GEARBOX

AUGUST 2023

HUNTER MODEL AUTO CLUB INC.

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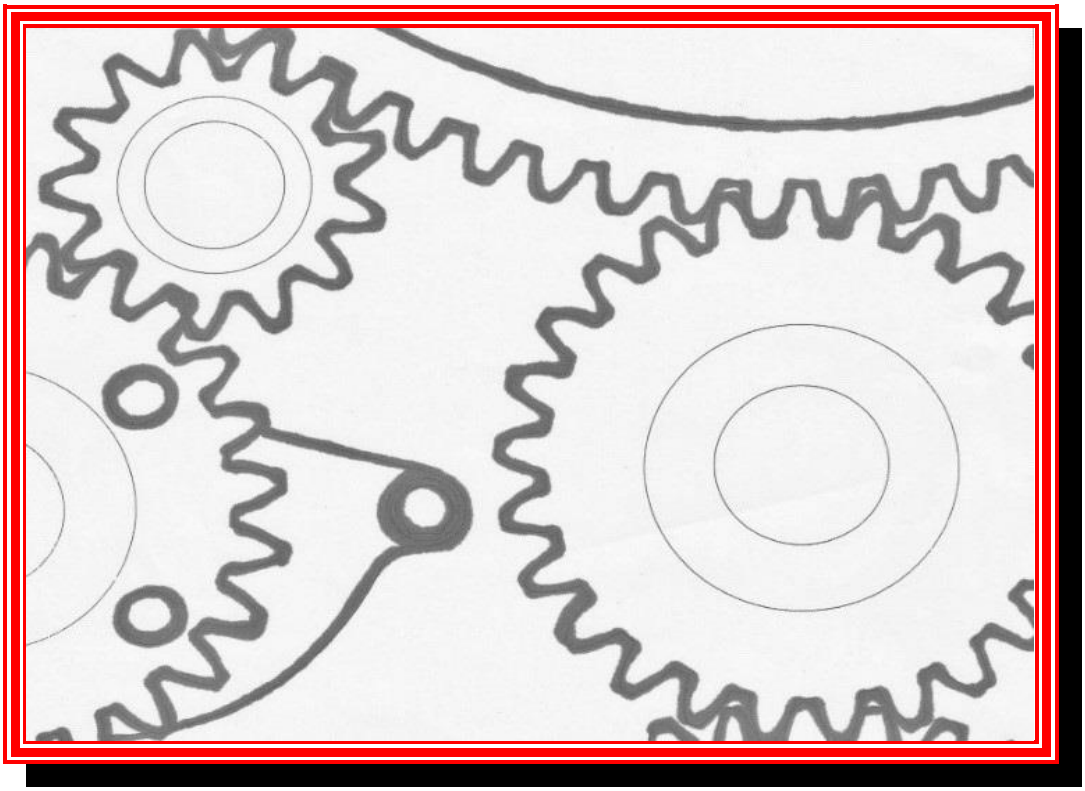
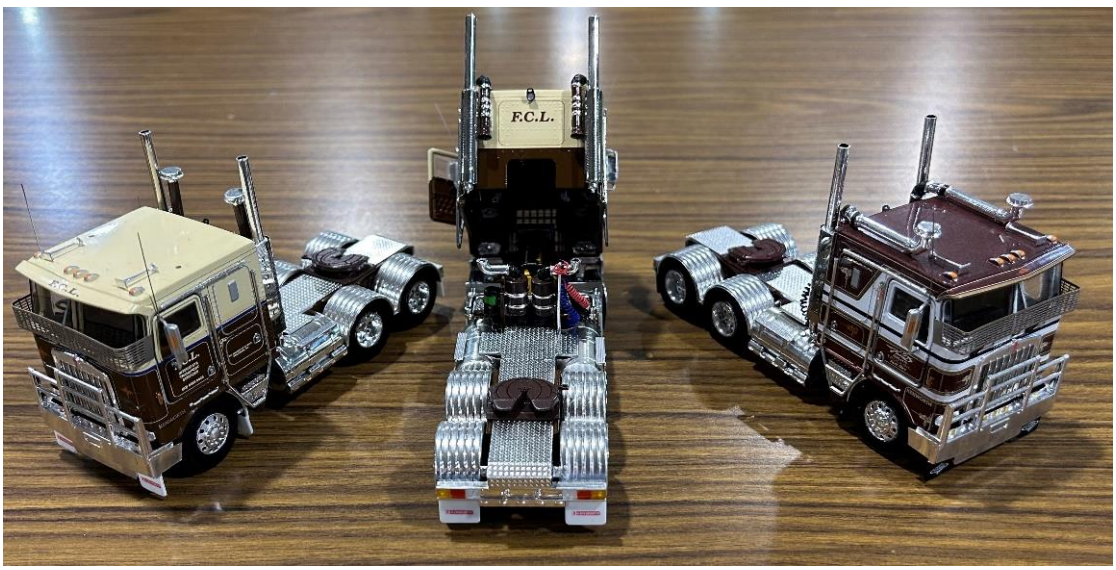


