

# ***THE AUTOMOTIVE HISTORIAN***

**April 2023**

## **AUTOMOTIVE HISTORIANS AUSTRALIA INC**

**FOUNDING PATRON: Ron Tauranac AO**

### **In This Newsletter**

#### **President's Report**

In his President's Report, Norm Darwin writes about progress on his shed and his travails obtaining access to the General Motors Holden collection held by the State Library of South Australia.

#### **Daimler Ambulances in World War I**

David Neely has provided a fascinating insight into the earliest of motorised ambulances and a spin-off from his research into the life of an amazing woman.

#### **Harbeck Rare Books**

Jörn Harbeck has contributed an interesting piece from his memorabilia collection including photographs of the second Dunlop Reliability Trial in 1905, along with the history of a copy of Henry Lawson's *Over the Sliprail*.

#### **Book Review**

Norm Darwin has reviewed the new and rewritten *She's a beauty!*, Don Loffler's classic history of the first Holdens.

#### **Videos**

There's a video produced by the Ferodo brake company centred on the 1968 Le Mans race titled *Never Start Something You Can't Stop*. It features a lap of the circuit narrated by Stirling Moss before the film focuses in on the John Wyer team's race-winning Ford GT40 - and how Ferodo brake pads stopped it.

Another little film clip came from an article in an *Auto Action* update featuring some footage of the 1973 Australian Touring Car Championship round at Wanneroo, WA.

### **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**

A rushed report this issue. I've been racing the winter weather to get my garage floor painted before it's too cold. Have only about three good warm days without cold nights to get three coats on a 17 metre shed.

It has been good news on the TROVE front with the Federal Government agreeing to provide funding. I also see the Victorian State Library looking to fund the digitisation of the Herald Sun. Amazingly it's not been done.

Recently I had reason to search the Holden collection held by the Mortlock Library, a wing of the State Library of South Australia, in Adelaide. Over the past five years the library has digitised much of the collection handed over by Holden as the company closed manufacturing facilities. A good deal of it is post-1960 material.

The search facility is not that user friendly, however searching for a model designation like HQ brings up a selection of thumbnail images with a description. Selecting a thumbnail gives a message that the item is unavailable for copyright or cultural reasons.

Somewhat dismayed at this, I consulted our committee experts on the subject, and no one can think of a valid explanation. I wrote to the GM AustNZ CEO, Marc Ebolo, for an explanation and was

contacted by his assistant who was also at a loss as to the reason. It appears counterproductive in furthering knowledge of GM's Australian history and somewhat odd given the material I was searching was freely handed out by the hundreds by dealers to prospective purchasers of vehicles.

I will now make enquiries at Mortlock Library to see why they have locked up post-1955 material.

**Norm Darwin**  
**President**

---

## **The Daimler Motor Ambulance, The Philanthropist and The Cockatoo**

**David Neely**



“Presented to the Queen of Belgium by Mrs Bon of Victoria Australia” was inscribed on the side of the Daimler motor ambulance pictured above.

Called motor ambulances at the time to distinguish them from horse-drawn ones, which were still very much in service during World War I. Mrs Bon may have chosen Belgium because it was considered a major victim of the war and its plight aroused enormous public sympathy. Belgian relief funds were generously subscribed and no doubt Mrs Bon supported those as well.

Who was Mrs Bon? I was intrigued to find out more about her and Daimler ambulances in the war.

[Click here to continue reading.](#)

---

## Harbeck Rare Books

### Jörn Harbeck

In August last year some online trawling took me to the website of the AHA. Finding the online resources very interesting and useful, I decided to join the association.

I am a Brisbane-based collector of Australian motoring memorabilia from the earliest days up to 1969. I collect all types of material, including photographs, road maps, sales brochures, and much more. Encouraged by AHA Secretary Tony Lupton, I am now sharing two of the more unusual items in my collection.

A few years ago, I acquired an early 20th century photograph album from a dealer in the USA - an album that had presumably been put together by an American visitor to Australia. It is filled with the usual views of Melbourne and surrounds but also contains three photographs from the second Dunlop Reliability Trial in 1905. The photos were taken at the start of the contest and are all captioned. Two of them show A. M. Foster on his 50 hp Talbot, the other shows W. R. Grimwade on his 10 hp Argyll.



