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VINTAGE METAL

The Journal of The Vintage Sports Car Club of Western Australia (Inc.)

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Next General Meeting: Monday 12th June 2017



Albany Classic — June 3-4

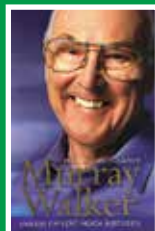
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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hi Folks.

As I write this month's report I find myself in a reflective and nostalgic mood. This state of mind was triggered when I attended the launch of Mike Sherrell's new book, "TCs Forever More," at the Jaguar Car Club premises on Sunday. I drove into the car park where the sight of twenty eight pristine MG TCs, lined up outside the main door, brought back memories of my mis-spent youth and the motley but wonderful friends I made as a member of the TC Owners Club in the sixties. Upon entering the clubrooms many old friends, who shared those times, greeted me. Though not as spritely as in the past they still had a glint in their eyes when they talked about their favorite cars and the mischief we got into driving them. Stories that, like all reminiscences, get better with time.



Mike is one of those talented characters you meet very rarely during your life-time. He had a successful career, raised a family, educated his children and was responsible for the survival of that iconic sports car, the MG TC, in the large numbers still on the road throughout the world today. His first book, "TCs Forever," has sold 5000 copies worldwide and demand is such that a further print-run is underway. This book is a restorers guide for TC owners. He has also restored 21 TCs and is currently working on the 22nd.

Why put my adulation for Mike you ask?

Our Constitution states our charter is the preservation of our motor-racing history.

The organizing and running of our iconic events takes up so much time and effort we tend to focus on them and forget the other implications of our charter. We preserve the history of our events by re-enacting racing as it was in the past, but what do we do about preserving infrastructure and cars? The Saturday workshop group is restoring the Caversham Car and the Caversham Committee is working hard to save the "D" circuit. These groups are doing their bit but they need more support.

Members, like Mike, have also made a significant contribution by saving and preserving a car that kick-started the post-war sports car production; a car that gave the average person the opportunity to go motor-racing post World War Two.

I was one of them and I have often wondered why we are so enamored with old cars. Mike summed it up in his book....

"The gap between us and the moderns is forever widening, built by robots for God's sake. Their demand for funny fuel and zinc reduced oils having its impact, notwithstanding their annoyingly efficient mechanicals and evermore smarty pants engines. If they weren't so bloody boring to drive and so bossy with their warning beeps and chimes; so tacky with their snap-on, clip-on plastic everything, our game would be up, but it's not. Oh no not by a long shot."

I guess that says it all.

Mike Barnes, our hard-working regalia and property manager, has had to retire from that position. We thank Mike and Jean for their enthusiasm and efficiency and wish Jean a speedy recovery from cancer. They will be missed but we look forward to them both returning to take part in Club activities in the future.

I would also like to thank Kevin Dorn for his generous donation of a trailer to assist in the maintenance of the Clubhouse.

Rob Ozanne

- aa. Housing Authority – construction of wastewater pump station on Lot 800 Brabham (RF)

Correspondence Out:

- a. CAMS – PL & Voluntary Workers insurance

Acceptance of Secretary’s Report:

Moved: David Moir

Seconded: Ian Fry

Carried

8. President’s Report:

a. Resignation

- i. Mike Barnes has resigned from the role of Regalia Officer and as a member of the Management Committee

- ii. The President is seeking offers from members to fill this role

b. Albany Classic – much work has been done towards this event including extensive negotiations with the City of Albany

c. The President has had complaints that one or two members have been giving negative comments about our club; he asked any members who hear such comments to speak to the member involved.

9. State of Play Reports:

a) **Competition** – Paul Bartlett reported that:

- Northam Motor Sports Festival – there had been a useful de-brief last month with the organising committee.
- Albany Classic
 - After negotiations with the City of Albany, we have been able to retain use of the “old” pit area but we still need to consider alternatives for future events;
 - We are working on a Financial Assistance agreement with the City of Albany;
 - We have a good working relationship with the Albany organising committee.

b) **Workshop** – Ron Fabry reported that:

- The Department of Housing will be erecting fences to protect the “Bush Forever” areas at Brabham;
- Kevin Dorn has kindly donated a trailer for use at the Caversham clubrooms;
- The body of the Caversham car is being prepared for painting.

d) **Library** – no report.

e) **Social** – Len Kidd reported that:

- We are negotiating with the City of Swan on the parade of racing cars from Guildford to Caversham;
- Ed Farrar had found the original certificate of the club’s incorporation in 1986 that has been framed for display in the clubrooms.

f) **Regalia** – nil.

g) **Caversham:**

- We are awaiting the drawing of the proposed track layout;
- a meeting with Rita Saffioti MLA was proposed.

