

More TF competition Part 1

In February of 1955 I was transferred to Toowoomba and soon joined the Toowoomba Auto Club (TAC) which has always been very active in its promotion of motor sport. During my time in Toowoomba the club was presided over by Stan Mossetter who was later made a life member of the club. Membership of the TAC heralded for me a far greater involvement with motor sport in its many forms. For quite a lengthy period I was a member of the TAC, the MG Car Club, which I had joined some time previously, and the Queensland Motor Sporting Club. The latter two were based in Brisbane and quite often another MG owner, now a friend of many years, and I drove there to attend the club meetings. We took turns at being a passenger in the other person's car. Despite this sharing of the trips my TF reached 31900 km just one year after purchase.

It was on one such night time return trip from Brisbane that I noticed fast approaching headlights in the rear view mirror. We were approaching the hotel at Plainland as the car swept past going considerably faster. It was the Austin Healey 100S being driven by Steve Ames who had been at the same meeting. Just beyond the curve past the hotel there was in those days a shallow invert in the roadway. As the Healey went through the dip without any slackening of pace the rear of the car hit the bitumen and a shower of sparks the full width of the car lit up the night.

Not long after my arrival in Toowoomba I assisted with the organisation of some TAC events and was a spectator at a sprint meeting on the Leyburn airstrip. This was probably the event reported on in the March 1955 issue of "Motor Sport in Queensland". A photo showing a Triumph "TR2", driven by J Barron, waiting on the start line includes a much younger looking me among the spectators.

Initially I restricted my competition to gymkhanas and met with some success in club events and was a member of the TAC team for a number of events on the Darling Downs.

What follows is a chronicle of events at which I competed or spectated.

Gymkhana and Barbecue – May 8 1955

This event, on May 8, 1955, was held on vacant land near the Waterford Hotel and according to the report in "Motor Sport in Queensland", "was enjoyed by all those present."

The results of the gymkhana events were as follows:---

Forward Bending Race	(1)	Fred Dyke (TC)
	(2)	G. Muller (Y)
Southern Cross	(1)	T. Connolly (TC)
	(2)	Ken Ebeling (TF)
Donut Race	(i)	Ken Ebeling (TF)
	(2)	R. Barrett (TF)

Triangle Race	(1)	Vince Jordan (TF)
	(2)	J. Muller (Y)
Parking Test	(1)	Vince Jordan (TF)
	(2)	Ken Ebeling (TF)



At a Waterford Gymkhana

Race Meeting - Leyburn Sunday May 22nd. 1955

I attended this meeting as a spectator. This must have whetted my appetite for speed events as I had a medical examination for a competition license on May 24 and applied for a license, through the Toowoomba Auto Club, the same day. The licence was approved in time for me to have a run at a Strathpine sprint meeting on Saturday, June 25, 1955 using a borrowed crash hat for each of my runs. The next move was a crash hat which I purchased on July 21 in time for the TAC Speed Trials, on July 24, 1955. The hat was to a British Standard Specification with the brand name Corker. Compared to today's efforts it looks a bit old fashioned when I see it sitting on the shelf in the cupboard.

Gymkhana and Barbeque- June 5 1955

This event began as an "MG Car Club" club run of 28 cars from Centenary Park in Brisbane and ended, after the gymkhana, with a barbecue at the Waterford Hotel.

The results of the gymkhana events were as follows:

Potato Race	(1)	Bill Weekes (TF)
	(2)	J. Muller (Y)
Forward Bending	(1)	Ken Ebeling (TF)
	(2)	Vince Jordan (TF)

Forward and Reverse Bending	(1)	S. Pollard (TC)
	(2)	Vince Jordan (TF)
Ladies Bending Race	(1)	Miss D. Herbert (TC)
	(2)	Mrs B.Pollard (TC)
Southern Cross	(1)	Fred Dyke (TC) 25.2 Sec.?
	(2)	Ted Jones (TD) 34.0 Sec.

