 m of stuck cars. After five minutes or so, he instructed us to try to get around the Volvo 142 of Douglas/Murphy but we ground to a stop about 20 m short of them. The Mustang of Arundel/Murphy then tried and came to rest beside us. The recovery crew then had to tow, with difficulty, each car up the long dune to freedom, and with that we were OLT and in deep doo doo.

The cause of the Volvo's engine problems was not obvious, and it would only start on a down-hill, and the electric windows were dead, mine down, so we decided to short cut the rest of the stage and get the main control WD and go on to Patchewollock and service and hope to sort it out. Earlier a stray branch had smacked the windscreen and started a slow crack, now another innocuous one knocked out the wing mirror glass spraying me with shards. Life gets tedious, don't it.

As we had now lost so much time we were unable to get back into time even if we skipped service completely, and could only hope that the organisers would take pity on that half of the field affected by clearly unequal conditions and ignore time penalties for late time purposes. I doubt that is going to happen, after all, this is the Old BP.

Fortunately Matt Searle and Les from Gordon Douglas's Volvo service crew managed to locate the air-leak way under the FI plenum where a pipe had popped off. In their diagnostic process they also identified the cause of the sometimes reluctant starting the Volvo had experienced since I bought it. It had a 12 volt coil, rather than an 8 volt, and when replaced with the right unit which was in our spares box, it now starts instantly!

Uplifted by the new engine note, and as the controls were still open, we proceeded south west along the edge of the Wyperfield National Park to Lake Albacutya which we were expected to skirt on 13 km of unmapped roads to the east, finishing at Yaapeet. We destroyed a Super Oscar passing another competitor, which was an irritation to say the least.

The correct road proved hard to find for many, and as it was dusk we agreed to follow a dispirited Gordon Douglas, who had been bogged on every track he tried, straight across the lake on a dry weather only road heading due SW. Curiously there was a gateway in the middle attached to which were the reassuring red and white tapes of the correct route; which it clearly wasn't. As we were well to the west of where we should have been we were lucky to get a glimpse of the silo at Yaapeet in the fading light, which lead us to control, albeit WD.

We were not confident of smoothly negotiating the maze of tracks to the east of Lake Hindmarsh in the dark, so we whipped down the main road to Jeparit, getting a flat on the way, but still diverting to the west a few km to pick up the main control, yes WD again. We had now visited every main control for the four divisions and OLT aside, we intended to continue with that goal alone; already a huge advance on our previous BP efforts.

After a meal break, and resetting the remaining Super Oscar, we attacked the final division on a variety of differing road surfaces for 95km heading generally SE towards Stawell. This stage spelt the start of the end for the Officers who had an apparently unassailable 50 point lead, when they missed a VRC, along with half the field, ourselves included. Second placed Rawson/Smith also fell victim. The following drop-off stage was very neat and put the nails in the coffins of both crews when they again each gave up a VRC. The Officers became seriously lost, dropping 42 minutes, and Rawson/Smith 17, handing the lead to Upton/Laidlay, who did it correctly with a loss of 6, which they carried to the finish.

The last stage east of Taylors Lake before Service passed through sheep stations and many gates, to finally run along a gem of a shire road following the Wimmera River.

Drivers were having such a good time most overshoot the hard-to-see correct track to the south, opting for a nicer one 500m later. This led to great difficulty finding the correct route east below Glenorchy, to control near Deep Lead. We dithered around too long, finally stumbling on the correct route, but 7 minutes over our late time limit. We were thus deemed to not have completed the stage, and our revised goal of being scored as visiting every main control became unachievable, even if we received relief from late time penalties caused by the sand bog.

Winton was tired and lacking confidence after this disaster and was ready to jump to Ballarat, but I convinced him we should do a short service in Stawell and book in early by more than 7 minutes, thus getting back into our late time limit and qualifying for the 30 minutes extra time allowance to possibly get us home. This we did, but compromised by taking the better roads to the control (yes WD) near Crowlands rather than the rally route, continuing our run of consecutive appearances at every main control. We attempted to do the same to reach control near Raglan, but the shire road we needed was closed for repair, and the diversion via Amphitheatre would take too long. Batten/Johnson were reportedly trapped on an impossibly steep hill off route hereabouts and sadly DNF after a very good fight back. The closed road to Raglan was the straw that broke this particular camel's back, and with the Volvo still singing along happily, and with no new rattles or concerns, we turned for Ballarat and the finish control, skipping three mains. Bloody quitters.

It was a worthy win for Upton/Laidlay, who had potential victory in 2010 snatched from them by White/Smith on the last stage. The Officers had their chance, but the Old BP is unrelenting and can catch everyone out. Matty T and Geoff Floyd completed the entire route without a missed control, VRC or WD, as did Upton/Laidlay who overlooked answering a question, so it can be done. Next time maybe.

Thus ends our saga, and we renew our thanks to Ross Runnalls and his crew for the vision and determination to have made it happen. Long may he be inspired to offer the challenge, and for a younger generation of rallyists to grasp it.

## **Car 22**

Hi Ross

Thanks for a great event, even though we got bogged and then broke a ball joint 15kms from the finish, we thoroughly enjoyed it; it's all in the fun of the game.

I have met a guy who used to work for BP and he has all of the route instructions from 1952 (?) to 1967, newspaper clippings and memorabilia and knows all of the facts and figures, which he started collecting as a kid.

By his own admission, he is a BP and rally tragic. He has never competed, but has remained fascinated with it all of his life.

If you have any use for his knowledge or records he may like to talk to you.

Next time I am going to take a "standard" car with comfortable seats and all of the trimmings, put on some decent suspension, lights, terratrip and away we go.

The only thing that stopped us, other than the ball joint, was the "salt lake" and the sand; how one avoids getting bogged is beyond me. We let the tyres down to 20, to no avail????

I think I need to practice.

My apologies for missing the dinner, I was home in bed, trying to get rid of a very bad cold.

