

# LOOSE FILLINGS

## WALTON WORLD TOUR 2

by Terry Wright

**S**INCE running the Walton-JAP there in 2002, I had been itching to get back to Shelsley Walsh and so its August 2005 Centenary Invitation meeting had been set as the immovable target for the Walton-Cooper's first competition outing in 35 years or so.

Things were starting to look tight as 2004 ended and final assembly started. By Easter 2005 everything that could be bolted on was - but key components were held up; some wider gears; machining blower casing repairs; improvements to the inlet ports.

In late May 2005 the car was ready for a few (weekend) squirts around an industrial estate and a rolling-road session to run it in. We'll skip the gory details here - new pistons and barrels were needed - and only

fitted the night before loading.

I had kept the car in most respects as Bruce Walton had it but inevitably there had been some changes. The engine now had a slightly bigger bore, some enlargement and reshaping of the inlet ports, closer rotor end-clearances in the blower chamber and the magnetos had been replaced by dual-fire coils triggered by the contact breakers in period magneto shells. It wasn't clear if any of these changes were playing a part in the teething troubles. All I could do was screw it together and lay some rubber on the front drive by way of a test before heading for the container terminal.

In early August we 'touched-down' at the Curborough sprint track near Lichfield north of Birmingham for a morning of run-

### GOOD VIBRATIONS

In the 1950s and 1960s, Victoria was the strongest state for air-cooled cars, and it seems it may be doing it again. There is confident talk of no fewer than seven air-cooled cars appearing in a few months time at Rob Roy in May. New owners are bringing cars out, and the enthusiasm of the longer-established Victorian competitors seems as keen as ever. Perhaps the Speed on Tweed organisers' interest in air-cooled cars may help to spread interest further north.

ning-in and everything seemed to work well. But under full load uphill at Shelsley Walsh a week later it was a different story.

The Shelsley Walsh course starts, as it has for a hundred years, in a farmyard with an adjacent former orchard as the paddock. Initially the narrow road rises at about

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**Rob Roy Invasion:** On debut at Rob Roy, John Hazelden's Sidney Rudge had magneto trouble and was back on its trailer by the time this picture was taken. The other four cars (right to left) are Ken Bedggood's Cooper Mk 5 JAP 1100, John Coffin's Robbins BSA, Graeme Noonan's Cooper Mk 7 Norton and Steve Denner's WGM Matchless. Photo Chester McKaige.



## DIRT-CIRCUIT 500

The latest air-cooled car to be restored by Bathurst's Barry Parsons is the JRS, a late-'50s and early-'60s Triumph-powered 500, which Barry brought out at the October GEAR day.

The car was originally built in Young in the NSW Central West and was bodied in Sydney by British-born alloy craftsman Stan Brown. It was the idea of John Richens, whose family owned a large orchard near Young. John was attending Young Technical College, and is said to have been influenced by watching the performance on local dirt circuits of cars like Les Trim's Lynx Vincent and the Davidson/Powell/Rofe DPR. Using the resources of the Tech, John built a chassis into which was fitted a 500cc alloy Trophy Triumph twin, said to have been the engine from the bike which finished third in one of the two motorcycle 24-hour races at Mt Druitt.

With engine and Triumph close-ratio gearbox in place, the car was sent to Sydney for Stan Brown to make the body, and from there it was taken to Melbourne where Len Lukey made exhaust pipes and the universal-jointed half-shafts. Dick Pol, who built most of the engines used in local short-circuit racing, extensively modified the engine and fitted fuel injection. A VW oil cooler was fitted in the nose.

The car was said to have been very successful on oiled-dirt circuits in the central west, revving to 8000 rpm on alcohol. When John Richens moved to Queensland the car was no longer used, and over the years the engine and gearbox were sold and many parts were lost. Barry Parsons described the car as being "in a very sad state" when he bought it in September 2004 and started its restoration.

The Les Trim Lynx Vincent went

## CLASSIFIEDS

**For sale:** Scarab Triumph, history from at least early 1960s. Rebuilt Bonneville engine, new 4-speed box, \$20,000, all offers considered. Graeme Worsley, 02 6362 8734.

**For sale:** Norton laydown box, believed complete, turns over OK, case has no visible cracks or damage. Plus two upright end covers. \$350. Also Cooper 500 road wheel with integral brake drum in primer, v.g.c., with original skinny Dunlop race tyre, \$300. David Rapley, 03 5629 6222.

