

# GEARBOX

**APRIL 2023**

## HUNTER MODEL AUTO CLUB INC.

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**TRAX SUPER SCALE 'LE' MONARO**

**'PROTOTYPE'** PHOTO TAKEN AT THE TRAX VISIT TO THE CLUB IN 2015

**LOOKING BACK** - The late Bob Rusconi and his wife Sue, both from Trax, attended our March 2015 meeting. The above pic is a prototype of the then soon to be released Trax 1/24 Scale resin model of the 1976 HX Holden Monaro LE Coupe. It was one of many items Bob showed members that night.

### THE NEXT 3 PICS - MARCH REAL MODEL COMPETITION PLACEGETTERS



**ABOVE** - Ken Mc's Assorted Fire Trucks came in first. **BELOW** is second placegetter, David R's NSW Police HWP vehicles. **The final pic** is Gerald's assorted Fire, Police and Ambulance models display that came in third place. Well done to all the members for a great turnout for the March comp.



**Being twenty in the seventies was much more fun than being seventy in the twenties.**

Paddy took 2 stuffed dogs to the Antiques Roadshow....

"Ooh!" Said the presenter, "This is a very rare breed, do you have any idea what they would fetch if they were in good condition?"

"Sticks." replied Paddy.

# HUNTER MODEL AUTO CLUB INCORPORATED

## Minutes of Club Meeting Held at Edgeworth Sport and Rec Club on 14 March 2023

**Meeting Opened:** 7.30 pm.

**Members Present:** 19      **Apologies:** 4      **Visitors:** 2

**Welcome to Visitors:** President Andrew welcomed Scott and Allison McCallum to our Club.

**Previous Minutes:** Moved: David Rosser      Seconded: Ernie Williams "That the February 2023 Club Minutes be accepted".      Carried.

**Treasurer's Report:** The Treasurer reported that the Club funds stand at \$993.09.

Moved: David Standen      Seconded: Matt Vile      "That the Treasurer's Report be accepted"      Carried.

### **Correspondence:**

#### **Outwards:**

- i) Members - Stirling Moss Story on Model Collecting.
- ii) Members – March Model Competition and Meeting Reminder.
- iii) Members and Others – March Gearbox (email and post).
- iv) Edgeworth Sport and Rec Club – Request to hold Toy Fair on 20 August with venue fee at \$100.
- v) Members – Special Edition Gearbox Edition No. 1 for 2023.

#### **Inwards:**

- i) All Australian Journeys – Holiday Tours 2023 Catalogue.
  - ii) Peter Ralston – Letter of resignation from Club.
  - iii) Coventry UK MC – Spring 2023 "Wheel Spin" magazine.
  - iv) South Hants UK MC – March 2023 "Wheel Nuts" magazine.
  - v) Barry Lloyd (Wessex MC Editor) – Feedback on Austin A90 article in Gearbox.
  - vi) PH Cheah (SMAC Secretary) – Feedback on Special Edition Gearbox.
  - vii) West Aust MCC (WAMCC) – Feb 2023 "Showcase" magazine.
  - viii) Edgeworth Sport and Rec Club – Confirmation to hold Toy Fair on 20 August with venue fee at \$100.
- Moved: Ken McGregor      Seconded: David Rosser "That the Correspondence be accepted".      Carried.

### **Matters Arising:**

- i) Hunter Toy and Hobby Fair – To be held on Sunday 20 August 2023 at Edgeworth Sport and Rec Club.
- ii) Kurri Kurri Vintage Day Display – Members displaying are to set up from 7.30am and be completed by 9.00 am on Sunday 26 March 2023 at the Kurri Kurri Public School Hall.
- iii) Steamfest on 22/23 April 2023 – Maitland Public School has been contacted for a Club Display, but no further information is available.
- iv) Fire and Rescue Open Day – Club Displays to be held at Tarro and Morpeth Fire Stations on Sat 13 May 2023. Date to be confirmed.
- v) Fighter World Return Visit – A visit has been booked for either 10 or 11 June 2023. Date to be confirmed.
- vi) Show Us Ya Slotz Return Visit and Display – Planned for September 2023.
- vii) Sydney Tramway Museum, Loftus Visit – Possible future visit.
- viii) Club 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Models - Ernie brought along a very nice example of model on a plastic plinth produced some years ago.  
Bill will follow up on this idea together with a couple of other leads that he has received.

