

Chapter 10

1998-2002

New enthusiasm and another period of growth

1998's touring runs got off to a flying start, with the eagerly-awaited second Tassie tour. Entitled the *World Heritage Run*, it began in earnest on Monday 9 February 1998, when 37 cars (22 from SA, 8 from Vic, 6 from NSW and 1 from ACT), left Melbourne on the ferry "*Spirit of Tasmania*" for Devonport, where they were joined by the sole Tasmanian entry, who took on the role of "tail end Charlie".

The following extracts are from the special 24-page insert in *Austin 7 Journals* 144 April 1998, which reported in detail on the daily events.

Tuesday 10 February; After disembarking at Devonport, the tour stayed overnight at Sheffield, the town of murals.

Wednesday 11 February; Visited Penguin and Wynyard on the way to Stanley, where the welcoming dinner was held. Local papers, *The Mercury* and *The Examiner*, featured stories on the run.

Thursday 12 February; Spent in the surrounding countryside and rainforest walks.

Friday 13 February; Travelled through rainforests to Cradle Mountain.

Saturday 14 February; Spent exploring the National Park.

Sunday 15 February; A fine day's drive through cattle country and forests, to Zeehan for lunch and on to Strahan.

Monday 16 February; Most of the group took a cruise to the Gordon River, while others explored the mining and forestry history of the area. All enjoyed a theatrical performance in the evening.

Tuesday 17 February; After the obligatory group photo at the waterfront, the short day's run took the cars through Queenstown to Derwent Bridge for two nights.

Wednesday 18 February; The next morning, after a cruise on Lake St Clair, which encountered some rough weather, the keen walkers in the group explored the surrounding National Park.

Thursday 19 February; After touring through the Derwent Valley hydroelectric scheme at New Norfolk, the group arrived in Hobart.

Friday 20 February; The morning was spent on a conducted tour of the Cascade Brewery, with a free afternoon. The evening dinner was at the VCCA Clubrooms.

Saturday 21 February; A free day, set aside to take in the markets and local tourist attractions.

Sunday 22 February; Despite the constant heavy rain, the group travelled south of Hobart, through the Huon Valley to Hastings Caves, with members of the VCCA.

Monday 23 February; Visited Richmond before reaching Orford for two nights.

Tuesday 24 February; A day spent sightseeing in Orford.

Wednesday 25 February; After stopping at historic Ross for lunch, the group arrived in Launceston, for the farewell dinner.

Thursday 26 February; After visiting the historic Woolmer's Estate 19th century country house, 27 cars from the group boarded the ferry at Devonport; ten cars continued to holiday in Tasmania.

Friday 27 February; After docking at 8.30 am, some South Australian cars were loaded on to transporters while the others drove: all arrived home safely.

The enthusiasm for Tassie touring did not abate after this very successful run. In January 2000, Dave Hall announced that there was a proposal to return to tour the eastern seaboard in March 2001. Following a meeting on 26 February 2000, this was confirmed and so Dave began planning for the "*Tasmanian Wanderers*" tour.

But before then, there was another Club milestone to celebrate in 1998. Bruce White headed a sub-committee which organised the Club's 45th Birthday celebratory dinner and rally. The dinner was at the Semaphore Palais on 24 October, where President Trevor Clerke officially welcomed guests: during thenight, Bruce Went recounted some of the Club's history. The following day, the Rally was at Wigley Reserve at Glenelg. Ron Burchett's report for *Austin 7 Journals* 147 captured the proceedings.

Notwithstanding the rather pessimistic weather predictions, Sunday 25 October dawned one hour earlier than it should have (first day of daylight saving), bright and light overcast, if a little on the cool side.

Soon after 8 am, rally organiser Bruce White and a small band of

helpers were busy marking out the display rows with the very professional signs that Bruce had prepared.

It wasn't long before the early rally entrants began arriving and from then on there was a steady stream of vehicles. Some of the multiple entrants tried their best to confuse the team recording arrivals at the gate, by arriving in other people's cars. Merv Perry drove David Gear's Meteor, Ian Jones came and went at regular intervals in various guises, Malcolm Lake turned up heading a procession looking very much like Mother Duck and a couple of ducklings, and so it went on.

By midmorning there were some 66 vehicles neatly lined up in their respective classes, basking in bright sunshine. For the next four hours there was a continuous stream of interested onlookers. Larger than usual crowds had thronged to Glenelg for the jazz festival and many were attracted to our display as they passed. A conservative estimate was that well over 1000 passed through – great publicity for the club.

Judging of entrant's vehicles was by popular choice: the winners were.

Vintage A7 –

Dave Hall 1929 roadster

Post-vintage A7 –

Jason Chester 1936 tourer

A7 sports –

Bruce White 1934 "Comet"

A7 specials –

Ralph Drage 1936 special

A7 unassembled units –

Most optimistic –

Mike Feltham 1937

coupe

Best attempt so far –

David Gear 1935 tourer

Other post-vintage Austin –

Arthur Addyman 1933 A10

Other vintage cars –

Trevor Clerke 1928

Willys Overland

Austin A30/35 –

Malcolm Flavel 1953 sedan

Competition cars –

Ian Brock A7 special

Registered cars –

Trevor Clerke 1955

Humber Hawk

All who attended enjoyed a great day and the Club's sincere thanks go to the organiser Bruce and his family helpers Sue, Emily and Sarah who lent so much support on the day.

The next major organisational challenge was the biennial "*Austins Over Australia 1999*" rally, over

Easter 1999. Although this was the fifth such rally, it was the first to be held in South Australia. Entry forms were issued in October 1998 and in January 1999, Dave Hall reported that to date, 235 entries had been received; by the time the Rally began, this had grown to 267 cars (including 66 A7CSA members) and 560 people.

A superb information folder (including a 64 page printed catalogue of all cars entered, with photos and description), which covered all the weekend's activities with detailed route instructions, was issued to entrants. Registration began on Thursday 1 April at Rally headquarters, Marineland Village. Friday was given over to entrants' own choice from tours of Adelaide, Port Adelaide and local beaches before the welcoming dinner that night.

The first official run began at 9 a.m. on Saturday 3 April when cars headed for the Barossa Valley for assembly at Seppeltsfield for lunch, before returning at leisure to Adelaide. The Sunday run visited Birdwood for lunch and display at the National Motor Museum; on return to Adelaide the farewell dinner was held. Despite the title of the dinner, there was still the run along the Fleurieu Peninsula to Victor Harbor and Goolwa on Monday 5 April. At Goolwa, entrants enjoyed lunch, followed by either a paddle steamer cruise on the River or a ride on the Cockle Train. The return drive to Adelaide brought to an end this extremely successful rally.

These extracts of praise are from the April 1999 issue of *Austin 7 Journals* 148, which featured reports and photos of the weekend.

President's Prattle

The year has seen people on various committees working hard for your Club, none more so than the *Austins Over Australia 1999* committee and now the biggest event is over and consigned to history.

My and the Club's heartfelt thanks and gratitude goes to all the Committees and especially the volunteers who started early and sometimes finished late into the night.

Austins Over Australia 1999 was a

great success, from my own experience and confirmed by feedback from other Club Presidents who attended in their Austins.

Dave Hall - representing the organising committee.

On behalf of the *Austins Over Australia 1999* Committee, I congratulate all A7C members who supported this event. Your support was magnificent; you excelled in all aspects of the event, right through from registration on Thursday evening to the conclusion at Goolwa on Monday.

Your support was appreciated by all entrants; many letters of appreciation have been received thanking you for your friendship and support during the event, ensuring a warm, friendly, fabulous weekend of touring.

Ron Burchett - *Ron's Ramblings*.

Seen through my eye as a largely non-contributing member and rally entrant, I thought the whole event was superb. Typical of the incredible efforts was the enormous mural painted by Dale Palamountain, which showed members' cars superimposed on a scenic map of Australia, and was the feature display on the wall at the Woolshed dinner on the Friday night.

Barry Frost - on behalf of all entrants.

Members of the A7CSA have always responded whenever help is needed for Club projects or events and *Austins Over Australia 1999* was no exception. In fact, taking into account those who entered cars, and those who volunteered their time to assist in the smooth running of this event, this would have to be the greatest number of members involved in any one event for the Club. *Austins Over Australia* was by far the biggest event we have organised, in terms of logistics and area covered, since *The News-Castrol Safety Drives* and for it to be the success it was, it needed the enthusiastic support of everyone.

It was obvious to all entrants that the 1999 event has raised the standard for this type of rally, by a very large degree to a level that has set a challenge for future AOA's to uphold. On behalf of all entrants, I am very pleased to take this opportunity to thank most sincerely all those who assisted in any way in making *Austins Over Australia 1999* such an outstanding and pleasurable event. You have all done the A7CSA proud.

The next *Austins Over Australia* rally, in Queanbeyan, was from 12-16 April 2001. Doug Hogg attended and reported for *Austin 7 Journals* 157.

