

Flat Chat

THE JOURNAL OF THE AUSTIN-HEALEY OWNERS CLUB INSWI INC

Austin-Healey

**Gavin & Robyn
Black's 100**



**NOVEMBER 2011
NEW MEMBER - NEVILLE LEE
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Flat Chat is the official publication of the Austin-Healey Owners Club (NSW) Inc., and is published monthly by Vintage Racecar Journal Pty Ltd.

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Contributions for the magazine can also be emailed to the editor at:
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AHOC Club meetings are held at the Rydalmere Bowling Club, Park Road, Rydalmere on the 2nd Wednesday of each month, commencing at 8pm. Members and guests are welcome to join us for dinner at the bistro from 6:30pm.

Flat Chat Editor
 Patrick Quinn



ON THE COVER

Gavin and Robyn Black's 100 was sold new in WA. Story on page 10.

FlatChat

NOVEMBER 2011

THE JOURNAL OF THE AUSTIN-HEALEY CLUB (NSW) INC

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2011

NOVEMBER

- 9 • Monthly Meeting & Annual General Meeting
- 12 • Garden Open Day Run
- 16 • Committee Meeting
- 20 • Vehicle Inspection Day
- 26-27 • HSRCA Eastern Creek

DECEMBER

- 14 • AHOC Christmas Party
- 25 • Send the editor a photo of your Austin-Healey for Christmas

JANUARY

- 11 • Monthly Meeting
- 15 • Presentation Breakfast
- 18 • Committee Meeting
- 26 • Australia Day-Motorfest etc.

If you have any questions about the above events please contact our acting club secretary Alan Mitchell on (02) 9639 9450.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

JOHN KENT

As we move towards 2012, members will see from the presentation of our annual accounts that we have a loss this year of \$9,000.00. We also lost money last year and we need to make a number of decisions about how we address this issue.

The reason we need to maintain a reasonable level of funds is to enable us to undertake activities such as the Supersprint and when it is our turn, the National Rally. Both of these events have a degree of financial risk. Some clubs this year have made losses on Supersprints. Thankfully we made a profit, albeit a reduced one.

To mount the National Rally we will have to outlay deposits in excess of \$20,000.00 and fund a significant number of sundry expenditures before we receive any payments from participants.

Our largest expenditure is the Club magazine, Flat Chat, which costs approximately \$80 per member per year.

I will seek comments on this issue at our November meeting, so please come along and have your say.

It would be good to see some of the new members at this meeting so that they can participate in club activities and avail themselves of the wealth of knowledge within the Club.



CLUB COMMITTEE

2011

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Vacant

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Patrick Quinn (As Above)

Public Relations
Richard Horwood (As Above)

Non-Committee Positions

Competition Assistant
John Kent

Librarian
Stuart McColl

CMC Delegates
Ray Roberts

Assoc of British Car Clubs Rep
Sue Darlington

Please do not call committee members after 9pm.

Flat Chat is published on behalf of the Austin-Healey Owners Club of NSW (Inc) by Vintage Racecar Journal Pty Ltd., 116 Warks Hill Rd., Kurrajong Heights NSW 2758

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AUSTIN-HEALEY OWNERS CLUB (NSW) INC Annual General Meeting

What are you doing on the evening of Wednesday 9 November 2011?

Perhaps you are looking forward to another exciting night catching a few ZZZs while propped up in front of the television or maybe you would like to take part in something that is really worthwhile?

The Annual General Meeting of your club, the Austin-Healey Owners Club takes place on the evening of Wednesday 9th November. The venue is the Rydalmere Bowling Club, Park Road Rydalmere and the action starts at 8pm.

If where our Club is heading into 2012 and beyond means something to you, come along and take part in the election of the new committee. No one will ask you to stand, just to raise your hand.

So come on and make the effort. Even bring along your Austin-Healey and you never know you may enjoy it. It is painless you know.

RYDALMERE BOWLING CLUB

Wednesday 9 November 2011

Please Come!



Greetings and welcome to the November 2011 issue of Flat Chat and hopefully within its covers there will be something for everyone to enjoy - even this little tome and the committee reports.

Our feature car this month is the 100 of Gavin and Robyn Black. As you will read Gavin bought the car in 1998 and by 2001 it was looking as resplendent

as you see on the cover. Interestingly the Black's 100 was sold new in Perth and before it finally settled in the Sydney area it crossed the Nullarbor twice. These crossings were not on the sealed road as it is today, but during the 1950s when it was a dirt road that roughly followed the coast. By the time it ended up in Gavin's hands it was an amalgam of a number of cars, but as he was looking for a challenge it was exactly what he wanted.

Here's cheers to members Geoff Golding and Nigel Nichols who took the trouble to send in things that would be of interest to us all. Geoff has expressed his views on the conversion of our Austin-Healeys from positive to negative and Nigel was kind to share his youthful memories when our cars were featured in contemporary comics and the like. Many thanks to both and I am sure that all of you are right now thinking of what you can send in for the enjoyment and information of your fellow members.

Have you ever thought about importing an Austin-Healey from overseas? Well quite a few members have done just that. Besides gadabouting overseas, Pat and Terry Bancroft have also added a couple of new toys to Chez Bancroft - a BT7 Mk1 and a BJ8. We spoke to them both about what to look out for in the process and you can read all about it on page 20.

Our new member for November might be new to the Austin-Healey Owners Club of NSW, but he certainly is not new to the world of Austin-Healeys. Neville Lee is currently living at Coffs Harbour along with his 1958 BN4 which he bought way back in 1961. All this makes him close to being the longest continual Austin-Healey owner in Australia and I am sure we all welcome him to our Club.

Many thanks to Kay Britten for sending in some thoughts on travelling with Charlie and her thanks to all who attended the service held on 29 September.

Our Back Page Pics this month come courtesy of Charlie's Underbelly Run that over the week ending 28 October travelled to Tumut, Deniliquin and Griffith. Hopefully between now and December's Flat Chat at least one of the forty participants will put fingers to the keyboard to tell us all about the fun they had.