Regards

Brian Canny

#### **Car 24**

Hi Ross. A short note to thank you, your family and all the officials for great, enjoyable, hard going event. also for forwarding our BP badge which arrived this week. I must apologize for not attending the presentation even though I told Ian and Geoff at the finish I was returning to Ballart to attend, but my wife whose health in recent months has not been good was not up to travelling, I am greatfull I was able to compete. So on behalf of the Lada team I express our sincere thanks from all. Car 24 the Lada. By the way I am very happy to announce that we the team have found the bloody Gremlin that has been plaguing the clutch in recent years and have him buried under a pile of rubbish behind the garage at home. I would like to mention to the Organisers of the event our sincere thanks to Mr Leigh Guest of Guests Auto Electric of Kerang who was part of the group of people who were involved with the catering at Kerang, These people were most helpfull suppling us with food despite us being late, but most of all Mr Guest opened up his workshop and put all his equipment at our disposal which enabled us to repair the Lada and rejoined the event later. The B.P Rally has a very big profile in that area it was just great to be part of it. Best wishes and regards to all. Dan Murphy. Lada Team.

#### **Car 24**

G'Day Ross ,

Mate , I really enjoyed the BP

Once started though any disconcerting aspects in my mind, of a BP Rally , went out the window.

Sitting along side someone who would have been the same age as my dad if alive was .. ..  
.. .. consuming.

The language barrier between Dan Snr and myself when he was tired was a time to behold.

Irish, Scottish, Hindu, Aboriginal , Dan blended the languages all together I'm sure..

I found I had great tolerance in the stressful periods.

I'm glad we made it to the finish for Dan's sake, he really wanted to press on regardless and if the slimmest opportunity 'we ' were going to do it.

He is a happy camper.

Thanks I'm looking forward to another one now , though some slight changes.

A car that's more comfortable ( loved Michaels Mrec ) , reliable , a crew where both team can hear , and a prepared team.

To you and your Teams efforts, I owe you a beer !

Again , thanks mate , see you soon.

Kev Wilson

## **Car 25**

### **Re: Olde BP Rally - WOW**

Scott,

You beat me to it - WOW.

Ian and I were first timers in this event and found it to be incredibly demanding and tough but totally rewarding. It truly was a great adventure.

The length of time spent in total concentration was measured in hours at a time. The driving effort was really no less than in a special stage event and the demands on the Navigator were incredible. Ian was almost overwhelmed early on but was able to develop a process which allowed him to manage the many simultaneous tasks systematically. As we moved through Thursday evening and Friday morning we grew in confidence as the roads we sought appeared (more or less) where we expected. We were also both able to contribute to navigating as I have had experience in the left hand seat and have directed a number of mapping events (Tunbridge Trials) and so understood what Ian was telling em and I was able to offer alternate interpretations of Ross' instructions in a few places which allowed us to solve a few geographical embarrassments. We really did operate as a team.

Jeff Stewart described the 2008 event to me as relentless, and I think this is a perfect description. There is almost no down time. The one long run on main roads (out of Mansfield) with no calls was required for plotting the run to Benalla and even route charted transports required close attention.

By the end of the first division on Friday afternoon (Benalla to Echuca) I was starting to flag (20km directly into the setting sun through the Red Gums of Gunbower Island) and already starting to worry about how I would handle another 400km of "spirited driving" through the Mallee to Mildura. We coped and I was actually still feeling pretty good - much to my surprise.

Like you Scott, I am hooked. If another event was announced tomorrow, I'd be downloading the Supps immediately.

I don't know how long it will take to persuade Ross to do it again but I hope he agrees. If not, hopefully someone else will take up the mantle.

My advice is that undertaking an event like this without a service crew is not sensible. I had many problems and could not have solved any with borrowing gear from other crew's service people. I was constantly bemoaning the lack of my toolbox.

Lack of suspension preparation would have knocked me out even if I hadn't melted my clutch. The increased weight of two spare tyres and Jerries of fuel in the boot led to two broken shockers. My

Steering rack came adrift twice and our radiator fan failed early Friday so we were up against it anyway. Now that I know what to expect I will be much better prepared next time.

Boy I hope there's a next time.

Thanks to Ross and his dedicated band of helpers and advisers. The teams of officials who followed the event doing multiple controls must have been nearly as exhausted as us. I didn't know all of them but Ted Perkins, The Kents, Liz P, Peter Parry and all their assistants - fantastic job. Thank you all.

Steve Richards / Ian Crook

## Car 25

BP tales (mostly true, and I am quite tall) VERY LONG

OK - I got a bit carried away here but I had to miss Sunday Lunch so I haven't been able to engage in any of the swapping of tales - I'm really very disappointed about that. Anyway, read this if you wish, or ignore it if you have better things to do. I've tried to be mildly humorous but no idea if this is entertaining or not. For those who were there, I'm sure this is the typical BP experience, for those who weren't it probably won't make much sense.

Some of Laurie's dramas are hard to top but:

1, Spent two weeks and VAST sums of money replacing the fuel tanks, hoses, fittings and pumps, all the while searching for the problem causing my (not especially powerful) Escort to use 40 litres of fuel per 80km in the Experts, Trail Blazer and the Blue Rock Stages. Installed mounts and brackets for two 20 litre jerry cans of fuel in an attempt to meet distance targets of 200+ kms for BP. I was expecting to have to cut and run to save fuel in every division. I decided on the first competitive that the minor 'misses' and random flashing of the shift light were too annoying to put up with and so unplugged the Omex rev limiter. Proceeded to complete every leg of every division (i.e minimum of 200km) on about 50litres of fuel. Spent the entire event discussing and wondering how a rev limiter can triple fuel consumption.

2, Somewhere along the bitumen up behind Eildon I realised that the steering was a bit off. At Mansfield discovered that only one end of the rack was still bolted to the car. Luckily it was the RHS that came unglued so the steering column 'sort of' held that end down. With quite a lot of cursing and two burns on my hands I failed to fix it. Danny Murphy (the younger) stepped in and helped and managed to get two bolts back in but without spring washers or other fixing device. Naturally the very fast but appallingly corrugated roads down past Stringybark Creek (anyone else note the Ned Kelly story location?) caused those bolts to fallout again by halfway to Benalla. Up at 7:30 am where I drove around trying to find a helpful mechanic. Was referred to 4 different places, none of whom showed any interest in taking my money. Bought four bolts (2 metric, two imperial because we had no idea what size they were) and some Loctite and some Loctite primer. More swearing (but fewer burns) led to eventually bolting and gluing the rack back on, where it stayed for the remainder of the event. Thank goodness for Gary Gibbons and Chris Halls service vehicles for the use of tools I wasn't carrying.

3, Sometime early on Friday we came around a corner and met some very agitated ladies on very agitated horses. They tried to make us stop and

wait while they had a picnic and a bit of a lie down. We tried to explain to them that they could expect another car like ours every two minutes for the next hour and they became a little more agitated. We departed as soon as possible after explaining to the most reasonable member of the pony club that we were only using that particular road and other roads might be a good choice.

