

NEWSLETTER OF
THE THOROUGHbred
SPORTS CAR CLUB.



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No.4
December 1982



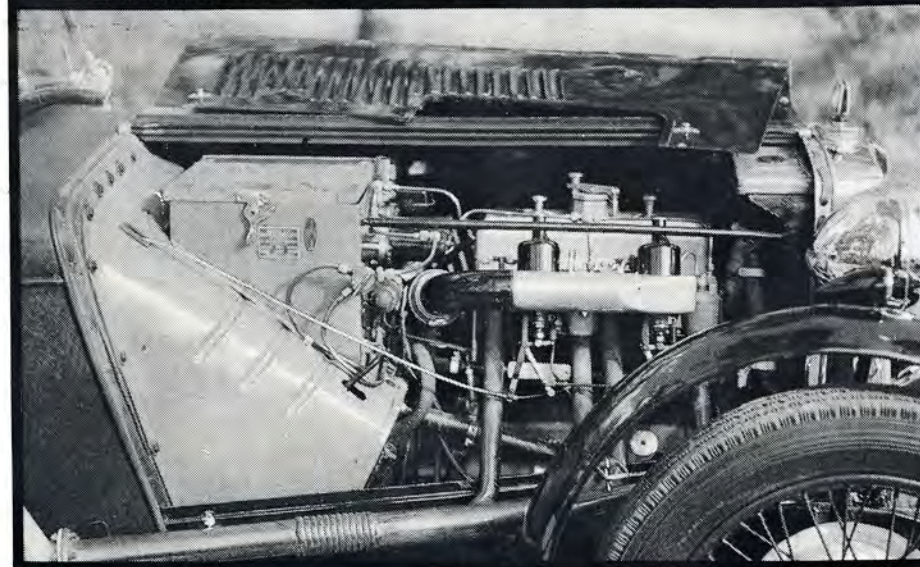
It's T for two with . . .

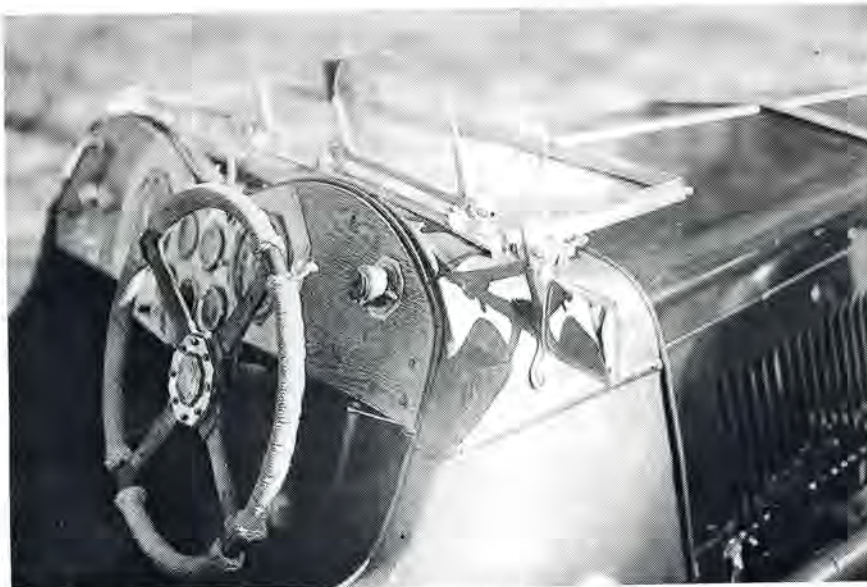
BLACK BEAUTY

'Safety Fast' with the Octagon

In 1935 Lord Nuffield closed down the MG racing department and declared that MG needed to make cheap, practical tourers for the public roads, not the small batches of highly tuned sports racers for Brooklands.

Consequently MG was required to produce a car from standard Morris parts but which had to look and handle like an MG. Hubert Charles drew plans for a car which was reminiscent of the 1932 J2 Midget but using Morris parts in a chassis based on the 1934 MGPA. This new car was the MGTA – the best Australian example of which is owned by club member Frank Grech.





