



# TORQUETUBE

**Newsletter of Riley Motor Club Qld , Australia Inc. August 2017**



**Mathew French's Riley 9, photographed recently at Alan and Sheila Hill's home. Bill French's owned the car in the 1960s (Mathew's Dad). He sold it to Alan Hill who then sold it to Mike Hawthorn. Mathew bought it back again in 2013 and restored it to its current condition.**

## Editorial

Thank you to Bill and Beverly Bunt, Marshall Holmes, Alan Lecki, and Colin Clark for your car stories. Special thanks to Martin Bell for recollections from his time with Austin distributors of Melbourne.

Pictured on the cover page is Mathew French's Riley 9. Readers may remember a story about Percy (the Riley 9) during the restoration process in the November 2016 edition of Torquetube. Although Mathew says Percy is not completely finished, it is on the road again. Congratulations , Mathew.

Thank you also to Trevor Taylor and Robert and Dulce Spiers for the photographs and

story about the recent tour of Victoria Barracks. Our foreign correspondent, Chris Reynolds in England made the magazine complete. Thank you to Alec Gatherer (Editor of RM Magazine) for the dates of RM manufacture.



## The editor appreciates receiving articles by the 21st of the Month

### THE 2017 RILEY MOTOR CLUB QLD ELECTED COMMITTEE

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## SAMFORD SHOW 15-16 JULY

Ron and Cynthia Cochrane's 1960 Rolls Royce Silver Cloud was voted Best Classic Car at the Samford Show 2017



**Above: Show President; Trevor Taylor who is also Vice President of the Riley Motor Club Qld presenting the Best Classic Car trophy to Ron Cochrane with Ron's Silver Cloud in the background.**

Over 100 vehicles were on display enjoying good weather and great family days out.

A total of 9 Riley Motor club members brought their Rileys to the event and enjoyed the Grand Parade Drive around the arena.

It was the 9th year that classic cars have been a part of the show, and it is steadily growing in popularity. There were 75 cars on show on the Saturday and 60 on the Sunday. Those members with other marques included Ron Cochrane's iconic 1960 Rolls Royce Silver Cloud and his 1946 Buick and Bill White's MGA. There was a wide range of vehicles on display, but one of the standouts was a 1917 Dodge showing off its superb original leather upholstery - 100 years young!

The RMB that the Club is selling on behalf of a country member popped its top radiator hose

at the end of the Grand Parade, and we were grateful it had the perseverance and good taste not to do it in the middle of the parade in front of the grandstand. It was all fixed in a jiffy by Ian Henderson and Bill White. Greg May in his Pathfinder got a flat tyre when approaching the Grand Parade and had to pull out to change the tyre.

**Below: Classic Cars at the Samford Show**



Beautiful weather and a very scenic spot - the large showground is ringed by mountains- a wide range of interests and activities for all members of the family. Events and attractions included equestrian events, a circus spectacular, pig racing, dog jumping, a bush band and a bonfire, poultry exhibit, reptile display and a heart-stopping display of motocross stunts by FMX Kaos. Pencil it in your diary for next year and see if we can't get even more Rileys there!

Trevor Taylor and Robert and Dulce Spiers



# AUGUST RILEY MOTOR CLUB EVENTS PROGRAM

**Tuesday 1st and 8th** Riley Boys at the Clubhouse—Restorers activities, friendship and technical advice.

**Thursday 10th at 8 PM: Monthly General Meeting of the Riley Motor Club, Samford Showgrounds**

**Sunday 13 Aug** Run to Mt Tambourine: Meet at 9:00 at the Yatala Pie Shop, 48 Old Pacific Hwy, Yatala .

From there we travel to the Oxenford turnoff where we will meet up with our southside cousins, and head up to the Eagle Heights Mountain Resort, a cafe/restaurant for morning tea.

From there we take a short drive up the mountain to Fortitude Brewery and Cheese Factory and take a short walk to

The Gallery Walk, a collection of fascinating antique shops, specialty stores, art and craft shops, etc.

Then back to the Fortitude Brewery and Cheese Factory for lunch. A wide range of cheeses and beers are available as well as an excellent lunch. Please advise Robert on 0434 196991 of your intention to attend.

**Tuesday 15 and 22nd** Riley Boys at Clubhouse

**Sunday 27 Aug** Breakfast Run: Meet in Samford at 0800, leave at 0815 to Tinchi Tamba wetland reserve on the Pine River for 0900.

Join in reroute or go direct.

Regards. Trevor. 0407 717 853

**Tuesday 29th** Riley Boys at Clubhouse

## NON-CLUB EVENTS

**Friday to Sunday 4-6th Greazefest Rockabilly Festival**, Cleveland Showground, 9am-6pm. Markets, vintage bikes and cars, fashion parades, rockabilly bands, pinups, tattoos, art workshops.

