



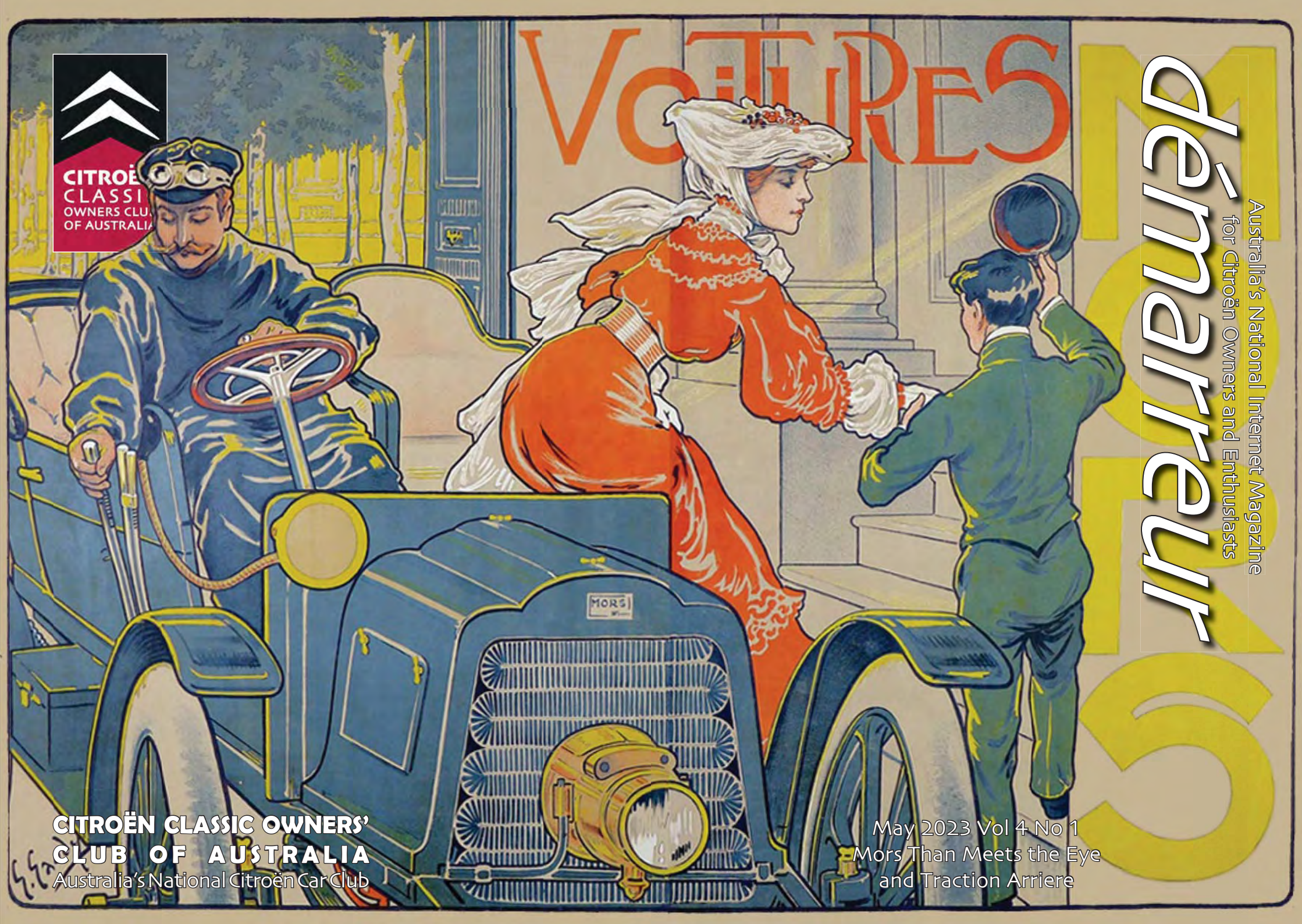
VOITURES

démarrateur

Australia's National Internet Magazine
for Citroën Owners and Enthusiasts

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

May 2023 Vol 4 No 1
Mors Than Meets the Eye
and Traction Arrière



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

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.

Membership

Annual Membership is \$35 and printed editions of 'Front Drive' are posted to Australian addresses for an additional \$45 per year.

Meetings

Club meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of every month [except December] at 7:30pm. The venue is the Frog Hollow Reserve Rooms, Fordham Ave., Camberwell.

Citroëning

Club Permit applications to VicRoads must be accompanied by a RWC [pre 1949 cars can be inspected by a Club Safety Officer], ownership validation and VicRoads forms endorsed by

the Club including financial validation. New Permit holders must supply the Club with approved photos, club permit number and expiry date. While Club permit renewals

can be done via the post CCOCA encourages you to do this via the internet and email. It is faster, simpler and safer than the post. Payment can also be completed via your VicRoads on-line account.

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Cover Image

The cover image is an advertisement for Mors cars created by Georges Gaudy. Image source: www.globalgallery.com

Deadline

The deadline for the next edition of 'démarrreur' is Friday, 16 June and for 'Front Drive' it is Sunday, 21 May.

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Life Members

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

Arthur and Nance Clarke	1984
Jack Weaver	1991
Peter Boyle	2003
Ted Cross	2012
Rob Little	2012
Sue Bryant	2017
Brian Wade	2017
Leigh Miles	2022
Lance Wearne	2023

SPARE PARTS & TOOLS

Contact Max Lewis. Phone: 0458 993 771 [if you do phone, please do so at a reasonable hour] or spareparts@citroenclassic.org.au

CLUB SHOP

Club Shop is presently not operating. For further information please contact the Club's President.

OTHER CLUBS

Vic www.citcarclubvic.org.au
NSW www.citroencarclub.org.au
QLD www.citroenclubqld.org
SA www.clubcitroensa.com
WA www.citroenwa.org.au
Tas www.citroentas.org

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Contributors

Contributors to this edition of 'démarrreur' include Chris Bailey, Ray Bell, Alan Brown, John Couche, Michael Dahl, Eric Fauvre, Alan Gibbons, Kenneth Johnson, Mark Navin, Andrew Peel, William Rankine, Willie Sellers, Mark Turpin and Russell Wade

Ed Sed

I believe that at 104 pages this may be the largest magazine the Club has ever produced. Hopefully you will see that as a good thing, although I have heard some 'wish' for the magazine not to be so big.

But before I share the highlights of this edition I must thank the Club for once again entrusting 'Front Drive' and 'démarréur' to my hands for another year. Thanks for letting me loose to guide some of your motoring reading for the coming 12 months.

Our focus is Traction Arrière and we have a contribution from Ken Johnson telling the story of his 1922 B2. His loving restoration of this car is a delight to read. The other 'vintage' piece is from William Rankine who tells us the story of his pre-war Citroën Diesel collection. Collection? I'm betting you didn't know there was one pre-war diesel in the country. Nev-



Continued on page 6

er mind three of them. Actually the story of these cars goes back to the Club's earliest days and in this edition we track the ownership of these very rare vehicles over the decades.

As promised, we have more to report on the subject of 'The Australian Racers' with a detailed article about Don Wright who built and raced a Traction-based open wheeler racing car in the 1950s in New South Wales. Surprisingly, part of this article comes from our friends at the 'Traction Owners Club' in the UK!

We have also caught up with the current owners of the Traction which previously belonged to David Giddings. He wrote about his ownership in 'Front Drive', Vol 46, No 5 and we had a contribution from its subsequent owner, Leon Sims. The car is still in Central Victoria but is now in the hands of Michael and Coral Dahl.

Alan Brown is back with the next instalment of his story of early French exploration of, and interactions with, Australia.

Chris Bailey, in 'Totally Traction' gets moist over Traction-based cabriolets. Not just the 'regular' ones but those built in limited numbers for the wealthy few.

Many of you will know that today Citroën has a small, but devoted following in Japan. But in

Well, here we go again. I have been nominated for the role of President of our great club for 23/24 club year and of course I was happy to accept. I look forward to working with the new committee to serve our members and keep our club growing and remaining relevant.

We wish to thank Tim Cottrell for his recent service as President of CCOCA as he has reluctantly decided to step down due to increasing work pressures. We all wish him success in his chosen profession which is giving him enormous pleasure but a very high workload. I am sure he will be back involved with CCOCA at some time in the future.

Lance Wearne has decided, after ten years as Spare Parts Officer, to step down and hand this important job on to a new custodian. Lance has made a huge impact for members restoring or repairing their Tractions around Australia. You will be pleased to know that we have a good replacement. Max Lewis has accepted this role and the spare parts service will return to Melbourne but will still be accessible by us all.

Lance has also received our highest service award and is now a Life Member of our Club. Congratulations to Lance and of course his wife, Eleanor, who

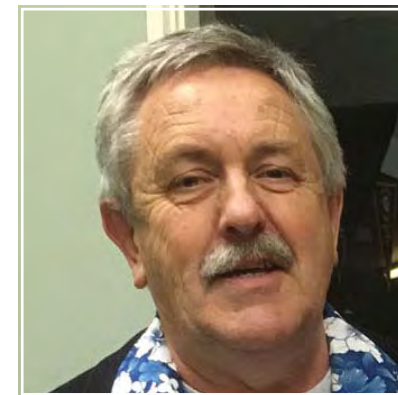
has supported him throughout this time.

Finally, a special thank you to all committee members who have run the Club so successfully last year. They have delivered strong leadership and commitment to their individual roles and deserve our thanks for a job well done.

Fortunately, most of the committee are re-standing for this new club year, which is great because there are always things to do. We have several decisions to make this year, including a search for new club rooms, re-locating spare parts, expanding our social activities, and developing our 2CV parts buying service.

Our new Facebook CCOCA site is about to launch too. Many thanks to Rita Robinson who has volunteered to set this site up for us. We hope this will become a useful medium for members around Aus-

Continued on page 6



Prez Sez

Ed Sed

Continued from page 4

the years leading up to the Second World War 'Le Patron' did not even have the rights to his own name. It had been stolen by 'the crafty' Doctor Tamotso Yamanouchi months before the first car had even been delivered to its new owner in Paris!

We have also deviated again from the totally Citroën path with a look at the history of Mors cars. Once the darling brand of the 'rich and vacuous' it fell on hard times and appointed André Citroën its President in 1907. In the years after the end of World War I things went from bad to worse and in 1924 André Citroën was appointed as the company's liquidator. A decade later, Citroën was in the same boat.

I hope there is something that takes your fancy this time around.

Enjoy!
Leigh F Miles ~ Editor

A-Tractions

Please note: To book or RSVP for a CCOCA organised event you must register on line at the club's website. Do not contact the organiser to register your attendance.

In line with Government guidelines CCOCA no longer requires proof of vaccination if you attend events arranged by CCOCA. The requirements of other organizations is not impacted by this decision.

The Club strongly recommends wearing a mask in areas where you cannot maintain social distancing.

Prez Sez

Continued from page 5

tralia to keep up to date with what is happening. I invite you to join this private group and contribute from wherever you live in Australia or overseas. Of course, our website and magazine remain unchanged and are our primary places for Club information.

And finally, I want to give a warm welcome to recent new members. I will be giving you a call very soon to say hello and personally welcome you to our club.

Ted Cross ~ President

• May

Monthly Meeting: Guest Speaker: Robin Bowles

WHEN: Wednesday, 24 May

TIME: 19:30

WHERE: Frog Hollow Reserve
Rooms, Fordham Ave., Camberwell

COST: Free

BOOKINGS: Essential for catering by Monday, 22 May

BRING: A good listening ear

MORE INFO: Helen Cross,
crossfam@ozemail.com.au
[03] 9819 2208

DO NOT CALL HELEN TO REGISTER! You must register/book via the CCOCA website <https://citroenclassic.org.au>

MAY BOOKING

Australia's True Crime Queen! Author Robin Bowles is widely acclaimed as Australia's True Crime Queen. With a huge



collection of her books receiving rave reviews and millions of copies sold, her writing is riveting, her investigative skills second to none.

Visit her website to read more about Robin and after doing so you will surely wish to attend this evening.

<https://www.robinbowles.com.au/>

ROBIN BOWLES WEBSITE

And don't forget, Max Lewis will be there with a great selection of books from the Club's library.

46th Historic Winton

WHEN: Saturday 27 and
Sunday 28 May

TIME: From 08:00

WHERE: Winton Motor
Raceway, 41 Fox St., Winton

COST: Adults from \$40
under 18: free

BOOKINGS: Preferred

BRING: Everything for a great
day out

MORE INFO: Leanne Cutler
pr@historicwinton.org or
0400 790 060.

The 46th Historic Winton car and motorcycle event will be held in its usual spectacular style with races, car park displays and marketplace of motoring and biking-related goods as well as delicious food.



A-Tractions

Organised by the Austin 7 Club Inc, President Len Kerwood said that Historic Winton will once again see competitors, motor enthusiasts and motorsport fans flock to Winton Motor Raceway for this Australia's most popular and iconic historic motorsport event.

Check the website for more details: https://www.historicwinton.org/WINTON_WEBSITE

• June

OzTraction 2023 ~ Swan Hill

WHEN: Friday, 2 to Sunday, 5 June

WHERE: Swan Hill, Victoria

COST: \$225per person

BOOKINGS: Essential by Monday, 8 May

BRING: Everything for a great Citroën weekend

MORE INFO: Lee Dennes, l.dennes@bigpond.net.au

DO NOT CALL LEE TO REGISTER! You must register/book via the CCOCA website <https://citroenclassic.org.au>

OZTRACTION '23 BOOKING

Please Note: This is NOT the June King's Birthday Long Weekend!

Your \$225 cost includes two lunches, three dinners and a cruise on the PS Pyap. In addition there will be a Show & Shine, an Observation Run and



a scenic drive.

You may also be interested in some optional extras: the Heartbeat of the Murray Laser Spectacular at the Pioneer Village, the Lake Boga Flying Boat Museum and a final breakfast gathering on the Monday morning. [The Lake Boga Flying Boat Museum is a personal favourite of your Editor! Ed.]

ACCOMMODATION

Do not book your accommodation on-line as we have secured an excellent discounted rate. Both recommended motels will offer us Queen Rooms at \$145 and will hold rooms for us until May 8.

Mention you are with the Citroën group to access this rate. Be sure you ask about the cancellation policy and the availability of breakfast, if you require it.

- Comfort Inn Lady Augusta, 375 Campbell St., Swan Hill [03] 5032 9677. Laura and Geoffrey.
- Burke and Wills Motor Inn, 370 Campbell St., Swan Hill. [03] 5032 9788. Wendy and Geoff.

Further details of the Club's premier weekend away will be available closer to the event date.

Remember as well, any refund due to you cancelling will be entirely at the discretion of the organizers.

A-Tractions

Battle of Waterloo: Note Updated Details

WHEN: Sunday, 18 June
 TIME: 09:00 for 09:30 departure
 FROM: Stud Park Shopping Centre, Stud Rd, Rowville
 TO: Kangaroo Flat Picnic Area, Cardinia Reservoir Access Road
 COST: Free
 BOOKINGS: Essential to Paul Buck
 BRING: Everything for a picnic
 MORE INFO: Paul Buck, 0412 627 711

The BMC Leyland Car Club has invited CCOCA and CCCV to join them for a picnic lunch and get together at Cardinia Reservoir to celebrate the 208th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo which was fought on Sunday, 18 June 1815

After such a success last year with our joint outing with the BMC Leyland Club we promised to do something again this year. The route will take us via a coffee break at Montague's Cafe, Lysterfield Lakethen on to Cardinia Lake Spillway car park



before our destination: Kangaroo Flat Picnic Area, where battle will commence. There are a couple of gazebos, should the weather be inclement.

June Monthly Meeting

WHEN: Wednesday, 28 June
 TIME: 19:30
 WHERE: Frog Hollow Reserve Rooms, Fordham Ave., Camberwell
 COST: Free
 BOOKINGS: Essential for catering by Monday, 26 June
 BRING:
 MORE INFO: Lee Dennes, l.dennes@bigpond.net.au

DO NOT CALL LEE TO REGISTER! You must register/book via the CCOCA website
<https://citroenclassic.org.au>
JUNE BOOKING

• July

Bastille Day Lunch

WHEN: Sunday, 16 July
 TIME: 12:00 for 12:30
 WHERE: Churchill-Waverley Golf and Bowls Club, 82 Bergins Rd., Rowville. 3178
 COST: \$40.00pp, refreshments to your account
 BOOKINGS: Essential by Friday, 7 July
 BRING: Your wallet
 MORE INFO: Marg Towt,



marg.towt@bigpond.com

DO NOT CALL MARG TO REGISTER! You must register/book via the CCOCA website
<https://citroenclassic.org.au>

BASTILLE BOOKING

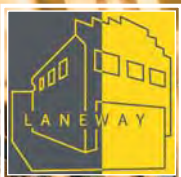
Join your fellow Citroënists from CCOCA and CCCV for a two course lunch at this inviting venue. The price, of \$40 per person, has been subsidised by the Club, but refreshments are to your account. So, bring your wallet! As always, be sure to drink responsibly.

Please wear your name tag! Should you need to cancel your booking, any refund will be at the discretion of the organizers.

World 2CV Meeting: Switzerland



A-Tractions



Chit Chat Tuesday

WHEN: 1st Tuesday
6 June
4 July
1 August
TIME: 10:00
WHERE: Laneway Espresso
Café, Dromana
COST: Cheap Eats
BOOKING: Not required
CONTACT: Warwick Spinaze
0407 016 719.

Laneway Espresso Café ~ next door to the Dromana Hotel, 167 Nepean H'way, Dromana. Easy to find, plenty of parking, under-cover seating if weather wet. This is a low key 'DIY' event for like minded Citroën owners to meet and chat.

WHEN: Tuesday, 25 to Sunday, 30 July

WHERE: Region Delémont, Switzerland

COST: €120pp until 31 May, €150pp from 1 June

BOOKINGS: Essential

The preparation of the World Meeting of 2CV Friends is underway. Our team is working hard to put together an event in the purest spirit of the 2CV. It will be great to meet everyone for this event!

In the meantime, we would like

to keep you informed by means of regular newsletters of the latest news concerning the world meeting of 2CV Friends.

You can also follow them on their website:

www.2cv2023.ch

[2CV WORLD MEETING SITE](http://www.2cv2023.ch)



2CV WORLD MEETING 2023
REGION DELÉMONT
25.7. - 30.7.23



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Member's Model: 1922 B2

Every story has a beginning. This story begins with a need to do things a little out of the ordinary!

My wife Chris and I love to travel in a slightly different fashion from most. We have traversed Australia, two up, three times, complete with camping gear on a 1999 Dyna Low Rider Harley Davidson. We have walked over a period of some ten years, between five and ten weeks per year, Melbourne to Toowoomba, Queensland with our six pack donkeys along the Bicentennial National Trail, amongst other trips. These experiences allowed us to enjoy a different method of travelling. The next trip maybe three months travelling the Murray in our boat.

Enjoying these unusual travels, and after partaking in a RE-DEX rerun in a Peugeot 203, I found the world of Citroën 2CV Raids [three Raids to date]. These Raids are the most enjoyable car experiences. At the time I was considering purchasing a Fiat Topolino so was in the mood for something else when the Citroën B2 came along.

All these travels required us to share our stories and photos with family, friends and interested groups. The recent two month Cape York Raid in our 2CV was no different. When sharing the Raid photos

and texts with a Bendigo friend Glenis, she became inspired and shared our story with her friend Darrell. Now Darrell happens to have a love of Citroën cars.

After seeing the photos of ourselves and our 2CV at the 'Tip', Darrell wanted to make contact with me and hear more of my appreciation of the 2CV.

He really wanted to hear first-

hand all about the adventure. On our return to Lockwood arrangements were quickly made to meet. During this time together stories about Citroën cars were exchanged.

I had been informed that Darrell had recently sold his early model Citroën. I was informed it was a 1922 B2. This was a car that excited me greatly so I

was more than keen to find out more about his car rather than talking about mine.

