



TORQUETUBE

Newsletter of Riley Motor Club Qld Inc.

November 2008



Australian touring party in Iraq, 1931

Photo: Joan Richmond via Neil Brandt

Next Meeting: 8:00 pm Thursday, 13th November
Queensland Sporting Car Club
206 Montague Road
West End 4101

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

Minutes of the OGM of the Riley Motor Club, Qld., Inc. held at the Brisbane Sporting Club, West End Thursday, 9th October 2008

Meeting opened by President Alan Hill at 8.15pm with 22 members and guests present. In the Secretary's absence, Linden Thomson recorded the Minutes.

Apologies: Ray & Bev Burrows, Sheila Hill, Dianne Phillips, Graham Mackay, Pat & Betty Elliott, Shirley Ellwood, Ken & Wendy Lonie, Neil Brandt, Kiara Rizzo, David Schoch and Dick & Earla Self.

Minutes from previous meeting:

Moved, Gary Britton and seconded by Trevor Judd that minutes be accepted. Carried.

Business arising from minutes:

Nil.

Inwards correspondence:

1. Membership fees from Owen Williamson;
2. Running Board Magazine;
3. True Brit Magazine;
4. Copies of Blue Diamond, Riley Gazette, Riley Crank, Riley Newsletter WA, Riley Rattles and Riley NZ.

Outwards correspondence:

1. Information to Registrar.

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

Treasurer's Report September 2008

Balance as per Bank Statement, 31 st August 2008		\$4,322.38
Income	Interest	
	<u>0.55</u>	
	<u>\$ 0.55</u>	\$4,322.67

Cheques Presented

L.Thomson N'letter expenses August	\$168.85	
September	\$ 99.20	
Brisbane Sporting Car Club Room Rental	<u>\$ 55.00</u>	
		\$ 323.05

Balance as per Bank Statement, 30 th September 2008	\$3,999.82CR
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Moved by Ross Phillips that the report be accepted, seconded Bill Short. Carried

Club Captain's Report:

October Club Run will be to Currumbin Valley and then to the Minerva Gathering, Mudgeraba, as in newsletter, except that the Minervas will now be parked in the Village rather than the Cascades. Linden Thomson advised that he had booked the Skyline Restaurant for the Annual/Xmas Dinner for Tuesday, 16th December. Details in next TorqueTube.

Spare Parts Report:

Jack advised that Mike Moffatt (N.Z.) had begun to make Nine parts for the Riley Register. He can have cylinder head gaskets made for NZ\$30 for quantities of 100. Jack will take 25.

He will also send a sample of each part we make to see whether they can make them cheaper in N.Z.

Jack had just picked up 16 x 1½ and 2½ clutch plates.

Alan Hill advised he had acquired the job lot of parts referred to at previous meetings.

Registrar's report:

Matthew said that rumour has it that member Chris Stafford had purchased a OnePointFive on eBay, and a fabric-bodied Nine from the south. He also acquired Matthew's RMC project.

Matthew had bought a 1935 12/4 Falcon on 16" wires on eBay, and had the car home.

Ross Phillips raised the new renewal forms for use this year that would include a means for providing car details.

General business:

Linden Thomson again advised members that they could view a full colour version of the TorqueTube if they received it by email. Sometimes the monochrome mailed version did not do photographs justice.

Matthew French saw on the Internet that the Register now has most of the parts for pre-war water pumps.

Ross Phillips said he had found a number on the block of the Kestrel that was recorded in Styles as being that of a Lynx Sprite.

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

Meeting closed: 9.01pm.

Next Meetings:

Thursday, 13 November, 2008.

Thursday, 11 November, 2008.

BRISBANE SPORTING CAR CLUB

Unit 1, 206 Montague Road

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

Porongorup Party 2009:

The Riley Rally 2009 is at Mt. Barker in W.A. starting April 9th and finishing April 13th.

At the moment a contingent of 4 couples (Hills, Thomsons, Jacksons and Patons) are entered and starting the planning stage. If there are any other Qld. members who want to join us we would be delighted to hear from you !

We intend to take around two weeks to get there, spend just over a week at the rally and in Perth, and then get the Indian Pacific from Perth to Sydney on return. Any other suggestions would be welcome.

For full details ring Alan Hill on 07 32891063.

Club Events Programme:

Wendy Judd

**ABOUT THE OCTOBER RUN—**

A '*first*' in my small experience of the Riley Club—AN ALL-RILEY OUTING! No 'moderns', -- just Rileys.

A glorious Spring day smiled down upon the Minerva's Grand Day Out, and, as predicted, we caught up with them as they made their way down to Currumbin Valley. We saw 8 of their number and Trevor was re-acquainted with his childhood as there was one Minerva very similar to that owned by his grandfather. We waved to Graham and Shirley and had a chat with Gary who was operating under the substantial disadvantage of a non-functioning starter motor but this didn't seem to dampen his enjoyment of the day. Minerva radiator caps are a work of art, especially the original ones. But the Rileys weren't completely overshadowed by the magnificent Minervas, a few people wandered over to look at our cars.

