BACKFIRE

Volume 55 No 2 June 2021

PO Box 200 Newcomb VIC 3219
www.wdhvcgeelong.com

Club meetings: 7.30pm 2nd Tues each month. **Clubroom:** Geelong Showgrounds, 79 Breakwater Rd East Geelong.

Backfire is the monthly newsletter of the Western District Historic Vehicle Club *(Reg No A00011857H).*
Member of the Federation of Victorian Veteran, Vintage & Classic Vehicle Clubs.

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The President's Idle Chatter

As we finish our membership renewal period, it has been interesting to hear some of the comments as we move into another year.

One thing that our club members really value is the great social benefits of our club. Whether it is sitting next to someone at a club event that you don't know very well or chatting to others, the other members are easy to talk to. Doesn't really matter what the subject is: perhaps a marque you don't know much about or maybe the weather.

It is very much a friendly club where people are happy to chat and make others feel welcome.

This is doubly important at this time of the year as we have just welcomed a number of new members to the club. It is clearly what new members are looking for as well, so if you find yourself with club members you don't know, then make the effort to have a chat. You might be surprised what you learn.

It also makes other members feel welcome and accepted and it is one of the great strengths of our club.

Enjoy.

- David Mitchell

This postcard series shows the Ford plant in 1917. Look out for more in coming editions. - Ed

GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

MINUTES OF GENERAL MEEETING No 606 OF THE WESTERN DISTRICT HISTORIC VEHICLE CLUB INC. HELD AT THE CLUBROOMS ON TUESDAY 11th MAY 2021

PRESIDING

President David Mitchell opened the meeting and welcomed 52 members attending .

APOLOGIES

Darryn Tucker, Eva Barwise, Rod & Lorraine Roach, Graeme Walker, Graeme Anderson, Tiny Stonehouse, Gus & Pam Shea, John Bailey, Jeanette Dragt, Glenn & Jennifer Gersbach, Barry Johansen, Robert East, Damien & Teena Giustini, Jennie Green, Brian Clissold, Jan Clissold, Nola Noble, Simon Anderson, James Park, David Perkins, Trevor and Annetta Warren, Nic Neeson.

Moved: Jim Coates

Seconded: Max McKenzie Carried

SICK LIST

Brian Clissold

MINUTES

The minutes of the previous general meeting as published in the *Backfire* confirmed as a correct record.

Moved: Libby Booley

Seconded: Brian Edwards Carried

CORRESPONDENCE (Fred)

INWARD

Letters In

- Kevin Hunter resignation from the Club.

Emails In

- Damian O'Doherty and John Reichmann resignations from the Club.

OUTWARD

Letters Out

- Get Well cards sent to Fred Dosser and Bevan Bell.

Emails Out

- Austin 7 Club email advising that the Club will organise something of interest for their weekend rally on October 29 to November 2.
- Consumer Affairs Victoria lodgment of annual statement to March 2021.

Moved: Libby Booley

Seconded: Ken Batson Carried

TREASURER'S REPORT (Maurice)

The Treasurer reported on receipts and payments since the previous meeting and submitted accounts to be passed for payment.

Moved: Maurice Healy

Seconded: Libby Booley Carried

PROGRAM DIRECTOR (John)

No report as John away. See the *Backfire* for details on events.

LIBRARY (Gary)

No report this month.

DINE OUT (Gary)

None scheduled.

EDITOR (Jon)

Thanks to Damien for editing the *Backfire* while Jon was away. Given Damien's move, Jon is looking for a new volunteer to assist when he is away.

WEBSITE (Damien)

No report .

FEDERATION REPORT (David M for David P)

Federation meeting in later May.

COMMITTEE REPORT (David M

- Gordon Printing still not available;
- Engine crane repaired;
- Ladies day will be held (details to be confirmed);
- Austin 7 Club will visit later in the year; and
- Review underway on electronic payment of membership fees.

MERCHANDISE (David M)

No update.

TINKER DAY (David M for Ray)

Visit Ken Batson this month.

MARS BAR AWARD (Ray)

The Vella brothers were correctly guessed by Jon, Lindsay and Ray.

VEHICLE PERMITS (Dallas for Gus)

- Dallas reported that there are eight renewals due this month.

