



# BMC-Leyland Australia Heritage Group Inc.

www.bmclaheritage.org.au

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.

July 2018

## NEWSLETTER Issue 69

### 20 Years of Heritage

#### NEWSLETTER

May 1999

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

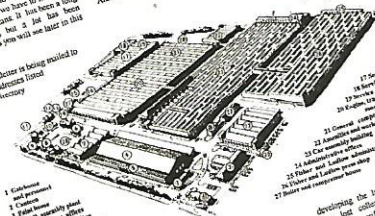
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#### About this newsletter

As a gathering of some 30 former employees in October last year, the group decided to publish this newsletter to keep former employees in touch.

Decisions made at the gathering have resulted in the production of this newsletter and a directory of members. The first newsletter is no longer being published but it has been a long time coming. It has been a long time coming but it has been a long time coming.

This newsletter is being mailed to all the addresses listed in the directory.



- 1 Entrance and parking
- 2 Main building
- 3 C.A. building
- 4 Administration building
- 5 Main building
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- 27 Main building

#### Keeping us in touch

On the first Friday in December each year since the start of the year 1974, a reunion has been held at the factory site. This year's reunion was held at the factory site. This year's reunion was held at the factory site.

There have been other gatherings of old Plant staff in the past. These have been other gatherings of old Plant staff in the past.

In October 1978, a walk around of the old Plant followed by a reunion luncheon was arranged by a group of old Plant staff. This was a walk around of the old Plant followed by a reunion luncheon.



### Crossroads Alice



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## Heritage Group Merchandise

### DVDs

#### The Car Makers

#### Horses to Horsepower

#### Austin Freeway Around Australia & 9 ½ Days

Member Price all \$20 each.

### CD

**Heritage Group CD 3<sup>rd</sup> Imprint** \$20  
Photos, powerpoint presentations, reports and stories.

### Books

**Building Cars in Australia** \$40

**P76- The Inside Story (2<sup>nd</sup> Edit.)** \$20

**BMC-Leyland Australia Vehicle Reference 1950-1982**

List Price \$85, Members @ \$45 limit of 1 per member

**Secrets of Style** \$30

For sales and details of postage contact Roger Foy on  
02 9449 1524 or email [rogerfoy1@bigpond.com](mailto:rogerfoy1@bigpond.com)

Or visit [www.bmclaheritage.org.au](http://www.bmclaheritage.org.au)

## Editors Note

Welcome to No 69, a very full edition of our newsletter. Celebrating 20 years is a major achievement in itself and a great excuse to review past successes. Our 2<sup>nd</sup> film afternoon was a great success and it was great that Castrol was so keen to be involved. Below is a letter from Barry Anderson who is hanging up his hat-actually, as could be expected from Barry, he is just putting it on another stand.

Due to space restrictions Alan Hancock's story will continue in our next edition.

I would like to draw your attention to page 5- a call to action!

## From Barry Anderson

Dear members of BMCLAHG

After 20 years on the committee in various positions, I will not be standing for Vice President or any other committee position at the August 16 AGM. I have found a new interest on the International Committee of Northbridge Rotary - water projects in Timor Leste. I have visited there twice in the last couple of years and late last year we finalised a water supply project in the village of Lete-Foho. I am now setting up a second water project - this in the village of Ermera - and will be going there again in the first week of October to finalise details. I will also be raising the funds - around US\$36,000 (AU\$48,000) - and need now to have this as my major focus.

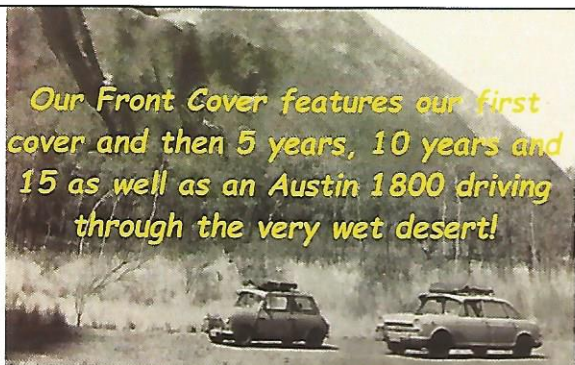
I will, however, be at the 20th reunion luncheon on October 28 which should be a great occasion.