10. General Business:

a) Steve Boyle agreed to provide supper at the June meeting.

11. Guest speaker — Steve Boyle spoke on the history of the Lancia marque and the Lancia Fulvia 1.6 HF and Flaminia coupes he had on display at the meeting.

13. Next Meeting: Monday 12 June.

14. Meeting Closed: 8:45 pm.

EDITOR'S RAMBLINGS

Driving Test

In the news when I was in Scotland was the reformed driving test. The transport department over there has decided to give its blessing to satnavs and learners will now have to demonstrate an ability to follow GPS directions on their dashboards — presumably, as Richard Littlejohn of the Daily Mail suggests, “without ending up the wrong way down a one-way street, or in the nearest river.”

Like most of us, he wonders why driving while staring at a satellite navigation screen is considered safe, while gawping at an iPhone is a criminal offence?

Learners will also be tested on modern skills such as turning on the rear window demister while driving. I can manage that, just don't ask me to adjust the clock on a modern car! The three-point turn is out, as is backing around a corner, replaced by reversing into a loading bay at a DIY warehouse. Oddly enough, in the road outside our holiday cottage, which is a dead-end with three lanes running off it, we saw many examples of “backing around a corner” as local motorists and drivers of fairly large delivery vans used the laneways to turn and get out of the dead-end. Even today, it seems to be a useful skill.

Littlejohn suggests that the reversing at the DIY warehouse may be a cunning ploy to cut the number of licences issued. He says: “Anyone who drives anything bigger than a Fiat 500 will know that trying to fit a normal vehicle into a designated parking spot at B&Q — or practically any other public car park — is an impossible task.”

As cars have grown wider over the years, public car park bays have remained the same size in this country too. A space that was perfectly adequate for an EH Holden or XP Falcon is a tight squeeze for today's relatively monstrous family cars and SUVs.

Flying Scotsman Rally

Our first weekend in Scotland coincided with the end of the Flying Scotsman Rally and Helen, my eagle-eyed wife, spotted this elegant 1938 MG VA drophead coupe of Americans John Scott and Robert Morey in the picturesque Kinross-shire town of Milnathort.

Ron Fabry will be pleased to learn that the rally was won by Paul Crosby and Ali Procter in a supercharged 1939 MG TB in a virtual photo finish from John Abel and Leigh Powley in a 1937 Lagonda LG45.



Bob Campbell

VSCC OF WA CALENDAR 2016/2017

June

- 3 Mt Clarence Hillclimb
- 4 Albany Classic
- 10 Workshop Saturday
- 11 Copy Deadline July *Vintage Metal***
- 12 General Meeting
- 13 Club Management Committee
- 19 Competition Group
- 20 Dad's Army Working Bee
- 27 Dad's Army

July

- 1 Workshop Saturday
- 3 General Meeting
- 11 Copy Deadline August *Vintage Metal***
- 11 Club Management Committee
- 17 Competition Group
- 18 Dad's Army Working Bee
- 25 Dad's Army

August

- 5 Workshop Saturday
- 7 General Meeting
- 11 Copy Deadline September *Vintage Metal***
- 13 Targa City Sprint, Perth CBD (TBC)
- 15 Club Management Committee
- 21 Competition Group
- 22 Dad's Army Working Bee
- 29 Dad's Army

September

- 2 Workshop Saturday
- 4 General Meeting
- 11 Copy Deadline October *Vintage Metal***
- 12 Club Management Committee
- 18 Competition Group
- 19 Dad's Army Working Bee
- 26 Dad's Army
- 30 Collie Hillclimb (Club Hillclimb Championship Rd 3)

NOTE! DEADLINE FOR ARTICLES AND ADVERTISEMENTS FOR THE JULY ISSUE IS JUNE 11.

VSCC NEWS



4.2-litre Jaguar fitted with triple SU carburetors and driving through a Falcon Borg Warner single rail



Guest Speaker June Meeting

Tony Brett is to show the latest addition to his car collection, a Jaguar Mark 7 special.

