



**CITROËN CLASSIC OWNERS  
CLUB OF AUSTRALIA**  
Australia's National Citroën Car Club

# FRONT DRIVE

A U S T R A L I A ' S   NATIONAL   MAGAZINE  
F O R   C I T R O Ë N   O W N E R S   A N D   E N T H U S I A S T S



WINTER 2012   Vol 36   No 3



## POSTAL ADDRESS

CITROËN CLASSIC OWNERS CLUB of AUSTRALIA Inc.

The address of the Club and this magazine is:

PO Box 52, Balwyn, Victoria, 3103.

The Club's website is:

[www.citroenclassic.org.au](http://www.citroenclassic.org.au)

Citroën Classic Owners Club of Australia Inc. is a member of the Association of Motoring Clubs.

The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of CCOCA or its Committee. Neither CCOCA nor its Committee can accept any responsibility for any mechanical advice printed in, or adopted from this publication.

The Club cannot accept any responsibility for, or involvement in, any business relationship that may occur between an advertiser and a member of the Club.

## MEETINGS

Club meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of every month [except December] at 8pm. The venue is the Frog Hollow Reserve Rooms, Fordham Ave., Camberwell. Melway 60, B3

## MEMBERSHIP

Annual Membership is \$55. For overseas membership add \$17.50.

## LIFE MEMBERS

The committee awards life membership to Club members in recognition of their contribution to, and support of, the Club. Life members are:

|             |      |
|-------------|------|
| Rob Little  | 2012 |
| Ted Cross   | 2012 |
| Peter Boyle | 2003 |
| Jack Weaver | 1991 |
| Nance Clark | 1984 |

## COVER IMAGE

The cover image, taken 'Traxion' the Traction Avant Nederland calendar for 2001 and depicts Courseulles-sur-Mer [Calvados] - Le Restaurant de la Plage. .

## COMMITTEE

**PRESIDENT ~** Peter Sandow  
[03] 9329 6555 [B]  
[president@citroenclassic.org.au](mailto:president@citroenclassic.org.au)

**SECRETARY ~** Sue Bryant  
04 1251 8849 [M]  
[secretary@citroenclassic.org.au](mailto:secretary@citroenclassic.org.au)

**TREASURER ~** Rob Barton  
[03] 5152 1230 [H]  
[treasurer@citroenclassic.org.au](mailto:treasurer@citroenclassic.org.au)

**ACTIVITY COORDINATOR ~** Mike Neil  
04 1821 1278 [M]  
[activities@citroenclassic.org.au](mailto:activities@citroenclassic.org.au)

**SPARE PARTS OFFICER ~** Lance Wearne  
[07] 3351 8327 [H]  
[spareparts@citroenclassic.org.au](mailto:spareparts@citroenclassic.org.au)

**PUBLICATION EDITOR ~** Leigh Miles  
[03] 9888 7506 [H]  
[editor@citroenclassic.org.au](mailto:editor@citroenclassic.org.au)

**COMMITTEE PERSON ~** Max Lewis  
[03] 9372 0921 [H]  
04 5899 3771 [M]  
[librarian@citroenclassic.org.au](mailto:librarian@citroenclassic.org.au)

## DEADLINE

The deadline for the next edition of 'Front Drive' is Friday, August 3, 2012.

## SUPPORT

**WEB WALLAH ~** Mark McKibbin  
[webwallah@citroenclassic.org.au](mailto:webwallah@citroenclassic.org.au)

**MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY ~** Sue Bryant  
[03] 9885 3179 [H]  
[secretary@citroenclassic.org.au](mailto:secretary@citroenclassic.org.au)

**TYRES ~** Robin Smith  
[03] 5984 1280 [H]  
[tyres@citroenclassic.org.au](mailto:tyres@citroenclassic.org.au)

### AOMC LIAISON OFFICERS ~

Ted Cross [03] 9819 2208 [H]  
Russell Wade [03] 9570 3486 [H]

### CLUB PERMIT & SAFETY OFFICERS ~

Russell Wade [03] 9570 3486 [H]  
Peter Boyle [03] 9470 8080 [H]  
Philip Rogers [03] 5944 3091 [H]

**LIBRARIAN ~** Max Lewis  
[03] 9372 0921 [H]  
[librarian@citroenclassic.org.au](mailto:librarian@citroenclassic.org.au)

**CLUB SHOP ~** Peter James  
[clubshop@citroenclassic.org.au](mailto:clubshop@citroenclassic.org.au)

### ICCCR REPRESENTATIVE ~

Ted Cross [03] 9819 2208 [H]

**PUBLIC OFFICER ~** Sue Bryant  
04 1251 8849 [M]  
[secretary@citroenclassic.org.au](mailto:secretary@citroenclassic.org.au)

## CONTRIBUTORS

Contributors to this edition of 'Front Drive' include Eoin Barnett and Morrie Pilens.

# CITROËNING

### CH PLATES

Send your annual CH renewal form to PO Box 52, Balwyn, 3103. Please do the right thing and enclose a stamped, addressed envelope. If you do not have a Club Permit Handbook include \$5 and we will return one to you.

### ABOUT TO ARRANGE A CLASSIC/HISTORIC PERMIT FOR YOUR CITROËN?

CH permit applications must be accompanied by a rwc. The onus is on owners to demonstrate that their cars are safe. Feel free to consult our Permit Officers for advice regarding getting your car on the road, and keeping it going.

**FOR SPARE PARTS & TOOLS**  
Contact Lance Wearne. Phone: [07] 3351 8327 or [spareparts@citroenclassic.org.au](mailto:spareparts@citroenclassic.org.au) [If you phone, please do it at a reasonable hour.]

**CLUB SHOP**  
For Citroën models, memorabilia and other items contact Peter James at [clubshop@citroenclassic.org.au](mailto:clubshop@citroenclassic.org.au)

**OTHER CLUBS**  
VIC: [www.citcarclubvic.org.au](http://www.citcarclubvic.org.au)  
NSW: [www.citroencarclub.org.au/](http://www.citroencarclub.org.au/)  
WA: [www.citroenwa.com.au](http://www.citroenwa.com.au)  
QLD: [www.citroenclub.org](http://www.citroenclub.org)  
[www.doublechevrans.aunz.com](http://www.doublechevrans.aunz.com)

This edition brings a slightly eclectic collection of features to 'Front Drive'. Well, that's one way of putting it. Others might suggest it is more a 'rag bag' of left-overs. Whichever way you see it, I hope you find a feature of interest.

I have been adding to my memorabilia collection recently and felt the need to share a couple of my recent finds with you. The first is a 1954 road test of the Big 6 by Australian Motor Manual. Compared with Chevrolet, Jaguar Mk VII, Ford V8 and DeSoto the elderly Traction does not perform that well. Interestingly, the car was not supplied by a dealer, or the importer. It was lent to the magazine by its owner and already had 12,000 miles on the clock.

Accompanying the road test is the first report on Citroën's new hydropneumatic suspension. Available to special order on your Big 6, it added £70 to the already steep purchase price of £1,840, but that included the provision of Michelin x tyres.

I also acquired an English brochure from the late 1950s on the

H van series. It has some beautiful illustrations that I have included in the colour section.

The Club's June meeting was focused on photography [no pun intended] and some of the winning pictures have been published, along with some of the stories associated with them.

Eoin Barnett's images from Hanoi prompted some internet searching that has resulted in an article that links Citroën in Indochina with the US forces in the Vietnam War. What this searching did reveal is the amazing lack of information on the activities of any of the French manufacturers in this French colony.

In 2000, two years before his death, Bernard Citroën was interviewed by Citroën enthusiast and historian, John Reynolds. The resulting article was published in the Daily Telegraph and formed his obituary as well. This is reprinted here along with the some history of the famous family, taken from our sister magazine in the UK, 'Floating Power'.

Enjoy,  
Leigh F Miles



OzTraction, Golden Times, in and around Castlemaine was a great event. Extremely well organised as a sequence of diverse events, townscapes and landscapes. All senses were touched. Visiting the excellent Art Gallery, cider and perry pressing, chocolate munching and fine dining at memorable cafes and designer pubs. Regrettably I was a little late getting away from the city grind but the mid year excursion took me somewhere I normally don't go, so an effective mini holiday, a break from the daily rush. Thank you Green Frog people for your effort in giving a lot of pleasure to a full OzTraction contingent, over 40 members I recall.

Winter does not seem to be a time for bubbling up new ideas. I get up in the dark and come home in the dark—I've forgotten what the house looks like on the outside. It is snowing however and early in Winter I've already had one of the best days of skiing I've had for years. The bonus was I spent much of the time with my two very young grandchildren who are so young that neither of them will remember their inaugural alpine experience. But all this goes by and I still wait for the return of the beloved, painting in progress IIBL. It's being repainted in the timeless style by an old-time craftsman who doesn't own a calendar, if you were unaware of such incon-

sequential details. This void in my life is starting to make me feel very plain, the antithesis of course being owning a Traction completes your life, fulfils your being and makes you feel special or at least crazy. So in desperation I turned

to Google...citroen concept car... I thought this might cheer me up and it did. Yep I've seen the Citroen Concept GT <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5YX3RSUJDLW> completely out there, looks like a PlayStation rendering ~ you'll never see one at the beach or in the Bunning's car park. But, but no one has told me about the Citroen Numero 9 Concept.... This is unbelievably gorgeous, this is nothing but spectacular. The video should be R rated. Watch it in a dark room... I bet you watch it at least three times and then you'll tag it for your Favourites.

<http://www.worldcarfans.com/112041343375/citroen-numero-9-concept-previews-future-ds-line-up-video> Brilliant... Brilliant. A good video on the Citroen museum in Paris as well.

Also <http://www.topgear.com/uk/car-news/citroen-numero-9-2012-04-13>

The winter will soon be over. I've got to find out if the Numero 9, to be released at the Beijing Motor Show is coming to Oz... I want to feel crazy again.  
Peter Sandow ~ President

PREZ SEZ

## CONTENTS

|                       |         |
|-----------------------|---------|
| ED SED                | PAGE 4  |
| PREZ SEZ              | PAGE 5  |
| A-TRACTIONS           | PAGE 6  |
| 1954 ROAD TEST: BIG 6 | PAGE 12 |

|                   |         |
|-------------------|---------|
| PHOTO COMPETITION | PAGE 17 |
| HY HEAVEN         | PAGE 26 |
| CITROËN INDOCHINE | PAGE 33 |
| FAMILY TIES       | PAGE 37 |
| CLASSIFIED ADS    | PAGE 47 |



**Please note: if no bookings have been received for an Event by the booking deadline, the Event will be automatically cancelled.**

## A-TRACTIONS

### ● JULY

#### COMMITTEE MEETING & CHEAP EATS

WHEN: Wednesday, 18 July  
 TIME: 7:00pm  
 WHERE: Check with the Secretary for this month's venue  
 COST: Cheap eats  
 BRING: Refreshments  
 BOOKING: Preferred  
 CONTACT: Sue Bryant,  
 [03] 9885 3179  
 secretary@citroenclassic.org.au

#### CLUB MEETING: ~CHEAP EATS

WHEN: Wednesday, 25 July  
 TIME: 7:00pm  
 WHERE: O'Sullivan's Sibeem,  
 914 Mount Alexander Road,  
 Essendon, Melways 28 G4  
 COST: From \$16pp  
 BOOKING: Preferred by  
 Friday, 20 July  
 CONTACT: Max Lewis  
 [03] 9372 0921 [H]  
 04 5899 3771 [M]  
 librarian@  
 citroenclassic.org.au



Meals start from as low as \$16. Wednesday is usually Steak Night so if protein is your preference, then you will be well looked after. The wine list is very reasonable and of course who could refuse a Guinness? So, bring yourself and your wife/partner/friend/cellmate whom-ever and any goss/anecdotes/lies/hyperbole whatever that is about the place at this time. Irish jokes may or may not be looked upon with glee... I did notice a sheleighlee behind the door! [ok, so Max can't spell but you get the drift.] Max has reserved the dining room upstairs for a crowd of 15



~ 20 but it could accommodate a lot more. The staff will arrange a long table as is our liking or any other format that you may want. The room has its own bar, open fire and is a splendid place. I have been there several times and am still amazed at what a delightful place it is. Parking is very close across in the nature strip... should be no problem here.

