

WESTWORDS

VOLUME 13

MARCH 09

ISSUE: 21



Targa Florio's 35th Birthday

**OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE LEYLAND P76 OWNERS CLUB
OF WA**

Leyland P76

LEYLAND P76 OWNERS CLUB OF AUSTRALIA (WA Division) Inc.

Postal Address: PO Box 507 Kwinana WA 6167
Fax: (08)9457 7099
Email: sales@writegear.com.au

Websites: <http://www.p76leyland.com>
<http://www.leylandp76.com/jameswa.html>



General Meetings are held on the last Wednesday evening of every month at 7.30 PM (unless otherwise notified). The Meetings are held at Unit 4 - 9 Yampi Way, Willetton.

The AGM is held in July. For dates of club meetings and events, refer to the Coming Events section of this newsletter.

CLUB COMMITTEE FOR 2007-2008

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <u>President:</u> | Gary Mentiplay 9497 7754 |
| <u>Vice President:</u> | Dennis Woodward 9397 0402 |
| <u>Secretary:</u> | George Garofallou 9359 3673 |
| <u>Treasurer:</u> | Tony Moisley 9350 6528 |
| <u>Editor:</u> | Lianne Shea 9390 3146 |
| <u>Publicity Officer:</u> | Adam Woodward 9397 0402 |
| <u>Vehicle Examiner:</u> | Andrew Mentiplay 9397 0528 |
| <u>Vehicle Registrar :</u> | Gary Mentiplay 9497 7754 |
| CMC of WA Delegates: | Life Members Gary Mentiplay Andrew Mentiplay Gary Mentiplay. Andy Renn Dennis Woodward James Mentiplay |

EMAIL ADDRESS'S

Adam Woodward
towardsthewoods@bigpond.com
Adrian Black
Adrian.black@watercorporation.com.au
Andy Mentiplay
andy.mentiplay@bigpond.com
Barbi Packham
barbi55@datec.net.pg
Brett and Lianne Shea
sheabl@optusnet.com.au
Darryl Packham
damage-inc@bigpond.com
Gary Mentiplay
gary.mentiplay@bigpond.com
George Garofallou :
p76slug@iinet.net.au
James Mentiplay
Sales@writegear.com.au
Kerry Mayers
maypac@iprimus.com.au
Mal White
maljulie@tpg.com.au
Matt Truman
wiskey@iinet.net.au
Mick LeCocq
Mick.Le-Cocq@verveenergy.com.au
Nick Gye
gyecosta@iinet.net.au
Riley and Lyn Bradley
rcljbradley@westnet.com.au
Tony Moisley
moisley@iprimus.com.au

Disclaimer:

In regard to products, services and/or procedures which are either advertised or mentioned in this magazine, members should determine for themselves the reliability and/or suitability for their own particular requirements. The Leyland P76 Owners Club of Australia (WA Division) Incorporated cannot accept responsibility for any product or service statement made herein, and the opinions or comments from any contributor are not necessarily those of the club, the committee, the members or the editor.

Front Page Photo.

Tony Moisley's Targa Florio at BMC Day

Photo: Lianne

**12 APRIL
2009
9.00AM**

All Australian Car Day V

Come down to see a huge display of classic Australian built cars from Ford, Holden, Chrysler, Leyland and other smaller manufacturers at this free day out which offers something for everyone.

Stroll through a large top-quality craft and produce market, of over one hundred stalls, view displays, dine on a wide variety of good country cuisine and be entertained by the day long variety show on the outdoor amphitheatre stage complete with prizes and giveaways.

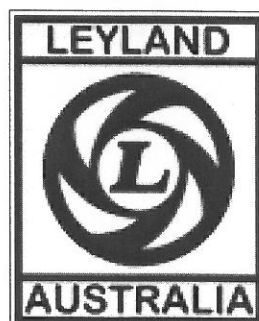
Children's entertainment includes rides, games, face painting and a bouncy castle. You also have the opportunity to taste the best of Western Australian wine, cheese and gourmet produce in a special expo.

Meet at Floopers Nth Dandalup at 7.45am and then head down to Waroona together.

The P76 club had a great turn out last year, we would like to put on a great show this year too. So if you are able to make it come down for the day, the cars get a lot of attention and it's a great day !! Hope to see you there!



ENTRY IS FREE



COMING EVENTS



Sunday 12th April 2009– All Aussie Day Waroona

All Aussie Day falls on Easter Sunday this year.

Meet at Floopers Nth Dandalup at 7.45am and then
head down to Waroona together.

General Meeting Wednesday 25th March 2009 7.30 pm At Writegear

2009

Coming Events

Sunday 15th March 2009– Classic Car Show at Whiteman Park,
(Interest only club not attending as a group)

Wednesday 25th March 2009– General Meeting at Writegear 7.30pm

Sunday 12th April 2009– All Aussie Day Waroona

As it stands at the moment All Aussie Day falls on the Easter long
Weekend!

Wednesday 29th April 2009– General Meeting at Writegear 7.30pm

Sunday 17 May : National Motoring Heritage Day

TBA June : Annual Inspections of Concessional Licence
Vehicles

TBA July : Boys Away Weekend

Snippets.

SNIPPETS

Brett recently sourced a variety of parts for the P76 from Clark rubber such as boot seals, bonnet bumper stops, door seals bailey channels, bushes, clips and fasteners etc.
He has a complete list of parts and prices which I will run in a later edition but if anyone is interested please contact Brett on 0447788018 and he can give you the part numbers

THE 35TH BIRTHDAY OF THE TARGA FLORIO IS THIS YEAR.

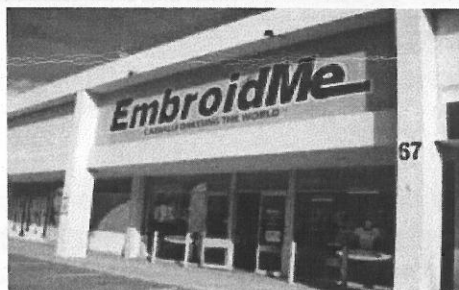
TO CELEBRATE THE MILESTONE THE CLUB WOULD LIKE TO PUT ON A GOOD SHOWING AT THE BMC LEYLAND DAY LATER THIS YEAR.

SO FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE TARGA'S NO MATTER WHAT CONDITION PLEASE BRING THEM DOWN FOR THE DISPLAY THIS

**V8 OIL
FILTERS ARE
AVAILABLE
THROUGH
ANDREW
KLOOT HE
ALSO HAS
OTHER
SPARE PARTS
AVAILABLE
FOR
INFORMATION
CALL JAMES**

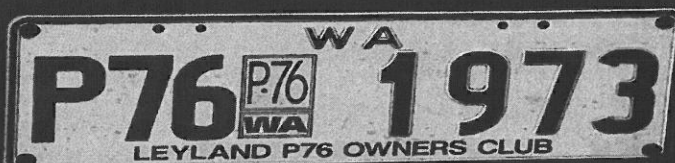
**FOR SALE: Bold as Brass Marina 4 cylinder, good condition, 6 month rego
\$1500 Contact: Brian Shaw 9527 8707**

**Jack Elias
has retired
from
Minicraft**

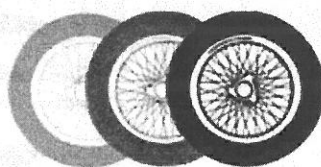


James has been in contact with EmbroidMe and we can now get our club logo put onto shirts, jackets and other clothing. The store has a range of clothing so you can pick something from their range or supply your own shirt and they will put the logo on it for you for \$7.00.

