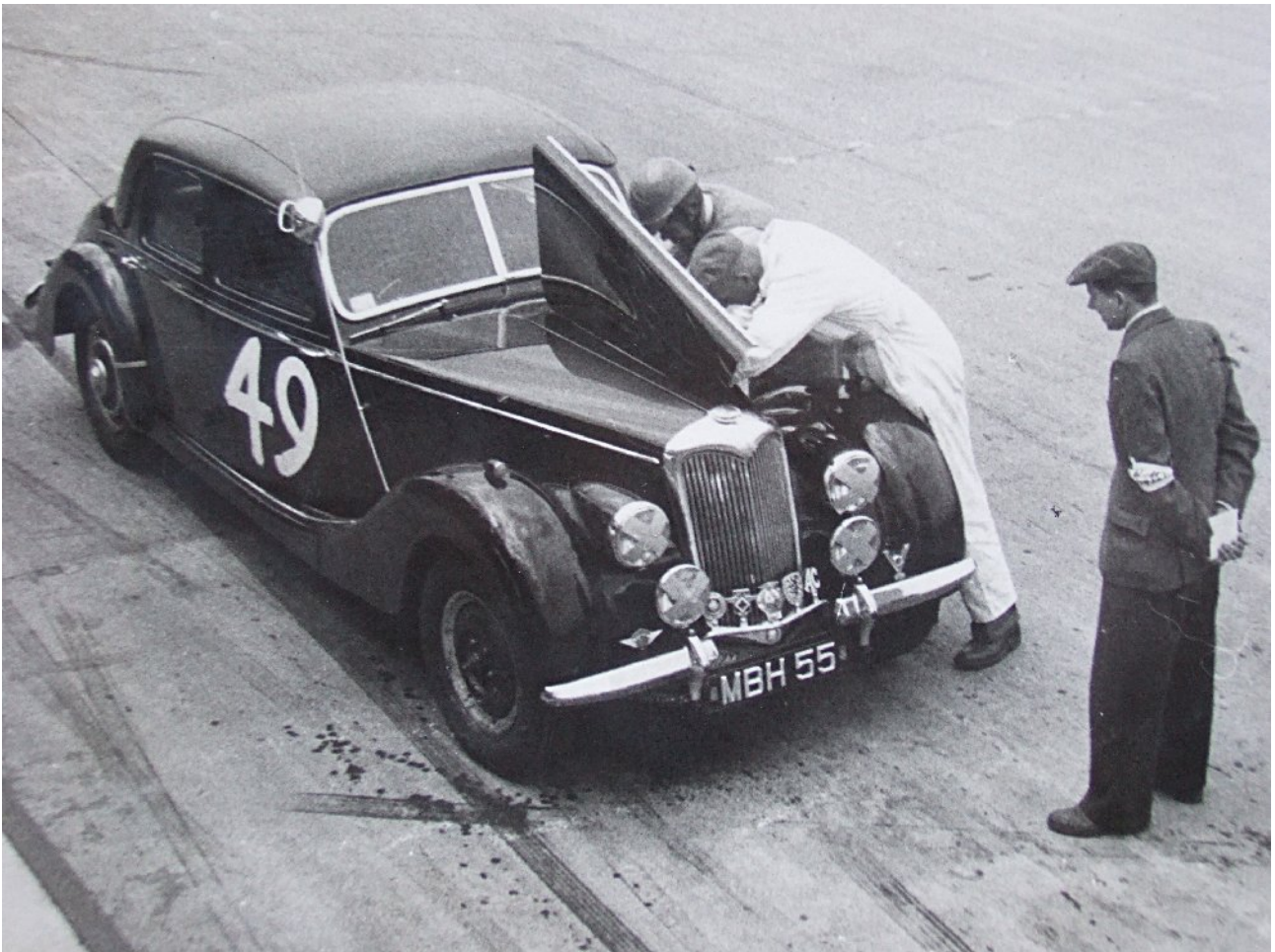




TORQUETUBE

Newsletter of Riley Motor Club Qld Inc.

June 2008



Next Meeting: 7:30 pm Thursday, 12th June
Queensland Sporting Car Club
206 Montague Road
West End 4101

Editor: Linden Thomson (07)32696426 0419175083 lindenthomson@optusnet.com.au

Minutes of the OGM of the Riley Motor Club, Qld., Inc. held at the Brisbane Sporting Club, West End Thursday, 08 May 2008

Meeting opened by President Alan Hill at 8.10pm with 21 members and guests present.

Apologies: Pat & Betty Elliott, Peter & Bonnie Young, Trevor & Wendy Judd, Ken & Wendy Lonie, John & Eve Romer, Graham & Betty Swan, Brian & Lyn Jackson, Beverley Burrows, Kiara Rizzo, David Schoch and Dick & Earla Self.

Minutes from previous meeting:

Moved, Gary Britton and seconded by Dorothy Cameron that minutes be accepted. Carried.

Business arising from minutes:

President Alan and Treasurer Ross circulated a proposed sheet put up by Trevor Judd and retyped by Dianne Phillips. The sheet was a reminder for members that annual fees were due and on the reverse side a place for members to identify vehicles that they own and contact details. The proposed form was discussed and an addition for members to indicate whether they were happy to have these details circulated within the club would be added. A number of other Clubs have such a register which is handy for members of like vehicles to contact one another.

Inwards correspondence:

1. Letter from the Office of Fair Trading;
2. Membership fees from Mr Bill Donovan;
3. Letter of resignation from Mr Bernie Reeves;
4. Membership fees from Mr Bruce McPhail;
5. Membership fees from Mr John Davies;
6. Letter from RACQ Motorfest with entry forms;
7. Copy of Club Sport Magazine;
8. Copies of Blue Diamond, Riley Gazette, Riley Rattles.

Outwards correspondence:

1. Letter of membership acceptance for Mr Peter Bradley;
2. Letter of membership acceptance for Mr Robert Harmsworth;
3. Get Well Card to Peter Young.

Moved by Robin Hull, seconded by Bill Donovan that the inwards be received and the outwards be endorsed. Carried.

