

The JULIAN COLLINS MEMORIAL TOUR



For ten of us, the JNBC Tour started in October 2006, however it really hit me hard the day I picked up Iain and Jane Galloway from the airport, realising that we were only a few days away from the start.

A few days earlier, John Lang and I with the help of Andrew McDougall, had been busy overseeing the arrival of the U.K. cars from the docks and transporting them to the underground car park of the Melbourne RACV Club.

My Speed 25 was gracing the RACV foyer and all was in readiness for the arrival of the overseas contingent and the first dinner together at the Malvernvale Hotel and the meeting at the clubrooms on 3rd October.

The opening dinner was held at the R.A.C.V. Club on 7th October and would set the scene for the rest of the Tour. John Hetherington was M.C. for the night and the dinner was interspersed with a few welcoming speeches and a short talk of what was to come the following day from Andrew and Francis McDougall.

That day was overcast but didn't dampen the enthusiasm to get on the road. The official start was on the Williamstown foreshore where some of the participants were confronted with the long arm of the law in the form of a couple of English policeman, complete with Wolseley 6.90, from the Police Re-enactment Group who proceeded to hand out driving infringements to various notable suspects.

Mike Hirst, who was driving my 12/50 seemed to end up with more than one and David Little was even handcuffed and when the key suddenly went missing it took some detective work to find it and unlock him.

From Willie, we headed down the Geelong Road to Queenscliff where we enjoyed a nice lunch, organised by David & Jan Seath at the Queenscliff Yacht Club. After lunch there was the option of traveling back to Geelong via a scenic route around the Bellarine Peninsula or the more direct route down the Bellarine highway. Most people took the scenic route.

The next day, we were up bright and early for the run to Warrnambool via the Great Ocean Road. As tail end Charlie, I was last away having to deal with a couple of small problems and about ten kms out of Torquay I got the message that the Chris Higgins 12/50 Doctor's Coupe on loan to David and Sally Woodburn had succumbed to head gasket problems and was parked in the car park adjacent to the start of the Great Ocean Road. Ray Newell kindly supplied a spare head gasket and after two hours and much banter and a confrontation with a group of Japanese tourists, we were soon back on the road and enjoying the views.

Warrnambool was a two night stay with many people visiting Port Fairy and the Warrnambool Maritime Museum on their day off. For others it was a chance to fettle cars and inspect the car collection of a local enthusiast. That night we enjoyed a barbecue and the Sound and Light Show at the Maritime Museum.

From Warrnambool we headed to South Australia, and it was at Tower Hill some sixteen kms out of Warrnambool that we encountered our first koala and grazing emus. It was suggested that Sally had gone there beforehand to entice a koala up a gum tree adjacent to the car park, and being an ex vet, she probably did.

Continuing on we passed through the towns of

Macarthur, Merino, Branxholme and Casterton to Penola in the heart of the Coonawarra wine region.

Two nights were spent at Penola with the chance for many to spend the free day either wine tasting or fettling cars. It was at Penola that the Chris Higgins 12/50 Doctor's Coupe finally succumbed to a broken timing gear and was relegated to a factory for collection after the Tour. This was not the only problem. Eric Nicholl who had succumbed to the lurgy that plagued the group, was sent home at Warrnambool, his 14/75 having been lent to Allan and Thelma East for the duration of the Tour. The car unfortunately was not running as well as it could and Allan spent many hours working on it. He and Thelma also contacted the lurgy which hit them both so hard that Sally had to transport them to the Mt. Gambier Hospital for immediate treatment.

This meant that David and Sally Woodburn were able to take on the recalcitrant Nicholl 14/75 with yours truly looking after excess baggage in the Antique Tyre Supplies utility.

Fortunately, Nick Simpson had a distinct passion for ANZAC biscuits which meant I soon had an empty box and a bit more space.

From Penola we took the scenic road via Casterton to Melville Forest where we were given a guided tour of one of the largest shearing sheds in the Western District. We were then subjected to a huge lunch organised by Warrick Hansted and ably assisted by his fellow Melville Forest neighbours at their local hall. To our English friends, this is what good old Aussie country hospitality was all about. From Melville Forest it was a splendid drive to Halls Gap with many stopping on the side of the road to admire the view or stopping in the middle of the road to photograph lizards enjoying themselves in the sunshine.