**EmbroidMe
Unit 3, 71 Mc Coy Street
Myaree
Ph: 9317 1333**



**Club Plates
Phone James on 9457 7077
(work) or 9394 0152 (home)
for more details.**



**COUNCIL OF
MOTORING
CLUBS** OF W.A. (INC)

ABN 58352277045

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

As at October 21 2008

2008 2008 2008 2008 2008

- November** 2 Fabcar 1-Day Touring Road Rally - AEM (www.classicrally.com.au)
9 Brockwell Memorial Run - to Whiteman Park
23 Fiat Lancia Car Day - GO Edwards Park, Burswood (www.fiatlantia.org.au)
23 GM Owners Day - Steel Blue Oval, Bassendean
30 Vintage Stampede - Barbagallo Raceway (VSCC - www.vscwa.com.au)
- December** 15 Council of Motoring Clubs General Meeting

2009

- February** 7 British Auto Classic & Gourmet Wine & Food Fest - Donnybrook Amphitheatre
15 All Italian Charity Superkhana (www.classicrally.com.au)
15 Northam Vintage Swap Meet - Northam showgrounds (AVVVA)
16 Council of Motoring Clubs General Meeting
22 All Italian Car, Bike & Scooter Day - Technology Park, Bentley
- March** 15 Classic Car Show - Whiteman Park
- April** 9-13 Austins Over Australia national rally
20 Council of Motoring Clubs General Meeting
TBA Classic Challenge Touring Road Rally - AEM (www.classicrally.com.au)
TBA Northam Flying 50 round the hosues - Northam (VSCC - www.vscwa.com.au)
- May** 17 National Motoring Heritage Day
17 British Car Day - Gingin
31 Albany Classic round the houses event - Albany (VSCC - www.vscwa.com.au)
- June** 15 Council of Motoring Clubs General Meeting
- July** 3 CMC Quiz Night (Mercedes-Benz Car Club of WA)
26 German Car Day - Northam (Mercedes-Benz Car Club of WA)

General enquiries to Council of Motoring Clubs of W.A. (Inc) Secretary, Peter Taylor on 9343 4605 pcwh@bigpond.com
Visit the Council of Motoring Clubs website - www.councilofmotoringclubs.asn.au
A comprehensive calendar of motoring events can be found at website: www.classicrally.com.au

NOTES:

1. This page may be published in your club magazine.
2. Details are subject to change without notice and no responsibility is accepted by the Council of Motoring Clubs of WA (Inc), its member clubs or its servants for incorrect information.
3. Updates and additional information should be directed to Paul Blank on 9271 0101 or paulb@classicrally.com.au
4. CMC Website enquiries to the Webmaster via www.councilofmotoringclubs.asn.au

Council of Motoring Clubs of W.A. (Inc) PO Box 742, Subiaco, Western Australia, 6904

LEYLAND P76 OWNERS CLUB OF AUSTRALIA (WA Division Inc.)
MINUTES FOR JANUARY 2009

OPENED: 7:30pm.

Apologies: Tony Moisley, Andy Renn

Minutes for November: Moved as being correct by James Mentiplay, seconded by Adam Woodward.

Correspondence In: Triumph Car Club, Veteran Car Club WA, Mini Owners Club, Australian Muscle Car Magazine, Hal Maloney.

Correspondence out: Nil..

Treasurer's Report: announced at general meeting.

GENERAL BUSINESS:

Gary Mentiplay raised a suggestion for raffling the latest **P76 Book**.

The club recently found out that **Jack Elias** has since retired from Minicraft.

Two new **rear windscreens** are available.

BMC Leyland Day 2009 will be used to celebrate 35 years of the Targa Florio.

Future **coming events** were briefly discussed President.

Current restoration projects by members present were briefly discussed.

James Long suggested running of **dash laminates** for the P76, and brought in a sample that is pretty close to the original Leyland spec.

CLOSED: 20:10

CLUB RAFFLE

In an effort to raise funds, your Club is conducting a raffle. The prize will be a limited-edition, leather-bound book on the P76, by Gavin Farmer. This is a superb book, and a prize well worth winning.

Tickets will be sold over the next few months, leading up to our 2009 Annual Dinner, where the prize will be drawn. To give all of our far-flung members a chance to win this prize, the Club has decided to mail out in advance tickets to all members, on the following basis:

Single Member: \$10 worth

Family Members: \$15 worth

You will find enclosed with this letter your tickets. We would greatly appreciate your prompt attention to returning to the club the correct payment for your tickets.

This will enable your ticket numbers to be validated before the raffle draw.

Extra tickets can of course be purchased direct from the Club.

All of the funds raised will go to your car club. The prize has been donated by the Mentiplay family, and there are no administration costs, so every dollar raised goes to the Club. High on the Club's list of priorities is the purchase of a new, good quality marquee, for use by members at displays, etc.

Any members that have any queries can contact me direct:

Telephone: (08) 9497 7754

Email: garymentiplay@bigpond.com

In closing, I thank you for your support of our Club, and look forward to catching up with you again in the future.

Best Regards,

Gary Mentiplay

President

3 February 2009

PRESIDENT's REPORT MARCH 2009

By the time you read this, you should have received a letter from me with some raffle tickets enclosed. OUR Club is conducting a raffle, in a fund-raising effort to purchase a suitable marquee / shelter for use at outdoor display venues.

The prize is a limited-edition leather bound P76 book, recently released by Gavin Farmer. All funds raised will go to the Club, so I urge all members to give this endeavour their full support. Please return the money (for the tickets mailed out) to the Club as soon as possible. This will enable your tickets to be validated.

Tickets cost \$1 each, and of course extra tickets can be purchased at club meetings, or via mail.

Upcoming Events:

There are two major car shows over the next two months. The Classic Car Show at Whiteman Park is on in March (see Coming Events), and will be followed by the annual All-Australian Car Day at Waroona on Easter Sunday (see Coming Events).

Work commitments will prevent me from attending Whiteman Park, but fortunately I will be going south to Waroona over Easter. We need another huge turn-out for the All-Aussie Day, so I hope this event receives the support it deserves from our membership.

Also coming up over the horizon in the next few months are:

Sunday 17 May : National Motoring Heritage Day

TBA June : Annual Inspections of Concessional Licence Vehicles

TBA July : Boys Away Weekend

We need input from YOU on our efforts for the National Motoring Heritage Day. I believe a driving event is in order, rather than just another display. The cars will get noticed by the public on the major roads if we mount a large convoy to some pleasant location, preferably outside the metro area. We need your input !

There are no plans at this stage for the June Long Weekend. We visited Albany for the past two years, but is it time to switch to another venue, especially during winter ?