### **General Business:**

- i) Peter Ralston Resignation – President Andrew read out Peter's letter in full to the members. After a brief discussion, Peter's resignation was accepted.
- ii) Catalina Association – Currently restoring a Catalina plane at Beresfield. Possible Club visit with a guided tour later in the year.

- iii) Steam Railway Visits – Later possible visits to Thirlmere Rail Museum and Zig Zag Railway.
- iv) Club Donation- Our very generous Club Friend Peter Miranda has donated \$250 towards the running of our Club which is very much appreciated.
- v) Bulahdelah Town and Nabiac Motorcycle Museum – These have been suggested as possible future Club visits.
- vi) Hunter Toy and Hobby Fair – To be held at Edgeworth Sport and Rec Club on Sunday 20 August 2023 along similar lines to the one we ran last year.

There will be a Club raffle run on the day and we are looking for the donation of suitable prizes. The proceeds raised from the Fair will be donated to our nominated local charity.

To date the following charity nominations have been received to be voted for at our April meeting – [Got Ya Back Sista, Hunter Special Olympics, Riding for the Disabled, Canteen, Jenny’s Place, Hunter Prostate Cancer Alliance and Westpac Helicopter.](#)

**Model Competitions:**

**“Actual” Model Competition:** “Emergency Vehicle” – Any scale up to five (5) models.

1 <sup>st</sup> ..... Ken McGregor .....	Fire Fighting Appliances.....	32 Points
2 <sup>nd</sup> ..... David Rosser.....	NSW Police.....	18 Points
3 <sup>rd</sup> ..... Gerald Kominatos.....	Police, Fire and Ambulance.....	15 Points

**“Virtual” Model Competition:** “Race Car” - Any scale up to three (3) models.

1 <sup>st</sup> ..... Terry Payne .....	Bathurst Memories.....	17 Points
2 <sup>nd</sup> ..... Matt Campbell.....	Ferrari’s F333SP.....	12 Points
Equal 3 <sup>rd</sup> ..... Bill Kenchington.....	Brian Muir and Bob Jane.....	11 Points
And .....	Brian Blyth..... Holden Dealer Team.....	11 Points

**Next “Actual” Model Category - April:** “Vehicle Associated with Food or Drink” - Any scale up to three (3) models.

**Next “Virtual” Model Category - April:** “4WD Vehicle” – Any scale one (1) model only.

**Meeting Closed:** 8.20 pm.



**NO ONE BELIEVES SENIORS.....EVERYONE THINKS THEY ARE SENILE.**

The couple had married as childhood sweethearts and had moved back to their old neighbourhood after they retired. Holding hands, they walked back to their old Primary school. The gates were not locked, so they entered, and walked into one of the schoolrooms and found the old desk they'd shared and where Jerry had carved I love you, Sally.

On their way back home, a bag of money fell out of an armoured car, practically landing at their feet. Sally quickly picked it up and, not sure what to do with it, they took it home. There, she counted the money - fifty thousand dollars!

Jerry said, We've got to give it back, but Sally said, you know the old saying, Finders keepers. She put the money back in the bag and hid it in their linen cupboard.

The next day, two Police Constables were canvassing the neighbourhood looking for information on the missing money. They knocked on their door and said, Pardon me, did either of you find a bag that fell out of an armoured car yesterday?

Sally said, No Constable.

Jerry said, She’s lying. She hid it in the linen cupboard.

Sally said, Don't believe him, he’s getting senile.

The Police Constables turned to Jerry and began to question him.

One said: Tell us the story from the beginning.

Jerry said, Well, when Sally and I were walking home from school yesterday ....

The first Police Officer turned to his partner and said, Were outta here!

