



TORQUETUBE

Magazine of the Riley Motor Club Queensland, Australia Inc.

February 2021

www.rileyqld.org.au



Melissa Townsend's RMB visiting the RMCQ clubhouse

Editorial

Welcome to a new and hopefully brighter year for Riley rallies and outings. I am certainly looking forward to the possibility of attending the National Rally in May.

Over the past few months a larger garage has been built at the Treehaven retirement home to accommodate and restore some pre-war beauties and this year looks like a great year for Harold, the Riley 9 Mark 3. He now has all of his mechanicals and they just need to be assembled.

The AGM will be held on Sunday 14th at 11 AM at our clubhouse at the Samford. Showgrounds. I hope to see you there.

Thank you to Brian Jackson who has contributed a description of how to time a Pathfinder engine and Ian Henderson who drew the picture. (page 8)



Riley 9 engine parts finally arrive

The Editor appreciates receiving articles by the 21st of the month

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December Breakfast run to the Pitstop Cafe



A good turn out on a beautiful early summer morning to the Mt Mee 'Pit Stop' café was enjoyed by club members on the 6th December. Fourteen members and family members attended.



At least three MGs and another classic car as well as well as a drophead, a drophead special and a 1936 Riley Falcon attended with their custodians.



The meal was excellent and the group was able to sit together and enjoy the views and the delightful company of like-minded enthusiasts.

Queensland Riley Motor Club Christmas lunch

Perhaps 28 members and family attended the Club Christmas lunch. It was held at the Old Petrie Town pub. There was no air-conditioning but the day turned out to be cool and slightly moist. In fact it turned out to be a perfect day for driving a Riley but being a conservative 'fine weather only' Riley driver and living in Maleny where it was raining the editor of the magazine decided to drive his all-weather Land Cruiser and it was not until we came down the hill that the weather improved.



Above: Mark and Jan Baldock and in the foreground Julie and Barry Evans

One of the things that made the day was that there was no setting up to do or washing up after the meal. Some very fine staff members delivered the meals as alternate drop grilled fish with chips and salad or chicken schnitzel and chips with salad. Everyone enjoyed the meal and this was followed by another alternate drop of sticky date pudding or creamy cheese cake with ice-cream.



Above: Greg and Yvonne May and in the foreground Bernie and Shirley Rowan



Above: Sheila Hill and Lyn Jackson

We sat with Brian and Lyn Jackson, Sheila Hill and the conversation partly centred around a Pathfinder engine that Brian had just restored. It was built as a donation to the club and according to Brian it had been set up on a test bench and it ran very smoothly. Most of the engine had been resting in the spare parts department at the club house. It had been poorly assembled and had put a con-rod through the side of the block. Graham Bourne had welded a patch into the extra hole that resulted and Brian had re-assembled and tuned the engine on his garage bench where it had been test run. Brian said it ran very sweetly.



Above: Kathrine Collins, Bill and Maria White enjoying the photography and their meal



Above: Chris and Prani Reynolds, Matthew French and John and Margaret Hansford

During the meal Chris Reynolds gave a short speech in which he recognised the contributions of many members to the life of the club and expressed his delight at the buoyancy of members who had continued to contribute and participate in the activities of the club during a covid-19 affected year.

He particularly noted the contribution of Wendy Lonie who had recently resigned from the club to go on to other things. So apart from recognising her contribution Chris also noted the need for a new club captain. It was an excellent event to end an interesting Riley year.

Below: Sue and Rod Longden and Graham Moore and his partner



February activities

Tuesday Morning 2nd and 9th: Riley Tinkers at the Clubhouse, Samford. Restoration activities, friendship and technical advice. BYO lunch and drinks. Tea and coffee provided.

Sunday 14th: The breakfast run will be to Bullocky Rest.

We will meet in Samford at 0800 to leave at 0815 to Bullocky Rest on Lake Samsonvale to be there at 0900. Then leave at about 1030 to the Club Shed at the Samford Showgrounds for the AGM at 1100 and a BBQ lunch at 1200. Regards Trevor. 0407 717 853

**Sunday 14th 11 AM:
Annual General Meeting
and Monthly Meeting of the RMCQ at
the Riley Clubhouse, 38 Show-
grounds Drive, Highvale 4520, Sam-**

**ford Show Grounds. The meeting
will be followed by a BBQ lunch as
\$5 per person.**

**Office bearers need to prepare and send
their reports to our secretary, Matthew
French by Sunday 7th.**

**WE trust that all members who are able will
make the effort to be there.**

**Attached is a form for nominating a person
to a committee position.**

**The Conrod trophy will be presented to the
member who has contributed the most to
the club over the past 12 months.**

Tuesday Morning 16th and 23rd: Riley Tinkers at the Clubhouse, Samford. Restoration activities, friendship and technical advice. BYO lunch and drinks. Tea and coffee provided.

