



**The Experts Trial Re-Visited  
Navigational Tour  
Saturday 23rd July 2022**

**Round 6 of the 2022 HRA Resto Country Spares  
Standard Car Class Rally Championship.  
Round 2 and 3 of the 2022 HRA Touring Championship**

## COVID-19 Statement

The concessions and restrictions placed by the placed by the Victorian Government on movement and activities during the COVID-19 Pandemic are extremely fluid in nature. There is a strong possibility the measures needed to be taken by individuals and organisations may be significantly different between the date these Supplementary Regulations are published and the date of the event.

It is therefore necessary that the HRA Website, Vicrally Website and HRA Facebook Page be monitored for Bulletins and variations to the Supplementary Regulations prior to the event.

Under no circumstances should anyone with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 attend the event. This includes any fever, respiratory symptoms, shortness of breath, sore throat, cough, fatigue, or lack of sense of smell.

Under no circumstances should anyone attend the event if they have been;

1. Overseas in the previous 14 days; or
2. In contact with someone who has been overseas in the previous 14 days; or
3. In contact with a known COVID-19 positive case in the previous 14 days; and
4. Have not been in any area or location that has a travel restriction applied due to COVID-19 in the previous 14 days, except where an exemption is applicable as determined by the relevant Government authority, and for areas with travel restrictions where applicable.

It is highly recommended that if any participant exhibits symptoms consistent with COVID-19 prior to the event then the individual should take a COVID-19 test through Vic Health or their regular doctor. Motorsport Australia strongly encourages the use of the Australian Government's 'COVIDSafe App' for all event participants.

Many administrative and operational processes for the event may be very different to what has been normally experienced in the past. This may result in some activities taking longer than expected. Please allow additional time and tolerance during this difficult period so we can all participate and be involved in the sport we love. Please do read these Supplementary Regulations closely and in the lead up monitor for any applicable changes that may be made to the event as they become available.

**Social distancing and other COVID-19 practices must be observed at all times.**



**HISTORIC RALLY ASSOCIATION Inc.**

## ***2022 Experts Trial Re-Visited*** **SUPPLEMENTARY REGULATIONS**

### **1 THE EVENT**

The Event shall be known as the "Experts Trial Re-Visited" herein referred to as "The Event". The Event will be a Club, Navigational Touring Event and will be conducted over a distance of approximately km on public and or private roads in the State of Victoria on the 23rd<sup>1</sup> of July 2022.

### **2. SCHEDULE OF DATES**

Entries open	Upon publication of these regulations
Entries close the event	Friday 15/07/2022 at 1800 hrs.
Event Starting Order ballot	Saturday 14/07/2022
Further Regulations issued	Sunday 15/07/2022
Start of Event	Saturday 23/07/2022 12.00pm

### **3. AUTHORITY**

- 3.1 The Event will be conducted under the FIA International Sporting Code including Appendices, the National Competition Rules (NCR) of Motorsport Australia, the National Rally Standing Regulations of Motorsport Australia (NRSR) including the National Touring Standing Regulations (NTSR), the Victorian Rally Bulletin, these Supplementary Regulations and any Further Regulations which may be issued.
- 3.2 Certain public, property, professional indemnity and personal accident insurance are provided by Motorsport Australia in relation to the Event. Further details can be found in the Motorsport Australia Insurance Handbook, available at [www.motorsport.org.au/](http://www.motorsport.org.au/)
- 3.3 This event will be conducted under and in accordance with Motorsport Australia OH&S, Safety 1<sup>st</sup>, Integrity and Legal and Risk Management Policies which can be found on the Motorsport Australia website at [www.motorsport.org.au/](http://www.motorsport.org.au/)
- 3.4 The Motorsport Australia Permit Number authorising the event is 322/2307/01 and will be on display at the start.

### **4. THE ORGANISERS**

The Event will be organised and promoted by the **HISTORIC RALLY ASSOCIATION Inc.**  
PO Box 631 Camberwell VIC 3124

In accordance with the Motorsport Australia NCR's , the Organisers reserve the right to postpone, abandon or cancel the Event if in their opinion the entries are insufficient or by "Force Majeure".