The car build started in 1983 and was finished in 1988. It was originally built by Bruce Abrey.

The car has a Mark 7 Jaguar chassis, still using the Mark 7 front end but fitted

with Ford Falcon ventilated discs and calipers. Engine is a

Falcon Borg Warner single rail gearbox to a Falcon Borg Warner back axle with drum brakes.

This car does have some competition history. It has run in the following events: around the houses event in Narrogin; the York Flying 50; Vintage Stampede at Barbagallo; and various hill climbs.

Tony will be telling the story of the car, how he obtained it and what he intends to do with it.



Guest Speaker July Meeting

Len Kidd has been working hard at forward planning and has arranged for Julian O'Hara to show his Ford GT40 replica at the July general meeting.

Regalia Master

President Rob Ozanne has already mentioned the hard work put in by Mike Barnes as the club's Regalia Master. Unfortunately Mike has had to step down from the position. The club is therefore looking for someone to take over the management of the club regalia. If you would like to help the club in this position, please contact Rob Ozanne to discuss the position. Rob's contact details are on the inside front cover, page 2 of this issue.

Albany's Racing Revolution 1936-1940

Enthusiastic VSCC member and motoring historian Graeme Cocks has produced a photographic history of the Around the Houses racing at Albany from 1936 to 1940.

Albany's Racing Revolution 1936-1940 subtitled *A Pictorial Celebration of the Around the Houses Races* features more than 140 photographs collected over many years. Every race from 1936 to 1940 is featured. Many of the pictures have not previously been published.

"Spectators flocked to Albany to see something new to Australia — racing on city streets," said Graeme. "The pictures vividly illustrate the intensity of the competition.

"The cars were also unlike the race cars of today. Many were regular cars turned into racers, while others were thoroughbred European racing cars from famous names such as Bugatti."

The book has been produced in softcover and in limited quantities. Pre-orders can be secured at www.motoringpast.com.au. See the advertisement on page 15.

BOYLE/PIERCEY FIAT 125T AT PHILLIP ISLAND



The annual Phillip Island Classic Car Festival for 2017 was held on March 17 to 19 and several VSCC members made the trip over to Victoria. Steve Boyle and his Fiat 125T featured on the motor sports web site VeloceToday.com, in a story by Vince Johnson. Vintage Metal obtained permission to reproduce here the story and photographs from the web site.

...Also running in Regularity and just a little different was Steve Boyle's 1972 Fiat 125T. One of 86 cars produced for homologation in Production Saloon Car Racing in New Zealand, delivered to Torino Motors

the target number was 200 so it was never homologated. Auckland, North Island NZ, its early history includes competing in the Benson & Hedges 500 Mile Race in October 1972 as one of the 3 works entries, finishing 7th outright — driven by Peter Hughes and Tony Lawrence. It also competed in Historic Racing in the late 80's and early 90's, taking at least one class title and competed in the inaugural Targa NZ Tarmac Rally.

Since acquiring it in 2007 Steve has returned the car to its original specification with just some extra engine tuning, resulting in now 160hp (125hp was original) from the Twin Cam 1608cc. Used in competition whenever possible, it travels all over the country from home



base in Western Australia. The car is a real warhorse and has seen more track miles in its 45 years than all but a few.

At the Island the car was driven in Regularity Division 1 and 2 categories by Steve and Martin Piercey, resulting in 63 laps completed with a 2nd and 3rd place finish from 4 events. Having kept it as refreshingly original as possible Steve plans to keep using it in any meeting that will have it.



Vince Johnson

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DAD'S ARMY NEWS



Happy Birthday Peter

The Dad's Army Workshop Saturday on May 6 coincided with Peter van der Struyf's 85th birthday. Ian Fry made sure none of us forgot by turning up with a suitably decorated birthday cake for Peter. After the ceremonial cutting of the cake the boys helped Peter to eat it.

Dad's Army Trailer

Kevin Dorn has donated a basically sound trailer to Dad's Army. It needs a bit of cosmetic work and it has a rusty bottom, but will be invaluable when the grounds need to be cleared of rubbish and excess plant growth. Now all we need to do is convince the club Hyundai to fire up so it can tow the trailer!



Peter and Terry Le May spent some time trying to coax the Hyundai into life. The coil was suspected, but it worked perfectly in the Caversham Car. The distributor was then



Now you know why Robin has a towbar on the front of the Maverick. It's for manoeuvring trailers without getting a crick in your neck.