GENERAL MEETING MINUTES ctd

RALLY REPORTS/EVENTS (Rod)

- See the *Backfire* for details on events when scheduled.
- The Ladies Day will be held on a weekday in June. Details to follow.
- The Coffee and Lunch runs are scheduled for May (see *Backfire*). June events to be confirmed
- Events attended by members include:

◊ Ray went to the Lake Goldsmith weekend and an antique motorcycle run to Beeac.

◊ David M went to Airey's Inlet for the movie shoot to be told it was cancelled.

◊ Merv reported on the recent coffee run attended by about 40 members.

◊ Barb thanked Murray for organising another successful ANZAC Day BBQ.

◊ Peter reported on the range of unusual cars at the recent All Ford Day.

◊ Graham went on the MG Car Club four day tour of western Victoria.

LONG DISTANCE RALLY (Sharyn)

Planned for late August based in Griffith.

TECH NIGHT (Peter)

This month's topic will be " show & tell".

SWAP MEET (Fred)

Swap Meet cancelled for 2021.

KITCHEN (Pam)

No report this month.

GENERAL BUSINESS

- Max updated the members present on Trevor Warren's recent accident.
- President David presented Eric Lewis with his 25 year membership badge.
- Karl talked about the early newspaper report on the Club on display.

FOR SALES, WANTED & CONFESSIONS

- Jon confessed to his unsuccessful efforts to fit larger wheels and tyres.
- Harold was another Crossley, this one from WA.
- John Hickford was a car body repair frame for sale.

Meeting closed 8.45pm.

Next meeting: to be held at 7.30pm on 8th June 2021 in the clubrooms

- Leigh Dwyer

COMMITTEE MEETING

Main points from the Committee meeting held in the Clubrooms on 18 May 2021.

◊ New Members: Doug & Jan Thomas and John & Rhonda Welsh accepted into the club.

◊ Gordon Print still offline.

◊ 10 members yet to pay as of 18 May.

◊ 3 parties on the waiting list.

◊ Some members have failed to renew their red plates. Gus following up.

◊ Ladies Day again discussed. Details in Backfire

◊ Pam Shea and Barb Bernell doing a food handling course. (Sharyn Harris has already done one.)

◊ Letter from Austin 7 Club asking to visit our club rooms on Sunday 31 Oct. Graham and Simon Anderson to co-ordinate.

◊ Just Car Magazines to be stored in the library temporarily.

◊ Decided to purchase the portable PA system James recommended (cost approx $269), with a second microphone at extra cost.

- Rod Booley

25 YEAR MEMBERSHIP BADGE PRESENTED

President David presents Eric Lewis with his 25 year membership badge. (Eric couldn't attend the April meeting when others received their badges.)

Stories From the Shed

Commer Car Bus Restoration

*- **the short version of a long story.***

When it comes to the effort and the passion that my parents put into restoring the Bus, the comment of "Dementia Protest" comes to mind.

In the late 1970s my father came home with a pile of rusty stuff on the back of a friend's truck and trailer. As a young person, I recall the senior lady that lived across the road saying to me: "What junk has your dad brought home now?".

Being very young at the time, I recall only small parts of the early restoration. Dad being dad, he was optimistic and eager to get stuck into it. Telling me that the engine was seized but after a few hours he had it running. He used the method of a bit of diesel down the bores and placed the garage jack up the crank handle with a little bit of pressure.

Somehow he managed to make room in a medium size garage, designed for four cars, to fit in a bus, three cars, several motorcycles and lots of goodies .

He obtained blue prints of the body from England, I believe. The first step was to build the lower portion of the body, as the shed wasn't very tall and that was as far as he could go. Once the lower portion was built on the chassis, the body was jacked up and the chassis was rolled out. The body was placed on the shed floor and the second story was built. Dad was a joiner by trade and this really played to his carpentry skills.

I recall coming home from school one afternoon: dad had mum's car going back and forth with a big lump of flat steel wedged up between the garage and the carport upright tapering.

He was twisting it to get the shape for the staircase.

He used many different non-conventional ways to do things but he got the job done to how he wanted it.

He wasn't scared to have a go at anything.

Commer Car Bus Restoration (ctd)

After many years of building, screwing, nailing, putting together, re-assembling and painting, the time had come to put it all together. The garage at home was way too small to accommodate the height of the bus at 4.2 m high, so he had hired or loaned a shed in North Geelong. It was an exciting day to see the bus go onto the truck and be transported out north to its new home.

I spent many weekends out in the shed helping him holding things, being in the way and all that! As a young man it was almost the first thing that I got to drive (shush don't tell mum!).

