

ISSUE 792



MAY 2024

THE VINTAGE DRIVER

The official magazine of the Vintage Drivers Club

Patron: Brian Tanti



THE VINTAGE DRIVERS' CLUB INC

Established 1958 Reg No. A0110905M ABN 30 004 426 528

'Catering for those who own or appreciate Vintage Vehicles'

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Committee: Trevor Barby



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Email: committee2@vdc.org.au

Safety Check Officers

The following Club Members are eligible to conduct Vehicle Safety Inspections on Members vehicles and sign Vehicle Safety Reports:

John Rhodes	0400 118 309
Brian Smith	0401 802 264
John Davis	0418 998 520
John Johnston	0417 354 998
Hein Otten	0418 390 538

An inspection fee will be charged by the service provider which will include an amount of \$25, which is to be returned to the Club.

Licensed Club Nominee:

John Johnston

Magazine Editor

Iain Ross

Email: editor@vdc.org.au

Events Committee:

Stuart McCorkelle, Doug & Edith Stevenson, Garry Jewell, Holly Schwind, Adam Francis and Doug Sterry.

Members Meeting – Natter Night Friday 24th May 2024

Enjoy a drink and a chat from 6.30pm
Meeting starts at 8pm

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the Vintage Drivers Club or its officers. Whilst all care has been taken, neither the club nor its officers accept responsibility for the accuracy of information printed and or the quality of any items or services advertised or mentioned in this publication. The editor reserves the right to edit contributions submitted for publication.

CALENDAR 2024

May	19th	Sunday	National Motoring Heritage Day
	24th	Friday	Members Meeting
	24th-26th	Fri to Sun	Historic Winton Races
June	8th	Saturday	Coffee & Chat
	7th- 10th	Fri to Mon	Kings Birthday Bash
	12th	Wednesday	Mid Week Run
	28th	Friday	Members Meeting
July	13th	Saturday	Coffee & Chat
	17th	Wednesday	Mid Week Run Christmas in July
	26th	Friday	Members Meeting
	28th	Sunday	New Members Day & 100 year Cars

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New Members

The following have recently joined our Club,
Please make them very welcome

Ian & Pat Young 1928 Austin 16/6 Burnham Sedan.
Nick Elliott & Jan Wehrmann 1929 Chrysler 65 Ute.

We hope you enjoy being members of our Club.

Front Cover:



Bruce MacLean's 1928 Oakland Tourer, read more inside this issue.

Membership Enquiries

New Membership Applications &
all membership enquiries to Doug
Stevenson Mob: 0419 319 977
Email: membership@vdc.org.au

Magazine Closing Date

Closing date for contributions for the June magazine is:

Monday 3rd June 2024

Permit Renewals & Applications: are to be sent to the Club Permits Officer, Arnold Chivers 10 Beaufort Rise, Warrandyte Vic 3113. Documentation should include—**1.** VicRoads Renewal Application Form **SIGNED BY THE MEMBER** **2.** Cheque or money order made payable to VicRoads **3.** Stamped envelope addressed to VicRoads. OR Stamped self addressed envelope if you want the signed form returned to yourself. The Club Permits Officer will: Confirm the applicant's membership, financial status and vehicle eligibility and will post all relevant documents in the envelope provided. **NEW PERMIT APPLICATIONS** are to be sent to the Club Permit Officer as above and include **1.** Vic Roads Application Form **2.** VicRoads Eligibility Form **3.** Photos as per VicRoads requirements **4.** For vehicles pre 1948, a vehicle safety report signed by an authorized Vehicle Safety Check Officer as appointed by the Club or a roadworthy certificate. Vehicles post 1948 a Roadworthy Certificate. As it is better for the owner to personally collect the new plates from VicRoads the application should be accompanied by a stamped self addressed envelope and no payment need be included.

From the President

We arrived home last night after spending nine days touring on the Spirit of the Twenties. It always amazes me how these events bring our members closer together. Newer members are accepted and made welcome on their first Spirit. The willingness of members to help those who have had a breakdown is inspiring. On the rally we had four lady drivers, one was on her own the entire rally (what a credit to her) one had a passenger for most of the time and the other two had a passenger all the time. At any sign of trouble there were some fellas there having a look and fixing it.

This is our club's signature event, and it will occur again in two years' time. We would also like to have an event next year for all club vehicles. This would mean someone agreeing to organise the event. Please let Stuart know if you can do this. If no hands go up, then unfortunately there will be no event.

Membership renewals will be sent out at the end of May and are due 30th June. No club permits will be signed after the 30th June if fees are not paid.

Happy and Safe Motoring.

Glenda Chivers



From the Editors Desk

Welcome to the May edition of The Vintage Driver.

It has been a busy time for the club with the running of the biannual Spirit of the Twenties rally and for the editorial team, the Florence Thomson rally for lady motorists in classic and vintage motors.

I believe that the Spirit was as successful as ever with a really good turnout of vintage vehicles touring northern Victoria for nine days. We will have details in forthcoming editions of our magazine. At the Florence Thomson rally our members Ann and Lyle Drysdale took off the major award for the Spirit of the Tour. Great effort.

This month we have a wide variety of topics featured, thanks to our members who have been so willing to provide articles for publication. But as always please do not hesitate to send me self-written articles we are always on the lookout for more and welcome your contributions.

For the recent editions on the cover, we have been featuring new members with their vintage vehicles. So, if you would like to see your vehicle featured please let me know.

As part of the arrangement, we do like to get a short article about your vehicle and your interest in it.

With the growing shortage of technicians able to repair early vehicles, if you get good service from a repairer and you feel he may be able to assist other members, please let us know so we can spread the word.

And finally, if there is something that you would like to see included in our magazine please advise us.

