

Ron and Austin Tauranac guests at Eastern Creek

LOOSE FILLINGS

Recent months have seen some positive signs of interest in air-cooled cars of the '40s. The sale of Brian Reed's Mk 5 Cooper, and the recent liberation of the Victorian-built Pentland JAP from a long hibernation, are encouraging signs for the air-cooled movement, because the new owners of these cars are going to use them. As mentioned elsewhere in this issue, five traditional-style air-cooled cars ran at the May GEAR NSW meeting, and our Around the Garages item lists a number of cars which are now very close to running. GEAR NSW has already pencilled in its May 2004 meeting for another all-aircooled event, and this could be a target for us to aim for. And you don't have to travel there alone - show your mates the huge choice of interesting cars available in our classifieds!

RON and Austin Tauranac were guests of the Historic Sports & Racing Car Association when Ron was the club's guest of honour at the September Eastern Creek race meeting.

Speaking during a dinner in Parramatta on the Thursday night before the race meeting, Austin Tauranac told the audience about 1950s experiences, which included using Ralt 2, Austin's road/race sports car, to tow the Norton-engined Ralt 1 from Sydney to Bathurst in 1951. Along the way Ron, who had the job of steering Ralt

1, lost his wrist watch and the team had to turn around, go back and look for it.

Austin's workshop on the eastern side of Circular Quay was a small section of a CSR car-park, which Cliff Trefry recalled "looked like something the convicts had cut out of the hillside." Cliff also recalled Ron's f.t.d. at King Edward Park hillclimb in 1954, where the 550cc Ralt 1 beat Brabham's Cooper Bristol with the Ralt running "100 per cent" nitromethane. (A recent UK story about Ron's return to Australia mentioned that his major re-

design of Ralt 1's rear suspension in 1951-52 used cross-over swing axles, explaining after some 40 years the reference to Ralt 1 having an effective swing axle radius greater than half its rear track.)

About 1950 Ron and Austin drove the sports car out to Hurstville in response to an advertisement offering an MSS Velocette engine, which they thought might have potential for use in a racing car.

Left: The Tauranac brothers, Ron and Austin.
Below: Todd Hamilton's Ralt. Photos Bob Ross.



The advertiser was Jack Brabham, and the Tauranac-Brabham association started from there. Brabham had a small machining business and Ron gave him work to do for CSR. A decade later, when Ron was designing for Brabham in England, he recalled Brabham was "the best machinist we had," because he did not need detailed drawings for some modification, but could understand Ron's broad concepts and take the job from there.

Ron had long discussions with Todd Hamilton, who had brought his Ralt Vincent to the Eastern Creek display of Tauranac-designed cars. Todd's Ralt is one of the "kit" Ralts built from a batch of chassis and other components manufactured before Ron went to England in 1960 to join Brabham. Ron told the Thursday night dinner he built "half a dozen" of these chassis in Brabham's machine shop, which was in the back yard of a house in Penshurst and was over-run by rats.

AROUND THE GARAGES

ON the Gold Coast, Alan Morton has the Sydney-built Alba "in a thousand pieces" while he adds a pair of Carillo rods to the 650 Triumph engine and has its crankshaft balanced. He expects to be running again in 2004.

In Sydney, Alan Harper's pioneer 500, built by the legendary Eddie Thomas in the late 1940s, now has its wheels on. Garry Simkin's Mk 4 Cooper Vincent has had its engine re-installed after burning a piston at the Grand Prix, and will test a further attempt to achieve a non-slip magneto drive. Terry Wright has had bodywork and roll-over bar made for the Walton Cooper. John Gale has resumed work on the alloy 1100 JAP in his Mk 4 Cooper.

Also in Sydney, the Hallidays have taken the Norton engine out of the Waye 500, replacing it with a dry-sump JAP, after which it will be repainted cherry red, both the colour and the JAP engine being as original specification.

In Canberra, Chris Tracey is working on the fuel system of the BB Ariel.

In Melbourne, Cooper Mk 7 owner Graeme Noonan has moved to Phillip Island, which may keep him otherwise occupied for a while. Neil Videan's supercharged Mk 5 Cooper Irving is in the care of Garth Rhodes, and has had new rear uprights and driveshafts made. John Dymond is understood to be hoping to have Penrite's Cooper JAP twin running for Historic Rob Roy in late November.

