

The B.M.C. Experience

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Issue 16: January to March 2016

COMPETITION CARS BUMPER ISSUE

- Works Minis
- Sebring MGA
- Austin-Healey 3000
- World Cup Maxi
- Repco Reliability Moke



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in a Morris 8



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Photo by Anthony Johnson

DRIVER'S SEAT

All smiles after we got my Austin Ant on the trailer for the trip back to Melbourne.



First of all we would like to wish all of our readers and advertisers a very merry Christmas and a prosperous 2016.

It is no secret that I am a fan of historic motorsport and I have a particular soft spot for BMC competition cars. In the 1950s and 1960s BMC had the World's most successful Competitions Department.

BMC Australia's Comps Department didn't have anywhere near the budget of its UK counterpart, but made good use of the work from Abingdon by importing a number of very successful rally cars.

On the track, no race in Australia had more importance than Bathurst and BMC made a big effort at the race from 1965 to 1967, with international drivers and the locally-produced Cooper S Minis - winning the race outright in 1966 and their class in both other years.

It wasn't just Minis, of course, as BMC had huge success with the likes of Austin-Healey and MG as well, with some success with a number of other cars.

At its height BMC was producing some of the most competitive cars in their classes and winning races and rallies across the globe.

With Greg Coates' restoration of Paddy Hopkirk/Brian Foley's Cooper S from 1967 Bathurst, it was fitting that we have a story on the reunion of Brian with the car.

This gave me the idea of doing more to celebrate the BMC Competitions Departments, in Australia and UK, in a bigger way. The result is this magazine with five genuine ex-Works cars as well as two private entry cars that almost made it - an Austin Maxi from the 1970 World Cup Rally and a Leyland Moke from the 1979 Repco Round Australia Reliability Trial.

With two Abingdon-built Minis, a former Donald Healey Motor Company Austin-Healey 3000 that was built for Sebring and an ex-Works MGA Coupe also built for Sebring, as well as the Foley Cooper S, you could say this magazine is really one with the Works. (OK, bad pun...)

Even if motorsport is not your thing, I'm sure you will find the history of these cars interesting.

If you prefer your competition with an emphasis on fun, and helping a worthy cause, then you will love the story of the Mini on the Camp Quality esCarpade.

Moving away from competition, we have a great story about a couple driving an Austin 7 to Cape York, celebrating the first car driven to Cape York, also an Austin 7, in 1928.

Another great road trip is the journey in 1958 from London to Sydney in a pair of pre-war Morris 8s.

History buffs should enjoy our latest instalment on the closing of the Waterloo factory, looking in detail at the infamous 1974 report about the motor industry by the Industry Assistance Commission.

And for something quite different, we introduce our new project car, the only Austin Ant in Australia. This is one of two that came to Australia as part of a global evaluation of the cars for local markets. Only about 25 or so were built, of which maybe a dozen survive, but the car never went into production because its final development coincided with BMC being taken over by Leyland in 1968.

Leyland owned Land Rover and Land Rover said no way to the Ant, so that was that. We are very fortunate that our car survived and we were able to secure its ownership earlier this year. We hope you enjoy following its restoration, and we will bring it out for a few shows, too.

Watto.



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MG returns to Australia - Again



MG is returning to Australia with MG3 (left) and MG6 in 2016.

MG is set to return to Australia, again, but this time with full factory backing from the parent company in China.

Two years ago the brand tried to make a come-back through another independent importer, but minor problems meeting ADR compliance saw the enterprise collapse with only twelve cars sold and over 380 left sitting "at grass" in the Petersham premises.

It is not known yet what will become of those cars, but MG Motors Australia, the new company wholly owned by MG's parent, SAIC, has assured us that they will not be dumped on the market.

According to MG Motors Australia, the MG3 and updated MG6 models should go on sale around March, with the GS6 cross-over vehicle, launched at the Shanghai Motor Show in April this year, arriving later in 2016. Pricing and specification for the cars will be announced in the new year.

It is understood that a further two models of SUV are currently being developed.

Ten dealers have reportedly been signed up to cover all Eastern Australian States, with Western Australia, Far North Queensland and Northern Territory expected to have dealers in the near future.

JLR to double size of engine plant



type production to full-scale manufacture with more than 50,000 engines coming off the production line.

The Ingenium engine launched initially in the Jaguar XE in April 2015 and was followed quickly by the 2016 Range Rover Evoque. Today the EMC has cemented its position as the heart of Jaguar Land Rover's UK manufacturing operations supplying all three vehicle plants with engines which will soon also power the Discovery Sport, all-new Jaguar XF and soon to be launched ground breaking Jaguar F-PACE.

The EMC is home to the high technology, low-emission Ingenium engine - Jaguar Land Rover's first venture into in-house engine manufacturing in a generation. In just twelve months, the Midland based facility has moved from proto-

Safety first



Many politicians, and even some "road safety experts" often put down motorsport as being at odds with road safety and encouraging unsafe driver behaviour.

A recent incident at Eastern Creek proved the exact opposite, when Andrew Bergan from GB's Mini & Moke World in Brookvale, Sydney, was involved in a smash that could have had horrific consequences, were it not for the safety aspects insisted on at all levels of motorsport.

According to Andrew's father Graham, Andrew was doing well in Race 4 of the Group Nb at the Muscle Car Masters on September 6, when it all went horribly wrong.

"Andrew had passed a few cars and he knew there were some right behind him. It started to rain during the race and he hit an oily patch and had a spin, but there was a Mustang right behind him and it T-boned him, which threw him up into the air and rolling across the grass."

Paramedics were quickly on the scene. After assessing Andrew, they decided not to take any chances and strapped him to a backboard in case he had any head or neck injuries. This in turn necessitated the roof of the ex-Peter Manton Mini to be cut off in order to get Andrew out of the car.

Andrew was checked over thoroughly in the Eastern Creek medical centre, before being transferred to Westmead Hospital for a complete check and tests. He was released later that evening, having suffered nothing more serious than some bruising and a sore wrist from where it had been whipped by the steering wheel.

The incident, and Andrew's lack of injuries, highlights the importance of all the safety regulations that are insisted upon in today's race cars, even for historic racing.

"It is ironic that this was the first race meeting in NSW where it was mandatory for the drivers to wear a HANS device", Graham said. "There is no doubt that it saved Andrew

from any serious neck injury."

Graham also pointed out the inherent safety of the driver's internal capsule. "The capsule was mostly intact, which says a lot about how we have to build the cars. A solid roll cage, good seat and strong wide racing harness all played their part."

"The doctor at Westmead said that if Andrew had come in from a similar crash on the highway in a road car that they wouldn't be talking to him - implying he would probably have been killed", Graham continued. "The doctor even went as far as saying that the way we build the race cars with the safety in mind is very good and that they often get drivers in after crashes at Eastern Creek who rarely have more than a bit of bruising and soreness."

It is something to consider the next time a politician is moaning about the dangers of motorsport.

Andrew said that because of the historic nature of the car, and despite its significant damage, it is being repaired rather than re-shelled.

Aussie UK Champ



Congratulations to young Aussie driver Liam Sullivan on winning the Mighty Minis race series in UK recently (Oct).

Liam had 10 wins from 12 starts in the series, only missing the Cadwell Park round because he was busy winning his class in the Under 2lt Touring Cars at the Spa 6-hours.

Liam's ambition is to become a professional racing driver in the World Endurance Championship and by the looks of things he is well on his way.

However, to take the next step, the FIA Masters Championship in Europe which will cost him in the vicinity of £10,000, he needs some support, as he is almost completely self-funded. He is currently running a crowd-funding effort through GoFundMe.

If you would like to support him, or want to learn more about Liam's racing achievements and to view a cool video of him driving a Suzuki Swift around the Nurburgring go to: liamsullivanmotorsport.com

Prototype 4x4 Moke for sale in WA



A piece of Moke history is up for sale in Western Australia.

The only surviving factory-built prototype 4x4 Moke, which has recently undergone an extensive restoration, is being offered for sale for the fifth time since being built around 35 years ago.

The Moke is believed to have been one of only three built by Leyland's Engineering Services at Moorebank, NSW, when the company was investigating ways of rejuvenating falling Moke sales.

The first hand-built prototype is believed to have been disassembled, with most of the mechanical components used in this vehicle. The only other known prototype was shipped to Leyland's Longbridge factory for evaluation and was almost certainly subsequently destroyed.

The speedo shows only 253km, and this is likely to only be accurate for this incarnation of the Moke, in this body shell,



as the mechanical components clearly show more wear and tear than would be expected from such low mileage.

Importantly, the 4x4 Moke is mechanically completely different from the Austin Ant, detailed later in this magazine.

But the historic nature of this vehicle, as the sole surviving prototype 4x4 Moke, makes it a very special car indeed.

The current owner would prefer it to stay in Australia and is asking \$45,000 for it – probably a reasonable amount when you consider both its condition and rarity and special place in Moke history.

Genuinely interested people can get in touch through this magazine.

Web Watch



Birthday Surprise
(v=LzMP2zxZaw4 on YouTube).

Here's a really enjoyable and uplifting short video about a restoration of a Morris 1100. After languishing in a farm shed for 27 years, the Morrie was brought out and restored then presented to the owner as a birthday present. A terrific ending and a beautiful result.



Mini & British Lifestyle

Facebook page for all lovers of the Mini and classic British lifestyle. Some great images and videos, old and new.



Need a getaway car?

Youtube: v=265yh7UmF0w

A different way to advertise cars, as the Two Ronnies show off the 1979 Leyland range.

Vale Ann Wisdom



Ann Riley (nee Wisdom) with her father, Tommy.

Ann Riley, better known by her maiden name of Wisdom, teamed with Pat Moss in rallying between 1956 and 1962.

The pair, both lovers of horses who began rallying together, became the most dominant female team of their

time, winning numerous prestigious events outright and many ladies prizes.

Their greatest success, though, was the outright win in the four-day and four-night 1960 Liege-Rome-Liege rally in an Austin-Healey 3000. This is still regarded as one of the greatest victories in rallying for the Austin-Healey and made the pair legends in motorsport. BMC Comps manager Stuart Turner described the victory as one of the most amazing drives he had ever seen.

Ann Marie Wisdom, who became affectionately known as "Wiz", was born to Tommy and Elsie ("Bill") Wisdom, both very successful drivers in their own right, in May 1934. Tommy was a respected motoring journalist, who raced and rallied in Works teams before and after

the Second World War, including the Monte Carlo Rally on 23 occasions. Elsie was one of the leading lady drivers in the 1930s, including winning the 1932 Brooklands 1000-mile race outright with Australian Joan Richmond in a Riley.

Ann was very fond of horses and competitive in show jumping but, according to Graham Robson, only met Pat at a BRDC dinner. "Almost inevitably, the two took up rallying together, originally in Pat's own Triumph TR2, where 'Wiz' became the competitive and very accomplished co-driver in the team. Although she often suffered from car sickness, she never let this get in the way, always determined to finish at all costs".

The pair's first international rally together was the 1956 RAC Rally, in a Works-entered

MGA 1500, finishing 3rd Ladies and 5th in class. By the end of the year they were crowned European Ladies' Champions.

Ann married rally driver Peter Riley in 1962 – the same year Ann and Pat won the Tulip Rally in a Mini Cooper. Immediately after the rally, Ann announced she was pregnant and was retiring from the sport.

Although returning occasionally to partner Pat in Works Escorts and Saabs, Ann was content with a country life, raising two children – Jenny and Tim.

Ann died seven years to the day after Pat, on 14 October 2015, and is survived by Peter, Jenny & Tim. As Graham Robson noted; "Seven was Pat and Ann's lucky number, which they always tried to include in the number plate or competition number of their cars."

From the Archives

The BMC Celebrates in 1965!

1965 was a momentous year for BMC Australia, as reported in *The BMC Rosette*.

There were almost entire issues devoted to the release of the Mini De Luxe (Feb–March) and the Austin 1800 (Nov–Dec) with both papers going into significant detail on the technical advances of the two cars. Meanwhile, Morris 1100 won the *Wheels* magazine Car Of The Year award.

April–May issue had a lengthy review of the first Mini Monte Rally, which coincided with the launch of the Mini De Luxe.

June–July issue had photos from the turning of soil for the new Parts & Accessories warehouse at Liverpool (Morebank).

August–October celebrated the outstanding success of the Cooper S Minis winning their class at Bathurst (Foley/Manton), first six places in class and six of the top nine for line-honours.

THE B.M.C. ROSETTE
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HISTORY MAKERS

B.M.C. Mini De Luxe

February–March, 1965 — Announcing the release of the B.M.C. Mini De Luxe.

B.M.C. Morris Mini De Luxe

GREAT MORRIS 1100 CAR-OF-THE-YEAR TROPHY TO B.M.C.

DESIGNERS DISCOVER FRONT-WHEEL-DRIVE

HONOR FROM MONTREAL MAGAZINE

1000 WITNESS PRESENTATION

A thousand B.M.C. employees were at the ceremony when *Wheels* magazine presented the Morris 1100 car-of-the-year award.

1000 WITNESS PRESENTATION

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MINI MONTE VOTED TOPS

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Big occasion for B.M.C.

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Big occasion for B.M.C.

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*** New Mini's superb honors**

The B.M.C. Austin 1800

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Superb safety praised after gruelling test tour

*** Special commentaries, photographs, and technical details of "The Car of the Century."**

B.M.C. Leader in sound safety-belt provision

Use on all occasions

Guidance for dealers

Recommended design

An Australian-made Morris Mini De Luxe created enormous interest at the Tokyo Motor Show from October 28 to November 11.

AUSTRALIAN MINI INTRIGUES JAPAN

10

Letters

Got something to say? Then drop us a line at:
Letters to the Editor, The BMC Experience, PO Box 186 Newcomb, Vic. 3219 Australia
or email to letters@bmcxperience.com.au

STAR LETTER - An Odd Marriage



The car in question was converted by a friend/colleague (an Engineer with the NSWGR) of my father back in the mid/late 1960's. He decided that the only car worth owning, rightly so, was an Austin 1800, but it had to be a wagon. But of course they didn't exist, so he set about having one made.

Various options were investigated for the conversion, including fabricating the entire thing, but some careful measurements at a wrecking yard discovered that the back end of an EH Holden almost fitted, so one was acquired and attached.

It wasn't quite a perfect marriage however. The most disturbing feature was the fact that an 1800 had a roof line that sloped to the back window, and when this was extended, the roof gutter ended up being stupidly low.

Graeme Widmer - Cheltenham, NSW



The other problem was of course that 1800s didn't carry a load very well without sagging in the arse, the additional permanent load meant the car had a permanent sag. The ute suspension might have been the answer. Too late now.

The car did of course have all the practical features of a wagon.

I seem to recall that the conversion cost about as much as the car cost when purchased almost new in 1966. An interesting thought if you convert that into today's values for a similar car.

The car was always guaranteed to turn heads wherever it went, and I was lucky enough to have many enjoyable rides in it.

In about 1975 the car was sold to a friend of mine, who loved it and drove it around Sydney for a number of years, until it finally gave in to neglect around 1980.

Riley, MO & 6/80

Issue 15 is your best effort yet! Keep up the excellent work.

A couple of points you may find of some interest. In the early 1960s I owned two 2½ litre Rileys. A black 1950 one in reasonable condition, which whetted my appetite for a better one.

A beautiful 1953 in burgundy came up. I swapped a Typhoon fiberglass-bodied Ford 10 special for it. What a fantastic car! It handled, stopped and flew (approx. 90 mph). The only snag was it had four bald tyres, in the middle of a Scottish winter, and I could not afford to replace them.

My elder brother was selling his Mk VII Jag to buy a 3.4, so I reluctantly sold the Riley to get the first of 16 Jags I have owned.

MO Oxford article.

I could not understand the Morris thinking at fitting a NEW side-valve engine to the



MO when they had used OHV engines pre-war. The MO was a nice but gutless vehicle.

The 6/80 and Morris 6 variants had a terrible reputation for burning valves. It may have been lack of proper maintenance in adjusting valve clearance on an OHC engine, but they did burn valves.

My home town in Scotland had a Rolls Royce aero engine factory and an enterprising 6/80 owning engineer, who was on the night shift, tried facing the valves in Stellite. This was a resounding success and lo and behold a little illicit cottage industry evolved, accessed by those in the know.

Bob Cowan - Wanneroo, WA

Minor Info Wanted

Thanks for the back issues of your great mag. Imagine my joy at discovering that a vehicle that I rebuilt in the 1980s was featured in Issue 2. The car is the MG 1300, which now resides in Geelong as a driver training unit in the MG Car Club.

Over the years, starting with a '58 Lancer, I have owned TC, TD, MGB, Cooper S, Triumph 2000TC, MG BGT, MG1300, and some I cannot recall.

I am currently working on a '58 Morris Minor 25cwt Commercial chassis, which has a timber tray-top utility rear end. Does anyone know how many were produced and how many are still alive? I believe it is a factory-fitted tray.

This car was restored in 1978 by Randal Love. From the plate the type is OF51, Car 7/70290 2158.

Any information on these vehicles would be greatly appreciated, thanks.

Mike Ainsworth via email

Apprentice Appreciation

I really enjoy reading your magazine; it brings me so many memories of the time I worked for Howard Porters (BMC/Leyland and Chrysler dealers in Fremantle, WA) in the '60s during my apprenticeship.

I remember so many of the cars; especially the Mini, Morris 1100 (my dad bought one of the first from Porters) and Austin 1800. But also Morris Major and Austin Lancer, Major Elite, Freeway, and Wolseley.

I had left by the time of the P76 and was working in my own business, but I remember going to the launch at the local dealer in Rockingham, where my business was.

Thanks for your hard work - it is appreciated.

John Whaley - Canning Vale, WA

Garage Great

I just loved the story of Garden Motors, Herne's Oak in *The BMC Experience* Issue 15.

As a very young teacher I was sent to Yallourn North Primary School in the early 1960s. I was the proud owner of a 1954 OHV Series 2 Morris Minor but it was having quite a few major mechanical problems so I traded my "Morry" for an Australian-made Morris Major Elite at Garden Motors.

Jim Pettigrew was the owner of Garden Motors and he was a colourful and likeable character. He wasn't too impressed when he saw the condition of "Morry's" engine but didn't worry about it.

Even way back then I was a BMC enthusiast, so would often drop in for a chat at the Herne's Oak garage or the Yallourn showroom, especially if a new model was on display.

One day Jim told me about a "demo" Wolseley 24/80 Mk2 for sale. Compared to the Elite, it was absolute luxury, so after working out if I could afford it, which I really couldn't, I signed up. The Wolseley survived many years at various locations around Victoria. It was a good looking car and a joy to drive.

Thanks to Paul Riviere for a really good story; it brought back great memories.

Rod Oaten via email

Mk2 Cooper S Dates



I always enjoy *BMCE* magazine. Especially the various history stories; when Zetland was in full swing and Evan Green was my hero.

I bought a Mini Cooper S MKII new in 1969, which I still have and which you wrote a feature about, in *The Mini Experience* – Issue 20

I have just read the "Number Crunching" story in the back of the current issue of *BMC Experience*, number 15, and thought I should correct an error for the sake of accuracy. Written articles tend to become gospel in later years.

It says; "YG2S4 is a MKII Cooper S, which was only built from August 1969 to June or July 1971".

My MKII was purchased and delivered new to me on 30th May 1969. It is number 636, as mentioned in your article in *TME* No 20. I still have the delivery documents from P&R

Williams, who, as a division of Larke Hoskins, were big sponsors of the Bathurst race.

I know now that my unrestored original car – as an unmolested one-owner vehicle – is a benchmark for authenticity. While there are still a few unmolested cars around, there are very few one-owner-since-new cars still on the road.

Mine is still used regularly, fully road registered. I took it to the Canberra 'Terribly British Day' last December. It did not miss a beat on the 900km return trip.

Peter Calwell – Dubbo, NSW

A Grand Tale

Just wanted to say how I enjoyed the article in Issue 14 (yes catching up on back reading!) entitled "Incurable" by Gerry Graham, on his 50+ years MG ownership.

It wasn't the fact that it was an "MG" story, but that Gerry had an interesting tale to tell and told it with such great humour. A real Ozzie story that we could all relate to.

Thanks for continuing to produce an interesting magazine and esp like the Australian articles as opposed to overseas

Jane Vollebregt - via email.

Engine Corrections

In issue 15 of *The BMC Experience*, there are some items on which I would like to comment.

Page 62 "Magnificent Motor-ing" Column 1; 3rd paragraph. The Riley 9 was not a twin overhead camshaft motor. It was a push-rod O.H.V hemi, with twin camshafts mounted high in the cylinder block.

As decoking and valve-grinding was a frequent service requirement in the 1930's (this was still the case in the 1950's in Australia), the good news was that the head could be removed for servicing, without the valve timing being altered.

Page 63, Column 3 Paragraph 4. In 1937, when the "Big Four" was introduced, it had both inlet and exhaust ports on the same side of the head. For the post-war RM series, it was redesigned into a proper cross-flow head with four exhaust ports on one side and two siamesed inlet ports on the other.

Thanks Peter. I stand corrected. This was an editor's error. Correct info was supplied in the story, but got muddled up in editing.

Page 85 "Forgotten Classic" Column 1, Paragraph 4 "However, a Wolseley version of the Oxford, known as the Four Fifty (or 4/50) was released with the overhead cam engine of the pre-war Wolseley Hornet"

Is this correct?

The six-cylinder Wolseley 6/80 was released at the 1948 London Motor Show and the 4/50 is a 4-cylinder version of the above, and the two motors shared the same bore and stroke, con-rods and bearings.

In the head, the valves were vertical and in line, and the camshaft acted directly on them via an adjustable disc fitted to the valve stem.

The Wolseley Hornet motor was based on the OHC motors used by MG in the 1930s. Here there are hinged tapered fingers, where the underside rested on the end of the valve stems, and the cam lobe pressed down on the upper-side of the finger.

Peter Ward via email

I stand corrected again. As a journalist and researcher, I always bow to the expertise of the enthusiasts.

Vantastic



I just purchased the Issue 15 on-line. Great magazine! I thought you may like these pics. I went to the BMC rally at the Heritage Motor Centre on 6 July, via a convoy from Cowley, where I worked 50 years ago!

In the display area at Cowley is lots of info on Mini and MINI history, and also Alec Issigonis, along with a real concept MINI Van – almost the same colour as my 1800 Van (converted

Aussie ute).

The convoy was of all models built at Cowley since the war, and some earlier.

The flags, two per car, were issued by the Museum! 14 x 1800s and a couple of Morris and Wolseleys – biggest one make contingent I believe on the day. My Van and a couple of others were in the concours.

David Matthews - via email.

Classic Aussie Model



I thought you may be interested in a photo of my 1949 Morris Series Z utility, built by J.A.Lawton & Sons (Port Rd, Kilkenny, S.A), which I bought in Sydney in 1958 and used until 1961.

The photo was taken at Umina Beach, NSW, and is adorned by my girlfriend, later wife, Dale. I presume the utility was originally owned by the PMG, as the colours are the same for vehicles of that vintage.

I like your photos of the ex-

Navy Morris Mini (Issue 12). They brought back memories for me, as I worked with the RAN (civilian) in Sydney from 1956-2000.

I had a lot to do with the motor transport workshops and technical organisation branch. We had about six Minis in Sydney about late 1960s to early '70s. I visited Leyland at Zetland and JRA at Enfield to inspect/accept the various vehicles we purchased.

Ray Snook - via email

Faded Glory



I found this old garage at Bulahdelah, in NSW, some months ago. The garage still has a very faint Morris Motors sign displayed on the outside of the building.

It must go back to the pre-BMC days.

David Neale - Bowral, NSW.

Preserving History - Words & photos by Craig Watson

On a recent trip to Sydney I was privileged to be given a guided tour of the vehicle storage area at the Museum of Applied Arts & Sciences (or Powerhouse) Discovery Centre in Castle Hill.

Following considerable renovations and extensions, the Discovery Centre will be re-opening to the public, through group tours and for individual researchers, in April 2016.

The Centre is basically the storage and research facility for the Powerhouse Museum and has a wide range of vehicles with links to BMC-Leyland; including an unrestored 1920s Leyland-built Trojan, Austin 7s, a Mini-powered Nota Fang, Mini K and others.

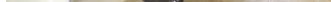
But one of the most interesting items in the collection is the original wooden buck for checking panels for the Leyland P76. Built in a modular fashion, it can be reconfigured

as either sedan, as it is currently displayed, or as the station wagon. All the appropriate panels for the station wagon body are in hand and can be fitted for display when required.

The buck, expertly crafted from hardwood timber, over a steel frame, and weighing around two tonnes, still retains all its identification and information plates.

Standing beside the buck was an incomplete P76 six-cylinder E6 motor.

The Centre will be open for tour groups from April and would be an excellent destination for a car club or school outing.



Rod Oaten's Dream Garages #7

Rawson
2015

History Repeats

From Terry Cornelius - Corowa, NSW.



Sabrina looking and going its best - Winton, May 1984.

After reading the story of the Stewart MG "Wheeler Fortune" in your latest magazine, I thought it may be of interest for your readers to learn about my own BMC-related racing special, Sabrina.

One Saturday in March 1978, the 50th anniversary of the first Australian Grand Prix was held as a 're-enactment' on the original road circuit at Coves, Phillip Island.

True to my roots and love of motorsport, I was there. On the Sunday the celebration moved to the PIARC circuit and I could see that a movement was afoot. So much so, that I found myself walking around the pits saying to myself; "where have I been?", as I marvelled at the eclectic gathering of old-style (my style) racing cars and their enthusiastic and yet sociable drivers.

On that day, as my senses were accosted by the sounds and sights of Australia's burgeoning historic racing scene, a plan of sorts was formulating in my mind... this was a movement I felt I just had to be part of!

Later that same year my interest was further expanded at Winton's third Historic meeting, where I once again found myself walking around saying "where have I been while all this has been going on". I met with Robbie Rowe, as I admired his Alvis

Roadmaster historic racer from the 1930s. Rob was from Sydney and a friend of a Sydney-side past acquaintance of mine, Wally Gates.

Wally had acquired this interesting Austin-Healey engined home-built sports-racer from the early 1960s, and was having problems regarding the issue by the CAMS of its historic logbook.

In view of the fact that I had intimate knowledge of that car, which was built in Benalla by Laurie Knight, the cousin of one of my best friends, I would become his principal source of reference. I also would learn that the problems he was having with his logbook would soon be the main reason for him offering the car for sale, in about July 1978, so of course I bought it!

The car was known as the Sabrina Austin Special, and I would go on to campaign it for the best part of the next decade.

However, for me to continue with my new Historic Racing dream, I needed a competition licence. So it came to pass that I was at a CAMS-organised 'driver evaluation test' on the Saturday of a two-day race meeting at Winton, with my hopes high. This was the last hurdle in the chain of things that go towards the acquisition of that all-important booklet.



Sabrina's first day out - Tarrawingee, November 1960, with Laurie Knight at the wheel.



Terry "overdriving" Sabrina at Winton.

'Driver evaluation' consists of a group of hopefuls circulating at supposed race pace in suitable vehicles, whilst being graded by a team of expert observers positioned at strategic points around the circuit.

There were about fifteen or twenty hopefuls there that morning, and we were all lined up at the end of the session and given the results of our evaluation.

While some were asked to perhaps try again another time, I was handed my licence. This cleared the way for me to compete in the weekend's race meeting, which, perhaps over-confidently, I had already entered.

In no time at all the historic cars were out on the track for our practise session, and I was sure it wouldn't take long for me to settle in to this new experience.

I should point out that I was not really a novice behind the wheel. Prior to the demands of marriage and a family of two girls, I had grown up as an enthusiastic entrant in speedway racing in the 1960s and motorcross during the formative years of the trail bike cult in the early 1970s.

So, sitting behind the wheel of a sports racing car on the grid at Winton didn't fill me with any trepidation. Sabrina showed itself to be an inherent over-steerer and I felt that suited me anyway, as I pressed on, putting it through its paces. By the time practise was over, I returned to my spot in the pits wearing the biggest grin, and congratulating myself for making such a bold move: "So far so good!"

Next thing, though, I was summoned to the start area for a session with the Chief Steward. "What could this be about", I couldn't help thinking, as I embarked on "the walk of shame".

This being a first for me, in several ways, I was prepared to be polite and respectful as I approached this man with all the power. I



Sideways action at Amaroo Park.



CAMS club meeting, Winton April 1981 - body was yet to be completed after the crash.

introduced myself and waited for whatever he had for me.

Without any ado, he came out with; "You're over-driving that car!"

This was the last thing I expected, so naturally I replied "What are you talking about?"

His response.... "You're going sideways before you get to the corners!!"

A polite but firm discussion on the pros and cons of my style of driving on a racing circuit ended with the aforementioned official saying; "well, I'll be keeping a close eye on you anyway!"

I knew that from his lofty viewpoint his scrutiny would be close and, as he warned, quite constant, which probably rather ruined my day!

Sabrina was powered by a 3lt Austin-Healey engine, which was originally supercharged, but on this day, and for the next several months, the car was running on carburettors while the supercharging system was being sorted out. So, it could be said that for that Chief Steward, the best (or worst) was yet to come!

As I mentioned earlier, there had been considerable angst over CAMS issuing the correct logbook for Sabrina. Initially they decided it was a Group M car: 1 January 1961 to 31 December 1965. This was based on the fact that Sabrina was entered as a sports car for the first time at Winton in 1962; which was correct.

However, as was mentioned, I had the benefit of a close personal knowledge of its history, which I was able to use to my advantage!

I was at a meeting at Tarrawingee circuit in November 1960 and found myself extremely attracted to first-time-out, half-finished, bodiless, supercharged and very

successful Sabrina. Four wins from five starts on that day would, understandably, leave me with an indelible memory.

On its next outing however, less than two months later, on Boxing Day, Sabrina, still bodiless, came into contact with the concrete dividing wall on the main straight at Hume Weir circuit. This disaster put it right back into the workshop and seriously delayed its ultimate build time. It would be nearly two years before I would lay eyes on it again, this time at Winton, finished and bodied.

The CAMS dilemma was to do with: Unfinished car equals no mudguards, therefore entered as racing car. Finished car equals body including mudguards, therefore entered as sports car, indicating different vehicles, in spite of being one and the same.

Subsequently I was able to adequately solve this unique and bizarre situation, and apart from "my" first outing, Sabrina was thereafter granted a Group L (1940 – 1960) log book.

Then a serious accident occurred in June 1979, during the Historic Winton weekend; Sabrina's maiden outing for me with its supercharger finally up and running.

Disaster struck on the trip home on Saturday evening, with the three of us in the tow car, when a drunk driver coming from the opposite direction crossed to the wrong side of the road.

In the ensuing carnage my front-seat passenger escaped major injury, while my back-seat passenger was killed, and I was



Leading Roger Wells' Mac Healey - Sandown, '78.

concussed to the degree that there would be no more racing for me for some time. The tow car was written off, and Sabrina fared little better.

It would be two years later that Sabrina and I next appeared on the track, again at Winton. Even after all that time its body was still yet to be finished, so it could be said that in a return to its historically defining incident, Sabrina once again was raced without its body after a two-year hiatus! "History repeats" (albeit in reverse). Sadly, the same could not be said for its initial historic "four wins from five starts", but the final race for the day, a handicap, did go our way!

Harking back two years though, to the disaster that took the life of my good friend Alan Jones, an observation was made at the time which, eerie as it may seem, is perhaps worth noting here....

The crash happened on 2 June, 1979 and 42 days later, on 14 July, Alan's namesake emerged from the shadows and won his first of many F1 Grands Prix; the first but one on the calendar after that fateful date!

From then on, it was success after success for Mr Jones, culminating in his taking the F1 Championship in 1980!

A little more irony is that my friend Alan had been an avid Austin-Healey fan for most of his short life and at one stage actually owned the first 100S ever to arrive in Australia, after it was brought into the country in 1954 for the then top driver in Australia; Alan Jones' father Stan.