### ● AUGUST GARAGE CRAWL

WHEN: Saturday, 11 August  
 TIME: 11:00am  
 WHERE: Mark & Sue  
 McKibbin's,  
 193 Old Telegraph Rd.,  
 East Rokeby

COST: Free  
 BRING: Warm clothing ~  
 it can be cold standing  
 around a garage  
 BOOKING: Essential by 5 August  
 CONTACT: Mike Neil,  
 04 1821 1278  
 activities@citroenclassic.org.au

Take ramp and Turn Left onto Old Princes Hwy if on Monash Fwy, meet along there. This could be dropped if people feel once on Monash they'd prefer to keep driving. Let me know. Mark's enthusiasm for all things mechanical is well known and his collection will be worth the trip especially to hear about his early 1900s Sizaire Naudin which he drove on an outback rally earlier

**SPECIALISTS IN SUPPLY  
OF UNIQUE AND  
HARD TO FIND TYRES**

**STUCKEY  
TYRE  
SERVICE**  
 RACING SINCE 1972



828 Sydney Road Brunswick Victoria 3056 Phone (03) 9386 5331 www.stuckey.com.au



this year.  
Refreshments will be served.

## COMMITTEE MEETING & CHEAP EATS

WHEN: Wednesday, 15 August  
TIME: 7:00pm

## A-TRACTIONS

WHERE: Check with the  
Secretary for this month's venue  
COST: Cheap eats  
BRING: Refreshments  
BOOKING: Preferred  
CONTACT: Sue Bryant,  
[03] 9885 3179  
secretary@citroenclassic.org.au

## CLUB MEETING

WHEN: Wednesday, 22 August  
TIME: 8:00pm  
WHERE: Frog Hollow Reserve  
Rooms, Fordham Ave.,  
Camberwell. Melway 60, B3  
COST: Free

BOOKING: Not required  
CONTACT: Mike Neil,  
04 1821 1278  
activities@citroenclassic.org.au

Unfortunately our tyre specialist,  
Russel Stuckey has had a diary  
clash and will not be able to  
join us for the August meeting.  
But, the good news is he is 100%  
confirmed for October.

So this month will be an op-  
portunity to catch up with fel-  
low members and share winter  
motoring stories.

## ● SEPTEMBER

## DAYLESFORD DAY RUN

WHEN: Sunday, 2 September  
TIME: 10:00am  
FROM: TBD  
TO: Daylesford  
COST: Lunch in or  
near Daylesford

BOOKING: Essential by  
Wednesday 29 August  
CONTACT: Mike Neil,  
04 1821 1278  
activities@citroenclassic.org.au

Check the next edition of 'Front  
Drive' for full details of this run in  
the country lunch in Daylesford  
as the primary objective.

## COMMITTEE MEETING & CHEAP EATS

WHEN: Wednesday, 19 Sept  
TIME: 7:00pm  
WHERE: Check with the  
Secretary for this month's venue  
COST: Cheap eats  
BRING: Refreshments  
BOOKING: Preferred  
CONTACT: Sue Bryant,  
[03] 9885 3179  
secretary@citroenclassic.org.au

## CLUB MEETING: ~OUT & ABOUT

WHEN: Wednesday, 26 Sept  
TIME: 8:00pm  
WHERE: Blackmans  
Interior Repair Centre,

86 Cochrane Rd, Moorabbin.  
Melways Map 78 B7  
BRING: Warm clothing ~  
this is an automotive  
workshop  
COST: Free  
BOOKING: Essential by  
Friday 21 September  
CONTACT: Mike Neil,  
04 1821 1278  
activities@citroenclassic.org.au

Peter Blackman's business  
is upholstery for both modern  
and classic vehicles. If you are  
interested in a complete renewal  
or refurbishing of an interior or  
convertible roof, this will be a  
most valuable event

Blackmans provide services  
such as leather re-trims, soft tops,  
head lining, carpets, steering  
wheel recovering, seat repairs and  
custom re-trims.

## ● OCTOBER

## PRE-CONCOURS DINNER

WHEN: Saturday, 13 October

Even in  
the depths  
of winter,  
Daylesford  
is a most en-  
chanting ru-  
ral village.





TIME: 7:00pm  
 WHERE: Il Carretto,  
 Italian Restaurant  
 479 Nicholson St.,  
 Nth Carlton  
 COST: Cheap Eats.  
 \$15-25 Mains. Licensed

## A-TRACTIONS

or BYO wine.  
 Ample parking. Nice atmosphere  
 BOOKING: Essential, by  
 Monday, 8 October  
 CONTACT: Mike Neil,  
 04 1821 1278  
 activities@citroenclassi  
 c.org.au

Yes, it is Concours-time  
 again. While the focus  
 is always the Concours,  
 dinner the evening be-  
 fore has become a... well,  
 I was going to say  
 routine, but I mean  
 a tradition.

Hav-

ing experienced eating at Il Car-  
 retto, I think it'll hit the spot for  
 good eats and plenty of talk to  
 catch up with those visiting for  
 the Concours.

Mains are priced from \$15 to \$25  
 and Il Carretto is both licensed  
 and BYO [wine]. There is ample  
 parking and Mike promises a  
 great atmosphere.

## ALL CITROËN CONCOURS

WHEN: Sunday, 14 October  
 TIME: 9:00am to 3:00pm  
 WHERE: Como Park North  
 Alexandra Ave., South Yarra  
 COST: \$5.00 per car  
 [max \$10 for a fleet]  
 BOOKING: Preferred  
 CONTACT: Mike Neil,  
 04 1821 1278  
 activities@citroenclassic.org.

au  
 Botha! We thought that all was  
 well with our booking for Como  
 Park North for Sunday 9 Octo-  
 ber. But, Stonnington Council is  
 now uncertain whether

'works' on site will be complete  
 and access available. So, the date  
 has changed and the venue is in  
 negotiation ~ keep an eye out for  
 an email soon.

There is generally plenty of public  
 interest in the event. It is well  
 publicised and free for the public  
 to stroll around. If you wish to sell  
 your Citroën or just show it off  
 then this is the perfect place.

This year it's CCCV's turn to or-  
 ganize the biggest car orientated  
 local Citroën event. It requires a  
 lot of help. There is a variety of  
 rôles which need filling. If you can  
 cook, greet people and take their  
 money, tell them where to go, put  
 up a marquee or take it down  
 again or one of a dozen other  
 things there is job for you. It is  
 only because Club members like  
 you help out that makes the event  
 a success. So, talk to Mike to vol-  
 unteer your services, please.

This year there are eight classes:

- ✂ Traction Avant and rear wheel  
 drive
- ✂ DS/ID
- ✂ 2CV, A-Series
- ✂ AX, BX, CX, GS
- ✂ XM, xantia, xsara
- ✂ C2, C3, C4, C5, C6
- ✂ Car of the Show
- ✂ Popular Choice.

Shine your Citroën, bring along  
 your family and friends and make  
 a day of it. We look forward to  
 seeing you there.

## BOYS' DAY OUT ~ OCEAN GROVE

WHEN: 4th Thursday  
 July 26

August 23  
 September 27

TIME: 11:00am

FROM: Ocean Grove  
 Industrial Estate,  
 1/29 Everist Road

TO: Victoria Hotel,  
 Hesse Street, Queenscliff

COST: Cheap eats  
 pub lunch

BRING: An interesting car

BOOKING: Not required

CONTACT:

Mike Killingsworth

04 1755 2446

The 'Boys Day Out' also known  
 by the MGCC Geelong as 'Tech-  
 nical Lunch Day' is a well  
 known get together by boys  
 with their toys, meeting first at  
 Mike's Shed where for a short  
 time lies, more lies and outra-  
 geous anecdotes are swapped,  
 then off for a short tour of the  
 Bellarine Peninsula, stopping  
 off at Portarlington for a chat.  
 Thence onto the Victoria Hotel  
 where, exhausted by all the tales  
 tall and true, lunch may occupy  
 the mind! 2pm is thought to be  
 a time to pull the plug and make  
 your way. It's a great day... we  
 say blokes only and bring an  
 interesting car, but we are not  
 too strict re the car... we just do  
 not want a procession of Nissan  
 entrails... or should that read  
 X-trails?





With a design that has remained basically unchanged for over 19 years the French front wheel drive Citroën has always enjoyed great popularity in its own country. In England, as in Australia, there

wheel, and the use of a bench-type seat in the front replacing the old bucket seats. Arm rests are now fitted to both front and rear.

The Citroën Big Six which is a long, wide and low car of integral construction is a first-class six-seater car for long distance touring. The car tested by Motor Manual

had 12,000 miles [19,500 km] on the speedo and had been tuned just previously. The front wheel drive gave good adhesion over all types of road surfaces while the suspension provided excellent lateral and directional stability.

#### IMPRESSIVE POWER UNIT

The overhead valve six-cylinder engine of just under 3 litres capacity raised speeds around the 83 mph [134 kph] mark but showed positively no signs of stress as the maximum brake horsepower ~ 76 [59 kW] ~ is developed at only 3,800 rpm. Engine accessibil-

ity is first-class and servicing the front wheel drive unit presents no difficulties to the mechanic. A simple heater may be installed on the left hand side of the engine and receives hot air from the radiator. This air is carried into the car by a long metal tube which leads into the front compartment and is easily dismantled in the summer.

#### HEAVY STEERING

Because most of the weight falls on the front wheels, and because they are driving wheels, steering, although accurate, is particularly heavy. As speeds go up, however, this heaviness tends to become less noticeable and the car can be placed very accurately on narrow twisting roads. At low speeds, say up to 30 mph [49 kph],

it is necessary to exert a great deal of power on the steering wheel when cornering, for this reason the Citroën is not a car for a woman, but one sure to appeal to the enthusiast who does not mind sacrificing ease of handling for the phenomenal stability and road holding which the Citroën gives.

#### FIRM RIDE

As can be expected with this type of car, the torsion bar suspension gives what many people would call a hard ride. However, this is amply made up for by the excellent bench seats which, because of the flat floor, allows an upright seating for all passengers. Because of this flat floor, which is made possible by the lack of transmission tunnel, above average