## THE ICONIC LOTUS CORTINA IS 60 YEARS OLD.



*The Ford Cortina was 60 years old last year. This year, the legendary Lotus Cortina has turned 60 as well.*

*There is no doubt that the Lotus Cortina was another example of Ford coming up with the right product at the right time, a trend that seemed to occur with Ford autos quite often. The following story has some input from a previous Gearbox article about the Lotus Cortina range over the years.*

**Classic and Sports Car** put out an article about the 60th birthday of the Lotus Cortina and they indicated that in the early 1960's, Ford's Dearborn Headquarters in Michigan initiated a programme aimed at pushing their brand's involvement in British motorsport to higher levels of participation with the aim of becoming a spearhead in European motor sports. To start with, the *Ford Consul Cortina* Mark 1 made its debut on 20 September 1962 when launched as a family sized car to compete against the Vauxhall Victor and similar sized sedans. It was initially fitted with an 1198cc engine which was an upgrade of the Ford Anglia's 997cc engine. A short time later, Ford Britain produced a Cortina 'Super' model with a 1498cc engine and followed up with the Cortina GT early in 1963 which had a lowered suspension and a 'hotted-up' version of this engine.

Colin Chapman, who in 1948 had founded his own company that would become Lotus Engineering Limited in 1952, formed the Lotus Group in 1959 with one company producing vehicles for motor sport and another specialising in Lotus components. Chapman's first foray into single seater race cars was back in 1957 when he was using the Coventry Climax engines. However, in the early 1960's, Chapman wanted his own Lotus engines so he had the designer of the Coventry Climax engine, Harry Mundy, design a twin-cam version of Ford's Kent engine.

Around the time of Ford's new Consul Cortina's release, Lotus was in financial trouble, but as luck would have it, Ford approached Chapman with a proposal to fit his Lotus engine to 1000 sedans to allow homologation for Group 2 racing. Ford arranged one of the new Cortina models to be used by Lotus as a 'development car.' In January 1963 at Monte Carlo, Lotus was able to show the motoring press their '*Consul Cortina developed by Lotus.*' Ford was then able to have the car homologated for motor sports by September 1963. They supplied the two door Cortina body shells to Lotus who built the race car using the Lotus twin-cam engine fitted with a gearbox from the Lotus Elan.



*All pics of the Lotus Cortina are of the author's 1:18 scale diecast model by AUTO art.*



It was in motor racing that the Lotus Cortina forged a remarkable reputation. Overall, the Ford factory were racing cars in Britain, Europe, and the USA. Team Lotus were also racing cars in Britain for Ford as was the Alan Mann Racing team in Europe. The Lotus Cortina was able to beat almost anything except the 7-litre V8 Ford Galaxies, and later, the Ford Mustang.

In the USA, the Sports Car Club of America (SCCA) created the Trans-Am Series in 1966 which was based upon commercially produced cars that had been modified for racing competition. Originally the series was open to FIA Group 2 Touring Cars with two classes, over 2.0 Litres and under 2.0 Litres with cars from both classes racing together and with Ford of Britain having a full factory effort with the Alan Mann Lotus Cortina sedans. Interestingly, **Allan Moffat** drove a Lotus Cortina to victory in the third race of the 1966 series. Yet, in the time the Trans-Am series was run with two separate classes competing together, Ford never won the under two litre class.

A notable Lotus Cortina driver was Sir John Whitmore who won the European Touring Car Championship in a Lotus Cortina in 1965. He amassed an amazing 'first in class' in 8 of the 9 races of the 1965 European Touring Car Championship whilst finishing first overall in 6 of the races. He retired from car racing in 1966 and, at the time of writing this article originally, he was then in his 70's, and still working as a management consultant. As well, he was still driving in historic car events, such as the Goodwood Revival well into his seventies.

1965 would be the golden year for the Lotus Cortina with a class win in the British Saloon Car Championship, though a Mustang was outright winner. Jackie Ickx won the Belgian Saloon Car Championship, and a Lotus-Cortina won the New Zealand Gold Star Saloon Car Championship. Other wins were the Nürburgring Six-Hour race, the Swedish National Track Championship, and the Snetterton 500.

