

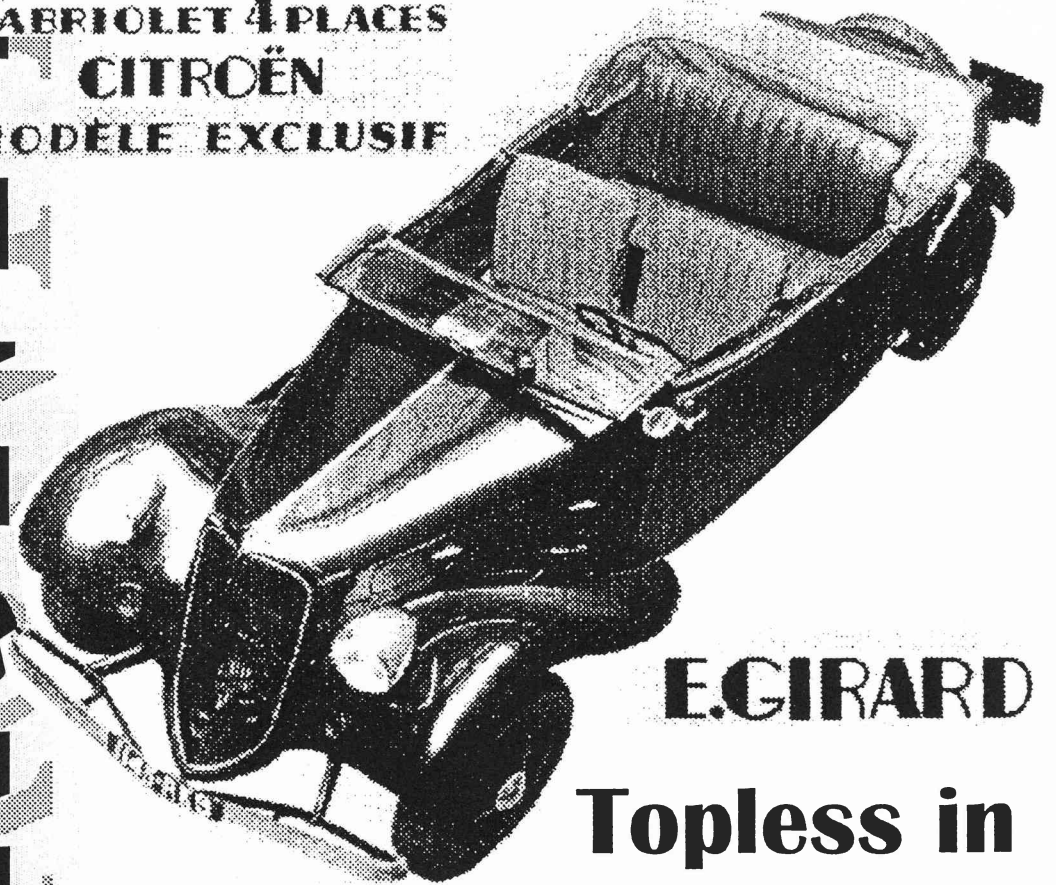
FRONT DRIVE

The Magazine of the Citroën Classic Owners Club of
Australia Inc.

Print Post Approved PP341403/0013



**CABRIOLET 4 PLACES
CITROËN
MODELE EXCLUSIF**



E.GIRARD

**Topless in
a Citroën**

**Light 15, DS & Visa - Something
for Everyone!**

February / March, 1995

Volume 18 Issue 6

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FROM the Desk

Everyone seems to love open-air motoring, even The Editor as he's just found out.

We promised you some reading on going topless in a Citroën, and, boy, have we been as good as our word? This issue is almost chockers with cabrio articles. Why don't you drop us a line and tell us what YOU think of cabrio motoring. Incidentally, the words "cabriolet", "roadster" etc are thrown about quite indiscriminately. I won't go into it now, but maybe we can sort the terminology out in the next issue.

This issue has also provided the opportunity to try out Leigh's new electronic camera, and to see how

the results come out on paper. From my preliminary observations, I suspect that like most new technologies, there will be a learning period over which results will be improved as experience is acquired.

As Prez Leigh indicates elsewhere, this issue marks the end of a club year, and for me, it has been a great confidence boost to find I can again make a contribution to CCOCA through its magazine. It has been fun and a great pleasure to work jointly on this aspect with Leigh, and maybe we can continue to fine tune Front Drive over the next year. Happy reading and happy clubbing.

Bill Graham, Editor.

Jane Birkin, you've won me!
Ed



H

HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS

Nance Clarke 1984
Jack Weaver 1991

CCOCA MEMBERSHIP

Annual Membership \$30
Overseas Postage Add \$9

CCOCA MEETINGS

Every fourth Wednesday of the month, except December, Canterbury Sports Ground Pavilion Room, cnr Chatham and Guilford Roads, Canterbury, Victoria. Melway Ref 46 F 10, or the Anchor & Hope Tavern, Church St, Richmond.

C

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Prez Sez



h, the embarrassment of it all. After years of membership of CCOCA as a one-eyed, twin cylinder, small car devotee I have now to eat humble pie. To beat my breast and rend my veil [to take a biblical quote from the Old Testament] and beg forgiveness from the bulk of CCOCA members.

"What has he done", I hear you ask "to feel such abject distress?"

"I am a traitor to my kind, I have been seduced from the true path to salvation."

"Heaven protect us, he has bought a Renault!"

No, I can assure you all that my lapse from the true

air-cooled way of life has not been that disastrous. But after years of being unimpressed with Tractions; after years [to quote an article in this edition of 'Front Drive'] of hearing about, although not comprehending 'pin wheels and crown-ans'; of failing to understand the relevance of 'tension bars' to automotive suspension, I have finally been seduced into the world of the Traction!

Oh the joy, the rapture, the motoring experiences that I have missed! Now, for the first time in my life do I understand

what the rest of Club membership has been keeping a carefully guarded secret for so long.

inside...

I realise that some true believers will assure me that a vehicle from the Slough of Despond cannot compare with a true French-built car, but really, what can compare with the delights of real timber and fine leather?

I can also understand that the original colour — a bright metallic blue — may

your deposit. Rooms will not be held without a booking form being submitted.

This is the last magazine for the Club year and I should like to take this opportunity to publicly thank all of the Committee who have worked very hard in the interests of the membership over the course of the year. Whilst it is easy to

look back and see things that one would have liked to have done, but have not been able to complete, there has certainly been a number of achievements for the year. Whilst I do not have the numbers to confirm it, I am sure that we have had more members attend the meetings at Canterbury this year than in other

The response from CCOCA Members has been pretty bloody discouraging. It is only six weeks until Easter - so pull your respective fingers out and book. I must also point out that whilst you can ring me to enquire about the availability of rooms, you must submit a booking form, with your deposit. Rooms will not be held without a booking form being submitted

not be in total keeping with the solid respectability of the model [sorry David Hancox] but it is a fantastic, eye-catching shade. [The suggestion from a northern member that blue lurex seat covers will be forthcoming at Easter is neither being taken seriously nor will they be well-received. Thank you Wendy!]

Enough of me.

Bookings are proceeding at a slow, but steady rate for Cit-In '95. But the response from CCOCA Members has been pretty bloody discouraging. It is only six weeks until Easter - so pull your respective fingers out and book. I must also point out that whilst you can ring me to enquire about the availability of rooms, you must submit a booking form, with

recent years.

After a shaky start to the magazine year with Bill Graham and I struggling to cope with modern technology, I believe we once again have a magazine of which all members can be justly proud. I must also put in a request to all members for your contributions to the magazine. 'Front Drive' is not just the vehicle for the Club to keep in touch with you, the members. It is the vehicle by which you can keep other members informed of your Citroën doings. So, put pen to paper, take a photo of the next time you take your car out for the day and send it to Club for publication.

Leigh F Miles
President

FROM THE DESK

PREZ SEZ

COMING EVENTS

COVER FEATURE — THE ROADSTER STORY — Light 15 Cabriolet

COVER FEATURE — OPEN SECRET — Visa Cabriolet

COVER FEATURE — MEMBER'S CAR — DS Cabriolet

HUNG, DRAWN & QUARTERED— An Occasional Rambling

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Coming Events

5 MARCH, 1995

PLEASE NOTE THIS IMPORTANT CHANGE OF DATE

The Day Run to David Malkin Restorations, planned for 26th February is now to be held on 5 March.

Planned schedule for the day:

Meet at the Shell Service Station on the city side of the Westgate Bridge for a drive in convoy to Geelong, at 9.00am. [Others may choose to go direct to David Malkin's - see details below.]

Arrive at David Malkin Restorations at 10.30am, or so, for a tour of the workshop and demonstrations of restoration techniques, panel wheeling, etc.

1.00-2.00pm [Depending on the length of the tour and interest] we will depart for a lunch/afternoon tea at Jack and Kari Hawke's. Jack and Kari will supply the BBQ facilities and coffee. You should supply everything else.

Mid/late afternoon, depart Jack's for a safe, sober drive home.

Location: David Malkin Restorations is located at 10 Maxwell Ave, Belmont [Geelong], behind Sizzlers Restaurant. Melway Ref 228, A10.

22 MARCH, 1995

Annual General Meeting

Canterbury Rooms

This is your opportunity to have your say in how CCOCA continues into the future.

IT'S YOUR CLUB, SO SUPPORT YOUR EVENTS!

All executive positions will be open for nomination and election. Nomination forms are included with this magazine. Nominations, completed, signed by the nominator, seconder and the nominated member may be sent to the Secretary, PO Box 52, Balwyn 3103 prior to the AGM. Nominations will also be accepted on the night.

If you are unable to attend the AGM, you can still vote by completing the Proxy Form, also with this magazine and returning it, prior to the AGM to the Secretary.

BE THERE, SUBMIT A PROXY, HAVE A SAY!

EASTER 1995

CIT-IN RALLY

Bookings for the Easter Rally have now opened to all members of Citroën Clubs throughout the country. So, be sure to get your booking form in to Cit-In Bookings, 16 Harrow St, Blackburn South, 3130. [Bookings sent to the CCOCA PO Box cannot be guaranteed immediate processing.]

23 APRIL, 1995

All French Day. Full details of this great day will be published shortly, but mark it in your diary now.

26 APRIL, 1995

Canterbury Rooms

Club Meeting, Canterbury - Guest Speaker

NAME YOUR POISON

It has become almost routine for Traction guru, Jack Weaver to speak on some aspect of TA maintenance and improvement at our monthly meetings. He has covered engine, gearbox and brakes. Please advise through The Editor what topic you would like him to address later this year in the mechanical/bodywork areas. This is your big chance!

Past Events - Metallic Pornography

A good turn-up of members attended the, usually very quiet, January Meeting of CCOCA, including five members arriving in Tractions.

Films were the order of the night according to the events calendar but, according to Dylan Webb the happenings of the night could best be described as "metallic pornography".

A sixty minute video of some of the most spectacular crashes from all forms of motor sport followed by incredible footage of the 1994 Paris — Dakar Rally [which Citroën naturally won] fitted his description well.

If you were there you would know what we mean — if you weren't, where were you?

See you all either at the Westgate Bridge, or in Geelong, on March 5th.

John Couche
Activities Officer



**TO BE CERTAIN OF YOUR BOOKING FOR CIT-IN '95, SEND
YOUR ENCLOSED BOOKING FORM PROMPTLY TO
CIT-IN BOOKINGS, 16 HARROW ST, BLACKBURN SOUTH,
3130**

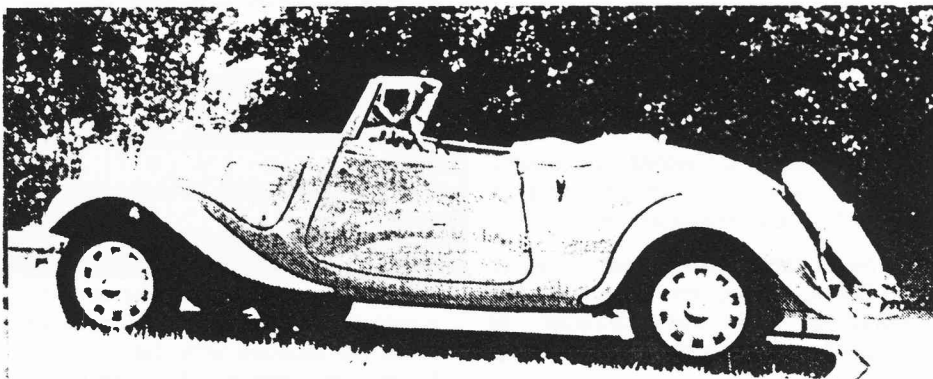
**REMEMBER, YOU MUST SUBMIT A BOOKING FORM
TO CONFIRM YOUR BOOKING**

The Roadster Story

The dream was to own a DS Decapotable but a close encounter with a Traction changed all that. Tony Stokoe reveals all in this fascinating tale. Reprinted from 'Citroënian' Magazine of the Citroën Car Club of Great Britain, November 1993, February and March 1994.

