

## Chapter 2

### 1958-1962

#### Making progress

With the increase in competition events, it was decided that the Club needed a Competition Secretary and this position was created on 24 March 1958: J Stacey was elected. Until this time, the Secretary/and/or nominated committee members were responsible for organising the various events.

Max Bowden was the Club's first CAMS licence examiner, and also represented the Club at CAMS Council meetings for 1957/59. He was followed by Doug Trengove in 1960 and Bruce Went and Ian Dodd in 1961/62.

In July 1958 the committee began moves for incorporation. At a Special General Meeting on 29 September 1958, constitution amendments for incorporation were approved. These came into effect on the payment of the appropriate fee on 3 November – the Club was now ***The Austin 7 Club of SA Incorporated***.

1958 was a busy year for those members who were keen on hill climbing. The SA Championships at Collingrove on Easter Monday, 7 April, included Garrie Cooper, Cooper Austin and the A7s of Murray Lewis, Bruce Went, John Walsh and Brian Cutt, and John Newmarch in his Ford V8. The next meeting was on June 14, and Garrie Cooper, Murray Lewis, Bruce Went and Brian Cutt competed.

The Broken Hill Silver City Festival Hillclimb Championships on September 14 attracted Garrie Cooper, Bruce Went, Ken Virgin and John Newmarch. Run at the "Peak Hill" site at Silverton, this meeting was a disaster for Bruce as he recorded two runs of 55.95 and 55.62 seconds before the motor went "bang"! but by the October 11 meeting at

Collingrove, he was back in the action.

For the 1959 SA Championship meeting at Collingrove, John Newmarch drove a Simca Aronde. Garrie Cooper drove his Elfin Streamliner, Doug Trengove the Ausford and Murray Lewis, Denis Overall and John Walsh in A7s.

The Australian Hillclimb Championships for 1960 were held at Collingrove on 8 October. Bruce Went, Murray Lewis and Rob Brosnan now had their Elfins, to compete with Garrie Cooper's. The A7s included Terry Ireland, Doug Trengove and John Walsh. Tony Grove, in the Ausford, Ron Guppy, Ford 100E Special and John Jarrett, Cooper Butler ran in Class F – 1101 to 1500 cc.

In 1958, the realignment of the main Gawler-Nuriootpa Highway at Gawler Belt (Willaston) resulted in a stretch of bitumen road being closed off and becoming private property. Successful negotiations with the landowner resulted in this becoming the new site for all 9 Chain Sprints from 24 August.

Bruce Berry recalls, "*Norm Butler knew someone at the nearby roadhouse who told him about the bit of closed road and that's how we got to use it*". This site was ideal, as by the time room had been left for the pits, the start area and enough road to safely slow down and stop in, there was only 9 chains left! The Club could not charge for admission to these events, but sold drinks to help cover costs. Later, as the event became very popular, suggestions were made to lengthen the run, but because of these limitations, it stayed at 9 chains.

The growth in popularity of these Club sprints meant that entries now had to be divided into 4 categories – "A7 Specials" and "A7 Standard and Sports" and "Other specials" and "Other cars". On September 26 1958 the MGCC was invited, resulting in 5 classes and the 7 December

meeting was open to all CAMS clubs.

These sprints became the "flagship" for the A7C and were directly responsible for the continuing growth in membership – from 100 at the end of 1957, to 126 in 1959 and 296 in 1962.

In 1959, four sprints were conducted, with entries growing from 16 in January to 27 for the last in November. Col Riches, Dodge V8 set FTD at four of these, his best being 9.7 secs.

The autocrosses at Bull Creek began to wane in popularity and the last was held on 19 April, 1959, when only six cars competed. The 9 chain sprints had taken over as the favourite form of competition, as they were less damaging to the cars.

The Border Runs continued in March each year, with the exceptions of 1960, when it was held in April due to it clashing with a race meeting at Phillip Island, and in 1962, when it was held in May. The fourth run in 1958 was noteworthy for the fact that on this run, SA outnumbered the Vics for the first time – not in A7s attending, but in people.

Bruce Berry recalls: "*I had spent my National Service in 1956 at Point Cook in Victoria and had built up a strong relationship with Victorian members who were also doing Nasho. I spent some of my weekends leave with them at A7 events. I was the main contact between the clubs at this time*".

The next historic decision, which was to have far-reaching benefits for the Club, was in November 1959, when the calendar for the coming year was being set. A race meeting, organised by the Club was proposed for August; this was confirmed at the March 1960 meeting and preparations were begun.

At the end of 1959, Keith Dobson retired and Max Bowden took over as President, with Tony Grove beginning his long-serving stint as Secretary.

Moving up the organisational scale to run a race meeting was probably the best, most far-reaching decision ever made by the Club. It established the Club as a competent and capable organisation and set it up financially in the immediate term and significantly contributed to on-going financial income.

Club members were racing at Port Wakefield: the A7C team of John Newmarch, Eric Spehr and A Hollard (all in Simcas) won the relay race at the SCC November 1959 Amateur Race Meeting and John Newmarch ran second to Clem Smith's Holden in the 8 lap trophy race at the 12 October 1960 meeting. (The feature event was the "Advertiser Trophy" won by Bill Patterson, Cooper Climax).

At Club general meetings, Norm Butler and John Walsh regularly gave reports on their racing activities.

#### The Advertiser 6 December 1960

Sporting Car Club will conduct an amateur race meeting at Port Wakefield next Sunday. Entries for the event, which is open to all CAMS licence holders, will close with the Club tomorrow night. Officials are asked to be at the course by 10.30 am as practice will start at 11 am. First event will be at 1 pm. Spectators will not be admitted.