I owned Sabrina for some nine years, then sold it to Roy Williams from Geelong. He sold it after ten years to Terry (someone) from Perth, who kept it for another nine years, then moved it on to Brisbane and into the hands of Barry Naylor who, after a similar time, unfortunately suffered a serious issue with his feet, and was forced to part ways with the car, so the present owner, also from the Brisbane area, is one Ian Young.

We're all hoping that he and Sabrina will be able to attend Historic Winton's 40th anniversary in 2016.

During Roy's ownership the car was painted silver. History records that the car was built in the workshop of Laurie Knight's Benalla Esso service station, hence the historic corporate colours of yellow with blue stripe.



Following the smash on the way home from Winton in June 1979.

Readers' Cars

Want your car featured? Simply send a couple of photos and 200-300 words about your car to The BMC Experience, PO Box 186 Newcomb, Vic. 3219 or editor@bmcxperience.com.au

Bill Lambert – Bremen, Germany

Words by Fabian Goern. Photos by Bill Lambert.



The MG TC in its new home in Bremen. Inset: loaded into the container.

In 2013 my Australian mate Bill Lambert found out that he was to do a year's full-time service at the Royal Australian Naval College, HMAS Creswell, at Jervis Bay on the New South Wales south coast.

At the start of 2014 he moved back to Australia with his family, Anja, Liam and John from their home in Bremen, Germany. But even Bill's busy service at the Naval College wasn't enough for him. Back in Bremen he had two MG Cs plus a Rover Mini stored at his home and those of a friend.

He missed his BMC mates back in Germany and thought the only cure for his blues was to find another MG to play with while at HMAS Creswell.

After a bit of searching for the correct model, Bill found a 1949 MG TC, number 9261, located in North Richmond NSW, so it was easy enough to take a first look at the car.

The TC had been meticulously restored over 14 years ago and just needed some final touches. The owner, a former RAAF

technician, explained all about the car. He was happy to pass it on for final completion and registration to have it back on the road.

A friendly agreement was made for the sale of the TC and it was initially trailered down to Jervis Bay. With some final testing miles around the Naval College and with the help of the Shoalhaven Historic Vehicle Club, the TC was granted its Historic Vehicle Club registration.

At the end of 2014 Bill's service at Creswell concluded, and he then took care of all the required formalities for the MG to take the trip in a container to Germany.

After a ship's voyage of almost two months, leaving Sydney three days after a summer Christmas, the container arrived in the port of Bremenhaven on a sunny winter's day at the end of February 2015; safe and clean.

Workers from the port tried to start the car without success. Bill came for collection and, with a bit of fuel, the right starting technique, a turn of the key and a pull

1949 MG TC



At the Royal Australian Naval College, HMAS Creswell, at Jervis Bay, NSW.



At HMAS Creswell.

of the starter cable, the TC awoke from a two-month sleep.

A few weeks later I headed down from Hamburg to Bremen in the March pre-spring sunshine to see Bill's 49-er MG TC. We took a short ride through the suburbs of Bremen in the Holden-coloured Permanent Red TC; then still right-hand-drive and licensed as a NSW historic car..... but now as a Bremen-registered historic car.

I promised Bill, this particular TC will take us to the Goodwood Revival, one day....as a sort of home-coming for the car.



As bought - almost finished.



Heading off from Jervis Bay.



Being picked up from Bremen docks.



I found the Austin A90 by chance, when I answered an ad on Gumtree regarding an AP5 valiant.

I live in Condobolin and travelled to a farm near Neville (down the road from Barry), about 50km south-west of Bathurst, that had been in the family for six generations. Sandy, the youngest generation, was selling some of the old stuff around the farm.

When I looked at the AP it had a stove in the side of her and the B-pillar was pushed in. I wasn't really keen on her with the damage. I asked Sandy if anything else was for sale.

He told me of a couple of trucks and his great-grandfather's Austin.

I looked at the trucks; loved 'em but they were not my thing. Then I went into the shed to look at the Austin.

Through all the 50 years of stuff I was amazed to see it was a coupe. I had seen a convertible before, as I recognised the three headlights. I was excited; big time!

It had been in that shed since 1964 when Sandys great-grandfather died. He bought it new, when the wool price was pound for pound (£1 for a pound of wool) in 1951, together with a convertible for his son George – a 21st birthday present, now long-gone.

Thankfully the coupe survived, as George (Sandy's dad, who is now in his 80s) told me



his father was planning to chop the back out to make a Ute.

I made a mad, off-the-cuff offer and Sandy checked with his family. The response was a no, until some research was done. Fair enough, too.

That evening I was told an asking price, but it was too much for me. I thought about it all night; as you do. I rang Sandy the next morning, agreed a price and arranged a time to pick-up the car.

It was quite a mission when I picked it up, with 50 years of stuff all around and on the car. The ground it was on was basically bull dust. The car had been sitting on blocks, as the tyres had been used around the farm, but the original rims were in the boot.

I had two jacks with me and, once all the stuff was moved from the car, it was up and down for hours to get the rims on, without tyres. I thought of running the car on lengths of wood, to get it out of the shed, but Sandy suggested running it out on some railway line that had been cut for fence posts. Perfect!

It all ended up really good, with a heap of effort. I almost gave up and changed my mind at one stage, but thank God I didn't.

I love this car heaps, but I have no certain idea what to do with it. I would love to mod her but it's all an unknown for me.

I'm still too afraid to turn the motor, but unbelievably the oil is like new. At the time of writing, I have second-hand tyres coming on Monday.

On the flip of a coin I have decided to sell the car to someone with more skill than me, who can give it the TLC it deserves.

Interested potential buyers can contact Allan through this magazine - Ed.



The Museum Trail

National Automobile Museum of Tasmania

Words by Jarah Weinreich

www.namt.com.au



Situated in central Launceston, the National Automobile Museum of Tasmania (NAMT) is widely acknowledged as one of the finest of its kind in the country.

Established at its current location opposite City Park in Cimitere Street eighteen years ago, the Museum is run by a non-profit foundation and relies on the generosity of enthusiasts and collectors to loan their vehicles for exhibition.

Fortunately, the Museum's far reaching reputation ensures continuous displays of world-class motorcars.

Tasmania's healthy classic car movement ensures that the ever-changing collection consists mainly of locally-owned cars, although occasionally vehicles have been sourced from interstate.

The Museum hosts quarterly theme displays on its purpose-designed feature floor, which may focus on a particular manufacturer, genre, or era.

This arrangement ensures that the collection is refreshed in spectacular style every three months.

Visitors can expect to see approximately 45 vehicles at any given time, with the feature display giving way to a main hall exhibiting a diverse range of machines.

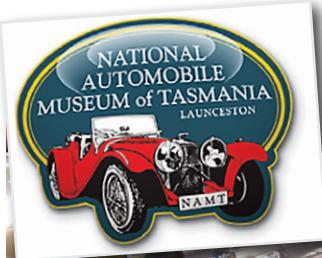
Products from marques such as Rolls-Royce, Jaguar, Daimler, Riley, MG, and Aston Martin stand alongside European exotics, veteran cars, Australian and American muscle cars, and rare curiosities.

The Museum also features a mezzanine floor packed with vintage and classic motorcycles.

The Museum itself has also evolved over the course of its life. From relatively humble beginnings, the facility now incorporates a gift shop, which stocks a wide range of automotive books, models, clothing, and memorabilia.

Several years ago, a street-front





showroom was added. Funded by the Museum Foundation, it adds another dimension to the building, giving passers by a glimpse at what awaits them inside.

The Museum also houses the Tasmanian Motor Sport Hall of Fame interactive display, which pays tribute to the countless Tasmanians who have excelled in national and global motor sport.

This is accommodated, along with a vast collection of rare and sought-after diecast models, in a lounge area.

As a central hub for Tasmanian motoring enthusiasts, the Museum plays host to several outdoor events through the year, including swap meets, and an annual community awareness weekend featuring club displays.

The ongoing success of the Museum is testament to the many hundreds of exhibitors who have made their cherished vehicles available for display, to the staff and volunteers who attend to the

day-to-day running of the operation, and to the many thousands of people who visit each year.

Now one of Launceston's top all-weather tourist attractions, the NAMT attracts visitors from all over Australia and beyond.

As such, the Museum prides itself not only on the quality and presentation of its displays, but also on the diversity.

Certainly, this means that all tastes are catered for, but it also provides an accurate depiction of evolution and change within the automotive world.

The museum is open every day of the year, except Christmas Day, and is situated on the corner of Willis and Cimitiere Streets, Launceston.

Admission is \$12.75 for adults, \$7 for children under 16 years and \$32.50 for a family. Locals and regular visitors can take advantage of a yearly pass for only \$32.

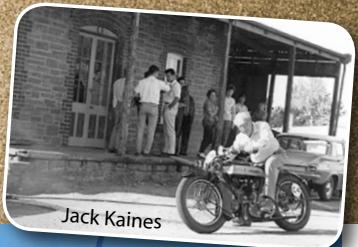
The museum also caters for school excursions, club days and tour groups. 



The Museum Trail

National Motor Museum - Birdwood, SA

Words by Bill Watson Photos by Bill Watson and Craig Watson



The National Motor Museum in the Adelaide Hills recently held a special event to celebrate the museum's 50th anniversary. We take a look at the museum and the event.

<http://motor.history.sa.gov.au>



About 1963 Jack Kaines, a dispatch rider during WW1, wanted a building in which to house his motorcycle collection. During a multi-faceted career he also served in the Royal Air Force in WW2, taught at Prince Alfred College and smuggled gold in China.

After the war he was appointed Deputy Registrar of Motor Vehicles in SA and was a foundation member and first president of the Veteran & Vintage Motorcycle Club of SA in 1956, as well as secretary of the Vespa Owners' Club.

With the assistance of neighbour Jeff Melhuish, the abandoned flour mill at Birdwood was purchased and renovated in 1964, with assistance from former PAC student Len Vigar who was an avid car collector and bought a share in the enterprise.

The building was opened to the public as a museum on 20 November 1965 by then premier Sir Thomas Playford. Sir Thomas is reputed to have said: "I'll give them six months!" Not jail, but duration as a museum.

In 1971 Gavin Sandford-

Morgan headed a consortium which purchased the Birdwood Mill Pioneer Art & Motor Museum from Kaines, with Vigar remaining a minority shareholder, but had trouble making it pay. It was offered at auction and passed in. SA Premier Don Dunstan, an enthusiastic supporter of the arts and tourism, stepped in to provide support and his Government bought the museum - a proprietary company - late in 1976. By then other historical artifacts were on display alongside the historic motorcycles and cars.

Chairman of the board was Dennis Dall, from accountancy firm Price Waterhouse & Co., and the auditor was the State Auditor-General. Other board members were businessman Eric Rainsford, Neville Webb (both Sporting Car Club of SA members) and Andy Brown (a Lancia enthusiast).

Donald Chisholm, who had been general-manager of Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement in Victoria, took up the same post at Birdwood, on 1 March 1977.

On 10 December that year a





special Opening Rally for historic vehicles was held, and Premier Dunstan performed the official opening of the newly named National Motor Museum.

Three years later the inaugural Bay to Birdwood Run for historic vehicles was held, which today is one of the largest classic car events in the country.

In 1981/2 the museum was brought under the auspices of the newly-enacted History Trust of SA (History SA from 2009).

Don Chisholm was replaced by John Cashen as Director/Manager in February 1983. A succession of Directors/Divisional Managers, starting with curator and Riley owner Jon Chittleborough (1997-2001), has followed since.

The museum has grown to become a prominent centre for automotive historical research, preservation and display of Australia's motoring history and culture. It contains the George Brooks Library: one of the world's most significant motoring libraries.

Today, the museum houses around 300 classic and modern

cars, buses, trucks and motorcycles in what is claimed to be the largest collection of such vehicles in Australia.

On Sunday 21 November 2015, the National Motor Museum held a 50th birthday celebration on the central oval. Some 400 cars and motorcycles were expected but, despite perfect weather for the event, only 137 turned up.

Organiser Pauline Renner said it was particularly disappointing, given the museum's original purpose as a haven for significant motorbikes, that only a couple of motorcycles put in an appearance.

There were several guest speakers, including Holden author Don Loffler and former rally champion Ed Ordynski. Four motoring authors conducted signings in the souvenir shop area. Food stalls were in attendance and children's amusements were provided.

It was a relaxing day for those who took the opportunity to view some interesting vehicles, including a large display of Ferraris, and catch up with friends from various clubs.





Photo by Craig Watson

Basil Wales was the powerhouse behind Special Tuning; turning it around from a loss-making parts and service oriented offshoot of the BMC Competitions Department, into a stand-alone, profitable and important link between BMC, then Leyland, and its competition customers.

Basil joined Morris Engines as an apprentice in 1952, being mentored by Morris's engine tuning guru, chief engineer Eddie Maher, as Basil recalled. "I spent time in the tool room for the basic engineering work and, unbeknown to me, I machined some conrods for an engine that MG used for one of their record attempts. Then I went to the Experimental Department and that's where Eddie Maher really took me under his wing."

His introduction to the world of motorsport was building A-series engines that were destined for a special customer. "We'd lift these engines up into the cab of this truck. The significance of K Tyrell Timber Merchants on the door didn't really impinge on me. Of course, these engines were going into Ken Tyrell's Formula Juniors, but I wasn't aware of it at the time."

Basil also built the supercharged twin-cam engine for EX181 in its record-breaking runs at Bonneville. "Eddie Maher



NZMC Mini won 1972 Heatway.

Basil Wales

Historically speaking

Words by Craig Watson.

Photos as identified.



Basil Wales at Goodwood in 2007.

said no-one else has run a supercharged engine here, so you might as well get the experience. So I did all the test bed work on that engine. I didn't go to Utah with the car – I didn't expect to."

"Instead, as a reward, I suppose, Eddie Maher arranged for me to go to Abingdon and join the Competitions Department, as the only apprentice ever allowed to join Comps, and I went on the Liege rally. It was just a fantastic experience. I remember seeing mountains for the first time. The team did quite well, I recall. But the Liege in those days was just a non-stop drive. There was no rest at all; and supposed to be no servicing, so we'd go into garages and make use of the local garage."

Basil's career was interrupted by two years' National Service and when he returned he found himself without a job at Engines Branch, as he explained. "I went back and Eddie Maher said, 'look, we haven't really got a job for you here,

but there's a BMC Service Department at Cowley and we think you'd fit in there quite well!'"

Basil worked as the sports car specialist in Product Problem Liason, doing a training course across the Abingdon factory then working on problems that arose with Production on the one hand and customers on the other. In this work he had a lot of contact with Bill Price in Competitions and when the position came up to head Special Tuning it was Price, who had knocked back the job himself, who recommended Basil.

"So, I went and had this interview with John Thornley and he said; 'It's losing money but you're there to provide a service. Stuart Turner's lot is overloaded with these silly customers asking difficult questions and saying they could beat Timo Makinen if only they had a car like his, and they just want to get rid of that sort of problem. You've got a parts stock there, and it's down to you.'



Marina "Yumping" - 1974 1000 Lakes.



Triumph 2.5 on Scottish Rally.



Basil (far left) in publicity shoot for Special Tuning, c1971.

Special Tuning – usually referred to as ST, but only officially renamed as such in 1974 – had been set up in 1964 by Stuart Turner, under the Competitions Department, as a way of handling the increasing number of enquiries from private owners wanting to get their hands on the same equipment being used by the Works team.

When Basil Wales took over running ST in 1965 he was told it was expected to run at a loss. He immediately set about making changes that by the end of the decade would see it contributing profits equal to around 50% of the Comps annual budget.

"I was technically working for Stuart Turner. I went to see him the first morning and said here I am. He said, 'I'm a busy man, you know what the job is, if you've got any problems come and see me, but otherwise it's down to you.' I thought, 'gee, thanks Stuart'. But he was as good as his word. He never came and challenged what I was doing. But I'd go and see him and he'd make some wise observation."

"I thought what have I walked into? I've never managed a budget. I didn't understand that at all. Although, during my apprenticeship my digs were 30 bob a week and I was paid 28 shillings a week. So, I had to be sponsored by my father and a condition of that was that I wrote up everything I needed money for, so he knew where it was going. That was good training, really."

"So, as far as the job, I went through the books and looked at the papers, and we were doing work internally for customers'

cars that were being shipped abroad, doing the PDI (Pre-Delivery Inspection) and obviously losing money on that. So, I stopped that, moved it out to BMC's service department in London, then I got word around that we could do this kind of work. Gradually the work built up and over the years I ended up making a 30% profit."

Special Tuning provided parts to the public that had been developed and tested through Competitions; from alloy body panels, to various stages of engine tuning kits, sump guards, eight-port cylinder heads and other racing and rally equipment.

With its own mechanics, it also provided a service of building and preparing race and rally cars for customers, with considerable success – even taking on any overload for the Works team itself. One of ST's greatest successes in this regard was preparing the Works Cooper S in which Tony Fall and Mike Wood won the 1966 Scottish Rally.

"To be able to say that we had proved we could match Comps' work was quite an achievement", Basil recalled. "We were a poor relative, without any doubt. They got so much glory, justifiably, that naturally overshadowed us. But never mind; my guys were keen and I tried to build the team spirit up, and it really jelled."

ST also prepared a couple of cars for the 1968 London-Sydney Marathon and an entire team of six privateer BMC 1800s for the 1970 London-Mexico World Cup Rally, all built to the same spec as the Works' London-Sydney cars.



Special Tuning publicity shoot c1971

When Donald Stokes decided to close the Competitions Department at Abingdon, ST took over what motorsport roles remained.

While Special Tuning didn't have the budget for motorsport that the Comps Dept had, and didn't enter cars in events under the Leyland Works banner, they did have a very important, and profitable, role to play in publicising the various brands of cars under the Leyland umbrella.

ST moved into the space vacated with the closure of Competitions, and was able to expand its operations. In 1972, ST prepared two 1275GT Minis for New Zealand Motor Corporation, for the Heatway Rally, which finished first and fifth – giving the Mini its last victory in an international rally.

They also prepared a number of cars, particularly Marina and Triumph 2.5 for Brian Culcheth, who was the only driver still contracted by the company on a long term basis (through the International Marketing Department) after the closure of Comps.

Contrary to popular opinion, Culcheth found the Marina prepared by ST to be a well handling car and won his class in the 1971 RAC and the 1974 1000 Lakes rallies in it.

Special Tuning was also responsible for the four-wheel-drive Mini Clubman that ran in one round of the Rallycross in 1972, beating Roger Clark's 4WD Ford Capri.

With a management shake-up at Abingdon, Basil Wales left Special Tuning, going to Unipart. "Unipart was the parts operation for the whole of the BMC, Austin and Leyland network", he explained. "It took over everything, really; we'd inherited Austin-Morris, MG, Land Rover, Jaguar, Rover and Triumph parts – all in different boxes, all with different part numbers. For example, Lucas would supply a distributor for all of those cars, so the same screws, condensers, contact points would have five different part numbers. My task, with a team of about a dozen people, was to put them all under one number and sort everything out so it made sense."

After a few years a chance came up to return to Cowley, running the department that controlled warranty repairs and problem solving for production. He was later technical liaison between Rover and Honda when that partnership was being developed – a position he retained until retirement.

Basil has always had an affinity with BMC's cars, and owned a Mk2 Cooper S with a veritable catalogue of ST parts for many years, which he sold in 2007. He is a regular visitor to Goodwood Revival, where he is often found around the pits, just lending a hand and maybe offering a sage word of wisdom – that is always taken notice of, naturally.



Culcheth, Cave & Marina - 2014.

Road Trip Weather Permitting

Words and photos by Trevor Webster

1958

Emigrating from the UK to Australia was common in the 1950s but, while most people opted to take the ship, Trevor Webster, Alan Taylor and their wives decided to drive - in a pair of pre-war Morris Eights.

On a sunny morning in June 1958, the two small cars drove through the heavy London traffic, heading for the South Coast of England. After over a year of planning routes, organising visas, permits, inoculations and equipment, overhauling cars and endless letter writing, our expedition was on the move. The road to Sydney lay ahead!

Our two cars were Series E Morris 8s, a 1940 tourer and a 1939 sedan, thoroughly overhauled, but only slightly modified, for the ordeal which was to come. In the tourer were Alan and Vera Taylor of Chelmsford, Essex. In the sedan were ourselves, Trevor and Mary Webster and our young son, Tony, 17-months old on departure.

Alan and I were both electrical engineers and were thinking of emigrating to Australia. We decided that it would be far more interesting to drive out, rather than take the usual journey by ship.

Both cars carried full camping equipment for their crews, as well as personal gear for six months travelling. Also included were essential provisions such as 192 packets of dried soup and 96 tins of milk! Add to this spares for the cars, jerricans for extra petrol and water, and you realise that space was at a premium.

To help offset the costs we had secured a



Brussels World Fair - 10 June 1958.



The Websters at Earls Court, London, prior to heading off on 9 June 1958.

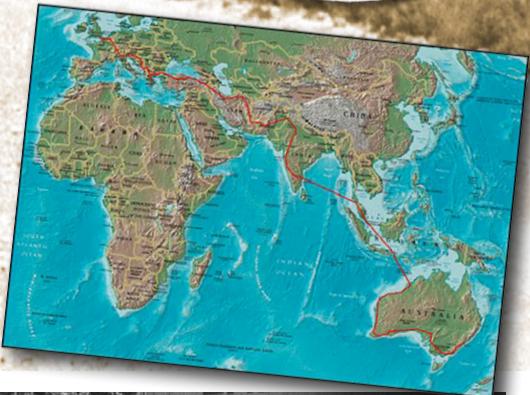
few handy sponsors, including Duckham's oils (their Q20-50 multigrade engine oil, new on the market at the time, was probably a significant factor in our success under trying conditions), WIPAC car parts, Oldham batteries and Ondura remoulded tyres. We named our little expedition *London-Sydney: Weather Permitting*.

The first sea crossing was by air. Twenty minutes after leaving the airfield on Romney Marsh, our Bristol Freighter touched down at Le Touquet in France. From here we made for Belgium, to see the 1958 Brussels International Fair, and the excruciating cobbles of Calais and Dunkirk soon gave way to the high speed Ostend-Brussels Motorway.

We continued south, over the excellent roads of Western Europe, through Luxembourg, France and Germany, and over the Swiss Alps (St. Gotthard Pass)



Coast road near Dubrovnik, Croatia.



into Italy, with its myriad Vespas and fast Autostradas.

We entered Yugoslavia at Trieste. The contrast from Italy was immediate, the clock being virtually put back a hundred years in as many yards. We entered a land of peasants, obviously very poor, working the land by hand, and driving ancient carts, drawn by incredibly thin horses, along roads thick with white dust.

Only an occasional diesel truck or official car marred the peace, even on the twin track autoput, which stretched from Zagreb to Belgrade. Everyone waved frantically as we passed, and one started to appreciate the feelings of visiting Royalty!

Our route lay inland at first through Bosnia to Sarajevo, and regained the coast at Dubrovnik, where a week was spent.

Known as the "Pearl of the Adriatic",



Visiting the Delphi ruins, Greece.



Two stills from a Standard 8 movie film taken in Greece.

Dubrovnik, formerly known as Ragusa, existed as an independent republic for a thousand years and was the great rival of Venice. It escaped the Turkish domination, which has so profoundly affected the rest of what became Yugoslavia after the First World War, but is now a collection of independent states.

Our stay was spoilt only by an on-the-spot fine, at pistol point, for entering a one-way street in reverse; the policeman's English was on a par with our Serbo-Croatian, so argument was out of the question!

Following the magnificent Dalmatian coastline, we circled the huge Bay of Kotor and, near the Albanian border, we headed inland into the interior of Montenegro. The country is mountainous and, with our heavily laden cars, 112 miles (180km) were covered in 11 hours solid driving!

The mountains gave way eventually to the plains of Serbia, and, after some more horror sections of road, we reached the Greek frontier. Our impression was that Tito's Communist regime in Yugoslavia was obviously making an honest effort to improve the lot of the people, but there was still a long way to go.

At the Greek Customs we re-entered the 20th century with a bang.

After Yugoslavia's 44-gallon drums and ancient bowlers, even a modern petrol pump was a sight for sore eyes. Bitumen roads, unfortunately marred throughout by enormous pot-holes, lead to Athens.

We completed our tour of the sights of ancient Greece via Corinth and Delphi, before heading north again to Larissa, Salonika and the Turkish border.

For military reasons, the roads on both sides of this border had been almost non-existent for centuries, but the Iron Curtain around Bulgaria and American Aid had led to great improvements in recent years.

After an interlude at Turkish Customs, listening to seductive oriental music over the radio and completing numerous formalities, we headed for Istanbul, which we found one of the most interesting cities on our route.

We visited the enormous mosques, the Sultans' palace and the islands in the Sea of Marmara, and camped high above the Bosphorus, overlooking the summer residences of the President and other heads of state. A beautiful site, to which we were fortunate enough to be taken by the agent of one of our sponsors.

Our stay in Istanbul was actually extended by a few days because it coincided with one of Turkey's periodical "petrol famines", experienced when foreign currency ran out! For three days, petrol was unobtainable, and it was only through the kindness of the director of the local B.P. company, who saw us in a queue with 300 other cars, that we got sufficient petrol to proceed on our way.

A ten minute trip by ferry took us across the Bosphorus to Scutari, where Florence Nightingale's hospital now serves again as a barracks.



Persian tea on a Persian rug - in Persia!

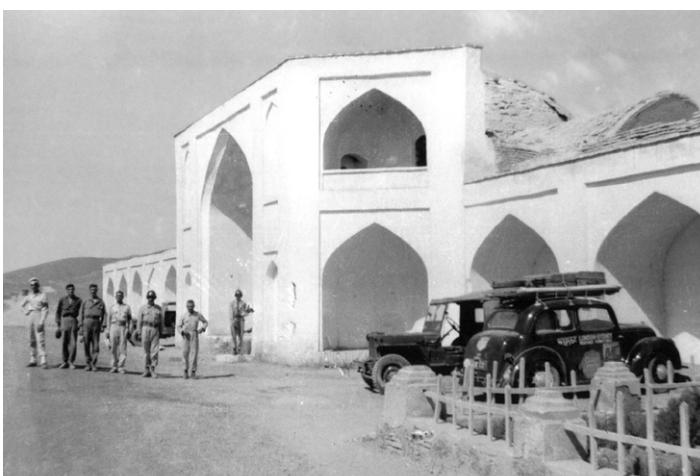
Our first experience of Asia was the fine modern highway leading to Ankara, the capital of Turkey. This is a modern city built to replace Istanbul as the administrative centre of the country; it resembles Australia's capital Canberra in setting and general feeling.

The Iraqi Revolution, and assassination of King Feisal, had occurred whilst we were in Istanbul, setting the Middle East aflame, but the British Embassy in Ankara assured us that the border with Iran was still open, so we continued on: after a further search for petrol!

From here on, bitumen roads became a



Road from Tehran seemed to go nowhere.



The group spent a day and a night as guests of the very friendly colonel and his men at a Persian (Iranian) fortress in the desert.



New Delhi parliament building, India.

curiosity, except in the bigger cities, until Pakistan was reached; although in Turkey modern military roads were being built.

On the Black Sea coast we experienced heavy rain, and the cars had to be almost carried through one river crossing by about twenty road workers. This coast is where hazel nuts, one of Turkey's main exports, grow in profusion.

About 100 miles from the Russian frontier we turned inland into the rugged interior of Anatolia. More mountains and the petrol consumption rose to 22 mpg – for an 8hp car!

We were given a jeep escort for the Erzurum military zone and, as a complete reversal of our previous experience in Turkey, we were compelled to fill our tanks with petrol to ensure that we did not run out in the middle!

Near here, we had some clothing stolen from under our pillows as we slept, and were given a striking example of the efficiency of the "Jandarma", or military police, who control the area. The Kurdish culprit was located in an outlying village and our garments returned within two hours of reporting their loss!

We passed close to Mt. Ararat, and finally reached the border of Iran, or Persia.

By the time we had cleared the Turkish Customs dusk had fallen and the Persian Customs closed. We passed the night in No Man's Land. This was, perhaps, a bless-



Village near Madras (now Chennai), India.

ing in disguise as we were under cover and the heavens opened with a torrential mountain storm.

Our first taste of Persian roads was a precipitous mountain track, inches deep in thick mud! After nearly 2,000 miles' experience, we could vouch that Persian roads were amongst the world's worst!

The proximity of the Russian frontier made the authorities in this area very spy conscious, and we were asked to produce our passports about every ten miles (16km) on average.

The soldier or policeman concerned then examined them for some minutes, in detail but very often upside down! In one town the police officer had a particular interest in obtaining our Census Card Number, and it took an hour to convince him that such things do not exist in England.

500 miles (800km) of bumps brought us to Tabriz and then Tehran, capital of Iran, where we enjoyed the luxury of a hotel during our stay. The city is built on the desert plain below the Elburz Mountains, and its summer climate is extremely hot and dry. It was a city of contrasts, with "jubes" (open gutters which combine the function of sewer and water supply for many parts of the city) and air-conditioned coffee bars side by side.

From Tehran our road lay eastward for 600 miles to Meshed and Afghanistan, skirting the northern fringes of the Great



Tony with truck drivers in India.

Salt Desert (Dasht-e-Kavir), which forms the barren heart of Persia and is completely devoid of vegetation.

The sun and heat were intense, and the wind like a dragon's breath during the day, and bitter at night. The desert and arid hills do, however, have a beauty of their own during the hours of sunrise and sunset, the sunlight giving rise to the most wonderful tones and colourings.

The boulder-strewn road surface was shattering, and after 200 miles we experienced our first major breakdown; our previous troubles having been rectified comparatively simply.

A front engine bearer of the tourer sheared, allowing the engine to drop and the fan to tear into the radiator. However, using a Heath Robinson arrangement of ropes, we were able to lash the engine in position. We also managed to seal the worst of the radiator leaks and drive the 60 miles to the next town before our water supplies gave out.

In Persia, repairs of any sort were a nightmare. The average welder and mechanic was completely inept, and quite likely to damage the car irreparably if his every action is not watched. Since all work is usually carried out in open courtyards, thick with dust, in full sunlight, this can be



The ferry on the Chambal River crossing.



The Taj Mahal was truly spectacular and lived up to its reputation.



In Singapore, Tony was feted by *The Straits Times* as the youngest ever "Overlander".

quite arduous. The price for the job is fixed by prolonged argument and bargaining.

Further trouble soon followed, and we spent the day living on "kebab" as guests of the colonel at an Iranian Army Fortress in the mountains while the damage was repaired. The general was away, so we occupied his quarters!

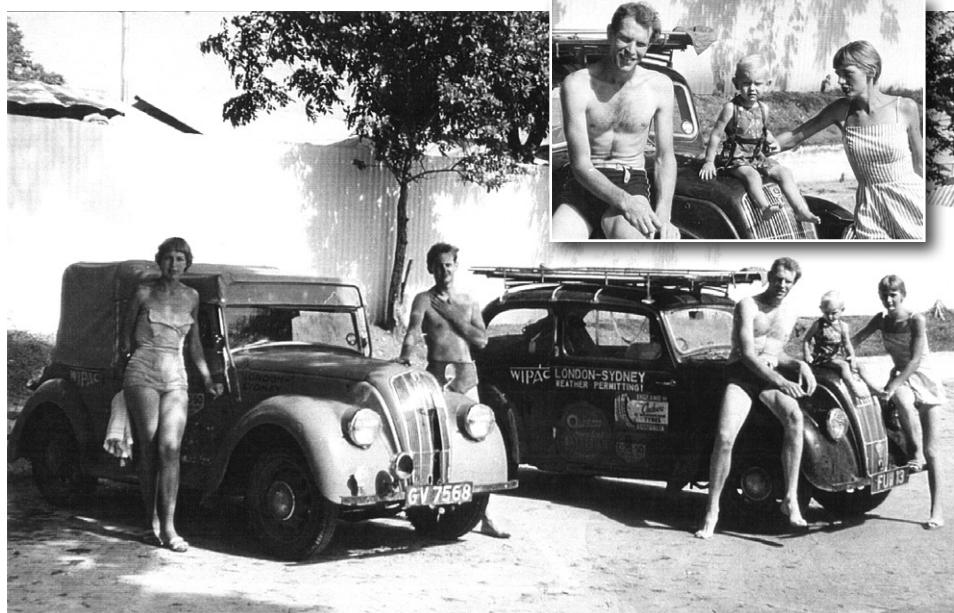
Near Meshed we turned South, along the Afghanistan frontier, for the 400 mile (640km) drive to Zahedan. We had a series of broken springs and shock absorbers along this road; on our cars as well as a Ford Zephyr, en route to Pakistan, which had joined us in Persia. Safety in numbers, we hoped, as the area had been the scene of several bandit attacks by Bedouins in recent years. However, all was well and we reached the Pakistan frontier intact.

