



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



May 2024 Vol 5 No 1  
Traction Arrière

Incorporating  
**THE**  
**NEWSLETTER**

# démarrateur

Australia's National e-Magazine  
for Citroën Owners and Enthusiasts



## CCOCA Committee

President ~ Ted Cross  
[03] 9819 2208 [H]  
[president@citroenclassic.org.au](mailto:president@citroenclassic.org.au)

Secretary ~ Sue Bryant  
0412 518 849 [M]  
[secretary@citroenclassic.org.au](mailto:secretary@citroenclassic.org.au)

Treasurer ~ Ian Macdermott  
0419 362 375 [M]  
[treasurer@citroenclassic.org.au](mailto:treasurer@citroenclassic.org.au)

Activity Coordinator ~ Lee Dennes  
0438 286 181 [M]  
[activities@citroenclassic.org.au](mailto:activities@citroenclassic.org.au)

Spare Parts Officer ~ Max Lewis  
0458 993 771 [M]  
[spareparts@citroenclassic.org.au](mailto:spareparts@citroenclassic.org.au)

Publication Editor ~ Leigh Miles  
[03] 9888 7506  
[editor@citroenclassic.org.au](mailto:editor@citroenclassic.org.au)

Web Site Manager ~ Bruce Stringer  
0412 342 706 [M]  
[websitemanager@citroenclassic.org.au](mailto:websitemanager@citroenclassic.org.au)

Committee Persons ~

Simon Marshall 0404 046 907 [M]  
Mark Robinson 0427 580 600 [M]  
Marg Towt 0408 373 181 [M]

## CCOCA Support

Membership Secretary ~  
Ian Macdermott 0419 362 375 [M]  
[treasurer@citroenclassic.org.au](mailto:treasurer@citroenclassic.org.au)

Asset Custodians ~ Ted Cross  
Max Lewis

AOMC Liaison Officers ~  
Max Lewis 0458 993 771 [M]  
Russell Wade [03] 9570 3486 [H]

Club Permit & Safety Officers ~  
Ted Cross [03] 9819 2208 [H]  
Philip Rogers [03] 5944 3091 [H]  
Russell Wade [03] 9570 3486 [H]

Librarian ~ Max Lewis  
0458 993 771 [M]  
[librarian@citroenclassic.org.au](mailto:librarian@citroenclassic.org.au)

Club Shop ~ Vacant  
[clubshop@citroenclassic.org.au](mailto:clubshop@citroenclassic.org.au)

ICCCR Representative ~  
Ted Cross [03] 9819 2208 [H]

Facebook Administrator ~  
Rita Robinson 0435 530 780 [M]  
[facebook@citroenclassic.org.au](mailto:facebook@citroenclassic.org.au)

## 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 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](mailto:spareparts@citroenclassic.org.au)

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

## Postal Addresses

CITROËN CLASSIC OWNERS' CLUB of AUSTRALIA Inc.  
The address of the Club and this magazine is:

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

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

CITROËN 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](http://www.citcarclubvic.org.au)

Citroën Classic Owners' Club of Australia Inc and Citroën Car Club of Victoria Inc are members of the Association of Motoring Clubs.

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

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

## Other Clubs

NSW [www.citroencarclub.org.au](http://www.citroencarclub.org.au)  
QLD [www.citroenclubqld.org](http://www.citroenclubqld.org)  
SA [www.clubcitroensa.com](http://www.clubcitroensa.com)  
WA [www.citroenwa.org.au](http://www.citroenwa.org.au)  
Tas [www.citroentas.org](http://www.citroentas.org)

## CCCV Committee

President ~ Michael Faulks  
0432 537 060 [M]  
[president@citcarclubvic.org.au](mailto:president@citcarclubvic.org.au)

Vice President ~ Vacant

Secretary ~ Ian Downie  
0452 411 104 [M]  
[secretary@citcarclubvic.org.au](mailto:secretary@citcarclubvic.org.au)

Treasurer ~ Peter Moloney  
0411 869 705 [M]  
[treasurer@citcarclubvic.org.au](mailto:treasurer@citcarclubvic.org.au)

Events ~ Dave Rogers  
0422 229 484 [M]  
[drogers11@gmail.com](mailto:drogers11@gmail.com)

Club Shop ~ Wolfgang Siem  
0425 872 082 [M]  
[woljen@gmail.com](mailto:woljen@gmail.com)

Committee Persons ~

Nick Hutton 0412 051 358 [M]  
John Parsons 0407 045 388 [M]  
John Wyers 0423 930 999 [M]

## CCCV Support

Membership Secretary ~ John Wyers  
0423 930 999 [M]  
[membership@citcarclubvic.org.au](mailto:membership@citcarclubvic.org.au)

Club Permit Scheme Secretaries ~

Deer Park Ferdi Saliba  
0409 34 977 [M]  
[ferdi.saliba@gmail.com](mailto:ferdi.saliba@gmail.com)

Nunawading Tom Gruzca  
0431 396 277 [M]

Frankston Dave Rogers  
0422 229 484 [M]

Endeavour Hills Bruno Tonizzo  
0418 945 461 [M]

Ashburton Peter Moloney  
0411 869 705 [H]

Librarian ~ John Parsons  
0407 045 388 [M]  
[librarian@citcarclubvic.org.au](mailto:librarian@citcarclubvic.org.au)

Web Site Administrator ~  
Nick Hutton  
0412 051 358 [M]  
[nhutton@tpg.com.au](mailto:nhutton@tpg.com.au)

## CCCV Meetings

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 from 19:30 at 8/41 Norcal 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.

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### Contributors

Contributors to this edition of 'Front Drive' include Chris Bailey, Alan Brown, Tony Burrell, Andrew Cox, John Freeman, Paul Johnson and Bauke Meijer.

### Deadline

The deadline for the next edition of 'Front Drive' is Friday, 7 June. There will not be a July edition of 'démarrreur'. The deadline for August's 'Front Drive' is Friday, 26 July.

## Ed Sed

**T**raction Arrière? Yes, before Traction Avant, there was traction arrière and both our Clubs are blessed with members who are keen to uphold and keep alive these cars from Citroën's earliest years.

Without these models the Light 15, the DS and the C5 X would not exist.

Victorian member, Paul Johnson, shares the story, and a load of pictures, of his restoration of 'Lemondrop' a yellow [now there's a surprise] 5CV Citroën.

While Paul knew the names of the car's original restorers, he did not have their contact details. As a result of writing for us, he went in search, and made contact with, those previous owners.

Continuing the 'vintage' theme, I can finally bring you the previously promised article about Citroën's toy cars from the pre-war years. These models were large: 38cm or so and,



contrary to my understanding, were not limited to rear drive models. Their production continued right up to the Michelin takeover... so Traction toys were made as well.

We also have the third, and final part, of Andrew Cox's extensive feature on André Citroën's gear-making enterprise.

Chris Bailey, from the UK, is hard at work on his Traction and shares with us some of his difficulties fitting a Jack Weaver plate to his car. It is great to know that a CCOCA creation continues to help keep Tractions on the road, globally. I hope, in a future edition, to tell Rob Little's story of the development of this great device and to explain why Chris may have had the difficulties he did.

One of the downsides of 'Front Drive' being available as a hard-copy magazine is that there are restrictions on the number of pages we can produce. More pages means higher printing costs and potentially higher postage costs. The result is that sometimes articles need to be held over until the sub-

sequent edition of [soft copy only] 'démarrreur'. Such is the case this time, because John Freeman's Traction 90 feature appears in this edition. John's wry view of the world shines through in his writing.

OzTraction is just around the corner, and we are sorry for the late notice. Details are in this edition and all members of both Clubs [whether Traction owners, or not] are all encouraged to attend.

In addition to local events, we have breaking news on Cit-In 2025, which is being hosted by the Queensland Club, and of the 60th Anniversary Dinner being hosted by the New South Wales Club. CCCNSW have let it be known that members of both CCOCA and CCCV who wish to join this celebration will be made very welcome.

In news from France, we also have information about the CX's 50th Anniversary event being held in September.

Something for everyone? I hope so!

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

CCOCA has always been about saving old Citroëns, and hopefully restoring them to their former glory. The focus began when CCOCA decided to build a club for Tractions and Vintage Citroëns, but our founders wisely decided to broaden their vision, and determined that all model Citroëns were, or would become, Classics. Jumping to today, CCOCA has an extremely wide group of models in our club, and no model is favoured over the other.

This month Leigh has decided to feature Rear Wheel Drive models. This is a very timely decision, because there has been a renaissance in interest of Vintage Citroëns. If you feel like joining this group there are a couple of Vintage Citroëns currently for sale.

Our new member Paul Johnson is one of these very committed owners, so please read his story. 2025 is also the 100-



year centenary of the first car to circumnavigate Australia, and yes, Citroën was the marque to achieve this great feat.

Our recent joint activities with CCCV are proving to be a wise decision, and I hope this concept will continue indefinitely. We need to plan a bit further ahead than we have done recently, but I am confident both sides of the partnership are working towards this goal. One area of concern for me is when people sign up to attend an event and then do not show up. This occasionally prevents another person from attending, and also shows a lack of respect for the organizers. Please consider this when deciding to attend an event in the future.

Today we held a very enjoyable Show and Shine at Rippon Lea, which is a National Trust property in Melbourne ~ the day worked beautifully. Michael Faulkes, the President of CCCV coordinated this event, and helpers from both clubs worked seamlessly to create an excellent experience. It was a perfect, autumn day, with 20° and sunshine, and we all had a great time catching up with friends. I encourage you to come along next year if we return to this location.

Finally, OzTraction, is in Shepparton, Vic. this year, and is still open for bookings if you feel like a short holiday. Please see our website or page 11.

Ted Cross ~ President, CCOCA

## CCCV President's Report



I'm always amazed at the reach this club has. Recently I was contacted by a youth services educator in the USA about a project her students have been working on to do with the history of the automobile industry. They came across the CCCV website links section and found it very useful for their research. One student in particular was very enthusiastic and has produced a quite extensive history of the US auto industry and was quite keen to share it with the club. For those that wish to read it, you can find it online here <https://www.convoycarshipping.com/a-guide-to-the-automotive-industry/>

### AUTOMOTIVE HISTORY

It's nice to see younger people with an interest in the older, or more obscure, makes. One of the best things about the annual Show and Shine is engaging with a wide audience that may not have much exposure to our beloved marque and hopefully bringing them into the club. That makes us sound like a bit of a cult but then you do have to a bit 'out there' to own a Citroën.

On the topic of membership, it's always nice to receive the monthly membership reports which show that the club is continuing to grow and we are now at some 260 members! The good news is we're going

to be here for a while yet and definitely to see the club's 60th anniversary next year. It has been truly great to see members coming out of the woodwork for the bi-monthly pub gatherings, which seem to only be growing in popularity. The next one will be at the Mordialloc Hotel in July. I look forward to seeing who comes along.

For the May meeting, John Albanis has organised an excursion to All Head Services in Keysborough. It should be a great night with a tour of the workshop. Full details will be on the club website and further down the magazine. RSVP is essential because there is a limit on the number we can take through the workshop.

One final note before I let you all get on with reading this month's issue. Today I received the very sad news that one of our founding members, Heather Greeves, has passed away.

