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BEACon May 2024

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Moss Vale Services Club **3/04/2024**

That's the spirit of BEAC.

There was a real feel-good atmosphere evident at the start of this run to Moss Vale Services club. I could feel it as soon as I arrived at the line-up at the Gardens. The weather was spot-on, and it helped to bring out a great variety of classics to cavort in the sunshine. It is my challenge and delight to wander up and down taking photos of the assembly. Notable this time were the three new MINIs lined up together, and the three classic Minis not lined up together – ah well! I did wonder though if the car carrier truck parked right behind us was there to follow us around in case of breakdowns!

A different angle on Owen's new (to him) Rover.

Socialising is underway from the word go.

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Have you noticed that there is a predominant car colour in BEAC?

21319-J

Nice to see the Pug back on a run.

This is the second time I've failed to find out what this rat truck is doing in our line-up.

Photo: Owen Sinden

Photo: Owen Sinden

The run briefing was given by President Geoff, who is making a good recovery after breaking his leg. Off we went, through Moss Vale, Sally's Corner, down the expressway to turn off to Wingello, and back from there via Bundanoon and Exeter to Moss Vale. During the run I was struck several times by the feeling of what a joy it was to be driving the Mini with window down through such gorgeous countryside in perfect weather conditions. Classic motoring at its best!

Photo: Owen Sinden

Three classic Minis (almost) in a line.

The club had set out a large table in the centre of the bistro for us to occupy. I was surprised that there were few other people in the room, so the club must have been glad to see us. The food we ordered proved to be very nice indeed. My bangers and mash was among the best I've ever had (and I've had a fair few of them in my time).

Jen's pumpkin and beetroot salad with salt and pepper squid, and my bangers and mash.

Undoubtedly this was a very successful BEAC run, and we must thank Geoff and Anne Wood for organising it. And for me, seeing them together in the Sprite (Anne driving), both with their BEAC caps on in the sunshine, was the epitome of what BEAC is all about.

Phil O'

Classic British Towing

This is another topic that could fill volumes, but I'm just going to take a (slightly humorous) look at two British classic cars - the Mini (which I know best) and the MGB (which is the dominant marque in our club).

Now most people would think a classic Mini wouldn't be able to tow much, perhaps just a small conventional trailer, but one common rig involves a trailer made from another cut down Mini body (usually painted to match the towing car).

The next step up is a small, usually vintage or retro, caravan. I've not seen an example of this setup in Oz, but I don't go to the large Mini gatherings, so they may well be here.

But I guess if you want to seriously tow something in a Mini, you might go the whole hog, and pick up a conversion such as the one below (love their motto).

When it comes to the MGB, they seem to follow the same pattern as the Mini, though with a 1.8 litre 95 BHP engine, their towing capability is greater than the classic Mini Cooper S with its 1275 cc 76 BHP donk.

Apart from normal trailers, combos featuring a cut down MGB body trailer are to be found (the green example below is from Geelong). But I have never before seen a trailer such as the red one pictured, made from the back end of two MGBs stuck together.

Now again, the next step up is to a caravan, but ones that seem to be somewhat larger than those attached to the Minis (though still retro in style). Some of our MGB owners in BEAC, who have been to national MG gatherings, may have seen such combinations here, but all of the photos I could find of them seem to be in the UK.

Another prime candidate for towing is the boat. In the photo below, the B is towing a small runabout, but should be able to handle a small cabin launch without a problem (though I couldn't find a photo of such a rig).

So, both these classic cars can do a reasonable job as a tow car, but in this day and age I think that most owners would have better vehicles to use for towing operations.

