

Chapter 6

1978-1982

The Sports Sedans era

Club President Ian Motley also chaired the 25th birthday sub committee in 1978, which organised a wine tasting, a dinner, a ball and the Silver Anniversary rally. Ian's report on the 26 February wine tasting, in *Austin 7 Journals* 59, noted that "after a slow start it turned into a very successful day with 90 persons attending".

Echoing the 1974 adventure to Ayers Rock, a similar run to Birdsville and back was planned, to promote our 25th year. A number of people showed interest but for various reasons there were only four starters when the party left Adelaide at 2.30 pm on 27 May. After several misadventures with the backup Morris J-van (the same one used on the Ayers Rock trip) and coping with rain, bogged cars and trailer, and alternator problems on the van, they reached Birdsville on 1 June.

Before starting the trip home, on 3 June, both vehicles needed repairs to their fuel systems, removing excess mud, and general tightening of screws and brackets.

The Strzelecki Track was very rough and several welding repair jobs were needed on the cars before the party arrived back in Adelaide on 8 June, having covered 2500 km. The Editorial from *Austin 7 Journals* 61 applauded the achievement.

The lengths that some people will go to get a bottle of grog! The classic case recently was the Charlie who drove a 50-year-old motorised pram 2500 km through the outback just to get one bottle of Birdsville Port. To cap it off, he doesn't even drink!

Aided and abetted by Bruce Bridgart, Colin Hanks and Trevor Mander, Charlie Adams celebrated the Club's 25th birthday by successfully taking his 1928 A7 up the Birdsville Track and back home by the Strzelecki Track, despite the handicap of having to take a modern-type support van.

A worthy effort proving that the pioneering spirit is not yet dead.

The 24 June dinner had the biggest number ever (148) for a Club dinner and was deemed "a good show": although the 26 August Birthday Ball was also a great night "it was not well attended and as a result lost money". One good outcome of the night was the return of the Club's first minute book from one of the original members.

In contrast, the 25th Birthday Rally and run was a success. Organised by Stan Gafney and David Searles, its aim was "to bring together as many A7s as possible for this rally which is hoped to be the largest collection of A7s in SA at any one time". It also included sections for Club competition cars.

The programme consisted of a static display in the West parklands followed by a dinner at the Clubrooms on Saturday 18 November and a touring rally of about 100 km on Sunday. The chairman of CAMS State Council, Stewart McLeod, opened the Rally and was joined as Judge for the various trophies by Don Chisholm, Manager of the Birdwood Mill museum.

Austin 7 Journals 63 and 64 reported.

Static display – West parklands

Notwithstanding the shocking weather, members turned out in force with their cars to provide one of the best displays one would ever wish to see. Despite the conditions, which dampened the public interest, the event was a great success as far as Club members were concerned.

Outstanding among the many fine A7 entries were Bryant Lawson's newly completed Meteor, Jenny and Denis McIlroy's 1929 Box saloon and matching trailer from Victoria, Terry Ireland's magnificent special and Alan Mander's 1936 Doctor's coupe, just returned from winning the Victorian Club rally. Among the bigger vehicles, Bob Moylan's Ford A roadster, Roger MacMillan's Bullnose Morris and Len Jeffries' beautifully restored truck, took the eye.

Saturday award winners were:

Vintage A7 – Elegance:

Bruce Williams' 1929 roadster

Post-vintage A7 – Elegance:

Denis McIlroy's 1931 sedan

A7 specials – Elegance:

Terry Ireland's 1929 special

A7 unassembled units –

Most optimistic – Stan Gafney

Best attempt so far –

John Heuzenroeder

Other vintage cars – Elegance:

Roger MacMillan

Other post-vintage cars – Elegance:

David Searles A10

Classic cars – Elegance:

Geoff Lobb MGY Tourer

Circuit racing cars – Elegance:

Don Kennedy FV

Autocross cars – Elegance:

Rod Morris Mini Cooper

Registered cars – Elegance:

Don Kennedy Datsun

Touring Run – Sunday 19 November

In ideal weather members with running cars enjoyed a leisurely drive around Adelaide and suburbs with lunch at Hazelwood Park and a finish at Newton for presentations.

Sunday's touring award winners:

Austin 7 –

Malcolm Lake's 1928 tourer

All other cars – Roger MacMillan's

1924 Morris Cowley

Popular choice, A7 – Alan Mander's

1936 Doctor's coupe

Popular choice, other cars –

Bob Moylan's 1929 Ford A

Director's trophy –

David Hall's 1929 A7 tourer

As well as these special events, the 1978 Club calendar contained the usual mixture of runs and competition. The A7 runs included a trip to Parafield airfield on 4/5 March for "Wings and Wheels of the Past"; on 9 April to a McLaren Vale winery; Camp and Capers on 2/3 September; a run to Barmera on 7/9 October and day runs on 5 November and 3 December.

Another opportunity to showcase the Club's activities and cars (and earn a fee for the Club) came in May and was recorded in *Austin 7 Journals* 61.

Adelaide International Expo 1978 on 12-28 May.

At very short notice (24 hours!) the Club received an invitation to provide a display at Expo. The results were outstanding, a credit to the Club and the organisers. The cars on show represented the full range of Club activities and were a credit to their owners.

Racing cars: John Walker (F5000), Don Kennedy (FV) and Ian Motley (Historic A7)

Rallycross cars: Dave Roberts (Toyota) and Alby Martin (V8 Cortina)

Sports Sedans: Barry Bray (S/c Datsun/A30), Bob Piper (Falcon) and Dan Larsen (Imp/Galant)

Sports cars: Tony Grove (A/H Sprite)

Austin 7: Alan Mander, Bill Austin, Bryant Lawson, Dave Hall (2), Brian Moffatt, Bruce Williams, Merv Perry, Jean Gilbert and David Searles.

The 1978 Border Run was on 22/23 April when 32 adults and 7 children made the trip. In 1979 it was on 10/11 March with 23 adults and 8 children attending but in 1980 it moved to the long weekend of 25/27 April and, breaking with tradition, went to Naracoorte. 50 from SA met up with 36 Victorians, with 7 A7s from SA and 10 from Victoria taking part.

For the 25th running of this popular weekend on 5/8 June 1981, Swan Hill was chosen; this was only the second time that the two Clubs hadn't met at Mount Gambier. An abridged version of the *Austin 7 Journals* 72 report by Dave Hall follows.

The A7C annual Border Run has become a legend over the past 25 years. This year the run was planned to Swan Hill and return – a distance of 630 miles – and we had two groups, one leaving at 10 am on Friday 5th and the second leaving at 4.30 am on Saturday.

The Friday group assembled at the Colonial Restaurant on Mt Barker road and left at 10.15 am and included the A7s of Bruce and Nell Williams, David Searles, Bryant and Unice Lawson and Dave Hall driving Bryant's newly purchased 1928 Chummy tourer. Brian Caire and Anne were trailering the A8, as were Kevin and Jean Gilbert with their 1936 A7 tourer. At Taillem Bend we met up with Alan and Gwen Mander trailering their A7. Intermittent rain began as we drove to Pinnaroo for our overnight stop. More A7s arrived on trailers; those of Merv and Ruth Perry, Graham and David Burge, Kevin and Rosemary Caire and David Gear with a spare trailer.

Meantime, the second group were "grinding" along the highway in heavy rain, cold winds and darkness. The convoy comprised Ian and Cheryl Jones' A7 Chummy, Dean and Kathy Qualmann in Ian's 1937 A7 tourer, the Morris 8s of Dave and Liz Franklin and Colin Hanks and the modern cars, some with trailers, of Bruce Whitmore, Steve and Peter Furlong, Tim Williams and Eddie and Kath Pfeiffer. By 9 am all had arrived at Pinnaroo and the convoy left for Ouyen for lunch.

