

# BACKFIRE



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Club meetings: 7.30pm 2<sup>nd</sup> 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

Nothing seems to surprise us this year as we continue in lockdown.

We did manage a Tinker day in August even if there wasn't much else. We had a great turn out for the soup line luncheon which had a lot more than soup. Well done to Barb and her helpers for a great day. As usual there was a lot of diverse items for the show and tell.

It really is going to be difficult to predict when events will be able to run again. In the meantime, Editor Jon will keep us informed and entertained together with plenty of member input and stories. It seems a great way to learn about what people are up to. So don't forget to keep the articles coming in to give Jon plenty to print.

I have continued to read more about electric vehicles and how they impact us in Australia. There is a thought that if we have an electric car in Victoria, instead of emissions coming out the tailpipe they will instead transfer to emissions from burning coal in the Latrobe Valley to make electricity.

There have been some studies done to see exactly how true this theory is. It turns out if you compare the full life cycle emissions which includes the manufacturing and energy per kilometre of an electric vehicle versus a petrol vehicle, in Victoria, the electric vehicle uses about 20% less emissions.

If you are in Tasmania or you have your EV charged from solar on your roof, then the EV uses about 88% less emissions. The EV produces more emissions in the manufacturing process but still manages to use less emissions overall. This will only get better in Victoria as we increase our proportion of renewable energy into the future.

So you can proudly drive your EV and feel good you are helping the environment.

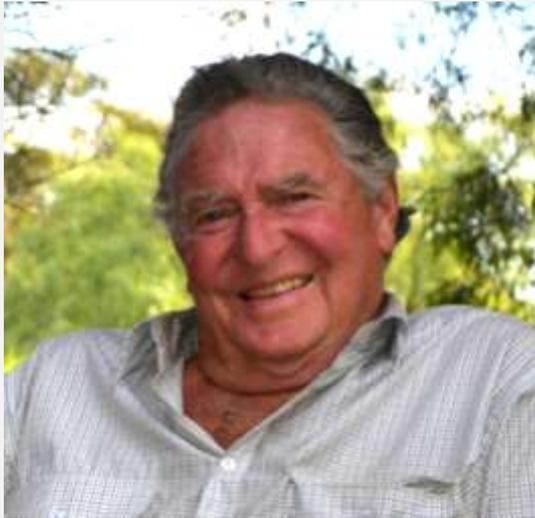
Stay well

- David Mitchell



"A 6,000 horse power gas steam engine. There are seven of these at Ford's." Postcards showing the Ford plant in 1917.

## VALE - JOHN PICCOLI "the Spanner Man"



Many people would know of "the Spanner Man". Our club has visited his impressive display near Boort at least twice. He was a very clever and imaginative person, having made many very large and small objects from spanners, welded together.

Two horses fighting, a bull, a shearer, marlin, a mermaid, horse & cart and many more – all larger-than-life.

He also had an aviary with colourful rare macaws and owned the billiard table of world champion Walter Lindrum, which we saw in his home.

It was a wonderful place to visit and we are very sorry to hear that he died this year. We often saw him in his wheelchair towing a trailer full of spanners at swap days. He and his works of art will be sadly missed. He gave much pleasure to many people.

Farewell the Spanner Man.

- Judith Matthews



### **Background from the Internet**

PICCOLI, John (The Spanner Man)

1941- 2021 Loving Husband of Sonia. Loving Father of Andrew, Ferena, Sophia and step father to Brigitte. Loving Pa of his 10 Grandchildren

**Date listed:** 27/4/2021

**Publication:** Herald Sun

Known as Spanner Man, Boort artist John Piccoli died suddenly on Thursday night, leaving his family, fans and Boort locals to grieve and celebrate a caring man and master of a unique art form.

After contracting polio in 1949, Mr Piccoli carried on farming his third-generation Central Victorian property from a wheelchair before retiring to embrace life as an accidental artist.

Mr Piccoli sourced antique spanners from far and wide to create his many sculptures; eventually, he was convinced to open his farm to visitors.

The tourist attraction welcomed 300 people in its first year; nearly 20 years later, it attracted 100-200 visitors a day.

- from the ABC website

Further reading and videos:

['Spanner Man' leaves a legacy of resilience, community, and spectacular sculpture - ABC News](#)

[Barraport artist John Piccoli has great skill with a spanner | Bendigo Advertiser | Bendigo, VIC](#)

[Meet The Spanner Man - John Piccoli - Bing video](#)

**The Long Distance Rally visited John Piccoli's sculptures in 2014, as mentioned in Sharyn's Long Distance Rally review, published in Backfire in August 2020.**

- Ed

*2014 HALLS GAP & WARRACKNABEAL 7 cars*

*We travelled to Halls Gap with a stop to see Imperial Eggs. We had kangaroos visit our motel as we had a BBQ dinner and we visited a horse drawn museum, machinery museum. Bought biscuits at Donald, made eucalyptus oil, and visited the Spanner Man.*



## John Piccoli's Artworks



## COMMITTEE MEETING

Main points from the Committee meeting held on 17 August 2021.

