



## A SLICE OF CLUB HISTORY - A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE Part 2 - the second coming

by Elaine Hamilton

Although I had had continuous membership of the Club, there was a long period when I was one of those often-berated members who contributed little if anything to the Club. However, this changed following my retirement from teaching when Vern and I started to go on the midweek runs. A chance conversation with David Miles had me back on committee again in Sept 2004 when he was President for the second time, his first also dating back to decades earlier. Maybe I felt an empathy for him because when he mentioned on the midweek run that the Committee needed new members, I offered to go along and 'help with the minutes'. Instead of that, I found myself doing the minutes as part of my duties as Secretary. I ultimately took on many more jobs than that role entails and worked with three other Presidents - Richard Mattea, Peter May and David Robinson.

My second term of Committee duty was equally as exciting as the first, if not more so, as David brought great energy to his role and initiated many improvements which resulted in the surge of Club memberships from fewer than 400 to a peak of over 800 just a few years ago. One of these was his discovery, after a lot of searching, of a building suitable, both in location and price, for our permanent Clubrooms. Others were the introduction of Club Chapters which broadened our membership to country areas and the setting up of a Club website, a major boon in facilitating communication with Club members.

While David was busy with these things, I found that there were a number of improvements that could be made to make some jobs more effective, that there were a number of things which past Committees has been planning to do that hadn't been done and a number of other jobs just looking for someone to take them on.



*A crowded venue for the 2011 Annual Club dinner and presentation of trophies*

I became aware that the Committee was floundering for ideas on how to increase attendance at the Club's annual dinner and presentation of trophies so sought, and was granted, permission to have a go at increasing numbers. This, combined with Kerry Strange's negotiating skills over menu prices at various venues, was so successful that the event which was about to be abandoned grew in number until close on a hundred were regularly attending. This continued until 2012 when a decision was made to

have new organisation and a new venue which, for a number of reasons, sadly saw the numbers dramatically fall.



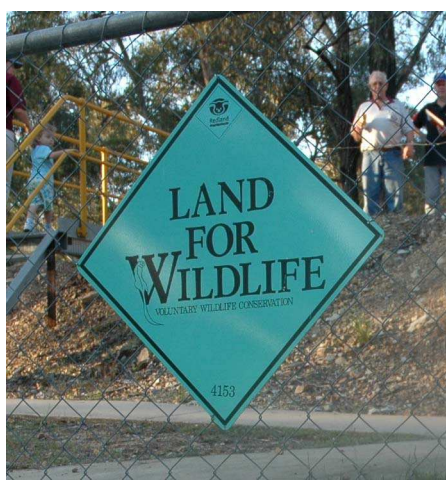
*One room in the Hamilton household was taken over by the Club library for many months*

For years, David Robinson had been busy purchasing books for the Club library so, with the purchase of the Clubrooms in early 2005, an appropriate venue for it was available. All that was needed was someone to catalogue and process the books so that they were well organised and that a secure and easy to use borrowing system was available. Having been a teacher-librarian in my paid working life, I took on this job which took up such a number of hours that they could only be measured in the hundreds. With the procedure for maintaining the Library now well established, ex-President Peter May has taken over this job though David Robinson still has the fun of purchasing the resources. The only disappointment has been the relatively low number of users taking advantage of this magnificent resource.



*The unveiling of the honourboards*

Again, with the purchase of the Clubrooms, there were permanent walls on which to display honour boards. With the donation by John Campbell of funds from the sale of his book 'Centaur', I organised both the purchase of the boards, researched and collated all the information to be displayed on them and played a large part in the organisation of the function at which they were unveiled. Since then, I have organised the updating of the information on the boards on an annual basis.



Having been on Committee at the time of the purchase of the land at Mt Cotton, the hillclimb venue has always been special for me. It has been



interesting to see it go from uncleared land to the parklike setting it now provides for the circuit and all without disturbing the variety of local wildlife. Thus, in 2005, soon after joining the Committee I suggested that we should register the land with Land for Wildlife to show how nature and motorsport can blend happily together. Approval was granted in October and the minutes record that very positive comments were made about the land in the letter of approval sent to the Club. Andrew Willesden has now gone one step further and the Club has now signed the Koala Conservation Agreement with the Redland City Council. This has provided funding for the eradication of weeds and the planting of trees. Vern and I have always supported the hillclimb and for a time, after retirement from paid work, went along to midweek working bees; however, a lack of skills and an excess of age found us not being particularly useful so we contributed to the improvements by donating a substantial amount of money for the new timing shed to be built. Back then, I did not know how much time I would be spending in it in the coming years!

There had been talk that a number of competitors had managed to get around Mt Cotton in under 40s and that this should be celebrated by the formation of a special sub-group called the 'Under 40s Club'. Once on committee, I took this task to heart and organised the design and manufacture of beautifully boxed medallions, cloth patches and framed certificates. I look on this as 'my baby' and enjoy personally congratulating each new member as they join the Club and putting my 'gold pen' finishing touch to each certificate with great pride. I also ensure that their names are added to the honour board in the Clubroom and to the special page devoted to that Club on the website.



