



Darlington Dipsticks

of Western Australia Inc.

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The Dipsticks' Rag



Run to Peter Brock's memorial, O'Brian Road, Gidgegannup, June 2020

Editor/Publisher: Bindy Datson

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Editor's Comment:

Thanks to this month's contributors who have made this magazine – there is a heap of interesting reading - keep up the good work and stay healthy 😊

Contributions:

Malcolm McNabb: Never ever did I think to myself “Mmm, yes, one day I must buy myself an Austin A40”.

To the contrary - as a youth, whenever I'd see an Austin A40 drive past I would think to myself “I really should throw a stone at that thing so it will get off the road”. I'm talking about the 1950's roly-poly shape A40. They seemed to be a dime-a-dozen on the roads of Perth during the 1960s.



Ah yes, Perth in the 1960s - when the roads brimmed with cars of style. I was growing into my teen years and starting to take a discerning interest in what a good car looked like. And my sophisticated taste (lol) drew an opinion that although the A40 looked okay up front, it's rear end made it look like a tired old English hound dog that had been given a hefty kick up the bum, but still refused to move. Yep, if ever there was an old man's car, it was surely a 1952 Austin A40 Devon.

1950's Austin A40 Devon... seen from a stone's throw

But hey, that was then. This is now - 2020, and Malcolm fast approaches old man status. So I have gone out and bought myself a 1952 Austin A40. But one that hasn't been kicked up the bum. I've acquired an Austin A40 Countryman. It's basically a van with factory-fitted side windows, rear seat, full headlining/cabin-trimming, and carpet... an Oz station wagon. Only a fraction of these reached our shores compared to the A40 sedan, which is probably why I'd never seen one before.

The box-body style reminds me very much of a Morris Minor van, but a little grown up. Just like me.

Cheers, Malcolm.



Reg Kelly: This is a true story from 1958. At that time, I worked for my father at the family tractor repair business in Mildura Victoria. Our workshop vehicle was a well-worn grubby FJ Holden Ute.

One morning I drove into town to purchase items from the local Auto Parts Suppliers. On returning to the street I put the key into the ignition (nobody bothered to lock their vehicles in those days) started the engine and reversed out of the angle parking space. I had the uneasy feeling that something was wrong, the clutch didn't shudder, the tappets didn't rattle, the gudgeon pins were silent and the Ute's interior was spotlessly clean, then to my horror I saw my Ute still parked at the curb!

I quickly swapped vehicles fearful my car theft would be noticed. I reversed back onto the highway in haste reassured by the familiar clutch shudder. (The well-worn ignition key must have acted as a skeleton key able to start the other FJ.) The lack of Holden ignition security did have its advantages.

Dad was an old-fashioned boss straight out of the Depression years, he believed the workshop Ute should be used strictly for business purposes only, this could be inconvenient whenever my 1938 Vauxhall sedan refused to rattle into life. Like all my young friends I was familiar with the trick of wrapping a sixpenny piece (known as a Zac) in tinfoil from a discarded cigarette packet and jamming it between the contacts of the unprotected ignition switch. In this way I was able to "borrow" the FJ and enjoyed many movies at the Drive-In theatre with my girlfriend of the day. Fortunately, Dad never discovered my clandestine use of his workshop vehicle. I have compassion for young Rakes of today, modern vehicles are ridiculously overprotected! Regards, Reg



Bob Shanks: Darlington Cars

3 of my Darlington Rileys (L to R) 1937 12/4 Riley 6-light Kestrel Sprite, 1937 Riley Special, 1948 Riley RMA



1937 12/4 Riley 6-light Kestrel Sprite. A very original car bought from a Riley mate in Boya and decidedly the most desirable car of all I've ever owned. When LeeNaa & I repatriated to Canada for a proposed business venture the Kestrel was reluctantly sold to the editor of the WA Riley Club newsletter who still retains ownership.

