

2013 National Rally

One of the added joys of going to a National Rally is the trip to the venue and back home.

We left Gisborne at 10.00am to meet other travellers at Nagambie for lunch. On arrival we found Chris Higgins, who with Eric Nicholl, had been there for some time. Chris & Eric had had the typical old car adventure already that morning when Eric's 14.75 had failed to proceed and Chris was forced to go home for his trusty 12/50 roadster.

As with any 12/50, it was up to the task and had arrived with the minimum of fuss.

Subsequently we were joined by the McDougalls, the McKaiges and Mike & Liz Williams, all the way from Hobart.

Following lunch, overlooking the Lake Nagambie we headed for Shepparton and motel beside the airfield.

Standing outside around the cars, we enjoyed the occasional glass of red and a lot of banter and marvelled at how a student pilot who was obviously having trouble with his landings, continued to practice well after anyone else would have found another hobby.

We had our first taste of old age as our room was one for the disabled and the shower didn't have a curtain which meant that nothing stayed dry on the floor.

We have decided we will pass up the offer of an incontinent bathroom next time!

We were joined by the Hetheringtons for dinner and aside from the queue at the food counter, that made the queue at the Malvernvale Hotel look like the queue at an AFL game between the bottom teams, we finally got our food.

The Alvis Escape **WAGGA**

John Hetherington had suggested a route up the backroads to Wagga and we had the pleasure of driving via Katamatite, Yarrawonga, Moama, Corowa, Howlong, Wanabadgeri, Culcain to

Wagga. A Tea stop at Moama had us viewing the white competition in the layby but we lost interest when we couldn't find an Alvis badge or wire wheels.



From Culcain we were on the Olympic Highway and our first real taste of NSW roads. Sure some of the previous ones had some potholes but we were not subject to traffic on them that felt 100 clicks was the minimum speed.

We found the Wagga Veteran and Vintage Club rooms right where they told us they would be and we were met with a very warm welcome.

The accommodation at the Country Comfort Motel could not have been better and the dining rooms were more than adequate and the



food was great.

Monday morning was a free morning and saw many people wander into the town. Amazing the number of people I spoke to who had, to use an aviation term, become unsure of position with the street layout.



We gathered for photographs at the Wagga Beach Car Park and departed for Junee. Following lunch we visited the Licorice and Chocolate Factory and the Broadway Museum. The skies darkened!

With about 45 km to Wagga there was a mad hurry to get going.

After about 20 km, we decided that seeing the SP25's sun roof leaks and the skies were even more threatening and now with lightning, we pulled into a layby on the right hand side and ran some tape across the join in the roof. Back into the car - couldn't find the keys!

Knew I had taken them out in case the boot was locked. Second trip to the boot found them at the bottom of the breakdown case. Back in car with sheepish look. Out into the traffic and now the rain. The skies opened and I must compliment the makers of rain glaze. It did its best in a torrential downpour and saved the need to put the "wee will winky" wipers Mr Charlesworth had equipped us with.



Those in open cars took a hiding, some of the occupants subject to hail as well as the rain.



Tuesday took us to Tumbarumba, via Wantabadgery, Mundarlo, Tumblong, Adelong and Batlow. Lunch at the Pioneer Womens Hut for a good country lunch.

Peter Gunnell's son, Ben drove back from Tumbarumba with us and kept us entertained with light hearted banter and suggestions for the answers to the quiz and the poem.

Next stop the RAAF museum at Wagga with Canberra, Meteor, Winjeel, Sabre and Mirage aircraft on display, outside.



*Two special mentions must be made:
Pam Mornane drove Frank's Speed 25 from Melbourne to Wagga and back.*

Chris Higgins with navigator Eric Nicholl aged 90+ from Frankston to Orange and return in the 12/50.

ORANGE

Wednesday morning saw the Alvis cars departing from Wagga, some to return home, the majority to continue onto Orange. It was a very scenic route that the organizers had worked out for us via Temora, Grenfell, Goolagong and Canowindra to Orange.

Many took the opportunity to visit the Aviation Museum at Temora Airfield. There was a WW11 flight Training Base here and now the site for historic flying days with a range of old military aircraft in the museum as well as displays of airforce history. The aim of the museum is to collect and maintain in airworthy condition historical military aircraft flown or used by Australian military forces. Amongst the collection is a Tiger Moth, a Wirraway and a Lockheed Hudson bomber. It was an interesting visit.

The roads to the north of Wagga didn't improve and it was often the case of dodging the potholes. The countryside was looking wonderful after the rain over the past summer and the farmers were out in force working up the paddocks ready for planting.



The main street of Grenfell, with its historic buildings provided an appropriate backdrop for our cars, as we took advantage of the cafes for lunch. The closer we got to Orange, the more autumn colour there was in the trees. Orange is justifiably proud of the wonderful display of the deciduous trees in the streets and parks and their fantastic array of autumn colours.

Thursday was a free day to do a bit of fettling on the cars – checking for any loose nuts and bolts, and to have a look around Orange. We went for a drive to the top of Mount Canobolas which is the highest point between here and the Indian Ocean! The view from the top over the surrounding countryside was great. Late Thursday afternoon we were part of the Decade of Grange Tasting that had been organised by Heather (from her cellar). It was a very pleasant way to enjoy fine wine with friends. Many thanks to Heather. At the end of dinner on Thursday night there was a competition to see who could make the best paper plane – prizes for the one that flew the greatest distance. Geoff Hood's plane was the winner. Some other planes only managed to fly in circles and others ended up in the ceiling decorations!

Frost covered cars saw a cold start to Friday with the day steadily improving into crystal clear blue skies and sun. The run today was to Bathurst and Abercrombie House for a visit and lunch on the lawns and verandahs. The route took us through the countryside and remains of small towns like Forest Reefs and Burnt Yards. The house was built in the 1870's in a grand style. The house was used by the Women's Land Army during WW11. The present

family bought it in the 1950's. It was a very interesting visit and since the house is still a home it had a very relaxed feel about it. The present owner is a collector and so there were garages filled with numerous items including a large number of Austin Sheerline cars. There was a Chev Hearse parked by the house, which turned out to be a car that Alan Bratt had owned and restored many years ago – it is a small world. Lunch was a fine selection of sandwiches, sponge cake and fruit. Before leaving for Orange many took the opportunity to do a lap of the Mount Panorama Circuit and to visit the National racing Museum.

Friday night's final dinner saw the entrants arriving wearing some wonderful hat creations for the Hat Parade. Many hats had an Alvis or motoring theme. Again Geoff Hood was a winner.

Saturday morning it was time to say farewell and to pick up the USB stick with photos from the rally that Geoffrey had spent the whole week working on – collecting photos each day for a slide



show each night and then to sort through and produce the finished product. An excellent memento of the rally.

Many thanks to The Alvis Escape Team - Heather, Rob, Loretta and Geoffrey for a wonderful rally.

Frances & Andrew McDougall