A reminder of the Club's visit to see the restoration project of a `Black Cat' i.e., a PBY-5A Catalina.

- PLACEGETTERS FOR THE JULY REAL MODEL COMP: PICS IN ORDER BELOW -

1st David S – Mercedes Gullwing
2nd Ben – XY Ford Falcon
3 rd David R – FCL K100's



HUNTER MODEL AUTO CLUB – SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR JULY 2023

Christmas in July Dinner Meeting:
This was our Christmas in July Dinner Night and as such we dispensed with our general business section except for the matters reported below.
The meals and the company were great, and an enjoyable night was had by all who attended.
We had 18 members in attendance, 1 guest and 3 apologies.

Toy and Hobby Fair:
The Toy Fair was discussed briefly, being the second last meeting before the Fair date of Sunday 20 August.
Tables - We have 28 paid up stallholder tables with the potential for 10 more tables to be sold which brings the total tables to 38.
From what the Edgy Club has advised it is likely that there will be a sufficient number of tables available. We will be better able to confirm this by next meeting.
Fair Advertising – Radio Stations 2NURFM and 2HD have both included our Toy Fair in their Community Events Board. In addition, the Toy Fair is featured on various Facebook pages.
Our Club's calico banners advertising the Toy Fair will be displayed outside the Edgy Club on the day.
Raffle Prizes – We would welcome member donations of suitable prizes for the raffle.

Catalina Amphibious Plane Restoration Visit, Beresfield:
Paul has arranged a guided tour for our Club with morning tea provided on Sunday 23 July starting at 9.45am for 10.00am (Cost $10). Details including directions will be forwarded by email to members. Lunch has been organised afterwards at Mortels, Thornton.

Model Competition:
"Virtual" Model Competition: "Railway Related Vehicle" – Any scale, up to (3) models only and ONE PHOTO ONLY.
1st……Ernie Williams……3801, 4401, 4201 Steam Engines……20 points.
2nd…..Matt Campbell……2 – 6 - 4 Steam Train……14 points.
3rd……Beth Campbell……Hornby Inter City……13 points.

"Real" Model Competition: "Brown Vehicle" – Any scale, (1) model only.
1st……David Standen……Mercedes Gull Wing……27 points.
2nd…..Ben Wing……XY Falcon……19 points.
3rd……David Rosser……FCL K100's……18 points.

Next Meeting: *Tuesday 8 August at 7.00pm for 7.30pm at Edgeworth Sport and Rec Club.*
It will be a normal night with business to be conducted, and both model competitions to be conducted.

Next ***"Virtual"*** Model Category: *"Yellow Vehicle"* – Any scale and up to three (3) models and ONE PHOTO ONLY.
Next ***"Normal"*** Model Category: *"Movie Vehicle"* – Any scale and up to three (3) models.

Meeting Closed: 8.20 pm. Bill Kenchington – Secretary

SOME OF THE HAPPY FACES AT THE CLUB'S CHRISTMAS IN JULY DINNER MEETING.

-AUTOBIANCHI - STELLINA - A little Italian Cabrio -

At the time of writing this, I was having some late nights watching the Tour de France on the TV. I spotted one team riding ***Bianchi*** brand bicycles, amongst the most historic and long-standing bike brands in the highest level of competition in the sport. The team using the ***Bianchi*** bikes, ***Arkea-Samsic,*** is a Brittany based outfit, (North West France) and they have been very successful over recent years in bicycle racing events conducted by the UCI (Union Cycliste Internationale) the world-wide governing body. ***Arkea-Samsic*** passed UCI's criteria for entry into the 2023 World Tour events that includes the 21 stages raced continually each day over a three week period for the tours of France, Spain and Italy. Their bikes, as well as those supplied to the ***Arkea-Samsic*** women's team, carry the *`Reparto Corse'* name, ***Bianchi's*** high-performance unit that have produced high-end racing and team-issue bikes down through the years. The bike ***in the next pic*** is similar to those used by ***Arkea-Samsic*** for the 2023 Tours.