During our talk together, I asked if Darrell had any photos of the B2 he had sold. The photos were produced: they were beautiful, amazing and I was thrilled just looking at them. At that point I was informed that the sale of his B2 had failed and the car was back in storage in Bendigo.

My immediate question... was it available to see... yes.... WHEN... how about 0900hrs tomorrow? YES... I will be there...

The story of the B2 unfolded. Next day within 10 minutes of seeing the Citroën and with a handshake I was the owner of another Citroën.

The following is from Darrell's account.

Fifty years ago [about 1970], an older gentleman was having a clearing sale of his property in North Ringwood. His shed was full of old cars, such as Dodges, Chevys and many other different makes. I was offered and could buy any one of the cars from this collection for \$50. My choice was an early Citroën [which I later found out to be a 1922 B2], in a poor state, damaged but was almost entire.

A project started. The Citroën was last fully registered in 1934. It was taken off road because of a suspected broken



Member's Model: 1922 B2

chassis, which turned out to be several broken springs instead.

Over the next 26 years, I collected as many parts as I could find for early Citroëns up to about 1930, purchasing 'parts', books and workshop manuals both locally at swap meets and overseas. I contacted people with knowledge of restoration. All this time spent in research paid off. Many photos of the car were taken, from all angles prior to starting to dismantle it.

This car was completely stripped, rebuilt and restored with necessary modifications made along its journey. I decided to leave as many sub-assemble pieces together as possible, having seen so many 'basket cases' over the years. After repairs or rebuild each assembly was cleaned, re-measured, photographed then wrapped in plastic and stored.

Having lifted the body off the chassis it became apparent that a total rebuild was required, both the wooden frame and most of the metal panels required replacing. It did not help as the roof of the shed where it had been stored had collapsed onto the car. All the metal panels were un-nailed from the wooden frame, labelled, photographed and stored.

New wood was sourced and the wooden frame rebuilt. I was able to purchase a good plank of 'Vic Ash', which I cured and

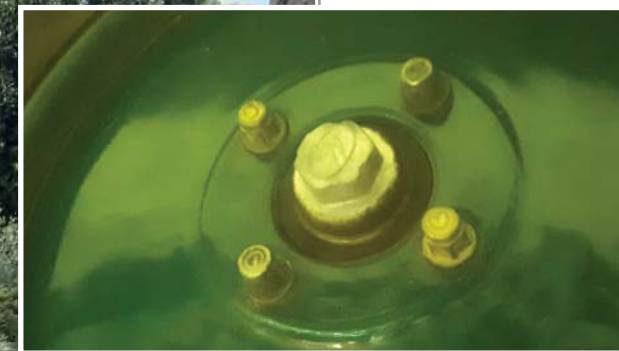
dried for four years. This wood was cut into strips of the original size.

A taunt wire was mounted between the front chassis centre and centre rear; this allowed exact measurements each side of the centre-line to be taken. Some original manuals state that some joins need to be screwed and some need to be glued as well. Which ones?

I found a retired railway coach builder whom assisted with in-



Member's Model: 1922 B2



formation on how to allow frame to flex, stay tight without

cracking or splitting and be able to correctly oil the wood.

After the frame rebuild oiled and stored, each metal panel required attention. Two rear guards were sound but required welding before filling, putty and priming.

Half of the front guards were unusable so were cut off and rebuilt. The louvered sides to the bonnet were usable but the sides and cowl top over fuel tank were re-built. Many weeks with tinsnips, nibblers, wire brushes, welders and shaping machines, finally hammers and grinders before each panel was suitable for final filling and putty then undercoating.

Total replacement of rear boot and sides. Wooden floor was cut and fitted. New wiring loom built and installed. Hood bows were cut and with a homemade three metre steamer and bench jigs the made bows were bent and shaped.

Member's Model: 1922 B2

Every nut, bolt, screw etc. was removed, restored or replaced. The internal upholstery and the roof were totally rebuilt to a very high standard. Between overlaps each piece of material is coated in bees wax to keep moisture out.

Each bolt that passes through metal has a plastic washer to seal it. The radiator cowl was electroplated over five weeks to build thickness prior to the final chrome plating. Radiator and fuel caps were cast with the Citroën emblem prior to chroming.

So for me now this beautiful B2 is club registered with CCO-CA's help and is on the road again. It needs a few little adjustments etc. but I sure enjoy her! In fact we took the B2 to the 2022 French Car Festival at Cruden Farm and returned with a Trophy.

I can't believe I have such an amazing car. I haven't stopped smiling. The most amazing thing is the car has even got Chris to smile on the odd occasion ~ well almost!!

Kenneth Johnson



You Sed

No sooner had the last edition gone out to you than there were emails in the Editorial inbox!

Members may not remember that we share our magazine with other affiliated Clubs around the world, including both the UK Citroën Car Club and Citroënvie in Canada. The first email was from the UK, with a note from their editor, Anna Burmajster.

Hi Leigh,

Would it be alright to reproduce 'What's in a Name' by your Librarian, Max?

By sheer coincidence one of our members sent copies of a few photos of Christ Church, Surabaya, Java, which was designed by Cosman Citroën in the 1930s and which was built during the time when his grandparents were in Java.

Cosman came from the Netherlands, we don't know if there is any link between him and our Patron.

So, combined with your piece, this will make an interesting feature in our magazine.

If you are happy for us to reprint the article, would you kindly send me the makings of it ~ text and the photos?

With thanks and kind regards,
Anna

Naturally both the article and the accompanying picture

and the family tree were sent to Anna post haste. But Anna's email was closely followed by one from George Dyke who almost single-handedly keeps the Canadian arm of Citroën enthusiasm alive.

Hi Leigh,

What a fantastic issue you folks have produced! Great info on the history of the 2CV and a most informative piece on 2CV fuel filters. And congratulations on diving deeper than I have ever read on the name origin of André Citroën. Your organization in Australia and the quality of Front Drive never ceases to amaze me!

BTW, I noted in the article about Traction gearboxes that the author stated; 'I am not aware of any 4-speed conversion for the 6-cylinder box.' You might want to pass along that one is now available from Pierre Duperray in France. Here is an article I put on Citroënvie about it: <https://citroenvie.com/progress-report-on-traction-avant-156-4-speed-gearbox/>

Cheers,

George Dyke

Editor [and pretty much one-man-band]

CITROËNVIE! <http://citroenvie.com/>

- & -

President

Citroën Autoclub Canada

Mors the Merrier?

By resting too much on its laurels, the prestigious Mors car brand almost never woke up. After having accumulated racing successes and manufactured quality cars, the company gradually became bogged down in an unoriginal product that only moderately interested customers, while a major economic crisis paralysed the automobile industry.

This free fall was only halted when a certain André Citroën took over the company. This dandy, still unknown to the general public, relaunched production, put Mors back on the road... only to take over the company a few years later!

The history of the Mors firm began around 1885, when Louis and Emile Mors, graduates of the Ecole Centrale, took over the reins of the family business. To the initial manufacture of

electrical equipment, the two brothers added the manufacture of signalling equipment for railways, semaphores and steam-powered boats. Emile began to take an interest in the automobile and in 1885, ie be-

fore Count de Dion and Amédée Bollée, he designed the first steam tricycle with an oil-fired boiler. He simply mounted the engine of one of his canoes on a tricycle, an achievement that earned him a bronze medal at the 1889 Universal Exhibition.

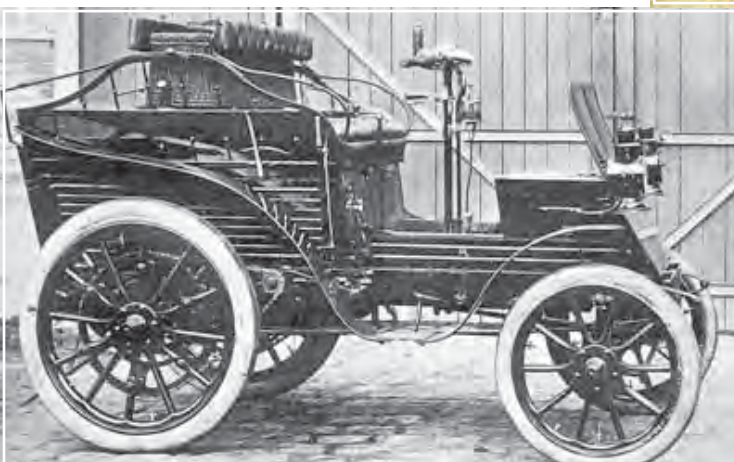
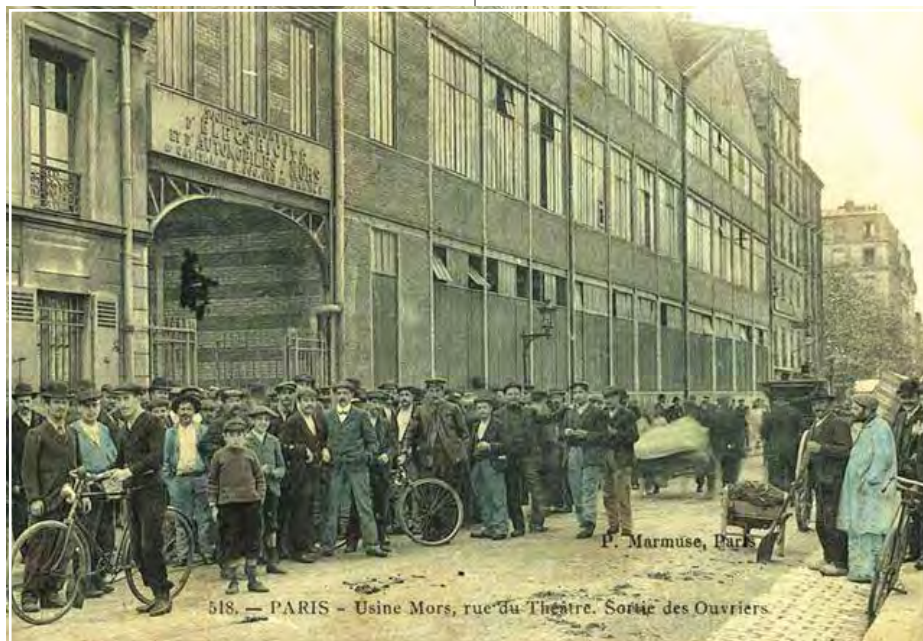
But it was not until 1895 that he really started to build a car. Seconded by the engineer Henri Brasier, he designed a vis-à-vis powered by a 4.5kW/6hp in-line four-cylinder engine, equipped with a mixed cooling system, water for the cylinder head and air for the cylinders, an ignition system with switches, perfected and patented, and a finned radiator.

First Sporting Successes

Presented at the end of 1896, the car was an immediate suc-

Below, left to right: 1897, 6hp two-seater Mors.
1899 6hp Mors.
1901 Mors.

Below: At 48 rue du Théâtre, in 1885, the Mors brothers created a tricycle that ran on steam using a boiler heated with petroleum. Ten years later their first car left their 15th arrondissement workshop.



Mors the Merrier?

cess, and nearly 200 examples of this 4.5kW chassis were built over the following two years.

Emile and Louis Mors took advantage of the popularity of their model to test different engines, notably a single cylinder, a twin cylinder and an astonishing V-shaped four cylinder. However, it was the twin-cylinder engine that was adopted on the new 3kW/4hp and 6kW/8hp chassis that appeared in 1898, with the four-cylinder not making a comeback until 1899, on the new 12kW/16hp touring chassis. In the meantime, it was used on the various racing cars of the brand which had built up a solid reputation in competition.

For its first appearance in a sporting event, Mors won the Paris-Dieppe race in 1897, then, the same year, the Paris-Trouville race. A great start which saw in 1898, new victo-

ries in Brescia, Italy, and in the Paris-Amsterdam race, the first important event in which the young brand was registered,

Emile Mors not hesitating to take the wheel himself.

But an accident in the Paris-Bordeaux race [a fractured collarbone] tempered his ardour and enthusiasm. It was then the in-house drivers, Levegh and Hourgieres, who drove the Mors cars to victory.

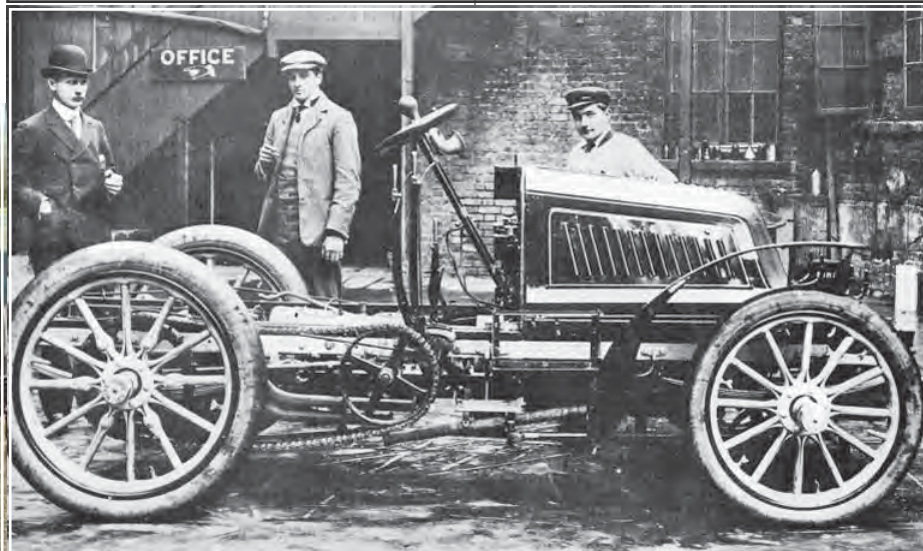
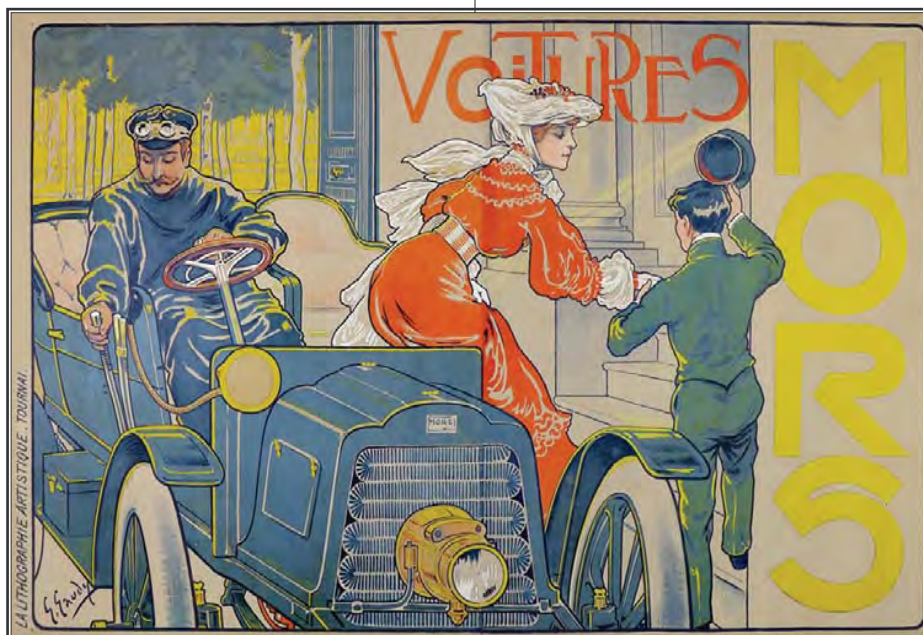
The brand's sporting range grew every year, and the order books kept filling up. About ten chassis left the Parisian workshops in the rue du Théâtre every month. This automobile production, which was still only secondary, soon became the company's main activity, hence the decision of the Mors brothers to change the old company

Below, left to right: 1902 9.2litre Paris to Vienna racer.

1901 Paris-Bordeaux 60hp racer.

1904 20/30hp Mors.

Below: This advertising poster for Mors was created by George Gaudy [1872-1940].



Mors the Merrier?

name to 'Société d'électricité et des automobiles Mors'. The railway signalling and electrical installation departments were nevertheless retained, but relegated to the background.

Mors intensified their competition entries and mainly took part in the city-to-city races which were developing considerably at the end of the century. Paris-Ostende, Paris-Biarritz, Paris-St Malo, Bordeaux-Périgueux, etc, were added in 1899 to an already impressive list of victories. These victories led to an increase in sales of passenger cars, with the 6kW/8hp and 12kW/16hp types enjoying considerable success.

The year 1900 was similar, with one victory following another. And Mors proved that its cars were not only fast, but also enduring, as a 17.9kW/24hp model won the Paris-Toulouse-

Paris race of more than 1,300 km, while other cars won the Esterel, de Gaillon as well as the Nice-la Turbie hill-climb races.

Below: On May 23, 1903, the weighing of cars at the Tuileries Garden before the start of the Paris-Madrid race. Number 217 is a Mors of 70hp, number 219 a Gobron-Brillié.



First Series Production Car

A gold medal at the 1900 Universal Exhibition accentuated the ambitions of the two brothers who brought out the first Mors car in series with a steering wheel, followed in 1901 by a new 7.5kW/10hp, the first French touring car with a low-voltage magneto ignition.

But this year was, above all, marked by the resounding success of Henri Fournier in the Paris-Berlin race in a Mors car powered by a four-cylinder V of

Below, left to right: On June 26, 1902, Willie K Vanderbilt raced his new 60hp Mors in the Paris-Vienna Race. 24-year old Willie K can be seen standing on the far right just prior to the start of the race.

Spectators watching the Mors compete in the 1903 Paris-Madrid race.

Car 125 of M Delaney after the accident at Simoneau, near Libourne during the Paris-Mardid race.



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10,087cc in displacement. The power of the Mors racing models escalated and they also won the Paris-Bordeaux race and the New York meeting. All pretexts are good to establish the reputation of the brand.

Thus, after the race victories, Mors set out to break the pure speed record. Several drivers followed one another, first the American billionaire Vanderbilt, then the Englishman Charles Stewart Rolls, the future founder of the famous Rolls-Royce brand, before the Frenchman Henri Fournier broke the record several times with 123.249, then 124.102kph, at the wheel of a Mors four-cylinder 44.8kW/60hp car with a capacity of 9.2litres.

Nothing seemed to be able to stop the rise of the small Parisian firm, which was awarded

Below: In the spring of 1915, Belgium formed an Expeditionary Force to assist the allies. Several hundred Belgian volunteers joined the new Corps des Autos-Canons-Mitrailleuses Belges en Russie, led by Major Collon. In mid-autumn, they arrived in Arkhangelsk. The personnel had 13 armoured vehicles of several types, among which there were at least two Mors vehicles.



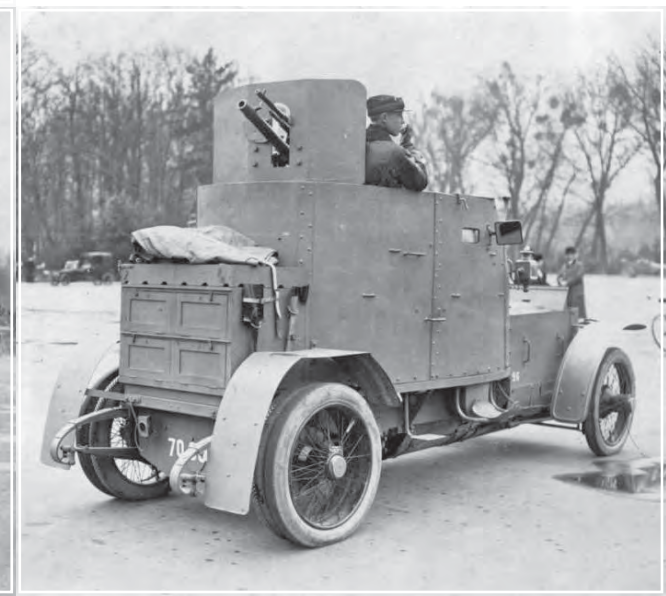
a gold medal at the Concours d'Elegance held during the 1902 Automobile Exhibition.

