

THE AUTOMOTIVE HISTORIAN

February 2022

**AUTOMOTIVE
HISTORIANS
AUSTRALIA INC**

FOUNDING PATRON: Ron Tauranac AO

From the Secretary

Our Plans for 2022

The committee met in mid-February and discussed ideas for member events to be held in 2022.

Two events are now in the planning stages.

An AHA - SAH(US) Collaboration

The first is an online event between AHA and our friends at the Society for Automotive Historians (USA). The idea being discussed involves presentations on the theme of "***A trans-national approach to automotive history: Australia and America.***"

The proposed symposium would examine the significant shared automotive history between Australia and the United States and begin to chart the ideas, people and skills that went back and forth between the large and small car makers in a mutual exchange. While a lot has been written about American cars in Australia, not much has been written on the shared design culture and even less on the shared business practices, company structures, building types and people.

The idea has been enthusiastically embraced by our SAH friends Louis Fourie, Don Capps and new president Robert Barr. We look forward to bringing this event to fruition, with dates being considered around September and October.

The Centenary of Repco

assemble a panel of former Repco luminaries who can discuss the specifics of Repco's programs and the company's significance for Australian motoring and motorsport.



In This Newsletter

In our section featuring Women in Automotive History, Jenny Fawbert has contributed a piece about Marion Bell and her 11 year old daughter who drove around Australia in 1925-26. Bell is credited as the third person and first woman to drive around the continent. There's also some more about Alice Anderson and a question about Joan Richmond's racing car.

Brian Caldersmith's artwork in the previous newsletter prompted Jeanne Eve of the Sir Henry Royce Foundation to let me know some interesting details about one of the cars in the poster. It is of course the vice-regal Rolls-Royce Phantom V, which she and her husband later owned, drove in the 1997 Paris to Peking Motor Challenge and subsequently donated to the Foundation.

Geelong Design Week, from 17-27 March, showcases the UNESCO City of Design and our committee members, Kaja Antleij and Manca Ogrizek from Deakin University are involved. *Solved: Engineered by Design* exhibits the innovative and creative work of Deakin researchers and students.

Peter Fry's Ford archives website has a post about a confidential Ford memo from 1971 detailing engine preparations for that year's Hardie Ferodo 500.

We have another article by Eli Solomon from Singapore and his Rewind Media Archive, this one is called *Lola in the Tropics*.

Eli's article in the previous newsletter about the Warrior Bristol got some great feedback when our member Doug Young let me know he was the Doug Young mentioned in the article as a previous owner of the car with Clive Philbrick in the 1970s when it was known as the Cooper Jaguar.

Albert Park and the Templestowe Hillclimb taken in 1956.

There's a lot of interest in former or disused tracks and circuits - Fishermans Bend and the two hillclimbs in the Ken Ra film are examples and Albert Park is not anything like what it was in the 50s. I've included a computer simulation video that takes you back to Tasmania's Longford circuit in a very realistic way.



View of Longford Corner and the Country Club Hotel in 2019 (Tony Lupton)

We would always like some more short videos from members - two or three minutes would be fine - or some photos, showing us some of your cars, items of memorabilia or other motoring-related activities.

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

Tony Lupton
Secretary and Editor

President's Report

It seems little has changed; we are still holding our committee meetings on-line. There is however light at the end of the tunnel. Ballarat Swap Meet is still scheduled for 25-26 February and I have a site at T33. If you go, call in and say Hi.

Australia Day has passed, and I note a number of automotive identities have been presented with Order of Australia Awards. While I applaud the dedication of volunteers and officials of various motoring organisations and clubs, I wonder about the merits of Daniel Ricciardo's Medal of the Order of Australia (AM). On the other hand, Ian Tate's Medal of Australia (OAM) is easily justifiable given his long association with motor sport administration in a voluntary capacity.

Fellow motoring journalist and historian, the renowned English author Karl Ludvigsen, is writing a history of supercharging. He has asked about an Australian company called Sprintex superchargers, formerly an agent for an English company of the same name. Sprintex Australia is now the manufacturer.

These past 3 months I have been occupied with a new shed, now erected, thus there has been no time for any history research. There is still work unpacking an old 100ft shed, the grounds rectification and lining of the new shed but it's a most satisfactory result.

