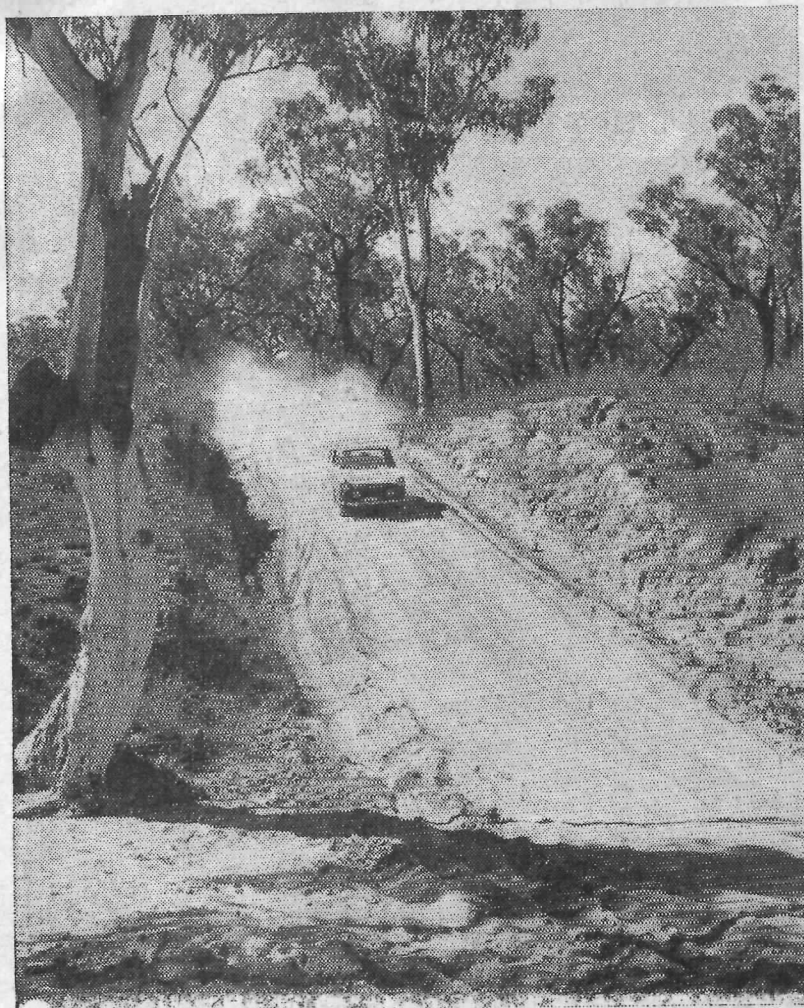


ROUND AUSTRALIA

IN 9 DAYS



SYDNEY, 6.22 a.m., July 16: Evan Green and Jules Feldman at end of long drive.



NINE days, six hours and 22 minutes, to be precise—that's how long it took us to drive an Austin Freeway around this island continent.

It turned out to be a record: previous fastest time around Australia was nine days, 12 hours, set in 1958 by a Standard Vanguard utility with a crew of three — John Thornton, Keith McCrohon and Evan Green.

Best previous time by a passenger car, made in 1959, was 12 days, 12 hours — the car being a Triumph Herald and the drivers John Thornton and Evan Green — so in this category the record was broken even more convincingly.

Only two other authenticated high-speed round trips have been recorded. Lex Davison took a Holden round in 14 days in 1954, and the following year Alan Jurd made it in 16½ days with a Vanguard. Several other attempts have been made, including one by Queensland driver Keith Thallon — but so far as we know, none was completed.

Not that there is any official recognition for times established on trips such as these: motor sport authorities do not list inter-state or inter-city records in Australia.

But motoring enthusiasts, and trial competitors in particular, show great interest in such ventures, and any "record attempts" are keenly watched and discussed by them, whether successful or not.

DRY creeks were frequent hazards, like this sandy crossing near Hughenden in western Queensland.

MODERN MOTOR — September 1962



Story of a record-breaking car trip by Modern Motor editor Jules Feldman and associate editor Evan Green

Toughest Test Ever

While the possibility of setting fastest time was always in our minds, the trip did not have this as its primary purpose.

Our object was to test the Austin Freeway — the new six-cylinder car from B.M.C. which Australians had waited for so long — over every type of road and in all conditions to be found in this country.

Best way of doing this, obviously, was to take the car right round Australia in the toughest, most searching road test ever attempted by any motoring magazine.

Clocking fastest time was of such secondary importance that we wasted many hours on filming and photographing operations, so as to have a complete pictorial record of the trip; nearly 20 hours were spent in this manner.

There were also unscheduled delays, of course, details of which will be given in the story.

When we saw, towards the end of the trip, that a record time was still possible, we went for it—and got back to Sydney with 5 hours, 38 minutes to spare.

MODERN MOTOR — September 1962

In the 8057 miles covered on the trip, we encountered every major type of road hazard except snow.

Road conditions ranged from excellent highways on which we averaged up to 76 m.p.h. (over one 70-mile stretch) to bone-jarring corrugations, feet-thick sand and bulldust, treacherous potholes, steep, rocky creek crossings and “jump-ups,” rain and mud over stretches of several hundred miles and narrow, deep-rutted tracks with sump-busting boulders in the crown. Finally, on the run home from

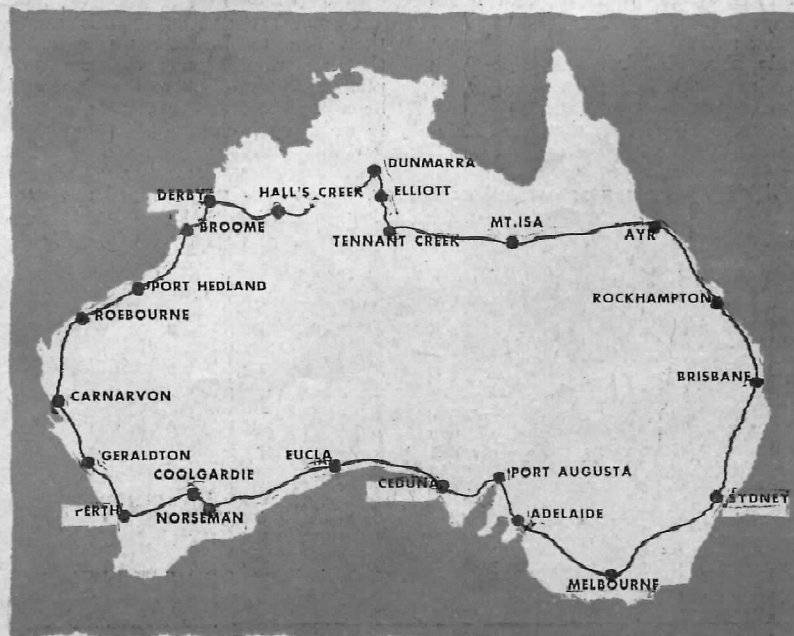
Melbourne to Sydney, our progress was slowed by a blanket of fog that lasted the best part of 200 miles.

In all these conditions, the Freeway gave a first-class account of itself.

It took fearful punishment, being hard-pushed all the way—as indicated by an overall “on the road” average of 50 m.p.h. (8057 miles in 161 driving hours, discounting only the major stoppages, but counting in the time wasted on photography).

On nearly all stretches, the aver-

MAP shows marathon test route; car travelled anticlockwise direction.





