

ROADRUNNER CAR CLUB
AMBASSADOR AWARD TO
MALCOLM KING



CAR CLUB
ROADRUNNER
SOCIAL CAR ENTHUSIASTS

**Presentation address to Malcolm King
Roadrunner Car Club – Ambassador
by Graeme Block, President.**

The Australian Motor Vehicle Manufacturing industry has played a significant part in shaping the industrial landscape in Australia with the introduction of local production plants, including Holden and Ford, which evolved from humble beginnings.

This not only provided employment for many people and families in the manufacturing plants, dealer networks and the extended supply industries but it is fair to say that many Australians became passionate about their favourite brand of car and these passions became part of life in Australia.

These industries employed and spawned a high level of incredibly talented employees in all fields, many highly regarded as some of the best in the world. Australia not only exported but also imported some talented specialists to take up roles in this burgeoning industry.

Fortunately, a large number of people whether consumers or those who worked in the industry, were keen to share this passion and knowledge with others, including the younger generations.

This fervour is evident in the number of active Car Clubs covering all makes and models – old and new – throughout Australia, with an abundance of these represented on Queensland's Sunshine Coast.

Many Clubs have prospered due to the efforts of those who have been involved in establishing or furthering the interests of existing Clubs. Members committing themselves and their past experience to management roles and giving up considerable time in the interest of the Club, its members and the wider community.

We at the Roadrunner Car Club are privileged to have one such person who is both a current and a founding member: Malcolm King.

Today we have the pleasure of recognising and honouring his extensive contribution to the motor industry. Born in England, Malcolm completed a 6-year apprenticeship with Vauxhall after which he moved to Ford

where he was a rig testing engineer. Malcolm, with his wife Susan and their son, arrived in Australia from England in March 1965 as 'ten pound poms', commencing his employment at the 'Ford Manufacturing and Development Facilities' In Geelong. Over a number of years he worked for Ford in various departments and locations around Australia and met Henry Ford himself during one of their speed and distance trials.

When Ford Asia Pacific was formed Malcolm found himself spending time in the Philippines, Korea and Taiwan as Director of Engineering. Later he applied his qualifications and talents to other related motor industry suppliers in the USA and in Australia provided full braking systems for Ford, GM, Toyota, Nissan and Mitsubishi.

For your information, we have reprinted recent articles from our Club's *Beep Beep* newsletter in this little booklet about Malcolm's distinguished career.

Malcolm and Susan moved to the Sunshine Coast when he retired and where he has continued his passion for cars as a member of several car Clubs. His roles included holding the position of 'President' for five years in a large Club, building around him a talented Management Committee and taking the Club to unprecedented levels of success. That team are now all members of our Roadrunner Car Club.

We are all extremely proud to have Malcom King as a member, colleague and friend in this Club.

Malcolm's personable and charismatic manner is evident in the way he easily communicates with people. He has a welcoming nature and shows a genuine interest in everyone he meets – this makes him a perfect 'Ambassador' for The Roadrunner Car Club..

It is with great pleasure that we recognise Malcolm's significant contribution and award him the status of Club Ambassador.

Graeme Block: August 2020.





Our thanks to Iain Curry for sharing this interview with Beep Beep readers :
Editor

Eighty years old and happily retired, Malcolm King's work with Ford has taken him to high speeds in the Australian desert and the boardrooms of the Far East.

WORLD OF OPPORTUNITY

Iain Curry talks to
Malcolm King

There can be few greater blessings than looking back on your working life and being as satisfied as Malcolm King. "It's been a fantastic time, and I've had a terrific life", the 80-year old says. Having moved from England in his early 20s to work for Ford in Geelong, Malcolm's career has been spent almost

entirely with the Blue Oval brand in various capacities, including stints in Taiwan and South Korea.

At his age and long retired, you'd perhaps expect his tools to have been hung up for good. Not so. His property boasts two giant shed

workshops, with

machinery, tools, cabinets, oil cans and parts large and small beautifully arranged and organised. Tucked away is his classic 1950 Riley Drophead Coupe 2.5-litre RMD, while being rebodied just down the road is his ex-racing 1929 Riley 9. "I still get a buzz from fixing things" he explains. "As you get older you need to keep physically fit, but you need your mind to stay healthy too. The cars keep me mentally active."