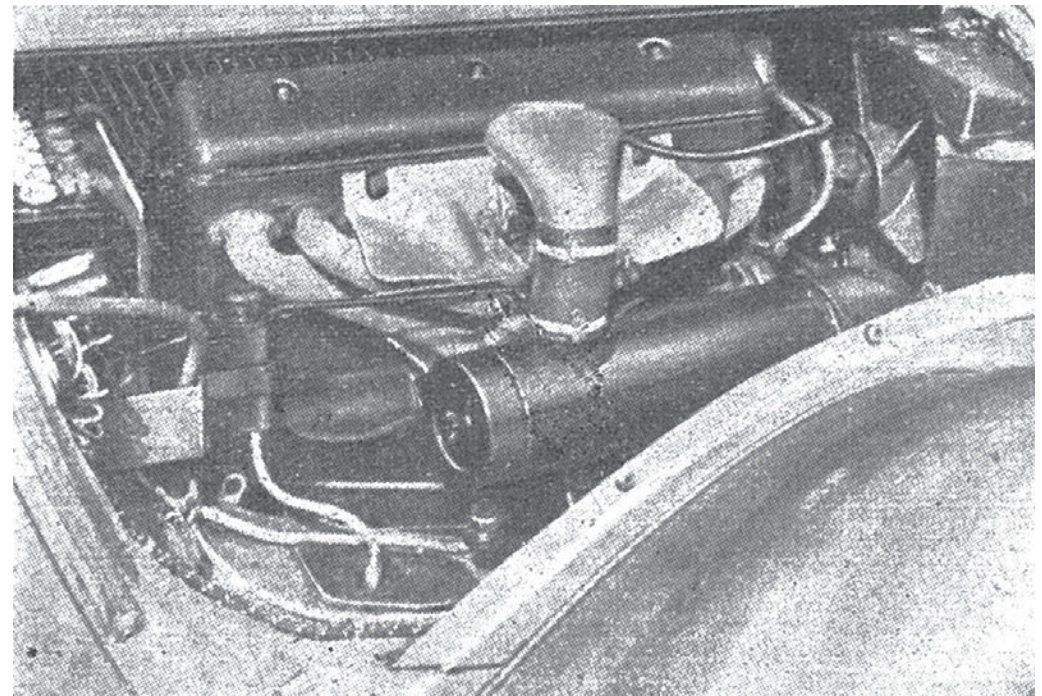
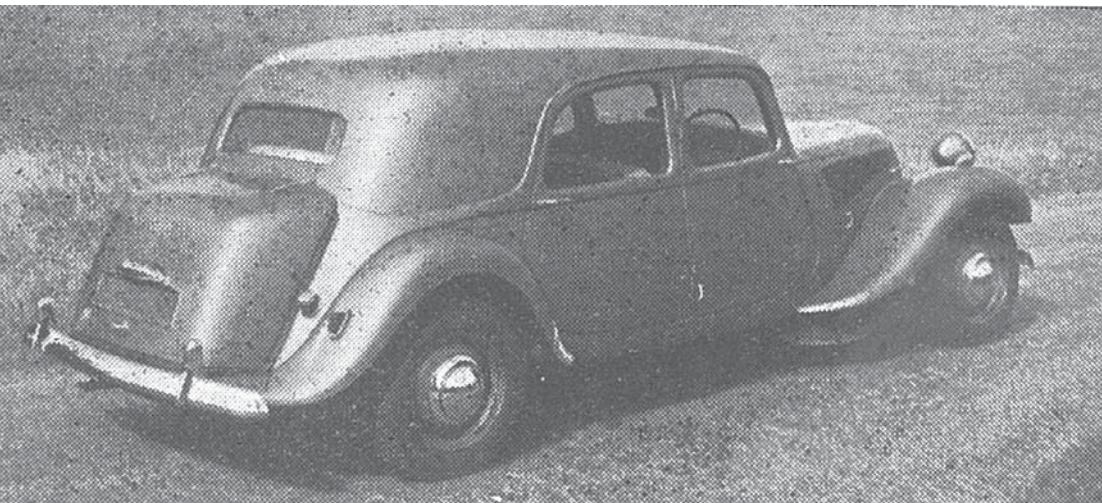
Impressive! Large air cleaner and the unusual shape of the fan are features of the engine. Rebores are unnecessary as the engine has replaceable cylinder liners

## 1954 ROAD TEST: BIG 6

Low raking lines of the Citroën were conceived in 1934 and are still impressive today. Vision from the back seats is not the best, A larger rear window would be a help

have always been two schools of thought regarding this car ~ those for it and those against it. The front wheel drive question has been argued for many years without any definite answer being reached.

The latest model now available in Australia has undergone several changes, mainly to the interior of the car and one to the rear end where an exterior luggage boot has been added giving a long-awaited-for increase in luggage space. Changes inside the car include a redesigned facia panel, steering





leg room is provided, especially in the rear seat. The seating position of the driver is good, but unfortunately the position of the clutch pedal has been set too close to the side of the protruding fire wall, and the driver tends to hit this

on the facia panel where it is well to hand. Unfortunately although changes can be made quite well for ordinary driving the mechanism cannot be pushed through hard if the driver obtains the maximum speeds in the gears. This applies particularly when changing from first to second.

Changing down

presents no difficulties. In top gear the car can quickly accelerate from 10mph, up to its maximum with little fuss if the manual ignition control on the facia panel is at the fully retarded position; if at all advanced a certain amount of ignition 'jingle' is evident.

On winding, uphill dirt roads in second gear the Big Six was really found to be first-class and there was a minimum of wheel spin.

#### NO DRIFTING

On the open road the car can be cruised comfortably at speeds up to 75mph [120kph] and very high average speeds can be maintained. When cornering at speeds up to 65mph [105kph] there is no trace of any breakaway but the car can be felt to be undergoing great torsion stress because of this. Over this speed and if cornering fast, the front end is the first to break away followed by the rear in such a way that the car is difficult to control as during high-speed cornering the car understeers badly. However, normal motoring, even by enthusiastic speedsters would hardly be likely to bring about this

## 1954 ROAD TEST: BIG 6

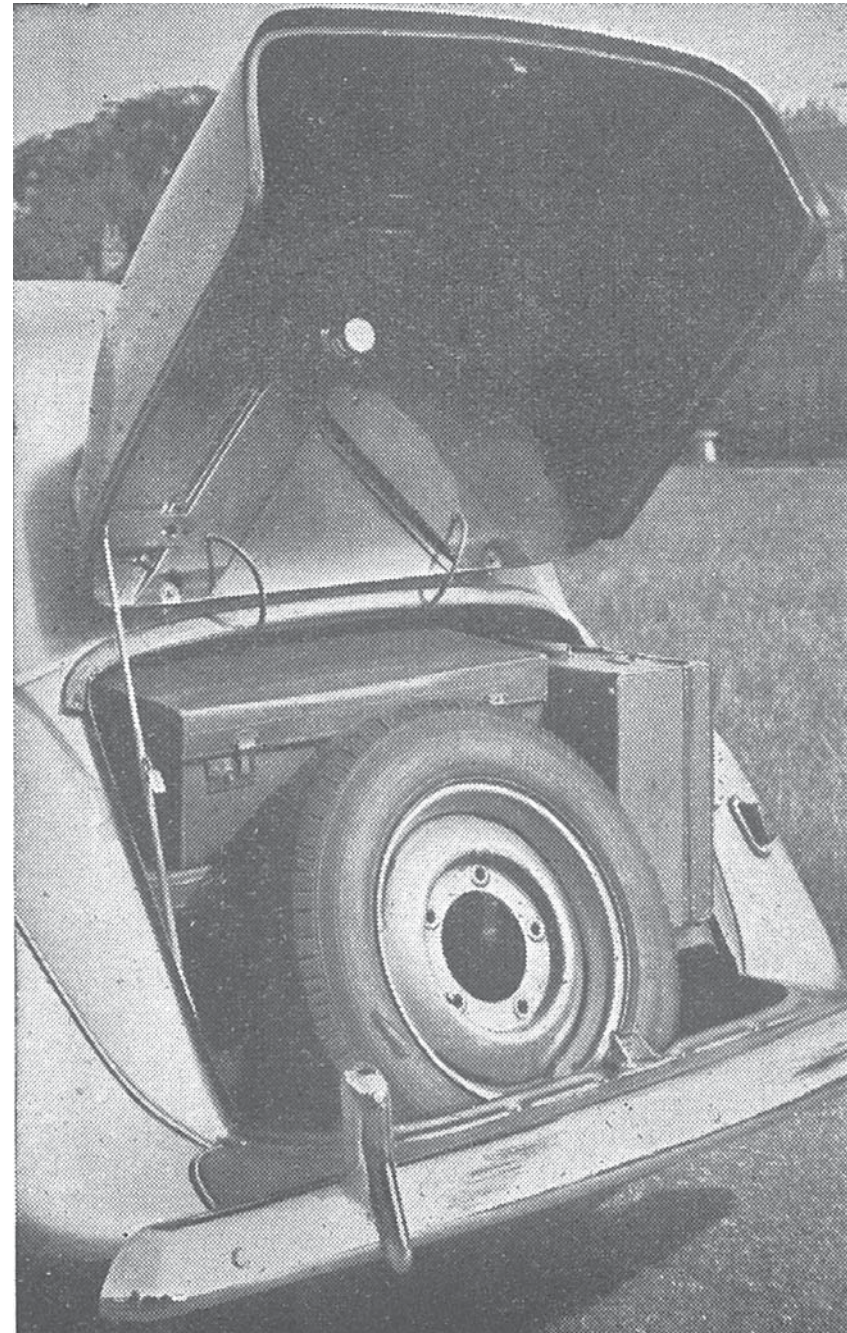
with his foot when declutching. The pedals themselves are of the pendant type and are well placed for heel and toe gear changes.

#### HIGH NOISE LEVEL

By modern standards there is a high noise level in the Big Six which tends to be disconcerting to passengers on their introduction to the car. This is partly due to the engine, but mainly due to the roar from the exhaust. It has been found with the exhaust system on this car in particular, that the silencer and the tail pipe tend to work their way loose within a short time. After adjustment on the car tested, the silencer had given trouble on two previous occasions and was just about due for its third trip to the garage for this ailment.

#### QUICK PICK UP

Acceleration of the Big Six is good for a car of its size ~ 12.5 seconds being taken from 0-50mph [80kph]. In second gear it has a remarkable pulling range as speeds of over 65mph [105kph] were registered on several occasions. This 3speed gearbox, which seems to be eminently suitable for a big car, has its gear change lever mounted





contingency.

#### HARD ON TYRES

Because of its capacity to go round corners fast and because of its leech-like adhesion to the road, the tyres undergo a high degree of wear in comparison with the

put down again to the firm suspension and fast flat cornering which does not go hand-in-hand with smoothness over bad roads. Road shock transmitted through the rack and pinion steering to the steering wheel is very slight. The

last aspect to be taken into consideration when considering the

car's performance is its braking efficiency. In the Citroën this is first-class. Although pedal travel after continued braking over long periods is experienced, there were absolutely no signs of brake fade. On the conclusion of the braking tests, the Six was brought smoothly to a halt from 60mph with none of the tail up, nose down, characteristics associated with large cars.

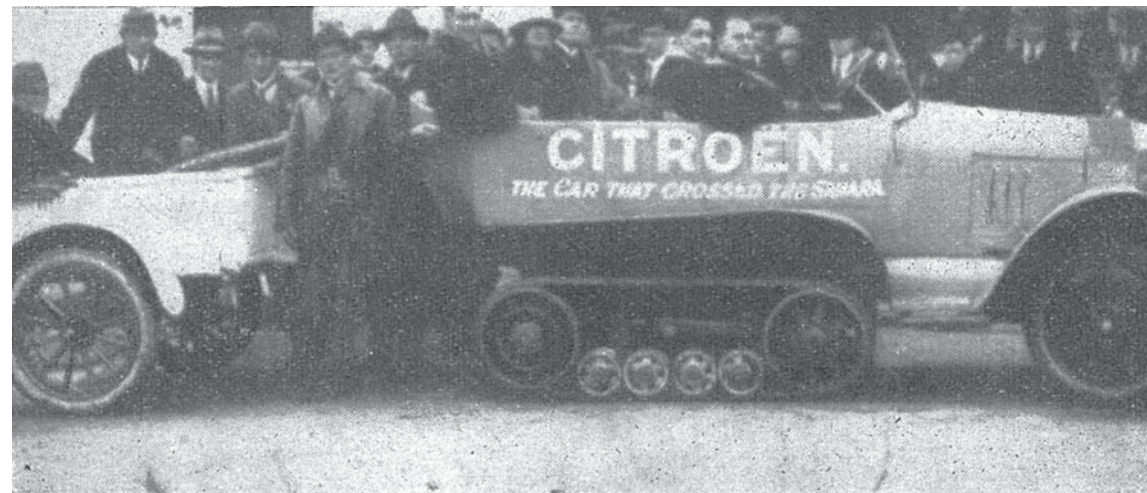
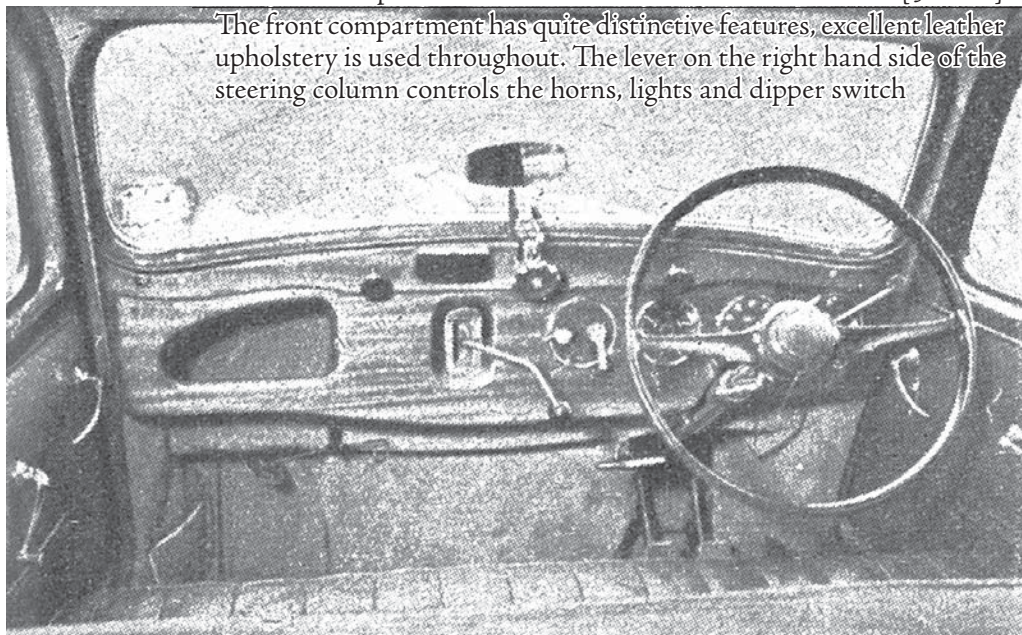
After the 200mile [320km]

tyres of other cars. Whereas 17 to 20,000miles [27 to 32,000km] is considered to be the life of a tyre on a rear wheel drive family car, in the case of the Citroën these figures can be reduced to between 12 and 15,000miles [19 to 24,000km].

