



## 2013 Old BP Rally Report: *Another Tough One*

By Ross Runnalls

Photos by: Tracey Dewhurst, Ross Runnalls, Ross Kelly, Steuart Snooks, Alan Baker.

After the 2010 event, satisfaction with the outcome must have outweighed the considerable time involved, and the commitment was made to go again in two years time. At an early stage a few areas were identified for improvement, including six hour divisions with breaks that reflect fatigue management requirements in the transport industry, entry fee discounts for first timers and younger competitors to keep numbers up, and easier navigation and road conditions with less sand and mountains. A course was

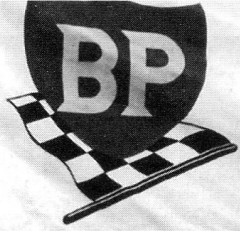
mapped out and largely confirmed by early 2011.

When Graham Wallis' Readyplan Rerun was not able to run in 2011 due to wet weather, we agreed to postpone that event to 2012, and the BP to 2013.

Entries were slow to come in, but came with a rush in the last week, ending up with 45, the same as 2010. Two withdrew before the start. Entry fee discounts had attracted nine new entries, including three from the Classic Rally Club in Sydney, and six with someone under 35 years of age, with Adam Kaitler/Ged Blum joining Paul McKinnon/Chris Ellis having both crew members under 35.

Given that much of the route was across the clay flats of the Northern Victorian plains and the Wimmera,

the rain forecasts were watched with acute interest. Fortunately for us, but not for the Mallee wheat growers who were hoping we would bring the Autumn break, the long run of dry weather held on to give us a fine weekend. One of our few objectives is to see the painstakingly planned route actually implemented without amendment, and it was a great relief to see that achieved. So 43 crews assembled at the spectacular RACV Country Club at Healesville, where the organisers put on a fine pasta meal at the start to get everyone carbed up for the night ahead. All part of the softening up process. Gordon Douglas had his now traditional last minute dramas with the Escort, this time solved by transferring their entry to the ex Ralph Price Volvo, which gave them a trouble free run.



# START



## Division One

John and Julie Quayle operated the start control from the front door of the hotel, after Julie had given the RACV shop a good going over. Cuthbert/Smalley broke a drive shaft before they started, but a quick trip back to the workshop saw them able to eventually start the event at Mansfield.

A short transport up to Ted Perkins and team at Mt St Leonard preceded a 32 km warm up through the forest via Rob Richards at Kalatha Camp to Peter Parry, John Moore and Brian Knights at St Fillans on Broadbents, but Narbethong to everyone else. Kalatha Camp was the second last control (number 44) in 1965 when it took points off more than half the tired field, still suffering from the previous section over the steep and slippery Cheviot Gap into Limestone, captured graphically in the film of the '65 event.

Harper/Snooks, Rawson/Smith and Aston/Nixon cleaned and Upton/Laidlay, Officer/Officer and Burn/Dunbar dropped 1. All of the Eskimos (from north of the border) lost time adjusting to applying the old maps to the current Toolangi Forest. The Knights fired the powerful modern Falcon off over the edge of Plantation Road into a precarious position that had Pam a tad concerned. Following competitors stopped to reassure them, but they had to wait for recovery to get back on the

road and rejoin before Benalla. Barry/Johnstone experienced early alternator (not generator!) trouble in the Austin 1800, and had to rejoin the next day at Kerang. Gibbons/Forbes came without a compass and could not find the control at St Fillans so cut to Mansfield to start afresh. Chambers/Moran first time out in the ex Bainbridge Merc retired very early with navigator illness, but they promise to be back.

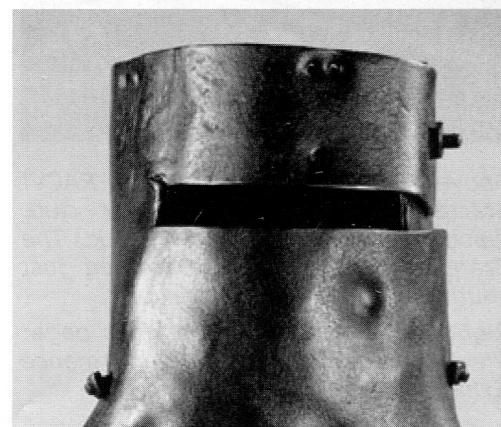
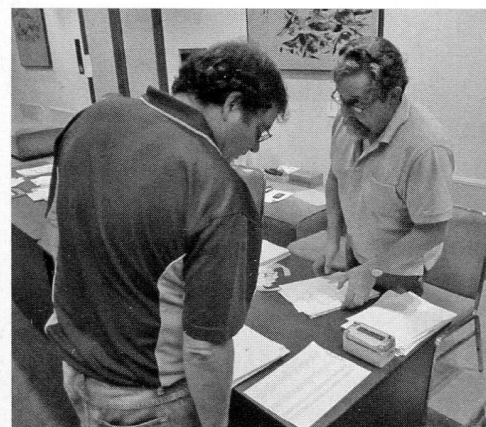
22 cleaned the cruise through Marysville and the climb past Lake Mountain to Peter and Jeremy Fraser at Stockmans Reward. Marysville and Stockmans Reward have never been visited by the BP. We love localities like Stockmans that appear on Broadbents to have only one road in and out. Incidentally, the only sign of habitation at Stockmans Reward is a camping area on the Big River. Tim Shepherd succumbed to navigator illness, and they jumped to Mansfield.

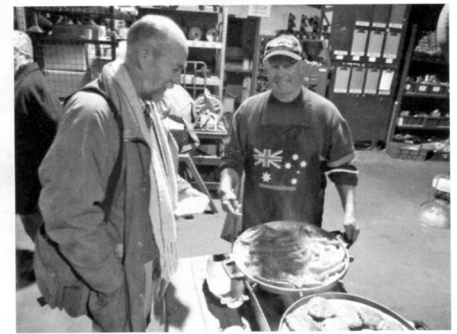
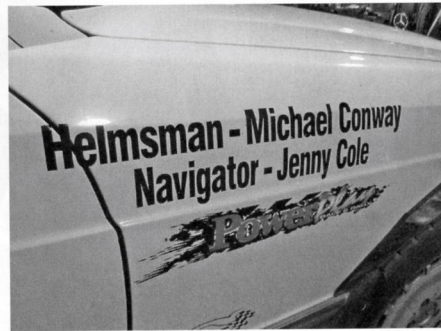
It would have been interesting to go from Stockmans along the Big River and enter Enoch Point, another desolate dead end road locality on Broadbents, from the South. There are 15 supposed dwellings hidden in the scrub at the old mining settlement of Enoch Point. The road from the South is trafficable by two wheel drive, but is rocky and requires some care, often not evident on the first night of this event, so that is why it was given a miss.

Time was tight for the run up what is now known as the Eildon-Warburton

Road, but in 1960 when last used by the BP, was well known as Dry Creek Road. Crews had to find the signposted Arthurs Creek Road, a steep side track, to enter control manned by Dave Gallacher and Rob Wilson, who withdrew their entry earlier in the week. Officers were slickest on 8, to Upton/Laidlay, Rawson/Smith and Ashton/Nixon 9 over the 36 km. Garths backtracked to Marysville as fuel consumption was of concern. Gardner/Paice crushed the sump on one of the humps down Arthurs Creek Road, or track, and became the first crew forced to retire. Winter/Maurer turned down an earlier steep track then had fuel problems after 4 km. Peter ran back onto the correct route and hailed Recovery. A 40km tow dumped them in Jamieson, where repairs were made and they rejoined in Mildura. Hall/Peers finally got to Control the right way but ran out of late time. Canny/Davies and Allan/Davidson overshot Arthurs Creek Road and tried Running Creek Tk to pop out on the right road at Control, unfortunately from the wrong direction.

