

LOOSE FILLINGS

GOOD VIBRATIONS

Air-cooled cars will have events all to themselves during the mid-week July 28 meeting organised by Golden Era Auto Racing club (GEAR) at Wakefield Park circuit, near Goulburn. Last year we had five single-seat cars running there, supported by Paul Samuels' B105 Berkeley. This year we hope to improve on that number. Even so, we are still not finding many new owners for the cars offered for sale in our classifieds. These are all cars with character and history, and they are not expensive by historic standards. Who do you know who might enjoy driving and working on one of these cars? If the For Sale cars were to join those already in use, we could have a lot of fun!

TWIN WINS AT WINTON

SOUTH Australian Cooper-JAP driver Derek Greneklee rebounded from a massive engine failure at Mallala in April to win both his scratch races in the pre-1961 events at Winton historic races in May.

At Mallala, on his car's first outing after a 12-month layoff, its very special 1100 JAP twin either broke the gudgeon pin in the front cylinder, or broke the gudgeon-pin bosses in the piston.

Regardless of how it started, the explosion destroyed the front cylinder and rod, bent the valves and made a mess of the

head and the rear connecting rod. Bob Jolly, who had manufactured the engine's flywheels and rods, set to and made new crankpin and rods, while Derek found some Kawasaki gudgeons which were longer, and an almost perfect fit in the pistons, which are based on Cosworth forgings.

He also added strength by changing from circlips to Teflon end-pads for the gudgeons, and took the opportunity to further increase the engine's balance factor, which is now 64 per cent and "much smoother."

Blowups aside, Mallala had been his first time out with distributor ignition, after CAMS had agreed to allow him to convert from the JAP twin's notoriously difficult dual magneto setup. Derek is most enthusiastic about the resulting transformation, saying the Cooper is now "a civilised motorcar" which is easy to start, and which actually idles. "When it's going properly, the Cooper is the most fun car I've driven."

Derek Greneklee's 1100cc Cooper JAP, which won both its scratch races at Winton historics in May. Photo courtesy Bill Hunter.



JOHN CROUCH - Cooper Champion

JOHN Crouch, who won the 1949 Australian Grand Prix and the 1952 Australian Hillclimb Championship, died on May 30, shortly before his 86th birthday. He was initially the NSW representative for Coopers, then succeeded Keith Martin as the Cooper agent for the whole of Australia, and between 1950 and 1952 actively competed in Coopers: in that period he was probably the most successful Cooper driver.

His father had done well in the Sydney motor trade, and John had a connoisseur's eye for quality cars, becoming a founder member of the Vintage Sports Car Club in 1944. He first drove in competition in 1936, in speedway, raced an MG TA at Mt Panorama in 1938, finishing fifth in the AGP, then in 1939-40 had good results with a 2.3 Alfa Romeo. He bought the Delahaye in 1946, and comfortably won the 1949 AGP in it. It is one of motor racing's ironies that, with his lifelong appreciation for vintage virtues, he also saw the commercial and competition opportunity presented by Coopers, which were in many ways the exact opposite of vintage values.

He had a key role in establishing Cooper in Australia. Of the ten Mk IV Coopers imported new to Australia, he sold six, taking one himself and selling three of the others to friends with whom he had been racing since before the war - Jack Saywell,

John Snow and John Nind. Perhaps better prepared through his prewar experience with JAP-powered speedway Skirrows, he ran his Coopers more often and with more success than they did. All six Mk V Coopers sold new in Australia also came through him, but after 1952 sales almost stopped, apart from the Brabham Cooper Bristol and the Blake/De Bord Mk 8. It is not clear whether this was connected with his retirement, or perhaps with increased prices.

His first outing as a Cooper driver was with a new 1100 JAP Mk IV at Hawkesbury hillclimb in November 1950, where he set a new course record; he also ran it to set a course record at Leura hillclimb in early 1951, then took it to West Australia where he won the WA hillclimb title at Mundaring Weir. A week later, at the 1951 AGP at Narrogin, he set fastest race lap and was leading on scratch when a float sank and he retired. He sold the Mk IV in West Australia, then ran Snow's Vincent-engined Mk IV to set new records at King Edward Park and at the 1951 NSW championship at Hawkesbury.

