

July 1990

The **HUMBERETTE**



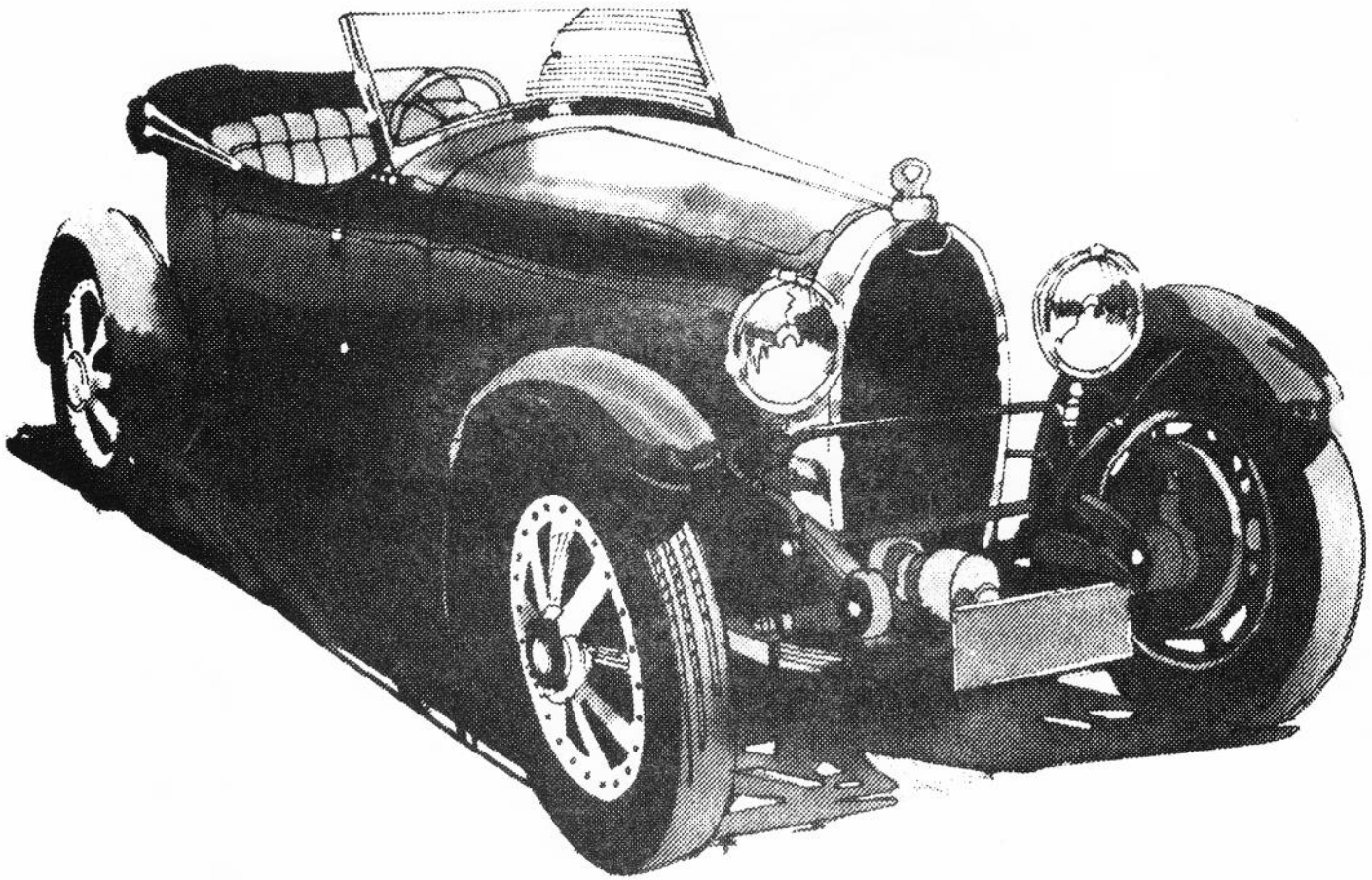
By Appointment to
The Royal Family

Official Newsletter of the
Humber Car Club of
Victoria Inc.

Affiliated with the
Association of Motoring Clubs



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- JULY 27TH. GENERAL MEETING. DEEPDENE PARK HALL, WHITEHORSE ROAD, DEEPDENE. (MELWAY MAP 46 A7.) 8.00PM.
- AUGUST 2ND. (HALL COMMITTEE MEETING).
- AUGUST 19TH CHACA SWAP MEET. "FRESH CENTRE" (formerly Fruit and Vegetable Market), FOOTSCRAY ROAD, FOOTSCRAY. (MELWAY MAP 42 J6). 8.00AM - 2.00PM. ADMISSION \$2.00.
- AUGUST 26TH *** (SUNDAY) GENERAL MEETING / FAMILY DAY. DEEPDENE PARK HALL. BYO PICNIC OR BBQ LUNCH - ELECTRIC BBQ'S IN PARK (20c coins). TEA AND COFFEE SUPPLIED. 12 MIDDAY FOR INFORMAL LUNCH ; MEETING COMMENCES 2.00PM. TECHNICAL DISCUSSION AND PROBLEM SOLVING SESSION.
- AUGUST 27TH. (MONDAY) A.O.M.C. DELEGATE'S MEETING, PROGRESS ASSN. HALL, TRUGANINI ROAD, CARNEGIE. 8.00PM SHARP.
- SEPTEMBER 16TH. COMBINED CLUBS RUN TO WESTERNPORT PUB, HASTINGS.
- SEPTEMBER 28TH GENERAL MEETING. DEEPDENE PARK HALL. 8.00PM. POSSIBLE SPEAKER FROM SHANNON'S CLASSIC CAR INSURANCE.
- *** OCTOBER *** *** 15TH BIRTHDAY OF HCCV. ***
- OCTOBER ... PRESIDENT'S MYSTERY RUN!
- OCTOBER 26TH. GENERAL MEETING. DEEPDENE PARK HALL. 8.00PM. SPEAKER FROM LOCTITE. (Arranged by Mike Dupla).
- NOVEMBER 11TH. ANNUAL CONCOURS D'ELEGANCE, PRIDE OF OWNERSHIP AND DISPLAY DAY.
** NOTE CHANGE OF VENUE FOR THIS EVENT. **
TO BE HELD AT BALWYN PARK (REAR OVAL AND SCOUT HALL), WHITEHORSE ROAD, BALWYN. (MELWAY MAP 46 D8). 11.00AM. SPIT ROAST LUNCHEON CATERED BY "TOMMY'S TATERS". - BOOKINGS REQUIRED - SEE NEXT MONTH'S NEWSLETTER.
- NOVEMBER 17TH - 18TH. BENDIGO SWAP MEET, PRINCE OF WALES SHOWGROUNDS, HOLMES ROAD, BENDIGO.
CLUB HAS MEETING AREA AND INFORMATION STAND AT "CLUB CORNER", CONFERENCE HALL.
- NOVEMBER 23RD. FINAL GENERAL MEETING FOR YEAR. DEEPDENE PARK HALL, 8.00PM.
- NOVEMBER 26TH. (MONDAY) A.O.M.C. DELEGATE'S MEETING, FOLLOWED BY ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION. CARNEGIE PROGRESS HALL. 8.00PM.
- DECEMBER 9TH. CHRISTMAS BREAKUP LUNCHEON AND PRESENTATION OF AWARDS ETC. EDWARDES LAKE BISTRO, EDWARDES STREET, RESERVOIR. 12.0 MIDDAY. APPROX. \$14 PER HEAD, PLUS DRINKS.

REGALIA FOR SALE.

WINDCHEATERS:	(New stock) - NAVY WITH BLUE HUMBER MOTIF -	\$20.00 ea.
	Sizes 18 - 24. Please note price rise.	
METAL GRILLE BADGES:	ENAMEL WITH CLUB LOGO -	\$20.00 ea.
LAPEL BADGES:	SMALL ENAMEL WITH CLUB LOGO -	\$3.50 ea.
JACKET PATCHES :	CLOTH WITH CLUB LOGO -	\$2.00 ea.
WINDSCREEN STICKERS :	VINYL WITH PEEL-OFF BACKING -	\$1.00 ea.
CAPS :	BLACK; SEW-ON BADGE SUPPLIED -	\$6.00 ea.

ALSO VARIED ASSORTMENT OF OLD STOCK - WINDCHEATERS, SCARVES, T-SHIRTS ETC.

FOR ORDERS CONTACT REGALIA OFFICER, VIC. WILSON. PH: (03) 478 9352.

***** A LETTER TO THE EDITOR. *****

59 Shields Tce,
CASTERTON. 3311

Dear Barry,

I am writing to congratulate you on your June 90 edition of The Humberette, a pleasure to read, full of interesting social and technical items. As secretary of our local club I receive on average 15 club newsletters each month ; none come near the quality of presentation and news value of the Humberette. Keep up the good work!

