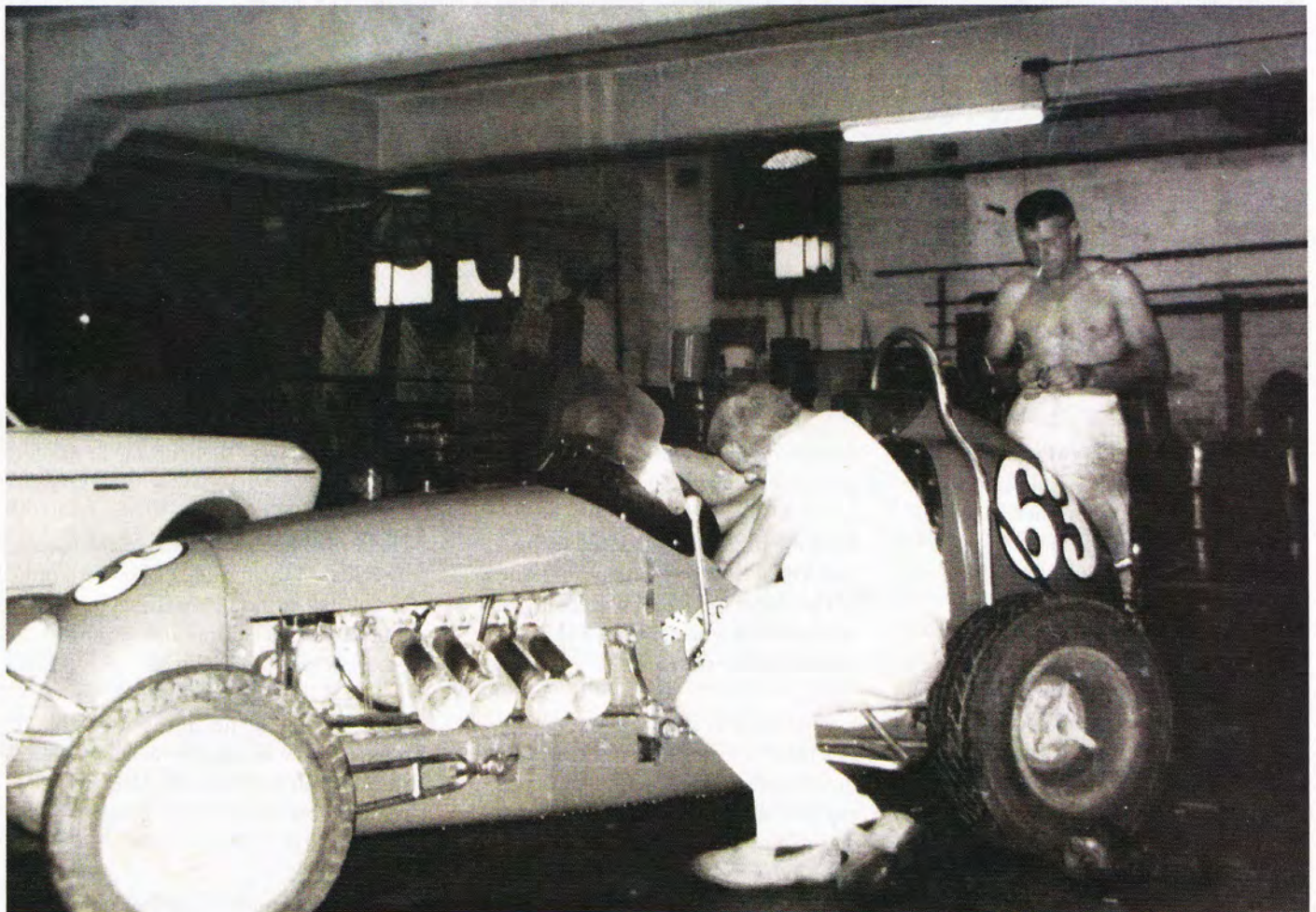


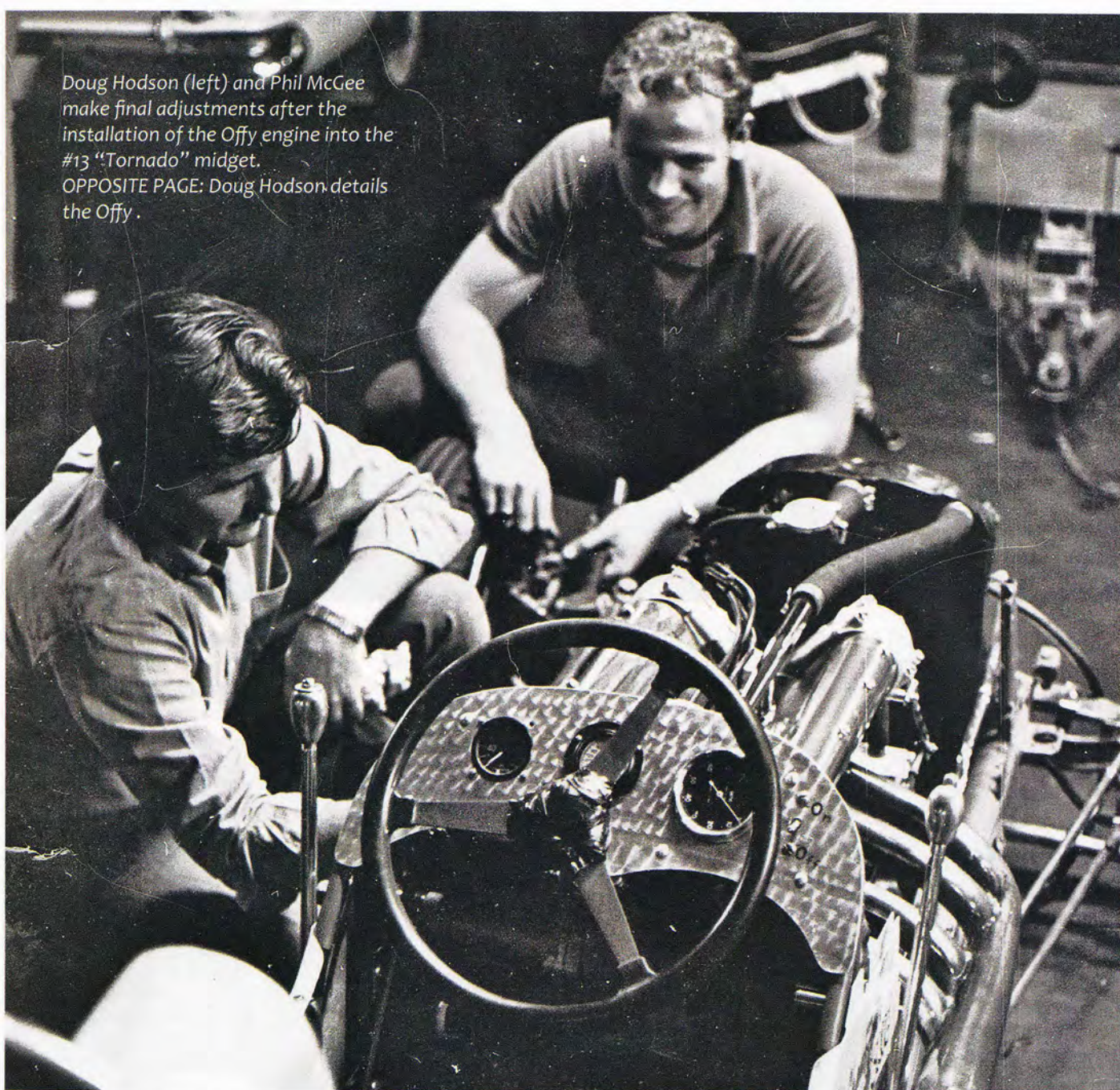


ABOVE: Passing two cars in one corner, Johnny Stewart has the advantage on Brian Myers, while Don Hunt, struggling with understeer, will soon see Stewart zoom by in the McGee Racing Cams "Trackburner".

BELOW: It is 1968 and American visitor Billy Mehner works on his Richardson Offy in the McGee workshop. Bob Tattersall is taking a "smoko".



Doug Hodson (left) and Phil McGee make final adjustments after the installation of the Offy engine into the #13 "Tornado" midget.
OPPOSITE PAGE: Doug Hodson details the Offy.



Naturally, a number of drivers and riders gravitated to the excitement that could be found under those bright lights. Phil McGee, Hedley's eldest son, tells a story about American singer Roy Orbison.

"Although Roy Orbison didn't come to our shop, I went up to the Chevron Hotel one night to have dinner with Bob Tattersall and Roy came to our table. In between his shows he talked about Tatts' racing. He was a really nice guy."

Some of the denizens of the 'Cross also found their way to the shop and became regular onlookers as the team burned

the midnight oil working on speedcars, grinding out cams and preparing cars.

It's these ingredients that made the McGee race shop so unique and one of the places to be in those great years of the sixties when speedcar racing boomed in Australia.