Phil O'

CLUB CALENDAR – May and June 2024

- **Runs start at 10 am from the Botanical Gardens Car Park on the corner of Old South Road and Kangaloon Road, unless otherwise noted.**
- **Please Note: all PDF files and links are available on the club's Events Web Page**

MAY

Wednesday 1st May

Lakeside Country Club
50 Raby Rd, Gledswood Hills
Download run sheet Lakeside Country Club Run
Meet | 10am, Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens car park,
1 Old South Road Bowral – at the roundabout Cnr Kangaloon and Eridge Park Roads
• Contact | Richard Holmes| mob 0428101880

Wednesday 15th May Highlands Hotel Mittagong
Main street, Mittagong
Download run sheet Mittagong Hotel run
Meet | 10am, Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens car park,
1 Old South Road Bowral – at the roundabout Cnr Kangaloon and Eridge Park Roads
Contact | Phil Davies| mob 0418169536

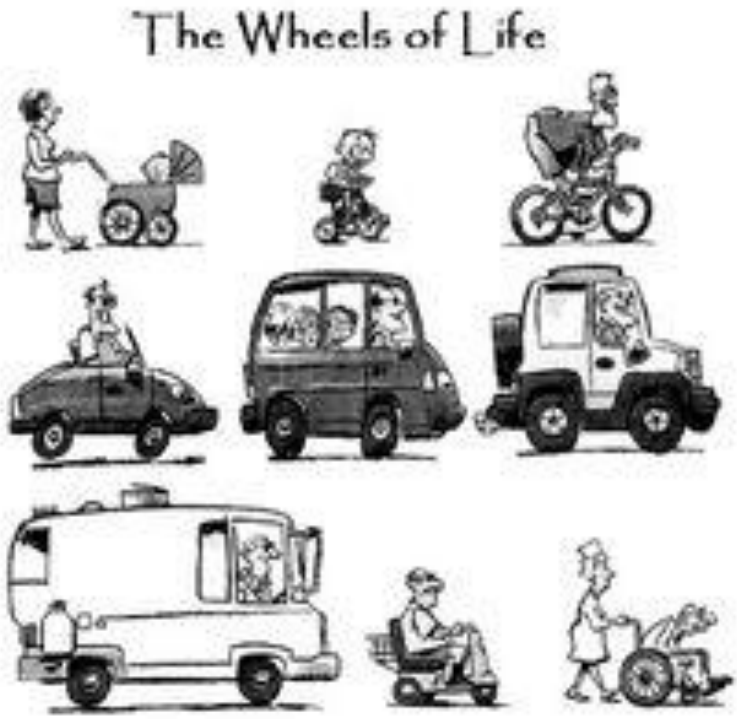
Wednesday 29th May Burrawang Hotel
Hoddle Street, Burrawang
Download run sheet Burrawang hotel run
Meet | 10am, Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens car park,
1 Old South Road Bowral – at the roundabout Cnr Kangaloon and Eridge Park Roads
Contact |Ros and Kevin Bell| mob 0439523134

JUNE

Wednesday 12th June Goulburn Soldiers Club
Market Street, Goulburn
Download run sheet BEAC Run To Goulburn Soldiers Club
Meet | 10am, Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens car park,
1 Old South Road Bowral – at the roundabout Cnr Kangaloon and Eridge Park Roads
• Contact | Richard Holmes| mob 0428101880

Wheels of Life

I've seen this one many times, and still think it is oh-so-true. Mind you though, BEAC members are doing their best to rebel against the sequence to some degree.



Round Australia Trials

There have been eight Round Australia Trials held to date -the 1954 and 1955 Redex Trials, the 1956, 1957 and 1958 Mobilgas Trials, the 1979 Repco Trial, 1995 Mobil Trial and 1998 Playstation Rally. They began in an era when few people had ever attempted to drive around the country, let alone in a competitive event in pretty much standard cars. Most of the early entrants were people in it for the adventure, with little or no sponsorship, but by the time the 70's rolled around, professional teams with considerable backing were taking over. The 1979 event was won by no less than Peter Brock, driving for the Marlboro Holden Dealer Team.

The early events generated great interest from the public, who saw the participants as pioneers and people willing to 'give it a go'. Companies such as radio station 2UE and The Sun newspaper hired light planes to carry their reporters around following the trial as it progressed.

