



FRONT DRIVE



Incorporating



Australia's National Magazine
for Citroën Owners and Enthusiasts



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



April/May 2024 Vol 48 No 1
Traction Avant: Turning Heads for 90Years



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Endeavour Hills Bruno Tonizzo
0418 945 461 [M]
Ashburton Peter Moloney

CCOCA 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 and Esther Wade 2017
Leigh Miles 2022
Lance Wearne 2023

CCOCA Meetings

Club meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of every month [except December] at 19:30. The venue is the Hawthorn Bowling Club, 1 Wood St., Hawthorn [cnr Denham St.].

CCCV Meetings

subsequent members \$15. Club general meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month [except January and December]. They alternate monthly between get-togethers in our Club rooms at 8/41 Norral Rd., Nunawading and social gatherings in various venues, such as pubs and restaurants. Details of each month's event are published here and on the Club's website and advised to members by email. CCCV COMMITTEE MEETINGS Meetings are held monthly in locations decided each month.

CCOCA Spares, Tools & Shop

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.

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PO Box 52, Balwyn, Victoria, 3103.
The Club's website is:

www.citroenclassic.org.au

CITROËN CAR CLUB OF VICTORIA Inc.

The address of the Club is:

PO Box 122, Nunawading, Victoria, 3131.

The Club's website is:

www.citcarclubvic.org.au

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Other Clubs

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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Cover Image

The cover image depicts the Traction previously owned by CCOCA member Geoff Burford. The car is now owned by his daughter, Tess.

Contributors

Contributors to this edition of 'Front Drive' include Chris Bailey, David Belfrage, Alan Brown, Loui Burke, Andrew Cox, Peter Keys, Jonathan Palmer and Dave Wheeler.

Deadline

The deadline for the next edition of 'démarrreur' is Sunday, 21 April and for 'Front Drive' it is Friday, 7 June.

Ed Sed

90 is a pretty big number, and we are celebrating this important milestone in the history of the Traction Avant with a bumper edition. For those of you without experience of a Traction, I pity you. Now, some would contend that the world is divided into two groups. The first comprises those who own, or have owned, a Traction and the other includes those for whom a Traction lies in their future.

We have three articles from members this month. One from Canberra member Dave Wheeler. On the surface it is simply about him driving his Traction to Corryong. But it is much more than that, as you will discover.

Queensland member, David Belfrage, shares the story of his Traction restoration and South Australian member, Loui Burke, shares his experiences of participating, in his Traction, in the



post-Cit-In trip of 2015. For the Traction uninitiated there is a bit of a 'basic guide to speaking Traction' which originally appeared in the programme for this year's 'British and European Motorshow' at Yarra Glen [Vic].

Chris Bailey and Alan Brown are with us of course. Chris continues with his experiences working on that Traction engine of his and Alan [you might be pleased to know] does not even mention the Traction.

Jonathan Palmer has news about Traction grille badges. Is yours the correct design for its year?

We also have the second part of Andrew Cox's excellent article about André Citroën's activities prior to setting up Citroën cars.

By the time you read this, CCOCA will have held its AGM. I hope

you attended either in person or by proxy.

Internationally, I must tell you that the image of four DSs taken by Robert and Kay Belcourt's son Jason [which appeared in both 'démarrreur' and the CCCV Newsletter] has been reprinted by the UK Citroën Car Club. Congratulations

Oh, and before I go, the day after we arrived in the UK we took possession of our new car. See the picture below.

So, not unexpectedly, we are Traction-heavy this month, but I still hope there is something for everyone?

Enjoy,
Leigh F Miles ~ Editor



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. The owner of a vehicle registered under the CPS will

receive a Club Permit Renewal from VicRoads. The owner must complete the form and provide it to their Club's CPS Secretary [see page 2 for contact details] for sign off.



CCOCA Prez Sez

I am writing to you from the 2024 Cit-In in Devonport Tasmania.

This event began with a pre Cit-In tour that was organised by Grahame and Anne Vaughan who did a magnificent job. There were around 70 Citroënists who joined together for a memorable event that crisscrossed central and northern areas of Tasmania.

This was followed by an equally enjoyable Cit-In in Devonport, where we met new and old friends from around Australia. The Tasmanian club Cit-In was organised by a small but dedicated group of volunteers and I thank them on behalf of all CCOCA members. They did an excellent job and we enjoyed all activities.

Running a Cit-In is a big job

and takes two years of planning and we are consistently getting big groups attending. Of course this means choosing the right venue is always a challenge.

The most important benefit of attending a Cit-In is supporting each club and making new friends. Our 'funny French cars' make all this possible. If you haven't been to one yet please make it an ambition to join one in the future. The 2025 event is being held in Queensland, making attending the associated Tour a must. Hopefully, Helen and I will see you there.
Regards from Ted



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.

The Clubs strongly recommend wearing a mask in areas where you cannot maintain social distancing.

CCOCA/CCCV Events Look Like This

Other Citroën Events Look Like This

Non-Citroën Events Look Like This

• April

CCCV April Monthly Meeting

WHEN: Thursday, 18 April
TIME: 19:30
WHERE: CCCV Club Rooms,
8/41 Norcal Rd., Nunawading
COST: Free
REGISTRATION: Not required
MORE INFO: Dave Rogers
drogers@gmail.com

Travel tales ~ the Moloney's
Round the Block Trip

Traction 90 Celebration Dinner

WHEN: Saturday, 20 April
DETAILS: Full details will be
available shortly
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>

TRACTION 90 BOOKING

2024 sees the ground-breaking Citroën Traction Avant celebrate its 90th Anniversary.



On this night our Clubs will celebrate that momentous event with a celebratory dinner. This is a 'once in life-time' event and one which no real Citroënist will want to miss.

Numbers are limited, so be sure to book as soon as possible.

Combined CCOCA/ CCCV Show and Shine

WHEN: Sunday, 21 April
TIME: Display cars from 08:30
General admission from 10:00
WHERE: Rippon Lea Estate,
192 Hotham St., Elsternwick

A-Tractions

COST: Free [see details below] and 2 free coffees per display car!

REGISTRATION: Not required

BRING: Everything for a picnic

MORE INFO: Ted Cross,

[03] 9803 2208

info@l23goans.com.au

Michael Faulks

0432 537 060

president@citcarclubvic.org.au

The garden and the mansion of this National Trust property will provide a great backdrop to our magnificent vehicles.

Admission: Entry for the driver and a single passenger in a car being displayed will be free. Those not displaying a car, and additional passengers in display cars, will pay the normal admission fee.

Adults \$15

Concession \$12

Children [3-15] \$9

Family [2adults + 2children]\$40

Free admission for National Trust members and free garden admission for residents of Glen Eira and City of Port Philip [refer to Rippon Lea website for details: <https://www.ripponleaestate.com.au/>]

RIPPON LEA WEBSITE

Arrival Time: It is a requirement of Rippon Lea that all display cars must arrive on site between 08:30 and 09:30.



No cars will be admitted after 09:30. Cars will be able to depart between 15:00 and 15:30. Feel free to explore the grounds throughout the day. Mansion entry is only available by organized tour which can be booked on the day.

Bring a picnic or take advantage of the food vans which will be in attendance.

Spruce up your car to be in the running for a prize or just come along and enjoy the day, all cars welcome from shining garage princesses to everyday drivers to restoration projects. Bring along your family and friends and make a day of it. We look forward to seeing you there.

CCOCA April Monthly Meeting

WHEN: Wednesday, 24 April
TIME: 19:30

WHERE: Hawthorn Bowling Club, 1 Wood St., Hawthorn [cnr Denham St.]

COST: Free
REGISTRATION: Essential for

catering by Monday, 22 April
BRING: Your photos from the Show and Shine

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>

APRIL BOOKING

Florence Thomson Tour

WHEN: Friday, 26 to Sunday, 28 April

WHERE: Based around Wangaratta

REGISTRATION: Closed

MORE INFO: florencethomson@gamil.com

In February 1905, Florence Thomson was the sole female entrant in the Dunlop Reliability Motor contest from Sydney to Melbourne.

The Florence Thomson Tour is proudly brought to you by the Association of Motoring Clubs [AOMC] on behalf of the RACV. The Tour celebrates the pio-

A-Tractions

neering spirit and contribution of Women to Australian motoring.

• May

Kerrisdale Mountain Railway Run

WHEN: Sunday, 5 May
 TIME: 08:00
 FROM: Eltham, actual location TBC
 TO: Kerrisdale Mountain Railway and more
 WHERE: 7523 Goulburn Hwy, Kerri-
 High, Kerrisdale
 COST: \$10 per person
 REGISTRATION: Essential by
 Monday, 22 April
 MORE INFO: Peter Lynch,
 atkipete@yahoo.com.au



Note the New Venue!

CCOCA May Monthly Meeting

WHEN: Wednesday, 22 May
 TIME: From 19:30
 WHERE: Hawthorn Bowling Club, 1 Wood St., Hawthorn [cnr Denham St.]
 COST: Free
 REGISTRATION: Essential for catering by 20 May
 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>

CCOCA MAY BOOKING

• June

Battle of Waterloo

WHEN: Sunday, 16 June

TIME: 09:00
 FROM: Mornington, exact location TBC
 TO: Balnarring Bowling Club, 12 Strathmore Rd., Balnarring
 COST: See details below
 REGISTRATION: Essential by Friday, 7 June
 BRING: BYO food for a picnic/BBQ lunch
 MORE INFO: Pete Lynch, atkipete@yahoo.com.au

We have invited the BMC Leyland Car Club to join us for a real Waterloo Challenge! The day will begin with a scenic drive to our morning tea spot at Penny Lane, 197 Nepean H'way., Dromana. We then continue to our headquarters for the day: the Balnarring Bowling Club.



A friendly, yet competitive, game of indoor bowls will set the tone for the occasion.

The Club has full kitchen facilities; BBQ, microwave, cutlery and crockery is available for our use. They will provide volunteers to show us the ropes to play the game, help in the kitchen, bbq and anything else we may require on the day. Staff will open and run the bar for us. Cost for morning tea and drinks at the bar will be to your account. If you wish to participate in the optional bowls competition, it will cost \$10pp.

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

WATERLOO BOOKING FORM

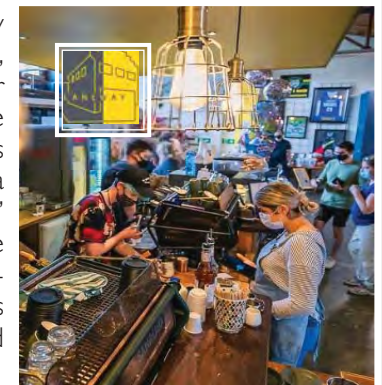
CCCV June Monthly Meeting

WHEN: Thursday, 20 June
 TIME: 19:30
 WHERE: CCCV Club Rooms,

Chit Chat Tuesday

WHEN: 1st Tuesday
 2 April, 7 May, 4 June
 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 the weather is wet. This is a low key 'DIY' event for like minded Citroën owners to meet and chat.



A-Tractions

8/41 Norcal Rd., Nunawading
 COST: Free
 REGISTRATION: Not required
 MORE INFO: Dave Rogers
drogers@gmail.com

This month we have Don Scutt's movie night. Popcorn and pizza supplied.

CCOCA June Monthly Meeting

WHEN: Wednesday, 26 June
 TIME: From 19:30

CCCV Club Advice Line

Traction Avant
 Ted Cross 9819 2208
 2CV
 Dave Rogers 0422 229 484
 AX/Berlingo
 Kirk Kirkcaldy 9363 2464
 GS/GSA
 Andrew Smith 9755 2439
 ID/DS
 Contact CCCV
 BX
 John Wyers 9787 6280

CCCV Noticeboard

LHM OIL FOR MEMBERS

The price of LHM oil is now \$18.00 per litre as at 10/11/21.

Cheque, money order or EFT [payable to CCCV Inc.] Note: Purchasers must receive a receipt.

Check for your nearest rep:

Mentone
 Stephen Maloney 0438 155 797
 Western Suburbs
 Ferdi Saliba 0409 384 977
 Glen Iris
 Colin Bates 9822 2864
 Ringwood
 Wolfgang Siem 0425 872 082

WHERE: Hawthorn Bowling Club, 1 Wood St., Hawthorn [cnr Denham St.]

COST: Free
 REGISTRATION: Essential for catering by 24 June

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>

CCOCA JUNE BOOKING

CX/C5
 Graeme McDonald 0409 134 836
 SM
 Lee Scholte 0407 150 038
 Xantia/Xsara
 John Wyers 9787 6280
 XM and modern models
 Salman Chaudhry 0410 040 505
 C2/C3
 Don Scutt 9807 8999
 C6
 John Fedorko 0438 597384

Somerville
 John Parsons 0407 045 388
 Ashburton
 Robert Belcourt 0439 798 079
 Shepparton
 Rob Little 0419 581 622
 Warrnambool
 Roger Wilkinson 0427 115 224
 Hurstbridge
 Adelino de Silva 0419 886 480
 Also available from club shop at club meetings.

LDS OIL

LDS oil is available at club rooms on club nights only at \$25.00 per litre.

Traction Grille Badges

Pim Berends sent me the photo below asking if this emblem he saw on a Big 15 was a genuine Citroën part.

John Gillard tells us that Slough produced two grille badges, one for the Big 15 and the other for the Big 6. They didn't produce a Light 15 badge. The badge for the Big 6 had a

large '6' on it. Tony Stokoe has such a badge on his car.

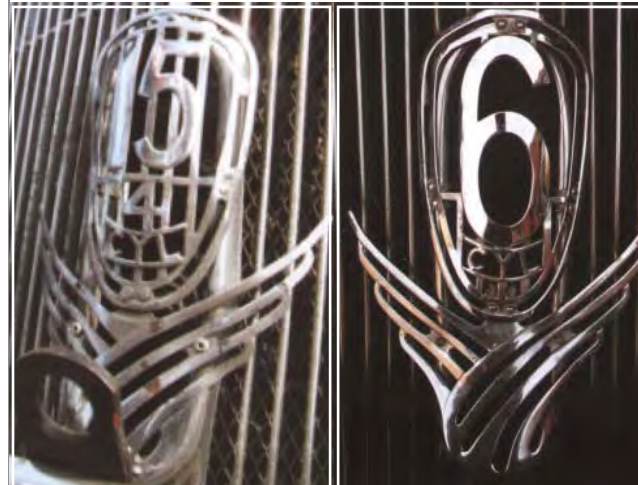
However both of these badges were also produced later by another company.

This got me really interested, and Karel Beukema too. Water has given us more information about grilles and badges.

This is what he says:

Normales and 15/6s have always shared the same grille shape [there are some distinct differences between them though] but both pre-war grilles had a short cranking handle slot.

After the war, once production had picked up again as the demand for cars grew, Citroën made some ~ but very limited ~ changes to the Traction Avant model that was now running out of date at an ever increasing pace. One was to modify the design of the 15/6 gearbox, following a decision to invert the sense of rotation of the engine from anti-clockwise to clockwise as seen from the front of the car. The hand crank



Top left: The photo sent to Jonathan by Pim Berends which started the whole process.

Top right: The grille badge on TOC UK member Tony Stokoe's 1949 Big 6

Bottom: Pre-war 15-6 badge on a short grille slot. This example is on the famous Mme Michelin six-cylinder cabriolet which featured in 'démarrer', Vol 4, No 4.

Traction Grille Badges

claw from then on caught onto the end of the upper shaft. This meant that the aperture in the front grille had to be adapted and it was decided to increase the height of the oval slot to allow hand cranking on both types.

On the 15/6, the hand crank is inserted into a tube that sits just behind the upper end of the slot, whereas the hand crank of the 11 B is engaged over a notch near the lower end of the slot. From then, on the 11 B was fitted with the well-known vertical ornament to cover the hand crank slot. As of 1947, the 15/6 grille saw the well known wing ornament with the [removable] 15/6 badge above it. On the 6, only the 15/6 badge has to be removed to insert the hand crank. The wing ornament is attached to the grille more permanently by means of two 3mm screws and bolts. This also explains why we often see older pictures of 15/6 with only the wing ornament on the grille. The wing ornament on the 15/6 was well received by the public. In the early '50s, it was therefore decided to have a similar motif on the 11 BL, which was continued until 1955.

On the 11 BL, the wing ornament was supposed to cover the round hand crank hole. It therefore had three spring clips that held it in place and allowed it to be removed. But there are



more differences. 11 BL wing ornaments are made out of aluminium. They are thicker than their 15/6 peers which are made out of chromed tin plate. One should never attempt to bend the 11 BL wing ornament because it will break. The aluminium is easy to polish to a bright shine.

Later BL models [until 1957] had to do without an ornament.