DETOUR: Bags strung across broken grid were only warning of this trap. Crew had to "demolish" fence, lay tin over wire strands to get past.

ages we maintained were well in excess of those set for round-Australia trials.

No car is perfect, and the Freeway did prove vulnerable in two respects—but both were of minor importance and no serious damage was sustained anywhere; nor did any major overhaul prove necessary throughout the run.

From past experience, no other car has stood up so well to the rigors of motoring around Australia as fast as local conditions will allow.

Mapping the Route

Route chosen for the trip was from Sydney to Brisbane over the New England Highway, up the Queensland coast to Ayr (near Townsville), then inland through Mt. Isa to strike the Alice Springs-Darwin highway at Tennant Creek Junction, and north as far as Dunmarra.

From here we were to head west again, through Wave Hill and Halls Creek to Derby, then down the West Coast to Perth and back east across the Nullarbor, through Norse-

man and Ceduna, to Adelaide, Melbourne, and back to Sydney via the Hume Highway.

We considered taking the shorter, faster Rockhampton-Longreach-Mt. Isa road in Queensland, but rejected it as not going sufficiently far north along the east coast to qualify this as a genuine tour of Australia; on the other hand, we decided not to visit Darwin because this would have meant retracing our steps for some 400 miles, all of it on excellent bitumen—an excursion that would have proved nothing. We planned to travel virtually non-stop, one driving, the other resting, halting only to pick up fuel and food, and for occasional servicing of the car. Only 14 fuelling stops were scheduled, which meant carrying a lot of fuel with us.

Preparing the Car

When first suggesting this marathon run to B.M.C., we specified that we would want the car supplied "as standard," so that it would be a true test of the vehicle as sold to ordinary buyers.

B.M.C. readily agreed to this. However, because of the non-stop programme, a number of internal modifications were necessary.

Most important of these were an extra fuel tank—27 gallons, to bring total capacity to 37 gallons and give us a range of at least 800 miles—and provision of a fold-down seat for resting.

The extra fuel tank was fitted in the boot—and because this increased weight over the back axle to an abnormal degree, B.M.C. fitted station-wagon type rear springs.

To increase effective tail clearance, we asked B.M.C. to remove the spare-wheel carrier from under the boot; we also thought the projecting diff. plug might be damaged by stones, and had it replaced with a recessed plug. These changes, plus a small skid-plate welded to the front of the muffler, were the only departures from normal specifications.

Inside, the front bench seat was replaced by a Wolseley type driver's seat and a specially built fully-reclining seat for the passenger. The rear seat was taken out, and the offside of its platform was occupied by a rack holding two spare wheels.

In front of the rack a wooden box screwed to the floor was to serve as our tucker-box. It had two clips for thermos flasks on one side, so we could eat and drink as we drove.

Other equipment included a Halda Speed Pilot, so we could keep track of averages without complicated calculations, a two-way radio to link us with an accompanying aircraft, and a battery of switches for night-driving spotlights, auxiliary fuel-tank pump, two-way fuel gauge, and hand-held spotlight.

Two powerful spotlights, a kangaroo guard built up of two rear-spring main leaves (which could serve as spares if needed), an insect guard and a radio aerial completed our special equipment.

So the car could be easily spotted from the air, the roof was brushed over with special bright orange aircraft identification paint.

Once B.M.C. had agreed to lend and prepare the Freeway, other backers were quickly found.

NERVOUS moments: excited cattle, exciting roads made rapid progress hazardous throughout the north-west.



ON LONG straights Freeway was tireless; on "Bitumen," sustained more than 70 m.p.h. for 600 miles.

Shell undertook to supply the fuel and lubricants (Supershell petrol and Ash-free Multigrade oil); 14 Shell service stations along the route were scheduled as our stopping points—and they were also to provide any servicing that might be necessary, as well as food, in areas where no B.M.C. agent was available. Route map and information on road conditions were supplied by the Shell Touring Service.

At all points, the arrival and departure times in our log were to be witnessed by the senior Shell or B.M.C. official present, so the record would be strictly authentic.

Olympic supplied the tyres and laid down stocks of the comparatively rare 5.90 by 14in. size at strategic points along the route, in case replacements became necessary.

Rex Aviation provided air cover in the form of a Cessna 182, piloted by Cliff Dwyer. The plane carried Sydney photographer Scott Polkinghorne, whose job was to obtain a complete pictorial record of the trip, in movies as well as still photos.

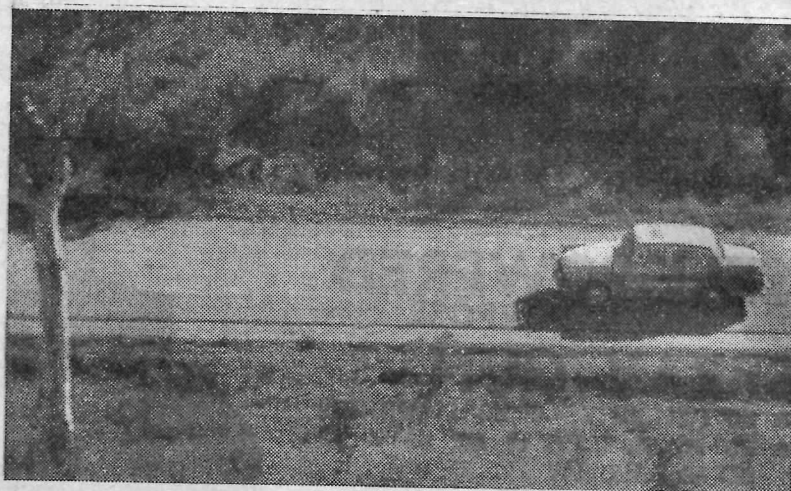
Another passenger was reporter Bob Main of the *Sydney Morning Herald*—so the whole venture was to be under scrutiny by the daily Press from start to finish.

A final seal of "officiality" was put on the whole project when Sydney's Lord Mayor, Alderman Harry Jensen, gave us goodwill messages to be delivered to the Lord Mayors of the capital cities we were to visit on the way—Brisbane, Perth, Adelaide and Melbourne.

Alarm in Brisbane

Our trip got off to a flying start at 00.01 (one minute past midnight) on Saturday, July 7.

Rain was falling as we left Sydney Town Hall; it stayed with us for 180 miles, and we also struck light fog



on the ranges near Tamworth and heavy frost in the Armidale area at dawn.

Despite 18 minutes spent filming near Glen Innes (the Cessna had landed there the day before, and Scotty was waiting for us on the road), plus an unscheduled six-minute stop for petrol at Warwick, we reached U.K. Motors in Brisbane at 12.30 p.m.—half an hour ahead of schedule, after averaging 50.8 m.p.h. for the 631 miles recorded by the speedo.

That stop for petrol was made necessary by one of us accidentally flipping the switch that actuated the transfer pump between the two tanks. When checking the auxiliary-tank soon after crossing the Queensland border, we were amazed to find it on "empty." We couldn't hear the electric pump ticking away in the boot, and at least 12 gallons of petrol went down the overflow pipe on to the road before we became aware of the loss.

This was a nuisance, as it forced us to do a bit of guesswork regarding fuel consumption on that first leg—but a far more serious worry awaited us in Brisbane.

While the car was being greased, we noticed traces of an oil leak

around the gearbox and clutch. B.M.C. technician David Campbell examined the area carefully and warned that oil could be getting into the clutch housing—in which case the clutch would eventually start slipping.

He said this probably wouldn't happen for about 5000 miles—and we still had the best part of 8000 miles to cover. Dismantling and checking would take about five hours—did we want anything done about it?