All functioning A7s appeared to be operating in accordance with Sir Herbert's specifications and by 3.30 we had arrived at Swan Hill and crossed the wooden bridge spanning the River Murray into NSW. (How about that – into 3 States of Australia in one day driving an A7!). We drove to our base camp at "Murray Downs" where we met Graham Logan, who with Brian and Kevin Caire, made up the organisers.

The Victorian contingent arrived 10 minutes later and the line up of cars was impressive; 18 A7s (11 from SA), 2 A8s (1 from SA), 2 Morris 8s, 1 A6 and 1 Diatto from Victoria, plus many moderns with trailers - 39 people from SA and 45 from Victoria.

After the evening meal the party boarded the paddle steamer "Pyap" for a cruise downstream on the Murray to the Pioneer settlement. Sunday was a free day, which was spent at the Settlement, and exploring the sights of Swan Hill and district. During the evening meal, Charlie Adams arrived straight from America; he had caught a plane to Swan Hill and was dropped off at "Murray Downs". Charlie has attended Border Runs for many years and was determined that a trip to the USA would not interfere with this year's event.

At 9 am on Monday the cars departed for the long journey home. By Pinnaroo, the cars of Colin Hanks and David Searles had lost power and were trailered from then on. All had arrived in Adelaide by 7.15 pm.

No sooner were the cars back from this run than they were needed for the 28th Birthday rally. Plans drawn up during the year confirmed a simple concept of a one-day event at the Clubrooms –morning registration followed by a short afternoon run and a BBQ tea on 28 November 1981.

30 vehicles entered and were assembled at the Clubrooms for the opening at 11 am. Bob Piper, Tony Grove and Charlie Adams undertook judging during lunchtime. The cars then left for a drive to Outer Harbor and returned to the Clubrooms at 4.30 pm. via Glenelg.

President Bob Piper presented the trophies and then the BBQ completed the day's events.

Vintage A7 – Elegance:

Bruce Williams

Post-vintage A7 – Elegance:

Jean Gilbert

A7 specials - Bryant Lawson

1978 COMMITTEE

President – Ian Motley

Vice President - Barry Frost

Treasurer – Eddy Pfeiffer

Secretary – Chris Gilbert

Assistant Secretary – Bob Piper

Comp. Secretary – Danny Larsen

Committee – Barry Frost,

Bob Frost, Tony Laube,
Graham Masters

A7 Owners – Alan Mander,
Stan Gafney, Charlie Adams, David
Searles, John Garnett, Brian Gilbert,
John Heuzenroeder.

Social - Bruce Went, Greg Hurrell,
Leslie Brown, Ruth Perry,
Bruce Bridgart.

25th Birthday – Ian Motley,
Kath Austin, Greg Hurrell, Ruth Perry,
Glenda Grove, Graham Masters.

CAMS Delegate – Bruce Went

Other vintage cars – David Hall

Other post-vintage cars -

David Searles

Popular Choice A7 – Lou Marks

Popular Choice Others – David Hall

*Car driven greatest distance to
attend* – Andrew Dawes

Director's Trophy – Kevin Gilbert

Having broken the cycle of going to Mount Gambier, the 1982 Border Run on June 11/13 went to Halls Gap. One group of eleven left on Friday, staying at Nhill overnight and by breakfast time the next day had been joined by another ten.

Those driving vintage cars included Stan and Bobbie Gafney A7, Alan and Gwen Mander A10, and David Franklin Morris 8/40; those with cars on trailers included A7s of David Searles, Jean and Kevin Gilbert, David Gear, and Dean and Kathy Qualmann's A7 sports.

On Saturday they travelled through Horsham to Halls Gap, meeting the Victorian contingent and then exploring the Grampians on Sunday. After an early departure on Monday, another successful run was completed, setting the pattern for future events to be based at different sites near to the SA/Vic border.

Day runs were still a regular feature of the calendar and from

1979-1982 members attended a combined run organised by the Armstrong Siddeley Club. Weekend runs to Port Hughes in June 1979 and 1980 were followed by first Kernewek Lowender event in 1981.

In early 1979 the A7 owners committee began to look into the benefits of the Club joining the Federation of Vintage Car Clubs.

(Before the Federation was formed, there was no organisation specifically looking after the interest of vintage motor vehicles. Up to that time most clubs were affiliated with CAMS, whose main concern was with motor sport and its regulation. Veteran and Vintage vehicles were not normally involved in speed events so it was decided to form a separate body solely to look after their interests. On the 21st March 1971 the Federation of Vintage Car Clubs of Australia (SA Division) came into being with these clubs – Sporting Car Club, Vintage Sports Car Club, Model T Ford Club and Mt Gambier Vintage and Veteran Club - among the founder members).

David Searles and Stan Gafney attended the March 1979 meeting

approved joining the Federation. Graham Burge was our first delegate, followed by David Searles, who began his long run as delegate in 1980; he was appointed to the Federation's Run Committee in 1983.



The inaugural Bay to Birdwood run, on 28 September 1980 was organised by the Federation; *Austin 7 Journals* 69 recorded Stan Gafney's report.

A small group arrived at the Merv Perry staging post at 8 am to muster,

rev engines and talk loudly, prior to the journey to Glenelg. Merv had his 1925 A7 ready as did David Searles, A7 and Charlie Adams in David's A10, Alan Mander A7 Doctor's Coupe, Jean Gilbert A7, Bruce Whitmore Chev, Dave Franklin Chev buckboard and my A7 Ruby sedan.

Alan's idea was to demonstrate solidarity by arriving at the start in an orderly line. Alas, traffic lights, split lanes, Bentleys, Packards, de Dion Boutons and that old desire to get there first split our ranks and we arrived spasmodically. Because of this we were separated for the event, however this made for making new friends in MGs and Essexes.

At the 9.30 am start there were some 669 vehicles and motorcycles. Leading off were the veterans – all polished brass and period costumes. There was some congestion on Anzac Highway (was Merv really baulked by a reluctant Rolls Royce?). And at Tea Tree Gully on the steep bits, there was congestion, hot engines and rusty water on the road. There were also a large number of spectators lining the route, sipping cold beer, cheering and waving.

With an event of this size, there were inevitable delays, not least of which was the queue into the paddock at Birdwood. Still, it was an ideal day, sunny with a breeze. Military police provided a brisk marshalling service while Channel 10 helicopters hovered overhead.

Also from our club were Ian Jones

of Bruce Williams, Brian Moffatt, Ian

David Grear, the Austins in their Alvis, Vauxhall and A7, David Hall Chev, Trevor Mander A10, Brian Caire A8, Kevin Caire A10 ute, George Bell Sunbeam and A7, David Biven A10,

Creedy Ford A and Bob Eglinton Model T Ford.

For the second running of what was to become the biggest vintage and veteran gathering in Australia and the envy of all other States, the 26 September 1982 run was recorded by David Searles in *Austin 7 Journals* 77.

The Rally applications received by the organisers this year totalled 975 and on the day it was reported that 966 vehicles and motorcycles booked in at Glenelg. Our Club met at the Esso service station Anzac Highway and left at 8 am for the Bay. When we arrived the MPs ushered us to the parking area where already 800 vehicles were assembled.

At 9.30 the Premier flagged off the first car; it was another 90 minutes

before the Austins were heading up Anzac Highway. Sightseers lined the route waving and cheering us on; family groups standing and seated, sipping bubbly and beer as we passed. By the time we were on Greenhill Road rain started to fall and the further we went, the heavier it became.

The trip to Birdwood was fairly uneventful if frustrating. It seems to me that if the motoring public are advised not to travel on a section of road, they drive on that section to see why they were advised not to! Arrival at Birdwood for our group was from 1 pm onwards and it was still raining. A brief respite from the rain allowed a few of us to venture out.