The TA had a pushrod engine like a family sedan's, and MG fans mourned the earlier Midgets' overhead camshafts. But Kimber kept the TA's price down and sold 3003 in three years. The design wore well. With minor changes and a better engine it became the post-war TC, which stayed in production until 1949.

The car is full of MG octagon badges. They're round the instruments on the dash, the bonnet and wheels, the spring screw lock on the filler cap, all round the engine, on the dipstick, even in the centre of each headlight.

In the cockpit the bucket seats are bolted to the floor. The tachometer is in front of the driver and the speedo is in front of the passenger, in the best vintage tradition. It has a big luggage shelf in the back, and useful pockets under the cutaway sills.

You step in over the flat box muffler. Asbestos lagging guards you from a hot tail-pipe. It's not easy to squeeze down past the wheel if your legs are on the long side, but once you're in the seat is a good fit.

The cockpit is pretty cramped. The wheel is right in your lap, and there's nowhere for your right elbow but over the sill. If you've got a passenger, your left elbow lies dangerously close to his kidneys.

The engine starts readily. Puffs of smoke squirt out the

back, and the deep crackle rises to a snarl as the revs rise. The gearstick doesn't move far but it's nice and precise, clicking home every time. It drops out in third when the revs drop, a common sign of advancing age in the T series. It's hidden away under the dash next to your knees, but you get used to reaching there.

The pedals are very light and you have to put your foot down carefully. It pulls well in all gears at low speeds. Acceleration in the middle range isn't marvellous but it livens up again as the needle goes higher. It's not fast by today's standards, but it can go as fast as the law allows and as fast as most Australian roads will safely allow. With the screen down you get the most out of it.

The steering is set to let the right-hand wheel clear the external exhaust. This gives a very big turning circle to the right, and a normal one to the left. It's the sort of definite minor drawback you have to learn to live with. Driving on the left, most of your tight turns are made in that direction anyway.

The steering is heavy but okay on a good road. The suspension is good, not stiff but rather springy. You feel the bumps but they don't trouble you, and you pass over them in a cushioned sort of way.

The TA wasn't a great sports racer. It was most successful in trials and hill-climbs. These were originally amateur events, but in

the late 1930s the manufacturers moved in and backed teams. The Cream Crackers and the Musketeers drove special TAs with big knobbly tyres and cycle guards, and in 1937 and 1938 they swept the fields.

"... [The car's] previous owner, Stuart Caskie, drove it out here from the UK, which was a feat in itself. ... it was driven all the way through Persia and Pakistan and India, and then it was shipped to Singapore and it spent some time in Malaya. It was shipped to Darwin then, and driven across Australia from there.

"It's the only known competition TA, factory produced, in Australia."

The engine is a Morris block, not an MG one. The original MPJG 192 cm³ long-stroke, small-bore engine proved to be too weak for extensive tuning and racing. There was a lot of thin metal around the water bores, and it was poorly cast. Cracked blocks became the rule. The rugged XPAG engine powered the rest of the T series.

"This one has had a lot of other work done internally and mechanically, and all this was done to a lot of TAs at the time. For instance, it has a special head on it. And from the historical point of view, the fact that it has this engine makes it more original."

The 1.2-litre engine is rated at 41 kW. The layout under the bonnet is clean and straightforward, so it's easy to see where it all goes and it's easy to work on it, with tools handy in the big box on the bulkhead. This remained a good feature of the series.

It's a fine example of a fine car. It looks good and goes well, and it has all the old familiar T-series' virtues, vices and peculiarities except sagging doors, exaggerated by a factor of about 25 percent. If you have a personal history of MG driving you'll know that's high praise in its own way.

The majority of the foregoing has been taken from the *Australian Sports Car World Quarterly*, January 1981, and has been adapted by WM.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I should like to welcome the new members to the Club and look forward to seeing them at Monthly Meetings and Outings. We started as a small but enthusiastic group of about one dozen one and a half years ago, and now we have more than fifty members. It is most heartening to see the Club grow so quickly but this growth generates new problems. Initially every member was known to each other but this intimacy is slowly slipping away. The only way our intimacy may be maintained is if we see new members and if you take an active part in the Club's activities.