The meal at Halls Gap did us proud, after which the AOC Chairman, Martin Boothman gave a talk on AOC matters followed by Mike Hirst who spoke on 12/50 Register issues. Questions from the floor provided much comment and it was interesting to see that other car clubs suffer from similar problems relating to enticing younger people into the fold.

The following morning after breakfast, a photo call was instigated with cars placed in order of age. Surprisingly this didn't take much time to organise with Andrew McDougall doing an exceptional job.

From Halls Gap we traveled to Ballarat via Ararat, Avoca and Maryborough. At Maryborough the cars were corralled into a car park adjacent to the Maryborough Information Centre and the local press came to write a story on the Tour and took

some photographs for inclusion in their local newspaper. Featured were John Harvey from the U. K. and Alan McKinnon.

At Ballarat, we had a two night stay and many took the opportunity of visit Sovereign Hill or stayed in bed trying to shake the lurgy which by this stage was rampant.

On the last night, John Lang had organised a dinner at a nearby restaurant to celebrate the 80th anniversary of the production Alvis front wheel drive. He had managed to bribe Tony Cox to come out and be the guest speaker for the night, a job he did exceptionally well. John had produced a magnificent publication on the history of all 12 FWDs that came into the country and for his efforts received a framed original blueprint drawing of a sectioned FWD engine.

From Ballarat, we travelled to Bendigo via Daylesford where we enjoyed morning tea at Jubilee Park just outside Daylesford. From Daylesford, we enjoyed a most spectacular run to Woodend followed by the magnificent views of Hanging Rock as we headed to Paramoor Winery for lunch. There we were entertained by David Webster playing his fiddle and having had lunch and enjoying the sunshine, it was a struggle for many to get going again. The 39km run to Bendigo saw most of us in our motel by mid afternoon.

By this stage of the Tour, many people had fallen by the wayside with the lurgy and decided to potter around the Motel while the fitter members of the group chose to take in Bendigo by tram and or visit to the Central Debra Goldmine.

From Bendigo we proceeded to Echuca arriving in time for lunch at the pub overlooking the historic wharf precinct where we were fortunate to be able to park the cars.

The afternoon was spent enjoying a cruise down the Murray on the paddle steamer "Canberra" before retiring to our motels for a well earned rest before dinner.

Dinner was held at Antonio's Italian Restaurant with Denise Blacket in charge of "Secret Woman's Business" whereby trophies were presented to various males with manly qualities!

From Echuca we headed towards Beechworth via Yarrawonga where we had morning tea on the foreshore of Lake Mulwala. Lunch was at Corowa, the birthplace of Federation where we enjoyed a talk and a look over the Federation museum before heading off once more on the road to Beechworth via Rutherglen. It turned out to be a rather hot day, with many of the 3 litre cars succumbing to overheating problems on the long climb into Beechworth. Not a problem for the 12/50s

however!

Accommodation at Beechworth was the old Beechworth lunatic asylum (very appropriate for Alvis enthusiasts) now a hospitality training school of La Trobe University. Here we were joined by a number of N.S.W. members who had participated on their annual Fairfax run and it was great to catch up with them all at dinner that night.

The following day after breakfast, Nick Simpson gave a very informative talk on common problems associated with Alvises looking at suspension, braking systems, body components and all those things that we tend to forget.

We then walked around the car park studying all the cars. This proved very helpful to a number of people and it was good to see that I'm not the only one who has a front axle resting on bump stops!

After lunch, we proceeded into Beechworth for a re-enactment of the trial of Ned Kelly in the Beechworth courthouse. It proved very amusing with a number of star performances.

From there we headed to the ski fields of Dinner Plain via Milawa and Mt.Beauty. It was a great drive to Dinner Plain with many people stopping to take photographs of the magnificent scenery.

Dinner at Dinner Plain was NOT magnificent, however it was largely forgotten the following morning when we encountered a rather thick covering of snow that had fallen during the night.