What has this to do with model cars you might ask. Many years ago I took a photo of a little convertible vehicle in Italy, but later on I couldn't identify it. I posted it on our Club's Facebook page and asked if anyone could tell me what it was. Bill K was able to say that it was an ***Autobianchi Bianchina Cabriolet*** [convertible] circa 1960. This led to a story in the ***December 2020 Gearbox,*** parts of which are as follows:

Autobianchi *was a company formed in 1955 through a partnership of Bianchi, Fiat and Pirelli, the large Italian tyre company. `Bianchi' is a maker of bicycles, particularly for modern day world-wide professional competition teams.*

It seems that Bianchi, as an Italian company, has a long automotive history and started off when a young Italian, Edoardo Bianchi, started up the Bianchi company in 1885 to manufacture bicycles. Like many other bicycle makers, he would eventually expand into making motor cycles and cars. By the start of the 1920's, Bianchi was the third biggest Italian motor car manufacturer after Fiat and Lancia. Of note, the bicycle was still a big part of the Bianchi company and Edoardo was always looking for innovative ideas to promote his products. He developed the front wheel calliper brake as is still used on bikes today and in 1915, he developed a folding frame bike for the Army that had wide tyres and a form of suspension. It turned out to be the forerunner of today's Mountain bike.

Between the wars, the Bianchi company was turning out around 70,000 bicycles a year and their competition teams had considerable success in bicycle racing which would continue post WW2.

Edoardo Bianchi passed away in 1946 and the business was taken over by his Son, Giuseppe….. In 1957 they released their first model Autobianchi model known as the `Bianchina Transformable' which was a partial convertible…… This Bianchina model was based on the Fiat 500, but with a new body and luxury items that put it into a higher price category. Though this was the aim of Autobianchi, it also gave Fiat a chance to test new automotive ideas that would appear on subsequent Fiat models…..

Over the years, Autobianchi would continue on, but internal issues saw Giuseppe Bianchi removed from the board and the subsequent total buy-out of the Autobianchi company by Fiat…… The Autobianchi `brand' was finally retired by Fiat in 1996 but the original ***Bianchi*** *company still make their top quality brand of bicycle today.*

Bianchi is now owned by the Swedish company of `Grimaldi Industri AB' and is still at the forefront of bicycle production including a recent joint venture with *Ferrari* to produce a special range of high-end competition bikes.

In that previous article about Autobianchi automobiles, I wrote that they produced an attractive little cabrio or convertible called the ***`Autobianchi Stellina'*** as shown in ***the lead-in pics*** and designed by Tom Tjaarda, the American born son of the Dutch auto designer John Tjaarda. Tom left university in the U.S. and moved to Italy where he was a stylist for Ghia and Pininfarina, Before starting his own design studio in 1984, Tom had also been the Director of Fiat Advanced Studios. However, my research also found an article that stated that Luigi Rapi, who worked as a designer for both Fiat and Autobianchi, was the designer of the Stellina. I have to say here that I often find a variance in information when researching historical motoring topics. Let's just say it was a joint effort between the two.

The ***Stellina*** was a smallish two-door convertible that was turned out between 1964 and 1965 by Fiat, who now owned the Autobianchi brand and was based on the structure of the Fiat 600. The Stellina was powered by a water cooled Fiat 600 rear-mounted over-head valve 767 cc (46.8 cubic inches) straight 4-cylinder engine with a single Weber carby. It delivered 29 hp or 22 kw of power through a 4-speed transaxle type gearbox and was stopped by hydraulic operated drum brakes on all four wheels. The Stellina had a top speed of 115 kph or close to 72 mph. It was a small car at only 12 feet (3.65 metres) in length and 4 feet 8 inches (1.4 metres) wide, but weighed only 660 kg (1455 lbs) so it was quite nippy.

520 Stellina units were sold till replaced by a similar, but slightly larger model, badged as the Fiat 850 Spider. A total of 152 were exported and it is thought that only ten Stellinas survive today, which makes it very rare indeed. *Terry.*

Above is the Auto Cult 1:43 scale resin model of the Autobianchi Stellina.

