

ISSUE # 88



**FEBRUARY
2022**

MELBOURNE MEMBERS

SHEPPARTON CHAPTER

The official and registered
Publication of the BMC-Leyland Car Club Inc in Victoria in 2014. A00615200N

The “WOBBLE KNOCKER”



**Our Vice President, Francis Borg dressed to kill in a video for his band.
Sorry Frankie, couldn't help myself!**

BMC-Leyland Car Club Inc

A0061520N

Committee of Management

Website: www.bmcleylandcarclub.org

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Phone number for all contact **0421841939**



PRESIDENT.	(CO FOUNDER)	Gary Turner.
VICE PRESIDENT.	(FOUNDER)	Francis Borg.
SECRETARY.		Norma May.
TREASURER.		Cheryl Sawyer
MEMBERSHIP.		Sue Wilson.
EVENTS & SOCIAL Coordinator.		Sue Wilson
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WEBMASTER.		Gary Turner
VICROADS CPS PERSON.		Sue Wilson and Francis Borg.
COMMITTEE MEMBERS.		Bryce Eishold, Cheryl Sawyer. Ramy El Sukkari. Vince Stok, Terry Sawyer.
REGALIA.		Gary Turner and Sue Wilson

The following members are authorised by the club to sign VicRoads renewals.

Gary Turner, Francis Borg, Norma May, Sue Wilson, Terry Sawyer, Vincent Stok.

The following members are authorized to sign Standard Declaration and Eligibility forms for the CPS.

These members are club scrutineers and Safety Officers.

Gary Turner, Francis Borg, Terry Sawyer, and Vincent Stok.

(No new cars will be admitted to the scheme unless the VicRoads CPS person, Sue Wilson, grants prior permission.)

Club Scrutineer's and Safety Officers are for signing off on the VicRoads Vehicle Eligibility and Standards Declaration Forms and for advice only. As of March 31, 2017, all cars must require a RWC including all those of pre-1949.

This publication contains general information, which does not necessarily reflect the views of the Club, its Committee or Editor and should not be relied upon without specific advice from a qualified professional.

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Anyone wishing to reprint an article can do so if the source is acknowledged.



Hi everyone, I hope everyone is keeping safe and Covid free.

One of our members up here in Shepparton, David Rooks has bought himself a 1954 Austin A70 and has enlisted Lloyd Newnham and I as apprentices to help him where we can. The car came with all the parts needed to complete the restoration plus double ups of some of the parts. The car had been painted around 25 years ago and has been sitting in a shed ever since. New headlining, carpet and all the chrome parts have been re-chromed and stored inside the car. We have everything required to finish this project so I will keep you all informed with our progress as we fumble and bumble our way through.

Big thank you to Clive and Jill Millsum who put on a small run to Lysterfield National Park. It looked like a great day out and we are sorry we missed it. There are details further in this newsletter.

There are a few runs coming up and I hope as many members as possible can attend. Richard Simpson has been able to organise a couple and members can make it a day trip or make a weekend of it. These runs are available for all our members to attend, and it does not matter where you live, you can attend.

The next couple of months looks like it will be busy with a number of runs coming up. Check them out and PLEASE let us know if you can attend. From picnics, pub runs, air shows, we have it all so before the weather turns to crap let us get out and do as much as we can, while we can.

If you want to do an impromptu run at any time, let us know and we will send out an email to everyone to let them know. Otherwise just put it on our Facebook page.

I have included in this newsletter an article on the Austin Freeway/Wolseley 24/80 60th Anniversary. I know a number of members will be interested to have a read of it. There are eight extra pages which makes this newsletter big.

Gary Turner
Editor
BMC-Leyland Car Club.





February 20th (Sunday)

Lunch at The BIG Strawberry

Meeting point: M.O.V.E. (Shepparton Motor Museum) at 10:30 for 11:00 departure.

Travel up to Koonoomoo which will take around 50 minutes or so.

We will have a light lunch at the café and possibly a small look around the area.

Bring your classic or modern and have a great day out.

February 20th (Sunday)

AOMC All British Day.

Yarra Glen Racecourse.

Not an official club run but members are welcome to attend. If anyone does get to go a few photos would be nice if you could send me some. Thanks.

