

**Peter Lanyon**

**Kar 54-Grimace**

Dunny Blows up in Sydney

That's how it all started. A thunderbox blown sky-high at Sydney 's Rosehill Racecourse. The Daily Telegraph was there to cover the event with a picture and story appearing in the next day's issue.

The year was 1989 and this stunt was the first promotion of the inaugural Kidney Kaper, as it was known then (the forerunner of today's Kidney Kar Rally). The storyline bore the message of an outback motoring adventure dubbed "the working man's rally", raising funds for the Australian Kidney Foundation (now Kidney Health) and promoting awareness of kidney disease.

To me, the synchronicity was all there. Firstly, because I'd always wanted to participate in some kind of motorsport but couldn't afford to and secondly, my daughter Jodie, was a sufferer of kidney disease and was a kidney transplant patient.

Part of the fun and the challenge of the KKR is the preparation of the kar. I am by no means an automotive expert, but over the years I've had some pretty good advice from other competitors. This is one of the great features of the rally – the willingness of our "rallytives" to share themselves, their knowledge and their time.

Most of us, during the course of the KKR, have experienced some sort of break-down or difficulty. It is that unselfish act of our rallytives to stop, lend a hand, and make certain that we are all OK or that help is on the way, before they continue. The spirit and camaraderie that exists within this fine group of people is absolutely fantastic, and a privilege to be part of.

The first kar 54 was a 1966 HR Holden, known to us as "Harry". The other members of my team that year were my brother-in-law Terry and a work-mate Ray. Our rally preparation for the kar that year was to paint it green and yellow and put a bull bar and sump guard on. As I said earlier, we've learnt a lot over the years!

My cousin's husband Ian was my next team member. Ian later went on to fame and fortune(?) in his own right as "Hicksie" of Kar 77.

Harry lasted a couple of years but succumbed to the dreaded metal cancer. He was replaced by another HR whose name was "Barry". The rally preparation for Barry extended to a rear-window metal venetian blind and a Landcruiser external sun visor which we had turned around and bolted to the boot to make a magnificent rear spoiler.

My wife, Wendy, became part of the krew and was the back-seat driver. The conundrum that often puzzled her was "how can the dust get into all of those places on your body that the sun doesn't often see?"

Next came the LJ Torana. Boy did this one bring back memories of a mis-spent youth and my GTR! My favourite photo of the LJ is with me at the wheel and my daughter Jodie in the navigator seat, hurtling 'round the back corner of the Broken Hill Speedway with the inside front wheel many inches off the ground! I recall Jodie saying to me at the time, "Come on Dad, the accelerator is the one the right!"

Then came the Commodores – three, I think. My son-in-law, Nathan, was navigator for a couple of KKR's. The kar's name was Grimace, because of the purple colour and thanks to George Smith, Nathan became known as "Little Grimace".

Prior to its rally heritage, the current Commodore started as a lowered, 6 cylinder automatic. It's now a raised, V8, manual. I still can't keep those tyres round though, they always seem to go flat on the bottom. One day I'll find a solution.

is a wonderful place, best country in the world as far as I can tell. What better way to explore it than by getting "off the beaten track". The outback has so many secrets and treasures that it would take volumes to relate. The people, the scenery, the animals and birds, the wildflowers, so much to experience. What better than at the end of a typical rally day to be able to kick back on the verandah of an isolated country pub and watch the sunset and tell a few yarns about the day's travels.

For the last two years, my youngest daughter Debbie has been navigating for me. What a joy she has brought to me and the rally. In the year 2000, my eldest daughter Jodie lost her life-long battle with kidney disease and passed away. This tragedy was devastating. I lost interest in the rally as I felt that the link had been broken. With the support of family, friends and rallytives, I continued and with Deb's inspirational partnership, the spark returned.

Jodie's memory lives on for rallytives in the shape of the "Jodie Lanyon Memorial Award" for the highest fundraiser.

Wendy, has been on one rally as a competitor and three others as support for the AKF. Wendy, my second daughter Kelly, Nathan and many other friends and family members have been tireless workers in our many fund-raising

activities. Without their support my unbroken run of KKR's may well have ended.

My mate Tim Barnes is my partner now. Tim and I have known each other since December 3, 1970, the day we both started our apprenticeship. Tim was with me in the LJ and the first Commodore, then went over to the "True Blue" team, 666 and 999, to help get them started. We've spent many a weekend working on the cars – sometimes fixing them, but mostly scratching our heads wondering how to fix them, or having a beer and working out the best strategy as to our plan of attack on fixing them.

Many people, from time to time, have asked me why I continue, why do I keep coming back? When I sit back and reflect on my sixteen years of rallying, the experiences that I've had, the places I've been to, the people I've met, the skills that I have learnt and the knowledge that I've gained, my answer to that is quite simple, "why wouldn't I?"

Peter Lanyon

Kar 54 "Grimace"