

## Ray's MM4 Travel Ramblings



Hi,  
Big Humber Adventure to the  
Humber National Rally 2023 in  
Victor Harbor SA the long way...

Castlemaine to Perth to Adelaide  
(on the Indian Pacific) to Victor

Harbor to Coonawarra to Castlemaine, a grand  
total of 9,220 km.

Departure Day: 15<sup>th</sup> April 2023

An hour into our journey, I did a U-turn at Wed-  
derburn to look at a derelict Mark IV in a pad-  
dock next to the roadside fence, and detected a  
faint whiff of burning oil. Had a quick look and  
couldn't find anything.



We did another U-turn at Wycheproof (I missed  
a sign) and the smell and smoke were obvious.  
Closer inspection revealed oil leaking from tap-  
pet cover at the rear on the exhaust side. When  
I turned sharply left, oil spilled onto the exhaust  
pipe. I used an accessible adjustable spanner  
and tightened the cover down a bit more, and it  
seems to have lessened the problem.

The story goes like this: someone mentioned  
that if I wanted maximum economy, it might be  
a good idea to check the tappets. Just what I  
needed in the lead up to our adventure. Any-  
way, I removed the rocker cover, adjusted the  
tappets, and realised I didn't have a suitable re-  
placement rocker cover gasket. I smeared  
some silastic gasket maker on and tightened  
the cover down. Started the car to check every-  
thing and a couple of rockers were hitting the  
cover. I loosened the cover off a bit and the  
noise went away. All good until I found out that  
it was too loose and leaking oil.

When exiting Lake Tyrell, the power steering  
cut out a bit, and the dash cam restarted. This  
happened a couple of times more at the out-  
skirts of Mildura. We went shopping, and when  
we returned, I tried to start the car but there was  
no electrics at all. It was like the battery was  
completely flat.

I have a mini jump starter in the boot and when  
I lifted the bonnet, the problem was obvious.  
The fancy new isolating switch on the battery  
had self activated which had in turn isolated the  
battery completely. This was a new \$50 switch  
from The Battery Factory in Bendigo, and sup-  
posedly far better than the screw down one that  
was already there. They will get some feedback  
on the product when I return.

The road to a view point at Lake Tyrell was  
quite corrugated and may have vibrated the  
switch off.

Apart from those minor teething problems,  
MM4 ran beautifully even through patches of  
pouring rain.

16<sup>th</sup> April: Checked oil and water. Both down about a pint. Acceptable. Noticed that there was moisture on the inside of the rear screen. We had to dry out our display sign which sadly never recovered. The rear screen will need to be sealed again

17<sup>th</sup> April: Refuelled at Merbein. Very happy, 66 litres for 298 miles. 13.8 litres/ 100k or a bit over 20mpg. MM4 disgraced itself by leaking coolant out at Wentworth while it was being admired. I checked and it was just a bit of overflow.

19<sup>th</sup> April: Checked oil and water, all OK. I found a local workshop with a hoist that I could borrow and installed a temporary overflow tank. A small cash donation was accepted. I also purchased some t-bolt clamps that were heaps cheaper than in Castlemaine and some heavy duty Loctite gasket sealer for the tappet cover should I need it.

20<sup>th</sup> April: Checked oil and water, all good. Adjusted Air Conditioning compressor belt. Removed battery isolating switch. Noticed a bit of coolant on the ground when we reversed out of parking area. Possibly water pump. I will need to keep an eye on it.

21<sup>st</sup> April: Checked oil and water and found a coolant leak out of the top radiator hose join. Both top hose clamps tightened up a bit so fingers crossed that it all works.

23<sup>rd</sup> April: Fuelled up before heading to Port Lincoln, 17.4 mpg. Fuel economy seems to be variable and I haven't quite worked out why.

I thought I was consistent with my driving but might have to adjust speeds down a bit



(unlikely). Head winds or fuel quality also might be affecting things a bit.

24<sup>th</sup> April: Kimba to Port Lincoln via Cleve and Cowell and a very underwhelming but surprisingly good Black Jade retail outlet in a shabby 2 star motel. Arrived at Port Lincoln Hotel, 5 star luxury. We might just chill out for a while.

27<sup>th</sup> April: Streaky Bay to Nullarbor Roadhouse. Noticed nasty timing chain or water pump rattle on idle. Brakes could be better.

28<sup>th</sup> April: Nullarbor Roadhouse to Eucla. Checked oil, down a little bit. Topped it up and departed. Quickly noticed a burning oil smell and returned to the roadhouse. Oil leaking from the oil filter seal. I had a spare filter, but no removal tool. Local handyman lent me his personal one and once filter was replaced and oil topped up, we were on our way again.



Naturally, I was reasonably stressed given that we were effectively in the middle of nowhere. We were on our way in about an hour but it could take a bit longer for the stress levels return to normal. Bunda cliffs are amazing and the views out of our Eucla Motel room are a pleasant surprise.

2<sup>nd</sup> May: Drive to Lucky Bay via Stonehenge which was quite amazing. MM4 very noisy now.