Four vintage Austins left Adelaide on Monday 9 April to drive all the way to

1998 COMMITTEE

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Comp. Sec. - Tony Morgan

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David Searles,

David Franklin

Spares - David Hall

Registrar - Bernie Koszegi

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Delegates:

CAMS - Tony Morgan

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Canberra and return. Stewart McDonald drove the baby Austin formerly owned by George Bell, Bob Eglinton was in his A7, Doug and Barbara Hogg drove their A7 "Bubs" and Dudley Pinnock drove his 1924 A12/4.

After travelling for two days through Hay, Narrandera and Wagga Wagga they neared their destination.

After changing a flat tyre on Dudley's Austin at Junee, we drove on to Cootamundra. Upon driving through town, we became involved at the end of a funeral cortege driving at walking pace; we followed it to the cemetery gates, where we turned across a railway bridge and away.

Our next target was Canberra and after driving through the afternoon traffic up to Parliament House, we had an exhausting run further on to the caravan park cabins at Queanbeyan, where I flopped into bed and refused to go further, despite it being Registration night.

Next day we registered for AOA. There were 159 Austins attending; this included 16 A7s, 12 A30s and 38 A40s. Those attending were from: ACT - 7, NSW - 68, NZ - 2, Qld - 23, SA - 9, S Africa - 1, Tasmania - 1, Vic - 45 and WA - 3.

The events were a self-guided tour of Canberra on the first day (Friday), with directions provided and a welcoming night. Saturday was a run to Bangendore, an historic town some 30 km away, for a static display and lunch. Sunday was another static display at a park in Queanbeyan with lunch and a farewell dinner that night. Strangely, on Monday there was a run to the Cotter Dam with lunch, but our group had decided to leave that day for home.

In October 1999, a "Great Ocean Road Tour" was held, with 15 cars and crew (including some of the Tassie tourers) enjoying an 8-day tour of the Warrnambool/Apollo Bay area of southern Victoria.

The *Tasmanian Wanderers Run* began on Thursday 15 February 2001 when the SA contingent of 11 cars (including 3 A30s, 1 A35, 3 A7s and 2 A10s) set off for the first night's stop at Ballarat. Next day, they arrived at Station Pier in Melbourne to greet the Victorian and NSW entrants and board the ferry to Devonport.

The following extracts are from *Austin 7 Journals 156*, April 2001 which reported their travels.

Saturday 17 February; After disembarking, the tour drove to Launceston and enjoyed an evening cruise on the Tamar River.

Sunday 18 February; After a free day to explore the local tourist spots, they were entertained that evening at the VCClub of Tasmania.

Monday 19 February; The day was spent exploring the Tamar River Valley.

Tuesday 20 February; Travelled to St Helens through Scottsdale and mountainous scenery.

Wednesday 21 February; Enjoyed a leisurely drive to Bicheno, on the east coast, where they stayed for two nights.

Friday 23 February; Arrived at Coles Bay, home for the next two nights, and explored the Freycinet Peninsula National Park and other natural beauties.

Sunday 25 February; The group travelled through Orford to Hobart, base for the next three days.

Monday 26 February; A free day - some visited the Cadbury factory!

Tuesday 27 February; A drive to Kettering to board the ferry to Bruny Island, to enjoy unspoilt beaches with lovely views.

Wednesday 28 February; After an 8.35 a.m. start, the group set off for Devonport, via the Heritage Highway, and the farewell dinner that night.

Thursday 1 March; A bus trip to the Great Lakes District, which returned via the Great Western Tiers and Deloraine, completed the tour.

Dave Hall, the organiser of the three tours of Tasmania, had a final few words. "As we left Devonport on the *"Spirit of Tasmania"* on the last evening, we waved our farewells to John Goninon, our fabulous *"tail end Charlie"* for the

run. He was standing on the riverbank alongside his A7 as we moved out of the river into Bass Strait. I felt a touch of sadness; the final chapter of our nine-year program of Tasmanian Touring had now concluded. I thank the members of this Club, together with our friends in Victoria, New South Wales and Tasmania who supported these events."

In 2001, to celebrate 50 years of the A30 in Australia, an Anniversary Rally was held in Echuca from 1-8 November. A group of 12 A30/35s made the trip, accompanied by one A95 and four "others". Organised by Ralph and Marie Drage, the main group left on 1 November and after an overnight stop at Ouyen, reached Echuca the next day. These highlights of the rally are from the report in *Austin 7 Journals 159*, January 2002.

3 November: This was registration day, with lunch provided; followed by a free afternoon.

4 November: Today was going to be a disastrous day.

A group photo was taken on the oval at Rotary Steam Park. All the cars formed the number 50 while a photographer took shots from a cherry picker. The majority then went on the paddle steamer *MV Mary Ann* for a luncheon cruise. One of our party collapsed as the paddle steamer left dock, and as the boat was returning to off-load her, the captain saw smoke billowing from the engine room - result, a burnt out generator. This caused the loss of the first part of the cruise while repairs were made.

Those not on the cruise had driven to Lockington Living Heritage Complex; unfortunately, on this drive, two young rally entrants were killed in a freak accident.

5 November: Cavalcade of cars. The cavalcade of 84 cars - 61 being A30/35s - paraded through the town to the Shire Gardens for a public display. A gala dinner was held that night.

6 November: The opportunity was taken to explore surrounding towns before returning to celebrate the Melbourne Cup under the gum tree at the motel.

The group left next day for Adelaide with a stopover at Naracoorte. One of the interesting asides from this rally was that a fuel consumption check was maintained; best mileage for the 1100 mile

(1760 km) trip was Kaye Butler's A30, with 46 mpg - the majority averaged 41-44 mpg.

The 80th Anniversary National Rally at Ballarat, hosted by the A7C Victoria from 1-5 April 2002, celebrated 80 years of the Austin 7. Headquartered at Sovereign Hill, the rally attracted 22 of our members and was reported in *Austin 7 Journals 160*.

All cars arrived safely at Ballarat, most having been trailered over, but there were a few stalwarts who drove all the way, and may we offer congratulations to those who took the effort to return to true Austineering. These included but were not restricted to, Bill and Kath Austin, Ian and Cheryl Jones, Tony and Kay Marston and Geoff Stephens and Bronwyn Marsland. Alan and Val Baker and Bob and Chris Gell trailered their Austins to Horsham then drove to Ballarat.

One thing when you go on a rally in your A7, you leave a calling card wherever you go, or more importantly, wherever you stop! The pristine car park at Sovereign Hill Lodge is no longer pristine! Wherever an A7 was parked, globs of oil remained on the asphalt, sometimes lubricated with petrol that overflowed from early Austins with crook needles and seats. The Thursday run to Cricket Willow oval near Hepburn Springs, where up to 120 A7s parked on the greenest oval seen for many years ... it is most probable that little brown patches are now appearing where offending Austins parked.

Val Baker wrote:

The highlights of the trip were the Welcome Dinner Monday night; the dinner and "Blood on the Southern cross" show Tuesday night and the run to Maldon on Wednesday. Quite a few little cars descended on Maldon at lunchtime, via different routes (of course no one was lost!). Our "Meteor" boiled at Maldon, spraying radiator water all over me, but as the day wore on the temperature dropped and it rained ... wet again! A pleasant lunch outside a local café and a walk followed before we returned home by Carisbrook, Clunes, Miners Rest and Ballarat.

At Clunes the local people took a great interest in all A7s, with much talk, reminiscing and photographs by the locals or maybe tourists, like us. Clunes is nearly a ghost town and we caused much excitement in the picturesque town.

Some of the South Aussies came home with trophies and awards; some with a hard luck story but on the whole everyone enjoyed themselves. Many thanks to the Victorian club for organising the week - well done!

Bob Gell wrote:

On arrival at Sovereign Hill Lodge we certainly went back in time. There were about 148 A7s of all models and shapes, some in pristine condition, some "as found in a barn" and many examples of the diversity of the make.

Great celebrations, as Ian Jones won the best-dressed male, David Gear the best Transport Class and Arthur and Nadia Addyman the Saloon Class. Geoff Stephens won the farthest driven award, as he drove from Adelaide via the Great Ocean Road and Gippsland before turning towards Ballarat ... and all in his 1929 Chummy!

The yearly touring events were not neglected during this period, despite the demands on members' time that the events recounted above imposed.

The All British Day continued to attract support, albeit not great. For instance, in 1998 the club had 11 cars out of the 550 entered: Bruce White won the *Popular Choice* award with his A7 Comet, repeating the win from the previous year. In 2000, 23 members entered, including A7-10, A8-1, A10-2, A16-2, A30-2, A40-1 and A90-1 while in 2001, 11 members attended out of the 600 total.