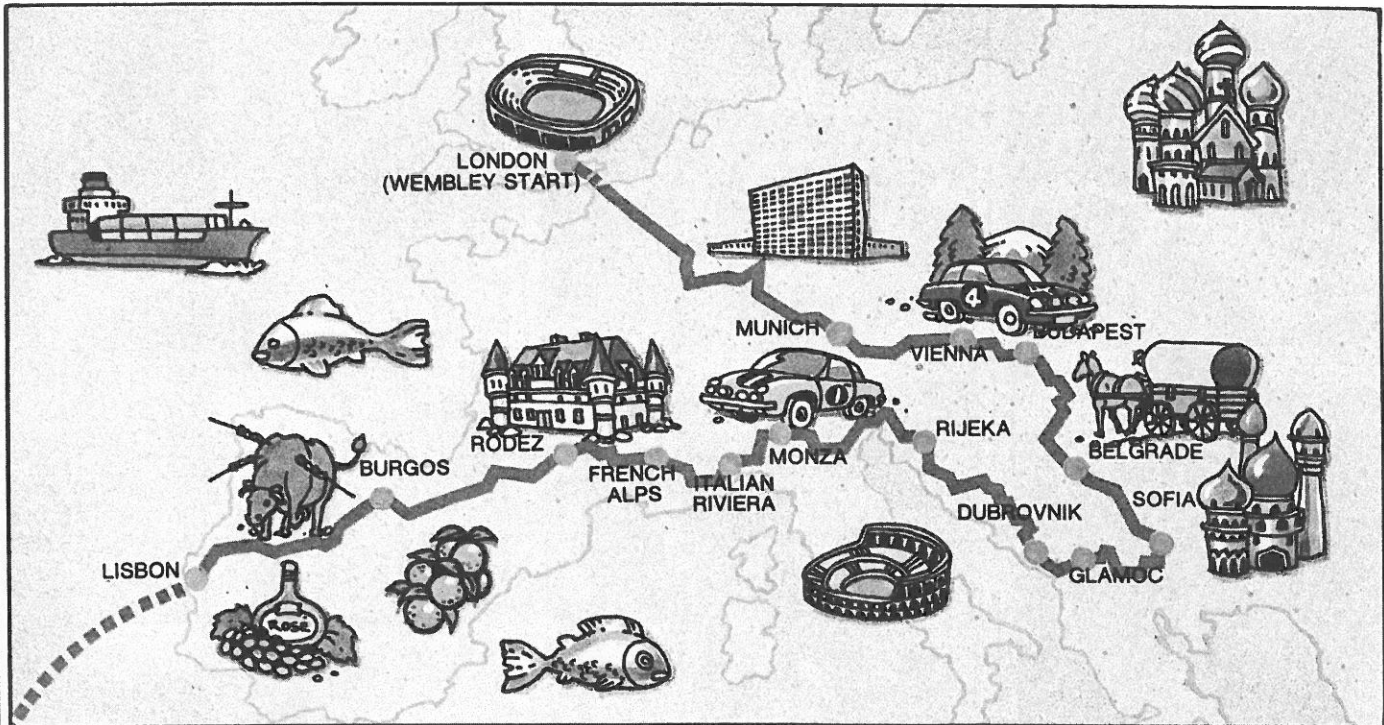
We will only know what YOU think if you let us know...

Gary Mentiplay

garymentiplay@bigpond.com

1970 World Cup Rally TRIUMPH OVER THE ODDS

Evan Green continues his great story of the incredibly long and tough 1970 World Cup Rally, and the amazing adventures he shared with co-drivers Gelignite Jack Murray and Hamish Cardno in their luckless Triumph 2.5PI. Part Two covers the run from Sofia to Lisbon, a mad dash fraught with traps and dangers and many laughs.



FOR TWO days we had driven east. Now we turned west, for a zig-zag route through the south of Europe to the port of Lisbon. As far as Sofia, the rally had been conducted at a cruising pace and few crews had lost points. Now the tempo would quicken, the roads would stray into mountains and become rougher, and all cars would begin to collect penalties.

The rally's first batch of primes, or special stages, lay ahead of us in Yugoslavia, with others to follow in Italy, France and Portugal. The first primes would be that night. Conditions would vary from a narrow bitumen pass that snaked down a cliff face on the Adriatic coast to rough tracks across the mountains of inland Yugoslavia. Our teammates assured us that these latter roads were the worst in Europe.

Each major rally has two starts, and therefore two moments of high tension for the participants. The first is the ceremonial start. There are crowds and

flags and police to guide you around corners but the tension is like stagefright, or the knot-in-the-stomach feeling before you stand up to make a speech. It is an emotional time, and confusing thoughts crowd your mind.

The other start, the second moment of tension, is at the Out control on the first special stage. This is where the serious part begins. No ceremony here. Just performance. You talk to yourself. You must go fast enough to stay with the leaders (but who will they be, and how fast will they travel?). You must drive slowly enough to conserve the car so that it will survive the whole journey (but how slow is that?). Stay calm and relaxed behind the wheel, so you'll drive smoothly and not hit something, or crunch the gears, slip the clutch, over-rev the engine or do anything else likely to ruin your chances of getting to Mexico. But you must be pent up enough to go fast — as fast as a works driver must, to be with the leaders, to put the car in a competitive position, to justify

your seat in the team.

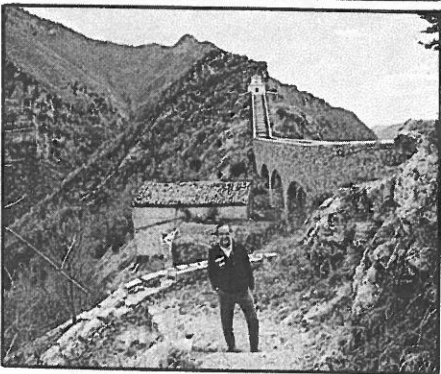
The second start — the Out control of the first prime — was on the outskirts of the Yugoslav city of Titograd. Nothing special. Just a control point at a park, and a crowd around the tables and a narrow bitumen road disappearing towards the mountains. That was where we were to go: up that narrow strip of shiny black towards the Adriatic resort of Kotor.

Hamish Cardno had driven to Titograd. While I rested in the back, he bedded-in the disc brake pads for the fast run ahead. We were using a competition-grade pad material that needed to be faded — that is, to be heated to the point where it lost efficiency or, literally, faded away. In the manufacturing process, the pads absorbed oil and the fading was necessary to draw the oil to the surface, where the heat would burn it off. Once faded, the pads worked well. But if you didn't give them the proper treatment, your first hard application of the brake pedal was likely to result in nothing but loud gasps of dismay

from those on board.

Hamish faded the brakes with great enthusiasm. His task was made more enjoyable by engaging Paddy Hopkirk's Triumph in a race and, by the time we reached Titograd, the car reeked with the pungent aroma of burnt brake pads. An Abingdon mechanic was waiting for us. I asked him to check the brakes, which were smouldering with heat, and the three of us wandered through the trees in the park, looking for a quiet place to relieve ourselves.

Titograd was the first control at which we were supposed to receive pace notes. A reconnaissance or recce crew had gone



through the day before, noting road conditions and estimating the speed at which corners could be taken. While Hamish went to the control to attend to the paper work, I chatted with the mechanic. "Brakes are fine," he said. "Plenty of pad."

We talked about the engine, which was still behaving erratically. Sometimes it would miss. At other times it seemed to pull well. Jack settled himself in the back, adjusting his belts and padding his corner with pillows. "Just take it easy," he said. "We've got a long way to go." Again, he stretched the word long and I had visions of the map of South America.

I tightened the belt, adjusted my helmet, and fiddled with my driving gloves. My palms were sweating. Hamish, having had the control clock stamp our card, came running to his open door and jumped in the navigator's seat.

"Go."

Hard away in first. But instead of smooth power, the miss came back, and

the car stuttered its way through the crowd lining the exit to the control. I could hear the Yugoslavs hooting in derision.

At first, the road ran straight, over crests and dips which let me coax speed from the laboring engine until the speedometer needle was hovering around 160 km/h. The Triumph had overdrive on third and fourth gears, and 160 in overdrive top seemed its happiest pace. We passed some buses. Passengers leaned out to their waists, waving with great enthusiasm. We raced towards another crest where a crowd had gathered.

Warning bells tinkled in my head, for crowds usually mean hazards. I waited for



World Cup Rally cars (top left) restart from Sofia. Before the San Remo prime (top centre), Gelignite Jack checks conditions with one of the recce crews. WCR route led from mountain tracks to autostradas and vice versa. Magnificent scenery abounded (bottom left) when there was a moment to pause. The battered Triumph was quickly serviced at Lisbon, then loaded aboard. Next stop — South America.

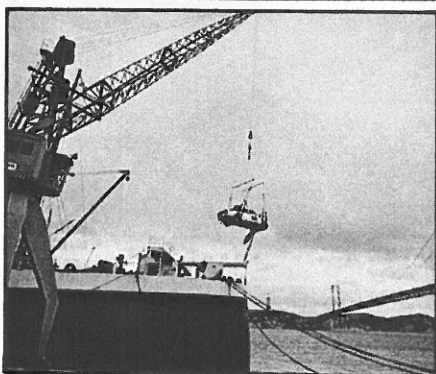
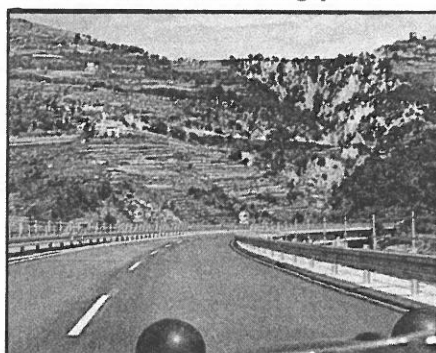
Hamish to call advice from the book of pace notes. What I didn't know was that there was no book. The recce crew had forgotten to leave a copy for us.