28 club members entered 42 cars with eight entering the concours. A7s – David Searles, David Grear, Jean Gilbert, Alan Mander, Bryant Lawson (3), Bill Austin, Merv Perry (3), Debbie Dawes, Bruce Williams, Stan Gafney, Dean Qualmann, George Bell and Tom Young. A8s – Brian Caire (2), Hugh Kerr-Grant and David Grear. A10s – David Searles, David Biven, Harry Hewson, Kevin Caire. A40 – Barry Gardiner. Other cars – Bill Austin, Kevin Gilbert, David Hall, David Franklin, Andrew Dawes, Lou Marks, Michael Qualmann, Jim Bishop, Bob Moylan, David Searles, David Grear, Bruce Whitmore.

Overall, the 2nd Bay to Birdwood Run was a success; it's a pity it rained. Without detracting from the event, it makes us appreciate our quiet picnic

Camp and Capers enjoyed continued support, albeit from a small group of hardy souls. The 1978 camp on 2/3 September was in the Strathalbyn area, with 7 cars and crews attending. For 1979 the site moved to the Angaston area where seven adventurers camped overnight; they were joined next day by six day-trippers.

The site changed again in 1981/82 to the Birdwood area, when the luxury of a large communal tent and a portable loo ensured that 20 people enjoyed the weekend. (Merv and Ruth Perry had arrived late. Merv's A7 had seized the motor a couple of miles from home; he stripped it and sent it away to be bored before joining the campers).

Our Victorian counterparts celebrated their Club's 30th year with a rally on 13/14 October 1979. Attending from SA were John Garnett, Graham Burge, Charlie Adams, David Searles, Alan and Gwen Mander, Bryant and Unice

Lawson along with Trevor and Margaret Mander and children.

An interesting day was had at the 1982 Australian Hot Air Balloon Championships, which were held at Seppelts winery in the Barossa Valley on 23 May. The following club cars provided a static display along with three other car clubs. *A7s* – David Searles, Bill and Kath Austin, Jean Gilbert, John and David Garnett, Alan and Gwen Mander, Tim Williams, Bryant and Unice Lawson, Merv and Ruth Perry, Stan and Bobbie Gafney. *A8s* – Brian Caire, Bill and Doreen Caire. *A10* – Kevin and Rose Caire. *Others* – Kevin Gilbert, Bruce Whitmore, Lou and Mary Marks. John and Rhonda Horsell and Andrew Dawes travelled in moderns with the group.

Since its establishment in 1973, one of the main functions of the Owners subcommittee had been to arrange the necessary payments for waivers, with the Registrar of Motor Vehicles, and insurance to enable the cars to take part in our runs. This was a considerable task, involving liaison between members and the delegated officer.

From 19 January 1979 a permit system came into operation. This required that the car must display the special label on the windscreen and defined where and when the car could be used; a reduction in fees was possible for car clubs making bulk applications and the cars had to comply with the Road Traffic Act regarding turning indicators and stoplights. Application forms needed to be completed one week before they were needed for a Club run. In 1981 concerns were held that some members were abusing the permits, using them other than for official Club runs.

Using this system required the Club to have a record of the cars and their owners and this was kept in the Club Register, which was updated regularly. (See table).

The spare parts stock continued to grow. The first parts available had been brought to a meeting in 1973 in a plastic bag but now had become so large that it could no

longer be stored at the homes of Charlie Adams and Ian Jones. In December 1978 the search for a suitable shed began and in July 1979 one was erected on the southern side of the Club grounds. Graham Burge and Stan Gafney managed the spares during 1980-81, and then Dave Hall assisted Stan in 1982.

Ron Burchett had been steadily accumulating books for the library to such an extent that it was beginning to outgrow his storage capabilities. In 1978 thoughts were given to housing it within the Clubrooms, but this would have to wait until extensions were undertaken.

An ongoing saga began in April 1978 when the Club was offered and purchased a 1935 A7 for use as a "club car". It was "to be held for a period of two years during which time a policy for restoration and use can be formulated". By March 1979 nothing had progressed beyond a suggestion that when restored, it could be used as the Club President's car or by any member whose own car was undergoing restoration or repairs. At the May Owners subcommittee meeting, it was proposed that the car be moved to Alan Mander's shed for storage and work begun on fixing the differential.

However, in the *President's Piece of Austin 7 Journals 67*, April 1980, Bob Piper bemoaned that "*for the past 18 months the car has been sitting in Ian Motley's shed. Why I am bringing up this matter is because I feel it is about time something was done to get it*

1979 COMMITTEE

President – Bob Piper

Vice President - Barry

Frost **Treasurer** – Eddy

Pfeiffer **Secretary** – Ross

Jones/Ian Hatcher

Asst. Sec. – Graham Masters

Comp. Secretary – Danny Larsen

Committee – Barry Frost,

Terry Clements,

Tony Laube

A7 Owners – Alan Mander, Stan Gafney, Charlie Adams, David Searles, John Garnett, John Heuzenroeder, Kevin Gilbert.

Social - Greg Hurrell, Leslie Brown, Ashley Wells, Ruth Perry, Nell Williams

Delegates:

CAMS - Bruce Went

FVCC - Graham Burge

mobile. The first task is to remove the differential and repair it so the car can be moved easily, then hopefully we can get the engine going. The catch is we need volunteers to do this work so if you are interested in this project let me know and I will see that something is organised". This prompted a start; Ian Motley agreed to coordinate the rebuild and in August the work done to date was reported to members.

At an Owners meeting in April 1981, Merv Perry outlined a scheme to get the project moving but "there was not lot of enthusiasm" and the July issue of *Austin 7 Journals 72* reported, "*unfortunately progress has stopped on this project; volunteers are needed to get the car*

Table showing the number of Owners and cars on the Club register, 1978-1982

YEAR	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982
Owners	96	60	71	73	74
A7	15	109	107	110	1
	1				1
					3
A8					6
A10	1	14	11	11	1
	4				2
A30			14	15	10
A40			1	1	1
Other	28	38	36	31	41

Note the sudden drop in owners after 1978 and the slow increase thereafter and the separation of A30s from Others in 1980, as these were becoming more popular within the Club.

back together". The President then asked the Owners sub committee to review the situation.

By December 1982 the true condition of the car was apparent and the project came to a close with this report in *Austin 7 Journals* 78 in January 1983.

Several years ago, the Club was offered an A7 for use as a "Club car", an offer that was taken up, and subsequently various members helped to dismantle it and take parts away for refurbishing. However, the bodywork was in a much worse condition (when removed from the chassis) than had been originally estimated and we are now faced with the considerable expense of having the body repaired.

Even if the car were restored and running, there are still problems of its storage, maintenance, repairs, cleaning, driving, insurance etc. So, considering all the above, the General Committee and the Owners sub committee have decided to offer the car as it stands for sale by tender to a club member, to be formally put in a later issue of Journals.

The President advised in January 1980 that the Committee was prepared to help the Sports Sedan Owners to set up a register within the Club to operate along similar lines to the A7 Owners. In June this was established and a 5-man committee was elected to foster their interests.

This tied in with changes that were being proposed to the Club constitution. The limit on the term of President to two years was to be removed, as it was a major stumbling block as no one eligible under the current rule was prepared to take on the role for 1981. The A7 Owners had suggested in 1979 that there be provision for remote membership.

At a special meeting in October 1981, these changes were approved, along with the requirement that any sub committee formed must elect a representative to the Committee. Also, the assistant secretary title (in reality the minute secretary) was removed; these duties would be undertaken by one of the elected committee.

Finding a secretary for 1979 was a problem; at the 1978 AGM no one was prepared to do the job but subsequently Ross Jones, one of the elected committee, offered his services. However, he was posted to

the country in June and so the position became vacant again. Bob Piper's *President's Piece* in *Austin 7 Journals* 65 noted, "As most people would realise, I'm disgusted that we cannot fill Ross's position on the committee". But by next issue the problem had been resolved as he wrote, "I would like to start this report on a happy note in that the Club now has a new Secretary - Ian Hatcher. Ian came forward after the last Journals, took the position and has settled in very well".