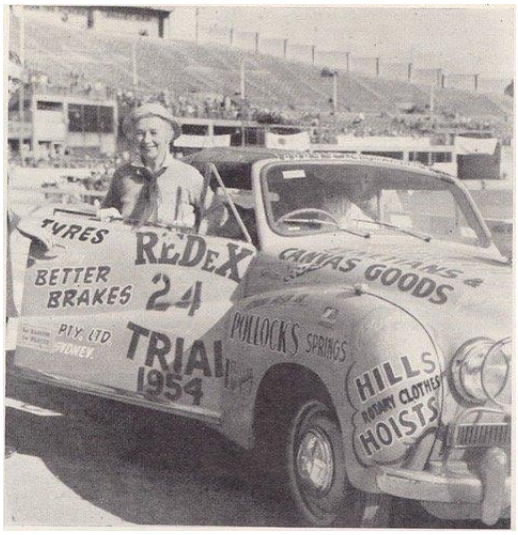
Every one of these trial events could generate enough stories to fill BEACon for a year, so I've chosen to limit this article to just one section of the 1954 event, to try and capture the spirit of the competitors and the immense difficulties that they had to contend with.

1954 Redex

The 1954 REDeX circumnavigated Australia in an anti-clockwise direction with a total distance of almost 10,000 miles. The event attracted a massive field. 120 of the 246 starters reached the finish.

Gelignite Jack Murray with navigator Bill Murray (no relation) in a 1948 Ford 48 were the only crew to drop no points.

Wikipedia's coverage of the event states: 'The **1954 Round Australia Trial**, officially the **Redex Trial** was the second running of the Round Australia Trial. The rally took place between 3 and 20 July 1954 over 9,600 miles (15,400 km), and had a first prize of £2,000. The route was truly "round (mainland) Australia", beginning in Sydney on 3 July 1954, passing through Brisbane, Rockhampton, Mackay, Townsville, Mount Isa, Darwin, Broome, Meekatharra, Madura, Adelaide and Melbourne, finishing at Moore Park on 20 July.



'Grandma' Conway with her A40 Somerset Convertible.

246 cars took part and 127 finished within the times allowed, though many doggedly completed the course in the following week. One forced to drop out was the celebrated radio personality Jack Davey. The winner was a Ford 1948 V8, an ex-taxi dubbed the "Grey Ghost", driven by John Eric "Gelignite Jack" Murray (1907–1983) and navigated by the unrelated Bill Murray, losing no points on the trip. A Peugeot 203 finished second and a FJ

Holden came third. It was on this trial that Murray gained his nickname, from his occasional celebratory detonation of sticks of explosive (often blowing up outback dunnies to announce his arrival in town – Ed.), a custom that delighted some and infuriated others. "Secret" intermediate checkpoints were an innovation this year in an attempt to curb speeding.

The following coverage of just one section of the event is taken from a detailed writeup of the whole trial on the Unique Cars and Parts website https://www.uniquecarsandparts.com.au/redex_1954.

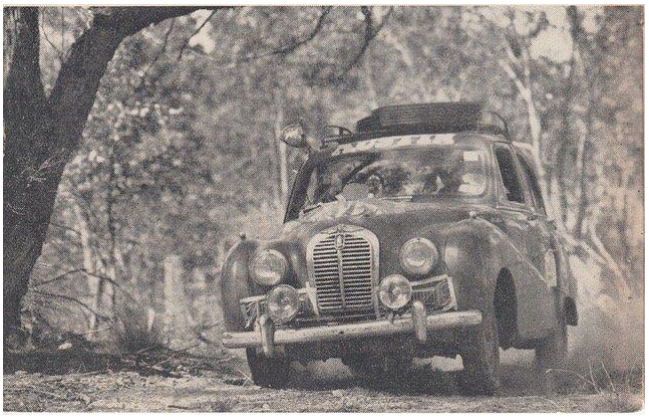
Townsville to Mt Isa

The toughest stretch of the trial lay before the crews as they turned inland for Mt. Isa. The road soon deteriorated to little more than a cleared strip of bushland, and sharp stones, tree stumps and massive potholes began to take their toll. In parts it was a real dust bowl, and visibility was so bad at times that tail-enders had to stop now and again to let the fine dust settle down.

The going proved too tough for many contestants, several of whom turned back to Townsville. There were a number of crashes including a collision with a cow, and two or three cars overturned. Rival crews helped put them back on the road. At least 30 cars got bogged at the difficult Pentland Creek crossing, 150 miles out, and had to be pushed out with the help of local residents. But all this was nothing to the hazards that faced drivers after Cloncurry.