- ◇ Southern Ports Vehicle & Motor Restorers Club Inc – invitation to attend their weekend rally at Robe, Oct 30/31 2021
- ◇ RGAPS – Club room lease renewal. Increases by 4% annually but remains an economical arrangement
- ◇ 309 paid up members
- ◇ No more new members added until joining period next year. Those on the waiting list encouraged to attend events meanwhile.
- ◇ Permits
  - Gus staying in permit officer's role for mean time
  - 2 cars added last over the last month. 12 permits expired
  - 436 red plate cars registered though the club, but only 11 of these are under 30yrs old
- ◇ 36 set to attend soup kitchen, max at ~44. All people to sign in with QR code, eat seated. COVID Marshall to supervise event
- ◇ Federation report
  - ~25 people attended via Zoom
  - Most Fed events cancelled; Bendigo swap off
  - Possible display of vehicles in lieu of Bendigo Swap
  - It's believed that the Red plate scheme eligibility will be changed to 30 years
  - Federation financially healthy
- ◇ Quotes to include color pages in *Backfire* received. Decided to only include some color pages for special editions.

- James Park

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

**... and his raw materials: thousands of spanners shaped and welded together**





## Stories From the Shed

### Electric Cars—the Way of the Future?



**This month regular contributor Lindsay Alford considers the benefits and drawbacks of electric cars**

Personal transport was originally by horses, camel, donkeys and ox. Then the horseless carriage was invented.

The steam engine was developed first but it was more suited to large things like factories, ships and trains, although some were put into cars. The disadvantages of steam powered cars included a slow start-up time while waiting for the steam to be generated and the danger of the boiler exploding. However early steam engines made little noise and were more reliable than petrol engines.

The internal combustion engine evolved to become the main source of powering cars. Early models were noisy, unreliable and difficult to start. They had to be started with a cranking handle, which required some effort. While petrol engines developed slowly, an extensive railway network was built throughout the world. The railway lines became redundant with the improvement of the petrol engine and road transport. We now have many "rail trails" because of this.

At the same time, electric battery cars were developed. Electric cars had the advantage that they did not have to be started with a cranking handle. They were regarded as ladies cars. They used lead-acid batteries which made the cars very heavy. Electric cars were quiet but had limited range and were considered city cars. With the improvement in the petrol engine, the electric cars lost out. Electric vehicles were still used in special applications such as forklift trucks and wheelchairs.

Step into current times. We are now seeing new development in electric cars. I would have thought that small urban cars would be developed first but normal size cars are now available.

A lot is said about the performance of electric cars but I'm going to discuss the reliability. Electric cars have not been around long enough to judge their reliability and durability. To judge this we need to look at other electrical equipment.

Electric motors are much more reliable than petrol motors. The electric motor driving the compressor in the refrigerator will run for 10 years, stopping and starting about every hour. All this without an oil change or new spark plugs or any other maintenance. When the refrigerator is at the end of its life the motor will still be working.

There are many types of electric motors. Electric motors do fail and there is a trade called electrical mechanics to repair them. When electric motors fail, what fails? Bearings fail, but there are only two. Windings can fail when overheated or overloaded or water gets into them.

Also, the switchgear controlling the motor can fail. This is the weakest link.

Mechanical switches are being replaced by solid state or transistors switches. They work better but are prone to fail with overload. More on this later. The carbon brushes and commutator wear out but now brushless DC motors are being used in power tools.

I have not used these yet or know their reliability as they have not been around long enough. They are in the top of the range battery tools. Brushless motors are used in washing machines such as the Fisher & Paykel and some direct drive front loader washing machines. The motors are reliable but the electronics that power the motor work can fail and the machine is scrapped due to the high cost of replacement.

Brushless DC motors will be the type of motors in electric cars. All my garden power tools except the lawn mower have electric motors for reliability and ease of starting. They are 240V with an extension lead as battery ones were not available when I bought them. Not sure what I will do when the lawnmower needs to be replaced, but I have noticed a large number of batteries powered options in the hardware stores. This decision is still some years away.

The electric motor in an electric car should be as reliable as a differential in a conventional car. (Also, see my article on electric motor repairs for workshop - [Backfire March 2016 P 11.](#)) The batteries will be the weakest link. They will need to be replaced like tyres and brakes in petrol cars. This will be an added cost. There are many varieties of lithium (Li) batteries each with its own advantages. But the cost is coming down. You can compare the battery life of power tools and mobile telephone. The life of these is getting better. The batteries in the mobile telephone are almost impossible to replace now. See <https://www.ifixit.com> for DIY repairs and rating on the difficulty in repairing. My DIY was a failure as the mobile telephone would not come apart and the screen broke! New phone. The mobile telephone I had a poor quality battery which did not help. The manufacture thinks the batteries will last the life of the telephone.

Power tools have easily replaceable batteries however the tools themselves are replaced when the batteries are at the end of their life due to the high cost of just a replacement battery. Battery replacement in electric cars will be a major cost.

Brakes in electric cars will last much longer if the



# Stories From the Shed

## Electric Cars—the Way of the Future?



car is driven correctly and the way it was designed to be driven. Most of the braking will be done by regenerative braking. The electric motors will become generators and charge the batteries. The conventional brakes will only need to be used in an emergency or when stationary. I remember when automatic cars appeared and the brakes did not last as long as in manual cars. Some savings will be with the brake replacement with electric and hybrid cars.

