

RIVERINA SPORTS CAR



ASSOCIATION INC.

OLD HIGHWAY 31 TOUR

11th to 13th. June 2025

A Special Supplementary Edition to accompany

OPEN TOPICS



The 'It's a bit chilly' Edition

Edition No. 254

July-August 2025



A good read anytime,
anywhere!



A Grand Tour

By Malcolm & Robyn
McEachern

June Mid-Week Run

Three Days on Route 31



RIVERINA SPORTS CAR ASSOCIATION

“OLD HUME HIGHWAY”

ROUTE - 31

MIDWEEK RUN June 11th 12th 13th

2025



An absolutely wonderful event, thanks to the planning and preparation put in by Malcolm and Robyn to organize the 3 days on the Old Hume, it went without a hitch - and they had even managed to arrange decent weather for much of the trip! With a fully documented set of instructions and maps (yes, the famous Malcolms Maps were all present and correct!) and the matter of meals, accommodation and wayside stops all part of the package, there was nothing for us participants to do but drive and enjoy. Perfect!

Malcolm has provided a very good summary of how the 3 days progressed, so over to you, Malcolm.

'Just a note to let you know how pleased I was with the event. Twenty seven members were entered for the tour and another five came on the run to Wagga Wagga for the day.

DAY ONE:

Some chose to start at "THE SHED" in Wodonga and the rest started the run at the Culcairn Bakery. All who met at "THE SHED" were provided with a folio of information relative to the "HIGHWAY 31 RUN" and I intended to give the starters at Culcairn their copy, however it was soon discovered on arrival at Culcairn that those important documents were still at "THE SHED". An urgent phone call to my son and he fired up his 5.0lt F-Pace Jaguar at home in Thurgoona, swiftly travelled to Wodonga, found the documents, and very soon met me at Gerogery Pub, where I took delivery of the wayward folios. The sound of that 5.0lt Jaguar roaring back to Albury, with the documents safely in my possession, was music to my ears.

Following morning tea it was follow the leader to the R.S.L. Club in Wagga Wagga where we enjoyed a rowdy (as is usual for this group) luncheon at Henry's Restaurant and then to the R.A.A.F. Museum at Forest Hill. (R.A.A.F. memorabilia and aircraft on display. The weather was absolutely perfect winters day. It was then back to the Club and accommodation, drinks at the Club, another noisy and very excellent dinner (for some) at the Chinese restaurant and day one was over.

DAY TWO:

An early breakfast at the Club and then off to SNAKE GULLY and the famous "DOG on the TUCKERBOX" where the tour officially began. More coffee and food at Oliver's then on the road to Gundagai, thru the main street and down onto the floodplain to view the very famous trestle bridge (road and rail). This was an ideal stop for photographs. On the road again and up to the Rotary Lookout to view the old timber bridges and the new concrete replacement bridges. We left Gundagai and stopped at Tarcutta and viewed the memorial to truck drivers who lost their lives on the "HUME HIGHWAY" very sad, however we viewed this important tribute in beautiful Winter sunshine.

It was then a lunch stop at "THE TEN MILE" cafe in Holbrook, along the old highway past WOOMARGAMA then into the old highway thru BOWNA and bypassing ALBURY/WODONGA to BARNAWARTHA and CHILTERN stopping at the GATEWAY HOTEL in WANGARATTA for the night. More afternoon drinks & then dinner (very nice thank you very much) .

DAY THREE:

This was the most interesting part of the "OLD HUME HIGHWAY 31 TOUR" as it encompassed more of the old road than the days prior. From WANGARATTA to GLENROWAN to BENALLA and BADAGINNIE then to EUROA for coffee. Then to AVENEL where we stopped to view the old stone bridge, which has true historical significance, another excellent photo shoot. This part of the old highway has been bypassed for many years brought back many memories of my youth travelling from Wodonga to Melbourne in the late 50s & early 60s. Into SEYMOUR and on to TALLAROOK, BROADFORD, KILMORE and the Tour's end at WALLAN and lunch at HOGAN'S HOTEL restaurant. For various reasons some members left the tour at WANGARATTA and another at EUROA.