THE *TRAX* HOLDEN VN *`SS'* COMMODORE 1:43 SCALE RESIN MODEL

The ***lead-in pic,*** a recent addition to my model collection, is ***Holden's 1988 – 1991 Holden Commodore `SS' sedan*** and modelled by ***Trax*** in 1:43 scale resin. So let's review this model which is in Phoenix Red.

Quite often we speak about operating features on a model, yet with these 1:43 scale resin models, you don't have individual items like opening doors or steerable wheels as operating features. Basically, most resin models don't have moving parts at all and will have to stay in the clear display box in order to prevent them being damaged. So the external detailing is where you will judge the quality of the model and in this case, and I often refer to this as the `one metre' rule, Trax have definitely attained excellent quality in this model externally.

Overall, it has a good level of accuracy and the stance of the model as it sits fitted to the plinth, is satisfactory and realistic for such a small model. I think it achieves the lines of the original `SS' Commodore accurately, and the paint finish is not only well done, but pretty close to the original colour. The wheels, one of my favourite sets of `mini-lite' styled Commodore mags over any others in the life of the `SS' range, are well made, as is the badging on the model. One standout feature is the quality of the models clear plastic windows that allow you to see a well detailed interior that includes pleasantly fashioned and accurate seating.

Front and rear views of the Trax model shows the excellent detail in the wheels and badging.

Then there is the real VN `SS' Commodore? The ***`SS'*** tag was used by General Motors on their 1961 Chevrolet Impala to donote a specific trim and performance level in that model and it actually stood for ***`Super Sport.'*** There is plenty of Holden advertising that shows that Holden's `SS' tag stood for Sports Sedan. It was first used on the *1972 HQ Holden SS sedan* which was a Belmont trim level four-door model with a 253 cubic inch [4.2 litre] V8 engine and a four-speed manual gearbox. This is seen as the precursor to the four-door HQ Holden Monaro GTS sedans that arrived in 1973. Further *`SS'* badging was used on some Torana models and then the VH Commodore where following models continued with a tie up to Peter Brock's HDT outfit. It wasn't till the release of the new and larger bodied VN Commodore model range in 1989, that Holden set up the *`SS'* as a stand-alone `halo' model that would continue till the Commodore ceased production in Australia. *Terry.*

--- DATSUN 240Z – GOOD LOOKING WITH WILLING PERFORMANCE ---

It was known as the Nissan Fairlady `**Z'** in Japan, but we know it as the ***Datsun 240Z*** and the ***lead-in pic*** is a Del Prado model of the ***Datsun 240Z*** in 1:43 scale diecast.

Released in late 1969, it's a sports car that today, one might be tempted to say it would lag behind the modern equivalent as far as *`performance'* goes. You may also think it would be a little underwhelming for modern highway touring requirements, yet, if you read anything from journalists who have recently driven this little 1970's machine, you would be surprised to find their verdicts. After a recent drive, a ***Hagerty Insurance Review*** journalist had this to say, *`.....the 240Z just lapped it up, straight six throbbing away mid-tachometer, steering tracking true, and brakes hauling off speed – albeit with old-school pedal pressure – when someone dawdled out in front. The 240Z feels made for this kind of driving.'* The Hegarty journalist suggested that the Nissan designers and engineers were probably more inclined to have motorway driving in mind when putting pen to paper in the planning stages way back then.

Going back in time to 1934 we find Nissan Motors was created by the merging of two Japanese firms, the `DAT Automobile Company' and the `Jitsuyo Automobile Company.' Interestingly, Nissan Motors chose to use ***Datsun*** as their product name. Then in 1984, the company decided to change its product name to Nissan and this would cost millions of dollars in changing signs at dealers around the world, not to mention another US $50 million wasted on now unneeded advertising for Datsun products. ***Hemmings*** stated that this exercise cost Nissan around $500 million.

Then there was Yutaka Katayama a future president of Nissan Motor Corporation U.S.A. and a real visionary for the company. Known as *`Mr K'* he was the Nissan executive who pushed the company into entering the 1958 Australian Mobilgas Trial with two Datsun 1000 sedans. This type of event would be a first for Nissan and Katayama believed that the little Datsun vehicle was tough enough to survive the 10,000 mile race over some of the roughest terrain you could drive a motor vehicle over. Out of 67 entrants, only 37 completed the trial and they included the two Datsuns, and amazingly, they came in first and fourth in their *`under 1000cc'* class.