March the 13th. (Sunday)

Swanpool Motor Festival

Richard Simpson is organising a group from Melbourne to meet up at Lilydale for a drive up on Sunday 13th

Details further in this newsletter.

APRIL 2nd. (Saturday)

Tallarook Pub for lunch.

Another run by Richard Simpson and this time the club is off to the TALLAROOK PUB for a good old country pub lunch.

Details further in this newsletter

April 10th (Sunday)

Tocumwal Air Show

Leaving from Shepparton we will travel up to Tocumwal to enjoy the air show just like we do at Tyabb every second year. Details will follow if future magazines.

April 15th (Good Friday)

Dookie Hotel, The Gladstone.

Family Fun Day Good Friday appeal.

Details further in this newsletter.

May 21st (Saturday)

Mornington Peninsula Wine Tour

May 28th and 29th.

Winton Historic. Winton Motor Raceway.

Details to follow closer to the event.

REGALIA

Car Club Banner	\$5.00
Embroidered Cloth Badge	\$10.00
Club Cap	\$15.00
Grille Badge	\$35.00
CLOTHING	
T-Shirt	\$25.00
Polo Shirts	\$30.00
Rugby Jumper	\$35.00
Club Dress Shirt S/S	\$35.00
Leather Bomber Jacket	\$220.00



Contact Sue or Gary for details - 0421841939

How to organise and put on a run.

Choose a month and a date that you can help

Once chosen, decide on a time and place to meet

Contact Sue and let her know so she can co-ordinate with the editor and committee.

Ask members to say if they are attending and make sure you have their phone number and give members yours. This will be possibly put in the newsletter anyway.

On the day get to the meeting point a few minutes early if you can.

Wait for members to arrive and leave at the designated time.

Try and travel in convoy. Do the right thing and if you cannot see the member behind you, stop and wait for them in a safe place. Another reason you need phone numbers.

Upon arriving check that everyone has arrived.

Take a note of who came, where you went, what happened, any story and any other details for doing a run report.

Forward your notes to Gary so he can write up a run report for the magazine

CLUB PERMIT SCHEME SIGNATORIES.

The authorised members who can sign your renewals are as per the following:

Sue Wilson, 222, 65 Channel Road, Shepparton, Vic 3630

Terry Sawyer, 15 Kingfisher CRT, Carrum Downs, Vic 3201 (also for new vehicles)

Francis Borg, 1321 Murradoc Rd, St Leonards, Vic 3223 (also for new vehicles)

Norma May, 1321 Murradoc Rd, St Leonards, Vic 3223

Vincent Stok, 27 Mawby Rd, East Bentleigh, Vic 3165 (also for new vehicles)

OUR NEXT RUN

February 20th. (Sunday)

The BIG Strawberry at Koonoomoo.

We are off to **The BIG STRAWBERRY** at Koonoomoo Victoria.

Meet at M.O.V.E. (Shepparton Motor Museum) in Shepparton, GV Highway at 10am and leave at 10:30 for a leisurely drive to the farm.

We will have lunch there and then we can wander around the big shed and see a collection of car Memorabilia, motor bikes and so on.

Visitors are more than welcome to attend even if you do not have a classic car.

I have booked for our group and although the menu is limited during the weekends due to the lack of staff, it promises to be a great day.

Ring now to reserve a spot to confirm you are attending please. 0421841939.



BMC LEYLAND CAR CLUB RUN – SUNDAY 13TH MARCH

Members are invited to this enjoyable day out! For Melbourne members we will initially meet in Lilydale at 8am for 8.30am departure in the service road in front of the Olinda Creek Hotel at 179 Maroondah Hwy, Lilydale. *Lots of nearby coffee shops and public toilet...!*

We will then drive the hour or so via the Melba Highway to the second meeting point around 9.45am in the hamlet of Yarck – again coffee and bakery, and public loo stop ! Members from Shepparton and any who have driven other routes can join the convoy of BMC cars there!!!

Departing Yarck around 10.15am for a one-hour drive to Swanpool where we will join around four hundred other historic cars at this great country meet...

