
THE "LIGHT SHAFT"

December 2020



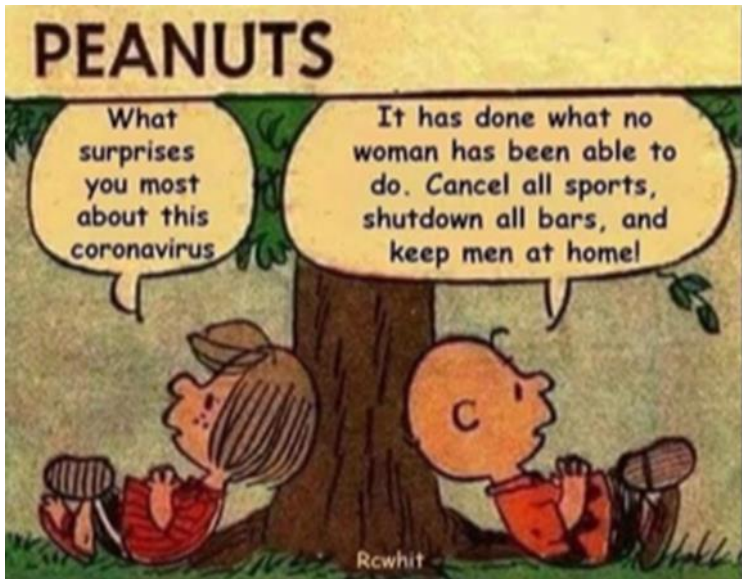
Bill Beetham's Austin Big 7 is FOR SALE, in Mackay,
Queensland Beautifully restored.

AUSTIN 7 CLUB INC. Reg No. A0003290N
P.O. BOX 462
MOORABBIN VIC 3189
www.austin7club.org





Tony John's Austin 7 and a standard sports— more of this tory to come next year





**Magazine of the Austin 7 Club Inc. In its 72nd year
Foundation Patron of the Club**

**Col. A C R Waite,(dec.) MC, OStJ, DL, JP, Freeman of the
City of London 1894—1991., Life member of the British Racing Drivers Club.
Winner of the first Australian Grand Prix.**

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

DECEMBER

- | | | | | |
|----|-----|---|---|---|
| 2 | Wed | 7 | A | M.G.M. On-line meeting |
| 5 | Sat | 7 | | Spares - Note change of hours - No BBQ |
| 13 | Sun | | | Year End Luncheon – Mulgrave CANCELLED |
| 13 | Sun | | | VSCC Two Wheel Brake Rally |
| 16 | Wed | 7 | A | Spares/Pudding in the Park/Awards Night |

2021

JANUARY

- | | | | | |
|----|-----|---|---|--------------------------------|
| 10 | Sun | | | Korumburra Swap Day |
| 20 | Wed | 7 | A | Picnic in the Park - NEW VENUE |

FEBRUARY

- | | | | | |
|---|-----|---|---|---------------|
| 3 | Wed | 7 | A | M.G.M./Spares |
|---|-----|---|---|---------------|

NOTE

***Spares Hours on 5 December 12:00 Noon to 3:00pm Spares
Hours on 16 December 4:00pm to 6:00pm sharp***

Mail Order Spares has resumed.

LIGHTSHAFT COPY CLOSING

Copy for Lightshaft **closes** late on

Saturday 16 January 2021.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

As we see this year out, hopefully we will have turned the corner and 2021 can start to open up, so we can all enjoy our club scene again.

At the time of writing this message we are hopeful of being able to have a Christmas Pudding in the Park social get together, see Ron Crellin's ad. In the new year we should be able to have our traditional Picnic in the Park, however note the change of venue in Robert Humphreys' article.

During the course of the year we will attempt to conduct as many events as possible, some old and some new. We will however require your support, either by attending and or organising.

2021 will be a year that defines our club and will require a concerted effort by all. 2022 will be upon us in no time and the Austin 7 National Rally, celebrating 100 years of the "7" This event will reflect on our club and we must do our club proud. Please ensure that you do your bit to make this a memorable event, as there is only one chance.

In closing, the committee and I wish you all a safe and Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. To those members who have health issues we especially wish you all the every best and trust that the new year brings improvement in your health.

Keep well and in touch with fellow members.

Len Kerwood.

DID YOU THROW OUT THE MAILER?

It had your Renewal of membership form attached.

Please read the Renewal Form carefully and correct any entries that are incorrect and PLEASE add your email address if there isn't one.

Editor's Ramblings

For those members who only receive a printed copy of the Lightshaft, if you enjoy reading about your favoured car, think seriously about learning to establish skills on your electronic machines.

There is a huge raft of knowledge simply available by looking at our Club's website, but also there are available all the newsletters from the other Australian clubs. That then opens the vista of all those large British Austin 7 Clubs that have a huge amount of technical hints and items for sale.

In my other role, shared with Janne, of supplying Mail Order Spares, I am always advising new Austin Seveners to obtain the electronic copies, FREE, of both the an original Austin Motor Company Handbook and List of Spare Parts for your model, from the Austin Seven Clubs Association, an invaluable resource. The Association also provides links to information that you will not readily find elsewhere.

The other argument for honing your computer skills is a few simple facts that are dramatically affecting the effectiveness of the mailed Lightshaft, and may affect it more in the future, being:-

- ⇒ Due to our degraded postal "service", and our reduced postal deliveries, it is doubtful that we will ever be able to return to a timely monthly delivery of the Lightshaft.
- ⇒ The mailed Lightshaft, due to cost constraints, is printed in B&W on internal pages, and
- ⇒ Is, due to mailing cost constraints, confined to a smaller magazine that could be produced, if no printing and mailing cost were an issue.

Editor's Rantings

It is also inevitable that, in the future, the rising cost of printing and mailing the Lightshaft will be reflected in the Club Membership fee structure.

GET ACQUAINTED WITH THE INTERNET, IT HAS HUGE ADVANTAGES

FOOTNOTE For all those who love their books, and I am one, the internet also opens up a huge shopping site for that favoured volume, either new or second-hand of yet another Austin 7 book.

MORE THOUGHTS ON THE COVID19 LOCKDOWN

During the COVID19 lockdown many people have trolled the internet, or watched wretched TV Series, to while away the time usually spent at the coffee shop (or driving their Austin 7, or cleaning up its oil drips). Janne and I have watched our fair share of “Antique Roadshow”, where quite often a reference will be made about an ancient relic. Often a comment will be made, “No-one has ever been able to work out how these ancient people manufactured this material”

We were watching a show a while ago that referred to ancient Phoenicians (or the like) who made concrete that has lasted for centuries, and is of superior quality to any concrete produced today, and yet, with all our technical advancement, modern science has been unable to replicate anything of similar quality.

Sure a lot of it was probably “trial and error”.

Last month I mentioned a Bill Bryson book, and this month reading his “Notes from a Small Island”, I read:-

Among the many thousands of things I have never been able to understand is, one in particular stands out. That is the question of who was the first person who stood by a pile of sand and said, 'You know, I bet if we took some of this and mixed it with a little potash, and heated it, we could make a material that would be solid and transparent. We could call it glass.' Call me obtuse, you could stand me on a beach to the end of time and never would it occur to me to try to make it into windows.

