

BACKFIRE



Volume 55 No 7 November 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

Hi all

At long last things are looking up and we are starting to move out of Covid restrictions. The 80% fully vaccinated restriction reductions come in on Friday 29 November at 6pm. This means we can start planning to get our regular events back on schedule.

Firstly we have the coffee picnic morning at Turtle Bend near Teesdale on Thursday 4 November at 10:30am. This will be a great opportunity for people to catch up and celebrate the start of the path back to more freedom. I know there are a lot of people keen to have an outing and we should have a big attendance.

After that we will have a 90% fully vaccinated date about 24 November. This will then allow fully vaccinated people a lot more freedom and allow the Club to schedule most, if not all, our usual events. Although we still can't have a November club night, the Committee will be able to review the details and plan the future schedule at its November meeting.

We will even be able to have a club night in December. There is a requirement for the Club to have a Covid Check in Marshall and also to check that everyone attending is double vaccinated. If you haven't done so yet it would be a great idea to get it done. I'm sure everyone is looking forward to more normality and certainty about future events. I know I am.

Recently, editor Jon sent out a note about electric vehicles and more specifically the opportunity for older vehicles. It talked about a lot of interest in older vehicles being converted to electric power.

I have also been following a company in Melbourne who are doing conversions to old Land Rovers. The company is called Jaunt Motors and they take old Land Rovers and start with restoring the 60 year old vehicles to make sure they can last another 60 years.

At the same time they include some upgrades like electric power steering, disc brakes, parabolic springs and modern electrical upgrades to make them better than original.

The result is a vehicle that is faster, quieter, more comfortable and easier to drive but looks and has all the character of an old Land Rover, including full 4x4 capability. They can even have a range of up to 400km. How good is that! They are not cheap but the interest is huge and they are booked out doing conversions until 2023.

Maybe there is a future for zero emissions and old vehicles.

- David Mitchell

**KEEP LEFT
UNLESS
OVERTAKING**



A habit that sets my temperature gauge climbing is other drivers who travel slowly in the right lane. Closely followed by those who pass me at 115kph then slow to 95 immediately after they have pulled in front of me. And I am sure I am not the only motorist irritated by these "endearing" bad habits.

Former Wheels editor, Bill Tuckey, moonlighted as the acerbic motoring journalist, Romsey Quints, writing in various car mags in the 1970s. Past club member, Graham Pretlove contributed the following piece by Quints in 2019. It expresses my frustration beautifully.

I was drinking the other day in my local hostelry with my friends Don Hogg and Sam Orr. Hogg is best described as a retired failed punter who has been trying to be a sex maniac for 40 years but keeps failing the physical; Orr is an evil, lecherous, Rabelaisian throwback with all the lofty social philosophy of a Ugandan shop steward. That they are both superb writers, certainly in the first dozen or so in Australia, is vindication only of their extraordinary good taste in choosing me as a drinking companion – that, and the fact that I had money in my pocket, and they were in their customary economic condition. [They have collectively put seven bank managers into the loony bin and caused 11 credit managers to apply for the dole, but that's another tale, for another time of telling.]

Anyway, howsoever, and all that, one of them asked me if the Triffids were still alive. Long-term faithful readers of mine [thanks, Aunty Maude and Granma] will remember that in SPORTS CAR WORLD in the mid-'60s I exposed the pernicious, vicious malaise of Triffidism.

(Quints applied a different meaning to the plants that took over in John Wyndham's science fiction novel. He coined the use of the word "Triffid" to describe vegetables at the wheel.- Ed)

Gentle reader, they impose speed limits on every piece of road in Australia save the driveway up to your front door, invented the sign they put at the start of all divided road sections: SLOW VEHICLES KEEP LEFT. Now, any fool knows that there is no such thing in Australia as a SLOW VEHICLE or – oh shock, - a SLOW DRIVER; Jack's-as-good-as-his-master-and-no-bugger's gonna-tell-me-I'm-slower-than-him. So the result is that everyone stays over to the right and you, stupid, who wants to go a little quicker find yourself bombing down the left-hand lane in greasy drizzle at dusk with boat trailers and caravans and wackers in Kombi campers and travelling salesmen and Aunt Myrtle all over there in the right-hand lane, just waiting to pull over onto you without signaling.

Oh, they do all the other things, like parking across your driveway, opening their doors on your paintwork, sitting behind you on high beam, and putting an L-plater into peak-hour traffic.

Pedestrians have learned that you simply cross any road anywhere there's a gap, they stream like suicidal lemming across in front of you against DON'T WALK and have colossal gall to get upset and shake fists and umbrellas at you when you blow the horn at them. Of course, Triffid pedestrians know very well that if a driver hits them and kills them then the driver is very liable to be charged with manslaughter, zebra crossing or not. Which is very comforting to a dead pedestrian.