Now for some news from this end of the state. I have finished my 1938 Hillman Minx and successfully taken part in the Federation of V,V & C C Clubs Hub Rally held at Warrnambool during April. This rally went for seven days with 104 entrants. The only Humber entrant was a 1925 9/20 Roadster of J. & M. Leslie of South Australia. The other rally my Minx did was the June Queen's Birthday Hamilton Club weekend. Performance in both rallies was excellent.

Now, be warned!!

Both Doug Coulter with his Series VA Super Snipe and myself in the Minx propose to attend the Annual Concours on November 11th, 1990!

I am working on my 1958 Chrysler Royal sedan at present and hope to have the Chrysler ready for the Alpine Rally in November.

The Casterton Club will again, on the Labour Day weekend, March 9th, 10th and 11th 1991 host our second rally. Would you be so kind and include this date in your Calendar of Events in the Humberette; entry forms are available from:

THE SECRETARY

CASTERTON MOTOR ENTHUSIASTS CLUB

P.O. BOX 144

CASTERTON. 3311.

For telephone information ring; (055) 811 414

Our club is progressing very nicely and tonight we hold our first annual general meeting. With ten clubs in a hundred mile radius around Casterton there is plenty of interest in the old car sector in this area!

Yours Faithfully,

James P. Kent.

WARNING!!! NEW SPEED CAMERAS!!! THE FOLLOWING PENALTIES ARE INCURRED!!!

Exceeding the speed limit by:	Automatic fine (\$)	Licence suspended	Demerit points
15 kmh or less	85	-	1
16-29 kmh	135	-	3
30-39 kmh	180	1 month	4
40-44 kmh	250	4 months	4
45-49 kmh	250	4 months	6
50 kmh plus	300	6 months	6

THE HUMBER CAR CLUB OF VICTORIA INC.

CLUB ADDRESS — 23 HIGH STREET, WATSONIA. 3087

COMMITTEE 1990-91

PRESIDENT	:	Geoff Webb	803 6592
VICE PRESIDENT	:	Margaret Willimott	435 6354
SECRETARY	:	Ian Foreman	
TREASURER	:	Brian Parkinson	
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY	:	Graeme Finn	497 4231
EDITOR	:	Barry Bosnich	(057) 83 1999
EVENTS DIRECTOR	:	Mike Dupla	390 2211
LIBRARIAN	:	Dave Denner	874 7016
REGALIA	:	Vic Wilson	478 9352
TECHNICAL ADVISORS	:		
- Vogues	:	D. Dunlop	439 7059
- Series V, VA S/Snipes	:	A. Goldman	(059) 75 6807
- Hawks	:	K. Willimott	435 6354
- Mk Cars	:	B. Kennedy	789 5119
- General Information	:	B. Kennedy	789 5119
- Auto Electrical	:	M. Fitchett	366 8987



VIC WILSON AND FRED PIETERSON WITH THEIR RESPECTIVE "WEDDING" HUMBERS.



The good news is that the club does not have any funds invested in Estate Mortgage, Pyramid or OST Friendly Society. All of our funds are solely invested in a major bank. It is fascinating to see the mess the economy is currently in, and yet at the same time see great opportunities, particularly for buying investment vehicles.

The current issue of Unique Cars clearly has some great buys, with many cars now for sale at well below replacement cost. Like many investment decisions, the long term future for classic and exotic motor vehicles must remain strong, and for these lucky cashed up individuals who have the funds and space to store cars, now is the time. Remember, motor vehicles are one of the few assets that are exempt from Keating's capital gain tax.

I often wonder when we have a meeting early in the month as we did in June (22nd), how many members would have turned up on the 29th June. I must acknowledge that early in my membership days I was nearly caught. Please remember that our meetings are the fourth Friday of every month. But the best reminder is the receipt of the Humberette which, if your postal deliveries are like mine, always arrives a day or two prior to the meetings.

Thank goodness for the Humberette.

Geoff Webb.

FOR SALES

1964 S/Snipe, auto, green and white, good body, motor runs but poor condition, last reg '87, 49,500 on clock.

Contact: Lyn Mill, Shepparton, Ph: (058) 62 2556, (058) 29 0073.

1965 Series V S/Snipe, white, daily use, reg 9-'90, good condition, new tyres, alternator, brakes, booster and exhaust, \$5250.00.

Contact: N. Roberts, Glen Waverley, Ph: 529 8100 (Bus), 560 4813 (A/H).

Series 2 and 3 Vogues, one auto, one manual, goers, \$200.00 for both.

Contact: Bob Kennedy, Ph: 789 5119.

1962 S/Snipe, mostly original, grey with red upholstery, interior fair, no picnic tables, original restoration HPY ..., \$3,500.

Contact: Jan Stewart, Ballarat, Ph: (053) 39 6509 evenings.

1964 Humber Vogue, registered until December, new transmission 3 mths ago, needs work on motor, fair interior, white duco/red interior, current owner last 8 years, \$1,000, rwc may be negotiable. Contact: Lorenzo Ootl, 442 Bell Street, Pascoe Vale South, Ph: 354 7035 (please ring before visiting).

Series IV Snipe, one family owner since new but needs restoration, body and interior very poor, mechanics D.K., registration ran out in March.

Contact: Maureen & John Bell, Mordialloc, Ph: 580 2920.

1954 Mk IV S/Snipe, for restoration, black, car is complete plus some extras, currently garaged at property near Yarram/Sth Gippsland, further information contact: Mr. James Buttle, Ph: (051) 85 1276 after 6:00pm.

Humber S/Snipe Series III, registered to Jan '91, runs well apart from big end rattle, many spares including doors, bonnet, boot, bumper bars, brakes, steering, engine, etc., \$500 the lot. Contact: Bill Bowker, The Basin, Ph: (03) 761 1089.

1) Sunbeam Talbot workshop manual (Dated 1954) \$35.

2) Sunbeam Talbot & Alpine parts catalogue (1954) - Mk 3, S/T 90, Mk 2 & 2A, Alpine Mk I, Mk I Special, Mk III, \$25.

3) Genuine Nuffield Riley 1.1/2 and 2.1/2 workshop manual, \$40 (postage extra).

Contact: Ken Watts, Tasmania, Ph: (003) 44 3764.

SOCIAL NEWS & NOTES

Hello everyone! With the year already half gone we will soon be thinking of our Annual Concours, Display Day and end of year break-up/Presentation Dinner. The Display and Concours event is again being held on the 2nd Sunday in November, conveniently situated between the Melbourne Cup weekend and Bendigo Swap Meeting dates! It will be necessary however, to change the location of the Concours/Display from Deepdene to Balwyn Park; another Council owned park further along Whitehorse Road. Unfortunately the drainage works at Deepdene Park will not be completed in time for us to use it. We have again engaged Tommy's Takers to provide a spit roast luncheon at the Concours and will be requesting your bookings for this next month.

This issue of the Humberette should contain your 1990/91 membership list. It is a mammoth task collating all the information that you send in on your application and renewal forms - our thanks go to Graeme Finn for the work he has put into organizing this and to Barry who arranged the printing. Please advise Graeme of any omissions or corrections - the list is only as good as your information and our infallibility!! There are some late renewals and recent new members not included here and these will be published in a supplementary list to be issued shortly.

Please use your membership list thoughtfully. It is intended to give you an indication of who else in the club has a car similar to yours and of other Humber owners in your vicinity. By publishing registration numbers it may also help you identify club cars you see on your travels. IT IS NOT INTENDED FOR THE SOLICITATION OF BUSINESS NOR FOR A TRADE DIRECTORY.

As our August meeting is a SUNDAY FAMILY DAY (Sunday August 26th) and the CHACA SWAP MEET is also in August (Sunday 19th), seems preferable to hold the 'Hastings Pub' run over until next month. This will now be in September as per calendar page details.

For the restorers and mechanically minded the SWAP MEET is a great place to browse, swap information and pick up the odd part of two. As well as the wide array of second-hand parts, there are usually items like books, motor magazines, badges and other regalia, replacement parts, consumables (both vehicle and human!!), bric-a-brac, etc to be explored. This is not a formal club outing but is a great spot to spend a Sunday morning. The SWAP MEET is held in the Fresh Centre, Footscray Road, Footscray (Melway Map 42 J6) and there is plenty of off-street parking available. Admission to the Centre is \$2.00 per adult.

In the last magazine you will recall a reference to an automatic transmission firm in Bayswater. At the time I asked whether anyone had any knowledge of them and, in return, I received a call from a very concerned member in Albury who had had less than satisfactory service from the National Coachworks Co. which is associated with this firm - maybe a need for caution if you consider taking your transmission there.