The Border Runs attracted stronger support. For the 1998 run, on 6-8 June to Hamilton, the A7s stalwarts were joined by three A30s, who were attending a similar event at Casterton, organised by the Australian A30 Car Club. Rated as "*one of the best we have experienced for some time*", 90 attended, with 31 from our club. The 1999 run to our side of the border, at Pendleton Farm Retreat near Keith, was from 12-14 June, and attracted 42 SA members and 28 from Victoria. Our group drove there by way of Langhorne Creek, Meningie and Tintinara.

The 2000 Border Run to Whitstock Lodge, set in the Victorian Grampians, was poorly attended, with only 15 making the trip - however, they all had a great time, as usual. This run was the last to incorporate bunk style accommodation as a move to motel/hotel style was flagged for 2001.

Ian Jones' story of his trials to get there is included in full from

Austin 7 Journals 153, as it captures his indomitable spirit and highlights the difficulties that can befall a trip in an A7.

The Border Run that you have when you do not get to the Border Run.

Whitstock Lodge 10-12 June 2000 and thereafter.

Contrary to popular belief, preparation started about three months before the event, but 'crisis management' means that progress thereafter is slow. The Border Run started at about 10.30 a.m. on Saturday, in the company of Geoff Stephens and Bronwen Marsland with their 1929 Chummy, and one hour after 'Bugs' engine had been fixed. **The Jones' 1928 Chummy is known as "Little Bugs".*

Progress was reasonable to Tailum Bend, with Bugs performing OK, but Geoff's car started to give a little trouble with what was suspected to be fuel starvation. We refuelled both, bodies and cars, went out of town to a parking bay for a short "cuppa" stop and then pressed on.

At about 3 km past the Railway overpass, 30 km short of Keith, there was a very brief quiver within Bugs, closely followed by an enormous shudder and complete engine bedlam; thereafter the crankshaft ceased to be in one piece! When Geoff arrived, they were told that they were on their own for the remaining distance (270 km). I believe they got to Whitstock at 9 p.m.

An hour after a mobile phone call to Andrew Dawes at Meningie, he arrived and trailed us back to his home. I asked Andrew whether he would loan me a car to go home for a modern and trailer (in retrospect I should have insisted with this option) but in very benevolent fashion, Andrew offered two options. One was to use his chummy (definitely not! - do not want any chance of mishaps with someone else's car). Option two was to use an available bench-tested '32 motor. Being a fool, I chose to make use of the '32 engine; after all it was tested *on the bench!*

Fitted the motor by about 1 p.m. Sunday, road tested and then removed motor to find out what was wrong within. After considerable modifications and rectification, motor was refitted and road tested by 8 p.m. Off to bed and up by 1 a.m. Monday and pressed on to Whitstock. One hour later 'it' dawned on me that it was not possible for us to arrive at Whitstock in time because the "unique" battery that I was using would not last until sun-up. 30 km before Kingston the LH rear wheel shed a heap of spokes and punctured the tube.

Circa Lucindale the headlights began to pulse with every operation of the electric fuel pump, so the battery was nearly flat. We slept for a couple of

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Life membership to David Searles

hours behind a white post just short of Naracoorte, and at dawn pressed on. (I know, you want to know how I started with a flat battery - well, had difficulty at home, so fitted a small 12v battery with suitable relay to operate starter when needed). We should have made a public phone call at both Naracoorte and Edenhope, but we had the mobile. Later when Cheryl opened the mobile - battery flat, no problems! Spare battery installed - but faulty and flat!! (Had 'it' tested by respectable institution the week before).

The '32 engine was performing well until sun-up, after which I became aware the oil was being consumed at an increasing rate; later engine power deteriorated.

Arrived at Whitstock Lodge sometime after 10 a.m. and ALL ARE GONE. Proprietor sympathetically gave us lunch (to go), however 20 minutes later another Austin 7 arrived. It transpired that he is a resident of Horsham and a member of the Vic A7 Club. He suffered from his own brand of 'crisis' management life style, and late Monday morning was the earliest he could make it! So all was not lost for both of us. That is our Claytons Border Run.

I have left out considerable detail, but this represents only about one third of the drama before I was to arrive back home.

In brief: We proceeded to the home of Ann and Neville Smith at Warrnambool and stayed 2+ days. I communicated with David and Rosemary Franklin (who had arrived at Whitstock) and they extended their holiday in Victoria. We left for home 1 pm Thursday, overnight in Mount Gambier. The car struggled and consumed oil to Meningie, where we were descended upon by a tourist (at the take-away). Gunter Schmidt of Mannheim Germany saw us struggling

along Coorong - he has a '32 Top Hat at home. Received mobile call from our backup: David Franklin possible broken crank in Mt Gambier, (later re-assessed as timing gear failure - but that is another story). The '32 engine is now very "poorly". Took the old road Murray Bridge to Adelaide. Taillem Bend to Cheltenham racecourse in 4 hours 15 mins. Less than 1 mile from home the engine stops. We take 15 minutes or so to stagger home.

So endeth the ordeal!

From the *Austin 7 Journals 157* report on the 2001 Border Run to Casterton on 9-11 June:

The Mission: To take charge of 31 A7s and 1 Morris Oxford and deliver to the vehicle crews a superb weekend in western Victoria.

The Challenge: To overcome all breakdowns, obstructions, unknowns and deliver the trip with no hiccups.

The Operation: A complete success!

The only car casualty on this trip was Merv Perry's A10, which broke a differential gear carrier bolt. The usual support (e.g. trailering the broken A10 and arrangements for its return to Adelaide plus the use of a loan car for touring) from others on the run ensured that Merv and Ruth still had an enjoyable weekend.

"From a South Australian perspective, the 2002 Border Run to Portland on 8-10 June, was not one of the best attended in the Run's history but it was entertaining and enjoyable. The only A7s on the run were Doug Hogg's 1930 Tourer and Alan Baker's replica Meteor special, both on trailers" – thus began the report in *Austin 7 Journals 161*.

The main event was the Sunday run to Nelson for a river cruise and luncheon on the Glenelg River. The cruise was an opportunity for SA members to actually be with the Victorian members at the SA/Vic border for the first time for many a Border Run. We crossed the border twice on the outward journey and twice again on the return, so this was a true Border Run!

Editor's Note: Although the *Austin 7 Journals* reports on these last three Border Runs indicated that they were the 44th to 46th to be held, research for this history found that this was incorrect and that the 50th run would be in 2004.

Although the 1998 PADARC rally was dropped from our calendar, as members were not happy with the standard of accommodation on offer, things improved over the next two years. On 13-15 May 2000, 24 attended in various Austins and "others", while for the 18-20 May 2002 rally, 36 made the trip – 9 Austins of various models together with 9 "others".

The Kernewek Lowender long weekends at Moonta in the alternate years still held strong appeal. The 15-17 May 1999 event attracted 800 entries for the Sunday Cavalcade of Cars, including 23 from our Club. The report in *Austin 7 Journals 149* summarised the weekend thus: *"A great Festival weekend; Good company; Super cars and bikes; Usual country hospitality; Tremendous weather; plenty to eat and drink; can't wait for the next one!"*

Austin 7 Journals 157 reported on the 19-21 May 2001 weekend.

There was a frantic rush to Price's to tour the bakery; the last tour ever, because the pasties will be made in Adelaide in future. After indulging in pasties and cream buns, some of us rushed back to Moonta for a tour of Wheal Hughes Copper Mine. Dressed like miners with rubber boots, battery packs and lights, we walked 55 metres underground to find GOLD!

There were over 800 entries, 32 of which were from the A7C. Starting at Wallaroo, Glen Dix waved off every entrant with his traditional flag wave. After winding our way around the streets of Wallaroo, Moonta, Moonta Bay and Port Hughes we finished our cavalcade at Kadina Recreation Centre, where all cars were viewed for the judging. So to sum it all up, we had a superb weekend.

The regular monthly runs continued with varying numbers attending. Many of these were organised by Club members, who responded to requests from the Touring Coordinators. One such run was to the National Motor Museum at Birdwood on 28 January 2001, by ten cars and crews, to see Peter Brock's racing A30 replica which had been rebuilt by his son James.

On 22 March 1998, 14 club members (in a field of 300) attended

the Phoenix Society's run to the Barossa Valley, where Bruce White's A7 Comet won the trophy for best vintage vehicle. The 1999 run on 28 March only had eight club members among the 200 plus entries.

The A30-owning members held a successful run on 31 May 1998, visiting Dale Palamounain at Eudunda. The trip was featured in the local paper, *The Barossa and Light Herald* which reported *"Twenty four vehicles were present and ranged from 1934 A10 sedans to a 1956 A90 saloon. The cute but reliable A30s outnumbered other models"*.

Later that year, "The Flying A 100 Mile Run" on 2 August went to Nuriootpa; 10 cars - A10, A30/35s, A70 and one Holden – attended. Another run on 14 May 2000 to Mannum drew "a fine assembly of cars".