MG CAR CLUB VICTORIA
Venue of the first Victorian & Australian Hillclimb Championship 1935
Clintons Road Christmas Hills

30th Anniversary

ROB ROY HISTORIC & CLASSIC HILLCLIMB

28 NOV 2021

NEW DATE

INCORPORATING THE ANNUAL VSCC VINTAGE EVENT
SHOWCASING A VARIETY OF CLASSIC VEHICLES

SUBJECT TO COVID REQUIREMENTS

Competition Commences 9.30am
Competition Entries available at Motorsport Australia Entry System
or manually via robroyhillclimb.com.au

Full catering provided by Panton Hill CFA
who will receive all catering proceeds

Admission - Single Entry \$10 or \$20 Full Car

General Enquiries
Event Director - Wayne Rushton 0412 339 934
Competition - John Kelso 0417 398 606




October Dine Out



With limited numbers allowed, 20 members met at the Clifton Springs Golf Club on Wednesday 13 October for a rather quick meal in the marquee outside.

There was another sitting after us, so it was quickly order and eat and leave.

While there we learned that Ray Matthews had recently turned 88 years young and he and Judith have celebrated 60 years together.

Congratulations to you both.

- Rod Booley



1935 Jaguar SS90

The Haircut

A teenage boy had just passed his driving test and inquired of his father as to when they could discuss his use of the car.

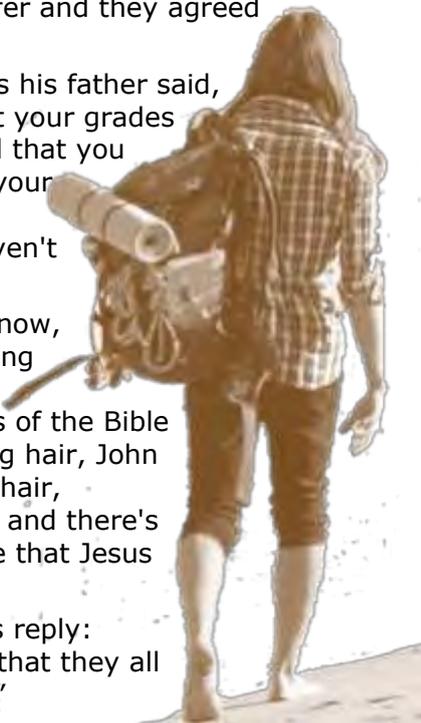
The father offered his son the following deal. "You bring your grades up from a C to a B average, study your Bible a little and get your hair cut. Then we'll talk about the car."

The boy thought about that for a moment, decided he'd settle for the offer and they agreed on it.

After about six weeks his father said, "Son, you've brought your grades up and I've observed that you have been studying your Bible, but I'm disappointed you haven't had your hair cut."

The boy said, "You know, Dad, I've been thinking about that, and I've noticed in my studies of the Bible that Samson had long hair, John the Baptist had long hair, Moses had long hair, and there's even strong evidence that Jesus had long hair."

Got to love the Dad's reply: "Did you also notice that they all walked everywhere?"



COMMITTEE MEETING

Main points from the Committee meeting held on 19 October 2021.

- ◇ MG Car Club invitation for President to attend opening of new facilities delayed to 12 Dec.
- ◇ Austin 7 Car Club visit postponed to 2022, due to Covid.
- ◇ VicRoads confirmed changes to the club permit scheme.
- ◇ Federation confirmed cancellation of Bendigo Swap.
- ◇ Graham & Pearl Rose are hosting a swap at Colac Showground on 14 Nov 2021 and The Barwon Valley Activities Centre on 11 Dec 2021.
- ◇ New Club business cards ready for next year.
- ◇ One car added to permit system in the last month. One member caught without logbook signed and fined \$807.
- ◇ Discussion of what events can be held. Decided on coffee morning at Turtle Bend in Teasdale, Thursday 4 Nov. Also potential caravan weekend at the Cumberland River in November (TBC).
- ◇ In light of changing Covid restrictions, agreed to register the Club for it's own QR code, to be used at events away from clubrooms. Also recognised need for a designated Covid check in marshal and vaccination proof for club events.
- ◇ Will investigate an outdoor club Christmas & registration meal if COVID allows.
- ◇ Need to review the values of the contents of the club rooms, and amend Club's contents insurance cover if needed.

- James Park

(No October General Meeting was held, due to Covid restrictions. - Ed)

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Letters to the Editor

Hello from Tassie

We've been here three months already, can you believe it! The time has gone so quickly but we have certainly fitted in a lot in that short time. We were meant to be back to Victoria a couple of times by now but COVID put a stop to that. Tasmania is VERY strict with border restrictions so while we may have been able to leave, we wouldn't have been able to return.

The renovations that we wanted to do before we moved into our house took a lot longer than expected. What we thought would take a few days to remove vinyl tiles that had been glued to the concrete, actually took a couple of weeks. And it was bloody hard work!

Meanwhile, in the middle of all that, the removal company wanted us to collect the Dodge from storage ... we weren't ready for that. The tiler needed us to finish ripping up the vinyl so he could lay the new tiles but everything had to stop so we could make room for the Dodge and then collect it. Nothing was going to plan.

In the meantime we bought a cheap bed so we could sleep in the house instead of paying for accommodation. We needed a spare bed anyway so that worked out ok. Living without a fridge was not much fun though. We finally got to really move in a month after we got here.

