

Mini • Austin • Morris • MG • Austin-Healey • Riley • Wolseley • Leyland & More

The B.M.C. Experience

www.bmcexperience.com.au



Issue 19: October to December 2016



**Bathurst 1966
in Colour**



**Rare MGC GT
Automatic**

One That Nearly Got Away
Ex-Works Mini is back on the road.



**Austin X6
Kimberley**



**Barn Find
Morris Major**



We can find your dream car...



Specialising in Jaguar, Land Rover
and all **BMC Vehicles**

■ Our service is not only to sell or restore cars.
We can also find the Classic British car of your
dreams through our wide network.
Our stock is regularly changing so call us
today, drop in or visit our website.

CALL WILF FOR SALES + SERVICE
P: 08 9204 1188 M: 0418 912 688

D/L 24101

www.britishcarsales.com.au

INCORPORATING



Wilf Chambers

MUSTANGS of PERTH

wilfchambers

JAGUAR | CLASSIC BRITISH CARS

UNIT 6 & 8, 53 GUTHRIE STREET, OSBORNE PARK WESTERN AUSTRALIA 6017

COMPETITION CLOSES
30 NOVEMBER 2016



GET A QUOTE
TODAY!

WIN A EUROPEAN SUPERCARS TOUR



PLUS WIN A 2016 VICTORY
OCTANE MOTORCYCLE

Shannons and Ultimate Driving Tours are offering motoring enthusiasts the chance to win an exclusive tour driving the world's best supercars on some of Europe's most amazing roads, from 28th July to 5th August 2017.

The eight-day guided tour travels through Switzerland, France, Monaco and Italy. Experience driving a selection of supercars¹ from Ferrari, Lamborghini, McLaren, Audi and Mercedes over four days. Stay at luxury hotels, castles and stunning chateaus, while enjoying fantastic dining experiences, including dinner with F1 world champion, Alain Prost. Plus, visit the Ferrari and Lamborghini museums in Maranello and the infamous Imola circuit.

The winner will also receive an all new 2016 Victory Octane Motorcycle in Matte Super Steel Grey.

Get a Quote = 1 Entry* | Take out a Policy = 5 Entries!*

To enter go to shannons.com.au/supercars or call **13 46 46** and obtain an eligible quote on your Car, Bike or Home Insurance* by 30 November 2016.

INSURANCE FOR MOTORING ENTHUSIASTS | CALL 13 46 46 FOR A QUOTE | SHANNONS.COM.AU

Shannons Pty Limited ABN 91 099 692 636 is an authorised representative of AAI Limited ABN 48 005 297 807, the issuer of Shannons Car, Bike and Home/Contents insurance products. Read the relevant Product Disclosure Statement and consider whether it is right for you before buying these insurance products. Contact us for a free copy. Competition conducted by Shannons Pty Limited, of Level 28, Brisbane Square, 266 George Street, Brisbane, QLD 4000. Competition commences at 12am on 15/8/2016 and closes at 5pm on 30/11/2016 (Melbourne time). Applications for online quotes must be submitted by 28/11/16 to be eligible for entry into this competition. However, telephone applications will continue to be available until 5pm 30/11/2016. Entry only open to eligible Australian residents aged 30 years or older. Eligible Entrants must be opted in to receive Shannons marketing communications. Total prize pool valued at approx. \$62,075.00 (depending on major prize winner's point of departure). Prizes drawn at 12pm on 14/12/2016 at Salmat Digital Pty Ltd, L2, 116 Miller St, Nth Sydney NSW 2060. The winners will be notified by phone and email by 16/12/2016 and published in The Australian newspaper on 19/12/2016 and on the competition website. The winner must be aged 30 years or older and have a valid and current Australian driver's licence. The drive experience is subject to any terms and conditions specified by Ultimate Driving Tours. *New Shannons Motor Insurance or Shannons Home & Contents insurance quotes/sales only (renewals and CTP quotes/sales ineligible). Limit 1 quote per vehicle or insured address. Permits: ACT TP 16/01335, NSW LTPS/16/05363, SA T16/1203. Full competition terms and conditions at shannons.com.au/supercars.



The B.M.C. Experience



Using your digital version

- There are numerous interactive links throughout these digital magazines.
- Click on any story listed in the Contents page to jump to that story.
- Click on club or event logos to visit related websites – where available.
- All websites and emails listed will link to their associated addresses.
- This includes advertisements which, where available, will take you directly to the advertisers' websites or automatically open your email programme with the associated email addressee entered.



Click on these links to view related YouTube videos



Click on these links to view additional photos



Click on these links to view 360° rotational views



Click on these links to access Facebook



Back Issues



Every issue of *The BMC Experience* is now available for you to enjoy.

Also, keep an eye out for Special Issues on a variety of subjects.

Individual copies and subscriptions are available through www.pocketmags.com



Available from



Features

17 Tour Of Duty



One-owner Austin-Healey Sprite

24 Camp Quality esCarpade Mini ready and money coming in

26 Road Trip - 1965 Crossroads Alice

30 1 Step Forward, 2 steps back P76 on 2016 Peking to Paris

32 Peking to Paris in a Shoebox



A Mini on 2016 Peking to Paris

40 Travels and Troubles Good Days and Bad with an MG TF

60 Built To Drive



Austin-Healey 3000 MkIII

66 MG Cruiser



MGC GT automatic

72 Concept Redefined Austin Kimberley

76 Australian Survivor Morris Major Barn Find

81 Inevitable Outcome



1966 Bathurst 500

88 Setting The Standard 1966 Southern Cross Rally

Cover Story

50 Phoenix



The resurrection of LXR 829E in Australia and the UK car with the same number.

Regulars

6 Editorial

7 News

9 Book & DVD Reviews

10 Letters

16 Taming The Dragon New owner for WCR Maxi

20 Eye Witness Outback Army Land Rovers

22 Club Profile Morris Car Club of Vic.

29 Eye Witness Photos from National Archives

33 Event Preview 25th Rob Roy Historic

34 49th Hay Mini Nationals

37 UK Scene London to Brighton; Bromley Pageant; Beaulieu Cooper Day; Bearsted Cars on the Green.

39 Moking to Brighton Mokes on the London-Brighton

92 BMCE Shopping

93 Back Issues

94 Next Issue

95 Final Turn Bob Holden - Bathurst 1966

Advertisers Listing:

123ignition Australia.....	42	Mini Classic.....	45
2016 Grand Day Out.....	36	Mini King.....	47
2016 Motorclassica.....	11	Mini Spares & Repairs.....	46
Abbingham Spares.....	44	Minis Plus.....	48
Aus Mini Spares.....	48	Minisport-Oz.....	48
Ausclassics Restorations...	44	Mossgreen-Webb's auction.	49
Autopics.....	100	MG Automotive.....	44
Auto Electrics On Wheels...	42	MG Sportsparts.....	44
BMCE Binders.....	46	MG Workshops.....	44
BMCE paper issues.....	91	Ralph Moore Auto Glass..	43
Bob Rowntree Automotive..	44	ReadSpeed.....	48
British Sporting Cars.....	43	Rhemac engines.....	42
Carwood Refurbishing.....	42	Shannons Insurance.....	3
Classic Fasteners.....	42	Sovereign Brit Parts.....	45
Classic Motoring.....	46	SU Midel.....	45
Concourse Spares.....	44	The Healey Factory.....	43
Graeme Lord.....	46	The Mini Exp. Reloaded....	90
Link Automotive.....	48	Triggs Motors.....	42
Lionel Otto Instruments.....	42	Vintage Wiring Harness...	42
Mini & Moke World.....	47	Wilf Chambers Classic Brit..	2
Mini Automotive.....	46	Wilf Chambers Classic Brit..	29



Photo by Jayne Watson

DRIVER'S SEAT

It's funny how things work out. I hadn't planned it, but this issue almost became a bumper rally issue - with a story on the 1966 Southern Cross Rally, two features on this year's Peking To Paris, a short piece on our preparations for the Camp Quality esCarpade and the major story on our front cover car, the ex-Works rally Mini LRX 829E.

There was another story, on the 1936 South Australian Centenary Rally, but I have held that over until next issue. I didn't want you getting all rallied out.

Of course, if, like me, you like rallying, then I'm sure you will love this issue. If not, we've got some great non-rally stories too, to balance things out a bit, so I hope you find enough for you as well.

Our features on the Austin-Healey 3000 MkIII and the MGC GT automatic actually compliment each other, as the MGC was intended as a replacement for the big Healey. It was just coincidental that both our feature cars are black.

The story on the Morris Major "barn find" proves that they are still out there. You just have to get lucky. What was even more interesting about this story, is that the current owner also once owned the identical sister car.

There is also a terrific story on a one-owner Austin-Healey Sprite that has served over 50 years' faithful transport for its RAAF pilot owner.

For the history buffs, there's still plenty to keep you entertained, with photos from the National Archives of Australia and a great selection of photos of Army Land Rovers in the Outback.

This year is, of course, the 50th anniversary of the fabulous victory of the Mini at Bathurst, driven by Rauno Aaltonen and Bob Holden, in 1966.

Many people still find this an incredible feat, but we look at why the result was

actually inevitable - not so much a case of if a Mini could win as which one and with which drivers.

We don't have many event reports this issue - apart from the Hay Mini Nationals. Remember, if you or your club has a major event, particularly a state or national rally, and you would like to see it reported in this magazine, all you have to do is send us a report and some photos.

If you are not sure about our deadlines, just drop me a line. We try and support the clubs by promoting their events and reporting on them afterwards, but as I can't get out to everything I need your help to get the reports to me.

I need to make mention that, following my rebuke of Stuart Brown of Ausclassics Restorations in Issue 18, he has now paid his account in full.

Stuart felt I was a bit rough on him, and I apologise if it seems I came on too strong, but as I said bills must be paid. We are now back on talking terms - in fact Stuart has again taken an ad out in this issue (he was happy to pay in advance).

Looking forward, we have some big events coming up, including the All British Day in Sydney (at the time of writing the rain hasn't washed it out) in August, the revamped Mini Muster in Brisbane in September, and the Camp Quality esCarpade in October.

Plus, of course, our own *The BMC Experience* Grand Day Out at Bundoora Park in Melbourne on 4 December. This year's event looks like being bigger than ever, with a number of clubs indicating they will be making it an official event, including some coming from interstate.

We would like to see as many BMC-Leyland related vehicles turn up as possible. We can fit a lot more in the venue.

Meanwhile, enjoy this issue. *Watto.*



Issue 19: Oct to Dec 2016

On Sale 12 October 2016

Published quarterly by

Autofan Media

PO Box 186 Newcomb, Vic. 3219
Ph: 03 5250 4842 Fax: 03 5250 4846
email: bmcexperience@gmail.com

Editorial and advertising enquiries to:
Publisher and Editor

Craig Watson

Contributors to this issue:

Craig Watson, Kay Drury, Patrick Quinn, Paul Newby, Steven Whitford, Evan Green, Scott Polkinghorne, Col Gardner, Steve Maher, Gerard Brown, Robin Page, Terry Regester, Declan Dwyer, Peter Williams, Taryn Ruig, Alan Drury, Brian Petty, Alan Nichols, Alan Lett, Troy Clayton, Glen Whitbourne, Terry Morrow, Paul Cross, Andy Frankel, Jayne Watson, Autotops.

Available globally through:

www.pocketmags.com

Distributed by:

Gordon & Gotch Digital

The BMC Experience welcomes potential contributors. All material submitted must be in digital format. Articles must be in Word or plain text and photographs must be high resolution. No guarantee for publication is given. All new contributors should call first to discuss ideas.

The opinions expressed in *The BMC Experience* are not necessarily those of Autofan Media or its representatives. Autofan Media is not responsible for any of the modifications shown in this magazine and we recommend that you seek the opinion of a suitably qualified person before undertaking any similar modifications.

While all reasonable efforts are made, Autofan Media accepts no responsibility for the accuracy of any information contained in this magazine.

This magazine is totally independent and is not an official product of BMW, MINI, MG, Rover, SAIC, Tata or any brand associated with BMC or Leyland or any affiliates, past or present.



© Copyright 2016

All material in this magazine is protected under the Australian Copyright Act. No part may be reproduced or stored in any medium, physical or electronic, without the written permission of the publishers, Autofan Media. The BMC rosette is a Registered Trade Mark, used with permission.



Follow us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/bmcexperience

Police Mini Rejoins The Force



Senior officers and guests gathered at the NSW Police Academy on 25 July to dedicate an example of the first HWP car used for speed detection.

The car was bought back by NSW Police a couple of years ago from Doug Jenkins in Melbourne and restored to its former glory.

Brought into service to replace the solo motorcycles, just over 1,000 Mini Cooper S, and fewer than a hundred Clubman GTs, were used by the NSW Police Force from 1966 until 1971 for Special Traffic Patrol duties.

The Mini Cooper S achieved great success in its time with the STP as the first unmarked police cars, often driven by plain clothes police for traffic enforcement.

The Cooper S was able to



Dana Jennings with a photo of himself in the 1960s.

achieve high speeds and conduct pursuit duties with increased safety and protection from the weather.

The Mini Cooper S is fondly remembered by many Police officers from the 1960s and '70s as a durable vehicle with good speed and handling abilities.

Three retired STP officers attended the day to see the car they once drove: Dana Jennings, Dave Whiteman and Don Hollier.

The car was presented in front of a display board, which included photos of some of the Minis and officers on duty.

Former owner of the car, Doug Jenkins, was also in attendance and was pleased with the result of the restoration.

Another World Record To Project 64



The Kiwi land speed record team running a 1964 Mini Cooper S at Bonneville Speed Week are celebrating success having claimed two world records at Bonneville Speed Week in Utah, USA, from August 13-19.

The first record was set on tuning runs for the little Mini that has gained a great deal of attention at the iconic Speed Week event.

In the I/BGALT class they set a speed of 144.033mph (231.799kph) on a 133.896mph (215.485kph) record.

The team then switched classes to I/BFALT - a change

from petrol to methanol, and on a tuning run for methanol broke the 140.458mph (226.045kph) class record with a speed of 158.039mph (254.339kph).

They were unable to back this up due to a hose fault on their next run.

Once the problem was solved they went out again and qualified at 153.710mph (247.372kph), and backed it up the next morning for a record result of 156.006mph (251.067kph)

These are both huge results in a sport where records are often claimed by margins of three decimal points.

Mini Hub at Motorclassica



This year's Motorclassica, on 21 to 23 October, at the Royal Melbourne Exhibition Building will have a treat for Mini lovers.

The two ex-Abingdon Works rally Cooper S, LRX 828E and LRX 829E, will be reunited for the first time since 1969.

They will be joined by the 1967 Foley/Hopkirk Bathurst Mini and former BMC Works drivers Rauno Aaltonen and Bob Holden, who won Bathurst together in 1966.

The display is a combined tribute to the 50th anniversary of that victory and the 50th anniversary of the first Southern Cross Rally.

Motorclassica will also be a focal point for the inaugural Southern Cross Rally Festival, celebrating 50 years of SCR, which will officially begin the following day from Healesville.

A highlight of the event will be a re-run of the infamous Bathanga Stampede in northern Victoria on the Wednesday night.

Rauno Aaltonen will be a guest on the rally and will be available to speak to competitors throughout.

Rauno will also be conducting a brief "skills school" at Falls Creek on Wednesday morning.

This is a great opportunity to not only meet the man dubbed "The Rally Professor" by fellow competitors, but to actually learn something from him.

Rauno, 76, with the 1965 European Rally Championship and wins in the Monte Carlo and Southern Cross rallies also in his CV, still runs a winter ice rally school in Finland.

Full details: Ph 0414 747 867 or southerncrossrally.com.au

MG Y-type 70th



Celebrations for the 70th anniversary of the MG Y-type will be held in and around the Sunshine Coast, Qld, with the event "hub" being in Maleny, on 9-12 June 2017.

Organisers have announced two special guests: David Lawrence from Sth Africa, author of the book *Let There Be Y's*, and Paul Barrow from USA, co-founder of the International MG Y-type Register.

The event will include a wide range of social, technical and driving events and Tony & Debbie Slattery would like to see as many Y-type owners as possible join the fun.

Full details via email to mgyregister@optusnet.com.au

Correction

In the review on Frank Rodwell's book *I Like Old Cars* last issue, I listed an email address to contact Frank. It seems I left out a w, so the correct email is: frankwrodwell@gmail.com

Austin 1800 Web

Looking for info on the Australian Austin 1800 and can't find the website?

The Austin Motor Vehicle Club of NSW is now hosting all the info from eighteenthundred.com.au amvcnsw.com.au/austin1800

MG Buy, Swap, Sell

There is a new dedicated website for MG enthusiasts to buy, swap or sell cars, parts, books, and memorabilia.

Joining the site is free, and until the end of September it is also free to post ads on the site.

Anyone can take a look, but only members can post.

mgbuyswapsell.com.au

Shannons Supercar Competition



Shannons and Ultimate Driving Tours are offering motoring enthusiasts the chance to win an exclusive tour driving the world's best supercars on some of Europe's most amazing roads.

The eight-day guided tour travels through Switzerland, France, Monaco and Italy. Experience driving a selection of supercars from Ferrari, Lamborghini, McLaren, Audi and Mercedes over four days.

Stay at luxury hotels, castles and stunning chateaus, while enjoying fantastic dining experiences, including dinner with F1 world champion, Alain Prost. Plus, visit the Ferrari and Lamborghini museums in Maranello and the infamous Imola circuit.

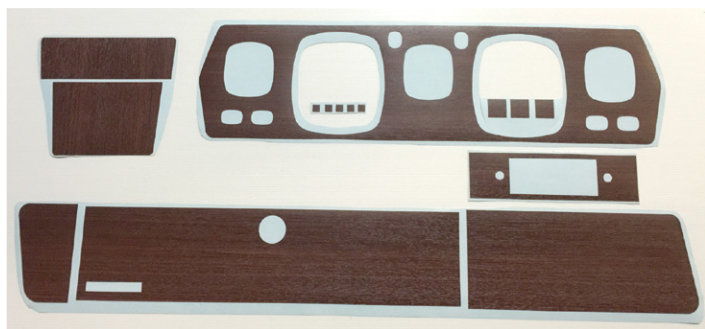
You could also win a new 2016 Victory Octane Motorcycle, Valued at up to \$18,995 inclusive of all on-road costs. Plus 12 months Shannons Comprehensive Insurance cover for the motorcycle.

So, if you're a motoring enthusiast, make sure you call Shannons to get a quote on your car, bike or home insurance to enter. Every eligible quote gives you an extra chance in the draw.

If you take out a policy you get 5 chances for every eligible car, bike or home policy!

Naturally, terms, conditions and restrictions apply. For details or To enter go to shannons.com.au/supercars or call 13 46 46 before 30 November 2016.

Replacement P76 Dash "timber".



Although the timber-look vinyl on the dash panels on a P76 have that 1970s' chic, they do have a tendency to lift on the edges, which can spoil the whole interior appearance of the car.

The problem has always been thought to be due to the harsh Australian conditions, particularly the heat.

Stuart Brown from Ausclassics Restorations has been experimenting with different materials in an effort to eliminate the problem with replacement panel sets.

After coming up with what looked like the solution, it was

found that shrinkage was still occurring on new sets.

Stuart said the problem lies with the adhesive material on the back, which has a surface tension on it and will shrink over time.

He now says he has the problem solved, by pre-shrinking the material for up to four months BEFORE cutting out the new panels.

Stuart has a limited number of dash sets available and said he won't be able to do more after these are sold, due to a lack of availability of the material.

For more details contact Stuart on 0400 995 515.

NZ Collection Up For Auction



ONE of the most interesting and authentic private New Zealand car collections will be sold at auction by Mossgreen-Webb's near Wellington in December.

Meticulously curated over some 50 years, it bears the hallmarks of a lifetime's passion and an inspiring degree of detail is reflected in the eclectic array of makes and models.

The makes from the various BMC stables are beautifully represented from the post-war era, culminating in the mid-1970s.

A New Zealand entrepreneur of note, Roy Savage was 24 years of age in 1958 and working with his father (also Roy) at the Griffin Savage Company – a confectionery-importing company he had brought to the North Island after World War I.

Simultaneously, young Roy

held the stories and imagery of the MGs of the RAF pilots racing around the airfields in war torn Britain in their downtime in his mind.

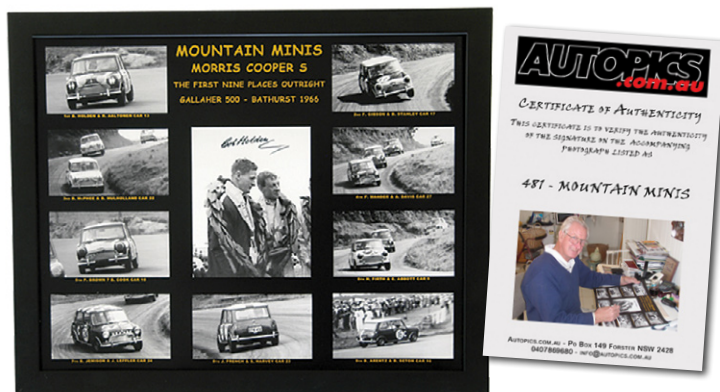
An MG TF was one of his first cars and there are still three exceptional MGs in the collection, showing Savage's keen eye for the famous sporting car.

A superbly presented 1965 Austin-Healey BJ8 3000 Mk 111 with hard top, and a delightfully original fully-optioned 1965 Wolseley 6/110 sit comfortably among two rare high-performance Rovers, several good Jaguars, Triumphs, and four very sweet Morris Minors.

The collection will go under the hammer at the Southward Car Museum at Paraparaumu on Sunday 4 December 2016.

All enquiries: motoring@mossgreen-webbs.co.nz

Autographed Bathurst Souvenir



This may be your last chance to grab a copy of the Autopics poster from 1966 Bathurst, showing the nine placed Mini Cooper S and winners Holden/Aaltonen, autographed by Bob Holden.

Autopics has only about five of these limited edition autographed prints left, at \$159 plus postage.

The posters are 22" x 18"

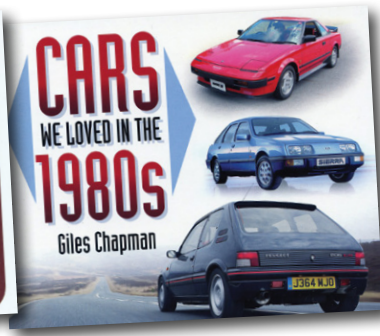
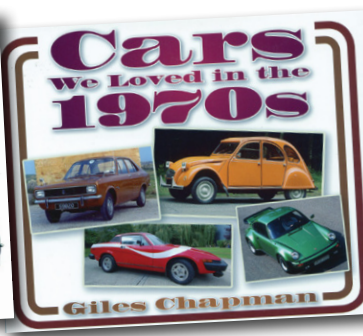
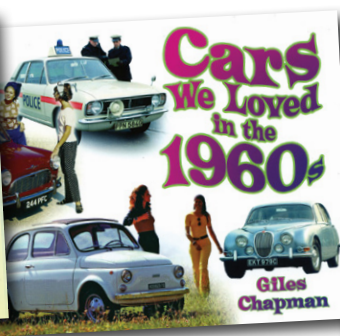
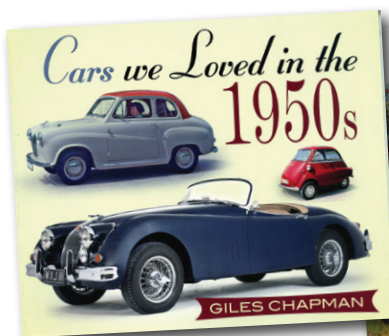
(550mm x 450mm) and come with a Certificate of Authenticity, which includes a photo of Bob Holden signing one of the prints.

With Rauno Aaltonen coming to Australia in October (see previous page), it might be the perfect chance to get his signature on the print as well.

To order your copy, go to www.autopics.com.au or email info@autopics.com.au

Reviews

All the books and DVDs reviewed in this section are available through our on-line shop. See www.bmcexperience.com.au/shop to order.



Rarely has the expression "don't judge a book by its cover" been more appropriate than with the *Cars We Loved* series by Giles Chapman.

I thought these little books would make an interesting addition in our catalogue, as something a bit quirky and light hearted, but they are far more than they first appear.

Each book is a reference gem, with a vast amount of information considering its small dimensions – 18cm x 15cm, 160 pages. Each car listed receives two pages that include a very brief synopsis

of its history, plus quotes from period magazine road tests and its sales popularity.

There are also separate chapters in each volume on *Life On The Road* in Britain, *Keeping Your Car On The Road*, *Dream Cars* and *Car Culture* for each decade.

Cars we Loved in the 1950s includes early post-war cars from 1946 to 1949, while the 1960s volume includes cars from 1959, such as the ubiquitous Mini.

I do however have two complaints about the books.

The first is that as a result of fitting so much material into so small a format, some of the text is very small – not great for our ageing readers.

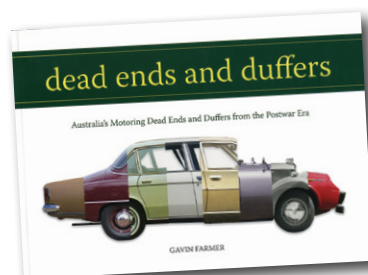
The second is a lack of any index in each book. As the cars are listed chronologically, according to when they were released, this is mostly resolved if you know when a particular car was released. However, this is in some ways cancelled by the fact that some cars listed are the second or third generation of the model – for example the MG TD is listed, but not the TC.

Finding the car you are interested in, or indeed any of the special chapters, requires flicking through the book.

There are certainly some surprising omissions from the books, but overall they are a delightful, handy reference that is easy to read and absorb and can be read in no particular order.

Perfect for if you have a few minutes available and just want to brush up on one or two cars.

\$25 each plus postage – mix and match or buy the whole set and save on postage.



At the other end of the spectrum is Gavin Farmer's new book, *Dead Ends and Duffers*; an irreverent look at some of the cars that failed to take the market by storm in Australia.

This is not just a book full of motoring pieces of rubbish, though there are a few of those, but includes a number of well designed or appointed cars that just failed for sell, or went nowhere in a design sense.

These include the likes of the Alfasud, which is described as "a flawed jewel"; Tasman/Kimberley ("an answer to a question no motorist had yet asked"); Honda S600/S800 ("an interesting production experiment that, for the moment, went nowhere"); and Isuzu Florian ("it had no glaring faults to the point where it was

sooo ordinary it failed to attract enough buyers").

Farmer, author of the P76 tome *Anything But Average*, has deliberately not included the P76, which he says "was not the 'lemon' that it has been portrayed as being."

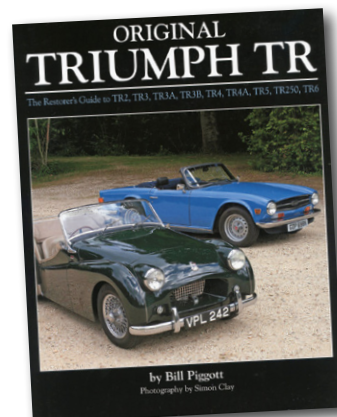
But hardly a local manufacturer or importer escapes Farmer's attention in this book, including Holden, Ford, Chrysler, BMC/Leyland, Toyota, Nissan, etc., all of which produced some sales duds.

In the case of some of the smaller manufacturers, like washing machine maker Lightburn, it is more a case of asking, "what on earth were they thinking?"

Not everybody will agree with some of the inclusions, and there are plenty more that could have been added but Farmer wanted to limit the book to just 50 examples.

This is another enjoyable book, in Farmer's usual A4 landscape format, that can be picked up and referred to in any random order.

\$49 plus postage.



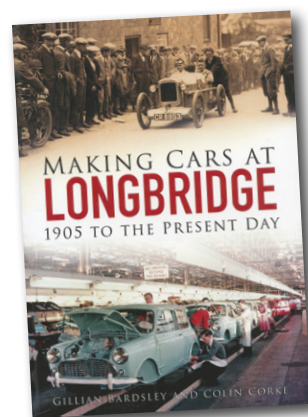
This is the latest in the excellent range of enthusiast guides and features Triumph TR sports cars, from TR2 to TR6.

This 240-page reference is really two books in one, divided into two parts for TR2 to TR3B and TR4 to TR6.

Superbly illustrated, author Bill Piggott details the differences between the various models, with clear detailed photographs.

The perfect companion if restoring a Triumph TR to original specification, or just have an interest in these iconic British sports cars.

\$69 plus postage.



The latest edition of this popular book brings the story up to date - to 2015.

Essentially a photo album with extended captions to provide valuable information about each photo, this edition includes a short colour section, and follows on from the 2005 collapse of the Rover Group and the redevelopment of the factory site.

There is also an introductory page to each chapter, with chapters divided by decades.

A great addition to the library of anyone with an interest in the Austin history.

\$45 plus postage.

STAR LETTER - Cheney's Shilling



I was very interested in your article about the 1928 Morris Minor and particularly in your preamble to that article, in the most recent magazine (Issue 18).

A few years ago, I was loaned a book *From Horses to Horsepower* by S A Cheney, which is his autobiography.

As you said in your article, Cheney became the Victorian distributor for Morris cars (among other things).

What interested me was the anecdote in Mr Cheney's book about a shilling which William Morris gave to Mr Cheney during his first visit to Australia in 1928.

After the tour, Morris agreed that something needed to be done to improve Morris vehicles. He remained determined to capture the Australian market, and

Neil Wakeman – Donvale, Vic.



promised Cheney that he would "make it his business to see that you get back every bob that you have lost. He then took a shilling from his pocket, and handed it to me 'Here is a pledge of my word on that,' Morris said."

Incredibly, Mr Cheney's grandson still has the shilling, mounted and made into a neck pendant.

Cheney said that promise was impulsively made and forgotten: It was never mentioned again.

But Morris obviously was genuine about solving the problems – soon after his return to England, the company designed new truck frames, new pump and fan assemblies and other improvements and sent enough parts, free of charge, to fix up all the trucks already exported to Australia.

Mystery Land Rover



I had a phone call from one of our readers, Barry Bourke, who worked at the Snowy Scheme (Issue 17) from 1962 to 1964.

Barry said the mystery Land Rover with the tractor tyres was done at the Cooma workshop, with wheels from a grey Fergie tractor, and adapters on the standard Land Rover hubs.

"They found out pretty quickly it was useless", Barry said. "It was top heavy and they had it so it was effectively locked in low range. It was okay in soft snow, two feet deep or thereabouts, but there were far better vehicles for the snow, like those Canadian Snow Tracs."

Barry also said that the Landie was difficult to steer with the big wheels.

Although it is very similar in appearance to a Forest Rover, by UK company Roadless Traction, Barry said he doesn't know where the mechanics who built this one at Cooma had got the idea from.

Barry also said he recalled a Land Rover forward control vehicle being tested by the Snowy scheme. "It came back on a truck in the afternoon, after it had rolled. It wasn't a success."

On the story about hot-wiring the Snowy Land Rovers, he said; "that was common with the mechanics and lots of people, if you couldn't find the keys. We all knew about it. I first found out about it while working in the field workshop at Jindabyne."

After Barry left the Snowy he went to work for the Hydro scheme in Tasmania, working in the heavy equipment maintenance workshop.

He said that although he recalled seeing Land Rovers in use there, he did not know how many were used or over what period.

We would be very interested to learn more about the Land Rovers used on Tasmania's Hydro scheme.

Works Minis



I have now had time to read the two excellent articles that you have written on the Works Minis, in Issue 16. Well done for explaining RJB as well as you have. I think this epitomises the problem of deciding "what is an ex-Works Mini".

One thing is clear, though. The last two Minis built at Abingdon were YMO 886J and the one you are missing YMO 885J. These two cars were built for the 1970 Sherry Rally and not used, owing to Lord Stokes closing down Comps.

885 now resides in the Isle of Man. There was a good article in Mini Cooper Register magazine Cooperworld detailing the life of the car.

Going back from these two gets complicated. Probably two of YMO 881H, XJB 308H and OBL 46F, with possibly SOH 878H in the mix, but this does not take into account re-built cars such as RJB 327F and LRX827E.

As I say, your article on RJB tells it all!

Keep writing!

Brian Bradley - UK (via email)

Thanks Brian. I have gone into even more detail on some of the Works Minis that came to Australia in the latest issue of The Mini Experience Reloaded, available from Pocketmags.com

Firefly Extras



Thanks for the excellent article on our ex-Snowy Land Rover Firefly (Issue 17). Having it on the front cover was a really nice surprise.

These two shafts (above) were given to me recently by the previous owner of the vehicle, Alex Morton.

He said they were in one of the rear lockers when he got the Land Rover.

John Tarran – via email

Body of Evidence



I read with interest the story on the 1928 Morris Minor (*Minor Response*).

My first encounter with this car was late in 1965, then owned by Clive Carmichael. It was a sad sight. Clive was a toolmaker by trade and made many of the components at Roadson Bros and Tippet better known locally as Ronnies.

Clive was a foundation member of the Vintage and Classic Car Club in Ballarat – now possibly the biggest Car Club in the old car movement in Australia.

The Morris Minor, a 1923 Renault and an old German Stoewer, that came to Australia via Scotland, were the foundation of the Club.

The body as described in the item as probably home-made has all the components that indicate it could have been a Cutter body, adapted for the car. Cutters were body builders in Ballarat; predominantly building bodies for Rolls Royces, which, like many cars of the time, were imported into Australia as a chassis/radiator.

Thanks for a great magazine.

Bill Walters – Wendouree, Vic.



Morris Vanguard Estate



On the top of p12 (Issue 17) is a letter about a Morris Major Wagon (inset photo above).

This is a customer conversion. The rear side windows and roof panel are from a Series 3 Vanguard Estate, with a one-piece tailgate in place of the normal two-piece. A photo of one of these is at the bottom of page 39 (shown above).

