



## 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 2011*



**"THE LAST OF THE TRUE PRIVATEERS" - LEYLAND MARINA AT BATHURST 1974 - BY STEVE MAHER**

**HERITAGE GROUP AT MINI EXPERIENCE DAY - CHRIS ROGERS & ROGER FOY**

**BOOK STATUS REPORT - ROGER FOY**

## THE LAST OF THE TRUE PRIVATEERS

A common complaint heard today about V8 Supercars, in particular when referring to The Great Race, the Bathurst 1000, is that the event these days lacks the manufacturer variety of the "good old days". One of the favourite times of these "good old days" was the Group C era from 1973 to 1984; 12 years during which many of Australia's greatest muscle cars were conceived and raced. The Seventies in particular were a high point, where the transition from Series Production to Group C saw the likes of Brock and Moffat in hotted up Toranas and Falcons battling oversubscribed grids to conquer Mount Panorama. Racing alongside these hot rod road cars were a huge variety of makes and models from just about every car manufacturer or importer. During these glorious days Australia was home to four manufacturers. Holden, Ford, Chrysler and Leyland. The racing history of "The Big 3" is well documented but not so much Leyland Australia, then Australia's fourth largest manufacturer. The main reason for this is that, apart from those heady days when the Mini dominated the small car class in its earlier guise as BMC Australia, including that Outright win in 1966, very little else that was produced by the company made it to grace the hallowed ground that was once Bald Hills, Bathurst. Post 1966 the Mini continued to compete at Bathurst right up till 1976 when the last Australian built Leyland took part. This was a Mini Clubman GT which finished fourth in its class. On only 4 other occasions post 66 did a BMC\Leyland built car, other than a Mini, pound around the mountain. In 1967 a pair of Morris 1100Ss entered finishing fourth and sixth in class and in 68 a single Morris 1100S took part finishing and tenth in class. In 1969 a single Morris 1500 finished ninth in class and finally in 1974 a Leyland Marina 6 which finished sixth in class. This is the story of that Leyland Marina 6.

**THE TEAM.** To compete at Bathurst in any car in any year takes more than the efforts of two or three people and the Neil Byers/Peter Molesworth entered Leyland Marina 6 coupe was no different. But it was primarily the efforts of three individuals that led to the No.34 car taking its place on the grid on the morning of Sunday October 6, 1974.

**NEIL BYERS** was a club racer having his first competitive event in a Morris Minor he built himself. This old Morris was like no other as Neil had fitted an Austin 1800 engine in the front, sometimes running with a supercharger so he could run up a class. During this early time Neil met and became mates with a fellow St George Port Hacking Automobile Club member Peter Molesworth. So impressed was Molesworth with the Morris that he asked Neil to help him build a Ford Anglia with a Holden 179 in it. They shared the driving of this car for a while, until Molesworth moved into a Ford Cortina with all the Anglia's running gear. Neil continued running the Anglia, now with an Austin 1800 engine, and had his first taste of Mount Panorama at the Easter meet of 1973. After this Bathurst christening he decided he must return and as the Easter meet was not being run again the only time to conquer the mount was at the 1000 in October. So a plan was hatched.

**PETER MOLESWORTH** likewise was a club racer. He was bitten by the motor sport bug after attending some of the night meetings at Oran Park in the late Sixties. As mentioned before Neil Byers and Peter built their Holden 6 powered Ford Anglia 105E which they raced, together and separately, through the early Seventies. Peter eventually sold the Anglia to Neil and built his own Mark 1 Cortina with the same Holden 179 running gear. Peter, at the time a poker machine mechanic, knew little of the Bathurst Marina project until one day, two weeks prior to the start of the 1000, Peter got a call from Neil. "Hey Pete, want to co-drive for me at the Bathurst 1000 in a couple of weeks?" As you could imagine, a yes was not long in forthcoming. The only hitch was Peter had to tip in the sum of \$300 to top up the projects funds. This done, he was off to Bathurst to race in the 1000 as a rookie.

