

## Whatever Happened to Charlie Jackson ?

*Tony Slattery has been sleuthing the Charlie Jackson story...*

This question was posed in the last Pre-War Newsletter, so recalling a display of unlabelled trophies at the MGCCQ Clubrooms in the name of one "Charles Nelson Jackson", I thought I should accept the challenge and do a little historical research into early MGs in Australia, and the mysterious Charlie Jackson. My first contact was with the club secretary Elaine Hamilton who confirmed that the trophies and our mystery man were one and the same. I also contacted Warren Skimmings in Townsville to see where he became involved in the search for history on Charlie and how he had approached Messrs Lackey & Steinfort at the AGP to see if the MG fraternity knew of Charlie.

The next step was to contact Charlie's daughter, Margaret, who filled me in with what little she knew of her father's MG/Motorsport life and what had survived through time to lead us to here and now. Margaret was adopted by Charlie and his second wife Margaret in 1954 as a baby, and was sadly only three years old when Charlie died in 1957, so most of what she knows today came from her mother and the treasured trophies from the past. As a child growing up Margaret remembers having the chore to polish that collection of trophies, keeping alive the memory of Charlie to her mother and herself. It is truly a remarkable joy that all those trophies so proudly displayed on the MG Midget below still survive as a collection today. We owe a debt to the Jackson family, for without that preservation we might never know the story about to be told.



**Charlie Jackson with his bonnetful of trophies**  
*Picture from Margaret Jackson*

Charles Nelson Jackson was born in December of 1885 in Denby, Wortley, West Riding, Yorkshire, England. He was the first son to Joel Jackson (a farmer) and Emma (nee Heppenstall). There are two gold medals from 1905, and an undated gold watch from the same period, that indicate Charlie was indeed a champion cyclist at around the time one William Morris was also a champion cyclist and manufactured cycles in a little workshop in Oxford. However by the census of 1911, Charlie had married Eva Lockwood (in 1910), and was living with his in-laws in Brush View Lane, Wakefield, Yorkshire. He was an "employer" and listed his occupation as "Carting Agent", so he was certainly into the transportation business at only 26 years of age.

In October 1911, Charlie and Eva left London on the ship "Wilcannia" bound for Australia. The first record I can find of their new life in Australia is in July of 1916, when Charlie (the captain) of the Bungendore Bowling Club won first prize as club champion and was hailed for his "tuition" of other members. The report further reads "Captain Jackson remarked that Gidleigh Station was the only station in the State that he knew had a bowling green for the station residents". If anyone knows of "Gidleigh Station" today, I'd like to visit.

In 1918, there are some records of Charlie competing at the Queanbeyan Show in horse trotting events, making a speech at the "Show Smoke Concert", and then donating two guineas for special prizes at the next year's show – his community spirit certainly on display. By 1921, Eva Jackson's parents had also migrated to Australia, when her father retired as a "Engineer" in the railways in Yorkshire – they appear to have settled in Anzac St, Yowie Bay, Miranda, NSW. We next find Charles Nelson Jackson in the electoral roll of 1925, employed as a "Chauffeur" and Eva "Home Duties" living at "Abergeldie Cottage" in Burradoo. Now the cottage is diagonally across the intersection from "Abergeldie", a Grand late Victorian home (circa 1880) on Chisholm Hill in Burradoo, so we can safely assume that Charlie worked for the owners of the stately home.

In October of 1926, Charlie helped to found the "Bowral Motor Cycle Club" and was elected as its first Chairman. It may be of interest to some that the Assistant Hon Secretary was "Mr. V. C. Bradman", a soon to be famous surname in Australia, especially in Bowral. By May of 1927, "C.N. Jackson" was suddenly the local dealer for Morris Trucks in Bowral, as he had a small battle with the council as they had refused permission for him to erect a petrol pump at his "garage", at the corner of Bowral & Bong Bong Roads. I called in at Bowral on my way to Beechworth and to my amazement that garage of Charlie Jackson is still there – opposite the "modern" service station. It has a "For Sale" sign out front, so it sadly may not remain for many more years.



Charlie's Garage then...



...and now

It is a mystery how Charlie moved from being a "Chauffeur" in 1925 to the "Morris Dealer in Bowral" in 1927, and being at least a part owner of the "Grand Garage" in the main street of Bowral. Further investigations of land and title deed transfers may reveal more answers.

