

Convoy To Ballarat 2009

On the Way There...

Members attending met at the Partridge VC rest area south of Campbelltown on Wednesday morning. Everybody turned up except Dave M, the only person who is always on time but still lives in the 19th century (no mobile phone). We picked up Paul S in the 54 Packard Convertible at the Yass Service Centre where we stopped for food and fuel before proceeding to our motel in Albury. It was here we met up with Dave M who left home on Queensland time, and missed us at Yass. At least he was safe.

The only people having car problems were Helen & myself in the 60 Lark. After the Lark's trip to Dubbo, we were lucky we didn't go to Mudgee on the Sunday night, as it failed to start the next time I tried to use it on the day I'd booked it in to get a slight exhaust leak fixed before we went to Ballarat. I had notified work that I would be in about an hour late but it was after 1pm before we dropped the Lark off at the exhaust shop. To prove where the problem was I ended up taking the rebuilt distributor out of the 64 Cruiser and installing it into the Lark.

It seemed to run well after that but after leaving the Partridge VC rest area it started to miss once again, not bad but noticeable. On arrival at our Motel in Albury we spied Scott R checking out another member's car with his timing light. Scott ended up checking the timing on the Lark and adjusted it as it was way out. Dinner that night was at the Commercial Club, the club that hosted the 2002 Albury Meet.

There was much discussion about the route we would be taking to Ballarat Thursday morning and as there was no official route, we split up into 2 groups, the V8's taking the freeway into the outskirts of Melbourne and direct to Ballarat, the others taking the scenic route via Bendigo.

We took the freeway route and after getting on the freeway in Wodonga (passing Harry K travelling in the wrong direction) and travelling 20km, I said to Helen that Scott's tune-up must have fixed the problem. Within 10 seconds the Lark started playing up, missing and so we pulled into Wangaratta for fuel. After fuel and a re-adjustment of the timing, the Lark was even worse so we pulled into the first rest area and adjusted the timing back to what it was. The Lark was, still running OK but you could tell it wasn't running right, especially since an exhaust manifold gasket blew out north of Albury. The only thing to do was keep driving and see what happened.

We were in the lead and following a map I had printed out from 'Whereis'. Actually I had printed out 2 maps, one shortest by time and the other shortest by distance. Unfortunately I followed the one shortest by distance that saw us leaving the freeway and travelling around suburban streets until we met up with a freeway again. We did save 1 km of distance but it cost us 15 minutes of extra time.

We finally arrived in Ballarat about an hour after our scheduled time and an hour before the others. We were checking out downtown Ballarat 2 hours later when the Newcastle mob passed us. They must have been looking for Harry. On Friday I was determined to at least fix the manifold gasket but after an hour's work I decided that it would be a two-man job. Luckily Steve L was willing to help me out for 5 minutes and after 2 hours we had fixed the gasket problem. I installed a new set of spark plug leads and the Lark at least sounded better.

The only other Studebaker in the convoy to have any problems was Tim G's 64 Cruiser. This was the first long trip that Tim had taken the Cruiser on and while it was missing a bit on the way to Campbelltown, it never missed a beat all the way to Ballarat. But once it was there it disgraced itself by refusing to start in the main street of Ballarat. If you are ever going to break down in a Stude the best place is at a Studebaker National Meet. Within minutes Tim had some members helping him out, especially Bob G who diagnosed the problem and lent Tim the part he needed to get the Cruiser running again.

On the Way Back...

After a great time at the National Meet it was time to head home. Ken & Sylvia G had suggested a trip back across the Snowy Mountains which was more interesting than returning via the Hume Hwy, so this was organised.

I read in Stude News that Charles S was willing to open his Museum for any Stude members travelling that way. After finding out that very few of the members on the convoy had visited the Museum, I spent a lot of time on 'Whereis' and worked out we could do a trip to the Museum on Tuesday. A call to Charles confirmed he would open the Museum for us. We left Ballarat at 0800 and 'Whereis' said it would take us 2.36 hours to get to Arthurs Seat and we arrived exactly at 1036.

I was surprised at how backward the State Government is in Victoria. They build Freeways that actually connect with other Freeways. I thought that you were only supposed to build Freeways that connected to major roads that were clogged with traffic like we do in Sydney.

'Whereis' said we could make the trip from Arthurs Seat to Wangaratta in 3.36 hours. It took us over 4 hours, not including a stop for petrol. Tea that night was at the Wangaratta RSL, and what a great meal it was.