We have joined the Veteran Car Club of Australia (Tasmania) and met a few of the members. They have made us feel very welcome. We had a tour of their Club Rooms and very well equipped workshop. They also have a Store room where they store and sell a fairly comprehensive collection of parts for member's cars. We're going on our first run with them in a couple of weeks.

Without restrictions here we have been out exploring a fair bit. It's just so pretty down here. When it snowed a few weeks ago we couldn't resist going for a short drive to get up close. We also went to Table Cape to the Tulip Festival...just magnificent. We've been to so many parks and gardens and recently went on a Tamar River Cruise. There's so much to see and do. Needless to say, not much has been happening to the Dodge and Teena hasn't been getting any patchwork done either.

I have however bought myself a new toy ... an S Series Valiant. It's being shipped down from Sydney and should arrive mid November. More on that later.

I sent our newsletter editor some photos of a car show which was held here in Westbury. It was a great turnout, I hope you enjoy them. More photos have been included on our website and can be accessed by clicking a [Tassie Map](#) on the website's home page.

We've also heard of a birthday celebration and a pretty special wedding anniversary.

Congratulations Ray and Judith. Well done both of you.

Letters to the Editor

We miss you all and when restrictions ease between borders we hope to see you again soon.

Best wishes from us both

Regards

Damien and Teena

The Westbury Car Show



A few of Damien's Westbury Rally photos.

Go to the club website for lots more [Tassie Events](#)

Mystery Car Identified

Jon,

The very interesting October Backfire Lancia article included a photo on page 11 with the intrepid motorists and their dog.

I believe that the car is a Buick Master Six from 1926 to 1928. Both 1925 and 1929 had distinguishing features not displayed in the photo. Master six headlights had the second nickel rim shown.

I have a 1926 Standard Six with the smaller engine.

Leigh (Dwyer)



Letters to the Editor

I Think I Have Seen Them All



I heard a very distinctive sound well before I saw it. Then Simon Anderson appeared and chuffed easily up our steep hill in his newly restored single cylinder veteran – the 1910 Brush. It was a lovely sunny day and the brass lights and radiator surround were shining. I was amazed that the brass surround was original, with the embossed name – Brush – standing out.

An interesting little car – hickory chassis and axles and wooden spoked wheels, and three-quarter inch chain drive on each back wheel. I was not really aware of chain drives in the early days of the club, but I do remember Robert Bauer's single cylinder Trojan with a single chain.

Ray van Galen, Ray and I welcomed this little gem and much discussion ensued. From a pile of bits and a very clever Simon, this little veteran was built over many hours. The seats were half made and with a few helpers, and his remarkably preserved Brush manuals that gave minute details, all contributed to this restoration.

Ray's newly restored 1925 Riley, nearly finished 1929 Scott, half restored Sunbeam and almost finished Vincent were all examined. It was a most pleasant and special way to spend an afternoon with friends.

The Brush started very easily, with the handle wound anticlockwise then left in place, whereas the Nash handle winds clockwise and is removed, or you get a broken hand. A few slight lever adjustments and what an exciting sound when she started. It was a treat to see it on one of its first outings.

Looking through club records I was surprised just how many veterans we had. Amongst the 34 different makes of cars, trucks and motorcycles listed there were four Dodges, nine T-models and seven Talbots, and all pre-1919. Now we only have about 14 vehicles – where are all the others? There were 77 over the early years. Just to name a few unusual makes such as De Dion, Scat, Chater Lee, Day Elder, FN, Hotchkiss, Leon Bolle and Mors.

Most have disappeared, so it was good to see a renewed, very old vehicle; and a 14-year-old boy was astounded to see it motor away.

- Judith Matthews

Letters to the Editor

A Sunday Spin

Sunday morning and it's going to be a nice day, so out with our faithful motorbike and sidecar (which was only put on club plates just last month, which I must say is a privilege). With our trusted GPS with all coordinates punched in, we head off, having our border collie Sky in the boot, thermos and lunch organised, its off through Barwon Heads.

The day is a little brisk yet, but not cold, and before long we are on Cape Otway Road enjoying the lush green grass. In every paddock sheep have their heads down, enjoying the feed alongside cute little lambs learning how to also munch on this abundance of grass. The sheer spectacle of undulating green hills with the smell of freshness surrounds us. Doesn't matter how many times you go on the same road it always has something different to look at and enjoy.

Suddenly I really feel the urge and I tap Peter on the leg and make a sign for him that I require stop. Okay he says. Off up one hill yet down another and my mind now needs to concentrate on something else as its taking quite a while. What shall I cook for tea? Did I bring in the washing? And so it goes for some time, hoping I will make it.

There we are nearly in Winchelsea, gloves off, helmet next, but wait, I have to get out of this and get there yet: oh how I'm hoping (please). Amazing how at this age we are so content with just the minor things of life.

Inverleigh for lunch and the place is very busy with other motorbikes and folk in their cars having picnic lunches. So we decide to go where it's quieter, not wanting to be around so many people just yet! Teesdale next, heading to Bamganie and that was our next mistake, as it was a corrugated dirt road that our faithful GPS sent us on. I'm sure she (Kerry) sits up in her satellite and decides to take folk to where ever she desires.

