

Imp Racers Do It With Screamers

Terence Tracey

The following article originally appeared in South Africa's Historic Times, October 2012.

Terence Tracey has a very canny plan of how to get his race cars to go quite a lot quicker around the various tracks on race day! His secret? He simply throws the keys to another driver!

Yes, it is indeed the embarrassing truth that Pat Lee took Terence's Capri around Kyalami on the same day as himself and Pat's times were a generous four seconds a lap quicker than his. Well, this time he really trumped it! His delightful Lamco Developments Imp was always a cute little car to see on the tracks although always offering a tidy challenge for the leaders and chargers to get past at least once during the sprint heats and twice on certain days due to its extremely slow pace. But in the hands of his new golden driver, or should I say 'racer' this little giant, which started from the back of the massive 50-car grid at Kyalami, was very quickly zipping effortlessly past the backmarkers as if it never belonged at the rear of the grid in the first place! Wayne was a massive nine seconds a lap quicker than Terence!

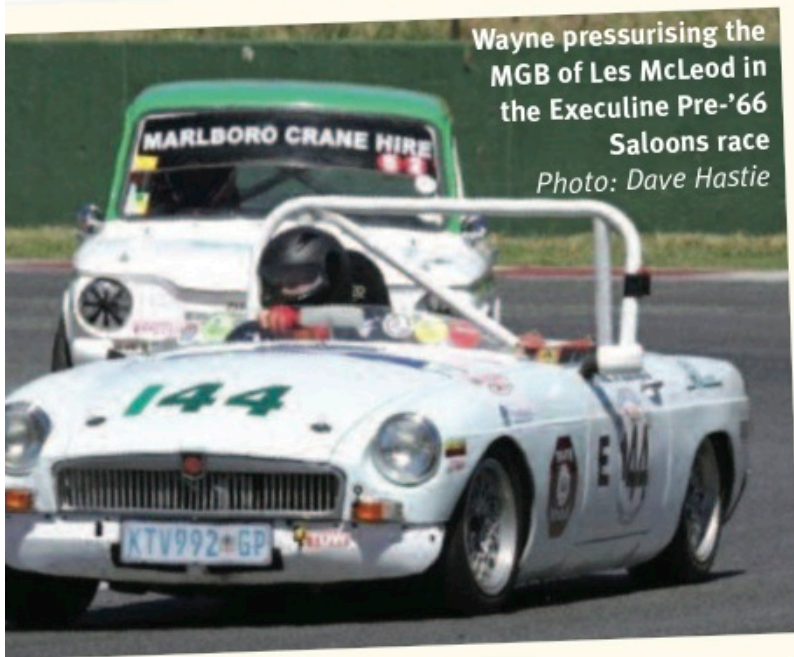
Well the new Imp pilot Wayne Berrington-Smith certainly did not spare the horses as he imposed his presence among the much more powerful machinery. With the tiny 900 cc mill screaming in willingness, reports have it that not only did Wayne coax unbelievable power out of the tiny Imp engine but he was four-wheel drifting through corner after corner and two things getting larger with every lap: the distance between him and his pursuers and the grin on his face under his racing lid. Well, fun he certainly had and it was a real pleasure to see the little car do what it has threatened to do for some time now.

Nor was it all plain sailing either – Wayne went on track for his morning quail, but in his

Barely visible below the mother of all sunstrips, Wayne Berrington-Smith showing perfect lines through Kyalami Clubhouse corner
Photo: Dave Hastie



excitement he went too early and played with the Marque cars brigade. In fact young Brendan Tracey, who was out qualifying in the now white flag car, was disappointed that his father had passed him with such a massive speed through Sunset on their first lap. Little did he know that it was not in fact his dad driving the Imp but the secret weapon Wayne Berrington-Smith!



Wayne pressurising the
MGB of Les McLeod in
the Execuline Pre-'66
Saloons race
Photo: Dave Hastie

Unfortunately WBS had to bring the Imp limping back to the pits with oil smoke pouring out from behind the car. The car was actually lighter on its return to the pits – it had deposited most of its oil on the track as Terence had hastily put the engine into the car on Thursday night and had not sufficiently tightened one of the oil pressure pipes to the engine and oil squirted liberally from the engine onto nicely warmed up exhaust pipes and onto the track. The effort allowed Wayne to become acquainted with the Clerk of the Course who requested his presence and explanation as to why he had added a few challenges for the drivers in his wake.

And, as if this was not bad enough, on his return to the track later, yet another oil pipe from the same family decided to let go! What next? A third trip to the Scrut Chief and another few litters of engine clean and lots of oil soaked rags.

More was in store. Race two for WBS was supposed to be heat two for legends; this was only a one-lapper for him as the car ahead chucked a stone up and smashed his windscreen. Serves him right, he should have been up front! So the Imp limped back to the pits one more time to be treated to a full valet, vacuum and all. By now it was Bruce Pidwell who was due to take the car for the second heat of Historic touring cars but he very generously gave up his drive to WBS who had suffered three failures in three outings since morning. Well, before he was to endure four failures out of four he ripped past a whole gaggle of cars that all started ahead of him. The fourth problem to befall the little Imp was a water pipe failure which leaked out for a full two laps while Wayne dropped car after car until finally he saw the water temperature gauge tell him a tale that was nothing short of pure spoilsport, he switched off and coasted to safety.

Now the interesting discovery post-race was on a close examination of the rev-counter. It showed that it was incorrectly calibrated so when we were revving it to a modest 6,000 it was actually closer to 9,000. The good news here of course is that if it has not blown itself to Kingdom come by now it probably never will. So all you comfortable class G & F sandbaggers, "Jus wash eet, zee Imp will get U."

Another interesting point to ponder is that all the failures on the car were due to poorly installed ancillaries but in spite of running low on oil more than once as well as running dry on water the engine is still rock solid with strong compression and no head gasket failure – a big well done to Lamco Developments for building such a genius engine. Nice work Andre (Lamprecht).



Oh, just one more thing post-race: the engine is still very happy but this is more than can be said for the box of gears! By the end of the day's racing, the 'box had had just about all it could take and it has put in for some well earned annual leave. So, with a new gearbox, a few water pipes, a bit of glass, a top up of water and another few litres of oil we will be back for the next race with the same driver line up!

And a word about Wayne... Clearly a top and gifted racer who showed clearly that he is well able to box well above his weight and seeing him have massive fun at his first ever four-wheel race I believe it would be safe to predict that he will be a strong member of our grids from now on.

Berrington-Smith to the power of three! Left to right: Keith, Wayne and little Christian. Kyalami, 29th September Midas Historic Tour

Photo: Dave Hastie



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