

Chapter 5

1973-1977

Coming of age and a home of our own

1973 was a very busy year and a lot was achieved, on top of continuing with regular sporting and social events. A Birthday Celebrations sub-committee, to plan for the Club's 21st year in 1974, and an A7 owners' sub-committee were set up and sites for Clubrooms were continually investigated.

The competition calendar included five night trials, although lack of entries and a petrol shortage caused two to be cancelled. Also on the schedule were five grass sprints, for which Graham Boulter (Underdale Motors) donated a trophy for pre-EH Holdens, three circuit sprints, two gymkhanas and an economy run as well as our trophy race meeting. For A7 owners, runs included the Border Run and the October Touring Assembly, again to Wallaroo.

The band of A7 owners had been growing steadily. Merv Perry, Ron Burchett, Tony Grove, Charlie Adams, Tex Emery and Ian Motley had displayed their cars at general meetings during the year and it had become apparent that the needs of A7 owners were not being adequately catered for by the existing Club structure.

In July 1973, President Rob Brosnan reported in *Austin 7 Journals* 41.

The Austin 7 owners have banded together and shortly we will be selecting another sub-committee from this group to coordinate with the general committee in the 21st Birthday Celebrations. The Austin 7 motor car must be maintained both in existence and in force as belonging to members of this Club and this group will work to encourage purchase, membership and restoration of as many vehicles as possible.

This group had first met at Trevor Mander's home on 7 July 1973; this report from *Austin 7 Journals* 41.

Around 25 members and several visitors attended Trevor's garage, which was tastefully decorated with A7 bits, photos and books, complemented by one rather pallid A7 Meteor, which served as a feature wall. A lot of interest was centred on Charlie Adams' Ludgate sandwich aluminium head and several members tried unsuccessfully to stuff it up their jumper.

Following Rob Brosnan's introductory remarks explaining the purpose of the gathering, Tony Grove generated some nostalgia when he briefly outlined the history of the Club. Ian Motley read much correspondence on A7 matters and discussion followed on various aspects. It was resolved that a sub-committee be formed to examine ways of catering for the special needs of A7 owners, including spare parts supplies, library facilities, outings etc. and a number of names were proposed for consideration at the next committee meeting.

The August 1973 committee meeting ratified the formation of the owners group and the names proposed for the interim committee, which would serve until the AGM. Tony Grove was appointed Chairman; Leigh Thomas was Secretary, Bruce Bridgart looked after spares parts, Ron Burchett was Librarian and Ian Jones reported at general meetings on their progress. At the AGM, Tony stood down and Bruce Bridgart, Ian Jones, Trevor Mander, Ron Burchett,

Leigh

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Thomas, Merv Perry and John

Garnett were elected. By the end of the year, numbers had grown from 20 to 40.

At the May 1973 committee meeting, Ian Motley moved "*that investigations be started into the possibility of holding celebrations to commemorate 21 years of the existence of the A7 Club in SA*". Nominations from members were duly sought and at the July committee meeting the following were appointed – Glenda Grove, Chris and Graham Boulter, Ian Jones, Ian Motley, Merv Perry and Leigh Thomas.

At their first meeting in July, Ian Motley was elected as Chairman, Glenda as Secretary and the Ayers Rock run, to generate publicity for the Club's 21st year, was proposed. It proved to be an asset having several members on

both of the new sub-committees, as A7s were to feature strongly in several of the planned events.

The committee arranged for a poster to be designed and printed as a memento of the year; Lyall Perry's design was chosen and was used on all 21st Birthday publicity, including the race meeting program.

Coincident with planning for our 21st birthday, the search for Clubrooms continued, with the President attending several auctions mid year and reporting progress to members, particularly on sites at Hindmarsh and Hendon. However, like all previous inspections, none were suitable. Then success – or so it seemed! At the September 1973 general meeting, Rob Brosnan gave a report on the best site found so far – at Tapleys Hill Road Seaton. He detailed the price, the amount of the bank loan needed and that we needed members to act as guarantors for the loan.

In the October 1973 issue of *Austin 7 Journals* 42, his *President's Piece* had this to say.

At this point in time, we are the closest we have ever been to purchasing Clubrooms. By now you would all have been notified in some form or other of our current situation relating to a church property on Tapleys Hill Road, Seaton. Formal application has been made to our bank for finance and is being considered right now. The Council has also been approached for their consideration with facts to hand outlining our present and future activities. A contract has been signed for the purchase on the proviso that both these applications are granted. We now sit tight with fingers crossed. Whilst you might sit and say, "good show chaps, this is what we have been waiting for, for years," I am concerned at the small response from members to act as guarantors to cover the amount of the bank loan.

Members – it is as simple as this; the bank wants a guarantee for the total loan. You have indicated that you want Clubrooms and if this is so, then you had better come forth with your name to be included in the list, because if we don't meet the request, we might as well forget Clubrooms forever.

Strong words, but they had the desired effect; at the October general meeting he reported that the bank loan had been OK'd, although

we still needed more names from members, and that we waited on approval from the Woodville Council. At the November committee meeting, the guarantors' list was sent to the bank.

Then disaster – by the end of November we were advised that the Council had refused our application! A new application, agreeing to keep the site in its existing condition with no alterations, was then lodged with the Council.

Rob noted in his report to the November AGM that *“He was sorry that the Clubrooms had not been finalised and although all was not lost, the Committee had learnt a lot about the process and which would be helpful in future negotiations”*.

Also at this AGM, Tony Grove was elected as President for 1974, as Rob, having served his tenure of two years, was now ineligible to continue. The Constitution was amended to include provision for a joining fee to be applied to new members.

Tony reported on Clubrooms progress in the January 1974 issue of *Austin 7 Journals 43*.

The latest move on our Clubrooms is that our application was put forward again at the Council meeting on December 11, when once again the Building Committee recommended that it not be approved, but one of the Councillors moved for a deferment until the next Council meeting. Since then, Rob Brosnan has had an on-site meeting with two of the Councillors and a representative from the Building Committee. We now have to get references in time for the next Council meeting on January 14.

At the February Committee meeting, Rob reported that the Council had given its approval, with two conditions; that we kept the Clubrooms neat and tidy and that no social functions went after 11 pm, and we were still waiting to receive the bank money. By the end of the month, at the general meeting, the President reported that *“we had signed and received the money and the Clubrooms were now ours”*. And that the first function there would be a working bee!

The Birthday Committee had been planning a wine tasting to kick off the year's celebrations and with a nice sense of timing, this then became the official opening of the Clubrooms on 24 March 1974.

Austin 7 Journals 44 captured the day's activities.

Sunday March 24, was **the** day that had been talked about and dreamed of for many years – the official opening of our Clubrooms, a day which turned out most successfully, and leaving a feeling of achievement with those who had been striving for this for many years.

The gates were opened at 2.30 pm for members to stroll through the grounds and hall and sample the excellent selection of wines. At 3.30 pm the official opening ceremony took place with our President, Tony Grove, introducing Mr Mike Thomas, Vice President of the National Control Council for CAMS, who after a very warming and congratulatory speech, officially opened the Clubrooms by unveiling an engraved brass plaque.

From then on, members and friends continued to enjoy the wines, while the children – and some adults – were treated to mini tours in Austin 7s that were among the cars on display.

It was good to see some of the Club's founding members present, namely Lloyd Thorpe and Doug Trengove. Special guests included David Davidson (ATC Victoria) and John Longbottom, President of SCC SA, and his wife June. They were part of the 180-200 people present.

The afternoon rounded off with a chicken tea and amber refreshments and as the night grew darker it was obvious that the once sacred church grounds would in future be the worshipping place of a different following.

At this opening event, the Club released a range of selected wines bearing the A7 Club label, produced in conjunction with Patritti Wines to celebrate our 21st birthday.

The first general meeting to be held in our own Clubrooms was the next day, 25 March 1974 after 200 chairs were purchased at a Public Buildings Department auction. To defray the loan repayment costs, in 1975 the Clubrooms were hired to various community and Church groups on a regular basis. Extensions and improvements were undertaken from 1976 and included enlarging the hall by moving the back wall towards the kitchen and

1973 COMMITTEE

President – Rob Brosnan
Vice President – Barry Frost
Treasurer – Colin Zytveld
Secretary – Ian Motley
Assistant Sec. – Barry Frost
Comp. Sec. – Mick Hammond
Committee - John Lemon,
Graham Boulter,
Wayne Roberts,
Tony Grove

Social – Margaret Smith, Bill Smith,
Rosemary Leigh, Alex Cochrane,
Sam Matheson

CAMS Delegate – Bruce Went

making the front door entrance flush with the outside. The side fence was replaced in November 1976; the kitchen floor was retiled and a lawn watering system installed in 1977.

The idea behind the Ayers Rock Run was to drive to Ayers Rock and return in 21 days in an Austin 7. By the time of the run, this had grown to three Austin 7s – 1926, 1928 and 1930 models.

Austin 7 Journals 44 1974, previewed events so far:

The trip to Ayers Rock and Return, June 1-21, was launched on March 30/April 1 with television news coverage and a front-page photo in *The Advertiser* on April 1 (April Fool's day!). The main aim was to create interest in the adventure and, hopefully, to gain sponsorship. However, to date Ian Motley has had seven offers to buy his hat!

The Advertiser reported on 1 April and the interview with Ian Motley appeared below a photo of his and Ian Jones' cars. *“Mr Motley said a trial run yesterday was the first the cars had made since extensive mechanical and body overhauls. We hope to cover at least 200 miles per day with only brief stops for refuelling and mechanical repairs. The cars are capable of speeds up to 50 mph, but the road conditions on the way to Ayers Rock are expected to slow the pace considerably. It is estimated that the*

team will need at least 1000 gallons of petrol, 50 gallons of oil and numerous tyres and tubes”.

