

# RALLY NOTES



## Gerry Crown & Matt Bryson The Road to Mandalay Rally



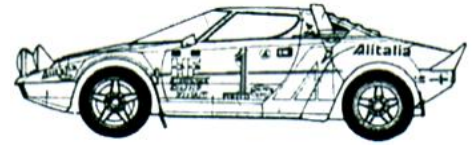
**OUR NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING WILL BE  
2nd of JUNE  
7:00pm @ WALLSEND DIGGERS**



AHRG is a CAMS affiliated club.

Australian Historic Rally Group Inc.  
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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT MAY 2015



I hope all of our members have survived the recent 'big wet'. The planning of the Heart of the Hunter has been put on hold. Most of the roads I would normally use are under water or drying out.

Darren Grainger & Rod Conry have just returned from Targa Tasmania . They successfully made it through the tough 6 day tarmac rally and were rewarded with targa trophies. The 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary event will be run next year, so Carey Fraser & Myself have already made a commitment to compete.

The Fluffy Duck has been run and won, with congratulations to Bernard & Madilon Corbett on their win. Ron Fraser & David Brown selected some great tarmac & dirt roads. I really enjoyed the Yango forest roads and the beef pie at the St Auburns pub. I dropped a wheel off the side of the road , however found it in the bush and kept going.

Dan Robinson has the Des West Winter Classic well under control. This is shaping up to be a fantastic event with lots of forest trails. The route will pass through Wingham to honour our past club patron Des. Book the 27<sup>th</sup> of June into your diary , fridge door calendar, mobile phone NOW !

The club is in good hands with our current committee. We are financially stable and continually discussing future events for our members to enjoy. I would like to see more inter club competition. Many of our members travel south and compete in navigation events held by Sydney clubs. How do we encourage them to travel north and compete in our prestige events ? Don't forget MGCC Newcastle have a touring assembly on Sunday the 31<sup>st</sup> of May, leaving their Cobby Street clubhouse at 9.30 am . Details are on their web site or call the director Colin Bray ph 0408994093.

Congratulations to club member Matt Bryson & Gerry Crown, with a second outright result in the Road to Mandalay Rally driving a V8 Leyland P76. Matt drove up to Newcastle to run the motor in before shipping the car to Malaysia. I had a good look over it and was impressed with Matt's preparation, which paid off. Four countries, 24 days and 7,600 klms Matt & Gerry missed 1<sup>st</sup> place by 1 second. Great to have an AHRG member on the world map of motorsport.

Hope to see you at an event soon.

Yours in Rallying,  
Geoff Thomas.

## 2015 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 2nd June  
Tuesday 4th August  
Tuesday 6th October  
Tuesday 1st December

### Club Event Dates

(See website for full sup regs and info )

**Des West Winter Classic** 27th June

**Heart of the Hunter** 15th August

**Evan Green** 14th November

**Christmas Run** 5th December

## Club Details

### Patron: Ruth West

#### Office Bearers;

President/Vehicle Examiner	Geoff Thomas	4957 0999
Vice President/Membership Sec.	Dan Robinson	49516229
Secretary	Kay Fraser	0404 497 401
Treasurer	Karen Piggott	0412 133 899
Eligibility	Peter Meddows	4936 1588
Public Officer	Darval Thomas	4920 7961
CAMS delegate	Rod Towers	0408 291 203
Club Capt./Scorer	Laurie Gahan	49511300
Editor/Web Master	Darren Grainger	0437 673 932

