



At the start in Perth: awe-stricken, envious children watch competitors—including Roger Clark in his Ford as he sets off



Line-up for the Australian "off" . . . the style is that of Le Mans

THE HOT-FOOT CHASE TO FINAL VICTORY

THE nine-day sea voyage by the P & O liner Chusan to Fremantle gave competitors a chance to recover from the discomforts of the past week. But few of them took advantage of it. Almost everybody seemed to be writing a book about his experiences, and often the loudest noise to be heard on board was the clatter of typewriters.

Some of the drivers went down with a mystery stomach complaint which they promptly named "Bombay Belly." And the Australians used the time to conduct a bit of psychological warfare among the rival crews. Horrific stories arose of the dangers lying in wait for cars on the final 3,500-mile leg to Sydney—kangaroos that suddenly bounded out of the scrub beside bush track roads and could dramatically alter the shape of a car's front end; fine red "bum dust" which lay inches deep on the roads, covering dangerous potholes.

At dawn on Friday, December 13, the Chusan steamed into Fremantle and the massive task of unloading the cars began. After the easygoing attitude of Asian police, drivers were surprised to find European standards of road-worthiness rigidly enforced. Local police booked no less than 26 cars for mechanical defects or illegal extras like sirens and flashing headlights.

But instead of insisting on a road test which would have penalised drivers by two hours, they allowed a day's grace for the cars to be licked into shape.

From the quayside at Fremantle police with lights blazing and sirens howling led the Marathon slowly along the 12-mile road to Perth's Gloucester Park pony-trotting track, where a 35,000 crowd waited to welcome them. A huge roar went up as two red-jacketed huntsmen

on white horses led Roger Clark's Lotus Cortina on a lap of honour. Next afternoon another capacity crowd flocked to the arena for the restart of the Marathon, with the cars drawn up Le Mans fashion round the track. Mini-skirted girls in red and white uniforms provided a colourful escort as each car moved to the starting line. Paddy Hopkirk in his B.M.C. 1800 got a big laugh from the crowd when he got a shade too close to one girl and made her give a nervous hop.

Western Australia's Premier, Mr David Brand, and other local celebrities flagged the cars away at three-minute intervals as they set off for the mining ghost town of Youanmi, 350 miles away. The leading Australian driver, Harry Firth (Ford Falcon, 29 penalties), who had taken a plane trip to spy out the rally route ahead and come back forecasting more dire troubles for the Europeans, said before leaving: "Only 15 to 20 cars will reach Sydney. The overseas drivers don't know what they are in for." But Roger Clark was undeterred by stories of the kangaroos, emus and wombats lying in wait for him. He retorted: "They've got to catch me first. I'll wake them up for the 'other drivers.'

PERTH—YOUANMI —LAKE KING

IRONICALLY, it was the Australians who made the first physical contacts with the country's wildlife—including Harry Firth himself. Other cars delayed through hitting kangaroos included an Australian B.M.C. driven by



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What the floods really meant: Harry Firth in Car 2, crosses a creek in Flinders

Evan Green, a French team Simca and a Russian Moskvitch. And in the early hours of Sunday morning Captain Fred Barker in a Mercedes swerved into a Dunlop depot calling for tyre levers. A hundred miles further back a kangaroo jumped across their path while they were travelling at 90 miles an hour. The huge kangaroo bars in front were bent back by the impact and jammed against the radiator. For ten precious minutes they battled to free the bonnet so that the engine could be attended to.

There was a moment of drama, too, for Roger Clark as he pulled into a service area at the tiny farming town of Southern Cross, on the rugged stretch from Youanmi down to Marvel Loch. A mechanic said: "You've hit something hard and bent the steering." Clark asked: "How long to fix it?" "Eight minutes." "Okay, let's go." As the mechanics worked feverishly, the second and third placed men—"Flying Finn" Simo Lampinen in his German Ford and Belgium's Lucien Bianchi in a Citroen—stormed through the town. Clark revved up in the garage and roared after them into the night.

