



TORQUETUBE

Newsletter of Riley Motor Club Qld Inc.

July 2008



Pretty cars all in a row..

Next Meeting: 7:30 pm Thursday, 10th July
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, 12 June 2008

Meeting opened by President Alan Hill at 8.10pm with 14 members and guests present.

Apologies: Pat & Betty Elliott, Peter & Bonnie Young, Del Thomson, Jack Warr, Graham Mackay, Ken & Wendy Lonie, John & Eve Romer, Graham & Betty Swan, Brian & Lyn Jackson, Beverley Burrows, Simon Schooneveldt, Shirley Ellwood, David Schoch and Dick & Earla Self.

Minutes from previous meeting:

Moved, Gary Britton and seconded by Bill Donovan that minutes be accepted. Carried.

Business arising from minutes:

Nil.

Inwards correspondence:

1. Letter from Paul Doyle, (Haynes Norton);
2. Combined Council Minutes May 2008;
3. CC News May 2008;
4. Combined Club Events & Swap meets;
5. Combined Council Affiliation Fees;
6. Invitation to Maryborough District Antique Motor Club "4th Custodian's Rally", Saturday 25 and Sunday 26 October, 2008;
7. Invitation to Summerland Sports and Classic Cars "25th Annual Static Car Show", Sunday 3 August 2008;
8. Copies of Blue Diamond, Riley Gazette, Riley Crank, Riley News Letter WA, Riley Rattles and The Running Board Magazine, Townsville Veteran, Vintage & Historic Motor Club.

Outwards correspondence:

1. Letter of membership acceptance for Mr. Bruce McPhail, Graceville;
2. Letter of membership acceptance for Mr. John Davies, Dalby;
3. Letter from Paul Doyle (Haynes Norton) to the Office of Fair Trading.

Moved by Linden Thomson seconded by Dianne Phillips that the inwards be received and the outwards be endorsed. Carried.

Treasurer's Report June, 2008.

Balance as per Bank Statement, 30 th April, 2008			\$3,745.65
Deposits Made	Membership fees	\$707.00	
	Interest	<u>\$ 0.47</u>	
		<u>\$707.47</u>	\$4453.12
Cheques Presented			
	Room Rental May	\$ 55.00	
	Newsletter Expenses, May	<u>\$153.20</u>	
		<u>\$ 208.20</u>	\$4,244.92
Balance as per Bank Statement, 31 st May, 2008			\$4,244.92

Moved by Ross that his report be accepted, seconded Matthew Schooneveldt. Carried

Club Captain's Report:

24th June Blue Care Respite Centres Short Rides for disabled, 10.45am till 12.00 noon. Brisbane Corso Reserve;
July Run meeting at Woodford;

3rd August, Summerland Static Display, Lismore;
9/10 August, Blackall Range Horseless Carriage Rally;
September, All British Car Display, Tennyson;
11/12 October, Minerva Rally;
November Run, Ross Phillips to provide details.

The 2009 Combined Council Rally for 2009 will be held on the Queen's Birthday weekend at Bribie Island.

Further information will be in the July Torque Tube.

Trevor and Wendy Judd were awarded a special award donated by the Cleveland Museum and the Redland City Council at the recent RACQ Combined Council Rally. Good to see that a Riley was selected out of the 135 cars at the Rally.

Spare Parts Report:

Nil.

Registrar's report:

Nil.

General business:

Secretary to write to Mr. Paul Doyle thanking him for checking the Club's Books and providing a letter of clearance for the Office of Fair Trading. The Queensland Combined Council of Historic Motor Clubs have requested all affiliated clubs

To discuss the eight points considered by the Queensland Department of Transport and also the seventeen other points that may have been part of the previous eight points or not considered at all. There were 33 requests raised with Transport over the last 10 years. Members present discussed the issue at length and were of the opinion that Queensland has a better system than the other States and should be left as it is. Secretary to write a letter to the Combined Council to that affect. Members then discussed various issues regarding their cars.

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

Meeting closed: 9.20pm.

Next Meetings:

Thursday, 10 July, 2008.

Thursday, 14 August, 2008.

BRISBANE SPORTING CAR CLUB

Unit 1, 206 Montague Road

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

New Members

We would like to welcome the following new members to the Club:

Peter Bradley of Tenterfield

Robert Harmsworth of Beerwah

Bruce McPhail of Graceville

John Davies of Dalby

We hope you have a long, mutually beneficial association with the Club.

Club Events Programme:

Wendy Judd

**July Outing—****SUNDAY 13th** an informal outing for lunch to

Storey Brook Cottage

71 Peterson Road

WOODFORD (phone 5496 1316) Map ref.: 35 H4 (top)

This is a B.Y.O. venue, with reasonable meal prices and a beautiful setting. Please make your own way there to **meet at the venue at 11:30am**, to give everyone a chance to wander through the gardens and to have a chat before lunch.

The Peterson Road turnoff is almost opposite the Ambulance and Fire Stations. Storey Brook Cottage is on the left not far past the Swimming Pool.

There is some parking in the grounds, but verge parking outside is also available.

I'll have pamphlets at the meeting that will better display this lovely place.

