

# LOOSE ..... FILLINGS

## GOOD VIBRATIONS

No fewer than 22 different cars were mentioned last year in *The Log*. More than half were locally-built one-offs, and thus truly unique, while the factory-built cars, although mainly from one manufacturer, all have special features. And all 22 cars have fascinating history. We can let people see some of that history using a display board, carrying photos and a summary of the car's specification and career. Like a mention in *The Log*, this isn't boasting, it's celebrating.

## NEW ZEALAND REUNION

Four air-cooled cars were amongst the 400 entries for the major New Zealand historic races held over consecutive weekends in late January at the new Hampton Downs circuit and at Pukekohe, both south of Auckland.

John Holdsworth suffered fuel pump woes in his Mk9 Cooper JAP 1100 and Ian Garmey's Mk5 Cooper JAP 500, entered for Arthur Hopkins, had pre-race dramas and didn't appear. Arthur featured on the front page of *Loose Fillings* #27 with the

front end of his Mk8 Cooper Norton sitting over a bank back in the 1960s; this same car was entered for Hampton Downs and Pukekohe by current owner Graeme Brayshaw, and despite having a piston replacement between meetings performed well. Returning to NZ to compete was

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Below: John Macey in the JBS at Bombay south of Auckland c1962. Right: with Garry Simkin at Pukekohe.



# More on NEW ZEALAND'S AIR-COOLED SPECIALS

by David McKinney

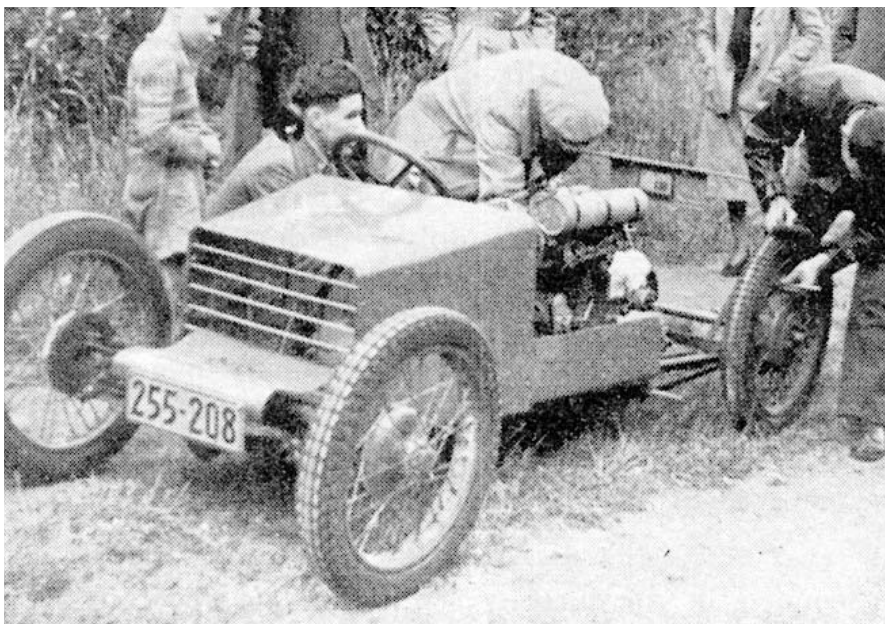
The Coopers and JBSs which came into the country in the early years saw action in New Zealand's major races up and down the country each year, but the specials rarely ventured beyond the limits of their own local area. The region by region story continues with coverage of cars and events in the North Island

## AUCKLAND/WAIKATO

In 1949/50 Ralph Watson, the brilliant engineer later responsible for the design and construction of the famous Lycoming Special, shortened and lowered a four-wheel BSA chassis, and fitted it with a two-seater stressed-skin aluminium body. The engine was later bored out to 1095cc and other modification carried out.

The Watson-BSA was unbeatable in its class in local hillclimbs, helped as time went on by the fact that the Coopers that were coming onto the scene were able in most cases to run in a separate 500 class. First appearing in 1950, the car was raced on occasion by Gordon Brown, but scored most of its early successes in the constructor's hands.

