

THE AUTOMOTIVE HISTORIAN

August 2023

**AUTOMOTIVE
HISTORIANS
AUSTRALIA INC**

FOUNDING PATRON: Ron Tauranac AO

In This Newsletter

In his President's Report, Norm Darwin updates us on his efforts to obtain GMH materials from the State Library of South Australia and the need to house the Ford heritage collection in Geelong.

Norm also highlights the coming auction of the Phil Irving archive by Donington Auctions. I have also included some information about the Irving Archive auction in a separate piece.

AHA hopes that as much of the archive as possible, particularly items like Phil Irving's diaries, technical drawings and documents relating to Repco and Repco-Brabham, will be kept together and made available for research purposes by a potential purchaser in collaboration with a public institution.

Articles

David Neely has given us another article in the series on early motor ambulances, focusing on the work of motor body builders Duncan & Fraser.

Jenny Fawbert has provided two pieces for this newsletter. *Cars to Kosciusko* is about early 20th century motoring expeditions into the highest reaches of Australia. Then, in *The Adventurous Mr and Mrs Glidden*, Jenny tells the story of a couple who drove around the world in the early years of the 20th century.

New AHA member Allan Whiting and his colleague Jim Gibson run a website called *Historic Vehicles*. They give some background on the website and Jim gives a rundown on his favourites among a very long list of cars he's owned. Next issue we'll look at some of Allan's favourites.

Eli Solomon brings us another instalment from Singapore looking at the early years of Lotus in the Tropics. It includes a lot of detail about the early years of Lotus.

Videos

I've included an episode of *In Pit Lane* from 2015 called *Memories of Match*.

Articles, Photos and Videos Wanted

We would always like articles, videos or photos from members about your cars, items of memorabilia, research or other motoring-related matters.

Thanks again to all the members who have contributed ideas, information and feedback for the newsletter.

Tony **Lupton**
Secretary and Editor

AHA Membership

If you're receiving this newsletter and wish to obtain the additional benefits of AHA membership, [click here to go to our membership page.](#)

New member subscriptions are \$60 and the renewing member fee is \$50.

From The President

GMH Records

First up the saga of getting access to post 1953 Holden material in the SA Mortlock library continues. Since my last report GM Aust NZ legal people have reviewed the agreement made over the placement of material at Mortlock and can see no reason not to allow me access from my home computer. GM wrote to the library early in July and they agreed to make it happen by July 30. GM followed up on Aug 2, however as of late August, they still have not complied. SA Library is not on my list of helpful institutions.

Ford Heritage Collection

On a positive note, is news this week of a Geelong Council endorsement of a plan to use part of the former Ford Geelong plant as a motor museum to house the Ford Discovery Centre material that includes their heritage car collection. Originally housed in a the old Geelong Federal Mills wool store, the Discovery Center closed on 29 July 2014. In October 2018 the material was relocated to the Western Heights Secondary College at Hamlyn Heights Geelong as the Geelong Museum of Motoring and industry.

Unfortunately, the pandemic ended the museum's ability to remain open, now the Ford Discovery material is under threat.

The Geelong Council estimates it will take \$8-15 million to develop a museum, where this will come from is speculation, however the council believes the State Government "Big Thing Projects" is a likely funding source.

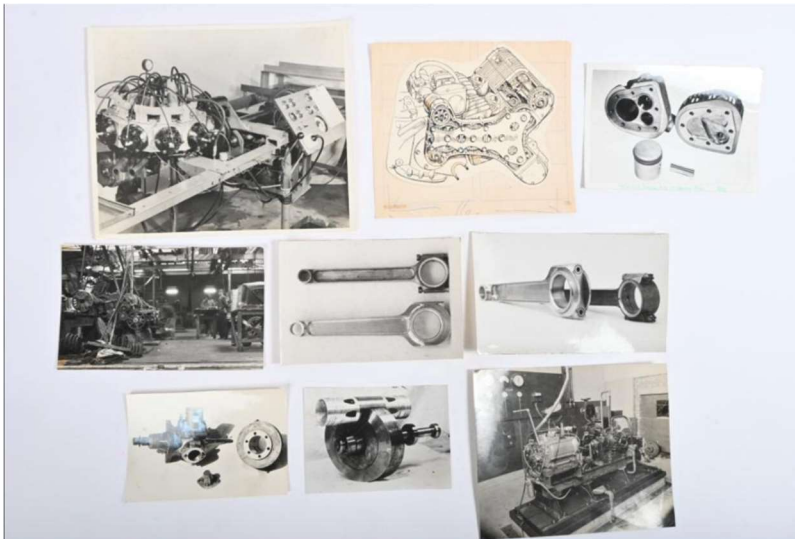
The 36.5ha site is owned by a property company, "Pelligra Group" who are managing the plot under the banner Fortek to small industry manufacturers, retailers and as offices. Already a transportable home builder is moving in and other parts are under lease. Let's hope the council make some urgent progress before the whole site is taken up, the Discovery Center material and the archive

