

SPIT AND POLISH

Journal of the Veteran Car Club of
Australia (NSW) Inc.

February 2024



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Margaret Beazley AC KC Governor of New South Wales
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ON THE COVER:



1910 Humber owned by Alby Frost at the start of the 1961 Wollongong Rally at Henson Park.

The car was known as 'Top Hat'

(from club archives)



Club Information

Club Management and Contact Details

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Committee Member	VACANT		

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Minutes

Minutes of Monthly Club Meeting held on 25 January 2024. Conducted at the hall and by Zoom.

ATTENDANCE

Committee: 9 Members: 14 Member's family: 2
Total at hall (13) and total on zoom (10): 23

MEETING OPENED AT 8:10PM

APOLOGIES: Barry Shinfield, Dorothy Shinfield, Lynette Martin, David McCredie, Laurie McGrath, Inez and Norm Mitchell

PRESIDENT'S OPENING REMARKS

The president, Phil O'Loan, welcomed members to the meeting. He apologised for the delay due to technical problems with the equipment. He suspects other users haven't reported the problem. The President welcomed all members to 2024 and predicted an exciting year of veteran motoring for the club's 70 birthday.

MINUTES PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes arising from the minutes: Nil
Proposer: Les Johnson Seconded: Ron Cox

INWARDS CORRESPONDENCE

Other clubs: Small Torque
Invitations:
Off Centre Dance Company - Car and Motor Show at Hawkesbury Showground on 3 March 2024
Berrima District Historic Car Club - 17&18 February 2024. Contact Bill Betts
Other:
Inverell Car Show - 11 May 2024
Russell Holden - modifications to his ad
Bill Betts - notification of events on 1 December 2023 and 12 January 2024
Berrima District Historic Vehicle Weekend - 17&18 February
Chrysler Restorers Club - request to use Queens Road as official address
Renault Car Club - dates when hall is available
Bill Bolderson - The triumph over distance -How Aussies, though isolated, produced wonders!
Christmas card from Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC Governor of NSW and Mr Dennis Wilson
Gordon Dewey – advising of the sale of NSW license plate 1
Fair Trading – certified copy of club rules

February 2024

Newcastle Branch minutes

Donations to the library from Bob Lamond and Don Liddle

OUTWARDS CORRESPONDENCE

National Trust – evaluation of High Wheelers Rally

Response to CCHMC re logbooks and rego inspections.

CMC renewal

Thank you emails to safety inspectors –John Burke, John Brumby, Chris Duncan, Malcolm Garthon, Neil Martin, Rob McCarthy, Barry Shinfield and Geoff Simons

Fair Trading – request for certified copy of the club’s rules

Bob Lamond – thank you for donation

Proposer: Graham Weekes Seconded: Will Garthon

TREASURER’S REPORT

The Treasurer’s report was tabled. Balances are:

Moved: Will Garthon Seconded: Robert Fordham

MAGAZINE

Robert has posted the magazine. Lauren wished members a happy new year and has a goal for everyone, to have a full magazine each month. She requested that items for February be sent to her asap as she will be away for a few weeks.

EVENTS

PAST EVENTS

3 December – Newcastle Christmas Party was held at Rathmines Club with 3 veterans attending.

COMING EVENTS

Saturday 27 January - Working bee at the hall. It starts at 8 am. There will be a general clean up of the hall, kitchen and the grounds. Bring your tools for outside work!

Friday 26 January - Northern Mash coffee run - cancelled

Friday 9 February - Southern Highlands Mash coffee run. Meet at Winifred West Park, railway station end of Mittagong for morning tea. Run will be advised closer to date depending on Lunch venue

10 February- Newcastle Branch- breakfast at Heilbrunn's-see Neil's magnificent collection of motorcycles. Contact Graeme Newman if you plan to go.

17 & 18 February - Berrima District Historic Vehicle Weekend

2 March - Newcastle Branch afternoon drive - details to be announced.

3 March - Sydney North Breakfast Meeting at Fagans Park off Carrs Road from 9 am.

16-22 March - National 1- & 2-cylinder rally Albany WA

10-14 April - Premier Rally Inverell

27 April - Gymkhana at Clarendon - more details to come

19 May - National Motoring Heritage Day- more details to come

14 -16 June - Singleton Weekend - more details to come

LIBRARY

Bill Boulderson has published a new book. There will be a book review in Spit and Polish and Bill's contact details published in S&P if members would like to have their own copy.

The library team will meet in February. It has received some generous donations from Bob Lamond and Don Liddle with some treasures.

DATING Nothing to report

PERMIT TO MOVE/REGISTRATION

Since the last meeting 21 permits were processed from Sydney and 6 from the Southern Highlands. Another from Laurie Garrod was processed this week. The registrations from Newcastle are yet to come. There will be another 3-4 from the Southern Highlands and some more from Sydney during the year.

MEMBERSHIP No applications have been received

HALL

Last year the timing of the working bee after the club meeting worked well so we will do the same this time. Robert requested help to move the chairs to the tiled area at the end of the meeting. He reminded members of the working bee to be held on Saturday.

February 2024

CHMC

Jenny Fawbert attended a meeting with Transport for NSW (TfNSW) It was disclosed that there are 77,937 vehicles on historic number plates. A discussion of seat belts resulted in 3 options and legal advice is being sought by TfNSW. The issue of club safety inspectors and logbooks was left as is the status quo.

The President asked for clarification of the seat belt options and timber floors as many veterans have wooden floors and wooden chassises. Jenny stressed that seat belts are not mandatory and 3 options were presented that may suit vehicles.

CMC No report was lodged. Still looking for a delegate.