22 cleaned the mainly twisty bitumen run via Jamieson to Alex McCosh and John Adams, who has his country seat nearby, at Delatite Lane just south of Mansfield. The road to Jamieson has only been sealed in recent years, so it is now used as a stage on the tarmac Targa High Country Rally. Another steep track was planned to make this run interesting and enter the Jamieson Micro Brewery from the North, but





Division Two

Parks Victoria said it could not be used as it was not a road, but only a fireline. An interesting mapped road was also looked at across Delatite Station, but the owner said it had not been used since horse and buggy days to go from the homestead into town, and was now barely negotiable by four wheel drive. The 1973 BP came this way from Mansfield to Jamieson on the first night marathon run over the mountains.

After service and a break at Mansfield BP the transport section continued up the hill to Alan Hall at Tolmie, who has recently shifted to this neighbourhood. A testing 60 km run would finish the night, initially past Stringybark Creek where Ned Kelly and his gang shot dead three Mansfield policemen: Sergeant Kennedy, and Constables Lonigan and

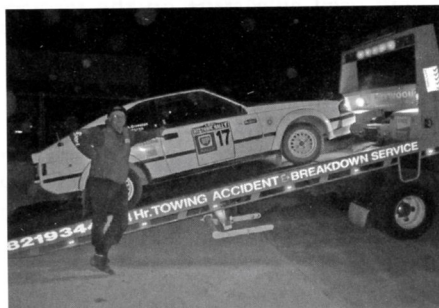
Scanlon in 1878, along the enjoyable Tatong - Tolmie Road known locally as "The White Road", which has been used in five BPs and now three Old BPs! Crews than had to search out the rugged Sawyers Rd over the Samaria Range to a passage control manned by Tony Kent and Kel Stapleton, before some nice tree lined lanes via another passage with Liz Partington and Ria Brodtman, ending on a slow overgrown lane to Jeff Whitten and grandson Jacob at Kelfeera. A fresh Cuthbert/Smalley were best on 4, to Rawson/Smith, Burn/Dunbar 7 and four on 8. Young navigators down the field; Will Murphy and Chris Ellis, were still wide awake, losing only 11. The NSW crews did not fare well with Blair/Henderson having to retire with gasket failure, Batten/Johnson having to winch back onto the road after an excursion, and Thompson/Floyd having to repair their front suspension along the way.

After a convivial breakfast on a fine Benalla Autumn morning, crews headed west on an 82 km cruise through Upotipotpon, where Radar 1, Mick Carey had a few eager customers, to a control south of Shepparton. The course criss-crossed the path of a recent tornado, but the damage had been tidied up, but there were some very bare remaining old red gums. Best were Rawson/Smith and Wallis/Nicholas clean, Burn/Dunbar 1, Ward/Pollock 4 and Upton/Laidlay 6. Some crews down the field were delayed when a local farmer did not feel obliged to let them pass his tractor and wide implement. The Cranston/Baker Celica expired here due to overheating and headed home on the RACV truck.

A nightcap and debrief with fellow crews awaited at the bar of the new Benalla Community Sports Centre. Garry Hodgskiss was back in harness tallying scores, which showed after Division 1:

The first drop off route chart for the event was a very short 6 km section requiring crews to enter Toolamba from the east out of the daunting Daunts Bend Forest beside the Goulburn River. Best was Burn/Dunbar clean, Wallis/Nicholas, Batten/Johnson, Coutts-Smith/Kelly, Knight/Knight, Douglas/Murphy 1. Why didn't the Knights clean as they live only a few hundred metres from Control? The Officers and Ward/Pollock took a while to sort it out, while five others gave up and W/Ded.

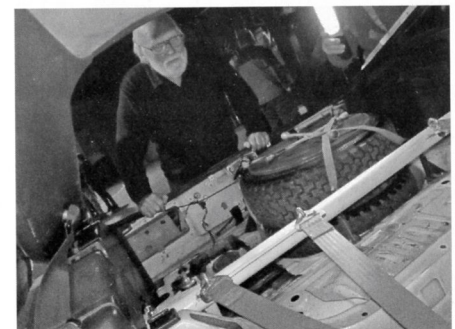
22 cleaned the easy cruise past Waranga Basin to the next drop off route chart. It was planned to make this section a



Rawson/Smith	16
Officer/officer	17
Ashton/Nixon	17
Upton/Laidlay	18
Burn/Dunbar	19
Conway/Cole	25

Above: A BP bookended by the RACV! Started at the RACV country club, finished on the RACV tow truck. The Cranston/Baker effort evaporated just south of Shepparton in Division 2.

Right, top of page and previous page: Views of scrutineering at Performance Exhaust in Ringwood.





little more interesting by including the road along the dam wall of the Waranga Basin, but the relevant authorities were not as excited by the prospect as we were.

The forests of Whroo south of Rushworth have tested crews in 1959, 1963, 1969, 1972 BPs, and many other local events, but the lovely little forest just north of the town with its maze of tracks has never been used before to our knowledge. Only 1.7 km of the maze had to be negotiated to enter Rushworth from the north. Rawson/Smith made it on time, with Cuthbert/Smalley, Officer/Officer, Wallis/Nicholas and Knight/Knight 1.

26 cleaned the 52 km run north to Simmie before a lunch and service break in Echuca.

34 cleaned the cruise across featureless terrain past a couple of isolated piggeries, skirting Patho, Patho West and Patho

Siding hence the section name Pathos, which also describes the power to evoke pity and compassion, something the organisers had exhibited lots of up to that point. The early and late parts of this section were shared with the 1971 BP in leaving Echuca and edging Kow Swamp on the way to Gunbower. Richards/Crook and Kaitler/Blum managed to confuse themselves for a while though.

A 47 km signpost drop off route chart through Gunbower Forest to a passage with BP stalwarts John Emery and Ian Home, left crews 2.2 km short of Ian and Peter Fulton's control at Koondrook. Cuthbert/Smalley found the hard to see track along Gunbower creek quickest to drop only 1, to Harper/Snooks 2, Officers 3, and Rawson/Smith 4. Seven crews terminated the route chart early and missed the passage, while 11 crews gave up and WDeD the control. The Norman/Ward Peugeot clutch →



Above: Peter Arundel/Michael Verge at Merrinee South on the edge of Sunset Country. The ute was retired on section 40 with Alternator failure.

## The beaute BP Ute

by Peter Arundel

I entered this event at the request of Michael Verge, his overseas trip was cancelled so he approached me to navigate. Usually he navigates for my brother Michael. We decided to take the 1968 Ford XT Ute which was still in Alice Springs from a previous trip up to the Gulf. After driving the car home from Alice it was time to prepare the car which comprised of fitting an esky into the back and some driving lights up front. Job done.

I was told by some others entrants that this was a navigational event and not a race, so the ute would be fine. I was soon to find out that this was not the case and flying through the forests with no roll cage a lap sash seatbelt and drum brakes was interesting to say the least.

On the second day after a rather late night with 2 hours sleep Michael navigated well and the old ute enjoyed the rolling farm country. Whilst having dinner at Kerang we checked the score sheet and to our surprise we were running second on the day. That made us forget about how tired we were!

I think the highlight of the trip was on the last day during the third stage when we came around a corner and noticed a long stretch of deep sand with cars bogged everywhere. With a quick change from third to second on the three speed column change we were into it, steering around all the fancy rally cars, with the engine pinging its head off we pulled up the last hill passing the tow vehicle and giggled like school kids to the next check point.

The best thing about this type of event is the personal challenge of 5 hours sleep over 3 nights and two days of having to fix any problems along the way and to concentrate and get the navigation right. Looking forward to the next BP Rally.

- Peter

finally cried enough. If they start the event noisy it does not bode well.