To be fair to the kitchen staff, please let me know at the meeting if you will be joining us, or ring any time before 9:00am Sunday: 07 3879 0340 or 0427 770 001 or 0417 770 593.

Diary Dates—**AUGUST**Saturday 2nd Summerland Classic Car Club 25th Annual Static Car DisplaySunday 3rd Informal dinner, Lismore Workers' Club

Display: Clyde Campbell Park, Molesworth Street, LISMORE.

Saturday 9thSunday 19thBlackall Range Horseless Carriage Club Montville Country RallyEntries close 25th July. For information and entry forms contact Wendy Judd tgjudd@yahoo.com or 3879 0340.Saturday 23rdSunday 24thKankanya Rally

Saturday – Tour from Bicentennial Park to Scarborough Park, Show and Shine 1:00pm to 2:30pm.

Sunday – Great Gatsby Picnic at Scarborough Parl. Dress to match your car. Info and entry contact Wendy as above.

SEPTEMBERSunday 21stAll British Day

8:30am to 2:00pm at St Joseph's College Sports Grounds, Tennyson. Cost \$15 includes metal badge, programme and passengers (first 500 cars).

OCTOBERSaturday 10thSunday 11thSpecial Gathering of Minerva AutomobilesSaturday – Display of these unusual vehicles at
238 Mudgeeraba Road, Mudgeeraba.Tour Director Malcolm McLaren mrmmlclaren@bigpond.com.au
07 3820 2902Saturday 25thSunday 26th4th Custodians RallyEvent headquarters: Wide Bay Motel & Conference Centre,
298 Walker Street, Maryborough.Enquiries Liz Wilson kewilson@bigpond.com 07 4125 2782
Entries close 26th September.**Editor's Notes:**

Most of the material this month comes from various old magazines; but I have to thank our indefatigable Tin Can Bay member, Lois Archer, who provides something of interest for many issues. Thanks also to David Schoch (whom we may one day see on a run or at a meeting again) for the wedding photos. Don't the cars look great?



The Gordon Horner article this month was written in 1959, well before the 1976 article featured last month. His interest was in pre-war Rileys. The other articles in this issue are contemporary post-war commentaries on an early RMA (Fothergill), and the 2½ ("Omnios") from *The Riley Record* in 1947 and 1948, respectively.

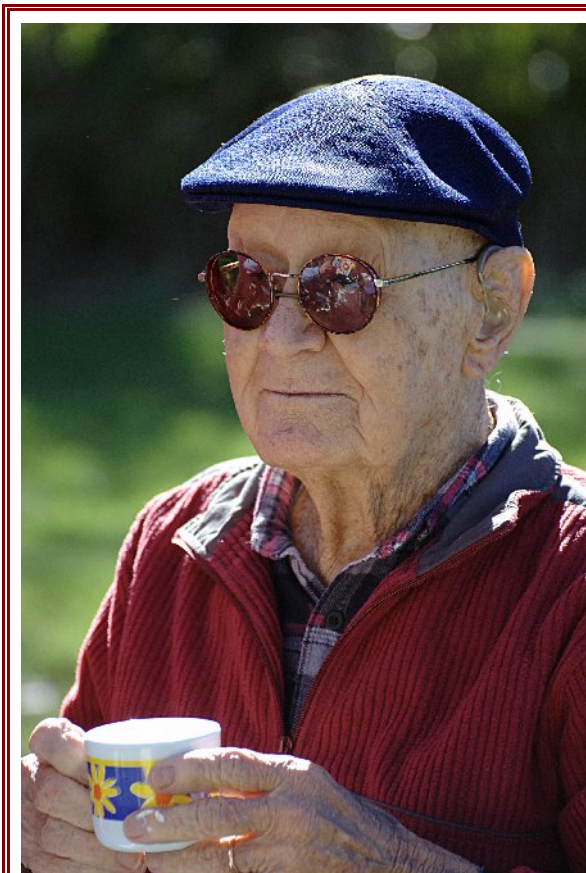
It is interesting to note the various attitudes and expectations expressed in these articles from 50-60 years ago. I must say I feel a great affinity with Fothergill in regard to the best way to appreciate our Rileys.

June Run Report:

LT



Another glorious Queensland winter morning saw four RMs (above) and a Volvo meet at the Strawberry Farm prior to heading to the Gold Coast to have morning tea with Dick and Earla Self and their daughter Barbara, and to congratulate Dick on his pending 95th Birthday.



Happy 95th Birthday, Dick

Dick has swapped the Honda for a walker after a couple of falls, but is still full of enthusiasm and confidence. 'Onya Dick!

After Dick failed to blow out the sparklers on the cake whilst being verbally assaulted by our rendition of the 'Happy Birthday' song, President Alan presented the Club Captain's Trophy to Bonnie Young as co-winner with Peter for 2007. Unfortunately, Peter is still in hospital and couldn't be with us. We all wish him well for his recovery.

We then moved on to Paradise Point for an al fresco fish'n'chips lunch, before heading home in the early afternoon. Thanks, Wendy, for organising this run.



