



B. M. C.
LEYLAND AUSTRALIA
HERITAGE GROUP Inc.

NEWSLETTER

November 2006



A non- profit association of some hundreds of former employees and interested persons whose mission is to preserve the heritage of BMC – Leyland Australia and its associated companies as a significant part of Australia's automotive manufacturing history.

Alec Issigonis Centenary Will Hagon's Presentation at our 2006 Annual Reunion Remembering Evan Green



Alec Issigonis may have had some economies in mind when he created the Morris Mini Minor, but it is probable that he was simply providing his usual innovative engineering response to a tremendous and more immediate challenge. The slender, aristocratic Issigonis dreamed, conceived and created as an artist. Each of his automobiles was a balanced, harmonious entity derived from his engineering training and his hands on experience. His great post war success, the Morris Minor, illustrates his *modus operandi*.

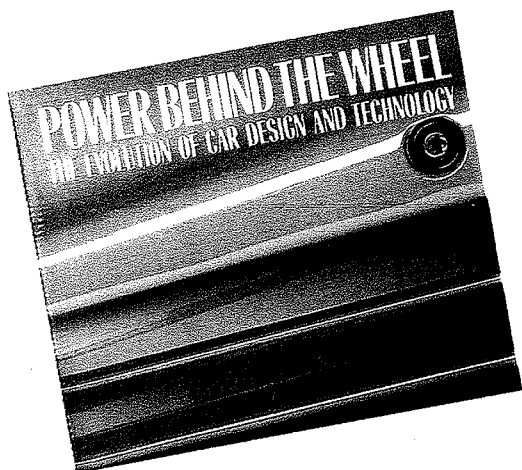
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Working with a small team, Issigonis created an attractive small car with torsion bar independent front suspension and rack and pinion steering. Very late in the design process, he decided the car looked too narrow for its height, so he had the prototype sawed in half longitudinally and moved the two halves apart until they reached a width that he thought looked right. The resulting 4 inch gap was filled in with sheet metal and structure, and conferred on the car not only a handsome appearance but better handling characteristics.



Extraordinarily advanced at a time when cars didn't need to sell, the Minor debuted in 1948 and was an immediate and sustained success. In production for more than 25 years, the Minor was built in numbers exceeding 1,500,000, many of which are still cherished and driven in England, the United States and elsewhere.

In 1952, Morris and Austin merged to form the British Motor Corporation, the same year Issigonis left to join Alvis. He returned in 1956 and was given a clean sheet of paper on which to create a small car that would respond to concerns raised during the fuel crisis occasioned by the abortive 1956 Suez operation. (Issigonis was a "clean sheet of paper" expert, accustomed to sketching out ideas on a scrap of cardboard and handing them to a staff member to execute for manufacturing purposes.) Using the courage born of long experience, he created a front wheel drive car with the engine mounted transversely. The resulting great space savings were translated into passenger accommodation, yielding a car only 3 meters long but still capable of seating four persons.

The Mini Minor was a good looking, good handling car. It set the engineering style for the future, for today, almost every front drive car in production essentially follows Issigonis' formula. It is doubtful whether Issigonis was aware of the revolution he was creating, since it took the introduction of a challenging style of car from another quarter and another culture to

make clear the full importance of the Mini - (the Volkswagen)

The above descriptive story is from Walter J. Boyne's 1988 book, "*Power Behind the Wheel*" - *the Evolution of Car Design and Technology*." (Roy South)

Roger Foy continues the Issigonis Story

In July this year, Roger was invited to talk to the Mini Car Club about Alec Issigonis. After an introduction, Roger made the following presentation.

"I have been asked to talk about Issigonis. The problem is where do you start? I looked him up on Google and it told me there were 68,000 hits in their system, so there is plenty of information out there. Perhaps the best way to handle this is to give you a brief summary of his life, and you can follow up the aspects that interest you yourself. Born in Smyrna (now Izmir) in Turkey in November 1906, the son of a Greek marine engineer who had taken British nationality and a Bavarian mother, Issigonis came to England when 16 and went to Battersea Polytechnic, where he qualified in engineering.

Issigonis went into the motor industry as an engineer and designer working for Humber and did some motor racing during the 1930s and 1940s during which time his famous Hill-climb car, the Lightweight Special was created. In 1936 he moved to Morris at Cowley working on an independent front suspension system for the Morris 10.

The war prevented this design from going into production but it was later used on the MG Y Type. He worked on various projects for Morris through the war and towards its end started work on an advanced post war car codenamed Mosquito that became the Morris Minor, which was produced from 1948 until 1971. He left Morris in 1952, at about the time of the merger, and moved to Alvis Cars where he designed an advanced saloon with all aluminium V-8 engine, and experimented with interconnected independent suspension systems. This prototype was never manufactured because its cost was beyond Alvis's resources.