Slough-built Traction

Slough-built 11 Normales were called 'Big 15' in the UK. They were equipped with the same grilles as their French peers, although they were all chrome plated and had their 'double chevrons' behind the vertical bars. However, on a Big 15 we are likely to find the same wing ornament as on the 15/6, as well as the oval clip-on badge, but now with '15 4' on it.

Original 15-4 emblems are very hard to come by. The only

way to make one, is by cutting out the 6 from a 15/6 badge and welding in a digit 4. Not an easy job, even more so as the entire thing will have to be chrome plated afterwards.

Slough-built 15/6s were called 'Big 6' after the war. They received a monogram with a large '6' instead of the 15/6 as the French cars had.

The wing ornaments were

TYREPLUS EASTLAND

cnr BOND & NEW STREET RINGWOOD 3134

PHONE: 9879 8487

PROPRIETOR: STEFFAN ROSIER

Please check for current stock and prices.



Traction Grille Badges

the same as on the French cars.

Not all Wings are Equal

Let's take a closer look at the wings.

In the picture directly below, the right wing crosses over the left one: in the picture below on the right, the left wing crosses over the right one.

These differences can be found on 15/6s [and Big 15s and Big 6s] as well as on 11 BL models.

Why the Difference?

Some suggest it is simply a matter of some of the wings being fitted facing backwards. Impossible, because the back side of the wings is plain, without

the suggestion of overlapping as on the front side.

Conclusion: these wings were meant to be different.

Another suggestion might be that the shop that made them just used different pressing and cutting tools, producing both types in random order.

Nope again!

The truth is Citroën started off with one type and then deliberately changed over to the other type at a certain point in time. Strangely enough, after a few years they changed back to the original wing setting! Only the French can dream up such a thing!



Logic?

Stylists are famous for not being methodical thinkers ~ logic is not a natural enabler for creativity. But why should one set off using shape A, change over to shape B and then after a while change back to shape A? I am afraid very few people will be able to explain.

Model Year Differences

To find out on what models/years the different wing ornaments were used one should take a closer look at the original images that were issued by Citroën itself, or at pictures of which the authenticity is undisputed. Looking around at Traction rallies and browsing through pictures on websites is likely to be confusing, since many 15/6 owners are unaware of the differences and may have just stuck onto their cars what was available. You may take my word for it that there are very many 15/6s around nowadays with wings that do not correspond with the model years of the cars.

Here's what it should be:

- ⚡ As of July 1947, when the first 15/6 with the clockwise rotating [D] engine was launched, the wings were 'right over left'.
- ⚡ During 1950, the 'moustache' bumpers on the Sixes were replaced by the straight higher ones, coinciding with a number of other upgrades to give

the car a slightly classier look.

As of this point, ornaments were fitted with their wings 'left over right'. This lasted until the summer closure of the factory in 1953.

- ⚡ After the summer of 1953, all 15/6s were again equipped with ornaments with their wings 'right over left'. This lasted until the end of 15/6 production in 1956. Late 1953 was also the time of re-introduction of the Familiale [only some 250 of these were made as 15/6s], to be followed by the 15-Hydraulique in April of 1954.

Rules of Thumb

- ⚡ All 'moustache-bumper' 15/6s from 1947 onwards: wings 'right over left'.
- ⚡ All straight-bumper small-boot 15/6s of 1950, 1951 and 1952: wings 'left over right'.
- ⚡ All big boot 15/6s of 1952 and early 1953: same as above.
- ⚡ Late 1953 and 1954: 15/6s with standard rear suspension: wings 'right over left'.
- ⚡ All 15-Familiales[⚡] and 15-Hydrauliques: wings 'right over left'.
- ⚡ Very early factory image material of the 15-Familiale shows 'left over right' wings as well as one single [left] tail light. As far as I have been able to analyse, all production line 15-Familiales [1953–1954] came with 'right over left' wings and tail lights on both

Traction Grille Badges

sides.

Wing Swaps

There are owners who have the correct wing ornaments on their Tractions, either because they still have the original ones, and/or because they are aware of the differences as described in this article. But I have seen so many 15/6s with wing ornaments that did not match the model year, that I doubt whether the owners are aware. There will also be people to whom it will not really matter. As far as I know, only new aftermarket 'left over right' 15/6 wings are available these days. I will be delighted to see people starting to swap wings at rallies and other Traction gatherings if they find out that both parties have got the wrong ones on their cars.

Although it is only a very minor detail, this would help preserve the original looks of Traction Avants in the future.

Derek Fisher has the last word

I made the badge for my Big 6 by copying an original. You can see two screws holding it onto the grille. I did this because the originals were clipped on making it easily removable to insert the starting handle but it did mean it could easily be stolen.

This article, by Jonathan Palmer first appeared in 'Floating Power', the magazine of the UK Traction Owners' Club' in March, 2012. It is reprinted here with the

author's permission and may not be reproduced elsewhere without his permission. After we made contact with Jonathan, he provided some updated information for us.

Owners of these vehicles are well aware that these badges are subject to attack from rust and corrosion as well as simple theft! The originals were made of relatively low quality material, and thus have a limited life span; the clips also frequently break.

Since these badges are unique to the six-cylinder model, I decided it was worth taking the time to produce something of a higher quality, which had a longer life and projected the true presence of a great car.

Using several high technology processes [that André Citroën would have enthusiastically embraced] including laser cutting, an impressive product has been created. A specification document that outlines the process in some detail has been prepared separately.

This has been an expensive adventure! I only want to recoup my costs, and bearing that in mind, I have come up with the following prices:

A Big Six or 15/6 badge set [including the wings] costs £125. Packing and postage to Australia will be £17 extra. Email me your requirements, specify-

ing the required wing direction and I will then send you a total price and payment conditions. Please contact me on newlandmusic@outlook.com Jonathan Palmer [Bristol] +44 1275 855 213 +44 7751 690 993

Big 6 & 15/6 Badges: Further Information

These photos are of the original badges. The first two were flattened before measuring.

WINGS

Left over right version [See comments sheet]. Hole centres: 58.5mm

15/6 CYLINDER

Both of the numbers '1' and '5' were raised so they would stand out.

6 CYLINDER

An original Big Six badge, correctly curved and minus two of its clips.



Traction Grille Badges

New Citroën Traction Badges: Comments on the Finished Product

⤴ With all replication, there will inevitably be some degree of compromise. In both the original badges, the pressings had a number of three-dimensional features. On the 15/6 badge, the numbers were raised to make them stand out: I had extra numbers produced and soldered them on the top to produce the same effect, [which is why they are a bit more expensive].

⤴ Although these new badges are more 'flat', the brass or steel sheet I chose has a much better quality than the original. They are pre-curved to fit your car.

⤴ The sizes of these new ones are exactly the same as the original badges.

⤴ Four stainless steel clips have been attached to each one, using eight brass rivets:

⤴ Most of the originals used pop rivets; mine are of solid brass.



In the course of the chromium plating process, these clips would also have been plated; because they are made of stainless steel, the plating will inevitably peel off, but that is of no consequence.

⤴ All the original badges were designed to be easily removed, so that a starting handle could be inserted; the clips often broke. These days, the opposite is required; each of my stainless steel clips has a 2mm hole on the end so that a wire may connect it to the car at an appropriate place on the radiator grille in order to deter removal. The best solution is to use stainless steel locking wire.

These wires are not visible and they are a good way to gain security and combat theft.

⤴ Because the peening on the rear of each of the rivets leaves a rough edge that

touches the radiator grille, a 2mm neoprene pad has been stuck to each clip to prevent possible damage/chafing and vibration. Neoprene could be used in other places where there is metal to metal contact.

⤴ The 'wings' are obviously separate from the badges and each one has a retaining flange that fits the clip on the badge. Again, to avoid the 'metal on metal' contact, a neoprene pad has been added to cushion them. They each have two holes at 58.5mm centres that will line up with your radiator grille; two 3mm bolts with wing nuts are provided.

⤴ In the photos, the wings are of the 'left over right' version, but the 'right over left' ones can also be produced. They do vary according to year and country, and you may wish to read through 'Not all Wings are Equal'

<http://btwsk.nl/Citroën4/index.php/2015-04-03-06-54-43/general-interest/74-traction-avant-wings>

NOT ALL WINGS LINK

When ordering, you must specify which type you require.

⤴ In the photos, both the badges and wings appear assembled. Although they are separate items, they are a matched pair, and I intend to sell them as such.



The Fox Collection

Members of CCCV and CCOCA enjoyed a visit to the Fox Collection Classic Car Museum at Queens Warehouse in Docklands on Saturday, February 17.

The Fox car collection is the creation of Australian trucking magnate Lindsay Fox and the Fox family. Lindsay is a hard-working and entrepreneurial Melbourne lad who started out as an owner driver in 1957 with one truck, and built today's vast logistics and transport opera-

tion from there. As we entered the museum and were welcomed by enthusiastic volunteer staff, the old V8 Ford tray truck that began the Fox empire took pride of place. A modest entry fee is charged with profits donated to local charities.

Queens Warehouse itself has a few stories to tell, as it has watched Melbourne grow over the years. It was built by the Victorian Public Works Department as a Bond Store in 1890 where imported goods, often of high value, were held until the customs duties were paid. In those days, Victoria, New South Wales etc. were separate colonies, sailing ships were unloaded along the Yarra River, and the nearby Spencer Street rail yards were busy with freight. Following Federation in 1901, ownership of the building was transferred to the

Commonwealth Government, and between 1908 and 1924 it served as Australia's first bank note and postage stamp printing works. It was returned to use as a customs facility and Commonwealth supply depot. In 1995 it was handed over to the Victorian government for a nominal sum, to provide a facility for the display of historic vehicles in the redevelopment of the Docklands precinct.

The world-renowned Fox car collection consists of over 250 vehicles with an estimated value of over \$60million. Around 60 are currently on display at Docklands, including rare models from Mercedes Benz, MG, Porsche and Ferrari. The remainder are stored or are under restoration at Essendon Airport. Our guide for

the tour, long serving volunteer Allan Dyer, gave us the back story and funny anecdotes about various vehicles, which made it easier to appreciate the international effort and countless hours of hard work involved.

Afterwards we enjoyed a convivial lunch at the nearby Nixon Hotel.

Thanks to Nick Hutton, CCCV, Fox Museum and the friendly Nixon staff for their efforts in making this such an enjoyable day out.
Peter Lynch



Canberra Boy Visits Corryong...

and Citroën Traction Avants

The little town of Corryong, just on the Victorian side of the NSW/Victoria border, is a different world. One thing among many I noticed in my first 15 minutes in Corryong was a couple of kids walking along with a footy, bouncing it on the ground, Aussie Rules style. If it was in New South Wales there would be a greater chance of them juggling it or passing it to each other without the handball. But, the difference between Corryong and other places I've seen around Australia is more than the predominance of one footy code over others. And Corryong is a mere 220kms from Canberra's Lanyon service station, or about 145kms as the crow flies.

But, I'm not a crow and it was a hard 220km drive to Corryong via Tharwa and through the Namadgi and Kosciuszko National Parks. I'm getting too far ahead of myself so I'll start from the beginning.

Okay, why did I decide to drive to Corryong?

It was partly because I'd never been there before, even though I'd been close to it, and partly because I liked the look of the place as presented by Heather Ewitt's ABC program 'Back Roads'. What, however, tipped the balance in favour of

my going was the fact that our family had acquired a 1953 Citroën Light 15 and I wanted to find out the name of the original owner.

It has had several owners since the original owner, and the only knowledge that was passed on to us regarding the original owner was that he came from Corryong, the car was sold after his death and that he had owned a shop in the town.

Before discussing the car, or the original owner, any further I will say that I am by no means a car fanatic. Although I had a strong interest in cars as a boy it waned after I left my teens. I do however, find some par-

ticular makes of car very pleasing to the eye, particularly the older classical machines, and the Light 15 Citroën and all the other Citroëns with that same body shape [known collectively as this readership will know as 'Tractions'] is a shape my brain has perceived to be beautiful for many years. I see the Traction design as a great work of art, but what is good and bad art is all of course subjective. All I know is that when I look at a Traction my brain manufactures 'feel-good' chemistry and when I look at a modern car with all its plastic it does not.

The Traction design was created in 1933 by the designers Andre Lefebvre and Flaminio Bertoni, and the car went on the market in 1934. Flaminio, or 'Flamo' to his mates, was a sculptor prior to being a car designer, so it's presumed he played the major role in the artistic aspect of the design, and it would partly explain why so many people who have seen Tractions regard the design as beautiful.

The designers, however, also had to ensure the car was highly functional, and it surely was, being years ahead of its time. As I have said, in my opinion the final product is a real work of art, and there are many people around today who agree, which explains why there is still a strong demand for new Traction parts, which are sold in Eu-

rope by several companies.

It was probably a series of events that drew me to Citroën Tractions, but who knows why something pleases the eye of one person and not another?

In 1951, a year before my birth, my dad, the late Roy Wheeler, didn't have anywhere near enough money to buy a new car, so he treated himself to some fantasy and instead bought a paperback booklet entitled, 'The Australian Motor Manual Annual 1951', which displayed photos of every car that was available in Australia during that year, as well as their specifications.

I still have that little booklet, and what caught my attention within it as a kid were the photos and descriptions of the two Citroën Traction models, the 4 and the 6, that were on the market at the time. The booklet also outlined the achievements of the 6 in competition, such as it being the effortless winner of the Bathurst 25 mile closed car race. This probably occurred as a result of it having superior handling to its competition because of its front wheel drive and low centre of gravity. I've copied the relevant pages of the booklet below.

Of course I was conscious of the existence of Tractions prior to being able to read, but after I became old enough to read about the Tractions in my dad's



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Canberra Boy Visits Corryong...

booklet, but was still a mere boy, I remember seeing a complete one that was going to be wrecked at Silk's wrecking yard in the Canberra suburb of Lyneham, and I can also remember being frustrated by not being able to buy it.

Another event which may have influenced me, when I was aged about 13, was the purchase of a Traction by the late Paul Lyneham, prior to him becoming a well-known ABC journo. At that time Paul was a young bloke living up the road from me. Although I was of course still a schoolboy living with my parents he was a young working man, but also living with a parent or parents.

On the way to Dickson High in the mornings I would first call in on my mate, the late Geoff 'Bluey' Cowan, so we could ride our bikes to school together. While doing so we would often gain pleasure by stopping outside the Lynehams' house and watching Paul drive his Traction out of their driveway and on to wherever he worked at the time.

If we were lucky, we would also get a glimpse of Paul's younger sister on her way to school. She was even more pleasing to the eye than his Traction but a couple of years older than us and way out of our league.

I can also recall at a later stage

having a really good close look at a Citroën Light 15 that was owned by a lad named Graham Patrick, who was three years ahead of me at Dickson High. It was parked next to one of the Dickson playing fields. On that day, Graham was due to play for Dickson High's 1st grade rugby team and I was due to play for Dickson High's under 15 rugby team. The first grade team got a lot of attention whereas nobody really gave a rat's arse about our under 15 team other than the members and our

coach, even though we were undefeated throughout the season. We definitely had no groupies and we were probably all virgins. Still, we enjoyed ourselves.

At that time I would have loved to have owned a Traction like Graham's and to have been playing in the first 15, but that all took a while.

Actually, I didn't purchase a Traction until I was 27 and living in Auckland, New Zealand, in early 1980, and the one I bought had been through the

mill and cost me a lot of money to maintain. Yet I'm glad of the experience and I associate the memory of that car with some good times.

I can recall sitting in my Traction in Auckland late one night with four young Polynesian girls who were singing very loudly and really enjoying themselves. We were parked on Karangahape Road outside a dance called 'The Reefcomber,' when a gang fight between Samoans and Cook Islanders started around us. The singing stopped

Dickson High School's Firsts rugby team. Traction-owning Graham Patrick is in the front row, far right. Below: Dickson's 1967 Under-15 rugby team. Dave Wheeler is the tallest lad in the back row. Both photos are from the school's 1966 magazine.



CITROËN Saloon (4 cyl.), 56 b.h.p.

To be in the forefront of design in good tractability, performance and safety for the past 15 years is a credit to this car which makes a Citroën owner a lifelong friend of the car. On the Continent, where drivers can choose from the world's best, Citroëns are in the forefront of popularity also. Two models, the four cylinder Light 15 and larger six cylinder with English or French coachwork are available.

ROAD TEST DATA
* Maximum Speeds in Gears: First Gear, 26 m.p.h. Second Gear, 52 m.p.h. Top Gear, 77 m.p.h. Acceleration through the Gears: 0-30 m.p.h., 6 sec.; 0-40 m.p.h., 9.5 sec.; 0-50 m.p.h., 14.5 sec. M.P.G. at normal driving speeds—25-27. Braking to stop from 30 m.p.h.—30 1/2 ft.