#### HILL TEST

Bad roads with deep ruts are taken in the car's stride although passenger comfort under such conditions is poor. This can be

The front compartment has quite distinctive features, excellent leather upholstery is used throughout. The lever on the right hand side of the steering column controls the horns, lights and dipper switch



In Geelong thirty years ago was this Citroën that had crossed the Sahara. Clive Birtles [brother of Francis] is seen in the front of the trailer. In the front seat is Major Curtis, now chief of Preston Motors. The vehicle was tested at Anglesea before the Great Ocean Road was completed.

*Continued on page 29*

The Club's July meeting was all about members' photographs of Citroëns and Citroën related images. While it was originally intended to offer prizes in three categories ~ black and white, colour and digital ~ it turned out that I was the only person showing digitally. So, we ditched the digital prize and awarded two prizes for colour pictures.

The black and white class was won by Morrie Pilens with a picture of a wrecked cx he bought some years ago. But we will let Morrie pick up that story...

She first caught my eye as I was driving to the City, through an open door in an automotive engineering place in Richmond ~ stripped bare and badly twisted.

I thought 'I must have a closer

look.

Some days later I dropped into the engineering premises run by father and son, and asked if I could have a look at it. In conversation, I established that it had belonged to an English doctor recently arrived and establishing

## PHOTO COMPETITION



a practice in Doncaster. It had travelled only 7,000km.

The doctor had parked it in Abbotsford, opposite a brewery, and a loaded forklift had backed into it.

I asked the two owners what

City, I stopped again at the shop and said to Jennifer 'I would like to show you something; would you come with me?'

The two guys were impressed, Jennifer showed some interest in the wreck, and we departed.

On my next day off, with \$4,000 in my hot little hand, I be-

came the owner of a 1980 CX 2400 wreck.

I brought it home and over the next 2 years proceeded to work on it on my days off.

I used two porta powers, a railway sleeper and mechanical jacks to straighten the body, then cut off the centre pillar, removed and fitted floor, repaired bonnet, replaced front door, repaired rear door, panel beat roof, then unravelled the jigsaw puzzle of nuts, bolts, wires, upholstery, and finished assembling. Then came undercoat, putty, rubbing down and spray painting. Re-registered on 26 May, 1987.

A dream to drive, I had an enjoyable time criss-crossing Victorian highways and back roads ~ had it up to 120km ~ with the special steering control, the faster you drive, the tighter it gets. I had 8 years of satisfying motoring, even towing a rubbish trailer ~ yes, that is where I came unstuck. Towing a loaded trailer with tree branches to the tip, I was pulled up by the Boys in Blue ~ accused of having rubbish falling off the trailer.

Talked them out of this but being a lean day, they made a roadside inspection ~ 'the treads on the tyres are too low, the spare tyre is not roadworthy', so they slapped on a yellow sticker.

I tipped my load, went home and parked the car ~ there was steam everywhere.

The car had blown a head gasket. She was really hurt and upset by the indignity of a 'yellow canary' and so was I! I'd had enough and decided to get rid of my old friend.

I advertised her and sold her for \$400 to an enthusiast ~ 'going to a good home' ~ and helped load her on a tip truck.

I was sorry for months afterwards ~ watching her depart on the back of a tow truck was too much to bear.

The English doctor is now an eminent heart specialist and Jennifer has gone on to higher things but has never forgiven me for my tactics in using her as a means of persuasion.

In 2000, there was an ad. in 'The Age' ~ 1982 CX 2400 ~ but that's another story!

Morrie Pilens

One of the winners of the prizes for colour pictures was a picture taken by David Gries for Lance Collins' Traction. The picture was taken during Raid'88.

Morrie Pilens class-winning picture of his CX, before he repaired it.



## PHOTO COMPETITION

they were going to do with it ~ they said they were going to repair it.

When passing some months later, I noticed it was still there. I thought 'I must have it'.

I went in and said that I would like to buy the wreck. Their answer was still that they were going to repair it.

My travels as a news cameraman to and from the city led me pass their shop, so I kept dropping in frequently and trying to talk the older man into selling it to me.

This had been going on for months when one day I stopped in front of the premises and left my journalist and sound man in the news car and went in. Again asking if they had changed their minds. The father [in his seventies] said 'you are persistent'. He saw the news car parked outside and said 'Is that Jennifer Keyte sitting there?'. I said that it was.

In a cheeky manner, he said 'If you introduce me to her, I'll sell you the wreck for \$4,000'. I said 'Done, but not today'.

A week later on the way to the



I had hoped to reproduce David's picture in this edition, but unfortunately he did not a digital scan to me in time.

But the other winner was Eoin Barnett. His photo is of Michael and his son Daniel Mohr on Raid

on August 12, 2008.

Eoin also brought with him some pictures he took in Hanoi in 1995.

Now a non-Citroënist seeing this building [now a car park] might comment on the 'pretty stained glass window', but we know better.

To us it is clear that at some stage this must have been an assembly plant, a showroom, a head office... at the very least a garage... with Citroën connections that pre-date the 1960s.

## PHOTO COMPETITION

Australia 2008. Eoin thinks it was taken during a lunch break near Lake Carey which is just south of Laverton, Western Australia



# Insure your love for less

Spend less on your insurance and more on your obsession

- Speak to specialist staff who share your passion
- Select your own repairer and receive a lifetime guarantee on authorised repairs
- Flexible premium options tailored to suit your individual needs
- We offer an agreed value to protect the value of your investment
- Save with competitive premiums for your daily drive
- Backed by Wesfarmers Insurance, one of Australia's largest general insurers with over 90 years heritage
- To find out more visit us online: [www.lsvinsurance.com.au](http://www.lsvinsurance.com.au)

**Lumley**   
Special Vehicles

**Call 1300 660 556 today to see how much you could save**

 **Wesfarmers Insurance**

Lumley Special Vehicles is a trading name of Wesfarmers General Insurance Limited (WGIL) (ABN 24 000 036 279 AFSL 241461). WGIL is part of the Wesfarmers Insurance Division of Wesfarmers Limited. Consider the product disclosure statement to decide if the policy is right for you.



Despite an in-depth search of the internet, neither Eoin nor I have been able to find any reference to Citroën having any major presence in Vietnam, outside Saigon.

Anyone who can shed any

light [unfortunately Eoin cannot remember exactly where he took the photo] please contact me.

Of course, all that internet searching had to put to good use. Hence the little article on Citroën's connections with Vietnam that appears elsewhere in this edition.

## PHOTO COMPETITION





## PHOTO COMPETITION





I was recently fortunate enough to obtain an early English brochure for the HY and HZ 30cwt vans. The brochure does not have a date of publication, or disclaimer that the information contained was valid on certain

of improvement. Launched, in France, in 1947 that would place the publication as 1959.

Brochures are always designed to make every motoring sow's ear seem more like a silk purse ~ and this one is no exception.

The copy that accompanies the illustration below extols the virtues

of the HY van's 'special chassis'. This is 'best described as a U piece riveted to a horizontal ladder... [which] guarantees that the

flooring will not twist or warp'. Which is why the van is depicted supported on just three of its four wheels.

The illustration below demonstrates that the van can carry more than its own weight ~ indeed it is the only van that do this. Well, I guess there has to be some compensation for a top speed of just 76kph.

To be fair, your Citroën dealer can offer two modifications. The first cuts petrol consumption for Town deliveries and the second

gives a higher speed ~ 50mph [80kph] ~ for distance work.' While the van was fitted with the 11D motor, it was limited to 3,500rpm in this situation.

Citroën assure us we will be able to 'stand up comfortably, and move around easily in your H van.' With an internal height of 1.8m... well, the man in door below must be right shorty.

The third illustration [overleaf] reinforces the ease of maintenance. 'The body is easily separated from the engine and front

## HY HEAVEN

date... but subject to change without notice. The only dating is linked to a claim that the van had benefited from 12 years





axle assembly.

Now everyone knows the HY van, but the HZ designation was new to me. The vans shared the same dimensions, but the HZ had a lower payload [980 compared with 1,605kg] and 'Michelin

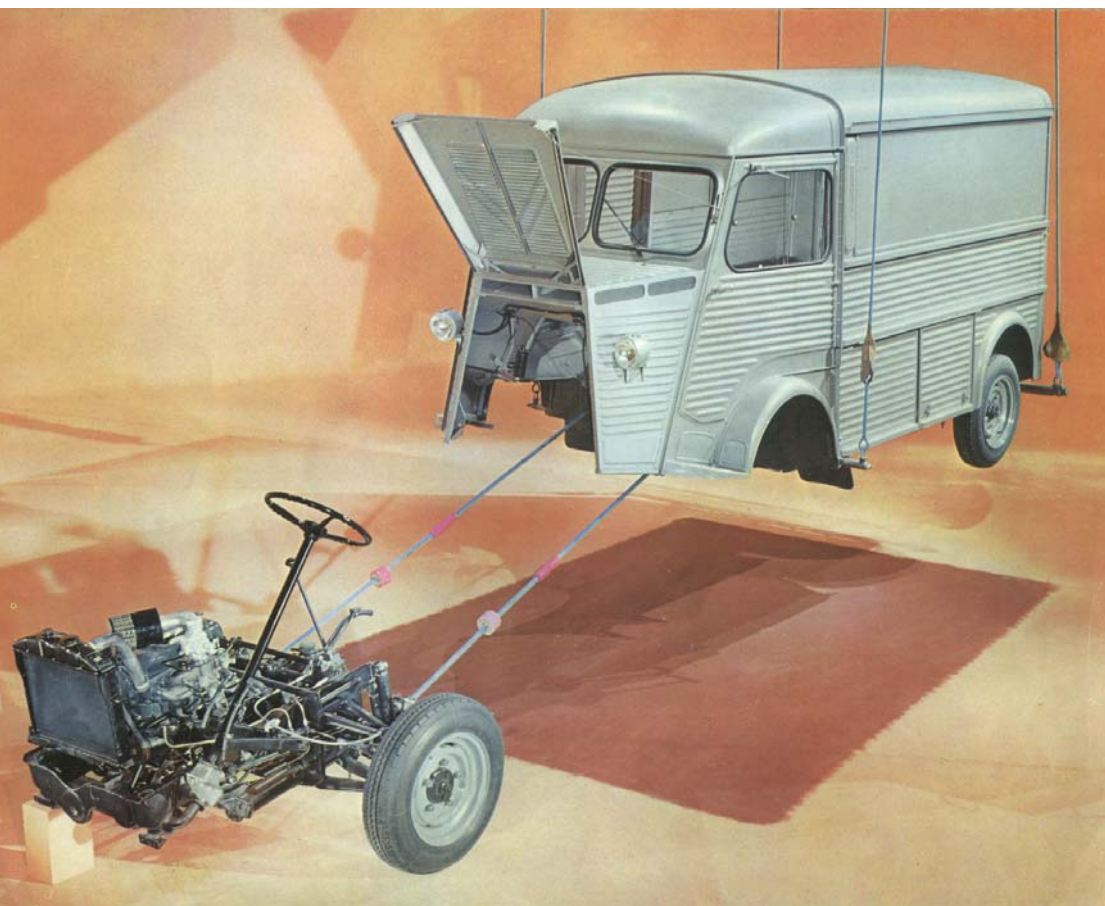
But my favourite part of the brochure is missing in the example I have. 'Here are the main overall dimensions of the H-type truck. You will have an even better idea of its proportions, if you assemble the cardboard model enclosed, and scale it off with ruler provided. You may also find it

cotton' tyres instead of Michelin x and the hand brake operated on the rear, rather than front wheels.

useful for judging any conversion or layout projects which you may be considering.'

