

49 Blake Street,  
DOVER HEIGHTS,  
N.S.W. 2030

21st. Feb. 1998

Laurie McGrath,  
12 George Crescent,  
PORT MACQUARIE, NSW 2444

Dear Laurie,

As promised per telephone, from memory I have put together the story of the 1914 'T' model Ford tourer, Engine No. C17371 for your interest, as the present owner.

This number should be evident on the engine block, also on the plate attached to the left side of the dash-board or fire-wall, inside face.

In 1959 the late Jack Jeffrey and I drove a V.W. to Bathurst where we visited a motoring friend of many years and a founder member of the Vintage Sports Car Club of Australia, Bill Chadwick.

In conversation, the question was raised "do you know of any veteran car in the district"? Bill's answer was "not around here, but there is a 'T' Ford at Mt. Tarana, owner Mr. C. Webb."

Deciding to investigate Jack and I headed in that direction in heavy rain and approaching Tarana were confronted by the swollen waters of the Fish River.

Testing the depth with a pole, the windows wound up fully and in low gear, the V.W. entered the water slowly, before being given the gun. The vehicle floated and with the water surface approximately 4 inches up the windscreen, the little car crossed the stream and climbed out the other side, without missing a beat.

Previous experience by the pair of us with a similar car in the 1954 Redex Trial, crossing Torrens Creek, between Pentland and Hughenden, Northern Queensland, also successful, had encouraged the attempt.

In Tarana we were directed to the property, met the owner "Clement Webb" and escorted to the barn and Ford, which had been converted from a tourer to a utility. On the property we were shown the remains of 23 'T' Fords, dismantled over a period and the parts scattered; chassis frames piled high in one heap.

Such were my impressions of the property, the home, its contents and not least, the owners Clem Webb, his mother and sister, though most courteous and kind, I believe to their detriment; the combined atmosphere reminded me of the story of Dad & Dave, in the play "On Our Selection".

I offered to purchase the 'T' model and received from Clem the reply; yes! he wishes to sell, but was not at all sure that he should?



This indecision led to periodical visits to Tarana, sometimes with my family over the next two years, I telephoned and wrote many letters. Finally per telephone a price was agreed upon, but he would remove and retain the utility body.

July 1961, with the help of another friend, Alex. Hawke, a jeep and trailer, when we arrived at Mt. Tarana it was snowing, a heavy ground cover and the temperature freezing.

Action, rather than words appeared the order of the day! I wrote a cheque for the amount agreed upon, using the hot bonnet of the jeep, it was accepted and after removal of the snow from the doors of the barn, we loaded the Ford, collected the side and tail lamps, each with handles attached from posts where they hung within the barn; they had served as hand-lamps around the property at night.

Before departure Clem again expressed the opinion that he should not sell, then several days later I received a letter requesting that if I proposed sale of the vehicle, would I give him first offer? "INDECISION".

For a number of years the Ford, in its acquired state became the centre of interest in display's, then a feature of the Veteran Car Club, assisting various charities, members insisting that I retain it in original condition.

Later I transferred from my family home, Ipswich, Queensland a complete rear body section including doors, with the view to complete restoration, an intention well founded, but prevented by medical problems involving my late first wife.

Approximately twelve years ago, Ray Thomas twisted my arm, the Ford became his property and from that day until you telephoned, I had lost contact with the car.

I might add that the Ford was an enigma to other 'T' model owners, it looked delapidated, but started easily and out-performed their cars on hills.

Laurie, it was a pleasure to talk with you, to know the car is in good hands and I look forward to casting my eyes on it once again, when the opportunity arises.

Yours sincerely.



George A. Roberts.

P.S. For the duration of Green's Motorcade Museum Park and until George died in 1982 the Ford was a mobile exhibit at