The Bay To Birdwood Rally on 23 September 1998 was rated "One of the Best" and out of the total of 48 A7s entered, 30 belonged to Club members. For the 29 September 2002 rally, following an open day at the clubrooms, 49 members' cars made the run; 24 of these were A7s. The finalists for the Concours included Harry Hewson 1933 A10, Bruce White 1934 A7 Comet, and Ken Hislop 1937 A10: unfortunately none of these won. For cars ineligible to enter the Bay to Birdwood, the Club run to view them at Gumeracha was popular. In 2001, the official run for Classic vehicles became *The Bay to Birdwood Classic*.

From 1999, Trevor Clerke took on the role of cooking breakfast for the annual Port Parade each November.

Also in 1999, John Wills and David Searles began organising monthly midweek runs for lunch at a convenient near-country hotel. Various called "URRS" runs, "Retirees" runs and lastly "Leisure" runs from 2001, they attracted a steady response from those members who had the time.

The long-awaited Federation of Historic Motoring Clubs' new

scheme for conditionally registered historic vehicles became effective on 1 July 1998, superseding the previous *Calendar of Events and Separate Journey Authorisation* voucher system. It now allowed for conditionally registered historic motor vehicles to be driven for a total of ninety days for any purpose in each twelve-month period, but not for fare, hire, or reward. There were responsibilities on both the Club and the vehicle owner: the onus was on the owner to have the new logbooks inspected by the Club Registrar at least twice each year.

But the new system presented some problems in administration and by March 1999, the Federation expressed concerns that there were vehicles under historic registration which either did not conform to the spirit of restoration or which had modifications outside the guidelines.

A committee was set up by the Federation to look at the eligibility rules for this registration. To clarify the situation for members, the full conditions for registration to date were printed in *Austin 7 Journals 152* for April 2000. Further details were in the April 2002 issue of *Austin 7 Journals 160*, highlighting the seven significant assemblies that must be complied with for registration approval.

The Federation convened a seminar at the Woodville Town Hall on 27 July 2002, where among others issues discussed, a *Draft Code of Practice* which had been prepared by the committee to address these problems, was presented, causing considerable adverse reaction from delegates. The upshot was that Clubs were asked to respond in writing: 65 did so, submitting their concerns and alternatives. A subcommittee of seven then screened, collated and summarised these into a document for presentation to the Registrar, Transport SA for his consideration. After a meeting with the Federation Executive and the Registrar in December, the concerns noted in the submission were accepted by the Registrar. The draft was rewritten as

the *Code of Practice* by the Registrar, for release to Clubs and the Federation early in 2003.

As a consequence of all this, the A7C began holding inspection days from January 2002 for Club cars on the scheme, to ensure they complied with the Code.

Dave Hall continued to run the popular, well-supported monthly "Enthusiasts nights", which catered mainly for A7 owners who were either restoring or building specials. A feature of the summer month's meetings was an evening run along the northern beaches, with either a hotel meal or barbeque at the clubrooms on completion of the run. A major project was to build A7 Meteor-styled replicas: Alan Baker was the first to get his car built, debuting it at the 27 March 2000 meeting. In July 1998, David Grear took over the spares service from Dave Hall, who had managed it from 1991.

In 1999, technical nights aimed at post war Austins, began under the "*Flying A*" banner. Held quarterly, these continued with varying success under the guidance of Dale Palamountain until the end of 2000. Andy Lamonby and Derek Norcott then ran them until Ian Jones took over in 2002, when, in an attempt to increase attendances, they were expanded to include other post war makes within the club.

As the end of 1999 approached, New Year 2000 was awaited with trepidation and excitement: trepidation because of the unknown effect of the "Y2K bug" on computers and excitement as we moved into "the new Millennium". It was also the year of the Olympic Games in Sydney. In the end, the computer problems did not eventuate, due to very extensive and expensive planning by the IT industry, but the Olympics added something to Australian life. Club member Ken Darwin was honoured to be one of the Olympic Torch Bearers. On 15 July 2000, as part of the nationwide Olympic Torch Relay, he carried the torch near his Eden Hills home; this was recorded in *Austin 7 Journals 154*.

2000 COMMITTEE

President – Trevor Clerke

Vice President – Kevin Caire

Treasurer – Daryl Beasy

Secretary – Kevin Caire

Comp. Sec. – Tony Morgan

Touring Coordinators –

Alan Baker, Gerry Lang

Spares – David Grear

Registrar – Ralph Drage

Property Officer – Keith Seidel

Delegates:

CAMS – Tony Morgan

FHMC – David Searles

One consequence of the Olympics was the possibility of cheap airfares to overseas destinations. The hope was that planes, after delivering their loads of tourists, would not have a full complement for the return flight home. After many members expressed an interest in this, Dave Hall began an "Olympic escape" register. However, as the Olympics got closer, it became apparent that even though the flights might be cheaper, the lead-time to book and arrange travel would be very short and the land content for touring on arrival could be expensive. And so, what was "a good idea at the time" was dropped, despite 800 having registered interest.

The Club and other members were also about to be recognised for their services to motorsport.

The *Australian Sports Medal* was an initiative of the Office of the Prime Minister of Australia in 2000 to formally recognise the contribution of individuals to Australian sport. This sports medal was established as a commemorative award within the Australian honours system, and recognised the contributions of current and former sports participants and those who provided support services to sport. On 9 February 2001, at the SA CAMS Awards night, 50 motor sport champions and officials were formally presented with this medal. Six A7CSA members were

honoured: they were Bruce Went, Glenda Grove, Tony Grove, Tony Morgan, Fran Williams and Barry Frost.

A commemorative plaque, marking 40 years of racing at Mallala, was unveiled next to the pit entrance at a ceremony at the 27 October 2001 twilight race meeting. Club members who had raced at that opening meeting in 1961 were invited guests of the Sporting Car Club.

The Timing Team reached a milestone of its own on 21 April 2002. The Super Truck meeting at Mallala was the 500th race meeting that the team had timed. The CAMS SA Board member, Bob Piper and SA/NT State Secretary Phil Hoffmann attended the May general meeting and presented *Certificates of Appreciation* to the President, Ralph Drage and Chief Timekeeper, Barry Frost.

During his presentation, Bob Piper, who is a past-president, congratulated the Club on this milestone. He acknowledged the team's versatility, as in reaching this total, the team has timed at many forms of motorsport in South Australia and interstate. Phil and Barry subsequently presented the currently active timekeepers with certificates at the Mallala 26 May Superkart meeting.

In 2001, the Club displayed four cars at the Port Adelaide/Enfield Council's 6 May *Centenary of Federation* celebrations. "*Ian Jones brought down a small quantity of A7 pieces to display with the cars and lo and behold, nobody looked at the cars – they made a beeline for the A7 pieces on the ground*".

Another opportunity to showcase Club cars came at Wayville on 10-14 April 2002. *Willis's Chit Chat* in *Austin 7 Journals* 160 commented.

I hear the Club put on a pretty good display of Club vehicles at the recent Adelaide Motor Show after a request from Shannons. David Gear took up the challenge and arranged for: Malcolm Flavel to display an A7 chassis in raw form prior to restoration, Doug Hogg's 1930 A7 van with its wooden framework (a very good talking point),

Barry Walsh's A/Healy Sprite MkIIIa, Ian Brock's 1927 A7 racer, Dave Hall's RN saloon, Tony Marston's tourer and Rob Vanderkamp's racing Falcon GT (a hit with many of the younger show visitors). It's good to see the Club being displayed at a venue like this.

Continuing support for the Hanson Centre for Cancer Research since 1997, culminated in the handing over of an electrophoresis power supply, valued at \$750 in May 2001. From *Austin 7 Journals* 157, July:

Gerry Lang and Alan Baker took their cars to the Centre, for viewing by the staff, who were amazed when the cars were driven between bollards in the courtyard. As we know, A7s are not very wide. Also in the group that handed over the power supply to Associate Professor Howard Morris of the Centre, were Tony Morgan, Barry Frost and Val Baker. A tour of the Royal Adelaide Hospital and a research lab at the Centre was then taken.

Austin 7 Journals changed size from issue 144 in April 1998. Due to the printer's oversight, this issue was printed at A4, not A5, and after a survey of members, it was decided to retain this size in future. In the January 1999 issue number 147, Ron Burchett paid this tribute to Jean and Kevin Gilbert.

Some members may not be aware that with the July 1998 issue of the *Journals*, Jean Gilbert relinquished the magazine production duties that she has performed so efficiently and willingly for many years. Over that period, Jean has typed the masters, arranged and supervised the printing, compiled and stapled and finally, with the aid of Kevin, distributed and mailed them. This has involved hundreds of hours and the Club is indebted to them for their efforts; my personal thanks also go to them.

David Searles assisted with production until December 2000, when Ron retired as Editor; David then took on this role, beginning with issue 156.

Ron's final Editorial in issue 155 included, in part:

As advised at the AGM, with some regrets I have decided to hang up my editorial hat and relinquish editorial duties for these *Journals*. Over the past couple of years with the advent and increasing application of space-age

computer technology, I have steadily become redundant.

