

*The following was sent to us by **Bruce McMillan**, Member 142. It makes interesting reading particularly now that some of us are more familiar with some of the people mentioned. Bruce also sent the Club a very old, interesting and most probably valuable book 'Complete MG Workshop and Tuning Manual' which will take pride of place in the Club Library.*

MEMORIES by Bruce McMillan

Some notes about myself. I was Secretary during Miles Hunter's Presidency. My cars were an Austin Healy, a TF, a rebuilt TC, and MG B, Alfa Guilietta (married and had a family), Cortina wagon (2 litre), Mazda 626, and Mazda SP20. Before I could afford 4 wheels, I had an Ariel de luxe 500 cc, and a Triumph 650 Thunderbird. At racing, the MG Car Club always provided timing and lap scoring teams for Lowood.

Club identities - as far as I can remember. **Sam and Peter Pollard**. Peter, a pharmaceutical chemist, raced a modified Austin Healy, a distinctive red in colour, until he beat the local constabulary home one night, got into his pyjamas and answered the front door when they called ten minutes later. He sold his car next day, being a Saturday, and the new owner was harassed by the constabulary until they found out that the car had changed hands. Sam, the elder brother, was a vehicular accident insurances assessor. He would take some piece of TC machinery into the kitchen at night and work on it there much to his wife's consternation. The Roots supercharger was a favorite for this treatment.

Tom Ross, a quiet unassuming chap, drove and raced a TR2 consistently. Lowood was his venue, great guy and a natural mechanic.

Miles Hunter, a Mexican - he came from south of the border - involved with cars pre-war in NSW, one of the original gentlemen - squire -, his wife "Nessie" known affectionately to the membership as " Mrs. Pres" and their daughter Nan " Dooley".

Greg Newton, who was immaculate in the preparation of his TF for concourse events.

John Muller - a sales rep for Howards and later BMC; he could sell frigs to Eskimos and was a staunch supporter of the MG car club

Bill Gearing with pedigree bulldog mascot "Chummily". It was crowded in the TC at times.

"**Charlie**" **McNicol**, Michelin tyre distributor/ businessman, drove a TF with a straight through exhaust system but disguised it for road use by putting a fish-tail attachment on the pipe until the gymkhana venue was reached where it was removed.

Ian Hamilton, who introduced me to this famous marque, MG, had a TF when we first met. Eventually he found an Alfa straight 8, twin supercharged, that was believed

to have been raced pre 1939 by Prince Biers of Thailand. He found it in a farmyard near Brisbane. He married and sold it. Some years later, a similar vehicle sold in the USA for 1+ million. When Ian fired up that motor it sounded like a great big bucket of well-oiled nuts and bolts.

Many others were fans of the "Goons" which was the popular radio programme during those pre TV times, Ralph "Little Jim" Davis (deceased), Bill Thomas (deceased), Brian Tebble (deceased).

Others who were around at the time but not Club members, included **Lionel Ayres** who raced a TC successfully at Club events. His mechanic Dudley Anderson had a passion and magic touch with MG engines.

David Stewart's "Whitney Special" rebuilt from a crashed Mark V Jag sported a Ferrari body he fashioned with the help of club members, Ian Hamilton, Bob Richards and myself along with others.

A couple of happenings that I do recall:

"Busted" The night the Licensing Squad raided the Wickham St. premises and "pinched" Graham Perkins - duty barman - and myself as senior Club official there. Background - either the Q'land Racing Driver's Club or the Brisbane Sports Car Club, had premises up the road from our rooms; which ever it was had a bar, refrigerator, keg and bottle sales unlicensed. The local hotel a block or so away, from which our Club purchased our supplies from over the counter, lodged a complaint with the Licensing Branch. The Club purchases were two dozen bottles of beer a time, the sale of which to the members was at a slightly marked up price which helped pay for the rent.

This particular Friday night, about 9 - 10 o'clock, this young chap, a non-club member, came in and wanted to buy a beer. Graham was behind the counter; Charlie McNicol was talking to him when this person arrived and started to "waffle" about cars in general and MGs in particular and wanted to buy Charlie a drink. He eventually did and paid for it with a ten-shilling note. That was the purpose of the exercise, to get that note into the till. Then the others who were waiting outside - about whom we did not know - could raid the premises. The upshot of it was that Graham and I were summoned for selling liquor from unlicensed premises. We duly faced court where Alex Frelegas, a good friend of John Muller's, defended us; he was a solicitor who was the honorary Greek Counselor for Brisbane. We pleaded guilty and Alex gave us good character references. The result was a 50 pound fine each, which the membership chipped in and paid. Just as well the "raiding" officers did not go onto the back porch where there was something like 20 dozen empties instead of the two dozen trading stock for that night. Naturally the Club up the road that should have been raided profited from our misfortune but closed their bar for some period of time. Needless to say so did the MG Car Club of Qld.

It must be remembered in those days, to not get charged with drink driving, you had to walk a chalk line without falling over. No radar for speeding either; two plain clothed police at the side of the road, the first one flagged the second

who was seated a measured furlong away who timed the car with a hand held stopwatch. Certainly not a means of collecting revenue.

The other event, which is clear in memory, occurred during one of the Easter pilgrimages to Mt Panorama. As usual, the normal preparations for the run took place at Hamilton's Nundah residence. Heads off the TF and Austin Healy, valves ground and seated, new distributor points, timing checked, carbies overhauled, tyres, tubes belts etc. checked and spares assembled.

Thursday night before Good Friday, Tom Ross TR2 with driving beam installed (most important), Graham Perkins TF, Jan Hamilton TF, and yours truly Austin Healy set off travelling via Cunningham's Gap, hoods down naturally. Had a narrow miss driving through the Gap passing a bus going up a hill. Hamilton went first, I followed. Half way past the bus Ian yells, "go back" - hoods down -; too late I was already committed and followed through. A car coming down the hill missed by a couple of lengths. On these trips it was necessary to drive beyond Guyra before thinking about stopping for the night. This was achieved and much more. At Tamworth it was veer right for the Oxley highway Somewhere between Tamworth and Gunnedah, the heavens opened up and, until it stopped, driving was impossible. After an enforced rest the cavalcade continued until, just south of Dubbo, the Perkin's TF broke the compression ring in no. 3 cylinder. We found out later on that no preparation work had been done on the car. Tom with "flame thrower" and towline began the haul to Bathurst. We arrived sometime after practice had started on Good Friday. Having selected a site on the mountain with a relatively flat piece of dirt, the TF was raised, the sump dropped and damage assessed. Tom being the only true mechanic amongst us decided that a set of 30 thou oversized rings would get the car back to Qland. These were duly purchased and installed, the engine tuned all in time for the Saturday afternoon's sport. Somehow, we - with the exception of Graham - were back in Brisbane on Tuesday to go to work. Graham, having to run his motor in, arrived much latter. Those were "heady" days.

Such are the thoughts of an old MG driver who has on his desk at the moment, a model TC on one corner and a Harley "Sportster" 1980 vintage on the other. The TC is there because I rebuilt one from the chassis up from a wreck. L H. Shaw owned it. That was my way to learn about cars. The Harley's there because my son has one that needs some work doing on it. Happy motoring.