At this meeting, A7 members racing were: Bruce Went (Elfin), Denis Overall (Austin 7), John Newmarch (Capricornia), Murray Lewis (Elfin), Rob Brosnan (Elfin), Bruce Forster (Austin Healey), Ian Dodd (A/H Sprite) and Dud Dansie (BBM).

One of the after-general-meeting entertainments organised was a visit on 29 February 1960 to the Cooper Motor Bodies workshop: "Garrie Cooper gave an interesting talk and conducted a tour of progress on Elfin cars". The cars being built belonged to Rob Brosnan, Bruce Went, Murray Lewis and Peter Wilkinson. (See later).

In May 1960, the Club ran at the first of many quarter mile sprints at WRE in conjunction with the Sporting Car Club and the WREI

(Weapons Research Establishment Institute) club - now DSTO - at Salisbury. 19 entries were received: the cars were timed over a standing start quarter mile and a flying one-eighth mile. Murray Lewis, Elfin set fastest time of 17.38 seconds and a speed of 94.3 mph (151 kph).

Other class winners were: A7, G Gepp - 26.72 secs, 52.2 mph; Ken Virgin, VW - 20.57 secs, 67.9 mph; Bob Chapman, Wolseley - 19.09 secs, 77.4 mph; Brian Cutt, Cooper Butler, 17.77 secs, 84.5 mph; John Morton, MGTC - 18.36 secs, 83.6 mph. Bruce Ide and Bruce Berry ran their A7s, Bruce Went his Elfin and Tony Grove his Ausford.

The Club combined with the SCC to run a 9 chain sprint in July 1960, which attracted 28 entries, including one A7 sedan and four A7 specials; FTD went to John Newmarch, Capricornia 9.3 secs. John was again the fastest at the next sprint on 25 September with 9.7 secs - this event had 27 entries over eight classes. The final sprint for 1960 was an open event, attracting 44 entries, FTD to N Davies, BSA special 9.4 secs.

A hill climb at Collingrove with the SCC on 24 July 1960 attracted 24 Club entries. Terry Ireland was the only A7, recording 52.70 secs and Garrie Cooper won with 45.11 secs. Other fast times were recorded by: Dud Dansie, BBM- 45.96; Murray Lewis, Elfin - 46.97; Peter Goodale, Austin Special - 46.86; Col Riches, Dodge V8 - 46.99 and Tony Grove, Ausford - 49.14 secs. The first A7C trophy race meeting on 14 August 1960 was a great success. The following extracts from October *Australian Motor Sports* tell the story.

On August the fourteenth, the Austin Seven Club of South Australia made history by organising a race meeting at Port Wakefield. From small beginnings a few years ago, this club has increased in stature and for the past two years has had a reputation for the smooth organising of sprints. Last year it was decided to take the big plunge, and under the direction of President Max Bowden, the committee and members worked like navvies with the result that on the day everything went like well-oiled clockwork.

### 1957-58 COMMITTEE

**President** - Keith Dobson

**Treasurer/VPres.** - Arch Millikan

**Secretary** - Max Bowden

**Assistant Secretary** - D Rogers

**Competition Secretary** - J Stacey

**Committee** - Jack Barnett, Ross

Roberts, Murray Lewis,

Moss Marchant, John

Newmarch, (Ian Fooks

*replaced after resignation by*

Tony Grove)

**CAMS Delegate** - Max Bowden

One innovation was in the timekeeping department. Max Bowden had suggested to one of the committee members that a large clock on the opposite side of the track to the timekeepers might be the answer. This person agreed, then blandly said he didn't know of a suitable clock movement and proceeded to make one. The finished product excited quite a lot of comment having a matt black dial four feet in diameter with yellow hands and figures. With all timekeepers quite new to the job the only trouble was when stopwatches were used". (Note: the builder of the clock was Bruce Ide and this clock continued to be used successfully at Port Wakefield and at Mallala. When technology overtook it, the clock was donated to the Birdwood museum).

One thing that caused anxiety during the week preceding the meeting was the wet weather, but the rain stopped on Saturday and Sunday could not have been improved upon.

Six entries were received from Victoria, including Eddie Perkins (father of Larry), and an eight-event program was conducted, beginning with an A7 race, for which there were only 3 entries. Other notable entries were from Garrie Cooper and Murray Lewis (Elfins), Dud Dansie (BBM) and Russ Court, debuting his Elfin. Mel McEwin entered his Skoda road car, which he used to tow his Tornado racing car!

Results:

#### **R1-Austin 7 handicap, 4 laps**

1 - Terry Ireland, 2 - Bruce Berry, 3 - Bruce Forster

#### **R2-Division 1 scratch, 4 laps**

1 - Greg McEwin (Machealey), 2 - Bill Pile (Cooper Climax Special), 3 - John Newmarch (Capricornia)

#### **R3-Division 2 scratch, 4 laps**

1 - Ian Alexander (Billancourt), 2 - Rob Brosnan (Elfin), 3 - Russ Court (Elfin)

#### **R4, -Touring, GT scratch, 4 laps**

1 - Ken Virgin (VW), 2 - Eric Spehr (Simca), 3 - Alan Coffey (Ford Anglia 105E)

- 1 – Eddie Perkins (Porsche),
- 2 – George Reynolds (VW Porsche),
- 3 – Malcolm Nancarrow (Austin Lancer)

**R5-Austin 7 Club trophy, 8 laps**

- 1 – Bill Pile, 2 – Greg McEwin,
- 3 – John Newmarch

**R6-Touring and GT handicap, 6 laps**

- 1 – George Reynolds, 2 – Mel McEwin (Skoda), 3 – Malcolm Nancarrow

**R7-Sports and Racing handicap, 6 laps**

- 1 – Jim Goldfinch (A/H 100S),
- 2 – Greg McEwin, 3 – Ian Alexander

**R8, 8a-Touring and GT invitation handicap, 6 laps**

- 1 – Mel McEwin, 2 – Ken Virgin,
- 3 – Alan Coffey
- 1 – Eddie Perkins, 2 – Russ Court,
- 3 – George Reynolds

The race reports state that good racing was a feature of the meeting, with close finishes the order of the day in the handicap events.