Despite an always busy career, Malcolm has restored or tinkered with numerous classic cars.

A Standard Flying Nine, 1933 Vauxhall, Mercedes 230SL, two MG TCs, two Model A Fords and a Rolls-Royce Phantom I. "The engineering on the Rolls-Royce was the best I've seen" he says. "The engine design was simple but excellent and very robust. That was the car that impressed me most."

Malcolm built billy carts as a youngster in Kent, England, and at 16 was given a 1922 Maxwell Roadster by an elderly neighbour. The budding mechanic worked on it but sadly couldn't get it running before his father gave it away instead of clogging up his back yard. Malcolm did a six-year apprenticeship at Vauxhall starting in 1957, learning welding, grinding, milling, turning and fitting.





Once qualified, he spotted an advert for rig test engineers at Ford. "That's where you take component parts, test them to destruction, modify then re-test and develop" he explains. "For example, we worked on early Cortinas and their wood rim steering wheels. Owners were climbing in, pulling on the wheels and splitting them, so we developed them in a way they'd stop breaking. At that time the models we were working on were the Cortina, Zephyr, Consul and Zodiac."

His life-changing course began after spotting an advert by Ford Australia seeking engineers. "I met the personnel manager at Australia House in London, was told we'd get assisted passage for 10 pounds, and we planned to go for two years, make some money then come home. But we never went back." He began work in Geelong a few days after arriving, upgrading the suspension on early 1960s XK and XL Falcons. "It was a different world" Malcolm says. "After work on a Friday afternoon everyone would head down to Bells Beach and go surfing. In England, we went home and hid from the rain and snow!"

Malcolm was working with Lewis Bandt, Ford's designer responsible for building the very first ute in 1934. "He was a genius" Malcolm says, "but I got bored sitting in that little office as he was hardly ever there." Malcolm was soon modifying trucks imported from the UK and USA for Australian conditions, before controlling the drawing office for upgrading Ford's 144, 170 and 200cu in engines for manufacture.

When he began looking after cooling systems, he'd be stationed in Broken Hill or Charleville, "testing at over 90F with an open throttle on dead straight roads". A good showing here led to becoming supervisor of vehicle testing and development, including being involved with the 351cu in Flacon GTs. "For a publicity stunt we did 70mph runs over 70,000 kilometres" he says. "Henry Ford came over from the States, told us we were raving mad, but we managed to break 44 speed and distance records. There were no problems with mechanicals, only damaged bodywork through hitting rocks and kangaroos."

When Ford Asia Pacific was formed Malcolm managed the design of the Escort-based Ford Fiera, a Suzuki Jimny-type model with flat sheet metal sides for the Philippines. He moved to Seoul in South Korea to integrate the Cortina into Hyundai's production line, before introducing the same model in Taiwan as director of engineering in that country. Latterly, his expertise moved to braking systems through PRB, developing aluminium twin-pot calipers for export to America on the Chevrolet Corvette and Camaro. "We provided full braking systems to the five car companies in Australia at the time: Ford, GM, Toyota, Nissan and Mitsubishi."

How he found time to continue restoring cars as a hobby is anyone's guess. "I'd work until midnight if I had to" he says. "I've always enjoyed stripping them, cleaning them, putting them back together and checking the machining dimensions. But it's also the rallies and people involved with the classic, vintage and veteran car scene that has always interested me."



With parts replacement rather than actual diagnosis and repair such a large part of modern mechanics, Malcolm says there's more satisfaction working on older cars. "They're much easier too! A modern car isn't something you can easily fix yourself, they're so full of electronics and sophistication. Back in the day, with a twin SU carburettor for example, we'd put a tube to our ear to listen and get them to balance. It was very satisfying."

After such a long career, Malcolm suggests a mechanic's life can be hugely varied. "If you refuse an opportunity you'll never know" he says. "Get a solid skills base and your interests could take you absolutely anywhere." And hopefully, in retirement, we can all be as content as he.





Malcolm King's Ford Anecdotes

During The Roadrunner's outing to see the Jack Brabham story, Kevin Bartlett and Frank Lowndes suggested that I note down some of my memories of my early work days with Ford Australia.

