

LOOSE FILLINGS

THE FIRST CAMERON 250

PICTURED at Fishermens Bend in February 1959, this neat air-cooled car is the first Cameron 250, which ran a pushrod 250cc Velocette engine and was built and driven by Don Cameron. His enthusiast father Jim was in charge of the TAA workshops, where the legendary welder Hedley Thompson was foreman, so there was considerable depth of engineering expertise behind his racing efforts. Earlier in the 1950s he had raced motorcycles, starting with a clubman's MAC Velocette. He raced one of the legendary 125cc Walsh BSA Bantams, his own very fast 250cc MOV Velocette and finally an ex-Quincey overhead-camshaft 350cc KTT Velocette which he crashed heavily at Phillip Island, needing four months off work.

His family persuaded him to consider racing with four wheels, and the Cameron 250 was the result. He worked for electri-

cal hardware manufacturer Oliver J. Nelson and was fortunate to have after-hours access to a lot of equipment there, and it was fortunate also that the toolroom foreman was another enthusiast. Don said he "more or less copied" the frame-design of the first 250cc JMW, although amongst other differences his car had wishbone and leaf spring rear suspension, rather than the JMW's swing axle. The car was given the MOV 250cc engine, and made its debut at Hepburn Springs hillclimb in late 1958.

The Cameron 250 added fresh life to the mainly-JMW Victorian under-250cc class in racing and hillclimbing, although Don considered it was too heavy. When it rolled at Templestowe in September 1959 Don scrapped it and built a lighter, smarter car looking like a three-quarter scale Mk 9 Cooper. This second Cameron 250 made its debut in August 1960 at Geelong sprints, attracting much favourable com-

GOOD VIBRATIONS

Congratulations to *Loose Fillings'* Terry Wright, whose massive restoration of the ex-Walton blown Cooper JAP 1100 was completed with literally an hour to spare before the car was loaded up for shipping to England. The downside is that the return to competition of this highly historic car will not happen in Australia. More cheerfully, the great news is that the car now lives again, and by the end of this year we expect to be able to say the same for at least one other Australian air-cooled racer. GEAR at Wakefield Park in October, and Historic Rob Roy in November, could be milestone events for the air-cooled revival.



Above: The Walton-Cooper ready for Shelsley. The 'beam-breaker' at the front is mandatory for UK hillclimb timing.

Below: The Cameron 250 at Fishermens Bend.



ment for its turn-out, but it competed only infrequently. Late in 1961, when the 250cc class in Don's words "started to fall apart," it appeared with his KTT 350cc engine and ran occasionally in hillclimbs and races.

What seems to have been a new owner advertised the car for sale early in 1963, claiming a maximum speed of 118 mph and a s.s. ¼-mile time of 15.64 secs. Don Cameron has some doubts about the maximum speed claim, but recalls the quarter-mile time was set at an AMSC sprint at Calder in 1962. In 1966-67 this car re-appeared in racing with another new owner, but by then motorcycle-engined cars were (with some notable exceptions) a class on the verge of extinction, even on country circuits.

The Cameron Mk III appeared in 1967, closely patterned on a BT6 Brabham and powered by an 1100cc Ford for the newly-introduced Australian Formula 2. Don raced it only briefly before it too was sold. This car, also beautifully made, survives in Victoria. So too does the second of the air-cooled cars, which currently has no engine, gearbox or final drive and which has had some post-period modification.

The photograph of the first Cameron 250 was discovered by motorcycle historian and author Jim Scaysbrook, who kindly made it available to *Loose Fillings*.

BITS & PIECES

- Despite the Editor's repeated recent attempts to give New Zealander Craig Pidgeon's Mk 10 Cooper a Norton engine, it continues to run very successfully with a 4B JAP. The Editor was also the source of the recent identification of Charles McCabe's Cooper as a Mk 8, when it is (and has always been) a Mk 13, the final air-cooled Cooper.
- Round the Houses, Terry Walker's history of motor racing in West Australia, was published in 1979 and nowadays is a very hard book to find. However, the author has now re-published it as a CD with many new photographs, and at \$29.95 plus postage from Perth motoring bookshop

Pitstop (www.pitstop.com.au) it is excellent value. The CD includes photographs of several WA 500s, including the Wally Gibson and Don Hall specials, and the Ex-Crouch Mk 5 Cooper (now the Penrite car) while in W.A. in the hands of Doug Green and Jack Ayres.

