

BACKFIRE

Volume 57 No 5 September 2023

PO Box 200 Newcomb VIC 3219

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.



www.wdhvcgeelong.com



[WesternDistrictHistoricVehicleClub](https://www.facebook.com/WesternDistrictHistoricVehicleClub)



[wdhvc_car_club_geelong](https://www.instagram.com/wdhvc_car_club_geelong)

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The President's

Idle Chatter

Hi All,

I hope you are all keeping well and looking forward to warmer weather at our next outings. I wasn't able to be there for our club auction night but I'm told it was a very entertaining event and our auctioneer John Bailey was in very good form. Thanks to John for all his efforts and to everyone for making it a great night. Apparently there were a lot of items for sale and maybe that was because we haven't had an auction night for about four years.

Speaking of great events, we were very lucky to be able to see the wonderful display of MG vehicles in Moolap for Tinker Day. The presentation, the variety and the quality of the many vehicles on display was outstanding, and included information boards for each vehicle. The MG Car Club of Geelong certainly looked after us with a few of their members present and provided hot drinks and something to eat. The weather at the end was not so pleasant with some showers but we were able to return to the clubrooms for lunch. Many thanks to the MG club for looking after us so well.

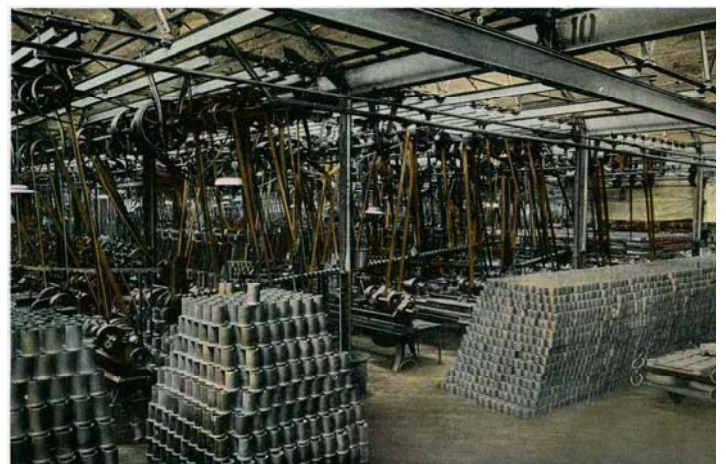
Another opportunity to see a range of vehicles is coming up on Sunday Aug 27th with a run to Beeac. I'm told there are going to be a couple of sheds open for members to view vehicles, followed by lunch at the pub. It should be a great day.

Just to let everyone know that we have recently had an issue with the heater unit in the clubrooms. It has stopped heating and although we are working on getting it fixed as soon as possible: at this stage we don't know when that will be.

So if you are attending anything at the clubrooms soon, it may be worth bringing a warm coat or jacket in case it is still out of action.

Stay safe and I hope to see you out and about.

David Mitchell



"Piston machining department. Veritable jungle of belts and shafting."

Postcards showing the Ford plant in 1917.

GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING No 626 OF THE WESTERN DISTRICT HISTORIC VEHICLE CLUB INC.
HELD AT THE CLUBROOMS ON TUESDAY 8th AUGUST 2023

PRESIDING

Vice President John Bailey welcomed the 84 members and Frank McKenzie's daughter attending.

APOLOGIES

Julie Wilby, Graeme Walker, Pam Dosser, Tony & Miriam Brincat, Jennie Green, Tim Paech, Pat Evans, Courtney Field, Ray Turner, Trevor Little, Jack Harman, Alan Tipper, Dallas Jones, Ray van Galen, Joan Stott, Rhonda Alexander, Noreen & Gary Mellington, Helen Graham, Barbara Thompson, Jeanette Dragt, David Mitchell, Nic Neeson, David Manx and Trevor Schneider.

Moved: Libby Booley

Seconded: Peter Telfer Carried

SICK LIST

Courtney Field

MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting as published in the Backfire are correct.

Moved: Ken Parry

Seconded: Jim Coates Carried

CORRESPONDENCE (Fred)

INWARD

Letters In

- RGAPS - Rental Renewal for club rooms

Emails In

- Allsure Insurance - Contents Insurance Renewal
- Robinvale/ Euston Historic Vehicle Club Inc - invitation to attend their Almond Blossom Festival 20 August
- Baw Baw Old Engine & Auto Club - invitation to attend their event 29th October
- Goulburn Valley Motor Vehicle Drivers Club - invitation to attend their Swap 10th September
- West Gippsland Restorers Club - invitation to attend their Gateway to Gippsland Rally Melbourne Cup Weekend 3rd - 7th November
- Allan David Lodge - request for a display of cars

OUTWARD

Letters Out

Sympathy Cards

- Frank McKenzie and Family on the passing of Moira.

- David Mitchell and family on the passing of David's Father.

Emails Out

Nil

Moved: Libby Booley

Seconded: Fred Dosser Carried

TREASURER'S REPORT (Maurice)

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

Moved: Maurice Healy

Seconded: Max McKenzie Carried

PROGRAM DIRECTOR (John)

Auction night this month.

LIBRARY (Phil)

No report this month.

DINE OUT (Sharyn)

Buckley's this month.

