



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

# NEWSLETTER

May/June 2008



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.

## **The Bill Abbott Story Part I - to be continued Warrewyk Williams at the 2007 Reunion**



**LEFT: BILL ABBOTT, MANAGING DIRECTOR  
AND MANUFACTURING MANAGER —AT  
BMC-L 1957-1969**

**RIGHT: WARREWYK WILLIAMS  
PRESENTING AT OUR 2007 REUNION**

### *Dear Members, Friends and Colleagues,*

It is with quite some sadness that I have to tell you this is my last Newsletter. I have some health problems - as with cars, people deteriorate with age. As my Doctor says, "Roy, it goes with the kilometers" and I have millions of Km. on the clock. As most Members will know, I have produced Newsletter since the formation of the Group in 1998. I have taken pride in presenting Newsletter as a quality publication. I have had great input from many members - especially Roger Foy, Rob Harrison and others. There were many challenges - particularly reproducing pictures from 40 year old newsprint. I am indeed very grateful that Jan Bowditch (Roman) has now volunteered to carry Newsletter forward and I thank her for producing the timely interim issue in January 2008.

I intend to continue my involvement with the Group and my friends and colleagues from BMC-L days - Best Wishes, *Roy S. South*

**Rob Harrison's Motor Racing Update**

**Doncaster Reunion 2007**

**Press Release: Our 2008 Reunion - celebrating the Heritage Group's 10 years**

## SOME BMC - L HISTORY

By R. L. Abbott

The following article was written by Bill Abbott in response to a series of questions posed by an author, Gavin Farmer, who at the time was collecting information for a book on P.76. The article is dated 28 Feb. 1992 and was sent to Roger Foy by Bill on the 20 Sept. 1994. Roger has now transcribed the hand-written original.

Dear Mr. Farmer,

Thank you for your letter 10 th. Feb. with your questions on the P.76 etc. But before answering them may I give you some background on BMC, both in the UK and Australia, which will help give you some appreciation of BMC Australia and the "environment" we worked under in the years 1957-1969. These may answer your questions on why we did things a certain way.

First on the UK side, as an organization BMC was very British and very conservative- with loyal customers both on the Austin side and Nuffield (Morris) side. In the immediate postwar WWII period, they dominated the UK market with over 50% share. As you would know, they were formed in 1952 with the merger of Austin and Morris, who had been bitter rivals pre WWII, but even in 1957, when I joined BMC (Aust.), there was still quite a strong undercurrent of Austin v. Morris. This was to be expected.

I came in as a rank outsider to BMC UK - an odd sort of colonial character - half Australian half American, because of my GM background, but found I could talk the language of automobiles, even with a funny accent. I never "fought" their ideas in a belligerent way, but was not afraid to say what was needed for Australia, and most people listened, even if they could not really see why we wanted to be different. Their knowledge of the Australian market was very limited, other than the Export Sales people. So quiet "education" became a priority in the first few years.

In Australia immediately after WWII, starting about 1947-8, before Holden got going, BMC were market leaders, (They had the stock!) as you will see from registrations graph attachment 1. In 1950, the various models from Austin and Morris got 64,000 registrations and a market ratio of 31%, but the trend was downwards.

(The graph in attachment 1 is not suitable for reproduction. It shows

the progressive decline in BMC's market share from a peak in 1950 of 31% to 10% in 1967, and a decline in sales from 64,000 to 44,000)

By 1961, a bad year for the industry, BMC

and Morris Major and the related badge engineered Wolseley 1500, plus the Morris Minor through the original CKD assembly plant on the site. Some of the other models were still with State Distributors, or in the case of Austin, at the Ruskin Motor Body works in Melbourne, bought by Austin some years before.

Secondly - the selling organizations were still run by the traditional pre-war State Distributors like Austin Distributors in Melbourne, and Lanes Motors (Nuffield), Larke Hoskins (Austin) and York Motors (Morris) - Sydney, and they appointed the country dealers, to each side of the family. That is, we were still following the traditional British method of distribution - with too many models in too low a volume for good economics for small dealers and manufacture, against strong "direct" dealers under GM-H factory control.

Except for the Morris Minor, and the earlier Austin A40 before Holden really got going, we had no relatively high volume models.

