

# Bob Holden in the great race

By Paul Watson

Bob Holden has competed in the great race "34 or 35" times, including his win with Rauno Aaltonen in a Mini Cooper S in 1966.

In the first Armstrong 500, at Phillip Island in 1960, Bob and fellow Peugeot ace Ken Brigden drove a 403 as part of the Continental & General Distributors team. They were fourth in their class (classes were governed by price then), behind class winners Geoff Russell, David Anderson and Tony Loxton, who completed 164 laps. The Vauxhall Cresta of John Roxburgh and Frank Coad (167 laps) is widely regarded as having won the event, although officially there was no outright winner. Another 403, driven by Ron Lilley and Jim Gullan, was eighth in class C.

In 1961, when the overall winner was a Mercedes 220SE driven by Bob Jane and Harry Firth, 403s filled three of the first four places in class C. First were Geoff Russell and Dave Anderson (163 laps), followed by Bill Coe and Ron Lilley (161 laps), with Bob Holden, Ken Brigden and Albert Bridge fourth on 153 laps. Their car had rear-end problems and was twice black-flagged for spilling fuel on the track.



Bob Holden and Bill March took third place in their class in the 1963 Armstrong 500 in this 404. A similar car, driven by Bill Coe and Syd Fisher, was disqualified.

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## ARMSTRONG "500" QUICK REFERENCE CHART OF THE CARS ENTERED by courtesy of Shell Company of Australia

CAR No.	DRIVERS	CAR	COLOR
1D	Y. Gault, W. Gillaglio	Valiant	White
2D	A. Nasham, Jr., W. Walden	Studebaker Lark	Ashley Yellow
3D	D. McKay, G. Gussack	Vauxhall Velox	Red
4D	R. Cook, A. Ross	Valiant	Green
5D	G. Russell, J. Keaburn	Zephyr	Stripe & White
6D	W. Burns, B. Lawler	Humber Snipe Auto	Black
7D	J. Wright, I. Ferguson	Studebaker Lark	Grey
8D	A. Reynolds, A. Allen	Valiant	Grey
9D	R. Holden, A. Bridge	Peugeot 406	Ivory/Black
10D	W. Coe, S. Fisher	Peugeot 406	Charcoal
11D	C. Hodgkins, TDN	Chrysler Auto	White
12D	P. Fells, T. Kraatzmann	Vauxhall VX190	Ivory/Red
13C	E. McPhue, G. Ryan	Corina G.T.	Kean Blue
14C	J. D'Shannassy, TBN	Holden EH-54	White
15C	F. Morgan, R. Sach	Holden EH-54	Blue/White
16C	K. Bartlett, W. Reynolds	Holden EH-54	Ivory
17C	S. Muir, S. Martin	Holden EH-54	Red
18C	H. Sudd, TDN	Holden EH-54	Light Blue/White
19C	B. Barnett, D. Johnstone	Hillman Super Mini	Grey
20C	H. Firth, R. Jane	Corina G.T.	Red/White
21C	L. Goughagan, J. Goughagan	Corina G.T.	
22C	W. Cunliffe, B. Braumball	Corina G.T.	
23C	I. Grant, T. Marden	Holden EH-54	Blue/White
24C	P. McCumisky, L. Brailov	Holden FB	Pink/Grey
25B	B. Walker, R. Clark	Renault RB	Red
26B	C. W. Harding, J. A. Yannuccelli	Morris Cooper	Blue
27B	L. Stewart, P. Bellotti	Morris Cooper	White/Red
28D	A. Gullif, E. Abbot	Corina 1500	White
29D	F. Malich, G. Murray	Renault RB	Light Blue
30B	G. D. Kelley, D. J. Kelley	Morris Cooper	Royal Blue
31B	C. Kennedy, D. Stewart	Simca Aronde	Blue
32B	K. Brigden, E. Smith	Simca	Beige
33D	J. Murray, A. Edney	Morris Major Elite	Brown/Brown
34B	M. Martin, D. Humphreys	Morris Cooper	Blue/White
35B	L. Wailay, S. Howard	Morris Cooper	Blue/White
36B	R. Tharp, J. White	Morris Major Elite	Ivory/Grey
37B	J. Connolly, R. Draper	Renault RB	Red
38B	F. B. E. Gordon, J. Towar-Janus	Morris Major Elite	Green/Green
39B	B. Foley, P. Manton	Morris Cooper	Grey/Yellow
40B	R. Emmett, F. Schweizer	Renault Gordia	Red
41B	J. Gates, M. Nedelko	Morris Cooper	Light Grey/White
42B	B. Chivas, K. Wilkinson	Morris Cooper	White
43B	W. Donnelly, J. Marchini	Morris Cooper	Black
44B	D. West, J. Martin	Morris Cooper	White/Green
45B	V. Brown, R. Marshall	Morris Cooper	Blue/Blue
46B	J. French, M. Valkers	Corina 1500	Beige/White
47B	C. G. Smith, R. Hadgran	Morris Cooper	Blue
48B	W. Blamfield, Alan L. Hill	Morris Major Elite	Brown/Brown
49A	H. Seton, H. Taylor	Morris 850	Blue
50A	F. Harn, G. Farret	V.W.	White
51A	G. Reynolds, J. McKeown	V.W.	Turquoise
52A	B. Callanan, L. Howard	Fiat 770	Dark Grey
53A	J. Alexander, W. Shanley	Morris 850	Black
54A	W. Ford, B. Ferguson	V.W.	Faded White
55A	D. Holland, L. Light	Morris 850	Platinum
56A	M. Collin, J. Barthorne	Triumph Herald 1200	White
57A	G. Mackie, G. White	V.W.	White
58A	K. Nicholson, F. Gibson	Morris 850	Red
59A	T. Condon, D. Cooke	Morris 850	Red
60A	A. Hill, F. Kleinig, Jr.	Morris 850	Smoke Grey
61A	A. Andrews, R. Yaxson	V.W.	Pearl White