WEBSITE

Abbey has loaded another 6 years of Spit and Polish from 2012 to 2017. An interested person made enquiries through the website and Graeme has sent the gentleman, Trevor Gaut, a membership form. He has an unrestored 1914 Sunbeam 12/16. There was also a request from the daughter of George Burton, a former member who had the Napier which is now owned by the Blythe family. She was hoping the vehicle could be used for her son's wedding as she used it when she was married. The request has been forwarded to Kerrie Hughes who is hopeful that they can assist.

Lauren received some enquiries through the Facebook page about the timing of events and one to trace a 1908 Metallurgique which is now in Victoria.

GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Donation of photographs from Richard Thomas

Rick Thomas is downsizing and donated 3 photographs to the club at the Newcastle Christmas party. Members were challenged to identify the make of car? Read about the make and how this special vehicle was identified in next month's Spit and Polish. The other two photographs were of Ray Thomas on his way to the 1960 Blue Mountains Rally, and the other a photo of James and Brown

2. 70th Birthday celebrations

The President would like to have more activities and greater member participation to celebrate the club's 70th anniversary.

He would like to have at least 15 members attend Shannons Eastern Creek to display the cars on the main concours. CMC usually organise a display of clubs with significant birthdays.

Other suggestions include garage crawls (Les Johnson offered), guest speakers, celebration dinner, screening of Geneviève.

Any suggestions or volunteers to organise an event or host a garage crawl please contact Phil.

MEETING CLOSED AT 8.50pm

The raffle was drawn.

Phil O'Loan
President

Louise Yeomans
Secretary

President's Report

By Phil O'Loan

The club this year has achieved a very significant milestone, reaching its 70th anniversary. Very importantly the committee would like to celebrate this achievement and encourages as many members as possible to participate in club events this year.

A number of events have been organised this year. The Premier Rally in Inverell on the 10th to 14th of April will be, as the name implies, is the premier event for the year. Expressions of interest have been outstanding, with over 60 cars likely to attend. A special thank you to Rod Holmes and Laurie McGrath for all their efforts in organising this event.

Another important event that will give us the opportunity to promote the anniversary of our club, is Shannons Sydney Classic held at Eastern Creek on Sunday 25th of August. Arrangements have been made to display our cars in the very prestigious and prominent Pitt Row. Furthermore, the club will pay for the cars to participate, sounds like a great day. So if you are interested, contact Graeme Newman and confirm your attendance. Other events being planned this year include garage crawls, special guest speakers, celebration dinner, and screening of Geneviève. Any suggestion, or volunteers to organise an event, or host a garage crawl, please contact me.

The National Rally in 2026 is not that far away, we need to assemble a rally committee to start planning for this event. Very importantly we need to appoint a Rally Director to guide us through the planning process. If you would like to take on this roll, or be a member of the rally committee, please contact me as your contribution would be very much appreciated.

Editor's Report

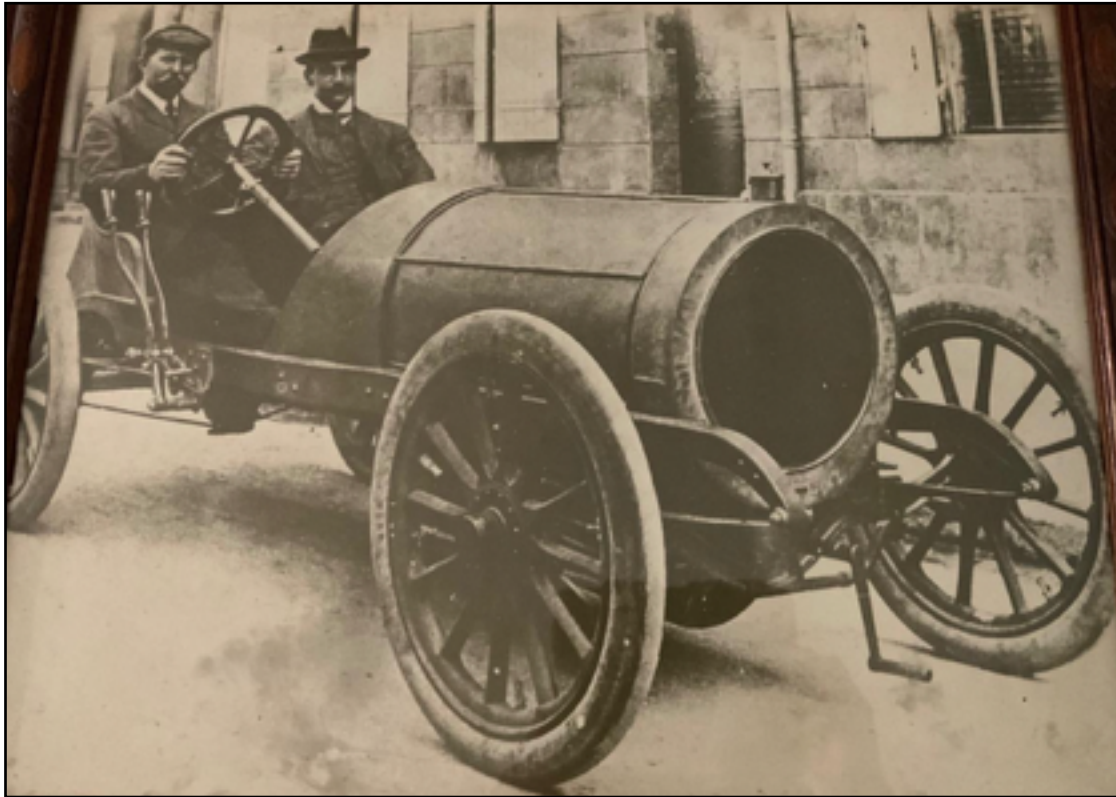
By Lauren Newman

Thank you to Jenny Fawbert, Graeme Newman, Robert Fordham, Rodney Anderson, Catherine Strutt and Peter Cockbain for helping to make this another full and hopefully interesting magazine! The final part of Chris and Catherine's FN adventures (for now!) is in this magazine as well as part 1 on an article from Peter about his Humber, with part 2 coming up in the March magazine.