We now had to cross the Baluchistan Desert, and we stocked the cars with petrol and water for the 480 mile (770km) run to Quetta.

Baluchistan must be one of the most desolate areas in the world, the entire landscape consisting of black broken rock. The heat was even more intense, and it was not possible to drive the cars more than five miles without boiling during the day, so we drove at night.



Unloading from MV Gorgon at Derby.



Outside the Singapore Swimming Club - photo shoot for *The Straits Times*.

Fortunately we were able to obtain extra water (and tea) from workers on the railway which runs near the road. Aspirins were much appreciated in return! In Quetta, we were entertained by a Baluchi prince and land-owner, who saw our cars and considered this hospitality to travellers in his country to be his duty. Unfortunately, only our wives were permitted to enter the harem!

From Quetta, a pleasant hill-station, we made for Sibi, which was living up to its reputation of being the hottest place on earth. About here we entered the Indus irrigation area and the humidity was fantastic. Travelling at night to escape the heat, we crossed the Indus on the mile-wide Sukkur barrage, and reached Lahore, capital of Pakistan. The only member of the party who seemed to thrive on the heat was the youngest, Tony, who remained energetic throughout!

In Lahore, we received very kind hospitality while the cars were being checked over, and even sampled the pleasures of the only air-conditioned bar in town. At 80°F (27°C) inside, it felt like an ice-box.

A mysterious noise in the engine of the tourer, which had developed in Persia, was found to be caused by a cracked piston ring, about the only spare we didn't carry. Fortunately, this was the only damage and a suitable replacement was located in the local bazaar!



Derby's main street.



Crossing the Partition line, India was the next country on our list. After a brief stay in Delhi, we reached Agra and visited the Taj Mahal. Living up to its reputation, the Taj impressed us deeply with its beauty and symmetry, despite the worst the monsoon could throw at us.

We had experienced considerable delays in Turkey and Persia, and the time until the sailing date of the ship on which we had booked from Madras was running out fast.

On account of the late ending of the monsoon, the rivers of India were still in full flood. The first ferry crossing, over the Chambal, involved us in nearly a day's delay. When we reached the second river crossing on our direct route to Madras, everything had been swept away, and the only living beings in sight were a herd of buffalo!

We had no choice but to retrace our steps and take a detour via Poona and Bangalore, involving an extra 800 miles, mostly in torrential rain. Travelling night and day, we reached Madras with two hours to spare – having covered the 10,500 miles (16,900km) from London in twelve weeks.

Fortunately, the roads of India, although narrow, were bitumen, although showing signs of deterioration. The worst hazards were water-buffaloes and sacred cows: and the truck drivers!

It is not possible to camp in the normal



The road from Derby to Broome, WA.



The "Great Northern Hwy", just north of Port Hedland, in Western Australia.



The only mile of bitumen, on the Madura Pass in Western Australia.



After crossing the Nullarbor, finally some trees to camp amongst in Sth Australia.

manner in Pakistan and India, but we stayed in "Dak" bungalows or rest houses; built originally for PWD (Public Works Department) staff and other government officials, but open to travellers at a small fee.

Our ship from Madras to Penang, in Malaysia, was the "Rajula" – noteworthy as having the largest passenger certificate in the world in pre-war days, when she was licensed to carry 4,500 souls: mostly on deck. The "Queens" (Mary, Elizabeth, etc), although nearly ten times as large, only carried half this number of passengers.

On our trip, we were the only European passengers and, being rather out-numbered by 1,700 Indians, we lived on curry to Penang!

After visiting the Snake Temple on Penang Island, we drove south through Malaya. We passed innocently through

numerous traffic checkpoints; part of the then current anti-terrorist campaign.

Our cars were never searched, and it was not until later that we discovered the trouble our very complete medical kit could have caused us. Someone had been heavily fined just previously for having a packet of aspirin in his glove box! We spent several pleasant days as guests on a rubber estate near Kuala Lumpur, and then completed our journey to Singapore via Malacca, over perfect roads.

From Singapore, we caught our booked ship, the 'Gorgon', to Australia, and landed at Derby W.A. on 24 September 1958. Tony developed a fever on board, but fortunately cured before we landed. This was the only real sickness experienced en route, achieved largely by careful boiling of all drinking water and cooking of dubious or unsealed foodstuffs.

Our first impressions of Australia were very good. You could drink the water! We were given a very hospitable welcome in Derby and spent over a month in the northwest in Derby, Broome and Port Hedland.

We reached Perth without hitting any bullocks or kangaroos. From Perth, we made for the "big timber" in the Karri forests of the Southwest. We passed through the Valley of the Giants, and visited Albany, before setting out for Esperance and the Nullarbor: 906 miles (1,458km) of gravel and sand road.

We reached Port Augusta safe and sound after a cool crossing, and finally arrived in Sydney in January 1959; via Adelaide, Melbourne and Canberra.

After 17,663 miles (28,426km), our eight horses were still going strong!



Journey's end: Trevor, Tony and Mary with "Moggie" at McMahon's Point, Sydney, on 16 January 1959 (left) and +50 years in 2009.



Family Ties



Trevor says; I should point out that "Moggie" has been in my family for 76 years – purchased new in London in April 1939 (assembled in March) by my Mother.

She bought a new Morris Minor in 1957 and gave the Series E to me as a birthday

present with about 130,000 miles on the clock. The rest is history, as they say.

From the BMC point of view, I should add that my Mother (who was a doctor) owned four or five Austin 7s between about 1922 and a 1937 Ruby. But she saw the Series E Morris at the 1938 Earls Court Motor Show and decided to have a change.

She went on to have a Minor 1000 and then an Austin 1300 and my Dad had a 1952 Riley 1.5 litre until 1963.

"Moggie" did some 60,000 miles in Australia after reaching Sydney in 1959. She was retired in 1964, when I got the use of a company car (always cheaper to run!!), and we also had a Morris 850 Mini - 1964

to 1971 and 76,000 happy miles!

So there has been some BMC experience in the family!

The Morris carried London rego FUW 13 for 20 years. She was then registered in Victoria as GXS 485 for four or five years and now carries NSW plate FUW 013 – the nearest I could get without paying fancy prices.





Eye Witness to History

Compiled by Col Gardner

The National Archives of Australia holds a huge number of images that document Australia's history and development.

Some of these photographs can place BMC/Leyland vehicles and their antecedents at work and leisure in contemporary historical urban and rural settings.



A somewhat battered Leyland truck from the early 1920s, in service with the Postmaster-General's Department as a mail carrier, circa 1937.

There were not too many amenities for the two employees. Solid tyres and the obvious 'armstrong' starter must have made it a bit of a beast to drive and ride in.

(Photo: National Archives of Australia, barcode 1646863)



The place is Mildura, Victoria, and the year is 1955. A large pre-war Morris, perhaps a Twenty or Twenty Five, cruises down Longtree Ave amongst an interesting mix of pre and post World War Two vehicles. (Perhaps Morris enthusiasts could help out with a positive identification on the model and year.) Worth noting is the art-deco style Ozone theatre, now sadly demolished.

(Photo: National Archives of Australia, barcode 11708678)

Mighty Mouse

Words by Nigel Wratten. Photos by Nigel Wratten & Camp Quality



Camp quality
esCarpade



For Nigel and Cathy Wratten, the decision to take part in the 2015 Camp Quality esCarpade was an easy one - and there was only one car worth taking on the event.

This year's esCarpade was the most fantastic Outback touring adventure, which started in Narrabri on 17 October, then travelled through St George, Charleville, Longreach, Emerald and Roma, finishing in Goondiwindi on 24 October - a total distance of some 3,000 km, with about 75% of the trip on gravel roads.

The esCarpade is Camp Quality's major annual fundraiser, and attracts entrants from far and wide. This year saw some 75 cars entered, three of which had 'British' heritage: a Rolls Royce, Triumph and of course our beloved 1966 Mini Deluxe.

A condition of entry for each vehicle was that it must be aged at least 20 years at the time of the event.

Our Mini was fully-restored a number of years ago and has only done 6,000 miles since the rebuild, so we had no real qualms about reliability.

We entered the car as Mini-Mouse, and following her 'survival' over various dirt

roads, she became affectionately known by some as Mighty Mouse.

Camp Quality's purpose is to create a better life for every child living with cancer. This year the esCarpade raised a whopping \$1,333,105! The majority of the fundraising is done by the entrants during the 12 months leading up to the esCarpade.

The entry fee was a 'reasonable' \$5,000 per vehicle. We were amazed and so appreciative of the support from our local community, in assisting Cathy and me raise the funds. Our final tally was \$9,300.00!!

Our supporters are too many and varied to name individually, but ranged from the Austin college students at the University of New England, our local Camp Quality volunteer group (including our Camp Quality kids), Rotary Clubs of Walcha and Uralla, Armidale's Classic and Specialist Car Club of Northern NSW, Gunnedah Vintage Vehicle Club, and *The BMC Experience* magazine. Thank you all so much.

This year the esCarpade "troupe" visited seven remote schools. The school visits provide the opportunity for the children to have some fun seeing the fantastically decorated cars, and 'themed' characters, up close. Camp Quality's amazing puppet



Leaving Longreach after the lay-day.

show travelled with the esCarpade, and ran a fun and educational puppet show at each school we visited.

Once the fundraising is done, the focus is to have a fun and safe trip. The dirt sections were all pretty reasonable, with some "mildly" challenging bits - perhaps a bit more challenging from the Mini's perspective. It was interesting at times trying to follow wheel tracks left by vehicles that are ALL wider than our "brick".

Some navigation was required; all pretty straightforward, though. We knew, of course, each day's destination for lunch and the ultimate over-night stop. Each participant was provided with a series of route notes, to allow us to navigate to the various towns along the way.

These included precise distances between easily recognisable way points; such as cattle grids, flood-ways, turns-offs, property names, etc.

My Bride and navigator, Cathy, had some initial concerns about getting us lost (me too, just quietly). Using the very detailed notes and our trip meter, the concerns were soon allayed - particularly when we arrived at each place where we were supposed to be.

There was always the ultimate comfort of knowing there was the ambo and the



They offered to put Mini in luggage truck.



In the shade at Augathella Roadhouse.



Testing the "air-conditioning".



The "BMC line-up": Rolls; Triumph; Mini.

mechanic sweep following the last vehicles each day.

We had a lay-day at Longreach, which consisted of tinkering with the cars – not necessarily for need of any major work on any particular car (but who doesn't like lifting the bonnet and adjusting "something") – along with visits to the Qantas Museum and Stockman's Hall of Fame.

We were often asked by fellow "esCarpadians", and folk along the way; "Why take the Mini?" The answer was easy: "Because we love it!"

We initially had some trepidations about travelling on the dirt roads, due the Mini's low clearance. With the fitment of a sound "bash-plate" (sump guard), and other under-body protection of fuel line and electric cables, combined with the keen eye of Cathy spotting ant hills, etc. on the tracks, we managed to come through pretty much unscathed.

In fact, our only two "hiccups" with our mighty Mini were a puncture on the last day heading into Goondiwindi, and getting stuck in top gear in the parking lot at Longreach.

It took Cathy nearly half an hour to change the flat tyre. I have plans to buy her a hydraulic trolley jack for Christmas, to make her life easier on future events.

The release out of top gear was a combination of pure mechanical "genius",



At the QANTAS museum: Longreach, Qld.

the use of a large hammer and tyre lever, and luck!

We must take this opportunity also to compliment and thank Camp Quality and the event organisers, officials, our fellow esCarpadians and all others involved, for their commitment and expertise in making this year's adventure such a safe, rewarding and memorable experience.

All the people on the trip were the most fantastic, committed and caring bunch. Cathy and I made some wonderful friends on the trip and can't wait until next year's esCarpade – again taking Mini-Mouse, of course.

Next year's esCarpade is from Batemans Bay, NSW, to Griffith, NSW via Phillip Island, Vic. (exact route yet to be established).

We are already looking forward to next year's trip. It would be great to see some more BMC products represented in next year's event. 



Nigel has promised Cathy a better jack for next year.



Above photos courtesy Camp Quality.

5th Rylstone Classic

22-23 August 2015 Words and photos by Evan Redman



Now in its 5th year the Rylstone Classic has fast become one of the 'must-attend' Mini events in Australia. Originally started in 2011 as an excuse to take a long drive on some of NSW's most scenic roads – and then talk about them well into the evening – the Classic now attracts entrants from all over Australia and, indeed, the world.

Inaugural champions, Canadians Rick and Elaine Higgs, recognised just how special the event would become, and donated the trophy now known as the Rylstone Plate for the outright winners.

Well over 100 competitors attended the 2015 event with new naming rights sponsor, The BMC Experience, adding a touch of authenticity to what is described as a 'pretend' rally. Although branded in the style of the famous Monte Carlo Rally, an event that Minis dominated on several occasions, the Rylstone Classic includes competitive events of a novelty nature. Each year, entrants enjoy observation challenges, team trivia and competing for bragging rights associated with winning the People's Choice award.

The Classic covered almost 500km on day one, departing Newcastle and travelling to Sydney's famous Pie In The Sky, before commencing an all-out BMC assault on the Putty Road. The field, with over 60 'twitchy little boxes' in total, was quite a sight snaking its way through one of Australia's more challenging and twisty roads.

After a traditionally long Saturday, with most cars sitting above 4000rpm all day, competitors found themselves at the spiritual home of the Rylstone Classic, the Globe Hotel. With its open fires, cracking selection of regional wines and great pub fare, the Globe stages a memorable evening.

2015 People's Choice winner, Ainsley Morris, mounted a persuasive and tasty campaign aided by running-mate Nicole Grr, convincing the field that Ainsley's red Moke was worthy of this year's award.

On their second visit in five years, colourful Queenslanders Darren Legge and Dave Parker won their second Rylstone Cup, an award reserved for either outstanding contribution to the event or for extreme hardship. Unfortunately for our northern friends, they endured a tough day behind the wheel and under the car, plagued by a mixture of problems. Arriving late in the evening with support crew members Roger Fortune and Duncan MacKay at their side, the boys accepted the Rylstone Cup and proceeded to make good use of it for the remainder of the evening.

Outright honours went to Victorians Karen and Peter Morris. Having heard about the event, the well-known pair made plans to include the Rylstone Classic on their trip through New South Wales to visit their daughter. Competing in "Darrell", one of 45 named Minis the couple own, they blitzed the field in the Observation Challenge and, with a strong showing in the People's Choice, their aggregate score was enough to take home the title.

Rounding out the weekend was a special piece of organising by pilot Garth Bingley-Pullin, swindling entry to the Rylstone Aerodrome for an epic photoshoot.

As planning commences for 2016, the biggest challenge for event organisers is ensuring that the growing field has accommodation; with beds, bunks, swags and campsites filling fast. If you're thinking of going in 2016, our advice is to book now and join in Australia's best pretend rally.



NSW All British Day



The Kings School - Sydney, NSW .

30 August 2015

Photos by Sean Littler.



After last year's event was postponed due to rain, then washed out completely, there was concern over this year's event going ahead – especially with a fair amount of rain in the weeks leading up to the event.

Thankfully the rain held off for the best part of the week prior and the 2015 All British Day went ahead as planned. The sun shone brilliantly all day, but without too much sting.

Perhaps because of missing last year, attendance this year was higher than expected, with 1,750 cars and a handful of trucks, buses, fire engines and other commercial vehicles turning up.

The ABD is held in conjunction with the Kings School annual Art Show and combined they attract large crowds.

Traders at the ABD were kept busy all day and visitors got to

see a terrific range of vehicles. Not surprisingly, there were hundreds of cars of interest to this magazine, many of which featured well in the trophies.

Among the happy owners on the day were Michael Benton (modified Mini), Simon Strauss (1948 Wolseley Series 3), Joan Lackey (MG Q-type), Trevor Halls (1932 Austin) and James Scott for his Jaguar.

It was pleasing to meet so many of our readers and I thank those who came up and said g'day.

Thanks too for the positive feedback on the magazine, which is one way we are able to keep track of if the magazine is providing the readership with the kind of stories you want to read.

The weather is already booked for next year, so mark in the last weekend of August, and keep your fingers crossed for sunny skies.



16th Qld Mini Muster

13 September 2015

Photos by Tegan Riley



The day started with overcast skies, but by mid-morning the clouds cleared and the sun was shining, making another perfect Brisbane day for our show.

Cars began arriving around 8am and by the time judging started over 100 Minis and a handful of other BMC relatives were lined up in beautiful order and waiting to be judged.

The quality of the cars on show gets better every year, just to make life harder for the judges in the Show n Shine. It was great to see a lot of old faces as well as some new attending and supporting the event. Congratulations to the Car of Show—Classic Mini and Mini Cooper S Mk I winner Greg Coates, with his recently completed ex-Hopkirk/Foley 1967 Bathurst Cooper S, who is always a great competitor in this class.

Congratulations also to 21-year-old Tia Halliday at her first show with the club, with The Joker Clubman Mini Van which was a real treat to see and took out the People's Choice trophy. It is terrific to see young people still taking to the Mini, which bodes well for the future of the car and the club.

Also to Tony Formosa for winning the

Car of the Show – BMW MINI. Although numbers of BMW MINIs were down on last year, the quality of cars on show made the judging no easy task.

It was great to listen to all the classic '60s and '70s music organised by Mr Music - Paul Glover. It brought back a lot of memories to the senior members of the club who enjoy music from their early Mini days.

The swap meet in the early hours of the day was attended by a lot of members taking the opportunity to clear their sheds from any Mini parts they don't need, or to pick up a bargain or two.

Thanks to all who attended, with gate numbers around the same as last year, and to all those tireless helpers who each year put on a terrific event.

Special thanks to Dave McGregor, who has been a tower of strength in all 16 of the club's Musters from the very first in 1999, and to his long-suffering right-hand-man, Daryl Millar.

The club is looking at new ways of making the event even better in future years, so mark Sunday 11 September in your diary for 2016's event and don't miss out. Q



Qld RACQ All British Day

Tennyson, Qld.

20 September 2015

Words and photos by Max Johnson.



The weather earlier in the week looked grim, just like last year, and the groundsman at St Joseph's College would not hazard a prediction for conditions at this year's RACQ Automotive Services All British Day.

Sunday turned out fine and again they came in their hundreds: the Morries, Healeys, Jags, Rollers, Fords, Triumphs and lots more; even a couple of 1920's Armstrong Siddeleys and an odd looking beast apparently made from an MGB underframe, homemade body and TD doors and wings. Every year something different turns up.

Mr Whippy was there, in his Commer Van, to the delight of the kids and adults alike who were lining up for his treats.

The high point of the day was the arrival of Ian Fordyce and his crew on the ex-Brisbane City Council Aveling Porter Steam Roller. What a magnificent sight, belching smoke and that steam whistle... I bet that got the locals arced-up. Despite two days of travelling, and a breakdown, they got there to the delight of the crowd. We are hoping for more next year.

Unfortunately, the clouds gathering in the distance frightened off the fainter-hearted British enthusiasts and some beat an early retreat, but the rain did not eventuate.

The Queensland Mini Car Club took the award for the Best Club display with their "Minis at the Drive-In" theme.

While competitor numbers seemed to be slightly down on last year, walk-in spectator numbers looked to have increased. The lower numbers were no reflection on the quality of entrants, with some spectacular looking examples on display.

People's Choice this year went to the superb Austin-Healey 3000 of Joe Day, while the Owner's Choice was awarded to Simon Fritz for his 1984 Range Rover. Best British (car of the show) was won by Grant Singer, for his immaculate 1926 Alvis 12/50 Ducksback.

Teams from our selected charities, RACQ CareFlight and QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute, were on hand again to educate the public on the services they provide to the community.

The organising team wish to thank our major sponsor RACQ Automotive Services for their continued generous support of this event.

Enthusiasts agreed that it was another great day of British automotive history on display, and we are all looking forward to another great event on 18 September 2016.





6th Motorclassica

Royal Exhibition Building: Melbourne, Vic. 23-25 October 2015

Words and photos by Craig Watson



There's something majestic about the Royal Exhibition Building in Melbourne as the venue for Motorclassica, which in six years has established itself as a motoring event of global proportions and quality.

The centrepiece of the event is of course the Australian International Concours d'Elegance, which includes many of the best restorations in the country vying for the many prestigious awards. While the Best of Show award went to a Ferrari, Post-War Classic UK & Euro was won by Tony Robinson for his stunning 1958 Jaguar XK150, and Modern Classic Sports & Performance Over 3-litre went to Barry Fitzgerald's 1962 Jaguar E-type.

In total there were 109 cars in the Concours, with a further 44 cars on display on dealers' trade stands. Over the weekend, 35 car clubs, showing 370 cars, took part in the Club Sandwich displays around the outside of the Exhibition Building. Of our interest, these included: MG Car Club of Vic on Friday and Saturday; Morris J-type vans, Bentley Drivers Club and Macedon Ranges & District Motor Club on Saturday; Austin-Healey Sprite Drivers' Club, Morris, Rover and Triumph Car Clubs, Historic Rally

Association and Bayside Car Enthusiasts on Sunday.

Weather was perfect, although the wind did get up a bit of Sunday and caused a bit of a dust problem.

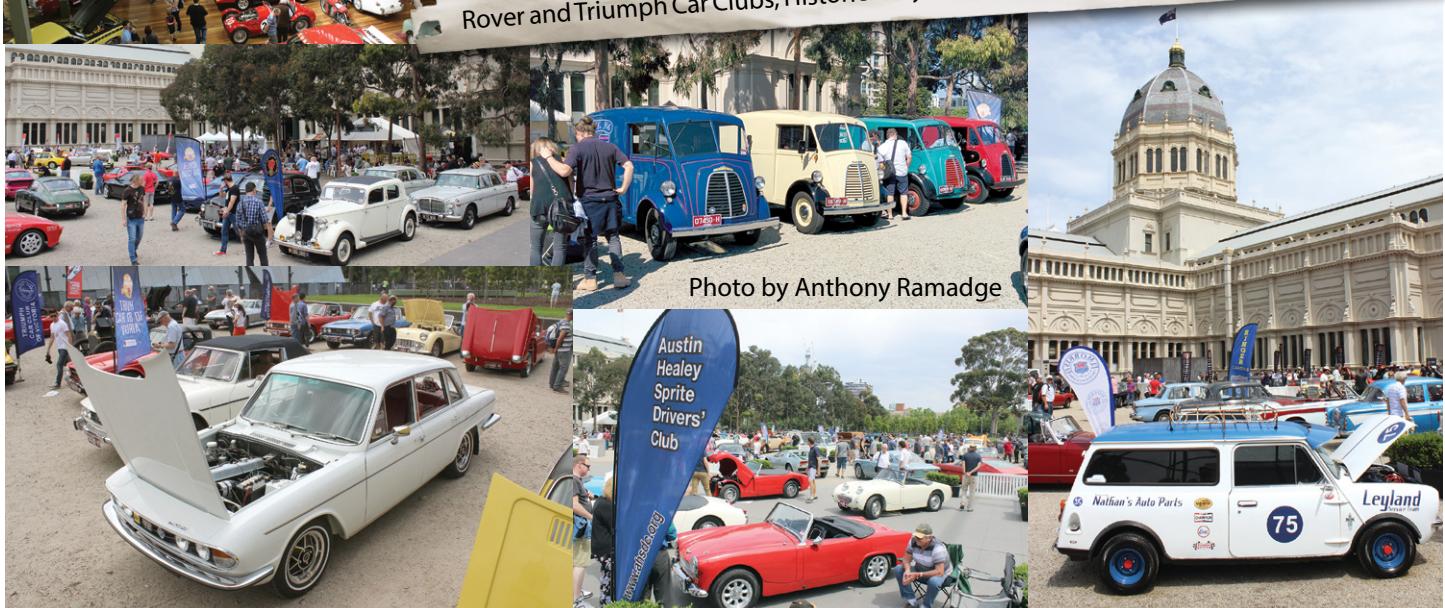
Saturday night brought the annual car auction in association with the event, run by Theodore Bruce auction house and bringing \$3.2 million worth of sales. 30 cars went under the hammer, with top price of \$62,500 being paid for a 1914 Rolls Royce Silver Ghost Landaulet.

Close behind was a globally-significant alloy-bodied 1949 Jaguar XK120 convertible, which went for \$635,000. By contrast, its stunning "standard" cousin, a 1953 model, sold for \$222,500.

Big surprise of the evening was the Australian-built 1951 Hartnett four-seater Tourer, the only one known to exist from a run of only 125 cars, which sold for \$106,875 after spirited bidding by two equally determined enthusiasts – which brought a round of applause when the hammer fell.

By the time the doors of the Exhibition Building closed on Sunday evening, over 21,000 people had attended.

Photo by Anthony Ramadge





Tasmanian Minifest 2015

Hobart, Tas.

1 November 2015

Words and photos by Craig Watson.



Tasmania again turned on the perfect weather for the bi-annual Minifest show at the Cenotaph in Hobart.

Over 120 Minis, Mokes and derivatives turned out, with a very high standard across the classes. There was a large contingent of race cars and a good line-up of Mokes, with a handful of very rare models. Craig Trenham had his all-steel Broadspeed Replica, which he bought from Queensland a couple of years ago, while Debbie Jandera turned up to her first Mini show with an extremely rare Iridium (metallic green) 998cc Mini LS. After the show I photographed the car, which will be featured in next issue of this magazine.

There was also a good turn-out of BMW MINIs, which made it all the more disappointing that this year Hobart MINI Garage had decided

no to support the event. Mini clubs across the country welcome owners of BMW MINIs, and it is a shame that 15 years after their introduction, MINI still doesn't see the sponsorship of Mini shows as a valuable exercise in publicity and mutual support.

Various fun games were organised throughout the day, including spark plug changing and wheel changing, while the chalkboard Mini centre-piece kept the young and young at heart entertained.

The turn-out for the event, which is equal to a good event on the mainland, and the enthusiasm from the owners shows that the Tasmanian Mini Car Club has hit the right balance, by having their event every two years.

The weather is already booked for 2017. ☀



Photo by Karen Polden



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21st NZ Mini Nationals

22-25 October 2015

Words and photos by Donn White.



Although based in the lower Manawatu in the North Island, host club, Modified Mini Register, elected to base their activities over the holiday weekend in Masterton, on the eastern side of the Tararua Ranges in the heart of the Wairarapa district.

This was a tall order for the organisers, as none of them live in the area. The bonus was that a number of the entrants had not ventured into the Wairarapa district before, so all of the scenery and roads were new to them. Also, a number of local Mini owners were sufficiently motivated by the activities they witnessed over the weekend to announce that they intend forming a regional Mini club of their own.

The Masterton District Council got right behind the event and made sure that the Show and Shine went smoothly on the Saturday morning in the centre of town. The weather remained fine for the weekend, as promised to the contestants by the Mayor during the Mayoral Welcome in Queen Street.

Slightly over 100 Minis were assembled and they attracted considerable attention from the locals, before setting out on a Navigation Trial once judging had finished at 1.00pm

A unique feature of the 21st Mini Nationals was that contestants could access their individual progress scores on-line as the weekend

unfolded. Each competitor had his or her own QR code. Once they scanned this they could access the Mini Nationals website and monitor their own scores, as well as those lodged by other contestants.

www.mininationals.co.nz was accessed literally hundreds of times over the weekend. So successful was this new concept that other clubs have expressed interest in having this tool available at future Mini Nats events.

Sunday saw most competitors assemble at the Masterton Motorplex for the Motorkhanas and Regularity Sprint. The weather was ideal and some very close times were recorded by competitors at the pointy end of the field.

Those who did not go to the Motorplex venue elected to take in an informal tour of the district. Various wine growing venues were visited along with the historic village of Greytown and the seaside resort of Castlepoint – so named by Captain Cook in 1769.

The next Mini Nationals will be hosted by the Otago Mini Owners Club based in Dunedin, which is in the south east of New Zealand's South Island, in late October 2016.

The Waikato Mini Owners have also been given the nod to host the 2017 Mini Nationals, which will be in Hamilton – New Zealand's largest inland city, in the North Island. 





The UK weather has been surprisingly mild for Autumn, which has been great for me as I've been busy sorting out the building of my long awaited new garage. It will be great to get my four Minis under one roof at last, but people are already driving me mad suggesting that I buy some more cars!

Ace Café Italian Job Charity Night: 3 September 2015

The Ace Café London (www.ace-cafe-london.com) is an iconic location: a biker's café in the 1950s and '60s and now a petrol-head's delight, with different classic and modified car and bike meets every night of the week.

The Mods'n'Minis night has been running since 2002, with meets on the first Thursday of each month.

I'm proud to say that The Ace Café Italian Job Charity Night has been an annual event since 2003, started by myself at the suggestion of the Ace's proprietor Mark Wilsmore, to help raise sponsorship

when I took part in my second Italian Job charity run.

I haven't done the run itself for many years, but the charity night is still going strong in the hands of Italian Job regular, Roger Hunt. This year he raised £2,300 from auctioning off and raffling a variety of Mini related goodies, generously donated by traders and friends.

This year's car of the night was Rob Lamcraft's lovely red ERA Turbo.

See www.italianjob.com for information about the run and money raised for Variety, the children's charity.



Minis by the Sea: 6 September 2015

Clear blue skies and sunshine greeted all the Minis taking a late summer run to the seaside at Worthing on the south coast of England.

Not even the slightest breeze was coming off the sea for this annual event, held in a leafy square surrounded on three sides by Edwardian buildings, the fourth being the road running alongside the beach.

This laid-back event, organised by the West Sussex Mini Owners Club, is free to enter, but is a great fundraiser for two local charities – the St Barnabas Hospice and Chestnut Tree House, a children's hospice. This year the auction, raffle, tombola, and rattle buckets, raised around £2,500.

All Minis parking within the area of the

showground are automatically entered for the show and shine, and owners don't even need to clean their cars for a chance to win the title of Shiniest Mini, Hottest Mini, Coolest Mini, Most Original Mini, Scruffiest Mini, or Most Bonkers Mini, along with Best Standard, Best Modified and overall Car of the Show.

This year's top award went to Scott Chorley with his beautiful yellow Van.

Worthing is just down the road from Ferring, the home of the last generation of John Cooper Garages, which means there is always a good turnout of Cooper-converted cars, along with ex-employees of the company, coming along to meet Mini owners and ex-customers, to chat and re-live their memories.



National Mini Show: 13 September 2015



The sunshine held out for the last big outdoor show of the Mini season in 2015, the National Mini Owners Club's annual event at Stanford Hall.

Sadly, attendance figures at this show seem to be suffering from the timing, which clashes with the world famous Goodwood Revival, with more and more Mini owners being attracted to the historic racing events.

However, those who supported this fantastic show were once again rewarded by the standard of the cars in the concours, the fantastic array of autojumble and the fun of the fancy dress on the club stands, not to mention the beautiful location in the grounds of a stately home and the delicious cream teas we sampled in the cafeteria.

As always, the winner of the Car of the Year was to receive automatic entry into

the prestigious Meguair's Club Showcase concours at the NEC Classic Car Show in November.

This year's winner was Sandra Britton with her multiple award winning, immaculate Snowberry White Mk2 Super Deluxe, which has been no stranger to the show scene for many years, but which seems to have been receiving even more perfect scores in 2015.

The car actually took part in the NEC concours back in 2007, so it was disappointing to discover that it was not eligible to enter it for a second time.