Treasurer's Report April, 2008.

Balance as per Bank Statement, 31 st March, 2008			\$3,494.93
Deposits Made	Membership fees	\$668.00	
	Interest	<u>\$ 0.42</u>	
		<u>\$668.42</u>	\$4163.35
Cheques Presented	Office of Fair Trading	\$ 38.10	
	Room Rental March	\$ 33.00	
	Room Rental April	\$ 55.00	
	Newsletter Expenses, March	\$ 115.60	
	Newsletter Expenses, April	<u>\$ 176.00</u>	
		<u>\$ 417.70</u>	\$3,745.65
Balance as per Bank Statement, 30 th April, 2008			\$3,745.65

Moved by Ross that his report be accepted, seconded Dorothy Cameron. Carried

Club Captain's Report:

In the Club Captain's absence, Ray Burrows covered some activities. The May run would have the Riley Club joining with the Bayside Vehicle Restorer's Club for the National Historic Motoring Day, 18th May 2008. Overview of the Run: 9.00am from Dreveson Park Wynnum foreshore (163, N1), to Anzac Park Toowong for morning tea, via Captain Cook Bridge, Park Road Milton, and the Mt Cootha Circuit. Then to lunch at Kalinga Park via Inner City Bypass, Hamilton, and Clayfield. Then to afternoon tea at Brisbane Corso, Fairfield on the River. Further information will be provided at the next meeting.

For those interested The Combined Council RACQ 2008 Rally will be at the Redlands 6th to the 9th June.

Also the RACQ Motor fest will be held on the 29th June 2008 at the Eagle Farm Racecourse. Entry \$15.00 per car if paid before the 24th May otherwise \$25.00. Entry forms available from your local RACQ Office.

Please note Trevor Judd's request for assistance at the Blue Care Respite Centre's Picnic on Tuesday 24th June, 2008. Details in the May Torque Tube.

Spare Parts Report:

Jack Warr advised that he has king pins and bushes for 2½ vehicles. Back axles are nearly ready. Jack now has Fibre timing gears suitable for Riley 9 engines. The Club has plenty of spares available.

Registrar's report:

Nil.

General business:

Very interesting discussion between members on various topics. Alan Hill advised that he has taken the magneto off of the Lynx due to intermittent ignition problems and has now fitted a conventional ignition coil and distributor. Simon Schooneveldt has a Riley Elf nearing completion and should be on the road shortly. Neal Brandt brought along a couple of brackets that were designed for external quarter glass for 1½ and 2½ vehicles.

Secretary's Email: Redpath@aanet.com.au

Meeting closed: 9.05pm.

Next Meetings:

Thursday, 12 June, 2008.

Thursday, 10 July, 2008.

BRISBANE SPORTING CAR CLUB

Unit 1, 206 Montague Road

West End Q 4101 (UBD map 21 (P8) approximately opposite Donkin Street.)

On The Cover:

Club racing at Goodwood, 7th June 1952. Driver W. Smith and his mechanic sort a problem under the watchful eyes of an official. Great image from the twilight of the glory days. Can anyone identify the badges? (Photo from editor's collection)

Club Events Programme:

Wendy Judd

**WHEN: Sunday June 15th****WHERE TO MEET: The Strawberry Farm (Mwy Exit 49, map 326 E 60)****WHEN TO MEET: 9 am**

WHERE WE'RE GOING: Masonic Care Queensland Gold Coast Hostel
 101 Allied Drive (cnr. Melbourne St)
 ARUNDEL
(Gold Coast map 18 K20)

WHY: To have **morning tea with Dick & Earla Self**. Their daughter, Barbara, will also be present. The plan is to take Dick, Earla and Barbara to join us for a fish 'n' chips lunch following the morning tea.

WHAT TO BRING: All requirements for morning tea and lunch if you don't wish to buy them. The exact place of the lunch will be announced at the Strawberry Farm and at the meeting this Thursday.

HOW TO GET THERE: I plan to take **Exit 62 (Map17 E 13)**. Take the right hand sweep down to the lights on the Gold Coast Hwy.

Right turn at these lights

Cross over Pacific Mwy

Left at the next set of lights into Heslop Rd

Follow Heslop Rd running parallel to Pacific Mwy

Left turn at T-intersection (Smith St) **(Map 27 K 5)**

Cross over Pacific Mwy

Straight through next lights

Left turn at the next set of lights (Napper Rd)

Follow Napper Rd.

Straight through all roundabouts

Straight through lights (Woodlands Way)

Straight through lights (Capt Cook Drv)

Turn next left into Allied Drv **(Map 28 G 3)**

(Change to **Map 18**)

Pass Central St on your right

There is a park on your left about 150 m further on with picnic and toilet facilities.

The Hostel entrance is on your right. There is some visitor parking in the grounds.

Dick is really excited about this day so I hope we can make it a special day for him.

Other Events:

Tuesday 24th June - Blue Care Respite Centres day as detailed in May TorqueTube. Contact Trevor Judd if you can help.

Sunday 29th June - RACQ Motorfest at Eagle farm Racecourse, 9:30am to 2:30pm. Details from RACQ.

Editor's Notes:



A fairly varied mix in this issue, and my thanks to Lois Archer (our Tin Can Bay correspondent) for her enthusiasm and for sending the article about the Gympie Historical Car Club run and information about Mick Thatcher's recovery. She also sent the *El Caro* Turns 50 article which covers *El Caro's* early history. I assume it was written some time ago for another magazine. We need Mick to fill us in on more recent history of the car. How about a few paras for a future issue, Mick?

I recently found the Gordon Horner Lynx story in an old Autocar, and thought it appropriate to reprint it here to celebrate the (almost) completion of Alan Hill's 1937 car. I'll try to get a story on Horner together for a future issue, and maybe reprint some of his other Riley stories and drawings.

The Ace of Cars story I found by chance amongst a pile of old newspaper cuttings I was culling. Can't recall who gave it to me, or when, but it's quite a good read. Bill Barber (I Googled him) was a long time Alvis aficionado and VSCCA member, but, although he learned to drive in his father's Alvis, whose first car was the Nine featured in the article.