At the end of 1955 Issigonis was recruited back into BMC - this time into the Austin plant at Longbridge - by its Chairman Sir Leonard Lord, to design a new model family of three cars. The XC (experimental car) code names assigned for the new cars were XC/9001 - for a large comfortable car, XC/9002 - for a medium-sized family car, and XC/9003 - for a small town car. During 1956 Issigonis concentrated on the larger two cars, producing several prototypes for

testing. However, at the end of 1956, following fuel rationing brought about by the Suez Crisis, Issigonis was ordered by Lord to bring the smaller car, XC/9003, to production as quickly as possible. By early 1957 prototypes were running, and by mid-1957 the project was given an official drawing office project number (ADO15) so that the thousands of drawings required for production could be produced. In August 1959 the car was launched as the Morris Mini Minor and the Austin Se7en. In later years the car would become known simply as the Mini.

Due to time pressures the interconnected suspension system that Issigonis had planned for the car was replaced by an equally novel, but cruder, rubber cone system. The Mini went on to become the best selling British car in history with a production run of 5.3 million cars. Sir Alexander Arnold Constantine Issigonis, CBE, FRS (November 18, 1906—October 2 1988) was knighted by the Queen in 1969 and retired from the Company in 1971 although he continued as a consultant for some years.

"I had never met Issigonis, and he never deemed it necessary to come to Australia. He is said to have had a very superior attitude to all things engineering, and no second opinions were required or tolerated. Such comments as "I don't like (heaters in cars), (radios in cars), (synchromesh on low gear)" have all been quoted as the reason that the original Mini did not have these features.

We first heard of the existence of the car which became known as the Mini, when we had a visit from Charles Griffin, the designer of the Morris 1100, who told us about this unbelievable small car which Alex Issigonis was working on, which they had called Sputnik!



EARLY ISSIGONIS CARS IN AUSTRALIA - 1948 MORRIS MINOR - THIS CAR IS THOUGHT TO BE THE SECOND OLDEST MINOR IN AUSTRALIA:

Our mouths fell open when he described this tiny car, with 10" wheels, 850 cc engine, and most amazing of all, Front Wheel Drive! We half thought he was having a loan of us, maybe the lateness of the hour, or that it

had been a long day, or that the salubrious surroundings of the Nyngan Pub had unsettled him. All was revealed when, a year or so later, we got our first two cars.

Some of the decisions made by Issigonis had effects that were not anticipated. During the development of the ADO40 (Freeway / 24/80), at the time of the great electric Fuel Pump disaster I mentioned last time I spoke to you, our Chief Engineer had the temerity to ask UK had they done any work on developing a mechanical pump for this model.

Issigonis must have heard of this inquiry and sent a telex back saying "ADO40 will have an electric fuel pump". Warranty cost of replacing electric pumps on ADO40 was the highest individual item and, from memory, was something like 24 pounds per car. Needless to say that we got mechanical pumps on the Mk II versions!



ANOTHER EARLY ISSIGONIS CAR IN AUSTRALIA - ONE OF THE FIRST MINIS BUILT HERE - CHASSIS NO. 00505 OWNED BY DAVE PATON - SOLD AFTER 251,000 MILES

Now, how is all this being commemorated? Your Club is very much involved in a display marking the Centenary of Sir Alec's birth at the Shannon's Classic at Eastern Creek on August 27. I also suspect there might be some sort of display at the All British Day at The Kings School on August 20. If you are all avid readers of The Mini Experience Magazine, you will all know that Australia Post is about to bring out a new series of Postage Stamps, one of which will feature the first Australian Morris 850. I can't disclose the publication date, but it might be 5 days before the All British Day. You may be interested to know that Australia Post contacted The BMC-Leyland Australia Heritage Group seeking our assistance in producing suitable images. This is the actual image used, and this material is some of the stuff sent to AP for their consideration. This is what the stamp will look like.

(Roger Foy)

Issigonis Centenary Display

The Morris Minor Picnic Club Inc. arranged for a display of Issigonis inspired cars in conjunction with the Shannons Classic Display at Eastern Creek on August 27,

It was expected that, as well as Morris Minors, Minis and Mokes, there would be Austin Minis, Wolseley Hornets, Riley Elfs, Morris and Austin 1100s and 1300s. Austin

1800 and Tasman and Kimberley cars on display.

Further Reading on Issigonis

Much has been written on Issigonis. Here are just a few recommended books you may wish to check out.