We had discussed these two basic problems in Sydney many times, and when Norman Lawrence, our Sales Director went to UK about 1960, we asked him to see if he could get agreement to marketing changes in our distribution away from the UK pattern. This is covered in my letter to Norman of March 1960 -

attachment 2. Norman had

(Attachment 2 is a Seven page Memo from RLA to NWL setting out his thoughts on the Product Policy he felt we should pursue, as well as the Dealer structure most suited to our operation.)

come to us from Austral Motors, (Austin) distributors in Queensland. He made little progress as it was against all previous BMC domestic tradition. The standard question generally asked of visiting Australians at that period by people who'd never been out of UK, was "We get 50% of the market in UK with our models and distribution - what's the matter with you chaps in Australia - we know it works and is successful!"

Diverting to the Depth of Holden Planning, Larry Hartnett as Managing Director had a burning ambition to build an Australian car. They did three serious car-manufacturing studies, which not only covered the Plant and Equipment needed, but the best specification for maximum sales appeal. The first was in 1936, on the then Standard Chevrolet, their highest volume model with about 11,000 per year. I helped pulling the sample car to bits and tagging each part

### PRESS RELEASE

#### 2008 REUNION

Sunday October 12, 2008 is the date for this year's Reunion of the BMC Leyland Heritage Group.

Ryde - Eastwood Leagues Club is the venue (117 Ryedale Rd., West Ryde) just a short walk from West Ryde Railway Station.

The Club has given us the whole roof area of the car park for a display.

Look out for more details in the mail soon.

Kay De Luca  
Event Organizer

Aust. had dropped to 22,000 registrations and 9.2% ratio and things were really rough and critical as to our future in Australia.

In about mid 1961, Harold Sainsbury, Finance Manager and I, then Manufacturing Manager (covering Engineering, the Manufacturing Plants & Supply) were called to Longbridge, to face an ultimatum from the then Chairman, Lord Lambury (previously Sir Leonard Lord of Austin) and Managing Director Sir George Harriman, asking what we were going to do to get us out of the red. BMC had invested about £Stg 7 million in the Sydney plant and had nothing but losses. They could not keep supporting us unless we could turn the operation to profit within about a year.

The Chairman was a tough Birmingham man, and his ultimatum was - "MAKE BUGGER PAY!"

#### Why were we in deep trouble?

Firstly, we had no models which really suited the market, and Holden had reached over 50% ratio by 1961. We started manufacture in Zetland plant 1956 with the Austin Lancer

with Part Name and Number, material and weight, to help the planning engineers up in the front office.

The next study was much more detailed in early 1939, with Joe Dillon the Sales Manager leading the Sales team. I was seconded from Engineering to work with this team on specification comparisons, performance estimates to the standard GM "CFM, CFTM etc. ratios - refer attachment 3.

(Attachment 3 was not included with the Notes from RLA.. CFM stands for Cubic Feet per Mile, and CFTM stands for Cubic Feet per Ton-Mile. This was a General Motors method of comparing the performance of cars by calculating the volume of air the engine was capable of pumping. RF)

A very important decision was made at this time by Joe Dillon - he considered no current GM job was really what we needed. The US models were getting too big and costly to buy and run, and the English jobs (Vauxhall) were much improved, but did not have the durability and performance of the US models, though the fuel economy was good.

What we needed was a car with US durability and performance but UK economy - something about half way, with 6 cylinders and capable of carrying 5/6 passengers. Could this be produced - something about a 3-litre engine and 2700 lbs. Kerb weight and 100 CFTM performance.

The War came along and this study was shelved, although a lot of background data had been collected, like a study of "Factors Affecting Car Design for the Australian Market". This covered climate, roads, State regulations, fuel specs., need for ease of servicing etc. All Departments did similar studies on their own functions, Supply Dept. on status of suppliers, Finance on Banking and Taxation Laws and so on.

The subject of car manufacture was being discussed in Canberra too, as Australian Consolidated Industries (AGM - the glass monopoly) had put up a draft plan based on making the then Willys car under licence. At that time, bodies were fully Australian, and there were a number of local chassis components with high tariffs, like springs, shock absorbers, tyres, spark plugs, radiators - which were deleted from the CKD packs and produced here. Thus with labour of assembly included, the local content was fairly high, I think about 60%, but it did not include power unit, axles, transmission, engine, electrics and carby. Etc

In late 1944, when the War was going our way, the Government asked all big companies to siphon off some staff, to start planning

for their post-war activities, particularly those which would give employment to all men and women coming out of the Services. Full employment was a major policy objective of Ben Chifley's Government. (But not today!!!)

