

Members' Report: Joint ACTVIC Triumph Car Clubs' Rally Ballarat, 11-15 October 2018

The recent joint Ballarat gathering represented the 13th Victoria and ACT Triumph Car Clubs' Annual Rally - a great tribute to its founder, Brian Tink. The Rally continues to grow in stature, underpinned by strong camaraderie and a varied range of activities across enticing countryside. Next years' Rally will be held at Merimbula, and we encourage members to participate in this event (see program elsewhere in the magazine).

This report has been prepared by Trevor Lloyd, Chris Doble and Anthony Ockwell.

Thursday 11 October

With seven cars assembled at the Dinosaur Museum, departure shortly followed at 10:10am. Following a phone call from our coordinator parked at Murrumbateman awaiting the convoy, a lone Stag tagged along and joined the convoy at the Sir George Hotel, Jugiong, for the appointed morning tea rendezvous. Much humour and chat followed among the ACT group, comprising Lloyds (PI sedan), Wades (Stag), Mousers (Honda), Kirchners (Stag), Brooks (PI sedan), Jan Tink and daughter Kerryn (Nissan), and Ockwells (Stag). Chris Doble and son Sean joined us at Chiltern.

From Jugiong, our next stop was Holbrook for lunch and a re-fuel. The good humour and camaraderie continued over lunch, auguring well for another enjoyable weekend with our Victorian colleagues. Chiltern provided a great respite on the trip south, with the motel keenly awaiting our arrival with everything in place and welcome mat (*ala* oil pan) on the driveway. The staff at the motel were very friendly and made sure that all was up to standard. After we settled into our rooms, we soon gathered for a late afternoon celebratory drink and nibbles before wandering into town for dinner at the Ironbark Bistro and Tavern. It is a beautiful old double brick building situated in the heart of Chiltern, constructed in 1869. Our host greeted us with open arms and instantly made us feel at home. There was a fine selection from the menu, and we settled in for a relaxing evening, being joined part way through by Chris and Sean.

Friday 12 October

With half of the trip still before us, the ACT group left the motel at Chiltern around 8:45am bound for Merindoc Winery at Tooboorac. Morning tea was served on our arrival as we settled into the beautiful countryside surrounding Merindoc. Here, we had the opportunity to sample a range of high quality wines following a comprehensive and enjoyable presentation by our host Steve Oates. Steve provided an overview of the history of the winery, varieties selected and the climatic similarities to regions of France, Spain and Italy, with their influence being exhibited in their Albarino, Vermentino, Dulcis, Tempranillo and Viognier wines. He also drew a contrast with the Rutherglen region in explaining the suitability of varieties to different areas, such as Malbec being grown further north but not at their location. There was an excellent selection of wines on offer for tasting, with most of us leaving with a carton or two under our arms.

From Merindoc, we headed straight for Ballarat via Kyneton and Daylesford. For the Triumphs amongst us, the back roads of Victoria were a wonderful change from the Hume – great countryside,

attractive towns, etc. Once we had settled into the motel, we decided it was high time for a late lunch, and with the city square in view, a stroll was in order.

The afternoon culminated in a bowls tournament at the local bowling club. It was a fun and entertaining afternoon playing for high stakes. We adjourned for dinner at the Club, rounding off a full and enjoyable day.

Saturday 13 October

On Saturday we headed out through the Arch of Victory and along the 22 kilometre Avenue of Honour. More than 3,700 trees represent the region's servicemen and women enlisted in the AIF for WW1. Each tree is numbered and has a memorial plaque at its base.

We drove onto Beaufort along the Western Highway and turned off to visit the Gardens of "Mawallok" Homestead. On entering the Homestead grounds there was a bit of excitement. One Herald owner drove his car into an unseen ditch at the entrance gate. A good Samaritan went off and returned with a Jack. This was not needed however as a group of blokes surrounded the car and lifted it out.

