

LOOSE FILLINGS

This is perhaps the most encouraging issue so far of Loose Fillings, because it shows how many of our cars are appearing, many of them now quite regular runners. Even running only occasionally still helps to make our cars more visible, and for this reason we need to thank every owner who has run his car. Nonetheless, the energy and enthusiasm of John Coffin deserves special mention, as through his efforts more of our cars have started appearing, in turn leading to their being given their own classes in Victorian hillclimbs. Likewise, in NSW, GEAR continues to provide events just for our sort of cars. And if you know someone who wants to join us, check the classified ads. Things are looking up!



The photograph shows a Cooper 500, driven by an "S. Pitcher," racing at Tarrawingee in the early 1960s. It looks like a Mk5, but was entered as a Mk4. Which Cooper was this, and who was its driver?

The puzzle was sorted out at the Historic meeting at Sandown in November, when Stan Pitcher started talking with Cooper Mk7 owner Graeme Noonan, using the familiar introduction, "I used to have one of these." Stan bought his Cooper late in 1961 and raced it at Calder, Winton and Tarrawingee until about 1966. During his ownership the car was usually entered by Alf Parker's Service Station in Knoxfield. Parker owned a 48-series Holden which Stan also raced.

From Stan Pitcher the car went to Adrian de Vos, then to an owner in the Ferntree Gully area whose name has since been lost, then to Rex Pointon, Bill Monish, David Rapley in 1980, then to Jim Runciman in West Australia in 1982. The car is now in South Australia, owned by Brian Sorley and Ed Suttor.

This is an unusual Cooper, originally a Mk4 but reworked in England with front bodywork and supplementary chassis tubes in the Mk5 style, although without the Mk5's pannier tanks or rack and pinion. The first two characters of the chassis number are not certain, but the remainder is clear - ??/28/49. This suggests the car could be just two numbers away from Jack Saywell's 8/80-engined Cooper, 10/26/49, which had its Australian racing debut at Easter Bathurst in 1950.

It was shipped to Australia by a Hobart-based merchant seaman, H.E. (Harry) Atherton, who told David Rapley he saw the car, fitted with a dry-sump alloy-barrel JAP, advertised at Brands Hatch during a visit to the UK. Atherton had "many frustrations" trying to use the car in Tasmania and sold it to a Melbourne driver, David Hutton, in 1959. Hutton had the car prepared by John Hartnett, a former motorcycle racer and already an experienced Cooper tuner. The car was at John Hartnett Motors in Moonee Ponds when Stan Pitcher bought it.

HOW'S THIS FOR STARTERS

US-built So-Lo roller-starter systems for air-cooled cars are now available through Cooper Norton racer Graeme Noonan (03 5952 6490, amethyst@waterfront.net.au). Prices range from \$1400 to \$2250, all including GST. More details on the manufacturer's website, www.doczintl.com



Meanwhile, Terry Wright spotted this fine bit of Swiss engineering at the Klausen Memorial hillclimb - power comes from a large angle grinder. He says, also, that he has found his Simkin starter benefits from the addition of vertical idler-rollers which run on the sides of the tyre.

BITS AND PIECES

- Movie film of the Coopers of Jack Brabham, Ash Marshall and Lloyd Hirst at Mt Druitt in 1953 is part of the extensive collection of motorsport photography on Brian Darby's website at www.vintage-speedway.com. Most of the site is devoted to speedway, but the Mt Druitt footage is part of a page titled Aussie Road Racing. Also on this page are photos of early Ralts, and of Jack Myers' dual Triumph-powered Thunderbird.
- Motorcycle historian Brian Greenfield has for many years been researching the history of Vincent motorcycles in Australia. His massive collection of information is now being readied for publication by Bookworks in Sydney, and should

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.

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

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

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

be on sale in the next few months.

- Things happen fast in the States. The US 500cc newsletter reports that with the revival of 500cc cars in US historic racing there are now about a dozen 500s "actually racing, right now, this year," with a four-event race series on the east coast.

- At its November Sandown meeting, Victorian Historic Racing Register (with some gentle nudging from former Cooper Mk9 owner John Coffin) remembered the 60th anniversary of Cooper's competition debut, with Penrite's Mk5 Cooper JAP 1100 and engineless Mk9 on display and Graeme Noonan's Mk7 Manx doing some demonstration laps - behind a pace car, at 5000rpm in second gear!