In April 1979, Ron Burchett retired as Editor of *Austin 7 Journals*. He continued with his strong Editorials up to the last, like this very prophetic one from his final issue, number 64.

I'm not sure why I'm writing this - notwithstanding considerable squirming over the past couple of years, I still seem to be wearing the hat of Editor.

As I said at the February GM, these Journals serve purposes other than just being a convenient calendar of future events for you the members. Probably not widely known is that the Journals go to a number of other car clubs; they go overseas and to almost every State in Australia - they serve as the window through which a lot of people see us.

They also serve as a historical record of Club activities - in a few years time when present members have perhaps moved into other interests, the only connection with the past are the Secretary's minute book and the magazine. Thus we should try to ensure that events are written up in the Journals.

John Garnett and John Heuzenroeder jointly edited the next two issues; John Garnett edited the January 1980 issue and then Tony Laube, who had been elected to the committee at the 1979 AGM, took over and produced issues 67 to 70.

Issue 69 was a milestone in that a new cover was designed and printed by the Sports Sedan Register; the text incorporated a special section "*Sports Sedan News*". Tony became Secretary for 1981, the Editor's role going to David Pound from issue 72. Issue 71, April 1981, was a committee effort and included Tony Grove's history of the Club to the end of 1980.



The tone of *Austin 7 Journals* had always reflected the interests of the Editor and the support (or lack of, as Ron had so often complained) that they got by way of relevant articles from members; consequently the issues varied from excellent to poor. David's background was with the Sports Sedans and his issues were strong on racing news, as the contents and cover designs showed.

With all the celebrations programmed during this period, there was still the competition side to each year's calendar.

Economy runs appealed to A7 drivers and moderns and one was held annually. The 1978 run travelled 100 miles and results were: *Austins* - Jenny Jones A30-53.16 mpg, Bill Austin A7-51.65 mpg and Jean Gilbert A7-48.22 mpg. *Moderns* - Ross Jones Galant-51.31 mpg, Lee Nicolle Holden-38.85 mpg and Graham Taylor-Holden 29.03 mpg.

For the 31 May 1981 run, television filming by Channel 2 was organised by Ian Motley. Eight A7s, one A10, four under 2 litre and six over 2 litre moderns competed. The winners on a wet and windy day were: A7s; Alan Mander 46 mpg, Ian Jones 42 mpg and David Searles 41.2 mpg; Moderns; Wes Burfitt Honda Civic 62 mpg and Ashley Wells Skyline 40 mpg. Unfortunately, the quality of the film was too poor to go to air.

The 1978 Club race meeting was another first - held on Easter Saturday 25 March as part of the

“Easter Speed Weekend”, in conjunction with the SCC’s SA Hillclimb Championship the next day. Ian Motley’s *President’s Piece* from *Austin 7 Journals 60* reported.

The meeting attracted 110 entries, including some from Victoria and NSW, who really added colour to the meeting. The racing was of a very high standard throughout the 22-event programme. I was at one stage a bit desperate for enough officials but in the end there were enough and I must congratulate those who took part for the way in which they carried out their duties.

Tony Parkinson won the Denis Dix Memorial for Sports Sedans. The success of this date convinced the Club to use Easter Saturday for the next 5 years.

The Club’s third 4-hour relay race was held on 29/30 July 1978. Ian’s problems getting enough officials hadn’t improved, as this extract from his *President’s Piece* in *Austin 7 Journals 62* shows.

With 13 teams entered we thought that we would come out financially OK, so with finances out of our minds we pressed on with preparations. Everything appeared to be going smoothly until a week before, and then problems began. A condition of entry was that each team supply three officials, but a number of teams didn’t comply so this meant following up the team managers, which added unnecessary work, and then to add insult to injury, names which were given didn’t show up. While I put up with this on Saturday practice, I really let fly at the driver’s briefing on Sunday. While there were frustrations, the officials’ situation was better than last year and the event started only four minutes late.

Once the race was underway the organisational problems ceased and all track officials and timekeepers settled down to the four-hour task. The timekeepers deserve a special mention, as being stuck with a stopwatch and timing sheet for four hours is no mean task as well as compiling the results afterwards. The track officials also must be congratulated on the way in which they carried out their duties, especially A7C members who were generally placed in strategic positions and did a very good job. I think that it is great when people say after an event how much they enjoyed it, but I wish that they would have more respect for the organisers before hand and give a lot more cooperation.

While the relay race has been run for three years it is in doubt whether

there will be a fourth – this one finished \$200 in the red. And unless we can get a major sponsor with a minimum of \$500 there will be no relay race in 1979.

The winning team of sports car drivers Ian Davis, Doig, Ken Durward and Doug Potts covered 264 racing laps and as the fastest qualifiers received no credit laps. The second placed team, from the Jaguar Drivers Club, completed 212 racing laps and with 43 credit laps, finished with 255 total. The A7C team of Don Wilkinson, Bob Moylan and Bob Smith placed third. They completed 230 racing laps, lost 3 with penalties and had 26 credit laps for a total of 253. The winning team’s tactics were to drive as fast as possible, having practised the same way, not risking losing laps. Ian Davis drove for just under the maximum 1.5 hours and covered 101 laps, then Jim Doig completed 98 laps in his 1.5-hour stint. Ken Durward raced for 60 laps, leaving the fourth car to complete the last hour and record 5 laps.

A recurring theme throughout Club minutes and reports of Club race meetings from the very first meeting had been the difficulty in getting officials. This problem was solved in September 1978, when the South Australian Motor Race Officials Association (SAMROA) was established to provide stable, reliable and well-trained flag marshals.

Steve Lewis, SAMROA’s President in 2003, recalls how the Association began. “Prior to this date, the organisation of trackside officials for open meetings at AIR was the responsibility of the SCC but realistically Glen Dix put the team for each meeting together. There were separate groups of enthusiasts, some from car clubs like the Holden Owners Car Club, who volunteered their services and usually worked together at the same location but if officials weren’t available this way, it was Glen’s task to find enough. Although most of the officials were regulars, they did not know each other and there was no over-all co-ordination to establish standards.

1980 COMMITTEE

President – Bob Piper

Vice President - Barry Frost

Treasurer – Eddy Pfeiffer

Secretary – Ian Hatcher

Assist. Sec. – Graham

Masters Comp Secretary – Ian

Jones **Committee** – Terry

Clements, Brian Jericho,

Tony Laube, Alan Mander

A7 Owners – Alan Mander, Stan Gafney, David Burge, David Hall, David Searles, John Garnett, Merv Perry

Social - Leslie Brown, Ashley Wells, Ruth Perry, Charlie Adams, Nell Williams

Sports Sedan Register – Tony Parkinson, Cos Monterosso, Wayne Man-
nor, Barry Bray, Lou DeLuca

Delegates:

CAMS - Bruce Went

FVCC - David Searles

Life membership to Barry Frost

Bill and Judy Pickett, the managers of AIR, wanted to establish a reliable source of officials and reduce the workload on Glen. There was also support from Rod Morris who needed officials for the Tailm Bend

Rallycross track. A meeting of interested parties was held at the A7 Club and a steering committee was formed. The first general meeting of the association was on 27 September at the Parkside Hotel, where Ted Blackwell was elected as the first President; within a year had also taken on the role of Chief Flag Marshall”.

SAMROA officials debuted at the Championship of Makes round on 22 October 1978 at AIR but in the first year the bulk of their services were at Tailm Bend. Our Club was one of the first race organisers to use their expertise and the start of a close relationship began with our meeting on Easter Saturday 1979. Motor racing organisers in SA could now call on timekeepers, fire fighters and flag marshals in specialised teams.

The 1979 A7 Easter Trophy Race Meeting on 14 April was

promoted with advertising on radio stations 5AA and 5KA, in *The Advertiser* and *The News* together with posters that club members distributed throughout Adelaide and nearby country areas. An excellent entry list and the usual strong support from our many trophy donors, firms and individuals, enabled us to put on another great race meeting. In fact, entries in the Vintage and Historic races were such that each race had to be in two divisions, making a total of 18 races. This year's Denis Dix Memorial winner was Clem Smith.