David Boyd has a lot to answer for really. Until I sighted his Traction Roadster I was secure in the knowledge that my dream of a convertible was impractical and beyond reach.

Not that my dream was for a Traction convertible. As a dyed-in-the-wool Citroënist my dream was to own an early DS Decapotable. But these are rare and expensive machines, and the fashionable image of the DS made them astronomically expensive in the mid-eighties, which was when I was searching for one. In addition, I already owned a DS saloon, which I would not dream of parting with, so buying a Convertible example of the same model seemed extravagant.



The splendid profile of the Roadster is clearly evident
Photo: Malcolm Bobbit

Then I saw David's immaculate Roadster, with the bonnet up, looking like an exotic bird about to take flight. We had never seen anything like it. The Traction is a sensational looking car, but in convertible form becomes astonishingly pretty.

Then I saw David's immaculate Roadster at the Citroën Car Club Rally in 1988. My partner, Brian, took some pictures of it, with the bonnet up, looking like an exotic bird about to take flight. We had never seen anything like it. The Traction is a sensational looking car, but in convertible form becomes astonishingly pretty.

I am one of those unfortunate (or is it fortunate?) Citroën enthusiasts who knows very little of mechanics. No doubt many Tractionists regard my loss as a form of disability. If I open a car bonnet it is through desperation rather than interest. But looking under the bon-

net of a Traction is almost enjoyable. I discovered that the various parts were easily identifiable and I could just about understand what they did and why they were there. Rather different from a DS -- to the novice anyway.

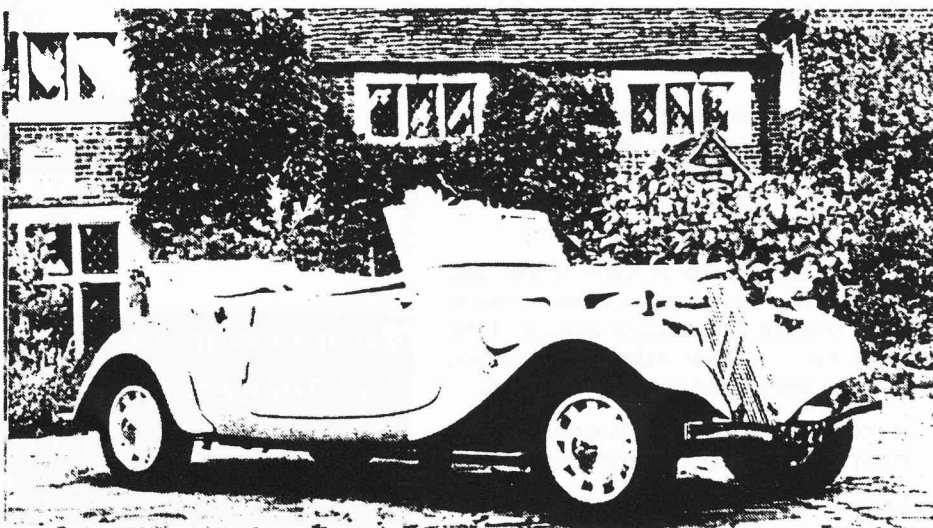
If only David Boyd was loyal to the TOC alone, and did not go to CCC meets I might now be a little better off! Having seen the white Roadster I found myself reading the ads for Tractions in the various magazines. No roadsters to be seen. I soon discovered that my latest dream was just as rare, if not rarer, and as ex-

pensive as the first. But then I saw a listing in the '11 CV' column of the 'Citroën' magazine of Citroën Concours of America, from San Diego. It read:

1938 11CV Convertible right hand drive, no rust, straight body except for minor crease in fender. Runs but needs restoration. Interior old but good. Rumble seat steps missing, also some other minor trim missing. \$19,000 Rick.

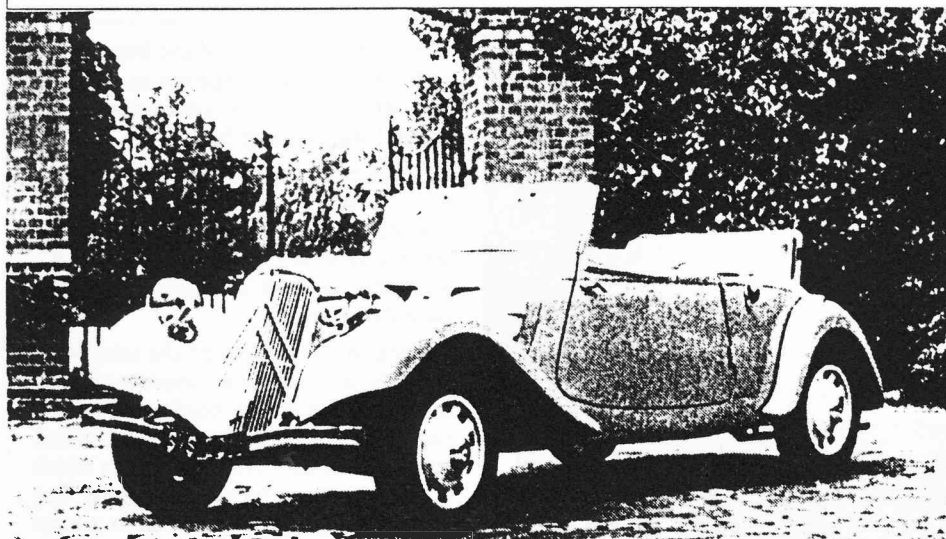
At the time the pound would still buy

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 5)



The majesty of the Traction Avant Roadster: its classic style is further enhanced by the ports on the bonnet and the Pilote wheels
Photo: Malcolm Bobbit

The Roadster Story



On a fine day you could drive forever
Photo: Malcolm Bobbit

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)

nearer two dollars than one, so this car sounded like a bargain. I had imported an SM from San Diego a year or two before and knew the process involved, to be reasonably straightforward and inexpensive. So why not a roadster?



Of course the difference was I knew the SM well; Brian and I had seen it whilst on holiday in California, and returned and used the car to tour the 'States for three weeks, before driving it to Long Beach ready to be shipped back. In that time we had become well acquainted with the Citroën specialist in San Diego, Rudy Heilig at CCA, who overhauled the car for us, and published the 'Citroën' magazine.

So I called Rudy up. Yes he knew the car advertised, and the description was accurate to the best of his knowledge. So I swallowed hard and rang 'Rick'.

It turned out the Car had lived its days in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and Rick had bought it and shipped it over a year earlier. So why sell it now? It seems he had paid rather more than the current asking price on the understanding that the car was in good mechanical order. It was not. The engine, drive shafts and gearbox were shot, and would need rebuilding, and access to parts and expertise in the 'States for a Traction is difficult and costly. So he was cutting his losses, as he did not want to take on the project. I should have heard the alarm bells. Instead I rang Rudy back and asked him and his brother Paul to inspect the car for me and report back.

In due course I got some photographs of the car, and Rudy and I spoke at length on the 'phone about it. It certainly appeared to be all there, but as Rudy pointed out, the very thick paint could hide structural defects. As described, the car interior and engine bay looked tired but intact, and the general effect was of a genuine and original car. Had there been another roadster, or even Traction saloon to compare it with I might have heard a different story. I had already reached the stage of hearing and seeing what I wanted to anyway, so I found myself negotiating with Rick and agreeing a sum of \$16,000. The deal was done by fax, and the transport arranged. My bank manager -- a classic car enthusiast who sympathises with my condition -- sorted out the transfer, and I prepared myself.

I read everything I could find on Roadsters. I found out about Peacock Engineering, Classic Restorations, and of course the TOC. I joined up and went along to Whitchurch, just five miles from my home, hoping to see lots of Maigret cars. The car park of the White Hart was full of Citroëns -- a Dyane, two or three BXs, a C 15, and ONE Traction! This was early on in 1990. I went inside and was given a warm welcome by Mike Wheals and Co., and sat listening to stories about pin wheels and crownians, tension bars and French horns. For someone who gets confused between crankshafts and camshafts, this was gobbledegook!

I gradually gained enough confidence to admit to owning a Traction and when I mentioned it was a right hand drive roadster currently crossing the Atlantic

there was much excitement! I brought out my much thumbed photographs as sent by Rudy, and the talk turned to monocoques and structural integrity. Just what was I letting myself in for?

At last the day arrived, late March, after a three month wait. I hired a 'beaver tail' pick-up truck, and drove to Felixstowe. The paperwork took about an hour. I paid the very reasonable import tax, and made my way to the car warehouse.

In the corner of a ramshackle shed, next to E-types and MGAs, Kharman Ghias and Cadillacs, there she was -- never mind structural integrity she was beautiful! Bright yellow with black wings and hood, with no sign of rust or neglect, apart from the dent in the rear 'fender' (American for wing). The Noddy car colour scheme was a bit suspect, but she certainly looked the part!

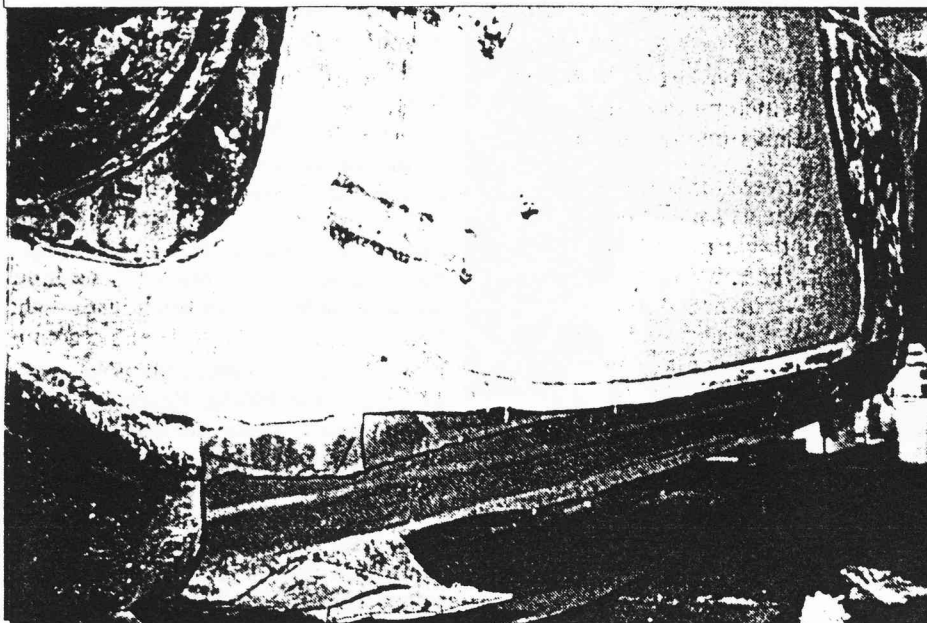
I opened the bonnet. Everything seemed to be there, and all joined up, complete with battery. I climbed inside. It was tiny and dark in there. The windows were about the size of the rear view mirror on modern cars. How on earth did you see where you were going? I turned the key and the starter motor turned. I was terrified. However, I needn't have worried, as the battery was flat in seconds, and the engine wouldn't fire. Rather than try jump starting, I decided to winch the car onto the truck, and started looking for a tow ring attachment of some kind. The bumpers and their supports were alarmingly mobile, so I eventually settled for a sort of angled beam running, from the engine to the wheel at the front of the car.

