

LOW FLYER

One of the first Australian-built Cooper S, this Mini crashed on the racetrack and was transformed. It became a winner almost immediately, but its radical weight-saving hastened the demise of the Sports Closed category. Today it is restored to its former glory.



Words by Craig Watson. Photos by Craig Watson & Autopics

Six years ago, Col Wickens was helping John Smidt pack up everything at Mini Kingdom, near Bankstown in Sydney, for the move into partnership at Mini Spares Centre just down the road.

Under a pile of paper, on an old glass sales counter, Col spied a faded advertisement for a car for sale.

The car was the Buckle LMS, raced successfully by Lakis Manticas in 1968. The ad was

about ten years old, but Col took a punt and rang the number, in Bathurst, to find that in fact, yes, the car was still for sale.

Col took a drive out to Bathurst to see the car, as he recalls. "It had deteriorated a fair

bit from the photograph. It was just about beyond the point of no return, but with what it was, it was worth putting everything into it to bring it back to how it used to be. It was in a paddock with a hay cover over it,

and it was starting to sweat. I think if it had gone through another summer it would have completely destroyed the car. So, I brought it home and got rid of the brown snakes and the rats that were underneath it."

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