

## 2012 NATIONAL RALLY TAMWORTH ONLY FOR HUMBERS

Imagine, if you can, the absolute thrill of travelling around the Australian countryside with 3 dozen Humber cars covering the years from 1927 to 1967. Can you see the vision? Think of the look on bystanders' faces when they see these beautiful vehicles cruising down Main Street in a country town and how they glide silently by in all their regal splendour! Think of the dollar signs the garage cashier has in their eyes as the empty tanks ring up nearly \$100.00 each time the tanks are filled! Just imagine the financial boost we gave to each passing town as we traversed the Highways and Byways of Australia staying in motels that mistakenly register our vehicles as **HUMMERS** !

Our **SSNIPE** met with other Humbers from Victoria late on Monday afternoon for afternoon tea on the banks of the Murray River before leaving for Wagga Wagga for our first night's stop over. The next morning we all took separate roads which all lead us to Forbes for night #2. McFeeters Motor Museum was visited by all of us and is recommended to anyone going that way. Again, a quick discussion the following morning, found each of us choosing to visit different towns along the way but with everyone gathering together for meals and accommodation in Gulgong. Most of the next morning everyone found there were so many things to see and do in the 10 Dollar Note Town that it was noon or later before the road to Tamworth was taken with once again drivers choosing which way they wished to go. Again, we all met at the end of the day to share experiences. One thing on which we all agreed was that our way of travelling was hassle free and if we needed to stay in touch we used our mobile phones. Doing "our own thing" while travelling meant no-one lost time waiting for others to catch up or wondering if someone was lost. Importantly, we all had the same maps and mostly stayed at the same motels!

Good Friday dawned and while we waited for the other participants to arrive we washed the grasshoppers and other insects off our previously immaculate cars. Having been on the road for 4 days most of us used the spare time to rest and relax having covered around 1500k. During the day most of the remaining Humbers arrived at our motel which was selected as HQ for the Rally. The usual friendly "Meet and Greet" was held in one of Tamworth's many beautiful parks where we received the usual "bag of goodies" that are a part of these rallies. It was then that we discovered another 5 cars similar to ours had arrived which we later learned was the greatest number to ever attend the one rally.

Easter Saturday dawned bright and clear with expected temperatures remaining around 31 degrees which had been the norm since leaving home. The oldest Humber was unloaded from the trailer and completed the rest of the weekend under its own power. The drive for the morning was a local affair and then the display and judging for the best car in each class was held on another pleasant green oval. Today's drive also included driving up the steep Moonbi Mountain to the Lookout. I had been told that the road was not a top gear affair but **SSNIPE** had to use brakes to prevent exceeding the 80k speed limit UPHILL. The little 1927 made it to the top but being thermosyphon cooled it just had to wet itself when it stopped, Fortunately, **SSNIPE** had the only water-bag in the group and this was used to top-up the brave little car. The next oldest was a 1933 12hp sedan and it too made it to the top. No mention shall be made about the Vogue which thought it could but it couldn't. (So it won the "Hard Luck" prize.)

Our Sunday trip also visited the Railway Museum at Werris Creek which is another "must do" in the area. Coal mining is taking over and a new mine opening will employ 1500 workers in their own company town. This will not help the real town Werris Creek very much but this has always been the system in the mines! We were told that when the new mine starts operating there will be a laden coal train, about a mile long, passing every 24 minutes 24/7. After morning tea "country Cooks Style" (nothing but a few crumbs left) we explored an interesting "First Fleet" History setting before heading off to Nundle for lunch and to participate in the Annual Chinese Festival. Lots of steep hills and quite rough roads were encountered in the area with visible signs of the damage caused by the recent floods.

Our Saturday evening's entertainment revolved around a "Country and Western Theme" with some very interesting table decorations being displayed by the 4 states - Qld, NSW, Vic, SA, with Qld winning the prize. There was an almost endless number of raffle draws on both nights with lots of really good prizes available from which to choose. Jan and I won a subscription to Classic Cars for a year and a bottle of wine. The Victorians, who represented 20% of the people won 80% of the prizes! And, the Peoples' Choice was awarded to the 1927 Humber which was also from Victoria.

Sunday night's Dinner was a good chance to wind down and as we drove to the venue the promised storm arrived but we were safely inside before it rained and it was all gone by the time it was time to go back to the Motel. As had been the case with all catering during the rally the food was once again excellent and enjoyable. The usual prizes were awarded with general consensus that the judges had done their work well. The winners all received a hand-made pottery "Humber Garage" which were very novel and well received.

Easter Monday reversed the previous daily temperature to a cool 13 degrees and the dry grass was showing a tinge of green already. We all gathered at the Golden Guitar for hot breakfast which was served in double-quick time and we said our goodbyes to everyone. Jan and I decided to travel down the Hunter Valley taking the bush road called "The Putty Road" which brought us out near the Blue Mountains. (Not a road I'd recommend to anyone) We motored up to Katoomba and visited friends we hadn't seen for many years then found our way to the Zig Zag Railway before going to Cowra where we stayed to visit the Japanese Gardens and War Cemetery.

These are another "must do" if passing that way. Here we met some of our group again. From here it was an afternoon's travel back to Wodonga.

All in fun this Rally became known, in very affectionate terms as "**THE FINGER RALLY**" because the Organising Committee had obtained (?) a supply of the big red hand used by a supermarket to show directions at turning points. This name then became a "**FINGER LICKING GOOD RALLY**" and then everyone was being given "**THE FINGER**" but at the end we all gave it

**"THE THUMBS UP RALLY**

**WELL DONE NSW HCC** and now it's over to **SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

**Contributed by Jan and Roy Strange HCCV & SSNIPE**