



B.M.C. LEYLAND AUSTRALIA HERITAGE GROUP

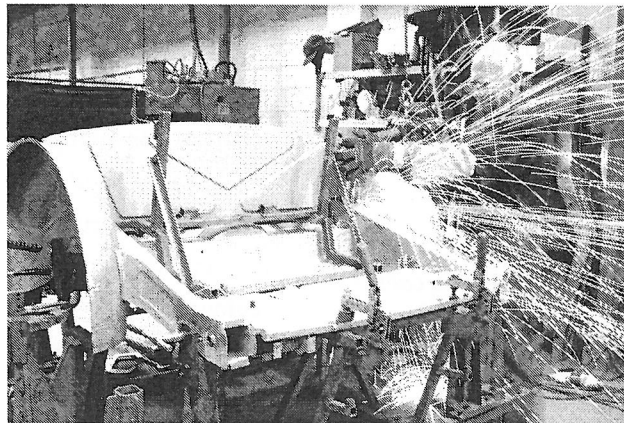


A non-profit association of some hundreds of former employees and interested persons whose mission is to preserve the heritage of BMC-Leyland Australia and its associated companies as a significant part of Australia's automotive manufacturing history.

NEWSLETTER

April, 2009.

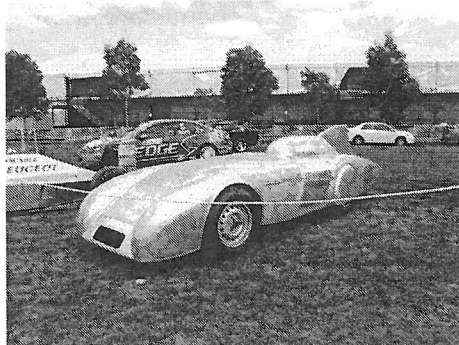
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Bonneville Healey

BRITISH MOTOR HERITAGE LIMITED

A Brief History

The roots of British Motor Heritage lie in the formation of Leyland Historic Vehicles in 1975, when all of the relevant historic vehicles and archives of the UK subsidiary companies were brought together. Even in the early days, LHV sought to improve the availability of genuine parts for British classic vehicles. In 1983 the commercial operations of what then became the British Motor Industry Heritage Trust (BMIHT) were formalised under the title of British Motor Heritage Ltd. From 1985 to 1995, British Motor Heritage was managed by Pressed Steel ex-apprentice David Bishop, who masterminded a series of extraordinary projects to re-commission the complete bodyshell tooling for the MGB, MGB GT, MG Midget, Austin Healey Sprite and Triumph TR6.

The availability of complete new bodyshells for these classic British sports cars greatly strengthened their long-term appeal to enthusiasts world-wide, and provided a solid foundation for the uniquely comprehensive spare parts support which these cars now enjoy.

When BMW restructured and sold off the Rover Group in 2000, British Motor Heritage was retained until November 2001, when it was sold by BMW to David Bishop, Neil Morrnick and John Yea as a completely independent company.

Neil is an Austin ex-apprentice with extensive senior management experience in vehicle and parts distribution, and John had held several senior finance and commercial posts in the former Rover Group.

During 2002 to 2006, the three new owners worked to consolidate and grow the business as a stand-alone operation. They further expanded the range of bodyshells, taking on the original Mini body tooling from Longbridge and offering Mini MkIV and MkV shells from August 2002. In 2004, the Mini Clubman/1275GT shell was added to the range,

bringing the total number of individual bodyshell derivatives up to 42. Regular additions have also been made to the general range of parts offered by Heritage through their network of Approved Specialists in the UK and overseas, with a total of some 10,000 product references now listed.

In the Spring of 2006, David Bishop and Neil Morrnick, satisfied that Heritage was now firmly established in its own right, each returned to their own busy 'semi-retirement' activities, leaving John Yea in overall control.

During 2006, Heritage launched some interesting diversifications. These included the development of seam-welded bodyshells for competition or even fast road use, the provision of roll cages and a new 'menu' facility for customers using a Heritage bodyshell to restore or build their car. The 'menu' can include anything the customer requires in the way of assistance, from having the bodyshell painted in the colour of their choice, right up to a complete restoration by experts in the Heritage factory. In addition, Heritage offered direct supply of bodyshells for the first time.

To further strengthen the Heritage business, two company acquisitions were made recently: in 2007 Powerstop Brakes Ltd became part of the Heritage group. This business specialises in providing upgraded braking systems for classic vehicles, and includes the exclusive distributorship of EBC pads, discs, drums and linings in the classic sector. British-made EBC braking materials include the famous 'Greenstuff' aramid-fibre pads that out-perform conventional friction materials in every respect - braking power, fade resistance, reduced pad and disc wear and cleaner operation. Powerstop covers virtually all makes and models, and is able to produce 'specials' for really rare cars.