### **5. KEY PERSONNEL**

CLERK OF THE COURSE	Robert Cranston 35 Castlebar Rd EAST MALVERN VIC 3145 Ph: 03 9563 0977 Email	MA Licence No. 9764412  Mobile 0414 560 688 <a href="mailto:classicstatue@bigpond.com.au">classicstatue@bigpond.com.au</a>
ROAD DIRECTOR	Phil Nicholas	MA Licence No. 9722064
EVENT SECRETARY	Robert Cranston 35 Castlebar Rd EAST MALVERN VIC 3145	MA Licence No. 9764412

	Ph: 03 9563 0977	Mobile 0414 560 688
	Email	<a href="mailto:classicstatue@bigpond.com.au">classicstatue@bigpond.com.au</a>
EVENT CHECKER	Rick Hartmann	MA Licence No. 9338350
CHIEF SCRUTINEER	Richard Elphick	MA Licence No. 1022765
CLUB STEWARD	Carol Latta	MA Licence No. 1045016
CAMS AREA CO-ORDINATOR	Jason Hague	MA Licence No.9882980
SCORER	Gary Hodgskiss	MA Licence No. 881485
COVID MANAGER	Martin Warneke	MA Licence No 9726264

## 6. CREW ELIGIBILITY

- 6.1 Crews shall consist of two persons, one nominated as the Driver and the other nominated as the Navigator.
- 6.2 The Driver and Co-driver/Navigator must hold a current Australian civil driver's licence or equivalent except where the Co-driver/Navigator has signed a declaration that they will not drive the vehicle at any time during the Event.
- 6.3 The Driver must hold a current Motorsport Australia Speed (or superior) licence. Navigator does not require a Motorsport Australia Licence.
- 6.4 Both crew members must be members of a Motorsport Australia affiliated car club.
- 6.5 To be eligible for points towards the HRA Club Touring Championship, the Driver, Navigator or both must be a current financial member of the HRA. This requirement also applies to those Crews competing in the Resto Country Spares Standard Car Class.
- 6.6 Both Crew Members are encouraged to be current financial members of an appropriate ambulance service and to have their own personal health insurance.

## 7. VEHICLE ELIGIBILITY

- 7.1 All competing vehicles must be registered or have a permit allowing the vehicle to be driven on public roads in the State of Victoria. A Current Registration Certificate or Permit for the competing vehicle is required to be produced when booking in at the Start Control.
- 7.2 Resto Country Spares Competitors will be required to have their Log Card signed at the Start by the Event Scrutineer
- 7.3 Fuel shall be in accordance with Schedule G of the current Motorsport Australia Manual.
- 7.4 All vehicles may be checked for general roadworthiness and must be equipped with a seat belt for every vehicle occupant. If, in the opinion of officials at the start, a vehicle is unsafe to compete, permission will not be granted for that entry to start the Event.
- 7.5 The Event Organisers strongly advise the carrying of a pair of Safety Triangles in case of vehicle breakdown in the various forests.

## 8. ENTRIES

- 8.1 To be accepted, all entries must be on the official entry form, complete in every detail and accompanied by proof of EFT payment of the appropriate fee and forwarded to the Event Secretary (either by email or snail mail) before the close of entries.
- 8.2 The entry fee paid for the Event shall be \$ 150.00
- 8.3 All payments are to be made by EFT (Electronic Funds Transfer). You MUST send a copy of the Transaction Report to the Secretary with your Entry Form.  
In the payment description field please use the three letter Event code "EXP" followed by the "Competitors Surname" eg: **EXP Jones**  
EFT details: Account Name HISTORIC RALLY ASSOCIATION (INC)

**BSB 033 050 Account No. 143 422**

- 8.4 Competitors are reminded of the penalties under the NCR for false statements.
- 8.5 The organisers reserve the right to refuse any entry in accordance with the NCR's .

