

Oh sh*t! Keys locked in (NA) boot!

Words & photos: James Lang

On the recent Eastern Victoria Chapter run to Bright, I was absent minded when I opened the boot of my NA outside the Mitta Mitta pub, put my keys in my coat pocket, took off my coat and then put my coat in the boot and then closed it and then said to my wife – “I think I have just done something really stupid.”

Early model NA's did not come with a remote boot release.

There was nothing I could do immediately so we ordered lunch and asked the other Club members if they had any good ideas which did not involve breaking the key barrel or taking to the boot lid with an axe ...



Extended stop in Mitta Mitta

Since I did not want to damage my car I thought I would call the RACV – I have *Total Care* coverage – to see if they could offer any help, and they said they would organise a mobile locksmith to open the boot and get me out of my predicament.

Luckily, Mitta Mitta is not such a bad place to be stuck in for a few hours. Eventually I got a call from the mobile locksmith who asked me if I had spare keys at home, and if so, could somebody take a close-up photo of the spare key and send it to my phone? Then the locksmith could get an idea of the key profile as a starting point to shape a replacement key. Luckily my eldest daughter was at home and took a photo of the original primary key and sent it to me via *Facebook*.

When the locksmith arrived he looked at the photo of the primary key and said that, with the five-digit number on the key, cutting a replacement key would be a simple matter. *Wonderful stuff!* The locksmith then used an app on his smartphone to come up with the key profile, and then entered this data into a small computer-controlled key milling machine in the back of his van.

The key profile was displayed on the milling machine's screen and it was fascinating to watch as the milling tool removed metal from the blank in the correct places. Once that was done he removed the new key from the machine, and then opened the boot.

All this was achieved in under five minutes!

I certainly got my money's worth from my RACV membership as the \$350.00 call-out fee for the locksmith was covered with the *Total Care* package. The spare key now resides with my wife's car keys in case I am absent minded again in the future ...

So, if you own an early model NA – what can you do to prevent this happening?

1. Attach a spare key to somewhere under the car – *super low tech!*
2. Fit a cable-operated remote release from a later model NA
3. Fit a remote electric boot release – a suitable unit is available from *Jaycar Electronics* (catalogue number LR8834) and retails for \$40.00
4. If you are in my “Mitta Mitta” predicament and are up the creek without a paddle and have no other options ... you can remove your rear number plate and, using a 20-25mm hole saw, drill a hole in the right-hand side ‘dimple’ which is below the right-hand number plate attachment screw. Then use needle-nose pliers to grab the actuator rod and open the boot. Seal up the hole with a rubber blanking grommet. ***Crude but effective.*** ■

