

Combined Car Clubs Run - July 2013

Sunday 21 July: Ray and I finished our combined car clubs Winter Getaway today and arrived home at about 4 pm. It's now 7.30 pm, and after turning all the heaters on, donning my cosy dressing gown & sheepskin slippers and having a bowl of hot soup and a cup of tea, I'm finally starting to warm up! I think we managed to pick the coldest, most wintery weekend ever, in spite of which we had a fantastic time.



Day 1 - 10am Saturday 20 July: 23 brave souls in 11 awesome cars met at the BP Calder Park to convoy to the first event of our getaway - lunch. We met them in Castlemaine and then all drove to Maryborough Railway Station, where we were joined by the Jordans from Daylesford and Merv and Maree Sherlock.

The station was built in 1890, and in 1895 when Mark Twain visited Maryborough he dryly observed that it was "a railway station with a town attached." The station houses a wonderful café, an antique centre and a wine cellar featuring local wines.

After lunch and browsing (and buying!), we proceeded on a gentle driving tour through the Victorian countryside to our first stop, Mt Tarren-gower, to take the cars up the famous hillclimb route (2 km long, average gradient 9.8%). The first Tarren-gower Hillclimb was held in 1929, and is Australia's oldest and longest running hillclimb. The weather was so appalling that we only lasted a few minutes at the top in hail, sleet and - I swear - snow!

Everyone then scattered to shop and browse in Maldon & Castlemaine, before regrouping for dinner at the Railway Hotel in Castlemaine (built in 1875). This is one of our favourite places in the whole world for great food, atmosphere and friendliness. The Railway won a swathe of well deserved awards in the 2012 Golden Plate Awards.

During dinner we held "The Quiz" to determine the next holder of The Ashes Perpetual Quiz Trophy, which was first awarded last year at the Winter Getaway hosted by the Rootes Group in Hepburn Springs. The winners in 2012 were *ahem* Lotte and Ray Linden of the Humber Car Club Inc. I'm proud to say that we managed not to misplace the trophy in the past 12 months, and we even remembered to bring it with us to the pub so that we could hand it over.



The winners, by a clear margin of 6 points, were Andrew and Faye of the Singer Car Club.

We had a wonderful evening and wended our way to our beds replete and pleasantly weary.



Day 2 - 8 am Sunday 21 July: about 20 of us gathered at Saffs Café in Mostyn St for a hearty breakfast. Temperature was about 2 degrees...

After breakfast we gathered back at the Motel to allow everyone to checkout and get fuel for our day's activities. First casualty of the run - the red Hillman Hunter sprung a leak in its water pump. Ray arranged to get it gingerly to our place, where it now sits proudly in the backyard awaiting repair and repatriation.

This delayed our departure somewhat, and created a bit of confusion. While Ray and the owners were organising the Hunter, several others set off for Newstead, the first scheduled destination, but not all knew about the building full of old cars in the main street. We had contacted the owner several weeks earlier to ask if he would allow us to have a proper look round, and although he initially said yes, we couldn't get hold of him again to arrange the time. So we then planned to stop so that everyone could peer surreptitiously through the windows at the wonders within. Ah well, the 3 cars still in our convoy all got to have a good look!

After Newstead we headed off to Clunes (est 1842), for book shopping and morning coffee, followed by the Creswick Woollen Mills for a bit of browsing & shopping. Then off to the Tangled Maze for a fabulous 2 course lunch. Several hardy souls tackled the maze, but it was way too cold for us!

Several people had commitments in Melbourne, so headed back before lunch, leaving 15 of us to finish off the run. The temperature was still hovering around 3 degrees, with a heavy mist. We hadn't seen sunlight for two days, but it really didn't seem to matter.



Several of us then called into Newlyn for the wonderful antiques. The 'posh' antiques are housed in the wonderful old theatre, which still has its original stage and vaulted timber ceilings. The bric-a-brac and collectables are in an old house close by, with something to suit every taste and pocket.

Singer Car Club - 6 (2 Gazelles, 1 other)
Sunbeam Car Club - 8 (2 Rapiers, 2 Tigers)
Rootes Group Car Club - 7 (Hillman Minx, Hillman Hunter, Hillman Minx Estate)
Humber - 4 (MM4, Mk VI Hawk) plus Merv & Maree in Ser V for lunch Day 1
Thanks to everyone for an awesome two days!
Lotte and Ray