Gillian Bardsley *Issigonis: The Official Biography*. (Icon Books Ltd, 2005) ISBN 1840466871

Wood, Jonathon (2005). *Alec Issigonis: The Man Who Made The Mini*. Breedon Books Publishing ISBN 1859834493

Nahum, Andrew (1988). *Alec Issigonis. (Modern European Designers Series)* Hyperion Books. ISBN 0850721725

Minis Down Under

Sunday October 22 saw a fantastic display of Minis of all models at a Special Events display area at Panthers Club, Penrith NSW. With more than 100 Minis on display, as well as Trade Displays showing the huge amount of trade support available to the Mini enthusiast.

The large car park adjacent to the display area was reserved for visiting Minis, and it was estimated that 1000 Minis came and went during the day.

The car park itself was a display of interesting Minis! The Heritage Group mounted a display of Memorabilia items in the Main Display area, making contact with many interested Mini owners.

(Roger Foy)

All British Day - 2006

This event is becoming more popular as the years roll on, with this year some 1400 cars in attendance. This year the BMC Car Club Trophy was awarded to the Morris Minor Car Club of NSW. A number of Heritage Group members were in attendance, some displaying their cars in the relevant Club displays. The Heritage Group again had a display of Memorabilia Items, and many interested contacts were made. (Roger Foy)

BMC - Leyland Australia Annual Reunion

The Doncaster Hotel
Friday, Dec 1, 2006

All former employees of BMC, Leyland Australia and their associated Companies are again invited to attend the Annual Reunion at

The Doncaster Hotel on the corner of Anzac Parade and Doncaster Avenue, Kensington, NSW.

As has been traditional, the date is the **First Friday Night in December**, which this year is December 1, from 4.45 PM on in the Public Bar area. A snack bar service only is available while the Hotel is under reconstruction.

In recent years, we have been successful in getting notices in the community notices columns of the Sydney Morning Herald and the Daily Telegraph, which have brought this event to the notice of a number of people who have not been aware of it.

If you know of anyone, who has never been, please let him or her know about it, or get them to call one of the people mentioned below. Remember that everyone is welcome.

For further information, please call:

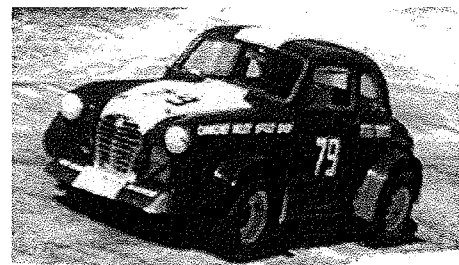
BARRY WILSON	9602 9038
RAY EPHRAIM	9772 2056
ROSS BELL	9144 4678
TONY DE LUCA	8812 2479
ROGER FOY	9449 1524
	(Roger Foy)

Rob Harrison's Motor Sport Update

Racing the Austin A30

With the late Peter Brock getting a lot of attention in International motor racing journals, it is interesting to note that with all his iconic success at Bathurst, the car which is getting all the notoriety is his Holden engined Austin A30. In fact his first car was an Austin and like so many great Australian motor racing drivers Pre-War, they started their careers in either early MG Midgets or Austin Sevens.

In Historic racing to-day, there are usually



one or two Austin A30s competing, and very fast they are too.

Back in the mid 1950s Frank Dent won a number of handicap events at Mt Druit, Orange and Parramatta Park but it was the emergence of Brian Foley which put the little Austin A30 on the map and as early as 1957 he was having great success.

With the Austin Healey Sprite being available in 1958, a lot of the engine

Continued on page 4.

Leading up to the event

In March 2006, we had a "Crisis Meeting" at the Automobile Club in Macquarie Street, Sydney. The crisis that the meeting considered was that we are running out of capable and willing people to run the Group.

There was no short term problem with falling membership. The immediate problem was that both Bruce Elson and Roger Foy had recently advised they were no longer in a position to run our Annual Reunions. The prospects for a 2006 Reunion looked bleak.

Some Members will know that Roy South left BMC in 1971 to pursue a successful career in the business world of international publishing. With 3 colleagues from that world, Roy has run very successful Annual Reunions averaging 100 attenders over 10 years.

Roy did not volunteer to run the BMC - L 2006 Reunion but suggested the venue he had used over the last 3 years and offered to administer a BMC - L function - but not to run it. - in view of his on going commitments to Newsletter editorial, production and mailing.

The Automobile Club Group walked over to the Rocks and inspected Löwenbräu - Ross Bell and Chris Rogers agreed to carry out the remaining functions. Our 2006 Reunion followed on September 24. The new historic venue worked well and attracted 120 people.

We had planned to have a limited car display in our private cobble stoned courtyard adjoining the restaurant area. Sadly, the Sydney Harbor Foreshore Authority who owns the entire area had placed several construction sheds in the courtyard to facilitate restoration work they are doing in adjacent heritage buildings. Despite the best efforts of Löwenbräu, the only way to clear the area for the day involved a payment the SHFA arbitrarily set at \$10,000. This was a serious disappointment.