This magazine has been prepared a bit earlier than usual, as we are heading to Japan in the first week of February so anything that is sent to me from now will be in the March magazine. I appreciate everyone getting their contributions in early this month. We're at capacity for this month again which is great - let's keep it up!

Mystery Picture

By Graeme Newman



At the Newcastle Branch Christmas Luncheon in December, Richard Thomas donated several framed pictures and some other memorabilia to the Club as he is in the process of downsizing. One of the pictures is the one above (I apologize this is a poor photograph of the picture). Richard had purchased it over 30 years ago from an antique shop in the Newcastle suburb of Islington.

Nothing was known about the vehicle, the occupants nor where or when it was taken. John Burke, Chairman of the Investigation and Dating Committee spent quite a while attempting to identify the vehicle make without success. Obviously, the radiator and bonnet style, the two similar levers and five spoked steering wheel are all identifiable features. John then posted the image on a forum on the Antique Automobile Club of America where he had almost immediate success.

Ariejan, an enthusiast from the Netherlands responded with the following:

This is a rather rare car, a De La Roulière, designed by the man with the same name for the Grand Prix des Voiturettes of 1908. Uploaded a photo as printed in the daily French paper L'Auto of June 29, 1908, where details of the car can be read (in French!). The car didn't finish the first round of the race due to mechanical problems. In September of the same year during the Meeting de Royan the car

would win the mile in 1 min. 57 secs. And that seems to have been the end of it.

With the assistance of David Norton the following translation is provided of the newspaper article.

THE DE LA ROULIERE CAR

Behind the wheel : LEVRAULT ; at his side : DE LA ROULIERE

The La Roulière team is made up of - DE LA ROULIERE and A. LEVRAULT (mechanic J. de La Roulière).

Mr LEVRAULT, a former cyclist, has been driving cars since the beginning; is very well known in his region. Drives fast, very carefully, plus doubles up as a mechanic.

Mr J. DE LA ROULIERE, an engineer, knows his car inside out. Good mechanic, very careful.

THE CAR: Aster 100 x 150 single-cylinder engine, Bosch magneto, Grouvelle carburettor. Gear change is done by a single belt housed under the bonnet and gives 4 speeds and reverse without any gears.

It is our intention to display both the picture, newspaper article and translation in the Club Rooms.

Thankyou to Richard Thomas for the donation of the items and to John Burke and David Norton for their help to tell the story of the car and its occupants.

VCCA Working Bee

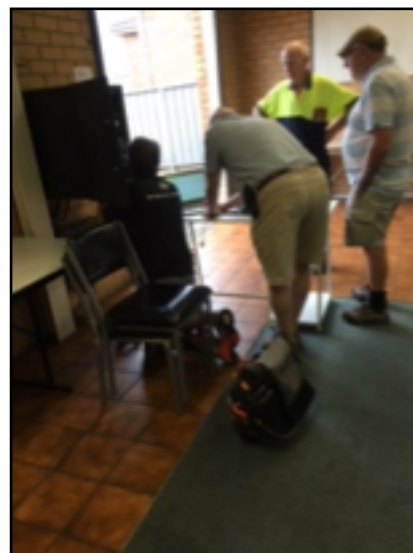
Saturday 27th January. By Robert Fordham. Photos by Louise Yeomans

Firstly, I would like to thank all the members who helped to stack the chairs in the hall after the Thursday meeting. This makes things easier early in the morning with the carpet cleaner.

I arrived at the club at 7.30 am to find that Phil O'loan was already working cutting the grass and Ron Cox working as both had to leave early to attend other functions. Phil Virgona had started clearing the vegetation from the side and rear fence line and taken it home to put in his green bin on Friday, but returned on Saturday to help cleaning gutters.

Others who attended were Louise and Geoff Yeomans, Neil Martin, David Norton and Ian Shinfield, who fixed the audio system.

A big thank you to all who attended to keep the building and grounds tidy. Many hands make a quick job.



How many historic vehicles?

By Jenny Fawbert.

For some years now the size of the registered historic vehicle fleet in NSW (and Australia) has been just guesstimated, as the various government agencies either couldn't or wouldn't provide the data to the peak bodies in our hobby. The excuses were varied - aged computer databases that were too hard to get the data from, "need permission from higher ups", and often my least favourite - privacy! (As a former Privacy Officer this was most irritating, as we always were asking for just vehicle numbers, not names and addresses).

And ask we did, respectfully but repeatedly, your Council of Heritage Motor Clubs NSW representatives and our counterparts at peak bodies in other states. Why did we ask? Because knowing the correct number of registered historic vehicles improves our evaluations of and responses to claims made about historic vehicles, e.g. about safety and insurance issues. If we base our responses on reliable quantitative data we can differentiate between reasonable and dubious assertions, and importantly use the numbers in advocacy efforts to governments, other organisations and sponsors. In NSW, a couple of years ago, Transport finally gave us their "estimates" of the HVS fleet - 65 to 69,000 vehicles on HVS. I know, you'd think that they could simply get the number of H and J plates currently on issue by the government HVS plate processing and payment unit, aka SFNSW, but apparently not.

Late last year, the need to get accurate historic fleet numbers escalated in response to:

1. Operating Heritage Australia's request for definitive data to use in its critical advocacy efforts and submissions to governments. OHA asked for NSW numbers, and via the Australian Motor Heritage Federation for other States' numbers to give the national situation.
2. The "Fossil Fuel in Heritage" project, a funded study by the University of Canberra and OHA assessing the quantities and types of fossil fuels that will be required by the major operating heritage sectors, automotive, aviation, agricultural, maritime and rail, to continue operation.