By the way if you are wondering what's happening with the Quinn Austin-Healey, it's almost stripped completely from the firewall forward. When the engine was removed I was so appalled at how stained and grubby the engine bay had become that I thought it was time for a spruce up. The twenty-six years since it had been restored have taken their toll.

Please don't forget the Annual General Meeting scheduled for Wednesday 9 November and if all that fun is not enough for you there is our Christmas party on 14 December.

**AHOC 2011 Christmas Party
14 December 2011 at the
Rydalmere Bowling Club**

Come along and share the Christmas cheer with your fellow members and friends.

Please be there at 7pm for pre-dinner drinks and dinner at 7.30pm.

Throughout the evening we will be holding a raffle, for which many of the prizes have been donated by members. These include: Christmas hamper; half a ham, bottles of red and white wine, 1.5 litre bottle of Johnnie Walker Scotch Whisky, mounted Austin-Healey poster, Christmas cake and a new copy of *The Pat Moss Carlsson Story - Harnessing Horsepower*.

I hope you can come along to the AHOC Christmas Party as it will be a fun evening. If you do, please dig deep for the raffle as proceeds go towards the 2013 National Rally that our Club will be hosting.

Numbers are needed for catering purposes so please contact me on (02) 9874 6080 or 0419 419 378.

Christine Little

Christmas Party

AHOC 2011





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For details call: 0419 901 863
Matthew O'Malley AHOC Member



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■ MONTHLY MEETING DATE: 12 OCTOBER 2011

MEETING COMMENCED: 8:04 PM

Apologies: Anne and Don Read, Barry and Karyn Birch, Chris Dimmock, Margo Hardie. **New Members/Visitors:** Nil

■ PRESIDENT

- Thanks from Kay Britten regarding the recent passing of Charlie Britten: "Kay wishes to express her thanks to those club members who were able to attend Charlie's funeral. And a special thanks to those who displayed their Austin Healeys."
- AGM 9 November 2011 – need to fill all the positions and to support the new Committee members for 2012.
- Kids "drive" program – still following this up.
- 2013 National Rally Update soon

■ VICE PRESIDENT • Nil Report

■ SECRETARY

Mail received:

- Email from David Britten for support for his Movember – you can donate online to <http://mobro.co/MoForCharlie> writing a cheque payable to "Movember" referencing David's Registration ID: 1365394 and mailing it to Movember PO Box 60 East Melbourne VIC 8002.
- Agenda for CMC meeting set for 28 November 2011 as well as minutes from September meeting held 26 September 2011.
- NRMA Motorfest application for Motorfest 2012 Australia Day Thursday 26 January 2012 – applications MUST be lodged before Friday 21 October 2011 – letter received 29 September 2011.
- Country Inn motel Bundanoon – book before October 20 to receive 10% off – notation as email received 11 October 2011. – further details from www.bundanoonmotel.com.au and for local attractions check out www.bundanoon.com.au ph (02) 9299 7799; contact Nola Gall.
- Upper Murray Resort Walaw/Jingellic 180 acres of natural bushland with 12x2 bedroom spa cottages; 4x3 bedroom two storey cottages; 4 studio units – check out the website www.uppermurrayresort.com.au or call on (02) 6037 1226 fax (02) 6037 1228 email info@uppermurrayresort.com.au contact Robyn Caldwell.
- CAMS Nominations for 2012 NSW State Council Deputy Chairman.

Events and Activities:

- 50th Anniversary Gwandalan Public School Hot Rod, Car & Motorbike Show spectacular Saturday 22 October 2011 – notation only as received 9 October 2011.
- Windsor RSL Club Open Day Saturday 15 October 2011 – notation only as received 10 October 2011.
- Highlands Motorfest 566 Moss Vale Road Burradoo NSW Sunday 30 October 2011 show entrants \$10.00/vehicle gates open at 7:00am enquiries 0438 691 259.
- Yass Antique Motor club Celebration of Heritage Motoring Saturday 5 November 2011 Banjo Paterson Park Yass further details available from Ken Reidy Club President (02) 6226 1944 or www.yamc.com.au
- Classic Yass Billy Cart Derby 5 November 2011 applications for both events from the Secretary.
- Lake Mountain Sprint 26-27 November 2011 Marysville Tourist Information Centre (03) 5963 4567 or contact peter@mountainmotorsports.com.au or mobile 0418 337 955 if interested to obtain competitor pack.
- Marques in the Park 13 November 2011, John Knight Park Belconnen ACT opens from 9:00am to 3:00pm. If interested contact Bruce Perry Event Director (02) 6254 5059 or mob 0408 652 107 or check out at www.actmotorclubs.org.au

Events and Activities:

- Healey Torque, (AHOC Qld Oct 2011); Hundreds & Thousands (AHOC VIC Oct 2011); Healeys West (AHOC WA Oct 2011); Highlands Steam & Vintage Fair Newsletter Sept 2011.

■ TREASURER

Bank balances at:

- \$26,310 – cheque account (incl deposits for Charlie's Underbelly Run)
- \$12,000 – cash management account.
- \$62,000 – term deposit

■ SOCIAL SECRETARY

- 22-29 October Charlie's Underbelly Run
- Saturday 12 November Garden Open Day at Quinns'
- Sunday 20 November Conditional Registration (Club Plate) Inspection Day at Edwin Street Mortlake – bring along membership renewal, insurance and registration forms.
- Wednesday 14 December AHOC NSW Christmas Party
- Sunday 15 January 2012 Presentation Day Breakfast at the Goodwins – please advise Christine if attending.

■ EDITOR

- Magazine is at the printers and if any member is doing something to their car please take some photos and send in.

■ COMPETITION SECRETARY

- Nil Report

■ HISTORIAN

- Provided information on the nomenclature of the Austin-Healey 100, 100 Six, 100 6, 100 6 S and 100 6 MM.

■ REGALIA/PUBLIC RELATIONS

- Regalia (under review of Regalia options). New "T" shirts from US – Austin-Healey Logo \$20.00 each in US sizes.

■ LIBRARIAN • Nil report

- **CLUB REGO** • 20 November 2011 Inspection Day at Richard Horwood's.

- **MEMBERSHIP** • 2012 Membership application/renewal form was sent out with the October magazine and is also now available at the Club website.