After a reduced price happy hour in our private bar and reception areas, M.C., Rob Harrison welcomed the guests who included Duncan and Ann Todd, Bob Johnston and Max Langshaw up from Melbourne, Graeme Laurie and Lise Gauchou from Noumea, and Herb Simpfendorfer a member and Austin 1800 enthusiast from Walla Walla near Albany. We also welcomed Wally Beresford and Barry and Fay Wilson to their first Heritage Group Reunion. It was noted that the three instigators of the Doncaster Reunion, Barry Wilson, Ray Ephraim and Ross Bell were all in attendance on this day.

Rob Harrison opened the event with a short presentation that is reproduced later on this

page under the heading *Rob Harrison Looks Back on his BMC - L Years*.

The Bavarian buffet was extensive and well received.

Later, President Barry Anderson introduced our Keynote Speaker, Will Hagon who provided an interesting and nostalgic insight into what went on in BMC - L Advertising and PR functions - this was very appropriate because we have so little material not related to Engineering and Production operations at Zetland. A précis of Will's presentation starts on page 5.

Survey Results

Towards the end of the luncheon, we circulated a brief questionnaire (a practice that has provided valuable guidance to Roy South's other Group over 10 years.) We had about a 63% response rate which is a little below normal for this type of survey. (There was some confusion as to where to lodge survey responses).

The results were very good - only 1 respondent voted negatively - hope he doesn't come next year!

70% said we should go back to Löwenbräu next year and 66% said we should have a keynote speaker. Additional comments were mostly complimentary. Surveys should always be used for future events. (Roy South)

Rob Harrison Looks Back on His BMC - L Years

As mentioned earlier, M.C. Rob Harrison opened the event and gave the following short presentation.

"During my school years, I used to draw cars and send the drawings to Dealers hoping they would send back brochures.

I was inspired by such great engineers as Geoff Healey and Colin Chapman to study engineering after my school years, but what did I do when I'd graduated - joined a Stock Broker as an operator on the Stock Exchange. I was never happy with the fact that I was not involved in creating something or working in an industry which created something. I used to think about all those thousands of people filing into the city each day into offices working away but not creating any wealth for the country - unproductive and making money out of nothing.

Stock Broking was very forward thinking and was computerized about 1968 and people were doing well and I had a great future but I had to get out.

So I wrote to Fred Thompson at BLMC wishing to join the company and in 1970, I received a letter back asking me to go to Zetland for an interview. I first worked in Sales Planning under Alan Hancock, he was my first introduction to clever people.

He was the only person I have ever come across who could be involved in a conversation and at the same time add up on his calculator. I was amazed at the clever people where ever I went.

Our Public Relations was manned by Evan Green, then Will Hagon - I do not think anyone has surpassed them in the industry. I was full of respect for the engineers and those on the line - for heaven's sake - they built Motor Cars not buy and sell shares - anyone can do that. And as far as computers were concerned there was a whole building devoted to computers - that's where I first met my wife - now everyone is a computer expert.

I then worked for Alan Fidler in NSW Sales. He had so much charisma he could have taken the part as 007 in a Bond film. I was an Area Manager and drove all over the countryside during the week.

But there is an irony to all this - Leyland bought Australian Steel, they employed 5000 skilled and clever people - they exported - all good for the country.

But what happened? - they closed down in 1974 - 32 years ago - and the Stock Exchange has flourished.

But those years had a huge impact on our lives and it is a measure of the friendships forged in the workplace that we still meet every year. It is an honor to be chosen to speak to so many of those I respect. Toni and I left Leyland in 1980 and I felt that joining one of the other car companies would be a backward step - so I left the Motor Industry and look back on that one quarter of my working life with fond memories.

(Rob Harrison)

Rob Harrison's Motor Sport Update (Cont from page 3)

modifications that appeared in these fabulous little cars found their way into the Austin A30.

However, it was Peter Brock with his Holden powered A30 which had the spectators spell bound. I remember seeing him compete in the night meetings at Oran Park and he and the car were sensational.

It was a very difficult car to drive and when Peter sold it to Ross Bond it was fortunate that Ross was such an accomplished driver as the third owner drove it into the cement wall at BP Corner at Oran Park and the car was so badly damaged it ended up at Simms Metal. In recent years Peter Brock's son, built a replica. (Rob Harrison)

Will Hagon's Brilliant Presentation

We were very fortunate to have Will address our 2006 Reunion because we have very little recorded information about BMC - L other than our extensive bank of Product and Production material.

And what a brilliant, entertaining show Will put on! His audience was delighted with his off-the-cuff, interactive, conversational style - often involving people in the audience. It was nostalgia with present day audience participation - brilliant.