My teeth are chattering with all this up and down over and over for such a long way. Silly me, all I had to do was put them in my pocket.

Finding the memorial for fallen war heroes was an emotional find, but so glad we did.

It was a great day.

- Barbara Hamann



Further advice will be sent by email. (Please pass on to those without email addresses.)

Friday 29 October Backfire folding morning 9am Clubrooms. Contact: Peter Telfer 0427 526 938

Thursday 4 November, Coffee run to Turtle Bend, Teesdale. Meet on site at 10.30am. BYO everything or coffee and snacks available at the Teesdale Store, a couple of hundred metres away. See you all there. **(Check in with the Club Covid Marshall upon arrival please)** 
Contact: Rod Booley 5281 5340 (0417 021 982)

Tuesday 9 November General Meeting-- NOT able to be held due to Covid restrictions (but December is looking hopeful!).

Tuesday 16 November Committee Meeting 7.30pm in clubrooms.

Monday 29 November December Backfire Deadline 5pm.
Contact: Jon Breedveld 0417 311 441

Dine Outs TBC Contact: Sharyn 0417 546 089.



Gary's Giggles Tall Tales from our Legendary Librarian

Do you remember dear," said the old woman to her husband on the 60th anniversary. "How 60 years ago tonight, in this very room, you didn't even give me time to take off my shawl before you started making wild, passionate love to me?"

"Yes dear, I remember," the old bloke replied in a quavering, wavering voice. "But the way I feel now, you'd have time to knit one."

A university lecturer asked her students to describe in a page or less the difference between ignorance and apathy. She was forced to give an A+ to the student to replied, "I don't know and I don't care."

A pretty teacher had taken over the class.

"How old he reckoned she is?" said young Bruce.

"Don't know. But if we can get her knickers off, we'll know."

"How come?"

"Well, on the back of mine it says 8 to 10 years."

An ant and an elephant got married despite the advice of their friends. During intercourse the elephant died of a heart attack and the ant said,

"Dammit, five minutes of passion. Now a lifetime digging the grave."

A bloke wanted to go to Surfer's Paradise for a holiday but he had a problem – his pet cat. So he asked the bloke next door to look after it. At the end of the first week he rang the neighbour from Surfer's and asked, "How's my cat?"

"Dead."

The bloke was deeply shocked by the news and when he recovered, complained to the neighbour about how he had presented him with the bad news.

"You should have been more subtle, and said, "Your cat's on the roof and we can't get it down. Ring back tomorrow". Then when I rang back the second day you could have said, "The cat fell off the roof and we took it to the vet".

And on the third day you could have broken it to me gently that the cat had died. Then it wouldn't have come such a terrible, terrible shock.

Incidentally, how's my mother?"

"She's on the roof and we can't get down..."

What you call a blind dinosaur?

Do you think he saw us?

What do you call a fly without wings?

A walk.



Stories From the Shed



PIONEER MOTORING WOMEN

Last month's *Backfire* featured a story about two remarkable pioneer female motorists, Jean Robertson and Kathleen Howell. The story related how a casual discussion during afternoon tea, in 1932 led to three women driving across Australia, through Asia and on to the Monte Carlo Rally and finally England. Robertson and Howell were two of these women: another motoring pioneer, Joan Richmond, was the third. This month we explore a little more of Richmond's achievements, which parallel those of her companions.

Joan Richmond (1905 – 1999)

In 1932 champion race car driver Joan Richmond made history as the first Australian woman to win a major motor-racing title. She also achieved the first overland car journey from Australia to England and competed in the Monte Carlo Rally.

Born in 1905 in Cooma, New South Wales, Joan Richmond grew up on a farm in rural Victoria and was educated at St Catherine's School in Toorak, leaving at the end of 1923. She showed a keen interest in horses, but her ambition to become a jockey was halted when women were banned from competing in horseracing.

Richmond's love for motorsports was sparked in 1926, when she bought a Citroën 5CV and drove with her mother from Victoria to her brother's property on the Queensland and Northern Territory border.

She began to compete in local club-level motoring events such as hill-climbs and sprints, pursuing the thrill of racing and competition wherever she could. There were few sports which allowed women to compete alongside men, but local car clubs wanted to encourage membership as few people owned cars. After she won her class in a Geelong hill climb event, a Melbourne Riley dealer spotted her. As a result she moved to a Riley 9.



Richmond and Molly Shaw, with the Riley they drove in the 1931 Australian Grand Prix

In 1931, on her 26th birthday, Richmond competed in her first major event in the Riley, at the Australian Grand Prix at Phillip Island. She placed fifth and began to garner a name for herself.

Monte Carlo Rally

In the book *Joan Richmond - from Melbourne to Monte Carlo and Beyond*, by David Price, Richmond recounts her preparation for the Monte Carlo Rally like this:

"The Riley factory representative in Melbourne was Bernie Beatson, a Scot in his 30s, who had been sent to Australia by Victor Riley to demonstrate cars. He was, I suppose, really a sales representative, although to some extent in those gentlemanly days of motoring, cars rather sold themselves."

