

# ***THE AUTOMOTIVE HISTORIAN***

**November 2021**

**AUTOMOTIVE  
HISTORIANS  
AUSTRALIA INC**

**FOUNDING PATRON: Ron Tauranac AO**

Hello members and welcome to the AHA Newsletter.

## **From the Secretary**

### ***The Future of Automotive Collections and Archives in Australia Presentation Videos***

Edited videos of the presentations from our 4 September online workshop have now been made available to financial members. I hope members are enjoying going back to your favourite moments, or watching the workshop for the first time now.

Congratulations again to the convenors, Norm, Simon and Harriet. Jordan Hammill and Dawn Liu did a great job with technical support on the day, along with editing and providing artwork for the videos. Special thanks to all the presenters, as it's the content that makes the difference.

### **Annual General Meeting**

Remember our AGM will be an online meeting using Microsoft Teams on Wednesday November 24 at 6:00pm.

Nominations are open for committee positions. Nominations for all executive and ordinary committee positions must be received by the Secretary by 5:00pm on Saturday 20 November.

I have received nominations from the current executive committee members for re-election to their positions: President, Norm Darwin; Vice-President, Simon Lockrey; Treasurer, Daryl Meek;

If there is more than one nomination for any of these executive positions an election will be held for that position.

Ordinary committee member positions are currently held by Jenny Fawbert, Nathan Pharaoh, Alan Willingham and Harriet Edquist. The AGM can decide to elect a number of nominated Ordinary Members to the committee.

A Microsoft Teams invitation link will be sent to all financial members prior to the meeting, along with the previous minutes, agenda and office bearer reports.

### **In This Newsletter**

We have another article from the archive of Eli Solomon from Singapore and his Rewind Media Archive. This is a recent article about the mystery surrounding a lost MG TA "Cream Cracker" racing car. As an MG enthusiast, I found this one enthralling. I hope you do too.

There's also another video from the National Motor Museum, with Matthew Lombard showing us around the George Brooks Library at Birdwood. Matthew showed this video at our workshop and it's presented here for those who missed it or would like to see it again.

For something a little different, I've also included a film produced by Kidston Productions, an interesting production house making some terrific short films about historic cars and motoring. This one, titled *Rossellini Roma*, features a very special Ferrari owned by film director Roberto Rossellini in the 1950s and follows its fascinating history over the years.

There are also some interesting articles from Norm Darwin mentioned in his President's Report and the two-part series from Daryl Meek on Early Ballarat Motoring.

I'd really 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 and information for the newsletter.

**Tony Lupton**  
**Secretary**

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### **President's Report**

Previously I mentioned Facebook Groups. These images of a Lightburn Zeta turned up on the Australian Motoring History page. It's a 1964 Zeta Sports Coupe prototype 1002. The images are taken from the American [RM Sotheby](#) auction site where it sold for \$US 24,150 in February 2013. Should it have ever left Australia?



Some months ago Stephen Phillip approached me about running a brief story of Anthony Michell's Crankless engine, a largely unknown Australian patented engine. Stephen has produced a biography of A G M Michell and the engine titled, *What Came Out of the Box*. Stephen's summary of Michell is included in this newsletter, and I hope it whets your appetite to learn more about one of our unheralded inventors. The 20cm X 13cm book runs to just over 500 pages, is well illustrated and is printed in Australia.

Back in August I mentioned Horace Harrison editor of the *Australian Motorist* 1912-1954. I had hoped to discover the facts around the magazine's starting date and volume number, alas this will have to wait until I can get to the State Library. A short biography on Horace is included in the newsletter.

While searching information on Australian motoring journals and doing the Harrison research, I came across a reference to **The Australian Women's Automobile Club**. Suitably intrigued I dug deeper; the result is a short history of the club 1913-1928. Discovering the backgrounds of these pioneer women motorists is not easy as newspapers used their husband's names or initials in reports. I am sure there is more to discover about these women, particularly Alice Elizabeth Anderson, chauffeur, mechanic and garage proprietor. There is a piece about this in the newsletter too.

