
National Humber Rally Renmark 2008

Another wonderful National Rally spent with old friends and new. We had a fantastic time in a part of Australia which we had only briefly passed through once before – on our return from the Clare SA Rally in 2002!

We really hoped that the 1955 Humber Hearse would be ready, but it was not to be. Nearly all the major work has been done, but as is so often the case it was the small fiddly stuff such as trims and interior which still need to be completed. So Ray wheeled out our beloved Mighty Mark 4.

MM4 preparation:

Our run to Picnic at Hanging Rock went well but the temperature gauge ran high driving home and it wasn't a particularly hot day. In an attempt to ensure absolutely no problems for the Easter run, I actually did some preparation (something I'm not really known for!).

Had the radiator reconditioned, tested and replaced the thermostat. Took all the wheels off and checked brakes (there is still something wrong as it makes a noise from the wheels in reverse). Changed the oil and oil filter, checked gearbox and diff, and even had the local RACV guy do a quick check on the cooling system just to be sure.

The Rally:

We left home 8am Thursday and lunched at Ouyen at noon. An excellent run with no problems. Leaving town we saw a familiar green Estate on the side of road – it was Fred ringing Sylvia with an update of his progress. He was doing well considering he had left his home at 4:30am! Straight thru Mildura and we arrived at Renmark about 3:30pm.



Booked into the magnificent Renmark Hotel/Motel – our balcony room had glorious views over the river and was exceptionally comfortable.



Went sight seeing on Friday to Berri and Loxton. We visited a local reptile park, run by a slightly eccentric zoo keeper. Originally thought it was a bit over-priced and run-down looking, but eventually found it to be quite amazing and good value. After a stern lecture about climate change being a great big lie the keeper brought out a large python and draped it around Lotte's neck, to her genuine delight. Beautiful, gentle and surprisingly heavy!

On to the official welcome at Olivewood, Chaffey Bros. original irrigation property complete with its original olive tree plantation and log framed house built in 1889, which is now a local museum. Quite interesting, with lots of photos including a large section on "The 1956 Flood". Registered, got our bulging rally

pack, bought some regalia and enjoyed the magnificent BBQ. We caught up with some of the other participants and enjoyed a very pleasant evening.

Saturday morning, started MM4 and it seemed rather noisy. Checked and found the exhaust had cracked at the flange where it meets the exhaust manifold. I reversed the car out and noticed there wasn't a lot of oil on the ground, so in true English fashion I assumed there wasn't much oil left and checked the oil level. Down two quarts, which was a bit of a worry as it was perfect when I left Castlemaine. Not to worry, oil is cheap, and I had spare oil in the boot. Topped it up and onto the display site between the hotel and the river, which had tarpaulins laid out to protect the grass (excellent idea, and participants kept the tarps when finished). As MM4 was not up to the presentation standard of the other participants, I settled for display only.



Sunday, 9:30am and onto the PS Industry, the local tourist Paddle Steamer, which was restored and is now run by volunteers. Where would we be without them? A wonderful 2 hour cruise, with Devonshire tea, raffles (which Lotte won), real koalas in the trees lining the riverbank (we definitely saw 3), and an excellent running commentary.

Off to Ruston's Rose Garden and Historic Car Museum for a gourmet picnic lunch.

Beautiful and extensive commercial rose garden but it was almost too warm to enjoy (temp by this time hitting the low 30s), but lovely and cool inside where there was also a shop and cafe.

The Sunday night Presentation Dinner was held at the Hotel which meant no more driving so we could relax and have a drink. Very pleasant evening with an interesting ice-breaker game, raffles, and all the awards handed out. The Fred Pieteron Birthday Rally – or so we dubbed it as he deservedly swept the prize pool, including Ladies Choice and Best on Display. Well done Fred - all that and a surprise birthday call from your daughter in England as well!

Monday Morning – called in to the local Auto-Pro and bought some exhaust repair bandage, muffler putty, hose clamps, and did a quick and nasty repair to the exhaust system. Seemed to fix it as it was quiet once again. We are a bit late to the farewell breakfast, although some participants had left early, but still enjoyed coffee and a muffin and final goodbyes.

We stayed an extra day to see some more of the area and visit an antique shop in Paringa and local wineries Angoves and Mallee. It was still very warm but a cool change was promised, so we were very happy to have waited.



Tuesday morning and we were ready to leave by 7:45am and noticed MM4 was quite noisy again, so we detoured to a local exhaust shop for a quick check. Fortunately he was open and willing to have a look, so he moved the Valiant Charger off the hoist. Three and a half hours later and we were on our way.

There were difficulties removing 50 year old exhaust nuts and studs, with a variety of breakages, mixed with colourful language. This sort of breakdown is unforeseeable and is part of the joy of old cars. Fortunately it was fixed before heading into the desert, for as soon as the repairer touched the exhaust pipe, it separated completely - it was barely hanging on. It was only a matter of time before it broke away on its own and had it been in the middle of the nowhere.....



We decided to come a different way home, via Pinnaroo instead of Mildura, on the recommendation of two separate sets of locals: "that's the way the buses go" etc. Nice drive, but it took over an hour longer, which given our late start meant an even later homecoming. The weather was thankfully a lot cooler as we followed the rain, but we had a fierce cross wind which made for a very tiring and difficult trip home.

MM4 didn't miss a beat, coping much better than its occupants with this leg of the journey. We arrived home about 8:30pm, completely shattered, but glad we went and glad to be back home again. Lotte then set the alarm for 5.20am to go to work in the morning!

Attendance:

Approx. 90 humans, 35 cars and 5 bicycles. There were also 9 "other" cars, just to prove that you didn't have to have a Humber to join in and have a good time!

Victorian Participants:

Colin & Anne Anderson, Alan & Margaret Arthur, Ron Forth, Chas and Margaret Grimes, Andy Heal, Neil & Kathleen Hiho, Ray & Lotte Linden, Fred Pieteron, Gaston & Cheryl Saint, Don & Pat Smith, Roy & Jan Strange, Ian & Thelma Watson, Keith & Margaret Willimott.



MM4 Vital statistics:

908 Miles (1471 Kilometres)

20.26 MPG

2 kilos extra weight on each passenger

All of which adds up to a most enjoyable rally!

Lotte and Ray