**NOEL DELFORCE's** earliest involvement in motor sport was as pit crew along with his brother, Russell, for Charlie Smith who raced a Morris Major and later an Austin Freeway during the Sixties in Appendix J. His family were good friends with the McPhee family in Wyong where he grew up and he recalls travelling to Warwick farm and other racetracks with Bruce McPhee and his green Holden FC. Noel started his apprenticeship as a fitter machinist with BMC Australia in 1964 and was involved with building the race engines for the top four class winning Mini Cooper Ss of 1967 and class winning Cooper S of 1968. In 1974 he also built the P76 V8 engines for the Evan Green/John Bryson World Cup Rally car and Greens Southern Cross Rally P76. During the late 60s BMC ceased manufacturing the Wolseley 24/80 and Noel bought a bare body shell from spare parts for \$100. This became his first racecar powered by the Austin Freeway Blue Streak 6 engine. It was later sold to Alan Springett to make way for the V8 Marina

sports sedan project. While all this was going on, he became friends with Noel and Peter. With his experience at race engineering, strong contacts at BMC (later Leyland) Australia and race experience he was naturally the best pick as co-driver for the Bathurst Marina. Noel likes to describe himself as a somewhat flamboyant race driver, which often got him into trouble with officialdom at tracks around NSW. Unfortunately he had a run in with ARDC Clerk of Course Fred Pearce one too many times. Fred was Clerk of Course at both Amaroo Park and Bathurst and during one of these confrontations Noel called Fred a "dickhead". Consequently Neil Byers entry for the 74 1000 was accepted on the condition that Noel was not driving. Enter Peter Molesworth. The people at Leyland who had helped pave the way for the Marina project were less than impressed to learn that "their man" Noel was not allowed to run and, in fact, had the project not been so far along it would have been scrapped, at least as far as Leyland's involvement was concerned.

**GETTING A START** in the 1000 in those days was no easy task as the grid was always oversubscribed and, as Neil and Peter were both "nobody" club racers who had never raced at Bathurst in the 1000 before, getting on the Entry List would be doubly hard. One thing in their favour was that the organisers, the Australian Racing Drivers Club, were always looking to increase the diversity of cars running in the event, a vastly different philosophy to today. This meant that entering something out of the norm might give them the edge they need to make the start. Neil looked at the Mini Clubman but decided against it as there were plenty of Morris Cooper Ss still racing at the time so Class A was out. Class B was for up to 2 litre cars and the Marina 1750 would not have been competitive against the Alfa GTVs and Twin Cam Escorts so the decision was made to enter Class C for cars between 2 and 3 litres. This class was dominated by Mazda RX3s and the Capri V6 was there as well, but was early in its development and still a bit fragile. Hence the decision to enter the Marina 6. Strangely racing a P76 V8 in Class A never crossed his mind.

**THE CAR** appeared on the official entry list as Morris Marina no.34, entered in Class C. It wasn't actually a Morris as this name disappeared the previous year when the company changed its name from British Leyland Motor Corporation Australia (BLMCA) to Leyland Australia reflecting the corporations' changes back in the UK. All cars made by Leyland Australia such as the Mini Clubman, Marina and P76 all carried the Leyland brand. Noel Delforce, who was originally set down to co-drive the Marina, was employed in the Experimental Department of Leyland Australia at the time. He used his contacts within Leyland to gain support for the Bathurst effort. No money was forthcoming but the team was supplied with a brand new Marina coupe shell and some spare parts. The vehicle chosen was the Leyland Marina 6 coupe, equipped with a 2.6 litre OHC 6 cylinder E series engine borrowed straight from the 6 cylinder P76, mated to a Borg Warner 3 speed floor shift gearbox similar to that used in the E38 Chargers. This racecar was actually a combination of two cars; one a written off Hertz rental car and the other the brand new shell. The write off was bought from a wrecker after it ended its life upside down in a creek at the bottom of a ravine in the Snowy Mountains. (Nothing is ever faster than a rental car © ). It even had footprints on the roof lining. The body shell, thanks to the inside help, was walked down the production line where extra welds and reinforcing brackets for body strength were added at the direction of the engineers from Experimental. All body sealing was deleted as was the sound deadening material and the body was given one coat of Chrystal White paint. The end result was a body shell some 80kg lighter than a production model. Some suspension components that were lying around were bolted on and the shell was pushed onto the trailer to go straight to the spray painters for some bright red "go fast" stripes.