**Apart from the
cuckold alternator, the
carburettor, fuel line,
regulator box and coil
arrangement all
looked foreign.**

I later discovered this was the drive shaft! The frame supporting the engine -- the front cradle as I now know it to be -- appeared very deformed and battered; more alarm bells started to ring. However, the car was successfully loaded

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The Roadster Story



Cut away sill, revealing the butchered structural beam

Photo: Tony Stokoe

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and I drove home carefully with my new prize. We managed to push her into the barn at the back of the house she was certainly no lightweight, the steering was unbelievably heavy, and a couple of fields were needed to complete a turn. But I was not to be daunted. We put the battery on charge and retired. The next day she still refused to start and the battery was soon defeated. We checked for a spark, which was no problem, and for petrol, which was in evidence. After some thought I put some fresh petrol in the tank, aware that the car had been in transit or standing for several months, and that petrol does 'go off' after a time. It worked and amid plumes of blue smoke she fired into life. We drove up and down the drive and around the yard, which allowed me to test the gears and brakes. The engine and gearbox worked, albeit with a fair amount of shake, rattle and moan, but the brakes were almost non-existent. The electrics were hilarious. An alternator had been installed, together with some VW Beetle front indicator lights, and sealed beam headlamps. The back of the car still had the single original red lamp as part of the number plate. The dashboard had been sprinkled with a variety of switches and dials, including a cigar lighter. All of this was (loosely) connected to a set of fuses in the driver's footwell and none of it worked.

I spent a day just looking at the car, discovering more eccentricities as I went

along. Apart from the central binnacle the dashboard bore little resemblance to any shown in the various Traction books I had acquired. The engine bay was a similar story. Apart from the cuckold alternator, the carburettor, fuel line, regulator box and coil arrangement all looked foreign. The engine and radiator if only because of their tired appearance, looked original. It was obvious the Argentinians had been resourceful and innovative in keeping the car on the road, and many parts bore the stamp 'Industria Argentina'.

At my next visit to the TOC at Whitchurch I soon blurted out that the new baby had arrived, and after lunch a delegation followed me home to inspect the delivery. Dave Stockwell, Steve Reed and Jamie Maisey peered suspiciously 'under the hood', and were intrigued by what they saw. Steve Reed thought the shape of the outer sills slightly strange, which was to prove only too true - more alarm bells.

At the time Brian and I lived near Whitchurch in Hampshire, convenient not only for Southern TOC meetings, but for Mike Wheals, the Traction and H Van specialist. So Mike, and his wife-to-be Jan, came over to inspect the beast and we decided to let him loose on her in the hope that some remedial work on the brakes and electrics would get her mobile, with an MoT and in a position to be registered in the UK. Several weeks later even Mike's optimism was waning. He had uncovered all kinds

of horrors in and around the front cradle and silent blocks. Argentinian roads -- and drivers -- were obviously pretty rough I was learning fast.

So what to do next? I had no idea where to start, but it was obvious that the car needed some expert attention, and somebody who knew their roadsters for guidance. So back to where I started. I rang David Boyd.

Talking to David Boyd on the telephone, he advised me to do a complete ground-up restoration on the Roadster. Buying a car which is SO rare, one cannot afford to take short cuts in its restoration which may compromise its value in future. The difficulty is getting it right. Even a mass market car like the Traction has some gaps in its history, and particularly in the documentation relating to pre-war roadsters in Paris-built and right hand drive form. Getting the details right could make or break the perceived authenticity and originality of such a restoration.

I decided to take it in easy stages (which would make it more affordable too!). I hired the 'beavertail' truck again and took the precious cargo to the French Car Company in Bournemouth. Nick Fleming at FCC has worked on my CX Prestige and DS in the past and I know him to be reliable and good at his work. Although not a Traction expert, he is a true Citroënist and in that regard a perfectionist! Nick and I did a deal: his colleague, Martin Wallington, who had experience in full restorations would commence stripping down the car for rebuild, based on a monthly fee from me. We anticipated the work would take six or nine months, depending upon what Martin uncovered. Once the car had been prepared for new paint and the running gear renovated, she would be shipped to Alan Green at Greenspeed Autopainters for finishing. Greenspeed had repainted my SM a year earlier and their work is outstanding. It all seemed SO simple at the time!

Then the 'phone calls started. In retrospect we should have installed a direct line between FCC and me. Martin removed the engine and running gear and on close inspection not only was the front cradle badly deformed but the front horns, which form the engine bay, were corroded and damaged. Bloody Argentinian roads! Martin cut into the front horns and noticed that the internal structural member, which starts inside

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The Roadster Story

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each horn and runs down the side of the car as a kind of inner sill, appeared to be missing. He removed one of the outer sills, and sure enough, the inner member was absent. The floor of the car had been replaced at some stage, and to facilitate the new floor pan the fitters had cut out the two main front to back structural beams! It got worse.

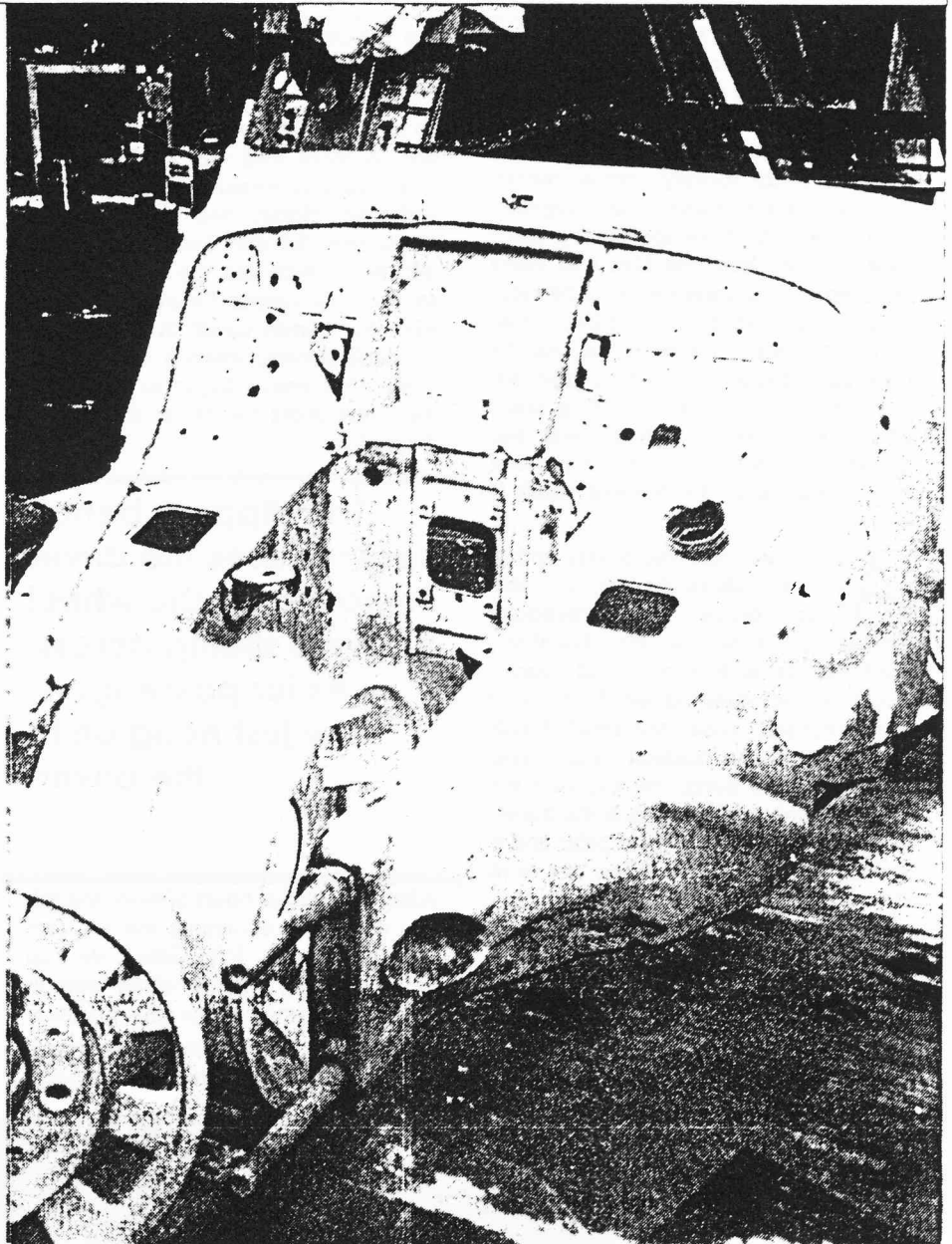
On stripping the back of the car, tons of filler were revealed. The car had been involved in a rear end shunt which had all but destroyed the last 12" of the body. This had been artfully refabricated in Isopon, which hid a crumbled concertina of metal when removed. The doors weren't much better, they contained similar proportions of filler and were actually different in length. The car had obviously been in two halves when the new floor was fitted and, when rejoined, one door opening was narrower than the other. So the resourceful Argies had simply altered one of the doors, making one side of the car shorter! Driving in a straight line must have been interesting.

So now we knew what we were dealing with. How should Martin go about rebuilding?

A trip to Peacock Engineering was in order. There I found an oasis of Roadster body parts, being built with hand-crafted expertise. Mick Peacock listened to our tale of woe with a knowing look. Many a layer of paint had hidden similar stories for him. As he told us, the roadsters were never built with precision, and lead was often used in the way my Argentinian friends used filler to disguise inconsistencies in the bodywork.

Unlike the Traction saloon cars, the roadsters were very much hand built, in limited numbers. So my roadster was about to be hand built, all over again. Peacock Engineering supplied me with new door frames and skins, a new floor, front horns and sections inner sills and outer sills together with a wealth of advice. It all sounds like a lot of money, but these beautifully shaped pieces of metal cost no more than equivalent parts for a modern Eurobox. I also decided on an exchange front cradle and engine, bought through Peacock. The engine in the car was very tired and it seemed sensible to either overhaul it or exchange it; with everything else to do exchange seemed like a better idea.

The car was now completely stripped down to a shell with the front horns and



*Stripped front horns, showing damage
Photo: Tony Stokoe*

sills cut away and looked no more than a lump of scrap metal. Increasingly my weekends were taken up with trips to the French Car Company in Bournemouth, and I gradually began to run out of friends who were enthusiastic about a trip to the south coast -- the word soon spread that this really meant a trip to view a lump of junk in Parkstone and talk for hours about 'what to do next'. My evenings were taken up with turning the pages of 'Le Grand Livre de la Traction Avant', 'Les Fabuleuses Tractions' and 'Les Prestigieuses Citroën', checking photos and illustrations for the original details. I went to Retromobile in Paris and bought light fittings and switches,

fuse blocks and door handles, all ready for the restoration.

Gradually the disassembled lump of metal began to reform. At one point the car was actually in two parts -- back and front -- but as the new floor, side members and sills began to be tacked in place, so she became whole again. Time went on and as the months turned into a year, I began to despair. So many parts of the car had been refabricated by the Argentinians that I began to wonder as to its originality altogether. I went to see the guru of the Traction in the UK, John Gillard of Classic Restorations, and con-

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The Roadster Story

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sulted him about replacement wings. On investigation, the wings of the car, both front and back, were hand made replacements, another Argie special and I wanted contemporary replacements. John was able to supply these, together with many other 'period parts', and I took comfort from the idea that many replacement parts were going to be more 'original' than those that had been fitted to the car when I acquired it. As the restoration began to progress, John became more invaluable, providing hours of advice and expert help. He was, and is, very enthusiastic about the car and has ensured that the finished result is correct.

Another man who is very enthusiastic about the car, and able to prove its authenticity through his records is 'Mr. Traction', Fred Annells, with whom I had many a long telephone conversation. Fred is very knowledgeable about the small details applicable to the roadster, and makes many of these parts. He supplied me with the rubber trim in which the frameless windows sit in the front pillar and is making up a pair of the rollers that sit in the door over which the windows run.

By early '92 the car was a rolling shell, ready to go to Greenspeed for preparation and paint. The shell was solid and correct, with a floor, doors and front horns exactly as Citroën designed them. I hired the 'beavertail' truck once more,

and the car made another journey coast to coast, from Bournemouth to Clacton-on-Sea.

So began the mammoth task of preparation. A metal shell with no fittings and only a coat of primer is very deceptive. Although Martin had constructed a sound base, the work involved in getting this rough block into the smooth shape we see now cannot be overestimated. Alan and Martin Green at Greenspeed are perfectionists, which is why I go to them, but even I began to wonder if they were going too far as the months dragged on.

The slippery bench seat requires the driver to hold onto the wheel to avoid sliding across.

As for passengers, they just hang on to the driver!

After hundreds of hours of work and gallons of primer, undercoat and top coat had been applied, John Gillard went up to Clacton and put the wiring loom in place. He seemed to like what he saw...