**9. STARTING ORDER**

- 9.1 Starting order will be determined by ballot within grades, according to Driver grading as per the current HRA Grading List at the time of the ballot. Crews not listed in the current HRA Grading List will start the Event in order at the discretion of the Clerk of the Course.

**10. SCRUTINY & DOCUMENTATION**

- 10.1 There will be no official scrutiny. Competitors are to submit the fully completed and signed 'Self-Scrutiny Checklist Rally Road' and 'Self Scrutiny Statement of Vehicle Compliance' forms at the Start Control. These two documents can be found at <https://motorsport.org.au/covid-19/competitors>.

The Event Organisers strongly advise the carrying of a pair of Safety Triangles in case of vehicle breakdown in the various forests

- 10.2 The following documents are required to be produced when booking in at the Start Control:
- Current drivers licence for all those likely to be driving during the Event.
  - Proof of current HRA club membership for those competing in the HRA Touring Championship.
  - Current Motorsport Australia Speed (or superior) licence for the driver.
  - Current Registration Certificate or Permit for the competing vehicle.
  - Motorsport Australia Vehicle Logbook or Log Card for Resto Country Spares competitors.
  - Self-Scrutiny Checklist and Self Scrutiny Statement of Vehicle Compliance.

**11. EVENT RUNNING DETAILS**

The event will start at Heathcote showgrounds, with the first car departing at 12.00. Book in from 10.00am. Night division will commence at 5.45pm

**12. SPEED LIMITS**

- 12.1 There will be a maximum speed limit of 100kph for the duration of the event. As the event is not timed & there are no closed roads, all normal road laws must be followed.

**13. CONTROLS & ROUTE INFORMATION**

- 13.1 Major Controls will be marked by a RED CLOCK board and manned Passage Controls by a "P" board.
- 13.2 At a manned passage, you will need to STOP and the official will make a notation on your road card. The closest you may approach a manned passage or control from the Wrong Direction (WD) without penalty is 50 metres from the specified point. Once you are closer than 50 metres you will be deemed to have entered the passage control. Walking into a manned passage from the wrong direction will count as WD.
- 13.3 Information (observations) may be required to be noted along the route to confirm compliance with Route Instructions.  
Information Boards may be placed along the intended route as well as the specified Via to ensure Crews have traversed the correct route.
- 13.4 Certain sections of the Tour may be designated as 'Two-Way' traffic.
- 13.5 **Information Board** – White board with a red or black letter and/or number.
- Information boards will NOT be preceded by an 'O' board.
  - Information's may be placed on unmapped roads or shortest mapped routes that have been specified in order to prove that the correct route has been followed.
  - Information's are to be recorded in the appropriate section on the road card.

- Information's are to be countersigned by the official at the next finish control. It is the Crew's responsibility to ensure that this is done before leaving that control.

**13.6 Redirection Board** – White board with the combination of a black letter 'R' and a number (e.g. R5)

- These may be placed at a via or along a shortest mapped route where the intended route is no longer passable and a re-direction is required.
- Record the details of the board (e.g.: R5) on your road card (as if it were an information) and then refer to the 're-direction' page at the rear of the route instructions.
- The re-direction page will contain specific instructions for directing you around the obstruction. This may involve a U-turn and/or travelling back along a length of road previously used in order to resume the intended route.
- Failure to record the correct 'R' information on the road card will render that information deemed as missed.

**13.7** At via points in this Event you may find any, or some, of the following;

- Nothing.
- Information board(s).
- Redirection board(s).
- A manned passage.
- Prescribed observation(s), e.g. local signpost.

**NOTE:** Information/Observation boards will be located such that they will face the intended direction of approach, or departure.

**13.8** Control Procedure - Touring.

Each Touring Section will have a maximum allowed time.

Crews may arrive early and then nominate their correct arrival time (which is the "Maximum Allowed Time") then wait for that time before commencing the next Section.

These times will be very generous.