Sheila and Earla



Earla, Barbara and Dick



Sunday in the park with Dick



Old-timers reminiscing



Alan, Bonnie and Trophy

From Our Tin Can Bay Correspondent:**Lois Archer**

Thought that I'd send these couple of photos of Mr. Riley taken since last weekend. I looked so forward to spending a day out with the Gympie Auto Club for the last "day" run before September (the next couple are for weekends away which I just cannot afford) so we headed into town on Sunday morning.

About 2kms from the club rooms, I began to hear what I thought was a slight tappet-type rattle. Everything went down hill from there on in, and we finally came home on and in a tilt truck. General consensus is that we have hopefully only blown a head gasket (there is a 1/4" gap in the gasket between No. 3 & 4 cylinders and the rest of the gasket doesn't look in great shape either).

At this stage, Mr. Riley has his bonnet off and safely stored; his carby is in the boot along with hoses, fan and other accoutrements and he really looks quite sad. His favourite mechanic has the head at his home and is stripping the whole lot down to do a valve grind while the opportunity presents.

For those of you who have such great mechanical skills, this probably wouldn't seem too daunting, but for me who knows just enough to dangerous, it's been a rather harrowing experience all round.

My regards and best wishes to everyone.

LONG LIVE RILEYS AND THOSE OF THOSE OF US WHO LOVE THEM.



I know that feeling well! (Ed.)



Mr. Riley under repair

Note from LT: *Having heard "the rattle" several times, I would advise Lois to get the sump off and check those big ends.*

Rileys At A Wedding:

David Schoch's daughter, Melissa, was recently married in the Wynnum/Manly area. A brace of RMs (David's and Neil Walter's) provided handsome transport for the wedding party.



David's and Neil's cars suitably adorned



Phil Berridge (David's bro-in-law, who drove the car), newly-wed Josh and Melissa Dodd, and Neil Walter.

CAR NUMBER 124 WHERE ARE YOU?

Trevor Judd

How do you feel when the P.A. system bursts into life and the voice says, "Would the driver of car number 124 please return to your vehicle?"?

If you are the owner of a Riley, you imagine that either the vehicle has caught fire or has at least dropped oil everywhere.

Well this happened to Wendy and me at the recent Combined Council Rally organised by the Bayside Vehicle Restorers Club over the June long week-end.

We were at the Redlands Museum/Cleveland Showground on Sunday, enjoying morning tea.

Relief when it turned out that a photographer from the local paper [The Redlands Times] wanted to photograph us with our Riley and a member of the Museum staff. BUT WHY?

The answer came at the presentation dinner on Sunday evening when we were presented with the Redlands City Council Trophy. The 2½ was judged by the museum staff member as "the most appealing vehicle" out of the 140-plus cars present. Obviously a man of great taste and judgement.

How It Used To Be Done:

From "The Light Car" magazine, June 23, 1939:

Touring News Spares Kits for Morris, Wolseley, M.G., Riley

Owners of Morris, Wolseley, Riley and M.G. Cars who intend to tour abroad will be interested in selected kits of spare parts which are available. For kits for the first three makes, a standard charge of £5 is made, which is refunded on return of the spare parts unused; they are handled by Morris Industries Exports, Ltd., Cowley, to which concern all enquiries and orders should be forwarded. It is to be noted that it is essential to give the chassis number of the car when ordering these (or any other) spares.

In the case of M.G., a slightly different procedure obtains; spares kits of two types are available, one for a short tour and the other for a longer period abroad. These parts are charged to the purchaser in full, but, on return of the spares in good order, he is credited with the cost less a 10 per cent handling charge. Spares kits for M.G. Cars are obtainable only from M.G. Car Co., Ltd., Abingdon-on-Thames.

From *The Autocar*, 9th October 1959:

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THE AUTOCAR,

The Exception?



Article and drawings by GORDON HORNER

Processional caterpillars, linked nose to tail, tail to nose, circle indefinitely, unquestioning, uncomprehending. Life without argument might not be as dully unprogressive, but it is spoiling the fun, and even impolitic, to play down dispute between rival enthusiasts for new and old cars. One may wish them a sense of proportion (very difficult); one would prefer that each side should have driven the cars of the other (unlikely). Nevertheless, such argument can stimulate the technical progress necessary if tomorrow's cars are to be better still.

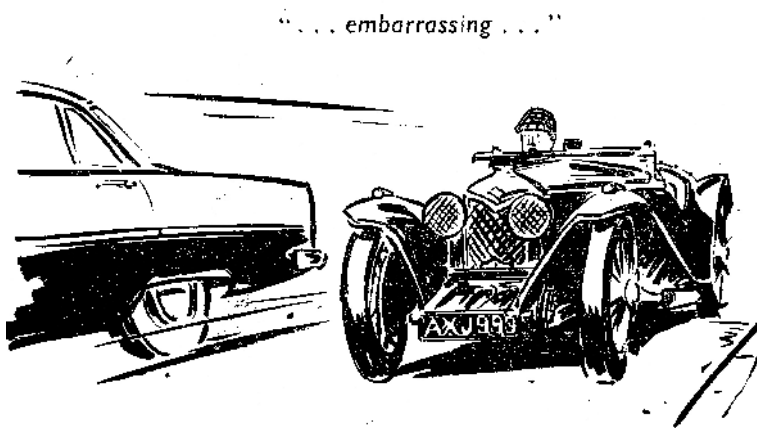
Trade and industry do not really prefer mechanical morons for customers. There is already too much work for too few garages, and with the factories straining to increase still more their share in a competitive though car-hungry world, an interested and knowledgeable home market can only be beneficial to the industry as a whole.