Sponsorship worries for the 4-hour relay race on August 14 had been resolved and in an effort to contain costs, it would be run as a one-day event. However, lack of entries meant it had to be cancelled and this type of race was consigned to history.

The 1980 A7C Trophy Race Meeting was on Easter Saturday 5 April, when fine weather brought out a good crowd to watch an 18 race programme. Peter Finch debuted his Monaro Sports Sedan and he and Tony Parkinson, Commodore fought out the Denis Dix Memorial. Coming from the rear of the grid, the Monaro took the lead after 6 laps and went on to win by 1.6 seconds.

The 1981 Trophy race meeting was on Easter Saturday 18 April when we had the valuable support of John Walker Panel Repairs and Magnum Wheels. With an entry of over 120 cars, scrutineering was held on Good Friday afternoon to reduce the rush on race morning. The Denis Dix Memorial winner was Tony Parkinson from David Jarrett. This meeting featured an All-Elfin race, at which Garrie Cooper flagged the start, and was won by David Madrrers. Another special event was the Magnum Wheels Challenge, which was a 2-lap dash on the AIR oval for the fastest two drivers in each category. 11 cars took part with Tony Parkinson winning in 47.5 seconds, from Mike Trengove and Peter Finch, 48 seconds.

AIR had track licensing problems in early 1982 and our Easter Trophy races on Saturday 10 April were the first for the year. The Sports Sedans again provided the best racing, with Clem Smith, Tony Parkinson and Peter Finch among the leaders. Tony repeated his 1981 success and won the Denis Dix Memorial but only after Clem had spun on the oval and backed the car into the wall, to be joined there by Peter Whitbread. In Historics, there were three A7s racing.

One of those quirks of fate which are unexplainable, was about to happen, as related by Neville Pym of the Sporting Car Club. *"In mid-1975 I was at Mallala, visiting my parents when, on a whim, I decided to go and have a look at the track for old times sake. Imagine my surprise and pleasure on discovering that it had not been ripped and destroyed but was generally as it had been left when it closed in 1971. I thought that the SCC could reuse it for sprints. Urgent meetings were held and eventually it was purchased and Clem Smith and Reg Sparks began the task of getting a track licence; first up was to have it track inspected by CAMS"*.

The following is a report to the CEO and the National Councillors of CAMS, compiled by Stewart McLeod on 30 January 1976.

"I personally inspected the track yesterday (by foot) and contrary to my advice to you previously, it is not in need of resurfacing. In fact, with a couple of minor exceptions, the track is in the same condition as when last raced on. There are a few spots where weeds have broken through the surface but these could be fixed with a minimum of effort."

The race headquarters is reusable as is the first aid station and the Clubrooms, on the outside of the circuit. The tower at Castrol has been blown over and must be removed. The pit counter only needs minor repair, however the pit apron would require resurfacing.

Spectator fences in some cases have been removed and in others,

dismantled, but I believe they intend to completely replace these fences, isolating spectators in slightly different positions. The toilet blocks, while still standing, would need major overhaul as they have had only sheep and cattle through them for some years. The banking that was on the outside of the track is in need of replacement if this is the type of protection required by the National Track Safety Committee.

There is a drain along the right hand side of Shell Straight, which needs attention, and two springs are active just off the track in this area, which would require drainage. Some attention needs to be paid to the sealing of the pit area or somehow reduce dust and stones. The large barn in the centre of the track will need to be demolished, as it is in bad repair.

Apart from some cleanup of the verges of the track and edge marking, I think the project could be a success with only a minimal outlay from the principal involved. It was quite spooky and nostalgic walking around by myself – I could still hear the echoes of a lot of cars.

I would ask that very serious consideration be given to approval in principle to this project."

From this report, the project proceeded and after a successful court case, the track was granted a B Class licence, which meant that it could only be used for Club and State Championship events. The track had been brought to the current safety standards; the old hangar had gone from the centre of the circuit and all other facilities were on the outside. The pits were now between the previous "Hangar Corner" and the southern hairpin and a new 2-storey control tower/timing room/announcing booth had been built. There was now nothing on the inside of the track to interrupt spectators' views.

The successful reopening was on a miserable 27 June 1982, when 5000 spectators returned to see the fulfilment of Clem's dream. Bob Smith reported for *Austin 7 Journals* 76.

On 27 June racing returned to the infamous Mallala circuit.

On Saturday I made the same mistake as a lot of others and went into Two Wells and took the old turnoff that is now a dead end – thanks Highways Department! My first practice was disaster. After driving at AIR for four years I didn't adjust well to the new circuit e.g. 15 gear changes per lap instead of 7. It was interesting to note the different times of certain cars on the twisting track.

The weather forecast for Sunday was "mainly fine" – perhaps it was somewhere! Scrutineering was mixed with rain and was followed by a humorous, somewhat ribald drivers' briefing. Unfortunately my racing viewing was limited, due to a few mechanical problems with my car but what I did catch was good.

A highlight of the meeting was the brilliant dice between Clem Smith (Charger) and Mick Monterosso (Mighty Mouse Escort) in the 10 lap Sports Sedan feature. I haven't seen a crowd pleaser like that in ages. The track had dried and Mick was still mad at being dusted off by an interstate Mini in the first heat. The results say it all: they both recorded the fastest Sports Sedan lap for the meeting of 1-17.7 on the same lap and finished with Clem beating Mick by 0.6 secs.

Allan Nitschke set the fastest lap time at the meeting in his Begg F5000 at 1-11.6, average speed 130.7 kph.

I found the track exciting, challenging and safe with somewhere to go if you get over enthusiastic and look forward to the next meeting.

In 1978, the rules for the Australian Touring Car Championship changed again; the endurance races no longer counted and eight rounds were held. AIR hosted the final round on 17 August when the Championship would be decided between Peter Brock and Bob Morris. In the race, trailing the Falcons of Colin Bond and Allan Moffatt, Morris tried to pass Brock, they touched and he spun off into the grass and became bogged. The resultant third place to Brock gave him the title.

In 1979, the AIR meeting on 17 July also decided the Championship. Brock took pole, using some special Bridgestone tyres while Morris had set his car up for the race. Brock led early in the race but Morris chose when to pass him and once past, Brock could do nothing about it. This year Morris

was in control and ran the race his way, driving to a memorable victory and the first title to a privateer team. Rule changes were applied again in 1980 and both Ford and GMH withdrew their factory support. Kevin Bartlett Camaro won the penultimate round at AIR on 1 June, from the Commodores of Peter Brock and Charlie O'Brien. Although he was a DNF in the final round, Brock had enough points to be the Champion again.

AIR was sold to Bob Jane in May 1981 and the ATCC round on 3 May was the first meeting under his organisation. Brock took pole from Dick Johnson, now driving the blue XD Falcon made famous by the "rock" incident at the previous Bathurst. Brock won the first heat after Johnson pitted to replace a damaged tyre; Johnson won the second from Bartlett and Brock. And by the end of the series, Dick Johnson had won his first Australian championship.

The 1982 contenders included Allan Moffatt's Mazda RX7, which had won the Lakeside round. At the 2 May AIR round, Moffatt led the race until an accident while lapping another car broke the Mazda's suspension. Johnson duly won from Brock, although Bartlett, who finished second on the track, had a one-minute penalty for jumping the start applied, which dropped him to fourth. At the final meeting at Surfers Paradise, an accident put Johnson out of the race but he had enough points to once again be Champion.

The other clubs organising races at AIR in this period were the SCC, who on 25 November 1979 held their first meeting since 1971, and the Formula Vee Association who held their first race meeting on 20 July 1980 and followed this again on 16 August 1981. The SCC began their twilight race meetings at AIR on 22 November 1980 and continued with these in 1981 and 1982, even though Mallala was now their main venue.