**Wanted:** Fiat 500 15-inch wheels, to help complete US 500cc project. Tom Cecil, Rigger2TC@aol.com

**For sale:** Cooper MkV Norton ex Bob Gerard. Don hall, 08 9386 2346

through many revisions and very little of it survives. The DPR by comparison is largely intact and its owner, Rowley Orr in Young, says it will eventually be restored with a Triumph, one of several engines it ran in its heyday. While Stan Brown is best remembered for his panelwork on road-racing cars, the JRS is one of several dirt-circuit cars for which he also built bodies.

## BITS AND PIECES

● The remains of the BRM 500, the Manx-powered Cooper Mk 8 copy built by Allan Staton in Victoria in the late '50s, are now in Bathurst in the care of the champion of air-cooled lost causes, Barry Parsons. At the January GEAR meeting president Terry Harris, who hillclimbed the BRM with Triumph 650 power in the 1970s, presented Barry with Staton's display board which listed his Rob Roy, Templestowe and Hepburn Springs class records with the car.

● Alan Morton recently discovered a week-old dead rat inside the Alba Triumph in his garage in the Gold Coast hinterland. Ah, Queensland: drop-dead beautiful one day, drop dead the next.

● The mystery Malaysian air-cooled car mentioned in Loose Fillings #11 may indeed have been an early Kieft, as there is mention in the 500cc magazine Iota that Michael Christie's early-type Kieft JAP 1100 was sold in 1952 to H. I. Thornton-Jones of Kuala Lumpur. As well, a Kieft advertisement in Iota during 1952 refers to a "latest specification" Kieft (this would have been the later Stirling Moss type) being available due to cancellation of an Australian order. Who might the Australian customer have been?

● Stamps, gentlemen, please: a reminder that sending Garry Simkin a book of 50c stamps greatly helps with the printing and mailing of *Loose Fillings*.

● Don Hall in Perth (whose Mk 5 Cooper Norton is still for sale), has just completed another air-cooled project, a 1969-70 six-speed Maico 125 motorcycle.

● The Newbound 500, a Victorian car with Gold Star BSA engine and gearbox which has been dormant for some years, has been bought by Blackburn Service Centre's David Palstra, who enjoyed a character-building debut with it at Phillip Island in February. While Graeme Noonan's Mk 7 Cooper ran strongly all weekend in the hands of guest driver Teddy Tompkins, the Newbound first broke the primary-drive shock absorber on the Friday, then split its fuel tank. Repairs were unsuccessful, and the car ran on Sunday using the sprint tank - which was empty after one and a half laps. Still, better than not being there at all!

## JBS WINS ASHLEY COWAN TROPHY

This trophy, remembering NSW 500cc enthusiast Ashley Cowan who died in 1995, is awarded by the Historic Sports & Racing Car Association for best performance by an air-cooled racing car at a nominated HSCA race meeting, which recently has been in a handicap event during the end-of-year Wakefield Park meeting. At the November 2005 meeting the best performance was recorded by Garry Simkin in his JBS Norton, after the only other air-cooled runner, Andrew Halliday in the ex Bill Shipway Cooper Mk 5 Norton, spun late in the race when seemingly comfortably in front.

## THE LOG

● November 13, Chelsea Rd hillclimb, Auckland: Allan Kerr, Cooper Mk6 Triumph, Graham Brayshaw, Cooper Mk8 Norton

● November 26-27, Wakefield Park historic races, Ashley Cowan Trophy: Andrew Halliday, Cooper Mk5 Norton, Garry Simkin, JBS Norton

● November 27, Rob Roy hillclimb: John Coffin, Robbins BSA; John Hazelden, Sidney Rudge (debut); Steve Denner, WGM; Graeme Noonan, Cooper Mk7 Norton; Ken Bedggood, Cooper Mk5 JAP 1100

● February 11-12, Phillip Island historic racing: Teddy Tompkins (Graeme Noonan's Mk7 Cooper Norton); David Palstra, Newbound BSA (debut)

● March 11, Mt Cotton hillclimb, Qld - David Reid, Cooper Mk3 JAP

● March 13, Wakefield Park - Garry Simkin, Cooper Mk4 Vincent, testing

● March 25/26, Eastern Creek HSRCA, Andrew Halliday, Cooper Mk5 JAP.-

● March 23-26, Albert Park, AGP demos, Garry Simkin, Cooper Mk4 Vincent.