CITROËN LIGHT FIFTEEN.
ENGINE—Four cylinder overhead valve unit, 1.511 c.c.; Bore, 78 mm.; stroke, 100 mm.; 43.86 h.p.; Compression ratio, 6.2:1, developing 56 h.p. at 4250 r.p.m.

TRANSMISSION—Three speed gearbox in unit with engine, differential mounted between gearbox and clutch. Front-wheel drive by sliding carbon shafts with needle bearing universal joints, dashboard gear lever.

SUSPENSION—Adjustable torsion bar suspension with hydraulic shock absorbers mounted vertically.

STEERING—Rack and pinion type steering.

WHEELS—16 in. steel disc wheels with 5.50 x 16 tyres.

DIMENSIONS—Wheelbase, 9 ft. 6 1/2 in.; Tracks—front, 4 ft. 6 in.; rear, 4 ft. 5 in.; Ground clearance, 7 in.; Weight, 21 cwt.; Overall length, 14 ft. 2 in.; Overall width, 5 ft. 5 in.; Height, 5 ft.

MAINTENANCE DATA

Ignition Timing: 8° B.T.D.C. Spark Plug Gap: 0.025 in. Contact Breaker Gap: 0.012 to 0.015 in. Valve Timing: Inlet opens 3° B.T.D.C., closes 48° A.B.D.C.; exhaust opens 48° B.R.D.C., closes 11° A.T.D.C. Tappets (In): Inlet 0.008 in., exhaust 0.005 in. Front Wheel Tie-out: 3/8 in. to 3/16 in. at wheel rim. Camber Angle: 1° 30 ft. Caster Angle: 2° 45 ft. Tyre Pressure: Front 22 lb., Rear 24 lb. Brake Fluid: Lockheed. Fuel Tank: 9 gallons. Pump: 8 pins, S.A.E. 40. Gearbox and Differential: 5 pins, medium gear-oil.



CITROËN Six Saloon (6 cyl.), 76 b.h.p.

Similar in most respects to the Light 15 the Citroën Six is a good deal longer, with that air of smooth power a long bonnet gives. Front wheel drive is the outstanding feature of the car, giving it the finest handling characteristics of any car on the market. The Six has achieved notable success in stock car events lately.

ROAD TEST DATA
* Maximum Speeds in Gears: First Gear, 26 m.p.h. Second Gear, 55 m.p.h. Top Gear, 83 m.p.h. Acceleration through the Gears: 0-30 m.p.h., 5.2 sec.; 0-40 m.p.h., 8.5 sec.; 0-50 m.p.h., 12.6 sec.; 0-60 m.p.h., 19.5 sec. M.P.G. at normal driving speeds—23-24. Braking to stop from 30 m.p.h.—32 1/2 ft.

ENGINE—Six cylinder overhead valve unit, 2.865 c.c.; Bore, 78 mm. by stroke, 100 mm.; 22.5 h.p.; Compression ratio, 6.2:1, developing 76 h.p. at 4,000 r.p.m.

TRANSMISSION—Three speed gearbox in unit with engine, differential mounted between gearbox and clutch. Front-wheel drive by sliding carbon shafts with needle bearing universal joints, dashboard gear lever.

SUSPENSION—Adjustable torsion bar suspension with hydraulic shock absorbers mounted vertically.

BRAKES—Lockheed hydraulic brakes, independent mechanical hand brake to rear wheels.

STEERING—Rack and pinion type steering.

WHEELS—16 in. steel disc wheels with 5.50 x 16 tyres.

DIMENSIONS—Wheelbase, 10 ft. 1 1/2 in.; Tracks: front and rear, 4 ft. 6 in.; Ground clearance, 7 in.; Weight, 26 cwt.; Overall length, 15 ft. 11 in.; Overall width, 5 ft. 10 in.; Height, 5 ft. 1 in.

MAINTENANCE DATA

Ignition Timing: 8° before F.D.C. fully retarded. Spark Plug Gap: 0.025 to 0.030 in. Contact Breaker Gap: 0.013 in. Tappet Clearance (In): Inlet 0.005 in. Exhaust 0.004 in. Front Wheel Tie-out: 3/8 in. to 3/16 in. at wheel rim. Camber Angle: 1° 30 ft. Caster Angle: 0°, plus or minus 1/2 ft. Tyre Pressure: Front 20 lb., Rear 22 lb. Brake Fluid: Lockheed. Fuel Tank: 10 gallons. Pump: 12 1/2 pins, S.A.E. 30. Gearbox and Differential: 5 pins, S.A.E. 90 F.P. gear oil. Steering Gear: Heavy grease.



Pages from the paperback booklet entitled, 'The Australian Motor Manual Annual 1951', which displayed photos of every car that was available in Australia during that year, as well as their specifications.

Canberra Boy Visits Corryong...

and several people fell over my front mudguards during the brawl, but fortunately neither my mudguards nor any other part of my Traction were damaged.

I can also remember another late night in Auckland when I was driving my Traction up the upper end of Queen Street, the main street of Auckland, when a large gang member stood in the middle of the road in front of me, hoping I would stop. As the area was packed with his gangster mates, all wearing their 'colours,' it would have been very foolish for me to stop. I suppose they wanted to mug me or commit some other mindless act of violence.

So, rather than be subjected to a gang beating, or worse, I did what all good Aussie boys would do in such a situation and put the old Traction into second gear and accelerated towards the idiot with my foot to the floor. The gangster side-stepped just in time and punched the passenger side front window as I went by,

causing no damage to the window but hopefully damaging his fist.

The Light 15 that is today a member of the family was bought new by a resident of Corryong in 1954. When I say it was bought new by a Corryong resident in 1954 it was actually made in 1953 but bought in 1954. There has always been argument over whether a car that is made in one year and sold 'new' the following year should be dated from the year of its manufacture or the year of its sale.

It was imported to Australia from where it was made in Slough, England.

Okay, back to the present and onto discussing the Traction. As I have said, the name of the original buyer of the car had

Dave with the 1956 Citroën Light 15 he owned in 1980 and 1981 while living in Auckland.



been lost by the time it came to my family, and the only information I had on it was that the original owner came from Corryong and that he owned a shop, probably a general store. If the name of the person who purchased the car new could be obtained, the most important part of the car's history would be known. And, as I have always liked detective work, it gave me one more reason to go to Corryong.

If I had my time over again, I would have gone into detective work to earn a living, as I really enjoy the process. I'm not referring to investigating crim's as a police detective. I couldn't stand working as a copper detective as I could not put up with police hierarchy. There are, however, all sorts of other jobs around

that require detective work, tracing missing persons, reuniting kids with biological parents and researching family history are just a few that come to mind.

So, I set off for Corryong on April 29, 2019, going through Tharwa and onto the Bobeyan Road through Namadgi Park. The bitumen stops before the Gudgenby Valley begins and I could feel all the corrugations as I climbed to over 1,200metres in places. I stopped when I went past Hospital Hill and climbed out onto a metal platform where I could gaze into the wilderness.

I have included a photo of a large signboard of the Gudgenby Valley which is displayed on the platform overlooking the said valley. Why didn't I just

Pictured near Tharwa is the Citroën Light 15 which is a member of my family. It was bought new by a resident of Corryong in 1954.



Canberra Boy Visits Corryong...

take a photo of the valley myself? Well, I thought the photo would detail the landmarks, but they are hard to read. My mate got lost in that valley when we went to see some Aboriginal paintings at Yankee Hat.

There is, however, a photo of me looking out over the Gudgenby Valley. Unfortunately, I missed much of the valley in my selfie and got mainly myself, which in another respect is probably a really good thing, as I have a lot in common with the Gudgenby Valley considering both it and I are made of atoms.

After I turned off Bobeyan Road onto the Snowy Mountains Highway, I turned off onto the road that took me through Kosciuszko National Park via Cabramurra and two dams, the Tumut Pond Reservoir and the Tooma Reservoir. It's a winding and narrow road and there's no way I would take it again if it was tourist season or if it had snowed, but fortunately I had beautiful weather and the traffic was light.

When I drove over the previously mentioned dams I didn't like the distance between me and the deep sides of the dams as the drops were a long, long way down. When travelling over one of the dams I experienced involuntary visualisations of a German invasion involving the dropping of bouncing bombs, the sort that skims along the water before it smashes the wall, as shown in the film 'The Dam Busters,' which is based on fact and tells the story of how it was done by the English to the Germans during World War II. I must have been thinking that the Germans still want revenge.

My involuntary visualisations eventually involved a German bouncing bomb actually smash-

ing the dam wall when I was right in the middle of the dam, causing me to plummet over the steep side in my red Barina, accompanied by an avalanche of water and concrete, while I screamed hysterically and lost control of my bodily functions. To top it off I could see my driving glasses partially dislodge from my face, adding to my indignity.

While in Kosciuszko National Park I took the photo below. Within it you will see a pile of manure which came from a Brumby. It reminds me of politicians, only horse manure is useful.

I've given the word Brumby a capital B because wild Australian horses were apparently named

after Sergeant James Brumby of the NSW Corps, who let his horses roam free before he departed for Van Diemen's Land. There is much controversy in regard to whether the Kosciuszko Brumbies should be culled, eliminated or left alone.

Anyway, upon arrival in Corryong, I parked my car in the main street, and directly in front of me was a lady, who had several years on me, watering some plants. She was a friendly lady named Robyn, and I had a good yarn to her. I asked her about the Citroën, and although she could not recall it, she told me she would find out for me who owned it through a friend of hers when she came across him.

I then decided I wanted a feed because it was about 1pm, and as I hadn't eaten that day my belly was starting to think my throat had been cut, so I slowly walked down the main street of Corryong. It wasn't busy, but it was by no means dead like many other country town shopping centres.

I first went to the visitor information building adjoining the local park to ask about a caravan park where I could stay for the night. I was assisted by a very friendly lady who told me of my options and also supplied me with some pamphlets and a map, all free of charge. I then went to a nearby cafe and



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had a good feed as I sat outside. During this period, I saw the two lads I previously mentioned bouncing a footy.

After slowly walking back towards my car I noticed two old blokes sitting on a seat outside the local IGA, laughing and talking to other locals. After buying some tucker for myself at the IGA to take back to the caravan park, I approached them, asking them how long they had lived in Corryong, as I thought they may know who owned the Citroën if they had been there for a long time. One of them, a bloke named Charlie, told me he'd been in Corryong for his whole 84 years, and that his cobbler, Len, had been there for his whole 91 years.

I told them they must have seen some big changes, and

they confirmed that my understatement was correct. Len told me he could recall as a kid seeing teams of bullocks being driven through town.

I had a good yarn to them, as they were friendly blokes, and it was refreshing talking to people who are a generation older than me; because at my age I often find I'm the oldest bloke in the street. They also seemed to be very happy with their lives, yet it made me wonder how many of their mates from their childhood were still alive and how many of the latter were living in Corryong. I thought particularly about Len's situation, because at 91 I doubt he would have any contact with any old Corryong schoolmates who still have a pulse. Even Charlie could not have been considered Len's

While in Kosciuszko National Park I took the photo below. Within it you will see a pile of manure which came from a Brumby. It reminds me of politicians, only horse manure is useful.



peer during their youth, as the seven years difference between them at that stage of their lives would have been enormous.

I told Charlie and Len I was wanting to find the name of the original owner of a Light 15 Citroën, as I'd been told that the original owner had come from Corryong and had bought the car in 1954. I then showed them a photo of the Traction on my phone, and upon seeing it Charlie immediately said, 'That was Billy Kidd's car!' It was confirmed by Len.

I asked them if Billy owned a general store as I was told he did, and they said he'd owned a cafe called the 'Crystal Cafe' and that he at one stage delivered fruit and vegies. They could not recall exactly when he died but they spoke highly of him and told me I could find the year of his death if I visited the local cemetery.

I thanked them for their help then headed for the cemetery. However, I first spoke with Robyn and told her I had found out the name of the original owner of the car. She then recalled quite clearly the car and told me that Billy kept it locked away and only brought it out on special occasions in his final years.

When at the cemetery, I found the plaque to Billy's grave or ashes. Billy died in 1996 at the age of 83 according to his plaque. I got further information

on the man from ancestry.com via my sister, who is a member, and at my request she communicated with Billy's nephew, John Herlihy. John has allowed me to post Billy's photo. Thanks John. He was born William Henry Murray Kidd on August 2, 1912 in Tallangatta Victoria and died on April 1, 1996 in Corryong. If he were alive today he would turn 112 this year. He was the eldest of 12 children born to John Rodney Anderson Kidd and Alice Jane Kidd. Billy married in 1934 Eira Iona McDonough, who died in 1975 aged only 63.

Billy's World War II service record shows he joined the RAAF in 1940 and was demobbed in May 1946. He attained the rank of corporal. His service number was 18681. I don't know whether or not he served overseas or what he did in the RAAF.

Other documents say he lived at Hansen Street Corryong, and the censuses of 1963 to 1972 have his occupation listed as a mechanic and Eira's that of a confectioner. When he died in 1996 his occupation was listed as a retired cafe proprietor.

As I have said, the photo was posted by his nephew, John Herlihy, on the Herlihy family tree on ancestry.com. Thanks again John.

After visiting the cemetery I had a good feed and sound sleep in a cabin I rented at one

Canberra Boy Visits Corryong...

of the local caravan parks.

I drove back to the 'Berra the next day after first having another good look around Corryong and soaking up more of its positive atmosphere.

I drove home via Cooma. It's a good deal longer in distance than through the Bobeyan Road but probably much shorter in time, and it was not so hard on my car. I really enjoyed my drive and brief stay in Corryong, including my contact with the living and deceased locals.

I will say that, as someone who has only visited Corryong briefly, I'm obviously not qualified to tell you much about the place, but I can tell you how it appeared to me based on first impressions. And in that respect I was very impressed.

I hope Corryong doesn't get any bigger because it seems to have the Goldilocks size of about 1,400 people. From what I observed, it seems like a nice, clean and peaceful little town, the sort that would be a good place to bring up kids. With a population of that size, and

it being off a main highway, it is also obviously devoid of the sort of traffic problems I have to suffer in the 'Berra.

I had thought it was an alpine town, but I was to find that, although it's close to the snowfields, its elevation is only about 350metres, a couple of hundred lower than the 'Berra, which would make its climate not as severe as I had anticipated.

I would be surprised if there's no drug and crime problems in Corryong, as there seems to be Australia wide, but if there is it's relatively small, as I saw no evidence of its presence. I was told a copper in charge of the region had done a good job of cleaning the place up.

Actually, I'll go further and say that, from the perspective of someone just passing through,



Corryong seemed to project a peaceful atmosphere of the type which indicates that the chance of coming across violence would be slim, and there was also an absence, in the atmosphere, of despair and hopelessness, which is something that could not be said of many country towns around Australia.

I was also to find that the people I spoke to were very friendly, and I am by nature a very cynical person who does not have a high overall opinion of our species.

If I didn't have my family in the 'Berra I would consider moving to a place like Corryong, as the 'Berra has become far too big and hectic for my liking.

While at the Corryong Cemetery I had a look at the grave



Billy Kidd, who bought new the Citroën now owned by my family in 1954. I'm not sure when the photo was taken but it was probably during the war. Maybe he was thinking about Citroëns at the time.

of Jack Riley. There is strong circumstantial evidence to suggest he was the inspiration behind Banjo Patterson's poem, 'The Man From Snowy River.' My grandad told me he met the son of the man from Snowy River during World War I. He was serving at the same time as my grandad but in another battalion. I don't know if he was Jack Riley's son or the son of someone else who claimed to be the inspiration behind the poem.

I was pleased to be contacted in July, 2019 by a lady named Rebecca Day, who is Billy Kidd's granddaughter. Through the marvel of the net she had read this post. She was glad to hear of her grandad's car, as she has good memories of travelling in it when she was a child. She also informed me that Billy had two Citroëns and that he kept one, which has been passed down to her. She is currently having it fully restored.

An Act of Stupidity...

Although the Citroën that is now within my family and the subject of this post had been beautifully restored before it came our way, it has a large dent in the petrol tank which I have decided to repair.

So, a few days ago I set about removing the tank. I couldn't have had better working conditions. The rear of the car was towards the front of my garage, facing the street and bathed in

Canberra Boy Visits Corryong...

the northern sun.

I first removed the wiring to the tank, the fuel line, the petrol cap and the straps and rubbers that hold the tank in position. According to my understanding the tank should have then dropped out of the car instantly. So I prepared a landing platform for it. It did not however, drop instantly out of the car. Although I had managed to loosen it, it slowly slid, with some help from me, only about 8 inches.

I tried to move it further by moving each side of the tank from underneath the car, but I wasn't going anywhere, so I decided to try to apply some force from above.

To explain, in the boot of Tractions, directly over the petrol tank, there is a rectangular lid which can be unscrewed. It reveals a rectangular hole which allows access to the fuel line and electrics. And as I'd undone the fuel line and electrics I decided to put my arm into the hole so I could attempt to persuade the tank to move from a different angle.