John Barraclough is mentioned by Barber. Coincidence plays a part again, because I had just discovered the quote about Riley steering in some just acquired early issues of *Australian Motor Sports* (gradually filling the gaps).

There was no CC News with the Combined Council minutes this time, but the report of the meeting with Queensland Transport is worth pondering. This topic of SIVS registration always generates discussion, and the CC is seeking input from constituent Clubs on the topic. Wish someone could come up with a breakthrough tactic. A lot of heads have been beaten on a lot of brick walls on this issue.

I'm still trying to get my motor together (I'll tell you about it sometime) but to the rest of you – Happy Rileying!

An Expert Opinion:

John Barraclough in his 'Spotlight' column in *Australian Motor Sports*, July 15, 1948:

The 1½-litre Riley, along with its big brother, steers — aims is a more suitable term — better than any car I've ever driven.

From Our Tin Can Bay Correspondent: Lois Archer

What a totally interesting trip that we had with the Gympie Historic Auto Club on 30 March 2008 – 16 beautiful cars turned up at the club rooms for departure at 9am sharp for parts unknown. As Mick and Lyn Thatcher were “supposed” to be at the Snowy to join the National Riley rally, Ralph and Joan Richardson took over the task of rally coordinators, and did a great job. Boy oh boy, did we take in so much of the area in one gorgeous day. One certain Riley didn’t make the trip, as the owner made the executive decision to take along his baby Fiat instead. Said Fiat managed to have a puncture while the rest of us made a static conga line waiting for the repair, and numerous folk wandered across the “so-called” highway taking photos of the proceedings for posterity – this obviously wouldn’t have happened if the Riley had been with them!!!!!!

By now, all of our Riley mates will be aware that Mick and Lyn didn’t quite make it to the National Riley rally, as Mick became really ill on the way down and ended up in hospital at Orange to undergo emergency surgery – such a great shame as they had both been so looking forward to the trip. With lots of help from family and friends, *El Caro* managed to eventually find its way back home, as did Mick and Lyn.

Mick is finally getting back on his feet with the help of his lovely wife, and they are both now looking pretty well considering their ordeal. I know that everyone wishes them both well, and looks forward to seeing them back on the road with *El Caro* in the very near future.

El Caro turns 50 this year, and we are beginning to consider that we should start to have special anniversary parties for our precious vehicles – far better to celebrate that than our own birthdays; *El Caro* may well be the first celebration with hopefully many more to come.

LONG LIVE RILEYS AND THOSE OF US WHO LOVE THEM!



El Caro in company at the Wellington lunch stop headed for Tumut (but see above).

El Caro Turns 50

Western Australia's only known Riley One-Point-Five began its long journey to this state 21 years ago, (now 40 years) curiously from Canada. Curiously, because the manufacturers had no idea that this car, fitted with left-hand drive for export to Canada, would have as its second owner an itinerant Australian journalist.

Originally the car was manufactured in 1958, exported to Vancouver some time after that, and ultimately bought in that city by a lady who lived in Nelson, some 350 miles North-East of Vancouver. Nelson is one of British Columbia's busiest logging towns, situated on the shores of Lake Kootenay and overlooked by the craggy, soaring peaks of the Rocky Mountains. It is certainly not the place, as the writer discovered, to go shopping for quality, British made cars.

A visit to see an Australian friend took me to Nelson in 1961 as part of an extended stay in North America. My original intention on leaving Australia was to buy one of the smaller model American cars (if there is such a thing) and bring it back to Australia, but things did not turn out that way.

Nelson, if my memory serves me right, had possibly only one new/used car dealer to serve its small population of a few thousand. So when I was shopping in Nelson in that winter of 1961, my expectations were not great; I thought that ultimately I would have to buy what I wanted in either Vancouver or New York – my two next immediate ports of call.

Casually, I inquired of the proprietor of the car yard what he had in the way of smaller cars. There were a couple of tired Chevy Corvettes, a Thunderbird that was out my price range, and, "Oh yeah," said the dealer disdainfully, "in the back row, there's a hunk of Limey sh.t."

I left the dealer mumbling apologies for making such an offering, and laboriously trudged through knee-high snow to the back row, and in the general direction of "the hunk." It was there alright, tucked as far away out of sight as possible and almost almost completely covered in snow, just patches of its maroon paintwork showed where the wintry sun had thawed a little of the accumulated snow and ice. It was definitely not a North American design because of its small compact silhouette, so it was with great curiosity that I sought out the radiator badge. You see in my excitement at finding a British car in this outpost of British Columbia, I'd completely forgotten to ask the distributor for the make of his reluctant possession. Quickly, I brushed away a heavy covering of snow to be absolutely delighted to find the Riley badge. But, I had to know more for that heavy covering of snow could have hidden a myriad of mechanical faults. With no great enthusiasm, the dealer had one of his men extricate the Riley from its home in a drift of snow and ice covering.

What emerged was an absolute delight – an almost brand new, maroon Riley One-Point-Five four door saloon, completely unmarked outside and still smelling of leather inside. And so it should, after all the car had only had some 3,500 miles clocked up. Seems the Nelson lady, accustomed to larger

American cars, had bought the Riley for its sleek looks in a fit of enthusiasm, but had traded it within a year, when she could not acclimatise herself to a manual four-speed stick change, and the smaller confines of the British car. Her misfortune, or poor taste, was to be my good luck. The dealer, eager to rid himself of "the hunk" readily agreed to my compromise price which, while I can't remember the figure now, was way, way below the true value.

For lack of imagination, it was christened "El Caro", and in it, my wife and I set off to see North America. Its first journey in my ownership was to be its longest, but it never faltered despite the worst weather that a North American winter could dish out. From Nelson we travelled South through Vancouver and the intervening US states to California and Los Angeles. En route, the car battled through a blizzard, black ice and the derisory remarks of a multitude of American gas station attendants who had never seen such a car. But it got us there, just as it was to get us from Los Angeles to New York City where I was to take up a journalistic appointment. Again we encountered shocking weather – so bad that on one stretch the efficient Smith's heater just could not cope and ice formed on the insides of the windows.