Now, with pace notes, no call usually means flat out, so I kept the car hard in overdrive. Trees were looming beyond the crest. A wall of them. Feeling uneasy, I flicked the overdrive switch to the off position. Our speed eased to 155.

Hamish, his Scottish burr thick with adrenalin, called out for the first time. I thought he said "go fast" which struck me as being a curious instruction, but I kept my foot down. Later, I realised that what he had said was: "Oh Christ".

We thundered over the crest and the bitumen went right. Hard right. Foot on the brakes. The pedal went straight to the floor. The crowd was cheering. They could see we were about to turn on the most spectacular show of the day.

Had the road been gravel I would have turned the car sideways and tried to slide through the bend, or put the car into a spin. But this was narrow bitumen and a slide would have tipped us on the roof. The road to the right was lined with trees and to have attempted the bend would have put us among their beckoning limbs. The road was edged with stones painted white. Straight ahead was a gap in the



stones and beyond that, a drop, with a ploughed field in the distance.

The crowd had stopped waving and begun to run. No brakes. No time to turn. Not much choice but straight ahead. I aimed between two white stones, saw a fence beneath us as we soared through space and noted an open gate to our right. We'll come back through that gate, I thought, and waited for the landing. We hit the ploughed field a long way from the fence.

The car landed dead flat, all four wheels touching at the same time. We slowed dramatically, and I was frightened we would bog in the soft earth. I selected second gear, turned the car hard to the right, and headed for the gate. We were back on the road when Jack emerged from the pillows in the back.

"Like, what happened?" he demanded.

Hamish was white faced. I didn't blame him. That was the first corner on the first special stage we had tackled together and, as far as he knew, I was going to do that

“ We soared through space. Hamish was white-faced. That was the first corner on the first stage. ”

all the way to Mexico. I tried the brake pedal again, and once more, it went straight to the floor.

“Sorry. We have no brakes.”

A seal had failed — probably through being cooked during the brake fading session — and the brake fluid was draining away. There was no repair we could attempt without losing too much time, so I pressed on. Driving a little more slowly, the misfire became more severe. A few minutes later, Paddy Hopkirk passed, going hard. He had practised this road, and I tried to hang on to his tail, easing up when I saw his brake lights flash, but our car couldn't pull as hard as his and we lost him on the long climb up a mountain.

We passed a couple of cars on the bends, where the road wriggled across the top of a range, and then caught our breaths at the sight before us. The mountains ended in a wall of rock that plummeted to the sea. We could see Kotor below us, and the road we were supposed to follow. It cut its way down the face of the cliff in a series of hairpin bends. It would have been daunting road at any time, but a dreadful prospect without brakes. I tried the hand brake. Not much good, but something to hang onto. Down we go. Just like the big dipper, sick feeling and all . . . Foot off the throttle to allow engine braking to slow the car. Too slow, so a touch on the pedal to hurry things up. A gasp from the back seat. Here's the first bend, swooping back to the left. Tight, sharp and steep. A quick blip on the throttle to get the revs right for bottom gear. Into first. Around the bend on trailing throttle. We run wide. A front tyre

slides in gravel.

A short straight, steep downhill. Into second and a bit of a squirt. No point wasting time. Here comes the second bend, hard to the right. Off the throttle. The car slows, but not enough. A big blip and we pick up first gear and the engine snarls. Round we go, exhaust cackling and spitting. Blipping, snarling, accelerating, slowing, we drove through 24 hairpins.

The In control at Kotor was at the bottom of a steep hill. Number 92 came in wagging its tail, and spun to a halt. I received a gentle finger wagging from an official. Mechanics were there and they quickly fixed the brakes. They'd look at the engine at Monza, in Italy. No time for a talk or a meal. Quick, take this coffee and fruit juice and rolls. Off again, because there's a long haul through the night to the next prime. The roads are rough and the time is tight.

THE ROAD degenerated into something that resembled a battlefield after a mortar bombardment. It was all holes and rubble and rocks. We eased back to idling speed but still passed American Brian Chuchua's Jeep. He'd stopped with a broken chassis!

The road was long and undulating. We could see the tail lights of dozens of cars, bobbing slowly through the hills like boats riding out a storm at night. The road climbed higher and became smoother. There was much snow and the tyre treads sang on the frozen surface. An hour before dawn, we were at the start of the next prime. It began in a town with roads of ice and buildings wreathed in mist. It was to prove disastrous.

Before the rally began, Hamish had been horrified to find he had been cast in the role of navigator.

“I am no navigator,” he had said, and told us of a previous event in which he had been put in the map reader's seat, alongside a famous Scandinavian, and had taken the illustrious driver up a wrong road and out of the rally. He now proceeded to demonstrate his self doubts had some foundation.

This was the first time I had driven the Triumph quickly on dirt. Snow packed the high places while the hollows were deep with rutted mud. I was swinging the tail occasionally and beginning to enjoy the car. Hamish, however, had the look of one who was expecting another flying visit to a ploughed field. He sat in the navigator's seat, rigid with concern, and bracing himself like a Praying Mantis on a stick. While wondering if he would survive the next four and a half weeks, he confused left with right and we spent 24 minutes exploring a wrong road. It was a simple error. All navigators take wrong roads. But this delay was to lead to a longer one.

The first rays of the rising sun were winking through the trees as we regained the proper route. We drove into a wide valley, and the sun's angled shafts turned the roads muddy ruts into stripes of shadow that ran, like railway lines, around the sides of distant hills. Smoke was curling from the chimneys of a village.

I first glimpsed the trucks as we drove over a crest. My first impression was that they were passing each other. Then, as we drew closer, that they had stopped at some sort of roadworks. And then, as we

ASTRA-VIEW

SUN ROOFS

38 TAUNTON DRIVE, CHELTENHAM 3192, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA
Telephone: (03) 584-6222

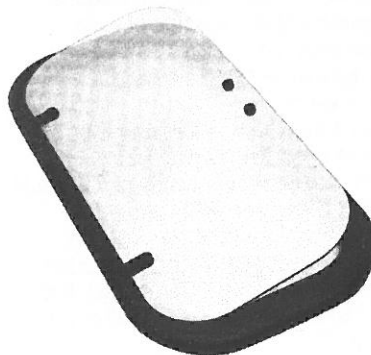
Telex: 36269

ASTRA
VIEW

DMT NO. 79107

GUARANTEE

ASTRA-VIEW provide a 12 months guarantee on sunroofs and your fitting agent accepts responsibility for the installation for twelve months.



ASTRA
VIEW

- Fits most vehicles.
- Super low profile.
- Circulates fresh air.
- Exhausts smoke and fumes.
- Assists in drivers not becoming drowsy.
- Can combat car sickness through good ventilation.
- Excellent for cars without "draft proof" windows.
- Safer than "soft top" convertible.
- Glass removed in seconds.
- MOST IMPORTANT — LOW COST — YOU COMPARE.

**SAME DAY
AUSTRALIA WIDE FITTING SERVICE**

“

He (Mikkola) is quick but won't last, they said. He suffers from brain fade.

”

had to brake to stop in an area of churned mud, I couldn't believe what was in front of us. Three large trucks blocked the road.

There was an embankment on our right, a sharp drop on the left and the three trucks filled the road in between. There were no people. Just three abandoned trucks blocking our way. Must be a mistake. Were we wrong again?