My own opinion is that nearly all old cars are run because the owners cannot afford new—I exclude brass polishers, for when you go that far back it is liable to be expensive—yet how many old cars can really earn their keep in constant use, competitive overall performance and running cost? The object of this little exercise is to take possibly the most competitive oldster, apply this yardstick, then judge how it fares against a modern equivalent.

I've stuck my neck out and chosen a Riley 1½-litre Kestrel Sprite of 1936-1937, and perhaps it is necessary to explain why other Riley engines just won't do.

First the "Nine." In various degrees of tune it goes from 25 to 70 b.h.p., the last figure covering the Brooklands Specials produced by wizards like Dixon and Ashby, and so hardly relevant. On first appearance in the mid-twenties the valves, inclined overhead in hemispherical chambers though worked by pushrods and rockers, made exciting stuff. Parry Thomas took it up, then Reid Railton, and the outcome—the Brooklands Riley—was a winner.

However, this model, when sold to the public, did less than 80 m.p.h., the beautiful Imp as little as 70, and the family saloon rather less. Of course, the engine is highly tunable, but larger crank and ports, lighter flywheel and the like give only 6 or 7 m.p.h. more, which hardly seems worth the trouble. A real increase in performance would be exceedingly expensive, with probable loss of reliability. The two-bearing crank is the real limiting factor—apart from one's pocket. Usually the sports versions retain their excellent handling, but against many modern family saloons poor performance, incongruously allied to to an extremely fast appearance, can prove rather embarrassing.



Now for the sixes; despite the white Riley, despite Peter Berthon and Freddie Dixon, who each got so much from the sixes, these engines were not so hot on the road. In general they were thirsty, some have suspect features like the water-cooled centre main bearing, and their performance is usually inferior to that of a good four, without being noticeably smoother.

Spares are a problem.

There were also two vee-8s, one basically a pair of 1½-litres sharing a common crankcase, the other two "nines." They powered little-known white elephants—the Autovia, of which the nicest thing to say is that the doors still close beautifully, and the "8-90"—both fast but thirsty and troublesome. Next came the larger fours, Big Four and Blue Streak—very good engines, similarly fast, not too thirsty but usually mated to a three-speed gear box and overdrive—somehow not real Riley. And once more a poor spares situation.

So to the 1½-litre—again the hemispherical chambers, straight-through, pushrod-operated valves, but unlike the Nine, a really rigid three-bearing crankshaft. This engine gave Mike Hawthorn his early victories against modern opposition. It comes in various stages of tune, the Kestrel Sprite six-light saloon being the best-known version.

Road tests gave a maximum of 79 m.p.h. It possessed a useful ability to go from 30 to 50 in third in around 8 sec; 0 to 50 very nearly as quickly as the moderns; 0 to 30 not much slower. However, it must be admitted that few old Kestrels will give these figures now.

Next to brakes and steering, especially important when buying old, not simply because of oncoming tests but for one's own peace of mind. Here Riley is good. The worm and segment steering, though high geared and positive in the vintage manner, has a very unvintage lightness, proving that Rileys knew something about steering geometry. It is rare to find excessive play after 20 years; the column is adjustable for rake.

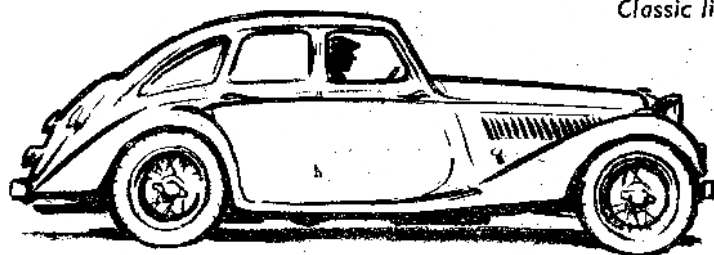
The Girling mechanical rod-operated brakes are fully compensated, i.e., by virtue of their design the parallelogram of forces is such that they will produce identical force at each pair of brake shoes. More simply, imagine yourself jammed between two walls, pushing forwards with the arms, backwards with the buttocks, the pressure—say 50lb—would be the same in each direction. Any tendency for these brakes to pull to one side can be due only to the intrusion of foreign matter. It is surprising how frequently foreign matter—usually oil—intrudes!

For suspension, most Kestrels have cart springs working with hydraulic, vane-type shock absorbers. Low centre of gravity plus good weight distribution help a great deal with the road-holding, but it is significant that a switch to telescopic, with low-pressure tyres on 16in rims, is a popular conversion.

Gear change is by preselector, a mechanism that remains something of a mystery to many, but to ex-cyclists who ever looked inside three-speed hubs it should not be difficult. As I remember, there was an annulus, i.e., a 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. The preselector box is basically a multiplied form of this three-speed hub, plus, of course, suitable actuating mechanism.