The times given for this event for Fred Dyke credits him as being 8.8 seconds faster than Ted Jones (TD) This makes me wonder if Fred's time was misread on the stopwatch.

Parking Test	(1)	S.Pollard (TC)
	(2)	Fred Dyke (TC)
Auto Cross	(1)	Fred Dyke (TC) tied with Bill Weekes (TF)
	(2)	Ken Ebeling (TF)

It was at one of the Waterford events that Pat Kinneally arrived in a Triumph "TR2". It was soon surrounded by a group of interested people, including myself, casting envious eyes at its many features. Before I left Maryborough, when the new Triumph sports car was still not available in Australia, I had requested some information about them from the local dealer. They had even less information than that I had obtained from English motoring journals. Sometimes it is nice to day-dream.

Gymkhana – Caboolture on Monday June 13 1955

This event was promoted by the magazine "Motor Sport in Queensland" as Queensland's Second Motor Sporting Gymkhana. The first was I understood held at the Mt. Gravatt Showgrounds which, at that time, would have been an outer suburb of Brisbane. This second event was held at the Caboolture Showground with proceeds going to the Caboolture Q.A.T.B. and RSSILA. It was supported by teams from the Sporting Car Clubs of Brisbane, Beaudesert, Gympie and Nambour and the Queensland Sporting Car Club. The MG Car Club, Brisbane Light Car Club and the Ipswich and West Moreton Auto Club also provided teams.

I was a member of the MG Car Club team which contained most of the competitors who had done well at the club's Waterford gymkhanas which had preceded this event . The full team, all in MGs as befits the name of the club, were Fred Dyke (TC), Bill Weekes (TF), Vince Jordan (TF), Ken Ebeling (TF), S. Pollard (TC) and Ted Jones (TD). I still have a copy of the programme, and some photographs of the event.

One of the photographs shows Vince Jordan in action but the caption shows him as being disqualified for hitting a post in the garaging test. I recall winning a heat of the potato race only to be disqualified. I was so far behind that I grabbed the make believe potato

off the ground by the post and jumped over the back of the car into the driver's seat instead of opening the door, getting back in and then shutting the door as required by the rules. I made a race of it even though I knew disqualification would automatically follow. There is a faint stirring of memory which says a team from Gympie won due to the efforts of Mick Gay in an MG "TF". His name would crop up again in a similar event at Maryborough a year later but this time in a Volkswagen. Other familiar names in motor sport circles at the time driving for the QMSC were Joe Marano, Bill Pickett and Jim Bertram.



Vince Jordan at Caboolture Gymkhana

Sprints – Strathpine June 25, 1955

This was my first speed event but I recall very little of it apart from the borrowing of a crash hat for each run. I have no photographs and only a line in a diary which comments that the run was uphill. My fastest run was 111.85 km/h (69.5 mph) which is probably why I make the excuse about the run being uphill.

My first visit to the motor racing circuit at Strathpine, about 20km north of Brisbane, had been as a spectator at the first event held there after the Second World War. A friend of mine, Gordon Taylor, and I rode our bicycles to the circuit from our respective boarding houses in Kangaroo Point principally because Gordon had an uncle who was to compete in the car events. Motorcycle racing was also on the programme. Gordon's uncle won one event but ran out of petrol in the main race due probably to under estimation of the fuel consumption at racing speed. There was some talk of sabotage but it seemed to be unfounded. The car was a Willys 77 tourer, a car long since forgotten by most people even if they ever saw one. One of the cars racing was an MG TB and another a dirt track speedway car which pulled out of a race near our vantage point. In its early years the

circuit was only straight up and down the single airstrip and around drums and straw bales at either end. A few variations, including racing in the anticlockwise direction, were tried from time to time but the final configuration involved a loop at the township end to add a little more interest by making the circuit a fraction faster.

Much later the circuit became part of a housing development with the major street called Spitfire Avenue. The side streets were named after the types of wartime aeroplanes which had used the airstrip.