**Sunday 6th Gatton Car, Ute and Bike Show** Gatton Showgrounds, 9am-2pm. Open to all makes and models. Dyno comp on the day, \$60 3 runs and a printout. Catering on site, kids stuff, raffles and trophies. Family fun Ph 0407 624445

**Friday to Sunday 11-13th Lakeside Classic:** Lakeside Park, Kurwongbah 9:30am-5pm. Access all areas, see some of the worlds most exciting cars up close

**Saturday and Sunday 12-13th Gold Coast Car Show:** Mudgeeraba Showgrounds 11am-3pm. Rockabilly Retro Car Show. Hundreds of cars, bikes, trucks. Hot rods, vintage, retro caravans. Live entertainment, dancing. Fireworks Saturday night. Market stalls, food stalls, bar, demonstrations, kids carnival rides.

**Sunday 13th Rocklea Swap Meet and Collector Car Display:** Rocklea Showground 5:30 am – 3pm. Stallholders sell a variety of goods, not all car related. Food tent.

**Friday to Sunday 18-20th Retro Rocks Nambour:** Nambour CBD, 9am-3pm. Live Rockabilly

bands, dancing, pinups, fashion parades, car show and shine, stalls.

**Saturday and Sunday 19-20th Leyburn Motor Sprints:** Leyburn , Darling Downs Show and Shine, retro caravan show-off, 15 trophy categories on offer

**Sunday 20th 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Classic Car Show and Shine:** Ebbw Vale Memorial Park Oval, 9am-5pm. All classics, hot rods and special interest vehicles. Live entertainment, food and drink stalls, 50s memorabilia stalls, raffles, trophies

**Saturday 26th Ruff n Tuff Charity Car Show:** Biggenden Showgrounds, 9-5pm. Swap meet, Show and Shine with 25 trophies, sound off, burn-out competition, bar, food and trade stalls.

**Saturday 26th Eudlo Car and Motorcycle Show:** Eudlo State School, 9-2pm. Show and Shine, all makes and models. Food, drinks, live music, kids zone and cold drinks etc.

**Sunday 27th Corey Lawson Memorial Car Show:** Noosa District Sport Complex, Tewantin, 7am-12pm. Open to all classics, customs, hot rods, muscle cars and special interest vehicles

**Sunday 27th Jimboomba Auto Extravaganza and Swap Meet:** Tully Park, Greenbank Road, Maclean Bridge, 6am-1pm. Vintage, veteran, classic, sports, street rods

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## **Rob Thomas and the Perryman car**

Hi there Phil, I am really happy to have the "Perryman Family Truckster". She will be well looked after. All going well I should pick her up this Saturday morning 22 July.  
Rob.

## **Lois Archer**

Hey Phil, Have to say that I'm really enjoying receiving all the Riley mags from other states. Most of the time I don't even know where they are or where they are going to, but it's great to know that our Riley's are all over the country. Am definitely hoping to get to Caloundra next May even if it's only for a day trip.  
Regards Lois Archer

## **Chris Reynolds**

Will look forward to meeting up on my permanent return....I'll actually be there in October but I have already a VERY packed program so no time for any Riley events I think.

I'm off today to England for nearly 2 months, and will be mostly on a leisurely canal boat, so will try to find some time to put together a paragraph for inclusion with the "jumper" photos.

Also I found photos of the HID lights installation I put on my Riley so will send you a paragraph or two on that for use in a slow news month! All I have to do is brush up my memory of the job, which was back in 2014 I think!

Best wishes,.....Chris Reynolds

## **Simon Schooneveldt**

Torque Tube is getting better and better. Thanks for including my little bit in the mention of Ray Perryman's passing.

I have restored another RMA engine which I would like to sell to clear some space for yet another project.

Thanks, Cheers  
Simon S.

## **Wendy Lonie**

Dear Editor, just a short note to let you know that your article in the June Torque Tube on the history of Loane Bros in Maleny who sold

Riley cars was extremely interesting and much appreciated. Members may remember past Members, John & Eve Romer who owned the lovely yellow & black 1950 RMB. On the dashboard of their car was a small brass plate with Loane Bros. engraved on it.

Wendy Lonie.

## **Linden Thomson**

Just received July TT, thanks. However I should point out a substantial error re Ray Perryman's car - it is an RME, one of the early ones that still had the RMA body (had to use them up, I guess), but it has all-hydraulic brakes and open tail shaft.

Cheers,  
Linden

Being prone to substantial errors, I thought it prudent to include the following:

**RMA** 1 1/2 litre saloon built between 1945 and 1952. Hydro-mechanical brakes and torque-tube rear axle

**RMB** Beefed up version of the RMA but with 2 1/2 chassis and mechanicals.

**RME** 1 1/2 saloon made between 1952 and 1955. All hydraulic brakes and open propeller shaft. In October 1953 the RME was restyled resulting in the running boards being substituted for cilles, the front and rear mudguards acquiring a front to rear crease, and spats fitted to the rear guards. The windscreen was also slightly enlarged .