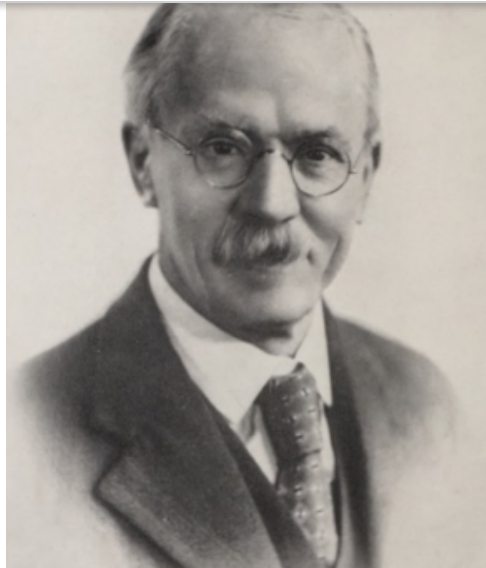
See also the Wikipedia entry on Alice Anderson at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alice\\_Elizabeth\\_Anderson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alice_Elizabeth_Anderson)

**Norm Darwin**  
**President**

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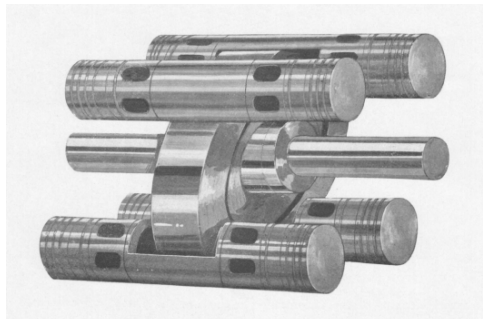
### ***What Came Out of the Box*** **AGM Michell and the Crankless Engine, a biography by Stephen Phillip**

AGM Michell was undoubtedly one of Australia's greatest engineers. He is best known for his innovative thrust bearing, which revolutionised ship propulsion. His other significant invention was the crankless engine; this revolutionary engine design nearly became a commercial success.



*AGM (George) Michell*

Michell had concluded that existing internal combustion engine designs were mechanically inefficient. In particular he disliked the crankshaft, that part of the engine which converts the reciprocating motion of the pistons into rotation of the drive shaft. To Michell, the connecting rods and crankshaft were clumsy and inelegant, and he set about developing an entirely new mechanism. He began by arranging the pistons around and parallel to the drive shaft. He then attached a thick disc, referred to as the slant, to the drive shaft at an angle (usually 22.5 degrees). The slant also acted as a flywheel and therefore a separate flywheel was not required.



*The crankless mechanism consisting of shaft, slant, and pistons*

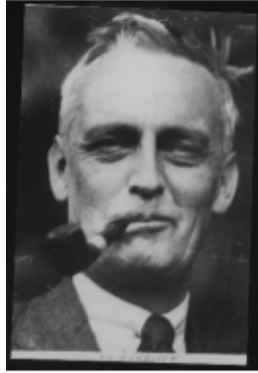
[Read more](#)

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## **Horace Washington Harrison Australian Automobile Pioneer**

by Norm Darwin

Recording 50 years achievement in the automotive industry, Horace (Horrie) Harrison began his motoring career with Tarrant Motors, then in 1905 joined the Vacuum Oil Company as the assistant to Chief Executive, Harry Comforth, he was within two years appointed the Victorian Manager. This



H W Harrison

Some confusion exists over the dates the trike was acquired. Horace in 1909 suggested he was one of Victoria's first motorists, pioneering the "petrol motor" and travelling "thousands" of miles on the Ariel. Some newspaper reports have suggested the trike was obtained in the 1896-1897 period however in 1921 he said he owned the "De Dion engine contraption in 1900-1901"



H W Harrison and trike c1900

The earlier date was perhaps related to the landing of an Ariel (formally Dunlop) trike in Melbourne in April 1897. Leon Mitchel suggests the Harrison trike image is of an Ariel from the period 1897-1898, making it one of the earliest imported vehicles.

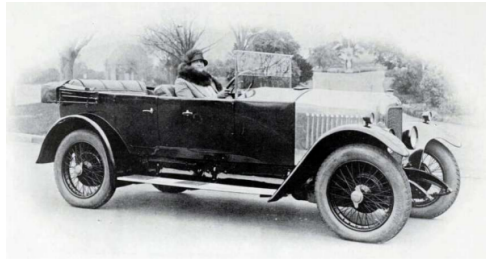
[Read more](#)

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## Australian Women's Automobile Club

by Norm Darwin

club lapsed between 1915 and 1917 then reformed in August 1918 when Miss Alice Elizabeth Anderson, described in Punch as “hails from out in the robust atmosphere of Kew way”, actively promoted its formation. Punch further advised, “These feminine clubs for ladies of the wheel are fashionable in the USA.”



