

# RALLY NOTES



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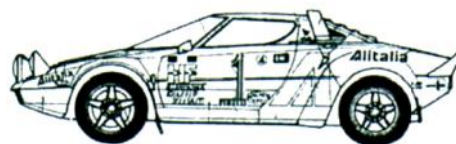
**OUR NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING WILL BE  
5th of AUGUST.  
7:00pm @ WALLSEND DIGGERS**



AHRG is a CAMS affiliated club.

Australian Historic Rally Group Inc.  
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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT JUNE 2014



Hello , and welcome to our bi annual magazine. A new committee was elected at the AGM in February with a reshuffle of some positions. Welcome to our new editor Darren Grainger, I wish him well for his first magazine.

The Fluffy Duck was directed by Ron Fraser with help from David Brown. Food was the order of the day, with breakfast at a small coffee lounge in Carrington. Lunch was at the Paxton Pub, with enough food on the plate to feed two people. After a day of navigation and a quick squirt in the dirt at MGCC Ringwood Motorsport complex we all finished near Hue Hue Road , in the midst of a storm.

The Night Owl is the next event on the calendar, followed by the Heart of the Hunter in August. John Collins is doing a great job as our webmaster and keeps information up to date on our website. John & Carey Fraser competed in Targa Tasmania and came away with a Targa trophy and a class win, well done. The committee has agreed to accept "events of interest" into our calendar to allow more use of club plated vehicles. If you have a motoring event which you would like to attend contact our secretary Kay Fraser for inclusion/invite to the event.

A few of our members will be competing in the Alfa Romeo/Classic Car Club Winter Classic at the end of June. The event will be run around the Southern highlands, with map reading navigation or tulip chart instructions on offer for the novice. The novice instructions are advertised as "No divorces here", which is a great idea to get spouses involved.

The MGCC extension to the Ringwood Hillclimb has been approved after a final track inspection from CAMS. The race track next door has been marked out with pegs and the vegetation removed. Should be ready early 2015. The central coast is pushing ahead with Casa Park, another motor sport complex near Tooheys Road. This brings up the question, as a rally group are we interested in hiring these complexes in the future and running events for our members ? Please make your voice heard as a club member and let the committee know how you feel.

Hope to see you at an event soon, yours in Rallying, Geoff Thomas.

**Patron: Ruth West**

President/Vehicle Examiner	Geoff Thomas	4957 0999
Vice Pres/Web Master	John Collins	0402 131 472
Secretary	Kay Fraser	0404 497 401
Treasurer/Membership Sec.	Karen Piggott	0412 133 899
Club Captain	David Mitchell	0407 450 053
Eligibility	Peter Meddows	4936 1588
Public Officer	Darval Thomas	4920 7961
CAMS delegate	Rod Towers	0408 291 203
Club Capt./Scorer	David Mitchell	0407 450 053
Editor	Darren Grainger	0437 673 932
Club Scrutineer	Brian Lawler	

General Committee;  
Rod Piggott  
Carey Fraser

**2014 Calendar****Club Meeting Dates**

Our meetings are held every second Tuesday of each alternate month

excepting the AGM. at 7:00pm

Meetings will continue to be held at Wallsend Diggers unless otherwise advised.

Tuesday 5th August  
Tuesday 7th October  
Tuesday 2nd December

**Club Event Dates**

(See website for full sup regs and info )

Heart of the Hunter. 16th August 2014

Evan Green. 8th/9th November 2014.

**AHRG WEBSITE**

Visit [www.historically.com.au](http://www.historically.com.au)

Many thanks to all those who have made valuable contributions to the website.  
If you would like to contribute, please contact : [secretary.ahrg@gmail.com](mailto:secretary.ahrg@gmail.com)



## Heart of the Hunter

Touring Assembly

**Saturday 16th of August**

Australian Historic Rally Group  
Route

Chart navigation  
(No silly questions)

ALL Tar Sealed Roads

Come and enjoy some of the best roads the Hunter Valley has to offer.

Start : Freemans Water Hole Shell Service Station.

Drivers briefing 9.00am first car 9.30am

ENTRY FEE : \$ 50.00

Cheques payable to : A.H.R.G.

Send entries to Ron Fraser

Event Secretary

2A/50 Northcott Drive

KOTARA. 2289.

ALL C.A.M.S affiliated clubs invited

Unregistered vehicle permits WILL BE accepted.

Historic Registered vehicles encouraged to compete.