3<sup>rd</sup> May: Checked MM4 and found a very noisy water pump. Luckily I had a spare so set about replacing it before going anywhere. Fortunately, the motel handyman was able to lend me a 13mm spanner and a 7/8" socket and bar. All other required tools were in my mini toolbox. I



tried to just remove the water pump but life wasn't meant to be easy.



Eventually I had to remove the complete housing and destroyed a gasket in the process. I tried to use heaps of gasket goo (purchased at Broken Hill) but after assembly and test, the gasket still leaked. I removed the whole system again, much quicker this time. The handyman gave me a lift to Repco to get new gasket paper, coolant and sealant. I cut a new gasket and installed everything again. Unfortunately, I dropped a nut and washers for the air compressor belt adjustment bolt. Only the washers hit the ground. The nut didn't...

I filled the radiator up with coolant and ran a test. Everything looks good but naturally I will be apprehensive for a while. Went back to Repco and purchased a pack of nuts and bolts, after the kind Repco lady carefully opened a pack and let me test the nut first to confirm size and fitment. All good so purchased a pack. I had initially thought about buying a flexible magnet but they didn't have any, and besides, the pack of nuts and bolts was cheaper.

7<sup>th</sup> May: Albany, and I nearly had an accident when pulling out from a kerb parking area into the path of a vehicle heading in the same direc-

tion as I was. Mental note, must get some side mirrors, my head doesn't swivel as much as it used to.

We met up with the local Humber chapter of the VCCCWA (HQ in Perth), previously organised by Darryl Ferguson, at the monthly Marina Cars and Coffee morning. Great atmosphere, brilliant display, too many amazing vehicles.

We then drove to Demark WA for a BBQ lunch hosted by the generous and very welcoming local club members - but only 2 Humber.





13<sup>th</sup> May: Perth, and the VCCCWA hosted a morning tea for us at the National Motor Museum. Humbers turned out in force!



14<sup>th</sup> May: Boarded the Indian Pacific for the luxury 2 night train journey to Adelaide. An anxious moment or two while the Humber was loaded, answering questions such as: "How do you start it?" and: "How do you lock the doors?"



16<sup>th</sup> May: Arrive in Adelaide and waited to be paged to tell us MM4 had been unloaded. Instead they walked through the terminal looking for the owners of the 'vintage car' as they didn't know how to start it. Ray donned a hi-vis vest, unlocked the door and started MM4, and they happily drove it off the carrier.

19<sup>th</sup> May to 22<sup>nd</sup> May: Humber National Rally 2023 in Victor Harbor - see Lotte's full report.

23<sup>rd</sup> May: Humber National Rally finished and time to head towards home via Coonawarra. We went the scenic route down past the Coorong and decided to do a small side trip, 4 km of dirt road each way. At about the 7km mark there was a huge bang and from then on there was a loud noise on the left hand side rear whenever we hit a series of bumps or went around a right hand corner and hit bumps. My initial reaction was that it had chewed out the top LHS rear shock absorber rubber, so although noisy, not too much to be worried about. I took it a bit easier for the rest of the trip.



Passing through Kingston SE - couldn't resist this photo op.



At Coonawarra, I emptied the boot out and checked the top shock absorber mount. It looked OK but I inserted a liberal amount of heavy duty Silastic just to be sure.

27<sup>th</sup> May: After 4 fabulous days catching up with Lotte's sister Winnie and family, we left Coonawarra for the final leg home and it didn't take long to realise that the problem wasn't shock absorber related. Not to worry, every kilometre travelled was another kilometre closer to home.

About 80 km into the trip MM4 started to handle a bit funny, the left hand rear mudflap scraped around a slow corner and I thought I might have had a broken spring or something similar.

At about 100km (50km short of Horsham), the left hand rear tyre gave way completely and then the penny dropped. We were lucky to be close to a good flat driveway into a farm paddock and confirmed that the rear tyre had given up completely. The culprit was a roofing screw which eventually broke off and proceeded to let the air out slowly at first and then with a rush at the end. Re-



sult, one stuffed tyre that I will have to replace. It was probably about 80% worn and was due for replacement shortly anyway. Fortunately, I had a brand new spare that I had carted around the country, and I had all the tools and jacks needed to do a tyre change.



50 minutes later, we were back on the road homeward bound once again.

We pulled into our driveway at about 5:30 pm, about an hour later than I had originally anticipated but at least it was still daylight (just).

Next morning I had a quick look over MM4 in the comfort of our garage. My own magnetic pick-up tool found the missing air-conditioner nut wedged in the engine mount housing. I had a think about the noise from the rear again, and after the initial bang, the sound was more like scraping and rubbing sometimes metallic and others not so much. I ran my hand under the rear guard and found that the tyre had caught on some metal and folded it away from the guard and nearer to the tyre so that it scraped every time I hit a large bump. Problem found, now to fix it.

**Vital statistics** (excluding the Indian Pacific, when MM4 got a \$300 train ride of 2,655km):

**Miles driven: 4,079 miles** (6,567km)

**Fuel used: 212.81 gallons** (967 Litres)

**Fuel Cost: \$2,093.37** (average cost \$2.20 litre)

**Economy: 19.17 mpg** (14.74 l/100km)

Lotte has another 7,500 photos if anyone is interested?



**Ray**