Cheers
Iain Ross



COMING EVENTS

Doc's Dodge – our club car is available for use by members to attend any of the events. Booking form on our website or contact club car manager – Dave Jenkins 0413 901 73

National Motoring Heritage Day Sunday 19th May



This the day we celebrate our passion for our heritage vehicles, and you are encouraged to get your Club car out on the road and let the public share our passion. Try the AOMC organised events at various metro and country locations. Details see

<https://www.aomc.asn.au/national-motoring-heritage-day>

Suggested event for VDC members at Trentham: See poster opposite.

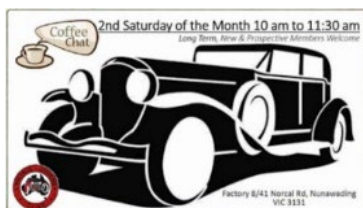
Members Meeting Friday 24th May

Historic Winton Races Fri 24th to Sun 26th May

See poster opposite for details.

Coffee & Chat Saturday 8th June.

10.00 am at our Clubrooms.



COMING EVENTS

Doc's Dodge – our club car is available for use by members to attend any of the events.
Booking form on our website or contact club car manager – Dave Jenkins 0413 901 73

Kings Birthday Bash Fri 7th to Mon 10th June



An event for those not afraid of the dirt
Entry details will be available on club web site
and in email notices.



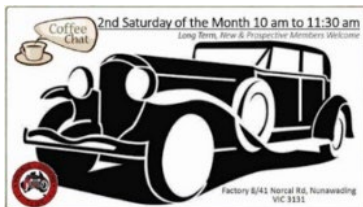
Mid Week Run Wednesday 12th June

Details will be available on club web site and in
email notices.

Members Meeting Friday 28th June

Coffee & Chat Saturday 13th July.

10.00 am at our
Clubrooms.



CHRISTMAS IN JULY

After a 5 year absence, it's on again
Wednesday, 17th July, 2024
Arrive at The Stamford Hotel, cnr. Stud &
Wellington Roads, Rowville
at 9.30 a.m. for a 10.00 a.m. start
We will have a leisurely drive, arriving at
our destination around 11.00 a.m. to
view a Military Museum before sitting
down for lunch at 12.30 p.m.

Cost is \$45.00 per person – drinks
available at the bar at Member's prices
Entries must be paid in full prior to the
event to reserve your spot – payable to
Maureen, Sue or myself

R.S.V.P. & payment required by
Member's Meeting – 28th June
Hope you can join in the fun & enjoy a
delicious Christmas lunch in July
Enquiries: Kurt 0402 117788

Members Meeting Friday 28th June

New Members Day & Celebration of 100 Year Old Vehicles Sunday 28th July

All new members who have joined in last
12 months and members with vehicles
listed with club as 1924 models will receive
an invitation to this day. So, keep the day
free and come along to meet new members
and celebrate the 100 year old cars.

Past Events

Coffee and Chat Working Bee

We had a great day today with our club coffee and chat working bee.

We had seventeen people turn up to give a hand with the car and there wasn't a clean hand in the workshop. Everyone got stuck into doing something and we got so much done it was great.

Jude, Lynne, and Glenda kept the table full of food, coffee and tea and they cooked the BBQ for lunch. There was definitely no shortage of food.



Job's, we got stuck into were getting the brakes all together.

Richard and Terry got the brakes altogether while a few of us others started on getting new bushes into the springs and chassis.



Trevor and Arnold getting things ready to fit up. Not sure who that other idiot on his knees is looking rather useless. Making out he's doing something important.

Once the bushes were in the boys got the front axle fitted up.

Looks like Richard is overseeing the brakes being fitted, Cracking the whip.



Past Events

Coffee and Chat Working Bee



We gave Grant an axle of another car and just told him to stay busy pulling it apart to keep him away from the real thing. He was none the wiser and felt he accomplished a lot for his days effort.

All jokes aside for a second or two Grant was here at 7:00 and has spent quite a few Saturdays here with me and Richard getting a lot of the parts cleaned and ready for today.



More food and another coffee break and a fair bit of BS being discussed between mouthfuls.



Kevin, Frank, and Grant got the rear springs all bushed up and bolted the rear axle in.

Once that was in, they fitted up the rear brakes and drums.

We lost Frank for a while out at the sand blasting cabinet. Every time we looked, he seemed very attached to it, so we let him be. We thought it was best to not take a photo of that.

Kirk and Jim pulled the rest of the engine down and got it ready for a good steam clean.

John, Ross, Jim, and Grant got stuck into all the sanding of the wheels, cowl, and bonnet parts ready for a bit more paint to be applied. Doesn't appear to be much happening just at this point in time but they got heaps of sanding done.



The Wire wheels will be getting their cream topcoat sometime this week coming.

Trevor and Kevin finished off mounting the gearbox in so we can work out the placement for the overdrive.



Past Events

Coffee and Chat Working Bee



Rear axle fitted up.



Gear box mounted.



Front axle all done.



A huge thank you to everyone who participated and gave a hand. Everybody put in a huge effort getting a massive amount of work done in just one day. We will have it rolling around the shed in no time soon.

Cheers Matt

Past Events

Our Club Car features in the Warrandyte Festival again.

It was back to the long traditional main street parade opening for the Warrandyte Festival on Saturday April 20th this year.

Members may recall my report in the April 2023 magazine about Doc's Dodge being a star attraction at last year's event despite that parade being cancelled because of a Total Fire Ban declaration. I just parked on the nature strip to the Reserve access road, and they came with the kids to sit in it and ask all about it.

The photos show a different story this year.

The main street was closed with police at each end to enable every school, club and Community group to show off their outfits and skill. Bands, teens stilt walkers, dance troupes, dragons, fire trucks set off past the community centre balcony as MP's, mayors Councillors and crowds waved in fine weather.

A full load of dignitaries piled into the Dodge to join other local open cars following the procession to the Stiggants Reserve where a full day of events was getting under way. My passengers were interviewed over a PA system as we turned in and I had told the crowd a little about how story of the Club Car.

