

Where will the story end

There is a saying that all good things come to an end. This raises the question, when should this story end? Someone reading it may say, "What is so good about this story? It really should have ended sooner". Perhaps they are right. Just the same I feel it necessary to chronicle, sometimes in not great detail, the motor cars which I became involved with.



These were mostly after purchasing the AP5 Valiant Regal as mentioned in an earlier chapter.

Firstly there are those which were of only passing acquaintance. A number of these came about because of my friendship with the often mentioned Ted Jones. An early one was a Valiant V8 in which I had a far too short but pleasing drive. There was also a Ford Falcon GT HO in which I made a passing manoeuvre which caused Ted to sit back in the passenger seat. Courtesy of Ted I also had a dash in a V12 Jaguar saloon which I took up to an indicated 150 km/h on the then newly finished highway south of Mudgeeraba. Ted took the Jag up to an

indicated 190 km/h on the way out to Mudgeeraba on the same stretch of road which was far less busy then than it is now. Ted also gave me a ride in an XJS and a drive of a Mercedes coupe. The latter was a bonus day as I also had a drive of a Porsche owned or rented by a member of the Robinson family who then owned the Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary. It was at a reunion of some of the people who, with me, had raced production sports cars like MG, Austin Healey, Jaguar and Morgan in the late nineteen fifties and early sixties. The names of the drivers and the makes of cars crop up frequently in the earlier chapters of my story.



After my marriage in 1958 I often drove the cars owned by my father-in-law. The first was an Austin Sheerline which transported us and our wedding presents from Brisbane to our flat in Toowoomba. It was a most stately vehicle. The Dodge Custom Royal (NGW-595) owned by my father-in-law at the same time was a black one with huge fins and was used as our wedding car in April 1958. At the time there were similar finned versions of De

Soto and Plymouth. Far the larger part of a 1960 return trip from Brisbane to Sydney with my in-laws, wife and young daughter I drove the Dodge. Over Easter while my father-in-

law was in Hay I drove the family around Sydney. In the stop go traffic of the holiday period I became convinced that there was merit, in many circumstances, in automatic transmissions. This was pre-Valiant days and is probably why, when purchased in 1963, it was an automatic. The Dodge with lots of chrome and painted black attracted a lot of attention and was invariably kept pristine in appearance. It was a large car and I sometimes felt that, with the aid of a couple of planks, I could have driven my Triumph



TR2 into the boot. The black Dodge was followed by three other Dodges. The first of these was green and had the controversial shape adapted by the first Valiants sold in Australia. This Dodge, like the Valiant, had gear selection in the auto box by push button. His next Dodge did not stay long due to problems with the brakes.



I seem to recall it having the high and low beam headlights mounted one above the other. To the best of my recollection I never drove it. It was soon traded in on the last of his Dodges, one of the Limited Edition pillarless 400 series (PSQ-017) Not long before his death the car became troublesome and frequently would not start even if it had been running a short time before and was still warm. On one occasion it was left by the roadside overnight when we took a taxi home. When the car became the property of my mother-in-law who did not drive my wife and I frequently drove this Dodge and often it was kept on the Gold Coast with us. A major overhaul of the carburettor at a later stage seemed to overcome the problem. It was eventually traded in on a dark blue XC Ford V8 Fairmont GXL (204-NJL) demonstrator. It gave good service until it was written off in an accident at Wallabadah on the New England Highway. During a return trip from Sydney a rear tyre blew out and the car left the road and hit a telephone pole on a disused pole route due for demolition. My wife, who was driving her mother and an aunt, suffered very bad bruising from the seat belt as did her aunt Nell. Her mother unfortunately hurt her spine and was in hospital at Tamworth for a period before being flown to a private hospital on the Gold Coast to recover. There is no doubt that the seat belts saved them from further injury. After some hassles with the insurance company another Ford (561-NML) of the same make and model, but a different colour, was purchased. This car was traded in on a gold coloured Ford Fairmont Ghia (537-PEQ) when the XF series was introduced. It was promised for delivery early in December 1984 but did not arrive until December 28. It was one of the first batch of XF models delivered by Bryan Byrt Ford. They had only a station wagon demonstrator at the time the car was ordered. To let us see how the fuel injected six performed we were allowed to drive a still current Fairlane. When the car was only a few weeks old my wife and her mother took the car to Melbourne. On the way south they had trouble which caused the motor to stop at the junction of the Oxley and Newell Highways not far from Coonabarabran. Fortunately it restarted and ran in a fashion until it stopped opposite the NRMA depot in Coonabarabran. The EGR valve associated with the anti-pollution system had worked loose and tightening the mounting bolts fixed the problem. When the first of a number of recall notices was issued it was stated that the ERG gasket used could become degraded due to heat transferred from the exhaust manifold via the insulated connecting pipe. Other recalls required attention to the starter motor solenoid, the remote release solenoid for the boot lid and a fusible link. It was a troublesome car from the start and even after servicing the engine tended to stutter and sometimes stop when warm. Regular doses of Wynns Fuel Injector cleaner seemed to help. The problems encountered resulted in a number of letters, written by me on behalf of my mother-in-law to the Ford company. The car was delivered with a burn mark the size of a 50c coin on the boot carpet and a fault in the instrument panel circuit board. This latter was pointed out by the salesman as it caused the STOP LAMPS display on the panel to light up whenever the brakes were applied. A replacement board had already been ordered but it was not until the 15000 km service that the replacement fixed the problem, free of charge naturally. The driver's seat belt would jamb while retracted and was eventually replaced free of charge as was the switch for the driver's electric window. Recurring trouble with the electric windows caused the local dealer to fit, free of charge, an extra relay on the left side. Labour charges had to be paid but there was no charge for the leaking air conditioner condenser in late January