*Continued on page 8*



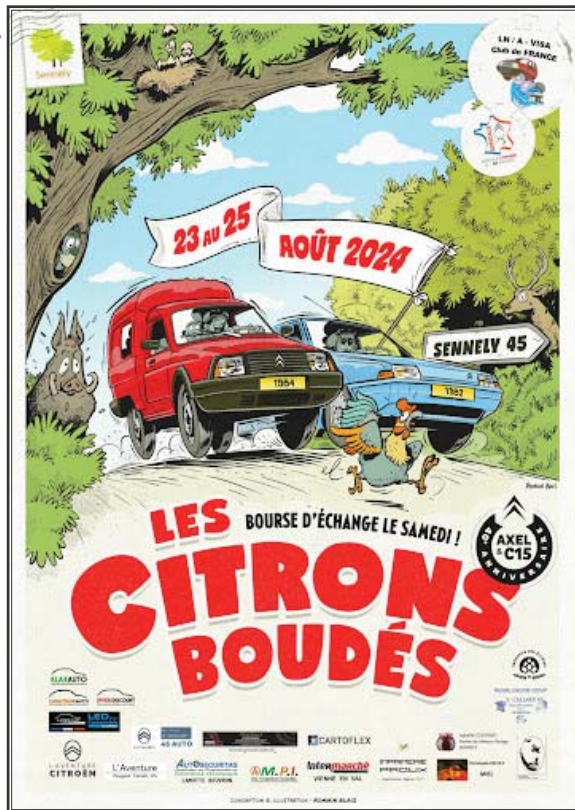
## CCCV President's Report

Continued from page 7

She was at the first ever CCCV meeting in the Parkville Post Office in 1965 and she has been a member ever since. Heather was possibly our longest continuous serving member ever and even asked her daughter to pay her subs not long before she passed. In her time, Heather has been secretary, editor, parts supplier and more recently the club historian. She will be remembered as a larger than life character and fierce friend who always had a good story to tell usually with a mischievous grin. Michael Faulks

### Cover Image

The cover depicts a 1930 Citroën AC4 which was listed for auction by Autive Auctions in Prague on April 27. The estimate was €10 to 15,000.



## 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 |

|                  |              |
|------------------|--------------|
| 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.

## 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*

### • May

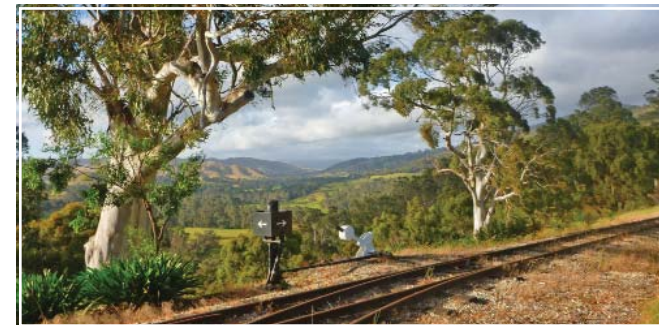
#### Kerrisdale Mountain Railway Run

WHEN: Sunday, 5 May  
 TIME: 08:00  
 FROM: Eltham, actual location  
 TO: Kerrisdale Mountain  
 WHERE: 7000 Culburn Valley  
 REGISTRATION: \$21 per person  
 MORE INFO: Essential by Monday, 22 April  
 atkipete@yahoo.com.au

#### CCOCA May Monthly Meeting ~ Made & Modified Tools

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  
 BRING: The tools that make the job easier  
 MORE INFO: Lee Dennes,  
[l.dennes@bigpond.net.au](mailto:l.dennes@bigpond.net.au)



# A-Tractions



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

## CCOCA MAY BOOKING

It's not hoarding if it's tools! Have you modified or specially made a tool for a specific job? Bring it along and share its use with other members.

## CCCV May Monthly Meeting

WHEN: Thursday, 16 May  
 TIME: From 17:30 or 19:00 [see below]  
 WHERE: All Head Services, 20 Fiveways Blvd., Keysborough. 3173  
 COST: Dinner to your account  
 REGISTRATION: Essential. Text John Albanis to register  
 MORE INFO: John Albanis, 0421 181 861

This month we decamp from the Clubrooms for a trip to All Head Services. The owner has arranged for a tour of their workshop and demonstration of the work they do to refurbish



cylinder heads. Please be at All Head Services by 19:00  
 Dinner has been arranged beforehand from 17:30 at the Keysborough Hotel for those who won't have time to sneak home before the tour. Further details are on the club website



## OzTraction 2024

WHEN: Friday, 31 May to Monday, 3 June  
 WHERE: Shepparton and district  
 COST: \$200per person  
 REGISTRATION: Essential, by Thursday, 23 May  
 MORE INFO: Ted Cross, 0400 592 208  
[president@citroenclassic.com.au](mailto:president@citroenclassic.com.au)  
 Helen Cross 0419 356 963

DO NOT CALL TED OR HELEN TO REGISTER! You must register/book via the CCOCA website

<https://citroenclassic.org.au>

## OZTRACTION BOOKING

Despite the name, OzTraction [CCOCA's own annual event] is not just for Traction. It is not even just for Citroëns. Cars of all makes and models are very welcome, indeed are encouraged, to attend. Naturally, members of CCCV can be sure of a warm welcome, too. Your \$200 covers the costs of welcoming finger food on Friday evening, two light lunches, three dinners and the farewell breakfast on Monday morning. In addition, there will be a Show & Shine, an Observation Run, and scenic drives in the surrounding countryside, including the Silo Arts sites. All other costs, including refreshments and accommodation, are to the attendee's account.

# A-Tractions

The preferred accommodation is The Peppermill Inn, 7900 Goulburn Valley Hwy, Kialla. [03] 5823 1800. <https://peppermillinn.com.au/accommodation/>

## PEPPERMILL INN

Mention the 'Citroën Group' when you ring to book. Further details of times, venues and directions will be emailed to participants approximately 7 days before the weekend.

Finally, remember this is NOT the June King's Birthday Long Weekend.

## • June

### Battle of Waterloo

WHEN: Sunday, 16 June  
TIME: 09:00  
FROM: Mornington, exact location TBC



Image: The Peppermill Inn

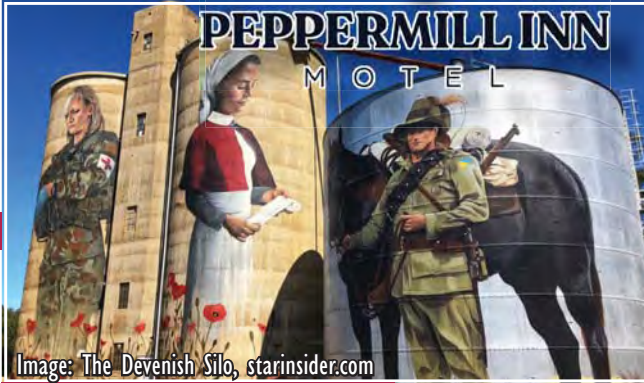
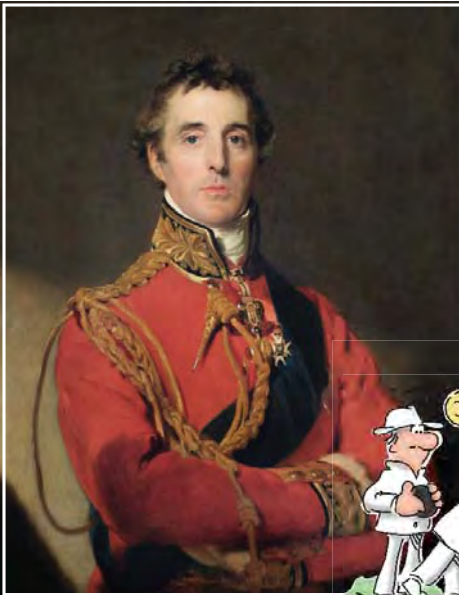


Image: The Devenish Silo, starinsider.com



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](mailto: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 and 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, 8/41 Norcal Rd., Nunawading  
COST: Free  
REGISTRATION: Not required

This month the club is hosting a movie night at the clubrooms. Don Scutt has raided his movie collection for a french classic. Popcorn and pizza supplied.

### CCOCA June Monthly Meeting: Film Night

WHEN: Wednesday, 26 June  
TIME: From 19:30  
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](mailto: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

For many film fans Blake Edwards' movie 'The Party', starring Peter Sellers is a comedic highlight. Come along,



## A-Tractions

bring the pop corn, sit back and watch this great movie with friends. It may not be 'gold class', but you will have a golden night out.  
Supper supplied, of course.

### • July **Bastille Day Lunch**

WHEN: Sunday, 14 July  
TIME: 12:00 for 12:30  
WHERE: Churchill-Waverley Golf and Bowls Club, 82 Bergins Rd., Rowville. 3178  
COST: \$40.00pp, refreshments to your account  
REGISTRATION: Essential by Friday, 5 July  
BRING: Your wallet  
MORE INFO: Marg Towt, [marg.towt@bigpond.com](mailto:marg.towt@bigpond.com)  
DO NOT CALL MARG TO REGISTER! You must register/book via the CCOCA website  
<https://citroenclassic.org.au>  
**BASTILLE BOOKING**

Join your fellow Citroënists from CCOCA and CCCV for a two course lunch at this inviting venue. The price, of \$40 per person, has been subsidised by the Club, but refreshments are to your account. So, bring your wallet! As always, be sure to drink responsibly.  
Please wear your name tag!  
Should you need to cancel your booking, any refund will be at the discretion of the organisers. Late bookings will not be accepted.

### **CCCV July Dinner Meeting**

WHEN: Thursday, 18 July  
TIME: From 19:00  
WHERE: The Bridge Hotel, 1-4 Nepean H'way., Aspendale. 3195  
COST: Food and refreshments to your account  
REGISTRATION: Essential, by Monday, 15 May

BRING: Hunger and a thirst  
MORE INFO: Ian Downie  
0452 411 104

Once again in place of a club night in the Nunawading club rooms, we are heading for a pub outing and meal.  
These sojourns are to encourage members who otherwise might not attend Club meetings. We rotate the area that they are held in so as to make them convenient to members in far flung areas. This month we head Bayside.

### **CCOCA July Monthly Meeting: Chat Night**

WHEN: Wednesday, 24 July  
TIME: From 19:30  
WHERE: Hawthorn Bowling Club, 1 Wood St., Hawthorn [cnr Denham St.]

COST: Free  
REGISTRATION: Essential for catering by 22 July  
MORE INFO: Lee Dennes, [l.dennes@bigpond.net.au](mailto:l.dennes@bigpond.net.au)

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

Come along and enjoy the warmth of the company of other Citroënists at the Club's July meeting. Max will be there with a large selection of books from the Club's library, all of them available to borrow. Remember, if there is a particular book you would like to borrow get in touch with Max before the meeting and he will be sure to bring it along for you.



Come along, enjoy a luncheon, along with the festivities to celebrate

## BASTILLE DAY

Churchill - Waverley Golf and Bowls Club  
Rowville Site  
82 Bergins Road Rowville Victoria 3178

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## A-Tractions



### Chit Chat Tuesday

WHEN: 1st Tuesday  
7 May  
4 June  
2 July  
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.

## Looking Forward

The next 'Front Drive' will be published on June 24 and celebrates the 65th Anniversary of the launch of the 2CV Sahara



Citroën's maddest idea of the 1950s or the perfect solution for sand dunes and oil prospecting? Share your view with Leigh Miles at [editor@citroendassic.org.au](mailto:editor@citroendassic.org.au) by Friday, 7 June.