Remembering Frank Airey by Ian Thompson ACT Riley Club

Over a very long period there have been no greater contributors to Rileying than Frank and Sylvia Airey. Their contribution in every aspect of club life has been an inspiration to many of us. With



Sylvia's sad passing earlier this year, in this issue we are reminiscing a little about their Riley ownerships, restorations, sheds, and their huge contributions to Riley Clubs both in NSW and ACT. Frank and Sylvia were justly awarded Life Membership of our club for their extensive contributions in all aspects of the club including Rally Coordination, Newsletter Editor, Executive functions and much more.

Frank and Sylvia joined the NSW club around about 1982 attending their first of many National Rallies that year at Toowoomba in their trusty Datsun 200B. There is nothing like a gathering of Rileys to get the bug so the dark green Two-Narf soon arrived in their shed. Their magnificently restored Elf came from Warren Hollis in the late 1980s. Soon after, Sylvia brought the kestrel home. The Aireys very impressive Riley Stable came to Canberra in 1992.

It is with sadness that I inform you that Frank Airey passed away earlier today, 7 January 2021. Frank's daughter rang Arthur and informed him that Frank had been admitted to hospital on New Years

Eve.

Frank was loved and respected by everyone who knew him, always on hand to offer advice and encouragement. He was a life member of our Riley club and he and Sylvia were committed members of the Sydney club before moving to the ACT in the 1980's. They not only loved their Riley's but were keen participants in and contributors to the Riley "family", taking on various positions of responsibility over many years to keep our club and the Riley movement strong and active.

Ian Thompson

Frank was known throughout the Riley clubs of Australia and many Queensland members will remember him from national rallies held in this state (Editor)



Have you booked to join us in Broken Hill for our National rally?



Rileys *first drove to Broken Hill in 1908.*

**Monday May 10
to Sunday May
16, 2021**

We'll show you this beautiful country and fascinate you with its history and drama.

Each day we will lead you to a new part of this land and each evening we want you to join us at the Riley Room in the Musicians Club for an evening of food and fun.

Getting around

The roads are good and uncrowded. But if you are not in your Riley, we'll try to give Riley transport for any who don't have a Riley in Broken Hill.
Just let us know!

Our committee says if you are driving from Sydney, a leisurely route is via Dubbo and Cobar, stopping at both.

The weather

May in Broken Hill is generally cool, sunny and dry (9 to 19 degrees each day)

The Riley Room

Every evening we are meeting in the auditorium at the

Musicians Club (267 Crystal Street, Broken Hill).

On your first visit there we will arrange a week's membership (no charge to you) and then you can walk in whenever you want.

Did you know (according to the ABC) the staple dish in Broken Hill is Cheese Slaw?

And the Australian Women's Weekly featured the recipe twice (1946 and 1966)? No, it won't be served every night.

Time to explore

There is plenty of time to see the local sites on Wednesday and Friday. Tuesday is a drive South-East to Menindee, and Thursday we'll explore North-West, to Silverton and beyond. Do as much or as little as you like.

Riley Motor Club of Australia

We have been a club for Riley drivers since 1955 and no matter where you are from we are here to help you enjoy yourselves. We welcome fellow enthusiasts from around our country.

Covid news

We have been through lockdowns and border closures. As optimists (we own Rileys!) the worst is behind us and we look forward to seeing you.

Remember to check accommodation can be cancelled if the worst happens.

Expression of Interest RILEY MOTOR CLUB VICTORIA NATIONAL RALLY 2023 "RILEY TOUR OF TASMANIA"



Preliminary plans have commenced for the "Riley Tour of Tasmania 2023", hosted by the Victorian Club. On the Tour, we will travel, stay, and tour together as much as possible within the accommodation constraints of this small island.

Tasmania is a magic destination with something for everyone: Historic towns & buildings, scenic landscapes, gourmet foods, arts & culture, natural beauty and of course great touring roads.