1988. Following further condenser problems the factory system was replaced with a new system from SuperCOOL. The auto transmission was playing up at forty five thousand kilometres and was adjusted on September 12, 1988. When it failed again on September 16 it was replaced with a reconditioned unit at a cost of \$425.00. Another letter to Ford resulted in a refund of \$250.00. In the letter it was pointed out that my CA Falcon had done 120 000km and the auto transmission was still working perfectly. The XF appeared to be hard on batteries. It was used mainly for running around town which may have been a factor. One battery distributor asserted that high under-bonnet temperature was a major cause of such battery failure. He stated that XF Falcon taxis which rarely cooled down were also having battery problems. Later model XF cars using unleaded petrol have cool air ducted to the battery. The car was taken to Brisbane for most of the servicing, and on other occasions, but made a number of longer trips. In addition to the Melbourne trip there was one to Cairns and separate return trips from the Gold Coast to Sydney and Bathurst. After a service on May 22, 1986 by Bryan Byrt Ford in Brisbane a disturbing amount of transmission fluid was found on the garage floor. On inspection two of the transmission sump bolts were found to be missing, some finger tight and others only lightly tightened. Two bolts were taken from a disused transmission belonging to my son's car and the bolts tensioned. At the next service on August 28, 1986 the supervisor of the team responsible was advised of the poor quality of service. He was not at all pleased and at my request provided replacements for the borrowed bolts.

The power steering box began to leak and was replaced with a reconditioned box on July 4, 1990. On March 26, 1991 the high pressure hose from the power steering pump split and had to be replaced. All told the XF had been in need of a fair bit of attention over the years especially in view of the distance covered. Despite the problems, my mother-in-law was quite happy to contemplate buying another Ford. After a visit to a Gold Coast Ford dealer now trading as Sunshine Ford, it was suggested by me, despite my not being keen on Holdens, that the Holden dealer in Southport be consulted. This did not eventuate and as a result of a visit to Bryan Byrt Ford in Brisbane, the Gold XF was replaced with a Sandstone coloured EDE Ford Fairmont 896 CGV. This was ordered on November 19, 1993 and delivered on December 3. As I type, it is March 1996 and the car has done only 15 956 km. So far it has performed well apart from two replacement batteries. The first lasted for almost two years but the second, which must have had a defect, only a short time.