It was then sold to Dave Long, who



Top, the Austin 7/Indian Special mentioned in *Loose Fillings* 33. Below, Ralph Watson's highly successful front-drive BSA-based special which still survives with a Watson-built rotary-valve engine.

shared the cockpit work over the next two seasons with Bob Hugill (before he moved on to his Mk VIII Cooper-Norton) and Mal Roberts. Unlike its contemporary small specials, the Watson-BSA twice contested the big Ohakea race (1954 and 1955), though without success. It did however gain good placing in beach-racing and on the old Seagrove airfield. There are claims that the car was raced at Ardmore in 1961, but that car had a 650 engine.

About that time, or perhaps slightly later, it was in storage in Wellington, with Martin Ferner. Around 1983 Ralph Watson reacquired the car and rebuilt it in its early form, and took part in several historic racing events. He later fitted a rotary-valve engine of his own design, and was able to see it running before his quite recent death.

Much less is known of the **Irvin 500**. It was built in Huntly by H L Irvin and seems from photographs to be a very workman-like job along Cooper lines, though with a blunter nose. Regrettably, it wasn't heard of again, and no other details are known - not even what engine it used.

Nothing else seems to have been made in this region for the remainder of the 1950s. Perhaps the numerous Coopers and JBSs competing in the region acted as a deterrent to would-be backyard engineers.

A 650cc car called the **BWS** was however used in minor Auckland events in 1960, and T H Booth's BSA Special of similar size has already been mentioned in connection with the following year. Perhaps they were the same car. At one of the 1963 Pukekohe meetings D B Geary entered a car called the **Valkyr 500**, but I imagine this was little more than another name for the Cooper 500 he had raced a month earlier. Finally, in 1964, Garth Taylor raced a car called the **TSR 500**, again at Pukekohe, and the same car appeared there in Richard Alder's hands the following year.

## WELLINGTON/MANAWATU

There may actually have been a second North Island **BSA Special** in the early period: Selwyn Molesworth was reported as driving such as device in Manawatu events in 1947. Nothing else is known of it however, and it may of course had a water-cooled engine.

Between then and 1952 Wellingtonians Bert Cresswell, Errol Ansell, Olly Cottrell, Jim Were and Jack Kennedy all started building 500s for themselves. Only two of these are known for certain to have been completed, and there is no record of either being run in competition in air-cooled form, though one did take to the tracks with a Ford 10 engine mounted across the back.

The capital did not see its first local 500 until 1954, when Les Stone wheeled out his **Lestone Special**. Stone had built Austin 7 and Ford V8 specials just after the war, before a couple of years in Australia, where he must have got to know the Tauranac brothers, as he brought back a set of their wheels.

The Lestone had a curved-tube chassis and steel body - its Ariel Red Hunter engine went in in January 1954.

But this was not a successful car. It rolled on a test run, then blew up in practice for its first hillclimb, and a week after that was wrecked in a towing accident.

Undaunted, Stone built up a replacement with a smaller-gauge straight-tube chassis, JAP engine and aluminium bodywork, and ran the car that season and the next with guest drivers Bill Shiells, Paul Simpson and Russell Buckthought. It raced at Ohakea, Ardmore and Levin.

Almost alone of the NZ 500 specials, the Lestone proved a match for all but the fastest benchmark Coopers. Stone himself was outright sixth-fastest in the important Houghton Bay hillclimb in 1955, and then Shiells, sitting in the car for the first time, took an upset victory in the Plimmerton event at the start of the following season. Back at Houghton Bay in March 1956, for the NZ Championship Hillclimb, Shiells was an outstanding fifth-fastest overall. The only cars which beat him were Coopers, Gibbons's Mk V 1100 and the Mk IX 500s of Jensen, Frost and Stafford. The last two had engines slightly over 500cc, so the Lestone was second in the smaller class, beating Webster (Cooper Mk7) and Gilbert (Cooper Mk6).

The car was then sold to Buckthought, who rebuilt it and renamed it the **Liteweight Special**. He was a regular at Levin meetings for two seasons, picking up several places in supporting races, as over the next two seasons did the next owner, Len Vidgen, who further modified the car. Both owners also picked up a number of top-three placings in local hillclimbs and sprints.