- Graeme was approached during the meeting by a gentleman who introduced himself as Stan Pitcher. Stan, who raced the Mk4 Cooper shown elsewhere in this issue, and had previously raced a car known as the TRM 500 in Victoria in the early 1960s, running it in partnership with Charlie Fitch at Darley and Tarrawingee, and also at Rob Roy hillclimb. This car was probably the later revision of the Alex Eyre-built AHE, a JAP-engined car with Austin 7 brakes and wire wheels in a short-wheelbase chassis. Its chassis was later lengthened, and its remains are now owned by Tony Matthews at Inglewood in country Victoria.

- MG Car Club's Rob Roy hillclimb in November included David Palstra's Newbounds BSA, Graeme Noonan's Cooper Mk7 Norton and super-enthusiast John Coffin's Robbins BSA. John said the three cars were given a great pit location and spectators showed a lot of interest, packing the area all day. Fastest 500 was the Cooper (30.5, thanks to a new 24/36 Daytona first gear and improved carburation), followed by the Robbins (31.12) and the Newbounds (32.58). Andrew Howell's McLaren-powered Gould hillclimb device ran 17.58!

- Six cars ran in the special air-cooled events which were part of the October GEAR meeting. John Coffin trailed the Robbins up from Victoria, and Garry Simkin brought both his cars, driving the JBS himself and loaning his Cooper Vincent to Dave Williamson. Barry Parsons produced his latest air-cooled acquisition, the New Zealand-built Scorpion Norton, a good-looking device which runs small-diameter wheels and a Norton Commando engine stretched to somewhere around 850 cc.

- Returning to the track after more than 20 years was the Waye 500, a one-off JAP and Norton-powered car which the Hallidays bought from South Australia in 1997 and

which, after a lengthy rebuild, they produced at the December 2006 GEAR day. The car last ran in 1993 in South Australia, but had a history going back another 40 years, to its original constructor Jack Waye. The car was bought by former motorcycle racer Kevin Fuss in 1955, and converted from JAP to Manx Norton power. That Manx engine is now in the Hallidays' Mk5 Cooper, and the Waye is running a JAP again.

- The side-valve 750cc BMW-powered car run by the late Hank Northey in historic racing, and more recently owned by Chris Hill in Queensland, has been bought by an unknown person who enquired about the car via Duncan Rabagliati in the UK, and who has not responded to enquiries from *Loose Fillings*. The car now appears to have an overhead-valve BMW engine.

- The original Cyclo 500, a small-wheeled space-frame car built in Melbourne by Leo Bates in the 1960s with a BSA single, and later with a 500cc Kawasaki triple, has been bought by Darren Visser, who helps John Hazelden with the Sidney Rudge.

- In South Australia, Don Penn is progressing with work on the Rilstone Vincent, the very Cooper-like car built by Keith Rilstone on the early 1950s.

- Three stalwarts of the air-cooled revival, David Reid, David Palstra and Andrew Halliday, ran their cars through the streets of Murwillumbah at Speed on Tweed in September. David Reid was bemused to find his Cooper JAP was marginally faster than his Ford-powered Cooper T59 Formula Junior. He commented that the Speed on Tweed atmosphere "has to be experienced to be appreciated." S on T supremo Roger Ealand is an air-cooled sympathiser, having owned the unique Beart Cooper during his years in England.

- During this year's Australian Hillclimb Championship at Mt Panorama, Garry Simkin and Terry Wright ran some demonstration climbs, 50 years after their respective cars - Garry's ex-Davison Cooper Vincent and Terry's ex-Walton Walton JAP - had fought out the 1956 title, run on the same hill.

- The Walton JAP now has a 500 JAP, more probably close to 600cc, which was acquired many years ago from speedway rider Brian Collins. Those were the days, never to be repeated, when \$500 got you a complete JAP-engined speedway bike. Slightly unusually (but they did make them, so Terry believes), the JAP has aluminium crankcases.

- David Palstra was second outright under 1500 cc group Lb in the VHRR 2006 awards.

THE LOG

This section of *Loose Fillings* celebrates all the known occasions on which our cars fire up in public, on the basis that, if you can get the thing to go bang, just once, it's worth a mention. But as well, *The Log* also reflects the level of activity in the air-cooled revival. This issue of The Log shows 12 different air-cooled cars have run at 11 events in three States since the last newsletter. Congratulations to everyone involved!