CHMC is represented at OHA by 2 delegates, and we agreed that another tactic to get the NSW numbers was needed. OHA formally approached a local MP in November to ask the Minister for the precise HVS numbers. And that question, coming direct from the Minister to the regulators, got a response (interesting how a Ministerial query can get results isn't it!). The answer appeared in NSW Government's Question and Answer publication in December as – Rath, Chris to the Special Minister of State, Minister for Roads, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Music and the Night-time Economy, and Minister for Jobs and Tourism

(1)How many motor vehicles are registered on the Historic Vehicle Scheme in New South Wales in

2023?

Answer - I am advised. As of 1 December 2023, 70, 977 motor vehicles are registered on the Historic Vehicle Scheme in NSW in 2023.

Question asked on 30 November 2023 (session 58-1) and published in Questions & Answers Paper No. 147 Answer received on 21 December 2023 and to be published in Questions & Answers Paper No. 153

Chris Rath's office advised OHA quickly, and OHA immediately shared with CHMC, and the AHMF members.

So, while it isn't much more than the estimate given previously by TFNSW, 70,977 is the official number as at 1 December 2023, and OHA, CHMC and AHMF and their members can quote it with confidence. A precise number is better than an estimate, and citing it from a parliamentary document gives validity. And other numbers so far - the Federation of Veteran, Vintage & Classic Vehicle Clubs (Victoria), was, after much effort too, able to get in October 2023 from Vic Roads that 103,779 vehicles 25 years or older are on their club permit scheme, this includes modified vehicles such as street rods and replicas, so they are trying to get further breakdown of the Vic fleet numbers. Other AHMF States are pushing their regulators for their numbers asap.

OHA is also compiling the official numbers of fully registered vehicles 20, 25 and 30 years and older, as some of these vehicles will enter the historic fleets in the next few years, so identifying their numbers is important to the Fossil Fuels study, and to heritage protection discussions effecting our vehicles.

The peak bodies in historic vehicle and transport heritage are endeavouring to pull together more official data on the Australian historic vehicle fleet, its make-up and its growth. Data such as, of the 70,977 vehicles on HVS in NSW on December 1, what decade of manufacture, manufacturer and vehicle class were they, how many were veteran, how many from 1980- 1989, how many were trucks or caravans, how many were Ford, Renault, Austin, etc.

Groups like OHA, CHMC and AHMF want to be well prepared with the right data to argue for continuing opportunities for our historic vehicles to remain on the road. To do so we need reliable, accurate information to counter those media, politician's and public comments that generalise negatively about "old cars", particularly with regard to emissions and road safety. We know we are not the problem, and the FIVA Global Survey 2020/1 results support that. Using the government's own data for historic vehicle numbers, State and national, in advocacy efforts, will be critical to those who seek to secure the future for our vehicles.

Events Calendar

Club Events

FEBRUARY

Thursday 15th

Committee Meeting

Tuesday 20th

Newcastle Branch Meeting - 78 Main Road, Boolaroo. 7:30pm

Thursday 22nd

Monthly Club Meeting - 134 Queens Road, Canada Bay. 8:00pm

MARCH

Sunday 3rd

Northern Sydney Breakfast Run - details to come

Sunday 17th-23rd

National 1&2 Cylinder Rally - Albany, Western Australia.

Contact: Deidre and Harry Pyle

Tuesday 19th

Newcastle Branch Meeting - 78 Main Road, Boolaroo. 7:30pm

Thursday 21st

Committee Meeting

Thursday 28th

Monthly Club Meeting - 134 Queens Road, Canada Bay. 8:00pm

Friday 29th-1st

CHMC Annual Rally - Parkes, NSW. For details see the CHMC website

APRIL

Wednesday 10-14th

2024 Premier Rally - Inverell, NSW

Contact: Rod Holmes, Malcolm Roy or Laurie McGrath

Tuesday 16th

Newcastle Branch Meeting - 78 Main Road, Boolaroo. 7:30pm

Thursday 18th

Committee Meeting

Thursday 25th

Monthly Club Meeting - 134 Queens Road, Canada Bay. 8:00pm

Saturday 27th

Gymkhana Day - details to come

Major Events

MAY

Thursday 2-5th

Pre 1931 Autumn Tour - Orange, NSW. Entry form on page 19 of November 2023 *Spit and Polish*.

JULY

Tuesday 16-19th

VCCCAQ Frostbite Tour

See January *Spit and Polish* for details

NOVEMBER

Monday 18-23rd

2024 National Veteran Vehicle Rally - Launceston, Tasmania

Expressions of Interest are now open on the VCCA (Tas) website: www.vccatas.org.au. Be sure to book your trip on the Spirit of Tasmania ASAP!

Contact: Ben (0404 917 366) or Jill (0448 678 291) - Rally Directors

Three weeks in an FN2400

25th Sep-13th Oct. By Catherine Strutt. Part 3

The next morning we repeated the drive along the rough gravel road that we'd driven the evening before and this time turned into the road to Avoca. It was another long rough gravel road that took us slowly over a rise. From the top of the rise we could see the gate in the short distance into the station homestead property. We felt excited. This is it. We chuffed up to the gate. Again, "Avoca" announced the faded green and white metal sign. In the paddock over to the right of us we could see a ute and farmers offloading feed to a large mob of hungry sheep and we wondered if they were the McCrae's. We turned the FN in anyway and slowly drove up the long and narrow road, the driveway to the homestead. The corrugations in the bally gravel tormented the FN's skinny tyres and suspension. A shingle back baking in the sun on the stones of the road bent his fat shingled body to look at us as we rolled by. When we arrived at the station homestead, we could already see that the building wasn't old enough. We parked in the shade of some box trees and got out, slightly deflated, iPad under my arm with Doug's photograph of the blue 1600FN in front of the old homestead, and pushed in through the front gate. The place was totally silent and the old screened in verandah, typical of outback station homesteads, was chockas full with kid's toys and drawings pinned on the walls. Chris knocked on the door but no one came. We walked around the whole property looking for the old building in the photograph but nothing looked like what was in the photo. It didn't feel right. Discarded farm junk lay everywhere. Old machines, cars, tanks, rolls of wire littered the ground and two dogs tied to a big Wilga tree lay in the cool shade observing us quietly. I waited around the back of the place on the gravel driveway



The original Avoca Station



while Chris went back to the FN to collect his hat. The sun was right above us and baking hot and the midday air was still. While I stood and waited, a long red bellied black snake lazily writhed its way across the driveway a few metres from me and disappeared into the shade under a Sandlewood bush. After a good search around the place, we left, defeated, and drove back down to the station gate.