4, A little later on Friday I realised the electric radiator fan wasn't working. I couldn't find a cause so we just needed to keep the car moving. I rolled a tyre off the rim around a tight right hander in the grid country. Turned the engine off while we fitted the spare. Started the engine when it boiled it's little head off. Started the engine to keep water circulating and tried to keep an eye on the temp. Discovered that all of my gauges were working accurately - except the temp gauge. Needle moved at random including extended periods against the lower bump stop. Spent the rest of the event wondering what the temperature was and when it would seize. It didn't, but it has several new engine noises that weren't there last week.

5, Wasted HUGE amounts of time twice, when a few moments calm thinking would have produced a very simple solution. Both were on Friday afternoon. Ian was on top of the navving for almost all the time (I think for a second time ever navigator he did a brilliant job) but there were a few vias that really challenged the both of us. We attacked these as a team and eventually got them right, albeit dropping lots of time.

First was an unmapped road with the number on the letterbox at exit as the via. Drove the right way first but turned back too soon. Drove all the way around the wrong way to within 1 km of the via. Stopped for a think (but not long enough). Drove all the way back to the T intersection and went back the first way but a bit further until we found the unmapped road. Drove up to the via, recorded the number and drove off down the route. Shortly afterwards realised that the question type via meant no Passage and so we should have gone the wrong way, got the number and kept going. Duhh!

Later on we read the instruction that the organisers used 4.7km of unmapped roads. I briefly wondered if that meant we HAD to use them. Arrived at a T intersection that was mapped only as a TL. Most cars had gone left it seemed from wheel tracks. So we did too. Drove around looking for the unmapped roads for a while until we were nearly at the via but using all mapped roads. Went all the way back to the T and went north on the unmapped road. Followed it for a few kms until we got to another intersection (unmapped). We agreed we needed to be further North so turned R and kept going until we had well exceeded the 4.7km. I was beginning to lose my cool but we set off back to the T where we turned R. This time we TRed (i.e. effectively as if we went SO the first time) and proceeded until we regained the mapped road (about where we got to earlier), TRed and drove up to the via, wrote down the info and carried on - still kicking myself. I had stumbled on the correct idea right at the beginning and didn't pursue it. The unmapped roads were a couple of kms shorter but we drove at least 4 times the intended distance and spent several minutes parked, studying the maps and instructions. With those two monumental errors it is amazing we were not OLT at Echuca. Our only other major error was the first drop off route chart beside the river on Friday. We were actually very close to getting it right but we turned R a corner or two too soon. I decided not to try to retrace our steps because I wasn't confident I could in that maze of twisty tracks. We did find the control but WD.

6, Had a few vias where we both wanted to cut and run to claw back some time but both times were unable to work out HOW to cut and run. I actually want to speak to one of the 'guns' or organisers to resolve one of these

because we ended up getting the via but had to go through an untaped gate to do it. I want to know what we were supposed to do there. The other one we eventually solved ourselves.

7, Constantly wondering how anyone except Ari Vatanen could possibly drive fast enough to clean ANY section. Saturday morning I thought I would have a red hot go at the Glider Field. I had been Stage Commander there for Darryn Snooks' VRC and had a bit of an idea what to expect. It seemed straight forward enough and Ian called it perfectly. I nearly threw it all away with a sneaky, hard to read right hander where I went well off the road but didn't lose much time, otherwise we had a clean, very fast run with no navigational uncertainty at all. By our calculation we still dropped two minutes! Bugger.

8, Section 30 brought us undone. We did very well nav wise with only one error due to catching the car ahead of us at the exact moment they reached the TL and so we went SO looking for the TL. Only lost a couple of minutes before we sorted that out. Once into the paddocks we battled the increasingly soft sand (No idea how later cars got through) but kept the momentum up until one spot where the track looped sharply right and then left uphill over a small dune. I thought I was in 2nd but quickly discovered I was in 3rd. Rapidly lost speed but I have driven 4WD in sand many times (across Simpson desert and SA Coast near Robe) and knew not to brake or even try to change gears or I'd be sitting on my floor pan. My poor car managed to lug across the crest and I breathed a sigh of relief and kept going in second gear until I got to firm ground. As soon as I changed up to third I knew we were in trouble - the pedal felt really spongy and didn't push up against my foot as I lifted back up. I tested it again and it was the same. For the rest of the section I changed gears without the clutch by matching revs and relying on the synchros but the end came at the gate. We barely got enough drive out of the clutch to get through the gate after Ian opened it and by the time we got to control there was nothing left. I did not have enough drive to move away from the control table until I very carefully 'felt' for grip in the clutch.

An hour and a half later when it cooled down we had a bit of drive and we managed to drive out to the Calder from where we dawdled along at 70kph until we got to Charlton where we met Joe Wilson who drove up from Olinda to rescue us. Thanks Joe. I went to Olinda Sunday to help install the roof that Joe was fitting when we called. Deeply disappointed to miss the dinner, but happy to return the massive favour Joe did for us.

9, Even without the clutch, we found out that were in big trouble anyway, as when we unloaded the car from Joe's trailer at Ballarat we found we had broken both rear shockers. No doubt the second spare tyre and 40kg of extra fuel was just too much for the poor old Bilsteins. Icing on the cake.

There are lots of other little incidents and problems but what an amazing adventure it was though. The biggest variety of roads and conditions you can imagine and hour after hour of sheer concentration and relentless pressure. Man I loved some of those roads though - what a blast.

Thanks again Ross, and all the helpers. Magnificent.

Steve Richards

## Car 25

Morning Ross

Thanks for keeping us up to date regarding results.

What an awesome challenge and experience, even though we did not get far on the Saturday as the clutch and the alternator were giving up, the rear shockers separated from the 'eyes' at the rear springs and the steering rack was hanging together thanks to Steve's ministrations on Friday morning. Mind you, if Danny Murphy Jnr had not helped out with repairs to the steering rack mounts on Thursday night, we would have been retiring there and then! Undoubtedly a test of car preparation, crew expertise, teamwork and stamina.

Would I do it again? Yes, but with qualifications.

And these are almost all if not entirely about risk management. (Car and crew preparation and capability issues are not among the qualifications discussed here, although there are many of those!

I see three categories of risk (nothing new, just what one would expect?)