However, all did not go smoothly, as the next interview with Ian, in *The Advertiser* on the 1 June, showed. *Yesterday Ian replaced a motor after a major hitch - it seized after going only a few yards. “The new motor proved no problem after a short trial last night. I’m a bit worried about the cars’ springs on some of those roads though. They weren’t built for these conditions and are probably the original ones” he said.*

The trip was a huge success. On their return, the cars and crews were again featured on the front page of *The Advertiser* and in Mitchell’s Cartoon in *The News*. The July issue of *Austin 7 Journals 45* reported on the adventure and Tony Grove’s *President’s Piece* included:

Well, I guess the talking piece for this magazine must be the A7s’ epic trip to Ayers Rock and Alice Springs to celebrate the Club’s 21st birthday and attached publicity. Nowhere in Australia has any car club received as much publicity so consistently over a prolonged period. Finally, the cars were displayed in John Martins’ city store for a week afterwards. The Club’s congratulations must go to Ian (Doc) Jones, Ian (Revs) Motley and Gwilym Henry-Edwards, the three A7 drivers, and of course, to the back up crew of Heather Lane, Trevor Knuckey, Colin Hanks, Mike Talbot, Geoff Kain, Stephen Sneesby and Ron Burchett, without whose help it would not have been at all possible.

Further in that issue was this report.

The Chief Secretary, Mr Kneebone, flagged off the A7C Ayers Rock team from Victoria Square on the morning of June 1st, after many nights of frantic preparations at Ian Jones’ Prospect Stable and a last minute engine swap by Ian Motley. The send-off was terrific – the team appreciated the support of all those who turned out and the cars that provided an escort out of the city and to Port Augusta.

The weather throughout was perfect, day after day of bright sunny cloudless skies. The nights generally were freezers but were tolerable with plenty of blankets. The roads were better than we had dared to expect – the effects of the big rains could be seen everywhere, but wherever the road was badly cut up or still under water, there was always a loop around that section.

Corrugations were our worst enemy. Some could be taken at 30-35 mph but the deeper ones threw the cars all over the road and had to be taken at 20 mph or slower. Early in the trip, Gwilym’s car was shedding bolts almost faster than we could replace them and on two separate occasions the hood on Ian Jones’ car threatened to part company with the car when windscreen supports fractured right through.

The A7s did a marvellous job. Worst moments were Gwilym’s broken half-shaft and Ian Jones’ broken crank on consecutive days – however these were overcome and the trip continued. It should be pointed out that both breakages happened at already cracked sections and Ian Jones wasn’t driving when his went!

Two days from home on the return trip, Ian Jones’ car lost all power, due to four burnt exhaust valves. Unperturbed, Ian performed an instant valve grind, using Heather’s toothpaste, resulting in full power for the run home. Readers will note no mention of Ian Motley’s car – he spent most of the trip waiting for something to blow up and is still trying to work out why it didn’t give trouble! Apart from a loose flywheel at Ayers Rock, it went like a rocket for the 2450 miles.

The publicity received was tremendous and the Club and sponsors – Shell, Spartan Paints, John Mack Cameras, Edgells and Port Carriers – received wonderful promotion.

The climax came when at exactly 10.30 am, 21 days after the start, the team of three A7s and two support vehicles arrived at the Shell Service Station on the corner of West Terrace and Grote Street to be greeted by crowds of people, TV cameras, radio interviewers – the lot! It was a truly memorable finish to a memorable event.

The thanks of the team go to those who made it all possible – the sponsors, those who helped in preparing the cars at Ian Jones’ place and Trevor and Margaret Mander and Bruce Bridgart who brought fresh supplies at the end of the first week. Special thanks go to Heather (the cook) and Trevor Knuckey and Colin Hanks who, for most of the trip, drove the very essential support vans.

Ian Jones recalls the schedule and some of the problems to be overcome. *“We left Adelaide on Saturday June 1 and by Sunday night we were camped 17 miles north of Coober Pedy, having had to fix the generator on one of the support vehicles (a Morris J-van) at Kingoonya. Near Mt Eba station, Gwilym’s car broke its axle and*

then my car broke its crankshaft south of Coober Pedy. After spending a day in Coober Pedy changing the engine, we reached Alice Springs on Friday and Ayers Rock on Saturday where Ian Motley and I both removed our engines.

We left the Rock on Tuesday, arriving at Alice Springs the next day, where I had magneto trouble. We left there on Saturday for the run home; our last night was spent camping 5 miles south of Dublin, leaving us a short run to Adelaide on Friday 21st”.

Ron Burchett, photographer for the trip, also recalls: *“It took us eight days to reach the Rock, where we stayed for two days. We climbed the Rock, taking photos to record the occasion; visited the Olgas, rebuilt Jonesy’s motor and most importantly, washed our filthy clothes! On reaching Alice Springs, we again stayed for two days, using the time to visit Standley Chasm and Simpson’s Gap. It was at Kingoonya that Jonesy replaced the four burnt out exhaust valves”.*

Shell, as one of the major sponsors, provided the fuel and oils for the trip and had a feature story in *“Shell Times”* magazine.

The Austins averaged close to 40 miles per gallon with speeds at times reaching 60 to 65 km/h. Corrugations in the road surface proved to be the cars’ worst enemy and at times speed had to be reduced to below 32 km/h to enable them to get over the worst sections.

Mechanical problems were not unknown and setbacks included a broken axle and crankshaft: however repairs were carried out in each case and the journey continued. Vibration from the badly corrugated roads took its toll, and the cars suffered breakages of windscreen supports and mudguard mounting brackets with a continual falling off of bolts and small pieces, rattled from their rightful positions. The support vehicles were not without problems either. The generators on both vans gave up the ghost fairly early in the piece and later the hydraulic operation of the clutch failed on one van and was repaired by the crude, but effective method of a mechanical linkage made from a fence dropper.

Some unexpected hazards presented themselves, the most alarming of which was an evening meeting with a large black bullock,

scarcely visible in the weak headlights. The A7 cable-operated brakes were really stretched to the limit to stop in time.

The cars attracted interested admirers wherever they went and were featured in newspaper, radio and television broadcasts (particularly the *Centralian Advocate* on Thursday June 20). At Mt Eba, the entourage rounded a bend to be met by the wife of the local station owner who had her camera ready for a photo. She had been following the cars' progress all morning by radio and had walked from the station to meet them.

The team said that they were very impressed with the comfort of the baby cars, even on rough roads, and that they met with terrific friendliness and helpfulness from people in the Outback.

The A7s had returned to coincide with our Birthday Dinner at the Morphett Arms Hotel, where Tony Grove welcomed the drivers.

As a finale to the Ayers Rock trip, at the 24 June general meeting, Ron Burchett presented the *Ayers Rock Climbers Certificate* to the President.

On 22 September the Club organised the first round of the SA Motorkhana Championships for 1974, in the Uniroyal factory grounds at Salisbury, as part of our celebrations.

With the historic Ayers Rock trip concluded, our organising committees now concentrated on the Birthday events: the Rally on 5/6 October and the Ball on 12 October at the Oberdan Centre on Findon Road.

The Birthday Rally began with a static display on Saturday 5 October at Bonython Park, Port Road Southwark, starting at noon. Pre-event publicity advised, "*It will be oriented towards the A7 but includes a display of all types of cars within the Club. It will be a unique display as never before in South Australia have so many A7s been gathered together at one time. If you've got nothing to do on the Saturday, come to the display – it's FREE! On Sunday the 6th, there will be a scenic run through the Adelaide hills for all the cars that are capable of registration, starting at Target Shopping Centre at 10 a.m.*"

Ian Jones, Trevor Mander and Ian Motley were the Directors and 112 cars, of which 74 were A7s, were on display. On the Sunday, 39 cars – 29 of which were A7s – took part in the run, which finished at the Hawthorndene Oval.

The Birthday Ball was jointly organised by the Social and Birthday committees and was a great success. Highlights of the evening were the cutting of the birthday cake, which featured an A7 design, and the debut performance of the A7 ballet, consisting of seven muscular males: they were so successful that they repeated their show at the Christmas cabaret, which brought to an end the 21st year celebrations.

During 1973, numbers of competitors in the treasure hunts, night trials, gymkhanas and grass sprints had varied. For example, the first treasure hunt drew seven starters; the next night trial had eight: 25 ran at the 4 March circuit sprint and 40 entered our 29 April race meeting.

Things improved for the 27 May gymkhana, when 24 competed, and then the 29 July circuit sprint attracted 45 entries. The *Austin 7 Journals* 42 report on the next two grass sprints noted, "*The number of entries received, especially old Holdens and Zephyrs, were very gratifying to the organisers*", and the September gymkhana had "*a large number of entries, causing some indecision about classes*".

An economy run in June had seven A7s: the moderns winner was Alan Radley while Bruce Bridgart's A7 (53.45 mpg), defeating David Perry's by 1 cent of petrol!

The 5 May 1974 autocrosse, at Salisbury, was run in conjunction with the Renault Car Club. The next event was due to be the SA Championships but problems with finding a suitable site, the type of tyres the cars could use and the general Supplementary Regulations prompted the committee to cancel it. Events for A7C members would now be run at Bill Gower's property at Williamstown.

1974 COMMITTEE

President – Tony Grove

Vice President – Barry Frost

Treasurer – Bob Frost

Secretary – Ian Motley

Assistant Sec. – Barry Frost

Comp. Sec. – Wayne Roberts

Committee – John Lemon,
Graham Boulter, Steve Caston,
Rob Brosnan

A7 Owners – Merv Perry, Bruce
Bridgart, Ian Jones, Trevor Mander,
Ron Burchett, John Garnett,
Lee Thomas

Social – Margaret Smith, Rosemary
Leigh, Steve Caston, Regina Caston

21st Birthday – Ian Motley, Glenda
Grove, Ian Jones, Graham Boulter,
Leigh Thomas, Merv Perry

CAMS Delegate – Bruce Went

Austin 7 Journals 45 1974
reported on the 7 July event.

Despite hail, wind and continual rain 24 brave competitors and even braver officials ran this event until conditions became so bad that a halt had to be called after the second run. The Social committee – what a marvellous job they did – hot soup, coffee, hot dogs; without them everyone would have been turned into icebergs. It is almost as if they ordered the weather and came prepared. Winners were: large specials – Steve Caston from Dan Larsen; small specials – Denis Dix from Clive Cox.

A fortnight later; the winners were - large cars, Geoff Eardley from Colin Hanks and small cars, Denis Dix from Bruce Went. The next two events were reported in *Austin 7 Journals* 46 1974.