I organised a 'Tour of Northumberland' for the Traction Owners' Club in August

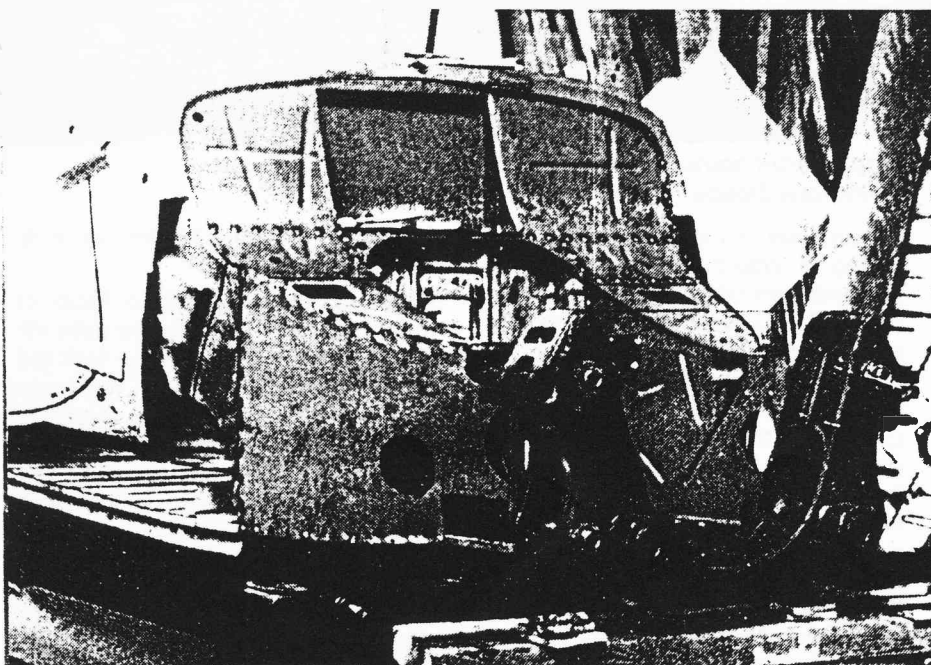
'92 thinking I would lead the convoy in my own Traction. It was not to be. We had a good tour and the event was a success, but Brian and I went in the DS. By then the roadster was painted, trimmed and had her engine fitted, but little else. The 'beavertail' was pressed into service to take her back to Bournemouth in July of '92 and Martin at FCC worked valiantly to get her together for August, but it was an impossible task.

Before the return to Bournemouth the roadster had been to Reading for a three week stay, and Andover for a two week break. In Reading she had door panels, seats and interior trim fitted. The car had previously been fitted with black vinyl to both the seats and panels, which was obviously another Argie special. I decided on one of my few non-original indulgences and had the seats and panels covered in cream Connolly hide. In Andover Jeff Foss of the 'Family Repair Service' (so this is where broken families are mended?) fitted a cream hood to the original frame, and made a matching tonneau cover.

One of my most interesting discoveries was Chris Glover of Brasscraft, near Farnham, who makes vintage and custom windscreens in solid brass for chroming. He made the beautiful letter box sized rear window, exactly as the original would have been. Again our South American friends had fitted a much larger plastic panel to the hood. Whilst this is much more practical it looked awful. To compensate for the lack of rearward visibility I had Jeff Foss make the rear panel of the hood detachable, so that it can be hinged open for a better view.

She was beginning to look like a real car. Greenspeed had finished the bodywork in a gleaming coat of pale blue and I loved it. The choice of colour had been very difficult and I eventually chose a light colour suggested by friend Graham Lane. On one of my many trips to Clacton he and I had flicked through hundreds of colour chips and finally an impulse decision for this colour proved the right one.

The trip from the trimmers in Andover back to my own garage was the last one the car made on the back of the 'beavertail'. She was now registered and taxed following an inspection at the local DVLO, MoT'd courtesy of Nick at



New front horns tacked into place
Photo: Tony Stokoe

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 9)

The Roadster Story

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8)

French Car Co. and in running order thanks to hours of work from Martin both here and in Bournemouth. So began a series of journeys as I DROVE her between various specialists to Classic Restorations in London for tuning and tweaking, to Quickfit Safety Belts in Harrow, for period belts and finally back to Clacton to be 'sorted out' after the various fitters had added everything to Greenspeed's lovely paint.

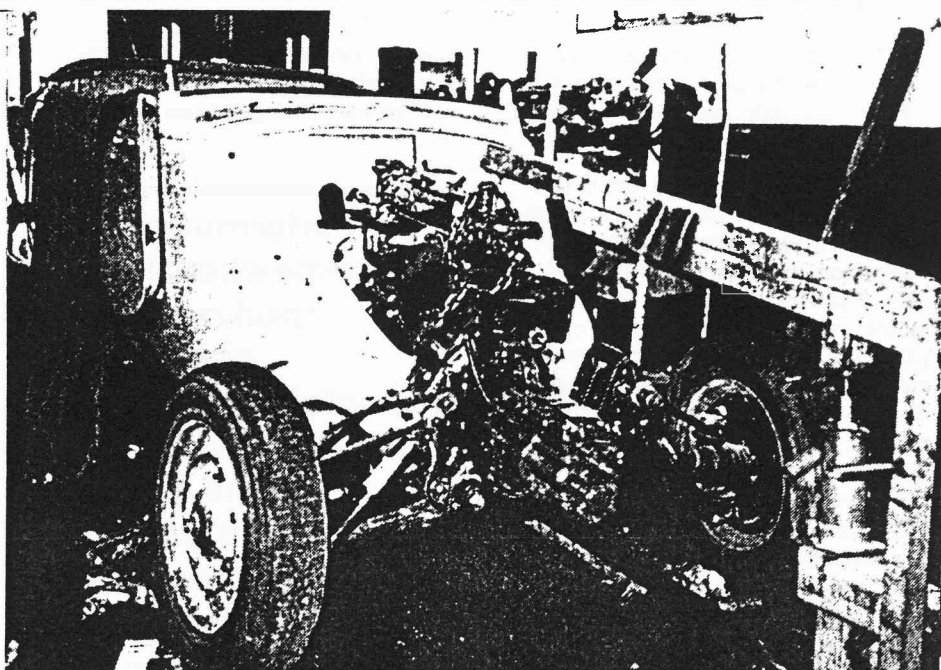
By now I had begun to enjoy driving her and overcame my apprehension. The car is certainly not slow, and I had to be careful to keep the speed down during the running-in period. The handling is superb, brakes and deceleration quite unnecessary on the approach to virtually any corner. Just turn the wheel and round she goes. The slippery bench seat requires the driver to hold onto the wheel to avoid sliding across. As for passengers, they just hang on to the driver!

Did Citroën have parts manufactured in South America, or was this another Argie special?

My drive back to Clacton was to be the first and only 'breakdown'. As I progressed up the A12 the steering became very bumpy and on checking I discovered I was just about to lose a front wheel. The wheel nuts were still tight but the holes around them had strangely enlarged into ovals and the whole wheel was gradually working its way off the nuts! Both the wheel and the nuts were virtually destroyed, so after struggling to remove them I fitted the spare and its nuts without further incident. Very strange! On showing John Gillard the deformed wheel and nuts we decided that the nuts, which were modified 2CV ones, were to blame, in that they do not seat properly on Pilote wheels. So I now have original Traction nuts!

The final 'sorting out' at Clacton should have been straightforward, had it not been for the radiator grille....

The grille had been put back onto the car as soon as the major body repairs were completed. Although it was in



Engine is dropped into renovated shell
Photo: Tony Stokoe

need of re-chroming, I decided to leave this until the body and bonnet had been fitted and finished properly. It was impossible to get everything fitting properly without the grille in place as a guide. So while the roadster was at Clacton for her final finishing the grille was removed and sent off for refinishing. The slats had been very mangled and it became obvious that they were beyond repair. Replacement, bearing in mind that the grille is a pressing, was just not practical. So John Gillard found a complete replacement which was in beautiful condition. It didn't fit; the space left by the 'original' grille was completely different and I borrowed two other grilles from my friend Martin Nicholson and the result was the same. No way would they fit.

On closer examination of the 'original' I found the tell-tale stamp again - 'Industria Argentina'! Did Citroën have parts manufactured in South America, or was this another Argie special? It seems hard to believe someone would fabricate the grille as a one-off pressing, so I assume that a local manufacturer made pattern parts for Tractions. I'd love to know more.

So this final hiccup in the restoration caused quite a problem. Should I rebuild the grille (at ridiculous cost and doubtful possibility of success), rebuild the front of the car to cater for another grille, or alter another grille to fit the space? After a lot of head scratching option two was

chosen and the masters of the bodywork at Greenspeed performed their magic around the 'new' grille. So the car can now be said to be the 'correct' shape.

At long last, in May this year, I drove her home. The restoration had taken over two years, cost more than I care to think about and transformed a tatty yellow and black old car into a stunning 1939 roadster. Just in time for the Traction Owners' Club annual rally in Yorkshire -- and that's another story!

Before closing, let me leave you with a list of the specialists whose hard work and expertise made the car what she is now. They all come highly recommended:

Mechanics/Body Repairs:

French Car Company, rear of 270 Ashley Road, Parkstone, Poole, Dorset Tel: (0202) 716019 -- thanks to Martin Wallington.

Coachwork:

Greenspeed, Wenlock Road, Weeley Heath, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex. Tel: (0265) 0304284 -- quite the best work you will find anywhere.

The Traction Specialists:

Classic Restorations, Arch 124 Cornwall Road, London SE1 8QT. Tel: (071) 928 6613 -- thanks to John Gillard for being a perfectionist.

Upholstery/Trimming:

Family Repair Service, Beales Close, Andover, Hants SP10 1HT. Tel: (0264) 323144.

Open Secret — The Visa Cabriolet

The Visa Convertible is not only the cheapest open car, it is also the only one with four doors. We explain why it could be a winner.

It has long been a mystery why Britain - one of the wettest nations in the Western world - should enjoy such a fascination for eccentric, inconvenient and exposed forms of transport - motorcycles and open sports cars in particular. Some suggest that it is a modern expression of defiance against the ancient weather gods, others that it's simply a desperate bid to make the most of what limited sunshine actually comes our way. Yet, whatever the underlying motivation, it is an acknowledged fact that Britons buy open cars in bigger numbers than almost any other nationality, and that the much talked about 'ragtop revival' has taken a far firmer grip here than elsewhere.

It was no surprise that the convertible version of Citroen's Visa hatchback should soon find its way to these shores:

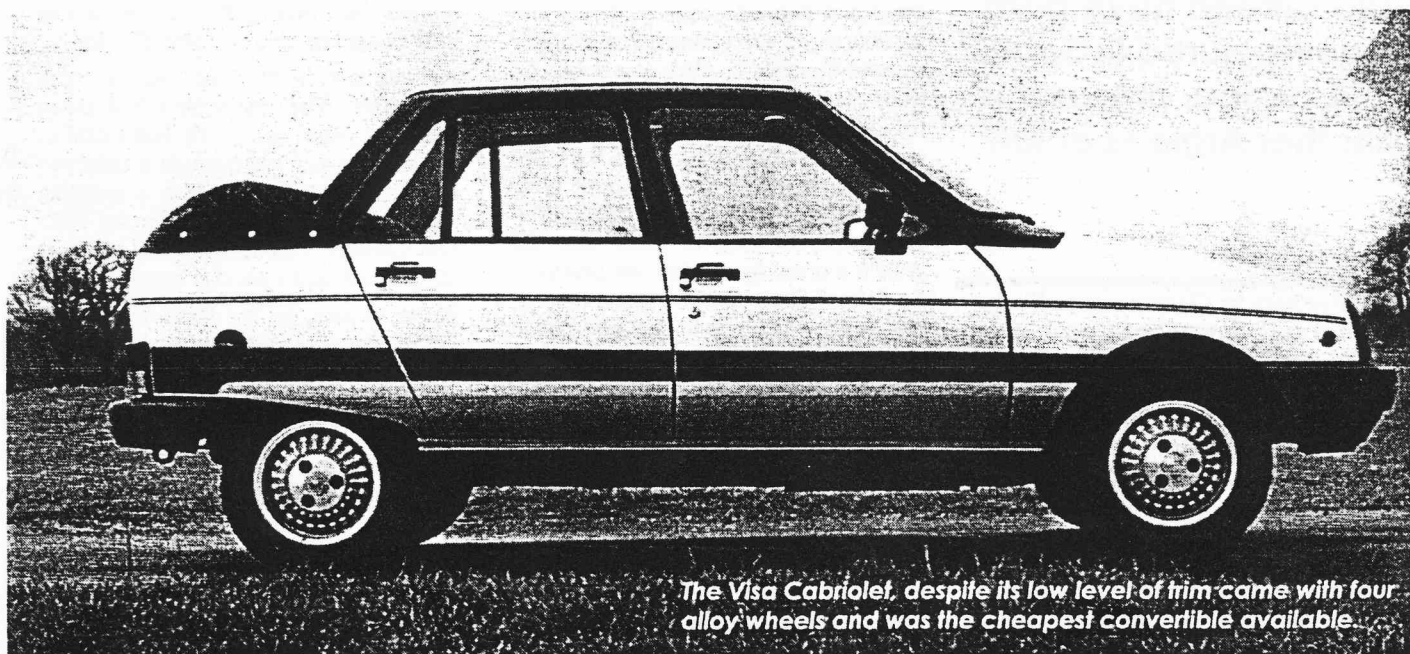
enjoy semi-convertible motoring - achievable in seconds at traffic lights, without even having to leave the driver's seat.