Bathurst 1963 entry list. Albert Bridge was killed shortly before the Bathurst weekend and his place was taken by Bill March.



**Bob Holden in the 403 he shared with Ken Brigden in the 1960 Armstrong 500. Autopics.com.au**

**The Bob Holden-Ken Brigden-Albert Bridge Peugeot 403 at Phillip Island, 1961.**



There were no Pugs in the 1962 Armstrong 500, won by Jane and Firth in a Falcon XL. (In that year Bob Holden and his 403 came third in the Australian Touring Car Championship.)

The bitumen Phillip Island circuit was breaking up badly and in 1963 the event moved to Bathurst and in that year the Cortina GTs dominated the race, which was won by Bob Jane and Harry Firth. In class C, Bob Holden and Bill March brought their ivory-and-black 404 home third on 119 laps but the 404 of Bill Coe and Syd Fisher was disqualified, although no-one can remember why. (1963 also saw Bob come twelfth in the Australian Drivers' Championship in his Lynx-Peugeot open-wheeler.)

The 1964 race was won by Bob Jane and George Reynolds in a Cortina GT. Bob Holden drove a Renault 8.

In 1965 the Cortinas had their last hurrah, with Barry Seton and Midge Bosworth's GT500 winning from Bruce McPhee and Barry Mulholland in a similar car. But the Cooper S was beginning to make its mark and filled six of the top 10 places. Greg Cusack and Bob Holden's Mini was ninth.

But it was in the Gallaher 500 of 1966 that the Cooper S came to the fore, with Bob Holden and Rauno Aaltonen leading the Minis to the top nine places.

By 1967 the Falcon GT was in the mix and changed the whole context of the Bathurst race. Falcons were first and second, followed by two Alfa 1600 GTVs. Bob and Tony Hall were fifth, in a Cooper S. There were four more Minis in the top 10. There were no Peugeots in that race, but the 1960 Armstrong 500 winner, John Roxburgh, was 24th in a Datsun 1000.

In 1970 Bob drove a Falcon GTHO to 14th place at Bathurst but by 1974 was punting an Escort GT1600 to 18th.

In 1983 he had entered an Escort at Bathurst and on the day after entries closed the race secretary rang and said, "I don't want your Escort." The car was getting old and was slower than most other entries. But Bob managed to qualify, blowing up several engines in the process, and after starting 55th on the grid, finished the race in 15th place. "When you drive little cars you've got a different mind frame about everything you do."



**The Mini Cooper S of Bob Holden and Rauno Aaltonen, winning the Gallaher 500 in 1966. Autopics.com.au**