



BMC-Leyland Australia Heritage Group Inc.

February 2023

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.

NEWSLETTER ISSUE 80



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Austin Freeway/ Wolseley 24/80
Vale Paddy Hopkirk
British Trans Americas Expedition



Heritage Group Office Bearers 2023

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Committee Members
Will Hagon
John Ross Edwards

Ex-Officio Members
Motor Sport Historian
Rob Harrison: toni.h7@bigpond.com

From the President

The Reunion Lunch was back to a pre Covid style event and was another great day. In 2022, we also had our AGM on the same day as the Reunion which we will do again this year. The date for those events is Sunday November 19th. I'd like to thank those members who filled a position last year and those who have stood for a position for 2023.

Our WEB site is about to have a complete makeover. It was meant to be live on December 1 but technical issues have slowed it down. With this in mind the upgrade will be staged, with the new look on line from March 1st. If you have any relevant photos, stories or information please feel free to call or email anyone on the committee. We are always looking for information that can help fill out the history of the factory, it's workers and it's products.

This year our calendar is back to pre covid with the first major event being our movie afternoon. We are very fortunate to have Brian Foley as a guest speaker and he will have lots of photos and race footage to show. The cost to cover afternoon tea is \$20. This should be a great event. Please let us know now that you are coming:

Two ways to pay: \$20 per head

Post cheque to 12 Acacia Dr, Glenhaven NSW 2156

OR By EFT to St George Bank BSB 112-879 A/c 131 434 941 BMC Leyland Aust Heritage Group with your Name or Member No as a Reference.

Then email Kay with names for catering numbers.

Film Afternoon

This year it will be a two way chat with Will Hagon and Brian Foley featuring pictures, and race footage.

Brian sold BMC cars, raced them and had his own BMC dealership

Brian contested the Australian Touring Car in 1960, 1964, 1965, 1967, 1969, 1970 and 1971.

His best year was 1967 driving a Morris Cooper S

In 1965, with Peter Manton, he finished 3rd outright in the Armstrong 500 in a Cooper S

Saturday 1PM

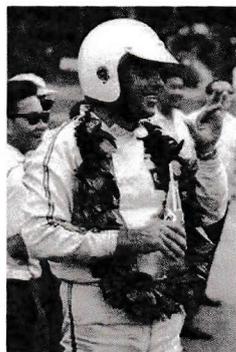
May 13th 2023

Vikings Sports Club

35 Quarry Road

Dundas Valley

\$20



Roger at our committee meeting on his 90th birthday in 2020

In the 2023 Honours list Roger Foy was awarded an OAM for service to Automotive History. As well as many Club rolls Roger has served in the following roles:

Former Journalist

Various roles in vehicle development and engineering BMC/Leyland

President Council of Motor Clubs 1974-1975

President Veteran Car Club of Australia (NSW) c1970s

Volunteer, Friends of Fagan Park, c1995

BMC Leyland Heritage Group Committee Member since 1998

On the Cover

Ex BMC/Leyland employees at the 2022 Reunion Lunch.

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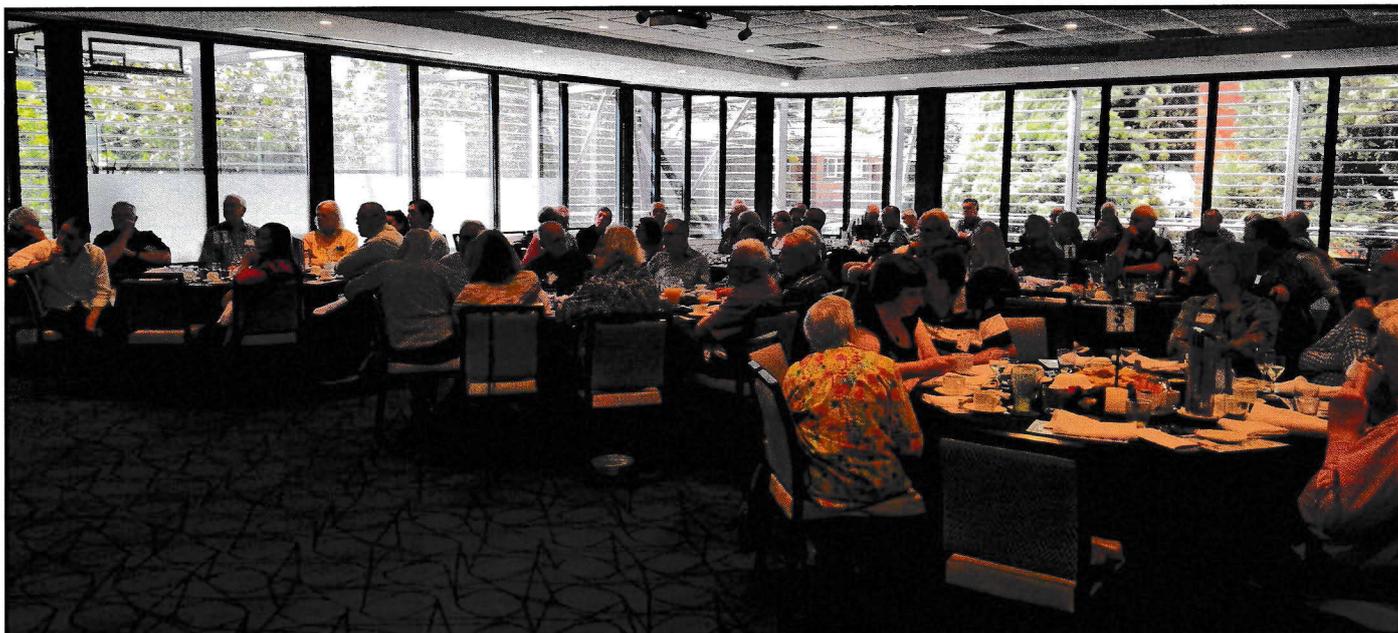
Please note that the Heritage Group has a new mailing address:

12 Acacia Drive Glenhaven, NSW 2156

With covid restrictions easing 2022's Reunion was almost back to a 'normal' event.