My involvement with these *Journals*, with a few short breaks since April 1975, has been full of interest and has been the vehicle for me making dozens of useful contacts both here and overseas. I have seen it evolve from a few foolscap pages produced by Barry Frost and printed by Geoff Eardley to the fine production that we have today. Also worthy of special mention is Nell Williams. During her short stint in the saddle she radically improved the quality with some innovative ideas.

Resuming in issue 149, July 1999, after an absence since April 1995 was *Willis's Chit Chat*. John continued to contribute until issue 161, July 2002, when ill health forced him to stop.

Like other editors before him, it didn't take long for David to pen his first *Editorial Comment*, in issue 157, July 2001.

While this column has not been, and probably will not be, a regular feature of the magazine in the future, I cannot let the happenings over the past few months go by without some comment. I feel there is a sense of excitement and enthusiasm not seen for some time.

Most recently the Annual Border Run to Casterton hosted 31 A7s from SA and Victoria within the 34 club cars attending. Our members over the border had suggested this venue as a perfect place to visit. During the Sunday run and to our surprise, Jim Ryan from Mount Gambier drove his A7 to Harrow for a lunchtime visit. This shows the enthusiasm amongst our regional members is alive and well.

Similarly, the Cavalcade of Cars and Motorcycles at the Kernewek Lowender had 32 club cars participate. This is a magnificent achievement from our members.

Other aspects of enthusiasm are highlighted with the continuing success of our monthly meetings that attract 70-80 members to hear the business side of the club. Those wishing for the more mechanical side are attracted to the A7 enthusiasts night where up to 40 members get into the practicalities of the A7, while the rejuvenation of the *Flying A* interest group caters for all post war Austins.

On the social side, regular touring runs prove as popular as ever and with the ever-expanding group of retirees, the monthly getaway to a not-so-distant but out-of-town hotel has members making a permanent booking for that special Tuesday.

Membership of the Club continues to grow since the advent of the concessional registration scheme and while these new members do not necessarily bring an A7 to the club, there is always the prospect that in future, one would fit neatly into their garages.

David's comments on the good number of A7s on runs was in sharp contrast to Doug Hogg's *Letter to the Editor* in *Austin 7 Journals* 145 July 1998, which lamented the fact that "We are now down to two or three being taken on runs. My A7 was the only one on the recent run to Burra and I had to thrash the hell out of it to prevent being last home – and failed! So – if as an owner you want the A7 baby to disappear from the Club, leave it in the shed and drive a faster, more comfortable car.

There are obviously reasons some club members cannot use their cars but alterations to the seats, giving more leg room can be made, together with a more relaxing type of run. I do not intend this to offend any members who obviously have solid reasons for not using their A7s but if the numbers of cars diminish further, there is a distinct danger of their demise in the Club."

Doug was also moved to write for *Austin 7 Journals* 146 on the good turnout of A7s for the September 1998 Bay to Birdwood Rally.

Our A7C was represented by 30 vintage A7s. Facts and figures can be boring but the thing that really stands

out is that 30 vintage A7s from our club can attend a rally that is held every two years but will not attend Club runs when we desperately need them to keep the baby Austin from disappearing from our Club ...Why?

This table shows the continuing, steady growth in membership, which reached 200 in 1998, from a previous average of 150-160.

Club membership growth

1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
200	202	232	265	314

The committee then agreed that a "members' orientation night" would be of value to these new members. Designed to give a background to the Club's history and the many facets of Club life, the first was held on 25 August 1999, with 38 attending. It was so successful that they have continued to be held each year since then.

For several years the committee had been conscious of the need to attract a younger age group to the Club. In June 2002 contact was made with a group of rotary-engined car enthusiasts, who to that time only had contact with each other via the Internet. After representatives of the group met with the committee, they agreed to join the Club as the SARotors, operating under the same general conditions as the A7 Owners group had done from 1973 and the Sports Sedan Register from 1980.

Dave Winfield was then coopted to the committee to represent them, as he was the driving force behind their formation.

He recalls how the group came together.

"In 2002, several owners of rotary-powered vehicles talked about forming a club to bring together people with an interest in cars powered by these unique engines.

2001 COMMITTEE

President – Trevor Clerke

Vice President – David Gear

Treasurer – Daryl Beasy/
Lyn Clerke

Secretary – Harry Belcher

Assist Sec. – Barry Frost

Comp. Sec. – Tony Morgan

Touring Coordinators –

Alan Baker,

David Searles

Spares - David Gear

Registrar – Ralph Drage

Property Officer – Gerry Lang

Delegates:

CAMS – Tony Morgan

FHMC – David Searles

These talks soon led to an approach being made to the Austin 7 Club with a view to creating SARotors as a group within the club.

An Internet web-site was created to help spread the word about the fledgling group, promptly followed by the creation of an on-line "Forum", where members and prospective members could exchange ideas, thoughts – even buy and sell used parts! Both places are well used and have contributed greatly to the success of SARotors.

To mark the official creation of SARotors, a "cruise" or "run" on 21 July 2002 was staged and all rotary-powered vehicles were invited to attend – on the day, some 43 vehicles attended. We drove out of Adelaide along the freeway to Murray Bridge, enjoyed lunch at the Port Bridge Hotel, and then returned through the hills. The day was a roaring success and led to regular cruises and other events such as Go-Kart evenings, BBQ's, Dyno Days and Photo-shoots.

Several members have since become interested in Modern Regularity and Hillclimb events, and compete at every opportunity. Others are content to attend the

	1999	2000	2001	2002
A7/Big 7	50	59	61	66
A8	8	9	10	9
A10	11	12	12	13
A16	5	6	6	6
A30/35	18	22	26	27
A40	7	9	9	11
A50/55	1	2	2	3
A70	1	1	1	1
A90/95	1	2	3	3
Austin Other	4	6	15	12
Other vehicles	38	55	67	86
Total	144	184	215	238

This table, showing the number of cars on the Club's Historic Registration scheme, particularly "Other vehicles", supports David's view that it had benefited the Club.



monthly cruises and meetings and enjoy the social side of the group – talking about their cars and stereos seems to bring new members into the group quickly and painlessly.

The group had a strong presence at the 2002 Small Car Sunday weekend, with entries in the Cruise, Show & Shine and the Hillclimb events.”

David Searles was awarded Life Membership at the November 1999 annual general meeting.

A working bee at the clubrooms in November 1999 removed the existing fence, ready for its replacement with a new 2-metre high, powder coated steel fence. After the installation, Gerry Lang and Alan Baker landscaped the garden.

In January 1999, Bruce White set up an A7C Internet address at the Flinders University and this was used until July 2000 when Tony Morgan's business site was used. Bruce's site continued to contain items of interest. During 2001, the committee considered the cost/efficiency benefits of our own address: in January 2002, www.austin7clubsa.com.au began.

The SA State Government brought in legislation in 2001 – *the Volunteer Protection Act* - to protect volunteers from being sued while performing their duties. This was one of the items discussed at the July 2002 Federation seminar.

Rising insurance premiums had always been a concern for the committee over the years but after the collapse of HIH Insurance in Australia, increases in the volume and value of litigation and the 11 September 2001 tragedy in the USA, they accelerated at a frightening rate. In 2002 this applied to all Club insurance cover - Clubrooms insurance, racing and public liability. Public liability cover in particular was becoming impossible to get at any price for many organisations and there were fears that the Pichi Richi railway at Quorn would cease operations. This was a worry for the club as it had been booked as part of our 50th celebrations in 2003.

In January 2001 the Club received a summons arising from the injury to a fire marshal at our 1997 race meeting. This was then routinely processed through the courts, handled by the insurance companies. However, in August 2001, we were advised that one of the insurance companies involved had gone into receivership. This left four parties – CAMS, Mallala Motor Sport Park, Women for Wheels and A7CSA – liable for the shortfall. During the latter part of 2001 meetings were held between our President, Secretary and the other parties to resolve this at the least cost to the club and an offer of settlement was made. This was not accepted and in May 2002 a second offer was put; the club was still awaiting a reply at the end of the year.

Phyl Stuckey left the CAMS SA State office in October 1998, transferring to head office in Melbourne to be the Manager of Licensing and Phil Hoffmann became the new State manager. At the end of 1999, Bob Piper was elected to the CAMS Board as SA member, beginning his tenure in January 2000. At the CAMS awards night on 4 February 2000, the 1999 *Official of the Year* was awarded to Tony Morgan. Barry Frost, Tony Grove and Bruce Went had undertaken research for a history of SA motorsport, which was also presented on that night. In April 2000, Tony Morgan was appointed to the State Executive and in October he was elected as the Alternate Board member. The SA office moved to new premises at 3/43 King William Street Kent Town in October 2002.

In 1998, CAMS introduced a new 5-level licence structure, grading upwards from “come and try days”, State and National to International level, with renewals on a rolling date.