- **CMC** • Clubs generally struggling to get full Committees.

- Motorfest may not start from Domain but come from various locations around Sydney (as was the case many years ago).
- Eastern Creek Conditional Rego cars not having reflectors attached to the rear of their cars – this is a requirement.

- **GENERAL BUSINESS** • Review of options for national Austin-Healey Club of Australia as an umbrella Club for the state affiliated member clubs – this would give possible opportunities for funding etc – Patrick Quinn to follow up on and discuss with interstate Clubs for Association of Austin-Healey Car Clubs of Australia.

■ SHOW & TELL

- Side change gear shift to centre change – Neville stirton
- Poster on board of each of the Healey marques – 100; 100/6 & 3000 – Terry Bancroft
- photos (from York Museum WA) of Gordon Button racing his red 100 #10 in the York Flying 50 1980 – Alan Mitchell

- **MEETING CONCLUDED** • Meeting concluded at 9:07 pm.



MEMBERSHIP REPORT CHRISTINE LYTTLE

The membership for our Club has climbed to 287 with the addition of two new members. These have been Richard Freemantle with a BJ8 recently purchased from The Healey Factory. Next is Neville Lee with a 100/6. Neville originally bought his car in 1961 and has been a member of both the Victorian and Queensland clubs over the years. He has now moved to Coffs Harbour and has joined us.

We welcome both Neville and Richard to our Club and perhaps

we will see you at an event soon.

Please remember that membership fees are due at 1 January 2012. A copy of the 2012 membership form has been in the past two issues of Flat Chat and can also be downloaded from the Club's website - www.austinhealeynsw.com.au or you can pick up a copy from me.

Also don't forget to check the website for regular updates - thanks to our Acting Secretary Alan Mitchell.

SOCIAL SCENE CHRISTINE LYTTLE

NOVEMBER - Wednesday 9th - Annual General Meeting - Rydalmere Bowling Club. **Saturday 12th** - Garden Open Day at Quinns - Once again Caroline and Patrick Quinn's garden is open under Open Gardens Australia. Entry is \$6 a head with proceeds going to Médecins Sans Frontières. There will also be a craft shop and plant stall where you can pick up that little something as a Christmas gift. Bring along your Austin-Healey and perhaps meet at Clarendon opposite the RAAF base at 11.00am on Saturday 12th for a scenic run up Bells Line of Road to Mt Tomah for coffee and then come back to Kurrajong Heights and the Quinns' garden. The garden is open from 10am to 4.30pm on both Saturday and Sunday and a delightful lunch is also available at Bilpin or Mt Tomah. If you wish, you could travel back down to Kurrajong for a wander around the shops and lunch at Sassafras Creek. This event was a great success last year. **Sunday 20th** - Club Plate Inspection Day - Richard Horwood's residence - Edwin Street, Mortlake. Bring along your club plate car for its free annual inspection. Neville Stirton will give your car its annual review and RTA paperwork can be completed on the day. Please bring along your proof of insurance on your car or send me a copy on email if you prefer to christinelyttle@hotmail.com. While fees are due on 1 January 2012 they can be paid on the day as it is necessary to be a paid member to apply for Conditional Registration. Bacon and egg rolls will be available during the morning - any members can pop in for a chat or to help on the day. Look forward to seeing you.

DECEMBER - Wednesday 14th - Christmas Party - This will be held in place of the December General Meeting with a start time of 7pm for pre-dinner drinks and dinner at 7.30pm. This year we will be changing the menu to a traditional Christmas Dinner with turkey and ham baked meal and plum pudding. The cost for each attendee will be \$20.00 and this will include some refreshments. Depending on your consumption you may be required to purchase some drinks on the night. A raffle will be held with Christmas related prizes. Many thanks to John Kent, Alan Mitchell, Terry and Patricia Bancroft, Patrick Quinn and Christine Lyttle for their kind donation of the prizes. Please contact me on (02) 9874 6080 or 0419 419 378 to book in for the dinner as numbers are essential for catering purposes. If you would like to donate any prizes for the raffle please give me a call.

JANUARY 2012 - Wednesday 11th - General Meeting - Rydalmere Bowling Club. **Sunday 15th** - Presentation Break-

fast - Stan & Jill Goodwin's, 189 The Scenic Road, Killcare Heights Phone (02) 4360 2621 will be hosting the breakfast in 2012. Please advise me if you would like to attend as numbers are required for catering purposes. The cost of breakfast will be \$5 per person. Remember there is no magazine in January 2012 to remind you of the event. Book in early and don't forget to update your new 2012 calendar. **Thursday 26th** - Australia Day Celebrations - Motorfest, Berrima and Parramatta Park have events as in prior years.

If you would like to host/organise an event please do not hesitate to contact me with your ideas.

Please put these dates in your diary/calendar - the Club needs your support in 2011/2012. Would be great to see lots of members and their Austin-Healeys on the road this year!!!

NATIONAL RALLY



Just in case you don't know, the 2012 Australian National Rally will be hosted by the Austin-Healey Owners Club of Queensland. In keeping with tradition it will take place over Easter (6 - 9 April 2012)

and will be held at the Novotel Twin Waters Resort, Ocean Drive, Mudjimba Beach Qld 4564 (Sunshine Coast).

For your convenience, there is a two page registration form at www.austinhealeyqld.com.au along with the three page accommodation booking form. They have asked for the registration form to be returned to the AHOC (QLD) and the accommodation form to be sent direct to the Resort. The details of which can be found at <http://www.twinwatersresort.com.au/> Rooms will be allocated on a first in basis.

It's hats off to our friends in Queensland as they have introduced an instalment system for those attending the Rally. Details of which can be found with the registration form.

If you would like the forms, but do not have the Internet please call me (PQ) on 0417 673 065 and I will send you copies.



Profile: Neville Lee

Name: Neville Lee

Occupation: Retired

Where Do You Live? Coffs Harbour, NSW

What Model Austin-Healey? 100/6 BN4

Why did you buy an Austin-Healey? It's a 1958 car that was first registered in Victoria on 21 June 1958. I bought it on 8 March 1961 when it was in almost new condition. I was working for CW Plummer in Pakenham who were Austin dealers. The boss bought an earlier 1957 100/6 and he let me drive it to motor mechanic's school. It was the very first Austin-Healey I drove and it left an indelible mark on me.