Fast, reliable, durable, beautiful, the Mors were also comfortable, with the adoption of shock absorbers which further accentuated their supremacy in competition. Several models

were entered in the Paris-Madrid race which was to be the major sporting event of 1903.

But the race was unfortunately plunged into mourning by fatal accidents that forced the cars to stop the race in Bordeaux. After having overtaken 163 competitors, Fernand Gabriel, at the wheel of a 52.2kW/70hp Mors, was the first to arrive in the Gironde capital and signed a new

Below, left to right: Mors licensed manufacture in both the UK and the USA. This plaque confirms its UK manufacture. This line up of armoured vehicles was supplied to the Belgian army. They were supplied under contract between the Belgian army and Mors. In accordance with this document, French specialists had to develop a new armoured car with anti-bullet protection and machine-gun armament. One of the existing Mors chassis was used as the basis for it. A rear view of the Belgian vehicle.



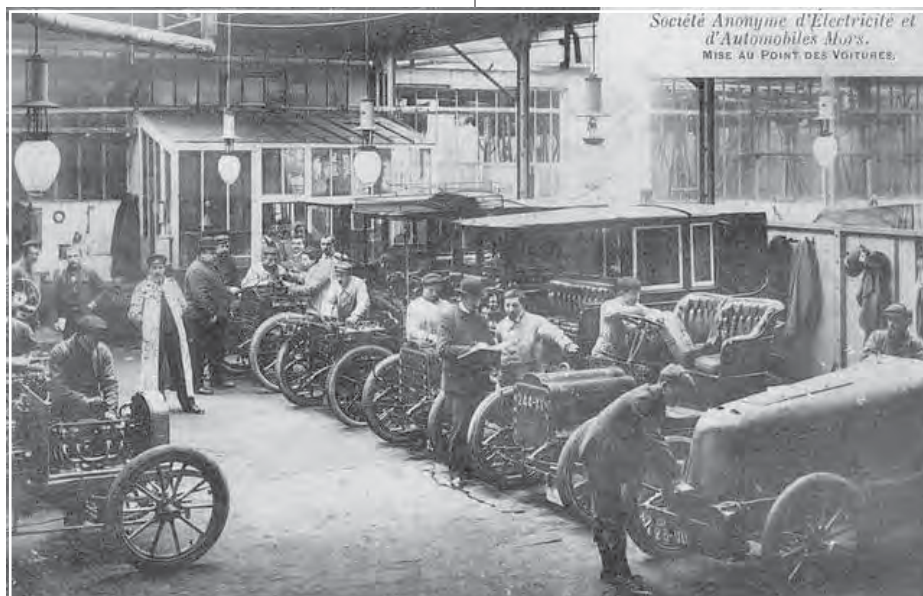
Mors the Merrier?

victory for the brand, which at the same time won a double in the large car category; those weighing between 650 and 1,000kg.

Although the Paris-Bordeaux-Madrid race marked the end of city-to-city racing, this did not mean the end of motor racing and it was on circuits that the various manufacturers could continue to compete.

The German circuit of Taunus was the scene in 1904 of the Gordon Bennett Cup. Created by the son of the owner of the 'New York Herald Tribune', this international competition allowed national teams to compete, each country having to be represented by three manufacturers. Mors succeeded in qualifying for the French team during the qualifying rounds, but it was Léon Théry, driving a Richard Brasier, who won this event in Germany.

A photo of the Mors workshops around 1910. Here we notice open and closed models, as well as a race car in the foreground.



He did it again the following year on a circuit near Clermont-Ferrand. However, no Mors car took part in this last edition of the Gordon Bennett Cup. It is not that the brand did not succeed in qualifying, but its directors simply decided to suspend,

at the end of 1904, all participation of their cars in competition, judging that they had nothing more to prove in this field.

The brand's sporting record speaks for itself and the touring cars, as evidenced by the glowing comments in the various automobile magazines of the time, which emphasise their excellent qualities of finish and endurance. A few years were enough for the Mors cars to be-

Below, left to right: In 1905, this Mors omnibus served the Salon de l'Automobile held at the Grand Palais. Mors direction signs were sometimes painted on walls. The design is a faithful reproduction of the radiator of the brand's cars. One might wonder if this is where André Citroën first got the idea for the Citroën signposts that would cover France after the First World War. This tar watering machine of the City of Paris [1928] is exhibited in the pleasant setting of the Bois de Boulogne.



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come the equal of the Panhard et Levassor, although the production figures between the two companies are incomparable, the Ivry assembly lines assembling about four times more chassis than Mors. Mors nevertheless relied on its branches in London and New York, which built cars under licence, to make up the difference.

Diversification

With no more sporting imperatives, the Mors brothers decided to give a new impetus to their company with the manufacture of small trucks of 1,500 and 4,000kg payload, and a range of buses, including double-decker omnibuses. These vehicles used the chassis of passenger cars, with four-cylinder engines of 12.7kW/17hp or 20.9kW/28hp.

These utility vehicles quickly demonstrated that they possessed all the qualities that had forged the reputation of the brand's previous models, namely power, robustness, flexibility, manoeuvrability and silence.

Meanwhile, Louis Mors set up a laboratory for scientific and medical microscopic photography, as well as a laboratory for research and studies on tuberculosis and cancer. It was certainly this research in the medical sector, more than his involvement in the automobile industry, which earned him

Two Mors brochures from 1910. That on the left depicts Belgian opera singer Cécile Thénèvet [b. 1872] who sang with the Opera-Comique in Paris. She was best known for her portrayal of Carmen. The second advertisement shows Mona Delza [1882-1921], Countess of Patrimonia, an actress who achieved fame in 1910 in the play 'The Mad Virgin' ['Vierge Folle'] by Henry Bataille.

the Légion d'honneur in 1906. A distinction that Emile also received in 1909.

In the factory in the rue du Théâtre, the workers continued to assemble the touring chassis, the range of which was based on four models of 7.5kW/10hp, 12.7/17, 20.9/28 and 33.6kW/45hp respectively. In 1906, all of them adopted the new monobloc engine and a metal band clutch, Mors being one of the few brands to use this system.

Although the atmosphere

within the company, which employed 1,000 people at the time, seemed serene, tensions began to arise within the management team because the treasury was showing signs of trouble. A lack of rigour in management and organisation was the cause of the sudden financial difficulties. The deficit increased the following year, accentuated by a general economic crisis that did not spare the automotive industry.

The situation quickly became catastrophic, and Mors was forced to sell its electrical sector in order to avoid a brutal liquidation. More seriously, the 1907 range did not have the means to relaunch the company, the various models not bringing any technical improvement, even the recent, and first in-house six-cylinder, failed to convince buyers. Fewer than 300 cars of all sizes were sold this year, while other manufacturers were invading the market with popular models. Some members of the board of directors were talking about the possibility of closing the factory.

The administrator and financier Harbleicher tried to postpone the deadline and contacted his son-in-law's brother, a certain André Citroën, who had succeeded in developing and making a metal herringbone gear factory prosper. Seduced by the challenge, André Citroën

10 HP
CARDAN
7,500 fr.

AUTOMOBILES MORS

12 HP
CARDAN
9,000 fr.

NOS ARTISTES EN AUTOMOBILE



M^{me} Cécile THÉVENET, la délicieuse "Carmen" de l'Opéra-Comique

17 HP
CARDAN
12,000 fr.

Société d'Automobiles MORS

28 HP
17,000 fr.
50 HP
25,000 fr.

48, Rue du Théâtre, PARIS (XV^e)


CATALOGUE FRANCO SUR DEMANDE

10 HP
CARDAN
7,500 fr.

AUTOMOBILES MORS

12 HP
CARDAN
9,000 fr.

NOS ARTISTES EN AUTOMOBILE



Mlle Mona Delza, que Tout Paris applaudit dans la "Vierge Folle".

17 HP
CARDAN
12,000 fr.

Société d'Automobiles MORS

28 HP
17,000 fr.
50 HP
25,000 fr.

48, Rue du Théâtre, Paris (XV^e)

Catalogue 1910 franco sur demande

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met Louis and Emile Mors, dissuaded them from giving up, and accepted the position offered to him as President of the Mors company, in parallel with his duties within his own company, which he intended to keep.


Citroën at Mors' Bedside

Through his intuition, foresight and organisational skills, André Citroën succeeded in reviving a company that has become moribund and allowed it to regain its former prestige. It took five years to change habits, restructure the factory and replace the old equipment with high-performance machines.

But above all, André Citroën knew how to surround himself with competent people who knew both the world of the automobile and the workings of the economy. This was the case with Georges-Marie Haardt, who took charge of the entire sales department before becoming Managing Director, and who, a few years later, would become known to the general public as the person in charge of Citroën's expeditions to Africa and Asia.

During these five years, the Mors catalogue was expanded with several models now delivered with detachable rims from Vinet & Boulogne at Neuilly-sur-Seine and benefiting from numerous improvements. In 1910 alone, just under 650 cars were produced, twice as many as the

The last Mors car launched in 1923 was a 12/16hp which was quite clearly above the Citroën Type 10hp. It was second in the catalogue to the 14/20hp. The Mors company ceased all automobile activity in 1925.

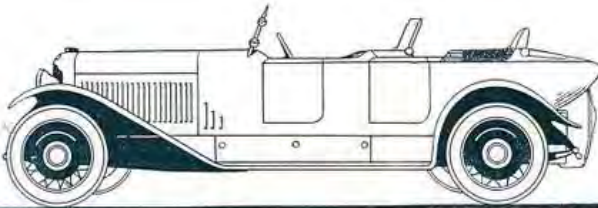


*Maximum d'Agrément
Minimum d'Entretien*

MORS

LES DEUX
CHASSIS
12/16^{HP} 14/20^{HP}

SIMPLES
SOUPLES
SILENCIEUX
SANS
SOUPAPES
(Moteur "Minerva")



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GRAND LUXE
TYPE GRAND-DUC**

R. du C. Seine 20166

SOCIÉTÉ • NOUVELLE • DES • AUTOMOBILES

MORS

Siège Social
48, Rue du Théâtre,
PARIS XV^e

Service Commercial
145, Quai de Javel
PARIS XV^e

previous year. There were also a few sporadic appearances in competitions, such as the Auto Club de France Grand Prix in 1908, and a gradual reduction in the capacity of the cars.

In terms of commercial vehicles, the various chassis performed brilliantly in competitions organised by the ACF and vans, ambulances, watering machines and fire pumps were added to the old omnibuses and small trucks, which also underwent several improvements.

However, not all the debts could be cleared and others were added, as André Citroën had to invest in equipment and manpower. In 1912, the Besançon-based manufacturer Théophile Schneider [who had been trying for several years to establish himself in the capital] tried to take advantage of Mors' delicate situation to get his hands on the company. [Ed: The Société anonyme des automobiles Th. Schneider was registered at Besançon on 16 June 1910. Vehicle production finally ended early in 1930, some ten months after the company's second declaration of bankruptcy, in March 1929.] Once again, André Citroën was able to persuade the Mors family not to sell. Providence intervened in the form of Atanik Eknayan, a rich diamond dealer and friend of André Citroën [who also came from a family of diamond dealers], who

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paid off $\frac{2}{3}$ of the debt.

This was a real breath of fresh air for the company, which could hope to see the end of the tunnel. To do this, the engineer Fauchier, a former member of the Franco-Swiss brand Zedel, designed the latest Mors, which proved to be a success, although it suffered from an underpowered engine.

André Citroën then thought of one of his cousins, David Citroën, director of the Belgian firm Minerva, who had presented a few years earlier a light car powered by a 28.3kW/38hp valveless engine inspired by that developed by the American Charles Y Knight. Its principle was simple: the opening of the

intake and exhaust ports was controlled by a sliding sleeve between the piston and the fixed cylinder. Convinced, André Citroën decided to equip the new range of Mors chassis with the Minerva valveless engine, which combined power, silence and flexibility.

Minerva Engines

Called SSS [Sans Soupape Sport] to differentiate them from the SS cars of Panhard et Levassor, their long-time rival, the range of new Mors consisted of a small 10/12hp, a 14/20hp, a 20/30hp and a more imposing 28/35hp with a displacement of 2,120, 3,308, 4,395 and 7,245cc respectively. A few chassis with valve engines were retained,

but it was mainly the valveless cars that made up the back catalogue of the brand, which was enjoying a new revival.

At the same time, the brand once again became one of the leading French car brands. The order books filled up again and nearly 800 chassis were marketed in 1913, and 1,200 the following year, while curiously, the financial problems persisted. Fortunately, one might say, although the term is misplaced in these circumstances, the declaration of the First World War cut short any speculation on the future of Mors.

During the war, the factory was requisitioned for the manufacture of shells, for which André Citroën had launched the programme using all the buildings and workshops at his disposal. Mors car production was completely halted for this war effort and the resumption of production after the armistice was difficult because the management, which unfortunately no longer included Louis Mors who died in 1917, had chosen to keep only models without valves.

The Minerva factories had been bombed during the conflict and were unable to supply engines to their various customers. It was more than a year later that the factory in the rue du Théâtre was finally able to resume its activities when it joined

the Citroën fold, while retaining its independence. Dressed in elegant bodywork, it was the only 14/20hp model with a capacity of 3,561cc that rolled off the production line from 1920, and which seemed to meet the current requirements of customers attracted by luxurious vehicles. However, this model quickly became outdated in the face of competition, which spared no effort to market modern, reliable, high-performance but also economical cars, a concept that was becoming more and more widespread.

Citroën Absorbs Mors

Orders were becoming scarce, so in 1923 Mors decided to relaunch the old pre-war 7.5kW/10hp, brought up to date. Commercially named 12/16hp, the new Mors was however the swan song of the brand. The creation of a body shop next to the chassis assembly lines, in order to produce complete cars, and the appearance of optional front brakes in 1924, could not save the company from a programmed death.

In fact, from 1918, André Citroën 'squatted' in part of the Mors premises to manufacture his own cars. The Citroën design office and test centre, located in the rue du Théâtre, gradually took up more and more space until it finally absorbed the premises in 1925.

In the meantime, André Cit-



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roën converted his arms factory on the Quai de Javel in the 15th arrondissement of Paris into a car factory, created the Citroën brand with a great deal of publicity, and launched his famous 10hp.

Mors and Citroën Cohabit.

The specialised press points out that the results of the war years would have been more brilliant for Mors if it had signed contracts directly with the Administration, rather than being a subcontractor of Citroën. The press also questioned why Mors was still presided over by André Citroën, a direct competitor working in series, 'the American way'.

In 1923, Mors launched the 12/16hp Sport, which was its very last model. It was a 2-litre car with a 30hp Minerva engine. This was Mors' swan song. A body shop was created next to the chassis assembly line, in order to offer complete cars. But nothing could stop the slow erosion of sales, and on 12 May 1924, André Citroën was appointed liquidator. Javel needed space, and Citroën decided to set up his design office at Mors. This is where the Traction, 2CV

After the Second World War the Mors name was attached to motorcycles, pumps, washing machines... but the golden era had past and today the name lives on only in memories for a small number of enthusiasts.

and DS are born.

This marked the end of the Mors cars, which had thrilled the crowds at the beginning of the century when they won most of the sporting competitions in which they took part, before satisfying pre-war customers with their road qualities, their silence and their flexibility thanks to the use of the valveless engine. At that time, many royal courts had Mors cars in their garages, SM Albert I, King of Belgium, SA the Empress Eu-

génie, the King of Romania, but also marquises, counts, barons, ambassadors, etc...

After 1925, only the spare parts service was maintained for a while. A few electric cars were produced during the Second World War.

Epilogue

Emile Mors continued to manufacture electrical equipment until his death in 1942. Between 1950 and 1955, Mors distributed and then produced scooters under the name Mors

Speed. But this adventure was short-lived due to the fierce competition from the Italian giants Vespa and Lambretta.

In June 1949, a light 50cc scooter was presented to the press. The almost final version equipped with a 98cc Brissonnet was exhibited at the 1950 Paris Fair. From 1951, the distribution is ensured by the Ets Mors. In 1952, the definitive version was released: 2 speeds and 115cc. But the Speed scooter is of limited use. Its performance was more suited to urban use or short trips. To reach a new clientele, Mors presented a 125cc Mors Speed at the 1953 Paris Fair.

In the 1960s, Mors concentrated on electrical installations, and became Mors Jean Bouchon [MJB] in 1964, renamed GTIE [Générale de Travaux et d'Installations Electriques] in 1984. In 2003, GTIE became a subsidiary of the Vinci group. Mors also continued its aeronautical, railway and maritime activities until 1996. These were then sold separately to various French groups. In the early 1980s, Mors acquired APR and Apem, two companies specialising in the manufacture of switches for industrial use. The Mors brand name disappeared for good as a result of mergers and takeovers.

But nothing will ever be the same again; the past belongs to

Pour 36.000 FR. comptant (assurance comprise)
votre scooter **SPEED** chez



P. BRISSONNET & C^{IE}

Concessionnaire **SPEED**

22^{ter}, Bd Général-Leclerc (Pont de Neuilly) - TÉL. : MAI 87-40

Conçu comme une *Automobile* :



le Scooter **MORS** *SPEED*

type

Paris-Nice

Mors the Merrier?

the past!

This article, by Eric Favre, first appeared in the French magazine 'Gazoline' in February 2000. The publisher was contacted for permission to translate and re-print the article, however no reply has been received. Additional information has been sourced from <http://leroux.andre.free.fr/jmpmors.htm>

Postscript

The St Louis Car Company also manufactured the Ameri-

can Mors. After manufacturing the St. Louis and Kobusch cars, the latter of which looked like a Mors, the St. Louis Car Company acquired an official license, blueprints, and plans from the Parisian factory to manufacture Mors cars in the US. After making the American Mors for three years, the company turned to the manufacture of a car of their own design, the Standard Six.

It's all in the Timing

A question about 5CV timing.

In about 2009 I purchased a trailer load of 5CV parts which I mainly got because I was told it contained an early distributor engine. Upon closer inspection the engine in question turned out not to be a distributor one but what appears to be a very early magneto 5CV engine.

The block, head and crankcase all appear to be standard early 5CV [with the cotter type pins to hold the starter motor and generator in place]. The difference is in the cast aluminium timing gear cover where the shaft and gear that the magneto attach to are much lower [approximately 35mm lower as shown in the image] than any

other magneto 5CV engine I have come across.

The engine number for this engine is in the mid 6000s which also makes it reasonably early. The attached picture shows a distributor timing cover [A], this unknown magneto timing cover [B] and the 'common' magneto timing cover [C].

The end caps that support the bearings for this one [B] instead of being made from cast aluminium one is a bronze casting and the other is a cast iron casting as shown in the included picture. The gear on the camshaft which mates with the magneto drive is quite a bit smaller in diameter than the standard one due to the lower height of the magneto.

There are no chevrons cast

into it but it does have the letters AC cast into it which I assume stands for André Citroën.

It's all in the Timing

The method of construction and the bolt holes are all exactly the same as all my other 5CV engines.

My question for the reader is if anyone knows anything about the history of this timing cover design as I have been unable to find it in any of the manuals or literature that I have. My assumption is that this one [B] is the first of the timing covers when Citroën changed over from using a distributor to using a magneto for the 5CV, possibly finding some issue with this design [maybe the timing gears wearing out due to their smaller size] and quickly changing to the more common distributor engine timing cover [C]. If anyone has any information or thoughts I would very much like to hear from them. Thank you.
William Rankine
Will84s@gmail.com



Almost a Bridge Too Far

This is not a Hard Luck Story, it is a celebration of serendipity, and a fabulous community of great people.

My Citroën journey started at the Maxim Motors stand at the Brisbane Motor Show in 1971 where, as an 11-year-old I sat in the blue jersey nylon trim of a DS21 in awe of everything about the car.

Fifty or so years later as a newly retired character, I bought a lovely DS23 Pallas and joined the Citroën Car Club of Queensland so we could learn how to look after it and hopefully gain the secret knowledge required.

