

THRILLING MOFFAT/BEECHEY CALDER CLASH

RACING

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car NEWS

**WILL INDY EVER BE
THE SAME AGAIN?**

**MEET "SUPER BEE" —
OUR FASTEST EVER MG'B'**

**TAKE A CAPRI HOLIDAY —
FORD'S LATEST DELIGHT**

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FEATURES / CALDER MALLALA WINTON WANNEROO

INDIANAPOLIS 500 HUME WEIR SNOWY RALLY



DAVID
ATKINSON



Inside rear wheel just brushing the surface, Iain Corness pours it on round BMC Corner at Lakeside.

The MGB was, and still basically is, an MGB—and to prove that a best lap of 1:7.1 at the recent Lakeside meeting was no fluke, the good Doctor's young wife Carole returned 1:8.2—with fuel starvation problems—the same day!

Let's have a closer look in on this trio that has brought lots of colour back to the northern racing scene.

Over to the Doctor . . .

All motor sport enthusiasts can recall their initiation, the pleasantly pungent smell of high octane, the screaming music of exhaust pipes or whatever it was that impressed. The youthful Iain Corness sampled it in the UK and recalls immediately that it was V16 BRM's, and that he was hooked. Shortly afterwards the family migrated from Scotland (1955) and settled in Brisbane, where Corness Senior became a resident master in one of THOSE terribly "GPS" schools, famous for its water sports, but

Meet the fastest MGB ever to grace our racing circuits...

Super Bee

Story and Pics by DES WHITE

FACT is fact, and the MGB has been around for quite a while (like if it was real human it would by now have hairs on its legs, and pimples) and in all these years it has never acquired a competition image on the local scene. This situation is about to change!

Why, in the age of organ transplants, should a young doctor go motoring very rapidly in an MGB?

The doctor in question is Iain Corness, who, until recently was best known for his quad-cam sense of humour that spins along at astronomical revs and makes "Laugh In" look VW-powered. His approach to motor racing is nothing short of serious, though.

This time it's a front wheel up—but it shows that Carole goes just as hard as her capable husband.



that too is an image which is perhaps in the process of change.

Iain went on to University and a procession of M.G's—going through at least a dozen from a TC forward, or backward, depending on your appreciation of the marque! This naturally led to membership of the MG Car Club—not honorary, but of seven years duration—and to completion of an MGA 1500. This machine reached its peak at Lowood in 1965 when it attained 119 mph down the long straight and burst into flames. The personal highlight of his early race career came when he eventually beat Carole Palmer's Austin Healey Sprite—and then he married her in what had to be the greatest MG wedding ever seen in Brisbane, and racing was over in favour of two years post-graduate work in the U.K.

"We spent two years in the U.K. and saw two MGB's which impressed. The fastest MGB in England turned out to be owned by Bill Nicholson, and the one up his exhaust was Tony Binnington's, a young fellow working for BMC. Wilson McComb, the then General Secretary of the MG Car Club, arranged introductions to these two, and also to Basil Wales of the Special Tuning Dept. (BMC) and Peter Browning of BMC Competitions Dept.

"They all helped with details, and Bill Nicholson still writes to help us with new developments. Reliability was



Sporting their "Symbolic Sex" symbols on driving suits and name tape, Carole and Iain—and Super-Bee—make a handsome trio outside their Brisbane home.

one key factor we learned, and the Factory Competition parts are engineered towards this end. Consequently we brought home with us a Nitrided cross-drilled crank, the factory flat-top pistons, steel timing gears and rocker shaft support brackets, Nimonic steel valves and Hidural guides".

The Car . . .

"The car was built by John Campbell, a final year pharmacy student, and myself, under the house. A body shell was purchased from the wreckers, complete with front and rear suspension, to form the basis of the car. Working conditions were hardly adequate, all work being done at night using hand tools only. The engine was assembled by Col Vaughan (who runs a pharmacy in Gattton) and the whole car was completed in under five weeks.

"The body was lightened where possible, without reducing the rigidity of the monocoque construction. Most came from the doors, which lost their windows, winders and hinges. The doors are now hung from their lower edges and I like to call them "reverse gull wings."

Fibreglass is used for the bonnet and front apron and for the wheel arch eyebrows. By the time you add on the weight of the deliberately over-engineered double braced roll bar, you get a car with a weight saving of about 1 cwt.