Capturing the event for the benefit of Newsletter readers who were not there was a real challenge however!

I had been warned by colleagues that Will would not work to a text or even a list of headings. The best we could do to capture the essence of this precious presentation was to put a tape recorder on the podium and hope that Will would not go wandering around the room with the wireless microphone. I told Will that, if he had that in mind, I would tie the tape recorder around his neck! We wound up with a tape recording of excellent quality. (Roy South)

Will started with some motorcycle stories but said he had been asked to talk about Leyland but probably wouldn't (laughter). Here's an impression of his presentation based on the tape.

"Barry asked me to provide some details about myself and BMC - L and so on. We could probably cut that down to the fact that I joined about the time of the launch of the Tasman and Kimberley and the marvelous Marinas 1500 CC and 1750 CC up to the P76.

I think in that period - the more technical amongst us could correct me - but I think in that period MG made a massive move up from a three main bearing crankshaft to five main bearings - a major change for the world's best selling sports car in a period when Nissan had the Datsun 1500, 2000 the 240Z, the 260Z and the 280Z

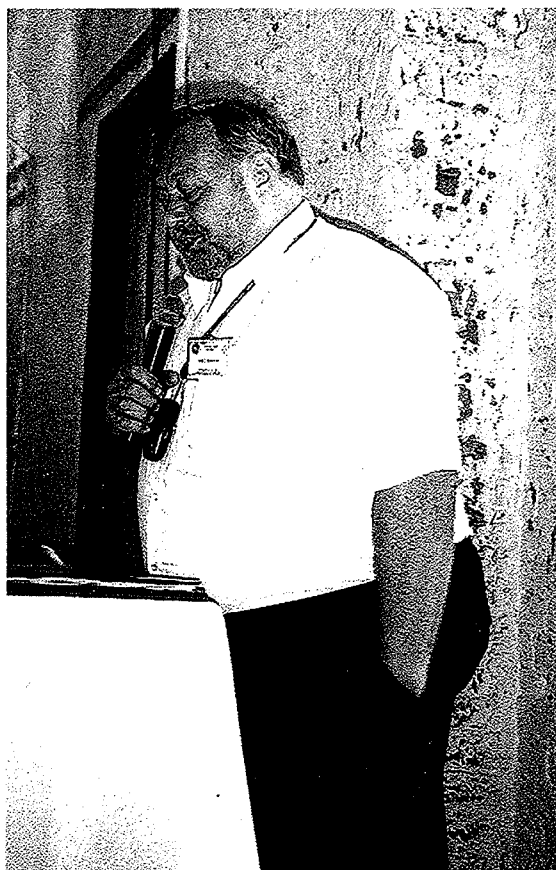
I enjoyed my time at Leyland because what it meant was that I played sub-district Rugby down at Woollahra with a mob of colleagues in a wonderful competition which is what is commonly called "Coarse Rugby". Will humorously described some of the joys of those Rugby days.

If you think about it, this Company was significant. One of our workmates /acquaintances now is still very active in the industry - I like the use of the word active. But one of the people out of Victoria Park is

now the most experienced, most senior, most experienced person in the Australian motor industry - John Conomos. He says the fact is that, in his Leyland days, he was just a humble truck salesman - we always wonder about the adjectives but he did a very good job.

He did a very good job indeed and not all of you may be aware in the area of PR - as Barry implied - he just suggested a little that we might be a pile of wankers who know stuff all about what is going on - and he may be right.

But out of PR came a guy who has now revived the name of an Australian made



motor car and is producing, in addition to the 4 local manufacturers you know of. And there he is, Bill Hemming - out of PR into Elfin Cars in Melbourne.

To check up on things, I went to Victoria Park yesterday and I drove through and I thought how the area has changed in its perhaps sixth incarnation. All the things it has been - I looked through all the maps - a collection of maps that I have and I discovered only yesterday the Sydney Morning Herald only put these out in 1977.

I was surprised that only 1000 people got them. That was all they published - they went through the earliest days of the colonies through the 1900s. In 1892 the site was still shown as a swamp or park - and then the Racecourse and the site for Car Manufacturing of which we know something, the Naval Stores and now residential.

Interesting to note in the early days of the colony and somewhere around this area,

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There, a Major Moss noted the difficulty in growing plants in areas of Sydney, and said "There was not a bit of timber fit for anything but to make a pot boil."

So I went to Victoria Park yesterday and saw the street names and noted that Barry Anderson and such as he were very lucky in being so much involved in that commemorative thing. There was nothing there of Dave Beech or the wonderful Ian Millbank or Evan Green.