Mable Robertson in her 14/40 LM Vauxhall Tourer

*The Home* 1<sup>st</sup> July 1927

The reformed club elected Nellie Mabel Lambert, wife of a Melbourne surgeon and she headed a membership of 25 female motorists including Drs. Margaret McLorian and Constance Ellis. Dr Ellis was Victoria’s first female MD in 1903 and an early adopter of the motor car. In 1912 aged 40, she was fined 20 shillings for travelling at 25mph, simply telling the officer she was in a hurry. Dr. McLorian became an MD in 1911. Nellie Lambert was made a life member of the club in April 1927.

[Read more](#)

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## Early Ballarat Motoring

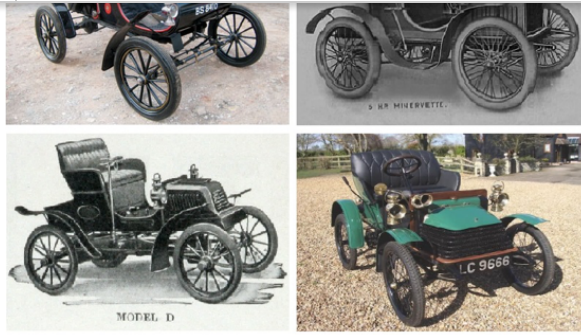
by Daryl Meek

This is a two-part article by Daryl, the first instalment of which appeared in an earlier newsletter. Along with part two, there is also a link below to the first instalment. Click on the photos to read the articles.

[Part 1](#)



[Part 2](#)



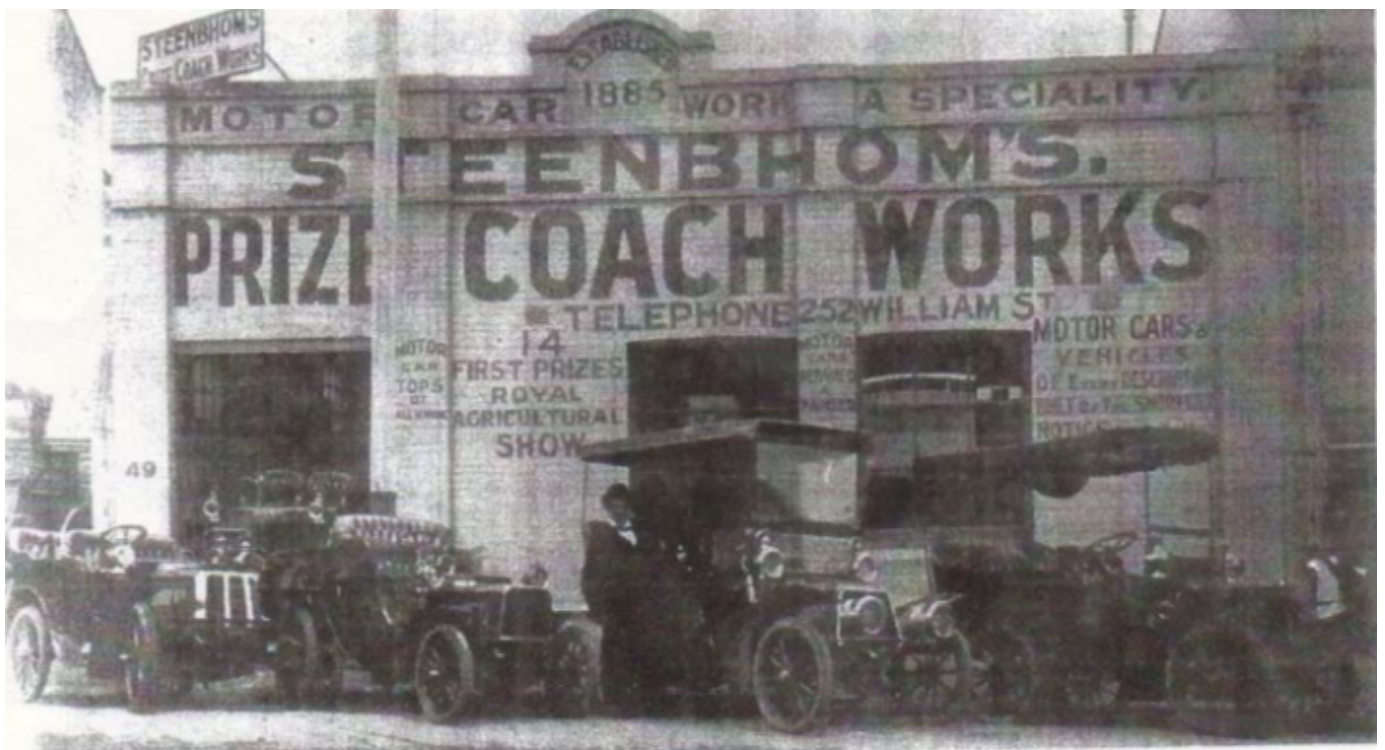
Some of the 5hp vehicles available in Australia c1905  
Oldsmobile, Minervette, Crestmobile and Wolseley