The Marathon was now developing into a flat-out race between these three leaders, and in the next few hours

they pulled even further clear of the rest of the field. They were the only drivers to beat the clock into Lake King, the third Australian checkpoint. Everybody else was late and gained further penalties. Paddy Hopkirk, whose B.M.C. 1800 had suspension trouble, dropped from fourth to eighth place. Another B.M.C. driven by Raano Aaltonen was now fourth with Andrew Cowan's Hillman Hunter in fifth place.

LAKE KING—QUORN —MINGARY

John Sprinzel in his tiny M.G. Midget had the hard luck story of the day. When he checked in at Lake King, he was credited with being one hour later than he actually was. He was halfway down the next stage before realising the mistake and turned back to put the record straight. Unfortunately, the rules clearly stated that mistakes can only be rectified if they are pointed out to officials at the time.



*Roaring away: Paddy Hopkirk's BMC 1800 in the Flinders ranges.
Below: After Bianchi crashed, Hopkirk talks to a reporter*

Many of the rallyists were now in some trouble ... struggling in the burning heat of the desert. Among them—Roger Clark. His car limped into Port Augusta, just 25 miles from Quorn control, firing on three cylinders. It seemed to be a repetition of the burned-out pistons which knocked Soderstrom out in Turkey and put Rosemary Smith too far behind to hope for the Ladies' Prize.

Clark said: "I am terribly disappointed." But not nearly so disappointed as Lotus Cortina driver Eric Jackson. Ford officials decided to take a piston from his car to get Clark mobile again. So Jackson, who had been in 11th overall place, was withdrawn from the rally.

Clark's breakdown brought a dramatic change in the order of the marathon leaders. But despite earlier forecasts that he was going to be an hour and a half late at the next control, he dropped only to third place after losing 17 minutes. Lampinen was now in front with a slender one point lead over Bianchi.

Clark made a fantastic recovery over the rugged Flinders range of mountains and the near-desolate plains down to Mingary. He set up a punishing pace, overhauling Lampinen and on one tricky section even "pushed" Bianchi to pass him. A B.M.C. official said: "I watched Clark on the Flinders range and he was going like a bomb. He is in an opposing team, but you can't help admiring his skill."

This was despite being frustrated by a local homesteader who had given permission for the marathon to run through his land and then changed his mind at the last moment. He parked a truck and a bulldozer across the gateway of his property, and Clark lost precious moments



making a half-mile detour. Fortunately the farmer did not relent later and following drivers faced the same problem.

Meanwhile the Australian drivers were running into troubles of their own. The Sydney Telegraph team Holdens, which had run superbly all the way and were strong contenders for the team prize, were decimated when Dave McKay's car rolled at high speed at high speed on the approaches to Broken Hill after successfully negotiating the Flinders. Co-driver George Reynolds was taken to hospital with head injuries. A second car driven by Barry Ferguson limped into the town with transmission troubles.

The only bright note came from the Telegraph girls' team who were still pressing on for Sydney determined to finish, even if it was in last position.

When control closed at Mingary late on Monday night 61 survivors had limped through in various states of repair. One breakdown in particular sounded an ominous note for marathon leader Bianchi. Another Citroen, the official entry of the Automobile Club of France with Briton Peter Vanson at the wheel, crawled in resting on its axles. Its special hydro-pneumatic suspension—the secret of Bianchi's phenomenal success in Australia—had broken down.

MINGARY—GUNBAR —OMEO

BUT Bianchi, now on the dizzy clifftop roads over the Australian Alps into Victoria, was still going strong. Here the narrow rock-strewn road winds up razor-back mountains with sheer drops on either side. On one 15-mile section there are 300 corners and Australian rally drivers always drive with seat belts off and doors half open so that they can leap clear if their car begins to slide over the cliffs. Thunderstorms had already turned parts of the road into muddy torrents. But there was now another hazard for marathon drivers—fog.