During 1999/2000, CAMS reviewed its structure to ensure that it would meet the challenges facing motorsport. In evolving from its traditional administrative role to an advocate of all matters connected

with motorsport and the act of driving. In October 2000, CAMS Ltd became the Confederation of Australian Motorsport Ltd, with a new logo.



The CAMS award winners were: *Racing Driver of the Year*; 1998 – Mark Foster, 1999 – Mark Foster, 2000 – David Lines, 2001 – David Lines, 2002 – Rob Jezierski and *Peter Wright Memorial*; 1998 – Jim Doig, 1999 – Mark Foster, 2000 – David Lines, 2001 – Tim Scarman, 2002 – Brad Fox. Beginning with the 2001 racing season, changes were made to the point scoring system for both of these awards. Also, the Peter Wright Memorial became an encouragement award and drivers who had previously won specified titles were now ineligible.

The 1998 A7C trophy race meeting on 12-13 September at Mallala included the FV and Club Cars State Championships, as well as historic motorcycles.

The FVs also raced for the Garrie Cooper memorial; winner was Garry Griffiths after a last lap incident took out the cars in front of him. Andrew Tucker won the FV Championship of 15 laps from Frank Haire and Jordan Ormsby. Adam Allan won the Club Car Championship of 18 laps from Mark Short and Paul Mitolo. The Mallala Masters of 25 laps for HQs completed the day's racing. After enduring some rain during the race, David Lines won from Bruce Heinrich and Neil Corey. The rain caused the race time to be the slowest in the 6-year history of the race but the fastest lap, once the track dried, was the quickest so far.

From *Austin 7 Journals 146*, October 1998:

The trophies were presented as the final event of the day and several

winners spoke of the great racing that they enjoyed and of the excellent organisation we had provided, making all the hard work that much more enjoyable. Each trophy recipient received a personalised certificate to go with the hardware; a new touch, unique to this club.

Celebrating our 40th year of organising races, the 11/12 September 1999 SA Championship trophy race meeting at Mallala was one of the best yet. Blessed with ideal weather and a healthy entry list, (over 160, including historic motorcycles) both days were a great success. In conjunction with the meeting was a major raffle: the first prize was a trip to the NZ Grand Prix, won by HQ driver Lindsay Gates.

In another first for the Club, this meeting included the first SA Regularity Championship and 17 entrants pitted their driving skills against the clock in five trials, each of four laps. Noel Oatway won from Paul Mastrosavas and Yvonne Armstrong. This year the Garrie Cooper memorial was for sports cars and was won for the fourth time by Jim Doig. The FV champion was Mark Foster; Adam Allan won the Club Cars championship. The HQs Mallala Masters was won by Peter Holmes David Lines and Daryl O'Shaughnessy. From the *Austin 7 Journals 150* report:

The lunch time parade again provided plenty of entertainment as 169 cars and motorcycles took the opportunity to drive around the track. The attendance by invited car and motorcycle clubs was at an all-time high, such is the popularity of our meeting.

Our race meeting on 9/10 September 2000 had the Club Cars Championship and Feature (in effect their Nationals) as well as SA Championships for FV, HQs and Regularity. Attracting 140 entrants from interstate and local drivers and running to schedule all weekend, despite showers during both days, the meeting was again up to the high standard we continually attain. The Club Cars came from Tasmania, NSW and Victoria to

race the locals. After qualifying, the 40-car field was divided into two groups that raced for points to determine the starting order for the final. The Feature race began as the heaviest rain for the whole weekend fell and immediately the light, high-powered rotary-engined cars were in trouble with a loss of traction. The winner was Roger Hurd; in second, and the SA champion, was Rob Vanderkamp.

David Armstrong won the Regularity championship from Bruce Wales and Neil Oatway. Paul Tucker won both the Garrie Cooper memorial and the FV championship. David Lines was again successful in winning the HQ Mallala Masters from Phil Collier. *Austin 7 Journals 154* noted:

As ever, this meeting would not be the success that it was if not for the help of many Club members, including those who managed the many vintage and historic cars which were on show and on parade during the Sunday lunch break. A measure of how efficiently the organisation ran is that the meeting was only five minutes late by Sunday evening.

In yet another first for the Club, the Supplementary Regulations and entry forms for the 2001 race meeting were available on the Club website. The opening paragraph from *Austin 7 Journals 158*, October 2001 summed up the 8/9 September meeting.

The beginning of September heralds fine weather, the footy finals, our race meeting and the Royal Show: of these, the Show is guaranteed to bring rain! And this is what we were faced with: after a wild night of wind and rain on Friday, Mallala on Saturday was not the most inviting place to be for a race meeting, with very strong winds all day. The rain was intermittent and the winds kept the track reasonably dry, although the trackside officials wished that it would stop. Sunday was completely different, being mild and pleasant.

A couple of months of planning, followed by a week of intense work had got the SA championships up and running. With titles for HQs, FV, Improved Production, the inaugural title for Historic Touring Cars (another first for the Club) and the Garrie Cooper memorial for sports and racing cars being the main attractions.

2002 COMMITTEE

President – Ralph Drage

Vice President – David Gear

Treasurer – Lyn Clerke

Secretary – Fran Williams

Assist Sec. – Barry Frost

Comp. Sec. – Tony Morgan

Touring Coordinator –

David Searles

Spares – David Gear

Registrar – David Franklin

Property Officer – Gerry Lang

Committee – David Winfield,

David Hall,

Geoff Stephens

Delegates:

CAMS – Tony Morgan

FHMC – David Searles

John Eason was the winner of the Regularity championship, again over five trials, from Noel Oatway and Margaret Hall. Such was the level of competition amongst the Regularity drivers that four drove a perfect lap, losing 0 points; another four lost only 1 point. Dean King won the Garrie Cooper memorial, from Jim Doig and Keith Williamson.

This was the 10th running of the HQ Mallala Masters: for the sixth time David Lines was the winner and with it the SA championship. His race time was the fastest to date by six seconds; Phil Collier and Graham Mason took the minor placings.

With a name change from Club Cars to Improved Production, the first SA championship winner was Mark Short from Adam Allan and Lou DeLuca. Adam Boylan was favoured to win the FV Championship and he duly dominated the race, winning from Craig Rundle and Robert Surman.

The inaugural SA Historic Touring Car Championship looked like an easy win for Rob Vanderkamp until fading brakes on lap seven caused his retirement. This left Jason Armstrong as the winner from Matthew Kessell and Robert Butt.

These final words on the meeting are also from *Austin 7 Journals 158*.

Special thanks to all A7CSA members who assisted in the meeting, which, due to everyone's enthusiasm, ran very smoothly from start to finish. The committee are particularly pleased with the many complimentary comments received from competitors and officials from other organisations, which show that they hold the A7C race meeting in high regard.

And if it is true that an army marches on its stomach, it is even truer that a race meeting runs more proficiently if its officials are fed and watered. In this regard, only the highest praise can be given to our *Catering Corps*, who again excelled in the range and presentation of food supplied to keep the engines of the marshals running at optimum efficiency – a job well done and they all should feel very satisfied with their efforts.

During 2001/2002, Tony Morgan worked with CAMS to produce guidelines and regulations for a "Modern Regularity" series to enable drivers with modern cars to compete on a racetrack for a minimal cost. It was hoped that this would attract new drivers to the sport. The regulations were approved in early 2002 and the first A7C-organised event was on the 25 May, as part of the Superkart meeting. From very small beginnings - only three of the five entrants completed the day's events - it had aroused interest and had achieved the aim of getting new cars onto the racetrack. For the 17 November joint meeting with the Superkarts, there were nine entries.

From *Austin 7 Journals 162*, October 2002.

Soon after the 2001 race meeting, the race sub-committee began planning for the 7/8 September 2002 Mallala Masters meeting. Its aims were to generate advertising income and publicity: both of these were achieved, with 23 companies supporting the meeting with adverts in the program.

Articles were written and submitted to several country papers, featuring local racing drivers and their cars; *The Advertiser* ran a photo of Tracy Szepessy and her Mazda Improved Production car and a 4-minute segment was broadcast on Channel 7's *AM*

Adelaide with flag marshal Bronwen Jones and driver Margaret Hall. We sponsored another colouring competition at the Mallala primary school. On 29 August Ralph Drage, Fran Williams, Barry Frost and Bronwen Jones, along with driver Adam Allan, whose car was on display, attended the school to present Certificates and complimentary passes to the winners in each grade.

The meeting attracted 110 entries, with 24 in the new Modern Regularity category, the only one to have SA Championship status, as greatly increased insurance costs had made it prohibitive for the other categories to be run as State Championships.

Seven club members were in the Modern Regularity runs. Highlighting the competitive nature of this competition, many of the drivers' skills improved as the day progressed and several achieved perfect laps, losing no points. But at the end of the day, John Eason had won the first Modern Regularity title from Neil Oatway and David Armstrong.

Rob Jezierski (FV) won the Garrie Cooper memorial from Mark Foster and Steve Griffiths. Steve Laybourn won the HQ Mallala Masters from Phil Collier and Gavin Porteous.

