

November 1990

# *The* **HUMBERETTE**



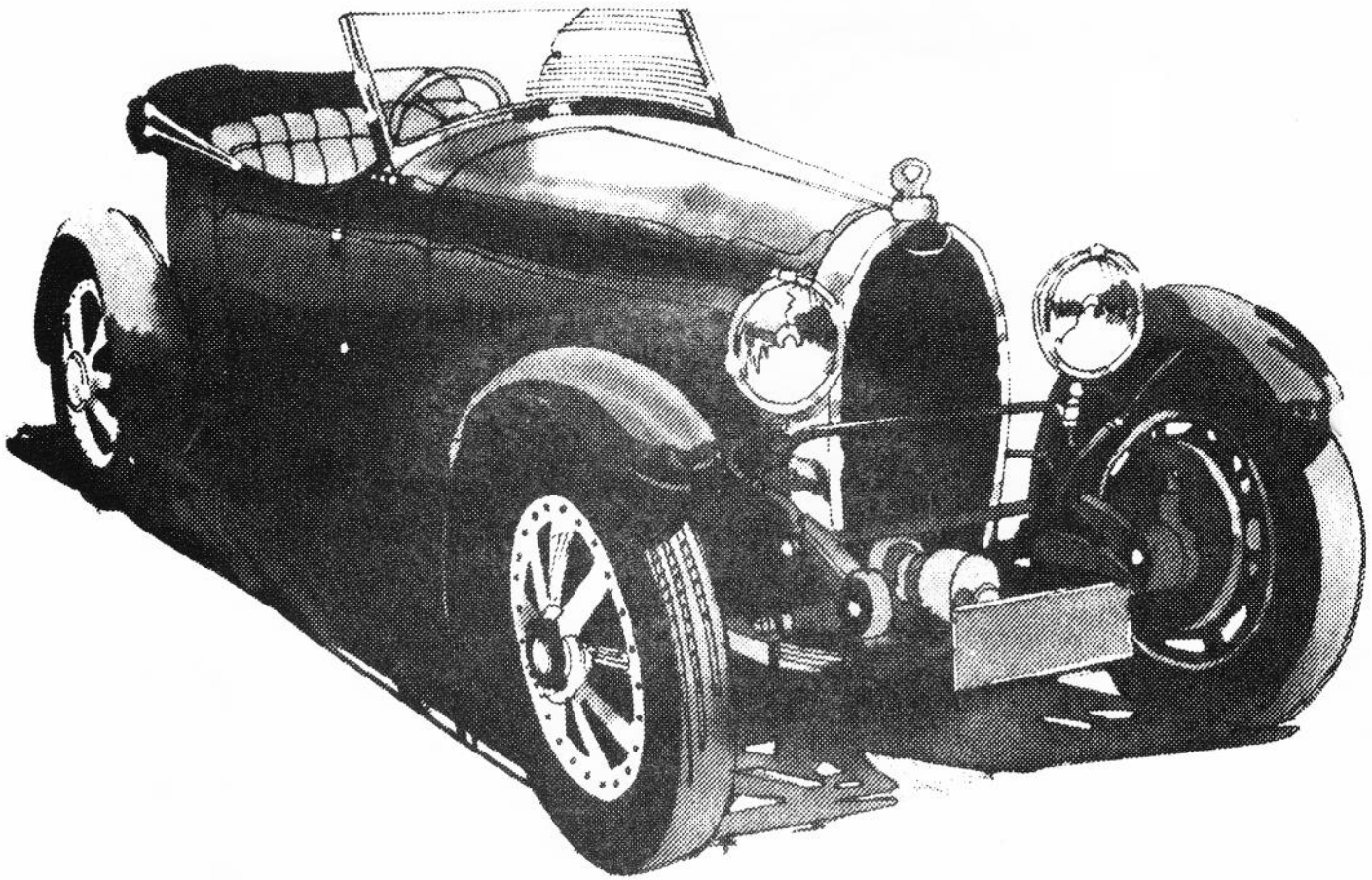
By Appointment to  
The Royal Family

Official Newsletter of the  
Humber Car Club of  
Victoria Inc.

Affiliated with the  
Association of Motoring Clubs



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- NOVEMBER 23RD. FINAL GENERAL MEETING FOR YEAR. DEEPDENE PARK HALL. 8.00PM. MEMBERS ARE REQUESTED TO BRING A PLATE FOR SPECIAL CHRISTMAS SUPPER.
- DECEMBER 9TH. CHRISTMAS BREAKUP PARTY AND PRESENTATION OF AWARDS, EDWARDES LAKE BISTRO, (RESERVOIR HOTEL), EDWARDES ST. RESERVOIR. SEE BELOW FOR DETAILS.
- \*NOVEMBER 26TH (MON.) A.O.M.C. DELEGATE'S MEETING FOLLOWED BY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING. CARNEGIE PROGRESS HALL. 8.00PM.
- JANUARY 25TH 1991. FIRST GENERAL MEETING FOR YEAR. DEEPDENE HALL. 8.00PM.
- JANUARY 26TH. CAVALCADE AND VEHICLE DISPLAY IN THE ALEXANDRA GARDENS. ENTRY FEE IS \$5.00 WHICH INCLUDES A COMMEMORATIVE BADGE THAT MUST BE PICKED UP ON THE SATURDAY. VEHICLES FOR DISPLAY MUST HAVE BEEN MANUFACTURED PRIOR TO 31/12/65. entry forms from secretary.
- JANUARY 27TH. "STRAWBERRY FIELDS" DAY RUN EAST OF MELBOURNE. ORGANIZED BY THE VETERAN CAR CLUB OF AUSTRALIA. ENTRY FEE WILL BE COLLECTED ON THE DAY.
- JANUARY 28TH. DAY RUN ORGANIZED BY VINTAGE DRIVERS CLUB. APPROX. 80 MILES STOPPING AT POINT COOK METROPOLITAN PARK FOR MORNING TEA THEN TO THE YOU YANGS FOR LUNCH.
- \*\*\* ENTRY FORMS FOR THE ABOVE THREE EVENTS ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE SECRETARY AND MUST BE IN BY DECEMBER 31ST. \*\*\*
- FEBRUARY 10TH. PICNIC AT HANGING ROCK. ORGANIZED BY MACEDON RANGES AND DISTRICT MOTOR CLUB. LIMITED SOUVENIR BADGE IS AVAILABLE ON THE DAY. THERE IS AN ADMITTANCE FEE INTO THE HANGING ROCK RESERVE.
- FEBRUARY 22ND. GENERAL MEETING, FOLLOWED BY THE ANNUAL GENERAL OF THE HUMBER CAR CLUB OF VICTORIA, INC. DEEPDENE HALL. 8.00PM.
- FEBRUARY 25TH. A.O.M.C. DELEGATE'S MEETING. 8.00PM. CARNEGIE HALL.
- MARCH 9TH-11TH. CASRERTON MOTOR ENTHUSIASTS CLUB ANNUAL RALLY. DETAILS AND ENTRY FORMS FROM SECRETARY.
- MARCH 17TH. ZEPHYR AND ZODIAC CLUB ANNUAL MULTI-CLUB RALLY AND DISPLAY AT ELAINE PROGRESS HALL.
- MARCH 22ND. GENERAL MEETING. DEEPDENE HALL. 8.00PM

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## CHRISTMAS BREAK-UP.



- WHAT'S ON: BREAKUP PARTY; PRESENTATION OF AWARDS; DRAWING OF CHRISTMAS HAMPER.
- WHERE: EDWARDES LAKE BISTRO (PRIVATE SECTION). OPPOSITE EDWARDES LAKE RESERVE AND YACHT CLUB. MELWAY 18 D/5.
- WHEN: SUNDAY, DECEMBER 9TH. 12.00PM TO 4PM. MEET NOON IN HOTEL CAR PARK.
- COST: APPROX. \$14.00 PER HEAD PLUS DRINKS. SMALL CHILD'S MENU.

Chief Executive  
Royal Automobile Club of Victoria (RACV) Ltd  
550 Princes Highway  
NOBLE PARK VIC 3174

Dear Sir

### THE CLUB LOCK

Earlier this year I purchased three of the above items from the RACV shop.

On the night of 25 August 1990 my vehicle, fitted with one of the locks, was stolen from outside my residence. It was found by Police on 27 August and I recovered it that night. The vehicle was apparently unharmed and The Club Lock was found on the front seat.

The sliding bar on the lock had not been cut through but had been fractured. There is no evidence that it had been attacked with any tool, such as a hammer, nor any that suggests that a pipe had been placed over the sliding bar to gain extra leverage. There also appears to be no damage to the steering wheel of the vehicle to which it was fitted (an HQ Holden).

There is evidence that the fracture was induced by bending and it seems to me that the lock has been able to have been broken by a person or persons without additional mechanical assistance. Further, since the sliding bar fractured rather than bent, it appears that the material used may be inappropriate. This leads me to doubt that it was fit for the purpose for which it was sold and to wonder whether it is a case of my particular lock being defective or whether there is a basic design defect.

I believe that, as a minimum, I am entitled to replacement of the broken lock. However, in view of the publicity given to the alleged effectiveness these devices, I consider that further investigation of this product should be undertaken. This of particular importance since motor vehicle insurers, among others, have been putting faith in them and in some instances insist that their insured parties purchase and use the locks.

I will be out of the country for the next month and should return early in October. Should you wish to inspect the broken lock in the meantime please contact Mr David Price at State Insurance Office, telephone 649 1287.

In due course I would appreciate your advice of what action you intend to take in this matter.

Yours faithfully

STEWART J HIBBERT  
MIEAust  
RACV Member



ROYAL AUTOMOBILE CLUB OF VICTORIA (RACV) LTD

15 October 1990.

Mr. S. J. Hibbert,  
P. O. Box 1162,  
RICHMOND NORTH 3121.

Dear Mr. Hibbert,

I refer to my recent correspondence of 20 September 1990.

An investigation was carried out by our Product Evaluation Department into your damaged Club Lock which revealed the following.

The shaft break shows a fine coarse surface of shiny peaks consistent with the fracture of a brittle metal.

A subsequent test conducted by 'Metal Treatment Services' revealed the broken shaft was surface hardened medium grade steel and is somewhat brittle causing the shaft to ultimately snap rather than bend.

Nevertheless, considerable force was required to break the shaft as evidenced by a second break performed by 'Metal Treatment Services'.

While the Club Lock does not show signs of abuse it is our opinion that a substantial bending force was applied to the lock shaft by an unknown means and that due to its grade of steel and hardening caused the shaft to snap rather than bend.

The Club Lock is not considered defective given its ultimate level of anti-theft protection.