I was able to squeeze my forearm through the hole with some difficulty. I then decided to go a bit further and put my elbow through, which allowed me to apply a bit more force to the tank and to move it a bit more.

I then decided to withdraw my arm, which was another matter

entirely. Although a squeeze, getting my arm into where I had placed it was not too difficult. It would seem however, the human elbow is like a more subtle version of a barbed fish hook or spear. It's made to allow it to go into small places, but it is not so easy bringing it out if it was a tight squeeze getting it in.

What was I to do? I was bent right over with my arse facing the street, as I demonstrate in the photo. I felt very vulnerable. I'm absolutely helpless.

I then came to my senses by realising that it would have to be a very sick person who would have any interest in my 1952 vintage arse, and very few people who are that way inclined are that ill. Still, my elbow was hurting and I was very uncom-



fortable in the position I was in and I was anxious to get out of my situation as soon as possible.

I was able to get hold of Ben Tuita, a young bloke who comes around to my place regularly to use my gym. I asked him to get me the handle of my hydraulic jack to assist to lever the hole so it could give me a bit of space. We had no luck, and I realised

Me standing in Wheeler Street, Corryong. It was really nice of the citizens of Corryong to name a street after me.

I was moved. Below: Me in a very vulnerable position.

we would have had to have torn the metal to increase the gap to any degree, and I did not want to do that.

I then decided to use my grappling knowledge, and one thing that should be ingrained with grapplers is that when an opponent has you in a position in which you are unable to move if you oppose him directly, you should move your body wherever you are able to move your body, even if it seems unrelated to opposing your opponent's direct hold on you. By doing so it enables you to get at your opponent's hold from a slightly different angle, which can often get you out of trouble.

I applied that tactic to my Slough opponent by moving my body as far from the position I was in as possible, which in turn allowed my arm to change its position, which in turn allowed me to withdraw my elbow and forearm, albeit with much difficulty and the acquisition of bruises and scraped skin.

I eventually removed the tank by getting underneath the car and moving each side of the said tank a small distance downwards until it eventually came out.

Had the car collapsed on me I would have found breathing very difficult, particularly if my chest was crushed. It would have ruined my day. Dave Wheeler



Member's Model: 1951 Big 6



As you may know [especially if you read the Editor's AGM report last month] we are sometimes fortunate enough to have locally-written articles we publish picked up by overseas Citroën clubs. This month we are reversing the trend by picking up an article which first appeared in 'Traction Avant', the

magazine of the French Traction club, 'Le Traction Universelle'.

Nothing really new there, I hear you say. But, this time the article was written for 'Traction Avant' by CCOCA members David and Helen Belfrage from Queensland.

Above: Collecting the car from Canberra. Two Big 6s in Bairnsdale.



In November 2019 after searching for two years, David and Helen Belfrage from Brisbane, Australia, found and purchased a [Slough-built], Black 1951 Citroën Traction Avant ~ Big 6 here in Canberra.

None of the Citroën Traction models is very common here in Australia, and the Big 6s are especially very hard to find.

The paint and panels were 85% complete and the interior and upholstery was 95% complete.

To summarise, all the mechanical, cooling, steering, brakes, suspension, electrics, gearbox, differential, bright work and seating components required repair, replacement or modification, and we have spent considerable time, and money, on these areas to bring this Traction up to a reliable, roadworthy and satisfactory condition.

Where it was prudent to establish and maintain reliability or reduce maintenance, I have changed some components for modern units without worrying about originality.

A benefit that we have enjoyed is that since joining two Citroën Car Clubs [Citroën

Top: Dynax S50 fluid was installed in the sills, hulls and doors.

Middle: Fabricated cradle for the front bumper.

Bottom: The completed leather interior.

Member's Model: 1951 Big 6

Car Club of Queensland and Citroën Classic Owners Club of Australia], we have met and made some wonderful new friends who we can tour and socialize with!

The Big 6 Restoration Begins.

The car was taken from Canberra on a tandem trailer to a farm in Bairnsdale, Victoria [6 hours south], where there was another Big 6 owner who had a large workshop and many spare parts for these models.

Body and Interior.

All locks, handles, screws, Bailey Channels, the dash board and seat belts were either rejuvenated, fitted or repaired! Bumper bars, over riders and front number plate panel have



The machined brass windscreen opener. The scuttle being repaired by having the rust removed. Below: The scuttle repaired and fitted with its new rubber seal.



The engine carefully held up on chains. Gears and sundries laid out for inspection. Below right: The modern CV drive shaft

been re-chromed.

Engine, Transmission and Gearbox.

Engine is fitted with ID 19 conrods and the conrods and crankshaft have modern bearings. Gearbox and the transmission have been totally rebuilt with new or good condition parts. Radiator has been replaced with a new one.

Brakes and Suspension.

The complete brake systems have been replaced with new components. The suspension has been repaired or had critical components replaced, including the Silent Blocks & Spline Shafts.

Steering Upgrade

A fully engineered and compliant electrical power steer-



Member's Model: 1951 Big 6



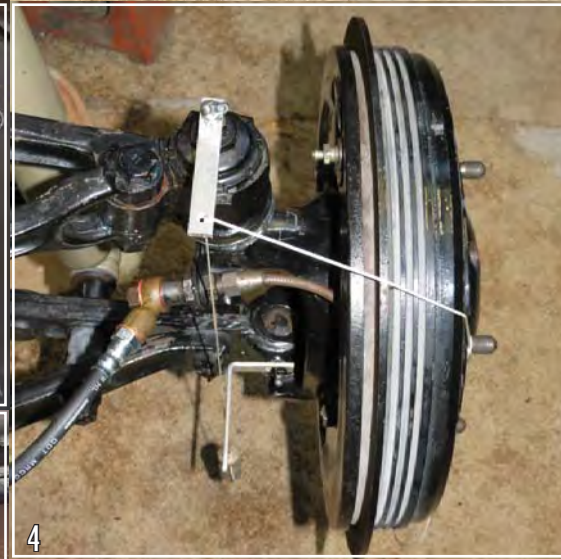
1



2



3



4



5



6



7



1: The front brakes were re-built.
2: As were the rear brakes.
3: New shock absorbers were installed.
4: Checking the adjustment of the front end.
5: On the load frame, testing the shock absorbers.

6: New Silent Blocs installed.
7: Helen in the back seat with their car-loving grandson Rory at the wheel.
Main image: The Big 6 played a starring role in the wedding of David and Helen's friends, Bella and Matt.

Member's Model: 1951 Big 6

ing unit has been fitted and the Citroën rack and pinion steering components have been replaced or repaired.

Electrical

New LED indicators, new sealed beam head lights, a repaired generator, a 123 Ignition electronic distributor and an electrical fuel priming pump have all been fitted.

The Big 6 Complete

We have enjoyed working on this car and have appreciated the design of the Traction and its heritage, and we leave our garage with confidence that we will return home without incident or break down!

Our Traction is driven for at least two hours on average every week!

The car is a pleasure to drive and each time Helen and I go touring in it we get many waves and smiles as we go by!

Family and friends are excited to ride in such an unusual car and we are very pleased to own this wonderful French Classic and to be able to offer them that experience!

David Belfrage



David at the wheel of the almost completed project. Clearly, by the brightness of the lights the electrics are in top order.

The generator was overhauled.

David is very proud of his new led tail and indicator lights.

Engrenages Citroën II

In this, the second part of Andrew Cox's excellent, in depth history of André Citroën's engagement with double helical

gears, we advance through to 1912.

The third, and final, instalment, will advance the story right up to the present day.

Citroën, Hinstin & Company

Citroën must have come back from Poland feeling rather pleased with himself, but he couldn't exploit this new opportunity straight away; he was still a student. Not only that, he had a year's military service to do before he could focus fully on making gears.

In August 1900, he left the École Polytechnique, to join an artillery regiment, based at Le Mans, with the rank of second lieutenant.

It looks as if he didn't give the army his full attention though. Barely six months after becoming a soldier, he founded his first company: Citroën, Hinstin & Cie.

The notification on the previ-



MAISONS QUI SE CRÉENT OU CHANGENT DE PROPRIÉTAIRE			
PARIS ET DÉPARTEMENT DE LA SEINE			
NOMS	PROFESSIONS	ADRESSES	PRÉDÉCESSEURS
Bernanos	Bronzes en poudre, etc.	83, Charlot	Pièle
Cailleux	Epiceries, vins	13 bis, Berthollet	Clozel
Chevallier	Vins, café	39, Lancry	Menestrier
Citroën et Hinstin	Constructeurs	18, Drouot	
Daugerk (Dme)	Modes, lingerie	79, Rone	Desoules (dme)
De Boisse	Constructeur d'automobiles	33, Chanzy	Martin
Lecomte	Accessoires de bicyclettes	32, Marais	
Letellier	Ornements pour modes	127, Parants	
Nouveaux métaux industriels hygiéniques	(Sec. anon. dite Cie c'es)	376, St-Honoré	

Engrenages Citroën II

VENDEURS	ACQUÉREURS	DOMICILES ÉLUS POUR LES OPPOSITIONS	Entrée en jouissance	FONDS VENDUS
<i>Petites Affiches</i>				
Autom. légères, Hinstin (soc. des)	16, Cadet		15 juin	Construct. automobiles, allée St-Jean, Essonnes (Seine-et-Oise)

ous page appeared in the Commercial Archives of France on Saturday 19, January 1901. It is listing of businesses that have been established or whose ownership has changed.

The railway line between Le Mans and Paris opened in 1854 and, by 1900, the journey time had come down to around 3½ hours, with at least nine trains a day between the two cities. The Citroën family was comfortably off, so we can reasonably suppose the young second lieutenant was able to pop back home, first class, to discuss his business aspirations with friends and relatives.

The 'Hinstin' in the company name refers to the brothers, Léon Jacques, always known as Jacques, and his brother [André] Georges Hinstin. Jacques is often described as a school friend of Citroën from the Lycée Condorcet, but he was born in May 1873, making him five years older than André, so this is somewhat unlikely.

In 'Les Chevrons de la Gloire', Fabien Sabatès and Sylvie Schweitzer suggest he was actually a friend of one of André's elder brothers, probably Bernard.

A small cutting [above] from

the July 11, 1900 edition of the Archives Commerciales de la France shows that, on June 15 of that year, a certain Hinstin, assumed to be Jacques, bought a company called the Société des Automobiles Légères, or the Light Car Company, and quotes an address in Essonnes, some 30km south of Paris. The Hinstins' involvement with cars began early.

When André Citroën came to set up his new company, with financial support from the Hinstin brothers, he opted to share this workshop in Essonnes. This is the entry in the 1902 Almanac of Commerce & Industry.

It's widely reported that this first company was called Hinstin Frères, Citroën & Cie but this is evidently wrong. Every scrap of written evidence refers only to Citroën, Hinstin & Cie.

I think the source of this confu-

Below: The entry in the 1902 Almanac of Commerce & Industry showing the listing for Citroën, Hinstin & Cie.

CITROËN, HINSTIN & Cie, taille mécanique dans la masse du métal, d'engrenages cylindriques et coniques à CHEVRONS. Chevrons simples ou multiples. Bureau à Paris : r. Drouot, 16. TÉLÉPH. 125.34. Usine à Essonnes (S.-et-O.). TÉLÉPH.

Paris. — Formation. — Société en nom collectif HINSTIN frères, constructions mécaniques. 19, Drouot, avec usine à Essonnes (S.-et-O.). — 25 ans. — 170.000 fr. — 15 juil. 1902. — P. A.

Above: The notification of the foundation of Hinstin Frères in the Archives Commerciales of July 26, 1902.

sion is that Jacques and Georges Hinstin themselves founded a company called Hinstin Frères at around the same time, with an adjacent registered address. This notification was published in the Archives Commerciales of July 26, 1902.

Although the primary activity is listed as mechanical construction, consistent with the purchase of the car company, there was a second string to their bow, the manufacture and distribution of electric arc lamps. It's this trade that seems to have left more traces in the archaeology of the 1900s, when viewed from the 21st century.

It's believed that the Hinstins put up at least half of the funds required to establish Citroën, Hinstin & Cie, hence they get second billing in the company name. However, as far as we know, neither of the brothers had an operational role in André Citroën's company; they had enough to do running their own businesses. Nonetheless, there remained close links between André Citroën and Jacques Hinstin for at least two decades.

Going Public

One thing's for sure, André Citroën was not someone who let the grass grow beneath his feet. Only three months after



Engrenages Citroën II

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CITROËN, 19, rue Drouot — PARIS

HINSTIN & C^{IE} Usine à ESSONNES (S.-et-O.)

TÉLÉPH. 309.11 **TÉLÉPHONE**

he formally left the army, his company could be found exhibiting at the 1901 Salon de l'Automobile, Cycles & Sports, at the Grand Palais.

Just a year later, the advert on this page appeared in the October 31, 1902 edition of the Revue de Mécanique.

There are references to an address in rue Drouot in the 9th arrondissement of Paris. In 1901 and early 1902, the company is associated with number

Above: This advert appeared in the October 31, 1902 edition of the Revue de Mécanique. There are references to an address in rue Drouot in the 9th arrondissement of Paris.

16. This is straightforward to explain, as big brother Hughes, or Hugo as he styled himself then, operated his trade in diamonds, gems and pearls from that very location.

In late 1902, the address seems to change to number 19, on the other side of the road.

Hugo was certainly at number 16 in 1903, so I guess the gear-making business grew to the point where it was no longer appropriate to share premises with a diamond merchant. Number 19 rue Drouot is, not entirely coincidentally, also the Paris address quoted by Hinstin Frères.

In France, as in the UK, a company is required to have a registered address, at which it can receive official correspondence. So, maybe someone was operating a bureau service from that building, or maybe a lawyer specialising in company formation had his office there. Without looking too hard, I found several companies all registered at number 19.

Both buildings are still visible today, little changed over the last 120 years, with shops on the ground floor and four stories of apartments above, plus rooms for the less well-heeled under the eaves.

André Citroën would have been very familiar with this part of Paris. His parents settled in the 9th arrondissement when they first moved to France from

Engrenages Citroën II

Poland in 1871 or 1872. The family changed apartments a few times but always stayed in the same neighbourhood. Even when he moved out of the family home to share a bachelor pad with his brother Bernard, they stayed in the 9th, at 21 rue d'Aumale.

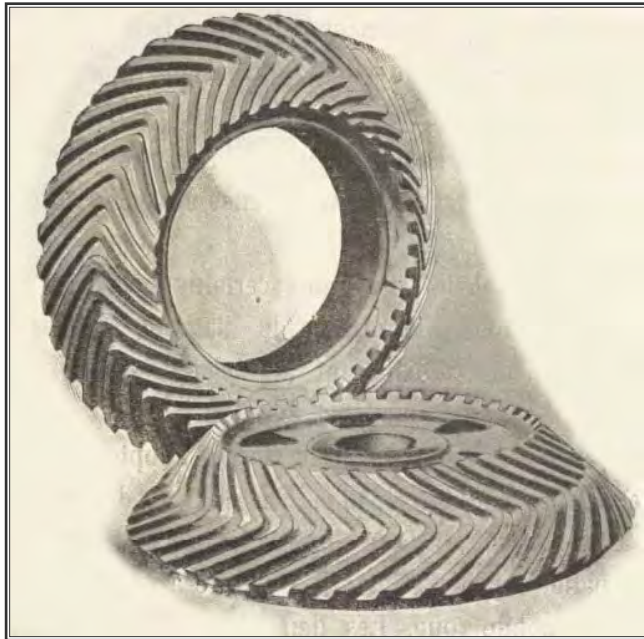
Early Days in Manufacturing

Progress at the Essonnes works must have been swift. There were no machine tools on the market for milling herringbone gears, so Citroën would either have had to build something from scratch or ~ more likely ~ procure something he could modify, to incorporate the mechanism Stanislaw Stückgold had designed.

He would most definitely have done some window shopping at Fenwick Frères, in the 10th arrondissement, as they were agents for several US machine tool makers, including Gleason, mentioned in Part I. Alongside Gleason was another gear machinery specialist, Gould & Eberhard of New Jersey. Both companies had been awarded silver medals at the 1900 Paris Exposition Universelle.

Whatever the source, such a tool would have been pretty substantial. Stückgold's patent shows a gear maybe 30cm across; Citroën's 1902 advert showcases a pair of gears around three metres in diameter.

Also, there's the small mat-



ter of cutting both straight and bevel gears, which would most readily be done by building a machine dedicated to each.

Then there would have been the job of working out the best tooth geometry and integrating that into his production machinery.

Then he had to find the best cutters and the means of grinding them consistently to shape. If they suffered from premature wear, the last grooves to be cut would be a different shape from the first, and, given the scale of the finished product, you'd have to be very confident of success. Scrapping a three metre blank would be a financial disaster.