GMH got the 1939 study out, again Sales Dept. decided we needed our own Australian Car, but their studies indicated downsizing to about a 4 cyl., 2 litre, 2100 lbs. kerb weight and 90 CFTM, with better economy, but still with good durability and adequate ground clearance for outback roads. This eventually became the Holden. By that time LJH had obtained (with difficulty) GM Corporation approval to build a car in Australia, provided it would be financed in Australia. Again we had to thank Ben Chifley's support for getting this from the Commonwealth Bank as a post-war project.

Things started to move in GM Overseas Operations, and Russell Begg was appointed Chief Engineer. I was fortunate enough to be picked in the first GMH group to go overseas in Feb. 1945, and became Russ Begg's "arithmetical labourer" on weight control, basic stressing and performance etc.

By a bit of luck we had a starting point for Holden—in 1938 GM Research built 2 lightweight cars to settle two questions—(1) How light can you build a car with good durability, and (2) The 4 cyl. vs. 6 cyl. debate. They had both been for 25,000 miles at GM Proving Ground with quite good results—so the 6 cyl. job mechanical items were studied for Holden. The body had to be quite new, for styling. The 6 cyl. was chosen as the 4 cyl. showed little \$ saving when extra had to be spent to smooth out vibrations and the 6 was Australia's preference.

#### Back to BMC and "Making Bigger Pay"

We accepted the challenge and this required:

1. Cutting operating costs to the bone, by reducing staff levels from 4000 to 3000 over a couple of months. We were badly overstocked due to the 1961 depression, so stock had to be cleared. Firing 1000 people at all levels - factory and staff, is not a pleasant task, but we tried to do it in the most "humane" way. Our good Personnel Manager, Ken Marsden was put into "reverse" to try and find jobs for those to be quit. The Supply Manager, Bob Gillingham did the same with our suppliers to see if they could help. Also key to the "reverse" employment approach, the first outsider we asked to come in was Milton McCarney, the NSW Secretary of the Vehicle Builders Union to talk about our problems.

When he walked in, he said "I know you've got some problems, all those bloody unsold cars in the yard - what's the bad news?"

A perfect lead in by a very astute Union man, but one Ken and I had a high regard for as a straight shooter. We put all our cards on the table, the financial position of the Company, and the ultimatum from the Chairman in UK, and asked him if he could help with placing some of the factory people. He was a bit taken aback - "I've never had a boss ask that before" -- but he did what he could.

We pointed out that the objective was to keep the jobs of the remaining 3000 people, and that the cuts would not all be in his members, but from staff as well. If we failed, all of us could be out of a job in about a year.

BMC only paid award wages except for an attendance bonus of about \$8/week, as absenteeism was a bit of a problem in the Plant. We cut this \$8 out, which really upset McCarney but promised him it would be restored when and if we got back to near breakeven - say in 6 months. One day about 4 months later I saw him in the Plant and said - "Remember the attendance bonus discussion and review in 6 months - we've decided to reinstate it in next week's pay". His answer "You bloody beauty!"

Some of the good people we put off got better jobs - one of the Engineering staff became Chief Engineer of our carburettor supplier - Bendix. We also got the CES people in and set up an office for employment interviews, and all told we placed about 70% of the 1000 before they left.

Bill Abbott's Narrative will continue in the Next Issue. (Roger Foy)

## DONCASTER REUNION DECEMBER 2007

The new facilities at the rebuilt Doncaster Hotel made the Annual Doncaster Reunion a much more convivial occasion than those of recent years. As in the past, there were several people who were attending for the first time, as well as a number of attendees who had traveled from interstate and country NSW to join with old colleagues to reminisce about old times. Access to the Doncaster is much improved as on site car parking is again available.

We were again successful in getting the event listed in the *Sydney Daily Telegraph* and the *Sydney Morning Herald* What's On columns and we thank those organizations for their support. Most of the first-time attendees heard of the event through these listings.

Roger Foy.

## NEW AUDI CENTRE AT VICTORIA PARK

Audi Australia has announced that it has acquired a site at Victoria Park for the purpose

of building a new Administration, Sales and Service Centre. The building, which will have five levels will face onto Southern Cross Drive, and will be roughly located on the site of our old Administration Building. Construction is expected to start this year.

Roger Foy.

## WARREWK WILLIAMS AT THE 2007 REUNION

This is a Transcript of Warrewyk's  
Speech

To be asked to talk in front of people I admire once is an honor, to be asked back is doubly so. So I only hope I live up to your expectations the second time around.