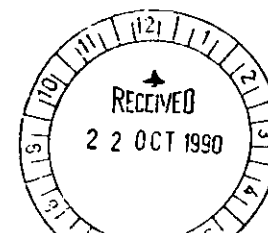
However, a copy of our Product Evaluation Report will be forwarded to the manufacturers of Club Lock recommending that the device could be improved with a higher grade of steel.

Please accept our apologies for the inconvenience caused and thank you for bringing this matter to our attention.

Yours faithfully,

  
G. J. PERCY,  
ACTING MANAGER BRANCH SERVICES.

GJP:sf





# THE HUMBER CAR CLUB OF VICTORIA INC.

CLUB ADDRESS — 23 HIGH STREET, WATSONIA. 3087

## COMMITTEE 1990-91

PRESIDENT	:	Geoff Webb	803 6592
VICE PRESIDENT	:	Margaret Willimott	435 6354
SECRETARY	:	Ian Foreman	
TREASURER	:	Brian Parkinson	
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY	:	Graeme Finn	497 4231
EDITOR	:	Barry Bosnich	(057) 83 1899
EVENTS DIRECTOR	:	Mike Dupla	390 2211
LIBRARIAN	:	Dave Denner	874 7016
REGALIA	:	Vic Wilson	478 9352
TECHNICAL ADVISORS	:		
- Vogues	:	R. Dunlop	439 7059
- Series V, VA S/Snipes	:	A. Goldman	(059) 75 6807
- Hawks	:	K. Willimott	435 6354
- Mk Cars	:	B. Kennedy	789 5119
- General Information	:	B. Kennedy	789 5119
- Auto Electrical	:	M. Fitchett	366 8987



U.S. MEMBER STEVEN AMALIA'S S/SNIPE SERIES 3  
L.H.D. AT MAGNOLIA HARBOUR, BOSTON.



MIKE DUPLA UPDATING SOCIAL REPORT.

By the time you read this report, Christmas will just be over four weeks away and the year will be fast drawing to a close.

We are rapidly approaching election time again where we select a new committee. If you are one of the few capable people who can spare a little time to assist in the running of our club, your help would certainly be appreciated. If you would like to stand for any committee position, please contact me.

For those members, particularly our country members who will not be attending our Christmas party, on behalf of the committee I would like to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and may your Humber continue to happily "purrr" for many years to come.

Geoff Webb.

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FOR SALES

Series V, original, Armstrong rear shock absorbers, fully reco by Pedders, not used, \$100.  
Contact: D. Hagg, Ph: 580 2531.

1952-54 S/Snipe, engine and gearbox, dashboard with gauges, tailshaft, seats, two (2) wheels and tyres, \$150.  
Contact: A. Guy, Cohuna, Ph: (054) 56 2645.

Mk 1 Sceptre, two-tone green, green interior, good all round, no rust, overdrive, Aust delivery car, no reg, \$4,000.  
Contact: L. Boyd, Ph: 719 7417.

5A S/Snipe, reg August 1991, needs work, excellent parts car, four new michelin tyres, Humber radio, \$1,000.  
Contact: Nick (or leave message), Ph: 329 6336.

1963 S/Snipe, auto, motor recently worked on, good tyres, blue and white, body good, reasonable car throughout.  
Contact: Laurie King, Ph: (059) 86 2130, Rosebud. (RK)

Mid 50's Hawk grill, brand new, \$50.  
Contact: Mr. Storace, Moorabbin, Ph: 555 4517. (RK)

1963 Vogue, auto, reg, mech fair, good tyres, interior good, spare car with it, car at Footscray, \$2,000. Contact: Ph: 687 2552. (RK)

Series IV S/Snipe, auto, ex motor, good gearbox, good tyres, moonstone (white)/red interior, body good, plates just handed in, car at Lalor, offers???  
Contact: Frank Wiffen, Ph: 465 2268. (RK)

Series V S/Snipe, auto, no reg, grey/red interior, good body, has been restored, needs rear shocker, uni joints (supplied with car), car at Sunshine, \$3,000 ono.  
Contact: Cheryl Johnstone, Ph: 312 2191. (RK)

Series 5A S/Snipe, dark green/grey interior, good body, runs well, some spares, car at Bayswater, \$1,500. Contact: Dave Clancy, Ph: 720 5519. (RK)

Series 4 S/Snipe, white, reg Feb 1991, new tyres, car at Carrum, will swap for auto Vogue, \$4,000 ono. Contact: Mrs. Bolton, Ph: 772 4518. (RK)

1964 S/Snipe, reg end Nov 1990, good tyres, white, no rwc.  
1954 S/snipe motor in boot, cars at Daylesford, \$1,000 for both.  
Contact: Luka Putnjivic, Ph: (053) 48 3719. (RK)

1965 Vogue, 4-speed manual, big motor, good tyres, exhaust, radiator, interior fair, body needs little work, reg April 1991, new brakes, new shockers, goes well, \$900 ono.  
Contact: Bob Kennedy, Ph: 789 5119.

SOCIAL NEWS & NOTES - NOVEMBER/DECEMBER

Hello everyone and welcome to this last bumper issue of the Humberette for 1990. I hope it adds a little extra something to your holiday reading.

The timely article from Mike Oupla regarding his ingenious method of repairing a broken trafficator arm was prompted by the interesting and informative address by Wayne Harrison from Loctite at our last meeting. I was amazed at the immense variety of sealants by Loctite that are available on the market.

Another job for the approaching holidays! Damian Li suggest an inexpensive and effective method for restoring wood veneer (carefully tried and tested by the author!). These repair tips show just what can be achieved with a little imagination, a dose of holiday "elbow grease" and a minimum of financial outlay!

Also, take time to peruse Stewart Hibbert's experience with the 'Club Lock'. Food for thought, indeed, but it is nice to see the courteous and efficient way in which the RACV replied to his request.

Once again we were fortunate with the weather for our annual Concours at Balwyn Park. Despite the slightly depleted attendance, a fine range of cars lined up around the oval. As well as the Humbers on display I noticed vehicles from the Standard Vanguard, MG, Daimler, Triumph, Hillman and Sunbeam Marques as well as several gleaming modern machines which provided a contrast to the early Humbers.

Bob Kennedy's stately 1934 Snipe, fresh from restoration, was the earliest car on display and looked most elegant sitting alongside its Mark and Series sisters. Bob's Snipe won the Most Popular Humber trophy whilst the Open Class went to Dan Carroll of the Daimler Club. Dan's fully restored soft-top early model Daimler certainly attracted much attention as did visitor Jamie Ritchie's well kept Mazda RX3 which took out second place in this area.

A full list of trophy winners will be published in the next magazine but Kevin Magee's Series V Snipe and Geoff Webb's Series II Snipe Estate again featured prominently among the award winners. It's hard to fault these two beautiful vehicles!

Series Snipes really scooped the pool this year with Bob Bruce and Alison Bodycomb's Snipes taking first and second respectively in the Pride of Ownership Event. The Snipes have certainly established themselves this year as flagships of the marque. Congratulations all!

Out thanks must go to all who assisted in any capacity at the Concours. From judges to vote scrutineers to photographers and catering organizers - your help is greatly appreciated. My sincere thanks, everyone!

This year's Christmas Break-up and Presentation Luncheon will take place on Sunday December 9th at Edwardes Lake Bistro. There is plenty of room for off-street car parking at this venue which also features a special children's menu and playroom. We had a great time here last year and expect this year to be just as happy occasion. There is no need to book beforehand but I would appreciate an indication of numbers attending. I have tentatively booked for fifty in a private area off the main nbistro. Don't forget the Christmas Hamper will be drawn on this day also.

Finally, as we project towards 1991 may I remind you of the Australia Day Parade and Tours over the last weekend in January. Entries for these events close on December 31st and entry forms are available either from myself or our Secretary at the next meeting. This is a good opportunity to promote the Club and bring Humbers to the notice of the general public.

In closing I wish you all a happy and safe festive season. Please drive carefully - Humbers are sturdy, steady vehicles and we would like to keep their owners that way also. All the best for 1991.

Margaret.

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# KENNEDYS KLANGERS

Well the big event is over for the year (Concours D'Elegance), 'and we all hate Kennedy and the other judges again' (do I hear still?) and it still annoys me that people still lose points for silly reasons. Some people think that the same items are looked at each year, believe me, they are not.

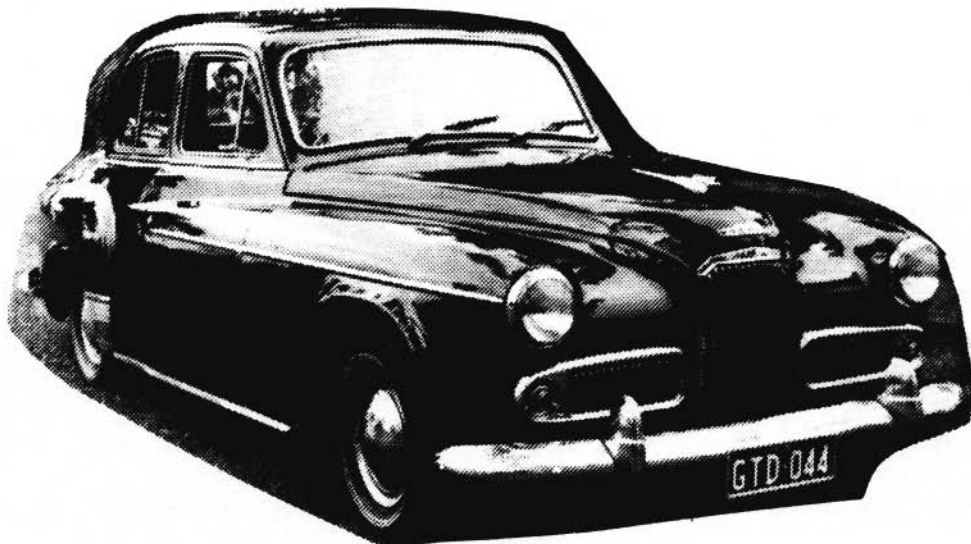
Some of the items that keep cropping up each year are; overspray of paint, grommets and other things painted over, dirt and dust in various parts, personal items left in vehicle and the list goes on and on. Maybe next year more can be written in the newsletter to help the members who want to enter into the event. The big thing to remember however is they are there to enjoy themselves.

One other item I must mention is no matter who judges at these events, either club members or someone from outside the club, you will never be happy with the results - that is a fact of life.

Well I won't bore you anymore (count that as a Xmas present from me) but I look forward to seeing you at the next outing or at the next meeting and if I don't catch up with you before, I hope you have a Merry Xmas and all the best for the new year ahead.

Bob Kennedy.

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# MINUTES of the GENERAL MEETING OF THE HCCV INC.

Held Friday 26th Oct. 1990 at Deepdene

The meeting was opened by Geoff Webb at 8.10pm.