My father was a Vanguard man during my schooling days, and I became involved with BMC products in my early 20s, when I took up a sales position with a small BMC dealership south of Adelaide. I left there just prior to the release of the Tasman/Kimberley models.

I have owned a Mk1 Austin 1800 automatic, Mk1 1800 manual, Morris 1500 5-speed and Mk2 1800 manual.

**Malcolm Dinning -
Pt Vincent, SA**

Gold Mini LS

On the subject of the Mini LS (Issue 17), I came across an LS at a panel beaters, which was painted Nugget Gold. I thought it was a 1275 LS, but the wheels were the 10" Contesta type, and I know that these wheels will not fit with the 8.4" discs.

On closer inspection I realized it was a 998 LS. I have never seen one before in that colour. Everything looked the same as the 1275. Anyway, I did copy down the car number and month/year: car no: 100111, 4th month 1978.

In relation to the SS, you are correct; there never was a brochure printed. I have documentation from Leyland's Publicity Department stating that only posters would be distributed.

My mother also had a Silver Blue 998 LS. I wish I still had it now. My brother's friend had an Iridium Green 998 LS.

Great Magazine. Keep up the good work.

Bill Middleton – via email.

Thanks Bill. Yes, the 998cc Mini LS was available in both Nugget Gold and Hi-Ho Silver, but only in small numbers and only in 1978.



MOTORCLASSICA

The Australian International Concours d'Elegance & Classic Motor Show

WALK WITH THE GREATS AT MOTORCLASSICA.

21-23 October 2016

ROYAL EXHIBITION BUILDING MELBOURNE



100 YEARS OF BMW / MERCEDES-BENZ / ROLLS-ROYCE / DUCATI / TOURING SUPERLEGGERA

Experience new and classic cars and motorcycles / Collector car auction / Motoring cinema / Restoration & maintenance / Touring destinations / Art and collectables / Auto after market / Club displays / Special guests

Tickets now on sale at motorclassica.com.au



Austin A70 Flyer

Eric Bailey's story in Issue 17 reminded me of my Austin A70 experience 50 years ago.

I was Service Manager of a small BMC dealership in Scotland and sold a regular "petrol and grease only" customer a Wolseley 6-110, on which he traded a 1954 A70 Hereford.

He did all his own servicing, except greasing. I bought the car for £50 and it was an absolute cracker.

The previous owner found out I had his old car and presented me with a list of lubricants he used in the vehicle.

He was a scientist with the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research.

Every lubricant had been tested and was the best in its field: Engine - BP Viscostaic; Gearbox - Castrol XL; Front hubs - Shell Retinax A; etc. No company had more than one product on the list.

The car was getting a bit soft in the front end and this was cured by filling the front shocks with EP90 gear oil!

I sold the car to my father, who had owned an A70 Hampshire, and he was delighted with it.

The old thing could fly and this was proved one Saturday night when my sister held a party, about 40 miles from home.

It was a good party and we left about 2am; my boss in his new Mini Cooper, my brother in his 2.4 Jaguar and me in dad's A70.

We were in convoy on the first twisty bits, then came to a two-mile straight. My boss shot off, closely followed by the Jag.

I stuck the A70 into third gear and flattened it.

As I shot past the Cooper I glanced at the speedo. The needle was off the clock and almost perpendicular!

I did not see the other two again.

On the Monday morning I was interrogated as to what I had done to the old girl to make her perform.

Maybe it was all the different lubricants.

Keep up the good work, Watto. As you can see from my background, I was there.

Bob Cowan - Wanneroo, WA.

Mystery UK Mini Van



I have an English 1969 Morris Mini Van in Tartan Red, that is very unusual. The floor is the same as the Mini Traveller, with a rear bench seat. The fuel tank is underneath and the spare wheel is stored inside in an integral pressed steel well, beneath a small false floor. Yet, the side panels are normal for a UK Mini Van, with no windows.

The vehicle was first registered in Surrey, England 1969.

I have heard that there was a small fleet of these hybrid Van/Traveller vehicles purchased by a utility company, and registered in the Surrey area.

Having spoken to a few more enthusiasts they believe it may have been part of a limited fleet purchase from the factory for either the Post Office or a utility company.

Jon Pressnell, in his book *Mini - The Definitive History*, has a photo of a Mini Van with a rear seat and says that these were available as a conversion from the factory, with the spare wheel and battery moved to the sides of the Van. Mine is not like this, with the spare wheel and battery as per the Traveller.

My Mini has not undergone any modifications since the factory build and remains original.

I have sent a request for information to the Mini Traveller and Countryman Register, but have not yet heard back from them. I have also spoken to the Heritage Centre at Gaydon, who had limited information of vehicles of 1969 and were unable to help.

If any of your readers can help with information it would be greatly appreciated. I can be contacted through this magazine.

Colin Brotton (UK) - via email.



Bringing Back Lots of Memories



MG RV8 from Issue 13

I've been a subscriber to your magazine since *The Mini Experience* and have every issue except the very first couple.

I look forward to reading each issue, as you cover a wide and interesting range of articles, many of which bring back fond memories from my past.

The article *MG In Spirit* (Issue 12) re: Dennis Seal and his Morris Minor - I know Dennis personally, as he's an ex-motor mechanic, like me, and well known around Maclean.

Dennis, who is now well into his 80s, has always been a perfectionist in his work applications, no matter what. The prime example of this is his car, which he often drives to displays at local car shows.

The article *MG Reborn* (Issue 13) re: the MG RV8. I saw two of these cars in January this year (2016) at the Evans Head Fly-in and car display.

The two were identical in colour and one was sporting twin SU carburettors, while the other was exactly like that in the magazine.

They were parked with and Austin-Healey 100M and two red MGAs - one with the factory fixed hardtop (Coupe body) and the other with a removable hard top of similar style.

There was also an immaculate white MGA Twn Cam soft-top, and a large SS (before they were given the Jaguar name) saloon. It was quite a heavy but beautiful looking car for its time, and even now.

The story *The Road To Hell* (Issue 14) about the Morris 8 in South Africa brought back plenty of memories.

My first car, when I was still an apprentice mechanic at McLeod's garage in Coogee Beach (Sydney), was one of these, with canvas top, in falling apart condition, which I bought for £35.

When purchased, the running boards were parting company

with the front and rear mudguards and, because of the light chassis and wooden framework, the body felt quite twisty.

As a result, the fitted door catches offered little passenger security - as experienced on a couple of occasions when the passenger door flew open while negotiating right-hand corners, and I nearly lost a passenger to the roadway.

On one of my trips home to Maclean from Sydney, I broke the main leaf in the front spring, just out of Newcastle.

I got a lift into Newcastle, bought a brand new main leaf for the spring (about £3), then a lift back to the car, removed and replaced the broken leaf and back on the road again.

The canvas top wasn't in the best condition and verging on rotten. I had the misfortune further along the same journey when a gust of wind ripped the hood along the windscreen and the full length of both side seams, leaving it flapping in the breeze behind me.

Between these problems, and later fuel pump problems, I was on the road, with no sleep, for about 40 hours.

Some time later, dad got me to leave the car at home and while I was away he did up the body, painted it red with black mudguards and cream wheel rims, and made up and fitted a heavy-duty canvas hood and side curtains.

After all the early problems, it turned out to be a good and reliable little car.

They were fond memories of what you wouldn't get away with today. The roads back then weren't the smoothest or greatest, either.

The letter from Ray Snook (Issue 16, p10) brought back memories of when I worked under Ray in the 1960s at the Navy's service and minor repairs garage in Dowling St, Woolloomooloo.

Ray, if you are ever up in the Maclean area, look me up or make contact through this magazine.

Keep up the good work and may your publication go from strength to strength.

Terry Essex - Maclean, NSW

The Tale of Another Green Mini LS



Peter's son Christopher and daughter Penelope with the newly acquired Mini LS in 1977.

Firstly, congratulations on bringing out the two magazines, I have been an avid reader of both since their release, the articles are extremely well researched and photographed. Bravo!!

What a lovely well presented Mini L.S. Debbie Jandera has. A car to be really proud to own!

39 years ago an identical car came into our possession.

My first Mini was an early model 850 with sliding windows, purchased from a business acquaintance who worked for Repco Brabham Engines in Maidstone in the late 60's.

The car had been fairly well worked over and would see off most would-be Fangios over the first 50m when the lights turned green.

Our LS was bought December 1977, as a surprise Christmas gift for my wife Ann, (we were second time around newly together and somewhat impoverished.)

She was driving a scruffy Mini De Luxe that I had resurrected. Rick and Ian at Scottune were a great help in assisting, and advising me in getting this mobile and registered.

At the time the LS certainly was a classy motor car; a head turner: great colour, alloy wheels, heater, two-speed wipers, tinted windows, heated rear window, radio/tape deck, fog lights, and in reverse both rear indicators lit the way. We had to have one.

I came across this low km demonstrator at Brents on the corner of Dandenong and Warrigal roads (long since gone).

As it was to be a surprise, I managed to hide the car in our neighbour's garage on Christmas eve, telling our

three-and-a-half-year-old daughter not to tell her mother.

Christmas morning: up early, drive the car to the front gates and roll it down the drive into the shed. My 1800 occupied the garage.

Obviously the Mini wouldn't fit under the tree with the other presents. Needless to say, it was a big surprise when it was revealed.

It was put to good use for several years in ferrying the children to and from school, sports days and meals on wheels. A Rover Quintette (Honda) semi auto for my wife came next in 1987, and the Mini was retired. (Well, the Quintette had 4 doors and a bigger boot).

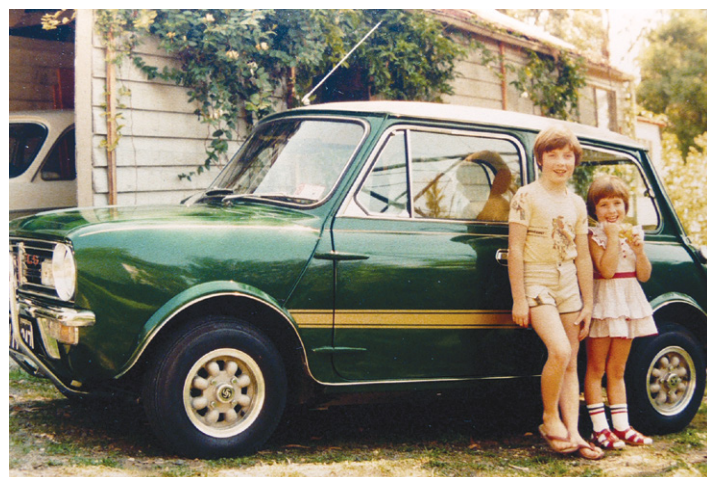
In 1992 out of retirement, with new brake seals, and shoes for the roadworthy, it was put back on the road when our daughter Penelope became eighteen and got her driving licence.

She used it during her university years, during which time it was not treated very well.

Vandals ripped off the radio aerial; the roof has several dents; somebody backed into the front with the towbar mangling the bumper and denting the front panel; and somebody pinched the front carpet.

The LS was retired in 1997, when the manual 1983 Quintette I was driving was passed down to Penelope. The Mini was kept however.

Now, the need for a second car down here on Phillip Island has seen me gradually (very slowly I'll admit) dismantling the front suspension for bushes replacement, diff and wheel bearing seals, (bearings cleaned, inspected and repacked); inner and outer



CV joint lube and gaiters; new wheel cylinders front and rear; and the need for the engine to come out for replacing the crankshaft pulley seal in the timing case. Also cleaning up and repainting the engine bay etc.

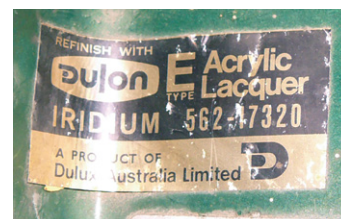
The radiator obviously needs attention too, as it has blown plenty of rusty coolant out during its last running days.

Surprisingly the odometer reading is 75063 km, so I hope the engine will run OK when I remove the air pump and plumbing.

Regrettably, this is only going to be a roadworthy-ready job. It really could do with a respray. The Mini is mainly rust free; three wheel arch extensions are required; the plastic chrome trim; new carpets and some panel work.

I would dearly love to do a complete restoration. However, a few years ago a loan to a "friend" whose engineering company went bust evaporated most of our retirement funds, so it will be up to the next owner (whoever/whenever this may be) to do a proper job.

Finally, I feel that the trim colour details of Debbie's car in the article are at odds with my perception.



I don't have the factory description, but I wouldn't describe the vinyl roof as tan. I would say more of a parchment colour. The same for the interior. Tan to me is a light shade of brown. I would describe the seat vinyl as a creamy/yellow with a gold colour fabric inserts. (I hope to source some as the front seats need upholstery).

Thank you again for the great mag.

Peter Jelly - Newhaven, Vic.



The Mini receiving a bit of long overdue TLC in 2016.

Mini Dreams



Just thought you would like to see a photo of the jigsaw puzzle I have finally finished, which I bought from your magazine - *Workshop Dream*. It was the hardest jigsaw I have done, but it looks great. I hope you like it.

Also enclosed are some photos of our Mini Clubman, 1977 model tow wagon, with Nambucca Smash and Towing sign-written on it.

We bought it as-is from Mini Performance Centre in Kurmond, near Sydney. Owner Vic Della Vale is a walking encyclopedia on Minis.

Kaye Evans - Gloucester, NSW



Lucky Swap Meet Find



Rummaging through a recent swap meet in Brisbane, I found a unique document: A Nuffield Dealer Agreement signed by Nuffield Australia, Howards Limited of Brisbane and Mount Isa Motors in September 1953.

Howards distributed Morris Cars, Morris Commercial Vehicles, M.G Cars, Wolseley, Riley Cars and Nuffield Universal Tractors.

Located in the back section was the authority to sell Studebaker Cars, as well as Matchless and Triumph motorcycles.

Paul Hamer - via email.

African Queen



I have just borrowed the latest issue from my friend Bruce Glasby and read the interesting article on the A35 pick-up. Another friend in Bulawayo, Graham Bishop, has two restored examples.

This is PU109, a daily driver. Unfortunately the other, pristine, is mothballed prior to its being sent off to South Africa (sadly) so not immediately available for a photo.

Peter Locke - Zimbabwe.



A Handful of Baby Austins



Enclosed are three photos of my A40 Farina Countryman, that I bought in May 1997 from a chap who I had been supplying parts to.

The odometer at the time had about 44,000 miles and the Overall condition suggests that this could be genuine.

When I sold the car a couple of years ago, it had around 58,000.

I am glad I bought this wagon, as it gave my wife and me a lot of pleasure.

The photo with me is in June 2013 at our club's annual rego inspection day.

The photos with the Farina on the trailer behind my A95 was when I took it to Melbourne to be in the Shannons Insurance Show 'n' Shine display at the 2000 Australian Grand Prix in Melbourne.

I am a member of the Razorback Crankhandle Association at Picton, NSW. We did three major tours with the club in the Farina.

The first was to the Great Ocean Road in Victoria; second, a tour of Tasmania; and third, a trip to Kangaroo Island in SA. The car was reliable and economical on all these trips.

Also enclosed is a photo of five A35 Pick-ups. This was taken in 1993 in New Zealand, after a car show at the Western Springs Show Ground at Auckland.

I had heard of this model and saw the cars being loaded, so rushed back and grabbed my camera.

I have also included a photo of another A35 Pick-up, which I took in 2007 at Pukekohe swap meet, also in New Zealand.

John Neumann - Picton, NSW.





George Caller, who we featured last issue, has sent in this photo of William St, Sydney, during its heyday as Sydney's auto-alley.

I have dated it early 1960s (1962?). Among all the Holdens and Fords, the latest cars I can identify in the photo are an XK Falcon (1960) turning right closest to camera and EK Holden (1961) parked on the right side of pic. An Austin A50 is coming through the intersection.

I can see the Larke Hoskins sign, just past the Renault sign. Working back toward the camera - Rover, VW, Jaguar, then a big gap back to York Motors and Lancaster Motors with Morris, Austin, Wolseley (so after 1961), then NRMA, Chrysler, Simca, then Hillman, Humber, Commer parts. On the left side of the road, working from the front Rambler and Humber at Hastings Deering, then Ford are the only car brands I can see. Can you add anything to help date the photo more accurately?

Supercharged Moke

I have been on the road for the last five years with a Land Rover Defender and off-road camper. I was in the army for many years and in the '70s after Vietnam I was a desert survival instructor (see pp16-17).

At 70, I thought it best to do it all again, with more comfort and without some officer trying to tell me how to do my job.

This time I have been on every desert (except the Great Victoria - too big and boring); the Cape (x3); Top End; Kimberly; Flinders Ranges (x3); Tassie (x2); SW WA; Cooktown to Grampians; and just about everywhere inbetween.

Over 209,000km I haven't had any real problems and I've lost count of the Tojo's and Nissans I've towed out of places they shouldn't have gone.

Back in the '70s I had an 1100cc Moke that I painted zebra striped and put a Godfrey's supercharger (Rootes-type) on. The Godfrey's had a larger than normal gear case with flanges

to bolt to a bench. It had been used to pressurise a cabinet in a laboratory and I got it for a song at a closing down sale - nobody knew what it was.

I cut a hole in the bonnet and the side panel and mounted it on angle iron brackets, rubber mounted to the flat mudguard.

A jockey wheel wasn't used because when you revved it the engine leaned forward and tightened the belts. Any flex needed was from the mudguard flexing. All primitive, but it worked.

I cut the inlet manifold from the exhaust, ran a three-into-one extractor along the tunnel, with a hot dog at the rear.

The inlet manifold was standard, with a pipe from the charger to inlet manifold made from exhaust pipe tubing. The corners were EJ Holden top radiator hoses with coil springs inside to prevent collapse under vacuum.

I fitted a 1¾" SU from an



Austin 1800. The engine was decompressed to 6.8:1 by making a 0.100" annealed solid copper gasket. I made a drive by calculating swept volume per revolution (x2 being four stroke), and swept volume of the charger to calculate pulley size to give 8 lbs/sq inch boost.

The original radiator was removed and replaced with a larger Goliath item mounted on the front bull bar. In front of this was a cut down oil cooler from a Saracen armoured car.

I used Finnish Dunlop ice tyres, with removable tungsten spikes using a device looking like a pop rivet tool. In sand you couldn't spin the wheels.

I had a fast back rag roof fitted, put a roof rack over it as a "roll cage" to which I mounted Centurion tank head lights. Two spare wheels went on the roof rack and an army trunk was mounted on the rear bumper for a boot.

Zev Ben-Avi - Mt Kilcoy, Qld

Taming The Dragon



Bronwyn Burrell has champagne ready as she receives the keys to Puff from Trevor Ripley.

In Issue 16 we had the story of the 1970 London to Mexico World Cup Rally Austin Maxi (*Out Of Puff*), driven by Tish Ozanne, Bron Burrell and Tina Kerridge.

Although partly supported by Leyland, the car was prepared for the rally by Marshall, in Cambridge, and entered privately by Ozanne.

After the rally the car was retained by Ozanne, until she sold it in about 1972. Nothing was heard of the Maxi until 1997, when it was restored and sold to an Italian collector. It reappeared in the UK in 2013 and was bought by Trevor Ripley.

Tina and Bron were reunited with the Maxi, named Puff because it ran out of puff on the WCR, at the 2013 Fenland Fair and were also with it at the World Cup Rally 45th Anniversary event at Gaydon in 2015. Bron's interest was rekindled and she began to get involved in historic rallying.

Earlier this year, she convinced Trevor to sell her the car. The official hand-over took place at the BMC-Leyland Show at the British Motor Museum, Gaydon, on 3 July.

Also at the event were two other BMC cars from the 1970 WCR: the Maxi driven by Prince Michael of Kent, Gavin Thompson and Nigel Clarkson; and the BMC 1800 driven by Jean Denton, Pat Wright and Liz Crellin – sponsored by *Woman* magazine and named The Beauty Box.


Pat Wright was also present on the day, to be reunited with The Beauty Box, which is now owned by David Scothorn and rallied occasionally in historic events.

"After several attempts and previous 'cheap makeovers' Project Shop TV in Weston is now seriously restoring and prepping the car to fight once again... rather than be a trailer exhibit. The list is long, but at least she will then be in a state to do some events again", Bron reported.

"Also, just to check that I can do what I need to be able to do with the car, I went 'quietly' to a rally school to drive a Subaru around the rally track", Bron explained. "I asked the owner to honestly let me know if I was wasting my time trying to rally again. After 3½ hours of sliding, handbrake turning and generally going sideways, I asked him if he thought I was okay to compete. I'll never forget his words – 'I have had many young men here who cannot do half of what you have just done. If you want to – do it.' Quite made my day!"

Bron will have Puff on the Austin Maxi Owners Club stand in the Classic Car Show at the NEC in November; the theme this year being "Heroes and Heroines". "That little car is such a star!", she said.

She is hoping, with Tina co-driving, to also gain an entry into this year's Le Jog – the three-day, 1000-mile Land's End to John O'Groats Reliability Trial and Classic Car Tour, regarded as the toughest classic rally in Europe – in December.

We will let you know how they get on. 



Reunited with Puff at 2013 Fenland Fair.



Tina & Bron with Puff at WCR 45th - 2015.



Bron & Tina in Puff at the WCR 45th.



Pat, Tina & Bron with The Beauty Box.



The Beauty Box with Puff at the BMC-Leyland Show, Gaydon, this year.



Tour of Duty



Words and photos by Paul Newby



This Sprite earned its wings with its pilot owner, spent many years grounded but has served over fifty years as a faithful transport.

This 1964 Austin Healey Sprite Mk III has worn no less than ten sets of registration plates since it first hit the road, as well as spending a fair amount of time in hibernation while its owner jetted off (literally) to distant shores.

Brian Weston enjoyed a distinguished 34-year career in the Royal Australian Air Force as a jet-fighter pilot, which included flying Mirages and F/A-18 Hornets. But back in 1964 he was a lowly 19-year-old second-year Air Force cadet at the RAAF Academy at Point Cook, driving a two-tone 1952 Ford Consul. While the Consul

was a sound and reliable barge it was hardly in keeping with the image of an aspiring jet jockey who dreamt of open-top adventures in a svelte sports car.

BMC released the MK III Sprite in late 1964 and this was seen as just the sort of car that Brian needed. Having been rebuked by the salesman at Peter Manton Motors in downtown Melbourne over the value of his Consul, he took his business to Goulds Motors in suburban Northcote.

"I had to wait four weeks before taking delivery of chassis YAGN8 629, a very early

Champion Red Mk III registered JDB-836 on 28 November 1964," remembers Brian.

"Interestingly, over the next 18 months a further six cadets from the No 16 RAAF Academy Course would buy Mk III and IIIA Sprites, and most from Gould's; and certainly none from Peter Manton Motors. By early 1966 there were two Mk III and five Mk IIAs at the Academy, oh, and a solitary Triumph TR2."

Early on the inadequate Dunlop C49 crossply tyres were replaced with Pirelli Cinturato radial tyres that no longer made



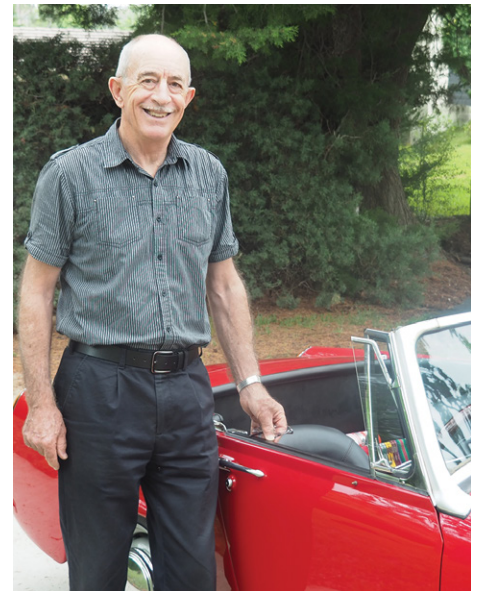
Point Cook Airfield - 1964.



Six Sprites and a TR2 - RAAF Academy, Point Cook, Vic - 1966.



Brian with his mate Terry in Point Lonsdale - 1965.



Brian with the car 50 years later.

wet weather driving a heart-in-mouth experience! The Sprite was used on several interstate dashes; trips to the beach with surfboard secured; as well as trips to visit a young lady from the Bellarine Peninsula. (Happily this lady became Mrs Weston and still is to this day. The Sprite also got her to the church in time and performed reliably on the honeymoon too!)

In 1966 Brian was scheduled to undertake further studies in the U.K. and he faced a dilemma. Should he sell the Sprite at what would be a significant loss, or should he put it into storage? He chose what would become the first of a several periods of hibernation.

But before this happened disaster struck, as Brian explains. "I was on temporary duty at the Central Flying School at RAAF Base East Sale, awaiting departure to the UK. After an enjoyable weekend driving around Lake Wellington, the coolant drain tap on the block vibrated loose and the Sprite overheated. Very quickly it became apparent that the engine had suffered major damage, as it started to use large quantities of oil."

"So I lifted the head and dropped the sump to remove the pistons that had telltale signs of scarring from the oil ring. However, the cylinder bores appeared smooth and undamaged. So a new set of pistons went in and the Sprite was carefully run in over 1,500 miles. But soon after its first extended full-power run, an

ominous rattle developed. It was too late to investigate, as I was soon on a Boeing 707 bound for London. The Sprite sat on blocks at Point Lonsdale for the next 20 months."

While in England, Brian ran a Triumph TR2 that consumed equal amounts of fuel, oil and water but otherwise proved reliable. But the Triumph had terminal rust and was sold to a wrecker for the princely sum of £10 prior to his return to Australia.

With Brian back in Australia, the Sprite was towed into Murphy's; the Geelong BMC dealer. Here the engine was hot-soaked in an oil bath to remove the internal stresses caused by the overheating. It was bored and 20 thou oversize pistons were fitted. Murphy's top mechanic did an excellent job. Indeed the cylinder head wouldn't be lifted for another 20 years.

Although the Sprite returned to the road in September 1968 sporting new Victorian registration, it was soon NSW registered as Brian was transferred to RAAF base Williamtown, near Newcastle.

The Sprite's "tour of duty" was under two years, as Brian and his blushing bride's next overseas jaunt was with No 3 Squadron at RAAF Base Butterworth, Malaysia, commencing in June 1970.

Over a period of 27 months, Brian flew Mirage fighters in Malaysia as part of the SEATO security commitment against the "Red Threat" that was the Vietnam conflict. During this time, the couple's mode of

transport was a white 1960 MGA 1600.

Back to Williamtown in 1972 and the Sprite was reregistered for the road. Initially a maroon Datsun 1600 joined it in the carport but was replaced a year later by a red Alfa Romeo 2000 GTV, which had the advantage of two rear seats, when the family grew to four with the addition of two daughters during this time.

By 1977 Brian was back in Canberra "flying" a desk. The Alfa soon departed – rear legroom was never its forte – and a sensible Peugeot 504 became the family taxi, while the Sprite continued as the second car.

1980 saw a return to Butterworth for two years at No 75 Squadron, followed by a year at the USAF Air Warfare College in Montgomery, Alabama. Meanwhile, the Sprite was again up on blocks, at the in-laws' on the Bellarine Peninsula in Victoria!

Brian and family returned to Australia in June 1983. The Sprite was initially reregistered in Victoria, then the following year in the ACT where it was used on the daily commute along the twisting Lady Denman Drive to the Joint Services Staff College at Weston Creek.

In 1986 it was back to New South Wales and Richmond RAAF Base. Living on base in married quarters meant no daily commuting, just enjoyable sports car duty! A leisurely 1987 saw the engine given a freshen up with new rings and bearings.



An Aussie Assembled Sprite.



St Christopher medal on the dash.



Wearing the latest number plates.



The family returned to Canberra in 1987 and back to the daily commute for the Sprite. It also was used for another special task involving the eldest daughter as Brian relates.

"All of the experts questioned why I wanted to tackle the emotional hurdle of teaching daughters to drive. I said if I can teach young men to fly the Mirage I can teach my daughter to drive! Not only did number one daughter front up to the ACT Registry in the Sprite and passed first time, she also mastered the heel-and-toe double shuffle into non-synchro first gear on the move!"

Brian's last flying posting was in 1990, this time F/A-18 Hornets at RAAF Base, Williamstown. This marked the end of the Sprite's commuting duty, as it sat in the garage while Brian took a "company car" Ford Fairlane to work.

This created an opportunity to restore the Sprite's exterior finish, which after 28 years, much of it in the sun, was starting to fade.

"Phillip Bambach of Tomago undertook the work, which included stripping the Sprite to bare metal, removing the odd rust blister and respraying the car with two pack Champion Red," says Brian. "He did a great job too."

The nomadic existence of air force life continued, with a posting to London – seeing the Sprite again hibernating in Canberra. It came out again on 13th February 1995 with what would be its final (ACT) registration plate YYT547.

Brian left the RAAF in July 1997 after 34 years of service to pursue other interests.



This included building and racing a BRG Mk3 MG Midget 1275 in the Group S category of historic racing, which he continues to race to this day.

By 2003 with over 150,000 miles on the clock, the Sprite was finally treated to a full engine rebuild by respected Canberra engine builder Neil Trama. The engine was blueprinted and fitted with 40 thou oversize pistons and hardened valve seats to enable the use of premium unleaded fuel.

Brian's Sprite has fortunately spent many of its years in the dry Canberra climate, which has certainly helped keep rust at bay. Remarkably it still has its original floors and never had a serious bingle; merely a couple of minor scrapes.

As befits a sports car that is still driven enthusiastically, the Sprite sports a few subtle modifications.

"It is fitted with extractors, and tubular shock absorbers have replaced the lever arms at the rear," Brian explains. "Mk III Sprites came without an oil cooler or sway bar, so I've fitted an oil cooler and a standard 12 mm front sway bar. I've also replaced the original steering wheel with a wood-rimmed one."

Today the Weston family can rely on a number of motor vehicles to meet their

commuting needs. An E Class Mercedes for family duties, a BA Falcon GT for towing the (MG) race car and even a late Porsche 911 Carrera S for a real adrenalin rush. But for a spirited fang to the picturesque Cotter Dam, the Sprite would always win out. For Brian some things haven't changed in 50 years.

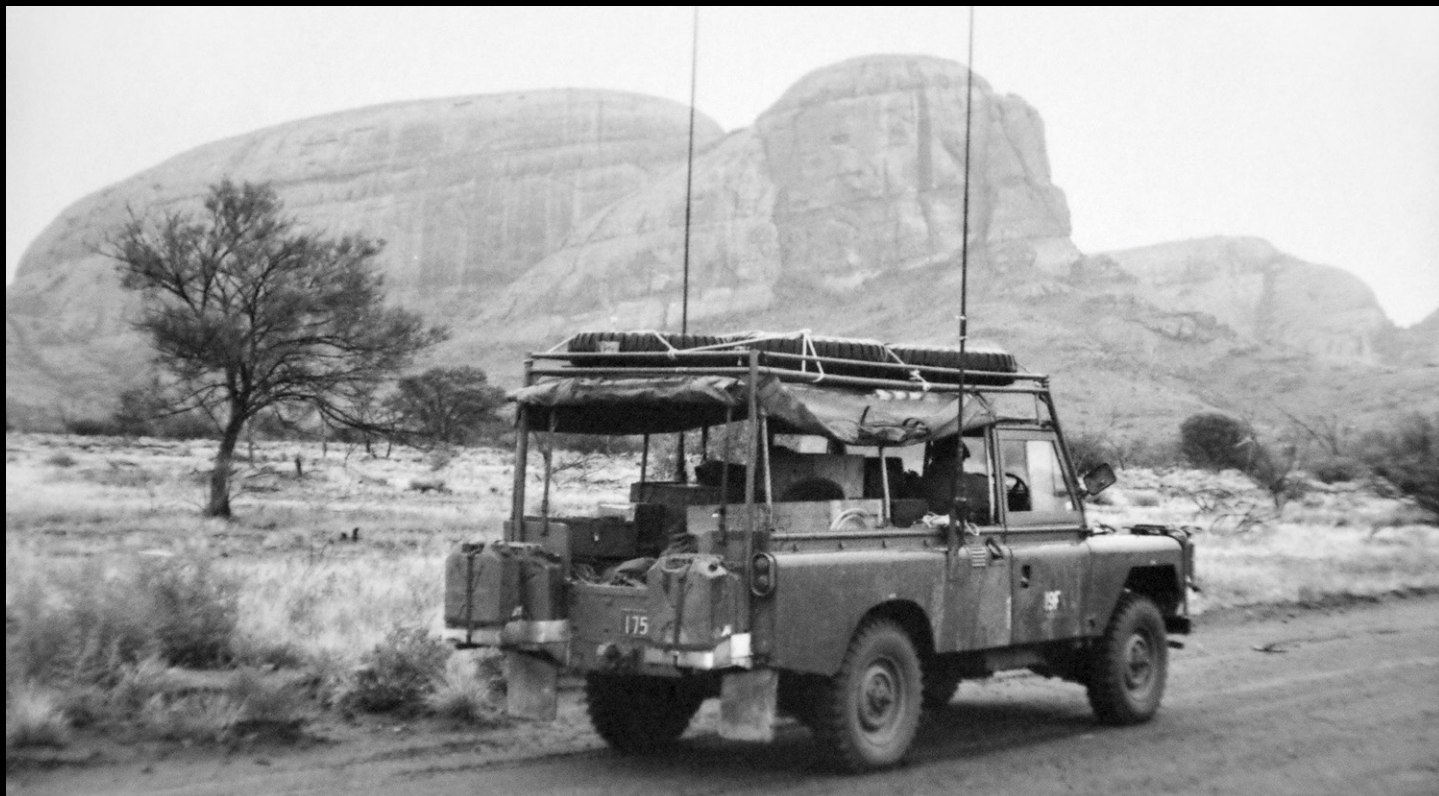


Brian with his racing MG Midget.