The day ended with a tight 36 km cruise into just north of Kerang at Bob and Marg Phillips, via Capels Crossing, which was a control in the 1969 BP, then across the Loddon River for an interesting run along the levee banks also used in 1963. Harper/Snooks, Officers, Burn/Dunbar, Batten/Johnson cleaned with Rawson/Smith, Bashford/Daniel, Morris/Morris, Kaitler/Blum down 1. Ten crews, including some of the more fancied crews, either could not find the levee bank road or forgot to look for the simple "How many "O"s in sign on left before bridge?" observation.

A fine soup and roast dinner was provided by the Kerang race Club and Kerang Rotary at the pleasant grassy racecourse facility. The local classic car club made an outing of it to join up with some of less elderly autos in the event. One of the catering team, Leigh Guest kindly opened his workshop to get Danny Murphy's Lada back into

the event, even if it meant cutting to Mildura to give navigator Kevin an early night. Mike Batten's children were tag-teaming as service crew. Son Paul came on board here and had trouble coming to grips with this old form of rallying where crews roamed across the countryside without the need for closed roads.

A number of crews recovered well from earlier disappointments to record a good daylight division. Best on Division 2 were:

<i>Officer/Officer</i>	33
<i>Allright/Rainbow</i>	33
<i>Burn/Dunbar</i>	36
<i>Rawson/Smith</i>	38
<i>Canny/Davies</i>	39
<i>Garth/Garth</i>	43

Outright best up to this point were:

<i>Officer/Officer</i>	50
<i>Rawson/Smith</i>	54
<i>Burn/Dunbar</i>	55
<i>Ashton/Nixon</i>	61

<i>Conway/Cole</i>	79
<i>Upton/Laidlay</i>	80

### Division Three

A transport up the highway to Lake Boga, home of a Catalina, a treasured aircraft to the Runnalls family, allowed extra valuable plotting time. Eight cleaned the 53 km cruise via Gowanford to enter Waitchie along 10 km of railway access track. Gowanford was visited by the 1964 and 1973 BPs. In 1964 the observation required at Gowanford was: Which oil company's depot located here? The only thing at Gowanford these days is the silo, with no sign of any oil company depot.

Waitchie was also a control in 1964, but they did not arrive by train line that time.

From there a 37 km tour crossed a portion of the large salt pan Lake Wahpool which could have presented problems if damp. It presented few problems now and also in the 1970

## The Tortoise and the Hare

I have to keep remembering that kids story – The Tortoise and the Hare. My navigator, son Tim, keeps reminding me. Once again we front up to the assembly for the start. Cars are coming off trailers. Support crews fuss over their charges. We check out the cars – roll cages, rally tyres, serious looking machinery, cars that look like they are meant to RALLY. In 1980 the 504 was our brand new family car. Since then it has gone through three sons as "their" first car. The last one put in a fuel injected motor and made some other suspension changes but really the car is pretty standard. Well if you are going to spend a few days in the car you want some comfort don't you? Carpets, Peugeot seats. Michelin road tyres have served us well in the past so we trust them again – can't afford a set of "real" tyres for the amount we do. Not sure about the future now that we cannot get the "Michies" any more but we will worry about that next time. Next time? Is there a "next time"?

Search for coffee at the RACV Club – we had arrived early this time. In 2010 we were running very late for the assembly after getting confused on the Melbourne freeways. Staff were very kind assuring us that if we were not Members we could not get coffee in the bar and walked with us (escorting us?) to the Ballroom that HRA was using. There are some advantages of being car number 38 – you can watch a lot of other cars leave but that only gets me nervous! Why on earth are we doing this??? We are completely out of our depth. Although this is now our forth Old BP we have only entered a few other rallies. Rallying was always a dream for me as a kid but it just did not happen. A friend, Gary Hawkins, did a fair bit in the late sixties running a Mini, an Austin 1800, even a big old Austin (an A90??) and then a Cooper S. It always had me dreaming. I was doubtful about entering this year but Tim was very keen making sure the entry was in! It really is good for some father- son team

building and despite being very tired by the end and down the back of the field it is great fun. It must be if we are back again for the start.

Healesville is a great place to start and we feel as though we are into the action very quickly instead of having a longish drive to Gippsland. Growing up in Melbourne I used to travel out through this area regularly however Ross Runnalls always manages to find roads I have not travelled before! Perhaps that is part of the fun of the event. Really enjoyed the sealed road run into Jamieson but found it difficult to keep up a balance of speed and smooth driving. Tim lives in Mansfield now so we again should know the area a bit. Arrive at the BP station for fuel and a Police car arrives. Tim knows the Officer and does a fair bit of "Public Relations" for HRA – the officer had been called out for reported "hoons" on the road. All was good.

We have another son living in Benalla. I know it takes 45 minutes between the towns however on that night it took a couple of hours using our late running time. What happened navigator?? It can't be the drivers fault for being too slow.

In our first BP we were out of late running time near Nhill and in that event we thought that we might as well pack up and go home at that stage because we were out of the event. We kept going however. Having the late running time limited to each Division as in this event is much better for us and others at the back of the field.

Three AM to bed, up again early for breakfast and to find out the starting times. No time to catch up on sleep. Again, living in northern Victoria, we should know the area for the daylight run for Division 2. In Toolamba we drive past Rob and Pam Knight's home where we had Scrutiny. Off to Echuca and in towards Cohuna. I live in Cohuna so it really was home turf. I wonder how others managed this section as the Instructions just said "travel for 44.9 km using the following signposted roads". There was no indication about how far you had to travel before



Above: Mike Maddock/Ross Kelly in 1970. Ross was back 43 years later, navigating for Stephen Coutts-Smith. Photo by Joe Collins.

The route wound around the boundary of the old one mile square Eureka Timber Reserve, where if one turned a 100m too soon, the track wound back to the bitumen. Three gave up at this and W/Ded. Fortunately the six gates in the last 1 km of the section were opened and closed by the organisers. Officers cleaned, to Upton/Laidlay, Ashton/Nixon 1, Rawson/Smith 2, Burn/Dunbar, Batten/Johnson, Coutts-Smith/Kelly 3. Two lots of radar picked up those trying to make up time past houses. The Shepherd's Peugeot was fine but Tim's stomach cried enough, and they retired here.

Crews could relax a little on the 76 km cruise through Leitpar to Ouyen, where one observation requiring "Smith" was followed by another with "Jones", and 10 cleaned including Arundel/Verge going well in the Falcon Ute and the erratic Spedding/Hunt.

A service beak was had at the Ouyen United, ex BP. Up the road a short distance and it was back into it from

Kiamal to Trinita, which was also a control in 1970, on an easy section replacing the originally intended run across the Raak Plain on Glencoe Station. The very dry summer has left sheep in poor condition and in a vulnerable state for lambing, so we kept away. Seven cleaned. To stay on North West Rd it was necessary to deviate slightly onto a laneway rather than follow the main track through an unmarked gateway up to a shed where the normally absentee farmer was just about to head to bed after a long day sowing. He was getting a bit upset with the hoons wheeling around and bidding a hasty retreat until he stopped one car and was surprised to find it was his old mate Peter Arundel, who was able to explain what was going on.

Ten crews cleaned and five dropped 1 on the gentle 36 km section generally following the Old Calder Highway to north of Hattah. It must have taken ages to get from Mildura to Melbourne when that was the highway. Healslip →

BP, which must have been a dry year as well. On the bumpy track through the saltbush around the edge of the lake, up to six sets of lights could be observed bouncing around the night sky from Rob Richards' passage control. One set of stationary lights before the passage was the Cuthbert/Smalley Datsun stopped with fuel problems. The bumpy track must have dislodged some crud off the bottom of the fuel tank.

getting to the next sign post and I can imagine crews worrying if they had missed a sign post. Loved the section on Gunbower Island as this is where I collect fire wood and go for some "bush time". Wished I had known we were going to be so close to Cohuna so that I could have tried to get some spectators out. And then into Kerang for tea. The Kerang Rotary Club was keen to ensure crews had "real country hospitality" and succeeded. I was pleased to see that members of the Kerang Car Club came to check us out. And then it was off to the Mallee.