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A year later in 2008, the famous British brand Tex Automotive Ltd also joined the Heritage group. This has added a huge range of mirrors, wiper blades and many other accessories to the Heritage repertoire, all made to OE standards on original tooling, some of it dating back over 60 years. Again, the Tex product range applies across many different marques in addition to the familiar British car ranges associated

with Heritage. In combination, these two new subsidiaries of Heritage greatly expand its market coverage, and help to ensure that vital parts will continue to be available for classic vehicles well into the future.

For further information and updates see the website ; www.bmh-ltd.co

(Ian Elliott)

Police Minis in Australia

By Doug Jenkins

Around 40 years ago motorists on NSW roads who ignored the road laws might find a mundane looking BMC Mini appearing in their rear vision mirror, but chances were this was no ordinary Mini. If it sported driving lights, had a pressed-metal sunscreen, a windshield on the driver's door, an aerial on the roof and was painted a bland colour such as grey, green or

beige it was almost certainly an unmarked high performance Police pursuit car. The sound of a wailing siren and sight of an illuminated hand-held POLICE sign beaming through the passenger window of the Mini as it pulled alongside would confirm the errant driver's worst suspicions.



In 1970 the NSW Police Department contracted with BLMCA to produce a car for the Special Traffic Patrol (STP) that had impeccable handling and was capable of maintaining a high speed. The result was a special version of the Morris Cooper S MK II with various performance and functional changes from the standard production version available to the public. Tailored BLMCA vehicle builds such as this were documented in Special Production Orders (SPO's)

detailing all the factory changes and modifications down to the last nut and bolt.

The first Police-related SPO's were for the earlier MK 1 Cooper S that was mainly supplied to NSW Police, although Victoria Police also had two of these cars. They included SPO16 for lowered front seats, SPO25 for reversing lights and SPO26 for competition disk brake pads. The changes for the

Mk II S were documented in SPO41 and were far more extensive. They included performance improvements such as twin 1½" SU carbies with Lynx Ramflo air cleaners, a BMC Special Tuning camshaft, a modified cylinder head and distributor, plus a free-flow exhaust. A Smith's Impulse tachometer mounted in the parcel tray in front of the driver showed how hard the motor was working and Dunlop Aquajet tyres provided the necessary grip during a high-speed pursuit. The SPO41 changes included some upgrades that became standard items on later Mini models, items such as reversing lights and two-speed wipers. An interesting component of SPO41 was a red handbrake warning light on the instrument panel activated by a fabricated switch mechanism on the handbrake bracket that alerted the driver if he tried to take off with the hand-brake still engaged.

Cars built to SPO41 were taken from the BLMCA factory to the NSW Government Motor garage in Glebe where they were fitted out with Police items before delivery to the hosting Police station. In addition to the driving lights, windshield and sunscreen mentioned earlier there was usually a steel sump guard to protect the vulnerable alloy sump, a two-way radio, siren, spotlight, fire extinguisher and magnetic-based blue flashing light. A set of reflective warning triangles, fire axe and pinch bar were housed in the boot.

When the Mini Clubman was released in 1971 and the Clubman GT replaced the Cooper S the Police

modifications continued and were documented in SPO28. By this time the Mini was nearing the end of its life as a Police pursuit vehicle as larger and more powerful cars from other manufacturers took over. It's difficult to know how many Police Minis were produced overall because most of the records have been lost. Using Police annual reports and BLMCA press releases as a guide the estimate would be

around 350 MK 1's and 650 MK II's delivered to NSW Police, a total of around 1,000 cars. After 3 months or 30,000 miles the vehicles had their Police items removed and they were sold to the public. How many remain on the road today is anybody's guess.

A number of the NSW Police officers who drove these cars have relayed fascinating stories about their days behind the wheel of the amazing Cooper S scaring the daylight out of unsuspecting motorists and interstate truckies. Many say it is the pursuit car that brings back the fondest memories of their time in the STP.

An excellent 17 page article on Police Minis in Australia was authored by Craig Watson and published in Issue 11 of The Mini Experience magazine. Back issues are still available from www.miniexperience.com.au

Can you help?

The author of this article, a member of the Heritage Group is researching and documenting the history of Police Minis in Australia as he restores an ex-NSW Police STP Cooper S MK II that was built to SPO41 specifications in 1970. He is very keen to hear from anyone who has any knowledge of BLMCA's supply of vehicles to Australian Police, including photographs, documents covering the SPO's or just memories of the design and build processes.