#### General Committee;

Rod Piggott  
Carey Fraser  
Andrew Park

## AHRG WEBSITE

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



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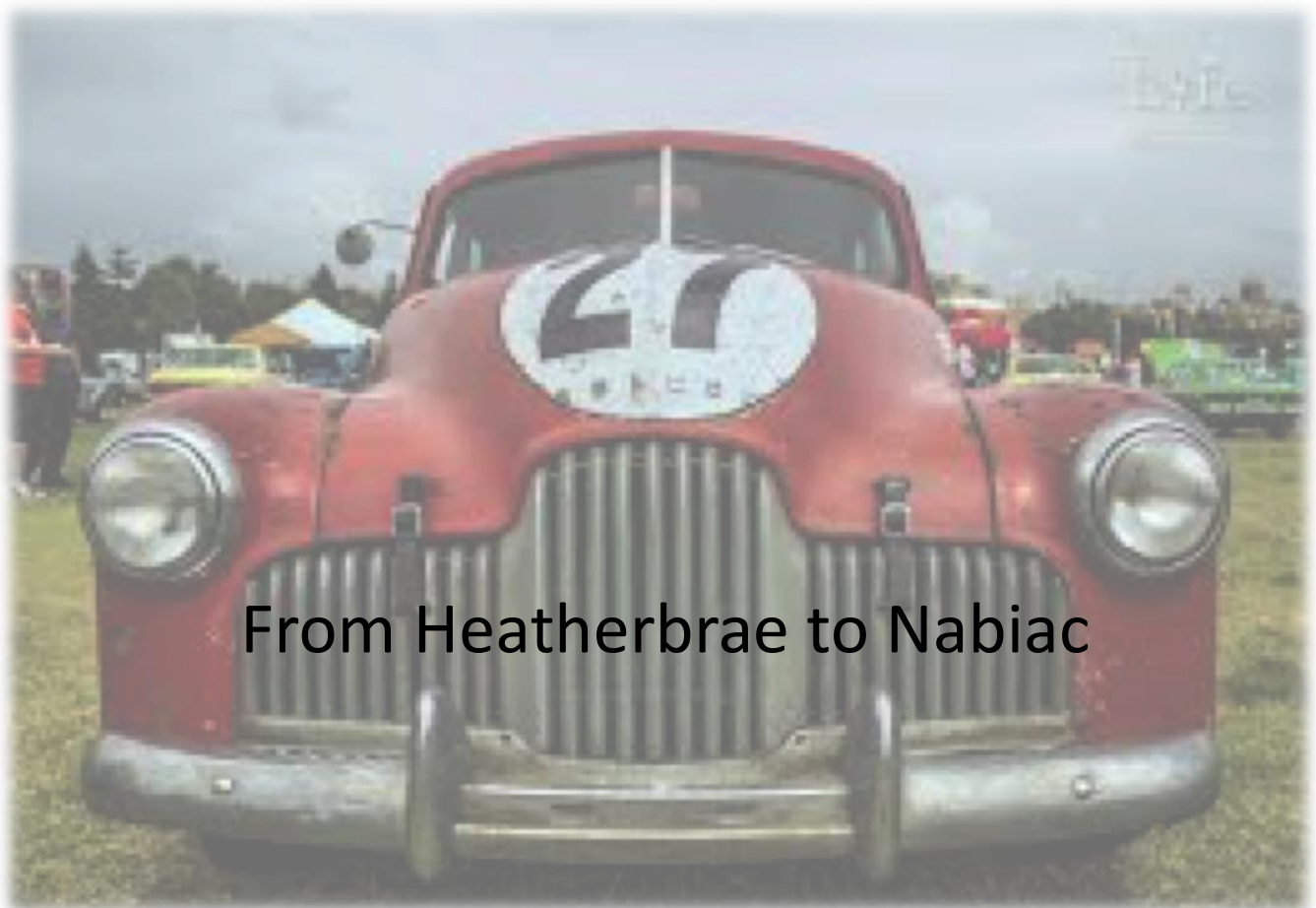
Rally Notes is published by AHRG Inc. to provide information for members of the Club. The opinions and advice expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily represent those of the Historic Rally Group Inc. the editor, or its officers, and no responsibility will be accepted.



# Des West Winter Classic

June 27th, 2015

"Come and join us"



From Heatherbrae to Nabitac

Download supp regs at website  
[www.http://historically.com.au/](http://historically.com.au/)



## Heart of the Hunter

Touring Assembly

**Saturday 15th 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 will be posted

[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. 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.

## Fluffy Duck 2015

In an effort to upstage Geoff Thomas' Heart of the Hunter and take over rally prominence in the club, it was decided to run two events within the one, in this year's Fluffy Duck.

I suggested to David Brown who designed the course that we have an all bitumen section and also one which covered gravel as well. I thought the numbers might grow, and I could then offer a little sympathy to Geoff by recording a higher amount of contestants. It didn't work but we did have what I think was a good day.