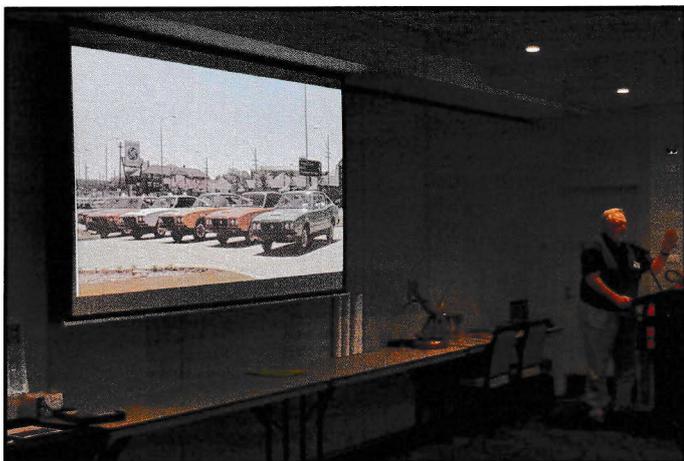
THE 2022 REUNION

RYDE EASTWOOD LEAGUES CLUB



With a return to the Rydale Room at the Leagues Club 70 people attended the 2022 Reunion including 12 from out of town. Roger Foy arranged the car display which was under cover instead of on the top level due to the heat on the day.

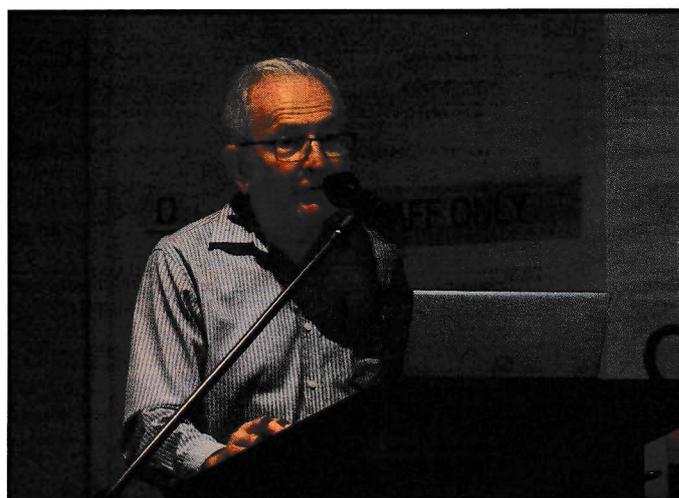
Will Hagon performed as Master of Ceremonies making sure there was plenty of time to talk while still moving through the program.



Ray Habgood spoke about some of his time at the Company with a presentation of Land Rover development. There was some footage shown from an ABC story about migrant workers, which was shot in the Zetland factory around 1972, featuring various stages of manufacturing Kimberleys, Tasmans and Marinas. Part of this footage was recently used on ABC's landline.

The 'Rara Avis Award' was again awarded to the car considered by the judges to be the rarest on show. Rara

Avis (rare bird- or person/thing according to Merriam-Webster Unabridged) is a bird made from suspension parts made by the apprentices and presented to the late John Nicol when he left BMC/Leyland in 1971. He was then a Senior Purchasing Engineer.



The 'Bird' in all its glory

THE 2022 REUNION

RYDE EASTWOOD LEAGUES CLUB

Also at the event were Tom Wheelwright and Brain Caldersmith representing the Australian Motor Heritage Foundation. The Foundation, based at Sydney Motorsport Park, aims to protect the heritage of the Australian motor industry by collecting and cataloguing books, brochures, race programs, magazines, reviews, photographs, films and any other material relating to the industry.

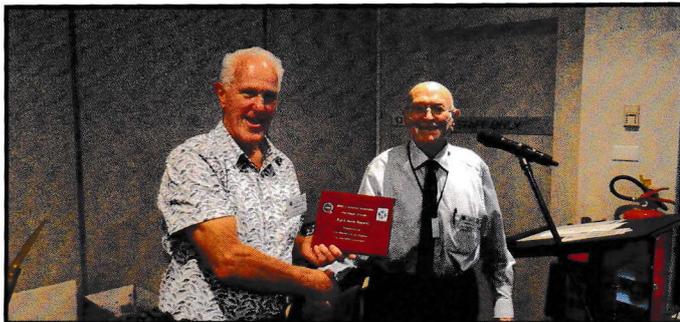
A big thank you once again to Kay De Luca for guiding the function through planning to implementation.