**RMF** Similar but with 2 1/2 chassis and mechanicals. No major body restyling took place on the RMF; at the time when the RME was being restyled, the RMF was discontinued and replaced by the Pathfinder.

**RMH** Pathfinder. Snap up the one on offer pictured in this magazine

**RMC** The 2 1/2 litre Sports three seater also known as the Roadster

**RMD** 2 1/2 litre Drophead Coupe'.

**RMG** 1 1/2 litre version of the Pathfinder, mercifully euthanized at birth.

# WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

## About Marshall Holmes

I was born and bred in Brisbane. I have always admired old English cars and now in this stage of my life I am finally getting enough time to pursue this passion. I am now involved in a major restoration project with my 1950 RMB. I am also part way through another restoration project with a 1963 Triumph Spitfire – a very different car to the Riley but both fill different parts to my personality.



I have been trained as a mechanical engineer and have worked in the oil and gas

industry for 30 years – now in a government regulatory role. In addition I also have been involved with the scouts since I was 8 years old and now am a leader of the Venturer scouts section (aged 15 to 18) at Nundah and enjoy the bushwalking, camping and outdoor life and all the challenges that teenagers bring. Recently I restored an old Queenslander house where I live at Northgate. My two daughters are now old enough to look after themselves and now have I some spare time to myself so that I can enjoy the Riley. These projects keep me busy on the weekends.



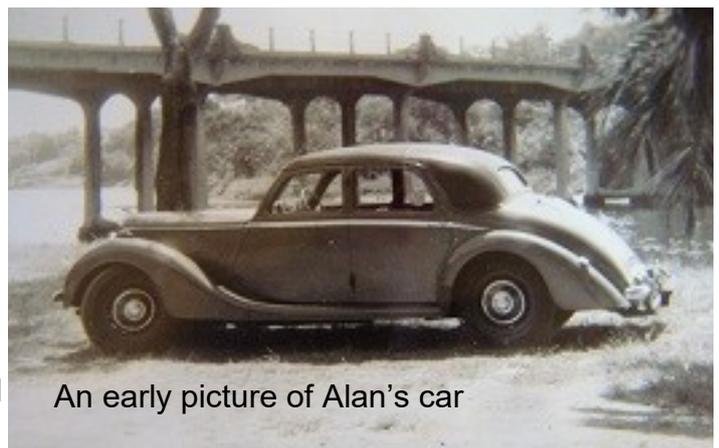
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## About Alan Lecky

Miss M.M. and Miss B.M. Reilly of Mooney Ponds, Victoria imported Riley Saloon VO683 Engine number 9291 into Australia from England on 10 August 1957. The vehicle was a 1952 RMA. Nothing is known about the car's history in England but a complete history has been preserved since then. The ladies of Mooney Ponds kept the car insured and in 1960 paid twenty-one pounds, four shillings and eight pence to comprehensively insure the car for 375 Pounds. A friend and perhaps a neighbour kept the car maintained for the ladies and numerous invoices were made out to his name; Mr Jack Decker. In 1990 the ladies had the car stripped back to metal and repainted an olive green.

It appears that the ladie's financial advisor liked the car and may have made more than one of-

fer to buy it. It is thought that he may have had regular contact with the ladies over the years and in the end the car passed hands in 2012. One can easily assume that by the time of the sale the two women had become quite elderly. The person who purchased the car joined the Victorian Riley Motor Club and took great care of the car until 2015 when he sold it to me.



An early picture of Alan's car

My interest in Rileys began when looking through a 'Just cars' magazine and saw a Riley for sale. I did consider a Rolls Royce but they are a high maintenance and expensive car to maintain so my attention refocused on Rileys. In 2015, we were in Tasmania on a caravan holiday so while there I started looking for a Riley that was for sale. When we returned to Melbourne I again looked for a Riley that was for sale. Fortune was on my side and I met Des Stayches. He was a Victorian Riley Motor Club member and when I saw the car it was exactly as he described it to be. When the transaction had been completed he drove it to the goods yard for Vic rail and it was put on a flat top goods carriage and in due course it was delivered to the Brisbane Rail yard. From there I drove it home to Mooloolah Valley.

The car has never been restored. The paint job done in 1990 is as good as it was when it came out of the gun. The original wiring can be seen under the bonnet. The interior is very neat and tidy and the green leather seat covers are in very good condition. The roof covering has a few little cracks. These have been treated but the car doesn't leak and it doesn't rain in Queensland?



As a young man, I did a mechanical apprenticeship but have spent most of my life working on the administration side of businesses. During my working life, I have worked with big diesel engines and conducted tests on engines before returning them to service. Be-

cause of the high noise levels, I have a little bit of industrial deafness and this may have contributed to blowing up the engine in my Riley. I have always tuned cars by ear and may have advanced the timing a little too far. At the time, I was returning home from a 'Horseless Carriage' Rally with my partner and passengers in the back seat. At first the engine started to miss and then 'boom'. Thankfully we were not far from home. When the head was taken off the engine I could see that a hole had been burned through a piston.



