

## **BATHURST LIGHT CAR CLUB ARMSTRONG 500 TO BATHURST**

By 1963, the Armstrong 500 mile race, being held as an annual event for three years at Phillip Island in Victoria, became one of the biggest crowd-drawing events the Australian motor racing calendar. Phillip Island was, compared to Mt Panorama a relatively easy circuit, and some members of Bathurst Light Car Club began to toy with the idea of promoting Bathurst to the Armstrong Company as being a more suitable and more demanding venue for the event.

The NSW representative of the Armstrong Company was contacted, and he came to Bathurst to have a guided tour of the circuit. There was as yet no speed limit on the track, so with the help of Alan Mitchell, a local amateur movie photographer who was at the time headmaster at the Scots School, Rex Ellis and Barry Gurdon drove around the circuit following Jerry Trevor-Jones in a Cooper Mini, with Alan making a movie of the track while the traffic was held up to make Jerry's lines authentic. The film also showed the other features of the circuit area, and was quite a professionally produced effort.

The film was sent to Melbourne with the NSW representative's enthusiastic support, and in October, 1963 the Armstrong 500 mile event for production cars was held in Bathurst, where it has been each year since with a number of different sponsors and has become the premier racing event in the country.

Story from Fifty Years of Motor Sport "The Bathurst Light Car Club 1953-2003 by Geoff Benson