The control electronics for the car are of two types. The logic controls (computer/brains) and the power controls to the motors (speed and braking control). Cars have many microcomputers control systems now. They control fuel injection systems, ABS brakes, delayed lights and door locks. The logic and control systems should be reliable. Computers, mobile telephones, fuel injection computers and all the other ones in cars are now fairly reliable. The sensors and the control mechanism are more likely to fail than the computers. Some will display error codes, and special tools and laptop computers may be needed to find faults. However, the cost of replacing the computer controls in all cars are high and will be no different in petrol and electric cars. (Will manufacturers release service information or keep it secret, to keep out independent repairers? John Deere in the USA does not release it but claim it contains company secrets. ([itfixit.com](http://itfixit.com) and supports the right to repair)

The electric power to the motor needs to be controlled by power electronic circuits for speed and braking. These circuits will contain transistors that carry large currents and will generate heat. The transistors are mounted on aluminium heat sinks to try to keep them cool. The unit will fail if they overheat. In the hot Australian environment this will be more of a problem.

Looking at other power electronics to see the reliability. The inverter for my solar household electricity has failed twice, the first time under warranty. The inverter is not located in the coolest place at home. Other have been reliable. This is for a 2kW system: electric cars are about 100kW, so the system will have to handle much more heat. A washing machine with electronic controls will only be powering 0.5kW motors.

What are the problems with electronic controllers in washing machines? Sometimes the PCB can fail for no apparent reason. Sometimes the power mains may have a surge causing it to fail. Ants and mice coming into contact with the high voltage components can cause failures. Sometimes the other components fail and it takes out the controller PCB. The controller in an Asian washing

machine fails when the water valve fails; not a good design. Fisher & Paykel washing machines replaced an inefficient drain pump with a highly efficient inverter pump, but the problem was when the pump blocked it took out the main PCB. They quickly brought out a new model with a different type of pump.

Li Battery fires: when Li batteries are charging, a thermal runaway can occur and the batteries can catch fire. To prevent this a very complex electronic control of the charge is used. Samsung had a recall on one of its models of mobile phones due to Li battery fires. An electric car manufacturer also had a recall on its vehicle due to the battery catching fire. Some power tools batteries have caught on fire too. Charge Li batteries in an open space away from inflammable materials to reduce the risk of the fire spreading.

Big batteries are used to store electricity generated by wind and solar systems, and feed back into the grid to meet demand when solar and wind are not producing. There have been 43 of these big battery fires overseas and one at Moorabool on 30 July this year. Li batteries are used in house solar systems and as 'house' batteries in caravans also. Electric cars do have a fire risk but so do petrol cars. (Jeep had a recall after their petrol cars caught fire.)

Motor mechanics will have to learn new skills, but this is not new.

Motor Vehicles Accidents: (MVA). Electric and hybrid cars have a green diamond on the number plate to warn emergency responders of the dangers of high voltage electricity. Training is being undertaken. This is no different to red diamond on LPG powered cars and associated risk.

Would I buy an electric car? This decision is still some time away.

### Some Definitions.

**PCB:** Printed circuit board, the electronic components are soldered onto a copper track and supported on a non-conductive substrate. The electronics of the system.

**Inverter Motors:** Electronics turn the electricity (AC or DC) into three phase electricity to power a 3 phase motor.

**Three Phase Motors:** A simple motor with three sets of winding for each phase. Single-phase motors are much more complex.

**Brushless (DC) Motors:** An inverter motor powered by DC, most commonly used in computer fans.

- Lindsay Alford

# NON RALLIES & RUNS

## Soup Line Luncheon

Limited by numbers due to COVID restrictions as we were, we still managed to have a great day out just before our latest lockdown. Our members are always very keen to be able to share stories, show some of their hobby stuff and have a lovely lunch at the same time.

Every year the fantastic effort that the ladies put in to cook and serve the soup line folks is legendary and very much appreciated by all, and this year was no different. Our thanks go to Barb van Galen, Margaret Hose, Lyn Jordan and Barb Healy for cooking and handling the workload of feeding 36 members with a delightful meal. And also thank you to the other people that brought in a plate of goodies and helped in other ways on the day.

As this Virus is not going away for a long while, we will not be organising any club activities for the near future. When permitted, I will be taking my old vehicles out for test runs as often as I am able to keep them in good order, but no club runs or activities are scheduled till further notice.

-Ray & Barb van Galen.



## Letter to the Editor

I found this notice when I was going through some of Mum's photos. You just never know what you will find that might be important.

The modern day women would be appalled to be introduced by your husband's initials, as my aunt was in this notice.

I thought someone else might have something similar in their memory boxes.

- Sharyn



**ALL FACE-TO-FACE CLUB ACTIVITIES ARE CURRENTLY SUSPENDED.  
CALENDAR INDICATES WHAT IS PLANNED IF RESTRICTIONS AT THE TIME ALLOW.  
Further advice will be sent by email.**

**Friday 3 September** Backfire folding morning 9am Clubrooms. *Contact: Peter Telfer 0427 526 938*

**Tuesday 14 September** **General Meeting (TBC)** 7.30pm in the clubrooms.

NOTE: Supper will NOT be provided, due to Covid restrictions.)

**Tuesday 21 September** **Committee Meeting** 7.30pm in clubrooms.

**Monday 27 September** **October 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

A man was speeding down the highway, feeling secure in a group of cars all travelling at the same speed. However, as they passed a speed trap, he got caught with an infrared speed detector and was pulled over.