EDITOR (Jon)

Nothing to report.

WEBSITE (Damien)

No report this month.

FEDERATION REPORT (David P)

David attended the recent meeting and reported:

- Picnic days will be organised again.
- Bendigo Swap confirmed for this year.
- Still no central contact for the Permit Scheme at VicRoads.
- Clubs encouraged to reduce their use of cheques.

COMMITTEE REPORT (Tony away)

No update this month

MERCHANDISE (David M away)

Club-branded wide brim hats available for collection.

TINKER DAY (Col for Dallas)

This month's Tinker Day will be a tour of a local MG collector's collection on Sunday 13th August.

MARS BAR AWARD (Ray)

No competition this month

VEHICLE PERMITS (Fred for Gus)

Two vehicles have been added to the scheme over the last month.

RALLY REPORTS/EVENTS (David M)

See the Backfire for details on coming events

Events attended by members include:

- The Coffee Run to the Curlewis Golf Club was well attended with 31 members. Libby Booley won the voucher!
- The Airey's Inlet Pub Run was a great success.

GENERAL MEETING MINUTES ctd

- Jon and Harold both enjoyed the Bell's Beach Brewery visit.

LONG DISTANCE RALLY (Sharyn away)

All confirmed with 10 couples.

TECH NIGHT (Peter)

This month will cover "Horns".

KITCHEN (Pam)

Pam thanked Trevor Schneider for his recent coffee pod donation.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Prompted by Barb, John asked for a show of interest in a Bendigo Swap bus. Good interest shown and Alex offered to book a bus for the Club.

FOR SALES, WANTED & CONFESSIONS

None this month.

Meeting closed. 8pm.

Next meeting to be held at 7.30pm on 12 September 2023 in the clubrooms.

Fill in the Survey!

The Economic Value of the Historic & Classic Motoring Industry in Australia

Last month's Backfire included details of The Australian Motor Heritage Foundation (AMHF) survey of heritage vehicle owners to put a figure on the contribution that the heritage vehicle sector makes to the Australian economy.

The survey is being conducted on the Survey Monkey platform by the economics advisory firm, The Mercurius Group.

The survey should take less than 10 minutes to complete and is **totally anonymous**. No private details of respondents are captured.

This link takes you to further details and instructions.

[Australian Motor Heritage Foundation \(AMHF\) Survey \(surveymonkey.com\)](https://www.surveymonkey.com)

The AMHF would be grateful if you could complete the survey. The aim is to get at least 10-20% of members from each club responding. The survey will remain "live" until mid-September. The AMHF will share the findings of the study with all participating clubs.

Please fill in the survey and help these efforts to recognise and protect the historic vehicles movement.

AUCTION SUCCESS

It's Not About the Money



The Club's annual auction, held after the August meeting, raised \$559, however the night was not about the money.

The event generated lots of laughter and good natured banter, things you can't put a price on. After a three-year break club members were obviously keen to restock their sheds and the auction featured a record number of 105 lots to be sold. (The fact that Gus had a large assortment of treasures to move on certainly helped!)

As always, our auctioneer John was in fine form, generating both laughter and consternation as an assortment of gear found a new home.

The term "box of sundries" featured prominently in early lots and more than one club member realised too late that the precious item he was really after was encumbered with one or more of these "boxes of sundries" that had failed to generate a bid on their own.

And deliberately not obtaining a buyer's number failed as a way to avoid buying anything: more than one such "unnumbered" person somehow managed to make an unintended purchase.

By the end of the night several people had an impressive pile surrounding their chairs.

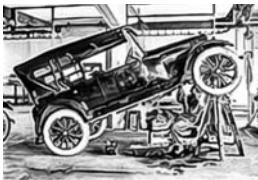
On the plus side prices paid were very reasonable and more than one clubman discovered that his \$1 box of goodies actually contained some quite valuable items in amongst the scrap. Some worthwhile, and in some cases brand-new, items went under the hammer cheaply.

For my own part, the Bentwood rocking chair that I hadn't realised I had acquired went to a good home after I popped it on my driveway with a "Free" sign attached.

And if anyone is in need of a 6" x 5/8" galvanised bolt, I have an ammo box full of them!

Thanks to John and the team of helpers who made the night a success and thank you to the club members who took to the occasion with good humour and gusto.

- Ed



Stories From the Shed

Converting Classic Cars to Electric



Converting classic cars to electric vehicles is booming in popularity.

"I love old Japanese cars," Mr Macken says. There's a lot of people out there who love their classic cars, but don't want the issues of internal combustion engines," he says.

"Old cars look beautiful and new cars all look the same."

From suburban garages to professional workshops, Australians are popping car bonnets and stripping out petrol and diesel motors, fuel tanks and gear boxes, mufflers and exhausts.

In place of these greasy, soot-stained parts, they're installing banks of lithium-ion batteries and small, but powerful, electric motors. Though not cheap, EV conversion, or "electro modding", is booming in popularity. Often, it's a way of breathing new life into beloved older models — a way of having a classic car without the fumes and breakdowns.

Some hope this change is just the start: they look forward to a time when conversions can be done cheaply and at mass scale. They believe that at least some of the petrol cars being sold today may see out their time on the road as converted electric ones. So what does conversion cost and could it work for your car?