They are;-

- o Risks to the public, predominantly other road users*
- o Risks to competitors, partly related to the first risk but also unrelated*
- o Risks to the reputation and thus sustainability of the event with potential or probable flow-on to rallying as a sport. Mostly, the consequences of failure to treat the first two categories of risk, I suggest.*

Overall, I would suggest that the common root of these three categories of risk is the:

- 1. nature of the event (a great concept that I support) and**
- 2. its conduct (aspects of which are *greatly concerning but could perhaps be changed without significant impact* on the nature of the event, its importance in the pantheon of rallying, its challenges and enjoyment for competitors).**

In other words, I would like to see the BP continue but see risk management as a key issue for attention.

Happy to talk if you want to.

Ian Crook

**Car 26** Hi Ross,

Many thanks to you - and your team - for the enormous effort you put into running the Old BP. Unfortunately we blew the head (or something in it) just before Mansfield and so didn't even finish Division 1. What we did manage to do was extremely challenging for someone who has never done one of these events before. The 100 maps look great but all the new roads since they were made, plus the vast number of twists and turns, plus my undoubted incompetence meant I got us monumentally lost a couple of times. I was improving, but it was a steep learning curve!

When you set the next one, I'll be back for sure.

Thanks again.

Regards

John Henderson

## **Car 27**

Ross

Congratulations on a great event.

The work that you must put in to create an event where everything is right must be mind blowing.

Maybe under the surface there were dramas but if so these weren't apparent.

Cameron was amazed, He has only competed in a couple mapping events and there were major problems. I assured him that if things seem confusing and you think Ross is wrong>>> ross is right!

Sorry re the panic we caused on Thurs night. I didn't want to unseal the phone in case we could get back in the event> which we subsequently did manage.

I am sorry that we couldn't stay for the presentation but we had a 5pm flight and we didn't know how much time was needed to get to Melbourne and leave the car.

i believe that there were medallions for the finishers at the lunch. If so is there any way I can get two sent up here?

We would love to have them.

Once again well done.

Laurie Garth

## **Car 27**

Bp 2013 thanks

As a new comer to the HRA and having just competed in my first BP rally I would like to thank all involved to make this happen,

>From the organizers of the event, the officials, the volunteers that manned controls. To all the other competitors.

I was amazed in the way all members of the HRA are willing to assist. By picking the car up from transport, holding the car at a workshop. And loaning us wheels and tyres as the transport people would not let us send the tyres down. And then assisting in getting the car back to us.

Only have competed in a few smaller events in Brisbane I have never seen an event that runs as smoothly and as accurately as the BP event.

It would be one of the few events where you are proud to just enter let alone finish. We had a learning and that is , no matter how big your fuel tank is, it is not big enough.

Entrants all seem to be able to list different types of car / driver / navigation issues faced during the BP and I do not think any have regrets about the event.

Thank you ALL so much.

Cameron Garth

Car 27 Lancer.

## **Car 27**

Ross

Thanks once again for all your work on what is the premier event. I did like the night time stops, but for us they were morning stops. Our main issue was the fuel consumption of the car. Don't know what the problem but we couldn't make it between fuel stops. I know this caused you some concern on the Thursday night, as it did us. Thursday seems to be my nemesis.

Apart from that all was fine. Well apart from the dip switch catching fire, the sway bar losing part of the setup, staking a tyre, knocking a hole in the exhaust and almost running out of race tape. We cut out the sand on Saturday morn as we were concerned with bogging and also fuel.

Did everyone buy something from the ladies in the hall at the fuel stop? They had gone to so much trouble with sandwiches etc. and so cheap. They only asked \$3.00 for a sandwich and a cup of tea. I gave \$5.00.

By the last fuel break we decided to head for Ballarat. Maybe if we realised our position we may have done the last bit.

My big mistake was not booking the flight home for a later time which would have allowed us to stay at the dinner. I don't know how many BPs I have left so don't make it too long till the next one. Two years will give me time to recover.

Once again well done and many thanks.

Laurie Garth.

Ps I must talk about a section that had me worried.

## **Car 28**

Hi Ross

>From my perspective it was an event of mixed emotions.

Div. 1 - Despite my pre-event fears as to the areas that this might traverse and the lack of being able to accurately scale distances over the myriad of "windy" roads in the area, this proved to be relatively straightforward, even though I made a monumental stuff up with the last via and control at the end of the last section (totally my fault)! I do, however, have a query as to the accuracy of the map scale on the 100D map as all distances that I scaled on that map were 'short'; ie. 1.5km scaled between 2 junctions in a straight line on the map was closer to 2km on the road.

Div. 2 - Just loved this one!! It was a matter of accurate scaling and following direction all the time, which is what navigation is all about. IMO more of the event should have followed this model.

Div. 3 - Was not too bad, although I think there were some pointless sections in it, ie, the 'lap' of Lake Wahpool didn't prove much, and the confusing instruction at Nowingi (re the railway line inference, reference to just the u/m road would have been sufficient) served to disorientate a number of weary crews. Again, no excuse for our 'misdemeanours' however.

Div. 4 - What we completed of this division had a few good parts (ie. navigation required) but also a lot of what I consider irrelevant with minimal navigational input - ie west of Rocket Lake. What really upsets me is the Mt Crozier section where we ended up stuck behind other cars and/or bogged in loose sand for over two hours, which effectively ended our event.

There were several other competitors in a similar situation to ourselves and

I cannot fathom the logic of this 'one off' section that had such a determining factor on the results of so many. If it was just because the BPs of old traversed this country then I can't support that as a valid argument given the effect that that one section had on the field as a whole. IMO it would have been far more interesting and challenging to have used the multitude of backroads and country lanes that exist in the area - ie. similar to Div. 2. But then again I might be biased!

Div. 5 - Didn't do this one.

Regards,

Geoff Rainbow

### **Car 31**

Hi Ross,

Congratulations again on a great event, and I must say the most comprehensive set of event results I think I have ever seen. I guess I should have expected that given the quality of everything else that you and your team prepared.

You asked what happened to us after Mansfield, well to answer that question I would have to start about two weeks before your event, yes two weeks. All us north of the boarder people got together to hear some words of wisdom from previous competitors. One of the helpful hints was along the lines that you would describe the direction of entry or exit at a via based on your interpretation of the Broadbents and not the 100 / 250's. So, at VIA 2 on 100A we went for the a road that would bring us in on the Broadbents from the SW which I interpreted to be the road that would bring us in from the SE on the 100A (That didn't work very well...) I learned something but we lost some time.