In 1952 he ran a new 1100 Mk V, setting the ultimate lap record for the long course in Parramatta Park and running as high as second in the 1952 AGP behind Doug Whiteford's Lago Talbot, before retiring. He had better fortune on the hills, setting

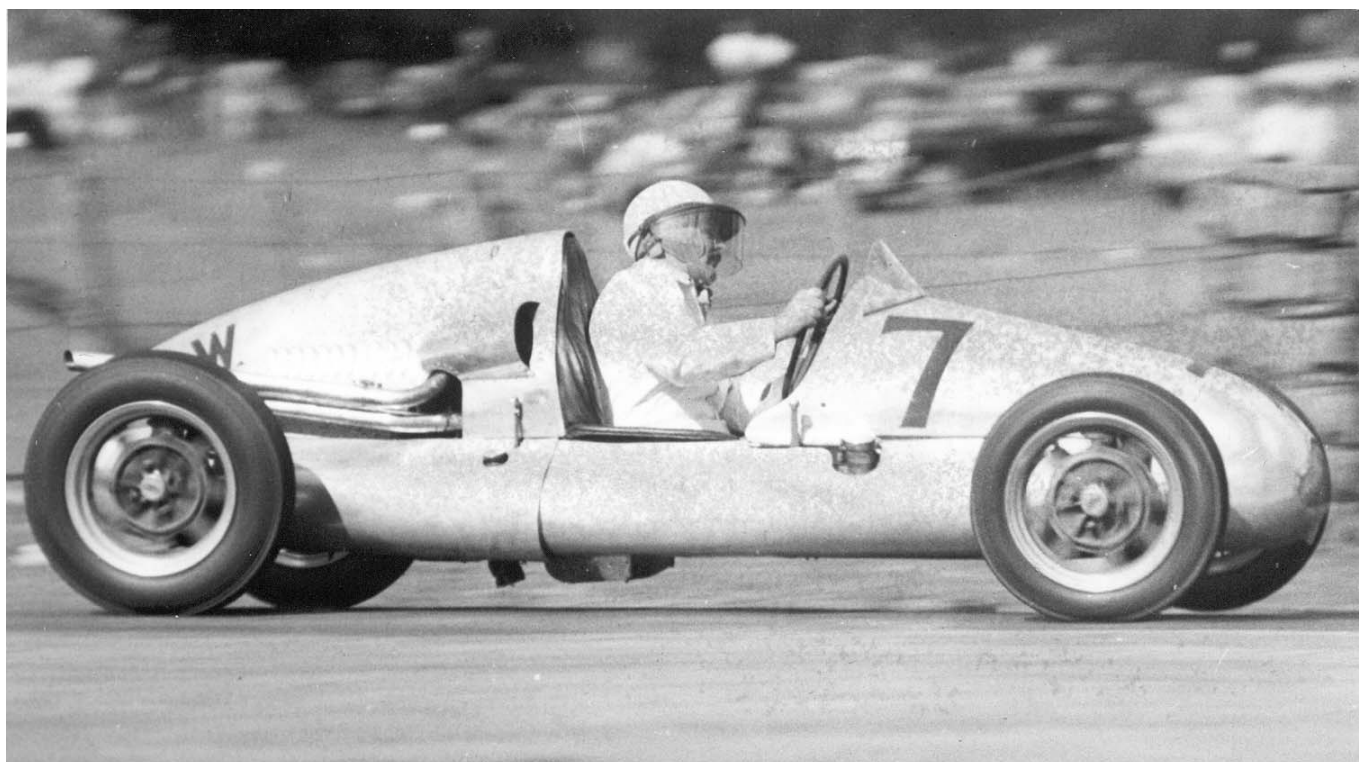
new records at Foley's and at Collingrove for the SA Hillclimb Championship, then winning the 1952 Australian Championship at Rob Roy from Stan Jones' (1100 Mk IV), Bib Stillwell (1100 Mk V), Charlie Dean (Maybach), Bill Patterson (997 Mk V) and Murray Trenberth (Trenberth Vincent). Shortly after Rob Roy he announced his retirement, having won both Australian national titles - the Grand Prix and the hillclimb championship - an achievement at that time unique, and subsequently equalled by only two other drivers, Lex Davison and Jack Brabham.

A prewar report described his driving as "outstanding for style", and after watching him at Hawkesbury in 1951 an onlooker recalled "John Crouch, who appeared to cruise up the hill in a neat, almost unexciting, Sunday-driving manner." Pictures from the period confirm this image, the driver straight-backed, elbows in, his cars working hard but precisely on line.

All three of the Coopers he drove are still in Australia, the 1100 Mk IV with John Gale, the Cooper Vincent with Garry Simkin and the 1100 Mk V with John Dymond.