Eye Witness *to History*

Zev Ben-Avi was a desert survival specialist with the Australian Army in the 1970s. These photos are all from one Central Australian expedition in 1973.



The Olgas (Kata-Tjuta) in the rain.



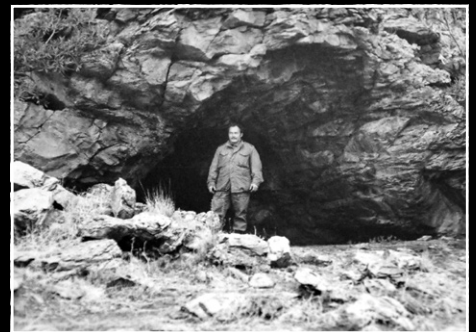
Snow chains worked very well on muddy desert tracks.



On the Sandy Blight Junction Road, at the Western Australia / Northern Territory border.



A British major on exchange at the Papunya Airport "waiting lounge".



Mechanic corporal at Lasseter's Cave.



The expedition saw a lot of rain.



Passenger's view of one of the Central Australian desert tracks.



The old Ayers Rock camping ground.

Club Profile

Morris Car Club of Victoria

by Stephen Whitworth



30 Years and Still Morrying Strong!



The first club meeting (left to right): Bob Whitbourne, Alain Ribas, Robert Lucas, Glen Whitbourne, Paul Watson, Bevan-Rhys James and Nick Donohue. Photo by Geoff Broomhead



The club organised the very successful Morris Centenary show at the Carribean Gardens in Melbourne in 2013.

The Morris Car Club (Victoria) Inc. was formed in 1986 for lovers of Morris (back then there was a greater emphasis on Majors). In later years the club expanded its charter and focus to include all Morris, BMC, Austin and Leyland-built vehicles.

The founding members came together after Bevan-Rhys James, who became the inaugural President and the club's first life member left a note on the windscreen of his Morris Major Elite that was strategically parked outside a display at the British and European Show held on the lawns of the Flemington Racecourse. The note invited people to contact him if they were interested in starting a club for Morris Majors.

Alain Ribas was one who saw the note, as he recalls. "Bevan's note said something like; 'If you are interested in starting a club

meet here on the hour every hour'. I came around the corner and there was Bevan standing on a box, spruiking the finer points of the Morris Major to a small but enthusiastic audience."

Bevan received a number of responses and from this initiative a club was formed. "We got really well organized", Alain continues. "We had fliers printed that we would leave under the windscreens of Morris cars and on a few occasions, while stopped at the lights, I'd jump out, tap on the window and hand the driver of a Morris one of these fliers."

The first formal meeting was held in Malvern on 12 April 1986 with three Majors and a 1960 Series 5 Morris Oxford. There were eight people in attendance, the youngest being 16-year-old Glen Whitbourne, who is still a member today.

The first run was to Barwon Heads and the club's 20th Anniversary Run/Lunch in 2006 retraced the original run. During the celebrations, Glen produced from his wallet the note he'd written when he saw the one on Bevan's windscreen 20 years earlier.

A monthly magazine was originally produced titled *The Bulls Eye*, which later morphed into the banner known as *The Neutered Bull* – an indication of the humour that has laid below the surface in recent years.

Our feature runs of the year include the RACV Classic Showcase (formally the British & European Show), and our annual Show-n-Shine. Every two years we invite the Morris Register to join us for a display day at Federation Square, which is a wonderful showcase for our cars and our club.



Getting down to business - 1st meeting.

REFLECTIONS FROM A RECENT MEMBER, STEPHEN WHITWORTH

I JOINED THE MORRIS CAR CLUB OF VICTORIA 18 MONTHS AGO. IN THAT TIME I HAVE WITNESSED ACTS OF INCREDIBLE GENEROSITY, EXPERIENCED GREAT EFFORTS TO MAKE NEW MEMBERS FEEL VALUED AND WELCOME AND I HAVE SEEN PEOPLE FROM ALL BACKGROUNDS JOINING AND WORKING TOGETHER.

THE MORRIS CAR CLUB POSSIBLY MIRRORS MOST CAR CLUBS IN THIS, BUT WHILE THAT MAY BE TRUE, NOTHING EVER PREPARES YOU FOR THAT POSITIVE EXPERIENCE.

I ENJOY THE MEETINGS. I LIKE HEARING THE STORIES AND I REALLY APPRECIATE SEEING MEMBERS GOING OUT OF THEIR WAY TO ENGAGE AND IGNITE INTEREST, NOT SIMPLY IN CAR RESTORATION. THEIR INTEREST IS GENUINELY FOCUSED ON ENSURING THE HUMAN SIDE OF A CAR-FOCUSED CLUB GROWS STRONGER, SO IT IS NOT JUST ABOUT CARS, HERITAGE PLATES AND RUNS, BUT JUST AS IMPORTANTLY IT IS ABOUT THE PEOPLE.

HAPPY 30TH ANNIVERSARY TO THE MORRIS CLUB OF VICTORIA. I HAVE LOVED EVERY MINUTE AND LOOK FORWARD TO WHAT COMES NEXT.



An early club trip to Point Cook RAAF base in 1988.



The club had a good turnout of members at the 2014 Motorclassica.



A REAPPEARING MORRIS MAJOR

THE STORY OF ONE MORRIS MAJOR SUMS UP HOW SMALL THE WORLD OF THE ENTHUSIAST CAR MARKET CAN BE.

ONE CAR THAT DID NOT MAKE IT TO THE FIRST MEETING OF THE MORRIS CAR CLUB WITH ITS OWNER BEING ATTENDED TO IN A WORKSHOP. IT WAS SHORTLY SOLD ON AND, ALTHOUGH ONLY WITH LOW MILES UNDER ITS BELT, THE NEXT OWNER DECIDED TO UNDERTAKE A COMPLETE RESTORATION. HOWEVER, THE JOB WAS NOT COMPLETED AND THE POOR MAJOR LINGERED IN PIECES FOR TWO SUBSEQUENT OWNERS. IN 1989, GLEN WHITBOURNE BOUGHT THE CAR WITHOUT KNOWING IT'S HISTORY.

GLEN REASSEMBLED THE CAR AND HAD IT PREPPED AND REPAINTED. WHILE VISITING A MORRIS PARTS BUSINESS IN MELBOURNE, HE WAS THUMBING THROUGH A MORRIS MAJOR HANDBOOK AND WAS AMAZED TO FIND IT WAS FROM HIS VERY OWN CAR; IT HAD THE SAME CHASSIS NUMBERS AND VIN DETAILS. RECOGNISING THE UNIQUENESS OF THE SITUATION, THE BUSINESS OWNER GAVE GLEN THE BOOK.

GLEN SOLD THE MAJOR IN 1991 AND THOUGHT IT WAS THE LAST HE WOULD SEE OF IT. TEN YEARS LATER IT WAS SOLD TO A CLOSE FRIEND OF GLEN'S. INCREDIBLY, THE POOR CAR HAD NOT BEEN DRIVEN IN THOSE TEN YEARS. THE CAR WAS AGAIN SOLD ON IN 2004 AND IS NOW FINALLY RUNNING AROUND VICTORIA ON CLUB PLATES.

The new Vicroads club permit scheme has facilitated greater use of our cars for pleasure-touring which has given committed restorers a greater reason to get their project cars finished and encouraged others to join them.

Our club believes strongly in welcoming new members and that there is real value in the fellowship that can be shared when enthusiasm and the experience of long-time "rusted on members" is combined.

We are a happy and friendly club. Our established members provide stability, while younger members are joining, with families whose children will be the future leaders of the club, and we are still attracting those of later years with memories of Morris.

"We just wanted to share our enthusiasm with other owners and give them a way to combine social with support", Alain explains. "I never imagined we'd get to a point where we'd have near 100 members but we have quite a few times over the past 30 years. It's been a great deal of fun"

If you are interested in knowing more about our club, our activities and our commitment please join us on the first Tuesday of each month at the Pascoe Vale RSL from 8pm, or feel free to join us for a meal from 6.30pm.

Alternatively visit our website for further details www.morrisclubvic.com



16yo Glen Whitbourne at the first meeting; he is still an active member.



CLUB FOUNDER BEVAN-RHYS JAMES MUSES ON LIFE WITH AN OLD MORRIS

MY DAILY DRIVE IS A 1955 MORRIS OXFORD SERIES 2; IT'S THE SAME AGE AS ME! SEEING AN OLD MORRIS GO PAST, MANY PEOPLE DON'T REGISTER; SOME LAUGH; MANY THINK YOU ARE, IN THE LEAST, ECCENTRIC BUT OTHERWISE BONKERS. THOSE IN THE KNOW, LOVE ITS SHAPE, ITS NOISE, ITS SMELL AND THE JOY OF SEEING IT.

THE PAST CAN HELP US APPRECIATE HOW OUR RECENT FOREBEARS SAW THE WORLD, AS WE PEER OUT THEIR WINDSCREEN INTO THE WORLD AS THEY SAW IT, IN OUR TIME, TODAY. THIS IS LITERALLY LIVING IN MOVING HISTORY.

TODAY'S OBSESSION OF HAVING THE LATEST, SLEEKEST, SMARTEST, FLASHIEST AND THE FASTEST, ALL WITH BUILT-IN OBSOLESCENCE IN A WORLD OF DIMINISHING RESOURCES, IS AN UNSUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLE.

MUCH OF THE ENERGY OUTPUT AND POLLUTION CAUSED BY A CAR IS IN ITS PRODUCTION. CLUBS LIKE OURS KEEP OLD "MORRIES" ALIVE AND PRESERVED. CERTAINLY, AN OLDER MOTOR MAY POLLUTE MORE THAN A SMALL MODERN ENGINE, BUT IF IT IS IN GOOD CONDITION AND RUNNING WELL, IT POLLUTES LESS AND USES LESS FUEL THAN A LARGE MODERN ENGINE.

IS IT POSSIBLE FOR US TO PAUSE, SLOW DOWN AND, FOR MORE THAN A MOMENT, IN OUR HARRIED HUSTLE, TO ACTUALLY APPRECIATE WHAT WE HAVE? DOES EVERYTHING HAVE TO GO FASTER? MY MORRIS IS PART OF THE NEW "SLOW VEHICLE" MOVEMENT - SLOW DOWN, ENJOY THE SCENERY.

I LOVE MY MORRIS, AND I DON'T WANT TO DRIVE ANYTHING ELSE IN ALL THIS RESOURCE-CHALLENGED WORLD. MAKE MINE A MORRIE!



Team BMC: Break! Mend! Continue!

Doing it for the kids!



22-29 October 2016 Bateman's Bay to Griffith via Phillip Island



As mentioned last issue, there were a few last-minute mechanical issues to be sorted.

Craig Illing (Craig 2) replaced the front wheel bearings, which just left an oil leak from the timing cover seal.

Craig came around to my place one weekend and we got into it. What a pain it was getting the aluminium radiator out - with fiddly little allen-key bolts holding on the cowl. The job took far longer than it should have as a result. I am thinking of replacing all those bolts with conventional ones, which you can at least get a spanner onto - especially the ones at the back.

While we were at it, we replaced the 16-blade metal fan with a regular plastic one. That one change has actually transformed the car.

Previously, there was a vibration through

the engine, particularly at highway cruising speeds, that had me a bit concerned. I couldn't put my finger on what it was, but the noise from the engine and an overall roughness was making me feel a little less than confident.

Now, the engine noise at high speed has been dramatically reduced and the vibration has gone completely. The engine now feels as it should, freely revving without any effort.

However, now I can hear the bearings in the alternator are making a bit of noise. I am hoping that it won't be a concern on the esCarpade. But, with the event spending most of its time close to civilisation, if the worst happens, we should be able to get the alternator fixed in one of the towns en-route.

There are a few additions I have had to make to the Mini, to meet the safety requirements of the esCarpade.

The first was to fit a cargo barrier, which every van or station wagon on the event has to have. Craig 2 got an old Commodore one and cut it down to size, with a bit of rhs steel welded on for a frame. Back at home, I pulled it out and gave it a coat of black paint. The result is a pretty professional looking job.



A cargo barrier is a safety requirement.



I don't want a repeat of last year.



We won't know the exact route until we are on the rally, but this is a good guide.

f Follow us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/TeamBMCAventures

We also need to have a flashing amber light, which can be seen from both the front and rear of the car. This is for safety in dusty conditions. I still have my old flashing light from when I did the Camp Quality Caper many years ago. To my surprise, it still works.

There also needs to be a rear-facing spotlight; also for dust. I already had the roof-mounted reversing light.

I have also fitted another fire extinguisher, behind the passenger's seat, mounted inside the B-pillar. I'm hoping we won't need one fire extinguisher, let alone two, but this one is more easily accessible by the driver, while the other is easier reached by the navigator.

There is always the chance we will come across another car in need of an extinguisher, and as I had a spare one, I thought 'what the heck!'

Most of the signage is now on the car, though at the time of writing there is still some room for more sponsors' names or business logos. By the time you read this, it will only be about a month until we head off.

TIS Electrics from Sunbury in Victoria has again supported us to the tune of \$2,000, which is greatly appreciated.

We are also pleased to have the Mini Car Club of NSW support us again with \$250 as well as a number of individuals again getting behind us. Regardless of the size of the donation, it is all appreciated. Every little bit adds up and it all goes toward making a better life for children living with cancer and their families.

So far, we have raised \$9,462 but I am

confident we can get well over our \$10,000 target. If you would like to get your or your company's name on the Mini, there may still be time.

I have been driving the Mini around a little to get it seen, as well as to get a few miles under its belt, to see if any problems raise their heads.

I had planned on taking DAV to the All British Day in Sydney at the end of August, but realistically, although I am confident in how he would go, it is an extra 2,000km that he just doesn't need.


However, I will probably have him on display at the Rob Roy Historic meeting in November - being after the rally, I'm hoping he will still be in fine fettle.

One thing I like about the esCarpade, apart from the fact we will be sleeping in beds instead of camping, is that we visit a lot of schools.

Together with the Camp Quality Puppets, the visits help spread the word about Camp Quality to rural communities, as well as teaching children that cancer is not contagious.

The puppet programme has been a huge success throughout Australia in helping children living with cancer to be accepted by their friends and school mates.

We also get to have our lunch stops in rural towns (marked in yellow on the map on the other page) and look forward to having friends and others come over for a chat. To that end, I hope that any of our readers who live on or near our route may take the time to come and say g'day.

Next issue I will have a full round-up on the event and how we got on. 

Thanks to our supporters:



DAV is virtually ready to go.

- Autostyle Paint & Panel Repairs
- Ian Mitchell
- Gordon Paterson
- Rod Quick
- Craig Lemon
- Chris Martin
- Wayne Clarke
- Graham & Lillian Hatfield
- Brett Sellers
- John Neumann

Total raised by Team B.M.C. so far (at time of printing) is: \$9,422.75

Road Trip

1965

Crossroads Alice



Photos by Evan Green & Scott Polkinghorne.

The expedition encountered drought-breaking rains at Ayers Rock.

In December 1965, two unlikely cars became the first ever to cross Australia from east to west or west to east, through the centre.

BMC Publicity manager Evan Green, "Gelignite" Jack Murray, photographer Scott Polkinghorne and BMC mechanic Alan Kemp, drove a Morris Mini Deluxe and an Austin 1800 to Australia's most Southerly (Wilsons Promontory), highest (Mt Kosciuszko) and most Easterly (Cape Byron) points, before embarking on a very hazardous crossing through The Centre.

The journey was part of a worldwide test of Castrol's then new oil, Castrol X with liquid tungsten. Proving the oil in extreme conditions, the crew experienced snow atop Mt Kosciuszko, and relentless heat in the Central Australian deserts. Driving through flooding rains, dust storms, desert sands and broken rivers, they covered a total of more than 12,000 miles (20,000km).

The trip became the subject of a film titled *Crossroads Alice*, and the central reason for Evan Green's first book, *Journeys With Gelignite Jack*.

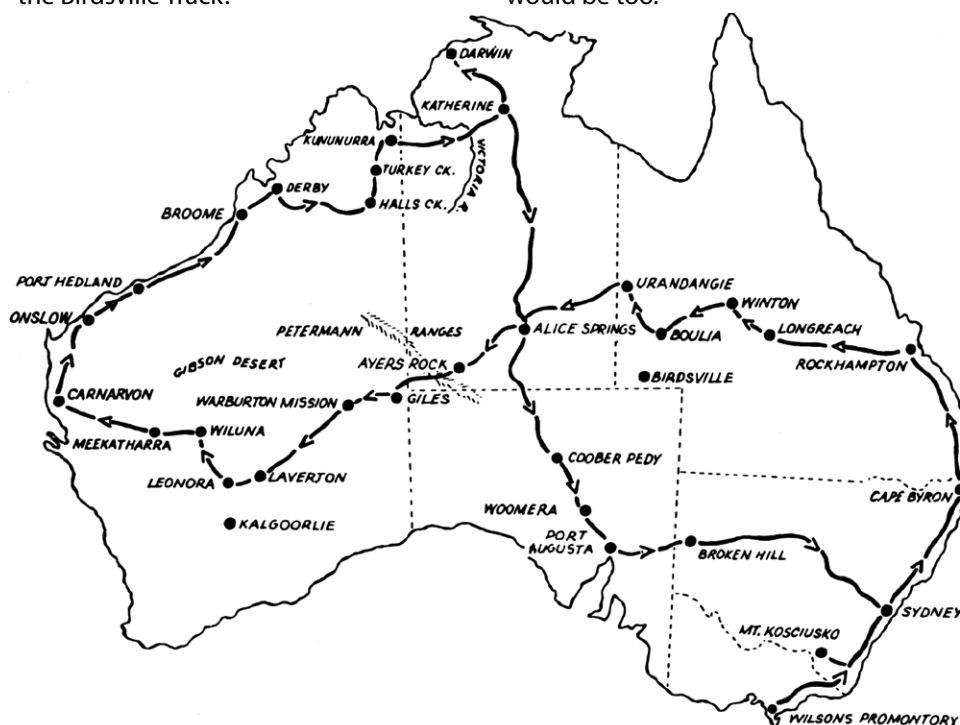
The Plan

In 1964 Green and Polkinghorne were involved in making a film about driving a Mini up The Birdsville Track; titled *Birdsville And Beyond* (see p96). Early in 1965 a visiting executive from Castrol in England saw the film and had an idea. Castrol was working on a new oil and he felt the Birdsville Track would be ideal for the hot weather testing.

Cold weather testing was being done in Norway, stop-start testing was in London, and high-speed tests at Monza, Italy. The Castrol exec contacted Max Roberts, Assistant General Manager of Castrol Australia, and asked if a pair of cars could travel 10,000 to 15,000 miles up and down the Birdsville Track?

Roberts put the question to Green, who reported; "The Birdsville Track is little more than three hundred miles long and thirty or more successive journeys through that depressing country would drive the crews of the motor-cars to madness. We looked at the map. I pointed out that, for the same mileage, cars could cover all the states of mainland Australia and encounter every condition from snow to sand."

"Max said... 'I don't think they really care where the cars go, as long as it's a real test of the oil. We'd like you to plan it, and, oh, they've asked that the same people who did the Birdsville film make a picture about this project. That means Scott and yourself. Interested?' That was like offering dope to an addict. I was hooked and I knew Scott would be too."



Australia's most easterly point, Cape Byron.



Drift sand covered much of the road in the Harts Range.



"Galignite" Jack Murray catches the first few drops of rain.

When setting the course Green realised that, while people had travelled virtually every part of Australia by this time, nobody had ever done the complete crossing, from East to West, or vice-versa, through the centre. Not by car, horse, camel or foot. This provided an extra attraction for him, to do something nobody else had done.

On selecting the cars, Evan got BMC to supply an Austin 1800 and a Mini, as he explained. "The Mini may have seemed a strange choice...Earlier trips with Minis – up the Birdsville Track and into Arnhem Land among other places – had taught me what you can and can't do with this cheeky little runabout."

Green's many experiences with REDeX Trial winner Jack Murray meant he was an obvious choice for the third driver. Murray was well known for his rallying exploits, and his penchant for practical jokes.

For the fourth member of the crew, they needed a mechanic who knew everything there was to know about how the cars were built and how to maintain them in poor conditions. Evan approached Alan Kemp who was BMC's Apprentice School Supervisor and also managed the small Competition Department.

Kemp recalled Murray was the life of the trip. "We got on very well. With Jack, everything was a big joke, and I think that did help. He was amazing in the way he could have a joke for every occasion; he just dragged them out. He's not as technical as he'd like to be. I don't think he was very highly educated, but he made the most of what he had."

Polkinghorne was the official photographer for the trip, with Green also shooting both movie film and photographs, but Kemp said he wasn't well for much of it, which was neither mentioned in the film nor the book. "Scott was very intelligent...He was a very good photographer...[but] he had some heart problems, and he was not supposed to carry anything heavy. He had the tripod and the movie camera, and on the odd occasion, if there was a pool of water and the car was going to go through it, and there was a bit of a hill over there, Scott would say, 'come-on we have to get up on that hill! I would carry the camera, and he would stagger up there and set it all up. He didn't make a thing out of it though, or use it as an opportunity or anything. He was just one of us."

The Journey

Because the test had to be carried out in extreme heat, it had to be done in high summer – quite simply, the most dangerous time of the year to be travelling in Central Australia.

Still, plans were made, and the two cars headed off in November 1965, first travelling down to Wilson's Promontory, then climbing Mt Kosciuszko, and travelling up to Rockhampton, via Cape Byron and the Gold Coast.

From Rockhampton they followed the Capricorn Highway through Emerald, Barcaldine, Longreach and Winton, then turned onto the beef roads through Boulia to Dajarra. From there the real adventure began, as they encountered the first really

rough section to the border outpost of Urundangi – with a permanent population of three people, including the publican and his wife.

Crossing into the Northern Territory, they found the going very rough, along the northern edge of the Simpson Desert, through sandy tracks made worse by soft drift sand that had blocked much of the road; becoming hopelessly bogged at one point and having to be towed out by a local.

After re-stocking supplies at Alice Springs they headed for Ayers Rock. Missing from the film is the acknowledgement that for the next part of the trip they were accompanied by another vehicle and driver. Entry to the Western Australian Aboriginal reserves required a permit, and this would not be granted in Summer unless they were accompanied by a 4WD vehicle.

The driver they contracted in Alice Springs was John Bamforth and his truck, "already high off the ground, had been fitted with oversize tyres to increase the clearance and improve traction through sand", and was christened by Murray the Iron Horse.

"In addition", Green wrote, "and most important on a stage that would run close to nine hundred miles without fuel – he was carrying two forty-four gallon drums of petrol, plus another drum of drinking water."

Temperatures through the deserts of Central Australia reached over 35°C every day, and while it is reported that the four were at times in danger of perishing if the cars got stuck or broke down, Bamforth



Every conceivable difficult road condition was encountered on the trip.



Sheltering from a dust storm.

and the Iron Horse ensured they were in no real danger.

But there is no denying the difficulty of the trip, through the rough tracks of the Peterman Ranges and beyond along the Gunbarrel Hwy, which although only put through seven years earlier, had seen little traffic or maintenance.

Kemp said the single standout memory from the trip was finding Lasseter's Cave. "Scott had been there before on a previous trip with Lasseter's son, so he roughly knew where it was. There was no road, and it was a bit off the track, about four miles or in that area, and in the cave... on the wall, there was a note in charcoal, that said something like "natives have deserted, starving, will head east...signed, H Lasseter."

When the fluid leaked out of the Mini's Hydrolastic lines, temporary repairs were made by cutting mulga logs into wedges and wiring them between the suspension arms and the body.

"With one side yielding and the other rigid, it shuddered unevenly through the bumps, so that it made progress in a series of fish-tail swerves. Ungainly as it was, it did have clearance", Green wrote.

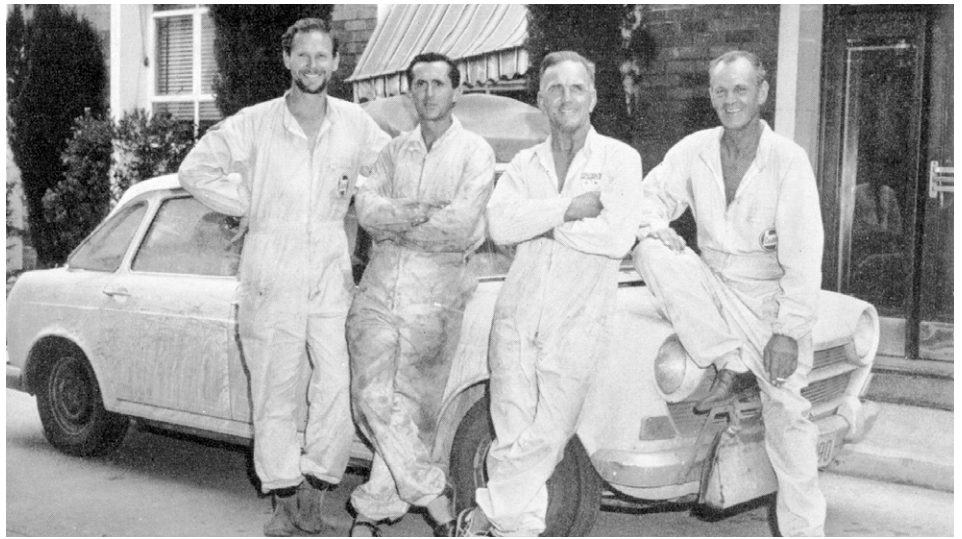
They were eventually able to repair the suspension at the BMC dealership in Kalgoorlie, after more than 1,000km over the desert and a detour from Laverton of another 350km.

They then headed north to Leonora and Wiluna, then straight across to Carnarvon, on the western coast, via progressively improving roads.

It was then a race to get to Darwin before the monsoonal rains hit. Having forded progressively deeper rivers – and being towed by a 4WD truck across the Victoria



Alan making repairs to Mini's suspension.



After arriving back in Sydney. L to R: Evan, Alan, Jack and Scott.

River – they arrived in Darwin a few days before Christmas. They had been on the road for five weeks.

Leaving Darwin on Boxing Day they had a fairly uneventful run down the bitumen to Alice Springs, making the town literally the crossroads of their journey.

From there, it was a straightforward run of around 3,000km back to Sydney via Port Augusta, Broken Hill and Dubbo. Green recalled; "we drove nearer the coast and the country became green and busy. Trees, grass, rivers, houses, and people. A line painted down the middle of the road. Yellow warning signs. Speed restrictions... The free-and-easy of the Outback had gone. Somewhere, at some point within the last few hours, we had entered another land."

Green's book, *Journeys With Gelignite Jack* and the BMC/Castrol film *Crossroads Alice* were released at a special press review in 1966 at Murray's garage in Bondi.

At the event, Alan Kemp had a special present for Murray, as he explained. "Every time Jack had the opportunity, when I was driving and had my shoes off, he'd throw them out the window and I'd have to stop and go back and get the shoes. We must have done a lot of extra miles having to go back for them. I sprayed them gold and presented them to Jack at the launch of Evan's book."



Evan's book *Journeys with Gelignite Jack* was re-released later as *Hit The Road, Jack* and included Murray's 'colourful' language.

The "Other" First Crossing



This Land Rover, now in the National Motor Museum, was one of two used by the Leyland Brothers in the first expedition from West to East through the Centre, in May to August 1966.

Travelling from the western-most point (Steep Point) to the eastern-most (Cape Byron) through the centre of the Simpson Desert, the team of five also encountered "drought-breaking" rains at Ayers Rock.

One of the Land Rovers experienced numerous broken differentials in the Simpson Desert, which tested the team's mechanic, Ted Hayes, to the limit.

Their journey was recorded in their documentary film *Wheels Across Australia*, and book *Where Dead Men Lie*, which were both released in 1967.

The book is long out of print, but the film is now available on DVD from the National Motor Museum in Birdwood, South Australia.



Jack presented with Alan's shoes.



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.



Back in 1939 when this photograph was taken, the Postmaster-General's Department was responsible for all postal and telecommunications services in Australia. Here we have a 1927 Morris Commercial, a little the worse for wear, adapted as a breakdown vehicle, with a British Bedford van in tow. NAA C4078_N1478A barcode 1647655



Mr Neil Harris, from Seymour in Victoria, in 1980 with his 1967 Morris 1100 sedan that he converted to an electric vehicle in 1978. He chose the Morris to convert because of its compact size and it being front-wheel-drive. NAA barcode 11412453

This page proudly sponsored by

wilfchambers

Wilf Chambers' Classic British Car Sales

Unit 6-8, 53 Guthrie St, Osborne Park, WA 6017 Ph: 08 9204 1188 or 0418 912 688

www.britishcarsales.com.au

Let us help you find your dream car – Australia Wide!

One Step Forward Two Steps Back

Words by Steve Maher.

Photos by Gerard Brown (gerardbrown.photoshelter.com)



That most gruelling of motor rallies for classic cars, The Peking To Paris Motor Challenge, only comes around every three years. This time the rally took 36 days and covered some 13,695km, travelling through China, Mongolia, Russia, Belorussia, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Italy, Switzerland and France.

Gerry Crown and Matt Bryson again lined up in their Leyland P76 V8 that won the previous event (see *BMCE* Issue 7), trying to score a hat-trick three in a row wins.

The field for this year's event was larger than in 2013, with 50 entries in the Vintageant category for pre 1941 cars and 59 in the Classic category for cars 1942 to 1975. There was a much bigger Australian contingent as well, with 16 Australian crews tackling the Challenge.

The depth of the field was also greater, with many more possible winners. So Gerry and Matt had their work cut out for them and the P76.

From the event start in Peking (Beijing)

the rally had a fairly straight forward run over two days to the Mongolian border, over some terrible Chinese country roads, with a couple of tests, or special stages, thrown in.

Most cars got through okay but some were already needing work. Into Mongolia is where the rally really starts and after three tests Gerry, Matt and the P76 were leading the event outright. Matt reported that they weren't pushing too hard, as it was only early in the event with a long way to go, and while they expected to be somewhere in the top ten, leading was quite a surprise.

Day four was where things started to go wrong. Two tests were conducted and the P76 was second fastest on the first. The second test though was not so good. Travelling at around 160km/h they came across a creek crossing with two alternative routes; they chose what looked the best and charged across. What wasn't easily visible was that both sides of the crossing had 30cm high embankments.

The P76 flew off the approach side and hit the departure side square on. A huge impact! The result was a blown driver's side front tyre and a bent passenger side radius rod. They decided to continue the 40km to the end of the test rather than stop and change tyres, but still lost only one minute on the fastest car.

At the end of the test they had dropped only one minute to the quickest car, an Alfa Romeo. Then, just before the start of the third test, the P76 dropped all oil pressure. After some temporary repairs they rejoined the rally, but at a much reduced pace, arriving at the overnight stop in Ulaan Bataar, the Mongolian capital.

Day five was a rest day and Matt, along with some very talented mechanical help, worked on the engine all day and well into the night trying to diagnose the problem. It looked as if their rally was over.

As luck would have it, some out of the box thinking found a solution and once again the Leyland V8 was sounding strong. But some issues with the timing of the event had them initially placed 57th out of 59. This was later corrected to 17th.

As they had no idea how much, if any,





damage had been done to the engine after the periods of no oil pressure, Gerry and Matt decided to take a more conservative approach to the rally with the aim of getting to Paris, so their pace was downgraded from "race" to "brisk".

The rally made its way across Asia and into Europe. Gerry and Matt, despite being careful not to push the pace, had dragged the P76 up to fourth by day 23.

Then, on day 24, disaster struck again. On a test section in a heavily wooded forest, on the way to Minsk in Belorussia, Gerry made one of his very rare driving errors. By now a podium finish was looking possible and Gerry was back in race mode. On a very slippery stage with narrow roads they approached what looked to be a fast open right-hand bend.

They were again doing around 160km/h when Gerry lifted off the throttle to drift into the corner. It quickly became obvious that this was a second gear corner, not the fourth they were in. This massive overspeed resulted in the car sliding off the outside of the corner into a farmer's paddock.

Gerry kept his right boot into it to drive out of the paddock and back on the road, but there was a log or something hidden in the long grass and as the car shot back on the track it hit the log and leapt airborne; completely over the road to the other side, where they landed on some, thankfully, forgiving trees, mowing them down and beaching the car on them.

Thanks to fellow Aussies Max and Julie Stephenson in their 1923 Vauxhall who



stopped and towed them back on to the road, the result was they lost about 15 minutes and dropped to seventh place. The P76 was now looking a bit the worse for wear as well.

Day 32 saw the only other mechanical problem occur on the P76, when the water pump started leaking. This was quickly changed with the spare carried onboard.

Four days later the rally pulled into Place Vendome in Paris with Gerry, Matt and the P76 in sixth place. They inherited one place after the unfortunate crash of the second-placed Mustang of Aussies Rob Garnsworthy and John Teasdale on day 28.

Gerry and Matt are well pleased with their result, as they realised that the P76 was still the fastest car on the rally. With a little luck going their way, it could certainly have been win number three, but they accept that is the sort of thing that happens in motorsport.

The winners, Mark Pickering and Dave Boddy, drove a brilliant rally in their Datsun 240Z and thoroughly deserved their win. There were four Aussie crews in the top six places.

At 84 years young, Gerry Crown was once again the oldest competitor on the rally.

Matt Bryson won, along with Sebastian Gross, the award for Best Help to the Sweeps, for spending most of his free time helping fellow competitors.

Congratulations to Gerry and Matt. They showed that throughout the event they were competitive and always a chance to win. Even with the setbacks they never gave up and are proud of their achievements. All their supporters from around the world are proud of their efforts and their never say die attitude.