The Mechanicals . . .

"The engine with all its steel bits must weigh in at twice normal! It is 40-thou overbored, with flat top pistons, and is built to Factory Stage VI figures, making full use of the nitrided crank and factory full race camshaft (C-AEH 770). The head was worked over by Joe Camilleri and the compression is about 10.3 to 1. Carburetion is by Weber (45 DCOE 13) and extractors by Sonic.

"The factory gives an output figure of 130 hp at 6000 rpm, and we should

be getting this. The rev limit is a self imposed 6500, as I can't afford a blow up!

"The factory competition clutch was too expensive, so we use an Austin Freeway reconditioned unit. This is 25% stronger than the standard "B" unit and has given no trouble to date. The clutch pit is ventilated through an air scoop and a 1in. diam. hole through the top of the bell housing, and ducted out through an enlarged drain hole at the bottom.

"The gearbox is standard. We would like close ratios but that's too costly. The diff is a modified unit by Mike Ryves in Sydney; it's not the ultimate in the limited slip range, but cheaper by far than a factory one. Coil springs from the MGB GT have been fitted up front and the rear leaves reset 2in. lower, with competition shocks and standard sway bar. It has retained the very forgiving MGB feel in its road holding.

"The front brake pads are DS11 with Ferodo competition rear linings. The rear brakes have air scoops to aid drum cooling, and no fade has been experienced so far. A Tri-safe unit is fitted, to split the lines in case of total failure of either front or rear.

"The wheels are "mag" type, but are actually all steel, with 6in. one piece rims offset about one inch. They weigh about the same as the wire wheels, but are locally made and use the standard splined hub. These are shod with Firestone Indy tyres, 118 compound, 8.10 x 5.50 x 14, with pressures 35 front and 33 rear, and I'd put my best friend on them too!

"In its present form the car will cover the standing quarter in fifteens and top 125 mph with a long run up. It will pull 120 mph before Lukey corner at Surfers. To date nothing has broken and nothing has fallen off. Only trouble to date has been running out of fuel at Lakeside. We now have made up a two pump, two line system, which should have cured this."

The Personal Viewpoint . . .

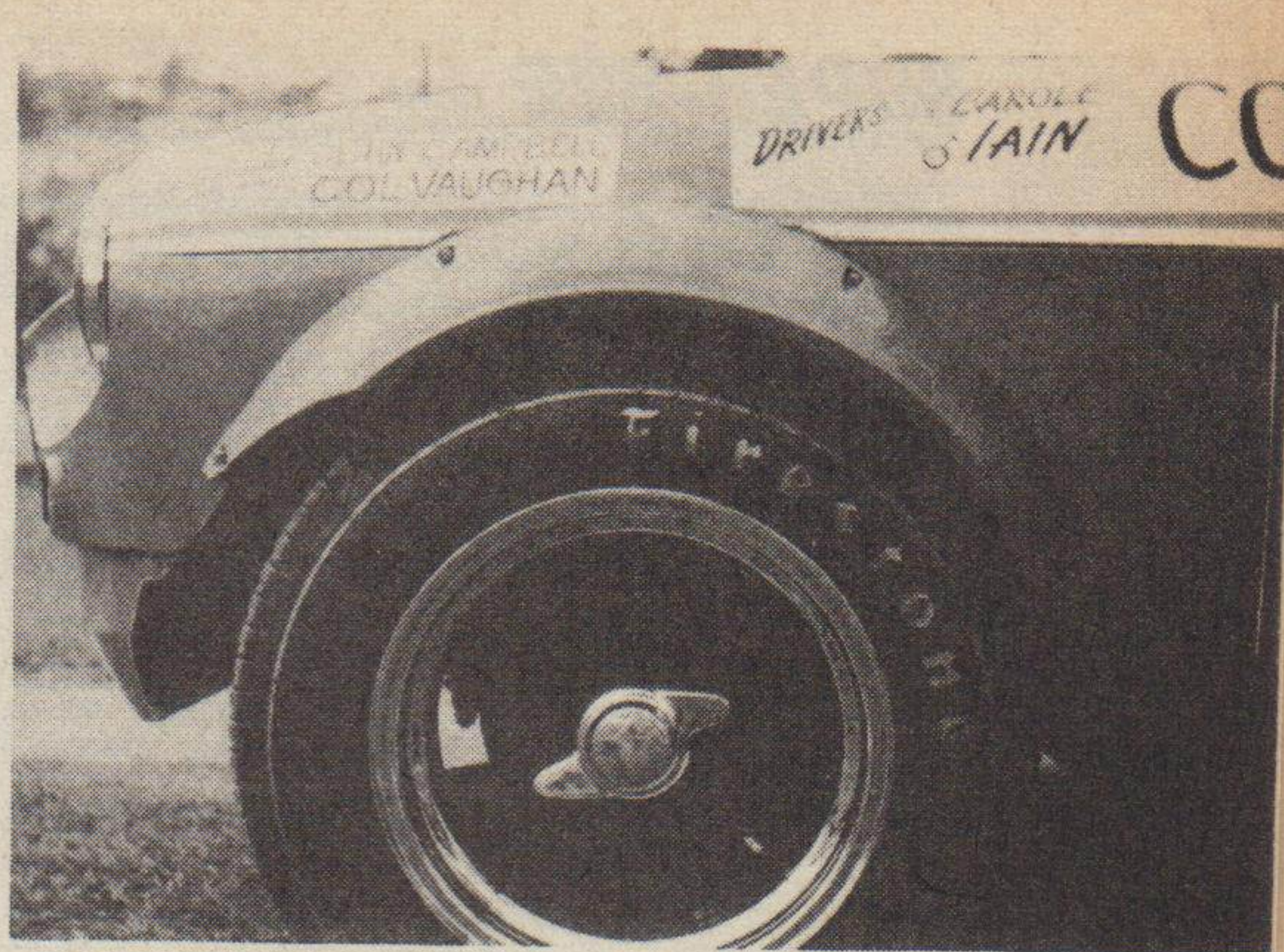
All readers of Racing Car News would at some time express their own views on the road safety problem, and the value of Motor Sport, so it's back to the Doctor:

"My professional colleague, Michael Henderson, has set the standards for us all, and I feel it is my responsibility to help local competitors understand the logic behind safety features. Like Dr. Henderson I feel you can't legislate safety—the drivers will adopt safety features willingly through an understanding of the situation. Racing develops the ability to anticipate a situation before it happens, and therefore be able to avoid it.

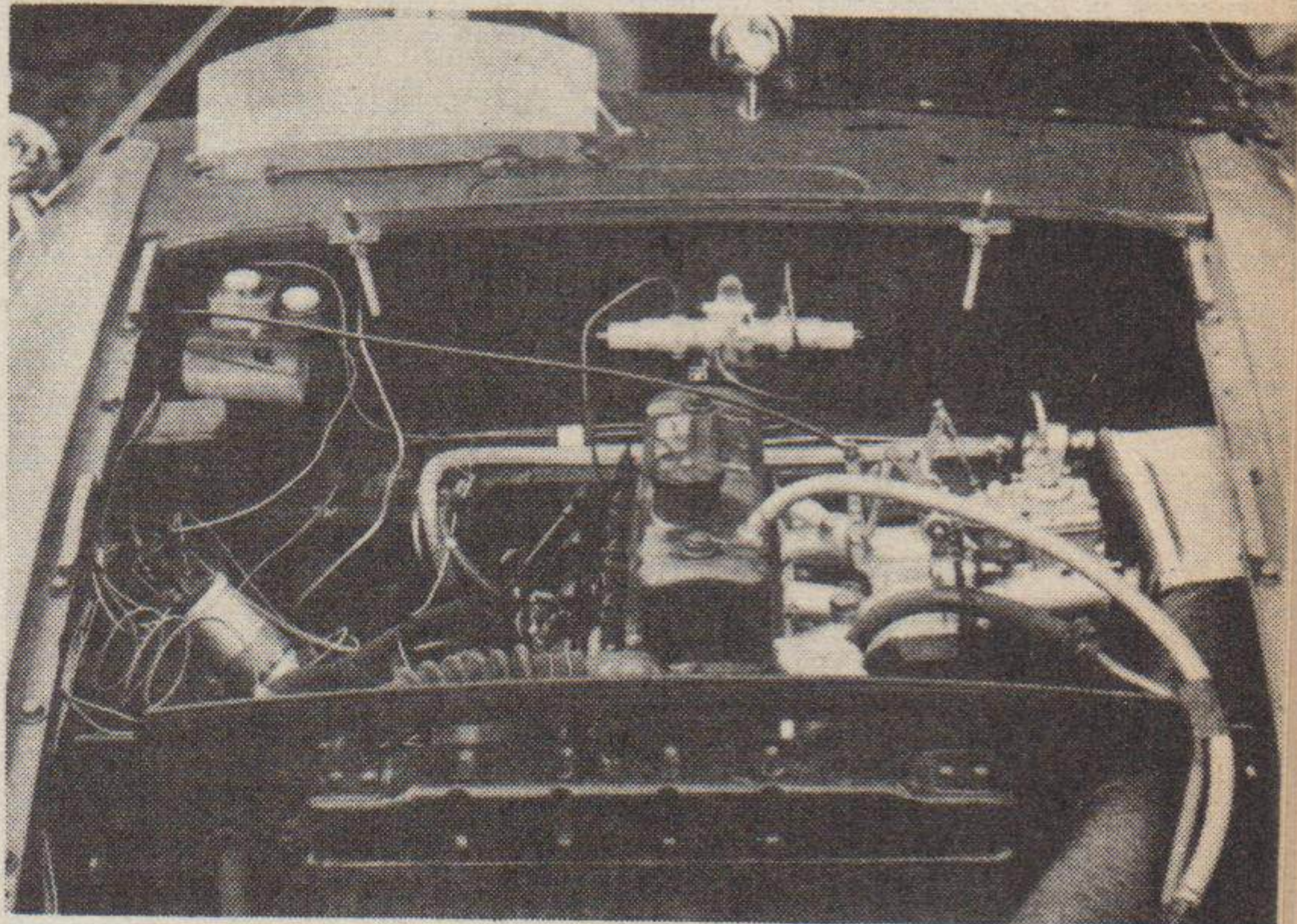
"This is true Defensive Driving. The enhanced level of car control through a racing driver's learned skills also helps where a truly unpredictable situation occurs, as in mechanical failure."

And to answer those much belted about old problems of how to draw more competitors into the sport, and in which category, the Doctor has the final say:

"I think it is the Promoters' responsibility to get those young fellows on the verge into the sport. Most of them



Super flared guards are needed to enclose the offset 6in. rims and fat Firestones.



Showing prominently in the tidy and business-like engine compartment is the "Tri-Safe" brake unit on the bulkhead.

are hesitant because of uncompetitive machines. Hold out a carrot in the form of Div. III races, or Novice races, with some financial inducement. Nobody likes to be last, so put all the last placers together, and give one the opportunity of coming first. I'm sure one reason I've been so keen was the two pounds I won in my first race!

