British & European Automobile Club
(Southern Highlands NSW) Inc.
PO Box 1020, Bowral NSW 2576
Website | **http://beac.org.au/**
Email | info@beac.org.au

BEACon December 2021

President: Geoff Wood, email: president@beac.org.au
Secretary: Anne Wood, email: secretary@beac.org.au
Treasurer: Peggy Pollock, email: treasurer@beac.org.au
Membership Registrar: Rob Stenvert, email: registrar@beac.org.au
Historic Plates Registrar: Rob Stenvert, email: registrar@beac.org.au
Webmaster: Rob Turner, email: webmaster@beac.org.au
BEACon Editor: Phil O'Regan, email: editor@beac.org.au
Runs Co-ordinator & Information: Roslyn Bell, email: events@beac.org.au

Berrima River Reserve 3/11/2021

We are back – again!

How good was it to arrive at the Burradoo meeting point and be confronted by a scene which shouted 'lockdown, what lockdown'? The committee were not at all sure just how many members would front up for our first run since June, but in the end some 40 people made it to Berrima. The mix included many well-known faces and a pleasing sprinkling of new members.

The starting grid was the usual pleasure to walk around. The MGs were there in numbers again, with Jaguar, Mini and Healey bolstering the British brigade, whilst a variety of

Mercedes and the VW Beetle ensured the Germans wouldn't be forgotten. It was good to see a couple of nice Italians and a SAAB rounding out the European contingent.

The assembly area was full of the sounds of people greeting friends that they had not seen for nearly five months, and many stories of surviving the lockdown were shared.

The British battalion.

Great to see the Maserati back in the mix.

That yellow is probably the ideal colour for a Bug.

The two tone Healeys really look like the iconic British gentleman’s sports car.

A profile that is so well recognised throughout the world.

One of Alfa's great cars – the GTV.

Two different variations of putting a top on the MGB.

The MGB GT certainly raised the comfort level of the marque.

The MGC GT – two extra cylinders does make a difference.

Reverend Woods is at it again!

So off we went on a route which was a little different from the one we used for our last run to Berrima in March of this year. Circling around through Werai, Exeter and Sutton Forest took us through some very good scenic areas before arriving at our destination. We must thank Ros and Kevin Bell for coming up with the route and indeed organising the whole run. The Berrima River Reserve has good facilities for a group of our size, and in no time everyone had settled in for a lunch in good company.

I was very pleased to see that ex-president Bob Payne made it to the gathering. Bob has been in declining health for some time now, but got to join us with the aid of his brother. Also good to have our webmaster Rob Turner back after a long enforced absence.

They've got a good pavilion at Berrima. Photos: Jenny O'Regan

NO CAMPING

Now, the reason for the three photos above: a couple of years ago, Brian Cox said to me that I should get a photo of the two similar coloured MGB GTs (his and at that time Bob Thomas's) together. I said sure, but somehow never did get a chance to do so again. When Bob put his up for sale, I thought my chance had gone. But then Rob Stenvert bought the car and kept it within the BEAC fold. And on this Berrima run, the chance finally came. So to make up for lost time, I present the three images above.