I am delighted Roy South brought this along (showing a picture) and that's most poignant to me. This picture of Evan Green and the story of that man in Wheels Magazine - for he became over a period, one of my great, great friends. He was a wonderful man. We started out knowing each other and working together as commentators at Ch 7 and then I, of course worked for him at Leyland and then we became rivals when he became Motoring Editor of the Sun Herald and I became Motoring Editor of the Sunday Telegraph.

It was funny my topic of interview with Evan Green. I was running a Caltex service station over in Bondi Road. - and I discovered I might not become very rich but might even become poorer.

We became involved in and worked with Metro Motor Sport and so the London - Sydney Marathon had come and gone. Channel 7 had covered the course - telling stories about it and I was riding along Cleveland street on my first motor bike a MWR 50 and there's a red, white roofed Austin 1800. obviously done a lot of hard work, In it Evan Green and I exchanged quick pleasantries. And I said to Evan "would you have a job in PR?" He said I'm going to Canberra to talk to a Car Club.

He got up off his backside in the way very little of the industry does these days and got around the Car Clubs all the time. "See you when I get back and we can have a chat" "When can I join?" I was a bit taken aback.

I had not been there very long when I ran into Alan Morris of MOJO in the corridor. I was introduced to him as the person who was going to solve Leyland's problems. I thought I was the person to make every thing right. I thought this is a big task!

I was about to call Barry Anderson, Barry Pfafflin and all those guys over at Engineering - you can St-f off. You are not needed. It's all down to me!

Evan really got going there - all the things he got going there - all the things he did and all the things he was interested in - he finally got happy - got a map of the world behind his desk and he would say what was happening anywhere in the world. Basically he never got any work done. Not only Bob

Johnston thought he was wonderful, Bob was right.

And I remember once he had done several of these marathons and he had swags and swags of these little bits of paper - money that had been advanced to him by Leyland for these various journeys and official jobs and indeed it could be the reason the place went down - because he never reconciled any of these accounts and as John Cotter may know, it wasn't that management threatened to do something horrible to him and possibly physical to him that he finally went with Alan Kemp and might have been another couple of people to the theaterette with all these documents and spent days spreading them out and trying to reconcile the sums of money that had been given to him and see if they could add up the sums of money before the Company auditors reported it to the tax Dept. He was a great guy and we had lots of fun and knew various numbers of interested people.

It really was fun and, one day when Evan was away, I went into 2GB to say hallo. Evan was quite close to the late John Pearce, the radio announcer and used to work with John in getting us publicity.

He'd promised a car for around Australia and, in fact John rose to Rally Cross in a car that Evan? Leyland supplied - perhaps John Cotter prepared it and put it on a trailer. The Company Garage was interesting wasn't it? Talking of dockets and reconciling - the Co. Garage was there - none of that - just open doors.

"I remember talking to a lovely old guy called Percy Campbell at 2GB. He said "we are a bit disappointed because Brian Tebble - he was Evan Green's "hard man" and Evan was "Mr. Soft" and "Mr. Often Absent". Brian Tebble would be there wielding the stick and putting order into things.

Tebble had said to 2GB "You are not getting that car for the Ampol Trial" and dear old Percy Campbell said "We are a bit disappointed about this - We have committed ourselves - "we have said on air" Tebble had done this and he's my boss, you see.. I suggested to Percy that he just write a note to Bob Johnson - thought it was a binding agreement - and it is now not happening. I decided I would just write a report on the meeting to Brian Tebble, copy Bob Johnson (and ensured Bob got his copy first). *2GB eventually got the car.*

One of Evan's favorite places was - the Grotta Capri Restaurant at Kensington - wonderful place.

Evan once said to me "I've been to England and it distressed me - they don't listen - they make cars for their climate, their country - this all got on top of Evan.

He had gone - to the Sun Herald - they had made him an offer and things started to change in PR. Among the changes that had moved reasonably quickly was a guy called Dick Jackson from Melbourne and he thought he should have been appointed head of PR and he got the job. Marrianne (Laurie) as Secretary - she was fabulous.

Dick was a bumbling sort of guy. We really didn't know what sort of relationship he had with the other sex. Dick came and went.

There I was trying to get the P76 before the public.

A guy with many tales to be told was Rob Luck, Editor of Modern Motor and they ran some stories and pictures of the P76. Rob said they had been given to him. As things turned out, the pictures could be identified as being taken at 5.00 am - presumably at the Plant. Rob subsequently never admitted anything.

Subsequently another guy came along - Alex Richardson and another - John Pola - the notorious John Pola. After I had left, there was an account of a fist fight in John Pola's office involving Alex Richardson.

Then various others came and went. Such was the history of PR at Leyland. There are other anecdotes and stories to be told

Will mentioned some recent involvements with and claims made by with other car Companies.

Will was amazed when Volvo said one of their new models was the first in line 6 transverse engined car.