Being able to manufacture

Les Lampes Hinsjer, ainsi que les Lampes Régina (arc brûlant en vase clos), qui servent à l'éclairage de l'Exposition, sont exposées par MM. Citroën, Henstein et C^{ie}, 19, rue Drouot, à Paris, dont le stand, au Palais de la Métallurgie, contient également des engrenages à chevrons taillés dans la masse du métal au lieu d'être fondus, dont la durée d'usage devient, de ce fait, presque indéfinie; d'où économie très grande.

was only part of the battle. To succeed, Citroën had to sell his products, and at a substantial price. A fledgling company with no track record means he wouldn't have had customers queuing up at his door, at least in the early days. On top of that, his products were largely bespoke, so every order had to be negotiated individually. Selling would have been a full-time job in itself.

Citroën, Hinstin & Cie and Hinstin Frères shared some of their marketing activities. The cutting above shows that Citroën had a stand at the 1904 Northern France Exhibition in Arras, where he showed examples of his gears, but also

some samples of the Hinstins' arc lamps.

Paris

Tenacity and hard work paid off; orders rolled in and the business grew. Feeling too far from the centre of gravity, André Citroën took the opportunity to relocate to Paris.

Around August 1904, Citroën, Hinstin & Cie moved to new premises at 202 rue Faubourg Saint Denis in the 10th arrondissement. At the time, this was a warren of workshops, sandwiched between the sidings of two main line railway stations, the Gare de L'Est and the Gare du Nord. Several other businesses shared the same address; the company rubbed shoulders with a locksmith, a timber merchant/carpenter and a mechanic, plus our friends, Hinstin Frères.

The Hinstins' activities at rue Faubourg weren't limited to electric lights. In the July 1906 edition of L'Auto-Velo, the Situations Vacant columns carried

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Engrenages Citroën II

an advert for a qualified engine test bed technician. Evidently the car building business acquired in 1900 was still going, in one form or other, after the relocation to Paris.

The 1932 Almanach Citroën, published by the factory, provides a potted history of the company. In the first section, it says that when the Faubourg Saint Denis factory opened, the workforce numbered only twelve, with 10 shop-floor workers, a designer and André Citroën himself.

Maurice Koechlin

The eleventh member of the team at Faubourg Saint-Denis was a talented engineer called Maurice Koechlin. [I should add that this not the Maurice Koechlin who worked alongside Gustav Eiffel, but a different chap altogether]. Few biographies of André Citroën even mention Koechlin, and those that do simply refer to him as a draughtsman, but this grossly understates his contribution. In truth, he was for many years, the engineer in chief. Not only did he create the first gear cutting machines, but he ran the whole manufacturing operation.

Born in Mulhouse in 1864, Koechlin suffered an attack of meningitis when he was young that left him profoundly deaf. As a consequence, he was sent to school at the Hugentobler Institute in Lyon, probably the

most advanced establishment for deaf pupils in France at the time. He must have excelled because he went on to secure a place at the École Centrale des Arts et Manufactures in Paris, one of France's highly selective 'grandes écoles', not unlike the École Polytechnique, except with more of a bias towards engineering.

After graduating in 1886, he went on to work extensively in electrical engineering, particularly on tramway systems in France and Switzerland. In 1900, he was involved in the development of fully enclosed arc lamps at the Hinstin Frères factory in Essonnes, upstairs from the workshop André Citroën would soon occupy.

In 1902, he became the first employee of Citroën, Hinstin & Cie. We know André Citroën was gifted as a salesman, organiser, innovator and leader, but unlike, for example Louis Renault, he was not really a hands-on kind of engineer, so it was Koechlin who took the concept André Citroën had seen in Poland and turned it into a working product. He was also the man who designed the bespoke gears the factory produced.

In 1908, he presented a mathematical treatise at a meeting of the Société Industrielle de Mulhouse in which he covered every element of the complex ge-

Paris. — Formation. — Société anonyme dite CITROËN, HINSTIN et Cie, machines à tailler les engrenages à chevrons, 202, fg Saint-Denis. — 20 ans. — 300,000 fr dont 175,000 fr. par la commandite. — 2 déc. 1905. — P. A.

ometry of herringbone gears.

In the same year, Koechlin and his colleague Louis Chartier represented the Citroën company at the Franco-Britannic Exhibition in London.

As far as I know, he remained with André Citroën until 1915, which is where the trail goes cold, though it was reported in 1932 that he had been made a Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur for his services to industry. He passed away on September 3, 1934 in Blanc Mesnil, where he'd made his home after leaving Engrenages Citroën.

With space to expand at rue

Paris. — Modifications aux statuts. — Société CITROËN-HINSTIN et Cie, machines à tailler les engrenages à chevrons, 202 faub. St-Denis. — Par suite de la cession de M. M. Jacques et Georges Hinstin à M. Citroën de tous les droits leur appartenant dans ladite société la raison sociale devient André CITROËN et Cie. — 21 nov. 1906. — A. P.

Left: The announcement, on December 2, 1905 of the formation of SA Citroën, Hinstin et Cie at 202 rue Faubourg Saint-Denis.

Faubourg Saint-Denis, the business prospered. Only four years after it was founded, the company changed its status, becoming a Société Anonyme; the equivalent of a UK PLC or American Corporation, as reported by the Archives Commerciales de la France in December 1905.

A Bientôt Hinstin

A year later, in November 1906, André Citroën bought out the Hinstin brothers, allowing him to shorten the name of his company to just SA André Citroën et Cie.

This change coincided with

Left: By November, 1906 Citroën had bought out the Hinstin brothers and he shortened the company name to simply SA André Citroën.

Below: A press advert from 1906 proudly showing the company as its headline.

ANDRÉ CITROËN & C^{ie}

BUREAUX & ATELIERS : 202, Rue du Faubourg Saint-Denis, PARIS

Téléphone : 443-77 — Télégr. : DRÉTROËN-PARIS

BUREAUX à LONDRES : 19-21, Queen Victoria Street. E. C.

— à COLOGNE : 13, Deutscher Ring.

— à TURIN : 10, Via Pó.




CONSTRUCTION D'ENGRENAGES A "CHEVRONS TAILLÉS"

CYLINDRIQUES & CONIQUES, A CHEVRONS SIMPLES, DOUBLES & MULTIPLES

TAILLÉS D'UN SEUL TRAIT DANS LA MASSE DU MÉTAL

Engrenages Citroën II

Jacques Hinstin becoming Commercial Director at Automobiles Gregoire, so it may well be he wanted to release funds from the gear company to invest in his automotive venture.

Citroën and Hinstin would work together again in the early 1920s, when they formed a joint venture with Adolphe Kegresse to develop and market light-weight tracked vehicles. But that's another story.

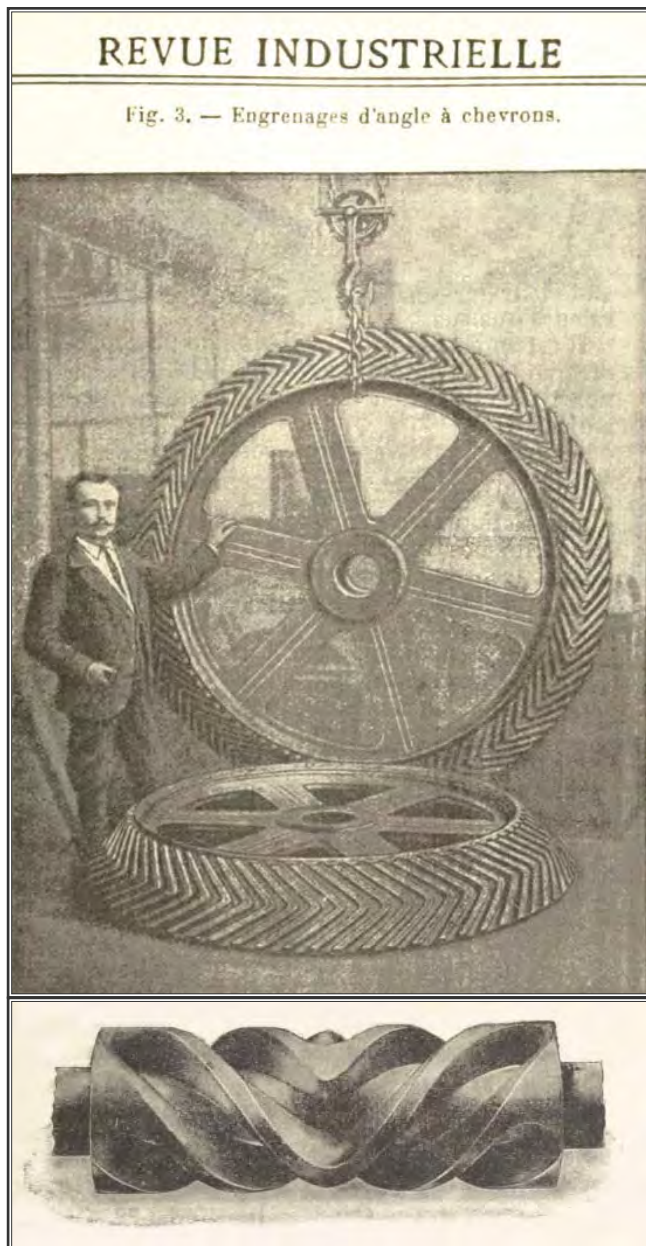
The next adverts to appear in the press had the company name right at the top, displayed with evident pride.

The sales office in Italy must have had a relatively ephemeral existence. This is the only reference I've found to a company address in Turin.

On December 22, 1906, the *Revue Industrielle* ran an article about André Citroën & Cie. Somewhat freely translated, it says this:

It's only during the last 30 years that we've used herringbone gears in large industrial machines and their development has been rapid. These gears allow the continuous transmission of torque through constant mesh, but without the major disadvantage of lateral forces found in [single] helical gears.

Unfortunately, the manufacture of herringbone gears has lacked the precision required. Up to now, they've almost all been cast and then reworked by



hand, which doesn't allow the full benefits to be realised... To achieve optimum performance, herringbone gears have to be machined from solid.

One must come forward to the last few years to see the development of a machine that can cut the both sides of the herringbone tooth in a single pass. Such a device resembles a milling machine but with a unique facility to combine movement of the tool and movement of the gear wheel to cut a chevron-shaped tooth... Monsieur André Citroën, a former student at the École Polytechnique, has perfected machines that can cut both straight and bevel herringbone gears. The precision of these machines allows the manufacture of pinions with a very small number of teeth.

This last point is a very important one. Traditionally, most mills and factories had been driven by water or steam, both of which delivered power at a relatively low speed. However, in the 1900s, industry was rapidly turning to electric motors, and steam turbines were just starting to appear, especially in ships. Charles Parsons' revolutionary Turbinia of 1884 had persuaded a reluctant British Admiralty to adopt turbine power for future warships, and the first merchant vessel to be so equipped was launched in

1901.

Suddenly, the world needed step-down gears capable handling massive power with maximum efficiency, and André Citroën had the perfect answer.

Unlike helical or spur gears, viable herringbone pinions could be made with as few as four teeth. One of these, combined with an eighty tooth gear, provides a 20:1 speed reduction in a compact package. Up until then, to achieve such a reduction without resorting to huge diameter gears meant using two pairs of gears or a relatively inefficient worm drive.

Only Citroën was able to provide this unique solution.

London Calling

As time went on, André Citroën was able to free himself from day to day running of the business, to focus on matters of strategic importance. By 1907, he had recruited a Commercial Director by the name of Victor-Laurent Baudin, who looked after the immediate sales requirements.

Citroën's first foray into sales outside France was to open an office in Queen Victoria Street, London. This early advert carries the post-1906 French name, but within a very short time, a new UK company was formed, The Citroën Gear Company Ltd.

Of course, he could have sim-

Engrenages Citroën II

This early advert carries the post-1906 French name, but within a very short time, a new UK company was formed, The Citroën Gear Company Ltd.

ply recruited someone in London to run the new office, but that was not the Citroën way. His father Levie Barend/Louis Bernard had 13 brothers and sisters, many of whom went on to have a prodigious number of children. In total, André had 93 cousins; a personal diaspora with connections right across Europe, and beyond. One of those cousins was Daniel Metz, the son of his aunt Abigaël Citroën and Jacques Metz, a diamond merchant based in Amsterdam.

Born in 1883, Daniel was only 24 when André Citroën invited him to come to London to run the sales office. In accepting this responsibility, Daniel was following in the footsteps of another cousin, David Citroën, who had left Holland a couple of years earlier to take charge of UK operations for Minerva Motors, a Belgian car manufacturer, founded in 1903 near Antwerp. [The Dutch side of the family was still called Citroën, it was André's father who had adopted the diæresis or tréma, making the family name Citroën, after moving to France. This punctuation mark indicates that the two vowels should be pronounced separately, as in naïve].

We are exhibiting at the ENGINEERING EXHIBITION, OLYMPIA, October 4th to 26th.

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27, Queen Victoria Street, London, E.C.

Ed: Other sources suggest that it was André himself who added the tréma. See Max Lewis' article 'What's in a Name' in 'Front Drive', Vol 46, No 6. Here is a link to it, for those of you new to the magazine. <https://citroenclassic.org.au/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Front-Drive-Vol-46-No-6.pdf>

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Mors

Staying within the family, In August 1900, André's brother Hughes [Hugo] had married Suzanne Sarah Haarbleicher. Her father, a native of Germany but settled in Paris, was a banker by profession, but more significantly for this story, Chairman President of Automobiles Mors. Impressed with his son-

in-law's business acumen and affinity for manufacturing, Haarbleicher asked André to help reorganise Mors, which was by then sustaining a loss and in danger of being liquidated. In 1908, Citroën became Managing Director of Automobiles Mors, a company with a workforce many times larger than his own, but that's another story.

On the Move Again

As sales expanded, space at Faubourg St Denis became increasingly constrained. In his biography of André Citroën, Jacques Wolgensinger talks of the need to juggle deliveries of finished products and arrival of raw materials, to avoid running out of space. Was this the first appearance of 'Just In Time'?

Handling the biggest gears was also a problem, to the extent that on occasion, roof tiles got broken, so tight was the headroom. It was time to find bigger premises.

From mid-1907 onwards, Citroën was dividing his time between Faubourg Saint Denis and Mors, across town at 48 rue du Theatre, a few minutes

from the Eiffel Tower. It was natural for him to look nearby for a new home for his gear business in the same area.

He found just the place on the bank of the Seine, at 31 Quai de Grenelle, in the 15th arrondissement.

In the mid 1800s, this area had been home to a series of a

busy docks. The artificial island, L'Île aux Cygnes had been created in 1827, to better manage river traffic through the area. However, over time, the Canal Saint Denis to the north provided a more direct route into the heart of the city for commercial river traffic, and a lot of freight was transferred to the railway.

At the same time, just a little way back from the river bank, there was a huge factory owned by the Anciens Etablissements Cail. This company, started by Jean-François Cail, had three main lines of business. It made machines for processing sugar cane, it assembled iron sections for road and railway bridges, but most of all, it built steam locomotives. By the time of his death in 1871, his com-



Engrenages Citroën II

pany had sold over 840 around the world.

By the 1890s, the business climate had changed and the company was restructured. Factories were consolidated and production was moved out of Paris. In 1898, the land at Grenelle, amounting to over 27,000m² was sold.

Since then, there had been some development, but there were ample opportunities for more. The plot that Citroën bought was right in the heart of the old Cail factory, where the forge had once stood.

It was perfect, with plenty of room to expand, and blessed with good links by road, rail and river. The metro station just around the corner had only opened a few years earlier, providing links to east and west.

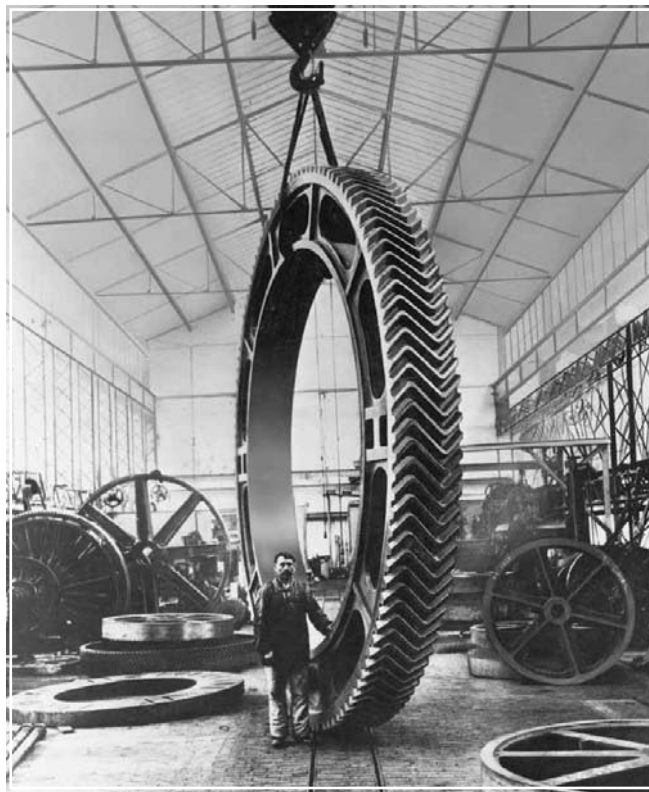
Only a minute or two further away was the Champs de Mars railway station. Originally built to support the great Exposition Universelle of 1867, since 1900 it had become the largest freight terminal in Paris. In particular, it had a large yard devoted to the receipt and distribution of coal, something Citroën would need in abundance to power his factory.