This resulted in a number of problems starting some cars. I had to tow start Allan Willingham and the Nicholl 14/75 had a frozen water pump, the only thing turning apart from the starter motor was the generator. An RACV chap who just happened to be there pronounced it dead and following a few frantic phone calls to Eric and then to the RACV, the car was put on a flat top truck and sent back to Melbourne. Whilst waiting for all of this, Richard Tonkin, David and Sally Woodburn and self enjoyed a nice cup of cocoa in one of the ski lodges with a nice roaring fire in the background.

Frank Mornane also suffered from freezing conditions in the Speed 25 and Andrew and Francis McDougall provided the necessary assistance to see the car on the road once more.

Lunch was at Omeo, a splendid repast and all too soon we were back on the road heading to Lakes Entrance. This was the idea, although things didn't go entirely to plan. Peter Holmes had mentioned to me over lunch that his car was running rough so when we hit the next service station, we stopped and had a look at the points or what was left of them. After a bit of a cleanup, it was no better, so after a couple of hours fiddling

around the car we organised for the car to be transported the following morning to an auto electrician in Bairnsdale.

Peter then accompanied me in the ute with all the extra luggage whilst Richard Tonkin transported David and Sally Woodburn and Sue Holmes. It was rather nice having a passenger for a change.

At Lakes Entrance the winner of the limerick competition was announced, and David Woodburn won the prize with the following:

*There was a young lady from Bright
Who's valves were incredibly tight
But with graphite and soap
And much use of the choke
She was able to function all night.*

From Lakes Entrance, Dale Parsell had chosen some delightful Alvis roads and 74kms later we were enjoying morning tea at the Maffra car museum.

While this was all going on, John and Marg Lang and Peter and Sue Holmes were stuck in Bairnsdale waiting for the TA14 to arrive from Omeo. It appeared after lunch, and a couple of hours later it was back on the road with a new set of points. Truly amazing that someone in Bairnsdale had a set of points to suit a TA14 Alvis. Makes one wonder what other bits and pieces to suit Alvises lurk in Bairnsdale?

Our overnight accommodation was at Inverloch, the international contingent staying at the RACV complex and the Aussies in motels in town. Dinner was a do your own thing.

From Inverloch, we travelled to Healesville via Korumburra and Warragul. When nearly at Korumburra, I got a call saying that Chris Storrar had a mechanical problem and would I go back and assist.

Chris had been really hit hard by the lurgy and somehow had managed to forget the idiosyncrasies of his choke set up and as we could get very little spark from both the coil and the magneto, it was decided to send the car back to Melbourne and he and Helen would be transported for the rest of the Tour in their daughter's car.

The problem seemed to be an ignition issue (virtually no spark) and after some fiddling to no avail, we decided to send the car back to Melbourne and Chris and Helen would continue the rest of the Tour in their daughter's car.

Lunch for some was had at Neerim South followed by a very enjoyable drive to Healesville.

The following day, Richard Tonkin had organised a guided tour of Healesville Sanctuary which provided the opportunity for our English visitors to see Australian wildlife close up and alive rather than dead on the side of the road.

The closing dinner was held that night and was a huge success.

A number of awards were presented to the following:

President's Award to Peter and Sue Holmes in the TA14 Woody.

Hard Luck Trophy to Chris Storrar for feeling crook and having trouble with the Speed 20 at Inverloch.

Stage Manager's Award to Bryan and Elin Pooley

RACV. Best U.K. car to David Webster

RACV Best Australian car to Alan McKinnon

Technical Session Award to Nick Simpson

Australian Slang Award to Phil Diffey

Sheer Bloody Helpfulness Award to Alan McKinnon

Golden Spanner Award to Martin Boothman for fixing his crack

The Starting Award to John and Marg Lang

Iain Galloway presented four plaques to Andrew

McDougall, Dale Parsell, John Hetherington and Richard Tonkin for their roles as Stage managers.

Posters of each car on the Tour were then presented to their individual owners. Jes Jarvis then presented the club with a lovely port barrel suitably inscribed for our club rooms. This was very much appreciated.

The last day organised by Richard Tonkin saw us depart from RACV Healesville heading back to Melbourne via Sugarloaf Dam where we enjoyed morning tea, a scrumptious affair put on by Pauline.

From there and with detailed instructions, the international contingent made its way back to the Melbourne RACV Club.