The whole project was nearly over before it really got started on the trip from the Zetland factory. Neil forgot to tie the car down properly and it rolled off the trailer as they were going along the main street of Marrickville. Luckily the car came to a stop without hitting anything and so, with the help of some willing bystanders seconded from a nearby pub, the car was reloaded onto the trailer and off to the painters. It was masked and painted that night, arriving at the Byers residence in the early hours of the morning where assembly began.

The engine build was handled by Noel Delforce who hand picked an engine block, crankshaft, rods, pistons, head etc straight from the factory floor and built a blueprinted and balanced race engine. As the block left the factory with no engine numbers stamped on it Neil contacted Leyland to allocate them one, since it was needed for the CAMS logbook. Later this was to become quite a headache. The rules for Group C at the time only allowed for a change of carburettor but a standard inlet and exhaust manifold, a 2inch SU carby replaced the standard 1 ¾ inch and a straight through exhaust fitted exiting just in front of the rear wheels. In hindsight, Delforce admits, they may have been better off sticking with the stock carby. The gearbox and rear end were taken straight from the wreck as was all the interior trim and wiring while the front torsion bars and lever arm shocks were courtesy of the Leyland

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Experimental Department. The torsion bars were thicker, the shocks were valved heavier and the rear springs and shocks were stock apart from having the springs lowered. The only modification made was the addition of a Panhard rod. There was no rear sway bar fitted. Selbys Suspension looked after making up a front sway bar, reset the rear springs and made the Panhard rod. Bond Roll Bars built and fitted the alloy roll cage. Tyres were racing slicks from Goodyear on 13x7 inch widened steel rims for the dry but there weren't any special hand grooved wet weather tyres, just a set of Olympic Reflex 13x6 inch radial street tyres on stock Marina 13x5 ½ inch rims. Brakes were stock except for using the Hardie Ferodo 1103 material disc pads on the front. These brake pads and shoes lasted the whole race.

The original fuel tank was considered to be too small for a long distance race so a change was looked at. The maximum size allowed was 120 litres and had to be a bladder type tank or a proper foam filled racing tank to prevent leakage in an accident. Proper race tanks can be very expensive so Byers had the idea that the aircraft industry might be the answer. The aircraft industry were considered leaders in bladder type fuel tank technology so he put a call through to some Bankstown Airport based small aircraft maintenance companies and came up with a fibreglass bladder type fuel tank out of a Cessna light plane. This tank was then mounted to a frame in the boot held down with a couple of seat belts. It was later discovered that the tank capacity was some 40 litres over size but nothing was said and no one checked it so that's how it ran the race.

During final checks of the car after it was built, Neil discovered that with the wider wheels it was ½ inch over width in front track. The wheels were measured and found to be okay, which meant that something was wrong in the front-end geometry. He went around to nearby Leyland dealer and measured the track of some Marina 6s that were on the lot. All proved to be the same as the race car so it seemed that during the homologation process, Leyland made a mistake with the front track figures supplied to CAMS. Although this was interesting to know it wasn't going to be helpful if the car was checked by scrutineers and found to be different to the homologation papers. Getting the homologation papers changed was going to take too long so another fix was required. Byers went to Leyland and was given three new lower control arm sets with no fulcrum link pin mounting holes drilled. These were redrilled to bring the track specs back to what was homologated. Two sets were used on the racecar and one set was given to the local Bathurst Leyland Dealer, Gurdon Motors, with the instructions that if anyone from CAMS asked to check the specs of a Marina lower control arm, this was the one to check. Fortunately, it never was, and the redrilled arm was never picked up from the dealer. A day or so before leaving for Bathurst the team went to Oran Park for a shake down test. They found the car went well but was way down on horsepower, which Delforce couldn't explain. They also played with steering alignment to find the best set up. To change camber alignment on a Marina you raise or lower the front ride height. They found that the best setup was about 20 mm lower than the minimum ride height required by the regulations. An interesting conundrum....