All up, 3306 Mark 1 Lotus Cortina models rolled off the assembly line before production ceased in 1966. However, it was apparent to Ford that the motor sport success of the Lotus Cortina was reflected positively on Lotus as a company and not on Ford itself, especially as there were always perceived shortcomings in the Mark 1 Cortina range. They decided to develop the Mark 2 Lotus Cortina in-house at their competition department at Boreham. The car was then built at Dagenham alongside the Cortina GT to be more cost-effective. The Mark 2 Lotus Cortina was released in March 1967 and was powered by a hotter 1557cc twin-cam engine similar to that of the Twin Cam Escort model.

As an aside, many British Constabularies ran the Mark 1 Lotus Cortina as a Traffic and pursuit vehicle replacing the more expensive Jaguar. They were heavily modified for standard Police usage and associated equipment. As an example, they ran an alternator for the extra electrical gear.

As I wrote in the previous Gearbox article, there are plenty of diecast models of the Lotus Cortina Mark 1 out there in various scales, including race versions. But the Lotus Cortina Mark 1 model is very special to me as when I was still at school, we were all into the Airfix 1:32 scale plastic construction kits of planes and motor cars. One of my favourites then was the Lotus Cortina version and I must have made five or six models and painted them up as race cars, stripes and all. I always thought that the completed model appeared too high on display, so by the use of a sturdy pocket knife, you could cut down the suspension and make the body sit much lower. So, you can see that I loved that little Airfix model car. *Terry.*

## ~AUSTIN A30 - A conventional car in miniature.



Regarding the title of this article and the two-door version shown in the lead-in pic, **Giles Chapman** described the **Austin A30** as a [conventional car in miniature](#) in his book 'Cars we loved in the 50's.'

Though there have been previous articles on BMC associated autos in the Gearbox, the only reference to Austin's family sized cars was in the **March 2023 edition**. It was about the **Austin A90** released in **1954** and fitted with a 2,639cc straight six cylinder engine. **Giles Chapman** said that the **A90** was built like a tank, was good to drive and was considered quite a satisfactory family car for the middle classes.

However, the smaller four-door A30 was first seen by the public at the **1951** Earls Court Motor Show, was advertised as the '**New Austin Seven**' and it would be Austin's competitor to the Morris Minor.



**Austin A30 four door sedan by Model Road Reproductions in 1:43 scale white metal.**

Though released in May 1952 as a four door family style model, *(the two-door models were not introduced till late in 1953)* there was an interesting story about its development at Austin's Longbridge Birmingham Plant. After the end of WW2, Austin were unable to replace the little Austin Seven range due to the British Government's interventionist policies that were pushing to have more than half of British automobile production available for export, and at the same time, imposing restrictions on domestic sales of motor vehicles that would last a number of years. A consequence of this situation was that Austin could only produce a larger car designed for the American market.

A few years before the outbreak WW2, Morris had become the top-selling small car in Britain after Leonard Lord had become Managing Director of Morris Motors in 1933. Austin was the other major auto producer in Britain and, until the mid-1930's, their little Austin Seven had led the 'small car' sales war. Leonard Lord would eventually resign in 1936 and in 1938 he accepted a role as works director at Austin's Longbridge plant. With Lord Austin's death in 1941, Leonard Lord became the most powerful person in the Austin organisation.

In 1949 a planned merger between Austin and Morris fell through and Leonard Lord gave approval for a new small car project to be undertaken in an attempt to regain dominance of that market over Morris. Initially, North American stylists were hired to give Austin's planned small car an 'up-market' appearance, however this concept proved unpopular with close confidants of the company, even though the stipulated idea of using unitary construction, a first for Austin, was taken up. This had caused quite a debate between Austin engineers, but Lord was also an engineer and he believed it was the way to go so that the new Austin would do away completely with a chassis.