Did you specifically set out to buy the model that you bought? The boss' car was an earlier BN4 with the log type cylinder head. I knew the cars in the area and that there was a new model coming out with more power and that's what I wanted. So when they finally arrived the sale price was £2,095 and if you wanted all the options like wire wheels, hardtop and heater the cost was closer to £2,500. To buy one you had to go to a dealer and put £600 on the counter. Only then would they order a car for you.

I was almost 19 and always wanted to be a mechanic and was living away from home with my great uncle. I met Richard Ralph who owned the car and all he seemed to do was to wash and polish it. I paid Richard £1,420 for the 100/6 and as mentioned it was like new, finished in its white over black paint which it still is. Richard went on to own a 100S. Even though it was only three years old I was the fifth owner. The first owner traded in a 100 on the BN4, but didn't keep up the required payments and the car was repossessed.



What was it like when you bought it?

As new! However that wasn't to last as I had a major accident in it when I ran off the road and down a cliff. I had a lady passenger with me and thankfully she was thrown out, for if she hadn't been I hate to think what would have happened. As it went down the cliff it hit a timber log that went through the passenger door and sill, and then crushed the floor before hitting the gearbox and breaking the bellhousing. We repaired it with a new left hand side chassis section, sill and floor. Of course there was no Kilmartins back then and everything had to be fabricated.

I kept on using the 100/6 as an everyday car and when I got married I bought an Austin A99. The Austin-Healey was stored in a shed at Corowa for nine years and cared for by Terry Cornelius. Terry actually used it as one of his wedding cars. Then I took it back to the farm near Corowa where it literally sat for years while the pigs rubbed up against it.

How have you been using the car? I had a BN1 that I had been using for some time, but had in my mind to get the BN4 on the road. We moved to Caboolture in Queensland and took the BN4 with us and the first thing I did was to have the trim done in the car. However there was a time just before that when I did think about selling both the BN1 and BN4 to buy a 100S that was for sale at the time, but the deal fell through.

While in Queensland I just used the car as anyone would and also joined the AHOC in that state. I moved to Coffs Harbour earlier on this year and while I don't use it all that often, my son Brendon uses it and enjoys the car. We both spent some time on tidying the car a bit, so now it looks very presentable. Mechanically we also rebuilt the front suspension and steering so that it also drives very well now too.

Perhaps next Easter I can make it to the National Rally in Queensland.

Travelling with Charlie



Thanks from Kay Britten

Growing up in a family that had never owned a car, meeting Charles opened up a whole new world to me. The world of motoring.

It was a wonderful world that started with a car race meeting at Warwick Farm many years ago. I recall it was sooooo hot and later Bathurst meetings were it was sometimes sooooo cold. In our time together we went to many car "Dos". The favourite was always Phillip Island, were once it was sooooo windy the cars didn't need to start their engines - they were just pushed along.

Other meetings were Wakefield Park for Austin-Healey races and GEAR. Then there were trips to the Gold Coast for international events and to Melbourne for the Grand Prix. Oran Park, Amaroo Park, Winton, Eastern Creek, the All British Display Days and the many Austin-Healey rallies. He took our A Model Ford to the first Motorfest in 1986 and didn't miss any of these Australia Day events until this year. His enthusiasm was always there, looking for a car he hadn't seen before or a new model, even if it was only in the car park

Some of the more memorable events were the last race meeting at Uralla - a wonderful weekend. The race meeting at Bathurst in 1988 and Chris Dimmock will tell how close it was to not going ahead. They were like little ducks, very calm on



top of the water and there legs paddling like mad unseen underneath. The Shannons National Motoring Tour in April 2001 in Canberra. The trip to Temora for the air show (or was it just for a great get together?) A weekend at Braidwood where, on Sunday morning the frost was so thick we thought it had been snowing. All of Charlie's runs. The first went to Coffs, Byron Bay, Glen Innes, Coonabarabran, Cowra, Tumut, Eden and Nowra. Almost all NSW - he pulled his head in after that marathon and made later runs a little more leisurely.

These runs saw many friendships form. Out-of-towners who own Austin-Healeys unable to attend meetings joined in and were made welcome. They made us very welcome when we called in for a cuppa or a meal on our caravanning and camping trips.

Going to these events not only involved the cars, but the friends. There was always someone to have a chat to. (Hence my nickname for him - Mr Haveachat)

Thank you for your friendship and to thank you for being at his funeral. The tribute of the Austin-Healeys at the chapel was a fine gesture. He would have been proud and I know we were.

PS He really liked all Austin-Healeys and it was his way of having a bit of fun to pit fours and sixes while always saying that the blue ones go faster.

Gavin & Robyn Black's 100



Sometimes it's interesting how things turn out. I was wondering whose car would be next to grace the cover of Flat Chat when out of the blue I receive an email from Alwyn Keepence in Queensland. Alwyn is a long term Austin-Healey owner and is also the registrar for the Queensland AHOC.

Alwyn wrote to let me know that he had recently been involved in the reuniting of a number of original sales documents belonging to the 100 of NSW AHOC member Gavin Black. It turns out that the Black's 100 was sold new by Winterbottom Motors in Perth to a Peter Lahiff who is now living in Queensland. Anyway, though Alwyn's assistance the documents are now where they belong.

Always on the look out for a good story I called Gavin who was very pleased at the idea of telling the story to fellow Austin-Healey owners.

"I bought the car in 1998 and it was my first experience with Austin-Healeys." Gavin answered to my question. "I just love the shape and that goes back to when I was much younger and I recall seeing one parked on the street. It's one of those traditional sports cars and I thought if I ever have the opportunity one day I would like to own one."

"It was however sometime later when family commitments reduced and I had time on my hands that it all happened. I thought the first step would be to join the Austin-Healey club, but found out that I couldn't without a car. I looked in the Sydney phone book for the Club, found it and called. I later realised that I was calling Don Read who then asked what car I had. I answered 'Subaru' and Don told me that I had to have a car, but he then said that I shouldn't be concerned as one would be found for me."