I recall I had to stand on the clutch with both feet and pulled on the steering wheel to be able to get the clutch in and slowly release once into gear. I was around 10 years old at the time.

The time came for all the sign writing to be all hand painted on and mum and dad had arranged for local and national businesses that were still around at the time to have their business name up in pride of place.

After about seven years and many hours it was finally completed.

I recall the first major event/rally that we went on. It was going to be the annual rally but unfortunately just near Lara the magneto packed up. That was the end of that until the following year. Dad and my brother Graeme drove the bus to Melbourne on the Friday at 12 mile an hour straight up the highway to the annual rally (1986?) for the Saturday start of the Sorrento run.

Yes, it took four days to do a two-day rally, but dad being dad, he would drive his cars and bus everywhere and anywhere. The only time something would go on the trailer was if it had broken down.

Dad's motto was to spend some time, even five minutes, on it every day and he would get somewhere. I have taken his motto into my projects also and you certainly get stuff done.

He rallied it at many events, at the Veteran Car Club and local club here in Geelong, and it was used in many outings and openings for events.

It became difficult to store it due to its height. He was lucky enough to be able to store it at the local bus company where he worked, and where they had him started on another AEC bus project for the bus company. Unfortunately, he only got part of the body built before becoming unwell.

The Commer Car is up in Echuca and I'm unsure of the whereabouts of the AEC. *-Simon Anderson*

The finished project, outside the town hall (old court house and post office in background)

Specs:

Eng: 8L 4 cyc, 35-40Hp

3sp pre selector gear box

Chain Driven on solid tyre

Max speed: 12mph

Height: 4.2m

Weight: 6T

Gary's Giggles

Tall Tales from our Legendary Librarian

The butcher could still remember the day it happened. The young woman, baby arms, coming into the shop and announced that the little boy was his. What was he going to do about it?

He tried to hush her up as best he could, promising to supply her with free meat until the child was 16.

And he'd been ticking off the years ever since.

Finally the kid came in to collect the week's supply and announced: "Guess what? I will be 16 tomorrow."

"Yes," said butcher with a grin. "So tell your mum this will be the last free steak, chops and sausages she will get. "

"And watch the expression on her face."

"Mister, she told me to tell you that she had been getting free bread, milk and groceries for the past 16 years. And to watch the expression on your face."

****

A well-to-do matron had long nurtured an ambition to own a talking parrot. So one day she plucked up the courage and visited her local pet shop. When she told the pet shop owner what she wanted he said, "Madam, I do have a talking parrot: it is the only one I have. But unfortunately it has spent all its life in a bordello and, as you are obviously a woman of taste, I fear that its language would be likely to offend you"

"Not at all," said the woman. "It would be fascinating to own a parrot with such an interesting background."

Despite further attempts by the pet shop owner to discourage the woman, she would not be dissuaded and finally bought the parrot.

Now the woman thought she would surprise her family with her acquisition so she arranged for a cover to be put over the cage, which she then smuggled into her house.

The woman's family consisted of two nubile daughters and a husband. She duly summoned them into the lounge room, announced that she had a surprise for them and whisked the cover from the cage.

The parrot blinked its eyes in the sunlight, looked around, saw the woman and said: "Ah, a new Madam." Then it spotted the daughters. "And new girls."

Finally the parrot looked at the husband and said, "But the same old customers."

Letter to the Editor

"Adventure before Dementia"

Hi everyone,

As you all know Doreen and I hooked up the van in early April, and headed west. Free camping is our main game. Victoria is pretty good at providing areas to free camp. When I say free, sometimes there is a small fee, like $5 a night, just to help with upkeep. Most sites are looked after by organisations like Lions Clubs with council support.

We have been traveling short distances, hugging the coast, and hoping for good fishing. But I think the gods went inland.

South Australia is second only to Tasmania for free camping, South Australia supplies great sites with toilets, rubbish bins, and dump points. So we always make sure that we put a donation in the honesty box and spend a bit in the town - fuel bread etc.

The Nullarbor is long, flat and not overly interesting. We broke my golden rule regarding doing long days: we crossed it in three days, not speeding, just long periods behind the wheel. We stopped at the Great Australia Bight and for a change no wind, but the flies were very friendly.

Today we are at Kalgoorlie and staying for two nights. My main reason for the detour, other than seeing the super pit {mine} and the starting stalls {old brothels} is to see a very important shed. I assume you all have seen the TV show Desert Collectors. He is based here and I am hoping to meet him. Oh yeah, the roads in WA are unbelievable: their worst roads are better than our best.