In West Australia, Jim Runciman hopes to start work "shortly" on reassembling the Holinger Vincent.

The things people will do to get their names in The Log!

Classifieds

For sale: Cooper Mk V Norton, ex Bob Gerard (UK). Immaculate. Don Hall, 08 9386 2346

For sale: 1961 Lynx Vincent, ex John Marston, oldest surviving Lynx. Very original, partially restored (see Loose Fillings # 4) includes new Terry Prince Vincent crankcases, other Vincent parts. Approval in principle with blown 1200. Asking \$20,000. David Lawry, 08 8373 1633, jlawry@picknowl.com.au

For sale: Scarab Triumph, NSW race history from at least early 1960s. Rebuilt Bonneville engine, new 4-speed box, single Amal. No trailer. \$20,000, offers considered. Graeme Worsley, 02 6362 8734

For sale: Cooper Mk 8 Norton, bought new by Dick Campbell, held 350 and 500 NZ speed records. More details from Ian Garmey in New Zealand.

For sale: Sidney Rudge, the former Sidney Vincent recently refitted with fully rebuilt 4-valve iron-head Rudge 500, in which form it began its long Australian history in the 1950s. A clever and well made car. \$14,000, keen to sell. Cameron MacMillan, 0408 676 527.

For sale: Cooper Mk 4 JAP 500, superbly presented, not run since total rebuild. Ex-Saywell 8/80 car, first Cooper to race at Bathurst. \$35,000, Matt Segafredo, 0418 280 000

For sale: Cooper Mk 9 Triumph, more details from Ian Garmey in New Zealand .

For sale: 1951 JBS Norton 500, fast, immaculate, very original. One owner past 35 years. Garry Simkin, 02 9958 3935

For sale: 1959 Bedson Enfield, built in Adelaide by Gordon Bedson with 700cc Royal Enfield Constellation, Albion box. Chassis possibly ex-F3 Mackson. Group L logbook. \$10,000. Peter Fagan, 08 8243 5258, 04012 150 290

For sale: Bruce Gooden special dirt-circuit car, built 1950s, won NSW titles 1963-64-65. 8-inch front wheels, 10-inch rear, ran Norton, Gold Star and Jawa engines, for sale without engine or gearbox but with trailer included in \$1500 price. Keith Smith, 02 6384 7311

For sale: Robertson Indian, amazingly original 1950s Victorian-built special with pushrod o.h.v. Velocette barrels on Indian crankcase, 19-inch wire wheels. Kevin Catt, 02 6332 2551

For sale: Berkeley, originally 328cc model, now with Royal Enfield big twin and reversing 3-speed and 4-speed gearboxes. Back to bare fibreglass. Five new Michelins, manuals. No known race history, no seats, instruments, hood or screen. Briuan Yelland, 02 4573 1447

Wanted: one old, worn-out 135x15 tyre to fit Cooper Mk5 front wheel for wall display. Also for sale - a lot of JAP spares. Brian Reed, 2/230 Albert St Brunswick Vic, 3056, 03 9387 0062.

Wanted: Bigger carbs for the Walton Special; any Amal Type 5 GP2 which were 1 7/32 to 1 3/8 inch choke would be fine or parts thereof. Will buy or can trade 1 5/32 TTs, Terry Wright, 02 9418 2974.

THE LOG

THIS section of *Loose Fillings* celebrates those special occasions where one of our cars actually fires up in public. It includes one of our best-ever turnouts of aircooled cars, at GEAR NSW in May, when five cars ran (accompanied by Paul Samuels' B105 Berkeley). In total, nine different cars ran in Australian events in the period under review. The previous page covered appearances through to the end of March, 2003.