*A Morris owner writes!*

*I would rather drive any three-year-old second-hand Morris Cowley because of its particular reliability and economy than any other car I have met any where.*

*The latest Morris with a lot of attractive new features added to all its old good points at the amazingly low price of £199 is certainly worth your money for this little beauty.*

**N**OW "Britain's most popular car" is within the reach of all prospective buyers.

The New Standard MORRIS COWLEY Roadster—specially constructed of the finest British materials procurable and equipped with 5 detachable steel wheels, 5 tyres and speedometer is now .. **£199**

**C. N. JACKSON,**  
LOCAL DEALER, BOWRAL

**MORRIS**

The first records of Charlie in motorsport found to date are in the Sydney Morning Herald of 9th March 1928, when he is recorded as being the outright winner of the "Berrima Automobile Club Reliability Touring Contest" from "Berrima to Canberra and back (by way of Bungonia – 240miles), the contest including a hill-climb, and petrol consumption tests, speed averages to be maintained ranged from 22 to 24 miles an hour. Charlie was driving a Morris Oxford. He placed first in the hill-climb and reliability part of the trial, but unplaced in the petrol consumption (you can't have it both ways!). A Morris Cowley utility driven by "T. Gough" won the petrol consumption test with an amazing 63 mpg (but placed 2nd to Charlie in the hillclimb).

A few days after his win, Charlie had an advertisement (left) placed in the "Southern Mail" on 15th March 1928 to promote sales of the new standard Morris Cowley Roadster.

The 1928 Electoral Roll shows that Charlie and Eva Jackson then resided in Woodbine Street, Bowral, and his occupation was now "Motor Mechanic", while Eva was still home duties. The "Southern Mail" of 9th April 1929, carried a list of trophies presented to members of the Berrima District Automobile Club – and six of these were won by Charlie and one by Eva (these trophies are now identified as being on the M-Type. I could find no records of Charlie competing in late 1928 and 1929, but an "F. Flanagan" seemed to be very successful in a Morris Cowley before moving to a 847cc Morris Minor in early 1930. However, there is a very important report in "The Southern Mail" of 7th March 1930, on the 3-day Trial conducted on 2nd March by the Berrima District Automobile Club, and it is of such significance that it is reproduced below in full:-

#### Automobile Trial

*The Berrima District Automobile Club completed its 3-days' trial on 2nd March. The first course was through Goulburn, Bungendore and Collector. Several events took place on Lake George, which is an ideal place for the purpose. These events were:- Flying mile, standing half-mile and slow running. This is the third year the Club has gone over this course. The concluding day was taken up chiefly by petrol consumption and hill climb. Much excitement was created by the finish of the petrol consumption test, most cars*

finishing before averaging 41 miles. Three cars were left to carry on – Gold, Hampshire and Jackson. Hampshire put up a good record of 61 miles. Then came the exciting contest between the last two cars. The village blacksmith was most determined to beat last year's winner of petrol consumption. All credit to Allan for the record he put up, being an average of 72 miles, but last year's winner carried on to the 76 miles.

All cars assembled for the hillclimb, which was very well contested. Some good times were made, especially by N. Payne's Chrysler and W. Webb's Hudson; Payne being the Club's favourite. But Mrs. C.N. Jackson's MG gave her club mates a wonderful exhibition of hill climb and lowered N. Payne's time by 13 seconds and a fifth. Mrs. Jackson spoiled a beautiful card by losing one point for running in one minute early on the Bungendore control.

**Results:-**

1st, Mrs. C.N. Jackson's M.G., Scr	2nd, R. Hampshire's Morris Cowley, 4 points start
Reliability ..... 99	Reliability..... 92
Speed, 1/2 -mile..... 100	Speed, 1/2-mile..... 95
Petrol Consumption... 100	Petrol Consumption.. 85
Hill Climb..... 100	Hill Climb ..... 78
	Handicap ..... 4
	354
3rd, Mrs. A. Cornwell's Ford, 2 points start	4th, N. Payne's Chrysler, 2 points start
Reliability..... 96	Reliability ..... 91
Speed, 1/2-mile ..... 97	Speed, 1/2-mile ..... 99
Petrol Consumption... 62	Petrol Consumption.. 63
Hill Climb ..... 83	Hill Climb ..... 87
Handicap..... 2	Handicap ..... 2
340	339

Yes, it appears that the first record found on an MG winning a motor sporting contest in Australia was by Mrs C.N. Jackson – Charles Nelson Jackson's wife Eva. Now stand and cheer all those heroes to emancipation – there is one more – Eva Jackson.

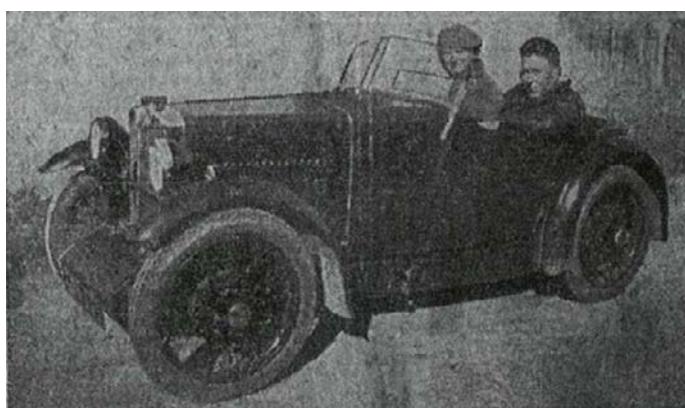
On 5th April 1930, Charlie Jackson was driver for F. Flanagan in a 847cc Morris Midget (a sports model of the Morris Minor type). The event report in the Sydney Morning Herald of 7th April records the car as an Morris Midget, not an MG Midget (a common confusion in the day). There is a report of Charlie competing at Penrith Speedway in April of 1930 with "no luck on the track", then with regularity Charlie seemed to enter every competition motoring event possible in his "Midget" in Sydney or Bowral :-