No need to register – just turn up on the day (any questions call Richard Simpson 0419.528.130)



**SWANPOOL
MOTOR FESTIVAL**

SUNDAY 13th MARCH 2022

Albert Heaney Oval • 2426 Midland Highway Swanpool
\$5 Entry from 8am

Children Under 16 Years FREE
No Dogs Allowed to Enter Festival

DISPLAY VEHICLES
Cars, Bikes, Trucks, Tractors, Buses, Boats, Race Cars, anything with an engine
ENTRY \$10 (Inc. 2 Adults) – **SHARE IN THOUSANDS OF \$\$ PRIZE POOL**

FURTHER DETAILS
www.swanpoolanddistrict.com.au
swanpool motor festival
or contact Ross Coles – 0417 351 304
swanpoolmotorfestival@gmail.com

Swap Meet & Market Stalls
LIVE BAND "RATTLER"
Take Away Food, Drinks, Coffee & Ice Cream Vans



STRICTLY NO DOGS

SATURDAY - APRIL 2nd , 2022

Whatever you do, do not miss this Club convoy lunch run to the historic

“TALLAROOK PUB”



A great day out for members and any guests/potential new members you would like to invite to come along and join us...!

Melbourne based Rendevous/Starting Point :

Yarra River end of Stiggants Street in Stiggants Reserve , Warrandyte.

Meet at 9.15am for a 9.30am departure.

Country members might like to arrange a convoy from Shepparton via Gary & Sue or come down to Pheasant Creek (Kinglake West) for 10.30am, or simply meet at 12.30pm at Tallarook.

Warrandyte starters will drive in club convoy for around 50 minutes via Kangaroo Ground St. Andrews and Kinglake to the Pheasant Creek “**Flying Tarts & Bakery Café**” for a morning tea/loo stop (or feel free to B.Y.O. morning tea!). *(Some members may wish to join the group there around 10.30am if that is more convenient from their home address!!)*

Then **around 11.15am** we will continue our easy drive for approximately 1 hour along the very scenic route through Flowerdale and Strath Creek towards Kerridale, after which we follow the Goulburn River westwards to **Tallarook township around 12.30pm for country lunch at the fabulous Tallarook Hotel.**

You can free wheel home the same way, or straight down the Hume Freeway...!

So, overall, there is just under 2 hours of quieter scenic country road driving time, a couple of good stops to refuel both yourself and the car - and a terrific lunch to enjoy!!!!

NOTE:

FOR THE PUB PLEASE “REGISTER BY WEDNESDAY MARCH 30th” YOUR PARTICIPATION AND NUMBERS TO RICHARD SIMPSON BY TEXT OR PHONE TO 0419.528.130

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST.

Let us know if you would like to join us in this event, please. Sue 0421841939



AN EPIC AIRSHOW EXPERIENCE NOT TO BE MISSED

WARBIRDS, AEROBATICS, STUNTS, GROUND DISPLAYS, FOOD TRUCKS AND PLENTY MORE!

The airborne entertainment is set to be a must-see spectacle, with over 5 hours of non-stop flying displays.

Catch rare and unique Warbirds that once called Tocumwal home, turn back the clock to World War 2 with exciting displays you may not see again!

Witness unbelievable aerobatics from some of Australia's top champion pilots. From spine-tingling solo performances to hair-raising formations, we have got it all!

We will be meeting at M.O.V.E. Shepparton's Motor Museum, GV Highway and travel in convoy to the air show. Make a day of it or a weekend if you like.

Further details to follow shortly.



EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST WANTED FOR MAY.

MAY. Date to be confirmed.

Peninsula Wine Tour and Lunch.

This year our good friend and wine expert, Brett Huxtable, is taking us on a wine tour of the Mornington Peninsula.

Some may have gone to the previous tours over the past couple of years, but it is time to rotate destinations and return to the Peninsula.

In previous years we have been taken to the Yarra Valley and last year to the Bellarine Peninsula which was really enjoyable.

We are running this run, in conjunction with **Motafrenz** who will be coming along for the ride as they have done in the past. The more, the merrier!

The day will start meeting at the BP Peninsula Link (outbound) petrol station from 9:30.

From here we will meet and chat with fellow members over a coffee or breakfast.