Your actual arrival time will be recorded, but will only be used as a tie-break, unless you exceed the time, in which case further penalties apply.

**13.9** Observers may be on course to note any infringements of Traffic Laws.

**13.10** Samples of boards used will be on display at the start.

**13.11** NRC 3.4(vi), (The 2mm Rule), will not apply in this Event.

## **14. SCORING & PENALTIES**

**14.1** Controls will be in accordance with the NRC and the Victorian Rally Bulletin.

**14.3** Passage controls and / or observations may be used to check compliance with route instructions.

**14.4** All Crews will start the Event with zero points and the Crew with the lowest aggregate points loss will be declared the winner.

- Incorrect or missing information or R board \_\_\_\_\_ 10 points per instance
- Missing a manned passage control \_\_\_\_\_ 10 points per instance
- Entering a Major Control from the wrong direction (WD) \_\_\_\_\_ 10 points per instance
- Entering a manned passage from the wrong direction (WD) \_\_\_\_\_ 5 points per instance
- Entering "Out of Bounds" areas \_\_\_\_\_ 10 points per instance
- Late arrival at any major control \_\_\_\_\_ 2 points per each 5 minutes (or part thereof) late, up to a maximum of 10 points, after which you will be deemed to have missed the control & incur a further 20 point penalty
- Missing the Finish Control for each Division End by more than 60 minutes \_\_\_\_\_ 50 points
- Detected breaches of traffic regulations \_\_\_\_\_ 100 points per incidence
- Being found carrying illegal maps in vehicle as well as the use of Electronic Devices with maps \_\_\_\_\_ 100 points per map

**15. NCR VARIATIONS, ADDITIONS & CLARIFICATIONS**

- 15.1 NRC 5.2 (iii)g shall be varied in part, such that:
- Missing any Passage Control or Observation will incur a 10 point penalty, (instead of 30 points).
  - Entering a Passage Control from the wrong direction (WD) will incur a 5 point penalty (not 15 or 30).
  - Carrying any other than the official maps or referring to other maps. Penalty 100 points per map.
- 15.2 A "P" board will precede manned Passage Controls. (A "P" board may also be placed on the incorrect direction of entry for safety reasons).
- 15.3 An "O" board will not precede Observation boards.
- 15.4 Observations recorded on the Road Card must be countersigned at the next major control or they will be regarded as "missed" and penalised accordingly. It is the Competitor's responsibility to ensure that this is done.
- 15.5 Touring Road Regulation 3.3.4 of the Motorsport Australia Manual will not apply and will be replaced by the following definition of a Touring Section.  
A Touring Section is a section where the route instructions may be in the form of a route chart or in some other form. The actual distance travelled, route traversed or other forms of measurement may be used to calculate penalties. A Touring Section may traverse populated areas using Shire roads and Highways with a less demanding target time and may include restricted speed and quiet zones. Given the nature of these sections helmets MUST NOT be worn during touring sections.

**PLEASE NOTE**

***On the Touring Sections we implore Crews to observe road rules and drive accordingly. We are traversing National Park as well as State Forest and we may wish to conduct a similar Event in the future as long as the relevant Authorities are happy with what we are doing.***

***This Event is NOT a forest race...we will have observers in the Forest and along the route, be advised that if Crews are seen to be acting in a manner not befitting of a Tour Event they will be reported to the Event Stewards.***

Event Steward action may mean loss of Competition Licence and Financial Penalty.

**16. FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS**

- 16.1 These will contain: car number, Competitor list, start locations, reporting times, odometer check, refuelling arrangements, and any other relevant information.
- 16.2 Further Regulations and Results will be sent to all Crew Members nominated on the Entry Form where a legible email address has been supplied. These documents will be in a PDF format.

**17. SERVICE CREW & SPECTATOR INSTRUCTIONS**

- 17.1 Service/Spectator Instructions will be available at the commencement of the Event.

**18. PROTESTS**

- 18.1 Protests, if any, must be lodged in accordance with Part XII of the National Competition Rules.