"One day Bertie asked me if I would drive out with him along the Sydney Road and meet two young Englishmen, Shipham and Dickson, who were, with Victor Riley's approval, driving a Riley around the world. We met them out on the road and as part of their welcome, Bertie suggested having a dinner together. This spurred me to arrange a cocktail party, the thing in those days, at the Oriental Hotel in Collins Street. Most of the girls that I knew weren't interested in cars or were busy, but I wanted to have some women present, so I invited Jean Robertson and Kathleen Howell, who I had met racing at Aspendale. They were an almost inseparable pair, about my age and very interested in motoring, especially long-distance driving. I didn't know them very well, but I did know that they had driven their Lancia to Western Australia and to Darwin."

"So we all met and talked and someone brought up the subject of the Monte Carlo Rally. None of us had ever seen the rules and we naively thought that the winner was the person who came from the furthest away. Someone said, "if you start from Australia, no one can get much further away than that"



Jean Robertson, Joan Richmond & Kath Howell in their "Cesarine" tailored riving suits.



Stories From the Shed



PIONEER MOTORING WOMEN

and so you would be sure to win. I said "let's ask Victor Riley if we can have some cars," and then there and then, Bertie drafted a cable to Victor Riley and got the hotel to send it off. In the still light of day next morning, I thought "oh my God, what a silly thing to do!" However Victor Riley must have taken it in good part, because he cabled back, saying "yes, take three cars from stock."

Joan recounts that she and Bertie Beatson would be one crew, Jean and Kathleen the second, while the third car was piloted by a man named Pat Morice. At the insistence of the Shell Oil Company, a chaperone was included for the women. Jean and Kath found a Mrs Coldham, a Melbourne woman in her mid-40s. She didn't drive and would travel as a passenger with Pat Morice.



Robertson, Richmond, Beatson, Morice, Howell and Coldham

Victor Riley ordered three Riley Nine chassis to be prepared in England for their expedition, however they didn't arrive in Australia in time, so three stock chassis were secured locally, with a Mr Thomas of Elite building the body for Richmond's car and James Flood building the other two. The cars were subsequently christened *The Bellbird*, *The Wattle Bird* and *The Kookaburra* (AKA *Jacko* - short for *Jackass*, a colloquial term for the bird).

Setting out on 15 August 1931 from Melbourne, they drove via Sydney and Brisbane to the Northern Territory. From Darwin the cars were shipped to Singapore, driven through the Malay Peninsula, shipped to Calcutta, driven across India, shipped to Iraq, driven across the Middle East through Jerusalem to Cairo, before finally being shipped to Italy.

This journey is credited as the very first international overland tour to have begun in Australia. After this feat, Richmond successfully completed the Monte Carlo Rally, covering 1,100 miles (or 1,770km) in 52 hours.

The group mostly paid their own way, though Shell and Dunlop supplied fuel, oil and tyres. Riley was impressed with the publicity drummed up by the tour and Richmond's growing reputation on the racing scene. He offered to sponsor her, enabling her to stay and compete in Europe.

Brooklands 1,000 Miles Race victory

In 1932, Richmond achieved her most extraordinary success, when she and her racing partner Elsie Wisdom took first place in the 1,000 Mile Race at Brooklands racing circuit in the United Kingdom — the only all-female racing team to compete in the event. They won in a Riley Nine, at 84.41mph, taking 12 hours 23 minutes and 53 seconds to complete the distance.

The first women to win a major motor-racing title, their success led to considerable media attention and enormous public acclaim. Richmond even received a telegram from American aviator Amelia Earheart, congratulating her on her Brooklands win. Richmond wrote in a letter to her mother:

"Isn't it all just too wonderful, even now I can hardly believe it. Do you realise we are the first women to win a long distance International race?"



Cup inscription: 'The First 1000 Miles Race organised by The Junior Car Club Brooklands June 3rd-4th 1932. Presented by Lord Wakefield of Hythe CBE to the Drivers of the Winning Car won by Mrs E M Wisdom and Miss Joan Richmond. Speed 84.41MPH.'

Teams and their cars. Note distinctive bodywork of Richmond's Riley, built by Mr Thomas of the Elite Motor Body Works, South Yarra. The James Flood works built the other two bodies. Photo outside the Riley Showrooms, London 1932.





Stories From the Shed

PIONEER MOTORING WOMEN



In 1933 she bought a 1921 Ballot that had previously been raced by Malcolm Campbell, but its age and poor reliability gave her little success. Richmond spent the following years in England and continued to participate in motor-racing events, including the Le Mans 24-Hour race and several more Monte Carlo rallies.

In England, Richmond met and fell in love with fellow motor-racer Maurice 'Bill' Bilney, and they were engaged to be married. In 1937 Bill was tragically killed when his car rolled during a 12-hour endurance race in which Richmond was his driving partner. Despite this loss Richmond continued to compete until the outbreak of World War Two in 1939.