The five of us on board had a fun time with a lot of crowd interaction. The Mayor and Councillors were all complimentary about the car's appearance and comfortable ride.

Cr Diamente regaled her friends about her last ride perched on the rumble seat in my DA coupe. I had fronted successfully for a decade but that year the battery died on the starting line. I roll started into the main street with the Councillor and our State MP on board without them noticing but the story came out at the finish line when they had to alight so I could park on a nearby slope. Very funny.

No such experience this year, the Club Car performed perfectly and is a credit to the Club.

By Doug Seymour



Past Events

The Spirit of the Twenties Rally

The Spirit of the Twenties Rally commenced on Friday 19th April at the Seville Recreation Reserve. There were ninety one participants with forty eight cars starting in the event.

A full report on the rally will be featured in next month's edition of The Vintage Driver.

Here are some images from the start of the rally provided by Chris Wells.



Past Events

Social Gathering in Place of the Members Monthly Meeting Friday April 26th 2024

There were twenty-six members present on the night. There was no official meeting that evening due to the number of committee members that were taking part in either the Spirit of the 20's Rally conducted by our club, or the Florence Thompson Rally for lady drivers. There was no zoom service provided for this gathering. In place of the meeting was an informal social evening at which members could enjoy each other's company, swap ideas, and tell tall stories. The evening was enjoyed by those members that attended with supper served by Sue Shulz and Judy Weeks.

Next month it's back to normal with a regular member meeting on Friday 24th May. Be there or be square!

CLUB PERMIT SIGNATURE CHANGES

The Vintage Drivers Club will **no longer** accept photos of club permits for signing.

Your options are:

1. Bring to a Club Meeting
2. Bring to Coffee and Chat
3. Post to 10 Beaufort Rise, Warrandyte Vic 3113
4. Scan the renewal to a PDF file and email to: clubpermits@vdc.org.au

If you have a Vic Roads Account, you may also use the Club Permit Endorsement Form. Fill in all your details and scan to a PDF file and email to the address above.

Arnold Chivers

Club Permit Officer VDC

Past Events

2024 NIGHT TRIAL

A REPORT FROM INDOORS

As part of the ecumenical agreement between the two pre-war car clubs (Pwatican 3) this year's Night Trial was organised – superbly – by Stuart McCorkelle and the VDC.

So confident was McCorkelle that the faultless, seamless and all-to-easy directions would lead to nil complaints that he removed his person to Bendigo for the weekend, leaving the inevitable blow-back to his hapless VDC colleagues. Be all of that as it may, some 22 Rabbits (8 VDC, 14 VSCC) turned up at the Corben Oval at Yarra Bend Park late Saturday arvo, firmly to be trapped, blinking, in the evening's Headlights.

Your correspondent and Mrs Dazzle had graced (ha!) the interior of Hugh Venables's 1930 Oakland V8 Saloon to act as navigator and spotter for the event. Hugh would have scored far better by bringing the family cat instead. Section 1 (of 3) seemed simple enough: follow the blow-by-blow directions and answer some observation questions en route to a dinner stop at the Spotswood Hotel at, ermmm....., Spotswood.

Well.

The blasted questions (hundreds of them, hundreds) just would not let up (for example: did you know that from a certain location on the Yarra boulevard between Chandler Highway and Johnston Street there exists a really useful sign advising that it is only 34km to Williamstown. FFS), and it was fortunate that the Oakland is possessed of a brilliant U-turning circle. Backtracking frequently and furiously we eventually got all but one or two of the answers. But. We arrived at the pub perilously close to being flagged out again for Section 2.

After gulping down a melange of pub parma/fish/calamari and way too many chips, it was onwards and upwards, albeit well behind the early eaters.

Section two required entrants to photograph their car adjacent certain specified locations, and then scamper out to the Control at Airport West by 2215. We got the first bit right for quite a number of locations, but rather underestimated the time to get to Airport West (impaired by wonky work from the Navigator to get onto the Western Ring Road and then getting marooned in the queue behind some gargantuan oversized big-build beam-thingummy escorted convoy) thus wiping off any credits gained with the photographs and getting very very deep into serious negative territory.

Section three saw us blow-by-blow navigating again and attempting to spot clues in the fleeting darkness. Again the remarkable U-turning circle of the Venables Oakland enabled us to identify all but one or two of the clues, but a quick glance at the steam-driven timepiece brought the horror realisation that we had not sent the photographs through to the conveniently-absent Organiser before midnight. This was achieved with seconds to spare, and we got into the cossetting surrounds of the VDC clubrooms at about 0015.

Entrants and results are listed nearby, where you will see how cunningly well your VSCC Correspondent effectively nobbled a VDC Entrant.

A really great fun evening, with perfect weather to boot.

Many thanks from all of us to the absentee Organiser, his Marshalls and Helpers, and especially to Hugh for tolerating us aboard the Oakland Saloon.

Article provided by Mark Burns
Competition Secretary VSCC

2024 NIGHT TRIAL ENTRANTS and SCORES

Doug and Melissa Sterry	705	1 st Outright	1 st VDC
Conor Ryan	688	2 nd Outright	1 st Vintage VSCC
Andrew Green	612	3 rd Outright	2 nd Vintage VSCC
Trevor Leech	555	4 th Outright	1 st PVT VSCC
Mark Alsop	529	5 th Outright	2 nd PVT VSCC
Daniel Zampatti	484	6 th Outright	3 rd Vintage VSCC
Jim Watson	385		2 nd VDC
Chris Wells	373		3 rd VDC
Jamie Hewitt	129		3 rd PVT VSCC
Phil Cassie	53		4 th PVT VSCC
Frank Mercuri	35		4 th VDC
John & Sharron Balthazar	19		5 th PVT VSCC
Richard Badham	23		5 th VDC
Jim Lambert	21		6 th VDC
Steve Denner	16		4 th Vintage VSCC
Neill Murdoch	9		=5 th Vintage VSCC
David Howell	9		=5 th Vintage VSCC
Russell Meehan	3		VSCC
Mark Weller	minus 38		6 th PVT VSCC
Hugh Venables	minus 91		VDC
Gerald Swinnerton	DNF		VSCC
Matt Weeks	DNF		VDC

Past Events

Florence Thomson Tour

The annual tour for lady drivers of veteran, vintage and classic vehicles on the weekend of 26-28th April. It saw eighty-four vehicles converge on Traralgon for a weekend of touring and socializing.