Hamish shook his head vigorously. This was the right road. We scrambled about on foot, searching for a detour. None. Then we spotted some men in the distance, walking away from us and towards the village. We called to them and they came back. They spoke no English, of course, but it was soon clear what had happened.

The truck in the middle of the road had become bogged in the deep mud. The truck on our right had tried to overtake by squeezing between it and the embankment, but had skidded and wedged itself in the gap. The third truck had tried to pass on the outside, near the edge of the road, and had broken an axle. So the drivers had decided to get help from the village... and have breakfast while they were down there. They agreed to eat later, and to try to move one of the vehicles now. During all this time, there had not been a sign of another rally car. Where were the other competitors?

Another half dozen men would have moved the third truck, but the three of us plus the Yugoslavs didn't have the muscle. For 45 minutes we pushed and strained, moving the truck a few metres but exhausting ourselves in the process. And then the Yugoslavs made the reasonable decision to have a rest... and eat breakfast while they were about it. They began to walk to the village.

A Citroen came down from the hills, corkscrewing a fine trail of dust and pulverised mud. The driver — Paul Coltelloni, who had won a Monte Carlo Rally back in the 1950s — leaped from the car and ran forward, shouting at the truck drivers. He brandished money. They looked offended. They had been trying... Coltelloni, who had been there a few seconds, was in a frenzy. He tried to thrust notes into their pockets and drag them back. There was a scuffle and the men threw the money into the mud.

Suddenly, a stream of cars poured out of the hills. We ran after the Yugoslavs, pleading with them to come back and try again, now that there would be more men to push. They brushed their coats and walked back slowly, ignoring the confused

and still frantic Frenchman.

So many people arrived we could almost lift the truck. The queue of cars stretched 100 metres. In 10 minutes, the blockage was cleared. And at that moment, another Citroen came down from the hills and Rene Trautmann, going so fast that we had to leap to safety, raced past and lost not one second.

ON THAT prime, Trautmann took the lead in the rally. That was a surprise, because the Citroens were favoured for their staying powers, not their ability to outspurt the Escorts and Triumphs and other fleet models like Porsche and Mercedes-Benz, which had fast drivers at the wheel.

Part of the reason for Trautmann's success was due to his spot-on timing at the trucks. But only part. After all, only two works cars were affected at the blockade — our Triumph and the sister car of Paddy Hopkirk, who was in the last group to arrive. Trautmann took the lead because of a bridge.

The bridge was near the end of the prime. It was a hump-backed affair, old and rickety, and the middle fell out of it the day before the rally cars arrived. The local road authorities hastily erected barriers at either end of the bridge and put up detour signs.

The Leyland and Ford pace note crews had driven over the prime before the bridge collapsed. Therefore, we were baulked at the barriers, and lost time following the detour. The Citroen pace noters, however, had been over the road after the bridge fell down and had sent their team a different way. This saved them much time. Trautmann was quickest, and led the rally. Guy Verrier, in another Citroen, was second.

In third place was Hannu Mikkola in an Escort. Its front protective bar — what we call in Australia a 'roo bar — bore the marks of an extraordinary escapade, an impetuous bit of driving that put the youngest member of the Ford team up among the Citroens but almost put him out of the event.

Mikkola was the latest Flying Finn to have burst upon the rallying world. He was known to be sensationally fast in short events but there was doubt about his staying ability. At one of our pre-rally briefings, I had asked about Mikkola but been told to forget him. "He's quick but he won't last," they said. "He suffers from brain fade."

And at that broken bridge, Mikkola did his best to prove his detractors were

right. He was driving with the wily Swedish co-driver Gunnar Palm. When they reached the barriers blocking the entrance to the bridge, Palm asked Mikkola to wait while he checked if there was a way across the river. Palm ran to the water and began to wade across. Mikkola sat in the car, fretting at the loss of time. It was soon obvious that the water was too deep.

Without waiting for Palm, Mikkola reversed the Escort back down the road, selected first, and gave the car full throttle. He hit the wooden barrier, shattering it, and, like a stunt driver leaping between two ramps, sailed across the broken bridge. He demolished the far barrier and waited for his astonished co-driver to wade across the river and join him.

The dripping Palm then delivered what must have been one of the most pointed and effective lectures ever given in motor sport. He said, in effect, that people thought the young Finn was a fast driver but a little short of self control. They could win this rally but only if they drove sensibly — and according to the tactics Palm had devised. The Swede then delivered his ultimatum. What was it going to be: my way or yours? If it's your way, said Palm, I don't get back in the car. It was a turning point in Mikkola's career. Your way, he said. Palm got in and they resumed one of the epic drives in motor sport.

Other Escorts were in strife too, although of a more conventional nature. Rauno Aaltonen was still plagued by gearbox troubles, Roger Clark rolled his car, and Timo Makinen sheared the drive to his car's distributor. Makinen was extraordinarily lucky. The distributor failed on the run to Kotor. But it failed at the beginning of the cliff-face descent to the town, and he was able to coast all the way into the control. Had the shaft snapped one kilometre earlier, he might well have been out of the rally.

FINDING THE Monza control was easy. Apart from the signs, there were the sounds. An international sports car race was to be held the following weekend, and the parklands surrounding the autodrome echoed to the howl of Ferraris and the raucous bark of flat-12 Porsches. The Leyland mechanics had pegged out a service area on a strip of grass beneath the raised banking of the race track. While drivers like Pedro Rodriguez and Jacky Ickx thundered above, fine-tuning their cars for the race and intent on setting fast practice times, the mechanics set about

“The guide’s broken edges ground each other away, depositing tiny pieces of metal in the cylinder.”

refettling the Triumphs.

The sorry saga of our misfiring engine was continuing but, again, there was no time to try to fix it. This time, there was not merely a lack of parts; there was too much else to do. On the way to Italy, a front strut had blown its seal, the rear wheels had begun to splay out as though the frame were bending, a rear shock absorber had failed and, worst of all, a final drive pinion shaft bearing had seized. As a result, our arrival at the Monza autodrome was not as auspicious as we would have liked. The engine fluffed and spluttered, the tailshaft emitted a constant wail as metal destroyed metal, and the wheels leaned at distressed angles.

Jack was muttering about the fragility of Triumphs. “Take it to Mexico!” he fumed. “You wouldn’t take it shopping.”

The fresh spate of failures worried us because we hadn’t hammered the car — certainly not by the standards of punishment normally handed out to rally cars. True, we had leap-frogged a fence and dug fresh ploughmarks in a farmer’s field but the landing had been so gentle that Jack, who had been lying down when we left the road, had felt no impact. It was a gentler landing than most aircraft manage. The pinion shaft bearing didn’t want to come out and we booked into the control five minutes late. It didn’t matter much. We were already a long way behind the leaders.

“Things will get better,” one of the mechanics said.

THE ITALIAN prime started at San Remo, on the Italian Riviera. It ran in a loop to the north through mountains that skirted the French border. Much of it was bitumen but the latter part followed narrow gravel tracks that ran past old cannons, whose barrels pointed across a valley at France. Goodness knows what war that was for.

On the way to San Remo, we discovered the cause of our on-again, off-again engine misfire. The car ran so badly in the mountains that it would not climb one alpine pass. We pulled to the side of the road and — rather than just clean the injectors as we had been advised — removed the rocker cover to examine the valve gear. And there was the trouble. A valve guide — a small, cylindrical piece of metal that supports the stem of the valve — was broken in half. It wasn’t easy to spot, because one half was resting on the other. When the valve moved up and down, the two broken edges rubbed each

other, grinding away tiny pieces of metal and depositing them in the cylinder. Some of this debris was fouling the injector.

We decided to neutralise number six cylinder. We slipped out the pushrods, so that the valves wouldn’t operate, and disconnected the fuel supply, swinging the long plastic petrol line away from the cylinder head and out the side of the engine compartment. It meant we would have to run on five cylinders, and that every sixth measure of petrol would be squirted along the side of the car — a process that was to cause us some concern at control points, where smokers in the crowd had to be pushed away from the petrol-soaked flanks of the Triumph.