Our time in Tasmania is 10 days plus two nights on board the Spirit of Tasmania ferry. The anticipated dates are Tuesday 14th to Saturday 25th March 2023. These dates avoid school holidays and Easter which is early April.

We will tour the eastern half of the state, from Devonport through the Central Highland to Hobart. Around Hobart, go west, south or east. Then up the east coast to the Swansea/ Bicheno area. We then head inland and up to Launceston. Explore the Launceston area before returning to Devonport.

Go to Riley Club of Victoria Website National Rally page for more details of the itinerary and register your interest at rileytasrally2023@gmail.com.

We will spend a total of 9 nights in three locations, with suggested accommodation options of Hotel/Motel, Villas/Apartments, and Tourist Park Cabins in each town for you to make your own bookings.

Our preliminary cost estimate, at current prices for two people, including the ferry, accommodation, meals, fuel, some of the major attractions' entry fees, and our Welcome, Mid Tour and Farewell Dinners, is in the vicinity of \$4,500. This is an indication only. The ferry departs ex Geelong.

So, whilst this tour is two years away, it would greatly assist our planning and preliminary reservations if you could indicate your interest to us now. We don't expect you to make a firm commitment to attend, however, if you could let us know that you will more than likely participate in this Riley Touring National Rally it would be a big help to us.

Riley Motor Club Victoria Rally Committee:

email rileytasrally2023@gmail.com

Contacts: Brian Graham 0412 674 055, Marilyn Threlfall 0429 300 783, Phil Camm 0418 12 2 146.

Please forward the following information to the Tasmanian Rally Committee so you can be kept informed of developments. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

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NATIONAL RALLY 2023 "RILEY TOUR OF TASMANIA"

Expression of Interest Reply

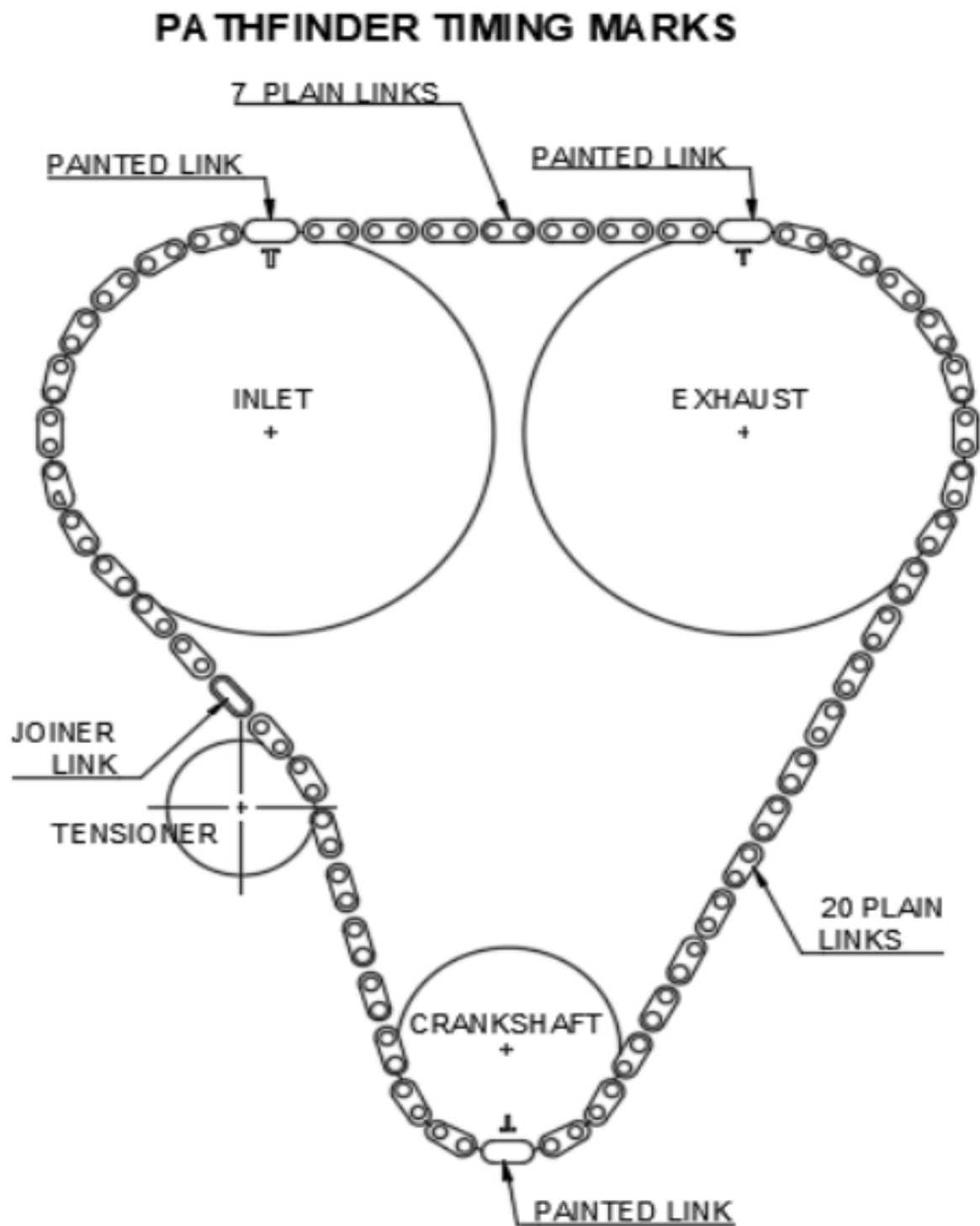
Please reply by 30 June 2021 at the latest.

