

# Introduction

## A history of the Austin 7 Club of South Australia Inc. from 1953-2003

This history of the Austin 7 Club of SA Inc. has been written to commemorate the Club's 50th anniversary in 2003. It records the Club's growth from the first meetings of a few enthusiasts in a private house at Glenelg, through the growth in membership requiring use of hired venues for meetings and then to the eventual purchase of our own Clubrooms in 1974. Since that time, the Club has experienced several cycles of waxing and waning interest in A7 ownership and membership but fittingly, in our 50th year, both are at an all-time high.

An integral part of our history has been the one ongoing theme – the Austin 7 motor car. As the catalyst for the Club's formation, it has weathered the changes from being the basis for many competition specials, to almost disappearing from Club life, to a slow revival of interest, which eventually saved the Club from collapse, and the recent steady growth in renewed popularity.

In 2000 the committee set up a history sub-committee of life members Tony Grove, Bruce Went, Barry Frost and David Searles to research and produce this history as part of the Club's 50th year celebrations. Bruce and Tony researched and précised minutes; Bruce tape-recorded interviews with several original members for their recollections of events; David sourced photos and Barry took on the task of writing.

From the above information this story evolved; it includes many personal comments and observations from members but it is essentially a history as seen by the author. Each chapter covers a 5-year period and includes the committees and Club officials.

The Club was established at a pivotal point in South Australia's

(and Australia's) motor sporting history as it began to expand with the change from amateur racing to the current very professional state that it is today.

As the Club was involved with CAMS (the Confederation of Australian Motor Sport) from soon after its establishment (also in 1953) the story therefore is not only of the A7CSA but is a record of the Club's involvement - as competitors, organisers or officials - with motor sport in its varied forms. Thus there are many references to the sport as it evolved too.

With the formation of the timing team in 1961 the Club was on course to be part of an ever-growing range of racing activities. In particular, the growth of touring cars into the current format, the World Championship with F1 and other International races is recounted.

We were there as part of history when Port Wakefield closed and the following race tracks were opened (and in some cases, closed): Mallala (both times) Adelaide International Raceway, Tailem Bend rallycross, Calder Park Thunderdome, Phillip Island's rebirth as a GP circuit for motorcycles, Eastern Creek's debut for the motorcycle AGP, the Adelaide Parklands (AGP, LeMans and Clipsal races) and the Albert Park AGP track.

In 1979, the Club joined the Federation of Vintage Car Clubs, which had been established in 1971, and its history and our involvement from then on in Federation-organised runs and issues is also recounted, as it has been a vital part of how we have progressed, particularly with the Historic Vehicles Registration Scheme. In 1995, it became the Federation of Historic Motoring Clubs and has since established the *Code of Practice* to ensure that the integrity of this scheme is maintained.

The minutes of countless meetings - general, committee and subcommittee - faithfully recorded over the years have been used to establish the facts. But the greatest source of information, records of

events and general interest stories, has been the Club's magazine, *Austin 7 Journals*, which was first printed in 1963 and continues today. The extracts used are a testament to the enthusiasm of the writers and to the efforts of the many editors, typists and production assistants who helped to produce it and their dedication to the Club.

Other motorsport information has been sourced from various race meeting programs, motor sport papers, journals, books and local newspapers; they are acknowledged in the Reference section at the back.

The success of the Club over the past 50 years is a testament to the work of all those people who have organised, competed in, or otherwise have been involved in the Club's many activities. The Club would not have lasted and flourished without them.

## Acknowledgments

This book would not have been possible without the help of the many people who gave information and technical advice.

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Bob Frost, David Searles and Dave Winfield provided the scanned images of the maps, diagrams and photos. Cindy Frost provided hands-on instruction in the art of publication layout.

The cover design was provided by John Stoneham ("Stonie") who is proud to say he was a Club member in the "good old days".

The photos have come from the collections of myself, Bruce Went, David Searles, Graham Taylor, Ian Jones, Charlie Adams, Tony Laube, Max Bowden, Harry Kneebone, Ron Burchett, Tony Morgan, John Lemm and the A7Club archives.

My sincere thanks to all of these who have made this history possible.

*Barry Frost*  
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