## Transportation and Coach Building

### Gary Luke's Family History of Steenbhom's Ltd.

In 1851 a Polish born Jew was transported to Norfolk Island and Port Arthur as a thief, convicted at the Old Bailey in London six years earlier. His language was recorded as Yiddish with a speech impediment. That could explain the various odd spellings of his name, possibly some variation of Steinbaum or Sztaynboim, but recorded in British trial and convict records as Steinbourne, and when finally free and living in Sydney as Steenbhom.

He married in Sydney in 1859 and arranged apprenticeships for his sons, like many refugees and immigrants even today who attempt to place their children in university in this land of opportunities.



Fehon, who imported the first Ford cars, teamed up with Abraham Steenbhom to expand the company, dealing with a range of marques. Abraham's brother Jacob who joined the company was influential in the establishment of motor body trade apprentice training and the conversion of the disused Darlinghurst Gaol for repatriation technical training of returned soldiers from the Great War. Two other brothers joined the company in lesser roles as upholsterer and accountant.

The Steenbhom company, funded mainly by Davies and Davies, the national Ford importers, was dissolved in the mid 1920s when Ford installed their factory in Geelong and Davies and Davies withdrew their financial support to establish the financing company of AGC.

*This study of the company is by Gary Luke, a grandson of Menasseh Benjamin Steenbhom, leatherworker and upholsterer, as part of a thesis for the Diploma in Family History Studies under the Society of Australian Genealists, published in 2002.*

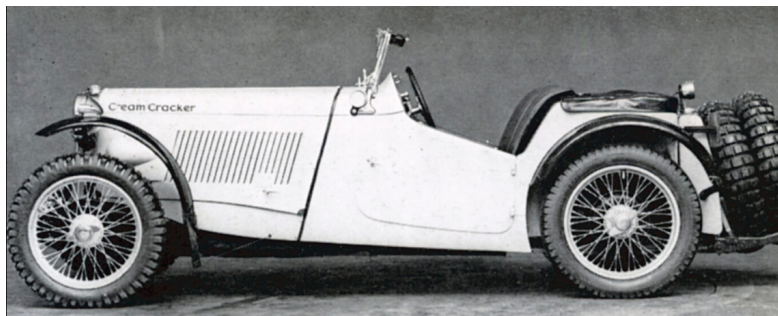
[Read the full story on the AHA website here.](#)

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## Singapore Stories

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

This story is about the mystery surrounding a lost MG TA "Cream Cracker" racing car. Click on the photo to read the story.



[You can check out Eli's website here.](#)

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## Third European Conference for Automotive History

Turin/Torino

April/aprile 2022

Roger Beattie has advised me that he will be attending the conference, being held in Turin from April 1 to 3, 2022. Roger is President of the Fiat Car Club of Victoria and is interested to know if



Further details about the event can be found in the conference information flyer at the end of this newsletter. Anyone thinking of attending can let me know.