Our Club race meetings continued as part of the Tri-Challenge Series. The winners were: 1998 – Jim Doig; 1999 – Mark Foster; 2000 – David Lines; 2001 – Mark Short.

There were other significant race meetings at Mallala. In 1998, Supertruck racing debuted on 23 August as part of a package with the Australian Sports Sedan Championship. This continued in 1999 and 2000 (2001 missed) and the 2002 meeting was the timing team's 500th, as reported above. Also in 1998, there was a return to car/bike meetings with the Superkarts combining with the Cafe Racers Club.

This arrangement continued to the end of 2001, when insurance problems stopped them. The Australian Championships for historic motorcycles were again held on 3 November 2002.

The Australian Touring Car Championship was set to change

and become the dominant series in Australian motorsport and Adelaide was to suffer both a loss and an addition to the racing scene.

In 1992, the last of the championship rounds at Mallala under "Group A" regulations was on 8 August. In 1993, the first of the new V8 races was on 3 July and in 1994, on 26 June. But also in this time, rules for the new International 2-litre "Super Touring" cars were in force and in 1995, 1996 and 1997 there were rounds of both championships at Mallala.

By 1998, the 2-litre class was losing the battle for fans while the Shell-sponsored V8s were blossoming. The 2-litres continued at Mallala, on 30 May 1999 and 12 November 2000 - their finale.

However, the V8s' Mallala round on 23 May 1998 was also a finale, but for a very different reason; they were too successful!

The formation of AVESCO to promote the category and the growth in popularity meant that Mallala was now deemed unsuitable to hold such an important event (shades of 1982!). Fortunately, there was a ready-made solution for SA (and Australian) fans.

With the loss of the AGP from 1995, the SA Government had set up *Australian Major Events*, to source replacement sporting events of any type that would focus World attention on Adelaide/SA and generate tourist income. One of their successes was the cycling *Tour Down Under*: another was the agreement to resurrect the Adelaide Parklands circuit for the V8s.

Using Bartels Road instead of Rundle Road, a 500 metre-shorter version of the AGP track was constructed and with Clipsal sponsorship, became the opening round of the series on 11 April 1999. Like the AGP before it, the organisation and running of this meeting set new standards for the category, resulting in winning the awards for *best meeting* several times.

However, all was not lost for Mallala. The V8s' success meant that a feeder category, called "V8

Writers in the official program, welcoming fans to the race, were full of excitement and expectation.

Premier John Olsen: Welcome to Adelaide, Australia's motorsport capital, for another innovative and historic event. This inaugural Le Mans *Race of a Thousand Years* will become another South Australian motorsport legend. Adelaide is the city that brought F1 to Australia and then lifted V8 racing to a new standard with the Clipsal 500.

Joan Hall, Tourism Minister: The race and party of a thousand years could have been held anywhere in the world. But the reality is that Don Panoz, the founder of the American, European and Asian Le Mans series chose Adelaide.

Dean Rainsford, Panoz Motorsport Australia: This race – on the original Grand Prix Circuit – is set to become a milestone in the Australian motorsport calendar. With all the glitz and glamour of international motor racing and the added talents of a few local boys behind the wheel, the Le Mans Adelaide event is poised to grow from strength to strength.

As things transpired, the race was successful, attracting a good crowd but political events overtook

it soon afterwards and this was the only race held.

The April 2001 *Austin Journals* 156 report noted in part:

Club members were involved as volunteers, drivers and timekeepers. The *Volunteers* were a new concept initiated by the Panoz Australia organisers and those who helped guide race fans and guests included David Searles and Geoff Murch. The *Driver* was Alan Heath, who teamed up with the Konrad Motorsports Lola and finished on the podium with second placing. The *Timekeepers* were the usual A7C timing team, entrusted with the task of timing the complete meeting.

The race started at 4.15 p.m. and finished 225 laps later at 10 p.m.; there was only one safety car period at the 5 hrs 10 minute mark, to retrieve the Panoz car of Jason Bright.

The American timing officials were amazed as the “traditional” crowd surged on to the track to acknowledge the winners and placegetters on the podium ... nothing like that happens in the US.

Another feather in the cap for the SA organisers was that the meeting concluded with a party on the Eastern side of the track for all the hard working officials.

As announced by the SA Government, the Le Mans series will not be held in SA due to the withdrawal of

funding but advice just received indicates the series will be held in another State later in the year.

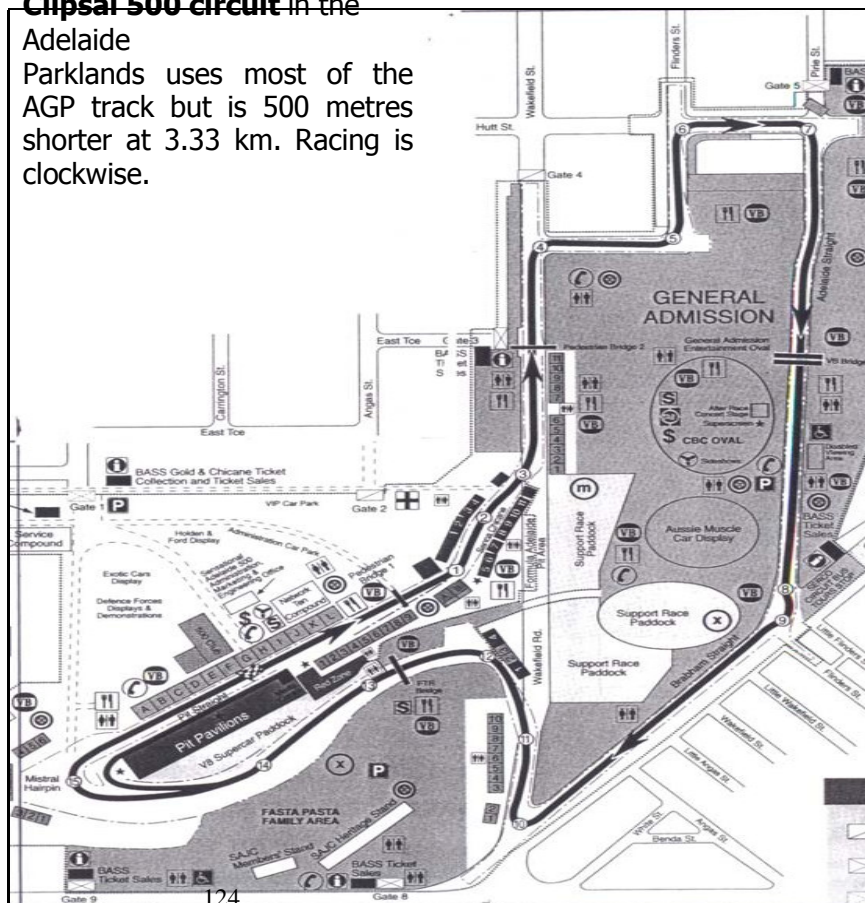
Despite this optimism, there was no other race held. This meeting set another first for the timing team in that the timing data for the main race was sent live to the Internet. Previous to this, and beginning with the twilight meeting at Mallala on 15 November 1997, results had been posted on the Internet at the conclusion of races. For the Clipsal races, results were updated and posted every 20 minutes.

The AGPs in Melbourne still enjoyed support from Adelaide-based officials each year. The 1998 race caused controversy over a “contrived finish” when leader David Coulthard slowed in the final stages to let team leader Mika Hakkinen retake the lead. The two McLarens finished a lap clear of third placed Frentzen (Williams).

1999 was the year Ferrari finally began to get their act together and challenge the McLarens. In Melbourne, Eddie Irvine (Ferrari)

~~Clipsal 500 circuit~~ in the

Adelaide
Parklands uses most of the
AGP track but is 500 metres
shorter at 3.33 km. Racing is
clockwise.



won from Frentzen (now Jordan) and Ralf Schumacher (Williams). The Jaguar team debuted in 2000, although neither car finished. The Ferraris of Schumacher and Barrichello scored an easy one-two victory from Ralf Schumacher.

The 2001 AGP will be remembered for all the wrong reasons. Early in the race, an accident between Jacques Villeneuve and Ralf Schumacher caused a wheel to be torn from Villeneuve's car. It penetrated the protective trackside barrier, striking and killing a marshal. Schumacher won the race by only 1.7 secs from Coulthard, with Barrichello third. The podium presentation was very subdued, as the drivers knew of the tragedy and there was no champagne spraying. As a result of the death, for 2002 the trackside barriers were redesigned with much smaller access holes. This process continued into 2003 when the catch fencing was extended all round the track.

The start of the 2002 race recalled memories of this tragedy when seven cars were eliminated in another first-lap accident. This let Mark Webber in his first GP, come home fifth in his Minardi, after qualifying in 18th. Schumacher won from Montoya and Raikkonen. This was Toyota's first GP with Mika Salo finishing 6th.