Katoomba 1956



Adaminaby 1957



"I had my first call the following day." Gavin said. "I wanted a challenge and certainly didn't want to buy a concours car or even one that was road going. I wanted to build one up to my standard that may be better or worse than other people's standards. I wanted to go through the whole exercise and the bundle of parts I bought gave me that challenge."

Engineer

Not everyone wants to buy their first Austin-Healey as multiple boxes of bits so I was interested in Gavin's background.

"My background is machining, tool making and then engineering." Gavin answered. "I have a sort of a workshop at home with a mill and a lathe with which I do all my own machining. The only thing I can't handle is spray painting, but I am very good at blocking back. The Austin-Healey is not my first older car as that was a 1942 Willys Jeep which I did a round Australia trip prior to being married. I later restored that and still have it."

"I found the 100 as a result of all the phone calls I received. I went and looked at a number of cars and the one; I think a lot of people shied away from was the one I bought, because I could see the challenge. What really appealed to me was bringing a bundle of parts back, to a car that could be driven again on the road. I bought it from Stan Goodwin and I understand that Ray Roberts had quite a few of the parts at one time too."

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“It was literally a basket case.” Gavin added. “There were six ammunition cases filled with bits, three or four cardboard boxes, a body shell that had spent time in a poultry shed and a chassis that had been stored underneath it. When I went to pick it up, everything was scattered across a forecourt which we managed to fit into two utes and a trailer. While I admit it was very daunting I am very pleased with the end result.”

Restoration

Like so many of us Gavin then went down the restoration path starting with the chassis and then building the car up piece by piece.

“I then went to the process of repairing the chassis, sand blasting and painting.” Gavin answered. “I even cut off both ends of the chassis so that I could blast and spray internally. I had to remake the crucifix and sections of the main rails. As far as a time-frame went, I finished the car in 2001. Only three years, but there was a lot of hours over weekends and evenings with lights going at all hours of the night.”

“The finished colour was interesting. I was always going to do it British Racing Green, but when I obtained the Heritage Certificate I changed my mind to blue. I actually decided against the true Healey Blue as I think it’s a little insipid so went slightly darker.”

Australian Delivered

"It's an Australian delivered car." Gavin said. "The Heritage Certificate told me that it was despatched to the Winterbottom Motor Company in Perth and I have often wondered how it came to be in NSW and what its early history was. Until recently I have never been able to go back to before Stan and Ray."

"Only recently have I managed to find that out through making contact with Peter Lahiff who now lives in Queensland. He sent me the original sales order and invoice that he still had. When it was just 10 months old he drove it across the Nullarbor to Melbourne and then north to Katoomba. He was then employed in the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme which meant that he then went south to the Snowy and then back to Perth again for Christmas. After that he came back again to his job at the Hydro. This was in 1956/57 when such a drive was no mean feat. He told me that while he had fitted an engine sump protection plate the car still suffered damage to the sump."

"To increase the under clearance of the car he fitted wintertread tyres, but even then he realised that the roads around the Snowy weren't suited to the Austin-Healey. He sold the car on consignment through someone at Brookvale. From then until Stan bought the car I know nothing of its history."

"Peter Lahiff has been very helpful." Gavin added. "By sending me information on the car along with some photos he had, which arrived only this week. He went on to own a 100S."

BN2 Gearbox

As usually happens I had a look at the restoration photos of Gavin's car and noticed that he had fitted a BN2 gearbox and later rear end.

"Yes the BN2 box and five-stud rear end came with the car." Gavin answered. "Every-

one knows where the weak links are there in the BN1 and I am pleased that I had the opportunity to fit both to the car. So during the restoration I decided to rebuild the car as a BN2, without of course actually saying that it was a BN2. Things like the wiring harness and front wheel bearings I made sure were as BN2."

I then asked the big question. "Would you do it again?"

"Yes!" Came the response. "But with the number of projects I have I will need to live to 137. I have recently finished a Buchanan that has a Triumph Vitesse chassis and bored out Vitesse two-litre six-cylinder engine. I am now working on a KM 200 which is taking shape and after that there is an Australian made open wheeler to do. I have hung that up under the roof of the shed so that I am not repeatedly reminded about what has to be done."

"I still have one item to go with the 100, the hood. Hopefully that should be soon, as I would like to use the car without having to look up at the sky each time."