I think that there is a lesson to be learned - If you are doing a job, or modification, on your Austin 7, remember that Lord Austin or his minions, or one of the racing boys, have done this before. They have made many errors, which you can learn from, and, more importantly, have found a suitable solution. Quite often their solution is not quite evident without reference to wiser heads, or to a lot of reading of old magazines or books.

But you can reliably bet on it - it's been done before, AND, it's either a TRIAL or an ERROR.

It saves pain and money to avoid repeating the error.

Rob.H.



COMING EVENTS

Monthly General Meeting - Wednesday 2 December 2020

Hope you have upgraded your computer with a camera so you can come to the on-line MGM.

We are AGAIN having the MGM via ZOOM, in the cosiness of your home.

If we do not have your email address, please advise austin7club.events@gmail.com - so that we can send you a ZOOM invite to the meeting.

The meeting will commence at 8:00pm.

Visitors very welcome.

You are providing the supper - yum yum

Spares will not be open.

PS It seems very likely that after the Clubrooms re-opens, we will still have MGM Zoom attendees, for those who are precluded from coming to the meeting in-person - you'll appear on the big screen at the Clubrooms.

SPARES (but no BBQ) - Saturday 5 December 2020

Note the amended hours 12:00 Noon to 3:00pm

More Photos and news on the website

<http://www.austin7club.org/>

And you can check for up-to-date information on events and news.

COMING EVENTS

THE 2020 VSCC TWO WHEEL BRAKE RALLY IS ON

KOVID KAPERS

VSCC TWO WHEEL BRAKE RALLY

The Austin 7 Club has been invited to join this event conducted by the VSCC.

Entry Fee:-

Four Wheel Braked Vehicles - \$10



SUNDAY 13TH DECEMBER 2020

Enjoy a refreshing drive to follow some of the Varra River's tributaries that were formerly used as sewers.

**EARLY START
PICNIC FINISH**

to avoid the traffic & heat

BYO near the Fairfield Infectious Diseases Hospital

CONTAGIOUSLY SIMPLE NAVIGATION

Assemble at 07.30am

Dallas Brooks Drive, Domain, Melbourne

Last Car Out 08.00am

SPARES - Wednesday 16 December 2020

Note the shorter hours 4:00pm to 6:00pm

To comply with COVID requirements and being fair to others, Graeme Logan has asked that you come to Spares with a list prepared beforehand, to speed up being served, and enable compliance with our COVIDSafe Plan.

COMING EVENTS

"PUDDIN' IN THE PARK"



Coming out of COVID

Covid precautions will be in place depending on the current Victorian Government directions on sanitisation, group sizes and social distancing

Plum Pudding/HAS/Awards Night

Le Page Park

Argus Street Cheltenham

Wednesday 16th December 2020

Commencing at 6.30pm

We will try to keep this as normal as possible

PICNIC IN THE PARK - Wednesday 20 January 2021

NEW VENUE - NEW VENUE

The new venue is Kingston Heath Reserve (locally known as the 50 Acre), entry from Farm Rd, Cheltenham MELWAY Map 87F1 – on driveway to Ron Brownlees Hockey Pavilion, and Southern United Hockey Club (there is a sign on Farm Road).

This new venue is:-

- ◆ Still close to the A7 Clubrooms, allowing relocation if weather is inclement
- ◆ In a park with good parking that is paved
- ◆ In a park with multiple areas of tree shade
- ◆ Plenty of room to have a number of groups, but separated to potentially meet any COVID19 restrictions
- ◆ In a park with plenty of nice walks, a lake, and the Kingston Heath Botanic Gardens
- ◆ A good playground – but a bit remote, at 300 metres
- ◆ Good access
- ◆ Public toilets in adjacent pavilion
- ◆ Usually a quiet area of this park
- ◆ Room for extra cars out in Farm Rd.

Look it up on Google Maps - also have a look at the homes to the north of this end of Farm Rd. - wedged between Kingston Heath Golf Course and National Golf Course.

Early birds at about 5:45 pm.

There are usually lots of Austins at this event which is a great time to bring the family for a barbecue.

This is a good time to shake, or blow, the cobwebs out of your Austin ready for the New Year, and to also catch up with your friends after the COVID shutdown and Christmas. A quick jog around the oval might be in order for those who indulged too freely during the festive season.

BYO everything. BBQ supplied.

Rob. Humphreys - 9583 6316 0427 772 281

MEMBERSHIP REMINDER

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions are due for payment before 31 December.

You will have received your membership renewal, either attached to a mailed Lightshaft, or sent by email.

Please pay it early to reduce the workload on the Membership Secretary and others who help run the Club.

Membership Secretary

MEMBERSHIP REMINDER - SUBSCRIPTIONS

IS YOUR CLUB PERMIT VALID ?

Subscriptions are due for payment before 31 December.

If you have not paid your membership by 31 December you will be UNFINANCIAL in 2021, and thus not considered by the Club, to be a member., for the purpose of the CPS

Your Club Permit is subject to the condition:-

“ the permit holder must remain a member of an approved club”

If you fail to pay your membership before 31 December there are a number of risks:-

- Your permit will be invalid
- It is possible that you may need to re-apply for a Permit, with the attendant cost of Roadworthy etc.
- The Club Permit Officer will be required to report your membership status to VicRoads
- The Austin 7 Club’s authorization under the Scheme could be at risk
- The Club Permit Scheme may be at risk.

Club Permit Officer

COMING EVENTS

Begonia Rally - 2021 CANCELLED

Could you please advise your members that the Begonia Rally in Ballarat scheduled for February 2021 has been postponed, of course, because of the COVID pandemic.

The 50th Rally will now be held on **18th-20th February 2022**. Entry forms and Rally details for this milestone event will be sent out later next year.

Many thanks for your help

Nerene Backhouse, Begonia Rally Committee, 0427 348 060

Austin Seven Clubs Association

The Online Archive

Handbooks, Parts Books, Body Parts Book and lots more.

Just download it to your computer - all part of our membership of the Association.

More being constantly added

An original Parts Book, for your model is one of the most valuable resources, especially for remote members.

An original Handbook is also a handy reference.

100 years ago everyone owned a horse and only the rich had cars.

Today everyone has cars and only the rich own horses.

COMING EVENTS

AUSTIN 7 NATIONAL RALLY 2022

In the centre fold of the October Lightshaft is Newsletter No 1 about this exciting National event, for all Austin 7 enthusiasts, including Big 7s and Austin 7 derivatives.

It also comes with an EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FORM.

If you know of Austin 7 owners who are unlikely to receive news of the event, have a chat with them, and give their contact details to the Rally Sub-Committee, so that they can receive news about the event.

A copy of the Newsletter No 1 and the Expression of Interest is also available on the website.

THE VICTORIAN CLUB PERMIT SCHEME

*Owners of Austin 7 Club Club Permit vehicles **MUST** maintain financial membership at all times.*

Your Club Permit Officers are, our Membership Secretary Geoff Taylor (Russell Dickson in 2021) and Robert Humphreys.

Remember to plan ahead if you need a Club Permit application or renewal signed or issued. You will find more detail on the club permit scheme on the Web Site

<http://www.austin7club.org/>

COMING EVENTS



If you can help in some way to make our 2022 National Rally a great event, please contact the Rally Committee

Austin Seven

100 YEARS

WARRNAMBOOL National Rally 2022

We are excited
And you are invited!