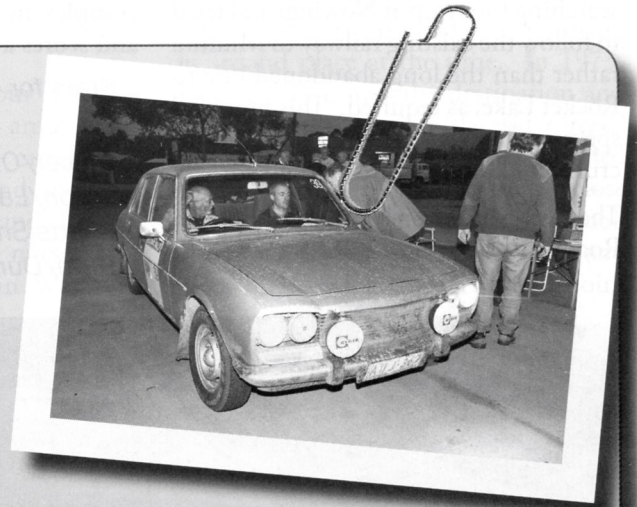
I lived in Murrayville in 1970 and knew that you could drive across the Sunset Country to Mildura but never did it. Last year with a group from PCCV we travelled this same route from the north into Pink Lakes. This was the SANDY section for 2013. We got to the long uphill section to find cars waiting and cars stuck. I was very glad that a 4wd was there to clear the track but it was very slow work and blew our late running time once again – but it was great fun coming through the desert.

And it was on to Ballarat. Really enjoyed the run over and off Mt Cole – we really had to keep working right to the end.

The result? Remember that Tortoise and Hare? We had good advice a few years ago that the first goal in an event like this is to finish. We did. We came 20<sup>th</sup> out of 45 starters (definitely sounds better than saying out of the finishers). Would we go again – YES! Why? We were sitting in Jeparit having tea. I was asked if we were going in the Classic Outback in 2014. The answer - No, out of my class and no suitable car. I was then offered a car. That is the sort of camaraderie the Old BP builds. It is a great achievement.

Ross and his team have my heartfelt thanks for providing an event like this that has got me involved. And Graham Wallis fired up my dreams with the Redex Rerun in 2003. Thank you to you both.

- Glenn Hall, Car 38 the Grey 504





Lane on the way up to Via 2 was the only part of the 2013 route shared with the 2008 and 2010 Old BP's.

The final 69 km tour for the night headed back out west initially across the Marwood family's cropping and grazing country, taking in Ironclad Tank, which caused so much angst in 2010. Although at night this time it presented far less problems, although Ashton/Nixon having little idea where they were sought assurance from a roo shooter out at work. Some crews went searching for a trap at Nowingi and tried to follow the existing railway to Mildura rather than the long abandoned one to Rocket Lake, as required. This provided spectator interest. After Nowingi, it was cruising like conditions to the end.

The start control on the Carwarp South Road was the end of a Raak section in

1970, where Steve Hollowood's father in-law Norm, of Fritter/Dorsman streeeted the field dropping only 1, and the youthful Maddock/Kelly registered an out of character WD. This time Officers lead the way on 3, to Coutts-Smith/Kelly, making amends and learning from mistakes made 43 years ago, on 5, Conway/Cole, Upton/Laidlay 6.

It was after midnight before the first cars wandered into the Werrimull Magpies clubrooms at the Aerodrome Ovals complex in Mildura, where a nightcap and scores awaited.

*Stars for Division 3 were:*

Officer/Officer	5
Upton/Laidlay	7
Coutts-Smith/Kelly	15
Burn/Dunbar	25

Rawson/Smith	26
Harper/Snooks	33
Thompson/Floyd	34

P. Arundel/Verge and McKinnon/Ellis also performed with distinction down the field dropping 72

*Outright situation up to control 27 was:*

Officer/Officer	55
Rawson/Smith	80
Burn/Dunbar	80
Upton/Laidlay	80
Conway/Cole	122
Bashford/Daniel	130
Harper/Snooks	142

**Division Four**

**36** of the 43 starters fronted up to the three amigos at the start of the division after another pleasant breakfast in equally pleasant Sunraysia weather. The Wallis/Nicholas Peugeot 205 was fine, but something about it was not agreeing with the normally resolute stomach of Phil Nicholas, and so they were heading home off down the highway, via Patchewollock. Murphy/Wilson headed straight to Jeparit, then direct to Ballarat, which would be enough to ensure that they did not end up last, and Danny reckoned he had solved the clutch issue which has been dogging the dogged Lada for some time.

It was out to the edge of town to the Gliding Field, and into it for a 12 km warm up drop off route chart through the Koorlong Bushland Reserve, where the speedy Kaitler/Blum were best on 1, to Conway/Cole, Ward/Pollock,



Some success at least for Dan Murphy/Kevin Wilson (Lada) at Japarit! - They finished 22nd after huge engine problems early in the event, but not losing a sense of humour.



Bashford/Daniel, Richards/Crook and Spedding/Hunt 2.

Then off on a 45 km cruise initially west along the enjoyable snaking 9 km lane of McSwains Rd, then a nice run south through Pirlta and into the driest part of Victoria, receiving less than 300mm annual rainfall, with some diversions along or in the crop beside old easements in the 30,000 acres cropped by the Henschke family. BPs have never ventured here before. Twelve cleaned. Rod Henschke had to tow a few out of a sand drift along a fence line on his property. The Cuthbert truck finally succumbed to their fuel problems, Morris' seized their engine and the Winter/Maurer pair expired from too much digging in the sand. Finding themselves with a fence and trees separating them from a decent gravel road, in possibly their smartest move of the weekend, placed a

triangle on the main road, so Gibbons/Forbes on the correct route stopped and were able to help them get out of their living hell. The Richards/Crook clutch had enough grip to get back out to the highway and home, but not to tackle the Sunset Country. A few wiser crews, some with ailing cars took the long way round from here to Underbool, rather than cross the Sunset.

21 cleaned the very straightforward 54 km cruise down the sandy Underbool Track to control at Birthday Tank in the middle of the Murray Sunset National Park.

A more testing 35 km tour followed along Mt Crozier Track around the edge of the Pink Lakes, out of the Park to a deviation around the edge of Mamengorook Bushland Reserve to control. A couple missed the deviation and blundered in WD. The

Officers and Bashford/Daniel sailed through the sand to drop 1, to Harper/Snooks, Upton/Laidlay, Rawson/Smith 3. Many either got stuck in the sand on the approach to Mt Crozier, or were held up by someone else stuck. Recovery Barry Collins and Bruce Halls worked through the queue all the while entertaining the Parks Ranger who was not told about the event by his colleagues. Allright/Rainbow gave up at this point after two hours being bogged. Burn/Dunbar limped out of the Sunset with a very sick gearbox and were forced to retire after a fine run, being in second place at the time. In 1973, Birthday Tank was the destination and Davis/Haas, Bond/Smith and Creed/Wunderlich in the Range Rover sailed through the sand of Mt Crozier to lose only 2, while McPherson/Thomas took 84, Edmonds/R. Muldoon 88 and Strownix/Boyd 94 as well as the 5 point



*Skirting alongside the wheatfields south of Pirlta in Division 4*



*A sad end for Burns/Dunbar - broken gearbox at Patchewollock after a fantastic run saw them in with a great chance of winning.*

penalty ignominy for each of resorting to Recovery vehicle assistance.

13 cleaned the easy 68 km cruise to Patchewollock. Only two did time, while five were either out of late time or WD cutting the course.