1937 15hp, 6cyl, dual-cockpit, Riley Special built in Perth in 1995. Dug up the chassis & mechanicals (no body) whilst on a contract in Singapore during the late 80's and later shipped the mostly-restored running chassis back to Perth when I was further deployed to Africa. Once back in Perth I designed the dual-cockpit roadster and in collaboration with WA's genius bodybuilder Cliff Byfield, we (70% Cliff and 30% Bob) over 5 ½ months, built a traditional coachworks/alloy body in Cliff's backyard in Bassendean. The finished car attracted a lot of attention and we took it to the Shannons Rally in Canberra but to be truthful, it was neither very purposeful nor comfortable. Eventually sold it into Victoria to fund the purchase of an antique aircraft.

1948 Riley RMA 1 ½ litre. One-owner car purchased in Sydney whilst on a round OZ m'home trip in 2011 and trucked back to Perth. Happy little car but like the Kestrel, reluctantly sold it in preparation for the Canadian pipedream venture and it now lives in Wooroloo.



1962 Volvo PV 544 (LHD). A 'one-owner' purchased unseen over the phone from Perth in California based on a verbal description from a wandering West Australian mate. Wife & I got off the plane in LA, picked up the car and spent the next five months doing a 27000km camping circumnavigation of North America (up the Pacific coast to Canada, across Canada, down the Atlantic coast to Gulf of Mexico, back to California then shipped the car home to Perth. Total trip maintenance expenses amounted to blowing a tyre in Canada, replacing a carb return spring in NY and a \$6 carwash bill to clean off W

Texas mud prior to shipping back to Oz. Probably the most useable and effective classic vehicle ever in my possession. However, with my ever-increasing aviation time demands it was ultimately sold due to lack of use and remains in Perth.



1962 Austin 1800 Ute. Swapped a vintage McDonald single cyl stationary engine and a Cooper 2-stand portable shearing plant (both restored) for 2ea 1800 utes and a sedan, all gutted, knackered and incomplete. Eventually built one sound ute body from the collection and later bought a running 1800 sedan as a source of interior trim. Ute project got stalled after final painting and before any assembly and still remains as such. Like the little Volvo, aircraft work took priority and the ute remains

a 'gunna' in my shed.



1946 Riley 1 ½ Litre RMA sedan.
Extracted from a 16-year hiatus as a rat's public toilet/maternity ward in a storage shed in Vic Park about 8 years ago. What was originally assumed to be a fairly quick and easy refurbishment has turned into an almost full home restoration. Pretty much all done now except for mounting the front mudguards and having carpet installed. Hopefully will go over the inspection pits at Transport before too many moons. Is reported by the Aust Riley Assoc to be the earliest post-war Riley known in Australia. Cheers, Bob



Paul Winter: Hi Bindy, Just thought I would put fingers to keyboard to add a little to the club rag from a different perspective.

As some of you may know I am a semi-retired heavy vehicle driver and on occasion, when needs must and someone is sick or hurt, I am called on to go out and about. This could be as simple as taking a trailer to the hook up yard at Northam or a little more complicated, as was last week, taking a triple road train to Port Headland.

So, to start at the beginning, Tuesday lunch time I get a call from the Ops Manager of Sykes Transport, conversation goes something like,

Ops: "G'Day Frosty how are you doing?"

Me: "All good thanks Mate"

Ops: "Got much on this week?"

Me: "Not a lot"

Ops: "Tim's hurt his back, fancy a trip?"

Me: "Where?"

Ops: "Port Headland, you need to be there by 10:00 Thursday"

Me: "Is it ready?"

Ops: “Will be by 18:00, you take your lead to Wubin and meet the Dog Runner with the other two and off you go.”

Me: “Ok, see you at 16:00”

See it’s really quite simple, I keep a bag packed with sleeping gear, washing kit and spare clothes also a 12-volt fridge for water and food, so not a lot of preparation needed.

On arrival at the yard I pack my gear into Tim’s truck, a Kenworth 909, and fuel up, was just on half full so only took around 1,000 litres.

Hook up to my lead trailer and dolly, check all the lights and tyres, have a chat with my Dog Runner and set off for Wubin.

The new North Link is fantastic, it cuts nearly 25 minutes off the journey to Wubin and the Road Train Hook Up Yard, so there I am waiting for the Dog Runner. When he doesn’t appear after about half an hour I call the office only to discover no one had told him the new road was open and the old road closed, he therefore had to follow the diversion and arrived a little later, not a good start!