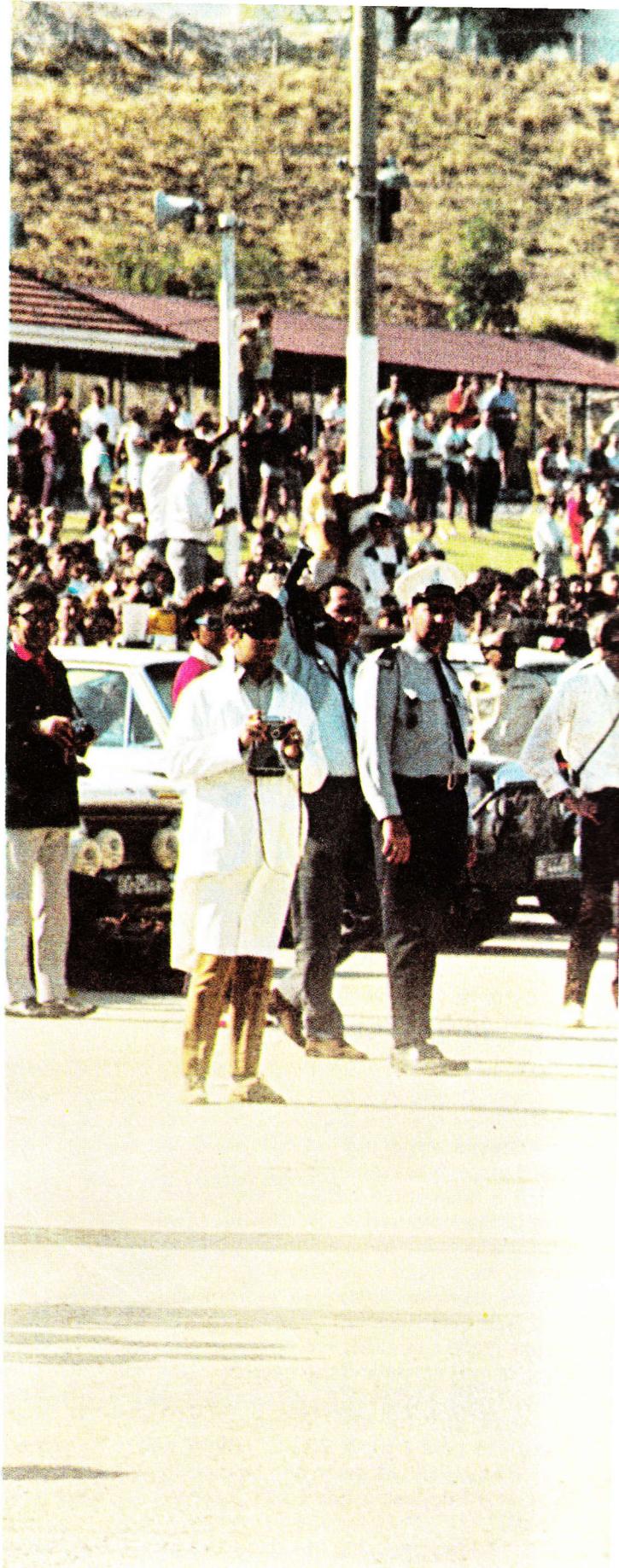
As Paddy Hopkirk checked into the tiny mountain timber town of Omeo just before dawn on Tuesday, he was rubbing his stiff arms after hundreds of gear changes over the Alps. He said: "I want to meet the man who could get over those mountains without loss of points. No one could ever do it."

No one did. Bianchi lost seven points on the alpine section. But Clark was 10 minutes late to bring his total penalties to 39—five down on Bianchi. Lampinen was still lying third with 40 penalties. But then he had had other problems to cope with as well. Just over the Victorian border his co-driver Gilbert Staepalaere was booked by police for speeding after a 75 miles an hour chase. At first police threatened to impound the car, but after getting his ticket Staepalaere sped off—spraying gravel over the spectators.