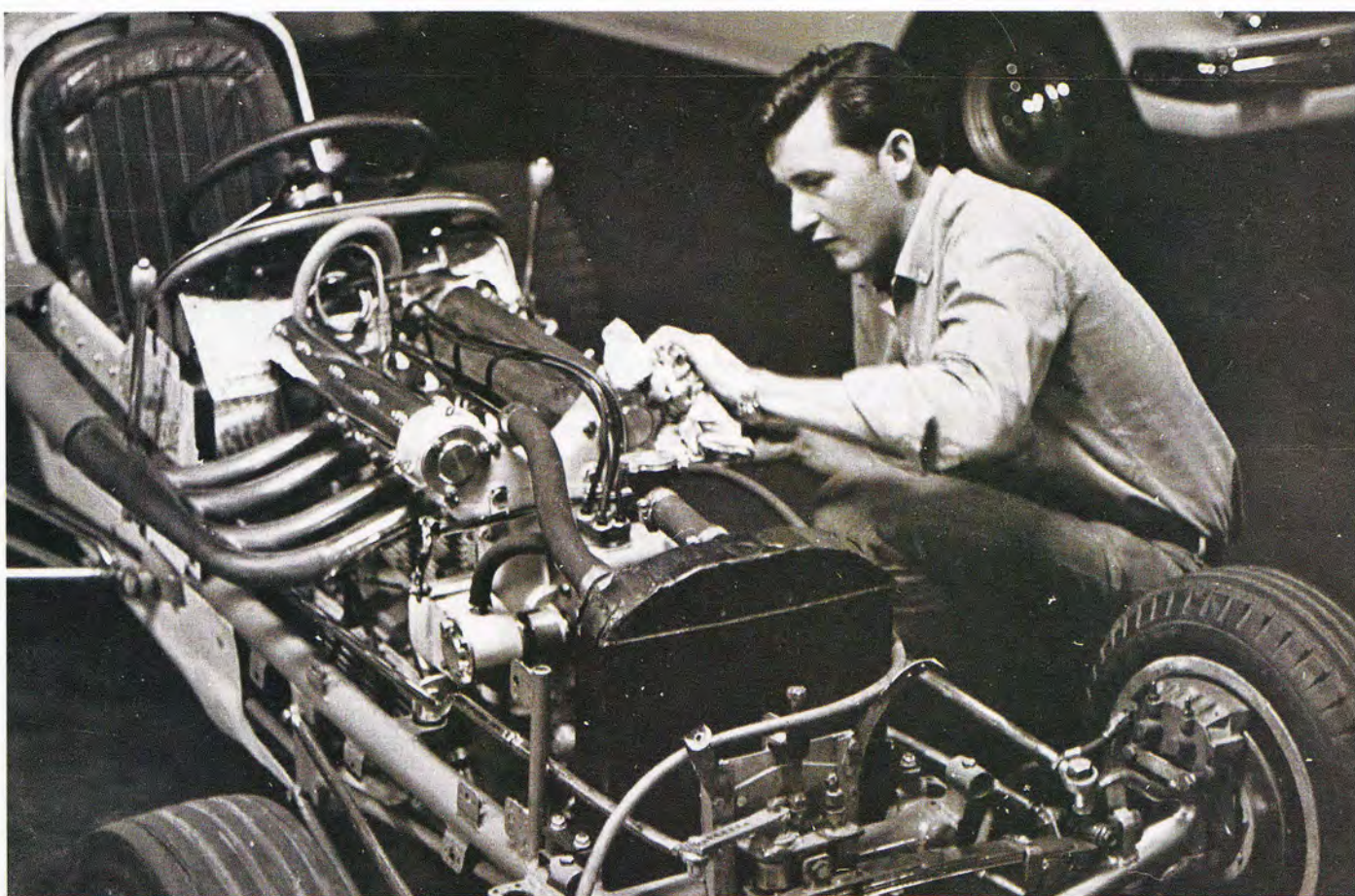
Everything was special about the "Victoria Garage" – even seeing Barry Butterworth's broken Offenhauser engine – as I stood at the work bench on the morning I visited, looking to advance my aspiring journalistic career with a quote or two from any of the

drivers who were there or one of the McGees.

Hedley McGee was an auto electrician by trade. In the mid-40s, after designing a camshaft-grinding machine, he founded McGee Cams and set up business in Victoria Street.

After visiting the nearby Sports Ground Speedway, he became involved with speedcar racing and built a Rugby powered car driven by longtime friend, Gordon Cox.

Soon he was approached by Empire



Speedways and asked to help maintain the speedcars for the visiting American racers who were competing at the Sports Ground and Showground Speedways.

