

THE AUSTIN SEVEN CAR CLUB OF VICTORIA RAN MUD SCRAMBLES AND MUD SECTION TRIALS THROUGH AND AROUND THE PARK ORCHARDS AREA DURING THE 1950's.

COMPETITORS IN THESE TRIALS HAD TO DRIVE THEIR OWN CARS FROM THEIR HOMES TO THE STARTING POINT, WHICH WAS THE BLACKBURN HOTEL, AND THIS WAS USED AS THE START FOR MANY YEARS. RULES DID NOT ALLOW FOR ANY TRIAL CARS TO BE TOWED OR TRANSPORTED TO THE STARTING POINT.

A MAPPED OUT AREA OF THE TRIALS CONSISTED OF 10 SECTIONS THAT RAN THROUGH VERY MUDDY AREAS AND NARROW TRACKS BETWEEN TREES AND THERE WAS JUST ENOUGH ROOM FOR THE CARS - WHICH DID NOT GET BOGGED - TO MAKE IT THROUGH.

THE TRIALS RAN ZIG ZAG THROUGH TREES, SMALL CREEKS, MUD BOGS AND LOW LYING AREAS THAT WERE DEEP IN MUD AND RESEMBLED SMALL DAMS. THE WHEELS ON THE A/V's WERE OF A LARGE DIAMETER, AND WITH THE THIN TYRES, THIS ENABLED THE CARS TO SLICE THROUGH THE MUD ONTO SOLID FOOTINGS TO KEEP MOVING TO THE NEXT SECTION. ONE POINT WAS AWARDED IF YOU WERE ABLE TO MAKE IT THROUGH A SECTION AND AS YOU PROGRESSED AND DID NOT GET BOGGED, POINTS WERE GAINED FOR EACH MUD SECTION PASSED.

AFTER BEING FLAGGED OFF FROM THE HOTEL THE CARS TRAVELLED ALONG SURREY ROAD AND INTO SPRINGFIELD ROAD, WHICH WAS NOT A THROUGH ROAD THEN, DUE TO THE CREEK FLOWING ACROSS IN THE DIP, BETWEEN THE NOW MOUNTAIN VIEW SHOPS AND SPRINGVALE ROAD.

THIS WAS THE FIRST MUD SCRAMBLE SECTION AND THOSE THAT MADE IT THROUGH CONTINUED ALONG INTO MITCHAM ROAD, INTO PARK ROAD AND ALONG PARK ROAD, DOWN THE HILL, ACROSS THE BRIDGE, THEN LEFT UP ALONG MCINTYRES, STINTONS, KNEES ROAD AND INTO PARTS OF THE NOW 100 ACRES.

THE PARK ORCHARDS CHALET WAS LATER USED AS THE STARTING POINT AND THE MAPPED OUT MUD BOG AREAS INCLUDED PARK, MCINTYRES, HARRIS GULLY, BEAUTY GULLY AND KNEES ROADS, INTO THE 100 ACRES, THEN OUT THE BACK OF PARK ORCHARDS, ALONG BERRINGA ROAD TRACK AND INTO OBAN ROAD TO THE LAST SECTION POINT WHICH WAS DOWN IN THE BUSH ON OBAN ROAD AT A CREEK CROSSING NEAR THE ARCHERY CLUB. THIS CREEK CROSSING WAS ONE OF THE BEST WITH MUD AND WATER EVERYWHERE, YET THE CARS STILL MADE IT THROUGH.

BILL AND ANN JOHNSON FROM DONVALE ARE A LOCAL COUPLE AND WERE GREAT SUPPORTERS AND COMPETITORS IN THE A/V CLUB OVER MANY YEARS.

JOHN AND MARIE PRYCE FROM PARK ORCHARDS, WERE ANOTHER COUPLE WHO ALSO DROVE IN THESE TRIALS. JOHN WAS EMPLOYED BY BP AUSTRALIA AS A RACING MANAGER.

THE AUSTIN SEVEN CAR CLUB OF VICTORIA RAN OBSERVED SECTION TRIALS, OR MUD TRIALS, THROUGH AND AROUND THE PARK ORCHARDS AREA DURING THE 1950'S.

COMPETITORS IN THESE TRIALS HAD TO DRIVE THEIR OWN CARS FROM THEIR HOMES TO THE STARTING POINT, WHICH WAS THEN THE BLACKBURN HOTEL.

A MAPPED OUT AREA OF THE TRIALS CONSISTED OF 10 SECTIONS THAT RAN THROUGH VERY MUDDY AREAS AND NARROW TRACKS BETWEEN TREES WHERE THERE WAS JUST ENOUGH ROOM FOR THE CARS – WHICH DID NOT GET BOGGED – TO MAKE IT THROUGH.