**Above: a newly engineered block**

The block and conrods were taken to Nambour Engine Machining to line bore the mains and the big ends. Mitsubishi shells suited the big ends so they were machined to take them. 40 thou oversized JP pistons have been purchased and when they are delivered the engine will be rebuilt and fitted back into the car. When complete the car will be timed using a dial gauge.



## COMMITTEE NEWS

**Secretary:** Mark reported that that number of Riley enthusiasts have applied for membership. The club has accepted their applications and Mark has extended a welcome to them. (Edit: encouraging news for the club's future)

**Club Captain:** Robert organised a Victoria Barracks tour for July 22nd and has written a report for Torquetube.

**National Rally 2018:** Wendy has assembled a program, entry form and cost summary and this may be found on page 9 and 10 of this edition of Torquetube.

**Riley Club House:** The development work is progressing and costings are likely to come under budget.

### Adjacent : Simon Schooneveldt's Elf

Some cars seem to turn up everywhere there is a party. Pictured is Simon's Elf at the RACQ show. Also present was Robin Hull with his RMB.



## NATIONAL RILEYS *In* CALOUNDRA

Hello Dear Riley Members, here is your much anticipated Program and Entry form for Queensland Rileys, 2018 in Caloundra. In the Entry Form, you will find further information for our event and costings. To date, we have had tremendous response through the Expressions of Interest which augers well for May 2018.

I do request that if possible you submit your entry form and payment sooner rather than later which will make our job easier. If you have any queries regarding the event, accommodation etc. please do not hesitate to contact us. An email with the entry form and accommodation form will be sent in mid August to all who submitted an Expression of Interest Form.

As stated in the original Queensland Rileys flyer, we intend to continue the tradition of a fantastic event. Caloundra on our beautiful Sunshine Coast in May should be superb and we believe the program that we have put together will deliver. Don't forget the theme at the presentation dinner is "tropical" so I am hoping the dining room will be a sea of outrageous tropical colour!

Hope to see you in Caloundra,  
Wendy Lonie  
Mob: 0417 857075

# Queensland

## National Rierys in Caloundra, QLD

7<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> May 2018

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW (ITEMS IN RED AT OWN COST)

PROGRAM/DATE	TIME	WHAT	WHERE
Monday 7 <sup>th</sup> May	3pm onward	Arrival & Registration	The Oaks Resort Golden Beach, Caloundra
	6.30pm for 7pm	Welcome Dinner	The Oaks Resort
Tuesday 8 <sup>th</sup> May	8.30am	Coach/Ferry to Pelican Waters & return	Morning Tea at Pelican Waters Tavern
	12md	Lunch at The Oaks or in town	
	1-2pm	Workshops for State Office Bearers	
	2.30pm	Tai Chi. Arvo tea Gymkhana	
	6.30pm for 7pm	Dinner	The Oaks Resort
	8.30am	Morning Tea	
Wednesday 9 <sup>th</sup> May		Choice of museum visit or mini French cooking school	Koogie Downs turf/strawberry farm
	12md	Lunch in Pomona	Pomona Village Square Pomona
	3pm	Silent Theatre Dinner	The Oaks Resort
	6.30pm for 7pm		
Thursday 10 <sup>th</sup> May	8.30am	Driving	Rally to the Hinterland Maleny Car Club
	10am	Morning Tea	
	12md	Lunch Presentation Dinner.	Montville
	6.30pm for 7pm	Tropical theme	The Oaks Resort
Friday 11 <sup>th</sup> May	8.30am	Drive and complementary brunch	Queensland Riley Clubhouse

**ENTRY FORM**

Please print clearly in block capital letters

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Vehicle Year/Make/Model: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Vehicle Registration No: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Dietary Requirements: \_\_\_\_\_

All entrants participate in this event solely at their own risk and responsibility. In this entry to attend the event, the applicant releases the organizers of any and all loss, damage or injury to the applicant, their party or their vehicle.

The entrant and party shall waive the right of action at law against the organizers, sentatives or agents for loss, damage or injuries arising from attending this event.

All entrants and their party also agree to have their names and contact details listed tributed to Riley attendees.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

Next page: **Cost summary** please insert number of attendees in the small boxes beside the event

	Morning	Afternoon	Dinner	Sub Totals
Mon 7 <sup>th</sup>			The Oaks Resort \$35.00 pp	\$
Tues 8 <sup>th</sup>	Bus & Ferry \$20		The Oaks Resort \$35.00 pp	\$
Wed 9 <sup>th</sup>	Morning Tea and either tour of museum or cooking school \$10 pp		The Oaks Resort \$35.00 pp	\$
Thurs 10 <sup>th</sup>	Morning tea \$10		The Oaks Resort \$35.00 pp	
<b>Total Daily Events &amp; Meals</b>				\$
<b>Event Entry Fee (per car)</b>				\$65.00
<b>Total Cost</b>				\$