Peter and Terry chasing the elusive spark in the Hyundai.

removed for examination, but Wally Phoebe has since given it a clean bill of health. Any suggestions to Terry Le May on a postcard...

Caversham Car

The Caversham Car is no longer grey. However, it is not quite the right shade of green and more coats of paint will be needed to get the desired colour.

It is now able to be started up and driven from its parking space in the main building to the workshop. The engine starts easily and runs very smoothly and everything else seems to work as it should. The end is in sight!

There is still work to be done. Front hubs were being repacked with grease, brakes were being checked and adjusted and small tasks completed under the dash. The workshop was a hive of activity.

A Little Visitor

In a tree near where some of our cars were parked in the shade I spotted a little chap whose red breast quite outshone the reds of Peter's MGB and the editorial MX-5. That's him on the right.





Kevin Dorn delves into the mysteries of the Caversham Car's under-dash area

Dad's Army Christmas in July

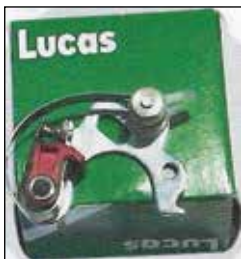
We haven't forgotten about it and Graeme Whitehead is working on establishing a venue and setting a date. Watch this space in the July issue.



Ron Fabry hunts through a fistful of keys to find the Caversham Car's ignition key

DAD'S ARMY DATES - 2017

	WORKSHOP SATURDAY	WORKING BEE TUESDAY	DAD'S ARMY TUESDAY
JUNE	10	20	27
JULY	1	18	25
AUGUST	5	22	29
SEPTEMBER	2	19	26



WHY WE LOVE ... The contact-breaker

This little piece appeared in Octane magazine and it seemed appropriate to our members' taste in cars. Thank you to Octane for permission to use the story.

Modern engines just work, mostly. If they don't, it's off to the experts and their digital diagnostics. People often aspire to a piece of this for their classic cars and retro-fit them with a clever electronic ignition system tucked inside the distributor. Fit and forget, that's the idea.

And you drive blissfully onwards until, one day, your tiny box of tricks suddenly stops working. Now you're stuck, and you wish you still had the little piece of old-school, electro-mechanical magic you so recklessly threw away.

Charles F Kettering, co-founder of the Delco company, invented the contact-breaker ignition system for the 1910 Cadillac (and the electric starter in 1912), and it served motor cars well right up to the 1990s. You can see it, understand it, fiddle with it and feel good about the result. The contact breaker needs maintenance, of course, but it repays with reliability and the reward of owner involvement.

A contact-breaker is undeniably less accurate than a piece of clever electronics. But on a cold, wet night, standing by your immobile retro-modded motor, you really wouldn't have minded that at all.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Members,

I would love to make this page a regular in *Vintage Metal*, but I need your help and feedback. Just drop me an email (bob@campbellfreelance.com.au) with your thoughts on anything to do with the VSCC of WA or this magazine.

Bob Campbell, Editor

Motorsport back issues

I'm enquiring whether any of your members are interested in acquiring back issues of the UK magazine "Motor Sport".

I have issues from 1998 to the present. There are a few missing editions but generally they are complete years.

I live in Noranda.

Yours sincerely

Allan Ausbruch

Tel 08 9276 7829

Response to Review of *Stirling Moss — My Racing Life*

Mike Lawrence is an internationally renowned motoring historian who has written many books including: Brabham+Ralt+Honda; Cooper; Grand Prix Cars 1945-1965; and March: The Rise and Fall of a Motor Racing Legend. He is also a lifelong fan of Stirling Moss, who he refers to as God (now Sir God).

In addition to the *Life of Sir God* you reviewed, Philip Porter is publishing a two-part biography of the Greatest Living Englishman. Then there was a series of expensive scrapbooks a few years ago. The old boy is making sure that he is remembered.

I will not be buying, or reading, any of them. There is a limit to even my veneration of the greatest of all drivers and neither Philip Porter nor Simon Taylor are up to the job.

At present I am working on a history of British motor racing, 1945-60. In 1945 we did not even have a circuit, by 1960 we ruled the roost. Mr God, as he was then, played a significant part in that because he, and his manager, had a nose for publicity. A popular comic for boys was the 'Eagle' and I was a member of the Eagle Club among whose vice-presidents was... you've guessed. He has been part of the landscape of my life and I do not look forward to writing his obituary.