When the shed is finished Heather and I will go back to working on the next book, one we started in the middle of last year.

Norm Darwin
President

Women in Automotive History

We are including a regular feature in the newsletter about women in automotive history and this edition features two pieces highlighting the often unrecognised role women have played in the industry.

Jenny Fawbert has provided the following article on Marion Bell.

Marion Bell

We vintage car drivers are, by contemporary reckoning, a pretty hardy bunch, out in all weathers in our less than dry and warm or cool and dust-free cars, but we wouldn't have it any other way. Perhaps we then are best placed among drivers in this day and age to appreciate the skill, daring and perhaps even naivety of those adventurous early motorists who took off to drive round Australia in the vintage years.



Image held by the State Library of South Australia

Among those pioneering motorists was Mrs. Marion Bell of Fremantle, credited as the first woman and the third person to drive around Australia by car. In October 1925 Mrs. Bell and her 11-year-old daughter left Perth in an Oldsmobile Six and travelled via Darwin, Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide, before arriving back in Perth on April 7th 1926.

[Click here to read the complete article.](#)

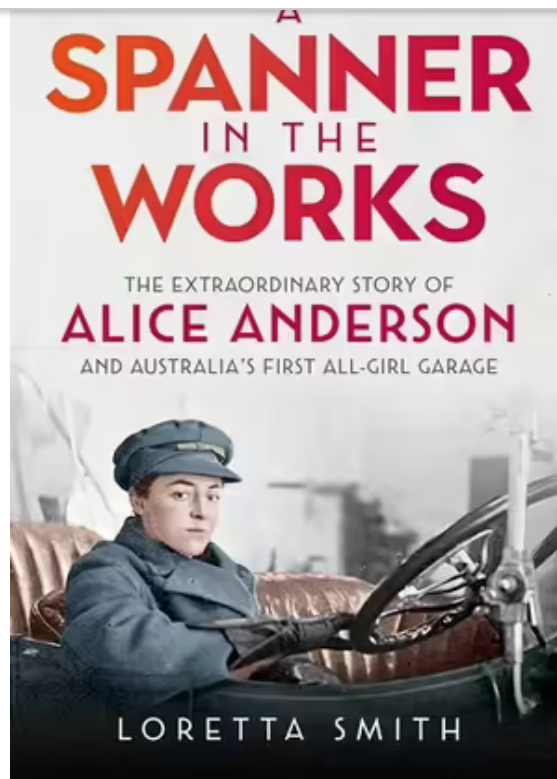
The last newsletter included a paper by Judith Glover and Harriet Edquist with the following photograph, stating that Joan Richmond (right) is seated on her 3 litre Ballot. Bob King has told me it is not a Ballot, but an MG or similar. Any further ideas anyone?



Amended caption: The photograph shows Joan Richmond (on the right) at Brooklands, 1934. Richmond raced in Australia and across Europe. (Brooklands Museum Collection, courtesy Silodrome).

[Click here to read the complete article.](#)

Alice Anderson



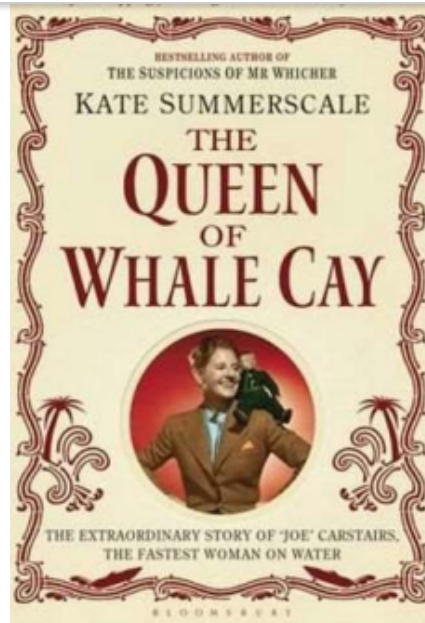
Since the last newsletter, I've had the opportunity to read *A Spanner in the Works, the Extraordinary Story of Alice Anderson and Australia's First All-Girl Garage*.

