

## ***The 1977 Repco Alpine International Rally***

This year's three-day **Alpine Rally** was again organized by the Light Car Club , with Frank Kilfoyle as Director . A total of 127 applications were received , but this number was eventually whittled down to 80 starters , the maximum allowed .

The rally result was a double victory for the Ford Rally Team , with Greg Carr / Fred Gocentas winning from team boss Colin Bond / John Dawson-Damer . It was Carr's third Alpine victory in a row , a very impressive feat indeed .

In third place were privateers Chris Power and Mick Brasier , an outstanding effort in their Brad Boyden Datsun 1600 .

An interesting entry was that of local car builder Purvis Eureka . They entered their Eureka PL30 model sports car , a fiberglass body on a VW platform , and powered by a 1600 Lotus Twin Cam engine . Driven by John Dixon , this new " special " acquitted itself quite well , despite some minor engine issues .

The Repco Alpine Rally started from Government House in Melbourne , then transported to Benalla Showgrounds for the start proper .

Reef Hills was the first competitive . Greg Carr took advantage of his dust-free starting position , and opened up a lead that he never really relinquished .

The route the progressed to Warrenbayne Plantation before heading down to Whitfield then on to Merriang . A spectacular retirement was that of Graham Trounce and Lloyd Minifie , who rolled their Datsun 1600 , dangerously ending up on the edge of a 60 foot drop .

Dust had been a serious hazard during the night , as the cars arrived around mid night for the overnight break at Bright . The two Ford Team Escorts were leading from Bob Watson / Wayne Gregson in the Gerry Ball Datsun 120Y , then Kenjiro Shinozuka and Gary Connelly in the Ralliart entered Lancer .

Division Two started at 12.30 pm on Saturday afternoon . In very hot conditions , the action began with laps around the Bright Showgrounds track . Fastest was Bob Bird's Lancer , followed by Bob Buck's Escort 2000 . A spectacular display was put up by John Sproule's EH Holden , fitted with full XU-1 running gear .

With cars being visible for about 15 minutes each , the spectators were treated to some excellent viewing as the cars traversed the Buckland Valley area , with the natural amphitheatre providing the scene .

The extreme heat of the afternoon began to take its toll , with Roger Bonhomme and Ian Herard damaging its engine , and Bob Waterhouse and Murray Coote both suffering overheating in their Datsuns .

After being in fourth position at Bright , David Jones managed to roll his Lancer and retired . Peter Corkran / Ian Ellis had a fuel blockage , then blew a gearbox in their Lancer .

The three leaders had not changed positions at the end of Division Two at Bright .

Division Three started , and immediately the leaders were in trouble . Carr had an oil line replaced at service , and lost his leading position on the road . Then Colin Bond had a puncture , so Bob Watson became first car on the road . Shinozuka then retired with a broken driveshaft , as the field blasted across the fast and slippery roads across towards Chiltern , then down into Stanley Plantation .

Heading in to Ovens Plantation and over Mount Porpunkah , Watson had gained time due to his front running on the road , and was now up into second place , splitting the factory Escorts .

Crews left Bright on Sunday morning for the final Division . Through Merriang , Greg Carr was still having oil line problems, and he repaired his car on the roadside . Colin Bond stopped to help as Watson roared into the lead on the road . Carr then set a very hot pace attempting to regain the lead .

However Watson was doomed for disappointment . With just two competitiveness remaining , his Datsun refused to climb an incline due to a failed clutch . Their very fine run had sadly ended .

This put Chris Power in the Brad Boyden Datsun out in front on the road . He had been putting up a string of great times , and his third outright placing just behind Colin Bond was very well deserved .

### ***Results : 1977 Repco Alpine Rally***

1 <sup>st</sup>	Greg Carr / Fred Gocentas	Ford Escort	86 points
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Colin Bond / John Dawson-Damer	Ford Escort	107 points
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Chris Power / Mick Brasier	Datsun 1600	131 points
4 <sup>th</sup>	Gil Davis / David Long	Datsun 1600	134 points
5 <sup>th</sup>	Ian Swan / Derek Rawson	Datsun 120Y	140 points
6 <sup>th</sup>	Rob Jackson / Mike Mitchell	Torana XU-1	144 points
7 <sup>th</sup>	Garry Harrowfield / Noel Richards	Datsun 1600	148 points
8 <sup>th</sup>	Rod Browning / Lloyd Meller	Datsun 1600	154 points
9 <sup>th</sup>	Peter Evans / Chris Maniatakis	Datsun 1600	158 points
10 <sup>th</sup>	Peter Johnson/ Geoff Jones	Lancer	159 points