Curiously, some people think this box is not particularly reliable or durable, but up to 20 years with no more than the occasional adjustment by the owner is not out of the way. The real fault is noise—most have a certain amount of whine, plus tummy rumbles. But at traffic lights one feels pleasantly smug sitting with first gear engaged and second selected—if the box is in good order the car will not creep until the accelerator is depressed, so in effect one is two gears up on the adjacent modern still in neutral. However, moderns will reach 30 first!

As to the appearance of the Kestrel Sprite, its lines flow, without being jelly-baby; proportions are well balanced, and the general effect is sporting without ostentation. It seats four in comfort, and the driving position is hard to better. One can criticize; some 1½s have the dipstick



Classic lines

on the side opposite to the oil filler which, in conjunction with a centre-hinged bonnet, seems odd. There is far too much unsprung weight, due mainly to huge brake drums and a hefty rear axle. Timing gears are usually noisy. Lag tappets to absorb backlash are fitted on some 1½s, but not the Sprite version, as they also absorb power.

Generally speaking, the engine leaks oil from the rocker-boxes, so messing about around an old Riley engine really is messy; perhaps leakage accounts for the fact that oil pressure is never that given in the instruction book—40-50 lb per sq in at 40 m.p.h. But not to worry; you can motor for years and never show better than 20 lb hot!

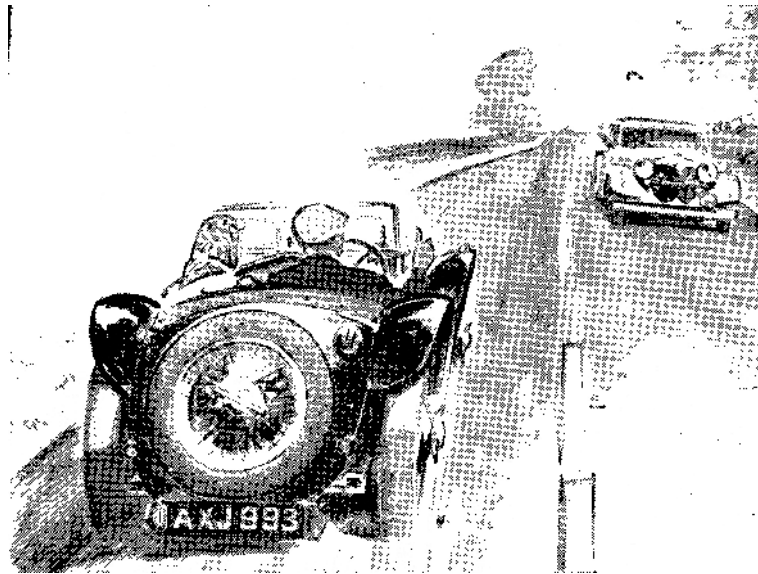
Bodily, deterioration is certain after 22 years. There will be the odd crack and warpage in the aluminium, and possibly some rotten wood beneath, whilst rust will have attacked the steel mudguards. The opening windscreen is fine on hot days, but a rigid one would have meant less scuttle float and fewer leaks and cracks in the pillars. The sun roof and acutely sloped rear window may very well leak also. The automatic lubrication never works *in toto*, and recourse to the humble grease nipple here and there will be necessary. However, there should be nothing wrong with the built-in jacks which, with knock-off wheels, permit a change in about the time the modern disc wheel owner takes to roll up his sleeves!

As for £.s.d., any Kestrel of 1936-1937 in what the dealers call "virtually as new" condition can fetch as much as £300. Those requiring attention go as low as £50.

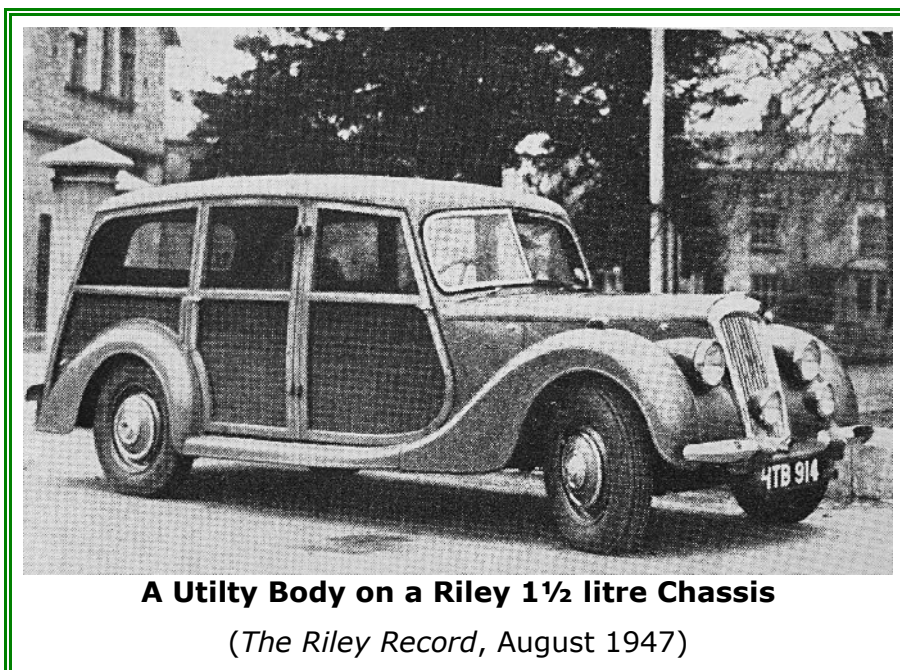
My own experience may be of interest. First Riley was a 9 h.p. Lynx as second string to my ZA Magnette. It cost £130 and when sold a fortnight later fetched £100. It was replaced by a 1936 1½ Lynx costing £180, which rebuilding increased to £400. This is a fairly rare car, and I remember suddenly encountering an identical model and hearing a bellow of "Snap" as the quick-witted driver went past. I remember, too, the vendor whom I regarded as a poor salesman since he had not even bothered to wash the car. Understanding dawned when my hosepipe revealed about ten million tar spots soiling the "immaculate cream cellulose."