Two of Austin's engineers in charge of seeing the concept through to fruition, Ken Garrett and Ian Duncan, had experience with the stress engineering required from their time in the aircraft industry. The little vehicle's new construction process was a giant leap forward in vehicle production technology for Austin at this point in time.

Interestingly, Austin's hierarchy had also considered front wheel drive with a transversely mounted engine and this was ten years before the Mini. The end result though was the *AS3* which would be known as the *Austin Seven* again for a short time and, in looks, was really a scaled down rendition of the larger Austin sedans. However, Austin's new 803cc four cylinder overhead valve engine was another brilliant concept in that it would add the term 'advanced' to the way this little auto would be judged by motoring journalists. It must be remembered that a side valve engine was the norm at that point, and that type of four was powering the A30's competitor, the Morris Minor.

This 803cc unit was designed by Austin engineer, Eric Bareham, from a scaled down A40 1200cc engine that became known later as the 'B' series engine. Also, the little A30 itself would be almost half the weight of the A40. The 803cc unit would later be known as the 'A' series engine and the famous engine specialist, Harry Weslake, was responsible for re-designing the combustion chamber and valve port areas that led to the little Austin's engine being so efficient for its capacity. In 1952, the magazine *Autocar* wrote, 'It is quite lively and the engine is pleasantly flexible, although it must be admitted that at the top end of the speed range there is a definite impression that parts of the little engine are moving very quickly.'

Competition with the Morris Minor is interesting as motoring writers had the Morris as the better proposition as far as handling went, however, the Austin, at between sixty and one hundred Pounds cheaper than the Morris, depending on options, was considered to have plenty to recommend it and proved a strong seller from day one. Eventually, and probably to the amusement of Austin engineers, the new 803cc 'A' engine would later go on to power the Morris Minor. And speaking of this engine, mounted in both in-line and transverse form and in various capacities, over 14 million were produced up to the year 2000.



***A restored A30 four-door model by Dinky Toys and note - [Made in England](#).***

The little A30 was basically a rear wheel driven conventional little sedan and quite a 'thrifty' model. To keep production costs low, it came with only a single windscreen wiper, single sun visor and a single rear tail/brake and numberplate light. You could order a passenger side sun visor and windscreen wiper as optional extras. It was not fitted with a heater, but that could be optioned as well. It had bucket seats in front and a bench seat in the rear all in vinyl, yet they could be ordered with leather facing. The A30 had a top speed of 70 mph (112 kph) and achieved 42 mpg (6.7 litres/100kms.)



***Above left: Bill's 2-door A35 by Vanguards and at right 4-door A35 by IXO and both in 1:43 scale***

In 1954, Austin produced a 5 cwt (250kg) van version to compete against the Morris Minor van and a station wagon based on the van and known as a 'Countryman.' The Morris Minor van had a larger carrying capacity, but the Austin being lighter and with a stiffer suspension, offered buyers the same payload and it should be noted that it stayed in production till into the late '60s.

With the late 1953 update, the A30 was available with Deluxe trim that included ashtrays and bumper bar overriders as well as opening rear side windows on the 2-door models. In 1956, Austin upgraded the little Austin with a larger engine of 948cc capacity where it immediately became the most powerful car in its class and was re-named as the A35. The upgraded 'A' series 948cc engine could also use a higher octane petrol which was becoming a popular choice in fuel around this time. Externally, the main difference was that the A35 had a larger rear window and the grille was larger, was painted and had a chromed horseshoe styled surround against the A30's small fully chromed grille. One important change on the A35 was the fitment of modern turning indicator lights whereas the A30 had a pop-out indicator mounted in the 'B' pillar operated by a knob in the centre of the dash. *Seen on the lead-in pic.*

In November 1956, and till the end of 1957, Austin produced a pickup version of the A35. From September 1962 till May 1966, the A35 van had its payload raised to 6cwt with the 1098cc engine installed initially only to be replaced by the 848cc engine in October 1963 till production ceased.