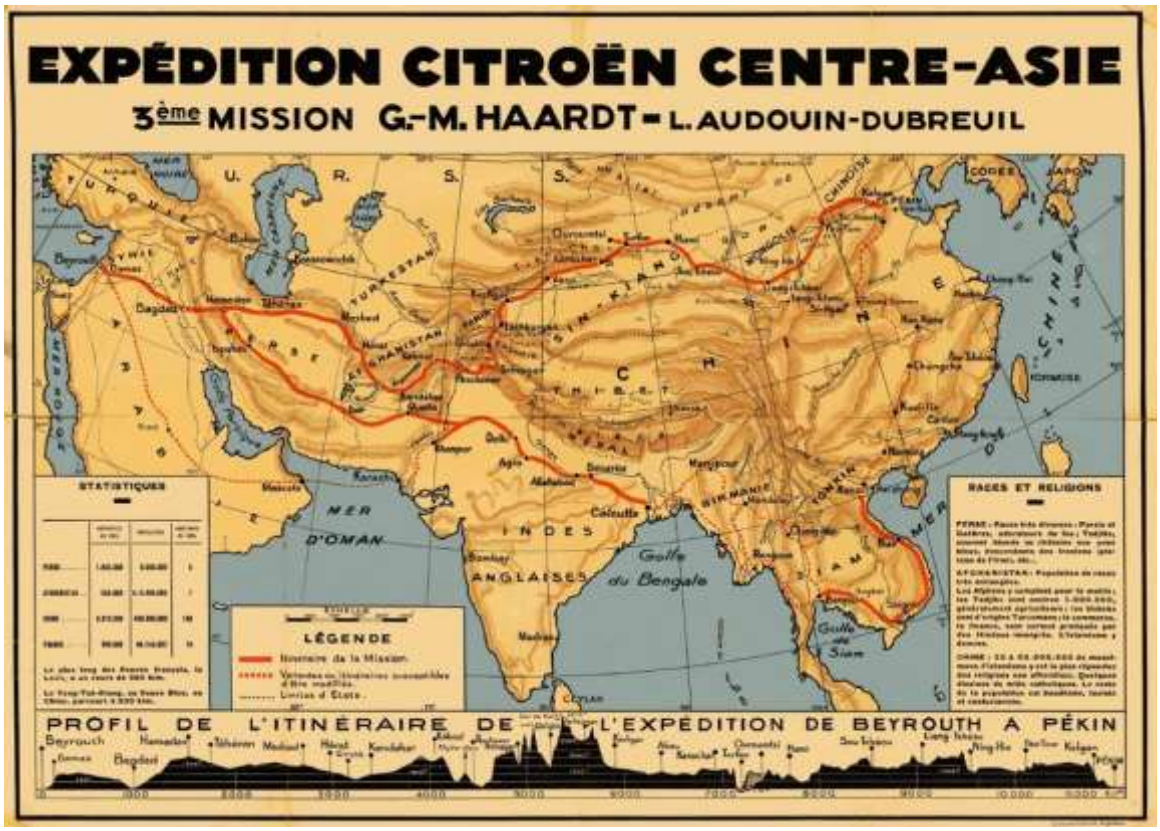
So now BEAC is back, let's hope there will be no more interruptions to our run schedule.

Phil O'

The Yellow Expedition

A little while ago a friend sent me an email containing a fascinating video of an expedition made in the 1930s from Beirut to Beijing in half-track Citroen vehicles. Given my well known enthusiasm for half-track vehicles, I was surprised that I had never heard of the trip, which was a monumental undertaking for its day. I chased it up, and this is what I found.

The Yellow Expedition was the third automobile rally organized by Citroën after having crossed the Sahara and the "Black Cruise" (both in Africa).
It was following the positive results in terms of media impact of the Black Cruise that Citroen decided to follow the Silk Road by car, with the purpose of travelling 13,000km between Beirut and Beijing, crossing most of Asian countries.



A fascinating 1930s map of the expedition (I don't know what the Calcutta arm has to do with the trip).

The Croisère Jaune ('Yellow Cruise') expedition was divided into two groups: the China Group and the Pamir Group.

On 4/4/1931 seven Citroen halftracks autochenille led by Georges-Marie Haardt (Director General of Citroen Factories, who had led the previous two expeditions) departed Beirut in Lebanon heading for Beijing (at that time Peiping) following Marco Polo's route along the Silk Road in part. Seven other halftracks left Tianjin (Tientsin) on the Yellow Sea to meet them. Their P17 half-track vehicle was called the 'Scarabée d'Or III' (Golden Beetle).

1931 Citroën Autochenille P17 Croisière Jaune

Russia had withdrawn permission to drive through Turkmenistan at a late stage, so two of the vehicles were manhandled north into the Karakoram, crossing the Burzil Pass (13,755'), to Mishgar where they were halted by the terrain.