August 18. This grass sprint, again held at Williamstown, was the driest we'd had at this track. This was expected, as one member had purchased a spray jacket and a pair of water boots just for this event. The number of entries was down on previous events but quality abounded. Eddy Pfeiffer arrived with his new Holden-powered machine, the Jones' special now had big tyres and even Phil Irving would have been very interested in Geoff Eardley's new extractor system. The pipes stuck out the side and followed the A pillar to join in a 2-3' megaphone which stuck up 2' above the roofline of the FJ! If he'd rolled it I am

sure he would have gone into orbit. Overall, it was a most enjoyable day, with Colin Hanks getting FTD. The person with the spray jacket and boots was seen to go out of his way to walk through a puddle of water before the day was out. The social committee was out in force again with the usual hot dogs, soup, cool drinks and chips.

September 8. Perfect weather and a hard, if rutted, track kept competitors at top pace all day. A minor variation was to have a garage at half way, requiring drivers to stop and restart. Colin Hanks and Bruce Bridgart drove Ian Jones' special to first and second places in the large cars class, even though they had to retire on the final runs when the harmonic balancer came adrift. Denis Dix continued his domination of the small car class, scoring his fourth straight win, with Clive Cox second in the same car.

Beginning on 25 May 1975, a paddock on Bruce Bridgart's property at Paris Creek became home for our mud sprints. *Austin 7 Journals 49* reported on the day, which was shared with the Ford Owners Car Club.

The first mud sprint for the season really was. A large crowd of spectators and competitors braved the cold and rain to see a spectacular event; one of the muddiest for years. Heavy rain stopped play several times during the day, restricting competition to three official runs, with winners decide on their fastest single run. The course was set around a dam and everybody eagerly awaited someone to end up in the drink, but it was not to be. Alby Martin had his all-purpose mid-engined Cortina out for the first time. Paul Godden was Alby's relief driver and did very well to record second FTD – Alby must have been a little cheesed. FTD went to Charlie Orlando in his VW special, also out for the first time. Bruce Bridgart won from Colin Hanks in the large open specials cars class (another case of relief driver domination) while Bob Sampson won from Bob McNamara in the large closed specials class. Thanks to the social committee for the hot tucker that kept the blood flowing in our arteries.

The popularity of mud sprints at this site continued; new cars were built and on 19 September 1976 the "Austin 7 Club Championship" was held there.

As the meeting was open to street cars as well as mud pluggers, a new course, which was a lot faster, a little smoother and a bit longer, was set out in a larger

paddock, adjacent to the one used previously. The 30 entries enjoyed the day and the successful drivers were: large closed specials – Paul Godden from Ian Jones; large open specials – Dan Larsen from Bruce Bridgart; small specials – Tony Laube from Graham Benneche; small street cars – Phil Jackson from Dean Bond; large street cars – Ian Motley; ladies – Brenda Bridgart from Cheryl Waters.

Street cars were now a regular part of the program and clubs invited to compete in 1977 were Renault on 26 June and Datsun on 28 August. The social committee continued to cater for the needs of spectators, drivers and officials, providing hot and delicious food. Ian Jones set FTD at the June meeting and Tony Laube did the same in August.

This period introduced new drivers and cars to the sport and all who attended appreciated the social atmosphere generated. The cars were generally purpose-built mud pluggers and modified saloon cars, with larger treaded tyres and cutaway bodies and modified exhausts.

They included, among others, Colin Hanks' Holden-powered Viva, Geoff Eardley's Holden FJ, Tony Laube's VW buggy, Denis Dix's FE Holden and the ex-Rob Brosnan Ford 10 special, Ian Jones' Holden special and Morris Minor, Merv and David Perry's Renaust, Phil Jackson's Bellett, Terry Clements' Austin Freeway, Mark Bamford's Ford 10 special, many and varied FJ Holdens, VW-based specials, Ford Cortina and Anglia-based specials and A7-based specials.

As well as the class-winning drivers listed above, others to compete were: Graham Boulter, John Hall, David Jarrett, Dave Roberts, Paul Godden, Steve Wright, Graham Benneche, Don Kennedy, Kevin Hobbs, Merv Lelliott, Gerry Merton, Lee Nicolle, Ross Jones, and Trevor Knuckey.

Most of these drivers and cars also competed in gymkhanas, of which at least one per year was

held. Bruce Went, Bill Smith, Gary Hoffman and Ian Motley were class winners at the 27 May 1973 event; on 9 September John Garnett, Tom Larsen, Terry Clements and Steve Caston were successful.

With the 1974 birthday celebrations being such an important part of the year, only one motorkhana was programmed - the 22 September round of the SA Motorkhana Championships at Salisbury. There was a gap of two years before the next motorkhana, on 26 March 1977, when 18 entries contested four classes, the winners being Alby Martin, Tony Laube, Lee Nicolle, and Brenda Bridgart. The wet weather affected entries for the last gymkhana of the year, on 3 July and only eight cars took part.

Our circuit sprints continued at AIR, using the short circuit. For 1973, there were three sprints scheduled, and *Austin 7 Journals 42* noted that at the second, held on July 29:

Entries numbered 45 and the weather was perfect. Some cars are more popular than others but everybody seemed to have a Torana at this event. Times were close in all classes, with Terry Clements winning the Sports Sedans in his Escort which has scars on it already, and Steve Brown, in his old 327, first in the over 3000-5000 cc class. Kym Sutherland emerged King of the Toranas in the 2000-3000 cc class and Cyril Nancarrow topped the Minis.

In an effort to increase the entry list, drivers from the Holden Owners Club were invited to the sprint on 11 November.

Due to the popularity of AIR, the number of dates available for Club sprints was restricted and we only ran two sprints each year. At the 3 March 1974 event, Fred Jeffries, in his supercharged Mercedes racing car, set FTD of 54.4 seconds. Merv Perry was the fastest A7 with 1-21.2.

The 10 November sprint was run with the Jaguar Driver's Club: class winners were – Dan Larsen 1-05.8, Gary Hoffman 1-02.0, Bob Piper 1-01.8, Alby Martin 1-01.7, Fred Jeffries 54.6 and FTD went to Dave Roberts with 54.3 secs.

The 9 March 1975 sprint attracted 69 entries, although the non-appearance of cars from the invited Triumph Sports Owners Association plus the increased track hiring charges caused the club considerable concern. The Committee successfully applied to CAMS to have only a first aid crew at the next sprints, in order to reduce the running costs of the event, as hiring fees for an ambulance and crew had also increased. The 12 October sprint had drivers from the Adelaide University Car Club, Datsun Car Club and the Sporting Car Club competing.

The increased cost pressures were reflected at the 29 February 1976 sprint, where even though 60 entries were received from A7C, Honda and Renault Clubs, the event ran at a loss. *Austin 7 Journals 52* April 1972 noted in part:

First casualty of the day was Eddy Pfeiffer, piloting his newly acquired GT Cortina mud plugger. He came unstuck at the end of the straight and rolled over but landed back on his wheels. His ego suffered more damage than the car because later on he and "Doc" Jones carried out slight modifications to the now modified bodywork and was OK'd by the scrutineers to continue.

Steve Brown was having a ride in Bob Piper's Falcon (Steve's old car) and won the battle with George Carter's A30-Holden, setting FTD of 56.6 secs.

The Hanks/Jones super modified had a bad day. First the gear box called it quits except for top gear and then the clutch and flywheel came off, causing too many revs and hence one broken crankshaft. However, both drivers had a couple of runs, with Ian beating Colin by 1.2 secs.

Excellent organisation and teamwork by the officials made the day a success and the spectators commented on the good behaviour and organisation by the club.

The 1 August 1976 event was run with drivers from the Sporting Car Club, Jaguar Drivers Club and Formula Vee Association and comprised combined times from a quarter mile sprint and circuit sprint.

Due to the heavy bookings for the track, the first sprint in 1977 was held on Monday 13 June when FTD went to Miles Jackson and

Austin 7 Journals 57 reported that "the social committee is to be commended for the tasty supply of food and drinks". The second sprint was run on 9 October; drivers from Renault, Honda, Holden Owners and Sporting Car Club were again invited.

In 1973, after the cancellation of rallycross events at AIR, a working committee from clubs affiliated with CAMS, with Ian Motley as its Secretary, was set up to investigate the feasibility of building a rallycross track. At the May 1974 A7C general meeting, Ian reported on progress to date and at the November committee meeting, he presented a plan of the proposed track layout.

Meetings were held in early 1975 and by April a 10-year lease on land at Tailem Bend had been signed. At a public meeting in July 1975, interested drivers – including many from our club – and sponsors were informed that the "SA Motor Racing Club Inc." (SAMRC) was incorporated and that CAMS had approved the track design.

In October 1975, after A7 Club members had surveyed and marked out the track, earthworks were begun. In February 1976, a government grant towards construction was received, with the proviso that SAMRC had to raise one third of the cost.

The Tailem Bend Rallycross track's first meeting was on 6 March 1977, with the A7Club providing equipment, track officials and timekeepers. The first open meeting followed on 17 April where Bob Moylan finished second in the rally car class. Rallycross differed from other dirt track events in two main ways: up to six cars competed in each race and started together and the track design incorporated a water jump/splash, along with a section of bitumen.

The first A7 Club meeting there was on 22 May and *Austin 7 Journals 57* 1977 reported:

The event was run as an autocross event with two cars on the track at the same time with a 15 second delay between each. The cars were timed

1975 COMMITTEE

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Vice President - Rob Brosnan
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Secretary – Ian Motley
Assistant Secretary –
Competition Sec. – David Perry
Committee - Dan Larsen,
 Brian Jericho,
 Terry Clements,
 Steve Caston

A7 Owners – Merv Perry, Bruce Bridgart, Ian Jones, Trevor Mander, Ron Burchett, John Garnett, Lee Thomas

Social - Bruce Went, Paul Godden, Lee Labella, Brian Jericho

CAMS Delegate – Bruce Went

over two laps from a standing start, with penalties for shortening the track or hitting track markers or officials!

It was good to see some new faces at the track. Graham Benneche turned up with his supercharged Torana from Rowley Park, while another interesting car was Colin Hanks' Holden-powered Viva. Ivan Piatanesi debuted his rallycross HD Holden, as did George Carter and Trevor Kennedy with their Cortina. The dual wheels on Gerry Merton's yellow and black Bellett caused a few comments.

Bob Perin drove his immaculate black HK 327 Monaro around steadily, even over the jump, but his clean driving style could not match Geoff Lobb's desperation.

Tony Laube's reputation was somewhat damaged as he spent most of the day facing the wrong way. Gerry Merton won the small specials class despite only completing three of the four runs; the last was done with a broken universal. Graham Benneche won the large specials class with Colin Hanks second. Terry Clements, driving his \$75 Cortina, won the small street cars class from Dean Bond and then had to drive home minus the exhaust system.