Now depending on numbers on the day we will initially split into two smaller groups for the wineries to cope with numbers, space and Covid restrictions.

We will be visiting three wineries which will be confirmed closer to the day.

Lunch will be at the Flinders Golf Club which has something for everyone plus amazing views.

We will finish at approximately 4:30 for your return home.

Enquiries phone Brett 0405445849 or Sue 0421841939.





Barry Cardell has for sale his **1977 MGB** in excellent mechanical condition. Near new zip out back windows. New brake pads, new fuel pump, electronic distributor, electric fan and so on. New leather seats but the paint is poor. \$13,500. Contact Barry on **0403329689**.



Notice:

To advertise any vehicle in this magazine I need the following. If not provided it will not be included in this magazine, Facebook pages or website.

At least six pictures of the vehicle, a complete description including year, make and model, repairs done, overall condition and a price.... Be realistic in pricing.

You are the one that knows your vehicle, not me, so do not just tell me what you want to sell or buy. I need all the details as required above or it is not being published.

PROJECT Austin A70

A project by David Rooks, Lloyd Newnham & Gary Turner.



Part one was to get the place to store the car while we worked on it. Dave had bought a carport in a kit but needed a hand to put it up. Dave and I put the two ends of the carport up and the next day Lloyd and a friend, Norm came around to help us do the other sections up. It was going well until one of the side beams fell and knocked Lloyd on the noggin'. It hurt and now he knows why we call him an "egg head!" After we got over that we finally got it up which left Dave to put on the roof and spouting which he did over the next couple of days.

Part two was to get the car to Dave's place in Shepparton and Lloyd was there to give him a hand to get it off the trailer. Lloyd's head was ok by that stage, well the outside was, not sure about the inside though!

Part three we go stuck into remove the radiator after I decided to fill it and water poured out

everywhere, so we knew that was stuffed. What a job to remove that but we managed to get it out in the end with Sue and Wendy giving "girly" instructions. So off that went to get repaired. Then the air cleaner came of along with a heap of other bits and pieces that seemed to get in our way.

When Dave bought it, he was told the starter motor was a bit sus so that was the next thing to be pulled out. In the meantime, Dave had been able to get a new starter motor from a member of the A40 Car Club in Melbourne. We managed to get it out only to find that the starter motor was in good condition. So, we looked at the solenoid and other wiring and it was decided to properly inspect the solenoid which seemed ok but all the wiring around it was old and needed replacing so Dave, being an ex-sparky, decided he would be able to handle all that and that is where the project is now.



WATCH THIS SPACE

Coming soon for all members.

David Rooks, Lloyd Newnham and I will be organising a good old fashioned car rally. We haven't got a venue yet, but it will have all the usual rally type excitement including finding items on the way, mystery roads, time trials plus heaps more. It's been discussed that the rally will last around one and a half hours with possibly a coffee break halfway. Points will be awarded for items collected, items found, plus more. So please, keep an eye open for when this rally will be on. There will be plenty of prizes including a booby prize for someone.

A lot of planning must be done yet but it's hopeful we will run it in the next few months. Points off for speeding. Points on for getting back within the calculated time frame.

Heaps of fun and you'll have to concentrate and use your brain for some of the cryptic clues along the way.

Will keep you posted.

RUN REPORT

5th FEBRUARY

UNOFFICIAL CLUB RUN.

Eighteen people. Eleven cars

Clive and Jill Millsum held a casual run to Lysterfield National Park on Saturday the 5th of February, and it turned out as a terrific day out for all that attended. Arriving around 11:30 the members got together for a chat and a picnic.

Clive and Jill, Terry and Cheryl, Jo and Kel, Ron and Pat, Kirsty and Michelle, Vince and Marion, Bryce, Shane Coutts, Peter Peacock, Bill, wife, and Peter Bernardi.

These types of runs are what members do enjoy and I thank Clive for his enthusiasm and hosting this run. I hope there are more, and we hope we can attend next time, well done.





Article.

Austin Freeway and Wolseley 24/80. 60th anniversary of tomorrow's car, today.

Where were you in 1962?

This is the second in a series which highlights this pivotal year in Australia's automotive history. It was a time of change and expanding choice.