The possible original garage of our FN...

The farmers who we had seen earlier were finished feeding their sheep and were coming back over to the paddock fence. We steered across the road and parked in the shade and I got out. As I walked up to the fence, the farmer in his beaten up brown Akubra, swung himself out of his new looking ute with a big smile on his face and walked over to meet me. He was an older bloke, probably in his 80's with huge calloused brown farm hands, fingers bent like they were used to being in a constant grip of a pump or an axe.

"Ya goin' back in history in that thing!" He yelled to us, "Yeah, I hope you can

tell us some more history too!" I replied.

"Are you Mr McCrae?" I enquired. He wasn't. His name was David and he knew the McCrae's but perhaps Alan (McCrae) was away at the moment. He had planes and he takes them up the top of the country to get them serviced. We explained to

him what we were trying to do and asked him what was down the road further on the 16,000 acre property.

"Ah well the shearing shed's down there...and there's a few other old buildings down there.." and we carried on a conversation which ended up with an invite for a cuppa back at their place in another nearby village. We thanked the friendly old bloke and told him if we didn't have any luck we'll come and knock on his door and have that cuppa!

Chris cranked the hot FN and we started on the road to see if we could find the shearing shed and the old buildings. The road was incredibly rough and we crawled along it in second gear. We had already come so far inland on this huge property and on either side of us was hot, dry, dead grass and prickles. A mob of sheep picked through the prickles and at the sight and agricultural sound of the old car, ran like buggery to the safety of a nearby dam and scrub. We continued on going around a bend and over a cattle grid, just as David had described it to us and as we turned and headed straight, we could see new zinc tanks and other things shining in the distance. "That must be the shearing shed", we said. In front of this by a couple of hundred meters was a large group of old established trees and as we rolled closer we could make out the forms of older buildings. Much older. We continued into the yard of the property and as we got to the end of the track, the trees parted and Doug Marshall's photo came to life as the original homestead quietly appeared and unfolded before us. We had finally found it.



The place was deserted and much more deteriorated now than in Doug's thirty year old photo. We

February 2024

walked up under the verandah stepping over the remains of the contents of the building, old rusty bed frames, bent iron sheets, bits of thick wall tin and metal, rolls of chook wire, tins and timber boards. There was abandoned old stuff absolutely everywhere. We split up and walked around the back of the place, carefully stepping over sheets of iron and piles of bricks. The day was extremely hot with no breeze, perfect snake weather. We found what we think could have been our FN's original shed, with walls and ceiling fully lined with tin and a ramp the width of a car at the entry. The floor was totally covered with the detritus of the early 1900's and later.



We walked all around the property, exploring the piles of metal, machines and tools, and poked in sheds looking at the abandoned life of a once busy farm paying particular notice of anything that looked FN. The whole place was exceedingly fascinating. We found an FN rear spring (which we left there for a later time) and tonnes of extremely interesting bits and pieces spread across the yards, lying under old peppercorn trees and inside other structures but after quite a while spent looking around we felt we should probably get off the private property before we were found by the owner.

We cranked over the FN, waiting patiently for us in the shade, and reversed it into position in front of the homestead to re-enact the photo that is so familiar in Doug's book of the FN Survivors. It was a satisfying moment of achievement. Photo taken, we left the old property and drove the long, slow, rough gravel roads back to Albert where we had lunch and a cuppa and got back on the road.



The day was more than half gone but we had still had another 120kms to travel before we could rest for the day. Aiming for Dubbo, we drove back along the terrible surface of Dandaloo Road and continued on through endless wheat fields and NW NSW scrub of Wilga, Sandlewood, Mulga and Bimble box trees to Trangie, Narromine and Dubbo.

With much more to write about our continuing journey home over the last couple of days home to Newcastle, I will finish my story of our latest FN adventure. We only encountered trouble with the reliable old 1911 FN2400 once in our three weeks away where outside of Dubbo, the car started to cough and splutter. But after a 15 minute points clean of the magneto by Chris, we were back on the

road. We survived a branch falling from a tree onto the front guard while motoring in some strong wind and enjoyed a lunch stop in Gulgong where Chris played some fiddles for an enthusiastic admirer of our music who owns the local music shop.

We stayed the last night of our trip in the sleepy little historic village of Cassilis, on the Munmurra River where our tent, the FN and ourselves endured a freak evening wind storm before battling with the trucks and fast traffic on the uncomfortable Golden Highway.

From Newcastle, sidestepping Sydney, down to the Southern NSW Highlands, across the Snowy Mountains to the National Veteran Vehicle Rally at Griffith, around the edge of the outback to Euabalong, Albert and Dandaloo, from Cassilis to Wollombi to Newcastle, the car carried us confidently and comfortably, 2830kms. It was another brilliant FN journey!