At the next meeting we have been asked by the NSW club to canvas your opinion regarding a possible name change by their club. As the first Humber club to operate in Australia, the name HUMBER CAR CLUB OF AUSTRALIA was adopted by NSW. However, over the ensuing years, as other independent clubs sprang up in the varying states, a degree of confusion set in. The questions to be addressed are - how much of a problem (if any) is the HCCA name to other state clubs and how could NSW club possibly differentiate, preferably without the need to undergo a complete name change (which would be an involved and costly procedure)? Opinions or ideas please!

Finally, in response to many requests, we have re-published in this issue a complete list of engine numbers for all Humbers manufactured from 1930 onwards. If your car still has its original engine, the engine and chassis numbers for the vehicle should correspond. The list gives you the range of numbers for all Mark and Series models and helps you identify, for example, whether your 1960 Snipe is a Series I or Series II model. Model identification can be particularly important when ordering spare parts for the vehicle.

Well, keep humm(ber)ing until I see you at the next meeting.

MARGARET.

MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING

HELD 22ND JUNE, 1990

Meeting commenced at 8:07pm.

Attendance: 32 members as per book.

Apologies: B. Parkinson, Mal Morgan, Vic Wilson, Ray Webster, Nat & Delsi Hanlon and Karl Wilde.

Welcome New Members: Amos, Carl Chapman.

Treasurer's Report: Nil.

Correspondence: CHACA Journal, HCC of QLD, HCC of WA, Humber/Hillman "Torque" NZ Club, Vic Roads Corp, Cim Centre, K. Watts of Launceston Tasmania, M. Heazlewood Tasmania, Rootes Group Car Club, Wolsely "Hornet", A40 Newsflash, The Flying A, RACV.

Events Director's Report: Churchill Island a success plus reminder of Gellibrand Hill Park outing in July (22/7/90).

Librarian's Report: Humber Sceptre & Hillman Hunter manuals reported by Dave Denner. Also, thanks to David Hart for Humber Hawk Auto Transmission manual and Accessories Listing.

Editor's Report: 180 newsletters distributed.

Hall Committee Report: Trees around Hall and Reserve are in poor condition plus extra parking space is required, an area problem may occur later. It has been put forward that some of the trees be removed.

A.O.M.C. Report: Nil.

General Business & Technical Talk: Discussion on safety of windscreen with scratches and pitting. The point was made that, in absolute cases of poor availability, R.W.C. may be granted on a pending (future) supply being available.

Steering problems were also discussed, pertaining to the use of correct tyres. It is important to stick as closely as possible to correct tyres as recommended by the manufacture.

Meeting closed at 8:56pm.

Saw film on National Rally at Cowra, N.S.W. Supper was then served.

"Our hearts were made glad as we conversed with one another, our interests were congenial and, our inner beings satisfied".

(Script from the 'Student Prince', Act 2 - S. Rombery)

Ian Foreman



Humber Armoured Cars

The Humber armoured cars were numerically the most important types produced in the United Kingdom, for production eventually reached a total of 5,400. The type had its origins in a pre-war Guy armoured car known as the Tank, Light, Wheeled Mk I, of which Guy produced 101 examples by October 1940. In that month it was realized that Guy's production facilities would be fully occupied producing light tanks, so production was switch-

ed to the Rootes Group and Karrier Motors Limited of Luton in particular. There the Guy design was rejigged for installation on a Karrier KT 4 artillery tractor chassis, Guy continuing to supply the armoured hulls and turrets. Although the new model was virtually identical to the original Guy design it was subsequently re-named the Armoured Car, Humber Mk I.

The Humber Mk I had a relatively short wheelbase, but it was never man-

oeuvrable and used a welded hull. The turret mounted two Besa machine-guns, a heavy 15-mm (0.59-in) and a lighter 7.92-mm (0.31-in) weapon. The type had a crew of three: a commander who acted as his own wireless operator, a gunner and the driver in the front hull. The first production batch ran to 500 vehicles before the Armoured Car, Humber Mk II introduced some improvements, mainly to the front hull which had a pronounced

slope. The Armoured Car, Humber Mk III had a larger turret that allowed a crew of four to be carried, while the Armoured Car, Humber Mk IV reverted to a crew of three as the turret housed an American 37-mm (1.45-in) gun. An odd feature of this vehicle was that the driver was provided with a lever which raised a hatch covering an aperture in the rear bulkhead for use as rear vision in an emergency.

KENNEDY'S KLANGERS

Sorry to upset you but I'm still alive and kicking.

First off a big 'no-no' - DO NOT RING ME AT WORK from 1st August. I will not be able to be contacted at work, I will be on another phone number and it will be a silent number. If you wish to contact me, please phone me at home at a sensible hour after business hours.

The club phone has been a bit quiet this month, not much 'for sale', a few 'help' calls and a couple of people wanting to join the club. The film people rang looking for certain models and coloured Humbers. At this stage I have not heard from the club member whose name we gave them.

By now Vic Wilson will have returned from another Darwin trip, look forward to hearing some 'fish stories'.

I'm sure all the club members join me in wishing Margaret Yates a speedy recovery for her injured foot, by now I hope you have thrown the crutches away. Once again all the best to you and Jim, looking forward to another visit.

Have you looked at your calendar lately, I think you should because the end of the year is racing towards us and that means 'Concours'. I advise you to start planning your jobs now and get stuck into them one by one. If you leave everything till the last minute you won't get them done.

One last item, our club has grown to a fair size but believe me there is still a lot of Humber owners out there that have not heard of the club. So put a card under the wiper blade or hand one to the owner personally.

Well enough from me at this time, all the best to everyone and remember, you don't drive a Humber, you motor in a Humber.

Happy Humbling,
Bob Kennedy.

NEW MEMBERS TO THE CLUB

Since my last report the club has gained a number of new members. Welcome to you all!

- Mr. H. Miles of Manangatang
- Mr. Carl Chapman of Mt. Evelyn (Series V Ambulance)
- Mr. Kelvin Hughes of Elsternwick (3 Series V's, 2 Series IV's)
- Mr. Ron Humphrey of Wodonga
- Mr. Wayne Preusser of Mt. Evelyn
- Mr. Alan Newsome of Red Hill, Canberra (Series III & IV)
- Mr. David Hart of Chadstone (Mk VI Hawk)

CLUB MEMBERSHIP

Included with this edition is the 1990 Membership List. The latest "WHO'S WHO" of Humbling. I hope that everybody finds it interesting, useful and reasonably accurate. I apologise in advance for any errors. Please notify me of any errors so that I can amend the records and I will issue an update later on.

Graeme Finn,
Membership Secretary.

WANTED

Body shell for MK 1 or II Snipe, also rear wheel arches.
Contact: Kevin Guzelain, Ph: (052) 76 1206.

Mk 2 S/Snipe.

Contact: J. Yates, 11 Oleander Street, Nightcliffe/Darwin, 5792, Ph: (089) 85 3571.

Humber Vogue-Sports, manual & parts book OR Vogue-Sports supplement. Also Humber Sceptre owners handbook.

Contact: Ken Watts, Launceston/Tasmania, Ph: (003) 44 3764.

* Kobs - headlight, panel light, wipers. Steering Column Cover - upper and lower. Front Left Mudguard complete.

* To suite Mk IV S/Snipe (1953-57) - two heater units complete, four S/Snipe badges to fit front guards, rear number plate mounting bracket (Mk IV A), horn ring cover, four rubber draught excluders - accelerator pedal to floor.

* Contact: Bill Bowker, The Basin, Ph: (03) 761 1089.

IT was called the "Pioneer Motor Carriage" — and it was the biggest drawcard at the 1897 cycle show at the Exhibition Buildings.

But to *The Herald's* first motoring writer it was simply "a nicely got-up dog cart", with an engine attached.

Certainly it was an odd contraption.

The Herald's reporter, who later managed to organise a test drive, wasn't a bad visionary.

He predicted in edition of March 3, 1897, that in the future the star exhibit of the show might have "a prejudicial effect" on the sale of bicycles.

"The horseless vehicle is entirely home-made," he wrote.

"While it is by no means free of defects, it must be apparent that the motor car has not only come to stay, but that it will, in the not very distant future, revolutionise street traffic."

He added that the prototype Pioneer had been hurriedly put together to display at the cycle show and had a few defects.