■ April 13 - Ringwood hillclimb: Mike Bendeich, JMW CZ 150

■ April 18-20 - Collingrove, Australian Hillclimb Championship: Terry Wright, Walton-Special, won Historic Grp L class

■ May 14 - GEAR day, Wakefield Park: Jeff Hodges, Bourke Special Triumph 650; Cameron MacMillan, Sidney Rudge 500; Garry Simkin, JBS Norton 500; Greg Snape, Cooper Mk 10 BMW 600 s/c; Rob Gunnell, Cooper Mk 4 JAP 500

■ June 22 - Rob Roy VSCC hillclimb, John Coffin, Robbins BSA

■ September 14 - Rob Roy interclub hill-

climb, John Coffin, Robbins BSA (second to a blown MG in U1500 class!)

■ September 5-6 - Eastern Creek, historic races: Andrew Halliday, Cooper Mk 5 Norton 500; Garry Simkin, JBS Norton 500;

■ October 5 - Chelsea Rd hillclimb, Auckland: Peter Bruin, Cooper Mk 8.

■ October 25 - Dapto Hillclimb NSW (just reopened): Terry Wright Walton-Special.

COMING EVENTS

■ November 28: another Bruce Walton "hillclimb night" on the Friday evening before Rob Roy at the VHRR Box Hill clubrooms.

■ November 30: Historic Rob Roy, a friendly event on a hill traditionally dominated by air-cooled cars.

■ November 29-30: Wakefield Park with the annual presentation of the Ashley Cowan trophy for best performance by an air-cooled racing car.

■ May 2004: (date to be finalised) GEAR New South Wales.

REG HUNT AT ROB ROY

GUEST of honour at MG Car Club's Historic Rob Roy hillclimb on November 30 will be Reg Hunt, who at Rob Roy in 1953 won the Australian hillclimb championship with his self-built Hunt Vincent. He is a legend in the Melbourne motor trade and, as the importer of two front-line Maseratis, he was a highly influential figure in the development of Australian motor racing during the 1950s.

The Hunt Vincent is being restored by Reg's son Graham. This car was built in Melbourne using a brand-new JAP 500 and components brought out from the UK when Reg and his family emigrated in the late 1940s. In 1951 the car was converted to the ex-Warton Vincent twin, and was just 0.02 secs slower than winner Jack Brabham's V-twin speedcar (now owned by the Hallidays in Sydney) at the 1951 Australian hillclimb championship. With assistance from Vincent designer Phil Irving Hunt then added a supercharger, and with the car in this form he won the 1953 title, again at Rob Roy.

Bob Joass, who travelled to Melbourne in the 1950s to examine the Hunt Vincent, saw its design - Morgan pillar-type front suspension, swing-axle rear, and rearward driving position - as strongly Iota influenced, although the car was put together in Melbourne. With its skimpy bodywork and wheels-at-all-angles cornering attitude, the Hunt Vincent was known as the Flying Bedstead, but clearly Hunt knew what he wanted a car to do. In 1954 he raced in Europe driving a new Mk 8 Cooper with Beart-tuned Manx engine, a proven, factory-built chassis with the best possible engine. It was a pointer to his subsequent Maserati years.

BITS AND PIECES

■ The Pentland JAP, built by Victorian Brian Pentland and hillclimbed and raced by him in the late '50s and early '60s, has recently been bought from its longtime third owner by Historic racing enthusiast Keith Roberts in Eddington, and restoration has already started. The car was bought minus engine but otherwise complete, and has 13-inch wire wheels and swing-axle rear suspension.

The Roberts family are key people in the increasingly popular Eddington Sprints, where air-cooled participation would seem most appropriate - as now seems highly likely.

■ A BAE Formula 4 has surfaced in Sydney, now owned by Ken Laws who in the 1970s was the intrepid pilot of a 179-powered Mini sports sedan at Oran Park. BAE cars were built by Bill Hinte, who nowadays lives in Queensland. Formula 4



Reg Hunt in the almost completed Hunt 500, Fishermens Bend, February 1950.

CHAIN GUARDS AND ROLL-BARS

DIRECTLY as the result of the experiences of Terry Wright who then raised it with the Historic Commission, the 2004 CAMS Manual will contain the following clarification of the rules covering chain guards for 5th category cars:

"Chain guards are only required where a broken chain would cause harm to the driver. Final drive chains in rear engined cars using motorcycle engine and gearbox assemblies do not require chain guards."