In the two and a half years in the United States, based mainly in Manhattan, *El Caro* was to take us on visits to 39 of the American States. From California to Manhattan, from New Hampshire to Florida, from New Orleans to Kansas, even from Manhattan across the border and back into Canada to visit the wilds of Quebec Province. *El Caro* was almost as familiar a sight on the Newport waterfront as Australia's "Gretel 1" when this writer was based for some two months in that town to cover our first America's Cup Challenge from down under.

Throughout nearly 50,000 miles of travel in the US, the "hunk" never gave a hint of trouble, not even a puncture. Her few mechanical needs were met by the sheer luck of my finding in the vastness of New York an expatriate Britisher, who ran a garage on Long Island that specialised only in English cars. So keenly sought were his services, that one had to book about two months in advance for a simple oil change and grease. I like to think that I had the only Riley One-Point-Five in the US for I never encountered another one, and my British garage man said he knew of no other in Manhattan.

During her stay in North America, *El Caro* had two registrations; first she carried British Columbia plates, then while in New York she changed to New Jersey plates. Yes, New Jersey; you see, New Jersey is just across the Hudson River from New York State and its registration and insurance fees were about a third of those in New York State. I gained this cheaper registration by registering my home address as that of some Australian friend of mine living in New Jersey. The deception was never picked up, and eventually it was time to leave America.

The original intention had been to sell her in Manhattan and buy another car at our next destination, Great Britain. But sentiment created a "coals to Newcastle" situation in which *El Caro* was loaded (along with us) aboard the Queen Mary for transport to Southampton and its home of manufacture. We

clocked up another 5,000 miles touring England, Scotland and Eire before it was time to return to Australia at a cost of £200. Sentiment again won the day and this was to bring us more luck.

The "hunk" finally landed in Fremantle aboard the P&O liner "Oronsay" late in 1963. She was still on New Jersey plates and still fitted with left-hand drive. Winterbottom Motors effected the change to right-hand drive in 1964. During the next four years, she became the faithful, unfaltering conveyance of my wife. I reluctantly handed the wheel over to her and resumed driving my Sunbeam Alpine sports, which I had put on blocks during the period of my overseas stay.

While the Alpine probably had more "zip", I kept longing for that certain something, the mystique and reliability that were all part of the Riley. With something like 58,000 miles on the clock, I decided to trade *El Caro* in on a new vehicle in the mistaken belief that things would start going wrong and start costing us money. An error in hindsight, now that I've learned that she's still going strong in mechanical heart though she naturally enough has the need for a major exterior and interior re-furbishing. She was traded in at Premier Motors early in 1968 on a new Fiat 850 Sports.

Our loss was probably *El Caro's* new owner's fortune, I think now, for the Fiat, even new, could not match the old Riley in performance and all round quality and reliability. After the trade in, I saw our old car around Perth a few times, but each time I did it brought back a flood of memories, such as:

El Caro's ability to cruise smoothly between 70 and 80 mph on US freeways to the amazement of American drivers in larger more powerful cars.

Her ability, because of manual gears, to drive out of snow drifts, while American cars, because of their automatic transmissions, floundered hopelessly in such conditions. Indeed, on one occasion, she towed a stranded American car, much larger than herself, out of a snow drift.

The "hunk's" ability to start no matter how cold the conditions. She always lived ungaraged and often was asked to start in minus 30 degrees.

The crowd that gathered outside the Desert Inn in Las Vegas, Nevada, when I pulled up at the entrance to book in for the night. I guess it would be one of the few times gamblers had been distracted by a car.

The Riley's mechanical durability, for in all the time I owned her, she never had the head off or a major repair. Her costly items to me were a few sets of plugs, a new coil, a fan belt, tyres of course, and regular oil changes and tune-ups.

Surely there was never a happier or luckier car.

Mike Cummins.

From Autocar, week ending 3 January 1976:

The author renews acquaintance with a 1936 Riley Lynx 1½-litre tourer he had owned 14 years previously



IT HAD been 14 years since we had seen "our" old Riley and from tea time on, ears had been tuned for first indications of that distinctive pre-selector whine. Eventually on my wife's insistence I walked the quarter of a mile to the village cross roads and, of course, there was the Lynx, just arrived and with Mick Raby pondering as to which road to take after an uneventful 200-mile journey from East Runton in Norfolk to our Sussex village. A few "just in case" spares were carried although in near 100,000 miles these have never been needed.

Included among these were an SU petrol pump, gaskets, oil, a coil and distributor — Mick claims that if the magneto failed he would be motoring again within 20 minutes — and a spare oil filter cover. This last may seem odd, but some ancient Rileys have been known to shed the cover and pump out most of the sump oil. This is because connection to the engine block is via a threaded ring soldered to the base of the cover, simple fatigue or constant overtightening can cause the solder to finally give way.

In fact this Lynx misbehaved just once, when a big end went — fortunately not too far from the home of a fellow Riley Register member. The crankshaft being undamaged, a secondhand connecting rod bored slightly undersize appeared, and Mick scraped in the white metal bearing using a broken piston ring.

On return home he attended to all big ends and fitted Wellworthy oil control rings — these no doubt explain the good consumption of over 260 miles to the pint against original Road Test figures of 1,000 miles on a gallon of oil. That the bearing failed was perhaps because Riley advised engine oil changes every 1,500 miles with the use of flushing oil every 5,000 and I cannot believe many owners ever kept to such a demanding schedule. Admittedly “our” Lynx had an engine change a year or so after being sold. The original engine rebuilt by me started to burn oil, so acquired for £5 — those were the days — a six-light Kestrel and passed it on to Mick. It is that engine plus gear box which has now done a further 80,000 miles, still giving oil pressure of 30 psi at 50 mph when hot, and averaging 250 miles to the pint. We both doubt that this is a special series engine, perhaps mine was not either as the inlet manifold looks slightly non-standard pushing the SUs so far out as to make fitting even the thinnest of pancake filters impossible.