And so it was off to Bathurst, two drivers with no 1000 experience and a model of car that had never been circuit raced anywhere in the world let alone over a 1000km distance. The cost of the project? From nothing to standing on the grid at the start of the 1974 Hardie Ferodo 1000 - \$2500.

**THE RACE** was foremost in the minds of the team when they turned up at Bathurst for scrutineering. Rain had been heavy in and around Bathurst in the days leading up to race weekend, which turned the pits into a mud bath. The best way to get around the paddock area behind pit lane was to wait for a car to pass you heading in the same direction as you were going and step into the tyre tracks, which had squeezed the excess water and mud away leaving you with a semi firm place to walk.

The car was still being finished off, but it sailed through scrutineering with no problems. It was noted with some humour though that Byers had taped a Bathurst Tourist map of Mount Panorama to the dashboard. The delays in putting the final touches to the car meant that both Byers and Molesworth only got one practice session each to qualify themselves and the car for the start. The second session was in pouring rain. They qualified 59<sup>th</sup> out of 60 starters, beating only a Class A Alfa Junior. Not an inspiring start but at least they were there. The one problem they couldn't solve was the lack of horsepower and it was suggested that they should use a mobile dyno at the track to try and fine-tune the engine to recover the missing horsepower. Unfortunately the team didn't have a selection of 2inch SU needles and springs to change the mixture and tune the carby in so that's the way it stayed. During practice

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they noticed that the fuel consumption was inexplicably high but put it down to the fact they were running at full throttle so much due to the lack of horsepower it must have been drinking fuel at a much higher rate.

The silver Mazda RX3 no. 31 of Bernie Haehnle and Geoff Brabham set the Class C pole with a time of 2m 51.7s just ahead of RX3 no. 30 of Tony Farrell and Brian Reed who did a 2m 51.9s. Gary Cooke and Bob Beasley made it a Mazda RX3 trifecta. Their time was in the high 2m 52s. Bo Seton and Don Smith driving a Holden Torana GTR were next best on 2m 53.8s. Stewart McLeod and Doug Whiteford in the factory 240K managed a best of 2m 55.7s. The Marina was just over 3 minutes.

Sunday morning, race day, dawned as cool and overcast with forecasts of heavy rain during the day. The no.34 Leyland Marina was pushed, tanks full, from the dummy grid to its grid position, around Murrays Corner and up Conrod Straight. On the dummy grid a flag marshal came up and asked them if the message from the day before during practice had been passed on. It had not. Flag marshals over the top of the mountain had noticed that the Marina was spewing out fuel. A quick rerouting of the fuel tank breather hose fixed the problem. The only bright spot was the teams Grid Girls, the four wives/girl friends of Byers, Molesworth, Delforce and team member Jeff Hardy. Resplendent in red mini skirts and tight white tops, they looked every bit the part, after all, this was the sexy seventies. The Marina had passed through scrutineering at its regulation ride height but whilst sitting on the grid one of the team mechanics slipped under the car with a ratchet and socket to "check something". As he was checking he 'accidentally' managed to wind down the ride height 20 mm to set the front camber angle to the ideal setting. Post race checking would be explained as torsion bars sagging during the race. Starting the race from this far back is an interesting exercise. The driver can't see the starter's flag so the organisers put a couple of relay starters down the grid, when the starter drops his flag the others do the same. Invariably though when you are 30 rows back from the start line your speed and urgency leaving your starting position is a little more leisurely. Just imagine what happens at traffic lights in the city.