APOLOGIES: Ian & Michelle Foreman, Alison Bodycomb, Steve Laurie, Nancy Kennedy, Pam Batten, Sylvia Pieterston, Nat & Delsie Hanlon, Vic Wilson, and Ray Webster.

NEW MEMBERS: Eoghan Wilson was welcomed to the club.

MINUTES: Minutes as printed in the October 1990 Humberette were accepted as correct. Moved by Bob Kennedy, seconded Margaret Willimot.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM LAST MINUTES: Nil.

CORRESPONDENCE: John Berry of Canberra, Marion Hattersley & Family, The Humber Club of Queensland, Macedon Ranges & District Motor Club, Zephyr & Zodiac Owners Club, Shannons Corp., C.R.Cookson of Casterton, Vic. Historic Racing Register, The Federation of Veteran Vintage & Classic Vehicle Clubs, Marque Publishing, The Formula One Shop. and various other advertising brochures.

CLUB MAGAZINES: Rover Car Club, Austin A40 Club, Humber Car Club of W.A., SATOC, Classic & Historic Automobile Club of Australia, The Daimler & Lanchester Club of Vic.  
The Chevrolet Car Club of Vic. and the Wolseley Car Club.

EDITORS REPORT: 210 magazines printed, 212 sent out this month (2 were back issues sent to interested people.)  
More photos of members cars are wanted.

TREASURERS REPORT: Balance at 26/10/90 was \$3363.37. Accounts for payment \$1458.50. Arnold Goldman moved the report be accepted, seconded Peter Sheldon. Brian Parkinson reported the Clubs' Public Liability Policy is due 30th Oct. and moved that the cover be increased to \$5million. Bill Holmes spoke against the motion, suggesting alternatives be sought. The motion was put to a vote and was passed.

VICE -PRESIDENTS REPORT: Margaret Willimot reported on the Clubs' Birthday Bar-B-Que at Kevin Megees' and reminded members that the Concours is at Balwyn Park this year.

A.M.O.C. REPORT: No meeting held but fees are to be increased to \$50.

HALL COMMITTEE REPORT: The Annual General Meeting then Monthly meeting were held on 2/10/90. At flat rate for use of the Hall is to be applied to the various groups. New members were appointed. It was suggested that Clubs have a "clean up roster" to improve clean up after use. However the Humber Club received a credit for cleanliness after their meetings.  
Next meeting is 1st Thursday in Dec.

FOR SALES & WANTED: The Mk.II Snipe from last edition desperately seeking an owner for \$500 or less. Other ads in November Humberette.

TECHNICAL OFFICERS REPORT: Keith Willimot referred to reports of corneal damage to wearers of contact lenses exposed to arc welding flashes. Bob Kennedy reminded members that with summer near to check their cooling systems, flush radiators check fan belts etc.

GENERAL BUSINESS: Special Effort Prize "Australian Practical Motorist" donated by Arnold Goldman. Barry Bosnich reported Hilda Sadlons Hawk is going again. It wouldn't start after a service. Repairs to the head area by Ray Webster got it going again. Brian Parkinson raised the matter of inconsistency of quoting for parts by some retailers. It was suggested that members ask for the persons name when obtaining a telephone price and ask to be served by that person. Comments were made on the value of currently popular steering locks after a case of one such lock being snapped in half by determined car thieves.

GUEST SPEAKER: Wayne Harrison from Loctite detailed Loctites large rang of thread lockers ,retaining compounds, pipe sealants, gasketting compounds, adhesives, etc etc. Wayne demonstrated uses of some of the products and also gave a very interesting overview of current industry practises. The presentation was very interesting and of relevance to car restorers.

The meeting adjourned at 10.15pm and was followed by tea coffee, cake and conversation.

GRAEME FINN

#### MEMBERSHIPS New & Renewed

Firstly on behalf of the Humber Car Club I would like to welcome the following new members. I hope the club is of benefit to you and that we might be able to meet on one of the clubs functions or outings in the near future.

Chris & Kate Bradburn of Ringwood

Rod Brown of Carlton. Rod has a Mk. III Snipe

Colin Davis of Wycheproof. Colin has a Mk. IV Snipe

Fred Mabey of Buronga NSW. Fred is restoring a Mk IV Snipe

Dan & Maryke Monk of Ocean Grove and their Series II Vogue

Keith & Nancy Sparrow of Murrumbeena, and their Ser.V Snipe

Eoghan Wilson of McKinnon. Eoghan drives a Ser. III Vogue,

Spencer Yen of Wonga Park. Spencer has a Ser.IV Snipe and Anthony Williams of Moonee Ponds.

Graeme Finn  
Membership Secretary

Included in this issue is an article on dashboard restorations by Damian Li, the son of member Ronnie Li who has a Series 3 Vogue. They have decided to restore the car and although Damian is still at school he has taken an interest in it. So Dad persuaded him to write the article for the newsletter.

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The following is a copy of letter sent to Federal and State Environment Ministers and their opposition counterparts by Woodend member Phil Newell who like all earlier car enthusiasts is concerned by the proposed new legislation. Maybe club members will feel constrained to write in a similar vain.

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Re. Current discussions concerning "old" vehicles and environmental and atmospheric pollution.

If the government of the day and the community at large were truly concerned about the above, then the private car would be banned. Only vehicles pertaining to the Police Force, Ambulance Service, Fire Brigade etc. would be allowed to continue in operation.

You and I each know that this cannot and will not happen.

Therefore consider the following points :

1. What constitutes an "old" vehicle? Five years? Ten years? Twenty plus years?

If one's notion of an old vehicle is that of one built prior to 1976, the year emission control was introduced, then bear in mind the fact that the early control equipment was pretty crude and ineffective. It was merely added on as an after thought to then existing engines. Most of this equipment has long since fallen into disrepair or has been tossed out. Effective emission control did not come about until the advent of electronic engine management in the mid eighties.

Surely no one could seriously argue that a vehicle built in say 1981 is an "old" vehicle.

2. Old vehicles are generally enthusiast owned. The older the vehicle, the more enthusiastic the owner. Old vehicles are generally well maintained and tuned.
3. Most old vehicles will run satisfactorily and reliably on unleaded petrol, therefore leaded petrol could be withdrawn. Also many old vehicles could be satisfactorily converted to run on L.P. gas, with obvious environmental benefits.
4. While on the subject of fuels and emissions, the following should be noted.

No fuel can be burned without producing carbon dioxide,  $\text{CO}_2$ , a key element of the "greenhouse effect". Contemporary emission controlled vehicles give out as much  $\text{CO}_2$  per given fuel consumption as do their predecessors. Certainly the contemporary emissions of oxides of nitrogen, oxides of lead and carbon monoxide are considerably lower than previously. But these elements have little bearing upon the greenhouse effect.

Therefore to say that old vehicles contribute more to the greenhouse effect than do contemporary vehicles is simply rubbish.

5. In this day and age of obsession with personal safety, the following should be considered :

Any student of engineering will agree that a column will resist compression and distortion more so when at right angles to the structure to which it is attached, rather than at an angle to it. Present day vehicles with extremely sloping roof pillars (in the interests of aerodynamics) offer little protection to occupants, particularly in the case of a roll over situation. Old vehicles with more upright styling, offer far more protection. This very subject was covered in a recent car club magazine to which I subscribe.

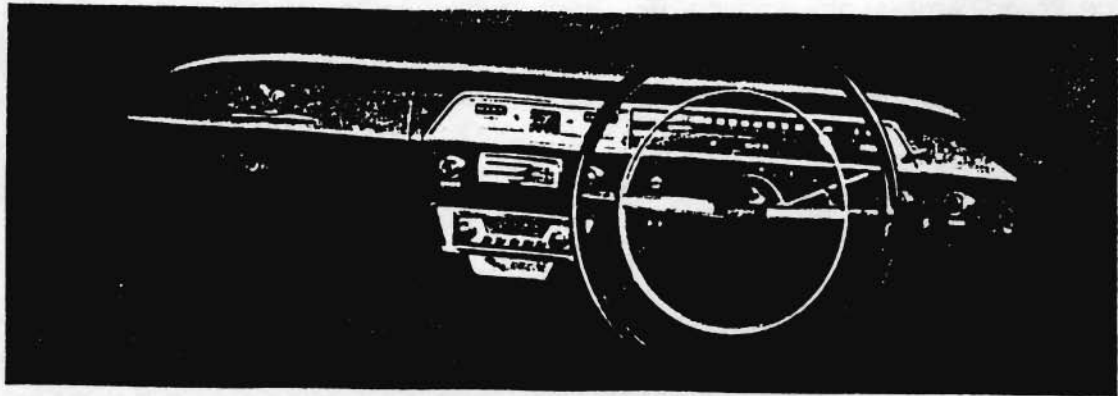
6. Wasting resources. Why scrap an old vehicle in good condition to make way for a new one? Consider the amount of raw materials needed to build a vehicle, not to mention the vast amount of electricity needed.

It seems to me that two key components of the environment debate are missing:- Basic honesty and rational thinking.

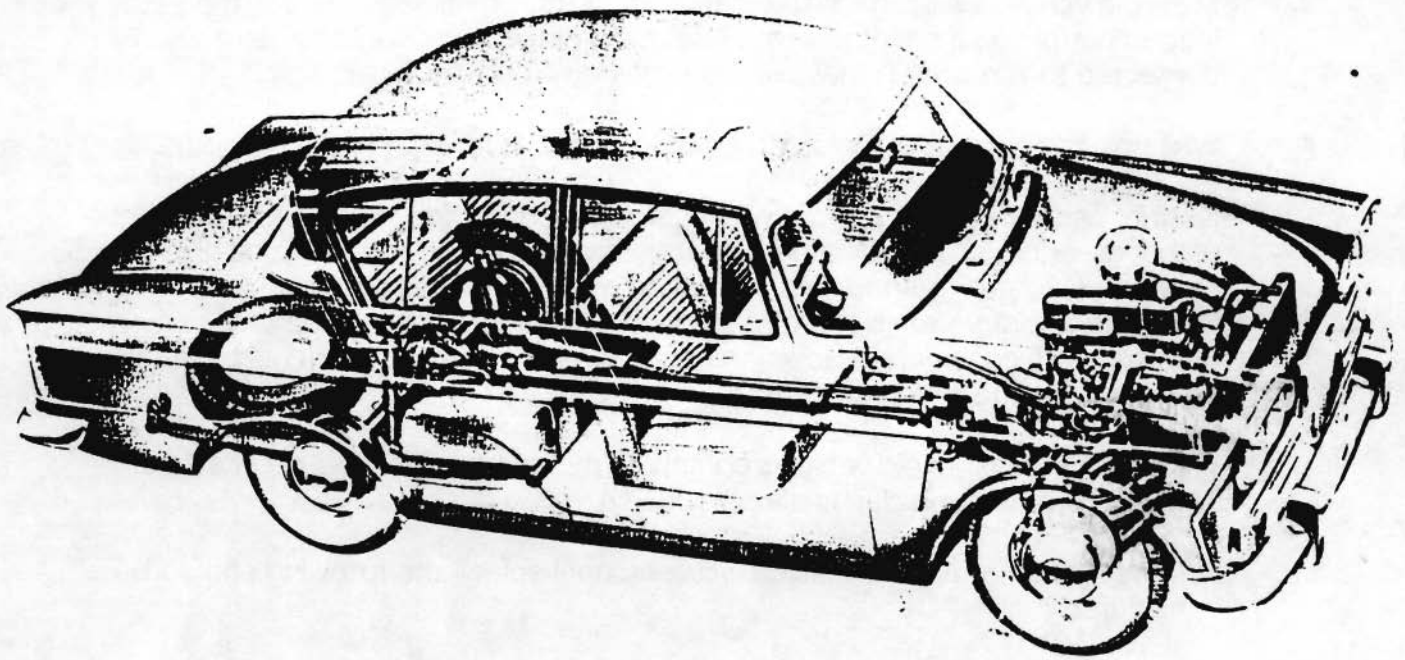
Not until these two issues are addressed will some form of sanity prevail.