Name: _____

Email: / Postal Address: _____

Member of State Club: VIC / NSW / ACT / QLD / WA / NZ / Other: _____

Phone: _____ Number of people: _____



Instructions on fitting the timing chain.

Put the chain on your bench in the shape that it would be on your timing gears with the joining link immediately above the centre of the tensioner. Then estimate where the timing mark on the inlet camshaft would be. Paint that link white. Then count 7 links clockwise. Paint the eighth link white. This link is placed on the timing mark 'T' on the exhaust camshaft wheel. Then count twenty links clockwise along the chain. Paint the next link white. This link will be placed over the mark, 'T' on the crankshaft gear. This is the way I always time a Pathfinder engine. It always works.

Brian Jackson

Reframing and fitting RMB doors

Fitting the sill into its correct position was always thought to be the key factor in getting the front doors to close without binding on their hinges, but RMB 60S5742 has taught me a few new things. The 'B' pillar on the passenger side was in its correct position on the sill but it was still binding on its hinges before it could be closed. Usually this only occurred when the 'B' pillar is fitted too far back on the sill, but this issue had already been addressed and it had been fitted into its correct position. Upon close inspection it was noticed that the door jam on the front passenger door had come out of its fold at the edge of the front face of the door.



Moreover, the replacement timbers that were in the bottom of the door were preventing the metal skin from being pushed into its correct position. It was also noticed that the door was very heavy.

Above: The replacement timbers

The timbers in the bottom of the door were

oversize and the timber that ran across the middle of the door had been broken and repaired by fitting timbers above and below it – sort of like splintering a broken bone.



That led to the conclusion that the timbers needed to be removed, the door jamb refitted into its correct position and the door jamb fitted to the door skin at the right angle and lighter timbers fitted.

Disassembly was not difficult as the replacement timbers were all fitted and screwed into place from the outside of the door. Enthusiasts would know that originally the door frames were made and screwed together on the side that faced the metal skin and the door skin was folded around the timber frame. There were also some interesting bolts that were holding the corner timber in place. These were all removed and then some interesting bulges were noticed in the door skin behind the middle timber and the oversized timbers at the bottom of the door. It became obvious at that point that the car had been in an accident and the front passenger side door had been stove in prior to the development of plastic filler. Yes, you guessed it, the door skin had been tinned, and the door skin shape had been formed with a trowel and half a kilo of lead.



The outcome was that it was decided to use another door and after a few minutes a likely specimen was fetched out from under the house and sand blasted on the internal corners where the bottoms timbers were to be fitted. The door jams were then spot welded at a few strategic points to the door skin at their correct angle. The door was then sealed on the inside with an etch primer and a few coats of black acrylic paint. New timbers were made from Flooded Gum (also named Rose Wood or Rose Gum) and fitted.



And finally, the hinges were straightened and refitted to the door and the door fitted back on to the 'B' pillar. Having gone through this exercise with the front passenger door, the other doors were inspected and where necessary the door jams were pressed back into their correct positions and spot welded. RMB 60S5742 then had four doors that swung on the 'B' pillars without binding on the hinges. Well, not quite. The passenger side doors still seemed tight on their hinges.