Interest in EV conversions rising

For years, people weren't interested in EV conversions. The change seemed to happen overnight, about 18 months ago, says Russ Shepherd, a director of a Melbourne EV conversion garage.

"We kept getting asked and asked and asked," he says. These weren't the usual hobbyists who "want to put a forklift motor into their Hyundai Getz", but people after "high-end conversions". "These are customers who want an alternative to Tesla, but with the mod cons." *Continued Pp 12*

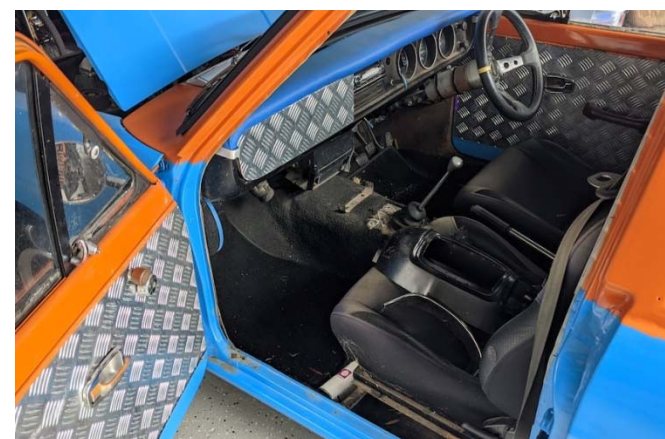


EV conversion can breathe new life into beloved older cars. (Supplied: Ken Macken)

At the beginning of winter, Ken Macken took the highway out to Chinchilla in Queensland's Western Downs to buy a 40-year-old ute — a dodgy-looking Datsun upholstered with strips of carpet and sheet metal.



The unrestored 1981 Datsun (Supplied: Ken Macken)



Complete with ratty carpet and sheet metal interior. (Supplied: Ken Macken)

By the time spring arrived, Mr Macken had converted the retro clunker into a snazzy little electric vehicle (EV), able to surge to 100 kilometres per hour in under six seconds (something the petrol version would have never achieved). He dubbed the two-door electric runabout the "Dasla".

An MG Roaster in the Electric Car Cafe workshop, alongside a Land Cruiser, Range Rover, and DeLorean. (Supplied: Electric Car Cafe)



Club Legends

Ken Batson

Our club includes people with a wealth of knowledge and experience that we wish to preserve. This is the seventh in a series about these "Club Legends".

Ken was born in 1944 in Geelong. He has a brother, Mervyn. He lived all his life on a farm in Moriac. In his own words, he has never been able to sit still. At the age of 15 his father bought another farm and he started working there - and has never stopped.



Ken tells of having a new David Brown tractor on the farm and Mervyn driving it home from the Gala Day parade at the age of 14.

They produced sheep and he supplied Ivorsons with lucerne hay which he sowed, cut

and baled on his own: a lot of work, but it gave him a nice extra income.

He first became interested in cars in the 50's. He learnt to drive in a Commer truck: typical farm kid. His first car was a 1956 Zephyr ute.

Ken will tell you he has owned lots of cars but his first restoration was a 56 Customline.

His dream car depends on his mood at the time as he is happy with what he has got. He has a lot of cars. Most were restored to a certain extent.

Ken has been in the WDHVC for about 35 years and he started when the club was in the Nissan Huts in North Geelong. He was events organiser and rally director for five years and started the dine-outs. He has also been on the Committee.

Ken organised movie nights for two years, Christmas Dinner at the club for people on their own and New Year's Eve dinner. (Afterwards they watched the fireworks from the clubrooms.) He was also Club Member of the Year twice.

In 2000 he organised a trip to Europe for 27 members, many who had never been out of Australia. He also proposed to his future wife Sandra at the Eiffel Tower in Paris. (how romantic).



He has most enjoyed being part of the club and talking to people of similar interests, club runs and the swap, but just being the club.

When I went to Ken's shed I thought he had a few cars but I was sadly mistaken - he has a lot.



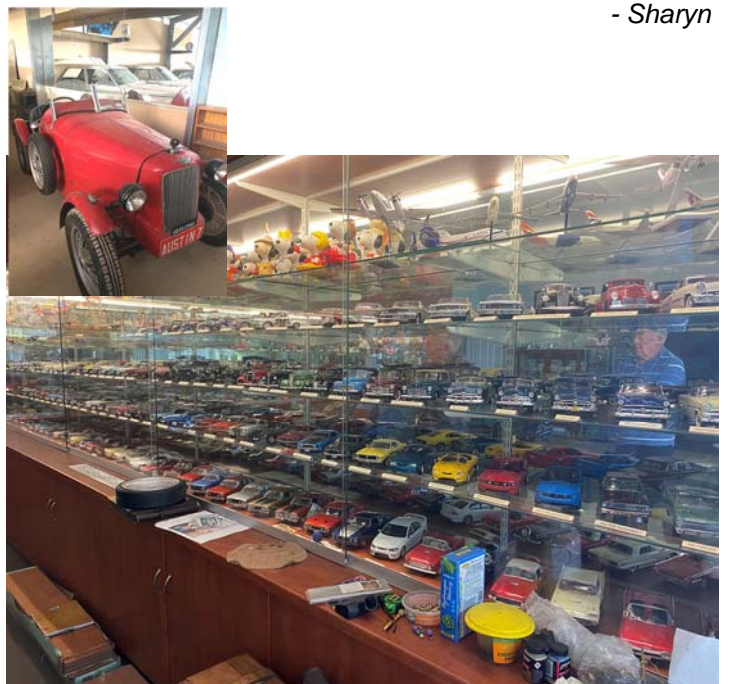
He also has model cars, jigsaws and dolls from all over the world. It is all displayed beautifully.