The officer handed him a notice, received his signature and was about to walk away when the man asked: "Officer, I know I was speeding but I don't think it's fair – there were plenty of other cars around me that were going just as fast, so why do I get the ticket?"

"Ever go fishing?" the policeman suddenly asked the man.

"Um, yeah..." the startled man replied.

The officer grinned and added: "Did you ever catch all the fish?"

\*\*\*\*\*

O'Reilly arrives at Tullamarine and wanders around the terminal with tears streaming down his cheeks.

A Qantas employee asking what's wrong.

"I've lost all my luggage."

"All of it?"

"The lot."

"Oh dear. How did it happen?"

"The cork fell out."

\*\*\*\*\*

Criminal in the dock: "As God is my judge, I am not guilty."

Judge: "He's not, I am and you are."

\*\*\*\*\*

Why did Dave get the flick from the orange juice factory?  
Couldn't concentrate.

A lawyer returns to his parked BMW to find the headlights broken and considerable damage to the bonnet. There's no sign of the offending vehicle but he's relieved to see there is a note stuck under the windscreen wiper.

It reads "Sorry. I just backed into your Beemer."

The witness who saw the accident is nodding and smiling at me because he thinks I'm leaving my name address and other particulars.

But I'm not."

\*\*\*\*\*

A young guy went into a casting agency to do an audition.

While he waited to be called, he saw an assortment of jugglers, fire eaters and magicians.

When it was his turn, the casting agent said: "Hurry up now, I'm a busy, busy man. So what is it you do exactly?"

The boy said: "Well, I actually do a bird impersonation."

The casting agent's face clouded over and he said: "Listen boy, don't you realise this is the 2020s? You will never get anywhere doing bird impersonations. Get out of here and stop wasting my time."

So the boy said: "Stuff you," and flew out the window.

\*\*\*\*\*

The carpet layers had just finished putting in the burgundy Axminster for the rich matron when they noticed a lump in the middle of the room. Taking out his hammer, one of the layers bashed at the lump, attempting to smooth it out.

"Oh bugger," he said, patting at his pocket, "must be me smokes."

"No, here's your smokes. But have you seen the old girl's budgie?"

# A WANDERER'S TALE

A story in the September 2020 edition of *The Vintage Driver*, written by Peter Thorogood about the restoration of his rare 1930s German Wanderer W25 prompted WDHVC and Vintage Drivers Club member, Evelyn Hill, to contribute to the record of the car's origins and history in Australia. The tale is one of a remarkable co-incidence and shows how easily historical research can go astray.

In his story, Peter tells of how he acquired the Wanderer from a fellow Vintage Car Club member in 2008. He says: "The car was only partially completed as the whole front-end was missing. (The previous owner's) intention had been to install a Holden grey motor, build cycle-type mudguards and do a quick body patch up. In reality the car was at the point of no return. The timber frame was dust, but I took on the challenge and started to collect parts, which in itself was an almost impossible job since only 235 were made and the factory was completely wiped out in World War II."

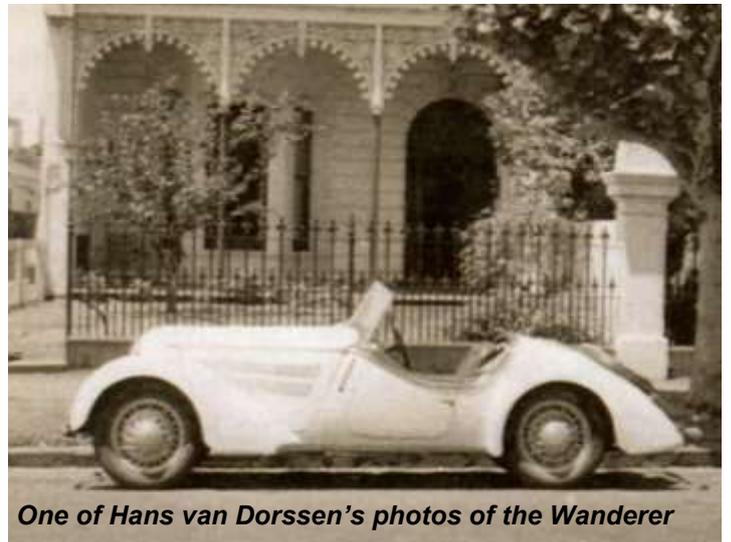
As part of the project Peter attempted to trace the car's history, having been given a copy of the original Victorian registration papers. Approaches to the then owner, a Mr DeVries, who lived in Norlane, were unsuccessful. Peter later went to the address and found the original house had been demolished and the site cleared by the government. He had heard rumours that the original engine had been buried in the garden and gained approval to excavate. He hired a backhoe and wasted money but only found a saucepan and an old boot.

The paperwork also listed a Hans van Dorssen, also of Norlane, as a previous owner and Peter tried to trace him. He found a person by that name living in Malvern and spoke to him on the telephone. That Hans van Dorssen sent four photographs of the car and a note about its background. Sadly Hans died a few weeks later but Peter had made the contact and found out a little of the car's history.

Peter's Google search of the surname "van Dorssen" came up under a listing for the Dutch Nazi leader Anton Mussert. It appeared a Max van Dawson had shared a cell with Mussert in 1946 and was ultimately set free. Importantly, a Hans was listed as Max's son. Max and his family migrated to Australia in 1951. And this is where the original story ended.



