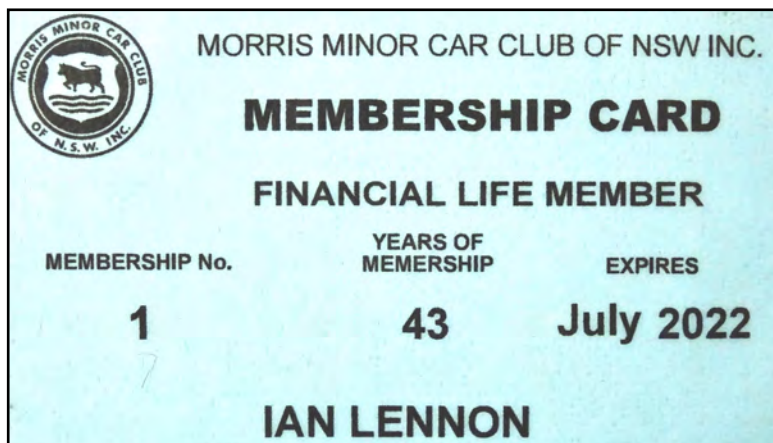


Ian Lennon - the Start of the Morris Minor Car Club of NSW



1978. That's when it all started for the Morris Minor Car Club of New South Wales. We know that because we celebrated our club's 40th Anniversary four years ago in 2018.

But how did it all start? It took Ian Lennon plus a small group of Morris Minor enthusiasts to get the ball rolling. Ian admitted that the idea was sparked by the Victorian club, Australia's first MM club. Ian was so enthused by Chester McKaige, who set up the Victorian club, that he decided to try the same in NSW.

Ads were placed in the Sydney Morning Herald and Daily Telegraph newspapers encouraging Morris Minor owners and enthusiasts to meet. The very first meeting was held in a scout hall in Canberra Rd, Sylvania, where about 10 people attended. The ads and the hall hire costs were all paid for by Ian.

The Morris Minor Car Club of NSW was started in 1978 and Ian was elected as its first president.

The first two meetings of the Morris Minor Car Club of NSW were held at Sylvania, in Sydney's southern suburbs, but with numbers quickly increasing, a new meeting venue was needed. The meetings moved to Earlwood, then to the BMC/Leyland Pavilion at the Showground at Moore Park.

"The numbers grew from 10 to 30 very quickly", said Ian "the result of *many*

phone calls and a lot of interest shown. Congratulations to the committees and presidents over the years for continuing the club and growing it." Ian was quite chuffed that the club is still going and is so strong.

You don't get to hold the #1 membership card in any club or society unless you have been instrumental in the start of that club. So it was no surprise, except probably for Ian himself, that in 1979 or 1980, the club's second president, Alan Sheehan (Ian was vice President), put forward a motion to the club that Ian should become a life member in recognition of his outstanding efforts in getting the club started. This was quite a remarkable acknowledgement given the club had only been in existence for two years. Ian Lennon: club founder, 1st club president, 1st club life member!



The MMCCNSW has continued to celebrate the start of the club

Ian's work with the PMG (Postmaster General's Department, later Telstra) began to take him all over NSW, and so his involvement with the Morris Minor Club waned, for obvious reasons. Somewhere along the line, Ian's life membership became non-current or defunct for some reason, something that would be put right.

of Bundanoon, it was yet another 'first' which led directly from Ian Lennon's establishment of our Morris Minor club in NSW.

Ian still remembers very fondly the MMCCNSW members he met in the early years of the club... Brian Condon, Stuart Treuer, Ray Selby, John & Julie Burrows, people he fondly remembers and holds in the highest regard. It would seem that friendships in the MMCCNSW become quite strong bonds.

And what of that first ever Morris Minor Nationals, hosted by the MMCCNSW? Ian spoke very highly of Tammy Miller, John Flower, and Tony Roberts, for making it such a resounding success. A resounding success? How many national rallies have we had since? Lots. Everything has a beginning, and the Morris Minor National rally, and the Morris Minor Car Club of NSW, can trace their roots back to the foresight of Ian Lennon, way back in 1978.