His other interests are a pot plant garden and tinkering and fixing things.

Ken is happy in his own little world with Sandra by his side and from what I learned, just as happy in the club now as ever.

He is an asset to our club and a legend in his own way.

- Sharyn



Other Events

Source: [swap-meets\(ozwrenches.com\)](http://swap-meets(ozwrenches.com)) and individual event flyers

- Aug 27 2023** Hamilton Swap Meet Hamilton Showgrounds. VIC contact 0428 289 502
- Aug 28 2023** Avalon Swap & Sell Avalon Raceway, 210 Old Melbourne Rd, Lara VIC 3212
- Aug 28 to 1 Sept** Federation Open Tour from Marong through Kerang, Swan Hill, Echuca and Shepparton. Spend time spend in the recent flood affected areas of northern Victoria and support their rebuilding efforts. Activities planned include museum visits, private tractor and bowser collections, Echuca Beer Shed and Shepparton attractions.
- Sept 10 2023** Shepparton Swap Meet GVMVDC Swap Meet, Shepparton Showgrounds
- Sept 17 2023** Bairnsdale Swap Meet Lakesters Swap Meet, Lucknow Football Oval
- Sept 17 2023** Buloke Show & Shine Birchip Leisure Centre,
- Sept 17 2023** Castlemaine Autoplex Swap Castlemaine Rodders at Castlemaine Autoplex, 35 ETTY St, Castlemaine
- Oct 15 2023** Albury Swap Meet Twin City Swap meet & S & S, Albury Showground
- Oct 21/22 2023** Campbells Creek Antique Fair Campbells Creek Rec Reserve, Friars Rd.
- Oct 22 2023** Colac Swap Meet Colac racecourse (new venue) Contact 0428 394 249 gandproseevents.com
- Oct 29 2023** HTPAA Antique Hand Tool Market St. Anthony's School Hall, 164 Neerim Rd, Cnr Neerim & Grange Rds, Caulfield East
- Nov 11 & 12** Bendigo National Swap Meet. Entry: Sat only \$15. Sun only \$5. Children 15 and under free. Public: Gates open Sat 6 AM. Sun 7 AM. Sheds open 7 AM. Details www.bendigowrap.com.au. Site bookings 0427 446 660. General enquiries 0434 730 822. info@bendigowrap.com.au
- Nov 18-19 2023** Daylesford Collectables fair Daylesford Town Hall
- Nov 26 2023** Maldon Swap Meet Maldon Racecourse Reserve (Vic)
- Dec 3 2023** Llanelly Motorbike Swap Motorcycle only swap meet, Llanelly public hall (near Bendigo)
- Jan 21 2024** Centre State Swap Meet Bendigo Racecourse



SHEPPARTON SWAP MEET
 Sunday Sept 10, 2023

SHEPPARTON SHOWGROUNDS,
 HIGH ST, SHEPPARTON
 (MIDLAND HWY A300)

6m x 6m **OUTDOOR SITES \$20**

ENTRY \$5 (Children under 14 free)
 Gates open at 6.30am for stall holders.
 General public 7.30am.
 No alcohol. No camping. No dogs allowed.
 Lunch and refreshments available.
 Paris Pick-up service available.

DIRECT DEPOSIT: to BSB 633-000, Acct 1366-25076, Acct name: GVMVDC
 Reference to be "swap" and your name. Please advise Kris by phone.
MAIL: Send stamped self-addressed envelope and booking fee to:
 Shepparton Swap Meet, P.O. Box 1206, Shepparton, 3632.
CHEQUE: Please make cheques payable to G.V.M.V.D.C. Inc.
www.gvmvdc.com.au/GVMswp.html
 For further information contact:
 Lloyd or Kristine Healey on 0438-294 351
 Member of the Association of Motoring Clubs Inc and
 The Federation of Tractor, Vintage & Classic Vehicle Clubs, Inc.



BULOKE COLLECTABLE VEHICLE CLUB INC

SHOW N SHINE

- ◆ Birchip Leisure Centre
- ◆ All Vehicles & Motorcycles!
- ◆ 8am Registrations open!
- ◆ 1:30pm Presentations!

SUNDAY 17TH SEPTEMBER 2023



SWAP MEET & MARKET: \$10 PER SITE

ADULT	\$5
UNDER 12	FREE

- ★ Vehicle entry inc driver \$10★
- ★ Multiple categories & awards★
- ★ Kids Activities★

All Enquiries PH: 0437846988 or 0427922691
 - CASH OR EFTPOS PAYMENT AT EVENT -

Antique Fair
Fryers Rd.
Campbells Ck.