Entries and supplementary regulations

[www.historicrally.com.au](http://www.historicrally.com.au)

or ph 02 49570880

## Message Board

### Notice To All Members

All members with historic registration please note:

The Committee has voted and passed the following: Historic Plate Holders registered with AHRG must compete in **at least one organized event** during the year to retain certification by the club. ALL Historic Plate holders must be financial members of the club or their Registration is null and void i.e. your car is unregistered. The club registrar will keep a record of members' participation in club events and has Committees approval to decline renewal of registration if the above is not adhered to.

This has been decided for the benefit of the club and its members. Some members cars have not been seen at club events for years and the same can be said of the members.

**On the subject of membership please note that all memberships end at the end of December each year and should be renewed BEFORE then to maintain your membership of the club and also legal registration of historic vehicles registered under the club.**

### Editors Message

Many thanks to those members contributing articles to be added for our newsletter especially the Fraser clan for this month. Please don't hesitate to email short stories to be shared by our club by emailing to [darren.garinger@hotmail.com](mailto:darren.garinger@hotmail.com) for upcoming editions.

### Classifieds

Just a notice to all Members that if anyone wants to sell or buy or swap club car related parts or vehicles please feel free to email a short text and minimal amount of pictures through and I will endeavour to get it into the Rally Notes.

You can email an advert to [darren.grainger@hotmail.com](mailto:darren.grainger@hotmail.com)

Any losses (or scam attempts) will be handled by police but AHRG accepts no liability whatsoever.



## ANSWER THE QUESTION

When was the last time you had the opportunity to get Ari Vatanen's autograph? When was the last time you saw Ari Vatanen the flesh? Have you ever actually seen Ari anywhere other than on a rally video. You would have to be lucky.

Peter and Steve Fraser decided to go to Canberra to watch the 1st Round of the Australian Rally Championships held some weeks ago, end of February early March. Their last visit to Canberra was ten years ago. Included in the party were Steve's sons, Jack and Toby the intention being to blood them into motor sport particularly rallying as we know it. Ages 10 and 7, both ARGH prospects. It was an easy drive down, staying at a Best Western motel and eating at Goulburn's famous Paragon cafe going and coming.

The rally started near Parliament House at Actor Park with a roll up of FIFTY NINE cars! Something to cause one's heart to pump a little harder. The field catered for 2 categories the ARC championship and the NSW State championship and what a wide spread of different vehicles. Hondas, Citroen, Peugeot, Renault. BDA Escorts, ever faithful Datsun 1600s, Neil Bates's Celica, a M3 BMW and a Porsche 911. A field that would bring to mind of a start of an AHRG event from Freeman's Water Holes!

The roads used were of course those used so many times over the years, good gravel and plenty of it. The boys watched a particular section called Pedders Power Stage which was a 3km blast on tight turns which had attracted quite a few spectators. It was between car arrivals to test their talent over the section that Peter turned his attention to admiring the local scenery. He noticed a tall fair haired slim built man standing not that far away. He nudged his brother Steve and said, "Who does that bloke remind you of? A bit thinner, but there's a resemblance don't you reckon?" Steve turned and took a good look at the man in question. He said, "Do you know he's more than a look alike. It's Ari Vatanen. Anyhow, let's go and check." I said, "How?" Steve said, "Let's go and ask. So this is what we did."

He had started to walk away, up the hill and there were more people than we two who had recognized him but they kept moving aside as he approached probably not wishing to intrude. But we did. With a friendly Newcastle smile we got close and asked if he would allow us to take a photo. He smiled and said "Yes of course" in his heavy Finnish accent. He was still quite reserved in his attitude. The boys thanked him for the time taken, then Steve decided to ask Ari how his son was handling the rally scene, the pressure he was under being Ari's son. It opened the floodgates and Ari could not have been more openly friendly toward them after that, and mentioned the late Henri Toivonen who was killed with his navigator some years ago. It was the highlight of the trip for them and the photo they have secured is a beauty. We hope to reproduce it in the club's publication.

That great Australian rally personality and national champion and Iarrikin Ross Dunkerton was also standing close by and after viewing some of the current vehicles contesting the Australian Title sliding past labeled it, Boring. It appears that Ari was flown out by the organizers to add a touch of class to the event.