The car itself is a 1936 Sports tourer having a 26L chassis number but first registered in December after the 1935 Motor Show. A change from standard was the fitting of an ex-1935 Falcon steering column — since the flexible spoked steering wheel was near perfect — which puts the hand throttle well below instead of just above the pre-selector quadrant. Mick, an art master, claims this to be more pleasing aesthetically and anyway in this minor respect the Falcon was a much better engineering job. It was a delight to listen to the engine's idle. SU had rebuilt the carburettors some 20 years ago and Mick had drilled the manifold in order to tune with a vacuum gauge — resulting in minimum vibration at a mere 300-400 rpm.

In the drive the family were soon all over, under, and in the car; women and kids tended to take over but somehow we managed to keep part of the chat about the Riley. It seemed that in nearly 14 years, Mick had spent virtually nothing mechanically, the car seeing the insides of garages only to take DoE tests.

We established that the points of the Scintilla magento changed in 100,000 miles and that the pre-selector gearbox — a mysterious device unless you once

owned a cycle with a three-speed hub — had given no trouble. Three-speed hub? That had an annulus — ring gear with teeth on the inside connected to the central sun wheel by interposed planetary wheels — the gear ratio being obtained by taking the drive either by sun wheel, planetary wheels or the whole collection locked in one mass. Basically the pre-selector is a multiplied form of the three-speed hub plus actuating mechanism. In use one advantage is that you select the right gear for a corner before you arrive; then a stab on the pedal does the change, both hands remaining on the wheel. Another is that at traffic lights one can be virtually two gears up on the competition — first gear engaged and second selected.

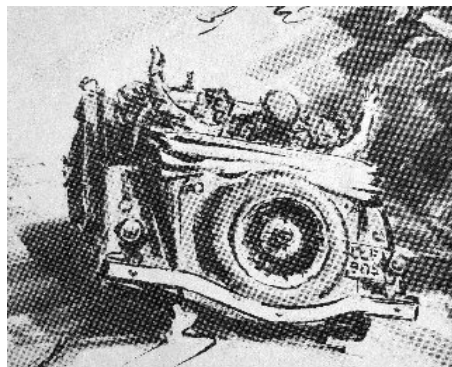
On a drive around our lanes I noticed no rear axle noises, a little backlash being the only indication of wear. However, Mick, somewhat fearful for half shafts that have probably done a quarter of a million miles, advised that I should modify the quick stamp I used for changing pre-selector gears, and instead draw my foot back almost as with a conventional clutch. I suggested that this meant that any wear spared the rear axle was now transferred to the pre-selector bands. Mick replied that the bands were of similar material to clutch plates and should be able to take it. Sitting behind the very offset wheel, enjoying the best shaped driving seat of my experience, with the screen flat and the longish bonnet and high headlamps giving a view so evocative of real open air motoring, brought back memories of a night journey across Dartmoor with my then very small son half asleep under the tonneau covering.

But down to earth. Would Mick ever sell back to me, I pondered? In the 14 years since I parted with the Lynx for £140 I have been kicking myself off and on ever since — especially as it is now worth £1,000 and only 50 are left in England. It would be worth still more if concours — as at first glance it appears to be. The car is now black, but was originally ivory. I said “non Riley” but Mick insisted that early brochures advertised colour to customer's choice. In fact only the bonnet had been sprayed, the rest has been done with Brushing Belco. Mick piled coat on coat and then painstakingly cut back with wet and dry glasspaper using the professional's contoured rubber block. Final treatment was with a rubbing down compound followed by Solvol Autosol and Autobrite. The body is aluminium, only the mudguards and running boards being steel. The mudguards were made in two sections, with the join smoothed and filled with lead solder which, as Riley enthusiasts know, does appear to encourage rust. However there was none on the Lynx — perhaps because of all my labours with a file and Jenolite 20 years ago. We agree that having a car slightly less than concours has its points; a future of improvements and fulfillment, whereas when it is perfect one sits thumbtwiddling, or at best working to stave off inevitable, if slow, deterioration.

After more awe at that beautiful engine idle, Mick naturally had to apply his talents to the Strombergs on our (Sunbeam) Alpine and the SUs on the MG Magnette. Meanwhile I pondered silently as to whether he might be interested

in some sort of swap, or perhaps sale of a half share. As it happened both our thoughts were in Machiavellian lines, Mick's target being the last of my Riley bits and pieces, plus a yearning to get his hands on our treasured perfectly chromed ski-shod maiden — ex-Stelvio or Alpine. In the event the mascot was preserved and I secured a promise of first refusal in the event of sale — unlikely I suspect. I asked about the present spares situation. In my Riley days I had about 2½ tons and several small firms notably “The Riley Man”, the late Stanley Burville, could often produce new bits. Now it is absolutely essential to belong to the Riley register, especially in areas — like Norfolk — where Rileys are particularly thin on the ground. The register does a great job recording and husbanding used spares and commissioning small scale manufacture of such parts as king-pins, big-end bolts, valves, half shafts, and gaskets. Apparently there are still old engines around with crankshafts which, with the use of scraped white metal bearings, have a regrind or two left. Mick plans to do a little body work, fit new king pins and check that the remarkable Abbofex steel and copper flexible exhaust drop pipe is still good after 10 years.

Departure, as departures so often do, had its moment of last minute panic. Mick reversed in the drive and unknowingly embedded the tail pipe in the grass verge — all that extra weight of Riley spares in the boot! The revs would not pick up and the engine was about to die provoking a panicky “something's wrong” from Mick. This would have been the moment to renew the Sunbeam for Lynx offer, but alas my efficient wife quickly advised what was wrong, calm was restored and in a few moments the Lynx was away up the lane. A few moments more and even that nostalgic whine had faded leaving only rural silence. Perhaps in another 14 years.....



Couldn't be a Riley Driver, could it?

SCENE: *On the Bruce Highway just north of Brisbane, a police officer pulls over a speeding car.*

Officer: "I clocked you at 130 km per hour, sir."