Leigh F Miles ~ Editor

## HY HEAVEN



*Continued from page 17*

test was completed absolutely no fatigue was felt by the car's three occupants although two of the test team complained of the large turning circle but they agreed that the driver was well looked after with regard to comfort, good all round vision, well-placed rear vision mirror and an excellent array of easily-read instruments.

### NEW TYPE OF SUSPENSION

A completely new type of rear suspension has been brought out by Citroën, and is fitted as optional equipment on their six

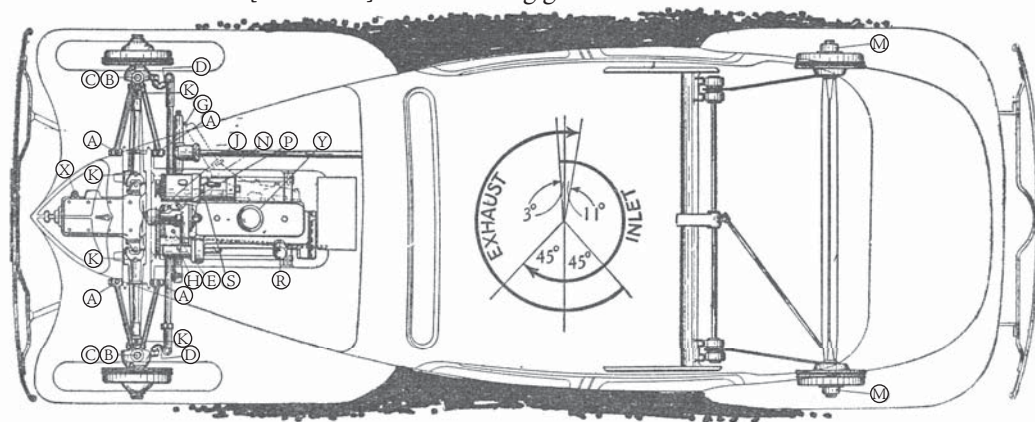
cylinder front drive saloon.

For the front suspension, the torsion bar system has been retained. At the rear, however, each wheel is mounted on an oscillating bar, the two bars being connected by a transverse stabilizer bar. On

## 1954 ROAD TEST: BIG 6

each side, the weight of the car is supported by a piston, which forces a liquid similar to hydraulic brake fluid into a sphere filled with gas. The liquid, acting on a diaphragm within the sphere, compresses the gas, absorption

Every 1,500miles [2,500km] the sump oil should be changed. A medium oil is replenished through the filler [v] in the overhead valve gear. An oiler for the lubrication of the clutch ball-race is located on the top of the clutch bell housing. This needs a few drops of engine oil every 250miles. Each 250miles [400km] ~ p: Water pump bush. b: Clutch thrust race. Each 500miles [800km] ~ n: Fan spindle bearing. j: Selector lever shaft. k: Drive shaft sliding ends. a: Upper link arm pin and bearings. b: Upper swivel link ball joints. c: Lower swivel link ball joints. d: Track rod ball joints. h: Fan pulley drive shaft bearing. Each 1,000miles [1,600km] ~ m: Rear hub bearings. x: Gearbox duff. filler, Each 10,000miles [16,000km] ~ g: Steering gear.





of road shocks being achieved by compelling the liquid to pass through calibrated holes.

A small seven-piston pump driven from the camshaft draws fluid from a tank mounted ahead of the dashboard, delivering it

however, cost is higher, the increase in price over the standard model being about £70 [about 4% Ed.].

Citroën claim for their new suspension an enormous superiority to any form yet devised.

In a demonstration, a bottle of champagne was opened and three

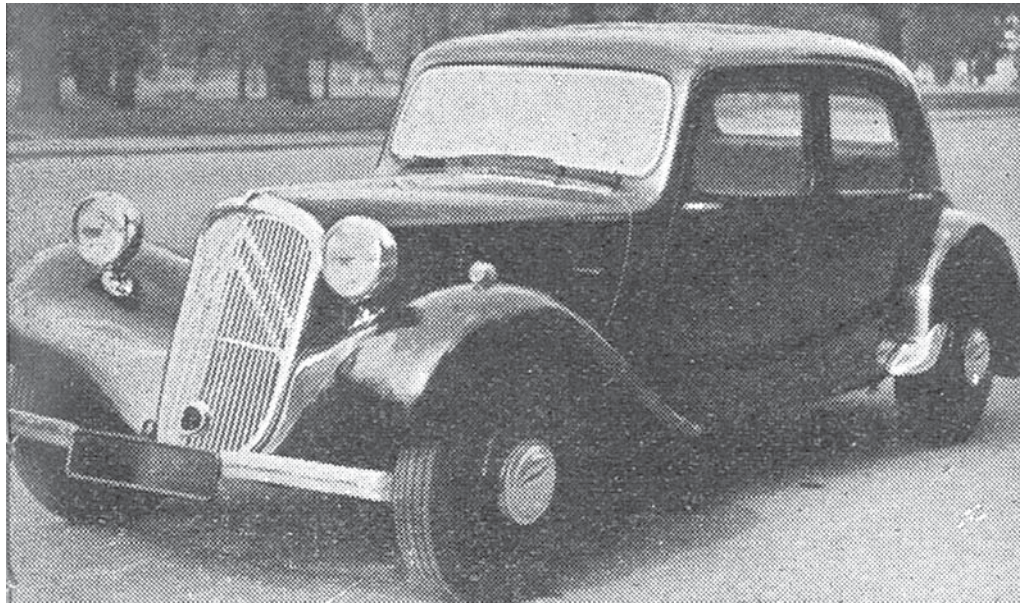
under pressure to an accumulator mounted alongside the engine, where a mechanism maintains a constant pressure regardless of engine speed. From the accumulator, two tubes carry the fluid to the pistons of the rear suspension system.

#### SMOOTHER RIDE

Overall weight of a car equipped in this way is practically the same as that of the standard torsion-spring model. At present,

glasses filled in a car travelling over a winding road at between 45 and 50mph [70 and 80kph] without a drop being spilled. Occupants were unable to feel any difference in ride whether the car was travelling over a smooth road, rough paving stones, or a surface dug up by a scarifier. Road holding ability ~ already excellent in the Citroën ~ is said to be even further improved. An additional advantage of the hydro-pneumatic suspension is

## 1954 Road Test: Big 6



| MOTOR MANUAL                         |                 | ROAD TEST          |   |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|---|
| Other cars in group: Chevro-         |                 | Mileage            | 12,000 miles                                |
| let, Jaguar Mk VII, Ford v8, DeSoto  |                 | Weather conditions | Wet and dry roads                           |
| Car                                  | Citroën Big Six | Price              | £1,840                                      |
| Supplied by                          | Private Owner   |                    |   |
| SCORE                                | Group           | This               | ENGINE                                      |
| Car                                  |                 |                    | 6 cyl. Bore: 78mm. Stroke: 100mm.           |
| Styling: Out of date                 | 4               | 3                  | Capacity: 2,867cc. Comp. Ratio: 6.5 to 1.   |
| Bodywork: Fair                       | 4               | 4                  | Valves: Overhead. BHP: 76 at 3,800rpm.      |
| Interior fittings: Good              | 4               | 4                  | Rated horsepower: 23.6. MPH in top gear     |
| Instruments: All needed              | 4               | 4                  | per 1,000rpm: 20.                           |
| Passenger comfort: Roomy             | 4               | 5                  | TRANSMISSION                                |
| Riding comfort: Very firm            | 4               | 4                  | Clutch: Single dry plate. Gearbox: Three-   |
| Driving position: Good support       | 4               | 4                  | speed. Ratios: 1st, 13.24; 2nd [SM], 5.62;  |
|                                      | 4               | 4                  | 3rd [SM], 3.875. Final drive: Spiral bevel. |
| Boot capacity: Only fair             | 5               | 3                  | SUSPENSION                                  |
| Spare tyre position: Hinders luggage | 4               | 4                  | Front: Independent; wishbone links and      |
| removal                              | 4               | 4                  | torsion bars. Rear: Dead axle; trailing     |
| Toolkit: Quite comprehensive         | 4               | 4                  | arms and torsion bars. Telescopic shock     |
| Jacking: Jacking point hard to reach | 4               | 3                  | absorbers all round.                        |
|                                      | 4               | 4                  | DIMENSIONS                                  |
| Max. speed: Sufficient               | 4               | 4                  | W'base: 10' 1". Length: 15' 11". Width:     |
| Acceleration: Good in top gear       | 4               | 4                  | 5' 10". Height: 5' 1". Turning circle: 45'. |
| Braking: Excellent                   | 4               | 5                  | Weight: 27cwt. Petrol Tank: 15gal.          |
| Roadholding: Flat cornering          | 4               | 5                  | Sump: 12pints. Ground clearance: 7".        |
| Flexibility: Good point              | 5               | 5                  | Tyres: 185/400mm. Weight distribution:      |
| Turning circle: Very bad [45']       | 3               | 2                  | Front/rear: 59/41.                          |
| Parking ease: Not easy               | 4               | 3                  | PERFORMANCE SUMMARY                         |
| Miles per gallon: Fair               | 4               | 4                  | Acceleration: 0-50, 12.5sec. Top gear:      |
| Tank range: 285 miles                | 4               | 4                  | 10-30, 10.3sec.; 20-40, 10.2sec.; 30-50,    |
| Value: Good long life                | 4               | 4                  | 10.6sec. Maximum speed: 83mph.              |
| Price per bhp: Fair, £24             | 4               | 3                  | Average mpg: 20.                            |
| Depreciation: Fairly high            | 4               | 3                  | Maximum speeds in gears: 1st, 28. 2nd,      |
| Delivery: 5 months                   | 3               | 3                  | 65mph                                       |
| Country service: Poor                | 4               | 3                  | Brakes [from 30mph to stop] 3 1/2'          |
| Total                                | 100             | 94                 | Steering [lock to lock]: 2 1/4 turns.       |

FURTHER NOTES:



that it can be used as a rear jacking system. A lever in the boot enables the pistons to raise the car until the rear wheels are clear of the road, after which a strut can be locked into position to take the weight while a wheel is changed.

interesting. I had always thought that by 1954, indeed well before then, that all Tractions were sold with Michelin radial tyres as standard. It would appear this was not the case ~ in Australia, at least. Ed.] It is not at present

being fitted to the Normale or the Light Fifteen, as it is felt that the

extra cost would lift them out of their present price class.

The hydro-pneumatic suspension can only be obtained as original equipment. It cannot be fitted later to a standard model.