"I have always felt that Sports Cars are the least 'cut-throat', and offer the safest training ground for the inexperienced driver. My advice is to follow the MG slogan—"Safety Fast". Notice that 'Safety' comes before the 'speed' part. Don't try to set the world on fire at your first meeting.

"I love sports cars, and must aim for a big banger sportie. If 7-litre AC Cobras were competitive still, that would have been the car. The late Ken Miles' Cobra excited my adrenals more than any other car I've ever seen."

The Wife at the Wheel . . .

The second member of the team is also the wife, Carole Corness, once quite renowned as Carole Palmer, the very rapid Sprite driver who used to set the racing pits on fire with an all girls pit crew. This "Barbarella bit" was perhaps premature, but the girls were efficient, and Carole's driving ability might even have given the late Paul Hawkins second thoughts about his much publicised views of the female sex. And while on this issue, it may be of interest to know that Carole is a superb cook, and the magnificent recipes she acquired in Spain and Gibraltar would do justice to a Cordon Bleu maestro!

SUPER-BEE *cont.*

This girl is very competent indeed, but has had her moments. Like the time she rescued a tiny kitten from a nearby drain and set about turning it into a real little lady. The usual problem arose, so Carole had Iain bundle the little dear off to the vet. Fortunately the vet was a close friend. He returned the kitten next day and pointed out that it was a boy cat!

Carole is twenty six, and works as a Doctor's receptionist in Brisbane. Where did her passion for motor sport spring from?