The ideal get together is coming up with our Hill Climb/Concourse to be held at Silverdale in

November. This is to be a 'complete' day to satisfy all requirements. There will be a Hill Climb, the first speed event run by the Club; a group appraisal Concourse; lunch, family day, debauchery in the woods (for those so inclined), etc. Come and enjoy a fantastic day.

By the time you read this a number of other activities will have been concluded.

About a dozen cars (and occupants) partook of the Hunter Valley Weekend. This was a highly successful outing with a fair share of road racing (I wound the R.R. speedo off the clock), boozing, flaunting (Sue Williams being told 'We do not do that type of thing here!'), and general comradeship.

Unfortunately our Club was not able to field a team for the 6-hour Relay this year but I competed in the Syndicate TR5 with the Triumph Club. An enlightening day was also held with the Ferrari Register.

We are looking forward to seeing everyone at the Christmas Party where the year's trophies will be presented. Mark this on your calendar and contact Roland Clark [(045) 77 2219] this minute to book.

Your committee will shortly be considering the programme for 1983. Any suggestions will be most gratefully received. Let us know what you want!!!

Bill Marshall 871-2092

RACING

Oran Park and Amaroo Park Lap Dash Report *Lionel Walker*

This year we were invited to two lap dashes held by the Alfa Romeo Owners Club. Both these events were novel in method of operation and proved a successful formula.

The day is broken up into two sessions – the morning session comprises lap familiarisation in which four groups of 8-10 cars each are individually allocated two-10 minute practice sessions of continuous lapping with restricted passing. The afternoon session comprises a conventionally-times lap dash.

The first event at Oran Park gave us practice at both damp and dry circuit conditions as the morning session was run in fog and semi-drizzle.

Ray Ross, after being hassled about running his slicks, reached the esses and ran out of petrol. He spent that session walking! Later, he recorded a time of 56.13 to win



his class. The rest of us – Chris Dale, Roland and Graham Clark, and myself – fought out our very hotly contested class, not having much success against the Porsches.

It was Roland's first event in the A.C. Cobra and it caused quite

a sensation to see it competing. Roland was driving conservatively – getting used to the handling and stability at speed! He was able to out-accelerate the Porsches down the straight, only to have them all over him through the corners.

Chris's V8 Aston appeared to be





a little off song on the day and achieved a time of 59.68 – the trouble being, we believe, a blown head gasket. He now holds the Club record for pirouettes at the corner leading off the straight!

I managed to equal my best time of 58.45 in the only dry run we were able to get first after lunch. It rained thereafter and all times dropped some 10 secs.

The Amaroo event was highly successful with nine entries from our Club.

The practice sessions in the morning were great, but we had Roland drop out with a broken rear axle after proving the suspension re-work and new low-profile tyres were very effective in controlling the power. The next withdrawal was Bill Marshall in the TR5 with a broken steering tie rod end which occurred as he was approaching Winfield corner under brakes. John Hall also did not get much of a run, so the afternoon session was minus these three competitors.

Three new faces were present: Bob Cattnach in his 911 Porsche, Trevor Larkey in his Ferrari 308 GT4 and Tony Lehnert driving the Formula Vee. All benefitted greatly from the morning session and I believe Bob is much more aware of some special characteristics of the Porsche when 2nd gear is selected under brakes. Bob's best time was 71.90, Trevor's was 72.56 and Tony's was 69.83 when he finally was able to run after borrowing some wheel nuts from our President's VW.

A change of tyres and front suspension settings helped me

achieve my best time ever of 66.91 – a gain of over 2 secs. However, we all have our problems and I am at present reassessing the best approach to Winfield corner.

Ziggy, in his Ferrari 308GTB, was the only one of us to give the Porsches a run for their money with a time of 65.72. However, complacency has its toll because the leading Porsche managed to get one extra run in before Ziggy realised, and recorded a time of 65.13 to pip him from a class win.

The event was a thorough success and we look forward to next year's round with Alfa.