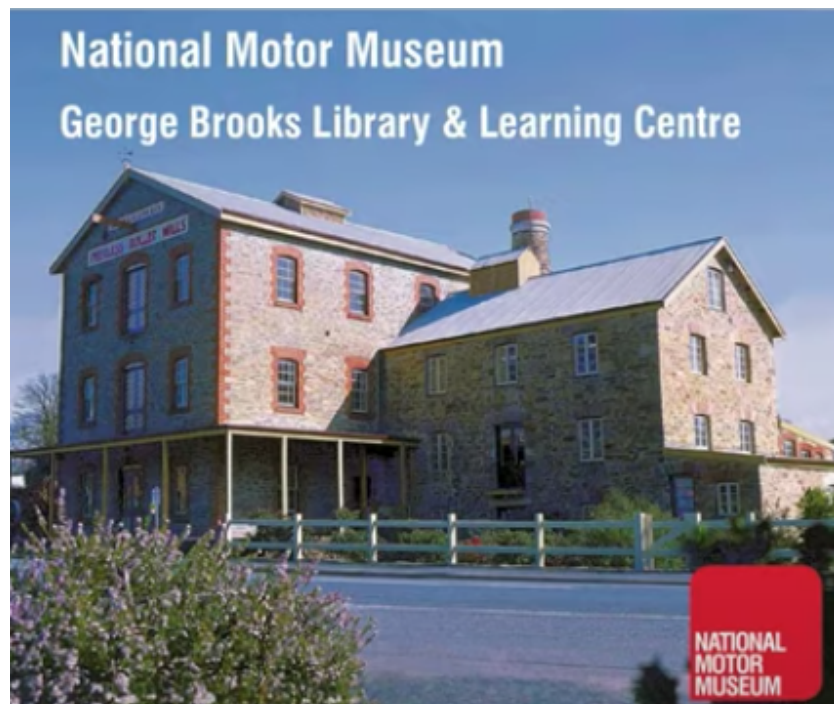
Tony Lupton

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## **George Brooks Library at the National Motor Museum**

Join Matthew Lombard for a walk through the George Brooks Library at Birdwood.

Click on the photo to watch the tour.



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## **Borg-Warner History Exhibition**



## **Changing Gears: Borg-Warner to DSI**

Saturday 6 November 2021 – Sunday 13 February 2022

[Click for webpage link](#)

The Borg-Warner automatic transmission factory in Albury opened in 1971 and the plant, which underwent a number of ownership changes, closed in 2014.

This exhibition at the Albury Library/Museum explores the history of the plant and the stories of its people.

Now we can go on long drives again, I'm keen to see this exhibition. A tour of the plant was a local tourist attraction when I was an apprentice mechanic in Albury in the 70s.

Thanks to Peter Rodgers for bringing this exhibition to my attention.

Tony Lupton

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## **Tarrant Advertisement**

Harriet Edquist found this wonderful full-page advertisement for Tarrant Cars in the catalogue for the First Australian Exhibition of Women's Work, held in 1907. As Harriet pointed out to me, women were clearly a good market for the motor manufacturers.

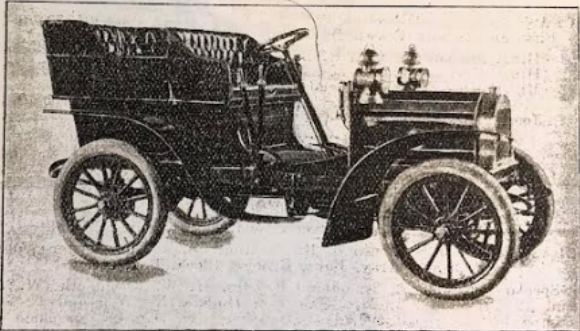
**TARRANT MOTOR CO.,**  
104-112 Russell Street, Melbourne.

**WOULDN'T YOU LIKE A MOTOR CAR?**

We extend to you a cordial invitation to our Garage,  
where the great Show of Motors is now proceeding. . . .

**THINK WHAT IT MEANS!**

You can get there and back, and anywhere and every-  
where, in the twinkling of an eye, if you go by Motor.  
And we manufacture and import the highest grade and  
most idealistic of the World's Cars.



**THE TARRANT CAR.**  
We build the TARRANT CAR at our own works. We are the  
Victorian representatives for

ARGYLLS	DE DIONS.	F.I.A.T.S.	BRITANNIAS
ROVERS	MERCEDES	BROOKES	MARINE SETS
	FORDS.		

Dont waste time by waiting for trains. but come to day and get  
yourself a Motor.

**Tarrant Motor Co , 104-112 Russell Street.**  
TELEPHONE, 3030-2942.

## 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.](#)

## Information Exchange

I was contacted recently by Kate Warren, whose late uncle had quite privileged access to the Formula 1 races and drivers in Australia and Europe during the 1980s as an amateur photographer. Her family has around two dozen photo albums along with memorabilia and she is seeking advice about what to do with it.