Anyway "adventure before dementia": that's all for now.

Phill and Doreen

Send your story or Letter to Editor to:
editor@wdvcgeelong.com
or drop it in my letterbox
(50 James Cook Drive
Wandana Heights 3216)

All contributions welcome!

Events Calendar

All events are subject to the Covid 19 rules current at the time.

Thursday 3 June **Coffee Run to Great Ocean Rd Chocolatier**, Anglesea.
Meet at Club Rooms, 10am sharp. *Contact: Rod Booley 0417 021 982, 5281 5340.*

Tuesday 8 June **General Meeting** 7.30pm in the clubrooms.
NOTE: Supper will NOT be provided, due to Covid restrictions.)

Tuesday 15 June **Committee Meeting** 7.30pm in clubrooms.

Wednesday 16 June **Ladies morning Tea and a Movie.**
A very special ***Thank You*** day has been planned for you again this year.

We will meet at the clubrooms at 10.15am on Wednesday 16 June. From there the men folk will graciously drive us to the "***Fork and Flower***" for morning tea. *(If you wish to order complete lunch items, they will be at your own expense, with coffee/tea, desert/cake at the expense of the club*)

We will then be chauffeured to the ***Pivotovian Cinema*** to see the ***1pm*** screening of "***June Again***" (*at the club's expense*) We will be returning to the clubrooms following the movie which is about two hours long.

There will be a ***sign-up sheet*** at the next general meeting on ***Tuesday 8 June***. Numbers needed by then as the club is paying for the movie tickets. Please be aware that you are making a commitment to come along when you sign up. Best wishes - *Julie Bennett.*

Thursday 17 June **Tinker Day.** Starting from our clubrooms at 10.30am, this run will be quite short as we are heading to Graham and Elaine Baldock's place, to see what he has been up to in his shed. As usual, bring your own everything, food and drinks and also a chair, and be prepared for a good chinwag in the backyard sunshine with your fellow club members. The parking will be in the street at the back of the house and along St James Street at Bottles and Barrels, off Aberdeen Street.
Contact: Ray van Galen 5278 9368. Mob. 0411 954 865. Barb's Mob. 0408 664 537

Sunday 20 June **Lunch Run to Meredith Hotel**. 51 Staughton St, Meredith.
Meet at Club Rooms 11.30am for 12.30 lunch. Names required by Thursday 17 June for booking.
Contact: Rod Booley 0417 021 982, 5281 5340.

Tuesday 22 June **Tech Night. 7pm for 7.30pm Clubrooms (TBC)**
Contact: Peter Telfer 0427 526 938

Monday 28 June **July Backfire Deadline** 5pm.
Contact: Jon Breedveld 0417 311 441

Thursday 1 July **Coffee Run to Sandstone Cafe**, 284 Torquay Rd, Grovedale. Meet at Club Rooms, 10am sharp. *Contact: Rod Booley 0417 021 982, 5281 5340.*

Sunday 22 July **Lunch Run to Portarlington Golf Club**.
Meet at Club Rooms 11.15 am for 12pm lunch. Names required by Thursday 19 July for booking.
Contact: Rod Booley 0417 021 982, 5281 5340.

Dine Outs – no dine outs are planned until the Covid vaccination program is complete.

Long Distance Rally

The long distance rally will be held in mid August this year. We will be travelling to Griffith NSW in a roundabout way. I have no more details as yet but if you would like to join us please let me know, Sharyn 0417 546 089.

Other Events

29 Aug - 5 Sept. 2021 Federation Golden Oldies Tour.
1919 - 1930 vehicles only. Details Anne 0412 848 797 or Glenda 0418 345 499.

non RALLIES & RUNS

Avoca – March Long Weekend 2021

Photos - Damien Giustini

The weekend got off to a good start when a Mercedes had to be jump started at the meeting point (left the car fridge on). But off we went, playing follow the leader.

When the time came to take the Avoca turn off, the car second in line (another Mercedes) wanted to be leader, so we all followed him. This left the original leader sitting on the overpass scratching his head, wondering why we were all heading to Adelaide.

Eventually we all did a U-turn on the freeway and headed in the right direction. Travelling along nicely for a while until the FJ had a hiccup (starter motor problems) and had to be pushed to get it going again. We finally all arrived in Avoca and settled in to our rooms, later gathering at the hotel for dinner.