It was Katayama who pushed Nissan into setting up operations in the U.S.A. With his insight into North American automotive tastes, he was able to influence the company as to the best type of Nissan products to be sold there. He knew Americans loved sports cars and post WW2 had been buying the little European two seaters by the thousands, both convertibles and hard top models. He was responsible for the introduction of the Datsun 1500 *[Fairlady in Japan]* into the U.S. Together with later model iterations, it became a great seller and became successful in SCCA [Sports Car Club of America] racing. But it would be the Datsun 240Z that would top it all off for him.

The original design of this sports car, designated as the Model S30, had input from Albrecht Goertz who had been associated with Raymond Loewy known for his association with Studebaker. Goertz designed the Toyota 2000GT and the BMW 507 and also worked for many automotive companies over his career. However, today much of the credit for design of the 240Z is given to Nissan's Yoshihiko Matsuo and reference is usually only made to the *`influence'* of Goertz. I say this as the full story is complicated and controversial. ***How Stuff Works*** wrote, *`Strangely, Nissan later tried to shrug off Goertz's involvement until the threat of legal action forced it to come clean.'*

After the success of the Datsun 1500 *[Fairlady]* and follow up models, the 1600 and 2000, Katayama saw the opportunity for a sports car with more power from a larger engine and therefore, even better performance. He knew Nissan couldn't target the Ferrari or Mercedes sports car types in North America, but a market was there, and with the exception of the Corvette, it was an almost untouched market.

Auto Art 1:18 Scale diecast model of the later version of the Datsun roadster, the 2000 from 1967.

Matsuo's designs produced a sleek short tailed two-seater sports coupe with a long bonnet that was just the way the Americans liked a sports car then, and it could compete evenly with the in-form E-Type, but at a cheaper price. Upon release, American Motoring writers were quick to praise the new car, not only for its performance but its great value for money. It had plenty of space for two persons and had room for a reasonable amount of luggage. The ***Datsun 240Z*** is the car that set Nissan on track to be considered a world-class automaker according to How Stuff Works.

The 240Z was powered by a 2398cc straight six-cylinder overhead camshaft engine with twin side-draft carburettors. It developed 151 bhp or 113kw of power through a four speed manual gearbox and had a top speed of 125mph or around 200kph. It would also have the option of a three speed automatic and a five speed manual gearbox soon added. Brakes were discs up front and drums at the back and the suspension was independent all round with McPherson struts, coil springs, locating links and an anti-roll bar up front and coil springs, McPherson struts and trailing arms at the rear.

The interior was interesting as it seemed to be based on the Corvette and had full instrumentation, reclining bucket seats, a radio, an excellent climate system and full carpeting as standard. The 240Z also provided air conditioning and an automatic gearbox on the options list, something the other British sports car makers had not yet provided. This car was aimed straight at the North American market and was very successful in that regard through the advertising strategy of Katayama. And it did deliver. ***How Stuff Works*** wrote, *`Many compared it with the late, lamented Healey 3000 in overall character, while others merely raved about the 125-mph top speed, nimble handling, secure roadholding, comfortable ride, and refinement unheard of in a sports car of this price.'*

Above left - Datsun 240Z in 1:24 scale diecast by Franklin Mint. At right is the engine in Kyosho's 1:18 scale model.

Though production could hardly keep up with demand in the early years, ultimately, demand for the 240Z had slowed slightly by the time it's replacement, the 260Z, arrived on the scene in 1973. The new 260Z also had a built-in problem and this was the fact that it had a larger engine that should have been more powerful to compensate for the loss of power in the 2.4 litre engine due to new U.S. emission laws, but it didn't. As well, It was heavier, especially with the U.S. regulations based bigger bumper bars so that due to its weight up front, most buyers required power steering which added more weight.

Like the success in motor sports attained by previous Nissan products, particularly in North America as a competitor in Sports Car Club of America (SCCA) events, so too the 240Z would carry on the tradition. Peter Brock (The American PB) who had already tasted success in the Datsun roadsters with his company, Brock Racing Enterprises, went on to have many wins in his 240Z including winning his class in the SCCA National Championships in 1970 and 1971. All this was adding to the 240Z's selling power in the showroom. The actor Paul Newman had started to make a name for himself in motor racing with a Datsun sedan and went on to drive a 280Z for Bob Sharp Racing on the East Coast of the USA.