The Wanderer, as found by the present owner, Peter Thorogood



One of Hans van Dorssen's photos of the Wanderer

Having read this story Evelyn made contact with Peter explaining that he also knew a Hans van Dorssen who had lived in Norlane. Evelyn was able to work out from the obituary Peter sent him that the Hans van Dorssen Peter had contacted was not the son of Max. Instead it was Evelyn's friend, Hans who was Max's son.

However Peter's contact had been the owner of the Wanderer.

Evelyn reflected on the random coincidence of two men with the same unusual name both living in Geelong and both being engineers – one designing lifts and cranes and the other building rolling mills. Evelyn said they both had travelled extensively and from the photographs he had seen, they even looked very similar. The two men had actually met in Australia but were not directly related.

The following information was subsequently sent to Peter by Evelyn's friend Hans about the family history and the Wanderer car.

*My wife Willemina and I know Evelyn through a (mutual friend) and (we) live quite close to each other.*

*Hans van Dorssen of Malvern is not the son of Max van Dorssen who you came across through a Google search.*

*Max (my father) died in 1969 aged 57. He was incarcerated after the war and did share a cell with Anton Mussert head of the Dutch NSB (National Socialist Movement). Max was eventually released without charge. Anton Mussert was executed in I think 1948. All these details are in the archives held in The Hague, which my brother and I visited some years ago to ascertain the correct details, because the "story" about things that occurred during the war our Dad Max told my Mum and others varied from the truth.*

*About the cars provenance. It is likely the car was brought to Australia by a high ranking officer of the Australian Forces. He would have been in a position to circumvent any import restrictions that may have applied at that time. (Neither) my father Max nor the father of Malvern Hans would have had the opportunity to bring out a car from the Netherlands.*

*My wife and I met Hans and his wife Sue a number of times but I admit I did not know him well. His sister Marijke (Marriane) lived in Geelong ... and also worked for Alcoa at the time I was employed by Alcoa. Also Leone, Hans and Sue's daughter, worked for Peter Cole, our brother in law (and) once a partner of Willemina's sister Catherine at a gold mine in Bamboo Creek, two hours or so drive West of Port Hedland WA.*

*Interesting how coincidentally you Peter, Evelyn, Malvern Hans and I have a contact. Goes to show you'll never know who or when you'll come across someone.*

Sadly Evelyn's friend Hans has also passed away recently but the chain of coincidence lives on.

Peter has yet to trace the provenance of his Wanderer back from owner Hans to its importation into Australia. Perhaps someone reading this will be able to shed some more light on the story?

### **Net facts about the Wanderer W25**

Winklhofer & Jaenicke, the business that became eventually known for its Wanderer cars, was established in 1896 in Chemnitz, Germany. They built motorcycles from 1902 and automobiles from 1903. The Wanderer brand was chosen in 1911 for overseas exports and was soon adopted for domestic sales.

In 1929, Dresdner Bank, sold the motorcycle business and in 1932 divested the rest of Wanderer. The car division became part of Auto Union, together with Horch, Audi and DKW. Of this quartet, Horch was positioned as the luxury brand; DKW built cheap two-stroke cars; Audi and Wanderer competed in different segments of mid-priced, technologically advanced small cars. Wanderers of the Nazi period acquired a trademark radiator design, shaped as a heraldic shield.

From 1937 on there were also sporting fours (W24 and W25) and another six-cylinder model (W23), propelled by new flathead engines constructed by Auto Union itself. The rest of the new sports model, dubbed the W25 K for Kompressor, would be on the leading edge of Thirties' design. Built on a tubular steel chassis with independent suspension all around, the engine drove through a crisp 4-speed transmission. Stopping was by hydraulic-brakes on all four wheels. The car sported coachwork by Wandler. The W25k, though distinctive, was much like the BMW 328's. Dimensionally almost identical, with the same engine size, horsepower and wheelbase, the two cars differed only in philosophy. Wanderer preferred a supercharged robust motor while BMW chose to push the limits of its fine, normally aspirated design.

Wanderer cars were always admired for their high quality and sporting character. The Wanderer Siegmars plant (now Chemnitz) of Auto Union was destroyed in early 1945, closing this chapter in the history of automobiles.

Source:

[Wanderer W25 K Roadster by Wandler - Wanderer \(rmw.lv\)](http://www.rmw.lv)

When the W25 was first released in 1936, Wanderer was part of the Auto Union conglomerate and contributed greatly with their Porsche-designed Inline-6 engine. The same unit was used in the W25 K and offered up to 85 bhp which was ample for its very low weight.

Styling on the W25 was similar to other Auto Union cars that also borrowed heavily from the earlier Wanderer W51 design. But with its low cut doors, sweeping profile and split window, all W25s had a distinct flair along with superb proportions and spirited performance.

In total, about 250 of these Wanderers were made and very few survive. Because of their rarity and each car fetches upwards of \$150,000 USD.