OMEO—SYDNEY

SOON after leaving Omeo, Clark was in serious trouble again—this time with a broken differential. It led to one of the oddest encounters of the whole marathon. Clark

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Bianchi's Citroen sets off in Per



... soon he was to leap ahead in the Marathon but only to end in disaster

continued from page 40.

spotted another Cortina by the roadside. It turned out to be an early morning fisherman. At first he refused Clark's offer to buy the back axle out of his car, but as Clark limped off up the road the fisherman chased after him in his own car. He called out: "You're Roger Clark, the British driver, aren't you?" He was now willing to give up his back axle.

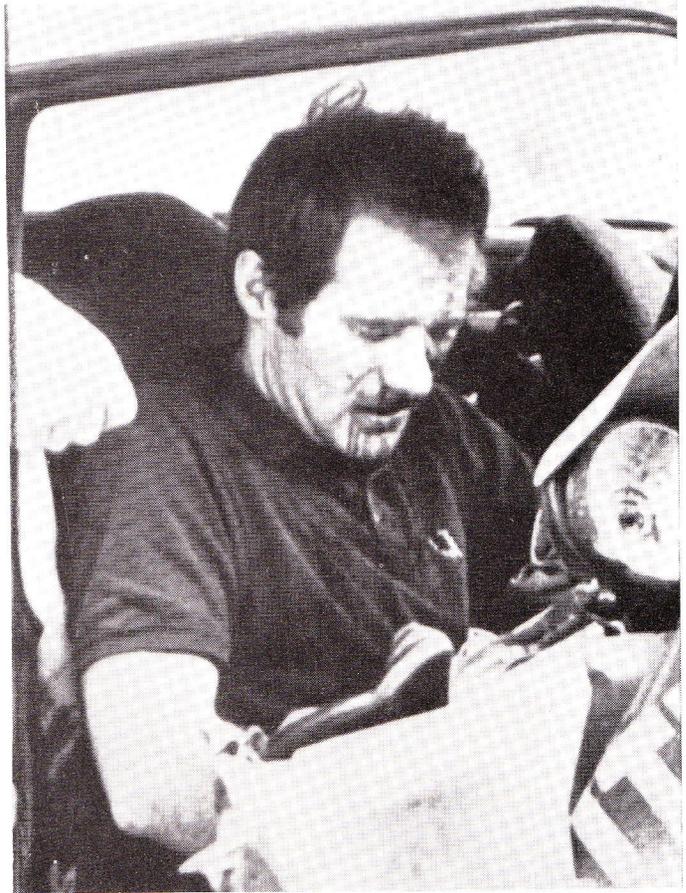
The two cars headed for the nearest garage where the back axles were swapped and after an 80-minute delay Clark roared off again towards Sydney.

Omeo is only seven weary hours to the Marathon finishing line and Bianchi was hurtling his Citroen through fog-shrouded dizzy cliff-top roads to conquer the Australian Alps. At this stage he was five points ahead of Clark. The alpine roads were clear of snow but thunderstorms had turned steep sections into muddy torrents, aptly named Slippery Pinch and Dead Timber Hill.