After that I got a bit confused with the roads around Marysville which cost us some time and after I resorted to the magnifying glass things improved a little (another lesson for me ....)

Things seemed to flow reasonably well after that. We just needed to drive a bit faster, which I must admit was a challenge at times in the big Falcon (but we do lover to bits).

Our "flow" dried up (maybe not the best choice of words given our age, but you know what I mean) on Sawyer Rd, or actually just north of Sawyer Rd (I think). In hindsight I now know that I overshot the location of VIA 1 but found a track that we thought would suit us an off we went. We had heard stories that you might send us along some real goat tracks so though nothing of the general unkempt nature of the path until John said something along the lines of "if we go down there we're never coming out" so we turned around for the first time, I think it was a 27 point turn (got to love the big Falcon).

We eventually found our way back to a road which looped back to a familiar position (where we started down the goat track!) so we decided we should do another 27 point turn. Problem was, the earth bank was soft and John reversed right up to it. The car stopped. Why? Turns out it was because we had plugged the exhaust tight. No flow out means no flow in (there is that flow word again!) anyway, we had blocked the road and therefore the next crew to come along had to help

push us off the bank. A clever ploy that we noticed other competitors used to their advantage on that sandy track somewhere southwest of Mildura.

Exhaust unplugged the Falcon started right up again, and seeing as we had already blown about 45 minutes we thought it would be time to cut and run. We tried to visit the remaining VIA's where we could and where we thought it wouldn't take too much time. We managed to visit VIA 3 and went back to find the track that our old friend (and one of the nicest guys in rallying) Jeff Whitten was hiding on. His campfire was very inviting but we had an appointment with beds somewhere in Benalla.

I remember that we arrived without much further trouble, so I learned how important measuring to the turn or VIA is!

To be continued (if you would like!)

Hi Ross,

Some more anecdotes for you.

Division 2

Section 9 – I had plotted the 5.8 km of unmapped road as starting closer to the crossing of Honeysuckle Creek and consequently went too far west and lost some time before returning to the right road. In hindsight I should have measured it better and I might have plotted it correctly. Lost 10 minutes.

I don't remember any particular issues in sections 10 – 12 however we found the drop off route chart (our first) interesting – another 2 minutes lost (on each).

13 – No problems.

14 – No problems except I got confused about the forward minute timing and came in a minute early.

15 – Was perplexed about trying to plot an unmapped 5.4 km road between VIA 2 and VIA 3, and was very relieved to find that it should have been VIA 3 and VIA 4. Everything else seemed to be O.K. (No time lost) Loved the view of Kow Swamp by the way. We don't see that much in Sydney....

16 – This section was O.K however the dust from other cars made it tough to keep up with the necessary speed. The drop off route chart was tricky, we found ourselves approaching the road that I presumed would have brought us in to the control from the southeast and realised that we too far away from the creek. We turned around and went back to find a track heading to the northwest, and were very happy when we found one and became excited when we saw one of your little red arrows. (I grew to love your little red arrows!) We lost some time but didn't get a WD! (11 minutes down on this one)

17 – Can't remember what went wrong here. I think I plotted it all O.K. and we were to the west of the river for a while and I think I recall some gates that we had to open. We were down on time,

maybe the time was partly me having to get out of the harness and over the roll bar. I can't see why it is the navigators job to open the gates, surely the driver should do this....(another 9 minutes)

18 – All O.K. on this one. No lost time (as you might expect, I think we came in and nominated)

The roast diner was fantastic. I think part of my downfall after this may have been over indulging myself with this great food. I think my stomach would prefer that I limited the quantity and “heaviness” of food. Another lesson learned.

Division 3 (where I really unravelled)

19 – All good here.

20 – No problem plotting this one. I recall dust slowed us down a little. We both enjoyed travelling so close to the railway line (was that legal?) kept thinking someone was going to stop us and send us back to the right road.... Lost some time (7 minutes)

21 – I think this was the beginning of my meltdown. I had trouble defining the actual location / configuration of VIA 1 (incidentally, I wasn't the only one!). I eventually worked it out and went straight through an open gate into a farmer's field, where John found the consistency of said field conducive to getting bogged, well almost. We just made it through and headed east to the edge of the field near the fence where the ground was firm enough to support the old girl and off we went. It's my recollection that the rest of the section was O.K. however a little humpy (is that a word, because I think it describes the nature of the track perfectly). It was funny to see all the headlights pointing in different directions in the middle of that dark night. (Did you deliberately pick the date of the event to coincide with a moonless sky?) We lost 22 minutes looking for VIA 1.

22 – I don't recall any particular issues on this section however my brain was fried by this stage. I should have started Panadol and Coke earlier (I really think that dehydration was an issue, notwithstanding the jokes about Coke). We lost 11 minutes which I think was because we were just a little slow.

23 – No issues but the break at Ouyen was well deserved. A couple of Magnums and a Coke. I think I took some Panadol at this point (too late).

24 – The beginning of the end. Finding cars bogged and impassable roads right at the beginning of the section had me a little phased, until John spotted some cars passing through to our east. A little back tracking and we were on our way (with about another dozen cars). The dust was like a thick fog and the concentration trying to peer through to find the roads / tracks took its toll. We found VIA 1, I think we found VIA 2 but by that stage everything started to feel like we were going in circles. Even now I don't know where we went or how we eventually found our way to the control, even with the aid of Google Maps satellite view. (Lost 29 minutes)

We decided that we were beaten and better get to bed. We basically cut and run straight to the final control in Mildura. I can't remember if we nominated a time or anything?? We were driving along the Calder Hwy and could see the headlight of other crews out to the east and then to the west, until the car started to weave up the road and we decided that we had better pull over for a sleep on the side of the road. (I've never had to have a sleep on a rally before!) John and I have discussed it and

neither of us have any concept of how long we were asleep. In hindsight we should have called through the start / finish controls of sections 25, 25 and 27. Another thing that we learned (and used the next day) I didn't even get to plot on Map 100H!

Division 4 (The must be a joke about black and white TV police drama in there somewhere)

After a good night's sleep I was convinced that I was not cut out for your events but I was ready to give it another go, so off we went...

28 – Route chart. No problem that I can remember.

29 – Drop off route chart. Completely stuffed it up and came in from the east. WD! Still no headache so I wasn't complaining.

30 – I recall that the navigation and finding of roads wasn't all that difficult however keeping the car moving in the sand was very difficult, and in fact at one stage not actually possible – Between VIA 2 and VIA 3 the big Falcon went down to its axles at the side of a wheat field. Then a Volvo came along, and went down to its axles, closely followed by a Datsun.