The cars with which I was more closely associated were of course my own, and to some extent, those belonging to me and my sons. Currently they own their own. While still owning the Valiant, the need for a second car became evident. Its main use would be for me to drive to work to save a return trip morning and afternoon for my wife. Obviously it had to be relatively simple to maintain, cheap to run and buy, and logically second hand. A

Morris Mini Minor seemed to fit the bill. It was an early model of 850cc and sliding front windows. The registration number was NOS 563 and the records I do have indicate that it was probably purchased in late 1964 or early 1965. It had been fitted with modified front seats which fully reclined but were poorly attached to the body. This was easily rectified and as time went by a new bottom was needed in the battery carrier in the boot. Rust in the body seams needed constant attention partly because my workplace was only a few hundred metres from the beachfront. One afternoon when cleaning out the rear compartment, I bumped the front seat as I got out. When the seat flopped back, its rear legs punched a hole in the rusty floor. A couple of riveted plates restored the situation. The rust on the roof was cleaned off and the roof was brush painted. Eventually the whole car was painted in this fashion. The Mini did not give a great deal of mechanical trouble and virtually all servicing and repairs were done by myself. After it became necessary to buy a second hand boot lid it was decided to move up.



The replacement was a Morris Mini K with the bigger 1100cc motor and wind-up windows. It was certainly an improvement. The old Mini was traded with the replacement boot lid on the rear seat. The comment of the dealer when he saw the old Mini was 'It certainly is a shocker.' In all \$1064.00 changed hands on September 1, 1972 for PWW-073. Its worst feature was badly rusted drip rails. These were removed completely, the rust treated and the area repainted. One

morning on a trip to Brisbane, where I was working at the time, I moved off at a set of lights as they turned green. When I reached for third gear, there was only neutral. A try for fourth gear produced the same result. The spot where it happened was near the Big Gun Fruit Market on the old road into Brisbane. From there the car was driven in second gear top a BMC dealer at Mt Gravatt keeping as much as possible out of the way of the morning traffic. It was left there for a few days until the selector forks in the gear box were refastened. The fix itself was simple but the labour required for removal of the combined engine gearbox and drive-train assembly meant it wasn't a cheap job. The Mini-K served for the first driving lessons and as a practice car for my two eldest children Christine and Grant. In the initial stages we used a sandy lot not far from the Budds Beach area in Surfers Paradise where we lived. At my insistence, both went to a driving school for final polishing. Finally body rust and oil consumption dictated a change which resulted in a trade up to a Holden Gemini two door. It proved to be a bad buy as events showed that it had been used as a towing vehicle and apparently had overheated badly. This car developed a number of obscure faults which proved expensive to fix. Things came to a head one rainy night in Brisbane.



My son Grant lost control in the wet and then hit a patch of running water on the road. He spun into the other lane and was hit dead centre on the passenger side. Fortunately he was unhurt, apart from bruising. The Holden driver had minor problems but no charges were laid as a result of the accident. In this way, Grant became the second member of the family to write off a car. Fortunately the car was covered by Third party property damage insurance. Grant for a period had to borrow my car to go to his training courses in Brisbane while we worked out what to do next.



The car he had to use was my 1972 XA Ford Falcon 500 which had traveled less than 12000 miles when it replaced the Valiant Regal. This was not long after the purchase of the first Mini. The Ford had been sold to its first owner on July 7, 1973 and was bought by me from C J Motors in Brisbane on March 7, 1974. The C was for Cranley (John) and the J was for Jones (Ted), two motor sporting mates of earlier years. It was registered OAB-018 and cost \$3333.00 including \$33 tax less \$600 for the Valiant. The car came from Miles which is about 340 km west of Toowoomba. It was reputedly being sold so the owner could buy a vehicle with a bench front seat for use as a Brisbane taxi. The car was a T-bar auto and had bucket seats. The odometer rolled over from 99 999 miles late



in September 1985 and would reach 40 000 on its second time around before being sold. At about 70 000 miles there was attention to the cylinder head but the remainder of the engine and the transmission remained untouched apart from routine servicing. Engine oil changes and greasing and simple servicing was usually carried out at home.

There was also attention to the front end and rear suspension which had sagged. The first major body damage was caused by Grant on April 29, 1981 when he ran into the back of a Fiat while looking at cars in a saleyard. He was looking for a car to replace the written off Gemini.