Running cleanly on five cylinders, the difference in the car’s performance was incredible. We ran the San Remo prime without loss of points, an achievement (after all our debacles) that had the mechanics cheering when we reached their service point.

They changed a front strut because another seal had blown, and put new wheels and tyres on the car. Jack and I had been changing the wheels ourselves, because we were sensitive on this subject, having lost the Marathon through losing a wheel. On this one occasion, however, we let others do it while we went to buy food. The service crew was supposed to give us a food pack, with supplies to last all the way to Portugal, but they had grown hungry waiting for us and eaten it themselves.

“We thought you weren’t coming,” one of them said cheerfully.

We didn’t mind, for we felt happier than at any time since the rally had started. One hundred kilometres later, a front wheel fell off.

THE FOURTH prime ran through Monte Carlo Rally territory. It was north of Nice, in the Alpes Maritimes of south-eastern France. Just to reach the start of the prime was difficult, because it required a long and rapid drive over several mountain passes — such as the infamous Col de Turini — which are used as special stages on the Monte.

Jack and I had been sharing the driving but now he slept in the back. Or tried to, for the road dipped and twisted and climbed so violently that I could hear him grunting as he was flung from side to side.

Through the village of Le Broc the Triumph thunders, its tyres drumming on the cobblestones. Hamish is shouting instructions. Around the old well in the middle of the market place. Swing right

towards the gap between two old buildings. You notice that they lean towards each other, so that their roofs almost touch. The walls are crooked. A shattering noise, as the car darts between the buildings and the echoes of the snarling, skip-a-beat exhaust come bouncing around your ears. Jack sits up.

Suddenly, you’re out of the village and running along a ridge. Then a few more dips. A short climb, a turn. “Right,” Hamish calls. He’s been working hard, and well. We’re a happy team. The three of us may have been plagued with poor luck, but we’re starting to have fun. Jack lies down again.

We start to descend a mountain. I brake for a hairpin left, and a rumbling sound enters the cabin.

“What’s that?” shouts Hamish, alarmed. I cock my head to listen but the sound is gone. A short downhill straight. Hard in second, change into third. The speedo climbs beyond 80. And suddenly, there’s a sound like a rifle shot, and the steering is gone.

I turn the wheel. Nothing. Stab the brakes. Nothing. The car starts to curl to the left and then, with a shocking abruptness, turns to the right. There’s no time to pull on the handbrake, to change gear, to scream.

We are over the edge of the cliff. Trees are rushing towards us. We seem to be still and the trees, their trunks ghostly white in the blinding light from our lamps, are accelerating towards us.

Everything seems to switch to slow motion. Or is it your mind racing? Hands on the wheel, waiting. Thoughts clicking through your brain. I don’t want to hit those trees. But what if we don’t? What’s beyond, down there in the black?

The car starts to barrel roll. Trees are rushing past. We’re not going to get to South America. My God, this is going to hurt.

We clip the trunk of one big tree and the side mirror and back door handle are removed. The back door starts to swing open. Two trees ahead. Tall and slender with stringy looking bark.

We hit them. The seat tries to drive through your spine. The trees snap, their roots are torn clear of the mountain earth and we start to ride up the twin trunks towards the branches, like a cat climbing a ladder. Very gently, the trees fall, their upper branches snagging the limbs of other trees. They put the car on its side on the ground.

Hamish and I hit hands as we turn off

(Continued on page 105)



The car lay on its side. Loose items tumbled out. We heard them bouncing down the mountainside.



(Continued from page 100)

the master switch. There's a high pressure fuel pump in the boot and we don't want a broken pipe spraying petrol on hot, mangled metal. All the lights go out. The darkness is terrifying.

THE CAR was on its right side, balancing on a ledge thick with ferns and stinging nettles. Broken branches and shredded bark covered us.

"Don't get out," Hamish warned. "There's a big drop down there."

But Jack wasn't getting out. He was falling out. He had undone his seat belt and twisted to brace his feet against the door... but the door was wide open and swinging in the nettles that bordered the ledge on which we were perched. Jack's legs and hips slipped from the car. I had begun to turn, to see if he was all right, and just managed to grab him by the shoulders. He seized the back of my neck with a hand that tightened like a band of iron. A few loose items tumbled out of the car. We could hear them bouncing down the side of the mountain. It was a long way to the bottom. He pulled himself back into the car, and began massaging his leg.

"Are you hurt?" Hamish said. Jack nodded, his teeth clenched in pain.

"What's the trouble?"

"Bloody stinging nettle."

It was the only injury any of us suffered.

Climbing through Hamish's door, we inspected the car by torchlight. The front wheel on the left-hand side was missing. The studs had sheared — that was the crack we'd heard — and the wheel had come off. Probably not tightened at the last service point. Michelotti's elegant nose was squashed but, incredibly, neither the suspension nor engine appeared to be damaged. We had a spare hub, which meant we could fit another wheel. If we could get back on the road, we could continue in the rally.

While Hamish and Jack examined the car further, I climbed to the road to get help. The first car on the scene was one of the Rolls Royces. It was driven by a middle-aged Englishman who was travelling with his two sons as crew.

"Jolly bad luck," he said. "Would you like a cup of tea?"

I suppose I was a little shocked from the crash, but I had the crazy thought I was imagining the scene. Tea? We were desperate for time, we needed a tow truck and here was a man in a Rolls talking like Noel Coward. He looked at me with concern. "We have a thermos."

"No thank you." For heavens sake, now

I sounded like Noel Coward. "We need a tow truck. We don't have much time. If you could enquire at the next control, I'd be grateful. It's about 15 kilometres away."

He looked offended. "I know where it is," he said, and ran through a list of towns in the region and their one common feature — a lack of tow trucks. The man must have spent a lot of time there.

"The nearest tow truck is based in Nice and that's 100 kilometres away," he said. "I shall try at the control, of course, but I doubt whether you'll be in luck."

A voice murmured from the depths of the Rolls. "We should be going. We don't have much time."

The driver raised a hand to silence his son. "I'll try to get a tow truck. I'm not hopeful." He paused. "You've had jolly bad luck. Are you sure you wouldn't like a cup of tea?"

I assured him, and the Rolls moved smoothly on its way. Forty-five minutes later, a tow truck arrived. Its home base was Nice, but it had been hired by Peugeot to be at the start of the prime in case any of the Peugeots needed assistance. From the tow truck stepped three men who looked like the front row of a Rugby scrum. They were delighted to have someone to rescue. And they brought us a present: our lost wheel, which they had found lying on the road at the bottom of the valley!

The mountainside sparkled with lights as people, who had been spectating at the control point, drove up the road to see the crashed Triumph. Soon, there was a throng around us. They cheered as the car was brought up in two stages — once, to a gentle slope near the road (where Jack posed on the roof for flash pictures) and then, in a much easier lift, on to the bitumen itself.

It took us half an hour to replace the front hub. There was no disc brake assembly on the new hub, so we had to seal off the hydraulic line with a ball bearing. Our spot lights had vanished in the impact but the four main headlamps were still intact, although wildly out of adjustment. They lit the tops of the trees.

We had 15 km to cover in fewer than 15 minutes, with the brakes working on three wheels and our lights aimed at the stars. If we were late, we would be out of the rally. The control was nearly deserted when we swept in, one tyre howling against a crumpled guard. A solitary official was folding his banners. He looked at his clock and smiled. We had three minutes to spare.

AS THE field strung itself across France, the World Cup Rally had been distilled into a three-make contest: Citroen versus Ford versus Leyland. Our side was lagging.