We started digging and swearing (which strangely seemed to help?) but luckily we heard the noise of an approaching diesel and appearing like the heroes in an Indiana Jones movie was the farmer and his dog in a white four wheel drive. "I thought I'd come and see what all the noise was about" was his greeting, but then the magic words.... "would you like a tow?". Would we! John had the snatch strap out and on the hook before the other crews had a chance, well we were there first.

Well in no time the sand started flying and after two "snatches" we were mobile again. What a great bloke. We thanked him as he was on his way back to help the others. Believe it or not, I think he was actually enjoying himself.

We had reduced the tyre pressure but obviously not enough. I think we learned a bit about sand technique also. Needless to say we lost some time on this section.

31 – Not too many challenges in this section. I do remember thinking that nobody would ever find us if we did end up bogged way down a wrong road somewhere! This was definitely a change from Sydney traffic. Not sure if we lost much time in this section however by this time it didn't really matter too much.

32 – Yes, we did get bogged before we even got to the climb up Mt. Crozier, but we had an excuse! Another crew had stopped (bogged) and blocked the route, so when we slowed down we dug in. Then another crew came along (that Datsun again) and kept their foot down, even when they were perpendicular to the road? So there we were again, three cars bogged together. This time there was no farmer to rescue us so I headed up to help get the other moving (because there was no way anyone was going anywhere until they were clear). So some Austin Seven style "bumping" (yes I am an owner) and some old fashion pushing got the road clear.

The other two crews returned to reciprocate and we were back on our way, for about 500 metres after which there was an official who asked us to pull off onto the firm area beside the road. Apparently there was a Mustang ahead that was 100% bogged and a recovery vehicle was in action.

John complied by reversing back off the road and into another car. (No damage just a bit of straightening required to the spot lights...)

To cut a long storey short, one the path was clear we were able to make the climb without assistance from the recovery car, even if I had to jump out to give the old girl a bit of a push. Well actually I didn't get to push because as soon as my weight was out of the car she just took off. John stopped to let me back in after what seemed like about 2 kms (maybe 300 metres).

For some reason I called John to turn right when we arrived at the Pink Lakes, I don't know why but I soon realised and we turned back. We found the road to the east but not before overshooting far enough to see the tourist signs that indicated that people used to live here! (Unbelievable). We entered the control from the correct direction but had forgotten to get the information at the VIA! We lost lots of time here, but have a great storey to tell. John was wrapped about getting up the hill when the Mustang (and others failed)

33 / 34 – We forgot to re-inflate our tyres didn't we. So on this section the car developed a strange vibration which we sorted by changing the damaged (egg shape) rears at Patchewallock. I don't remember having any issues on this section, but I do remember the great cakes and nice ladies in the hall in Patchewallock. (It's fun to say Patchewallock, even if my spell checker is unhappy about the spelling) Lots of time lost up to this point. Better do something to get some time back.

35 – The plan was to book out of the control and then find a quicker route to the finish and deliberately miss anything in between. I spotted a section of the map on the main road not far from the finish control that looked like it may have been altered to conceal a road that we could use, and it turned out this road was there. We used the main road for most of this section and arrived at the end control in a VERY reasonable time. "How did you do that time?" the control official said. "I just drove really well" was John's reply. He didn't lie, he just didn't tell the whole story.

36 – Our plan on section 34 worked so well that we thought that we might try the same thing on this section. We went straight down through Hopetoun and turned right towards VIA 5 and then picked up the rest of the route from there.

37 – Same plan again however this time we rejoined the main road to Rainbow just after the start and headed south and as we turned we saw a sign for "Catholic Church" so we guessed that was the information required at VIA 2 so that helped. We rejoined the route just south of VIA 3 and continued to the end. I remember having some trouble figuring out how to open (and close) one of the wire gates which I think was around VIA 5, I had not encountered one like this before (we don't use these in Sydney!).

38 – Straight forward route chart to the end. A well earned rest.

Division 5

Our meal was deliberately light, chicken chips and more Coke. We had both kept up with water through all of Division 4 and I was feeling quite fresh. Oh, and I had been taking two Panadol every 4 hours....

39 – I don't remember anything dramatic about this section. (4 minutes late)

40 – I remember that the drop off route chart was tricky (for us) and that finding one of those little red arrows was very reassuring. I also recall having some trouble finding the control, keeping between the creeks was the answer, there were a couple of possible roads if I recall correctly. (10 minutes late)

41 – We (I) did have some difficulty on this section. My first difficulty was after the quiet zone when we came into a farm machinery area where I wasted some time finding the road to the south. I was trying to keep away from the road that was mapped as crossing the Wimmera River near the W. Turns out we had to head in this direction just a bit further before we found the right road to the south. Then, the big time waster was looking for the right road into VIA 3. We (I) had plotted a right turn at about 6.5 km from VIA 2 however possibly because of the degree of wiggle I must have misjudged this and ended up coming in on the tar road that runs parallel to the channel. Spotting the light from the passage control in the distance I realised that we would have to go back and find the correct road, which we did at the expense of much time. There was an area just before the control where some extra concentration was required although I think we did O.K. (20 minutes late)

42 – You might ask why 12 minutes late, well it turns out I couldn't tell my right from my left. We departed from the service point with not too much time to spare however when we got to the instruction that said "Railway crossing then TR" I read this as "Railway crossing". Yes we went straight ahead, went SO at the roundabout and guess what, we couldn't find O'Regan St. anywhere! We drove around for a while saying rude things about you until I realised what I had done wrong and then John said something rude about me.(12 minutes late)

43 – No issues on this one, apart from not watching the clock ....(1 minute early - oops)

44 – The climb up to VIA 1 was fantastic fun. John and the mighty Falcon did us proud, and the cheers from the crowd at the top made it all that much more rewarding. There was quite a bit of oil on the hill so we deduced that some of the previous crews had not had quite so much fun as us. We headed up a wrong road (Seedling Point, I think) and had to reverse back to the intersection before resuming in the correct direction. The rest of the section was reasonably straight forward although maintaining speed in a big car was challenging. (14 minutes late)

45 – Another drop of route chart, at this time of night! Did I mention that the compass in our car was reading +45° out, and given the lateness and shaking etc. (lots of excuses) we ended up too far east and thinking we were in the correct location that I had thought would bring us into control from the west, we headed east. We almost ended up in Chute (Shute, as the Americans might say). We realised what I had done and turned back to receive our WD on entering the control... bugger! (11 minutes late)