Completed entry form and cost summary to be emailed or posted by 1st April 2018, with cheque enclosed or direct debit payment.

submitting Early returns would be very much appreciated. Thank you.

liability for Email: [kenlonie@bigpond.com](mailto:kenlonie@bigpond.com)

Address: 44 Benecke Road

their repre- Maleny QLD 4552

Direct Debit

Bank: Bendigo Bank

above dis-Account Name: Riley Motor Club Queensland Incorpo-

rated BSB: 633-000

Account No: 156635229

\*Add your surname as payment reference please\*

# VICTORIA BARRACKS TOUR by Robert Spiers

Last Saturday nine of us went to Victoria Barracks Army Museum on Petrie Terrace, Brisbane. We were well received by staff and volunteers. The tour began with an induction by Captain Steve Beck beside one of the barracks field guns, then we were escorted to the original Officers Quarters - a beautiful example of Victoria-na, featuring pressed metal ceilings, or-nate working fireplaces, picture rails, etc. Inside the Mess Ante Room, a brief history of the buildings (dating back to 1860 ) fol-



lowed, and then a delightful Devonshire tea was served in the officers mess in fine silver.

Some of the Mess traditions were outlined for us under portraits of the Queen and various military notables. Dress whites and port, gleaming regimental silverware laid out to the millimetre, no member of the mess is to enter the mess room before dinner is announced, at the conclusion of din-



ner and before drinking their wine, each officer says aloud, "The Queen," and so on.

We all received a souvenir booklet and then made our way to the billiard room where a splendid full size, slate based, billiard table made in Australia 130 years ago took pride of place. The walls were covered in photographs from the barracks history and other mounted items of warfare

and interest.

One curiosity was a small sliding panel that linked the room and its occupants to a bar, and drinks could be served through it without the need to actually leave the room.

We were then treated to a tour of the museums guns and field pieces, all beautifully restored, including a Bofors anti-aircraft gun that could fire 130 rounds a minute and a so-called '25 pounder' of the type that was used at El Alamein in Rommel's first defeat in the desert campaign.

It was an excellent tour, taking more than 2 hours, and more than half a dozen guides taking turns at various points to cover their area of expertise.

It would be impossible to cover all that we were shown, and that is a pity, but one of the notable things was the meticulous detail of a diorama of the 4th Light Horse Charge of Beersheba. Another, a chair that Australian POWs built during their time on the Burma Railway. An example of a piece of modern military kit (a field jacket lined with porcelain to protect against incoming fire) was passed around, letting all understand what it would be like wearing it and its massive weight all day long, male and female troops alike. In a curious little area of 'rainforest' between two buildings a small timber box was nailed to a tree a few metres off the ground. Captain Beck explained it was for a resident possum, and informed us that all animals on Department of Defence land are protected.

From Governor Bowen in 1860, through to all the conflicts Australia has been a part of until the present time, this official Army Museum continues to house, classify, exhibit and educate. It does this very well.



## A TOWNSVILLE RILEY by Bill Bunt

I grew up in Western Queensland, and as my father had a transport business, from an early age my daily diet was trucks and machinery. This was the beginning of a long career in mechanics. After the death of my father I moved to Townsville where I secured a position as a motor mechanic with Annand and Thompson. This company was the distributor of Rover cars, Land Rovers and Volkswagen, and had just established a branch in Townsville. I think it was 1955 or 1956.

As Volkswagen were new in Australia, the German company insisted that mechanics must attend their training schools which were at Annand and Thompsons' head office at Breakfast Creek Road in Brisbane. I attended all of these training schools and returned to Townsville being the first fully qualified VW mechanic in Townsville. I went on to become the workshop manager.

I left Annand and Thompson in 1961 and with a good friend purchased some equipment to work on the rebuilding the railway line between Mt Isa and Townsville. One of our jobs was to supply railway sleepers for the new track to lay on. After the railway track rebuild I came back to Townsville and worked for Sigi Graf, who was the Mack truck and Nissan UD dealer. He also had a large panel and paint shop, and the only large chassis straightening crush in Townsville. I learned a few tricks of the trade there.

In 1964 I purchased the Caltex dealership in Ingham and in 1969. I started the BP Distributorship in Townsville. This business grew like crazy and we had fuel tankers running all over North Queensland. As well as bulk fuel and oil distribution we had two service stations. In

1996, we sold this business and started the business of retirement. However, I think that something must have gone wrong because I now seem to be full time restoring old cars.

My first Riley was a RMA. It was advertised in Bundaberg. Then a RMB came up for sale in Pambula Beach. This was a coastal town on the NSW Victorian border. The car was in a very poor condition. There was no timber left in it, the engine and transmission was worn out and the body needed a lot of attention. In short it required a total rebuild. It was left in the shed for a few years until opportunity came to restore it. When the work began, Jack Warr provided lots of advice. He also provided a timber sample of an A frame which was copied using a band saw, electric plane and hand tools. I reckon that there must be 250 pieces of timber in a Riley and none of them were the same as any other piece. It took a couple of years to make all the timber parts for the frame and then to fit it all together.