A couple of examples provided by Kate give a taste of the quality of these photos, the first showing Thierry Boutsen in the cockpit and the second Ayrton Senna and others listening to a briefing.



Please send any ideas or advice about the collection to Tony Lupton.

## The Sir Henry Royce Foundation

Russell Rolls, Chairman of the Sir Henry Royce Foundation, has provided the following information for fellow AHA members.

The Foundation, a registered charity, produces a free quarterly e-news update – “Royce Voice”. All who are interested in Rolls-Royce and Bentley heritage are welcome to subscribe.

For subscriptions refer to The Foundation’s website – [www.henryroycefoundation.com](http://www.henryroycefoundation.com) – or send an

## The Sir Henry Royce Foundation Research Award

The Foundation's "Archive" at Bill Allsep House (Rowville, Victoria) has a significant collection of historical material on Rolls-Royce and Bentley in Australia. To encourage publication of research based on this important archive material, The Foundation has initiated The Sir Henry Royce Foundation Research Award.

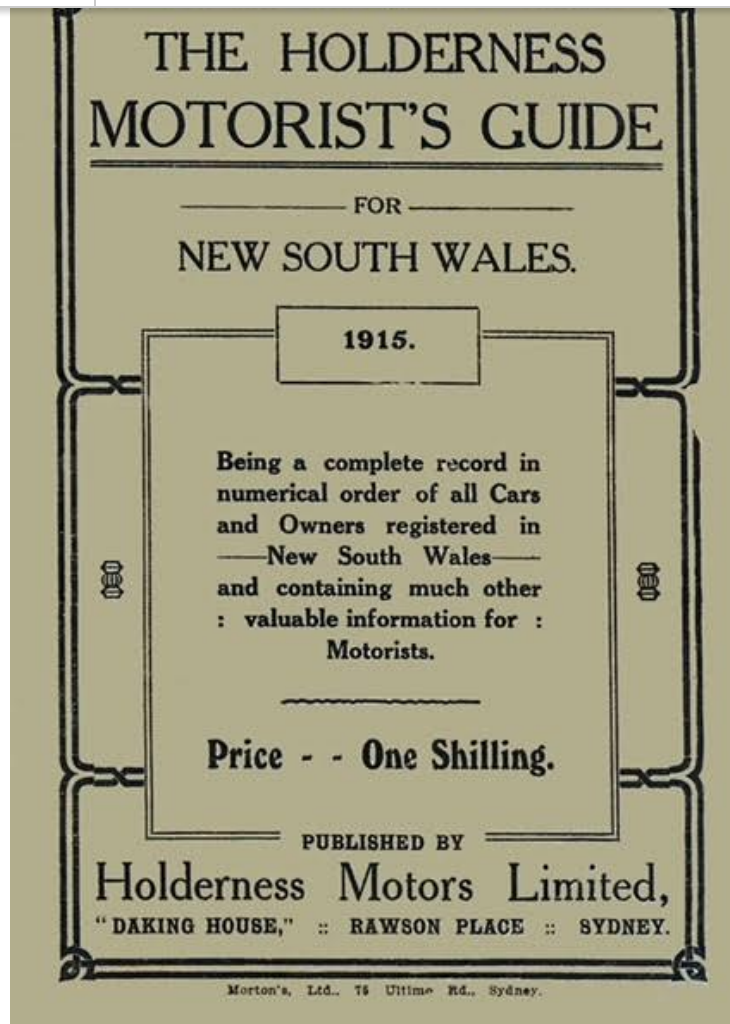
This Award, with a prize of \$500, will be presented annually to the person who, in the opinion of the Trustees of The Foundation, has made the best use of The Foundation "Archive" to research a topic of Rolls-Royce or Bentley interest and who has published this research in the Rolls-Royce Owners' Club of Australia magazine "Praeclarvm" or in wider, publicly available media. The key driver of this Award is the use of The Foundation "Archive" as the basis of the research and the published result.

Further information on the scope of the "Archive" collection and the details of the Award should be directed to AHA Member and Chairman of Trustees of The Sir Henry Royce Foundation, Russell Rolls, at [enquiries@henryfoucefoundation.com](mailto:enquiries@henryfoucefoundation.com).