Lunch at the Crystal Cottage was very enjoyable with good food, very pleasant surroundings and excellent company. Simon, Helga, Trevor and I agreed to calling the 14th of October "a great day out."

THE UP-COMING NOVEMBER RUN— or "Is there any body out there?"

WHEN: Sunday, November 16th meeting at **9:30am**

WHERE: 388 HAWKESBURY ROAD, ANSTEAD Map Ref 195 L 11
Mike O'Sullivan's place is between Castlereagh and Church Streets as you drive up or down Hawkesbury Rd, and the entrance is **opposite** a white picket fence which has dark green sections painted along it at regular intervals. The numbers 388 are on the letter box but it isn't an imposing entrance so you'll have to be watchful. If you're coming from the Mt Crosby end you'll turn right into Mike's and if you're coming from the Moggill Rd end you'll turn left into Mike's.

BRING: Your own morning tea, chairs and tables. Mike has offered to clear a space in his shed for us to have our elevenses out of the sun's punishing rays.

AND THEN.... Following our visit to Mike's we'll proceed out to Mt Crosby Road, following it through to, and over the Warrego Hwy then to swing right round a roundabout which will put us onto the highway. We pass Marburg and turn right into Lowood/Minden Road, then follow this road up to the **Tarampa Pub** for lunch.

DATES TO REMEMBER—

TUESDAY DECEMBER 16th Annual Dinner at the Skyline Restaurant....
Contact Linden Thomson for details and bookings.

QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY LONG WEEKEND 2009

The Combined Council's Great Depression Rally held on and around Bribie Island ... More details next year.

Letter:

M & L Thatcher
1105 Wide Bay Highway
LOWER WONGA Q 4570

1st September 2008

Riley Club Members
c/- R Burrows
14 Lynch Crescent
BIRKDALE Q 4159

Dear Club Members

Re: Easter -Showy Mountains Rally

I am sending a late "thankyou" to the club members on the national rally who helped Lyn get me to doctors and hospital in Canowindra, and then transport her along with 'El Caro' to Orange on the Thursday.

Everyone was concerned and willing to help and Lyn especially was grateful for the support.

Once again we can't thank everyone enough for their well wishes and here's hoping that I won't have to return this kind of help sometime.

Lyn and I are looking forward to being able to participate in a rally with you all in the future.

Yours Sincerely



MICK THATCHER

Motoring to Europe— Linden Thomson The Great Riley Adventure as reported in the Press:

The story of the Australians who drove their Rileys half-way across the world in the latter part of 1931 is widely known, at least in part, among the Riley community, though it is difficult to find a full account of their journeyings. The only one I know of was written many years ago by Les Mills and published in 'The Second James Flood Book of Early Motoring.' There were also regular progress reports published in *The Riley Record*, but I only have those printed in 1932 towards the end of the journey. Bits and pieces of the story are printed from time to time, and long-standing members of our Club will recall that one of the members of the party, Joan Richmond, was guest of honour at our National Rally in Toowoomba in 1982, 50 years after their competing in the Monte Carlo Rally.

With the online availability of some Australian newspapers on the National Library of Australia web site, I thought to search for relevant news items and eventually found enough to be able to track their journey. So here is the story that an assiduous contemporary reader of *The Argus*, *Canberra Times* and *Northern Territory Times* would have been able to follow.

The earliest reference to the party of Australian motorists who intended to travel overland to England, taking in the Monte Carlo Rally on the way, is in Melbourne's *The Argus* of Thursday, 16th July 1931. A paragraph in the grab-bag 'Items of Interest' column reads:

Motor Tour to England.

Mr. J. P. S. Morice, the editor of the "South Australian Motorist," has joined the party of five Australian motorists who will leave Melbourne on a motor tour to England on August 15. The party will consist of Mr. R. Beatson (leader), Misses Kathleen Howell and Jean Robertson, Mrs. Charles Coldham, Miss Joan Richmond, and Mr. Morice.

This was followed on 4th August by:

Cars for Monte Carlo Rally.

The three Riley cars which will leave Melbourne on August 15 for the Monte Carlo Rally will be excellent examples of Australian material and workmanship. The streamlined bodywork of Mr. Beatson's Egyptian model, which has been built and tested at the Elite Body Works, Toorak Road, has a striking appearance. A feature of two bodies which are being built at the works of James Flood Pty. Ltd., St. Kilda Road, is the extreme lightness of the body frame. The overall weight, with fabric, is barely 62lb. The bodies are constructed from specially selected Australian ash.

It is interesting that in his extensive recounting of the story, with the

cooperation of some of the participants including Joan Richmond, Les Mills says that they were unable to trace the name of the builders of the car she shared with Beatson, which was metal-panelled, and must have been considerably heavier than the other two cars!

On Wednesday 12th August 1931, *The Argus* had the following small item:

"CHRISTENING" OF RILEY CARS.

The official "christening" of the three Riley cars which will leave Melbourne for Europe on Saturday will take place this afternoon at The Palms, Alexandra Avenue. Sir Robert Gibson will perform the christening ceremony, after which the guests will be entertained at afternoon tea by the Shell Company.