The SAMRC ran a points score during the year and this was won by Gerry Merton with Alby Martin fifth and Colin Hanks equal sixth.

Motor racing at AIR in 1973 opened with the Tasman Championship round on 25 February, followed during the year by rounds of Australian Championships for Sports Cars, Touring Cars, the Manufacturers' Championship and F1/F2 cars.

Our race meeting, on 29 April had perfect weather and an entry of 40 competitors. Sponsor support from 19 companies ensured that the meeting was a success.

The 1974 season began with a night meeting on 12 January; the rest of the year's open meetings followed the pattern of 1973. President Tony Grove, writing in the April 1974 issue of *Austin 7 Journals 44*, expressed concerns for the viability of running our race meeting at AIR.

Our annual race meeting on April 28 is possibly our last due to the forecast of increased costs of hiring the track in 1975. I hope you will be there to support the club and the social committee who are organising a "ding" afterwards. To our trophy donors, I say, "thank you very much" for supporting the Club once again.

As part of our 21st year, the meeting featured a display of A7s and, to cater for the gathering historic and vintage racing movement, was the first meeting to have races for Vintage cars. The *Austin 7 Journals 45* report on the meeting included a copy of the race report from *Racing Car News*, which said, in part:

AUSTIN 7 MEET FIRST CLASS

Members of the A7C SA Inc proved once again on Sunday April 28 at AIR, that theirs is the only Club in the State that can – and annually does – run its own restricted race meeting. Providing a programme of 16 close scratch and handicap races over the short 1.1-mile

circuit, the Trophy Race Meeting gave many of the regular competitors valuable practice and a lot of fun, while some of the not-so-regular drivers had a chance to show their stuff.

The most consistent effort on the day came from John Lewis driving the Torana XU1, taking first in all four Sports Sedan races and enjoying his first run of good fortune for a long time. One driver not to share good fortune was Dave Roberts. His shakedown run in his Morris Minor Sports Sedan ended with crumpled bodywork when he and Brenton Smith, Torana, tangled on the entry to the main straight and ended up hard against the Armco. Steve Brown ran his revamped Falcon and Daryl Schultz his new Mini.

The FV boys had what was surely their busiest and most enjoyable day for many a meeting, with 5 races in all. Keith Poole won their hard fought 8-lap trophy race.

Fred Jeffries in his S/c Mercedes won the Div. 2 racing car scratch. Newly found F5000 star, Stephen Fraser, came out with the big Cicada F5000, engaging in the usual spectacular dices with Dean Hosking, Birrana 374. Steve scored two wins over Dean, who had revenge with a clear win in the 8-lap Trophy race.

In Vintage events, Dean Hosking took his Cooper Climax to a close win over John Fitzpatrick, Lola FJ in the scratch race. In the second handicap race, Mike Trengrove drove the not-so-quick A7 into first.

Tom Tymons won two scratch races in his Asp from John Parker, Chimera, who won the handicap from Doug Potts and Jim Doig.

Overall, the meeting was well worth participating in, either as a spectator or driver. It offered the opportunity to relax and enjoy a day's racing without the many tensions of open meetings. Afterwards, the Club spirit flowed freely

and rounded off a very full day. The Club race meeting is a most important part of our sport but one not often seen these days.

The concerns the Club had for the viability of these meetings due to rising costs were addressed during the next year.

But before then, the Club lost one of its stalwart members, as on 10 November 1974, whilst on holidays at Surfers Paradise, Denis Dix lost his life. On a quiet Sunday morning Denis had gone for an early swim when a sudden rip got him into difficulties and he was swept away and drowned.

In his memory, the Club set up the *Denis Dix Memorial*, to be an annual award for Sports Sedans, at our race meeting.

Austin 7 Journals 49 from July 1975 reported on the 4 May race meeting.

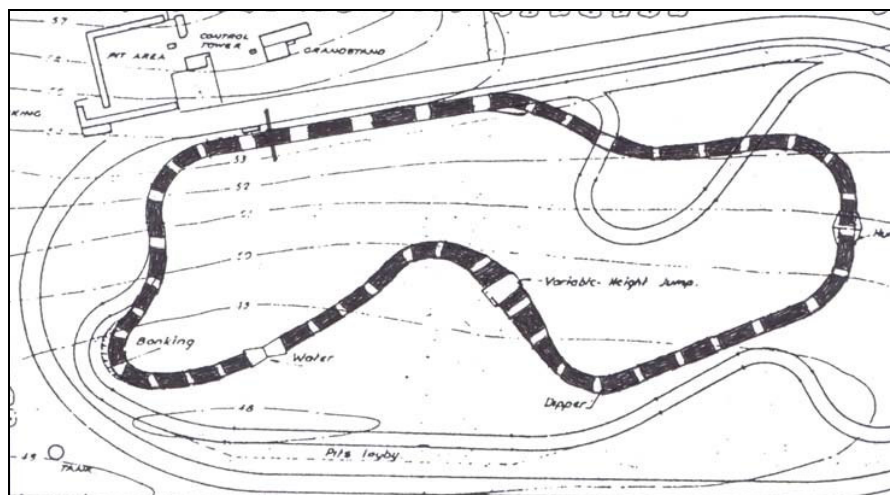
After careful deliberation, we decided to take one of the biggest gambles ever for a lone car club by turning our normally closed A7 race meeting into a fully open event, which meant that for a substantial fee for insurance etc., we could advertise and admit paying public.

The biggest contributing factor of course, was funds and if it weren't for the response from trophy donors, advertising donors and especially Fred Jeffries, who saw fit to donate \$250 towards the project, then we would not have reached first base.

Everything seemed to fall into place and the organisation on the day ran like clockwork; special thanks to those members of the SCC who offered their services. The racing on AIR's short circuit was the first Open meeting held in SA, to be organised, promoted and run by a single club.

The *PRESIDENT'S PIECE* in that issue summed up the day.

Our open race meeting on May 4 was a great success, both from a competition and financial viewpoint. Over 60 competitors raced on the day, the largest entry that we have had at our race meetings, and provided close and exciting racing. Approx. 1000 spectators attended and their gate money, together with program and raffle sales and the barbeque afterwards, ensured a profit of nearly \$500.



Tailem Bend rallycross track. Racing was clockwise and from the start there was a short bitumen straight which changed to gravel and dirt with jumps and a water splash. The design incorporated alternate tracks for racing but these were never developed.

Reporter Peter Oliver, from *Racing Car News*, wrote this article for the programme.

Probably the best phrase to describe the A7 Club's role in motorsport over the years has been one of "total involvement". Ever since I can remember, the official timers at race meetings have been members of the A7C, who under the able direction of Barry Frost have recorded the lap times for every single competitor out on the circuit. But timing is just one task for the A7C in its overall contribution to local motorsport. The Club organises all forms of competition on a club and open basis as well. Take today's race meeting for instance.

The A7CSA began organising an annual race meeting back in 1960 at Port Wakefield and has put on such an event every year since through Mallala and now here at AIR. And despite lack of really big support from sponsors, the Club has risen to the occasion and provided a professional showing where I know that other bigger clubs find difficulty in attracting entries for circuit sprints. The reason for the A7 Club's ability to do this is the undoubted solidarity of its members.

Apart from the annual race meeting, the Club holds circuit and grass sprints, gymkhanas and trials and there is no question about the Club's aim to provide events for its members and any interested spectators. As well, the Club has a darn good social calendar, which has caused me to be the worse for wear, on the odd occasion!

From the days of 9-chain sprints at Gawler Belt to today's race meeting, the A7C has displayed an ongoing policy of providing motorsport enthusiasts with something new and exciting. Take for example, the trek to Ayers Rock and back in 21 days by Club members in three A7s in 1974, and of course, today's race meeting, which is the first open meeting that the Club has promoted. And the Club has not been quick to discard popular events for some new short-lived fad. That's why today's programme features all sorts, with handicap and division races. And at last year's meeting, the older cars had the first of their infrequent but enjoyable competitive outings, which has undoubtedly paved the way for more such events at AIR.

A further measuring stick of the Club's involvement in motorsport is the number of CAMS Service Awards that have been awarded to its members. The club works from a motorsport base, probably stemming from its namesake, the classically successful Austin 7.

Finally, I would like to mention the number of successful drivers who have been a member of the Club or are still current members. I doubt that another

club of its size can boast as many. Anyway, that's my view of the A7CSA, certainly unbiased, as I'm not a member.

Main trophy winners in a 16 event meeting, were: FV – Keith Poole; Touring and Sports Sedans – David Jarrett; Sports cars – Eric Boord; Racing cars – Chris Milton. David Jarrett, who won all three races counting towards this trophy, won the inaugural Denis Dix Memorial.

Peter Oliver also wrote this story on Denis's contribution to motor sport in SA, for inclusion in the race programme.

I first saw Denis Dix at the wheel of his Ecurie Rapide early model Holden with which he blazed a successful trail on both local and interstate circuits. That was in the late '60s during the Mallala days when going motor racing meant a 50-mile one-way trip north to a disused RAAF base which lacked modern facilities but certainly not atmosphere. And it was Denis and the many other characters of the day who made that atmosphere.

However, Denis had something that made him stand out from the others, an infectious smile, a man's humour and certainly the personality to go with it.

Denis had entered motorsport some 10 years before when, at 16, he accompanied his father in the 1958 Ampol Trial in their 1948 Dodge. After that came more trials, gymkhanas and Club events in a Ford Mercury. By now Denis had joined the A7 Club and was looking to circuit racing. He prepared his first early Holden for the last meeting at Port Wakefield and raced the battleship grey Holden at Mallala after that.

While driving tin tops, Denis took to work on an aluminium-bodied 750 cc Renault special called the *Delta* in which he featured strongly on the circuits and also in hillclimbs. Not only that, but in the 1965 6-Hour International Sedan race at Sandown he partnered John Newmarch to third outright in a Skyline GT.

Shortly after this, Denis acquired his most successful early model Holden and also an Anglia Sports Sedan, with which he was a front-runner yet again. Denis campaigned the distinctive brown and yellow Ecurie Rapide cars, until the final days of Mallala, which saw him take on more of a patron's role rather than active competition. Included in this was a FV driven by Bob Frost.