Tom Wheelwright from Australian Motor Heritage Foundation addresses the luncheon



Press photos

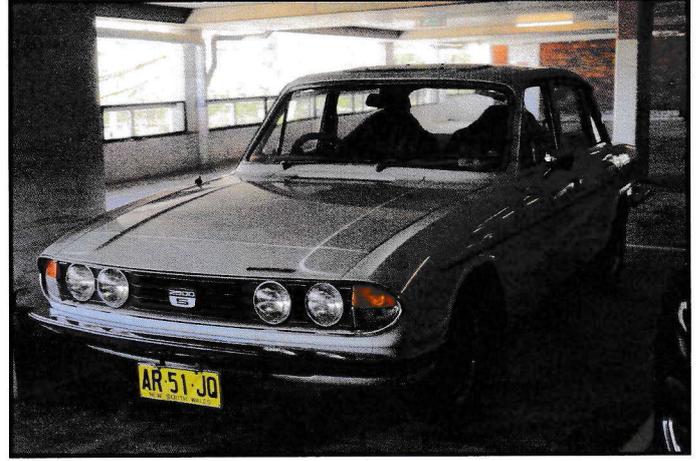
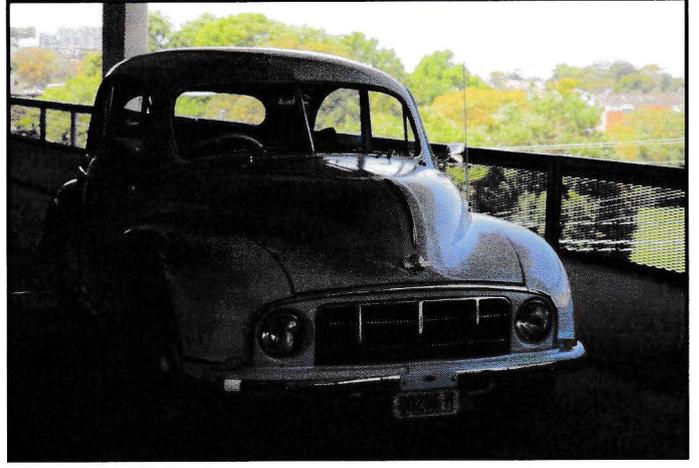


Roger Foy presents the Rara Avis award to Peter Asquith for his Austin A40



The Car Display





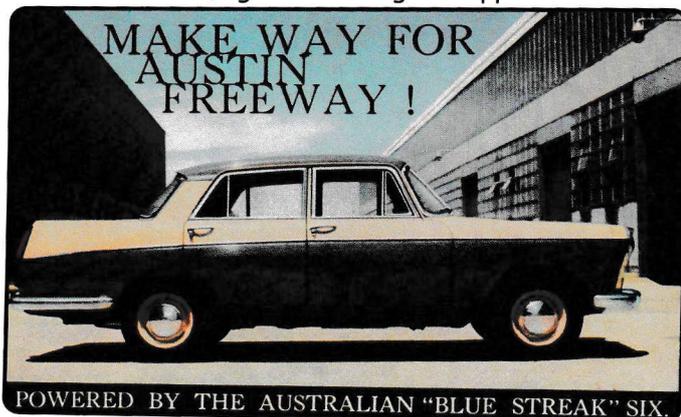
Austin Freeway & Wolseley 24/80

Launched to the press on March 18, 19 & 20, in 1962 and then to Dealers on March 28th, with these events at Sydney's Trocadero. The message was clear -

'Make way for the Freeway'

Back in 1959 the almost identical Austin A60, Morris Oxford Series V and the Wolseley 15/60 (the ADO9 Farina Range) were released locally. This range was near identical to the UK range but with the big difference of the locally developed 1622cc B Series engine in place of the UK's 1489cc. So while rugged and well made, the new range couldn't break the local perception that a family car required a 6 cylinder engine as was found in the very popular Holden. Added to this, Ford was gearing up to put the Falcon into local production. By 1962 dealers were going to be BMC so separate Austin and Morris models of the same car were no longer required. It was decided that small cars would be Morris and larger cars would be Austin with Wolseley covering the top end of the market.

So the 1622cc 4 cylinder became the 2433cc 'Blue Streak' six cylinder. Other changes included a new grille, rear fins (from the UK MG/Riley versions), relocation of the radiator and a modified bonnet. The wheelbase grew by 1" there were modifications to the suspension to improve the ride and deal with the extra weight of the bigger engine. The Morris Oxford interior was used with a Freeway badge replacing the clock. Bench seats were used, again matching the opposition.



The Austin was available as a sedan and a wagon with two tone paint finish while the Wolseley was sedan only in a single colour. Both cars were manual as standard with a Borg Warner 35, 3 speed an option. The auto option was popular with Wolseley buyers.

The public release was on May 21st and hopes were high for the Freeway and Wolseley 24/80. The Austin was available as a sedan and a wagon with two tone paint finish while the Wolseley was sedan only in a single colour. An 8000mile round Australia trip was organised to prove the soundness of the new car. Many of those miles were on dirt roads but it was completed in 9 days and set a record.



However, with a body based on older models, the new BMC offerings were up against new models from Holden, Ford and Chrysler, also released in 1962, and although sales started in the right direction they then tapered off. It wasn't long before the Wolseley version outsold the Freeway and in October 1964 a MkII version (YDO3) of both models was launched. Power was increased to 84bhp, new colours introduced and a MkII badge added to the rear amongst other detail changes.

The MkII Freeway only lasted a few months but the Wolseley version was still popular and remained in production until the arrival of the Austin 1800 in October 1965.



The Austin "Freeway."