National Rally
Saturday 9th April - Thursday 14th April

Celebrate 100 years of Austin Sevens
whilst exploring this beautiful part of Victoria
Come have a whale of a time in Warrnambool!

Enquiries: 2022rallyinfo@gmail.com

AUSTIN 7 NATIONAL RALLY 2022 SUB-COMMITTEE

Chair- Andrea Casabene, Peta Lee (Minutes), Graeme & Bev Logan, Tony Casabene, Russell Dickson, Greg Drummond, David & Judith Finn, Peter & Lesley White, Ron & Helen Crellin, Carole & Len Kerwood, Maria & Colin Cheesman, Robert Baudinette, Helen & Michael Shegog, Neil Rickard.

Editor's Note

Last month I published this photo in the Lightshaft, and promised more this month.

The Club has a twin overhead cam head on display in our Clubrooms - read on.



Was this man an Austin 7 legend

Thomas William(Bill) Conoulty

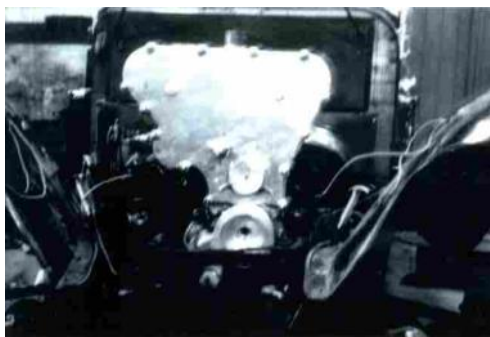
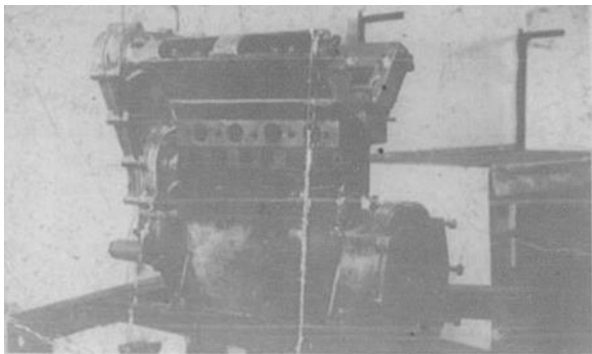
Thomas William (Bill) Conoulty Senior was born in Sydney, NSW, Australia in 1901 and attended Ultimo Technical College. He married and had three children. One son William (Bill) Conoulty Junior followed in his father's footsteps choosing engineering as his profession. Bill Conoulty passed away in 1961. Thanks to Bill Conoulty Junior, much of his father's early motoring history has been preserved.

William Conoulty Senior is best known for his involvement with building and racing Austin Sevens, motorcycle racing (Douglas Isle of Man) and NSW motor sport from the late 1920' to the late 1940's. He was the first man in NSW to achieve 100 mph on a motorcycle. He was an avid supporter of the controversial Maroubra speedway in the 1920' and early 1930's. Bill Conoulty



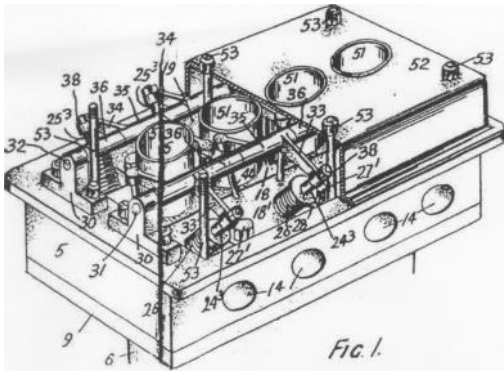
is also known for his design of the 'Musso' (also referred to as the 'Conoulty Special Austin Comet'), the 'Cushioned Power' Austin Seven head, an overhead valve conversion and an overhead cam conversion for the Austin Seven.

Contemporary photos of the Twin overhead cam cylinder head conversion

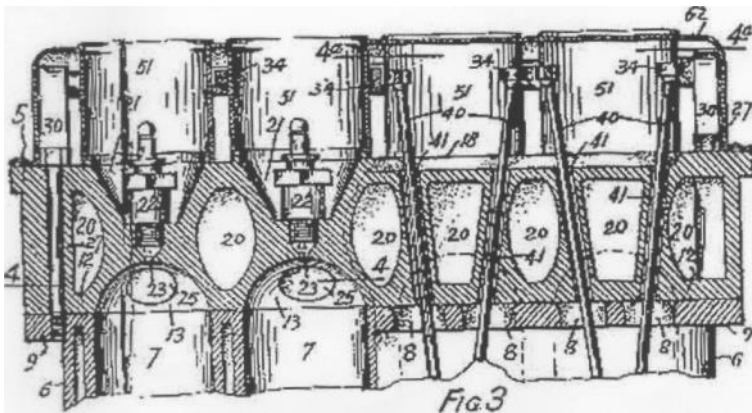
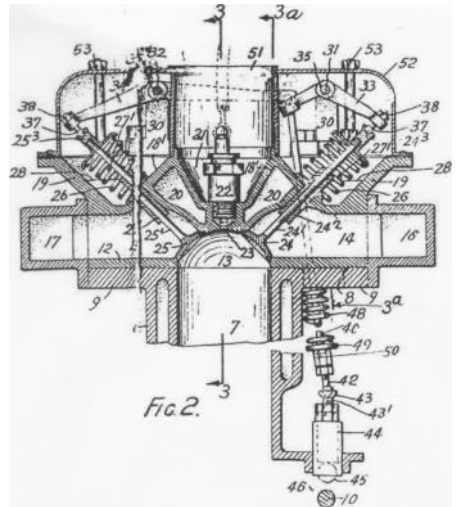


PARKING AT CLUBROOMS

In the interests of all members could those attending meetings please park only *in the marked spaces*. Please leave the forecourt for **AUSTIN 7s ONLY** and any *handicapped members*, and please make access available for those *delivering or collecting* goods or club equipment.



The Conouly Push-rod Overhead Valve Cylinder Head conversion for Austin 7 Austin



Bill also designed small Austin Seven power "tractors" for indoor use featuring enclosed exhaust gas collection. The Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in Sydney commissioned one of these in 1937 to pull linen trolleys around the wards.

One of his more interesting projects was the Sydney version of the 'Globe of Death', which in its original form, featured a modified Austin Seven and a Douglas motorcycle travelling in opposite directions!

His business activities were conducted from three locations in the eastern suburbs of Sydney. These were 25B Barcom Avenue, Darlinghurst, Mc Lachlan Avenue, Rushcutters Bay and 180 Oxford St, Paddington. The family lived above the premises in Oxford Street for a number of years. At one stage, Bill Conoulty Senior employed approximately 40 people.

In 1934, Bill Conoulty Senior met Murray Jamieson. Murray was in Australia visiting Larke Hoskin Pty Ltd, the main Austin Seven importer in NSW. During this period Murray was interested in the prototype overhead cam conversion that Bill Conoulty had developed and was running in his Australian bodied 'Comet Special'. This car succeeded in winning many NSW Light Car Club events one of which was the Fastest Time in the Mountain Trails - Class A - on the 17^t~ of November 1934. As history tells us, Murray Jamieson secured funding from Lord Austin in late 1934 to develop an overhead valve engine.

From the Australian Wheels magazine article from 1955 titled "Conoulty - From Trials to Dirt Tracks" that covered much of Bill's motoring history.