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# CCOCA Annual General Meeting

The CCOCA Annual General Meeting was held on Wednesday, 27 March at the Club's new meeting point of the Hawthorn Bowling Club's rooms in Hawthorn.

We had 26 members in the room and the Club had also received proxies from a further 38 members. This total of 64 members is 15% of our membership of 427. The required quorum is 10% of the membership, so the meeting was able to proceed on the night.

The reports of the members of the Committee, which had been published in the previous magazine, were tabled and accepted by the meeting.

At this point, the Committee stood down and, Past President, Tim Cotterill, took the chair.

As you will be aware, our long-serving General Committee representative, Russell Wade, stood down from the Committee after a number of years of service in various roles.

There had been no valid nominations received before the meeting, but the Committee nominations/seconds that were received, and accepted, at the meeting are shown in the table.

As there was only a single nomination for all the positions,

| COMMITTEE NOMINEES, NOMINATORS AND SECONDRS |                |              |                    |
|---|----------------|--------------|--------------------|
| Position                                    | Nominee        | Nominator    | Secunder           |
| President                                   | Ted Cross      | Lee Dennes   | Peter Sandow       |
| Secretary                                   | Susan Bryant   | Helen Cross  | Mark Robinson      |
| Treasurer                                   | Ian Macdermott | Helen Cross  | Susan Bryant       |
| Editor                                      | Leigh Miles    | David Rogers | Marg Towt          |
| Spare Parts Officer                         | Max Lewis      | Barb Towt    | Michael Molesworth |
| Activities Coordinator                      | Lee Dennes     | Marg Towt    | Helen Schembri     |
| Website Manager                             | Bruce Stringer | Susan Bryant | Marg Towt          |
| Committee Member 1                          | Marg Towt      | Helen Cross  | Ted Cross          |
| Committee Member 2                          | Simon Marshall | Ted Cross    | Marg Towt          |
| Committee Member 3                          | Mark Robinson  | Helen Cross  | Mark Forster       |

the nominees were duly appointed.

While at first glance it might appear that there have been no changes to the make up of the Committee, in fact we have two new members on Committee. They are Simon Marshall and Mark Robinson, each of whom has written a short profile for the magazine.

### Simon Marshall

Hello fellow members of CCOCA. I was recently asked if I would be interested in entertaining the idea of becoming a committee member of our wonderful club. At the recent AGM in Hawthorn, the interest became reality and I am now a new committee member.

A little about myself: Citroëns were introduced to my life in the mid '80s by my stepfather Roger Brundle. Roger was a founding member of CCOCA, so Citroëns were always

around as I was growing up. I didn't pay much attention to them because big American V8s were my thing at the time.

In 2016 Roger passed away after a brief battle with cancer. It was left to me to sort out his cars and all the parts associated with them. Trying to work out what belonged to what and how things went together I developed a newfound appreciation for the complexities, and also the subtleties, of these fantastic cars. I'm not sure at what point it got me, but I was definitely bitten by the Citroën bug.

I now own four Citroëns in various states of repair, and disrepair, and thoroughly enjoy learning more and more about these cars every day. I'm fascinated by how complex they appear to be, yet if you follow the bouncing ball and don't rush anything, you get to the end of the task with an even greater appreciation of the engineering in these cars, albeit with a few



more swear words in the vocabulary.

Looking forward to helping wherever I can and however I can as a new committee member of CCOCA.

Simon Marshall

### Mark Robinson

My association with Citroëns started when I was 19 and I purchased a Light 15 followed by an ID 19 and then a 1969 DS Safari that I owned for over 20 years and wish I still had.

I then had normal cars until my addiction drew me back and I brought a DS 23; now recently sold.

With my wife, Rita's, support and encouragement, I am currently working on a 1955 Traction Avant Big 6H that you will see on the road this year.

I am still working, not yet retired. But I hope I can serve the Club as much as I can.

Mark Robinson



# Cit-In 2025

WHEN: Friday 2 to Monday, 5  
May, 2025  
 TIME: From 15:00 on May 2  
 WHERE: Maryborough, Qld  
 COST: TBC  
 REGISTRATION: Essential.  
 Registrations open in July, 2024.  
 MORE INFO: [cit-in25.citroenclubqld.org.au](http://cit-in25.citroenclubqld.org.au)

## CIT-IN 2025 WEBSITE

CITROËN CAR CLUB OF QUEENSLAND & FRASER COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL WELCOMES YOU TO THE HOME OF MARY POPPINS & GATEWAY TO K'GARI [FRASER ISLAND] 2025 marks the centenary of the first circumnavigation of Australia by car. Not just any car, but a Citroën 5CV. It is also the 70th anniversary of the legendary DS, launched in Paris 1955. Maryborough is three hours north of Brisbane and is rich in history, boasting 1800s architecture, a proud industrial heritage producing naval ships and equipment for the railways and sugar mills. The city has abundant nature, with the Mary River running from the hinterland to the sea. Hervey Bay, on the coast,



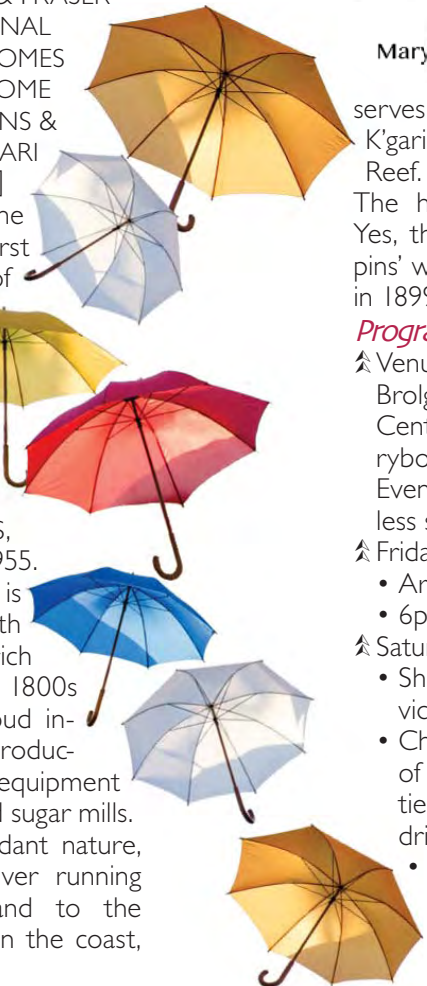
### CIT-IN 25 Maryborough Queensland Citroën Car Club of Queensland

serves as the gateway to both K'gari and the Great Barrier Reef.

The home of Mary Poppins? Yes, the author of 'Mary Poppins' was born in Maryborough in 1899.

### Programme of Events

- 📍 Venue  
Brolga Theatre & Convention Centre, 5 Walker Street, Maryborough.  
Events will be based here unless stated otherwise.
- 📅 Friday 2 May 2025
  - Arrival 3pm to 6pm
  - 6pm Welcome BBQ
- 📅 Saturday 3 May 2025
  - Show and Shine: Lunch provided
  - Chevron Games: A series of fun and precision activities to challenge the skill of drivers and their cars.
  - Evening Dinner and Dancing at Maryborough Services Club



- 📅 Sunday 4 May 2025
  - Observation Run: A selection of curated drives, activities and walks through the hinterland, to the Coast and in Maryborough's historic Wharf Street precinct. Discover the region's Nature, Heritage and Reef. Lunch provided.



- Formal Dinner: Theme ~ Bring to life the glamour of Paris 1955. The year of the launch of the Goddess.
- 📅 Monday 5 May 2025
  - Breakfast and Farewells

**Stay Informed**  
As planning for Cit-in 2025 progresses more information about the planning and activities will become available.



On the website you can sign up to receive email newsletters with updates as the event gets closer. If you choose to subscribe, we will not use your contact details for any other purpose and will not share details with any other person or group. You

can opt out at any time.  
**Accommodation**  
Find the list of Maryborough hotels, caravanning and camping options on the CCCQ website or at [www.visitfrasercoast.com](http://www.visitfrasercoast.com)  
**FRASERCOAST WEBSITE**

# Jubilé CX: France

WHEN: Friday, 13 to Sunday 15  
September 2024  
WHERE: Cloyes-les-Trois-  
Rivières, France  
COST: See below  
BOOKINGS: Essential  
BRING: Your passport!  
MORE INFO:

[information@jubilecitroencx.net](mailto:information@jubilecitroencx.net)

While the eyes of many CCO-CA members will have been focused on the French celebrations for the 90th anniversary of the Traction, others will be equally aware that this year marks the 50th anniversary of the CX.

You can register here:  
<https://jubilecitroencx.net/boutique/fr/accueil/2-inscription-jubile-cx.html>

## JUBILÉ CX REGISTRATION Cost of the Event

Registration for the full three day event is €100. This covers a car [CX only], the driver and a passenger. Additional passengers are €20each.



- Single day visitor entry: €5
- Saturday Gala Dinner: €60pp. Limited attendee numbers.
- Friday evening cocktail reception: €30pp. Limited numbers.

### What to Expect

The Jubilé CX will take place at the Domaine de Montigny-le-Gannelon, in Eure-et-Loire, just a stone's throw from the Perche region.

Registered Citroën CX cars [and only Citroën CX cars] will be allowed to park in the designated area inside the Château grounds for the duration of the weekend during the

event's opening hours. However, throughout the event, you are welcome [and encouraged] to come and go as you please. It will be possible at any time to get out your CX to discover the region or take some great shots on the banks of the Loire.

Depending on what they want to do, guests will be able to take part in the various activities on offer on the site or elsewhere, if they so wish, giving them the chance to enjoy an 'à la carte' stay. To do this, the CX registered must be able to enter and leave the Domaine by its own means.

Conviviality, sharing and exchange are the key words for this event!

### The Programme

- Continuous entertainment:
  - Citroën CX living exhibition
  - Sightseeing tours
  - Sale of parts
  - Photo shoots
  - Continuous on-site catering
- Friday 13 September:
  - Ride at the La Ferté-

Vidame Test Centre ~  
SOLD OUT

- Welcome Ceremony Club evening [booking required]
- Saturday 14 September:
  - Visit to La Canopée aircraft collection ~ Chateaudun [reservation required]
  - Concours d'élégance Jubilee Gala Dinner [reservation required]
  - Dance evening
- Sunday 15 September:
  - Jubilee Tombola Draw
  - Closing picnic
  - End of the event at 5pm





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# In the Limelight



## Ronin

Any Citroën-esque list of films worth its salt must have John Frankenheimer's 'Ronin' high up in its hierarchy. Who can forget the brilliant [and very realistic] car chases through Nice and Paris, which were considered by some as the best depicted on film?

Frankenheimer avoided special effects in the car-chase scenes, instead he visualized them with storyboards and then used the same camera mounts as those used on Grand Prix.

The actors were placed inside the cars while being driven at up to 160kph by Formula One driver Jean-Pierre Jarier and high-performance drivers Jean-Claude Lagniez and Michel Neugarten. The actors had enrolled at a high-performance driving school before production began.

According to Lagniez, the car stunt coordinator, it



# In the Limelight

# Engrenages Citroën III



Sam: Whenever there is any doubt, there is no doubt. That's the first thing they teach you.  
Vincent: Who taught you?  
Sam: I don't remember. That's the second things they teach you.  
Vincent: No questions. No answers. That's the business we're in. You just accept it and move on. Maybe that's lesson number three.



ple cars with dummy steering wheels installed on the left side, while the stunt drivers drove the speeding vehicles.