After a long discussion, we decided against it. The car was being tested "as is," and we didn't want any major work done on it unless absolutely necessary.

So we crossed our fingers and left Brisbane at 2 p.m.—half an hour later than scheduled.

We had no trouble making up this leeway, reaching Rockhampton at 10.7 p.m. (23 minutes early and only 22 hours out of Sydney) and leaving dead on schedule at 11 p.m.

Our average from Brisbane to Rocky was 54 m.p.h., though we never exceeded Queensland's 60 m.p.h. open-road limit and came down to the specified legal speed when passing through towns, as we did throughout the trip. Our regard

OOPS: Treacherous mud between Derby and Broome sent Freeway skating off road and into bush—undamaged.





THROUGHOUT journey, pilot Cliff Dwyer kept Cessna in close touch with Freeway — as here, over Northern Territory grasslands. Aircraft and car were linked by two-way radio, a great boon in more remote areas.

for the Freeway's ability to keep up high averages was growing rapidly.

A Roo and a Ditch

We left Rockhampton at 11 p.m., as planned. The road to Ayr was still good bitumen, except for a few gravel stretches and roadworks detours — but it was here that we had our first encounters with road hazards.

About 170 miles north of Rocky, a five-foot kangaroo darted out suddenly from our left, giving us no chance to avoid him or even apply the brakes. The impact broke the two guard supports, smashed one spotlight, and cracked the other, caved in the grille and knocked the Freeway badge off it.

End of roo — and it would also have been the end of our radiator, if it hadn't been for that kangaroo guard. We gave thanks to B.M.C.'s Cyril Baker and his crew for making such a sturdy job of it.

Next hazard, between Mackay and Proserpine, was by courtesy of the Queensland Roads Department. For some reason, they had dug a vertical-sided ditch, 3ft. wide and 3ft. deep, halfway across a return to the main road from a detour, and hadn't bothered to put up a barricade.

The headlights made it look like a mere indentation until it was too late to change course; we slammed the brakes on — but the front of the car still crashed into the ditch at about 20 m.p.h., and we stopped with a bone-jarring jolt.

A less rugged car would have lost its front end — but the Freeway amazed us by reversing out of the

hole as if nothing unusual had happened.

Damage was confined to one badly bent rim, which we hammered out after making sure the tubeless tyre wasn't losing pressure (we ran on tubeless Olympics all the way) and a "reversed" steering wheel, which had turned through half-a-revolution, so that the horn ring was now on top in the straight-ahead position.

Though a subsequent check-up showed the offside front wheel had been knocked in, out of toe-in, the Freeway remained easy to steer and stayed on course even with hands off the wheel.

The roo and the ditch cost us 28 minutes — yet we reached our scheduled stop at Home Hill, just south of Ayr, at 7.30 a.m.; again a half-hour ahead of time, after averaging 50 m.p.h.

Here we took time out to fix the damage: the broken guard uprights and the smashed spotlight were replaced, the steering checked and alignment restored. We also changed out of our heavy clothes into lighter outfits, to suit the warmth of the tropics, and left at 9.03 a.m.—half an hour later than intended.

Record to Mt. Isa

We were swinging inland now along the Burdekin Highway, and bid farewell to the bitumen at Charters Towers. Here we again picked up Scotty, who wanted to film our progress over dusty dirt roads.

We dropped Scotty at the Hughenden aerodrome to rejoin the Cessna; he should have been thank-

ful for this, as ruts and corrugations over the next 270 miles, through Julia Creek to Cloncurry, set our teeth rattling and caused a mysterious knocking at the back of the car, which had us worried for hours.

Cloncurry to Mary Kathleen was on bitumen again — but the relief was short-lived, as the last stretch to Mt. Isa hadn't changed a bit from the round-Australia trial days. The infamous steep-sided "jump-ups" were as bad as ever, and the Freeway's suspension worked overtime as it nosed in and out of the deep, rock-strewn gullies.

Considering all this, and the extra mileage we covered while posing for Scotty's cameras (the speedo showed 616 miles instead of the mapped distance of 599) we were delighted to find we'd reached Mt. Isa at 10.40 p.m. — 20 minutes ahead of schedule.

No one had ever made Sydney-Mt. Isa in under two days, even through Longreach, we were told. We'd picked the longer route and got there in one day, 22 hours, and 40 minutes.

Delays included, our Ayr-Mt. Isa average was 45.4 m.p.h. In the 1954 Redex Trial, competitors were set an average of 33 for the Townsville-Cloncurry section and only 28 m.p.h. for Cloncurry-Isa; many struck trouble and were late in control.

At Isa the Freeway got its first oil-change. The rattle in the back was explained when we opened the boot and saw that the bracket holding the auxiliary fuel pump had snapped off.

A stronger bracket was made up

(Continued on page 74)

ROUND AUSTRALIA IN NINE DAYS

(Continued from page 19)

— and mechanics also fitted a transverse strengthening bar under the boot, on finding that its floor had begun to crack under the weight of the 27-gallon auxiliary fuel tank.

Then they pointed out that one of the rear shock-absorbers had blown its gasket — due, they said, to over-tightening of the top cover; the gasket on the other shocker also showed signs of over-tightening, protruding well beyond the metal, so we agreed to have both units replaced.

All this took time, so we were again half an hour late in leaving — 00.30 on Monday morning instead of midnight.

Next run was easy, however — all on good bitumen, and with nothing to worry about except cows and kangaroos, which we managed to dodge.

Despite wasting another 30 minutes on photography (our own this time, not Scotty's), we covered the 543 miles to Elliott in 8½ hours — just under 64 m.p.h. — arriving at 9 a.m. sharp (actually 9.30 a.m. N.T. time — but we ran on Eastern Standard Time all the way).

The Freeway cruised sweetly at 75-80, and we thoroughly enjoyed the easy run north.

Dustbowl off Dunmarra

We had to meet the Cessna at Elliott; but as it was restricted to daylight flying, we feared it wouldn't catch up with us. It didn't, and we had to wait.

In any case, the local service-station operator was the only one who let us down on the whole trip: though warned days in advance, he had no fuel for us or the Cessna and had to send for it to Newcastle Waters. When supplies did arrive, the car petrol turned out to be standard grade, so we told him we'd refuel at Dunmarra.

Meanwhile the Cessna arrived, and we drove to the airstrip to help Cliff Dwyer fuel up from drums, as well as to do some more filming.

Leaving Elliott at 11.50 a.m., we covered the 70 miles to Dunmarra in 55 minutes at a fantastic 76 m.p.h., the speedo needle seldom dipping below 80.

Both tanks were filled to the brim with Supershell; we grabbed a soft drink each and set off again at 1.07 p.m.—2½ hours later than scheduled.

Swinging west off the bitumen four miles north of Dunmarra, we took the little-used dirt road to Top Springs — and it was here that the first real misfortune overtook us.

The dreaded fine bulldust of the Northern Territory lay in thick stretches along this road—and just on 2 p.m., when the speedo had clocked up 37 miles, we hit an immense pocket of it.

We saw the red dust flow up over the bonnet like a wave of water, and the Freeway shuddered to a stop. The ignition had packed up—and no wonder: everything under the bonnet was buried in dust—we couldn't even see the engine or its auxiliaries!

We did our best to clean the stuff from battery, spark-plugs and fuses, but it was everywhere—in the air, in our hair, in our lungs, calf-deep underfoot.