Saturday morning we had a leisurely breakfast then toddled off to look over the local shops. On our way back to the Motel we came across a gypsy wagon being towed by a tractor. The owner (I can't remember his name but his nickname was Wishbone) and his two dogs were on their way from Gigarre near Shepparton, to Mount Gambier, then back to Hamilton to house sit for a friend. He had travelled all over Australia in his wagon. He said he used to tow it with a horse but he got sick of having to shoe it every couple of weeks.

Our coordinator had tried to get us in to afternoon tea at the Maryborough railway station but it was booked out by a car club from Geelong ... can you believe it? So, for the rest of the day we did our own thing. Some of us went for a drive to Maryborough to do over the second hand shops: others did a wine tasting. There was also an option of a movie at the Avoca hall. All in all it was a very pleasant day.

Later we enjoyed traditional drinks and nibbles in the shade of the beautiful trees before a BBQ for dinner that night. Damien's distillery made a brief appearance for a few tasty treats.

Sunday morning, the Stag had a hiccup (thermal fan?) so they climbed aboard a modern for the trip. We left for St Arnaud at 9am, meeting Allan Esmore from the North Central Vintage Car Club at 10am.

Allan briefed us on the days planned activities before taking us to his house to see his amazing collection of cars and bikes. (The FJ had another hiccup and had to be pushed to get it going again) While he told us the history of each and every vehicle, his lovely wife Heather supplied us with morning tea. From here he took us past massive hay sheds where we had to do a U-turn (and push start the FJ again after it stalled) to head back to a local sporting club where he had arranged for us to have lunch. Wisely, the FJ was parked down a hill this time.

In the afternoon (the FJ only needed a light push) we were taken to the home of Arnold Bond. With the FJ parked on a slope, we were greeted with bagpipes before we heard the history of his collection of vehicles." Bondy" took great delight in starting his Mac Truck with an air start frightening the living daylights out of a few of the Ladies. With a light push of the FJ we then headed off to the home of Brian Dixon to see his incredible collection of pedal cars. (FJ parked on a slope again.)

Brian's old Labrador enjoyed a cuddle or two, leaving a coating of fur on our clothes.

Avoca – March Long Weekend 2021

From here, the FJ was pushed and we were taken to the home of Noel Bryce to see his collection of Cadillacs. Noel also had a Goggomobile which was for sale. One of our members was tempted to buy it but although it was small, it was just not quite small enough to fit in the boot.

With a push of the FJ, Allan then took us to the old St Arnaud railway station to see an exhibition of local art. Before heading back to the motel and after pushing the FJ, we had a look at their lovely painted silos. For a small country town and a club that only has around 70 members I was amazed at what they had to show us.

On the drive back to Avoca the MG decided to have a blowout and boy was it a blowout. Another BBQ for dinner, followed by "Damien's Distillery" till the wee hours. Some of the boys slept really well that night.

Monday morning and our long weekend was nearly over. The FJ decided it was best to go straight home without stopping and the Mercedes thought it was best to rescue the dog from the sitter so we were two cars down.

Playing follow the leader, the rest of us went to the aviation museum in Ballarat. Upon leaving the museum, the new leader took us into a new area before we turned around and went the correct way. From here we were heading to the Sebastopol Bowling Club for lunch. But which way is it? "We'll turn left ... no right, oh wait, I'm not sure, better go back the other way. Woops! it was right after all, best turn around again" ... we made it! After lunch, everyone headed in different directions, making their own way home.

Another Avoca long weekend had come and gone. It had been so much fun. I haven't laughed so much in a long time. I can't wait for next year. In the words of the only original Avoca weekender "I wouldn't miss it for quids".

- Teena

non RALLIES & RUNS

Tinker Day May 2021

Today we visited Ken Batson's shed which houses his extensive collection of old cars. This was a return visit as we visited his place way back before Covid in September 2018.

This collection consists mostly of large American and Australian cars, with a bias for Fords. He does have two Mercedes Benzes, one to restore and another for spares. Another odd one was a Humber. There is a lack of Holdens, but he has purchased the last of the Holden Commodore utes as a runabout.

We walked around the cars and Ken told us a story about each one and how he obtained it. Some he kept when they got too old and were replaced by a newer one. Other he acquired when they were not worth anything and before they became collector items and increased in value. He also has an Austin 8 which he used in a rally.

Some of the old cars are on red plates, others are waiting to be restored, but are in a shed to protect them from the elements. His current project is restoring a Buick straight 8 so that it does not get cut up for a hot rod.