Four years later and many great club trips away to St George, Mary River, Stanthorpe, and Gayndah we decided to attend our first CITIN.

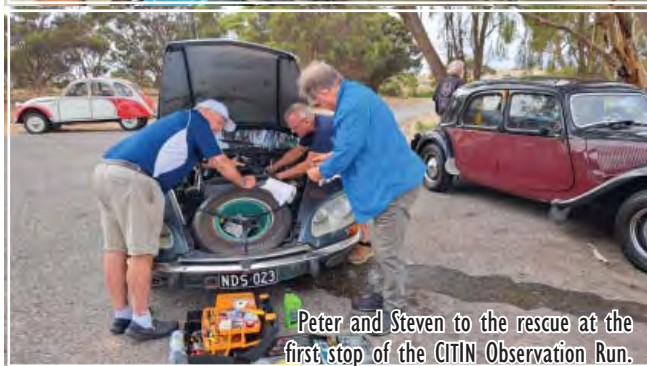
Armed with spare suspension boots, ligarex banding and hydraulic seals etc. we set off from the Gold Coast to Port Macquarie as our first stop. We left seven days for the trip to Murray Bridge to allow for possible hiccups.

All went well but on day two out of Foster the clutch cable broke so we lead a fine procession the last 16km into Tuncurry in third gear. It was Saturday morning at about 10:30am when we landed on a flat area to call the NRMA.

I also called our resident Citroën guru Ian Steele in Maleny



Clutch Cable tutorial from Paul in Cessnock.



Peter and Steven to the rescue at the first stop of the CITIN Observation Run.



Our 1974 DS23 Pallas, 5 speed.

to ask about clutch cables etc. He got straight on to Jason Hantos, the Sydney guru, who was busy preparing to go to the CITIN as well.

He put us on to Paul Smythe, the Funeral Director in Cessnock who had exactly the part we needed.

The NRMA flatbed driver winched us on board and deposited the DS on the footpath outside their recommended workshop by 11:30am. The Towies assured us that the boss was a 'good bloke' [and he was!] and that Sixt hire car was just up the road.

We walked up to the hire car yard to find it completely closed, and while planning to book accommodation for the weekend in the hope of potentially doing something on Monday morning, a car cruised into the parking lot and a guy in his mowing outfit got out and headed for the office. The owner's mower had broken down and he had a headache so had some Panadol in his office which brought him there by complete chance.

Within ten minutes, on a Saturday afternoon, we had a hire car and were off to Cessnock two and a half hours away to meet up with Paul and Janelle and collect the new clutch cable.

We were treated to a great afternoon tea chat, and a tour of his most fantastic sheds full of classic Citroëns and his collec-

tion of nearly a hundred years of family business hearses, from horse drawn to a Statesman.

Most importantly I was given an in-depth tutorial of how to replace the clutch cable using a fantastic rally DS as an example.

We stayed overnight in Cessnock, did a winery circuit tour before returning to Foster ready for the early Monday visit to the Workshop.

Simon and his young staff had never seen a DS and as they were very busy let me do the fitting myself and were happy to lend me tools as I needed. So, as it was raining, Pam held the umbrella as I removed the hydraulic pump and extracted the old cable. With the voices of Steelie, Jason and Paul all sharing the process and pitfalls in the back of my mind the new cable went in. The air-conditioning bracket is above the crucial adjustment area, so it had to be removed as well.

Early afternoon saw calls and texts from all of my gurus checking on my progress. Clearly, they thought the job should be done by now, however by later that afternoon the rain cleared and with much relief it all pumped up and went into gear both forward and reverse.

We certainly had all our guardian angels with us throughout the process.

We then set off two days late for our planned itinerary, but

Almost a Bridge Too Far

within a few days and we were back on track in Renmark having stopped in Goulburn and Hay on the way.

We arrived happily in Murray Bridge and met up with all the Citroënists. What a great venue for the event.

The show and shine was spectacular and I spent a great hour and a half in the Hotel car park with Jason absorbing his expert knowledge of every car.

My sister and brother-in-law joined us for the Observation Run on the Sunday and as we arrived at the first clue point, I noticed that the suspension felt rough and as we stopped green radiator fluid was pouring out and the suspension was down.

On close inspection one hydraulic pump belt had slipped off and sawn through the small water pump hose creating the leak. Happily, as we were early on the route, within minutes Peter, in his 2CV, and Steven, in his ID19, both from Queensland were on the scene with boxes of tools.

Just as we were wrapping self-adhering tape around the split hose, Martin, a local South Australian, came over and said, 'you mean you want one of these' and handed me the correct hose which Stephen then proceeded to fit. Of course, the alternator had to be removed to get access. All this was done while Peter played Florence



Day 2 ready for the tow to Forster, NSW.

Thank you to Citroën Australia for the Commemorative CITIN 2023 jacket won by Mark.



Best Car park ever ~ Bridgeport Hotel, Murray Bridge during CITIN 2023.

The Hard Luck Story trophy awarded to Mark and Pam.



75 years of the 2CV was the celebration focus at CITIN 2023 Show and Shine.



Nightingale with the torch.

Not to be out done, Max, from Toowoomba, arrived with a full kit of replacement radiator fluid at just the right time. Just when we were all ready to test, I could not find where I had put the radiator cap. It eventually was found in Peter's toolbox, but not to be out done Max returned with a spare as well.

No surprise then that we were awarded the 'Hard Luck Trophy' at the gala dinner.

We had a marvellous and uneventful trip back home and as I write this some weeks later, Steelie has sent me a whole set of radiator hoses, I have sent a replacement water-pump hose to Martin in South Australia, I have sourced two replacement clutch cables, one to Paul in Cessnock and one as a spare, Peter has new special tape and I was able to replace Max's radiator fluid in Murray Bridge.

I am completely in awe of the way the Citroën family closes around you particularly as a relative newbie.

We have already booked for CITIN 2024 in Tasmania!

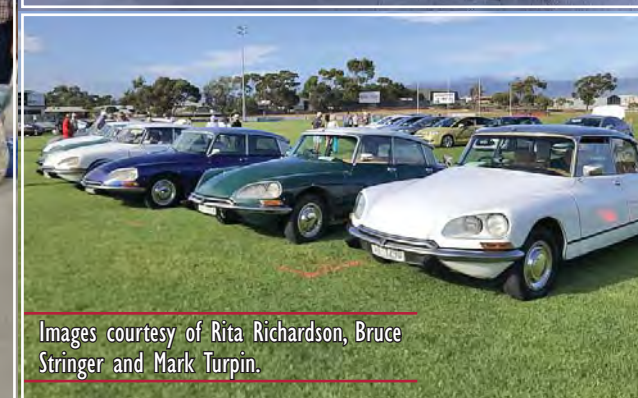
Incredibly to add to our constant good fortune on this trip, in Bathurst we had a call from Citroën Australia to say that I had won the commemorative Murray Bridge CITIN 2023 jacket, which arrived just last week.

Now to buy a Lotto ticket.
Mark Turpin ~ CCCQ

CitIn '23 In Pictures



CitIn '23 In Pictures



Images courtesy of Rita Richardson, Bruce Stringer and Mark Turpin.

Nippon Citroën

Identity Theft ~ Now & Then

Late last year, as I pulled up to the pumps to fill my tank, I received a text alerting me to update various details on my ApplePay account. Knowing I was about to use this to pay for my fuel, I unwittingly complied [nooo, I hear you both screaming]. It wasn't until the following morning that a discussion among colleagues triggered the response I should have experienced 10hours earlier. Sure enough on checking, the message had been generated by an unknown mobile number. .

With my heart sinking faster than a DS with a faulty accumulator, I made contact with my bank. There is some very good advice and support available, as I found. Thus far I would seem to have escaped unscathed but I'm still keeping my fingers crossed. Do beware, gentle readers.

So, identity theft such as this

is a recent phenomena you would think. Alas no. As André Citroën found out within a few years of commencing car manufacture, according to articles published in 'Citropolis' 23years ago.

As production of the first cars got underway in Paris, across the world in Japan envious eyes were plotting. On 16th May 1919 Doctor Tamotso Yamanouchi applied to the patent office in Tokyo to register not only the name 'Citroën', but also the title 'André Citroën'. This was to cover the supply of both vehicles and parts. On carrying out their research with due diligence, the Japanese patent office found that neither were protected, so awarded Dr Yamanouchi the rights.

It wasn't until the following month that André Citroën sought to register the rights himself. This was successfully done in France, but for Japan it was too late. The crafty doctor hadn't only chosen Citroën.

He had made a number of other applications, including Ford but found they were already protected. So these applications were refused.

In 1920



日佛シトロエン自動車株式会社
東京・麹町・虎ノ門

●五馬力型
シヤシー 二、四〇〇圓
三人乗 上製幌型 三、一五〇圓
二人乗 クーペー型 三、二五〇圓
三人乗 實用箱型 三、二〇〇圓

●十馬力型(八印ハ全鋼製)
シヤシー 三、二〇〇圓
五人乗 上製幌型 四、二〇〇圓
五人乗 特製幌型 四、五〇〇圓
六人乗 リモジン箱型 四、八〇〇圓
四人乗 セダン箱型 五、四〇〇圓
三人乗 クーペー型 五、四〇〇圓
(東京版)

新型シトロエン 値下御通知

今同國内車に於て工場集約生産を實現致し従ては外洋に比しより各車種に於ける全量西國乃至全西國の値下騰行を以て諸君定価改定仕様照例全量御用命の程伏希希上様

昭和十四年五月一日

A Citroën advertisement published in a daily newspaper in December 1925. Citroën Japan had to drastically lower its prices of the 5 and 10hp, in order to come into line with the Ford Model T assembled in Yokohama, which was ridiculously cheap.

André Citroën had sent his close associate André Sceillier, around the world to set up agencies for Citroën cars. Accompanied by his secretary Felix Schwab, operations were set up in England, Germany and Italy. As part of their tour in Asia, a rally of Citroën cars from Tokyo to Osaka was organised, which attracted much positive attention in the press.

Accordingly, a company was set up by a large company through their subsidiary, the Tokyo Gas and Electric Engineering Company. Fifty cars were ordered but did not sell well due to high pricing. Most of those left were lost, when Tokyo was

devastated by the Great Kanto earthquake of 1923.

Ford leapfrogged other car manufacturers by setting up a factory to build their cars near to the docks in Yokohama in 1925. General Motors opened their plant two years later in Osaka.

That year André Sceillier returned to set up a new company, Nichi Futsu Citroën. This time greater success was achieved, although prices were still not that competitive. A hammer blow was dealt two years later, when Ford began

SALOON	CATALOGUE PRICE [¥]	DISCOUNT PRICE [¥]
Ford	1,735	1,735
Chevrolet	2,065	2,065
Citroën C4	2,590	2,400
Citroën C6	3,400	2,900

LOCAL PRODUCTION OF JAPANESE CARS		
YEAR	PRODUCTION	% CHANGE
1919	12	~
1924	136	+1,033%
1926	246	+660%
1927	302	+23%
1928	433	+43%
1929	376	-13%
1930	391	+4%

Nippon Citroën

production in Japan, which cut their costs considerably.

At this time the main volume of car sales were to be used as taxis. In Japan these were principally bought by owner/drivers. These owners valued a low price over and above any other consideration. The quality of the vehicle and that long term cost benefit did not enter their calculations. Citroën were still not appealing to this group of purchasers.

What of the evil Dr Yamanouchi? Well, he had been keeping his powder dry. However, in 1926 André Citroën received a telegram from one of his inspectors, that, while visiting Japan, he had learnt of Dr Yamanouchi's deceit. However, by now Dr Y had given the patent rights to his brother Teji. This was an important decision with dire implications for the law-

suit, which André Citroën was obliged to instigate...

As soon as he discovered Dr Yamonouchi's claim, Citroën instigated a law suit. The basis of which being that the Citroën company was well known around the world and had featured in many publications. Unfortunately, the weakness in this case was that there was no evidence that anything had appeared in print in Japan.

A second lawsuit was brought by the new importing agent ~ Nichi Futsu Citroën Jidisha Kai-sha. The basis of their claim being that Dr Yamonouchi had not used the Citroën name for over two years, or ever for that matter.

Sadly, both lawsuits failed due to lack of proof of any awareness in Japan of André Citroën as an industrialist and despite the fact that the evil doctor had

Not Japan, but China. China is a harsh country, and its roads are the same. In 1930 there were only 10,700km of roads throughout the whole of China. The few roads there were, were completely unusable during the rainy season and for most of the winter! Although they knew it was necessary to do something for the development of the automobile industry in China, the Chinese engineers couldn't find anything better than this system of 'pot hole' filled roads. This was their way of keeping horse vehicles off these roads and reserving them uniquely for automobiles. They dug these holes at regular distances in the theory that the car's wheels could pass between them but not those of a horse drawn vehicle. This might seem a bit of a drastic remedy but it was certainly efficient. You can imagine the joy of a driver trying to drive along these roads at night!

not actively used the Citroën name. The act of selling it to his brother constituted 'use'. During this time Nichi Futsu had signed a contract with Japanese lawyers Messrs Kawase, Arima and Baba to represent both their case and André Citroën's. Unwisely, this entitled them to a huge settlement if the case was won with any expenses paid in addition.

By now it was 1928 and on the 13th of January ~ a Friday, as luck would have it ~ Teji Yamonouchi contacted the head of Japanese customs in Yokohama requesting that no new Citroën cars be released to Nichi Futsu Citroën. The rights to these cars were his, and he had the papers to prove it!

After representations by



Nippon Citroën

André Citroën and the French ambassador, a temporary arrangement was made for Nichi Futsu Citroën to receive the cars. However, it came too late and later that year Nichi Futsu Citroën Jidisha Kaisha filed for bankruptcy.

Citroën set up yet another company, Nippon Citroën Jidoshaosha Hambai Kaisha Ltd ~ The Japan Citroën Automobile Sales Ltd. Incorporating two of the previous company's main creditors, this new venture agreed to carry on with the litigation over the Citroën but refused to honour the agreement to pay the previous lawyers.

Said lawyers had been dragging their feet anyway [some things never change...]. After consideration, Messrs Kawase, Arima and Baba agreed to reduce their bill from ¥30,000 to ¥20,000. André Citroën re-

In 1902, Komunosuke Uchiyama, a 21-year old technician employed by the Sorinshokai bicycle dealership in Ginza, produced two trial automobiles. One was a car whose engine had been brought back from the US with a chassis and body built by Uchiyama. In April 1907, Uchiyama produced the Takuri, the first entirely Japanese-made car.

fused this as exorbitant, since no fresh case had been brought. He found himself in a delicate situation, as he didn't know what future litigation might ensue and whether he would yet need their services.

In 1929 Yamonouchi was approached by a member of Nippon Citroën to see if some sort of resolution could be achieved. This involved asking if he would accept a directorship in the new concern.

At this time both Citroën in Paris and Nippon Citroën in Japan were investigating the possibility of an assembly plant in Japan. Much had to be agreed, and trials as to what degree of local input would be most economic would make an interesting article in itself. André Citroën was dubious about the possible success of such an operation. He was not convinced that sales

would achieve the levels required. A further complication to all these matters was that if a Japanese driver of the time wished to buy a different vehicle from his current car, he was required to obtain a new driving licence by passing a new driving test! Given the dominance of Ford and General Motors, this was

a further impediment to any other manufacturer attempting to gain a share of the Japanese market. As to their Highway Code, the less said the better.

Against this background, in 1931, Yamonouchi suggested a potential compromise, stating that he would be willing to sacrifice all entitlement to the Citroën name, if he received an apology in person from a Citroën representative, expressing sorrow for the attack against him. Furthermore, that a public statement be printed in both Tokyo newspapers, 'The Japan Times' and the 'Japan Advertiser' to the effect that an agreement had been reached between Citroën and the good doctor, and stating that his was a genuine mistake, without malice, etc. [you get the picture]. In addition, he would accept the sum of ¥30,000, or a Citroën car, or commercial vehicle.

In January 1932 Andre Citroën wrote a letter refusing any possible amicable arrangement with Yamonouchi and his personal advisor in Japan, Louis Garbe, suggested that it was probably wise to let this particular sleeping dog lie for as long as possible. In due course the French ambassador to Japan M. de Martel was travelling through Paris in October 1932 when he called to see André Citroën. He informed him that Yamonouchi had announced his wish to sur-

NUMBER OF AUTOMOBILES ON JAPANESE ROADS & ITS COLONIES		
YEAR	CARS	% CHANGE
1923	16,205	~
1924	25,001	+55%
1925	30,215	+21%
1926	38,693	+28%
1927	49,675	+28%
1928	61,711	+23%
1929	81,471	+33%
1930	90,116	+11%
These figures represent no less than 277 companies!		

render all claim to the Citroën name. So, after years of causing protracted stress for all concerned, the machinations of Dr Yamonouchi fizzled out.

1930 had seen the beginning of an economic crisis in Japan, which deepened further through the following year. Sales of vehicles of all types went into sharp decline. Most Citroëns had been sold in the main cities, and more regional agents were now reporting no sales at all. By 1932 ideas of an assembly plant were fading fast and the difficulties of 1934 saw the official liquidation of all Citroën operations in Japan for a long time.

This article, by Andrew Peel first appeared in the March and April 2023 editions of 'Citroënian', the magazine of the CCCUK. It is reproduced here with their permission and may not be reproduced elsewhere without their specific approval.

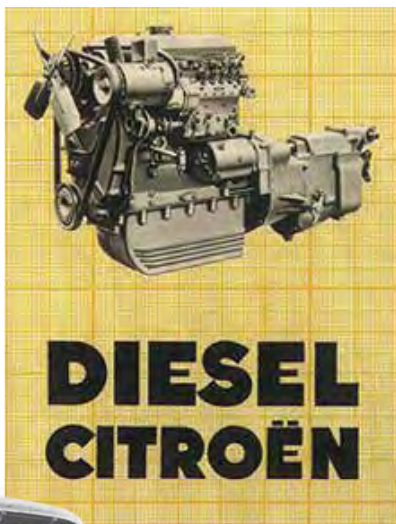


Diesel Delights

This article is derived [aka cobbled together] from a series of articles published over the decades in various editions of 'Front Drive'. Together they tell the story of six diesel-engined Citroëns from the 1930s that were exported to Australia. The writers of the original articles which provided the source material include one-time President of CCOCA, John Couche, the Club's ex-Secretary [and resident historian] Mark Navin, committee member Russell Wade and the present owner of three of the vehicles, William Rankine.

Let's start, as they say, at the very beginning with some historical background from the cars' previous owner, Russell Wade.

Following poor sales in the post-depression years [compared with Peugeot and Renault] Citroën introduced in 1934 the NH [Nouvel Habillage translated as 'new clothes'] series of the 8,10 and 15hp cars. These used a new sloping radiator grille, curved bumpers with a pair of horns mounted on the front bumper and valances welded under the guards be-



**DIESEL
CITROËN**



hind the front and rear wheels, all very reminiscent of the 1933 Fords. Despite the re-design being undertaken by the designer of the Traction Avant, Flaminio Bertoni, these few concessions were not enough to make them sell like hot croissants.

In May 1934 a new torsion bar independent front suspension similar to the Traction Avant front end was added to 'modernise' these rear wheel drive side valve cars and production ceased in September 1934 just before the introduction of the new 7 and 11 Traction Avant at the 1934 Paris Motor Show.



In January 1935 the 8 and 10hp rear drives were put back into production to satisfy the conservative clientele unable to accept a Traction Avant. These rear drives reverted to beam axles but gained OHV motors similar to the 7 and 11CV Traction, but carried the engine prefix MI [Motor Inverse] ie the engine ran in the opposite direction to that of the Traction. They also had straight bumpers with chassis prefix 7VA and 11VA.

A diesel variant was produced for commercial users with 75×100mm giving 1,766cc with the engine prefix DI and chassis prefix UD, these were made in very small numbers apparently from a confection of bits ie they had the earlier NH curved bumpers.