I must admit that due to the late notice I was given I was unsure whether to accept this honor as it usually takes me three weeks or so to prepare a good impromptu speech.

At first I thought being given free reign to talk about anything would be great but then it occurred to me, what would I actually speak about?

This was a problem for which I wasn't prepared.

As knowledgeable as I think I am on the subject of the Leyland P76 it occurred to me that anything I might relate about the history of this esteemed vehicle would be like a child teaching his parents about the birds and the bees. Mind you the way school is these days that's not entirely out of the realms of possibility.

In 2005 I spoke about how a P76 changed my life so I thought perhaps it might be pertinent to enlighten you on the subject of how a P76 changed the lives of those around me or in other words, How I became a P76 Evangelist.

Long before I owned my first P76 I was working on acquiring something else I desired. This was the receptionist from the company for which I worked. Now before she was even my lovely lady wife, Carmel was enlightened as to the nature of the Leyland P76 when one afternoon a pristine Omega Navy Targa Florio pulled into the car park of the North Ryde office where we worked. Even then I openly declared my interest in P76 ownership to my intended.

She can't say she wasn't warned! All the same I must congratulate her on surviving over 21 years of marriage with me and my hobby... obsession?

Now it was obvious that Carmel was destined to be linked to Australian P76 history; well I'd say there are very few women who have

spent as much time at the wheel of a Force 7V as she has for a start. What a thrill for her it must be to know that! I'm sure you can see even now how excited she is and I'm sure the other ladies here could relate to this.

No ? I might have to reread that Men Are From Leyland, Women Are From Suzuki book again, or whatever it was called.

Anyhow. In 1991 my daughter Angela was born and she was privileged to be picked up from the hospital in our P76 Super known, affectionately, as "War Zone". Now the effect of this would affect her far sooner than anyone would have thought. Before Angela could even talk Carmel and I would wonder why she would make strange "Urr urr urr" sounds occasionally. I'd have to admit to being a tad concerned about this unusual behaviour and it was actually quite some months before I put two and two together.

One morning with our 14 month old daughter Angela safely strapped into her booster seat I was about to start the car when she started her strange "Urr urr urring" again. I turned around to look at her both confused and concerned. With no further sounds from her I turned my attention forward and started the car.

Now War Zone's carburettor had been changed to a Holley 350 and like so many of these conversions the choke was simply never connected meaning that when the engine was cold it needed to be revved until it was warm enough to continue idling without feathering the accelerator. It was then that the penny dropped. My little daughter was simply mimicking the sound of the only vehicle she had ever known, Essentially before she could say, "Dadda," she could imitate the sound of my P76!

The same year my daughter was born, in fact I think it was the same week, I started a new job with a Financial Markets



Information company. It wasn't long before all staff, even those, from other countries (England, Ireland (both northern and southern), India, Israel, Hong Kong, Lebanon, The Phillipines) were well and truly aware of

the advantages of Leyland P76 ownership. (Contrary to what they might read in the paper.) Yes, it was a brave person who risked a lecture on P76 history by dropping the P38 line.

Ultimately the little Aussie company I worked for was very successful and was therefore naturally gobbled up in a corporate buyout and I suddenly found myself working for the largest news company on Earth - Reuters. Finding my way around a company where even people who had worked there for 20 years and didn't know everyone was certainly an experience but I very quickly discovered ways to ensure that many of the myths regarding the Leyland P76 were not propagated by this news monolith. Even the deputy chairman knew better than to approve stories containing derogatory comments relating to the P76 as I, aside from managing the Field Services group, also took it upon myself to defend the car against the scurrilous accusations that used to appear with monotonous regularity in the local press.

The Reuters job ultimately lead to a role with another company in Singapore during the late nineties and even here the Singaporean staff soon learnt about the mighty Leyland P76 and of course the legendary Force 7V. With unlimited high speed internet access available to me I fairly soon figured out how to set up a web site that offered an alternative view regarding this great Aussie marque and was able to decorate it with many pictures too.

Actually I am still amazed just how many of those Force 7 pictures from that old web site were copied and are still displayed on many websites both here and overseas to this day.

The role in Singapore was very draining and there were no P76's on the island nation either; at least none that I could find - and I did look - just in case, so I returned to Australia and made career change from computers and finance to digital cameras and photography.