We have achieved much since Roy South brought us together in 1998 for that last nostalgic walk around the Victoria Park site and Greg is covering this in the latest newsletter. I hope that some "new blood" will come forward on the committee - both ex employees who can record their stories at VP and others with an interest in the companies' history who can bring a new perspective.

My very best wishes to you all.

Barry Anderson

Our Front Cover features our first cover and then 5 years, 10 years and 15 as well as an Austin 1800 driving through the very wet desert!





## 20 Years of Heritage

"Smashed by steel fists, ripped asunder by armoured claws, the walls have come crashing down, reduced to desolate rubble. This place once hummed with life and hope, with ambition and commitment, with honest sweat and toil."

So said Wheels magazine (September 1999) in their Retro column. The Zetland plant was now levelled, except for the Tote building, and the one page article looked back at this British outpost of car making. A year earlier, on October 30<sup>th</sup> 1998, 83 former employees met for a nostalgic walk around the Victoria Park site and then lunch. This was just before the mechanical juggernauts moved in to start the destruction. At that lunch the BMC-Leyland Australia Heritage Group was formed.

From donations made at that meeting the first edition of the newsletter was produced in May 1999. With a cover featuring an architect's perspective of the plant, the newsletter detailed the aims of the group and included details of a directory of ex-employees. The table below reproduces the group's agenda.

Future activities were discussed with the Doncaster Hotel Reunion to remain unchanged, the possibility of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the plants closing (Dec 1999) and the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the plants opening (March 2000) to be celebrated together in an event during 1999. Also on the agenda was exploring the possibility of securing sponsorship or a grant to publish a book encapsulating the plant's history. A list of state and regional contacts was also included with 8 listed for Sydney, 1 for NSW North Coast, 1 each for Victoria, South Australia, Queensland and 2 for Western Australia.

That's where it all started and here, 20 years later, are some of the achievements of that humble beginning.

- September 1999 an application was lodged to The Institution of Engineers Australia for the Zetland site to receive a Historic Engineering Marker (HEM). The November 1999 newsletter announced that the application was successful.
- The Group was incorporated on November 5<sup>th</sup>, 1999 with the 1<sup>st</sup> committee meeting on December 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- Triple celebration in 2000 for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the plant, 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the closing and the unveiling of the HEM bronze plaque. This plaque found its final home at Victoria Park on December 9, 2003.
- A grant was received from the Royal Australian Historical Society to record an oral history of employees of the plant.
- Successfully influencing the naming of new streets and parks at the Zetland site, which Landcom later recognized at a cocktail party (8/12/2005). The event recognized all the partners in the project and was held at the Zetland site.
- 'Victoria Park Plant Heritage' CD released



- A 'Heritage Group' Badge' was announced in the July 2004 newsletter and windscreen stickers became available in 2008.

IDENTITY	OUR MISSION	OUR OBJECTIVES
BMC-Leyland Australia Heritage Group	<i>"to preserve the heritage of BMC-Leyland Australia and its associated companies as a significant part of Australia's automotive manufacturing history"</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Keeping in touch</li> <li>2. Archives, information, memorabilia</li> <li>3. Events and Activities</li> </ol>
Not a club or formal association		



- In April 2006 the Heritage Group assisted the City of Sydney Council with their Heritage Festival. The Council also expressed interest in accepting and preserving memorabilia as well as being interested in supporting the planned book on the plant and its employees.
- The BMC Car Club Trophy, first awarded as an encouragement by Tom Poole in 1959, was donated to the Association of British Car Clubs to be used as a perpetual award for Best Club display each year.
- The April 2013 newsletter received an issue number (49), better quality paper and full colour resulting in an improved quality to the included photos.
- The archive project has seen over 726 items scanned and collated and deposited with more to come.
- A new Web site appeared in 2014 (*John Lindsay managed an earlier version*)
- Reproduction of original factory newsletters as supplements to the Group's newsletter as well as reproducing the booklet 'BMC in Australia'
- Supply and sales of BMC/Leyland films including 'Horses to Horsepower' and 'The Car Makers'. Showing these movies has also added to the events calendar.



Key ring celebrating 100 years of Austin

Then there are the books. In terms of time taken, the number of members involved, the planning and collating for the project 'Building Cars In Australia' stands out as a major success. Added to that publication, and just as important, is 'P76.The Inside Story', 'BMC-Leyland Australia Vehicle Reference Book' and 'Secrets of Style'.

