

Jim Bowen's Racing Minor, Pt 2

How it all started... by Ray Selby

Jim's famous low light race car was originally owned by club member Steve Peckham up until it developed car-cancer in the sills and A pillar, so Steve decided to replace it. On a trip to Steve's place to check out his new car, I noticed the old red car on a box trailer - on it's final journey to the tip! Steve said I could have it and thinking that Jim Bowen wanted a two-door I jumped at the offer.

This same car was on the cover our magazine in Sept-Oct 2015 at my place at Berrima, covered in snow.

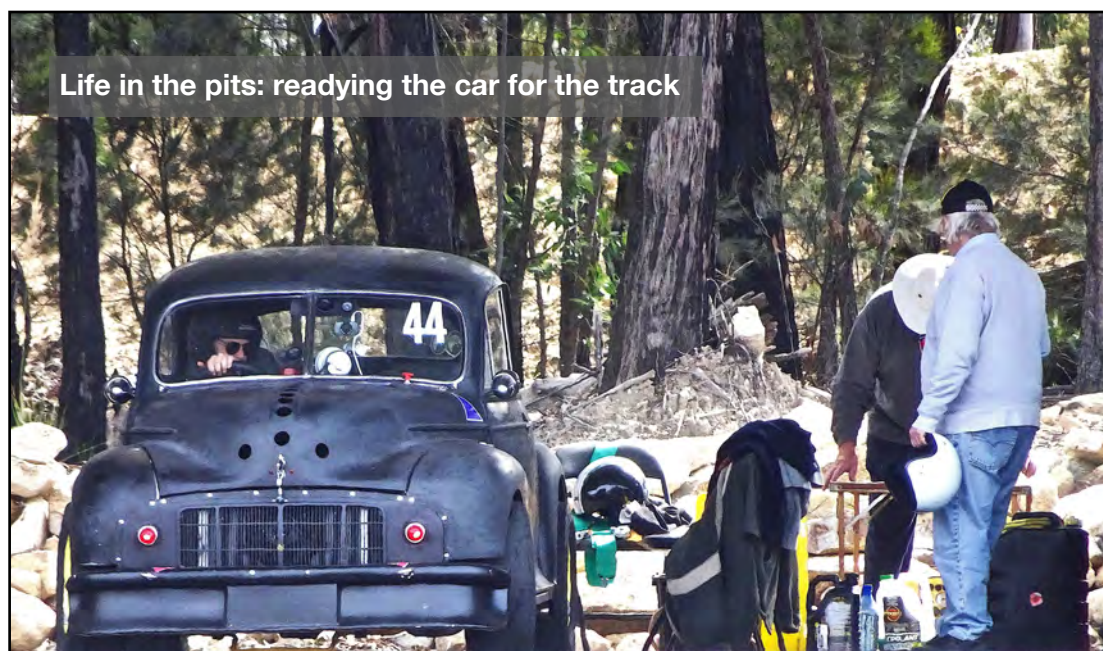
I get the car back to the workshop and with the help of Jim, Jai Sommers and Gary Evans, we stripped it down to a bare shell. I asked Bill van Diemen to weld in new body parts as needed - a big job, well done Bill.

I then started to design the suspension to make the car handle. First I made up heavy duty rear shocks and mounting brackets. The rear springs were reset down three inches, then an extra half leaf was added on top of the front section of the springs, inverted, to stop axle tramp and diff wind-up. It was all assembled with new rubber bushes.

On the front I shimmed the wishbone



pivots for negative camber, lowered the torsion bars to suit, then made up two new lever shocks to racing specifications, reconditioned the steering rack and then made up two stub axle uprights with new trunnions and pivot pins and bushes.