And then there was rallying. Granted, not your average 240Z as they were specially prepared by the company's *Nissan Works* to represent the factory in FIA rally competition. Nissan targeted Britain's Royal Automobile Club Rally, run through rural and forested localities, the Rallye Monte-Carlo, held on a sealed roads and in which they came second in class in 1971 and third overall in 1972 and they competed in the East African Safari Rally which was run in desert areas and which Nissan won in 1971 and 1973. It is believed that Nissan produced around forty factory Rally `Z' autos for International rallying all up, but with very few left in collectors hands today.

As an aside, for the 1971 East Africa Safari Rally, considered the most punishing rally on the FIA calendar, the Datsun 240Z took out overall winner honours, class honours, team honours and the manufacturers championship and became the first vehicle to take overall victory in its initial year of competition.

A `Special Edition' Datsun 240Z in 1:18 scale diecast from Maisto.

In Australia, the 240Z arrived in 1970 but only with the five speed manual gearbox, though a few models were imported with the automatic gearbox after 1971. They weren't cheap either, being more expensive than the Ford Falcon GTHO. ***Unique Cars Australia*** said, *`A $4500 introductory price ensured the new Datsun cost less than a GTV Alfa Romeo or Triumph TR6, however it was still considerably more expensive than an XU-1 Torana or Chrysler's new E38 Charger.'* Of note, Ross Dunkerton drove a Datsun 240Z to win the National Rally Championship in 1975 and 1976 and a 260Z for his win in 1977. As a result, Nissan won the Australian Rally Manufacturers Championship three years in a row. A willing little sports car for sure. *Terry.*

~~~~~ ROVER SD1 ~~~~~

Reading a **Classic and Sports Car** article recently prompted me to look at the ***Rover SD1*** for a Gearbox article and mainly because of an understatement that caught my attention. They wrote, *`The SD1 not only bore no resemblance to its P6B predecessor, but it also symbolised hope for the future of BL …. at a time of industrial disputes and faintly desperate advertising.'*

In my research I found a similar theme in **Auto Express** when they wrote, *`The history of the British motor industry is littered with heroic failures, but if there's one that really deserved to succeed above all of the others it's the Rover SD1.* ***European Car of the Year in 1977,*** *the SD1 was a brilliant concept; a luxurious and spacious large hatchback that could carry a family and their luggage in comfort.'* The SD1 also received the Don Safety award for 1977.

British Leyland revealed the all-new Rover 3500 on 30 June 1976, though it would be known by most as the SD1. They had started work on the SD1 project in 1971 and originally it was to be the replacement for the Rover P6 as well as the Triumph 2000 series. ***`SD'*** stood for *Specialist Division* and the ***`1'*** indicated it was the first *Rover and Triumph* jointly developed car, though there were no more `SD' joint projects to come.

To start with, Rover's focus was on both a six and an eight cylinder powered automobile that would provide a comfortable and excellent cruising vehicle. It was to be designed by David Bache and would end up with a body style a little out of the ordinary as far as executive cars went, being different to the traditional so-called `three box sedan' design. Bache wanted a five door sedan with overtones of Ferrari body styling and the Pininfarina 1800 concept car that was based on the Austin 1800. ***See next pic.*** And that is a story for another day.

Bache had started his career with Austin as an apprentice engineer ending up in their design studio. He moved over to Rover in 1954 as their first body stylist where he was responsible for updating the then current Rover sedans as well as the Land Rovers and later Rover sedans, especially the Rover 2000 and subsequent P6 variants.

The design and engineering team were slightly constrained by the allocated budget and had to use as much standard Rover componentry as possible. Yet, the rear suspension was compromised with the use of a live rear axle instead of the De Dion system from the Rover P6. Strangely, it worked well. They also used drum brakes at the rear, rather than discs as on the P6. Though intended for release in 1975, the SD1 wasn't displayed to the press till 1976 and initial reactions were similar to that of **Autocar** when they said, *`The Rover has its flaws – but we believe that these can and should be easily rectifiable as running changes.'*

At the end of the day though, poor workmanship in construction as well as an incredible industrial discord within the British auto building industry then, meant that the SD1 didn't achieve what should have been a very successful motor car. **Auto Express** said, *`Low-quality parts were screwed together with no love whatsoever, which is why instead of the SD1 saving Rover, it would be another nail in the coffin.'*