When a claim was submitted to Club Insurance I was told the policy had lapsed when a renewal notice was returned address unknown. The RACQ had been advised of the change but, despite volunteering to do so, had not advised their insurance arm. At the time, they were two separate groups but membership of the RACQ was required by the insurance group. Club Insurance could easily have made a phone call to the RACQ and retained the business. This was pointed out to one of the managers in Brisbane but only a slight measure of personal satisfaction was achieved. In complete contrast, when I was late in paying a premium to SGIO Queensland, now Suncorp, they sent me a letter. It suggested that as I may have omitted to pay the premium they would cover the car for a further month. It made good business sense. Later when I began giving my youngest son driving lessons in the Falcon it was comprehensively insured with the RACQ.

Grant was involved in another collision on October 29, 1987. He was struck from behind by another car when going from the Chevron Island bridge into Ferny Avenue. The other car, a Renault 18GTS had most of the damage and left a minor mark only on the rear bumper of the XA Falcon.



When Grant was using the XA to travel up and down to Brisbane, consideration was being given to a replacement for the written-off Gemini. It had to be second hand and cheap. It turned out to be an automatic Holden Monaro HG GT as traded to Mike Gore's



dealership. A deposit of \$15 was paid on May 4, 1981 and the car picked up on May 8. It looked rather disreputable and had a deep scratch on the left side from end to end through the bronze paint. It looked a little better when the toweling seat covers were removed and the interior vacuumed after washing the car. Later on, the scratch was disguised with a coat of paint from a spray can after being rubbed down and feathered. To our later sorry, we wrote off the sometimes erratic oil pressure to an electrical fault. One evening, on the way home from Brisbane, lack of oil pressure resulted in a thrown rod and a hole in the crankcase. The ever faithful XA Falcon towed the Holden home from just near Oxenford. It wouldn't be the last time.

A long motor was arranged through a friend in the trade and a change-over was carried out in the street. We used wooden supports and a system of pulleys to do the lifting. Examination of the oil pump showed it to have been faulty. When Grant finished his training in Brisbane and began working on the Gold Coast, the car went to a backyard panel beater friend to be derusted and painted. It returned looking quite reasonable. Problems with the automatic transmission resulted in total failed and once again the XA

Falcon was called on to tow the Holden home. With the aid of a friend, Grant converted the car to a manual and it served well until sold late in December 1989.

While still in possession of the Holden Monaro, an XB Ford V8 coupe being done up for a friend caught Grant's eye. After some scouting around he picked up a rather tatty unregistered XA Falcon coupe with a 302 Cleveland motor. It had a factory fitted sun roof and rear window sun shade. At first it was stored at the premises of the friend who had worked on the Monaro to gather more rust. After a few months, and after a lot of trouble getting it started, it was shifted to Michael's Body Shop. There it was eventually restored when Michael had the time and Grant had some money. The latter was not often. While almost little more than a bare shell, the engine bay was painted in the same colour intended for the body and the battery shifted to the boot. The wiring was replaced with a harness from an XB GT Falcon which also provided the fog lights and brackets. The dash assembly came from a Fairlane as did most of the parts for air conditioning. Quite a few new panels were required including one front mudguard, rear quarter panels, door sills, and a bonnet for a GT Falcon. The section at the bottom of the rear window had to be fabricated by the panel beater. Despite being an XA, it had been fitted with XB mudguards and grill area. While this work was in progress, the motor was sent out for attention to bores, crankshaft and bearings. The motor was reassembled in the garage and when finally fitted was found to have rather low oil pressure which did not cause problems. When the car was finished in a dark blue two pack and cleaned up it was an attractive motor car. It was driven to a muffler shop on May 31, 1989 with about a metre of pipe attached to the extractors. It attracted quite a bit of attention because of its smart appearance and the exhaust note. It didn't sound half as good when picked up the next day. There was no lockout on reverse gear due to the absence of a shaped block in the gear-lever housing. The missing piece could not be bought but, after having a look at one and taking some measurements, I decided to try to make one. The first one was made from a piece of wood to get the right profile before starting on a steel one. It worked quite well but eventually it was forced out of position and as the large welsh plug had fallen out the carefully made piece was lost. The block was only a force fit and in hindsight we should have drilled and tapped it and secured it with a bolt or screw. So far the gearbox has survived without reverse gear lockout. The first night after it was completed Grant and two friends drove it from the Gold Coast to Maryborough without a spare tyre or tools of any sort. The car soon developed an appetite for universal joints in the propeller shaft. Inspection showed that the sleeve of the yoke had been reaching the extent of its internal splines. Movement of the suspension was causing unintended end thrust on the universal as well as on the gearbox mainshaft. This was only cured when a slightly shortened shaft was fitted. Why the standard length shaft was unsuitable is unknown. Unfortunately the car has to be parked in the street and it was not too long before further attention to body rust was needed. While this work was being done the motor was reconditioned. A new camshaft was fitted as was a larger capacity sump. The oil pressure was now at a proper level and the car ran very well and had developed a better turn of acceleration particularly above 3500 revs. It is still parked in the street, it is now 1996, and has gathered more rust and has an uncertain future.