The distributor cap proved difficult to remove and we cursed the engine's "accessibility"—not one of the Freeway's strong points—as we skinned our knuckles on the burning-hot bypass oil filter, sandwiched in right next to the distributor.

We also cursed the air vents provided in the car's inner guards, which seem to have been designed specially to suck in dust and throw it up on to the electrics and the carburettor. The air-cleaner was full of it—but, surprisingly, the paper-element filter had done its job well, and not a speck of dust had got through to the carby throat.

Having no points file (an unpardonable omission!), we used the old bushman's dodge of cleaning the breaker points with the striking surface of a matchbox—but several attempts failed to get us going, and we also noticed that the car's key-starter had packed up, though the motor could still be turned over with the solenoid button.

Somehow we came to blame the coil and tried replacing it with the spare we carried. Still no go—and after four hours of tinkering we were just about at the end of our resources when we saw a huge 50-ton, three-wagon diesel cattle train lumbering up from the west.

We hailed the driver, and he stopped the monster, obliterating everything with a cloud of choking, blinding dust. We had thought of getting a tow, but realised that we would have suffocated in a matter of minutes in the duststorm behind the train, so asked instead for a lift to Dunmarra, where we hoped to find a mechanic and, perhaps, another coil.

Dunmarra had neither—so on to Elliott we went in the cattle train, arriving there at 11 p.m. Five hours to cover 107 miles!

Here we did find a storekeeper-cum-mechanic, but he wouldn't attempt the trip at night, inviting us instead to have a sleep at his place till 4 a.m., when he would drive us out to the car.

No alternative, so we didn't reach the car again till 6 a.m. on Tuesday, and it took the mechanic another two hours to get it going. Turned out the coil was all right, but the rest of the electrics—especially the distri-

butor—were swamped with dust, which is much worse than water, because it doesn't dry out.

Reported Lost

Off again at 8 a.m., now 21½ hours behind schedule. Since no phone exchanges or post offices operate there at night we had no way of letting anyone know, and there was much worry at Halls Creek, in the Kimberleys, where the plane crew awaited us.

This was when we got an idea of the wonderful efficiency of the Flying Doctor and Air Services radio networks in the outback: we met only two cars in the 240 miles to Wave Hill, but both crews had heard we'd been missing and a plane was looking for us. It was a great comfort to have this reassurance.

More bulldust in the distributor at 10.15 a.m., just past Top Springs—but not so bad this time; we were off again within an hour, the engine missing for a while on one cylinder, but soon regaining its normal beat.

The road was much worse than expected, especially after Wave Hill, where we dented a front-wheel rim on a rocky creek crossing and spent 25 minutes hammering it out—just as the Cessna appeared overhead, making its first contact since Elliott.

Night had fallen when we reached the W.A. border, after negotiating some narrow high-crowned rocky tracks and crossing vast, flat plains around Inverway and Nicholson.

Here, for a change, we were lucky: just after going through the border gate, we met a Land-Rover going the other way. Its driver told us the normal road to Halls Creek had long been closed, and we'd have to take a private road through Flora Valley Station. But for this, we might have got properly bushed!

As it was, our only trouble that night was a broken fan-belt. Again due to poor accessibility, this took us 45 minutes to replace.

We reached Halls Creek—and a much-relieved plane crew—at 1.05 a.m. (E.S.T.) on Wednesday, 25 hours later than we'd hoped. The original schedule had gone to pot, as schedules inevitably do in the North.

Instead of driving 510 miles in 13½ hours, we found we'd covered 525 in 17 hours; even so, the "all-in" average of 31 m.p.h. was higher than the 30 m.p.h. set for these roads in the 1954 Redex—and with the two hours' stoppages taken out, we'd actually averaged 35 on the road.

We wondered what problems we would strike next—and the possibility of developing a slipping clutch was a nagging worry at the back of our minds.

CONCLUDED NEXT MONTH

MODERN MOTOR — September 1962

Concluding the story of a record-breaking car trip by Modern Motor editor Jules Feldman and associate editor Evan Green

THIS is the second half of a two-part report on Modern Motor's marathon 8057-mile road test of the Austin Freeway, which was completed in the fastest time yet recorded for a car trip around Australia—nine days, six hours, 22 minutes.

Last month we told you how the route was selected and the car prepared; how Shell undertook to supply the fuel, and Rex Aviation provided a Cessna 182 to follow us around the continent, carrying cameraman Scott Polkinghorne and newspaper reporter Bob Main.

The story took us as far as Halls Creek, in the Kimberleys—3247 miles from our starting-point in Sydney—and described the trouble with Northern Territory bulldust near Dunmarra, which had cost us the best part of a day.

Now read on . . .

HALLS CREEK was the nearest thing to a town we'd seen since leaving Mt. Isa, and the distinctly spartan Kimberley Hotel seemed like a palace.

Here was our first chance to wash off the Dunmarra bulldust, and we took it—though there was no hot water left at that late hour and the cold shower set our teeth chattering.

A hot meal revived us, and we tried to have messages sent ahead, warning of the breakdown in our original schedule, but were told that it was impossible to get out a message at night.

After fuelling from a drum which had been left out in the street for us when the service station had closed, we left Halls Creek at 2.40 a.m.

(Eastern Standard Time) on Wednesday, July 11.

The twisty, hilly road through the Kimberleys had been graded recently but was still bumpy and corrugated, with the added hazards of piles of gravel and occasional boulders left behind by the grader.

After the Top Springs-Wave Hill-Halls Creek sections, it looked quite reasonable to us, and we jogged along at a good bat, admiring the clumps of ghost gums that loomed in the headlights at river crossings—particularly at Fitzroy Crossing, which we reached shortly before dawn, as the sky was just beginning to brighten.

Our original plan was to refuel from a drum brought out to Yeeda Junction, 28 miles out of Derby—but the rendezvous had been fixed for the previous night, and we realised that we would now have to go right into town.

The pleasant, uneventful night's run brought us there at 10.20 a.m., 7 hours and 40 minutes after leaving Halls Creek.

The speedo had clocked up 376 miles, indicating that we had averaged just on 49 m.p.h. over a road which 1954 and 1955 Redex contestants had covered at 30 m.p.h.

At Derby the Freeway received its second oil-change, and we asked the mechanic to replace the distributor points, which had become pitted during our mishaps with dust. He said it would be quicker and easier to replace the whole distributor—and preferable, too, since there was still a good deal of bulldust in the original unit. We told him to go ahead.

When the car was ready, we spent

35 minutes touring the town for the benefit of Scotty's cameras and didn't leave Derby until 3 p.m. (E.S.T.).

Minus Top and Second

We had been warned that unseasonal heavy rain had fallen south of Derby during the night and morning, but had not expected the road to be as bad as we found it.

There was a 100-mile stretch of new roadworks between Derby and Broome, and all of it was now loose, rain-soaked red clay.

When we weren't splashing through water or slithering on a greasy surface, we were crawling through deep mud churned up by the local meatworks trucks, before these stopped using the road as too dangerous at 10 a.m. that morning (as we found out later).

DERBY interlude: schoolkids of all shades and sizes mob the Freeway, strip us of every bit of chewing-gum carried in the car—and we had about 40 packets at that stage.



UND AUSTRALIA IN 9 DAYS



DUST (above) and rocky creek crossings (below) were our main enemies up north—plus hundreds of miles of mud, caused by unseasonal rains.