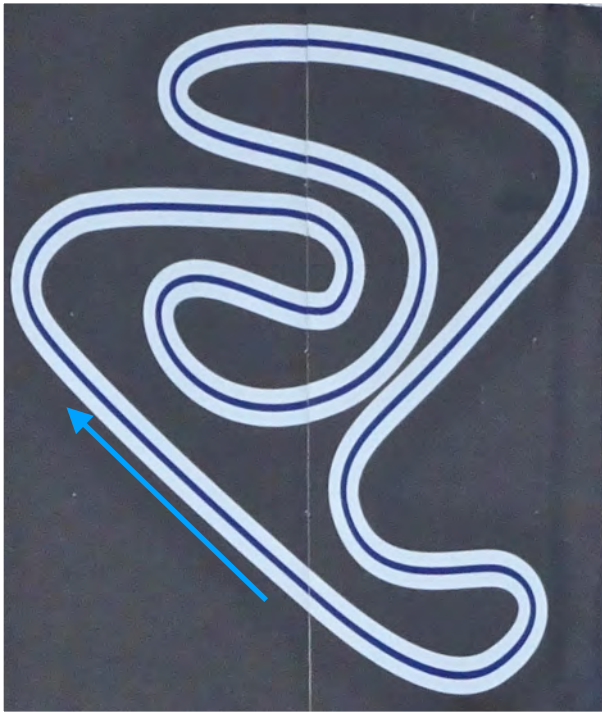


Life in the pits: readying the car for the track

I fitted two reconditioned TD Cortina front disc brake assemblies that are so big that they would stop the Queen Mary as I had been saving them for 20 years to fit to my own project that I am



The twisty Pheasant Wood Circuit (left) was perfect for great handling cars like Jim's new racer. Top speed along the main straight (above) was easily matched by the magnificent brakes. Near-flat cornering highlighted the quality of the suspension set-up.



Jim does some fine tuning



The writing was on the wall...

building. Then I made up a special front sway bar to stop body roll.

A Datsun Sunny diff assembly was fitted that Gary Evans made up and modified - and we then ended up with a rolling chassis. Then with the help of our team we fitted the motor (fully rebuilt by David Nunn) and gearbox (rebuilt by David too).

Then it was back to Jim's to get Gary to do the electronics, with some ignition work done by Bob Gilliland, and let Jim repaint the car - and do his magic as he does on all his low light cars.

Jim was totally astonished by the way the car turned out and the results speak for themselves. All up it was a good effort over about 15 months by all club members for everyone to enjoy.

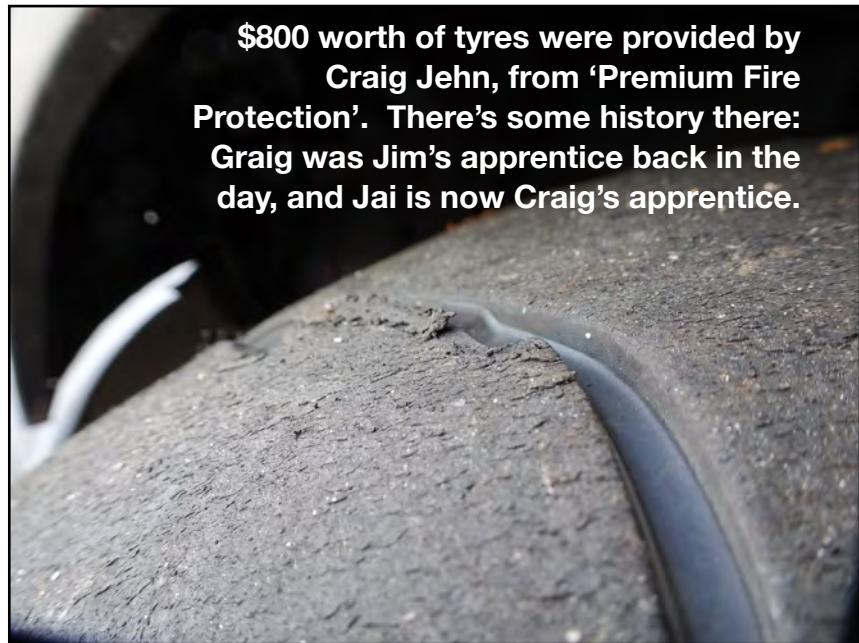
It worked out pretty well in the end; it's not a glamour car but it does a good job.