CLUB VISITOR

If you know of a Member who is unwell or in Hospital please contact Bruce Walker, our Club Visitor. He will visit or send a card to the Member.

Contact Bruce on brucewalkerartisan@gmail.com

9807 1729 or 0409 410 700.

Maybe Conoulty was just a legend

Conoulty - From Trials To Dirt Tracks

From Wheels Magazine (Australia), December, 1955

Bill Conoulty's hectic motor sport career ranged from racing motor cycles at Maroubra Speedway to plunging into the shattering round of pre-war car trials.

By John D. Duker



Conoulty on his racing Douglas. With it he became the undisputed top dog of bike racing in the 20's

Bill Conoulty and his mechanic Les Sales stood back to back beside their racing motor cycle as the four toughs closed in on them, intent on putting Conoulty out of a coming race-and in hospital.

Sales, six feet two and sixteen stone, shuffled forward and swung. The closest basher fell back, clutching his nose. Conoulty ducked a wild swing by another, lashed out with his gauntleted fist-and the fight was on.

As the two ducked and weaved under the blows the first tough scrambled to his feet with a wrench in his gnarled fist. Seeing it coming, Les Sales made a sweep with his left and paralysed the arm that held the wrench. He

sank his ham fist into the other's throat and turned to the remaining two as Conoulty sparred for an opening with his opponent.

Then the five feet six lightweight Conoulty was floored by a punch, and his attacker leaped for the cycle, tearing the ignition wires from the machine in the same movement. Sales gripped his shoulder and threw him backwards over the cycle.

Sales turned into the thick of punches thrown by the other two men as Conoulty got to his feet. A left rip that belonged to no boxing ring floored the first assailant and a right swing from the ground kayoed the last.

Bill Conoulty and Les Sales stood among the prone bodies of the four men who tried to put the rider out of the Newcastle Championship race. They were four common toughs whose business was to protect the bets of their boss.

Sales picked up two of the unconscious men by the scruffs of their necks and hurled them out of the pit enclosure as interested spectators started to gather. In a moment the other two men followed their cronies, and Conoulty and Sales bent desperately over the cycle to repair the torn-out ignition.

Two minutes before the riders were called to the starting line, Les Sales gripped the heavy machine bodily in his arms and lifted it around to get more light from the track on to work.

The warning signal sounded as the last wire was clipped into place, and Conoulty walked beside the machine as Sales wheeled it on to the track. Minutes later another episode in Bill Conoulty's career as champion motor cycle rider and car driver came to a climax as he flashed over the finishing line with the checkered flag proclaiming his victory. His average of 72.3 mph equalled the world's record for a half mile track up to 1922.

The concern of the dishonest fixer had been well founded when he told four of his men to "get" Conoulty.

This was not the first time that Bill Conoulty had had to contend with toughs and urgers. Without Les Sales to guard his machines any of them could have been last, for motor cycle racing in the twenties was a cut-throat sport. Even cycle distributors were inclined to shut their eyes to skullduggery if an outstanding rider was racing a rival machine.

But Bill was brought up the hard way. Dirty riding and other tricks were easily recognised - and defeated as soon as they arose.

Bill Conoulty was born in Newtown, Sydney, in 1899. His father, a butcher, wanted Bill in the family business, but the smell of petrol claimed him instead. At sixteen he was apprenticed to the well-known motoring family, the Howarths, in their firm, Petrol Economics Co.

Bill's idol was Harry Howarth, a racing cyclist; and soon, in emulation, he bought his first machine, an old 1908 Norton.

His career was almost cut short when he made a total wreck of boss "Fred" Howarth's cycle, but he tried again, on his own.

He entered a strong field of factory-sponsored cycles and experienced riders on a thousand yard hill climb at Bondi, in 1917. A crowd of five thousand saw Bill easily win his heat, and defeat a works Sunbeam by two yards at an average of sixty miles an hour in the final.

Fired by the newspaper write-ups, Bill entered and won several more hill climbs on an old Douglas. Then he bought himself an ancient Indian Scout and began his climb to championship class with victory after victory under the semi sponsorship of the Howarths.

The Howarth family gave him the run of their machine shop at night, and later, after leaving the Howarths to join Biden and Roberts, the Indian distributors, the same help was extended. Like the Howarths, Biden and Roberts already had their own racing team and would not fully sponsor Conoulty. So he beat his employers' team time after time in handicap and scratch races at Victoria Park.

By then he was regarded as a genuine demon rider to whom the rails were merely an obstruction to stop others getting past on the inside.

His nerve was put to the test when he saw a close friend, Jim Murray, killed in a sidecar race just prior to his own handicap event. He stood the test as he ploughed through straining cycles to overtake the handicap leaders, winning in an exciting finish by three feet.

To the followers of motor cycle racing the twenty-years old Conoulty was the rider of the day, the cleanest, most daring, and most heroic. He was set for the big time.

Soon he learnt the value of a guard in the workshop and pits, and found out how to avoid foul tactics on the track.

He had to sleep with his machine in case somebody slipped pins in the spark plugs to earth the ignition, or water in his petrol tank, petrol in an alcohol engine, or pull off the plug wires.

He learned to avoid the rider who deliberately waited behind the field in a flying start, then jumped the flag and cut in on the field at the first bank.

These dirty riders were invariably visited later by their victims. There was a fight in the pits at almost every meeting.

Conoulty's career took a sharp rise towards the top when Douglas' Mr. Pearce Williams invited him into the Douglas racing team. He became a star under team manager George Nichols.

Bill and his off-sider, Les Sales, met the four toughs shortly afterwards on the Newcastle Championship night.

Not only was he a star on the track-his opinions on racing machines were respected by his sponsors, and it was due to his insistence that the New South Wales distributors asked the English factory to make Isle of Mann racing models especially for the local team.

Douglas sales shot sky high after success on success by Conoulty and his colleagues. Hill climbs, acceleration tests, grass track racing and six day trials saw victories to the Douglas team with clockwork regularity.

It was not accomplished without spills and thrills. In one six-day trial Conoulty, wet to the skin from rain, urged his machine along a rough bush track at dusk as he headed for the cheek point at Lismore.

His acetylene lamp missed a length of barbed wire lying across the cart-wheel tracks. It wound itself around the front hub, jammed the wheel and threw the rider fifteen feet over the handlebars and knocked him out.

A horse and sulky driver found him sprawled on the track and took him to Lismore hospital. He was interned, fuming at the delay, for four hours, while his chances in the trial evaporated.

In another six-day trial, some weeks later, Bill set off with Douglas team-mates Ted and Stuart Williams. Stuart and Conoulty rode stock side valve Douglas cycles. Ted rode a temperamental OHV Douglas called "The Killer."

The three riders struck heavy yellow mud near Kiambra and Ted was dumped into the slime. He gripped the handlebars of "The Killer" and straightened it. He threw his leg over and landed heavily with the bike on top of him on the other side.

He tried again. Once more "The Killer" slide from under him. Finally, covered in yellow mud and snarling at his hilarious team-mates, he dragged the cycle bodily through the mud to firmer ground.

The rain had swollen a creek the team had to ford shortly afterwards. Ted set "The Killer" for the opposite bank, stalling within five yards with wet plugs. So Conoulty rode his cycle to a timber footbridge upstream and started across. It collapsed and dumped cycle and rider eight feet down into the rushing creek.