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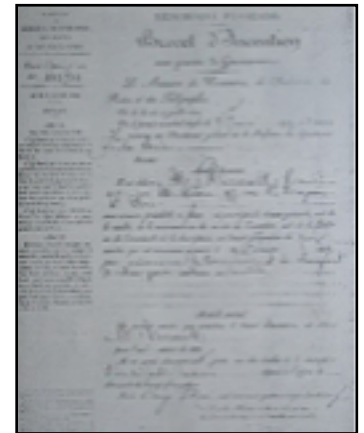
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125th Anniversary of Renault and the appearance of the de Dion Bouton vis-a-vis

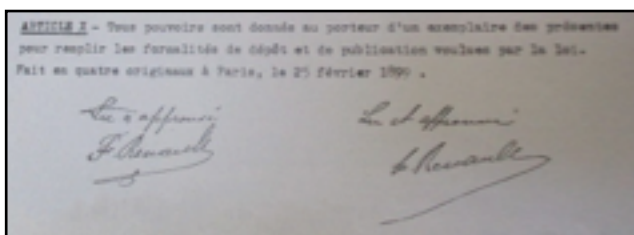
By Rodney C Anderson . December 2023

'A Real Christmas Tale' – Rue Lepic Montmartre 1898 [Early Auto December 2021p.14 &15 www.veterancarclubofwa.asn.au/EarlyAuto/2021DecEA.pdf] described 'A wonderful story set in Montmartre Christmas Eve 1898 that was expanded in 1955 by St Loup in Renault de Billancourt and occasionally regurgitated' that began by claiming ' ... Louis Renault going up and down one of the steepest and highest hills in Paris on 24 December 1898 in an automobile is one of the best-known Renault stories, being mentioned in nearly every reference to the marque.'

The story ended '... Whatever happened that Christmas Eve in 1898 the fact is that the Louis Renault '... became the foundation stone for a huge industrial empire...' [Renault Regie Nationale] – an empire that is described by Charles de Gaulle in his mémoires as the 'first and finest factory in France'.



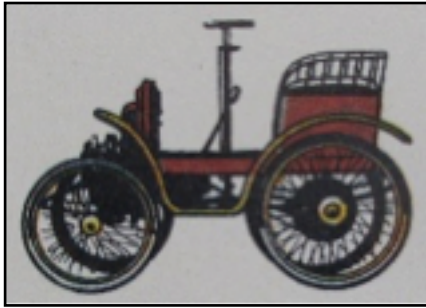
The Automobile constructed by Louis Renault in 1898 – the Louis Renault' Early Auto January 2022 pp. 14 & 15 [www.veterancarclubofwa.asn.au/EarlyAuto/2022FebEA.pdf] describes the automobile Saint Loup simply refers to as the Louis Renault.



Most stories covering the period September 1898 to March 1899 published since 1956 seem to be based on the story as told by Saint Loup that was 'carefully translated' into English that 'is in the main accurate.' [The Veteran and Vintage Magazine

Volume 2 No. 6 February 1958 p. 513.] In A Sequel to 'A Real Christmas Tale' – Rue Lepic Montmartre 1898 [Early Auto January 2022 pp. 15 & 16 www.veterancarclubofwa.asn.au/au/EarlyAuto/2022JanEA.pdf] mention is made of two significant documents – the application to patent an invention dated 9 February 1899 and the registration of a company - Renault Frères – dated 25 February 1899.

More recently, I was made aware of nuances in the terminology used in production. As a consequence, I am satisfied that on 14 March 1899, at 139 rue du Point du Jour, Billancourt, the prototype with revolutionary direct-drive transmission, Michelin tyres and 1 cv. $\frac{3}{4}$ de Dion Bouton air-cooled motor appeared.



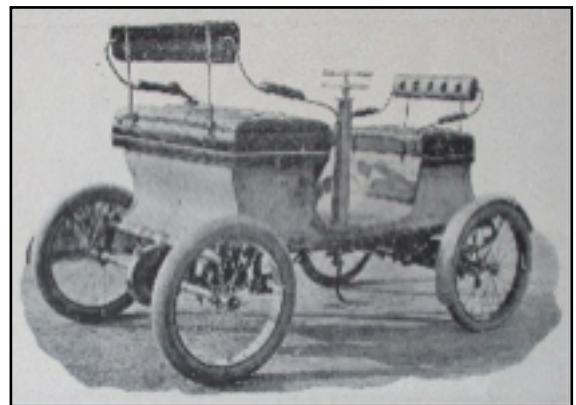
1898 Prototype Artists Impression
© Renault

The same day, Renault Frères received an advance payment for a Type A – Systeme Louis Renault from M. Georges Bartaumieux. [In First Gear – The French Automobile Industry to 1914 James M. Laux 1976 p.50].

Soon after, at 36 Quai National, Puteaux, another prototype with a rigid rear axle and a reported 3 ch. $\frac{1}{4}$ de Dion Bouton water-cooled motor appeared.

Incidentally, to celebrate the centenary of de Dion Bouton Quai National was re-named Quai de Dion Bouton.

To celebrate these anniversaries, devotees of Renault, de Dion Bouton, Michelin, and other French motoring enthusiasts will be gathering at various places to pay tribute to the contributions made by de Dion, Bouton & Trepardoux to the science of mechanical and aeronautical engineering and Louis Renault - the person Lord Montagu of Beaulieu described as 'epitomizing the age of the motor-car in France during the first half of ' last century.



LFA 1899 p.176

Furthermore, the arrival in Australia of the Renault 4cv. – the last 'Louis Renault' model – with sales in the week beginning 21 February 1949 provides a wonderful opportunity for the impressive number of 4



Renault's 1898 Type A & the contributor's de Dion Bouton vis-à-vis

cv. enthusiasts, some of whom own other models attributable to Louis Renault, to hold extraordinary musters to celebrate this 75th anniversary of a model that reached 500,000 sales worldwide on 8 April 1954!

Indeed, everyone interested in the history of the automobile is encouraged to acknowledge with a celebration of sorts any or all of these significant occasions.

