



Queensland Rover News

The monthly newsletter of the Rover Car Club of Queensland

November 2017

RCCQ

CHRISTMAS PARTY

Sunday 10th December

at

Sirommet Wines
850 - 938 Mt Cotton Road,
Mt Cotton

12 noon at the Cellar Door



Parking could be at a premium, so don't be late.

*Just \$20 per head for members,
excluding drinks, as the Club
is subsidising the cost.
Non-members \$38*

Please remember to bring the
exact amount in cash with you.

*The presentation of our annual awards
will be part of the programme*

If you have any questions or have
special dietary requirements, please contact
Gary Bickford on 0419 742 208



Welcome to our
newest members



Ross Baldwin, Coolum Beach

Rover 75



Ian Cunningham, Brookfield -

Two Series III Land Rovers



**Des Whitely, Mossman, 1947 P2
75** (This picture wasn't available
for the last issue)



Des Cobham, Helensvale

1974 P6B

..... and a warm welcome back to long-time member **John Farr** of
Scarborough and his SD1, re-joining after many years absence!

What's on?

18th November - *Palmwoods Car Festival - Palmwoods State School*

10th December - *RCCQ Christmas Party - Sirromet Wines - see details in this issue.*

25th February - *RCCQ Coffee and Cars breakfast at Sirromet Wines*

19th March 2018 - *Gold Coast Super Swap, Country Paradise Parklands, Nerang*

27th-30th April - *National Rove, Shepparton, Victoria. See our website for details.*

27th May 2018 - *Mac's Bridge Sports & Classic Car Festival, Belmont Rifle Range.*

Be sure to visit our website from time to time to keep up with the news and for important information: www.roverqueensland.asn.au

or simply Google rccq

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RCCQ members receive 10% discount.
(evidence of membership required)

Rover Specialists - repairs & service -all models

Fenwick Memorial Rove

Report on the weekend 14th-15th October 2017 with the Summerland Sports and Classic Car Club and RCCQ in the Lismore area.



RCCQ members - morning tea at Denise Fenwick's home

At about 9.15am on Saturday 14 October, we headed south on the M1 in grey, overcast weather. After driving through very heavy rain around Tugun, we arrived at the Brunswick Heads Hotel for lunch stop at around 11am (or 12 noon daylight saving time).

There we met up with fellow RCCQ members, Craig and Jenny Barraud, Neale and Sandy Webb, Mark De Nino, Jon Lowe, Geoff and Sue Kearns and new members Helen and Drew Maywald. Club member, Russell Graham from Uki also joined us – he was driving his friend's Rover P4 90. The weather was inclement, but we had chosen a spot under cover and an enjoyable lunch and much chatter was enjoyed by all.

Around 2pm, we left Brunswick Heads and drove south to have afternoon tea at the home of Denise Fenwick. In a scene reminiscent of 'Keystone Cops', some missed the turn-off to Alstonville and sailed on past, others then missed the turn off to Tuckombil, drove straight on and passed the others going the opposite way. A hurried about-turn and proper turn-offs saw us all arrive at a similar time at Denise's place, where we were treated to a wonderful afternoon tea. Unfortunately the rain then began in earnest and we headed off to our motel.

The Saturday evening meal was at the Wollongbar Tavern, where we joined many members of the Summerland Sports and Classic Car Club. It was a very pleasant evening.

This was the weekend the weather forecasters had predicted rainfall of 100ml in most areas. At least that much fell on Wollongbar during the night and we woke to a wet morning.

The main feature of the weekend was to visit Wilsons Robotic Dairy near Kyogle. On Sunday morning we gathered at Lismore and headed to Kyogle Visitors' Centre for morning tea. From there we drove on to The Risk and Wilson's dairy farm.

It was a very interesting visit - the Wilson's are 5th generation dairy farmers and turned to the robotic method of milking their herd of 200 cows in 2013. The system works very well for them, all automated. Happy cows, happy farmer – this certainly must be the way of the future.

We then drove on to Cawongla Store for a most delicious two-course lunch. Unfortunately the rain continued on and off. After lunch the Rover Car Club of Queensland was thanked by the President of Summerland Sports and Classic Car club for attending and invited us back again in 2018. Finally we said our farewells and headed home.

Despite the weather, it was a lovely weekend. This part of NSW is particularly scenic and it is always nice to catch up with Denise Fenwick and our friends in the Summerland Sports and Classic Car Club.

Rover Car Club of Queensland members attending:

Ross and Eve McCormack (P6B)

Craig and Jenny Barraud (P6B)

Neale and Sandy Webb (Range Rover)

Mark De Nino (P6B) and Jon Lowe

Helen and Drew Maywald (P6B)

Geoff and Sue Kearns (Jaguar XJ6 Series II) – Saturday

Russell Graham (P4 90) – Saturday lunch



Thanks to Eve McCormack for this report

FOR SALE

Rover SD1 Vanden Plas 1984, \$4,500. Engine No.SARRRMWV313603. Phone Rob on 0419 736 704.