The car was briefly owned by John Paton before passing in 1962 to Dick Butters, who probably used it more than any previous owner, and continued the car's hillclimb and sprint successes. It was also driven regularly in this period by John Swan and in one event by Peter Slocombe.

The Liteweight was sold in 1964 to Chris Jones, but he does not seem to have used it, and it then disappeared from public view until discovered around 1981 by Aucklanders Ian McCully. He completed its restoration over several years, and the car returned to competition in the later 1980s. It is believed to have been given on "per-

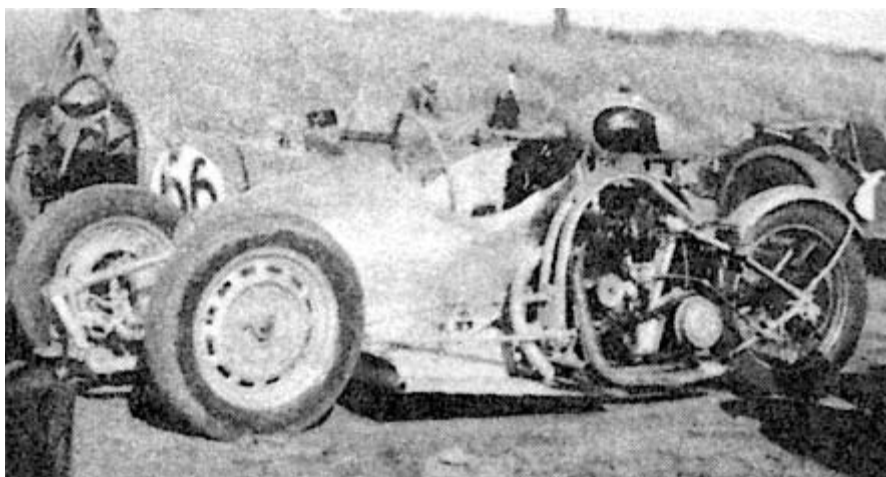
manent loan" to a friend when McCully went to England, where he recently died.

Another prolific specials builder was Olly Cottrell, with an Austin 7 and a Ford 10 behind him before his abortive BSA Special of 1949, which was followed by an Ansaldo Special. The next one was an **Ariel Special**, built with two motorcycle engines in the back of a chassis made up from Standard 8 and Austin 7 parts. He raced this at Ohakea and Waikanae Beach without success in 1955 and 1956, though he did pick up a couple of class placings in hillclimbs. Some parts of the car found their way to Christchurch, where they surfaced in a 500 special a little later (see **Satellite** in *Loose Fillings* 33).

The last air-cooled special built in Wellington relied not on a motorcycle engine but one from a Dyna Panhard

saloon. Constructor Ernie Gold placed the 745cc flat-twin unit in the rear of a lightweight spaceframe chassis and clothed it with a fibreglass body. The **Panhard Special** appeared in a mid-1958 sprint and was entered for the following year's Ohakea race meeting, but appears not to have run on that occasion. It was acquired by Michael Taylor who dismantled and, in the 1970s, dumped the remains.

*It seems I was mistaken in saying in Loose Fillings 33 that the Stanton brothers' BSA special reappeared at Dunedin in 1953, as cited in Graham Vercoe's Historic Racing Cars of New Zealand. Scott Thomson, who has written a history of racing at Dunedin (amongst other works), points out that Vic Brown's BSA was in fact a pre-war front-drive coupé, which I would presume to be a water-cooled Scout. DM*



Top, Olly Cottrell's wondrous Ariel Special which appears to have used all but the front ends of two Ariel motorcycles. Below, second version of the Liteweight Special, a competitive 500 which still survives.

## THE LOG

We continue to defy the air-cooled myth by not only bringing our cars out in public, but also by actually getting them to run. The New Zealand presence in this instalment of The Log reflects the strong interest – from both sides of the Tasman – in the two major North Island historic meetings in January 2010, and would have been even stronger had other NZ cars been ready in time. The previous log recorded appearances up to October 24, 2009.