languishing in the Broadmeadows Ford's Head Office needs a proper home.

Phil Irving Archive Auction

Last is the impending auction at Donington's of the late Brian Greenfield, author, collector and motorcycle enthusiast's memorabilia. This includes the personal archive of Phil Irving. Greenfield purchased Irving's material from the Irving estate in the 1990s. The lots form a significant part of the second part of the auction that commences on 4 September 2023.

As expected, there are plenty of motor bike lots as well as items that span Irving's time with the Crankless Engine Company, Repco and post Repco.



Donington Auctions - Phil Irving Archive

For example, there are large engineering drawings and correspondence relating to an all-alloy head built for the Holden 179/186/202 engine. Developed in June 1973, this engine produced 295bhp in its simplest form. It survives today and is being manufactured by HSD of Moorabbin who using the latest technology can extract 325bhp out of a 179 engine using carburettors and without any boost.



Donington Auctions - Phil Irving Archive

AHA is keen to see a benefactor secure the Repco material as a single collection able to be preserved and available for research, as the material includes a number of items relating to the 1966 RB-620 Repco-Brabham engine.

Norm Darwin
President

The Phil Irving Archive Auction

Donington Auctions are presenting a collection of Phil Irving's documents and effects which comes from the estate of the late Brian Greenfield. Brian was a colourful character in the Australian Vincent motorcycle scene and a passionate automotive collector and historian. Brian was good friends with Phil and was able to purchase much of Phil's personal effects from his estate following Phil's death in the early 1990s.

The Greenfield/Irving collection includes Irving's early diaries, notebooks and period photographs as well as handwritten and typed articles.

Lots include technical drawings relating to the AJS 7R (Lot 750), Vincent photographs featuring a Vincent Rapide Series B; (Lot 773) and Notebooks (Lot 782) and Repco-Holden 5000 program technical drawings (Lot 783).

Lot 778 presents a series of technical drawings relating to the Cyclone Holden Cylinder Head from the late 1960s. Of particular interest is original correspondence between Phil Irving, Frank Hallam and Charlie Dean, all on REPCO letterhead.

Another interesting lot is a copy of his experimental Vincent design engine drawing "8-Valve Vincent Preliminary Layout" (Lot 653).

The Irving collection represents items of important historic and academic value.

Online bidding for the part of the auction including the Irving archive opens at 10am Monday 4 September and closes in a staggered manner at 1-minute intervals on Sunday 17th September 2023, with the last lot concluding at 8pm.

[The catalogue can be viewed by clicking here.](#)

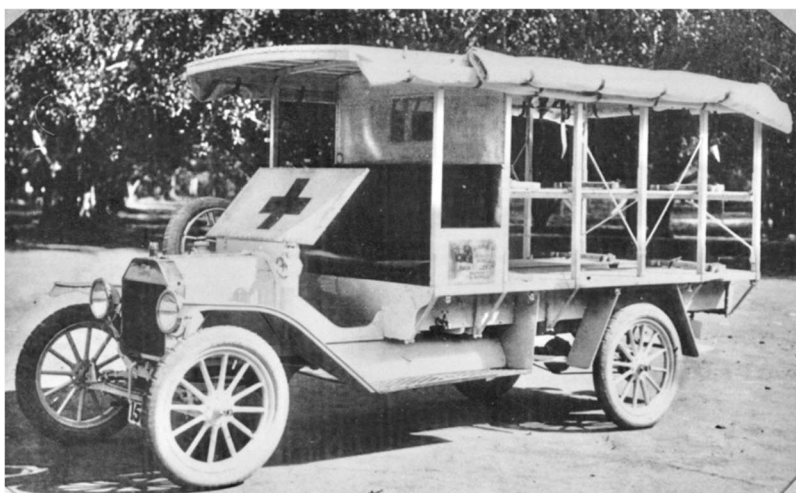
Duncan & Fraser Limited, Adelaide Carriages and Motor Cars