**19. OFFICIAL MAPS**

- 19.1 The maps for the Event will be supplied by the Event Organisers.  
No other maps are to be carried or referred to ... see Section 14 "PENALTIES".

**20. AWARDS**

- 20.1 The following awards will be presented for the Event

- Outright \_\_\_\_\_ 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>
- Grade A \_\_\_\_\_ 1<sup>st</sup>
- Grade B \_\_\_\_\_ 1<sup>st</sup>
- Grade C \_\_\_\_\_ 1<sup>st</sup>

- H81: Historic Pre 1981 Group \_\_\_\_\_ 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>
- P81: PRC Pre 1981 Group \_\_\_\_\_ 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>
- PM: PRC Modern Group \_\_\_\_\_ 1<sup>st</sup>
- CRC: Classic Rally Cars \_\_\_\_\_ 1<sup>st</sup>
- Resto Country Spares Standard Car Class \_\_\_\_\_ 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>
- ROAD CARS: \_\_\_\_\_ 1<sup>st</sup>,

20.2 Grade and class awards for second place will only be awarded if more than 5 starters and third place if more than 8 starters per classification.

20.3 The organisers may combine awards if a Competitor wins more than one award.

## 21. **COMMUNICATIONS**

21.1 The use of any two-way radio or mobile phone during the Event is highly discouraged. The carriage of these is permitted for safety reasons, for use in the case of accident or emergency. (See 3.3.1 in the Victorian Rally Bulletin.)

All mobile phones with data ability will be sealed in an envelope at the start of the Event.

## 22. **ALCOHOL, DRUGS AND OTHER SUBSTANCES**

22.1 Any holder of a Motorsport Australia Licence (or a licence issued by another ASN) may be tested for the presence of any drug or other banned substances and subject to a penalty for a breach of the Australian National Anti-Doping Policy and/or the Motorsport Australia Illicit Drugs in Sport (Safety Testing) Policy at [www.motorsport.org.au](http://www.motorsport.org.au). Consumption of alcohol in the paddock, pits or any other reserved area is prohibited until all competition is concluded each day. The holder of a Motorsport Australia Licence (or a licence issued by another ASN) may be tested for the presence of alcohol by a Motorsport Australia Accredited Testing Official (CATO) in accordance with the Motorsport Australia Alcohol Policy at [www.motorsport.org.au](http://www.motorsport.org.au).

## 23. **JUDGES OF FACT**

23.1 Scrutineers will be deemed Judges of Fact with respect to vehicle and equipment eligibility and safety in addition to document compliance.

23.2 All Control Officials and observers designated by the Clerk of the Course are deemed to be Judges of Fact with regard to:

Time, distance from and direction of entry to and from controls and passage controls,

Activity that occurs within the control area, exhaust efficiency and excessive wheel spin.

Detected breaches of Road Traffic Regulations.



## The Experts Trial. Tough in the Old Days

The first Experts Trial was run in July 1947. It was the brainchild of Alan Watkin, an experienced trials competitor who suggested to anyone who was interested "that a really hard trial should be staged". He was as good as his word and started a traditional event that became the Experts Trial and has always challenged competitors to the full. Those who entered Experts Trials expected no mercy from the Director and received none.

Watkin's event started at the Brunswick Street LCCA clubrooms and went via Doncaster, Wonga Park, Yarra Glen, Rob Roy (where a timed section was held) Dixons Creek, Mount Slide, Steels Creek and St Andrews, finishing back at the clubrooms. These places are now suburban areas of Melbourne but back in 1947 the country was open and the roads were little better than goat tracks. 13 of the 29 starters got to the finish, and the driver awarded best all round performance, including three sub events, was W Luxton (Wolseley)

The Experts was always run in the winter months, when wet weather was almost inevitable, and the roads chosen and the navigation difficulties were the most testing possible. These were the days before shires and forestry officers were concerned about whether roads should be used in wet weather, and the event director would delight in using roads which had become quagmires due to rain.



