

THE AUTOMOTIVE HISTORIAN

October-November 2022

AUTOMOTIVE HISTORIANS AUSTRALIA INC

FOUNDING PATRON: Ron Tauranac AO

AHA-SAH Symposium *Wheels Across the Pacific* Videos

Financial members have now received video links to the entire conference to view at their leisure.

For newsletter recipients who aren't members of AHA, [here is a link to the proceedings of the conference](#), where you can view the slide presentations for each of the nine papers, plus video of the opening and closing sections of the conference.

Any new members who join AHA will receive access to the full conference video presentations.

Coming Soon -

In Conversation: Repco Centenary Panel

In recognition of Repco's centenary in 2022, we have recorded a discussion featuring Michael Gasking, Nigel Tait and Brian Heard, three illustrious Repco alumni in conversation about motorsport, Repco Brabham engines and more. Financial members will receive the video link once editing has been completed.

AHA Membership and Membership Renewals

Membership renewals were due on 1 July, as the financial membership year commences on 1 July for the forthcoming year. New member subscriptions are \$60 and the renewing member fee is \$50. If you have renewed or joined since April your membership is valid for the 2022-23 membership year.

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

[Renewing members can keep their membership current by clicking here.](#)

In This Newsletter

Design to Driveway

Our own David Burrell has helped produce a documentary series interviewing seven of Australia's most influential car designers in this Shannons series. The first four episodes have been broadcast and links are below.

An MG Winning a Formula 1 Race?

There's been no record of an MG winning a Formula 1 race, until now. Eli Solomon has written a great piece on a bit of motor racing history.

Bill Pearson's Motor Racing Archive

Bill Pearson has published some terrific footage shot by himself and his father in the 1960s. In the first instalment Bill explains how he became a film cameraman for Movietone News, following in his father's footsteps, and managed to get amazing access to some memorable days of motorsport.

Articles, Photos and Videos Wanted

We would always like some more articles or 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

VALE: Lawrence (Larry) Xavier O'Toole

5 February 1959 – 8 September 2022

It is with sadness that we record the passing of Larry following hospitalisation in April this year. Larry was an early member of AHA and contributed at past conferences. He was a driving force behind the Castlemaine Autoplex complex, a venue that we planned to hold the abandoned 2020 conference in.

Larry was born in Swan Hill and resided in Ultima on the family wheat and sheep property during his early years. Educated at St Vincent's College Bendigo, Larry turned to photography and journalism.

In 1973 he moved to Castlemaine to work for Eddie Ford and the Custom Rodder magazine and three years later started Graffiti Publications. In 1977 Australian Street Rodding magazine was launched and continues today. Larry has also written several

books on street rodding, the Australian ute and Holden V8 engine. He was an active street rodder and owned a number of modified cars over the years.

Larry is survived by his wife Mary and children, Lara, Carman, Allister and Shane. A memorial service was held in Castlemaine on 29 October.

Norm Darwin



Larry's panel van and some of the cars at his memorial service in Castlemaine.
(Photo by Ian Liddell, supplied by Norm Darwin)

From The President

The symposium jointly held with SAH (USA) was a great success and provided a forum for a diverse range of topics spanning the theme, ***Wheels Across the Pacific: Transnational Histories of the Automotive Industry.***

Thanks must go to Simon Lockrey who did much of the organisation on the day, aided by graphic design and media students Tianning Miao and Lorena Zapiain who made sure it all ran smoothly and was recorded. Simon, together with Harriet Edquist and myself co-convened the symposium. I express my thanks.

I would have liked to have seen more members physically attend the RMIT University venue as this helps foster collegiality through direct interaction. I guess we are still coming to grips with Covid, still the event was designed as an online forum and in this form worked very well for us Australians and those overseas.

The President of the Society of Automotive Historians, Robert Barr, who gave his support

from day one, said of the event, “That was an outstanding symposium; well-executed and diligently administered. The topics covered a wide spectrum, and we all learned a great deal. In my view, this first joint symposium was a significant event on many levels.”

We will need to think hard about the next AHA conference and how it will be run.

Norm Darwin
President

Shannons Design to Driveway Series

Some of our own AHA members feature in the new Shannons ***Design to Driveway*** series documenting the story of car design in Australia. This is a story told by those who shaped and styled some of the most iconic and loved cars ever made on Australian soil. Shrouded in mystery and under high security, the Design Studio was always locked to everyone other than the design teams and the most senior car company executives.

This original series from Shannons celebrates those who have designed our local cars for nearly a century. It is the one piece of our motoring history that has largely remained untold.

For the first time, seven of Australia’s most influential car designers, including Leo Pruneau and Phil Zmood, take motor enthusiasts on an exclusive walk into the archives of Australian car design.