When AIR opened, Denis was out there among the mud and spray in another early Holden – what else – and then a hot 2-litre VW. Meanwhile, he

1976 COMMITTEE

President – Barry Frost

Vice President - Rob Brosnan

Treasurer – Rob Brosnan

Secretary – David Perry

Assist. Sec. – Terry Clements

Comp. Sec. – David Perry

Committee - Dan Larsen,

Brian Jericho,

Bruce Bridgart,

Steve Caston

A7 Owners – Merv Perry, Charlie Adams, Trevor Mander, Ron Burchett, John Garnett, Graham Burge, Peter Williams

Social - Bruce Went, Bob Piper, Paul Godden, Lee Godden, Leslie Andrews

CAMS Delegate – Bruce Went

Life membership to Ian Motley

actively supported other drivers in both speedway and circuit racing.

Denis led a man's life, more recently taking on trail bike competition. With all the chances of death that an active racing driver faces during such a long and successful career, it seems ironic that his life should end in a freak accident.

There is no doubt that Denis will be sadly missed and what could be more appropriate that he will be remembered by the annual award in his name at the A7C annual race meetings.

The 2 May 1976 meeting was on similar lines, being an open meeting with 21 races, including the first for "Street Cars" in this State. In an introductory article in the programme, Stuart Innes from *The Advertiser* wrote about the Club's history to date, including the following excerpts.

The Club's experience in motor racing has enabled it to hold very professional race meetings, right from Port Wakefield in 1960. At its meeting in May last year, the gates were thrown open to the public, making it the first time, since WWII at least, a single car club has itself organised and promoted an open race meeting in SA.

Today's is the second of such annual meetings but in pure club racing spirit, there is no prize money, only trophies. And with the short circuit being used, the racing for those trophies is assured of being close and keen.

One of the innovations today is the event for a "street car class", which at last gives the owner of the everyday runabout a chance to race it on the track.

The meeting was successful, attracting a larger crowd than the previous year. Main trophy winners were: FV – Graham Hawkes; Vintage – Ian Morgan, Holway; Sports Sedans and Denis Dix Memorial – David Jarrett, Repco Rover; Sports cars – David Walsh, Asp; Racing cars – Stephen Fraser, Cicada F5000; Street cars – Chris Cole, Ford Capri V6.

The 1977 meeting on 1 May was our 20th and the successful involvement and commitment of Club members was highlighted in the *PRESIDENTS PIECE* from *Austin 7 Journals 57*.

Everybody in the Club must be proud of the Club and its ability to organise and run such a successful race meeting. The professional approach that all members and competitors had towards this meeting is most commendable - track officials, car parking officials, program and raffle ticket sellers and timekeepers.

And then the vintage car display, which I think really added a lot of colour, and finally the competitors who put on a show that you have to class as top entertainment.

Some statistics: there were 100 officials on the day, 75 of whom were Club members; 75 competitors of whom 32 were Club members, plus mechanics, plus the drivers of the vintage cars meant that we had a turn out of between 120 and 130, out of a membership of 250; what a great effort. The finale of the day was the social committee's barbeque, which really topped off the day.

Trophy winners were: FV – Peter Scott, Sports Sedans/Denis Dix Memorial – John Virgo, Torana; Sports cars – Jim Doig, Asp; Racing cars – Dave Ferrall, McLaren F5000; Historic racing – M Carroll; Vintage racing – Don Fraser.

David Perry was one of the many flag officials on the day and he recorded his adventures for *Austin 7 Journals 57*.

How do you get a sore shoulder? I don't know how **you** go about getting a sore shoulder but I can thoroughly

recommend one method – be a flaggie at one of our race meetings. Yes, you too can get a sore shoulder as I did after being one of the flaggies at point three (before the esses) on May 1.

It all started when I happened to pick up a blue flag, which to my surprise, stuck to my hand all day. Many times during the day I waved it furiously in an effort to remove it but even that didn't work.

By coincidence, every time I waved it, one competitor was about to overtake another. Occasionally I held it out stationary to show a group of drivers my plight. Some obviously felt sorry for me as they acknowledged me as they passed – that was nice of them! They don't miss you by much as they pass either. Once I was trying to shake the flag off, Dave Ferrall in Gil Cameron's F5000, had one wheel on my side of the grass and I was only about 2m from the track edge.

At one stage one of the competitors was trying to match the colour of his exhaust with that of my flag, which was very flattering but meant a lot of work for us as Bob McNamara, Jack Larsen and myself had to clean up a huge trail of oil, sometimes 1m wide.

I must thank John Virgo, who in the last event spun his Sports Sedan Torana in the middle of the esses, leaving the car blocking the track. This was the only thing that cured my blue flag problem, but not for long, as I now had a yellow flag to wave. Bob had caught the disease too as he was trying to shake off a yellow flag like me. We were waving really madly until the event finished, when we gave up. Yes your flaggies had flagged!

In September 1975, the Club again expanded its horizons and entered a team of six cars in a 6-hour relay race at Calder. On Thursday 25 September, the five Sports Sedans of Steve Brown, David Perry, Dave Roberts, Trevor Kennedy and Wayne Sutton were loaded onto Trevor Mander's car transporter semi-trailer for the trip to Calder. Terry Clements' car was at his workshop for an all-night engine rebuilding session, as during testing at AIR on Thursday morning, the engine had suffered internal damage. The rebuild was successful and his car was on the semi and on its way by 11 am.

On Friday night, the team of drivers, crews, timekeepers, lap scorers and supporters – 50 in all – boarded a bus at the clubrooms and, accompanied by Steve Smith

towing an empty trailer and Danny Larsen towing the club trailer loaded with spares, tyres etc., set off for Calder.

Practice day conditions were diabolical with a strong wind blowing dust into everything but by the end of the day, our team had qualified second fastest. The 6-hour race had a handicap format, with the slowest team getting the most credit laps (73) and our team getting 5. The race started at 10.30 a.m. and on the first driver/car changeover after 20 laps we were second.

However things went downhill from there as each car had problems - a leaking petrol tank, fading brakes caused by boiling brake fluid, broken rockers, a collision resulting in bent front suspension, a flat tyre and another lot of fading brakes. Our total lap count was 362 while the winners had 395. Lap times for the drivers were: Steve Brown 54.2; Terry Clements 54.9; Dave Roberts 54.5; Trevor Kennedy 56.5; David Perry 58.1 and Wayne Sutton 58.4 seconds.

The entourage arrived back at the clubrooms at 5 a.m. on Monday, where the drivers expressed their appreciation to all those who were on the trip.

As an aside to the racing, three female timekeepers had ventured to the Victoria Markets in Melbourne on Saturday and had purchased a sulphur-crested cockatoo from a pet shop. By several devious means, materials to make a cage to keep it in were obtained, as were seed and water receptacles. The bird was subsequently secreted in a motel room and on to the bus. During the ride home, its squawking at inappropriate moments caused much anguish to its owner.

On arriving at Bordertown at 12.30 am, Dave Roberts roused himself from a slumber and asked "Has that cocky been out of its cage and been flying around? It feels like he landed in my mouth!" Then, when at home in a proper cage, the ungrateful bird picked the door catch and escaped the next morning – of such things are legends made!

Plans were made to attend the next year's event but due to a lack of cars, this did not eventuate. However, the seeds were sown and the club decided to hold a similar event at AIR.

The inaugural 4-hour relay race, the first in SA, was run on 4 July 1976. The event ran on similar lines to the Calder race, with handicap laps for all but the fastest team and penalty laps lost for exceeding nominated lap times. Ten teams entered, including three from Victoria and three from our club, teams 7, 8 and 9. Team 7 – Terry Clements, Bob Piper, David Perry and Wayne Sutton; Team 8 – Dan Larsen, Dan Wilkinson and Don Kennedy; Team 9 – Bob Moylan, Steve Blee and Al Harris.

Team 7 lost two cars with engine problems and ran the last 3 1/4 hours with only top gear in one car, whilst teams 8 and 9 had no problems.

Team 9 won, recording 256 laps from team 5, the Sprite Club of SA on 244 laps while third on 243 laps was team 13, Sports Car Racing Team of SA, comprising Jim Doig, Alan Lee, Roy Kingham and Wayne Polden. This team won the trophy for the most racing laps completed, with 243 laps, from team 7 on 216 laps. Trophies were donated by BP Australia.

The 1977 race was held on 30/31 July and attracted 12 teams. Team 1 – A7/SCC with Ian Davis and Ken Durward from A7C; team 2 – FV Association; team 3 – Morris Mini Car Association; team 4 – Austin Healy Owners SA; team 5 – Triumph Sports Owners; team 7 – A7C, Dave Roberts, Gerry Merton, Ivan Piatanesi and Ken Leigh; team 8 – Jaguar Drivers Club SA; teams 9 and 10 – MG Car Club SA; team 11 – A7C, Bob Piper, Bob Smith, Dan Wilkinson and Dan Larsen; team 12 – Bolwell Car Club SA and team 13 – Sprite Club SA.

The Adelaide University Car Club provided a scoreboard service, which updated teams' positions every 10-15 minutes during the race. First place went to team 1 with 249 laps; second was team 9 with

248 laps and team 13 took third place with 245 laps. Team 1 recorded the most actual racing laps (249) from team two on 229. Trophies were again courtesy of BP Australia.

However, as President Ian Motley wrote for *Austin 7 Journals* 58, getting the event underway was an achievement in itself.

From my point of view, it was a miracle that this event happened as every conceivable thing that could go wrong, went wrong. The main problem was lack of officials as six other clubs were asked to supply people and they were not forthcoming. Once the relay race got underway it turned out to be the event of the year. The social committee once again deserves a mention for their barbeque.

The Austin 7 owners group continued to organise runs and touring assemblies. The Border Run in March 1973 had 11 Austins and 43 people in the group. Problems encountered by the A7s on the run included Charlie Adams' Chummy which suffered three punctures before Murray Bridge and by the end of the return journey, six of the A7s were on trailers.

The 1974 run was changed to the January long weekend, to coincide with the Mt Gambier Club's Australia Day Rally. This run was not free of dramas, as *Austin 7 Journals* 44 reported.

