

S.E Street Machines-The First Show'n Shine

After months of planning and a mountain of work by Bill Scott, aided by the club committee of myself, Doug Cram, Bill Bowman, Buggo King, Coogee and his brother Johnny and a lot of input at the Melbourne end by Alan Hale and Dave Ryan (the founder of Rare Spares) from the VSMA. At the Adelaide end we had help from Charlie Vignale and Peter Voight from Adelaide Early Holden Club, we were a week out from the show and everything was running smoothly.....to a degree.

Bill Scott had the VSMA permit and insurance organised and the venue booked at South Gambier's Blue Lake Sports Park for the display on Saturday and Cabaret Saturday Night. Buggo had the disco all organised. I had the run to Naracoorte all organised and the Cave tours booked.

Doug Cram and Bill Bowman had the catering organised. Alan and Dave from Melbourne said they had at least ten cars coming, Charlie and Peter said they had about eight, locally Bill Scott and Doug Cram had ten definite entries coming but with a week to go we had no paid entries and one expression of interest. Bill, due to his illness had not been able to complete the paint on his Pontiac GTO so it wouldn't be there. My Monaro was still in the paint shop in base coat and my painter was also off work ill. Doug Cram's Charger was still unfinished so he was reduced to driving his wife's road car.....things looked bleak but we crossed our fingers and Prayed.

With 2 days to go, we had 4 paid entries locally and none from away, but assurances from both Melbourne and Adelaide that the cars were definitely coming. My painter was back at work on the Monaro but plodding along ever so slowly. Scotty had tried to do more work on the Pontiac but couldn't manage it. We had sold 90 cabaret tickets so at least that would be a success.

One day to go and registrations began Friday night at the 'Welcome in Ampol Service Station' opposite the South Eastern Hotel. Scotty, Coogee, his brother Johnny, Buggo, Jack Jennings Bill Bowman and Doug Cram were there. I came down to help out and did for a while but Scotty told me to p--- off and work on my car and get it to the show if possible, so I did. They got nine local registrations that night and one Adelaide Car. Final registrations were from 8.00 a.m. Saturday to 11.00 a.m followed by a short street parade out to the Show'n Shine which started at 12.00 mid-day.

At 8.30 a.m on the Saturday Morning we were sitting there forlornly, with no new registrations when someone yelled here comes a couple along the highway. It was more than a couple, the VSMA members had travelled as a group and now one after the other they began pulling in to registration (if I have missed any I apologise) Alan Hale had led them in, in his black FC V8 followed by Victor Reilly in his metallic red FC V8 with hillborn fuel injection. Then came Dave Ryan (Pontiac GTO), Jim Murcott (Black EK Wagon), John Peterson (Black V8 Zephyr), John Zeigler (HQ Ute), Rod Hadfield (Black V8 Anglia), then a group whose names I have forgotten, but the cars were HT Monaro, HK Monaro, LC XU-1 V8, EH Wagon, Ford XY Panelvan, Holden Panelvan, Mark 2 Zephyr, 51 Chevy, 56 Customline, 55 Chevy, HQ one tonner, and probably some others I have forgotten.

The cars from Adelaide also began rolling in with Charlie Vignale, Rick Martin and Peter Voight in EH Holden's, followed by an EH wagon, HQ one tonner, XA Van, XT Van, XT Sedan, Chrysler two door (not sure of model) and a couple of others I have also forgotten. Local entries were Pete Ransom in his modified L34 Torana, Brian Podgorski XU-1, Roman Tos Custom HT, Attilio Agoston Custom HG, Fred Bishop Custom XP Falcon, Tony Minge Black FJ, Frank Amoroso Black EH sedan and me if I could get the car finished.

This was not a bad line up of entries for a first time show and nearly all of these had support vehicles and people with them, we ended up selling 240 cabaret tickets for the night.

At 11.00 a.m. Bill Scott told me to p---off and not come back until the car was finished or the show was over (which was due at 4.30 p.m.) With a willing crew I went back and helped the Panel Beater who was intent on doing a good job no matter how quick I wanted it finished. Despite Scotty's insistence on me finishing my car, I went back out to the show a couple of times to check out the cars and take a few pics, also to help if required.

Eventually at Scotty's insistence I left at 2.30 p.m. to go finish the Monaro. At 4.00 p.m. it was finished, although the engine bay was still pretty mucky. Then it wouldn't start, having sat around for 2 months. We stuck the battery on charge for 20 minutes and it finally fired, it spluttered popped and backfired its way out to Blue Lake Sports Park to get there at 4.39p.m. **just** as the cars began to leave. Scotty just shook his head, but did say that it looked nice even if it sounded like a chaff cutter.

I turned off the engine and chatted to Scotty for a while, he said that we had some very good crowds through the show and he thought we had done pretty well financially. He was feeling pretty tired and thought he wouldn't stay too late at the Cabaret.

After talking to Scotty for about half an hour and a few other guys who came over for a look at the Monaro, I decided I better head off home to get ready for the cabaret. I didn't think the battery was going to have enough life to fire the engine but it just turned it over enough to go. Scotty suggested leaving it home that night and to charge the battery a bit more, and I agreed with him. I got myself cleaned up, my wife had organised baby sitters for the night and we were ready by 6.00 p.m. when the phone rang, it was Geoff Palmer, he was ringing around all members and wanted to convene a special meeting of as many members as possible (which could be done under the terms of the constitution at that time), I agreed and we all met at the Park at 6.30p.m. We had 90% of all financial members present which more than required for an SGM. I opened the meeting and Geoff got to the point of his reason for the meeting.