Ignoring his side-splitting team-mates, Bill wheeled his submerged machine to the ford and climbed out. They lit a fire to dry the plugs, pulled the engine down and cleaned it up.

Bill Conoulty rode second to the outright winner, team-mate Stuart Williams.

Then, with fanfares from America, dirt-track racing began at Penrith in 1924. Bill turned his talents in this new direction with Gus Clifton and Tom O'Dea. Their chief opponent was the American champion, Paul Anderson, sponsored by Indian.

As hard as they rode, as nervelessly as they manoeuvred, Anderson easily outstripped Conoulty and his colleagues in the first day's programme. But the next clash was soon to come.

They gained experience from Anderson's victory and learned the new techniques of dirt-track racing from him. They also made modifications to their own machines after "checking design in Anderson's machine", as Bill blandly said.

At the next meet five thousand people saw Conoulty riding like a demon to roar past the field, one by one, overtaking the flying Anderson on every lap.

With two laps to go Conoulty hit a corner at 85 mph. His front wheel hit a hard patch as he broadsided over the oily, bituminous surface and the rear wheel caught up with the front, sending the Australian broadside at an angle of twenty degrees along the track.

The exhaust scraped the ground as he wrestled the bucking projectile and the crowd screamed as two riders bore down on him.

The seasoned fans gaped in amazement as Bill righted the cycle after a full broadside of 155 feet and sank the driving wheel into the oily dirt as he tore in pursuit, and then defeat, of Anderson.

A stickler for perfection of equipment, Conoulty spent weeks, sometimes months, preparing for races.

But one day at Cessnock, he was brought on at the last minute to ride a borrowed Douglas. He was still checking the machine when the riders lined up for the start of his heat. Nervous on a strange machine, he rode to victory and roared hastily back to the pits to continue checking the cycle for the final.

Once again he was bent astride the machine, checking, at the starting line when the race commenced. He opened the throttle, let the front wheel sink back onto the track as it bucked forward, and roared off after the field, bringing the spectators to their feet as he flashed past one rival after another.

He was gaining fast on the leader from second place as he rounded a dangerous corner at 75 mph. Without warning the rear wheel collapsed and he lost control, heading straight for the fence.

The machine splintered the two bottom rails and Conoulty's chest took the full impact of the top rail as he plunged through into the crowd.

The machine careered on, scattering spectators left and right like a scythe while Bill hurtled along the ground twenty yards.

A reluctant doctor brought back from the sixteenth hole of the local golf course diagnosed a broken rib and left collarbone, punctured lung, dislocated right shoulder, sprained right ankle and a fractured left foot.

Bill cursed the golf-minded doctor for his delay; he raised blue murder for the torturous strapping of the bandages; and he stormed unsteadily out of the hospital and had his friends drive him to Sydney next day.

An old doctor, "A proper butcher" says Bill, patched him up and he was riding again nine Week later at Aspendale, Melbourne. He lost every race that day.

Shortly afterwards, at Deagon near Brisbane, Bill showed that nine weeks out of the game meant nothing. He broke the grass track record while winning three out of five races on his Douglas, and later still at Ballina Beach, he was the first Australian to clock over 100 mph solo, doing 101.6 mph.

That record, established in 1925 remained unbroken for eighteen years.

But Conoulty was making another reputation for himself, and it formed the basis of his present-day business policy; he constantly demanded better equipment.

Douglas gave Bill Conoulty his better machines and he gave them the victories on which their sales thrived.

Bill took a Douglas special on to the newly-opened Maroubra track one day for a private trial. Douglas officials clocked the machine as Conoulty pressed his chin on to the tank and opened the throttle wider and wider. He was braking his self-made records.

As Bill swung the bucking bike off a bank at 100 mph a connecting rod snapped, the engine seized and the rear wheel locked.

Swerving crazily from side to side, the cycle got out of control. Conoulty dropped off and hit the track at eighty miles an hour as the machine veered off in a drunken slide.

The track burned a hole in his leather suit, and ground away his flesh like butter for the last thirty yards of the sixty yard slide.

His friends rolled him out of the pool of blood and rushed him to hospital. Doctors patched up a gaping hole, but he raced the same Douglas special a week after-and won his handicap easily. But the wound took six months to heal, and he carries the scar today.

The crash was the price Bill Conoulty paid to discover that the special was unsuitable for the Maroubra track. He had the Douglas firm make the

"Pathracing" machine, a cycle with a longer frame and higher centre of gravity, and on it he rode second to team-mate Kev Carmody by one length in an exciting race in the Golden Helmet competition.

His second entry for the coveted Golden Helmet trophy at Maroubra appeared to predict failure again, for his chief opposition was a team of American riders on machines with far more punch in the straights.

Weeks of track study, and experimentation took Bill Conoulty to the starting line with an anxious eye on the Americans and a wink in the other eye to team-mate Kev Carmody.

The two Australians quickly got into the lead with hard-opened throttles right from the start. The Americans could not get around the leaders during their sprints along the straights, and the Australians. With better suited machines, held their leads around the bumpy banks.

The five thousand spectators saw first Carmody and then Conoulty take the lead. The Americans began to trail behind as the two team-mates clashed for the final lap.

The crowd screeched hysterically at the neck and neck struggle Conoulty slammed hard around the throttle for the final bank and took the checkered flag two lengths in front of Carmody at 100 mph.

Bill Conoulty's average on his 500 cc machine was a record 92.6 - class speed which remained unbroken until the track was torn tip.

In 1927 he turned to cars. He got an Austin agency and began competition racing in 1929. From then on he was known as the Austin Seven man. He found cars a lot different. Most of it was for fun.

At Maroubra, where he made some of his early starts, a large and excited crowd yelled, "Look at Conoulty passing all the bigger cars", and cheered him into the front in his little Austin 7.

Their cheers turned to derisive hoots as he pushed his car over the finishing line after the engine blew up. He took fourth place.

Bill then entered endless rounds of reliability trial, acceleration test, hill climb and slow-running feats which were the rage in the 30's.

Most of the trials were week-end affairs, with overnight stops in hotels along the way. After an arduous day of competition the competitors had fun at night.

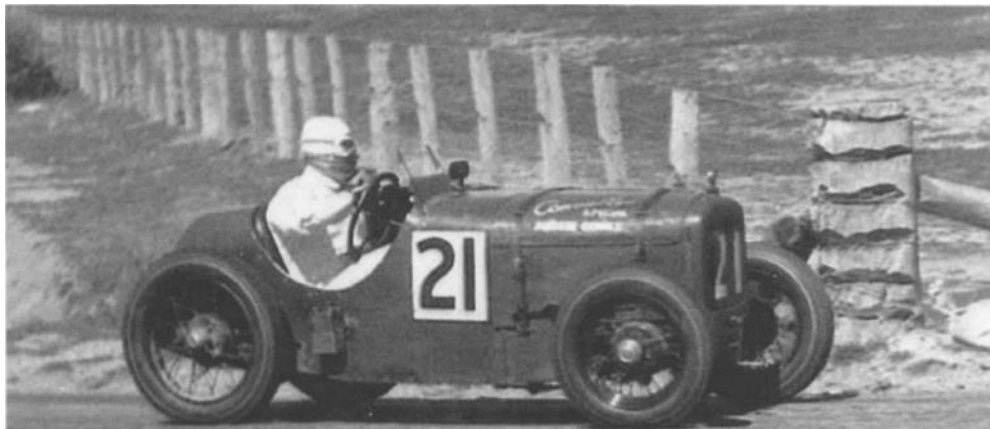
The hostelrys rocked to the antics and prantics of the light-hearted motorists. All the well-known names rolled up - Gus McIntyre, Otto Herschel, Jack and Ray Murray, the Jones family, Hope Bartlett, John Sherwood; the list went on for thirty and forty car loads and 80 or 100 people.