The Gift of a Motor Ambulance

David Neely

Duncan & Fraser, established in 1865, not only built motor ambulances in World War I but also the directors and employees of the company donated one to the war effort.

Duncan & Fraser's Ford Model T ambulance was presented to the South Australian Military Commandant, Colonel Sandford, by the State's Governor, Sir Henry Galway, at the Soldiers' Memorial Statue on North Terrace on 24 August 1915. At the ceremony Mr Duncan and Mr Spafford, the works superintendent, spoke on behalf of the directors and employees respectively. The 'Chronicle' on 28 August 1915 reported on their speeches.



An ambulance built by Duncan & Fraser to military specifications on a Ford Model T chassis. [State Library of South Australia B21423]

“Mr. R. A. Duncan, representing the directors of Messrs. Duncan & Fraser, in asking his Excellency to present a motor ambulance to the military authorities, said he trusted that the vehicle would be the means of allaying the suffering of the brave men who met with mishaps on the battlefield. Mr. H. Spafford spoke

on behalf of the employees of the firm. He said the men had quietly and unobtrusively shown their loyalty to King and country. Over 30 employees of the firm had enlisted, and some had been in the trenches for months. Those who could not go to the front were doing their little bit. They had subscribed £157 for the Belgian Relief Fund, and with the aid of the directors had raised sufficient money to pay for an ambulance. That would not be their final effort.”

[Click here to read the full story.](#)

Cars to Kosciusko

Jenny Fawbert

Pioneering motorists, from the earliest days, set their sights on touring through the Snowy Mountains and driving to the top of Kosciusko. An ambitious journey, all things considered, and ascending Kosciusko by car impossible in the first few years of last century as even horseback tours often found the track to the summit impassable.



Jones, S. J. Motoring to Kosciusko. Image held by the State Library of Victoria.

Difficulties with poor roads and availability of fuel aside, motoring to the high country was an attraction to many of our prominent early motorists as they found their confidence in distance motoring. The first to attempt the journey was Mark

Foy.

In 1902 Foy and a party of friends, including tourism promoter Percy Hunter, motored to Cooma in his 10 hp 2 cylinder Panhard and 6-1/2 hp Liberia. The Panhard, later known as "The Flying Fox", already had a Sydney to Melbourne trip to its credit in November 1901. It unfortunately broke down on the return journey from Adaminaby and Kiandra and was towed into Cooma by horse. The local blacksmith, though having no experience with a motor car, excitedly offered to fix the vehicle and promptly pulled the engine apart. In a local photo, Foy, with dirty hands, is standing beside his dismantled Panhard. To Foy's chagrin the repairs baffled the blacksmith and the Panhard returned to Sydney by rail. The Austral Cycle Agency, importer's of Foy first De Dion in 1901, were likely tasked in March with the Panhard's repair, along with another Foy vehicle. Austral subsequently took Foy to court to recover the costs of the repairs, Foy considered their account exorbitant and the judge agreed with him.

[Click here to read the full story.](#)

The Adventurous Mr and Mrs Glidden

Jenny

Fawbert

Mr and Mrs Charles Glidden were arguably the first global motorists. Crossing Canada by car in 1904 was one in a series of long-distance motoring adventures the Glidden's undertook, including travelling in Australia.

Charles Jasper Glidden was a self-made millionaire, he invented the telephone exchange and retired at age 43, enabling him to take up motoring. Intrigued by the successful Napier in the RAC's 1000-mile trial of 1900 he ordered a 4-cylinder Napier for his 1901 tour of Britain and France. Impressed with that car Glidden owned two more Napier's, a one for his 1902 tour of central and southern Europe, a 16 hp tourer that had won the Concours d' elegance at Crystal Palace in

February 1902. After that tour he ordered a more powerful third car for driving through Europe, Scandinavia and the Arctic Circle in Sweden.