Vicki Larkey

Well, here I am, sitting in front of my typewriter, not quite sure how it all happened.

One moment I was enjoying the accolades of being on the winning team to win the Observation Run to Nattai, then the next moment I'm pounding out reports on who's doing what, and where.

No matter, Geoff needed a bit of help and I like typing so let's hope we make a good team.

Amaroo Lap Dash 13th June

My first outing with the Thoroughbred Sports Car Club.

Being a little shy and not wishing to rise at the ungodly hour suggested by Trevor, I decided to make my own way there.

One traffic hold up led to an across-country trek which led to a rural dirt road which finally led to Amaroo.

The freshly washed and polished Jag. looked a lot worse for wear by the time I turned up, a little sheepish and a lot apprehensive. The Alfa Club was in full swing, organising and expertly running the cars which had arrived from its own club, the Porsche club and the T.S.C. club.

As I took my first look at the action, Bill Marshall in his funny little racing car (I'm not up on the names of cars which don't look like real cars) had just managed not to make the bend down the back stretch.

Siggy muttered something to two new members, Bob Cattnach and my better half, Trevor, that shares could be bought in it if they wanted to, but since at this stage the car seemed to be going sideways, there wasn't much enthusiasm generated at all. It crossed my mind that perhaps today was going to be more interesting than I thought!

This proved to be the case as first one then the other outdid itself to give the audience a thrill. A brown Porsche went tearing up the straight all bright and shiny and came down the back stretch as if it had been engaged in mud wrestling somewhere in between.

Then there was the little red Alfa which, with a great flourish, went zooming up the straight only to suddenly emit a giant cloud of blue-grey smoke and an ominous black trail right up the driving line to the top of the hill. Good stuff! The crowd surged to the pit area to inspect the remains, which fortunately turned out not to be as expensive as first imagined.

Lionel, not to be outdone, decided that his long, sleek, and absolutely sexy (in the grand manner, of course!) XK140 Jag. could surely outdo all and sundry, and took on the very solid and immovable brick wall down the end of the back straight. Really Lionel, you shouldn't have! The T.S.C. club was quite happy to let other clubs put on the displays for the audience, but, since you insisted, we appreciated the effort.

No doubt times, places, and who won what will all be printed somewhere here about, but to me, a spectator and newcomer to your club, you certainly know how to enjoy yourselves.





OBSERVATION RUN

... 20th June

Sheets were handed out to those attending the Amaroo Lap Dash advising that an Observation Run would be held the following Sunday – departure at 10.00 am from the El Rancho parking lot at Epping.

Feeling a little on the 'new side' once again, Trevor and I, accompanied by my daughter Susan and friend Scott, turned up at one minute to ten, only to be confronted by a solitary vehicle, looking most forlorn, half way down the parking area. Not long after, cars of all shapes, sizes, makes and colour started to pour in.

Gordon and Sandra Monk were unlucky enough to have to retire almost immediately with engine

trouble. Bill Marshall arrived with his latest family hack – a Silver Cloud Rolls Royce. After all, how else would one travel on a pleasant Sunday outing with the family?

Our trusty organisers gave us the nod and we all lined up our vehicles to accept instruction sheets, best wishes, and have our departure time recorded.

The contestants all seemed to fare pretty well until maths got the better of them. How quickly can you deduct 1.69 km from the existing 39,527.23 km already on the clock. This type of calculation was necessary when looking for an apparently mythical swimming pool, for Mr Rookes' water tanks, for the specialist fuschia grower down Bloggs Lane, or whatever.

Those lucky enough to have trip meters (such as the winners) didn't have much trouble at all.

However, the racing back and forth caused a lot of confusion amongst the Sunday drivers!

The BBQ at the end was the real leveller though, the first arrivals managing to get tables whilst the later ones had to contend with a 45° slope (making wine drinking a little difficult, to say the least).

The rain stayed away just long enough to allow a relaxing lunch and even more relaxing warm-up by the fire.

All in all, a most successful day, which should draw even more entrants next time with its emphasis on fun and family.

Well done.

Vicki

We now have photographic evidence that Bill Marshall likes to get his finger into everything (take a close look at top left of three of these pictures).