It just goes to show that no matter how good you and your crew are, and how good your car is, you still need that tiny amount of good luck which neither money nor experience can buy.

You can check out more information via their Facebook Page: World Rally P76 and at worldrallyp76.blogspot.com.au

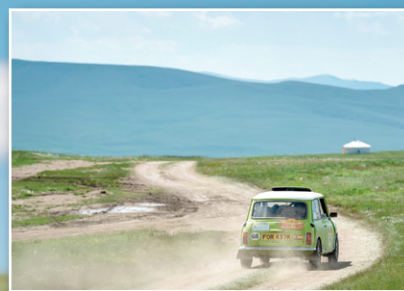


Public domain image.



Peking to Paris in a Shoebox

Words by Steve Maher. Photos by Gerard Brown (<http://gerardbrown.photoshelter.com>)



The Peking to Paris Motor Challenge is undoubtedly the toughest and longest rally in the world today. Doubly so when you consider this rally is contested by cars from 40 to over 100 years old.

To win this event you need three main ingredients, the right team, the right preparation and the right car, with a sprinkling of good luck.

UK based husband and wife team, Paul and Christine Hartfield, set out on the 2016 Peking to Paris and tested all four of these; in a 1972 Austin Mini.

The Hartfields had originally decided to enter a 1930s Packard in the Vintageant category, but when the car was sent to Owen Turner at Complete Rally Services for preparing it became obvious that they were way short of enough time to get it into at least a reasonable condition to finish the rally.

Without a suitable car to substitute they were out of the rally before it started and the non refundable, not insubstantial entry fee had been paid months earlier.

Meanwhile, Owen had a Mini he built for the 2015 Sahara Challenge and he offered to sell it to the Hartfields. They accepted and were soon on their way. Without a doubt the Mini would be the smallest car to attempt the Peking to Paris rally.

This Mini's shell is actually a 1992 Mk6 body which is pretty much the same as the original Mini. Picking a later body simply meant there was less chance of having to do lots of rust repairs.

Also, the later Minis had rubber cone suspension, which is more durable and simpler than the hydrolastic. The shell was fully seam welded with the addition of a second floor skin, fitted with a strong 1275cc engine producing 84bhp, Cooper S brakes, rally suspension cones and 12" wheels.


In the hands of the Hartfields, the Mini turned out to be a surprise package on the rally. Not the fastest car, but consistent and mostly reliable. Only one serious problem occurred when, on day 31, one of the Mini's rear trailing arm pivot pins broke, resulting in two missed sections. They were able to get the car moving but elected to drop the two sections to get more time to fix the car properly.

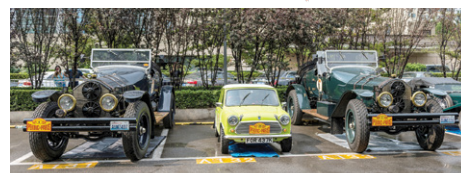
There were one or two other minor hitches during the rally, but overall the Hartfields and their Mini did way more than what was expected. Few thought they would even get out of Mongolia let alone all the way to Paris.

The record book shows car #34 covered the 14,000km journey over 36 days, in 268 hours 11 minutes 51 seconds, including the penalties for missing the two sections.

The Mini finished in 22nd place out of 57 starters in the Classic category, and 9th in their class out of 16, with a Silver Medal.

Their time is equivalent to spending nearly 12 days non-stop, driving 24 hours a day. A truly remarkable effort, against much more powerful opposition. The mere fact that they made it to Paris at all is accolades enough.

BMCE congratulates Paul and Chris for their outstanding result, and congratulations to Owen Turner from Complete Rally Services in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, on his build and preparation of the Mini. 



Mini with 2x American LaFrance cars.



Coming Event - 25th Rob Roy Historic

20 November 2016 - Clintons Rd, Christmas Hills (near Eltham).



Photos by Robin Page
and Terry Regester



Rob Roy near Eltham, some 45km north-east of Melbourne, is Australia's oldest purpose built hillclimb track, and the second oldest continuously running in the world after Prescott in the UK. On 20 November it celebrates the 25th Annual Historic & Classic event, since the venue was resurrected by the MG Car Club Victoria.

Rob Roy was originally established on a property known as Clinton's Pleasure Grounds, with its first meeting held on 1 February 1937. The track was bituminised in 1939 and joined Prescott and Shelsley Walsh, also in the UK, as the only three purpose-built bitumen hillclimb tracks in the world.

Prior to the track's closure in 1962, eight of the Record Holders had also been winners of the Australian Grand Prix; including Jack Brabham, Stan Jones, Lex Davison and Bill Patterson.

The track remained closed for 30 years. In 1992, following discussions with current owners of the land, Melbourne Water, and the then Shire of Eltham, the MG Car Club of Victoria secured a lease on the property.

Reconstruction of the track began which involved laying the entire surface, improving internal access roads and the installation of some guardrail in places.



The result was a faithful re-creation of the original track.

While the MGCC was the driving force behind the restoration project it could not have been achieved without contributions from the wider motor sport community. The historic nature of Rob Roy and the on-going support given to it makes it a unique motorsport venue.

The first "Return to Rob Roy Historic" was run on 27 - 28 February 1993. The Australian Grand Prix came to Melbourne in 1996, and to avoid clashing with other historic events associated with this major event the Historic & Classic date was moved to November: where it has remained.

In 2011 the MGCC erected the original start line "brake shoes" from the old Templestowe Hillclimb track, which had been secured on the closure of that track in 1987. This imposing feature adds to the historic significance of the Rob Roy track.

This Historic & Classic event is the largest conducted annually, although there are other meetings during the year including a round of the Victorian Hillclimb Championship.

From 1993 to 2016 is actually 24 years. But in 1996, when the change of dates was initiated, there were events in both February and November; which makes this year's event the 25th of the "new" era.

Competitors from the first meeting, and others who have supported the venue over many years, have been invited to attend along with past outright record holders. People who made the resurrection possible like Friends of Rob Roy (FORR) and representatives from the two major contributing clubs namely VHRR & VSCC will be in attendance.

Owners of past outright and class record breaking cars will be encouraged to compete or display their vehicles.

Members of non-sporting car clubs, particularly from the BMC/Leyland stable, have been invited to attend and display their cars in a special designated area.

Approaching Rob Roy from any direction is a very scenic drive and the event has a real picnic atmosphere about it. A limited amount of commemorative regalia will be available on the day.

All the proceeds from Catering for this event, provided by the local Panton Hill CFA, will go to the Brigade; as it has for several decades.

Entry to the event is \$10 per individual or \$15 per car: Children free. Competition from 9am with trophy presentations at approximately 4.30pm.

Rob Roy is located in Clintons Road, Christmas Hills and is best approached from the Eltham - Yarra Glen Road. Melway Ref is 265 A9.

Competition & Entry enquiries :

John Kelso 0417 398 606
or robroyhillclimb.com.au

General enquiries:

Rob Roy Event Director,
Wayne Rushton 0412 339 934





49th Hay Mini Nationals

10-12 June 2016

Photos by Peter Williams & Taryn Ruig.



The Australian Hay Mini Nationals is the jewel in the crown of Australian Mini events, attracting hundreds of people from all over Australia. Running continuously since 1968, it is the envy of many major motorsport events.

This year's event was no exception. Held on the June long weekend in the small town of Hay in outback New South Wales, the event caters for the tastes of all Mini enthusiasts, kicking off with a welcome to town party on the Friday night, for old friends and new.

Saturday morning dawned bright and sunny, as owners polished their prized possessions for the street parade and the Show and Shine.

The street parade is a meeting of all the major events run in Hay over the long weekend: including the Hay Dust Drinkers B & S ball, and the Vanguard Nationals.

Event Secretary Amanda Dwyer was thrilled with the turnout. "We aim to put on a show for not only the club members and Mini owners, but also the town's people, and sponsors. This is why we have organised the parade to include the other events", she reported.

The parade consisted of around 90 to 100 Minis, Mokes, and variants, as well as 30 or 40 "B & S utes" complete with flags, aerials and bull bars. This was topped off by another dozen cars from the Hay Vintage Veteran and Motorcycle Club, and another eight or ten entries from the Vanguards. "All up we had around 150 vehicles in the Parade, and an estimated crowd of 3,000 people lining the street!" Dwyer said.

The vehicles entered in the Show and

Shine were once again of the highest standard, and a real credit to their owners.

After all the judging was complete and results were tallied, John Towers, from none of the main clubs (yet) was awarded the coveted trophy for Best In Show.

Other winners included Steve Pearse and Darryl Heydon from the Mini Car Club of NSW for Best Modified Leyland and Best Derivative respectively, and Alexander Lee and Craig Williams both from the Modified Mini Car Club of SA. Craig's immaculate JCW BMW Cooper S also won the People's Choice award.

The original Hay Mini Nationals started out as a motorkhana only. People drove to Hay on the Saturday, competed in the motorkhana on the Sunday, partied Sunday night, and drove home Monday.

Today, Hay has become one of the most competitive motorkhanas in the country, with hundredths of seconds separating some of the country's best drivers.

However, a remarkable camaraderie remains. Competitive foes will stop and help each other with only a moment's notice to solve mechanical issues, and then go right back to battling for that elusive tenth of a second.

At the other end of the competitive field are the first-timers and rookies. This includes the next generation of motorsport champions, and Mini enthusiasts; some competitors as young as 12 years.

The motorkhana itself is run along unique lines, on a billiard-table-flat paddock, 12km from the Hay township.

Six tests are run consecutively, with each





competitor having one attempt at each test in the morning and another in the afternoon. Only the competitor's fastest time on each test counts toward their final result.

Everyone wants to do well in Hay. Doing well may be beating your mate, or making the top 50. It might be making the front page of results, or even winning your class.

You have done spectacularly well to make the top ten outright; a group of drivers that are very often only separated by a few seconds over a full day's competition.

This year's motorkhana started on wet dewy grass, so drivers' first attempts at the tests were slow and slippery. This applied plenty of pressure for a clean run in the faster, dry afternoon tests.

Previous outright winner Greg Dobson and eight times Hay champion Declan Dwyer both fell victim to small mistakes, hitting flags in the afternoon sending them tumbling down the leader board (Dobson finishing 19th outright, and Dwyer 9th)

Fifth outright was snared by an elated Julie Witcombe from MCCNSW (her best ever result) in her immaculate Moke. Six times previous winner Craig Williams (MMCC) was fourth outright, narrowly edged out by MCCNSW veteran Darryl Heydon (third) and MCCNSW champion and previous national motorkhana champion Corrinne East Johnstone also in a Moke.

However, all the spoils landed on a stunned Kelvin Goldfinch (MCCNSW), also in a Moke, for his second outright win of the motorkhana.

Hay Heroes is a side-by-side elimination event that pushes the crowd right to the edge of their seats. Held immediately after the main motorkhana, and only open to Minis and MINIs (no Mokes), competitors are divided into classes by engine capacity and run off in pairs on identical slaloms.

Mistakes mean instant elimination and, once again, fractions of seconds count. The winners from all four classes go on to compete for the outright Hay Hero trophy.

The twentieth running of this iconic event was as exciting as ever. It seemed MCCNSW was going to take all the spoils after Dean Cook snared Class A, Mathew Goldfinch grabbed Class B and Phil East scored a big win in Class D. But it was Victorian Mathew Webb who won Class C and snatched the outright win after a hard fought Grand Final.

The coveted GBS (Gus B Staunton) Teams Award is arguably the most valued trophy from Hay. It is awarded to the best performing club over the weekend with points accrued from the Show and Shine, Motorkhana and Hay Heroes. This year's GBS went to the Mini Car Club of NSW, who had a dream weekend and an easy victory.

As usual, the event wound up with the fancy dress presentation party, with Mini devotees dancing and laughing together to the wee small hours.

The 2017 Australian Hay Mini Nationals, on 9 to 11 June, will be the 50th running of the event and will be one not to be missed.

Already many of the founding organisers and competitors have signalled their intent to come and see what they started has turned into.



The
B.M.C.
Experience



12th Grand Day Out

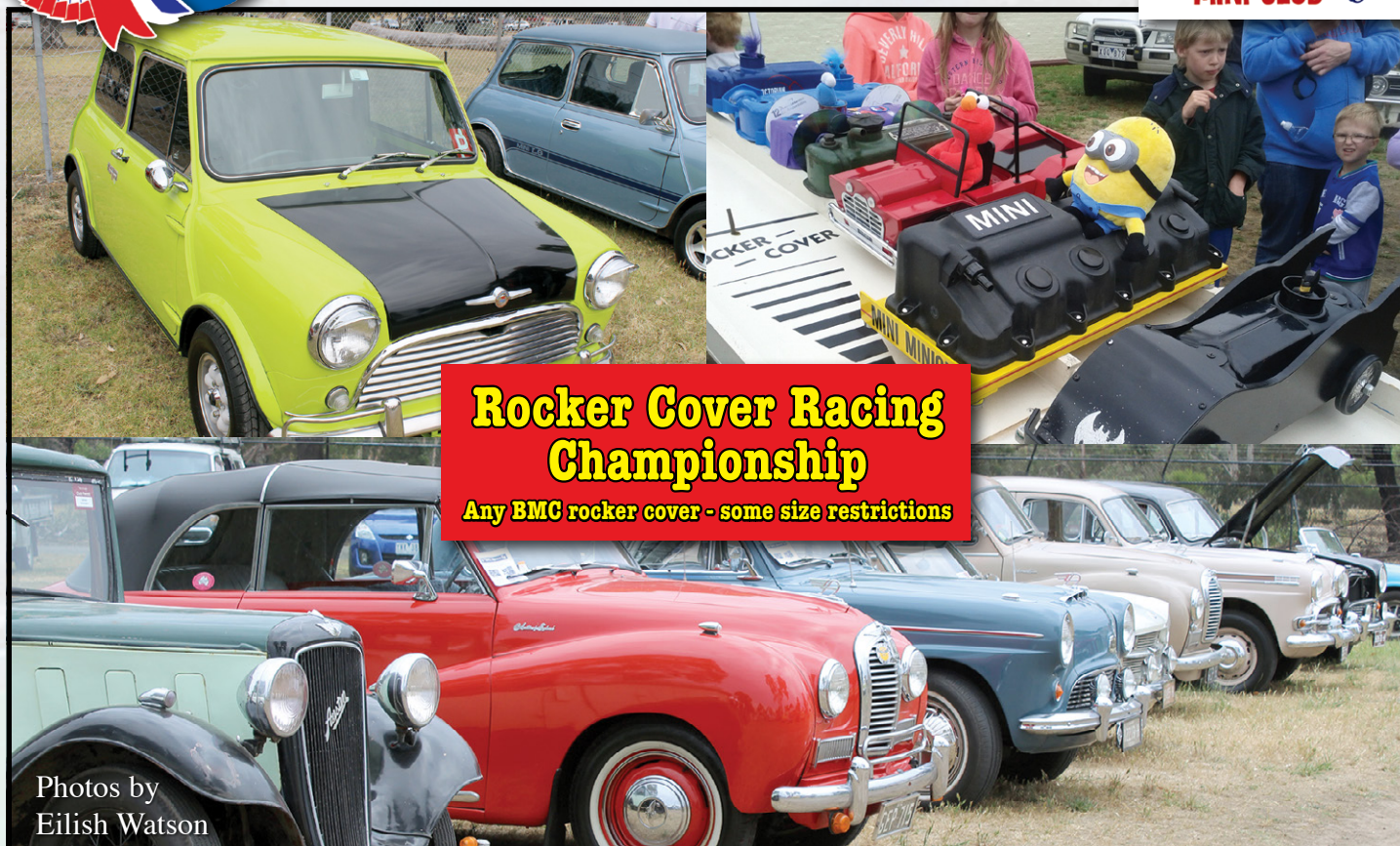
Proudly presented by the Victorian Mini Club Inc.

All BMC & Leyland cars welcome



Cooper's Settlement

Historic Homestead



Photos by
Eilish Watson

Show cars, daily drivers, race cars, specials, trade stands.

Hot food and hot & cold drinks available at the venue.

Any BMC-Leyland brand, any age, any condition.

FREE ENTRY

FREE raffle!

Sunday 4 December 2016

Bundoora Park, Plenty Rd. Bundoora (Melbourne)

10am to 3pm

No trophies, no stress, no pressure...

Just great BMC-Leyland cars, great people and a great day out!



UK SCENE

Words by Kay Drury. Photos by Kay & Alan Drury



We've had a great summer for the 2016 show season. My 1960 Austin Seven is now back on the road after four years in hibernation, while we moved house and built our new garage, so I'm now looking forward to doing a few more local classic events.

London to Brighton: 22 May 2016

The 32nd London to Brighton Mini Run, which is normally held on the third Sunday in May, this year took place a week later to avoid a clash with the International Mini Meeting in Belgium.

2,100 official tickets were available for the event, but each year hundreds more Minis take part unofficially, finding parking places in Brighton town, as only official entrants are allowed to park on the famous Marine Drive.

However parking arrangements this year

caused some problems for the organisers, with the ongoing deterioration of the historic arches along Marine Drive, leading the organisers to abandon their usual autotest area.

They also had to segregate the Classic and New Minis; the shorter Classic Minis parking by the fenced-off arches and the larger cars parking at the wider Marina end of the Drive, leading to some controversy.

The Mini Moke Club always has a great turnout at this event, opting to take a

longer, more scenic route from Crystal Palace to Brighton along minor roads, far better suited to the laid-back Moking lifestyle. They also included the 1959 prototype ex-Royal Navy Moke in their convoy. It's great to see such special cars actually being used on the road.



Bromley Pageant of Motoring: 5 June 2016

This event, held every year just south of London in Bromley, Kent, is an enormous classic car show. While I used to be a regular visitor, it always seems to fall on the same date as other major events, so this year I decided to get back to it.

The show is great for auto-jumble, memorabilia and car books and models, as well as every type of car cleaning equipment that you could imagine.

The display area is split into two sections. By far the biggest area is given over to what is called 'one-make parking'. This is effectively the car park for those attending the show with a classic car that is not part of a club display. You just need to book the car into the appropriate make/model area beforehand and arrive early.

Once we were in the showground we spent most of the morning looking around one-make parking before venturing into the main display area.

Many local clubs have club stands at this one, so you often see cars whose owners don't like to travel too far to the make-specific national shows.



Beaulieu Cooper Day: 12 June 2016

As always, Mini Cooper Day at Beaulieu was a highlight of the show year. Located in an idyllic area in the middle of the New Forest in Hampshire, we usually make a weekend of this one, camping amongst the wild ponies.

The weather forecast was looking gloomy beforehand, and rain the night before and early morning didn't bode well for the day, leading to slightly lower attendances than normal, and less concours cars on display.

However, amazingly the rain held off, and we had sunshine in the afternoon. No other show has as many Ex-Works Minis and replicas on display, or such a good

selection of Coach Built and other well-known Minis.

There are always special guests to talk to; this year including Paddy Hopkirk, Mike Cooper, Stuart Turner and Barrie "Whizzo" Williams.

Highlight of the show for me this year was the ex-racing Broadspeed GT, registration number EOP 88D, in its 50th anniversary year, owned and painstakingly restored by Broadspeed enthusiast Chris Wooden.

Another great car that stood out for me was a freshly restored Crayford Cooper Convertible, owned by James Morrison.



Bearsted Cars on the Green: 31 July 2016


The ninth annual 'Classic Cars & Retro Vintage' took place on Bearsted Green, near Maidstone, Kent.

Around 200 classic cars took part, cramming the small village green full of vehicles and visitors for the day, in order to raise money for The Kent, Surrey and Sussex Air Ambulance.

My cousin lives in Bearsted and had been asking me to take a car to this show for several years, particularly as he had himself been airlifted to hospital by the

air ambulance after an accident a few years ago.

I heard that the local branch of the Mini Cooper Register was having a club stand at the show, so asked if I could gate-crash for the day with my 1960 Austin Seven on its first outing for a while.

It turned out to be a brilliant day with some great cars on show, with a picturesque backdrop of the sleepy Kent village, and my Mini undertook the 100-mile round-trip with no problems. 





Moking to Brighton

England - 22 May 2016 Words by Brian Petty Photos by Alan Nichols



Mokes and Mokees waiting to head off from Chrystal Palace Park.

I have owned my Moke since 1973, but have "only" been a member of the Moke Club for the past ten years or so.

My first London to Brighton (L2B) Mini-run was in 2005, after having some restoration work done on my Moke. My friend Alan Nichols, who did six L2Bs in his own Mini, sits in the passenger seat enjoying the ride, taking photo's en-route, plus chatting all the way to Brighton and back. For work he's a London Nightbus driver (double-decker) but whenever he is out with his wife she always wants him to drive, when he would rather not, so our arrangement suits him a treat.

This year was the 32nd L2B Mini-run to Madera Drive in Brighton, organised by the London & Surrey Mini Owners Club (LSMOC), with 2,100 Minis officially registered. Of those, only 20 to 30 were Mokes.

We all met in Crystal Palace Park ready for the start at 8.00am on Sunday morning. The order you leave is the order you arrived, so if you arrive on Saturday and camp in the Park overnight, you would be in pole position for the off, after the Show & Shine Minis get away.

The Mokes met in a corner of Crystal Palace Park, then followed the first line of Minis out, with Chris Naish (team leader) leading our convoy, plus a tail-end Charlie checking for stragglers!

Being Moke owners, we like to buck the establishment so deviated from the official route in the Run-pack, but rejoined it in Croydon.

For much of the drive we followed a 1959


prototype Buckboard Moke. The owner told me he bought it in 1971. It has no indicators, so he uses hand-signals to say where he's going.

A little further south we stopped in the town of Hooley – at a petrol station (road-side parking) just before the start of the M23. Here, in the last few years the neighbouring tyre shop has been giving away breakfasts of Hot-dog/Burger and tea/coffee to the runners – a welcome sight and worth a stop of about twenty minutes.

Getting all the Mokes back out into the traffic on the A23 saw our tail-end Charlie pull out into a space and really stop the traffic to allow all the Mokes to create their convoy again. We stayed on the A23 through Redhill and on to Horley, where we turned onto the B2036 and off into the countryside. Of course, we stopped for a regroup photo before going down the B road.

Past Gatwick Airport, through Crawley, under the M23, through Cuckfield, Burgess Hill, onto the A273, down to Pyecombe, then into another petrol station for another short break to re-group (more photos) before rejoining the A23 again into Brighton.

Arriving in the centre of Brighton we turned into Madera Drive, where a few local Moke owners had reserved a space for us, and parked-up two-deep.

The L2B is an ideal place to go for any spares you may require, with many trade stands along the seafront, selling all kinds of Mini bits, with deals galore. 



The Mokes all lined up on Madera Drive, Brighton.

Travels & Troubles

Words and photos by Alan Lett

Alan Lett set off around Australia on his dream drive in his MG TF and arrived home five years later, with a new wife, child, dog and budgie. In 1998 disaster struck the MG, but Alan didn't give up and restored it over 17 years.

I bought my little 1953 MG TF (1250cc) in 1964 – it was love at first sight. She was Birch Grey and I bought her from Hasting Deerings Ford at Top Ryde, in Sydney.

I was 16-years-old and an apprentice panel beater and spray painter at the dealership, and soon repainted the car in a beautiful Silver Blue metallic. I remember days and nights just sitting in her at the back of my parents' home; going nowhere but dreaming of where I would drive her when I could.

As soon as I could, I joined the Sydney MG Car Club and entered the TF in hillclimbs at Lithgow in the Blue Mountains and in lap-dashes at Oran Park.

Around Australia

In the early 1970s I did something I had always wanted – I drove my little MG TF around Australia, with a little Jayco camper in tow. Although bigger than the MG, the camper towed very well, even on the many bulldust roads.

From Sydney I drove to Adelaide then across the Nullarbor Plain, on the Eyre Hwy. Dust, and the heat from the exhaust, came up through the timber floor.

Outside Kalgoorlie on dusk, I was overtaken by three cars. The front one had a bull bar and, worried about hitting kangaroos I tried to stay with them, but couldn't keep up.

I soon passed another car without a bull



Charmaine with the MG and camper at Port Macquarie on the way home - late 1975.

bar, that had hit a kangaroo – the car was a write-off. From then on I sounded my horn over and over to try and scare any wayward 'roos away from the road.

In Perth I met a lady, Anne, who became my wife and in Geraldton, where we lived for three and a half years, we had a baby girl; Charmaine. I worked in Geraldton, about 420km north of Perth, as a spray painter. We were given a pet dog, Sandy, and a budgie in a cage. By the time we left Geraldton, the little MG was very full.

Driving north to Carnarvon we had such a strong head wind that the MG wouldn't go over 20 mph. I thought the engine was giving out.

The road from Port Hedland to Broome was like a beach and I sand-blasted the rear mudguards.

We reached Fitzroy Crossing late on a Sunday afternoon, with only half a tank of petrol, and the garage was closed. We teamed up with another car and set off along the very rough, corrugated road. On dusk we came across a broken wooden trailer, with no registration plate, three

bald tyres, two of which were flat. The trailer was empty, apart from a 44-gallon drum full of petrol. We took the lot, except for one gallon, and got out of there quick smart.

We stopped for three weeks at the beautiful Lake Argyle, which was only completed in 1971, and the town of Kununurra; which was built to service the Ord River Scheme.

Then it was on to Darwin, where we arrived just before the start of the wet season, about eight months after Cyclone Tracy. Some people we had met in Perth couldn't believe the little MG had made it all the way to Darwin towing the camper.



Ayers Rock and Central Australia were highlights of the trip.



Alan was lucky not to be killed in the crash, and spent about three weeks in hospital.



There was plenty of work on smashed and damaged cars after Cyclone Tracy. By the time we arrived in Darwin we were almost flat broke, but the owner of the car yard gave us space for our camper and paid me a week's wages in advance to keep us going.

Four months later we headed south to Katherine Gorge, where we set up camp. One day we were returning from town, after buying supplies, and the MG broke a conrod. We got a tow back to camp, where I pulled down the motor. I got a new conrod and piston sent from Sydney so I could rebuild the engine.

We then drove down to Alice Springs, where we left the camper, then went on to Uluru (Ayers Rock) before returning north as far as Three Ways, past Tennant Creek, then across the Barkly Hwy into Queensland and up to Cairns. We loved Cairns, but after a while it was time to head south again.

The drive down the Queensland Coast was without problems, but crossing into NSW, going through the Border Ranges, I had to drop down through the gears to first gear to get over one very steep hill. Later on, outside Forster, I had to go down to first gear again to get up the Bulahdelah Hill. The MG was really struggling by this time. The diff was also making a lot of noise all the way from Queensland.

By the time I got home to Dee Why in Sydney there was smoke pouring out

of the side vents below the bonnet. As I unhitched the camper trailer you could almost hear the MG sigh with relief.

The engine had to be rebuilt and I did a full restoration on the MG, before moving with it up to the Central Coast to live.

Disaster!

Everything changed on 27 May 1998. It was a lovely sunny morning and I was out with Anne and our three-year-old grandson for a drive in the MG, when a 35-year-old drugged driver, with no license and driving a stolen car, smashed into the MG.

I was almost killed, suffering severe head injuries and a smashed elbow. My wife and grandson were also injured and suffered shock. I woke up in hospital with no recollection of the crash at all.

The first time I saw the other driver was in court and he had tattoos on both hands that said "HATE COPS".

After the crash I had severe anxiety and depression and felt I had got a life sentence. I didn't have comprehensive insurance on the MG and in the hospital I wished I was dead. The only punishment the other guy got was three months' home detention. I didn't get a cent in compensation.

The Rebirth

But I didn't give up. It took me 17 years, on a disability pension, but I eventually rebuilt the MG, thanks also to a lot of help from my mate Ron Taylor. I wanted to do as much of the work as I possibly could.



Discussing the car with car club members.

I painted my MG red and renamed her My Lady In Red – My Passion. The car was completed on 11 November 2015 – an historic day for me.

I look forward to many more miles in her yet. One state we didn't get to on our trip around Australia in the 1970s was Tasmania, so I hope to be able to drive the MG around that island in the near future.

Would I do the Around Australia trip again? No! Am I glad I did it? You bet! I loved every bit of it, from the bulldust coming up through the floor, to the rough roads and corrugations.

I look back on the many good times and bad I have had in my MG – mostly good – and I remember the days before I could drive her, sitting in her and going nowhere, but full of dreams. MGs forever! 🚗



The new look Lady In Red.



A few personal touches inside.



The MG as it is today, ready for many more years of happy days.



Alan with his pride and joy - 2015.

Auto Electrics
On Wheels
Let us remove your shorts!

Specialising in:

- ★ PROFESSIONAL RE-WIRING
- ★ MORRIS, AUSTIN, LEYLAND, ROVER, MG
- ★ MINI ELECTRICAL PARTS
- ★ ELECTRONIC DISTRIBUTORS & IGN KITS
- ★ HI-TORQUE STARTER MOTORS
- ★ ALTERNATORS ★ PRINTED CIRCUITS
- ★ SWITCHES ★ LIGHTS

Phone orders & credit cards welcome

Tony Bulltieg
Email: tonyviv2@bigpond.com
517 Camp Cable Rd
Jimboomba, Qld 4280

Ph: 07 5546 9065 Mobile: 0408 731 441

Classic Car Instrument Restoration

- Full repair & rebuild service on all makes of instruments
- Specialising in chronometric and magnetic
- Specialist in Smiths and Jaeger gauges
- Dial restoration or replacement
- Special senders made to order
- Ratio boxes & cables

Lionel Otto Instruments

Contact: John Robertson
Ph: 07 3277 3888 F: 07 3277 8520
Email: info@ottoinstruments.com.au
124 Evans Rd. (PO Box 9) Salisbury, Qld. 4107
www.ottoinstruments.com.au

TRIGGS MOTORS

Your local friendly, family-owned business
Established in TORONTO for over Sixty Years.

88 Excelsior Parade,
Toronto NSW 2283.

Phone: 02 4959 2122
A/Hours: 02 4959 2034
E: triggsmotors@gmail.com

All General Automotive Repairs. 4WD and Off-Road Mods and Rebuilds.
RMS Inspection Services.
Specialist Range Rover and Land Rover.

Proudly supporting
Camp Quality for over 20 years

www.triggsmotors.com

VINTAGE WIRING HARNESS
established 1976

- * BMC-Leyland specialists
- * original style wiring looms all makes and models - 1920's onwards
- * braided wire or pvc, with cotton over-braiding or original harness tape
- * custom modification to your specification
- * braided HT and battery leads
- * perfect for restorations

(03) 9870 0583
contact@vinwire.com.au

vintage wiring harness
po box 2288 ringwood north victoria 3134 | www.vinwire.com.au

CLASSIC FASTENERS
Est. 1988

Fasteners and tools for your automotive restoration project.

Extensive range of BSF, BSCY, BA & UN threads, wood and self tapping screws.

Order online at www.classicfasteners.com.au
Ph: (08) 8346 9838
Email: nuts@classicfasteners.com.au

123ignition Australia

Classic looks with modern performance and reliability.