The last two old BPs made great use of the sandy tracks in reserves and on farms in this area, so this time we responded to the locals urging us to stop in Patchy. While the community run store did not

sell 98 octane, the ladies put on a great lunch spread in the hall opposite

16 cleaned the easy 38 km cruise through Turriff West to a control just west of Wathe. Wathe was the location of an infamous BP control. How a shed and a pile of junk in a clump of trees in the middle of nowhere warrants a name and location on Broadbents is a wonder. In 1965 the entire field got bogged strewn across sandy wheat

paddocks in the middle of the night, trying to enter Wathe from the SW. The lowest points lost, found another way, but that does not always work. Decades of cropping have removed any signs of a track if there was ever one to start with. We intended to enter Wathe from the North in 2008, but a week before the event the farmer converted the channel bank track we wanted to use into cultivated wheat paddock, forcing a hasty redirection. This is as close as we

*A Classic BP Rally Scene if ever there was one. Cars arrive at a remote location, mentioned only on an old Broadbents map, queue up and have a chat through the window.*

*In this case we are at Albacutya, entered from the North.*



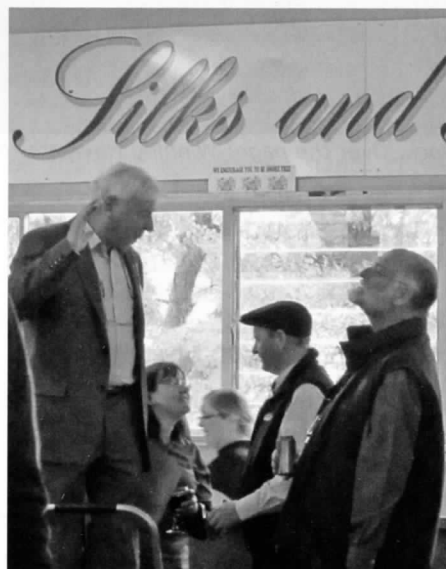


Above: Division break at Japarit after the run around Lake Hindmarsh.

Below: Not often that Big George (Davidson) has to look up to someone! Phil Emery did a masterful job of hosting the post BP rally luncheon. Jenny Cole and Steuart Snooks provide a nice counter point in the background while discussing the BP Rally that might have been won.

can get to Wathe now. Spedding/Hunt lost time finishing installing new rear shocks hastily purchased in Mildura while bypassing the Sunset.

Six cleaned the 65 km cruise through Burroin and Nypo, which were also vias in the 1964 BP, avoiding the Dattuck sandhills across to and along the edge of Lake Albacutya in Wyperfeld National Park to control at Albacutya from the north. The above commentary was also provided to crews as section background. Many took it very literally and launched over the sand dune bordering the lake, looking for an edge that was not there, as the lake has been dry since 1974, and becoming stuck on sandy tracks normally traversed by 4WD and dirt bikes. What was required was to heed Navigator Guide Event Specific Rule 10 on unmapped sections and "...When confronted with a choice take the direction closest to control..." Allan/



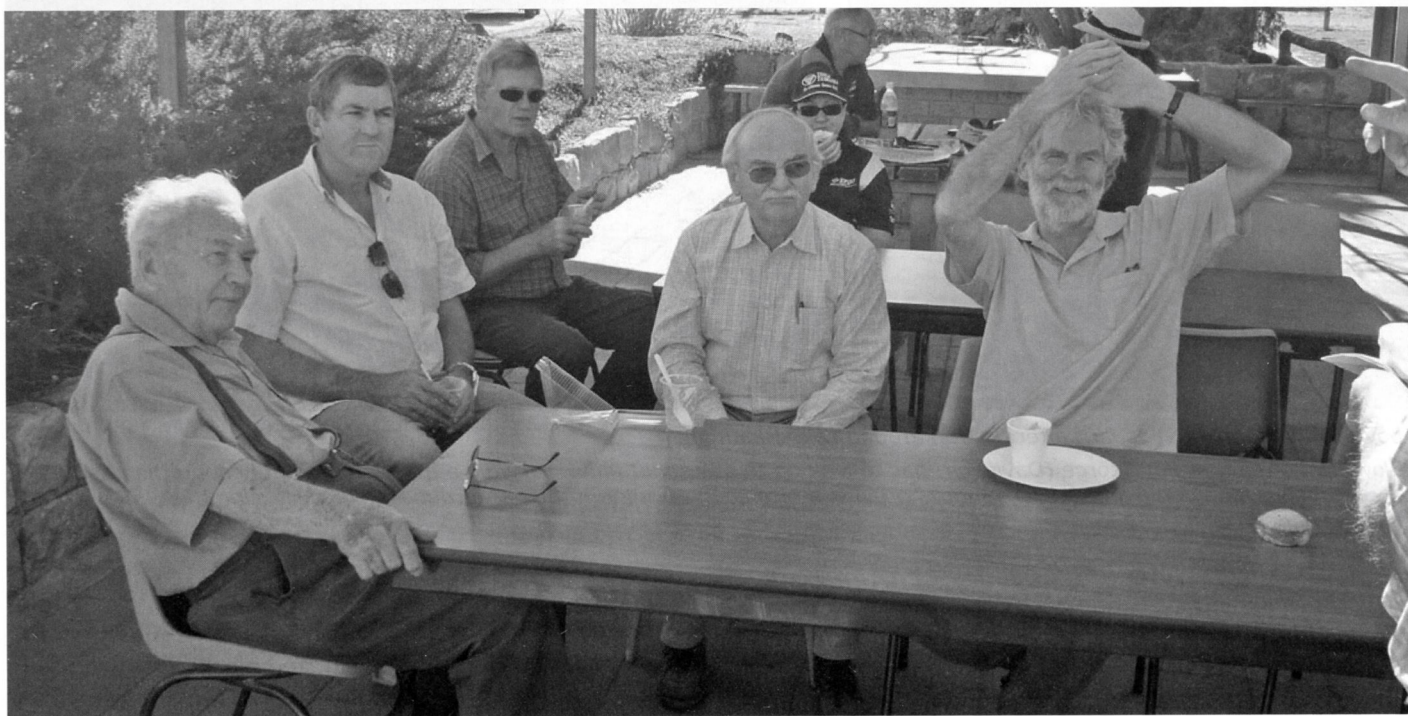
Davidson got stuck off the course, but Recovery was able to find and extract them, but they retired anyway, way out of late time.

The toughest section for the Division was left until last, a 55 km traverse

winding in out and across Outlet Creek, which links Lakes Albacutya and Hindmarsh, and finishing with a scenic run alongside Lake Hindmarsh, which does have water. Pella was shown in different locations on each of the maps used, and both were visited. At the second Pella, the denomination of the Lutheran church, famous for its giant 1885 Fuller pipe organ, was required as an Observation. The church was built in 1911. The organ was transferred from a South Melbourne church quite recently in 1970. Pella has Lutheran origins, being a remote town located in the Judean Mountains, where a small group of believers sought refuge during a revolt and siege of Jerusalem in A.D. 66. Consequently Pella Lutheran churches are scattered across the USA. Best here were McKenzie/McKenzie recovering from a bogging on the previous section, down 7, Rawson/Smith 8, Officer/officer 9,



Firth/Kilfoyle/Thomas, winners of the 1963 BP Rally en-route to Omeo. Photo by Laurie Thomas.



BP elders and some less elderly at Patchewallock. Over the page: Winning Navigator Mark Laidlay, the Late Don Thomson and a relieved looking Ross Runnalls.

Coutts-Smith/Kelly 11. On the last occasion that crews blundered across Outlet Creek looking for Via 4, many came across a ramshackle farmhouse, and sought assistance from two bearded chaps, who from the accounts received, were possessed of distinctive dentistry. Dazza and Don are renowned locally for their capacity to put away slabs of beer. From control 37 it was a short drive into a welcome meal break at the Jeparit Showgrounds, coinciding with the conclusion of a big footy match. The Rainbow-Jeparit Football Netball Club put on a fine roast meal. A lapse in local communication meant that there were delays in opening up the only fuel outlet in town.