## Pre-1911 NSW Registration Information

In addition to the information provided by Brian Caldersmith that the AMHF has a copy of the Holderness Guide, I have been advised that the State Library of NSW and the University of Sydney Library also hold copies that are available to researchers on request.

There is also a History & Genealogy website operated by Terry Callaghan who has reproduced the Holderness Guide information. His website with the motoring resources is <http://www.terrycallaghan.com/resources-motorist/>



*Cover photo of the Holderness Guide 1915*

If anyone has any more information or helpful hints about any of these subjects please get in touch with Tony Lupton.

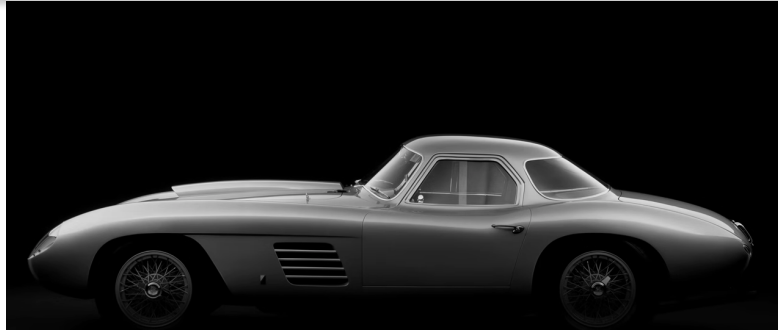
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## Rossellini Roma '21

Kidston Productions

"This is the story of one of the most iconic cars ever built.

"It left its native Italy over half a century ago to lead a very different life, first in quiet French retirement before sailing for America where it found stardom. Now we've brought it home to be reunited with the humble streets and personalities of its youth, to reveal the untold human stories behind the bright lights and glittering celebrity...and to roar." (Kidston)



[Click on the photo to watch the film](#)

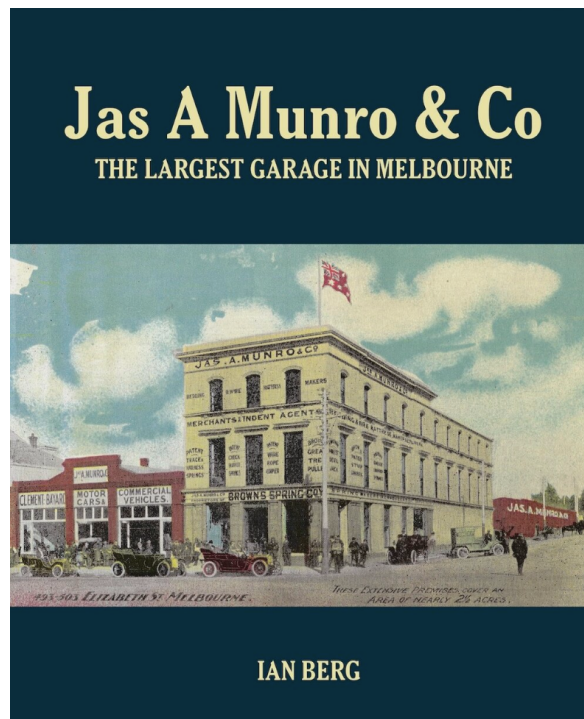
## Books and Projects

### Jas A Munro & Co

#### The Largest Garage in Melbourne

by Ian Berg

Veteran Car Club of Australia (Victoria) stalwart and AHA member, Ian Berg has written a fascinating story of early Melbourne in his work on Jas Munro. The foreword is written by AHA member Jon Faine.



Anyone interested in automotive history, the development of Melbourne and the place of Elizabeth Street in our history will enjoy reading Ian's book. Copies are available through Ian's website at: <https://www.ianberg.org/>

### Warren Turnbull's Holden Histories

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.