In quick succession between January and August 1962, Chrysler, BMCA, Holden and Ford released new, locally constructed vehicles of similar dimensions, engine capacity, number of cylinders and price. All were aimed at the affordable family car market. Australia's car buyers never had it so good.

In two short years the public watched their choice expand from the under-performing FB Holden to the trim, taut and terrific XL Falcon with its smart "Thunderbird" roof line, the upmarket Zephyr Mark III, the powerful and well-equipped R and S Valiant, the EJ Holden—looking like a smaller version of the 1961 Chevrolet—and BMC Australia's (BMCA) Austin Freeway—advertised as "tomorrow's car, today"—and the luxury Wolseley 24/80.

At this point it is worth mentioning the pricing of the sedans to provide a comparison. At a Holden dealership, the Special retailed for £1110. The Falcon Deluxe and Freeway were listed at £1130. The Valiant cost £1255. The EJ Premier, the only one with automatic as standard, was £1420. The Zephyr and Futura were £1374 and £1252, respectively. The Wolseley 24/80 was £1225. An automatic added approximately £120 to the price of each model.



A publicity photo of the Freeway. The horizontal lines of the grille were an attempt to visually widen the car.

Make Way for The Freeway

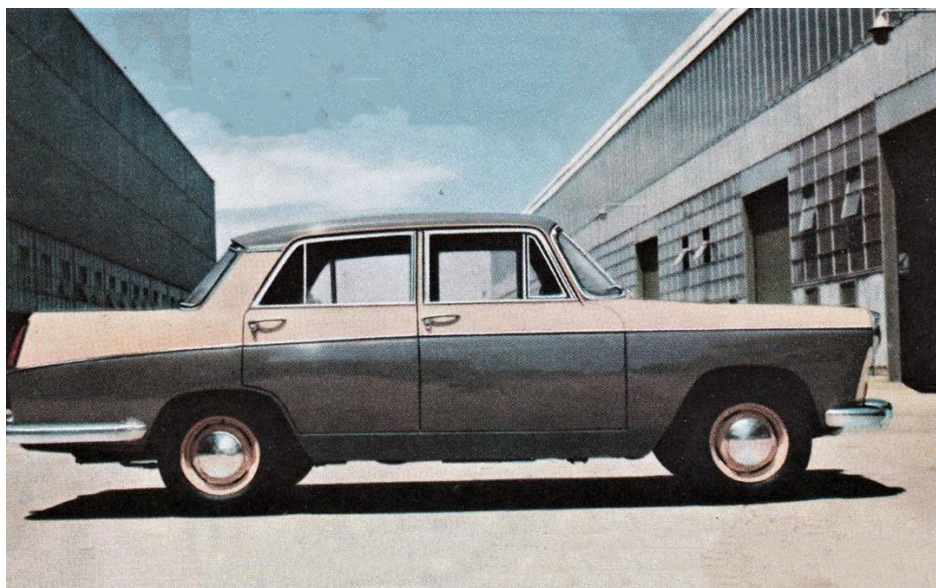
If you had been in the offices of BMCA's senior executives in January 1962, when they learned about the launch of the R series Valiant, you might have seen a few concerned faces.

The cause of the frowns had its source in BMCA's plans for the imminent launch of their new six-cylinder Austin Freeway and 24/80 Wolseley, into the same market segment that Chrysler had just entered. They would now be perceived as the fourth entrant. Adding to the pressure was the sell-out of the R series, and the hurried introduction of the S model. This would establish a minimum benchmark that would be an ideal measure to rate BMCA's success by the media.



This photo of the Wolseley 24/80 was taken at Sydney's Rushcutters Bay. Check out the crank handle location hole in the front bumper bar which was covered by the number plate.

The new cars were a big bet by BMCA. In 1950 the company luxuriated in a 30% market share, higher than Holden's. Trouble was, by the time the family sized, Pinni farina styled Austin A60 Cambridge, Morris Oxford and Wolseley 15/60 appeared in early 1959, with the B-series four-cylinder engine, BMCA's share had sunk to just 11%. BMCA managers knew their underpowered "big car" trio was not competitive in a market that worshipped at the Church of Saint Six. They had long held aspirations of winning a slice of the lucrative six-cylinder market, if only their UK bosses would listen to them.



