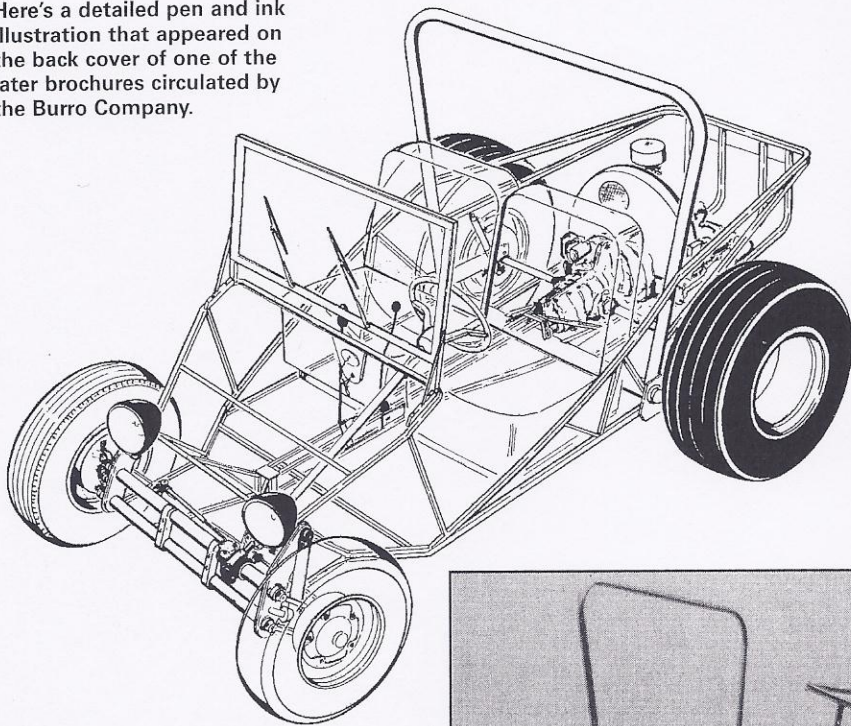


Dune Buggy

continues with a look at Hilder "Tiny" Thompson's classic Burro

Here's a detailed pen and ink illustration that appeared on the back cover of one of the later brochures circulated by the Burro Company.



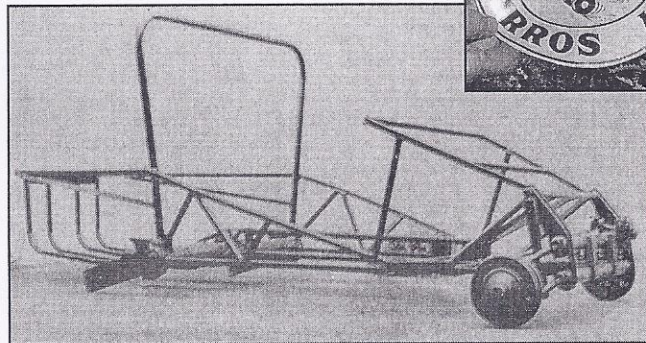
Editor's note: Special thanks to Roger Smith and John Dodson for Burro art and photos.



The Burro Company made two different stickers that we know of, as well as a large patch that could be sewn on a jacket. LEFT, bare chassis, showing roll bar and "basket," or cage, for a VW engine.

late, Hilder "Tiny" Thompson. Unfortunately, following the same style of our previous "History of the Dune Buggy" segments will be impossible this time around. Reason being, Tiny Thompson passed away several years ago and we never had the opportunity to sit down with him in person and ask some of the same questions that we did with the other pioneers noted. We have, on the other hand, met several individuals that knew Tiny personally and we asked them to offer up any information that they could on the subject. Additionally, we've located several photographs from various sources, and even included some color photographs of Burros that are still being driven regularly on the streets, and in the deserts, of California. Tiny was truly a pioneer from the early days of our sport, and to omit him from this series would be a true shame.

Tiny was a talented fabricator, welder and sheet metal worker, with a shop that was located at



1353 Santiago Avenue, in Santa Ana, California. Prior to the introduction of the car which is known as the Burro, Tiny and his crew concentrated on specialty jobs for several different clients. One of the early projects he became known for was a two-wheeled vehicle that he designed and built mainly for hunting, which closely resembled a motorcycle but had the ability to go many places through rough, rocky terrain that most motorcycles of the era would never attempt to venture. Because this vehicle that Tiny was building could go almost anywhere and was tougher than nails, he called it the Burro. Since Tiny was friends with people that were interested in off-roading, it didn't take long for him to be introduced to the world of dune buggies. So, sometime in 1963, one of

Tiny's friends, Dale Velzy, who incidentally was aware of a buggy that Roger Smith owned and built, asked him to consider building a dune buggy at his Santa Ana-based fabrication shop.

Velzy and Tiny jumped into their truck, took a spin over to Roger Smith's Peppertree Automotive, in nearby Costa Mesa, and after viewing Roger's buggy Tiny went back and built the first 4-wheeled Burro for Dale Velzy. Now, when you look at the photos we have of the Burro chassis in this article you will undoubtedly see a resemblance between it and the steel space frame chassis that Roger had designed and built (shown in Fall '96 issue). With the first car complete and on the road, Tiny got hooked up with Oliver "Les" Chote, owner of Les'