Graham Howard

John Crouch in his Mk V Cooper at Hell Corner, during the 1952 AGP at Mt Panorama.
Photo Byron Gunther



Norton Gearbox Tips

FOR the good reasons that they were ubiquitous, strong and reliable, most air-cooled cars used Norton gearboxes. The 'upright' box, which started life as a Sturmev-Archer product in the 1920's and became Norton (though made by Burman) in 1935 was superseded by the 'laydown' box from 1949 onwards. Then, after the Norton company was absorbed in Associated Motor Cycles c. 1956, there was a further revision in the design that became known as the 'AMC' box and ran until the demise of the Commando in 1977.

One of the beauties of this long history is that the core components are mainly identical, so a great deal of interchange is possible. Also, a road box is readily convertible to a racing configuration by removing the kickstart assembly and substituting a roller bearing for the bush at that end of the layshaft and a roller bearing for the ball race at the other.

Although I had a lot of experience with the AMC box in another racing application my first outings with the upright box on the Walton-JAP Special were a bit disappointing, a handful of neutrals being an all too common embarrassment. I consulted Norton guru Geoff Clatworthy * and he said that unlike the later boxes, the 'upright' needed careful setting of the external rod connecting the selector mechanism with the camplate which operates the selector forks.

Geoff's advice was to assemble the box on the bench without the gears and hold it in a vice. Put a spanner on the nut of the selector mechanism quadrant which operates the rod and use this to shift the camplate in the box which operates the selectors. The camplate motion is controlled by a spring-loaded plunger, which lodges into notches in the perimeter of the cam-plate so that it stops at the correct position for the engagement of each gear.

The aim is to adjust the rod so that the camplate tends to slightly under-select rather than over-select. With under-selection, the momentum of the camplate tends to carry everything into the correct location, rather than past it, which would be the case with over-selection.

According to Geoff Clatworthy, "Slight * Call Geoff on 02 9603 4024 if you want him to service your box.

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, all offers considered. Graeme Worsley, 02 6362 8734.

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: 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 731.

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: 1949 Cooper JAP 500, immaculate, reliable. Oldest Cooper in Australia, long racing history in UK, Europe, Malaysia and Australia. More details from Rob Gunnell, 02 9427 0816.

Wanted: any large body i.e. 38-42 mm Delorto SS1 carburettor spares. Geoff Clatworthy 02 9603 4024.

For Sale: small compressor, near new, 40 L, 2.5 hp, . \$150, Terry Wright, 02 9418 2974.

under selection" means allowing the detent and the "flywheel effect" of the cam plate to complete the last poofteenth of engagement.

Another thing worth checking and correcting if necessary, is the condition of the selector mechanism itself in the doll's head or the outer case. I also replaced the springs in here. The result was, driver error excluded, more or less perfection. Geoff also advised as follows:

- The pre AMC sleeve gear had 1/4 roller and bronze thrust washer; Ken McIntosh does a roller thrust race conversion which is worth considering.
- Set up the main shaft with 8/10 thou end float.
- Never put a spring washer under the clutch body nut as it can cause it to cock. Use a flat washer plus 601 Loctite. Use mild heat (needle point propane torch) to soften Loctite for removal.
- To improve the clutch pushrod action cut off 3" and run a ball or roller in between the two parts or use a thrust bearing.

Norton gearbox parts are widely available with the best sources in Australia and New Zealand probably being Modak Motorcycles in Melbourne (tel 03 9602

1229) and Ken McIntosh Racing in New Zealand (09 570 1119). Ken publishes a very useful catalogue on his website at www.manxnorton.co.nz.

Also worth considering, even if your clutch is serviceable, is a NEB clutch from John Titman Racing Services in Brisbane (07 3207 4445). This is a speedway and dirt-track after-market unit which can be supplied to fit a Norton mainshaft. An early model has been most successful in the Walton-JAP and I have splashed out some \$1100 for a current unit for the Walton-Cooper.

The look and fit is almost identical to the Norton unit; with some \$500 needed to recondition an original unit I reckoned the extra cost of the new one was well worthwhile. John can provide heavy duty springs too which I recommend. He is also the guy to contact for new rear sprockets (in aluminium) and gearbox sprockets down to 15 teeth - the smaller gear here puts less load on the box if that is an issue.

If you are like most air-cooled owners the car will have come with heaps of spare and often rusty gears. How do you make sense of these and what ratios are worth considering? Read the next *Loose Fillings*.

Terry Wright.

To be continued.

THE LOG

THIS section of *Loose Fillings* is our Hall of Fame, bestowing recognition on the highest achievement of air-cooled ownership - getting the device to fire up in public. Sadly, since the end of March when the last instalment of The Log was closed off, there appear to have been only two public appearances by air-cooled cars.