The flag dropped and some five seconds later they were away. From the start Farrell led away Haehnle, Seton, Whiteford, Cooke, Geoff Perry in the BMW, Nick Louis in a Mazda RX3, Roger Bonhomme in a GTR Torana, the Capri V6 of Geoff Newton...and Byers in the Marina. Neil was driving the first stint and was settling in well when on lap three the Marina went sailing down the escape road at Hell Corner, the brake pedal on the floor. Byers slowed the car enough to handbrake turn, pump the pedal to find brakes again and return to the fray, arriving in the pits to have the brakes checked at the end of that lap. Everything seemed OK so he was sent back out. The brakes didn't play up again for the whole race. From here on the race settled into a regular pattern for them. Trouble struck early for the Cooke Mazda on Lap 6 in with engine problems. This still left it as a Mazda 1-2-3 leading Whitefords 240K. Seton had an early stop but was soon out hauling in the leading bunch. The Capri lasted till Lap 20 when Newton retired it with shot bearings and Perry retired the BMW with no brakes. Cooke was still battling on in his troublesome RX3. Part way through Neil's stint he saw one of his crew waving something at him from pit lane. Next lap he came into the pits to find out it was nothing more than an icecream! The Marina struggled up and down the mountain but flew across the top. Flat out the best they could get down Conrod was around 120mph. The top Mini Cooper Ss would do 112mph so they were only marginally faster than cars with half the engine capacity. Neil recalls at one point moving over to let Brocky through in his L34 Torana going across Skyline and followed him down through the Esses and Dipper sticking to his rear bumper like glue. Looking through the back window of the Torana as they exited The Dipper he saw Brocky do a double take in the rear vision mirror not believing the Marina was still there. Farrell relinquished the lead to Haehnle on Lap 49 when he pitted for fuel & driver change to Reed who slotted into 2nd ahead of Don Smith - GTR and Whiteford in the 240K. Reed took back the lead on Lap 54 when Haehnle pitted for fuel and Brabham. Lap 56 saw the retirement of the Seton/Smith GTR with bent valves. Such was the size of the 140 odd litre fuel tank that refuelling only needed doing at driver changes and so around lap 50 Byers pulled into the pits to refuel and change drivers.

Molesworth jumps in while the crew are busy checking everything and refuelling. The refuelling caused a bit of a stir amongst some officials. The team had no money to buy the fancy aluminium fuel churns being used by the big teams so they came up with another idea. They modified the lids on their 20 litre fuel drums by putting lips on them so they could push on a piece a large diameter plastic hose and then when they were lifted up to pour the fuel in the fuel tank another crew member smashed a hole in the bottom of the drum with an alloy chipping hammer allowing air to enter

and the fuel to drain very fast. Try getting away with that today! Beasley arrived in the pits in the Cooke Mazda with bent bodywork. Cooke attacked the front guard with an axe to make tyre clearance.

Just after 2pm Delforce called Peter in for wet tyres, soon after Whiteford brought the Datsun in. Peter said it was pouring on top of the mountain and cars were spearing off everywhere. They topped up the fuel and changed to the "wet weather" tyres and Peter floored it out of the pits. Next time round he remembers seeing the pits chock-a-block with racecars changing to wets. It looked like a Pitt Street bus stop on a wet Friday afternoon. Whiteford settled into second place just over a lap behind Farrell, Haehnle was third. Peter pressed on in the heavy rain. The speed variable between them and the rest of the field was greatly reduced but it was still like driving on a skating rink. During this time Molesworth spun at least once down through the Dipper without hitting anything or being hit but there were many close calls. Peter recalls seeing many cars crashed off the track or limping back to the pits with damage. Whiteford pressed on hard eventually unlapping himself and proceeded to pull in Farrell at about 10 seconds a lap in the pouring rain. Colin Bond in the other HDT L34 also had a close call with the Marina. Both Molesworth and Bond were racing down Conrod with Bond closing at a very fast rate. Bond slipped past but was immediately on the brakes to pull up for Murrays. Molesworth was on the inside and due to his slower top speed could brake much later so he dived down the inside out braking Bond onto Pit Straight. This clearly didn't impress CB as when he came alongside to pass the Marina on Pit Straight he could see the glaring eyes of a clearly unimpressed Bond. From then on Molesworth remembers getting a dirty look from Bond every time he lapped him. Driving in the wet presents it's own set of challenges but racing at Mt Panorama in pouring rain can be life threatening. One of the biggest problems is a fogged up windscreen and in 1974 there were few solutions to this problem. The Molesworth solution was to slacken off the harness and lean out the open drivers window so as to follow the white lines down the right side of the track. This solution was particularly useful going down Conrod. Unfortunately it also put you on the fast line so all you could hope for was that the faster cars would see you and move to the left. Just before Molesworth jumped on the brakes at the end of Conrod he would check his mirror and if he couldn't see the glare of a set of headlights he would move left to take Murrays and the only time you knew you were being passed was when you heard the exhaust and saw the car as it passed you, no way of seeing them come up on you beforehand with no headlights on. Whiteford got to within 55 seconds of the lead car when he had to pit to change a flat and again chased after Farrell to finish 47 seconds down in second place. Molesworth later changed back to Byers and racing slicks and they raced on to finish 125 laps.