Engine	Inline-6
Aspiration	Supercharged
Valve train	OHV, 2 Valves per Cylinder
Displacement	1963 cc / 119.8 in <sup>3</sup>
Power	63.4 kw / 85 bhp
Specific output	43.3 bhp per litre
BHP/weight	85.17 bhp per tonne
Front brakes	Drums w/Hydraulic Assist
Rear brakes	Drums w/Hydraulic Assist
Curb weight	998 kg / 2200 lbs
Top speed	~144.8 kph / 90 mph

Source: [1936 Wanderer W25 K | SuperCars.net](http://www.supercars.net)

**The car under restoration. Peter hopes to have the work completed by Christmas.**





# Stories From the ~~Shed~~ <sup>Net</sup>



## The Origins of the Last Post

The following rather poignant piece from another club's newsletter, was contributed by Sharyn Harris.

Read it first, then read on. - Ed

We have all heard the haunting song, "The Last Post". It's the song that gives us a lump in our throats and usually tears in our eyes. But do you know the story of that song? If not, I think you will be interested to find out about its humble beginnings.

Reportedly, it all began in 1862 during the American Civil War, when Union Army captain Robert Ellicombe was with his men near Harrison's Landing in Virginia. A Confederate army was on the other side of the narrow strip of land.

During the night Captain Ellicombe heard the moans of a soldier who lay severely wounded on the field. Not knowing if it was a Union or Confederate soldier, the Captain decided to risk his life and bring the stricken man back for medical attention. Crawling on his stomach through the gunfire, the Captain reached the stricken soldier and began pulling him towards his encampment.

When the Captain finally reached his own lines, he discovered it was actually a Confederate soldier, but the soldier was dead. The Captain lit a lantern and suddenly caught his breath and went numb with shock. In the dim light he saw the face of the soldier. It was his own son.

The boy had been studying music in the South when the war broke out. Without telling his father, the boy enlisted in the Confederate army.

The following morning, heartbroken, the father asked permission of his superiors to give his son a full military funeral, despite his enemy status. His request was only partially granted. The Captain had asked if he could have a group of army band members play a funeral dirge for his son at the funeral.

The request was turned down since the soldier was a Confederate. But out of respect for the father, they did say they could give him only one musician. The Captain chose a bugler. He asked the bugler to play a series of musical notes he had found on a piece of paper in the pocket of the dead youth's uniform. The wish was granted. The haunting melody we know as "The Last Post" used at the military funerals was born.

This story appeared on Facebook in April, 2015, The post has been viewed over 2.3 million times in the last three months and shared over 32,000 times. However it reminds us not to accept at face value all that we read without checking for ourselves.

It is human nature to enjoy a good yarn. Shared stories have been entertaining, amusing and educating people since our ancestors sat around fires in caves. And a story that triggers our emotions always seems to have more appeal. But I am reminded of the old journo's wry observation: "Never let the truth get in the way of a good story."

Further research has discovered the story of Capt. Ellicombe circulating as far back as 2010, but also found other versions. These claim Cpt. Ellicombe's story gave birth to the American bugle call "Taps", not the Last Post. However, this is not how Taps came into being. Taps is the American equivalent of the Last Post and is played during military funerals and commemorative services in America. It was originally used as a signal to extinguish lights. Union Army Major General Daniel Adams Butterfield felt the call for "Extinguish Lights" was too formal to signal the day's end. With the help of the brigade bugler, Oliver Willcox Norton, he created "Taps" to honor his men while in camp at Harrison's Landing, Virginia following the Seven Days' battles during the Peninsular Campaign, in 1862.

Source: [Did the Last Post originate on an American Civil War battlefield? - Australian Associated Press \(aap.com.au\)](http://aap.com.au)

The truth behind the origins of the Last Post is likely much drier and pragmatic than this heart wrenching Facebook yarn. And it seems it originated in the British military (which predated the American). In military tradition, the Last Post is one of a number of bugle calls that mark the phases of the day. .

The Last Post was first published in the 1790s, just one of the two dozen or so bugle calls sounded daily in British Army camps. The soldier's day started with the call of Reveille, and came to a close with the First Post. Sounding "First Post" indicated that the duty officer was commencing his inspection of the sentry-posts on the perimeter of the camp. The inspection would take about 30 minutes: when completed the "Last Post" would be sounded. The name referring simply to the fact that the final sentry-post had been inspected. For decades this was the sole use of the call, a signal that the camp was now secure for the night, closed till morning.

In the 1850s another role emerged. At this time many military bandsmen were civilians and didn't accompany their regiments overseas. So when a soldier died in a foreign land, there was often no music available for his funeral. Necessity being the mother of invention, a new custom arose and the regimental bugler sounded the Last Post over the grave.

## The Origins of the Last Post

The symbolism was simple and highly effective. The Last Post now signalled the end not merely of the day but of this earthly life. And, as the practice developed, at home and abroad, it was followed by few moments of silent prayer and then by the sounding of Reveille, the first call of the day, to signify the man's rebirth into eternal life. People also associated it with the lines in St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians: "For the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible."

The end of the Boer War saw the building of some 600 war memorials across Britain. Traditionally the British commemorated a victory by erecting a statue to the general or the commander. But, with a new mood of democracy abroad, the new war memorials now listed the names of all the dead, both officers and other ranks. And every time a memorial was unveiled, the Last Post was played, as the symbol not only of death but of remembrance.

The tradition was strengthened during World War One and the Last Post was played countless times at funerals abroad and in Britain. With mass enlistment and then conscription, the walls between the civilian and the soldier broke down completely, and a piece of music that had once belonged exclusively to military culture was adopted by a wider society. In the decades that followed WW1, it became almost a sacred anthem in an increasingly secular society.