Speed Trials – Leyburn Sunday July 24 1955

'Motor Sport in Queensland' in their report said "Some of the worst weather seen in Toowoomba this year dampened the spirits of competitors and spectators at the TAC's Speed Trials held on Sunday."

The fastest time, in the Racing Car Division, for the flying quarter mile was 175.6 km/h (106.4 mph) by Arthur Griffiths in the Javelin Special which was often called the "Yellow Goanna" because of its distinctive colour and low build. Pat White (Cooper JAP) covered the standing quarter mile in 15.61 seconds for the fastest time of the day. In the closed car class Norm Yarrow, Holden, performed best in the flying event 140.2 km/h (87.14 mph) and in the standing with a time of 19.98 seconds.



Bill Kent at Leyburn

The full results for the sports cars were as

DRIVER	CAR	STANDING START SECONDS	FLYING START	
			MPH	KPH
A. Gourley	MG TC	20.26	81.53	131.21
D. Foster	MG TC	21.69	72.93	117.37
V. Jordan	MG TF	21.47	63.11	101.56
K. Ebeling	MG TF	22.14	78.47	126.28
B. Kent	MG TF	21.61	75.93	122.19
J. Van de Kamp	Sunbeam Alpine	21.03	88.14	141.84
M. Beutel	Triumph TR2	---	95.13	153.09
R. Hamilton	Swallow Doretta	18.62	97.07	156.21
A. Gourley	Austin Healey	19.62	87.88	141.43
B. Griffiths	Triumph TR2	18.59	96.05	154.57

'Motor Sport in Queensland' reported "Seven records were broken and two new ones established and, with the exception of P. Kinneally's Class "E" records, all were in the closed car division." As I was to do in later years, Pat had entered his Triumph TR2 in the Racing Car Division! It had been his intention to set a new record for Class "E" racing cars and he easily achieved his goal.

The report in the "Toowoomba Chronicle" credits Pat with breaking only the standing start record with a time of 18.23 seconds. In fact Pat reached 156.1 km/h (97.07 mph) in the flying event which easily eclipsed the record of 109.43 km/h (68 mph) held by F. Reid in a Vauxhall Bugatti which had also held the standing start record at 24.4 seconds. The Class "E" sports car record was held by Barry Griffiths, in another Triumph TR2, with a speed of 158.1 km/h (98.24 mph.) a speed he did not achieve on this occasion.



Jack Taylor in the judge's box at Leyburn

Speed trials – Strathpine, August 27, 1955

I have a photographic record of a number of cars at this sprint meeting on the old Strathpine airstrip. My programme, with the results pencilled in, says August 27, 1955 but the caption in my photo album says it was on August 28. Some of the cars appearing in the photographs are the Lago Talbot, belonging at the time to Ken Richardson, the ex Richardson Ford Special of Steve Ames, a Cooper (engine unrecorded), an MG Special, at least one MG TD and at least a couple each of MG "TF" and "TC". There is also an MG "YA" saloon, an MG "ZA" Magnette saloon, an Austin A30 and one 48/215 Holden. One of the TFs is mine, in its usual slightly grubby condition. My car was generally considered to be one of the dirtiest cars in the MG Car Club. Being black didn't help but as it invariably had been driven down from Toowoomba I used it as an excuse. In the days before construction of the Ipswich Bypass it was a one way trip of 138 km (86 miles).

The MG Car Club ran their "Speed Trials" on a handicap system but the times given below are the actual times taken in the standing start. The speeds have been calculated using the elapsed time for the flying quarter mile.