Each of the designers reveal exclusive images, designs and the original clay models from each of the ‘big 4’ Australian car companies. Each episode is hosted by motoring journalist and artist Warren Brown who retraces the careers of each designer, while motor historian David Burrell, from Shannons ***RetroAutos*** and another AHA stalwart, provides viewers with context during each episode.

The series is a wonderful complement to the four volume ***Design to Driveway*** books authored by David Burrell which were featured at our 2019 AHA conference in a presentation by David and designer John Field.

Here's a link to that 2019 AHA conference presentation -



Now on to the TV series.



As David Burrell, who researched and interviewed each of the designers says, "It's a fascinating look into how the designs of some of the most treasured and iconic cars in Australia's rich motoring history have evolved. For years, these designers were sworn to company secrecy and worked behind the high security doors of their design studios. How honoured we are to now be able bring these seven incredibly talented and influential designers together for the first time."



There are cars and designs cancelled and never seen by the public, including a rotary powered Holden called the "Green Lizard", an all-Australian designed Ford Mustang – cancelled on the spot, and how Holden almost had their very own global Corvette type sports coupe, until Detroit pulled the pin.

Plus, there are the men who helped sketch and style clay models of the Chrysler Charger and who created the legend of the Australian Ford Falcon – including the birth of Ford’s race winning GT performance car of 1967.

“It’s incredible to think that more men have walked on the moon, than have held the position of Director of Design at Holden. We have the last three Holden designers to work in that storied role,” said Burrell.

You can watch the series as it is progressively released on [Shannons Club TV here](#) and on [YouTube here](#) or click on the individual photos above for the four episodes screened so far.

MG Wins a Formula 1 Race

Eli Solomon's research in the post-war Grand Prix races in Singapore has led to an interesting hypothesis. If a race was run to FIA Formula 1 regulations, is it a Formula 1 race? If so, an MG TC Special called "Black Draught" driven by Mick Jennings in the 1949 Johore Grand Prix in Singapore is a Formula 1 winner.

Click on the photo to examine the evidence for yourself.



Mick Jennings on his lap of honour in his MG TC Special after winning the 1949 Johore Grand Prix. (Rewind Media website).

Bill Pearson's Motor Racing Films

Bill Pearson has published some terrific motor racing footage shot by himself and his father in the 1960s. In the first instalment Bill explains how he became a film cameraman for Movietone News, following in his father's footsteps, and managed to get amazing access to some memorable days of motorsport.

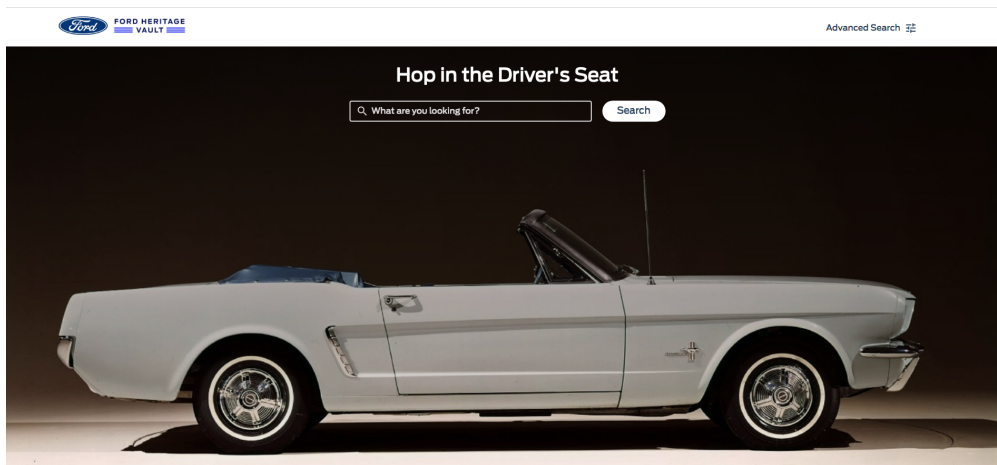
For the first event, at Warwick Farm in December 1964, Bill's father was the cameraman. Those following were shot by the teenage Bill. The film quality is superb.

Click on the photo for Volume 1 of Bill Pearson's Motor Racing Films.



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.



Third European Conference for Automotive History Turin/Torino October/ottobre 2022

Our committee member and President of the Fiat Car Club of Victoria, Roger

Beattie, attended the conference in Turin. Roger's report from the conference will feature in the next newsletter.

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 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



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

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, by mail at P.O. Box 319 Balaclava 3183 or via our website at autohistoriansaustralia.org

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

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