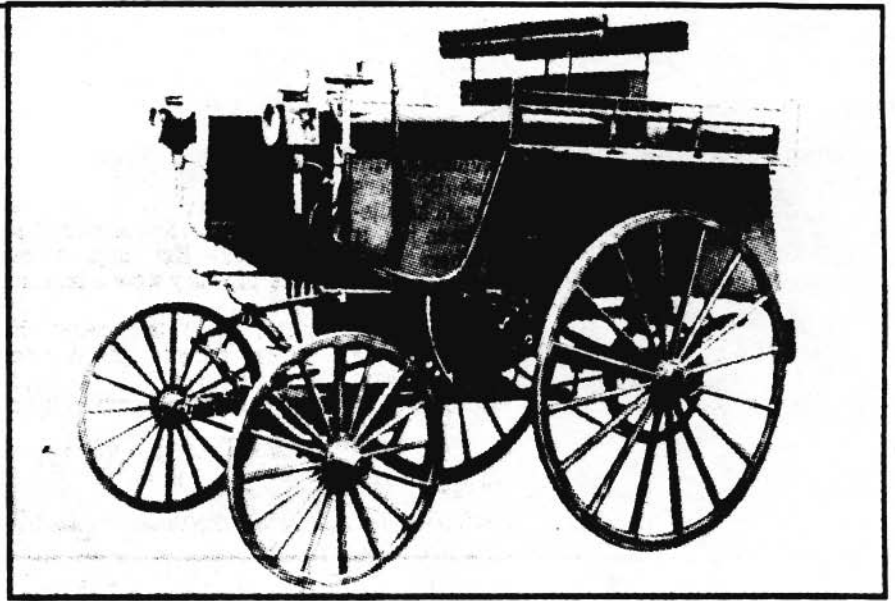
He listed the problems as "a somewhat heavy appearance", a motor that was "by no means noiseless", "considerable vibration" and "something more than a suspicion of a smell of oil".

The good news, he informed *Herald* readers, was that the Pioneer could be taken around corners and in and out of traffic in a much smaller space than a horsed vehicle ... and a second model would cure many of the defects in the prototype.

Herald readers learned in a later article that a 2½-horsepower single cylinder kerosene engine housed under the seat gave the Pioneer a top speed of eight miles an hour. He explained that The Australian Horseless Carriage Syndicate of 452 Collins St had commissioned Mr W. Jackson's Phoenix Carriage Works in Brunswick St, Fitzroy, to build the vehicle "from the ground up".

The Herald's reporters were a modest lot in those days and our man refrained from letting on that he had been granted a spell at the controls.

But our first motoring writer was given credit for his feat of daring in the next issue of *The Weekly Times*, then, as today, part of the *Herald* group.



The Pioneer Motor Carriage: "by no means free of defects".

The Weekly Times reported that "a representative of *The Herald* was the first press man in Australia to enjoy a ride in the horseless vehicle" and that he had been "very favorably impressed by the simple controls."

Simple controls they were, at that ... two levers (one for a clutch and the other for a brake) plus a steering wheel!

Whatever happened to the big plans engineer-designer and syndicate manager Walter Ridge had for the Pioneer?

The most likely theory is that smaller De Dion-engined vehicles imported soon afterwards made the Pioneer obsolete before it really got off the drawing board.

Still, if those late 19th century cyclists had known what the future held for the horseless carriage they would have probably banned the Pioneer from their 1897 exhibition.

Anyone who has tried to push a bicycle through the fume-laden streets of 1990 Melbourne will know why.

'Zip' battery

ISUZU in Japan has invented a battery it says can be recharged in 10 seconds and produces 20 times more power for its weight than conventional batteries.

Conventional car batteries generally need eight or more hours to recharge.

Isuzu and Fuji Electrochemical, which jointly announced the development, expect to start commercial sales of the battery in two years, a spokesman for Isuzu said.

The battery uses activated carbon and diluted sulphuric acid and should cause fewer environmental problems than mercury-based and other conventional types of battery, he said.

A 1.2 volt, coin-sized version has been produced on a trial basis, he said.

The new battery may be produced in different shapes and may be used in home appliances as well as cars and trucks.

AUSTRALIA'S biggest-selling cars—the Holden Commodore and Ford Falcon—have the biggest number of faults. And that's official!

According to the Federal Government's watchdog—the Automotive Industry Authority—the big Aussie sixes are lagging well behind other locally produced models in the quest for world class quality.

Their average number of faults is more than double that of Japanese four-cylinder imports and far greater than the standards achieved by smaller, Australian-made models.

Significantly, says the AIA's latest State of the Industry Report, the Falcon and Commodore are the only Australian-made models not exposed to direct imported competition.

While quality levels have improved for small and medium-sized cars made in Australia, our big-selling sixes now have more faults than they did back in 1985.

The Commodore earned the AIA's wooden spoon, its quality level slipping to a five-year low in 1989, after a solid performance with the introduction of the new VN model in 1988.

Faults

The EA 26 Falcon, which experienced a disastrous introduction two years ago, improved markedly. It pipped the Commodore with a lower average number of faults.

Australia's best-built vehicles in 1989 were the Toyota Camry, Mitsubishi Magna and Toyota Corolla. All three have improved steadily since 1985. But all were below the standards set by comparable imported models.

The AIA's quality data is compiled by Automotive Research and Marketing Services (ARMS), from samples of private new car buyers. While the data is collected quarterly, the motor manufacturers have an agreed "code of silence" which prevents the results being published or used for competitive advantage. That's why you won't see Toyota shouting its "win" from the rooftops.

The once-a-year AIA report is the only glimpse of this otherwise confidential data afforded to the public.

THE SUN-HERALD, May 20, 1990

Sample Average Number of Faults Reported for Locally Produced and Imported Vehicle Models, 1985 to 1989

Model	Sample Average Number of Faults				
	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
Toyota Corolla	2.40	2.09	2.31	2.27	2.04
Ford Laser/Meteor	2.29	1.69	1.64	2.08	2.31
Nissan Pulsar/ Holden Astra	2.28	2.40	2.66	2.94	2.36
Mitsubishi Colt	2.83	2.96	2.59	3.09	2.72
Comparable fully imported models	-	-	-	1.79	1.50
Toyota Corona - Camry	2.59	2.09	2.58	2.43	1.91
Mitsubishi Magna	2.40	2.07	2.16	2.21	1.99
Nissan Bluebird- Pintara/Skyline	2.44	2.41	2.37	2.70	2.44
Comparable fully imported models	-	-	-	1.34	1.37
Ford Falcon and derivatives	3.08	3.46	2.95	4.44	3.35
Holden Commodore and derivatives	3.32	2.36	2.49	3.24	3.38

Hawker's van restored to its mint condition

Henry Monsoor always carried Minties when he went out on his rounds as a hawker; they were an important part of his stock and were sold loose from a seven-pound tin.

He also carried Craven A tailor-made cigarettes for special customers, and Blue Capstan and Log Cabin plug tobacco for the rest, in his 1928 Graham Bros van.

The hawker's van has survived to become part of outback history after being restored at the Birdwood Motor Museum in the Adelaide Hills.

From about 1929 to the early 1940s, the Beirut-born hawker's shop, and sometimes home, was a welcome sight around the Flinders Ranges, in the north of



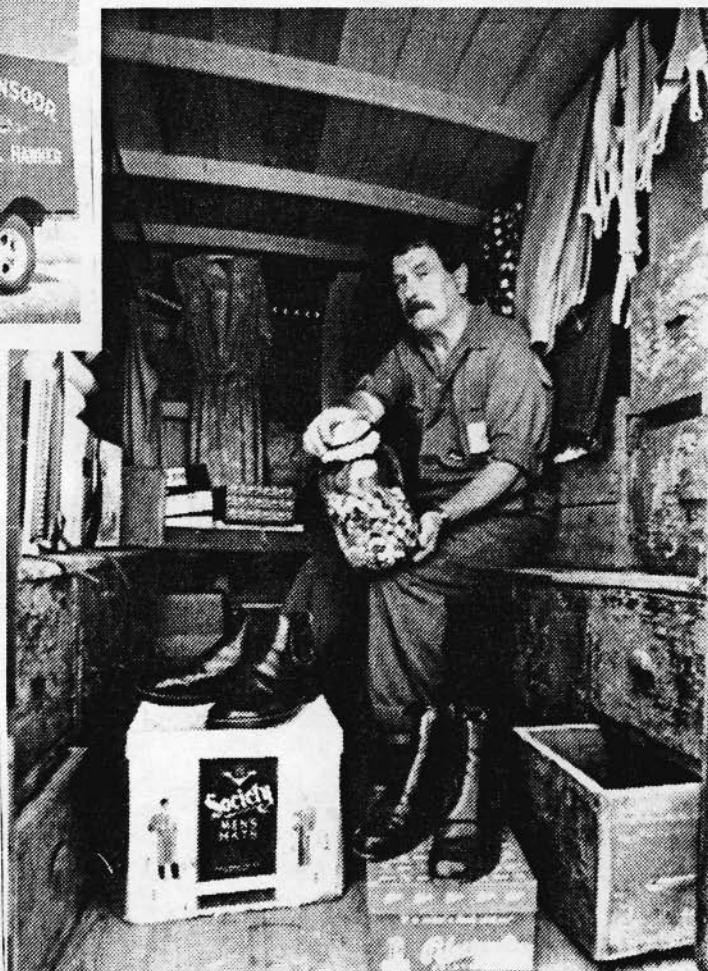
The restored van today.

