

TCCV and friends in Tasmania

Easter 2018 was different for members and friends of the Triumph Car Club of Victoria (TCCV) to most other Easters. For months, a three-person committee had been at work planning the club's second ten-day overseas tour of Tasmania. Back in 2010, a dozen Triumphs toured Tasmania's centre and east coast. This time, 32 people ventured forth in 17 cars to circumnavigate the island, which is more than twice the size of Belgium.

On Good Friday we assembled at Port Melbourne to drive aboard the Spirit of Tasmania, and at 6.30pm we set sail across Bass Strait for Devonport on Tasmania's north coast. Next morning, three Stags, a GT6, a Dolomite Sprint, three 2500 saloons, a Sunbeam Talbot and a Tiger, a soon-to-be-classic BMW Z3 and 328i, a Jaguar XJV12, three last-minute classic-replacement Holdens and my Herald Coupé were travelling the 49km through Tamar Valley to Christmas Hills Raspberry Farm for breakfast and the start of our adventure.

Highlights of the tour included guided tours of Brickendon Farm (which dates back to Tasmania's convict years) and Trevallyn hydro-electric power station, cruising through snow-covered high peaks of Cradle Mountain-Lake St. Claire National Park and moonscape countryside around old copper mining towns of Queenstown and Zeehan. The Night Critters Coach Tour through the forest at Cradle Mountain showed just how much nocturnal wildlife there is to see, while the two half-day trips out of Strahan on the Tourist Wilderness Railway and Gordon River and visiting the Wall in the Wilderness while driving alongside the Franklin and Huon Rivers travelling east to Hobart were memorable and enlightening.

Displaying the cars on the lawns of Parliament House Gardens while we enjoyed Salamanca Markets and lunch, visiting Mawson's Hut replica on Constitution Dock and having a flutter at Hobart's Wrest Point Casino afterwards were the capital's highlights. Port Arthur (of convict penitentiary infamy) and the Bass Strait crossing itself completes my list of places and things of note, but the top three were the camaraderie, the scenery and especially the roads. There is nothing quite like driving classic cars in convoy with friends through spectacular

countryside on narrow, winding roads (even in bleak weather) for putting a permanent smile on the dial. Tasmania is truly a classic car driver's paradise.

So, how did the cars perform? I would like to say that no cars had mechanical or electrical problems completing the 1440km clockwise circumnavigation. Unfortunately, I cannot. The only TR, a petrol injected TR6, failed on arrival at the ferry car park, suffering a fatal sliced fuel line – road debris is suspected. Fortunately the ferry was two hours late, giving time for the car to be taken home on an RACV Total Care truck, and the owner to return in his non-classic.

At Strahan the GT6 gear selector mechanism collapsed, the car being taken the 223km back to Devonport on another RACV Total Care truck. An injector failed on the 2.5PI – its trip to Hobart through the western mountain range must have been interesting to say the least, especially leaving Queenstown on its Stelvio Pass-like climb. Triumph Car Club of Tasmania members in Hobart supplied a working replacement injector, restoring powerful hill-climbing performance. Future touring will be made with working injectors in the boot – good advice for all PI Triumph owners.

A Stag and the Sunbeam Talbot had window wiper issues. Replacing a fuse fixed the Stag, while the Sunbeam Talbot was fixed ingeniously using string tied to the wiper arms and passing through side windows to be

pulled alternatively by passenger and driver. My Herald lost high beam, not that they were needed, but this was fixed by plugging the blue/white wires back into the connector. Even the Jaguar's alternator stopped working on the drive back to Devonport, but came back to life next morning – an electrical mystery. Importantly, all these breakdowns could not have been predicted or expected, and none detracted from the enjoyment of the touring experience. All other cars performed perfectly, and nobody collided with any Australian wildlife or bent any panels. Instead, everyone returned safely to Melbourne enriched by the experience. The Tiger, Sunbeam Talbot and Z3 then continued their adventure, as home for them was a further 2000km away in Brisbane, Queensland, but that is another story for another magazine!

Alan Andrews



Parliament House Gardens display.



Tourists swamp Alan's Herald Coupé outside Wrest Point Casino in Hobart.