Doug Jenkins

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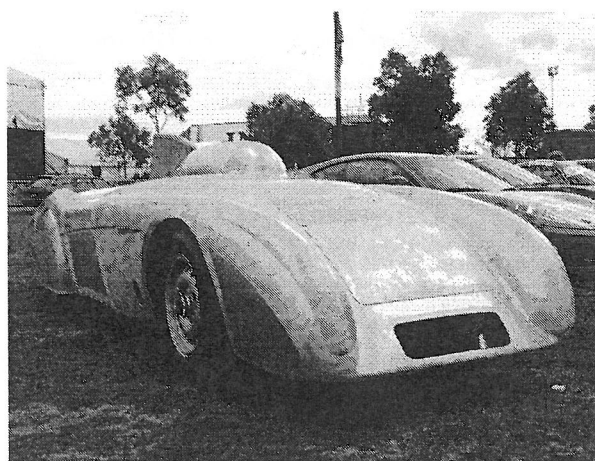
Motor Sport Update (April)

The Festival of Sporting cars run by Charles Jardine, held the second Easter Bathurst Race meeting recently and again it was a great success. At lunch time on both the Saturday and Sunday the organizers arranged a three lap event with a Le Mans start for cars of a type raced at the Sarthe. Jaguars D,C type and Lister lead the field followed by Austin Healeys, a TR3, GT40's and a Lenham Sprite and Joe Armour's Le Mans Sprite which I thought was the most desirable car there being the only one in the field to have actually raced at Le Mans finishing a commendable 15th in 1967 and 1968. An indication of how motor racing improved the breed is seen in the Austin Healey 100/S. 50 examples of the specially built 100/S cars were made at Donald Healeys Warwick factory. These cars in 1954 had disc brakes, a lighter body than the standard cars and a special engine derived from the Austin Healey 2.7 litre four cylinder motor. A special head (alloy) was designed by Westlakes allowing for a four port design. The blocks had to be specially cast as the new cylinder head required a different head stud arrangement and for only 50 cars the development cost must have been enormous so each car was heavily subsidized by Austin as the cars would have cost at least as much as an Aston Martin DB3S to make, yet were almost half the price. These cars were enormously successful coming 3rd at Sebring and scoring victories all over the world (last year a 100/S won the feature event at Goodwood). Most people would think that these special cars were an extravagance on the part of Austin but it did not end there as special cars were built for the Utah record attempts - one based on the 100/S but with a cast iron version of the special head (Healey was not confident that alloy would be durable enough) and a special streamliner version with extended nose and tail. After their amazing success, the cars were destroyed owing to

salt corrosion but Melbourne based Austin Healey 100/S restorer, Steve Pike, is reconstructing these cars using genuine parts for a Swiss client who intends to reinact the Bonneville records in September. The cars were on display at the Philip Island Historic Race meeting last month.

But the cost of the development of the Westlake design was not wasted by Austin as it found its way on to the Austin Princess engine which was a six cylinder version of the Austin Healey engine with the same bore and stroke (one of the longest stroke car engines of post war production designs).

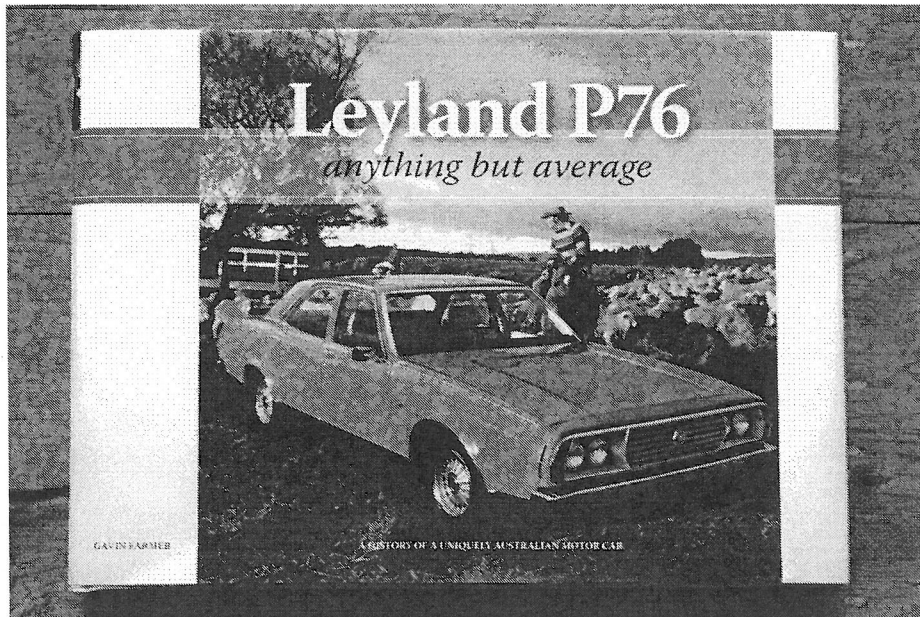
Coincidentally I was talking to Doug Campbell (of Campbell's BMC of Bankstown) at the NRMA Motorfest on Australia Day. He had his beautiful DS5 Austin Princess on display and asked him what happened to the two tone brown Austin Princess BMC 123 used at Zetland to transport dignitaries to and from the factory. He said it has disappeared yet there is a similarly painted model in Sydney. The last time I saw BMC 123 was in Haymarket about 1978 - but where is it now. It was fitted with a similar engine as fitted to the Jensen 541R - A rare beast indeed.