Ken has built a clear sheeting roof between two of his sheds and has filled this light and sheltered spot with a large collection of pot plants. This cosy nook was where we ate our lunch.

Many thanks to Ken for sharing his place and an interesting look at his collection.

- Lindsay Alford

Photos - Damien Giustini & Lindsay Alford

non RALLIES & RUNS

Last Smell the Roses Day - 22 May

We were very lucky with the weather on the day. Nine hardy souls turned up for our last motorcycle run for this year: we could not expect another day as fine as this in June.

We headed down to Torquay via Horseshoe Bend Road, after having to do a U turn at the first bit of the road due to road works. The beach road at Torquay was a lovely sight with the ocean giving the swimmers a taste of summer and warm sunshine for the last few times this year. A lot of dogs were taking their carers walks and sniffs. Most of the carers were on leashes and not misbehaving at all.

From the beach area we headed to the chocolate and ice-cream place, where Ray Matthews and I had ice-screams while the rest of the group had coffee and lots of other goodies. We all went home in different directions from there but all agreed it was a good day out.

The participants were;

Ray van Galen	1986 Honda Shadow.
Doug Thomas	Modified 750 Yamaha café racer, just back on the road.
Manuel Vella	BSA/Fiat motorbike.
Ray Matthews	500 Tipple air cooled Suzuki.
Judith Matthews	Red Ford Capri.
Bernie & Jean Ellison	Land Rover.
Merv Baum	1994 W124 Mercedes.
Bernie Turner	Ford Laser.

We will do it all again next starting summer.

- Ray van Galen.

VALE
ROBERT (BOB) BAUER

Bob passed away on the 14th April surrounded by his loving family. He served on our Club Committee and was Assistant Secretary, followed by a 3-year term as Club Secretary, commencing in 1979. Bob's vehicle interests were Trojan vehicles, including an unusual underfloor engined car, and a truck which he often used for everyday transport. He was a keen collector of all manner of memorabilia, which became his main passion in recent years. We extend our sympathy to Pam and the family.

VALE - IAN MCINTYRE

We record the passing on 24 April of Ian McIntyre, a former very active member of our club. Ian served on the Club Committee, with a term as the Program Director in the 1980's. Ian and his late wife Barbara rallied in a vintage Morris sedan. We extend our sympathy to his loving family.

.- Trevor Schneider

Quotes About Cars

You are sitting in the passenger seat - don't touch my perfectly positioned vents!

Three blondes were driving to Disney World: The sign said 'Disney World Left,' so they started crying, turned around and drove home.

~ Author Unknown

SOME AUTOMOTIVE FIRSTS From "*I Love Old Cars and Transport Stories*"

- by Frank Rodwell OBE* (*over bloody eighty)

The first automobile race in the U.S. was organised by the Chicago Times-Herald in 1895. It began on Thanksgiving Day, 28 November, and ran from Chicago to Evansville and return, a distance of 56 miles over snow covered roads. There were more than 90 expressions of interest to compete when first advertised but only six vehicles made it to the starting line.

They were - the Duryea Motorwagon; Mr Mueller's Benz from Mannheim; Morris & Salom - Electric; De La Vergne Refrigeration Machine Co; Sturges - Electric; and a motorcycle with an engine built into the rear wheel.

The Benz was the first away at 8.55 am. The Duryea came in first at 7.18 pm while the Benz struggled in second at 8.53 pm. They were the only vehicles to finish.

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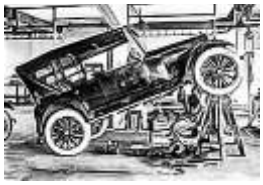
The first female race car driver was Madame Laumaille who took pan in the Marseilles to Nice race of 1898. Driving a De Dion-Bouton tricycle in the 2-day event, she won her section and came in fourth overall. Another was Madame du Gast in a big Benz. She was the only female driver among the 314 entrants in the 1908 Paris to Madrid race, which was cancelled after a number of contestants and spectators were killed or injured during the first day of the 3-day event.

****

The first circuit specially made for car racing was at Aspendale Park in Melbourne. Entrepreneur, James Robert Crooke, converted the old horse racecourse to suit cars. On 29 January 1904, under the auspice of The Automobile Club of Victoria, the first race was won by Crooke, driving a 4.5 hp 1902 Locomobile.