Driver: "Gee, officer I had it on cruise control at 100, perhaps your radar gun needs calibrating."

Wife (not looking up from knitting): "Now don't be silly dear, you know we don't have cruise control in this car."

The officer writes out the ticket.

Driver (looking at his wife): "Can't you please keep your mouth shut for once?"

Wife (smiling demurely): "You should be thankful your radar detector went off when it did."

Officer makes out the second ticket for the illegal radar detector unit.

Driver (glowering at his wife, through clenched teeth): "Dammit, woman, can't you keep your mouth shut?"

Officer (frowning): "And I notice that you're not wearing your seat belt, sir. That's an automatic \$135 fine."

Driver: "Yeah, well, you see officer, I had it on, but took it off when you pulled me over so that I could get my license out of my back pocket."

Wife: "Now, dear, you know very well that you didn't have your seat belt on. You never wear your seat belt when you're driving."

Police officer begins writing out the third ticket.

Driver (turning to his wife, barks): "WHY DON'T YOU PLEASE SHUT UP???"

Officer (to woman): "Does your husband always talk to you this way, Madam?"

Wife: "Only when he's been drinking."

Something Special:

That was the heading on an entry in the "Market News" section in the April 2008 issue of **Octane** magazine, previewing an auction run by Brightwells in Leominster, UK. The accompanying text read:

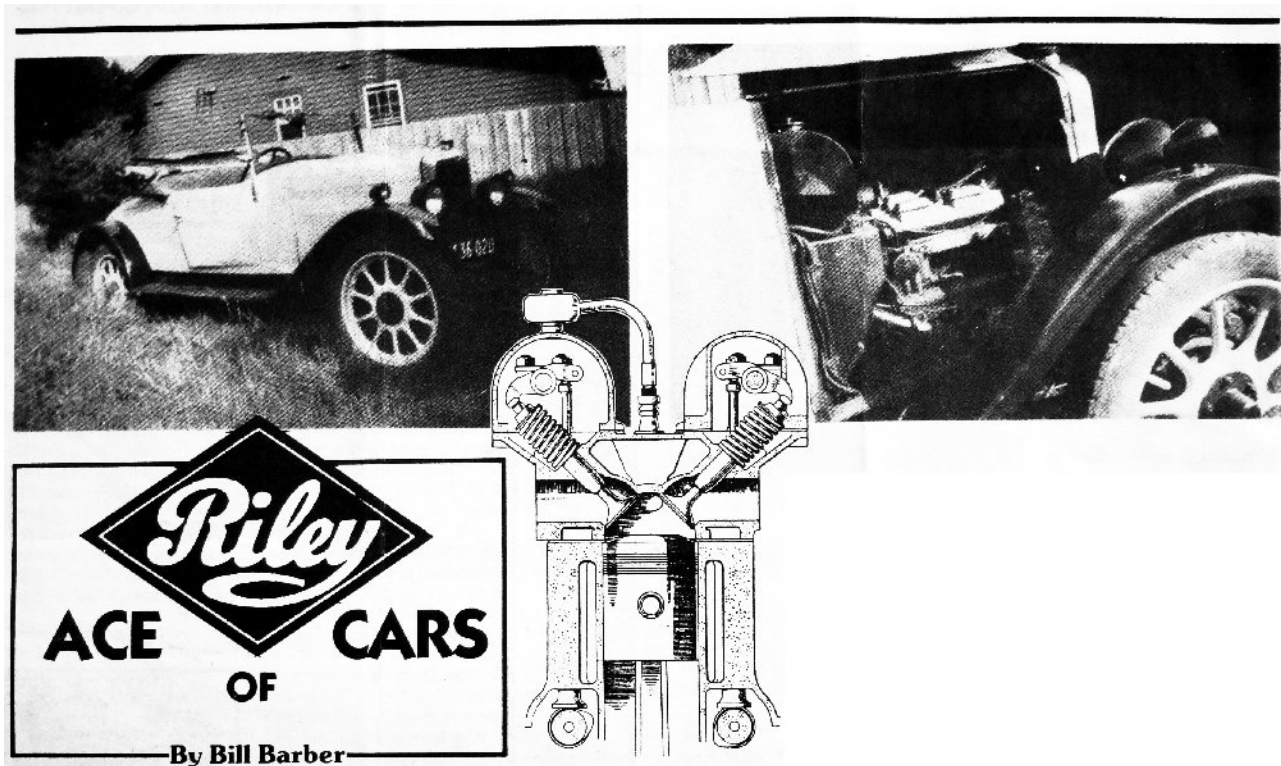
Don't you hate those times when cars appear for sale that you really, really want? A lovely-looking Riley special on offer here (below) has certainly given us the urge to check the bank balance, although it will have purists in the Riley Register spluttering in disgust. Based on a 1947 RM 2.5 saloon, it wears hand-built aluminium bodywork designed by the vendor concealing a 4.1-litre straight-six from a Chevrolet Camaro. Main downside is that it also has the Camaro's auto gearbox, but £12,000-15,000 for a car that looks this good and is taxed, MOT'd and on the button still makes it a tempting proposition.



In **The Automobile**, May 2008 the result of the sale is reported thus:

Brightwells had parked the polished aluminium 1947 Riley sports special right up front in pride of place in the showroom. At first sight it was larger than we had imagined from the preview photographs and on closer inspection turned out to be beautifully constructed. Based on an RM saloon but powered by a straight six thought to have come from a 1967 Chevrolet, it had been hand built to the vendor's own design. Flamboyant, noisy and a veritable 'crumpet catcher', it could have been yours for £14,000.

From Main Range Magazine, July 1987:



The first of a series describing some of the interesting cars that I have owned over a period of many years devoted to "funny old cars" and motorcycles.

The Riley Motor Company adopted as its badge a blue diamond outlined in white bearing the name "Riley" in white script and with the motto "As old as the industry, As modern as the hour" in the margin. Hence the title adopted for this article.

Like so many young men in 1948 I wanted very much to obtain a car of my own. So I sold my model railway and my V.J. Yacht and took to devouring the Used Car columns of "The Age".

