

# MY STORY



**Tony Kirwan, from Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, is the proud owner of a rather unusual Austin A40 Farina camper. Here is his tale.**

**I** OWN a 1960 Austin A40 Farina Countryman Mark 1 camper wagon and a 1967 A40 Farina Countryman Mark 2. The Mark 1 was built at the BMC plant in Zetland (a suburb of Sydney) in 1960 and its colour is coral and foam white. It was subsequently shipped to Wagga Wagga (a country town in New South Wales) to the local BMC dealer, Allcars Wagga Wagga. It was put on display at the local agricultural show in Wagga Wagga as part of the car dealer's display and then used as a display vehicle in their showroom.

In January, 1961, my grandparents traded in another Austin and bought the Farina. The only options purchased were a sun visor and an aftermarket roof rack (good for hanging



Interior is as smart as the outside.



Front seats in the folded position.



Sturdy brackets are integral to seat operation.



A40 in normal guise as a family hatchback.

Left: Tony's lovely 1967 Mark 2 A40 Countryman.

the walking stick on). The Farina led a very pampered life, living under cover and being serviced by the book. The only mechanical problem encountered during their ownership was the need to put a new set of rings in it at 80,000 miles, because it was using a bit of oil.

Both my grandparents died in 1993 and the A40 was left to me. When I obtained the Austin, I used it sparingly and decided to join a club. I joined the Austin A40 Car Club of Australia, New South Wales branch. The car was used on many club outings and won several awards in the concours section, including Most Authentic.

I had the privilege of attending a BMC-Leyland Australia Heritage Group reunion in 2000, with the A40 used for the display. At the reunion, I spoke to many past employees, who worked at the BMC Zetland factory, and was told that the Farina Countryman version was an Australian idea. The story, as explained to me, was that when the new Farina sedan was released in Australia, several staff were sitting around the tea room, discussing life and cars in general, and thought that if the whole back of the sedan opened up, it would be a better sales proposition.



This is how rear seats fold flat.



Engine bay is exemplary – check out the master cylinders.

So, as the story goes, sketches were done and it was sent off to England, and the rest is history.

Since owning the Austin, I have repainted it in its original colours, I have carried out a full rebuild on the original engine, the interior has been re-trimmed and the suspension and steering systems have been overhauled. The gearbox and differential have not been touched, other than oil changes, and are as they left the factory in 1960. The biggest improvement was getting rid of the old cross-ply tyres and fitting a set of radials.

### OVERALL WINNER

As parts were getting hard to find in Australia, I joined the A40 Farina Club in England and found them to be a wealth of information. The club website is very good and allows us overseas members to stay in touch to see what is going on. In 2013, the car was displayed in the A40 club concours section and was the overall winner and also judged the best-presented.

The camper option allows the front and rear seats to fold flat, providing a level surface for two people to sleep on. The Austin is now used on car club outings only. It runs on unleaded fuel with a lead additive with no problems at all.

## How to lead 3 lives...



Three lives – family saloon, camper, workhorse.

This is a pretty basic camper by any standards, but it's a camper, nonetheless, and a vehicle of some considerable interest. Tony sent us cuttings from "Modern Motor" magazine, dating from 1962, with the somewhat clever heading "A-40 Winks". The tester said that the Countryman camper was the only station wagon under £1,000 "that can sleep two six-footers at full stretch without them having to dangle their tootsies out of an open tailgate". A rather quaint turn of phrase. According to the tester, the seats could be suitably folded down in just three minutes. He added: "No need to carry a mattress for camping, and the bed surface is practically level all the

### IN ONE AUSTIN A40 COUNTRYMAN

Now you can be a three-in-one family—in ONE Austin A40 Countryman. The most versatile light car ever designed, the A40 Countryman is the car you need for the life you lead. A car engineered to be great under tradition, with parking turn of performance, comfortable elegance of line and more drive in the same class. From the inside out, Austin planned the A40 Countryman to make your light car life so comfortable. Here is the look of the future, in a brilliant, solid family saloon that doubles as a workhorse, looks as a station wagon. An exciting, adventure vehicle, economical to buy, economical to run, economical to maintain.



### SPECIFICATION

**GENERAL:** The A40 Countryman is a four-door, four-seater, light car with a load capacity of 1,000 lbs. It is available in two body styles: the family saloon and the station wagon. The saloon is available in two trim levels: the standard and the deluxe. The station wagon is available in one trim level: the standard. The A40 Countryman is available in two engine options: the 1,100 cc and the 1,300 cc. The 1,100 cc engine is available in two power options: the standard and the deluxe. The 1,300 cc engine is available in one power option: the standard. The A40 Countryman is available in two transmission options: the standard and the deluxe. The standard transmission is a four-speed manual. The deluxe transmission is a four-speed manual with overdrive. The A40 Countryman is available in two wheel options: the standard and the deluxe. The standard wheels are 14 inches in diameter. The deluxe wheels are 15 inches in diameter. The A40 Countryman is available in two paint options: the standard and the deluxe. The standard paint is a light blue. The deluxe paint is a dark blue. The A40 Countryman is available in two interior options: the standard and the deluxe. The standard interior is a light blue. The deluxe interior is a dark blue. The A40 Countryman is available in two exterior options: the standard and the deluxe. The standard exterior is a light blue. The deluxe exterior is a dark blue. The A40 Countryman is available in two interior options: the standard and the deluxe. The standard interior is a light blue. The deluxe interior is a dark blue. The A40 Countryman is available in two exterior options: the standard and the deluxe. The standard exterior is a light blue. The deluxe exterior is a dark blue.