South Australia, bringing the latest dress material, watches, mouth-organs and toothpaste, as well as Minties, to settlements and stations.

— PETER HUGHES



Henry Monsoor's van in the Flinders Ranges in the 1930s.



Mr Brian Jeffries, restoration mechanic, with items from the van.



ROAD TEST COMMENTARY

THE MOTOR YEAR BOOK, 1957

The Humber Super Snipe also has an epicyclic gear with two-pedal control, but in this case there are only three speeds although the maximum in first and second are in fact almost identical with the Rolls-Royce speeds in second and third, i.e. 38 and 63 m.p.h. But on this model with the Borg-Warner transmission the hydraulic coupling is also a torque converter which not only makes up for the lack of a low bottom gear in a four-speed box; but also gives increased accelerating powers in top gear. On full throttle there is an automatic change down to the intermediate speed in the gearbox and the car will accelerate on this ratio up to 60 m.p.h. when there is automatic engagement of top gear on which ratio the car will put up a surprising 97 m.p.h.

For all practical purposes the lever on the steering column is neglected by the driver although a first gear can be brought in by hand for the purpose of climbing extremely severe gradients or assisting engine braking. Normally, however, the speed at which the gear change is made between the intermediate gear and direct is wholly determined by the position of the throttle.

The Humber as a car has both the merit and defects of a design which is some years old; the merit that one sits fairly high off the ground and that the car is not excessively wide; the defect that the interior width and leg room are somewhat deficient in relation to the overall size of the vehicle, and an unladen weight of 36 cwt.

Interesting comparison can be made between the Humber and the Ford Fairlane V.8 which is one of the most popular cars in the United States. The Ford is 6 in. wider, 2½ in. longer, and 5 cwt. lighter; it has a 4.5-litre engine as against the Humber's 4.2-litre, but does only 14.2 m.p.g. in place of 15.3 m.p.g., the maximum speeds of the car being identical within 1 m.p.h. Both use in substance the same type of transmission, but somewhat strangely the heavier Humber reaches 80 m.p.h. in 28.5 sec. whereas the Ford takes 31.4 sec.

That in England the Ford is the more expensive car of the two must not blind one to the reality that in its country of origin it is substantially the cheaper, but the extraordinary similarity in performance does underline the progress that has been made in the development of British cars which have not changed greatly in external appearance in the past five or six years. The Humber of 1949 for example had a maximum speed of little over 81 m.p.h. and needed 32.6 sec. to reach 70 m.p.h. from rest compared with the current model time of 21 sec.

SUPREME IN TOWN OR OUTBACK — this luxurious Humber Super Snipe is built to give you real driving satisfaction and pride of ownership. Its dynamic 6 cylinder 4 litre O.H.V. engine only whispers at 90 M.P.H. The massive cross-braced chassis, heavy duty shock absorbers, outstanding road holding and cornering stability—all combine to ensure safe, comfortable, fatigue-free motoring over all road conditions. Truly the Humber Super Snipe is Australia's biggest big car value.

£1595 plus Sales Tax. Confidential terms. Accredited finance company—Industrial Acceptance Corporation Limited.

PRODUCED IN THE FACTORY OF ROOTES (AUSTRALIA) LIMITED

• Ad contributed by Brian Sladden
• Technical info per Tom McAlpine

SUMMARY OF ROAD TEST PERFORMANCE

Make and Model	Date published	Capacity (c.c.)	Weight (cwt.)		Acceleration in top gear (or "drive" range) (sec.)				Acceleration in highest intermediate gear (sec.)				Topley pull in top gear (lb./ton)
			Unladen	As tested	10-30 m.p.h.	20-40 m.p.h.	30-50 m.p.h.	40-60 m.p.h.	10-30 m.p.h.	20-40 m.p.h.	30-50 m.p.h.	40-60 m.p.h.	
(1) Austin A.30 Countryman	Nov. 23, '55	803	15	18½	13.9	15.0	20.6	—	8.0	10.5	—	—	165
(2) Austin A.30 Westminster de Luxe (with overdrive)	Dec. 14, '55	2,639	25½	29½	9.0	8.8	10.0	12.7	6.3	6.7	7.9	—	255
(3) Austin A.105	Aug. 22, '56	2,639	26½	30	7.8	8.0	9.3	10.5	5.5	5.6	6.3	—	260
(4) R.M.W. Type 501 V.8	Dec. 7, '55	2,580	28	31½	10.2	10.5	10.7	10.6	6.3	5.7	6.4	—	235
(5) Citroën 2CV (Type A.Z.) Cabriolet	Jan. 25, '56	425	10½	14	30.0	36.2	—	—	18.4	24.9	—	—	105
(6) Ford Squire Estate Car	Dec. 28, '55	1,172	16½	20½	13.4	13.5	15.7	22.2	5.0	5.8	—	—	155
(7) Ford Consul II	May 23, '56	1,702	22	25½	11.1	11.0	11.8	15.1	5.9	6.7	8.3	—	210
(8) Ford Zodiac II	May 2, '56	2,552	23½	27½	8.1	8.0	8.4	10.1	4.5	5.2	6.2	—	305
(9) Ford Fairlane V.8 Town Sedan (automatic gearbox)	Sept. 12, '56	4,457	31½	35	3.9	4.7	5.5	8.1	—	—	—	—	340
(10) Hillman "New Minx" de Luxe	May 23, '56	1,390	19½	23	12.0	12.1	13.5	15.7	7.2	8.0	10.5	—	200
(11) Humber Hawk Estate Car (with overdrive)	April 11, '56	2,267	31	34½	10.6	10.3	10.8	13.9	6.9	7.2	8.6	—	225
(12) Humber Super Snipe (automatic gearbox)	Aug. 15, '56	4,139	36½	39½	3.8	4.8	6.6	7.1	—	—	—	—	—
(13) Jaguar 2.4-litre (with overdrive)	July 25, '56	2,483	27	30½	8.2	8.4	8.6	8.7	5.6	5.5	6.2	—	280
(14) Landrover "107" Station Wagon	July 18, '56	1,597	30½	34½	12.7	15.7	24.7	—	8.2	11.9	—	—	175
(15) Morgan 4/4 Series II	Aug. 8, '56	1,172	13½	17	13.5	13.2	14.7	17.2	5.6	6.2	8.9	—	165
(16) Morris Isis de Luxe (with overdrive)	July 11, '56	2,639	27	30½	9.4	9.8	11.8	13.8	6.5	6.8	8.3	—	240
(17) Nash Metropolitan Hard-top	May 16, '56	1,489	16½	20½	9.3	9.7	10.8	13.4	5.9	6.6	9.1	—	250
(18) Packard Clipper (automatic gearbox)	June 27, '55	5,243	38½	42½	4.2	5.4	5.4	6.2	3.2	4.2	4.0	—	525
(19) Paramount 1½-litre Roadster	April 25, '56	1,508	21½	25½	10.7	12.5	16.7	22.3	5.9	7.7	12.8	—	195
(20) Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud (automatic gearbox)	Jan. 18, '56	4,887	38	41½	3.1	3.8	5.8	6.6	—	—	—	—	290
(21) Simca Aronde Elysée	Sept. 19, '56	1,290	17½	21½	12.3	13.5	13.6	15.3	7.3	8.3	8.7	—	185
(22) Standard Family Eight	Feb. 8, '50	803	14½	18½	15.7	17.6	22.5	—	10.3	12.6	20.0	—	150
(23) Standard Family Ten (with Alexander-Laystall conversion)	May 30, '56	948	14½	18	14.1	13.4	15.4	20.0	8.6	9.0	10.2	—	180
(24) Standard Vanguard III (with overdrive)	June 20, '56	2,088	24	27½	10.9	9.2	9.7	12.1	5.3	6.0	8.1	—	250
(25) Standard Vanguard Sportsman	Sept. 5, '56	2,088	24½	28	8.6	8.7	10.6	11.5	5.2	5.3	6.8	—	265
(26) Triumph TR3 Hard-top Coupé (with overdrive)	April 4, '56	1,991	19	22½	9.2	8.6	8.9	9.1	6.2	5.7	6.0	—	265
(27) Vauxhall Cresta	June 6, '56	2,262	23½	26½	9.7	9.3	9.1	11.4	5.9	5.7	7.4	—	245
(28) Vauxhall Cresta (7.7:1 compression ratio)	Oct. 31, '56	2,262	23½	26½	9.7	10.1	10.8	11.6	6.0	6.3	7.6	—	230
(29) Volkswagen de Luxe Saloon	April 18, '56	1,192	14	17½	20.2	18.4	18.4	27.7	9.7	8.9	11.3	—	150
(30) Volvo 440K	April 4, '56	1,414	19	22½	12.0	12.2	12.9	17.3	6.9	7.7	10.2	—	200