Susan and I migrated to Australia in March 1965 and I joined Ford of Australia's 'Product Engineering Department' in Geelong, Victoria.

I commenced in the 'Advanced Design Office' working for Lou Bandt: Lou was the designer of the Ford Coupe Utility built on a B Model Chassis in 1934.

Following a stint in the 'Engine Design Office', where I was supervisor responsible for the design of the 188 and 221cu engines, I was transferred to the 'Vehicle Test and Development Office'.

In April 1967 I was appointed to 'Supervisor Vehicle Test and Development' where I followed the development and test of the 188 and 221cu engines. We developed the GT Falcon range of cars, from the XY through to the XA/XB and XC Falcon models.



*The first Ford Ute designed by
Lew Bandt in 1934*

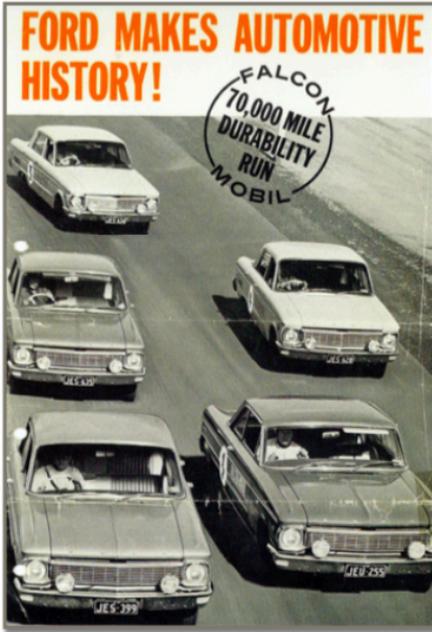
These were exciting times at Ford with wins at Bathurst and it culminated in the installation of a 428 cubic inch V8 engine into a Ford XY for the then Managing Director of Ford Australia – Bill Bourke.

It was during my time as Supervisor of Vehicle Development that the Sales and Marketing office thought up a plan to test the latest (Stock Standard) Falcon's durability – with publicity release – to be run at the Ford You Yangs Proving Ground at Lara, just north of Geelong. On April 24th at 8,28am Wally Booth flagged off racing drivers of the day, Ian and Leo Geoghan,

Fred Gibson, Alan Moffat, Bruce McPhee, Barry Seton and Ken Harper. Kevin Bartlett was called in, along with some others, to help out as driver fatigue became an issue whilst

*Bill Burke's Red Ford XY
with 428ci engine
alongside Malcolm
King's 1930 Model
Roadster which Malcolm
restored. Taken at
Malcolm's home of the
time, 'Bell Brae' in
Victoria*





Above:
Publicity release for
the 1965 XP 70,000
mile durability run.

Right: Pit stop

Below: Battered,
bruised by unbowed



In that same year a Ford Cortina won the 'Bathurst 500' and the XP Falcon won the 'Wheels Car of the Year' with Bill Tuckey, editor of Wheels magazine, calling the durability run the *Epic of the Year!*

Malcolm King



The first car crosses the finish line establishing
49 Australian endurance records

running 5 x 1965 standard production XP Falcons for 70,000 miles [116,600ks] over 7 days continuously.

Henry Ford arrived in a helicopter midway through the run and privately advised the Ford Management that they were "out of your minds, a bunch of damn fools"!!

The end of the 70,000 miles came at 1.42am on May 3rd: all vehicles finished 6 hours ahead of the 9-day target, battered and dented but none of them missed a beat mechanically. During the endurance run, 49 Australian time and distance endurance records were broken. As a tribute to the Ford mechanics who maintained and repaired the body damage the drivers presented the Proving Ground staff with a chrome-plated mallet which remains displayed to this day on the dining room wall at the Proving Ground.

The testimonials of the respected, independent drivers counted for an enormous amount of good publicity for Ford dealers and was instrumental in helping to overcome the initial poor durability record of the earlier XK/XL durability issues.



CAR CLUB
ROADRUNNER
SOCIAL CAR ENTHUSIASTS



Malcolm and Susan King
in their precious
1950 Riley Drophead Coupe

Roadrunner Car Club Inc. August 2020
www.roadrunnercarclub.com.au