I spent three years at Fletchers Fotographics with Neil Fletcher the company's owner and founder, who was a huge Corvette fan, the Managing Director who loved high performance Fords and the Operations Manager who just happened to be President of the Porsche Club. I'm sure you can imagine how a Leyland fanatic, with very little photographic experience, fitted into this auspicious group.

Remember these were last days of the 20<sup>th</sup> century yet still the early days of consumer type digital cameras where these overpriced devices, in which I specialized, were only

considered to reproduce a poor quality picture and not a real photograph.

Twenty years in the computer industry had taught me quite a bit about the nature of digital pictures however so it was quite a shock for the staff when, proudly displayed on the wall above the digital camera cabinet one morning, was a picture of my yellow Force 7V Coupe - about 2 metres long and 1 metre high. I'd also figured out how to use the wide format printer!

Now Fletchers policy regarding the display of personal photographs meant that pictures of Fords, Porsches and even Corvettes were not displayed in the store. Needless to say bets were made about how long the Leyland poster would last in this position as well as how long I might last in my position.

Two things saved me however. Firstly the rules only banned the display of photographs - there was no mention of posters. I love to split hairs; just ask my wife. And secondly just about every male customer that came into the shop asked about the Force 7V and how much was a digital camera that could produce a picture like that.

Before I was ever reprimanded the store manager was somewhat more distracted by the sudden increase in digital camera sales, in fact the attention generated by a large poster of this legendary vehicle led to the sales of many digital cameras. Far more in fact than the posters of Falcons, Porsches and even Corvettes that oddly enough were tried in the ensuing months.

I discovered very quickly if you want to start a conversation just display a picture of a P76 or a Force 7V. A principle I use even in my work today as I travel around the country training people about the excellent Fujifilm Finepix digital cameras (which by the way is a prize in the raffle today: it really is an excellent camera so you should all buy a few more tickets). My job as I discovered is also a great way to educate people regarding the truth about the Leyland P76.

Obviously working in a photographic environment meant that I eventually got to master Photoshop the computer program that allows one to manipulate digital images. Having to use this product on a regular basis

for photo restorations etc. meant that I also became fairly adept at altering photographs yet making them look like they hadn't been altered.

One evening after the shop had closed I took a picture of my yellow Force 7 parked under my car port at home and turned it into "Spy Shot" of a pink Tour De Force stored in a factory. I even changed the rear panel design and badging to suit.

I was surprised how real some of these pictures looked and thought it might be fun to print a couple as photographs but as it was late and the photo lab had been powered down for the night I simply saved my work onto a CD intending to put the pictures through the lab the next day. I carefully marked the shiny round disk, "Leyland Force 7V & Tour De Force Pictures" and left it behind the counter ready for me to use the following morning.

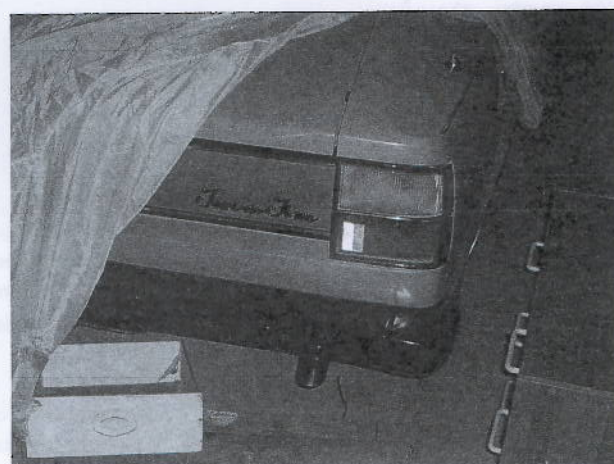
However the next day I was on late shift and by the time I'd clocked on, the CD was missing. I wasn't really that concerned as I still had both the original and modified pictures on the shop's computer system. I never found that CD but as business was good and I was kept busy, I never got around to printing the pictures at all, at least not until I received a phone call from Nick Kounelis, a P76 aficionado in Tasmania, about a month later.

He excitedly informed me that someone had discovered a couple of Tour De Forces and that the race was on to locate exactly where they were. He further told me that pictures of the cars were on a well-known P76 website. Naturally I quickly accessed the internet on one of the store computers and was more than just a little surprised to see my "fake" pictures there with the credit for them going to someone who definitely wasn't me!