EACH SECTION WAS MARKED WITH 10 WHITE STAKES AND COMPETITORS WERE AWARDED 1 POINT FOR PASSING EACH STAKE WITHOUT STOPPING, UP TO THE 10 POINT MAXIMUM AND THE WINNER WAS THE CAR WITH THE MOST POINTS AT THE END OF THE TRIALS.

THE TRIALS RAN ZIGZAG THROUGH TREES, SMALL CREEKS, MUD BOGS AND LOW LYING AREAS THAT WERE DEEP IN MUD AND RESEMBLED SMALL DAMS. THE WHEELS ON THE A7'S WERE OF A LARGE DIAMETER WITH THIN TYRES AND THIS ENABLED THE CARS TO SLICE THROUGH THE WATER AND MUD ONTO SOLID FOOTINGS TO KEEP MOVING ONTO THE NEXT SECTION.

AFTER BEING FLAGGED OFF FROM THE HOTEL, THE CARS TRAVELLED ALONG SURREY ROAD AND INTO SPRINGFIELD ROAD, WHICH WAS NOT A THROUGH ROAD THEN DUE TO THE CREEK FLOWING ACROSS IN THE DIP, BETWEEN THE NOW MOUNTAIN VIEW SHOPS AND SPRINGVALE ROAD.

IT WAS THE FIRST MUD TRIAL SECTION AND THOSE THAT MADE IT THROUGH CONTINUED ALONG INTO MITCHAM ROAD, INTO AND ALONG PARK ROAD, DOWN THE HILL AND ACROSS THE MULLUM CREEK BRIDGE. THEN LEFT UP INTO AND ALONG MCINTYRES ROAD AND AROUND THE STINTONS AND KNEES ROADS BUSH AREAS.

DURING THE LATER HALF OF THE 1950'S, THE BUSH AREA NOW KNOWN AS THE 100 ACRES WAS USED FOR THE COMPLETE TRIALS THROUGH ITS DAMS AND MUDDY AREAS.

THE PARK ORCHARDS CHALET WAS LATER USED AS THE STARTING POINT AND THE MAPPED OUT MUDDY AREAS INCLUDED PARK, MCINTYRES, HARRIS GULLY, BEAUTY GULLY AND KNEES ROADS, INTO THE 100 ACRES THEN OUT THE BACK OF PARK ORCHARDS, ALONG BERRINGA ROAD TRACK AND INTO OBAN ROAD TO THE LAST SECTION POINT WHICH WAS DOWN IN THE BUSH ON OBAN ROAD AT A CREEK CROSSING NEAR THE ARCHERY CLUB. THIS CREEK CROSSING WAS ONE OF THE BEST WITH MUD AND WATER EVERYWHERE, YET THE CARS STILL MANAGED TO MAKE IT THOROUGH.

ROPES WERE ALWAYS ATTACHED TO THE FRONT OF THE CARS AND TIED LOOSELY ALONG THE SIDE AND THESE ROPES WERE USED BY THE SPECTATORS TO PULL OUT ANY BOGGED CARS.

BILL AND ANNE JOHNSON FROM DONVALE ARE A LOCAL COUPLE AND WERE GREAT SUPPORTERS, WITH BILL COMPETING IN THE VICTORIAN SPORTING CAR CLUB TEAM FOR SEVERAL YEARS. TEAMS FROM THE AUSTRALIAN SPORT CLUB AND SEVERAL OTHER CLUBS COMPETED EACH YEAR.

JOHN AND MARIE PRYCE, WHO LIVED IN RAINBOW VALLEY ROAD PARK ORCHARDS, WERE ANOTHER COUPLE WHO ALSO DROVE IN THESE TRIALS. JOHN WAS EMPLOYED BY BP AUSTRALIA AS A RACING MANAGER AND IT WAS JOHN WHO INTRODUCED MUD TRIALS TO THE A/7 CLUB.

JOHN WAS PRESIDENT OF THE AUSTIN 7 CLUB FOR MANY YEARS AND WAS ALSO PRESIDENT OF THE CONFEDERATION OF AUSTRALIAN MOTOR SPORT WHICH WAS THEN RUN BY THE RACV FROM ITS OLD OFFICE IN ELGIN STREET, CARLTON.