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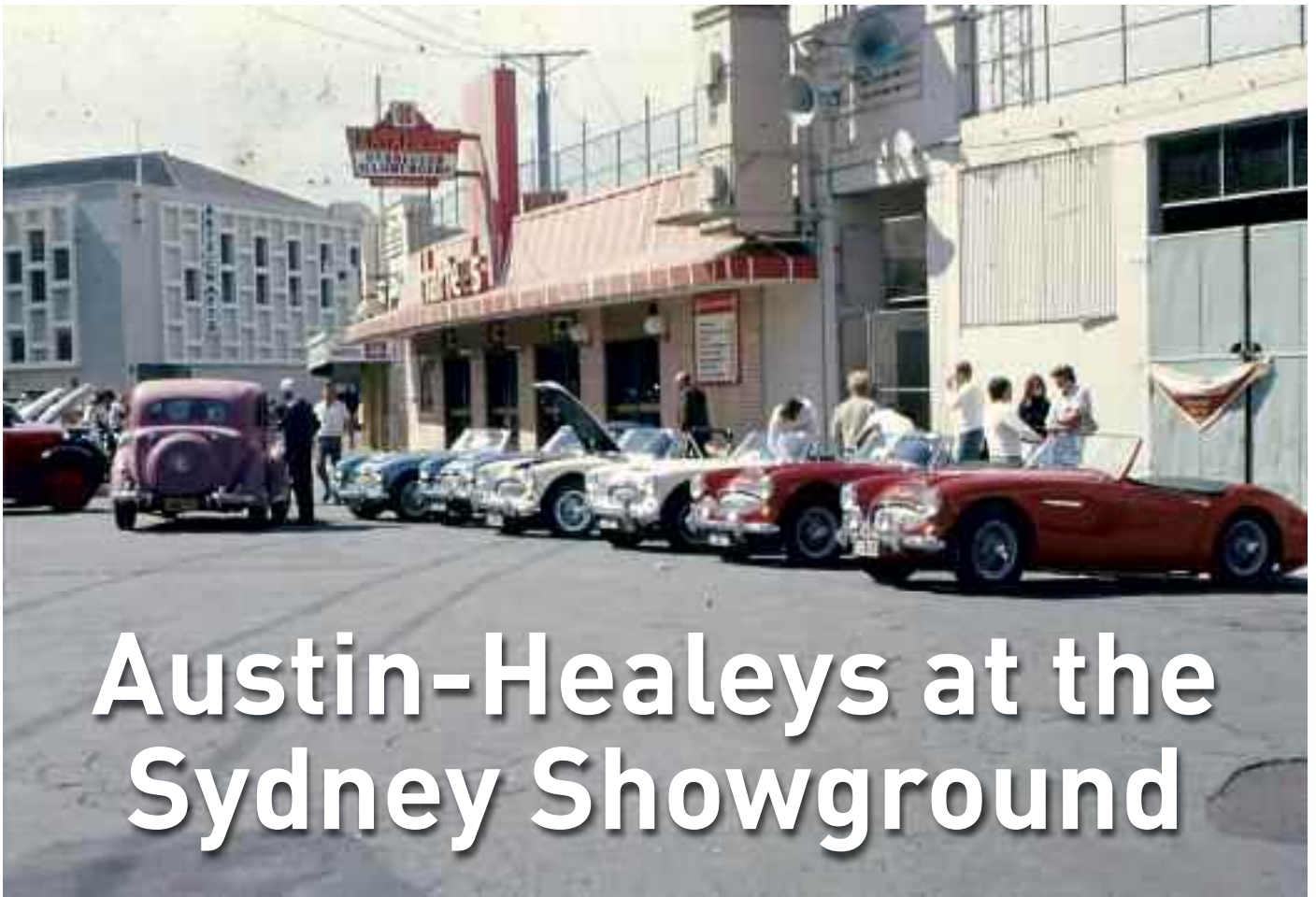
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Austin-Healeys at the Sydney Showground

This month's photos also come from the 1970s when the Club was in its infancy. The photo showing the Austin-Healeys lined up in front of a wall was taken at the Sydney Showground at Moore Park before it was established at Homebush. It would have been late August or early September 1974 and we had been invited to attend what would have been one of the earliest gatherings of classic car clubs in Sydney.

Scanning the original slide so that it's digital has deteriorated the photo's clarity, but it is still possible to make out a few cars. The closest car is a BT7 Mk2 that at the time belonged to John and Fay Thornborough and is now owned by Dave and Shirley Mould. The next is a BJ7 carrying the registration number AH-434, which I am fairly sure, was owned by Don and Anne Read. The third car is the BJ7 of Stuart and Diana McColl which they still owned and the next is the BJ8 of Wally Gates that of course is now owned by Chris Dimmock. I cannot identify the next two cars.

I recall some wonderful cars in attendance including a magnificent Mercedes Benz SSK and a gorgeous Riley MPH that was fitted with four Amal carburetors.

The cars were in model order and out of the photo to the right were other models and I seem to recall that there

were over twenty Austin-Healeys in attendance.

The second photo showing the rear view of a racing 100 was taken at Amaroo Park in what may have been 1979. It shows then member Kevin Gardner about to head out on to the circuit where later he was to have a slight altercation with the Mk1 3000 of Don Holland. This was mentioned in the cover story in the September 2011 Flat Chat.

I recall the car being very used around the edges, however it was reasonably quick. I don't know what happened to it.



Your “Acie-Ducie” Austin-Healey

All Austin-Healeys were set up electrically wise with a “Positive” earth, as were most British and European cars up to the early '70s. Most American cars were “Negative” earth from the '30s through to about the '70s and beyond where the trend appears to be negative earthed vehicles today. To show my age, I will ask a question in a gruff voice. “Why is it so?”

For the less “techno” minded, I should explain. For all electrics (not only in cars) to work and to make a circuit there has to be a positive and negative pole. Holding two magnets against one another one, one end will reject (positive to positive) and the other will lock together (positive to negative). In an electric motor, by swapping the polarity (positive and negative) of the motor you change the direction in which it rotates. So what's this got to do with your Austin-Healey? Quite a bit!

It's popular for Austin-Healey owners to fit alternators to their cars, requiring the polarity to be change from positive to negative. Generally, alternators are more efficient in fully charging “the sleepy batteries” in your Austin-Healey. Generators in good repair do the same job, but the car needs to run longer to achieve the same level of charge.

In my view, changing to an alternator is a deviation from the car being original – it's too obvious by simply looking, unlike other modifications that don't spoil originality - internal engine mods. Enough of my “hobby horse”.

Electronic Ignition

Some time ago I started looking at moving from the traditional distributor to an electronic ignition for our 100. It makes starting easier with a bigger and stronger spark which in turn provides better performance and reliability. One condition in my quest was the new/replacement distributor must be the same as the original in appearance. Easier said than done!

The first hurdle was to finding a positive earthed electronic



Alternator fitted to a 100 engine.

distributor. I could get the bits and rebuild the one in the car, but the shaft is worn. So I spoke with John at Automaster (Flat Chat advertiser) who suggested that a new distributor was cheaper than rebuilding the old one. That took me to “my second favourite piece of equipment” – the Internet.

Only available were negative polarity units, however they looked the same, so part of my quest could be achieved. Did I want to change the polarity of our car? What were the advantages or disadvantages? What was involved in doing this? More research on my second favourite piece of equipment. What an interesting story evolved over an hour or so.

It was then a case of looking to see what is “out there” at a competitive price. Initially I found complete electronic negative earthed distributors delivered by post within the price range of between \$450-\$500, while kits cost in the area of \$150-\$200. But it was not what I wanted.

The search continued and a firm in the UK had what I wanted, but still negative earthed. However after some “email chats” the fellow indicated that there was a demand for positive polarity units which were under developing and would be available in about 3 months. Nothing happens quickly with an old car does it? Some say the same about their owners too.