Suits most BMC-Leyland cars
16 selectable advance curves
Easy timing with built-in LED
Smooth engine torque curve
Stronger spark at all speeds
Lower fuel consumption
Variable dwell-angle
Simple installation
Maintenance-free
Less emissions
Better starting

**Australia's only authorised import agent.

Also available:
NEW 123 / TUNE
Computerised tuning for even greater control.
Also: Bluetooth control

Ted Cross (Vic.) 0400 592 208 or ted@123ignition.com.au
www.123ignition.com.au

Carwood
refurbishing service

Rob Brewer
Quality Woodwork
All Marques and Models

Ph: (03) 9553 0483 • Mob: 0412 347 408
E: rob@jagsrus.com.au
www.jagsrus.com.au

rhemaac
HIGH PERFORMANCE ENGINES

- * offset boring
- * crankshaft stroking
- * crankshaft wedging
- * torque plate honing

ALL FACETS OF PERFORMANCE ENGINE BUILDING & MACHINING

T: 08 8522 2588
F: 08 8522 5517 E: rhemaac@bigpond.com.au
Lot 7, Paxton Street, Willaston SA 5118
www.rhemaac.com.au

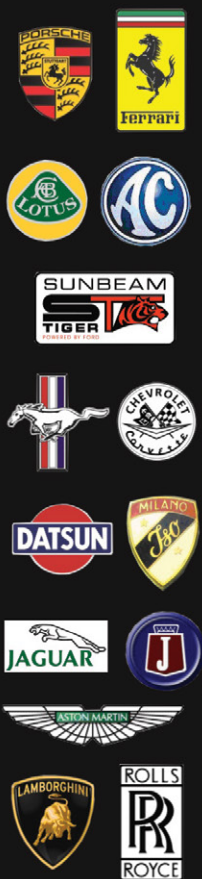
CLASSIC SPORTSCAR SPECIALISTS

Car Sales Restoration Service
Accident Damage Spare Parts



Healey The Factory

Phone (03) 9872 3900
646 Whitehorse Road, Mitcham (Melbourne)
www.healeyfactory.com.au



GLASS GLASS AND MOORE GLASS

Thousand of Windscreens and Glasses for all
marques of Prestige, Classic and Sports cars

- ALL MODELS -

FEEL FREE TO CALL FROM ANYWHERE IN AUSTRALIA

• WE WILL HELP •

02 9667 1933

INSTALLATION SERVICE SYDNEY & MELBOURNE METRO
PLUS WE SHIP ALMOST ANYWHERE

RALPH MOORE AUTOGLASS P/L

Specialist experience since 1964

6 JOHN STREET, MASCOT
SYDNEY N.S.W. 2020

Email: autoglass@bigpond.com

Fax 02 9669 6605



**British
Sporting
Cars** AUST. Pty. Ltd.

- BMC Specialist
- Restorations
- Engine rebuilding
- Servicing



- Competition car preparation

Workshop: 68 Collins Street Kangaroo Flat
Post: PO Box 1247 Kangaroo Flat, Vic 3555
Phone: 03 5447 1040
email: rallymaster@bigpond.com

MG GIVE THESE NUMBERS WHEN WRITING OR ORDERING PARTS

MGB	1962 - 1980
MGA	1955 - 1962
TC/TD/TF	1945 - 1955
PHONE NO.	(02) 9875 1144

GUARANTEE CEASES ON DISCARD OF THIS PLATE

SPORTSPARTS PTY. LTD.
10 MYRTLE STREET
NORMANHURST N.S.W. AUSTRALIA 2076

www.sportsparts.com.au

- Quality spares
- Accessories
- Free technical advice
- Reconditioned and exchange parts
- Prompt mail-order service

MG AUTOMOTIVE
Sports Car Specialists

ALL MG PARTS AND SERVICE

Latest diagnostic equipment for MGF
3/20 KENWORTH PLACE, BRENDAL Q 4500
EMAIL: mgautomotive@gmail.com

Barry Evans
07 3889 9652



MG WORKSHOPS
SALES • SERVICE • SPARE PARTS • RESTORATIONS

10 Pickering Rd Mulgrave, Vic. 3170
Ph: 03 9545 0111

Specialising in service for **ALL MGs**, including MGF
We're easy to find, with lots of **FREE** parking


mgworkshops@primus.com.au

Bob Rowntree Automotive
Precision Engine Building

- A & B Series engines
- Road & Competition
- Gearbox rebuilding

Omega Pistons
Penrite oils
Payen Gaskets
ARP Fasteners

2 Kathleen Pl. Thirlmere, NSW 2572
Ph: 02 4683 0618 Mob: 0402 216 149 Fax: 02 4683 2621
Email: bob.rowntree@exemail.com.au



LES BINGHAM T/AS
ABBINGHAM SPARES
MG PARTS IN STOCK

WATER PUMPS; FUEL PUMPS; GASKETS;
CLUTCH & BRAKE PARTS; FAN BELTS;
HOSES; BRUSHES; GENERATORS;
ALTERNATORS; GLOBES; WHEEL
BEARINGS; TIE ROD ENDS
- PLUS LOTS MORE

Ph: 0414 473 510

Email: abbingham2@bigpond.com

PO Box 197 Kurri Kurri, NSW 2327



*Full or Partial Restoration
of Your Classic*

*Premium
Quality
Carpet
Kits*

*Specialist
Products*

*Jaguar
Range Rover
Leyland & more*

Ausclassics RESTORATIONS

0400995515
ausclassics.com






MG Concourse Spares

MGB parts specialist
8 Janine Ct, Newcomb, Vic 3219
Ph/fax: 03 5248 4084

front cover of catalogue

Call or email today for a **FREE** copy of our 54-page catalogue

Greg Reynolds

Email: concourse@internode.on.net
A family-owned business for over 30 years

Breathe Easier

Get your classic running right, with new air filters and ram tubes.



- Complete range of genuine parts
- "In-House" S.U. carburettor restoration service
- S.U. fuel pumps
- Carburettor linkages & ball joints
- Ram tubes / Air cleaners

SINCE 1969



MIDEL Pty Ltd
www.sumidel.com
For all your S.U. requirements

Phone: 02 9759 5598 | Fax: 02 9758 1155 | [facebook.com/sumidel](https://www.facebook.com/sumidel)

SOVEREIGN BRITPARTS

South Australia's largest independent
Jaguar & Land Rover specialist.
(Just minutes from Adelaide CBD)

80 King William Street,
Kent Town SA, 5067
Service: 08 8362 5997
Parts: 08 8362 5666

info@sovereignauto.com.au



Now also supplying parts for Mini, MG and
other great British marques.
Call us today to discuss your requirements.

www.sovereignauto.com.au



OPEN 6 DAYS

Contact Greig Malaure

Unit 2/27 Hope St. Ermington, NSW 2115

Ph: 02 9874 7211 Mob: 0411 869 438



OUR RESULTS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES

Mini Classic offers:

- *NEW AND USED PARTS
- *ALL MECHANICAL REPAIRS & SERVICES
- *PERFORMANCE MODIFICATIONS
- *RACE CAR PREPARATION & INFORMATION

Business For Sale



MINI

SPARES & REPAIRS

WE HAVE BEEN BUILDING, MAINTAINING
& RACING CARS FOR OVER 40 YEARS.

Mini - BMC - Historic Racing Cars - Cooper
We need some space.
Surplus spare parts now selling

44/2 Hoyle Ave., Castle Hill NSW 2154
Ph: 0414 593 314
email: glasby@bigpond.com

Classic Motoring

Online Store



**Classic Mini spare parts
and accessories**

Large range of spare parts.
Secure and easy to use website.
Fast Australia-wide shipping!

Credit Card, Bank Deposit, PayPal or Money Order.

www.classicmotoring.net.au
sales@classicmotoring.net.au

GRAEME LORD



Maintaining Legends

37 Kingsford St, Fairymeadow NSW 2519
Ph: 02 4283 6076




maintaininglegends@bigpond.com

MINI AUTOMOTIVE

**21 OLD TOOWOOMBA RD
IPSWICH, QLD. 4305**



SU carburettor
service & tuning
(Mini only)

TEL: (07) 3281 4255
FAX: (07) 3812 3436

www.miniauto.com.au
enquiries@miniauto.com.au



Binders

Don't let your magazines become history!

\$15 each (plus postage)

Please send me _____ BMC Experience binders: @ \$15 each

Postage costs: Australia \$15 per order. NZ \$20 per order. ROW \$25 per order



Name: _____ Daytime phone: (____) _____

Address: _____

State: _____ Postal Code: _____ Country: _____

☐ (Australian customers only) I enclose money order / cheque for \$ _____ payable to Autofan Media

OR

☐ Please charge my credit card for \$A _____ ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard

Card number: _____ / _____ / _____ Expires: _____ / _____

Name on card: _____ Signature: _____



Please send this completed order form (a photocopy is acceptable), together with payment to Autofan Media
PO Box 186 Newcomb, Vic. 3219 Australia, or call +61 (03) 5250 4842



MINI & MOKE WORLD



220 Harbord Rd Brookvale NSW 2100
PH: 02 9938 2242 / 02 9905 5753 FAX: 02 9938 4224



We can build the Moke you have always dreamed of!

- . Specialist Service Centre, centrally located, with fully qualified automotive technicians
- . In-house engine building service for road and race
- . New, used and reconditioned parts
- . Body building license for rust repairs and custom modifications
- . Licensed Motor Dealers (NSW DL 13353)

info@miniandmokeworld.com.au



"Like" us on Facebook: Mini and Moke World

GO ON - You've always wanted to own one, why should we have all the fun!

www.miniandmokeworld.com.au

MINI KING

(02) 4648 0654



- Service
- Repairs
- Tuning
- Some parts

"Mini" Glenn
0415 863 394

Unit 3, 5 Graham Hill Rd., Narellan, NSW 2567

Under 20 mins from the M5/M7 junction



**The only Website for all your
Mini Parts and Accessories ...**
www.minisport-oz.com.au



Prices in Australian Dollars - Over 9000 items
email: sales@coopersimports.com
Neil 0428 66 1275 :: Don 0447 67 1275
www.minisport-oz.com.au



Contact Ben Remminga
Ph: (03) 9729 1323
Email: minis@minis.com.au

1/9 Clare St Bayswater 3153

Great service and quality

6 BIG reasons

to buy your Mini parts and services from us:

-  20 years' experience with Minis
-  Quality parts at fair prices
-  Confidence in our service
-  Australia-wide despatch
-  Classic & New MINI parts
-  Dismantling MINI 2001 - '10

www.minis.com.au

ReadSpeed

theminiman@bigpond.com



**New
Address**

**Shed 5L
167 Murarrie Rd
Murarrie
Qld 4172
M: 0407 135 656**



- *Road - Rally - Race
- *Spare parts
- *Engine & gearbox building
- *Sports Sedans and race cars a speciality.



Ask about our BMW twin-cam engine conversion as featured in Issue 23 of *The Mini Experience*



Ph: (07) 3399 9999

It's our 50th anniversary in 2015

Aus Mini Spares

Formerly Newcastle Minis

86 Maitland Rd. Mayfield, NSW 2304 Ph: (02) 4960 3211 Fax: (02) 4968 3434
Email: lincoln@partsandpanels.com.au www.ausminispares.com.au

**"Classic Service
for
Classic Minis"**

Lincoln Haynes & Tom Griffin

Spare Parts for: Morris
Cooper S
Rover Minis
Sprite
MG
Leyland

Reconditioned engines & gear boxes
Performance engines & parts
Cheap shipping within Australia



Smiths Guages Manifold Exhausts Spax & Gaz Suspension Redline Lucas Electrics

LINK

**Australia's premier
Mini, Cooper S & MG
Race, Rally and
Restoration workshop.**

- Restoration services
- Tuning and maintenance
- Performance modification
- Autorotor Superchargers
- World-wide parts service
- Expert service, advice and information.

For all your Mini, Moke or MG needs, call Bryan Pope today.



3A Thornton Cres. Mitcham, Vic 3132
Ph: 03 9873 3874 Fax: 03 9874 6687
Email: link@foxall.com.au
Web: www.linkautomotive.com.au

FORTHCOMING AUCTION



1954 MG TF 1250
Estimate: NZ\$32,000-38,000



1965 AUSTIN HEALEY BJ8 3000 MK 111 WITH HARD TOP
Estimate: NZ\$70,000-85,000



1969 JAGUAR E-TYPE SERIES 2 4.2 COUPE
Estimate: NZ\$85,000-105,000



1966 JAGUAR Mk11 3.8 MANUAL
Estimate: NZ\$42,000-52,000



1973 ROVER 3500S UPGRADED SPEC MANUAL
Estimate: NZ\$20,000-28,000



1972 ROVER 3.5-LITRE COUPE PB5 AUTO
Estimate: NZ\$26,000-36,000



1965 WOLSELEY 6/110 3-LITRE SEDAN MK 11
Estimate: NZ\$7,000-10,000



1955 AUSTIN A30
Estimate: NZ\$8,000-10,000

THE ROY SAVAGE COLLECTION OF CLASSIC CARS

Auction: Wellington, Sunday 4 December 2016

mossgreen-webb's

Enquiries:
motoring@mossgreen-webbs.co.nz
+61 3 9508 8888
+64 9 524 6804

23-25 Falcon Street
Parnell Auckland 1052
www.mossgreen-webbs.co.nz

Phoenix

Words by Craig Watson. Photos as detailed.

Like the mythical bird of ancient Arabia, after a long and productive life, this Mini has risen, if not from the ashes of its former self, then certainly from a very poor state.







Photo by Autopics

Timo Makinen and Bob Forsyth in LRX829E on the 1967 Southern Cross Rally, only days after the car arrived in Australia.

The Numbers Game

73 different registration numbers were used on Works Minis in the UK. But with some cars written off in crashes, others simply worn out or broken through use in rough conditions and others retired as obsolete, there were far more cars than registration numbers. It has been suggested that most Works registration numbers ended up on at least two Minis, with detailed evidence to show that some appeared on up to four or five.

Former manager of BMC's Competition Department, Stuart Turner, explained to me some years ago that because cars were entered into rallies weeks or months in advance, it was often easier to change the registration number onto a new car, than to change the details of the entry in the rally.

"Added to that, we had what is called a carnet, which was a document an inch thick with a bloody silly number of questions for Customs", Stuart continued. "Now, we get a call that this particular car's been crashed, so we've got to switch it to another car, but it's booked out on a boat tomorrow night; do you think we're going to change all the documents. So the plates from that car, went onto the other car."

Basil Wales, manager of British Leyland Special Tuning, 1970-'74, said; "The Comps department changed identities on the cars so often, you could never really know which one was on any particular rally. The car that had registration XYZ today, might have had a different number tomorrow and XYZ could be on another car entirely."

However, according to former Works assistant manager, Leyland ST manager and BMC Works authority Bill Price; "The saga about all the number plate changes relating to Abingdon cars is exaggerated. Yes, of course it happened but it was mainly done for convenience, for example to ease the car build programme, bearing in mind that to build a new car does not happen overnight, to allow a successful car to go on show, or fit in with entries in events organisers made months in advance when one had to submit car details, etc."

"A car which was ready to go, could have its registration number changed to fit in with the programme, as already mentioned - this occurred to very few cars. Also, the 'whole saga' of cars being re-shelled but retaining their original identity, which occurred quite often. (I think it would have been far fewer if the Mini had 13-inch wheels and a greater ground clearance !!)"

The Works would often build a group of cars together, but alternate their entry

in rallies, to ensure there were always cars ready for each rally.

So it was that four Minis were built together, registered LRX 827E to LRX 830E. 827E and 829E had their competition debuts in the Tulip Rally in April 1967 - with 827E, driven by Timo Makinen/Paul Easter, finishing second overall and first in class, while 829E, with Rauno Aaltonen/Henry Liddon, was just behind at third overall and second in class.

827E went on to be one of the most successful identities in the Works team, but most likely on a variety of cars, from Group 2 to Group 6 and in both rallying and racing.

829E competed in Group 2 guise in the Geneva Rally (though technically entered in the Criterium de Crans-sur-Sierre, as the Geneva Rally proper was only for cars in Groups 1 and 3) in June 1967, driven by Julien Vernaev/Henry Liddon, finishing second outright behind 827E (Tony Fall/Mike Wood).

As far as LRX 829E is concerned, things then get a little complicated. The car was



Photo from Internet - source unknown.

LRX829E's debut was 1967 Tulip Rally.



Photo from Internet - source unknown.

Service stop on 1967 Geneva Rally.



The BMC Rosette in October 1967 had a special four-page "Contest Feature", which included the Bathurst 500 and the Southern Cross Rally.

apparently converted to Group 6 spec (prototype cars) and ran in the Coupe des Alpes (Alpine Rally) in early September (Makinen/Easter) with the registration GRX311D. This is another registration that featured on a number of cars, including Group 2 in the 1966 Acropolis and as a de-seamed, de-guttered, 12"-wheeled Group 6 car in the 1969 Circuit of Ireland.

Order From Down Under

BMC Australia didn't have the extensive resources of the Works team at Abingdon. As a result it had a much smaller Competition Department, with much fewer cars being built and often had to make do with repairing a car, even if badly damaged, rather than replacing it.

It made sense, as the cheapest and most efficient method of getting the latest from the UK, to buy cars ready to rally directly from the Competition Department at Abingdon.

There is no doubt that Evan Green, head



Makinen and Forsyth with 829E before the start of the 1967 Southern Cross Rally.

of the Australian Competition Department, would have put his order in for two cars to compete in the 1967 Southern Cross Rally with plenty of time to spare. With the rally taking place on 4-8 October and with a six-week sea voyage, the cars would need to have left England by late August. As it was, they arrived only just in time to have NSW number plates fitted and a quick look over before the rally.

The two cars that came to Australia were LRX 828E and LRX 829E.

As 828E had last competed in the Danube Rally, retiring when Rauno Aaltonen was refused entry to Hungary because of problems with his Visa, and was in a new bodyshell since crashing in the Acropolis, it is likely that it was the same car that came to Australia, possibly just given a going-over at Abingdon before shipment.

However, It would appear that 829E was another car refurbished, but not the car that competed in the Tulip or Geneva Rallies as 829E.

That car received the GRX311D plates, possibly partly because 829E had been allocated to the car destined for Australia

and partly because 311D may have already been allocated to whichever car was entered in the Alpine Rally, with all the appropriate paperwork, carnet, etc already filled out and submitted.

Two From One

However it worked out, there were now two cars that had worn the LRX 829E plates: one that had competed fairly successfully in three rallies, in both Group 2 and Group 6 guises; the other a rebuilt car sold to BMC Australia. It is at this point that the histories of these two cars diverge and need to be looked at individually.

There are many arguments about the "originality" or "genuineness" of Works cars, of any brand or model, precisely because of this habit of swapping identities around in the various Competition Departments; and most did it as a matter of course.

While we are not going to delve into this conundrum at this time – though a more detailed look at the whole argument might follow in an upcoming issue – suffice to say for now that there are two cars that can legitimately claim provenance to the LRX 829E registration.



Aussie LRX829E has been restored to its UK Works spec, as it arrived in Australia.



Photo by Guy Smith

Guy Smith's LRX829E is essentially as he found it, plus Alpine rally signage.

The Shopping Trolley

Guy Smith is the current owner of what, for convenience sake, we will call the original 829E and bought the car from the widow of the MG employee who bought it from the Competition Department, as he explains. "[The car] had been used for shopping for 20 years by an ex-Abingdon employee. Bought from the Works in 1967/8 for £25, as a slightly rallied car, (it had only been used on tarmac) it was converted for everyday use. The employees were in a great position to acquire real Comps stuff. The car left the Comps department as an ex-rally car, along with a separate Works engine and a set of Minilites, all of which, it appears, was not uncommon. I spoke to (former Works mechanic) Den Green about it fairly recently, and he remembered it's purchase."

"Being always on the lookout for Minis and Mini parts, especially Works stuff, I first got wind of the car and assorted spares after the owner passed away. As soon as I saw the car, I knew it was the genuine LRX and there followed a protracted negotiation for it's purchase from his widow. The engine had still not been fitted. It has been owned by me since 1988. This was all back in the days when nobody was interested in Works Minis."

It is not clear what registration was on

the car when sold to the MG employee, and Guy Smith said; "I bought the car a very long time ago, without paperwork, from a very sensitive lady who was not in a great frame of mind."

According to Bill Price; "In the case of cars shipped overseas, the registration numbers were used as a temporary exportation shipping document. It was easier for Customs documentation to send a used car which Customs assumed would come back."

Considering the interest in Works cars today, naturally Guy has done a lot of research on the history of his LRX, but it was a set of photos in *MotorSport* magazine that convinced him of the car's provenance. "The car is in amazingly original condition; still sporting its twin fuel pumps, grab handles etc. Even the competition numbers were still visible under the red paint on the doors. It is the same car which was photographed in detail after the 1967 Tullip Rally, and featured in a *MotorSport* road test. In the photos in the magazine, even the scratches in the paint in the boot match up with the car now."

"After I bought the car, a body number check on the heritage record confirmed its provenance 100% and this was subsequently verified by the Mini Cooper Register."



Photo by Guy Smith



Photo by Guy Smith



Photo by Guy Smith

Works dash panel was given to Guy by former Works supervisor Bill Price.

Apart from a set of genuine Alpine rally plates, magnetic competition numbers, and a replacement Works dash panel, supplied by Bill Price, Guy says the car is exactly as he bought it.

"It is, it seems, one of the few survivors with original Abingdon body, and remains in unrestored condition. It has the original, as built, body number for the car, which proves beyond doubt its lineage. This was very lucky, as many rally cars had replacement front panels, etc (not to mention complete replacement cars – Ed), and this gets lost. The car does have a DVLA V5C UK registration, though due to its unrestored state it has not been on the road for many years: something that I aim to rectify in the near future."

Naturalised Aussie

The two Works rally Minis arrived in Sydney only a matter of days before the start of the 1967 Southern Cross Rally. There was not enough time to repaint the cars in the Australian Works colours, Castrol Green with white roof, and they were given a very quick going over by the Competition Department mechanics John Cotter and Terry Douglass, mainly to check all fluids, tappet clearances and anything else that could be checked and rectified if needed in the short time available.

They were also given NSW registration plates – LRX 828E becoming EPX 813 and LRX 829E becoming EPX 812 – with the front plates attached to the bonnet in front of their UK numbers.

John Cotter remembers the cars well. "Oh, yeah, they were built like Formula 1 cars compared to our cars. They had the money; they had the expertise and the engineering skills; and they'd been building the cars a lot longer than what we had. Everything was beautifully done. We got better and better, as we went on, but we were only amateurs at the start, compared to those guys."

The timing of the rally suited BMC, and other companies, very well. Bathurst was held the previous weekend, on 1 October, so it became economically viable to bring out the big name drivers from BMC's Works team to compete at Bathurst and in the Southern Cross Rally.

FIND
MORE
FREE
MAGAZINES

[HTTP://SOEK.IN](http://soek.in)

In 1967 the European drivers who came out were Tony Fall (who was fifth outright and first in class with Bob Holden at Bathurst), Paddy Hopkirk (with Brian Foley, 8th o/r; 4th in class) and Timo Makinen (John French; 7th o/r; 3rd in class).

For the Southern Cross Rally, Paddy Hopkirk teamed with South Australian navigator Gary Chapman in EPX 813 (LRX 828E); Timo Makinen with Victorian Bob Forsyth in EPX 812 (LRX 829E); and Tony Fall with Fred Logan from NSW in a locally-built car, EHT 848. Evan Green drove the locally-built EFT 685 with Roy Denny (NSW), while the fifth factory entry was Bob Holden and George Shephard (NSW) in another locally-built car, EFT 232.

Incredibly, only Holden completed the rally, taking third place, while both Abingdon cars retired with broken gearboxes – Makinen while leading the rally. “I think Timo split the helical gear, and tore the cluster straight down the middle”, Cotter remembers. “They were fairly hard on motor cars. Probably nothing like we’d ever seen. But they were quick, while they lasted.”

Bob Holden recalled taking Tony Fall out for a test run just before the rally, to get used to local conditions, but said this revealed one of the problems with the driving style of the Europeans.

“We went out and did this practice run, from Bathurst up and around through some small town, I can’t remember exactly”, Holden reported. “I did the loop first and then Tony took the car and he fairly scared the daylight out of me. He was doing the Scandinavian Flick thing, from side to side. That’s OK on the roads over there, but here the crest in the middle of the road, between the wheel tracks, is quite a bit higher, and it was putting a lot of stress on the trailing links to be going up over this hump and back again. He said I scared him because I wasn’t doing the flick, but he scared me even more by doing it. I told him that if he wanted to finish the rally he had to stop doing the flick.”



Photo by John Lemm

At the end of the 1969 BP 1000 Hills Rally in SA, showing the BMC Australia Castrol Green/white livery. By this time the car was owned by BMC dealer John Taylor.

Over the next twelve months both cars, now painted in Castrol Green (though only outside, with inside remaining Tartan Red) and their UK identities effectively removed, were rallied regularly, with some success.

BMC Australia had seen that the Mini was outgunned by the V8s at Bathurst, so there was no factory entry in the 1968 race.

However, Hopkirk was still brought out for the Southern Cross, driving EPX 812 with Peter Mulder, while Evan Green/George Shephard piloted EPX 813. Again, the gearboxes proved the weak link and both cars retired. BMC honour was upheld a little by South Australian BMC dealer John Taylor who won Class B in his privately-entered Cooper S.

Rally Hiatus

Soon after the rally, British Leyland Australia (as BMCA had become) announced it was withdrawing from competition, and Warwick Robbins from *Wheels* magazine road tested EPX 812 (LRX 829E), saying; “You might kill a race team, but an image goes on forever.”

BLA’s decision was made after rallying had virtually been banned in NSW, but the announcement turned out to be a little

premature. NSW Police had tightened up the regulations significantly, following the Bianchi crash near Nowra on the London-Sydney Marathon, saying a Police permit would not be issued until a permit had been granted from every local council that any rally was to travel through. In the case of the Mini Monte Rally, for example, this would have required over 50 permits to be granted before the Police would agree. The increased workload alone, along with the uncertainty of gaining all the permits, was enough to scuttle the Monte.

The organisers of the Southern Cross Rally, which had previously travelled through the NSW and Victorian high country between Sydney, and Melbourne, moved the event north to Surfers Paradise, with a few short sections through the mountainous border country of northern NSW.

By this time, BLA had sold both the Abingdon Minis but had on hand three of the London-Sydney Abingdon-built Austin 1800s (see Issue 1 of *The BMC Experience* for the full story). These were entered in the Southern Cross, with Scott Andrew Cowan (winner of the London-Sydney in a Hillman Hunter) and local David Johnson winning the event outright.



John Taylor in the 1969 Southern Cross Rally. Photos by Autopics.



Photo by John Stoneham



Photo by John Lemm

Don Lemm had bad luck in rallies, but had a lot of success in autocross in 1971 and 1972.

Private Ownership

In February 1969, a month before the *Wheels* road test came out, EPX 812 (LRX 829E) was sold to John Taylor, who rallied it fairly regularly with Graham West in South Australia, registered as RGA 890.

This was a particularly dry period in country South Australia and many roads and tracks became increasingly sandy and rough. As a result the Mini spent a lot of time bogged or with one wheel spinning, which in turn put a lot of strain on the differential.

However, Taylor was reluctant to put a limited-slip differential into the car, because he had one in his race car and found the steering extremely heavy and the handling unpredictable. This decision came back to haunt him as, while lying in third place on the final day of the 1969 Southern Cross Rally, the diff exploded.

Taylor and West rallied the Mini for two years, winning only one event; the 1970 Snowtown Rally. But, according to long-time Adelaide motoring correspondent and photographer John Lemm; "the car

was always competitive, being fast and spectacular to watch."

In October 1970, Taylor replaced the car with one of the ex-Works London-Sydney Austin 1800s and went on to win many events, finishing second in the SA Rally Championship.

Taylor sold the Mini to Don Lemm, John's brother, who had a disastrous start with the car, crashing it in his second event – the 1971 Southern 500 Rally. Although not successful with it in rallies, Lemm had a much better run in autocross, winning the Sporting Car Club's series in 1971 and 1972.

In July 1975 he sold the car to Keith Robinson, from whom it went to Peter Smith in 1976, then Tony Cullen in August 1978. Cullen owned the Mini specialist business Minifix, located at Blackwood, and had a team of three rally Minis, registered BMC 001 (LRX 829E), for himself; BMC 002, driven by Dave Wallis; and BMC 003 for Rod Morris.

"They were identical cars and we competed in the Endrust Series and the South Australian Championship", Cullen explained. "We did fairly well. It was really

good with a team of three Minis, and great publicity for the business, and people were always looking to see how we were going."

As often happens, though, circumstances changed, parts were taken off the car and it was eventually left to languish. After all, by that stage, most people just thought of it as an old rally car and not worth anything.

Rescued

The Mini was sold to Michael Warin in July 1980. In January 1981 the registration reverted to RGA 890.

Somewhere along the line the car, still with a few Works items attached, ended up in a creek in the Adelaide Hills. That's where Dave Linton found it and, recognizing its significance, rescued it and stored it. In the late 1990s, Linton sold the car to Simon Young from British Sporting Cars in Bendigo, Victoria. Simon wasn't sure what to do with it at the time, but knew it needed to be saved.

In 2001, Simon sold what remained of 829E to West Australian Mini collector Syd Jenkins, who said it was; "very tired after 35 years plus of competition. It is probably one of the most-used ex-Works cars around."

Thankfully, some of the important paperwork has survived, signed by Alan Kemp, who ran BMC Australia's Competition Department under Evan Green, which states that the car was supplied with a compression ratio of 10.5:1, final drive of 3.9:1, close ratio gears (straight cut), and AAA.648 camshaft.



Photo by John Stoneham

John Taylor, 1969 Southern Cross Rally. Note filler for third fuel tank high on C-pillar.



Welded patch is visible from inside boot.



Photo by John Stoneham

Over the past fifteen years, Syd has undertaken a lot of research on the car, as he explained. "There was a lot of research and discussions with previous owners who provided some documents. The paperwork John Taylor gave me at a meeting not long before his shock death, licensing authorities and some basic detective work, proves that the car was in fact another Works car from the era."

"I suppose the one thing that can be said, and is pretty much agreed, is that the car may have been the last to carry the registration LRX 829E, but it wasn't the first and this wasn't its original registration."

"It was body wise original but had had a hard life", Syd continued. "The subframes and running gear were with it and it came with a genuine Mk 1 engine and gearbox but it wasn't the original (we think) although the engine number matched."

"As you can see the roll bar had been changed to an Australian one and we decided to keep that rather than put a UK Ally Bar in. The wiring was a mess and most of the original switching and associated gear was gone. Surprisingly much of the Abingdon safety padding and some quite

unique pieces remained, as did a lot of trim for the original Cooper S."

"The driver's seat was gone and the carpet was in pieces. All the glass was still there as were lights and related trim."

"It was a mess but very original down to the extra petrol tank installed by John Taylor and exiting to the C pillar. I still have the original SA number plates."

Resurrection

Syd left the Mini in Simon's care to be restored back to its former glory, as it arrived in Australia. That has been no small undertaking, particularly due to the rarity of the correct ex-Works parts.

Simon had also restored the sister car, LRX828E with Graeme Urch (see side bar), so already had a wealth of information and experience with the Works Minis.

Although nowhere near as complete as 828E, there was still a significant part of the car there. "To me the most important part is that you start with the genuine body shell", Simon said. "This had its original doors and boot lid – not the bonnet, because the car had hit a tree, more than once – the subframes, part of the dash."



Photo by Watto

Simon Young with almost finished LRX.



Photo by Jill Jenkins

Syd is very pleased with the restoration.

Sister Car - LRX 828E



While LRX 828E and -829E obviously have significant similarities and were built at Abingdon in the same period, there are also numerous differences. This is partly due to each car being built by one mechanic and each mechanic had his own way of doing things, and partly due to personal requirements for different drivers.

Although unsuccessful in the Southern Cross Rally, retiring with gearbox problems in both 1967 and 1968, 828E, registered in NSW as EPX 813 was driven to third place in the 1968 KLG 300 Rally by Evan Green/George Shephard. Two weeks later it scored first place outright in the Castrol 300 Rally, driven by Colin Bond – who had never previously driven the car.

In 1969 828E was sold to Merv Collins from Ballarat BMC dealership E. Collins Motors.

Fellow Ballarat Light Car Club member Graeme Urch bought the car from Collins in 1971 and has owned it ever since.

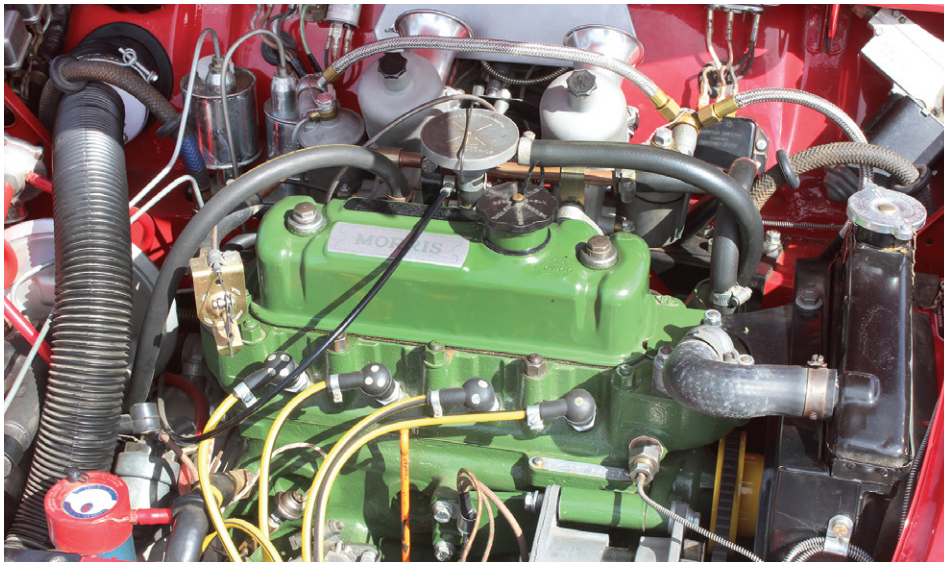
Graeme rallied the car until 1979, then decided it was too valuable to risk as ex-Works cars were already beginning to show an increase in value.

In the late 1990s, Graeme decided to have the car professionally restored back to how it was when it left Abingdon. He entrusted the work to Simon Young at British Sporting Cars, who was already an authority on BMC Works cars.

Even though the car was 95% complete, the few missing parts proved elusive and the restoration took around three years.

LRX 828E and LRX 829E will be on display together at Motorclassica on 21-23 October.





"It still had the hydro pipes in it", Simon continued. In Australia they hated hydro for some reason and they converted them to rubber cone, but the pipes were cut off and capped, and they were still there. Rusty, but intact, so we could use them as a pattern to make up new pipes."

"The floors were very rusty, so we had to remake the front floors, like you do in a lot of Minis, but they're identical. Anything that we've replaced is identical. So we put floors in it and we put a grille panel on it, but I actually got that out of a very early English car."

"Steve Pike over at Marsh Classic did all the metal work and did a great job, but we had to keep as many factory welds as possible. We didn't use any reproduction panels. Like every Mini, the battery box was ruined, but we actually found a Mini with a good battery box, drilled out the original factory spot welds and welded it all back in. But the rest of it is all original; amazing, really."

The fanatical dedication of both Syd and Simon have ensured that only correct parts have been used and that every detail, even where not visible, is as accurate as it possibly can be.

But where, after exhaustive searching, original Works parts have simply not been available, it has been a case of making them from scratch.

"If you're just building a works recreation and it's not a particular car, it's a lot quicker because you don't have to be inch-perfect."



1980 rego label showing RGA 890.

"But when you've got *the* car, you want to be true to the car and put it back together the way it ran at the time. Close enough is not good enough. It's got to be as exact as we can make it. It's all about the integrity of the thing. In years to come and we're all long gone, I'd like to think that if people pull the whole car apart not only the bits you can see, but that everything that's put together, right from the bare shell, has been put together as close as it could be from when it left Abingdon."

"Having a car that is painted red and white, having the dash panels in it, and four driving lights on it is not what makes it a Works car. It's all the attention to detail that makes it a Works car. It's modifications to engine mountings, gearbox case – it's got all the internal modifications to the gearbox that they had as well – and it all just takes time."