**Experts Trial 1950. G Lord (Austin) A Ferguson (Morris Minor) and H King (Wolseley)  
Photo Australian Motor Sports magazine**

In early Experts Trials competitors had to complete the entire course to be classified as a finisher. The instructions were handed to crews at each control, so if you didn't reach a control you did not know where to go next. Only the best crews succeeded, so the event was well named. A glance through the results over the years confirms that the leading drivers of their respective eras invariably placed well in the Experts: names such as Stan Jones, Lex Davison, Bib Stillwell, Doug Whiteford and Bill Patterson all feature in the results at various times, followed in later years by Harry Firth, Frank Kilfoyle, Tony Roberts, Bob Watson and Geoff Portman. As well as having good pace to make up time after navigation problems, drivers were required to coax, cajole or bulldoze their cars through roads and tracks that a four wheel drive would shy away from.

Tyre chains were essential equipment, as was a winch. Hand grips were fitted to the boot lid so that navigators could stand on the back bumper bar and bounce cars through deep mud, and in the 1960s some factory cars were fitted with off road electric winches for de-bogging purposes.

The Experts Trial of 1972 lived up to all of the challenges expected of a “proper” Experts. Run by champion navigator Jim McAuliffe, the difficult course through the mountains around Marysville became a nightmare thanks to atrocious weather.

After battling through muddy tracks and flooded creeks the field was confronted by deep snow on the Mount Margaret section north of Marysville. Conditions were such that the course opening car considered the conditions impossible, and it did not traverse the course. This left the first competitor (myself and Geoff Thomas in a Peugeot 504) to blaze the trail.

*Bob Watson/Geoff Thomas  
battle the mud in their  
Peugeot 504 in 1972  
Photo Chris Brown*



We fitted tyre chains, and ventured into the virgin snow, following a vague gap between the trees where we assumed the track might be. Geoff understandably missed a turnoff, and the increasingly deep snow finally stopped the Peugeot in its tracks, the radiator boiling furiously due to the effort required to plough along at slow speed. Laboriously we turned the car around by winching it back and forth and were about to retrace our tracks when another rally car arrived, followed by several more. All of the cars needed to be turned around, and by the time this was done and we set off down the correct road we were hours late, and very close to our time limit.

When the convoy arrived at the control there was a massive crowd of people, as all of the service crews for the various rally cars were waiting, the field having been missing for several hours. Narrowly within our late time Geoff and I pressed on, visiting as many controls as time would permit, to the finish. After a week of calculating results, we were declared the winners, with a score that a cricketer would have been proud of, which reinforced the fact that in an Experts Trial, you never give up trying.

From the mid 1970s the navigation requirement became much more intensive, and to have success it was necessary to go out and map the areas the trial was passing through or use highly specialised maps. Directed by Stuart Lister, the events became contests in which the skill of the director to set navigational challenges was pitted against the skills of the top navigators to find the correct course. For this reason the event lost some favour with drivers and consequently its status as a state championship round, and became a specialized contest between the top navigators. The days of battling through terrible roads were over, and as a result the Experts Trial lost much of its reputation as a fight for survival.

The winning navigator of the Experts Trial each year from 1970 to 1986 was presented with the Perpetual Broadbent-Robinson Trophy, which was donated by Robinsons, the company which took over the Broadbents map company. The whereabouts of this perpetual trophy is a mystery, and the HRA would be most grateful for its recovery.





**George Spanos (Riley)  
negotiates a ford in the  
1948 Experts Trial  
Photo George Spanos**

Deep creek and river crossings were a constant challenge, none more so than in the 1964 event which started at Cobbledick's Ford near Geelong. Bruce Ford was the Event Director and set off about an hour before the first competing car, through the ford and away. The weather had been wet for weeks and was still pouring down on the day of the event. Mal McPherson and Ian Home in a Holden were the first car off and when they reached the ford the water was quite high and running rapidly. Seeing no sign of the director who must have gone the same way they plunged into the raging torrent. The car was swept downstream and turned over with the crew struggling to get out and maps and paraphernalia floating out of the windows. Eventually the car snagged against a tree and the half drowned crew abandoned ship. For years afterwards McPherson blamed Bruce Ford, claiming he had avoided the ford somehow, but it turned out on investigation that the gentleman in charge at the nearby Melton Weir had decided his dam was getting a bit full so he released the water just before the rally started. The rally was re-routed.