- August 19-20, Leyburn Sprints, David Reid, Cooper Mk3 JAP
- September 16-17, Speed on Tweed, Murwillumbah, David Reid (Cooper Mk3 JAP), David Palstra (Newbounds BSA), Andrew Halliday (Cooper Mk5 Norton)
- October 11, Wakefield Park, GEAR meeting, John Coffin (Robbins BSA, all the way from Victoria), Garry Simkin (JBS Norton), Dave Williamson (Garry Simkin's Cooper Mk4 Vincent), Mike Bendeich (JMW), Barry Parsons (Scorpion Norton),

Greg Snape (Cooper Mk10 BMW)

- October 21-22, Mt Tarrengower hillclimb, John Coffin (Robbins BSA)
- October 29, Morwell hillclimb, David Palstra (Newbounds BSA)
- November 3-5, Mt Panorama, Australian Hillclimb Championship, Garry Simkin (Cooper Mk4 Vincent), Terry Wright (Walton JAP 500)
- November 11-12, Sandown historic races, Graeme Noonan (Cooper Mk7 Norton)
- November 28, Rob Roy hillclimb, John Coffin (Robbins BSA), David Palstra (Newbounds BSA), Graeme Noonan (Cooper Mk7 Norton)
- December 1-3, Eastern Creek historic races, Andrew Halliday (Cooper Mk5 Norton), Garry Simkin (Cooper Mk4 Vincent)
- December 6, GEAR, Wakefield Park, Andrew Halliday, Wayne JAP
- December 9, Mallala, Don Penn, Rilstone Vincent

CALENDAR

Edlington Sprints for 2007 will be run on March 31. This is one of the best-kept secrets in club motor sport. It's a simple standing quarter on a by-passed length of public road on the outskirts of this small town in central Victoria, but it's the atmosphere, the enthusiasm and the lack of pressure (not to mention the post-event party) that makes it special. This event is ideal for our sort of cars, and we should be there in bulk. More info from Neville Roberts, 03 5468 7295.

LOOSE FILLINGS BY E-MAIL!

Back in the 1960s, someone estimated a possible world demand for computers of no more than 50 machines. Now it seems everybody has one, and *Loose Fillings* itself is written, laid out and sent internationally by computer. If you would prefer to get future issues electronically, e-mail Garry. Simkin.

LOST AUSTRALIAN 500S - THE CLAYTON 500

SECOND IN AN OCCASIONAL SERIES

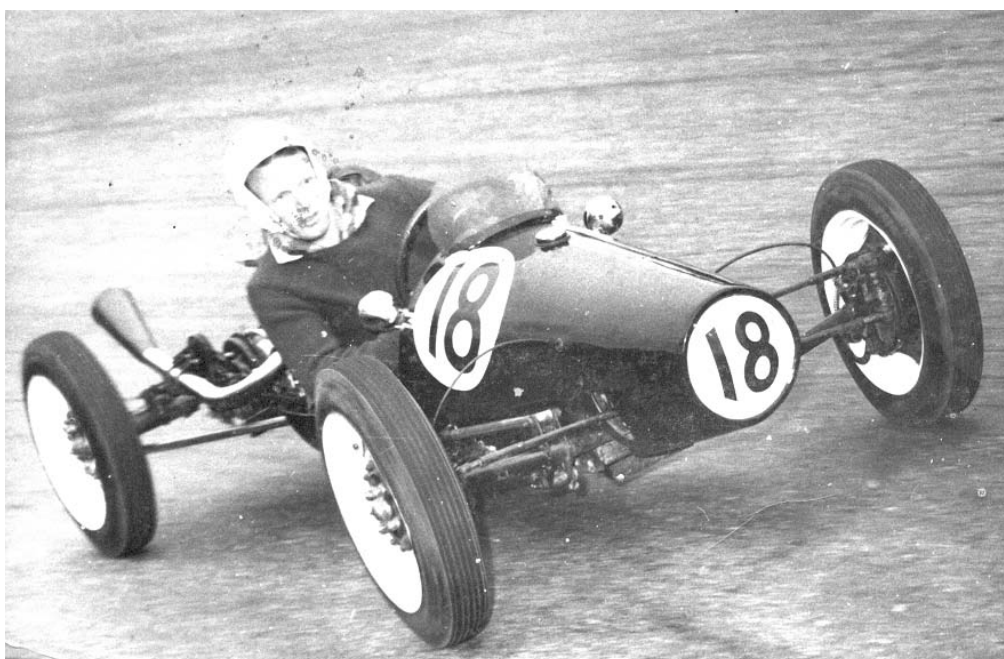
After some 12 months of building, Syd Clayton's 500 had its early outings late in 1952 at Rob Roy and Templestowe hillclimbs in Victoria. Known as the Clayton Scott 500, it used one of the legendary watercooled Scott two-stroke parallel twins and the Scott three-speed gearbox in a chassis based on a pair of Singer 9 chassis rails, with beam axles at both ends and suspension by quarter-elliptic springs and friction shock-absorbers. Wheels were 19-inch Singer and brakes were mechanical all round, Singer at the front and Royal Enfield hub/drum/sprocket at the rear. Wheelbase was a sensible 84 inches (2135mm). Writing in about 1955, engineer Maurie Wheeler (the "W" in the WGM) noted that the car had had "many successes."