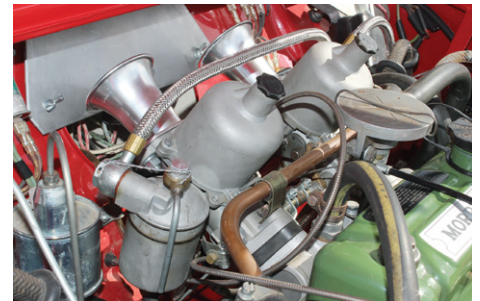
Syd continued; "It is often said the most important part of a Works Mini is the wiring, and this was therefore a big concern. After many attempts to use UK sources, including original Lucas employees, then rarer than chickens' teeth, we found Rod Smith (formerly of Classic Wiring Looms). He, after Simon, deserves the greatest praise for the finished car."

"Graeme Urch's car, the sister car to this (LRX828E), still had a complete and intact wiring loom", Simon explained. "He was gracious enough to let Rod Smith copy the wiring loom, while it was still in the car, so he could make the one for Syd's car exactly as it should be."

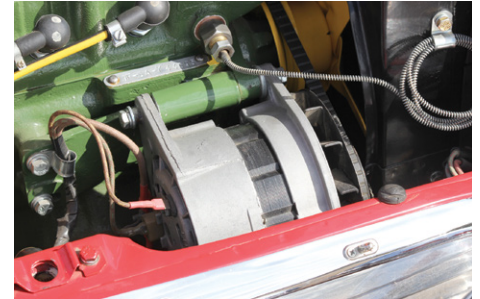
"It's very easy to look at them and underestimate how much work is in them."

Simon said that many of the modifications were very complicated, but must have been done that way for a reason.

"That was the level of preparation of these things, which was light years ahead of anybody else", Simon continued. "But there is still some stuff that you look at and think why did they do that like that. It's that complicated and difficult. They were under time constraints, but they did it anyway."



Modified MGA-type H4 carbs.



1967 cars ran with alternators.



Rear brake drums were drilled.



Period tools and tool bag had to be found.



Co-driver's map pocket and grab handle.



All original padding was still in the car.



Simon even has a period Dymo labeller.



Heuer clocks rare as rocking horse poo.



Every switch conforms with period photos.



Mirrors are correct in every detail.



Irvin aircraft seatbelts as per original.



Original Aussie rollbar was still in the car.



"What is it they say?; British engineering is about finding complex solutions to problems that don't exist."

"Then you get involved in different modifications for different cars and it just permeates. There are variations from car to car. Different mechanics had a different way of doing it, and then the drivers had their preferences and the way they wanted things set out, which were different from person to person."

To really understand how these cars go together, you need to understand the mind-set of what they were trying to achieve. Coming from a background of preparing cars for competition, I can understand a lot of why they did things the way they did them."

On top of all of that, were the changes made to the cars once they reached Australia. Although both this car and 828E have been restored essentially as they were when they arrived in Australia, there are also some Australian details that have been left in them, as Simon explained.

"It's good to incorporate some of the Australian history. Of course, the double-skinned bronzed-in floors were done in Australia. They weren't allowed to do those in the UK. In Australia they were allowed to have overt body strengthening. So, that's got the double skinned-floor, as has Graeme's."

One small detail that was discovered during the restoration proved beyond doubt that this was the car owned by John Taylor, and therefore proved its provenance down the line. Taylor had fitted a third fuel tank in the boot, which had its filler mounted high on the left-hand C-pillar. A welded-in plate is obvious from inside the car, and a matching welded plate on the rear parcel shelf is still visible inside the boot.

"Steve Pike said he would tidy up the welding, but we said, no leave it because it is part of the car's history and helps prove its originality", Simon explained.


The last rego sticker, registered RGA 890 and expiring February 1981, is still on the car, as are a couple of stickers which are visible in some of the photos from the period.

Double Take

So, there are now two cars wearing the ex-Works registration LRX 829E, some 20,000km apart but joined through their common history. Both have genuinely worn the identity, so have a legitimate claim to it.

Does it matter? Neither owner thinks so. "Syd is well aware of my car, and we corresponded prior to his purchase of the Australian version", Guy said. "I think/hope we are both fairly relaxed about it, and he is a nice guy. In my eyes there is no issue with there being two. Historically that is what happened, and you can't change history, much as you may wish to."

"In the 1970s old Works rally cars weren't worth a Jax cracker", Simon mused. "At the end of the day, they were just a tool to do a job and were then discarded. I'm not saying we should go back to that, but I think we've gone too far the other way and people are getting far too precious about them. They are, at the end of the day, just motor cars. A lot of history, but they are just motor cars."

Syd's car, LRX 829E, will be on display at the 2016 Motorclassica in Melbourne in October, alongside its sister car LRX 828E and the ex-Hopkirk/Foley 1967 Bathurst Mini (see BMCE Issue 16). This will be the first time since 1969 that the two Abingdon-built Minis have been seen together. 



One of the original stickers on the Mini.

Built to Drive

Words and feature photos by Patrick Quinn.
Travel photos by Troy Clayton.

When first introduced, from outside the Austin-Healey 3000 MkIII (BJ8) looked identical to its MkII predecessor.

But mechanical and interior changes made it a better touring car.

That suits Ian Clayton down to the ground and he loves driving his; across town, or across the country.



Ian Clayton likes to drive his BJ8 and over the past ten years or so has regularly used it for his commute across Sydney, before his recent retirement, as well as on many club runs with his wife Carol.

"I enjoy driving the car," Ian said. "So would take it to work a couple of times a week. It was over an hour to get there and of course back home in the afternoon. Then on the weekends whenever a situation would come up like going to the local shops I would take the car, but I would not go anywhere that I would need to park it in the shopping centre carpark. Plus there are runs with the club, including the Brass Monkey Run that takes place mid-winter to the coldest places imaginable. Most people would think you were mad to leave home at 6am mid-winter and then drive for two or so hours with the top down to someplace even colder for breakfast. Along with 150 or so other cars it's a wonderfully eccentric thing to do."

"A few years back I drove across to Perth for the Austin-Healey National Rally. I went with my son Troy, and Carol flew across. Driving across in the Austin-Healey was just fabulous and despite being on the road for close to seven days we had a great time. I did wonder what it would have been like to turn right at Perth and come home the long way."

"One of the big things I appreciate about the Austin-Healey is its simplicity and reliability so much so is that I think it's just brilliant. About the most technical

part in the car is the overdrive and even that is just a set of whirring gears inside a casing. Mechanically it's a basic car but, as the saying goes, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. I have found the Austin-Healey to be just as reliable as our modern Toyota."

BJ7 v BJ8

If you attend any gathering of Austin-Healeys you will be bound to see that the number of later cars far exceeds the earlier cars, and there are probably more 3000 Mk3s or BJ8s than any other single model on display.

Without doubt, the popularity of the BJ8 in Australia exceeds that of all other models, but available records show that only 11 were imported into this country when new. The vast majority have been privately imported in more recent years, and most of those from North America.

So, what makes them different and more attractive to the majority of buyers?

In the last issue of *BMCE* we looked closely at a 3000 MkII BJ7, noting with the introduction of that model the Austin-Healey was slowly catching up with the rest of the sports car world: with a proper convertible hood and wind-up windows among its refinements.

For years Austin-Healey buyers put up with leaky soft-tops, wind-prone side curtains, gear levers that entered the cockpit from the side of the gearbox tunnel and exhaust pipes that crashed on the smallest of pebbles.





As early as 1961, Geoff Healey of the Donald Healey Motor Company had suggested to BMC a raft of improvements that included a major alteration to the chassis profile, along with updates to the body and fittings.

At the time, BMC lacked the commitment to take these on board for one reason or another – usually financial. Some exterior changes were made with the introduction of the BJ7 in the middle of 1962, but it was to be a further two years before some major changes were implemented.

Of course the biggest market for the Austin-Healey was North America, so it made good sense for BMC to be conversant with how US vehicle manufacturers released their new models. So, in October 1963, in line with the US 1964 model year releases, BMC announced the new Austin-Healey 3000 MkIII that carried the chassis code BJ8.

Unlike with the release of the BJ7 there was no overlapping production, with the first BJ8 carrying the next chassis number from the last BJ7.

Externally, the differences between the two models were indistinguishable. You would have needed a sharp eye to notice the badge above the grille was changed from 3000 Mk11 to 3000 Mk111 or you may have noticed that exhaust pipes exited from the opposite side to the earlier model.

However, there were significant interior

changes as well as under the bonnet. Gone was the traditional Austin-Healey scalloped metal dash, which was replaced by a timber dash that incorporated the instruments directly in front of the driver, centre switches and a lockable glovebox. The BJ8 is the only big Austin-Healey that was fitted with a glovebox, and had a key-operated starter in place of a push-button.

Installed beneath the dash was a centre console that extended back along the top of the gearbox tunnel and incorporated a useful cubby-hole beneath the armrest. The console allowed for a convenient location of a radio and speaker.

Additionally, behind the seats was a useful covered panel that could be used as a back rest for the rear passengers (usually small children with extremely narrow legs and small feet). The panel could be folded forward to take extra luggage or even perform the useful function as a picnic shelf.

Under the bonnet, the 2912cc C-series engine received a warmer camshaft and twin 2" SU HD8 carburettors. This resulted in an output of 148bhp and 165 ft-lb of torque; an increase from 131bhp and 158 ft-lb from the BJ7.

All of this, along with a completely revised exhaust system, made the BJ8 a true 120mph motor car and able to run 0-60mph in 9.8 seconds.

Motor magazine was thoroughly taken with the changes, saying; "Two exhaust



pipes and four silencers have subdued the noise to a pleasant grumble...Yet this is no cissy sports car. A top speed of 122.5 m.p.h. is fast by any standards and quite exceptional for £1,200...In a nutshell, you now go much faster in greater (but by no means sumptuous) comfort on no more petrol – a fair return for long-term development."

Phase 2

The new Austin-Healey was warmly received by both the motoring press and the sports car buying public, but in its original guise production only lasted a mere eight months, to May 1964, and 1,390 examples before what is known as the BJ8 Phase 2 was released.

The Phase 2 addressed many problems that were evident with the Austin-Healey from the very first of the 100s when it was found that ground clearance left a lot to be desired.

In all prior Austin-Healeys the chassis was straight from front to rear, but with the new model the chassis rails were curved where they passed under the rear axle. This provided additional axle movement so that the car could be raised an inch, and in turn allowed for softer rear springs.

Positioning of the rear axle was also changed with the Panhard rod being substituted by twin radius arms connecting the chassis to the rear axle.

It was probably quite logical then, but looking back now the question arises as to why introduce a new model and then, after just 1,390 were built, it was dramatically changed? As the rear axle changes were suggested by Geoff Healey as far back as 1961, perhaps the new model incorporating all the changes just wasn't ready in time for the marketing driven release date of October 1963.





There is one aspect about the Phase 2 that can border on the pedantic amongst owners, and that's the front and rear side-lights. From the first 100/6 of 1956 through to the last of the BJ8 Phase 1, Lucas beehive shaped glass was used, but the Phase 2 saw the use of larger individual round plastic lenses.

That's what all the books say, but this is where it can be confusing. Different markets had different laws, with some European countries requiring such fittings as steering locks, smaller capacity engines and separate indicator and side lights. Due to a change in US regulations from the end of March 1965, all new BJ8s were fitted with separate indicator and parking lights front and rear. Today, BJ8s in Australia and elsewhere may have been sold new in countries that required separate lights as early as 1961, meaning that some early examples do not necessarily have the same lights as others.

In his book, *Austin-Healey: The Bulldog Breed*, Jon Pressnell says; "There is a strong argument that the last-of-line BJ8s were the best of the breed. There is also a counter proposition, that in being the most plush of the big Healeys the MkIII was also the model that was furthest from the car's authentic sports-car roots, having been transformed into a degenerate grand tourer."

Most road-testers of the day were of the former camp, enjoying the refinements of the MkIII.

Autosport wrote; "The Austin-Healey 3000 is a car for long journeys. It will go anywhere, and fast, too, without wilting under the worst conditions. There are smoother and quieter town carriages, but



for the man who likes to feel a big engine gobbling up the miles, this is an attractive buy."

Similarly, *Autocar* said; "Despite some dated features, the big Healey is still terrific fun to drive. Tractable, capable of an immense amount of hard work with reasonable economy, it will still have its devotees long after production has ceased."

In the twin-light form, the BJ8 stayed in production through to December 1967. In all, there were 17,711 BJ8s built, plus one more that was assembled from parts in March 1968. That last Big Healey still exists in the US.

As Anders Clausager reveals in his book, *Original Austin-Healey*; "Neither Donald Stokes nor the BMC-Leyland merger in 1968 killed the big Healey – by that time the decision had already been made. It was an American lawyer called Ralph Nader whose one-man crusade for safer, cleaner cars led to the US authorities adopting the first safety and emissions standards from 1 January 1968. BMC decided that it would be pointless to try to make the ageing design meet the new emissions standards and decided to drop the Healey."

In fact, *Road & Track* had pre-empted this decision as early as February 1965, when it wrote; "The Austin-Healey...has served its purpose well both on road and track... However, the existing model appears

to have reached the point of honorable retirement, and perhaps BMC will soon come up with a worthy successor after starting from scratch with a clean sheet of paper."

BMC instead decided to release the MGC – a hybrid MGB with a six-cylinder engine – to replace the Healey. That decision would be fraught with problems and the car short-lived, as we detail in the next story.

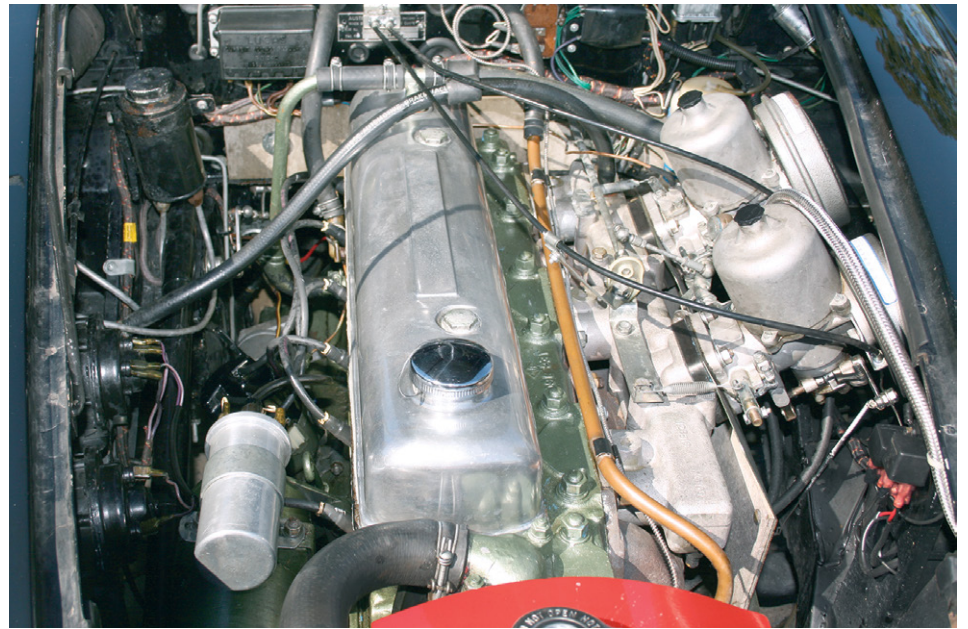
Back to Ian

Like so many people, Ian Clayton's interest in cars developed when he was young. He still has his original Dinky models of Austin-Healeys, and while he liked the shape of the marque back then, that affection has grown somewhat since. By the time he reached his teens his interest blossomed to the extent that he started looking around at what could be bought, if he had the money.

"Back then, the only Austin-Healey that ever came up for sale were the 100s," Ian said. "You very rarely saw any of the six-cylinder models come up for sale. I went to buy a 100 in Bathurst back in 1972, but was pipped at the post by another buyer, so I ended up buying a Cooper S instead."

"Since then, I've restored a Buckle, the BJ8 and am currently doing a Jaguar E-type. After Carol and I were married I remember going north on our honeymoon in the Cooper S. We reached Port Macquarie and there was a 3000 BT7 Mk2 with the





triple SUs in a wrecker's yard, which really amazed me. It did occur to me to buy it, but with the \$10,000 mortgage we had just taken out I thought I had the weight of the world on my shoulders."

So, as far as Austin-Healeys were concerned, Ian bided his time right through to August 1999.

"I must admit that I never stopped thinking about buying an Austin-Healey", he added. "However the money just wasn't available after expenses. Back then we had a charter boat business centred on the Hawkesbury River that operated out of Windsor, north-west of Sydney. It was a 60-foot timber cruiser that had previously seen service during World War 2 as a torpedo recovery vessel."

"However, come New Year's Eve we would take it to Sydney Harbour as such boats were in high demand. In particular the 1999-2000 New Year's Eve was extremely busy, with the massive fireworks to welcome in the 2000s. It was a lucrative weekend which left us with a sum of money that we decided to put towards an Austin-Healey. Probably the only time in my life when I was flushed with funds!"

A Rough One

"It wasn't a huge amount of money!" Ian continued. "However there was enough to start looking round for a rough one and I found it at Special Interest Autos in South Australia. It was unusual as they normally imported American muscle cars, but I saw they had this Austin-Healey for sale. There were a few other cars available at the time that with little work would have made for a tidy driver, but I decided that I wanted one to restore."

"Someone in the US had fitted the car with a 383ci Chrysler V8, along with an auto transmission, but it also came with its original engine and gearbox. I really wasn't interested in the V8 and auto so they were removed before I bought it. I brought the car across from Adelaide and it took me about a day and a half to pull it apart; and about five and a half years to put it all back together again."

"I deliberately went out to buy a BJ8, as it was the model I wanted. With all the 'improvements' that had been made over the years it was exactly what I wanted. Sure they are not as pure in design as the early 100s, but they still look pretty good."

"I pulled it apart in one weekend and found it was missing lots of pieces. As soon as I bought it I joined the NSW Austin-Healey Owners Club and made contact with people within the club who could help me do those things with the chassis and bodywork that I couldn't





do. This included new chassis rails and a complete new firewall as the original had been hacked around quite a bit. Looking back, I rather liked the look of it when it first arrived complete with massive flared guards. It looked quite a muscle machine, but worth nothing if it was restored like that. With the chassis restored I sort of hung the panels on it, then sent that away for the bodywork to be done along with the re-painting. When it came back I did all the rest."

"As to black, I honestly admit that I like the Healey Blue colour, but at the time thought there were too many painted in that. Originally the car was red with black interior, so in the end I compromised with myself and had it done in black with red interior."

Restoration

"I stripped all the mechanicals," Ian explained. "The engine block and cylinder head I took to a machinist near where I live, where he bored it and had the crank and camshaft reground. It came back in pieces for me to assemble. The gearbox and overdrive I sent to the Healey Factory in Melbourne to be rebuilt. After all that I assembled everything else, which was quite straightforward after the experience I had with the boat and the other cars I've restored."

"During the restoration, things were done when I was in a position to do so. Plus there were many times when I just walked away from the car because of being frustrated

with something not doing what I wanted it to do. Sometimes I felt like throwing a hammer at it, but I would stay away for a week and come back when I was in a better mood and have another go. I certainly wasn't in a rush, but I suppose it would have been nice to finish it a lot earlier."

Enjoying the Drive

Ian is one who feels the BJ8's balance of old-style charm and later refinement give the perfect combination for enjoyable motoring.

"I'm pleased to say that my wife Carol really likes the BJ8 and actually prefers it over the E-type, as do both daughters who used the car as their bridal car", he revealed. "I was very happy with the way it turned out. It's not a concours car, but then I spent a lot less money on it than I would have done if it was."

"As to the BJ8 and the E-type, I think the Jaguar drives like quite a modern car while the Austin-Healey doesn't. However that's not a negative, as I appreciate the differences. The E-type is a '70s car while the BJ8 harks back to the '50s. I like that, as driving the BJ8 just takes you back to simpler times."



Ian says the BJ8 is the perfect tourer.



While driving to Perth, Ian had no qualms about driving to the best spots.

MGC Cruis

Words and photos by Craig Watson.

The MGC should have been a runaway success, but compromises in the engine and suspension led to severe criticism in the Press, which killed sales.

Today the car is appreciated for the effortless touring that it was originally scorned for, even more so in the rare automatic version.



Des Grinter slides into the driver's seat of his MGC GT, snicks the automatic gear selector into Drive and pulls out into the traffic. Gently pressing down on the throttle sees the engine noise rise a little, as the speed quickly climbs. Pushing the pedal harder sees the car quickly gaining the maximum speed limit, while the engine is quietly burbling along.

The car is smooth, and the engine quiet, with a subdued but meaningful exhaust note, as it gobbles up the miles. "As a touring car, you just can't beat it", Des says without needing to lift his voice above normal.

There is no doubt Des loves his MG, but there is a very practical reason why his had to be automatic and the GT version.

Des had always been car mad, with some of his earliest memories being of visiting the speedway and motorbike racing with his dad. He was a carpenter/joiner by trade, having been apprenticed to his dad in 1955, and enjoyed boat building, fishing and camping.

Like so many of his time, Des longed for an MG TF but knowing his dad would not

ser



provide the necessary funds, he bought a far more practical Ford utility.

In 1961, he did get his first sports car, an Austin-Healey 100/6. With a tow bar fitted, he often used to tow a small camper trailer to spots along the Surf Coast, but in 1964 necessity caused him to sell the Healey and buy the first of what would be a string of mundane, if practical, Holdens and Fords.

The Need for Automatic

Des met his wife to be, Jill, a nurse, in 1961 and they married four years later.

Des was also a keen footballer in his youth, winning the Best And Fairest award with his local club in the mid-1950s. But an accident during a match in 1965 changed everything.

Those were the days of nail-on stops on football boots, and injuries were not uncommon. Unfortunately, during a match Des received a severe gash on his left leg from another player's stops. The wound healed, but a lump developed that was eventually diagnosed as bone cancer.

In those pre-chemotherapy days, the answer was to have the leg amputated, so



The bonnet is the most obvious change from MGB.



Transmission tunnel was wider to accommodate Borg Warner auto.

Des lost his above the knee, as he recalls. "That was the only solution in those days, really. We were married for three months when it came to that and it gives you an incentive to get off your, you-know-what, and get moving. Because, what else are you going to do? You need money, and there's only one way you're going to get it and that was to continue to do what I knew, which was carpentry."

Getting back to work naturally took time, but getting around was another dilemma. Automatic cars weren't very common, but Des, being a hands-on kind of bloke, devised his own methods of activating the clutch in a variety of manual cars, before automatics became more prevalent and affordable.

So, his missing leg never prevented him from doing the things he really wanted. He continued to enjoy his outdoor activities and boat building, and worked as a builder until 1974, then continuing until his retirement as a building inspector and building surveyor with local councils.

However, Des still longed for a sports car and in 1981 he bought a Series 1½ E-type Jaguar 2+2. Naturally, it was automatic, but it took some dexterity to climb in and out.

He still enjoyed watching motorsport, but in the 1980s became involved with go-karting, with his son James. Not content with sitting on the sidelines, Des was soon behind the wheel. But the foot-operated clutch was impossible for him to use, so he again devised his own method of operating the clutch. His modifications

were approved and he enjoyed many years of karting.

It was also in the mid-Eighties that Des bought a twenty-year-old MkX Jaguar, which he described as a wonderful cruising vehicle. A couple of years later an XJ-based Daimler Sovereign 4.2 joined his stable.

Finding a C

Around 2002, Des started looking for another sports car that would combine the touring ability of the saloon cars, with the sporty appeal of the E-type. "I did a fair bit of research and I tried lots of sports cars out as far as access", he explains. "That was the main thing, and the MGB or MGC was the easiest to get in and out for me. The GT was a bit better than the soft-top with the roof on, because the windscreen is a couple of inches higher and that makes a big difference getting in and out."

"Of course, we were looking for an automatic and I just thought the six-cylinder would have a bit more torque, so decided to go for the MGC. So I started looking for one, and they're not that easy to find. I eventually got this one somewhere out of Brisbane."

That difficulty in finding one is not surprising, as not a large number were made, with very few coming to Australia. In total, there were 556 automatic MGC roadsters and 764 auto GTs built.

Although exact numbers brought here aren't known, according to former British Motor Heritage Chief Archivist Anders Clausager, in his book *Original MGB*, only 64 MGC roadsters and 99 MGC GTs were

built as right-hand-drive export models. Of those, only two roadsters and eleven GTs were automatic.

The Unloved MGC

At first glance it is difficult to distinguish the MGC from the MGB. In fact, the only external differences are the bonnet, which has a pronounced bulge to clear the engine and a smaller bubble to clear the carburetors, the letter C on the rear badge and the slightly larger diameter wheels – 15" instead of the B's 14".

Apart from that, appearance wise at least, the bodies are identical. However, underneath, the front of the floorpan also came in for a significant change in order to accommodate the new front suspension. More on that shortly.

Mechanically, however, the MGC is substantially different from the MGB; most importantly with the engine.

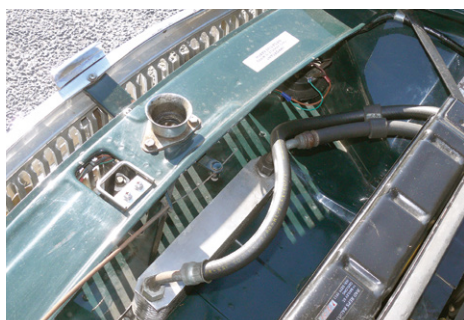
In the early to mid-1960s BMC had three top-selling sports cars: Austin-Healey 3000; MGB; and Sprite/Midget (one car sold under both badges).

The big Healey was the rorty, agricultural, hairy-chested racer; the MGB was the mid-priced, nimble choice for lovers of twisting roads; while the Sprite/Midget was for the fun-loving, cash conscious, mostly youth market.

But even by this time, the nature of the Austin-Healey had changed with the car becoming more refined with wind-up windows, a proper convertible hood, 2+2 seating, a timber dash which even included a lockable glovebox, quieter exhaust, and softer suspension (see previous story).

As such, it had become much more of a touring car, than the all-out sports/racer of the original. With the Healey's progressively more civilised role, it is not surprising that when BMC came to replace it, they looked at something to continue along this path.

The other problem facing BMC was a lack of funds to undertake a "clean sheet" approach to designing a replacement for



Plenty of room behind MGB grille.



Very cramped behind MGC grille.



Pancake air filters are not standard, but help breathing for a little more performance.

the Healey. It therefore became a necessity that the new car would be a development of the MGB – after all, it was already the biggest selling sports car of all time, to that point.

So it was, that the MGC was really a compromise vehicle that failed to excite the market place or the media, basically because it was misunderstood.

Essentially an MGB with a six-cylinder engine like the Austin-Healey, most road testers seemed unable to look at it on its own merits, rather than comparing it with one or the other, or both.

Motor Sport magazine said; "One feels that if there had never been an M.G.-B or big Austin-Healey then the 'C' would have had better prospects...while the M.G.-C is an enjoyable and tireless as a touring car, suitable for those unending continental roads, it is not a sports car in the Austin-Healey and M.G.-B sense."

It was mercilessly panned by many for not being as powerful as the Healey or as chuckable through the bends as the MGB. Certainly, the weight penalty of the engine and the new suspension, making the car a full 340lb (150kg) – 210lb (95kg) of that coming from the engine – heavier than the MGB, with virtually all of that up the front, made the car more prone to understeer.

But, contrary to what some of the motoring scribes reported, it was not a "lethal understeerer". *Car and Driver* was one of the most scathing in its attack on the car, saying; "By stuffing the great cast-iron Austin-Healey 3000 engine into a cringing MG-B chassis, they've managed to destroy most of the good features of the B without appreciably improving performance. Considering the amount of work involved, it puts one to wondering why MG bothered...the big trouble with the beak-heavy MG-C is trying to get it to go around anything."

Conversely, *Autocar*, while disappointed

in some aspects of the car, was far more balanced in its report, writing; "Steering is on the whole very good, with the reservation that, regardless of speed, on any sort of corner needing appreciable wheel movement, its considerable castor makes it heavy by contemporary standards. It is very accurate, direct (despite 3½ turns lock to lock) self-centres strongly and has the right amount of feel and feedback."

Testing an automatic GT version, they said; "It also tends to run straight on, at first, when cornered hard; there is considerable initial understeer. Possibly because the weight distribution is a little more favourable on the GT...this understeer doesn't seem quite so prominent, though it must be respected."

US magazine *Road Test* was another with less than complimentary remarks, declaring the MGC "not for the enthusiast". "Enthusiasts familiar with the fierce performance of the Austin Healey are going to find the MG C disappointing."

Of the balance of the car, it said; "This front weight bias also makes itself felt on cornering. After trying to hurl the C through a decreasing radius bend one ROAD TESTER was heard to say, 'I've heard of understeer, but this is ridiculous'."

On a more positive note, the magazine reported; "It is out on the highway or freeway that the MG C becomes a pleasure to drive. In the Grand Touring tradition it is smooth, stable and purrs without effort."



Apart from a few minor details, interior is essentially the same as the MGB MkII.



Disc brakes slightly larger than on MGB.

Motor, on the other hand, stated the car was a "mild understeerer", but said the "overall handling characteristics are little changed" from the MGB. "With 210lb more engine weight and an increase in front roll stiffness, pundits have been predicting tremendous understeer for the new MGC. But in fact the weight distribution is very little changed compared to the MGB."

Car and Driver, while still objecting to the lack of performance and chuckability of the car, admitted that not all was bad. "It isn't that the C is a lousy car – it isn't. It's just that the C isn't much of a sports car, even less an MG sports car."

In hindsight, the MGC has become much more accepted for what it is, rather than for what it isn't. Malcolm Green summed it up best, in *MG: Britain's Favourite Sports Car*. "Right from the outset the main disadvantage suffered by the MGC was that it looked too much like an MGB while being really a car with a quite different set of virtues."

"Those who did take the plunge found that the model's shortcomings were nowhere near as bad as they may have been led to believe, and that they were amply compensated for by a surprising ability to cover long distances without apparent effort."

"The secret is to enjoy the MGC as a long-distance touring car and forget about trying to compete with the MGB owners round the twisty bits!"

Sales Disaster

Sadly, while both the Austin-Healey and MGB had been roaring sales successes in the United States, and the MGB would continue to be so for another decade, the MGC was a complete failure.

The MGC went on sale, alongside the





MGC should have leather-bound wheel, but otherwise as MGB.



140mph speedo for MGC. Tacho red-lines earlier than on MGB.

MGB MkII, in October 1967 at a UK price of £1,102 for the roadster and £1,249 for the GT, including taxes, with the automatic adding £100, or overdrive for the manual being £62. US list prices were \$3,410 for the roadster, plus \$400 for the GT, \$255 for auto and \$175 for overdrive.

There is no doubt that the scathing reports on the car from a large number of magazines had an impact. Considering the success of the Austin-Healey 3000 MkIII as a touring car, the MGC should have been able to continue in this vein. Brand loyalty would have played its part, for sure, but perception is everything in marketing and the perception of many people was that the MGC was a dud.

87% of Austin-Healey BJ8s (15,407), 61% of MGB roadsters (53,722) and 47% of MGB GTs in the same period (10,157) went to North America. That should have meant the MGC would be equally successful, but sales were bitterly slow in this most important of markets.

Ever the kings of badge engineering, BMC suggested an Austin-Healey version of the MGC, but Donald Healey refused to have his name associated with the car, so the idea came to naught.

Unfortunately, not even the news that HRH Prince Charles had bought an MGC GT as his first car was enough to give some spark to sales.

Only 2,483 MGC roadsters (54% of production) and 1,773 GTs (40%) made it to North American buyers in the three

years of production. In total, production figures for the MGC were 4,544 roadsters and 4,458 GTs.

The Engine

The heart of the MGC, and the item that caused the most complaints from the road testers, is the six-cylinder engine that was shoehorned under the MGB's front panels.

A common misconception is that the engine in the MGC was simply the six-cylinder from the Austin-Healey, slightly modified. While the engine was indeed based on the C-series, it was significantly changed – with important input thanks to a bit of Australian innovation.

Looking back, it was Australian engineers that convinced their UK counterparts that the venerable B-series engine could be bored out to 1622cc, by siamesing the bores (see Issue 3 of this magazine). It was through this work that the engine was eventually extended to 1798cc for the MGB.

When it came to designing the Austin Freeway and Wolseley 24/80, the Aussies wanted a six-cylinder engine to compete directly with the family cars from Holden and Ford.

They looked at Austin's C-series engine, but considered it too heavy and too long, plus too costly to machine locally in order to maintain the high local content required.

Again, they struggled to convince the UK engineers of what they wanted, but eventually ended up with a six-cylinder

version of the B-series, of 2433cc and known as the B6, or Bluestreak Six. It was shorter and lighter than the C-series and, with a seven-bearing crank, was smoother in operation. It was also unique to Australia, with no other market using this engine.

A six-cylinder version of the MGB had been proposed by the car's creator, Syd Enever, even before the car's specification had been finalised. However, just as the announcement of the original Austin-Healey 100 temporarily stopped development of the MGA, so too did the release of the six-cylinder Austin Healey prevent the earlier development of a six-cylinder MGB.

With the scheduled demise of the Austin-Healey in 1968, due to imminent changes to US emission laws, engineers at Abingdon again considered a six-cylinder version of the MGB. They looked at the C-series and also concluded it was too heavy and too long.

However, the decision was taken out of their hands, as the design of the new engine, which would power both the revised MGB as well as the Austin 3-litre (a rear-wheel-drive adaptation of the 1800 platform) was handed over to Morris Engines at Coventry.

They looked at the Australian B6 but, although it was lighter, shorter and smoother than the C-series, considered it not durable enough. Rather than work on improving that design, which would have made sense in terms of cost because of its commonality with the four-cylinder B-series, they opted to design an all-new 2912cc engine, though using the seven-bearing crank from the B6.