Our club was represented by Ann and Lyle Drysdale with their two daughters Jennifer & Allison, Catherine and Gordon Berg, Naomi and Nick Gruzevskis, Dionne and Andrew Hendy, Karon and Leigh Whitfield.

Anne took off the award for the Spirit of the Tour for the entrant that best embodies the spirit of the event.

During the weekend participants were encouraged to dress in the period of their vehicle and visited the Gippsland Vehicle collection in Maffra and Old Gippstown heritage village in Moe.

Participants enjoyed the tour as many positive comments were received and was evident by the number who have attended the event since its inception.

Next year we hope to attract more vintage and veteran vehicles. So, watch out for details of next year's event and come along for an enjoyable tour.



Top: Ann receiving her award from Keith Mortimer AOMC

and Maureen Ross event coordinator

Middle Left: Jennifer, Lyle, Ann & Allison

Middle Right: Ann & Allison during the tour

Bottom: Ann & Allison at Old Gippstown



Dionne & Andrew
Hendy



Karon & Leigh
Whitfield



Naomi & Nick
Gruzevskis



Catherine &
Gordon Berg



Members Car

Bruce McLean's 1928 Oakland Tourer

Bruce McLean tells his Oakland story.

My interest in vintage cars started when I was quite young and was sparked by a 1929 DA Dodge sedan, owned at the time by Rod and Judith Adler. Their family and ours often visited each other, and when Rod, Judith and their kids came to our place it was often in the Dodge. I thought that Dodge was just the coolest car on the planet.

As a voracious reader of old car books and magazines I thought I had a pretty good knowledge of most makes, but one day in the mid 80s I saw an article in Restored Cars magazine about Oakland. I'd heard of the brand but had paid it scant attention, and I knew nothing of the link between Pontiac and Oakland. But a black and white photo of a 1926 Oakland Tourer in the article really caught my eye and I resolved there and then to one day own an Oakland.

So the hunt was on, and in the following years and with very limited finances I looked at a few basket cases, but quickly moved on when I realised just how bad they were. At one point I had actually brought home the very bare and basic remains of an early '20s 6 cylinder OHV Oakland, which turned out to be the same chassis and running gear used in the final years of Scripps Booth before General Motors wound them up. Armed with this knowledge I got in contact with Les Francis who owned a 1920 Scripps Booth, and to cut a long story short I bought a lot of surplus parts from Les and started to restore my Oakland remains as a 1922 Scripps Booth.

In 1989 I came across a fairly battered and incomplete 1928 Oakland Tourer. I did some research on the 1928 models and decided they looked pretty neat – it wasn't a '26 like the picture I fell in love with, but it was cheap enough, so I dived in head first and brought it home. The look on my wife's face when I brought it home was pretty much as you'd imagine; few words were spoken, none were necessary. I knew her well enough to know exactly what she was thinking, but I was full of enthusiasm of youth, and I had supreme confidence in my abilities as a maker of miracles, and, well, 35 years later that car is still not finished. It was around this time I first joined the club.



Along the way, I stripped that car down, meticulously documenting and labelling everything as I did, and I stashed it away under the house we were renting at the time so I could fit my daily driver in the single car garage, which meant the Scripps Booth also had to go. Two years later baby number one came on the scene, so the car was quickly relegated to memory. Two more years later we bought our first home, so the many pieces of the car were pulled out from under the old house and re-deposited under the new one. At that time the 'new' house didn't even have a garage – it was another 13 years before we finally built one of those, and in the meantime, I had let my club membership lapse.

Over the years I visited swap meets all over Victoria and picked up many bits and pieces here and there, as well as from other Oakland owners I'd got to know through the Oakland Register. Fast forward many years and two more kids later, and one day my daughter put me on the spot. The conversation went something like this:

Daughter: "Dad, do you remember what I asked you about the old car years ago?"

Me: "No darl, what was that?"

Daughter: "I asked you when would the old car under the house be finished"

Me: "Really? What did I say?"

Daughter: "You said it would be finished in time for me to use as a wedding car"

Me: (silently) Damn.... "How old were you then?"

Daughter: "11"

Me: Damn...

She was 22 by this time and had recently become engaged. At least I hadn't made her a pinkie-promise or anything binding like that, but I still felt bad about having let her down, so I resolved to get cracking and make amends. Needless to say, it didn't get used as a wedding car – a bride sitting on a milk crate on a bare chassis was never going to happen.

But in the years following I did make some good progress, and it was actually during covid lockdowns where I was working reduced hours that I actually got the most work done. I had the engine rebuilt. I rebuilt the gearbox and diff and the braking system, re-bushed everything and made a number of new parts. The wheels were re-spoked, and the car is now a running, rolling and (almost) driveable chassis. But now our kids have all grown and left home and there are grandchildren to amuse. "What're you doing Poppy?" "I'm working on your car mate". "When is it going to be finished?" Damn. Another guilt trip.... Okay, now I'm impatient to have something I can drive right away.

Members Car

Bruce MacLean's 1928 Oakland Tourer

A phone call from an Oakland Register member a couple months ago had me heading towards Wangaratta to look at a 1928 Tourer that looked the goods. This was a fully restored car with an interesting history. I approached the finance minister with some trepidation as I had only recently bought a new car and was quite pleasantly surprised to get a nod of approval. We drove up and inspected it and took the grandkids to help sway things in our favour. Needless to say, I bought the car – the conversation on the drive up there went something along the lines of “there’s really no chance of you not buying this car, is there”? Umm...no. No there isn’t.