October Sat 21 & Sun 22
WE DO NOT STOP FOR RAIN
GATES OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AT 8AM
BOOKINGS ARE REQUIRED

Friday setup, and free camping
STALLS SIZE 10x6 metres
 Admission \$5 Kids free
Campbells Ck. Rec Reserve
Fryers Rd. Campbells Ck.
 All enquiries please **TEXT** Mark
 Mobile 0414 244 842 **TEXT** is preferred

COLAC SWAP MEET
 Sunday October 22, 2023
 Colac Racecourse



Sellers @ \$25 from 6.30am
Public entry - 8am-1pm - \$5

Enquiries: Graham Rose 0428 394 249

SWAP MEET
Maldon Vic.

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 26
WE DO NOT STOP FOR RAIN

GATES OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AT 7AM
 No bookings required
 Saturday setup
STALLS \$25 per 6x6 metre site
 Admission \$5 Kids free
Maldon Racecourse Reserve
Cnr Bendigo Rd. & Lewis Rd. Maldon
 All enquiries please **TEXT** Mark
 Mobile 0414 244 842 **TEXT** is preferred

Events Calendar

Updates will be sent by email and posted on Facebook.
(Please pass on to those without email addresses.)

With both the Flu and Covid in the community, masks are recommended when in close proximity to others.



- Sunday 27 August** **Club Run to the Beeac Pub** for lunch and to view a car collection. Also a display of windmills to look at over the road. Meet at Waurm Ponds parking bay on Princes Hwy about 2km beyond Anglesea turn off. Depart 10 am. Numbers required by 22 August.
Contact: Ken 0437 254 351
- Friday 1 – Thurs 7 Sept** **Long Distance Rally** Leaving from Anakie Store at 8.30am.
Contact: Sharyn 0417 546 089
- Thursday 7 September** **NOTE: CHANGED VENUE. Coffee Run** to the Eastern Hub Complex at 285A McKillop St East Geelong from 10am. Parking in the streets and there is the ability to drive into the carpark and drop people off.
Contact: Rod 0417 021 982
- Tuesday 12 September** **General Meeting** 7.30pm in Clubrooms.
- Wednesday 13 September** **Dine Out at RSL** from 6pm. *Contact: Sharyn 0417 546 089*
- Tuesday 19 September** **Committee Meeting** 7.30pm in clubrooms.
- Thursday 21 September** **Tinker Day to a Motorbike Collection.** Meet at the Newling Reserve, Hendy Main Rd Moriac at 10am, to leave at 10.15am. As usual bring your lunch and a chair to sit down afterwards.
Contact Dallas 0432 172 171
- Sunday 24 September** **Club Run to Werribee Zoo.** Entry charge: concession \$34.50; senior \$41.50; adult is \$45. Bring your own lunch or buy it at the venue. It will be an early start as I was advised to be there no later than 9.30am. We may see the new lion cubs. Meet at the Corio Bay Roadhouse (old Melbourne Rd). Take the service road after you cross the Purnell Rd lights [at the car wash]. We will depart 8.30am. Numbers required.
Contact Ken 0437 254 351
- Monday 25 September** **Oct. Backfire Deadline 5pm.** *Contact: Jon B 0417 311 441*
- Tuesday 26 September** **Tech Night "Wipers"** Single blade, double blade, electric, vacuum-assisted (???) - even hand-operated. Make a clean sweep so you can see clearly and come along! All welcome. Wear your name badge and get a FREE CHOCOLATE FROG! Be there at 7pm, so we can set up for a 7.30pm start.
Contact: Peter Telfer 0427 526 938.
- Friday 29 September** **Backfire folding morning** 9am Clubrooms.
Contact: Peter Telfer 0427 526 938
- Thursday 5 Oct** **Coffee Run to the residence of a Club Legend Frank McKenzie.** Meet at Frank's house at 755 Great Ocean Rd Bellbrae. On the left hand side of the road [Coming from Geelong] the letterbox has a Riley on top!!!! About 2 kms past the Bellbrae roundabout. Follow the driveway down about 250 metres.
OR those coming from Geelong can meet at the Clubrooms, ready to leave at 9 45 am.
- The Club will supply coffee/hot chocolate pod appliances with pods and milk. Sausages, bread and sauce available for a BBQ lunch cooked on a fire. [bring marshmallows if you want or chocolate and bananas wrapped in foil etc]. Don't forget to bring your cakes or bikkies. Come and sit around the fire and chat about stuff!!! Don't forget a chair and some sunscreen or wear your new Club sun hat!!! We will need numbers to assist with catering. A list will be available at the next meeting or contact me before 5 September.
Contact: Col 0425 822 026

The Way It Was

(taken from the 21st anniversary Backfire - March 1988)

"Back to Port Campbell for a well earned lunch parked just off the main street, where the cars seem to attract a large number of holidaymakers, many in scanty attire, to the edification of the birdwatchers among us!

- Val Stocks – Colac Rally, February 1974

"Arthur Good said that on a recent two-day rally the Rugby returned 20 miles to the gallon of water!