An impressive array of cars, owners and supporters assembled at Glen Osmond at 12.30 a.m. on Saturday 26 January. There were 12 A7s, George Glidden's A10 and Colin Hanks' Morris 8/40 plus support cars and trailers. Doubtful honour of first on to a trailer was taken by Ron Burchett's A7 special, which boiled dry at Nairne and cooked the head gasket. However, this was closely followed by Jeff Kain's A7 with another blown head gasket and shortly after Trevor Knuckey made it three up – trailers were running out fast!

At the Keith turn-off, Trevor Mander, driving a support car, was surprised to see his A7 disappearing smartly in the direction of Bordertown and gave chase. When he caught up, he was told "there's others ahead" and he eventually overtook Dean Jones – still pressing on and blissfully unaware of anything amiss. A smart about turn and all was in order except that Dean

1977 COMMITTEE

President – Ian Motley

Vice President - Barry Frost

Treasurer – Bob Frost

Secretary – Chris Gilbert

Assistant Sec. – Ian Jones

Comp. Sec. – Brian Jericho

Committee – Barry Frost,

Bob Piper,

Bruce Bridgart,

Steve Georg

A7 Owners – Graham Burge, Merv Perry, Charlie Adams, Alan Mander, David Searles, John Garnett, David Biven

Social - Bruce Went, Leslie Andrews, Raylene Georg, Trevor and Heather Knuckey (*both resigned in July, replaced by Greg Hurrell and Cheryl Waters*)

CAMS Delegate – Bruce Went

then managed to blow up his engine – four down! Unluckiest member was Trevor Knuckey, whose car, after being returned to the road at Naracoorte, started making expensive noises a few miles further on, the result of shedding a welsh plug without warning. On arrival at Mt Gambier after a long hot day, the five trailers were each sporting an ailing A7 – Jeff Kain and Ron Burchett's with blown head gaskets, Trevor Knuckey and Dean Jones, expensive noises and Charlie Adams with a suspicious noise (which subsequently proved to be of no consequence).

The rally on Sunday included cars and bikes of all makes and vintages, including a good representation of A7s from Victoria. Our Club had the A7s of Bruce Bridgart, Ian Motley, Ian Jones, Ian Sweetman and Tex Emery, along with George Glidden's A10 and the Hanks Morris 8/40. The run was to Nelson, Dartmoor and then back to the Mount.

The run back from Dartmoor probably upset a few drivers of some of the heavier vintage machinery as there was a procession of A7s steaming past at a good rate of knots. To add insult to injury, at one stage Graham Taylor (driving Ian Jones' car) overtook a slower car while enthusiastically waving on another A7 sitting in behind him.

The remainder of Sunday afternoon was spent water skiing on Valley Lake and on Monday morning the Victorians were farewelled at the Border and all proceeded on the return journey.

The final wrap up, again from *Austin 7 Journals 44*.

Some good running was put in over the final stretch through the Adelaide Hills in an attempt to get all cars off the road before their permits expired at midnight. Notable were the fuss-free runs of the two Bridgart A7s, the Mander, Adams and Ian Jones A7s, not forgetting the Glidden A10 and the Hanks 8/40.

Notable also was Ian Motley's perseverance: his car completed most of the run despite a variety of problems – on departure time of 9 a.m. on Monday, the gearbox and a lot of other essential bits were spread all over the Jens Hotel car park when everyone else was leaving. Half an hour later, the "Green Flier" took its place in the run to the Border. The back-up squad with trailers included Ross Jones, Graham Taylor, Trevor Mander, Ian Alexander and Colin Trengove.

The 1975 run reverted to the 25-27 April weekend and had 36 participants who on Saturday visited the Tantanoola Caves and took part in a motorkhana.

Highlights of the weekend included showing the Ayers Rock film and slides to the Mt Gambier Club members; the debut of Merv and Ruth Perry's A7 "Bubbles"; David Perry splitting his muffler in the motel car park on Sunday morning and David Franklin's first run in his Morris Minor.

The 1976 run was also on 25-27 April. Peter Williams debuted his recently restored A7, suitably christening it at Murray Bridge. After enjoying the usual friendliness at the Mount and then farewelling the Victorians at the Border, all cars returned home safely, with the exception of Merv Perry's A7, which had to be trailered from Taillem Bend.

The 21st Border Run was celebrated on the weekend of 23-24 April 1977 and attracted 45 adults and 23 children in 35 cars. The run to the Mount proved disastrous for the A7 of Bill and Kath Austin, which broke a crankshaft, and for Steve Georg's Vanguard which "gave up the ghost" at Coomandook.

Sunday morning's itinerary listed a run to the Border at Nelson and then on to Port MacDonnell

before returning for a gymkhana with the Mt Gambier Club. An anniversary dinner celebrated the occasion that night and then it was back on the road again on Monday morning.

It wouldn't be a Border Run if it didn't rain on the parade at some stage and this trip was no exception. The Burge's A7 lagged behind the field through the Coorong and was trailered from then on. The Bridgart A7 had trouble on the last leg into Strathalbyn after leaving the main group, and hobbled home rather sick and sorry. The weekend was noted for the continuous swapping of magnetos between the Jones, Burge and Perry cars.

Outings catering mainly (but not exclusively) for A7s began on a more regular basis from 25 August 1974, when an A7 Owners Observation Tour was held in the Adelaide hills area and attracted 14 Austins, including three A10s. A similar turnout of cars took part in the 9 February 1975 VSCC combined run, again in the inner hills area.

After day runs to Victor Harbour in March and to the Owen Centenary Celebrations in April, the first "Camp and Capers" was held on 17/18 May 1975.

Designed to bring back the outdoor adventure feel of bygone years, modern camping equipment was "frowned upon" by the organisers. The notice in *Austin 7 Journals* set the tone; "*a bush campsite, no modern conveniences (people with portable electric generator plant etc unwillingly tolerated but not encouraged)*".

This inaugural weekend was spent near Meningie and attracted 15 hardy souls. Ruth Perry's report in the July 1975 issue of *Austin 7 Journals 49* concluded with "*This event, which at the start appeared as though it might be a disaster (due to the drizzly weather), was in fact a very pleasant casual and enjoyable weekend. Thanks go to all concerned; who knows what this will lead to for next year*".

What it led to was a unique event firmly set on the Club's social

calendar. Bryant and Unice Lawson penned this report for the October 1976 issue of *Austin 7 Journals 54*.

A small but enthusiastic band rallied for this event and after a slightly delayed start, due to trips home for forgotten articles, the grossly overloaded safari (try loading a 3-man tent, two sleeping bags, air mattresses, chairs, all manner of utensils, food etc. plus crew of two, into an A7 roadster) headed off into an impending dust storm.

A trouble-free run and scenic trip through ideal A7 terrain was highlighted by a visit to the Bleasdale winery at Langhorne Creek where the subsequent tastings added even more cargo to some of the suffering A7s, but it is amazing how much room can be found in an "emergency". Then it was across the Wellington ferry to our campsite where the A7s showed their superiority over the larger moderns in deep sand.

With camp erected and a roaring fire, we were treated to a really wonderful night. With the weather now perfect we barbequed and enjoyed a slide show, courtesy of Bruce Bridgart and Charlie Adams, despite having to lay on our sides or stand on our heads to focus on some!

Next morning saw a hurried breaking of camp before the rains came and then the arrival of several other members who, after being assisted through the sand, joined us for lunch. The rain failed to dampen our spirits and when it was eventually time to leave, I think the unanimous feeling was that Camp and Capers would be one of the best social events organised this year and worth every bit of the effort involved to participate.

The camp held on the 13/14 August 1977 was near Langhorne Creek. Another enjoyable time was experienced and the run home was described by Ian Jones: "*At about 1.30 the convoy headed west through Hartley and on through Mount Barker, up and over some ripper hills (by A7 standards). One pale blue A7 was in bottom gear very early and was trailered by a smoke screen, which matched the car's colour. As for "yours truly", this was the first time that bottom gear had to be used in about ten years of Austineering, but as I took every thing plus one large dog, the load was considerable!*"

Another regular run, which began in 1975, was to Balaklava in September for their Show day.

Graham and Lyn Masters hosted members who displayed their cars - two early A7s, three late A7s, two A10s, one Vauxhall roadster and two Morris 8/40 sedans - on the oval. The 1976 run attracted 10 A7s, three A10s, one A40, one Morris 8/40 and one MG while Bruce Bridgart's sheep won 1st and 2nd prizes at the Show. For the 1977 run it was reported "*a very good turn out of A7s and A10s attended*".

The October long weekend in 1975 saw seven A7s, two A10s, an A30 and A40, a Morris 8/40, the Ayers Rock van and a number of moderns at Stansbury.

The enthusiasm and excitement generated by the Club's 21st birthday rally was still strong within the Club and it was decided to hold a Biennial rally on 16/17 October 1976 in Bonython Park at Hindmarsh.

Saturday morning set up was threatened by rain but by midday almost 60 cars were in place and at 1 p.m. President Barry Frost performed the opening ceremony. Throughout the afternoon, despite some drizzly showers, a steady stream of spectators wandered through the display and many favourable comments were received.

Entries covered the whole range of Club activities from trailers loaded with rusting relics, partly restored chassis, vintage, post-vintage and classic cars, moderns, racing cars and mud sprint specials. Particularly appreciated were the magnificent Terry Ireland special, the result of 14 years work, and the Victorian A7C entries of Jenny and Dennis McIlroy and Dorothy and Roy Ducat. The day's activities concluded at the Clubrooms with tea and a selection of club films.

Sunday's run, with 30 cars, left from Port Road Hindmarsh and travelled via the city, Outer Harbour and the seafront for lunch at West Beach. In the afternoon, the cars travelled via Glenelg, Blackwood and Crafers, then across the hills to Montacute to the finish at Linden Park.

Saturday's award winners:

Vintage A7 – Elegance:

Dave Hall 1929 tourer

Post-vintage A7 – Elegance:

McIlroy's 1931 tourer

A7 specials – Elegance:

Terry Ireland

A7 unassembled units –

Most optimistic - Trevor Mander

Best attempt so far –

Brian Moffat

Other vintage cars - Elegance: Jim Bishop

Other post-vintage cars Elegance:

Peter Williams

Classic cars – Elegance:

Graham Shipton

Circuit racing cars – Elegance:

Bob Piper

Autocross cars – Elegance:

Tony Laube

Registered cars – Elegance:

Don Kennedy

Sunday's touring winners:

Austin 7 – Jenny/Dennis McIlroy

All other cars –

Carol/Peter Williams

Popular choice, A7 -

Jenny /Dennis

McIlroy Popular choice, other cars – David Searles

1977 got off to a flying start with a three-day Australia Day rally, which saw the debut of David Biven's A10.