### **Bob Watson**

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#### ***Some stories from the late Graham Hoinville, winner of five Experts Trials***

**Graham Hoinville**, the top navigator of his era, successful driver in races, rallies and hill climbs and co director of the BP Rally, won five Experts Trials navigating for Harry Firth. He shares his experiences in some of the early Experts trials:

*"In 1951 I took the plunge, entering the Experts Trial (as a driver) which was a two day event directed by Roy Linden and Donald Thomson. We stopped overnight at the Isle of Wight hotel at Cowes on Phillip Island, the event being run under very wet conditions with frequent floods and the added challenge of the car bonnets being sealed, with a penalty for breaking same. I finished third in my Singer behind Stan Jones/Maurie Monk and Frank Sinclair (MGTD). I recall Harry Firth getting stuck in a non stop mud section on the outskirts of Cowes.*

*I regard the 1952 Experts as "my" event. At night we had a "non stop entry into control" in the Black Range area south of Murrindindi. We were struggling to keep moving in six inches of snow, and as we entered control the official, a LCCA committee member who was often on controls and inevitably intoxicated, pronounced "you stopped back there"- and we were penalized 30 points, putting us back to third place behind Stan Jones and Mal McPherson. Although a member of the LCCA I clearly did not fit in with the reefer jacket and cravat image of the club.*

During various events I had become friendly with Harry Firth, who was becoming a leading tuner of MG TCs. Late in 1953 Harry came to me with a proposition-would I join him as navigator in trials? Harry was friendly with Russell Lane, principal of Neal's Motors, the Rootes Group distributors, and they provided a Sunbeam Alpine, the same specification as the car that Stirling Moss was enjoying success with in Europe. Harry was offered the car for use in "important" rallies.



**Peter Manton  
(MG P Type) gets  
some assistance  
in the 1948  
Experts Trial  
Photo Australian  
Motor Sports**

Our first event was the 1953 Alpine trial which we won comfortably. We then used the same car in the 1954 Sun Rally, and won, being the only crew to "clean sheet". At that time trials were becoming destructively rough, and Neal's Motors withdrew, leaving us to "freelance" in various makes. In the 1956 Blue Ribbon Trial Harry was forced to run his "work ute", which was a dilapidated World War 2 British Army Morris 10 ute which he had purchased for 10 quid. The engine was basically the same as an MGTC and Harry and I fitted it with a Marshall Nordec supercharger borrowed from my MG TC. This, together with the low rear axle ratio of the ute gave it shattering acceleration, although the handling above 60 mph was a challenge. We won the Blue Ribbon, and the following weekend was the Experts Trial, but the Light Car Club refused to accept the entry of the ute. Not to be discouraged, we borrowed a VW and won the event anyway.

The toughest event I ever experienced was the 1958 Experts. It was very wet, and we used a VW. There was a very deep creek crossing near Officedale early in the event, the water was over two feet deep and the exit was a steep bank. We could not quite climb out, and the VW slipped back into the water, swamping the engine. An official Land Rover pulled us out and I set to draining the water out of the distributor and drying the cap out with a handkerchief. The engine fired up, and we were off, but moisture kept condensing inside the distributor cap, and drying the inside of the cap became a regular routine. Then the starter motor failed, so we had to park on a hill every time we dried out the distributor.