- October 1975

RALLIES & RUNS

August Tinker Day - a "Morris Garages" Morning



A stunning collection of historic MG motorcars awaited the 30 or so club members who attended the August Tinker Day. The collection is proudly owned by father and son, Ray and John Abikhair and is displayed in a shed in Moolap. The visit was arranged through our club President David's connection with the Geelong MG Car Club.

Upon arrival we were greeted by several club MGs in front of the shed and, after a brief welcome, the shed doors rolled open to reveal a gleaming array of some 20 classic and rare MGs spanning the early 1930s through to the 1970s. Each car had its own information board giving the model year and brief history of the vehicle. The display was immaculately presented and we were privileged to have been given access.

Of particular interest to me were two fine examples of the rare 1930s MG Magnette Airline, an unusual coupe version of the Magnette which featured teardrop shaped mini sunroofs and striking paintwork.

Ray and John, along with MG club members, mixed with our group, providing more details of each car and responding to questions. After a leisurely walk and talk around the display members were treated to morning tea, provided by our hosts.



1948 MG TC

Apart from a sudden, sharp rain squall that had John scurrying to wind up the windows of cars parked outside, the weather was kind. After the visit most members returned to the clubrooms for lunch. Thanks to David and the MG Car Club as well as the Abikhairs for making this special visit possible. - Ed

A model of a 1935 MG Magnette Airline, showing the unusual "teardrop sunroof"



RALLIES & RUNS

August Tinker Day - a "Morris Garages" Morning

M.G. Car Company

William Morris's Morris Garages in Longwall Street, Oxford, was the Oxford agent for his Morris cars. Cecil Kimber joined the dealership as its sales manager in 1921 and was promoted to general manager in 1922. Kimber began promoting sales by producing his own special versions of Morris cars.

Debate remains as to when MG car production started, although the first cars, rebodied Morris models that used coachwork from Carbodies of Coventry and known as "Kimber Specials", bore both Morris and MG badges. Reference to MG with the octagon badge appears in an Oxford newspaper from November 1923, and the MG Octagon was registered as a trademark by Morris Garages on 1 May 1924. Morris Garages assembled its cars in premises in Alfred Lane, Oxford. Demand soon caused a move to larger premises in Bainton Road in September 1925, sharing space with the Morris radiator works. Continuing expansion meant another move in 1927 to a separate factory in Edmund Road, Cowley, Oxford, near the main Morris factory, and for the first time, it was possible to include a production line.

In 1928, the company had become large enough to warrant an identity separate from the original Morris Garages, and "The M.G. Car Company" was used from March of that year. In October, for the first time, a stand was taken at the London Motor Show. Space soon ran out again, and a search for a permanent home led to the lease of part an old leather factory in Abingdon, Oxfordshire, in 1929.



The collection warranted close inspection



A limited liability company named M.G. Car Company was incorporated on 21 July 1930.

Kimber stayed with the company until 1941, when he fell out with Morris over procuring wartime work and was summarily dismissed. Kimber was tragically killed in the February 1945 King's Cross railway accident.

MG underwent many changes in ownership over the years. Morris's Nuffield Organization merged with Austin to create the British Motor Corporation Limited (BMC) in 1952. Its activities were renamed MG Division of BMC in 1967, and so it was a component of the 1968 merger that created British Leyland Motor Corporation (BLMC). The MG marque continued to be used by the successors of BLMC: British Leyland, the Rover Group and, by the start of 2000, the MG Rover Group, which entered receivership in 2005. The MG marque along with other assets of MG Rover were purchased by Nanjing Automobile Group (which merged into SAIC in 2007).

MG production restarted in 2007 in China. The first new MG model in the UK for 16 years, the MG 6, was launched on 26 June 2011. Chinese MG SUVs are now quite common here too.

Source: Wikipedia.





Stories From the Shed

Converting Classic Cars to Electric



Continued from Pp 6

At the same time, James Pauly from Caboolture in Queensland was noticing a similar phenomenon.

His converted VW Beetle was suddenly getting a lot of attention at car meets. There were more EVs on the roads, too. A tipping point was reached; a novel gizmo became the future of cars.

"People realise this EV thing is serious, it's not going away," says Mr Pauly, who runs a business converting EVs.



The interior is much the same, but with an LCD screen

As he points out, replacing a petrol engine with an electric motor is just another form of hot-rodding; incorporating a newly released auto-technology into a classic car, as a custom modification.

"I don't usually get customers who aren't a car enthusiast," he says. "One of my latest customers came to enquire about a VW Beetle conversion kit and they arrived in their bright orange V8 hot rod."

So what does this all cost?

It's not cheap, warns Chris Jones, national secretary of the Australian Electric Vehicle Association (AEVA).

"If you want something that goes more than 150km to a charge and maintains a highway speed, you're going to be spending north of \$30,000," he says.

"If you want to do a really good conversion of an old car, you're going to spend as much money as buying a new electric car."

Mr Macken, for instance, spent about \$40,000 on batteries, the electric motor and other parts to both restore and convert his Datsun ute. "That's restoring a car back to brand new," he says. The Dasla has a range of about 180km, or less than half that of a \$44,000 new EV.