In this period, two drivers dominated as World Champions: Mika Hakkinen in 1998 and 1999 and Michael Schumacher from then on. The AGP continued its reputation of being hard on cars: the number of finishers each year, from a starting grid of 22, was nine, eight, nine, fourteen and seven!

The "Save Albert Park" protesters continued to have an ever-dwindling presence. Of much greater concern to security was the possibility of track invasion by someone who made a habit of disrupting major Australian sporting events. At one meeting, a vigilant trackside official noticed that he was in the wrong area for his credentials, and intercepted him before any disruption was caused.

The Club provided officials for the *Cooper's Rally SA* in 2001 and 2002. These extracts are from *Austin 7 Journals 158* October 2001.

On July 7/8, the first Australian Rally Championship round to be held in SA for several years, was conducted in the area around and in the Mount Crawford Forest. Our Club was involved in helping to run the last competitive stage – the Hannaford Hump - run as Special Stage 8 on Saturday and SS 17 on Sunday.

Most members involved were used in closing all access points to the public road and ensuring that spectators did not encroach onto the stage. The final control point and the recording of Stage Times were entrusted to Trevor and Lyn Clerke on Saturday, and Barry Frost joined them on Sunday. The weather was very wet and cold on Saturday but cleared up considerably for the Sunday runs, but even then, one of the Special Stages at Kersbrook had to be cancelled due to the ground conditions.

This is an account of the Sunday activities:

Assembly was at the Golden Grove Cemetery at 11.30 a.m., where final instructions were delivered by the Stage Commander, and then it was out to the Hannaford Hump Road control point, where Trevor and Lyn had set up a small shelter tent as protection from the elements. Other members travelled along the route, closing access points with signs and yellow tape and generally making the road safe for competitors. At 1 hour to go, the first of the organisation checking cars arrived, and this set the stage to Amber: the next car was the course checking car and it set the stage to Blue. Then the stage went to Green and the event was set to be run: the field was preceded onto the stage by the last official car which ran with a siren, alerting all marshals that the first competitor would be along in 10 minutes.

And so the rally cars began to arrive... As each competitor crossed the flying finish to the Stage, their times were recorded to the nearest second and telephoned to us at our control point. The cars had 500 metres to slow down and then stop for Lyn to take their rally book for us to record the finish time, calculate the stage time and record it in their book and on a master control card. Their stage times were also written on a large board so that they could see how their rivals were faring. These stage times were also radioed back to Rally Control at the Showgrounds, so that the results were always up-to-date.

All went smoothly until there were only 6 cars to go, when the Stage went Red, as someone had driven onto the course from a side access point! A half hour delay ensued while the course was checked and made secure again – the culprit meanwhile had disappeared! Back to Green and the final drivers appeared to complete the Stage. With the arrival of the course sweep car, our duties were completed, save for removing all signs, posts and traces of the Rally and returning the road for public use. This was duly accomplished and everyone gathered at our point for a final equipment check and return. The Stage Commander was very pleased with how the Stage had been conducted, noting that we would probably be awarded the prize for the best run Stage – this was confirmed later that day.

So again we have been involved in a major motor sport event in SA, and again we have performed to the highest standards. Congratulations to all involved from the Club.

Despite all the above activity going on, the committee was able to focus on our coming BIG year – the 50th celebrations in 2003.

In February 2000, David Searles, Barry Frost, Bruce Went and Tony Grove were appointed to a sub-committee to research and record the club's history; they first met in May to begin their task.

In April, Dave Hall was appointed to coordinate the Club's 50th celebrations. In May 2001 Geoff Carroll, Tony Morgan, Trevor and Lyn Clerke and Julia Johnson joined him; Ashleigh and Robert Ford were added in June. In June 2002, Tony resigned, due to other commitments.



A 50th Club logo design was sought from members and Bruce White's was accepted in February 2002, and was used on the shirts, jackets and printed material.

In January 2002, the proposed itinerary for the Flinders Ranges Odyssey tour was released. In August 2002, the committee jointly met with the history and 50th sub committees to brainstorm special events for 2003.

Although several innovative ideas were proposed, later studies proved that none of them were viable and so the final program was:

19 January - Launch of celebrations at the clubrooms;

15 June - "Back to the Club" day at Clubrooms;

13-14 September - Mallala Masters SA Championship races at Mallala;

15-20 September - Flinders Ranges Odyssey tour;

21 September - Anniversary Dinner.

Anticipating the need for funds for the 2003 celebrations, successful games nights were held on 4 May and 9 November 2002.

As noted in Chapter 7, it is impossible to record the deaths of all members. In the following cases, some had been in the Club for a long time, others a shorter period, but all were remembered in *Austin 7 Journals*. In 1998: Gwen Mander and Dean Qualmann. In 1999: Fred Bicknell, Tess Koszegi, and John Jewison. In 2000: Max Bowden. In 2002: Bryant Lawson and Bob Goldsworthy.

Summary

In this period, the Club's organisational skills were well and truly tested, with the 1998 and 2001 Tasmanian tours and the 1999 *Austins Over Australia Rally* to be arranged: all three were outstanding successes.



Celebrations were held interstate for the anniversary of the A7 (80 years, at Ballarat) and the A30 in Australia (50 years, at Echuca) and these were well attended by members. Border Runs were still enjoying strong support after 49 years and the 50th run was looked forward to with eagerness. Increasing leisure time for many members now meant that mid week runs could be supported.

The Federation worked hard to establish the Code of Practice for conditionally registered historic vehicles. After considerable debate amongst many member Clubs, the Code was progressed to the point where it was to be in force in 2003.

Worldwide insurance problems began to have a disastrous effect in

Australia as premiums rose many times over, putting financial strains on all organisations and businesses. The Club was affected when one of the underwriting companies for our race meeting in 1997 went into receivership before the claim had been settled, leaving the club with an unknown debt hanging over its head.

On the sporting scene, the timing team reached a significant milestone with the 500th meeting achieved. International racing returned to the streets of Adelaide with the *Race of a Thousand Years*, on New Year's Eve, December 2000 but despite contracts for its continuing, it only lasted for the one meeting. However, the growing popularity of "the V8s" meant that Mallala dropped off the circuit but Adelaide - the Clipsal 500 - was begun in 1999: Mallala returned to favour in 2000, for the V8 Lites, now the Konica series.

Of more importance for Club members was the work done in establishing rules for the Modern Regularity events.

Membership continued to grow, as did the number of cars on the Club's register. The advent of the SARotors group heralded an influx of new, younger members to the Club.

But the focus was on 2003 - the club's golden anniversary.



CAMS State manager, Phil Hoffman looks on as CAMS SA Board member, Bob Piper presents the Certificate of Appreciation for the 500th race meeting officiated at by the timing team, to Club President Ralph Drage, general meeting 13-5-02.



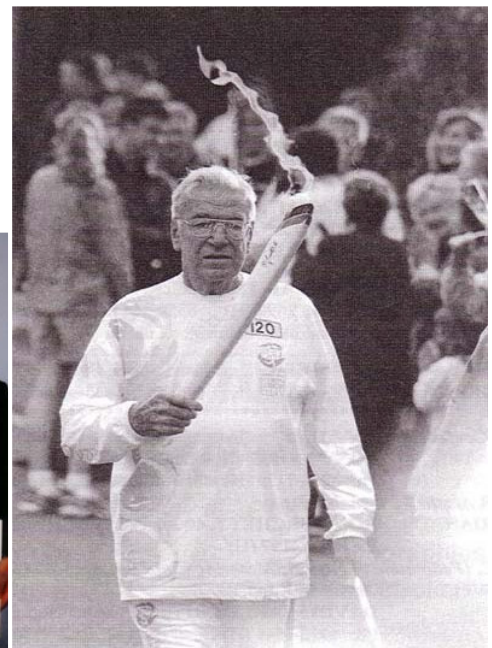
Cars at Whitstock Lodge on the 2000 Border Run

Some of the cars on the 1996 Border Run to Portland



From left: Barry Frost, Gerry Lang, Tony Morgan, Associate Professor Howard Morris and Alan Baker at the Hanson Centre for Cancer Research, May 2001

Proudly displaying their 2000 Australian Sports Medals and Certificates, at the 2001 CAMS Awards night, are, from left: Bruce Went, Glenda Grove, Tony Grove, Tony Morgan, Fran Williams and Barry Frost



Ken Darwin proudly carrying the Olympic Torch, Eden Hills 15-6-00.



Cars at the Birdwood National Motor Museum for **Austins Over Australia April 1999.**



The A7s of Malcolm Lake on display at the September 2000 Enthusiasts night.

From left: Ashleigh and Robert Ford, Ralph Drage, John Wills and Phil Hutchins take a close look at Peter Brock's A30 replica on display at the Birdwood National Motor Museum, 28-1-01.



HQ Holden action from the Mallala Masters meeting, 12-9-99.

Dave Hall's A7 disembarking from the Spirit of Tasmania, at the end of the final tour of Tasmania, March 2001.