Undaunted, I added a 15/6 Adelphi bought for £95 due to a combination of "Suez" and 17 m.p.g. A dealer gave me £105 a year later, and I bought a 1937 6-light Kestrel for £145. This car had done 7,000 miles since the previous owner fitted a reconditioned engine and gear box; the Lynx, too, is in a healthy state, so I look forward to some years without major trouble.

Well, there it is. Can a pre-war Riley 1½ compete against modern i.f.s., light yet rigid construction, economy, comfort and capacity? If it comes pretty close, remember that this was an exceptional car, and watch that judgement is not swayed by intangibles such as the cachet that goes with that blue diamond, or the well-known camaraderie linking the Riley clan.



I retain the opinion that argument and enthusiasm are great fun and to the good of motoring generally; but "ware the lunatic fringe," and the sentimentalism that has provoked expensive restoration of many cars exceptional only in age and rarity.



A Utility Body on a Riley 1½ litre Chassis

(The Riley Record, August 1947)

From *The Riley Record*, January 1948:



We know the 2½ litre Riley is good because many are the comments we hear at the factory, at various speed trials, at motor clubs and just in casual conversation. But how good it is I had not really realised until I read an article in *The Motor* dated 17th September, 1947, entitled "The End of Phase One."

This article is an extensive resumé of post war road tests by the Technical editors of *The Motor*, road tests, I might add, which are highly accurate and unbiased, technical editors being notoriously inhuman and possessing hearts of stone as proved by their own statement in their article, "The End of Phase One" — "In order to eliminate (as far as possible) the human element, a technical editor is normally present to drive the car . . ."

A Quick Motor Car

This excellent article, when speaking of the Riley 2½ litre, mentions ". . . timed at speeds approaching 95 m.p.h." and this when the car was being compared with a 4½ litre model which had a very similar performance. Incidentally, the Healey, fitted with a Riley 2½ engine ". . . exceeded 100 m.p.h. by a useful margin."

The 2½ litre returned the excellent figure of 23 m.p.g. at a sustained 70 m.p.h. whilst the Healey, with its scientifically streamlined body ". . . turned in the astonishing figure of 31.2 m.p.g. at this speed."

Here I would like to observe that a car with a good petrol consumption does not necessarily have a poor performance; in other words an efficient engine will give both performance and good consumption.

These figures prove that the 2½ litre engine burns its fuel to the best possible advantage thanks in part to the famous Riley cylinder head.

To return to *The Motor* and their road tests, "Four cars . . . were able to increase their speed by 20 m.p.h. within 10 seconds in top gear and these were the best four performances over the whole range from 10 m.p.h. to 70 m.p.h." and Riley and Healey were two of these four cars.

Healey and Riley are Outstanding

Continuing, I was impressed by the number of times the 2½ litre Riley is mentioned in this article, "The End of Phase One." I noticed "In particular, the time taken to cover the quarter mile standing start is one of the most accurate figures which can be put forward, and here, as in so many other cases, the Healey and Riley put up outstanding performances and were the only cars to get below 20 seconds."

All this talk of vivid performance and good petrol consumption made me wonder whether those keen types, the technical editors, were concentrating too much on engine performance and neglecting road-holding and steering. But no, anyway, let me quote *The Motor* again, from the same article: "For sheer cornering power, both the Healey open car and Riley saloon are in a class by themselves. They do not compare with, but actually excel, some of the Continental models which have been famous for this quality."

An interesting table is also included in this article.

	Average 2.7 litres	2½ litre Riley
B.H.P.	87	90
Weight	29.2 cwt.	28½ cwt.
Acceleration 0—30 m.p.h.	5.6 sec.	4.8 m.p.h.
Acceleration 0—50 m.p.h.	13.6 m.p.h.	10.2 sec.
Standing ¼ mile	21.8 sec.	19.8 sec.
Maximum speed	85.0 m.p.h.	94.8 m.p.h.
Top gear acceleration 10—30 m.p.h.	10.6 sec.	9.0 sec.
Top gear acceleration 30—50 m.p.h.	12.2 sec.	9.8 sec.
Tapley pull in top gear, lbs. per ton	223 lb.	250 lb.
Maximum speed on 1 in 20 gradient	68 m.p.h.	68 m.p.h.
M.P.G. at 50 m.p.h.	24.4 m.p.g.	26 m.p.g.
Overall m.p.g.	22.5 m.p.g.	25 m.p.g.