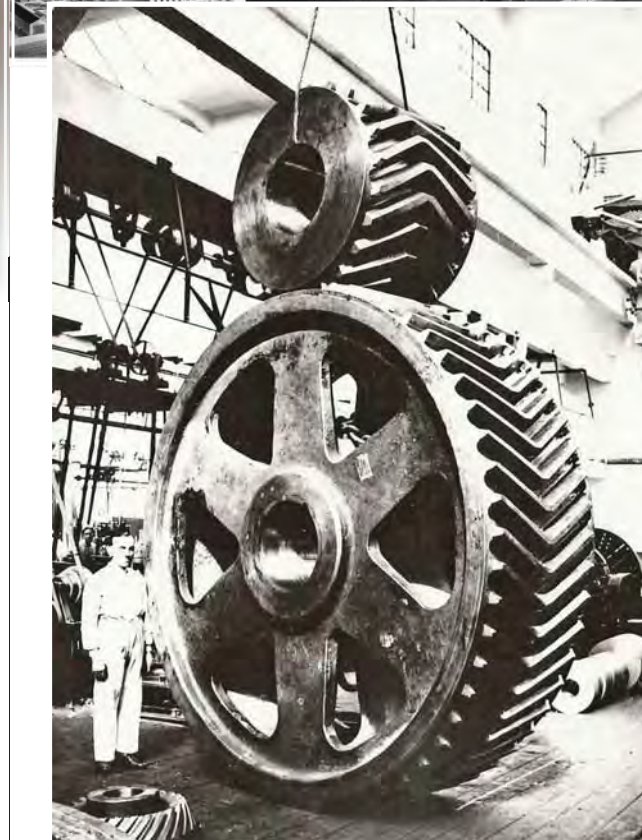
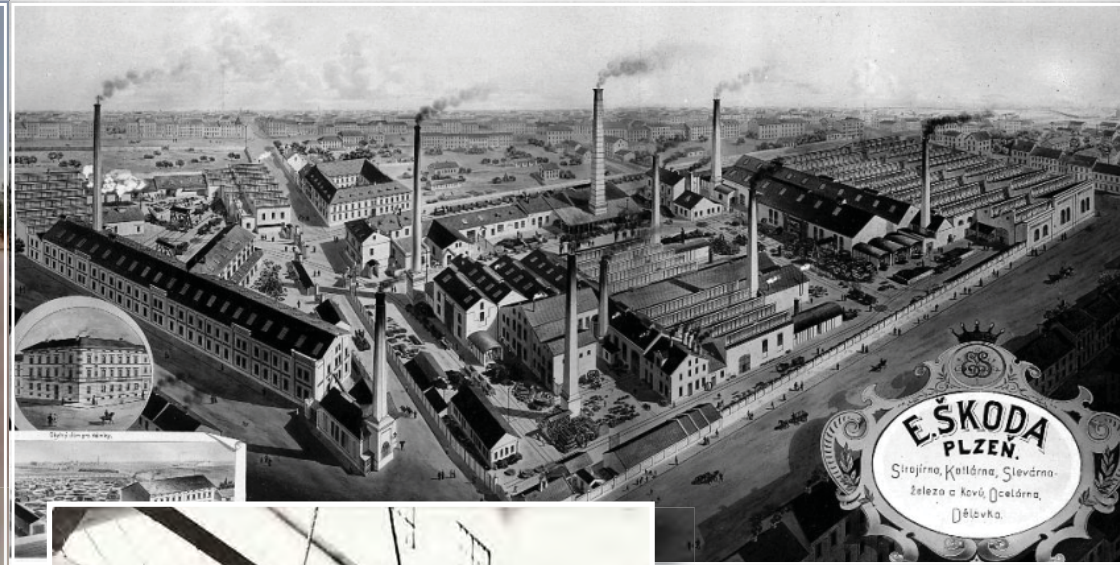
The final chase had very little music because Frankheimer thought music and sound effects do not blend well. Sound engineer Mike Le Mare recorded all of the film's cars on a racetrack, mixing them later in post-production.

was a priority not to cheat the speed by adjusting the frame rate. Point-of-view shots from cameras mounted below the cars' front wing were used to deliver a heightened sense of speed.

Should we be harsh on Lagniez for getting XMs Series 1 and Series 2 mixed up during one of the chases?

The final chase scene used 300[!] stunt drivers and multi-

This article was originally published by the CCCUK in their magazine 'The Citroënian'. It may not be reproduced elsewhere without their specific approval.



In this, the third, and final, part of Andrew Cox's excellent, in depth history of André Citroën's engagement with double helical gears, we advance through to practically the present day.

Above: The Škoda plant at Plzeň in the 1900s.

Left: Škoda went on to produce gears every bit as impressive as those made in Paris. This pair was produced in 1929. The main wheel weighs 20tonnes and the pinion a further 8tonnes.

# Engrenages Citroën III

## Manufacturing Abroad

In 1911, Citroën entered into a licence agreement allowing the Škoda factory in Plzeň [Pilsen] to manufacture his gears for the Austro-Hungarian and German markets.

Škoda was a dominant player in the region, with a huge manufacturing capacity, and a workforce of some 7,000 people. In all likelihood, they would have met the demand for herringbone gears with or without help from Citroën, so a deal that provided some return from those markets without any capital investment would have been impossible to decline.

In any case, patents only gave protection from copying for 15 years, so any rights obtained from Poland were due to expire in 1913.

The Plzeň factory went on to produce gears every bit as impressive as those made in Paris.

In a similar move in 1912, a manufacturing facility was set up in the Lefortovo district of Moscow, just east of the city centre.

An independent organisation called the Citroën Gear Joint Stock Company was established in Russia to finance this side of the operation. A major customer was the Kolomna Locomotive Plant, some 115km to the south east, though smaller



A share certificate in Citroën's Russian enterprise 'The Citroën Gear Joint Stock Company' and an early Russian press advertisement for the company's gears.



This advertisement, from 1912, no longer mentions the German sales office in Cologne. I guess it must have been rolled up into the agreement with Škoda.

gears were also supplied to the nascent automobile industry.

This Russian company would be nationalised in 1917, after the October Revolution led by the Lenin.

The advert from 1912 no longer mentions the German sales office in Cologne. I guess it must have been rolled up into the agreement with Škoda.

### The Titanic Connection

There was expansion in

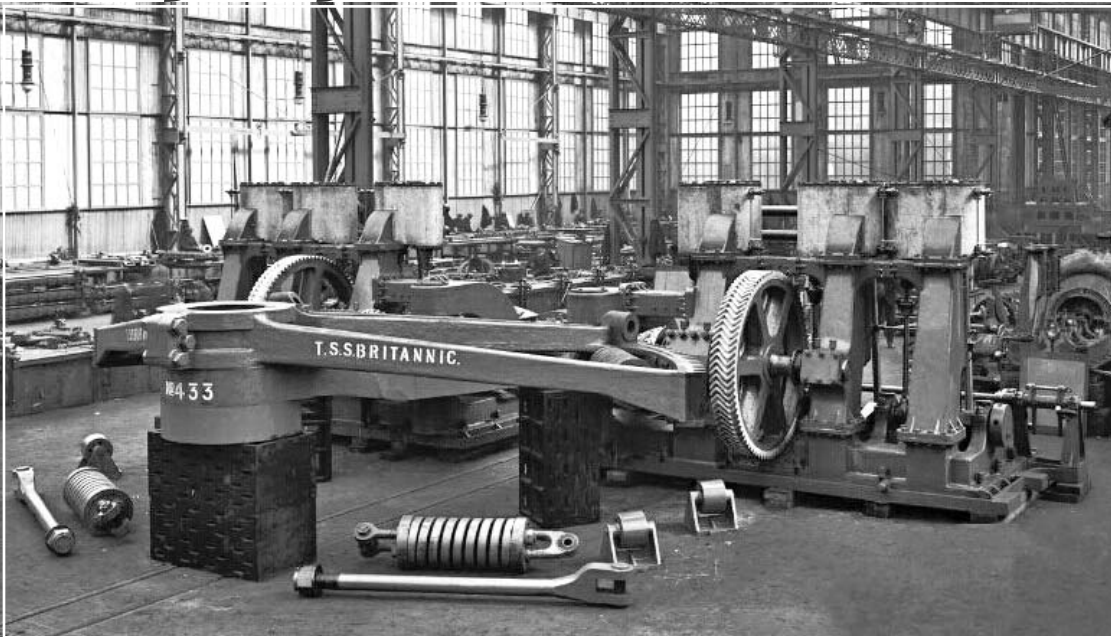


the UK too, as the sales office moved to more spacious premises at 28 Buckingham Gate, SW1, a location it would occupy until 1924 when it was incorporated into the Citroën building at Brook Green, Hammersmith. By 1914, the UK operation would comprise the London HQ, nine regional offices up and down the country and agencies in South Africa, Australia and Canada.

British customers included Sandycroft Ltd, a specialist in winding gear and related equipment for mines, Ernest Newell & Co, which made tube mills for



# Engrenages Citroën III



grinding minerals and cement and Hunter & English, a long-established company, now making pumps, cranes and dredging equipment.

One of the best-known sales achieved by the London office was that of three gear sets for rudders of the Olympic Class liners being built for the White Star Line by Harland and Woolf; the Olympic, the Britannic and the Titanic.

Construction of the Olympic started in December 1908 and

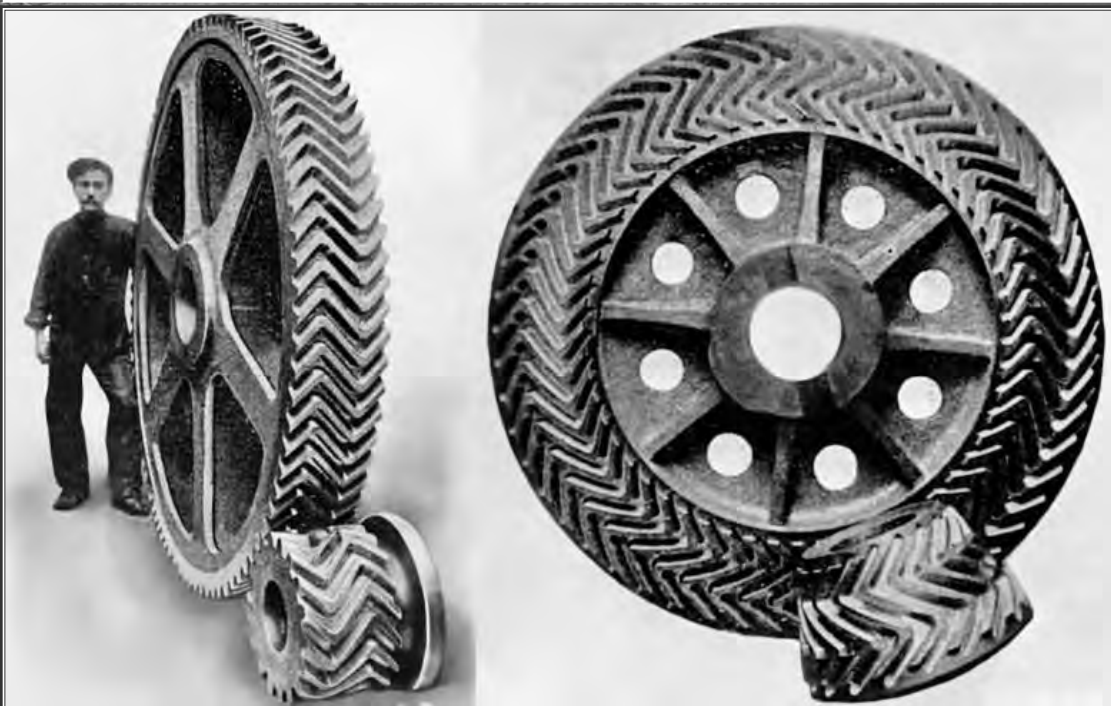
The 1912 show at Olympia was attended by André Citroën

the Titanic three months later. The keel of the Britannic was laid in 1911, but the ship wasn't completed until 1914, following design changes in the light of the Titanic disaster.