This brochure photo was taken on an internal roadway at BMCA's factory in Zetland, Sydney, located on the corners of South Dowling Street, O'Dea Street and Todman Avenue.

To gain the inside story on the development of the Freeway and Wolseley, I spoke with BMCA historian and author Nairn Hindhaugh. Nairn worked in BMCA's PR department in the 1960s and owns a Freeway, an Austin 1800 Mk II and a Morris Major Elite.

"They had a tough time convincing their UK bosses of the need for a six. They could not understand why Australia was any different to the UK. The Australians did eventually prevail, but so much valuable time and effort was wasted getting to that point. The ninety-eight cubic inch/1.6 litre B-series engine was expanded into a 146 cubic inch/2.4 litre six. A running prototype was assessed in early 1960. It produced 80bhp/60kw. BMCA tagged it the "Blue Streak," naming it after a British missile and rocket project."

At the start of the project, BMCA only had Holden in their sights. Grabbing just 10-15% of Holden's reported 1959 sales of 112,000 units would be enough to ensure a welcome boost in volume and profits.



The local design team made as many changes to the Austin Cambridge as their small budget and under resourced facilities allowed, to transform it into the Freeway.

When the XK Falcon arrived in 1960 those assumptions had to change. Two rivals meant more competition, increased buyer choice and a reduced slice of the overall market. Now, in early 1962, came the realisation that the market had changed again. The Valliant's appearance meant sales would be split four ways.

Chrysler's marketing campaign for the Valiant did BMCA no favours either. "Finest of the 3" proclaimed the print advertisements and brochures. The clear message was that the other two were Holden and Ford. Car buyers were being subtly told that BMCA was not a contender, even before it had launched its new cars!



The Freeway advertising jingle was recorded on a 45rpm record by radio station 2GB and given to dealers to play in their showrooms.



BMCA was keen to ensure that buyers understood the Freeway was not a mildly re-styled four-cylinder Austin A60 Cambridge. It was now made by and for Australians and boasted a SIX-cylinder engine named after the "blue streak" ICBM rocket. So, make way!

But there was no turning back for BMCA. An extravagant media and dealership reveal was held at Sydney's famed Trocadero function centre in March. BMCA's advertising agency even wrote a song for the occasion, asking everyone to "Make Way for The Freeway."

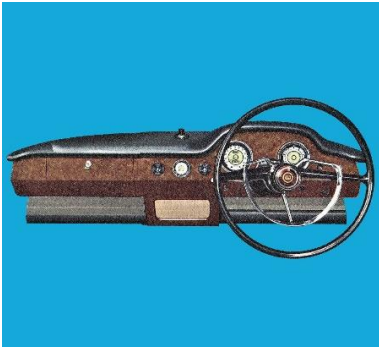
*"Make way for the Austin Freeway, powered by the Blue Streak Six,
Made completely by and for Australians, a sure-fire beauty that will kick at the flick of a starter,
Such amazing fuel economy, alive with safety features and so many extras,
And unsurpassed value as you are ever going to see, dependability is really guaranteed,
Built within the smallest part, and durability is also guaranteed,
A three-speed gearbox, and brand-new door locks,
Make way for the Austin Freeway, tomorrow's car today."*

You can hear the song by clicking on the link at the end of this story.

Truly Australian

The Freeway and Wolseley arrived in dealerships during April and the battle for market share began in earnest. BMCA's dealers could not rely on winning sales through new styling. A lack of money and the UK parent company's indifference to the Australian market meant BMCA was stuck with the tall and narrow shape of the Farina cars.

Lacking a proper styling studio and with few staff, the company's chief designer, John Holt, reworked the Freeway's grille to visually widen the car and rummaged through the UK parts bin and applied the rear fenders of the Riley 4/68 and MG Magnette models. The Wolseley's styling was unchanged.



The Wolseley dashboard embodied restrained wood panelled elegance. An automatic 24/80 was priced at £1,338. No other car at its price provided its level of luxury inclusions. By comparison, the automatic EJ Holden Premier was £1,420.