The following day, the paper reported:

MOTORING TO LONDON

PARTY OF SIX DEPARTS

Riley Cars Christened

The party of six which will leave Melbourne for London on Saturday in three Riley cars was bidden farewell by a band of well-wishers at the Palms yesterday. The cars were to have been christened by the chairman of the Commonwealth Bank Board (Sir Robert Gibson), but he was unable to be present, and Miss Peggy Gibson performed the ceremony, breaking a bottle of champagne over each car. She wished the party a successful journey.

The first of the cars, The Kookaburra, is creamlined, and will be driven by Mr. R. Beatson and Miss J. Richmond. The second, the Bell Bird, is black and red, and will be driven by Miss Jean Robertson and Miss R. Howell; while the third, the Wattle Bird, maroon in colour, will be driven by Mr. P. Morice and Mrs. C. Coldham.

Mr. Beatson said that the object of the tour was to prove the worth of British cars and equipment. The bodies of the cars were Australian made, and were in themselves a tribute to Australian workmanship.

Arrangements for the tour have been in the hands of the Shell Company of Australia. The cars will be shod with Dunlop tyres, and Shell lubricant will be used throughout the journey. The party was given the best wishes of the Royal Automobile Club and the Victorian Light Car Club.

"The Kookaburra" of course is most commonly known as "Jacko", the name invariably used by Joan Richmond.

Then on Saturday 15th August in *The Argus*, the day of their scheduled departure (look towards the bottom of the ad.):

**AERIAL AND MOTORCYCLE
GYMKHANA**



**MELBOURNE
AIRPORT**
Bobby St., near Mount St. Hill.

**SATURDAY
AUGUST
15TH**

ADMISSION 1/- PLUS TAX
AND CHILDREN HALF PRICE

Special Buses Leave Flinders Street Station at short intervals after 1 p.m.
| Taxis as Required.

Aerial and Motor-cycle Relay and Obstacle Race.
Motor-cycle Football Match.
Aerobatics.
Bending Race.
Car-towed Glider Flight.
Motor-cyclist's Dash through Sheet of Glass.
Model Aeroplane Flight.
Turfboard Riding Match.
Blowing Up Ammunition Dump.
Flag Race.
Parachute Descent.
Band Music. Refreshments.

SEE The Riley Team Leave for Monte Carlo.
SEE Galloping Bertha.
SEE The Golden Vauhall Arrive from its Gruelling Test.

Their departure was reported in *The Argus* on Monday 17th as part of the coverage of Coode Island event. By Monday, the party had reached Sydney according to *The Argus*, 18th August:

MOTORING TO LONDON.

SYDNEY, Monday. — The three Riley motorcars in which two men and four women are driving from Melbourne to London, reached Sydney this afternoon. The party was welcomed at the Royal Automobile Club.

Progress was tracked in small items in the newspaper, their Thursday departure from Sydney to Newcastle being recorded in the Friday 21st issue. On the 25th, *The Argus* reported:

MOTORING TO ENGLAND.

BRISBANE, Monday. — The party of motorists who left Melbourne in four Riley cars in order to motor to England reached Brisbane today. They will leave on Wednesday morning for Darwin.

Note that the number of cars seems to have increased by one!

There seem to have been no reports of their progress through Queensland until, on Wednesday 2nd September, *The Argus* printed:

MOTORING PARTY AT WINTON

The Shell Company of Australia Ltd. has received a message from Mr. R. Beatson, the leader of a party of Australian motorists who are travelling to England in three Riley cars, stating that they arrived at Winton (Q.) at noon on Monday, and that they would leave yesterday morning for Cloncurry and Camooweal. They expect to arrive at Darwin on September 14, and they will leave by the Marella for Singapore on September 19.

On Tuesday, 15th September 1931, the *Northern Territory Times* took up the tale, with a quite entertaining report:

SPECTACULAR TOUR

MELBOURNE TO LONDON

The party of motorists, in their Riley cars, arrived in Darwin on Friday afternoon last, to wait for the Marella, by which they will travel to Singapore. The party consists of Mrs Coldham, who calls herself the chaperone, but who is far too charming for such a cold fish position, Miss Kathleen Howell, Jean Robertson and Joan Richmond, and Messrs R. Beatson and P. P. S. Morice. Miss Robertson and Howell are known to Darwin residents, having paid a previous visit to Darwin.

The travellers left Brock's Creek, where they had been the guests of Mr Patullo of Byrneside, at 10.30 a.m. on the Friday and reached Darwin about 4 p.m. the same afternoon. They say that the Territory roads are much better than are the Queensland ones, and that the folk they have met along the way have been generosity itself.

Mr Beatson is the English representative of the Riley cars in which

the party travel. Misses Robertson and Howell hold the record for motoring between Adelaide and Perth, a record which many other drivers have tried to beat, but without success. Miss Richmond is also a well known motor cycle racer.

They have done the trip from Sydney at an average rate of 30 miles to the gallon of petrol, and for safety sake have changed the oil every thousand miles, though it has hardly needed changing. They have had only three small punctures all the way, and the cars have behaved perfectly. They are running on Shell Oil, and are using Dunlop tyres, which are standing up to the journey perfectly.