On August 10, 1985 my youngest son Mark was driving home in my XA Falcon after his late night shift at Charlies a twenty four hour restaurant in Surfers Paradise. It had been raining and he lost control on the wet roadway. The car mounted the footpath, demolished part of a wood and glass bus shelter and narrowly missed a public telephone cabinet. The left front mudguard was crumpled and the radius arm bent. It was driven home with a great squealing of tyres. The worst feature was the damage caused by the shattered glass from the bus shed. The slivers of glass gouged through the paint to leave pin points of bare metal across bonnet, roof, boot lid and same side panels. The windscreen was also badly scratched. The RACQ insurance assessor decreed that the vehicle should be written off. He agreed that it had obviously been in quite good condition and valued it at \$1800.00. There was a \$300.00 excess on the policy and I arranged to purchase the wreck for \$400.00 to enable me to restore it to the previous or better condition. The radius rod was replaced by a second hand one obtained for \$25.00 from the wreckers. The car was taken to a garage for a wheel alignment and same attention to a buckled wheel rim which cost \$35.50. The car was left at Michael's Body Shop on November 1985. It was returned on December 7, 1985 in pristine condition after a full repaint in the original Polar White. Including the windscreen and bumper, Mick charged me \$1280.00. The total cost including repurchase, the excess, body work and bits and pieces was just under \$2050.00. The insurance company gave me \$1100.00 which left me just under \$1000.00 out of pocket and reasonably happy. An application to the RACQ to comprehensively insure the restored vehicle was rejected because it had been written off by them. It was readily accepted by Suncorp.

Following my retirement in July 1987 I began planning for a visit to Cunnamulla where my wife had been born. The XA was running well and using very little oil but it had never been air conditioned. The latter was considered essential for a trip so far west and a newer car seemed to be indicated.

A list of desired features, in perhaps an XE Falcon, was given to a car buying group associated with my credit union. The list included air conditioning, power steering, T-bar automatic transmission and light coloured paintwork preferably white. The cash outlay was to be limited to ten thousand dollars and an allowance for the to be traded XA. After a week or so one of the traders rang to say they had found a good low mileage XE within the price range. It was however a two tone Eclipse model in blue over white. On inspection I wasn't keen on the colour so the trader took me to see a number of other similar cars which appealed less. The Eclipse was decided on and arrangements made to have power steering fitted. The date of manufacture was 27/1/1983 and it was registered 945-OQU later that year in the Townsville area. There is no receipt held by me but credit union withdrawals of \$500 on 27/2/89 and of \$8600 on 3/3/89 plus \$1500 allowed for the XA adds up to \$10600. Just when the car came into my hands is not known but at least a week elapsed after it was decided to pay the extra for fitting the power steering. The comprehensive insurance policy with Suncorp was changed over on 4/3/89. It is 1996 as I write and we haven't been to Cunnamulla.

On the way home from Brisbane after picking up the car, it seemed that everyone was passing us despite the XE speedometer indicating a speed just over or at the limit. This