On one occasion, a violent skid sent us clean through the bank and far into the scrub, dodging trees and boulders. The Freeway came to rest with its tail in a ditch, but excellent traction brought it back on to the road safely and without damage.

The road was so slippery here that when one of us got out to take the picture published last month (on page 17), his feet went from under him, and he found it as difficult to get up as on an ice-rink.

About 4.30 p.m., just after crawling through a mud bog in low, we selected second gear—and apart from a wildly revving engine, nothing happened.

We tried selecting third, with the same result. Obviously, we'd "done" our transmission—but how and where?

First gear was still operative, and there was no strange noise from the gearbox, so it looked like a broken linkage.

Sure enough, an examination showed that moving the gear lever



CESSNA races Freeway between Broome and Pt. Hedland. Sand here was nice and firm, so we kept the needle on 70 most of the time.



made no impression on the transfer linkage for second and top gear—so at least the gearbox was all right. Could we jam the box in second, we wondered?

We'd been sorting things out underneath for about half-an-hour when, to our relief, the Cessna appeared overhead.

Over the two-way radio, we told the crew we'd lost the top two ratios and asked them to bring the mechanic out from Derby, adding that we would try to make Broome in low gear.

Broome was then 36 miles away, and we set off at a crawl, keeping speed down to 15 m.p.h. to avoid overheating the engine; but as the temperature gauge remained steady, we upped this to 18 m.p.h. and reached Broome soon after 7 p.m. (5.05 p.m. local time).

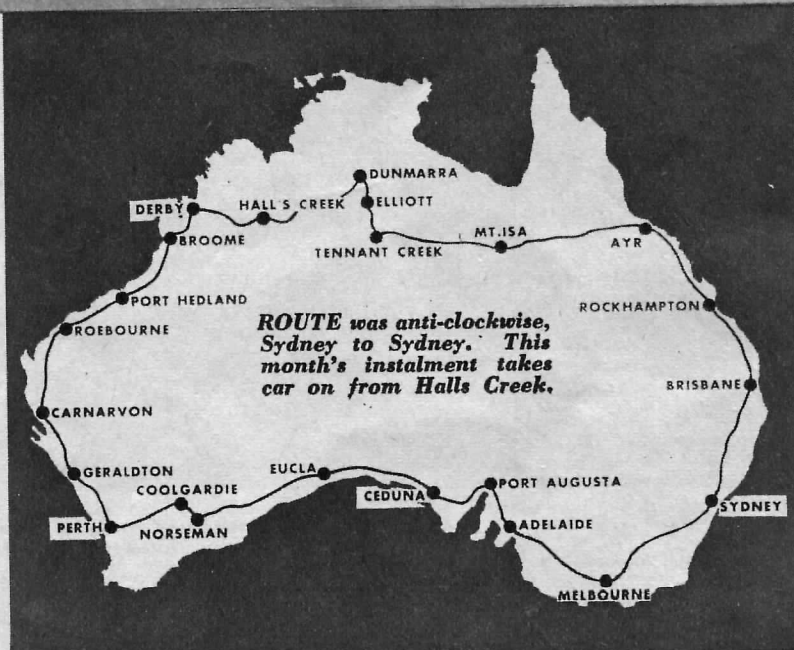
As anticipated, there was no mechanic at the Broome Shell station, which turned out to consist of a couple of pumps outside a general store. We congratulated ourselves on arranging for the Derby man to be flown out—but our pleasure proved to be premature.

When we crawled out to Broome airport to meet the Cessna crew, they were amazed to see us, and we learnt that they had heard only the first half of our message.

Not realising that we wanted the mechanic flown to Broome, they had sent him out by car to pick us up on the road!

The inevitable happened: although we shanghaied local taxi-

EVAN pushes, Jules pedals, Scotty clicks the shutter. A skid on wet western end of Nullarbor sent us crashing against mudbank, facing back towards Perth—but a bit of digging freed unharmed Freeway.



driver Lofty Cavanough and sent him out to meet the mechanic, it was too late. Not finding us at the spot indicated, he had already gone back to Derby.

Things were getting desperate now. With Lofty's help, we finally located a mechanic in Broome. He diagnosed the trouble as a broken weld between the linkage rod and fulcrum plate, but refused to work at night and told us he'd get on to it first thing in the morning.

We left the Freeway with him and went to the local pub. Though mad with frustration at this further delay, we did appreciate the chance of a good night's sleep—the only one we had on the trip.

Immediately after breakfast on Thursday we fronted the mechanic again—only to be informed that he had a couple of other jobs to do before getting on to ours.

Again Lofty came to the rescue: "Grab the car, boys—let's try the meatworks!"

And it was there, at the Broome meatworks, that the linkage was repaired. Watched by a group of workers bloodstained up to their knees, the staff mechanic cut through a rubber sleeve and pulled it aside, revealing the broken weld; the welder applied the rod, and the whole job was finished in 20 minutes.

Had we known about this meatworks lurk, we could have saved ourselves 14 hours — but that's how things are in the North-West!

Sand — Then More Mud

Thanking the resourceful Lofty, we left Broome at 9.30 a.m. local time, but 11.30 by our own watches, which were kept throughout on Eastern Standard (this fact won't be mentioned again—all times quoted from now on will be E.S.T.).



STUNTING for camera on Pardoo Sands. We found it hard to make car misbehave; it slewed seldom, was easily corrected.



THIS red bulldust on Dunmarra-Top Springs section, caused our first big delay, threw schedule out of kilter. BELOW: Welding broken gear linkage at Broome meatworks. Job took 20 min., and repair was perfect.





MORE stunting — this time at Eucla, in front of the abandoned telegraph station. Wheel-spinning take-offs helped bring on clutch trouble; it started slipping on climb up Eucla Pass but got us home safely.

Scotty forsook the Cessna for the Freeway once more, for the first time since Hughenden: he wanted to film our progress over the long, sandy stretches along the north-west coast.

The sand was good and firm after the recent rains, and we sped over it at 70 in most places; the Freeway showed little tendency to slew in the softer patches, and when it did, the sideways motion was easily corrected.

With the Cessna flying overhead, we took time out in the Pardoo-Sands area for another filming and photographing session.

Soon after this we struck more roadworks—mostly soft dirt, but freshly graded and presenting no real problems.

So we thought—until we crossed a high-piled dirt crown to give way to an oncoming car, and got dust in the distributor again!

We cursed ourselves for forgetting to pick up a points file at Derby; but a nail-file borrowed from a caravanning couple did the job equally well, and we were off again after 40 minutes.

Dropping Scotty at the Port Hedland airport at nightfall, we reached Roebourne, our next fuelling point, at 10.45 p.m. The speedo read 647 miles; despite the delays, we had averaged 57.5 m.p.h. (trial cars were set 42 m.p.h. for this section in 1955—but the road here has been vastly improved since then).

Off again at 11.15, we had an easy run over reasonable dirt roads for a while, but struck a whole series of

mishaps in the early hours of the morning:

- Two punctures, which meant we had to use both spares.

- A slow leak in a third tyre, which we could do nothing about, because our foot-operated pump had jammed as soon as we tried to work it, making any repairs risky, in case too much air escaped before we could plug the hole; and, not having a pump, we couldn't use the inner tubes we had brought along, either.

(All three punctures were caused by identical horseshoe nails, we found later—must have run over a whole heap of them somewhere.)

- More unseasonable rain on another long stretch of roadworks, causing us to bog twice in deep mud; we managed to push the Freeway out of one bog and rock it out of the other, alternating between first and reverse.