Flying Fifth – Conrod Straight, Bathurst 1st August 1982

The sensation of being perched at the top of Conrod Straight, engine revving, spectators hovering at your window, adrenalin pumping, is something no lover of motor competition should miss.

It is like the thrill of the first ride you had as a child on the Big Dipper at Luna Park (sorry, the Harbourside Amusement Centre).

Conrod Straight IS straight, but it is made interesting by the sharp drop to begin, combined with two very large rises around the halfway mark. These rises have the measured fifth between them which means you can't back off on the crest of the first hill regardless of how daunting it is to accelerate over a blind hill.

I think everyone, even if only for a split second, lost speed at this point on the first run. The second crest took you over the top to a fairly good run down to the sharp left-hand corner at the bottom.

This is the point where the competitors wait. When twenty or so cars have completed their measured run they are then escorted back to the top of the hill for their next turn.

The T.C.C. was given a great welcome by the host club and asked to participate in any coming event which took their fancy. The quiet word though was not to put our exotica's into the hill climb as too many have bitten the dust trying to outdo the locals. They have such a diverse collection of vehicles, ranging from extremely beaten up to the polished family sedan which on closer inspection houses the most exotic extras designed to leave many an unsuspecting person with jaw agape!

Amongst a wide variety of cars – some road registered, some not; some immaculate and some . . . well . . . not so immaculate – was a well prepared Monaro GTS, and a Ford GTHO also immaculate. These took the honours. These cars were super modified and running on nitrous oxide; however a lot of work had obviously gone into both cars and they deserved their outright wins. To date full results have not been received – more in a later issue.



In all, seven vehicles represented the Sydney contingent, these being made up of:
Roland Clark – Aston Martin
Bob Cattanaach – Porsche 911
Chris Gibson – RX7 Mazda
Trevor Larkey – Ferrari 308GT4
Ziggy Schuler – Ferrari 308GTB
Bill Rankin – Aston Martin
Jim Peters – Scimitar GTE

The loyal ladies were represented by Maureen Schuler, Tanya, Linda Gibson, Val Peters, and myself.

The Club took out the first five places for production cars – not a bad effort.

Trevor and I did not stay the night in Bathurst at the motel selected by Roland. I gather from other members Roland has not had much luck with his choice of accommodation. Please ask those who stayed at Bathurst if all was OK this time.

Whilst on the subject of Roland, it must either be his good looks or his well bred charm which must save him on many occasions. It was only by the skin of his teeth he avoided confrontation of the worst kind from five very cold, very neglected looking ladies stranded down the pit area at Bathurst. Promises of a warm room with fire, toilets and canteen looked very remote. Once again he came up trumps!

All who participated in this event agree that next time we'll try to encourage more to come from Sydney. It was well worth it.

Vicki



Oran Park – Alfa Car Club Meet 29th August

Siggy Schuler was once again pipped at the post – by a Porsche no less.

It seems no matter how well Sig does, how many laps he runs, he always has a Nemesis waiting for him in the form of a last run Porsche.

Oran Park extended circuit is really a good test of car performance and driver's skill. It matters little whether you have a high performance vehicle capable of mega top speed, or a pint-sized midget with barely enough engine to fill a suitcase.

It seems to level them all out on the extended circuit. We saw a flying performance by Peter Mullins' Morris Cooper S complete with racing slicks and driver to match who became the outright winner of the day.

Mark Anthony's dazzling yellow Corvette gave us all many bated breaths as he careered around B.P. corner and onto the straight in front of the pits. Tyres squealing, body snaking and looking completely out of control, he manoeuvred to make the most of all the track.

Bob Cattanaach's 911 gleaming red Porsche had one tight moment on the dog leg when due to clutch 'weariness' he couldn't find a gear to drive out of the bend – result a lovely 360° to delight the crowd but give poor old Bob a few grey hairs.

Another victim of the dog leg managed to lose not only the wheel off the rear of his car but the axle as well. It was like watching in slow motion as they separated gracefully and proceeded to lazily drift down the grass verge centre, stopping many metres apart, dust swirling.