Over the years, the piece has changed - not in the music but in the performance. Notes are held for longer, the pauses extended, the expression more mournful, so that it now lasts around 75 seconds, rather than the 45 seconds it used to take to mark the end of the day.

The sound of a lone bugler playing the Last Post has become one of the most distinctive sounds in the world. Eerie and evocative, it exists beyond all the usual barriers of nation, religion, race and class, charged with the memory of generations of the fallen.

Post Script: allied prisoner Arthur Lane sounded the Last Post in Japanese prisoner-of-war camps, and became known as "the musician to the dead". During his captivity he kept a roll of army-issue toilet-paper, on which he recorded the names and details of each of over 3000 men at whose funerals he had sounded the Last Post.

Source: [The Story of the Last Post – Ireland's Own \(irelandsown.ie\)](http://irelandsown.ie)

Source: [The story of the Last Post - BBC News](http://www.bbc.com/news/ireland-12345678)

## SOME AUTOMOTIVE FIRSTS

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

- by Frank Rodwell OBE\*

(\*over bloody eighty)

The first automobile race was run outside Paris on 22 July 1894.

\*\*\*\*\*

The first reversing light was introduced on a 1921 Wills-St Claire. Childe Harold Wills was employed by Henry Ford, as a draftsman, in 1902. He is credited with designing, in 1928, the oval Ford logo which was introduced in 1928 and still decorates Ford vehicles to this day. Wills was the metallurgist who invented vanadium steel, used in all Ford models. Wills resigned from Ford in 1919. He cashed his shares in the company for \$1.5 million and set about building his own cars in a factory on the American side of the St Claire River. With his knowledge of metals he acquired a stock of molybdenum to produce a stronger alloy steel which he used in all his vehicles. Although they were class cars of high quality it was difficult to compete with other top brands and production of the Wills-St Claire ceased in 1928. The building was bought by Chrysler in 1933 and Wills went with it, working as an adviser in metallurgy.

\*\*\*\*\*

The first turn signals were on a 1926 Talbot.

\*\*\*\*\*

A Miss Mary Anderson invented the hand operated windshield wiper in 1902.

\*\*\*\*\*

In 1906 another enterprising lady, Dorothy Levett, first suggested fitting rear view mirrors in cars.

\*\*\*\*\*

The first vacuum operated windscreen wipers were fitted on a 1915 Willys-Knight.

\*\*\*\*\*

- contributed by Fred Harris



## Quotes About Life

The secret of a good sermon is to have a good beginning and a good ending; and to have the two as close together as possible. ~ George Burns

# Covid Speak – pandemic phrases that have infected our vocabulary

**The Pandemic has affected us in ways that we could not have previously imagined.** Among my idle musings of late has been the impact of Covid 19 on our language. It struck me that new phrases have been created and existing words given new meanings, no doubt accelerated by the fact that everybody is talking to everybody else on social media (since they can't do it in person) and generating new language as a result.

The first phrase that came to my mind was "**Covid kilos**". This phrase has proved a handy rationale for the tightening of our waist bands as we indulge in that extra sweet treat or drink while sitting on the couch.

Other Covid words include:

**"Lockdown"** – this used to mean making sure I secured my workshop before coming inside for the night. Now it involves smiling and waving as countless masked walkers wander past our front gate while taking their approved exercise in the park.

**"Pivot"** – for me this word was always associated with superphosphate. Now it has become an overused expression to describe the constant need to change, adapt and redirect as we spin from one lockdown to relative freedom, then back into the next lockdown. (Small business owners are especially aware of this one!)

**"Iso"** – I knew the general meaning of "isolation". I also remember from my early days that ISO referred to the light sensitivity of film. (Remember film, that stuff we used to use to take photographs.) However this abbreviation now has a quite specific meaning for the host of ways we live on our own, deprived of our normal social interactions (like Club activities!) by the Virus.

**"Covid bubble"** – bubbles were something children produced with soapy water, usually accompanied by gleeful giggles and wonderment as rainbow-coloured orbs floated gently through the backyard. Now it describes containment and being limited to a very specific, very small number of people we can mix with in lockdown. (Also known as your "**quaranteam**" or "**bubble buddies**".)

**"Hotel quarantining"** – this conjures up images of multi-storey buildings being enclosed by high fences to stop them lumbering off or fraternising with neighbouring structures. However the pictures on telly reveal that the fences are to contain people, not buildings. Unfortunately the term has come to describe an expensive and testing period of "voluntary" and self-funded imprisonment, undergone by many people as the price for returning to home and loved ones here in Australia. (Best done at Howard Springs, rather than The Novatel or the Flemington high-rise flats.)

**"Click & collect"** – a catchphrase fabricated by the communications geniuses employed by Bunnings, Dan Murphys, Officeworks and countless food outlets to describe the apparently allowed (?) process of online ordering and Paypal payment then driving our mobile isolation capsules to retail carparks to await the delivery of much-needed and essential "sanity preservers" like bottles of red wine, computer consumables, tools and DIY equipment or food.

**"Jabbed"** – used to mean what Lionel Rose did to Fighting Harada to win the world boxing crown, and "**double jabbed**" meant that he hit him twice. Now it is the same as being "vaccinated" or "double vaccinated" with **AstraZeneca** (or Ay Zee to his mates) or **Pfizer** (more properly know as **Pfizer-BioNTech**, but called 'the Fizz' on the streets.)