However, of equal importance has been the ability of ex-employees to keep in touch at reunions, events and via the newsletter. Members continue to supply their stories for inclusion in the newsletters making them a valuable resource as well.

Sharing this wealth of knowledge with others who are interested in the products and how they were designed and manufactured has also ensured that the plant, its employees and their achievements will not be forgotten. Surely that is fulfilling the mission "to preserve the heritage of BMC-Leyland Australia".

Back in 1999 'Wheels' ended their article with mention of Roy South and the Heritage Group who "aims to keep the spark alive, the history straight and the wheels turning". When measured against this and the set aims of the group Barry Anderson can have the last word quoted from the July 2012 newsletter: "We have reason to be pleased with our achievements".



Sold on eBay as we went to press: \$14,250 unregistered Needs some work but a genuine Targa Florio.





# BMC-Leyland Australia Heritage Group Inc.

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## An Open Letter from the President to Heritage Group Members and Friends

The Group is 20 years old this year and our considerable achievements are summarised in this newsletter. These will be celebrated at our "best ever" reunion lunch on Sunday 28 October. I hope you will all be there!

But our member numbers are thinning - some of those who have recently died are mentioned on page 6 and two of our committee members are also standing down from the committee.

A letter from Barry Anderson, for many years our President, is in this newsletter and Tony Cripps, whose efforts over recent years have seen the publication of three of our books, the establishment of our website and numerous articles in the newsletter, has advised that will not stand again for his ex-officio position.

The Group needs more members to join the committee if the Group is to continue to function. We have nearly \$50,000 in the bank and these funds must be used to further the Group's charter or they will be forfeited if the Group is wound up. Committee members' roles are not arduous - 4 meetings a year and some thought on what the Group should be doing. I therefore urge you all to consider nominating for committee.

Another way you can help the Group to continue is by writing for the newsletter. The newsletter is critical to the Group's continued existence because, as Roy South used to say, "it is the only tangible thing the members get for their subscriptions". Your own stories - either as an employee or from your own experience in or research of some other aspect of the companies' impact on the country - are, then, invaluable.

Other ways of contributing are; a) proposing new ways for the Group to "preserve the heritage" of the companies; or b) just volunteering to help in some way.

The AGM is on Thursday 16 August at 10:00 am at the Ryde Eastwood Leagues Club. **Please attend** and help keep the Group alive.

Best wishes,

Greg Kean, President

### Look what they do to our Products



A chap in the UK is racing an Australian Austin Lancer II in classic type events.

Prepared as a replica of one of the Phillip Island cars where the BMC fielded a team of Lancer IIs and Major IIs. Pics were taken by Alan Toft who reported that the engine was out to 1850 cc.

The Austin Club first heard of this car when they had an enquiry for Front Shock Absorbers which are unique to DO1115/YDO1.



Car 39-Class C- was the Foley/Edney Lancer in the 1960 Armstrong 500



## Vale

Ex-employee Kevin Regan passed away towards the end of last year. Kevin joined BMC in 1953. His (then) future wife Josephine was also a BMC employee. Rod Downs, Allan Kemp and Duncan Todd passed away recently. All had long careers at BMC/Leyland and were members of the Heritage Group.

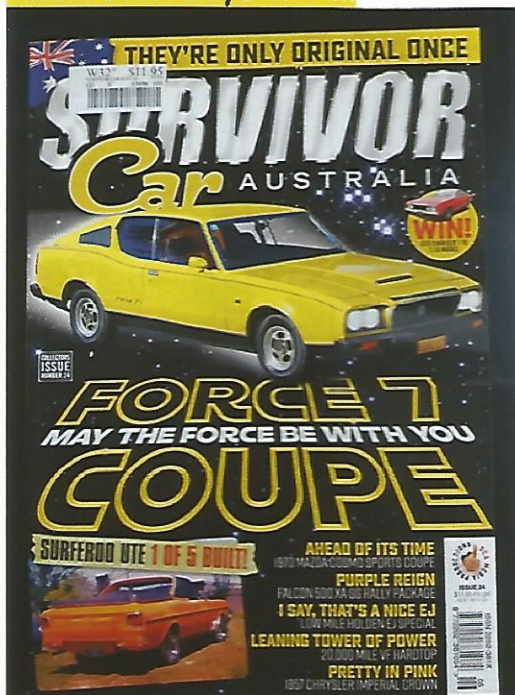
Terry Ohlsson who produced 'The Car Makers' for Leyland Australia has also passed away. Terry graciously came to our first film afternoon and entertained us with his 'behind the scenes' stories.