The weather has been fine for the trip, they have had only one shower on the trip across Queensland, that fell when they were near Camooweal and turned the dust on the cars into mud, but did not hinder their progress.

The Light Car Club gave them a splendid send off when they left Melbourne, accompanying them as far as the Larkin Aerodrome, then sending them on their way with cheers.

The itinerary, after they leave Darwin is somewhat vague, but the party hope to go by sea to Singapore, then on up the Malay Peninsular to Penang, then by sea to Rangoon and Calcutta, then across India to Bombay and Karachi, then by steamer up the Persian Gulf to Bushire. From Bushire they will motor along the edge of the Gulf to Mahomerab and then to Basra. From there they will go into the Shamiya Desert, on across Arabia, through the Holy Land and on to Cairo. They plan to be in Cairo on December 10.

From Cairo on, their itinerary is indefinite. Perhaps they will go down through Egypt to Tunis and cross the Straits of Gibraltar into Spain or they may go back round the edge of the Mediterranean, up through Damascus, past Bieirut and the Gulf of Alexandretta.

They intend to be in Monte Carlo for the motor racing rally about the middle of January. They have entered their cars as an Australian team. If all goes well they will reach London on February 1.

Theirs will be the first cars from Australia to enter for the Monte Carlo Motor Rally, and all good Australians will wish them every success and the best of luck on their way.

On the following Friday, the same paper had an entry in its 'Town Topics' column:

The Riley Car Party who are leaving by the Marella for Singapore, en route for the Monte Carlo Rally, will be running on Shell Motor Spirit during their trip, and are using Triple Shell Motor Oil for lubricating purposes. Their small cars look very businesslike and dainty, and as they are the first Australians to enter for the Rally they will carry with them the good wishes of all for their success.

With regard to their chosen ship, possibly the only choice, a later paragraph records its movements:

The Marella arrived in port about 8 a.m. this morning and mails closed at 4 p.m. today, so her stay is likely to be a very short one. What a different way of life in tropical Darwin in the Thirties—the movements of a single ship must have been of some significance and could be predicted by when the mail closed!

The next reference I could find was a small mention in *The Argus* of 17th October in the 'General Cable News' column:

Australian Motoring Party.

The party of Australian motorists who are travelling to England in Riley cars have arrived in Rangoon.

Then on Tuesday 20th October:

Australian Motoring Party

The party of Australian motorists who are travelling to England in Riley cars left Rangoon for Calcutta by steamer on Saturday.



Photo: Joan Richmond via Neil Brandt

The next report I could find in the database was published after a gap of about six weeks in *The Canberra Times* of Wednesday 2nd December 1931. It makes interesting reading, particularly in comparison with more recent events in the same area. It conjures up images of a different world in which news arrived by cable, record-breaking solo flights were still being made, outbreaks of diseases now long controlled disrupted travel (though we have new ones of similar effect), exciting archaeological discoveries made the headlines, and the British

were developing their theories of aerial warfare by bombing Iraqi tribesmen. You might note in passing that Apostrophe Man was active as long ago as the Thirties.

MOTORING TO EUROPE Australians' Tour To Iraq

It was feared that the Australian party of motorists driving to Europe to take part in the 1932 International Monte Carlo Motor Rally, might have their journey across Iraq checked, owing to a cholera outbreak at Basra (head of the Persian Gulf).

When C. A. Butler, on his record flight from England to Australia, landed near Basra, on November 3, he came into conflict with the local authorities, owing to having landed in a plague infected area, and from this incident it looked as if Mr. R. Beatson's party, comprising four women and to men, aboard three light cars—9 h.p. Dunlop shod Rileys—might have to alter their route. A cablegram from Basra cleared up all doubts last week, for it reported that the Australian overlanders had arrived there, and were leaving at once for Bagdad, inspecting on the way, the recent archaeological discoveries at Ur of the Chaldees, and ancient Babylon.

The drive up the Euphrates Valley to Bagdad—capital of Iraq—with all its historical associations, and thence across the dreaded sand desert, which stretches for 425 miles between Syria on the north and Arabia on the south, was one that the Australians looked forward to with keen anticipation, despite the difficulties of the trip. Leaving Bagdad the "Riley's" will follow the centuries-old caravan route across the desert to Palestine. They will for safety closely follow the well armed motor coach Pullmans, which tri-weekly make the trip between Bagdad and Damascus. It is dangerous for motorists to attempt to traverse this route alone, owing to the predatory bandits that infest the country. For this reason the motor coaches travel across the desert in pairs and the desert outposts at Ramadia and Rutba are armed and protected against attack. Travelling all night these luxuriously fitted up 6-wheeled Pullman coaches, which weigh 7 tons each, land their passengers at Damascus, where they transfer to ordinary touring cars for the 4 hours' run over the zigzagging roads of the Lebanon to Beirut, a French-Syrian port on the Mediterranean-washed shores of Palestine. The whole journey of 603 miles takes only 36 hours.