"OLD HUME HIGHWAY 31 RUNNERS"

Malcolm & Robyn McEACHERN	JAGUAR XF SALOON
Raymond & Tina JONES	
John & Eileen CARTHEW	TERRITORY SUV
Peter & Sallyanne DUNHAM	JEEP GRAND CHEROKEE
Peter & Lorraine DALEY	JAGUAR XJ SALOON
Peter & Kerri THOMPSON	MG ZST SUV
Alan & Lynne BRINK	ALFA ROMEO GIULIA
Peter & Caroline SPASOJEVIC	JAGUAR XK ROADSTER
Deb & Ian LATTIMORE	AC COBRA ROADSTER
Margaret & Ray TOBIN	CHRYSLER SEBRING CONVERTABLE
Ida & Hans PROBST	TOYOTA RAV 4 SUV
Kim & Chantelle McCONCHIE	MERCEDES SLC 500 COUPE
Peter & Cheryl GRICE	SUBARU SUV/CHEVROLET COMARO
Ray TANNER	HOLDEN SALOON

DAY RUNNERS:

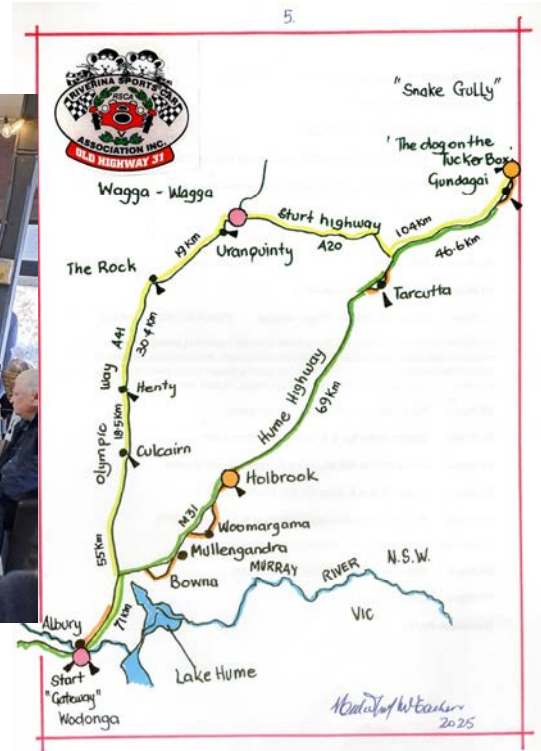
David POLSEN	HOLDEN MONARO
Peter & Ronnie TAYLOR	HOLDEN SS COMMODORE
JOHN McINNES & DENISE BELL	

MALCOLM J McEACHERN Director



Day One.

Meeting at the shed, and the first action of the day was to receive the very comprehensive briefing notes - you will find many of them to be reproduced throughout this report - and get on the road and up the Olympic Way to Culcairn to get the needed coffees and morning munchies as a first priority.



With a full compliment of travelers, and having met up with the day runners, it was off to Wagga RSL for lunch and check out if we could check in at the RSL Motel -no can do, we were a bit early - so lunch it was, and an opportunity to check out the if dinner in the Chinese restaurant section might provide a bit of a different cuisine. The menu looked promising, so we decided that would be the go after drinks.



The afternoon took us to the RAAF Museum at Wagga airbase, with a collection of planes parked on the hardstand at the front, and an interesting collection of history of the base in the museum proper, which is still in use as a training establishment by the air force.

Outside, a mural on a water tank depicted the locations of the numerous training bases set up across the region during the second World War; as my father had been in the RAAF at this time and had trained at some of these bases, there was a bit of a family connection for me.



With the day trippers having departed, it was time to get back to the RSL, get checked in and then start the serious business of the evening - drinks before dinner!



The procuring of drinks and settling in to the lounge was a work of mere moments, the chatter volume was cranked up to RSCA normal, and the Master of Ceremonies welcomed us all to what was already proving to be a delightful trip over the three days—and had his birthday celebrated in style!

Moving on to the Chinese restaurant, and 3 tables of hungry people perused the menu, and one of the heads of a table ordered a banquet on every one's behalf. Except somewhere in the communications it was lost in translation that three tables were involved, and as we, on the third table watched on, a feast of Bacchanalian proportions was delivered in rapid fire succession to the other two; after eventually attracting a waitress's attention it appeared that no, we were not included in the group order, the banquet was only for the other two tables.... So we ordered individually, happy days, got some more drinks, and waited patiently...more drinks, less patiently...WAITRESS! Oh dear, what did you



order?

Oh it appears the kitchen has lost the order...

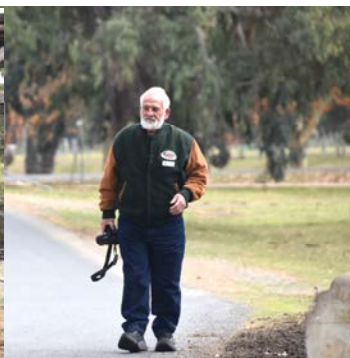
We did get fed before the lights went out, and as this was the only hiccup for the trip, not too bad in hindsight.