It's an enthralling read about an amazing woman. But more than that, it's an extraordinary insight into the living conditions of a family in the late 1800s and the early years of the 20th century. Anderson's family lived through times of relative wealth and security, personal tragedy and economic ruin, most of which was due to her father's behaviour. Her ability to transcend this background would have marked her out as extraordinary whether she started an all-girl garage or not. The enduring mystery surrounding her death is only one piece of a much bigger picture.

Bob King has also alerted me to another mention of Anderson. This is in the biography *The Queen of Whale Cay, the Extraordinary Story of (Betty) 'Joe' Carstairs, the Fastest Woman on Water*. A link to Bob's review of the biography, originally published in the Bugatti Bulletin, is below.

Click on the link or the photo of the book cover to read Bob's review.

[*The Queen of Whale Cay, the Extraordinary Story of \(Betty\) 'Joe' Carstairs, the Fastest Woman on Water*](#)



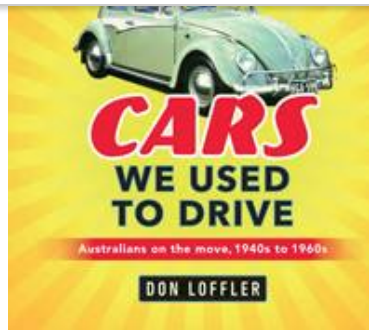
And here is an ABC article with curator Michelle Toft of the National Motor Museum from 2017, where Michelle discusses Anderson's career and place in our automotive and social history. Click on the photograph to read the story.



Kew Garage in Melbourne was opened in 1919 but vanished long ago. (Supplied: National Motor Museum)

Cars We Used To Drive - Australians on the move, 1940s to 1960s

This is Don Loffler's latest book. Don is well known for his work documenting Holdens. This book is a departure that takes him further afield.



Here's a review of the book recently published in The Senior magazine:

<https://www.thesenior.com.au/story/7613132/dons-book-a-glimpse-of-a-bygone-motoring-era/?cs=6771>

Third European Conference for Automotive History

Turin/Torino

October/ottobre 2022

Our committee member Roger Beattie will be attending the postponed conference, now planned to be held in Turin on 15 and 16 October, 2022. Roger is President of the Fiat Car Club of Victoria and is interested to know if any other AHA members plan to attend the conference.

Anyone thinking of attending can let us know.

Peter Fry's Ford History Website

Former Ford engineer Peter Fry has recently created a website which he is populating with interesting archival material relating to Ford Australia history.

Peter has extensive automotive knowledge, having worked for GMH, Vauxhall in the UK and Ford in Australia and around the world.

He told me that while the website is new and very much a work in progress, he will continue to post material and expand the content. He has an extensive resource and great knowledge, so this is a very welcome development.

Code Name "Q.C.-U.S. Audit Engines" The Factory Phase 3 GTHO Racing Engines

Peter states that David French has uncovered an amazing 50 year old internal Ford memorandum from Special Vehicles Manager Al Turner, setting out the process for building up to 25 special blueprinted engines for dealer entrants to use in the 1971 Hardie Ferodo 500.

Below is a photograph from Peter's post showing use of *Plastigage* (or Plastigauge for the British version), a special clearance measuring material used in engine blueprinting.

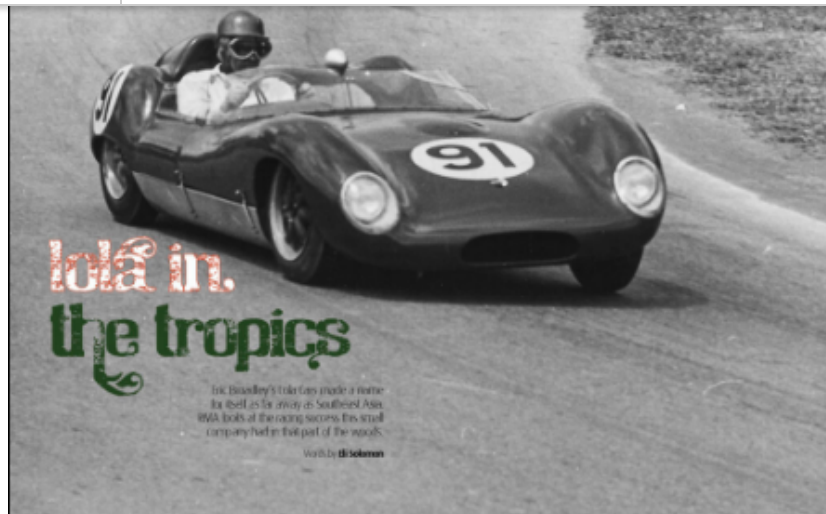


Singapore Stories

Eli Solomon is a journalist based in Singapore who runs the Rewind Media website dedicated to South East Asian motor racing heritage.