included grey haired ladies in smoking four cylinder Toranas. A later check against another car indicated that the speedometer was probably reading between 10 and 15 km/h slow. A few days later my son Mark had the car in Brisbane. In mid afternoon he rang to say that the car had caught fire when it was started. Fortunately there was a suitable fire extinguisher nearby in the underground car park and with the aid of another motorist the fire was put out. The fire had been confined to the under bonnet area and to the concrete floor underneath the car. My mother-in-law's car was hastily borrowed for a trip to Brisbane after telling Mark to call the RACQ. Grant and I had found the cause of the fire before the RACQ serviceman arrived. A badly tightened union on the petrol pump had twisted the short hose connecting the tap of the metal pipe to the carburettor and it had split. When the car was started petrol had been dumped all over the distributor with unpleasant results. According to Mark he saw a light on the wall when the car started and thought it odd as he had not switched on any lights. As soon as he realised there were flames he had turned the engine off and deprived the fire of its main fuel source. There was powder from the extinguisher everywhere but it had served its purpose. The underside of the bonnet was blackened with soot but there had not been enough heat to cause blistering. The serviceman had a suitable piece of tubing and after taping up a small amount of burnt insulation on some wiring the car was started without the problem recurring. Before leaving for the Gold Coast it was arranged that once we got on to the freeway we would check the speedometer. When traveling at a steady 80 km/h the lights were flashed and Grant checked the reading in the XE. This was repeated at 100 km/h. On arrival home it was clear that XE speedometer was way out. Even when driving 10 km/h over the limit on the XE speedometer there would have been no danger of being booked for speeding. Arrangements were made to take the car back to the dealer who replaced the whole instrument cluster and cured the problem.

When thinking back it seems that the XE behaved fairly well. Other than the fire the RACQ had to be called only one other time for roadside assistance. It was March 22, 1990 before any significant work was needed. The power steering box was leaking and had to be replaced. Having become unhappy with the amount of play in the steering the car was taken to Pedders for a quote. The quote on 2/9/91 was for \$669.50 and the items said to be needing replacement seemed quite extensive. An RACQ inspection on 10/9/91 listed far fewer problems which were attended to by Sunshine Ford for \$357.24 and achieved the desired result. Attention to the air conditioning was required in March 1992 for almost \$150. A few days before Christmas 1992 Mark had again borrowed XE which overheated after the radiator had sprung a leak. Mark called the RACQ who topped up the radiator. The engine had cooled before the RACQ arrived. It was suggested that Mark drive to a nearby service station in Milton Road Brisbane for attention to the radiator which had to be replaced.

The blue paint on the roof had always looked thin and in June 1994 surface rust began showing up on the swage lines. The boot and bonnet were also fading badly and some body trim was looking tatty. As the car had been kept in good mechanical condition and had covered a relatively small distance it was considered to be worth keeping. The new odometer was reading just over 50,000 km at the time and the old one read 98 585 km when the roadworthy certificate was issued in February 1989. The car was fully repainted

after attention to minor rust and with all external trim removed. New window weather strips were fitted and chrome trim, striping, rubbing strips and mud flaps replaced. On completion the car looked even better than I had expected. When a reduced rate was offered for number plates to replace a bad batch which had lost their reflective qualities the registration number became 389-CDZ. All went well until the night of Saturday December 3, 1994. When we left a Christmas party at the Park Regis Motel in Southport to go home the car was gone. It had been parked in a well lit area only twenty metres from the motel driveway. The police were advised and on arrival took the necessary details. The insurance company was also advised on their after hours number. It was suggested that I go to the Suncorp agency in the Pacific Fair Shopping Complex which would be open next morning despite it being a Sunday. There I was advised that I could have an Avis hire car until my own was recovered. On December 5 the Beenleigh police rang to say that a cane farmer at Woongoolba had found bits of car trim and papers on a remote part of his property. Some of the papers had my name and phone number on them. The officer at Beenleigh requested me to advise the investigating officer at Southport of this discovery. The following morning Beenleigh police rang again to say that my car had been recovered from a canal at Norwell along with another vehicle. It was minus all doors, boot lid and back seating. It had been taken to a towing company yard in Beenleigh. When I advised the insurer of this fact I was told that the Avis car would have to be returned. The car was inspected at the yard and it appeared that an attempt had been made to remove the left front mudguard. It was held on by a couple of bolts at the front. The thieves may have been disturbed and decided to dump the car. It seemed that the guard had been bent forward by the force of the water when the car was being pulled out of the canal backwards. A nearby panel shop had already inspected the vehicle when I saw it and had decided it was "uneconomical to repair". While the assessor agreed that it had obviously had been in very good condition the pay out was only \$5000. Fortunately Grant's big Ford V8 coupe was available to me for running about. Arrangements were also made to cash in a small investment to finance another car.