Richmond returned to Australia in 1946. Although she competed in a few racing events, her profile wasn't as renowned in Australian motor-racing circles as it had been in Europe and England. In Australia, funding was limited and sponsorship was lacking and Richmond abandoned her motor-racing career. She turned towards animal welfare issues and worked in this field for the rest of her life. Joan Richmond died in 1999 in Melbourne.

Joan Richmond was a pioneer in motor sport, competing in seven Monte Carlo Rallies, two International Alpine Trials and two Le Mans 24 Hours races (including in 1935, driving an MG PA Midget #56 with co-driver Eva Gordon-Simpson).



Richmond in her Triumph, with some of her trophies. South Kensington 1936



Mrs Gordon Simpson and the young racing driver Joan Richmond sitting in the latter's 1921 3-litre GP Ballot racer, July 1934

Sources:

- ◇ The National Museum website - Joan Richmond collection | National Museum of Australia nma.gov.au
- ◇ St Catherine's School website - [Joan Richmond - St Catherines School](#)
- ◇ Wikipedia
- ◇ Joan Richmond - from Melbourne to Monte Carlo and Beyond", by David Price 2011.

NOTE: the WDHVC library has a copy of this book – well worth a read if you want more details of this remarkable woman. – Ed.

Photos:

- ◇ Victorian State Library. The notes, name the three women and their Rileys. These photos were donated by Kathleen Howell (Gardener) – Ed.
- ◇ "Joan Richmond - from Melbourne to Monte Carlo and Beyond", by David Price, 2011.
- ◇ Pinterest



Stories From the Shed



THE HISTORY OF THE CAR RADIO

THE HISTORY OF THE CAR RADIO

Seems like cars have always had radios, But they didn't. Here's the story.

One evening in 1929, two young men named William Lear and Elmer Wavering drove their girlfriends to a lookout point high above the Mississippi River town of Quincy, Illinois, to watch the sunset.

It was a romantic night to be sure, but one of the women observed that it would be even nicer if they could listen to music in the car.

Lear and Wavering liked the idea. Both men had tinkered with radios (Lear served as a radio operator in the U.S. navy during World War I) and it wasn't long before they were taking apart a home radio and trying to get it to work in a car.

But it wasn't easy: automobiles have ignition switches, generators, spark plugs, and other electrical equipment that generates noisy static interference, making it nearly impossible to listen to the radio when the engine was running. One by one, Lear and Wavering identified and eliminated each source of electrical interference. When they finally got their radio to work, they took it to a radio convention in Chicago.

There they met Paul Galvin, owner of Galvin Manufacturing Corporation. He made a product called a "battery eliminator", a device that allowed battery-powered radios to run on household AC current.

But as more homes were wired for electricity, more radio manufacturers made AC-powered radios.

Galvin needed a new product to manufacture. When he met Lear and Wavering at the radio convention, he found it. He believed that mass-produced, affordable car radios had the potential to become a huge business. Lear and Wavering set up shop in Galvin's factory, and when they perfected their first radio, they installed it in his Studebaker.

Then Galvin went to a local banker to apply for a loan. Thinking it might sweeten the deal, he had his men install a radio in the banker's Packard. Good idea, but it didn't work. Half an hour after the installation, the banker's Packard caught on fire. (They didn't get the loan.)

Galvin didn't give up. He drove his Studebaker nearly 800 miles to Atlantic City to show off the radio at the 1930 Radio Manufacturers Association convention.

Too broke to afford a booth, he parked the car outside the convention hall and cranked up the radio so that passing conventioners could hear it. That idea worked – he got enough orders to put the radio into production.



WHAT'S IN A NAME?

That first production model was called the 5T71.

Galvin decided he needed to come up with something a little catchier. In those days many companies in the phonograph and radio businesses used the suffix "ola" for their names -Radiola, Columbiola, and Victrola were three of the biggest. Galvin decided to do the same thing, and since his radio was intended for use in a motor vehicle, he decided to call it the Motorola.

But even with the name change, the radio still had problems: when Motorola went on sale in 1930, it cost about \$110 uninstalled, at a time when you could buy a brand-new car for \$650, and the country was sliding into the Great Depression. (By that measure, a radio for a new car would cost about \$3,000 today.) In 1930, it took two men several days to put in a car radio. The dashboard had to be taken apart so that the receiver and a single speaker could be installed, and the ceiling had to be cut open to install the antenna.

These early radios ran on their own batteries, not on the car battery, so holes had to be cut into the floorboard to accommodate them. The installation manual had eight complete diagrams and 28 pages of instructions. Selling complicated car radios that cost 20 percent of the price of a brand-new car wouldn't have been easy in the best of times, let alone during the Great Depression. Galvin lost money in 1930 and struggled for a couple of years after that. But things picked up in 1933 when Ford began offering Motorola's pre-installed at the factory. In 1934 they got another boost when Galvin struck a deal with B.F. Goodrich Tyre Company to sell and install them in its chain of tyre stores.

THE HISTORY OF THE CAR RADIO

By then the price of the radio, with installation included, had dropped to \$55. The Motorola car radio was off and running. (The name of the company would be officially changed from Galvin Manufacturing to "Motorola" in 1947.)