### LEADING DIMENSIONS

W	47.0
L	100.0
H	57.0
W	57.0
L	100.0
H	57.0
W	57.0
L	100.0
H	57.0

The body construction by the British Motor Corporation Australia Pty. Limited is similar to that of other BMC light cars, with a strong, welded, unitary construction. The A40 Countryman is available in two body styles: the family saloon and the station wagon. The A40 Countryman is available in two engine options: the 1,100 cc and the 1,300 cc. The A40 Countryman is available in two transmission options: the standard and the deluxe. The A40 Countryman is available in two wheel options: the standard and the deluxe. The A40 Countryman is available in two paint options: the standard and the deluxe. The A40 Countryman is available in two interior options: the standard and the deluxe. The A40 Countryman is available in two exterior options: the standard and the deluxe.



THE BRITISH MOTOR CORPORATION (AUSTRALIA) PTY. LTD.

How come people in advertising literature are always slim, handsome and smiling? BMC spec sheet for the A40.

way, without the awkward bumps and hollows you have to pad in most other conversions."

Tony, it is good of you to get in touch with all of the info and pictures – very much appreciated. And before signing off, we make our usual plea for you to

tell us your story – it can be good, bad, sad, happy, ugly or just plain indifferent, provided it has some sort of connection with classic light commercials and is suitable for readers of a family magazine, we want to hear. Over to you – Editor.

The Austin A40 Car Club of Australia was formed in 1971 to preserve, restore and continue the use of all Austin- and BMC-built cars, with a particular focus on the A40. The website is [www.austin40club.com.au](http://www.austin40club.com.au). Details of the A40 club over here in the UK can be found at [www.a40farinaclub.co.uk](http://www.a40farinaclub.co.uk)

# LIFE 1

## A four-passenger family Saloon

World-famous Italian designer Pinin Farina styled the outside good looks of the A40 Countryman—gave it the flash and sparkle of continental elegance that will look new, years from now. Splendidly trimmed, the A40 Countryman offers "stretch-out" comfort for four adults and a "big-car" performance that will amaze you. A full-length parcel shelf and closed glove-box are standard. The A40 Countryman is in every detail, a fully-equipped 4-seater saloon car.



# LIFE 2

## A camping-body Station Waggon

Weekends away and the A40 Countryman doubles as your own private sleeper. Simply fold the rear seat flat, the front seats flat and make up your bed. Incidentally, both front doors open wide with interior and exterior locks and full wind-up windows.



# LIFE 3

## A willing work-horse on all jobs

The A40 Countryman is built for hard work as well as good looks. With the hinged tail-board and upper window panel opened horizontally, the rear seat folded flat, the A40 Countryman is a power-packed work-horse, good for hundreds of odd jobs. The low lift and easy access make loading and unloading easy.



Period advertising leaflet makes interesting reading.



NEW in-book seats with separate backrest fold flat, most rear seat seats. Windows now wind down instead of sliding into the doors. Tailgate is shown right.

A40 Countryman now replaces saloon for the same price. It sleeps 2, takes lots of luggage, is a nutty performer, says Bryan Horrohan

## A-40 WINKS

BMC's new Austin A40 Countryman is the only driver, except for the 4100 cc that can sleep two, with more room to dangle their tootsies out of an open tailgate. The 1100 cc has done for making the bed fold either very well longer in the front seats. The full conversion takes only three minutes or so and the rear seat folds flat, and the front seats fold flat. The A40 Countryman is a power-packed work-horse, good for hundreds of odd jobs. The low lift and easy access make loading and unloading easy.

Good instead of the old slide-down type, which used to get their sliding feeling when the car was on the move. Much better the way, and the winding action is light and quick. And all these extra things come with NO increase in price. The Countryman runs 4213 throughout a year, more than the A40 saloon which is 4100.

For the BMC, should get a big head—as well as a big side lift for the new model. Mechanically the A40 is unchanged. The 1100 cc, four-cylinder, A40 series engine, as fitted to the Mini, runs on 83 to 110 mpg. The extra 1100 cc adds less than 200 lb. to the A40's weight, so performance is practically identical to the saloon. But it's worth to



improving, since the Countryman's rear window can open, an interior leather back, dual parking lights and mechanical, offset front wheel.

On the Road The engine is never fever. It may sound busy but doesn't get actually noisy, even at peak revs. The cruising speed is between 50 and 60 mph, but speed is promised to 110-120 mph. The low 1100-cc backside motor makes for great fuel economy—25-30 mpg. The three doors close and are well spaced, but the rear door tends to close slowly. A rear window is not a great asset, but it's better than none.

No handbrake, of course—but that's not a great loss, as the gear stick has a handbrake. It's not a great loss, but it's better than none. The A40 Countryman is a power-packed work-horse, good for hundreds of odd jobs. The low lift and easy access make loading and unloading easy.

What with the Morris 850 and the A40 Countryman, it's easy to see why BMC's new car is so successful. The A40 Countryman is a power-packed work-horse, good for hundreds of odd jobs. The low lift and easy access make loading and unloading easy.



PERFORMANCE ON TEST

CRUISE: 50-60 mph, 25-30 mpg. ACCELERATION: 0-50 mph, 15-20 sec. TOP SPEED: 110-120 mph. FUEL CONSUMPTION: 25-30 mpg. PRICE: £1,000-1,200.

Road test from "Modern Motor" magazine of 1962. We love the clever heading.