Here's a recent article titled *Lola in the Tropics*.

Click on the photograph to read the article.



Federation Rally Poster and the Rolls-Royce Phantom V

Seeing Brian Caldersmith's 2001 Federation Rally poster in the last newsletter led Jeanne Eve to contact me about one of the cars depicted in it.

Underneath the BT19 and the Volkswagen on the left side is the 1967 vice-regal Rolls-Royce Phantom V.

This car was purchased from the Commonwealth Government by Jeanne Eve and her husband John Matheson, who drove it in the 1997 Paris to Peking Motor Challenge and donated it in 2002 to the Sir Henry Royce Foundation.

Jeanne wrote a book about the motor challenge, *Rallying in a Rolls-Royce: Preparation, Pitfalls and Passion on the 1997 Paris to Peking Motor Challenge*, with foreword by Lord Montagu of Beaulieu who features in the story.

The book is a great read and highlights the spirit of adventure that classic motoring evokes. Completing the 16,000km event was an amazing achievement. Unfortunately the book is out of print, but Jeanne hopes to make it available again as a digital publication. Let's hope so.



A photograph from the Foundation's website by Brian Carson.

The cars in the Foundation's collection regularly appear at events and there is a museum at Coolumb in Queensland.

[For more information on this and other cars in the collection, along with a video and photo gallery, visit the Foundation's website by clicking here or on the photo above.](#)



The Record Busters 1956

Fishermans Bend, Hepburn Springs Hillclimb, Albert Park and Templestowe Hillclimb

1940s to the 1960s. Many of the films are introduced using Rankine's custom-made title "KenRa Films Present".

Thirty-eight cans of these silent 16mm films were donated to the Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI) by Rankine's grand daughter in 2016 and are being digitized by ACMI.

This film has some terrific footage of the airstrip circuit at Fishermans Bend, the first Hepburn Springs Hillclimb, the Moomba race meeting at Albert Park circuit and the Templestowe Hillclimb, all from 1956.

Click on the photo to watch the film.



Please let me know if you recognise a car or driver.

Being home movies, Rankine's family or friends also make cameo appearances and some of the crowd and atmosphere footage is wonderful.

Longford Road Circuit Simulation

This computer simulation recreates the old Longford road circuit in a really vivid way, giving some history of the track, explaining the layout and putting you behind the wheel.

These simulations are on a system called rFactor 2, a racing simulation platform, featuring many circuits around the world. The full gaming system allows people to drive their simulated cars.

This promotional video was produced by GP Laps.

While we can't drive the whole track at Longford any more, this video puts you in the driver's seat. Click on the photo to watch.



AHA Resources Page

Previous articles from the newsletter and other resources are available on the **AHA Resources Page** - click on the titles below to read the articles or [click here](#) to be taken to the Resources Page.

Recent articles:

[Women in the Early Australian Automotive Industry - a Survey](#)

[Australian Women's Automobile Club](#)

[AGM Michell and the Crankless Engine](#)

[Horace Washington Harrison, an Australian Automobile Pioneer](#)

[Early Ballarat Motoring - Part 1](#)

[Early Ballarat Motoring - Part 2](#)

[A History of Steenbhom Ltd. Coach and Motor Body Builders](#)

Information Exchange

Wheels and Modern Motor Magazines

Nicholas Scarff is a member who is doing his Master's thesis on the history of Jaguar in Australia. He needs someone with a complete collection of *Wheels* magazines from 1953-59 and *Modern Motor* from 1954-59 who would be willing to let him look through them for advertisements and articles. Nick is based in Melbourne, but please let us know if you can help out wherever you may be.