My best

Mike Lawrence

Chichester, UK

WANTED! REGALIA MASTER!

Can you see yourself managing the VSCC Regalia?

Contact Rob Ozanne if you are interested in the rôle.

0429 556 134 — jenrob@westnet.com.au

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The Great Southern
weekender



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- Street Machines
- Festival
- Entertainment

On the WA Day June long weekend Albany will again come alive with the sights and sounds of classic cars competing in the streets of the CBD. Families will enjoy the fun filled festival with entertainment, market stalls and competitions.

SATURDAY 3 JUNE 2017

Mt Clarence Hill Climb

SUNDAY 4 JUNE 2017

"Around the Houses" and Festival



New book - out now!



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RACING REVOLUTION
1936~1940**

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early Around-the-Houses Races.
And while you're there, check out a great
range of motoring books.**



Motoring Past
www.motoringpast.com.au

A drop dead gorgeous Cord
drophead of 1937



CAN CORD MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN? BY BILL BUYS

If Donald Trump is going to make America great again, he could do worse than to help Craig Corbell get the famous Cord back in production.

The Cords of the 1920s and '30s were well ahead of their time, the low-slung, high performance 810 and 812 models of 1937 featuring front wheel drive, hidden headlights and fuel cap, rev counter and radio and a distinctive louvred 'coffin nose' bonnet.

Many people regarded the Cord and its related Auburn and Duesenberg brands as the greatest cars ever produced in the US.

"It's one of the most revolutionary and certainly one of the most beautiful cars of all time," says Jay Leno.

Car and Driver magazine called it "the coolest car you never knew existed."

But the Great Depression of 1933 hit the Auburn-Cord-Duesenberg (ACD) firm hard and it closed its doors in 1937.

Errett Lobban Cord was a brilliant businessman who took control of the failing Auburn company in 1929 and his Cord Corporation included Lycoming engines, Stinson aircraft, Checker taxicabs, and the magnificent Duesenberg luxury and racing cars.

A year later, Cord's company and its parts inventory was acquired by Detroit entrepreneur Dallas Winslow and it operated successfully, supplying parts to owners of the brands and restoration work by former ACD employees at the original factory in Indiana.

Then in 1960, Glenn Pray, an Oklahoma industrial arts teacher and Cord restorer, bought ACD and moved it to Broken Arrow, Oklahoma.

He continued to offer parts and restoration work, but pretty soon had plans to put the 1937

Cord back into production – and a modern Cord, called the 8/10, was available from ACD in 1964, thanks in part to Gordon Buehrig, the car's original designer, worked with Pray on the lines of the new 8/10.

Pray next focused on creating a modernised version of the 851 and 852 Auburn Speedsters of 1935/6. Engineering started in 1966 and by 1968 the snazzy convertible, known as the 866 Speedster, was available at US\$8450. They had big block 428 Ford engines and a choice of automatic or four speed manual transmission.

Pray built 138 cars in his factory and sold about 90 Speedsters that were in various stages of completion. A decade later the Speedsters were selling for US\$18,000 and in their final years of production, they were priced in the low US\$30,000s.

Pray died in 2011, but his success attracted Texas enthusiast and business developer Craig A Corbell II.

He now owns the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Company and wants to take advantage of the Low Volume Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Act of 2015. This legislation frees boutique manufacturers from restrictive car manufacturing requirements.

“The appeal of these cars is extremely high across a small segment of the population,” he said. “Until now it was cost-prohibitive to build these cars profitably.

“But now that expensive high speed crash testing, for example, is no longer required for low runs of replicas, this makes sense both in terms of reviving a source of extreme passion for enthusiasts, and financially as a business investment.

“This is an amazing opportunity, and it's important for us to look past the pure financial aspect. We want to get this right to uphold the honour that people like E L Cord and Gordon Buehrig brought to this brand.”

Here's your chance, Mr Trump.

Forget about the Mexican wall, get Cord up and running and you'll be on your way to making America great again.



A 1937 Cord 812 sedan on display in a German museum

FROM THE LIBRARY

THE RACER'S AND DRIVER'S READER

Edited by Anthony Harding



This 290 page book, is full of interesting articles, 24 pages of a good variety of action photographs from different eras and the period appealing Russell Brockbank cartoons, which all add up to a 'jolly good show' and an interesting read.