**Below: The RMB assembled and painted.**



**The chassis number of my RMB is 6056606, and the engine number is the same. The photo above could be titled ‘a Work in Progress’ – the lovely blond in the background with me, is unfortunately not me, but a dear friend of mine who loves the cars too.**

My preference was to paint the car in acrylics. I have painted with two pack but acrylic paint is far more forgiving. You can make a mistake and fix it using acrylic but with two pack apart from being toxic it requires a spray booth and the skill to get it right. The colour chosen was 1983 Nissan Burgundy. I know that Rileys originally had black vinyl roof skins but I chose a cream colour.

The Repco workshop in Townsville ground the crank and machined the big ends and mains to take International Truck slipper shells. The block was also rebored to take oversized JP pistons and the engine was rebuilt in my shed. One issue is worth commenting on. The big



**Above: The car completed and on the road**

end bolts provided by the club seemed too soft. After years of building engines, you get a feel for these sorts of things and you just know when they are right or wrong. After a while grade 8 bolts were purchased from, 'Bolt Master'. The bolts used had Nylock nuts and these did the job nicely. Since fitting them they have provided a confidence during long trips in the Riley.

Another interesting point that arose during the NQ Riley Rally and that was with the dip stick. Apparently different dip sticks were used for different models and the dip stick that I had was not the correct one for my car. Robin suggested to me that I simply put 7.8 litres of oil in the car and mark the dip stick to get the right level. What I found was that my dip stick

showed full at only half the amount of oil specified by Riley.



**Above from the left: Bill Bunt, Robin Hull and Ken Lonie comparing dip sticks**

Other variations to the car includes the fitting of a thermo fan and a stay bar that ties the two mudguards together. It seemed to me that there was insufficient bracing for the front mudguards and what I have fitted is a bar that ties the guards together behind the radiator and at the top of the guards. This provides a rigidity that stops the guards from moving about during high speed runs.

Beverley and Bill Bunt

Townsville

P.S. Beverley does all the computer work as I don't even know how to turn the computer on!!!!

Below: Rob Thomas' RME now residing at his home in Wongawallen. It seems that all RMEs continued with RMA bodies until Oct 1953



## The Austin Distributors of Melbourne by Martin Bell

### A brief history of the distribution of British motor cars in Australia in the 1950's and 60's as well as some thoughtful side tracks.

The Austin Distributors, Victoria was located in South Melbourne during the 1950's and later at Brighton. They were the Australian distributors of British cars and sold cars to vehicle agents including Larke Hoskins in Sydney and a major vehicle agency in Brisbane. In 1952 they were the Australian agents for the Nuffield Motor Company led by Lord Nuffield and the Austin Motor Company led by Sir Leonard Lord. I was very fortunate in that I was with the Austin Distributors in 1953.

In 1953 the first Grand Prix at Albert Park Lake circuit was conducted and 3 Austin Healys were brought to Australia to compete. I was allocated to work at the Grand Prix as a first year apprentice. I was in the workshop area. We took the bumpers off, put tiny windshields on front and because they ran hot in Australia we put blocks of timber under the bonnet and strapped them down to give extra ventilation. It was the beginning of the round Australia Car Trails. It could have been in 1953 that I saw the first Riley in a Red Ex trial. The Red Ex went from Sydney, Brisbane, Townsville Heartbreak Highway to Mt Isa, Tenant Creek, Darwin and straight down the centre through the Alice, Port Augusta and then to Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney mostly on dirt two wheel tracks and



Above: Austin Healys with bonnets ajar

gravel and this was the Highway.

In 1954 the company became BMC in Australia and they were the Australian agents for Austin, Morris, Worsley and MG. Later Rileys were offered but by this time car makes were simply a badge swapping exercise. During this same year the mechanical parts for all makes became uniform and the series 2 Morris Minor had the same engine and transmission as the Austin A 30. During this period the Morris Isis, Austin A 90 was the same as the Riley Pathfinder and mechanically they were all fitted with the BMC series C motors with the same transmission. At the same time there was the B type 4 cylinder in the Austin A 50, Morris Oxford and Worsley 1500 and with badge swapping the Riley 1.5, the MGA were all the same motor and transmission.

The first A type motor was only 803 CC. When it went out of production in the mid 60's it was enlarged to 1275 CC. What made things worse for the company was that the Morris and Austin A 30 had heavy bodies but only had an 803 CC motor and it was gutless.

The B series was 1398 CC and when it went out of production it was 1798 CC and they became the East west motor for the 'land crab' suitable for rallying. It was the first car that you could take off the production line and really treat roughly in a rally with out damage. This was the Austin 1800.