This historic route was first traversed with a motor vehicle in 1909 by an Englishman, Mr. David Forbes. His party comprised an English driver, an Assyrian mechanic, a cook, and an Arab guide. They travelled aboard a 10 h.p. Dunlop shod Argyll, heavily laden with petrol, camping equipment, etc., and despite losing two days improvising a ferry across the river Euphrates, the party succeeded in reaching Bagdad in 9 days—a feat that astounded those who had a knowledge of the difficulties of crossing this desert country. Twenty-two years ago it took the caravans 24 days to cover the same route;

today travellers make the same trip in comfort in 1½ days, averaging 45 miles per hour throughout the night; the only landmark the drivers have to guide them being a single plow furrow across the desert, which is trailed by the aid of powerful electric lights on the coaches.

The Australians, who are running about a week behind schedule, expect to reach Cairo (Egypt) about the middle of December. The International Rally in which the party and three cars will compete, will finish at Monte Carlo on January 20. In this contest competitors select their own starting point, from those nominated by the promoting club, and passing through specified controls en route, must arrive on time at all points and at finish to avoid elimination. As the rally is held in mid-winter, and some of the routes radiate over 2000 miles from the finishing point, the trial is a great sporting adventure. The speed average for large cars is 24.8 m.p.h., while the small cars must maintain an average speed of at least 19.8 m.p.h. for the full distance covered (*sic*). The winner of the respective classes is the driver who maintains his schedule, checks in on time, and has covered the greatest mileage. In addition, the cars have to undergo an examination for mechanical defects, brake efficiency, etc.

This year's event saw 120 contestants start from outlying parts of Europe and Britain. Two Britishers in D. M. Healey (Invicta) and V. E. Leverett (Riley) won the coveted honours.



Haddad, guide at Kish (Iraq) *Photo: Joan Richmond via Neil Brandt*

Our intrepid travellers did indeed reach Cairo almost on schedule as the next report in *The Argus* of Saturday 19th December shows:

**Australian Motorists.
At Cairo for Christmas.**

CAIRO, Dec. 17.

The party of Australian motorists who are travelling by motor-car to the International Motor Rally at Monte Carlo have arrived at Cairo, Egypt.

They had an amusing experience at Suez, where the Customs officials were dubious and asked why should women want to cross the desert from Australia. A perusal of the documents dispelled their suspicions. All members of the party are fit and well. They will spend Christmas in Cairo and will then ship their cars to Italy.

After Christmas, *The Canberra Times* takes up the tale with their report of 29th December including a most optimistic interpretation of the journey and its implications:

**AUSTRALIAN MOTORISTS
Across Half The World**

The Australian party of motorists who left Melbourne last August to drive to Europe to compete in the big International Motor Car Rally, which finishes up at Monte Carlo on January 20, have arrived at Cairo (Egypt), thus continuing their long trek across almost half of the world.

The fact that the party of 4 women and two men, aboard three light cars—9 h.p. Dunlop shod Rileys—have been able to make this long overland journey under safe, easy and enjoyable conditions, opens up the possibility of their successful trip paving the way for the adoption of this route as a pleasurable sight-seeing motor tour to London.

After the holidays, the Australian party sail to Southern Europe to make preparations for their competing in the classic Monte Carlo rally.

In the new year (1932), *The Canberra Times* provided a commentary on the Australians' strategy now that their trip was getting to the pointy end. On 19th January, while the Monte Carlo Rally was in progress, the following appeared:

**MONTE CARLO RALLY
Australians Competing**

The world's greatest motor car reliability trial—the International Rally to Monte Carlo, the famous sporting resort on the Mediterranean, is to be decided this week—the event finishing on the 20th inst. This strenuous contest, which is held under European mid-winter conditions, when much of Europe is under snow, has additional interest for motorists this year, because of the fact that a party of

Australian men and women have driven three 9 h.p. Dunlop shod "Rileys" across half the world to compete in the classic event.

The personnel comprises three women drivers in Misses Jean Robertson, Joan Richmond and Kathleen Howell—all of whom have had considerable experience in motor competition in Australia, Mrs. C. Coldham and Messrs. R. Beatson (leader of the party) and J. P. Morice.

According to advice received by cable the Australians selected Palermo in Italy as their starting point. They were scheduled to deoart from the Palermo control on the 18th inst. (three days after more distant contestants had started for Monte Carlo), and after driving about 160 miles across the north of the Island of Sicily, they had to tranship across the Strait of Messina to Reggio, and then proceed up the coast of Italy—checking in at the Naples control (358 miles), Rome control (146½ miles), and Genoa control (326¾ miles), and then a further 118 miles into Monte Carlo—a total run of 1,111 miles. This distance—apart from a time allowance for shipment across the straits to Italy—had to be negotiated at an average speed not less than 21¾ m.p.h., and not exceeding 23½ m.p.h. There is no allowance for stops or adjustments en route.

Unfortunately the Australians, by starting south of Monaco, have handicapped themselves by selecting a route much shorter than other official courses extending as far away as Stavenger, (Norway—2260 miles), John O'Groats (Scotland—1836 miles), and others nearly as distant from Monte Carlo. Palermo is distant from the finishing point of the rally about the same distance as is London (1,124 miles) from Monte Carlo. In the formula deciding the winners, distance travelled is a factor of considerable importance, as after 100 points are awarded to every contestant travelling 1,000 kilos (621½ miles), there is added one hundredth of a point for every additional kilometre (1,093 yards) driven.