- May 5 - GEAR, Wakefield Park: Robert Rowe, Sidney Rudge.
- May 29-30 - Winton Historic races: Derek Greneklee, Mk 9 Cooper JAP 1100, two from two!

COMING EVENTS

- July 28 - Wakefield Park, GEAR regularity day. This is the second annual GEAR day to offer special events just for air-cooled cars. CAMS paperwork not required, just bring your air-cooled car and a big smile.

If you can't bring a car, come along for the party and meet some other air-cooleds. Expected entrants include:

Rob Gunnel - Cooper-JAP
Garry Simkin - JBS-Norton
Terry Wright - Walton-JAP
Mike Bendeich - JMW
Graham Snape - Cooper-BMW
Graham Noonan - Cooper-Norton
John Gale - Cooper-JAP
Graham Louk - Bedson-Enfield

If you want to run a car please ring Lisa Tobin-Smith a few days before on 02 4960 9617 or email lisamgb@hotmail.co. This I just to help planning - you enter when you get to Wakefield Park.

- September 17-19 - Speed on Tweed, timed laps of a road course through Murwillumbah, which closes its main street for evening festivities.
- October 23-24 - possible date for Mt Tarrengower hillclimb.
- November 27-28 - Wakefield Park HSRCA historic races, including the annual Ashley Cowan Trophy for air-cooled

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cars. Log books needed for racing.

- November 28 - also the probable date for MG CC Historic Rob Roy

BITS AND PIECES

- Ian Gordon, former Mildren Racing mechanic now working at Sears Point raceway in California restoring Formula One cars (someone has to do it), has recently bought a Mk V Cooper which for many years had been standing unused in a Californian garage. It has a Manx Norton engine, and appears to be very straight and original.

- Website www.oldracephotos.com.au. mainly carries photographs of larger cars; there are also some fascinating photos of Tasmanian 500s. Photographer Bill Hunter, whose shot of Derek Greneklee at Winton is carried in this issue, can be contacted through whunter@bigpond.net.au.

Readers are probably already aware of the vast archive of Peter D'Abbs and Lance Ruting photographs available through www.autopics.com.au.

Other websites worth a look are that of the British 500 Owners Club at www.500race.org and the Cooper Car Club at www.coopercars.org.

- Cyril Kieft, the Welsh businessman whose name was attached to a variety of open-wheel and sports-racing cars in the 1950s, died recently aged 82. The Kieft 500 raced by Stirling Moss, and two very similar cars later raced by Don Parker, were from 1951 the only consistent opposition to the Coopers. This design was devised by Ray Martin, Dean Delamont (editor of the UK 500cc club magazine *Iota*) and sports editor of UK weekly magazine *The Autocar*, J.A. Cooper.

Through detailed 1951 articles in *Iota* and *The Autocar*, the car's design concepts

were spelled out and well illustrated. These reports undoubtedly had great influence on Australian 500s, a number of which incorporated some or all of the Kieft's features, including rubber in tension as a very light springing medium, zero-roll-stiffness swing-axle rear suspension, adjustable rear toe-in and a single in-board rear brake.

- The Smith 500, a tiny car with unique alloy-centred 12 and 13-inch wheels, Cooper-style suspension, Model T steering and Ralt fibreglass nose, has been bought by GEAR stalwart Barry Parsons in Bathurst. This car was started in the 1950s by the late Sid Smith but never completed, and spent some 40 years in the roof of his Helensburgh workshop. With Barry's impressive record of getting cars onto the track, we can look forward to finally seeing this interesting little car in motion.

- Not content with acquiring Brian Yelland's Berkeley (*Loose Fillings* #16), Graham Branch in Port Macquarie has now also bought Paul Samuels' B105 Berkeley, which he hopes to run at Speed on Tweed in September.

- UK Cooperists Joy Rainey and Trevor Hulks were welcomed to lunch in Sydney early July by the *Loose Fillings* team and others after their successful completion of the London-Sydney Marathon in a Morris Minor. With a 1275 cc engine transplant, the Minor did 17,000 km without a hick-up in the regularity class.

- Thanks to readers who sent books of stamps to help cover *Loose Fillings* costs.

Back on its wheels for the first time, Keith Roberts' BJP 500 poses outside the family workshop in Eddington. Restoration of this car is making rapid progress. Eddington is the scene of an annual public road quarter mile sprint which will next be on Saturday 26 March 2005.