Meilleurs vœux pour la nouvelle année

1908 30HP 6 Cylinder Humber

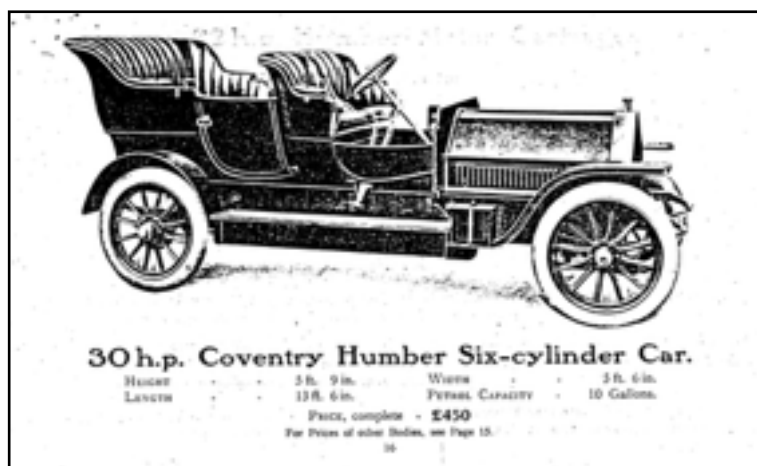
Part 1. By Peter Cockbain

I first became aware of the existence of this "car" – or the remnants of it, in the March-April 1975 edition of an Australian magazine "Restored Cars".

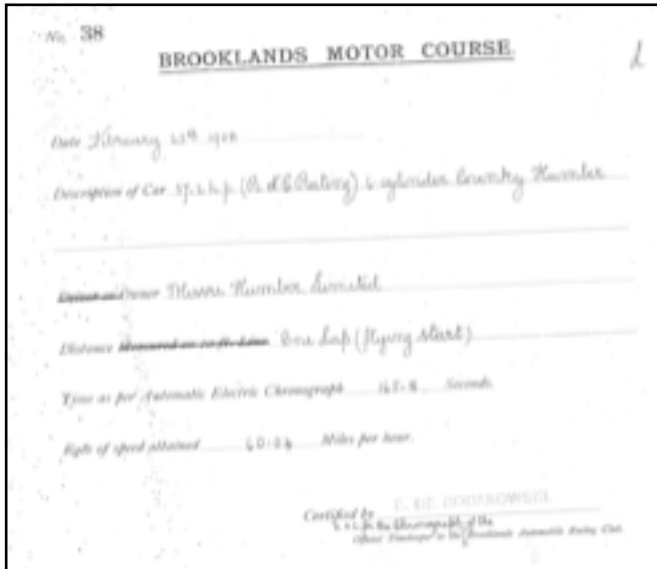
In that magazine, there was often a section called "Veteran Relics" or "Vintage Tin" which showed some photos and a brief description of cars which they had found however never gave their location, no doubt to protect the anonymity of the owners.

At that stage I was into the very early stage of restoring the 1910 16/25 Humber I had recently acquired and was not interested in other future prospects. I had given the dilapidated 16/25 to my wife as a mother's day present - which was not taken very well!

Over time I learnt of the rarity of the 1908 6 cylinder from detailed information sent to me from the ever obliging John Tarring.



The car was quite a large vehicle with a wheel base of 9' 10" and track of 4' 4", on overall length of 13' and having a 6 cylinder (3- 2 cylinder blocks) with a bore of 4" (102mm) a stroke of 4 1/2" (114mm) giving it a capacity of 339 cubic inches (5.6 litres). That model had been clocked at Brookland's at 60.04 mph on the 25th of February 1908 (see photos 2&3).



When it was ultimately advertised as one of the many items to be auctioned at a clearance sale in 1987, I decided to bid on it, thinking AUD\$5,000 (£2,500) would be as much as it was likely to go for based on the dismembered state it was in.

Unfortunately I had other more important appointments to attend on the day of the auction. I was surprised to find out that the opening bid was \$5,000 and it sold for \$15,000 to a Roger Bond, whose name and contact details were later given to me by John Tarring when Roger Bond contacted him.

The following year I visited Roger in North Melbourne and saw all of the many, many bits that made up the '08 Humber which Roger had neatly put in one of his numerous sheds. I saw that they were being kept under cover and arranged in logical "piles".

I kept in regular contact with Roger telling him of the various items I had reconditioned as I restored my 16/25, including what I had done, the cost, and the name of the companies I had do the work. He was very appreciative of my information, and I assumed he was gradually progressing with his own restoration.

Roger then moved another 50 kilometres north of Melbourne to Whittlesea to quite a bit larger property where I visited him again on one of my frequent visits to Melbourne. I was astounded to see just how much "stuff" he had hoarded over the years with the



'08 Humber being only a small part of his menagerie.



He had very large bronze fountains, old gas lamp posts, a full size merry-go-round, life size bronze statues, motor bikes, several dismantled early Rover cars, several penny farthing cycles plus hundreds of other paraphernalia, all stored in multiple sheds.

After that disappointing visit I no longer shared information with Roger as he was a hoarder, not a restorer. On Christmas Eve 2010 I received a

surprise phone call from Roger, as it was me that always contacted him. His words were "Hi Peter, are you still interested in the '08 Humber?" which I certainly was and said so and asked him why? He explained he'd had a serious heart attack whilst competing in a push bike race and decided his health was so bad that he was liquidating all of his collection. He said if I was interested and a price could be agreed upon that the Humber was mine.

And so the deal was done!

The following weekend, with the help of a friend we loaded the Humber, which had been cut into 3 pieces as the previous photos show and all the related loose items onto a very large trailer – but only after exchanging my bank cheque for a receipt and a copy of the auction receipt proving Roger's ownership!



Sadly Roger passed away not long after all this took place.

On roughly placing the 3 pieces of the chassis together over the next few weeks it appeared that either the tail shaft was too long or there was exactly 1 foot missing out of the chassis. On further inspection it was obvious that the cuts in the chassis did not match up, indicating that there was a section missing. However, this was contrary to the Humber published figures that gave the wheel base as 9' 10" whereas, on fitting the tailshaft/diff to the gearbox, it was 10'10".