However, that opened the opportunity up to one of the highest-scoring class winners, which was in fact an Australian car! John Porter's Australian Clubman S was awarded the privilege of representing the Mini at the most prestigious classic car show of the year.



NEC Classic Motor Show: 13-15 November 2015

The National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham plays host to maybe not the biggest, but certainly the most important UK classic car show each year.

This year were even more exhibits, with six halls packed with cars and stands; although, sadly, it is still running out of space compared to the demand for display stands. I spent just one day there, but you really need at least two days to see everything comfortably.

Space restrictions meant there were fewer club displays this year. The biggest clubs for most marques were included, but not so many local ones.

It was good to see John Porter's Australian car in the Meguair's concours, but it was also good to see that the 'Mini of the Year' winner from the National Mini Show, Sandra Britton's Mk2, was given pride of place on the British Mini Club's stand.

The show's main sponsor, Lancaster Insurance, had also arranged for her to display her latest pride and joy, her freshly restored 1971 Aqua Mini Clubman, on the Pride of Ownership display.

The Heritage Motor Centre at Gaydon had a stand at the show and called a press conference to announce some major changes that are about to happen. The long-awaited new building, housing the museum's reserve collection of cars, was at last complete, and about to open, but only until the end of November, when the whole museum will close.

The plan is to re-open on 13 February 2016, having had a facelift thanks to another Lottery grant of £1.1million. It will also have a name change and will now be known as The British Motor Museum.

We'll have something on the grand re-opening in our next issue!





Baskerville Historics



Hobart, Tas

2-4 October 2015

Words by Daniel Willson

Photos by Stuart Edwards



Daniel Willson in Group N.



Bradley Trenham - Hobson Special.

The annual Baskerville Historics race meeting again attracted a record number of entries in both car & motorbike classes including a good number of Minis and other BMC cars including specials, MG's, Austins and Morris' competing in Group N and Regularity events.

Regularity is a great way for those not wanting to race their cars in open events an opportunity to get them out and compete on the track against the clock, without having to have all the latest safety gear and related expenses.

Bradley Trenham, driving his Mini-engined Hobson Special finished first in Sports & Racing Regularity for the weekend; and in doing so took home the Max Bowen Trophy for the second year running.

Group N under 3 litre saw ten Cooper S Minis entered, including Mike Holloway, Cameron Sabine and Henry Draper from Victoria who had come to do battle with the locals.

Qualifying was held in very windy conditions, with James Willson setting the fastest time of the Minis, ahead of brother Daniel and Henry Draper.

There was a great battle between the Willson twins who crossed the line in Race 1 as the first two Minis; James in sixth place overall, just 0.16s ahead of Daniel.



Peter Killick.



James Willson leads Henry Draper and Peter Killick in the Chris Ellis Memorial race.

Sunday morning saw more great dicing amongst the Mini drivers. Jeremy Bennett, the youngest driver at just 15-years-old, was greatly improving his racing skills having stepped up from competing in regularity events.

The third running of the Chris Ellis Memorial Race was held in the early afternoon. The ten Minis lined up on the grid in much anticipation as to who would take home the prized trophy. James Willson had won the two previous years, but Henry Draper was determined to give him a run for his money.

Once the starters light went out, James shot into the lead as Daniel's car developed an electrical problem. This left Henry to slip into second place and hunt down James. Over the seven laps Henry wasn't able to get close enough to make a move, but these two were clear of the rest of the field. Peter Killick was comfortably in third place and the lead positions remained unchanged for the rest of the race.

Aaron Creed drove well in the first few laps but had an engine and gearbox blow up. Jeremy Bennett showed some great skill in holding off Sabine and Holloway; who had both commented on how technical the Baskerville track is.

Some great battles were going on with



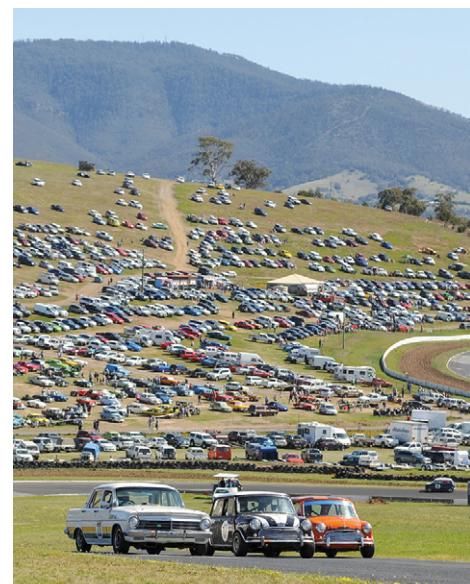
Aaron Creed.

all the Minis and other Under 3lt cars throughout the weekend. Despite just missing out in the Memorial race, Henry Draper proved the fastest of the Mini drivers in three of the four Group N races. He has set his sights on the Chris Ellis race in 2016.

Unfortunately, Andrew Glidden's engine blew up, which was not the way he wanted to finish what was already a disappointing weekend due to not setting a time in qualifying because of engine trouble.

Jeremy Bennett has now taken ownership of his uncle Chris Ellis' Grp N Mini so, particularly with the form he showed with his first proper racing weekend, we expect that he will be a winner of the prestigious race in the future.

Thankyou again to the organizing committee of the Baskerville Historics for putting on a great weekend.



The natural amphitheatre of Baskerville.

Baskerville - MG Musings

Hobart, Tas

2-4 October 2015

Words by Jane Vollebregt

Photos as indicated



Jane Vollebregt may not have been fast, but she had fun. Photo by Stuart Edwards.

Four Victorian MG owners, with three MGBs, set sail for this year's Baskerville Historics: David Anderson, Roger and Lorna Chapman and myself.

Looking at the program on arrival, I noticed I was listed for two classes: Regularity and Sb Class Racing. I asked to do Regularity only, but was told I needed to do both, or at least the Racing (they needed the numbers for the grid) – me thinks they just wanted a back-marker! So, feeling like the sacrificial lamb, I entered practice at the back – I knew my place – and duly circulated. I love this track!

Not the same could be said for Rodger – he broke his diff! He had a spare, which he declared must have travelled at least 20,000 km to and from every race meeting over the last few years, just in case. Dave and he had it changed within 45min, but Lorna missed her practice session.

Saturday brought high winds, shredding some marquees, sand storms and 29° – which broke the heat record for October.

My car was literally thrown sideways on the back straight. After I came in, I found my MGB badge from the boot lid had jumped ship, to join the other detritus our cars seem to leave on every race track in the country.

Meanwhile, Lorna was having FUN at regularity, passing everyone that got in her way.

We then had two races with a predictable outcome: myself last; Rodger second-last (but five secs faster than me!); with Dave coming 1st out of four Sbs (the other was a Sprite driven by local Don Bartley), and out of the thirteen-strong field (incl

four Porsches, two 240Zs, TVR, Clubman and a Datsun 2000) came sixth overall.

Lorna again had FUN, improving her time.

Gorgeous sunny weather on Sunday, not too hot. We went over our cars and replaced brake pads and tightened a few loose bolts.

Lorna was up first: turned the key, to be greeted with the sound of silence. Frantic scrabbling under the bonnet confirmed a dodgy wiring connection. She got away okay and improved her time yet again. Lorna was on fire!

I had better pull up my socks.... I tried to use the jet lag excuse having only arrived back from Europe two days before departure to Tassie but they all laughed at me!

In Race 3, Dave improved by a second and moved up to third place overall: only the Clubman and one 240Z to round up in the next race.

Highlight of the last race was Dave passing everyone except the Clubman, coming second; Rodger's times were consistent; I improved by 0.07s; Lorna had FUN achieving her PB, despite having to avoid the pirouetting car in front of her.

Dave achieved second outright for the weekend and won the Sb class. Rodger was third and I came fourth (out of four, remember) but loved the weekend. The biggest plus of all was that we were all going home with a working car.

Once again our sincere thanks go to the Tasmanian MG Car Club who looked after us so well. I hear that they're trying to get at least 10 Sb Class cars for next year, so we can have our own grid.



Photo by Stuart Edwards

All about fun for Lorna Chapman.



Photo by Stuart Edwards

Local Mark Dilger.



These photos courtesy Jane Vollebregt.

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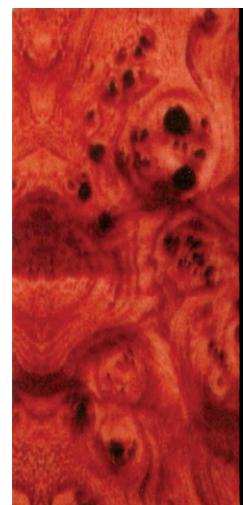
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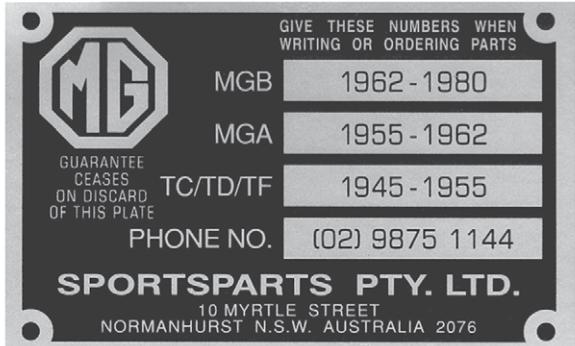


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ALL OF US HERE AT WILF CHAMBERS CLASSIC BRITISH CAR SALES WOULD ALSO LIKE TO WISH ALL OUR CUSTOMERS AND READERS OF THIS MAGAZINE A SAFE AND HAPPY CHRISTMAS, AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO A FANTASTIC YEAR IN 2016. *Wilf Chambers*

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Reunited

Words and photos by Craig Watson

Brian Foley got to drive the Mini he raced with Paddy Hopkirk at Bathurst in 1967, for the first time in 48 years...and he was amazed at the restoration.





"It was fantastic. The car is amazing. They have done such a good job. Driving down the road the car seemed to get faster and faster."

Brian Foley





Photo by Autopics

Brian at the wheel the last time - Bathurst in 1967.

Greg Coates' Mini is something pretty special. Between 1963 and 1976, 128 Minis raced in the annual Bathurst enduro, of course winning the race outright in 1966. Of those, twelve were Works entered cars, and of those only one, Greg's, is known to still survive.

This was the car which Brian Foley and Paddy Hopkirk drove to fourth in class, and eighth outright, in 1967. It is easy to understand why Greg, with help from his dad Richard, put so much effort into restoring the car.

When the opportunity arose for them to take the car to Wakefield Park racetrack in August this year and have Brian Foley drive it, Greg was understandably excited. But, as they say, the best laid plans...

It had been organised for Brian to drive the car at the lunchtime break on the Sunday, but the meeting was running late because of dense fog in the morning, so there was no lunch break.

Fortunately, as Bathurst in the 1960s was for standard production cars, Greg had ensured his Mini, affectionately known as Paddy, was road registered. This meant that we could take it out on Braidwood Rd, which runs past Wakefield Park.

It wasn't quite the same for Brian or Greg, or for me taking photos, but there is no doubt the reunion was an emotional one for Brian.

Although he has been following the restoration through this magazine, this was the first time Brian had a chance to see the car in the metal. I'm sure I caught the hint of a tear as, sitting at the wheel for the



Photo by Greg Coates

The car at 2011 Qld Mini Muster in "as found" condition.

first time in 48 years, he was momentarily speechless.

"It is incredible", he said. "Just fantastic. These guys have done an excellent job, and taken it the whole way. All the details; everything's been done, everything! It's a credit to them."

Once out on the road, making pass after pass for the camera, it didn't take Brian long to get back in the groove. "Cars have come a long way since 1967. I had to get used to stopping to select first gear. The steering wheel was obviously very basic compared with today's, but the car went very well. Driving down the main road there it just got faster and faster."

Bathurst Days

With the release of the Cooper S in 1965, BMC realised they had a real chance of winning Bathurst, which after only two years had already become a major drawcard and publicity vehicle. Evan Green organised for two of the top European BMC Works drivers, Paddy Hopkirk and Timo Mäkinen, to come out for the race.

That year, though, Brian Foley won the class and was third overall, with fellow Australian Mini specialist Peter Manton. Hopkirk/Mäkinen were a lap behind, finishing third in class and sixth overall.

For 1966, Hopkirk and Mäkinen were again brought out, as well as Rauno Aaltonen. This time the plan was to team each of the Euro drivers with one of the locals: Mäkinen with John French, Aaltonen with Bob Holden and Hopkirk with Foley.

It's well known that Aaltonen/Holden



Greg had Brian sign one of the sun visors.



...and sent the other one to England, for Paddy Hopkirk to autograph.



Greg entered the car in the 2015 Qld Mini Muster, and earned a bag of awards.





Final touch added since Wakefield Park.



went on to win the race, ahead of a complete whitewash by the Minis. Makinen/French were third, while Hopkirk/Foley suffered centre-main bearing failure in their engine and retired after 27 laps.

Hopkirk and Makinen came out again for the 1967 race, again partnered with Foley and French respectively, along with new team driver Tony Fall who partnered Holden.

Holden, with Fall, again won his class, but this time the Minis were simply outgunned by the new Falcon GTs – signalling the start of the V8 dominance of the race. Brian and Paddy had a better run than the previous year, finishing fourth in class.

Although Minis continued to be entered in the race up until 1976, taking a total of 11 class wins in 13 years, 1967 was the last time a BMC Works team was entered.

"In '65 we were third outright and won the class. It was just a matter of fuel, because as it turned out the Cooper Ss were as quick as the GT Cortinas. And the following year there was a whole pack of Cooper S. Everybody had a Cooper S in '66. Then '67 was the first year of the V8s and that was the end of that", Brian recalled.

Brian and his business partner Laurie Stewart drove an Alfa Romeo at Bathurst in 1968, although Brian still raced a Mini in Improved Production racing up until 1970.

Great Memories

After driving the Cooper S at Wakefield, Brian was impressed with Greg and Richard's dedication. "They're very enthusiastic, father and son. They just love what they're doing, and they've done it properly. Their enthusiasm is great, but it's probably the same enthusiasm I had, but in a different way, back when I was young, when it came to racing."

Although he only drove the car for a few



minutes, it did bring one memory of the 1967 Bathurst race back in great detail, as Brian explained. "When I was driving the car down the road there, it reminded me of going down Conrod with Timo. We found that when two cars were absolutely touching, we were timed at 114mph down Conrod, when the Cooper S on its own would do 104mph. I remember that my back bumper bar was flat from Timo just giving me a nudge every now and then."

"So, Timo would lead and I'd be behind him, then we'd swap over so the cars wouldn't overheat. We came onto Conrod and Charlie Smith, in another Cooper S, was in front of us and we just pulled out and passed him as one. He was shaking his fist at us, as if to signal we weren't being sportsmen."

"Anyway, we were coming down Conrod Straight and I could see Timo's speedo from where I was sitting, through his back window. Because, his speedo wasn't that far away, bearing in mind the cars were only ten foot long, and the speedo was sort of wound off the clock. They were the days," Brian laughed.

Brian said that although all the BMC drivers got on well, he doesn't recall a lot of socializing. "We had a good rapport. I don't remember the social side of things that much, but we got on very well. Timo was always smiling and laughing and we got on very well."

"But I haven't seen him since all those years. I haven't had anything to do with Paddy since 1967, either. We're worlds apart, I suppose. He's over there and I very rarely go over to England. I'd like to go back to Goodwood, though, because I think Timo, Paddy and Rauno and these guys go to Goodwood."

That would be a reunion worth seeing, I'm sure. 

THE PAPER TRAIL



Photo by Autopics

Words by Craig Watson.

Photos as detailed.

Photo by Paul Sulma

RJB 327F, dressed as it first arrived in Australia, at the Silverstone event for the 60th anniversary of the Competitions Dept. in 2015.

Paul Sulma spent 10 years convincing the UK authorities of his Mini's provenance.

RJB327F was originally used as a race car, then rebuilt as a rally car and shipped to the other side of the world where, but for the enthusiasm of the current owner, it would probably have remained.

In the 1990s the race car was recreated and, at a time when fewer checks were done by the authorities when re-allocating dormant registration numbers, RJB327F was given to that car.

When the rally car, albeit re-bodied twice, returned to the UK many years later, with a long and illustrious provenance, it sparked a battle royal that took almost ten years to resolve.

Discovered

Back in the late 1980s, Paul Sulma was looking for an ex-Works Mini to buy. In about 1997 he saw a car from Australia advertised in one of the English Mini specialist magazines, purporting to be an ex-Works rally car, as he recalls. "I faxed Jim Barrett (the owner), and he came back saying it's not the actual car...and said there's this bit and that bit off the original car, and he'd built it around another shell and had followed the article in *Sports Car World* to get the details correct. That's the

thing that worried me. I thought, I'm not sure about this car, so I thought this is not really for me."

Paul had been introduced to Basil Wales, former manager of Leyland Special Tuning, and mentioned the Australian car to him. "Basil said he thought a guy in New Zealand owned it. He then sent me a letter this chap, Brian Houston, who owned the original car, had written. That letter was the kick off really, because it gave me an address."

"So, I dropped Brian a note saying I've been told you've got this car, sort of thing. Then I got to talk to him about it and then

one or two more letters and I suggested I may be interested in buying it from him... It probably took about three or four years, but eventually I did wear him down and persuaded him to part with the car."

Paul then had to consider the ramifications of importing the Mini to England, as another car already carried the same UK registration of RJB 327F.

"I heard that the car's rego over here was already being used by somebody else, which kind of put a dampener on it. So, I was kind of half thinking, yes it would be a good car, because I'd seen photos of it, but if I brought it back here the rego wasn't available, then that would be a mega fight to get the reg, and also the fact that somebody might say, well you haven't got the right car."

"Then there was Jim's car as well, which made it all a little less attractive when all this came out after researching the car...I thought if I'm going to be buying this thing I need to be absolutely sure of what I'm buying."

"I had Brian Houston provide me with as much documentary evidence as he could and photographs of it, to back up its provenance, really. And he did do it and that satisfied me, but I still had this dilemma that if I bring it back here I've still got parts of it in Australia, with Jim Barrett, and somebody with the registration here



Preparing the race cars at Abingdon.



Photo courtesy Bill Price

The Works Minis in the pits at the 1969 Spa 24 Hours. Car #79 was registered RJB 327F.

claiming to have the original body shell as well – which subsequently proved to not be the case. But no other car was coming up and then Brian said okay he would sell it...so we agreed on a price and I shipped it over here in 2002."

"I spent the next ten years fighting to get the original UK number for it, because I knew from the history of the car that it was without question the one that left Abingdon with that identity and was shipped to Australia with that identity."

"Maybe I was a bit naive, but I thought it would be a lot more straightforward than it turned out to be. I thought I had a good trail of documentation and I thought that was enough."

Works Race Car

Looking back to the beginning, two Minis were entered by the BMC Competitions Department, the "Works", in the Spa 24 Hours in July 1969, using the relatively new Lucas fuel injection system with eight-port cylinder heads.

John Handley and Roger Enever drove car number 78, registered RBL 450F, while John Rhodes and Geoff Mabbs were in car number 79, reg RJB 327F.

According to Peter Browning, in his 1971 book *The Works Minis*, RJB 327F was



Photo courtesy Paul Sulma

Original bonnet still exists.

RJB retired from the race after only a couple of hours, with collapsed valve seats, while the sister car retired disappointingly, with a conrod through the side of the block, after nearly 23 hours and having lead its class in the race.

In August, RJB was used at a Thruxton race meeting as the camera car for a BBC *Grandstand* film crew, driven by Mabbs; "having to battle up through the field after an early collision with Richard Longman, which was good viewing", Price wrote.

RJB's final race was the following month at Oulton Park, where John Handley drove it to 15th overall and 4th in class.

Rebuilt and Shipped Abroad

While BMC Australia had a Competitions Department, run under the auspices of Evan Green's Publicity Department, it had neither the resources nor the finances to build rally cars to the same level of development as the UK Works team.

Two Minis were bought by BMC Australia from Abingdon in 1967, LXR 828E and LXR 829E. The cars had mixed fortunes, both retiring from the 1967 and '68 Southern Cross Rallies, but taking a number of wins and places in other events.

Rallying was banned in NSW in 1969 and the ex-Abingdon cars were sold off. However, the ban was lifted the following year and two more cars were ordered from Abingdon.

As it transpired, these would be the very last two Cooper S Minis prepared by the Works team at Abingdon, before its official closure on 31 October 1970. One of these was a Mk2 Cooper S, while the other was a brand new Mk3 Cooper S: the only one ever prepared at Abingdon.

Photo courtesy Brian Culcheth



Brian Culcheth (left) and Andrew Cowan survey the results of the crash during the press day demonstration. Incredibly, the car was repaired in only six days.



Photo courtesy Peter Brown

The two Abingdon cars with the locally-prepared Cooper S, driven by Evan Green. Note the new bonnet on BLA 532 and the higher position for the registration plates.

The cars were completed in about July 1970, but were unable to be dispatched to Australia immediately due to a strike by UK dock workers at the time, according to an article in *Sports Car World* magazine in September 1971.

The Mk2 Cooper S was the "rebuilt" RJB 327F, according to Browning, while the Mk3 was registered, YMO 881H. These cars were then hastily driven across England and France to Hamburg in Germany, from where they were shipped to Sydney, arriving in September 1970.

An Australian Identity

Leyland took control of BMC in Australia in late 1968, but for the time being things in the Competitions Department ran much as before. However, with Leyland's new corporate look taking over from 1969 it was decided to change the livery of the race and rally cars. Some time in 1970, Evan Green devised the new colour scheme that all factory-supported cars, regardless of discipline, would compete under – being Mediterranean Blue and white.

Due to the delay in getting the later two Abingdon cars away from the UK, when they finally arrived in Sydney there was not enough time to do much preparation and to paint them in the new livery, prior to the Southern Cross Rally in October.

The cars had both been fitted with limited-slip differentials in the UK but even prior to arriving in Australia the team at

Abingdon had realised the advantages of the LSD were far outweighed by their disadvantages for dirt stage rallies. A Telex was sent to the Australian factory suggesting the replacement of the LSDs with standard diffs, which became a priority.

The two cars received NSW registrations BLA 523 (YMO 881H) and BLA 532 (RJB 327F). These plates were fitted to the cars, while they still retained their UK plates.

The cars were ready for the Southern Cross a week before the event and were taken out to show off to the press.

Unfortunately, while demonstrating the prowess of the new cars, Brian Culcheth managed to roll RJB, with then Competitions manager Gus Staunton on board.

With only six days to go before the rally, the car was remarkably repaired and Culcheth was able to compete in the rally, with local navigator Roger Bonhomme. A new bonnet was fitted and the car given a fresh coat of paint, but still in the Abingdon colours.

Unfortunately, while leading the rally on the third night, Brian hit a large rock, damaging the inlet pipe to the auxiliary radiator, allowing the water to escape and causing a blown head gasket.

The other car, driven by Andrew Cowan with Bob Forsyth, was retired shortly afterwards, while in fifth place, after hitting an embankment and damaging a driveshaft. Culcheth offered one of RJB's driveshafts,



Photo courtesy Peter Brown
By 1971 Southern Cross the cars were all in the Leyland livery, and YMO had been replaced with an Australian Clubman GT.

but the two were not compatible, forcing both cars out of the event.

Evan Green and Peter Brown restored a bit of pride for the team, taking second outright in a locally-prepared car painted in the new Leyland colour scheme.

Success and Failure

Two weeks after the Southern Cross, both UK cars were entered in the KLG Rally Of The Hills. After again leading the rally in the early stages, Culcheth, again driving RJB with Bonhomme, finished in fourth place, but first in class, because of taking a wrong turn and having to retrace his steps on one stage. Green/Brown were again second outright in the local car.

In January 1971 Andrew Cowan drove RJB in the Noumea Rally, in New Caledonia, and had an enormous crash, rolling the Mini several times.

This time the body was virtually destroyed. The Mini was brought back to Sydney, where it was re-bodied with an Australian Mini K body shell, with all the ex-Abingdon parts, including its ID plate and rear number plate, transferred over to the new car.

The two ex-Abingdon Minis were taken to New Zealand in May, for the inaugural Heatway Rally: BLA 532 (RJB) being driven by Cowan with Australian Dave Johnson and BLA 523 (YMO) by Green/Brown.

Unfortunately, both cars proved to be unreliable and an incompatibility of parts between the two cost Green/Brown the rally. Cowan had a litany of problems,



The only known colour photos of the three BL Australia team cars for the 1970 Southern Cross Rally. Photos courtesy Peter Brown.



Photo by Autopics

Southern Cross Rally, October 1970

Photo courtesy Peter Brown



Heatway Rally, New Zealand, May 1971

Photo by Autopics



KLG Rally Of The Hills, November 1971

Photo by Autopics



KLG Rally Of The Hills, November 1971



Photo source unknown.

Andrew Cowan and RJB ready to embark for Noumea, January 1971.

Changing Hands and Countries

1971 saw Green and Brown compete in a number of rallies in an Australian-built and prepared Clubman GT, with the registration BLA 523. It is not known what became of YMO 881H, the Mk3 Cooper S, whether it was crashed or simply reached the end of its life and was re-bodied into the GT. Any information on this car would be appreciated.

Green was the force behind the Competitions Department at BL Australia and when he left the company at the end of 1971 the department virtually ceased to exist, though carried on in a reduced capacity by Gus Staunton for another year.

RJB, still with its Aussie registration BLA 532, was sold to privateer Andrew Foord, who owned A. F. Brake & Clutch Services. Foord was a regular competitor, with a number of cars, in Rallycross.

On the front cover of *Racing Car News*, January 1974, is a painting of Rallycross at Catalina Park, featuring another Mini of Andy Ford [sic] and BLA 532.

Rallycross required a very different type of car from rallying and Foord stripped everything not required out of RJB. It is actually remarkable that RJB survived its time in Rallycross, as Foord was notorious for rolling his cars and wrote off a number of them.

But survive it did, and when Foord emigrated to New Zealand in 1974 he took RJB with him, but left all the ex-Abingdon Works parts that he had stripped out of it in Australia.

In New Zealand he apparently used RJB for a short time, before selling it to fellow competitor Andrew McEwan. McEwan also used the car for competition, although details are not known, and registered it for the road, as JP 7880. He sold the Mini to Brian Houston in about 1984.

Houston used the car quite successfully in hillclimbing, before retiring it and storing it for a number of years.



Paul bought Jim Barrett's tribute car to get some of the original Works parts from RJB.

By this time the Australian body on RJB was reportedly in a very poor state, so he decided to restore the car, back to how it arrived in Australia in 1970.

He sourced a period correct Mk2 English body, as well as many of the missing Works parts for the car, and rebuilt it with as many of the original parts as he could.

When Paul Sulma bought the Mini from Houston and imported it back to the UK, it came with the original UK, Australian and New Zealand number plates, as well as the all-important original chassis ID plate.

The Barrett Connection

Paul's saga with RJB had begun when he saw the ad for Jim Barrett's "recreation" of RJB in an English magazine. Although he initially had no interest in the car, once he had got hold of his car Paul began to have second thoughts. Barrett did have a number of genuine parts from the original car that Paul thought should be on his.

Barrett told this author in 2004 how he came to get the parts and build his tribute car. "Back in about 1990 I was looking for some Minilites to build up a Works replica, which I had the car almost finished. There was a guy advertising a set...and I went

down there and he had stacks of Mini parts: alloy doors, bonnet, boot lid, guards and all this stuff, and he said it's off a Works Mini, RJB 327F."

Barrett bought all the parts but wasn't sure of their authenticity, until he saw the story on RJB in *Sports Car World*. "One of the photos in the magazine shows the back of the car and there's a dent in the boot lid. The boot lid I bought was painted exactly the same and had an identical dent, so I thought this is amazing, an amazing find."

"I got all the panels, Perspex windows, the seats and almost everything, the whole lot of the interior. So, I thought all I've got to do is to put it in another shell, and I copied the colour and everything. I copied the parts that I didn't have and all the decals on the outside from photos in the magazine."

However, the wheels and the alloy doors were used on his other recreation, of the Works Mini with registration DBJ 93B – a famous and three-time rally winning identity.

Barrett also had a copy of the rear RJB number plate made up and in 2005 sold his car through a Shannons auction. The new owner did a registration search and found that BLA 532 had not been reissued and was still available – the original registration having expired when Andy Foord took the car to New Zealand.

With help from Graeme Urch, owner of the 1967 ex-Works Mini LRX 828E, from Melbourne, Paul tracked down the new

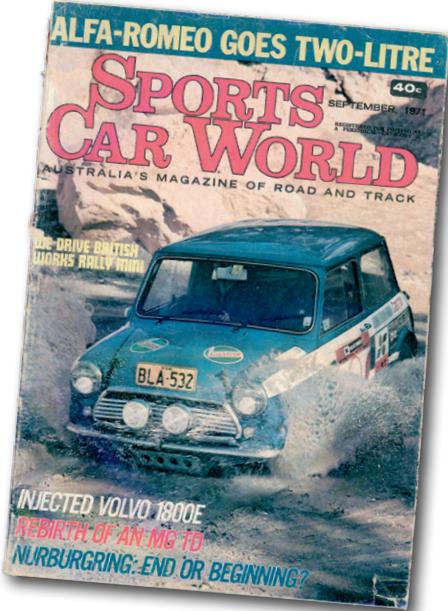


Photo from SCW shows Aus body with Mk1 taillights, UK plate, MGB reversing lights, upswept exhaust and crease in bootlid.



Barrett car was a fairly accurate copy. UK registration plate was a reproduction.



Paul with some of the paper trail in 2007.



Original ID plate and UK, NSW and NZ registration plates are all with the car to provide provenance. Photos by Craig Watson.



Bonnet steady still has Leyland blue paint.



Photo by Paul Sulma

RJB in 2015. Taillights would originally have been UK Mk2 as it has now.



As restored by Brian Houston. Note the secondary radiator on the clutch end and the high position of the coil.



Head prepared by Lynx (Aust), as shown by company stamp and date: 22-9-71



Hose connections for second radiator.



RJB 327F at a UK event in 2013, with original sump guard, but before all the stickers.

owner of RJB in 2006 and bought the car from him. All the genuine ex-Works parts were stripped off the car and shipped to Paul in the UK. The car was rebuilt with standard steel panels and glass windows, repainted in the Leyland colours and on-sold to John Sluce in Tasmania. Sluce was always aware of the car's history and knew it was nothing more than a standard Cooper S in Leyland team colours.

Paul paid a fee to the RTA in NSW to hold the registration, so nobody else can make up another copy with that registration.

The Paper Battle

Paul Sulma admits that when he got RJB back into the UK, he thought the process of convincing the DVLA of its provenance would be a fairly simple affair, but he underestimated the very lengthy process involved.

"My problem was that I was not known to anybody in the Mini Cooper Register at the time...I can understand the opposition to me, I suppose. The other guy knew all the people...all thinking, 'who's this guy trying to nick his plate off him? We've got to stop it'. I think there was a little bit stacked against me at the time, and it has taken a long time to convince some people of the merit of my case."

After nearly six years, Paul had convinced the DVLA that the other car should not have had the registration allocated to it and it was withdrawn from the car. But that didn't automatically mean the registration became Paul's, as he explains. "Convincing the DVLA that the other car didn't have the right to the plates didn't mean I had proved my case that my car did. It was almost like starting over with a whole new application."

Paul sent a second draft appeal into the DVLA in June 2009. By this time, with even more evidence in hand and now an active member of the Mini Cooper Register, some support was beginning to emerge for his case. But it was still not until August 2012 that he was able to report; "The DVLA have now finally agreed to re-allocate the rego

to my car, after nearly ten long years of fighting!"

But things still didn't run smoothly, as the V5C registration certificate, the logbook, was sent to Paul's previous address. "The lady that lives there now promptly binned it, thinking it was merely junk mail for me", Paul said at the time.

With a replacement V5C in hand a week later, the car was finally registered and legal with the correct RJB 327F plates in February 2013.

At this point there was still a lot to do to the car. Because of the saga of the registration, Paul had not done a great deal to it, in fitting the Works parts from Jim Barrett or tidying up the details.