Hedley helped New Zealand born driver Frank Brewer win the 1949 Australian Grand Prix and the 1950 World Speedcar Championship. "I still have a telegram that Frank sent dad, thanking him for the work he had done on his car when he won the 1950 World Derby," Chris McGee remembers. "When my mum went into labor with me at a Showground media day, it was Frank who drove her to the hospital. They also had to drive Phil to hospital too because he had serious burns on his knees from the exhausts on Frank's V8-60!"

"Little did we know what was to follow when our workshop became involved in motor sport," Phil says. "There were tether cars, speedcars, stock cars, road racing cars, hill climb cars, speedway bikes, road race motorcycles, speedboats, model airplanes and dragsters."

"My father's products included twin

generators for taxis, water injection, racing cams, fuel injection and lots of McGee Holden engines that were sent across Australia," Phil adds. And Hedley's reputation began to grow.

What is not so well known is that in the 1950s Hedley competed in a variety of events including hill climb and road racing. His FJ Holden became known as 'Hedley's Holden Hornet'.

Hedley once entered an economy run at Castlereagh. Phil takes up the story: "Dad drove his Holden to the track. With mum, Chris and I sitting on a blanket watching, he proceeded to replace the rear end, back off the brake shoes, put 100 pounds of air in the tyres, wash the grease out of the wheel bearings, replace the carby and advance the ignition timing. The organisers had the contestants drain their fuel tanks and they were given precisely one gallon. One by one, the contestants ran out of petrol until dad was the last man standing at over 80 miles. After picking up his trophy, he then had to put the car back together for the trip home!"

His wife, Lillian, decided to race, too. Pregnant with Chris, she broke Hedley's lap record at Mount Druitt!

In 1956 Hedley pioneered fuel injection for Werner Greve's Holden. Werner won that year's World Speedcar Championship and Hedley's reputation flourished from there on. Everyone then wanted a McGee injection system and a McGee camshaft!

Hedley was somewhat secretive about the machinery he used to achieve his successes. Sydney Solo Test star John Langfield was one of the few who got to see it and recalls what he saw. "It was hidden in his workshop behind a hessian covered wall. I felt honoured that he allowed me into his most secret inner sanctum."

Maintaining race cars for the Showground promotion meant a parade of American stars through the workshop. Chris remembers that "we had all the USAC stars during the 1960s stay with us. Empire Speedways had us look after Bob Tattersall for a

decade, along with fellow Americans Sherman Cleveland, Marshall Sargent, Merle Bettenhausen, Leroy Warriner, Jimmy Davies, Dick "Jet" Brown, Mike McGreevy, Don Meacham and Billy Mehner."

The list of local talent was no less impressive. "We ran cars out of the shop for Stud Beasley, Johnny Stewart, Jack O'Dea, Kevin Park, Brian Mannion, Ray Redding, Blair Shepherd, George Tatnell, Jack Porritt, Garry Rush, Len Brock, Peter Nunn, John Fenton, Gordon Benny, Max Monk, Murray Hoffman, Joe Braendler, Warren Armour, Bill Warner, Ray Revell and Andy McGavin. The list goes on and on. Plus, our parts helped win the Bathurst 1000 a couple of times," Chris recalls.

McGee Racing Cams also fielded several "house" cars. Kevin Park's McGee Shell "Revmaster" captured the 1964 World Championship and team mate Johnny Stewart, with Phil McGee as his crew chief, won the 1965-1966 season Australian Speedcar Championship

with the legendary McGee-Shell "Trackburner". There was also the #13 McGee "Tornado", which debuted with a Ford Falcon engine and later switched to Offy power. Although Ray Redding built his own red #53 Holden, the car was closely aligned with the McGees as a "signature" car. Another "signature" car was owned by Peter Nunn.

Hedley was also deeply involved with the Sydney speedcar club, the Eastern States Racing Association (ESRA), and consequently the workshop was "Speedway Central" and the McGees were witness to many memorable events on and off the track.

The McGee workshop was located next to St John's Anglican Church and the noise of high revving engine tests was not conducive to worship. Chris reveals the solution: "Hedley decided to route the engine's exhaust into a hole in the wall and use the cavity between the inner and outer walls of the building as a muffler. Everyone marveled at how quiet the testing was. One day he



ABOVE: Phil McGee adjusting the "Tornado's" Offy with Chris McGee (background).
BELOW: Phil McGee with team driver Len Brock at Westmead Speedway in 1967 with the Ford Falcon in the engine bay of the "Tornado".