Back to *Australian Motor Sports*: After the noise had died down the Committee congregated with huge grins and Max Bowden said, "Right, now for next year..."

Senior officials were: Clerk of Course, Max Bowden; Secretary of the Meeting, Doug Trengove; Starter, Ian Dodd; Chief flag marshal, John Morton; Chief spectator marshal, Mike Adamson. Members of the SCC handled handicapping and scrutineering. The timing team was under the control of Jean Bowden (Max's wife). Tony Grove was the announcer and Bruce Went was in charge of trackside communications (telephone system). Bruce's Elfin had suffered a blown engine at the previous meeting, so he couldn't compete.

The entry fee paid by the Club to Brooklyn Speedway (owners of Port Wakefield) was 5/- per car.

The assembling of a timing team for this meeting was also one of those strokes of good fortune, again unrecognised at the time. After the success of our fledgling timing team, the Sporting Car Club asked us to take over the timing responsibility for future meetings. This we did, beginning our duties at the next meeting on 4 December, setting up the beginnings of a team that grew and flourished with the sport: it continues to be one of the most versatile in Australia in 2003.

Max Bowden recalls: *"By the end of 1960 I decided that I had become too involved with CAMS and the A7 committee, having been Secretary for seven years and President for one, so I retired".* At the 1960 AGM, in his Presidential report, Max spoke of "the growth of the Club in its organisation of motor sport". He continued with the Club, being in charge of the timing team and as Clerk of Course at the next race meetings.

With the closing of one chapter of our history, another was about to begin, with Bruce Went as President joining Secretary Tony Grove to take on the responsibilities of leading the Club forward. This coming period in motor sport, when Port Wakefield would be closed and the new Mallala track built, was to enable the Club to prosper and establish a sound financial base.

Another co-operative sprint between A7C/MGCC/SCC/AMC was held on 30 January 1961 at Port Wakefield. 41 entries, including eight A7C members, were timed over a standing quarter-mile, a standing lap and a flying lap. (The AMC – Associated Motoring Clubs – comprised small clubs that each had less than the required membership to join CAMS in their own right and included the Morris Minor and VW Car Clubs).

The enthusiasm after the success of the August race meeting prompted the Club to organise two race meetings in 1961. For the meeting on May 14, scrutineering was held on the Thursday night before the event. This was an historic occasion, being the last race meeting at Port Wakefield.

**Results:**

**R1-Division 2 Scratch, 5 laps**

- 1 – Denis Overall (A7),
- 2 – John Walsh (A7)

**R2-Division 1 Scratch, 5 laps**

- 1 – John Newmarch (Capricornia),
- 2 – Murray Lewis (Elfin)

**R3, 3a-Touring and GT Scratch, 5 laps**

- 1 – Ken Virgin (VW)
- 1 – V Clancey (MGA),
- 2 – Denis Dix (Holden)

**R4-Neil Milhinch Trophy, 15 laps**

- 1 – Dud Dansie (BBM) 2 – Russ Court (Elfin), 3 – Bruce Went (Elfin)

**1959 COMMITTEE**

**President** - Keith Dobson

**Treasurer/VPres.** – Arch Millikan

**Secretary** – Max Bowden

**Assistant Sec.** – Murray Lewis

**Competition Sec.** – Tony Grove

**Committee** – Jack Barnett, Harry Kneebone, Norm Butler, John Newmarch

**CAMS Delegate** – Max Bowden

**R5- Touring and GT handicap, 8 laps**

- 1 – Ken Virgin

**R6- Sports car handicap, 8 laps**

- 1 – Bruce Went, 2 – Graham West (A/H Sprite)

**R7- Racing car handicap, 8 laps**

- 1 – M Bail (MGTC), 2 – D Davies (MGTD)

**R7- Invitation handicap, 6 laps**

- 1 – M Bail (MGTC), 2 – D Davies

*The Neil Milhinch Trophy was in honour of this Club member, killed in a road accident in March 1960.*

The birth of Mallala came about because the required standards of tracks used for the Australian Grand Prix were being raised from those that had prevailed since the founding of CAMS.

Port Wakefield had been the site of the 1955 Australian Grand Prix, won by Jack Brabham, Cooper Bristol. By the rotation system used by CAMS at that time, South Australia's next turn to hold the AGP would be in 1961. It was assumed that it would be at Port Wakefield, which wasn't always the nicest place to be for a race meeting, often being windy and dusty and was 60 miles (100 km) from Adelaide on a narrow main highway. Then CAMS dropped the bombshell – Port Wakefield was not a suitable site for the 1961 race! So Mallala was born out of sheer necessity. When the owners of Port Wakefield bought the disused former RAAF air base at Mallala – with plenty of tar-sealed roadways and taxiways and some potentially useful buildings - it was apparent that a lot needed to be done.

An enormous amount of work was put into preparing the new track and the A7 Club was at the forefront, dismantling the existing

grandstand at Port Wakefield (which had not been designed in kit form) and transporting and reassembling it at Mallala.

