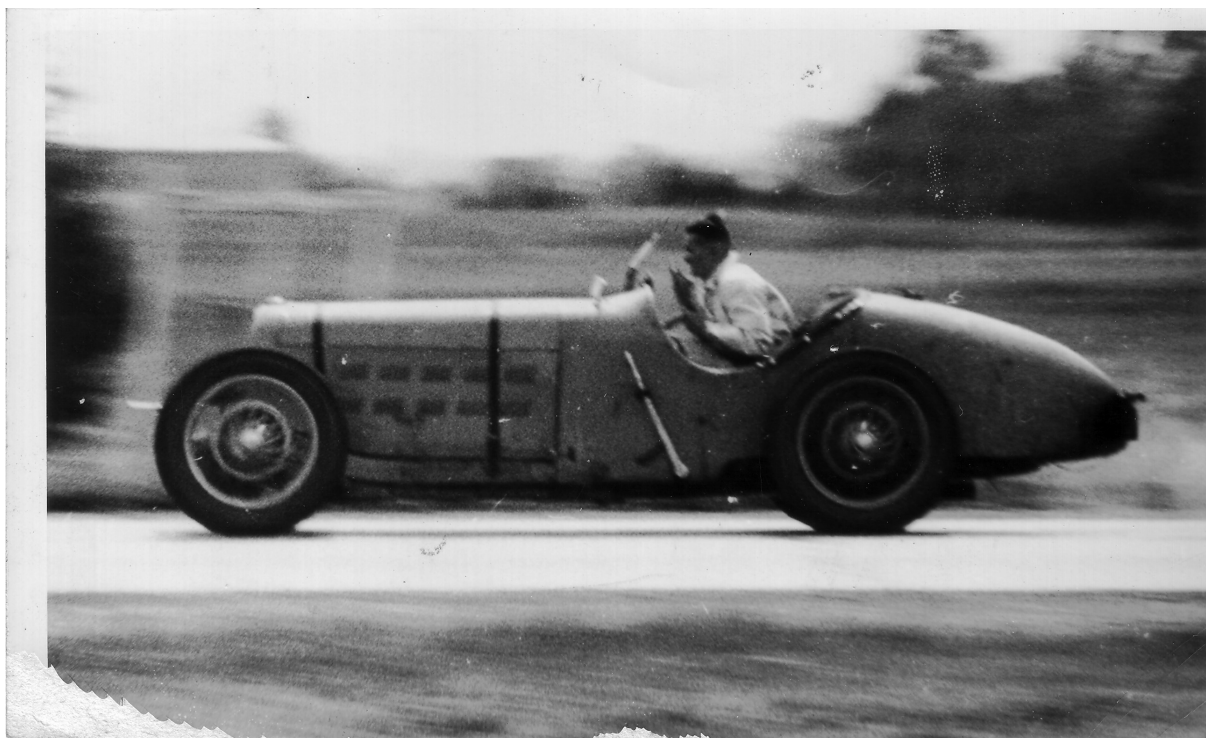


FROM THE ARCHIVES No 35

Tim Shellshear

Several more interesting shots are contained in the Dave Dent photos that we have been working our way through. This time it's the famous Kirby- Deering Special built by Frank Kleinig that ultimately evolved into the famous and formidable Kleinig Hudson. Fortunately this car, in its developed Hudson engine form, is still with us and can be seen in events down south now and again. The photos we have are the car in its original form running the straight eight Miller engine which it did for a couple of years. There is no better description of this than in Bob Pritchett's own words in Australian Specials No 4 from Australian Motor Sport November 15 1946.

"Kirby's used to do a lot of work for the competition motorists, and naturally Frank saw to it that that as time went on and his skills developed, more and more of this work came his way; finally, the man who turned pistons happened to be away, he made a set of pistons for a car which won its next race at Maroubra



using them, and this set the seal on his career. He was right in it from then on and it was about then that the late Wal McIntyre came into the picture. Mr. McIntyre used to get cylinder heads from Kirby's, who cast and machined them, and he had his eye on Frank as a likely youngster, so, when he decided to build a special racing car round a Miller engine that he had, he got Frank into the plot. Looking around for a chassis, they decided that the most suitable one in sight was that of a nearby new MG Magna Salonette (L Type), belonging to Mr. McIntyre, so, stopping at nothing, they dismembered the Magna for the sake of its chassis frame. Later they got another out from England new, rebuilt the Magna round it, and sold it, after which it went out of the picture.

The Miller engine was 1,500cc straight eight, with twin overhead camshafts and centrifugal blower. .. and so was born the Kirby-Deering Special, from the engineering genius of Frank Kleinig and the extraordinary enthusiasm and generosity of Wal McIntyre.

At first the car, whilst extremely fast, was also extremely hard to handle, and it was only by a painstaking process of trial and error and experiments with weight distribution, steering geometry and ratios, shock absorbers, spring rates and so on (at one time the car carried 2 cwt of lead ballast aft so that the rear springs would work), that it was brought to the

stage where it could be driven up to its potential performance. Even then the final drive ratio was too high; the Miller engine didn't get really cracking until it was spinning at over 6,200 rpm and Frank says that by the time he had wound up to this pitch the car was starting to take off properly – he had usually reached the stage where he was running out of straight and he had to begin all over again. Once, at a Canberra Speed Trail, he entered the flying mile in second gear and covered the distance at an average of 117 mph, crossing the line at something over 135;

he thinks that, given sufficient breathing space, she could have been worked up to about 145 or more mph. Not bad for a homemade 1½ litre special. The supercharger was geared to five and a bit times engine speed, which means that at times it was turning at over 42,000 rpm, which is a bit staggering when you come to think of it. “

“ The Miller, was eminently a sprint car and was dogged by unreliability in long distance events so, just about the time the Light Car Club was going grey organising the first road race at Bathurst, the 1938 Australian Grand Prix, Mr. McIntyre had a short discussion with Mr. Kleinig on the subject of temperamental and tricky engines. And as a result, Mr. McIntyre's fairly new Hudson sedan suffered, and the Miller at last became the Hudson.”



The two shots here appear to date from 1936. The first with the car at speed is most likely the Canberra Speed Trials of 1936 and it looks to me that it is Tom Peters driving. He looks too bulky to be Kleinig. The second shot appears to be a hillclimb shot and this looks like a young Frank Kleinig driving. I have no idea of the location, but would welcome suggestions.