Amongst the many contributors to the book are such well-known names as Bill Boddy, John Bolster, Paul Frere, Denis Jenkinson, Wilson McComb, Cyril Posthumus, Michael Sedgewick, L.J.K. Setright, Eoin Young; all well known names from the 50s to 70s of the UK sporting motoring publishing scene.

It contains a period blend of humour, commentary, technical, snippets such as "A 1966 MG100 was advertised; 'late property of clergyman, religiously maintained.' It sounded like a good buy, as it must have attended regular services," and articles looking to the future of cars and motor sport.

Find it, book #199B in your VSCCWA library.

Mark Jones

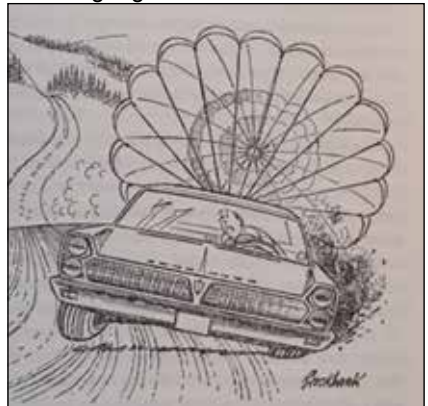
◀Airborne at the Nurburgring



Brooklands, the right crowd and no crowding



"Fancy ruining a great old car like that with grotty mod wheels"





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Cost: \$14/iTrail which includes postage within Australia (One per car)



JK&L SQUARE RIGGERS UPDATE



Craig Atkins' much raced Morgan 4/4 leads a brace of MGs and the Salmson at the 2015 Vintage Stampede. It's not Albany, but it's a great shot by Graeme Howie

The Pre-war Grid at Albany — Delving into our Motoring History



Steve Williams' Austin 7 with Barry Mackintosh in the Bartlett (Shane Cassidy)

Our grid for Albany is a living parade of Western Australia's motor racing history. Yep, it sounds like a cliché but every car on the grid whether original or replica raced in the 1920s and 1930s at Albany, Lake Perkolilli or Dowerin.

The little Austins owe their existence to Herbert Austin who dreamt of a car for the masses as Henry Ford had done in America. The Seven refers to the British horse power rating for determining road tax used pre-war. The 750cc engine can

be tweaked for performance and Austin Sevens performed well in Western Australia, particularly when supercharged.

The Salmsons of the Mackintosh family were popular in Western Australia. They were called voiturettes in

France, light cars with sophisticated engines. The Bartlett Special was a record breaker at the Brooklands track near London and set records in Western Australia as well.

The 1928 Chrysler called Silverwings is a Chrysler 72. Walter Chrysler built strong, fast cars. The 72 denotes the top speed of the car from the factory and with a little work they



Christopher Mackintosh in the family Salmson (Nicole Lothe)



The Mackintosh family's Bartlett Special



Graeme Cocks in his recreation of Silver Wings

could go a lot faster. In 1928 Chrysler came third and fourth at the Le Mans 24 Hour race. The original Chrysler Silverwings swept all before it in the 1920s in WA.

Fords are always well represented. Ossie Cranston raced every Ford model in the 1920s and 1930s and Cactus is a replica of his Model A. The White Mouse is a Ford 10 special built by Jack Nelson.

Morgans were raced with more enthusiasm in Western Australia than perhaps anywhere else in the world and Craig Atkins keeps the flag flying for the English marque. Let's hope he has more luck on the way to Albany than



The White Mouse Ford 10 special



The recreated Cactus, Ossie Cranston's Model A special

he did on the way to Northam.

The 1930s saw many MGs raced in Western Australia. One of the VSCC's legendary members, Clem Dwyer, was one of the early enthusiasts for MG in WA. His father owned

Comet Motors which sold Morris and MG cars.

MG and Austin had great rivalry in the early 1930s, with MG getting the better of Austin by being the first 750cc car to reach 100mph. It was the same in Western Australia. By the end of the 1930s, MGs reigned supreme in Western Australia and only Aub Melrose still paraded the little Austins in WA Car Club and WA Sporting Car Club events.

Standard took over Triumph in 1944. We think



Mike Sherrell's MG TC (Nicole Lothe)

of Standard as meaning ordinary but in the early days Standard cars were more like "High Standard" cars. It is good to see the Standard on the track again. Of course, we see many Triumphs in the VSCC as well.