[Ed. According to Wikipedia the 11UD model was the second diesel passenger car in the world to be produced in series. It was first introduced in 1933 at the Paris Motor Show. Series production only started in 1936. The 1.75-litre engine reached a maximum speed of

Both the cars pictured here are Flaminio Bertone's facelifted 'Nouvel Habillage' models witnessed by the obviously sloping radiator grille and the valances welded to front guards. Interestingly the picture on the facing page lacks the bumper-mounted horns and curved bumpers.

Diesel Delights

85kph... Two utility versions with a DI diesel engine with indirect injection and turbulent filling emerged from the Rosalie model. Production took place from 1936 to 1938. At the same time, the larger truck 23DI was created.]

Production, by all accounts, was 500kg chassis, 520 examples and of the 850kg chassis 100 [between 1937 and 1939].

As far as can be ascertained six diesels in chassis form were imported to Australia [Melbourne] being a mixture of 500kg and 850kg types.

The Tale Hangs by the Grille

So much for the history. Back in 1979 ['Front Drive', Vol 3 No 4, October/November 1979] we ran a reprint of what appears to be an advertising leaflet for Citroën's 1934 diesel-powered 7-seater salon. As part of the introduction to the article the Club's Secretary and resident historian, Mark Navin, noted that 'It is fairly well documented in 'Front Drive' that in 1934 Citroën produced the 'great leap forward' ~ the Traction Avant series with its highly innovative front wheel drive. Up until that time, Citroëns were rear wheel drive and automotively somewhere between average and interesting ~ certainly not in the league of what is now known as the Traction.

What is not as widely known is that Citroën continued to

produce rear wheel drive vehicles up to nearly the start of World War II. These 'flat-earthers' did have a certain amount of automotive ingenuity. Initially they were effectively Rosalie bodies with a Traction engine reversed. By mid-'36/'37 a diesel-engined version in 4 and 6-cylinder form had been produced and designed as a commercial vehicle. I have it on good authority that both models were marketed in Australia. With the exception of the remains of a 4-cylinder motor in Sydney, I have never heard/seen of either model in a reasonably complete form. If any member can furnish me with any facts, rumours, hearsay, I would be most grateful.'

It appears that nothing eventuated from this appeal, but by February/March 1980 [Vol 3, No 6] Mark was back in print announcing the discovery by John and Robyn Couche of a grille. Here is what Mark Navin wrote at the time.

The recent Bendigo Swap Meet unearthed a tantalising find. Robyn and John Couche brought back a grille ostensibly belonging to a 1930s Citroën, and obviously it is not from a Traction, though apart from size was a close relation [see photos opposite]. First inspection by the Couches seemed to favour it being a Rosalie grille [it was bought on that assump-

tion]. Closer inspection and the lack of the Floating Power emblem sent us scurrying to the reference books.

There appear to be two possibilities:

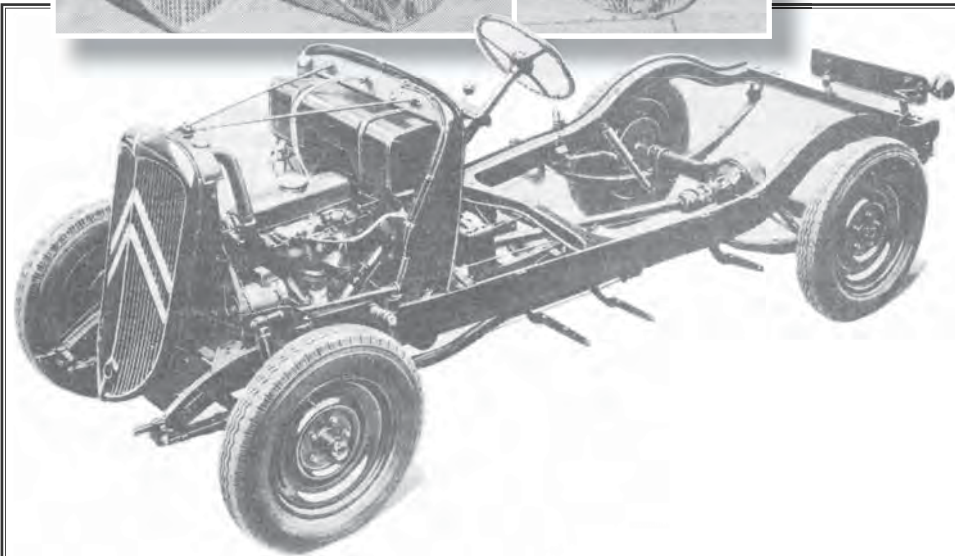
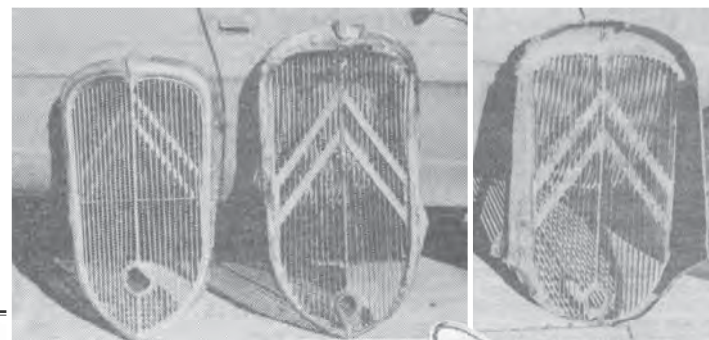
1 That it is a Rosalie grille and one of the last which was called the NH series, as this model had what could be called the Prototype of the Traction. However, specific mention is made that the chevrons were hidden behind

the grille. Obviously, this is not the case in the mystery grill, as the back view shows.

2 That it is the remains of a Citroën diesel, and this seems to be confirmed by a photo in Pierre Dumont's 'Quai de Javel'. Not seen in the comparison photograph are the unusual side panels and these are exact copies of the ones shown in the rolling chassis. The photograph shows a light utility chassis which was origi-

nally available with a petrol engine, but later [and by far the most common] with a diesel engine.

So, any educated guess



Diesel Delights

makes the grille from a diesel Citroën circa 1936, and any leads as to the rest of the remains of this vehicle would be appreciated.'

Unfortunately, as is so often the case with images that appeared in early editions of 'Front Drive' the originals of the photos have been lost and all we have for reference is the scans of the poorly reproduced original magazines. However

Below: The 'first' diesel would appear to well beyond restoration, although with the right skills, time and money... who knows.

Inset: This image of the 'first' diesel appeared in 'Front Drive' in 1980 shortly after its 'discovery' by John and Robyn Couche. In the time between the two photos the A-pillars seem to have disappeared!

they are included in the hope that they will provide a degree of enlightenment for the reader.

A Car to Accompany the Grille

By Volume 4, No 1 [April/May, 1980] Mark was back with an update.

A further episode in the 'Australian diesel' saga. John and Robyn Couche have located what appears to be the vehicle belonging to the grille illustrated in last issue. Residing on a farm [of



course] in Western Victoria, its general condition is poor; missing engine, gearbox and bonnet. Although the wood frame has rotted, the body, mudguards and tailgate are there and in reasonable condition for the car's age. A plate identifies the car as a Type 500, DI [for diesel], No 890053. The name and address of a previous owner is still visible.

Our honorary historian, Mark Navin comments: 'The vehicle appears to be one of four rolling chassis imported into Australia, and bodied locally.

[Ed. Note the reference here to four rather than the more commonly promulgated number of six.]

They were available in short and long wheelbase. The shorter became the utility, and the

Left: French colour advertising for the Rosalie highlighted 'Floating Power' along with the various models which were available.

Right: This March 1934 press advertisement from Sneddon's Motors in Brisbane features a Slough-built Citroën 10 [8CV]. Given the date the car shown is a pre-facelift model with the vertical grille and cut-away mudguards.

LES VOITURES DE TOURISME
CITROËN

March 1934
The Queensland Motorist
Page 10

floating power CITROËN - floating power CITROËN

**THE COMPLETELY NEW AND REVOLUTIONARY
CITROËN
TEN**

THIS Ten is a replica of the record-breaking standard Citroën which has smashed over 256 World and International records, accomplishing 186,420 miles at an average speed of 58 m.p.h., running continuously day and night for 153 days.

In addition to this amazing performance, this Ten embodies a series of extra features:-
Extra Power—11.4 h.p.; Extra Wheelbase—106 1/2 ins.; Extra Safety—Dual Servo Four-wheel Brakes; Extra Comfort—Full Air-wheel Equipment; Extra Performance—Floating Power; Extra Strength—New Rigid Frame.

De Luxe bodies are standard—roomier (on account of the long wheelbase), are upholstered in Chrome Leather, with adjustable front seats in Tourers and Saloons. Luggage carrier standard on all models.

Prices from £280.
(plus Sales Tax)

Available in Roadsters, Tourers, Coupes, and Saloons

Sneddon's Motors Ltd.
467-9 ADELAIDE STREET, BRISBANE
Showrooms, Service and Spare Parts - Phone: B 7648

Diesel Delights

long wheelbase were made into a van which was used by a laundry firm that visited hospitals.'

Apart from that, details are sparse. Any more help?

Once again, no further information was immediately forthcoming. Nothing more, indeed, was heard of Australian diesel-engined Citroëns until Russell Wade appeared in print in 1982 ['Front Drive', Vol 6, No 4, November/December, 1982], when he announced the discovery of the vehicles which form the basis of this tale. Here is what he wrote...

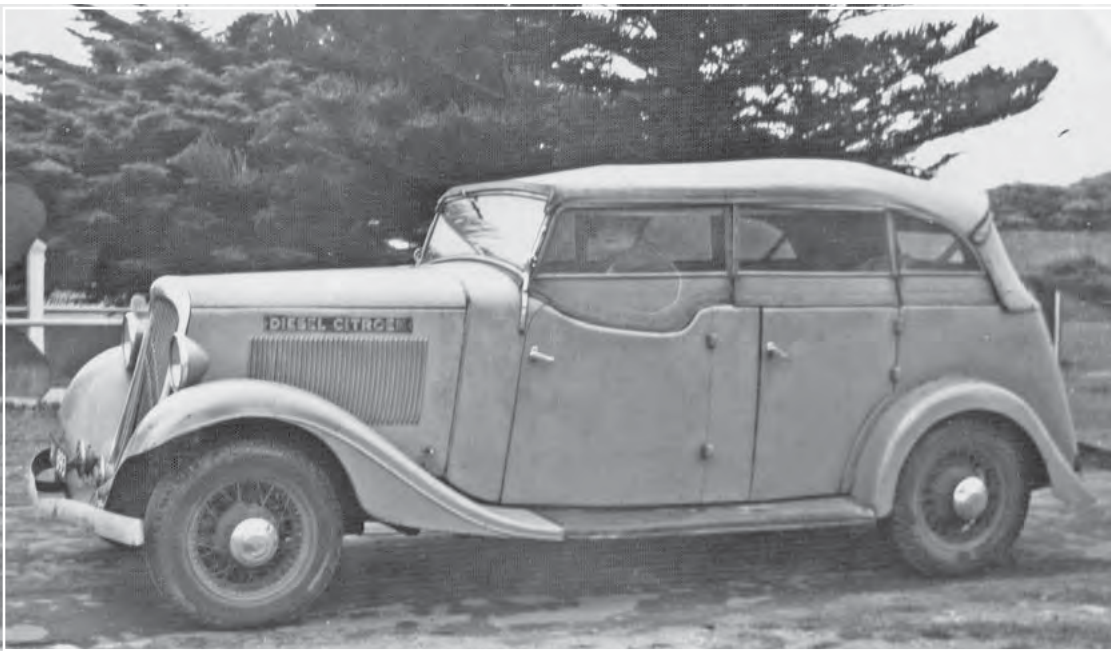
And Two More Makes Three

About four years ago, while nearing the end of a phase of diesel enthusiasm [not fanati-

cism ~ fanatics have distillate in their veins or at least smell as if they do], and starting a phase of Citroën interest, I was selling some diesel parts. The purchaser noticed a decrepit 2CV in the vicinity and immediately commented that he had seen a pair of old Citroën diesels. I forgot about this comment, thinking that my leg was being pulled [1930s Citroën diesels?] until seeing Mark Navin's articles in Front Drive.

Six months later, I traced the

The Australian bodied car was purchased in about 1935 and this 1950 image was taken prior to the addition of a three inch strip of wood above the windscreen to elevate the roof due to owner's height.



chap who originally told me about them, but he had lost the name and address of the owner. However, he did describe the location within about a one square mile area. Much slow driving and door knocking later, I still could not locate them by the vague description of the house but luckily, after about another four months, my informant, on returning from the airport, was able to recognise

Moran & Cato was the largest chain of grocery stores in Australia in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. While they did use the Citroën diesel pickup for a time by 1940 this International Harvester truck was in use. It is shown here outside their Brighton store. Image: Museums Victoria.

some landmarks and finally produce an address.

The owner of the diesels turned out to be a mature lad of 71. The vehicles are two of a batch of six chassis imported, and consist of an Australian touring bodied car and a pickup [ute with a separate rear body] that had been used for many years by the owner in his business as a diesel mechanic.

The car had been purchased in 1935 when it was about one year old, and had starting problems which were cured as mentioned later. It travelled about 140,000 miles and has been on blocks in a shed for the last 14 years. It is complete, with motor out with bearing trouble,



Date MAR-29-68 Receipt No. 27595 Read No. 4 Class 080 Amount Paid £22-22-00	Collector of Inquiries	<div style="text-align: center;"> <p>STATE OF VICTORIA</p> <p>MOTOR CAR ACT 1951</p> <p>CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION OF MOTOR CAR</p> </div> <p>This is to certify that the Motor Car described hereunder has (subject to receipt of annual fee at the rate per power-weight unit indicated being shown hereon by the imprint of the cash register) been registered as of the power-weight units, and for the year ending on the date set out hereunder.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">S. H. PORTER, Chief Commissioner of Police.</p>																		
		<div style="float: right; width: 15%; border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> WARNING This Certificate shall have no effect until the imprint of the CASH REGISTER appears hereon </div> <table style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <th style="width: 55%;">Name and Address of the person in whose name the motor car is registered</th> <th style="width: 10%; text-align: center;">HH</th> <th style="width: 35%;">Description of MOTOR CAR</th> </tr> <tr> <td>Mr. SUNDERLAND John Bredin</td> <td></td> <td>Registered Number HDM 080</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1 Malpas Avenue</td> <td></td> <td>Make Type</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Citroen Utility</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Colour P.W. Units Rate</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Red Blk 43 6.0</td> </tr> </table>	Name and Address of the person in whose name the motor car is registered	HH	Description of MOTOR CAR	Mr. SUNDERLAND John Bredin		Registered Number HDM 080	1 Malpas Avenue		Make Type			Citroen Utility			Colour P.W. Units Rate			Red Blk 43 6.0
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			Cwt.		Cwt.															
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Chassis No. VT 0477	REGISTRATION FEE																			
Used for the carriage of goods for hire or in the course of trade	for the year ending 29.3. ANNUAL FEE £ 12.18.0																			
	INSURANCE £ 1.0.0																			
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Diesel Delights

pation [?] of not seeing a diesel Citroën on the road for some time to come.

A Change of Ownership

But all was not lost as in about 1988 Russell Wade acquired the Citroën Diesel car [tourer] and the pickup truck from the widow of John Sutherland, who we have already met in Russell's previous article. Russell had tried to get him to sell up a few times. He had operated a business known as 'Sutherland Diesels' from 60 Sydney Rd., Coburg for many years during the 1950s and 1960s.

With the vehicles came a heap of used spares with such gems as broken crankshafts and odd crown wheels. The other curios with the vehicles were the two original registration folders of the old green style showing the original registration and the history of ownership since then. These folders were phased out in the early 1960s, Russell seems to remember.

The car had been first registered in 1939 and showed a curious pattern of ownership. It would be owned by the same person for many years then change hands with two or three new owners over a 12 to 18 month period. Then a period of long ownership would follow. The reason for this was that many owners never came to grips with the cold starting procedure.

This cold starting problem was common to all small diesels because the tiny combustion space with 20:1, or higher, compression tends to quench or cool the compressed air during cold starts. In large diesels the bigger mass of air in the combustion chamber acts as an insulator leaving a hot spot in the middle to start combustion. Early small diesels had a thermostatic valve [fed by diesel fuel] in the inlet manifold. For a cold start you simply held a switch until the resistance was white hot [by guessing the time], this opened the thermostatic valve, but no fuel flowed in.

Then the starter operated, fuel and air sucked past this white hot coil, produced a nice inferno in the inlet manifold and, providing there was some oxygen left in the air, the engine started. This system, although very simple, was always prone to blockages or electrical malady.

The pick-up truck was first registered in 1941 and had only two previous registered owners, but it had spent many years unregistered on French Island. So, it was badly rusted, but it did run quite well after Russell bought it. The body was very well made with wind-up windows, wind-out windscreen but it did have the usual wooden frame of that era.

The car, by comparison, had

an incredibly unsophisticated tourer body with side curtains, again wood-framed and built by Melbourne Motor Bodies, previously located on the site of the Trocadero night club, now the site of Arts Centre Melbourne. Incredibly, the car was built on an 850kg chassis.

Russell could not find the chassis plate on the pick-up, but the remains of the other diesel pick-up found by John Couche had a 500kg chassis plate. So, presumably some lackey was sent to choose a chassis at random ~ unaware that there were subtle differences [springs, for example!].

Of the six vehicles imported [Russell has heard the figure six from two totally unconnected sources] all six engine blocks still exist, or at least they did in 1992. Only two complete vehicles and the remains of a 500kg pickup are extant, so it is fair to

The Trocadero nightclub in 1950.

Inset: The venue opened in 1926 as the Green Mill dance hall. It was to feature in one of the Phryne Fisher mystery novels by Kerry Greenwood.

assume the other three vehicles have been scrapped.

Various factors, relating to time, family, usability and safety [cable brakes!] saw Russell sell these two Citroën diesel vehicles to Citroën Classic Owners' Club of Australia member Neil Rankine.

Neil's son William is a member of the Club and takes up the story for us.

Another Owner With a List

My father [Neil] purchased two diesel Citroëns back when I was still in primary school



Diesel Delights

[1990s] from Russell Wade which he had purchased from Sunderland Diesel. I have always had a thing for diesel cars, having grown up with the noise and smell of them.

My first car was a green diesel 504 Peugeot. I have fond memories of going to the service station in the early 2000s to fill it up. At the time, diesel cars were not common and the service station attendants used to initially question if I really wanted to put diesel in the car, but they always knew it was diesel when they heard the car engine running.

My father has now passed these diesels onto me and my love of the sound of a diesel engine continues today. I plan to restore one of the two diesel Citroëns purchased from Russell when I finish my current two 1920s Citroën restoration projects [5CV Doctor's coupe and a B2 Kegresse].

Not long after my father purchased the two diesel Citroëns, he also acquired the other diesel ute mentioned in the article. It was on a farm under pine trees and as such suffered badly from corrosion. Unfortunately, this meant that the body was beyond repair.

A few years later, a family friend phoned out of the blue from a farm clearing sale in country Victoria and offered to bid on a Citroën diesel en-

gine on my father's behalf. He explained that he knew it was a Citroën engine as the bonnet over the engine had the Citroën diesel label on it still.

As we did not really expect it to actually be a Citroën diesel engine, we asked him to buy it only if it went cheap, which it did. It had the radiator, bonnet, engine and gearbox, the engine turned out to be in good condition and we have had the engine running.

Of these cars we have the most history on the Sunderland diesel ute, presumably because it was used commercially. This ute was driven around my parents' farm when we brought it home and was driven into the shed where it still sits. We have very little information on the other cars. A period photo of the touring body of the Diesel Citroën is included, along with a copy of the original registration certificate for the Sunderland diesel ute and a photo of it when it was brought home. The Sunderland ute is still painted in the red and black colour scheme and has the Sunderland business information painted on the vehicle's side.