An electric motor replaces the combustion engine in the Datsun. (Supplied: Ken Macken)

The biggest cost, says Tim Harrison, who's converted a 1965 Ford Cortina in Brisbane, is the batteries, which are in exceptionally high demand right now.

"I sourced my own batteries by salvaging them from a wrecked Tesla Model X that I bought, but not everyone can do that," Mr Harrison says.

"If I had to source them elsewhere, the conversion would have added up to about \$30,000."

Mr Harrison expects the cost of conversions will fall as batteries get cheaper and new EV sales swell the supply of second-hand parts.

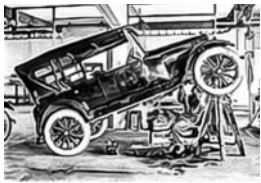
"In theory, everything points to it getting cheaper," he says.

Which cars are best to convert?

Not all cars are suitable for conversion, according to Mr Jones. The key consideration is weight: if you start with a heavy chassis, you'll need to install more batteries to get enough range. For this reason, many classic Australian cars, like Holden Kingswoods or Toranas, are considered unsuitable.

"Old Australian vehicles are not light," Mr Jones says.

Japanese-made cars (like the Datsun) are among the most sought-after. Eighties or '90s cars are ideal because they're modern enough to not be complete pieces of crap, but dumb enough to not have computers to circumvent," he says.



Stories From the Shed

Converting Classic Cars to Electric



To be compliant in Australia, the gross mass of the converted vehicle cannot exceed what the car was designed for. Small, lithium-ion batteries might weigh a lot but their weight, plus the engine, typically balances out the weight of the removed combustion-engine parts.

"It's a good idea to engage with a compliance engineer before you get started," Mr Macken says.

Another consideration is historical value, says Mr Harrison. Ripping out the engine of a rare Porsche may be a bad idea. VW Beetles are a popular option, says Mr Pauly, who has converted three in his workshop, and sold about 20 conversion kits with batteries and motor for owners to do the work themselves.

Choosing a model that has been converted before can save time and avoid unseen complications.

"We can convert a Beetle in less than a month," he says.

Australia's only electric Commodore?

But some people are happy just to convert the car they have. In the best tradition of DIY self-belief, Les Cook, a 74-year-old retired Queensland dairy farmer, has converted a 2001 Holden Commodore.



"I live in the country where there are cattle and kangaroos on the roads and I don't like to be out driving in a Toyota Corolla or a Nissan Leaf. I want to be in car that can survive hitting a kangaroo or cow," he says.

The conversion process has been a steep learning curve. At one point while installing the batteries, Mr Cook dropped a spanner across a live terminal and saw "bolts of fringing lightning". "It frightened the shit out of me," he says. The incident convinced him to outsource the wiring to an auto electrician in Cairns. Later, he found he had to install an app to work the EV car charger. The only problem was he didn't have a smartphone.

After four years, the work is done. Perhaps the only electric Commodore in the world is now parked in a "dairy mate's shed behind a heap of hay" in the back blocks of northern Queensland. Whenever Mr Cook takes it out for a spin, the car turns heads. EVs are a rare sight in this part of Queensland. "People ask me, 'Is that an *electric* Commodore?'" Interest in it is phenomenal," he says.

Recently, while recharging at the roadside near Innisfail, the police stopped.

"They told me I was the first one who had pulled up at that charger. It'd been there about 18 months."

Cheap, mass conversions of petrol vehicles?

Conversions are not currently economical for most people, but Mr Shepherd believes standardised "cookie cutter" conversion kits could drastically reduce the cost.

He hopes this could spawn a new Australian auto industry.

"I don't think it's out of the question to say we are already manufacturing cars again in Australia," he says.

"We hope to get to the point where someone can bring a Range Rover over to us and we can convert it in a couple of days for less than \$10,000."

Nine Australian and New Zealand EV specialist garages have formed a "collaborative group" to create "the knowledge to help save millions of fuelled vehicles from landfill".

This alliance believes that petrol and diesel cars being bought now may be hard to resell in coming years, once people switch to EVs, which are falling in price and have lower running costs.

Governments may also encourage the switch to EVs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The owners of cars with combustion engines would then have to choose between scrapping or converting them.

Organisations that operate fleets of specialist or modified vehicles, (such as four-wheel drives fitted with special wheels to travel on railway tracks, and which cannot be easily resold), are already faced with this problem, Mr Shepherd says.

"These vehicles have a useful life of up to 10-20 years, but the owners have been told they have to decarbonise," he says. "We're now fielding calls from customers with 20,000 vehicles modified to fit their business. They're asking if they can extend the life of the vehicle by dropping an electric drive chain into it at scale."

The interest in classic car conversions is being seen worldwide. A US company has recently developed a self-contained EV chassis which it says is designed to fit almost any classic car, and would radically streamline the conversion process.

Continued Pp 14

Converting Classic Cars to Electric (ctd)

There is also growing interest in the UK. Former footballer David Beckham has invested in a high-end electric car conversion firm that charges up to 500,000 British pounds (\$925,000) for an electric Rolls-Royce.

Conversion can jeopardise warranty

Fleet managers are under pressure to decarbonise and switch to EVs, confirms Mace Hartley, executive director of Australasian Fleet Management Association, a peak industry body. But EV conversion jeopardises the manufacturer's warranty'. "Large fleets won't touch it," he says.