With a snowy mountain pass and frozen rivers, vehicles were not travelling much faster than 1km / h. Once this obstacle was cleared, another difficulty appeared: as a result of a landslide in the mountain, the path had disappeared and had to be retraced. There was no option but to disassemble the half-tracks to make 30-kg packages, transportable by mules. Vehicles could thus be reassembled once the obstacle had been overcome to continue the journey

Looks a bit dodgy to say the least!

The group proceeded on camels and horses to Kashgar (Kashi). They met the others and, despite arrest, bandits, rebels, and crashing through ice at a river crossing, went on to Beijing in the other vehicles, arriving 12/2/1932. The Pamir group took 315 days (4 April 1931 to 12 February 1932) to travel from Beirut to the western gate of Beijing, a distance of 12115 km. Sadly, Georges-Marie Haardt died of pneumonia at the end of the expedition.

The Citroens arrive in Peiping (now Beijing).

These epic expeditions were the final vindication of that eccentric invention, the horseless carriage!

Phil O'

CLUB CALENDAR – December 2021

- **Runs start at 10 am at Cnr. Osborne Road & Moss Vale Road, Burradoo unless otherwise noted.**
- **Please Note: all PDF files and links are available on the club's Events Web Page**

December 2021

Wednesday 1 December 2021 | Robertson Run

- Venue | Robertson Bowling Club, 1 Yarranga Street, Robertson
- Meet at 10am, Cnr Osborne Road & Moss Vale Road, Burradoo
- Download Run Sheet | BEAC Robertson Run PDF
- Organisers | Ros & Kevin Bell | Mobile | 0421 029 900

Sunday 5 December 2021 | Canberra Region Terribly British Day
• Venue | Queanbeyan Park, Lowe & Campbell Streets, Queanbeyan
• Time | From 10 am to 2 pm
• Download Information Flyer | Terribly British Day Flyer 2021 PDF

Wednesday 15 December 2021 | BEAC Christmas Party
• Venue | Robertson Public House & Kitchen, 89 Hoddle Street, Robertson
• Bookings and pre-payment essential, to Events Co-ordinator Ros Bell
• **The venue and BEAC require folk to be fully vaccinated.**
• **Cut-off date for bookings: Wednesday 1st December 2021**
• Download full details | BEAC Christmas Party PDF
• Enquiries, contact | Ros Bell | Mobile | 0439 523 134
Email | events@beac.org.au

Nepean Dam 17/11/2021

Encouraged by the good response to our first run back after the enforced COVID lockdown (picnic at Berrima), we were set to go again with a picnic at Nepean Dam. It is a no-brainer site for us as it has the space and good facilities to cater for our numbers. Except this time numbers were somewhat low. Around 20/25 people made it to the venue. This was attributed, at least partly, to the very busy state many of us find ourselves in since restrictions were eased.

The view down that gorgeous flowing bonnet.

Anyway, the weather cooperated well on the day, so we set off on what turned out to be a long-ish but well thought out run to get to the dam.

Everyone soon settled in to afternoon of good eating, drinking and companionship in the best BEAC style. We again must thank Ros and Kevin for their dedication to bringing us the best runs available under the circumstances!

The morning pow-wow.

Nice to see the Manion 911 out and about again.

The picnic maestro in action again!

These two continue to flock together.

Phil O'

HISTORIC VEHICLE SCHEME

• For members with BEAC Primary Historic Vehicle Registration, on a club run you must keep either a Club BEACon Newsletter or BEAC Events Web Page print-out in the car to justify the use.

HISTORIC CONDITIONAL REGISTRATION - 60 DAY LOG BOOK SCHEME
A reminder that it is a condition of the 60 Day Log Book Scheme to sign off on your RMS Log Sheet **BEFORE** making a non-club run journey. Severe penalties apply.
Members with cars registered under the Historic Vehicle Scheme are expected to attend a minimum of **four** Runs / Events per year.