There was also a very sporty Hillman Minx raced at Albany in the 1930s.

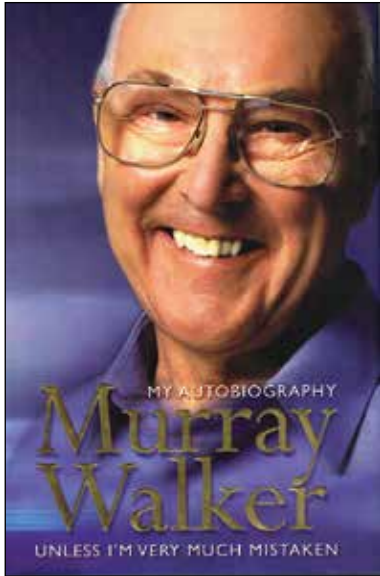
So there you have it. A quick rundown of the cars and their place in WA motor racing history. Let the racing begin.



Stuart Elvidge's Flying Standard special (Nicole Lothe)

Heza Henry

BOOK REVIEW: MY AUTOBIOGRAPHY - MURRAY WALKER UNLESS I'M VERY MUCH MISTAKEN



Every motor racing fan knows about Murray Walker, motor sports commentator *par excellence*, the man of whom Clive James said that he commentated like a man with his pants on fire!

This book takes us from Murray's childhood, and what it was like to be the son of one of the world's best motorcycle racers, through his schooling and his war service with the Royal Scots Greys to his work in public relations and advertising. It will come as a surprise to some readers that motor sports commentary was for many years a paying hobby alongside his day job with various companies including Dunlop and advertising agency Masius.

While he was working hard at promoting products such as Dunlopillo, Murray was also attempting to make his way as a motorcycle trials rider and racer. He had some success in the trials, but was a mediocre racer. He was to find his true place was behind a microphone, not a set of handlebars.

Murray's father got him into the commentary game and they became a virtually unique father and son team at events such as the Isle of Man TT. When TV discovered

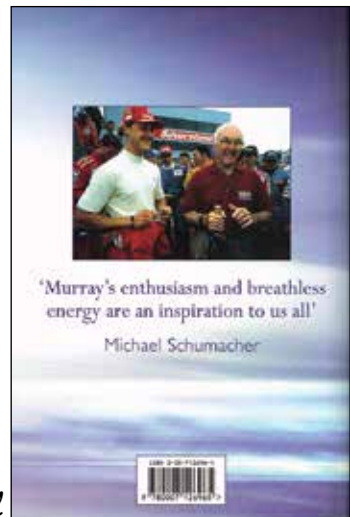
motorcycle scrambles, now known as motocross, Murray was the logical man to head the commentary team for both the BBC and ITV. That situation couldn't last and soon he was working exclusively for the BBC. Motocross gave way to rallycross from about 1968, when the BBC's Grandstand programme replaced the bikes with the 4-wheeled off-road racers.

Ten years later Murray was the lead commentator when the BBC took on Formula 1. He remained there until ITV took over the World Championship races and, to many people's surprise Murray also moved to ITV.

One thing that surprised me was to discover that Murray is one of those who believe that Formula 1 started in 1950. In fact, Formula 1 was in force from the 1948 season, it was the Drivers' World Championship that began in 1950.

This book is a great read for any fan of motorsport but it is also a wonderful story of a man who was able to indulge his passion for motor sport and bring enjoyment to millions of viewers across the world. Eddie Irvine, after watching the recorded races without commentary with the Ferrari team, said: "Jeez Murray, I never realised how dull some of them would be without your commentary."

The book is available in paperback or Kindle from Amazon.



Bob Campbell



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HEALEYS IN MINIATURE

Way back in 1965 when motor racing was still dangerous and sex relatively safe, I joined a slot racing club. I don't remember the name of the club, but it numbered among its members well known motoring names of the 60s such as John Trowell and Brian Lemon, both of whom raced full sized cars at Caversham and Wanneroo.

We met in a beautiful old building at the Barracks end of St Georges Terrace called the Yorkshire Insurance Building. As an impecunious junior public servant, I found it hard to keep up with the spending of other members. I couldn't even manage to pay for private practice sessions, and that was to be a problem.

In the 1:32 scale sports car class the cars to have were Revell and Monogram models from the USA. British models from VIP and Scalextric were not competitive, but they were more affordable.