So given all of the above – to make the change from positive to negative in our car MAY have some advantage if we choose to fit an alternator at a later date, but even then a positive earthed alternator may be or become available – that's another story.

So back to the negative v positive polarity in your Austin-Healey. The swing to negative polarity came from the Americans in the '30s by setting a world standard where all motor cars have negative polarity. It was a major US manufacturer that led the push as a division/subsidiary of that company manufactured automobile electrical components and saw a way of expanding the their business model right across the automotive industry.



BJB under restoration with engine fitted with an alternator.

Corrosion/Rust

One of the theories to negative polarity is that it slowed the effects of corrosion/rust. Given modern car manufacturing and rust prevention techniques, this theory seems in this day and age to be a rather shallow. How could this possibly work?

Our cars were made 50 or 60 years ago and a lot of them in the intervening period suffered extensive attacks from ferrous oxide, but from where I'm sitting as your Austin-Healey is sitting on rubber tyres and to complete the circuit it's impossible in normal circumstances to prevent the dreaded "tin worm".

Right now you are asking what does this have to do with the polarity of your Austin-Healey. Read on!

Those of us who have had anything to do with boats and their operation will find in a majority of cases they are negative earthed. "Why is it so?" The explanation lies in preventing rust and how "boat electrics" are set up; herein lays the reason.

If the electrics in a boat are set up using negative polarity, the earth part of the circuit means the water the boat floats in is a good conductor. So by using the water to provide the completed circuit from the boat, we have this traditional position of boats being negative earth, but because of electrolysis it has the by-product of reducing rust/corrosion on metal hulled boats.

So where does that leave us? I see very little advantage in changing our Austin-Healeys to negative earth. However if you are going to install what I will describe "modern luxuries" e.g. air-conditioning, CD players or a modern radio than possibly a case can be made for a change. Apart from the addition of these I see no real and tangible reason to go fiddling with the electrics of the "beast in the shed".



Interesting setup of an alternator and air conditioning compressor fitted to a six-cylinder engine.

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Comic Book Healeys

The photograph of 77 ARX in the August *Flat Chat* sparked something in the dim recesses of my atrophying memory banks.

In the early sixties I used to receive, direct from England, the *Eagle* magazine, a wholesome 'paper for boys' mostly renowned for the colourful and futuristic space adventures of Dan Dare, pilot of the future. Dan Dare has entered the lexicon of English people and you still hear English car reviewers referring to futuristic, over-the-top cars as being very Dan Dare. Citroens would've once been described as such, sadly no longer. Martin Brundle often cites F1 drivers as making a Dan Dare move, but he means it more as an audacious manoeuvre, also very Dan Dare like.

To get to the point, in 1962-63 much to the outrage of many, Dan was removed from the front cover, relegated to black and white and replaced by a series called 'Kings of the Road', featuring competition cars through the ages. The March 23, 1963 issue of *Eagle* featured 57 ARX on the cover, sister car to 77 ARX. Yes I still have the issue and it was a pleasure to scan the cover for everyone.

I consider these artist's impressions to be quite emotive, the sort of image that leaves an indelible imprint on the subconscious of the impressionable young mind. Looking through some other issues, I noticed in one comic strip, a sports car that can only have been inspired by the Austin-Healey 100. Interesting that the hero comments on the lack of room for all of them in his car. Perching on the luggage rack wouldn't be approved of today.

Also many ads for model Austin-Healey cars plus an ad for a model Healey Sports Boat and trailer, I imagine this would be a rare find. Plus there was always a 'What's New?' section and in the one scanned it featured the Mark 2 Sprite along side its big brother 3000.

I think it's fascinating to see Austin-Healeys in the context of their times and hope that other people find it at least mildly diverting.

What happened to Dan Dare? There were many anguished letters to the editor, but it was only after a single letter from an American reader that he was returned to full, glorious colour and in his rightful place on the front page. The demands of the American market were hegemonic in all areas, not just in the sports car world!



DRIVING a works Austin-Healey 3,000, Don and Erle Morley won the tough Alpine Rally for the 4th time running last year. If they

twenty two. Great experience was gained this way and, after winning the famous Tulip Rally in 1959, they joined the BMC competitions department.

Since that date, they have notched up many successes for BMC. In the 1962 Monte Carlo Rally, at the wheel of an MGA coupe, they won their class, and came in second in the Gran Turismo category. Later in the same year, a class win in the Tulip Rally was recorded.

Don and Erle have always competed together, and attribute their success to this, rather than to the fact that they are twins.

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The Mark II Austin-Healey 100 is now available in the new 'Sport' finish. It is also available in the new 'Sport' finish of the previous model.

The Mark II Austin-Healey 3000 is now available in the new 'Sport' finish. It is also available in the new 'Sport' finish of the previous model.



12 Story by STEVE ALLEN • Drawn by MARTIN AITCHISON

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IMPORTING AN AUSTIN-HEALEY



Way back in 1974 I imported the Quinn Austin-Healey from the UK. With the assistance of a customs agent it was relatively straightforward and next to no government officialdom to contend with. So when I heard that Terry and Pat Bancroft had recently bought two Austin-Healeys in the US I asked for their thoughts.

"Actually I didn't intend to buy another Austin-Healey." Terry said over a coffee and yet another Tim Tam. "When we sold the BJ7 a few months back I thought I would put the money into a 1958 Corvette. I found one in Sydney that really appealed as it was RHD and fully registered. Then I gave it some thought and came to the realisation that an early Corvette was probably a bit out of my comfort zone. A little time later I was looking through a copy of the magazine from the Austin-Healey Club of America and two cars caught my eye."

The cars turned out to be a 1960 RHD BT7 Mk1 in North Carolina and a LHD 1967 BJ8 in Seattle, Washington.

"Within hours I called the owners in the US letting them know that I was interested, so much so that I would arrange for inspections. Thanks to some Austin-Healey owners both here and in the US that was done and back came glowing reports on both cars. I was happy with that, agreed to buy them and arranged for the money to be transferred."