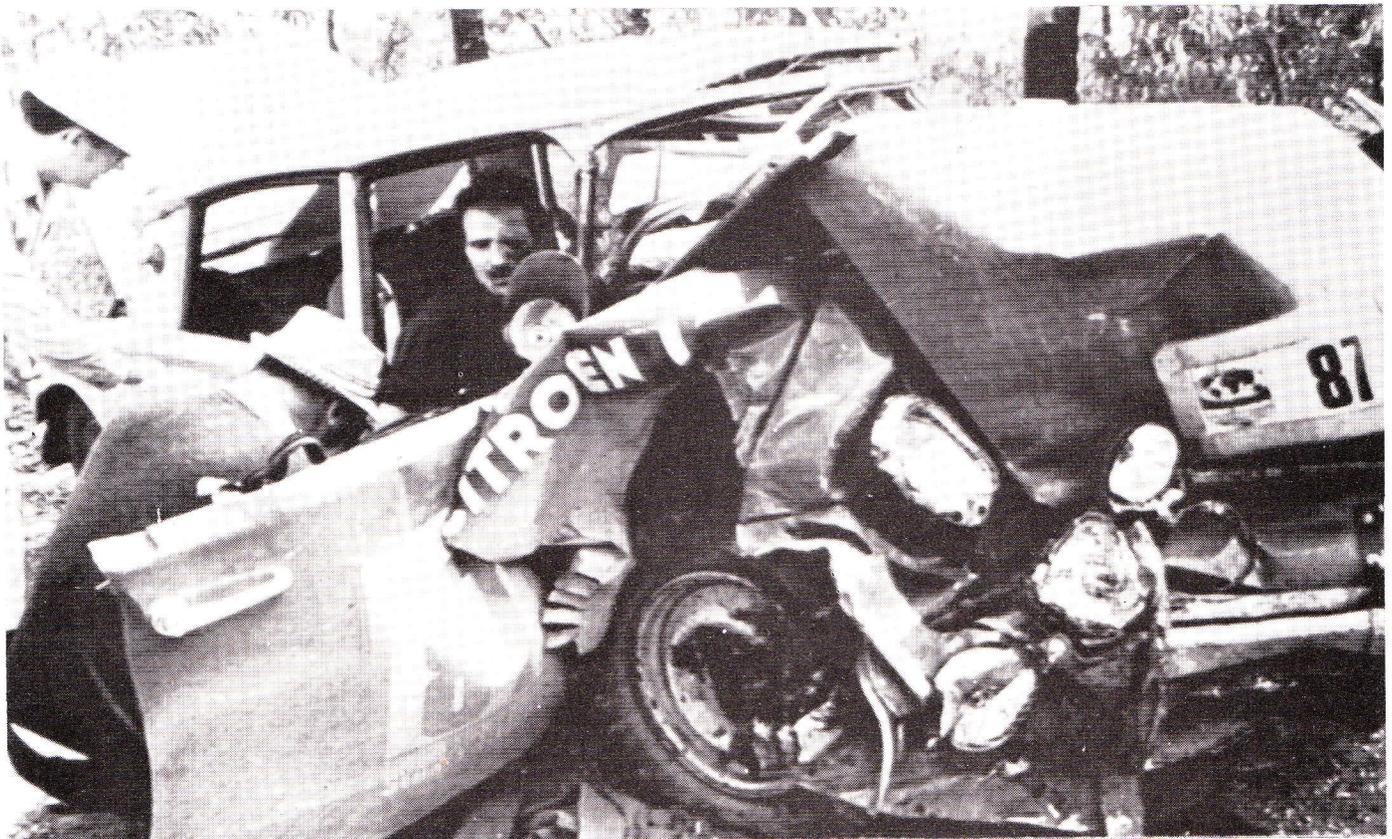
These were the toughest, harshest stages. Once through them the drivers could look forward to an easy sprint to the finish. But then came the tensest drama.

Up to and near the last checkpoint at Nowra, 100 miles from Sydney, Lucien Bianchi was way out ahead. It looked as if nothing could prevent him winning. He had said: "I'm going to win. The old lady (patting his blue Citroen) is just fine. How you Australians say it? Just beaut."

Staepalaere was then running second but then his Taunus broke down. He and his crew pitched the car on its side and went to work to replace a tie-rod—with the



Bianchi — hopeful, determined, defeated.



So much hope, so much lost so near to victory: Bianchi's Citroen after his close-to-home crash.



He's won! The New South Wales Premier R. W. Askin waves chequered flag as Hillman crosses the finishing line.

SUMMARY BY DAVID BENSON

clock racing against them. This left Andrew Cowan, driving a Hunter, in second place. Hopkirk was lying third.

Then trouble hit Bianchi. He had beaten the lot—the mountains and the deserts, the heat and the ice. There was only straight motoring between him and the £10,000 prize. But near Nowra, with co-driver Jean Ogier at the wheel and Bianchi snatching a little sleep, the Citroen came round a bend and ran slap into a Mini. "I braked hard," Ogier said, "but it was impossible to miss." Rescue teams had to cut Bianchi out of the wreck, and he was taken to hospital.