## Who is this Ari Vatanen guy, anyway?

Born in Finland in 27 April 1952

First professional rally was in 1970

First WRC rally was the 1974 Thousand Lakes Rally

His first international rally was in 1975 in Jamaica driving a Datsun 120Y

World Rally Championships 1974 - 1998 , 2003

World Rally Champion in 1981 (and youngest driver to achieve it)

Paris-Dakar Rally winner 1987, 1989, 1990, 1991



Set a record time at Pikes Peak in 1988 in a Peugeot 405 which featured in the 1989 film "Climb Dance"

Check it out on YouTube at;

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=295SCGR-1ZA>

Or search;

1988 Pikes Peak's Climb - Ari Vatanen Onboard in the 405 T16 Peugeot (HD 720p)

Ari had many more wins in his career, competing in 101 international events

After he retired from rallying he entered Politics in 1999 and was elected to the European Parliament

Since 2013 Ari Vatanen has been the President of the Estonian Autosport Union



## DES WEST

### Patron of the A.H.R.G. (Aren't We Lucky?)

Together with his wife Ruth, the support they have given to our club over the years has been immeasurable. Given that he was recently acknowledged as being no 21 in the list of Australia's greatest motor sport drivers, and think about who would be actually included, how could he possibly be interested in driving his campervan around the country to be a steward which is required to enable us to run our events, both he and Ruth. I have had the pleasure of being in their company over many years, when they have arrived at the start of a rally, and found that they always blend into the crowd at the various control areas, greeting people they knew without fanfare and I can say genuinely enjoying the day's activities. Keep in mind that these two wonderful people have rubbed shoulders over the years with the likes of Peter Brock, the Geoghegan brothers, and the rest of the top of the heap in the motoring world and sat alongside Sir Jack Brabham at a recent social motoring function. Des was asked by a friend as to how he addressed Sir Jack. He said, 'I called him Jack that's the way I've always known him. And why not? When one looks into Des's motoring history in this country, as we shall over the next few months, he is entitled to speak to the best of them on the same level. People with knowledge engaged in the various activities that go to provide interest for the rest of us have come to the conclusion that the various individuals that reach the top of the tree in their various activities, be it golf, tennis, athletics, motor sport have been lucky enough to have been born with that extra something, that gift that takes them over and above the rest of the pack. We can go and practice till the cows come home, and can improve in a big way, but come up against the top performer in their field, and we just get knocked off, so to speak. The gift that makes the difference is something they have but can't relate to you even if they want to, Des had that extra. He could not have achieved so much in the time he was active piloting motor vehicles. Add to this, he built and prepared his cars in his workshop, and also built motors for some of the big named motoring personalities of the day. Among these were the famous Geoghegan brothers.

Someone told me once that it's got to be in the genes. It has been inherited in certain cases from somewhere or someone in the family history. Well in the Des West story it could well be the case.

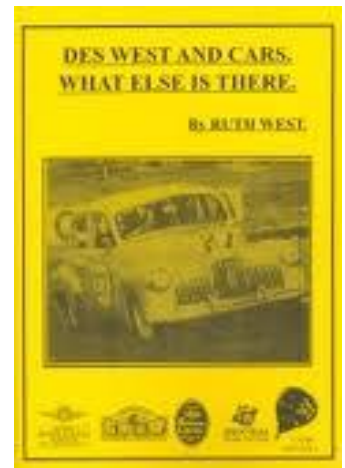
Grandfather Horace raced motor bikes even before the Great War of 1914, a belt driven thrasher and history records that this type of machine was used in competition back as far as 1908. It appears that there has always been a competitive flame burning inside of certain members of the human race in that they want to race something and beat someone with it.

Around this time, the rev heads of the day were continually annoying the cops as well as certain narrow minded townfolk by attempting to establish the quickest time between either Sydney and Melbourne or Sydney and Brisbane or in reverse over roads that weren't even thought of in those days. Eventually as usual the staid, conservative, unimaginative, stodgy citizens of the day were able to have restrictions enforced and stifled motor sport, with little exception.

Meantime, Horace entered his bike in a rally that would be classed in this age as a big one, Sydney to Melbourne, promoted as a Reliability Run as previously mentioned over roads that were to be a thing of the future. And to add to the excitement, at one stage it rained in a big way just hours after the start. The front runners arrived at a creek that was classed as impassable. Horace watched it get even deeper as the rain kept falling, and no doubt he felt the others were about to toss it in. He picked up his bike, (they were only little small single cylinders those days with a leather belt to drive the back wheel), slung it over his shoulder waded through the now swollen creek and might have been entitled to wave ta ta to the others. He went on to win what could only be even now a marathon event.