After hooking up the triple which involves backing the dolly attached to the rear of the lead trailer under the middle trailer and doing a thorough check of all lights, tyres and hubs (62 tyres, 31 hubs) I set off to see how far I can get the first night. In the end I managed to find a space in a parking bay 40Ks short of Mount Magnet for a sleep at 02:45 and got my head down.



Kenworth 909 triple I took to PH, 53.5 meters long, 600 Horsepower

Wednesday morning I push on to Mount Magnet for some of the best Coffee and breakfast on the Great Northern, also buy a packed lunch so as not to be limited to servo’s for a feed. Then on to Meekatharra around 13:00, quick toilet break then onwards, the aim was to get to Port Headland Wednesday night so continued to press on, being sure to stay legal with regards to driving hours and breaks.

One of the challenges of keeping a good pace is overtaking, yes you can overtake a Road Train with a Road Train, it involves a great deal of trust in the other driver and the use of the UHF two way radio all trucks are fitted with, it usually involves a brief conversation.

“Northbound Toll copy?”

“Yeh Mate”

“How’s it looking”

“Clear for about 2 k’s bring it on I’ll back off if needed”

“Thanks mate on my way”

“You’re Done”

“Thanks mate”

See, really quite simple, it also works at night when the drivers have a really good knowledge of the road and know how long the straights are.

Fortunately, I have no issues (flat tyres etc) and arrive at Port Headland just after midnight, this gives me time to fuel the Truck ready for the return and have a good sleep ready for the following day.

The delivery point is just over the road from the BP Truck Stop so after a bit of a lie in I’m at their gate at 09:30 and have unloaded the wire coils by 11:00 and heading home again with the empty trailers.

Usually the story would end there, however having got just south of Meekatharra I receive a text message to call the office, finding a parking bay I call in:

Ops: “Where are you?”

Me: “Just south of Meekatharra”

Ops: “Fred’s broken down just south of Payne’s Find can you do a quick hitch and take his load for Port Headland up to Capricorn Roadhouse at Newman and meet Jes who has just unloaded in Port Headland do a change over there and then come back with his empties, Fred should be able to nurse his home with your empties”

Me: “Yep”

So about 20Ks south of Payne’s Find I find Fred at the side of the road with a loaded triple, we do a quick swop and off I go again North, arriving at Capricorn 20.30, I meet Jes, do another trailer swop and settle down for Friday night.

Saturday dawns a lovey day and I’m woken by the sound of Whistling Kites in the tree next to my Truck, after the usual checks, oil, water, tyres etc I set off for my first stop at Kumarina Roadhouse for breakfast which gives me the driving time to then get to Mount Magnet for lunch, as I won’t have the driving time to get all the way back from MM in one hit I decide to have a break about half way at Wubin then on home.

All goes well except for a few delays due to Oversize loads heading north, not little ones either these were Haul Packs and their bins so 8 Mtr’s wide which means finding a space to get completely off the road until they are past, you get plenty of warning of their approach on the UHF radio which is why I would recommend ALL drivers who are going to use the main highways to drive long distances to have a UHF

radio and have it turned on all the time, the advanced warning it gives you of what's on the road ahead is invaluable.

Yard to Port Headland:	1620
Port Headland to Payne's Find:	1243
Payne's Find to Capricorn:	784
Capricorn to Yard:	1163
K's for the week:	4810

This is just a little insight into a Truckie's week, and on this trip I was lucky, no tyre changes at night, in the rain, on the side of the road, no breakdowns or equipment failures. I don't do this every week, but a lot do, so please give them the due consideration they deserve, and remember if the trucks stop Australia stops!

Regards *Paul Winter*



Roger Perks: Motoring History

B.M. (Before Marriage)



1951 Morris Minor Low light soft top (my first car) its fastest speed was 60mph down any mine shaft; as a second year apprentice Fitter/welder/turner it needed all of my trade skills to keep running. It gave me the feeling of a Fred Flintstone car. One day, showing off the tremendous power of the side valve 920cc motor, I tore the rear front spring hanger from the floor. When I looked further into this, I noticed a fair amount of the floor was rusted away - over the holes had been placed Masonite - this took some fixing. I also pulled out the motor and gave it an overhaul, cord rings and all. Later that year I sold it to a wrecker and used my Dad's old car, a Standard 10, it went a bit quicker - 70mph.