This also required two sets of instructions and two extra control officials, but on the day it showed that it can be done. Starting from Wyong both sections worked its way towards Kurri Kurri and Newcastle, with a meal break for the bitumen competitors at Laguna. The competitors in the gravel section were instructed to check into Laguna but proceed onto St Albans for their meal break. This involved a 33 kilometer section of gravel. I had some concern about the condition of the roads due to heavy rains that had fallen previously and thought that we would get half a dozen runners with the majority wanting to run the bitumen. What a surprise, it went in reverse, and most of the competitors preferred to run the gravel section of the event.

The finish was at the Golf Club at Mangrove Mountain with all 14 competitors finishing without drama with exception of one competitor. Geoff Thomas had the disadvantage of losing his left hand rear wheel off the Fiat which caused an immediate bank up of the following competitors. However Geoff managed to finish the event.

I had great plans for the Peugeot Rally Team as well as my grandson, Troy Fraser taking out the all bitumen section. In effect the Fraser's were to rain supreme on the day. Troy Fraser was the quickest competitor in his Skyline R34 GTR Vspec having passed several controls without stopping and missing three quarters of the boards and wondered where everyone else was at the finish. Needless to say he came last.

In the Peugeot 404 the second string to the Fraser camp were Peter Fraser and his dad Carey navigating. I would have thought they were a hot prospect for glory, not having in twenty odd years in the club ever featuring in an AHRG event together. Unfortunately at Laguna, after being instructed to leave the car and walk up to the coffee shop and check into the control and then return to the car to proceed to St Albans for lunch, they were distracted for some particular reason didn't check in and did a major control.

There were several questions to be answered by competitors and for some strange reason Carey forgot to transpose the answers from his notes to the answer sheet. The result, last place in the gravel competition.

By all accounts everyone enjoyed the event.

Ron Fraser.



## Targa Tasmania 2015

2015 saw the return to Tasmania for Rod Conry and myself after skipping the last three years. With the car sitting in the shed at home since Tassie in 2011, we dropped the oil and coolant, repainted the wheels, changed a few stickers (added the AHRG), loaded the Evo onto the trailer, and headed south.

With the bypass now open around Holbrook, the run down to Melbourne really is an easy one and even with the car trailer on the back, only took about ten hours. After leaving the trailer in Port Melbourne we headed off in search of our service crew, a couple of suspect Kiwi mates who flew into Melbourne that morning, lucky for us it didn't take much find them, nearest pub to the ferry wharf and there they were.

Lots of things can change in three years and the first thing we noticed was a lack of cars waiting to load on-to the ferry on Friday night, last time was a record entry list, and the line of cars went for miles, this year was quite a lot less. After all the storms in Newcastle before we left, the weather in the strait was calm and it was an easy run across to Devonport and one thing that hadn't changed, the Raspberry Farm for a big breakfast.

After waiting patiently for Targa to open their doors, we were entered and heading for scrutineering. This year Hans devices were mandatory so we picked up a couple from Geoff Thomas a month or two earlier, unfortunately for me, mine was still sitting in the wardrobe in Lake Macquarie so I'm now the proud owner of two. After a quick glance over the car and safety gear, we were done, the car parked in the Silverdome, and seeing as it was Anzac day, we were off looking for a game of two up.

The biggest change came with the new format for the event which is now officially six days. The regular Tuesday start with Prologue in George Town on day zero has now been replaced with starting on Monday with three stages run before the Prologue called day one, followed by the usual stages based out of Launceston.

We learnt about the next change when we were slapped with a five minute penalty for being *too fast* on the first stage. Stages one and two have always been untimed to allow drivers to build up to the higher speeds and feel out the car. This year a new rule was implemented which prescribed minimum times to complete the first three stages. Luckily for us (and two thirds of the field), the change had not been included in the supplementary regulations and a check of the National Rally Rules proved the change had not been communicated correctly and the penalty was invalid. Note to anyone running next year, the first three stages will have a minimum time for the stages.

Day 4 gave us controversy when a large amount of sump oil was found on the entry to a hairpin on the Mole Creek stage with speculation a local wasn't that happy to allow us the pleasure of his road.

Fortunately that was the only stage in the event we weren't able to run at pace with the dry conditions helping keep the majority of cars on the black stuff. Many of the drivers who had run full recce were talking about some brand new tarmac on the Mt Roland/Cethana stage which sounded promising, but alas, council canned that plan and the stages were shortened to keep us off the good stuff.