- Our one and only case of swamped ignition, which stranded us in the middle of a lake 100 yards long, covering the full width of the road. We pushed the Freeway out on to hard ground, decided to give the starter one last try before tinkering with the electrics—and, to our delight, the engine kicked over.

By now we were so tired that we forgot to log all these delays—but they must have cost us well over an hour.

Another effect of tiredness and frustration was that we no longer bothered to shave. Until Broome, we had made daily use of the battery-operated Lord Riam shavers in-

cluded in our kit; but from there on, even this simple task seemed like a waste of precious energy.

We were glad to reach Carnarvon at 10.10 a.m. — glad also to be able to get that tyre repaired at last. Luckily, it had gone down only to 14lb.

The speedo had clocked up 451 miles, which meant we had averaged 41 m.p.h. instead of the expected 45—not surprising, considering all the stoppages.

Look, Ma—No Brakes!

A good breakfast, and the prospect of an excellent bitumen road all the way to Perth, cheered us up no end: here's where we make up time, we thought, as we set out at 10.50 a.m.

And so we did for about 150 miles, flying along at 75-80 m.p.h. (we covered the first 100 in 86 minutes—an average of almost 70).

Then we decided to change drivers—and the car refused to stop! Neither footbrakes nor handbrake made the slightest impression on its headlong progress.

Working down through the gearbox (double-declutching to get the non-synchro low gear) and taking advantage of a slight rise in the road, we gradually brought it to a halt and examined the master-cylinder reservoir: it was empty.

No signs of a leak anywhere. We tried the old dodge of filling the reservoir with water and pumping the

(Continued on page 78)

emerged with an output of 32 b.h.p.

This increase (from 26 b.h.p.) is achieved by using a different cylinder-head—specially ported, with bigger inlet valves, stronger valve springs and improved manifolding.

In Australia, a 28-IF Zenith carby is used in place of the Solex fitted to the French-assembled vehicle, which develops only 28 h.p.

The suspension, all independent by long, supple torsion bars and telescopic shockers, allows the extreme range of wheel travel (on trailing arms at the rear) needed to provide a comfortable ride over railway sleepers or through creek beds and stump holes—and I'm not joking.

Ground clearance is a gaping eight inches. Combine this with the flat underbelly, and you have a real log-hopper.

On the Road

Part of the test included a fast 400-mile run to a point some miles off the beaten track near Mudgee.

Renault Australia advised us to push the R4 hard if we wanted to, as it would cruise all day at 60-65 m.p.h. We did just that.

The little car never faltered, and at the end of the run ticked over as happily as if it had been on a quiet Sunday outing.

Over winding, narrow mountain roads, through potholes and ruts, the R4 made up in fine roadholding what it lacked in power.

Being hauled along by the front wheels, understeer is the car's primary handling characteristic, but the R4 is essentially safe, whether you're used to f.w.d. or not.

The body sways dramatically on bends, but the wheels stay where they should be; only when pressed really hard will an inner front wheel lift—not a bad feature, because the differential then transfers power to the free-spinning wheel, preventing higher speed through the corner.

The test car was subject to body-drum at idling speeds. The body-work was not dustproof, but these items will, no doubt, be rectified.

Most remarkable feature of all is the Renault's fantastic suspension. The most shocking road surfaces can be traversed at virtually any speed.

Nor does it stop there. If you feel like driving across a ploughed field, do so. We did. The wheels just went up and down like grasshopper's legs, but the ride was comfortable and the car performed as though it did that sort of thing every day.

Top-gear pulling power is remarkable for such a small engine. Little gear-changing is required on a long run, as the R4 hangs on in top gear like a little bulldog.

On the flat, the R4 will pull away from 18 m.p.h. in top gear without a murmur. In fact, it's hard to believe the engine is only 747c.c.—it feels twice the size.

City traffic is all in a day's work, too. The flexible engine is allied to controls which are accessible, smooth and easy in operation.

Driving position, incidentally, follows the comfortable Continental pattern of steering wheel almost parallel with the dashboard and seat back, to allow full arm freedom.

Placement of the pedals makes it almost impossible to heel-and-toe—a pity, because the car handles like a little sports job.

Braking is adequate, but not outstanding. When required to stop quickly, however, brakes were well up to the job.

Top speed was a genuine 69.6 m.p.h.—with the speedo needle hard-up against the 80 m.p.h. stop.

Acceleration in top from 30 to 40 took all of 6.4 seconds, but 50 to 60 stretched to 24.5—so don't attempt to pass any E-type Jaguars.

Finally, fuel consumption. In the mini-car class—even flat-out cruising gave a remarkable 38 miles per gallon, and several hundred test miles yielded an overall figure of 42.75 m.p.g. Yet this is no mini-car. It's a roomy station wagon that will carry four large men and their luggage in great comfort. ● ● ●

Round Australia

(Continued from page 47)

pedal. No results—the water level didn't go down, and there was still no sign of a leak anywhere.

Mystified, we tried adjusting the handbrake, which was at its limit of travel, but found the toggle bent and adjustment impossible.

Geraldton, listed as an emergency stopping-point on our schedule, was 150 miles away; somehow we would have to get there without brakes.

Luckily, the coastal highway in this area sweeps over an endless series of hills with long climbs and descents, so we could maintain a fair speed.

Swooping down a hillside at 70, we would let the next climb slow us down to about 50 till we could see over the crest. If the road ahead was clear and reasonably straight, we would accelerate again; if we sighted an obstruction or a bad bend, we'd drop down into second and be ready to slow the car further with engine compression if the need arose.

We actually enjoyed this exercise in anticipation—until we wanted to stop at Northampton, 30 miles north of Geraldton, so we could phone ahead and warn the local B.M.C. agents we'd be in for brake repairs.

Northampton happened to be at the foot of a fairly short descent, and we had to work down quickly through the gears to slow the car down. Even in first, we were still doing about 15 m.p.h. as we entered town, and the handbrake wasn't having the slightest effect, so we ran the nearside wheels

against the grassy dirt kerb and finally slithered to a halt—less than a foot from the tail of a poor little Morris Minor.

After making our phone call we got to Geraldton at 4.25 p.m. and stayed there for an hour and 20 minutes.

Turned out that a seal in the off-side rear-wheel cylinder had blown and all fluid had been lost through it, though no trace of the leak could be detected on the surrounding mud.

This was duly fixed, and the system was rinsed out with metho before the brake fluid went in, to remove traces of water.

One of the punctured tyres was repaired and the second, which was badly holed, was replaced with a new tyre scrounged from the local Olympic agent.

Fixing the handbrake would have taken up more time, so it was made operative "for emergencies only." We were warned that, if used, it would have to be released by hand under the car.

The remaining 300-odd miles to Perth were covered without further trouble. We got there at 10.30 p.m. on Thursday, and the speedo reading of 606 miles represented an average of 50 m.p.h. since Carnarvon.

Perth—and a Forecast

The Freeway got its third oil-change in Perth, and the gearbox oil was changed for the first time.

The whole brake system was re-checked (all rubbers were found to be O.K.) and refilled with fluid. Inspection showed that excessive lining wear had occurred at the off-side rear wheel, where fluid had got into the drum. But all other linings were sound, so we refused to have these shoes relined.

We did, however, agree to have four new tyres fitted, in addition to the one we'd obtained in Geraldton.

The treads showed remarkably little wear—an average of only 3/32in.—and the Freeway's robust front end had maintained its alignment so well that there was hardly a sign of unevenness anywhere. But there may have been several more horseshoe nails working their way gradually through the rubber, and we weren't going to risk getting stranded in the middle of the Nullarbor.