In the meantime, Galvin continued to develop new uses for car radios. In 1936, the same year that it introduced push-button tuning, it also introduced the Motorola Police Cruiser, a standard car radio that was factory preset to a single frequency to pick up police broadcasts.

In 1940 he developed the first hand held two-way radio-- The Handy-Talkie for the US. army. A lot of the communications technologies that we take for granted today were born in Motorola labs in the years that followed World War II.

In 1947 they came out with the first television for under \$200. In 1956 the company introduced the world's first pager while in 1969 came the radio and television equipment that was used to televise Neil Armstrong's first steps on the Moon.

In 1973 it invented the world's first handheld cellular phone. Today Motorola is one of the largest mobile phone manufacturers in the world. And it all started with the car radio.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO the two men who installed the first radio in Paul Galvin's car? Elmer Wavering and William Lear, ended up taking very different paths in life. Wavering stayed with Motorola. In the 1950's he helped change the automobile experience again when he developed the first automotive alternator, replacing inefficient and unreliable generators. The invention lead to such luxuries as power windows, power seats, and, eventually, air-conditioning.

Lear also continued inventing. He holds more than 150 patents. Remember eight track tape players? Lear invented that. But what he's really famous for are his contributions to the field of aviation. He invented radio direction finders for planes, aided in the invention of the autopilot, designed the first fully automatic aircraft landing system, and in 1963 introduced his most famous invention of all, the Lear Jet, the world's first mass-produced, affordable business jet. (Not bad for a guy who dropped out of school after the eighth grade.)

Sometimes it is fun to find out how some of the many things that we take for granted actually came into being!

AND

It all started with a woman's suggestion!!

Source: [Car Radio, An Interesting Story - America in Uniform \(beliefnet.com\)](#)

- contributed by Ken Batson



**PUSH-BUTTON
NETWORK
TUNING**

**PUSH A BUTTON... GET YOUR
FAVORITE STATION *Automatically***

SOME AUTOMOTIVE FIRSTS

From *"I Love Old Cars and Transport Stories"*

- by Frank Rodwell OBE*

(*over bloody eighty)

In his early years as a professional golfer, Tiger Wood, was sponsored by Buick.

The biscuit maker, H. R. Arnott, purchased an, Australian-assembled, Innes car in 1904. Later he was fined ten shillings for driving down a Melbourne street at 13 mph.

What did the Australian-made cars Palm, Renown and Spark have in common? They were, in the main, assembled using Model T Ford parts.

Beginning in 1926, Maserati cars were made in Bologna by the six Maserati brothers, Carlo, Bindo, Alfien, Mario, Ettore, and Ernesto.

The RR logo on the radiators of Rolls-Royce cars was changed from red to black in 1930. It was not a mark of respect for the passing of Mr Royce, Black was considered not to clash with any other colour. Fredrick Henry Royce died in 1933.

The Flanders and E.M.F. cars were produced in Detroit, from 1908 to 1912, by Bryan Everitt, William Metzger and Walter Flanders. Everitt was manager of the Wayne Automobile Co. which also made bodies for Oldsmobile and Ford cars. The Wayne Auto Company was taken over by E.M.F in 1908. Metzger was the sales manager for Cadillac, while Flanders was factory manager for Ford. Flanders also set up the initial production line for the famous Model T Ford. Studebaker was the selling agent for Flanders and E.M.F cars and absorbed them 1912.

- contributed by Fred Harris



Stories From the Shed



PIONEER MOTORING WOMEN

Alice Anderson

A bit more about Alice Anderson, the woman in whose garage Jean Robertson worked (See also the story in *Backfire* October 2021). It seems that a number of women ventured into outback Australia in the 1920s to carve reputations as resourceful and capable pioneering motorists. Alice was one these. The book *A Spanner in the Works: The extraordinary story of Alice Anderson and Australia's first all-women garage*, by Loretta Smith, details how Alice and fellow member of Melbourne's exclusive Lyceum Club, Jessie Webb, braved the bush in an epic road trip. (Jessie Webb was a founding member of the Lyceum Club, previous president and the University of Melbourne's first female lecturer in the history department. The 46 year old Webb was an experienced traveller whose exploits included a 1922 jaunt across Africa from Cape Peninsula to Cairo.)

In 1926 the pair drove from Melbourne to Alice Springs in an Austin 7 that had been prepared in Alice's garage. They drove the tiny "Baby Austin" on a 4800km return trip over harsh country where roads didn't always exist. The production line car was known as the Baby Austin or "Chummy" for good reason: its wheelbase was only six foot three inches (190.5cm) with a narrow 40-inch (101.6cm) track. It weighed just 780 pounds (354kg) — just over half the weight of a Model T Ford.