After all, he didn't see any reason to spend much more money on the car until the registration had all been sorted out.

Many of the parts have now found their way onto the Mini, and it is all but complete. The parts from Barrett included the genuine ex-Works Tech-Del durilium sump guard, as was originally fitted to the car at Abingdon and used up until the Heatway Rally. This has now replaced the later alloy sump guard which was on Paul's car when he got it. More recently, signage has been added to make the car appear as it did when it first arrived in Australia.

In late 2014 Paul bought the car claimed to be the RJB race car, and has been able to prove beyond doubt that it was not. "The shell is not even a Cooper S one and nor does it have a body or FE number, which was clearly removed before it was painted. And, of course, it has remake duplicate chassis and engine number plates."

After ten long years, Paul was able to prove the provenance of his car to the satisfaction of the DVLA and has many of the original parts from the original body shell; a requirement for the DVLA to accept his case as having the original car. The RJB plates are now permanently part of Paul's Mini and if he ever decides to sell it, at least the new owner won't have the headache that Paul has endured.

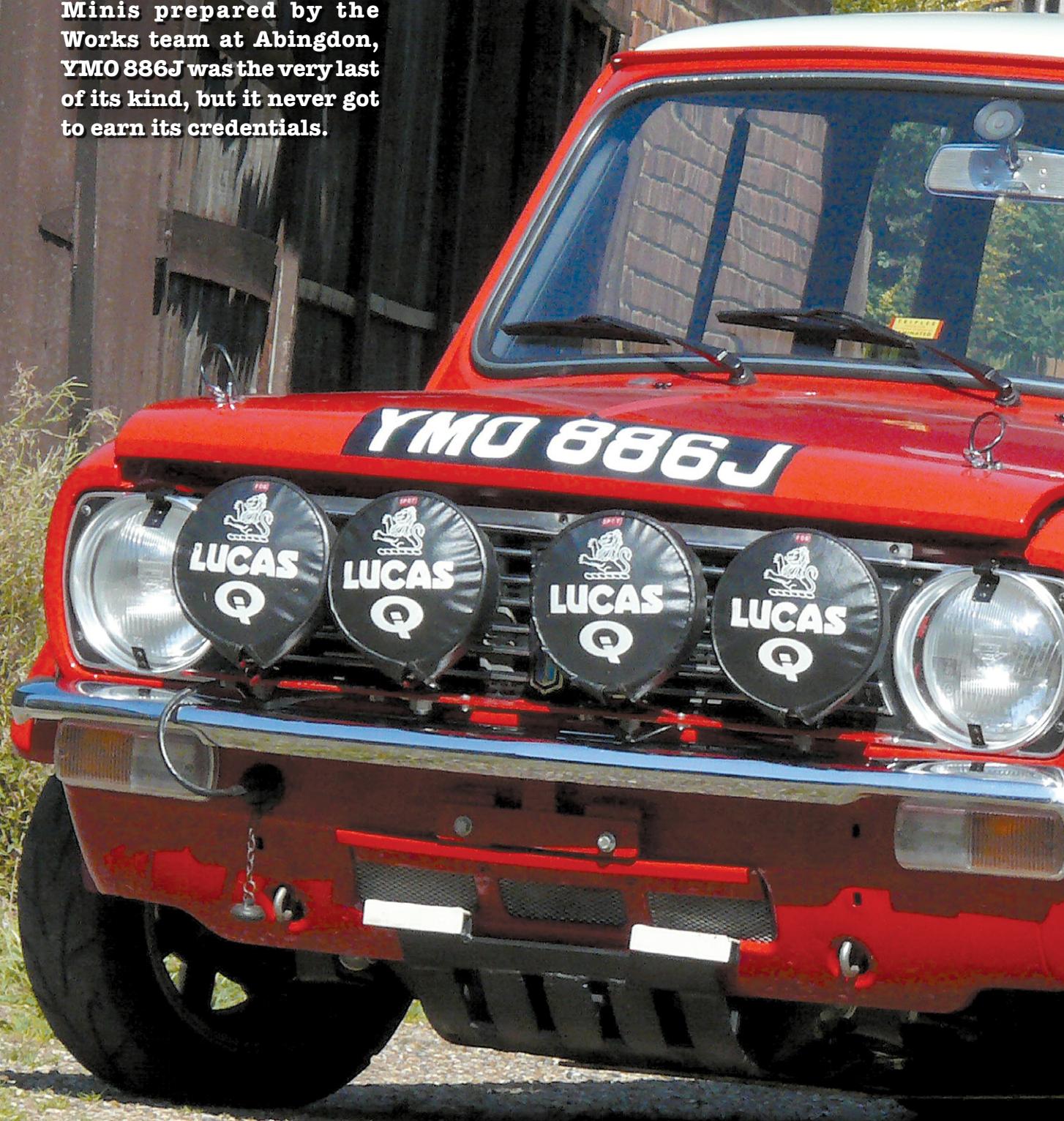
Photo by Emily Sulma

Final Encore

Words and photos by Craig Watson.



One of only four Clubman Minis prepared by the Works team at Abingdon, YMO 886J was the very last of its kind, but it never got to earn its credentials.





Of the 73 registration numbers used on Minis that were prepared at Abingdon, all but four were on round-nose Cooper or Cooper S Minis. The remaining four were used on Mini Clubman 1275GT models, and only two of those are listed in Peter Browning's Books on the Works Minis.

The last two Minis prepared at Abingdon were completed just before the October 1970 closure of the Competitions Department, so were never used on any event by the Works team. As a result, they are often neglected in the histories of the Works team.

But they were Works Minis in every detail and only failed to join the ranks of their many stable mates through the disbandment of the team.





Something Special

These Clubman Minis were a far cry from standard cars, being built to Group 6 specification, which was basically for prototype vehicles. This meant a great deal of latitude for modification, as car makers used this category for trying out many new ideas.

As such, the Minis had aluminium doors and boot lid, fiberglass bonnet, Perspex side and rear windows, wider Minilite wheels and wider plastic wheel arch extensions.

But it was under the bonnet that the car was truly something special, with the engine dominated by a cross-flow, eight-port cylinder head with twin Weber 45DCOE carburettors at the front.

The engine also featured a 637 camshaft and was dry-decked; meaning coolant didn't flow directly between the head and the block. Instead, coolant flowed from the block to an auxiliary radiator, mounted in front of the engine, then into the head, supposedly giving superior cooling of the engine.

The engine produced a reputed 130bhp and drove a Limited Slip Differential through a close-ratio, straight-cut gearbox.

Inside the car would look familiar to anyone with a knowledge of Works Minis, with the usual fare of switches, gauges, Halda trip meter and Heuer rally clocks, but clearly having benefitted from the experience gained from years of rallying.

High-back adjustable rally bucket seats

provided plenty of comfort for driver and passenger, while Britax four-point harnesses kept the occupants where they belonged. A Mota-Lita sports steering wheel and Tudor plastic windscreens washer bottle completed the driving compartment.

The rear parcel shelf held two wheel braces, while the rear seat was removed and in its place hung the typical large BMC Works tool roll.

Opportunity Lost

The two Minis in question were finished in August 1970, as Bill Price recalled in *The BMC-BL Competitions Department*.

"Although two new Mini Clubman cars with eight-port cylinder heads and twin Weber carburettors were being prepared for the Sherry Rally in Spain, for Paddy Hopkirk/Tony Nash and Brian Culcheth/Johnstone Syer, the entry was cancelled on instructions from Lord Stokes."

"This was particularly frustrating for the crews who had already completed a full recce and prepared pace notes for the stages. There was bitter disappointment in Spain where the BL dealer had already had the recce crews on local TV. *BBC Wheelbase* were featuring the rally in one of their programmes, and they even offered to cover some of the teams expenses to get Berkeley Square to change their minds, to no avail."

"The next weeks were spent clearing up the department which would be taken over by Special Tuning, the responsibility to dispose of the cars and equipment being handed over to Basil Wales."



In Private Hands

One of these two Minis was registered YMO 886J, and is the subject of this feature.

It's not known what the other car's registration was, if indeed it was registered. It was common for BMC-BL Comps Dept to order registration plates in groups and there are many instances of similar cars with sequential numbers.

However, this does not appear to be the case with YMO. The only other YMO plate listed in either Bill Price's or Peter Browning's Works team references, regardless of car type, is YMO 881H, which came to Australia for the 1970 Southern Cross Rally – see previous story.

Thankfully, there is a known detailed and continuous history for YMO 886J. Although restored, today the car retains many of its original components, thanks in no small part to the fact it never competed in the hands of the Works team.

With the closure of Comps, 886J was sold to rallying dentist Malcolm Patrick. It is not known if he rallied the car, but it was soon sold to a Forbes family from Greenlaw, Berwickshire, in Scotland.

Its first competitive event was the 1970 Mintex Seven Dales Rally, followed later that year by the Welsh Rally – both events being part of the *Motoring News* Rally Championship, with the Welsh having international status.

886J went through a number of short-time owners, before ending up with Gloucester Leyland dealer John Warner.



Two wheel braces & tool roll - no rear seat.



Boot load of ex-Works tools.



No big Lucas reversing light on last cars.



Andrew Bond at the wheel of YMO 886J

He owned the car for many years, possibly doing a number of minor rallies with it. By the mid-1990s the Mini was getting quite tatty, so Warner commissioned Dave Gilbert – founder of the Ex-Works Mini Register, Works Mini enthusiast and, at the time, owner of a specialist car preparation and restoration business – to restore it and return it to its Group 6 specification.

About a year later the car was sold to another Works Mini enthusiast, Paul Stanworth, who put it up for sale in 2002. It was at that time that current owner Andrew Bond chanced upon a small ad for the car, as he recalls. "I saw an ex-Works Hillman Imp advertised at a dealership owned by Paul Mackey, but the ad was two months old. Beneath the photo of the Imp there was a one-line ad that said; 'last ever Works Mini' and 'Price on Application'. I rang up and was told the Imp had been sold, but the Mini was still available. The dealer was selling it on consignment for Paul Stanworth."

After having a good look over the car, and seeking advice from a number of experts on the Works Minis, a month of negotiating eventually saw Andrew buy the car.

Long-Time Enthusiast

Andrew's interest in the Works Minis dates back to 1966, when he bought his first Mini second-hand from a London dealer, as he explains. "I was buying a bog-standard 850, ATM596B, and hanging on the salesman's wall was a photo of Paddy Hopkirk's 1964 Works Monte Carlo Rally-winning car. I was a lot more interested in looking at that than at the bog-standard 850 I was buying."

"At the end of the deal, we shook hands on the sale...I said, 'I don't suppose you know where I could get another copy of the photo, do you?' He took it down from the wall and said, 'my dear boy, have it with my compliments'. I still have that photo today. That set me off on the path, I guess."

"I quickly developed an interest in rallying in Minis and in those days there were so many tuning firms, there was nothing you couldn't buy for souping up Minis around London."

After the 850, Andrew went through



a number of other rally cars, including a Sunbeam, a Mini Cooper and an Escort Mexico, before a job with a company car. Fast forward a few years and at the time he saw 886J advertised, Andrew owned a home-built "replica" Works MGB, a Lancia Delta Integrale and a Peugeot 206GTi.

"Paul Mackey bought the MGB from me", Andrew reveals. "I sold the GTi privately and kept the Integrale. So, I had to down-size considerably to get the Mini."

Time For A Freshen Up

Andrew describes the Mini as diabolical to drive when he bought it. "I decided it was just lethal with the limited-slip in it and 30-year-old hard racing tyres; absolutely lethal...You had to take off at 5,000 revs, then keep it at 5,000 revs just to stop it flooding. You can't do that over speed humps and living on the North Circular, so I decided to have a replacement engine put in it and keep the eight-port engine, just in case."

Andrew admits that was a mistake and after having considerable trouble with the replacement engine he put the eight-port back in the car, with help from another Mini specialist Kevin Clark. However, although the LSD had been replaced with a standard diff and the carburettors re-jetted, most of the problems remained.

So, the engine was removed again in 2005 and rebuilt by Vulcan Engineering in West Ealing. "The place is a relic, really, of the Sixties and Seventies tuning era. The guy does a lot of A-series heads for a firm out at Brooklands that sells his Stage 1 and Stage 2 heads. He had never seen an

eight-port engine, believe it or not, so he was really interested in doing it."

Although it is the original engine, Andrew had it de-tuned slightly with the fitting of a Kent 286 camshaft, to replace the Works 637 cam (which he still has), to make the car more drivable. "I didn't buy it to put on a trailer and take to shows. I wanted to actually drive it", he explains.

Meanwhile, the water rail, which runs across the front of the top of the engine and delivers coolant to the front-mounted auxiliary radiator, was built from scratch by Kevin Clark; having only a period magazine photo to guide him. "The guy's a genius at fabricating stuff", Andrew says.

In 2007 the body was resprayed in its original Snowberry White over Flame Red – colours that in the Leyland period replaced the former Works livery of Old English White over Tartan Red – by High Tone Restorations in Oxfordshire.

Andrew had the seats recovered and the Halda restored, fittingly by Abingdon Works Co, where he also located a set of Heuer rally clocks from one of the Works Triumph 1970 World Cup Rally cars, and an altimeter that he swapped with a Triumph restorer for a genuine auxiliary radiator.

"Today, YMO 886J retains its original body shell, engine block, cylinder head, straight cut gearbox, seats and wiring loom. The lights were all on it. The seats were in it – I've had the seats recovered, because they were pretty tatty. Most of the dash is original, and I've had the car resprayed. And importantly, I've got the green logbook here and the ID and registration plates", Andrew concludes.



Test Car

Words by Patrick Quinn.

Racing photos by Ian Welsh. Detail photos by Steve Oom.

Relegated to the role of test car for the 1963 Sebring 12-hour, then neglected for years, this Healey is now back where it deserves, on the race track.





When England looked to exports to help pay off the national debt after WW2, Donald Healey was one of the first to recognise the importance of the massive potential of the North American market.

The story of how the Healey 100 was designed specifically with the US market in mind and how it became the Austin-Healey 100 overnight at the 1952 Earls Court Motor Show is well known, and was covered in detail in Issue 2 of this magazine.

Part of the agreement with Leonard Lord was that Austin would take on the management of the construction of the new sports car, while paying the Donald Healey Motor Company (DHMC) royalties for each car.

Donald Healey was also provided with a substantial budget to promote the marque on the international racing stage and record breaking. Cars were entered into such diverse events in Europe as the Mille Miglia and Le Mans by DHMC, while the BMC Competitions Department had a lot of rally success with various Austin-Healey models.

To be successful in the US market, though, Donald Healey knew that he had to prove the cars locally. To this end he instituted a series of record-breaking runs on the Bonneville Salt Flats in Utah, and circuit racing across the country.

Surely the home of the most popular and well-known motor racing circuit in America was Sebring, Florida, which held its first race in 1950, and where the annual 12-hour event has been held since 1952.

The circuit uses service roads and parts of the old concrete runways of the WW2 Hendricks Army Air Force training base for B-17 bombers.

The circuit is still notoriously bumpy, especially where the old concrete meets newer asphalt, and in its early days was poorly marked out, making it difficult at times to even find the correct course.

Originally 5.2 miles (8.4km) in length, it was a difficult circuit to master, partly because of its flatness, without camber on the corners, and partly due to the rough and changing surfaces and wide variety of corners, from fast sweepers to hairpins.

In the early days it was a classic case of what wins on Sunday, sells on Monday. And Donald Healey was correct about the importance of the North American market. Over 90% of all Austin-Healeys built were sold there new.

Sebring Austin-Healeys

A glance at the history of this classic event shows that cars designed by the Donald Healey Motor Company competed in every Sebring 12 Hours from 1954 through to 1968.

In 1954, DHMC entered four 100 models at Sebring, with a tremendous first-time result for one of the cars, finishing third overall and first in class.

The following year there was a veritable swarm of Austin-Healeys, including seven of the 100S model, which commemorated the previous year's class win. Best result was for the sole official DHMC entry, driven by Stirling Moss and Lance Macklin, in sixth place overall.

DHMC entered two lightened and highly-tuned 100S models at Sebring in 1956, but both cars retired with disintegrating exhaust systems.





Weslake alloy cylinder head and triple Weber carbs helped push the 1963 cars into the Prototype GT class for Sebring.

Late 1956 saw the introduction of the new Austin-Healey 100/6 and the following March DHMC, via importer Hambro Ltd, entered three special streamlined versions in the US race, but without success.

The following year a further three, without the streamlined bodies, were entered, while for 1959 no Big Healeys were entered, as the DHMC focused on the Sprite entry.

Four British Racing Green 3000s were entered, officially by BMC but still run by DHMC, for 1960, while DHMC's attention again turned to Sprites for the following two years.

For 1963, DHMC prepared three 3000s and a Sprite for the event. The following two years brought single entries of separate 3000s, with the 1965 entry, driven by Australian Paul Hawkins and English driver Warwick Banks, being the last for the 3000.

The DHMC entered Sprites at Sebring through to 1968 with private entries for the following two years.

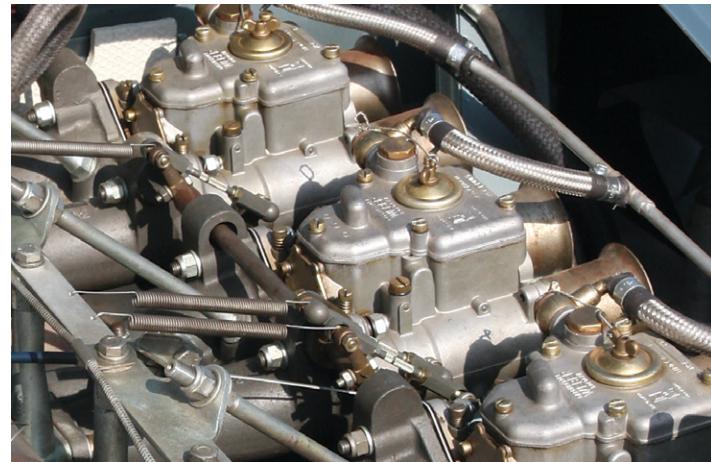
57 FAC

We are indeed fortunate that in Australia there are two ex-Works Sebring Austin-Healey 3000s: one of the 1963 cars and the '65 Hawkins/Banks car. It's the '63 car that we are interested in for now, and it's of further interest to look closely at its pedigree.

The three cars prepared for Sebring in 1963 were all known as BJ7 models. The marque had evolved somewhat from a Spartan roadster of the early 1950s to a car fitted with a convertible-style soft top and wind-up windows.



Four-wheel disc brakes were a feature.



However, while these three cars were all produced on the Abingdon production line, they were completely stripped of anything that represented luxury and therefore unnecessary weight.

While the bodies of the standard cars were a mix of steel and alloy, the Sebring cars were all alloy and each was fitted with a fiberglass hardtop.

British Motor Industry Heritage Trust records state that each was supplied to the DHMC less engine, gearbox, wheels, tyres, rear axle and brakes. Therefore far from a standard Austin-Healey 3000 Mk2 BJ7.

When finally prepared at the DHMC, under the bonnet of the car was the usual 3lt cast-iron straight-six, but on top was a specially designed Weslake alloy cylinder head, breathing through triple Weber carburetors.

The gearbox was also the venerable BMC four-speed, but with specially selected ratios and, surprisingly, no Laycock de Normanville overdrive was fitted: unlike the great majority of road cars.

All this, together with dual-circuit four-wheel Girling disc brakes, took the cars out of any production class and firmly into the Prototype GT Class – up against such pure racing cars as the Ferrari 250P and 248SP Dino.

When first registered, English cars are usually provided with a specific registration that stays with the car for its whole life. The three big Healeys for Sebring in 1963 were registered 54 FAC, 56 FAC and 57 FAC, while the lone Sprite was 58 FAC.



Driving lights a necessity for 12-hour race.

While three Big Healeys were prepared to similar specification in the UK and shipped to the US, the race entry was for two of them. It is not known how the choice was made, but 54 FAC and 56 FAC ran in the event, with 57 FAC used as a practice, or test, car. Throughout the weekend the cars carried the numbers 33, 34 and 35 respectively.

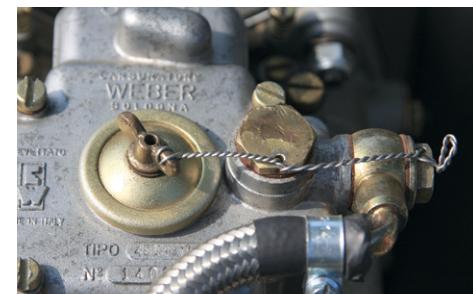
At the end of the 12-hour race the two Big Healeys were still running and, unsurprisingly, one of them (56 FAC) finished fourth in class, behind three Ferraris, and twelfth overall. 54 FAC finished in 26th place, following oil surge problems.

Following the event, 54 FAC and 56 FAC were shipped back to the UK. Both still exist and are regularly seen on the world's Historic circuits. The third car, 57 FAC and our feature Austin-Healey, did not return, but was sold as-is at the completion of the Sebring 12-hour to Austin Canada; for all of \$1,000.

Records indicate that in 1964, 57 FAC won the 4-hour Sundown Grand Prix at Mosport Park in torrential rain, driven by Don Kindree and Al Pease. The race was part of the Player's 200 meeting, which led to Kindree being crowned the 1964 Canadian Racing Drivers Association Class Champion.

Confusion

It is at this point that confusion enters the scene. It began with a promotional advertisement placed by Austin Canada in the contemporary press, which sang the praises of 57 FAC's success, while using a photo of an earlier model Austin-Healey.



Important bolts were wired in place.



Many creature comforts, like winding windows, were removed from the race cars.

This earlier car was actually a 1960 BN7 two-seater, carrying the registration number CAN 171. It was also prepared by the DHMC for Austin Canada at the time, and went on to win the 1960 Canadian Racing Drivers Association championship for driver Grant Clark.

This confusion remained as late as June 2011 when CAN 171 came up for auction in the UK, and it was said to have been once registered 57 FAC. This writer extensively investigated the history of 57 FAC and managed to make contact with drivers who had raced the car while it was in Canada. Once alerted of this error the auction house printed an addendum to their sales catalogue.

It doesn't help when even later the British Motor Industry Heritage Trust stated in a Heritage Certificate that 57 FAC was also entered in the 1964 Sebring 12 Hours, driven by Paddy Hopkirk and Grant Clark.

However, contemporary records state that the 1964 Sebring car, while also a BJ7, carried the registration number 767 KNX. This car was sold at auction in the US in August 2013 for just on the equivalent of AU\$500,000.

Battle Scarred

Like any car used in competition, 57 FAC was maintained with the next race in mind. It certainly wasn't mollycoddled and, no doubt, the engine, gearbox, brakes and so-on were rebuilt/exchanged on many occasions.

By the mid-1980s 57 FAC was simply yesterday's racing car and was in very poor condition. Thankfully, it was purchased by a keen Californian Austin-Healey enthusiast, by the name of Phillip Coombs, who at the time was successfully racing 56 FAC.

Coombs had bought the car from a Canadian racer and in a conversation I had with him a few years back he said; "It was in pieces and not running, plus there were quite a few parts missing. I had 56 FAC as well at the time, and during the '88-'89 off-season the car was restored by Tom and Kaye Kovacs of Fourintune in Cedarburg, Wisconsin. I took both cars along to Fourintune and they sat next to each other, as part of the process was having 56 FAC freshened at the same time. It was very useful having them both there, as 57 FAC



needed quite a bit of work and we could see what it had to look like with its sister car sitting alongside."

The car indeed was in poor condition and if it was an ordinary road car and perhaps ten years earlier, you would have to consider whether it would have been financially more beneficial for it to be scrapped for parts.

But with an injection of a considerable amount of money and many new parts later, 57 FAC, with its original chassis and main body structure, and many original parts, was restored and put back on the road. In 1989 the car was shown at an Austin-Healey rally at Niagara Falls, where it attracted huge attention from fellow Austin-Healey owners.

Auctioned

It was not Phillip Coombs' intention to keep 57 FAC in the long term. After all, he still had 56 FAC to satisfy his need to go racing, so he shipped the car to the UK and put it up for the Brooks auction held in conjunction with the October 1989 London Motor Show.

The winning bid was the equivalent to US\$349,627 (AU\$451,000) and the highest price ever paid for any Austin-Healey up to that date. The winning bidder was Victor Gauntlett who was, at the time, the Executive Chairman of Aston Martin.

Many of us would remember that the late 1980s saw a skyrocketing classic car market, with prices escalating beyond belief. Those of us who had been around for any period of time knew it had to stop; and it certainly did – with a bang!

Gauntlett kept 57 FAC until May 1992, when it was once again sold by Brooks at their Monaco auction. The new buyer was an Australian enthusiast/collector and,



Bonnet scoop gets air to carbs.

eager to have the car at the soonest opportunity, it headed south aboard a Qantas jet.

Here in Australia, the car once again received an extensive restoration before being sold again in 2004. Then at a Sotheby's Australia auction in April 2010, 57 FAC came up for sale once again, and while it was passed in, it sold soon afterwards to its current Sydney-based Austin-Healey enthusiast.

Looking at the recent history of 57 FAC it certainly has led a quieter life than its first 20 or so years. The current owner has run the car in a number of Regularity events and has been kind enough to let others, including myself, do likewise. He is a firm believer that cars such as 57 FAC should be out and about, allowing people to see them.

So we have come full circle with a car that initially trundled down the Abingdon production line, set up for racing and used in the most enthusiastic of ways on the racing circuits of North America. It has been modified away from standard, modified even more so to maintain its competitiveness, and restored at least twice. Until recently it led an almost museum like existence and now more than 50 years after it was first built it's been exercised with some enthusiasm allowing others to admire its purposeful beauty.



Patrick Quinn in 57 FAC at Phillip Island.



Huge fuel tank filled the boot.



Quick-release fuel cap for fast refueling.

MG Royalty

Words by Craig Watson.

Photos as indicated.

This was one of the most successful MGAs of all, yet current owner Ian Prior had to rescue it from its near death in a Florida yard.

Photo by Ian Prior

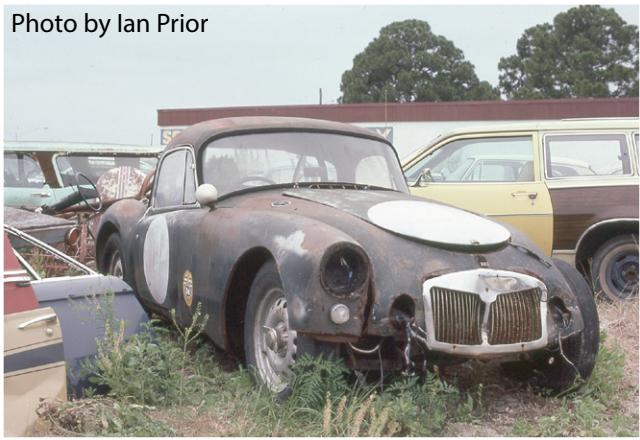
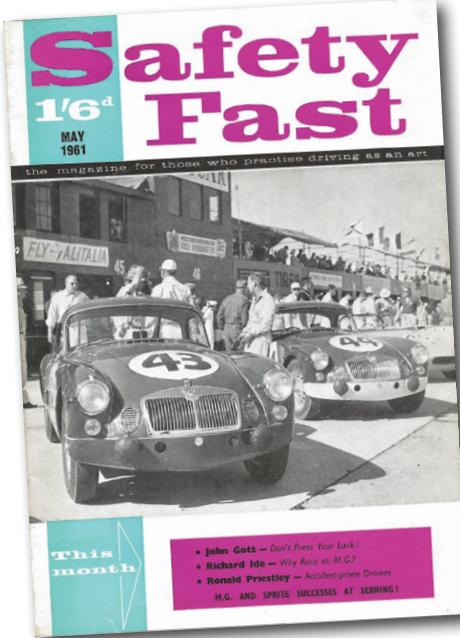


Photo by Craig Watson



It sat, a forlorn hulk, its body blackened and rusty from the elements, its chrome faded and lacklustre, the damaged grille half hanging off. The car almost looked like it was being reclaimed by the earth. It leaned to one side; one of its front wings lying on the ground beside it, which gave it an odd Cyclops-like appearance; its bonnet slightly ajar, as if silently trying to call for help.

The average person would never have picked it for a champion racing car, let alone one of the most successful MGAs built in the hallowed halls of the BMC Competitions Department.



MG's in-house magazine, May 1961.

Ian Prior saw the car and immediately fell in love, but it wasn't for sale. Ian and his wife Pam were travelling around the US in a VW camper and had only stopped in to the little town of Titusville in Florida to visit a fellow MG enthusiast and NASA engineer, Art Floyd, and to see the tourist Mecca of Disney World a little further down the road.

Art had a workshop, where he was fitting a Buick V8 to his MG Y-type, next door to where the MGA lay, and promised Ian that he would keep working on the owner of the MGA to get him to sell it.

"It was 1977. Pam and I had taken a year off work to see the world, and the first three months were spent touring the States in the VW Kombi camper", Ian explains. "We did a virtual circumnavigation of the States, 18,000 miles in total. We'd seen the MG near the start of the trip and by the time we got to Chicago, after six weeks of negotiation the guy had said he would sell it. We finished driving all around New England and then DC, then hurtled back down to Florida to get the car."

The owner knew exactly what he had. It was he who had told Ian in the first place that the car had raced at Sebring. But in the mid-1970s a rusty, old MGA, regardless of any racing pedigree, was not worth a great deal and; "for the princely sum of 500 bucks, plus 50 for the original special head in the boot, it was mine", Ian recalls.

"We loaded it in a U-Haul truck and shipped it back up to Charleston, which was the closest port where we could put it on a boat back to Australia."

When Ian eventually got back home at the end of his year-long sabbatical, he was eager to get started on the restoration. He'd been a life-long MG enthusiast and has owned a wide range of models, from TC to MGB, Y-type and various MGAs.

But when he had "a so-called expert" muck up the body repairs, Ian became slightly disillusioned, and the car sat unrestored for many years.

"In a way it was good, because I was going to race it and I probably would have buggered it, so I'm glad I sat on it. It meant I was able to get so much more research done in the intervening years, so I could do it right back to how it raced at Sebring, and the car is so much better for that."

That research enabled Ian to identify exactly which car he had and its unequalled history.

Between 1959 and 1962 MG entered 11 MGAs at Sebring – three each year except for 1961 when it only entered two. Nine of those cars are now accounted for, and Ian's is one of the two 1961 cars.

It is the car that wore number 44 in the race and, driven by Americans Jim Parkinson and Jack Flaherty, finished first in its class and 14th place overall out of a field of 65 cars. The sister car, number 43, Peter Riley/John Whitmore/Bob Olthoff, was second in class, making 1961 MGA's most successful trip to Sebring.

Only two other MGAs could lay claim to an equal, or maybe better, result: the privately entered twin-cam coupe of Lund/Escott, that won its class and finished 12th overall at Le Mans in 1960; and the Works entry Coupe that won its class and was 28th overall in the 1962 Monte Carlo Rally.

Ian's car, chassis 100148, and its sister, chassis 100149, were hand-built in the Competitions Department at Abingdon specifically for the 1961 12 Hours of Sebring. They were built to Stage 6 tune, which included the optional centre-lock disc wheels, Dunlop disc brakes on all four wheels, ZF limited-slip differential, long-range 17gal fuel tank, extra cooling ducts



Ian Prior with his "King of the MGAs".

for engine and driver, re-routing the main electrical cable, fuel and brake lines inside the cabin, and numerous extra creature comforts. There was also identification lighting that was required by the Sebring regulations and the chassis was lightened a little as well.

Although the cars began life as Twin-cams, they carried highly-modified 1588cc push-rod engines for Sebring.

Following Sebring, as was the norm, the cars were sold off locally. However, it took some nine months before #44 was sold, being eventually bought by Fred Ball, a DJ at the local Titusville radio station WRHF. Ball had actually test-driven both cars, but chose #44 as it seemed to be in better condition and, "after all, it was the class-winner", Ian reports.