Dud Dansie gave a progress report on building the Mallala track to the Club at the May meeting. The working bees began on 4 June; these entailed weekends at both tracks, camping overnight on Saturdays to get the job done.

Bruce Berry recalls: *"We had the contract to remove the existing grandstand. We organised working bees with 20 or more people camping at Mallala over the weekends. Then we built the pit counters; it took us 12 weekends straight to finish the job. And while this was going on we were still building our own cars"*.

Rob Brosnan recalls: *"We stayed in the hotel at Port Wakefield while pulling the grandstand down. Ian Dodd was the overseer of the project, ensuring that the way it was bolted and welded together was structurally sound"*.

The Club was paid for the grandstand but the extra work on the pit counter was taken as credit towards track hire, allowing costs to be kept under control for the next few years of events at Mallala.

While this frenzied building activity was going on, Club events still took place. There was a sprint at Lanac Park near Mount Compass with the MG Car Club; another WRE quarter mile sprint with the SCC on July 2, when 59 entries were received, and 9 chain sprints in September and October.

Another major event was taking place in July – at Lake Eyre, where Mel McEwin was attempting to set an Australian land speed record.

Bruce Went was part of the official timing team and he recalls: *"Mel McEwin had sponsorship from Mobil to set an Australian land speed record with his Tornado racing car, powered by a Chev Corvette V8 engine. He drove to Lake Eyre a week before the attempt, carrying the car and all the heavy equipment, including the digital timing gear. He selected a track and marked a straight line with green dye. A party of eight - the timekeepers, surveyors, stewards, doctor and an electronics expert from WRE (to look after the timing gear) - drove up to the site, leaving on Friday night and expecting to be at Muloorinna Station early on Saturday morning – sleeping time had not been taken*

## 1960 COMMITTEE

**President** — Max Bowden

**Treasurer/VPres.** – Bruce Went

**Secretary** – Tony Grove

**Assistant Sec.**– Bruce Berry

**Competition Sec.**– Doug Trengove

**Committee** – John Newmarch,

Dennis Overall, Bruce Ide,

Ted Thitchener

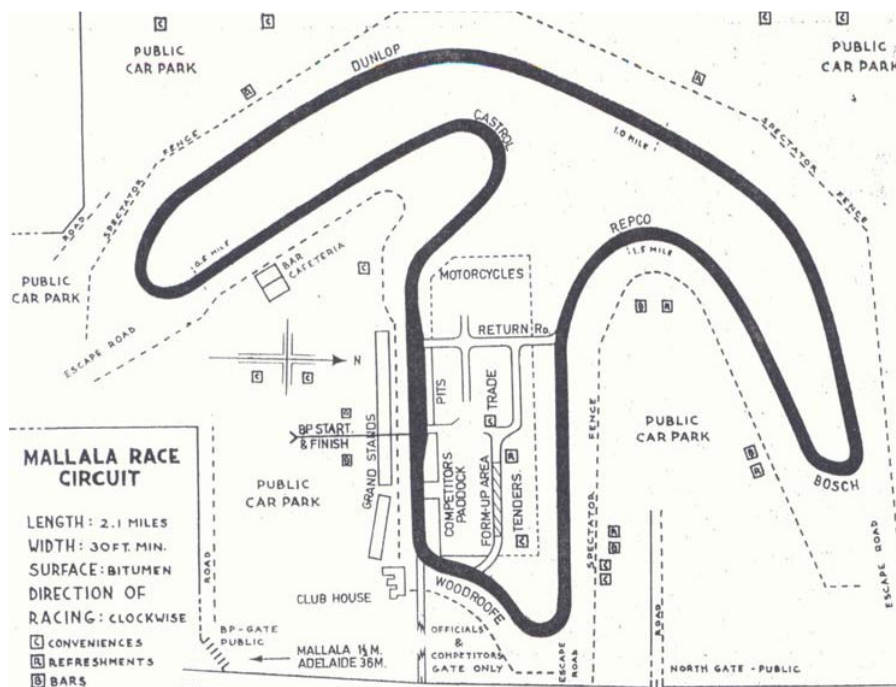
**CAMS Delegate** – Doug Trengove

*into account! We were to proceed to the lake, set up the timing gear, survey the track and have practice runs and probably break the record and then drive home on Sunday.*

*That was the Plan – reality was something quite different!*

*The officials had been provided with three used cars as transport. These gave continual trouble – new spark plugs needed on one at Clare, broken windscreen wiper switch, bald tyre and cracked wheel, broken jack, driver's side window defective, the battery fell out of one and had to be wired up with fencing wire, and finally one exhaust was ripped out in one of the many deep creek crossings – this was repaired laying in the mud. The roads were in poor condition, due to continual rain, and travelling was slow. From Hawker at 1 am, we arrived at Leigh Creek at 6 am, having taken 5 hours for 100 miles. The road was now dry and by 9 am we were at Marree, and had breakfast at Muloorinna at 10 am Saturday. In contrast to our adventurous drive, the Clerk of Course, Ken Walker, arrived by plane on Saturday.*

*To reach the lake from the station, we drove over a goat track through sand dunes. The lake edge was muddy for about 50 yards and its surface was a salt crust about 15 inches thick over black, oozy mud. The timing gear was set up to record over the measured mile but we had trouble aligning the activating lights, due to the glare from the salt. Next morning we were up at 4 am and were able to correctly align them. A few timed runs were held during the day but*



**Mallala** race circuit 1961. Length 2.1 miles (3.4 km), racing was clockwise.

*the car was not fast enough to break the existing record, as it suffered some engine problems.*

*By 4 pm we had finished and returned to Muloorinna, where we had to again patch up the exhaust before setting off for home. Contending with large bull dust holes, no brakes, a radiator coming adrift and no third gear, we eventually arrived in Adelaide at 7 am on Monday morning."*

Editors note: Not for the first time in motor sport history (nor the last), did a record attempt on a salt lake prove to be a lot harder to achieve than ever thought possible when planning began. Four months later, the Tornado was racing in the AGP at Mallala.