By about 1956 Clayton had converted the car to run a 500cc BSA single and Fiat 500 15-inch wheels. In early 1957 it was briefly raced and hillclimbed by John Marston as the Gold Star 500, and by late 1957 it appears to have passed to another Victorian, H. Millar. By early 1959 the car was being raced and hillclimbed in NSW by Brian McPherson from Wellington, who is shown competing at a Mt Panorama hillclimb. By

1961 McPherson had replaced it with a self-built more modern car powered by a 650 BSA twin. The Clayton BSA was sold to Leaton Motors, from where it was bought by Noel Simpson on the NSW central coast. He too raced and hillclimbed it for a short time, and it was known unofficially as the Hairyleg Special. At the very fast public road Bumble Hill at Yarramalong, inland from Wyong, it broke

a steering arm, and Noel later recalled it as "quite a dangerous car by modern [1960s] standards." It was also utterly out of date by 1960s standards, and after an almost continuous 10-year career its status as one of the earliest 500s was not enough to ensure its survival.

The engine was bought for a racing motorcycle, and the rest of the car went to a local scrap dealer.



COOPERS AT LAGUNA SECA

by Garry Simkin

Sixty years of Cooper cars was the theme for the 2006 instalment of the annual historic-racing extravaganza held in August at Laguna Seca in northern California. Expat Australian mechanic-fabricator Ian Gordon had invited me to drive his 1951 Mk5 Cooper Norton, purchased by him three years previously but not run for possibly 25 years or so. Initial runs at the Sears Point track showed up carburation and fuel supply problems that we never really got on top of, making it hard to get good drive out of the corners.

Thursdays 'rookie-day' and subsequent Cooper parades ensured that I got many laps in, as competitors only get one race during the weekend. Losing the one and only plug lead early in the race meant for an "early shower" for me. Formula Junior cars formed the bulk of the entry in this event.

Local air-cooled enthusiasts were delighted at the turnout of six 500 cars, which included four Coopers, a JBS from the UK and a Staride driven by Chuck Streets, winner of this section. Staride owner John Streets was a worthy winner of the Harry Morrow award for services to the air-cooled movement, Harry being a prominent former 500 racer on the US west coast.

Seen spectating at this event was



Queenslander Ivan Tighe, his 1964 Australian Hillclimb Championship winning car having been sold by Peter Johnson to John Streets. The Tighe Vincent is now domiciled at Sears Point and looking rather unloved. This Mk9 clone is one car that would be good to see repatriated and it could be a strong performer in Historic racing here.

Laguna Seca presentation line-up is (L-R) Charles McCabe - Mk 9 Cooper, Richard Frank - Mk 10 Cooper, Garry Simkin - Mk5 Cooper, Chuck Streets - Staride, Richard Utley - JBS, "The Tingle" publisher, Tom Cecil with Harry Morrow Trophy, John Streets, Tom Franges - Mk11 Cooper Triumph. Staride in the foreground.

Photo Doug Stokes

CHAIN STUFF

by Terry Wright

I recently had some concern when I discovered that a 1/2" sprocket isn't just a 1/2" sprocket. An afternoon of Internet investigation led to the finding that in the 'precision roller chain' group (amongst many other types) chains (and sprockets to suit) are covered by different standards - European, American and motorcycle.