- December 2, 2009, Wakefield Park GEAR day – Terry Perkins, Scarab Triumph
- December 6, 2009, Taupo races, NZ - Graeme Brayshaw, Cooper Mk8 Norton
- January 22-24, 2010, historic races Hampton Downs, NZ – Graeme Brayshaw, Cooper Mk8 Norton, Garry Simkin, JBS Norton
- January 30-31, 2010, historic races, Pukekohe, NZ – Graeme Brayshaw, Cooper Mk8 Norton, Garry Simkin, JBS Norton
- February 17 2010, Wakefield Park GEAR day – Terry Perkins, Scarab Triumph

## BITS & PIECES

- Mystery numbers stamped on Bill Keenan's Ralt wheel centres (*Loose Fillings* 33) would have been a heat-treating batch number, suggests Rennmax constructor Bob Britton, who was involved with 500cc cars in Sydney in the late 1950s. Bob said Ralt wheels were cast in a high-copper aluminium alloy, and the raw castings had to be stacked carefully because the treatment process required very high temperature. The actual castings, he recalled, were made at a foundry in the Brighton le Sands-Ramsgate area.
- Recordings of cars competing at a 1952 hillclimb at Foley's Hill in Mona Vale, overlooking Sydney's northern beaches, include the sounds of Jack Hooper's JAP-powered Hooper 500 and Ron Tauranac's Norton ES2-powered Ralt. The recordings were made by Ron Heine, and are planned to be included on a CD which will accompany a book to be published by Bill Boldiston, one-time owner of the Scarab Triumph.
- Most active Australian 500cc racer in the very early days of the movement may well have been Ballarat-born Bruce Campbell, who appears to have done all his racing in just one year, 1950 – and to have done it in Germany. This information comes from a comprehensive record of German F3 racing at [www.formel3-guide.com](http://www.formel3-guide.com). It shows Campbell, whose date

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Garry Simkin's JBS Norton, which was imported in the early 1950s by Ron Frost and then went to Jim Berkett, who had also owned the Holdsworth Cooper. Apart from a magneto woe the JBS performed well, however the long Pukekohe straight and bumpy surface weren't to its liking.

Participating in the demonstration events was Terry Rush's Mk6 Cooper Triumph twin, with former owner Alan Kerr looking on.

At Pukekohe an interested spectator from Western Australia was ex NZer John Macey, who told of racing a JBS as a 17-year-old after his employer Jim Boyd helped fund the purchase for him on the proviso that he work it off in Jim's garage. Through the 1960s Boyd did amazing things in the aero- engined Lycoming sports car, which was competing at both meetings (and air-cooled to boot). Parts from Maceys' car form the basis of the JBS that Max Rutherford is recreating in New Plymouth, Max being in attendance both weekends along with Laurie Callender whose father Johnny imported and raced a JBS in NZ as well. Max is also rebuilding that car for Laurie.

Three other cars that appeared at these meetings are worth special mention. One

is the above-mentioned Lycoming Special, which was built in the early 1950s and has a 5.2 litre Gypsy Moth aircraft engine coupled to a Studebaker gearbox and Ford V8 diff. Another is the 1950 Maserati 8CLT Indianapolis car, which now resides at the Southward Museum and which ran parade laps at both meetings. Only two of these cars were built, and when tested at Modena in 1950 they reached 199 mph. It was also good to see the 1951 Citroen Spyder, which uses a rear-mounted 1.9 litre Citroen engine and Citroen gearbox. It was very advanced for its time, and is thought to be the first rear engined water-cooled race car built in New Zealand.

Regular LF contributor Max Fisher appeared at Hampton Downs to admire the new circuit, which in time will be a show-piece venue and which already makes Pukekohe look very third world. Despite a good straight it is very 500-friendly and will be even better when the longer version is opened. A series using the long and short tracks would make for a great two weekends, worth lining up for in 2011 when the theme will be a salute Chris Amon, who was very much in attendance over the two weekends of January 2010. To find out more visit [www.nzfmr.co.nz](http://www.nzfmr.co.nz)

Max Rutherford and Dave Williamson

of birth is given as June 30, 1911, drove a car described as an RC Special BMW at six German circuits between May and October. He had three DNFs, a 9th and a 10th placing at the Nurburgring and a best finish of 5th at Feldburg. The site shows a surprising amount of motorsport in Germany as early as 1948, and participation by many German drivers who were to achieve international recognition in the 1950s. Any more information on Bruce Campbell would be most welcome.