Ignoring the Internet and email, that was no different than I did some 37 years ago, but then Terry said that's where the similarities finished.

Import Permit

"It's not possible to import a car

without dealing with red tape. You must apply for an Import Permit to the Australian government and to do that you need a Bill of Sale, which is another name for a receipt. It's not a matter of waking up one morning and deciding to buy a car overseas and then applying for the Permit. No, you have to buy the car first and then make the application and you have to send along the original Bill of Sale or receipt. It costs all of \$50 for each car."

"In amongst all this I organise the shipping and that started out with the BJ8. I contacted a company in the US called Ship Overseas. Initially I consid-

ered using roll-on roll-off shipping as it was slightly more economical. Ship Overseas arranged the road transport from Seattle to Long Beach, California. That was painless as they really knew what they were doing. The actual transport and holding in the US was looked after by Schumacher Logistics."

"In the end the BJ8 came by a container which was packed with all sorts of other goods. The car was loaded and had a frame built around it to avoid transit damage."

Left the US

"It left the US on 10 September and arrived in Sydney 4 weeks later." Terry said. "Previously I've had shipping done via Japan, but this ship came direct to Australia. All up, the shipping from Seattle to Sydney cost US\$2,900.00 and that included storage in Long Beach."

"Just before the ship was due to arrive I received notification





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from a forwarding agent in Sydney who is best equipped to deal with all the necessary paperwork and stuff to get the car through Australian customs and quarantine. The total cost for that was \$1,400.00. As the car is older than 30 years there wasn't any import duty, but there was GST of \$3,700.00."

"In Sydney it sat for a week waiting for the container to be unloaded, for Customs to do whatever they do and for the compulsory steam cleaning before it was available to be picked up. That was on 18 October."

Terry and Pat had bought both cars sight unseen, but while recently in the US did have a quick look at the BJ8 at Long Beach. So I was interested in his first thoughts on seeing the car in Australia.

"Most impressed! I was pleased when I first saw it at Long Beach and very much so now. There were a few little things that required attention like a broken handbrake cable, changing the headlight direction and a new tyre. It is now on Conditional Registration and I must say that it drives beautifully which I suspect has a lot to do with the Bilstein shock conversion."

Were you wondering how much it all cost? I know that I was.

"All up landed in Australia it cost less than \$49,000 which is probably a lot less than what it's worth here. I am very pleased indeed. I probably have the newest Austin-Healey in Australia." Terry finished with.

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A few odd bods this month – a Healey boat, a rebodied 100/6, limited release model and some interesting Austin curios.

Available in the UK is a car called 'The California' which is actually a rebodied 1957 100/6 that was delivered new to the US. No reason is known, but in the mid '60s the Austin-Healey body was discarded and a new steel one fitted that looks a bit like a cross between an E-type and a Corvette.

Somehow it has found its way to the UK and has been restored by noted Austin-Healey enthusiast John Chatham, at a reported cost of £75,000 that included a tuned 3000 engine with uprated camshaft and extractors.

There is talk that the car was featured in a Doris Day/Rock Hudson film, but on checking on the Internet Movie Cars Database I could find no reference to it. Anyway if you would like to find out a little

more have a look at www.oldtimermanchester.com and you will see that £77,500 (Aus\$116,950) will buy it for you.

What do they say about boats? There are only two good times – the day you buy it and the day you sell it. Well I would be happy to test that with Lady Christie, a Healey Marine Sports Boat 55.

The boat was originally owned by a Lady Christie to take her from Brownsea Island to Poole Harbour in the UK. After that it was used on the Thames and purchased by the current owner in 2005 and professionally restored.

It is indeed a lovely example of the DHMC's folly into boat building and if you would like to know more send an email to peterfreebody@btconnect.com

I was tossing up whether to run the ad for the 1:43 scale model of the 1963 Sebring 3000 – 54-FAC. Anyway as it might be of interest to those members who collect models of Austin-Healey I decided to include it.

As you can see it was made by Spark models for the current owner and putting 1 and 1 together I would say that he had to have a certain number made. That's a good thing of course as it allows the collectors amongst us to add it to their collections.

Lastly is a quite interesting classified ad that also explains something to me personally. Sitting on my desk is a silver plated cup with a Larke Hoskins badge on its base and the Austin flying A forming part of its handle. From the included classified I now know its origins, but I wonder if I should continue to use it to hold my pens and pencils.

CLASSIFIED ADS



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RARELY IF EVER OFFERED. By special commission from Larke Hoskins, NSW Austin Distributors to Angus and Cooté Jewellers, a limited number of silver plated presentation Goblet Sets each containing 6 goblets was ordered to commemorate the release of the Austin-Healey 100 sports car and increased Austin sales throughout the range. This set of six from my own personal collection was initially awarded for meritorious sales results to Barry Taylor, the owner/driver of the "Gladiator". Now a well known Group Lb sports car that is still in competition, although Barry has passed on. This set is a wonderful piece of Historic Motoring History and is for sale at just \$295.00. Please call Paul Samuels (02) 4862 2048 or paulracing@bigpond.com



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Charlie's Underbelly Run



The Sherman and Burch Austin-Healeys at Tumut. John Burch Photo.



Kate Burch, Judy & John Sherman at Tumut. John Burch Photo.



Who wins the prize for the longest shorts? Niel Thew Photo.



Ray Roberts and Delwyn Goldsmith were proud winners of the Volvo drivers hats award. Niel Thew Photo.



One wonders who Ray Roberts is conversing with while David Williamson hears from Jim Phillips. Niel Thew Photo.



Austin-Healeys and an American thing about to be woken from their slumbers at Tumut. Neil Thew Photo.



Carolyn Kent points out the finer points of the Kent Austin-Healey to Muriel Roberts, David Williamson and Ray Roberts. Niel Thew Photo.



Perhaps everyone is smiling at the approaching waitress. L-R. Louise & Gordon Lynas, Kathryn & Ian Roughley, Judy & John Sherman, John & Kate Burch, Neville & Jan Stirton and Glenda & Thew. Photo Courtesy Neil Thew.



The view at Tumut from the Burch Austin-Healey. John Burch Photo.