The homestead is best described as a Mansion serving the Lord of the Manor. I clearly remember the vast stone walls around the perimeter of the property and gardens and thought of how they would have been handpicked and stacked by workers around the turn of the century. The trees were magnificent I walked down a path lined with Silver birches to the water. The water was more of a lake than dam and is fed by three or four springs. No drought would affect this property. The lush gardens were spectacular and vast.

I thought what a lost commercial opportunity not opening the mansion for view and not offering morning tea. I was quickly advised that the owner had bigger fish to fry and was very obviously not short of two bob.

The one toilet was a small room out the back of the mansion. Right next to the toilet entrance door was parked the owner's Stag. Not mentioning names to protect the guilty, one visitor was seen to open the car by trial and error with a Stag key and take a photo of the compliance plate for input into a stag register. So much for stag security locks. This was later cleared with the owner.

We travelled back along the Western Highway to Learmonth and The STAG Hotel where we had a 2 course, help yourself from the bae mere meal. The area was quite small for the 55 plus Triumph enthusiasts gathered. I have never seen two hotel staff work so hard feeding the masses. The food just kept coming, was hot and of high quality. Desert consisted of bread and butter pudding or sticky date pudding.

We drove back to Ballarat after lunch and visited the Botanic Gardens. In there is the Prime Ministers walk. I noted Ben Chifley who presided over the war years and launched Holdens. I noted Gough Whitlam who when the security detectors went off said it is my aura comrades. Further along was Malcolm Fraser and I thought life was not meant to be easy. The standing joke was that Australia has recently changed PM so fast and so often that the curators have run out of money and can't keep up. Sean had a more ironic observation. Busts of Julia Gillard and Kevin Rudd eye balling each other.

We finished the day with dinner at the Red Lion Hotel where we cut the ACT and TCCV 13th year celebration cake.

Sunday 14 October

Sunday dawned another fine and sunny day, the fourth in row which the locals advised was unusual.

The program for the day involved visits to the Creswick Woollen Mill, Clunes markets, an old Gold Mine site, a Flour Mill and finally a BBQ to finish the day.

Given the packed itinerary, an early start was in order with an 8.30am departure from the Motel for Creswick and the Woollen Mill.

The Creswick Woollen Mill has been around since 1947 and although now a much smaller operation than in its heyday, it still produces first class products from Wool, Alpaca and Possum fibres. A tour was organised to show the process from raw fibre to finished product. A number of our members purchased samples of their products as mementos of their visit.

After the Woollen Mill it was onto Clunes where the cars were on display at the local markets. Members also took the opportunity here to have lunch at the local eateries.

Following Clunes, we proceeded to Berry No 1 Mine, an old gold mine and one of many in the area. Whilst there was not a lot to see, many decided to climb the Mullock Heaps for a view of the surrounding countryside - a view that offered a much different vista in green and gold to that seen in the ACT and surrounds.

From the mine, the convoy of some 35 cars continued to Anderson's Flour Mill at Smeaton - a facility that started operation in 1861 and operated for almost 100 years finally closing in 1959. The facility was operated by a water wheel driven by water flowing along a 5km water race. Because of the significance of the Mill it was acquired by the Victorian Government in 1974 and entered on the Historic Buildings Register with subsequent restoration taking place.

The final function for the day was a BBQ put on by the Restaurant at the Motel. A fine spread was provided and much discussion ensued about the weekend. All agreed the event was very successful with attention now turning to Merimbula in 2019.

Monday 15 October

A long day in the saddle as the ACT party headed for home, with some unintended detours and side-tracks along the way. The trip back had three simple objectives: minimise distance on the Hume, enjoy more of the Victorian countryside *en route* and have a leisurely lunch break at Violet Town. For a couple of us, these objectives appeared way too easy, and they became: maximise time on the Hume, see as much of the Victorian countryside as possible, even if it were in a southward direction, and avoid a lunch stop at Violet Town.

Most of us re-grouped in Holbrook for afternoon tea before tackling the home straight.

Another top weekend with our Victorian colleagues.