# New Humber Vogue

more pleasure in driving



A handsome facia in walnut veneer carries a full range of instruments and controls, grouped for efficiency. Driving features include a dished-type steering wheel, sports-type gearchange lever, conveniently-placed handbrake, combined flashing indicator switch and headlamp flasher. You command a 1.6 litre engine of high capacity and power. You get lively response, swift acceleration through the gears, high sustained cruising speeds, maximum speeds well over 80 m.p.h. (129 k.p.h.) and power to spare on hills.



more  
advanced  
features

Even more advanced features than before - in the latest and finest new Humber Vogue. Innovations include a new form of luxury seating, increased luggage space, disc brakes on front wheels and elimination of greasing points. Borg-Warner fully-automatic transmission, or overdrive on top and third gears, available as an extra.

The interior is finished to a high degree of comfort and luxury, and the new front seats have independent fore-and-aft adjustments of 5 inches (127 mm.). Standard advantages include a ventilating/demisting system, efficient insulation against noise and vibration, wide-opening doors with child-proof locks, a door-operated courtesy light and anchorages for safety belts.

The highly-efficient 1.6 litre engine gives a brilliant, balanced performance, lively response and high cruising speed, now with greater fuel economy. Advanced suspension ensures a smooth steady ride and firm road-grip. This is a car you will want to own - because it brings you more pleasure, prestige and value!



# New Humber Vogue

Enriched interior • Front disc brakes • Greater economy

From any viewpoint, the new Humber Vogue is a car of quality and distinction. Note the wrapped-round screens front and rear for maximum visibility, the twin headlights for night driving safety. Twin reverse lamps are standard.

## SPECIFICATION

**ENGINE:** Four-cylinder short-stroke unit with push rod operated overhead valves. Solex downdraught carburettor. Bore 3.21 in. (81.5 mm.). Stroke 3.00 in. (76.2 mm.). Capacity 97.1 cu. in. (1,592 c.c.). Engine develops 62 maximum b.h.p. at 4,400 r.p.m. and maximum torque 86.3 lb. ft. at 2,500 r.p.m. Compression ratio 8.3 : 1. For certain overseas markets a low compression ratio is available; for details ask your Dealer.

**IGNITION:** Coil and distributor; automatic centrifugal advance and retard mechanism, vacuum control; 14 mm. Champion N5 sparking plugs.

**COOLING SYSTEM:** Centrifugal pump and fan, thermostatic control. Coolant pressure fed to cylinder head with selective cooling of valve seats, stems and sparking plug bosses.

**CLUTCH:** 8 in. Borg and Beck single dry plate. Hydraulically operated by pendant pedal.

**GEARBOX:** Four forward speeds and one reverse with control ring synchromesh on second, third and top. Steering column gear change lever.

Overall ratios: top 3.89 : 1, third 5.413 : 1, second 8.324 : 1, first 13.013 : 1, reverse 16.483 : 1.

**REAR AXLE:** Hypoid semi-floating axle shafts to the rear wheels. Ratio: 3.89 : 1.

**CHASSIS:** Unitary construction of chassis and body provides exceptional strength and rigidity.

**FRONT SUSPENSION:** Fully independent front wheel suspension by means of swinging links, coil springs and ball joint swivel bearings, controlled by double-acting hydraulic telescopic shock absorbers. Use of nylon insert ball joints eliminates need for periodic greasing. A torsion bar sway eliminator is fitted between the suspension lower links.

**REAR SUSPENSION:** Long, wide semi-elliptic leaf springs give improved lateral stability. Double acting hydraulic telescopic shock absorbers maintain control under all conditions.

**WHEELS:** Five pressed steel wheels with ventilation slots and wide base rims, four embellished with polished nave plates and rim-finishers. Spare wheel is housed in a cradle below the luggage compartment floor.

**TYRES:** Tubeless 6.00 x 13 in.

**BRAKES:** Lockheed disc brakes at front of 10.3 in. diameter, and drum brake of 9 in. diameter at rear. The handbrake at the side of the driver's seat operates through a system of cables and the linkage is independent of the footbrake.

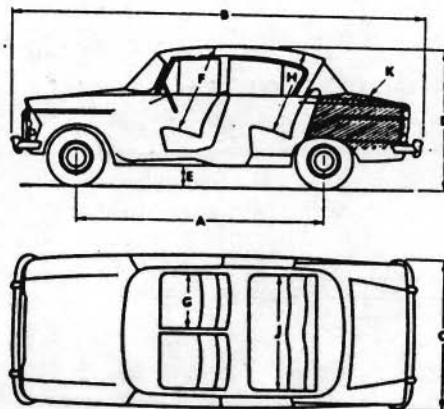
**STEERING:** Burman recirculating ball type. Three piece symmetrical track rod linkage. 16 in. diameter steering wheel with chromium plated horn ring.

**PETROL TANK:** In left-hand rear wing, 10½ gallon capacity with filler positioned on top of wing.

**INSTRUMENTS:** Speedometer including mileage and trip recorder, thermometer, oil pressure gauge, fuel gauge, ammeter and warning lights for headlamp-main beam, ignition and flashing indicators.

**STANDARD EQUIPMENT:** Heating and ventilation system with two-speed fan, screen washer, two-speed screen wipers, twin reverse lamps, boot floor mat, wheel finishers, two interior sun visors.

**WEIGHTS (Approx.):** Unladen (with petrol and water) 2,404 lb. Dry (without petrol and water) 2,308 lb.



## DIMENSIONS

		in.	m.
A	Wheelbase ...	101.00	2.565
B	Overall length ...	165.25	4.197
C	Overall width ...	62.25	1.581
D	Overall height ...	58.25	1.480
E	Ground clearance ...	6.50	0.165
F	*Front headroom ...	39.00	0.990
G	Front seat width ...	22.50	0.572
H	*Rear headroom ...	37.00	0.940
J	Rear seat width ...	51.00	1.295
K	Luggage compartment capacity ...	cu. ft. 16.00	cu. m. 0.453

\* Dimensions marked thus include 2 in. (51 mm.) of cushion compression.

## ROOTES (AUSTRALIA) LIMITED

PORT MELBOURNE, VICTORIA

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COLOUR SCHEMES AVAILABLE UPON APPLICATION



MONTE CARLO RALLY



**HUMBER**

**SUPER SNIPE**

Drivers: M. Gatsonides & K. S. Barendregt

**WINS**

**BARCLAY'S BANK CUP  
FOR BEST PERFORMANCE  
of any British Car**



**IRRESPECTIVE OF  
PRICE OR HORSE-POWER**

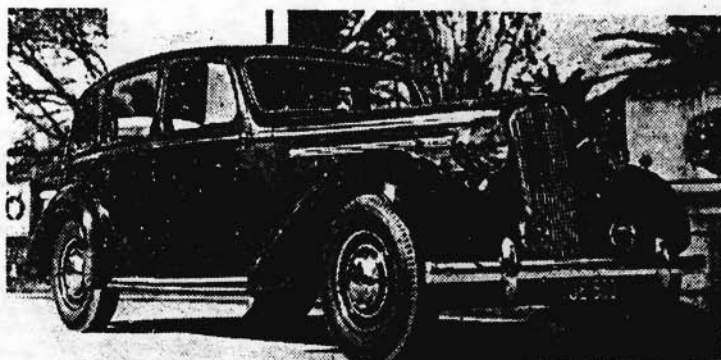
*(Subject to official confirmation)*

**A PRODUCT OF THE ROOTES GROUP**

At first glance the Humber won the rally? Advertizers' licence allows even more these days

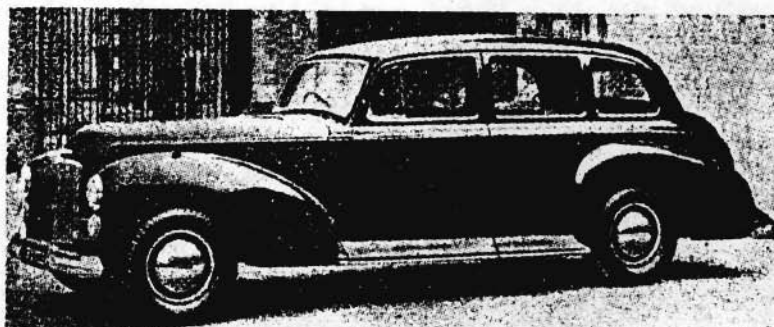
Following in the classic English line of Rootes Humber range, the Hawk makes its appeal as a family saloon with finger-tip gear control and a really improved gear box, one that is crashproof. Here is a saloon with elegance plus 4 cylinder economy. It has a 114 inch wheelbase making it a roomy car for Australian conditions. The 14 h.p. motor has side valves, and develops 56 b.h.p. at 3,800 r.p.m. This is conducive to petrol economy averaging about 25 m.p.g. Typical Humber luxury and comfort include a sun-shine roof and a roomy boot which can be floodlit when opened at night. Jacking is simple with special brackets permanently fixed to the chassis.

**HUMBER SUPER SNIPE 27 h.p. Six.**



There are many members of the respected Humber family and these bigger six cylinder cars with 27 h.p. high power output motors answer Australia's need for powerful cars. It has a smooth speed potential exceeding 80 m.p.h. and a flexibility that enables it to idle at 5 m.p.h. Luxuriously appointed they are the choice of vice royalty and will be seen as State cars during the forthcoming Royal Tour. This is one of the British cars approaching American big-car specifications.