Know the Answers

It is important that you know the main specifications of the Austin "Freeway" and the "Blue Streak Six" engine. In this highly competitive automotive industry, all of us at BMC have a part to play in the selling of the Company's products.

ENGINE

Cylinders . . . six in line.
Bore and Stroke . . . 76.2 mm by 88.9 mm.
Cubic Capacity . . . 2433 cc.
Compression Ratio . . . 7.7 to 1.
Valves . . . pushrod overhead.
Carburettor . . . Zenith downdraught.
Power at r.p.m. . . . 80 (gross) at 4350 r.p.m.
Maximum Torque . . . 123 ft/lb. at 1650 r.p.m.

TRANSMISSION

Type . . . Three speed manual.
Ratios:
First . . . 12.08
Second . . . 6.32
Top . . . 3.91
Rear Axle . . . 3.91

SUSPENSION

Front . . . independent coils.
Rear . . . semi-elliptic.
Shockers . . . piston.

STEERING

Type . . . cam and peg.
Turns . . . lock to lock, 2.8.
Circle . . . 37 ft.

BRAKES

Type . . . drum.

WEIGHT

Dry . . . 23 cwt.

TOP SPEED

86 m.p.h.

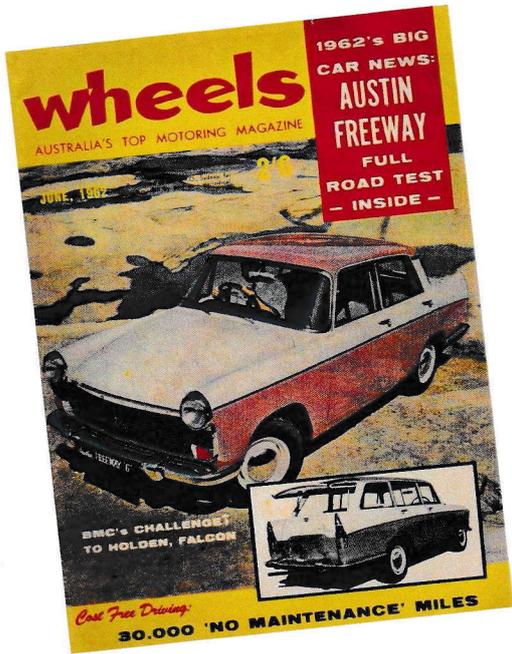
FUEL CONSUMPTION

29 m.p.g. approx.

This "Blast-Off" edition of the "B.M.C. Review" which was produced for the National Dealers Conference, has been specially reprinted as a Souvenir Edition for members of B.M.C. staff.

The Austin Freeway & Wolseley 24/80 both turned 60 in 2022. The first version was

Launch Price Comparison	
Austin Freeway Sedan	£1130 inc tax
Austin Freeway Wagon	£1225 inc tax
Wolseley 24/80 Sedan	£1225 inc tax
Holden Special Sedan	£1111 inc tax
Falcon Deluxe Sedan	£1149 inc tax



A message
to all
B.M.C. Staff



Today we launch on the Australian market our six-cylinder Austin Freeway and Wolseley 24/80.

This is a memorable and proud occasion for all of us at BMC (Australia) as we see come to fruition the greatest project in the Company's history in Australia.

The Austin Freeway and Wolseley 24/80, and the recently announced Morris Major Elite, are the result of a great deal of planning, experimentation and a lot of hard work by all within this company.

In these three new cars, plus the Morris 850, we now have a range of family cars unsurpassed by any manufacturer anywhere in the world.

In the past 12 months we have seen our share of the Australian car market grow steadily, and we anticipate that in the next few months this will increase even more dramatically.

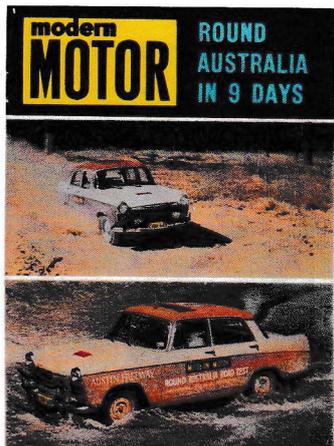
Each and every one of you at BMC (Australia) has played an essential and important part in the production of these new cars, and we can all feel justly proud of our achievements.

The Directors of the company congratulate and thank you for making the Morris Major Elite, Austin Freeway and Wolseley 24/80 possible.

Sincerely,

H. J. Graves
Managing Director.

An Austin Freeway & Wolseley 24/80 which were recently sold via Grays Online. The pics demonstrate the differences between the models, but note, however, incorrect paint schemes.