That issue was set aside for a while and it was decided to refit the cant rail to the passenger 'B' pillar. A short visit was paid to the local 'town and country' hardware store and dome headed bolts with the square stem were purchased. These fit into the square openings at the top of the 'B' pillar. When the 'B' pillar was turned upside down to fit the timber rail it was noticed that the 'B' pillar bottom plate that received the hinges was bent backwards. When the Riley had been repaired after the passenger door was stove in the repairer had not noticed the damage to the 'B' pillar. The plate

was straightened, the cant rail fitted to the 'B' pillar, the assembly was refitted to the Riley and the doors were put back on. To my delight the doors swung freely, and the problem seemed resolved....But not quite.



At that stage, the rear fillet had not been screwed to the cant rail, so the doors were taken off, the 'B' pillar removed with the assembly with the cant rail was turned upside down again and put on the floor to fit the fillet. It was then noticed that the 'B' pillar had a definite bend in it. The accident mentioned earlier had pushed the 'B' pillar backwards. So, the cant rail was removed, and the 'B' pillar placed on a shop press and the pillar was straightened. The assembly was then put together, the fillet screwed into place and the whole thing fitted back onto the Riley and the doors were fitted with no binding on the hinge pins and the doors swung freely.

Below: Can you see the bow in the B pillar?





Above: Fitting the cant rail to the 'B' pillar is best done on the floor so that the fillet can be fitted over the bolts and screwed along the inside edge of the cant rail.

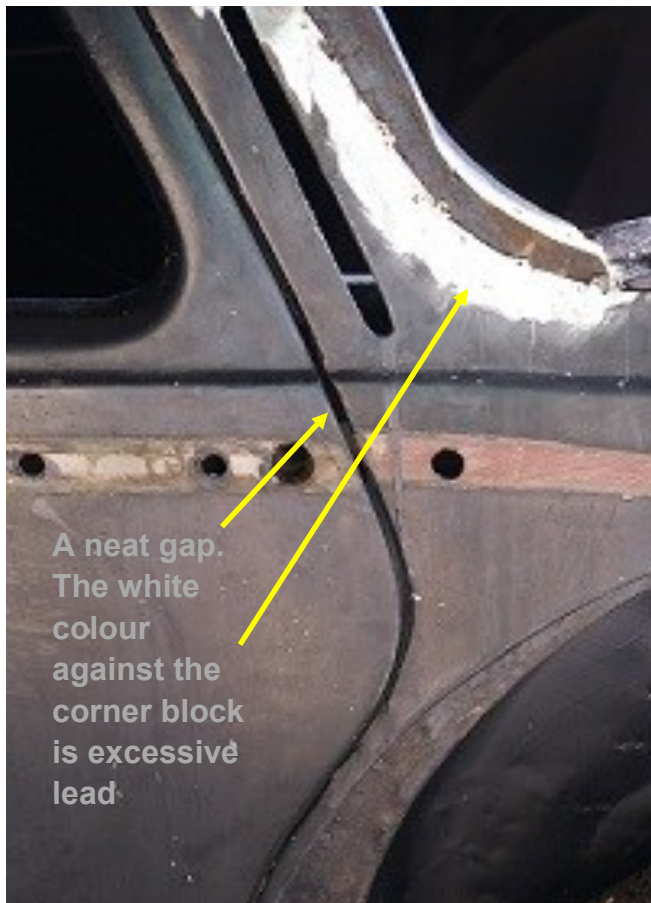
Fitting the rear passenger door up to the tub presents no problems when done in the correct sequence. First, the cant rail was pushed back over the corner block and clamped into place and then the bottom of the 'B' pillar was pushed towards the back of the Riley on the sill. The adjustments were then tweaked until there was an even gap between the door and the tub. The 'B' pillar was then bolted through the sill onto the chassis and bolted through the

sides of the sill, then the cant rail was screwed into position on the corner block. A nice even gap right around the door and an even gap between the doors made the activity worthwhile.

Thankfully, the drivers' side doors were in good condition and the tub on the driver's side had already been roughly fitted into its correct position. The doors were removed, the bolts holding the cant rail were taken out and a slight height adjustment between the cant rail and the top of the 'B' pillar was made. The shape of the fillet was then slightly altered so that it fitted more neatly up to the 'B' pillar, it was screwed into position and shaved back to follow the curve of the cant rail and the whole assembly refitted into its correct position on the sill. Following the same procedure as on the passenger side, the cant rail was pushed back on the corner block to achieve a similar gap as on the other side and then the 'B' pillar was pushed back on the sill. The tweaking is all about raising or lowering the door in its position to achieve an even gap between the tub and the door, so this was the next step.