Given my many projects I will probably only have time to restore one of the diesel Citroëns. As such, the Sunderland diesel ute could potentially be available to the right person.

William Rankine

Totally Traction

Despite what my wife may tell you I don't spend much time or money on car magazines ~ these days certainly less than I used to. However, I do like to browse the odd internet forum about old and shabby cars. On one such site the topic of 'Peak Car' was raised. What represents Peak Car?

This question is open to much interpretation and as much stuff was written questioning the meaning of the question as there was proposing answers. Obviously, I said the Traction Avant is Peak Car. It does everything you need a car to do and looks good too and it was probably the first modern car. I could have said the DS because its looks have never been bettered ~ but its poor accessibility to service items let it down. When

cars are 50 years old or more, every item is a service item. The DS is more complex and has a lot more of them than the Traction and everything seems to be behind everything else.

Of course, there are some things on a Traction that are a little awkward to get to, especially on the narrow bodied cars. Come to think of it, the DS only came in one width ~ how very boring!

Was there any other car that was built in two widths as standard? I suppose one might argue that BMC's Farina range might qualify, but the bigger ones [eg Austin Westminster] only shared styling with the smaller cars [eg Austin Cambridge] ~ they were not versions of the same car.

I think it is remarkable how one design produced so many variants that all looked so good

and did their job so well with so much commonality. To achieve so many variants, in so short a space of time, incorporating so much new technology but without any help from computers is amazing.

And that's

The 1938 Renard et Bec bodied car at the Mid-dacten ICCCR meeting. Photo: Chris Bailey.



Totally Traction

only the engineering. The marketing was pretty special too ~ the car was designed to appeal to such a wide range of buyers ~ from Presidents to police forces, taxi drivers and farmers as well as to the general public.

I can't think of any other vehicle which served such a wide market. Of course, the 1970s Mercedes W114/W115 range appealed to CEOs, taxi drivers, families and rally drivers but no other vehicle comes to mind.

And yet ~ even with the range that Citroën offered, there were people who needed something different.

Whilst I no longer buy many car magazines, I do like to take a look at them in the

shops. If you run a newsagent, I do apologize. This used to be something I would do at motorway service stations or in airports, but I've got out of the habit in the last couple of years for some reason. And so I found myself in WH Smiths thumbing through 'Classic and Sportscar'. Having got past many, many pages of adverts I found a

couple of interesting snippets, both relating to Traction Avant roadsters.

Neither were your average common or garden roadster [if there is such a thing]. One was the blue 1938 Renard et Bec bodied car that some of you will have seen at the ICCCR in Mid-

dachten. I am sure it must have appeared at many other events, but I saw it there, parked in the car park with all the ordinary Citroëns. I have written about this car before and ~ what a nice motor. Its mention in C&SC was to highlight its appearance at auction with a guide price of €80,000 ~ 120,000. That's a lot of money.

But doesn't seem that much for a unique car that looks as good as this one does. Despite that, it apparently did not sell. The auction description says it is the only survivor of two that Renard et Bec made. It's certainly the only one that I have seen but Olivier de Serres' book 'Traction Avant Coupe Cabriolet Decouverable' shows a picture of a car that has a different number plate and looks to be an off-white colour. Does that mean that both cars still exist? Does it make it less unique if there are still two of them? I'd still like to own it even if there was a risk of parking next to the other one in Tesco's car park one day.

The other roadster featured was rather more common, although I have never seen one. The magazine article is about

These images of the Renard et Bec cabriolet are taken from the Citroën website, who republished them from the catalogue of the Osenat Auction at Salon Époqu'Auto which was held on November 6, 2022.



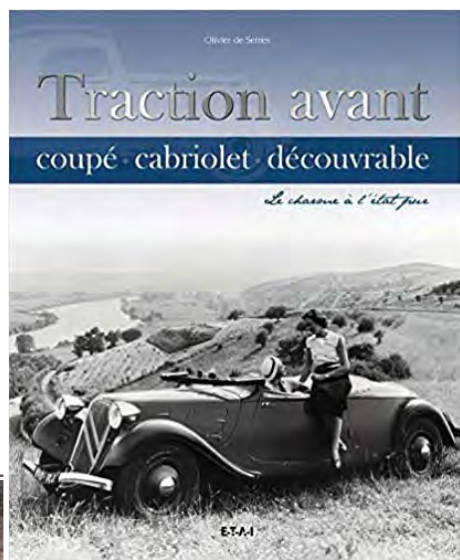
Totally Traction

the Musée Maurice Dufresne in Azay-le Rideau and the main photo is of a Georges Irat OLC3. The magazine photo is of a red car but I can't reproduce that ~ but the white car pictured is the same model. According to the C&SC caption Georges Irat made approximately 200 examples of the OLC3 although I have seen other sources suggesting various figures between 100 and 700 being produced.

Whatever the figure, it looks similar to a Traction Avant Roadster but it only uses the Citroën's 1,911cc engine and gearbox. It is front wheel drive but I do not believe it uses the same drive shafts. It is not monocoque being built on some kind of U-section chassis rails. The suspension uses Neiman rubber O-shaped springs [hence the O in the model

name]. The doors are front-hinged. It is similar to ~ but almost completely different from the Traction. In fact, apart from the engine and gearbox it had no other link with Citroën at all.

Both these cars were built in 1938 and both must have cost considerably more than an IIB Cabriolet. I get the appeal of



the Renard et Bec car ~ it is a stunning looker and [almost] unique. But what's the point of the Georges Irat car? It sort of looks like the Traction ~ but doesn't have the dicky seat or even an opening boot. It is certainly no better looking than the Citroën and personally I think it is far less elegant.

Georges Irat branded their cars as 'The Elite Car'. Their OLC3 evolved from the previous ODU and MDU models which were lightweight and sporty ~ in the MG vein, but with front-wheel-drive and using the Godefroy et Levecque Ruby engine. Godefroy et Levecque had in the early-1930s rescued George Irat from bankruptcy resulting from the Wall Street crash. The Ruby engine was theirs ~ apparently good in its day, but by now quite old fashioned. It was of small capacity [about 1-litre] and used thermosiphon cooling and its cylinder head was not removable.

Hence, in 1938 it was replaced by the Citroën engine and gearbox [hence the C in the model name]. This made the car heavier and less sporty than the previous model and gave it a 3-speed gearbox where previously the car has 4 speeds [hence the 3 in the model name] but it still sold ~ until the war came along. When that ended Georges Irat was not big enough to ignore the Pons Plan

for restructuring the French automotive industry, nor were they big enough to be included in it and were effectively left out in the cold. Their intended partnership with Bugatti was hampered by the latter being accused of collaboration during the war. And so, post war Georges Irat no longer offered the OLC3. And, of course, nor did Citroën offer the Traction Avant cabriolet.

I do not know how much you would have to pay for an OLC3 now. In 2018 the auction house Arctural sold one for €23,780 but I don't know the condition. Maybe they don't attract much money but I would rather have a Traction Avant cabriolet anyway.

[Ed. Before you read on, I remind our readers that this article first appeared in the January edition of 'Citroënian'. That is mid-winter and explains the following paragraph.]

With the weather as it is, I expect my Normale will still get the lion's share of the action. Where I work, our last vestige of COVID control requires our temperature to be taken when we arrive. Even though the Normale is a saloon, without a heater in the car, I regularly fail the test because my temperature reads too low. So, my job for tomorrow is to fit the heater tube in the Normale.

Chris Bailey



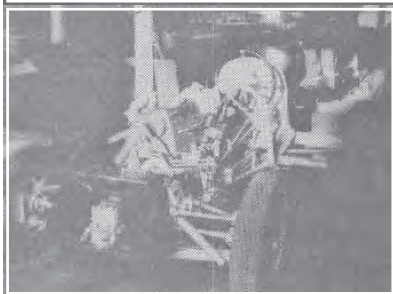
The Australian Racers III

Don Wright

You may recall that a couple of months ago I published an image that was from the front cover of 'Wheels' magazine from February 1956 depicting Don Wright at wheel of his Traction Special competing in the NSW Championships at Newcastle that year.

The Club's archive holds some other material about Don, his Citroën Special and his racing exploits.

Back in Volume 2, No 4 [October 1978] we published the results of then member Kenn Gilbert's interview with Don. In Volume 16, No 1 [Winter, 1992] we reprinted an article from the February 1958 edition of 'Sports Car World' which



told more of the Don Wright story and finally in Volume 24, No 1 [April 2000] some additional photos were published.

Since then there has been a short article published by the Traction Owners Club in the UK about the restoration of the Special and I have located additional material on line about the Don's now restored [and racing] Special.

In February 2002 an article about Don appeared in 'Motor Racing Australia' magazine.

I have done my best to collate all of this into what I hope is a cogent tale... not as easy as you might believe as not all the articles tell the same story.

Still, I hope you enjoy this second article in 'The Australian Racers' series. Once again, I must apologize for the quality of the images associated with this article as the source is mainly the Club's scanned magazine archive.

Leigh F Miles ~ Editor

The term 'Racing Citroën' does not sound quite right ~ as incongruous as saying '2CV Drag', or 'Light 15 Sprint'. If, however you have a memory stretching back almost 70 years, and had a keen interest in local motor racing, you may remember Don Wright of Sydney, and his Citroën Special.

Stones peppered the fence, spectators ducked, as the all

blue racing car thundered around the hairpin.

Don Wright flattened the accelerator, and headed towards the finishing line of the Hawkesbury ~ Mt. Panorama Hill Climb. His time established a new course record for the difficult hill.

This Citroën special ~ one of the smartest B class cars, has had a colourful career, and more than half a dozen capable engineers have had a finger in the design and preparation of the car.

The story begins before World War II. Bill Buckle saluted forth just like many others, a 12-year-old with his father in a Triumph Dolomite. It was 1938, Englishman Peter Whitehead was at Bathurst to trounce the locals and win the Australian Grand Prix ~ and young Bill was forming ideas about going racing when he grew up.

Of course there were war years to take minds off racing after that, but with the re-

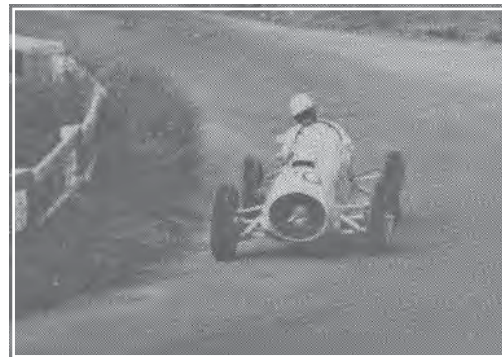
sumption of racing in 1947 those dreams were still alive. So it came to be that in 1951 the 25-year-old Buckle raced a blue Citroën Light 15 on the mountain circuit.

The Light 15, fitted with a hot cam, twin SU carburetors and running on an 8 to 1 compression ratio, was reputed to be one of the fastest saloons through the tricky Bathurst 'Es-ses'. Consequently, it won many handicap events during its season or two of racing.

These were times when a production car race drew perhaps a dozen starters, while there were up to three full fields of open-wheelers and the tin-tops were seen as mere diversions.

Bill Buckle had visions of owning a racing car, so it was not surprising to see him set about designing and building a racing chassis. His plans, naturally enough, included a Citroën motor as the car's power unit.

He had picked up a badly



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smashed, low mileage Light 15 and set about making an open-wheeler.

By the time Bill Buckle had built the chassis rails, front and rear ends, cross members he became matrimonially [entangled]. Buckle's interest in the Citroën special waned, and as a result the car lay in the Buckle workshop for months.

Other renditions of the story tell that Bill had decided that Europe beckoned... either way the result was the same.

At this time Pennant Hills engineer, Don Wright, who had made his racing debut in an ancient Salmson, became interested in the Citroën. The bare chassis, rear and front ends, steering rack and pinion and five special Pilote wheels were

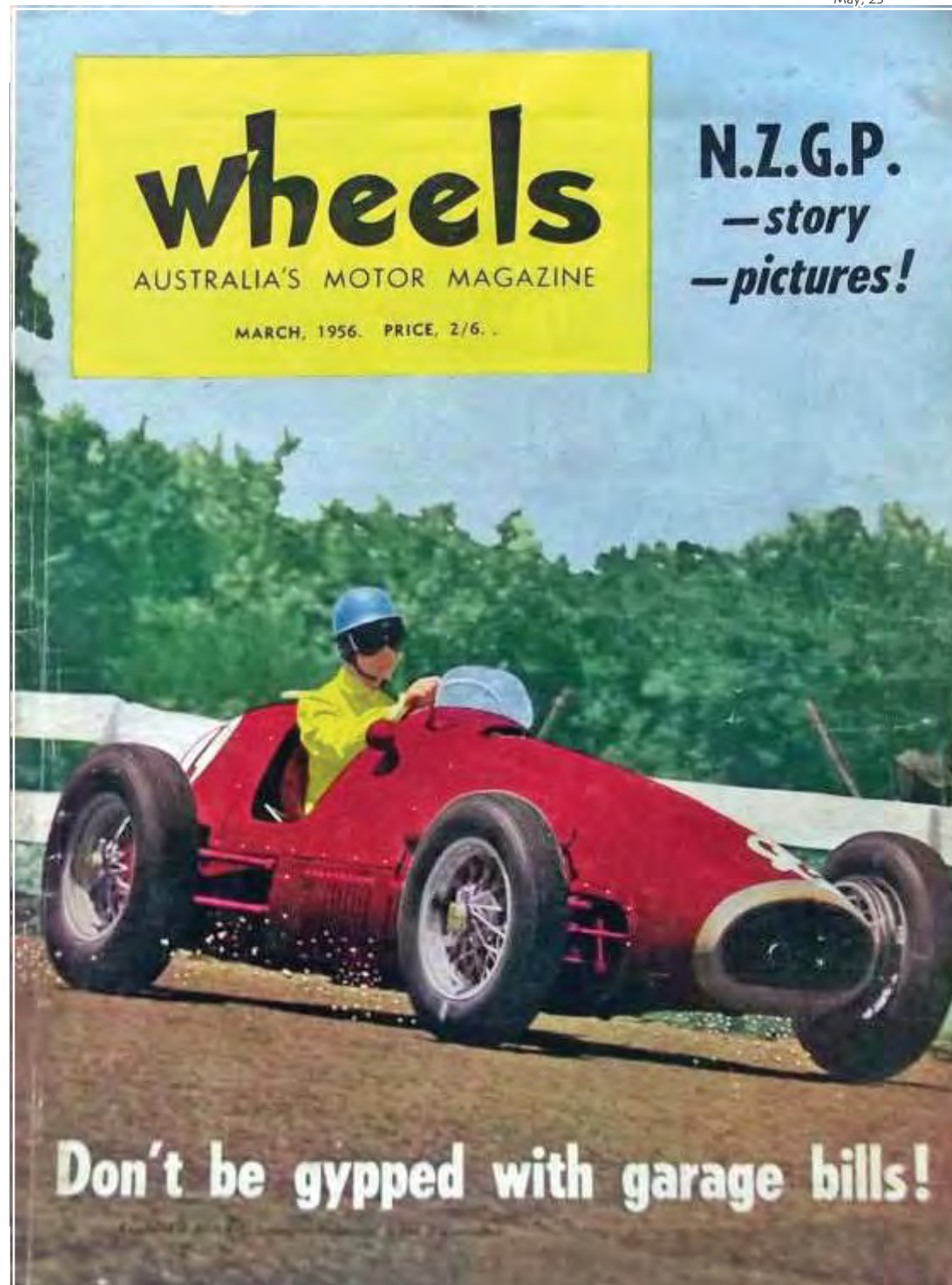
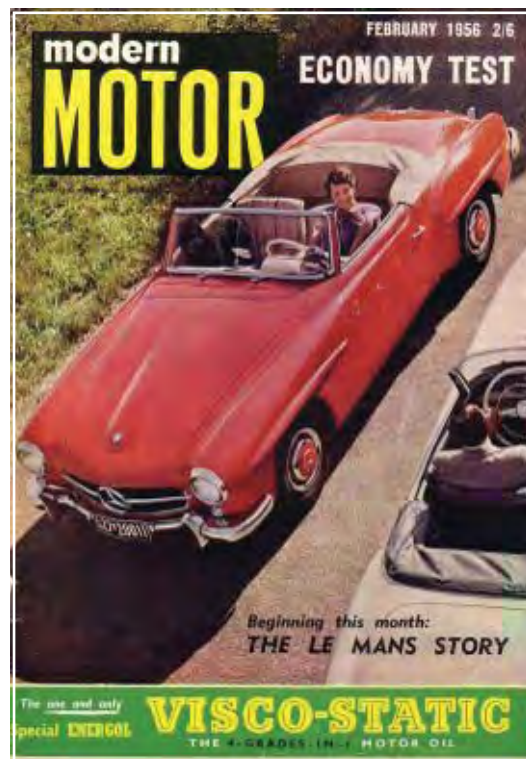
According to some sources the March 1956 edition of 'Wheels' magazine contains a report on Don Wright's performance at the 1955 NSW hillclimb championships. Other sources make no mention of such an article being part of the magazine. Motor Book World has a copy for sale if you feel like spending \$22 to find out the truth.

But in February of the same year 'Modern Motor' did indeed cover Don and his car. The Motor Book World website says the edition contains '1956 Chevrolet sedan road test 3p, Rover 75 road test 3p, first D-Type Jaguar in Australia 1p, AC Ace road test 4p, the Le Mans story 5p history, Don Wright p5, steam cars 3p, Citroën Special, Mobilgas economy run

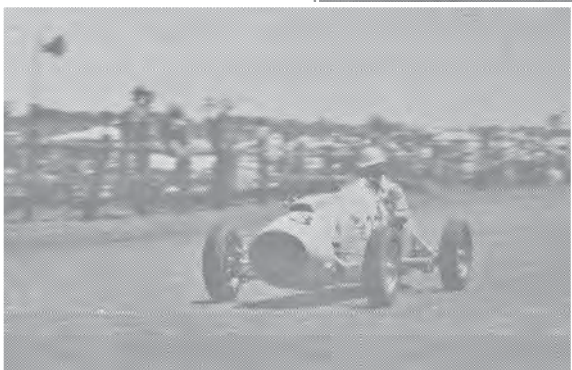
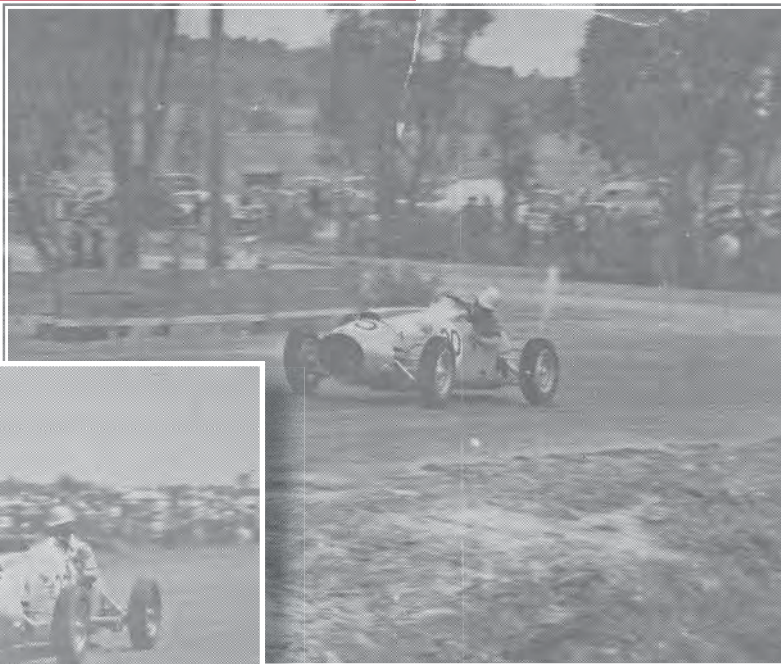
delivered to Wright's workshop.

A few months prior to this sale, Buckle Motors, NSW dealer for Citroën, suffered a fire, and as a result many brand new motors were seriously damaged by heat and water. Don Wright bought two of these '15' engines for as many pounds and set about reconditioning them to first-class condition.