**HUMBER PULLMAN 27 h.p. Limousine.**



Without losing its typical Humber character the new Pullman has a longer length of 17 ft. 6½ in. and incorporates new coachwork by a leading English firm specialising in the restricted limousine field. The streamlined front is restrained and the well-known 6 cylinder Super Snipe engine is continued. A new braking system with two-leading-shoe brakes, a new synchromesh gearbox with steering column control are notable features. The interior is partitioned with speaker grille behind the front seat. Running board lights, radio controls in arm rests, two occasional folding seats, a larger luggage compartment and air conditioning are just a few of the comforts incorporated in this outstanding Rootes production.

**HUMBER HAWK 2 Litre 14 h.p.**



## WET AND WILD

No this is not a story about those things you buy in a chemist and one might be mistaken about thinking that it is a story about surfing. But it's neither, in fact its a story about the Wild family (Anne, Ian, Karl, Melanie and Heather) driving their Snipe through the floods of central NSW, earlier this year (1990).

It all started about 4 years ago when we said, "the next time we're up north central of NSW again lets go camping in the Warrumbungles". Well, the 1990 National Humber Concourse took us that way again.

### The Concourse

A slight diversion from the main theme of this article; - the concourse. It was our first national concourse but it will not be our last.

Getting the Snipe ready took considerable effort and although the car didn't get close to the winners, it didn't matter. The top to tail cleaning, the checking of all bearings, the tuning and timing, the oil and water changing, etc. etc. are all things that our cars should go through at least once a year. It is maintenance like this that keeps our cars on the road (and pollution free despite R Kellys' claims). Let our cars run down and yes, they should be off the road.

The 1990 Concourse itself was great. The weather the first day was, to say the least, damp but it didn't mar our spirits. The people of Cowra were friendly, the host club was friendly, obliging and well organised. But most of all the Humberers, all who attended, were very friendly and welcoming to each and every one of us. It was a credit to all Humber owners and their clubs throughout Australia. I guess our attendance was rewarded a bit more than some others when we, somehow or other, won the observation trophy. (Actually it was Annes' good driving). Thanks NSW for hosting and organising the event; WELL DONE! We, the whole family, are looking forward to the 1992 concourse in Broken Hill.

Thinking towards the future and keeping in mind R Kellys' attitude perhaps we should consider the various concourse classes for our cars to enter. Concourse D'Originale is not necessarily Concourse D'Excellance nor may it be Concourse D'Safe&Sound on todays roads. Perhaps more cars will be entered in the future if we thought the various concourse classes out a bit better for the decade ahead of us rather than the decade behind us.

Now back to the main story.

### The Warrumbungles

After the Concourse at Cowra we packed up our camping gear and headed the further one hundred and fifty odd miles north into the Warrumbungles.

The Warrumbungles are an interesting inland range of mountains isolated from the main divide that separates the coast from inland Australia. They are renown for the rugged volcanic remnants jutting out of the surrounding plains. The 21,000 hectare park is a natural haven for both wildlife and fauna and flora; they also have a very long and interesting aboriginal history. They provide excellent opportunities for camping, bushwalking, nature study, etc. Of additional interest the Siding Springs Observatory which one of the worlds major optical observatories. Also within the observatory site is the fascinating exhibition "Exploring the Universe".

Our drive north from Cowra was fairly dry, but just after we got the tent up the drizzle started and it was only drizzle where we were camping. So on with our coats and off walking and looking and learning. The few days we spent there were very interesting. But

the drizzle was getting heavier and after a few days all our clothes were starting to get a bit damp (some were @#\$%^&\* wet) so we said lets pack up a day or so earlier and slowly make our way south.

Thats exactly what we did and we drove out of the Warrumbungles via Coonabarabran to a virtual inland sea. In all our collective lives we have never seen so much inland water and as we drove down the Newell Highway towards Gilgandra all we could see was water, more water, and more water. Further, it was still raining and getting heavier.

Onwards we went, through Gilgandra and by that time the inland ocean ('twas definitely bigger than a sea) was lapping at the curbs of the highway. Oh! Why didn't we turn back then? ???

Nobody was stopping us, there were no warnings so on towards Dubbo for lunch. The streets at Dubbo, as most know, are very wide and the gutters deep, but.....not deep nor wide enough. We finally found a park (nearly in the middle of one side street and swam to the nearest footpath. The rain just got heavier and I believe during that one lunch stop Dubbo had over a couple of inches of rain. Because it was so cold and wet we all had the most massive baked spuds for lunch (yummy) and I don't think we'll ever forget those big baked spuds with the rain in Dubbo!!

After lunch, down the highway towards Parkes and Forbes. Although we had to go through "minor road wetness", it was at Peak Hill where we were first warned and had to actually drive through water right across the road.

The Humber handles beautifully in 8 inches of water. It definitely didn't float but nor did it drift around. The clue is to drive in slowly and then when the water starts to cover the exhaust accelerate slowly to keep the exhaust pressure from the engine more than that from the water. Care must be taken not to surge into the wet as this will only splash water through the engine bay. With automatics this was a bit tricky; you must remember that we were towing a trailer with all our camping gear as well. Anyway, we had no real trouble there.

We had a few more rivers to drive through that day but we finally made it to Forbes. Seeing how the day was starting to get on we called into the local police to check the road conditions ahead. They were uncertain and recommended that we wait until morning for more information. So we called it a day and started looking for digs for the night.

Well, having already spent our budget on motels at Cowra we checked out all the on-site caravans, etc. etc but to no avail so we spent the next weeks budget on another motel. It was a beauty mainly because it had two stories which put us further away from the rising floods. That is, we could rest comfortably all night assured that we were high and dry. The motel owners were really nice people and assisted us, and many others, in drying out and bedding down for the night. They had only taken over the motel a few months before and, what with the air strike and then the floods they were having a rough start in the tourist industry. Incidentally, feel sorry for those people. Further flooding, later this year, put the second storey of that motel under water and it isn't sited low on the landscape.

The next morning we were up early and round to the police to check the road conditions. They had no "latest news" but said proceed on and if the road is blocked there'll be police diverting the traffic. So, fools that we were believing the police, on we went down the Newell Highway towards West Wyalong.

The ocean was getting deeper and more and more of the road was disappearing. Buses, trucks and those high rise 4WD utes were having no trouble at all just travelling up their side of the road. 2WD and the mickey mouse 4WD's had to sit on the crown of the road. That means there were no turning points for miles and miles. We were committed to go on.

It was interesting to see the buses and trucks coming towards us. Water spraying everywhere and suddenly, spluuunsh, one of their wheels would find a big hole in the road. If we had found one of them I think we would have come up in China. They looked deep.

Well the water was getting deeper and deeper with the real deep bits being about one to two foot deep at the crown of the road. And then, a little Mazda stalled right in front of us. I missed the cue to throw it in neutral and keep the revs. up so we stalled and the water shot up the exhaust. I turned the engine over a bit, hoping, but to no avail.

Do you know what we tried to do then. PUSH. Have you ever tried to push a Snipe through two foot of water with a trailer hooked up. We couldn't. It was as simple as that. What to do now?? Poor car, gear, family, etc.! What to do???

Well three cars behind there was this cowboy in his high rise 4WD Toyota Ute. He had been looking at the Snipe in Dubbo the day before and later in Forbes. Reckoned the Snipe was an A-OK car and should not be out in such conditions let alone being threatened by floods. So out he pulled out around the three that were equally stuck and stranded cars behind us; splashing them like @\$#%#%^&\* on the way. Quick as a flash hooked onto us and towed us passed the Mazda (light globe) and up onto high ground. Then he bided us farewell in his central Orstraaliaaaan draaall and drove off, leaving all the others floating sideways off the road. Thanks mate whoever and wherever you are.

We, a little bit bewildered by the speed of it all, were left with this obligation to try and save the other cars. So, shoes off, pants rolled up and back into the water, ... on foot this time. We easily pushed them out, them being light modern things; it was like pushing funny shaped boats - they all floated.

Next time, if there is a next time, I think I'll get an old bicycle inner tube and use it for a snorkel for the exhaust. Such a light length of rubber tubing stretched over exhaust and held up high would stop the water from backing up the exhaust pipe.

We went through a few more flooded sections of road and it was .... "fun" hearing the Wild family yelling (in chorus), "Come on Trish! Come on Trish! ...." until we cleared each and every puddle on the road to West Wyalong. Also before entering each flooded section of road we were real cautious; Karl and Melanie walked ahead of the car checking for holes and we made sure there were no little itty bitsy cars in front of us that were going to stall; although most of those sized cars had already been outed from the race.

By the way it was still raining.

We finally got into West Wyalong where the general terrain has a higher elevation and thus no more floods. At that stage we said, "lets drive home". It rained all the way home, right into Croydon. But home is home is home. It was a welcome site. All we did was park the car, get any perishables out of the boot and/or trailer and then hit the sack.

### Drying Out, Tidying Up and Repairing the Car

The next morning we woke up to a very wet Snipe and a trailer full of very wet camping gear. It's all expensive to replace so TLC in a big way was called for. We needed lots of under cover area for the Car and the bits I needed to pull out, the tent and bedding, etc. etc.. Only so much fits in the garage.

It was Karl's idea to put the tent up and put the Snipe in it. That's what we did and together with a Tangi heater we soon had things drying out and still had the garage roof to work under.

I decided that all the inside of the car had to come out right down to the floor pan. It looked a daunting job but really it all happened quite easily and quickly. The seats went in the workshop, the carpets and door trim in the lounge and other bits and pieces all over the place.

It was good to get to the bottom of things and really give it a good clean, repaint here and there, check for the start of cancer (there were a couple of small spots starting) and generally go over the old girl.

The mechanical bits to be checked were:

- Front wheel bearings and steering gear; I replaced the bearings and greased all joints.
- Universals; one needed doing so I replaced the lot, together with the central bearing.
- Differential oil and rear bearings; all OK but I changed the oil anyway and I think I'll have to do the pinion seal soon.
- Automatic transmission; change the oil, everything seemed to work OK.
- Engine and engine bay; clean everything in sight, change oil and air filters, change oil, clean electricals and re-set points etc., Check fan belt.
- Check all, and I mean all drain holes from front to back, especially in the door sills.
- Check and grease speedo cable.
- Check and clean radiator core for grit and/or dirt that might have been washed into it.

Generally we put our collective noses into every nook and cranny of the car. It came out of that ordeal better than when it went into the concourse judging. We even carefully cleaned around the front and rear windscreens and resealed them into their rubbers, they were starting to leak.

The whole job took us nearly three weeks work to get the car back on the road. I still haven't put the original carpets back in as I found a synthetic carpet at Clarke Rubber that looks very close to Westminster and a lot hardier. I've stored the original for future concourse type events. I now know that it's easy to take in and out now!

During the three weeks many people asked why have we got our car in the tent. We asked them if they had a bit of time. If the answer was affirmative, it was out with a few drinks, a sit down and a good laugh at our experiences on the road from the Warrumbungles.