DATA, NOVEMBER 1955 TO SEPTEMBER 1956 INCLUSIVE

	Acceleration through the gears (sec.)						Maximum speed (m.p.h.)				Max- mile speed (m.p.h.)	Fuel consumption (miles per gallon)					Over- all	Drag h.p. at 60 m.p.h.
	0-30 m.p.h.	0-40 m.p.h.	0-50 m.p.h.	0-60 m.p.h.	0-70 m.p.h.	Stand- ing 1-mile	Over- drive	Top gear	3rd gear	2nd gear		At steady speeds in highest gear						
												30 m.p.h.	40 m.p.h.	50 m.p.h.	60 m.p.h.	70 m.p.h.		
(1)	9.0	16.1	28.5	—	—	26.4	—	63.0	43	27	—	54.5	49.5	39.0	—	—	35.4	21.8
(2)	5.3	8.1	12.6	18.3	27.3	21.1	91.9	86.3	73	50	—	30.5	36.0	33.0	30.0	26.0	21.6	23.4
(3)	4.0	7.2	11.0	15.4	21.7	20.2	91.2	96.3	71	48	92.4	28.0	34.5	32.5	28.0	25.5	22.0	24.2
(4)	4.9	6.9	11.0	15.2	21.9	20.0	—	100.2	81	51	—	31.0	28.0	25.5	23.0	20.0	18.6	21.6
(5)	13.6	27.0	—	—	—	31.1	—	47.2	43	31	—	70.5	59.0	—	—	—	49.7	20.3
(6)	6.5	10.9	20.2	33.8	—	23.8	—	69.9	—	46	—	48.0	44.0	39.5	34.0	—	35.7	24.4
(7)	5.6	9.9	14.8	23.2	36.9	23.0	—	79.3	—	59	77.6	37.0	34.5	31.0	27.0	20.5	22.1	25.2
(8)	4.6	7.4	11.3	17.1	24.3	20.9	—	87.9	—	62	—	31.0	29.0	25.5	22.0	19.0	21.5	26.9
(9)	5.3	8.3	11.2	16.4	21.4	20.3	—	96.1	—	64	93.1	22.5	22.0	20.0	18.5	16.0	14.3	27.0
(10)	6.0	10.5	16.0	25.0	44.5	23.4	—	78.6	63	40	77.4	43.0	38.0	34.0	29.0	25.5	29.8	19.1
(11)	6.4	11.4	16.6	25.2	36.7	23.2	79.7	72.0	50	29	—	38.0	35.5	31.5	26.5	23.5	22.8	27.2
(12)	4.7	7.7	11.3	14.8	21.0	20.4	—	97.0	—	63	95.0	29.0	21.0	19.0	17.0	15.0	15.3	31.0
(13)	4.6	6.9	11.0	14.4	19.9	19.6	101.5	93.5	69	47	—	37.0	35.0	31.0	26.0	21.5	18.3	24.4
(14)	7.8	14.7	28.9	—	—	26.2	—	58.1	51	37	57.2	26.5	23.0	19.5	—	—	18.2	35.5
(15)	6.4	10.3	16.0	26.9	47.8	23.0	—	75.3	—	52	74.1	60.0	52.0	43.0	33.5	27.0	35.1	16.7
(16)	5.1	7.7	12.2	17.6	25.7	21.2	85.0	90.0	68	38	87.4	35.5	42.0	35.5	30.0	25.5	26.2	24.5
(17)	5.6	9.5	14.6	22.4	35.6	22.3	—	76.3	—	57	75.6	38.0	37.0	33.0	28.0	23.5	26.3	20.7
(18)	4.3	6.3	8.4	10.9	15.2	18.2	—	113.4	—	—	107.5	26.0	25.0	22.5	20.5	18.5	16.6	31.5
(19)	6.8	11.2	19.3	31.2	—	24.6	—	72.4	—	51	—	39.0	35.0	29.0	23.5	—	25.6	20.5
(20)	4.3	6.7	10.0	13.5	19.0	18.8	—	102.9	63	40	—	24.8	22.0	20.0	17.5	15.5	14.5	33.0
(21)	5.4	10.6	15.0	23.9	34.7	22.2	—	82.6	60	40	80.4	45.0	41.5	37.5	34.0	—	26.4	—
(22)	8.8	15.6	27.7	—	—	26.3	—	62.1	53	33	—	50.0	44.5	39.5	—	—	37.3	18.8
(23)	5.1	9.2	14.7	22.6	—	22.9	—	75.2	68	41	73.6	43.0	44.5	42.0	37.0	29.0	35.1	19.2
(24)	5.8	9.0	13.8	21.7	31.1	21.6	83.7	82.6	—	55	81.6	39.5	37.5	35.0	30.5	26.5	25.9	24.4
(25)	5.1	8.5	12.5	19.2	27.7	21.4	90.7	88.2	—	59	86.7	44.0	39.5	34.5	30.0	25.5	25.6	23.9
(26)	3.6	5.4	7.5	10.8	14.6	18.1	104.7	105.3	76	51	—	43.5	45.5	42.0	37.5	33.0	27.1	18.4
(27)	6.7	9.6	13.8	20.2	31.6	22.0	—	82.2	—	62	80.0	35.0	32.5	30.0	26.5	23.0	23.5	23.6
(28)	6.1	9.4	14.2	20.5	29.2	21.8	—	84.5	—	62	83.1	41.5	35.0	31.0	27.0	23.5	22.9	26.7
(29)	7.2	11.8	18.2	32.4	—	23.5	—	68.2	61	45	—	49.5	46.5	39.5	34.0	—	30.8	18.3
(30)	7.0	11.1	16.9	28.0	43.7	23.2	—	75.5	—	59	—	43.5	41.5	37.0	32.0	25.0	29.7	21.6

The Roots of Rootes

Richard M. Langworth
Hopkinton, New Hampshire, USA
31 July 1981

'Melancholia' assails us all—some more than others—often to the detriment of sanity and reason. Ah, how sweet they were, the days of Bugatti and the carrozzeria of ye olde country! We order up another Pimms No. 2 and reflect on the dismemberment of old excellence.' Captain Ralph Stevens, a Maine-based autoholic, was talking about the disdain levelled at MG TFs when he wrote that lovely paragraph—but he could equally have been referring to Rootes-built Sunbeams, Humbers, Hillmans and Singers. Rarely has the vintage crowd in Britain stopped to consider those cars on their own merits, preferring instead to mourn the loss of great vintage-era marques.

'Quality, like connubiality in the human female, is a state of mind,' Captain Stevens concluded. And the state of mind of most graduate enthusiasts leans towards blaming the Rootes brothers for wrecking grand names with production-line pish-posh. If rebutted with the suggestion that Sunbeam, say, wouldn't have survived the thirties were it not for Rootes, the common reply is that this indeed is what should have happened, rather than the denigration of the Sunbeam badge. But the argument is fallacious: what sometimes issued from the production-oriented Rootes Groups were cars worth more than a casual glance, even if they did not set any Land Speed Records. And that is what this book is all about.

Both British and American readers may be interested in the parallels between the Rootes family (William and Reginald, with their sons Geoffrey, Brian and Timothy) and the Stateside Studebaker family (Peter, Clem, Henry, Jacob and John, all brothers), a few generations and 4500 miles removed. Like the Rootes, the Studebakers entered the motorcar trade from an allied industry: bicycles for the British family, wagons in the case of the Americans. The cycle operation began in 1902, under the direction of William Rootes, Sr., in Hawkhurst, Kent. It was from there, after the First World War, that young William and his brother Reginald entered the retail automobile trade in the twenties and became manufacturers during the thirties. Rootes Ltd was formed in 1932, and by 1936 they controlled the destiny of Hillman, Humber and what had formerly been Sunbeam-Talbot-Darracq. The Singer Company were brought in during 1955, formalized in January 1956.

Scanning the relatively sparse material on the Rootes family, one is further reminded of the Studebakers in descriptions of their character. For both were of a stock we have all wonderingly known: strong, decent, bluff, shrewd, hearty. This can perhaps be accounted for by the way of life and heritage of their parts of England and America, or even by the possibility that more favourable climes may conversely darken and convolute the native personality. An American newspaperman, describing one of the Studebakers, might have equally been talking of Sir William Rootes when he described his subject as 'a genial man with a highly suspect hayseed air. "I'm just a country boy," he will say disarmingly, but there is something about him that makes a city slicker count his fingers after a handshake.'