Performance falls somewhat short of sporting but it is nonetheless acceptably responsive and flexible. Our car, without the optional five-speed gearbox, pleasantly lively about town; the smooth and free-revving engine proves quite fun to use

of the Dyane and the 2CV's roll-back roof system, essentially like a generously broad and long sun-roof that extends backwards to take in the rear window.

In this way the doors, side window frames of the standard hatchback are retained and the provision of a strong windscreen header rail together with a bracing bar between the centre door pillars ensure a rigid structure and little necessity for ugly or space-consuming reinforcing beams.

But what makes the Visa truly unique among convertibles, both ancient and modern, is the fact that it has four passenger doors. This makes entry into the rear seat infinitely easier than the customary clamber over required on a two-door convertible - unless, of course, you are athletic enough to jump right into the car in true vintage fashion. And once in the rear it is immediately plain that there is a good deal more legroom and shoulder width than in rival convertibles such as the Golf and Escort:



The Visa Cabriolet, despite its low level of trim came with four alloy wheels and was the cheapest convertible available.

nor was it a surprise that, in the truest traditions of the British climate, the day on which the Citroen's sun-worshipper special was delivered to us should have been the wettest and windiest of a particularly inclement winter.

However, the unending downpour provided a very suitable first test for the waterproofness of the Visa's hood seals and by the next morning bright glimpses of sunlight had not only melted most of the black frost but had persuaded us to flip back the first section of the roof to

And as soon as the bright patch in the sky looked enough to stay, a quick halt in a lay-by was sufficient to roll the roof right back to its fully open position for the rest of the journey to be completed in enjoyably fresh, but frosty fashion.

Yet in some ways the 'convertible' label is something of a misnomer for the Visa. In reality, it is more like the classic tourer of yore, for the hood does not fold completely out of the way to provide genuine windscreen-only open air motoring. Instead, there's a refinement

the reason for this is easy to see: most of the two-doors have complex and bulky concertina-type hood frames which take up a lot of width when folded, whereas the Visa's simple hood takes up very little space either up or down. Nor is any of the precious boot space stolen.

Mechanically the convertible has sensibly stayed with the refined, flexible and economical 1,124 cc powertrain of the mid-priced 11RE hatchback rather than be tempted by the racy and none-too-

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 11)

Open Secret — The Visa Cabriolet

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10)

restful 80 bhp powerpack of the 1,350 cc GT version. Performance, therefore, falls somewhat short of sporting but it is nonetheless acceptably responsive and flexible. Our car, without the optional five-speed gearbox, and with relatively few miles on the clock, felt pleasantly lively about town; the smooth and free-revving engine proves quite fun to use despite the rather whiney quality of its sound. Maximum speed is in the order of only 85 mph and 0-60 mph acceleration occupies a full 16.5 sec, underlining the fact that the convertible is certainly no sports car.

Another area where the Visa scores strongly is in ride comfort. Quite plainly and simply, there is no other open car this side of the £20,000 Jaguar XJSC that can compete with the Visa for comfort over poor road surfaces, in town or along potholed country tracks. Suspension is soft and accommodating, even with only the driver aboard: the penalty comes, as always with Citroens, when the car has to be handled hurriedly along twisty lanes. Angles of body roll are prodigious, even at modest cornering rates, and though the actual road-holding is good, the driver has to struggle heroically with the heavy steering to keep the car on its course.

As a practical family tourer the Visa is a success - but not a wholly unqualified one. As already described the front section of the hood folds back extremely quickly and conveniently to provide the intermediate 'sunshine roof' position that is so woefully lacking on the rival all-or-nothing convertibles.

But further opening of the roof is slightly trickier. The 'front flap' has to be held vertically for its pivot bar to come out of its sockets inside the roof rails; then begins the skilled process of folding back the roof on itself form a neat, flat bundle on the rear platform. One slip here and the hood can end up in a tangled mess: even with experience we found that individual hood-folding techniques lead to a wide variety in the style, shape and proportions of the bundle.

Once folded the hood does not intrude onto rearward vision as badly as a Golf's: where some die-hard open-air owners may criticise the Visa is for the relatively limited amount of roof structure that actually folds out of the way. For with only the centre section rolling back and

the substantial side frames remaining in position, the effect is not so much that of a true convertible, more that of a car

Slow and sensible, perhaps, but the Visa Cabriolet, as a latter-day Morris Minor Tourer, may be just the car very many families have been looking for for many years

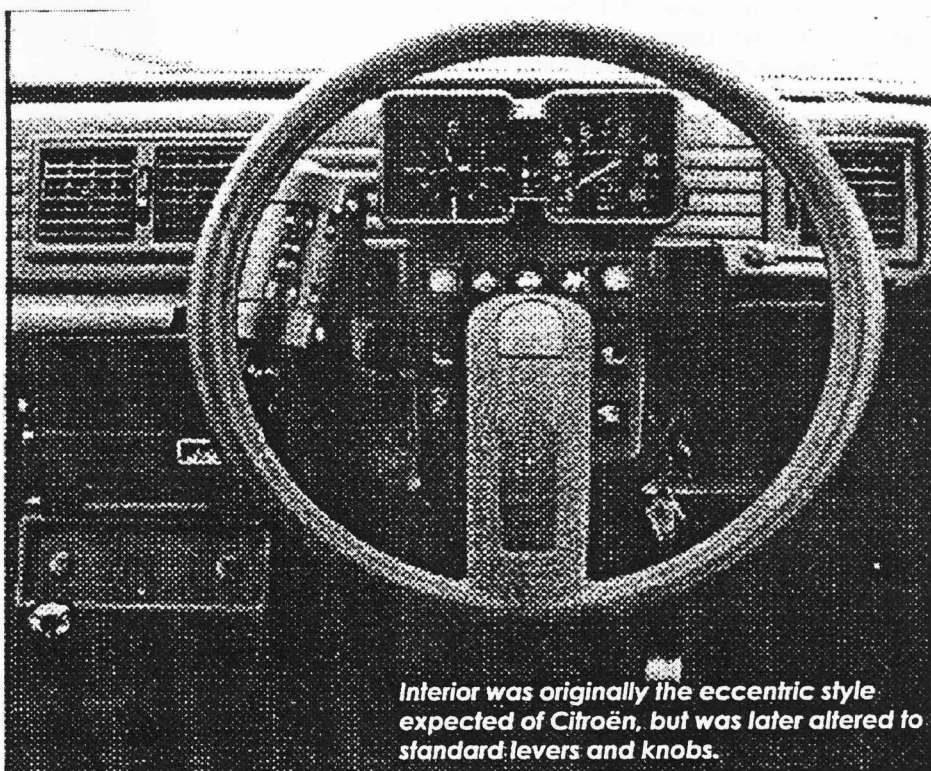
with a very long sun-roof.

Yet this semi-enclosed feeling is also a blessing: not only is accident safety improved, it also makes the car much warmer when driven at night or in a cold climate. Draughts tend to come from the back, but the Visa's narrowness ensures that buffeting is limited, even at 60-plus.

twittering of turbulence around the windscreen header rail at 40 mph, and higher speeds produce a 'Wuthering Heights'-style wind howl for the pillars.

Perhaps the best news about the Visa is its price: at £5,665 it is easily the cheapest proper convertible on the British scene. It has its faults, such as the heavy steering, poor minor controls and the minuscule plastic-lidded letter-box slot that masquerades as a boot, but there's nothing else which can offer four doors, decent space and a good ride.

It could turn out that Citroen have stumbled across a rich vein of demand that no-one even realised was there: as a down-to-earth design at a realistic price the Visa offers the fun of open-air motoring without the extra expense, complication and frustration of the high-performance fuel injection equipment and extravagant tyre sizes that are obligatory on most other convertibles yet which must in many cases be wasted on drivers who want fresh air but not necessarily the extra power.



Interior was originally the eccentric style expected of Citroën, but was later altered to standard levers and knobs.

Replacement of the hood is a job for two people rather than one: not because it is heavy, but because of the accurate lining up needed for the front bar. Suppression of wind noise, while much better than on Fiat's Strada Cabriolet, is not up to Volkswagen's standards: there is some

Slow and sensible, perhaps, but the Visa Cabriolet, as a latter-day Morris Minor Tourer, may be just the car very many families have been looking for for many years.

Reprinted from 'What Car', February, 1984.

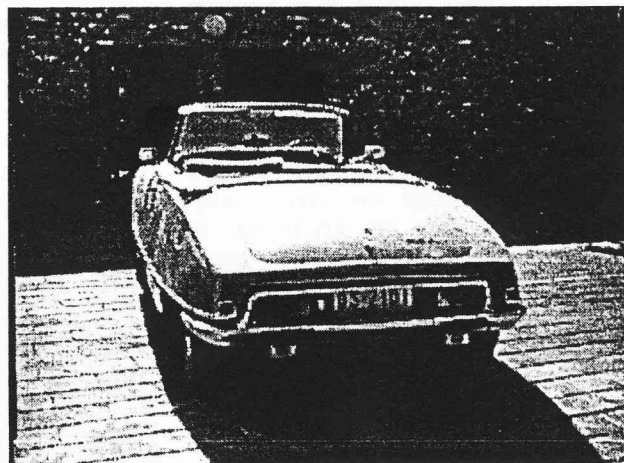
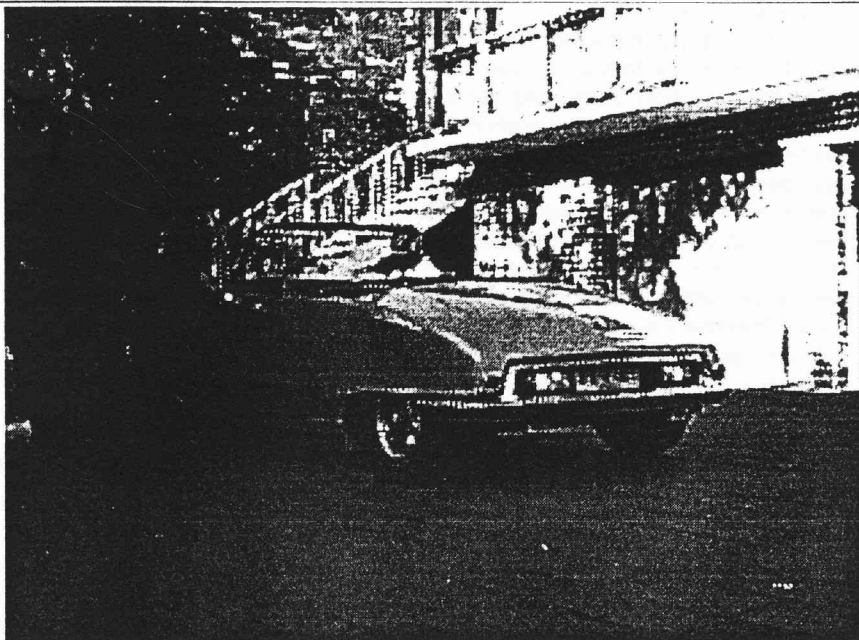
Member's Car - DS Cabriolet

This week, The Editor went "on assignment" to check out and report on the splendid DS 21 cabriolet, in recent times belonging to Julian Newton Brown of Richmond in Melbourne. It certainly was a great joy to catch up with the vehicle again, and to allow myself to be seduced by its graceful lines and most particularly by the comfort and exhilaration it conveyed when I was being driven along in it in "top down" mode. The latter was something I had not previously experienced.