The Oakland was bought by a farming family at a clearing sale in Port Germein SA in 1956. The new owner used to shoot and trap rabbits to supplement the family farm income and the car had a large box strapped to the luggage rack to store the bunnies in. His kids also used the car to drive a couple of miles every day to catch the school bus during the late 50s and early 60s. After a time, it was laid up in a shed on the farm and brought out once in a while to use in street parades in the town.

In the late 80s the car was shipped across to Katanning in the southwest of WA, where one of the daughters had moved with her husband to run a motel. The car was still in pretty reasonable original condition at this point, but in the mid 90s the decision was made to restore it, so the body was removed, some rust

repairs completed and then repainted. The interior was reupholstered, and a new hood made, the engine and all the rest of the mechanicals were overhauled and all the brightwork was re-chromed. The car was then used for a number of years, touring the local area and taking part in local rallies, and in between times it had pride of place on display in the function room of the motel.

In 2013 the now retired couple moved back to SA – to Naracoorte, where the car was further rallied in the local area until the husband passed away in 2021, whereupon his widow and the car moved to the Wangaratta area to be closer to her daughter. The car was still being used in the Wangaratta area until very recently but changing circumstances had dictated that it had to be moved on.

So, after travelling back and forth across the country over the years, the car is now settled in Emerald Victoria where I plan to hang onto it, use it regularly and share it with family and friends. And yes, I still plan to continue restoring the other Oakland, and who knows, in another 35 years it may just about be finished? At the very least, I expect at some point in the future there may be a grandchild asking if it’ll be finished in time so they can have them both as wedding cars...



Club Project - Vintage Catering Van Matt Weeks Reports.

We have made plenty of progress with the coffee catering van in the last few weeks. A lot of preparation work went into getting all the parts ready for the working bee so we could get everything together. We replaced all the bushes and bearings for the king pins in the front axle.

They all went back together nice and tight and now the wheels are on they move freely.

I got the brake shoes back the day before the working bee which was great, so we had them all there to get the brakes back together.



Spent some time getting everything cleaned and ready for assembly.



Richard and Terry got all the brakes assembled on the working bee and back on the axles. I machined all the drums back to a fresh new surface for the new shoes, so the brakes on the coffee van should be really nice.

Everyone put so much effort into the working bee we actually ran out of work by the end of the day so I got the guys to give me a hand to get the gearbox mounted so I can fit the Laycock overdrive into it.

The next couple of days after the coffee and chat working bee I got the wire wheels all painted and the chassis finished in satin black.

The sides of the chassis have been painted gloss black and I also did the drums in gloss so they are easily cleaned.



The wire wheels came up beautifully with the new hub caps



Club Project - Vintage Catering Van Matt Weeks Reports.

and freshly zinc plated lock rings.

So, everyone that turned up to the working bee helped us get the chassis onto four wheels, which I think was a huge combined effort to get that done in a day. Well done to everyone that turned up. They all went home with dirty hands and a belly full of food thanks to Jude, Lynne and Glenda. The workers definitely got slower by the end of the day due to so much coffee, tea and food on offer.

I have also picked up the clutch and brake master cylinder which has been re sleeved and completely rebuilt.



The engine block had a good steam clean after Kirk and Jim dismantled it. I can now give it a good check over and get it measured up ready for machining.

Cheers
Matt



A Mercedes Benz Story

Restoration of a 1952, W 136, 170 Da "Ute" (Pick-up)

Our member Colin Wilson describes his restoration of an unusual Mercedes Benz utility dating from 1952. After inspection and assessment by members of the Mercedes Benz Club knowledgeable about 170 model Mercedes Benz, the vehicle was purchased in February 2019.

The previous owner, after working on it sporadically for more than 15 years, decided to sell it as he had found another project with more appeal. He had carried out a large amount of work including having the motor rebuilt, refurbishing the brakes and replacement of some of the timber frame and metal panels of the body. The original engine was considered not worthy of repair as the block casting was broken at the mounting for the starter, so a replacement was sought. Another engine was sourced and rebuilt. The



number on this engine indicates it is a 1955 engine produced for W180 cars. Once the vehicle was in my workshop it was essential to clean accumulated dust and dirt from everything and at the same time do a stock take of all items to determine their condition and to see if any parts were missing. This process became a challenge as there is very little information available on this model and there are very few still in existence. Now that I realised what was ahead there was a need to gather technical information and prepare a plan for the restoration. However, I still had a problem in not knowing what a guard stiffener and splasher looked like. They are referred to in the manual but without a labelled diagram it became a part jigsaw puzzle. A further challenge arose in that the guard supports, now recognized as stiffeners, differed from left to right. One was higher and positioned further out than the other - over 40 mm difference - should I be concerned? Fortunately, a component panel beater, who helped create another Mercedes ute was willing to offer his services and actually helped to bring the vehicle from a dusty open shed in the country to my workshop. He sure likes a challenge. The vehicle was a 1952 Mercedes Benz W136 170 Diesel Pick up!

Body restoration saw as many body panels removed as possible so they could be stripped, de rusted and primed ready for panel work and refitting. The quality and fit of the front guards posed a serious problem as they were rusty, cracked and had been repaired with bronze. The bonnet had been badly distorted and required a lot of work to return it to its original condition.

Chassis repair carried out by the previous owner had resulted in distortion of the frame so that sections had to be pulled back in place with considerable force to enable a satisfactory fit of the doors to be achieved.

The rear pick up body had been distorted and dented over the years it was decided to retain as much of the original tray as possible and fill dents in the vertical supports. It was decided to clad the sides of the tray with marine ply, stained and grooved to provide the appearance of timber boards.





The engine was totally rebuilt, electrical wiring renewed and the cabin fully retrimmed.

Having been produced when hand skills were required and use of natural materials such as leather for oil seals finishes can vary from original and many challenges can be encountered when working on early models



of somewhat rare vehicles.