There have been some important people to come out of- BMC - Leyland from experimental, tooling, final manufacture and out of all that came Bob Johnston (Toyota for many years), John Conomos, Bill Hemmings at Elfin *Continued Page 7*

Tribute to Evan Green as it appeared in Wheels Magazine . Will Hagon referred to it in his presentation.

Remembering Evan



We had lunch just before Christmas. He was impossibly frail and gaunt; tissue paper skin draped over sinew and bone. The insidious illness, and the toxic brew of chemicals the doctors prescribed to fight it, were eating him away.

But he wanted to go bush again. Up the Birdsville Track. He wanted to write about big skies and red sandhills, and tell the stories of the people who lived in the soul of Australia.

I think we both knew there was little chance he'd be well enough to make the trip. But I said, yes, we'll take the story. Do it when you can...

You could say Evan Green never really grew up. Most of us soon lose the uninhibited ambitions of childhood; the dreams of being a fireman, astronaut or racing driver - or all three - are quickly extinguished by schooling, circumstance and sober responsibility. But Evan never stopped dreaming, right up until the end. And, unlike most of us, he made many of those dreams come true.

Best-selling author, works rally driver, radio and TV personality, member of the board at Holden, senior newspaper journalist: each one is a respectable career achievement.

Evan Green was all these things and more: adventurer, artist, musician as well.

**Truly a 20th century
Renaissance man...**

Will Hagon continues,

We are not starting our careers - are well along with them and some of us are well into retirement and some of us are discovering little discomforts with life.

There is a lovely Australian author/poet called C. J. Dennis who is most popularly known for a book known as "The Sentimental Bloke", which, in its first 18 months sold 66,000 copies in the early 1900s - among other works.

Will closed his wonderful presentation by reading substantial quotes from the last chapter of "The Sentimental Bloke"

Will, we all thank you so much.

(Will Hagon - text based on a tape recording of Will's presentation by Roy South)

An Anecdote - How Bob Phillips and Roy South Hijacked Evan Green at a Book Launch.

I left BMC - L in 1971 to start a 6 year career transition which included 2 part time evening University Degrees including a Masters Degree in Business Administration (MBA) - many thousands of hours of very hard work. In 1980, I was appointed to the Board of Reader's Digest and several of its Associated Companies.

On a particular day in the early 1990s, I went to my office as usual - greeted my immediate staff. This was a million kilometers from BMC - L. This was the real business world where people succeeded or failed on their results - it was a thrilling environment - working with the best people in the business.

Today was to be no different except I was expecting Bob Phillips who was then working for Suttons Motors and was determined to sell me a fleet of some 40 Holdens. I looked forward to seeing Bob with whom I had worked for many years at BMC - L and had invited him to lunch at the Office.

By late morning, I had seen signs of preparations for a function on our Roof Garden. I was fortunate in that my office had huge glass walls and a door for entrance to the magnificent Reader's Digest Roof Garden - some 60 m long and frequently used for Corporate Cocktail Parties, Book Launches and the like.

I inquired what was the purpose of today's celebration. My editorial colleague told me she was launching the most recent volume of Reader's Digest Condensed Books. She mentioned Evan Green who had authored

"Dust And Glory" - based on the Redex Trials - and that was included in the book to be launched. I know Evan well, I said - can I join you - and with a mutual friend? Of course, she said but don't forget he is one of the Guests of Honor - others will want to meet him and share his experiences that underlay his book. Sue, I promise, said I. Came time for the function - the literary guests had arrived - also Evan. Bob and I soon said hello to him and we started talking of old times at BMC - L.

We chatted in a corner of the Roof Garden over a few drinks for probably an hour totally ignoring the publishing fraternity until Sue called him away to be introduced as the author of *Dust and Glory*

(Roy South)

End of P76 Program 'Tragic for Australia'

says Evan Green - Sun Herald Motoring Editor - Oct 20, 1974

Every day this week, the desk of David Abell, Leyland Australia's young managing director, has been swamped with letters and telegrams.

They are from people ~ protesting at the demise of his company's all-Australian car, the P76. The protests represent an amazing turnabout in public reaction. For now that the contentious sedan has been put to the sword, thousands of champions have sprung to its cause. It's all too late, of course.

The P76 is on the way out, destroyed by rumour, doubts about Leyland's viability, a vicious word of mouth campaign ("they should have called it the P38, it's only half a car", the wags used to say), massive disruptions to its building schedule, the inefficiency and unreliability of sections of Australian industry, and poor timing by the people who made it.

It was a good car, launched at a bad time.

The P76 project will be remembered as a \$25 million monument to the curious and destructive Australian habit of condemning our own, doubting what we create, and hindering what we try to produce.