This year was my return to the driver's seat after an ugly attempt at driving on my first stage in 2008 that managed to park the car on its roof over the side of The Sidling. The good news for my ego and wallet this year was that I managed my stages behind the wheel without incident, and still had a mate in the passenger seat. For Rod, sitting in the passenger seat and calling pace notes didn't come naturally, but with only a couple of short "I'm off the notes" managed well. Day 4 Rod took the wheel and drove down the west coast to Strahan, across to Hobart, with Day 6 a short run down to the southern loop and back which saw us at the finishing line by 12:00 to collect our finishing medals and Targa plates.

The next big change to the event this year was moving the finish from the traditional Wrestpoint Casino into the city where we finished at the International Shipping Terminal with staggered presentations as each class crossed the line. Without any bars nearby, we ended up around the corner in a car park with a few other teams having a beer out of the esky before heading back to the Targa Bar at the casino for a couple of quiet ales.

So with nothing but the return trip on the ferry and a long drive home, Targa 2015 had been run and conquered, we enjoyed terrific weather with this year being only the second dry run (even though I may have tried a little rain dance before Queenstown to bring the big horsepower cars back to our level), our little Evo VI had completed its fifth full Targa (and one rather short run), and we had satisfied our need for speed for a while.

Darren Grainger



## P76 ON THE ROAD TO MANDALAY

“GONE IN 61 SECONDS”



In 2010 Gerry Crown and Matt Bryson conquered the Peking to Paris Motor Challenge in a 1964 EH Holden. An event Gerry had tried to win on two previous occasions, in 1997 with rally legend John Bryson in the same EH Holden finishing 5<sup>th</sup> and in 2007 with John's son Matt in a 1940 Buick Straight Eight finishing 29<sup>th</sup> after breaking the diff in half. Gerry and John also took part in the 2002 Trial to the Nile Rally in the EH. After the 2010 Peking to Paris it was decided to retire the old EH and build something faster and stronger, enter the Leyland P76. John Bryson knew the attributes of the P76 well and convinced Gerry that this is the way to go. The ultimate goal was the 2013 Peking to Paris.

Matt Bryson took charge of the build and the first event for the three of them was the 2012 Trans America Challenge, essentially a shakedown event for the Peking to Paris the following year. The result was an equal second place just 38 seconds behind the winning Jaguar. The P76 ran faultlessly and with a little fine tuning would be ready for the Peking to Paris. Twelve months later the Gerry, Matt and the P76 were dispatched to China and 33 days later Gerry and Matt took out their second Peking to Paris victory.

Time passed and the decision was made to do the 2016 Peking to Paris again in the P76 but new rules were set out for the event restricting some modifications to the cars, primarily the banning of fuel injection and remote canister shock absorbers. The P76 was rejigged with the new rules in mind and the 2015 Road To Mandalay Rally was chosen as the event for the shakedown run. This was seen to be a good test as a number of the other competitors in the event were also entered for the 2016 Peking to Paris including the Peter and Zoe Lovett Porsche 911 that chased Gerry and Matt across Asia and Europe two years before.

The Road To Mandalay Rally was different to the Trans America and Peking to Paris. The Trans America was all Regularity Trial and the Peking to Paris is basically all special stage. The Road To Mandalay was to be a combination of both with the common thread being the navigation across hundreds of kilometres every day. The rally departed from the world famous Raffles Hotel in Singapore on the morning of Sunday February 1. 66 classic and vintage rally cars ranging from a 1907 Itala 40 to Ford Mustangs, Datsun 240Zs and Porsche 911s including 1 Leyland P76 #66.

No sooner had the field crossed the border into Malaysia that the first Time Trial took place. Although this time trial was only short at around 8km, it was very tight and twisty with a high degree of navigation to get the correct route through the plantation, coupled with this it was very slippery and the big P76 was quite a handful. Gerry and Matt were up to the task though and managed to win the special stage by 4 seconds to the Peter and Zoe Lovett Porsche 911 and the Grant Tromans and Simon Russell Datsun 240Z. This was to set the tone for the whole rally as these three crews were consistently in the top group trading fastest times. The first five days of time trials was designated as The Malaysian Cup and although the 240Z was the fastest over two of the four time trials, the P76 was fastest overall and led the rally at the first rest day in Georgetown, Malaysia. Many cars were already experiencing problems including the 1970 Chevrolet Chevelle which required a clutch change. The only problem with the P76 was the exhaust flange bolts had come loose and blew the gasket. Matt dropped the sump guard, replaced the gaskets, nuts and bolts, everything else was OK. Gerry Crown was the fastest driver to this point and he was also the oldest at 82. You've got to respect those octogenarians.