The car was sold as a new vehicle, with Florida registration plates 19D 3007.

Ball used the car in local autocross and rallies, winning the 1962 Orlando Nocturn Dusk to Dawn Rally. However, it developed a few mechanical issues, including clutch failure and head problems, according to Ian. "To help finance the repairs, Fred entered into an arrangement with a local MGA Twin-Cam racer and Sports Car Club of America (SCCA) driving instructor Herb Burns. Herb agreed to maintain the car in return for the opportunity to race it."



Chassis 100148's 1st in class and 14th outright made it one of the most successful Works MGAs of all. Photos courtesy Ian Prior.



Original steering wheel.



Original dash was complete.



Original Microcell bucket seats restored.



Original engine is now back in the car.



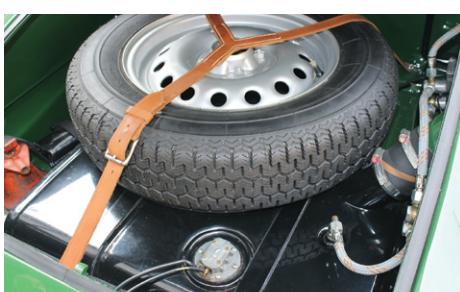
Welch plugs were bolted and wired in.



Battery located under bonnet for access.



Twin fuel pumps for reliability in the race.



17-gallon long-range fuel tank.

Burns only entered the car in two events. The first was the SCCA meeting at Osceola Florida, where it ran in Class E modified – making it totally uncompetitive.

The other event was the 1962 Daytona SCCA Divisional Run-offs, but a puncture on the first lap eliminated any chance of contention.

However, fearing the financial consequences of an engine failure or crash, Ball decided to sell the car, trading it in on a new Saab.

The next owner, Richard Robson Jnr, bought the car in November 1962 and drove it in a number of SCCA events between 1963 and 1965. While the details of most of those events are not known, two significant events the car ran in were the 1964 and 1965 Daytona Continental 2,000km races (which became the Daytona 24-Hour in 1966).

In the 1964 race the car completed 101 laps before engine problems forced it out, while in 1965, now painted blue, it managed only 42 laps before retirement.

Due to no longer being competitive it was used as a road car, before being damaged in a minor crash. In about 1968 it was parked in the back yard of a panel-beaters in Titusville, where, nine years later, it was spotted by Ian.

Ian said the condition of the car when he got it was “just shocking”, with rusty sills, chassis, window surrounds, joins between the guards and body and various other places. The front valance was missing, but the dashboard was complete and the original steering wheel and all the special racing fittings remained.

Most importantly, the car retained its ID plate, the chassis number matched the known history, and the car’s provenance was without question.

Despite needing extensive repairs, Ian says that all of the chassis and the running gear, as well as about 70% of the body, is original.

Luckily, the sister car turned up in the mid-1980s and Ian made contact with the new owner, Frank Graham. “We were very fortunate”, Ian admits. “Frank’s dash had been knocked around and he was miss-

ing his tacho and stuff like that. My front valance was missing, so I could do a copy of that. So, there were detail things like that, that we were able to help each other with.”

In 2003, Ian managed to locate the car’s first private owner, Fred Ball, who was able to help with further details regarding the interior.

Although he had much of the body work, the engine and upholstery done professionally, Ian did as much of the work on the car, including all the stripping and reassembly himself, with some help from his brother Richard.

The restoration really only got under way in 2004, being finished just in time to take the car to England for the 50th anniversary of the BMC Competitions Department and MGA combined event.

Ian also took the car to Sebring in 2012 for a reunion to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the last running of an MGA at the historic circuit. The car was reunited with its sister, No 43, and another five of the other seven surviving Sebring MGAs.

Just prior to that event, Ian had another stroke of luck, when the original engine block turned up after the owner saw a story on the car in *Safety Fast* magazine and realised the engine sitting under his work bench was the original, with engine number EX 178/44. That engine was rebuilt and fitted to the car before the Sebring trip.

The block was very special, with no water jacket holes to the head and a by-pass elbow for the separate water jacket in the head. All the wired fittings were still on the block, including the Welch plug retainers. Ian rebuilt the engine, with machining and advice from Ian Shugg at Crankshaft Builders. Clive Cams produced a copy of the original 713/12 cam – it paid to have the original factory build sheets.”

Although Ian has driven the car in Regularities and club sprints a number of times, he is not interested in risking it with full-on racing – and he doesn’t want to spoil the authenticity by fitting a roll bar, which that would require.

Ian is indeed fortunate to have a car with such an illustrious history, and the MG is lucky it was discovered by him before it returned to the earth as a pile of rust.

Out of Puff



Words by Bronwyn Burrell.

Modern photos as detailed.

Period photos courtesy Bronwyn Burrell

Photo by Jim Jupp

When the 1970 London to Mexico World Cup Rally was announced in 1969 a team of seven cars was selected for British Leyland's official Works entry – three Triumphs, two of the brand new Austin Maxi and a lone Mini Clubman 1275GT (a proposal to enter three of the brand new Range Rovers was scuppered when the car was not ready for release in time).

Further to this were five 1800s that were privately entered, but prepared by the British Leyland Special Tuning Department, and another Maxi built by Janspeed and driven by Prince Michael of Kent, Gavin Thompson and Nigel Clarkson, was given support from Leyland.

There was one other Austin Maxi on the event, supported by Leyland but privately prepared and entered by a team of three women, led by long-time rally and racing driver Patricia (Tish) Ozanne. She was partnered by Bronwyn (Bron) Burrell and Katrina (Tina) Kerridge.

This is Bronwyn's tale of the adventure.

Tish Ozanne contacted me in October 1969 to see if I would be interested in the next 'London-Sydney' style rally – but this time to Mexico in time for the start of the World Cup football event to be held in Mexico City in June. Of course, I was thrilled, having missed the first big event.

Tish was already a very experienced driver, having won numerous international rallies and competed in the Monte Carlo on several occasions.

I first met Tish and our third driver, Tina



Early team publicity photo, taken before the spec of the car had been finalised.

Kerridge, at Marshall's in Cambridge. They were preparing the car for Tish, a privateer, but under the aegis of British Leyland. Most of the work was done by Peter Baldwin, who was always so kind and pleasant to us, and so skilled in what he did. At least he was able to explain what he was doing in words we could understand.

Tish had connections with a fashion house called Jean Allen – so we were given white, flared cat suits (all the rage in the 70's). Then we visited C & A, and ended up with green mini dresses and red quilted jackets – very stylish for the times.

Tish and Tina visited the Navy to check their abilities at altitude in its pressurised tank, but I couldn't get away for this. Apparently, very interesting results.

Next was a photo opportunity. We posed around the car in the cat suits, and tried a driving test. The car behaved like a pig: so underpowered for the weight it had to carry – two spare tyres; loads of spare parts and a huge 20-gallon rubber fuel tank. No room for the clothes we took – and paper knickers, (as we couldn't do any washing

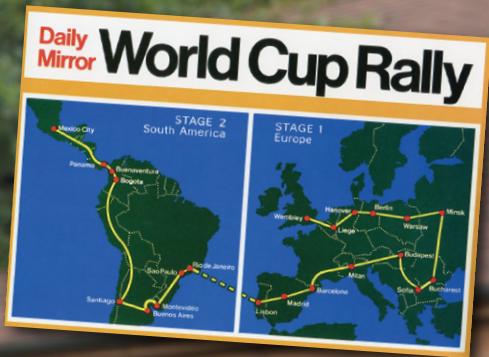


Photo by Jim Jupp

Net was used to carry paper knickers.

during the rally) – they had to be piled on the spare back seat, amongst some food, drinks and more spares.

The morning of the start, Sunday 19 April, dawned bright and sunny.

My partner Rob brought some champagne to send us off and we gathered round the car in the Wembley park ferme toasting a good trip. Sir Alf Ramsey flagged us off the ramp, and we slowly drove from that amazing old stadium into the big adventure.

The run to Dover, with people waving us on, was quite exciting. After a



Left to right: Tina, Bron & Tish - Ready to roll and kitted out with the latest fashions.

fairly uneventful ferry crossing, we reached Boulogne where at 6pm the rally restarted.

The European leg of the rally was a mix of very long drives, through twisting mountain roads, usually arriving after dark, grabbing a little sleep where possible, then on for the next section.

On our way from Sofia to Titograd, we were stopped by the police for speeding and had to pay the bribe (sorry, fine) in cash on the spot. Then at the border with Yugoslavia, it was decided that my visa was not valid and I had to pay another fine/bribe/fee for a new one.

It was a long hard drive to Titograd, along a very rough road in places, lots of landslips and even snowy sections.

Our first speed test, or 'prime', came just north of Titograd - 50 miles in 65 minutes, over farm tracks and dirt roads. All I remember of this is the fact that it was an open road: Two-way traffic on a single-track road with, at the end, a series of hairpin bends looking out over the dramatic Adriatic coast.

At the end of the prime, we caught up with our service crew - faithful, brilliant young men who had helped to prepare the car, and were now following us as best they could around Europe.

Prime 2 - 119 miles in 2hrs 50 mins, from Glamoc, through Sanski Most to Bosanka Krupa. The road map was very confusing, but we managed to make it to the end without much mishap.



Loading the cars onto the SS Derwent at Lisbon. They would be on the water for 14 days, before the rally re-started in Rio.

Public domain image



We crossed into Spain early on Friday morning, 24 April, traversing the north to Arganil for the Portuguese Prime - 45 miles in 65 mins. Pitch dark; narrow tracks; not a soul anywhere. We were beginning to feel disorientated, but it was then a doddle into Lisbon and the docks.

On 25 April the cars were loaded onto the SS Derwent and left for the 14-day trip to Rio. A lot of crews went back to England but Tish, Tina and I stayed in Lisbon, playing football with the Russians on the beach.

Five days later, we boarded a plane with the other crews (all heavily weighed down with spare parts) for a flight to Rio. We arrived in Rio early Thursday evening and were taken to the Hotel Gloria, on Gloria beach, where we were to stay until the cars arrived.

I remember encouraging the Russian drivers to a game of water polo in the hotel pool, which involved them trying to drown me. We went to the movies, but when we left the cinema we were told to avoid a man bleeding in the gutter, because he had been stabbed and you "don't get involved here". A strange, violent place.

After eight days, the cars arrived and, in the late afternoon on 8 May, the rally re-started.





Photo by Jim Jupp

71 cars did the re-start, and we were lying in 35th place. Not bad, considering 106 cars started in London nearly three weeks earlier – well done Tish.

We were flagged off outside the Hotel Gloria and then again outside the Brazilian Museum of Art, and then it was non-stop all the way to Montevideo - 41 hours in all.

But, the weather had been bad and lots of the tracks had been washed out, so a new route had been organised to avoid the worst. Here we met plank bridges – you just had to gun the car and drive straight over - too slowly and you might slide off.

The first South American Prime, the Parana Coffee Prime, was from Ventania to Bateias: 125 miles in 1hr 30m. Most of this seemed to be done on logging tracks through forest. We felt we had lost our way, as the route cards were not very specific. Luckily, we found a very helpful man with a truck who led us through the jungle to a spot we showed him on one of our maps. Back on track again.

The Rio Grande Prime – Ituporango to Canela; 120 miles in 1hr 40m – was more like being in Europe: rolling green country, with the roads and tracks open to traffic.

At the end of the prime only 56 cars remained in the rally; five had retired in the last Prime.

We crossed the border quite easily into Uruguay and into a time warp, with loads of old cars and trucks. I remember overtaking a little old lady driving an antique Model T Ford – she was wearing her Sunday best and looked really scared of all these monster machines.

All I remember of the Uruguayan Prime – 125 miles in 1hr 30m (insane) – is the dust. But there were some bad accidents too.

By the time we reached Buenos Aires, we were in 30th place, from a remaining 52 cars. We drove 125 miles south of Buenos Aires to the little town of Saladillo, where we asked the BL mechanics to look at our car, as we had cracked the exhaust manifold.

The BL mechanics removed the manifold and fitted another, but then discovered it was the wrong type. So, they had to take it off again, weld up the original and put it back on the car.

We were now running a bit late and it had started to rain before we got to the Pampas Prime – 200 miles in 3hrs 30m. Normally these dirt roads, with 90-degree turns between huge paddocks, were dusty, but they were raised high and domed with deep drainage ditches on either side.

Once the rain started, these dusty roads became extremely greasy and eventually, about 2am, we slid off into one of these ditches. Tish tried to drive back on the road time and time again, but it was impossible. We had winches in the car for such an emergency, but could not drive the stakes into the ground.

Eventually, a truck came along to check over the road and pulled us out. We carried on and arrived at the end of the prime – to be told it had shut some 20 minutes earlier. We were out of the rally. We had covered some 6,000 miles in six days in Europe, then completed 2,500 miles in 4½ days in South America.

We managed to limp back into Buenos Aires, where our representative found us a hotel. Tina decided to go back to England, while Tish and I said we would try to catch up with the rally and follow it all the way to Mexico.

After a couple of days in BA, we set off on a long hard drive of nearly 800 miles, for Salta de los Angeles, in northern Argentina, to watch the rally go through after the Gran Premio Prime. That night we went to the local casino, where I won just over \$100 – beginner's luck I think, but much appreciated after all our unexpected expenses.

The next morning we went out to the control for the end of the Prime, and while we were waiting for cars to arrive heard that Andrew Cowan, Brian Coyle and Lacco Ossio had been involved in a really serious accident. They had 'flown' off the track into space, having been blinded by the dust of Jean Denton's car, 'The Beauty Box' in front. Jean was devastated when she found out. She'd had no idea that anyone was close behind her, and of course she would have pulled over. They were all alive, but were taken to hospital in Salta.

Back in Salta later, we saw Andy on the street. He was out of hospital but was complaining of a very sore neck. He was going for a massage, which he thought might help, before flying back to Buenos Aires. It was later discovered that he had a cracked vertebrae in his neck. He had been in such pain that the BL reps had made him have an X-ray and he had to rest a few days in the English hospital in Buenos Aires. Luckily the massage didn't cause any further damage.

Tish and I decided to drive across the Andes along the Pan American Hwy, which turned into a near disaster. Our car broke down in a little village at an altitude of 12,500 feet, San Antonio de las Cobres, where there was no garage and it was eventually discovered that the part we needed, a rotor button, was one part we weren't carrying.

After being retrieved by the AAA and returned safely to BA, Tish and I had a long talk – we had our flight home paid for from Mexico City, so we said we would try to catch up with the cars in Columbia at the boat to Panama, and try to cadge a lift in another car.



Inside was decked out with all the equipment of the Works rally cars, including special tool roll on the rear door (right).



Rubber fuel tank and tools inside boot.



Engine was originally 1500cc, but now 1750cc. Photos these pages by Jim Jupp.



Original and new positions for fuel cap.

With the BL agent's help we arranged to ship the car back to the UK on the next available freighter and organised flights to Cali and then on to Buenaventura – the port of departure for the ship through the Panama Canal. The flight was a bit of a 'bus-stop' flight, through Santa Cruz in Bolivia, then Lima in Peru, to Cali, then a little ten-seater plane to fly us over the Andes (terrifying).

We eventually made it to the ship and caught up with the drivers who had wild tales to tell. 26 cars were still on the rally at this stage. We set sail for Panama, and had a wild party in the bar that night.

We managed to find a driver with a car who was going to continue to Mexico and we hitched a lift with him. He was Youri Lessovski, from Russia, with a Moskovitch.

We had thought the roads in South America were tough, but the Pan American Highway north of Panama was unbelievable. The potholes were the size of houses and the tarmac came and went – it was a case of swerving to avoid the worst, and all in the steamy heat of tropical jungles. The further we went the worse the little Moskovitch fared, virtually disintegrating around us, with cracks appearing in all the roof pillars and moving under all the stresses the car was taking.

We got to the border control between El Salvador and Guatemala at about 2am, only to find it closed. We woke a sleeping guard, who demanded thousands of whatever currency it was to open the border gate. We had no choice but to decline, as we did not have that money, so we drove away. We waited 20 mins, then drove up again – no guard – opened the gate (it was only a barrier) and drove away.

During that night, somewhere, we passed an active volcano in the night,

spewing massive amounts of red lava into the air – quite thrilling!

Now all we wanted to do was get to Mexico City. At one point I said, "why don't we take pictures of us all next time we stop. One for all our memory books." I turned to Trish and said, "have you got a spare film, we must have taken loads already". She said "I don't know, there is nothing on the camera to say". We checked and...no film at all! Nearly 16,000 miles and not a single picture to show for it!

We finally made it to Mexico City - even if not still in the rally – and slumped into our room in the hotel that was the rally headquarters.

The next few days were full of events: celebrations, a visit to the British Embassy with all the British drivers, a visit to the archaeological museum, a little bit of shopping, and a lovely meal in a nice Mexican restaurant.

Then, onto the pre-booked flight home with British Caledonia, who served real food in those days – I remember a lovely fillet steak as one of the meals. We had to fly via Montreal and at last onto Gatwick, where Rob was waiting. I said a tearful goodbye to Tish, who had been really wonderful, and then home sweet home.

Although so disappointing to not finish, it was a fantastic experience, never to be forgotten.

Tish passed away about six years ago, but Tina Kerridge and I still survive, as does the car. I only met up with Tina again two years ago, as we had lost touch. Someone told me to 'Google' her, and that's how I found her again. We recently took part in a 45th anniversary reunion of the World Cup Rally and we were the only team able to drive our original car at the event.



Straps prevent visors falling on dirt roads.



Works-spec on-board Hydro pump.



Strong reversing light was a must.



Tina (left) and Bron with Puff at the World Cup Rally 45th anniversary in 2015.

Tina Kerridge shares some of her memories from the event as well.

I was lucky to have the chance of driving with Tish Ozanne and Bronwen Burrell. They were both more experienced in the rally world than me. I was a member of the Cambridge Car Club, had done production car trials, stages, rallies and Nationals.

My first memory of the WACR was driving up the start ramp to be waved off by Sir Alf Ramsey and thousands of cheering supporters. I could just make out the frantic waving off my two young children in the stands with members of the CCC. I was going to be away for six weeks.

Our Maxi was built and prepared at Marshalls by Peter Baldwin and Ray Brand, and it was identical to the Works specification.

British Leyland at Abingdon gave us a briefing session. We were told about South America, what it would be like generally and we were given the option to carry guns, as most of the Works teams did. Can you imagine three girls with lethal weapons? We decided not to.

We were advised not to drink the water – don't even clean your teeth with it. BL told us about the route... (and) to look out for the railways, as the tracks just run across the roads without level crossings. We were told about the Primes: one was dusty, loose surface all the way; another was rutted and dangerous, and if the notes say "slow", you go slow.

We had to make sure we carried enough



Tina in Puff recently.

money in different currencies for the various countries. The Iron Curtain countries of Hungary and Bulgaria were most difficult as we were only allowed to take £5 into each.

Our service crew of Peter, Tim and Ray would be responsible for carrying most of our spares. They were also travelling in a Janspeed Maxi, which could cruise at 100mph.

We practiced over and over again the wheel changes: we carried two spares on the roof. Bron, who was the tallest would get the wheel off the roof, while Tish and I would deal with the jacking up and getting the wheel off the car. We were quite slick at doing this in the end. Just as well, because we had two punctures in two kilometres on the Yugoslavian Prime.

The Glamoc Prime was a mixture of tarmac, rough tracks with ruts and rocks – the cars took a real pounding. Just as we finished the Prime our driveshaft gave out. We were very lucky and managed to get to the BL service point and had a new one fitted.

We did the Arganil Prime (in Spain) in the dark, with dust, mist and fog. We were now a little concerned as we had not seen or heard from our service crew for 24 hours – they had gone shopping! Having got through the Prime with no mishaps, we made our way to Lisbon. At the last control the boys were there. A little further we were waved down by Sir Michael Marshall. He had flown out to congratulate us on our



2015 Historic Marathon Rally Show



Photo courtesy Bron Burrell

Bron & Tina first united with Puff at the 2013 Fenland Fair.

35th place in the rally. We were on a high. It was fantastic, as we were a private entrant.

South America would see us on our own, as the boys had to go back. Three girls and no support team.

We made it through the first couple of really tough South American Primes, but by the time we got to the Pampas Prime, running late because of the repairs to the car, it was raining heavily. The rest of the rally did the Prime in dry and dusty conditions. We had to decide whether to go on or withdraw from the rally.

There would be no cars in front now and nothing behind. Facing 350 dangerous kilometres, that the torrential rain had turned to mud, we decided to do the Prime. We kept going for a while, then slipped off the road... There were no trees or objects to winch from... We tried putting our coats under the wheels, but were still unable to shift the car. Eventually we were pulled out by a four-wheel-drive truck that had been sent by the Argentine Motor Club. Our rally was over. We just cried.



Original rally plate is back on the car.



Photo courtesy Trevor Ripley

Tim Reynolds, Ray Brand, Peter Baldwin, John Watts, Tina Kerridge, Bron Burrell.



Photo by Jim Jupp

Trevor Ripley is the current owner of "Puff" and explains what he knows of its history.

As I understand it, in 1997 the Maxi was discovered in a large chicken shed near Cambridge. A dealer specialising in rally cars bought it and restored/recommissioned it, and sold it to an Italian guy in Trieste.

The car had been repainted in the wrong shade of blue, but the Italian guy had it repainted in the correct colour.

About six years ago I saw it advertised for sale but the owner was hard to communicate with and I gave up on it. Then two years ago I was looking through the auction results from a recent sale at Goodwood and to my amazement the car was listed but "not sold". I traced the vendor, Robin Shackleton, and did a deal with him and bought the car.

The car is in remarkable condition still retaining its original interior and equipment. The original engine was a 1500, as this was one of the first Maxis. When it came back from the rally Tish had the 1750 put in it, and did some other rallies in it, including one in Belgium. There is a gap in the history

then and it ended up in the chicken shed, with all the rally gear inside as it was. It's like it was never used again. The mileage on it isn't high, and as far as we can tell it's only ever been a rally car."

When I got the car I got in touch with Tina Kerridge, and she was delighted it was back in the UK and pleased it's out and about again. We took it to a show for her and Bron in Cambridge and Tina got some of the old guys from Marshalls to come along, as they would be interested in seeing it: Peter Baldwin, Ray Brand, Tim Reynolds (Tina's husband) and John Watts, who did bodywork, were also there.

The ladies love to drive in it. It obviously brings back many happy memories for them. They are both delightful people and it is great that I have got to know them.

"When I met Bron in Cambridge she said she had the original rally plaque, on the side of her house. A few weeks later she emailed to say it should go with the car, and she sent it to me. I sent her the replica one, so she still had something. I thought that was a lovely gesture from her. She had that for 40 years and now it's back on the car. 

Patricia (Tish) Ozanne

Born on the island of Guernsey in 1923, Tish Ozanne entered her first club-level rally in 1953, because she thought it would be entertaining.

Despite never sitting a driving test, Tish drove a wide range of cars and quickly became a talented driver, regularly winning the Ladies prizes and taking outright places in numerous International rallies.

She drove a Works Mini 850 in the 1960 season, then was a strong private entry in Minis for many years.



On the 1962 Monte Carlo Rally, with Margaret Mackenzie (later Lowrey) as co-driver, she was the highest-placed competitor to start from Warsaw. Her last competition was in a Mini Cooper S on the 1973 Circuit of Donegal.

In her post-rally life, Tish established a successful Bed & Breakfast business.

She died on 11 February 2009.

Bronwyn (Bron) Burrell



F3 - Brands Hatch, 1964.

I had started at Brands Hatch in 1963, when I was 19, racing Formula 3 cars, and was lucky enough to have had a lesson from Jim Clark in how to drive the circuit; albeit in a Ford Lotus Cortina – a beautifully balanced car.

After a bad crash at Brands Hatch during a practice session, I spent six months recuperating from a suspected broken neck, that was just very severe whiplash. So I took up rallying as the less expensive option.

I started with an Austin-Healey 3000 Mk III in 1966 doing local rally stuff to get enough 'finishes' to obtain an International Racing/Rally licence. I then acquired an ex-works Imp, that had been successfully rallied by Rosemary Smith, then the top lady driver.

Then after the World Cup Rally, I had an Escort Twin-Cam and competed in many events, both at Club level and international level; including the RAC Rally of Great Britain on four occasions, the Circuit of Ireland, Welsh and Scottish rallies, plus rallycross and sprints.

There were not many sponsorships around at the time, and it was all done on a shoe string. I was also invited to be Miss Castrol in 1970 (below) after the World Cup Rally and did a photo shoot, but it was only used once!



HIGH HOPES

Words by Craig Watson. Photos courtesy John Stone

While few people expected a Moke to survive the 18,500km Repco Reliability Trial, it was not the car but sheer exhaustion of the crew that saw it out of the event.



When John Stone and Greg Cleaves left Melbourne on the start of the 18,500km 1979 Repco Reliability Trial around Australia, they had high hopes of finishing the event, and maybe even causing a bit of an upset.

"We don't expect to win", John was quoted as saying before the event. "We just want to finish as well up as we can. Our ambition is to finish in the top 20 to 25. I think we have a 20 per cent chance."

The Moke

They had certainly done all they could on the mechanical front, with some very practical assistance from Leyland, as John explained recently. "We wanted sponsorship. Both of us had been rallying in the Mini Club for years. So we went to Leyland's PR manager, John Crawford, who'd done the London-Sydney in the Coke Moke with Hans Tholstrup. He was really keen that we got sponsorship, but didn't

have any to give us, but let us use Leyland's workshop and had stuff made for us. The roof was made at Leyland's workshop at Enfield, the long-range fuel tank, the rear bull bar and I can't remember what else. He then helped put together presentations to sponsors."

"The car was half built when we met him; we were hammering to get it ready on time. Crawford made sure we were getting things done on time, because he

REPCO RELIABILITY TRIAL AUG 79



didn't want to be introducing us to potential sponsors if we weren't going to get to the start line. So, he made sure things were progressing and when we hit an obstacle if he could sort it out he would."

The rally would require a car capable of keeping up highway-type speeds across the roughest tracks, so the car received some sensible modification, based a lot on Crawford's experience in the London-Sydney Marathon only two year's before.

The engine was basically a Cooper S spec 1275cc, with twin carbs and producing around 70bhp at 5,200rpm. This was mated to a Mini K gearbox, with standard Moke differential. The windscreens was sloped back slightly, to try and get some sort of aerodynamic advantage over the standard Moke, and the car was capable of doing over 160km/h.

But beyond these modifications, the car was mechanically surprisingly standard.

"There's plenty of ground clearance with standard suspension on the Moke. We didn't really try to adjust the suspension. We tried to run it standard – dry cone, obviously, but all new, so it was tall, and with big shocks."

"The hope was that if we broke something we could just fix it at a Leyland dealer. I'm not saying it was a standard car, but we tried to keep it to the point where we could get parts for it at a Leyland place



The only known photo of the Moke on the rally.

somewhere, or a wrecker, or something. So, it wasn't Paris-Dakar standard, by any means."

The Moke had been bought from a wrecker's for \$450 and built with a budget of around \$8,000. Thanks to help from Crawford in preparing their submission, Endrust came on board as major sponsor, kicking in some much-needed cash and supplying a support vehicle. Not just any support vehicle, though, but the very Endrust Range Rover that Evan Green had driven in the 1977 London-Sydney Marathon.

But as John explained, it wasn't quite what they expected. "It was in a really bad state. It had done the London-Sydney with Evan Green and so-on, and then it had been on display at various Endrust branches around Australia. I don't know if it was used as a pig-shooter, or what, but it was stuffed. We had to spend as much money on the Range Rover as we did on the Moke. That being said, this thing flew. I used it running around Sydney for a couple of weeks. It had a P76 4.4lt engine, tweaked. It was just a beast."

As it turned out, the Rangie wouldn't be much help on the rally, as John continued. "We had three guys from the Mini Club, in that thing, pulling a trailer with parts and welding equipment and whatever. Unfortunately, the axle fell off the trailer in the middle of nowhere and they got behind and spent half their time trying to catch up to us, so they weren't really much help. I don't mean that against the guys, but you can't do much if you're not there."

Other sponsors included Ampol for fuel



Early days of Moke's preparation.



Photo by Craig Watson

and oils, KLG spark plugs and Olympic tyres.

John and Greg had been rallying for a number of years as members of the Mini Car Club of NSW and were confident enough in the Moke before the rally. "The greatest threat is driver error, even above mechanical failure", John said at the time.

The Rally

The Repco Trial started in Melbourne on 5 August 1979, finishing there two weeks and 18,500km later. It took in every mainland capital city, except Alice Springs, but wound a tortuous route between each major centre, usually on rough dirt tracks. More than half the route was on special stages on closed roads, which ranged from a little over 20km to more than 500km.

Between Melbourne and Adelaide, just to get competitors used to the expected conditions, the route included a special stage up the Border Track on the SA/Vic border. "It was really sandy. Being car 135, we were at least 135th on the road, and by the time we got there it was all cut up and rutted. We had heaps of ground clearance, compared to many people, and I can remember we came to a grinding halt three-quarters of the way up the hill, and trying to reverse back down the hill with no rear visibility. But, we actually did alright on that section."

"Then there was a really muddy stretch, near Bordertown and I remember there were stuck cars everywhere. There was a local saying it's blocked, don't even think about it. As it turned out, there were 50 cars stuck in a 5km quagmire stretch of



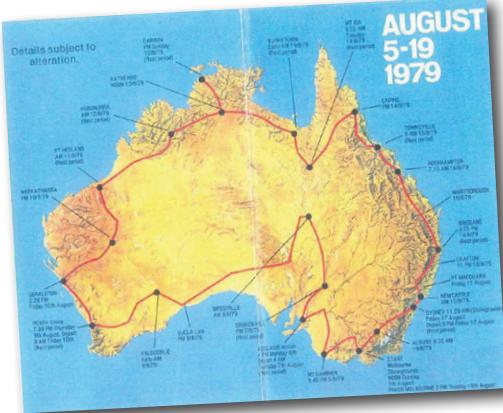
road. The first 20 or so had got through it. We went around the edges and went up onto the train line and drove along the rocky side of the train line, and we could see everyone off in the bush."

The Moke was able to keep up with the pace of the rally for the most part. On the tight, twisty tracks, the Moke was in its element, but on the long straight sections the leaders, with full factory support, were just pulling away all the time. Just keeping up meant driving harder than would otherwise be considered sensible.

"It rained virtually the first half of the event", John recalled. "On the Nullarbor Plain it was bucketing down rain. I remember driving on the highway between two sections trying to make up time – according to the speedo we were doing 110mph, but we knew it wasn't accurate. We'd sloped the windscreens back and when you got over about 70mph the wipers didn't touch the glass. So, we're flying blind at a 100 miles and hour across the Nullarbor hoping for the best."

In the Hamersley Range, in WA, was a horror stretch known as Chocolate Ruffle Pass, with huge rocks that tore at sumps and fuel tanks on most of the cars, slowing everyone down to a crawl; except the Moke.

"We just hurtled down it in third gear without even realising how bad it was", John revealed. "The Moke had so much ground clearance. Admittedly, a lot of the big rocks from the middle of the track had been cleared by other cars by the time we got there. At the bottom there were four or five broken cars and over the next 100km or so were cars that came to grief from



Map of rally route from original brochure.

NB: Birdsville Track was deleted due to unseasonal rain which flooded the Track.

damage they had done on the Pass. But we went down it like it was a pebbly hill."

Mechanically, the Moke had been very reliable, with the only recurring problem being with the rear suspension, due to the weight from all the fuel and spare parts they were carrying. "Trailing-arm pins were our Achilles heel. We'd broken one up in the Hamersley Range and we had one back wheel at a funny angle, scrubbing the tyre. We drove into the fuel stop at Wittenoom and all the locals were there, hanging around, and this guy comes out with a beer in one hand and the hose from the petrol pump in the other and said, 'what do you need'. I said 'a full tank and a trailing-arm pin, please'. And this guy in the crowd goes, 'how many do you want?' In the old Asbestos mine they had a fleet of Mini Mokes and he went away in his ute, with his pet wallaby, and came back with about ten trailing arm pins and said, 'here you go'."