It was the most all-Australian of all Australian cars, and suffered because of it. It was a big car, launched at a time when big cars were waning in popularity, but still selling in vast numbers. It deserved success, but instead received biting criticism, especially as news of Leyland's financial problems became known. Most of its critics never drove the car.

One government minister called it a lemon. Even the Prime Minister, between journeys in his imported Mercedes Benz 450 SEL, gave it a back-hander. "For God's sake, why

blame the Government if you produce a model you can't sell?" he said at a business dinner in September.

The truth is, as 31 year old David Abell was having expounded to him this week, the P76 is a good car. In a number of significant ways, it is the best car made in Australia. It steers, handles, rides and stops in a way that its American-inspired rivals should emulate. It is more economical. It is lighter than its rivals, and therefore consumes less raw materials. It has high standards of primary safety. It is inherently strong.

It suffered quality control problems in its early days. So has every new Australian model. With the P76, the faults were primarily human ones, not design faults. The people on the assembly lines who put it together just didn't do it properly. Look at one on a showroom floor now, and you'll find a finish equal to the best in this country. It's a car of world class, conceived, designed and built by Australians. And it's had it.

Why? That's a question that hangs over the future of the whole Australian car-making industry. The P76 was launched in mid-1973 but its conception took place almost six years before. The design and development of a new model is a lengthy business. That, plus the enormous cost, is what makes the risk so great. A manufacturer is trying to predict what you will buy many years in advance.

Credit squeezes or booms, an energy crisis or an oil glut are the storms or fair winds that determine the buying climate in future years. And predictions are about as accurate as long range weather forecasts.

In the late 1960s, Leyland - just changing its name from BMC - sold predominantly small cars. It was in a market segment becoming saturated with Japanese models, both imports and those assembled locally.

The company made no model that slotted into the Holden-Falcon-Valiant segment, which accounted for more than half of all sales. It was a more profitable segment, too, for big cars sell for more than small cars and therefore their profit margin, in terms of dollars per vehicle, is greater. The Company reasoned that if it were to stay as a major Australian manufacturer, it would have to build the type of car most people were buying. In other words, a Holden competitor.

The Government of the time opposed the principle of mass imports and encouraged local manufacture. Like GMH, Ford and Chrysler, Leyland reacted to government pleas, spent huge sums on car-making facilities, and developed Victoria Park into the only all-on-one-site motor manufacturing plant in Australia.

To be continued next issue of Newsletter

President's Report 2006.

Our Group has continued spreading the word about our heritage mission and keeping in touch. My thanks to the 2005/6 committee and all who helped during the year.

We had a stand at the Austin Centenary Day in March. 197 cars were on display for the 100th anniversary of Austin's first car. Each exhibitor received one of our Austin Centenary keyrings.

In April Sydney City Council invited our participation in their first industrial heritage tour of South Sydney. It ended at the Tote building where we had a photo and car display. Thanks to Roy South and Roger Foy, ably assisted by Ron Moss

In August we again had our stall at the All British Day at Kings College. The Tom Poole trophy - donated by us three years ago - was again presented on the day to the Morris Minor Club of NSW for the best single marque display.

In September our re-union at the new venue in The Rocks was very successful. 120 attended, several offering help for next year. The response to our questionnaire will give guidance for 2007. Our thanks to Chris Rogers, Ross Bell and Roy South.

At each of these events, Roger Foy has sold the Videos, CDs and other items our Group offers. Thanks to him for this contribution to our finances and public education.

The Australia Post "Car" stamp series recognising 100 years of driver licensing in Australia now in POs. The 1964 Morris Mini stamp will interest members.

The Newsletter continues as the central component of our Group's activities. As ever, Roy South has produced first class documents again this year and we thank him for undertaking the huge effort that this involves.

Progress on "The Book" on the Victoria Park car years has been slow. We have had meetings with two potential authors and several members. These have yielded new options on both editorial approach and publishing techniques. We will continue with these efforts to define the direction for this project and get started.

Following the October Annual General Meeting your team for 2006 - 2007 is:

Barry Anderson:	President
Peter Mohacsi:	Secretary & Membership Records
Ross Bell:	Treasurer.
Annual Reunion	Kay DeLuca (Chris Rogers assistant)
Car Club Liaison	Roger Foy
Historical Publication Coordinators	Barry Anderson and Roy South
Newsletter Production & Mailing	Roy South
Motor Sport Historian	Rob Harrison.

Bruce Elson, who was active in establishing the Group, has been Vice President for some years advised that he was unable to continue in this position. The president expressed the members' sincere appreciation for his past efforts. No Vice-President was elected this year.

Barry Anderson

Your Team

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The opinions expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Heritage Group.

This Newsletter is published by the BMC - Leyland Australia Heritage Group