As Ruth West says in her wonderful book, "Des West and Cars, What Else Is There?" he established a lasting memory for his son and grandson, our Des, to emulate. The early days were spent in and around Holbrook and Naranderra down south, but Grandpop Horace and his brothers Percy, Lindsay and Fred moved to Casino and established a workshop repairing machinery, tractors and anything else needing attention. They built their own press to remove the solid rubber tyres that were in use at that time and add to this their own generating plant and so had the first electricity in Casino. I did mention earlier that Horace had picked up his motor bike and carried it through the creek that was deep enough to drown in. Well I had a look at a photo of Horace standing alongside a car and I reckon he was big enough as a young man to pick up the car itself if he had to.



Later they helped out the local picture theatre owner and supplied them with power. As usual as now, there were always the presence of the local louts making their presence felt, and on the Saturday nights when the movies were showing, at interval they would go behind the theatre and pee on the corrugated iron sheets that formed the back wall of the West's workshop. No doubt thought it a great joke being what they were; scumbags. The West boys thought it a bit on the rich side, and proceeded to wire up the metal rear wall to the electric supply source, and needless to say, the very next night of the movies, at interval, the screams of pain coming from the hoods after getting shocks where it hurt most, between their legs, brought the practice to an abrupt halt.

You constantly hear the word genes these days when it comes to human behaviour and there has to be a lot in favour of believing in the theory. Des's father Lindsay was also as his father Horace was into motor bikes and being a mechanic, knew how to make them go. He entered and won the North Coast Motor Bike Championships in 1926, and won. On poor roads at the time, the competitors also raced on the sand on Tallow Beach, a stretch south of Byron Bay. (I might mention we in Newcastle back in the forties had motor bike thrashes on the sand, at Morna Point, Port Stephens so its always been on, somewhere or another.)

Des was born in 1928 and at the age of four years hung around his father as he worked on cars and bikes, he watched dad do some wiring under the dash of a Wolseley Hornet so he had a crack at continuing the job and needless to say the result was not in the best interest of his father or no doubt the owner. It had to be done again, Des was put to bed early that night.

These were times with practically no roads from Sydney to the north, new cars arrived on barges from the Distributors and were jumped from one barge to another to unload, but also supplied was a new set of springs installed to make up for any damage, no doubt that might have occurred during unloading. He was allowed only to watch as his father painted the Hornet some time later no doubt by hand in those days. Des however despite the uproar he had caused in the family with his wiring effort thought he might try his hand with the paint brush but keeping clear of newly painted car, went to work with Dad's paint and more he found in the shed, on the family wood heap, with the result of a cream and green stack of firewood.

This time, he went to bed early with a sore bum, as a result of contact with a leather strap in the hands of father who mentioned at the time that he was just as hurt by punishment being administered as Des was in coping it.

His record as a young growing lad shows that his heart has always been in the right place, always with the view that he should be contributing to the family in some way. Keeping clear of his father for a time, he should do something to help his mother especially with her chores. Obviously in those days, women worked hard physically, and young Des had watched his mum among other things scrub down the boards of the verandah with a scrubber and sandstone block. He decided he should give her a spell. He obviously knew what was needed to carry out the job, but had trouble in finding the sandstone block she had always used, but eventually located in of all places their ice box

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Water and sandstone after a treatment with some muscle power to help would normally dry out very quickly, but when the family arrived home only half the verandah was done, and certainly had not dried out. Young Des was advised by a certainly incensed father that the sandstone block he had used on the verandah was indeed a pound of butter so that there was always the possibility that someone could go down on their backside as well as leaving his mother short for the sandwiches for next days lunches. He went to bed again with a sore bum.

As a last effort to create an impression within the family, he suggested to his sister who had a nice head of hair, that a trim would definitely improve her appearance. So he went to work with the scissors which resulted in a final punishment and a definite end to young Westie's efforts to gain recognition within the family enclave. He decided as young as he was, to concentrate on the mechanical activities that were always happening not far from the front door.

More to come. Ron Fraser.



## Targa Tasmania 2014

Another year, another Targa. Last year was not a good year with a couple of mechanical problems although we managed to finish. This year I made sure there would not be a repeat of last year's problems. Once again John Collins agreed to navigate for me which I was very happy about as we get on very well together which is important in a 6 day event.

The RX7 was ready to go about a month or more before the event which was a change. The only major work to the car from 2013 was to have the gearbox reconditioned after last year's problem of having to drive the car all day with no clutch as my brand new clutch lasted all of 4 hours.