Rene Trautmann's Citroen DS21 still led, but the bridge-jumping Hannu Mikkola had moved his Ford Escort into second place. Guy Verrier's Citroen had slipped to third, Timo Makinen's Escort was up to fourth — a remarkable result, considering his distributor failure in Yugoslavia — and Patrick Vanson, in another Citroen, was fifth. The best placed Triumph was the car of Brian Culcheth, whose 2.5 PI was sixth, just ahead of Robert Neyret's Citroen and Paddy Hopkirk's Triumph. Paddy would have been in the first five but for the delay caused by the trucks.

Rauno Aaltonen, virtually the last man at Sofia because of his split gearbox, had caught up amazingly well to be ninth, ahead of Tony Fall's Escort and Andrew Cowan's Triumph. The top dozen was rounded off by the Escort of Polish driver Sobieslaw Zasada. Five Escorts, four Citroens, three Triumphs. The works Mini had been driven flat-out, as it was supposed to be, and had paid the penalty. It had crashed.

The leading female driver was Rene Trautmann's wife, Claudinne. The Trautmanns looked like making money at Lisbon. Big 'part-way' awards were to be given there, for the rally leader, the best placed privateer and the leading woman driver. They were going to collect the lot.

HAMISH AND Jack worked hard through the French prime. Hamish had pace notes for this stage and called distances and speeds for each corner. Jack leaned out the back door window — or where the window should have been, for the glass had shattered in the crash — and tried to illuminate the road with a hand-held spotlight. One man was drawing a verbal picture, the other trying to fill in the shadowy blanks.

The mountains secreted patches of fog. Hitting these misty walls was like driving into white fire. The beams of our deranged headlamps blazed across our line of vision like criss-crossed searchlights and made the fog flash with a brilliance that seared the eyeballs. Jack had tied his belt around the door to keep it closed. Trusting the belt, he hung wide from the car to try to keep the spotlight's beam on the road. His hand was nearly frozen when we reached the end of the prime. He said nothing, but put it against



No cars passed, because we were the last car in the rally. I hate being last.



the back of my sweating neck and laughed when I jumped.

Just beyond the control, another group of Abingdon mechanics was waiting. They knew what had happened, for our benefactor in the Rolls had searched for them to tell them we were over a cliff. The men's faces were a mix of emotions. Their mouths smiled greetings but their eyes were creased with worry.

"How much time can you spare?" the man in charge asked.

"None," Hamish said.

The Abingdon man grinned, like someone who's heard that answer before. His team, possibly the best mechanics and fixers in the world, were already assessing priorities — what had to be done, and what could be left until later.

Again, our enemy was time. Being so close to the late limit, every minute lost in making repairs had to be regained on the road. We were now faced with the long haul to Lisbon. The car had to be in proper running order to survive the fast drive across France, Spain and Portugal. There was another prime to negotiate — in Portugal — and there was the ghastly spectre of being behind time at Lisbon and missing the boat to Brazil. But we couldn't run all that way with our lights fanning the heavens and our tyres squealing like hell on every corner.

Jack and Hamish ate and helped the mechanics. I tried to sleep in the car, for a lot of hard driving lay ahead of us. The car was jacked up, hammered and shaken. Metal groaned as it was levered back into shape and clanged as it was thumped with a sledgehammer. I could hear the clicketty-click of ratchets, the hiss and pop of welding torches and the occasional oath as a knuckle lost skin. It was a disturbed rest, like trying to sleep in the engine room of a ship that's thrown a rod as the vessel founders in a storm.

No cars passed, because we were the last car in the rally. I hate being last.

And so I lay in that rocking, echoing car, befuddled by tiredness and disappointment and wondering whether we truly could get back into this rally and keep the team intact.

Hamish was a good bloke. He'd got over the shock of our first off-the-road leap and was taking it all calmly. Nothing like driving off two cliffs to steady a man down. Good driver, too.

Jack was quite simply Jack Murray which is saying he is one of this world's great men. I'd have given my life for him and he'd have done the same for me as long as I wasn't dying in some ridiculous

way, in which case he might have had trouble stopping laughing. We were going to laugh about this when it was all over. At least I hoped so.

I began to feel some sort of affection for the car. What a heart it had! The rest of it might be crook but there was something worthwhile deep down. And then the tiredness which had been hovering on the fringe of consciousness, like a wave gathering strength offshore, came flooding around me and I was overwhelmed by sleep.

They worked on the car for two hours. The fan had begun to chew the radiator so they replaced them both. They put in new hub and brake on the side that had lost the wheel, beat out the mudguards so that the tyres could almost turn to full lock, and tried to restore some shape to the nose so that the lights could be reset to illuminate the road. The back door was bent like a banana. The mechanics had no spare door with them, of course, so they pressed it as flat as possible and wired it shut. Even so, the edges were kinked and air could pass easily through the gap between door and body.

What we overlooked was the exhaust pipe. Its outlet yawned beneath the damaged door. The pipe was specially made for the rally, being shorter than the normal Triumph exhaust and bent to discharge its gases out the side of the car. And with it pumping fumes into the cabin, we drove across France and into Spain.

By Pamplona, in northern Spain, Hamish and I, sitting in the front, were glassy eyed and Jack, lying in the back with his head next to the door, was close to unconsciousness. It was late at night as we drove through Pamplona. Jack suddenly stirred and tried to force open the wired door. Then, in a strange frenzy, as though he were acting in slow motion, he tried to beat open the other door — the one which had no internal handle because it had been converted into a tool rack.

"Quick," he groaned. "Let me out. I'm crook."

Hamish was driving. He stopped the car in one of the city's busiest streets.

"Guts ache," said Jack, speaking with difficulty. "Must have a crap."

He headed towards a restaurant. It must have been a fancy one, for there was a doorman standing outside. This person, seeing a hunched man in blue overalls staggering towards him, began retreating towards the door. The tasselled epaulettes on his fancy coat were quivering. Bare footed and dirt stained, Jack asked if he could use the toilet. He

spoke in English but he might as well have tried Swahili.

The doorman backed away. Jack mimed his need. The other man's eyes opened wide in distress, assuming some form of unconventional attack was about to be launched. Jack, in the pose of a Sumo wrestler, rolled his eyes and fainted.

When I reached him, there was sign of neither breath nor pulse. Every muscle in his body was rigid and to touch his skin was like feeling soft leather over stone. In falling, he had hit his head. Blood was trickling from a small cut on his nose. It was still flowing, so he was alive.

The doorman had now spotted our car with all its rally signs, understood who we were and called an ambulance. Jack began to breathe heavily. He opened one eye.

"Do you know something?" he said. "I think I've cacked the nest."

AN AMBULANCE took him to a first aid centre. Hamish and I followed in the Triumph. Jack had indeed dirtied his overalls and he showered and washed the garment. He had nothing else to wear. I gave him my rally jacket and fetched a sleeping bag from the car.

He seemed a lot better, but then fell over again, and the ambulance attendant suggested he take him to a hospital so that a doctor could examine him. Dressed like someone taking part in a sack race, with a rally jacket covering his top and the sleeping bag held to his hips, he was led to the ambulance and driven to hospital.

Two nurses stepped forward to help him walk to a waiting trolley. Jack reached to take their outstretched arms and dropped the sleeping bag. It was an impressive introduction.

He was strapped to the trolley and rolled away. We farewelled the ambulanceman and then waited for someone to return and tell us what was happening. No one did. Hamish and I were left in the deserted entrance to a large hospital. It was nearly midnight. We searched for someone, found a young nurse, and were led to a young woman who spoke English.

"They are going to keep your friend overnight and X-ray him in the morning," she said.

We asked to see the doctor and explained our predicament. If Jack had to stay in hospital we would be out of the rally. If he could be examined straight away, we would know whether he could continue or not.

"You could not go on without him, and

(Continued on page 113)

“What’s wrong with these bastards?” JM grumbled.
He got in the car, still wearing only my jacket.”

he could join you later?” the doctor enquired through the girl, who was translating for us.