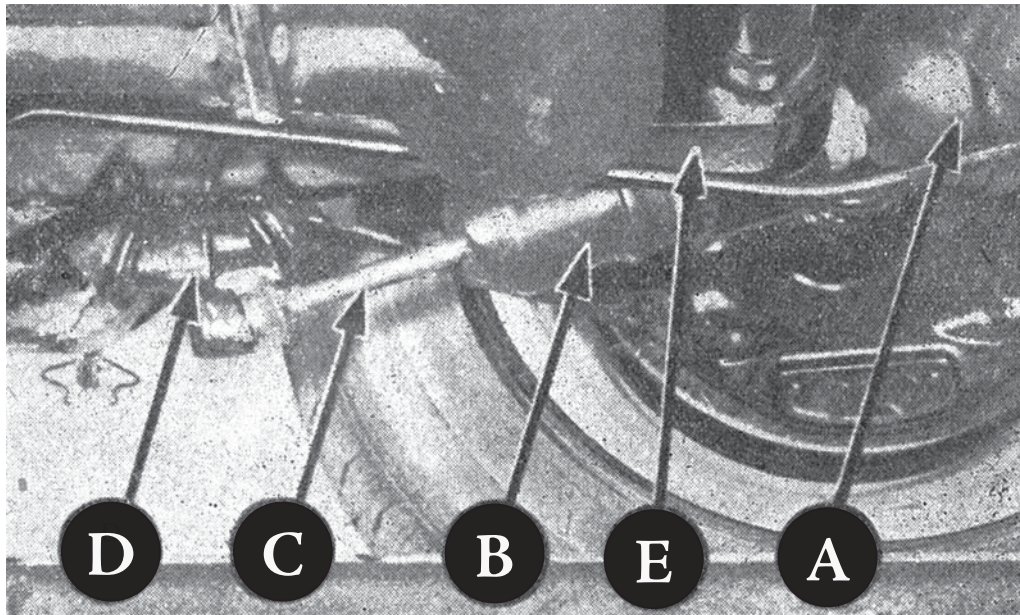
These articles first appeared in 'Australian Motor Manual', 15 October, 1954. The magazine is from the collection of the Editor.

#### SAFETY FACTOR

No danger could result from sudden loss of pressure, as in breakage of a fluid line. Even with the system inoperative, the car could still be driven slowly home.

With this type of suspension Citroën recommend the fitting of Michelin x tyres, which have a steel and rubber carcass. [This is

The gas-filled sphere [A] cushions liquid forced from the cylinder [B] by the weight of the car acting on the piston rod [C] shackled to the chassis at [D]. [E] is rear end of chassis member.



## 1954 ROAD TEST: BIG 6

As I noted earlier in this magazine, Eoin Barnett's photographs from Hanoi lead me to undertake some internet searching to discover more about the building he photographed. Unfortunately, I could find nothing on line to indicate the purpose of the building. It

would certainly seem that Citroën's 'head office', such as one existed in French Indochina, was in Saigon rather than any of the other Colonial centres.

Société Automobile d'Extrême-Orient had its head office on Bvd Charner from 1936. However the building's motor-

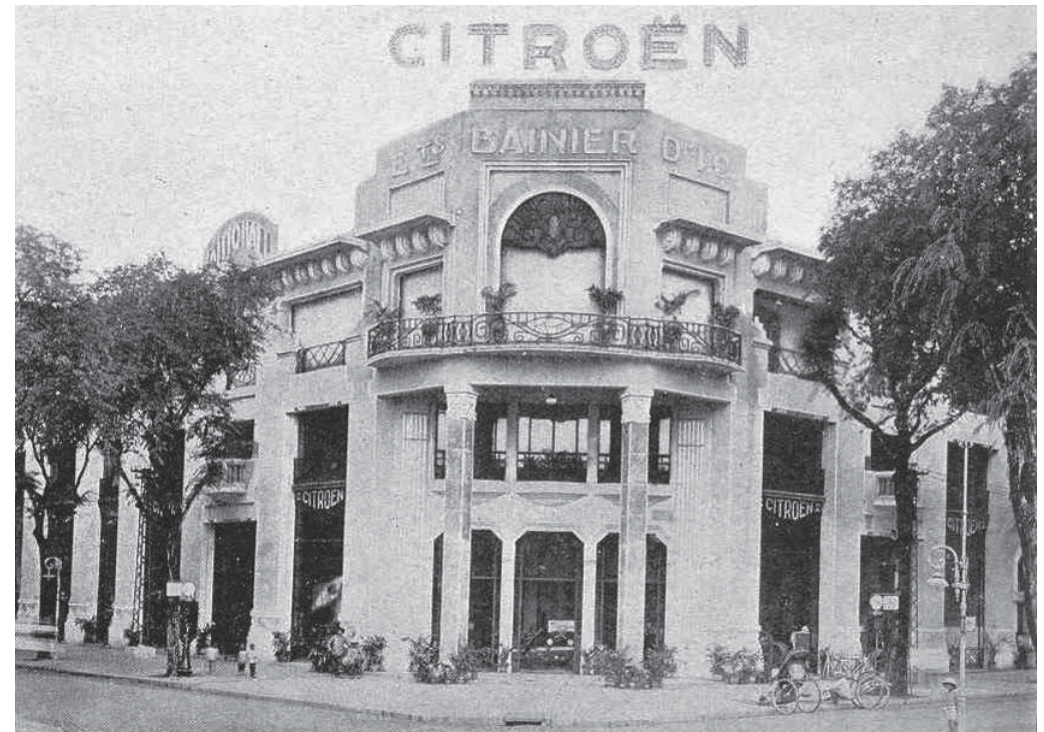
ing associations pre-date that year. In 1912 a French business man named Mr. Bainier built an automotive showroom and garage on the corner of Boulevard Bonnard and Boulevard Charner, in Saigon. In 1927: he became an

import dealer for Citroën automobiles. The showroom was one of a number of Bainier 'Auto Halls' through out Indochina at the time.

There were also Bainier 'Auto Halls' in Hue, Ha Noi, Phom Penh and Tourane at the time. The showrooms were used to

The main entrance to M Bainier's Saigon 'Auto Hall' on Bvd Charner.

## CITROËN INDOCHINE





house and exhibit the latest Citroën and other automobiles. While Eoin's photo could be of Bainier's Hanoi 'Auto Hall', I have not been able to locate any pictures of this branch of his automotive empire.

six story hotel, complete with one hundred guest rooms, three cinemas, a cafeteria, a dance hall and library, and renamed the building the Rex Trading centre.

When war broke out between the Americans and the North Vietnamese, the hotel was leased by the Americans and used as a bil-

let for US military personal and the Joint United States Public Affairs Office [JUSPAO] personal.

Part of the job of JUSPAO staff was to provide reporters with 'clear, concise summaries of widely scattered action.'

As such, nightly briefings were held at 5pm at the Rex hotel that

covered the day's events.

These briefings though, ended up not satisfying anyone involved.

The military always tended to provide less information rather than more, and often the information they did give was incomplete or inaccurate [as war data often is].

Overtime the briefers also began giving body counts and other such statistics to satisfy reporters' demands for precision.

But because the briefings seldom bore any resemblance to the facts in the field, as reality became temporarily replaced by dazzling displays of numerical progress, the briefings became mockingly known as the 'Five O'clock Follies.'

Later in the war the 'Five O'clock Follies' were shunted across the street to the building on the corner of Lam Son Square and Dong Khoi, but most people still associate the 'Five O'clock

Follies' with the Rex Hotel.

The other reason the Rex Hotel is so often associated with the Vietnam War is because of its rooftop bar.

The rooftop bar and restau-

The postcard [below] also dates from 1948 and shows Bvd Saint-Graal. Two Citroëns are parked on the right of the street.



The two post cards [left and centre] depict Bvd Charner looking towards the Hotel de Ville [Town Hall]. The left card shows the Bainier 'Auto Hall' and is undated. The centre card shows the facing side of the Boulevard and dates from 1948. A Traction can be seen ~ second closest to the camera. The right hand card shows a line up no less than eight D-series cars outside the 1960 Colombo Plan Conference held in Saigon.





rant was a favourite watering hole with the GIs and war correspondents, and was a place where they could feel at ease without having to watch their backs.

From here they could watch the flashes and explosion on the

the reunification of Vietnam in 1976.

Ten years later in 1986 the hotel was sold once again, the new owners changing its name back to the Rex Hotel.

Since then the hotel has expanded to incorporate surrounding buildings on Pasteur Street,

and has converted its old cinema to guest rooms to increase the size of the hotel.

Today the Rex Hotel is a 5 Star 289room hotel complete with two ballrooms, spa, gym, two swimming pools, six restaurants and bars, and numerous fashion shops.

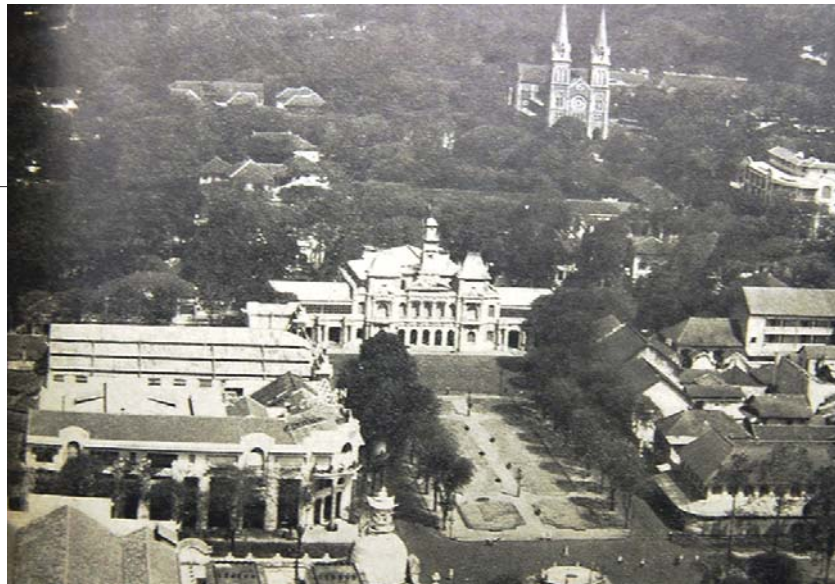
The Rex Hotel has certainly come a long way since its beginning, metamorphosing from car showroom to a 5 star luxury hotel.

horizon in relative safety, glad that it was not them being shot at.

When South Vietnam was liberated in 1975, the Rex Trading Centre became the property of the city's tourist bureau.

They in turn upgraded the Rex into an international hotel and renamed it Ben Thanh Hotel.

With a touch of irony given its use by JUSPAO, Ben Thanh Hotel was used as the location for the press conference announcing



This picture is an aerial view of Bvd Charner. At the top of the street is the Hotel de Ville [Town Hall] and in the lower left the 'Auto Hall'.

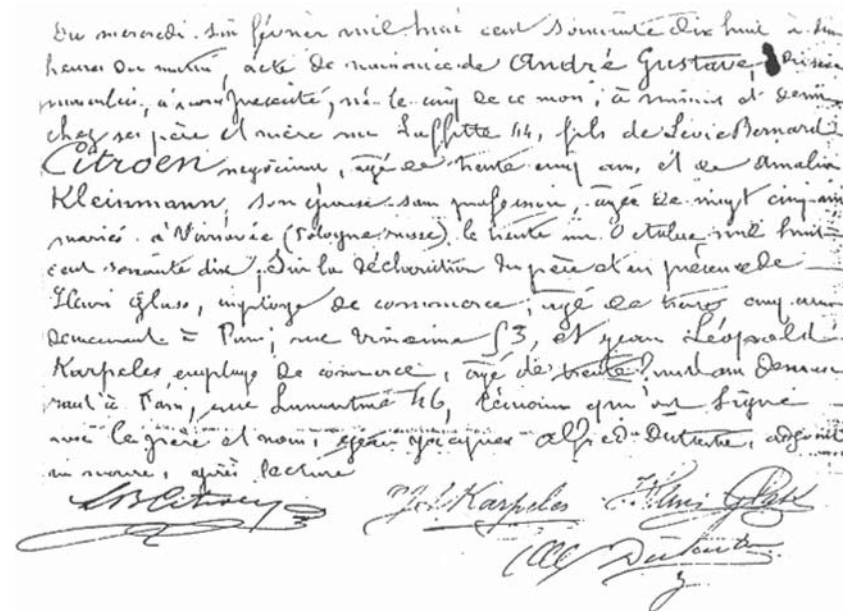
André Gustave Citroën was born just half an hour after midnight in the early hours of Tuesday 5 February 1878 at his parents' house, 44 Rue Laffitte, in the 9th arrondissement of Paris.

Rue Laffitte is a one-way street running south to north, crossing Boulevard Haussmann and Rue La Fayette. It is about a quarter of a mile east of the Opéra and about 2 miles east of the Arc de Triomphe.

At 8am the following day [Wednesday 6] his father Levie Bernard Citroën aged 35, signed a formal declaration of his son's birth. This birth certificate was witnessed by Messieurs Henri Glass, Leopold Karpeles and Jean Jacques Alfred Dutrertier.