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

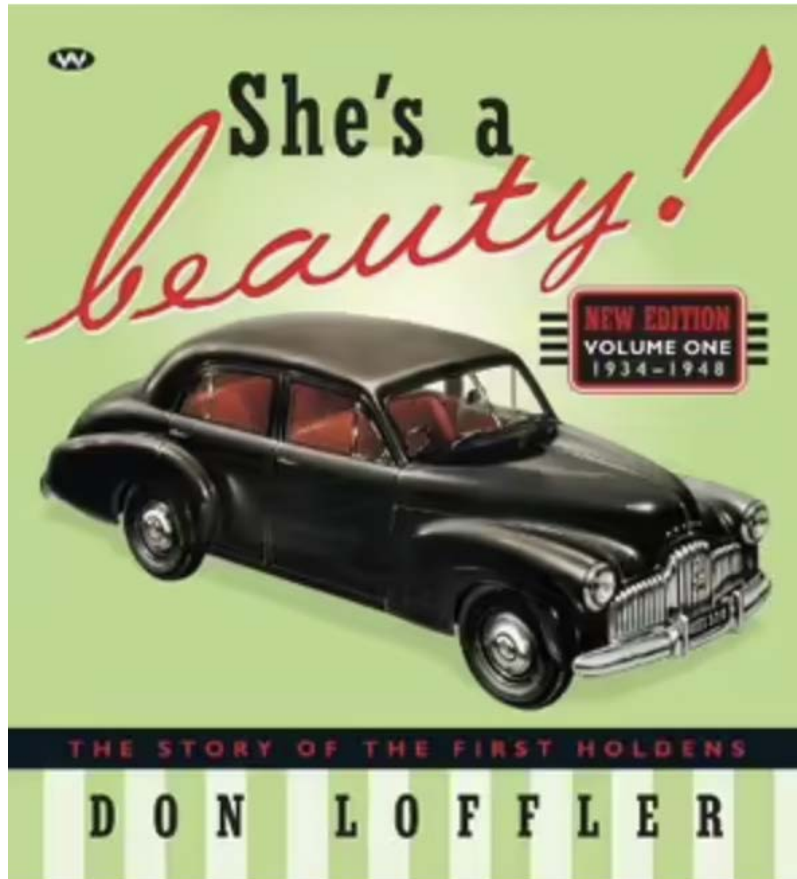
---

## Book Review

***She's a beauty!* New Edition 1934-1948 Vol. 1**

# The History of the First Holden

By Don Loffler



Hard cover with a dust jacket

Wakefield press

RRP \$59.95

Published 2023. 290 pages.

Back in 1998 Don Loffler published *She's a beauty!* A 246-page history of the first holden. Don will be the first to admit it was perhaps a premature release. As soon as the book landed Don was inundated with new information and suggestions for corrections. A dilemma for all historians, publish and miss something important or wait and never know when to commit.

In 2006 a new enlarged edition (294 pages) was published this updated *She's a beauty!* with new information and photos plus corrections. Fast forward to 2023 and Don has acquired even more new information, what to do. reprint or rewrite? Don chose to rewrite, splitting the book into two volumes. This is the first.

The format is the same, as is the cover. This I believe will create some confusion with secondhand copies confusing buyers. Big questions for the publisher are, is there a market and will previous purchases put their hand in

their pocket?

Aside from this, *She's a beauty!* contains all the known knowledge of the story of the first Holden, it is richly illustrated with original Holden images, many unpublished. The history covers the first thought of a local GM car in 1935 when Laurence Hartnett, then Managing Director, explored the idea with his GM Overseas Operations management, to those immortal words by Australian Prime Minister, Ben Chifley, "She's a beauty!"

This is an essential book for any Holden enthusiast, owner or historian. The wisdom of splitting the story into two volumes is yet to be seen.

Norm Darwin

---

## Never Start Something You Can't Stop

In an earlier edition of this newsletter we featured *The Racers Who Stopped The World*, a film about the Dunlop disc brakes fitted to the C Type Jaguar driven by Stirling Moss in the 1952 Mille Miglia.

This time we have another film about brakes. *Never Start Something You Can't Stop* was made by Ferodo and is about the John Wyer team of Ford GT40 cars at the 1968 Le Mans 24 Hours, which used Ferodo brake pads. The film starts with Stirling Moss narrating a lap of the circuit.

Click on the photo below to watch.



---

**Auto Action and Historic Motorsport**



Auto Action magazine gives historic motorsport very good coverage, including a regular column by Mark Bisset. They also gave great coverage before and after to the recent Rob Roy Revival hillclimb festival.