A friend of a friend known to me promised to keep a lookout for a car to suit my needs. What was wanted was a younger Falcon, hopefully an XF with the same specifications as the stolen XE. It turned out to be just that. An XF Falcon GL with air, T-bar auto, power steering and low kilometers. It was a later version than the mother-in-law's gold XF had been and used unleaded petrol. It was metallic blue in colour and was registered 757-PUO. The cost in as traded condition from Sunshine Ford on March 19, 1987 was \$7900. It had travelled a little over 50,000kms and receipts and log book entries appear to confirm this figure. It had previously been owned by an elderly gentleman who had apparently parked by ear rather than sight. Both bumper bars, particularly the front one, were askew and held at the sides by self tapping screws. There was a dent in the left hand rear door extending into the mudguard which looked better after the liberal use of cutting compound. There was a badly repainted repair on the other rear door and two small dents in the front of the bonnet. It took a bit of effort, new clips and some work with a hammer on the front bumper mounting point to get it fastened properly. It now sits centrally and has only a slight droop where the bumper meets the wheel arch on one side. At times I'm inclined to leave the bodywork like it is in the hope it is less likely to get stolen. Just the same I now fit a top quality steering wheel lock and have had the glass areas etched with

the registration number 757-PUO. Since purchase a new air conditioning condenser, which seems to be a weak point in Ford factory air, had to be fitted. Some time later I became unhappy with the amount of slack in the steering and on RACQ advice had new rubbers put in the radius rods, the steering box adjusted and the alignment checked and adjusted. The mechanic advised that the steering box was in need of replacement. This was attended to in April 1996 when an upper left ball joint was replaced. This improved the steering to my satisfaction. It seems odd, perhaps, that three Ford cars used by the family have, all needed power steering box replacements and all at relatively low kilometres.

Eventually the time arrived when my younger son required wheels to get him to the University and to come home at week ends. This need resulted in the purchase of a Mark 1, Ford Escort 2 door for a total of \$2030.00 on May 18, 1988. It needed quite a bit of work to overcome some minor problems. Further work was needed to get the heater working. After a number of visits to the wreckers I was able to obtain the dashboard windscreen vents from a later car. I was able to modify them to replace the old ones which were falling to pieces. In truth it would take too long to tell of all the things done to the car. Major jobs included an overhaul of the motor and replacement of the rear axle and differential assembly. In all it was in many ways a better car than when it was purchased until it began to run badly after a run of twenty or thirty kilometres. This was particularly bad over 80 km/h. The garage seemed to have cured the problem after a major overhaul but on the way to Brisbane to put it on the train to Cairns it played up again. Mark, who had gone to Cairns to teach at the high school, picked it up and despite attention in Cairns it was often troublesome. As he was later transferred to Mossman, it became necessary to replace the leaking front struts which condition had been pointed out by the RACQ months before. More work was done on the car during the year Mark was teaching at Mossman and he brought it back to Brisbane when he obtained a teaching job at St Joseph's College at Nudgee.

Mark had always aspired to an MG and after some looking around he purchased an MGB tourer. It was a rubber bumper model which had been converted legally from left hand drive. The body was in really good condition with little if any rust. Electrically, it was a disaster with all sorts of intermittent faults. The RACQ was called out so often that he received a letter suggesting he get the wiring overhauled by an auto electrician. The overdrive was inclined to be noisy but never gave trouble. The electrical problems and the needs of his wife, who had to park the car at night at the university, resulted in the trade up to an MGB GT. This car, also a rubber nose model, had been privately imported from England, and a much better proposition in most respects for an only car. The body was not quite as good but generally it has been a sound car apart from minor problems that must be expected in a car more than twenty years old. On occasions when he has need of more seats when friends came to visit for a few days or more, we swapped cars and I had the use of the MGB GT. In late February 1966, when his wife Georgia was close to giving birth to their first child, we again swapped cars. This changeover lasted until they purchased a Magna sedan in late April. While I had the car I was able to make some minor repairs and replace a faulty reversing light switch. The MGB didn't really suit my purpose but in the end I was almost sorry to see it go.

It seems that I am now up to date to September 1996 and who knows what may be in store for me so far as cars are concerned. Some time in the future, there may be a need to upgrade or replace a car again. Should that happen, I can always add a line or two.