All are imperial-dimension based even if expressed in metric terms and all are represented by various international as well as national standards. Apart from the few differences mentioned below, the motorcycle series coincides dimensionally with American and not European industrial standards.

Motorcycle and American chains have numbering systems where the first digit represents the number of 1/8" increments in the pitch - the roller and pin centre-to-centre distance. Motorcycle 420 and American 41 chain are therefore both 1/2" pitch.

Roller width (sometimes referenced as clearance between side plates) is another

variable. Thus 1/2" motorcycle chain can be 410, 415 or 420 these being of 3.17, 4.75 and 6.35 mm width respectively; 420 is the norm for classic motorcycle primary drive i.e. engine to gearbox.

Also varying can be roller diameter and all the above chains have a diameter of 7.75 mm. To make an engine sprocket for a 420 chain you have to buy an American-type blank and here there is a small problem in that a while a 41 is made for a 420-sized roller, a 40 is made for a larger roller diameter of 7.92 mm.

Ideally then you should buy a 41 blank (which will also be the correct 6.35mm width) but probably the more commonly available 40 blank (being for fractionally



larger rollers) may be ok for your application.

Going up a size to 520 etc, (this being 5/8" pitch), in an amazing feat of global coordination, the roller diameter of 10.16 mm is the same in all European (10B), American (50) and motorcycle chains. Variations in width then come into the picture with motorcycle chains also having 525 and 530 widths and H suffixes for thicker plates.

Only if you have a Morgan three-wheeler are you likely to get to 3/4" pitch and here neither motorcycle nor American chain is any use to you. What you need is European 12B (i.e. 12/16" pitch) with roller diameter 12.07 mm and an inside width of 11.7 mm. The American and motorcycle chains have rollers of 11.91mm diameter

The motorcycle chains above are available at the required length by excellent mail service at sensible prices from www.sprocketsunlimited.com in the UK. I now find this is much more efficient than getting the wrong chain in the wrong length from a motorcycle shop and then not being able to buy spare connecting links.

A YEAR WITH AN AIR-COOLED 500

David Palstra records his first year with the Newbounds BSA

I purchased the Newbounds 500 in December 2005 from Calvin Donald who had restored it in the mid '90s and competed extensively in it up to about 2000. The car was in good condition and ran well (after I learned the starting techniques).

As it was my intention to compete in the car, I decided I needed to master it and its intricacies. Saturday afternoons, in the street outside my workshop, became practice time. Lucky it is an industrial area! Even so, plenty heard it and came for a look.

Deciding that I was now an expert, I entered for the February 2006 Phillip Island historic meeting, to run in Prewar Regularity. The organizers obviously decided that the car wasn't fast enough for Postwar, a good decision as was subsequently proved. Overall, the meeting was, for me, a disaster and further description is not warranted, other than to say I had a year's worth of learning about air-cooleds in one weekend.

Next run was Eddington sprints, which was great fun. However, the vibration was so bad that, although I could see the banner above the finish line, I couldn't read the 3-foot high letters on it. John Coffin in his Robbins easily pipped me.

Next event was Collingrove in the beautiful Barossa Valley. Following a great Easter at Mallalla crewing for David Reid in his Cooper FJ, we arrived at Collingrove on Easter Monday in pouring rain and it was suggested that we leave the car on the trailer. Not so for the intrepid pedaller. "Let's give it a run," I suggested. The weather improved slightly, the runs commenced, and I managed to spin on two

Below: the Newbounds in action through the streets of Murwillumbah at Speed on Tweed. This car has BSA engine and gearbox in a four-tube chassis, with front suspension and brakes from a Fiat 500 which also provided all four wheels and the rear wishbones and transverse springs. Steering is by cut-down Minor rack and pinion, rear uprights are fabricated, origin of the central rear brake is not known. Construction is believed to have been in the early 1950s, by James Newbound, who raced BSA-powered speedway bikes and who was in charge of the Army workshops at Bandiana. He was killed in a road accident in the late 1950s, and it is not clear if he completed the car. In the 1990s the car was bought by Calvin Donald, who ran it up to 2000. It was bought by David Palstra in 2005. Photo Justin Ealand, Bussturkey Studios

of three runs before the rain came back. I still had a great time, and the organizers gave me the Persistence Award, which under the circumstances was quite appropriate.