I had first encountered this beautiful car one morning as I was driving to work about five or six years ago. At the time it was being driven by Gaye Dutton (wife of Jeff) and was her particular pride and joy, as she told me at the time. The next time I was involved with the car was when I was researching D Series Citroens in Australia for Olivier de Serres, to be used in his "Grand Livre" on Ds world-wide. By the way, I believe that book has been out for some years now, but I have yet to see it. If someone could slip a copy under my nose, I'd be very grateful. Olivier assured me that my copious photos and notes enabled him to give Aussie Ds a good coverage in the book. When he was finished with it, Olivier passed my material on to Jan de Lange of the ("world") ID/DS Club in Holland - clearly a man for D enthusiasts to talk to.

The broad background to the DS cabriolet as I understand and recall it (please don't hold me to fine detail) is that it came from Vanuatu to Sydney

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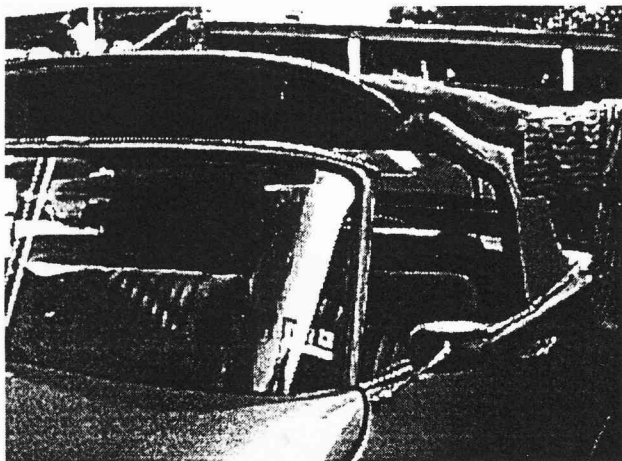


In removing the roof, the first step is to release the back window....

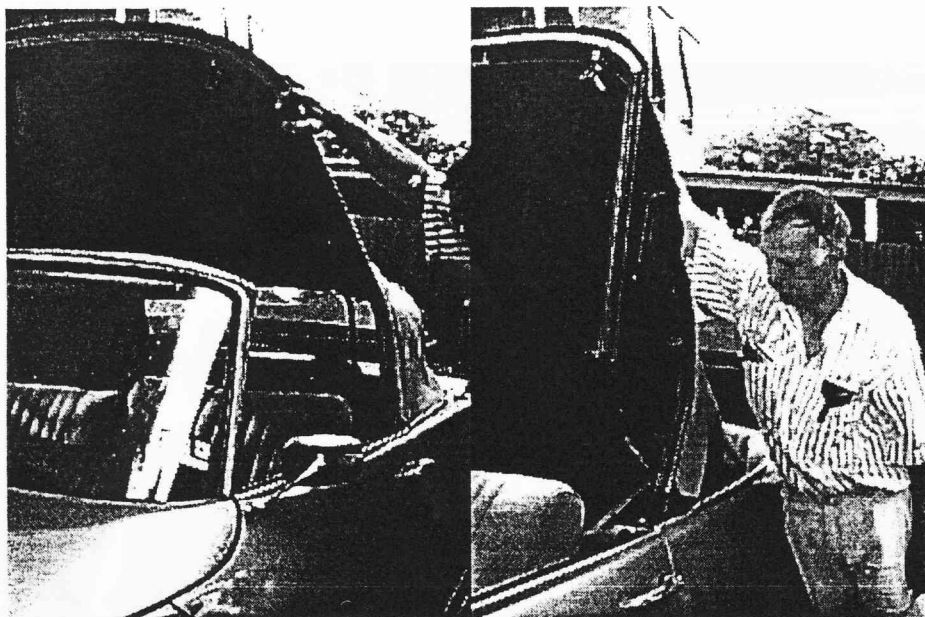


...then release the roof from the top of the windscreen....

Member's Car - DS Cabriolet



..and lift the roof away from the frame....



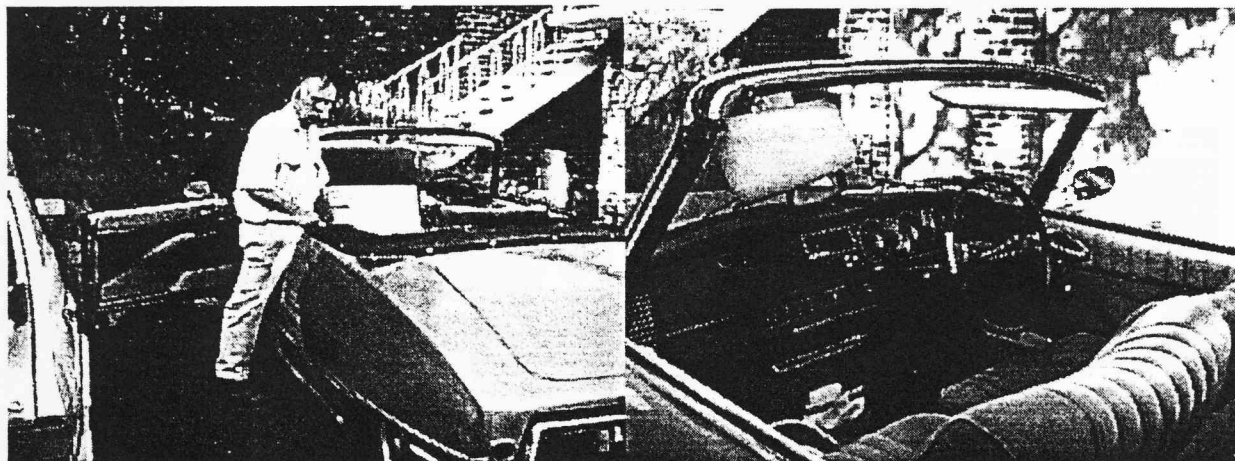
..and keep lifting....

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where Hedley Horwood (in charge of spares at Citco?) had it converted to right hand drive and carried out some restoration on it. For example, its present owner pointed out several fittings (latches etc) around the boot which still had the part number stickers on them, indicating they were new pieces that Hedley had installed. He also told me the car was originally green with green upholstery, and came with a spare set of identical seat covers. In the time I have known it, the body has been a beautiful duck-egg blue (or green) with as I recall, cloth upholstery of a vaguely fawn-light brown (taupe?) colour. The hood has faded somewhat from its presumably original black, and would require some restoration and dressing or even renewal to bring it up to concours condition. Still, let us not split hairs. It is still a splendid and VERY desirable motor car. In fact I could easily swing round to Ted Cross's view that a D cabrio is the MOST desirable Citroën of the lot. Kit the car out with a leggy and mini-skirted chanteuse Jane Birkin as shown standing in one in Olivier de Serres "Citroën: Tous les Modeles" and you'd definitely win me over!

Catching up with Julian was almost as fascinating a task as tracking the car. Julian is still a registered pharmacist, and still, with his family, a very keen snow skier. The latter interest led him to build a ski lodge ("Julian's") at Falls Creek, and often sees him skiing overseas. Recently, he completed the family-run "Rip Inn"

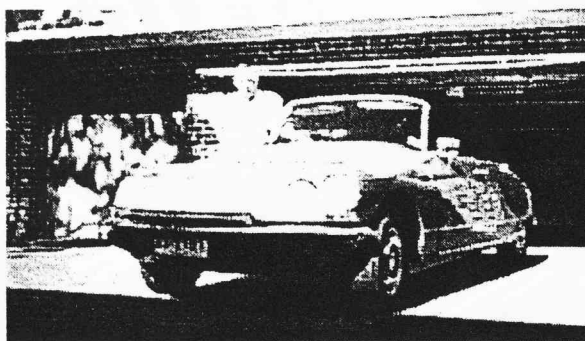
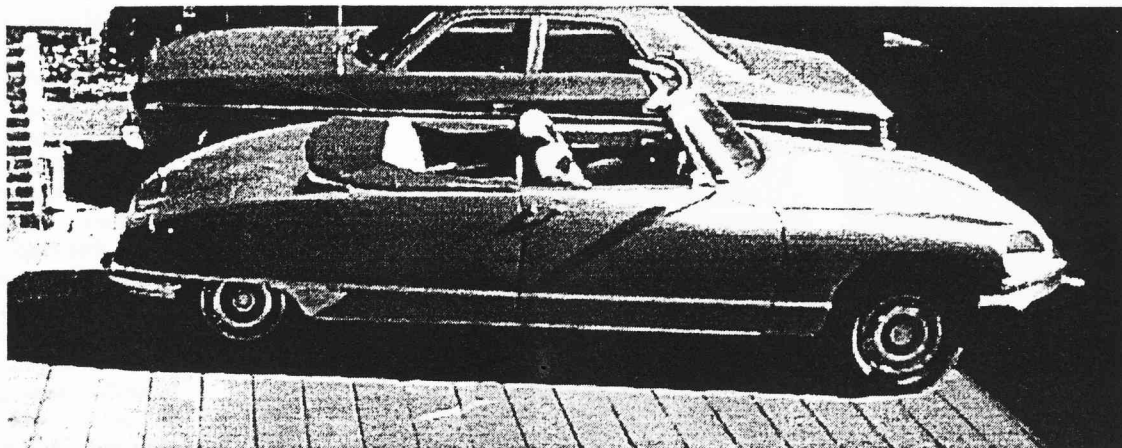
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... and stow the roof, after carefully folding it, under the cover.

The cabin is typically sumptuous DS Pallas, with prestige cloth and 'plush' carpeting

Member's Car - DS Cabriolet



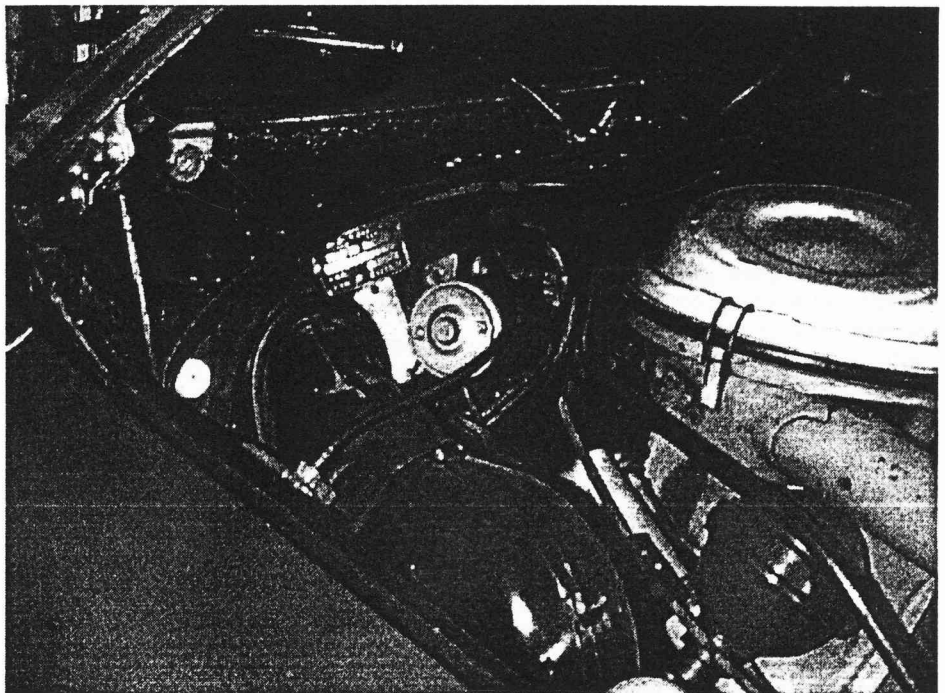
Member's Car - DS Cabriolet

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restaurant and a group of shops at Sorrento. Where I met him was a group of town houses in Richmond which he had also built and where his Citroens are usually garaged. They include a CX25 El, a DS23 wagon and a DS23 injected sedan. The environment had quite a French feel, with the town houses being accessed down a narrow right-of-way leading to the rear of existing houses fronting the street. When I left him, Julian - a charming and courteous man - was flying off next day to spend a fortnight trout fishing at his lodge on Tasmania's Great Lake, before returning to undergo surgery to rectify a hernia! Quite a busy boy.