*Above left is Bill's Corgi 1:43 scale model of the A30 Van and at right a Classix A35 Countryman in 1:76 scale.*

Though the A35 remained in production, it's days were numbered with the release of the Austin and Morris Mini Minor models in 1959, though the Countryman versions stayed in production till 1962 and the Van till 1968. Interestingly, Austin never produced a convertible though a prototype was completed in 1955 and shown at various motor shows. It never went into production and is currently housed in the British Motor Museum at Gaydon in Warwickshire, England. With the larger engine in the A35, this little sedan had plenty of success in its class in British saloon racing and we all know about Australia's Peter Brock and his A30 machine. *See next pic* of this model from Dinkum Classics *courtesy of Bill K* on the left and at right another version with different livery and racing number produced *by Ace Models*. From late 1967, and racing mainly in Sports Sedan and Sports Car categories over a two year period, Brock competed at 65 race meetings with his A30 winning 102 races.



For the Australian market, the A30 was produced by the Austin Motor Company of Australia from 1952 to 1954 and by BMC Australia from 1954 to 1956 with the A35 production following. *Terry.*

# ---MARKS MILK FLOATS---



The *lead-in pic* is a Matchbox 21c, the Commer Milk Float. I have fond memories of these milk floats as my Mum would clean the local church hall where I was able to play with two of them in the halls toybox. So in adult life, any time I find one, it is added to my fleet, and without doubt it will always be my favourite model of all time. The local milk float from my childhood was the same colour, and at the time I would not have believed that they could ever disappear from our streets.



The Commer Milk Float entered the Matchbox range in 1961 and was a very popular model remaining in production until 1968. There were numerous variations of the milk float over its casting run, about a dozen. The early ones have grey wheels, milk bottle decals on the doors and clear windows, the last having black wheels, red & white cows on the doors and green windows. The bottles also changed colour over the model run going from cream to white.



If you were living in England in the 1970s, you will know this as the ad campaign from 'Unigate Milk.' If you did not drink your milk, a Humphrey would steal it and believe it or not, they did sell more milk. Australians may have memories of being forced to drink a small bottle of milk at school each day and no amount of Humphreys would have made that warm milk any more palatable.



In the early days, the milk float was horse drawn and this could be seen up to the 1960s. The stop start and light payload made the horse ideal. This was also the reason for electric milk floats as this sort of use would not suit petrol or diesel engine vehicles. The horse drawn float in this *next photo* with a Ford 100E, dates it to the 1950s.



Wales & Edwards was a British manufacturer of milk floats based in Shrewsbury and they were particularly well known for their three wheelers. It was one of the oldest milk float manufacturers lasting from the early 1940s to the 1990s. In 1989 the company was acquired by Smith Electric Vehicles.

They sold mainly to United Dairies (later known as Unigate) and in the early years, to Express Dairies. The basic design has evolved throughout W&E's existence before finally ending its days as the Rangemaster. *Previous photo.*



*Co-op milk floats being loaded with full crates at their Reading depot in the 1950s.*

Not all milk floats were electric, these are some petrol ones, a Morris J2, *next pic left*, and the famous Ford Transit. *next pic right*. They were more suited to country routes. This is also why electric milk floats never made it out to Australia as distance and speed were the two things they could not cope with.



So how is it we all know about these Pommy milk floats. Perhaps because they have been part of popular culture for decades. With the likes of the driverless CA Bedford in Casino Royal, the spoof 007 movie in the 1960s to Benny Hill with Ernie the fastest milkman in the west in the 1970s (Benny Hill actually was a milkman before he became a TV star) and more recently Father Dougal McGuire in Father Ted.



*Previous pic - Father Dougal McGuire in Father Ted*



*Above - From the Casino Royal film and below from Benny Hill.*



*Above left - Spot-On 1/43 milk float from the 1960s. Above right - Oxford diecast 1/76. Below Matchbox CA Bedford in 1:76 scale*



And finally, what can happen if you leave a man in a shed with a milk float for too long. A hot rod milk float when you need milk in a hurry.



The last is a steam powered milk float which by the time you have built up steam the last customers on your round would be getting yoghurt. What is strange is that the hot rod is a bit of fun, but the steam powered milk floats are for real! **Mark.**