1979 was a memorable year for Club member John Walker for he won the Australian Grand Prix at

1981 COMMITTEE

President – Bob Piper

Vice President - Barry Frost

Treasurer – Charlie Adams

Secretary – Tony Laube

Assist. Sec. – Graham Masters

Comp. Sec. – Barry Gardiner

Committee – Barry Frost,

Terry Clements,

David Searles

A7 Owners – Merv Perry, Stan Gafney, Graham Burge, Brian Caire, Kevin Caire, David Searles, David Gear

Sports Sedan Register –

Tony Parkinson, Cos Monterosso, Wayne Mannor, Barry Bray, Lou DeLuca

Social – Bruce Went

Delegates:

CAMS – Bruce Went;

FVCC – David Searles

Wanneroo in WA in his Lola T332 F5000 and capped off the year by winning the CAMS Gold Star as Australia's Champion Driver. *Austin 7 Journals 66* paid tribute to his efforts.

John Walker, Champion Driver of Australia.

On 9 September at Sandown in Melbourne, Club member John Walker won the CAMS Gold Star for Australia's Champion Racing Car driver, by finishing second in the third and final race counting towards the award. John announced his retirement after the race.

1979 has been a momentous year for John and his Magnum Wheels sponsored Lola T332 – the first South Australian AGP winner and now the first South Australian to win the AGP and the Gold Star in the same year. In fact, only three other drivers have achieved this distinction – Lex Davison, Alex Mildren and Max Stewart.

This year three races counted towards the Gold Star. Besides the AGP and the Sandown race, John was third at Oran Park, after blowing an engine during practice and starting from the rear of the grid for the race. John has been an active A7C member for all his racing career and all members congratulate him on achieving a distinguished place in Australia's motoring history.

That report did not do justice to the drama of John's AGP win, which was as dramatic as any movie

script. John had qualified third behind Alf Costanzo and Larry Perkins in an 18-car field. Then the two front-row cars took each other out of the race at the first corner, leaving John in the lead with 63 laps to go.

By lap 20 he had a slender lead over John Wright but lapping slower cars proved to be a bit of a problem. However, contact with another car in that first corner melee had damaged the exhaust on John Walker's car and it began dragging on the ground. After several laps to see if it might fall off, the officials black-flagged John and he pitted on lap 30 to have the offending exhaust removed. Although only stopped for 18 seconds, it was enough to drop him to third behind Wright and John Bowe.

By lap 34 the gaps between them were four and ten seconds and this closed slowly until lap 50 when John regained second place. Wright's engine was suffering from low oil pressure and with less than two laps to go, while holding a lead of less than one second, it failed and John Walker, whose car was also down on power courtesy of the broken exhaust, swept by to win. Among John's pit crew for this famous victory was Tony Grove, who recalls, *"We had been watching the dragging exhaust and had convinced the officials that it would be OK but eventually they called the car in. I monitored the stop from the front of the car while the mechanics removed it and John rejoined the race"*. Although not present at this race, Doug Trengove had been chief mechanic on many of John's races.

As winner of one of the oldest continual Grand Prix race in the world, John received the Lex Davison Trophy, a silver model of the A7 which had won the first AGP in 1928.

The enthusiastic Sports Sedan Register had organised a "Twin State Challenge" series with WA drivers. Their first meeting was at AIR on 1 June 1980 where Bob Smith Torana (SA) won the final from Gordon Mitchell Alfa Turbo

V8 (WA), Dick Ward Fiat Abarth (WA) and Lou DeLuca Anglia (SA). For the return meeting, the Register raised \$1200 in three weeks for three cars to go to Wanneroo in WA on 6 July, where Peter Finch won the 10-lap final from Lou DeLuca after Tony Parkinson had blown an engine in a heat race.

The 1981 round at AIR on 26 July had a three heat format: Heat 1 - Lou DeLuca, Cos Monterosso, John Beasley; Heat 2 - Mick Monterosso, Dick Ward, Lou DeLuca; Heat 3 - Dick Ward, M Barnes, John Beasley.

Wayne Sutton and his Escort made the trip to WA in early September 1982, returning as joint leader of the series. At the SA round on 26 September at AIR Dick Ward debuted his new Mazda RX7, which won the final from G Stephenson (WA), Mick Monterosso and Lou DeLuca. Wayne placed well enough to be the overall series winner.

By 1979, which was the last year of the Tasman/Rothmans International Series held each February, racing fans in South Australia had enjoyed nine years of watching International champions racing at AIR and there were rounds of the Gold Star, for Australia's Champion driver, and most Australian titles.

But there was no series or awards to formally recognise SA's champion racing driver. Rallying had had the Silver and Bronze Star awards for its champion drivers and navigators since 1961.

This was about to change; Peter Wright, the State CAMS Secretary, suggested to Barry Frost that with the strength of racing currently enjoyed, such an award was well overdue. It had to take into account the fact that not all local categories had the same number of races at each meeting so therefore a simple "points for each win etc" scoring system would not be fair to all.

Barry and Bob Frost devised a scoring system that took this into account. At the CAMS State Council meeting in February 1979, our delegate Bruce Went successfully moved that the

proposed rules for an annual SA motor racing award be adopted and so the "SA Racing Driver of the Year" came into being. Several designs for this award were submitted and the State Council approved the one from Barry Frost.

Every race meeting held in SA during the calendar year counted towards this award; fittingly the first winner was club member Jim Doig. *Austin 7 Journals 67* had a few words on the win.

During 1979, a point score system operated on all race meetings held at AIR, for all competitors. Points were awarded for starting and completing a race plus bonus points for the first eight place getters. Competitors were required to compete in either 5 or 6 meetings, any less and they were ineligible. Jim Doig averaged 30.42 points to win the award. Other club members to score well were: David Ferrall, Greg Ferrall, Lou DeLuca, Roger Andrew, Wayne Polden, Don Kennedy, Barry Bray and Trevor Kennedy.

Congratulations to those members and especially to Jim.

Dale Wilson, State CAMS chairman, made the presentation to Jim during our race meeting on 5 April 1980. This award was firmly established as one to be coveted and the subsequent winners were; 1980 - Bronte Rundle, 1981 - Mark Poole and 1982 - Lou DeLuca.

In 1980, there were three Club trophy race meetings organised, (by the A7C, FVA and SCC), and these clubs decided to award a "Clubman Driver of the Year" trophy which would be scored along the same lines as the Racing Driver award but with handicap races included in the score. The inaugural winner was Jim Doig and he repeated his success in 1981 and 1982, establishing himself as one of our best and most consistent drivers.

The popularity of circuit sprints at AIR began to wane in 1978; only 15 entries in July. For the next one, in August, despite combing with six other clubs, "entries were disappointing, especially from A7C members".

In contrast, the 18 March 1979 sprint had 57 entries, with Colin Trengove's Lola T332 setting FTD

with 1-51.1 secs. However, in his next *President's Piece* for *Austin 7 Journals 66*, Bob Piper lamented, "*The circuit sprint at AIR was a financial disaster, but an enjoyable one for those who attended*".

The return to Mallala for sprints was eagerly awaited but, as *Austin 7 Journals 65* reported;

Unfortunately because of circumstances beyond our control the planned circuit sprint at Mallala on 4 November has been cancelled. This is very disappointing news but maybe if CAMS and Clem Smith can reach an agreement we will get a run there soon.

In the next three years, sprint numbers fluctuated from highs of 52 in 1980 and 1981 down to 29 for the September 1982 event.

Mud sprints and motorkhanas were still on the calendar and the Taillem Bend rallycross track was used for autocross. This report from *Austin 7 Journals 66* by Danny Larsen on the 23 September 1979 event captured the action.