Ray Selby
(Photos: Owen Sinden)

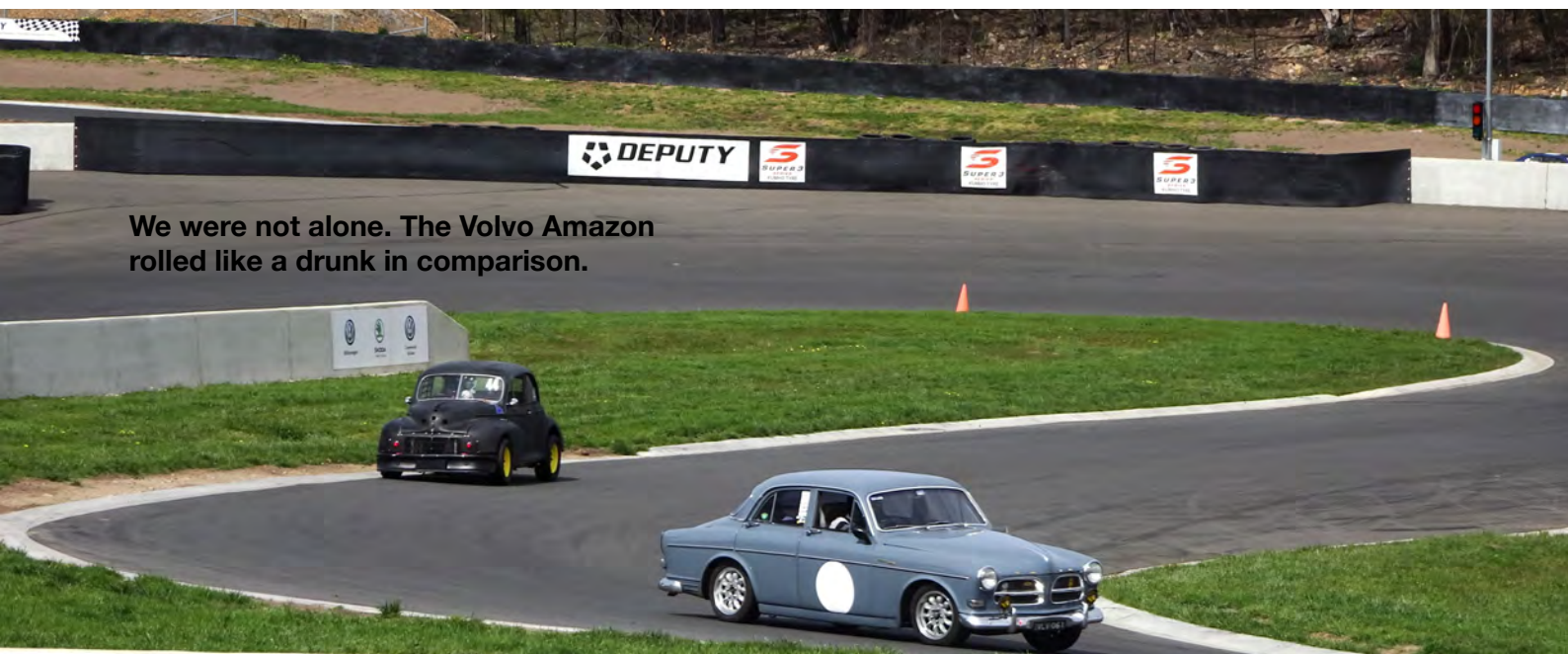
Gary and Jai make use of the modern facilities



\$800 worth of tyres were provided by Craig Jehn, from 'Premium Fire Protection'. There's some history there: Graig was Jim's apprentice back in the day, and Jai is now Craig's apprentice.



We were not alone. The Volvo Amazon rolled like a drunk in comparison.





Jai Sommers - all
smiles off the
track, very
serious on the
track.