The third car was a 24 hp model, chain drive with 40-inch rear wheels, fitted with Mulliner coachwork to Glidden's own requirements for carrying luggage, tools, parts and extra tyres. Glidden took delivery of the vehicle in the UK in 1903 and it was this vehicle in which Glidden subsequently travelled twice round the world.



The Glidden's and Charles Thomas on the southernmost road in the world at Bluff, New Zealand in 1905. Burke, Keast, 1896-1974 (1905-03-20). SUPPLEMENT TO THE AUSTRALASIAN PHOTOGRAPHIC REVIEW. (20 March 1905).

By March 1905 the Glidden's had reached Australia, having already toured over 223,000 miles and through 22 countries. At the end of their world-wide travelling some 3 years later they had driven over 4 continents and numerous islands, including Japan and Fiji, and 40 countries.

[Click here to read the full story.](#)

The Story of the Historic Vehicles Website



The *Historic Vehicles* website is the brainchild of Jim Gibson and Allan Whiting. Initially the brand, features and restoration content was historic trucks, but subsequent entries included historic cars and motorcycles.

In the 1960s, without knowing each other, both blokes cut their teeth in the road transport business: Jim as a mechanic and then young truck driver and Allan in freight sales. Both men then moved into truck operations roles and ended those career moves as operations managers for large truck fleets.

Again without knowing each other, Jim and Allan scored senior appointments with Australian-market truck importers and manufacturers. Jim stayed in the truck corporate world for some years, while Allan moved into 4WD and road transport journalism. At that point their paths crossed, with Allan reporting on the trucks that Jim was marketing.

A firm friendship developed. Seeing how much fun Allan was having in the writing and photography game, Jim moved that way as well. By the 1990s, both blokes had senior editorial jobs and Allan then started his own truck buyers' guide magazine, *Truck Search*, while also serving as long-term technical editor of *4x4 Australia Magazine*.

With the advent of the internet, Allan saw the writing on the wall for magazines, sold off *Truck Search* and launched the *Outback Travel Australia* website.

Jim's magazine career climaxed with the editor's role at *Truckin' Life Magazine*, but, after he'd raised its profile way beyond former levels, the mag fell into the post-internet financial doldrums and Jim went freelancing, writing mainly about older cars and trucks for specialist magazines.

Red-wine-induced conversations in that post-magazine era led to the idea of the *Historic Vehicles* website that launched in 2020.



The first Mustang Car Club meeting in Sydney, 1982.

After checking out the considerable content on the historicvehicles.com.au website, the AHA was interested to find out what cars the historic vehicles duo had owned over the past 60-odd years, so here it is.

(This issue starts with Jim Gibson's cars. We will cover Allan's cars in the following [newsletter](#).)

[Click here to read the story.](#)

Rewind Resource Archives

Center for South East Asian Motorsport Resources

Eli Solomon from Rewind Media in Singapore has shared another terrific piece on motorsport history. This one features Lotus cars racing in the tropics.

Super Friendly, Super Frail - Lotus in the Tropics

On 1 November 1952, there appeared an advertisement in Motor Sport magazine. It was for the Lotus Mk VI, and from that date, we can mark seventy-one years of Lotus as a company, and not just the name given to a few specials. Seventy-one years on and Lotus will once more be a featured marque at this year's Goodwood Revival (which is stated to be the 75th anniversary of the marque – “with a special on-track celebration paying homage to ‘The Chapman years’ (1948-1982).”

[Click here or on the photo to read the complete story.](#)



The start of the 1966 Singapore Grand Prix. Rewind Media Archive.

Memories of Match

2015 Episode of In Pit Lane

Following the video about Frank Match's pit crew in the last newsletter, this video is an episode of *In Pit Lane* from 2015, shortly after the death of Frank Match. Brett Ramsay interviews Frank's one-time chief engineer Derek Kneller who talks about moving from McLaren to work for Frank at the dawn of the Formula 5000 era and offers wonderful insights into Match the man and his cars.

[Click here](#) or on the photo below to watch.



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