On June 5, 1910 it was reported in the press that building works had commenced. I haven't been able to find out exactly when the move took place, but it was certainly in the

first half of 1911. In June of that year, entries started to appear in the employment section of Paris newspapers for workers at the new site.

One thing we can see straight away, there was enough head-room for the largest gears.

If you look closely you can see that these immense products were made in sections to render them more practical both to make and to transport. In this case there's a horizontal dividing line between upper and lower halves. However, the castings were so arranged that there was no break in the gear teeth themselves.



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Engrenages Citroën II



The photo overleaf shows the scale of operations in the new factory.

Looking in the opposite direction, we can see some of the larger machines at work

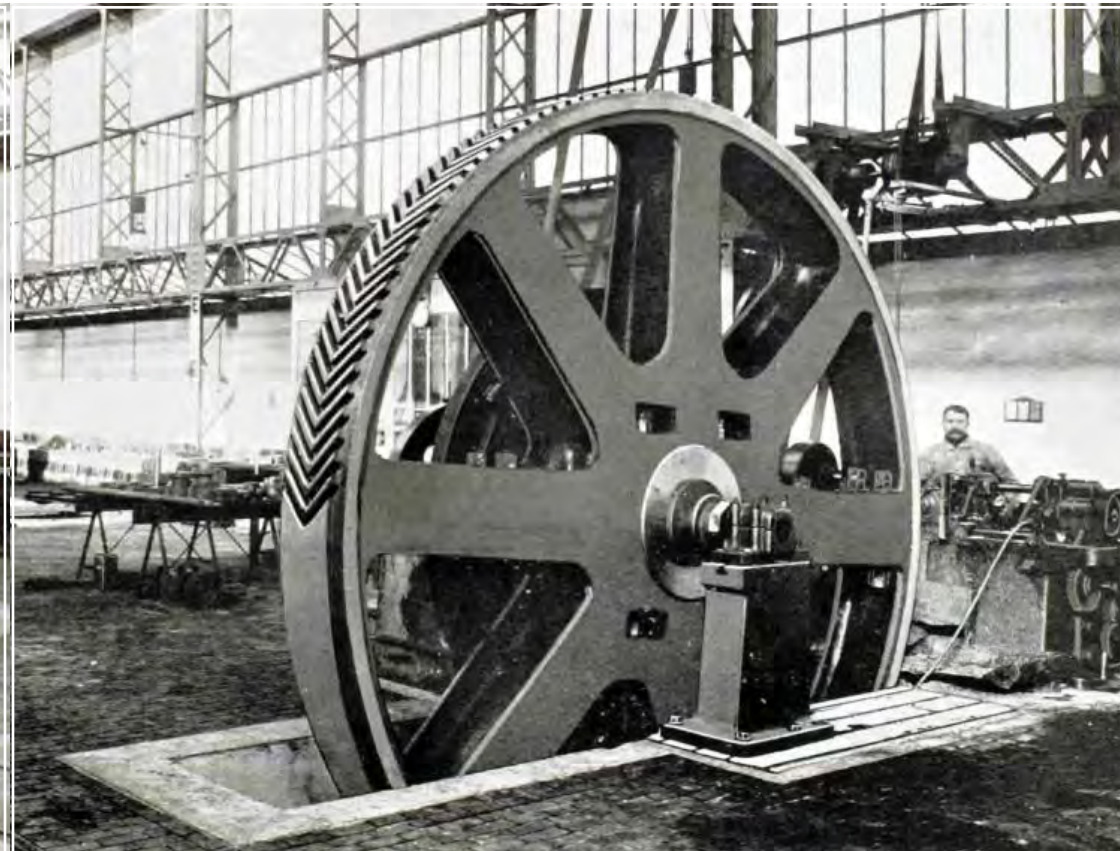
We can see here the principle described in the Stückgold patent. The photo comes from a 1914 catalogue issued in the UK.

The text alongside describes the process like this:

The action of the Citroën gear cutting machine is based on the milling process. An end cutter

formed to the normal tooth contour is used, the main cut being taken in a single pass of the tool. The rounded portion at the apex of the tooth is effected by a second cut... The inclination of the tooth can be chosen at will... we have adopted an angle of 45° for spur gears and 53½° for bevels as the most suitable.

Many of the machines on the shop floor are powered in the traditional way, by flat belts from an overhead shaft, but



this one is electrically driven, to give it the flexibility to swivel around to cut bevel gears of different angles. Electricity was generated on-site by a dynamo driven by a 200horsepower steam engine.

The same catalogue mentions that the factory is equipped with groups of lathes, general machine tools and large and small gear cutting machines, which suggests finished products may have included assemblies, not just the gears them-

selves.

The small gear cutting machines could make examples up to six feet in diameter, while the larger ones had a maximum capacity of 30feet [9.1m]

Andrew Cox

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Traction on the Dirt

This article was written by South Australian CCOCA member Loui Burke. He originally wrote it for 'Floating Power', the magazine of the UK Traction Owner's Club. At the same time, Loui also wrote an abbreviated version for 'Front Drive'. Loui and Helen emigrated to Australia from the UK in 2010, which explains why he wrote for them, and why some of what he has written may not be 'news' for us, in the way it would have been for its original readership.

Loui has previously told the story of their Light 15 in 'Front Drive', Vol 36, No 6, which

can be found here:

<https://citroenclassic.org.au/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Vol-36-No-6-Nov-Dec-2012.pdf>:

FD VOL 36, NO 6

This adventure started after the Australian National Citroën Rally [Cit-In 2015], which was held over the Easter weekend, near Adelaide in South Australia. There were over 80 Citroëns in total from all over Australia, ranging from a 1924 5CV to a 2015 C6. There were around a dozen Traction, including my 1952 Slough

Small Boot with id engine and 4-speed conversion, which I brought with me from the UK, when Helen and I emigrated to Australia in 2010.

It is traditional to have a 'post Cit-In' run which, this year was organised by Liz Pike and John Henderson. It was to be a ten-day journey of 1,800km, heading north to see the magnificent Flinders Ranges and beyond to the edge of the Outback. As I had not travelled that far north before, I was keen to join the group.

I then discovered that various stages of the trip involved a total of 400km of 'dirt roads' [ie no bitumen]. This initially caused me to reconsider going in my Traction, but after talking to Liz and John, who had done the recce earlier, I was convinced that 'she'll be right'. At this stage, Helen decided that she would be returning to Adelaide in her own car, so it would be a solo trip for me!

These dirt roads are not 'off-road', where a 4x4 [or even a 2CV] is more suited, and represent the only way to get between the more remote towns in Australia. Sometimes the bitumen just stops, the road becomes dirt for 10–30km, and then simply reverts to bitumen. The quality of these dirt roads varies enormously depending on how recently they have been 'graded' [literally with a

bulldozer blade to make everything 'flat' again]. There are also major issues around river crossings, which are normally quite uneven, but dry. However, after heavy rain, a flash flood will first make the road impassable and after the water has subsided, the road/river bed will no longer be remotely flat and can be full of obstacles such as trees and large rocks, which have been washed down in the flood water. They will remain like that until the grader returns!

I have had three flat tyres on the Traction, during the last three events, which had all been on bitumen roads, so I was naturally concerned about travelling on dirt roads. I decided to take a spare and a 'spare' spare.

Our intrepid group planned to leave on the Easter Monday, after Cit-In. However, I had a couple of issues with my Traction during the Cit-In event. On Saturday afternoon, when I tried to start the Traction in the hotel car park, I discovered smoke pouring from the starter motor. A quick dismantle of the starter motor in the car park revealed a dead-short to the casing, due to the windings insulation collar having moved. This was quickly removed, fixed, reassembled and back in the car [just] in time for dinner!

The Sunday event was a Motorkhana. This included several events which were timed [ie as



Traction on the Dirt

fast as possible] around varying arrays of traffic cones in a field! As this was the closest I had then been to dirt road conditions, I entered the Traction.

I really enjoyed this and went away feeling confident and excited about our departure on Easter Monday. I stopped to refuel on the way back to the hotel, to be ready for the next day. As I took off the filler cap, I noticed that the filler neck had 'dropped' and after a quick inspection underneath, I realised that one of the petrol tank retaining straps had snapped.

Back to the hotel carpark, where I temporarily lashed up the petrol tank with rope. This was now also leaking as the filler neck had cracked when the tank

dropped. This temporary repair was achieved again [just] in time for the Sunday formal dinner.

By this time Helen, and several others, were questioning my plan to take my Traction on the up-coming journey. Some went so far as to question my sanity! However, I had a cunning plan. One of the local club members had kindly offered his workshop to anyone needing it over the event, and I planned to make a new strap before continuing on to join the rest of the group later that day.

After an apprehensive night's sleep, I awoke to heavy rain and the prospect of a workshop day. Thanks to Brian Woodcock for use of his very well-equipped workshop and Rolf Breyer for



his able assistance in draining and removing the tank, soldering up the cracked neck, grinding off the support brackets, fabricating new straps and riveting them back into place. Fortunately, the first night's stop was only a couple of hours away, so I was able to arrive again [just] in time for dinner [can you see a pattern emerging here?].

Helen was now safely back in Adelaide and not convinced the Traction would survive the next 10 days [Oh ye of little faith].

Tuesday morning dawned sunny and warm, with me feeling full of confidence again, and our intrepid group of 23 cars [My Traction, three Ds, nine 2CVs, a CX, C4, C5 plus a couple of 'others'] set off to begin

the adventure.

The first day was 440km through the beautiful Flinders Ranges, with the only dirt road being the last 15km from the highway to the old sheep station at Beltana, where we were to stay the night. This 15km was the first proper dirt driving I have done. Initially I was quite slow and cautious [only upto 40kph] because of the dust and the corrugations across the road, which just appear for a while then just disappear again. The advice I had been given is keep back at least 100metres from the car in front, to let the dust settle again, avoid the bigger rocks, don't drive too slowly over the corrugations, and use both sides of the road [ie which-



Traction on the Dirt

ever is smoothest!]. Remember that Australian roads are very empty and normally very straight, so visibility [apart from dust] is normally excellent.

By the time I arrived at Belтана, the sun was going down and I was feeling pretty good. The Traction was fine. No starting issues and the petrol tank was secure and no longer leaking. This time I was ready well before dinner, and had a chance to watch the fabulous sunset with a good glass of Australian red wine in hand. The only casualty en route had been an almost new Renault which had ruined one of its low profile tyres on the dirt. Was this an omen for me?

The next couple of days were uneventful, with great weather and jaw dropping scenery but no more dirt, until we headed

off the highway to the ghost town of Farina. This was inhabited until 1967 when the railway was diverted and the town literally died [apart from one lovely old lady who still has an art gallery there!]. We all stopped to explore and I got distracted in the art gallery.

When I re-emerged, I discovered everyone else had departed, leaving me and my Traction alone in a ruined village, on a dirt road, well away from anywhere and with no phone signal. Was I apprehensive when I got back to start the car? No... of course not!!

Next day, we were back onto the highway to Marree, which was our furthest point north in South Australia. [Look for it on Google Maps!]. This town was reached by the original 'Ghan' railway in 1884 and until its ex-

tension to Oodnadatta in 1891 was the end of the line. The 'new' 'Ghan' railway bypasses Marree, but the town still has a population of a couple of hundred people. It is literally the beginning of the Australian Outback, where you do not go without some serious planning and preparation [ie next year in the 2CV which I have just bought ~ another story coming up!].

The road to Marree had about 40km of dirt. There was no alternative to this if you want to get to Marree. If it has been raining, the road turns to mud, so you either wait or drive a 4x4. Fortunately, it was dry, so off we went. My earlier tastes of dirt driving had allowed me to be more relaxed and confident and my speed increased to suit the conditions. Generally the major dirt roads [ie between towns] are actually pretty good. Speeds of up to 85kph seemed to suit the Traction best [four-speed ID] on the dirt, with 100–110kph on the bitumen being very comfortable.

After Marree, the next couple of days were in Arkaroola, but to get there was 130km of dirt. This time, the dirt roads were not quite as good as the 'main' road to Marree, but my confidence, and tyres, all seemed to be doing well, so off we went again in loose convoy.

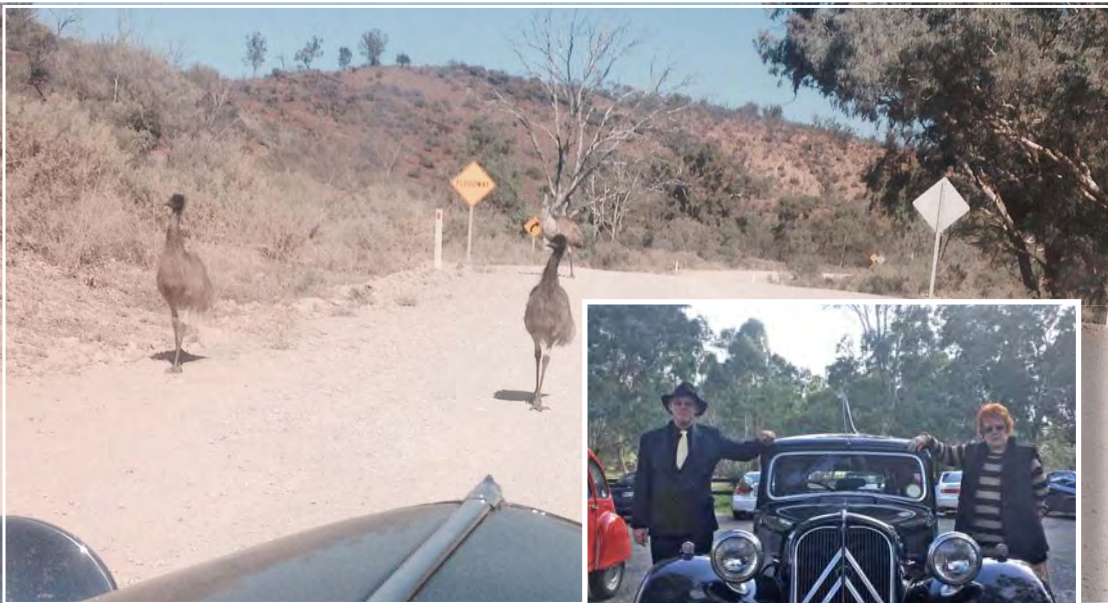
As I travelled I became so very impressed with the Traction's

ability to handle the rough surfaces. It then dawned on me that when André's team designed the car in the early 1930s virtually all roads, even in Europe, were like this. The ride quality was remarkably smooth, with only minimal vibration coming through the steering. There was almost nothing felt through the seat. I was having a ball! I did feel a little guilty about the continuous 'clattering' from under the car, due to smaller loose stones being thrown up against the underside [this is not a trip to be considered for a concours vehicle!!]. On arrival, a check over of the car proved uneventful, but boy what an amazing amount of dust was in, on and under the car!

Arkaroola is one of the most spectacular places I have ever visited, and I was glad we had two nights there. It allowed us to do the 4x4 Ridge Top Tour [as passengers in the resort's Land Cruisers with their drivers]. I have never done true off-roading before, and I was simply amazed what these vehicles could climb and descend ~ 45° 'tracks' that a bulldozer had recently regraded ~ which contained large rocks and loose earth. The views from the three different peaks were truly outstanding, as was the crystal clear night sky, with more stars than I have ever seen before. That's why they built an Observatory there!



Traction on the Dirt



On the 130km return from Arkaroola, I was now completely at ease with dirt driving. That particular part of the journey was just perfect. The day was sunny and 25°. The car was running beautifully and I passed two of the 2CVs, the drivers of which were being more conservative in their approach to the dirt. On some sections of the good dirt a speed of 85kph was not unkind to the car or foolhardy and I did the total journey in two hours [ie averaging 65kph].

There are always unexpected hazards to be aware of on these [or any] Australian roads. On this return journey I had to stop completely to let a family of emu cross the road, drive through a swarm of locusts and

on two separate occasions, I had to brake for kangaroos which just appear from the side of the road, bound across without looking and continue, oblivious of what might have been. One of the 2CVs lost a headlight as a kangaroo clipped the bonnet on its way across the road.