The final results show the no. 30 Farrell/Reed Mazda RX3 in first with no. 28 Stewart/Whiteford in the 240K second, both on 152 laps. The no. 31 Haehnle/Brabham RX3 finished third, one lap down with the no.35 Brewster/Louis RX3 fourth on 149 laps. On 146 laps was the fifth placed no. 27 Bonhomme/Watson Torana GTR and the no. 34 Byers/Molesworth Marina finished sixth in Class on 125 laps.

Sadly, as is too often the case in motor sport, the end result is decided in the courtroom, not on the racetrack. Protests were lodged against

the Mazda RX3s over the eligibility of their rear axles. The Mazdas had apparently homologated a limited slip diff but to fit the LSD, shorter or different axles also needed to be fitted and these weren't homologated. This would have left the Stewart/Whitford 240K as winner followed by the Bonhomme/Watson Torana and the Marina third. However, the protest was dismissed and the Marina was back to sixth. Byers and Molesworth were happy just to have finished. Where they finished really didn't matter. As privateers it was just the experience that counted. The reason for the unaccountable brake failure on lap 3 became apparent at post race scrutineering. When the team went to pick up the car there was a brake fluid puddle next to the right rear wheel. Oddly it had failed and resealed itself during the race but wouldn't hold pressure sitting overnight.

After the race the car was taken to R.M.Campbells, the Leyland Dealer in Bankstown, for displaying. Oddly Neil forgot to tie the Marina down on the trailer properly - again - and once more it rolled off without hitting anything. How lucky can one car get? A couple of weeks after the 1000 Neil was entered into a 6 hour relay race at Oran Park but as his engine had been sealed by the CAMS scrutineers pending the outcome of the protests over the Mazdas. He had to get a CAMS scrutineer to come over and unseal the engine while they serviced it and reseal it prior to going to Oran Park.

The car was eventually taken to Lynx Engineering where some tuning on the dyno brought it from 64 rear wheel horsepower to 110 rear wheel horsepower. They really could have used those extra ponies up and down the mountain. Early in 1975 Neil decided to get the Marina registered so it could be used as his wife's shopping car. This was where the headache with the engine numbers allocated by Leyland started. The car sailed through inspection with no problems but 6 months later Neil got a visit from the Police. Apparently Leyland had inadvertently given Neil an engine number that had already been allocated to a regular production car so there were two six cylinder Marinas with the same engine number. Of course this wouldn't do, so after a careful explanation and double-checking with Leyland Australia the Police issued the engine with its own NSW engine number. During 1975 Neil ran the Marina in the Sun 7 under 3 litre Touring Car Series at Amaroo Park. Although big results were not forthcoming, Neil had a great time racing with the big boys in his class. For a few years on from here the Marina was used as a club racecar and shopping car until rust became a problem in the body. As there was no body sealing used when building the body and only one coat of white paint moisture got into places it normally never would and resulted in the car being put out to pasture.

Where is it today? Peter Molesworth eventually ended up with the car and it is currently undergoing a complete restoration to its Bathurst 1974 spec. Can't wait to see it at the 2010 Australian Muscle Car Masters.

Today Neil Byers still races production cars. His current mount is a Mitsubishi 380 and he returned to Bathurst in 2009 for the first time as a competitor since the 74 1000 to race the 380. Peter isn't actively involved in motor sport at present but the return of the Bathurst Marina may see him and Neil enter in some Group C races. Noel Delforce is semi retired in the NSW Hunter Valley and is restoring a Leyland P76 Targa Florio.