This means that the Australians, although they will drive through three days and two nights and all else being equal on performance—must lose 19 points on distance covered against those starting off from the most popular venue, Stavenger.

Looking through the programmes of the 1930 and 1932 rallies, no competitors amongst those that completed the rally started from Palermo—indicating that the route selected is not a popular one amongst the hundreds of European sporting motorists who compete in this great winter motor contest. Last year's rally was won by two British drivers—D. M. Healey (Invicta-Dunlop) starting from Stavenger, winning A class for large powered cars, and V. E. Leverett (Riley-Dunlop) also from Stavenger, capturing "H" class for light cars.

In a brief report datelined London, Jan. 20, *The Argus* of 22nd January 1932 recorded that the party had reached Monte Carlo, and the next day in the 'Sporting Cables' section (complete with gender reassignment):

Monte Carlo Rally Prizes.

MONTE CARLO, Jan. 21.

The first and second prizes for light cars at the Monte Carlo Motor Rally were won by Lavelette and Boillet, driving Peugeots, while Leverett, driving a Riley, won the third prize. Messrs. Richmond and Robertson, of Australia, driving Rileys, were seventeenth and nineteenth respectively. Miss Robertson obtained fourth prize in the Coupe des Dames.

The Canberra Times of 9th February has the Rileys reaching the targetted endpoint of the trip in another enthusiastic report:

UNIQUE RECORD FOR AUSTRALIAN MOTORISTS

When the Australian party of motorists, including four women, arrived last week in Coventry (Eng.) aboard three Riley cars, a unique set of records was established. It was the first occasion upon which motorists have toured from Australia to England—outstanding features of the journey across the world being that four women took an active part in the driving and adventures associated with travel in may of the countries passed through.

For thre light cars to successfully complete the arduous trip is a tribute to the efficiency and workmanship of the British built 9 h.p. Rileys used.

A message from England to the Dunlop Perdriau Co. from Mr. R. Beatson, the leader of the party, also discusses another striking fact, for he cables that the three Rileys reached Coventry on the original Dunlop tyres as fitted when the cars left Melbourne last August, and that the tyres are still in excellent condition/ This is indeed a remarkable demonstration of tyre endurance and a tribute to Australian workmanship and the dependability of the tyres selected for this strenuous drive.

If anyone a few years back had suggested that three cars shod with standard balloon tyres could be driven across the world and all vehicles finish with the original tyres in excellent condition, they would have been looked upon as almost fit subjects for medical attention. Yet standard Dunlop tyres made by Australians have done it, affording an outstanding illustration of the remarkable endurance now built into motor tyres by Dunlop Perdriau.

The route followed was across Australia to Darwin (3,380 miles) through the East, across North India, thence to Basra, Bagdad, and via the 425 miles Syrian Desert to Palestine, then through Jerusalem, Suez to Cairo. After driving 1111 miles in the International Monte Carlo Rally Contest, the journey across Europe was undertaken, the long tour terminating at Coventry, England.

The success of this pioneering trip opens up the possibility of many motorists in the future adopting this method of journeying between

Australia and England. As a sight seeing tour it is probably unparalleled.

The 'Town Topics' column in the *Northern Territory Times* of 15th March contains the following rather inaccurate paragraph:

Those who met the Misses Howells, Robertson and Richmond during their visit to Darwin will be pleased to hear that in the Ladies Race at the Monte Carlo Rally both Misses Robertson and Richmond gained fair positions, the latter coming 17th and the former 19th in the list. The winner of the Ladies Race was Mrs Vaughan, a Londoner, driving a Triumph car. The Misses Robertson and Richmond both drove Riley cars. Drivers of Riley cars were placed 4th 5th 19th 11th 16th 17th and 19th in the light car class, which is a triumph for English cars. It may be mentioned that Mrs Vaughan's win was all the more meritorious as she had stopped, during the trial, to render assistance to an injured motorist, thereby, so she thought, throwing away all hopes of a win.

The correct results for the Australian women were reported in *The Argus* as quoted above.

The Canberra Times next reported, on 26th March, what seem rather optimistic plans by the party which understandably never eventuated:

TO LONDON BY CAR

Word has been received from London by the Perdriau Rubber co., stating that Mr. R. Beatson and party, including four women, who motored from Melbourne to London, and on the way competed in the International motor car rally to Monte Carlo, will probably drive back to Australia. It was the intention of the six Australians to drive their three 9 h.p. Riley cars in the 1,000 miles British rally held early this month—an event that attracted 361 entrants—remarkable figures considering that continuous day and night driving was necessary until the 1,000 miles was travelled. Although the three Riley cars have each travelled 15,000 miles since leaving Australia last August, the original Dunlop tyres fitted are still in use—a sterling tribute to Australian workmanship.

Other plans that didn't get off the drawing board were outlined in the *Northern Territory Times* on 3rd May:

The party of six Australians who set out from Melbourne several months ago to travel as much as possible of the way to Monte Carlo in motor cars has decided to extend the tour to include Central Europe, the Sahara, West Africa, the Congo and Capetown. The members of the party—Mrs F. Coldham, Joan Richmond, Jean Robertson, Kathleen Howell, R. Beatson and J. P. S. Morice—are reported all well.