Secret Classics indicated that many still say today that British cars from the 1970s exemplified poor build quality. The reason Secret Classics gave for this comment is that there was often serious conflict between auto company executives and employees on the factory floor, especially through the unions, and there were massive periods of time lost through industrial strikes that would be unheard of today.

Add the more common issue of a lack of quality control in the checking of vehicles leaving the assembly lines, and you end up with vehicles that were of poor quality with some even having parts missing from the finished product. We all know the British auto manufacturing history that followed and, though Land Rover and Jaguar still exist today, they are owned by the Indian Tata company according to Secret Classics.

That could easily be the end of the story, but we will have a quick look back at the SD1 now, including my favourite, the Rover Vitesse, that also rated a chapter in Australian motor racing history. Upon release in June 1976 as the top-of-the-line model, the Rover 3500 was powered by a warmed over 3.5 litre twin SU carbie V8 engine from the P6 through Triumph's newly designed five-speed manual gearbox or an auto. In late 1977, Rover released a more economically priced and equipped Rover SD1 in Britain in both 2.3 litre and 2.6 litre capacity straight six engined models called the 2300 and 2600. The 2600 in particular received excellent reviews by the motoring journalists.

The P6 continued in production as a four cylinder model, as did the Triumph 2000 series models for a short time, though they ceased production in 1977. The first update to the SD1 occurred in 1979 with the addition of the ***V8-S*** model in an effort to have a more up-market model available. It took the standard 3500 and added more luxury items such as air-conditioning and a sun-roof. Then in 1980, to replace the V8-S, Rover turned out the ***Vanden Plas*** with nearly every luxurious option available as standard equipment.

1982 would see Rover add two four-cylinder engines to the SD1 range with one being a turbo diesel version. But the overriding issue that was still continuing throughout the production of the SD1 was workplace conflict with associated walkouts and strikes. Then in late October 1982, Rover released their best model in my view, the ***Vitesse.*** Rover had seen the success of BMW in Europe and felt that the SD1 was its equal as far as sporting appeal went, however, notwithstanding its use in motor sports events, it had never really been marketed that way.

The Vitesse was the so-called `sports model' of the SD1. The 3.5 litre V8 engine for the Vitesse was now fuel injected with better breathing and was boosted in power from 155 bhp to 190 bhp. [116 kw to 162kw.] The Vitesse had a lowered and stiffer suspension, bigger rims with wider tyres, a rear spoiler and body stripes and when released at the 1982 British Motor Show, British Leyland promoted it as a car with sports characteristics to show they were interested in producing fast cars again. Subsequently it would be developed to compete with some success in the British and European touring car competitions under the guidance of Tom Walkinshaw.

Autocar wrote, *'Enthusiastic drivers are likely to relish the stiffly sprung Rover's handling and acceleration response, if not some slightly agricultural aspects of its ride. It may lack the overall sophistication of some of its peers, yet we ended up liking the car almost for this very reason. It has a distinctly "animal" character all of its own.'*

I can remember the ***Rover Vitesse*** as a pretty serious racing car competing at ***Bathurst*** and on other Aussie tracks before the Walkinshaw team won the 1985 Bathurst 1000 km race in a Jaguar XJ-S. At first I thought that Rovers body style, though very handsome, sleek and tough, did look unusual on the track compared to the body style of the Ford and Holden competition that we saw in civilian guise every day on our roads. However, for a few years, the lively looking Jaguar Vitesse, in racing livery, was a common sight out here on the race track.

Tom Walkinshaw built an SD1 Vitesse in 1983 that came to Australia for the ***1984 Bathurst 1000 km race***. Driven by Jeff Allam and Armin Hahne it came first in `B' class and 12th overall. ***The next pic*** is the Tom Walkinshaw Vitesse driven by Steve Soper and Ron Dickson that placed 8th in the same class, but was the last car over the line, 47 laps behind the winning VK Commodore of Peter Brock and Larry Perkins. The Soper and Dickson Vitesse had only just been completed before being sent to Australia to race at Bathurst before going to New Zealand to continue in events over there. The Allam and Hahne Vitesse was returned to Britain where it raced till 1988.

For the 1985 Bathurst 1000 that was won by the Walkinshaw team's Jaguar V12 XJ-S coupe driven by Aussie John Goss and Armin Hahne, two Vitesse models also took part in the race. One was driven by Tim Slako and Geoff Leeds and the other by Barry Robinson and Jon Jeffry. The Slako car came in 11th overall but the other Vitesse did not finish the race. Slako and Leeds also raced the same 1985 Vitesse in the 1986 Bathurst race, but did not finish.