This led to all sorts of interesting test drives as I was, and still am, very much "Vintage" minded. The term VINTAGE to me does not necessarily refer to cars of a specific period but rather to those which are of sufficient mechanical interest to be worthwhile.

An Amilcar tried was found to have a cockpit so cramped that I could only sit in it after the seat had been removed. The next discovery was that with one good kick one could depress all three pedals at once and put a hole in the bottom of the petrol tank all at the same time.

An A.C. proved to be more interesting but presumably as a result of its suspension geometry had a gait reminiscent of an arthritic camel.

Eventually my quest was satisfied. A butcher in Carrum had advertised his Riley. He claimed to have spent a great deal of money in having the engine

rebuilt so, despite a depressing lack of oil pressure showing on the gauge during the test drive, I felt that it was worth taking a punt on.

The car was a 1928 Riley Nine. In retrospect I decided that it was a Mark 1½. The body was a roadster, probably by Ruskin of Melbourne. The hood was a most remarkable device. I was able to put it up or down using only one hand while sitting in the driving seat. Its aerodynamic qualities were not so clever though. At any speed above about fifty miles per hour it would threaten to blow away.

The wheels were rather offputting. They were not the usual wire wheels fitted by Riley. Rather they were steel spoked devices reminiscent of a Bull-nosed Morris. With hindsight this was probably a good thing though. The cost of having wire wheels rebuilt periodically would have been too much for my slender resources. After all, this was a time when it was most unusual for a second-year pharmacy student to own a car at all.

The lack of oil pressure was traced, with the help of Barney Dentry, to a slipping oil pump drive. This man who was the high priest of vintage Riley motoring, also suggested the insertion of three match sticks under the lining of the cone clutch to ease its harshness. He also introduced me to Reg Goodie who ran a garage in LaTrobe Street which was a veritable Aladdin's cave of Riley spares.

Now the Riley had a very sophisticated engine with its famous "PR head". This was a hemispherical combustion chamber with two rows of inclined valves operated by rockers and short push-rods from twin camshafts located high in the cylinder block. It is significant that the "Hemi head" was allegedly invented by Chrysler in the '50s.

The gearbox was also a cut above the average. It was a four speed device and was very pleasant to use. This could not be said for the clutch though, which was a cone that was best kept for getting the car away from rest and thereafter best ignored.

Likewise the brakes which although fitted to all four wheels had a compensating mechanism of fearsome complexity. This ensured that by the time all of the lost motion in the links had been taken up one had already hit the obstruction. The only way that this could be circumvented was by setting up the adjustment so that all of the lost motion had been adjusted out.

This left the brakes slightly dragging and on one celebrated occasion, I was driving to Rob Roy hill climb and had just passed the Eltham war memorial and overtaken John Barraclough in his NE type M.G. when I braked for a 90 degree left hand corner to find that the dragging brakes had faded away like Arabs into the night, and that the car continued with unabated velocity. I took the escape road straight ahead while "Backoff" continued in the direction of our mutual objective laughing his head off.

On another occasion the generator flung its windings and so this was removed and sent off to be rewound. The result of this was that the starter motor could

only be used in emergencies. More importantly the generator was mounted on the front end of the crankshaft so that there was nowhere to apply the starting handle. This meant that one became incredibly skilled at finding slopes on which to park so that the engine could be made to resume duty by roll-starting.

Shortly after this I was returning home late one night when I attempted to pass another car while driving through Mordialloc. I had just got alongside him when the other driver decided to turn to the right across my path to enter Beach Road. This left me with two options. To hit him and probably kill us both or try to turn inside him.

I opted for the second alternative with the result that my car fell over. This was rather disastrous for the windscreen and side lamps, not to mention a couple of my ribs. Fortunately I had the hood down at the time or it would have been written off too.

One rather humorous result of this debacle was that the next month was the Pharmacy Ball, and the girl I took was afraid that in going in my very much open car (the hood could not be erected as there was no windscreen to attach it to) the metallic thread in her dress would rust. It did not, by the way.

Mention was made earlier of the rather comical braking system. At about this time the writer was doing a locum job in Lilydale and while driving to work one morning along Stud Road where the Stamford Hotel now stands one of the newly replaced clevis pins sheered off. This was replaced by a piece of wire liberated from a passing fence and I continued on my merry way.

At the first curve going down the big hill into Lilydale this carried away and so the car continued to the bottom. Fortunately the railway gates were open at the time. The rod which had come adrift however had shorted the terminals of the brake light switch and so when we finally rolled to a stop we were, like the Children of Israel in the desert, marked by a pillar of smoke by day!

By this time the poor old thing was becoming very tired. The engine's thirst for oil was almost as great as that for petrol. At that stage in our history, vintage cars had no particular value as such. The cost of another engine rebuild could not be justified so it was advertised in "The Age".

The writer had to go out for a short time and his mother took a phone call from a potential buyer who only asked one question:

"What colour is it?"

"It's green."

"Is it a pretty green?"

"I suppose so. It's dark green actually."

Ever since then the phrase "Is it a pretty green?" has featured in our Golden Treasury.

In fact, the car was eventually sold to a dealer. The poor old dear had lasted me for some five years and many thousands of miles of enjoyable and spirited motoring. Moreover it had confirmed my vintage leanings.

From the Minutes of the 27th May 2008 bi-monthly General Meeting of Queensland Combined Council of Historic Vehicle Clubs Inc.



Queensland Transport Liaison Report:

In the absence of Rod Graydon, Richard Eggesfield presented a report on QT's review of SIVS. R Eggesfield attended with Rod Graydon & Graham Bristow the meeting between Combined Council & QT on 14th May 2008.

Richard reported that the meeting was disappointing in that QT was not discussing or consulting with Combined Council but was just informing CC of the decisions before they are enacted. QT officer handed out an internal 'not for publication' paper which discussed the issues and explained the reasons for the decisions made in the SIVS Review.