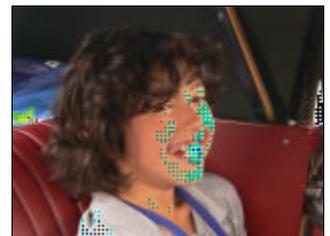
So ended nearly three weeks of Touring around some of the best of Victorian roads. The weather was excellent, the accommodation well above par and the friendships made will last forever.

My thanks to all those who attended and a special thanks to all our international participants for making the journey in these difficult financial times. Without your support, this event would never have happened.

CM



PEOPLE, CARS & PLACES



CELEBRATING 80 YEARS of the PRODUCTION ALVIS FWD



From left to right: chassis 6992, 7231, 7239, 7190 and 7257

There are those who love them and those who hate them and those who choose to ignore them as if a mutation from a company that produced some of the world's most successful and sought after automobiles.

At the celebration, Tony Cox chose to start his presentation, firstly with the question, are front wheel drive owners normal and then with a follow up question, are front wheel drive owners not normal.

From a show of hands to both questions, the jury is still out and likely to remain so.

In looking to punctuate the JNBC Memorial Tour with highlights, the idea of celebrating the 80th Anniversary was hatched as an 80th birthday is very special in the life of a human and why not in the life of a car. The production FWDs were all produced within a 3 or 4 year period and 8 of the 12 that came to Australia, left the factory in 1928.

The idea was to get as many of the FWDs as possible, to Ballarat on the 15th October. Advice to owners that the event was on, provided them with about 12 months notice and there was certainly some activity in the Blacket, Donnan, Gunnell and Lang camps.

With me quietly applying some pressure, Des Donnan was unaware at the time that he was to have had the engine and transmission unit out 4 times before the event. He kept complaining about the noise it made and

it was kindly pointed out to him that he should sit back in his comfortable seat and listen to the music. Bob Blacket ran into some problems that were going to need some parts fabricated and with 2 months to go advised that he would not be able to do it.

Rob & Heather Gunnell set about the major task of completing the FE coupe and having it painted and wired and all the other time consuming "little" jobs. "Effie" had completed just 40km when Rob drove out the gate to face 600km from Sydney to Ballarat. It was important that their FA was also there and Heather drove it single handed as lead car. Both cars did not miss a beat.

Don Bosanquet was faced with a starter motor rebuild just before the event and managed to get it all together in time.

Without the help of my very good friend and club member, Peter Miller, I would never have made the starting blocks. He assembled the engine for me. Later when I told him I had done something stupid and put the brake arms on back the front and the engine would have to come out again, he said he'd be around at 9.00am in the morning, and he was. The car had also done very few kilometers following 7 years off the road and performed well in spite of the driver who was facing a taller crown wheel and pinion, close ratio gears and a better cam.

The restaurant was on the shores of what use to be Lake Wendouree (before the drought) and lent itself to the cars being parked adjacent to an outdoor area at the rear. The night was chilly and several brave souls took their drinks outside to enjoy the night air.

Tongue in cheek, I had several months earlier, asked Tony Cox if he would like to join us in Ballarat and I was delighted when he said he would try to keep the week free. If ever there was someone who is passionate about his interest, it is Tony. Following a week of work, he flew to Australia, hired a car and arrived in Ballarat on the Monday evening. Spent the next day preparing a

presentation for the dinner. Provided us with an enthralling 30 minutes. Drove to Bendigo for the rest day. Left Saturday morning for a meeting with the owner of a Talbot Darraq, of similar credentials to his 8 cylinder FWD project. Flew out early Sunday, to face several days in court as an expert witness. Thanks Tony your dedication to the FWD movement leaves us breathless.

The five cars were pictured near the lake and individually at various other locations.

Thanks to all those who made it possible and to those



1. Chassis # 7329, engine # 7703, car # 12483, body by Vintage Motor garage- Rob Gunnell & Heather Goldsmith
2. Chassis # 6992, engine # 7602, car # 11825, Le Mans body - Rob Gunnell & Heather Goldsmith
3. Chassis # 7190, engine # 7653, car # 11982, special body - Des Donnan
4. Chassis # 7257, engine # 7672, car # 12139, replica Martin & King body - John Lang
5. Chassis # 7231, engine # 7660, car # 12009, Martin & King body - Don Bosanquet



Photography
By
Frances McDougall