Over the next few days I made quite a few phone calls but to my surprise any efforts to convince people that the pictures were not actually of real vehicles seemed only to result in me being accused of trying to put people off the scent so I could obtain the cars myself. Eventually it was accepted that the Tour De Force pictures were fakes but only after I had produced more photos depicting the coupes in brown, yellow, green and purple and sent them via email to various people involved in the hunt.

In reality a great thing that has resulted from my interest in P76's and that is the enormous group of Leyland-Friendly people around the country that I have the honor of calling friends.

I am also fortunate that my present job with Fujifilm takes me all over the country on a regular basis (believe me that's not as exotic as it sounds) however it has allowed me to stay in touch with my Leyland compatriots in a far better way than just



emailing them. I consider myself very lucky to be able to catch up with P76 people, not only in my home state, but also in Victoria, South Australia, Queensland, Tasmania and even Western Australia where it seems I have attended more general meetings and events of the WA P76 Owners Club than some of their local members!

In some respects I owe a lot to the P76. The first one I bought provided us with many years of cheap transport and adventures around this country that both my wife and I will certainly never forget. More recently, the sale of my beloved cars provided us with the financial freedom we required to escape some mounting monetary issues. There are very few cars that could be considered an investment - especially if one continues to drive them regularly. In spite of its critics the P76 is managing just that!

They say you only realize what you have until you no longer have it.

I learned this lesson well and truly over the course of 2007. I can honestly say that



even though I knew I had an attachment to these vehicles through the time spent in and under them (mainly under them I think) it was not until the 28<sup>th</sup> February at five minutes past twelve when they rolled away on the truck to their new owner that I realized just how strong that attachment really was. For me it was literally like cutting off an arm.

I content myself with the thought that one would give up an arm for the greater good of the body, however an arm is still a substantial price to pay. It is all a question of priorities I suppose. All the same I'd be the first to admit that I was totally unprepared for the ensuing sense of loss.

Also surprising to me was the reaction from my non-Leyland related friends, colleagues and customers around the country, the very people who would regularly rib me and taunt me about my, "P38's".

After 5 years of P76 pictures and stories that usually preceded or followed my digital camera training sessions, it was obvious that even the hardest Holden supporter, the strongest Ford fanatic, the most avid American, British or Jap car enthusiast actually seemed saddened by the news that my Leylands and I had parted company.

Of course the biggest question was and is always, "Why?"

Usually followed by, "How could you do it?"

As I said it was all a matter of priorities. And it is my hope that as those priorities have now been prioritized and sorted out, and even though I doubt I could ever achieve quite the same collection again, I still hope that there will be room again in my family for a Leyland P76 or even a Force 7 again. (OK, Carmel?)

Now I know you guys built more coupes than you let on, so if anyone has a spare Force 7 hidden away somewhere feel free to call me on my mobile number 0409 770 072.

In fact a short time ago while up in northern NSW, carrying out some digital camera training I happened across a Nutmeg Targa Florio tucked away in a

Lismore garage and hopefully that might just be the basis of a future story.

Until then I have plenty of photographs, many, many, memorable memories and more importantly many good friends, all around this great nation of ours to keep me company. And if I've managed enlighten even one person about the P76 maybe, just maybe, I've contributed something to bringing a little more truth into this world of ours.

And don't we need that, especially with an election just around the corner.

So again I pay homage to those of you who were the creators of a car, that while its

life was cut short, can never really die. I think we can all be content that the P76 in all its

variant forms, ably assisted by a dedicated band of enthusiasts out there, will long outlive its detractors.

Thank you all for giving people like me something to do with our spare time and our weekends, and weeknights, and days in lieu, and holidays, and... I really want to get that Targa so before I give my wife anything further to think about I might just end it here.

I really hope to see you all same time next year.

## Epilogue

On 8<sup>th</sup> October I did in fact purchase that Nutmeg P76 Targa Florio I mentioned in the talk. It has quite a few mechanical problems motor, gearbox, brakes, steering and more but the body is basically sound and I hope to



have it on the road before Xmas (this year). Just north of Kempsey with the "new" toy. (Warrewyk Williams)

## ROB HARRISON'S MOTOR RACING UPDATE

Since the last Newsletter there were two very significant historic race meetings in New South Wales. The most recent was the fantastic Festival of Sporting Cars, Easter Bathurst.

This was the first time for as long as I can remember that a meeting was held at Mount Panorama for club cars (i.e. cars without sponsorship). This meeting was superbly organized by Charles Jardine and for motoring enthusiasts, it was Heaven.