Day Two.

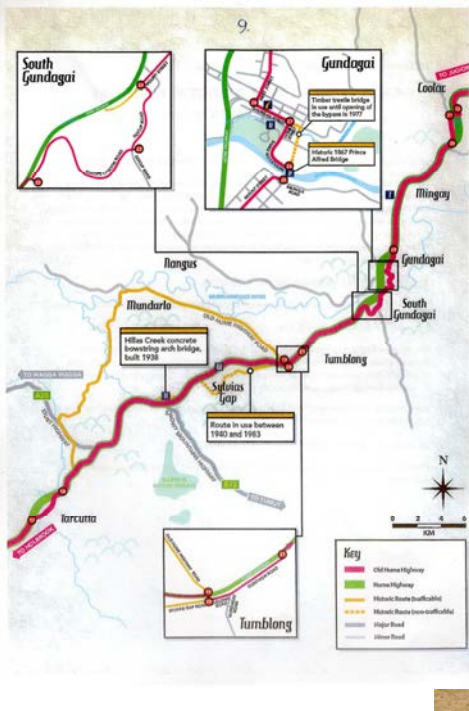
A hearty breakfast, and off to Snake Gully (aka The Dog On The Tuckerbox) outside of Gundagai. A foggy start to the day, and we appreciated having brought a car with a damn fine heater and a demister that lived up to its name. With bits of sun breaking through now and then, it was up to the Hume and on to Olivers for coffee (and toasties for those who were still hungry after breakfast—coffee did us, the Big Breakfast lived up to its name). Shrouded in mist, the old roadhouse bought back a lot of memories of childhood trips up the old Hume, and the modern replacements have none of the character that the old roadhouses had - memories of Golden Fleece restaurants particularly, as the McConchie family go-to for a break on a road trip, will never be replaced by the Golden Arches.

Caffeine content refreshed, and off to the old bridges of Gundagai. These days the old road bridge is almost but a memory, however the railway bridge stands proudly, a sym-



bol of old style construction now defying its age (apart from the bits that are falling off - it seriously needs a preservation budget, but I may fly without mechanical aids before that happens).

We gathered at its base and marveled at how it had withstood the years of service with heavy interstate trains rum-



bling over it, and again a bit of nostalgia - coming home from a Sydney holiday on the Southern Aurora in 1961, rumbling over that bridge and my dad telling us the story of Gundagai and the Dog on the Tuckerbox as we looked down on the floodplain, and, as kids do, wondering if the bridge was going to collapse while we crossed it. And sort of hoping it might - that would be AN ADVENTURE!!

And then off to the lookout to admire Gundagai from the top of the hill, where the view



was great but the wind chill factor was -10C and not showing any signs of abating. Still the cloud was breaking up, and time to get back to the road and head South, next stop Tarcutta; the weather improved and the sun was shining as we viewed the very sobering memorial to truck drivers who had lost their lives on the dreaded Hume. All ages,



from mid teens to in their nineties, and sadly it keeps being updated. While the roads improve, and the trucks improve, the danger still exists for the long haul drivers.

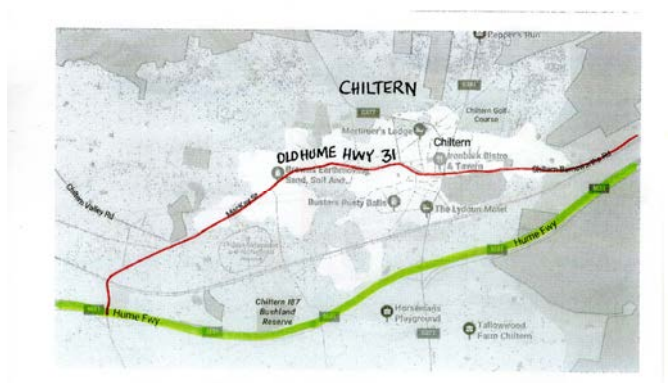
And then it was off to lunch at submarine city, home of one of the most interesting car dealership showrooms in the state - Holbrook. The Ten Mile Café beckoned, a venue I will be going back to, as the food was great, the pricing reasonable, and the service as good as you'd want. Holbrook also boasts a great old Holden dealership, Lieschke Motors, with a display of golden Holdens in the showroom - I have checked, sadly no cheques accepted, especially mine, apparently.

