

Southeast Getaway

Joint South Australia/Victoria Biennial Gathering

Pam Bown, Coral Campbell and Saeko Fujiki



Briefing on Day 1 at the Country Roads Motor Inn.

Victorian Delegates: Eileen Barker, Mike Barker, Pam Bown, Grant Butler, Bill Campbell, Coral Campbell, Tyrone Dark, Brian Egan, Karen Egan, Alyssa Finlay, Murray Finlay, Saeko Fujiki, Gill Taylor, Tony Taylor, Janette Todd and John Todd.

Three cars left Torquay on Friday morning. The sun was shining, unlike the previous day. "Miho" and Pam's "Clara" were far from spotless after driving through the rain for nearly 200km. Bill made us jealous with his freshly polished and shiny MX-5 just out of the garage. Of course we were delighted to be given one of the new compact CB radios, a recent club purchase.

The Campbells mapped out stage 1 of the trip and led the run. In Geelong, Tony & Gill Taylor's silver SP joined us. Four cars in convoy

continued the run towards Ballarat, avoiding the busy Geelong town centre and travelled on the Midland highway. Part of this route was the same as Bill and Coral's run in June. The weather reminded us of the run as well. At this point the clouds started to gather with showers now and then. Bill wasn't happy, but we felt less jealous.

In Ballarat, Michael & Eileen Barker and John & Janette Todd were waiting for us. Shortly after Murray & Alyssa Finlay arrived. Morning tea and greetings were exchanged. Bill prepared enough CB radios to distribute to all of the cars. Everyone had to have one. Lucky people!! (By now you may have realized one of us is not so keen on carrying the CB radio.)

Some of us refuelled then we hit the road again. This stage was led by Pam and Tyrone. We travelled along

the Western Highway to Horsham. Just before the lunch stop some cars became separated from the convoy and missed the turn, but the CB radios did the job and we walked into the pie shop together. The pie shop was certainly worth a try. The variety on offer was fantastic. If you want further information, please contact Tyrone.

Filled with pies and coffee we returned to the road. Tyrone led us on a little detour off the Wimmera Highway to the magnificent Mt. Arapiles, about 10km after Natimuk. We had to drive along a little bit of unmade road but it was worth the effort. A kind local also came onto our CB reception and gave us some touristy information. There were many people camping in the area and some brave people were rock climbing. We parked the cars, strolled around and made the ritual photo and video shots.

Stage three was lead by Tony & Gill Taylor. The countryside was exceptionally green after the recent rainfall and big fields of bright yellow canola here and there were beautiful aspect of the scenery. We had a good run and drove into Naracoorte around 4pm South Australian time. Bill made a comment over the radio, "Does anyone know of the location of our accommodation?" Instantly a kind local gave us some instructions over the CB. Then Bill realised that some of us were staying at a different motel. "No worries buddy". We received a second instruction from the local, and everyone arrived safely.



Free Booze. Russet Ridge Winery.

Meeting the South Australian contingent was good. Some familiar faces and some new faces greeted us. Peter Papageorgakis welcomed our group and gave us some information. We checked into the room and noticed it was the same motel we had stayed in on the way back from NatMeet last year. After a quick cuppa we walked to town to stretch our legs.

At 7:30 we walked to the Naracoorte Hotel. Then we noticed it was the same hotel we had a

meal in last year. We knew the next day we were going to visit the same cave we had also visited last year. Peter must have known what we did last year. We drank, ate, talked and laughed. The South Australians even organised a surprise raffle! Some of us won bottles of booze. The South Australian president Keith Greenlees made a warm welcome speech.

After having a satisfying meal in a pleasant atmosphere, we participated in the usual poker machine gambling session with Bill and Coral. Back to the motel and

the end of an enjoyable day one.

We awoke on Saturday to our breakfast, delivered to our rooms. It was an early start today – leaving the motel carpark at 9.15am. Twenty-three cars headed off towards the Naracoorte Caves. Due to our large numbers, we were scheduled to do two shifts of the one-hour tour of the Victoria Fossil Cave. A few of us stayed at the visitor centre, taking in the information about the large numbers of fossils found in the caves and supping on coffee (in a very relaxed manner) at the café. When the tour groups returned, they raved about the spectacular caves and the sights they had seen underground.

At this point, we headed off in convoy towards the small coastal town of Beachport. Have you ever seen a convoy of cars snaking through a small town (Millicent) looking for a member's daughter's new house (which we couldn't find)? No? It was a new experience for us too! On arrival at Beachport, we were booked into 'Bompers café' for a light lunch of focaccias and salads. We had enough time to stroll along the waterfront and view the local sights. On our drive back to the motel, the convoy got 'stuck' behind

Cheese Please. Gill and Tony Taylor at rest.





Saeko Fujiki and Murray Finlay with a nights supply.

a police car, which was similarly stuck behind another vehicle doing about 108kmh (the speed limit is 110kmh). The in-convoy radios were running hot. Who would volunteer to act as the sacrificial lamb and overtake the police car? We figured that the police would pull over the first MX-5 to overtake it, leaving the rest of us free to set off at the speed limit. No one volunteered. We continued for many kilometres with what was, to all intents and purposes, a police escort. Any vehicles coming towards us would have interpreted it that way.

After the drive back to our motels, we boarded a bus for a local winery 'Russet Ridge'. We were given a tour of the winery - who was it that set off the emergency alarm by inadvertently resting on the big red button? The tour included a tasting and light afternoon tea of fruit and cheeses. After much sampling, food and wine, we again boarded the bus for the 'scenic route' back to our motels before a quick change for dinner.

We walked into the main part of town to our restaurant 'The Blue Wattle Café'. This was owned and managed by a Victorian who

commuted regularly from Bendigo – phew, what a distance to travel for work (3-4 hours each way). We had another enjoyable social evening – good food, good wine and, of course, good company.

Sunday dawned bright and sunny, people relaxing over breakfast for a later start. Mid morning, a group walked into town for coffee, chat and back.

Then, a zoom towards Penola, past pastures, and then vines. Our lunch stop at Hollick's winery saw us all mix and mingle; enjoying a delicious three course lunch. My favourite was the lemon tart, or was it the Atlantic Salmon? – both tasty and faultless. After, the lottery was drawn, \$100 to our Eileen and Mike – congratulations!

Later, Victorians working on Monday left, so Tyrone and I, Janette and John followed the convoy to Bool Lagoon. We enjoyed a tranquil stroll along the boardwalk, sighting many birds and fowl.

Back at the motel, men peered under Clara's bonnet whilst women sat and watched the men – funny creatures!! Then a walk to the local for a very light dinner before our Monday return.. We four Vic's (and me at least 2kg heavier) in a mini convoy, zoomed through greening Victoria, acres of vivid yellow canola, sweet smelling legumes and shorn sheep, through Horsham, Bendigo and home – a truly enjoyable weekend.

Victorians on the loose at Beachport.