The ex Channel 9 sports commentator Daryl Eastlake has also passed away. Daryl raced a P76 sponsored by Leyland Dealer Southport Motors.



Daryl at the wheel of his P76

## The Cover Says it All!



The Force 7 continues to be news worthy and the current edition of Survivor Car Australia has an excellent 13 page story. The story of the Force 7 and all the survivors is covered. Featuring Dave Nelson's car a two page lift out poster of the Force 7 is also in the magazine.

## Crossroads Alice

SMH 1 Jan, 1967

## This was the feat of 1966

MOST outstanding motoring feat of 1966 was performed by a quartet in two B.M.C. cars—an Austin 1800 and a Morris Mini De Luxe.

**ROAD AND TRACK**  
By CLYDE HODGINS

It was in 1965 that Evan Green found himself in Max Robert's office. Max Roberts was Castrol's assistant General Manager and he had a question for Evan which had come from Castrol's London office. Could two cars travel between 10,000 and 15,000 miles up and down the Birdsville track?

Behind the question was the need to 'heat' test a new Castrol oil and between them they decided that it was not really possible. However, on studying a map of Australia Evan suggested that for that mileage two cars could visit all the mainland states. Castrol wanted extreme conditions, lots of sand, heat and dust. So a plan was hatched, the backdrop: Australian desert in Summer, two cars: an Austin 1800 and a Morris Mini Deluxe courtesy of BMC; a crew of 4: Evan, renowned driver 'Gelignite' Jack Murray, photographer Scott Polkinghorne and BMC engineer Alan Kemp. Crossroads Alice was born.

## IT TOOK AUSTRALIA'S TOUGHEST DRIVERS TO GET THE CARS THROUGH



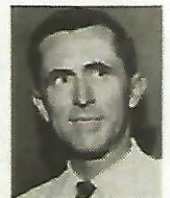
Jack Murray



Evan Green



Scott Polkinghorne



Alan Kemp

Only men with experience of the Australian desert could possibly have undertaken this test. It was their skill and determination that forced the cars through conditions that would have strained even a tracked vehicle to the limit.

Fast forward to 2018, on a Saturday afternoon in June, 40 ex BMC/Leyland employees and enthusiasts gathered to revisit this feat of man and machine. Castrol had been contacted and was only too willing to be a part of the afternoon with John Wilmington attending as their representative.





Castrol also supplied caps and a stubby holder for each attendee.

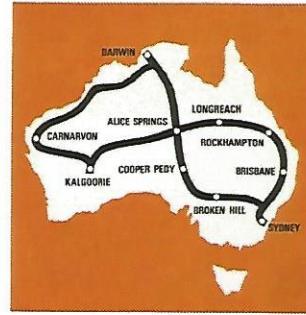
Some had seen the video record of the trip before and some had not. All were amazed at what was asked of the cars, the oil and the drivers. Seeing snow and ice being removed from the sump of a Mini and then days later it is in the heat of the desert, then sliding in desert mud, crossing rivers and being manhandled off the side of the road was truly inspirational. Scenes of the team driving past Uluru (then only referred to as Ayer's Rock) while water from storms cascades over what should be desert.



Crossroads Alice is a glimpse of the past and how things were done which represents an important piece of motoring history. Like many other stories, this needs to be preserved for future generations.

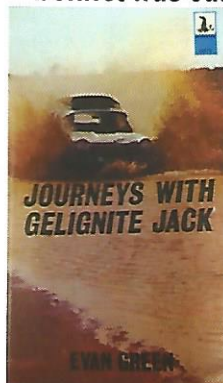


The oil was launched in July 1966 in a venue in Chatswood where 'Crossroads Alice' was screened. Evan Green and Jack Murray attended as did Roger Foy. Each attendee was given a tin of the new oil and here is Roger with his tin!