The engine gave the dealers a little more to boast about. Nairn picks up the story. *"The Australian-only 146 cubic inch/2.4 litre six-cylinder engine produced 80bhp/60kw. In the horsepower stakes it was midway between the EK Holden and the XK Falcon's base engine. Against the Valiant there was no comparison because it was 80% more powerful. And when Ford introduced the optional 170 cubic inch/2.8 litre engine with 101bhp/75kw, in May 1962, in the XK, BMCA fell to second last in the rankings, just above Holden's old grey motor."*



A print advertisement declares the marketing proposition for the Wolseley, but the Valiant was way ahead of power and cubic capacity.

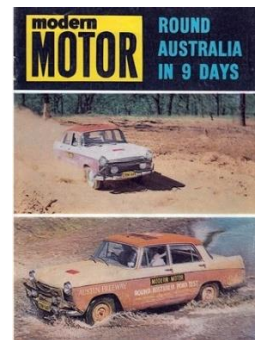
It was on the inside where the duo excelled. Both were exceptionally well equipped compared to their rivals. Let us hear from Nairn again.

"The Freeway, which also came as a wagon, offered inclusions that Holden and Ford made you pay for. Standard was a heater/demister, oil and temperature gauges, locking petrol cap, padded dashboard, full width parcel tray and seat belt anchor points. The Wolseley provided the Freeway's equipment plus carpet, burl wood dashboard, clock, leather upholstery and centre rear seat armrest. It also undercut the EJ Premier's price. Both could be had with a Borg Warner automatic. The brakes had a larger swept area than the rivals."



The Freeway wagon was a slow seller.

To prove the Freeway was a robust “all Aussie” car, BMCA’s PR manager, Evan Green, and Modern Motor publisher, Jules Feldman, drove one around Australia in a record nine days and six hours. Much of the route took them on outback dirt roads. The message was clear: the Freeway was robust and was hailed as “truly Australian.” This slogan used frequently in advertising after the round Australia “test.”



Modern Motor founder, Jules Feldman, and BMCA PR manager, Evan Green, “raced” around Australia to demonstrate the speed and durability of the “all Australian” Freeway. It resulted in great publicity for BMCA and must-read stories and photos for Modern Motor. To appease the usual gang of wowers and do-gooders, it was publicly called a “trial.”

But no matter how hard they tried, BMCA could not entice many buyers to part with their money. It is agreed that when production of the Freeway and Wolseley ended in 1965 only 27,000 had been sold. That is a monthly average of only 660 cars. By comparison, the XL Falcon had reached 4,000 sales a month and the EJ Holden was way ahead with 11,900.



After the round Australia “trial” the Freeway was paraded in cities and towns as being “Truly Australian” and “True Blue.”

Why did car buyers shun the Freeway and Wolseley? Nairn shares his views.

“The cars were three years too late to the market. They looked very much like the previous four-cylinder BMCA cars, which had not been able to make an impact on Holden’s sales. Had BMCA released them as six-cylinder cars in 1959, to compete with the FB Holden and Ford Zephyr, they would

have established a foothold. But up against the “big 3” of 1962, their narrow stance and tall body put them at a disadvantage. They were up to five inches higher and six inches narrower than the competition. Buyers noticed those differences.”



The UK built Freeway prototype, still with its Morris Oxford grille, is compared with the XK Falcon and FB Holden. This photo demonstrates just how anchored the Freeway's and Holden's styling was in the 1950s, with high placed headlights accentuating their narrow bodies.

Intriguingly, there was an attempt to widen the car. Nairn explains what happened.

"In 1961 a group of engineers decided to build a wider Austin A60. They saw this as an effective and inexpensive way to create a six-seater. They did a cut and shut of five inches/130mm, similar to what Mitsubishi did with the first Magna, and showed it to Bill Abbott, BMCA's manufacturing director. For some unknown reason, Abbott berated those who had done this work and ordered the car destroyed. No one to this day knows why Abbott reacted the way he did to such a great idea."

The company's financial situation and the success of the Mini and 1100 also had an impact, says Nairn. *"The American car companies had deep pockets to fund price cuts and support dealers with massive advertising campaigns. BMCA did not have that sort of financial capacity to support what was an interim model. With the success of the Mini and 1100 in Australia, all efforts were directed at those volume sellers rather than the Freeway and Wolseley."*



BMCA commissioned a number of renderings for Wolseley print advertisements and brochure. They show the car to advantage.