1961 Mini 850, was very good low mileage car - a light grey with two red racing stripes over the center from front to back. I modified the engine with head work, Twin 1 ¼" SU's and full works extractor. Performance was crap down low however above 3000 revs it was great, this car was the delight of the Newcastle Police nearly every time I went to Town they stopped me to complain about the noise or something. One night on my way home from a bus trip (a Tec outing to Sydney) I was pulled over by the police who checked everything they could think of on the car. There was nothing wrong but when I stopped, I left the motor

running as the battery was not good. They made me shut it down, when it wouldn't start, I asked them if they would give me a push. They just laughed and got back into their car and watched me push start it down the road.

This car went all over NSW to the car racing in Sydney and Bathurst, it was great. Once at Bathurst doing donuts at the top of the mountain, I cracked the alloy sump/gearbox - out came all the oil. After a lot of enquiries we got a welder in Bathurst to weld it up but we couldn't drive home so they fixed a ridged tow bar from a shackle welded onto the Mini subframe to a mate that had a rear tow bar on his MGA (very unusual). He was an apprentice from work so my ride home was steering the Mini 1.80m back from bright taillights for 150m to Newcastle not much fun.



In 1965 we moved to Perth WA from Toronto (near Newcastle) NSW.

1961 Austin Healy Sprite 'Bug eye' This was another project car however a brilliant handling unit. Rebuilt the gearbox, steering and brakes (what brakes?). I had a problem keeping it clean - one day out racing a Zephyr in the wet to Yanchep I slid off the road, back wheel stuck in sand and over we went. The car rolled over so slowly - I was strapped in however my girlfriend at the time Marilyn (now my wife) spilt the chicken and salad all over the inside of the car.

Two guys from the Zephyr came running over and assisted us out of the car and we rolled it back on to the wheels. I got a screwdriver and file to prop the windscreen and hold the hood frame together. We pulled the hood back on and we were about to get going when our friends caught up and asked if we were ok. We were, and continued to our picnic at Yanchep, from that day on the car was known as the Chook car. Marilyn's parents never knew about this accident until we returned to WA after our stint in Victoria some 4-5 years later.



1951 Holden FX Race car (raced at Caversham WA 1967) my first race car - by this time I was a member of the WA Sporting CC. This car was so quick and a bit expensive for me to run (sports car class), had a grey motor prepared by Charlie West mechanic, 4 speed gearbox, finned drum brakes and too many mods to mention. It ran on 110 Racing fuel, a brilliant car - top speed at the end of Cavy straight was 125mph. I sold it back to its original owner McCartney for the same amount that I purchased it for, he had been pestering me

for a while as I needed to borrow his trailer to transport it to events and knew I was having problems getting it to the track so we discussed a deal and it changed hands back to its original owner.

Not sure if the above is the same car as had no photos. Number sounds familiar - lost my cams logbook so have no reference 😞



1960 MGA 1600 Mk 1 I regret not keeping this car, it was so good I can't say any more, I still had the desire to race so looked for another car to buy, a Mk1 Mini Cooper S came up for sale at Winterbottom's in Perth so we did a deal.

Interesting Cars Owned A.M. (After Marriage)



1965 Mini Cooper Mk1 Traded the A in on this 3-year-old car which I raced at Caversham, then we moved to Melbourne for 2 years. Looking for more racing options, we competed at Sandown, Winton Race Tracks and Templestowe Hillclimb. This car was our daily driver. The body and engine were upgraded to S specification and capacity increased to 1275. When sold the engine developed 118 bhp; 1310cc capacity Peter Manton Motors engine and a real flyer. Top speed along Sandown front straight of 130MPH in a Mini, at that speed it feels like your breaking the sound barrier whilst dragging your bum on the ground. Eventually we decided to look for another slightly bigger sporting car, as it was very

difficult to drive on the road so we traded it in on Cortina GT 1600 Mk2. I really wanted a XR GT - they had just been released by Ford in one colour only GT GOLD but couldn't afford it then. However if I had



sold the Cooper privately, as I found out later, we may have been able to as one of the car club guys Garry was prepared to pay \$1300 a lot in 69. Oh well, they all say that after the fact. The GT Falcon was \$2100 I think, not much when they are \$185k now.