## CALENDAR

The following dates cover eastern states events where (with the exception of Wakefield Park in September) air-cooled cars could run without needing high-level CAMS paperwork for car and driver. For GEAR events suitable clothing is necessary, and some form of roll-over protection is now obligatory, but no CAMS paperwork is required. A Wakefield Park licence is required, but CAMS licences are also accepted.

April 5: GEAR NSW, April 12: GEAR Q  
May 3: GEAR Q, May 7: VHRR Rob Roy  
June 14: GEAR Q, June 21: GEAR NSW  
August 8: GEAR Q, August 9: Gear NSW  
August 19-20: Leyburn Sprints (Qld)  
September 9-10: Wakefield Park historic races, incl. Ashley Cowan trophy

# Air-cooled cars in New Zealand

## COOPER

by Max Fisher

**N**EW Zealand Cooper history is well known and recorded, the cars themselves being either privately imported, for example Bill Lee's, or coming via John Crouch in Australia. Independent Motors in Wellington (Jock Shelley) had a sub-agency from Crouch and imported a few cars. The later agent was Ron Frost, of Frost Motors in Levin, along with his associate Arnold Stafford.

New Zealand was unusual in that a number of Coopers were run in the NZ Grand Prix at Ardmore and the Lady Wigram Trophy at Christchurch. At that time, not many Coopers anywhere in the world had run a full GP distance of more than 200 miles, let alone remained competitive throughout. Syd Jensen placed 6th in the 1955 GP, as did Ron Frost in 1958, both with Norton-powered Coopers. New Zealand did not run the international F3 class, so the capacity of the Manx Nortons was up to 600cc, using the barrel and piston used for international sidecar racing.

In other races like the Dunedin road races air-cooled cars did really well. In

1953, Bob Gibbons (Cooper Mk5 1100 JAP) finished 2nd, Syd Jensen (JBS) 3rd and Ron Frost (JBS) 5th. At Dunedin in 1954, Arnold Stafford (Cooper Mk 6) finished 3rd, and in 1955 he finished 2nd.

- About 20 Cooper 500s came to New Zealand, and although the exact number is unclear because records of the early cars are confused (to say the least) and some cars have a doubtful pedigree. It is generally accepted that two Mk3 500s came here, along with a Cooper clone, built in England but not by Cooper's. These were followed by at least two Mk4s, both still in Auckland and the following:

- 1951: three Mk5s came here, 5/12/51 and two long-chassis cars - 5/L/2/51 and 5/L/8/51. Of these, two are still in NZ, the other is now in the US.

- 1952: only one Mk6 came to NZ, although we have a very professionally-built replica in Christchurch which is clearly marked as a replica.

- 1953: one Mk7, 7/11/53, was imported and at the time of writing is for sale in

England. Chassis 7/22/53 was sent to NZ from a private collection in Japan for a complete rebuild, and was subsequently returned to Japan. A total copy of this car exists in NZ, but it is a replicar, not genuine.

- 1954: three Manx-engined Mk8s were imported, one by Dick Campbell (8/3/54) and two by Frost Motors (8/26/54, 8/27/54). Two of these cars are still in NZ, one with a Hillman Imp engine as fitted very early in its life. There is possibly one other Mk8, JAP-powered, in a private museum in Taranaki. This car raced twice then disappeared.

- 1955: Four Mk9s came to NZ - 9/24/55, 9/25/55, 9/26/55 and 9/28/55. Regrettably, only one remains.

- 1956: One Mk10, 10/20/56, was imported, along with a complete set of components, which was built up into a complete car in 1957, using a NZ-built chassis. This semi-Cooper has no chassis number, and is now in Australia.

This completes the series covering factory-built air-cooled cars in New Zealand. For any data or assistance with the history of factory-built cars please contact either me (+64 9 534 2245 or Ian Garmey. (+64 9 294 9310).

We are always happy to help.