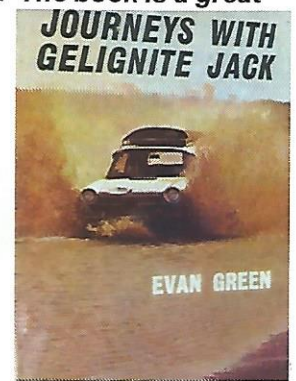
The course the crew and the car

Tony Burnett, Castrol's Historian, supplied us with some additional information and advertising. He was also able to tell me that Castrol XL features an 'oil-soluble long chain tertiary alkyl primary amine tungstate', hence 'Liquid Tungsten'. He also pointed out that on our advertising for our event the oil was listed as GTX. GTX wasn't released until 1968 in the UK and 1970 in Aus. I got the information straight off the DVD jacket! Evan Green also recorded the experience in a book, *Journeys with Galignite Jack*. Below are the covers from the hardback (right) and the paperback (left). Note that the hardback cover has the picture printed back to front making it a left hand drive 1800! Tony also informed me the dent you can see on the bonnet was caused by a big roo. The book is a great



read and records a lot more of the difficulties encountered.

It was also released as 'Hit the Road Jack'



'the 1800 was immobilized ....one front wheel was firmly on the road, another was embedded in the soft bank, and both rear wheels were high in the air. Jack was wearing a smile of triumph..."I found the road" he announced'

The Austin 1800, picked randomly from the production line, was filled with the new oil and then driven to Brisbane and back to run it in. The engine was then stripped and meticulously measured, details recorded, and plastic replicas made of two cylinders.

The drivers were tasked with keeping the vehicles at the highest possible cruising speed. Oil samples were taken along the way and a detailed log kept.

At the end of the trip, with 13,447 miles on the clock, the engine was stripped down and pre and post measurements compared. There was measurably less engine wear than expected!





# BMC-Leyland Australia Heritage Group Inc.

2018 CALENDAR



<b>AUGUST</b>			
Sunday 12 <sup>th</sup>	Shannon's Sydney Classic (CMC)	Sydney Motorsport Park Eastern Creek	9am - 4pm
Thursday 16 <sup>th</sup>	Heritage Group Annual General Meeting	Ryde Eastwood Leagues Club	10.00am
<b>SEPTEMBER</b>			
Thursday 13 <sup>th</sup>	Heritage Group Committee Meeting	Ryde Eastwood Leagues Club	10.00am
Sunday 23 <sup>rd</sup>	All British Day	The Kings School North Parramatta	
<b>OCTOBER</b>			
Sunday 28 <sup>th</sup>	Heritage Group Reunion	Ryde Eastwood Leagues Club	10.30.am
30 <sup>th</sup>	Issue Newsletter #70		
<b>NOVEMBER</b>			
TBA	Project Team Meeting		
<b>DECEMBER</b>			
Friday 7 <sup>th</sup>	Annual Reunion	Doncaster Hotel Kensington	
15 <sup>th</sup>	Issue Newsletter #71		

## Our Member Car Clubs

CAR CLUB MEETING DATES & VENUES:			
1st Monday	Morris Minor Car Club NSW	Arena Club, Rookwood Rd, Yagoona	7.45pm
1st Friday	Morris Register NSW	Vikings Club, Dundas Valley	7.30pm
1 <sup>st</sup> Friday	Mini Car Club NSW	Veteran Car Club Hall, 134 Queens Rd, Five Dock	7.30pm
1 <sup>st</sup> Tuesday	Leyland P76 Owners Club NSW	Toongabbie Sports & Bowling Club, Toongabbie	7.30pm
2nd Tuesday	Nepean District Morris Minor Club	Werrington Community Cottage	7.30pm
2nd Tuesday	Sprite Car Club of Australia	Parramatta RSL Club	7.30pm
3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday	ACT Mini Car Club Meeting	Deakin Sports & Social	7.30pm
3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday	Leyland P76 Classic Car Club	Sans Souci Literary Institute	8.00pm
4th Tuesday	Austin A40 Car Club NSW	Bankstown Sports Club	8.00pm
3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday	Wolseley Car Club NSW	St Marks Hall, 17 Mary St, Granville	8.00pm
4th Friday	Austin Motor Vehicle Club NSW	Cumberland High School	7.30pm

Three ways to get involved:

1 Come to the AGM

2 Send in your story

3 Book your tickets for the Reunion Lunch

**20th ANNIVERSARY HERITAGE GROUP REUNION**

[www.bmclaheritage.org.au](http://www.bmclaheritage.org.au)