Mark it on your calendar for next year. The MG car club is still very much involved with the FOOSC and it was evident with the number of MG's competing and my admiration for the MGB as the most robust of sports cars was cemented on this very challenging race track.

On November 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> last year the HSRCA celebrated the MGT series of sports cars and special events were organized at this Wakefield meeting.

The 'T' series of MG's were prolific in motor racing here in Australia and many of our great drivers started racing with these square rigger models. In fact as late as 1957, Jim Johnson in an MGTC special won the Bathurst 100.

In my very early years I used to draw cars and send my drawings to different car manufacturers around the world hoping they would send me sales brochures back. In most cases they did and I started a collection of these brochures which I still have today. I remember when I started at Zetland I was talking to Bill Jeffers about my collection and he said he had something special to show me. From his desk drawer he pulled out a brochure on a MGTA in perfect condition. It was a beautiful brochure and I wonder where it is today. The interesting thing about all this is that I still have a letter addressed to me from P and R Williams signed by Bill Jeffers attached to which was a nice brochure of an MGA. Bill was a great character and worked for P and R's in the 1950's when I wrote to them. They were also Aston Martin dealers and I still have a nice DB2 brochure which Bill sent to me and in his letter he claimed that when I left school I should endeavor to become a commercial artist. The sad thing was that no Universities here catered for such a profession, so I studied engineering instead. When the computer and photocopiers became popular, I lost my interest in drawing intricate cutaways which the computer could reproduce perfectly. Fortunate this was, I suppose, as the commercial artist virtually died out. These commercial artists were put to work doing the artwork for these old brochures which included magnificent paintings of the cars and the showroom posters were copies of these superb paintings rather than photographs. My favourite artist was Frank

Wootton who did most of his works in water color however the RAF Club in Piccadilly has magnificent oil paintings of fighter aircraft done by this very underestimated artist.

## BORG WARNER AUTOMATIC OVERDRIVE DISKS

A friend of ours recently gave us a pair of 12" 33 RPM records that deal with the servicing and overhaul of Borg Warner Automatic Overdrives.

If anyone is interested in having these, please give me a call on 9387 5331.

(Roy South)



John Baggott in the U.K. has produced some very accurate books on BMC cars in competition and he is researching MGB's in competition for a new book which he is writing.

He contacted me recently after information on Ken Tubman who was well known among our group for his exploits in Austin 1800s in the London to Sydney rally.

Apparently, while at Abingdon he ordered a works prepared red and white MGB with hard top in which he and co-driver George Stefanoff competed in a number of European rallies. The MGB was sold and the owner put it in a garage in the U.K. in 1974 and it has just been re-discovered.

John asked me if I could track down Ken Tubman, so he could get a run down on the events in which the car competed and also the results.

According to John Baggott it is a real Time Warp with a 1960's packet of matches in the glove box and various rally notes in the boot.

Ken Tubman used to have a pharmacy in Maitland but is no longer alive and as a result we have been trying to track down George Stefanoff and with the help of Mini Club member Mick O'Brien we have had success. George Stefanoff lives in Canberra and he too is a Pharmacist.

The day before I contacted him, he put together a number of photos and slides of the MGB and sent them to Motor Sport magazine in England but fortunately he kept copies of all the Rally results of their exploits in Europe.

These will be the subject of a later update for the Newsletter.

(Robert Harrison)

## HISTORIC AUSTIN A95 FOUND IN VIETNAM

Late last year, Sue and Ross Bell went to Vietnam. There they discovered an Austin A95 with quite a history. The car was found at the Thien Mu Pagoda in Hue in central Vietnam.

The car had transported the monk Thich Quang Duc to the site of his self immolation. He travelled to Saigon and publically burned himself to protest the policies of President Ngo Dinh Diem.

A famous photograph of his act was printed on the front pages of newspapers around the world. His death soon inspired a number of other self immolations.

(Sue and Ross Bell)



## A relic

In this car The Most Venerable Thich Quang Duc went from An Quang Pagoda to the intersection of Phan dinh Phung street and Le van Duyệt street on June 11, 1963 in Saigon.

As soon as he got out of the car, The Most Venerable sat down in the lotus position and burnt himself to death to protest against the Ngo dinh Diem regime's policies of discriminating against Buddhists and violating religious freedom.

## BMC - LEYLAND AUSTRALIA HERITAGE GROUP

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.

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

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