There was the time when the local constable, at one overnight stopover, arrived to shut up the bar before the party got out of hand. He left in the dawn, singing happily with the rest. There was the time a frantic manager found his books had been audited overnight; it was followed by gunnery practice at bedroom utensils with a revolver; a competitor's room so filled with bushes he couldn't move; and Jack Murray feeding competitors hot dogs with teeth-breaking sticks cunningly inserted in the middle.

Another time, a noted strong-man and show personality made a cutting remark at Otto Herschel and Conoulty. Herschel picked the strong man up, shook him like a rabbit and threw him the full length of the pub hallway.

Later, in his new reputation of the Aim, Otto roused his fellow competitors from deep sleep with the admonition to let's live a little. Jack Murray reached out, doused him with a jug of water and Herschel decided, against bright living.

Against the razzle-dazzle background, Conoulty snatched the coveted Castrol Trophy, the year round competition which involved all sorts of



Bill Conoulty driving his 'Special Austin Comet'. 1. The above photograph shows Bill entering Pit Straight at Bathurst -C1938. Photograph supplied by Peter Maher New South Wales, Australia

trials and tests. His win was given added lustre because he took it out in a diminutive Austin Seven.

Next year he won the trophy again, nearly equalling Gus McIntyre's feat of taking it out three times, although ill-health removed McIrityre during the third series, leaving his navigator, Frank Kleinig, to take the remaining events.

In one event in the year following his second win, Conoulty and his navigator were hurrying along Cleveland Street, Sydney, at a moderate sixty miles an hour to pick up time. They struck a silent cop and the vehicle plunged helter-skelter down the road.

Unhurt, they scrambled out, lost five minutes righting the dented but undamaged car - and lost that year's Castrol by five points.

In 1938 he built a freak for a petrol consumption - the "Hairpin Special". The chassis was barely heavy enough to support two bucket seats and the

engine. The inner tubes were tilled with water; there was no grease in the wheel bearing and light oil used in other moving parts. The driver had only to slam down the hand throttle for it to accelerate impressively with a thunderous roar for twenty yards and then coast majestically for hundreds of yards up hills and around curves.

Officials asked him about the large - and illegal - board built up behind the seats. Conoulty hoped it would act like the sail of a yacht. He told them it was to stop children throwing stones at him. The tricks were allowed, but his 134 miles per gallon was beaten.

Officials brought out a "No coasting" ruling next year, but he took an Austin 9 up to 85.34 miles per gallon without tricks.

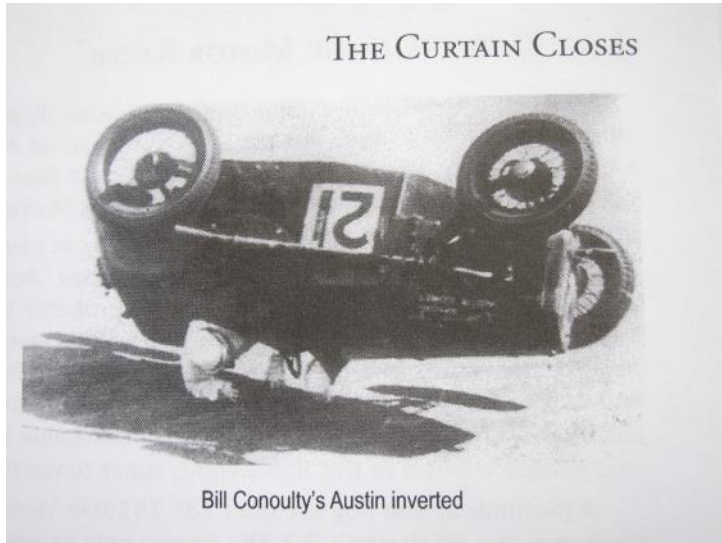
Ignition trouble ruined his post-war debut in the races at Bathurst, N.S.W., in 1945, and bad luck carne again at a later Bathurst meeting when a magneto became temperamental. He had to borrow another at the last minute, sliding into the starting line as the official was raising his flag.

He was well placed in the field while travelling over the mountain when he hit a corner with a thousand revs more than the corner would allow. The Austin 7 hung dangerously over a precipitous cliff for a fraction of a second as he braked, so he lifted his foot.

He approached a 60 mph corner at 70 a few miles further on and flicked his hand over the gear lever to change down. He missed the gear and the car rocketed off the road, turning over and over down a hundred foot embankment, landing upside down on its stunned driver.

Conoulty groggily inspected the car and found no damage other than a broken steering wheel.

Regulations stated that drivers must report their accidents and get official permission to continue, so, confident of the outcome, Bill drove at breakneck speed to the pits.



He stood by, fuming at the delay while officials went over the car, and then all hell broke loose when they told him he could not continue. But his angry disappointment abated when he later found two rivets which had sheared from the front radius rods which held the wheels in position.

Bill Conoulty's hectic motor sport career ranged from racing motor cycles at Maroubra Speedway to plunging into the shattering round of pre-war car trials.

Since that meeting in 1945, Bill Conoulty has not entered in serious competition. At 56 he is content to call it a younger man's game, and devotes his time to his garage business at Darlinghurst.

It is doubtful if a competition driver will ever be associated with a make of car in the same way again. For, even now, just about anyone in Sydney knows about Conoulty.

"Ah, yes," they say. "He's the Austin Seven man."

POSTSCRIPTs

Conoulty was Clerk of Course for the 1938 Australian Grand Prix, held at Bathurst.

Hi Rob,

My overhead valve cylinder head is a LAP head made in the UK in 1928 and I think it was owned by a chap called Aubrey Melrose who lived in Perth. I remember my father telling me about him and used to race a super charged A7 with the fabric universal joint which he used to tear out regularly.

Dad worked for Shell all of his working life and Aubrey ran a shell service station. Bill Sheehan has a Nippy? Engine from the same person I got my head from. Hope this helps.

It does give my engine more power. It is fitted to the Meteor at the moment.

Cheers Chris Athey



If you are actually going to the Victorian legislation website, be careful.

The Road Safety (Vehicles) Interim Regulations 2020, came into force on the 4 October 2020, but on the same day an amendment to the regulations also came into force, and a consolidated Regulation has not been published.

Another change was that a club permit may be reassigned to a surviving spouse or domestic partner on the death of a permit holder.



Connecting
our communities

Recent changes to the Club Permit Scheme

October 2020

The Road Safety (Vehicles) Regulations 2009 will be replaced by the Road Safety (Vehicles) Interim Regulations 2020, which will take effect from 4 October 2020.

The new Regulations include the following changes that apply to the Club Permit Scheme.

Use of Club Permit vehicles

The vehicle operated under the Club Permit must not be used for hire or reward for the carriage of goods or freight or to provide a commercial passenger vehicle service as defined by the *Commercial Passenger Vehicle Industry Act 2017*.