Unfortunately we forgot to mention the faulty handbrake, which meant we couldn't regain normal use of it till our next servicing stop—Adelaide, 1700 miles away.

A compression check showed around 140lb. pressure in all cylinders except No. 2, which was down to 100; but the engine was still running sweetly, so we didn't want anything done about it.

Meanwhile our former London correspondent, Harold Dvoretzky (who returned to his native Perth a couple of years ago), had come up with some bad news:

MODERN MOTOR — October 1962

Heavy rain had fallen over most of the Nullarbor, and the western end of the road had been closed for the past two days, with several trucks and semi-trailers bogged in the mire. The rain had now moderated to a drizzle, but conditions were still bad.

We asked Harold how long it should take us to reach Adelaide.

"Normally, with a bit of luck, I'd say you could do it in 36 hours," said Harold. "The way things are now, I don't know."

We made Adelaide in 32½ hours, including all stops—but it wasn't easy.

True, the bitumen from Perth to Norseman was a piece of cake. We left at 0.45 a.m. — on Friday the 13th!—and were in Norseman at 8 a.m. sharp, having covered the 444 miles at 61.2 m.p.h.

Half an hour to refuel and take on food, and we were off again. We had Scotty and his cameras with us

once more for the Nulla crossing; Cliff Dwyer, in the Cessna, was to pick him up at Ceduna.

Yes, Mud Again!

News of conditions ahead was only partly reassuring. Things had improved the day before, we were told, and all but one of the bogged transports had managed to make Norseman by evening; but now rain was falling again on stretches that were being filled and graded in preparation for Perth's Commonwealth Games visitors, and we might be heading into a fresh quagmire.

With three in the car, there was no chance of sleeping properly; but we were too worried to feel tired.

The bitumen ended some 30 miles east of Norseman—and for the next 200 miles we were on mud. Mud of every conceivable variety, from a

sticky, wheel-clinging mess to a treacherous, greasy film that threatened to send us off into the scrub at the slightest sign of carelessness.

We passed the one remaining bogged transport—a 20-ton monster listing at a 45-degree angle, with mud up to its cargo on one side, abandoned by its crew and looking as if it would stay there forever.

Despite mud and rain, we kept the speedo needle on 55-60—and that's where it was pointing on the only occasion when we lost control, on a particularly greasy though innocent-looking stretch.

After zig-zagging across the road half-a-dozen times, the car turned end-for-end and fetched up with a mighty whack against a mud bank, facing back toward Perth.

Mud was packed tightly around the front wheel and under the body, so out came our trenching tool. A few minutes' digging, and the Freeway amazed us once more by reversing out of the roadside trench with one man pushing and one driving, though its nearside rear wheel was in mud and water up to the axle.

Nor was there any body damage, from an impact that would have dented the panelling of most cars.

After this we learned to recognise that particular clean, smooth-looking mud surface, reducing speed to 45 whenever we saw it again. In mud, as on sand, the Freeway retained ample directional stability, and this was the only time we were unable to control a developing skid—not surprising, considering our speed.

Bumping Over the Nulla

Rain and mud lasted all the way to Madura, where we left the comparatively tall scrub of the Hampton Tableland and descended the short bitumen of the Madura Pass to enter the typical Nulla landscape—a vast, flat expanse of nothing, studded with sparse clumps of saltbush, spinifex, and occasional dwarf-size mulga.

But road conditions didn't get much better: now we had to contend with deep ruts and potholes on a surface that had been churned up during the rains, then baked to rock hardness by the sun. There was only one saving grace: the usual Nullarbor dust wasn't there to bother us.

Some of the potholes were positively frightening. We saw one king-size hole that could have swallowed a small car; left behind by a bogged transport, it had been marked with four sticks and bits of rag.

Whatever the road, we had to press on. So we sped over everything at 60, dodging the worst hazards with a flick of the handily geared steering (2.8 turns lock-to-lock) and wincing as the suspension bottomed over bumps we couldn't avoid.

After an hour of such punishment the Freeway began to bottom more readily. Goodbye shockers, we

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thought, but refused to slacken speed, putting our faith in the springs.

The Eucla turn-off hove into sight, and we took it, nipping between sand-drifts to have a look at the abandoned overland telegraph building and Gurney's petrol pumps, well known to round-Australia drivers.

We didn't need fuel and knew Eucla had no mechanic to check our suspension, but Scotty wanted some dramatic sand shots, so we obliged.

It was here that the trouble we'd feared ever since Brisbane first occurred: the clutch began to slip.

After one spectacular wheel-spinning take-off we caught a whiff of singed facings—and as we were climbing the short, steep pinch of Eucla Pass back on to the plateau, there was an unmistakable slip in the transmission. The engine revved up, and for a few seconds the Freeway behaved like an automatic; then the clutch bit once more and we reached the top of the pass. But we knew we'd have to nurse it from now on.

The brakes, too, had lost much of their efficiency: having worked them overtime in avoiding potholes, we put this down to glazed linings.

Just after Eucla we crossed the border into South Australia; here, contrary to predictions, we found the road slightly better than on the W.A. side, though a good deal dustier.

But it was still rough enough to set the suspension bottoming frequently at our consistently high speeds. The Freeway's shockers and brakes were definitely tired now—and so were we, since we couldn't stretch out to sleep and had to be content with brief cat-naps.

Driving became especially trying after nightfall. The Freeway seemed to wallow around curves like a wounded whale, and we were glad to reach Ceduna at two minutes to midnight on Saturday — 23 hours, 13 minutes out of Perth.

The 772 miles from Norseman had been covered in 15 hours, 28 minutes — an average of 50 m.p.h.

Despite the late hour, and the fact that someone in Perth had forgotten to wire our E.T.A. to them, the Jukes had kept their service station open and had a hot meal ready for us.

They also had some bad news for Scotty: no word from Cliff Dwyer, which meant the Cessna hadn't arrived and Scotty had to go on with us to Adelaide, like it or not.

Reassessment at Ceduna

Over the meal we reviewed our chances of beating the round-Australia record, decided we could still do it and recast our plans accordingly.

Previous fastest time was 9 days, 12 hours, so we had 1½ days up our sleeve. The original schedule called for us to get from Ceduna to Sydney in 33 hours, including one-hour stops in Adelaide and Melbourne; this

would bring us home three hours ahead of the record.

But, knowing the brakes would need attention and believing the shockers — and possibly the clutch — would have to be replaced, we thought the margin was too slim and decided to up our averages for the final sections, leaving more time available for repairs. As it turned out, we needn't have worried.

We left Ceduna at 0.35 a.m. on Sunday. There was a bit of clutch shudder on take-off — and although slip was barely noticeable, we knew we'd have to go on nursing the clutch, avoiding any sudden acceleration and declutching smartly whenever hard braking was required.

The road continued to improve. Much of it had been graded recently, but the surface was still fairly bumpy, often narrow, and flanked by deeply gouged, hard-edged water runnels.

Back on Good Roads

A couple of hundred miles of this brought us to the start of the bitumen outside Port Augusta, and from then on it was all plain sailing.

We were still short of brakes, of course; but the clutch was behaving itself — and, to our amazement, the shockers seemed to tighten up soon after we got back on to good roads.

The Freeway's general condition surprised us, too: despite all the punishment it had received, there wasn't a squeak or a rattle from body or suspension — a far cry from B.M.C. cars of a few years ago, which were famed for built-in noises.