So now Andrew Cowan and his co-driver Brian Coyle (who recently married Andrew's sister) were left in the lead. They are Scotland's best-known rally team but in the first flight of international drivers which the Marathon attracted they were comparatively unknown. Steadily and unobtrusively they had worked their way up the field in the titanic test of the last 36 hours—cliff-hanging in the alps, then along a desperate stretch of forest tracks before the last clear miles to the Warwick Farm racing circuit in Sydney.

"THE most memorable experience of my life", said Andrew Cowan when, tired and travel-worn, he arrived in his mud-spattered Hillman Hunter at Warwick Farm, the winner of the Marathon, the most exciting motoring event since the invention of the internal combustion engine. Andrew can now claim to be the world champion rally driver.

For myself as a reporter, the Marathon was both inspiring and arduous. From the very moment the first announcement was made in the Daily Express I have been intimately concerned with its success or failure. The mammoth task of organising the event took a year and fell on the shoulders of Jack Sears, an incredible manipulator of giant saloon cars in exciting races at Silverstone and elsewhere. Tony Ambrose brought his rally experience and, apart from plotting a testing route, produced an almost foolproof logbook for the drivers. Stuart Turner, former B.M.C. competitions boss and now a Castrol executive, weighed in with his practical experience on the other side of the fence. As did Jack Kemsley, the man who makes the R.A.C. Round Britain Rally possible every year.

With at least five million people watching the cars through India, give or take a million or two in Pakistan, and another few million along the roads of Europe, the Express

	3.	(80)	
No SP (TRAFFIC LIGHTS)			109.74
	WARWICK FARM		110.47
	CIRCUIT on RIGHT		111.00

Marathon now rates as the largest live audience in history for a sporting event.

Who could anticipate the profound respect and absolute co-operation that the authorities along the route gave to the organisation. Frontier barriers were manned day and night and formalities and red tape cut.

Australia, and Perth in particular, greeted us like prodigal sons. Even the stringent laws relating to the import of cars were waived, just as many formalities had been dropped for the rally men in Europe. No import duty was charged on any of the competing cars and police rules were stretched to give the Marathon men a chance to sort out their troubles without severe penalty.

The drive across Australia was fantastic. Some good-humoured animosity had grown up quite naturally between the European and Australian drivers and wild stories were circulated throughout the ship about the conditions to be faced after Fremantle. But any ill-will generated during the long voyage soon disappeared in the competitive conditions in Australia.

Roger Clark rapidly became a folk hero as he led the rally constantly for two-thirds of the Australian section. Any suggestion that he would not win was greeted with animosity. When he suffered his repair setback, practically the whole of Australia willed him back into the event. Lucien Bianchi's great driving, especially on the "killer" stages, was greeted with awe as he took over the leadership from the stricken Clark. There was genuine disappointment and pity for him and his crew after the accident so close to the finish when he was so far in the lead.

The Daily Express London-Sydney Marathon publication is mostly here because of the efforts of David Benson and Victor Blackman, who went all the way. It was edited by E. Alan Smith. The picture service was managed and edited by Frank Spooner and Ron Morgans. The contributors, apart from those named elsewhere, were an Express team accustomed to ranging the world. The occasional footnotes are from Castro's marvellous guide to the route. Published by Beaverbrook Newspapers, Ltd. Typesetting by P.W.H. Ltd. Printed by Purnells, Somerset.



David Benson



Victor Blackman



A CABLE FROM SIR MAX AITKEN

SYDNEY

ANY event is only as good as the organisation. The superb success of the London/Sydney Marathon is due to the hard work over the last year.

Officials both in London and in Australia are to be complimented for their magnificent work.

The colossal public interest depicts the results of the work of those officials.

The Marathon has captured the imagination and the enthusiasm of the people in Britain, Europe, Asia and particularly Australia. The press and TV coverage of this event has been massive.

I salute those who started at Crystal Palace, those who fell by the wayside, and those who crossed the finishing line in Sydney.

Max Aitken