The first London to Sydney marathon in 1968 was won by default by a Hillman Hunter, (Much modified), second place was a Ford Falcon (Australian) with an American Mustang engine and transmission. Third, fifth, sixth and seventh were all nearly standard Austin 1800s. The quote of the day was, 'we were just not fast enough'. The man driving the Hillman Hunter was Andrew Cowan, the world famous long distance rally driver. No body could beat him. It was based on a point a minute and he was 57 minutes behind even over the whole rally.

He was only out classed by Galignite Jack Murray in the 1954 Red Ex trial by setting a world record that will never be beaten right around the Australian highway one with no points lost. He did it in a 1948 Ford V8.



**Above: Martin pictured preparing an Austin for the first Red Ex trial**

In 1954 RedEx Galignite Jack (who said he could not track an elephant in snow) missed the turn off got onto the tram tracks from Essendon towards Melbourne up to the zoo to the control. He got there on time to the minute by driving straight across Royal Park between hocky and soccer fields through the crowd from the wrong direction tooting his horn, pulling the hand brake on jumping out and getting his passport stamped and he was on time. He got his nick name because he carried galignite to blow up a path through rocks on outback roads. He used to let them off like fireworks. On one occasion he put an explosive under an out back thunder box with a long fuse so he could be talking to a copper when the explosion occurred. Un-beknowing to him the thunderbox was occupied and the occupant came out alive in the midst of dust and smoke with his pants around his ankles. He also water skied and broke the speed limit along the Thames during the Sydney London Marathon. He was also arrested because he skied into Sydney harbour. The boat was not manned because he had contrived a throttle control on the ski bar.

The Austin company also took over the dealership of Austin Martin, Reno, Purgeo and NSU in 1954.

In 1956 the company changed its name to Continental and General Distributors. BMC was winding down and British Leyland took over. For a short time they were known as British Leyland Motor Corp but within a year BMLC was gone and the company became British Leyland. During that time they took over Rover, Triumph cars and Jaguar. The company was so poorly led and organised that customers could not get spare parts. The company also self-destructed because the leadership promoted competition within the group with one brand competing against another. The end result was

that the whole company was driven into the ground.

In 1957 I went to the Brighton Branch.

By 1959 'badge engineering' became the norm for these motor cars and the Morris 8/50 became the Riley Elf and the Austin Mini, Worsley 1500 and Austin Lancer and Morris Major. Later the Morris 8/50 became known as the Mini Minor. Today it is known as the Mini owned by BMW but in those days it was the Mini Minor.

Then in 1965 I got out of the motor trade and started a business with taxi trucks. It was sold in 1971 and we went to England for 5 months and while there purchased a double decker Bristol bus which we shipped back to Australia and by Christmas eve 1972 became a private tour company named, 'London Transport Bus tours Pty Ltd.' It was sold in 1984 to our partner and we moved to Queensland.

There is a utub video presented by Jeremy Clarkson titled, 'What killed BMC' It was competition within the company. It is worth watching if you are interested in the history of English car making.

**Martin Bell**

(Editor: Martin Bell joined the Austin company in 1952 and then on 1 Jan 1953 was apprenticed as a mechanic. He was one of 27 apprentices at the workshop and at the time the proportion of apprentices to qualified tradesmen was 2 to 1. During the whole time working for the company he was involved in preparing cars for rallies) Following his time with the company he was taken into the Army as a National Serviceman. After Corps training he ended up as a RAEME Corps member posted to Bandiana Raeme workshops. In 1984 Martin and his bride, Chris moved to Queensland. Today they are enjoying a well-earned retirement and live in Caloundra. Martin is looking forward to visiting the 2018 National Riley in the same city)



**Above: Martin Bell in 2017**

## RMB Riley Q 519095 by Colin Clark

I had been looking through 'Just Cars' magazine with the view to buying something with classic lines and I saw a Riley. I liked the look of the car so I telephoned the owner who lived in McKay. He put a high price on the car and wouldn't consider negotiating so I let it go but he did give me Alan Hill's telephone number in Samford. When I phoned Alan he was very welcoming so I visited Samford and Alan took me for a drive in his car. I enjoyed the experience so much that I paid the joining fee for club membership on the spot and began looking for an opportunity to buy a car. The first car that came up was a RMA. It was a nice car and the

owner was very informative. The offer was particularly attractive as the car came with a second vehicle for parts. But my heart was set on a RMB so I let the car go.

The car that I did purchase came up through a very unusual circumstance. My wife drove past a 1950 model RMB Riley in the near by town of Minden. It was for sale. I had a look at it and made an offer and for a little extra money he sold the original number plate; Q 519095 with the car. This was in 2015. The original dealers plate; a small printed aluminium tag was nailed across the body number on the scuttle timber advertising that it had been imported into Queensland and originally sold in Brisbane. I was a bit concerned about the fact that there was only one number plate on the rear of the car so a second plate was manufactured and

**Below: beautifully finished interior**



**Above: Colin and his RMB**



fixed to the front of the car. Apparently in the days when the car was originally sold only one plate was required on the rear of the car.