On day 7 the rally crossed the border from Malaysia to Thailand but before leaving Malaysia there was one more time trial which Gerry and Matt won by 11 seconds to the Tromans 240Z and Lovett Porsche. The quote of the day came from Phillip Lunnion who drives the 1938 Jaguar SS 100 #11 who asked Matt after seeing the P76s time "is that a car or a time machine?" The run through Thailand took the rally past some of the worst hit areas from 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami. It was on day 8 that the regularity tests started. Up to this point Gerry and Matt in the P76 were on top but with a good result in the regularity tests the Lovett Porsche moved past the Tromans 240Z. Day 9 was another rest day in the tsunami ravaged town of Khao Lak and a wander through the car park told many stories of woe. The Greenhalgh/Slowe 1939 Alvis had taken a tooth off the crown wheel in their diff and weren't expected to get much further. The Heather and Jo Worth 1968 Volvo Amazon had their throttle jam wide open resulting in a dropped valve, holed piston and damaged head. The pushrod was removed and car continued on three cylinders. The Malaysian crew of the Jamalullails holed a piston in their Jaguar XK150. Gerry and Matt used the time to rest as the P76 was fine and there was still a long way to go.



Customs Malaysia to Thailand



Day 12 after leaving Hellfire Pass and into a couple of regularity tests was where Gerry and Matt made their one and only slip up. From Matt "Today wasn't our best day in terms of competition, but it was bound to happen somewhere. We made a navigational mistake on the first regularity and lost a minute. They put in a deliberate bit of trickery and we just misjudged it. I am told only 10 cars got the turn. A shame the Porsche was one of them." It was at this point the 46 second lead that Gerry and Matt had built up disappeared and became an 11 second deficit to the now leading Lovett Porsche and the Tromans 240Z just 46 seconds behind the P76. It was day 15 that the P76 struck its only other problem. While waiting for the start of one of the time trials the o-ring on the oil filter let go depositing engine oil all over the engine bay and the road. Thankfully there was no fire and due to the generosity of fellow Aussie Rob Garnsworthy, who was competing in the #68 Ford Mustang, Matt was able to quickly borrow a Z9 oil filter, swap them and refill the oil before starting.

Day 16 was another rest day and the last before heading into Myanmar (Burma). This again is a good opportunity to check over or "spanner" the car. No problems to report, just a lot of oil everywhere. Matts only complaint at this point was that there was too much regularity and not enough time trials as more time trials would have given them the opportunity to apply more pressure to the leading Porsche. Day 19 was designated as a rest day as crews and officials navigated their way through the processes of exiting Thailand and entering Myanmar (formerly known as Burma). Myanmar has been effectively closed to most foreigners for around 60 years with only some Chinese being let in for cultural events, so this was quite a big deal and testament to the work put in by Phillip Young and the team at the Endurance Rally Association. Gerry, Matt and the P76 were now only 2 seconds behind the Lovett Porsche and time was running out. Every time trial they take huge chunks of time off the Porsche only to lose some of it in the regularities. Peter and Zoe Lovett are accomplished regularity runners.

As the last days wound down with only three regularity test over days 22, 23 and 24 the pressure was on between the Lovett's and Gerry and Matt. The Tromans 240Z was close but not close enough to pounce unless the Porsche or P76 fouled up. Neither did. On Day 22 all top three lost only 2 seconds. No one was giving an inch. Day 23 saw the 240Z best and drop 5 seconds, Gerry and Matt dropped 7 seconds and the Lovett Porsche dropped 10 so now Gerry, Matt and the P76 were back in front by 1 second and only one day, one regularity test to go. Day 24 saw the finish in the ancient Capital City of then Burma, the city of Bagan but all eyes were now on the last regularity as the result here will determine the winner. Two of the top three cars did best dropping just 2 seconds. Unfortunately Gerry and Matt weren't one of them, they dropped 4 seconds leaving them 1 second behind the Lovett Porsche for second place. 4 countries, 24 days, 7,600 kms and only 1 second separated the top two cars. It just doesn't get any closer.