Additional information covering the Historic Vehicle Registration 60 Day Log Book Scheme can be found on the BEAC website https://www.beac.org.au/historic-vehicle-scheme/historic-vehicle-scheme-60-day-log-book-scheme/

Please note: if you sell a car that is noted on the BEAC Member's Register, please inform our Membership (and Historic Plates) Registrar of the sale. If in doubt whether the car is on the Register, tell him anyway at registrar@beac.org.au (he won't be offended)!

A Classic Experience

Many of you will have noticed that my Mini has been missing from the first two runs that the club has done since restarting after lockdown. Thought you might be interested to find out why.

On 11th August I took the car out for a run with club member Kevin Bell in his Capri. We zipped along the Wombeyan Caves road to the end of the tarmac and back. When I got

home I noticed the Mini was leaking oil somewhat. Took it to AJs in Bowral, and Tony rang me back to say the car had done the engine bearings, the engine would have to come out, and while you are doing that you should replace the clutch etc, etc

.

Engine and drivetrain out.

'I'm on the top of the world, looking down on creation…….' With apologies to The Carpenters.

But the further they went, the worse the story got. Every bearing in the whole setup was shot, right down to the one at the back of the gearbox, which is where Tony thinks the whole trouble may have started. In one case, a bearing had chewed into the engine casing and another casing had to be found (not easy in this day and age). So it ended up to be a total rebuild of the engine and drivetrain!

Before and after engine bay.

Whilst waiting for parts, Tony seized the opportunity to rust treat and respray the engine bay. He also sought out the correct paint for a ’70 Cooper S and applied it to the rebuilt engine. So underneath the bonnet is going to look at least as good as the rest of the car does since AJs detailer gave it a spruce up.

The main consumer of time is the gearbox, which was sent to Sydney to be rebuilt, and word came back that parts were required from the UK to do the job. This surprised me, as I thought that you could still get any part required for the car within Australia. Anyway, as you would imagine, those parts seemed to take a hell of a long time to get here. Then when all seemed right to go, a very unusual problem arose. The guy down in Goulburn who was using a sophisticated technique to clean the gearbox casing so it could be inspected for cracks suddenly went blind! He had to have tests done on his brain to try and find out why this happened. In the meantime further inspection revealed wear on many of the gearbox components and also in the diff, partly due to bad maintenance many years ago. As I write this, it is just over 100 days since the car went in for repairs, and we still don’t know when I’ll get it back.

The cost of the exercise is unknown at this point, but I’m hoping it will not be more than $10,000 (but it could well be). Now initially I was a bit miffed at the expense, but when I thought about it, it’s hard to begrudge it. After all, the car is fifty one years old, and has travelled 250,000 kilometres (and that only if you believe that the 95,000 miles on the odometer when I bought it was genuine and not wound back from somewhere over

100,000). It is basically worn out! For a ten foot long box on ten inch wheels, a rebuild is entirely reasonable at this stage.

Rebuilt and repainted engine waiting for gearbox.

And while I'm at it, there's the matter of the tacho. Again, many of you will remember that after a disastrous (for me) club run last year, when I was stuck at Wingello for hours with ignition problems, I finally bowed to the advice many people were giving me to go to electronic ignition. It was only late in this process that we discovered that my classic Smiths RVI (impulse) tachometer would not work with electronic ignition. I initially decided to leave the tacho in place in the car not working, as I had rarely used it anyway to change gear etc. But when the big rebuild came along, I decided to get one that works with the ignition. I'd heard that you could get a Smiths RVC classic look tacho that did the job, but when I rang the biggest Mini parts place in Oz (that supplied the bits for the big rebuild), I was shocked to be told that they didn't recommend electronic ignition for Minis! After a period of further consultation, they seemed to retreat from this position (seems that it was one guy in particular that says this), and agreed that the Smiths RVC would work OK. So I obtained one, but won't get my greasy mitts on it until my birthday in January.

Old and new tachos.

So hopefully, after the smoke clears (unintended pun) there can't be too much else to cause the car grief. Ready for another 250,000k? Well, a definite maybe!

Phil O'

MOTORING MIRTH

So which car has the worst battery position?

Thank you to all contributors to this edition.