"The thing is, there were all these people in Holdens and Fords and couldn't get a part for them, and here's this guy giving us a box of parts for the Moke. That was our one and only win."

But the long days and nights' driving with little or no rest was really taking its toll. The rally had eight-hour sleep stops at Adelaide, Perth and Darwin, with a daytime rest stop at Townsville and a two-hour break in Brisbane. Apart from that you had to keep moving and snatch a little sleep when you could.

"I remember one place, Greg said to look at the Halda and wake him at 240km, or something like that. So I wake him at 240km and he sleepily looks at the book and says, 'straight on' and went back to sleep. We were just exhausted and we stank. We slept in the car whenever we got a rare opportunity, which really wasn't during the event except in the main cities."

Inevitably, exhaustion caused them to lose so much time that they arrived in Darwin outside the maximum late time and were excluded from the rally. "We



1977 London-Sydney Range Rover was loaned to Moke team as service vehicle.

John said it needed as much money spent on it as the Moke, but in the end it proved to be a liability.

pleaded and pleaded with them to let use stay in the rally. We were just totally exhausted. We scavenged a set of sort of route instructions from another competitor who was also out at Darwin and tried to make it look like we were carrying on, just for our sponsors."

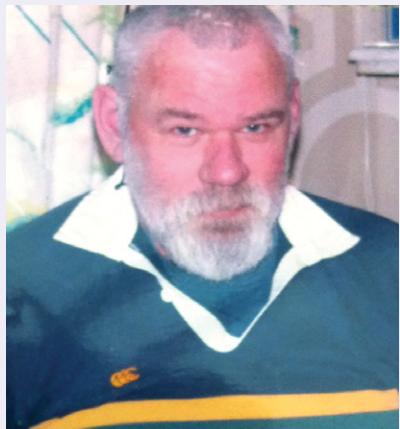
They continued to Sydney before completely withdrawing, then took the Moke to the Sydney Motor Show, still covered in mud and dust, to keep their sponsors happy. "We got a good reception at the show", John admitted. "We put a trailer on the back of the Moke and drove around the show with the Endrust jazz band on the back, at about 2 mph. That kept Mr Endrust happy."

So, it was a disappointing end to the rally, but as John pointed out it wasn't the Moke that had let them down but the rally itself. "The big problem with the rally was simply the lack of sleep, and the time limits for the stages. It just became dangerous. There is no way that a team of only two people could have completed the rally safely. They could have still done the same distances, over the same roads, but given a bit of time to rest and the rally would have been much better for everyone."

With the way the Moke was running, they probably could have reached their goal of finishing the event – and maybe even shaken up a few people. 



Pre-rally publicity photo shoot.



John Stone in 2015

John and Greg were long-standing members of the Mini Car Club of NSW and regularly competed in rallies and motorkhanas with the club and at State level.

John also took part in a small number of Rallycross events at Catalina Park, in his Clubman GT, and was a regular competitor at Hay.

John and Greg did one more rally in the Moke after the Repco Trial, the Narooma Rally, but the Moke apparently suffered a broken differential or driveshaft.

They then sold the car to fellow Mini Club member Darryl Heydon, who still owns the car today, over 30 years on.

Darryl did a number of rallies and motorkhanas in the Moke - finishing second outright in the 1982 Oberon Rally.

Over the years, the special rally equipment has been removed from the Moke. The only identifying parts still on it are the roof, rollbar and steering wheel.

Darryl had the Moke repainted a few years ago and it was a regular entrant at the Hay Mini Nationals for around 15 years.

The engine has been rebuilt but it is still the original one used on the 1979 Repco Reliability Trial.

Today the Moke is on club registration and is used only on occasional club events.



Darryl Heydon at Hay in 2009.

Road Trip

2015

Retracing History

Words and photos by Bev Kidby

Lang & Bev Kidby followed in the wheel tracks of the first car to reach Cape York, in a near-identical 1928 Austin 7.

In late June 2015 we headed off to recreate the first car journey from Cairns to Cape York (Australia's most northerly point), a distance of roughly 1,000km.

In 1928 Hector MacQuarrie and Dick Matthews drove a tiny Austin 7, which they named Emily, on a heroic journey through the bush and over numerous tropical rivers to be the first vehicle to reach Cape York. We acquired an almost identical 1928 Austin 7 to attempt to follow the same route, 87 years later.

Cape York is still one of the great four-wheel-drive destinations in Australia, as the way is closed for six months of the year due to monsoonal rains and high rivers. There are now gravel roads built around the most difficult sections of the original route along the old telegraph line – the same horse track Hector and Dick went on in 1928.

Although it was our original intention to replicate the 1928 trek as much as possible, we did not end up doing the old telegraph line but took the development road for most of the way.

Even with good intentions we were early in the season and learnt there were a number of crossings that we would not have managed, and we had no reason to destroy or damage such a cute vehicle.

We would be going completely alone



Hector & Dick with their A7, Emily.



Lang and Bev Kidby on the beach at Cape York in their 1928 Austin 7, Daisy.

and unsupported and, whatever the outcome, were assured it would be a lot of fun.

Our little "Baby Austin" only weighs around 400kg, while a mighty 10 hp from the 750cc side-valve engine would be speeding us along. Many of the 4WDs that past us weighed up to eight times as much and traversed the rough tracks as if they were highways.

The journey begins

We trailered the Austin to the home of our friend John Lenne in Cairns and after some great hospitality, we set off on Thursday 26 June for all points north.

The little car, now christened "Daisy" by me, was cruelly loaded, despite all efforts to reduce the weight. Initially the engine sounded like a machine gun but it was discovered that the timing was extremely advanced. With a little bit of fiddling, the distributor was modified to



A promotional photo for sponsors.

use both its internal automatic advance and the original hand lever on the steering wheel, and then purred nicely.

The very steep 15km climb up the range from Cairns to Kuranda tested the little girl, with a stop half-way to replenish the radiator. On arriving at Barry Dick and his partner Linda's place at Mareeba the left rear brake was removed after it was found dragging and frozen. It is amazing how much better a car goes without the brakes half on!

A nice night at Lakeland Downs pub was followed by an early morning run into Cooktown. Some seriously steep hills were now taken in Daisy's stride, using the increased performance.

Although capable of going faster, we found about 60km/h was a comfortable



Lang & Bev's Austin 7, named Daisy.



First of many brake repairs, at Mareeba.

cruising speed. Fuel consumption, once over the range, came in at 52mpg – about 6.7lt/100km. Fuel was not going to be a big expense and the 20lt tank and two 10lt jerry cans we were carrying would get us easily between scheduled stops.

We were delighted with the level of interest in Cooktown, and did an interview with the local paper: who were fully expecting us, though we do not know how. As Hector and Dick's Austin 7 in 1928 was also the first car ever to drive to Cooktown, the town's interest in us was keen.

Cooktown to Coen

We left Cooktown in the rain, but the weather cleared once we were over the range. We forded the Normanby River on the Battlecamp Road with no problems then struck out on the gravel, which had a few corrugations but Daisy handled it well.

We arrived at Laura late-morning and set up camp behind the pub. Daisy had her photo taken with another Austin 7 parked at the Laura Store.

During the afternoon Lang worked on the brakes, removing each wheel and adjusting each one in turn. All brakes were virtually seized – something we had not spotted before leaving home.

In 1928, Hector and Dick put Emily on the railway that ran from Cooktown to Laura. This fell into disuse a short time later, after the gold and other local demand dried up.

We arrived during Laura's big weekend with the Picnic Races and bull riding but,



Crossing the Normanby River, with a concrete causway, proved no difficulty.

thankfully, the crowd was camped at the show well away from us.

The next morning our oil gauge showed no oil pressure. Lang was able to use the thin wire from a bread-bag tie, provided by another motorist, to clear out the oil jets and we were soon on the way again, heading for Lakefield National Park on relatively good roads.

We arrived at our pre-booked campsite at Hann Crossing, on the North Kennedy River, before lunch and enjoyed a very relaxing afternoon at this idyllic spot, totally out of sight of any other campers on the banks of the river.

On Sunday we continued through the National Park, calling into Lotusbird Lodge – a beautiful resort 28 km from Musgrave, where the owners Sue and Gary treated us to morning tea.

We stopped at Musgrave Roadhouse and topped up with fuel. As we were leaving we passed Jan and Alan Pike returning from Weipa. Alan boiled the billy and we swapped tales of our trips. They were travelling south so were able to give us some clues about the road ahead.

Conditions were horrendous on the main north-south road, what the government calls the Peninsular Developmental Road. The corrugations really made poor Daisy do a merry dance, and there was a lot more traffic to contend with.

We had been having trouble with Daisy overheating and during the afternoon she



just stopped dead. Lang found the points had closed. Despite a daily dab of grease, the new points were wearing their rubbing block very quickly and needed checking regularly.

We arrived at Coen at 3pm and were able to get a room at the hotel for the night.

In 1928 Hector and Dick wrote about what once had been a thriving inland town, dying because the high cost of labour had forced the gold mines in the neighbouring mountains to close.

Coen to Bramwell

We set off by 7am on Tuesday, with very few cars on the road through to Archer River. The road conditions varied from okay to downright awful. After refuelling at Archer River and having some breakfast we made the decision to not put Daisy through an extra 200kms of corrugations on the side-track into Weipa.

Turning onto the Telegraph Road we decided we had made the right decision, as this part of the road seemed to be in much better condition.

We called into Moreton Telegraph Station for lunch, then continued on to Bramwell Station for the night.

During the day we struck quite a bit of rain, which made it fun when cars passed and the windscreen turned red. The wiper didn't want to work, but we found we could tilt the whole windscreen and wipe it with a paper towel each time someone passed us.

At Bramwell Lang, with the help of Les, a volunteer at the station, again worked on the brakes, which continued to give us problems. In the evening though, we were able to relax and enjoy a very nice meal and live music until 9pm.



The relentless corrugations had Daisy regularly dancing across the road.



Fixing brakes with Les at Bramwell Station.



Kids at Bramwell Station meet Daisy.

Bramwell to Seisia

Before setting off from Bramwell on Wednesday, 1 July, Lang had to fix the accelerator cable and then we went 10km to Bramwell Junction Roadhouse and refuelled. We were getting 5.9lt/100km, so Daisy was proving very economical.

During the day all brakes failed, so Lang had to just read the road and use the gears. Emergency stops were achieved by simply turning off the ignition.

We called in at Fruit Bat Falls, which are lovely but over-run with 4WDs and people so we continued on to the Jardine River ferry crossing. There was a huge line-up of vehicles and it took about an hour to cross.

We were helped by Tina, the driver of the car in line behind us, tying a rope from her front to our rear so we didn't get away and go down the steep slope, across the barge, and end up in the Jardine.

We had considered trying to re-enact the 1928 crossing and even brought a large tarp with us to float the car across. Unfortunately there did not seem to be anybody who was willing to wade across the crocodile-infested river. Lang probably would have given it a try, but this little duck certainly wasn't going to.

The roads again ranged from okay to awful, but we eventually hit bitumen just out of Injanoo, then headed through Bamaga and onto Seisia.

This is a tiny but pretty seaside town, with a very nice caravan park and Mark the mechanic at Top End Motors. We organised to have Daisy looked at the following day and booked into the park for the next three days.

We make Cape York

Lang worked all Thursday with Mark at Top End Motors, rebuilding the brakes



Getting a helping hand onto Jardine Ferry.



Fruit Bat Falls.

and the leaking radiator. I went down to the wharf and got on the ferry over to Thursday Island, where I spent the day. It certainly has changed since we were there 30 years ago!

We were off early on Friday to head for the tip – what the locals call the top of Cape York. The road is pretty rough but we covered the 34km by 9.30am, despite drowning Daisy in a deep creek crossing.

As it was low tide we were able to take Daisy onto the beach for photos of our arrival.

Lang and I walked out to the tip and by the time we returned the car park was filling up. On the way out we passed dozens of 4WDs, all heading to set foot on Australia's northern most point.

The road from Bamaga to the tip was the roughest so far and we were limited to second and third gears on the corrugations.

Heading South

We didn't get away from Seisia until early Saturday afternoon, but decided to head south as far as we could before dark. We were the only car on the Jardine ferry and at about 4pm we turned off on the Old Telegraph track to Sailors Creek, to find a great spot beside the water with nobody for miles. We had a refreshing swim in the creek followed by a nice meal under the stars.

After refuelling at Bramwell Junction on Sunday morning we decided to go into Bramwell Station again, as they had a festival on all weekend, with a horse race, bull riding and greasy pig, etc.



Daisy with one of the smaller termite mounds on Cape York.



Lang relaxing in camp.

Daisy had been running very well, but after lunch, and almost to the main road, Lang detected a strange lurch and crunch and realised we had broken the right rear axle housing completely off the differential.

We limped back to the homestead and Lang and the station truck driver welded the crack. The light axle was also fitted with a neat cross support brace under the differential, to cope with any further excess overloads.

We decided to stay the night at Bramwell Station and enjoy the live entertainment once more.

On to Musgrave

Off again on Monday, with Daisy fixed and raring to go. We called into Moreton Telegraph Station and selected breakfast from their vast menu of pies or pies. Despite the culinary paucity, it is a lovely green place for travellers to stay under shady trees with friendly staff.

The road was still pretty crook so we again decided not to sidetrack into Weipa.

Just north of Archer River, Daisy died and we discovered a fuel union had worked loose, letting all our petrol slowly run out onto the road (no fuel gauge in a 1928 Austin 7).

A young family stopped and I jumped in with a jerry can to go 25km to Archer River for petrol and hitch a ride back to Lang, who was fixing the fuel line.

Lang appeared before I could leave Archer River, having been refuelled by Shane, who was passing on his way to



Unsuccessful creek crossing near the tip.

Weipa with a can of chainsaw fuel – Austin Sevens will run on anything, it seems!

Having a petrol engine is becoming a serious remote area planning issue in this day of diesel engines in 90% of four-wheel-drives.

We soon had camp set up and dived into the clear waters of the Archer to get rid of the dust.

Leaving the Archer the next morning, we bounced over a terrible road towards Coen. There was no generator charge and after a bit of investigation it seems the primitive cut-out had failed, although the generator was still working.

We managed to get a charge by Lang revving the engine with me under the bonnet pushing the contact in, but the rough road and gear changes caused the engine revs to drop and the contact to pop out.

We figured the car would run for days on a full battery, so switched off our stereo, Engel fridge, airconditioning and electric seat adjustment to reduce electrical consumption. Ah, if only...

Musgrave Telegraph Station was a nice break with good food and a welcome cold beer.

Back to Cairns

In deference to Daisy, on Wednesday we elected to travel the shortest distance to the bitumen, straight south to Laura. There are some bitumen strips several kilometres long, but in-between are the roughest sections of road we encountered. We stopped at Hann Roadhouse for a break before arriving at Laura late morning.

We took more photos of the two Austin 7's together. The store owner at Laura has had one parked outside his roadhouse for many years, so it was symbolic being able to have them side by side.



Lang tends to the broken fuel line.



Lang and Bev reflect on their trip so far, on the beach at Cape York.

From Laura we were back on a lovely smooth road surface, with no more white knuckle, heart in the mouth, bone rattling travel.

We stopped at Palmer River roadhouse for a late lunch, then made it to Mount Carbine where we checked into the caravan park and secured a cabin for the night. This was the cheapest accommodation so far, and the size of a small unit with all mod cons. Very welcome.

We had a pleasant trip down the range into Mossman, then along the coast, arriving back in Cairns at midday on Thursday 9 July, having completed our circle with Daisy purring along and the two of us feeling very much more relaxed.

The trip was great fun and we were able to bring history alive, which is what we set out to do.

Driving old cars though, especially under such rough conditions, you are constantly aware that you are testing the boundaries. Lang did a fantastic job driving the entire route and attending to all the mechanical needs Daisy required.

Of our two New Zealanders in 1928 Hector only learnt to drive between Sydney and Cairns and he said in his book he was always happy, like me, to be the passenger. I can only imagine how difficult it was for



Daisy with local Austin at Laura.

You can read the full day-by-day account of the journey at: fiat500expedition.blogspot.com.au

them: no communications, no roads and no idea of what lay ahead. They were true pioneers who should not be forgotten.

In Summary

From Cairns to Cape York and back was 1,624 miles (2,598km) over 14 days. Total fuel used was 58 gallons (230 lt) giving 28mpg (8.8lt/100km) – pretty good seeing we spent a lot of time crawling in third and even second gear.

On the good sections we played it conservatively and, although Daisy would do much more, we sat on 35mph (60km/h).

Several of our problems were caused by the huge load she was forced to carry. The corrugations are constant throughout the trip and although the Austin 7 rides nicely, effectively having no shock absorbers results in regular out of control "drift driving", particularly on corners.

The Austin 7 was a great little car for its day and it would have been a winner on the English country lanes for which it was designed.

It just goes to show, you can take any car anywhere as Dick and Hector proved in 1928.

But it's back to the 4x4 for us for a while – until we feel in the need of more punishment. 



Mission accomplished - tip of Cape York.



FOR
SALE

Crisis

The closure of Waterloo

Part 5 - The IAC Report

By Craig Watson

The report into the state of the motor industry by the Industries Assistance Commission has often been blamed for the severe dip in sales figures of Leyland's P76, which led to the closure of the Waterloo factory.

However, while the release of the report did appear to have an immediate and severe impact on sales of P76, it had no real bearing on the decision to close the factory, which had been made weeks, or even months, earlier.

In fact, the IAC report was a handy scapegoat that was used as the reason behind the closure, but was not a direct contributing factor.

David Abell, who publically took over as Managing Director of Leyland Australia in

July 1974, only days after the release of the report, attributed much of the reason for the closure to the report in an interview in *Australian Motor Manual* in January 1975.

"Well obviously it was the proposed structure of the industry that seemed to be indicated in the IAC report plus the very significant operating losses incurred by Leyland Australia not only for this year but in previous years. The two together made a fairly obvious story", he said.

In a submission to Deputy Prime Minister Jim Cairns, in August 1974, Abell also used the IAC report as the basis for the falling sales. But the figures supplied by Abell showed that sales had been falling steeply before the report was released and that the drop in sales after its release, although

affected by the report, would probably have already been significant anyway.

The wholesale sales figures for P76 sales that Minister for Manufacturing Industry, Kep Enderby, submitted to the Government in October were: March 1,228 sales; April 505; May 688; June 435; July 127; August 180; September 175.

These figures also show a slight recovery in the two months following July.

In the submission, Enderby said; "Mr. Abell alleged that the fall in sales in July was directly attributable to Press comment about Leyland, following public release of the IAC Report on Passenger Motor Vehicles on 11 July."

While this is undoubtedly partly true, sales had been falling for months already due to many factors, some of which we have looked at in previous issues. The press stories regarding the IAC report, and the assumptions and predictions made for the imminent closure of Leyland's Waterloo factory must have had some impact.

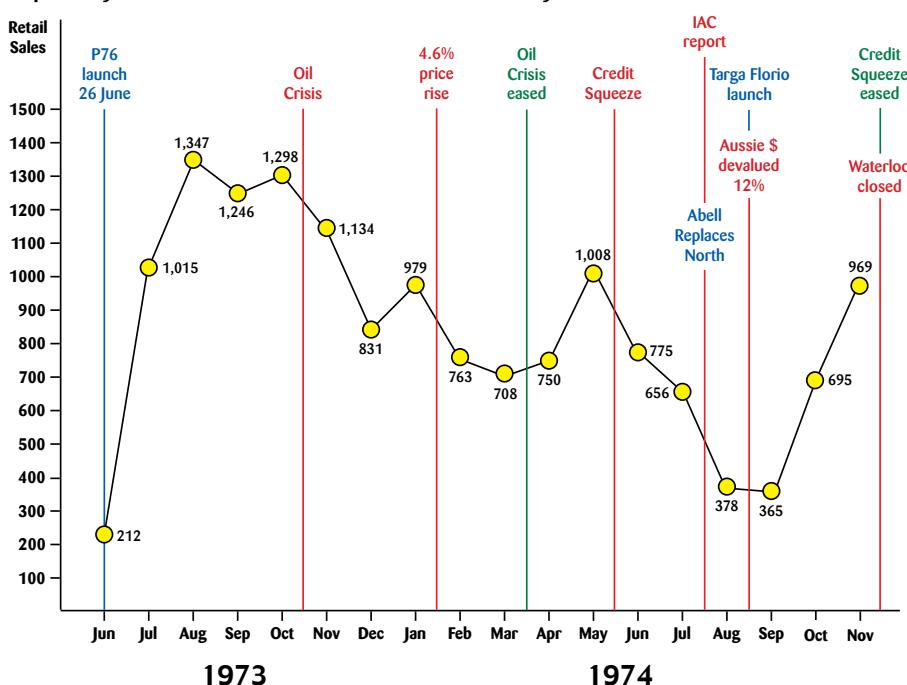
However, the reported "resignation" of Peter North from the company only five days after the report's release may have had a greater impact on sales than the report alone. While it is unlikely that had North still been at the helm the situation would have been much better, his shock departure at such a critical time was seen by many as "abandoning the sinking ship."

But news reports to do with Leyland Australia, and indeed the UK parent company, had been continually negative for many months, which, combined with union troubles, shortages of steel and price increases throughout the industry, had an equally negative impact on consumer confidence.

While the drop in July was dramatic, the recovery in August was not insignificant.

Impact of global and national events on P76 retail sales figures

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A Government credit squeeze had been introduced in May 1974, which was the primary cause of the May drop in sales. While the credit squeeze affected the whole industry, its effect was more noticeable in Leyland dealerships where difficulties with supply were already reducing stock on display to embarrassing levels.

On 22 June The Canberra Times reported on the retrenchment of 1,000 factory workers at Waterloo. "A company spokesman blamed the current credit squeeze and the past inability of key supplier-companies to provide essential component parts for the mass dismissal", the paper reported.

While the above figures are factory sales to dealerships, Hal Moloney, in Leyland P76, provides monthly retail sales figures, which show the same trend but transposed by about a month.

Moloney's figures show an impressive recovery in sales, of 90%, in October – of 695 cars, against 365 for September. Sales were up 39%, to 969, in November.

Although these increases were largely due to the release of the run-out Targa Florio model (see Issue 7), they were no doubt influenced by an increase in consumer confidence and the easing of the credit squeeze in November.

Clearly whatever impact had been felt from the release of the IAC report, was more than countered through increased supply, the release of a new model and Leyland continuing to talk up the future prospects of the company – right up until the axe fell on 10 October.

The Report

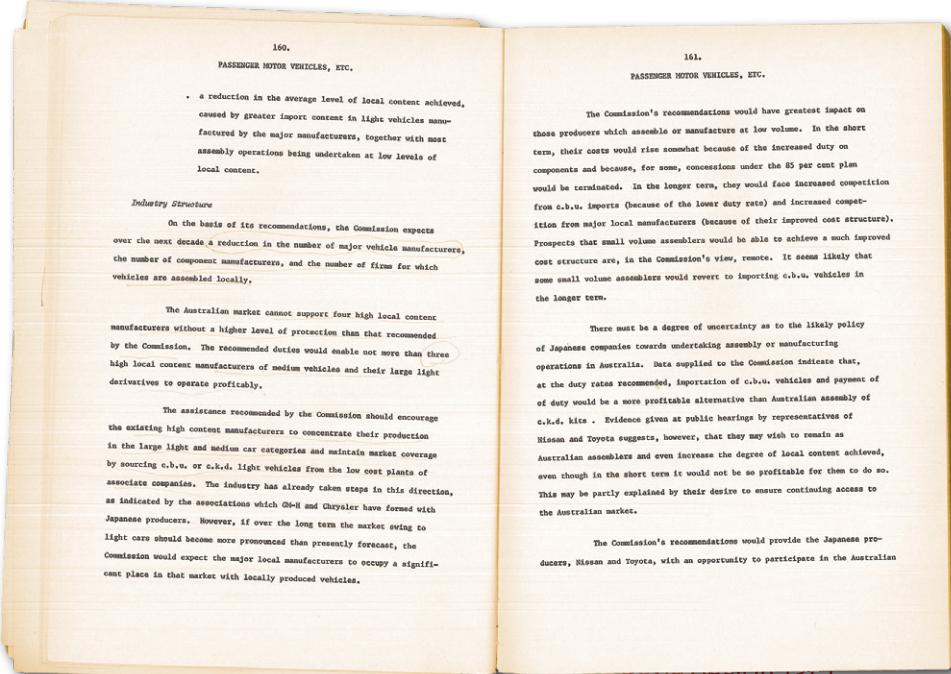
It is often stated that the IAC report surmised that Australia could not support more than three automotive manufacturers, and that the inference was that Leyland, with the lowest market share, would have to be the one to go.

Finding a copy of the report today to confirm or disprove these claims is not easy, and few newspaper or magazine stories go into any real detail about the report. In fact, while researching this story, I could only locate two copies listed in public libraries in Australia, being the National Library in Canberra and the reference library at University of Technology Sydney.

For anyone who is interested in reading through the report in detail, its correct title is *Passenger Motor Vehicles, Etc. 10 July, 1974: report of the Industries Assistance Commission*. ISBN 0642008094

The Commission heard evidence from representatives of all four vehicle manufacturers and three assemblers, as well as a number of importers of CBU vehicles.

While Leyland is obviously mentioned in relation to its evidence, recommendations and requests, it is not in any way directly



The IAC's report into the passenger vehicle manufacturing industry makes interesting reading, but still leaves many questions unanswered.

singled out as the company that should close its manufacturing arm.

However, the evidence in the report clearly shows that Leyland had the lowest market share of the four manufacturers, though only marginally lower than that of Chrysler.

In its summary, the Report says: "Of the four manufacturers and three assemblers in Australia, only two achieve production volumes which are in any way comparable with those of even the smallest producers in the U.S.A. and Japan. Among the more important components and processes, the Australian market supports about four times as many stamping and engine manufacturing plants, twice as many transmission and axle plants, and twice as many vehicle assembly plants as would be compatible with an efficient industry structure."

In other words, the inference, really, is that only the two largest manufacturers, being General Motors-Holdens and Ford, met even the lowest level of what the commission considered being economically viable.

"It is evident, therefore", the Report continues, "that if the overall efficiency of

the industry is to change and its ability to exploit the benefits of economies of scale is to be improved, a change in the industry's structure is required."

"In the medium car market not more than three local manufacturers with a high local content could operate profitably."

The Commission identified the Local Content Plans as the greatest hindrance to profitable manufacturing and recommended their scrapping altogether, combined with a reduction in the overall import tariff.

"The (local content) plans have encouraged the fragmentation of the market and provided relatively more assistance to low volume uneconomic production than they have to the larger manufacturer... The plans have led to a proliferation of models offered by the local industry... They have encouraged assemblers to produce a wider range of models, with a smaller volume of sales for each model, rather than to offer fewer models, with a larger volume of sales for each model"

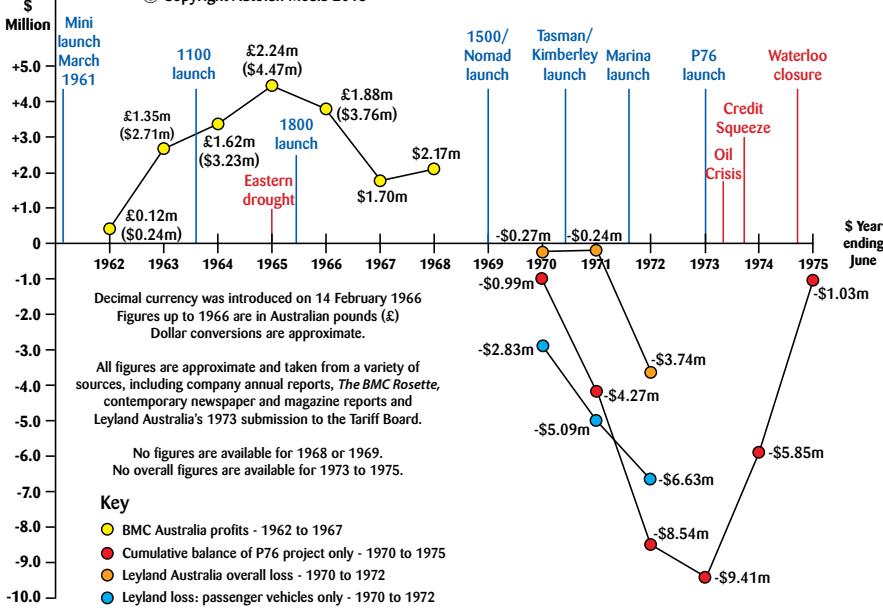
"Accordingly the Commission recommends that the local content plans be discontinued... The Commission considers that assistance to the industry should be

	1953	1963	1968	1972
U.S.A.	6,117	7,638	8,822	8,820
Japan	9	408	2,056	4,022
Germany F.R.	388	2,414	2,862	3,516
France	368	1,482	1,833	2,993
Britain	595	1,608	1,816	1,921
Italy	144	1,105	1,545	1,733
Canada	365	532	885	1,154
Australia	30 (a)	220	330	426 (b)
Other	114	813	1,551	2,860
TOTAL	8,130	16,220	21,700	27,445

Global production figures show Australia's diminutive size. Figures are x1000

Annual profit and loss figures for BMC - Leyland Australia 1962-1975

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mainly by way of a simple tariff system... The Commission recommends that the long term rate of protection be 25 per cent for both vehicle and components."

However, the Commission recognised that the immediate disbandment of the local content plans and a reduction in the tariff would create chaos in the industry that was already so highly geared to the existing system. It therefore recommended in the short term to increase the tariff to 35% and then reduce it in stages over 7 years to 25%.

Looking at an area that would affect Leyland's highest volume market, that of the Mini and, to some extent the Marina, the Commission said; "At the lower end of the light car market, manufacturers should be able to operate profitably at fairly low levels of local content. However, it is expected that a substantial proportion of the light car market would be met by imports. Present indications are that the major source of these imports would be Japan."

The Commission criticised the lack of local ownership, pointing out that all four manufacturers were wholly-owned subsidiaries of overseas companies, but admitted that introducing any sort of assisted or forced injection of local capital was unworkable.

A table in the Report showed that Leyland's overall market share had steadily fallen from 12.9% in 1965, to just 6.3% in 1973. In the same time, the market for small light cars had increased from 17.1% to 21.4%, while the overall light car segment had increased from 33.7% to 46.9%, with the majority of that increase coming from Japanese imports.

A comparison of the top seven producing nations and Australia showed an increase in local manufacture between 1953 and 1972, from 30,000 passenger vehicles

to 426,000. By comparison, in the same period U.S.A. had increased from 6,117,000 to 8,820,000, while Japan had soared from 9,000 to 4,022,000.

"From the study and from other evidence presented during the inquiry, the Commission has concluded that inability to exploit scale economies is the most important single factor contributing to the high cost of the Australian industry and accounts for about half of the assessed cost disadvantage against Japanese producers and a greater proportion of the disadvantage against North American and European manufacturers. The balance of the total cost disadvantage appears to be due to the greater efficiency by which the overseas producers seem to be able to organise resources to produce motor vehicles. There was no evidence that the Australian producers suffer any considerable disadvantages against any major overseas vehicle manufacturer arising from the price of material inputs or Australian wage levels."

While no specific manufacturer was singled out by name, the Commission said; "On the basis of its recommendations, the Commission expects over the next decade a reduction in the number of major vehicle manufacturers, the number of component manufacturers, and the number of firms for which vehicles are assembled locally."

"The Australian market cannot support four high local content manufacturers without a higher level of protection than that recommended by the Commission. The recommended duties would enable not more than three high local content manufacturers of medium vehicles and their large light derivatives to operate profitably."

The inference against Leyland was strong enough that most newspapers and magazines argued that under the recommendations of the IAC, Leyland would

have to close at least Waterloo, if not all of its manufacturing plants.

The Report does make one assumption that shows a distinct lack of understanding of the motor industry; the time involved in creating new models to meet market demand.