I asked Nairn what it is like to own and drive a Freeway.

"My 1964 Freeway was rather down-at-heel when I bought it for \$150 in 1983, but the interior and basic mechanicals were sound. I had driven new ones when I worked at BMC 20 years before and they endeared themselves to me. It has been a perfect club touring car; two of us took it from Brisbane to Perth and back, it has been round Tasmania, the Barossa Valley and back, now with about 125,000 miles on the clock. An engine rebuild was undertaken before the WA trip, just to make sure there were not any problems."

Since acquiring his Freeway in 1983, Nairn Hindhaugh has given it a solid work out, driving through all states and territories except the Northern Territory.

"Once these cars get into their stride, they sit comfortably on the road and cruise effortlessly at posted speed limits, with plenty in reserve. Not the quickest away from the lights, but there is more than enough useful torque where it is needed between 30 and 80 kmph. It keeps up with traffic, and it is also a great open road car. I have had a few minor problems with the car; one of the best things is the lack of rust – the Roto dip rust-proofing system really did work."

"Most of us would love the proverbial E-Type, but family cars, such as this one, are a nostalgic reminder of the way we were. I think it's important to preserve our motoring heritage and these cars bring a lot of joy to the many of us who can remember when they were the latest on the road."



Nairn's Freeway pictured on the Nullarbor Plains. BMCA built robust cars, which is for sure.

First Prototype Still Exists

The first prototype of the Freeway, built at BMC's Longbridge factory in the UK in mid-1960 still exists. The car landed in Australia in December 1960. Allan Foy owns it, an ex-BMCA employee, who bought it in December 1962. The car was originally a Morris Oxford, fitted with the Australian six-cylinder engine. It underwent numerous reliability tests and exterior trim configurations. It is a rare automotive artifact.



Compare the white 1960 Freeway prototype with the production version. Differences include rear fender trim and a chrome strip on the C pillar to separate the two-tone paint schemes. The grille was developed in Australia by the small local design team working in a cramped, walled-off section of the engineering department.

Freeway Legacy

So, what is the legacy of the Freeway and Wolseley? For me, there are four.

The first recognises that it was BMCA's first attempt to develop an "all-Australian" car that appealed to mainstream buyers.

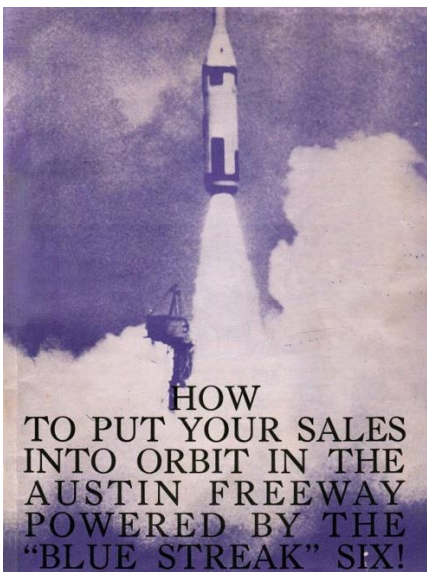
The second is the forgotten pioneering of the affordable "luxury" version of the basic family sedan, in the form of the Wolseley 24/80. Interestingly, the Wolseley outsold the Freeway, which leads to the speculation that BMCA would have been better off focusing on that end of the market.



The Austin's and Wolseley's production run ended in September and October 1965, respectively. The Freeway shared a crank handle location hole in the bumper bar with the Wolseley.

The third is that despite the lack of success with the Freeway and Wolseley, this did not deter the company's top managers. They gave the family car segment another two tries with the X6 Tasman/Kimberley and P76.

The fourth legacy is that the lessons learned were ignored. Ford and Holden had extensive financial and people resources to push back against any new competitor, which they did with the Freeway/Wolseley, and again on the X6 Tasman/Kimberley and the P76. Oh yes, 1962 was an important year.



BMCA provided dealers with a comprehensive sales book. The cover showed the blue streak rocket. Contents included decals, diagrams of how to dress up their showrooms and colour charts.



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