On 13 March a memorial run to the Barossa Valley, in honour of George Glidden who had died in November the previous year, was held and attracted 14 Austins of various vintages and 18 moderns. *Austin 7 Journals 54* noted "*George was one of our most popular and enthusiastic members, and was always one of the first to volunteer for work sessions, flag marshal duties etc. He will be greatly missed*".

Static displays had been attended at the Woodville and Campbelltown ovals (on 27 February and 2 April); these were followed by the 15/16 May Cornish Festival, where our cars took part in the grand tour of the track at the racecourse, where the festivities were held.

In June there was a run to Pitcairn Station, near Oodlawirra,

where the eleven hardy souls experienced a weekend variously described as "*fantastic, terrific, excellent and tremendous, besides having a bloody good time*".

Highlights were the visit to the nearby Pitcairn Range to see gold mines; the station museum of early Australiana and aboriginal artefacts and a tour to see aboriginal rock carvings.

To maintain the growing interest in A7 restoration and to encourage participation in runs, the Port Carriers Trophy was introduced for 1976. Donated by Geoff Lobb, it rewarded those who participated in events for cars on the Club's Register, where numbers of A7s had grown from over 100 in 1975, 122 in 1976 to 143 in 1977. (First winner was Bill Austin, followed by Bryant Lawson). However, despite this trophy, in February 1977, concern was expressed at the poor turn out of cars on runs in comparison to the number on the Register. One suggestion, not acted upon, was for a group to be formed to visit inactive members to help them get their cars mobile.

In order to assist members to keep their cars running, the Club's spare parts operation had been gradually expanding and was boosted by a \$200 donation from general funds in September 1976. Begun by Bruce Bridgart and Ian Motley, who carried them around in a plastic bag, and then taken over by Charlie Adams for new spares and Ian Jones for second-hand spares in January 1975, it proved to be invaluable and in 1976 turned over \$2400 worth of spares. Thoughts of the need for a shed to house them in were first raised in August 1975.

Finding suitable tyres for the A7s had been a problem: this was solved when a project undertaken by Ian Motley in 1973, to order 500 tyres, specially made by Dunlop to suit the A7s, came to fruition in 1975. The payment for them coincided with the establishment of the Clubrooms loan, putting some pressure on Club finances for a short time.

The social committees had worked very hard to put on entertaining events for members and to provide catering at sprints and mud sprints. In the process, they raised funds for the Club: and their success can be gauged by these figures. 1973 - \$650, 1974 - \$1050, 1975 - \$1650, 1976 - \$1200 and 1977 - \$1150. Another innovative idea was for a jumble sale at the Clubrooms when members donated goods for sale or had more valuable items sold on commission.

Organised by Bruce Went and a dedicated band of helpers, including Jacque Went, Rae Frost and Ruth Perry, who sorted and priced the donated items, the inaugural sale on Saturday 31 August 1974 raised \$170. Others followed in November each year with \$400 raised in 1975 and \$550 in 1976.

Traditionally, the final social event each year had been a Christmas Cabaret but after the 1976 one had run at a loss, they were discontinued. In its place, a Christmas Social on Saturday 3 December 1977 was held at the clubrooms. This was followed by a Children's party next day: both were successful and were made a regular date on the calendar.

The Editor's position of *Austin 7 Journals* had changed in 1975. Barry Frost had accepted the Presidency of the Club from Tony Grove and Ron Burchett had taken on the role of Editor as well as being in charge of our growing collection of books in the library. Also under Ron's guidance, and to keep abreast of A7 information, in July 1974 the Club took associate membership of the A7 Clubs Association (UK) and purchased back issues of their magazine.

Ron's Editorial in *Austin 7 Journals* 48 April 1975:

This issue of the Journals marks the end of an era. For the past 12 years, this magazine has been produced, rain, hail or shine by Barry and his wife Rae. The Club's sincere thanks go to Barry and Rae for their work on the Journals over the years. There is no doubt that their efforts have contributed to the steady growth of the Club.

Ron's appointment was timely, as with the growth in A7 activities, his knowledge added to the relevance of the Journals. However, he was not shy to speak out on issues, either praising or castigating, as he saw the need.

The editorial for *Austin 7 Journals* 50 read:

This is the Jubilee issue of the Journals, and a lot of water has passed under the bridge since that first issue.

This month I'm in a reflective mood! It occurs to me that we are a pretty unique group. We have a Club which provides for such diverse interests as touring, mud sprints, circuit racing and sprints, trials and vintage cars and garnishes these with social activities such as balls, cabarets and weekend trips (even extended holidays to the Red Centre and wild life-collecting expeditions to Melbourne!) When you look at it, we're on a pretty good thing.

But by issue 53, July 1976 Ron had experienced some of the frustrations of editorship.

The magazine is what you the members make it. As Editor I only assemble the contributions I receive, I cannot make material. Hence I apologise to the mud sprinters – their activities are not covered in this issue because nobody was prepared to give me write-ups, despite several appeals.

Subsequent issues did contain informative reports on Club activities, so Ron's words had the desired effect and he continued to produce quality issues. And then he penned the following in issue 58, October 1977.

CLUBROOMS FOR SALE!

Strange caption – but the thought has come to mind more than once at recent monthly meetings. The lack of interest/support displayed at times has started me thinking that the "few" can't carry it forever and sooner or later it will all fold up.

I usually arrive late and hence find myself at the back of the hall looking at something like 100 backs and it disturbs me that when our President on occasions calls for help (the recent working bee was a classic example) the half dozen hands that go up are generally the same ones and invariably belong to those staunch people who are already heavily involved time-wise in other Club activities.

It staggers me that there are so many who won't make that little effort to back the already committed members. I

guess everyone's too busy and it doesn't really matter anyway – WHO CARES?

Bruce Went continued as the Club CAMS delegate and in May 1973 was involved in setting up a Board of Management to govern the sport in SA. However, this proved unsuccessful and in April 1974 it was dissolved; Bruce was elected deputy State Chairman and from 1975, Ian Motley was our alternate delegate.

The CAMS "Service Award" had been presented to Barry Frost in December 1973, taking the number of Club recipients to five. Tony Grove wrote in his *PRESIDENT'S PIECE* for *Austin 7 Journals* 43 that the citation at Barry's presentation read "In his quiet and unassuming way he has given his all for the benefit of motor sport in SA".

In October 1976 Barry was appointed as CAMS' National Chief Timekeeper.

Members helped with the 1975 and 1977 Telethon Appeals. This involved delivering material to those people who were doing the actual "door-knocking" and then two weeks later,

returning to collect it.

Aiding this charity generated great publicity for the Club, through NWS9, *The News* and 5DN. On 20 December 1975 Glenda Grove, Bryant Lawson and David/Merv Perry together with car, gave a live interview for the evening NWS9 TV news.

The Club continued its involvement with International motorsport, as on 23 September 1977 members manned the Adelaide control for the London-Sydney marathon.

The 1973 Tasman Series for F5000 racing cars saw Garrie Cooper and Stan Keen in Elfins and John Walker in his Matich A50 competing in the four Australian races. John then went to America for the L&M Series, but crashed in the opening race. He returned with a new Lola T330, which was prepared by Doug Trengove for the Australian F1 Championship series that year.

John was second at the AIR round, won both Phillip Island rounds and was third at Sandown. Garrie Cooper was 6th at AIR, 2nd and 3rd at Phillip Island and 5th at Sandown. At the end of the series, John and Garrie were second and third, on 30 and 20 points, behind Gold Star Champion John McCormack, Elfin on 33 points.

John Walker finished fourth in the 1974 Tasman Series, after winning the opening NZ round in established at Levin. In the 1975 series, despite proving that "motor racing is dangerous" with a spectacular high-speed crash at the Sandown round, he still finished equal second.

The 16 February 1975 "Rothman's International" Series round at AIR was wet; Chris Milton took fourth and John Walker ninth but neither were well placed in the final standings. Gil Cameron joined the series at Sandown in his McLaren M10B.

In 1976, AIR's round on 7 February was the series finale and Alan Jones lapped the field in his Lola T332 and set the outright lap record of 49.50 secs. Garrie Cooper Elfin MR8C finished 9th; Chris Milton, Gardos OR2 12th and Gil Cameron, now driving a McLaren M22, was 17th.

The Australian Touring Car Championship series was still over eight rounds and included Wanneroo in WA from 1973.

The 1973 meeting at AIR on 10 June was the one where Allan Moffatt's Falcon GTHO was stolen the night before the race. (It was later found abandoned without significant damage). In hopes of finding the car on race day, the Championship race was rescheduled to later in the program but Moffatt was forced to accept Murray Carter's GTHO and had to start from the back of the grid. Despite this, and a pit stop to fix a loose exhaust, he still placed second place behind Peter Brock's Torana. Moffatt won the Championship from Brock.

The 1973 Championship rules combined both Series Production

and Improved production, setting the Championship on its way to be the pre-eminent category in Australian motor sport.

In 1974 the Championship returned to seven races. Peter Brock won the 9 June AIR round and went on to easily win the Championship. In 1975, Colin Bond Torana won the 10 June AIR race and the Championship.

The 1976 Championship was substantially changed, as the endurance races were now a part of the ATCC. Running from February to November, and not including Bathurst, it featured 11 races at 10 different circuits in five States. The 6 June AIR meeting again made the headlines when Moffatt's car transporter was almost destroyed by fire at Bridgewater. He borrowed John Goss's newly built Falcon and won both heats! At the meeting on 24 October, Alan Grice won: by the end of the series, Moffatt was again Champion.

In 1977, the sprint race at AIR on 5 June saw a 1-2 finish for the Bond/Moffatt Falcons. After the famous side-by-side Bathurst finish of Moffatt/Bond, the 23 October race at AIR had the same results; Moffatt was again Champion.

As previously noted, the Underdale Motors Trophy was added to the list of Club annual trophies in 1973: it changed in 1974 to the Graham Boulter Motors Trophy, but then lapsed.

The 1974 Goldsworthy Motors Trophy was very eagerly contested: in the closest finish since first being awarded, it was won by one point, and was not decided until the final event of the year.