The upper image on the facing page depicts the final set of rudder gears, on the shop floor of the Belfast shipyard, beside the tandem three-cylinder steam engines that turned the rudder.

The lower picture, originally published in 'The Engineer,' gives a better sense of scale.

André Citroën was hugely



# Engrenages Citroën III

supportive of the UK operation, travelling to London to be there in person whenever the occasion demanded. It's reported that he spoke English quite fluently. We know he attended the 1912 Machinery Exhibition in Olympia, where many other French companies also exhibited their wares.

## The Citroën Gear Company

In 191, a new company was created, the Société des Engrenages Citroën.

From the report of the new company's formation, we can see the difference in scale between the former company, established at the end of 1905 with a capital of F300,000, and the new one, created just over six years later, with a capital 10 times greater.

The Conseil d'Administration is what we would term the Board of Directors, and there

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ANAL. CAPITAL DE FONDERS 3.000.000  
SIÈGE SOCIAL  
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Turning to the next entry, I thought R Boas must be his brother René, but it turns out another brother, Jacob Robert Boas, was always known as Robert, and it is he who became a director of SA Engrenages Citroën.

After André Citroën, we have an entry for J Citroën; this is Joseph-Roelof Citroën, one of André's many cousins.

The Boas brothers' mother was Clotilde Sara Schwob, who

George Schwob: a man whose facial hair could be seen from behind. Those of you who with long memories will remember the days when your editor's moustache was even longer! Albeit not visible from behind.

**LES ENGRENAGES CITROËN**

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CYLINDRIQUES  
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95% de rendement  
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**SOCIÉTÉ ANONYME DES ENGRENAGES CITROËN**  
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**Société des engrenages Citroën.** — Au capital de 3 millions de francs, divisé en 30.000 actions de 100 francs, dont 15.000 d'apport, attribués à la Société André Citroën et C<sup>ie</sup> avec les 500 parts de fondateur créées et une somme de 1.874.933 fr. 76. Siège social à Paris, 31, quai de Grenelle. Conseil d'administration: MM. A. Boas R. Boas, A. Citroën, J. Citroën, N. Raffalovitch G. Schwob et K. de Skoda.

This is the announcement as reported on February 20 in 'L'Echo des Mines et de la Metallurgie'.

are some interesting names on the list.

First in the list, A Boas, or to give his full name, Eliézer André Boas, was a school friend from the Lycée Condorcet. It's widely reported that André Boas had been involved with Citroën's gear company from the start, in 1901.

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## Engrenages Citroën III

numbers among her siblings a certain Georges-Julien Schwob d'Héricourt [1864–1942], the G Schwob named in the list.

George Schwob deserves a mention in any treatise on the subject of Citroën, if for no other reason than to include this photograph of his magnificent moustache. As someone who struggles to grow a goatee, I have a deep respect for any fellow whose facial hair can be seen from behind.

Putting aside this impressive growth, Schwob's role was critical, because he was a major source of funds for the new company, both at a personal level and through his friends and contacts.

Born into a wealthy family, he was an industrialist in his own right, with interests in mining, tramways, banking and other areas too. In 1911, he was made a Commandeur de la Légion d'Honneur, the third of five levels of distinction in France's highest order of merit. André Citroën achieved the same rank 17 years later, followed by Grand-Officier de la Légion d'Honneur in 1931.

Schwob's first involvement with André Citroën came through Mors, where he held a seat on the board.

Next on the list, is Nicolai/Nicolas Raffalovich. He doesn't seem to have had a connection with Citroën before, which

makes me think his involvement as a director was linked to the joint venture in Russia, but I've yet to turn up concrete evidence to support this. In any case, he was certainly a colourful character.

Born in Odessa on January 31, 1883, he seems to have spent much of his life in Paris; when he wasn't away fighting, that is. When he got married, in the Russian church on rue Daru in 1905, he had to take leave from the Manchurian Front, where Russia was at war with Japan. His wedding garb was the uniform of the Dagestan Mountain Regiment. He was very well connected; his wedding was attended by Ambassadors, Princes, Barons and Counts, as well as commoners.

His bride, Marie Raffalovich, was also his cousin, which meant his uncle Arthur became his father-in-law. As if that wasn't complicated enough, Nicolai's brother Serge/Sergei Raffalovich married his wife's sister.

Arthur Raffalovich was commercial attaché to the Russian embassy in France. As well as Engrenages Citroën, Nicolai was on the board of several other companies, including the Banque Russo-Asiatique de Paris and a gold mining company based in Belgium.

The last entry is listed as K de Skoda. Other records refer to Karl de Skoda, with a regis-

tered address in Vienna. In his native German, his name would be rendered as Karl von Škoda, or more fully, Karl Freiherr von Škoda, who just happened to be General Director of the Škoda Works in Plzeň.

The key point here, and the reason for going into detail, is that all of the directors had put in at least F375,000. Just as he did when he founded his Cit-

er network to provide working capital, while maintaining the longest lines of credit he possibly could from his suppliers.

### Competition

Perhaps mindful of the imminent loss of patent protection for the fundamentals of his gear cutting technology, the company started to lodge new patents in its own name. Between 1910 and 1915, at least eight different groups of patents were registered.

Some were

This Mors advertisement from 'La Suisse Sportive' of May, 1914 depicts the car's final drive and references its Citroën-sourced gears. The illustration below is taken from a Citroën brochure from September, 1914.



roën, Hinstin & Cie, André Citroën succeeded in raising funds from his family and their circle of associates. He did not have to go to the banks or the stock exchange to raise capital. This was an approach he maintained for as long as he possibly could. When he became a car maker, he famously relied on his deal-



# Engrenages Citroën III

new applications for herringbone gears such as a compact reduction gear train, a new gearbox design. Others came from links the company had forged with the French navy; hence, there was a new design for the rudder drive in submarines and battleships and improvements to the control of valves in torpedo tubes, registered in 1911.

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TOUS ENGRENAGES, Réducteurs de vitesse à vis sans fin et roues dentées, à CHEVRONS HÉLICOÏDAUX, taillés d'une seule pièce. Ferrures, forge, charonnage, menuiserie,  
R. PETIT, 52. (19<sup>e</sup>). Nord 35.41.



PH. 148-11 - 2-18

Others came from André Citroën's experience of building cars at Mors, such as a new leaf spring damper arrangement and a new final drive for rear axles, which of course, quickly found its way into new models.

By the beginning of 1914, other companies had started to offer competing products.

As this advert shows, Piat & Sons now offered Citroën-style herringbone gears and also a discontinuous double-helical tooth pattern, which it sold under the brand name Kosmos.

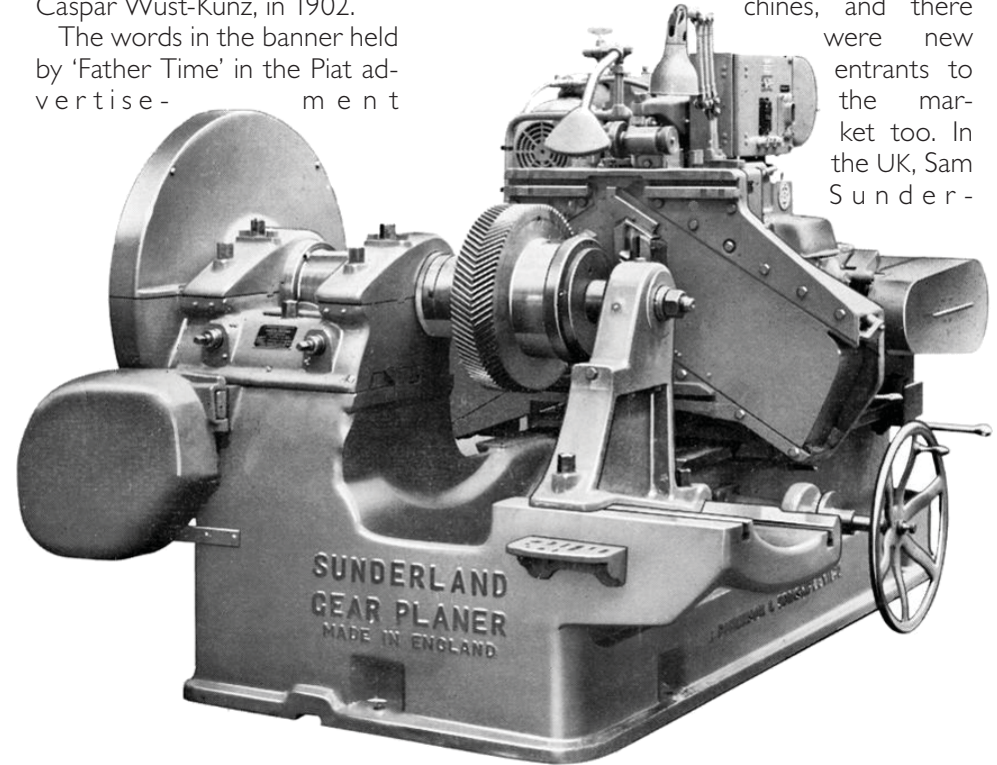
This last style was made using a completely different process that had been patented by a Swiss engineer by the name of Caspar Wüst-Kunz, in 1902.

The words in the banner held by 'Father Time' in the Piat advertisement

are obviously aimed squarely at Engrenages Citroën. It says, 'It's not enough to have machines [to cut gears]. Long experience is [also] essential for the manufacture of good quality gears. Piat has been making them since 1830'.

André Citroën had competition in the UK too. The Power Plant Company of West Drayton, Middlesex had also taken out a licence from Wüst. This advertisement was published as early as 1909.

Manufacturing technology was improving apace. Existing gear cutting specialists like Gleason and Fellows were offering new, more capable machines, and there were new entrants to the market too. In the UK, Sam Sunder-



## Engrenages Citroën III

land from Keighley and William Sykes, from Middlessex were both awarded patents in 1914 for new methods of producing gears, including herringbone style. Both would enjoy considerable commercial success with their products.

However, increased competition and changes in the market suddenly ceased to be the biggest concern.

### War

When businesses set out their objectives and strategic

plans for the years to follow 1914, few of them included international conflict, but on August 3, 1914, Germany declared war on France, and everything changed. In the same month, 2.9million men were called up to join the army.

The starting assumption within the French government was that it would all be over quickly, but success would depend on mobilising the biggest possible force in the shortest time. Military service had been compulsory in France since 1798, so the mechanism for an immediate call-up was already in place. By the end of the war, almost nine million men had been enlisted in the nation's military.