12/13th April 1930	Two day Reliability and Touring Contest	Royal Automobile Club
21st April 1930	Penrith Speedway	
10th May 1930	Races – Seven Mile Beach Gerringong	Sydney Bicycle and Motor Club
16/17th May 1930	Two day Reliability and Touring Contest	Royal Automobile Club Aust.
9th June 1930	Penrith Speedway	
21st June 1930	One Day Reliability Contest to Robertson	Royal Automobile Club Aust.
12th July 1930	Two Day Reliability Contest to Robertson	Sydney Bicycle and Motor Club
15th August 1930	Reliability & Touring Contest to Canberra	Royal Automobile Club Aust.

The picture below and this statement appeared in the "Sydney Morning Herald" on 23rd September 1930:-

**THE MG MIDGET**

Mr. C.N. Jackson is one of the few Australian owners of the special sports model M.G. Midgets, produced by the Morris organization in England, and with it he is a frequent competitor in events promoted by the Royal Automobile Club of Australia and the Sydney Bicycle and Motor Club. Mr. Jackson is sometimes accompanied by Mrs. Jackson in the speedy little car, which has some good performances to its credit in hill climbs, flying mile tests, and similar events. It was one of the fastest cars in its class in the contest to Canberra held a few weeks ago.



On the 6th October of 1930, J. McCutcheon from Victoria featured at Penrith Speedway in a match race against a Gypsy Moth aeroplane with his "Morris Midget" car, "really one prepared hurriedly for his own use by Mr. E. J. Buckley" – according to the Sydney Morning Herald.

Charlie appears in the entries for the Sydney Bicycle and Motor Club Reliability Contest to Robertson on the 15/16th November 1930 in a "Morris Midget", setting the fastest time on the Hill Climb and finishing 2nd overall in the contest. Charlie was it seems, an early exponent of the race on Sunday – sell on Monday, and appeared to have ready access to the

media – the following appeared in "The Mail" on 21st November 1930:-

**Bowral's Speed King**

**CHARLIE JACKSON WINS AGAIN**

*Mr. C.N. Jackson was again successful in the Sydney Bicycle and Motor Club's Reliability Contest to Robertson on Saturday, winning for the second time in succession the reliability section, which is run with two secret controls. There were not many drivers to complete the last seven miles of the Pass to Robertson at the average speed. With ordinary reliability controls Charlie has not lost a point in all the trials he has run with the Royal Automobile Club and the Sydney Bicycle and Motor Club this season. With regard to hill climb, flying mile and acceleration, Jackson was winner of his class, 850c.c. Two of the cars competing are considered the fastest cars in Sydney in their respective classes, E.J. Buckley, the interstate record breaker driving one and W.H. Northam, the well-known track driver the other. Two of these cars came up specially to break Charlie's record. At an early hour on Sunday morning they were trying the hill, which is under repair, and had them worried.*

*As the Sydney Morning Herald has often said, Robertson hill calls for skill on the part of the driver. Jackson again showed his skill in this event; he equalled his own record, beating his opponents from 5 to 15 seconds. He feels confident he can still lower this record. Charlie is ranked in the Sydney Club as one of the best light car drivers. He heads the list of the Sydney Bicycle and Motor Club with the most wins in the 1930 season, including the 50 miles beach race which he has cause never to forget.*

*That the car Mr. Jackson drives is an absolute standard M.G. makes his performance the more meritorious.*

In March of 1931, Mr & Mrs Jackson won the Berrima District Automobile Club Reliability Trial and that was it !. There were no more motorsport events to be found after that date. In August of 1931, the Jackson's left Bowral to take up a new career as Hotel publican's "in the Newcastle District". They moved further north over the years, and had hotels in Nobby, Gympie, and in Miles by 1940.

Sadly, Eva died in 1945 and Charlie married a much younger Margaret Gardiner in the late 1940's before adopting a Daughter Margaret in 1953.

Charles Nelson Jackson died of a heart attack on the 26th November 1957 at the Apple Tree Creek Hotel near Childers in Qld and he was laid to rest in the Degilbo Cemetery.



**Margaret Jackson beside the cabinet holding her father's trophies**



**The SB&MC badge as seen on Charlie's M-type**  
Photos from Tony Slattery

**Author's footnote:**

While we seem to know a lot about Charlie now, there are still many questions and details that the MG fraternity would like to answer. The identity of his car is not known at this time, although it was certainly an Oxford built car, so the chassis would be lower than around number 800. I have done what I can. If any of you can assist with further clues/information or ideas, I would be glad to hear from you, or better – write another chapter for Charlie and send it to our editor for a future Newsletter.