"This problem arose on my first visit to Rob Roy", said Terry. "They seem to have a thing in Victoria about rear chain guards even if the chain only goes round when the wheels are turning."

"So next time I went back with a log-book endorsement by Tony Caldersmith (Chairman of the Historic Eligibility Committee) to say I didn't need a guard. Now Tony has had the rules sorted out which is terrific", he said.

Another 2004 rationalisation which Tony has organised removes an anomaly whereby a historic car competing in a hillclimb or sprint where there are modern cars might have been required to follow modern rules for safety rather than the historic rules. This has not been a problem so far but clarifying the rules will make sure it doesn't happen at all.

Along the same line of thinking, the 2004 rules will provide for a period specification roll bar to be approved and this to be endorsed in a log-book if the inspector is satisfied it will improve the safety of the vehicle.

(As opposed to making it worse which does happen! The next Loose Fillings will have some guidance on roll over protection design which I have been working on. TW)

was a mid-'60s idea for motorcycle-powered low-cost racing, and enough cars were built in Queensland to have their own races, admittedly with small fields. Weight of numbers and the sheer logic of Formula Vee proved too much for Formula 4, as in fact it did for virtually all forms of low-budget non-touring car specials, which were just about extinct by the end of the 1960s.

■ Brian Reed's Mk 5 Cooper JAP, originally Bill Patterson's car collected in England in 1951 and raced over there before coming to Australia, has been sold. New owner is Queensland enthusiast Peter Harburg, already the owner of a Cooper Climax, the car in which Lex Davison won the 1961 AGP. The Mk 5 will be cared for by Don Biggar, who in the late 1950s worked on both John Marston's ex-Davison Cooper Vincents. Don remembered taking the cars to Phil Irving's home at Seaford for tuning, after which they would be given test-runs up and down the street.

■ Shelsley Walsh, the British hillclimb which dates back to 1905, is in danger of being lost to motorsport when its current lease expires in 2004. An appeal has been launched to raise money to obtain a 99-year lease of the site and Terry Wright has raffle tickets to win a Jaguar. More information is available from www.shelsleytrust.co.uk.

NEW AIRCOOLED HISTORY

IT'S been nearly 50 years since anyone wrote a book about 500 cc cars. Now Colin Rawlinson's *The 500 cc Racing Car* provides something the earlier books could not - a perspective. This is not a large book, with just 32 pages of approximately Readers Digest dimensions, but it manages to include many good and unfamiliar photographs. Emphasis is historical and UK, with occasional European references. Australia is briefly mentioned, noting Ron Tauranac's early air-cooled designs. It's well produced - not bad value at \$19.95 from Motor Books, 02 9144 4799.

FIRE and ALCOHOL FUELS: Be Warned

WOULDNT it be really good to have motorsport controlling bodies that were on the ball technically so that when they make rules for our safety they have some foundation in commonsense?

It's been an eyepener to discover that the controlling bodies in both Britain (Motor Sports Association) and Australia (Confederation of Australian Motor Sport) are failing to make it known that the standard AFFF foam in widespread use in fire extinguishers is not effective on alcohol.

That this is the case is well-known in the fire-protection industry worldwide. The definitive US NFPA Guide (pp 11-93) says as follows:

'Air-foams generated from ordinary agents are subject to rapid breakdown and loss of effectiveness when they are used on fires that involve fuels that are water soluble, water miscible, or of a "polar solvent" type. Examples of this type of fuel are alcohols, enamel and lacquer thinners ... Even small amounts of these substances mixed with common hydrocarbon fuels, such as gasohol, may cause rapid breakdown of ordinary fire-fighting foams.

'Therefore, certain special foaming agents, called alcohol- type concentrates, have been developed. These alcohol-resistant concentrates are proprietary compositions of several types... The most common ... produce foams suitable for application

to spill or in-depth fires of either hydrocarbon or water-miscible flammable liquids by any foam-generating device. They exhibit AFFF characteristics on hydrocarbons and produce a floating gel-like mass for foam buildup on water-miscible fuels.

Although the test described in the FIA 'Standard for plumbed-in fire extinguisher systems in competition cars' only involves extinguishing gasoline, the standard does state:

"The extinguishing agent must be selected carefully according to the fuel used and indicated on the homologation certificate. Alcohol (methanol) based fuels will require special AFFF variant (sic) for example."