Inevitably, almost all factories had to close. André Citroën returned to his artillery regiment, reprising his rank of Lieutenant. Just up the road, Louis Renault, who was by then a well-known industrialist, commanding several factories and a workforce of over 3,000 people, found himself at the same rank he held during his military service, that of a private soldier, the lowest of the low. It wasn't long until the French authorities realised they'd rather have Monsieur Renault overseeing the manufacture of aero engines and other war materials, but he was not excused the call-up.

Back at 31 Quai de Grenelle, there were only around 20 men

left; those who had been rejected for war service on the basis of age or infirmity. They were kept busy largely as sub-contractors for larger companies working on military equipment.

After the war, André Citroën had a very large factory, a considerable workforce and no

market for his product, so his priority was re-tooling to produce motor cars. But that's a whole different story.

Meanwhile, life at Engrenages Citroën started to return to something approaching normality, though we can assume that Citroën no longer had much time to spend at this business. His primary focus was now building and selling cars.

The advertisement to the left, from 1922 is little changed from years earlier.

Roughly translated, it reads:  
**Citroën Gears**

*Straight and bevel gears. Single and multiple speed reduction  
Silent operation, 98% efficient,  
large reduction ratio*

*The most resistant, practically no wear in any dimension.*

*Feasibility studies, Projects and quotes for all modern transmissions with Citroën Gears*

*Special gears for automobile rear axles and aircraft engines. Speed reduction gears for turbines*

*Machine Tools  
Rolling Mills  
Textile works  
Mine hoists*

We can see that the Škoda factory is no longer mentioned, but the Russian plant is, even though it was nationalised in 1917, at the start of the Russian Revolution.

A slightly different version of this advert included the maximum size of gears that could be



# Engrenages Citroën III

- produced:
  - ⤴ Straight gears
    - up to 9metres in diameter and 1metre wide
  - ⤴ Pinions
    - up to 2metres wide and 2.7metres long
  - ⤴ Bevel gears
    - up to 5metres in diameter and 70centimetres wide
  - ⤴ Internal gears
    - up to 5metres in diameter and 30centimetres wide

## Extending the Range

This ad from October 1923 introduces



LE MANCHON **CITROËN** L'ACCOUPLÉMENT ELASTIQUE DES TRANSMISSIONS MÉCANIQUES EST DEVENU UNE RÉALITÉ.  
S<sup>o</sup>A<sup>o</sup> DES ENGRENAGES CITROËN 31, QUAI DE GRENNELLE - PARIS  
TÉLÉPHONE: 8018-50-50

something new; the company is now manufacturing flexible couplings, to damp torsional shocks caused by sudden accelerations and flywheel effects in rotating machinery.

These couplings were invented not in France but in the UK, by an engineer from Lancashire, James Bibby. In 1919, he formed The Wellman Bibby Company to make and market them in the UK and its dominions.

The patents for the device were not confirmed until 1921, so Engrenages Citroën must have been quick off the mark to reach a licensing agreement for France.

The beauty of the design is that it's completely scalable. Examples capable of transmitting tens of thousands of horsepower were made on both sides of the channel.

From the end of 1933, Engrenages Citroën also

## MOTEUR ANDREAU AGRICOLE ET INDUSTRIEL



4½ CV  
à 1300 et 650 tours  
avec 2 arbres et 4 poulies

REFROIDI A L'AIR  
ET CONSOMMANT  
moins  
d'UN QUART DE LITRE  
PAR CHEVAL-HEURE

PLUS d'accidents par évaporation ou gelée  
PLUS de retour au carburateur  
PLUS de dépense exagérée de carburant

LE MOTEUR ANDREAU  
ÉCONOMISE  
UN LITRE D'ESSENCE  
PAR HEURE DE MARCHÉ

CONSTRUIT PAR LA  
Société Anonyme des ENGRENAGES CITROËN  
31, Quai de Grenelle - Paris

products on a more modest scale too.

One of the more intriguing examples is this small industrial/agricultural engine made under licence from Jean Edouard Andreau.

Like many other figures who pop up in the history of the Citroën company, Jean Andreau was a brilliant engineer who succeeded in several fields.

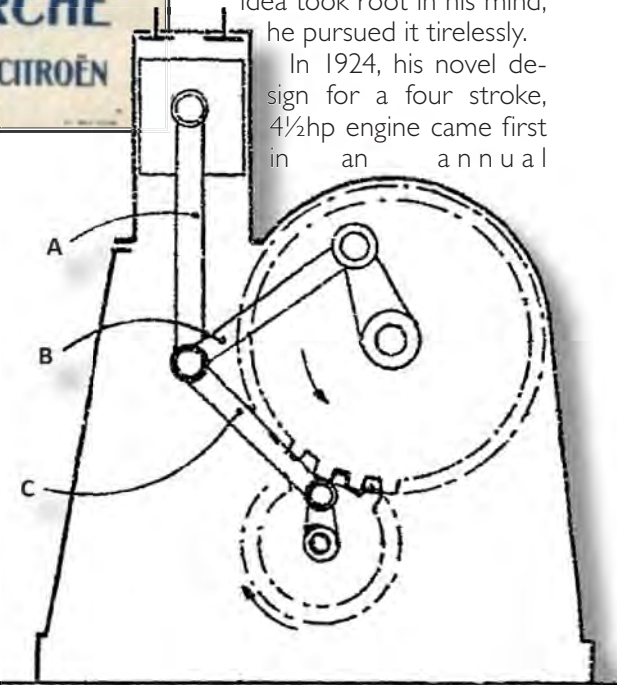
He's best known for his work on aerodynamics in the automotive world, famously coming up with a radical streamlined body for the Peugeot 402 and, later, a three wheeled light car for Mathis. However, his interests were broad and, once an idea took root in his mind, he pursued it tirelessly.

In 1924, his novel design for a four stroke, 4½hp engine came first in an annual

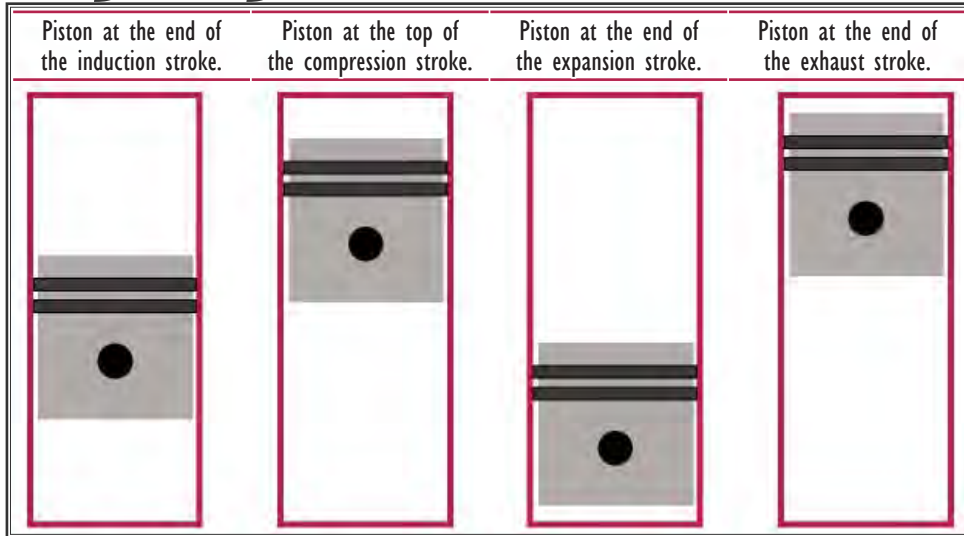
obtained a licence from the Swiss company Pulvis AG to manufacture a load and speed-sensitive clutch they'd developed to provide start-up and overload protection for large electric motors. It achieved a mention in a couple of documents but doesn't seem to have made much of a splash.

## Jean Andreau's Engine

Whenever Citroën's Gear Company is mentioned, the focus is always on immense gears that dwarf a human figure, but during the inter-war years, the product portfolio extended to



# Engrenages Citroën III



competition organised by the Office National des Recherches & des Inventions.

This really was an ingenious concept. The adverts of the day stress how economical it was, without giving any hint how this ground-breaking efficiency is achieved.

This excerpt from one of Andreau's patents starts to give us an idea what makes this engine so different from the norm. We can see there are three connecting rods, A, B and C, together with two crankshafts, which are geared together.

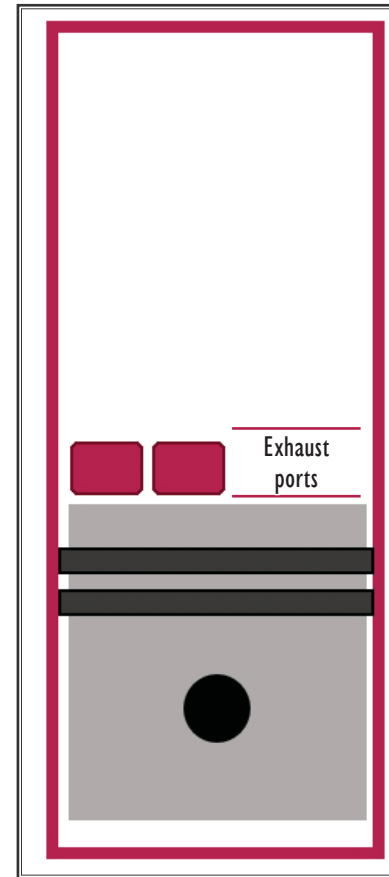
The net effect of this rather complex arrangement is to allow each of the four strokes, admission, compression, expansion and exhaust to be of different lengths.

The figure above explains what this means in practice.

The first two illustrations are pretty conventional. The piston descends, drawing in a fuel-air mixture and then rises to compress it. The size of the volume above the piston when it's at its highest point determines the compression ratio.

However, things get a bit more unusual when the mixture is ignited, forcing the piston down. In the Andreau engine, the piston descends further than it did on the induction stroke, enabling the hot gases to expand further and hence extracting the maximum energy from the fuel. Similarly, as the piston ascends again, for the exhaust stroke, it gets almost to the very top of the cylinder, emptying it completely, ready for a fresh charge of fuel and air.

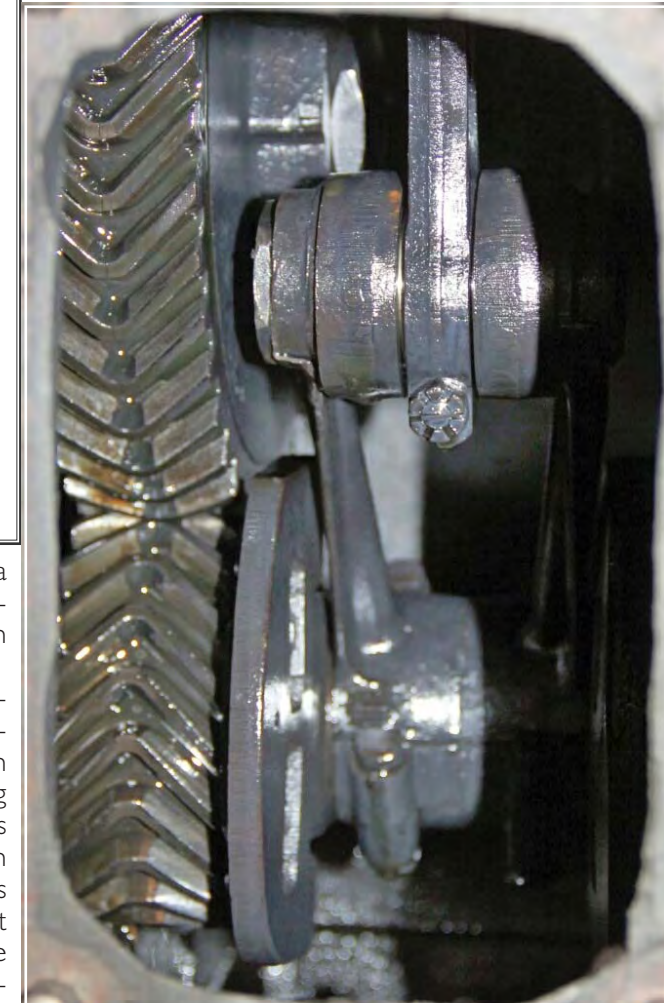
The difference is significant, in the sales documentation, the



engine is described as having a stroke of 90–135mm, a difference of 50% between induction and exhaust.

