

History is so, so easily lost - the origins of our National Riley Rally Trophies

By Leigh Johnson

Two trophies traditionally presented at the conclusion of a National Rally were donated to preserve the memory of long-standing Riley Club members. The Jim Andriess Trophy and the Alby Lobb Trophy.

The Jim Andriess Trophy

This trophy, in the form of a silver tray, is awarded to the person or persons who have contributed most to the Riley movement in Australia in the last year.

In the very early 1970's together with Noel Lockley, Jim started what has become the NSW Spare Parts Fund. Jim worked in a camera shop in Sydney. He also had a pretty well-equipped workshop at his home in Mona Vale, north of Sydney for working on his cars and Noel lived not far away in Collaroy.

The first task they set themselves was to have made some desperately-needed replacement half shafts for 2½ litre Rileys. A number of members put in \$10.00 each and a batch was ordered. Jack Warr in Queensland was also involved very early in the process.

The axles were sold at a profit and the resulting funds were put towards producing a batch of almost equally desperately-needed water pump kits. From there, the NSW spares operation just grew and grew.

Jim was born in 1905 in what was then the Dutch East Indies. He came to Australia before World War II and worked as an interpreter during the war. Sadly, his wife died shortly after giving birth to their first child, a daughter who also survived only a short while after birth. Katie, Jim's wife's twin sister had moved in with Jim to help with the illness and ended up staying on with Jim on a permanent basis.

We don't know how it was that Jim became interested in Rileys but over the years he owned a 2½ litre car and two 1½ litre cars - one post-war and the other a pre-war Falcon.

He was a very generous man and brought a great deal of enthusiasm to almost anything that interested him. His spares activities assisted many people to get their Rileys back on the road and to keep them on the road. He was a wonderful man, always there for anyone who had a problem or just wanted to talk.

Jim died in 1995 and left behind a spare parts operation that has served many of so well over the years and still serves us all.

The Alby Lobb Trophy

First awarded in 1994, this trophy is given to the highest points scorer in the Conrod Trophy driving a pre-war Riley.

Albert Edwin Lobb (known to everyone as Alby) was well known to S.A. and interstate vintage car enthusiasts with a common interest in Riley cars although his interests extended over many marques. He lived all of his life in the Port Adelaide area. He died in 1987, aged only 72 years.

Alby was a boilermaker by trade but for 30 or so years conducted a general and electrical engineering business from his home workshop. His clientele were varied, including Adelaide firms and country clients seeking motors and machinery. He also built motorised mobile welders and wind-driven generators, these being dispatched as far as Coober Pedy.

Family photo albums show of Alby's early interest in unique cars and motor cycles. Most photographs were taken at Semaphore where the kiosk photographer was ever ready to record the Amilcars, Lagondas and Nortons which were paraded there.

In the 1950's Alby's interest turned firmly to Riley Nines. One of his specials was his "Jitney", an aluminium body built on a tourer chassis and used every day as a workhorse. Over the years the Nine collection increased to include a 1929 tourer, a Monaco, 1930's roadster, 1935 Imp and finally a Brooklands.

The 1960's heralded his interest, as to be expected, with RM Rileys having purchased a Roadster which thankfully took over work duties from the Nines. During this time whilst filling the empty block next door with RM sedans, he managed to build a few shortened chassis RM specials one or two of which are still in existence today.

Alby's Roadster is still with us too. It's owned by his son Peter and daughter-in-law Annie Lobb, SA Riley Club members.

Gradually the Nines were sold and the RM stable became more complete with the acquisition of a Drophead. Post 1974 saw Alby concentrating more on his business and he gradually disposed of the Rileys, although there were always visitors seeking spare parts or a friendly chat to tap into his vast Riley knowledge and experience.

Alby was ever willing to assist fellow enthusiasts and, although he collected Rileys, he always found greater enjoyment in driving or using the cars for work or pleasure.

The Trophy features a mounted Riley Nine piston. This piston is from the famous Antill Roadster, holder of the Perth to Sydney light car record of 1929 supplied by Graeme Pinkney, the owner of the car at the time.

The Longest Distance Travelled Award

This award, presented to the person or persons who have travelled the greatest distance to get to a National Rally came into being during the planning of the W.A. Collie Valley Rally in 2003. There was discussion about how BMW owned the Riley name and a suggestion that BMW here in Australia might be contacted to see if they might be interested in sponsoring a trophy.

The idea fell flat initially because they thought most of the BMW people in Australia wouldn't even know what a Riley was! However, John Picton-Warlow said he was in touch with Victor Riley over another matter and that he'd raise the subject with him. It was left to John to handle.

A couple of months went by and then John announced that Victor Riley had been in Germany meeting with BMW management and had raised the subject of a trophy for the Longest Distance Travelled in a Riley and had received a favourable response. And not only that. BMW gave the Riley Club of WA \$5000 to be used for whatever the club saw fit. So it was decided that John should arrange to purchase a trophy bearing the BMW and Riley names.

At the meeting of Presidents last year it was decided that it should be downsized to make it easier to transport.

And now that we've regained our history, let us ensure that each year we recall it and preserve it.

If you would like to add to or edit the above please contact the author at leighj@adam.com.au.

The above is based on input from:

Peter Lobb in an article from the 1994 National Rally magazine about The Alby Lobb Trophy; Russel Sinclair, Secretary of the NSW Riley Club in relation to the Jim Andriess Trophy; and Rowland Palmer, President of the WA Riley Club in relation to the Longest Distance Award.