After returning onto normal bitumen road we had another four days to round off a fantastic trip. We had been very lucky with the weather, as there was heavy rain two days after we finished the trip and two sections of the roads we had travelled on were flooded and completely impassable to anyone.



During the trip I learnt a lot about the Traction's roots and just how accomplished the Traction still is today, let alone when it was launched in 1934.

In the end, I had no further mechanical issues with the car, got 8.1L/100km average [SU Carburettor], no tyre damage [the Renault destroyed a second low profile tyre]. There were inevitably some small stone chips on the body [easily fixed with touch up paint], but the dust removal and cleaning took a full day.

Did I enjoy the trip? It was fantastic!

Would I do dirt roads again? Most definitely!

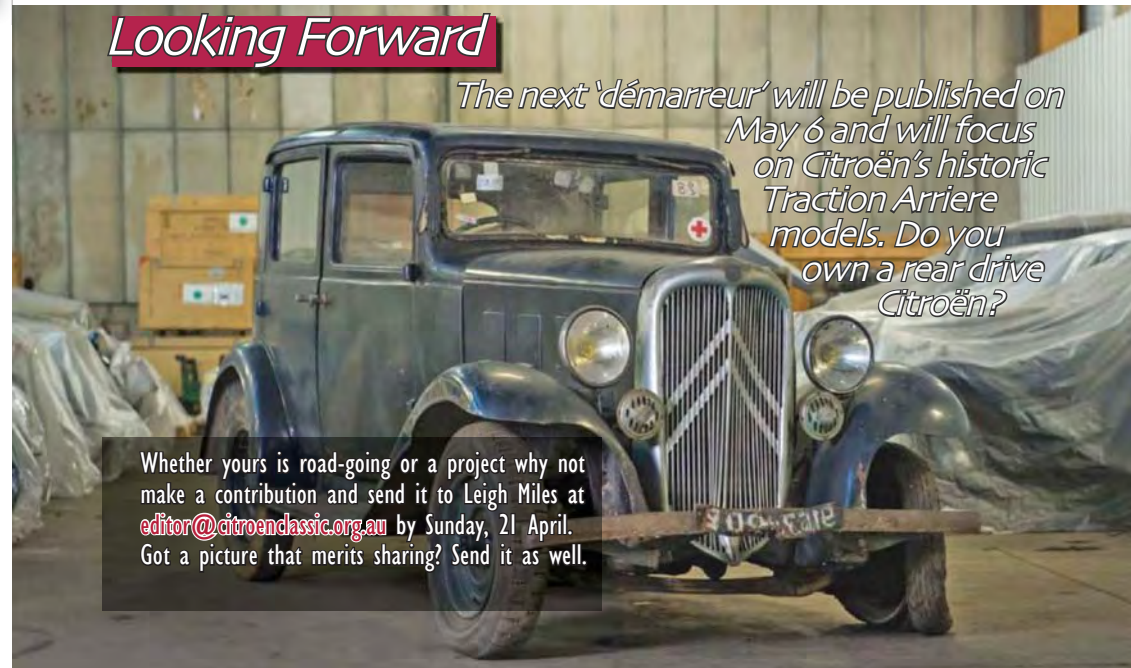
Is the Traction a wonderful car? Of course!

Loui Burke.

Looking Forward

The next 'démarréur' will be published on May 6 and will focus on Citroën's historic Traction Arrière models. Do you own a rear drive Citroën?

Whether yours is road-going or a project why not make a contribution and send it to Leigh Miles at editor@citroenclassic.org.au by Sunday, 21 April. Got a picture that merits sharing? Send it as well.



Totally Traction

There has been progress with my Normale's engine but it is not yet back on the road. The project is moving forward even if the car is not.

No serious surprises have surfaced, I just need to take care not to make any unrecoverable mistakes and to deal with issues I discover along the way. I'm trying to follow the principle of 'if it ain't broke don't fix it' ~ partly to save time and money but mainly because I'm lazy. Another consideration is space ~ the more things are dismantled, the more space they take up and the less space I have to work.

And so I'm quite pleased that things are going back together now and there's more room to move.

The resultant engine will be a bit of a Frankenstein ~ no worse than anyone else has done ~ Perfo head and flywheel but the bottom half including the crankshaft is ID19.

The advantage of the ID 19

is that the crankshaft uses shell bearings and has better lubrication. The downside is that the flywheel doesn't attach to the crankshaft the same way and is slightly closer to the engine. I was alerted to this by Philippe Alison and Peter Simper.

It's not a big issue ~ but the options need to be considered and executed carefully.

The Perfo crankshaft is fitted with six M8 studs onto which the flywheel is mounted. A locking plate fits over the nuts so that the tabs can be bent upwards to stop the nuts undoing. The locking plate also retains the spigot bearing in the centre of the crankshaft.

The ID 19 engine has six M10 tapped holes in the end of the

crankshaft. The pitch circle diameter [PCD] of the holes is the same and crucially, so is the spacing ~ they are not equidistant. One hole is shifted by a few millimetres to ensure the flywheel always goes back in the same orientation. This would be important if the flywheel and crankshaft were balanced together ~ mine have never met.

The holes being in the same place, the first task is to drill out the 8mm holes to 10mm. But it's not quite as simple as that because the ID crankshaft is fitted with a 10mm dowel pin between two of the threaded holes. The choices are to either remove the dowel pin from the crankshaft or to drill a hole in the flywheel.

There is a rebate in the flywheel ~ same for both types ~ which located the flywheel on the crankshaft flange. I don't like the idea of the flywheel being located radially solely on the threads of the bolts. The Perfo crankshaft does not have the dowel pin but its studs have 8mm diameter plain shanks which extend into the flywheel, so the threads don't touch it.

On the ID crankshaft the dowel pin performs this function allowing standard fine pitch 10mm bolts with no plain shank to be used. I enquired into getting some special bolts made with a plain shank ~ not cheap. I have chosen to drill the hole in the flywheel for the dowel.

I can open up the bolt holes from 8mm to 10mm in my garage, but I am not equipped for precision drilling of a new dowel pin hole. I have asked a local machine shop, that works on engines, to modify the flywheel, opening up the six holes and adding a seventh for the dowel pin.

There is a 5mm gap between the flywheel and the Perfo engine, but the ID crankshaft is 5mm shorter than the Perfo's ~ goodbye gap! There may also be a problem with the starter motor meshing. I have asked the machine shop to shave 2mm off the back of the flywheel which will make it about 0.6kg lighter. I didn't weigh it but it's not a sig-

Cracked exhaust valve.



Old and new exhaust valves.



Totally Traction

nificant amount and I have asked the machine shop to check the balance afterwards.

I have also asked them to make a 2mm thick spacer to fit between the flywheel and the crankshaft. I will use 20mm long



M10x1.25 bolts with this spacer. This will mean the gap will be 4mm which is good enough. I may still have to set the starter motor position 3mm further out than normal. I won't know that until I get the flywheel back.

Fun fact ~ flywheels are generally attached to crankshafts using fine thread bolts ~ that's another thing I have learnt on this project.

I am keen that any modifications I make to the flywheel are reversible ~ in case I rebuild the original engine. If I want to use this flywheel on a Perfo crankshaft I will need to sleeve the

Inset: A modern valve stem seal.

Left: Old and new valve, in right and wrong positions.

Below: The white spirit valve leak test.

Right: ID 19 auxiliary drive splines

holes.

Some years ago I fitted a diaphragm clutch which uses an adapter ring bolted to the flywheel. The M6x16 socket head cap screws that came with the clutch kit to hold the pressure plate to the adaptor ring seem to be made of cheese. Five of the six came off OK, but of course the sixth put up a fight as its socket became more round than hexagonal, so I am replacing them with high tensile bolts ~ not because of the tensile load, but because it's a real pain when the socket gets chewed up.

The clutch plates and release bearing are as good as new and are going back in untouched.

When I took the head off, my intention was just to clean off

the soot from the combustion chambers and refit it. The good news is that there is no sign of any valve seat recession. I run ordinary unleaded and more recently E10 and I sometimes add an additive. The head does not have hardened valve seats and, on this evidence, I see no reason to change that.

Less good news is that one of the exhaust valves looked to have been eroded, so I removed it and found it had a crack growing from the edge. I assume it was running hot for some reason.

Since I have never previously removed the head, I have no idea if this is a recent occurrence which is progressing rapidly or something that has been like that for years. I do know that



Totally Traction

I do not want a lump to drop off and cause havoc with the piston and liner and so it has, of course, been replaced with a new valve.

The other valves showed no such damage, but I took them all out and lapped them in and put them back whence they came. There was a little pitting on a couple of the other exhaust valves. A quick leak test filling the combustion chambers with white spirit showed a little more lapping was needed, which I did. There will be a little more compression now than there was before.

With all the valves out, I could also pay attention to the valve stem seals. Until now I wasn't sure if it even had any fitted, although I have not seen any signs

of a problem in that regard.

Engines made before October 1950 and after December 1954 only have stem seals fitted to the inlet valves. Between these dates they were also fitted to the exhaust valves. Why the change? No idea. And what do they actually do? I'm not quite sure about that either.

My previous experience with valve stem seals relates to more modern engines where the seal fits around the top of the valve guide and does not move with the valve. They do actually provide a seal between the moving valve and the static guide. I'll be changing them on my son's Scimitar and my own DS soon, as there's a fair bit of smelly blue smoke coming out the back of both of them.

**Left to right:
The flywheel.
Perfo crankshaft
flange.
Perfo auxiliary
drive, Oldham
coupling.
The head, back
in place.**



But on the Traction, the seals are much simpler ~ plain square section O-rings fitted to the valve stems and not connected to the valve guide.

When I removed my valve springs, I found the seals were in good condition but fitted to the plain section of the valve stem. This is not where they are designed to be fitted. They should be within the valve spring cap, just under the collets. Frankly I struggle to see how much sealing they do in either position.

Maybe they are intended to stop oil that collects around the collet from dribbling down the valve stem. They weren't doing that on my engine and it didn't seem to miss them. Are they supposed to function when the engine is running? I've tried to

imagine how oil drops behave with the valve bumping up and down 25 times a second ~ or are these seals just supposed to stop oil dribbling down the valve stem when the engine is stopped? In which case why would they not be fitted to all the valves on all the engines?

I consulted with Martin de Little, who has recently cured his Traction of its smoking habit. In his case, his seals were cracked and broken and fitted in the wrong place. Fitting new seals in the right place has cured the problem. So, despite my scepticism, they do seem to do something useful when fitted in the right place.

What did I do? I fitted the new seals in the right place and refitted the old seals in the

Totally Traction

wrong place.

I have chosen to fit the head using new, but original type studs. I could have used bolts. John Moon drew my attention to Roger Williams' article in a previous 'Floating Power' recommending Unbrako high tensile socket head bolts and deeper tapped holes to increase the compression load on the head gasket. This stems from a concern that modern gaskets, being harder than the originals need to be tightened down harder. Before the big ends started knocking, my engine was running without any head gasket problems and it had original studs and a modern gasket. I have chosen to put it back together that way ~ and we'll see what happens. I did make sure I had screwed the studs to the full depth of their threads. I noted, as well, Mark Harding's advice on Facebook to use a smear of Wellseal sealant on the gasket, and I've done that.

I have to say the cylinder head, with both manifolds fitted is quite heavy, and I was very grateful that I had an engine hoist.

While I'm waiting for the flywheel to come back from the machinist, I have the lovely task of cleaning up the bell housing and gearbox, which are filthy. I will need to swap the auxiliary belt drive shaft for one with a splined drive instead of the Perfo's Oldham coupling type.

The filthy bell housing, which needs a thorough cleaning.



Andy Burnett included one of these with the engine. The gearbox output seals will be replaced, and I hope that, together with new gaskets, will reduce the oil drips.

I am grateful for the advice from Andy Burnett and Philippe, Peter, John and Martin as I pursue this adventure. Progress is being made and I may get the car back on the road by Christmas ~ if not it should be before the New Year. [Ed. This article was written by Chris in December, 2023. An update on when his car will make it back on the road next time.]
Chris Bailey.

[Not a] Member's Model: Big 15

Here is some news for you! Not every Traction owner is a member of CCOCA. Who knew?

Roger Thiedeman, who has provided information for our magazine previously, passed on to me the magazine of the Vintage Car Club of Queensland. While the magazine might have the uninspiring title of 'The Vintage Car', its sub-heading is 'A well-oiled rag from the Vintage Car Club of Queensland'. Very clever, in my opinion.

But within the pages of the January, 2024 edition Roger had found a Traction article from a member of that Club: Peter Keys. Despite owning a Big 15, Peter is not a member of CCOCA!

The article is clearly written for an audience of Citroën novices, but I decided to leave the article pretty much as Peter wrote it.

André Citroën enjoyed a privileged childhood as



[Not a] Member's Model: Big 15

the son of a prosperous Jewish immigrant in Paris during the late 19th century. His me-



teoric career began with the manufacture of helical gears, followed by the production of munitions during World War I. His achievements in the 1920s as a motor magnate were prodigious, earning him the reputation of the 'Henry Ford of France'.

Sadly, André Citroën's story came to an abrupt end during the Great Depression of the 1930s.

After launching his most famous model ~ the revolution-



ary Traction Avant ~ the company went bankrupt and André Citroën died soon after, leaving huge debts.

Citroën's mastery of salesmanship and publicity combined with his appetite for risk-taking helped make him an international celebrity. The company survived with funding from the Michelin Tyre Company and a new model ~ the revolutionary front-wheel drive Traction Avant.

It was created by a relatively unknown aeronautic engineer, Andre Lefebvre, and sculptural designer, Flaminio Bertoni. Features included independent front suspension, four-wheel hydraulic brakes and a monocoque chassis. Production commenced in 1934 and continued until 1956.

Fast forward to 2019...

After admiring the distinctive body lines and intriguing history of the Traction Avant for many years, I decided to indulge my passion and buy my very own piece of history. When I heard of a 'Big 15' for sale from a renowned Citroën collector at Gayndah, four hours' drive from Brisbane, I had just had to go and check it out. Full of anticipation, I left with fellow club member, David Fryer. On arrival, I immediately fell in love with the car, but it would take another five months before the sale was finally agreed.

Given the fact that the car had not been used for a long time, it was decided to collect it using a tandem trailer, again with David. It was an uneventful exercise.

My Big 15 was rust-free and very original, which is hardly surprising given the low mileage.

It also has an interesting history. The original owner ~ the CEO of Chubb Security in Bangkok ~ imported the car from England in 1951. [Citroën had a UK factory in Slough at the time.]

The paperwork included details of the second owner: a Chinese gem dealer in Bangkok, and he confirmed the unusually low mileage. He told me that he feared damaging the body panels in the heavy Bangkok traffic, so he rarely took it out.

After years of polishing, the original silver paint had worn thin in places, particularly on the outer edges of the mudguards. I decided to repaint them using an original Citroën colour, and the finished effect was very pleasing.

I enjoyed driving the Big 15, but decided to sell, for no good reason really. I replaced it with the smaller Light Fifteen. The condition isn't as good, but it's more nimble in the busy Brisbane traffic.

A Citroën tragic? You bet!
Peter Keys.

Momentum Memorandum

Momentum Memorandum:
Roughly translated from Latin
to mécano-speak : « Don't for-
get the bloody handbrake »]

Voisins Vendéens : Un Visiteur en Twingo.

Le 15 mars 2024 : « Beware
the ides of March » ~ attribut-
ed to soothsayer Spurinna, [un-
successfully] life-coaching Julius
Caesar on this day in 44BC...

« Remember to adjust your
handbrake if your 2CV has a
centrifugal clutch » Citroënist
and engineering legend Michael

Pyper esquire, Bunbury WA,
December 2023.

Deux-Chevaux Moquette La
Coquette takes centre-stage
this month, giving Papybus a
well-deserved break. Well, al-
most. Moquette receives a visit
from an early-model nineties
Renault Twingo ; was that car
the Deuche's spiritual succes-
sor? The Twingo driver [Vois-
in Vendéen Yvonnick, who
featured with his Traction in
last month's story] shares his
thoughts on 2024's electric ve-
hicle French government subsi-
dies. With a grandkid and a bit
of Vendéen springtime flora and
fauna... pour la bonne mesure.

Bonjour les amis Citroën-
nistes des Antipodes.

Owners of elderly Deux-
Chevaux will know the impor-
tance of maintaining a well-ad-
justed handbrake.

The technically-minded mem-
bers of our readership will be
able to explain the whys and
wherefores of Citroën's prefer-
ence for parking brakes which,
on many models, operate on the
front wheels ; the joys of
handbrake-turns are denied to
owners of two-pots, and vari-
ous other Citro-types.