- Bob (Robert Francis) Wigg, former New Zealand speedway rider, died in January, aged 82, reports Max Fisher. An engineer and toolmaker, he rode for the Plymouth Devils team in the UK in the late '40s and early '50s and was one of the "Wednesday Racers" group of expat speedway riders who drove 500cc cars at Brands Hatch during the week. After he returned to New Zealand he was mechanic for Wally Henwood, and installed a Vincent twin in Henwood's Mk4 Cooper. He later restored a number of cars which he drove in historic club racing, and his skills were always available to fellow competitors. His engineering ability, his quirky ways and his sense of humour will be sadly missed.

- The history of 500cc F3 racing in the US, from its earliest post-WW2 days through to current "vintage" racing, is covered in a just-published book, *Formula III Racing in North America*, written by Kieft 500 owner and longtime SCCA racer

Harry Reynolds. The book includes descriptions of the cars, courses, organizations and people involved, and has appendices covering 500cc-related organizations and information on the surviving cars.

The book is soft cover, 272 pages, and costs \$US 39.95. More information, and postage costs, from the publisher, Iconografix Inc., 1830A Hanley Rd; PO Box 446, Hudson, WI 54016, or [info@iconografixinc.com](mailto:info@iconografixinc.com).

## WAKEFIELD PARK RACES, SEPTEMBER

The Historic Sports & Racing Car Association is interested in including air-cooled cars in its September Wakefield Park meeting, which will be run along similar lines to last year's meeting, with emphasis on MGs and other older cars. HSRCA will be happy just to have our cars for display, without any requirement to pay an entry fee. For owners looking to have some track time, air-cooled cars would run in company with Austin 7s and possibly with the slower MGs. For competitors who do not have any CAMS paperwork, HSRCA expects Level 2 CAMS licences for regularity events will be available on the day, and that racing-specification roll bars will not be required. Regularities will have a GEAR-style 2 by 2 start. This year's program will probably follow last year's, with practice and one event on the

Saturday and two events on the Sunday. Competitors with the necessary CAMS paperwork for racing can also run in the JKL races for no extra entry fee, the racing program being the same as that for regularities. More information is available from Dick Willis, at willisrg@smartchat.net.au .

## BILL PATTERSON

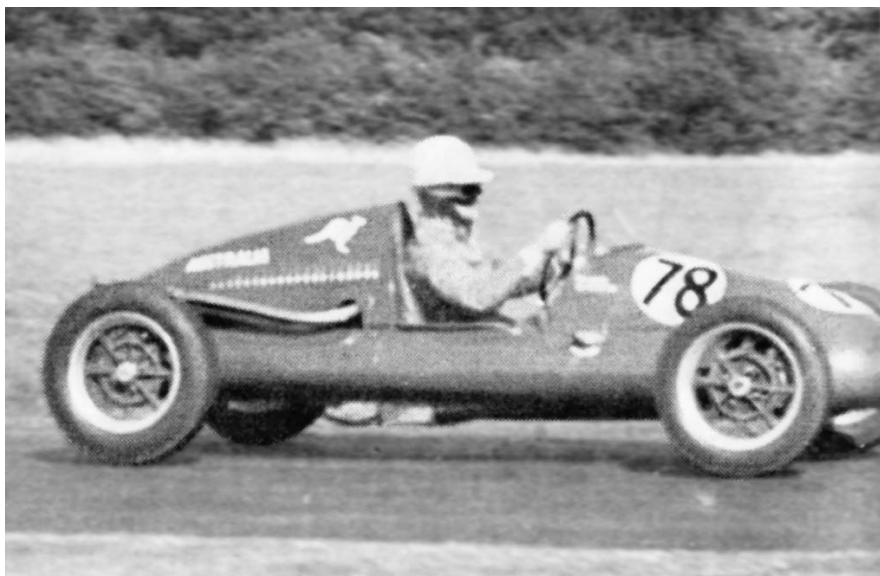
Widely considered to have been the fastest Australian driver of his time, Bill Patterson died in January, aged 86. After some years racing MGs, he travelled to England in 1951 with family friend Tom Hawkes, who bought a new Mk5 Cooper JAP which Patterson raced in England and Europe. Given the competitiveness of the British F3 scene, and the dominance of the Manx Norton engine, Patterson achieved some creditable results.