## SNAPSHOTS FROM THE 2005 GOODWOOD REVIVAL

The 500s returned to Goodwood last September and 6 makes (Petty, JBS, Keift, Cooper, Effyn and Mackson) shared the top 6 places. Seventh, just days after his 77th birthday, was David Stevenson, originally entered in the Walton-Cooper, which didn't get its planned 500cc transplant. It was left to Californian Skip Streets driving John Streets' 1953 Erskine Staride to represent the new world. There is no 500 event at Goodwood this year but there is planned to be one at the Cooper 60th anniversary celebrations as part of the the August 19/20 Monterey Historics at Laguna Seca. Garry Simkin is down to drive expat Aussie Ian Gordon's Mk5 Cooper-Norton. TW



Above: John Chisholm's 1952 Arnott-JAP; See *Loose Fillings* #19 for Max Fisher's story of the other surviving Arnott in New Zealand. Photo Terry Wright  
Left: The Streets' Staride showing signs of contact in the great four car scrap for second place before expiring near the end of the race. Photo courtesy Jeff Bloxham



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1:12, steepens to 1:8, bends to the left (Kennel), steepens to 1:6 or so and bends again to the left (Crossing). Each of these bends is blind, between high grass banks and needs to be taken flat out to maximise momentum for the main climb which follows (still curving left) up the side of the hill. You arrive at the Esses (left then right) in front of thousands of spectators crammed up the high banks above you and finish dead straight at a somewhat lesser gradient of 1:10.

In practice on the Friday of the three-day meeting there was considerable misfiring from the Cooper both without load when raising revs before dropping the clutch on the start and when accelerating off the line and out of corners. Eventually the rear cylinder head overheated a little for no apparent reason.

Suspicion fell on my attempts to replicate with methanol, pump fuel and acetone, the period mix of 80% methanol, 10% avgas and 10% benzol so I reverted to 100% methanol. Some doubted the head of fuel provided by the original gravity feed sprint tank and so I changed to a pumped fuel supply from the scuttle tank.

Batteries were recharged and ignition and fuel pump circuits separated in case one was interfering with the other. A possible hot spot and source of pre-ignition caused by a flaw in the head around a plug was a concern and so I decided to run only one plug to each head (in the good holes) instead of the twin-plug set-up.

Bruce had raised doubts about the characteristics of the coil ignition compared to the original magnetos so that was worrying me but there was nothing I could do about it. There I was also wondering if the better breathing and possibly more efficient blower had changed the carburetion side of things at all.

A plug-chop at the finish at about 6000 rpm had shown the full-throttle mixture was about right. But Bruce had run without a carburettor piston spring and dashpot oil to give faster throttle response. The misfire could have been the result of the piston rising too rapidly (thus leaning-off the mixture) and/or bouncing when the throttle is planted. Perhaps the needle needed to be richened at the lower throttle positions? Alternatively some light springing (to prevent the piston bouncing) and/or some very light oil in the dashpot (to dampen piston movement) could have been tried.

Otherwise the motor was delivering heaps of torque from way below 2000 rpm with little vibration and would run way past 6000 rpm if I inadvertently let it. The way it picked up its skirts at low rpm made it feel remarkably like the turbo diesel VW Golf I was using as a tow-car.



Above: Attacking 'Bottom Ess' on the last run at the Shelsley Walsh Centenary. The Walton-Cooper seemed to handle flawlessly. Note that the Walton-developed suspension is much flatter at the front than seen in most period pictures of late model Coopers. Photo Dennis Rushton.

Right: Demonstrating the Simkin Mk II starting machine to Stuart Becker who owns the ex Freddie Giles Salome. Traditionally the air-cooled cars push start down this road into the paddock, with the start being just to the right at the bottom.



I pulled the heads off and spent most of the Saturday working on the car in the paddock. It ran much better on the Sunday, the big day, with no overheating but there was still some slight misfiring evident. Later I found what was most likely to be the cause of the problem. One of the contact breaker bearings had been installed with shim stock in place of the fibre insulator. The shim stock had come loose and fallen out thus allowing 10-20 thou play in the shaft next to the contact breaker with obvious effect on the accuracy of the ignition timing.

At the end of my first timed run at a reasonable 38.24 seconds - I relaxed my arms as I crossed the line - and the steering column popped out of the rack!

I had to wait in the paddock at the top until the scrutineer could be ferried up to

inspect and authorise my return down the hill. The problem was soon fixed but my second and final run felt far too frantic to produce a good time.

However the clock stopped at 37.12 seconds, a personal best and a class win - just. Finally it seemed like fun again!

*Edited by Graham Howard,  
1248 Pacific Highway, Pymble  
NSW 2075 phone/fax 02 9440 4081  
(grimes@optushome.com.au).*

*Produced by Terry Wright,  
(tsrwright@gmail.com).*

*Published by Garry Simkin,  
28 McClelland Street, Willoughby,  
NSW 2068 phone/fax 02 9958 3935,  
(gjsimkin@iprimus.com.au).*