Club conditions

VicRoads may, from time to time, vary or remove a condition that an approved vehicle club must comply with. Internal review rights apply.

Club Permit number plates

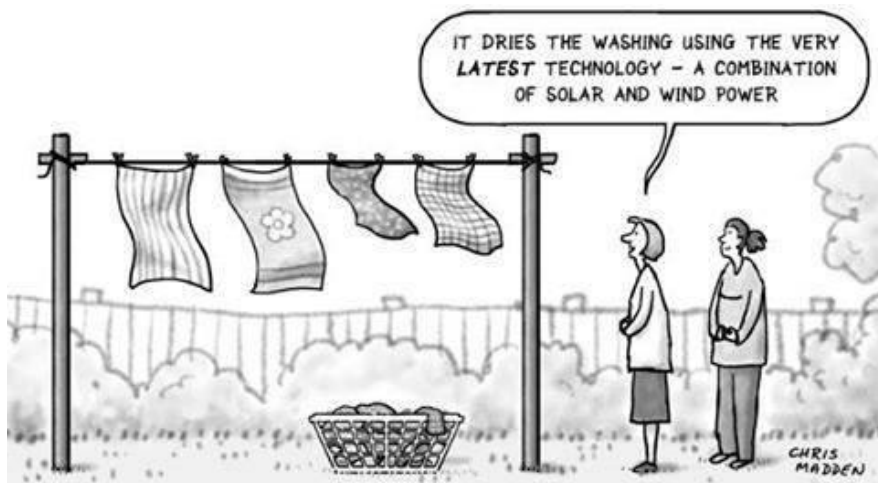
When applying for a Club Permit, the applicant will now be required to pay a fee for the issue of standard Club Permit number plates (\$38 for two number plates, or \$19 for one number plate).

AUSTIN 7 CLUB INC. - COMMITTEE 2021

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HISTORIC SPRINT

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mailorderparts@austin7club.org

Robert Humphreys (03) 9583 6316

CLUB VISITOR

Bruce Walker 9807 1729, 0409 410 700

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Gary Hawkins 0459 135 496

CLUB PERMIT OFFICER

Geoff Taylor, Robert Humphreys (Deputy)

FEDERATION DELEGATES

Noel Wilcox &/or Remote Member as agreed

CLUB BUILDINGS OWNERS CORPORATION DELEGATES

John Shiells, Robert Humphreys, John McMillan

CLUB LIBRARY

David Easton

COVID19 Event Controllers

Two vacancies



DISCLAIMER

The Austin 7 Club Inc. (A7C), its Officers and the Committee cannot be held liable for any errors and/or omissions in items that are published in The Light Shaft in good faith. It should be noted that the publication of an advertisement, or expression of views in articles and reports, does not necessarily imply endorsement by the A7C of the advertised product or service, or the views expressed in any articles or reports published in The Light Shaft.

**THE AUSTIN 7 CLUB ROOMS AND CLUB SPARES
are located at
UNIT 8, 19-23, KYLIE PLACE, CHELTENHAM NORTH.**

All correspondence to the Secretary:

Austin 7 Club Inc. P O Box 462, Moorabbin. Vic 3189

Please do not send mail to clubrooms

Spares are open:-

M.G.M. from 7.30 p.m. to 8.00 p.m.

H.A.S. from 7.45 p.m. to 9.00 p.m. and between 12:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. on the Saturday following the M.G.M. (or the following Saturday if the former clashes with a Club Event)

Spares can be ordered by mail from:

Janne and Robert Humphreys, 27 Peters Drive, Cheltenham Vic 3192

Or mailorderparts@austin7club.org

Vacant positions for Spare Parts helpers Club Supporters needed

We require more assistance with retaining the Club's income that our Spare Parts provide to your Club: Keep in mind that we lost the Historic Winton income as a funding source this year and maybe again next year.

Can you assist at all with any of these roles?

- ⇒ Cash Sales
- ⇒ Marketing and Advertising
- ⇒ Re-stocking
- ⇒ Annual Stocktaking
- ⇒ Purchasing
- ⇒ Mail order filling
- ⇒ Technical Advice
- ⇒ Re-manufacturing components
- ⇒ Collecting donations

More donations are needed of useable parts. Can you assist with those obsolete bits and pieces down the back of the shed you no longer need. Panels, Suspension, Engine, Gearbox, Tools all required to top up our stock for you the members.

One's trash is another's treasure .

Give Graeme Logan a call and have a chat.

It's not what your club can do for you, but what you can do for your club.

MARKET PLACE

Market Place advertisements will normally appear for FREE in two consecutive Lightshafts Editor

Stolen Motorbikes

The AOMC has been notified of two motorcycles recently stolen in Mannum, South Australia.

Attached below is a link relating to the two recent stolen classic/vintage motorcycles; 1976 BMW R90S and a 1958 Velocette Venon.

If possible, could you please inform clubs, members, to be aware.

If you see or know of the stolen motorcycles please email Brett Lennox <lennoxbrett66@gmail.com>.

SPARES CHRISTMAS CLOSURE

Please note that Spares will close after the December Pudding in the Park on the 16 December, 2020 and re-open again at the MGM on Wednesday 3 February, 2021.

NOTE THE HOURS

16 December - Spares Open from 4:00pm to 6:00pm sharp

1. At a movie theatre, which arm rest is yours?
2. If people evolve from monkeys, why are monkeys still around?
3. Why is there a 'D' in fridge, but not in refrigerator?
4. Who knew what time it was when the first clock was made?

MARKET PLACE

FOR SALE

An Austin Rarity , the BS4.

Originally built in 1932-34 by George Brough of the Brough Superior SS100 motorcycle fame.

Built to Ride , Show , rally or Club outings. In perfect order.

Regards & Carpe Diem

Leigh Goodall , CEO, **Proud Products Pty Ltd**

T (03) 8368 2522 **M** 0417 368 058

E leigh@proudproducts.com.au

A 47 Burns Road (PO Box 69) Altona VIC Australia 3018



FOR SALE

1937 Austin Big Seven Tourer.
New tyres and upholstery.

Comes with the original
owner's service manual.

Engine no. A1067 Chassis no.
9897

Vintage car registration for
Queensland. Fully restored. In
Mackay, Queensland.

I am too old to use it now.

Bill Beetham email beethambill@gmail.com

Asking price \$18,000.00 pick up only.



FOR SALE - CDs

I know there are a lot of sailors and even more “Armchair Sailors” in the club who may like to give themselves, or someone, a lasting Christmas present.

There are 19 tracks of great sea songs (not shanties) on the CD and was a “big” production with some of Melbourne’s top musicians backing the songs.

Cost is \$25 inc postage & packaging or direct from me at a meeting \$20.

There is also available a “Vintage Bushwackers” CD of Australian music , both would be \$40- inc. P&P.

David Isom

MAIL ORDER PAYMENTS TO AUSTIN 7 CLUB SPARES

Payment for parts is preferred by Direct Deposit.

Please note Spares Banking Details, located at the bottom of our Invoices.

**Robert & Janne Humphreys-
mailorderparts@austin7club.org**

To all of you who have a car under the Club Permit Scheme.

Check your date of EXPIRY of your Permit.

Many have NOT received renewal notices on time.