Onwards South, with a couple of diversions onto the old Hume - along the old highway past Woomargama, then divert again to the old highway thru Bowna, and while the original directions through Albury and into Wodonga were nicely detailed, a bit of prudence was called for as we were a bit behind schedule, it was now school hours, and all of us



were familiar with the route across the river and on to Melbourne. Still it did bring memories of sitting in summer traffic in Young Street, watching the temperature gauge edge into the red, the cars inching along and looking at any possible, rational way of avoiding it in the future. The opening of the new Hume was years overdue.

Onwards South to Barnawatha, and another section of the Old Hume, signposted as such. This took us through Chiltern, and then back on to the Hume and into the evenings destination, the Gateway Hotel in Wangaratta. Check in, head to the nearest servo for a fill up - the low fuel light had been shining accusingly since Chiltern, threatening bad things will happen soon - and another pleasant evening commenced in the lounge with the standard RSCA requisites of convivial drinks and a damned



good natter. We must thank our hosts, Ray and Tina Jones, for the fine hospitality, with snacks being passed around the lounge to accompany the pre-dinner drinks; and then a fine dining experience topping off the night. Excellent!

Day Three.

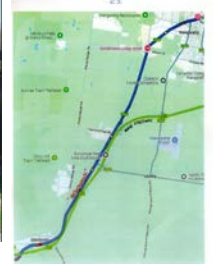
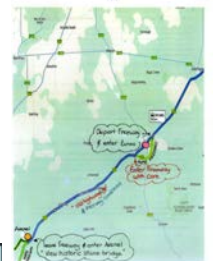
Today brings a whole lot more of the Old Hume into the equation, and it's off to Kelly Country, specifically Glenrowan, as the first section still in general use. You'd hardly know Glenrowan has a connection with Ned as you go through town - just the occasional small tip of the helmet to him!

Parallel to the new Hume, a lovely piece of road overall, and skirt around the town of Winton, passing a historic relic on the side of the road - it's the old Winton Service Centre, where (and I have it on good authority) both the trucks and the drivers could be serviced at the same time, but not, I am assured, by the same person.

Through Benalla, the usual mix of locals and tourists who all seem to have their own interpretation of roads rules, and on to Badaginnie.

This section of road has some long straights which were immortalized in a Wheels Magazine story in 1971, 'HO Down the Hume', where an early morning blast from Albury to Melbourne had the Ford GT-HO PIII on the rev limiter in top gear, holding steady at 144 MPH.

A story with an iconic picture altered for the magazine, the speedo needle wound back to 120, but now the original is available. Try this on the Hume today and see how you fare!





Still a bit chilly out, so it was a welcome morning tea at the Euroa Bakery, a very good choice - my measure of a bakery, the sausage roll, passed the test and the coffee was pretty good too.



A local drove up in a very classy convertible, however he said the heater really wasn't doing much and the wind chill factor on the move was pretty character building. I'd certainly like one, but I'd be a bit more choosy on the days I drove it!

Then to Avenel, and a stop at the old stone bridge on the way out of town. This was another masterpiece of building, hand hewn stones and still solid 150 years after it was built -



and said to be spanning a point in the river where Ned Kelly once rescued a child from drowning. I assume he wasn't wearing his armor at the time!

With the sun shining, it made for a last glorious day as we headed into Seymour, passing under the freeway and coming in past a servo I remember from years ago. It was another standard roadside stop for fuel and a cuppa, I think Mum and Dad liked its rural setting rather than braving the traffic in Seymour proper.



In Seymour it was a stop to get the group back together, question if there was a word missing in the creek name, and the opportunity to play car spotto and cry 'Hey! Charger!' when a very nice example nosed out of a side street unexpectedly.



Back on to the Hume for a short time, then a step to the left to pick up the old highway again as it ducked into Tallarook, which sadly has a slightly run down look compared to most of the other places we passed through. A few more kilometers of freeway then off to Broadford, for the last major section of the Old Hume. Roadworks in Broadford held us up for a little while, then down into Kilmore—a real slow drag, the spread of housing development hasn't been matched by any improvements in traffic management through the town.



On to Wallan, and down the infamous Pretty Sally Hill - another part I remember all too well as an uphill slog amongst smoke belching trucks, wheezing pommie cars struggling in first gear and coming to a steaming stop half way up, and cattle trucks with streams of pee out the side catching the unwary with their windows down. Oh, the fun we had!