Thanks to the members of both the Humber Club and Rootes Group Club for their advice during the dry out, especially Des Judd, Rob Dunlop, Keith Willimott and Vic Wilson. The club(s) spirit was very much appreciated.

We are enjoying our Humber and the Humbering around Australia. Anne and I are looking forward to some long service leave where we can really take on an epic journey. Something like they used to do and in the same spirit. The Humber is the car to do it in. They're safe and comfortable, tough, easy to work on (compared to the modern stuff) and give a sense of adventure to those who drive them. Like all of us they like TLC and respond to it. Remember we got through the floods when other, more modern cars didn't. If it wasn't for that little Mazda, I don't think we would have got stuck at all.

Until our next adventure,

Anne, Ian, Karl, Melanie and Heather.

## NOW YOU SEE IT...

Chips and scratches on a car's paintwork can be annoying because no matter how minor they are, if you want them fixed it can still take a bit of work. Not many car owners want to spray or touch-up blemishes themselves, and a professional repainter is obviously going to charge more than the problem is worth.

A West German company has come up with another solution: a micro-thin, dry film of paint with a self-adhesive backing that can be applied over the problem spots. Called Holt's Autofilm, the paint patches are like little stickers which cover-up the scratch or chip and, with over 230 colors to choose from, the patches should be a perfect color match and blend in with the rest of the car's duco.

Holt's Autofilm is pre-cut into different shapes and sizes, and each pack is sufficient for at least 20 repairs. Repairs are made by cleaning and de-greasing the afflicted area, applying the patch and waiting five hours for the adhesive to fully bond. And it's not just a quick-fix solution; its makers claim Autofilm gives permanent protection against rust and resists weathering, heat, petrol, washing and waxing. Autofilm packs are available from most auto accessory outlets for around \$15.50.

An Australian man claims to have a re-cycled oil which meets the same quality standard as other leading brands of new oil. Tim Pearson claims his recycled **PEARSON** oils are high quality and significantly cheaper, and also help reduce environmental pollution.

Used-car warranties in NSW are now being based on vehicle age and distance travelled, rather than purchase price, following changes to the law by the Minister for Business and Consumer Affairs. The minimum coverage is now 3 months and 5000 kilometres for cars up to 10 years old and with less than 160,000 kilometres on the clock.





Topped up with Esso Extra, a Humber pulls out into Fulham Palace Road.

## Safety expert warns of risks with computer-designed cars

Computer-designed cars could "come apart like a zipper" in some accidents, a car safety expert said in Melbourne yesterday.

Dr Murray Mackay, who runs Birmingham University's traffic accident research unit, said cars involved in accidents other than the single, legislated crash test for which they were designed could fail structurally.

He said engineers designing

cars using computers had been able to cut out an extra structure not needed to pass the safety test for European registration eligibility.

"They have cut out all the ancillary parts which once would have been part of the design," Dr Mackay said crash safety legislation did not deal with the reality of road crashes.

He was hopeful that the 30 per cent crash test, which was advocated by some car makers such as Mercedes-Benz, could be adopted.

Work had to be done to improve child safety in cars; seat belts in the back were not always designed to properly restrain smaller occupants.

He also warned of two problems for car safety researchers: "the flying mother-in-law" and "the fat woman in a fur coat".

The flying mother-in-law occurred when an unrestrained adult in the back seat hit the back of the front seat in an accident, causing the death of the front-seat occupant who was correctly restrained.

The fat woman in a fur coat was a problem because of the amount of movement left in the seat belt due to the coat and fat, which could make the belt ineffective.

Seat-belt tensioners were one solution and had been fitted by Volvo and Mercedes.

# Lost Opportunity

The decline of British car sales in the USA has been dramatic since the Second World War: Richard Langworth tells us why

Richard Langworth is a distinguished American observer of the motoring scene and has owned many European cars. Early in the Seventies he was a senior editor of *Automobile Quarterly*, and he regularly contributes to several Classic car publications in the USA. Anyone with his reputation as a writer, who keeps a Triumph TR4 and a Sunbeam Alpine Harrington in his barn, and visits the UK every year because otherwise he would miss the place, deserves an audience. Here is his viewpoint.

**T**HIS is not an easy assignment. The reasons why the bottom has dropped out of the market for British cars in the USA are apparent enough. But listing those reasons, for one who has owned and enjoyed British cars for a quarter of a century, is an unpleasant task. The staff of *T&CC*, however, are interested in the truth, for what happens in America often affects the availability of cars elsewhere. And here the British motor industry, along with governments both Tory and Labour, have a lot to answer for.

Aside from a trickle of peripheral makes — and Jaguar, whose current success is more relative than substantive — the song has ended. But the melody lingers on, not least in the thousands of British sports and sporting cars enjoyed by American enthusiasts, and their UK counterparts. Most of us look upon the demise of well-liked badges as frustrated lovers, wondering how it was that great companies, with everything in hand, suffered themselves to be brought low, and to cast away all that they had gained by measureless effort.

Let us dispense first with who is *not* to blame: British engineers and designers, for a start. British ingenuity gave us the Mini, progenitor of virtually every small car being built today; British cleverness gave us the E-Type Jaguar — the equivalent of Italian exotics at half the price. Rolls-Royce may not be "The Best Car in the World" any more — at least technically — but for those to whom quality and panache matter more than anything else, there is still no substitute for one. Above all, Britons taught the rest of us how to build exciting sports cars out of mundane family car components — memorable machines that provided more fun than we'd ever known behind a wheel. Two generations of Americans grew up with those cars. We are still sufficiently fond of them that Triumph, MG and Austin-Healey alone account for 20,000 US enthusiasts and perhaps 40,000 cars in various stages of repair or restoration.

The problems of the British car in America have less to do with its designers or builders than with government and management, both of which, whenever faced with a fork in the road, almost always took the wrong turn. Nor is the problem exclusively confined to the American market. Certainly the UK industry is not performing spectacularly in Europe. Again and again Ford has taken the decision to build its most exciting cars in Cologne rather than Dagenham. But America is



the leading case in point. In 1945, America was the largest, potentially most profitable, and most devotedly pro-British market for automobiles in the world.

Consider the situation in 1945. Next to the Swiss franc, the dollar was the hardest currency on the globe, a veritable bonanza for those who could earn it. Britain stood first in American affections. Americans had watched with admiration as Britain stood alone against the dictators; later we stood shoulder to shoulder in the most unsordid partnership between two great states in world history. American soldiers made lifetime friends on the British Isles; many married British girls, and brought them home. A lot of GIs also brought home the first MGs and Jaguars, establishing the British sports car in America and awakening thousands to motoring joys not experienced since the last Mercers and Stutzes of the Teens and Twenties.

In those early post-war years Great Britain maintained a 90-plus per cent share of the American imported car market. In 1949, it was close to 97 per cent. Of course this huge slice could not be held indefinitely. As Europe recovered, French, Italian and German cars began to figure in the US market. Still it seemed likely, as the Fifties dawned, that Britain's broad and attractive range of cars would continue to fill needs that few rivals could.

The MG TC and Jaguar XK120 were firmly established among the most desirable cars a 'Yank' could own; Rootes and Standard-Triumph

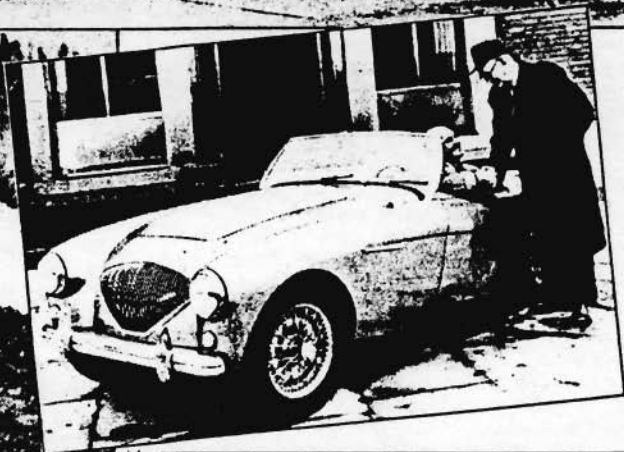
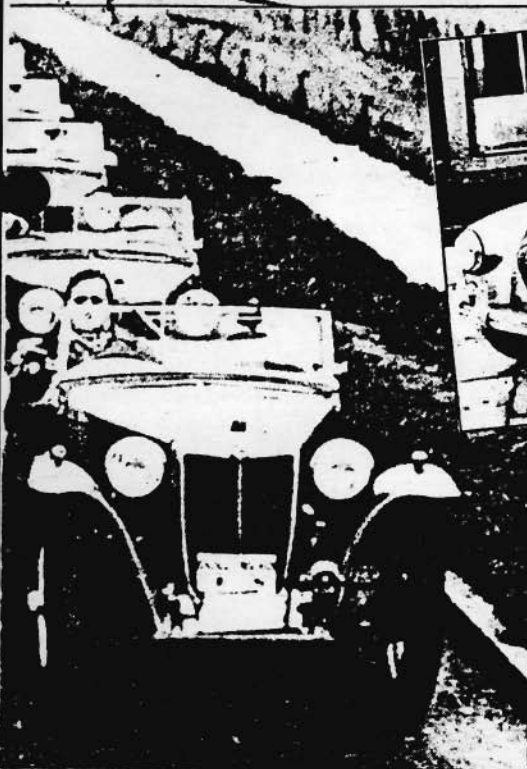
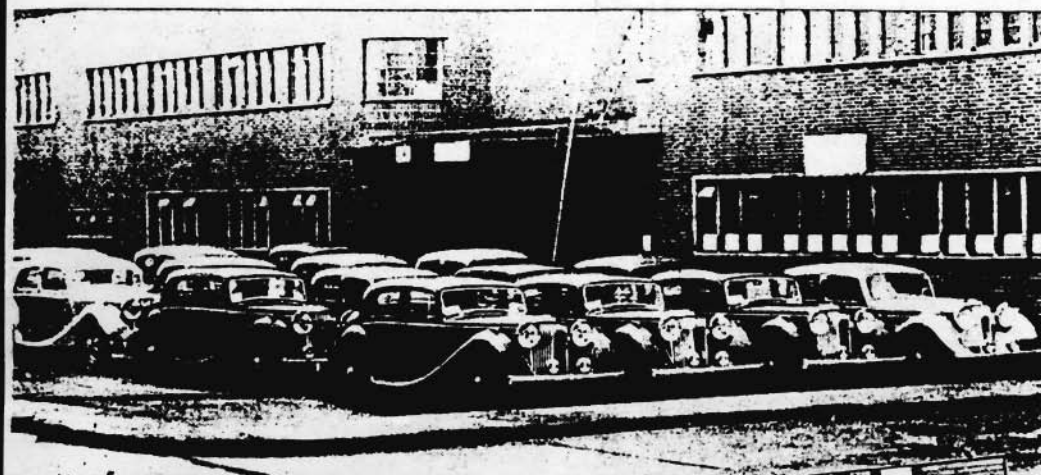
*Above, "MGs for America: dollars for Britain" was what the signs on the radiators said. They were right as the marque was enormously popular in the USA*

were preparing to field their own unique sporting confections. Makes like AC, Allard, Frazer Nash, Healey and Morgan, though not widely distributed, were known and respected, particularly on the race courses. America's carriage trade was conversant, not only with Rolls/Bentley but with Jaguar, Armstrong Siddeley, Daimler and Rover. Qualitatively, all these cars were at least as good as those from other countries.

