

## A taste of competition in the TC

During the greater part of the three years and eight months of TC motoring, my interest in motor sport was confined to being a spectator. This period consisted of almost a year in Brisbane except for work-related visits to country areas, two years in Emerald and eight months in Maryborough. It was not until the last month in Emerald that I took my first step towards participation in any aspect of motor sport.

During 1953 there was Australia-wide interest in the REDEX Around Australia Reliability Trial. As a result of public interest, the "Telegraph" (the daily afternoon paper of Brisbane which ceased production in 1988) decided to sponsor a trial over the two days of one weekend of October 1953. As I was due to take my annual leave during October, I decided to submit an entry. One of the regulations stipulated that "all cars were to be fitted with bumpers bars back and front" but, in response to my enquiry submitted with the entry, all entrants were advised that the rule did not apply to those vehicles which not have them fitted as standard.

When entries closed, well over 400 eager competitors had signified a desire to take part. This was an impossible number for such an event and it was announced that a draw would take place with 214 competitors starting on the original date with the remaining 200 plus to compete on the following weekend.

This could have created a problem for me as I was due to start back at work on the Monday following the second weekend of the trial. In fact I was on transfer to Maryborough and due to take up duty on completion of my holiday. When the list of competitors was published I looked and looked, all the time getting further down the list until I came to entrant 200 out of the 214 starters for the first weekend.



*Navigator Lex Holloway with the TC, Telegraph rally, October 1953*

As navigator I had enlisted the aid of an old motorcycle mate, Lex Holloway, whom I had met through my association with the Kedron Motorcycle Club. Just which way we went I no longer recall but we did follow the railway line into Gatton at one stage over a rather risky looking log bridge. I still have the original stick-on number discs and some newspaper cuttings which give details of the event. Being very much a bower bird I still have the programmes, result slips and newspaper clippings for quite a few events including the three "Telegraph" rallies. Between the two of us, and the TC, we had done a pretty fair job for beginners as one clipping tells me that we came eighteenth out of 214 starters. We had lost only 44 points. Naturally we were very happy with the result. Forty four was the same number of points as two other competitors who, according to the report, did better than we did in a sub-event held at Warwick. What this event consisted of I no longer have any idea.

The winning car was driven by Joe Marano (Vauxhall Velox) with a loss of 20 points. Second place went to D Fowler (Austin A40), also decided on the sub-event (loss of 20 points). Third was C N Brown (Morris Minor) who lost 22 points. These three drivers were entered in the non-expert category. Having not previously gained a place in a similar event but having lost fewer points than the experts they were awarded the open richer class awards of \$100, \$60 and \$30. This allowed other non-expert competitors to be awarded the non-expert prizes of \$30, \$20 and \$10. There were a large number of other awards provided by garages and business houses including those for the best placed Ford, Holden, Morris and Vauxhall.

There were 59 competitors who lost fewer than 100 points and only nine of the nominated entrants did not start. The route instructions took only thirteen lines of typing to get the cars from Brisbane to Toowoomba and twelve to get them back to the start at the Brisbane Exhibition Grounds. A far cry from today's route instructions. The fastest speed mentioned in the instructions I still have is 65 km/h (40 mph) . There may have been other speeds nominated at the controls along the route.

An analysis of the makes of cars in the first twenty places is quite interesting. There were five Fords (including a V8 utility), five Austins (one an A30), three Vanguards, two each of Holden and Vauxhall and one each of Jaguar, Morris Minor and MG. The latter was, of course, mine.

After the remaining week of my annual leave, following the weekend of the rally, I drove to Maryborough to take up duty as OIC of the Maryborough Telephone Exchange and Technicians' District.

At some stage after my arrival in Maryborough it was announced that there would be a Royal Tour which would visit Bundaberg but would not include Maryborough. One of my regular dancing partners asked me if I would be going to Bundaberg, a round trip of 240 km, to see the Queen. My reply in general terms was 'I'm not prepared to join the great stream of cars on the road to Bundaberg, or the crowd of people in the streets, for only a few seconds of viewing'. Consequently, I didn't go. At the next Tuesday night

dance, the same young lady rebuked me saying 'I thought you weren't going to see the Queen?' As I had stayed home, the answer was 'I didn't!' This brought the response, 'Well how was it that I was on the verandah of the golf clubhouse and saw a cream MG with red mudguards traveling along the road to Bagara? You can't tell me that there is another the same as yours in Bundaberg! After all, there is only one MG of any sort in Maryborough!' No amount of persuasion could convince here that it had not been me. Indeed I had to admit that it seemed too much of a coincidence as not many MGs were painted in two colours. I thought it might have been a Singer 9 or something even less exotic. The truth eventually came to light.