- contributed by Fred Harris



Stories From the Shed

The TR7

When one espies a road test of the Triumph TR7 saying unequivocally and happily that it has all the interior comforts of a sedan and, what's more, drives like one, then one can only weep for past glories.

How are the mighty fallen! How far this fellow has descended into the depths of compromise! In this Year Of Our Lud he not only accepts that awful looking 10-year-old mess of metal afterbirth as a sports car, but attributes to it qualities of sedan comfort and handling! Ten year ago, you would have been horse-whipped – and a jolly good thing too.

Not that I carry any brief for Triumphs. In fact, I try not to carry anything for Triumphs at all, apart from a faint sneer. They did build a passably good car in the TR2 and TR3 [why was there never a TR1 chaps; perhaps they built it and someone said: "OK, that's a good try: 16 points and a purple certificate and try again"?]. However, after that the Triumph became a noisy, rough, treacherous parody of a sports car, with strange suspension that leaped about all over the place, aided by a body that flexed and creaked, as to a windjammer rounding the Horn.

But if you are so dense as to require further advice on how far the motor car has fallen, look only at the TR7 and the Fiat X1/9, today's version of memorable sports cars like the Healey 100/4 and the Triumph TR2s and Swallow Dorettis and even – yes, even – the original 1600 Datsun Fairlady. The bloody Triumph probably doesn't even leak.

This is neither the time or the place to launch into an analysis of what-is-a-sports-car. Far more qualified observers than yr hmble svt can do that, and have. You only have to read the daily blatts to discover that the sports car has nearly disappeared. Why? Because years ago, children, anything with a soft top was always described by the newspapers, those sacred wellsprings of all good literature, as "a high-powered sports car". In an accident report, a poor little bug-eye Mark 1 Sprite, being driven around a roundabout desperately at 60km/h and T-boned by a Mack truck, is described as "a high-powered sports car that got out of control". So even the papers know the sports cars have disappeared. Either that, or the journos are at a loss to know whether to classify a Porsche Turbo as a sports car, or a high-powered continental sedan, or whatever. We shall find out the next time a Porsche Turbo is T-boned at a roundabout by a Datsun 120Y.

Speaking of Datsun 120Ys [choke, gag, grit teeth] ; a Gay Young Thing [he was really very nice] told me the other day that he had brought a sports car. Now, I am always very careful not to let people know that I have anything to do with cars or know anything at all about them, because they are liable to descend upon me with shrieks and flutters and flappings, demanding to know what's the best car to buy. When I tell them a well - cared-for Riley, they sort of go glazed about the features and back away, talking to other people behind their hands, with the whites of their eyes darting in my direction.

Anyway, the Gay Young Thing told me his sports car was a Datsun 120Y and it was simply soopah. Owning a Datsun `120Y must be a bit like buying guinea pigs as pets; they seem like a good idea at the time, but after a few days they stink.

Anyway and howsoever, I only tell you that dreary tale because so many of today's younger buyers really have no idea at all what makes a Proper car. Just let me say that I'm not prepared to compromise.

Of course, not enough people went to Phillip Island historic meeting. There they would have seen the finest collection of Proper Cars ever assembled in Australia – not just the cars that were racing, but those in the spectator areas. But having been to another historic meeting since, and with another coming up, I must emphasise that if you are old enough to remember Proper Cars, and have friends or relatives too young to have ever seen them, take them along.

There in the spectator parking areas you will see the Alvises and Lagondas and Rileys and Rovers, Sunbeam-Talbots and Bristols, Healey Fours and Jaguars, BMW 328s, Delahayes, Amstrong Siddeleys Star Sapphires, and even – if you are very lucky and stay very still – a Cord or a Duesenberg.

If you are equally lucky you will not see a single Japanese car.

Dismissing all this as the dribblings of a senile old car freak would be easy, except that I don't think too many readers of SCW own Datsun 120Ys. Really, it's not a giant nostalgia trip or that dreary reprise about They Don't Buildem Like They Useta. They probably build [as in construct] them better. But they've taken all the uncertainty out of motoring. These days, if you start out to drive across the Nullarbor, you start with the absolute certainty that you will get there without the car giving a single problem. What ever happened to wheel rims that would crack asunder if you drove too hard, tyres that lasted until the canvas showed through, bug deflectors that didn't work, vacuum-operated windscreen wipers that stopped when you accelerated, drum brakes that turned every emergency stop into an eyeball with your Maker, unsynchronised first gear, handbrakes so far away under the dash that to reach them in an emergency you had to fling yourself horizontal, gloveboxes that fell open every time you accelerated, knobs on steering wheels to help you make seven turns lock-to-lock, wide clip-on whitewalls you could rip up against a kerb, fuel gauges that mooned vaguely about between E and F, and all the other romance? Gone, that's what.