This section, which, eliminated many during the 1953 Redex Trial, had deteriorated even more after big rains during February. Three hours had been allowed for the 84-mile drive from Cloncurry to Mt. Isa. The first 20 miles of this was on reasonably good gravel road: the. last 7 or 8 miles were also good gravel. But in the middle was a 56-mile section of incredibly rugged, winding bush track. Realising that it would be difficult to average 28 m.p.h. on that stretch many drivers took the risk of speeding over the first section - only to be caught by a secret control 28 miles out. Car after car was pulled up by officials who demanded route cards and stripped points off the drivers despite arguments. Every one of the three drivers who otherwise clean-sheeted around the course lost points here.

It was a punishing ride. The front suspension on nearly all the cars would bottom repeatedly, and the wishbones and apron would plough deep into the gravel. Surprisingly most cars stood up well to it all – but still there was more damage done on that stretch than on all the rest of the route. Shock absorbers broke off, sprints snapped, gearboxes packed up, petrol tanks were holed, and engines choked with dust. Flying stones shattered several windscreens. Steering systems were knocked out of alignment and softened springs allowed cars to bottom more frequently, crashing sumps and gearboxes on rocky ground. Tyres wore out as quickly as on a speedway.



More than 20 cars were forced out of the trial here by various kinds of damage: many others reached Mt. Isa barely able to move, and of the 129 cars that had left Townsville with a clean card, only 3 remained un-penalised. These were a Vanguard number 251 driven by Victorian D. Whiteford, a Ford Customline entry 159 driven by a M. L. Arentz from N.S.W., and of course Jack Murray's Ford V8.

Cars came in with mufflers and exhaust pipes missing or rattling along the ground, smashed mudguards and headlights, and coughing, spluttering engines. One arrived with a large hole in its windscreen. Hit by a flying stone, the curved glass had turned white with tiny cracks and the driver had no option but to punch a hole in it, so he could see through. Others discarded their windscreens altogether.

Carry on when the windscreen's gone.

There is a very good video on YouTube covering the whole event, and it captures the spirit well

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P4gVXTnnGUk

AGM - Bargo Hotel 17/04/2024

The ceremonial cake!

And so the BEAC faithful gathered at Bargo pub for the club's AGM. But it was a special AGM, marking twenty years since the club was founded as HEMA (Highland European Motoring Association). To mark the occasion, Geoff and Anne had commissioned a truly marvellous cake made by Wendy Paul. (Wendy has contributed many delicious creations as prizes at BEAC Christmas parties and the like, and we are indeed lucky to have her in our club - thank you again Wendy!) And best of all, we had three of the club's founding members (and partners) there to ceremoniously cut the cake.

A very goodly number of members and partners attended the event.

The President addresses the AGM.

Whose legs are these and why would I take a photo of them?

Oh yes, there was an AGM held first, but that was speedily conducted in best BEAC style, with Secretary Peter scribbling like mad to capture the minutes. After that it was line up at the bar to order your food and drinks. As usual at Bargo there were only a couple of people in the kitchen, but with a few exceptions the meals arrived relatively quickly and everyone could get on with socialising at a rate of knots.

(L – R) Roy Potter, Rob Turner, Noala Potter and Joan and Tom Currie are the guard of honour.

Then came the day's highlight, with Tom and Joan Currie, Roy and Noala Potter and Rob Turner called up to the committee table. Tom gave a short speech on the club's history, noting that founder Martin Frosh would be looking down with satisfaction that the club had reached this significant milestone. Tom then cut the cake to the applause of all members, who realised the significance of the occasion. Having these founding members there generated a very special atmosphere which added to the enjoyment of the occasion. The cake was then expertly divided up so that everyone could have a piece (and yummy it was too).

Now originally I wasn't going to put any car photos in this report, but then Fred Edney told me that his well known Triumph TR-7 had made the journey to the AGM – its first outing in four years! So here it is in all its glory – welcome back to the fold.

Phil O'

PS: The legs in the photo above are President Geoff Wood's and he doesn't have a moon boot on his left leg anymore. Good to see!

MOTORING MIRTH

Thank you to all contributors to this edition. **Phil O'**