Very little has changed in the rules controlling SIVS vehicle use. QT agreed in principle to some minor concessions regarding Combined Council submissions however most submissions were rejected.

Richard also reported that during the review process, QT reported that it was looking at a total of 38 issues, in fact most of these issues were internal 'Process and Regulation' issues related to the implementation/impact of any changes to the 8 issues QT discussed at the 14th May meeting.

Richard reported that QT plans to write to all owners of SIVS registered vehicles (around 10,000 people) and inform them of the changes. QT undertook to inform Combined Council when the letters were to be posted (expected sometime in July).

While very little has changed the 8 issues were discussed and the QT decisions relating to each were read to the meeting:

1. QCCHVC's request for the unrestricted use of SIVS on public holidays and weekends.

NOT APPROVED. QT advised that the purpose of SIVS registration is to provide a concession based on limited usage requirements. To increase permitted use of a SIVS vehicle to include full public holiday and weekend use would be a change from the thrust of the SIVS rules which were to permit club members to use their vehicles for club events. From a CTP point of view the increased use would result in an increase in risk which would require an increase in CTP premium.

2. QCCHVC's request for the increase in radial distance for road testing of SIVs from 15kms to 20kms.

Request to clarify the condition "Road testing within a 15km radius from the place where the vehicle is garaged"

NOT APPROVED The 1998 review of SIVS increased the "test drive distance" from 5 km to 15 km. At that time 20 km was also proposed but not approved as QT considered 15km adequate. Purpose must be for testing and not to simply get from point A to point B. QT is looking at tightening the wording to make the intent clear that the 15km is for road testing (after repair or restoration) and not for a trip to the shop or joy ride.

3. QCCHVC's request for the increase in radial distance for joyriding in bus-type SIVs to a distance greater than 5km.

NOT APPROVED: - The 5 km is the duration of a trip and not a radial distance from commence point. Subject buses are manufactured more than 30 years ago and are not subject to annual or 6 monthly inspections for SIVS rego so QT has stuck firm with this distance.

4. Authorisation to use a SIVs on a road when relocating the vehicle due to the owner moving premises or the vehicle being sold to a person eligible to continue the concession.

Approved in principle with authorisation for the single journey being approved by a Senior Customer Service Centre Officer. Further clarification to be forwarded by QT.

5. HMCCQ's request for the issue of a single plate for shared use amongst multiple SIVs registered motorcycles to the same operator.

NOT APPROVED. The registration number identifies a particular motorcycle on record to link frame and engine number and motorcycle description to the single rego.

6. QCCHVC's request to allow HS style plates to be personalised so they may be retained following cancellation or loss.

NO CHANGE. Current system remains. PPQ to investigate the customising of V&V & historic plates but no agreement yet. There are no plans nor have there ever been to stop SIVS vehicles using personalised plates.

7. Request to allow incorporated historical societies as an 'eligible person' for the SIV concession

APPROVAL IN PRINCIPLE via written request and approval process granting the registration.

8. Enforcing active membership of a club to retain SIV concessional registration.

NOT APPROVED. Queensland Transport accepts that the practice of some to join a club for SIVS registration only and then not renew their club membership each year occurs.

NOT APPROVED due to the difficulty in enforcing the practice plus the QT policy relating to the release of user information to Combined Council.

Summary of Results

Little has changed from the present system. Rumoured changes including the introduction of log books and removal of personal plate eligibility were looked at but were not rated as viable by QT.

QT has approximately 10,200 vehicle owners registered with SIVS registration and intends sending each registration holder a letter outlining the changes to SIVS registration and a reminder as to conditions of restrictive use for SIVS registration by early July 2008.

Combined Council will receive notification in advance of this correspondence being sent.

The acting President then reviewed the Combined Council list of issues raised with QT relating to SIVS and asked delegates to consider which if any should be proceeded with.

The Seventeen issues Combined Council has raised with QT were

- 1) Week-end use proposal;
- 2) No stamp duty on sale of veteran vehicles & later SIVS vehicles – (*QT agreed in principle but Treasury was opposed to the idea*);
- 3) No Road Improvement Fee for SIVS registration (See b above);
- 4) Bus carrying passengers >5KM;
- 5) SIVS drivers must remain members of recognised vehicle club. (*QT changed wording to 'should remain'*);
- 6) VIN numbers stamped on (veteran) vehicles. Vin Numbers issued on paper have to be carried in the car at all times;
- 7) Policing / reporting of non compliant SIVS use. (*We now have a procedure for clubs to provide information to the Combined Council in writing. The Combined Council is then to contact QT. The problem is there is no feedback.*);
- 8) Family members for weddings etc. Expand to include nieces & nephews (*we did have a win to include grandparents and grandchildren.*);
- 9) Special case for significant weddings etc. (*i.e. couple were married in a 1928 Dodge and would like to travel to their 50th wedding anniversary in a similar vehicle*) that the Combined Council be given the authority to issue special permits for such events, Combined Council to report numbers to QT;
- 10) Printing the SIVS Book – (QT advised not enough demand for it – use the Web);
- 11) Speed or lack of it - up dating the SIVS book online;
- 12) Standardised Dating Certificates;
- 13) Cheaper Registration – (*Ongoing, raised several times, no progress, suspended by Combined Council until week-end proposal resolved*);
- 14) Free registration for veteran vehicles;
- 15) Regular meetings with QT staff who are up to date on issues;
- 16) Problems with new registrations on >30 year old vehicles which do not have proof they have registered before;
- 17) Option of availability of square number plates – (QT – PPQ advised that Combined Council Clubs would need to confirm a minimum order of 250 at unknown price to start process);

There was some discussion regarding the action Combined Council should take as a result of the QT SIVS review.

John Greene moved that "*At the July Meeting of Combined Council, delegates should be in a position to advise what, if any, are the main issues relating to QT that their club would like Combined Council to raise with QT.*" The motion was seconded by Christine Stevens and carried.

Clubs are urged to discuss among members any QT issues and advise Combined Council by mail or through their delegates of any issues for discussion at the July Combined Council meeting.

Combined Council will then develop an approach to have issues resolved.

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