**LATEST NEWS**

**STOP/GO**



**BURDON UNLOADS AT SEBRING 12 HOUR**

JOSH BURDON has taken out his second ever IMSA victory in the LMP3 class, for Riley Motorsports, at the Sebring 12 Hour. The third generation racer from Hobart – in his second IMSA outing for American team Riley Motorsports – helped his teammates Felipe Fraga (BRZ) and Gar Robinson (USA) fight back from P4 in their #74 Ligier JS P320, winning by a lap over the #13 AWA team. That makes two IMSA wins for Aussie after taking out the LMP3 class win at the Le Petit Le Mans last season for Andreotti Autosports. ✪



**MCFADDEN'S HISTORIC VOLVUSIA WIN**

JAMES MCFADDEN has had a strong start to the World of Outlaws season: sixth in the 64-driver standings after six starts. But his win at Volusia was a memorable one for the Alice Springs Sprintcar superstar. His sixth career win was the 100th victory for his Roth Motorsport team in the #63 RM Toyota, and a first ever Sprintcar victory for a Toyota Racing Development 410 Engine. "To be the guy to get the hundred is pretty special. This car has been on the road for 25, 26 years, I know how much it means," McFadden said. ✪



**SEPANG 12 HOUR PODIUM FOR TRANS-TASMAN OUTFIT**

THE ALL-Antipodean AMAC Motorsport team have stormed to a terrific GT3-Am class podium at the Sepang 12 Hours in Malaysia. Australian GT stalwarts Ben Porter and Andrew Macpherson were joined by BJR Supercars gun Andre Heimgartner. It was a sensational fightback from the amateur AMAC team after qualifying in P11 in the oldest GT generation car in the field (1951 Porsche 911 GT3-R), who after 215 laps, finished three laps back on the outright Audi GT3 winners (Absolute Racing), and one lap back on Am class winners, AAI Motorsports in the #91 BMW. ✪

# STAN JONES: AUSTRALIAN ACE CENTENARY



Stan Jones, Maserati 250F, Longford, 1956. Image: B. YOUNG. Right: Stan Jones' Centenary memorial.

**By Mark Bisset**

A GROUP of devotees of Aussie 1950s Ace Stan Jones – father of 1980 World F1 Champion Alan – gathered at Melbourne's Springvale Cemetery to celebrate the life of the 1958 Gold Star and 1959 Australian Grand Prix winner last week.

Born a century ago on March 3, 1923, Stan died 50 years ago in London on March 16, 1973 in the care of Alan and then wife Beverley. Sadly, he missed Alan's first British F3 Championship win at Silverstone two days later aboard a

GRD 372 Ford. A tearful Al had his garland placed inside Stan's casket for the flight home. A win-or-bust racer until late in his career, Stan is fondly remembered for his performances at the wheel of the Charlie Dean/Recco Research built Maybachs and a Maserati 250F.

Historian David Zeunert organised longtime friend and employee Lloyd Holyoak to regale the Stan-Fans with some anecdotes about a racer who lived and played hard, not the least of which was that Jones 'dated' not one, but three Miss Australias. Eat your heart out Brock... ✪

**BENNETT FLIES AT INAUGURAL ROB ROY REVIVAL**

DESPITE THE Saturday being cancelled due to extreme heat, the inaugural Rob Roy Revival Hill Climb enjoyed a stellar Sunday, as car lovers, competitors, and organisers came together for the historic event put on by the MG Car Club Victoria, with collaboration from the VHRRL.

Held in Victoria's Yarra Valley region with two-time Bathurst 1000 winner Sam Stone as MC and competitor, over 70 historic cars and motorcycles turned up to go on show and to compete.

"It was truly an incredible event that wouldn't have been possible without the hard work and passion of everyone involved," an event spokesperson said.

"It is the participants who came out to compete and share their magnificent machines with us, the passion for the sport and commitment to push yourselves to the limit was inspiring, and it was an honour to have you all.

"The energy and enthusiasm the spectators provided was infectious, and it was wonderful to see so many people coming together to celebrate the sport of hill climbing."

In terms of the day's winners over the eight categories, the Modern Sports & Racing Cars to 2000cc victory was taken out by Laurie Bennett in his #53 1966 MG in what was the largest of the fields with 15 entries. Bennett's average time of 28.56s was enough for the outright victory whilst third place came from the same category, with Angus Mitchell in his ASP Clubman posting a 28.09.

The 4x Cooled category was taken out by Darren Visser in a Batten Cycle for the outright second fastest time of the weekend (32.69).

In the Pre-War Sports & Racing Cars, David Bishop grabbed it in an Austin 7 by 2s over Colin Kirkpatrick in a Bugatti T37.

The Historic Sports & Racing Cars up to 2000cc went to Graeme Raper in a George Heed Ford Special Monoc, whilst the Post-War Sports



Laurie Bennett (1971 Elfin FF600R) took out Modern Sports/Racing Cars up to 2000, with the FTJ with (owner) Mike Elmoretop in 1957 MGA Coupe. Image: STEVE PAGE



Racing Cars up to 1500cc was won by Mark Pittman's MG TC. The Post-War Sports & Racing Cars from 1500cc to 3000cc went to Louis Santin in a Singer Lemans, whilst Jeffrey Welsh in the Prad Holden Sports won an equally close battle in the Modern Sports & Racing Cars up to 2000cc against Bowes, in his Chevrolet Corvette by just 0.02s. In the Saloons & Touring Cars, Peter Weymouth-Wilson got it done in his Morris Cooper S. FRW Neal ✪

A recent subscriber update included a reprint of their 11 May 1973 cover story, featuring the fourth round of the 1973 Australian Touring Car Championship held at Wanneroo raceway in Western Australia.