Our third race meeting had been scheduled for 20 August. However, before Mallala could be used for the AGP, it was necessary to hold a shakedown meeting, so we forgave the August date, transferring to 3 December.

The August shakedown meeting showed that the Mallala track and organisation were capable of running a major race meeting, (although the Touring and GT race finished in the dark), and the stage was set for the 1961 Australian Grand Prix. The A7Club had been instrumental in convincing the organisers to reduce entry fees for local competitors: originally these had been considered too expensive, and no one was going to enter. This was resolved satisfactorily and the meeting had a full supporting program to the AGP.

This summary of the October 9 1961 AGP and supporting races is taken from an article written for the race program for the A7C race meeting on 7/8 September 2001.

And so to the "Craven A" Australian Grand Prix. October that year was very hot, and parts of the track surface were in poor condition with freshly repaired sections beginning to crumble. The AGP program had practice and qualifying heats on Saturday – Sunday was a day of rest – (remember this is SA in 1961!) – with further practice on Monday morning, and the AGP in the afternoon.

Came the starting time and 16 cars lined up. The field was a mixture of Specials and Factory-built racing and sports cars, including the Ricardian

Special driven by John Newmarch and the self-built, supercharged Austin Special of Trevor Ellis, who at 19 years 7 months was the youngest ever competitor in an AGP – both were A7C SA members. Trevor had been one of the enthusiastic A7C members who had camped at the track to get it ready. The Austin had been timed at 92 mph (147 kph) in a sprint and during the race was lapped every 4 laps. However, Trevor completed 38 laps, best lap of 2-16, and finished in eighth place. His Austin 8-based car was the last side-valved engine to finish an AGP.

The leading cars in the race were all Cooper Climaxes, and although David McKay led on the track, he had been penalised one minute "for an early start" and after 50 laps and 1 hr 29 minutes 01 seconds, the chequered flag went out to Lex Davison, whose car promptly rolled to a stop – out of fuel, caused by a fuel union crack after hitting a straw bale (remember them as safety barriers!) during a spin. Second went to Bib Stillwell with David McKay third. Lex Davison and Bill Paterson shared fastest lap time at 1-44, 72.7 mph (116.7 kph).

The new Elfin FJ of Garrie Cooper was entered but did not start, due to a seized gearbox. The Elfin streamliner of Peter Wilkinson was the only Elfin to start, finishing in tenth place. The Ricardian retired on lap 14. Another non-finisher was the Vitesse of Helen Bittner, a car/driver combination still competing in Historic events today.

Support events were for Touring/Grand Touring cars and Sports cars: A7 Club members who raced in these events included Bruce Went, Ian Alexander, Garrie Cooper, Doug Trengove, Denis Overall, Denis Dix, Brian Cutt, Lincoln Kakoschke. Clem Smith, current track owner, also competed.

The 1961 AGP was the second last held under the rotational system whereby each State held it in turn: the coming Tasman Series brought international drivers to Australia and only tracks deemed to be able to organise the AGP "to the required standards" would be granted the event. This effectively restricted it to the Eastern States for 20 years, until Adelaide in 1985.

The AGP proved that Mallala was suitable to hold Championship races and for 1962 the following national titles were held there: Australian Formula Junior Championship, Australian Gold Star and Australian Tourist Trophy.

Senior officials for the A7C 3 December 1961 race meeting were: *Clerk of Course*, Max Bowden;

## 1961 COMMITTEE

**President** - Bruce Went

**Treasurer/VPres.** – Rob Brosnan

**Secretary** – Tony Grove

**Assistant Secretary** – Bruce Berry

**Committee** – Dennis Overall, Doug Trengove, Bruce Ide, D Wilson

**CAMS Delegates** –

Bruce Went, Ian Dodd

*Secretary of the Meeting*, Ian Dodd; *Starter*, Tony Grove; *Chief flag marshal*, Eric Spehr; *Start marshal*, John Lemon; *Chief timekeeper*, Jean Bowden and *Announcer*, Kevin Colwill. The Club had secured sponsorship and this was the first of several "Marie Claire" trophy race meetings - Marie Claire being a brand from the Emu winery based in Morphett Vale.

Results:

### **R1-Division 1 scratch, 3 laps**

1 – Mel McEwin (Tornado), 2 – Garrie Cooper (Elfin FJ),  
3 – Dud Dansie (BBM)

### **R2-Division 2 scratch, 3 laps**

1 – Brian Morrell (Elfin), 2 – Denis Overall (A7), 3 – Trevor Ellis (Austin Sp)

### **R3, 3a -Touring and GT scratch, 3 laps**

1 – Cyril Nancarrow (Austin Westminster), 2 – Malcolm Nancarrow (Austin Lancer), 3 – Ross Loader (Holden)  
1 – Col Riches (Auschry),  
2 – Noel Hurd (Zephyr)

### **R4- "Marie Claire" racing trophy, 5 laps**

1 – Mel McEwin, 2 – Dud Dansie,  
3 – Doug Trengove (A30 Sp)

### **R5- "Marie Claire" sports trophy, 5 laps**

1 – John Newmarch (Ricardian),  
2 – Russ Court (Elfin),  
3 – Murray Lewis (Elfin)