Young Billy Rootes (we shall occasionally use his nickname, which he retained even after being knighted, to distinguish him from his father) was sent from Hawkhurst to Cranbrook School, and then to Singer in Coventry—one supposes he jumped, in 1955, at the chance to absorb his former employers—to learn the motor trade as an apprentice. His younger, more introverted, cautious and quieter brother Reginald, meanwhile, followed a business course, being educated in the intricacies of administration and finance. After the First World War the two moved from the cycle to the motor trade with a successful chain of retail car outlets in Kent. In the early twenties they relocated to Long Acre, London, and in 1926 moved to Devonshire House, Piccadilly, which remained Rootes headquarters throughout the period described herein.



The first Lord Rootes who, as 'Billy' Rootes, founded a great motor-manufacturing dynasty



Devonshire House, in London's famous thoroughfare, Piccadilly. This was the Rootes Group's headquarters from the end of the 1920s to the mid-1960s

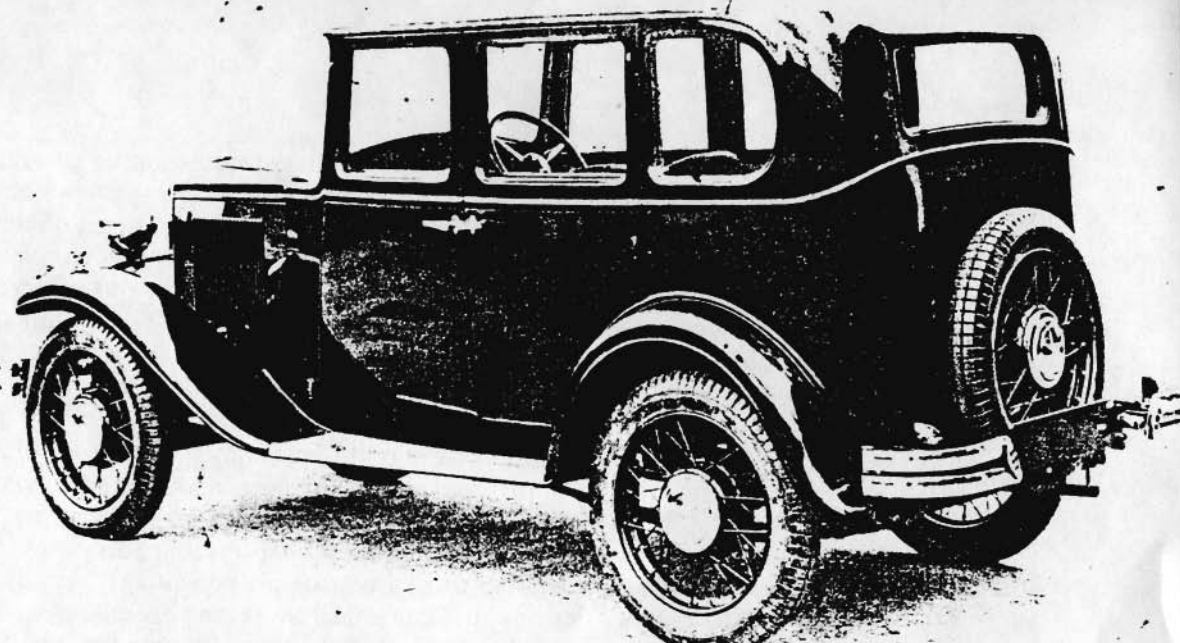
Contributed by
Ian Foreman

William and Reginald were a perfect combination. Graham Robson has written that Billy 'wanted to be as important, and as wealthy, as Herbert Austin and William Morris'. He was several decades behind those two great pioneers, of course, and he realized he would have to work his way into their league by acquisition, rather than invention. Billy's skills, Robson continued, 'were as a salesman, and as a motivator of men; Reginald . . . was the administrator. As William was later to say on many occasions, he might be the power unit of the Rootes Group, but Reginald was the steering and brakes. The one had the bright ideas, and was for ever dashing off in a new direction, while the other made sure they could all work, and restrained his brother from excesses.'

By 1928, the Piccadilly operations had become so successful that Rootes were the largest motor distributors in Britain. Simultaneously there arrived Billy Rootes' opportunity to do more than just sell cars. Hillman and Humber were—conveniently—in financial trouble; even more conveniently, their Coventry factories were close together. Hillman in particular had had a bad time of it after the war. Some years before the Rootes brothers beckoned, its managers had discussed selling out to Siegfried Bettmann, who ultimately bought Dawson and launched the Triumph car in 1923.

In this action one may recall yet another American parallel: the effort by crack sales executive Joseph W. Frazer to 'buy control' of a functioning manufacturer during and after the Second World War. Frazer ultimately obtained Graham-Paige, and allied that firm with Kaiser-Frazer. Detroit car makers scoffed at this upstart who proposed to become one of them. 'Frazer never built a car in his life,' they said, 'he just sold them.' Similarly the advent of Billy Rootes was greeted with hoots by the moguls of Coventry, who could hardly imagine a less likely candidate for their as yet still rather exclusive club. With the arrival of the Rootes family—their initial entrée was as large shareholders, not outright owners—the former Hillman and Humber hierarchy rapidly disappeared. Spencer Wilks and Captain (later Sir) John Black, joint managing directors of Hillman, immediately departed—Black shortly to join and then to lead Standard, Wilks later to direct with distinction the fortunes of Rover. One can understand the rationale here; the motorcar business is a serious game, and its leaders in that time of a near *laissez-faire* business climate were generally hard-driving and forceful in disposition. It is inconceivable that Billy Rootes and John Black could have been partners in any venture.

The only fly in this apparently promising Rootes ointment was a little matter known as The Crash. Wall Street plummeted in October 1929, the American economy with it, duly followed by the rest of the Western World's.



The Rootes family, already faced with sales problems involving weak 14hp and unhappy straight eight Hillmans, and an expansive but slow-selling line of 9, 14 and 20hp Humbers, were immediately thrown into the problems of a slack economy and a reeling motor industry.

The Hillmans were restyled for 1929 and priced as low as £295, and Rootes encouraged every attempt to increase production. But by 1931 the Hillman-Humber combine was in even worse straits than 1928, facing either liquidation or reorganization. At this point the Rootes family stepped in to assume full control, formally created the Rootes Group and embarked on a programme of model revision and line rationalization.

For Hillman especially, the Rootes connection couldn't have come at a more opportune time. William and Reginald soon convinced Captain J. S. Irving of 'Golden Arrow' fame to direct the creation of a new small car, designed to weld with the thin wallets of the Depression-era British public. The result was the 9.8hp Hillman Minx, with a solid little 1185cc side-valve four-cylinder engine which developed 25bhp at 3600rpm. The chassis price was only £120, and there were two models, a four-door saloon at £159 and a tourer at £198. The Minx was not a great car—what Hillman ever was?—but it was certainly a good one, and fair value for money. Through 1933 the Minx was accompanied by the larger 2.1- or 2.8-litre Hillman Wizard, but this model didn't sell well and the Rootes rationalized it out of existence by 1934. Later large Hillmans inexpensively deployed the big Humber engines.

The Hillman Minx of 1931 was the one single car which put the Rootes Group on the way to massive growth. It was nothing special in engineering terms or styling, but simple, cheap and reliable

A significant departure for the Hillman Minx was its production technique—a streamlined, mass-volume operation. Billy Rootes had studied and admired the bung-'em-out practices of GM and Ford in North America; later he would strive mightily to exploit the US market with his own car.

The Minx did nothing but improve during the Thirties. A four speed gearbox and optional free wheel and radio were offered for 1934; a progressive all-synchromesh transmission arrived a year later and the 1936 restyle brought a GM-like integral boot. The all-synchro gearbox vanished after 1939 for cost reasons, but in the short-lived 1940 model year the Minx adopted unitary construction—a new and relatively unique idea for a car of its class at the time.

The first sign of the sporting Rootes cars to come was the Hillman Aero Minx of 1933, on a shortened 78in wheelbase. Though its drive train was straight out of the standard Minx, its chassis was distinctly different, being underslung behind the front spring brackets and fitted with long, almost flat rear springs. Bolt-on engine mods included a high-compression cylinder head and down-draught carburettor fitted to a modified exhaust induction system and a remote-control mechanism afforded a short gear lever. Though Hillman proclaimed that this chassis was mainly intended for specialist coachbuilders, the stock coupé design, with its rounded, sloping radiator shell and integral stone guard, was handsome and popular. Prices were £145 for the bare chassis, £245 complete. In 1934 Hillman added a sports four-seater at £225 and a close-coupled foursome saloon at £255.

The Aero was a dashing addition to a line of cars whose more standard models were in no way sporting, and in concept was a portent of the future. The Rootes family were hard-headed businessmen first, enthusiasts a very distant second, but if the market was there, they *would* consider derivations of their standard models. This proved to be the prevailing philosophy from the acquisition of Talbot in 1935 through the Ford V8-powered Sunbeam Tiger of 1964.