46 – By this time John was just about done. After starting the route chart he suggested that we cut and run to the finish, but it occurred to me that we didn't really have a map that would help us find our way there anyway (maybe the Broadbents?) however I convinced him that we could at least find a shortcut to the control at the end of the section. So, we turned back, went up through Chute (again) and then found the start of the road or better track that should have brought us into the control from the correct direction. Turned out to be the right track however we did have our doubts about halfway until we found a signpost "Taylors track" I think it was, and this gave us enough

confidence to push on to the control. I think we missed a board or passage control by being too sneaky! (11 minutes late)

47 – Straight forward to the finish. I can usually get a simple route chart sorted out, but obviously not always – Stawell. (In on time, for a change)

When we arrived at the finish I was still feeling good and could have gone on for another hour or so, however I now know that John had had enough. We hung around the clubhouse for half an hour or so and listened to the various versions of “if we had ... then we would ....” which I always find lots of fun. Our “If only” related to a 6<sup>th</sup> position in Division 5 and realising that “if only” the 20 odd other crews that DNF had finished, that we would probably have been about 26<sup>th</sup> (which is about where we were in Division 1) We found our way back to our hotel and the event was over.

The next morning we were awoken early by a phone call from our friend Dave Johnson (yes he is still our friend even though he called us at 7:30 am!) to tell us his sad storey. We eventually came back to life and went off the find some breakfast . Gerry Bashford and Ray Daniel had found a good spot so we invited ourselves to join them.

We joined them at lunch again and I must say the highlight for us was watching the video of one of the original events.

Our trip home to Sydney was long but much less eventful. It was the fourth night (or should I say morning) in a row that I got to bed after 3:00 am.

Great event. Learned a lot. Can't wait for the next one!

### **Car 33**

Morning Ross

I guess the best thing we can say, is that we finished the event but of course a glorious last. We had alternator trouble into the second section of the first division which we then missed all of the second division as we were unable to get to the start in Benalla the next day. We started at Kerang for division 3 but lost time. Being last away we seemed to have found an angry farmer near the pre Ouyen control who gave us verbal serve because of the other 40 odd competitors that had come before us but we kept going (the farmer told us to F\*\*\*FF so we did, also said I was an old fart and should be in bed and not annoying him. Maybe he was right)

Having said all of that we did get better in the 4th and 5th division albeit we did not complete all the sections in time.

Gary and I did enjoy the rally and many thanks to you and your team for a great event with special thanks to Ian and Geoff for their help to Gary and me.

Other than the alternator problem the 1800 did not miss a beat but I guess with an experienced team it may have done a bit better.

Thank you for the event.

Best regards

John Barry

Gary Johnstone

Car 33

## **Car 34**

Ross

Thanks very much for putting on a great rally, it was greatly enjoyed by myself & the Mustang, but not so much by my navigator, but two out of three ain't bad. The breakfasts & dinners were much appreciated & its great meeting the locals, especially after Jeparit footy club's big win. Big thankyou to the officials who were always happy & helpful no matter what time of the day or night it was, and how much dust was up there nose. Look forward to doing it again whenever that may be, see you around. Regards

Michael Arundel

34 Ross

As mentioned in my earlier email we had a great time, great roads & course, (the bits we did)?, the odd angry farmer, but the kid sitting on his dads lap waving to the cars makes up for that. I would put our non finish down to over heating due to lack off coolant, this is the navigator not the mustang.

Regards

Michael Arundel

## **Car 36**

HI Ross,

His name is Mick Engelfield 0428 241 915. Thank you very much for running the event I totally enjoyed myself. My body is nearly back to normal.

I was a little surprised that the event was being run as a race. I was sold the event being a navigational event. Not that I mine driving fast in the dirt but it was a little challenging in the old ute.

The car went really well with only a flat tyre on the Thursday night and loose fan belt. Saturday it run like a dream and as you know we came 2nd outright (good navigator)

Sunday started well loosing 10 minutes on the first section and cleaning the second stage. But when the sand came we drove straight through without a problem driving around bogged cars.

But during this stage and having the throttle wide open for so long in the sand the carby got blocked and I lost 60 minutes plus getting into the end of the 3rd stage. At Jeparit I pulled the carby apart and blew out the jets which fixed the problem. Then after the first stage of 70 minutes which we cleaned the car started to cut out again. So we decided to join my brother Mick and head for Ballarat. We should of at least handed our card in but not thinking and being a little worn out ( 5 hours sleep in 3 days) we had a beer instead.

It was a great event and am looking forward to the next with a compass that works!!

Kind Regards,

Peter Arundel

## **Car 38**

Ross

A huge thank you to you and your team for another great “weekend”. We are very much amateurs in this rally world but this was our fourth BP and really enjoy being part of the event. Our goal always seems to finish the event and to still be able to drive the car home. I am amazed at how quickly some of the cars go – they just power away from us leaving us their dust. I am too slow and we use up late time in every section but can usually buy some back or cut and run to keep in the event.

I am really pleased that you had a 4wd in the second sand patch in the Sunset. When we arrived there were two cars stuck and others waiting to get through. This meant that we had used all of our late time before getting to Patche. Really liked the idea of supporting the locals there with a service break. It is important that we support these communities.

It always amazes me the logistics of the event. The ability to find so many tracks and dirt roads to travel around the state. In Jeparit I was telling a local we were heading to Ballarat for the night but he could not get past the idea of the sealed roads where the fact is we travelled virtually all of the way on minor roads. We used to live in Stawell but we came out of there on roads I have never used!

I have spoken to the local paper (based in Kerang) this morning wanting to see if they had a photographer at the Kerang Racecourse. Unfortunately they didn't. I was hoping they would have put an article in the Cohuna Farmers Weekly (which really needs to be written today) to explain to the Cohuna people what was happening given that they would have seen the cars in the area but the article really needs photos with it. Got any ideas who might have photos of the cars in action that could be used?

Thanks once again for a great experience and challenge – it is good to live on the outside edge of your comfort zone!

Glenn Hall

## **Car 40**

Ross,

No worries re the results - at least we finished!!!

The highlight for me was the support given to us by the people manning controls etc. In particular, when we got off the map (and then back on again) there was no lack of encouragement to cut and run, and just finish the event. We did have some car problems from just before Mildura which also influenced our decision. My lack of health also obviously contributed.