Our lunch stop, and end of the tour- Hogans Hotel in Wallan, another historical place that fortunately seems to be flourishing. And over lunch, everyone agreed it had been a won-

derful three days, with good roads, good food, and of course good company!

A vote of thanks to Malcolm and Robyn for the time and effort they had put into the planning for this trip, it was a success because of their enthusiasm and interest in the history of the Old Hume - it was appreciated by us all.



- Debbie Lattimore: Great trip, thanks RSCA, Malcom and Robin 😊
- Ian Lattimore: What a great group of people we have in our club , thank you to all the crew 👍
- Peter Thompson: a wonderful 3 days, getting to know fellow clubbies, a few good drinks, good conversations, a fun drive and just a dam good time. Thank you, Malcolm and Robyn, you're the best.
- Ida Probst: What a lovely 3 days, driving through old country towns reminiscing highway 31. Delicious food and of course that glass of wine with wonderful company. Thank you so much Malcolm and Robyn.
- Peter Dunham: Old Highway 31, the Dunham perspective. The first night at the Wagga RSL Club we all decided to dine at the Chinese restaurant. Two of our three group tables made the correct decision to feast on a banquet which was served promptly and plentifully. The poor unfortunate table occupied by the McConchie's and Co weren't so lucky and received their orders after everyone else had finished. This was mainly because they ordered individual fancy pantsy dishes. Eventually we were all fed and content and retired to our comfy large beds.

The next morning after a massive breakfast at the club we headed to the Dog on the Tuckerbox and coffee at Oliver's. We then regrouped on the shoulder of the new Hume Highway before venturing back to the Old Highway through Gundagai.

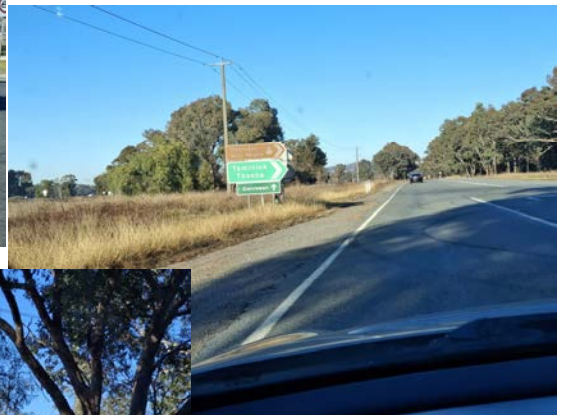
Our tour Director, Malcolm McEachern, stood on the road with his door open as all cars pulled to the side. He resembled a Highway Patrol Cop with his stealthy black Jag thus causing all the other traffic to hit the anchors heavily. After an interesting day of driving we all arrived at the Quality Gateway Hotel Wangaratta for the night. This was place was flash. Rooms, bar, dinner and breakfast were superb. Thank you Tina and Raymond Jones for hosting such a great experience.

Our final day was probably the best as far as scenery which included the beautiful stone bridge at Avenel. Robyn and Malcolm went above and beyond with the massive organisation of this trip which included historical information, brilliant mapping and timing. Thank you and we look forward to next year's event.

Sals and Peter Dunham

A potpourri of pictures.





Postscript.

From my own experiences, I know the work that goes into preparing multi-day events, and it is not something to be casually undertaken.

The planning and preparation starts with identifying the routes to be taken, then looking at how interesting are they, what are the attractions to make the trip memorable?

Then there is assessing the road conditions for suitability for what is likely to be a very varied collection of cars making the journey, where to eat along the way, what accommodation will provide both quality of establishment, and a reasonable cost for the participants?

Ideally there is the opportunity to carry out a reconnoitre and confirm the actual meets the desirable - as we heard, Malcolm found the Gundagai planned accommodation 'actual' had a mismatch with the 'desirable', and hence Wagga became the default first overnight stay. The alternative, of using Google maps and venue ratings, can lead to some, shall I say, regrettable outcomes - a little test run can save a lot of grief.

Documenting the drive is an art in itself, and there is no doubt Malcolm has truly made an art of map making - combining a flair for the visual with the detail to make them useful, and then adding the supplementary information that leaves the entrants with a sense of awe at the presentation, and a confidence they will also find it useful. A rare talent indeed!

Ably supported by Robyn, Malcolm has again set a standard for us to measure up to when we plan events, be they a day, a week, or longer.

Thanks for suggesting the trip, planning the trip, managing the trip and being a huge part of the trip; and...Happy Birthday!!

Kim McCouchie