As much as anything, my "assignment" was about trying out a new form of camera which Leigh had acquired with some co-operation from Cussons. Worth about a thousand dollars and made by Apple Computers, it is entirely electronic (apart from its fixed-focus optics) and uses no film at all. The images recorded in much the same way that one uses a conventional camera are stored inside as electrical charges on an electronic chip. This information is later "down-loaded" into a conventional desk top computer where the images can be manipulated into a page layout and outputted in either colour or monochrome. Up to 32 low-resolution or eight high-resolution images can be stored in the camera before it is necessary to down-load. In practice, I found the camera easy to use, but its built-in light-level-controlled flash seemed at times to be fooled by high light intensity variations in the subject area. Hence there were times when perhaps the flash should have fired for infill lighting, but didn't do so. The resulting dark images may respond to computer enhancement, but exposure control may be an aspect requiring further attention.

After we had arranged shots of the cabrio from its numerous aesthetically-pleasing angles, and Julian had demonstrated the simple hood-raising procedure and access to the rear seats, he offered to take me for a "spin" in it - an unexpected bonus. Julian normally does not take the car out in wet weather, and if he drives it with the hood up, he usually leaves the flexible rear window zipped down, which must create the most delightfully refreshing breezes



Despite being built by Henri Chapron, the plates on the bulkhead make no reference to him.

through the cabin. For our spin on a superb sunny day, naturally we travelled "al fresco".

Rolling out his narrow right-of-way, Julian briskly negotiated the roundabouts of Richmond's residential streets and I noted the smoothness and confidence of the cabrio's passage over the numerous speed humps. Immediately, I had been struck by the sense of freedom and freshness conveyed by top-down motoring, and of course by the extremely comfortable and supporting seat. Julian mentioned almost apologetically that the car did show some "scuttle shake" due to body flexing, but I really could only discern it when we crossed those speed humps at low speed, and anyway, it is very hard to eliminate all flexing when there is no rigid hood structure to help body stiffness.

The lap-only seat belt caused some initial sense of insecurity, but this was very soon forgotten as we joined the briskly moving traffic on the South Eastern Arterial. I realised that my prior experience of roadster motoring was virtually nil, and really, my old motor bike of many years back had been more of a deterrent than an inducement to build on that experience. Finally, I was

starting to appreciate what the "fresh-air freaks" have been on about.

Cutting back into Hawthorn to congratulate Julian's sister-in-law on her birthday, it was intriguing to discover that her father - now normally comfortably ensconced on the Gold Coast but visiting for the moment - had once owned an elegantly-bodied four cylinder Traction Arriere (how often have we heard such stories - "Yes, we had one of those when I was a kid"). Through Julian, we hope to access the surviving photo of the vehicle with a much, much younger sister-in-law beside it, and the accompanying story about the car for our FD pages.

"And so to bed" as the incurable documentalist, Mr Pepys might have said. Well, not quite - back to the terrible let-down of my old Ford Falcon actually. Wow, the horror of retro-shock!

Thank you, Julian, for a very memorable acquaintance with a truly fine motor car.

Bill Graham.

Hung, Drawn & Quartered

Readers of exceptionally long memories will recall that from time to time, The Editor decides that all you lot need another "fix" of the old recipe of fact, fiction, fabrication and general fornicating about. The tricky bit is working out which is which! So, here we go with another helping or three of gossip, garbage and good gear to amaze you, amuse you and bring on the odd cerebral seizure (not of course to be confused with that well-known Roman, Julius Seizure). Remember, none of this stuff is guaranteed as to veracity, so it would be best if you did not spread it around.

Now, to kick off, do you know which CCOCA member has expressed a long-standing ambition to conduct horizontal gymnastics with his wife in the empty tray of one of those huge 150 tonne dump trucks used in mining and construction projects (and may well have achieved this ambition)? Well here's how we found out.

Some years back, one of our venerated members (no, dummy - I didn't say he

we old-timers are prone to put it, his alarm-detecting antennae were instantly at full quiver when he spied a CCOCA Committee member just inside the door, camera at the ready to catch the expression on the lad's face. The expression was priceless. An open mouthed mixture of suspicion, apprehension and amazement spread across his visage as he tried to grasp what was going on.

"Bloody hell", he said, "that's 'Freddy Nerk' (naming the CCOCA member). What the hell is he doing here?"

As George (not his real name - remember, discretion is a byword in this column) came further into the hall, arm-in-arm with his "better half", Mabel (also not her real name), it became clear that this was no simple family gathering. This boy had been around a bit in his day, working in industry in Australia and overseas, and Mabel had managed to gather together with the utmost secrecy a goodly selection of George's friends (among whom, a small knot of CCOCA types), family and work-mates from far

delighted by the occasion, soon settling in to a good yack with his old buddies (as the Tibetans would agree, there's nothing like a good yack). During the evening, a suitably "Citroen-flavoured" cake was revealed, while the Citroenists brought forth a delicately crafted wall plaque, featuring a leggy "bird" emerging provocatively from the "suicide" front door of a Traction Avant and wishing him well from his CCOCA mates. The leggy bird seemed to have a rivetting effect on George's attention!

However, a major feature of the evening was Mabel's "celebrity roast" in which she described living with him and some of his little peccadillos (careful, this is a family program) over the years. It was here that we learned of George's gymnastic ambitions as above (I think he may have achieved them in a flood-lit machine storage yard one night in Bougainville or somewhere), and also that given a choice by Mabel between a large Michelin tyre, one of his Citroens and her, he had said that she would not be first in the list! Mabel pointed out that there were things that she could do for

I could not resist including this superb Traction Cabriolet. Ed.



had a "venereal member") was invited along to a skilfully organised function at the local RSL, anticipating that it was to be a simple family "get-together". In due course, our lad was led into the function, like, one might say, "a lamb to the slaughter". Perhaps "smelling a rat" as

and wide. They had driven and flown in from literally all over the country, even perhaps from Papua New Guinea.

You see, the occasion was actually George's fiftieth birthday, and it had now become a grand affair. After his initial shock, George was clearly

him that he could not expect of a Michelin tyre, but George clearly had set his sights higher. No wonder George's eyes light up when he sees those big earth-moving Michelins.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 17)

Hung, Drawn & Quartered

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16)

Mabel also revealed that, in the native ways of PNG, George had always claimed he had paid a bride price for her of (from memory) 250 kina and five pigs, and that maybe he had paid too much. Given what a loving wife Mabel obviously has been to him, and the outstanding success of the celebration she had organised on his fiftieth, might we humbly suggest that even at say 300 kina and six or even seven pigs, George would have still been well on the right side of the ledger, to put the matter conservatively. Well done, the pair of you. Incidentally, photos of the occasion exist, so maybe in a later issue---. No, we don't have one of them in the dump truck!

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On very good authority, we have been told that Easter Monday (when most of us will be gathered at Cit-In '95 at Bairnsdale) is actually the 25th wedding anniversary of one our esteemed CCOCA couples. We hope that this reference won't be necessary to remind him, and of course we have no idea what activity he has in mind for the occasion, but might we humbly bring to his attention that someone who has a major interest in the matter has high hopes that a "second honeymoon" in Tasmania might be the order of the day. As always, discretion is our byword, but we wouldn't like to see a "boil-up" over the matter.

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Having made glowing references in the Editorial of the last issue of Front Drive to the improving quality of our publication, it was then with some embarrassment that we later discovered that despite our very best efforts, one or two glitches crept into the final copy. Generally, it appears pretty easy for the reader to work out what we meant to say, but we are concerned that the valuable Index over which Peter Simmenauer poured buckets of sweat (or in Peter's case, perspiration) may also be flawed in one or two places. We would be grateful to be advised of any such instances that you find, and we undertake to vet the matter again when we (hopefully) put together a single

comprehensive index covering all the Front Drive issues to date. As the axe-wielding young George Washington might have put it: "I cannot tell a lie. It was Leigh's bloody computer wot did it (plus quite a bit of late-night fatigue impacting on both of us)".

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One of the strengths of any club is the diversity of talents usually found in it, and CCOCA having in it that legal eagle and doyen of the air-waves, Jon Faine, illustrates the point very well. While we strongly encourage members to speak out on matters that interest them or concern them (particularly through your main organ of communication, Front Drive), we felt a bit nervous recently that some comments from members might run us foul of the law if we were to publish them as presented to us. It was very comforting then to be able to tap into Jon's advice, before we went ahead. This is not the first time that Jon has been of such assistance to the club, and most notably, his input when we were updating the club constitution for incorporation was both valuable and highly valued.

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Speaking of Jon, we had occasion to return his call the other day when he was seeking info on the Vietnamese Normale Traction roadster. The word is that, yes, the car has arrived in the country. It has been looked over by Gerry Propsting and been found to be in need of some significant further work to bring it up to scratch. It has gone up to Mansfield, and since its owner is still overseas, it would be best to let the dust settle for a while (please!). Gerry tells us that the vehicle is NOT FOR SALE, at least for the time being. Another (Legere) roadster and coupe are also in the offing it seems, and we'll let you know details through FD ASAP - OK?

@@@@@

Incidentally, Jon couldn't talk long on the blower because he was busy cooking. Which does nothing to answer the eternal question: "Do real men eat quiche?", but it does suggest that it is OK for real lawyers to cook. Now, I wonder if Jon

might be able to relay a comment on the matter to us from his political nemesis and arch conservative, Sir Murray Rivers QC. Might we enlist Sir Murray as a regular contributor to this column? Watch out in future HD&Qs.

@@@@@

Thinking along the lines of propriety and so forth, how many people well past the age of majority live in dread of what parents and mothers in particular might say about their actions? Well, President Leigh Miles for one. By now you will have picked up that Leigh has finally flipped his lid and bought into the ranks of Traction Avant motoring with the little used (31 000 miles since new) metallic peacock blue 11D Light 15, ex-Helen Cross, ex-Tony Tesoraro, ex-Harding etc. An ecstatic Leigh motoring down to Rosebud in it to a family weekend was most concerned about what his mother might say about the purchase. Certainly Leigh was less concerned about what his bank manager might say, but then his bank manager would be unlikely to object, given the circumstances, would he? Fortunately, his mother seemed quite happy (or too stunned for words). Maybe she's realised as we have that it's safe to let Leigh out on his own now.

Elsewhere in this issue, we learn from our East Gippsland correspondent that Leigh may have purchased a second Traction Avant. Incredible!

@@@@@

Our notes on the need and the scope for research to bring out more details of Citroen half-tracks in Australia (particularly as used in the Snowy Mountains Hydro-electric Scheme) have landed on fertile soil! Traction Arriere enthusiast, David Hancox, has phoned up for more info, and we have sent him on his way with some former SMHES contacts to follow up. There seems to be quite some likelihood that more info can be uncovered, and David is setting off on the trail with gusto. Good hunting, David. We look forward to some very interesting stories from you in due course.

Letters to the Editor

10 Omeo Highway
Bainsdale
Vic 3875.

Dear Bill,

Some "goss" for the magazine! I believe Leigh Miles is now the proud owner of not one but two Tractions. Ted Cross appears to be responsible for one purchase, and the other, well, it is preferred that they remain nameless. I guess it was inevitable that Leigh would succumb, with us rabid Tractionists egging him on.

It occurred to me that with Cit-In '95 fast approaching and no Austraction this year, that the club should produce a lasting memento in some form or other for the participants, "Celebrating 40 years of the D Series".

But, "Oh shit", what about the BLOODY T-SHIRTS - you know the

ones, quote - "a special limited edition T-shirt" for us who have paid the money, turned blue waiting, and still no result or word. They were to be available for Austraction '94. Perhaps a bit late for that now, but I for one would still like the T-shirt or if that is not possible, at least a refund or a credit.

There is also a rumour that a certain "RED CAR" is coming onto the market soon. That should create a bit of interest and also a new member!

Gerry Propsting's well-known Light 15 WM 715 has been sold to my brother, Jeff Cox, who is with the RAAF at Williamstown. Jeff is very pleased with himself — having bought the car sight unseen — and is determined to get the car back into shape for regular use. He is looking forward to his first function with CCOCA as a new member, and most of all seeing his Light 15 for the first time at Cit-In '95.

Speaking of which, it is shaping up to be a huge event, bookings coming in from interstate already. We've put an order in for the weather!

See you there.

Regards from Mel Carey.