He continued to race and hillclimb the Cooper to great effect after he and Hawkes returned to Australia. In 1954 it was converted to run a 996cc JAP twin, and Patterson won that year's Australian hillclimb championship at Collingrove from Murray Trenberth's Vincent special.

The Cooper JAP was followed by a succession of Climax-powered Coopers, in which his sheer speed was indisputable. He won the 1961 Gold Star with a 2.5 litre T51 Cooper, and was unlucky not to also win the 1961 AGP. In 1957 he did in fact share an AGP victory, driving Lex Davison's Ferrari for almost a quarter of race distance at Caversham while Davison recovered from dehydration in the extreme heat.

The Cooper JAP was brought back to historic racing by Brique Reed, and is now for sale (see our Classifieds) in Peter Harburg's extensive collection in Queensland.

Below, Patterson's UK performances impressed Autosport which described him as 'determined' and featured this picture from Brands Hatch in its 9 November 1951 issue



## ASHLEY COWAN TROPHY - TERRY AND RAEWYN PERKINS

The Ashley Cowan Trophy for 2009 has been awarded by Historic Sports & Racing Association to Terry and Raewyn Perkins, (below) from Port Macquarie on the NSW North Coast. The trophy, for best performance by an air-cooled car, was awarded in recognition of Terry and Raewyn's active, and remarkably successful, campaigning with the Scarab Triumph.

During 2009 the Scarab ran at two hillclimbs on the local Cooperabung course, and at four Wakefield Park GEAR meetings. The team only missed the other two GEAR meetings because Terry was recovering from a shoulder operation.

The Scarab's on-board starter system worked well all year, and the recent addition of an extra leaf in the rear spring has increased Wakefield Park cornering speeds. Terry notes he covers between 50 and 8km at each GEAR day.



## CLASSIFIEDS

**For sale:** BB Ariel, built '60-'61, Red Hunter engine, Norton box, complete spare engine plus engine and gearbox spares, new body panels. Chris Tracey, 02 6280 5285

**For sale:** Cooper Mk5, ex Hawkes, Patterson etc, huge Australian history with 500 and 8/80 JAPs including 1954 Australian Hillclimb Championship. Freshly overhauled 500 JAP. Offers to Peter Harburg, (07) 3839 9699

**For sale:** Gilbert JAP 500, built 1968 by Roy Gilbert with 1938 4-stud JAP 500, upright Norton box, 10-inch steel Mini wheels. Spares include registered trailer, small Shorrock blower, some engine, gearbox and carburettor spares. \$10,000 or offer, John Cooper, 02 4982 6370, 0407 202 436

**For sale:** motoring and motorsport books and magazines, mostly US and European, email for 12-page list. Graham Howard. grimes@ix.net.au or 02 4787 8772

**For sale:** Arnott JAP, 1952, one of two special long-chassis cars ex Ivor Bueb, modified in England by Pip Preece to coil-over suspension and lengthened by 10" in the centre of the chassis. Immaculate condition. Contact Rob Williams, NZ 09 427 8120 or roshwill@orcon.net.nz

**For sale:** Waye 500, built in 1953, CAMS log book, JAP 500 dry-sump engine, Norton gearbox, roll bar fitted, new upholstery TT carburettor, Lucas magneto, eligible to run overhead cam Norton, ready to run, \$15,000 ono, Andrew Halliday 02 9888 6175.

**For sale:** motorcycle books, going inexpensively: AJS & Matchless Service & Overhaul Manual (L. Neill); AJS and Matchless post-war models (Roy Bacon, Osprey); AJS, History of a great motor cycle (Gregor Grant, forward by John Surtees) Australian Motor Cycle Heroes, 1949-1989 (Cox and Hagon); Ducati Motorcycles (Alan Cathcart); Ducati Untold Stories (Alan Cathcart); Ducati workshop manual, models 160, 250, 350, 450 through 1974 (Clymer); Ducati Singles (Mick Walker, Osprey); BSA Gold Star workshop manual (Bruce Wayne-Smith); MV Agusta motorcycles. (Peter Carrick, foreword by J.Surtees); History of Motorcycles (Orbis, London, foreword B.Sheene); Vincent Riders Handbook, Black Lightning, Black Shadow and Rapide (Harper Engines Ltd., Stevenage); Velocette Service manual, Viper, Venom, MSS, Clubman, Thruxton (Velocette Motorcycle Co.); The First Norton Knocker Scene (photographs; all years, SOHC & DOHC, Bruce Wayne-Smith); also magazines: Classic Racer, Classic Bike, Classic Motorcycle. Call for details - Peter Molloy, 02 4341 0679