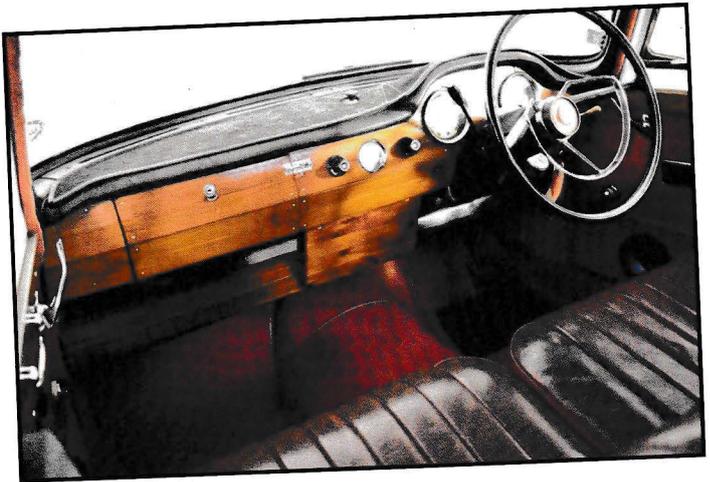
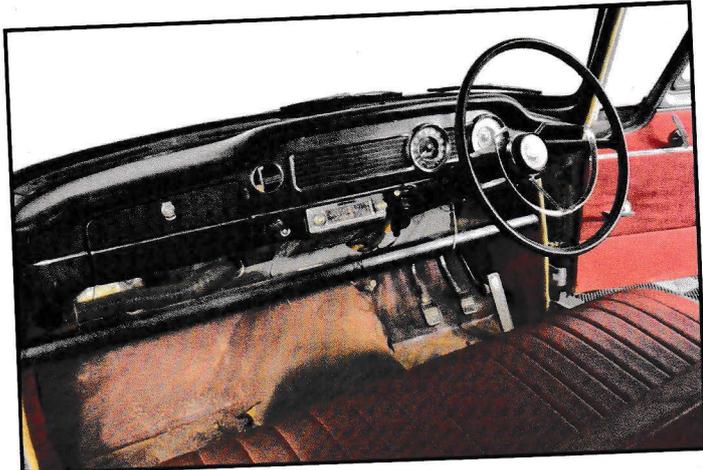


Morris for New Zealand

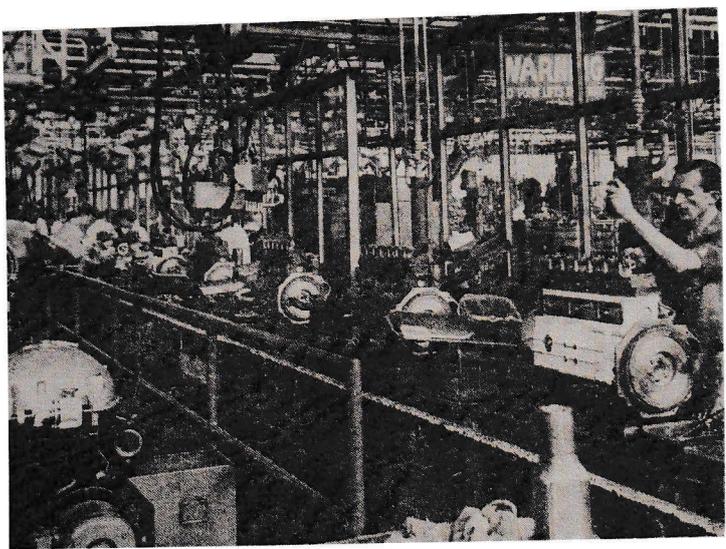
MORRIS GOES SIX (6) MAKEWAY FOR THE MORRIS FREEWAY * POWERED BY THE 'BLUE STREAK' SIX



Austin Freeway & Wolseley 24/80



Freeway dash on left and 24/80 dash on right. The Wolseley really was another level of luxury compared to the opposition.



Left & below Part of the 'Austin Freeway Supplement' Daily Telegraph, May 21st, 1962.

Roger Foy's pre-production Freeway still going strong.



"Three thousand four hundred workers use 22 million worth of machinery to turn out a car every four minutes at BMC's Zetland factory."



Began with a merger
 B.M.C.'s Australian story began in 1954, when the Austin and Nuffield interests amalgamated to become British Motor Corporation (Australia) Pty. Ltd.

The Austin company had two plants in Melbourne for assembling British-made cars, and in 1947 Lord Nuffield had bought Victoria Park, an old racecourse three miles from the centre of Sydney.

The new company chose Brisbane for its works because the vast majority of all Australian vehicles are sold in New South Wales.

It examined many sites and eventually decided on the Victoria Park in a huge development programme that already has spread to cover over 50 per cent of the area and eventually cover almost all the 57 acres.

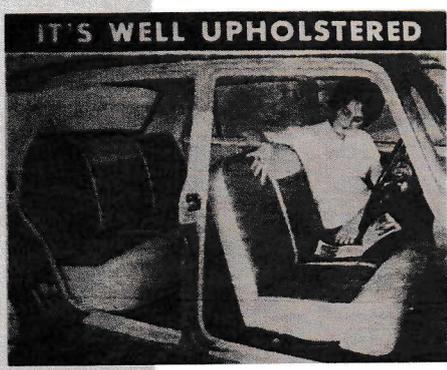
The old racecourse clubhouse and members' club became B.M.C.'s relations office and the club's existing part of the service department.