“In respect of the effort that Bill Scott had put in almost single-handedly organising the show and shine whilst suffering from and being treated for a possibly fatal form of melanoma, Geoff wished to nominate Bill for life membership, despite the club only being a year and a bit old, so that Bill could see that we appreciated his efforts whilst he was still well enough.”

Doug Cram seconded the motion and a secret ballot was taken, with a unanimous yes vote by all present. We then retrieved our wives and girlfriends and headed out to the cabaret.

By 8.00 p.m. the place was humming, with the South Clubrooms packed out and the disco was going full bore.

As I had to do the presentations and speeches and because I am so shy and reserved (well I was back then) I was at the bar getting some Dutch courage, before the presentations began. At 9.00 p.m. the DJ announced that the President and Vice President were starting the presentations, so we duly commenced. I don't recall who won what, but there were the usual jeers, catcalls and whistles every time someone won a trophy (Bill had also made the trophies which looked very good). Finally we had finished presentations and a tired Bill said he was heading for a seat and might go home soon.

I said "just hang about Bill we have one more presentation to do" and I called Geoff Palmer to the stage. He had a certificate in his hand, that he had hurriedly made and had printed. Whilst Bill stood with a puzzled look on his face wondering who was getting what, I then told the crowd of the efforts Bill had put in to the Show n' Shine whilst being so ill. Then I announced his life membership award. As we presented it to a very stunned Bill, I could see tears running down his cheeks, for a moment I thought he was going to cry, but he got himself together and made a very moving thank you speech, his last comments were "I'll be sticking around for a while yet!" 38 years later more bouts of cancer and some heart attacks and he is still around and still building cars...thankfully. He got a standing ovation from the crowd for about 5 minutes.

For the rest of the night his spirits were lifted and he was still at the bar when the cabaret began to wind up. John Petersen came over to me and said "A few of the boys want to go dragging....you got somewhere we can go?"

I said I would arrange something and Bill and I rang a couple of mates in the Force, after a discussion with them it was decided Square Mile Road at Yahl would be the venue and the word was passed around. At 1.00 a.m. there were quite a few guys, girls and cars out on square Mile Road. A quarter mile was measured and a guy with a torch was put at the end of it, to signal the cars when they crossed the line and to warn of any other vehicles.

Car after car blasted down the road, side by side with the exhaust notes crackling into the night. I noticed Alan Hale looking around nervously and asked what the problem was; he said he was keeping an eye out for the Police. I laughed and said to him, "see the guy flagging the cars off, well that's xxxxxxxx (*name deleted for obvious reasons*) and see the white GT Falcon waiting to line up, that's xxxxxxxx (*name deleted for obvious reasons*), they are both Police Officers, in fact xxx is a Sergeant!" Al walked away shaking his head and said "geez you guys have got it easy over here" (Interestingly both officers were transferred within the next two months)

There were many interesting drags that night, but the best one I thought, was between Pete Ransom in his much modified L34 Torana and John (Burnout King) Petersen in his black V8 Mark 3 Zephyr. John lined up first and did a couple of staging burnouts which nearly gassed everyone at the start line. Then Pete lined up and did a quite respectable burnout in the Torana. The two then lined up for the drag race. Pete came off the start cleaner and got a good lead, but lost ground with the gear-changes and was beaten by about a car length. John Petersen said it was one of the closest drags he had been in for a while. At that time he was Victorian Street Class Champion. At

about 3.30 a.m. we all headed home to get ready for the run to Naracoorte the next day.

Next day, we were all up early, Pete Ransom called around home to see if the Monaro was going to fire up or not (it didn't, the battery had died altogether) he asked if I wanted to come with him, which I did, my wife had work to do at home so she elected not to go. We all met at the Target Car Park and began the run heading up Commercial Street and then turning up Penola Road. Bill Scott was leading the run, having commandeered his brother in laws XT GT (with his brother in law driving, he knew how Bill drove).

We had a good long line-up of cars heading out Penola Road with a lot of members bringing out their unfinished (or unstarted) vehicles. Young Geoffrey (as Coogee was endearingly called then) and his brother Johnny were in his recently acquired Dodge Phoenix, pale blue in colour running on standard rims with cheese cutter tyres and not much in the braking department.

As we headed out past the airport, Jim Murcotts EK Wagon pulled off the road and stopped with the bonnet up, Pete and I pulled up, along with a few others, whilst the leaders also pulled up and waited. The hot six had decided to shear the harmonic balancer rubber and throw off the pulley; luckily it had done no other damage. Rod Hadfield said "I told you should have put a Gilmer drive on it Jim!" Jim Murcott agreed that Rod was right. After a bit of discussion we decided to take the EK back to Peter Barrow's house which was only a half K back down the road and see if we could leave it there. He was more than happy for us to do that.

We continued to Naracoorte Caves with no further problems and enjoyed a B-B-Q lunch there and a tour of the Caves. At about 3.00 p.m the Adelaide based guys bid us farewell and thanked us for a great weekend.

Some of the Melbourne guys also left at this time cutting back through Edenhope.

Eventually the rest of us left in a semi orderly fashion and we were driving along quite happily when Roman Tos pulled out and passed us in his HT V8, Pete decided that was not on and stood on the Torana, whipping out and around Roman and hitting about 110 mph. I looked behind to see Coogee sitting right behind us in Pete's slipstream, cheese cutter tyres, virtually no brakes and a huge grin!! Pete nearly ran off the road in surprise, but regained his composure and gunned the Torana to about (censored) mph, once Coogee was out of the slipstream he dropped back a fair bit but Pete kept the car going for a while to give us a safety buffer. We got home with no further excitement. All in all it was a great show weekend, a tradition that has continued over the years.