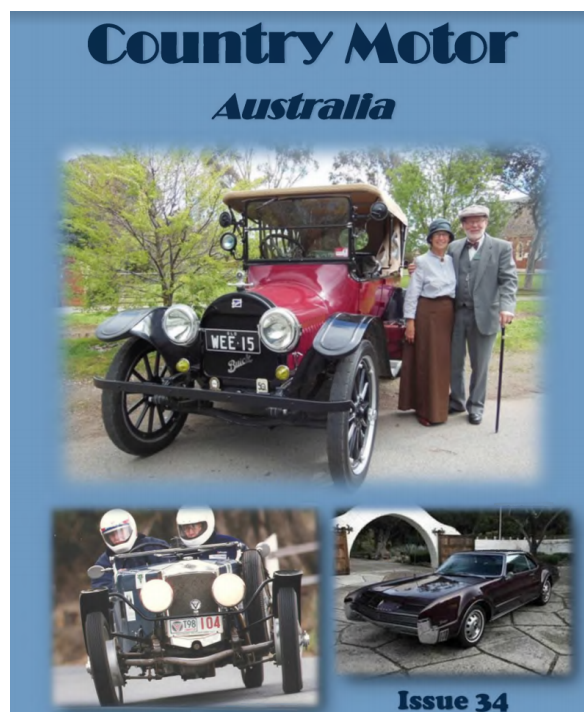
Some of our members and friends produce very interesting and informative newsletters of their own. Many cover events and history with a rural and regional focus.

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)



## AHA Resources Page

David Neely's History of Jackson, Jones & Collins



*Parramatta Road, Leichhardt, Sydney in the 1920s.*

David, together with Tom Clarke, wrote *Rolls Royce & Bentley in the Sunburnt Country - the first fifty years in Australia*. It is a fine documentation of both marques that also contains many histories of motor body builders who were building motor bodies for both makes in Australia.

### **Sydney's First Gathering of Motorists**

Jenny Fawbert has written a fascinating paper on Sydney's first motoring get-together. [Read the article on our Resources Page.](#)

### **GM on Designing and Planning Automotive Dealerships in Australia**

Michael Bogle's paper on GM's approach to automotive dealership design is a very good read. [Read the paper on our Resources Page.](#)



### **Land Title Data as an Automotive History Research Tool**

Norm Darwin has an interesting take on using land survey information in automotive research. [Read it on the Resources Page.](#)

## Changed Arrangements for Third European Conference for Automotive History, Turin

We have heard from Anders Ditlev Clausager, Secretary of the Society of Automotive Historians in Britain, that the conference in Turin will now be held in April 2022. Here's the new advertisement and call for papers.

Conférence Européenne sur  
l'Histoire de l'Automobile



Torino 2022

**Thomas Ulrich**, AHG, Germany;  
**Anders Ditlev Clausager**, SAHB, Britain;  
Together with the **AISA, Associazione Italiana per la Storia dell'Automobile**  
And the **FIVA Culture and Youth Commission**



invite you to the  
**Third European Conference for Automotive History**  
Supported and hosted by **MAUTO**



Torino / Turin—Italia / Italy / Italien  
1-3 aprile / April / avril 2022  
[www.pan-european-automobile-history.com](http://www.pan-european-automobile-history.com)  
[info@museoauto.it](mailto:info@museoauto.it)

### CALL FOR PAPERS:

Together with the Museo Nazionale dell'Automobile and the AISA, we are pleased to invite you to our third European conference for automotive history, to be held in the Mauto, Corso Unità d'Italia 40, Turin, Italy, from 1 to 3 April 2022, with invitations cordially extended to AHA (Australia), AHG (Germany), CONAM (The Netherlands), PHAF (France), SAH (USA), SAHB (Britain) and UIA (Serbia), as well as to other interested organisations and individuals.

To further international discourse, conference presentations will focus on subjects which have a cross-border European or International interest, or are of general interest to automotive historians.

The provisional programme is as follows:

**Friday 1 April:** arrival, informal dinner in the hotel.

**Saturday 2 April:** conference in the museum starting at 9am, with a break for lunch, followed by dinner.

**Sunday 3 April:** a morning session of further papers, finishing at midday.

Speeches should be made in English, with accompanying Powerpoint presentations. The length of each presentation is provisionally set at 30 minutes, with 10 minutes for questions and discussions.

Please note that the programme is subject to change. The organisers reserve the right to cancel any part of the programme.

The closing date for submissions of papers for consideration by the organisers is **1 October 2021**, please supply an abstract or outline, including estimated length and number of slides. Please contact:

**Anders Ditlev Clausager**, 62 Viceroy Close,  
Birmingham B5 7UT, England  
Telephone +44 (0)121 440 4745  
email: [sahb.secretary@btinternet.com](mailto:sahb.secretary@btinternet.com)

## 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.*

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## 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/>

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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)

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

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