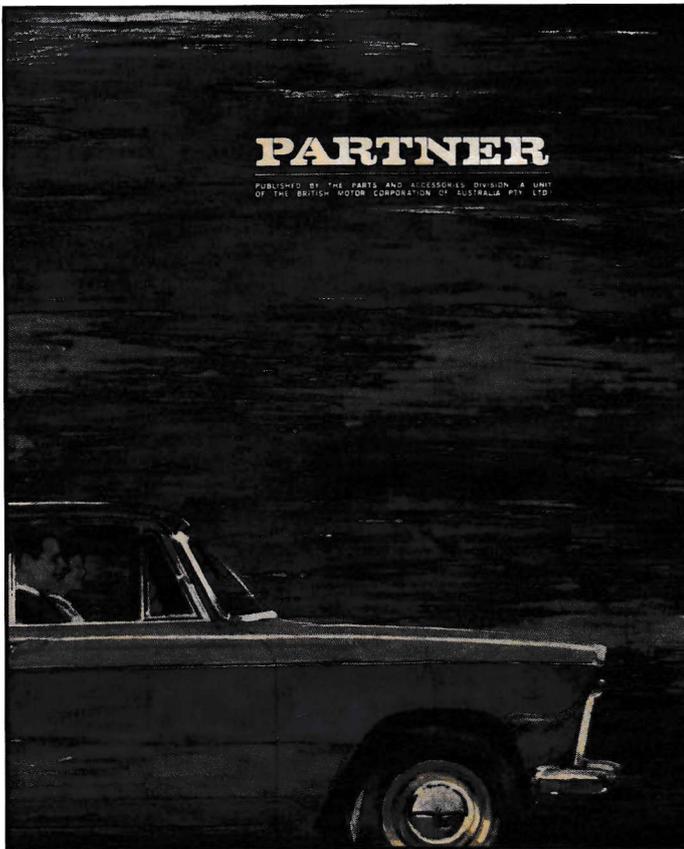
Until new factories at Victoria Park went into production, B.M.C. was equipped with a complete CKD—complete knock-down—vehicle imported from Britain in parts.

By 1961 about half the content of B.M.C.'s vehicles was being made in Australia.

Now the proportion in some vehicles is as high as 95 per cent.

And the other four per cent of the material is imported only because it is unprofitable or uneconomical to produce in Australia.





1962 BMC Range

Radiator located just behind the grill to allow for the 6 cylinder engine



In December 1971, aiming to complete the first unbroken land crossing of the Americas, two Range Rovers set out from Alaska. They completed the task in June 1972 just as first deliveries of Range Rover were arriving in Australia

On December 3rd 1971 two Range Rovers departed Anchorage, Alaska with the aim of driving top to bottom of the Americas.

Led by Major John Blashford-Snell and crewed by men from the 17th/21st Lancers the two vehicles completed the journey on June 10th 1972. The 30,000km trip included 3 months of travel through the Darien Gap which is a rain forest jungle with no roads or even continuous tracks. The jungle did, however, feature plenty of swamps, rivers, nasty mammals, reptiles and insects. The Range Rovers had been flown to Anchorage by the RAF, but from there they were driven, pushed, and floated along the route.

The expedition started by traveling down the Alaskan Highway averaging around 800 kilometres per day. Nights were spent in Travelodge motels along the way and this would later be seen as ultimate luxury. While travelling through Canada one of the vehicles hit a truck and was damaged. No one was hurt but the second vehicle driven by Gavin Thompson towed the stricken car to a British Leyland Dealer where a delay of about a week ensued waiting for spare parts to arrive.

Along the way there were press obligations and even product demonstrations. Having reached Panama City on January 12th the rest of the team arrived. 30 horses were added to carry all of the required equipment, food and test equipment. On January 19th, the expedition entered the Jungle.

The rain season had lasted 5 weeks longer than usual so they were greeted with thick, black mud. A reconnaissance crew went ahead to decide the best route, Although they were 'driving' through the jungle progress was slow with a guide walking in front of the vehicle the whole time. Each vehicle had a team of 8 from the Royal Engineers who also walked with the car digging, laying ladders, cutting down trees and winching where

June, 1972



TRANS AMERICAS EXPEDITION SUCCESS

Two specially equipped Range Rovers have succeeded in their bid to make the first ever unbroken land crossing of the American Continent from north to south, a total distance of about 18,000 miles.

Three months of the six-month long journey was spent in crossing the hitherto unpassable Darien Gap, a 250 mile stretch of dense jungle, swamps, rivers and mountain ridges separating North and South America.

The Gap represents the last obstacle to the completion of the Pan-American Highway which otherwise runs unbroken from Alaska to the tip of Chile.

The Range Rovers faced thick snow and ice and temperatures as low as minus 45 degrees, as well as tropical heat and jungle.

The Range Rovers were crewed by men from the 17th/21st Lancers. Rally driver Captain Gavin Thompson who, with Captain Jeremy Groves, led the vehicle party, said at journey's end: "It has been a fantastic experience.

necessary. Progress was very slow, sometimes less than a mile in a day. Water crossings created some of the bigger issues. On one occasion, they waded the first vehicle late in the day across a small river. After rain fell overnight the small river was now flowing much faster, so fast they couldn't use their rafts. Each vehicle carried two solid aluminium ramps capable of carrying the weight of the vehicles. They could be placed on top of Avon inflatable rafts which could then be powered by an outboard motor or the front mounted winch. The river was too fast for the rafts, so they had to drive across. However, when nearly successful, the river won and pushed the Range Rover off course.

Water quickly rose above the bonnet and the motor was shut down. With great difficulty, a hand winch was attached, and the vehicle was slowly pulled out of the water. By this time the water was lapping over the roof! A period of drying followed which included pumping water out of the engine and changing the oil. Then they were back on their way.

Contact with the outside world was kept by radio to two base stations outside the Darien Gap. Petrol, mail, and supply materials were dropped via parachutes from Beaver aircraft when required. The team would use flares or balloons to mark their position. Average speed for the jungle crossing was 4kms per day and fuel consumption was 1mpg (If I have it correct that's 282.48 l/100kms using imperial gallons.)