We can see the Andreau engine offers two immediate benefits, an extended expansion phase and improved scavenging of exhaust gases. In fact, there's a further sophistication here, in that the engine has two ways for the exhaust gases to exit the cylinder. In addition to the conventional cam-driven pop-

pet valve in the head, there is a port in the lower part of the cylinder that's uncovered, two-stroke style, at the bottom of the combustion stroke. It's estimated that 80% of the exhaust gas leaves the cylinder via this means, leaving just the remaining 20% to leave via the traditional route. This allows the ex-



## Engrenages Citroën III



haust valve in the head to be relatively small, leaving space for a large inlet valve.

The piston does not travel so far down the cylinder during the induction stroke, so these ports remain closed during that part of the cycle.

On the negative side, there are additional losses from the additional joints and bearings, but there is a compensating factor. The primary connecting rod, shown as A, in the first diagram, remains close to vertical throughout the power stroke, thus reducing friction between the piston and the cylinder wall and minimising the tendency for the bore to wear on one side, causing ovalisation; quite a problem in conventional engines of the day.

In the production version of the engine, both crankshafts were available on the outside of the crank case. The nominal engine speed was fixed at 1,300rpm, but because the intermediate shaft was geared down by a factor of two, a 650rpm output was also available, to provide more versatility in use.

At the time, this engine offered record breaking fuel economy of around 165grams of fuel per horsepower-hour in official test.

The design allows the compression ratio to be optimised to suit different fuels without

compromising the overall benefits, though it's believed only petrol versions were marketed.

The Andreau engine was manufactured and sold by Engrenages Citroën from 1926 until at least 1934. It's believed several hundred were made, but a more precise figure has proved elusive.

Why was it an attractive product for Engrenages Citroën to build? Well, of course, the two crankshafts were coupled by herringbone gears.

André Citroën himself commissioned Jean Andreau to build experimental four and six cylinder versions of his engine, with a view to fitting them into production vehicles. Citroën must have been pleased with the results, because it's reported that he made Andreau a gift of one of his six-cylinder cars.

It's not known why development ceased, but it may have been because absolute power output was regarded as more important than fuel economy at the time. It's recognised that engines of this type have a relatively low output power for their swept volume, compared to their more conventional four stroke cousins. There may also have been problems making it run successfully over the wide range of speeds required in the automotive world.

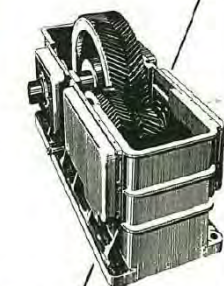
As for the demise of the utility engine, perhaps manufactur-


### LES REDUCTEURS CITROËN

ONT UN RENDEMENT DE 99,2%

**ILS SONT MONTÉS AVEC ENGRENAGES A CHEVRONS**


- Leurs engrenages sont taillés en chevrons sur machines de haute précision et montés sur roulements.
- Leur rigidité est assurée par un carter très nervuré.
- Leurs dentures ont une portée totale grâce à un dispositif de réglage breveté.
- Leur lubrification est toujours abondante et leur étanchéité parfaite.





SOCIÉTÉ ANONYME DES ENGRENAGES CITROËN 31, QUAI DE GRENELLE PARIS 15<sup>e</sup> SEGRUR 05-70

- Le manchon élastique CITROËN est entièrement métallique, d'encombrement réduit et son démontage est facile et rapide.
- Il absorbe les déplacements axiaux et radiaux.
- Grâce au parfait vis-à-vis des dentures, les lames de son ressort en acier spécial sont chargées également.
- Son élasticité circonférentielle est progressive et son effet d'amortissement est maximum.



**TOUS NOS MANCHONS STANDARD SONT LIVRABLES IMMÉDIATEMENT**

### LE MANCHON élastique CITROËN

PROLONGERA LA VIE DE VOS TRANSMISSIONS



## Engrenages Citroën III

ing cost was against it, even given the operational economies it offered, or perhaps the market moved towards small diesels instead.

Engrenages Citroën continued to thrive in the post-war era. Inevitably, as the years went by, there was a move away from bespoke gears to standard products, for example fully enclosed modular reduction units.

In 1962 the com-

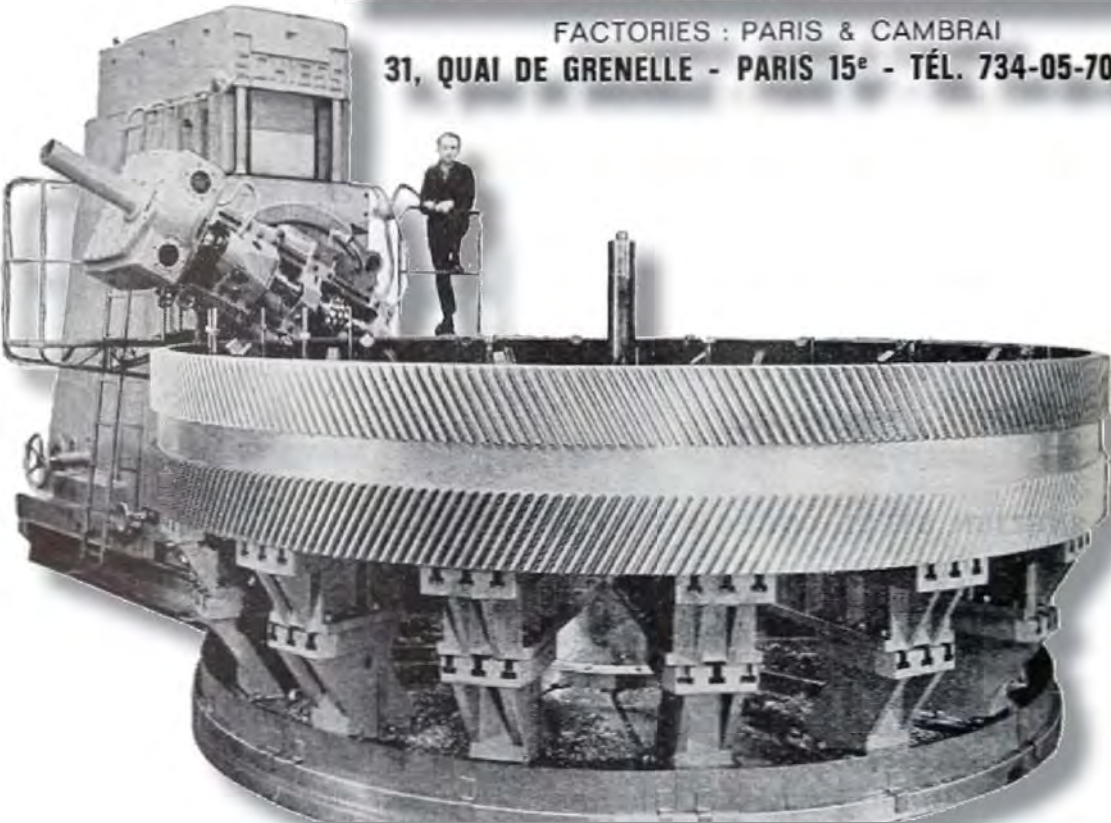
pany acquired Réducteurs Messian of Cambrai, increasing the total headcount to over 900 staff.

One might have expected consolidation; but no. Operation continued more or less as before from two sites. The Head Office remained the factory that André Citroën built in 1911.

### ENGRENAGES ET RÉDUCTEURS CITROËN-MESSIAN

FACTORIES : PARIS & CAMBRAI

31, QUAI DE GRENELLE - PARIS 15<sup>e</sup> - TÉL. 734-05-70



In 1974, Citroën-Messian became part of the PSA Group, along with the car business. In 1977, Citroën-Messian bought the Durand company and re-branded itself CMD, which still exists today.

It was retained by PSA until 1991, when it was acquired by Dynaction-Mecadyne. The business was divested again in 2005, becoming part of another French multinational, Groupe CIF; Compagnie Industrielle et Financière de Bussy SA.

The site in Cambrai, originally

founded by Robert Messian, is still in operation, but the Quai de Grenelle was vacated in the mid-1970s, marking the end of the connection with André Citroën.

### Paris in the 1900s

This map shows just how instrumental the gear factory was in shaping the future geography of Citroën's empire in Paris.

In theory, his munitions plant/car factory could have been sited in any number of places. In the end, it's no surprise he chose to build it just down the

# Engrenages Citroën III

road from the first plot of land he'd bought, five years earlier.

There's little left to see today. The Gear Factory is now a hotel, the Tour Mercure, as is the former axle and drivetrain plant at 61 Quai de Grenelle, which is now a Novotel. The old Mors factory was home to Citroën's

Research and Design teams for many years, before being demolished to create another apartment block.