A warm sunny but slightly windy day saw 15 competitors show up for what turned out to be a thrilling, hard driving autocross meeting at the Taillem Bend Raceway. The circuit had just been graded and started out to be very smooth but slippery. The event comprised 3 laps with 2 cars spaced half a lap apart.

Practice saw drama when Peter Fisher lost the left front wheel of his Holden on turn 4. Graham Benneche bent the left front suspension on his EH Holden and Terry Clements came unstuck on turn 1 and broke the exhaust system on his Capri.

Most drivers treated the first run gingerly as they felt out the track. During the second run times dropped a lot from the quicker drivers as the battle for first place began. David McQuirk ran out of fuel; Steve Furlong had gearchange problems on his Holden-powered Viva and Ralph Silins had handling problems on his Holden-powered Datsun. Terry Clements also had a bolt from the alternator fall out which then made strange noises.

The third run saw some extremely smooth and fast driving from Lee Nicolle in his newly built HR Holden rallycross machine. He was trying hard to shake off an attack on his times by my new Galant rally car. Other drivers having fun were David Poole and Tony Laube, both completing 360° spins with no effort. Turn 4 was by far the most difficult (or the most fun) because the

surface was very powdery causing terminal understeer in most cars.

The final run was the decider for most classes. Terry Clements lost the use of his alternator completely but this didn't stop him from turning in his fastest run for the day of 3-07.7. I quietly slipped around in 2-56.5 to clinch the fastest overall aggregate time of 11-58.6. Graham Benneche yet again bent the front suspension causing him handling problems and also depriving team-mate Gary Hoffmann of his last run. Lee Nicolle was playing with tyre pressures but his last run was the slowest although he still comfortably won his class. Ralph Silins took the prize for the most spectacular drive because he lost control as he entered the bitumen turn before the finish line, swerving one way, then the other, and finally slamming sideways into the tyre and earth barrier. Luckily no damage was sustained to the car; and to the driver - only his pride. The drivers and spectators enjoyed a really great day.

A report in *Austin 7 Journals 68* on a rallycross meeting on 22 June 1980 noted, "*Graham Masters (Cortina) and David Poole (Holden) have joined the rallycross ranks with their cars*". Other members competing were Peter Whitbread (rotary-engined VW), Lee Nicolle (HR Holden) and Bob McNamara.

This was one of six open rallycross meetings that year, which, unknown at the time, was to be the last, as the organisers were facing financial difficulties and racing ceased at the end of 1980. Elsewhere in that *Austin 7 Journals* issue, a report on an invitation to a Southern Districts Car Club motorkhana on 13 July noted; "*Tony Laube, David Poole, Steve Furlong, Lee Nicolle, Graham Benneche, Miles Jackson and Graham and Lyn Masters all had a fantastic time*". In 1980, these members (and others) competed at an autokhana at Birdwood and a hillclimb at Collingrove.

Ian Jones was Competition Secretary in 1981 and he penned the following for *Austin 7 Journals 70* in January.

The 1981 calendar has a considerable number of events, which should produce a good contest for the annual trophies, provided members participate. To assist this point, David

1982 COMMITTEE

President – Barry Frost

Vice President – Bob Frost

Treasurer – Charlie Adams

Secretary – Bob Piper

Comp. Secretary – David Poole

Committee – Bob Frost,

Steve Furlong, David Searles, Ken Leigh, Lee Nicolle.

A7 Owners – Merv Perry, Stan Gafney, Brian Caire, Kevin Caire, David Searles, David Grear, Rose Caire.

Sports Sedan Register – Peter Finch, Wayne Sutton, Lou Deluca, Cos Monterosso, Ken Leigh

Social – Bruce Went

Delegates:

CAMS – Bruce Went

FVCC – David Searles

Poole has volunteered to act as "Club Captain"; his role will be to STIR and Rouse the Rabble into a fighting "Austin 7 Club" contingent of some size. Do not wait for him to contact you – help him and rally round. The type of vehicle is unimportant eg road registered, dune buggy or wild outrageous special, are all eligible.

David's efforts to increase participation in a range of events had success as 17 members took part in the first dirt sprint at Birdwood on 3 March. Other events included: an autocross at Elizabeth on 12 April, an autokhana at Birdwood on 19 July, an autocross at Elizabeth on 26 July and a mud sprint at SDCC on 23 August.

The timing team continued to work at racing at AIR and Mallala (after June 1982), and rallycross meetings, as well as at Club sprints, gymkhanas and mud events. In 1979 the opportunity arose to time the SA round of the prestigious Swann International Series for motorcycles at AIR and this led to timing at all National Championship motorcycle rounds at AIR. The 3-hour production races in 1980-82 presented new challenges for the team as they featured large fields of very competitive machines.

On 6 August 1979, the Club manned the Adelaide control for the

Repco Reliability Trial. Set in the South Parklands, with entry from Goodwood road, the control was at the end of the first major division and competitors had not had any sleep since leaving Melbourne the day before.

The control was set up by noon ready for the first car at 4 pm; the last arrived at 1 am. During the evening a team had been alternating at the check-in table whilst others had been on duty in the parking areas. The cars were sent on their way very early next morning and by 11.30 a.m. the control area had been cleared and the A7C had again done an excellent job.

In 1978, Garrie Cooper was awarded the CAMS Membership of Honour, joining Sir Jack Brabham and Phil Irving in this prestigious award.

The citation accompanying the award read, *"Mr Garrie Cooper has been a CAMS member and leading competitor for over twenty years. In that time he has been deeply devoted to motor racing and his enthusiasm has led to his becoming the most productive and successful of racing car manufacturers, having at this time, built over 300 competition vehicles since his first sports racing chassis in 1959. In the years since, Elfin cars have won no less than eleven National Championships, two with the designer driving. Grand Prix wins in Singapore and New Zealand are included in the list of this prolific builder. His enthusiasm for the sport, his perfectionism in his profession and his unfailing courtesy, goodcheer and sportsmanship have brought international credit to himself and his country"*.

Garrie died in April 1982 and a tribute to him was in the July issue of *Austin 7 Journals* 76.

Garrie Cooper is probably the most notable of names to have graced the Austin 7 Club membership during the almost 30 years of the Club's existence. Most of us will have read at least one article about his years of dedication to motor sport, both as a constructor and a driver. He was certainly a front-runner in both fields, producing many superb

drives in his equally superbly designed and built cars.

Some of our older members have been closely associated with Garrie over the years and no doubt have very fond memories of personal and racing activities. The loss of Garrie is certainly a great loss to motor sport – hopefully his efforts and enthusiasm will not be forgotten.

At the November 1980 AGM, life membership was awarded to Barry Frost.

Improvements to the Clubrooms continued and with the repayments on the loan (which had risen in six years by over \$125 per quarter) meant that there was continual pressure to raise extra funds.

Sales of food and drinks at almost every competition event helped, and each race meeting report concluded with a tribute to the hard work of the social committee for the enjoyable after-meeting barbeque. Extract from the social committee notes for *Austin 7 Journals* 67, April 1980.

Although the social committee is not primarily a fund raising committee, good management over the years has raised a considerable amount of money for the Club through its activities. Each year a lottery is run; other funds come from the sale of drinks at Club meetings and the sprints and race meeting during the year. The Annual Dinner this year is at the Baron of Beef.

The follow-up in the next issue of *Journals* said, in part:

134 members and friends spent a very pleasant evening at the Baron of Beef. A surprise of the evening was to see the wife of a member join the realm of the usual male domain of the beer drinking competition in which it is pleasing to record that she took second place.

The traditional June annual dinners were still well supported, with Bill Austin using the occasion of the 1979 dinner to celebrate his 50th birthday with friends and members. However the July 1982 *Austin 7 Journals* 76 issue noted *"This year creates a record for the lowest number to attend an annual dinner in the history of the Club – 39 people enjoyed themselves at a really good show"* and concluded

with a plea for members to let the social committee know what was wanted in future. The Christmas social at the Clubrooms concluded each year's events.

