

National Humber Rally 2000

Part 1 – Getting there is part of the holiday

Monday 17th April

Loaded up the Mighty Mark IVB, topped up petrol, and left sunny Melbourne. On the road from Yarra Glen to Yea, we heard a noticeable bang, with accompanying tinkles, but didn't see anything through rear vision mirror, so assumed nothing large fell off. A subtle check on brakes, steering and gauges confirmed everything relatively OK. After a while I became aware of a slight difference in handling, and suspected a front sway bar problem. Arrived at Benalla for lunch, and a cursory glance underneath confirmed that a sway bar link bolt had sheared, nothing dramatic. At Rutherglen we stopped at the local RACV shop - 20 minutes and \$20 later, complete with new link bolt, bushes, and washers, we were on our way again. Next stop, Fairfield winery for a tasting or two (only Lotte of course – I was driving!).

Tuesday 18 April & Wednesday 19th April

Back-tracked to Yackandandah as we hadn't seen it before, then on to Tarcutta, detour through Gundagai, lurched passed Gaston & Cheryl Saint who were towing a caravan, and eventually arrived in Canberra.

As an ex-Canberran, I have access to a workshop in Canberra, so took the opportunity to replace sway bar bolts with thicker hi-tensile ones, gave the car an oil and filter change, replaced one stop light globe (\$1.50), adjusted brakes and took advantage of the hoist to walk under the car for a general checkover. Much more civilized than our cold garage floor.

Thursday 20th April

After shopping/browsing in Goulburn, we returned to find a note under the windscreen from another Humber aficionado. We did try to ring, but without success. Berrima for lunch, and then Mittagong, left turn at Campbelltown at 4:00pm up the Great Northern Road to the delights of Sydney Peak hour. This part of the trip was awful: partly due to traffic; partly due to not having been there before; getting caught in the wrong lane; a couple of pre-Easter accidents; and also nearing the end of a long day. We ventured to the local shopping square to stock up on consumables, which was pre-Easter bedlam. The sun had well and truly set by the time we escaped to the peaceful & welcome haven of Nepean Shores Resort.

Part 2. – The Rally – action packed!

Friday, 21st April

First glance at our neighbour's 1934 Humber – magnificent! Quiet morning recovering from the journey so far, managed to find the local car wash. Rally welcome and registration with an evening BBQ, meeting the other participants, and swapping tales of the adventure so far, particularly from the Saints – something about changing a flat tyre with a screwdriver, alternators problems, and other misadventures.

Saturday, 22nd April

After congregating outside the resort, we set off on a parade down the main street of Penrith, and assembled in the Council Car Park where a welcome speech given by the local mayor was warmly received. The concours judging took place, and as I was fortunate enough to be one of six judges, I had the opportunity to inspect six vehicles very closely indeed. All were magnificent, a credit to the Humber Marque (and their owners) and really were top quality. One owner confessed to taking the car off the road for three months to prepare for the concours. Talk about commitment! He also mentioned that he didn't particularly enjoy this, because in reality he missed driving the vehicle. Being slightly biased I particularly liked Troy Hancock's Black Mark IVA, the four years of effort clearly visible. One day I will get around to it myself. One day...

If the slow ride through Penrith's main street didn't test the cooling systems, the climb up to Hawkesbury Lookout did. A number of Humbers exhibited the telltale signs of the evil green fluid (coolant) escaping. 'Jenny' required more fuel to return, and that appeared to be the sum total of tales of woe. The lookout was quite superb, a pity we left the binoculars in the cabin. From the lookout to the Olympic Rowing venue. What a magnificent conversion from a quarry. This site will be used for years once they get rid of the highly paid consultant's recommended but out-of-control weeds. The ranger/guide didn't mind showing us around as it took him away from the water weeding duties, which I gather are a bit of a chore.

Back to the resort and then to the Nepean Rowing Club for the Presentation Dinner, Raffle ticket selling, presentations of awards for Concours, People's Choice, Pride of Ownership and Hard Luck Stories, all kept under control by the talented MC. We fared embarrassingly well in the raffles, coming away with a veritable Humber Treasure Trove. We won an oil drip tray and filter funnel, five litres of oil, and photo frames. What more could a Humber owner want? People's Choice went to the 1934 Humber of our neighbours, Alan & Margaret Haggerty. My personal belief is that this was probably almost unanimous. It really was a stand out vehicle, and even more impressive when you realise it was driven from Griffith NSW.