André's mother was Amalia [née] Kleinmann aged 25, and they had been married in Warsaw on Wednesday 31 October 1870. There were four older siblings ~ Jeanne, Hugues, Fernande, and Bernard.

André's great grandfather, Roelof Limoenman traded in exotic fruit in Amsterdam. Limoen [pronounced 'limoon'] is Dutch for lime. Roelof's son, Barend, changed the surname to Citroën. Citroën [pronounced 'citroon'] is Dutch for lemon. Barend was a successful jeweller and diamond dealer, and married to Netje had fourteen children. Levie was sent to Warsaw to expand the family business, and there he met



André Citroën's birth certificate.

## CITROËN INDOCHINE

## FAMILY TIES



Amalia. When Levie and Amalia moved to Paris in 1872 or 1873 the surname acquired a diaeresis [two dots over the e], probably to make it sound better to the French ear. The family moved from Rue Laffitte to a larger apartment in

Levie Barend is sometimes documented as Lévie Bernard or Louis Bernard, and Bernard became a common choice of name after the move to Paris. Amalia is sometimes documented as Amalie, and on her maternal side there

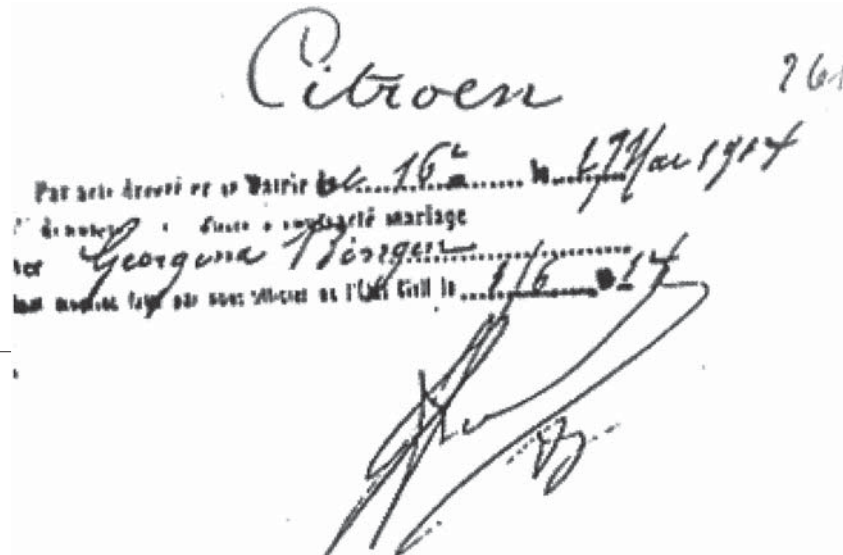
was an Amaalie. She also bears the name Masza, but which is vari-

ously given in some sources as Masha, Mazra, and Marza. Two of André's children have the name Maxime, this having come from their mother Giorgina's side of the family.

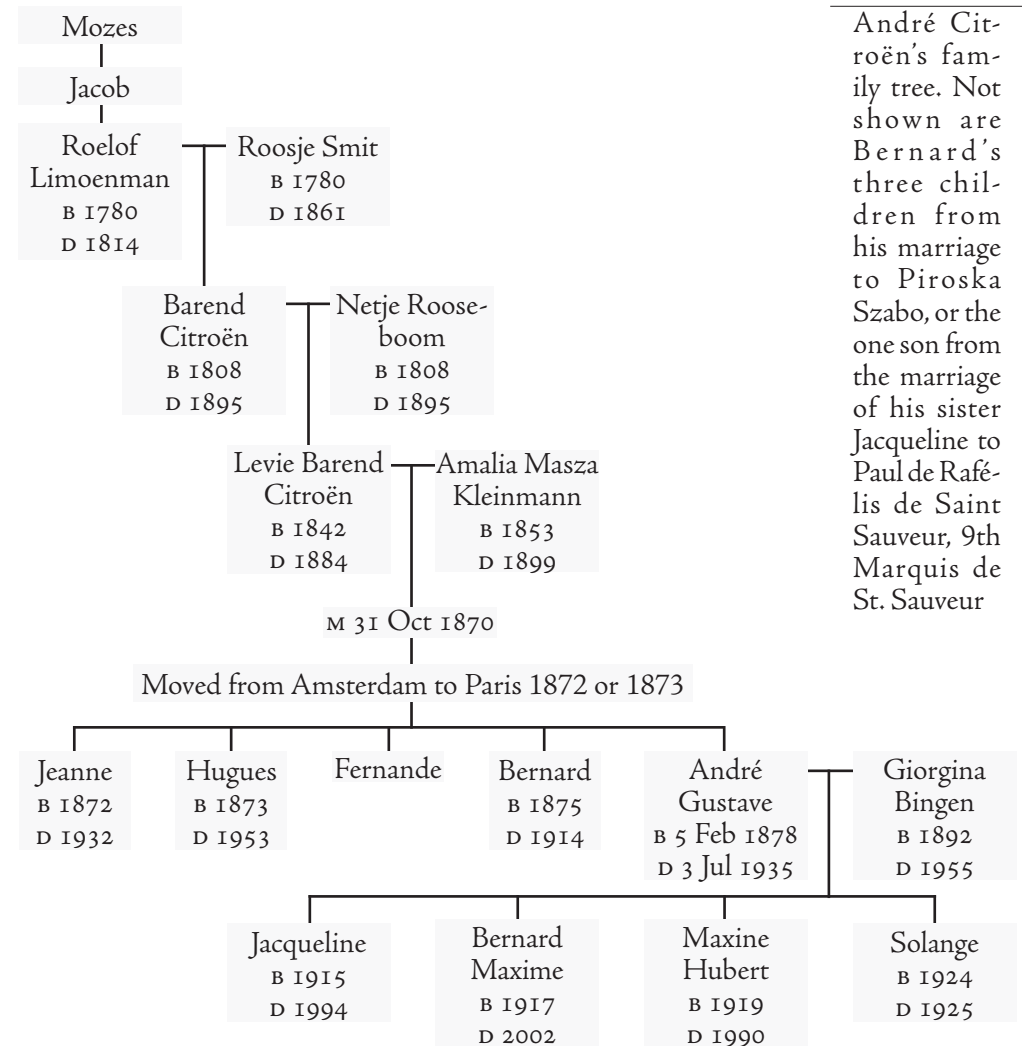
André married Giorgina Bingen [the daughter of an Italian banker] on Wednesday 27 May 1914. This was a civil ceremony in lieu of marriage at the town hall in 16th arrondissement [roughly to the southwest of the Arc de Triomphe]. They had four children ~ Jacqueline, Bernard,

Rue Châteaudun [now a one-way street running west to east across the top of Rue Laffitte]. Growing up in a prosperous Jewish family, André would have had a comfortable early childhood, until sadly in 1884 his father committed suicide. Amalia moved the family to smaller apartment at 62 Rue La Fayette [near the east end of Rue Châteaudun].

As is common with large families, certain first names prevail. Levie had a father, cousins, uncles, and great uncles named Barend.



The certificate of André Citroën's marriage to Giorgina Bingen.



André Citroën's family tree. Not shown are Bernard's three children from his marriage to Piroska Szabo, or the one son from the marriage of his sister Jacqueline to Paul de Rafé-lis de Saint Sauveur, 9th Marquis de St. Sauveur

Maxime, and Solange [who died in infancy].

André died on Wednesday 3 July 1935 of stomach cancer, and was interred in the cemetery of Montparnasse, the funeral being led by the Chief Rabbi of Paris.

Two years before the death of André Citroën's eldest son Bernard in August 2002, at the age of 85, John Reynolds, a freelance motoring writer and journalist and Traction Owners Club [UK] member, was commissioned by the Daily Telegraph to visit the Frenchman at



his apartment in the fashionable 16th arrondissement of Paris to interview him about his experiences during World War 2 and his service as a pilot with the Royal Air Force, a subject about which very little was then known

when they wish to purchase a car they will think of Citroën, because fond childhood memories will spring to mind,' he said.

These models were followed by a range of toy garages, service depots and fire stations and after that the famous Citroënnette series of pedal and electric-powered toy

cars. 'I hope that the child who plays with these toys won't just say, 'Pass me my model car,' but 'Pass me my Citroën' said André Citroën at the 1927 Citroënnette launch. 'The first words that a baby should learn to pronounce are Mummy, Daddy and Citroën,' he proclaimed.

Naturally, the chief test driver of these Citroën models was the motor-magnate's second child and eldest son, Bernard Maxime Citroën; born in Paris on 4 June 1917. Bernard tested his father's tiny prototypes to destruction on the living room carpet.

At first, young Bernard seemed destined to succeed to what was then Europe's largest automobile manufacturing empire. But in 1935, when he was 18, his father became bankrupt and died shortly afterwards.

As the heir-apparent of 'The Henry Ford of France' [as Citroën pere was known], Bernard seemed destined to succeed his father at the head of what was then Europe's largest car maker. His father [who stemmed from a prominent Dutch-Polish Jewish family] had

been the first European industrialist to adopt American methods of mass production and mass marketing.

Within 10 years, Citroën was the world's fourth biggest car maker and the largest outside the US.

In 1929, the Quai de Javel turned out more than 100,000 vehicles, a total that was not seen again in Europe until the 1950s.

This made André Citroën an immensely wealthy man, well able to afford the lavish lifestyle that made him the target of gossip columnists throughout France. The company's vast profits funded his love of gambling, his weakness for advertising and publicity and, above all, his boundless generosity towards his three children, Jacqueline, Bernard and Maxime.

During the Roaring 1920s, Bernard and his siblings enjoyed a hedonistic upbringing, even by the standards of the time. For example, in July 1925 their father invited them to join him at a gala ceremony held to mark the switching-on of the illuminations installed on the Eiffel Tower to celebrate the opening of the international Exposition des Arts Decoratifs et Industriels, the birthplace of the Art Deco movement. Thereafter, every night for the next 10 years, the children could see their family name on the side of the Eiffel Tower spelt out in huge 100ft letters with 250,000 electric light-bulbs; the gigantic advertisement was visible

from 60 miles away.

Bernard was also present when, two years later, in May 1927, his father threw a huge party at the Quai de Javel to welcome Charles Lindbergh, who had just landed in Paris, having made the first flight across the Atlantic. 'During these ceremonies, my brother, sister and I presented a gift of jewellery to the American aviator,' he said.

The Citroën family regularly took their winter holidays

Bernard Citroën with his parents André and Giorgina.



## FAMILY TIES

in England, even among Citroën enthusiasts.

The resulting material formed part of an article published later by the Daily Telegraph in 2002 and subsequently in Bernard's obituary which also appeared in that newspaper.

Bernard's father, the engineer, industrialist and founder of Automobiles Citroën was more than just the pioneer of popular motoring in Europe. He was also among the first car manufacturers to introduce the automobile into the nursery as a means of publicising his full-size products.

Motor manufacturers, keen to raise interest in their vehicles, produced toy cars and in 1923, [three years after opening his huge car factory at the Quai de Javel on the left bank of the Seine in Paris], Citroën followed suit producing life-like toy cars that were all scale replicas of his production cars intended to mirror all the excitements of the grownup motoring world. By capturing the imagination of young would-be drivers, he aimed to recruit them later in life as loyal customers. 'In later years,



at Saint-Moritz in the company of Charlie Chaplin, while in summer they rented the same seaside villa at Deauville, Les Abeilles.

'To amuse us during our long summer holidays at Deauville, my father presented us with an elec-

tricly powered half-scale model of his latest series production car and persuaded the local police to give me permission to drive about the town on the public roads, even though I was not old enough to have a proper driving licence,' Bernard said. 'My father also provided one of his well-known Citroën-Kegresse caterpillar cars to act as a bathing machine.' For many years, every season the Citroën children would enter their little car in the annual Concours d'Elegance held by the Deauville Automobile Club. On at least one occasion, in September 1930, they were accompanied by Maurice Chevalier, then at the height of his fame.