A few historians have pointed out the essential truisms about this period of Rootes consolidation and absorption. In doing so they became almost 'revisionist historians' in that they were re-justifying, *vis-à-vis* the complaints of the enthusiasts, what was perfectly justifiable in the thirties. Bluntly, men were out of work. But Britain was climbing out of the Depression by 1934, and Rootes helped put people back on the job. The firms they had added to the Hillman-Humber empire—Thrupp and Maberly Coachworks (Rootes-owned since 1925),

Karrier in 1934, Clement Talbot in 1935, British Light Steel Pressings in 1937, the Sunbeam Motor Company in 1938—were all struggling, and the struggles were mainly due to the Depression or bad management. The great Louis Coatalen, remember, had borrowed half a million pounds in 1924, a ten-year loan to finance his Grand Prix endeavours. That

note fell due in the very depths of the Depression, and Sunbeam, of course, could not pay up. As Karrier, Talbot and Sunbeam entered receivership in the thirties, Rootes picked them up, promising marketing know-how and new, mass-production techniques, supported by the formidable financial resources of Prudential Assurance, their largest backer. Thanks in part to a slowly recovering economy, Rootes succeeded. Against production of about 5000 cars per year in 1930, they built a capacity of 50,000 per year by 1939. Rootes, along with firms like Rover and Standard—were partly responsible for making Coventry, by the outbreak of the war, 'Britain's Detroit'. As such, they contributed vastly to the wartime production which enabled Great Britain to withstand the onslaughts of Nazi Germany, until those who had hitherto been half-blind were half-ready. For their wartime efforts both William and Reginald Rootes were knighted, and they well deserved the honour.

Rootes were firmly convinced that Coventry was the place to build cars. The offer to run—for a suitable fee—shadow factories built and paid for by the British Exchequer, was irresistible. In 1936 there was no guarantee that war with Germany would ensue, and the big plants did not convert from cars to aircraft engines. Everyone hoped peace would reign forever—but few hoped as hard as the auto-makers.

Accordingly, once Rootes gained control of Sunbeam, the latter's factory in Wolverhampton was sidelined in favour of a shift to Coventry. The company also began operating a shadow factory, built close to their Hillman-Humber plant at Stoke Aldermoor. Then, in 1940, the huge shadow complex at Ryton-on-Dunsmore was opened, just outside Coventry on the London Road. Rootes moved in—to build aircraft engines for the duration and cars afterwards. Ryton, along with most other former shadow factories, still builds cars today. It is now the headquarters of the Peugeot-controlled Talbot Company, successors to Chrysler, successors to the Rootes Group.



Geoffrey Rootes, 'Billy' Rootes' eldest son, who became the second Lord Rootes when his father died, and who also became the company's chairman for a period in the 1960s



Bernard 'BB' Winter, Rootes's much-respected engineering chief in the 1940s and 1950s, who managed to interpret the wishes of the Rootes family in a very practical way

UNDERSTANDING THE NUMBERING SYSTEM USED ON YOUR NUMBER IS NOT DIFFICULT. WHAT AT FIRST LOOKS LIKE A TYPICAL INSURANCE POLICY NUMBER IS ABOUT TO BE EXPLAINED:-

LET'S LOOK AT AN EXAMPLE:-

A 8901765 POS/OD/RSO

1, 2, 3 etc.

1. Prefix Letter

Pre 1950 Cars have no prefix. 1950-59 Cars are prefixed "A"
1960 on cars are prefixed "B"

2. FIRST NUMBER - Nine differing numbers identified Hawks Snipes, Super Snipes, Pullmans, Hillman, Minx, Singers and Sunbeams. The key ones for us are:-

5	: Hawk	6	: Early Pullman
8	: Super Snipe	9	: Later Pullman, All Imperials

3. SECOND NUMBER - This indicates the year of introduction, worked out with the prefix letter.

Before MK11 Models 0 = 1938, 1 = 1939, 2 = W.D., 7 = MK1 Models

4. REMAINING NUMBERS

Now that the mystery model is identified we come to the Serial Number of the car. Ranging from 0000 to 9999 leaves a maximum of 10,000 cars to a given batch. That's a lot of Humbers and before anything near 9999 came up a model would have been changed or superseded so we would have new numbers beforehand. In 1965 Chrysler expanded the potential serial numbers, then axed production within two years.

5. LETTERS AFTER CHASSIS NUMBER - These reveal the goodies.

B.W. = Borg Warner Automatic G/Box O.D. = Overdrive G/Box
P.O.S. = Power Operated Steering. H.or L. = HI/LO Compression Motors.

Those are easy to figure out, but what do RSO or WSO mean? Taking the first letter:-

H.	- Home	E.	- CKD Export to Home Spec.
R.	- RHD Export	W	- CKD RHD Export
L.	- LHD Export	X.	- CKD LHD Export

Someone who is running out of patience and understanding will be asking "WHAT IS CKD"? Well you're probably driving what was one before it arrived in Australia. A completely knocked down assembly kit.

TAKING THE SECOND LETTER:-

C	- Convertible	R	- Roadster
D	- Sedan De Ville	S	- Saloon
H	- Hardtop	U	- Estate Car
L	- Limousine	V	- Van
P	- Pickup	X	- Chassis only

AND FINALLY THE LAST:-

M	- Ministry of Supply	X	- Non Standard (eg USA)
O	- Standard	P	- Police

FOR ADVANCED STUDENTS POSSESSING INCREDIBLE LOGIC AND PATIENCE ONE COULD FILL THE NEXT SIX NEWSLETTERS TRYING TO UNDERSTAND PAINT AND TRIM CODES.

STARTING CHASSIS NOS. FOR HUMBERS:

	<u>SNIFE</u>	<u>16H.P. (6 Cyl)</u>	<u>12 H.P.(4Cyl)</u>
1930	19367	17367	
1931	26500	22500	
1932	29090	24950	
1933	25/1000	16/2000	12/1001
1934	25/5150	16/4150	12/1701
1935	25/9001		12/20001
1936	25/4001		12/22001
1937	25/66165		12/24032
1938	5000500		
1939	5100001		
1940	5200001		
MK1	4710001	1946-47	

SUPER SNIFE

	<u>SNIFE</u>	<u>16H.P. (6 Cyl)</u>	
1939	8100001		
1940 W.D.	8200001		
MK1	8700001	1946-47	
MK11	8800001	1948-49	
MK111	A8000001	1950-51	
MK1V	A8200001	1952-53	
MK1VA	A8400001	1954-57	
MK1VB	A8410001		
SER 1	A8900001	1958-59	
SER 11	B8000001	1960	
SER 111	B8100001	1961	
SER 1V	B8200001	1962-63	
SER V	B8400001	1964-65	
SER VA	B084600001	1965 on	

PULLMAN

Pre 1938: Snipe No. P. Suffix

1938	6000500		
1939	6100001		
WD	6200001		
MK1	6710001	1964-47	
MK1 SEDANCA	6720001	1946-47	
MK11	9800001	1948-49	
MK111	A9000001	1950-51	
MK1V	A9200001	1952-55	

IMPERIAL

1938	6000500	
SER V	B84300001	1964-65
SER VA	B884400001	1965 on

SCEPTRE

MK1	B3100001	1963
	B31200001	1964
MK11	B132000001	1965-66
SCEPTRE	B111000001	1967 on

HAWK

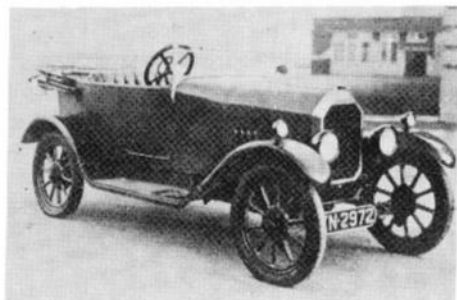
MK1	2700001
MK11	5800001
MK111	5900001
MK1V	A5000001
MKV	A5200001
MKV1	A5400001
SER 1	A5700001
SER 1A	B5000001
SER 11	B5100001
SER 111	B5200001
SER 1V	B5400001
SER 1VA	B054600001

VOGUE

SER 11	AB7200001	1963
SER 111	AB74000001	1964
SER 1V	B77400001	1965

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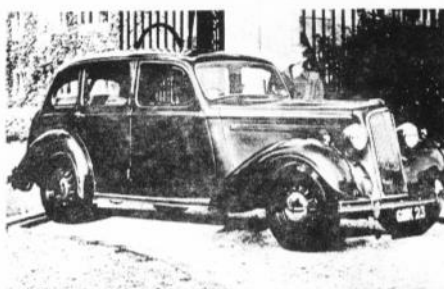
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