The Argus brings the tale almost to its conclusion with a paragraph in the 'Items of Interest' column on 17th June:

To England by Motor.

Four of the six Melbourne motorists who travelled to England overland by motor-car returned yesterday by the Aberdeen and Commonwealth liner Largs Bay. Two of the party—Mrs. C. Coldham and Miss Joan Richmond—remained in England. The Misses J. Robertson and K. W. Howell and Messrs. R. Beatson and J. P. S. Morice have returned to Australia. "We had a perfect holiday," said Miss Robertson. "We enjoyed every minute of it, and would gladly set off again tomorrow. It is the best possible way of seeing the world, for it brings you closely into touch with all manner of places and people." Since reaching England Miss Joan Richmond has had the signal success of winning the 1,000 miles handicap of the Junior Car Club at Brooklands. Miss Howell hopes to open a school for women aviators in Melbourne.

These remarkable women were obviously made of sterner stuff than most (including men). They seem to have treated the whole adventure as a bit of a picnic! Read the following from the 'Woman's Realm' section of *The Argus* of 25th June 1932 and see if you agree:

**BY ROAD AND BY AIR
What Women Are Doing**

It is some years since Miss Jean Robertson and Miss Kathleen Howell created a record for women motorists in Australia with their journey by motor to Darwin and back. Since then they have motored along the southern coast to the west of the continent, and there can be few women drivers with greater experience of motoring in this country. They returned to Melbourne on the Largs Bay recently, after having travelled by car overland by way of Malaya, India, Asia, and Europe, to England as one of the party of six, which included Miss Joan Richmond, who recently, with the English woman driver, Mrs. Wisdom, won the 1,000 miles handicap of the Junior Car Club at Brooklands. Their route included Singapore, Penang, Bombay, Basra, Damascus, Jerusalem, across the Sinai desert, Suez, Cairo, Alexandria, Brindisi, Palermo, and Monte Carlo, where they arrived on January 18, just in time to compete in the great motor rally. Miss Richmond drove in the big event with Mr. R. Beatson, and did remarkably well. Miss Robertson and Miss Howell drove in the women's event, one of the rules being that no man must touch the car at any time, and they got fourth place. Talking this week of the tour and their experiences in England, both motoring and flying, these two friends were agreed not only on the complete enjoyment of such a method of seeing the world, but upon its cheapness. "We paid for everything, except the chassis of our car," Miss Robertson said, "for equipment, freights, first-class accommodation on boats, hotels,

and so on, and a very generous estimate works out at less than £300 each, or about £500 for a car for two people. For a four-seater it would be still cheaper. And you are seeing wonderful things all the time. By ordinary means of travel the cost of such a tour would be very considerably more."

Miss Howell, who, like Miss Robertson, took out her pilot's certificate before she went abroad, has some interesting things to say about women in aviation in England.

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Very interesting descriptions are given by these two Australian girls of the great motor rallies and tests both in Europe and England, descriptions from the point of view of both observer and participant. They were very interested in the Women's Automobile Sports Association in England, which conducts at frequent intervals motor trials of one kind or another, and a number of hill-climbing tests over some of the most famous hills in the south of England. Miss Robertson discussed the possibility of a women's team coming to compete in Australia in the event of big rallies being organised here, and she found much interest in such a possibility, although there is no likelihood of it for a year or two at least.

Finally, to put the icing on the cake, as it were, in *The Argus* of 5th December 1932:

MOTORISTS MARRIED. Members of World Tour Party.

Miss Jean Robertson, daughter of Mr. F. R. G. Robertson of Mortat, Goroke, and Mr. Robert Beatson, both of whom were members of the party of six Australian motorists who travelled 14,000 miles overland on a tour from Australia to England, between August, 1931, and February this year, were married on Saturday. The ceremony was performed by the Rev. Dr. Macrae Stewart, of Malvern. Mr. Beatson, who was the leader and organiser of the party, is the representative of Riley motor cars in Australia and New Zealand.

In the course of tour members of the party took part in the 1931 Monte Carlo rally, and later Miss Joan Richmond, who was member of the party, achieved much success while racing at Brooklands in England.

Pity the date of the rally is out by a year, but it serves as a fitting close to this compendium of newspaper articles covering the great Riley adventure. If you would like to read more, including the personal reminiscences of Joan Richmond and Jean Robertson as told to Les Mills, get hold of the James Flood book mentioned above. It is a very long article, but if you express interest, I could serialise it in future TorqueTubes.

From Our Tin Can Bay Correspondent: Lois Archer

Hello, My Riley mates.

Just thought that I'd let you know that Mr. Riley is very much back on the road again and performing like the prince that he is thanks to his "personal" mechanic Barry – no big oil leaks apart from the obligatory drops from the oil filter and the drips from between the engine and gearbox (well, you mechanical fellows know what I mean – quite frankly, I have no idea!!).