2014 was the first year in quite a few years that Geoff Thomas was not running due to business commitments with only 3 cars from the Hunter (two immaculate HQ Holdens from the Maitland area) competing. Geoff was sorely missed.

The usual trek to Tassie involves towing the Mazda behind the trusty Pajero with an overnight stay in Holbrook. The next day travelling to Melbourne and unloading the car from the trailer and then driving both cars onto the Ferry (much cheaper than bringing car trailer onto ferry).

This was our eighth crossing of Bass Strait and by far the worse. On leaving Port Phillip Bay the Captain announced that the crossing will be "Lumpy". Lumpy was an understatement, winds were gale force with sea spray level with our porthole which was on Level 8; highest deck on the Spirit. It was hard to sleep as the ship was banging and crashing so badly it kept waking us up. In the middle of the night Kay commented "I can't remember putting the handbrake on in the Pajero."

We arrived in Devonport at 6am and drove straight to the Raspberry Farm which is a favorite haunt for Targa competitors for a fabulous breakfast (sorry you missed this Geoff), then onto Launceston for scrutineering. With scrutineering out of the way it was time to relax for the rest of the day and off to the Country Club for driver's briefing and then the Welcoming Party which included all you can eat and drink which we had to do. Peter, Kay and John had a great night.

Targa Tasmania started on Tuesday 6th May for two stages including a 4.1klm town stage (Prologue) around the streets of Georgetown which is 40klms north of Launceston. All went well and that was the competitives for day 0. The times for the Prologue decide the start position for Day 1.

As the Targa Stage Map shows it is a full on event covering 2000klms with 600klms being competitive.

Targa Tasmania is a tough event to compete in and when you have no service crew it can be even harder. Up to the end of leg 3 competitors can buy fuel at Servos along the way. Leg 4 and 5 require service crews to keep cars fuelled up because the West Coast has limited fuel outlets. John and I run on our own from leg 4 when we are forced to buy fuel off private companies who park in predetermined spots along the route and fill you from Utes with 44 gallon drums with hand pumps. You can pay \$2.80 per litre but it's better than running out of fuel and not finishing the event.



Traditionally, Targa is for the most part a wet event. This year the first three days were dry and then the rain came. To describe the conditions I would have to say extremely slippery. Day 4 saw 30 cars go off and the Mazda was wheel spinning in 3<sup>rd</sup> gear every time I gave it a bit. There were cars off everywhere including Jim Richards in his brand new Porsche Cayman, and the leaders of the event Jason and John White in their EVO. The stage that they went off was diabolical; I couldn't keep the RX7 Straight at any speed. It is reported that a local tipped oil or diesel on the actual corner where Richards and the White's went off (obviously not a happy resident).

My wife, Kay and son, Peter were supposed to be our service crew but spent more time in coffee shops, chocolate and cheese factories etc. Without the luxury of a full on service crew we had to carry all our spares and tools and buy our fuel. But who am I to complain!

Upon arriving in Strahan (2 night stay) I decided to change the front brakes pads. I had a spare set on board and proceeded to fit them only to find that while they were the correct length, width, etc they were too thick. Luckily for us a fellow competitor from Maitland, Darren Meyer came to the rescue (he had a fantastic service crew in Strahan) and ground down the pads with an angle grinder. Yes, you wouldn't normally do that but it was that or retire from the event. The first stage next day proved challenging as the steering wheel shook itself to pieces under breaking until the pads wore down evenly and then it was back to normal. Thanks Darren.

The stages from Strahan to the finish in Hobart were enjoyable and by this time the rain had stopped and we had a few dry stages. Around 3pm we reached Hobart and drove to Wrest Point Casino for the official finish and a well-deserved beer.

The Mazda performed faultlessly. All John and I had to do at the end of every day was to check all the fluids, wheel nuts, tyre pressure etc. and to finish without a scratch or a mechanical problem just adds to the enjoyment of this fantastic event.

Without describing actual stages in my opinion the roads are second to none. This event is very unique in that major roads are closed to the public for up to 4 hours at a time so competitors can drive on some of the best tar roads in the world.

John did a great job calling Pace Notes and is definitely off his P Plates. I'd also like to thank the crew, John, Kay and Peter for making each night at the pub at Evandale even more enjoyable.



For those who have never been to spectate or compete at Targa Tasmania it is a definite must do and should be put on your bucket list. With a field around 130 for this year more than half would have been classic cars so worth the effort to have a look at both old and new.

Carey Fraser