But the bright prospects soon dimmed. The first disastrous drop, occurring with the onslaught of VW in the mid-Fifties, cut Britain's market share by half. Yet even the Beetle left the UK with a solid third of the US market, and this was not insignificant — the import market in 1958 nudged half a million cars. Alas, the slide continued. Just 15 years after the end of the war British cars held only 10 per cent of import sales. Today, in a market of well over two million imports, Britain is fortunate to account for one per cent.

What happened has more to do with Britain than with the US or Germany; more to do with BMC, Standard-Triumph, Rootes and the rest than with VW or Renault; more to do with British governments than with the EEC or 'Japan Inc'. Of course it is easy, in the blaze of hindsight, to see things which were perhaps not so clear at the





**Top, Jaguars lined up outside the factory ready for export in 1947. Middle, Donald Healey, sitting in a Austin-Healey 100, shakes hands with BMC's chairman Leonard Lord, 'father' of the Austin-Healey concern. Above, New York motor show in February 1954, with Jaguar, Standard and Austin in evidence as well as the cars on the large Rootes Group stand in the foreground**

time. But we now know that steps were being taken as early as 1946 which would undermine the British car in America.

The clearest case against well-intentioned but damaging government meddling is *The Decline of the British Motor Industry*, a book by Canadian professor Peter J S Dunnett (Croom Helm, London, 1980). Dunnett points first to the 'export or die' policy of the post-war Labour government, which starved the home car market. The government believed this was acceptable because the market for British cars was 'unlimited' — a short-sighted approach that failed to consider the economies of scale which made American cars, in areas where they competed, better buys. In post-war Australia a 30hp (RAC-rating) six-cylinder live-passenger American car sold for less — despite Imperial preference — than a 10hp, four-cylinder, four-passenger British car. The UK stranglehold on exports to the USA and elsewhere began to weaken after sterling was made convertible in 1947, several years before the Continent could offer really competitive cars.

The government export policy also supported weak and outdated manufacturers at the expense of the more efficient, Dunnett says. For example, even though the post-war Standard Eight was a simple little Thirties box with a narrow track, no room and no performance — and even though the Standard works was inefficient — it was still profitable to make and sell the car because of artificial demand produced by the export policy. This fostered a laggard attitude

toward research and development which would — when competition became rife — prey on the British car: first in export markets like America, later at home.

The export policy also meant that it took much longer for design defects to filter back to British factories, even though America's combination of motorways and rough secondaries was an ideal test ground. Corrections were delayed or forestalled — the root of Britain's longstanding US reputation for unreliable cars.

Vastly in contrast was the policy of VW's Heinz Nordhoff who, Dunnett writes, "knew the only hope for survival was in providing outstanding quality and service to offset [American] resistance to the strange design and German origin." American VW owners in the late Fifties and Sixties could testify to the competence of VW dealerships and service departments. British car franchises, meanwhile, were carelessly handed out to multi-make dealers or glorified used car merchants.

Another very serious problem was the diversity of product line, which British manufacturers had

considered one of their strengths. In Germany, Opels and Fords were mid-sized, VWs and DKWs small, Mercedes large. But in Britain, with the exception of Vauxhall, the larger companies spanned the market — and brought them all to America. In 1956 there were 33 different models of British cars for sale in the USA, compared with 12 German, eight Italian and six French. This meant fewer unit sales per UK model, further discouraging dealers from stocking adequate spares or employing sufficient servicemen.

The full-range approach did not just happen; it was the result of government tax and competition policies dating to the Thirties. We can see — again in retrospect — that the UK should have conceded the economy car market once it was obvious that VW had it sewn up, and pared down its US offerings to sports cars and luxury saloons. For Britain had nothing to compete with VW in the US. Post-war petrol rationing (1946-50) had played its part here: because the ration was on a fixed mileage, rather than a fixed amount of petrol, UK builders were encouraged to create larger, less efficient cars than the French and Germans.

The Conservatives took over in 1951, but were no more helpful to the industry. Until 1959 the Tories remained convinced that mass transport was far more important than the automobile, and distributed their development efforts accordingly. This left Britain with a road system unlike any in Europe, much of it still based on ancient footpaths. Such a system perpetuated low-geared little cars like the Morris 1000 and Austin A40 which, when run on American highways, simply burned themselves up. The English climate, lacking American extremes, failed to suggest the demands that would be put upon UK cars in America. Nobody can blame the climate; but we can complain that it wasn't taken into serious consideration.

We must not omit the purchase tax from our discussion. Successive British governments used it, like a tool, raising it to cut domestic demand and aid exports, lowering it when exports recovered — and doing it so frequently that the industry, in Dunnett's words, "felt the brunt of the country's balance of payments difficulties from two directions."

A sales boom occurred in 1962, but didn't last. In 1964 Labour came in again, tried to prevent devaluation of an overvalued pound with a credit squeeze, and business went sour. They eased credit restrictions but the overvalued pound caused continued export losses. In 1967 they finally devalued, and slapped all the restrictions back — higher purchase/petrol licence taxes, reduced hire-purchase time. Now the domestic market went bad. A remarkable statement was made by the then Chancellor of the Exchequer: "Prices are better, at least lower than expected, and consumption, partly as a result, is higher, which in a sense means worse."

I cite only a few of many examples of government actions which cannot be ignored in any assessment of the UK industry's performance in America, and elsewhere. There are more: the Common Market fiasco (Chrysler bought Rootes as a wedge into the EEC; then Britain was kept out and Rootes went further into hock); BMC being forced to sell Minis below cost; BMC and Leyland being forced to merge, and the appalling results, with which we are all familiar. "Since 1945," Dunnett concludes, "the government

# Lost Opportunity

largely unintentionally, had carried on a form of guerrilla warfare against the UK motor industry's international competitiveness with its export policies, transport policies, regional policies, regulatory policies, and failure to put labour relations on a satisfactory basis. The defence of the pound... acted as a direct frontal attack by squeezing profits to such an extent that investment and the development of new models was curtailed...

I think it is improper to knock another country's internal policies, which is why I've confined this part of my report to the analysis of someone else. We Americans have nothing to laugh about; similar policies by our own government have had perilous results in Detroit. Both our peoples live in an age of activist government — well intentioned, rarely helpful. In earlier years, perhaps, this did not matter. But today our motor industries must compete with nations where government and industry work as a team. "Government," Mencken said, "is the enemy of all good, diligent and industrious men." But Mencken never conceived of what we now call Japan, Inc'.

I don't think any motor industry could perform much better than Britain's under the government pressures described, up to about 1965. The economy car market was lost before then, for reasons mainly beyond industry control. But the sports and specialty car market has been lost since then — at a time when government was striving to undo the wrongs. And here one can only blame management.

There does seem to be a perfect reluctance to dare. In 1981 I spoke with a leading British purveyor of Triumph spares, whose business spans the years from TR2 to TR8, who had just returned from Coventry. "I asked Triumph when the TR8 was coming to Europe," he said. "After all, performance like that is arguably more suited to continental motorways than American interstates. 'Oh, we've not reached that decision,' the company said. I replied, 'Well, who's going to make it?' They hadn't a clue. 'I'd not want to be the one to make that decision,' was what one top manager told me."

Today we are expected to believe that the TR7/8 vanished because it was not profitable to sell in America, owing to the strength of the dollar. But should it not have been engineered with the flexibility to sell in the Continent?

The TR7/8 episode is exemplary of wrong-headed decisions from the drawing board up. First, the TR6 was allowed to remain in production far beyond its time. Then the TR7 was dreamed up — in Longbridge rather than Coventry — by a designer who conceived it 'as a doodle,' who was astonished when management earmarked it for production. In every characteristic it was the opposite of the great TRs that had gone before. It was an extreme wedge instead of a conventional shape; it was underpowered; it was closed, not open (even though America had never banned convertibles); it was more feminine than masculine, a sort of semi-sporty, two-door saloon. To build it, BL tapped the infamous, notably inefficient, Speke plant, which was eventually closed because it couldn't produce quality. (US drivers were able to identify TR7s by their traditional pose of one headlamp open and one closed, the result of unreliable electrics; when they cured that it was noticed that rust was setting in around the 'eyelids'.) In an owner

survey conducted by *Road & Track*, TR7 owners recorded the lowest loyalty figure in history when asked if they'd buy another — almost half of them said no.

Against such problems, the TR7, facing the onslaught of Datsun Z-cars and Mazda RX7s, was foredoomed in America. The strength of the dollar was incidental — the Japanese had to put up with that too. The afterthought convertible version was too little and too late, and I am not surprised that no one at Triumph would make the decision to flog the cars on the Continent. I doubt whether the Continent would have had them either.

In 1980 I attended the press preview of the TR8 and the Rover 3500 (US version) in San Diego. Most of us were guardedly optimistic about the TR8, which was rorty and fun to drive despite its peculiar looks. The Rover, which J-R-T said would take on BMW, Saab and Audi in the States, was a shocking disappointment and flopped. Yet in concept it was a car which should have been a tremendous success here.

Introduced in Europe in 1976, the new Rover had been relatively successful. A scaled-down, tightly designed five-door hatchback, its only styling flaw was a clumsy front end borrowed not quite intact from the Ferrari Daytona. Even so, it won several styling awards, and its shape was infinitely better than those of most of its competitors. In 1979 I drove a Rover 2600 over 2000 miles in Britain, including London to Jura in the Hebrides and back, thinking to myself that it was perfect for America. It was fast, yet surprisingly economical, roomy, yet of compact exterior dimensions. The hatchback was practical, the fit and finish good.

But what awaited us in San Diego was an entirely different motor car. Because all the emission work had gone into the old Buick-derived 3.5-litre V8, this was the only powerplant offered. Its performance was down, its fuel consumption up. In an effort to obtain reasonable mpg figures they'd over-gear the car to the point where it felt like it was freewheeling in top or even fourth gear. The quality was down compared to UK market Rovers. And at \$17,000 it made no dent on BMW, Saab or Audi sales. J-R-T withdrew it at the end of 1981, having sold 781 that year.

What the Rover experience suggests is that a good design can be ruined by product planners with a limited understanding of the needs of this market.