*Top performers for Division 4 were:*

Officer/Officer	13
Harper/Snooks	23
Rawson/Smith	24
Upton/Laidlay	33
Conway/Cole	34
McKenzie/McKenzie	38

*The overall leaders up to control 38 were:*

Officer/Officer	68
Rawson/Smith	104
Upton/Laidlay	120
Conway/Cole	156

Harper/Snooks	165
Bashford/Daniel	187

**Division Five**

**29** crews fronted to start the final division, glad to see the sand of the Mallee behind them and the welcome logical grid pattern roads of the Wimmera ahead of them made a little more interesting by night.

13 cleaned the 92 km cruise through Yarriambiack Creek wheat country in a series of 27 southerly and easterly steps to a control just west of Murtoa. A few crew's brains were still addled from the last division and took more than 30 minutes, chewing up late time that would be needed later.

A 24 km tour dropped crews off in the middle of the Barrabool Reserve, from where they had a number of choices in order to find a passage control on the east side, then find unmapped roads to enter control in the Marma forest between the Wimmera River and Mt William Creek. Most careful were Upton/Laidlay 6, McKenzies 7, Knights, Spedding/Hunt 9, Cooper/Warner 10. 14 missed or Wded the passage. Compass was critical here, so it did not help the Officers that they thought that their compass was faulty at this time, and lost 42 minutes finding

control. Ward/Pollock retired here as they had run out of inflated tyres. Peter Arundel/Verge fine run in the Falcon ute came to an end here with alternator problems. Brother Michael Arundel/Murphy went out in sympathy, and they were tired. The 1960 BP passed through Marma, but stuck to the main road, and the final cancelled division of the very wet 2004 Old BP was planned to use the Barrabool Reserve, hence the Knight's proficiency on this section, as directors of that event.

There was to be no let up. The next 61 km started easy then used some mapped roads through private property, involving a 40 km/h quiet zone through a lambing paddock, and a hard to see gated turn off in order to get to the magnificent drive alongside the Wimmera River. Unfortunately the turn off this road was overgrown, so much effort was required to get to the passage correctly. 14 did not, before setting off again to reach the control north of Stawell, which was in the same location, and with same direction of entry as the 1964 BP, when it was reported that "Rally Director, D.K. Thomson, flanked by his assistant "foxes", was seen dancing a jig of pure joy on the last control into Stawell, where a constant procession of cars passed, repassed, turned, studied their maps again in an attempt to find the correct route into control. Even the novice competitors

had become familiar faces by the time they finished cruising backwards and forwards on the two alternative tracks. Ray Christie, in the VW "Antarctica 1", came back from one trip into the scrub in such a hurry that he flattened a fence after hitting a stretch of ball-bearing gravel. Six crews managed to clean, including Laurie Graham/Bruce Ford VW, Harry Firth/Frank Kilfoyle Cortina GT, Tony Theiler/AJ Denham VW and Leo Squires/Jack Wilson EH Holden. Crews were informed that it was not anticipated that they would find it anywhere near as difficult this time, but many did not believe this and spent time looking for other than the direct way to control, or as five crews did and WD. The most alert to find the overgrown turn off and go direct to control were Ellis/Sietsma 6, then Conway/Cole, Knight/Knight 8, McKenzies 10.

A service break at Stawell BP was an opportunity to pick up a further handy 30 minutes late time before the final challenge through Mt Cole. The Garths, Barry/Johnstone and Spedding/Hunt did not think 30 minutes would be enough and headed direct to Ballarat.

A 53 km cruise on good flowing shire roads through Dunneworthy Common past Ararat to control at Mt Cole Creek (also visited by the 1959 BP) at the foot

of Ben Nevis, helped restore confidence to battered navigators. Unfortunately crews were not able to take in the grand daytime view of the Mt Cole Ranges and soaring eagles from Telegraph Hill. 11 cleaned. Thompson/Brocklebank and Ellis/Sietsma WDed trying to find the easiest way home while picking up major controls along the way.

A short 34 km over the Mt Cole massif, inexplicably never entered by the original BPs, featured a steep climb up Cowans Tk, then a fang for the driver along the glorious Main Mount Cole Road before a steep descent down Sandersons Rd. Cowans Tk proved too much for the low slung Escort of Harper/Snooks, which clobbered a rock, but did leave a helpful oil trail for following crews. Batten/Johnson made the climb ok, but then immediately found a steeper one and got so precariously stuck, they refused offers of assistance from on the spot recovery assistance crews. Once extracted they broke a drive shaft on the drive to Ballarat and so joined the DNF ranks, as did Canny/Davies with a broken ball-joint. Best though were Rawson/Smith 6, then Conway/Cole, Officers 13, McKenzies, Cooper/Warner 14.

The 14 km drop off route chart to enter the centre of Raglan (last passed through by the BP in 1962) from the north was easier than it looked with

only one way to control requiring a few correct decisions along the way. Upton/Laidlay, Rawson/Smith and the Knights went looking for something more difficult, while Cooper/Warner WDed after going via Chute. Most slick were Conway/Cole, Officers 2, Ashton/Nixon, Mckenzie 3, Douglas/Murphy 4.

And so to the final touring section, another drop off route chart of 18 km through, and titled Waterloo. Crews were told that "There are many ways to control, some a little longer than others, and all pretty rugged. Try and avoid meeting your Waterloo here like Napoleon did. Think of ABBA instead." Only 12 crews reported to this control. Most astute were Upton/Laidlay, Knights 7, Thompson/Floyd 9, Officers 11, Coutts-Smith/Kelly 12. Conway/Cole elected to WD and stay within late time. Kaitler/Blum persisted and made it, but outside late time.

*Notable survivors of the tough final division were:*

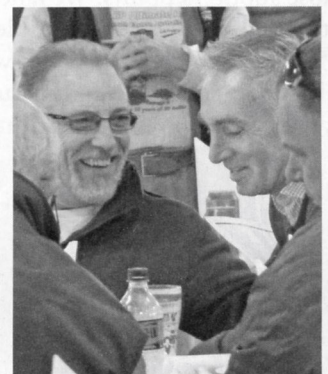
<i>McKenzie/McKenzie</i>	<i>48</i>
<i>Upton/Laidlay</i>	<i>65</i>
<i>Thompson/Floyd</i>	<i>67</i>
<i>Coutts-Smith/Kelly</i>	<i>81</i>
<i>Conway/Cole</i>	<i>109</i>
<i>Cooper/Warner</i>	<i>130</i>

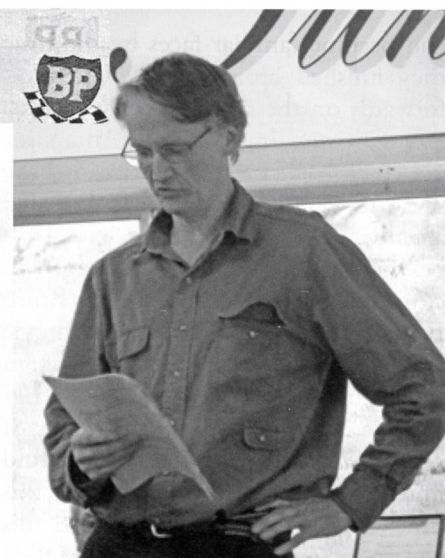
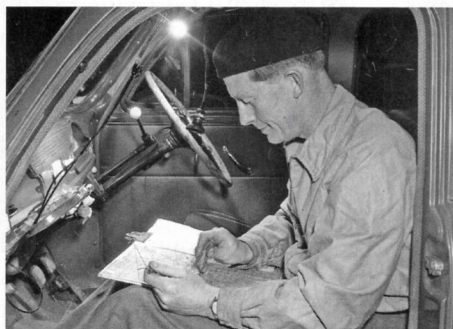
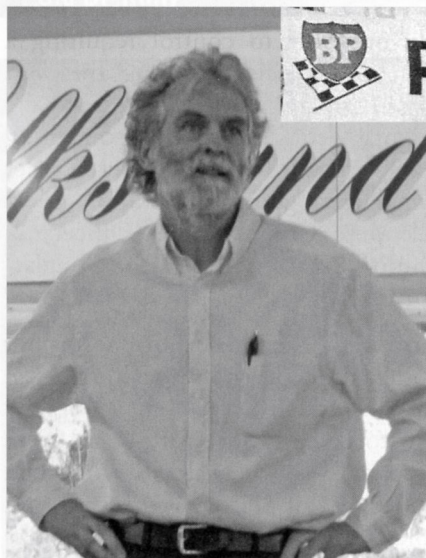
*(getting the hang of strange southern customs)*