The Wanneroo piece included a link to an interesting video clip of the race. Click on the photo below to watch the clip.



## Ron Tauranac Interview

I recently found this interview with our founding patron, Ron Tauranac, where he talks about his extraordinary experiences in motor sport.

The interview seems to date from the early 2010's and was made for a podcast and video series called *The Mechanic's Gallon* produced by Gary Critcher, a former employee of Formula One Management. Click on the photograph to watch the interview.





---

## Shannons Design to Driveway Series

All seven episodes are now available and the links to each are below. Click on the photo to watch the episode.

Congratulations to David Burrell and his team, particularly the designers, who made this terrific series possible.

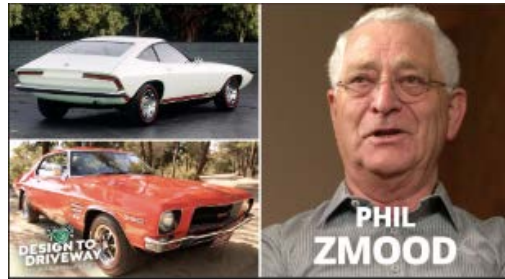
In addition to the stories of Leo Pruneau, David Ford, Dennis Nicolle and Phil Zmood we now have the episodes featuring David Hardy, Graham Wadsworth and Richard Ferlazzo.

Click on the photo to watch the episode.

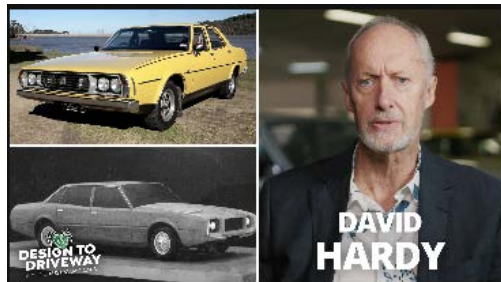




**Dennis Nicolle - Chrysler & Mitsubishi Australia Designer | SHANNONS DESIGN TO DRIVEWAY | Ep 3**



**Phil Zmood - Holden Chief Designer | SHANNONS DESIGN TO DRIVEWAY | Ep 4**



**David Hardy – Leyland Australia Designer | SHANNONS DESIGN TO DRIVEWAY | Ep 5**



**Graham Wadsworth - Ford Australia Designer | SHANNONS DESIGN TO DRIVEWAY | Ep 6**



## **Design to Driveway: Behind the Scenes of the TV Series**

David Burrell takes us behind the scenes in this story about the making of the TV series. Click on the photo to read David's story.



---

## **Ford Heritage Vault Website**

Ford enthusiasts will find plenty of interest in this website containing over 5,000 photographs and brochures on American and Canadian Ford and Lincoln models. Click on the photo to go to the website.



---

## 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:

[An Open and Closed Case - The Saint-Didier Convertible Body](#)

[An Anorak's Guide to Early Q Plates](#)

[Marion Bell. Round Australia in a 1925 Oldsmobile](#)

[The Queen of Whale Cay](#)

[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](#)

---

## 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.](#)

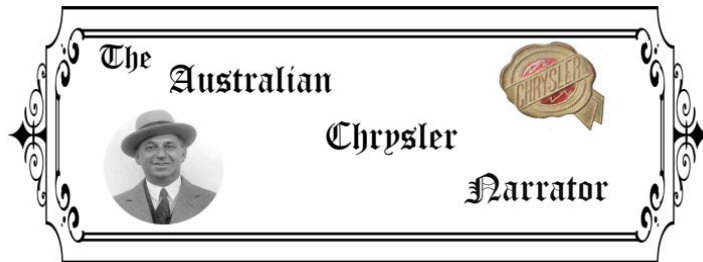
---

## 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.

Here are some newsletters you may wish to subscribe to.

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](mailto: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](mailto:countrymotor@aussiebb.com.au)



# Country Motor *Australia*



**Issue 34**

---

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

Websites for some of our Australian motoring friends

[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](mailto:info@autohistoriansaustralia.org), by mail at P.O. Box 319 Balaclava 3183 or via our website at [autohistoriansaustralia.org](http://autohistoriansaustralia.org)

---

AHA would appreciate you distributing this newsletter to your friends, networks, clubs and associations.

---

*Copyright © 2023 Automotive Historians Australia Inc., All rights reserved.*

Want to change how you receive these emails?  
You can update your preferences or unsubscribe from this list.