With the Club expanding with the formation of the Chapters there was a need to update the website to be more inclusive. There was also a lot of information such as that on the history of the Club just 'looking' for somewhere to be accessible so, along with our hard-working webmistress Glenda Crew, many hours were spent redesigning the website, re-organising the content already there and creating new pages to accommodate all the old and new information. Glenda and I continue to work together almost on a daily basis to ensure that this is constantly updated with the latest information, reports and photos.



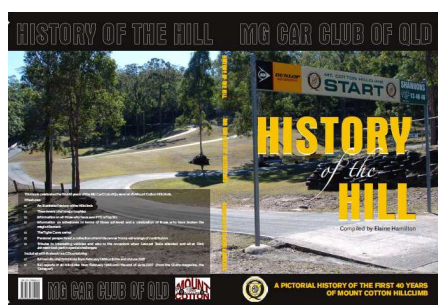
When Dino Mattea's proposal for the formation of the 'Friends of Mt Cotton' supporters group was accepted by the Management Committee in 2005, I assisted with the writing of the brochures, the printing of them and then, with Vern, became its first two financial members. During the period when Dino was sending out newsletters to members, I assisted with providing information and putting these together for him.

There was a feeling that many of our members were not aware of the Club's marvellous facility at Mt Cotton so I came up with the concept of an Open Day at the hillclimb incorporating a Swap Meet to provide another facet to the day. It started off strongly with lots of stalls and lots of MGs being brought along on the Club run to it. However, in the past two years the number of stallholders has dropped but the number of MGs on display is still substantial. Sadly, it was taken off the calendar for this year. Maybe there is someone out there with expertise in this area willing to revive it. If so, please make your offer to the current committee.



*The Club display at the Redland Museum in late 2006*

One of the promises made in the 'Friends of Mt Cotton' brochure was that the Club would be producing a book on the history of the hillclimb so, by now, you can probably guess who took on this task. Fortunately, I had already collated a lot of information when I found myself taking on responsibility for the display on the history of the hillclimb at the Redland Museum in late 2006. So, with that information at hand, and with the background of having compiled over 20 high school textbooks in my paid working life, the task of compiling the book was less daunting than it could have been. Because of its pictorial nature, the cooperation and generosity of photographers Brier Thomas and John Clatworthy were greatly appreciated. This necessitated many hundreds of hours being spent digitising all of their negatives in order to select those needed for the book. This resulted in the scanning also of all of Brier's racing negatives of Lowood, Lakeside and Surfers Paradise and discs of these are still being sold through the Club.



Thus, by the time of the Australian Hillclimb Championships in 2007, the book 'The History of the Hill: a pictorial history of the first 40 years of Mt Cotton Hillclimb' was ready to be released and the Under 40s Club was ready to be launched. I was able to entice long time Club member, friend and designer of the circuit, Jon McCarthy, back 'home' to Australia from his home in England to launch the book. For the launch of the Under 40s Club, I was able to persuade Garry Connelly, then the Australian Delegate to the FIA and now a Steward at many of the F1 Grand Prix, to present the inaugural batch of mementoes to the founding members of the Under 40s Club.



*2007 AHC - Gary Connelly with the inaugural members of the Under 40s Club*



At my final committee meeting on July 9 2013, I was able to get a motion passed that the back wall of the Clubrooms would be devoted to the hillclimb and that a plaque commemorating John Davies' commitment to the Club and the Hillclimb would be placed there. Ever since the purchase of the Clubrooms, John expressed his frustration at the lack of acknowledgement of the hillclimb within the building. I am pleased that his wish has started to be fulfilled.

Many of those tasks listed above do not come under the responsibility of Secretary - a role which would probably be defined as sending out notices of meetings and agendas, writing and distributing the minutes and dealing with the correspondence and doing these things in a timely manner to enable the business of committee to be done effectively. For now, it is only these last items which will I am not doing - they are for the current Secretary, Malcolm Spiden. However, I will continue for as long as feasible with all of my other non-Committee tasks including the editing of the Club



magazine; the updating of the Club's website; the monitoring of the Club's Facebook page (the setting up of which provided a steep learning curve for such a non-social media person as I am); the sending out of another of my initiatives - the weekly email which provides updates of coming events to those in Brisbane and its 'catchment' area; assisting with timing at the hillclimb on the occasions when

Vern is not competing; the maintenance of master files of all results of Club competitive events, of record breakers at the hillclimb, of all copies and contents of the Club magazines, of Committee members, of trophy winners etc; almost daily liaising with our webmistress, Glenda Crew, keeping the website updated with reports on events etc, updating of the Club's calendar of events both on the website and in the magazine and the writing of press releases to try to get maximum publicity for Club events ... and probably any other jobs for which my help is needed and welcomed.

PS There was another side to my participation in the Club and that is in my Sunday afternoon drives around the hillclimb in the last three decades - our Isuzu PF50 sports sedan (now in the hands of Ross Liddle), our Cooper S and our MGB GT.