Winners were:

1973: Goldsworthy Motors *Ivan Piatanesi*, Hoffman Dry Cleaners *Dan Larsen*, Gilbert Motor Bodies *Neville Greiger/Len Jeffries* (who also won the trophy for best novice crew in night trials), Underdale Motors *Geoff Eardley*.

1974: Goldsworthy Motors *Fred Jeffries*, Hoffman Dry Cleaners *Don Kennedy*, Graham Boulter Motors *Steve Caston*, Gilbert Motor Bodies *Fred Jeffries / Len Jeffries*.

1975: Goldsworthy Motors *Bruce Bridgart*, Hoffman Dry Cleaners *Don Kennedy*, Gilbert Motor Bodies *Bob McNamara/Bob Sampson*, Denis Dix Memorial *David Jarrett*.

1976: Goldsworthy Motors *Dan Larsen*, Hoffman Dry Cleaners *Don Kennedy*, Gilbert Motor Bodies *Steve Caston/Cheryl Waters* (note that they were not in the same team), Port Carriers Trophy *Bill Austin*, Denis Dix Memorial *David Jarrett*.

1977: Goldsworthy Motors *Tony Laube*, Hoffman Dry Cleaners *Charlie Orlando and Don Kennedy tied*, Gilbert Motor Bodies *Bruce Bridgart*, Port Carriers Trophy *Bryant Lawson*, Denis Dix Memorial *John Virgo*.

Summary

In this period, the Club celebrated its coming of age, and achieved its long-held dream of our own Clubrooms. However, the Council objections were an unexpected hurdle for the Club to face. Rob Brosnan worked hard to overcome them and door-knocked our neighbours for their support.

Also, in a decision which was to have far-reaching importance, the Austin 7 Owners Committee was established to concentrate on fostering A7 interests.

The Club continued to extend itself in the organisation of race meetings, holding the first open meeting run by a Club and introduced the 4-hour relay races to the sport in SA. Members' expertise in organisation was used to good effect in helping to set up the Taillem Bend rallycross track

The 21st Birthday rally showed how this type of event could benefit all sections of the Club by showcasing to the public the type of cars we had and set the scene for subsequent rallies of this type. With continuing enthusiasm for celebrating milestones, in 1977 another birthday sub committee was set up to plan for our 25th year.

Members continued to respond to demands made on them by the Club, serving as officials at race meetings, mud sprints and



Official opening of the Clubrooms 24 March 1974.

Mike Thomas, Vice President of the National Control Council for CAMS, unveils the commemorative plaque, watched by Rob Brosnan (left), Tony Grove and Ian Motley (right).

rallycross with distinction and dedication and supported community events with enthusiasm.

The social life of the Club continued and was enhanced by the birthday celebrations. Fund raising was even more important now that the Clubrooms needed to be repaid and maintained and the social committee continued to fulfil its role.

Competitive motor sport was still the driving force behind a steady membership list, as these figures show: 1973-270, 1974-250, 1975-238, 1976-250 and 1977-250.

These drivers were AIR regulars.

RACING CARS

Garrie Cooper, Elfin MR5; John Walker, Lola T330; Malcolm Ramsay, Birrana; Chris Milton, McLaren M22, Asp; Gil Cameron, McLaren M10B, M22; Stan Keen, Elfin Repco; Ray Rowlands, FV; Fred Jeffries, S/c Mercedes; Mike/Colin Trengove, Ian Jones, Ian Motley, A7.

SPORTS CARS

Garrie Cooper, Elfin MS7; Stan Keen, Boral Ford; Ian Davis, IDS; Eric Boord, Boral Ford.

TOURING CARS

John Walker, Torana. Malcolm Ramsay, Torana, Holden Repco.

SPORTS SEDANS

Graham Bishop, Cooper S; Wayne Sutton, Bellett, Ivan Piatanesi, A30/ Rover V8; John Kay, Peter Finch, Chev Camaro; David Jarrett, Cooper S/Rover V8/Chev Camaro; Lou Deluca, Datsun; David Perry, Anglia; Dave Roberts, Morris Minor; Steve Brown, Falcon; Bob Piper, Falcon; Daryl Schultz, Mini; Terry Clements, Escort; Graham Masters, Anglia; Barry Bray, A30; George Carter, A30; Garry Sloper, Anglia; Wayne Polden, Escort; Ken Leigh, Morris Minor; Alan Reed, Mini; Bob Moylan, Mini; Miles Jackson, Anglia; Tony Parkinson, Colin Morris, Ian Chilman, Peter Rule, Trevor Kennedy, Holden; John Reynolds, Kym Sutherland, Torana.

STREET CARS

Dan Larsen, Galant; Dan Wilkinson, Corona; Chris Cole, Capri V6.

The A7C and Birrana

Malcolm Ramsay competed in A7 Club grass sprints, mud sprints, quarter mile sprints and races at Mallala and AIR.

His many road-racing successes included winning sport car races in Malaysia, Singapore and Australia (Elfin 300) and second places in the Malaysian, Penang and Singapore GPs. He then moved to racing cars, with Elfin Mono, Elfin 600 and Elfin Repco Brabham 2.5 litre, competing in the Gold Star Championship.

When the rules were changed for the Gold Star, the Repco engine was replaced with a 2-litre Waggott but as it was uncompetitive against the F5000 cars, the car was sold.

Malcolm then drove for CityState Motors in a Torana XU1 Series Production car and with co-driver John Walker, finished sixth at Bathurst. He then raced the CityState Holden HQ fitted with a 5-litre Repco motor in the Australian Touring Car Championship where he gained several second places – this was the era of Jane, Moffat and Geoghegan!

In an interview with Bruce Went, Malcolm recalled how he became the constructor of Birrana racing cars and his success with them.

"The name Birrana came from the first Formula Ford that Tony Alcock had built – it is aboriginal and means 'throwing stick'. I had first met Tony Alcock at Elfins when he was building

Neil Allen's sports car; he then moved to Sydney.

I had backing from CityState to build a new F2 racing car and when Elfins declined to build it for me, Tony came back to Adelaide and we set up a workshop in a warehouse in Hindmarsh Square. It seemed like a good idea to use an Australian name and after the

success of this car, which finished second in the 1972 Australian F2 Championship, we formed Birrana Racing Cars.

We then set up in a BP service station on Unley Road but despite the enthusiasm and interest shown by many people, we didn't sell any cars for a long time. The first car sold was a Formula Ford. The factory F2 car won the Championships in 1973, 1974 and 1975 in the hands of Leo Geoghegan and Geoffrey Brabham.

Leo Geoghegan and I raced at the 1973 Singapore GP in Birrana 273s with 1600 cc twin cam engines. Leo finished 9th but lowered the lap record by 1.9 seconds; I didn't finish, as my car suffered a punctured fuel tank from rocks thrown up off the track.

Eventually, in 1974 I closed the business as it was losing too much money and I started Birrana Engineering. Tony went to England with two cars and Bob Brown, Bob Muir and Dean Hosking as drivers. I had the opportunity to go too but declined and stayed at home to build up the engineering business. (Tony was killed in a plane crash in England in 1975).

I built one more car in 1978, which I raced in Malaysia but the petrol crisis caused the series to be cancelled with me leading.

Birrana Racing was started in 1993 in Formula Brabham, later Formula Holden, and to 2001 had won the Gold Star Championship eight times with drivers Mark Webber, Paul Stokell, Jason Bright, Simon Wills and Rick Kelly."



Paul Stokell, Birrana Racing Team Reynard Formula Brabham, on the grid at the 1993 AGP meeting in Adelaide. The lap record for this class was set by Paul Stokell at the 1995 AGP at 1-29.97.

1976 Border Run.

L to R; A7s of Tony Grove, Trevor Knuckey, Charlie Adams, Ian Jones



Paris Creek mud sprint 15-8-76



Ian Jones (L) and Colin Hanks (R) with Ian Motley's A7 at Collingrove, Easter 1977



A contrast in A7s at the 21st Birthday Rally, West Parklands, October 1974
Charlie Adams' "Chummly" with the racer of Geoff Redin.



Rallycross action, Taillem Bend.

Above; view back to the start line area, grandstand and timing box.

Above right: Colin Hanks' Viva. Bottom right: Gerry Merton's Bellett.



The Epic Ayers Rock and Return run



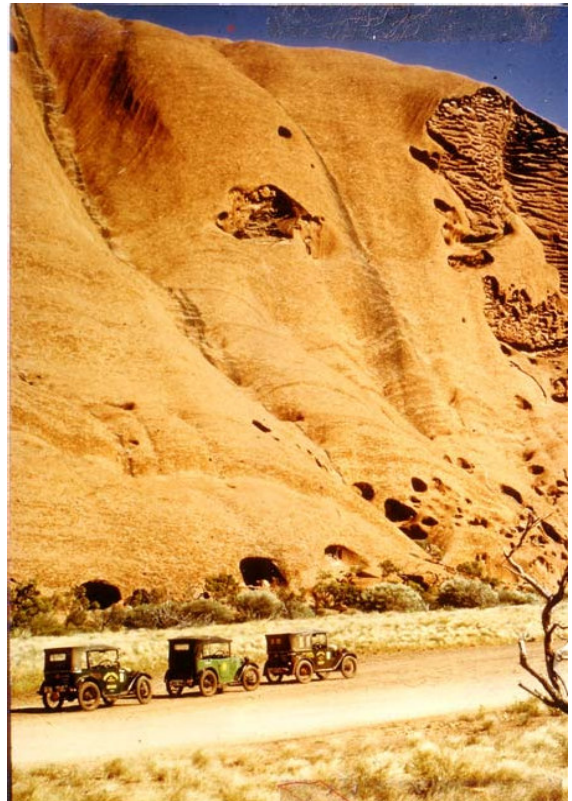
Ian Motley's A7. Left; A final check-over before the big day; Above; Preparing to clean the wind- screen en route.



Another gentle tap should fix it!



The convoy pauses at the SA/NT Border



The Epic Ayers Rock and Return run



Top Left.
At the gates to the National Park
Centre: The Club flag flies from
the top of the Rock
Above: The last night camp
south of Port Wakefield.
Heather Knuckey cooks for the
drivers. Top Right.
The three A7s are dwarfed by the
Rock
Centre: A quiet place to stop
for lunch
Right: A celebratory drink at
the end. L to R: Ian Motley,
Gwilym Henry-Edwards and
Ian Jones.