Something was bound to give during the expedition and it was a rear differential. Both vehicles were traveling overweight with much of the weight on the roof. Large swamp tyres were fitted from the the start loading the diffs and drive shafts even more. Mud clung to the tyres making them even heavier thus increasing the strain. The inevitable happened. With one vehicle totally stranded, the 2nd vehicle was used to pull the first one and now they were both broken.

Gavin Thompson (one of the drivers) was flown out so he could contact Geoff Miller, Land Rover's transmission expert. Having explained what had happened a Range Rover was loaded up with the same weights and mud tyres and driven around the Jungle Track at the Solihull factory until it broke. It was found that with the mud tyres and the mud there was too much load on the transmission. Geoff Miller flew with new differentials into the Darien Jungle and with these in place the equipment was redistributed and some of the weight removed. Standard cross country wheels and tyres were fitted. There were no more diff problems, but the problem had set them back 26 days.

In Panama, a used Land Rover Series II was purchased to be used as a scout vehicle and it occasionally fell into ravines, two of the ladders broke and after the mud came terrain with very steep ascents and descents.

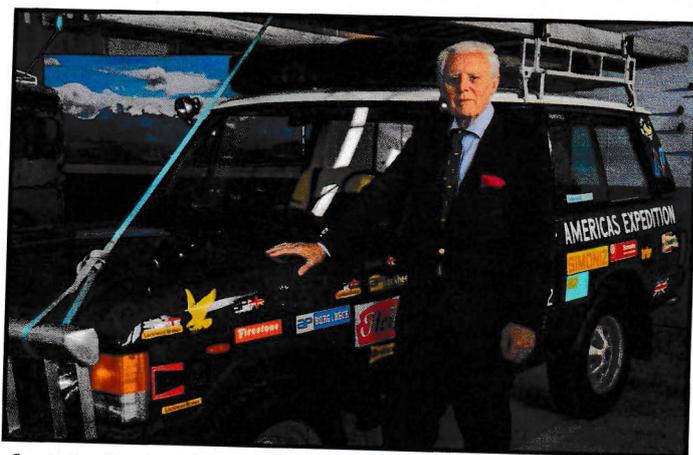
The last major obstacle was the Great Atrato Swamp. It's nearly 96kms wide and was choked with weeds. The rafts were used but progress was slow as chainsaws had to be

used to clear the weeds. Some sections were cleared with dynamite. Eventually they made their way to the other side although the river banks were more like sponges but it did support the weight of the vehicles-just. After 96 days in the jungle the expedition was back on rough dirt roads and soon they arrived in Medellin A British Leyland agent gave the Range Rovers a much needed service.

On May 13th the expedition, now back to two Range Rovers and crew (everyone else went home) was traveling south again. The rest of the trip was relatively uneventful with a few stops for servicing and additional press conferences. The team now had to move quickly.

Having started in winter and now heading back into winter snow was now the big issue. With the planned route completely blocked, a new route over worse roads was selected- but at least there were roads.

On June 10th, 1972 the British Trans-Americas Expedition arrived at Ushuaia Cape Horn. Job Done.



Captain Gavin Thompson with the Range Rover he drove. Rebuilt by British Leyland and then restored by the UK's Dunsfold Collection, a large collection of historic Land Rovers. Pic: JLR

With the passing of Paddy Hopkirk, Rob Harrison asked Bill Price, Competitions Manager at BLMC to write a for us....



Paddy and 33 EJB on stage at the London Palladium after the Monte Carlo win

Vale Paddy Hopkirk

Born 14th April 1933 in Belfast- Died 21 July 2022, Paddy started his motoring career aged seven when bequeathed a Harding motorised 4 -wheel invalid chair.

At 17 he saved up to buy an Austin Seven. He later became proficient in driving tests frequently in a VW 1200 Beetle.

His efforts in the Irish Rally championship brought his name to the attention of the Triumph Team. In 1957 he gained a 'works' drive in a TR3 with a 2nd in Class in the Tulip rally. Some good results with Triumph followed until leaving abruptly in 1958 to join the Rootes team mainly driving the Sunbeam Rapier. On the Acropolis rally where all the team retired, Paddy had a chance to drive an AH 3000 courtesy Pat Moss !

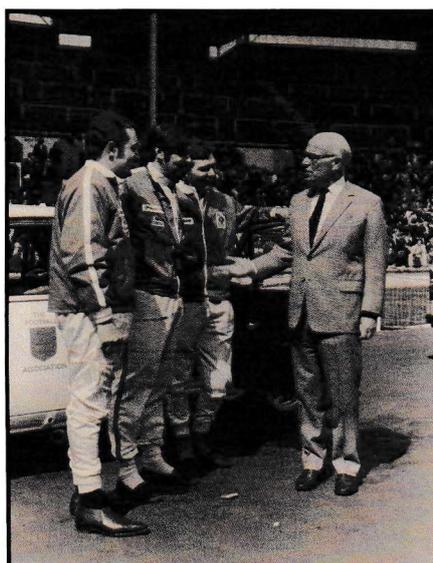
A letter to Stuart Turner saw a move to BMC with his first drive on the 1962 Liege-Sofia-Liege rally in a Healey. His first drive in a Mini Cooper was in the 1963 Monte Carlo finishing 6th overall.

The 1964 Monte, with Paddy starting in Minsk, was in the later Cooper S with the 1071cc engine. Despite strong opposition, particularly from the Ford V8 Falcons, Paddy won. This great win hit the international headlines and the Mini really was the Talk of the Town, with Paddy & Henry (Henry Liddon Co-driver) appearing on stage at the London Palladium with the car.