Jessie Webb checks for a flat tyre on the road to Alice Springs, 1925

Both women had work commitments that allowed only six weeks for the trip. Roads were patchy at best and the engine radiated heat into the cabin, which made travel in daylight hours potentially scorching. Heading north from Adelaide, Alice navigated the Austin carefully, avoiding dangerous stretches of sandy soil and damaging rocks. To be stranded here could spell disaster. For anyone less prepared, it would have been extremely risky. They travelled off the beaten track but always kept the Overland Telegraph in their sights to aid navigation. They ran out of water and were low on food. Alice used her rifle to augment their supplies and they drank brackish bore water. When it did rain the desert burst into bloom, carpeted in wildflowers. They reached Oodnadatta after 14 days, then stayed with "Mrs A" at a desolate homestead near Charlotte Waters. She greeted her bedraggled guests with great

enthusiasm, inviting them to sit around her large kitchen table while she poured the best cup of tea the travellers had tasted in a long time. They found fresh water at Horseshoe Bend on the Finke River, having crossed very sandy terrain. Three weeks after starting out the women crossed through Heavitree Gap and on into Alice Springs. The trip was the first time such a journey was attempted in the smallest vehicle to come off a production line.

Postscript: Less than a week after her return, on September 17, 1926, Alice was fatally shot in the head at the rear of her garage in Kew. She was 29 years old. The coroner concluded she had accidentally shot herself while cleaning a revolver.

Sources:

- ◇ ABC News website
- ◇ National Motor Museum
- ◇ *A Spanner in the Works* by Loretta Smith, reviewed in *The Weekend Australian Magazine*, March 22, 2019



Alice Anderson's garage, Cotham Rd, Kew

FOR SALES, WANTED & CLUES

Wanted:

Cane/Wicker basket with lid. Max. size I am limited to is L 27" x W 14" x H 14".
also

Kingston 5 ball brass carburettor complete or parts. Call Simon 0414 482 241. **9/21**

Wanted:

Unique Cars magazine—June 1998.
Call Leigh 0468 763 054.

8/21

FOR SALES, WANTED & CLUES

Clues

Lions Christmas Cakes and Puddings – early bird offer. Covid 19 may make buying Lions Christmas Cakes and Puddings from regular retail outlets difficult. So lodge an early order for these delicious favourites! The quality, reputation and value for money of Lions Christmas cakes is a matter of public record – do not miss out.

Lions Christmas Puddings 900 grams - \$13

Lions Christmas Cakes 1 kg - \$13

Lions Christmas Cakes 1.5 kg - \$17

Place your orders and I will store them before contacting you to come to take delivery.

Call Brian Edward, 5222 6986 or 0492 852 164.



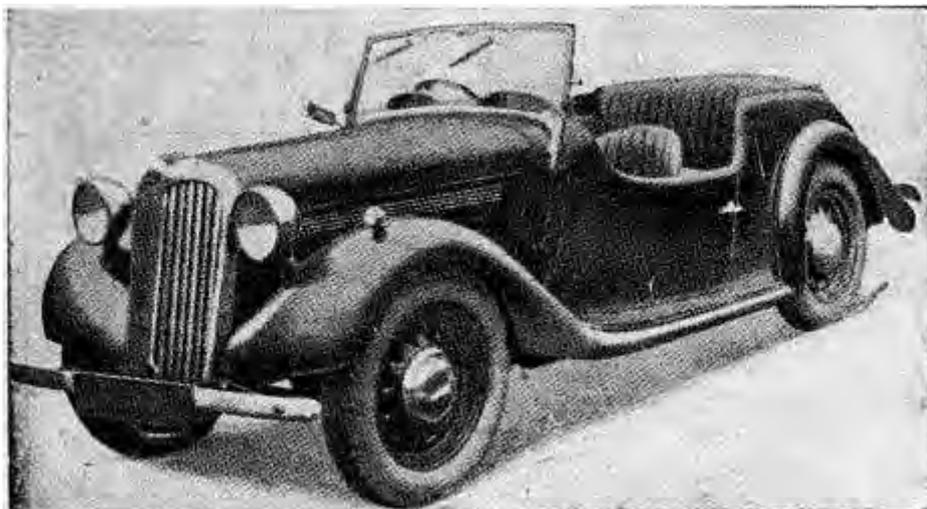
For sale/wanted ads are free to Members and generally appear for **two issues** of *Backfire*. To remove advertisements from the newsletter earlier, email editor@wdhvcgeelong.com (Ph 0417 311 441).

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).

—The Cars of 1950—



SINGER 9 ROADSTER.

£683

This sleek 4 A Series Singer incorporates an improved differential and a new four-speed gear box. It features the well-known Singer overhead camshaft valve gear and offers sleek lines, an imported body, and a performance for those with sporting blood. With all, it's a four seater very well finished throughout. All fittings being of the very highest quality. Price is £683. Exhibited by Devon Motors Pty. Ltd.

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Early bullnose Morris

November 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
24	25	26	27	28	29 Backfire folding morning 9am Clubrooms	30
COVID All events are subject to Covid 19 rules current at the time. Updates by will be sent by email.						
31 October	1	2	3	4 Coffee Morning. 10.30am Teesdale 	5	6
7	8	9 General Meeting 7.30pm	10	11	12	13
14	15	16 Committee Meeting	17 Dine Out	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
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.						
28	29 Backfire Deadline 5pm	30	1 December	2	3 December Backfire folding morning 9am Clubrooms	4