1968 Cortina Mk2 1600 GT (raced at Templestowe Hillclimb Vic) then we came back to WA and it was our family hack, drove it to Sydney and back to see my parents in 71. Work was starting to dominate my life and I was transferred to Sydney for 2 years where the GT had more modifications. Marilyn

drove it till 1986 then I completely resprayed the car and rebuilt the engine, suspension and gearbox and our son drove it for 2 more years.



1963 Rover P5 Saloon Mk11 6cyl auto, the most comfortable car I have driven. As good as any RR, it could cruise all day at 110km. Big front bench seat, great disc brakes, Power steering, window spats and brilliant radio. I was offered a good price for it so sold it, needed work on the auto and rust repairs at that time and was too difficult for me to fix.



1975 Rover P6-3500s manual. These cars were developed in the UK for Police work and hopeful sales to the US. They were imported into WA in small numbers (there are a few fake ones here), cruising in the country you could comfortably sit on 130-140km top speed was about 205km. It had great brakes "Discs" all round and handling through its De Dion rear end was outstanding, and great power steering. When I bought it had gearbox problems, front input bearing failure and excessive shift play - I removed the box

and fitted a Toyo front nonstandard bearing (this bearing is a Rover special and was not available), layshaft bearings and rear bearing as well as all the Synchro's, seals and replaced all the gearchange crap plastic bearings with bronze bushing, sweetest shift ever.



1968 MGB Mk11 Roadster, Australian assembled, owned since 1989 entered lots of MGCCWA competition events until I had some gearbox problems, since then has been under restoration. I have stopped and started this resto several time through the years however now it is full steam ahead 75% of parts purchased, body welding 90% finished, body prep for painting early next year, providing no more problems and god willing.



2003 Mercedes Benz E320-W211 elegance our current cruising car. Got it for a very good price, have replaced engine and gearbox mountings, front LH control arm and ball joints and some interior resto. Without doubt the best car I have driven. A friend of mine has a 2007 MB AMG E63 and our car is better to drive. The ride is slightly harsh at lower speeds however it gets better over 100km. A lovely Grand Tourer - top speed 240km or so MB say.

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Tradespeople Listing

Name	Email	Phone number	Address	Function
Tavis - Vintage Classic and Custom	www.vintageclassicandcustom.com.au	0408 955 717	Shop 6 / 110 Briggs Street, Welshpool WA 6106	MG Specialist
Galloway Engines	www.gallowayengines.com.au	(08) 9531 1366	25 Baker St, Pinjarra WA 6208	Engine Reconditioning
Motteram Motors	www.motterammotors.com.au/	(08) 9250 3395	3 Elmsfield Road, Midvale WA 6065	Engine Reconditioning
D'Uva French Polishers	www.duvafrenchpolishers.com/	(08) 9274 4056	21 Elliott St, Midvale WA 6056	French Polisher
Peter - Holley Parts	www.holleycarbs.com.au	0455 602 618	49 Swan Street, Guildford	Carburettor restoration/parts
Stuart Pekin		0404 231 712	4 / 6 Bookham St Morley WA 6062.	Citroen mechanic
Kathy Arts - Badgemate	info@badgemate.com.au	(08) 9255 1577 Office, 0400 165 423 Mobile	4 May Street, Bellevue WA 6056	Badges
Alex		0411 550 250		Mobile Auto Electrician
Mike - Car Services and Electrics	Mva81555@bigpond.net.au	(08) 9274-6606	11 Bushby St, Bellevue WA 6056	Auto mechanic
Bruce Sharman	bruce@bygonerestorationsandspares.com	0408 889 279	PO BOX 1505 Toodyay, 6566	Car restorer, wiring looms
Tom Sharman	vintagetommy@icloud.com	0430 046 729		Car/bike restorer
Franc Fonte, FMJ Motors		(08) 9458 3433	U 8/35-39 Tate St, Bentley WA 6102	Jag Specialist