**If you have not received your renewal by 2 weeks before expiry, give
VICROADS a phone call, on 9854 2432.**

ALSO check ALL details - including expiry date, addresses etc.

The “period of grace” has recently been reduced to 90 days.

When paying ALWAYS retain your receipt.

Keep a scanned copy of your receipt with your logbook.

GEARBOX REPAIRS

To ALL AUSTINs, including F.W.D.

Special Ratios and Standard Ratios

Austin 7 - 4 speed boxes with better ratios from \$1,700

Changeover or yours rebuilt

John or Ben Needham

OLD CAR GEARBOXES P L (03) 9553 3203

LIGHTSHAFT ON THE WEBSITE

You can receive the whole of the magazine in glorious technicolour - if you are happy with only receiving your magazine in this form, then please let the Membership Secretary know.

Rob. Humphreys

Even if you want a hard copy, consider updating your email, and requesting an electronic copy as well.

“Going Strong” A history of the Austin Seven Club in Victoria.

By *Bob Watson*

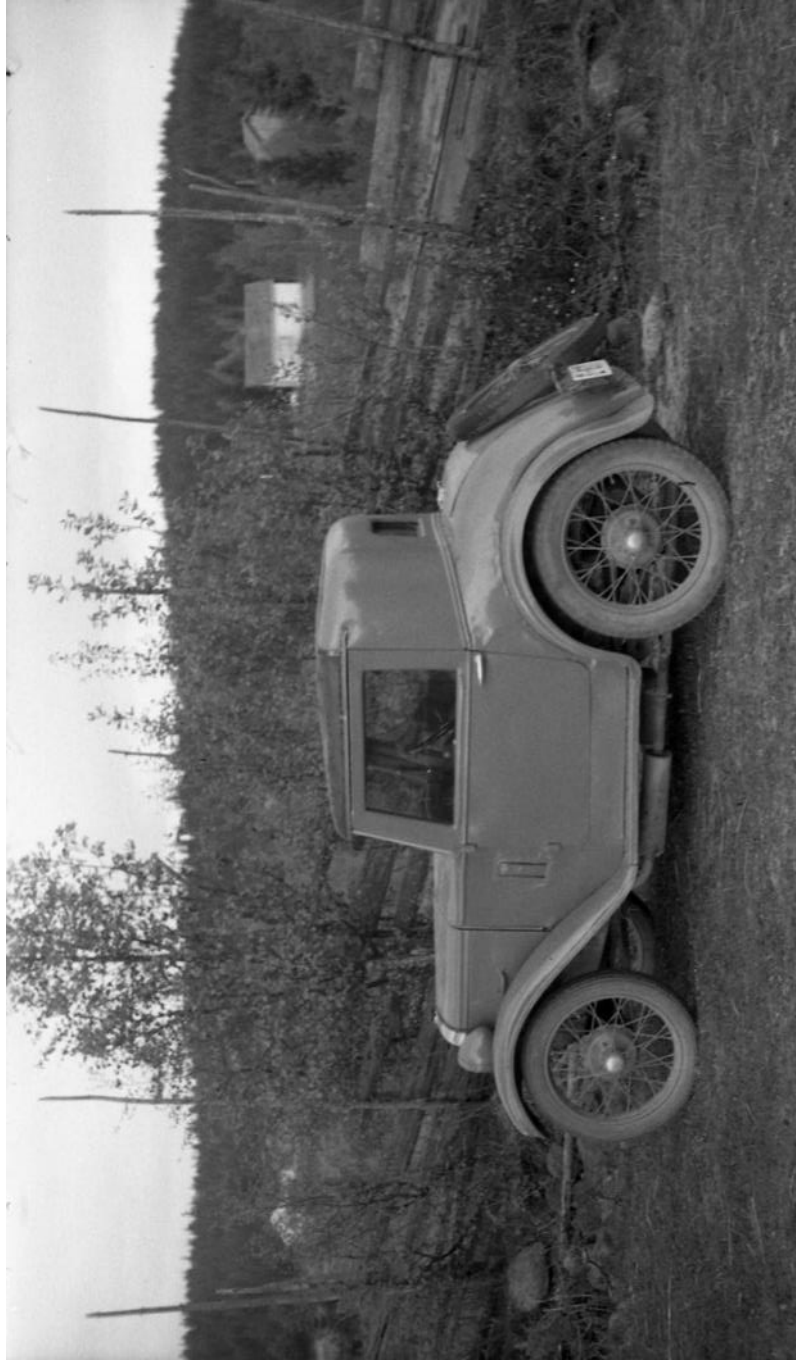
A great read for \$25.

Posted copies will be plus cost of Postage and Packaging, .Postage and packaging will cost \$13.30 (for single copies for members in Australia) .

For some Metro Melbourne members the postage is less, but contact us.

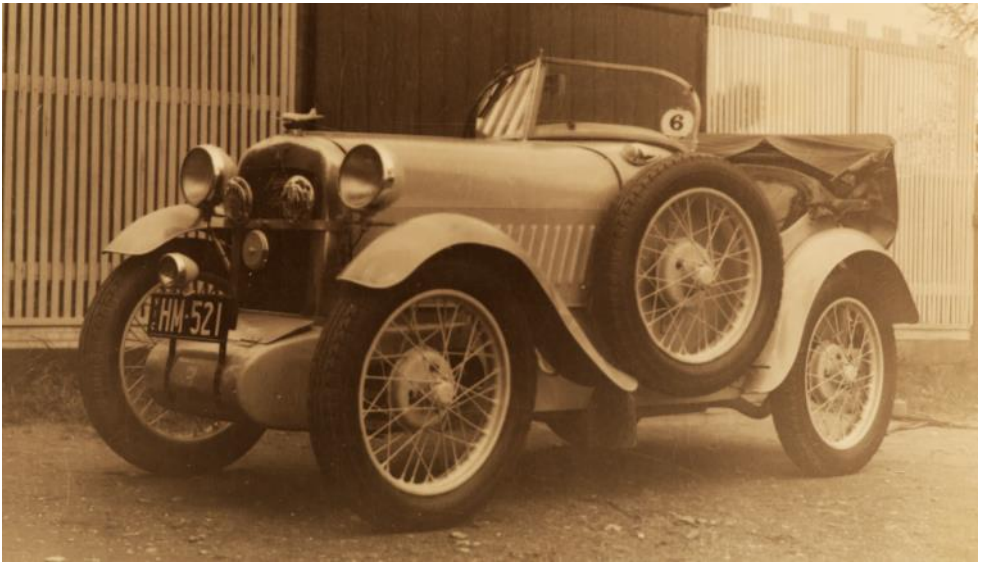
You can order your copy by contacting:-

Janne or Robert Humphreys (03) 9583 6316



Tony Johns is seeking information about this car. Bill Sheehan thought he may have seen it at the Ballarat National Austin 7 Rally

Does anybody have any photos that may provide more information?



Above: Ashley Tracey has shared this photo with Tony Johns from a scrapbook belonging to the late Jack Cocks from Chewton.

The caption reads ‘My second Austin 7, 1946 before I got my licence.’

Tony Press has confirmed it’s a 1929 ACE built by James Flood and Company. Clearly visible is the original tool box below the radiator with its hinged lid giving access to the crank-handle.

Editor: Compare it with the photo below of my Unkle’s Ace, in about 1930 – he changed the wheels, to get a better ride.