Jumble sales continued to be a good source of income and these were held at the Clubrooms with members supplying goods for sale until August 1982 when the new "trash and treasure" sales became in vogue and we took two large trailers to the Metro drive-in at Marion.

In 1979, the Club's original chairs, which were second hand and of tubular and plywood construction, were replaced with new plastic moulded ones and a new refrigerator was bought. Requests for members to help at working bees were hard work for Presidents; support came from the usual band of helpers who kept the clubrooms in order.

General meetings were still the backbone of Club activities but waning interest at various times caused concerns from the President and the Owners sub committee.

The A7 Owners noted in *Austin 7 Journals* 65 in July 1979 that *"attendances at A7 owners meetings have fallen off over the past year and only a few "regulars" seem to attend. Could it be that Saturday night is just not suitable or is it the current cold weather?"* A survey slip seeking preferences for meeting nights and suggested topics for speakers or any other ideas was included. It is unknown how many responded to the survey but in November it was resolved to move these meetings to the second Monday in each month.

In July 1982, the *President's Piece* from *Austin 7 Journals* 76 spoke strongly on the current poor attendances.

On the last Monday of each month we hold an event that is as old as the Club itself – and next year we are 30 years old – and it is called a general meeting! Judging by the numbers who have been attending the last few meetings, it would seem that many members have forgotten to attend general meetings. It is embarrassing to the committee when guest speakers are welcomed to a meeting and have only 20-30 to address. General meetings are

for members to hear reviews of past events and news of what is planned for the coming weeks. They are an integral part of Club life and activities. If you have pride in the A7C then please make the effort and attend the next meeting when the entertainment will be films.

The points systems for the annual trophies were amended in 1978; members' preferences for events were changing and after 1978 the Gilbert Motor Bodies Trophy for trials was no longer contested. The Port Carriers Trophy was renamed "The Geoff Lobb Trophy" from 1980, as Geoff had sold the business and personally sponsored the award.

Of interest is that in 1981, 56 members scored points towards the Goldsworthy Motors trophy for the most successful Club driver. The A7 Owners Award, which encouraged attendance at A7 Owners meetings and A7 runs, was instigated in 1981.

Trophy winners in this period were:

1978: Goldsworthy Motors *Tony Laube*, Hoffman Dry Cleaners *Tony Grove*, Gilbert Motor Bodies *Ross Jones*, Port Carriers *Alan Mander*, Denis Dix Memorial *Tony Parkinson*.

1979: Goldsworthy Motors *Danny Larsen*, Hoffman Dry Cleaners *Don Kennedy* and *Terry Clements*, Port Carriers *Bryant Lawson*, Denis Dix Memorial *Clem Smith*

1980: Goldsworthy Motors *Tony Laube*, Hoffman Dry Cleaners *Don Kennedy*, Denis Dix Memorial *Peter Finch*, Geoff Lobb *Bill Austin*

1981: Goldsworthy Motors *Graham Benneche*, Hoffman Dry Cleaners *Daryl Knuckey*, Geoff Lobb *Bruce Williams*, A7 Owners *David Searles*, Denis Dix Memorial *Tony Parkinson*

1982: Goldsworthy Motors *Lee Nicolle*, Hoffman Dry Cleaners *Graham Masters*, Attendance trophy *Graham Masters*, Geoff Lobb *David Searles* and *Brian Caire*, A7 Owners *David Searles*, Denis Dix Memorial *Tony Parkinson*

Sports Sedans had grown immensely in popularity once the Register was organised. Club members concentrated on this category and included:

SPORTS SEDANS

Serge Deluca, Anglia; *Ivan Piatanesi*, Escort, Imp; *Danny Wilkinson*, Toyota; *Ken Leigh*, Morris Minor, Torana; *Wayne Polden*, Anglia; *Cos Monterosso*, Anglia, Escort; *Rod Morris*, Cooper S; *Miles Jackson*, Bellett; *Tony Parkinson*, Torana, Commodore; *Bob Smith*, Holden FJ, Torana; *Barry Bray*, A30, Datsun; *Dave Olsen*, Escort, *Bob Piper*, Falcon; *Danny Larsen*, Imp; *Trevor Kennedy*, Holden EH; *Lou Deluca*, Anglia; *Mick Monterosso*, Anglia, Escort; *Dave Ferrall*, Charger; *Denis Pearn*, Anglia, Capri, VW; *Ian Statham*, Anglia, Bellett; *David Perry*, Datsun; *Tony Ross*, Holden FX; *Peter Finch*, Monaro; *James Rosenberg*, Holden, Torana; *Ian Brown*, Charger; *Graham Hawke*, Torana; *George Carter*, Datsun; *Graham Masters*, Bellett; *Eddy Pfeiffer*, Escort; *Steve Brown*, A30; *Wayne Sutton*, Escort; *Alan Packer*, Mini; *Trevor Knuckey*, Anglia; *Peter Whitbread*, Renault; *Lee Nicolle*, Holden; *Daryl Knuckey*, Falcon.

SPORTS CARS

Jim Doig, Motorlab Asp

RACING CARS

John Walker Lola T332; *Garrie Cooper*, Elfin; *Steve Wright*, FV; *Don Kennedy*, FV; *Eddy Pfeiffer*, FV

RALLYCROSS, AUTOCROSS

Tony Laube, *David Poole*, *Steve Furlong*, *Lee Nicolle*, *Graham Benneche*, *Miles Jackson*, *Graham* and *Lyn Masters*. *Clyde Cox*, *Peter Wilsdon*, *Colin Zytveld*, *Tony Orlando*.

Tony Laube's rallycross
Datsun at Tailem Bend



Summary

Club life continued to function steadily although enthusiasm for runs and events waxed and waned as members' priorities changed. The Club's efforts to run 4-hour relay races came to an end, as support from competitors was not forthcoming.

We joined the Federation of Vintage Car Clubs and this was to prove to be of long-term benefit to members with historic vehicles. A7 runs and tours still enjoyed great support and the Bay to Birdwood Run was set to establish SA high on the International calendar.

The poor attendances at Club meetings were concerns, as were difficulties in filling committee positions. Changes were made to the Constitution to help overcome this. The election of sub-committee representatives on the general committee was a strengthening move, as was the creation of the Sports Sedan Register, which was providing the growth in motor racing.

The celebrations for our 25th birthday were another success with the Birdsville run showing that an adventurous spirit still beat strongly within the Club.

On the sporting scene, the club continued to be part of National events. John Walker won two of Australia's highest motor racing prizes, and in 1978, Garrie Cooper received CAMS' esteemed Membership of Honour. In March 1982 he received the Advance Australia Award from the SA Governor at Government House.

The Club was instrumental in establishing the CAMS SA Racing Driver of the Year award to honour our home-grown stars.

The resumption of racing at Mallala and the sale of AIR were notable at the time but were to lead to dramatic changes to SA racing in the future. In the meantime, for the first time in SA's history, drivers and fans were able to enjoy International, National and Club racing at two circuits.



**25th Birthday Run to
Birdsville, May/June 1978**

Left from the top.
Stuck!
On the right Track;
Charlie Adams and
Trevor Mander at
the SA Border;
Company at last -
someone to talk
to.



Above from the top.
Stuck!. L to R—
Trevor Mander, Bruce
Bridgart and
Colin Hanks
ponder the
situation;
Civilisation at last—
now to get back
home in one piece.

**First Sports Sedans
Twin-State Challenge,
1 June 1980, AIR**



Contrasts in the mud—1956 and 1983

Above: Daryl Beasy at Birdwood, 1983

Right: Ross Roberts and Brian Langeluddecke, 1956.

A roar from the past



As part of Adelaide Speed Week, on 22 April 1992, "the throaty bellow of speed machines filled the streets of Woodside for the first time since street racing ended in the township in 1951". Ian Brock's A7 Special is shown with him as passenger and Henry Short, the original owner, as the driver.