Rover P6B sedan 3.5 L, \$2,500. Phone Rob on 0419 736 704.

Rover Parts - F.I. V8 Motor and gearbox, \$800.00, Rover V8 Twin \$450.00, P6B diffs, suspension and various parts including power steering, SD1 spare panels including doors boot etc., S/H grill and splash panel, the lot \$500.00. Phone Rob on 0419 736 704.

Rover SD1 3500SE 1984 - refurbished 3.9 V8 fitted. \$3250 ono. Located Redland Bay, Brisbane - Call Brent on 0488 144 177.

Rover's Evening Star

Production of the Rover 75 ended in 2004.

This is the story of its development.

Thanks to Jon Lowe for contributing this article, adapted from Classics Monthly, July 2015

A deal between the part-nationalised British Leyland and Honda was signed in 1979 and in 1986 a revitalised BL was renamed the Rover group and sold to British Aerospace two years later.

The deal with Honda was good for the Rover marque and resulted in the Japanese company using its Concerto range as a base for the Rover 200/400 series, the Accord as the Rover 600 and the larger Legend saloon for the 800. In 1994 the Rover Group was sold to BMW at a time when the Longbridge-based company was keen to start developing replacements for the 600 and 800 range. Stylist Richard Woolley had been tasked with honing the Rover 600's styling and include a sprinkling of traditional Rover features such as chrome and wood veneer interior trim to the new design.

With BMW now controlling Rover's purse strings, the German-based company wasn't happy with having to pay royalties to Honda under the ongoing licensing agreement, if the Accord or the Legend were used as the basis for a brand new Rover. What BMW wanted was an all-new replacement model that could be marketed as the first new large Rover saloon produced from the revitalised company.

The seemingly bottomless development purse provided by BMW was in stark contrast to the financial restraints imposed on Rover by its previous owners. Following the cash restraints imposed when Rover was under the wing of British Aerospace, unlimited funds were now available for developing a new model. This was good news as prior to the takeover, Woolley had been working on three models to replace 600 and 800. The design to replace the Honda-based 800 went under the code name of 'Flagship', one called 'Eric' would take over from the 800 coupe and a third called 'Core' was planned to replace the 600.

Although Rover were provided with a generous supply of cash to develop new models, three new large Rovers were considered rather extravagant, so projects 'Flagship' and 'Eric' were dropped and 'Core' was renamed 'Isis'. This was the project that would go on to replace both the 600 and 800 and as Rover's V6 KV6 engineer was nearing completion, it seemed prudent to make use of this unit in the new car and start winding down Honda's services as an engine provider.

A brand new top end model made a lot of sense as it would allow Rover to return to North America, a market the 600 had been denied by Honda due to its falling foul of the Japanese company's restrictive licensing terms. Project Isis rapidly developed from a styling sketch to a day model and the concept, now known as RD1, got the green light from the BMW board.

Although the exterior of what would become the Rover 75 saloon had been approved quickly, it was a totally different story with the interior.

The design for RD1's interior went in two very different directions. One was to produce a stylish but very traditional British interior, while the other idea was a far more radical approach. The latter would feature a single, one-piece moulded dashboard utilising soft-feel plastics incorporating a series of veneered panels as part of the construction rather than add-on decorations. A suggestion by the traditionalists that RD1's dashboard should take its inspiration from the Second World War Spitfire was totally ignored by the BMW board.

The project was given the new code name of R40 and with virtually no budgetary constraints, Rover's engineering department set about producing a body with a high level of structural rigidity. This not only set a new level in passive safety, it also provided stiffer and more accurate handling. A large transmission tunnel helped with the body's torsional stiffness and also led to rumours that the new Rover could be rear-wheel drive.

As project R40 progressed, BMW became more involved and although Rover had investigated several rear suspension permutations, BMW wanted to use its proven Z-axis set up. This was used on the current rear-wheel drive 3 Series and it needed a lot of work to adapt the set up for the new front-wheel drive Rover. BMW's involvement was now starting to delay the 75's launch and after countless miles testing the new model in the US and around the unforgiving Nurburgring, BMW brought the 75's launch date forward and unveiled the new Rover at the 1998 Birmingham Motor Show.

Although the new Rover was well received by the press, NMW chief Bernd Pischetsrieder dropped a mighty PR clanger at the launch when he announced, "short term actions are required for the long-term future of the Rover Group". This off-the-cuff remark caused panic back at Longbridge and threw a huge spanner all in the good work done by the engineers, designers and line workers who had produced the 75.