All motor car racing enthusiasts have their own ideas as to what is the best type of chassis, suspension, etc., and it was not surprising that within the next few weeks Wright, in as-



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sociation with Franklin Baldwin, made drastic modifications to Buckle's chassis.

So, by now Wright had a chassis, suspension, motor [on the way to be restored to new condition]. But he was lacking

such important items as a gearbox and carburettor.

Negotiating with a French firm he soon overcame the gearbox problem by importing a Duriez box which featured four forward gears instead of the standard three.

The Duriez was regarded as being far better than the usual ERSR gearbox. These were hard to find, and had to be smuggled into England by the HWM Jaguar racing team. Don bought one of these sets and brought them in as second hand lathe gears to avoid paying tax!

The l'Epicard Duriez gearbox, as it was officially called, was first constructed in 1948. It is based on a normal Trac-

tion Avant gearbox housing but with some modifications made. All other gearbox components are different from the normal Citroën parts. Externally the gearbox in standard form, can be identified by the lever for reverse on the front of the gearbox. The gearbox was available in three versions based on the various pinion/crownwheel configurations.

Fitting twin 1/4" SUs, fed by an aircraft pump, he got the Citroën Special going, and two weeks later, although the motor was otherwise standard, he entered the car for the Vintage Car Club's climb at Foley's Hill. In chassis-only form, the Citroën hurtled up the hill and many spectators were sceptical as to whether this crude looking motor car would ever reappear at Sydney's hill climbs.

When Don Wright towed the unclad car back to his workshop he was convinced it was a motorcar well worth fiddling about with and that when all

teething troubles were overcome, it would be capable of winning races.

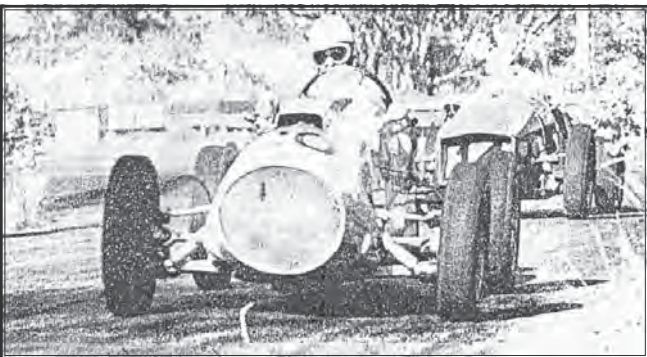
Wright's next call was on Stan Barrett, a well-known designer of racing car bodies, and after many hours of consultation over drawing boards, the now familiar outer covering of the Citroën was designed. Built from 16 gauge aluminium with odd sections from 18 gauge, the completed car tipped the weighbridge at less than 735kg.

Wright also fashioned a stainless steel fuel tank for his machine. This fitted between the two chassis rails immediately between the driver's seat and held 60litres.

With all that it was still an outlandish kind of device. Tall because of the height of the engine, it always displayed a ready tendency to bodyroll and leaned its Michelin tyres over mightily. To keep the nose lower, the radiator was built in two halves and went either side of the gearbox.

Don had worked on the Special with the assistance of Gordon Smith [engineer], Stan Barrett [panel maker] and Franklin Baldwin [chassis designer] to construct a most formidable piece of machinery.

Soon after the Foley's Hill outing it took out second place in a 50mile event at Mt Druitt, followed by a first



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place in a quarter-mile event. This car competed at every Mt Druitt meeting.

Its achievements were restricted to a few minor placings in handicap racing.

Then came Orange and the long flat course which lent itself

Below: Don Wright in the car he built racing at Bathurst

Bottom: By the mid-1960s the Citroën Special was still going strong. Here it is at Oran Park [No 47] with Don James at the wheel. This image by Bruce Wells, both images reproduced from 'Motor Racing Australia'.



to high speed. Wright installed a higher geared crown wheel and pinion and during official practice, clocked 148kph. This speed was most satisfying for the still near standard motor.

However, during the Gnoo Blas Handicap in 1953, Wright suffered his first mechanical breakdown. The alloy differential carrier bearing gave way and oil poured from the motor. With one lap to go Wright nursed the near seizing motor car and finished in fourth place.

Repairs were quickly effected. The damaged parts were replaced with steel supports which have proved entirely satisfactory since that incident.

At Hawkesbury Lookout, compet-

ing in the under 3-litre class, the Special set a new record which stood unbroken until the closure of the circuit in the mid-fifties.

After several races, in the 1954 Bathurst One Hundred Mile Grand Prix, the Special took fourth place [the winner was Reg Hunt in a 250-F Maserati]. In the following year Don came fifth, being timed at 179kph.

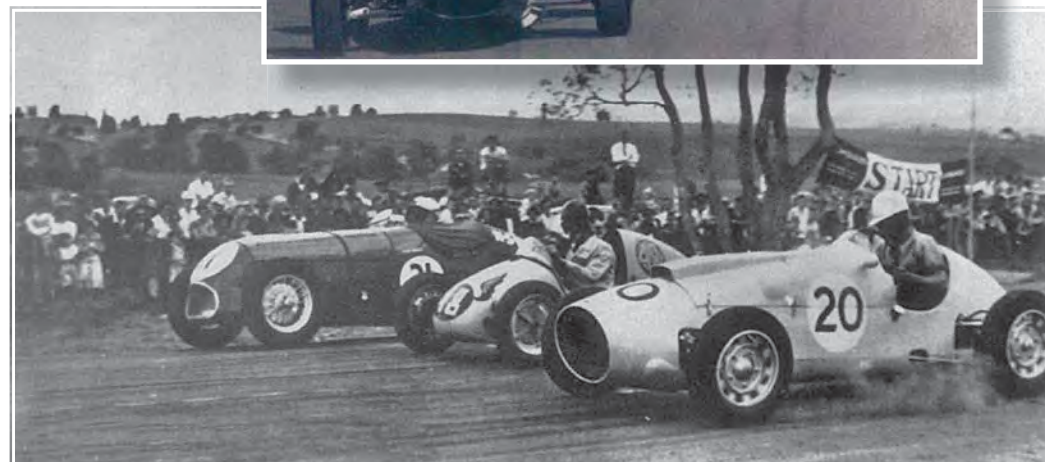
Don won the 1955 NSW Hill-climb Championship, starting with the car minus bodywork. Radial tyres and front wheel drive were very rare for a single seater.

Meanwhile Wright commenced to 'hot up' the French car's motor. It was bored out by 8thou in. to 3½", the crank-

shaft was ground and the bearings remetalled with aero 'C' heavy duty metal. A new set of valves were air freighted from the HWM factory in England, while Triumph 5T motor cycle valve springs were fitted. The head was polished and ported

Below: Catalina Park, 1966. Barry Lake in his Elfin leads Allan Grice and Don James in the Citroën Special.

Bottom: Light up those front wheels! Wright and a mixed group of opponents leave the grid at Bathurst. Both images are reproduced from 'Motor Racing Australia'.



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and 9thous. removed. [Alternate sources suggest a total of 175thou was shaved from the head. Ed.] This lifted the compression ratio to 8.9 to 1. Twin 1½" SUs were used to feed the ethyl-alcohol based fuel into the motor.

In this stage of tune, the Citroën's speed increased considerably and at Bathurst, Wright was timed at 164kph down the mountain side.

The Mount Panorama meeting proved most successful for Don Wright.

He finished in second position in the handicap for 'B' racing cars, and a close fourth in the principal race, the Bathurst 100.

Shortly after Bathurst, Wright took the Citroën to the Newcastle hill climb, where he finished a close second in his class.

By now Don Wright was reaching his ambition. Wins were coming his way, and although the handicapper was placing him further and further towards the rear of the B class fields, he was able to win or gain a minor placing in the majority of races.

Eventually, the Citroën was promoted to the A class racing car section, and against this opposition Don Wright found the going tough. His solution was simple ~ improve the performance of the car.

The rear beam axle was replaced by an independent rear

suspension fabricated from Morris Minor lower control arms [torsion bar type] and specially made upper control arms and struts with Light 15 rear stub axles attached.

New upper arms were designed and built to grasp the Citroëns hubs and stubs. This important modification made two important changes to the French racing car. Firstly, it now had independent suspension on all four wheels. Secondly, the weight was reduced by 76kg to 660kg.

This change cured the problem of rear wheel lift and high cornering speeds.

Don Wright also experimented with a number of alcohol fuels to find one most suited to the 11 to 1 compression ratio.

These experiments soon proved their worth.

The first time Wright started the car at Mt. Druitt he won both handicap and scratch event for B group racing cars and finished the closest of seconds in the 50mile feature race.

Fresh from these successes at Druitt, Wright again made his way northwards to the Newcastle Hill Climb. This time he was victorious. He won the climb outright against all comers.

Having seen the success Jack Brabham had with an ERSA gearbox Don decided to import one from France. This proved

somewhat of a disappointment to Wright, who found it not nearly so sturdy as the Duriez box. Put simply, it broke, as you will read! However, Bathurst was drawing close so Wright decided to run the car on the Mt. Panorama circuit and hope all would go well.

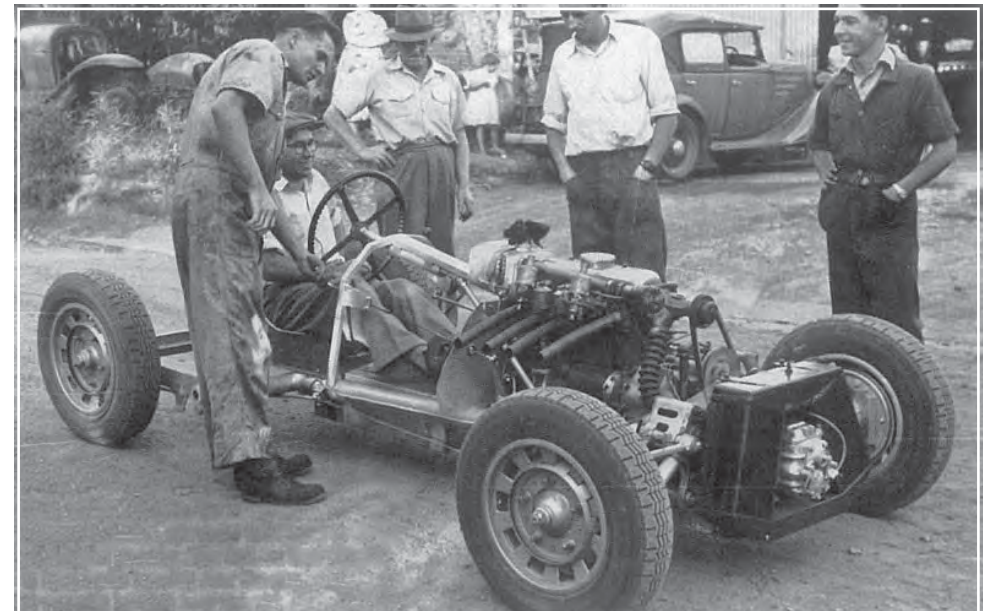
Halfway through the Bathurst 100, Wright pushed the Citroën into the vanguard position and the next eight laps led his opposition a merry dance. The front wheel drive vehicle was handling the mountainous circuit with ease, and looked as if it only had to keep going to take out the handicap section of this racing classic.

At the end of Con Rod Straight Wright flashed into the

braking area, slipped into third gear, but fifty yards from the 90° corner he depressed the clutch and shoved the stick into the position of second. A screech of metal to metal followed ~ the Citroën's selector gear was on the ice. Throughout the remaining six laps of the race Wright pushed the Citroën along with the aid of only top and third gears, and although this added seconds to his lap times, he was able to finish the Bathurst 100 in fourth place.

While careering down the mountain straight the Citroën was clocked at 178.6kph ~

Under the skin. Note the unusual radiator, specially fabricated to fit around the gearbox. Car builder, Don Wright is in overalls leaning over the car.



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quite fast for a Light 15 Citroën.

Meanwhile Don set about making up a new set of gears identical to the Duriez kit. Gear cutting was to be done at Commonwealth Aircraft Corp a 'foreign order' but he had only got as far as a production of the gear blanks when he decided to sell the Special, a move prompted by the car running a standard gearbox, putting a rod through the block at the Newcastle Hill Climb.

On the spur of the moment Wright decided to compete at the Newcastle Hill Climb. He hastily installed a three speed box in the car and went north.

The Newcastle hill is a solid test for any car, and it was not surprising to see Wright's Citroën

At the Bathurst in the late-1950s displaying improved roadholding from the newly fitted Morris Minor rear wishbones.



throw a rod whilst being revved past its limit during the steep climb. However, he nevertheless recorded the fourth fastest time of the day before wrecking the motor.

Burwood dentist Ian Steele, made an offer for the car which subsequently was accepted by Wright.

It wasn't disappointment with the car that caused Don to sell it. 'The day of ingenuity had finished,' he recalled. Factory cars were filtering into the fields and the Specials were being less and less successful.

Ian Steele's success in the Citroën was limited to one minor race at Mt Druitt, but at Bathurst last year he was unlucky not to have won the handicap section of the Bathurst 100. Touching just over 160kph on the downhill straight and with a lap time of 3min 18s, Steele was

lapping consistently, although the car appeared to be running well below par. With only one lap of the Mt Panorama circuit remaining Steele rounded Pit Corner and headed towards the control tower. When opposite the official area the car gave up the ghost ~ oil was thrown high into the air and there was a horrible sound from under the bonnet. When Steele brought the car to a standstill he found a hole in the block and the remains from the car's sump pouring on the ground. The thrown rod had protruded near the distributor drive.

It was some months later before Steele and the Citroën made their reappearance at Mt. Druitt. In between Bathurst and this meeting he had fitted a new

block, shaft rods, liners, etc, to the engine, but even so, mechanical troubles had not been fully overcome. He started to blow head gaskets with alarming rapidity.

'When I did get my troubles ironed out' Steele stated, 'I spun the car at 4,500rpm in order to run in the motor. Geoff Thorne [described variously as an ice-skating clown of genius or a musician] came along and made me an offer on the Citroën. I accepted and the car and I parted and although he is a comparatively inexperienced



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driver, he should not take long to accustom himself to race track conditions. He has spent many hours and much money on reconditioning the car.

He obtained from Bill Buckle the Citroën motor which was originally intended for the car, and he has completed the work started by Wright on the building of a new four speed gearbox. This set of straight cut gears was produced from the Duriez blanks which Don Wright had made.

If the Citroën can go fast,

Thorne [as demonstrated in the only drive of the car at Mt Druitt] should be an operator who can get most out of the car's performance.

'Racing car enthusiasts will follow Thorne's progress and that of the Citroën with interest during the forthcoming racing season', said 'Sports Car World' in February of 1958.

Geoff broke the circuit record at the Silverdale Hill Climb, but flipped the car in a later event. There was a problem with the tuning, the car cutting out in some bends, so on the return run down the climb Geoff turned up the idle to a hefty 2,000rpm to save himself the grief. In a comic opera scenario, the car got away from him after standing on its nose on the steep downhill run when the brakes were applied. It lurched to one side and then dug in, climbed the bank and deposited Thorne in the bush as it overturned.

The rebuild after this crash lead to a slightly wider body being fitted, keeping more flying stones off the driver's hands on the steering wheel. It never really looked any different, however, being uniquely identifiable throughout its long racing career. It was always painted much the same colour, a light blue with some white.

'Originally the car had a large steering wheel that had to be

removed to enable you to get out. I made a wood-rimmed alloy wheel that was smaller and didn't have to be removed,' Thorne said.

Thorne sold it after the rebuild.

Don James made it well-known at Oran Park, racing regularly [sporting a crossflow DS cylinder head with stub exhausts that stood out the side of the bonnet] in Formula Libre, his signature bright red shirt contrasting with the blue of car 47. By 1963 the engine was out to 1,981cc.

By now there were more circuits to run on, and the car kept on running on them. It raced at Bathurst, Oran Park, Catalina Park and Warwick Farm, frequently still running in races with top-line cars. It always showed incredible cornering ability, even though it still ran the Michelin tyres on the skinny original wheels. Stopping was aided by larger 'Big 6' Citroën brakes on the front, which was becoming a strange sight in a world of four-wheel disc brakes.

In 1968 Bob Winley 'bought' the car and started racing it. The story goes that Winley encountered James one night and offered to swap his road car ~ a Citroën DS ~ for the car. James accepted, but they decided that as they had both been drinking it might be a good idea to wait till the morning before they

confirmed the deal!

When racing Winley could not wear his red shirt because CAMS required fireproof overalls and underwear from then on. Bob ran in 'modern' races and the newly-created Historic Car races and club events, winning money and trophies and being accused of doing 'rain dances' before race days, such are the car's abilities in the wet. Bob fitted extractors and a muffler.

By the time Winley got the car, it was really out of place in



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a rear-engined world. But still it raced in among the little light-weights of the day, naturally going back a grade but still mixing it in outright company in some events. The day that Bathurst's outright record of 2m 09.7s was set by Niel Alien, Winley ran in the same 50-mile race as Alien, Leo Geoghegan and John Harvey. His lap time, however, was just over three minutes.

'I raced at Bathurst three times in that car,' he remembers, 'and each time I came

home with more than a week's wages in prize-money.' At the time Winley worked in the production department at Channel 10, which led to an interesting comment being made when a newsclip of a race at Warwick Farm included a shot of him disappearing into the bush at Creek Corner!

He was out of licence for one Hume Weir, however, and Roger Wells drove the car, setting identical lap times to Winley's.

Asked about what it was like to drive, Winley said that it took him 18 months to come to grips with the car. 'I just had to learn to control it rather than let it control me,' he says.

'You could corner it on the throttle,' he continued, 'but it was the opposite of a

normal car ~ power on and it would understeer, off and it would oversteer. You could hold the steering at any angle and get through a corner, depending on how much throttle you used, but there was an ideal angle to get through the corner fastest.'

It must be borne in mind that we are talking about the car running in company with F5000 in 1970, almost two decades after it was conceived. And in its conception it was well over a decade behind any mainstream activity with front-wheel drive racing cars.

Various Millers had run with FWD at Indianapolis in the late 1920s and through the '30s, but very little other activity in this field was seen. Concurrent with the building of the Citroën Special there was an almost mad-cap attempt at the new FI by DB Panhard, they being the only ones known to have opted to try the 750cc supercharged alternative to 2.5-litres.

This car was an unmitigated failure, while later attempts at Formula Junior with Saab 3-cylinder two-strokes driving the front wheels were similarly doomed. The Don Wright Citroën, however, can only be classed as a moderate success. It was usually reliable, as Barry Lake recalls from the times he raced against it. 'It never seemed to break down, it just

kept going,' he says.

Certainly it had done plenty of troublefree service when Don Wright had it, the little Special taking in three Gnoo Bias and two Bathurst meetings, along with Mt Druitt and the Newcastle hillclimb.

But it did have its problems with reliability, particularly in the gearbox. 'I burst the case and dropped oil everywhere on the grid one day at Oran Park,' Winley recounts. Over two decades, any car is going to have its off days. He also remembers it breaking an oil line early in one six-hour relay race, then the following year just droning around Amaroo Park for almost half of the race as its team-mates fell by the wayside.

What it did for the spectators was provide something different. It finished up being a huge car alongside the modern Formula Juniors that it competed with, which Lake again recalls. 'I remember sitting alongside it on the grid at Catalina one day, it was so high compared with my car.'

It defied the odds on road tyres as well, clinging on exceptionally well with Michelin X radials while those around it sported proper racing rubber.

This Citroën was unique, probably the most successful front-wheel drive racer of all time. When Historic Racing arrived it had barely stopped rac-



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ing in regular events. And it took its place among the regulars at the various meetings staged for older cars.

After six years John Moxham, a Citroën fancier, bought the car and re-fitted an original type of cylinder head.

Moxham didn't seem to have the same affinity for its preparation needs as others had. Wright was right on the ball in this department, having his own mechanical business after becoming a Flight Engineer in the Air Force during the war.