(Rob Harrison)

Below is a Press Release from Gavin Farmer on his new book, *Leyland P76: Anything but Average*. This was intended to be published in the previous edition of the Newsletter, but had to be held over for space reasons.

PRESS RELEASE - DECEMBER 20, 2008



Ilinga Books is proud to announce the release of a new book on the iconic Australian car, the Leyland P76.

Authored by internationally published motoring writer and historian, Gavin Farmer, the new book titled *Leyland P76: Anything but Average* is an intriguing story of so many ifs-and-buts and a few might-have-beens but above all it is a story about an important saga in Australia's industrial history.

Included in the 224-page book are chapters covering:

- Early post-war history of Austin, Morris and BMC and the cars made pre-P76
- The search for a local identity
- The full design and development of the P76 including the collaboration with Adelaide company Castalloy Ltd in making the P76's aluminium alloy V8 engine
- The media release and public reaction
- The world's only Austin V8—a P76 prototype

- BMC's rally success and the P76 in competition, including John McCormack's F5000
- The saga of the Ilinga AF2 powered by the 4.4-litre aluminium alloy V8
- The P76 station wagon, Force 7 coupes and P82 replacement for the unloved Marina
- Numerous Appendixes with specifications, engine detail and production numbers

Leyland P76: Anything but Average will be available in two formats: standard hard bound edition at rrp \$85 (plus p&p) and a special leather-bound edition at rrp \$225 (plus p&p) that will be numbered and signed by the author and will undoubtedly become a collector's item in years to come. *Leyland P76: Anything but Average* can be purchased direct from Ilinga books -- ilingabooks@chariot.net.au or P.O. Box 323, Bridgewater, S.A. 5155, or ☎ 08 8339 3645 - or from a good motoring bookshop near you. Contact Gavin Farmer, author and publisher.

LEYLAND AUSTRALIA PLAQUE REMEMBRANCE DRIVEWAY, BASS HILL.

Does anyone have any recollections of the circumstances or the occasion of the installation of this plaque on the Remembrance Driveway at Bass Hill, N.S.W. This photograph of the plaque was sent to us by James Mentiplay of the W.A. P76 Club seeking some information on it. It was sent in by one of their members who spotted it by the roadside.

We enquired of Bankstown City Council Library Research Officer, Ms. Jenny Madden, who advised that there are a number of similar plaques on the Hume Highway in this area. This particular plaque, identified as Site No. 8, was dedicated in 1962. It is located in a park on the Sydney side of the junction of Hector Street and Hume Highway, Bass Hill. The Remembrance Driveway starts from Sydney at the Bridge and Loftus Street corner of Macquarie Place and finishes at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

It would appear therefore that as the installation of the Plaque preceded the merger with BMC by some seven years the original Leyland company sponsored this plaque.

(Roger Foy)

YOUR BMC LEYLAND AUSTRALIA HERITAGE GROUP TEAM

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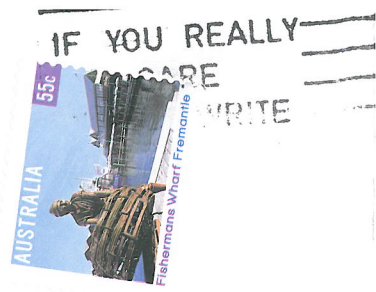
More information on the Remembrance Driveway can be found on the internet at
www.remembrancedriveway.org.au



HERITAGE GROUP DVDs

The Heritage Group DVDs covering the promotional films "The Carmakers" and "Horses to Horsepower", incorporating Austin Freeway Around Australia in 9-1/2 Days, are still available from Roger Foy (02) 9449 1524. Also still available is the CD which incorporate over 400 images of the Zetland Plant. Note that this product needs to be viewed through a computer with an imaging software program. Price of all items is \$20 each, Postage \$3. A limited number of Heritage Group windscreen stickers are still available, see January 2008 Newsletter. These are free to Heritage Group members; \$5 post-free to non-members. A phone call to Roger to secure.
 (Roger Foy)

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Membership Renewal Due June 2009