Also, it was most pleasing to see you at all sorts of places and your encouragement was also welcomed.

I have one comment about competitor behaviour but will speak to Ian Ellis about it in due course.

Martin Forbes

## **Car 41 Olde BP Rally - WOW**

A quick note to sincerely thank Ross Runnells, Ian Ellis, Geoff Boyd and the entire Olde BP Rally Team & HRA for a sensational adventure over the past 4 days.

What a unique and rare opportunity to participate in a landmark event. As a "Youngen" in the event, and from a special stage background, I now acutely appreciate the attraction to these long distance events. I HAVE THE BUG!

The amount of effort that must have gone into selecting the diverse course is staggering!

We used a Nissan Skyline with limited modification - Seats (a must in my opinion), upgraded Brake Pads, Sump guard and of course Navigational Equipment. An electronic compass is a must and a Monit or similar. I did not replace the 100,000km old suspension and paid the price with complete failure after a small jump heading out of Mildura on Saturday morning. I would suggest doing the best with suspension you can afford, or if you don't, at least respect the suspension you have (as I did not).

Even when we were bogged in sand (driver error) for the third time on Saturday, I was thinking, there are so many worse things I could be doing right now!

Thanks to Justin Hunt for Navigating, it is a tough event on Nav's with massive spans of concentration required! Congratulation to Alan & Mark on the win, commiserations to Dinta & Kate who were looking so good for such a huge part of the event.

I would recommend anyone who likes driving on great roads to give it a go should the opportunity arise again. Ross will hopefully get the itch again in the coming months!

The Outback Trial has to be the next opportunity to have a crack at this type of event. START PLANNING NOW! There is no way you would be disappointed if you do it!

Scott Spedding

## **41**

I LOVED IT

I wish I did not spit it and pull out on the last day. I would do it again tomorrow to be honest.

I really enjoyed the diversity or the course. Was rougher than I thought. I found even if you nailed everything you had to maintain such a high average speed to be on time. But that's part of the challenge.

Justin Hunt

**Car 42**

Hi Ross,

Thanks for the opportunity to respond.... whilst this was my first event - and an inglorious start, I thoroughly enjoyed the camaraderie of the event, and help and understanding of the organising team. I was very disappointed not to be able to commence from Benalla - as you would be aware it was not for lack of trying!

For the record, my navigator was sick and unable to continue..... my estimation (off the record) is that it was an anxiety attack in the forests.

The car was strong and I certainly look forward to using it again in the near future..... and yes my wife is aware of its existence!!! But that's another story!!

Regards,  
Alan Chambers - Car 42

## Officials feedback

Hi Ross,

Just a quick message to say thanks on behalf of Roger and I for providing an opportunity for us to enjoy a great weekend together.

Yeah sure it was tough, tiring and at times frustrating (Liz) but overall bloody rewarding. I guess you already know that you are doing this for more than just the competitors. We the officials are out there, not just out of a sense of service but to enjoy being part the experience.

Cheers ...

Geoff Byron

Hi Ross

Hope you starting to feel your feet again. (Now the bills come in, reality!) Steve as asked what to do with the fuel receipts, I have suggested he send them to you, so I presume you will get them shortly.

Congrats on the weekend we all enjoyed it very much & I think you made a few people realize what they can actually archive. Hope you enjoyed it as much as everyone.

Anyway enough airy fairy stuff, hope to catch up soon, will discuss a time for dinner (may be wait until Chrisy is home, so we can hear her stories as well)

Cheers  
Tom Kaitler

Ross thank for yet another great experience albeit as officials We had a great time and appreciated our "early" schedule--with the average age of 68 it was most welcome.

We didn't have any problems apart from car 25 driving off 4 mins early at Shepparton.

Everyone was on good behaviour although when Dinta and Kate arrived at control 40 we knew to keep away!!! At both Underbool and control 40 we clocked plenty of people cruising along the main roads some returned the correct way others simply kept going. At StFilans one competitor asked us to

sign his info-THE Q Board!!! sign.

Again thanks and I don't believe that the majority of people realize just how

much effort/time/cost goes into this iconic event As C of C for the 2dayta we have spent many hours driving plotting/planning and as a TA we don't have the hassles of obtaining permissions from all the shires etc.

Again thanks from the "TEAM"

Warm regards  
Peter Parry

Ross

Thanks for doing the event again, we hope it will happen again in the future as the HQ really needs to finish one, we will both be in a better space after this year.

Re interesting story when at Outlet Creek passage a local stopped by and we asked where he had been - he had been to the Pella Lutheran church vacuuming for the Sunday service and couldn't understand why all these cars were going up and down the road. The local reporter was with him and hopefully will publish something about the event. Interestingly when I asked did he vacuum every week he said no they only have a service every 2-3 weeks - I wonder what the Lord would think of that!!!

Also Ouyen pub - stayed there is 1974 for Hattah Desert Rally - 39 years later rooms the same, same carpet, same beds, same everything, good to know some things never change!

Also it is probably unlikely but if there were any medals left over we had a third member in the team - Noel Saville - he has been service crew for the last 2 BP's that we ran so not a fly by nighter. I will leave that with you.

A suggestion Peter Stapleton made at the luncheon re late running time and running out of it was if you have 5-6 sections per division do you make then last section the toughest so most complete the first 4 or 5 and if they have to cut and run they can still most likely complete all divisions and nearly all the sections. Jus food for thought as I am sure there will be some complaints as well as some compliments.

All the best

Ian

Ian C Fulton BVSc, MS, FANZCVS  
Specialist in Equine Surgery

It was a pleasure to be involved Ross ..... certainly the most "epic" officialing I have ever done !

Thanks for putting the event together - must have been a mammoth task. Maybe another for the 60th anniversary?

cheers

Dave Gallacher

Hello Ross.

Thank you for the opportunity to help out. I had a great time.

A couple of experiences come to mind.

A few minutes after I was closed by the sweep on Sat morning, a car full of Koori's stopped and asked if there was a car 'race' going on. I said it has just finished. Then one of the women in the back asked if I had seen any emus around. I said that I hadn't. They were ok about it then left. I suspect they were out looking for lunch!!!

The other was at P15 (Glenorchy) where a third of the cars through got WD's. Only one of these decided that they did not want to stop and get their lumps. I had a torch so I still got their number (11) when they turned off. I'll talk to John R & Dave S next time I see them.

Regards,  
Robert Richards...