Thanks to Chevron Publishing for details of the 1974 Hardie Ferodo 1000 from *The Great Race*.

Steve Maher, 2010

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## HERITAGE GROUP DVDs

Members will be pleased to know that the Heritage Group DVDs incorporating three of the Company's promotional films, "The Carmakers", "Horses to Horsepower", and "Austin Freeway Around Australia in 9½ Days" are still selling steadily. The latter two films are incorporated in the one DVD. Price is \$20 each plus postage \$3, from Roger Foy (02) 9449 1524. **Roger Foy**

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## HERITAGE GROUP AT MINI EXPERIENCE DAY

The Heritage Group manned a stall at the gathering organised by Craig Watson, proprietor and editor of "The Mini Experience" magazine, held at the Zetland factory site on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> February, 2011, to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> birthday of Mini production in Australia and dubbed "The Homecoming"

Some 260 Minis attended, including a couple from as far away as Western Australia. Craig Watson drove from Melbourne in his Mini Van, towing a trailer made from (guess) a Mini van. His wife Jayne drove up in a Moke towing a modern trailer. She said she preferred the in-built air conditioning rather than driving the Mini van. Both trailers were packed with display and sale items for the Mini Experience stall.



The Heritage Group Gazebo with, from left, Chris Rogers (seated), John Lindsay, Terry Douglass, and an unidentified but interested visitor.



Roger Foy and I manned the heritage display, arriving in CEA 443, the prototype Austin Freeway. We were there very early and erected our shelter and display in the designated spot. The event took place in a cleared area, partly grassed, with as yet no buildings on it.

We were inundated by people talking and asking questions about the old plant site. The favourite question was "Where are we standing now?" which we found difficult to answer accurately because so much has changed. The only landmark still standing is the old Tote building which was not easily seen from our position. We were probably seen somewhere near the old Canteen site.

John Lindsay did a sterling job leading walking groups around the site, map in hand, trying to point out the position of the major factory buildings. These tours were so popular that John was exhausted by the end of the day.

A very original Morris 850 with the original owner, Mrs. Rae Whitcombe standing behind. Mrs. Whitcombe bought the car new, as a 19 y.o. girl, and has virtually used it every day since. Mrs.

Whitcombe is a past-President of the Mini Club of NSW.



We were similarly exhausted because there was no let-up from questioning Mini enthusiasts, so much so that we had trouble finding time for a cup of tea and lunch was a very hasty sandwich.

What struck us was that nobody had any concept of the size of the factory, and could not conceive that the factory stretched from Joynton Av. all the way to South Dowling St. and north to what was O'Dea Avenue, now built over. In that respect the publication of our forthcoming book which will contain a street map of the existing Landcom roadways laid over an

aerial photo of the old plant will tell the story much better.

We were photographed many times over by enthusiasts wanting to know about our employment, and very impressed by the reproductions of paintings of factory scenes which we had on display. We had copies of these for sale, but were unable to find time to unpack them let alone sell them. We did manage to sell a few Heritage Group memberships.

Roger Foy and Chris Rogers



## BOOK UPDATE

Roger Foy reports that the current status of the book is that the writing is now substantially complete, with only a few loose ends to tie up. A Publisher has been chosen, and I can also report that our application for financial support from the City of Sydney for the printing and publishing of the book has been successful with a very substantial sum of money being allocated. The effect of this will be that the book can now be produced to a higher standard than it might have been otherwise, and it will enable us to offer it at a lower price to our members and associates. To put this into effect, the associated contracts will be signed this week.

Technical Specifications of the book will be as follows:

Page size:	Approx. 216mm x 268mm (Landscape Format).
Extent:	240 pages + endpapers, Hard cover, Dust jacket.
Binding:	Section sewn, hardback, endpapered, jacketed, with head and tail bands.
Hard cover:	Full colour laminated over approx 2500 micron boards.
Jacket:	Full colour laminated.
Paper:	115 gsm matt art paper.

Colour printing: Available wherever required for images, on up to 104 pages, distributed widely through the book.

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