VHRR's Morwell hillclimb took place in May, probably not the best time weather-wise. After sitting for several seconds with the back wheels spinning before leaving the line, I decided more traction-oriented tyres were required. A great day, beaten again by John Coffin. Drat.

I was approached at Phillip Island to take the car to Historic Winton in late May so it could be included in their Aussie Specials display and parade. A great weekend and lots of fun on the old short circuit.

Roger Ealand had spoken to me at PI and again spoke to me at Winton. Roger is the Director of Speed on Tweed at Murwillumbah in September and he was keen to have some air-cooleds there. After much soul searching, I decided to go.

Before I went, I followed some advice given to me by Derry Greneklee of Cooper JAP fame in Adelaide, and braced the top of the engine. Amazing result - glasses no longer jump on nose, and kidneys have resumed normal functioning. I also shouted the little thing new tyres. After discussion with Graham Hoinville of CAMS, I



fitted Michelin X pattern which are proving very satisfactory.

I had arranged to meet David Reid, who was running the Junior at Wakefield Park in September. I left Melbourne with the flu, got to Goulburn feeling bad and then experienced the coldest day I have ever felt at Wakefield on the Sunday. We left in the afternoon and headed for sunny Queensland, arriving at Currumbin on Monday afternoon.

I tootled off to the doctor and was told I had developed pneumonia. A couple of days rest under the care of David and his wife Annie and I was ok. Speed on Tweed was an adventure. It has been reported elsewhere so I won't repeat myself. Needless to say it is a great event, "The 'Most Fun You Can Have Sitting Down'".

October saw us head for a multiclub hillclimb at Morwell. A class first made me happy, although I should mention we were the only entry in the class. This great venue is about to disappear. From the clubroom windows, one can see the gigantic dredges moving ever nearer as they tear the brown coal from the earth. The good

news is that the club is getting a new circuit and clubrooms, courtesy of whatever authority digs up the coal.

November saw Historic Sandown which I attended as a spectator, having decided that big circuits don't agree with my little car (or is that with me?). Graeme Noonan was there with his magnificent Manx-engined Cooper, as there was a celebration of Cooper's 60 years. Other than being held too long before getting on the track and then having to follow the pace car at ridiculously slow speed, I'm sure he had a good time. If you haven't seen Graeme's new rollers, make the time to see them. Very impressive.

Following discussions with Graeme Noonan and John Coffin, we took the three cars to Geelong for a static display on November 19, being the 50th anniversary of the first Geelong Speed Trials. The organizing committee is trying to convince Geelong Council to allow them to revive this most historic event. If the attendance of onlookers is any indication, it will happen.

The ast weekend of November saw

Historic Rob Roy. Beautiful day, perfect weather. The air-cooleds were represented by Graeme Noonan (who got the Cooper going very well), John Coffin in the Robbins and yours truly in the Newbounds. All three cars performed flawlessly and entertained the crowd.

All I can say in conclusion is that, having been fascinated by air-cooleds for 50 years, and having finally found the courage (or stupidity, or whatever it can be described as) to invest in one, I have had a truly enjoyable year. Many more years will follow, if Derry G is any indication, but this first year will live in my memory.

I have met numerous memorable characters, many of whom have offered advice, suggestions, bits and information.

I have made friends with many people who appreciate 'real' racing cars and the intrepid souls who pedal them and that is something no money can buy.

Most importantly, I must mention my tireless pit crew, headed by Denis Coghlan, ably assisted by Mick Doyle and Jeff Ross. Without them, the car, and myself, go nowhere.



Above: Air-cooleds getting ready for a Speed on Tweed run with David Palstra (left), David Reid (Mk 3 Cooper-JAP) and Andrew Halliday (Mk 5 Cooper Norton).

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Terry Wright tells us that the sequence of photos of the Walton-Cooper in trouble at Shelsley-Walsh in the last *Loose Fillings* ended with him 'shooken-up' but the car undamaged. In the last of the photos, the car is actually shown bouncing backwards off the bank before it continued back across the track to end up on the opposite bank. This photo shows how the Esses is supposed to be taken. The drain cover is a useful marker for the exit onto the finishing straight.