JOHN WAS ON HIS WAY TO ENGLAND FOR A RACING CONFERENCE WHEN HE RECEIVED NEWS THAT THEIR FAMILY HOME HAD BEEN BURNT TO THE GROUND WHEN BUSHFIRES ROARED THROUGH PARK ORCHARDS ON TUESDAY 16 JANUARY 1962. AN AUSTIN 7 NEAR THE HOUSE WAS BURNT TO A SHELL, BUT TWO OTHERS IN HIS GARAGE SURVIVED ALONG WITH STORED FUEL AND OILS.

A JOHN PRYCE MEMORIAL TROPHY IS A YEARLY EVENT HELD AT THE ROB ROY HILL CLIMB.

THE PARK ORCHARDS CARNIVALS

WHAT GREAT WEEKENDS THESE WERE FOR FAMILIES - HERE ARE DETAILS OF THE 1961 CARNIVAL.

THESE CARNIVALS WERE HELD DURING EARLY MARCH WHEN THE WEATHER WAS STILL WARM AND THE DAYLIGHT HOURS LASTED A BIT LONGER.

THE AREA ON THE HIGH SIDE OF DOMONEY RESERVE WAS SELECTED, CHECKED, CLEARED OF LOGS, BRANCHES, AND ANY LONG GRASS WAS CUT.

SETTING UP USUALLY STARTED DURING THE FRIDAY AFTERNOON, AS SOME OF THE DADS HAD FINISHED THEIR SHIFTS OR WORK NEARBY, AND WERE ABLE TO MAKE A START WITH THEIR CHILDREN JOINING THEM TO GIVE A HAND.

FAMILIES LENT THEIR TENTS, FLYS, LEAN TOO'S, TABLES, FORMS, CHAIRS AND OTHER OUTDOOR EQUIPMENT, AND AFTER CHECKING WITH BILL FINNIS OR STAN SHEPHERD AS TO THE MOST SUITABLE SITE, IT WAS DROPPED OFF READY.

HAMMERS, NAILS, SAWS, AXES, WIRE, PLIERS AND TOMAHAWKS WERE SOME OF THE TOOLS USED TO SET UP THE TENTS AND STALLS.

AFTER TEA THAT NIGHT A LOT OF THE MUMS WERE BUSY MAKING, BAKING AND ICING CAKES, SPONGES, SCONES, SLICES, PANCAKES AND OTHER GOODIES FOR THE CAKE STALLS.

JAMS, CHUTNEYS, PRESERVES AND FRESH FRUIT, LEMONS OFF FAMILY TREES WERE ALL PARKED AT HOME READY TO BE DROPPED OFF AT THE VARIOUS STALLS DURING SATURDAY MORNING.

PLANTS IN THE POTS, SHRUBS, VARIOUS NATIVE AND GERANIUM CUTTINGS IN CONTAINERS, BULBS AND A LOT OF GARDEN CUTTINGS WERE ALSO BOUGHT ALONG FOR THE PLANT STALL.

THE ESSO SERVICE STATIONS AT THE TIME HAD TIGER TAILS THAT YOU COULD TIE AROUND YOUR FUEL CAP AFTER FILLING AND PAYING FOR PETROL - "PUT A TIGER IN YOUR TANK".

THEIR ENGINE OIL CAME IN PINT TINS AND A FUNNEL WAS PUSHED IN AND CLIPPED ON TO ALLOW POURING INTO THE ENGINE.

THESE OIL TINS WERE COLLECTED, CLEANED, AND BOUGHT ALONG TO USE STACKED UP FOR THE CAN SKY, TO BE KNOCKED DOWN BY TENNIS BALLS FROM THE THROWER.

THE COCONUT SHY AND OLD PLATE SHY WERE OTHER SIDE STALLS WHERE THE THROWER TRIED TO KNOCK OVER ALL OF THE SMALL STACKS OF COCONUTS OR KNOCK THE PLATES OFF THEIR STANDS TO THE GROUND. AS MOST OF THE PLATES ENDED UP BROKEN, THERE WAS QUITE A PILE ON THE GROUND AFTER THE WEEKEND WAS OVER.

DURING THE SATURDAY MORNING, ALL DRINKS, MILK, CORDIALS, WATER, LOLLIES, BISCUITS, CAKES, LOAVES OF BREAD, ROLLS, HOT DOGS, HAMBURGERS AND SAUSAGES WERE DROPPED OFF AND PLACED IN A FOUR-SIDED TENT WITH A FLY FOR HEALTH REASONS AND THEN GIVEN OUT TO THE VARIOUS STALLS WHEN SET UP.

MICK (AND MRS REISCHEIK) WHO HAD THE ORCHARDS WHERE ST ANNES IS NOW, BOUGHT ACROSS HIS GREY FERGUSON TRACTOR AND COUPLED THIS TO THE LARGE TRAILER BELONGING TO STAN SHEPHERD COMPLETE WITH BALES OF HAY FOR "TRACTOR RIDES".