Around 303,000 SD1 models were built over a ten year period before being replaced by the front wheel drive Rover 800 series developed with Honda. Interestingly, the SD1 was also used by British Police and when production was ending, the Metropolitan Police Force stockpiled a large number to be gradually brought into service till 1989.

Above - Premium `X' make a nice 1:43 scale diecast model of the Vitesse and I have seen them on Ebay for around A$60 with free shipping from China. ***Below at left -*** Atlas 1:43 diecast scale model of the 1984 BTCC winning Vitesse of Andy Rouse and ***at right*** is the excellently detailed Cult brand Vitesse in 1:18 scale, but expect to pay around A$350-400 landed. Vanguards model the SD1 Vanden Plas in 1:43 scale as well as Police liveried SD1 sedans. Oxford also make the Vitesse in 1:76 scale. *Terry.*

- JAGUARS WE LOVED IN THE FIFTIES - MARK VII TO IX SEDANS -

The ***lead-in pic*** is a Jaguar ***Mark IX*** I spotted in New Zealand many years ago and it gives you an idea of the long flowing lines in their body styling that Jaguar was turning out in these large luxurious sedans during the 1950s commencing with the Mark VII in 1950. We have featured many Jaguar automobiles in past ***Gearbox*** articles including the 2.4 or Mark 1, the Mark 2, the S-type, the E-Type and the XR6. I have some nice Jaguar models from this range with my favourite being the Auto Art 1:18 scale diecast model of a white E-Type convertible.

But I also have some nice 1:43 scale diecast models of Jaguar models by ***OXFORD*** in the Mark VII to Mark IX range. Interestingly, when I was photographing the Oxford Jags, I noticed that they are not identified on the base as to what particular model they are. It just says Oxford `Jaguar.' Luckily as I purchased each model I recorded which *`Mark'* each was. [Remember, I don't keep the boxes.] By the same token, Oxford's Mark VII to Mark IX range in 1:43 scale are well detailed with a nice paint finish and were excellent value for their price at the time.

Going through my ever increasing motoring books library again for this Jaguar story, I noticed that these elegant Jaguar sedans were featured in my copy of **Giles Chapman's** book, ***`Cars we loved in the 1950s'***. I might add here that all the vehicles mentioned in his series of books *`Cars we loved…50's,60's, etc'* are only provided with a concise history, yet make excellent reading. **Giles** started this Jaguar story with the following statement – *`Unveiled to gasps of awe and admiration at the **1950** Earl's Court London Motor Show, the Mark VII's impact was immediate and enormous.'* The release of the Mark VII started a new range of big Jaguar sedans made throughout the 1950s.

Oxford 1:43 scale diecast models of the Jaguar Mark VII

And they were big cars at around 16 feet or 4.9 metres long. Being priced at around a thousand British Pounds, few Brits could actually afford one at the time, however, the bottom line for Jaguar was export to North America and that is where most went to in the early years of production.

Though it was heavy and could easily seat five people inside, and six at a pinch, it really was a *`performance'* car as it was powered by Jaguars competition proven 160bhp or 119kw XK 3.4 litre, twin overhead cam six cylinder engines. They could reach 60mph (96kph) in just 12 seconds and had a top speed of 100mph or 160kph.

These engines had polished alloy camshaft covers over an aluminium head, twin SU carbies and `hemi' combustion chambers that produced amazing torque with almost perfect reliability for that early post war motoring era. The big Jaguar sedans had exceptional handling for such a large vehicle on all types of road surfaces, not only navigating city traffic, but on the open road, and its first-rate servo-assisted drum brakes gave it great stopping power.

The interior was likened to a `gentleman's club cabin' by **Giles Chapman** with high grade leather and carpeting and a beautifully crafted walnut dash with instrumentation *`that glowed purple in the dark.'*

The Mark VII was a big seller in the USA, and this led to Jaguar providing the option of an automatic gearbox in 1953. In 1954, Jaguar released the upgraded Mark VIIM models with only slight exterior changes, but with power increased to 190bhp or 142kw. They became a favourite, not only of the British Police, but Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II.

Oxford 1:43 scale diecast model of the Jaguar Mark VIIM in Police livery.

The Mark VIII was introduced in 1956 with a single piece front windscreen and a slightly altered grille. In 1958, the Mark IX arrived with a 3.8 litre XK engine that produced 220bhp or 164kw and with power steering and four wheel disc brakes as standard. This series of Jaguars ceased production in 1961 being replaced by the Mark X. *Terry.*

Oxford 1:43 scale diecast model of the Jaguar Mark VIII.

Oxford 1:43 scale diecast model of the Jaguar Mark IX.