- Thanks to Robert Rowe, *Loose Fillings* has seen a copy of the Automobile Year article on the history of 500cc Formula 3, written by Eckhard Schimpf, who raced a Cooper in 1958 and later raced Porsches and BMWs. Although some details are unexpectedly inaccurate, the article offers a European view of the 500 F3 story, and it has some unfamiliar and well-reproduced photographs. It would appear that BMW, through its modern Cooper Mini, is interested in reminding us of earlier Cooper history.

- Darley circuit, near Bacchus Marsh in Victoria, was first used in the late 1940s by motorcyclists and from the mid '50s was also used by Austin 7s, 500s and then by 250s, occasionally for all-car meetings, but mostly with combined fields of A7s and aircooleds as part of a motorcycle program. Nigel Tait, who ran his first self-built A7 there in the early '60s, recalled Trevor Cole (who still races an A7 special in Historics) "taking an old-fashioned fly-spray out onto the starting grid and giving the buzzing 500s a spray before they started."

- David Lawry's partially restored 1961 Lynx Vincent has been bought by Victorian Historic enthusiast Allan Toussaint, who intends to complete the car and race it. Photographs of the car in *Loose Fillings* # 4 showed it was being restored to a very high standard. This was the second of the three Vincent-powered Lynxes John Marston drove, originally with a supercharged 1200cc engine. The car has been in South Australia since the late 1960s.

- Graeme Noonan, who races a classic Norton motorcycle as well as his historic Morris Cooper S and Mk 7 Cooper Norton, is recovering from a compound fracture of

his left ankle, which required many pins and several plates. And they reckon motor racing is dangerous - his injuries came about while lopping a tree.

- Phil Irving's listing as an Australian Kieft agent in 1952, noted by Max Fisher elsewhere in this issue of *Loose Fillings*, has a possible link to the origins of the Melbourne-built Sidney Rudge, which had many design similarities to the 1951-type Kieft. Between 1950 and 1954 (when he joined Repco), Irving was working for the Chamberlain brothers' companies in Port Melbourne - as was Len Sidney. Bob Minogue in the late '50s was an apprentice at MacPherson's under Len Sidney and ran the Sidney car with a Vincent twin from early in 1963. He recently told John Hazelden, the car's current owner, that from the outset the car had been built with room to eventually fit a Vincent. While this all suggests Irving could have had considerable influence on Len Sidney's thinking, in his detailed autobiography Irving mentions neither the Kieft agency nor Len Sidney, although he does provide useful detail of the early days of the Victorian 500cc Car Club, of which Irving was a foundation member.

- Murray Rainey's Mk 9 Cooper Norton, brought to Australia new in 1955, was sold to Mark Chapman in the UK several years ago. Former owner John Caffin advises the car has now been fitted with a 500cc Manx (in place of Rainey's blown 750) and recently won a race at Cadwell Park, driven by Simon Diffey.

- Both the Walton-Cooper and Terry and Ray Wright have left Sydney for the Shelsley Centenary weekend but probably not Goodwood. Numerous hillclimbs are planned before the season ends with September.

COMING EVENTS

- August 10: GEAR Wakefield Park.
- October 12: GEAR Wakefield Park, including special events for a/c cars.
- November 26-27: HSRCA Wakefield Park races with Ashley Cowan Trophy.
- November 27: Historic Rob Roy.
- December 7: GEAR Wakefield Park
- GEAR events require neither a CAMS licence nor logbook or CoD. However they do require GEAR membership, a reasonable level of driver safety equipment, and the circuit's own licence. For Wakefield Park, drivers with a CAMS Level 2 licence or above can use it. For GEAR NSW entries contact Lisa Tobin-Smith, 02 4960 9617, or lisamgb@hotmail.com. For Gear Queensland entries contact Bruce Bloodworth, 0427 432 631 or bsnota@bigpond.com

Classifieds

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

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: 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, 0418 280 000.