"The assistance recommended by the Commission should encourage the existing high content manufacturers to concentrate their production in the large light and medium categories and maintain market coverage by sourcing c.b.u or c.k.d. light vehicles from the low cost plants of associate companies...However, if over the long term the market swing to light cars should become more pronounced than presently forecast, the Commission would expect the major local manufacturers to occupy a significant place in that market with locally produced vehicles."

It seems absurd to think that the manufacturers would be capable of suddenly changing their focus from medium-sized cars (Holden, Falcon, Valiant, P76) to light cars (Mini, Morris 1100, etc) virtually overnight. The time required for design, development, testing and bringing into production any new model is usually at least four years. Even with the best planning and forward-thinking, a new car can completely miss the mark, due to many outside influences – even simply by the changing fashions in the market place.

The Industry Perspective

All the manufacturers and assemblers, except one, were in favour of retaining local content plans and some form of tariff protection, as the Report reveals.

"All four manufacturers...requested the continuation of modified local content plans, maintenance of, or increases to, existing duty rates (except GM-H) the introduction of quantitative restrictions on imports. Suggested modifications to the plans included assessment of content on a company basis lower average content requirements, removal of the 'no-reversion' rule, and local content for exports."

AMI, Toyota, Motor Producers, and Nissan also sought the continuation of some form of local content plans, but with content requirements generally lower than 85 per cent. These companies also requested that the tariffs on components and c.k.d kits be lower than tariffs on c.b.u. vehicles. Renault requested no local content plans but sought lower rates of duty on components than on complete vehicles."

Not surprisingly, importers generally requested lower import tariffs, with concessions for lower-emission vehicles, while "Gosson requested duty-free admission for electric vehicles."

Understandably, everyone was out to find the best solution for themselves, but

although all the Australian manufacturers and assemblers wanted revised local content plans to remain, the Commission recommended the immediate disbandment of these plans.

The Commission also seems to have not taken any account for drop in sales and profitability across the industry due to the 1973 fuel crisis, the 1974 credit squeeze, the rampant inflation of the times or the on-going industrial strife across the industry.

The basic assumption was that if the local content plans were removed and tariffs lowered, that somehow the local industry, cut down to two or three manufacturers and three or four assemblers through natural attrition, would suddenly become viable – and would somehow be able to immediately respond to changes in market forces from one category of vehicle to another.

The Leyland Perspective

Although little of the actual evidence is included in the report, reading the statistics that are included it is easy to conclude that the Commission's recommendations were reasonable.

However, a few points from BMC-Leyland's history in Australia show that there were far more other influences on the profitability of the company than merely adherence to the local content plans.

BMC was at its most profitable in the mid-1960s, at a time when it was producing labour-intensive small vehicles that had technologies inherently expensive to produce – the front-wheel-drive Mini and Morris 1100 – and using an inherently expensive paint preparation process as the Rotodip.

The company's financial problems really began in the late 1960s, when it was replacing these vehicles with more conventional designs, trying to break into the family car market that was dominated by Holden and Ford, and to a lesser extent Chrysler.

The enormous losses of the company in the early 1970s were more attributable to its lack of desirable products, problems with build quality and reliability, and the amount of money and priority given to the P76 – a desirable car that suffered from insufficient development testing, build problems and a shortage of supply of parts, and arrived just in time for a fuel crisis, high inflation and a credit squeeze.

It would seem that when they were making cars people wanted and making them well, and not being hamstrung by outside forces, BMC-Leyland was capable of being profitable, despite, or maybe partly because of, the local content plans.

A pre-Abell Leyland Australia proposed in its submission to the IAC hearing;

Year	Motor Cars		Station Wagons		Light Commercial Vehicles		Total
	No.	% of Total	No.	% of Total	No.	% of Total	
1960	197,033	68.0	47,785	16.5	44,908	15.5	289,726
1961	144,865	65.1	43,267	19.4	34,487	15.5	222,619
1962	205,463	67.2	61,326	20.1	39,021	12.8	305,810
1963	233,135	66.3	74,245	21.1	44,312	12.6	351,692
1964	250,062	65.6	83,001	21.8	47,969	12.6	381,032
1965	258,057	68.1	73,694	19.4	47,412	12.5	379,163
1966	245,175	69.4	61,513	17.4	46,854	13.2	353,542
1967	275,594	71.4	59,947	15.5	50,601	13.1	386,142
1968	310,267	73.8	58,569	13.9	51,445	12.3	420,281
1969	343,275	75.4	57,604	12.7	54,131	11.9	455,010
1970	358,181	76.4	54,880	11.7	55,582	11.9	468,643
1971	362,669	76.5	54,555	11.5	56,730	12.0	473,954
1972(a)	353,924	75.6	51,928	11.1	62,037	13.3	467,889
1973(a)	402,123	75.3	57,802	10.8	73,997	13.9	533,922

Total registrations shows growth of passenger vehicle market 1960 to 1973.

"a) that a locally manufactured car have a high level of local content, but not as high as the present 85%/95% level, which includes the body sheet metal, preferably to a design that is unique to Australia. b) that the existing built-up vehicle tariffs be retained but should not be viewed as a realistic major policy tool in restructuring the industry. A quantitative control on built-up vehicles be introduced aimed particularly at those cars that that compete directly with (rather than complement) the basic family car production in Australia. The company sought that this control be based on units (rather than value) and reasonable access to built-up imports should be made available to domestic manufacturers."

Another important factor that the IAC report does not take into account, basically because its terms of reference were only to cover passenger vehicles, was the impact of commercial vehicle manufacturing.

While all the other manufacturers and assemblers covered, with the exception of Ford, produced only passenger vehicles or their light commercial variants (utes, and panel vans, etc), BMC manufactured or assembled a wide gammit of vehicles.

These included truck, bus, tractor and Land Rover assembly.

Export sales were also not mentioned in the report and, again, Leyland had a much broader range of export markets

than any of the other manufacturers - that is until the Government's realignment of the Australian dollar in August 1974 decimated many of those markets.

While Leyland Australia's overall financial position was desperate by the end of 1973, most of that was due to the failure of the passenger car side of the business, which in turn was due to the many causes already discussed in this and previous features.

With an improvement in quality control and parts supply, the release of new P76 models, the forthcoming P82, an easing of the credit squeeze (which occurred in November 1974, the same month that the factory closed) and an easing of the oil crisis, there is every reason to believe Peter North's proposition that Leyland could have been operating profitably within a year or two.

Regardless of the outcome of the IAC hearings, it was David Abell's intention to close Waterloo from the moment he arrived in Australia in July. The release of the IAC report allowed him the perfect opportunity to approach Jim Cairns with a plan for the Government to buy the factory and assist Leyland in easing out of the industry, while giving the Government an easy implementation of the IAC's recommendations.

We will look in detail at how that unfolded in the next issue.



The Commission blaming the local content plans didn't account for the fact of Leyland failing to meet the market's expectations in product lines and build quality.



Watto has a new project car, and it's one of the rarest Mini factory derivatives anywhere.

With the completion of Greg Coates' restoration of the ex-Foley/Hopkirk 1967 Bathurst Cooper S Mini, the timing was perfect for me to source another vehicle that we could follow through the pages of this magazine.

Fortuitously, I was contacted by long-time associate, source of information for this magazine and former Administrative Manager for Product Engineering at the BMC-Leyland factory in Waterloo and later Engineering Services Manager at Moorebank, Peter Davis.

I first met Peter about 12 years ago, when researching the factory for a series of articles that appeared in *The Mini Experience*. While visiting him in his NSW home, Peter showed me his project car, an Austin Ant.

This is a very interesting piece of BMC history, which we will also look at in some detail in each upcoming issue of the magazine as the project progresses.



Body number 17, of 25 produced.

I was stunned to find out there was even an Austin Ant in Australia (see P95) and asked him that if he ever sold it, would he please offer me first refusal.

Peter assured me he wasn't going to sell it and that it was going to be restored by his son Paul, who owned a Triumph restoration business.

Circumstances changed, Paul sold his business and the Ant remained under cover and out of the weather for many more years. True to his word, though, Peter called me a couple of years ago and offered me the Ant. A fair price was agreed, but it took me two years to pay off the car. I sincerely thank Peter for his patience and fairness in allowing me to pay it off in this way.

In September this year I travelled with my mates Brett Nicholson (my Shitbox Rally co-driver) and Anthony Johnson (owner of Land-Rover specialist business British 4WD Imports in Melbourne) on a boys'own weekend road-trip up to Peter's place to collect the Ant, which is now safely ensconced in my garage.

The first priority was to get the car sitting on all four wheels properly – or at least well



Car number 103 - 3rd one completed.



Anthony, Watto & Brett with the Ant, before heading back to Melbourne.

enough to be moved around the garage a bit more easily.

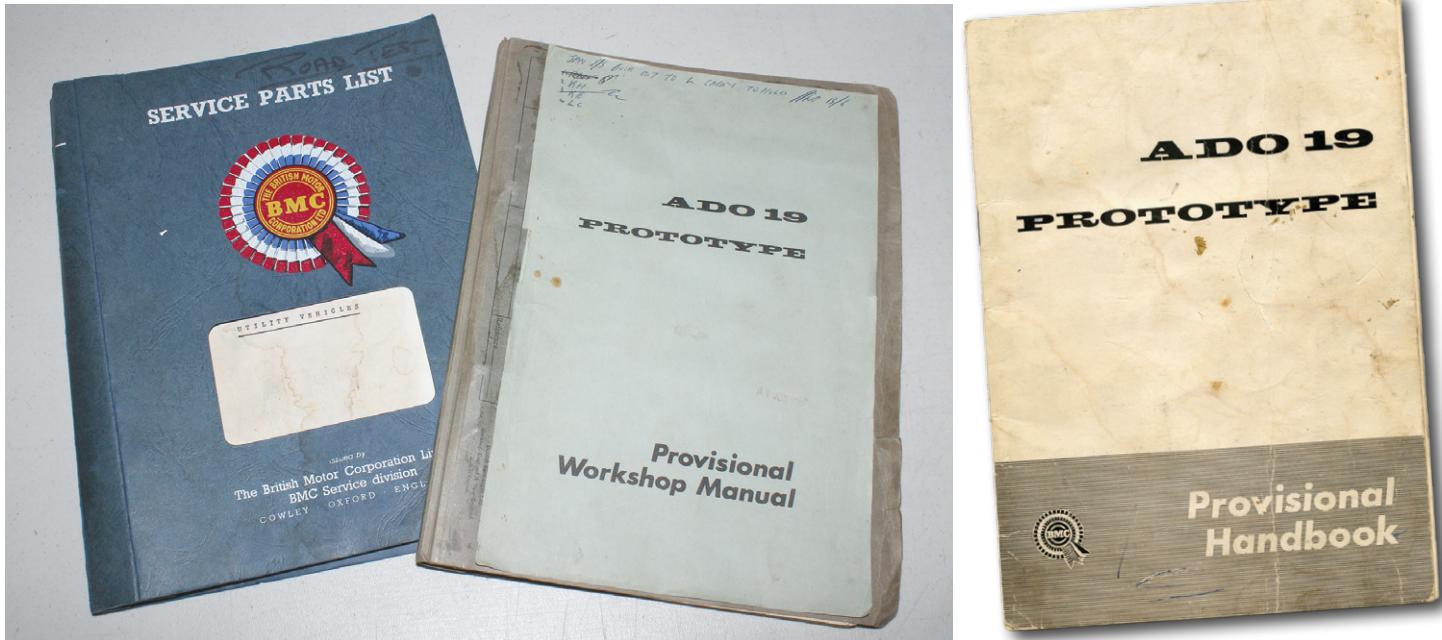
Peter had been gifted the car back in 1978, when he left the company. However, he was asked to loan the car to the Engineering Services department while they developed the 4x4 Moke – the presumption being to investigate whether to go down the path of the Ant or to do something very different. They chose the latter course, effectively following another design set out by Alec Issigonis himself back in 1959.

Frank Andrew, then Managing Director of Leyland Australia, said in a letter to Peter, dated 21 July 1978: "I do confirm that the Austin Ant was given to you by myself and appreciate your lending it to Engineering Services for the Moke 4x4 comparison. I would obviously appreciate their being able to use it for the time required on the Moke 4x4 project. At the end of that time it will be delivered to your home free of charge."

True to the letter, the Ant was delivered to Peter's home, on 1 November 1979, but in a partially dismantled state. Peter was furious about this, as the car had been in a running and serviceable condition when he had left it with Engineering Services. By this time, though, Frank Andrew had left Leyland Australia and returned to UK, and Peter's complaints to his replacement fell on deaf ears.



At home in Watto's garage.



Peter obtained original literature on the Ant when the factory closed, including an abridged specification list, parts list, provisional workshop manual and driver's handbook; all of which came with the Ant and will help with the restoration.

This only added insult to injury after what had happened to the second Ant that had been sent to Australia. It had been cut up and sold off for scrap value when the Waterloo factory closed in late 1974.

For some unknown reason, the engine and transmission had all been removed from the car and stored in the company garage at Waterloo.

Peter saw it there one Friday afternoon in 1974 and requested that it be moved to Experimental for safe keeping. When he returned on the Monday morning he found that it had all been put in the Simms bin and sent as scrap.

So, in 1979, with his Ant delivered in a non-running state, Peter was so disappointed that he was unable to immediately do anything with it. Time marched on and the Ant sat for the next 36 years, until I collected it.

By that time the front tyres were completely flat and refused to hold air. The front suspension was connected to the car via only one of eight bolts and the shock absorbers. This made it very difficult to get the car onto and off the trailer, each task taking about two hours, with some lateral thinking and some choice language.

After dropping Anthony at home, Brett and I stopped in at Minis Plus in Bayswater and I bought a couple of Morris 1100

wheels with good tyres. However, we were unable to fit them while the car was tied down on the trailer.

Once at home and off the trailer I jacked up the car, removed the front wheels and began fiddling with the suspension mounting brackets.

An interesting part of the design of the Ant is that, unlike the Mini or Moke, there are no subframes to hold the engine or suspension. The engine, transmission, transfer case, suspension and steering rack are all removed from the car as one unit, with a small semi-frame for the top suspension mounting points. This means to do any major work on any of these components requires the removal of them all from the car.

Without the opportunity to remove everything from the car, I wanted at this point just to attach the suspension to the stage where I could move the car around while I begin work on it.

While I was able to get four bolts into the suspension mounting brackets, the rest proved impossible.

Keeping in mind this is a pre-production prototype vehicle, there are some strange things on it that hopefully would have been attended to prior to full production, had that gone ahead.

In this case, the bolts that attach the rear brackets to the transmission case are various lengths. Most surprisingly, the lower point of the rear brackets are attached to a long stud that passes right through the transfer case, with a nut on each end. As this is not in there at present and cannot be fitted while the suspension is still attached, I will have to partly dismantle the suspension to fit it; which in itself is not going to be an easy task.

For now, though, the car is at least sitting on four good wheels and tyres and can, very carefully, be moved around in the garage.

The car was then given a bit of a clean



Two boxes of random parts came with the car - some belong with it, some don't.

After a quick clean. Inset: "E" on windscreen means Engineering Department.



Fitting the second headlight, the indicators and bumper made a significant difference.

and a number of interesting aspects discovered. For starters, it appears to have all its original glass, including the windscreens. This is confirmed by the dates of manufacture for all the glass is early 1968 – see break-out box on dating glass.

On the windscreen is also a sticker with the letter "E". According to Peter, this was to let the service garage at Engineering Services easily identify which department the car belonged to. An "S", for example, would have been for Sales, while the "E" was for Engineering. At this stage, Engineering Services was maintaining some of the company fleet.

A couple of polystyrene boxes were in the back of the car, filled with an assortment of parts in various conditions, from thoroughly rusted to quite useable.

Some of these are for the Ant, some are for a standard Moke or Mini, while some others I do not recognise from anything, so may well be for the Ant. I will not dispose



Cooling system will need an overhaul.

of anything until it has all been identified and what is for the Ant but no longer useful has been replaced.

In amongst those parts, though, were the original sump guard (which has not yet been fitted), a standard Moke sump guard and the Ant's front bumper.

Herein lies my dilemma – how far to go with the restoration and how original to keep the car. It is not the most original Ant on the planet – one in NZ is much more original, while most others known to exist have had extensive restorations, or are in pieces and in need of full restoration.

Mine is almost complete, but is a non-runner and is in fairly poor condition. But it is virtually all there and in most of its original paint.

So, in the short term, I am going to assemble it as much as possible, with the original parts that are with the car or, where necessary, replace them with useable second-hand or new-old-stock parts.



I will then attempt to restore the mechanical components of the car, to make it a running and driveable vehicle. One important part that is missing is the tailshaft for the rear-wheel-drive. This is possibly, and hopefully, just a standard Morris Minor part, but may in fact be unique.

There are many parts on the car that are unique, but also many that are common with other BMC vehicles, as would be expected.

The front indicators are from a Morris 1100, as are the 12" road wheels, the disc brake front end and a number of parts. The side repeater indicators are from the UK 1100 Mk2, which was not sold in Australia, or the Austin 1800 (which, of course, was).

A couple of weeks after getting the car home I bought two used but useable front indicator lenses from Link Automotive in Mitcham and fitted them, along with the second headlight that was sitting in the front cabin footwell of the Ant. A quick

Dating the Glass

All auto glass should have a method to date its manufacture. The Austin Ant, like most BMC vehicles of the period, used glass manufactured by Triplex Safety Glass Co Ltd, Birmingham, England.

The glass should have an etching or white stamping of TRIPLEX LAMINATED (on some windscreens) or TRIPLEX TOUGHENED (most common).

The method of dating the glass is via a series of dots above or below certain letters.

Taking the second word first, a dot under each letter represents the year of manufacture, where:

L A M I N A T E D

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

T O U G H E N E D

So, a dot under the second letter refers to a year ending with 2 – eg: 1952, 1962 or 1972. A dot under the space after the last letter refers to a year ending with 0 – eg: 1950, 1960 or 1970.

Prior to January 1969, only the quarter of the year of manufacture was identified, with a dot above the letters T, R, E or X in the word TRIPLEX.



The Ant's laminated windscreen.

A dot above the T means first quarter; R is second; E is third and X is fourth.

The windows on the Ant, as illustrated above, were therefore manufactured in the first quarter of 1968.

From January 1969 a more complex system was used, with one, two or three dots above specific letters, as per:

January TRIPLEX

February TRIPLEX

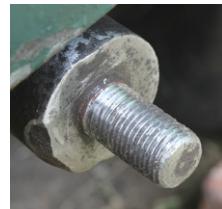
March TRIPLEX

April TRIPLEX



All its other glass is toughened.

May	TRIPLEX
June	TRIPLEX
July	TRIPLEX
August	TRIPLEX
September	TRIPLEX
October	TRIPLEX
November	TRIPLEX
December	TRIPLEX



Bumper mounting bolts cleaned up well.

polish of the chrome (or stainless?) front grille bars and the car looked 100% better.

I then removed the radiator cap – and immediately wished I hadn't. Oh dear! The radiator is completely blocked with what appears to be a blend of dry 36-year-old coolant, mould and scale. While I would like to keep the original radiator, and will investigate having it thoroughly cleaned out, it might not be worth the trouble.

The engine is a little problematic. Firstly, it is not the original engine. The car came from the UK with a 1098cc engine. Peter had a 1275cc fitted - one of six brought from UK, built to Swedish emissions regulations, for fitment checks for the 1275LS Mini.

Peter believed this engine was still in it when I bought the car from him, and was surprised to hear it again has a 1098cc fitted. The origin of this engine is unknown. The sump is full of clean oil, but the internal condition of the engine and gearbox at this stage is also completely unknown.

The unique manifold is with the car but not fitted. The original exhaust is fitted, but its internal condition is unknown. A carburettor did not come with the car. Thankfully, rags have been pushed into all the inlet and exhaust ports, which hopefully have kept out water and other nasties over the past 36 years.

The second job was to refit the front bumper. I thought this would be fairly straightforward but, not too surprisingly, this turned out not to be the case.

The mounting points were the worst rusted parts of the entire car, with the threads on the mounting bolts, which are welded as part of the front support members, very badly rusted. I wanted to avoid having to cut them off and replace them, so bought a die nut and carefully, with plenty of lubrication from WD40, wound the nut on and off to clean up the thread.

It came up better than I imagined and the bumper is now securely fitted. It would appear, though, that the bumper is supposed to mount to its brackets with four coach bolts, which I did not have, so for the short term it is mounted with standard bolts.

Over the next few months I will be removing the ugly, and non-standard, rear bumper, cleaning up the original rear bumperettes, tidying up the interior, and having a good look at the engine.

I wonder what awaits me when I remove the head from the engine. Stay tuned.

Australian Antics



The Ant Pickup on trial in Australia - or maybe just out for a bit of fun.

After years of development (which we will cover in detail in a later issue), and six engineering prototypes, 25 pre-production prototypes of the ADO19 Austin Ant were built in mid-1968, with at least seven of these shipped overseas for sales analysis.

One or two went to the US Army, for military evaluation, while two each went to South Africa, New Zealand and Australia.

One of the Ants that came here was referred to as a Pickup model, with canvas roof over the cabin, canvas tonneau at the back and a canvas curtain on the cabin's rear bulkhead.

The other was a Hardtop, or Station Wagon, which had a fibreglass roof front and rear, in two pieces, canvas sides and back flap at the rear and sliding glass window in the rear bulkhead of the cabin.

The Hardtop also came with Deluxe specification, which included chrome grille bars, tailgate handles and rear bumperettes; timber trim along the waistline and down the rear corners; masonite door trim pads; metal runners in the rear tray; rubber floor mats; and a chrome-look PVC finishing strip for the windscreens.

Although these were for sales evaluation, and not engineering evaluation, the Experimental Dept at Waterloo did undertake a fair amount of testing of the vehicles on behalf of the Sales

Dept, to determine the suitability of the design for the Australian market. The Australian Army was initially interested in the vehicle, but it is not known if any testing was carried out by or for them.

In the end it was all for naught, as by this time Leyland had taken over BMC and, as owners also of Land Rover, determined that the Ant would take some sales away from Land Rover (and from the Moke). So, the whole project came to an abrupt end.

The two Ants in Australia remained here, being used as factory hacks, towing and pushing vehicles, trailers and other items around, and being used by maintenance crews and for any odd job at the factory.

The Pickup vehicle was cut up and sold for scrap with the closure of the Waterloo factory, while the Hardtop was transferred to Engineering Services at Moorebank, where it continued to be used as a general run-about.

Of the 25 pre-production prototypes and six engineering prototypes built, only ten or twelve are known to still exist today.

Five of these are in the UK, of which three have been comprehensively restored. One, also restored, is apparently in Greece, while both South African and both New Zealand cars remain. Only one, our project car, the Hardtop, remains in Australia.



Trying out the Pickup at Charleville, Qld.



The Basic model - Moke 4x4 Utility.

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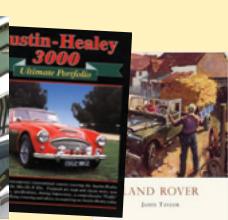
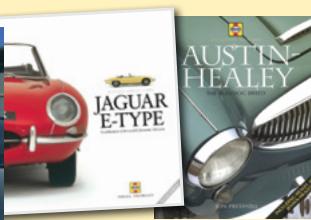
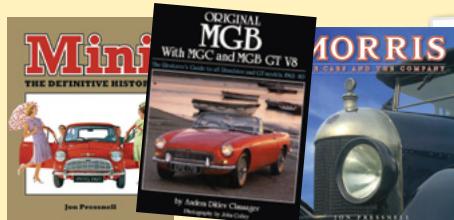
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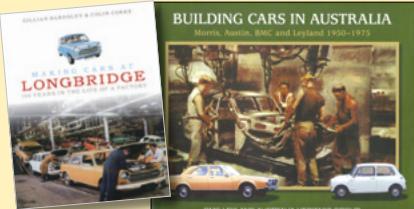
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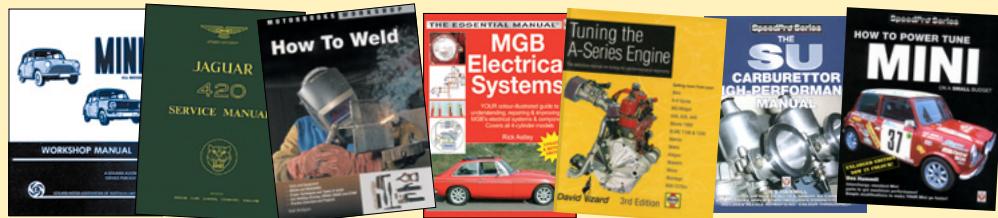
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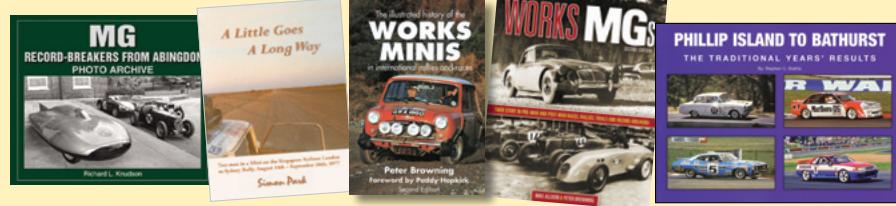
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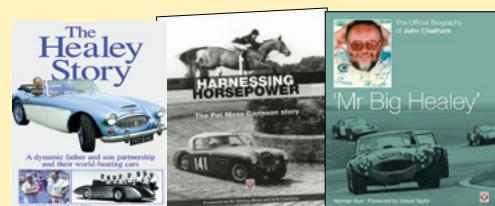
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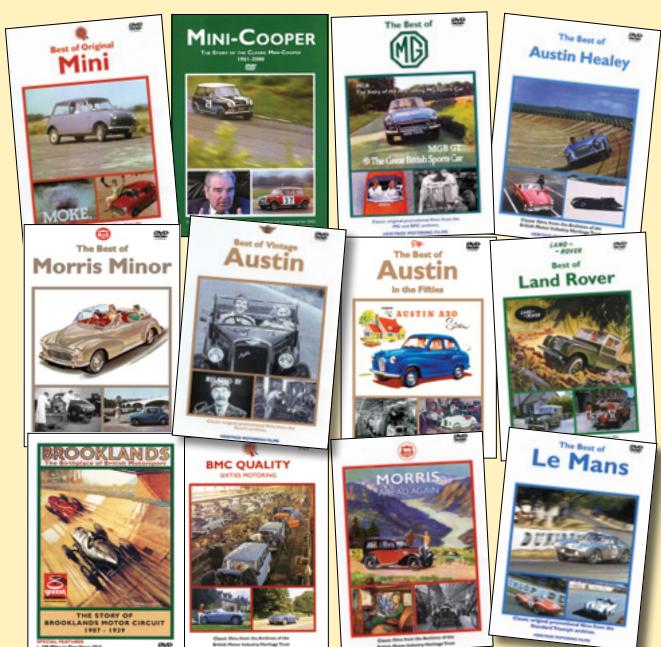


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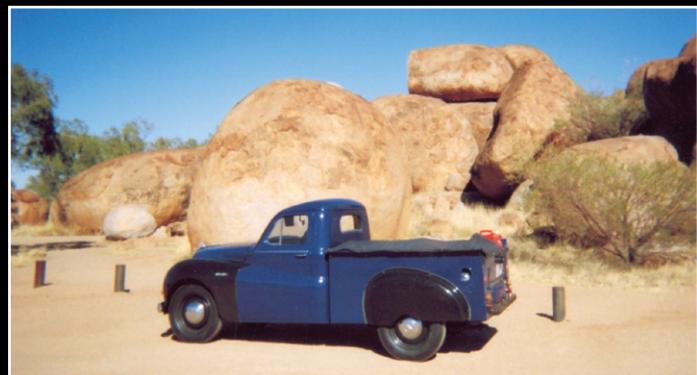
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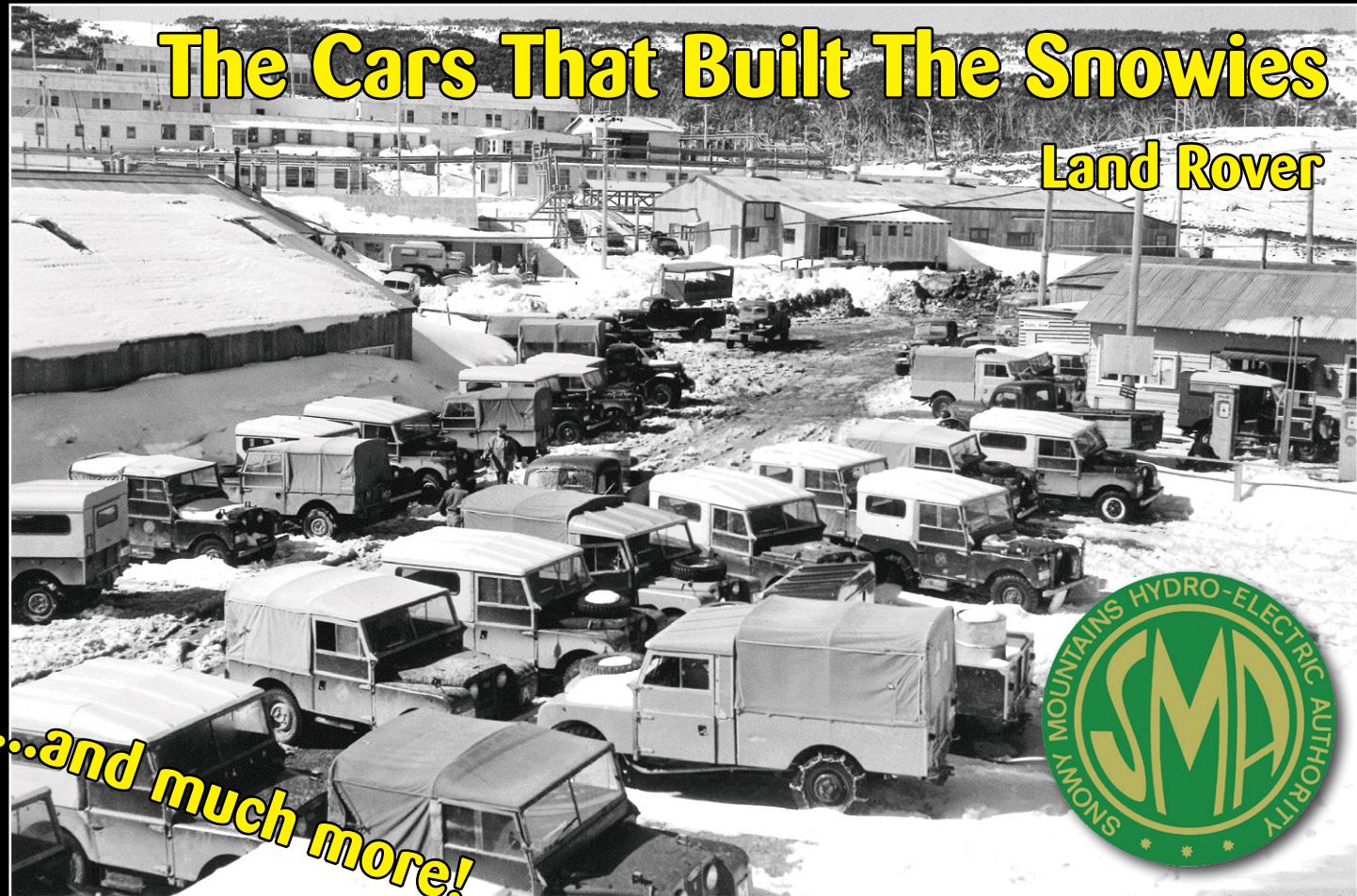


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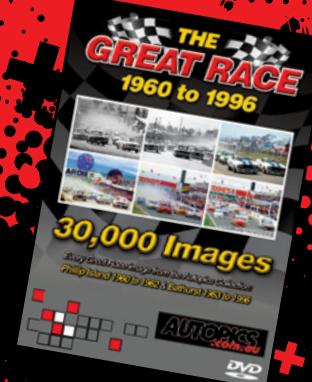
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