## KEVIN SHEARER

Kevin Shearer, who was my next-door neighbour and longtime friend, died in February. After he told me, just over two years ago, that he had cancer, I watched him fight an amazing battle, and in what can best be described as an act of Shearer defiance he painfully completed his last project, the restoration of his 500cc JAP special (photo right by John Lemm).

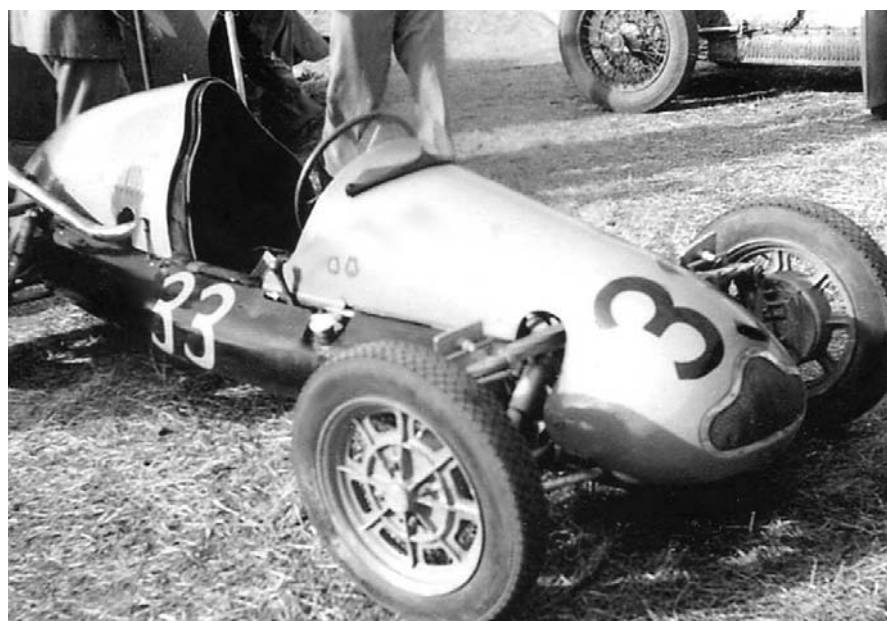
This was an incredible achievement in view of his failing health. Just climbing the steep slope between the house and the workshop exhausted him. But to his eternal credit he persisted to get his last car running, so he could have one final drive at Winton in 2009.

The Shearer family's involvement in historic racing goes back more than 40 years, and in South Australia no other family has contributed so much time and ener-



gy to the sport for so long. Three things come to mind when I think about Kevin – integrity in his dealings with others, enthu-

siasm for his sport, and courage to the end. He was a very good man, and we will all miss him.  
*Derry Greeneklee*



## PHOTOS FROM KEVIN

At Winton in May 2009 Kevin Shearer had mentioned his collection of photographs featuring air-cooled cars, and that he was keen for them to be available for *Loose Fillings* readers to see. On their arrival David Williamson spent considerable time scanning and 'cleaning' them up

Some had captions on the back, many didn't. Two such uncaptioned pics are shown (left), probably from Victoria, and we invite readers to submit suggestions as to who the cars' owners are at the time.

An interesting feature in the top photo is the four spoke steering wheel, not an item normally seen on an air-cooled Cooper. This JAP 1000 Mk3 is numbered '1' in another shot. The exhaust pipe on the Cooper Mk5 number 33 appears to taper as it goes out of shot, maybe suggesting a Manx Norton engine.

We are grateful for Kevin making these photos available and would appreciate any information on these two which can be directed to the editor, details below.

*Garry Simkin*

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