*Tim Shepherd points out one of the 1969 Renault 16's (2nd car waiting) that his Father Bruce would have prepared for the Waltons-Renault Rally team.*

*Below: John Rawson and Kim Harper compare stories.*





**The final outright picture and award winners after 47 sections was:**

<b>Upton/Laidlay</b>	<b>185 and first H68</b>
<b>Rawson/Smith</b>	<b>249 and first H81</b>
<b>Officer/Officer</b>	<b>263</b>
<b>Conway/Cole</b>	<b>265 and first budget rally car challenge</b>
<b>McKenzie/McKenzie</b>	<b>270 and first PRC</b>
<b>Thompson/Floyd</b>	<b>302</b>
<b>Coutts-Smith/Kelly</b>	<b>340</b>
<b>Ashton/Nixon</b>	<b>514</b>
<b>Bashford/Daniel</b>	<b>545</b>
<b>Knight/Knight</b>	<b>704</b>
<i>(after a disastrous Division 1)</i>	

**23rd or last position were Barry/Johnstone Austin 1800 on 3602, just failing to catch Murphy/Wilson on 3541 points lost.**

One of our aims was, as it has been for the last two events, for the winner to lose about 30 points. We failed again on that one. The lowest possible score was 51 points. Given that the winner lost 185 points, all of the top runners had at least one or two disastrous sections,

which is not entirely unexpected over that period of constant driving. We had other aims too, but the main outcome was that we were happy that competitors were generally very happy.

The BP rally was organised for the first nine years by Donald Thomson, who had a clear philosophy for the rally, which is worth being reminded of:

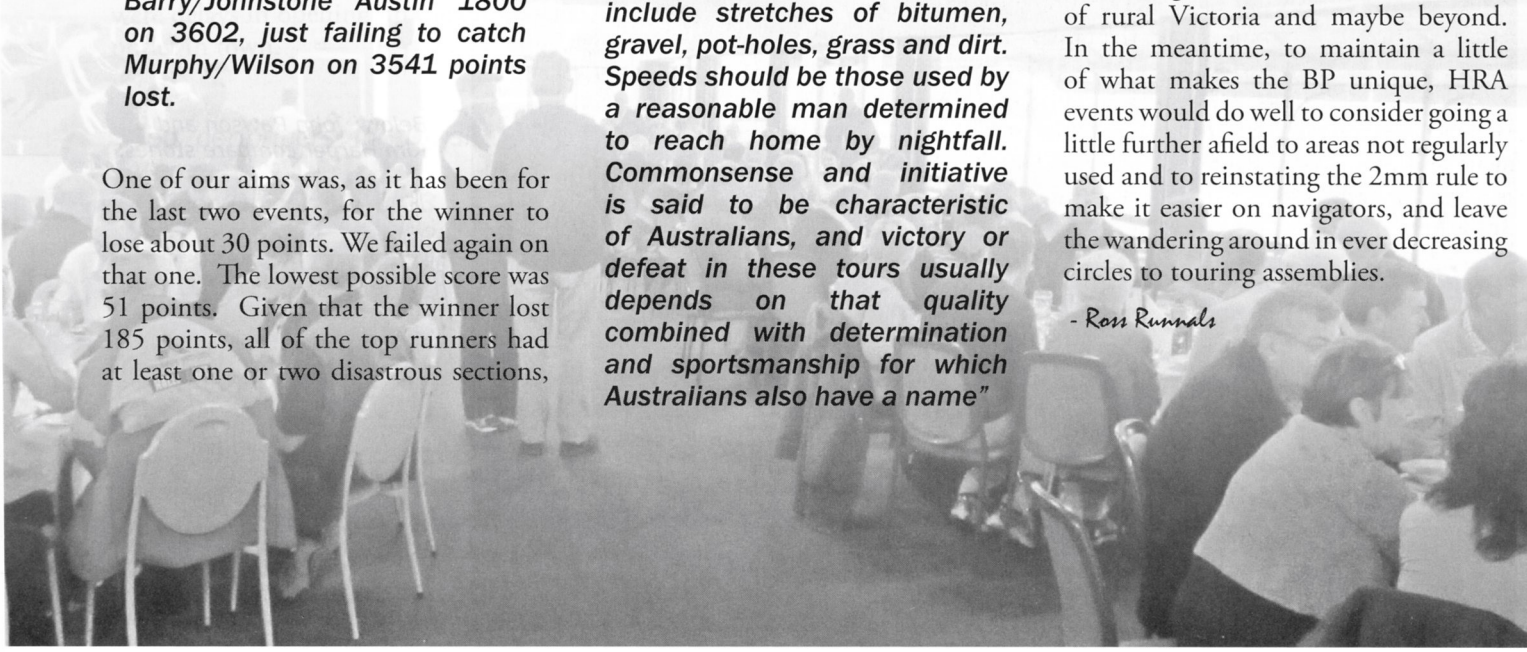
*“Roads should be obscure, certainly; they should even include some which are rough or abandoned: but the best test is to pick a fair average of surfaces such is might generally be encountered by an Australian traveller outback. If you want to find the types of car – and men – who are best suited to the outback areas of our great and pretty empty land, then you must design a representative test. Road surfaces should include stretches of bitumen, gravel, pot-holes, grass and dirt. Speeds should be those used by a reasonable man determined to reach home by nightfall. Commonsense and initiative is said to be characteristic of Australians, and victory or defeat in these tours usually depends on that quality combined with determination and sportsmanship for which Australians also have a name”*

Donald also claimed that every section in every BP he directed was cleaned, but no one ever cleaned an event.

To commit to organising this event, and for it to survive, competitors are trusted to enjoy themselves without racing across the countryside well in excess of the speed limit. As one of the successful drivers put it: “I 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.”

If we do it again, in somewhere between two and five years time, in order to maintain Donald Thomson’s vision we will have to make times slower and continue to enforce reasonable speed limits. We will also have to hope that the desire is still there to show you more interesting roads and tracks in corners of rural Victoria and maybe beyond. In the meantime, to maintain a little of what makes the BP unique, HRA events would do well to consider going a little further afield to areas not regularly used and to reinstating the 2mm rule to make it easier on navigators, and leave the wandering around in ever decreasing circles to touring assemblies.

- Ross Runnals



# A Civilised Old BP, sort of..



Story: Steve Ashton

Photograph: John Douch,

**W**e do Ross' events because they are always epics which test you more than you ever think they will, and you always learn something about you, the car or the countryside you didn't know before.

We do this despite coming from a background which started with route charts in the late 1970's and graduated to pace notes in the 1980's and never looked back. (why would you?) Nevertheless, Ro has always gamely stuck at the map reading thing, just so we can do these events basically. It's not her favourite way of getting around, and the more recent handicaps of bifocals, night time light levels and a balance problem don't help.