Now I am no genius, and if I can think of these few words, I figured there must be more out there. So I jumped on the Internet and found a host of other words and phrases that have been resurrected or given new meaning as a result of Covid.

An article on a web page called *The Conversation* points out that in fact the only new word generated as a result of the pandemic is

**"Covid 19"** or **"COVID-19"**, which is in fact an acronym. The World Health Organisation says this term is shorthand for **"Corona Virus Disease 2019."**

The website says that most of the coronavirus-related changes have to do with older, more obscure words and phrases being catapulted into common usage, such as **"reproduction number"** and **"social distancing"**. It also notes the creation of new word blends based on previously existing vocabulary.

Previously obscure medical terms have come into everyday speech. These include two drug names: **"Hydroxychloroquine"** a known malaria treatment which first appeared in the dictionary in 1951, but was touted as a magic bullet against the virus. (President Trump embraced it as a Covid preventative.) Another newly-famous drug, **"Dexamethasone"**, has reduced the death rate among critically ill COVID-19 patients. The word first appeared in the Oxford Dictionary in 1958 but has been reborn due to its use in combating coronavirus.

The dictionary also included specific Covid meanings for **"community transmission"**, **"community spread"**, and **"shelter in place"**. **"Sheltering in place"** used to refer to seeking safety during an event like a tornado. Now it refers to a prolonged period of social isolation. Similarly, **"elbow bump"** has evolved from something like a high five, as documented in 1981, to its present form: a safe way to greet another person.

Other phrases like **"self isolate"** or **"self quarantine"** are included, as is **"Rona"** (or "Miss Rona"), a slang abbreviation for coronavirus.

New blended words spawned by Corona include **"maskne"**, and acne outbreak caused by facemasks; **"zoombombing"**, which is when strangers intrude on videoconferences; and **"quarantini"**, a cocktail consumed in isolation.

A **"covididiot"** ignores public safety recommendations; a **"doomscroller"** is someone who skims anxiety-inducing pandemic-related stories on their smart phone or computer.

Other, self-explanatory terms referred to on the web include **"virtual happy hour"**, **"covid video party"** and **"coronababies"**. (And if those born in the 2000s are "millennials", then are these children to be termed **"coronials"**?)

A term that seems to offer some hope is a **"vaccine passport"**. Another term for this ticket to freedom is our **"immunisation certificate"**. Call it what you will, using either is certain to involve fumbling through a mask and fogged glasses to open another app on a smart phone that sadly has a not-so-smart owner. And all to be allowed into a supermarket for some milk and bread! (Forget about catching a plane or going on a cruise!)

**PPE** (personal protective equipment) is the masks, shields, gloves and flowing blue plastic gowns worn at testing and vaccination sites.

The politicians' daily press conferences have used terms like **"flatten the curve"** or **"get ahead of the curve"**. They talk about being **"asymptomatic"**, of **"community spread"**, and **"confirmed positive cases"**. They refer to **"contact tracing"** and **"viral fragments"**, and describe specific local government areas as **"containment areas"**. Another favourite term is **"herd immunity"**. (Wasn't that previously achieved by vaccinating dairy cattle?)

**"Patient zero"** is the first individual who is infected with the disease during an epidemic. (You know - like **"ground zero"**, where the bomb went off.) If this person wanders about in the community for several days before being detected he is called a **"super spreader"** (I used to tow one of these around behind my grey Fergie! Which gets back to where I started at - **"Pivot"**.)

So finally there is **"WFH"** – which describes what we are all doing nowadays: working from home.

Well, all this research has made me very tired, so I think I'll lapse into a little **"coronacoma"**.

- Ed

FOR SALES, WANTED & CLUES

For Sale:

**1970 Cortina L auto.** Very neat and tidy, Strong engine and gearbox. Club Reg. 21097-H \$8,100. Call Gary 0427 752 544. **8/21**



\*\*\*\*\*

**Automatic transmission filter kit** for a Holden Colorado RC30. For 2008 to 2012 models. Brand new old stock Transgold KFS883, Google it to see if it fits your vehicle. \$10. Call Ray 0411 954 865. **7/21**

\*\*\*\*\*

**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**

Wanted:

**A 12 volt starter solenoid** for my old petrol Fergie (pictured). It's mounted away from the starter and I push the button on the end to start. Call Rod 0417 021 982, 5281 5340. **9/21**



\*\*\*\*\*

**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**

FOR SALES, WANTED & CLUES

Wanted:

**Unique Cars magazine**—June 1998. Call Leigh 0468 763 054. **8/21**

Clues:

**Mercedes Benz.** Possibly a 1969 280 SE. White with tan leather interior. Currently on club plates. Enquiries: call Graham 5241 4871 **7/21**

\*\*\*\*\*

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).

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# September 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29	30	31 August	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3 September</b> <i>Backfire</i> folding morning 9am Clubrooms	<b>4</b>
<b>COVID All events are subject to Covid 19 rules current at the time. Updates by will be sent by email.</b>						
<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>EXTREME WEATHER</b> (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.						
<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> General Meeting 7.30pm	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> Committee Meeting	<b>22</b> Dine Out ????	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> Oct 2021 <i>Backfire</i> Deadline	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>1 October</b> <i>Backfire</i> folding morning 9am Clubrooms	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9