According to Malcolm Green; "In the event, those working on the new unit lost the plot somewhere along the way and when a prototype of the replacement 3 litre engine arrived in the Development Department at Abingdon it turned out to be very little smaller, or lighter, than the old C-series they had already rejected as being too big to fit in the MGB engine bay."

After all their work, the resulting engine





Des is delighted with his MGC GT.

was only 2" (50mm) shorter and 20lb (9kg) lighter than the C-series, but developed 5bhp less (145bhp) than the Austin-Healey unit. That compared well with the MGB engine (90bhp), but at a considerable weight penalty – the 'B' unit weighing 360lb compared with over 650lb for the 5-cylinder.

Functionally, the new engine had a lot of potential but, due to the short time available for the release and the short lifespan of the MGC, this was never exploited. As Malcolm Green wrote; "Subsequent work on the engine by tuning firms proved the latent potential of the design as they were able to extract considerably more power with comparatively minor changes to the manifolds and cylinder head. Just why the shortcomings of the engine were not recognised and rectified before the car was launched is one of the many mysteries of British car manufacturers in the 1960s."

Hampered by the size of this new engine, MG's engineers did what they could with the time and money available, but the body and suspension had to come in for some significant changes.

Firstly, the radiator was almost right up against the bonnet shut panel, which was mounted further forward. This meant there was little room for the oil cooler, which was also moved further forward, and the hoses to the cooler. These were accommodated through holes that were pressed into the panel. In the case of the automatic cars a transmission oil cooler was also fitted, mounted directly on top of the engine's oil cooler.

Suspension and other changes

The big strong cross member under the engine of the MGB was too bulky to fit under the MGC's engine, so was removed and replaced with a U-shaped cross member under the sump.

This meant radical changes to the front suspension. Where the MGB had coil springs and lever action dampers, the MGC used different wishbones, telescopic dampers and longitudinal torsion bars that mounted onto the front of the floorpan.

This in turn meant the floor had to be strengthened to take the loads from the front suspension.

The steering was geared slightly lower,

at 3½ turns lock to lock, instead of three, to help cater for the changes in the caster of the front wheels, due to the suspension changes. However, the steering was still often criticised for being heavy at low speed or for parking.

As already mentioned, the bonnet was different on the MGC, with bulges to clear the engine and carburettors. Like the MGB, the bonnet was aluminium, although Clausager believes it may have been changed to steel on some late production cars. Where the bonnet on the 'B' had a strengthening rib across the middle, this was deleted from the bonnet on the 'C'. As a result, the underfelt was a single piece, instead of the two pieces on the 'B'.

The rest of the bodysheet was the same as for the MGB MkII, released at the same time – which included a wider transmission tunnel for the new all-synchro manual and the Borg Warner type 35 automatic gearboxes.

Inside the car was basically the same as the MGB MkII, down to new door handles and switch gear. However, the MGC did have a sewn leather cover over the standard steering wheel (which came in for a fair bit of criticism) and slightly different calibrations on the tachometer. The tachometer on both cars was now electric, instead of the earlier mechanical type.

All MGCs also included slightly larger front disc brakes, with the rear drums being slightly smaller diameter, but wider, and featured a power booster. Cars sold

to North America featured split-system brakes and two brake boosters.

Other changes for the American market were the same as for the MGB.

Feature Car


Des Grinter bought his MGC in March 2004 and drove it basically as he got it for the next nine years. In 2013 he pulled the engine out, because it had started burning oil, and the transmission because it also needed an overhaul. "Getting new parts was no problem", he explained. "I bought all new pistons. Everything we got was new – oil pumps, everything, just to make sure that it would be right."

While the engine was out, the engine bay was given a freshen up and a repaint.

Although it originally had the usual 5½" painted wire wheels, Des fitted a set of 6" Performance Superlite alloy rims, because he particularly likes the look of them in the 15" diameter – plus they are much easier to keep clean.

Otherwise, the car is pretty well as Des bought it, and very well looked after.

The MGC is today recognised as desirable for the very reasons it was derided in 1968 – its effortless touring capabilities and its smooth untroubled engine. It has also become sought after partly because of its rarity.

As far as Des is concerned, it's the perfect combination of touring car and sports car, with the added benefit of a good automatic transmission. 



Concept Redefined



Words and photos by Craig Watson.

The Austin Kimberley was really an updated 1800 with a new engine, new interior and a new skin. It was better than the opposition in many ways, but early reliability issues meant it never reached its full potential.



One of the biggest problems faced by BMC, and later Leyland, engineers in Australia was convincing their British counterparts that many (most?) of the cars they were designing were not suitable for Australian conditions.

This problem extended back to the earliest days of Morris in Australia, as we

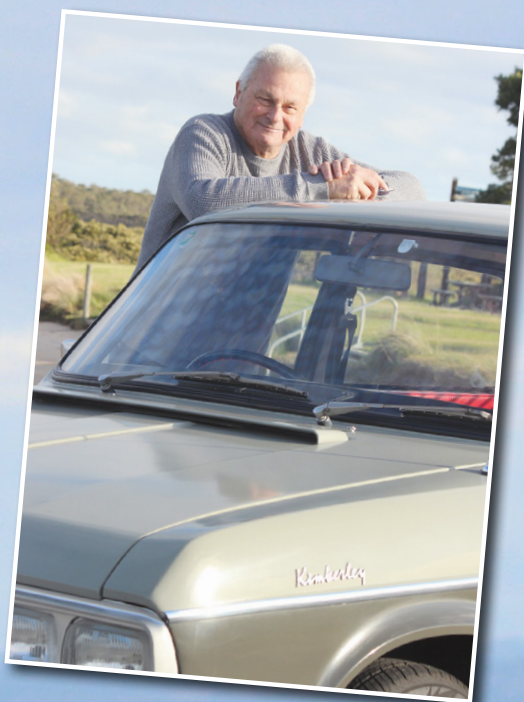
detailed last issue, with William Morris only being convinced of the problem when on a trip out here and seeing first-hand his cars fall apart on Aussie roads.

BMC Australia had its own Product Engineering department from the late 1950s and spent a lot of time and effort in "Australianising" cars for local conditions.

Of all the cars that came out from the UK one that was found very durable on Outback roads, albeit still requiring some modification from the UK spec, was the 1800, sold in Australia only under the Austin brand.

In fact, the body of the 1800 – ADO17 in BMC engineering parlance – had

Kimberley



the strongest torsional rigidity of any car on the market at the time, thanks mostly to the transverse tunnel across the front bulkhead for mounting the front suspension.

As BMC Australia moved closer to its goal of an all-Australian designed and built car in the late 1960s, Leyland took over

the company and found a considerable lack of future model development taking place in the UK. The biggest project, which was virtually ready for release and which Leyland, despite a lack of confidence in the car, was saddled with was the Maxi.

This was Alec Issigonis' last major project with the company as, partly due to the car's

dismal sales performance, and that of the uninspiring 3-litre, he was sidelined and replaced as Technical Director by Harry Webster from Triumph.

Webster recruited Roy Haynes, who had designed the Mk2 Cortina, from Ford, to give the Mini a facelift and to design a new car that would become the Marina.



Meanwhile, BMC Australia found itself with a dearth of suitable interim models to get it through the phase of developing its new two-models to take on Ford and Holden.

The immediate answer, and one that would cost the least, would be to facelift the two existing models; 1100 and 1800. UK wanted Australia to take on the Maxi, but the Aussies stood their ground. They did take the new four-cylinder E-series engine and the hatchback concept to update the 1100 to the new 1500 and Nomad. The unfortunate fate of those models was explained in Issue 12 of this magazine.

The 1800 was initially given a facelift, coming out as the Mk2 in November 1968, while a major restyle was taking place in the UK.

Roy Haynes was responsible for updating the 1800 concept and the changes followed traditional (nee Ford) thinking, transforming the look of the car. The new panel work was not insubstantial and included basically every panel in front of the windscreen and behind the rear screen. The C-pillars were also filled in to remove the 1800's rear quarter-lights and give the car a more conventional appearance.

However, the main passenger compartment and the door shape were unchanged, keeping re-tooling costs to a minimum. But the doors even came in for modification, with new door handles to meet the incoming Australian Design Rules – particularly ADR2, governing door handles and locks, effective from 1 January 1971.

Inside was all new, with a full-width plastic dash incorporating new round instruments, eyeball vents and rocker switches.

Mechanically, the new car, designated

YDO19, came in for a major change with the all-new six-cylinder E-series engine. The Maxi had always been intended to be available in four- or six-cylinder configurations, so the six was already designed for use with front-wheel-drive, which was to the benefit of YDO19. The Maxi never received the six-cylinder.

The fitting of this engine in YDO19 meant that the side-mounted radiator of the 1800 was deleted, the inner guard being closed in as well as re-profiled, and a larger front-mounted radiator included.

As the engine was fitted transversely, so the conventional fan could not be used, a thermostatically controlled fan was required – a first for Australia.

This should have been a breakthrough for the car, as the side-mounted radiators had never been ideal for the Australian weather, but problematic controllers for the thermo fans resulted in many overheating problems in the early cars.

For sale, the car was named X6, to give it a prestige feel alongside the Jaguar XJ6, with two models being named Tasman (the basic model) and Kimberley.

According to Tony Cripps in his book *P76: The Inside Story*, "Haynes recognised that YDO19 (Kimberley/Tasman) was too late, highly priced, overweight, and under-'sexed', but there was no other viable alternative."

The Tasman was priced a little above a Ford Falcon and between the Holden Belmont and Kingswood, while the well-appointed Kimberley was between the Falcon 500 and Fairmont, and between the Kingswood and Premier.

Accordingly, they were not overpriced, but problems with early cars, particularly the overheating engines, fuel leaks in the automatics, stalling with the Kimberley (this was a manifold problem with the carburettors being horizontal instead of slightly inclined, and prone to flooding under hard braking) and vapour locking, coupled with the usual Leyland build quality malady, saw sales stall.

As *Wheels* magazine said; "By average standards it's an excellent car – even an outstanding one – in many of the ways that count... (but) Despite its assets, the Austin



Car type identification

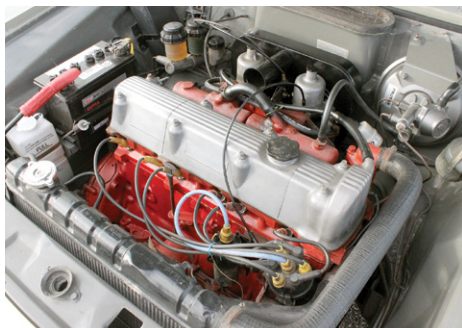


Y = Australia; B = Engine size, 2000-2999cc

S = 4-door saloon; 5 = Model series.

YBS5 = Austin Kimberley, Mk1 & Mk2

YBS6 = Austin Kimberley Auto Mk1 & 2



suffers telling problems and handicaps and these collectively help to account for its weak sales."

Feature Car

After Warren and Pam Barry drove their Austin A30 from Melbourne to Bendigo for Austins Over Australia a few years ago, they knew they needed something with a bit better legs. "I got sick of doing 75-80km/h up there", Warren explained. "I said to Pam, I think we're going to have find something else. Peter Bernardi from the A40 club said he knew of a Kimberley sitting around, in Drouin. It was in pretty poor condition. But we went and had a look at it and then Pam and I brought it home and started working on it."

Warren doesn't really know much of the history of the car. Apparently it had been through a few owners, including Patrick Farrell, Robert Goodall, Steven Oliver, and ended up in the hands of the A40 club with the body in a fairly poor state.

Warren and Pam bought the car in 2013 and spent two years restoring it, with a lot of help from Peter. "It had been in a shed, but the shed had obviously leaked, so the whole top and bonnet were totally surface rusted out", Warren explained. "There were quite a few dents and scratches and scrapes, and I knocked them all out and bogged them up. The bonnet was all sort of rippled. I learned a lot of panel beating on that. Then I did the painting to the best I could."

The lower colour, Velvet Grey, is the original, but Warren wanted to do it two tone – though not to everyone's satisfaction, as he revealed. "I did have people say to me about the two-tone being wrong. But my father had a Mk1 brand new, and it was a two-tone. It was a cream and green. So, I know they came like that. But I think it really looks good. It really lifts the thing up."

The upper colour is just something Warren got from a local store. "I don't

know what colour it is. I almost think it's a colourbond colour", he laughed.


Inside, the carpets were rotten and there was almost nothing left of the headlining. The seats weren't too bad, but faded and split from the sun. Pam works at Clark rubber and was able to get red vinyl, close to matching the original. Warren then took them to a local trimmer, who made up all new panels, then brought them back and fitted them to the seats on which Pam had redone the foam padding.

Mechanically, apart from giving everything a thorough clean, Warren said he hasn't done anything to the car, but admits it could probably do with having the engine stripped down and checked. "We haven't been on any real long distances in it, yet. We've been down to Gippsland and down to Geelong, so I'm confident it runs, and it runs okay."

"The hardest part, that would have been nice to do better, was the dash, but you just can't. Even when someone has them, they're already broken."

A few concessions to modern driving have been added, including a radio and new seatbelts – with the old front seatbelts now fitted in the back.

Like them or not, the red-wall tyres, which offset the red interior, are simply rubber "flappers" that Warren bought from Turkey. "I was actually going over there and I thought I'd bring them back in my luggage, but then when I checked, at the time they were giving free delivery."

Warren and Pam are very happy with the way their Kimberley has turned out. They realise it's not a concours show car, but it suits them to a tee. It is not a particularly valuable car and was restored on a budget accordingly. Most importantly, though, is it's another forgotten model from Leyland with one more example rescued from potentially going to the scrap yard. You've got to admire them for that. 

Australian Survivor

Words by Glen Whitbourne.
Photos by Craig Watson.



Barn finds! They're still out there and sometimes you can still get lucky. But what are the chances of finding two identical cars, with connected histories, years apart?



This story began for me in 1998. I'd seen a two-tone blue Morris Major travelling around Ballarat a few times. It appeared in good, original condition and, with P-plates on it, was being driven by a young lady.

I have a deep interest in BMC cars and have been a member of the Morris Car Club of Victoria since its very first meeting, when I was in my teens, so this was the sort of car I would take notice of.

My first impressions were that it might have been a family car, handed down a generation, but I didn't give it another

thought. I didn't know where it was from or any more about it and left it at that.

Sometime later I happened to be talking to a bloke named Mal Warner and somehow got on to the topic of hobbies and old cars. He said he had recently inherited a Morris from his father Les and his daughter had been driving it around town, as she had not long obtained her driver's licence. He described the car and I realised it was the same one. What are the chances?

Mal went on to say that it was getting a

bit unreliable and needed work, and that his daughter wasn't driving it anymore and it was sitting in his driveway in Ballarat North. I offered to have a look and assess the car for him. As a result I also made an offer to buy it. Mal agreed to sell and I bought his Major on 23 July 1998, on the condition that I hand in the registration plates, GYV 165, which I did.

I drove the car home and began to clean it up and carry out repairs. It was in good overall condition and mostly just needed a bit of attention. I enjoyed my work and effort on this Major, but never re-registered it.

Photo courtesy Jean Merrett



Jean in her Sunday Best with her Morris Major - 8 March 1961.

Photo courtesy Jean Merrett



Alfred in Sylvie's car at Goolwa, SA - New Year's Day 1962.

The Barn Find

I kept in touch with Mal for some time and one day he said that he had an aunt who also had a Morris Major absolutely identical in every way to his dad's, but that he had not been in contact with her nor seen the car for many years. He passed on her name to me, with some vagueness, told me she lived in the Wimmera district in far-western Victoria, and wished me luck.

Keen to follow this lead I tried a few avenues but to no avail; it was all too long ago and as we all know, these rumours of old cars in sheds are just that, and the cars and people involved are usually long gone.

However, in March 2001 I was visiting a mate of mine at Serviceton, on the South Australian border, where he'd lived all his life. I took a long-shot and showed him the note Mal had written. He said he'd see what he could do. Incredibly, within half an hour not only had he found Mal's aunt, Jean Merrett, but he'd contacted her and her husband Bob, and they said that they'd be happy for me to call in on my way home. Yes, she still had her Morris Major in the shed! Never under estimate the bush telegraph; it works!

So, I called in on Jean and Bob, had a look at her Major and took a few photos of it still in the shed. It hadn't moved since 1989. I did make an offer to buy her car, but I could see that she was in no mind to sell. She was very sentimental, which I quietly admired in her, so we exchanged details and I told her the story of Les' Major that I'd bought. She said she remembered Les, his son Mal and his Major getting about in Nhill.

It turned out that the two cars were closely linked and virtually twins. Jean's had been bought for her by her grandfather, Alfred Warner of Lawloit, from Bongiorno Bros of Nhill on 30 January 1959, registered GXH 645. It was finished in Murlong Grey over Odeana Blue with contrasting Tan trim, fitted with a painted sunvisor, locking petrol cap and sump guard for added protection.

Jean also lived at Lawloit, on her family's farm "Belvue", and passed her driving test in September of that same year, taking on the Major as promised.

She enjoyed driving her Major around the district, mainly between her family farm, her grandfather Alfred's home, and to Nhill and Kaniva for shopping.

She often drove with her mum Win, grandfather Alfred and Buttons their fox terrier dog, travelling occasionally as far as Horsham or Bordertown. The car was never driven to Melbourne or Adelaide.

Jean told me that although the car was well looked after, garaged in a farm shed and had never spent a night outside, it wasn't treated like a princess. It did some work around the farm, often carrying a sheep trundled up in the boot, and the dogs sometimes rode in the back, but it was never abused.

However, in 1989 the fuel pump was giving trouble and the carby was flooding at times, so the Major was laid up in the shed and the registration allowed to lapse. The car had travelled a mere 58,441 miles in 30 years.

The other Major had also been bought by Alfred Warner, from Bongiorno Bros, on 26 June 1959, registered GYV 165, for his niece Sylvie Warner who lived at Winiam.

It was finished in Murlong Grey over Odeana Blue with contrasting Tan trim, fitted with a painted sunvisor, locking petrol cap and sump guard for added protection: exactly like Jean's Major in every way.

Sylvie, a spinster, left the car to her brother Les Warner of Nhill when she died on 15 September 1976. Les enjoyed driving the Major, too, and kept it in use until he passed away in October 1996, leaving the car to his son Mal. When I bought the car in 1998 it had an original 84,341 miles on the clock.

Getting Back In Touch

I sold Les' Major to a friend of mine, John Rae, in April 2003. John finished off tidying up the Major, re-registered it on its original number and enjoyed it with his local car club. I was glad it was in good hands.

The years moved on, then one afternoon in June 2012 I was telling this story of the twin Morris Majors to some friends in the Morris Car Club. They agreed it was a great yarn, but in the following weeks I began to wonder what ever happened to Jean and her Morris Major.

It had been eleven years since I saw her car, and seven since I had spoken with her. Too long I know, but again, as a long shot, I found my notes and called her number only to find a message bank. I left my details and thought that was that, a bit



Jean with her Major on the family farm, "Belvue". Photos courtesy Jean Merrett.



Glen with Les' Major after he bought it.



Opening shed was like opening a time capsule, but the Morris was soon on its way to its new home. Photos by Glen Whitbourne.

disappointed, but I shouldn't have left it so long.

However, a week later I received a call from Jean saying that she was glad I called, as she'd lost my number and that she'd wanted to contact me. She said her husband Bob had passed away in October 2006 and that she needed to move the car on. She had asked a few museums if they would be interested, but with little response, and she said that if I was still interested I could buy it for what I offered in 2001. I said I'd think about it and call her back.

About a week later I did so, asking a lot of questions about the Major as I thought it would have deteriorated somewhat since I saw it last. In the end, I thought I'd take the chance, buy it over the phone and hope that it wouldn't be too much worse than when I'd seen it before, all those years ago. After all, the car had always been shedded and Jean was adamant that it had never spent a night outside.

A New Home

It took me about a month to find a suitable day to go and pick it up, as it was the depths of winter and I didn't really want the car to get a soaking on top of 23 years' of dust. It was a foggy morning on Friday, 6 July 2012 when I set off from Ballarat to pick up the Major, turning into a sunny, but cool day.

I had an enjoyable 3½-hour drive, with anticipation of what would be. This and the scenery helped pass the time on the journey.



I arrived at "Belvue" at 11.00am and Jean was ready with the handbook and keys on the kitchen table, along with a good cup of tea. I showed her a brochure for the Morris Major and a few photos of Les' Major I brought along as well.

We then went out to the shed. I was trying not to set my hopes too high as I knew it had been eleven years since I'd seen the car. Jean hadn't even seen it since Bob died six years earlier, as she couldn't open the shed door on her own. The shed was slowly collapsing around the car and the doors were very heavy and had to be lifted out of the way.

We opened the door, flooding the dusty old shed and the back of the Morris with bright sunlight. It was like stepping back in time; into history; a part of Jean's life and her memories. It felt surreal, but there it was, covered in layers of Wimmera dust, dotted with foot prints from her cats Lucky and Whisky.

The car had a cover over it when I last saw it, but Jean said that blew off in a wind storm, so she'd put it in the boot. I slowly opened the driver's door, expecting to see all manner of rodents scamper for cover. It was calmly quiet; no wildlife in sight; a relief, I thought.

There was a distinctive smell of mice, but my worst fears were unfounded. I looked under the seats and mats and it wasn't so bad. Yes it had had mice through it for many years and it needed a good clean out to say the least, but I didn't see any holes in the seats or stuffing on the floor. It might be alright.

Luckily, while the shed was sagging significantly it had kept everything inside it very dry. Although thick with dust, I couldn't see any surface rust on the car which would be caused by dampness or rain blowing in and settling on the paintwork.

Extracting the Major from the shed was a slow and laborious job. I pumped the tyres up to only 15psi, as great cracks were appearing in the side walls as they took shape, but they seemed to hold okay.

I attached a tow rope from the back of the trailer to the back of the Major and took up the slack, then had a good look to see if



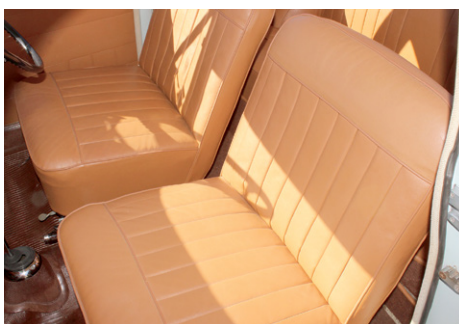
Photo by Glen Whitbourne



Complete service record in logbook.



Mileage is genuine.



Engine will need a complete overhaul.



Now cleaned up, the interior is basically like new.

everything was alright. The shed was really in a bad state. The front wall had come away from its supporting posts and was sagging badly. The doorway hung down and it was debatable if there would be enough room to get the Morris through it.

I was sure that if I started messing about with the shed at all it might come crashing down around us, onto the car.

Slowly, with Jean watching out, inch by inch, I eventually got the car out in the open. We were lucky, the roof of the car had cleared the top of the doorway by about half an inch.

I was able to have a good look at it now, open all the doors and let the sunlight shine in for the first time in over two decades. Jean too was interested to see what it was like and was sorry to see it so neglected looking and nearly black with dust. She was a proud lady and loved her little Morris Major.

She had owned it 53 years and was very attached to it. It had a lot of good memories for her. I felt like I wasn't so much buying an old car, but taking on an old friend to look after and nurse back to health: a special car with a rich history worth remembering before it's lost to the mists of time altogether.

I winched the Major on to the trailer, chaining it down front and back, loaded the ramps and fitted the door back in place on the saggy shed. I said farewell to Jean and told her I would call her when I arrived home.

I set off, not travelling too fast as I wasn't sure how well things like the sun visor etc were attached. I arrived home in the dark at 7.00pm after an enjoyable but long trip. I hurried to roll the Major off the trailer and into the garage, as a dew was setting and the cold air was threatening a frost. I didn't want this to be the first night the car had ever spent out in the open.

With the Morris safely inside I packed up

everything, gave Jean a quick call to say all was well and called it a night. It had been an eventful day, and I was exhausted.

Sadly, Jean passed away suddenly on 30 November 2012, only 4½ months after I bought her Major. She was a lovely lady and I'm honoured to tell the story of her and her little blue Morris.

Since then I have cleaned, stripped and repainted the wheel rims, as they were all fairly rusty. I have also fitted a new set of cross-ply tyres, but the original spare is still in the boot.

Other than that the car is exactly as I got it. The paint has a few marks on it and the grille is a little rusty, but it is too good to do anything to. The interior is like new – although I did spend many hours cleaning out the mice poo and getting rid of the smell.

I haven't yet tackled the engine – nor have I tried to start it – but I have turned it over with the crank handle and it moved quite freely. I will take the engine and gearbox out and give them a freshen up. I am a mechanic by trade, so that side of it will all be fairly straightforward. At least everything is there.

But what of this car's twin, which I had owned and passed on over a decade ago? That car now resides in a private motor museum at Coleraine, west of Hamilton. My long-term plan is to get Jean's Major back on the road, then take it down to Coleraine and get some photos of the two together. Stay Tuned.



Glen copies the photo of Jean with car.



CAB Manager Bert Bushell, in the first car assembled in CAB - December 1957.

The Morris Minor was released in the UK in 1948 and began assembly at Nuffield's new CKD plant at Zetland, Sydney, in 1950.

As early as 1951, Alec Issigonis proposed a slightly larger replacement for the Minor, but with the formation of BMC the following year, he left to undertake work for Alvis and the Minor replacement ground to a halt.

The idea was revived in 1955 and a number of concepts, all based on the Minor's floorpan and mechanicals, were submitted. The design chosen to go forward was by Austin stylist Dick Burzi, with very similar lines to his A40/A55 which were already in production at Longbridge but scaled down to suit the Minor floorpan.

It was originally planned to use the 1200cc B-series engine from the A40, but as the project progressed, the boot was enlarged and interior appointments improved, making the car somewhat bigger and heavier than the Minor.

It was soon realised that the car, designated DO1101 by the Cowley drawing office, was too big to replace the Minor and would be an all-new model. The Minor, meanwhile, went through various upgrades, becoming the Minor 1000 in October 1956 and remaining in production in the UK until 1971.

During testing it was found that the A40's 1200cc engine was underpowered

for DO1101, so the car received the 1489cc engine from the A55. However, the car now found itself in a bit of no-mans land, as both Austin (A55) and Morris (Oxford Series III) had cars of similar size, rendering DO1101 superfluous.

It was decided instead to produce the car as a small Riley (designated the One Point Five) and Wolseley (1500).

At the same time, the first major expansion of the Zetland factory had begun, with the construction of the new Press Shop, where body panels would be stamped and welded together, before moving to the new Car Assembly Building (CAB) for painting and final assembly.

It was decided that the Wolseley 1500 and unique to Australia Morris Major and Austin Lancer versions would be the first vehicles to be assembled there. The potential market for the Riley version was considered too small, so this was never assembled locally.

Therefore, the new buildings were originally geared up specifically for DO1101 assembly.

The CAB was completed in late 1957, with the first test car, a Morris Major, coming off the end of the line in December.

Apart from the front panel work, and obviously badges, the main differentiating features were all in the interior, particularly the dashboard arrangement. The Wolseley



Photo by Glen Whitbourne

Early Morris Major central instruments.

featured a full-width timber dash, the same as the UK model, and a heater as standard, while the Morris and Austin featured a modular instrument cluster – the Austin's directly in front of the driver, the Morris in the centre. In 1959 the Morris would also have its in front of the driver, but where the Austin had an all metal dash, with vinyl covered safety padding on the upper and lower rails, the Morris had vinyl covering the entire dashboard as well.

Wheels magazine; "noted that the small Morris sits down tightly on every bend, though its tyres howl more than somewhat." They also reported that, like the Wolseley 1500; "the other virtues – silent running, generous power, good fuel mileage, and excellent road manners, remain untouched" and said their test car "handled impeccably".

Similarly, *Australian Motor Manual* said; "After a hard day's driving we returned to the office full of praise for its handling and performance qualities...We came away from the test convinced that the riding and handling qualities are well above average..."

Even before the first production cars rolled out of the Zetland factory, prototypes of the Series II version, DO1115, which ultimately would only be available in Austin and Morris badges, were being tested. As a result, DO1101 only remained in production until late 1959.

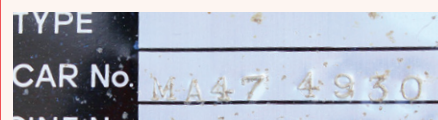
Production Numbers and Prices

Model	App No built	Price £
Austin Lancer	6100	985
Morris Major	6100	1025
Wolseley 1500	2600	1095

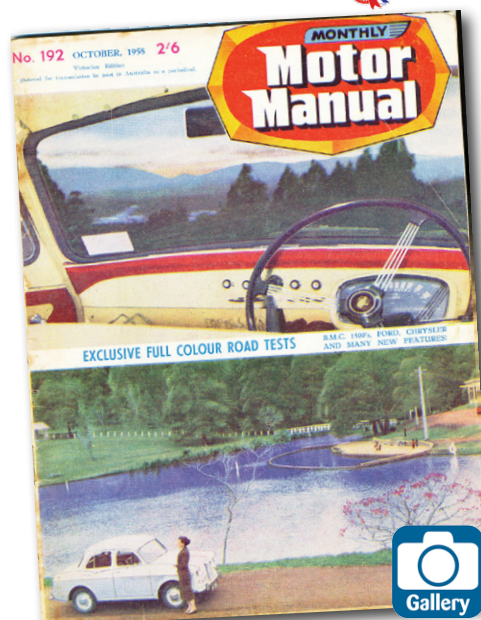
Production numbers are approximate only, based on Glen Whitbourne's research and observation of known car numbers. Wolseley 1500 numbers are Australian assembly only. UK production - 103,394 Wolseley & 39,568 Riley.

Prices are new list price from *Wheels* magazine, Feb 1959.

Car type identification

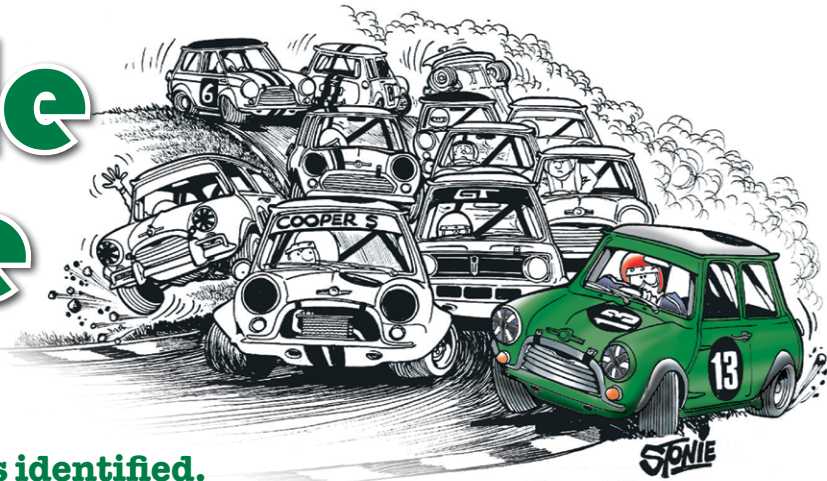


1st letter - Marque: Austin/Morris/Wolseley
 2nd letter - Model series: A = 1st series
 3rd digit - Body type: 4 = 4-door saloon
 4th digit - Year of assembly, where:
 6 = Dec '57 to Nov '58; 7 = Dec '58 to Nov '59



Inevitable Outcome

1966 Bathurst 500



Words by Craig Watson. Photos as identified.

For just about anyone following the V8 Supercar circus these days, it seems almost incredible that a Mini would have won at the annual Bathurst enduro.

But in 1966, it was virtually a forgone conclusion that the Cooper S would do just that – it was not so much a question of if the Mini could win, but which one.

To understand why the Mini was in such a position in 1966, we also need to look at how the race unfolded, in the three preceding years.

1963

In its earliest concept, the Armstrong 500 at Bathurst followed basically the same format as the three previous races held at Phillip Island, being for standard saloon cars, exactly as could be bought by the public.

A minimum of 100 of a particular model had to have been manufactured or assembled in Australia to be eligible to compete. Imported cars were not permitted.

Importantly, as with the previous races, only class results would be officially recognised, so from a manufacturer's point of view, when it came to advertising, winning any class was as important as being first over the line.

Classes were based on price and the race would be started in class order, with car numbers, and therefore class starting positions, being drawn from a hat. The expectation was that the biggest and most expensive cars would be the quickest, so Class D (£1,201 to £2,000) would be at the front of the grid.

Holden was subject to a global ban on involvement in motorsport by parent company General Motors, but had got around this in 1963 with a special model of the EH, known as the S4, and entry through privateers or individual dealerships.

The S4 was no hotrod, but was a significant improvement on the standard model EH. It featured the largest available Holden engine at the time, 179ci, with a new stronger manual gearbox, tailshaft and clutch, competition brake linings and a brake booster for the drum brakes. It also included a more comprehensive tool kit because the rules of the day said that only

the tools carried in the car could be used to work on it in the first half of the race. It was, simply, the first low-volume special model designed specifically with winning at Bathurst in mind.

Ford hastily released a GT version of its Cortina, with the required 100 registered (many in the names of dealerships) in time for the deadline for race entries. The GT used the four-door shell of the Cortina, released locally the previous year, but included engine improvements and disc brakes. Both the Ford and Holden were in Class C (£1,001 to £1,200).

BMC's 997cc-engined and disc-braked Morris Cooper (Class B; £901 to £1,000) had been released in September 1962, so there was no rush to get a special model produced for the race. While BMC did not officially enter any cars, like their counterparts only privateers or individual dealerships entered. However, three Morris Major Elites were entered, probably with at least limited factory support, by Gurdon Motors in Bathurst, but did not perform well.