Later in the year, the national motoring magazine 'Motor Manual' began a project aimed at forming a nationwide car club. They advised all known readers who lived not too far apart of the names and addresses of other readers to enable them to establish contact and perhaps form a district group. This resulted in a get together at Pialba, a seaside resort on Hervey Bay, not far from Maryborough. This meeting resulted in the formation of a district group of the Motor Manual Goodwill Club which elected me as President.



On the day, a totally unexpected arrival from Bundaberg was a cream MG with red mudguards. The grill bars were painted in a rainbow of colours while my car had red. The hood material of his car was also of a slightly different colour. A number of colour slide photographs were taken to prove a point and honour was upheld a few weeks later. Negative colour film and one hour processing was still a longway in the future

in 1953. Kodak colour slide film had to be sent to one of the southern states for processing. The young lady who doubted my word was to see both cars together at a later date and was most apologetic.

Part of my free time while at a hockey carnival in Bundaberg some time later was devoted to assisting John Butler, the owner of the other MG, to reassemble his motor after an overhaul.

One of our first events organized by the group was a demonstration gymkhana at a rodeo in Gin Gin.



Paul Kronenberg Ford ute



Peter Sama Plymouth ute.



The participants, in addition to my MG, were an Austin Six complete with a home made utility body, a Dodge utility and a small Ford utility either an Anglia or a Prefect. This was long before the days of gymkhana specials and the display was well received. A treasure hunt at Maryborough unfortunately achieved only five starters and we had that many trophies. One of the clues was painted on a piece of tin which we tacked on the underside of the diving board at Teddington Weir. Because the board was on a high bank, the only way to read the message was to go to the end of the board, lie down and look underneath. This clue led to an object which had to be identified. The object was a badge of the Motor Manual Goodwill Club which had been fastened to a piece of lead and submerged in the water in one of the steps of a fish ladder alongside the weir.

A gymkhana at Burnett Heads, outside of Bundaberg, was quite successful. On this occasion, the starters were more varied with an MG Y saloon, Austin A40 tourer, Ford



MG Y Saloon.  
M.M.G.C Gymkhana at Burnett Heads



the HOLDEN which won the sack for highest point score for the day.



backward into second garage



forward into first garage



Zephyr and three small Fords, either Anglias or Prefects in three body styles, one saloon, one tourer and one utility. There were several 48/215 Holdens and two Chevrolets owned by a father and son who were two of the keenest supporters. There were a number of others not readily identifiable from photographs in my album.

As Maryborough was far closer to my parents' home at Woodford, a little over 220 km by the shortest route, or 240 km if you preferred all bitumen surface, visits there were more frequent. On one occasion I took the shortest route, leaving the Bruce Highway at Beerwah, another small town now bypassed by Highway 1.

The road from Beerwah to Woodford was then a winding, narrow gravel road but still a pleasant drive in a sports car. This, despite an assertion by a friend of sorts that a TC rode like a brick lavatory. I believe the inference was that the suspension of both had about the same stiffness. Once on being offered a lift home, he remarked, 'A second class ride is better than a first class walk!'

The road is now much better and offers an excellent view of the Glasshouse Mountains and the surrounding country. The road crosses the Stanley Range and a side road leads to Crohamhurst, once the home of the legendary long range weather forecaster Inigo Jones. Crohamhurst, at one time, held the Queensland record for the highest rainfall total in a 24 hour period. A figure of about 800mm was quoted by the weather bureau. The record now belongs to Mount Bellenden Ker in the ranges near Babinda in North Queensland.

On the Woodford side of the range, while traversing one of the rougher sections, I began to hear funny noises and to have difficulty when changing gear. It was now quite dark but with the aid of a trouble lamp I discovered to my horror that the front engine mount had broken on the left hand side. The remaining few kilometers were covered at a much slower speed. Having arrived at my parents' home I had a refreshing cup of tea and began some preliminary dismantling. The radiator was drained and removed followed by the crankshaft pulley and the timing case cover. By then it was well past bedtime. Next morning, a Saturday, after further dismantling, the engine bearer plate was taken to a local garage to be welded back together. After final reassembly next morning things still didn't seem right and further investigation showed that the rear engine mount was also broken. This break was in the same aluminium casting at the rear of the gearbox which had been found to be broken during the earlier engine overhaul. As there was not the expertise in Woodford for such a repair I fabricated a bracket out of two thicknesses of sheet steel to hold the gearbox to the mounting point. It stayed that way until a new owner had it welded and machined. By now it was Sunday afternoon and I was due back at work at Maryborough in the morning. After a short road test I got under the car to check some bolts. As I was getting out from under I looked up and there, right in front of my nose and only a few centimeters away, was a crack halfway through the main chassis member on the left hand side! No wonder the engine mounts had broken! In fact, it was a wonder the engine hadn't fallen out. My father arranged for a local garage mechanic to come to work and the crack was welded and a strengthening plate added. I left for Maryborough after a very late tea.

By now I was beginning to wonder if serious consideration should be given to the purchase of a newer or perhaps new car. Still an MG of course.