Maximum deceleration was .94 g with a pedal pressure of 110 lb., this equals a figure of 32 ft. from 30 m.p.h.

Absolutely intrigued by now with the 2½ litre, I searched through an *Autocar* road test of the 18th April, 1947, and found, "For covering journeys in the shortest possible time by road this car has few equals," and then, "This car's suspension, besides affording an extremely high degree of riding comfort, is such as to tie it down to the road for fast cornering and under-braking, enabling curves to be rounded at speeds which represent the maximum of many another car on the straight."

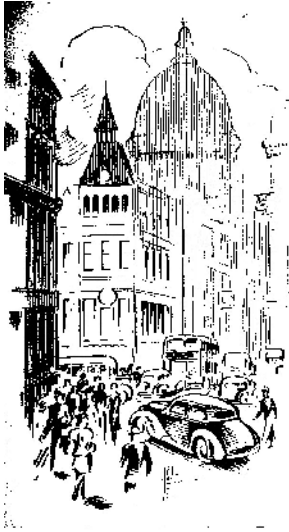
With an outstanding engine performance together with really excellent steering

and road-holding it seemed to me that some mention of brakes should be made. After all it is no good having a staggering performance and then lack of stopping power when required, so, quoting *The Autocar* again: "Considering the work that they are so frequently given, the brakes . . . deserve the highest praise. The pedal action is not heavy, and straight line safe braking without pull on the steering is obtained at all times."

And so this praise from acknowledged experts of the Technical Press continues. To quote from the beginning of this article, however, "We know the 2½ litre Riley is good," but, whilst remaining very modest, we now feel it is a lot better than ever we thought it was.

"OMNIOS"

From *The Riley Record*, March 1947:



- CHARLES FOTHERGILL, Motoring Correspondent, "News-Chronicle," tells his experiences with his New 1½ litre RILEY under the arduous conditions of news-gathering.

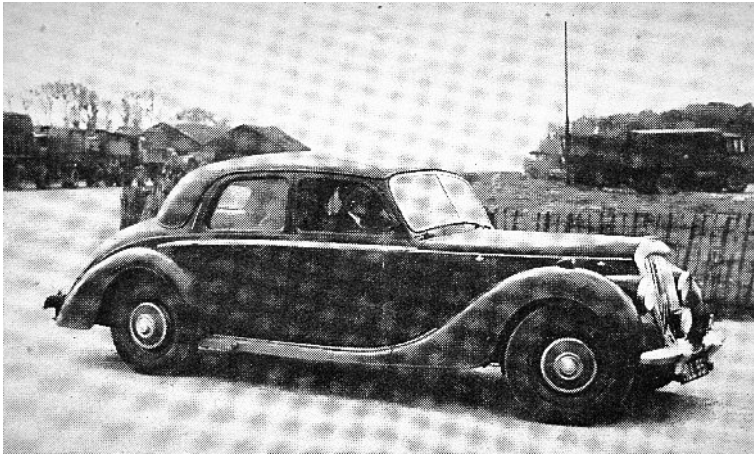
It was in 1938, when I was road-testing and reviewing a current model practically every week that the designer of one of Britain's best-known marques (not Riley), said to me rather testily: "Well, we can at least be thankful that you don't own one of our cars."

When I asked him why, he replied, "Because, as a customer, you would be a damned nuisance!"

This was simply because I had returned the car to the factory with some mild criticism and a suggestion that as the car was obviously not up to the firm's usual standard they might like to send me another model to try out. So they put the designer himself on the 'phone—and was his pride hurt!

This incident is recalled merely to show that I am a little finicky about motor cars (you get that way when you are constantly trying out new models), and since I swapped a then very advanced o.h.v. camshaft motor cycle for my first car some 18 years ago, I have been particularly finicky about my own personal mount. I have always liked a thoroughbred.

Well, I have just completed over 2,600 miles with my new 1½ litre Riley (no brickbats, please, from all you people still awaiting delivery). I applied for a Ministry of Transport permit to buy in the earliest days of such permits, and I can still visit the factory at Coventry and actually receive a welcome. In fact, I am one of Riley (Coventry) Ltd.'s most satisfied customers. I haven't a grouse at all.



Mr. Fothergill on Redgate Corner, Donington, with his new 1½ litre Riley.

I think I know my Riley pretty well by now, too. It gets no kind of an easy life in Fleet Street. There is constant hard work to be done in traffic-congested London, which can be a phase of motoring full of irritations unless a car has the most gentle manners, and there are long-distance runs to be covered quickly—inquiries among the car factories in the Midlands, a dash north to see a new racing circuit, an investigation

of road developments in Oxfordshire, and so on.

And maybe early in the morning, just as you are about to go home, comes an appeal from the News Editor, "Can you possibly help us out, old man? No editorial car available at the moment, and a hell of a fine story at Putney." It is probably raining "cats and dogs," and London's wooden setts a greasy menace, but you must get the photographer there darned quickly or he will miss his picture. And heaven help you—and the reputation of your car—if you fail to deliver the goods.