As well as a full programme rallying with BMC, Paddy was

a regular driver for the Cooper Car Co race programme appearing alongside John Rhodes in the second car.

When BMC relented and 'gave the nod' to MG competing in the Le Mans 24hr race, Paddy drove an MGB in 1963, 1964



and 1965 with good results achieved 3 years running. Paddy had an eye for business and started a motor accessory business in shop in 1965, the premises being badly damaged by an IRA terrorist bomb on one occasion.

His regular team mates with BMC were the Flying Finns, Timo Makinen & Rauno Aaltonen who became good buddies.

Race and rally events in conjunction with BMC Australia such as races at Sandown and Mount Panorama plus the Southern Cross rally were enjoyed by Paddy.

Another headline event was the 1966 Monte Carlo rally where the Mini Cooper team were 1st, 2nd & 3rd overall. However the cars were disqualified over an alleged infringement of the headlamp regulations.

As Paddy commented afterwards, we woz robbed !

BMC became part of British Leyland in 1968 and the motorsport budget was now strictly controlled by Lord Stokes.

Paddy competed in Mini, MGB and MGC in 1968, culminating in the London Sydney Marathon. Paddy was in the team of Morris/Austin 1800 saloons with Paddy finishing 2nd overall. He would probably have won if not losing time assisting at an accident involving Lucien Bianchi in a Citroen.

Some TV rally-cross in 1969 with the emphasis now on the Triumph models under Lord Stokes.

Paddy was 2nd in the Circuit of Ireland in the lightweight Mini Cooper S. and 2nd in class in the RAC Rally driving a Triumph 2.5PI.

Paddy retired from serious rally/racing in 1970 and to finish his illustrious career, Paddy was one of the team of Triumph 2.5 PI Mk2 saloons entered in the 1970 Daily Mirror World Cup rally from London to Mexico, finishing 4th overall.

Business expanded with the Mill Accessory Group.

Paddy was persuaded to take part in some historic rallies such as the Pirelli Classic Marathon which he won in a Mini Cooper S.

Appointed MBE in 2016 and for two years he was president of the BRDC.

Paddy was a wonderful friend, team mate and raconteur. There was never a dull moment when in his company.

Bill Price

Paddy Hopkirk, Tony Nash and Neville Johnston chat with Lord Stokes in front of the World Cup Rally Triumph 2500



2023 CALENDAR

JANUARY			
Wednesday 18th	Heritage Group Committee Mtg	Tree Tops Café Glenhaven Green	10.30am
FEBRUARY			
Wednesday 1st	Newsletter No.80		
MARCH			
APRIL			
6 TH TO 10 TH Easter	Leyland P76 Clubs Nationals 50 th	Parkes and Forbes NSW 50 th Anniversary P76	
Wednesday 19 th	Heritage Group Committee Mtg	12 Acacia Drive, Glenhaven Green	10.30am
MAY			
Saturday 13 th	BMC Movie Afternoon	Viking Club Dundas	1.00pm
Sunday 21 st	National Motoring Heritage Day	Kurrajong, Aust Motorlife Museum, Berry	
30 th May	Newsletter No.81		
JUNE			
Friday 30 th	Membership Renewals Due		
JULY			
Thursday 20 th	Heritage Group Committee Mtg	12 Acacia Drive, Glenhaven Green	10.30am
AUGUST			
Sunday 20 th	Shannon's Sydney Classic (CMC)	Sydney Motorsport Park Eastern Creek	9am-4pm
SEPTEMBER			
Sunday 10 or 17	All British Day	The Kings School?	9am
30 th September	Newsletter No.82		
OCTOBER			
Wednesday 18th	Heritage Group Committee Mtg	12 Acacia Drive, Glenhaven Green	10.30am
NOVEMBER			
Sunday 19 th	Annual Reunion Lunch/AGM 11.30am	Ryde Eastwood Leagues Club - Ryedale Room	10.30am
DECEMBER			
CAR CLUB MEETING DATES & VENUES:			
2 nd Tues bi-monthly	Morris Minor Car Club NSW	Mt Lewis Bowls Club, Greenacre -Feb/Apr/Jun/Aug etc.	7.00pm
1 st Friday	Morris Register NSW	Vikings Club, Dundas Valley	7.30pm
2 nd Friday	Mini Car Club NSW	Strathfield Event Centre, Weeroona Rd, Strathfield	7.30pm
2 nd Tuesday	Leyland P76 Owners Club NSW	The Hills Club, Jenner St, Baulkham Hills	7.30pm
2 nd Tuesday	Nepean District Morris Minor Club	Werrington Community Cottage	7.30pm
2 nd Tuesday	Sprite Car Club of Australia	Parramatta RSL Club	7.30pm
3 rd Wednesday	ACT Mini Car Club Meeting	Deakin Sports & Social	7.30pm
3 rd Wednesday	Leyland P76 Classic Car Club	Sans Souci Literary Institute	8.00pm
4 th Tuesday	Austin A40 Car Club NSW	Bankstown Sports Club	8.00pm
3 rd Wednesday	Wolseley Car Club NSW	Last Wed. Croydon Park Club, 55 Seymour St, Croydon	8.00pm
4 th Friday	Austin Motor Vehicle Club NSW	Cumberland High School	7.30pm

By the beginning of 1973 everything was in place for the big reveal



Leyland The new driving force.