But the good years did not last for ever. In 1934, André Citroën decided to modernise his factory to launch a revolutionary new car, the Traction Avant, the world's first mass-produced monocoque, front wheel drive design. He had misjudged the economic situation badly, with the result that Citroën ran headlong into a severe financial crisis, made worse by the plunging sales of

his existing range. A creditor's moratorium was established, but when this was broken by an impatient minor creditor, Automobiles Citroën was deemed insolvent and taken over by its largest creditor, the Michelin tyre company, to which André Citroën had already pledged his personal share-

holding. Having lost his firm, his fortune and even the rights to his name, the following year he died of cancer in a Paris clinic, aged 56, leaving his wife and children in straitened circumstances. For the 18-year-old Bernard, it was a shattering personal and career blow. Under new Michelin management, there was no room for him at the Quai de Javel and it seemed unlikely that the competition would employ an engineer called Citroën.

Nevertheless, in 1936 he followed in his father's footsteps by entering the elite Ecole Polytechnique, the engineering academy of the French military and civil services, passing out in 1939. Two years later, he enrolled in the Ecole Supérieure du Pétrole, a faculty of the University of Strasbourg based at Clermont-Ferrand, to begin his career as an engineer in the petro-chemical industry, and on gaining his diploma he joined the French state-owned Aquitaine Petrol Company.

In the meanwhile, the outbreak of the Second World War had intervened. In May 1940, at the height of the phoney war, Bernard was called up for compulsory military service and had begun training as a pilot at the Armée de l'Air flying school located at Versailles. When the invading German army arrived unexpectedly in Paris the following month, his unit was transferred to Royan and then on to Toulouse.

In August 1940, following the fall of France and the signing of an armistice with Germany, the country was divided into two separate zones, occupied and unoccupied, the northern part falling under German military control and the southern being administered by a collaborationist French government led by Marshal Petain, based at Vichy. Like most other French servicemen, Lieutenant Citroën was immediately demobilised.

Observing the realities of

Hitler's New European Order, in December 1942, now aged 25, Bernard decided to escape from France and join the Free French Forces in England under the command of General de Gaulle. After crossing the Pyrenees on foot in the height of winter, he reached Barcelona the following April, where he made contact with the British consulate and enlisted in the Free French Air Force. Dispatched along the celebrated clandestine escape route that led across Spain and Portugal, he reached Lisbon 20 weeks later [after encountering many adventures, including a short stay in prison] and was immediately flown to England on board a Dakota aircraft, arriving in London early in June 1943. A few days later, a similar ferry plane was shot down by the Germans over the Bay of Biscay, Bernard

Below left: Bernard, aged 15, with his father and French tennis champion Henri Cochet.

Right: Bernard in the cockpit of his Free French Air Force plane.



© John Reynolds Collection



## FAMILY TIES



recalled. 'All the crew and passengers perished, including the British actor Leslie Howard.'

Nine months later, after passing through elementary flying school at Wolverhampton and an advanced pilots' course at RAE

Finding the Spanish way of life agreeable, he decided to stay on in General Franco's capital, employed by a small agency concerned with the importation of various makes of French automobiles. It was at this time that he became a Roman Catholic.

In due course, Citroën opened his own import

agency. His stay in Madrid lasted until 1958, when he returned to Paris and rejoined the petrochemical industry, taking up employment with a subsidiary of the French Elf-Aquitaine/Total oil conglomerate, engaged in mineralogical exploration and development work overseas. Over the next 25 years, until his retirement in 1982, his activities as an oil company executive regularly took him abroad, to Argentina, Iran, India and Mexico.

During his retirement Bernard Citroën was able to concentrate on literature and tennis; for his achievements as a poet he had earlier been elected, in 1979, a member of the Academie du Var.

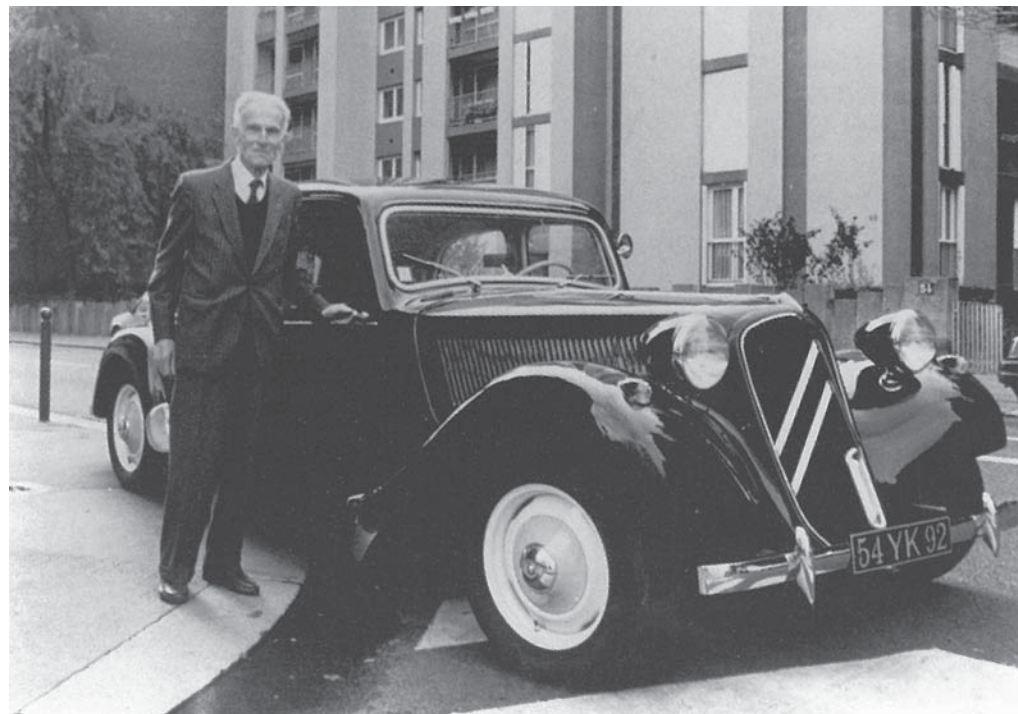
In 1996 he published his controversial autobiography, 'La Conjuración de Javel', in which he expounded his theory that his father's financial downfall and the acquisition of his firm by the Michelin Company had not been entirely an unavoidable commercial accident. He formed the view that the Citroën family had been the victims of a devious plot to swindle them out of the rightful

ownership of their company.

A man of catholic tastes [and nowadays of Catholic religion] Bernard Citroën had memories of owning and driving many different types of vehicle. During his time in Spain in the 1950s, he owned one of his father's greatest creations, a classic black 11CV Traction Avant saloon. 'But there was never any question of receiving one as a present from the new owners of the Double Chevron firm,' he reflected ruefully. 'I had to pay for this car myself, out of my own pocket, just like any other motorist.'

Driving this car always brought back memories of the days when, as a boy in 1934, he frequently accompanied his father

and his engineers on test drives in prototype Traction Avants. On one occasion he made a fast trip from Paris to Deauville and back in the magnificent 3,822CC v8 22CV version of the Traction Avant, exhibited at the 1934 Paris Motor Show, but never put into series production. At the wheel was Denis Kendall, a young Anglo-American Citroën engineer. 'Later, Kendall went back to England and was eventually elected Member of Parliament for Grantham from 1942 to 1950. After the war he became a minor figure in the British motor industry, when he attempted to build Britain's first People's Car. I met him again in Grantham in 1944,' said Bernard.



## FAMILY TIES

Cranwell, Bernard gained his wings as a Flying Officer in the RAE and was given temporary British citizenship. Following further training he joined No 342 Squadron [staffed entirely by French air crews and known as the Lorraine Squadron] which was equipped with twin-engined Douglas A-20 Boston tactical bombers, based at Hartford Bridge near Camberley, now known as Blackbushe airfield.

As part of the Second Allied Tactical Air Force, throughout July and August 1944 Bernard's squadron supported the ground forces engaged in the liberation of France, following the Allied D-day Normandy landings. Between June 1944 and May 1945 he flew more than 75 missions over France and Germany, service for which he was awarded the Croix de Guerre with five bars and, ultimately, the distinction of Commander of the Legion d'Honneur, military class.

After the war in January 1946, he found himself once more in Spain, having been sent to Madrid by the French government.



However, it seems that neither of the two great postwar creations of the Citroën firm, the 2CV and the DS19, was favoured by his custom, perhaps because they were too closely identified in his mind with the firm's new Michelin

car was a Citroën BX. 'During my motoring lifetime, a period spanning more than 50 years, I saw my father's vision of inexpensive motorised mobility reach its conclusion,' he reflected. 'Unfortunately, instead of developing into the ideal state of unfettered freedom of travel for the masses, as he had

hoped, it has proved so popular and successful that the result has been the all too familiar chaos of universal overcrowding and congestion on the roads. But he foresaw that situation also. Had he lived longer, he would surely have been among the first to come up with the answers!'

Bernard Citroën married Piroska Szabo, in 1952, a Hungarian by birth, who died in 1996.

They had three sons.

© John Reynolds

management. 'Eventually, when the Traction Avant went out of production, I switched to Fiats and Peugeots, even Dafs. In fact, I was one of the very first motorists in France to own one of these little Dutch cars. It had a continuously variable transmission, similar in principle to the system that my father planned to introduce on the Traction Avant in 1934,' he recalled.

At the age of 80, Bernard gave up driving. Appropriately, his last

## FAMILY TIES

Jacqueline Citroën leaning on the mudguard of a Traction Avant, following the completion of the Paris ~ Moscou ~ Paris Rally.



## FOR SALE

### 1951 LIGHT 15

Gunmetal Grey. New Tyres. New Clutch. Sun roof. All leather work is new. No rust. Regular service, good condition and well maintained. Completed Traction Run 2009. Original registration: TW 682. \$15,000. Contact: Bob Lachal 04 1711 0143 [36/02]

### FREE TO A GOOD HOME

Traction doors [4]. These doors are very rusty but I can't bring myself to send them to scrap. They can't stay where they are for much longer. Includes window regulators and locks [I think] but no handles. Located in Sydney near Parramatta ~ pick up only. Peter Lowrie, PL568@yahoo.com.au [36/01]

### 1930 C6F

1930 C6F project car, completely dismantled some new parts included. Engine No: 058614. Asking \$500. Ring Dave 04 2984 3408 or [02] 6684 3408 [Byron Bay, NSW area]

### B2 ENGINE

There is a B2 engine for sale in NSW that has been used as a stationary engine and comes complete with magneto and carby. The bell housing of the crank case has been removed to access the fly wheel for a belt drive. But otherwise the engine looks complete and turns over. For details phone Gus on [02] 9823 9768 the price is \$385. [36/01]

### 1966 ID19 ~ HEIDLEBERG CAR

Citroën 1966 ID19 Heidelberg car in fair condition, runs and lifts needs restoration. Unfortunately, health reasons stop me from restoring this car. Price \$6,500. Chassis No 193018733. Phone Ken on 04 0938 7606 or email kandrblackwood@gmail.com [35/08]

### 1951 11BL

Completely resprayed in Rouge Delage, interior completely retrimmed in original cloth. Gearbox has had the strengthening plate fitted, courtesy of the previous owner and Mel Carey, the engine has been completely rebuilt, new pistons and liners, big end and main bearings. Carburettor has been rebuilt and a 123 electronic ignition fitted. New mastercylinder and slave cylinders. One lower ball joint replaced. New interior and exterior chrome fittings. New tyres fitted within the last 3 months, rims converted to 15 inch to permit fitting 15/165 tyres [original 400mm rims available, in lieu of current rims, but those tyres aren't good]. Slight engine oil leak. Currently on full ACT registration till April [can be renewed till October]. She drives beautifully, and is immaculate inside and out... not quite perfect, but very close. Y1B 32S \$17,500. Contact Chris 04 0766 4843 [36/01]



## WANTED

### WORKSHOP SPACE

Workshop space, double garage etc. suitable for restoration work, use of power tools etc. Ideally on East side, Mornington Peninsula, or rural up to an hour out of Melbourne. Call Mike Neil 04 1821 1278, or email taymike51@gmail.com [36/02]





# CITROËN CLASSIC OWNERS CLUB OF AUSTRALIA

Australia's National Citroën Car Club