The car passed the roadworthy without any work being done so it came into my ownership with very little to do. In the first instance I did reconnect the driving lights so that they worked. When the editor of Torquetube visited I learned that the 'Passing Light' switch was disconnected and in the place of the original dip switch a toggle switch had been installed and when high beam was selected the passing lights or driving lights came on as well. The dimming switch for the instruments was missing, the headlining had been replaced with vinyl and the exhaust manifold had been replaced with extractors. The trafficators had also been disconnected and an indicator switch had been retro fitted to the steering column. Apart from these modifications everything else was original including the wiring. Prior to my ownership the car had been re-painted in a cream colour and it looks very tidy.



**Above: Colin's garage**

On my to do list is converting the indicators back to the trafficator circuit so that the trafficators and indicators work together. I also intend to spruce up the interior trim. Nothing needs to be done with the seat covers or the carpet and I am very happy with the purchase. It really is a beautifully crafted vehicle that drives well. Since purchase the car averages 14 KM each week on my twice weekly visits to Marburg to

purchase a newspaper. On one occasion I did drive the car to Canungra. On the way home a noise developed in the rear of the car. When I stopped the car was inspected and to my great surprise the inner rim of a rear wheel had cracked. I was very fortunate to stop the car when I did because it would not have taken much longer for the wheel to come off and perhaps serious damage may have resulted. The only jack in the car was the original Riley jack so with this I raised the car, changed the tyre and continued on my journey home. Since then I have acquired another rim from the Riley Spares and purchased a bottle jack.



Apart from my Riley I have a Morris Minor. It is in pristine condition and I have owned the car for 15 years but since purchasing the Riley it has not been used and eventually I allowed the registration to expire. Maybe I can get registration for the Morris through the Riley Club? Apart from club registration I don't expect to put the car back on the road again as it is not likely to be used much when I have the Riley to enjoy.

Colin Clark

Editor: Colin is a mature aged cattle farmer who also breeds horses. He lives on a beautiful Lockyer Valley property with his wife and they keep busy working the property, walking to keep fit and for the rest of their day they care for their many animals. Apart from the Riley and Morris they have a four wheel drive, tractors, a truck and a horse trailer. Colin does not drive at night otherwise he would attend club meetings but is keen to enjoy magnificent motoring and extends an invitation to the club to visit his property for a Riley run.

# FOR SALE

## **RILEY RMA 1 ½ LITRE MOTOR, COMPLETE, RESTORED AND RUNNING with Genny, Starter & Carbie**

A longstanding Riley Club member and enthusiast, I have recently rebuilt RMA Engine No. A6624 – I had acquired this motor as a project because it was suspected to have 'run' it's big ends, and indeed it had.

The motor includes refurbished Generator, Starter Motor, Water Pump, Fuel Pump, CH5 Lucas Distributor and single SU Carbie. Replacement white metal conrods fitted, hand shaved to correct individual tolerances.

Pistons are standard Australian BHB with rings to suit. Excellent compression, motor still has a long life ahead, ready to fit into any RMA. Call Simon Schooneveldt (07) 3505 1033, 0499 228 603 or e-mail: [spschoon@primus.com.au](mailto:spschoon@primus.com.au)



## **Riley Pathfinder**

The car should be considered a car body rather than a functioning car as it has not been driven since the 1970's and has fallen into a state of deterioration. That being said there may well be elements of the vehicle that could be useful for someone. It has been stored under a car port which has a roof but no walls so it has been semi-protected from the elements for the last 40 odd years. The paint was stripped back with the intention of re-painting, so the brown colour is not rust but rather the undercoat that was used prior to painting.



The car is located in the Blue Mountains (west of Sydney) and I can be contacted at [rjbournes@gmail.com](mailto:rjbournes@gmail.com) or 02 47536622. Price: \$800 or make an offer.



## JUMPERS AND JAZZ AT WARWICK by Chris Reynolds

The last edition of this magazine noted that the Warwick Jumpers and Jazz festival was on during July. This annual festival features mostly knitted "jumpers" decorating trees around the centre of Warwick plus Jazz music in the main street and various venues in the town, Art exhibitions plus of course a display of historic cars.



The historic display is held in the main street, which is closed to traffic for the day but of course alive with other activities. The photos here, taken when I was there in 2015, will give you some idea of the event and maybe there will be a Riley on display next year! When I was there in 2015 mine was the only Riley present.



Warwick is about 130 km from Brisbane and the journey on the Cunningham Highway is scenic, going over the Great Dividing Range at Cunningham Gap. In any other car you need to change down to second gear, but mine always stays in top gear all the way up the climb on this road at the speed limit. You should be warned that Warwick at this time of year is VERY cold so you need to rug up well, including for the journey if there's no heater in your car!. Also as the mustering of the cars for the display is very early, anyone going will need to travel to Warwick the previous day and stay overnight. Maybe next year I will see you there??

Chris Reynolds