The original Healey ready to race with bright yellow back wheels and dark green front ones. Sorry no colour shots.

I trotted off to Timms Hobby Shop in Hay Street towards Milligan Street (literally trotted to get to Timms and back from my workplace in the old R&I Bank building in Barrack Street within my lunch hour). There I purchased an MRRC 5-pole armature and the plot was coming together.

My brother worked in Boans store and we had befriended the manager of the Toys and Hobbies Department. We got staff discount for the Healey through my brother and a lot of help from the manager. He stripped down the Triang motor and replaced the armature with my 5-pole unit, swapping the pinion gear across. He also remagnetised the motor to make sure it was working at its best. I had Scalextric Formula Junior wheels for the back of the Healey and I was allowed to search through the stock of spare tyres for the softest pair. For the front I had wheels from an Airfix Cooper F1 slot car, which had nice hard tyres.

The 5-pole motor revved harder than the Triang original, so I wanted to change the gearing. A Revell contrate gear had the requisite number of teeth to give me a 4:1 ratio in place of the stock 3:1, but Revell axles were $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch while the Scalextric was $\frac{3}{32}$ -inch. I cut a piece from the end of a Bic ball-point pen refill and forced it inside the Revell gear then pushed the whole lot on to the Scalextric axle, which gave me a firm interference fit. Another piece of refill on the front axle kept it nicely centred. (See picture above right).

Under the Pink-Kar Healey, showing the plastic motor cradle and 3:1 gears.



I wanted to run a Scalextric Austin Healey 3000, a beautiful little model, so I hatched a cunning plan. I knew that the "Triang train motor" in the Scalextric models was the basis of a very quick series of motors from MRRC (Model Road Racing Cars) in the UK and the potent 5-pole armature from MRRC would slip neatly into the frame of the Scalextric motor.



The original Healey showing the Revell contrate gear on the back axle.

Off I went to the races. I lined the Healey up alongside all of the American models, Ferrari 250GTOs, Cobras and the like, and got ready to go. The start was by turning on the power to the track



The original Healey partly restored before I discovered the 5-pole armature had developed a short circuit

while we all held our controllers at full on. The Healey shot straight into the lead...and straight off at the first corner. I should have spent some money on practice sessions...

Ten years later on a home track I set up myself I managed to sort the Healey's handling (and my driving), but it was just a bit too late.

In the meantime Scalextric had run into commercial trouble as the slot racing craze died down. Its overseas production facilities in France and Australia

closed down and the Spanish factory went it alone as SCX. The Healey was gone from the hobby shops.

In about 2006, I discovered a small hobby shop in the south of England, near Reading, that had models made by Pink-Kar from Scalextric moulds — or very good copies. The Triang motor was replaced by a plastic cradle carrying a can-type motor that clipped into the original



mounts and the gearing was good old Scalextric type 3:1. I picked up a bright yellow Healey (no green ones in stock) as shown above.

Later still, in 2017, SCX recreated the Scalextric Austin Healey 3000 as part of its "Scalextric Vintage" range and I grabbed one from Pendle Slot Racing in Nelson, Lancashire, England (pendleslotracing.co.uk). The model (left) doesn't seem to be available in Western Australia. It looks exactly as mine did before I started modifying it.



PAINTINGS FOR SALE BY WA ARTIST



A drawing of your favourite car, prices from \$150.00.

A painting of your favourite car, prices from \$650.00.

A painting includes a drawing, which you can approve before the painting is started.

Either piece by WA Automotive Artist Rob Falconer. I have a diploma in fine arts from Claremont School of Art, Perth WA.

I started my studies at Reigate school of art in

South London, England.

Contact Rob Falconer Ph 0430 322 294.

Email: reliant.automotiveart@outlook.com

▲ Max Gamble in the Ossie Cranston V8 Special replica at Barbagallo.

▶ Peter Hall, Datsun 260Z





FOR SALE – Miller Ford

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Over the years I've helped many collectors and their families move-on classic cars and automobilia, often from Deceased Estates. Sometimes families don't know what to do, so cars and items get given to unappreciative people, or worse, thrown out... I have excellent specialist contacts throughout Australia who can assist in ensuring your collection goes to the right people or institutions, and that the best price is achieved when an item is saleable. I also work as a classic car broker on commission. If you have old photos, model cars, books and other memorabilia as well as classic cars, please keep my name and contact details or give them to your family for when your cherished items need new homes.

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