Colin reports that the journey to restore this vehicle was an enjoyable experience enriched by the assistance and encouragement of people with a similar addiction.



The Ridolfi Fiat 501

This story began in late 1925 at the Fiat Lingotto factory in Turin when the wide track chassis number 12514836 was laid down and progressed through the works as a chassis only for export to Australia. Nothing unusual as Fiat sales of the Tipo 501C to Australia were quite consistent.

It was destined for Autocar Industries in Russell Street, Melbourne, on the corner with Little Collins Street, who did not send it to the usual Melbourne Motor Body Co for a tourer or roadster body but to the James Flood works in St Kilda Road for a sedan body. This was to be special as this was to be the display car on the company's stand at the 1926 Motor Show. This was unusual as it was a 2 door car with rear seat access via the folding jump seat provided for the front passenger. The driver's seat was distinctly upmarket, so this was a driver's car, not a chauffeur's car.

No doubt one of the staff got a suitable commission when the car was sold off the stand to Mrs Bertha Horne, of 15 Dundas Street, Thornbury. This was the address of one of the local milk suppliers or local dairies. The milk business provided a suitable living for Mrs Horne and her son Robert. During World War II, milk rounds were rationalised, and rounds were given to a specific area, rather than an area being serviced by several milkmen (or woman in this case).

The car was used carefully but in later years, after the demise of Mrs Horne, her son Robert continued the milk round with the horses and milk carts. If somehow a customer was missed, he would fire up the Fiat rather than hitch up one of the horses and make the delivery. It also did have some private use but sometime around 1970 it was run into by a Ford Foulcan and the rear was damaged, including smashing the special taillight which had a green glass in it. Richard Unkles remembers seeing him around 1980, when he was still doing the milk round, but the Fiat laid idle in the stables.

Around 1983 Robert died and his possessions were left to a lady cousin



who contacted the Vintage and Veteran Fiat Club to find a suitable new home for the damaged Fiat. The Club called for tenders, and it was won by John Blakey in Cairns, who was very keen to win it. He also was keen to get the early milk bottling machine which had processed the old thick lip milk bottles fitted with the round waxed paper caps. The reason is that his grandfather had the dairy in Cairns in much earlier days.



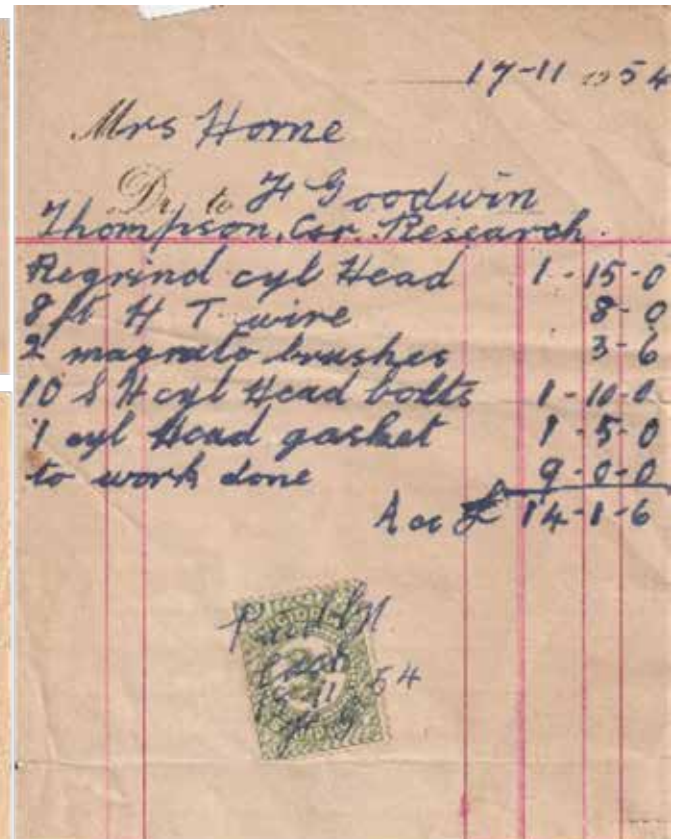
John was keen to get into the project and carefully dismantled the major components. Unfortunately, he contracted a fatal cancer soon after. He was very aware that his good friend Tony Ridolfi was very keen on the project and John made sure the car went to Tony. Tony collected all the parts and trailered them some 80km south to his home and workshop at Babinda. But when unloading he discovered the front passenger's jump seat was missing. So, he drove back to Cairns but it was not to be seen, despite his best efforts.

A couple of weeks later John's funeral was held in Cairns which Tony attended. On that day one of his friends discovered the missing seat leaning against a lamp post beside the highway. It seems that someone had picked it up but realised they had no use for it and put it out beside the road. Tony was a very industrious

restorer and completed the restoration in a couple of years. This was one project of many Tony undertook but this one was never passed on. Eventually Tony died in 2022 aged 98 and the Fiat passed to his son Glenn in Cairns, also a car enthusiast.

Some club members might remember Glenn was introduced as a visitor at the January monthly meeting. He had come down to provide assistance with a Cadillac restoration.

Glenn says because of the usual distances covered with runs around Cairns, the Fiat does not get out as much as it should, but it is in safe hands, 98 years after it was the show car at the 1926 Melbourne Motor Show. It seems that if the right home was found for it a sale could be effected.