If you are the lucky proprie-
tor of a 2CV with the optional
centrifugal clutch, then an effec-
tive handbrake is even more in-
dispensable, because leaving the
parked car in gear provides no
additional immobilisation at all.



And so, yesterday morn-
ing when I'd backed Moquette
La Deux-Chevaux Coquette
out of her garage and onto
our downward-sloping, wa-
terlogged lawn, I was careful
to clunk the steering-locked
wheels at an angle which would
leave the little car stranded
across the slope, rather than at
its lower extremity which cul-
minates in a stonebuilt bread-
oven, built just after La Révolu-
tion.

**In order of age:
fallen oak tree
250; Moquette 52;
Paul 5; optical
fibre broadband
3weeks. The fall-
ing oak did not
break the cable.**

I was ~ with mild paranoia ~
placing a wine-bottle-sized log
under one of Moquette's front
wheels, when I heard the rat-
tle of the timing chain on Yvon-
nick's Renault Twingo approach-
ing down the lane, then pausing
to examine and avoid the upper
branches of the fallen oak tree.

I know that he's come to col-
lect a copy of last month's 'dé-
marreur' article, which I got
printed off on glossy paper for
him in Chantonay yesterday. I



Momentum Memorandum



English practice with his remnant Scottish rrr's.

« Ah, mon ami, you too have lost un chêne, an oak tree... Quercus Robur in Latin ! That one would have been a sapling when Napoléon ordered the building of La Roche sur Yon, capital of Vendée, using the Roman city grid-pattern... it would have witnessed the returning soldiers of the Great War, and the home-coming of prisoners of World War Two... How many storms has it resisted in its lifetime ? »

I tell him that this particular bi-centenarian tree had been suffering since the heatwave and drought of 2003. For the past twenty years, its expiring limbs have been a haven for woodpeckers, jays and climbing ivy with its store of winter berries ; the evergreen ivy would have contributed to its eventual, and literal, downfall two weeks ago.

He pauses, noticing the expanse of dandelions in our field ; they have opened in the morning sunshine. I read his thoughts, and reply:

« Oui, mon ami. Le printemps jaune ; yellow spring of celandines, primroses and that brief explosion of dandelions. Followed by le printemps blanc, as the blackthorn, l'épine noire, blossoms. Then le printemps vert when the leaves burst through... it will all happen so swiftly now . »

also suspect that we will start off by nattering about the season, then, comme d'habitude, and with Yvonnick's encyclopaedic knowledge of nature, ecology and so many other things, we will go on to explore a plethora of conversational conundrums.

Half a minute later, he is standing on the driveway in gumboots and a woolly hat, closing the Bordeaux-coloured driver's door and eager to do his weekly

There is no lower age limit for learning proper application of handbrake. Edna May the GSA spotters might notice her keeping dry in the background.



Pneumatiques et pissenlits.

By the time they flower, the leaves are becoming rather too bitter to add to a salad.

A Dyane with the limb-losing pin parasol. The last time this tree lost a bough was in 1923, according to neighbour Béberte. She was born 10 years later, and her parents remembered the crashing sound when it fell one stormy March night.

Our visitor adds :

« The ground is so wet, and the storm two weeks ago was so violent. You have not been the only one to lose a tree ; even the ancient pin parasol up at La Raudière lost a big branch. »

He spots the log under Mogette's Michelin.

« I see you do not trust your... handbrake ! »

A wren offers its strident, springtime stanza.

« Un troglodyte, Yvonnick. The smallest garden bird with



Momentum Memorandum

the loudest song ! »

We exchange more chit-chat about the coming of spring ; the build-up of our birdsong dawn chorus as blackbirds, wrens and other avian fauna start to make statements of territory.

I place a couple of sun-worn camping chairs behind Edna May the GSA in her south-facing garage. We watch blue-tits coming and going in and out of the holes between the limestone wall and the oak cladding opposite.

« Oui, mon ami. Sprrring will now gather pace faster than your Deux-Chevaux if you forget to fix that handbrake properly. »

We laugh, I tell him I admire his bravery for parking down-slope of La Deuche. He discards his hat.

As we sit in the welcome sunshine, I ask him to update me about the French state subsidies designed to stimulate electric vehicle sales amongst les classes

populaires.

He tells me that, since our conversation in February, la situation a évolué...

« You see, mon ami, it was announced by the previous government in December that eligible persons would be able to obtain an electric car for just one hundred Euros per month... They called it Le Leasing Social... »

I say that Le Leasing Social had a faux-bilingual, Macronesque ring to it. Did it sound too good to be true ?

Yvonnick explains some of the terms and conditions...

« Well, the original offer, when launched last December was supposed to be for 20 or 25,000 véhicules. It involved partnerships with the State, with credit companies and car manufacturers. The small print was that you needed to have a personal taxable income of less than €15,400, live 15kilomètres or more from your place of work, or use your car for 8,000 kilometres per year for professional purposes. Thus it could be considered as a redistributionist fiscal policy for low-earners... »

« ...or perhaps for higher earners with efficient accounting practices ? », I offer.

He notes the raised eyebrow, pauses, and watches for a moment the mésanges-bleues doing their nest-building duties in

the wall opposite.

« Oh, and only certain véhicules could be purchased... only ones made in... France or Europe. I think the original text did not stipulate this, but by the time it was passed into law, the... correction... had been made. »

« A sort of disguised protectionism ? » I enquire, thinking about the Chinese rechargeable SUV we'd hired for a few days back in November at Perth airport.

« Perhaps so, cher ami. I suppose your Australian friends would find this promise of cut-price crédit, of state intervention quite... curious ? In French we call it a coup de

pouce, literally a push with the thumb. I think you would say in English a helping hand... You know, it was intended to be one of those win-win stimulus packages to create employment in the car industry, and at the same time to push the idea of green credentials. The offer was over-subscribed when it went live on the first of January. More than 97,000 applications in spite of the paperwork ! »

I ask how the government reacted.

« You know of course that we got a new Prime Minister in January. It is customary in our system for a Président to wear out several Premier Ministres. The new one is the youngest in

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Momentum Memorandum

France's recent history! When Gabriel Attal replaced Elisabeth Borne, one of the first things he did was to instruct the transport minister to suspend the deal. This was done quite cleverly. You know how in France, complexité is seen as a qualité, not as a... fault! »

I look across at Yvonnick's Twingo, parked just behind Moquette, briefly reflecting on a pre-Powerpoint slideshow I'd given at a CCOCA meeting in Melbourne in 1997. The subject was the first wave of « complex » state subsidies which had resulted in booming sales for the diminutive, smiley frog-faced Renault. And in the compulsory scrapping of road-worthy older cars. One of the Victorian members present had remarked « The lunatics truly are running the asylum »...

« I see you looking at La Twingo! Yes, mon ami! What a success story! Perhaps the true successor of the Deuche? It even smiled in that Froggy way, just like a 2CV! Renault made an economy car of true character and charm did they not? You could even fold the seats to make a double camping bed! »

We leave that debate for another day, and he concludes his explanation of Le Leasing Social.

« Well, Attal and his new team announced on the 14th of February that the offer was over-subscribed, but that the

good news was that twice the original number of electric véhicules would be subsidised. Fifty thousand! So a sort-of compromise, satisfying more than half of the applicants by supplying twice as many cars as originally planned. And... like scheming politicians everywhere, they gave the promise of more subsidies to come! Possibly it is no coincidence that the electric... French!... Renault 5 is due for launch in 2024, and it is rumoured to be a potential... how do you say... game-changer? It will be built in the north of France, in Douai. How ironic

Does that Froggy face seem familiar?



that the factory should be sited in the old coalfields; perhaps a symbol of transition from fossil-fuels? »

« Yes, Yvonnick. Well done! Game-changer indeed! As you probably know, Australia has an... interesting... relationship with coal. Did I hear Le Président refer to this car subsidy thing as La Transition Énergétique à La Française recently? And how much will this cost the French taxpayer? »

« I am sure Monsieur Google would inform us of that! In any case, I have come here to talk about trees, rather than tax! »

He says with a smile.

We walk towards the house to pick up the 'démarrateur' article and for a pre-lunchtime Muscadet, then to talk about hedgerows, ancient oak trees, and even-more-ancient pilgrimage paths...

« I will give you the phone number of my friend with the big chainsaw, mon ami. The logs from your vénérable oak tree might as well release that captured carbon and keep you warm next winter! »

On the way to the kitchen door, we walk past Papybus, whose five doors are wide open



Momentum Memorandum

for a dry-day airing. A starling named Marlin busks his golden oriole impression ; a cheeky robin is gleaming a late-morning brunch of baguette crumbs from the front passenger seat, which is in rear-facing captain's chair configuration.

« Un rouge-gorge ! In English a robin, non ? I see you have been pic-nicking in Le Papybus again ! By the way, did you tell our amis australiens yet about the omnibus connection with Nantes ? »

I reply : « Pas encore, mon ami. But I will. »

Stay tuned , amis des antipodes, for our next Voisins Ven-

déens tale, as the cuckoo arrives, the laneways hopefully dry out and when Citroëns various take us to discover the growing popularity of our local pilgrim walkways.

A popularity which is gaining momentum like a downhill Deuche with a slack handbrake and an absent, wine-bottled oak log.

Alan Brown
March 2024

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The C8 scores plenty of points on the accessibility scoresheet. Even after grandkids have finally stuffed up the one remaining electric door mechanism.



In the Limelight

Fantômas

In 1911, French writers Marcel Allain and Pierre Souvestre created a super-villain, who became a phenomenon in literature, comics and film ~ Fantômas ~ a master of disguise, thief, killer and head of his own network of criminals. Over the last century, more films, comics, books and television series were produced, leading up the the hugely popular reboot of the character in the 1960s.



FANTOMAS



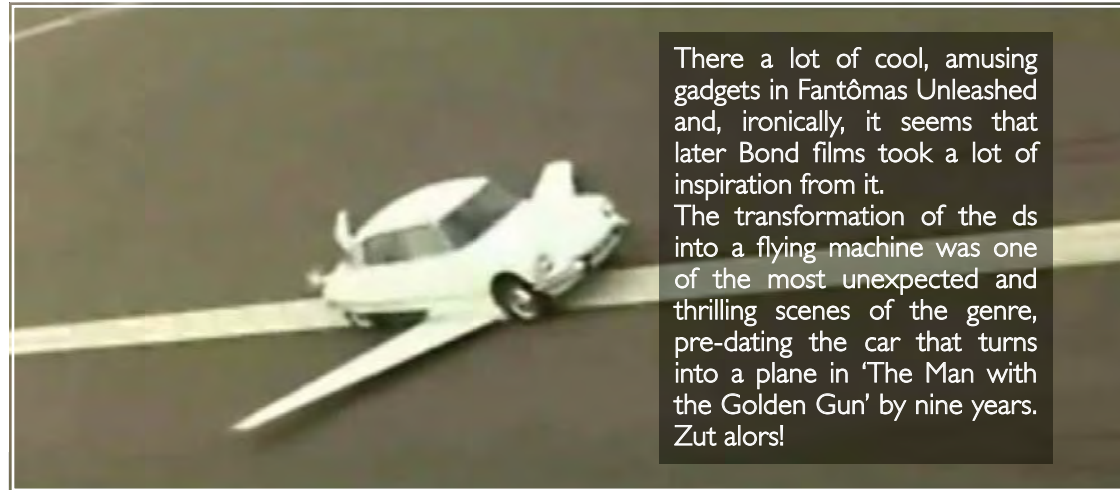
In the Limelight

After the success of the first James Bond film 'Dr No', followed by 'From Russia with Love' director André Hunebelle, writers Jean Halain and Pierre Foucaud and composer Michel Mague created, between

1964 and 1967, what would become three of France's biggest box office hits ~ a humorous send-up of the Bond pictures.

The heartthrob, Jean Marais, plays two roles ~ Fantômas, usually wearing a blue mask and delivering a signature slow, evil, but genuinely amused laugh, and the 'hero', Jérôme Fandor, a Bond-like journalist in pursuit of Fantômas and the spectacular stories about the arch villain for his newspaper.

Comedic genius Louis De Funès steals the show




There a lot of cool, amusing gadgets in *Fantômas Unleashed* and, ironically, it seems that later Bond films took a lot of inspiration from it. The transformation of the ds into a flying machine was one of the most unexpected and thrilling scenes of the genre, pre-dating the car that turns into a plane in 'The Man with the Golden Gun' by nine years. Zut alors!

as inept and bumbling Police Commissaire Juve, who has also made it his life's mission to capture Fantômas.


Gorgeous Mylène Demongeot plays smart [with a bit of ohh-la-la thrown in] Hélène Gurn, a photographer for Fandor's newspaper and the journalist's girlfriend.

As for Citroëns, you will lose count of the different models appearing in the trilogy, but the most important one happens to be in the second film, 'Fantômas Unleashed'. It is, of course, the legendary Flying ds, in which Fantômas makes his spectacular escape ~ yet again ~ after a brilliant car chase.

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Your Traction Primer

The perception today is that, until 1934, Citroën had a reputation for producing well-equipped, but rather run-of-the-mill cars, light trucks and buses. 1934 was the watershed when entrepreneur and brilliant publicist André Citroën launched the ground-braking 'Traction Avant'. Of course, the Traction, while shining the light towards the future, cast a shadow over the marque's past. It should be remembered that Citroën was the first French brand to introduce the 'tout acier' [all steel] body and to adopt Chrysler's 'floating power' [Moteur Flottant] engine mounting system.

It is no understatement to describe the Traction Avant as the most advanced mass-produced car of its era. While none of its features, individually, was new, what was new was the fact that this car combined them all into a single, affordable package. Features we regard as highly mainstream... monocoque construction, front-wheel drive, torsion-bar suspension [independent at the front], a wet-liner overhead valve engine, hydraulic brakes and ~ from 1936 ~ rack and pinion steering created a car that was an immense leap forward over the competition.

At its launch, the advertis-

ing described the car as being 'two years ahead' of the rest. Yet at its final departure from the market, in 1957, it was still in advance of almost all the family saloons being produced by its competition across Europe. Compared it with other saloons of the pre-Mini era and it seems more modern in its roadholding and handling, although in other areas it does betray its 1930s origins.

But the Traction is more than merely the sum of its technical advances. It can lay claim to being one of the most beautiful cars ever made... its stance and proportions, its flow, grace and harmony. It is also integral to French history and culture. Can you seriously imagine a film set in the European theatre of World War II that does not feature a Traction Avant being driven either by the Nazis or by the Free French forces? Probably both!

For the novice looking at a Traction Avant, you will probably call it a 'Light 15'. The '15' is a reference to its UK RAC/fiscal horsepower and 'Light' to the fact that it is a small-bodied version. The English-assembled cars were, for almost the life of the model, imported to Australia. Being English they were trimmed with Conolly hide and sported wooden dashboards. We also received the same

body and engine [four cylinder, 2litre] combination ex-Paris. The French cars, in their home market, were called 'Onze Legere' [Light 11], 11 being the French fiscal horsepower rating of the 2litre motor. These cars, trimmed in cloth and retaining their metal dashboards, were imported to Australia, and the UK, as a 'base' model.

There was also a larger bodied model available with the four cylinder motor [called either a Big 15 or in French a 'Normale'] and a six cylinder motor [a Big 6 or a French 15/6, reflecting the 2.7-litre's French horsepower rating of 15CV]. The picture becomes more complicated with long-wheelbase Familiale, Limousine and Commerciale bodies along with cabriolet and coupé/faux cabriolet bodies in both four and six-cylinder versions.

The original plans for the Traction included a V8 version, rated at 22CV. While a number of prototypes were developed for testing and were displayed at the 1934 Paris Motor Show, along with the four cylinder versions, this car was never launched.

Unfortunately, the Traction was rushed into production and beset with the direst teething problems imaginable. Early cars jumped out of gear and often required an elastic strap

attached to the windscreen to hold the dashboard-mounted gear lever in second, stub axles and torsion bars broke, damping was weak, the handbrake was useless. Early bodies sagged until the doors would not open and the 'Moteur Flottant' system was quickly, and quietly, dropped.

Despite Citroën's huge publicity drive, sales of the Traction were disappointing and, within a year of the launch of the car, André Citroën had lost control of his business empire to its largest creditor, Michelin. At the time, the naysayers [and there were many of them] might have seen this as vindication: the Traction was too complicated for its own good and André was too flash, too clever-by-half and too Jewish. By 1935, André Citroën had died of stomach cancer.

But André's drive for innovation did not pass with him. In 1955, Citroën again stunned the world with the DS. In 1970 won the European Car of the Year award for the GS. 1974 saw the launch of the CX. While the brand has these days lost too much of its individuality in the ownership of Peugeot and Stellantis it does remain Australia's longest continuously imported marque of motor car.



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