

ANZAC DAWN SERVICE

At a recent Committee meeting the suggestion was put forward about the Club taking a run to Albany for the Anzac Day Dawn Service on top of Mt Clarence. This was greeted enthusiastically and plans were set in place.

The group leaving Armadale on Friday 24 April consisted of 11 Buicks and one modern who gathered at the Old Narrogin Inne, leaving about 10 am. Les and June Woodruff came down to farewell the cars before they headed south to Albany, about 420 km from Perth.

The weather was warm and sunny and the drive was very enjoyable through the State forest and then into open pastoral land. The cars swung into the Wool Shed complex at Williams at the 160 km mark for morning tea and many were interested in the local produce, woollen clothing and knitted articles.

At Beaufort River four of the Buicks were snapped up by a booze bus with police testing people for alcohol. Most of us drifted by as there was only room for four cars at one time. Each of the four cars happened to be left hand drive and I think one of the police was a bit green because he tried to breathalise the passengers on the right side of the car. This caused some laughter on both sides. Bonnets were popped and engines were examined by the interested police. They seemed to be more interested in the cars rather than doing any breathalising!

Lunch at Kojonup in a small park where we met up with Barry and Lourdes Gard who had driven across from Bunbury in their 1938. From there the convoy headed south again down to Albany and booked into the Dog Rock Motel. Kaye and Johnno Cook had driven from Kukerin in their Corvette to meet us at Albany.

The monument atop Mt Clarence with its magnificent horse and diggers statue has been recast after the original one was blown up in the 1950s in Egypt when anti-British/Australian sentiment prevailed. The supporting stone base was brought back from Egypt and rebuilt at Mt Clarence, the last port of call before our diggers headed off to Egypt in WWI. The stones at the base bear the marks of gunfire but the holes have been patched

Physically Mt Clarence is quite steep with only one narrow road leading to the summit and memorial. We were told by the RSL that numbers for the Dawn Service are limited because of the small area of land available at the monument. About 4 a.m. on the morning of Anzac day, shuttle buses start to ferry people from Marine Drive to a point at the turning circle on Mt Clarence. This is a first in-first serve situation until numbers have been met.

The Buick Club decided that we would check out the walk trails up Mt Clarence and see if we could get to the Anzac Day ceremony without having to queue for the shuttle bus, with the uncertainty about even getting up to the monument. As it turned out a shuttle bus turned up early in the morning (about 4.30 a.m.) at the Dog Rock and those who intended to go up the mountain (about a dozen) hopped on the bus and were taken about half way up the road to the monument. Light rain was falling as we headed up. This was a bit of a heart pounding, knee aching climb but we managed to get there at 5.30 am just as the service started.

I think most of us agreed that it had been well worthwhile making the effort and the service was very special. Some members are talking now about visiting Gallipoli, Villers-Bretonneux and Beersheba in Israel.

When the service ended at about 6 a.m. the first light was appearing in the east and you could see across the outer harbour to Breaksea and Michelmas Islands. Light rain kept sweeping across. Amazingly a dark purple colour lit up the sky which unfortunately was difficult to catch on camera.



We all decided to walk the downward trail which was narrow and fairly steep. Luckily we could see our way by this time and the group proceeded in single file down to the main road. We arrived back at the motel about 7 a.m. somewhat damp and weary. A hot shower and a a buffet brekkie brightened everyone up.



Newton Powell, a Buick club member who lives at Albany, had kindly arranged for the Buicks to be on display at a lovely park near Middleton Beach. The local VCC joined us with their interesting collection of cars and trucks. Newton had provided some pergolas for protection from the odd shower of rain which were very acceptable. There seemed to be a constant stream of locals and tourists examining the cars.

At 2 pm the cars regrouped and headed out the Chester Pass Road towards the Porongrupps. We then swung across to Mt Barker but encountered about 10 km of gravel roadworks which had everyone swearing and muttering.

Most of us booked in at the old Plantagenet Hotel at Mt Barker with the overflow at the nearby motel. Vic and Margaret Hayes were our hosts, Vic having been president of the post vintage section of the VCC in Perth some time ago. After our early morning start on the Saturday, it was great to relax, have a few drinks and enjoy the wonderful meals provided by Margaret in our very own dining room.

After breakfast on the Sunday, some of our members headed back to Bunbury and Perth leaving eight cars heading on to Narrogin for the Sunday evening.

The Stirling Ranges looked pretty spectacular on the way to Borden. We had planned to have morning tea at a huge Dutch windmill which is a genuine mill, not a replica. However the owners had gone back to Holland for a holiday so we just used this as a photo opportunity for a Buick lineup, complete with a young border collie prancing around.



We had a late lunch at Katanning, having to wait for two Buicks who had points and water pump problems. However eventually everybody gathered at a lovely park and enjoyed the warm sunshine and the ice-cream van.

About 4.30 pm the cars swung into the Albert Facey Motel at Narrogin, a place pretty well known to the Buicks. The usual pre-dinner drinks and post mortems of the weekend sitting outside our rooms and then gathering in the restaurant of the motel for dinner. Another great social evening.

Monday morning saw the remaining eight Buicks dispersing after breakfast towards the various destinations to head home.

Special thanks to Harold Hitchcock, Tony Howe, Stuart Syme, Alan Haime and Newton Powell who helped make this another great Buick getaway.

L M Haime (WA Buicks)