Nor was the Rover alone. As English-born Tony Hogg once told me: "I remember interviewing Kjell Qvale once — fascinating because he's the most successful importer of cars in America, particularly British cars, which he likes especially. He said that the executives who come to see him in San Francisco are primarily interested in playing golf and drinking Martinis... And anyway they aren't the people he wants to see, not the executives, but the guys who actually do the nitty gritty of the job, below the executive level. I particularly remember him saying that there were people in England designing cars especially for the American market who have never set foot in the US."

Another writer, Dean Batchelor, made the same point to me about the BMC 1100, which for a brief year or so was running second to VW in American import sales. It soon became apparent that 1100s were burning out clutches in San

Francisco and burning out engines in Los Angeles. "This caused consternation at BMC," Dean said, "because they couldn't understand how two cities so close on the map could experience opposite service problems." Anyone who has been to those two cities would have understood — but nobody at BMC did. Remarkable.

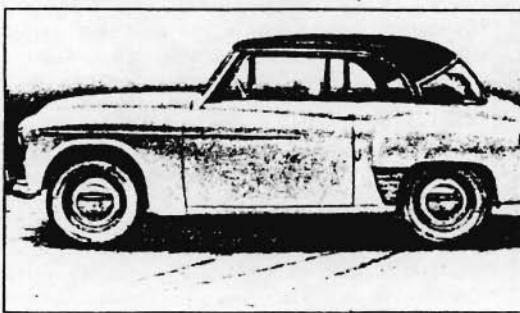
Aside from ignorance about the US market, management too often settled for 'good enough'. Another experienced journalist, Don Vordeman, said he used to collar a BMC representative every year at the New York Motor Show: "Why don't you spend a little money, come up with a 2.0-litre ohc six, and put it in the MGB? Even with the countless niggling little flaws remaining in it, you won't, in all the factory space in Britain, be able to make enough of them." BMC's man was non-plussed: "Well, we're selling them adequately now as it is; we just don't think it's necessary to do something as complicated as that." "Three years later," continued Vordeman, "comes the MGC, which was an absolute disaster of a car. There was just no clear thinking. But some poor, insulated executive actually thought it was a good idea." (The MGC, you may remember, was to have been the new Healey; the Healeys, father and son, refused to allow it).

The MG story is probably the greatest mistake the UK industry has to answer for. Here was the most popular sports car in America (and elsewhere), its famous badge a watchword wherever Thoroughbreds were appreciated. What happened to it defies belief. Apparently it all stemmed from the decision, post-Leyland merger, to emphasise Triumph at the expense of MG. Dozens of good ideas for MGB successors (many shown in past issues of this magazine) were floated, and tabled. The only thing really tried was dropping in the good old 3.5 V8. (It's amazing how often that engine has been deemed the 'Resurrection and the Life'). But it was soon obvious that the MGB GT V8 couldn't be sold at a competitive price in America, and it was never exported.



Above, perhaps styling exercises like this Buick Wildcat of 1954 were partially responsible for American enthusiasm into British designs

Below, restrained British styling for the Americans in the shape of this 1953 Hillman Minx Californian coupé





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- paint scraper
- P1200 wet and dry sandpaper
- sanding block
- Watty! estapol colour wood stain
- Spray gun
- White Letraset Instant writing *Available in most newsagents*
- Dulon Ultra clear lacquer
- plastic wood filler

*Most of these things you would probably have lying around the house.*

- STEP ONE.** Remove the dashboard facia from the motor car.
- STEP TWO.** Use the heat gun and aim it at the old varnish, have it about 10cm away. DO NOT leave the gun in the one spot as the varnish may tend to stick to the wood. Once it has started to bubble quickly use the scraper to scrape the varnish off.
- STEP THREE.** Give a light sand and wipe the facia so it is free from dust.
- STEP FOUR.** Stain with the wood stain. The colour that you want will depend on what colour wood stain you choose to use. Apply it with an old rag wrapped around a spoon. *Use the round side of the spoon. The rag and the spoon gives a better result than a paint brush.* Leave it to dry for about 3 hours or more.
- STEP FIVE.** Give the facia two heavy sprays with Dulon Ultra Clear Lacquer. Leave it to dry for about 5 to 6 hours.
- STEP SIX.** Use a white Letraset to Label the controls on the facia.
- STEP SEVEN.** Then spray two thin coats over the top of the Letraset, covering the whole facia. spray quickly and evenly, increase the distance between the gun and the surface to 20cm, this will produce a drier coat. CAUTION, a wet coat will dissolve the Letraset and make it run. Wait 2 hours before continuing.
- STEP EIGHT.** Give three to four heavy coats. Sand between coats and leave it for 24 hours.
- STEP NINE.** Give a light wet sand with the sand block. This will get rid of the uneven over spray.
- STEP TEN.** Cut with Dulon Cutting Compound and polish with Dulon Buffing Compound to a mirror surface.

## HOW TO REPAIR A BROKEN INDICATOR ARM

By Mike Dupla

A few weeks ago I was engaged in removing the perished remains of what was originally the dash padding on my Series V Snipe when I accidentally snapped the indicator arm as a piece of padding came away.

After inspecting the damage I decided that a repair was possible and set about a method of repair.

After removing the indicator mechanism from the vehicle, remove the pivoted portion of the broken indicator arm that is held in place with a roll pin, this can be done by mounting the mechanism in a suitable vice (take care not to damage the mechanism) the roll pin can be removed with a punch of suitable diameter (if you do not have a suitable punch, you can make one out of a two inch (50mm) nail by simply grinding off the point of the nail).

Make up a holder to mount the pivoted portion of the arm (as shown) the holder is simply made out of a three inch (75 mm) nail which has been bent to the shape shown (I used a rusty nail that was rescued from a piece of timber), then cement the pivoted portion of the arm into the holder using "LOCTITE - Liquid Steel" and allow to set.

Drill a hole one eighth of an inch in diameter and 8 mm deep (THE HOLE MUST NOT EXCEED 8 mm IN DEPTH) in the end of the indicator arm as shown.

Cement the Holder Assembly into the arm as shown using "LOCTITE - Liquid Steel" and allow to set.

And there you have it, the arm is repaired and much stronger than the original. (See diagrams over page.)

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### **SAFETY WARNING!**

#### **SAFETY WARNING! SAFETY WARNING!**

This is a warning for people who wear contact lenses and engage in welding without protective eye goggles.

One man engaged in welding work flipped open his protective shield in order to position a welding rod. The rod touched the shield and there was a spark. Another man, an electrical worker, closed a switch and there was a spark. Both men were wearing contact lenses at the time. Neither noticed anything untoward at the time. However, when the men removed their contact lenses at the end of the day, the CORNEA OF THE EYE WAS REMOVED WITH THE LENS, resulting in INSTANT and TOTAL blindness in each man's affected eye.

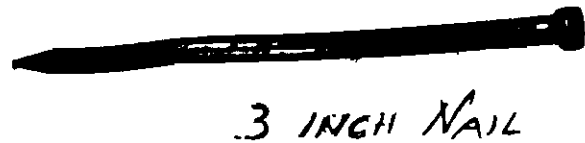
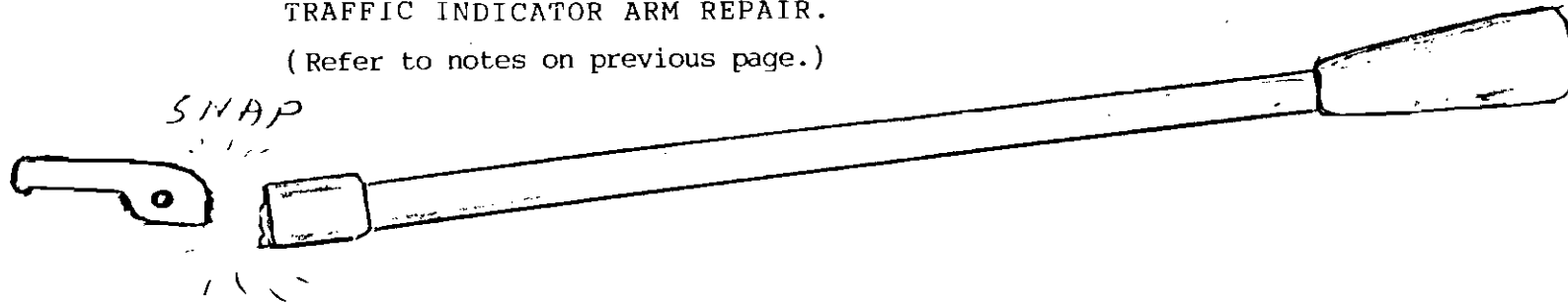
It appears that the electrical arc generates microwaves which dry up the fluid between the eye tissue and the contact lens. The drying up is painless and not likely to be noticed by the contact lens wearer until the contact lens is taken out.

Please wear spectacles instead of contact lenses when working near welding or electrical switching (battery terminals??) and using the now universally popular MIG welding.

PLEASE PASS THIS ON TO YOUR FRIENDS WHO HOPEFULLY IN TURN WILL TELL THEIR FRIENDS.

Per courtesy of *Backfire*, W.D.H.V.C. Inc. newsletter.

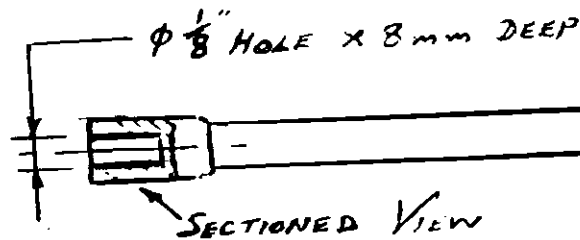
TRAFFIC INDICATOR ARM REPAIR.  
(Refer to notes on previous page.)



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YOUR HOLDER & FIX INTO  
PLACE WITH "LOCTITE -  
LIQUID STEEL".



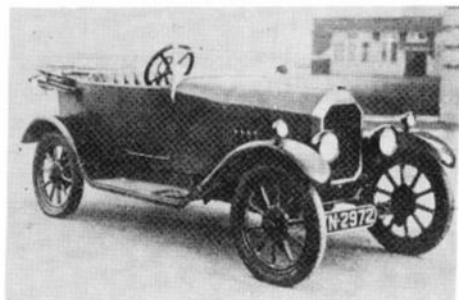
DRILL END OF ARM AS SHOWN



GLUE HOLDER ASSEMBLY INTO ARM WITH  
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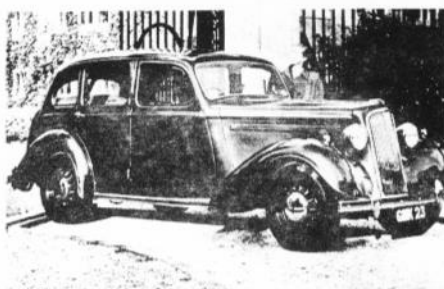
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