Wednesday was another big day. We left Wangaratta early and had a short break at Beechworth. The skies south looked like a terrific storm was catching up with us so we headed for and had lunch at Corryong. The storm turned out to be a dust storm, not a rain storm and fortunately it followed the Hume Hwy, not us, much to the frustration of the Dave, Christa and Tony McK, who left the convoy in Wangaratta and took the short (but dusty) route home. 'Whereis' said 6.10 travelling time from Wangaratta to Queanbeyan but that was a joke as it took us over 7 hours, not including stops.

I wish we had more time as Corryong was an interesting place and we could have done a lot of sightseeing along the way. The trip across the Alps, while very scenic, was like an obstacle course. The dust storm might have followed the Hume Hwy, but the wind followed us and we spent the whole trip trying to avoid branches left on the road. Steve L took us on a tour around the landslide in Thredbo. While we have all seen it on TV, it was so different to see it in real life.

We arrived into Queanbeyan before dark. The motel was a disappointment, older than I expected and the only motel on our travels that didn't offer a cooked breakfast. It was however close to the Queanbeyan Bowling Club. We had the pleasure of meeting Tony N, who brought around his 60 Hawk for members to look at. Tony's car was Pat M's car that he donated to the Cancer Council on his death and I am sure that Pat would be happy that his Hawk has gone to someone who appreciates the car as Tony has spent a lot time and money on the car since he bought it. After inspecting the Hawk we visited the Queanbeyan Bowling Club where we had our last get together and once again we had a great meal and while the club was going to close at 9pm the Stude people kept it open to 10pm.

We were up early once again on Thursday morning, but this morning we only had to travel about a mile to Ken & Sylvia G's home where we were able to park our Studebakers in their driveway and catch the bus that Ken had organised to take us on a tour of Canberra. For \$10 each we had a guided tour of Canberra with a commentary by Colin, the bus driver, who told us many facts about Canberra that we had never heard before. We ended up at the Telstra (Telecom) Tower with its magnificent views of Canberra and found out that if we were up here yesterday you couldn't see a thing because of the dust storm. It must have been faster than our Studebakers or did it turn right at Yass?

We finished the tour back at Ken & Sylvia's who put on a B-B-Q lunch for us while we toured Ken's sheds and what an interesting tour that was. Nearly as interesting as the sheds was the bathroom. You would have to see it to believe it. We left Queanbeyan around 2pm and headed back to Sydney.

I drove Geoff & Jan B to St Marys station at 6:00am Friday morning so they could catch their

flight back to Christchurch. Geoff kept all the petrol receipts while he was driving Megan's 59 Lark and he sent me an email the other day advising the Lark averaged 21.45 MPG for the whole trip, most of it 70+ mph freeway driving. I haven't worked out the MPG for the 60 Lark but I think it will be similar.

Just to set the record straight. A lot of people on the convoy asked what we have done to Megan's 59 Lark as they had observed its power and acceleration on the freeway. The engine is the original 259. We stripped the engine down at 97,000 miles, mainly to fit new gaskets and seals, as it was starting to leak oil. The bore showed no wear and the only mod was to convert the heads to use ULP. Other than that the engine is stock original.

I must thank Ken & Sylvia G for their help in organising this tour and their hospitality in Queanbeyan; Charles & Therese S for their hospitality at their Museum; Steve L for his help on our car in Ballarat; Scott R for his work at Albury and Geoff & Jan B for taking Megan's car to the National. Tim G would like to thank Bob G and all the Victorian members who helped him out in Ballarat.

I found out in Ballarat that some SCCA (Victorian) members are organising a convoy to the Fremantle National Meet in 2011. Let us know the details and I hope we will be joining you.

Members attending on some part of the convoy:

Scott R	1951 CHAMPION SEDAN	NSW
Steve W	1951 CHAMPION COUPE	NSW
Steve L	1957 TRANSTAR PICKUP	NSW
Max & Kerri M	1959 LARK HARDTOP	NSW
Dave & Christa D	1960 LARK SEDAN	NSW
Phil & Helen H	1960 LARK HARDTOP	NSW
Peter L	1963 LARK 2-D SEDAN	NSW
Tim G	1964 CRUISER	NSW
Dave M	1964 AVANTI	NSW
Graham W	BRAND X	NSW
Ken & Sylvia G	1965 CRUISER	MID-WEST
Paul S	1954 PACKARD CONVERTIBLE	QLD
Chris S & Damien F	1964 DAYTONA HARDTOP	QLD
Geoff & Janet B	1959 LARK HARDTOP	NZ
Tony McK	1960 HAWK	NZ
George & Francie P	BRAND X	NZ

Phil H.