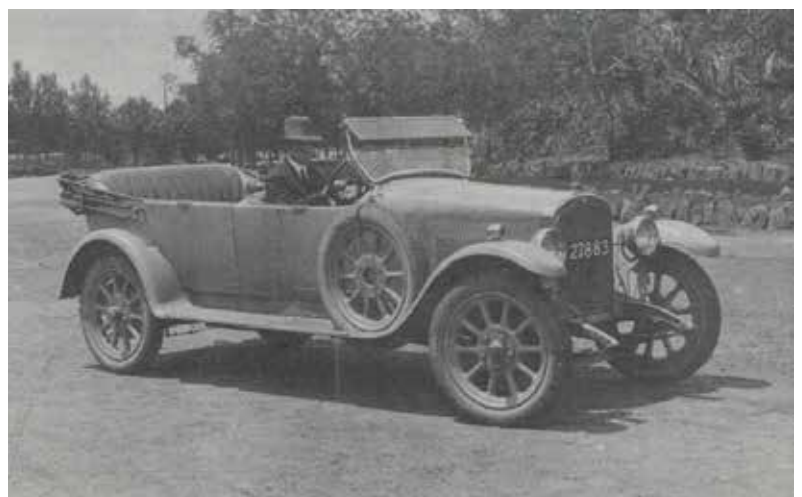
Last Month's Mystery Vehicle

Last month's mystery vehicle was an Itala tipo 50 of around 1921.

"The Mystery car pictured this month is an Itala Tipo 50. I know because I have one." So reports proud owner David Stott

The car pictured is one of the 1921 1,000-mile Alpine Trial cars and the driver is JH Grice. It is the same car as used in the magazine advertisement for the Spirit of the Twenties rally with registration number 27883 and is fitted with a James Flood body.

My car is an early production 1921 Tipo 50 which is an "repaired as necessary" unrestored car. In the early years Itala designed and built cars in Turin Italy mostly aimed at competition including Grand Prix and the well know Peking to Paris race of 1907. Many models were built in small numbers perhaps just to satisfy competitions of the time. In the company's 30-year existence some 46 models were produced.



Last Month's Mystery Vehicle

A change of management after the first world war introduced a car designed for the mass market and this was the Tipo 50 with approximately 734 built between the 1919 – 1926. A slightly modified Tipo 50B (V shaped radiator) was built in 1923/24 with a further 242 produced.

The Tipo 50 was a conservative design for the time with a Monoblock engine, an exposed flywheel, a separately mounted gearbox, multi disc clutch and two-wheel brakes. It was expensive at around 875 pounds (here in Australia). James Flood here in Melbourne were the sole Australian agent for Itala, and therefore most Itala's we know about have James Flood bodies including at least three cars that are now back in the UK.

I have found that the Tipo 50 is a large, strongly built, heavy car and durability of gearbox and differential seems very good.

The engine is of 2.8 litres, with a quoted top speed of 80 k/mh, and I have had my Itala up to this speed on the freeway without effort. It is a powerful engine and a good hill climber.

I have found the two-wheel brakes effective, and I have not felt it needed more braking power. However, the transmission brake is not so effective. Originally regular braking was done on the hand brake to the rear wheels, and the transmission brake was operated by the pedal and was the emergency brake. When I bought the car, it had been modified so that all three brakes worked together (expressly forbidden in the owner's manual) on the pedal.

I have now changed the arrangement so that the pedal operates the rear brakes, and the hand brake works the transmission brake. This is more in line with the way we drive now and for safety seemed the best way to go. Also, I would not like to see the outcome of heavy braking using the transmission brake through the diff in the wet, as loss of traction on one wheel could see the other one rotate the opposite way.

Itala engineers appear to have been kept busy with new designs along the way and from experience within our group of Itala owners there were many changes made and we keep finding differences between similar model cars. For example, the gear change is central on the early cars like mine and is on the right on the 50B. The firewall is a different aluminium casting on the Tipo 50B also, yet in most other ways they are the same car.

My Tipo 50 has six volt electrics and from new was fitted with American Westinghouse Starter, Generator, gauges and switches and described in the owner's manual. This seems very unusual for an Italian car, at a time and in Turin, where Fiat was established, Fiat were already using local made Marelli 12-volt electrics.

An interesting point is that there are no serial numbers stamped on the ID plates on any of the Westinghouse components on my car, and original records from Westinghouse I have seen show all the many makes of car (some obscure) they sold to with specifications and serial numbers. These records do not show that Westinghouse ever sold to Itala. Was this some special back door deal perhaps? This is a mystery we will probably never solve.



Last Month's Mystery Vehicle

Later Itala's were fitted with 12-volt Marelli electrics.

My Itala Tipo 50 completed the RACV 1,000-mile Alpine trial re-enactment organised by the club in 2022. It did need tow starts on the first few days (Thank you John Johnson) but otherwise it did well and got me back home. David Stott.



Thank you, David, it's great to have a member that actually owns our regular mystery vehicle.

As well as David, Ben Wilby was also onto it being an Itala, but Les Lee was a little off the money! Itala was established in 1903 and was successful in racing at the Targa Florio, Coppo Florio, and the Peking to Paris. It was second only to Fiat in local sales targeting a more exclusive clientele than Fiat.

Locally the marque really benefitted from having a very proactive local agent in James Flood who could see the advantages in ensuring the vehicle competed locally in Alpine rallies and other events.

A book outlining the history of Itala has recently been released the Author being Donatella Biffignandi . It was produced by the society of Italian Stories of the Automobile. It has received very favourable reviews.

This Month's Mystery Vehicle

This vehicle built in Little Rock Arkansas was designed to cope with the condition of rural roads in the twenties?

The first correct answer from electronic and hard copy versions will receive a small reward.

Contact: Iain Ross Mob: 0409 027 392
Email: imgross@bigpond.com



Tom Brown Engineering

For those who don't know Tom Brown he is a lover of vintage cars, his grandfather Bob Brown infected him with the love about the same time Tom learnt to walk.

Bob has been a club member since 1980 and the old car interest has migrated through the whole family of his six children and partners. All up the family has around 18 old cars at last count.

Including a lot of Dodges, Cadillac, Ford, Morris, Holden, Chev, International, Bedford and Mack.

Tom turned his hand to mechanical repairs at a very young age, You could see a future in mechanical knowledge when his father Michael pulled the brushcutter apart one day to put new piston and rings in it, and rushed of to answer a phone call upon returning to find Tom had put it back together, at the age of around 5yrs old.