This warning is also applicable to handheld extinguishers whether car-mounted or trackside. Yet no such advice can be found in either the CAMS Manual of Motor Sport or the MSA British Motor Sports Yearbook .

Both bodies are, of course aware of the different characteristics of alcohol fires compared to the more common gasoline. Both require vehicles using alcohol to carry prominent identifying disks. While the MSA has no such requirement, CAMS requires such historic vehicles to carry an extinguisher "applicable for use in an alcohol fire".

Such an extinguisher could be the powder or dry chemical type which is widely

used on cars in Australia but which the MSA prohibits in Britain. It is believed this may be because of the corrosive nature of the powder but it is a pointless restriction given that powder is one of the standard extinguisher types in use at tracks worldwide.

It is just as well for Graham Burrows that trackside powder extinguishers were available. If he had an FIA homologated and CAMS or MSA approved AFFF type plumbed-in system then it would not have worked on his fire unless it had the "special AFFF variant" the FIA warns about.

Any foam extinguisher with alcohol-type concentrate should be so labelled but those that I have looked at recently at tracks in the UK and Australia where alcohol fuels were in use were not.

At the very least competitors and officials should be made aware of this situation. And much more complete advice should be given to competitors, especially those in the UK who have recently been replacing prohibited halon systems with AFFF.

Better still would be a general requirement that extinguishants in use be effective on the fuels that are in use. Extinguishers should be clearly labelled as such and could even carry the same 'alcohol' sticker as the cars they are suitable for. This is easily accomplished at a scheduled refill - the appropriate concentrate can be used and there should be no, or maybe just minimal, extra cost.

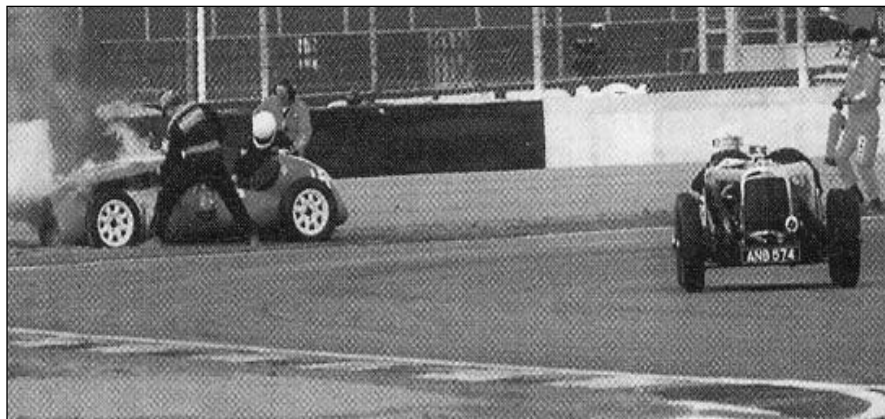
In the UK, MSA's prohibition on the use of powder extinguishers should be relaxed where the fuel is alcohol as competitors are being prevented from carrying effective and reasonably priced extinguishers whose disadvantages may far outweigh the advantages. In any case, foam handheld extinguishers are not readily available in the sizes that can be carried on a car.

Hillclimbers, sprinters and racers using methanol - you have been warned! TW

An on-board fire extinguisher system not working in Graham Burrows' Cooper-Bristol at Silverstone earlier this year - from the the Vintage Sports Car Club Bulletin (Summer 2003). Stuart Pringle, Secretary of the VSCC, described the incident to Terry Wright as follows:

"The car was running on methanol. Only when a powder extinguisher arrived in the hands of a marshal was the fire brought under control. His on-board foam extinguisher had been ineffective."

Yet the VSCC has been promoting, without qualification or warning, the notion that all that is needed in a historic race car is a FIA/MSA approved handheld or built-in extinguisher. Most, although not all, of these, use AFFF. The information published about them makes no mention of their suitability, or otherwise, for alcohol fires. CAMS has had nothing to say either that we know of. Meanwhile NASCAR has just announced new extinguisher requirements using halon which is still in general use in the US.



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