So what of Ian Lennon's 'recent' past? What has he done since his most memorable starting of the MMCCNSW? Ian worked for the PMG and Telstra for 28 years, which included a substantial amount of moving around NSW as a 'Workforce Workload Analyst'. A national project started for that position, requiring Ian to

**MORRIS MINOR
Car Club of N.S.W.**

1st NATIONAL RALLY
BUNDANOON

1983

81

IAN LENNON
1960 1000 PANEL VAN

Part of the contribution that Ian has made to the club's library includes this rally pack from the first National Rally, held in Bundanoon NSW from 1st to 4th April 1983

When Virginia Purdon became President, she immediately reinstated Ian's life membership, and included her sincerest apologies for the aforementioned exclusion, a decision that Ian has forever appreciated and a decision that has remained current to this day.

Ian Lennon's formation of the MMCCNSW led directly to another first: the first Morris Minor National Rally. Held in 1981, in the NSW Southern Highlands town



Ian's beige (and highly modified) van

drive from Wollongong to Canberra, into Victoria, over to the coast and back to Wollongong, a huge area to manage - then to head office to forecast the staff needed to run the business.

In his earlier days, Ian picked up some extra cash working part-time in a wrecking yard, fixing up and selling motor homes and camper vans. "I'm not a master but I'll have a tinker" was Ian's motto, but such was the high quality of his work that he was offered a job by Bill Casburn, who operated the Morris Minor Centre at Brookvale.

Unfortunately, the travel from Sydney's southern suburbs to Brookvale made it impossible, but another well-know Morris Minor identity, Paul Kelly, was employed instead.

Now retired, Ian does some work for past customers of his lawn mowing and car cleaning business - but he refuses to accept any payments, asking instead that the money is donated to the Starlight Foundation.

Of course, Ian has more than just a passing interest in cars. After getting his drivers licence in 1969, Ian and his mates started playing with cars. Which ones? "We were into Morries, Standard 10s, Prefects, Anglias, all the old Pommy cars, plus a sprinkling of old Holdens and Fords. We'd put a bit on here and there, just to get some more performance out of them."

And Morries? "I can't tell you how many I've owned; Travellers, utes, sedans, vans, the lot. A lot of Morries were modified

MAJOR MINOR VICTORY

Motor club show champ

In 1978, Ian Lennon, of Sylvania, decided it was time the Morris Minor had a club devoted to its preservation.

So he and a small group of enthusiasts formed the The Morris Minor Car Club at Earlwood.

Since its modest beginnings, the club has increased from 14 to more than 120 members.

It is the only Morris Minor Club in Sydney.

The club had its first success recently, winning first prize in the 1981 Motor Club Show at Yennora Wool Centre, Fairfield.

The club entered seven cars in its display and won a trophy and \$500.

It has based itself on the Morris Minor Centre in Bath, England, which was formed in 1977 to restore, rebuild and make parts for the Morris Minor with the support and assistance of British Leyland.

The Morris Minor is regarded as an investment by the British car trade, according to the Earlwood club secretary, Mr John Flower.

He said few makes of cars could claim such con-



sistent popularity and everyday use as the Morris Minor.

The first Morris Minor came off the production line in October, 1948.

It was a two-door model, saloon and convertible with a 918cc side valve engine and was known as the Low Light.

It was designed by Alex Issigonis, who de-

signed an 803cc overhead valve engine.

It was also in 1952 that the British Motor Corporation was formed by the merger of Morris Minor Ltd and the Austin Motor Company.

Special batch

After many more mergers later, the company became known as British

Motor Corporation. By December, 1960, one million Morris Minors had been produced and a special batch of Morris "one millions" were built to mark the occasion.

By 1962, the engine size had been increased to 1098cc and flashing direction indicators had replaced the trafficators and the deluxe version

of the Morris Minor. TAMMY Miller and Ian Lennon with the first prize trophy.

land ended production of the Morris Minor.



One of our club's first major victories. Ian Lennon is pictured with Tammy Miller. The ute shown above the trophy (LDQ-427) is Ian's. (St George and Sutherland Shire Leader, 1981)

back then." Ian's favourite, a van, has an MG Midget 1275 engine (enlarged to 1310cc), a Datsun 1600 gearbox, Marina front and rear ends, pendulum pedals, and a brake booster. The van was painted beige, a Holden colour in the late 60s.

So, from all us us in the Morris Minor Car Club of NSW, thank you Ian for all your foresight and effort, we really do enjoy a remarkable club.