We had two lakes of water about two inches deep that came into the two depressions in the floor pan. The water sloshed backwards and forwards under acceleration and braking. I did not dare drop a pencil or map as they would be lost in the muddy lake under my feet. We pressed on, arriving back at the LCCA club rooms in Brunswick Street at about 11 pm after a very long night. I was knackered, so Harry drove me home in a borrowed car and returned to the club rooms to find that no other competitor had reported in. He left for home, confident that the event was ours!

## Graham Hoinville

**Harry Firth and  
Graham Hoinville in  
2010**



### Experts Trial winners

1947	W Luxton Wolseley
1948	AJ Chalmers Standard
1949	Bill Patterson Ford V8
1950	H King Wolseley
1951	Stan Jones Holden
1952	Stan Jones Holden,
1953	Stan Jones Holden
1954	Doug Whiteford.Standard Vanguard
1955	Reg Smith/Rob Whyte VW
1956	Harry Firth/ Graham Hoinville VW
1957	Bob Foreman VW
1958	Harry Firth/Graham Hoinville VW
1959	Harry Firth/ Graham Hoinville Austin Healey Sprite
1960	Harry Firth/ Graham Hoinville VW
1961	Geoff Russell/Wally Walsh Peugeot 403
1962	Don Opie/Doug Rutherford Ford Anglia
1963	Frank Kilfoyle/Mike Flanagan Ford Falcon
1964	Tony Theiler/MartinHartigan VW
1965	Reg Lunn /Geoff Thomas Ford Cortina
1966	Tony Roberts/Peter Haas Holden HD
1967	Tony Roberts/Peter Haas Holden HR
1968	Bob Watson/Jim McAuliffe Holden HK
1969	Tony Roberts/Mike Osborne Porsche
1970	Bob Watson/Jim McAuliffe Renault R8 Gordini
1971	David Cuthbert/Andy Chapman
1972	Bob Watson/Geoff Thomas Peugeot 504
1973	Bob Watson/Jeff Beaumont Holden HQ
1974	John Coleman/Bernie Peasley
1975	Garry Harrowfield/Geoff Boyd Ford Cortina
1976	Garry Spence/Noel Kelly Mitsubishi Galant
1977	Geoff Portman/Ross Runnalls Datsun( <b>Event no longer a round of the Victorian Rally Championship</b> )
1978	Geoff Portman/Ross Runnalls Datsun
1979	Geoff Portman/Ross Runnalls Datsun
1980	Geoff Portman/Ross Runnalls Datsun
1981	Event not run
1982	Cancelled Bad weather!!!!
1983	Event not run
1984	Gary Grealy/Geoff Byron
1985	Geoff Portman/Ross Runnalls Datsun
1986	Cancelled.
1987	Geoff Portman/Ross Runnalls Datsun 1600
1988	Event Not run
1989	Warwick Smith/Paul Paterson
1990	Glen Cuthbert/Ross Runnalls
1991	John Rawson/Dave Smith Datsun Stanza
2013	Geoff Portman/ Ross Runnalls Commodore





**Author's thoughts**

Times change, and the thought of driving one of today's four wheel drive turbo charged forest rockets along a typical Experts trial track is laughable. The Experts Trial has gone the way of the BP Rally and the Round Australia Trials, which were challenges to the determination and fortitude of the crews of the day. Now the challenge is to save seconds, and a wrong tyre choice or a myriad of other incorrect technical decisions means losing an event, just as surely as if the car had become bogged or the navigator taken a wrong road in the old days.

The difference is that in modern events you don't have to walk to a farmhouse in the early hours of the morning to ask the farmer to bring his tractor to pull your car out, or even worse, dig it out or winch it out yourself. The spirit of adventure has gone missing, and although logic would say good riddance, somehow the rallies of today lack the character and touch of terror they once had. They have become sanitized and homogeneous technical exercises. For heaven's sake, they don't even rally in the dark anymore!

I am sure the Directors of the 2022 Experts will not subject competitors to the indignities of the dark days, but I am confident cars and crews will obtain at least a small taste of what an Experts Trial used to be like.

**Bob Watson**



**Melbourne Herald  
1958  
Cutting courtesy  
George Spanos**