### **R6 - Touring and GT handicap, 6 laps**

1 – Ken Virgin (VW), 2 – Malcolm Nancarrow, 3 – Vince Clancey (MGA)

### **R7- Division 1 handicap, 6 laps**

1 – John Newmarch, 2 – Murray Lewis,  
3 – Mel McEwin

### **R8 - Division 2 handicap, 6 laps**

1 – Helene Bittner (Vitesse),  
2 – Peter Wilkinson (Elfin),  
3 – Graham West (A/H Sprite)

### **R9 -Touring and GT handicap, 5 laps**

1 – Col Riches, 2 – Ken Virgin  
3 – John Morton (Morris 850)

### **10 - Racing and Sports handicap, 5 laps**

1 – Helene Bittner, 2 – Doug Trengove,  
3 – Graham West

The popularity of Club events is shown in these summaries from 1962.

*9 chain sprints*

25 February - 35 entries, FTD and track record – 7.8 secs, Ian Bell Chrysler special (dragster).

9 September – 60 entries, FTD – 7.8 secs, Alf Mullins, Chrysler special.

*Quarter mile sprint*

22 July – 52 entries, FTD – 13.00 secs, Alf Mullins Chrysler special.

*Grass sprint*

Held at Virginia on 24 June – 24 entries, FTD Ross Chatfield. This event attracted new members to this type of competition, which was a short circuit laid out in a paddock but with no mud or slush to contend with. This meeting was the competition debut of Malcolm Ramsay, Morris 850.

*Gymkhana*

26 August – 32 entries, won by Malcolm Ramsay.

The 11-event May race meeting marked the racing debut of several club members. Entered in the popular FJ Holden class were John Walker, Serge DeLuca, Denis Dix, and Charlie Adams, while Tony Alcock raced his Elfin.

The 4 November race meeting was combined with the SCC: another 11-event program saw the racing debut of Malcolm Ramsay, (who won the All-comers handicap in his Morris 850), and Doug Trengove's Cicada.

As part of Max Bowden's desire to retire from Club responsibilities, he and Jean relinquished their control of the timing team at the end of 1961. Barry Frost assumed this responsibility, commencing with the SCC meeting on 4 March 1962.

Club members were not only keen sprinters and racers; they also competed in hill climbs. With the success of our first two race meetings, thoughts turned to looking for land suitable for a hill climb. One site had been looked at in 1961 and in November 1962 another was investigated: neither were suitable.

With the growth of sprints and other events, the Club needed the equipment necessary to run these efficiently - flags, timing gear, star droppers and bunting etc. In February 1961 a Public Address system was bought: then all this gear needed to be stored and carried to each event and so in September 1962, discussions began on the design of a Club trailer.

To accommodate the needs of increased competition, stopwatches that timed to 1/100 second had been bought and the sprint timing gear upgraded.

General meeting attendances had outgrown the Druids Hall at Norwood (the December 1961 AGM had been held at the SCC rooms) and from 30 July 1962 monthly meetings were held in St John's Church hall in Halifax Street Adelaide.

At the committee meeting on 5 November 1962, Dud Dansie moved "that a newsletter be started if an editor can be found". At the December AGM, conducted by Max Bowden, Barry Frost was elected to the committee for 1963.

## Summary

The Club continued to grow and mature and became incorporated. The popularity of competitive events saw membership grow each year 1958 – 109, 1959 – 126, 1960 – 119, 1961 – 178 and 1962 – 296. This growth was directly attributable to the appeal our sprints had in attracting new members.

The move from Port Wakefield to Mallala brought motor racing nearer to Adelaide and the new track proved very popular with drivers, as it was a "safe track". The work that members did in helping to construct facilities was of great benefit to the Club, as the money earned effectively doubled club funds. The credit earned enabled events at Mallala to be made affordable for our members, encouraging them to compete whilst also attracting new members to the Club, some of whom were to become famous in South Australia, Australia and overseas.

## 1962 COMMITTEE

**President** - Bruce Went

**Treasurer/VPres.** – Rob Brosnan,  
*moved interstate, replaced by*  
Murray Lewis

**Secretary** – Tony Grove

**Assistant Sec.** – Bruce Berry

**Competition Secretary** – Ian Dodd

**Committee** - Dud Dansie, Eric  
Spehr, John Newmarch,  
Trevor Ellis

**CAMS Delegates** –

Bruce Went, Ian Dodd

The timing team, as well as providing a vital service, began to earn funds for the Club – a service it still provides in 2003.

This period saw the last of the original office-bearers, in Keith Dobson and Max Bowden, retire from official duties, but a new breed, just as keen and committed, were about to lead the Club.

## Annual Trophy Winners

### 1958

*Glen Motors Trophy* – Bruce Ide

*Wise Trials Trophy* –

John Newmarch

*Scott Hillclimb Trophy* –

Murray Lewis

*Lutzow Speed Trophy* –

Murray Lewis

### 1959

*Glen Motors Trophy* – Max Dillon

*Wise Trials Trophy* –

Doug Trengove

*Scott Hillclimb Trophy* –

Denis Overall

*Lutzow Speed Trophy* –

Charles Tuckey

*Aggregate Trophy* – Ted Thitchener

**1960**—No record of winners

### 1961

*Glen Motors Trophy*– Bruce Ide

*Wise Trials Trophy* – Ken Virgin

*Scott Hillclimb Trophy* –

Bruce Forster

*Lutzow Speed Trophy* –

Denis Overall

### 1962

*Glen Motors Trophy*– B Brown

*Wise Trials Trophy* – Ken Virgin

*Scott Hillclimb Trophy* –

John Walsh

*Lutzow Speed Trophy* – J Mason

## Evolution of the timing gear-Mk II

The start and finish sensors were of the same principle as the original described in Chapter 1, but had been updated by Bruce Went in construction and for ease of use.