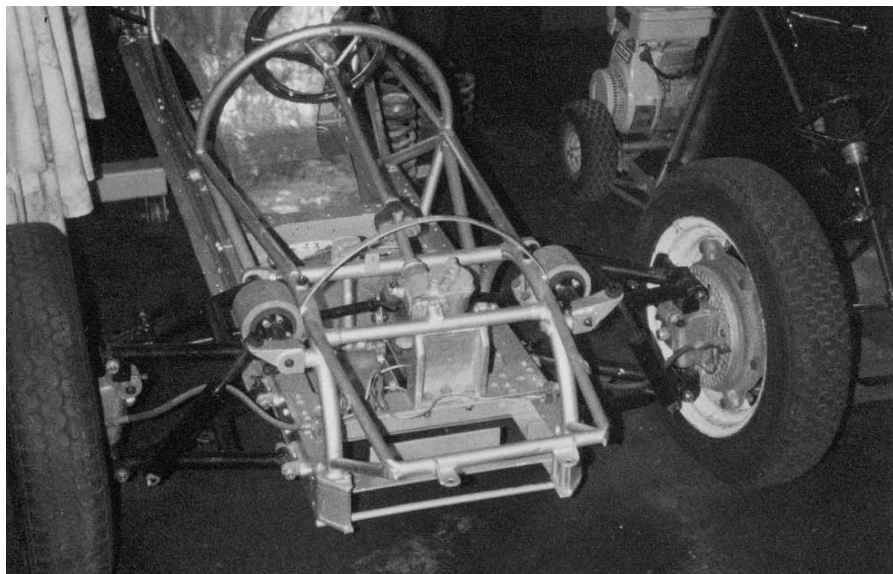
For sale: 1949 Cooper JAP 500, immaculate, reliable. Oldest Cooper in Australia, long racing history in UK, Europe, Malaysia and Australia. Rob Gunnell, 02 9427 0816

Wanted: Fiat 500 15-inch wheels, Tom Cecil, Rigger2TC@aol.com.

Air-cooled cars in New Zealand

BY MAX FISHER

KIEFT



IN 1951 Ron and Les Moore imported two C50-type Kiefts, chassis C50/2 and C50/3. Both were fitted with 1000cc Vincents and were ultimately supercharged to gain respectable performance. These were not good cars, being too heavy and with suspect handling, but they were interesting for two reasons: they were the first Kiefts sold outside the UK, and they had a most unusual method of chassis construction.

They had a parallel-sided ladder frame riveted together from channel-section alloy, with a bridge-girder style subframe of tubular steel bolted to the top of the aluminium ladder, using four quarter-inch bolts at each junction. Suspension was double wishbone front and rear with Metalstic bushes providing rubber in torsion as the suspension medium.

The New Zealand cars were raced by Ron and Les Moore, then one car was campaigned, mostly in hillclimbs but with the odd circuit race, by Bruce Abernethy, M Beckett and Lyn Nielson, without much success. Both cars still exist in New Zealand, one still with a Vincent, the other with (from memory) a Norton Atlas twin. One of the cars had suffered a major accident at Wigram and remained as parts only until the early 1990s, when the car was rebuilt around a new frame.

In 1957 a JAP-engined C51 Kieft was imported to New Zealand from Northern Ireland, but the car did not race and has disappeared completely. Total Kieft production of C50, C51 and C52 models was about 35 cars, in general considered to be not well made and a bit rough in construction, the exceptions being the car assembled by Ray Martin for Stirling Moss, and those of Derek Annable and Don Parker, who extensively modified his.

In 1952 Kieft listed two Australian agents, L. Taylor, 475 Adelaide St, Brisbane [presumably Les Taylor, who raced a number of air-cooled cars - Ed.] and P. Irving of Seaford, Victoria [the legendary Phil Irving]. I have no knowledge of any Kieft cars being sold in Australia, but I have a faint recollection of an article in Sports Car World or similar detailing a C51-C52 Kieft in Australia. I would be interested in any information readers may have.

The top photo from Max Fisher shows one of the Moore Kiefts stripped bare for restoration. The second photo is a factory picture of a production car, while the bottom picture, with the works van, shows the two Moore cars before they left for New Zealand. The latter two photos are reproduced from a privately published history of (mainly) 500 Kiefts. "Kieft Racing Cars - the Bridgend Story" by Peter Tutthill which I bought last year at Goodwood. It's a good read - contact Peter in Cornwall on +44 1208 812358. TW

NORTH AMERICAN 500 REVIVAL

TOM Cecil in Lake Stevens, just north of Seattle, is working to revive the 500cc Club of America. He has already met 500 historian Duncan Rabagliati and is corresponding with Cooper Car Club's Richard Neale, through whom he heard of *Loose Fillings*. Tom suggests his 500 enthusiasm makes him "around half a bubble off of plumb," a position which will probably be familiar to readers of this publication. Tom aims "to bring out the US 500s that aren't active, and develop some support for them" - also very much the objectives of *Loose Fillings*.