“No. The rules say you must keep the same crew all the way.”

He nodded understanding and went to a phone. We could hear Jack coming for a full minute before he rolled into view, still strapped to the trolley. He is proficient in two languages, English and Profane, and he was expressing his discontent in both.

When he saw us, he let fly: “What the hell are you pair of poofers doing, putting me on this thing. A man’s just got a guts ache.” He glanced at the two nurses.

“He sounds healthy,” said the doctor. The girl did not attempt a translation. The doctor took Jack into a small room, undid the straps and began to examine him.

“I’d say he is in tremendous pain,” he said. “His stomach muscles are knotted. I would like to keep him in hospital but it would be all right for him to go with you if you had him examined when you get to wherever you are going.”

We nodded agreement.

“I should give him an injection, to relax his muscles and put him asleep.”

I told Jack, and helped him to a stool in the corner. He began to recite his catechism, and then started a hymn.

“That’s not bad, is it?” he said. “I haven’t sung that since I was seven.”

“May I give him the injection?” said the doctor, an edge of uncertainty creeping into his voice.

“He wants to give you a needle,” I told Jack. “Then we can get out of here.”

Jack nodded, but had a curious look in his eyes. He began to hum the hymn. The two nurses moved forward to help him to his feet.

For many years, Jack Murray was a champion wrestler and the sight of two persons advancing on him — specially persons who had just had him strapped on his back — must have roused old instincts. As each nurse touched his arm, Jack grabbed them in wrist locks, pulled them off balance and then, with a phenomenal display of strength, sent both nurses cartwheeling across the room.

They somersaulted to the opposite wall, passing the startled doctor in a whirl of white underwear and black boots.

With that effort, Jack fell off the stool and lay on the floor, his backside bare. The doctor rushed forward, stuck the needle in, and suggested we get him out of the hospital as quickly as possible. Within minutes, we were on our way to Portugal.

THE NEXT hours were a nightmare.

Hamish and I drove in shifts that shrank in time until we could manage no more than 20 minutes at the wheel. When we changed, we would run around the car, examine the tyres, jump up and down — do anything to try to keep awake. We were so desperately short of time we couldn’t consider the luxury of stopping the car while we both slept.

Jack seemed to be in a drugged sleep. But after one bout of running and jumping I came back to the car to find Jack awake and sitting behind the wheel.

“I’m right, Jack,” I said. “My turn. You get in the back and have a rest.”

He looked at me, and his eyes were sharp. “You look as though you’ve just gone 15 rounds with Joe Louis,” he said. “Get in the back and have some sleep.”

He sounded like the Jack Murray of old, so I climbed into the back seat, covered my head with pillows, and was asleep within minutes. At some time in the morning, I was stirred to wakefulness by feeling the car stop. A front tyre had punctured, and Jack was changing it. Passing cars were tooting their horns.

“What’s wrong with these bastards?” Jack grumbled as he got back in the car, still wearing only my jacket.

THE FINAL European prime was in the north of Portugal and ran through a chain of rocky hills. The rocks, in fact, were to prove a hazard for two of the Mercedes-Benz in the event. The first car slid wide on a bend and destroyed itself against a large rock, embedded in the edge of the road. The impact was sufficiently strong to move the rock and roll it into the centre of the road.

The next car around the bend was another Mercedes, driven by the East African Safari winner Edgar Herrmann. He collected the rock head on, and was also put out of the rally.

After the excitement of the prime came a lazy run to Lisbon. The day was warm, and the road, lined with tall eucalypts, shimmered with rising layers of heat haze. Jack and Hamish slept.

Anyone who has ever been weary, and tried to drive a car through the hottest part of the day with companions asleep around him will understand the dreadful battle that has to be fought to stay awake. Your eyes won’t focus. The eyelids grow heavy. You slap your face. Put your head out the window. Eyes stream in the rush of warm air. Back inside. Your head begins to sag and loll. You eat something. Drink something. Slap the face again. Must keep going. Must stay on the road.

We’ve been on the road one week. One week, and you’ve had a few hours in a bath tub. A mechanic is waiting with a car outside Lisbon.

“Quick, follow me.”

You’re wide awake. You’re going to make it. Jack and Hamish stir. You start singing. Jack belts you on the back of the head with a pillow and laughs. But the mechanic isn’t leading you to the control. He turns into a garage. The service crew is waiting, with wheels and parts spread on the floor. There’s laughing and cheering and you’ve accomplished something, by just getting here.

“We have very little time,” Hamish warns.

Already men are walking on the car, unbolting the bonnet. There’s a cylinder head.

“You’ll be able to try six cylinders in South America,” one man says, and grins.

The head is changed. There’s more panel beating. Even a painter is there, to signwrite a new front number plate, to replace the XJB 303H that was destroyed in the crash. Inevitably, there’s a hold-up. Some bolts don’t fit. Hamish studies his watch and perspiration pops from his brow.

“We only have 10 minutes.”

We get in, tighten the belts. Someone thumps the bonnet.

“You’re right. Follow the guide. He’ll take you straight to the control.”

The guide has taken a massive dose of Fangio pills and is off. The man is crazy. Down the wrong side of the road, past rows of cars and buses, lights flashing, horn blaring. People smile and wave when they see the rally car in pursuit. The Triumph is flying. So this is what it should be like. Jack is whooping in the back seat.

The control is at the wharf, where cars are to be loaded for Rio de Janeiro.

Beyond some buildings, we can see the spidery outline of cranes. Then funnels, flags, World Cup banners. The guide slows and pulls to the side of the road. He waves us on. A mouthful of teeth smile as we blaze past.

Into the control. The English official looks up. “I say, I thought you’d retired.”

Hamish rushes to the clock. Jack and I stay in the car, panting, hoping, worrying.

Hamish returns with doleful look on his lean face.

“Three minutes. Three lousy minutes.”

“Don’t tell me we missed out by three minutes,” Jack bellows.

“No,” he says softly, starting to smile.

“We made it by three lousy minutes.” □

Continued next month.

Services available to Members

The W.A. P76 Owners club accepts no responsibility for any problems that may arise from these services



For all your stationery requirements

Call club member

James Mentiplay

Phone: (08) 9457 7077

Fax (08) 9457 7099

Unit 4, 9 Yampi Way

Willetton WA 6155

For South of the river

Auto Repairs

Call Club Member

Rod Tenardi

MEDINA AUTOMOTIVE SERVICE

112 Stanyford Way, Medina.

Ph 9419 3951



OUTBACK AUTOMOTIVE RESTORATIONS

Panel & Paint



SPECIALISING IN LEYLAND P76

Spares, Repairs and Paint



Top Quality Resprays and Insurance Work.

Call Club Member Tony Moisley

on 9459 8011

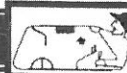
6 Davison St, Maddington

**Maddington
Transmissions**

Doug Berry

Unit 1, 3 Kitson Place, Maddington, WA 6109
Telephone: 9493 0218

Ultra B-O-N-D



Nigel Woodward

PROPRIETOR

7a Caple Street, Willagee WA 6156

Mobile: 0419 912 915

**Do you need a discount towing service
Give statewide towing a GO
Don't forget to tell him you're a P76 club member.
Statewide Tow & Salvage PTY LTD
10 Bellamy St O Connor 6163**

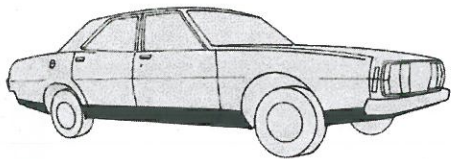


- Windscreen Chip Repairs
- Glass Scratch Polishing
- Plastic Headlight Polishing
- Bore Water Removal
- Prompt & Reliable Service

RETURN ADDRESS: PO BO

KWINANA W.A. 6167

LEYLAND P76 Owners Club of West Australia inc.



QLD P76 Owners Club
PO BOX 343
Carina
QLD

4152