Two 1/100-second stopwatches were fitted and operated by electric solenoids and controlled by electronic circuitry. The equipment could be used in two ways:

1 – To time two single-lane sprints, side by side with a common start pulse and separate finish times.

2 – To time a single lane ¼ mile sprint from a standing start and record times from two finish lines a known distance apart (usually 66 feet) and so calculate the car's speed at the finish.

This was the final configuration and was used until 1972 when sprints had lost their popularity and the Club stopped running them.

## The A7C and Elfin

With the popularity of sprints, many members, including Garrie Cooper, Norm Butler, Rob Brosnan, Murray Lewis, Bruce Went, Barry Catford and Doug Trengove were building specials of varying designs and origin and using them to competing in A7C trials, sprints and gymkhanas.

In 1958, Murray Lewis's A7 special had set an A7 record of 10.9 seconds at the 25 August 9-chain sprint and he again won at the 26 October sprint (11 secs) at Gawler Belt. Norm Butler and Garrie had built an Austin A40-chassised 2-seater special - the Cooper Butler - and at the same October sprint, Norm ran second in class with 10.2 secs. At the 21 June 1959 event, he ran 10.3 secs to win from Doug Trengove, Ausford, 10.4 secs. The Cooper Butler was later converted for road use. Barry Catford debuted his Renault 750-powered Delta at the 27th September 9 chain sprint.

Murray sold Garrie a damaged 1932 A7 tourer, which was rebuilt into the Cooper-Austin. It featured an A30 engine sleeved-down to 750cc and mated to a P-type MG gearbox. The suspension originally was a modified non-independent A7: later on the rear axle arrangement was altered by shortening the pinion shaft and torque tube and locating the axle housing with a single trailing link on each side.

Rob Brosnan recalls: "*I found an A7 tourer belonging to a friend of my dad's, which I brought home and chopped the body off with an axe! I built this into a racing car, which I eventually sold to Denis Overall and in his hands it became the quickest A7 to race at Phillip Island. The car now belongs to Ian Motley. I then bought a Ford 10 special without a body.*"

*Sitting in my parent's garage with Garrie Cooper and Murray Lewis, looking at the car, we decided that it needed a body and Garrie suggested one like the current Lotus. If we could find 4 people willing to be part of the project, he would design and build them. Murray and Garrie made 3 – we needed one more."*

Bruce Went and Peter Wilkinson then came on board - and so the Elfin Story began. The first car delivered was for Garrie in September 1959: Rob's and Bruce's came in March 1960, Murray's in April. All four raced at the 18 April 1960 Easter Monday meeting at Port Wakefield and they all competed regularly in A7C sprints over the next few years.

Murray Lewis recalls: "*At the time of joining the A7 Club I owned an Amilcar. It was "bitser", consisting of engine, diff. and front axle from a 1926 Amilcar roadster, which I owned, grafted on to an Amilcar Grand Sport chassis purchased from Garrie Cooper. A tubular steel frame (electrical conduit as this was all that was readily available) was fitted to attach a body to but this never eventuated. I competed in this car in an A7C 50 mile trial with Rob Brosnan as navigator. Some time later the car suffered a conrod through the side of the engine block.*"

*I then purchased a 1932 A7 tourer and apart from daily transport, used it to compete in A7C events, including the "Spring Trial" of 1955 with Norm Butler as navigator. In this event we took a wrong turn at the top of Trial Hill in the Barossa and rolled the car end for end on a dirt road after hitting a ditch. After righting the car and checking the oil, Norm was able to drive me to the Angaston Hospital and the car back to Adelaide.*

*My next car was a 1948 A8, which I used in the early nine chains sprints at Bolivar. This was in 1956 and I was now on the committee and the car was used to map night trials.*

*Garrie Cooper had purchased the Lyall Dent A7 and removed the body, fitted a tubular frame and competed at Collingrove hill climb. He then began rebuilding it as a monoposto, but before completion, he conceived the idea of the Cooper Austin. We did a deal and I ended up with the partly completed monoposto and Garrie with my wrecked '32 A7 minus the engine.*

*I rebuilt the car as a two seater and fitted the now reworked '32 motor, complete with Ford Pilot Solex twin-choke carby and Scintilla magneto ignition, to the Lyall Dent 4 speed gearbox. I first competed with his car at Collingrove in 1957. Over the next two years I ran at Port Wakefield, nine chain sprints at Gawler belt and two race meetings at Phillip Island to compete against the Vics. In 1959 at a nine chain sprint, the crankshaft broke.*

*Garrie was building the Elfin streamliner sports cars and I decided to purchase one. The motor and gear box from my A7 special went to Denis Overall and the chassis went to Bob Plantener.*

*My Elfin was fitted with a BMC B Series 1500 cc motor, gearbox and diff and Vanguard brakes with specially cast drums and was the first Elfin with independent front suspension. Later it was converted to independent rear suspension using the BMC diff in the centre and Elfin Formula Junior components at the wheels.*

*In this car I competed at Collingrove, A7C sprints at Gawler belt and WRE and race meetings at Port Wakefield, Phillip Island, Ballarat, Mallala and Warwick Farm in Sydney.*