Mr. Riley, myself and his mechanic's partner Joan joined in a rally with the Gympie Club on Sunday 27 September organized by Mick Thatcher for a run to Tewantin via Cooran. The conga line included Mick & Lyn in their OnePointFive, two Jaguars, an Escort, and a Fiat. This was the first long run for us post-op, and we came home with clean oil, a totally full radiator, and absolutely no pressure, apart from when the dumb driver took a right turn just a little too early and wound up driving over about 8kms of unsealed dusty, dirty, unsealed **GOAT TRACK** – WOW, I am now completely comfortable again after giving the Riley a completely good work-out. Any guesses about which cars shone on the day? The two RILEYS? absolutely – no bias going on here!

I miss not being able to join you and to catch up, but always know that there will be a devoted Riley owner out there somewhere.

LONG LIVE RILEYS AND THOSE OF US WHO LOVE THEM.



Mr. Riley on Barry's hoist post-op.

Hard Times Indeed— (Are they coming again?)

LT

During my quick scan of the NLA's National Daily Papers database for Riley related stories, I came across the following letter to the Editor of *The Canberra Times* of 24th September 1931:

READER'S VIEWS CARS IN THE STRINGENCY

(The Editor, "The Canberra Times")

Sir,—Deputations at different times to the Minister for more work are usually greeted with the usual political palaver of sympathetic consideration but "on account of there being no funds available, etc."

Yet money can be found to purchase new cars for foremen and others; also recently a Riley car made its appearance, and rumour has it that several more are on order. Surely bread and butter come before cars these days, and if transport is essential, surely a push bike or motor bike would answer the purpose, or would it be too "infra dig" for department heads to come to this.

Some married men in the Territory are rationed one week in three and single men one week in five. There are foremen, clerks and others practically over one another who are never rationed and can go on annual holidays while the work goes on serenely as ever.

Where does the Prime Minister's saying: "Everyone must share the sacrifice" apply here? This country has been a great milking cow for some and it's time somebody in authority started to put the house in order.

Yours, etc.,

"BREAD AND DRIPPING,"

Forrest, September 22, 1931.

This reminds us that it wasn't all bright young things planning driving tours to Europe in 1931, and that some regarded Rileys and such as an extravagance. Some perhaps still do today.

For Sale

1949 Riley 2½ Saloon.

Fully re-conditioned engine, carbies, steering box, diff, brakes, hand-crafted wooden steering wheel.

Re-wooded. Body and chassis sand blasted, primed. Chassis painted black.

Four spoked rims with good tyres.

Seats at upholsters but not started yet.

Has to be put back together, painted and upholstered.

Thousands of dollars in receipts.

The wife says the Riley goes, or me!

Make me an offer!

Graham Jones 07 55982 576 gjonespaint@aapt.net.au

Riley Parts For Sale – Post War

RMABDEF	boot lid straight, no rust in seams.....	\$100
RMABDEF	spare wheel cover, quite good.....	\$40
RMBDF	bonnet assembly, complete, straight	\$30
RMABD	rear bumper assembly with all brackets, vgood.....	\$70
RMABDEF	tow bar.....	\$25
RMABDEF	perspex windscreen protectors, 1950's accessory, 2 panels with sealing rubbers & suction cups in good condition. Could save your windscreens across the Nullabor next Easter.....	\$30
RMABD	windscreens, untampered frames vgood.....	\$20pr
RMF	factory illustrated parts catalogue, excellent.....	\$50
RMA	speedometer mph (early type) vgood condition.....	\$ 50
RMA	speedometer kph (early type) vgood condition	\$80
RMH	Pathfinder workshop manual, mint condition.....	\$50
One Point Five	New factory workshop manual ring back folder.....	\$20

Many other parts available.

Contact Mike Bramwell on **0437189538**

2008 Committee Contact Details:**President**

Alan Hill
4 Mahdeen Place
Samford 4520
Telephone: (07) 3289 1063
Email: alshe@bigpond.com

Secretary

Ray Burrows
14 Lynch Crescent
Birkdale 4159
Telephone: (07) 3822 1366
Email: Redpath@aanet.com.au

Editor

Linden Thomson
39 Third Avenue
Sandgate 4017
Telephone: 3269 6426
Email: lindenthomson@optusnet.com.au

Spare Parts

Jack Warr
9 Newcomen Street
Indooroopilly 4068
Telephone: (07) 3378 3541

Registrar

Matthew French
152 Old Northern Road
Everton Park 4053
Telephone: (07) 3353 0532
Email: mgwfrench@optusnet.com.au

Vice President

Brian Jackson
22 Lorraine Avenue
Marcoola 4564
Telephone: (07) 5448 7465
Email: jacksons1@aapt.net.au

Treasurer:

Ross Phillips
34 Blackwood Street
East Ipswich 4305
Telephone: (07) 3281 3807
Email: dphillips@prescare.org.au

Club Captain

Wendy Judd
6 Cressbrook Street
Forest Lake 4078
Telephone: (07) 3879 0340
Email: tgjudd@yahoo.com

Assistant Spare Parts

Graham Mackay
10 Lonsdale Close
Parkinson 4114
Telephone: (07) 3273 3450

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