Perhaps this is why the car always looked such a professionally built machine despite the dependency it had on basic production components.

'When I went solo,' he said of starting his own business, 'I chose to work on Citroën be-

cause it was different. That meant front-wheel drive and metric threads at a time when everyone else was the opposite. But today everything's front-wheel-drive and metric.'

The car sat unused then and John moved interstate, selling the car to another Citroën collector, John Vanchop.

In 1992 CCOCA recorded that the Don Wright Special still existed in 'appropriately appreciative but anonymous hands' in Australia. The last report was the car was having a comprehensive overhaul to bring it back to scratch. Jack Weaver says he had been able to get inside it on corners in his hot Traction IID sedan none-the-less!

As Ray Bell wrote in his article for 'Motor Racing Australia', 'The Citroën Special Wright, Buckle, Buck and others spawned, however, languishes unattended in a shed. Its current owner has never done anything with the car, for two decades it's been unused.'

The current owner says that the car languished un-

used at John's Mittagong property.

The story now continues with input from an article which appeared in 'Floating Power' the magazine of the Traction Owners' Club. A member of that Club, Willie Sellers had first got to know Don Wright in about 2000. When he asked Don about his Special he said it 'was

The original fuel tank was under the seat, but later it was moved to the tail. From the days when it ran a gearbox-driven Pesco aircraft fuel pump, it had half inch [13mm] fuel lines, so there was plenty of fuel in the system even when the tank was empty. Winley landed in the stormwater drain at Sandown one meeting and split the fuel tank, which leaked completely dry while he awaited the end of the race. Once out of the drain, he drove all the way around the circuit to the pits and was putting the car on the trailer before the lines ran dry!

in a scrapyard and the owner would not let Don have it.

At this stage Don re-thought and reconstructed Lancia Lambdas at his business in West Pennant Hills. His major pursuit was making replacement blocks for Lancia Lambdas, which he carved out of billets of aluminium! No castings...

Anyway, he made one for Peter Giddings a well known pre-war s/c Alfa Romeo owner and racer. Ray Long was also a Lambda owner and in 2004

bought Don's car which was in pieces; Bill Smith restored it with four forward gears, and no reverse.' Don also worked on the restoration.

Finally, the car is now ready to re-join the Historic Racing scene with proud owner Perry Long at the wheel.

As far as we know, this is the only Citroën Special ever to be built in Australia and is probably one of the very few monoposto Citroën specials in the world.

In common with most front wheel drive cars, the Citroën has excellent road holding characteristics brought about by the fact that the car is pulled out of corners, rather than pushed. This is of particular advantage in wet conditions.

Road adhesion of this Citroën special is so good that photographs have been taken of it bent like a banana when cornering extremely hard.

Don Wright passed away on October 21, 2011.

This article was researched and assembled by Leigh F Miles with input from Alan Gibbons' article in 'Sports Car World' [1958], Willie Sellers' article in 'Floating Power' [2017] and Ray Bell's article in 'Motor Racing Australia' [2002]. The use of Ray's article is with the permission of the publisher. Other information and images have been sourced from the internet.



Member's Model: Light 15

In the February/March edition of 'Front Drive' we presented a Members' Model article by David Giddings. There was also a short follow-up article by the car's next owner: Leon Sims.

While Leon is no longer the custodian of the lovely Light 15 it does remain a Club car. The current keeper is Michael Dahl who has owned 'Celeste' for about four years. Here's his update...

I had always admired an 'old Citroën' seen through a mechanic's shop window in Smith St, Collingwood, and my wife had long held a desire for a 2CV. [Members of longer-standing will recognize this as Citro Motors which for many years was run by Club members Mel and Colleen Carey... or maybe Michael's memories go back even further to the days when the Smith St site was run by Bruno. Bruno has gone to meet his maker, while Mel and Colleen have retired to Queensland. Ed.]

Having moved to Maldon and enjoying country life, our thoughts turned to acquiring an older



Member's Model: Light 15



vehicle to jaunt around in, without any particular make in mind.

One day Coral spotted a Traction Avant on a South Australian web-site which piqued her interest, and she showed it to me. I realised this was what lurked in the Smith St window. Alas, further enquiries revealed the car in question had already been

sold, and so began the search for a similar car for sale.

As it transpired, there was a nice looking black one for sale in Trentham, so we arranged to drive over and have a look.

I think the decision to acquire 'Celeste' was made before we had even alighted from our car.

Leon and Sue delivered her

to Maldon, and the transaction was completed over a nice bottle of Sancerre brought back from France some years earlier.

A trip to the auto-electrician resolved a brake light issue, before the requisite RWC was obtained, and club plate gained and affixed in place.

Then came to task of learning about the foibles of an older car, and how to coax it into life when we wanted to take a drive.

My mechanical skill-set would be defined as 'basic' at best, but I managed to free up a troublesome choke cable, and realised a battery charger would be a new necessity of life.

Also, with guidance from the owner's manual, and armed with new grease gun, I have undertaken an oil change and, with a much contorted body, lubricated the multitude of grease nipples in all manner of places, and now understand why mechanics use hoists!

It was interesting reading David Giddings' recent article, which shed some light on what mysteries may lurk within the engine, and what had been carried out beforehand to the car.

It is a testament to his work that the car still runs well, and we haven't had to do anything to keep her on the road [and the heat shields are still in place].

He will be disappointed to learn however that one of his

preferred French hub caps has made an escape and is likely lurking somewhere in long grass beside the road somewhere in the goldfields area. We have been unable to find a replacement to date.

I have learnt that the car must be started about once a week, even if not taken for a run, to ensure that she starts easily. Forgetting to do so for two or three weeks is a recipe for disappointment, likely leading to flattening the battery a number of times before the spark of life returns. I assume it is something to do with fuel draining out of the fuel pump or something similar.

The clock shows the right time regularly, twice a day, and the fuel gauge has a mind of its own, sometimes showing empty, or flickering somewhere about what the true tank level might be, and sometimes telling me the tank is full when I know it isn't. Hence another learned fact that a routine peering into the tank via the filler to ascertain the actual fuel level is a prudent action to avoid an unexpected interruption to a drive.

We have been custodians of 'Celeste' for over four years now, and she always draws admiring looks whenever we trundle through Maldon and out and about on the country roads hereabouts.

Michael and Coral Dahl

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Further Adventures of a Citroën C8 in Western France and beyond...

Previously [Front Drive April/
May 2023 Vol 46 No 6]...

Last summer, on the hottest evening of the 2022 French heatwave, your Vendée correspondent could be found cooling off with an unlikely Eastern European beer called « Rebel » in the company of beach-life friends next to Rodolphe's Petite Cabane. The conversation turned to a little-known

A sketch of the ill-fated ship the Saint-Paul

Facing page: Sauveteurs en Mer observation post, Le Goulet beach. Note the recently-installed stainless steel electro-dunnies ; another Star Trek feature? Aussie-inspired beach showers would have been a welcome addition.



Franco-Australian adventure from 1868...

Shipwreck

Gérard enriches his story by referring to drawings in « Les Vendéens Grands Voyageurs ». We lean over occasionally to look at the details of the illustrations, then lean back to sip some more bière tchèque.

« You see, in Hong Kong the captain took on board 317 paying passengers, all headed for the Australian goldfields. Chinese labourers who, in those days were referred to as « Coolies »

« Yes, Gérard »

Interjects Marie-Pierre

« I believe it is now considered a pejorative expression, but in the nineteenth century that was the term used. Rather like the term « sauvages » was used for the original inhabitants of distant lands.

« That is correct ma chérie.

Now we must picture this overcrowded vessel sailing south towards Sydney.

What followed was a series of miscalculations, tragedies, along with a small number of minor miracles...

You see, after a few days, it became obvious even to Narcisse Pelletier the cabin boy that the captain had not taken on board enough victuals for his crew and passengers. One can only imagine the atmos-

phere on board as rations became more and more meagre. This was an uncomfortable situation, but not life-threatening.

The decision the captain took next, however, would lead to disaster. »

Rodolphe pushes back his chair, and offers to bring another round of drinks.

« Continue, Gérard. I know what is coming. »

Two golden-tanned bikini-clad lifeguard nymphs begin to pack away their rescue equipment as the church tower chimes 7pm. One of them waves to Pierrot who tries to wave back and accidentally sprinkles his customer with La Baleine sea salt.

« Sometimes a wrong decision can lead to disaster, and this time it did. Captain Pinard decided to shorten the voy-

age by passing to the west of the Solomon Islands. A quicker, but more hazardous route due to hidden reefs and rocks. The short version is that the ship hit some rocks between Rossel Island and the smaller, waterless Heron Island.

The ship sank within hours. Miraculously all on board survived, and were able to reach the uninhabited patch of dry land by wading through the shallows. »

All this was observed from the beach of Rossel Island, half a kilometre away ; the observers did not appear to be of friendly intentions...

Some of the crew were attacked the following day after they crossed the shallow straits in the ship's longboat, looking for water. Narcisse received a head injury during the fray and recounted this many years later, from the viewpoint of a terrified 14 year-old.

The crew managed to make the crossing back to Heron Island, but their luck could not hold out for long, given their shortage of food, water and weapons. »

Crossing the Coral Sea

Gérard explains :

« Narcisse's account was that the captain and a small number of the crew, perhaps six or eight men, attempted to slip away during the night in the



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ship's longboat. Later versions by those on the boat seemed to indicate that this decision had been made after discussion with the Chinese contingent, although Narcisse's version, suggested that no such conversation took place; it was only after he heard the vessel being dragged to the water's edge, then jostling aboard himself that Narcisse, albeit uninvited, ended up on board... »

Gérard continues after a gulp of bière.

« Whatever the politics of the situation were ~ and the intention was that the longboat occupants would seek assistance for the shipwreck survivors as soon as they made land-fall ~ the geography of it was that they navigated west for 12 days, drinking seawater, urine and eating seagulls and hoping

to bump into the Cape York peninsula of Le Kwinslond. An incredible feat in itself. »

« Australie, alors » says Christian, nous voilà !

« Oui, mon ami, and Narcisse was probably the first crew member to leave the boat after the bow touched land. We can surmise this because he cut his feet after not realising that a coral reef lay between the boat and the beach. And those injuries were the reason for his becoming separated from the rest of the crew. This is where Narcisse's sojourn en Australie, en le Kwinslond began. He was sent into the bush in search of fresh water to bathe his wounds. When he returned to the beach, there was no sight of the boat or the crew. »

Silence descends under our red parasol. We all knew that Narcisse must have survived, but how, in this remote part of tropical Kwinslond, during the dry season ?

« Well, mes amis, you see, Narcisse had not arrived on virgin land. White sailors had probably never ventured here, having observed, from a safe vantage point offshore « savages » in the distance. As Narcisse's story would show us, such a presumption of « savagery » was, to say the least, founded on « information incomplète » They had observed

members of the Uutaalnganu tribes, families who eventually became known as The Sand-beach People... »

Gérard raises one eyebrow, and, like all good conférenciers, knows instinctively that we are hanging on his every word.

An Unlikely Rescue

« You know, we could meet here every evening for apéritif until the equinoxe, and we would still have failed to explore every twist and turn of Narcisse's adventure. »

Rodolphe begins to calculate how much bière tchèque he'd need to pre-order if that were to be the case...

« Now I ask you to imagine Narcisse, barely more than a child, alone, at nightfall, on the other side of the world from his... native... Vendée. Incidentally, we know that he was younger-looking than his fourteen years by what happened the following day, but more about that in a moment...

He later recalled that he had crept between the roots of a giant fig-tree and had cried himself beyond exhaustion and to sleep.

We can imagine him being awakened by thirst, painful feet wounds, and a low tropical rising sun, filtering through fig leaves. And perhaps not totally oblivious to the beauty of his surroundings, as this strange

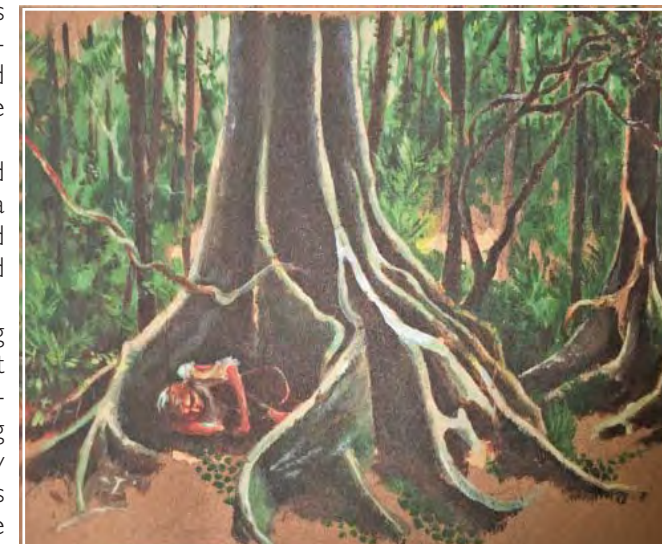
world moves from fuzziness to focus. He straightens up to a sitting position, eyes still down-cast and sees two pairs of bare feet where the tree roots meet the undergrowth.

As he looks up, he sees two unclothed female figures. One appears to be a girl in her late teens, and the other an older woman, perhaps her mother. As his gaze meets theirs, their expression turns to fear, and they run away into the bush.

It is not long before they reappear with two men, who are also naked and carrying spears.

Narcisse imagines that his last moments have arrived, as the men enter into an animated discussion. »

We are brought briefly back from Kwinslond to Vendée by the church chimes of 7.30.



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Gérard resumes : « Narcisse reaches behind the root of the fig-tree. One of the men strikes a pose which suggests he is preparing to throw his spear. »

Our raconteur takes a sip of from his glass, then holds it up to the lowering sun...

« It was not a glass that saved Narcisse. Rather it was his tin mug ; one of the two possessions he had carried with him. He held it up to one of the men, who lowered his spear, accepted the offering, and smiled.

The other possession he had, apart from his ragged trousers and shirt, was a handkerchief. He removed this from his pocket, and proffered it to the other man.

« The women walk towards Narcisse. They are now unafraid. The older woman touches his downy cheek. Narcisse detects an aroma of woodsmoke on her fingers. Then she carefully pulls away his threadbare shirt to peer inside. It occurs to Narcisse, in one of those slow-motion moments of clarity, that they are unsure whether he is a boy or a girl. They gesture to him to follow them, offer him water from a gourd and berries from a dilly-bag, and the men lead the way into the bush. »

Gérard pauses. I notice, not for the first time, that one of

the trees behind Rodolphe's café and in the grounds of the 18th-century post-house is a mimosa, a golden wattle. Perhaps it is a descendant of the acacias brought back from Australia by those eighteenth and nineteenth century French explorers? De L'Australie à L'Atlantique ? They grow very well in the Vendée coast's micro-climate, almost as readily as on Mediterranean shores, turning Vendéen late-winter into Aussie green and gold...

« After three or four hours, the group pauses and Narcisse is once more given water and

The young Narcisse and his adoptive father Maademan. Drawing by Thomas Duranteau circa 2016.

Facing page: Australian greens and golds bring brightness to a grey winter day opposite Le Goulet beach.



berries. They all lie down in the shade and Narcisse falls asleep. He is awakened by the sound of two women giggling mischievously. While he has been asleep, they have evidently concluded their investigations as to his gender. »

Apéritif prolongé

« And now, mes amis, I invite you to look at some more illustrations in the book, because they will show you much better what happened to Narcisse over the next seventeen years. Yes, seventeen ! ...

...How he was adopted by Maademan, one of the men who had found him ; how Narcisse was given the name of Amglo ; how he was initiated into the tribe, through the sacred and secret ceremonies of passage to manhood. His scar-

ifications, the piercing of his nose and ears. There is even some speculation that he may have fathered children within the tribe, speculation and investigation that continue to this day with specialists and anthropologists in Le Kwinslond and elsewhere...

We spend some time collectively immersed in the book, and sharing thoughts on the story so far. Time seems suspended.

The evening breeze has freshened by now ; almost-perfect air-con, stirring the mimosa branches into a soft whisper.

The church clock strikes 8.00.

Marie-Pierre suggests that we prolong the apéritif by moving to their garden just two streets away.

« We can eat together, nothing fancy but just à la bonne franquette. Then we can tell you about Amglo's « rescue » by the British... Which was more of a kidnapping in some ways ! And about his return to France via Sydney, Nouméa and Le Cap Horn in 1875. Finally his re-adaptation, of sorts, to French life on the coast here... the book that was published about him by Doctor Constant Merland from our hometown of Nantes in 1876...

Also you must be wondering what happened to those hundreds of Hong Kong men and



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the rest of the St Paul crew marooned on Heron Island? I warn you now, there is no happy ending there... »

She continues :

« Gérard, we will worry about sad endings later. For now, we must enjoy our evening. I will go back with our amis antipodéens in Le Papybus. Can you take the AX and call past the lady who sells the eggs just next to La Mariennée restaurant. We will make une omelette entre amis. The people next door to us are giving away their surplus summer tomatoes. They are magnifique, especially the pineapple yellow ones. Omelette et salade de tomates, sauce vinaigrette. In Papybus we will collect a couple of baguettes and a melon, perhaps also a Camembert, from the supérette at the end of the road. He will be open until 8.30 at least.

Christian, Rodolphe, will you come too ? »

Such is the magic of the evening, that both agree to change their plans and join us at 9 o'clock.

« Très bien, les amis. Before the end of our evening I promise to tell you about the Papybus Omnibus historical connection with our home town of Nantes », offers Marie-Pierre with a wink, then she walks across Le Parking with us to Le Papybus.

Epilogue : Did you say Air-Con?

The sun is still an hour above the horizon. I have forgotten to leave the sliding door open, and the shade of the parasol pine has long since crept towards the other end of the car park. The C8's interior thermometer will show 45° at least.

We climb on board, I lower the electric windows. Even the sliding door ones work since garagiste Daniel polished away 20years of tarnish from the connectors. Start the engine.

Vendée tomates 'ananas'... a coastal camping summer favourite... Just a pinch of La Baleine sea salt required to make the perfect brunch.

Facing page: Citroën interior design flourish? A second mirror for keeping an eye on the passengers.



Shirley invites Marie-Pierre to occupy the Citroën-esque comfortable rear seat across the mini-aisle from her own. Papybus' automatic ventilation system goes into warp-factor 27.

The fan is muffled yet noisy, but not noisy enough to disguise the frill-neck lizard hissing sound emanating from behind the instruments. A query arrives from the back seat :

« You did remember to ask Daniel to re-charge the clim' last week, I presume. »

I peer up at the neat little panoramic pull-down mirror which all Papybuses seem to have, and which affords a fish-eye view of the interior.

Then I perform a faux-gallic shrug and assume my AIR-CON drongo expression.



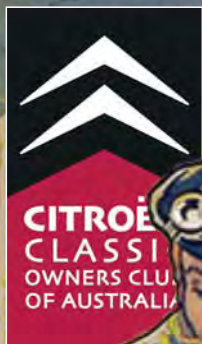
OoooooOoooooo

Stay tuned, chers amis Citroënnistes antipodéens, to share the conversation which took « chez Marie-Pierre et Gérard » place as the sun set on that scorching Vendée Friday. We will discover how, seventeen years after being abandoned on Cape York, Narcisse Pelletier returned to Saint-Gilles from Le Kwinslond's Cape York peninsula between April and September 1875 in... « Amglo's Story concluded : Rescue or Kidnap ? »... and we will learn, at last, the solution to the mystery of the Papybus/Omnibus/Nantes connection.

Alan Brown, March 2023

Dedication

This episode is dedicated to our West Australian friend and Citroën stalwart Greg Bracegirdle, who is not enjoying the best of health these days. Greg is an honorary Vendéen, having visited this area of France on more than one occasion. He became the proud owner of an orange Vendée Acadienne back in the Nineties. Citroënnistes from many countries have been warmly welcomed to WA over many years by Greg and his wife Nina. AB.



Vc

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