Further inspection of the chassis after steam cleaning exposed a brass plaque on one of the cross members with the initials ROC, which later I found proved that the chassis was not a standard one made by Humber but "special" made by the Rubery Owens Company which seems to indicate that it may have been a hearse, or an ambulance, although the wire wheels that were fitted do not fit those applications – so what was it?

Photo 8 shows the car in 1931 fitted with a 1920's Graham Paige body indicating that the original Humber body was scrapped in the 1920's. The Victorian State in Australia destroyed the very early 1900's registration details and despite dedicated attempts by various Victorian fellow car enthusiasts, and an earlier enquiry by a previous owner, we have not been able to resolve that question.

Help needed to solve mystery of rare car

ONE of the rarest cars in the world is believed to have its early history in the Bendigo region.

The car, a 1908 six-cylinder Humber, belonged to the late Leon Ruedin Sr of Humpy for nearly 60 years prior to his death in 1986, but its history prior to about 1930 is unknown.

Some Bendigo identity may be able to disclose the secret of its whereabouts from 1908 to 1930.

The car was reported to have belonged to George Larnell, the quartz mining king. This is incorrect, as George died in 1906, and could not have ordered a car built 18 months earlier.

George did own an early Humber, and a photograph of this car taken in front of George Larnell's home, Fortuna Villa in Booth St, shows it to be a 1906 four-cylinder car.

Leon Ruedin drove his car in a Bendigo Easter Day parade, believed to be 1931, as the car was decorated to celebrate Douglas Mawson reaching the South Pole, which took place during the summer of 1930-31.

The car was then fitted with a roadster body taken from a

1920's Graham Paige, the original Humber body having been discarded.

The car is one of the first six-cylinder cars made, and is 20 years older than the next oldest six-cylinder Humber in existence.

Few early six-cylinder cars have survived, as the science of building six-cylinder engines was not understood at first, and even the earliest model six-cylinder Rolls-Royce often broke their crankshafts!

The present owner is keen to find out the early history of the car, and particularly to locate any early photographs that may help in rebuilding it as it originally was. Anyone with the information should write to: Roger Bond, 24 Edward St, Maribee, 3663, Phone 011 43-2283, H: 353-3224.

For the technically-minded the details of the car are as follows: six-cylinders cast in three blocks of two cylinders each, 4" bore 4 1/2" stroke, 5/8" litre capacity, twin ignition (high and low tension), 9 1/2" wheelbase, 5 1/2" track. The car is related to the four-cylinder cars built for the 1907-8 Tourist Trophy races on the Isle of Man.

Do you recognise this car?



● ABOVE: The six-cylinder Humber as a Bendigo Technical College students entry in the Bendigo Easter Day Parade, probably 1931

● LEFT: The Humber at the Ruedin estate auction on Thursday May 28, 1987. This photo originally appeared in the Bendigo Advertiser the following morning.

My contacts to Rubery Owens in the UK proved useless and I was told very sternly that they were now in a totally different business sector and had not kept any information on their earlier history. One can see from the previous photos that the front section was cut just behind the gearbox and it was then, so the story goes, apparently used to drive a chaff cutter driven by a large leather belt fitted around the flywheel.

You will notice from photo 6, what appears to be a jagged edge around the tailshaft coupling that the hand brake works on. This is apparently a rather rare anti-rollback pawl and ratchet arrangement to prevent roll back on hill starts. The close up shown in photo 9 gives a clear picture of the anti-roll back pawl and ratchet arrangement. One thing that I have not been able to ascertain is what the arrangement was for the engagement and disengagement of the pawl. I would appreciate any comments in this regard.

The back diff section was used as a farm cart, I was told by an older employee of the estate when I briefly visited only to quickly be ordered off the property by the new owners.

From the present Humber records, it seems that this is the only Edwardian 6 cylinder Humber remaining as virtually all makers of 6 cylinder cars of the '08/'09 period suffered snapped crankshafts at certain speeds and loads caused by harmonic forces generated by the longer crankshafts, non-symmetrical firing order, out of balance components etc.



February 2024

Harmonic balancers (dampers/absorbers) were not developed by Chandler until 1910 although Humber did not produce another 6 cylinder model until the 20/55 in 1927 (Thanks to Peter Wilcox for that information). Of obvious great concern to me was the fact that my car might have the same problem as the engine was seized after standing for decades and could not be turned over. Removal of the crankcase showed the crankshaft was intact although the engine needed an enormous amount of work done on it during the restoration – more on this later.

The gearbox showed surprisingly little wear and only required all bearings to be replaced.

It was when I dismantled the differential that the reason for the car being cut up became obvious as one of the teeth of the crown wheel was lying in the bottom. It took me quite some time to find someone who could cut such basic teeth shapes with virtually all present gear cutters now utilizing CNC equipment and me unwilling to pay the exorbitant cost of them writing a program for once off operations.

I ultimately found a one-man band operation in a very old workshop who had 15 old line shaft belt driven machines that could cut all the gears I needed – cash of course. I joked with him and said “I’ll bet you don’t have trouble with your computer driven stuff” to which he replied “When something breaks I have everything here I will ever need to make any new part I want” – Touché.

The engine was a real mess, having the inlet manifold destroyed when it was converted to run on kerosene during WW1. The exhaust gases diverted into a double chamber exhaust gas heated inlet manifold that heated up the kero to allow it to fire when introduced into the cylinders (see photo 5). There was a change over tap on the dual fuel tank that allowed the engine to start on petrol until the exhaust gases heated up the inlet manifold sufficiently after which it was switched over to kero.

In 4 out of the 6 cylinders the walls were rusted through to the water jacket and all required boring out, resleeving, larger pistons made, crank shaft ground, all new bearings, con rods, new cam shafts, valves, lifters, timing gears – the lot.

To be continued...

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