We have had a request for a photograph of a 1940s style Victorian registration sticker from a person with a 1946 Dodge who wants to print a replica of the round registration stickers used at the time.

The photo below, from artblart.files.wordpress.com, is the best I've been able to find. Can anyone supply a close-up of a period registration sticker?



Geelong Design Week 17-27 March

Solved: Engineered By Design

This event celebrates the skills and talents of Deakin engineering students and researchers, showcasing engineering design and interdisciplinary projects that demonstrate how we solve real-world problems for our community and society.

Go for a tour of the Centre for Advanced Design in Engineering Training (CADET) at the Waurn Ponds campus, registrations are required.

Tours:

Friday, 18 March 2022, 10-11am

Saturday, 19 March 2022, 10-11am

Thursday, 24 March 2022, 5-6pm

If you would like to attend the exhibition tour please book a free ticket on the website by clicking on the photograph below. You will need to scroll down the page of events.



**Hosted by Deakin
University, School
of Engineering**

**Solved: Engineered by
Design**

**Friday 18 March 2022 -
Thursday 24 March 2022**

Database of Digitised Magazines

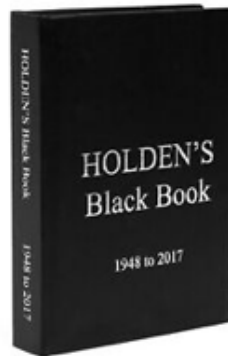
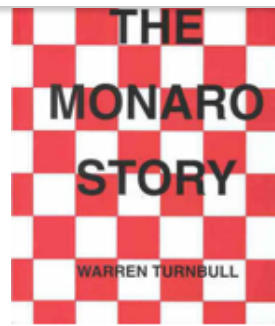
Subsequent to discussion of documenting collections that have been or are being digitised, a list of Australian sites was quickly developed. They are listed below. Should you know of others, please advise. This is now being extended to include a list of all Australian Automotive magazines regularly published and sold or distributed publicly.

[Click here to see the database of digitised magazines.](#)

Books and Projects

Warren Turnbull's Holden Histories

Warren Turnbull's contribution about his Holden history research resulted in Laurie Shine from Western Australia getting in touch. Laurie runs the Torana L34 Register and wanted to share some information about the Holden Production Broadcasts. It's hoped they have a productive discussion.



Members are invited to supply some details of their current work projects so other members who have any resources or information that might assist their research can contact them.

Newsletters on Historic Motoring Themes

Some of our members and friends produce very interesting and informative newsletters of their own. Many cover events and history with a rural and regional focus.

Johannes "John" Schuurman produces *The Australian Chrysler Narrator*, which focuses on all things to do with pre-1960 Chryslers in Australia, including Dodge, De Soto and Plymouth. John's email is plymouthpalace@gmail.com



David Vaughan produces *Country Motor*. David's publication focuses on historic vehicles, collections, events and personalities in regional Australia. All back copies are available through a link on the AOMC website here <https://www.aomc.asn.au/country-motor-australia>. The email for subscriptions is countrymotor@aussiebb.com.au



Members are encouraged to send in contributions or ideas for inclusion in member updates. Whether it's something about motoring history you think members may be interested in, a project you're working on or have finished or a suggestion for AHA, let us know about it.

Local Links

[Association of Motoring Clubs](#)[Veteran Car Club of Australia \(Victoria\) Inc.](#)[Victorian Historic Racing Register](#)[Royal Historical Society Victoria](#)[Council of Heritage Motor Clubs \(NSW\)](#)



[Vintage Sports Car Club of Australia](#)



[Vintage Sports Car Club of Victoria](#)



[Historic Sports and Racing Car Association](#)



[Australian Motor Heritage Foundation](#)



[The Sir Henry Royce Foundation Australia](#)

Any other organisations wishing to be included are asked to contact AHA.

International Friends



The Society of Automotive Historians

In Britain

Information about SAHB is available at their website: <https://thesahb.com/>



Information about SAH (USA) and their events can be found on their website:
<https://autohistory.org/>

Automotive Historians Australia can be contacted by email at info@autohistoriansaustralia.org, by mail at P.O. Box 319 Balaclava 3183 or via our website at autohistoriansaustralia.org

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