*The Elfin was sold in 1963 to the Jarrett brothers."*

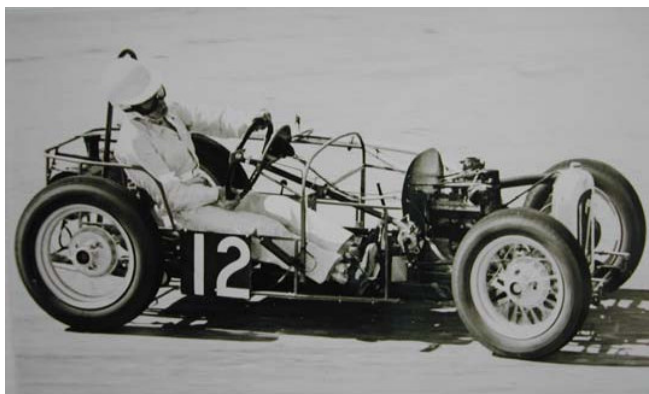
Bruce Went recalls. "*My Elfin was powered by an early model Ford E93A motor, fitted with two 1 1/4 inch SU motorcycle carbys, a hot cam and a planed head. The gearbox was Ford 10 with altered ratios, driving through a 100E diff. All this took some months to put together and at about 4 a.m. on Easter Monday morning, the car was completed for racing at Port Wakefield that day. I had a couple of hours sleep and drove it to the track to run the motor in. During the day, I learnt a lot about motor racing and was very pleased with the car's handling.*"

*The next couple of years competition at Port Wakefield and Collingrove were only moderately successful, but I had a lot of fun; much of the competition was with the Elfin's of Rob Brosnan and Peter Wilkinson, whose cars had similar performance to mine. When Mallala came into being. I was classified in Division 3, eventually qualifying at the front of the field for a Div. 3 scratch race. This glory didn't last long as the willing but tired little motor passed away.*

*Looking for bigger and better engines, I purchased a Mk1 Consul motor, bored it out and fitted Mk 11 pistons, two 1 1/2 inch SU carbys, mated it to a Morris 8/40 gearbox and squeezed it into the Elfin. The extra cc's certainly made a difference but brought other problems – lack of brakes! I purchased some disc callipers and made up discs of mild steel, which were quite reliable and restored the stopping power. The motor was proving very reliable in contrast to the previous one and survived four meetings without damage. I fitted a hot cam in about September 1963, which improved the performance again, but it was apparent that close ratio gears were needed. I didn't get around to this as at the Easter meeting in 1964 I sold the Elfin to a Victorian buyer."*



The A7 specials of Garrie Cooper (above) and Murray Lewis (below) at Port Wakefield



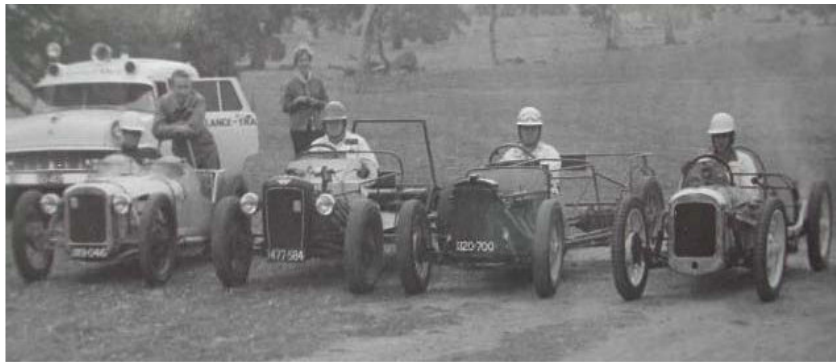
#### **Port Wakefield touring car action, 29-11-59.**

Top: Eric Spehr (Simca) and Peter Krome (Fiat 1100) Eric was one of the team that won the relay race. Centre: D Hall (Holden), B Muir (A30) and P Krome Bottom: Ken Virgin (VW) and B Muir



#### **9 chain sprint action, Gawler belt 1959.**

From the top: Dennis Overall A7; Dud Dansie BBM; Allan Moir Ford V8; Greg McEwin MacHealey; Bruce Went in Norm Butler's A40 special



### Collingrove hillclimb action, 1959

Top Left: From left, A7 specials of Terry Ireland, Bruce Berry, Bruce Went and Denis Overall  
 Centre left: A30 special of Garrie Cooper  
 Top right: Bruce Ide, Ausford; L Gibson, A7 special; Terry Ireland, A7 special, Doug Trengove, Ausford, John Pocock, Morris 8/40; Peter Krome, Fiat 1100

**Port Wakefield:** Bill Pile, Cooper; John Newmarch, Ricardian; Jim Goldfinch A/H100S; Rob Brosnan, Elfin; Murray Lewis, Elfin; Ian Alexander, Billancourt; Bruce Went, Elfin. May 1961





### Bulls Creek Autocross 19-4-59

From the top: Neil Milhinch A7, Max Dillon A7, Darcy Hunt A8



### SCC Autocross 23-8-59

Moss Marchant A7



### Gymkhana 12-7-59

Ted Thitchener Ford Zephyr



### Gymkhana 18-10-59

Kevin Colwill MGY



### Elfin Streamliners at Port Wakefield

Above: Rob Brosnan Elfin Streamliner chases Jim Desira, MGA twincam

Left: Bruce Went as grid marshal at second A7 race meeting with Murray Lewis (21) and Garrie Cooper (22)

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At right:  
From left, Graham Taylor, Don Scott and Charlie Adams and the Prince Skyline GT.



## **Mallala action**

Left: Denis Dix abandons his  
Holden

Below:  
Don Scott, Prince Skyline GT  
chases a Holden, a Lotus  
Cortina and a Monaro