"I had been mad on cars since I was in High School. My dream car at that time was a white MGA. I went to my first race meeting in 1963 and then joined the MG Car Club. I learned a lot about driving in motorkhanas. I bought the ex-John French Sprite in 1965 and plunged straight into Motor Racing.

"I had a fairly successful run in the Sprite and the only sad part of the story was the deadly feud which developed between myself and the owner of a certain MGA. I came out of Mobilgas at Lowood one practice day to find the same young man standing forlornly beside his MGA. He and car covered in foam. He looked so sad that I blew him a kiss to cheer him up. However, this did not seem to be appreciated as he spent the rest of the year trying to run over me.

"Like at Lakeside, trying to be the hero, he came up on the inside into BMC with two wheels on the dirt. And

at Surfers, bearing down on me into Firestone, while the Sprite was refusing to run properly. I looked at the expression on his face in the rear view mirror and thought 'If I don't let this madman through, he'll hit me', so I moved over and married him in self-defence.

"Fact is that motor racing is really a male sport, and the women who take it seriously are usually the ones who climbed trees when they were kids and worried their mothers because they couldn't care less about dolls. There are drivers and posers on the women's side and only lap times tell the story.

"There are a few exceptionally good female drivers about, but I don't think they could beat a good male driver in a similar car. There really is something in this 'Me Tarzan, you Jane!' It's very obvious with Iain and myself. Every time we go out to race he beats me by part of a second. I refuse to acknowledge the 1.1 sec. at Lakeside as the car played up on me every time, but if he can do it again when we sort out the fuel supply problems, I will humbly acknowledge that—him Tarzan.

"My first responsibility is to Iain as a wife, not as a co-driver, so I do my best to fulfil this role. A fortune teller overseas told me that I would have triplets (first and second drivers and reserve) so I'll have to think about raising this Grand Prix team. I hope I won't have to give up motor racing for any length of time.

"We racing girls must stick together and improve. How? Pick the brains of

the best male drivers about. Watch carefully where they brake, compared to other drivers in similar cars, and watch their lines into corners when they're dicing. Classical lines are marvellous when there's nobody else about, but they're useless if you want to pass someone in a corner."

And Come for a Spin in "Super Bee" . . .

The MGB was at Surfers for a little private practice, so too was the Match SR4, but it was for a show to the press as Rothmans displayed their latest and greatest interest.

I got to drive the MGB as Iain gladly took me for a few laps in the passenger seat. I won't describe those laps, as my safety precautions were not all that could be desired. I mean to say that I was so busy—with one hand under the seat to stop me from sitting quite suddenly on the gear stick in the esses, and one on my head to hold on my loosely clipped helmet—that I had a little time to note road behaviour.

The Bee that day was not in top form—the tyre pressures were all tail about and the beast was understeering like a steam roller, not helped of course by the fantastic grip of those big Firestones.

Controls were an odd mixture. Brake and clutch were almost soft, not the sort of pressures that will ruin Carole's leg muscles. By contrast the steering proved incredibly heavy and dead, and indicated that it would take some learning.

The circuit showed a few pools of water and caution was needed (Iain was watching) as I set away for a few solitary laps. Power takeoff was quick, with a great thrust over 300 rpm, and gear shifts were quite spot on. This was certainly no stock MGB, and the power on hand indicated standing quarters in fifteens would be no problem.

The Surfers circuit is wide open, and my horror is Firestone, a very fast left hand sweeper that tightens up on exit. This is where I found out about those tyres, as the outside edge (wet) loomed up and I yanked her back. Oh happy day—the Bee just sort of slipped back to the inside without the slightest protest and had it been a race two cars could have gone by abreast. Did I leave a big gap! That was when I thought I must be a long way from the limit.

The Super Bee comfortably pulled 105 mph past the tower, held to the ton under the bridge without fear (for the comfort of the watching owner) and showed that 120 would be possible before Lukey. The five laps were over too soon, and it was clear that laps in under 1:30.0 would be in order with Iain at the wheel.

That's the Super Bee, the latest addition to our cheaper Sports Car brigade, and should you see it in action and want to know more about it then go to the Doctor. He has built this car with lots of help and advice from others who know the ropes and would like to see more Bees on the track. Oh, but don't go in Surgery Hours, those consultation fees don't cover motor sport, and our Doctor is a busy man. ●



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