This is the kind of restless but zestful life the Riley has led up to date. It was run in very carefully for the first 500 miles and had not exceeded 50 m.p.h. at 800 miles, but then all pampering ceased. The job demands that it should be harnessed to serious work, since when it has well and truly been "given the works"—and it has thrived on it.

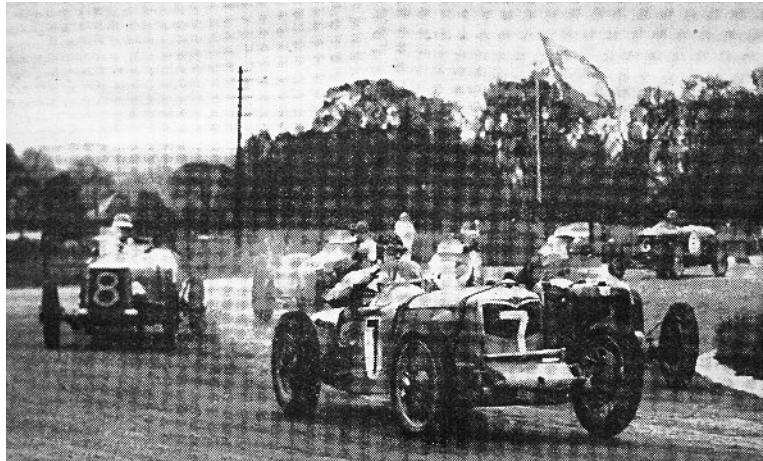
This kind of thing, for example.—I had an important appointment with "the Army" at Donington Park in connection with the possible handing over of the track for racing, and was very late in getting away from London. It had to be a non-stop run, with the speedometer ranging between the 70's and 80's whenever the opportunity occurred on Road A5, and then from Atherstone a fast cross-country run via Ashby-de-la-Zouche. There was no question of slackening up to give the car a breather. It just had to get there very quickly—and it did, with minutes to spare.

It is essential to drive the Riley on such a business "we must get there on time" run to appreciate its true worth. On the long, straight stretches to Weedon and beyond it did the knots without fuss or bother—this was continuous high speed and not just short bursts—and the engine subsequently seemed much sweeter and smoother for it all.

I would have no fear in driving this car flat out from Lands End to John o'Groats in order to keep a journalistic appointment with John Cobb himself. I

would not worry a bit if you covered over the oil pressure and water temperature gauges on the dashboard. I know the car would give a trouble-free run and be dead on time—and I am confident that at the end the engine would purr with satisfaction. The harder you beat up this power unit the better it seems to like it.

Combined with this virile ability for continuous high speed without worry is an almost ladylike ease of handling, the car being so rock-steady right up to its maximum in the neighbourhood of 80 m.p.h. that she can be held with one finger wrapped around the rim of the steering wheel (not to be recommended, of course, but it can be done.)



A pre-war memory of Donington Park.

But it is on the cross-country runs that I became most endeared to this car. To drive it along winding roads, with their unscientific gradients and disconcerting cambers, is to experience a joyous thrill which in these days of motoring austerity makes you feel that life really is worth living.

It is exhilarating motoring in the best sense with complete safety and without any lurking fear of those unexpected encounters that are so liable to occur when you attempt a rapid, twisting run in a car which is not in every respect a well-designed, well-built thoroughbred.

It takes a minimum of physical effort to corner the Riley faster than the majority of the cars on the road to-day, nor is there any need to take the slightest risk. The designers have found the ideal combination whereby exceptional comfort and soft suspension are linked with rock-like firmness on the turns and a complete absence of roll. With the particularly accurate steering, requiring only the smallest movement of the wheel, the car can be flung into bends at astonishing speeds, and it will grip the near-side like a leech without the slightest tendency to heel over or cause your passengers any discomfort.

This, to my view, is the Riley's most delightful characteristic, enabling unusually high average speeds to be achieved on the longest journeys without any of that feeling of strain and tiredness which is so frequently attendant upon such trips in more powerful but less willing and stable cars.

It is one of the few cars that I have owned that combines so many virtues that it appears to satisfy all my "customers"—Pressmen and others I take around from time to time as passengers. What I mean is that it invariably inspires some form of spontaneous tribute.

"Wonderful road-holding this bus has got," remarked a photographer during an exciting dash through London's rain-soaked streets one night. "How beautifully quiet the engine is," commented Mabel, our most beautiful girl reporter. "She goes like stink for a 'twelve'," said a contemporary on a National Daily. "What a change to our car," offered an old lady to whom I gave a lift at Great Missenden. "In ours, I sit so high, but I feel so safe in this car." "This engine's nice and smooth. Is she a sixteen or a twenty?" asked an Australian radio broadcaster as we cruised along at a mile a minute. And finally the young R.A.F. type, one of the world's most experienced hitch-hikers, I should think, who thumbed me to a standstill just outside Coventry on his way to Dagenham, "Best car I've had a lift in yet," he declared.

Who am I to argue with so many? I just sit there and smirk my approval, and hammer the Riley still more—and she continues to purr with satisfaction.

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