Patches of early-morning mist greeted us soon after Port Pirie, and we saw a magnificent sunrise somewhere near Port Wakefield. Then came the suburbs, and we reached our Adelaide checkpoint at 9.15 a.m. — 8 hours, 40 minutes out of Ceduna, after averaging 54.6 m.p.h. for 473 miles.

The 32½ hours from Perth represented an all-inclusive average of 52 m.p.h. for the 1689 miles we had clocked up. But we'd spent just over two hours at fuelling stops and in three filming sessions (including the one at Eucla), so our actual on-the-road average was 55.3.

In the 1955 Redex, contestants covered a slightly longer route (1785 miles via Kalgoorlie) in 41 driving hours, for an average of 43.5 m.p.h. — and they had 12 hours' rest on the way, taking 53 hours in all.

Admittedly, we didn't face the hazards of dust or of travelling in a compact field; but otherwise, because of rain and roadworks, we didn't find the road much better than it was in those days — though it will be immeasurably improved as roadworks and grading are rushed to completion in the next few weeks.

Final Stretches

The faulty handbrake cable was finally replaced in Adelaide, and the

Freeway got its fourth and last oil-change.

As suspected, loss of braking efficiency was due to glazed linings; there was still a good thickness left, and we could have had them buffed up, but it was simpler and quicker to replace the shoes with a ready-lined set taken from stock.

The shockers seemed to have regained practically all their efficiency by now, but we had them checked just in case. There was no damage anywhere, and the mechanic explained the reason for their apparent failure on the Nulla:

We'd given them such a bashing while flying over potholes at 60 that the oil inside had become overheated and lost its viscosity, so we were actually riding on undamped springs and bottoming on the wishbones and not the stop rubbers — hence the clatter!

The effect was purely temporary: given a chance to cool off, the shockers had reasserted themselves and the Freeway was again riding properly.

The only worry left was the clutch, but the mechanic felt sure it would hold out, so we crossed our fingers and left Adelaide at 10.30 a.m.

We had dropped off Scotty, who stayed behind to wait for the Cessna: a message from Cliff said he'd been delayed at Forrest, in W.A. (the radio of another light plane had failed and D.C.A. had instructed Cliff to escort it to its destination) and had only just reached Ceduna.

The run to Melbourne was uneventful; we picked up the pilot car at Sunshine, eight miles out of the city, at 6.30 p.m., having averaged just on 58 m.p.h. for 456 miles.

The trip into town, plus time out for refuelling, dinner, and one last conference concerning the clutch, took exactly one hour and we were off again at 7.30.

We hoped to make Sydney in ten hours — but it was not to be.

Just north of Wangaratta we ran into a thick fog which lasted almost 200 miles, with only brief occasional breaks. The strain of trying to follow a few feet of centreline, which was all we could see, plus the accumulated tiredness of the past nine days, made the final night run the most trying of the whole trip.

This unexpected hazard was to stretch our Melbourne-Sydney travelling time to 10 hours, 52 minutes for an average of 51.3 m.p.h.; but at least we had no trouble from the clutch on the many hill sections.

The Hume had never seemed so long or so twisty as we negotiated its last hilly stretches — but it ended at last, and we braked the Freeway to a stop at our original starting-point as the Sydney Town Hall clock showed 6.22 a.m. The date was Monday, July 16.

We had beaten the round-Australia record by 5 hours 38 minutes, and the small group of B.M.C. and Shell

executives waiting to clock us in gave us a rousing welcome.

What Test Showed

As we said at the start of this story, the record aspect was only incidental—main purpose was to see how the Freeway would behave when pushed to the limit through all types of conditions to be found in Australia.

To sum up our findings, we'll let the facts speak for themselves:

- The overall time for this round-Australia trip was the fastest ever recorded by a car.

- Taking out fuelling stops and major hold-ups, we covered the 8057 miles in 160½ driving hours — an average of 50.2 m.p.h. Fastest on-the-road average for any round-Australia trial was 40 m.p.h.

(Even this time makes no allowance for hours wasted on filming or for minor stoppages such as wheel-changes, which we didn't bother to log—so our actual average speed would have been higher still.)

- We used 362½ gallons of Super-shell, averaging 22.2 m.p.g. overall—excellent economy for such a fast trip.

(Having no way of telling how much fuel was lost through over-pumping on the first leg to Brisbane—as described last month—we first calculated the average from the known consumption for the rest of the trip, then applied it to the Sydney-Brisbane stretch to obtain the total.)

- Oil consumption, between the four oil-changes, worked out at less than a pint per 1000 miles. It would have been lower still if it weren't for that leak from the rear main seal into the clutch.

- Only mechanical replacements needed on the trip were two rear shock-absorbers, a wheel-cylinder cup and a handbrake cable—and, perhaps, a set of distributor points.

Though we did fit a new distributor, as well as new brake shoes and a fresh set of tyres, all this was done merely to avoid unnecessary delays—as explained in the story.

Apart from this, we had that broken gear linkage welded at Broome—and that was all.

No major repairs to engine, transmission or suspension were needed—in itself, something of a record for this sort of trip.

- The car received no special maintenance—even the head wasn't touched. Service was confined to the normal greasing procedure every 1200 miles or so—except at Mt. Isa, Derby, Perth and Adelaide, where the oil-changes were accompanied by a general check-over.

- Though we always drove with at least one window partly open, very little dust entered the interior under way; it got inside mainly when we stopped and opened a door. On one occasion it penetrated the boot when the lid sprang open; after the catch

had been tightened, we had no further trouble. No water got into the car at any time.

- The Freeway came back without a squeak or rattle, and all doors still opened and shut normally, which speaks highly for body rigidity

- Dents were confined to one under the nearside front guard (caused by the same kangaroo that dented the grille), one under the tail (caused by a boulder on the Mt. Isa section), one in the pressed-metal sump (good thing it wasn't cast-iron) and a few on the underside of the muffler. All dents were minor and the lack of damage underneath was remarkable.

- The engine pulled as well as ever, though the idle had become a bit rough. In our opinion, all the car needed to bring it back to normal was a decoke and valve-grind, attention to the rear main seal, a clutch re-line—and, perhaps, new shockers.

A most impressive performance—and the findings of the test should make the Freeway an even better car than it is now.

B.M.C. Australia have already put through a modification to the rear main seal and altered welding procedure to strengthen the 2nd/3rd gear linkage. At our suggestion, they are also considering the possibility of blanking off the dust-admitting louvres in the inner front guards, which had a lot to do with our bull-dust trouble.

Distributor accessibility cannot be improved without drastic changes in engine design—but we suggested that the cap be made easier to remove by giving the lower clip more sideways movement, and this will probably be done. At the same time, Lucas are looking for a means of making the distributor itself more dustproof.

One final note: B.M.C. took a big chance when they lent us the Freeway for this round-Australia test.

We told them we would report everything that happened to the car, without glossing over any faults that might appear—which is exactly what we've done in this story.

They must have had great faith in the Freeway—and it didn't let them down. . . .

MORRIS 1100

(Continued from page 29)

system, I can do no better than quote B.M.C.'s own literature, which describes it very clearly:

When, for example, the front wheel encounters a bump, a tapered piston rises in the front cone, forcing the mixture out of the cone and along the pipe to the rear suspension unit, which reacts by causing the rear of the car to rise to the level attained by the front. On rebound, the reverse procedure occurs. Pitch is thereby eliminated, and the action is further



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