Sunday, 23rd April

Congregated out the front of the resort and then drove up the expressway to Katoomba where we assembled in the Council Car Park. We then boarded a red double decker bus for a tour of the mountains. First stop, the scenic railway (tricky) and

sky bus (a breeze). We passed both tests of courage. Second stop, views to the 3 sisters. Third stop Leura for lunch. Fourth and final stop, 'Leurralla', a country residence of the Evatt family and also a magnificent Doll and Toy Museum. It was just outstanding. The bus driver also gave running commentary, highlighting points of interest that would otherwise have gone unnoticed. Back to the car park, and on to Norman Lindsay's residence and gallery. After dinner I attended what I hope was a constructive Humber Australia meeting.

Monday 24th April

9am, we boarded a bus at the resort for a trip to a ferry terminal at Cabarita on the Parramatta River for the Sydney Harbour cruise and City tour. We are strict landlubbers. Our apprehension wasn't helped when the 'African Queen', alias the good ferry James McCabe, hove to, and proceeded to rock disconcertingly when a flying catamaran passed nearby. There was no turning back now, 50 passengers behind us blocking the gangplank. The harbour cruise was fantastic, the commentary fabulous, and the city sights absolutely stunning. Apprehension disappeared in a matter of minutes. The cruise lasted four hours complete with lunch, morning and afternoon teas, and other drinks if you wanted. We departed the 'African Queen' at Darling Harbour, which was packed with Easter visitors. The aquarium had queues out the door, as did some of the other attractions. Eventually, we took a monorail ride around the city, in an attempt to try as many forms of transport as possible in one day. Our bus then took us through the city to the Rocks area where we had half an hour for a quick look. Back onto the bus for a tour of the harbourside suburbs to Doyle's Fish and Chip shop at Watson's Bay. 'The Gap' was nearby, and although most of us took in the view, so far as I know no-one jumped. The sun set yet again, everyone climbed aboard for a trip over the coat hanger bridge, back over Gladesville Bridge, and then through the Olympics venue at Homebush Bay, complete with excellent commentary from Bruce Carpenter. Returned to the cabins at about 8pm for a well earned rest.

Tuesday, 25th April

Farewell BBQ Breakfast, some speeches, handing over of the banner to SA, and farewells to those leaving. The Mortons and we stayed an extra day to give the traffic time to clear. We took a drive up to the mountains, across to Richmond, and down to the Windsor antique shops. It being a small world, we met the Mortons doing the same thing.

Part 3: The long and winding trip home

Wednesday 26th April to Tuesday 2nd May

Mittagong – replaced a front park light globe. Bowral, Moss Vale, Fitzroy Falls, Kangaroo Valley, Batemans Bay for 2 nights to visit my mother, replaced a rear shock absorber rubber in the Humber. Canberra for the weekend – swapped motors in my mother's Honda Civic and caught up with old friends. Returned to Batemans Bay, handed back the Civic, swapped stuff back into Humber and then onto Eden. From Eden to home via Bairnsdale and Rosedale.

Summary

What a fabulous rally! Well organised, wonderful company, great fun! Approximately 70 people participated, and about 40 vehicles, which is an excellent turnout. The organisers were tireless – or at least they pretended to be! I bet they all slept for a week when it was all over.

What a wonderful idea to sponsor a worthwhile cause, in this case the Children's Medical Research Institute. It gave the whole rally a purpose & goal, which only added to the enjoyment. I am sure the precedent has been set for future events.

A huge **thank-you** to all those who made this rally so successful and trouble free, who looked after us so well, and who made sure that the weather was spectacular from start to finish!

Humber Expenses

1.	Sway Bar Link pin and bushes (non-Humber)	\$20.00
2.	Tail Light Globe	\$1.50
3.	Park Light Globe	\$1.50
4.	Shock Absorber bush	\$6.00
5.	85.6 Gallons of Fuel for 2072 Miles (24.2 mpg average!!)	\$341.50

Ray Linden – Driver & Writer

Lotte Linden – Passenger & Editor