Instead, fleet managers will probably just sell their combustion engine vehicles to the public over the next decade (if the cars aren't severely modified) and replace their fleet with new EVs.

"If you have a 2030 carbon target, you can replace every vehicle in 2029 and you've done it," he says.

Without the support of fleet managers, mass conversion of combustion vehicles is unlikely to happen soon.

Mr Shepherd's Melbourne workshop will be electrifying about a dozen cars this year, many of them luxury or classic vehicles. Among them is a DeLorean, the gull-winged car from the Back to the Future movies.



Removing the engine from the DeLorean, which is being converted to an EV. (Supplied: Electric Car Cafe)

It's a fitting emblem for the appeal of classic EV conversions: combining the looks of the past and the technology of the future. "We have a Subaru Brumby coming in and a Porsche 911," he says. "We're taking over the workshop next door, but soon we'll need new premises."

Back in Chinchilla, Mr Macken says his next project is a 1970s Ford Bronco EV. Meanwhile, in Brisbane, Mr Harrison is converting a 1973 Kombi, while his Instagram page teases a future "retirement project": a rust-eaten 1940s Pontiac Streamliner tucked away in a shed, "patiently waiting for her resurrection".

"Your time will come, dear," he writes.

- by technology reporter James Purtill

Adapted from: [Converting classic cars to electric vehicles is booming in popularity - ABC News](#) 18 October 2021

Letters to the Editor

Historic Electric Vehicles

Did you know that in 1884 that the first production-standard electric car capable of being reproduced and sold to the public was unveiled?

Did you know that in the early 1900s 1/3 of all vehicles on the road were electric? They started to quickly disappear around 1920 with the introduction of petrol and Henry Ford.

Ferdinand Porsche - founder of the eponymous sports car-produced an electric vehicle called 'P' in 1898, before creating the world's first hybrid offering, which was powered by both electricity and a combustion engine.

Mercedes-Benz also offered up an electric model called the Mercedes Mixte, in 1906. This car was adopted as a taxi in cities and was even developed into a race car in 1907.

We are merely seeing the reincarnation of old tech.

The photo is a group of working EV trucks in the UK plugged in, in 1917.



Ford Truck Club (from Facebook)

- contributed by *Lindsay Alford*

It's Your Newsletter, so Keep Contributing!

Don't forget to send me your contributions. Emailed, hand delivered, posted, by SMS or carrier pigeon! Hand written or typed. Don't leave it to the faithful few or your editor. If you are at an event, take a photo on your phone or scribble a few notes. Send them to: Mob. 0417 311 441 or editor@wdhvcgeelong.com

DEMENTIA QUIZ

1. You are a participant in a race and you overtake the second person.
What position are you in?

2. If you overtake the last person then you are

3. Very Tricky Arithmetic!

This must be done in your head only. Do not use a paper and pencil or a calculator.

Take 1000 and add 40 to it. Now add another 1000 then add 30 to it. Add another 1000, now add 20. Now add another 1000. Now add 10.

What is the Total?

4. Mary's father has five daughters: Nana, Nene, Nini, Nono and ????

What is the name of the 5th daughter?

5. This is the Bonus round – a chance for you to redeem yourself.

A mute person goes into a shop and wants to buy a toothbrush. By imitating the action of brushing his teeth he successfully expresses himself to the shopkeeper and the purchase is done.

Next a blind man comes into the shop who wants to buy a pair of sunglasses.

How does he indicate what he wants?
(Answers below.)

When Is It Time

How do you know when it is time to "hang up your car keys?

When your dog has this look on his face.



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8/23

KEEP IT IN THE CLUB

Got a vehicle for sale?
Please consider advertising it in *Backfire* first, to give your fellow members the first option of buying.

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).

Quiz Answers

1. You would then be second.
2. Second last? Just joining in????
3. 4100 (not 5000, which your mind first tells you).
4. Nunu (runs thorough the vowels - a,e i,o,u).
5. He asks. (He's blind, not deaf & dumb.)

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September 2023 at a glance (details Page 9)

1954 Willys Aero

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27 Beeac Pub Run. Leave 10am Waurin Ponds parking bay,	28 Avalon Swap Federation Open Tour	29 28/8 to 1/9	30 Federation Open Tour	31 August Federation Open Tour	1	2
OR Q J #G LV WD Q F H #U D O O \ ##						
3	4	5	6	7 Coffee Run. 10am Eastern Hub Complex	8	9
Z G K Y F #OR Q J #G LV WD Q F H #U D O O \ ##						
10 Shepparton Swap	11	12 General Meeting 7.30pm	13 Dine Out RSL	14	15	16
17 Bairnsdale, Buloke & Castlemaine Swaps	18	19 Committee Meeting	20	21 Tinker Day Meet 10am Newling Reserve, Moriac	22	23
24 Club Run to Werribee Zoo. 8.30am Corio Bay Roadhouse	25 Backfire Deadline	26 7pm Tech Night "Wipers"	27	28	29 Backfire Folding Morning	30
1 October	2	3	4	5 Oct Coffee Run. 10am Frank McKenzie's or 9.45 Clubrooms	6	7
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.						