[Many thanks, Mel. By the way, there appears to be some minor breach of the club rule that all scuttlebutt should go to the Editor to avoid unhealthy speculation. Now come on. Who did supply Mr Miles with the second Traction? Has he been got at by Torr Shaun Barr? Should we call in Paul Lineham to comb over the evidence on The 7.30 Report? Can Jon Faine organise some time of reply on the ABC? What would Sir Murray Rivers have to say on the matter? Should there be a Royal Commission? - Ed.]



Whilst we do not yet have a photo of the recently imported Normale [big-bodied, French-built] Cabriolet [ex-Vietnam], we thought this picture would satisfy your demands for the time being. Ed.

Letters to the Editor

Sight Unseen

Buying and Importing an Unseen "Restored Car"; What You Should Know.

To: Front Drive, the magazine of the Citroën Classic Owners Club of Australia.

Re: Article for the magazine to help prospective car buyers and in reply to the letters to the editor in the two previous issues from Ken Churchman and Lorraine Finn. It is based on our experience and we think it is important to raise awareness before the fun gets out of classic motoring, before even having made a start.

From Adrian Schoo and Neville Sharpe, members of the Veteran, Vintage & Classic Club Bendigo Inc. and the Citroën Classic Owners Club of Australia, Inc.

It can be very tempting to buy a particular model or make of car when you have set your mind to it, however there are many pitfalls. This article is based on the personal experiences of the authors and is written to assist and protect our fellow car enthusiasts.

The problem starts mostly with a passion for a particular model, but can eventually lead to frustration, dissatisfaction and disappointment with the vintage or classic car world in general. In our case, the Citroën Light 15 appealed.

Looking around and pricing is the first logical step. Buying privately could be an option, but you can be in trouble if you do not know where to look. There are without any doubt reputable places to buy, but there are also so-called "professional restorers". They might even have a good reputation in their home town and might even be published authorities in classic car journals, but who are, in the final analysis, as bad as the worst "used car salesmen" that you have ever read about.

An advertisement in a local newspaper attracted our attention, but the car was apparently not in Australia. We were assured that this would not be a problem because it would be shipped over almost immediately. Our enquiries established that the person in New Zealand is a car restorer, dealer, writer of articles on Citroëns and somebody of standing in his home town and the vintage car world.

He seemed to know exactly what to do. After more insight into shipping costs and the necessary paperwork, the decision was made to go ahead. Prices were confirmed by a local agent by fax, from New Zealand.

Instructions were given to begin the necessary paperwork, a deposit was paid

and the balance was due on delivery of the car.

Having paid the deposit there was nothing else that could be done, other than waiting and hoping that the cars would live up to the promises of the the "professional restorer". Some restoration work was still required. The cars were going to be resprayed and were to be in a roadworthy condition.

Another payment was demanded and the final payment asked for was considerably more than was initially agreed. Furthermore this payment had

They might even have a good reputation in their home town and might even be published authorities in classic car journals, but who are, in the final analysis, as bad as the worst "used car salesmen" that you have ever read about.

to take place before the cars would be released by the shipping agent, so that they could be inspected!

The sight of the cars was very disappointing in many different ways. The worst thing of all was the dangerous structural problems under one of the cars which was badly rusted through and in danger of breaking up. The two cars would not pass a Roadworthy Certificate in the State of Victoria — they were, indeed, far from roadworthy. The problems have been addressed to some

extent including swapping one of the cars for one bought locally. This is the car referred to by Lorraine Finn in her recent letter.

Nevertheless, the whole exercise leaves a nasty taste behind and has been a bitter and expensive disappointment.

Based on our experiences our advice to prospective classic car buyers includes:

- Do not buy an unseen car. It is worth while making a trip, even to New Zealand. At the worst you will have a nice weekend trip.
- Agree on a proper contract so you know what you will have to pay and when.
- Make sure you know what state the car is going to be in when it is delivered and that restoration work is carried out to your satisfaction.
- Do not believe that restorations carried out in a country where labour is cheaper will be cheaper for you. They can, in fact, work out dearer when they are not carried out properly.
- It may be better to purchase an unrestored car and use local tradespeople. They have more to lose.
- Join a Club and get as much advice as possible from your fellow enthusiasts.

After all the efforts, enjoy your investment with your family, friends and fellow club members.

Adrian Schoo & Neville Sharpe

Classified Advertisements

FOR SALE - 2CV PANEL VAN

AK 400 Van 1975

Recently restored with a significant number of new panels

Two pack paint, inside and out in Rouge Delage

Chassis strengthened to "Raid" specification

Only 10,000 miles since new engine

Many other parts replaced during restoration

\$14,500, or best offer



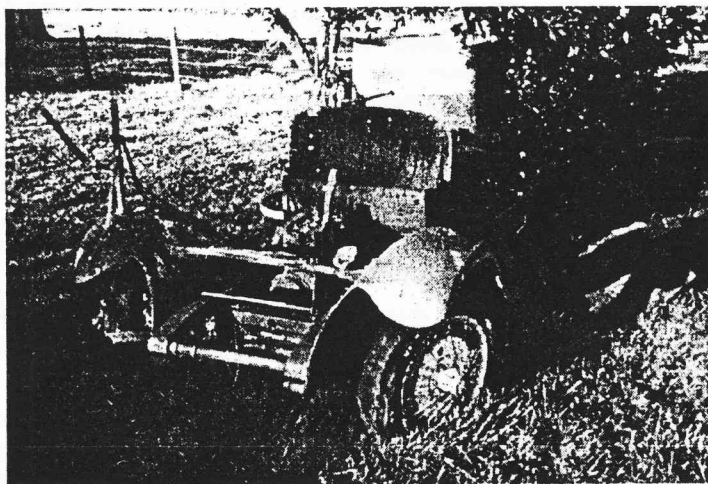
FOR SALE - REMNANTS OF HISTORY

Remnant s of Early ' 3 0 s Citroën

It owes me \$100

Any offer
considered as it
HAS TO GO

Contact Dave
H a n c o x
[059]43 1029
[BH], [059]43
2485 [AH]



FOR SALE: ID 19 & PARTS

For sale: ID 19 parts sale, too numerous to detail, but include; gearboxes, radiator, complete set of glass for doors plus front and rear screens. Would separate but prefer to sell as a package. \$800 negotiable.

John Towner, Unit 2 28/30 McIntyre Close, Port Macquarie, NSW 2444. Tel. [065] 82 1005.

For sale: ID wagon and sedan, plus almost complete set of panels for each, plus many other spares. Prefer to sell as a single lot.

Andrew Stewart, PO Box 146, Sea Lake, Vic 3533. Tel. [050] 70 1376.

FOR SALE: REPAIR MANUALS

For sale: Factory repair manual for 2 CV, 1950s, good average condition, two volume version. Best offer over \$30. Contact Peter Simmenauer on [03] 882 6539.

For sale: Factory repair manual for Light 15. Very good condition - why make do with photocopies when you can have the real thing! \$65 each. Contact Jim Thompson Tel: [08] 379 3846.

2CV6 FOR SALE

For Sale: FUN 000, 1984 2CV6 Charleston, Grey/grey, 52,00 miles. Always garaged & maintained. New clutch, battery, front & side mufflers & tailpipe. Reg. till July, 1995. Needs new upholstery. \$13,750.

Featured in Easter Cit-In '93 gymkhana.

Contact: Carl Perrin, 39 Stanley St., Nedlands, 6009, WA. Ph: [09] 396 3268.

WANTED

Wanted: Four hubcaps for 1953 Light 15 (English), big boot model; new brake hoses. Have some 1949 parts to swap.

Ken Churchman, 1675 Coolgardie Street, Mundaring, WA 6073. Tel. [09] 295 2569.

Wanted: DS 21 sedan in good going condition.

Andrew Stewart, PO Box 146, Sea Lake, Vic 3533. Tel. [050] 70 1376.

ID Sedan. Must be runner, or better.

Carl Perrin, [09] 386 3268



**TO BE CERTAIN OF YOUR BOOKING FOR
CIT-IN '95, SEND YOUR BOOKING
FORM PROMPTLY TO
CIT-IN BOOKINGS, 16 HARROW ST,
BLACKBURN SOUTH, 3130**

CCOCA Spares

TRACTION

New oil pump gears	\$55.00
Wishbone shaft, upper, reco	\$180.00
Lower ball joint adjusters [Permanently fixed to car]	\$60.00
Bushing, second gear	\$12.50
Bronze bush, brake shoes	\$4.00
Big boot bottom rubber	\$20.00
Scuttle vent rubber	\$30.00
Pedal rubber	\$10.00
Rubber grommet - petrol filler, 2 sizes	\$10.00
Door V block rubbers	\$35.00
Bonnet rubbers	\$0.35
Big and small boot paint protectors [under handles and lights]	\$30.00
Steering rack boots [pair]	\$44.00
Gearbox gasket set	\$18.00
Gasket set VRS [Big 6]	\$180.00
Gasket set VRS [L15, 11BL]	\$90.00
Exhaust muffler and tailpipe	
• Light 15	\$190.00
• Big 15	\$150.00
• Big 6	\$140.00
Exhaust hanger, rubber	\$2.50
Front hub	
• Outer seal	\$8.00
• Inner seal	\$8.00
Door lock [French]	
• Big boot	\$22.00
• Small boot	\$22.00
Front wheel bearings [state width when ordering]	\$26.00
Valve guides	\$12.00
Fan belt	\$13.00
Door lock springs	\$3.00
Inlet valves	\$20.00
Clutch plate	\$125.00
Fuel pump	\$50.00
ID/DS Main bearing O/S	\$85.00
ID/DS Conrod bearing	\$85.00
78mm Piston rings	\$85.00
Big 15 Drive shafts [each, less inner cardin shafts]	\$480.00
Brake master cylinder [new]	\$85.00
Brake master cylinder kit	\$15.00
Tie rod ball joint kit	\$15.00
Brake hose [French]	
• Front	\$28.00
• Rear	\$24.00
Throttle shaft 32PBIC Solex [0.5mm oversize]	\$20.00
Bonnet strip clamp [internal]	\$1.50

DYANE / 2CV

Brake hose	\$22.00
Seat rubbers	\$1.00

EARLY 2CV

All parts are new, unless otherwise stated

Clutch linings	\$15.00
Tie rod covers [metal]	\$3.00
Starter motor [reco]	\$40.00
Crown wheel & pinion	\$200.00
Front brake drum	\$15.00
Rear brake drum	\$15.00
Starter Bendix unit	\$10.00
Windscreen wiper speedo worm & drive	\$8.00
Front over riders	\$5.00
Head gasket [375cc]	\$2.00
Lock & key set [2 barrels & 2 keys]	\$15.00
Oil pump bodies [bronze, no gears]	\$10.00
Valve springs	\$1.00
Steering pinion & bearing	\$15.00
Door catch	
Right front	\$6.00
Left front	\$6.00
Accelerator pedals	\$1.00

A large selection of old and recent 2CV parts are available through the Club, over and above those listed, at very reasonable prices. These are not held in stock by the Club, but we can arrange delivery quite quickly, in most cases

WANTED

Change over Silent Blocs [front] \$56.00 each, provided your Silent Blocs are serviceable

NOTE: ORDER FORMS TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER TELEPHONE CALLS

I cannot justify the time to chase second hand parts. If you need them, advertise in Front Drive

Prices subject to change without notice.

Contact Spare Parts Officer -Peter Boyle

Cit-In '95

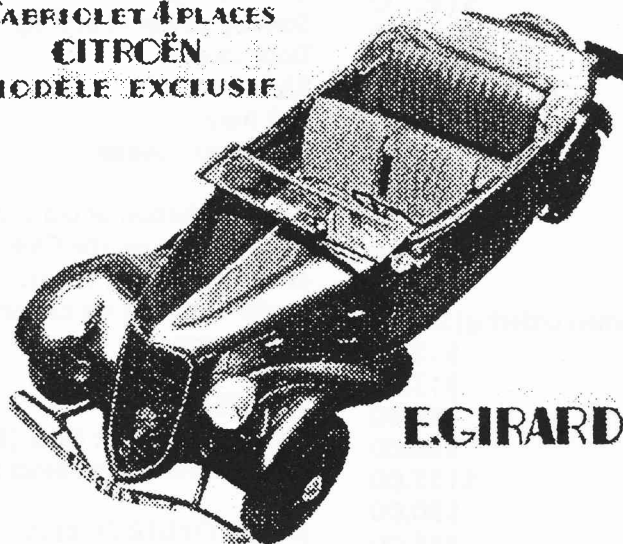
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Club of Australia Inc ◆

Bairnsdale
Victoria

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