Most Riley doors have rotten timbers but what do you do with the timber behind the top hinges? They need to receive screws to fix the hinge against the door jam without any movement. The solution that I use is mixing a two-part epoxy 'drillable' cement. It is mixed and poked into the openings until they are full, and the epoxy has mixed with the remains of the timber behind the metal skin of the door. When set, the holes are redrilled and new screws are used to fix the hinge into place. This was done on all of the doors behind the top hinges before fitting them back into place. It is important that the hinges are fixed tightly against the doors as movement between the hinges and the doors alters the gap between the doors and the body.

With the doors fitting up to the tub with good gaps all around, it was time to fit the 'A' posts, knee blocks, the quarter panel timbers and skins and the front window surround. These tasks and fitting the front door jams will be a task for next week.



Mystery crime against a Riley roadster

I have never seen anything like it before. The engine had been built by professionals. Sure, they were unaware of some of the uniqueness's of Rileys. An incorrect bolt was put into the middle fixing point for the outlet cam bush, a foreign generator had been fitted and unusual spark plugs fitted, but this was different. When doing the final tune up, NSK plugs were fitted, the carbies were balanced, the distributor timing was set, and the engine fired up and ran sweetly. Later the Riley was put on a car trailer, tied down and the cruiser connected to the trailer was parked on the verge in the street that was a cul-de-sac – no passing traffic. It was parked there for an early start the following morning so the Riley could be delivered early.

After a few days the Riley began to run rough and then it would not run at all. It was pretty certain that it was the seventy-year-old condenser, but the Riley still needed a crank handle tube and a chrome strip to complete it, so arrangements were made to pick it up, do the little jobs necessary and return it. When it came to the condenser, the nuts on the external connection were released, the connection to the condenser taken off and the two small bolts that hold the plate in place were removed. The old condenser was then taken off, a hole was drilled and tapped, and a small BA bolt was used to fix the new condenser to the distributor plate and the wiring was reconnected. The engine started but it was very rough. What was happening? Maybe the spark plugs were too long, and the pistons were high lift? So, the spark plugs were removed and examined.



Both electrodes on number one and number two had closed. Besides that, it appeared that something had struck them. They both had small indentations on them. The only way to find out what it was, was to take off the head and have a look. I know what you are thinking. If I was a 21st century person I would simply put a camera down the spark plug hole and have a look before doing anything drastic but being a 20th century person trapped in the 21st century, there was no camera in the toolbox, so the head was taken off.



Above: Note the contrast between number two and number three piston. Number 1 and 2 have been peened by ball bearings and they have struck and closed the electrode on the spark plugs.

The exhaust, choke, fuel line, generator and fan belt were disconnected, the rocker boxes removed, and the head stud nuts were released. Just like you, there was a time when I could just climb into the engine bay, free the head and lift it off the block by hand but not anymore. A lifting chain was attached to the head and a block and tackle was used to lift the head away from the block. This done, the cause of the problem was exposed. A small ball bearing was sitting in number two combustion chamber. It was definitely a ball bearing. It was ferrous. My magnet told me so. The head was then put on the bench and a flow through test was carried out (a quantity of fuel was poured into the combustion chambers with the spark plugs fitted). Number two, three and four retained the fuel but in number one the fuel passed easily

by the exhaust valve. This was removed and inspected. There were marks on the edge and on the inside of the valve head where a ball bearing had belted the valve and escaped. The valve was then placed in a lathe and sure enough there was the unmistakable wobble of a bent valve. Fortunately, there were a few valves in a container and a few spare head gaskets on the garage shelf.



Above: The exhaust valve on number one. You can see where the ball bearing was caught between the valve and valve seat and then escaped.

The pistons were closely examined at that point and it was seen that the tops of number one and two pistons had been peened by ball bearings. Where did they come from?



Above: An interesting pattern produced by a ball bearing bouncing up and down on the piston.

If it had been one object like the little screw-on top from a spark plug, it could be understood as an accident. But what about not one but two ball bearings? When the Riley had been started initially it sounded sweet and it ran for maybe 15 minutes or more. When the original spark plugs were replaced with NGKs there were no ball bearings in my pockets or on the bench and I was not asleep. So how did the ball bearings get into number one and number two combustion chambers? The only time when the Riley was out of my sight was when it was on the car trailer when the cruiser, trailer and Riley were parked in the street overnight.