Peter and Zoe Lovett deserved the win. They were very quick winning two of the ten time trials but they were excellent in the regularity tests. Gerry and Matt have some heart to take away. They won The Malaysian Cup and was clearly the fastest special stage car there winning four out of the ten time trials. In hind sight that one 60 second navigation mistake on day 12 cost them the rally. Despite that deficit they clawed their way back to be in a position to challenge for the lead by the end of the rally. A truly magnificent effort. The Grant Tromans/Simon Russell 240Z was a serious threat throughout the event. They also won four of the 10 time trials but lost out in regularity. You can read Gerry and Matt's blog from the rally at <http://mandalayroadp76.blogspot.com.au/>

The final results are:

1st	#64 Peter and Zoe Lovett 1965 Porsche 911	1h 11m 20s
2nd	#66 Gerry Crown and Matt Bryson 1974 Leyland P76	1h 11m 21s
3 <sup>rd</sup>	#62 Grant Tromans and Simon Russell 1973 Datsun 240Z	1h 13m 04s
4 <sup>th</sup>	#56 Ludovic Bois and Julia Colman 1969 Volvo Amazon	1h 18m 24s
5 <sup>th</sup>	#52 Paul and Sandra Merryweather 1967 Mercedes Benz 300SE	1h 18m 44s

The Vintageant Category was dominated by three late 1930s Chevrolet Fangio Coupes. The US crew of Bill Shields and Scott Herbstman won by 45 seconds to Phil Garratt and Kieron Brown who in turn finished nearly 5 minutes in front of the Daniel Day/Ronald Doyle entry.

What Gerry and Matt brought away from this rally was the knowledge that the change in regulations for the 2016 Peking to Paris hasn't hurt the P76 too much. A bigger carburettor and some fine tuning to the shocks are all that's required. Australian Rally Hall of Fame inductee John Bryson has always said the Leyland P76 is the best long distance rally car he has ever seen. A second place in the 2012 Trans America, a win in the 2013 Peking to Paris and another second in the 2015 Road to Mandalay, some 40 years after the great result in the 1974 UDT World Cup Rally all go to reinforce John Bryson's statement. Gerry and Matt themselves obviously did a brilliant job themselves. Matt prepares the car and navigates; Gerry at 82 was the oldest driver in the rally and clearly showed his class as a rally driver. One wonders what history would show if Gerry had pursued a career in rally driving instead of his business interests a half a century ago. Congratulations to Gerry Crown, Matt Bryson and the Leyland P76. You are all "Anything but average".

Steve Maher

Reprinted with kind permission from Steve Maher and the Classic Rally Club *Rally Directions* (thanks to Bob Morey). Photos from Gerrard Brown & Matt Bryson.





**AHRG Inc.**  
**PO Box 987**  
**Warners Bay,**  
**NSW. 2264**

Email: membership.ahrg@gmail.com

**APPLICATION / RENEWAL OF FULL MEMBERSHIP**  
(Voting rights [AGM only], Committee eligibility, CAMS Licence validity, Newsletter)  
**APPLICATION / RENEWAL OF ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP (Newsletter)**

I, ..... (Full Name of Applicant)

of, ..... (Address & Postcode)

Home Ph: ..... Mob: .....

Email: .....

**Please print clearly (do not use if you don't want to receive club emails)**

I desire to become/renew as a Member/Associate Member. (Cross out non-applicable words) In the event of my admission as a Full Member, I agree to be bound by the Rules of the Australian Historic Rally Group Inc.

.....  
(Signature of Applicant)

Date:        /        /

**Direct Deposit**        **BSB: 182-222**  
**Account:**            **120660865**

Please email receipt of transfer to: membership.ahrg@gmail.com

Single Membership: \$35  
Family Membership: \$55  
Associate Membership: \$10

Cheques made payable to:        THE AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC RALLY GROUP INC.

CAMS Licence No:        .....

Competition:        .....

Official:        .....        .....        .....

Do you have a vehicle/s with Historic Rego?    Y / N        Facilitated by the AHRG?    Y / N

**Historic Vehicle/s**

<i>year</i>	<i>make</i>	<i>model</i>	<i>capacity</i>	<i>rego</i>
.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	.....

**NOMINATOR:**

I, ..... *a member of the AHRG. Nominate the applicant, who is personally known to me, for membership of the AHRG*

..... (Signature)

Date:        /        /

**SECONDER:**

I, ..... *a member of the AHRG., Second the applicant, who is personally known to me, for membership of the AHRG*

..... (Signature)

Date:        /        /