We did resolve after the last BP not to work up to 2 hours before the start of the event and have 5 hours sleep the night before, as this proved to be a stupid strategy, surprisingly. So this time we actually knocked off early and got to the start in a reasonable frame of mind and semi organised. Hell, we even had a service crew with a Pajero full of Galant spares for us and the Officers (thanks Tom and Derek!). We were also Team Galant, with Dinta and Kate, and Dave and Ewan McKenzie.

## Division 1 Healesville to Benalla

Anxiety levels were up on the LHS as we transported up to Mt St Leonard. Off onto the Siberia touring section with the stern warnings about speed limits from the Director echoing in my head. How fast do you drive? Flat out up to the speed limit then cruise? Or just rapid touring? I never really decided, well not until we got onto Silvia Creek Rd and I thought I was in the Rally of Melbourne, so it was off down Plantation Road as fast as we go until I got reminded of the speed limit. There was also a grumbling noise coming from the left rear, so I checked the wheel nuts at the control and got 6 turns out

of most of them! I REALLY should have been going slower down that hill.

Then it was off into the rally heaven of the Eildon Warby Road (aka Dry Creek Road for the oldies) where we were dicing with David Burn and Spook and swapped places a few times. The map reading was going suspiciously well, so we started to look for tricks that weren't there and went up one wrong road for a few minutes. And we must have spotted the \$30,000 Saab killing Escort Cross member bending hump in time because nothing really happened to the mighty Galant (any of them actually).

But everything else kind of fell into place and we cruised into Benalla at a respectable time to find we were equal second with our team mates the Officers. Now this for us was a bit of a shock, but we slept very well nevertheless – well a lot better than the last BP where we had about 1 hours sleep on a massage table in some store room. And we must have spotted the \$30,000 Saab killing Escort Cross member bending hump in time because nothing really happened.

## Division 2 Benalla to Kerang

This all went pretty well until we got to section 16 Gunbower Forest. The concept of using the signposted roads (which we had never seen before) didn't quite gell for the in car director. We saw Cleaves Road alright, we just didn't know what to do about it! So we just sailed past it, wondering why on earth we were supposed to just look at the sign. As luck would have it, before long we saw Island Road, where the instruction was to go straight on, which we did. What we didn't know was this was the OTHER end of Island Rd, so we were heading out of town in a very strange direction. This wasted about 5km, so we gave up and went back and actually took Island Bend Rd despite the instruction being straight on, and wouldn't

you know it the next road we see is Rifle Butt Rd, complete with Graeme Wallis turning into it. This was a stroke of luck frankly, but we took it and followed Graeme for a while until we made our next mistake, which also wasted about 5km. Anyway, this wasn't a great section. There were some more exploring on the next section but we still managed to hold onto 4th into Kerang, which was about 20 places better than we were expecting, so this was GOOD!

### Division 3 Kerang to Mildura

This division actually went really well for us, with one tiny problem - which is that despite visiting all the vias correctly, someone forgot to actually look for and write down the information at 3 of them. A bit of a pity really since we were actually there! And by the time this little oversight was realised we were too far away to go back. So that whacked a cool 90 points onto our score, which dropped us to 7th, still not too bad from our pre-event expectation perspective, but 7th is never that good when you've been 2nd! Another civilised arrival time into Mildura, and another civilised nights rest. Thank you Ross!

### Division 4 Mildura to Jeparit

We were going pretty well down through here, when we succumbed to a bit of wanderlust. Heading into the Pink Lakes section, which started out with the traditional BP deep sandy section, going up Mt Crozier. We were prepared with the lowered tyre pressures and a heightened attitude. We caught up to the Coutts-Smith Volvo just before the sand, and were a bit apprehensive about being too close behind the big unit to avoid getting stuck if they did, but it handled the sand with aplomb, so no problems. A quick chat with the Park Ranger on top of Mt Crozier and off down the best road in the event, which was the road from the top of Mt Crozier down past Honeymoon Hut Track. An absolute beauty, flat, smooth and twisty. Can we have this in a pace noted event please Ross? However flushed with success we decided to look at Lake Crosby -wrong! Rushed back, got on the right road, got the control from the right direction, all smiles until Alan Hall asked us what the answer to the question was. Groan -we had omitted to write down yet

another piece of information despite having been there. Alan, being a good sport let us guess the road name before we handed over the card, and with a 50% chance we got it wrong! No more Millionaire for us.

Then came the Wyperfeld section, which really had us lost looking for Via 2, despite being able to see Hopetoun (well we thought it was Hopetoun) in the distance. We were sitting at a T junction working out how to give up when our team mates McKenzies arrived to tell us we were sitting at Via 3! So off we went with them, having a bit of fun down the east side of Lake Albacutya dicing for position. The Mckenzie's got into the lead, and with us close behind drove straight past a large sign saying Soft Sand 4WD only, which I thought at the time was reasonably gung ho - being a natural coward I hung back. I was able to see them subside to the sills in the distance

and had just enough time to drive around in a circle and escape. But being teammates we of course had to go back and help them get out, which took a little while, and combined with our earlier blundering about cost us 31 points.

Sinking fast, as it turned out. Next was Lake Hindmarsh, the maze in Outlet Creek and the dentally challenged chaps giving almost non-directions from their front gate. Friendly though! We lost a lot of time in Outlet Creek, gave up, drove towards Lake Hindmarsh and ended up getting the via by pure luck -it was much further south than either we or the many others crawling round thought. The adventures along Lake Hindmarsh all worked out fine, and we limped into Jeparit with another 37 points lumped onto our score -now down to 12th. At least the car was perfect!

### Division 5 Jeparit to Ballarat

Section 40 was called Marma, and the director cryptically noted that previous BP's had passed through here and stuck to the main road. Well no bloody wonder. The drop off route chart and the helpful note about the use of the compass being critical, would have led you to turn the wrong way at the end of the route chart (well that's our story) and from then on it's a nightmare. We ended up W Ding the passage and bugged off. Unfortunately we bugged off to section 41, Wimmera

“  
...the director  
cryptically noted that  
previous BP's had  
passed through here  
and stuck to the main  
road.”

Well no bloody  
wonder.

”



Gary Hodgskiss scoring the Old BP at Jeparit. Photo by Ross Kelly

River, with a lengthy director's description of how absurdly hard it was in the 1964 BP and how, expressed in the language of a retired bureaucrat, "it is not anticipated that crews will find it anywhere near as difficult this time". Well bullshit. I can't be bothered doing the maths but I reckon that 40 and 41 each had a higher total penalty than any other section. We had another shocker on 43 Dunneworth (according to the scores –can't remember what happened here) and then generally got Mt Cole ok, with a few 17 point turns. The climb up Cowans Track was fairly easy for the Galant, not sure why those Escorts were whining about it. Maybe they had their forest racers set too low.

Ro worked out Raglan very well and despite a small side trip up a corduroy dozer track, we nailed it and only lost 3. Waterloo was kind enough – although the director's sardonic Abba reference didn't seem particularly useful at 2am.

And so to the LCCA, aka the Pub With No Beer. A frosty night in Ballarat without any frosties! Anyway calm was restored after Ross woke his pub owning brother and returned triumphant. He was eventually forgiven. And after all that we ended up 8th, which is our best BP result ever, so pretty happy!

It is almost impossible to appreciate how much work must go into this event, and how much skill, knowledge and experience go into designing and running such a sprawling event with so few resources, relatively speaking. We have indeed been fortunate to be the beneficiaries of this rally munificence on many occasions as competitors, and we can only hope that the restless Runnalls brain will again turn to this kind of problem in time for us to do it again. After all there are 7 places up for grabs!

- Steve.

Below: Steve Ashton (right) holds court at the Old BP Luncheon



Gerry Bashford, Peter Fraser and David McKenzie.



## BOI PERFORMANCE

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