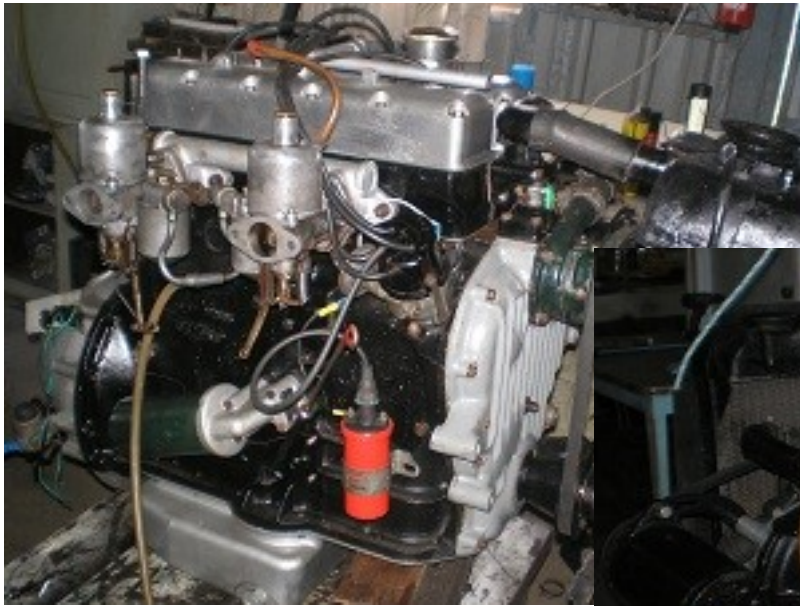
Melissa Townsend's RMB: Chassis No 61 8777 by Chris Reynolds

Melissa Townsend is a new member whose Riley was passed down from her late Father, Mel Parker. He had purchased the car from Neil Bending in 2009. Our Register identifies the car as originating in Melbourne and bought by Ron Cook in 1958. Ron was originally stationed at Amberley, but subsequently relocated to the Gold Coast. He was something of an enthusiast and also owned a Vintage Sunbeam and a Veteran Overland.



Above: Melissa Townend and partner Nathan

Melissa initially contacted the club seeking assistance with her car as her late father had been "tinkering" with the carburetors and the car no longer ran. Having discussed the problems with her and at the club's Tuesday meeting it was decided that we'd offer to look at the car and attempt to get it going as a "Tuesday Group" project. The car was subsequently delivered by Melissa's partner, Nathan, to the Club House a couple of weeks ago. (Continued next page)



Pathfinder motor

completely rebuilt, complete with all accessories all rebuilt, pistons are 40 thou oversize all bearings replaced with modern slippers. Engine can be



seen and heard running at Marcoola, the engine belongs to the Riley Club most club members reckon it is worth about \$3000 dollars. Have included a couple of photos.

Thanks Brian.Jackson.

Interested parties may contact the QRMC spare parts officer, Mark Baldock for further details or make an offer.

Melissa Townsend's RMB continued:

The car has had some hard times since the 1950s and we spent some time examining the car on the hoist, compiling an initial list of items requiring examination/remedy. It is not the intention to restore the car to a state where it will meet roadworthy standard, rather it is our intention to get the car running with a good idea of the further work required. We will then run Melissa through the list of work so that she and her partner can proceed with some confidence.

The car came with a lot of spare parts, which must have come from another car which was dismantled at some earlier time. These include a gearbox, many engine components, radiator cowl, flywheel, brake shoes, etc. Amongst the spares were the carburettors, which had been removed from the engine. All spares except the gearbox were inside the car in the boot or backseat.

The current state is that the carburettors, the

initial focus of the alleged problem, are being examined and adjusted by Brian Jackson. The Distributor is also under scrutiny. We have had the engine turned over by the starter motor and it appears to have decent compression on all cylinders (we have no gauge so this is subjective only, but bodes well). The water pump, which was initially seized, now turns but has a small leak. Our next tasks are to check the (after-market) fuel pump and to refit the top end of the steering tube and dashboard, which have had screws removed at some time. We also plan to examine the brakes for any faults (the brakes work but appear to be sticking).

It'll keep us occupied for a few weeks yet !