Tom has varied experience in the automotive industry and now works full time at Hofmans engineering where he was awarded apprentice of the year in his final year, (now fully qualified) working on mining and military repairs to very hi tolerances.



Tom showing Freshly poured white metal out of the mould.

As its turned out Last year Tom received a phone call from John McCorkelle telling him about Bill Eldridge (we all know Bill) retiring from his mechanical repair business, and an opportunity to take on the white metal bearing and engine rebuilding side of his business.

Tom decided to call Bill and have a chat.

They came to an agreement and Bill offered to train Tom at Tom's workshop in Bendigo.

With Bills 40yrs of engine rebuilding knowledge and some serious hours of training, Tom has re-white metalled and rebuilt 3 engines already this year in his spare time when not working night shift at Hofmans.



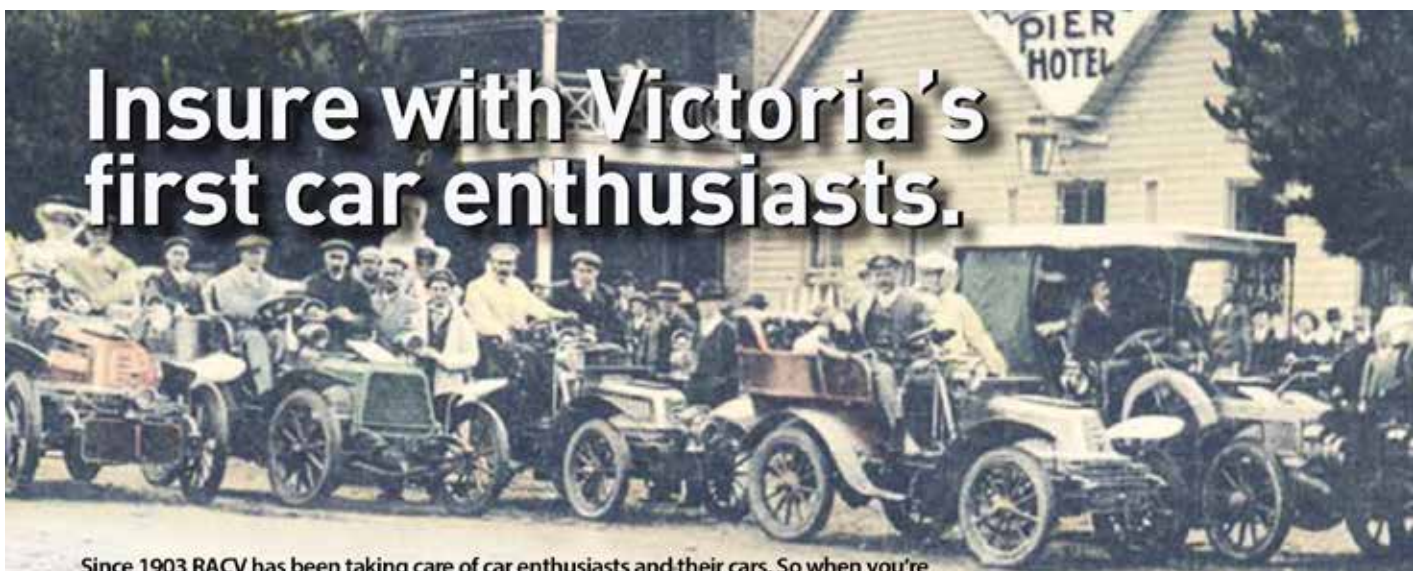
Bill showing Tom how to set up the Line Borer to do the main bearings on a 1923 Dodge.

I think the long term plan is Toms intention to move into a factory to house his growing arsenal of engine rebuilding equipment to cater for the love of Vintage and Classic Car Motoring.

Story by Michael Brown.

Tom can be reached by phone on: 0401 489 676 or email: dc8dodge@gmail.com

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Contact Margherita Boemo M: +61 418 508 511
E: margheritaboemo@gmail.com



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Contact Marilyn Threlfall

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Greg Taplin
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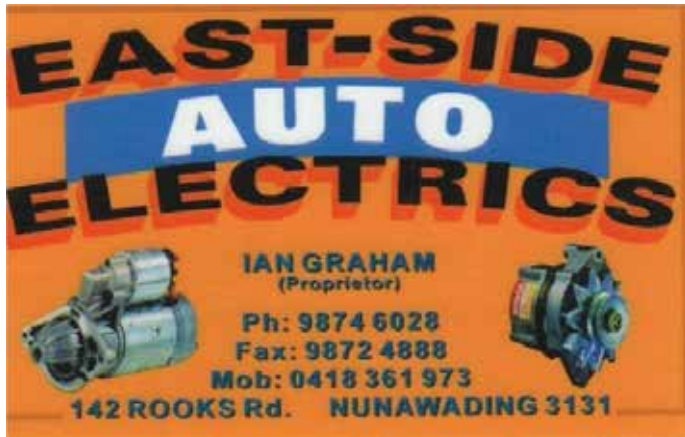


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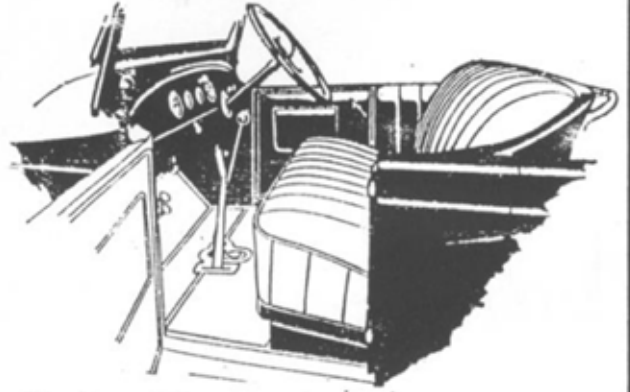


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