Just like the sports car.

Yesterday my daughter brought home these guinea pigs, you see, and . . .

Romsey Quints. SPORTS CAR WORLD 1978.

(contributed by Graham Pretlove in 2019

FOR SALES, WANTED & CLUES

For Sale:

Peugeot 1956 403 Sedan. Light green early model with good history. No rust. Believed to be the oldest in Victoria. Often seen at car shows. Connection to the 56 Olympics. One owner 32 years. Sold due to ill health. Original engine – no 2579773X. Club reg CH 3201. Original plates available (GJ-483). $13,000 ONO. Club car. Call Colin 5248 4417. **6/21**

****

Buick Special 1938. Excellent condition. Not driven for some years. Purchased in SA. Motor rebuilt. New pistons. Head replaced. Gearbox serviced. New radiator. Rewired. New 6 volt battery. Chrome motor parts. Steering wheel replaced (some cracks). Tyres good. No rust. Club reg CH 4567.

Original SA & Vic number plates included in sale (SA reg no 287: Vic reg no 262-655. Asking $40,000 for the car & $20,000 for the number plates. Call Lyle 5243 2494. **6/21**

****

4 x 14 inch 4 stud alloys & Michelin 185/14 tyres (80% tread). Suit Peugeot 504, 505 or 604 & Subaru Brumby. Includes 16 brand new wheel nuts and new spare hub caps to suit. $350. (Bought and refurbished for my SA trip in the Brumby but the tyres were too big.) Call Jon 0417 311 441. **6/21**

For sale/wanted ads are free to Members and generally appear for **two issues** of *Backfire*. To remove advertisements from the newsletter earlier, email **editor@wdhvcgeelong.com** (Ph 0417 311 441).

Reminder: All vehicles in the "For Sales" must have VIN number & Price or Registration Number & Price, otherwise they will be listed under "Clues". Ads for the 'Clues' section must not refer to any payment that may take place by mentioning an amount or 'best offer', etc.

All ads for cars also appear on the **club web site** where greater detail and photos (where supplied) can be viewed. To see ads, go to http://www.wdhvcgeelong.com/wdsale.html

All ads remain on the website until you request their removal. To remove an ad from the website, email webmaster@wdhvcgeelong.com (Ph 0418 587 415).

Club Activities

Club activities are being resumed carefully. The committee continues to monitor the situation.

Red Plate registration renewals. Contact Gus Shea directly to arrange for your paperwork to be signed, so you can get it to VicRoads well before it falls due. Ph Gus on 0400 203 151.

Backfire

Keep up the good work and maintain the flow of interesting and varied stories, to fit around the minutes, reports and event calendars.

Website

Check it out at www.wdhvcgeelong.com

28 JUNE- MONDAY
JULY *BACKFIRE* DEADLINE.
Jon 0417 311 441.

The views/comments expressed in the publication of this newsletter are those of the individual contributor and are not necessarily endorsed by the current Committee of the Club. Whilst every care is taken to determine the safety of any technical information provided and the accuracy of the information supplied for inclusion in this newsletter, it is printed in good faith and neither the Committee nor the Club accept any responsibility for any loss or injury incurred by any application of such information.

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Backfire

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1938 Buick Special

June 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31 May	**1**	**2**	**3** Morning Coffee Run 10am Clubrooms	**4**	**5**
6	**7**	**8** General Meeting 7.30pm	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**
13	**14**	**15** Committee Meeting	**16** Ladies Day 10.15am Clubrooms	**17** Tinker Day 10.30am Clubrooms	**18**	**19**
20 Meredith Lunch Run 11.30am Clubrooms	**21**	**22** Craft/Tech Night. 7pm Clubrooms	**23**	**24**	**25**	**26**
27	**28** July 2021 *Backfire* Deadline	**29**	**30**	1 July	2 *Backfire* folding morning 9am Clubrooms	3

COVID All events are subject to Covid 19 rules current at the time.
EXTREME WEATHER (including Total Fire Bans) A club event may be cancelled on extreme weather days. If an extreme weather day is predicted members should either: check the club website; check their emails; or contact the event organiser.