GUS AND MRS BANDIAS RAN AN ADJOINING ORCHARD DOWN FALCONER ROAD AND THE GIRLS AND THEIR FAMILY BOUGHT ALONG THEIR HORSES FOR RIDES AROUND THE ROUGH OVAL.

AS MOST WORK AND BUSINESSES SHUT AT 12 NOON SATURDAY, THIS GAVE THE WHOLE FAMILY A CHANCE TO JOIN IN THE FUN OVER THE WEEKEND.

WOOD FIRES WERE LIT IN A COPPER TO BOIL THE WATER FOR THE HOT DOGS AND IN THE OLD BAR-B-Q's THAT HAD LARGE THICK METAL PLATES ON TOP OF "U" SHAPED CONCRETE.

LONG GUM TREE BRANCHES WERE TRIMMED, CUT AND TIED TOGETHER TO BE USED AS A LEAN ON BARRIER AROUND ALL OF THE GAME AREAS, WHICH WAS AT A SAFE DISTANCE FROM THE STALLS.

THE RAFFLE WHEEL WAS ONE OF THE LAST ITEMS TO BE FIXED IN PLACE AND THEN IT WAS ON WITH THE FUN.

EVERYONE KEPT AN EYE OPEN FOR THE GUEST OF HONOUR, WHO WAS MR GEOFF CORKE, KNOWN ON TELEVISION AS "KING CORKERY, KING OF THE KIDS".

THE CARNIVAL DETAILS WERE ANNOUNCED ON RADIO AND POSTERS WERE DELIVERED IN PARK ORCHARDS AND AROUND RINGWOOD AND WARRANDYTE.

GEOFF CORKE WOULD ARRIVE IN HIS OWN CAR, AND HEAD INTO A TENT FOR HIM TO CHANGE INTO HIS ROBES, PUT ON HIS CROWN, COME OUT AND THEN BE DRIVEN AROUND BY BOB FINNIS ON THE BACK SEAT OF BOB'S 1954 BLACK MG SPORTS CAR WITH THE CHILDREN WAVING AND CHEERING.

AFTER STEPPING OUT OF THE MG, GEOFF WOULD SHAKE HANDS WITH THE CHILDREN AND THEIR PARENTS, AND WOULD THEN ASK THE CHILDREN WHO COULD SING HIS TELEVISION SHOW THEME SONG AND THOSE THAT COULD, DID SO AND RECEIVED A SMALL PRIZE.

GEOFF WOULD MEET AND SPEAK WITH EVERYONE AND ENJOY SOME REFRESHMENTS DURING THE AFTERNOON, THEN IT WAS ANOTHER DRIVE AROUND TO SAY GOODBYE TO ALL.

THE VERY ENJOYABLE ATMOSPHERE CONTINUED THROUGH THE LATE AFTERNOON AND INTO THE EVENING AND WHEN EVERYTHING WAS SECURE, THE MEN AND THEIR WIVES, WHO HAD WORKED SO HARD DURING THE DAY, ENJOYED A FEW BEERS OR LEMONADE SHANDIES UNTIL IT WAS TIME TO HEAD HOME, WHICH WAS USUALLY ABOUT MIDNIGHT, WITH BILL FINNIS MAKING THE FINAL CHECK WITH "OK FELLAS, LET'S CALL IT A NIGHT", AFTER THE PICTURE BUS HAD COME THROUGH FROM RINGWOOD HEADING FOR WARRANDYTE.

SOME OF THE YOUNG BOYS, MYSELF INCLUDED, USED TO SLEEP IN ONE OF THE TENTS TO KEEP AN EYE ON THINGS AS THERE WERE PLENTY OF POSSUMS AND FOXES IN THE AREA.

THE CARNIVAL CONTINUED ON THROUGH SUNDAY USING UP THE FOOD, AFTERNOON TEAS, DRINKS, PRIZES AND PLANTS. BY LATE AFTERNOON, AFTER THE TENTS AND EQUIPMENT WERE PACKED UP AND LOADED, ANY FOOD STUFFS OR OTHER ITEMS WERE GIVEN AWAY.

IT WAS A THOROUGHLY ENJOYABLE WEEKEND WITH FAMILIES AND FRIENDS HELPING OUT AND IT GAVE NEW RESIDENTS A CHANCE TO MEET THE PARK ORCHARDS PEOPLE WHO HAD WORKED SO HARD TO MAKE IT SUCH A GREAT SUCCESS.