Despite the PR faux pas, praise was heaped on the Rover 75 by the motoring press who found that even the entry level 1.8 litre and 2 litre K-series powered cars drove and handled exceptionally well – a 2 litre

diesel option was also available. The new model proved a huge leap forward when compared with the Rover 800. Top of the line V6 powered 75's came with full leather interior and the model's retro styling touches harked back to the days of the Rover P5 and P6.

Unfortunately, the misplaced words at the car's launch resulted in lines of stockpiled 75s being stored on fields around the assembly plant. Sales eventually picked up but more enthusiastic drivers complained that the car's suspension was too soft.

At first, the 75 tended to appeal to more mature drivers and many commented that the new Rover was "one of the best handling front-wheel drive cars in the world". To make the 75 more company car friendly, the very capable Rover 75 Sport was eventually added to the range.

1994 proved to be Rover's annus horribilis when BMW sold out to Phoenix Venture Holdings. As part of the deal, it was agreed that the 75 would remain in production, but assembly had to move from Cowley to Longbridge as BMW needed the Cowley plant to build the new Mini.

Logistics staff and engineers at the newly named MG Rover worked overtime to organise the move, which was completed during an extended three-week summer shutdown. By October 2000 Rover 75 production was underway at Longbridge alongside the classic Mini and one of the new board's first decisions was to produce an estate version of the Rover 75.

A 75 tourer had been developed alongside the saloon in the BMW days and once in production, the board played a masterstroke and sanctioned the development of a re-engineered sports model codenamed X10 for the saloon and X11 for the estate version. Launched in 2001 as the MG ZT, the new model featured significant changes to the engine management, chassis and suspension to warrant the MG octagon emblazoned on its nose. The future was looking rosy for MG Rover and in 2003 the company astounded the motoring press when it officially unveiled rear-wheeled drive, Ford V8 powered versions of the Rover 75 and MG ZT - the 75's huge transmission tunnel had come in handy after all.

A long wheelbase version of the 75 was unveiled in 2002 and marked the return of Vanden Plas-badged Rovers. Sadly, this didn't last long and soon after the model was rebranded as the 75LWB and again in 2004 as the 75 limousine.

The Rover 75 and MG ZT range received a long-overdue facelift the same year and although the familiar financial storm clouds were once again gathering on the horizon, MG Rover's design department produced a stylish Rover 75 coupe concept.

This exciting new model was based on a previous prototype created during the BMW days and had been badged as a Riley. Despite the revived coupe concept actually reaching the glass fibre concept stage, it turned out to be a sweetener to entice Chinese maker Shanghai Automotive Industry Corporation [SAIC] into a joint venture deal.

By now MG Rover was in financial turmoil and design engineers at Longbridge were doing all they could under 'Project Drive' to cut Rover 75 production costs by 'de-contenting' the car. Out went the heavily varnished veneer dashboard on some models to be replaced by a plastic moulding and door mirrors were now the same as fitted to the Rover 200 and 400. The 1.8 litre and CDT 75s lost their rear anti-roll bars and penny-pinching in all areas of the car was now the name of the game.

Rover 75 production came to an end in April 2005 when Phoenix called in PricewaterhouseCooper Plc to act as administrators and try and sort out the financial mess the carmaker now found itself in. A new buyer was desperately needed if Rover was to survive and a leaked memo from an MG Rover executive hinted that a deal with SAIC was imminent. A £67m deal was duly signed with the Chinese company for the intellectual property rights for the Rover 75 and 25 along with the K-series engine. MG Rover's future seemed secure at last.

However, the announcement that SAIC's was planning to produce its own version of the 75 in China proved to be a bit premature when, in a surprise move, it was announced that Nanjing had mopped up the rest of MG Rover's assets for a reputed £60 and had staked its own claim on the Rover 75.

This Chinese tug-of-war resulted in SAIC producing its own version of the Rover 75 in 2006. As BMW had sold the Rover marquee to Ford for an estimate £11, the Chinese company had to create a new marque, Roewe 750 for its new cars. The revamped Roewe 750 was co-developed with automotive consultants Ricardo and had a slightly longer wheelbase (100mm), a restyled rear end and a freshened-up interior. Power came from SAIC's own version of the K-series.

In 2007 Nanjing, the new owners of the MG marquee launched the Rover 75-based MG7 and the sportier MG7Z. These two versions look more like the UK-produced Rover 75 than SAIC's Roewe 750 and all three models are built on the former Longbridge assembly lines shipped out to China following the demise of MG Rover in 2005. Although its ten years since MG Rover has survived its parent company and two versions of this future classic are now back in production, albeit on the other side of the world. Not a bad record for a good looking car that was almost torpedoed at birth by one of BMW's chief executives.

National Rove 2018

Shepparton, Victoria

Applications are open now - see the Coming Events page on our website for a link to all the details

Next General Meeting

Tuesday 28th November at Grange Library

This meeting will incorporate our

Annual General Meeting