The Mini Cooper was a regular production model, with almost 1,700 built by the time of its Bathurst debut. By comparison, although the Cortina GT became a regular production model, barely 100 had been built in time for the race, while only around 120 S4 Holdens, including six hand-built especially for the race, were assembled in total.

Six S4 Holdens and four GT Cortinas were entered in the 1963 race, against 11



Morris Cooper of Manton/Foley splits Ford/Ferguson VW Beetle and Little/Holland Morris 850. Manton/Foley finished well down, but Mini Coopers took first and second in class and showed the capability of a hot Mini at Bathurst.



Holden EH S4 was the first model specially built to race at Bathurst, but was beaten by disc-braked Cortina GT.



Eventual 1964 winner Jane/Reynolds Cortina GT leads Smith/Maher Cooper that went on to win Class B. Cooper Minis took the first three places in class. Photo by Paul Cross.

Cooper Minis. Bob Jane and Harry Firth were first over the line in a Cortina GT, after 130 laps of the Mt Panorama circuit, winning Class C. Although an outright winner was not officially recognised, the race was effectively concluded when Jane/Firth finished. Fred Morgan/Ralph Sach were second in their S4, while the highest-placed (outright) Cooper, driven by Doug Chivas/Ken Wilkinson was sixth, winning Class B.

1964

Holden had been reprimanded by General Motors for its involvement in the previous year's race. As a result, only three Holdens were entered in 1964; all being privately entered by dealerships.

On the other hand, Ford Motor Company officially entered three GT Cortinas, as well as another four entered either through dealerships or privately.

BMC had the higher-revving 998cc

Cooper, of which five were privately entered.

Bob Jane won again, this time with George Reynolds, and Cortinas took six of the first seven places over the line, although outright results still didn't count. Charlie Smith/Bruce Maher drove the best of the Coopers, finishing ninth outright but taking Class B. In fact, Mini Coopers took the first three places in their class.

1965

All things considered, and if everyone was on the same page when it came to the rulebook, the Cooper S should have easily won in 1965. But Harry Firth, nicknamed The Fox because of his cunning in both tactics and rule interpretation, had other ideas.

Cars could not be modified away from standard specification and must be exactly as could be bought by the public. However, what constituted standard specification

was defined by what was in the owner's manual that came with the car.

1965 brought a new sponsor, Irish tobacco company Gallaher, and for the first time the recognition of an outright winner. Also, for the first time, imported cars were permitted, provided at least 250 had been sold in Australia. For locally assembled cars, the minimum remained at 100.

The importance of an outright win in terms of advertising value was not lost on any of the manufacturers or assemblers. Ford, BMC and AMI (Australian assemblers of Toyota and Triumph) all had official entries – this being the first year that Japanese cars were entered in the race.

In BMC's case, it was the new 1275cc Morris Cooper S. Released in August, around 170 had been sold in time for Bathurst. Under the guidance of PR Manager Evan Green, BMC also brought out two of the company's contract race and rally drivers from Europe – Paddy Hopkirk and Timo Mäkinen – for an all-out assault on the race.

Further, the three factory-entered Cooper S were stripped down and completely hand-built by the Competition Department mechanics John Cotter and Terry Douglass, to ensure everything was as finely tuned as possible within the rules.

To go with the new image of the race there was a tightening of the rules, particularly to end the common practice of using "optional extras". There had been nothing illegal about this, but it was considered by many to be against the spirit of an event designed to test stock standard production cars.

BMC Australia wasn't completely innocent, either. The Sports 850 had been a dealer-developed special with twin



1965 winning GT500 of Seton/Bosworth was a low-volume, hand-built special, rather than a true Series Production car. Photo by Paul Cross.



Photo by Craig Watson.



Photo by Craig Watson.

Top: GT500 air scoop to cool brakes. Above: Extra fuel tank was deciding factor.

carburettors that received factory approval and was accepted for the 1962 race at Phillip Island. But the new rules may have prompted BMC to adopt two components as standard on the 1275cc Cooper S, that were optional extras in the UK – the second fuel tank and the oil cooler.

But Harry Firth had gone one step further, with full support from Ford, developing the Cortina GT500 – so named because of the Cortina's previous successes in the Bathurst 500.

Firth had picked up on a loophole in the rules. Basically, if a component wasn't listed in the standard specification for the car it couldn't be used, and no optional extras were permitted in the race. But, provided the minimum number were made, it was basically up to the manufacturer what was standard and what constituted an optional extra.

110 UK-built two-door Cortina GT body shells were imported and sent down the Australian production line, where they gained locally-made glass, interior trim and wheels to be classified as locally assembled. To save weight, the cars were only painted with one each of undercoat and topcoat, while the standard carpets were replaced with plastic floor mats and minimal underfelt. There was also a bare minimum of sound deadening material on the car.

They were then sent to Harry Firth's workshop, where the other special components were added. These included hand-made aluminium air scoops for the front disc brakes and an 8¾ gallon (39.8lt) auxiliary fuel tank – taking the total to 17 gallons (77.3lt) – which was filled from dual fillers just in front of the bootlid.

The 1498cc engine had a re-worked head, higher compression, stronger conrod bolts, an improved camshaft and bigger chokes on the Weber carburettor. These combined to give an extra 15 bhp (11 kW).

The suspension was lowered by over an inch, and heavy-duty shock absorbers fitted. There were also competition-spec brake pads on all four wheels.

The gears were Lotus Cortina ratios in



Timo Makinen leads Foley/Manton and Holden/Cusack in 1965. Cooper S took the first six places in Class C, setting the stage for 1966. Photo by Paul Cross.

the original GT case, and the final-drive ratio was 3.9:1 – allowing a top speed down Conrod Straight of 109 mph (180 km/h).

110 Cortina GT500s were built to qualify (with a further 185 supplied after the race), of which ten had their engines hand-built, balanced and blueprinted by Firth's team especially for the race.

The owner's manual was written around these improvements and is as thick as any workshop manual, with all clearances and tolerances listed. Such details are usually included in the workshop manual, but not the driver's manual. Interestingly, many of the tolerances for the GT500 are as much as + or - 10%.

Listed as "optional extras" were the radio, heater and air cleaner. The air cleaner was even supplied separately in a paper bag.

Ford reportedly lost a total of £200 per car, including £100 production costs to Firth and £10 "development costs". Although 110 had been completed in time for the race, not all had been sold, so the remainder were registered in the names of dealerships.

There were nine Cooper S competing, three as full factory entries, against the ten GT500 Cortinas. Ironically, Firth wasn't in a GT500, instead partnering John Raeburn in a Cortina 220, finishing first in Class A.

Where the GT500 only had to make one

fuel stop for the race, the Cooper S, with 11 gallons (50 lt) had to make at least one more, and that was to prove the deciding factor.

The one real advantage the Minis had was being the only cars in the race fitted with proper racing tyres, courtesy of Dunlop. Although on paper there seemed to be a number of cars that could win, in reality only the GT500 and the Cooper S had any chance.

The starting procedure was unchanged from the two previous years, so the Minis had to fight through a minimum of twelve Class D cars to get to the front.

The Studebaker Lark, with its V8 engine, was seen as a real contender, but brake and wheel problems plagued the cars throughout the day. By lap seventeen the leading Studebaker pitted with brake problems and the rest of the race became a battle between the Fords and the Minis.

The factory Minis began slip-streaming each other down Conrod Straight, reaching 114mph (183km/h) against 104mph (167km/h) without assistance.

The Minis were proving as fast as the GT500s, with Brian Foley setting the fastest lap of the race, at 3m 13.7s, with the Geoghegans' car the quickest Cortina at 3m 14.6s. Within the first half-hour of the race, Foley had taken the outright lead,

Photo by Paul Cross.



1965 - Cook/Lindsay leading Chivas/Barnes. Both cars failed to finish.



Photo by Paul Cross.

1965 - Haylen/Bartlett in BMC-entered Mini De Luxe leads Hopkirk/Makinen.



Photo by Paul Cross.

Foley/Manton leading Hopkirk/Makinen. They finished third and sixth respectively.



Photo by Terry Morrow.

1966 - BMC's PR Manager, Evan Green, with drivers John French & Brian Foley.

followed by two Cortinas, then another couple of Minis.

Then the pitstops began and, try as they might, the Minis couldn't make up for the Cortinas only making one scheduled stop for fuel.

The Brian Foley/Peter Manton Cooper S crossed the finish line in third place outright, one lap and five seconds behind the winning GT500 of Barry Seton/Midge Bosworth and 97 seconds behind the GT500 of Bruce McPhee/Barry Mulholland.

The Cooper S took the first six places in class, but perhaps more impressively held six of the first nine places outright, with fifth place going to another GT500.

Tenth place went to a Triumph 2000, a full six laps down on the winner, while the fastest non-500 Cortina GT was eleventh.

Bathurst is full of ifs and maybes, but there is no doubt that if Ford had entered only true production cars, rather than these low-volume specials, the 1965 race would have been won by Cooper S Minis.



Photo by Terry Morrow.

1966 - BMCA Competition Department's chief mechanic, John Cotter.

Importantly, by producing these very special vehicles, Firth did not cheat or break any rules. He simply read them carefully and applied what was acceptable within the letter of law. However, the organisers of the event considered that Firth and Ford had gone beyond the "spirit of the rules".

1966

But, rather than ban the GT500 outright, the ARDC changed one important aspect of the rules for 1966, by increasing the minimum number of cars assembled to 250, the same as for imported cars.

Firth wanted to do a MkII version of the GT500, but Ford refused to back the plan, having lost an estimated £60,000 on the first version and with the higher number of cars required. Besides, work was well under way on the still secret V8-engined Falcon GT for 1967.

As Bathurst approached in 1966 there was only one real contender, the 1275cc Cooper S, and just about everybody knew it. The only cars that were beating the Minis in racing around the country weren't eligible for Bathurst because of the minimum production requirement.

BMC again went all-out, with three factory-entered cars and two drivers, this time Paddy Hopkirk and Rauno Aaltonen, to partner local drivers Brian Foley and Bob Holden respectively. Timo Makinen was intending to come, but had to stay in Europe to meet other commitments, so his place to partner John French was taken by Steve Harvey.

AMI again entered a mix of Triumph and Toyota cars, while Nissan Motor Company entered two new Datsun Bluebirds and brought out Japanese star drivers Moto Kitano and Kunimitsu Takahashi to drive one of the cars. But they were never under any illusion of taking a surprise outright win, instead being focussed on a class victory.



1966 - BMC mechanic Terry Morrow with his charge for the day, driven by French and Harvey. Photo courtesy Terry Morrow.

With no official Ford entry, and no production Ford realistically in the running, there were some interesting drivers in a Cooper S for the first time.

Most notable was Harry Firth, who had masterminded Ford's "creative rule interpretations" the previous year.

Firth knew the only car entered at Bathurst in 1966 that stood any real chance of winning was the Cooper S, as he explained a few years before his death.

"The only reason we decided to run the Mini was that Ford decided they weren't going to run... and other people made some offers which didn't please me. The chap with the Mini, Adrian Bryan, (a Holden dealer in Adelaide) said I'd like you to drive a Mini for me, and I said, 'yeah alright Adrian, I'll do that.'"

"We got the Mini and ran it around a bit. Then I went off to America and left a list of things to be done, but when I got back nothing had been done. That was only three weeks before the race. So, it was all very hotch-potch, but the Mini was pretty good and I had another chap driving with me, Ern Abbott, who was a known Mini peddler, middle class, but he was alright."

Also piloting Minis in a one-off appearance were Bruce McPhee/Barry



Photo by Terry Morrow.

1966 - BMC Works drivers Steve Harvey (left) and John French.



Early in the race, Brian Foley leads team mate Rauno Aaltonen through Gallaher Corner. Photos by John Playford.

Mulholland, Barry Seton/Barry Arentz and Frank Matich/Frank Demuth.

Of the nineteen cars entered in Class C, seventeen were Cooper S. Their only possible competition was from the V8 Valiants and a lone Holden X2 (a twin-carb sports version of the HR) in Class D. So, it really was basically a question of which Cooper S would win.

While BMC had also entered Minis in Classes A and B in 1965, the following year they concentrated solely on the three Cooper S for the outright win.

But there were still a handful of drivers, driving the 998cc Cooper and a couple of Mini De Luxe entries chasing the cheaper classes. In total, of the 55 cars entered, almost half the field, 24 cars, were Minis of some description.

Bob Holden managed to talk Evan Green into letting him have his allocated Mini overnight a few days before the race. Assisted by the guys at Lynx Engineering, he stripped the engine down and completely rebuilt it, balancing everything that he could and making sure all the components were matched and within the finest tolerances.

"I was just looking for an edge, and the edge happened to be that it had to be as perfect a car as you could possibly get", Bob explained. "I knew they weren't really that perfect. They were nicely-built little cars, but they weren't on the edge, the limiting edge of being perfect... What had all been done at the factory was pretty well spot on, but the balancing was the critical thing on them."

Bob Holden drew number 13 for the race, but Rauno Aaltonen was not pleased, as Bob recalled recently. "I always ran number 13, whenever I could, because it was a number that I knew no-one else would want."

"Bruce McPhee was the same, and he always liked to run number 13, too. We had an arrangement that if we ever ran in the same races he would use number 113."

"But Bathurst was different. You didn't choose your own number; it was drawn out of a hat. And that's what happened; I drew number 13 out of the hat and two years later Bruce drew number 13 - and he won that year."

"I wasn't at all superstitious about the number but Rauno was really upset when they pulled number 13 out for us. He would have been on the next plane home if he could. It took me some time to convince him that it was okay, and it was my normal race number, anyway."

Once again the race would be started in class order, and once again that was the wrong decision. Although car numbers were still drawn randomly, grid positions within classes were at least decided by practice times.

There were only seven Class D cars in the race, and when the flag fell there was a mad scramble toward Hell Corner, which at the time was named Gallaher Corner in deference to the new major sponsor.

By the end of the first lap the pole-sitting Weldon/Slattery Studebaker was fifth, behind the Nougher/O'Keefe Valiant and three Minis - Aaltonen, Smith and Brown.

After two laps the order was Aaltonen, Smith, Brown, Hodgson, Foley, Matich (all in Minis), Nougher (Valiant), then the Minis of French, Stacey, and Mander, then the Valiant of Boddenberg/Cooke.

After six laps Minis held the first sixteen places outright. As the commentator of the official film of the event said, "at this stage anything that's not a Mini is news".

On lap seven, the BMC team suffered its first problem, when John French collided with a Valiant at Murray's Corner. He was quickly in the pits and dropped from tenth to twentieth.

On lap ten Foley got past Aaltonen and the Works Minis began to put their "towing" tactics to use down Conrod Straight for the next fifteen laps.

Then on lap 25 Foley brought the number 28 Cooper S in with oil pressure problems. Hopkirk went out for three laps, then coasted in with centre main bearing failure and was out of the race.

On lap thirteen, Frank Hann rolled his Cooper S, and two laps later Frank Matich was in the pits with a blown tyre, after running in fourth spot.

Ron Hodgson was next Mini retirement, when he ran off the track at XL Bend at the top of Mountain Straight. He hit a tree, but luckily was unhurt.

Meanwhile, in Class B there were four 998cc Coopers in the field of fifteen cars, that had earlier held the first four spots in class. The lead changed numerous times, and on lap twelve the Prisk/Martin Cooper had a lengthy pit stop with valve problems.



Photo by Autopics

Steve Harvey finished 8th with French.



Photo by Autopics

McPhee (3rd) leads Arentz/Seton (9th)



Photo by Terry Morrow.

Smith/Haylen crashed out on lap 65.



By the time Rauno Aaltonen, here going into Gallaher Corner, took over for his second stint, he was in a commanding lead. Photo by Autotopics.

But at the front, the pace was frantic. Aaltonen was lapping five seconds quicker than the winning GT500 from the previous year, with his fastest lap set at 3m 11s.

Bob Holden took over from Aaltonen and had a fair dice with Ron Haylen, lapping consistently at 3m 12s for lap after lap. But on lap 65 Haylen's Mini blew a front right tyre at McPhillamy Park and crashed out of the race.

That left Holden in the lead, which was never surrendered, even during the final driver change. By lap 106 Aaltonen's lead was 2m 50s, with only Bill Stanley on the same lap. One lap behind were Ern Abbott, Bruce McPhee, Paul Mander and Peter Brown.

With twelve laps to go the Firth/Abbott Cooper S began dropping back rapidly. It had blown a wheel cylinder and had no brakes, so was slowing with the gears and the handbrake. McPhee was gaining rapidly and a couple of laps later shot past to take second spot.

Firth wasn't happy and blamed Abbott for the problem, as he recalled. "I said you drive the first and last stints, and I'll drive the middle. I should have made it the other way around, because in the third session he stuffed the brakes."

Frank Matich, another lap down, was on a charge, after spending twelve minutes in

the pits with a broken gearshift bracket. He set the fastest lap of the race at 3m 10s, before disaster struck on lap 127, when he lost a wheel coming out of The Dipper, as *Racing Car News* described. "Matich held the car for 30 yards, but couldn't pull it round the right-hander and the car buried itself into a tree."

There are always hard-luck stories at Bathurst and plenty of people who could have won if they had a little more luck go their way.

Another was Paul Mander and Andrew Davis (consistently incorrectly listed as Arthur), an amateur privateer pairing who finished fourth. "That was the year we could have really done well. I don't think we ever thought we would do well; we were all piss and vinegar, trying too hard. The nerves at the start of those races were so high that I can remember my knee twitching with the tension and excitement of it", Mander recalled a few years ago.

"I went down the escape road at Murray's Corner on lap one, and a few laps later down the escape road at Hell Corner. I was just trying too hard at the beginning, and an error of judgement, locked up the front wheel, slid into the fence, bang. That's the way it goes."

"We lost well over two laps, getting the mudguard off the front wheel, but we



Bob Holden, left, consistently matched Rauno Aaltonen's lap times. Photos by John Playford.



The Lost Trophy

One unfortunate postscript of the race is that the trophy for first place has been lost. It was awarded to the entrant, in this case BMC Australia, but with the shuffles between BMC, Leyland and JRA, it has disappeared somewhere over the years.

Bob Holden is disappointed that he never received the trophy, which he says was promised to him by BMC's publicity and competitions boss, Evan Green.

Former Leyland and Land Rover employee, and dedicated Mini historian, Gary Norwood wrote to us some time ago, saying; "I found this and some other trophies during the clean up prior to JRA folding up in 1991."

"It was very quickly packed away and shipped to the new Rover Australia building at Rosehill in NSW."

In October 1991, at the 25th anniversary celebrations at Bathurst, Gary and Jim Barrett had the trophy on display with a Mini decorated as a tribute to the winning car (below).

After Bathurst 1991 it was taken back to Rover Australia's head office and put on display.

"It was on display in our training area for years. At some time all of the trophies were packed away on site. Several organised searches with other Mini-minded people failed to unearth them. We have no idea where they are."

Rumour has it that the trophies were disposed of at a local rubbish tip and then retrieved by either a Rover employee in the know, or someone from the tip.

There are also rumours about the trophy being in the possession of various people, but nobody has ever come forward with it.



continued and, looking at the record, we finished two laps behind. Andrew never forgets to remind me how things might have been."

But out front, Holden and Aaltonen drove the perfect race and ran consistently fast, with a superbly prepared car that was completely reliable. Even if everyone else's luck had been with them, it would probably have only affected the minor places and it is unlikely they would have caught the number 13 Mini.

Both Holden and Aaltonen were supremely skilled and highly experienced drivers and would not have given up the lead easily.

"He (Holden) paid attention to the smallest detail both in technical as well as in tactical matters", Aaltonen wrote. "Bob's recipe was smoothness, soft lines and beautiful treatment of the car; brakes, gearbox and the clutch. I could not agree any more as my philosophy was that smoothness brings speed."

"The memories from Bathurst are very pleasant. Everything worked well", Aaltonen said.

Holden is equally enthusiastic about his co-driver, as he explained. "Rauno was Rauno; he was special. I wanted him right from when they said he was coming. I knew he had done sportscar racing and things like that as well as rallying. He was a feeling driver. He could carry a car. He was unbelievable. That's why we did so well."

While car preparation and driving are essential elements to winning any event, so too is the contribution made by the mechanics who look after the car throughout the day.

BMC had a lot of helpers on the day, but the mechanics in charge of the three factory team cars were Alan Kemp, John Cotter, Terry Morrow, Terry Douglas, Gordon Kemp, Bob Brawn, and Andy Hanright.

"They all play an important part", Cotter recalled. "It only takes one of them to stuff up the whole race, so they've got a fair bit of responsibility. There's not that many



The repainted 1966 Bathurst winner, EFK 167, in 1967. Photo courtesy Andy Frankel.

people who can say they worked for the race team that won Bathurst. It was a great feeling; the thrill of a lifetime."

To illustrate the complete dominance of the Minis, only nine Cooper S finished the race, but they took the first nine places outright – a record that still stands – while in Class B it was Cooper 1-2-3.

Aftermath

1967 saw the release of the Falcon GT and for many years the V8s dominated the race and the press coverage. Minis continued to do well in their classes, though. In 1967 Bob Holden, with British driver Tony Fall, again won his class and was fifth outright - the Minis again taking the first seven places in class.

Minis won their classes again in 1968, '69, '74 and '75, but the days of the Mini challenging for outright victory had faded as quickly as they appeared.

The Fate of 13C (EFK 167)

Due to the Bathurst race of the time being for standard production cars, and with a fairly high number of privateer drivers, it is not surprising that many of the cars competing were road registered.

This was even the case with the BMC factory-entered Minis. The car that won Bathurst (race number 13, Class C) was registered EFK 167.

After the race it was sold to John Millyard, with the sale handled on behalf of BMC by Bob Holden. One of the conditions of the

sale, though, was that the car couldn't remain Castrol Green, of BMC's main sponsor, so it was painted white.

It continued to be maintained by Holden and Millyard entered it in a number of races. Of particular interest, he also entered it in Bathurst in 1967, co-driven by Andy Frankel, who managed Holden's workshop.

The car performed well all day, but after they decided to change the wheel studs, because of problems with other Minis' wheel studs, they finished 12th outright and sixth in Class.

Millyard worked as a professional musician and drove the Mini as his daily transport. One night, while working in a disco in Martin Place in the Sydney CBD, the Mini was stolen.

Naturally, a police report was filed, but the car has never been seen since. There have been plenty of rumours regarding its fate, but none have borne scrutiny. Sadly, Millyard no longer has a copy of the police report, or the car's registration papers or logbook, so its car and engine numbers are no longer known.

As its identity would be impossible to verify, and given that any car that could be proven to be EFK 167 would be forfeited as a stolen vehicle, it is unlikely that if it does still exist it will ever turn up.

Its fate will therefore remain a mystery, but its place in history as the only Mini to win Bathurst will always be remembered by Mini and BMC enthusiasts.



EFK 167 was driven by John Millyard and Andy Frankel to 12th outright and sixth in class in 1967. Photos courtesy Andy Frankel.

The very first Southern Cross rally saw the first international entrants and some tough competitive stages - setting the standard for the events that followed.



1965 European Rally Champion, Rauno Aaltonen from Finland, with Australian navigator Roy Denny, attracted a lot of press interest.

To quote astronaut Jim Lovell, "There are people who make things happen; there are people who watch things happen; and there are people who wonder what the hell happened."

Bob Selby-Wood was one of the former. So was Evan Green.

Both were members of the Australian Sporting Car Club – Green was president at the time – and they came up with the plan to run an international level rally in Australia.

The club had organised the Round Australia Trials in the 1950s and early '60s – firstly sponsored by Redex, then Ampol. However, sponsorship dried up after the 1964 Ampol Trial, and it was Green who came up with the idea of a similar event, originally run between Sydney and Melbourne to make the most of the PR potential associated with the country's major population centres.

Bob Selby-Wood was appointed Director of the event, sponsored by Rothmans cigarettes and known as the Rothmans Southern Cross International Rally and billed as Australia's first truly international rally.

Selby-Wood ignored the naysayers and forged ahead, convincing many skeptics that the rally was possible and could attract the top drivers, from Australia and abroad.

The first Southern Cross had a huge prize pool for the time, of \$18,000 – described in the media of the day as "the richest in the world", although the 1958 Ampol Trial reportedly had a prize pool of \$30,000 (£15,000).

Selby-Wood felt that such a prize pool would bring international competitors, but that would require the support of the major manufacturers having official factory entries in the rally.

Evan Green was also Public Relations manager with British Motor Corporation, as well as its lead rally driver and could see the value of the event from the company's point of view, the club's, and the drivers'.

The Mini Cooper S was the rally king at the time, winning the Monte Carlo in 1964 and 1965 and only being disqualified on a technicality after also winning in 1966.

Green had organised for BMC Works drivers to come to Australia for the 1964 Sandown International 6-Hour and the 1965 Bathurst, and planned to do the same for Bathurst in 1966.

It is no coincidence that the Southern Cross was organised to start only three days after Bathurst. That would allow car companies to offset the cost of bringing international drivers out for both events. In the end, only BMC would do so in that first year, though the idea caught on for subsequent years.



Garard/Goulburn, Holden - 2nd outright.



Lunn/Thomas, Holden - 4th outright.



Winkless/Smith, Volvo - 6th outright.



At the finish, Roselands Shopping Centre.

So it was that when the 70 cars lined up for the start of that first Southern Cross Rally at Roselands Shopping Centre, in Sydney's west, the only two international drivers would attract the most attention.

Paddy Hopkirk, winner of three major international rallies, including the 1964 Monte Carlo, and Rauno Aaltonen, the incumbent European Rally Champion with a string of wins, were both in Cooper S Minis. Green himself was in another Mini, as was Bob Holden.

Added to the media interest in the BMC team was the fact that only three days earlier Holden and Aaltonen had paired up to win Bathurst in a Mini.

While there were no other international drivers, Ford, Renault and Volkswagen all had Works entries, with local drivers, while a team of semi-official Holdens (supported by NSW and Victorian dealerships because of a global GM company ban on motorsport) also took part.

Cars competed in four classes based on engine size, in both standard and modified categories.

To add difficulty to the rally, most of the driving would be done at night, with fairly short daytime rest periods at Wagga Wagga, Melbourne and Canberra.

On the Melbourne leg, just over the border in Victoria, between Albury and Tallangatta, was what has infamously become known as the Bethanga Stampede. Competitors were thrown into a maze of three "special stages" that formed loops like a cloverleaf, with the town of Bethanga being entered from a different direction on each occasion. Entering along the wrong road meant more penalties, while late times were penalized at one point for every fifteen seconds.



Peter Walz & Bob Cain had a close call.



Winner Harry Firth.

On the return leg the section that proved most difficult was the notorious Araluen Loop, near Braidwood, described as "the best drivers' section of the rally".

The Minis were still grabbing a lot of attention, with the two Internationals setting the fastest times on many stages, but their cars were suffering from a number of mechanical woes which cost them time.

Aaltonen described the road conditions as being very similar to those on the East African Safari, regarded at that time as the most rugged rally in the World.

But out in front was the Volkswagen of Barry Ferguson, which had taken the lead in the early stages of the first night. Then, on a blind crest on the road between Canberra and Collector, he ran headlong into a tree, putting him out of the rally. That same tree accounted for another three competitors, including Bob Holden, who managed to limp on to finish third in his class.

By this stage Aaltonen was out of the rally with a blown head gasket, but Hopkirk struggled on to take third in class and tenth outright. Evan Green was best of the Minis, winning his class and finishing seventh outright.

Harry Firth had been keeping in touch with the leaders in his Cortina and inherited the lead when Ferguson crashed out. Firth held on to win the event outright, by 25 points.

Other class winners included a Honda




Firth & Hoinville collect their prizes.

S600 Coupe, Mini Cooper, Renault R10, Cortina and Holden HR.

Ford won the Teams Prize, with the Cortinas of Firth, Vaughan and Kilfoyle finishing in first, third and fifth places outright, respectively. The Holdens of Garard and Lunn were second and fourth.

Carol Shaw and Lynne Keefe were the sole surviving all-female team, winning the Women's Prize and finishing third in their class in a Mini De Luxe.

Only 44 cars from the original 70 reached the finish line, back at Roselands. But the rally had been a huge success in terms of publicity and popularity. Hopkirk and Aaltonen said Australia was the greatest potential rallying country in the world, and the rally was one of the best they had competed in.

The word spread, more international drivers arrived in later years, and the rally became an important one on the international calendar, and the pinnacle of Australian rallying, until 1980, with Aaltonen finally winning the event in 1977 for Nissan/Datsun. 



Harry Firth with Bob Selby-Wood.



Carol Shaw and Lynn Keefe won the Women's Prize and were Third in Class A.

The **mini** Experience

RELOADED

The
BIG
News

Now available for your computer or iPad

(or any other Apple or Android device)



One purchase allows
viewing on multiple devices

The Mini Experience magazine, updated, improved, and reloaded to digital format.

And at a fraction the price of the paper editions

Look out for enhanced digital content, such as
videos, links, and additional photo galleries.



(Some paper back issues are still available - see www.bmcexperience.com.au)

 **pocketmags.com**

 Available on
Google play

 Available on the
App Store

The B.M.C. Experience

The mini Experience



We know you'll enjoy this digital version, but you can still get the paper copies....

Subscribe today from the next available issue and never miss a copy.

\$42 incl post in Australia **\$45** via air to NZ **\$95** via air to Rest of World

www.bmcexperience.com.au



Some back issues also available
Paper issues are only available in limited numbers and some have already sold out.
To check availability and price

CLICK HERE





BMCE Shopping Experience

Looking for information about BMC-related cars?
Trying to find the perfect gift?
We've got loads of ideas in our on-line shop.

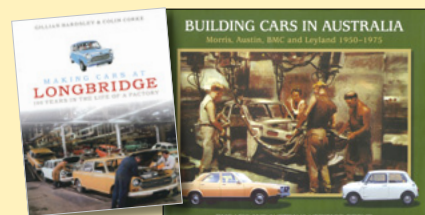
[Click Here](#)

Books:

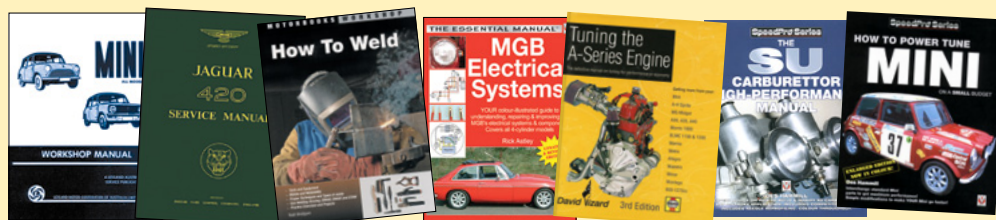
Marque histories



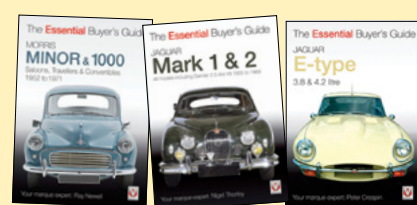
Factory histories



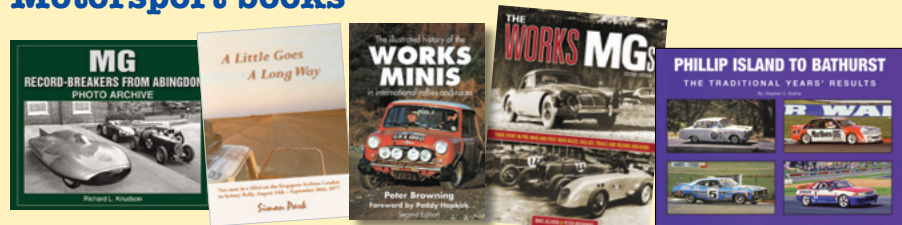
Service and performance books



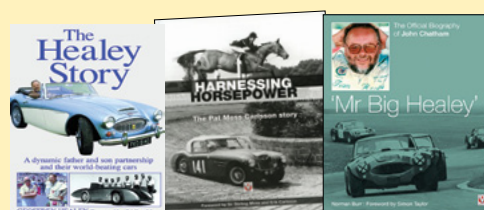
Buyers' guides



Motorsport books



Biographies



DVDs

Exclusive DVDs



Heritage films



Jigsaw puzzles



...and
much
more!

Have you missed an issue of

The B.M.C. Experience?



Every issue of The BMC Experience is available in digital format.

Download your digital copy today

Available from the app store and from  **pocketmags.com**



Available on
Google play



Available on the
App Store

Some paper copies are still available of both

The mini Experience

and

The B.M.C. Experience



Available only from our website:

<http://bmccexperience.com.au/shop/back-issues.html>

In our next big issue....

The
B.M.C.
Experience



www.bmcexperience.com.au



Camp Quality esCarpade
Full event review.



On Foreign Soil
Exporting BMC cars from Australia.



Barn Find - Super Rare Riley 2.6
...and the only one in Australia.

Austin A90 Atlantic Prototype



...and much more!

Issue 20 on sale 11 December 2016

Information correct at time of printing

Final Turn





750,000 + MOTORSPORT IMAGES

**THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE
ACCESSIBLE PHOTOGRAPHIC HISTORY
OF AUSTRALIAN MOTORSPORT**

Autopics.com.au is a photographic history of Australian motor racing from the early 1950's to the current day. **Log on and explore!**

Based on the archives of Lance J. Ruting, Peter D'Abbs, David Blanch and many more photographers, our website allows you to view over 23,000 images from our collection of over 750,000.



P.O Box 149 Forster NSW 2428
Phone: 0407 869 680
Email: info@autopics.com.au

www.autopics.com.au



Now available a DVD of all the
Autopics Great Race images.
Over 30,000 images from
Phillip Island '60 to '62 and
Bathurst '63 to '96.