DRIVER	SPORTS CARS	CLASS	STANDING START	FLYING START	
				MPH	KPH
P. Uscinski	MG PA	G	20.80	67.92	109.31
N. Ansell	MG TC	F	19.55	74.2	119.4
S.Pollard	MG TC	F	18.30	76.40	122.95
A. Sterer	MG TC	F	20.55	78.60	126.5
F.Morrison	MG TD	F	19.8	80.57	129.67
R. Barrett	MG TF	F	20.01	84.27	135.62
K. Ebeling	MG TF	F	20.49	73.29	117.95
T. Yule	MG TF	F	20.36	89.55?	144.12?
W. Weekes	MG TF	F	18.38	80.36	129.32
CLOSED CARS					
A.E. Ansell	MG YA	F	23.42	67.42	108.49
F.S. Dyke	MG Magnette	F	21.17	75.44	121.41
V.G. Jordan	Austin A30	G	24.10	70.87	114.04
RACING CARS					
W. Pitt	Cooper	G	14.90	107.14	172.42
N. Huch	MG Special	F	15.10	101.47	163.29
K. Richardson	Lago Talbot	C	13.67	108.96	175.35
S. Ames	Ford Special	C	15.66	100.33	161.47



Gymkhana - Drayton September 4 1955

This is the only other gymkhana I have any record of. It was organised by the Toowoomba branch of the Motor Manual Goodwill Club. I came third overall among non club members. Even though I was a member of the M.M.G.C. I had entered as a visitor. One driver managed to overturn his model "T" Ford while mucking about after the event.. The damage was mostly to his pride.

Hillclimb – Prince Henry Drive on Sept 17 1955

This event on Saturday, September 17, 1955 was conducted by the Toowoomba Auto Club in conjunction with "The Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers Association" as part of the carnival activities. It was promoted as "The Australian Hill Climb Championships". The entry list of 33 competitors was made up of 16 racing cars and 17 sports cars. In the Racing Car classes the star performer was expected to be Lex Davison in his Supercharged Cooper-Vincent and the spectators were not disappointed. He won the Championship with a best time of 44.73 seconds. This was 1.78 seconds quicker than the time of the second fastest car the Cooper-JAP entered by Bill Pitt but driven, on this occasion by Charlie Swinburne. Third fastest was the Lago Talbot of Ken Richardson

with a creditable time of 47.53 seconds. The times are from my completed copy of the programme but are thought to be correct in most cases. Other racing car drivers to better the 50 second mark were Pat White (Cooper-JAP) 47.88 seconds, John Mc Kinney (MG Special) 48.39 seconds, Stan Mossetter (Riley Special ex Rizzo) 49.38 seconds and N. Huch (MG Special) 49.42 seconds.

The fastest Sports Car was that of Steve Ames with a time of 48.06 seconds. This was 2.64 seconds faster than the time of 50.71 seconds achieved by R Taylor in a Jaguar XK120. The Ames car was in reality the ex Richardson Ford Special fitted with cycle guards for the event. The car was built by Mr Jack Wright and had first raced at Lowood in 1950 and had run third in the 1954 Australian Grand Prix held on the old Southport (Gold Coast) road circuit in the area behind Surfers Paradise. The winner of that event was Lex Davidson in the HWM-Jaguar Special.

Pat Kinneally had entered his Triumph TR2 car in the Racing Car Class "E" section. This was a smart move as he was the only Class "E" entry and thus made fastest time in his class. Had Pat entered in Sports Car Class "E" his time of 54.26 sec would have placed him second to the Swallow Doretto of R. Hamilton on 53.75 sec.