As a first move he has produced some stickers of the original 500cc C of A logo, which was only slightly changed when the club changed its name to the Formula Racing Association. Similarity to the New Zealand "Road to Ruin" racing team logo is entirely appropriate! Although the 500cc C of A had a membership of fewer than 40 people and seldom saw grids of more than half a dozen cars, Tom believes many of these cars still survive, and he hopes to encourage owners to bring them out again. He's at Rigger2TC@aol.com.

His racing started in 1958 in a borrowed Effyh 500. Later that year, to get a 500 of his own, he bought plans and began building a Triumph 500-powered Dane, which was not completed - but not thrown away either (he still needs some Fiat 500 wheels - see *Classifieds*). Tom's is the only known home-built car made from Dane-supplied drawings.

The prototype Dane was jointly built and raced by Stu Dane and Mark Latker after they graduated from Stanford University, and two further cars were built, mostly by Dane himself. At least one of these three cars survives. Stu Dane was killed driving a borrowed racing car, but Tom has located Mark Latker and has taped four hours of conversations with him. As well, he has located three other former Dane drivers, and collected more than 30 photographs of Dane 500s.

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THE LOG

IN this section we record those occasions where air-cooled cars have fired up in public. Loose Fillings welcomes advice of all such events - mention in The Log isn't boasting, it's celebrating!

- April 6: GEAR, Wakefield Park NSW - Col Davidson, Scorpion Vincent
- May 1: VHRR Rob Roy (Vic) - John Coffin, Robbins BSA
- May 28: Secretly on a road in Sydney, Terry Wright, Walton Cooper
- May 28-29: Historic races, Winton (Vic); John Coffin, Robbins BSA; Derek Greneklee, Cooper JAP 1100
- June 25-26: Historic races, Eastern Creek; Garry Simkin, Cooper Mk 4 Vincent

THE ORNEL SPECIAL

IN the time-honoured way of aircooled cars, the NSW-built Triumph-engined Ornel Special has once more disappeared from sight after spending at least a year - neglected but not for sale - lying beside a house in Sydney's far western suburbs. This car took its name from Ornel Pumps in Mascot where it was built in the late 1950s by John Dunning.

At some early point in its career it crashed at Oran Park and was extensively rebuilt. In its later form front and rear suspension used Fiat 500 transverse leaf springs and wishbones, Fiat front uprights, brakes and hubs, and cast rear uprights, probably the Cooper-like uprights copied by Bob Joass. It had a Ralt rack, and wheels were Renault 750 pressed-steel rims and spiders, married to the hubs via adaptor plates.

Below: Peter Wentworth-Edwards and the Ornel at Baskerville in Tasmania in the 1970s, with the car looking unusually shiny. Photograph by Leigh Stephens from oldracephotos.com.



Earliest mention so far found of the car is when John Dunning entered it for a Castlereagh sprint meeting in March 1960. For the second-ever Oran Park meeting in July 1962 it was entered by him as the Ornel 650 and driven by Jack Allen, and through to the end of 1963 Allen and Dick Newell were entered as drivers at various events at Oran Park, Catalina and Silverdale hillclimb. By late 1964 the car was entered at Oran Park by the Holyoake family's CC Tyres business in Camden, driven by Warwick Holyoake, and described as the Ornel Triumph 650. At the May 1965 Oran Park meeting the car was shown as having a capacity of 997cc, and at Silverdale in March 1966 its capacity was stated to be 998cc, with David Holyoake the driver. This would fit with recollections of later owners that for a time the car ran a Square Four Ariel engine. Like most other four-wheel installations of a Square Four this one was not a great success.

It was passed on by David Holyoake to a young Rob Phillips, and from about 1970 he ran it in early Historic events, now Triumph-powered again. When Rob bought his present Mk V Cooper Vincent - originally the Bib Stillwell 1100 JAP - the Ornel was adopted by Peter Wentworth-Edwards and continued to run in Historic racing, as well as open events, sometimes driven by Winston Pisani. In the course of some 20 years racing, the Ornel is known to have competed at Oran Park, Catalina, Warwick Farm, Amaroo Park, Silverdale, Hume Weir, Symmons Plains and Baskerville.

HISTORIC ROB ROY, NOVEMBER

DAVID White, the MG club's enthusiastic organiser for Rob Roy, has offered to provide a separate air-cooled class if five or more cars enter for Historic Rob Roy at the end of November.