Roland Clark teamed with his son Graham to put the AC Cobra through its paces, turning in quite respectable 98.73 and 98.96. The Alfa Car Club time caller deserves special thanks and appreciation for his non-stop information and unending list of adjectives to describe various cars and drivers.

Chris Gibson's lime green RX7 (correction, due to the arrival of a 1973 911S jade green Porsche from O.S.) Linda Gibson's lime green RX7 was described variously as silent, gliding, docile (?), pristine, and sedate. Linda WILL be pleased.

Geoff Belshaw also turned up in his Scimitar, as did John Gilmour in his 246S Dino Ferrari. Trevor and I shared Trevor's 308 GT4 Ferrari (I must try the XK6 around the track some time). I don't think Trevor was too impressed by my gymkhana-type dodging of the witches' hats down the straight.

Dutiful wives and girlfriends were Maureen Schuler, Linda Gibson, and Maria. I can understand the reluctance of many ladies, with or without offspring,

in attending these Lap Dash days. I can imagine that Oran Park would be so hot as to be unbearable from November on. We were fortunate enough to have some umbrellas, a steady breeze, some Eskys with food and drink and each other's company, otherwise hitchhiking home may have been a pleasure after six hours of revs, loudspeakers and high octane fumes. Those girls deserve a night out on the town for their loyalty to loved ones.

We did the next best thing and went back to our place for a mini-celebration for Linda's birthday. A quick visit to the local Chinese restaurant and a cask of Coolibah and we were away. Once again, the social side of the TSCC was enjoyed as well as the sporting.

Vicki



House Party at Lionel Walker's, 24th June

Somehow (I'm not quite sure how), Lionel and Gail ended up with a house party at their home in Hornsby Heights instead of, I believe, a Scottish Ball.

It was arranged that a plate (full) was brought plus your pleasure for drinking. Lionel and Gail would provide the venue.

It didn't take long, about 20 minutes I'd say, before the ladies realised they were all on their own.

It seems there was keen interest in Bill Marshall's 275 Ferrari, Roland Boldy's Aston DB2-4, and Lionel's restoration jobs on the Jaguar XK6 and Aston DB6.

Gail finally threw down the gauntlet and suddenly they were all back in the house and no longer gathered in the Walker's amazing see-through garage.

Some great dancing music was produced and before long Jim Peters and Sue Williams were cutting a mean rug, whilst Gail and I tore Lionel and Trevor apart from their conversational absorption in headlinings, new head lamps or whatever. Geoff and Jan Belshaw arrived with their new baby.

Tessa, Yvonne, and Shirley had a fascinating conversation on n.b.f.'s; we all inspected Sue's new



look in tooth fashion; and interesting topics were discussed in the various groups scattered around the room.

We all take this opportunity of extending our appreciation to Gail and Lionel for their hospitality.



Technical Night – Suspension/Wheel Alignment 7th September

An interesting and informative night was held at John O'Sullivan's Liverpool Front End Service. Although a long drive for most of us in the midst of a petrol drought it proved to be very worthwhile.

Each of the small but enthusiastic band who turned up, had his car's suspension checked over expertly by John and his three employees – a notable exception being Bill Marshall's 2 tonne Rolls. The ramp equipment looked a little on the light side to carry The Roller!

Altogether a Saab, Turbo, Ferrari 308 GT4, Aston Martin, and the Rolls Royce (at ground level) were checked and found to have various problems, all fixable and no doubt will be worthwhile improvements to each car in the form of better handling and increased tyre life.

For any members with suspected suspension and/or alignment problems we suggest you ring John O'Sullivan at Liverpool Front End and arrange for an inspection – 602 7734 or call at Unit 8A, 104 Homepride Avenue, Warwick Farm.

Trevor Larkey



What is this lady doing? All will be revealed in the next issue.

STOP PRESS

Support your Mag.

Engage brain in gear and start writing – Exposures, Scandles & Blackmail all considered as long as the Editor gets his percentage. Saucy pictures, naked cars – please forward for the editor's perusal.

**Attention – The – Editor Geoff Belshaw,
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