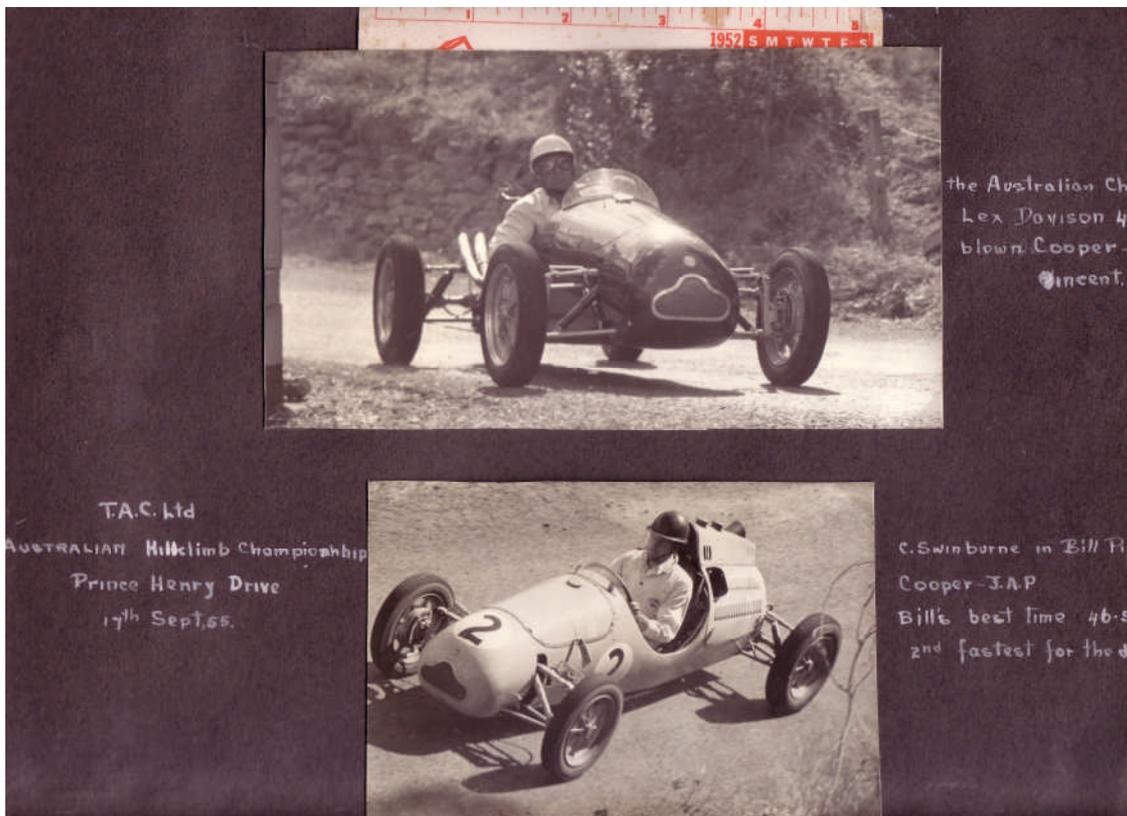
Parade through Toowoomba before AHC 1955



General view of start line



John Gill, MG TF on start line



BEST TIMES FOR SPORTS CAR DRIVERS

DRIVER	SPORTS CARS	CLASS	TIME in seconds
Steve Ames	Ford Special	C	48.06
R. Taylor	Jaguar XK120	C	50.71
Alan Gourley	Austin Healey	D	53.08
R. Hamilton	Doretti	E	53.75
Merv Beutel	Triumph TR2	E	56.28
B. Mossetter	MG TC	F	52.55
Alan Gourley	MG TC	F	53.00
Bill Weekes	MG TF	F	54.41
Alan Wickham	MG TC	F	54.97
John Gill	MG TF	F	58.0
Ken Ebeling	MG TF	F	61.04
M. Kent	MG TF	F	62.45
Peter Uscinski	MG PA	G	60.88
Peter Downing	Riley Imp	G	61.75

In the course of my official duties that night, at the telephone exchange, I was able to get the actual photographic prints of the winner, Lex Davison, and the runner up, Charlie Swinburne, which were used to send "Picturegrams" to the Brisbane "Courier Mail".

This was my first hill climb in competition. Many years earlier I had been a spectator at a hill climb held at Whites Hill close to the Brisbane suburb of Camp Hill. I am quite sure that at the time the possibility of my taking part in such a competition never entered my mind. I had after all ridden there on my push bike. I took a number of photos at the Whites Hill venue including one of Alf Najor in a borrowed MG TC Special which he drove up the hill some seconds faster than its owner. One of the first MG TDs to compete in Queensland finished up in a ditch and was also photographed.



Alf Najor in Les Taylor's MG at White's Hill