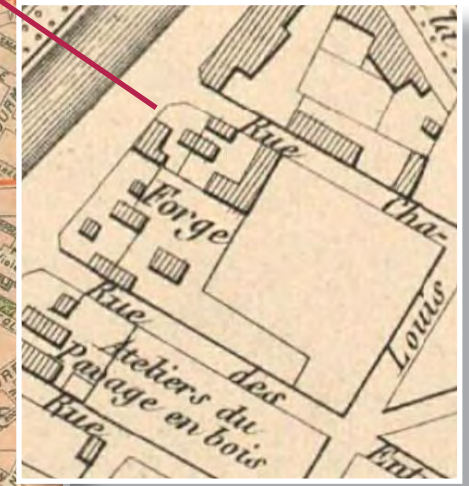
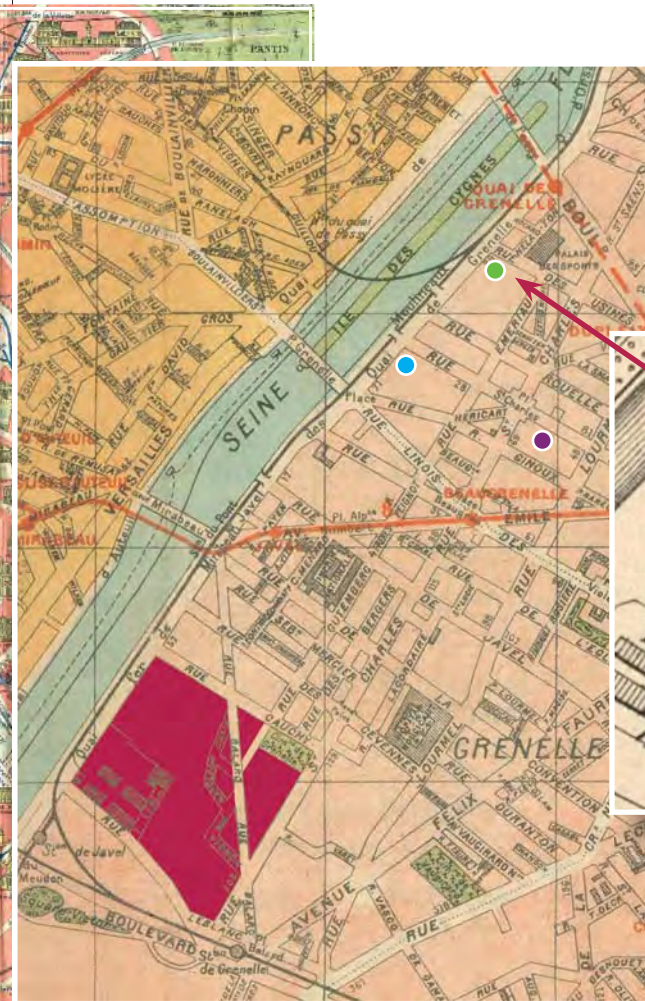
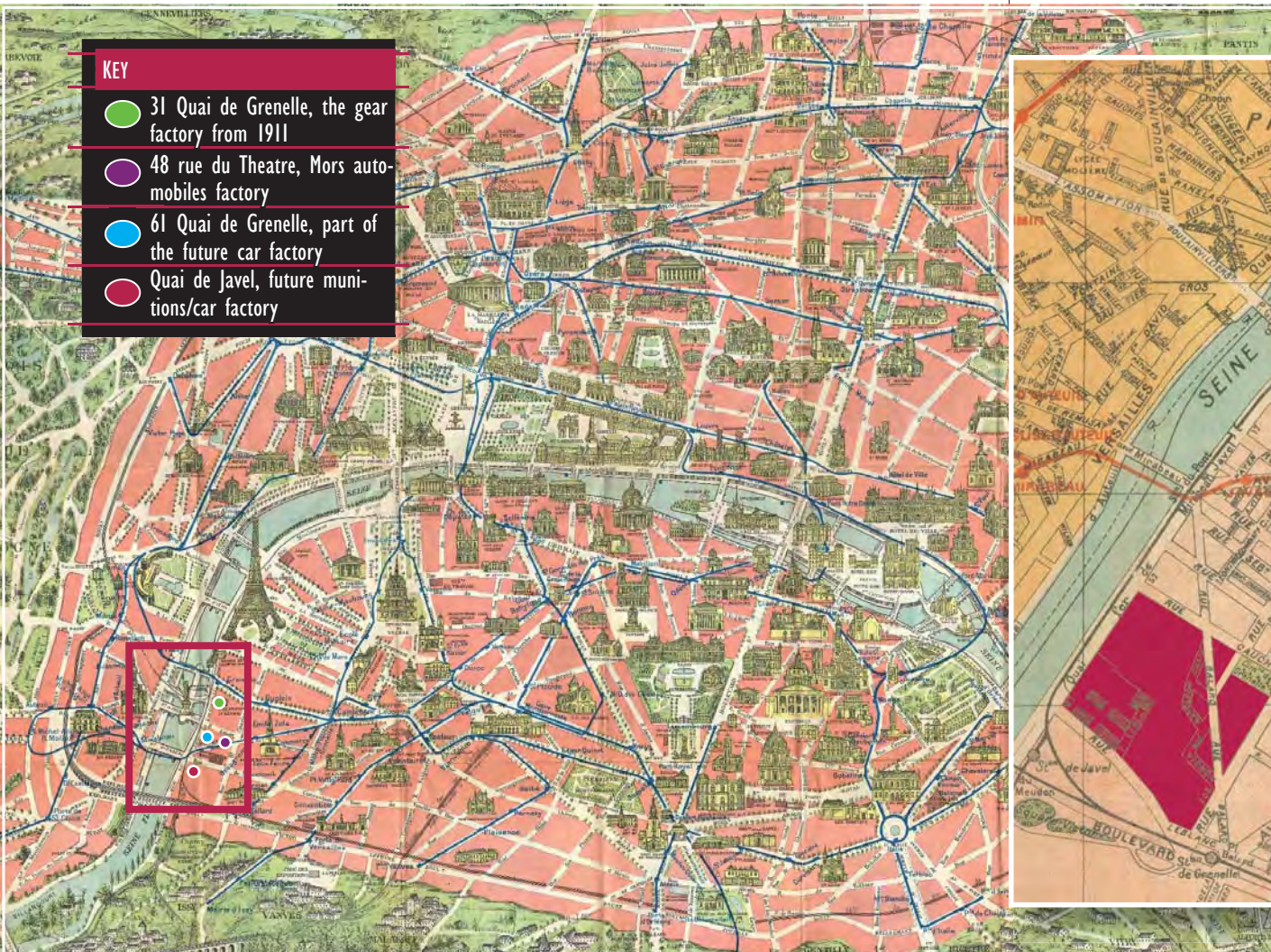
Much of the main factory site has been turned into Parc André Citroën, with a hospital, offices, shops and apartments covering the rest. The name of

the park and a small bronze bust are the only links to the past. A visitor today would hardly believe there was once a factory employing well over 10,000 workers on this site.

Andrew Cox



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The excerpt above is from an 1845 map which shows that the gear factory was built on the site of the great forge erected by Établissements Cail.

# Les Jouets André Citroën...

## A Vintage Toy Story

Citroën's centennial timeline highlights as a milestone for 1923 'André Citroën starts making toy cars that are miniature replicas of "dad's car"'

Knowing nothing about this part of Citroën's operation, I did a quick check of Citroën history sources. It appears the Citroën historians are more interested in the real car part of Citroën, because the toy story does not feature. I obtained about two sentences of information. I finally gathered the information I needed from French toy car collectors' blog sites. It is a very interesting story, so here goes.

As we know, André Citroën was a marketing genius and was the forefather of many of the



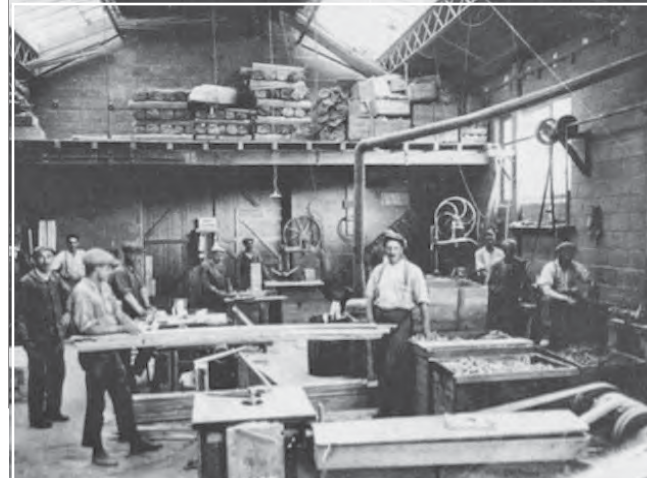
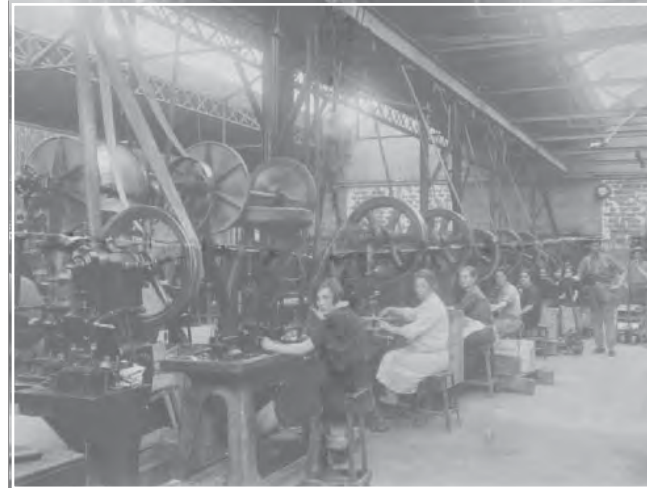
The man with the idea: Fernand Migault.

marketing techniques in use today. His marketing techniques are no better illustrated than by his 'toy story'.

One of André's early slogans was 'the first words from children must be Dad, Mum and Citroën'; so where did he get the light bulb moment to use toys? Well, in fact, he didn't.

The story starts with Fernand Migault, who had taken over his father's small toy workshop in Paris, in 1919. He already had a keen interest in sporting automobiles and cycles and wanted to develop the company and introduce quality products related to automobiles or mechanical toys. He was aware of the Citroën phenomenon from the start, and the full pages of advertisements in favour of type A and B2 made him understand that the search for the development of his business should, directly or indirectly, accompany the programme of this Citroën factory.

He developed the idea of toy Citroën cars as a marketing strategy for André. Fernand was fortunate to have a cousin, Marcel Gourdet, who was an expert tinsmith and small time model maker. He commissioned him to produce a Citroën B2 model in exact detail. The model was built and it looked great. The next challenge was to arrange a meeting with André.



Fortunately he had a friend who set it up. Initially, André was surprised by the proposal; but, after analysing and inspecting the model, he figuratively grabbed the light bulb and turned it on.

André Citroën, in his office on the second floor of Javel, where he was assisted by Mlle de Les Cases, studied the toy in question. Migault's offer came as a surprise at first, then was analysed and dissected, and André Citroën was undeniably enthusiastic about it. As he himself once said: 'If the toy is well made, if it faithfully reproduces the real model, it will undoubtedly evoke in the child, but also in his parents, in his entourage, in the retailers who will sell it, and consequently for the public who will see the brand 'Citroën' exposed everywhere and that undoubtedly will constitute marvellously effective publicity, by multiplying with thousands of specimens a durable publicity support and of course always offering a thousand other possibilities to speak about it.'

Later in the same speech: 'It should be pointed out that, in addition to this enormous publicity, there would be a priceless advantage, because in fact it

The CIJ factory, at Briare employed many women who, in the aftermath of the war, often were widowed and in need of an income.

## Les Jouets André Citroën...

would be free, constant publicity, or at least at a very low cost and with no comparison with the result.'

In October 1932, he also told his dealers at a banquet after the Paris Motor Show: 'A product may be good and it may stand out, but it still has to be publicised. ...People say to me every day: 'Why do you spend whole pages in the newspapers? Why do you light up the Eiffel Tower? Your cars are famous. Everyone knows they exist; there are 700,000 of them on the road

trielle du joué [CIJ, Migault's company], they only had seven personnel. The workforce would increase to 200 employees. The factory was set up in 1923 in Briare and it is believed Citroën assisted in the design, layout and in determining the equipment needed. The toy production line arrangement was very similar to Citroën's own assembly line for mass production.

Citroën's production line methods resulted in large cost savings so, his assistance in setting up CIJ, no doubt, repaid Citroën with very cost competitive toys. The layout had separate workshop areas for tooling, bar turning, stamping, screw cutting, soldering, carpentry, degreasing and painting, assembly, finishing and packing. The photo of

the toy factory shows the screw cutting workshop used for making small parts like steering tie rods. Note the high numbers of females in the workforce, which highlights the ongoing fallout from World War I; a shortage of men, and war widows needing an income to survive.

### The Contract and André's Marketing Strategies

CIJ had to deliver all the finished toys to the Citroën factory. All the promotion and marketing was controlled by Citroën. The toys were sold

through Citroën dealerships throughout France, and in Parisian department stores. The objective was to attract children to buy toys in the dealerships, accompanied by their parents. So, when they went in to buy the toy, the salesperson would also introduce the real car.

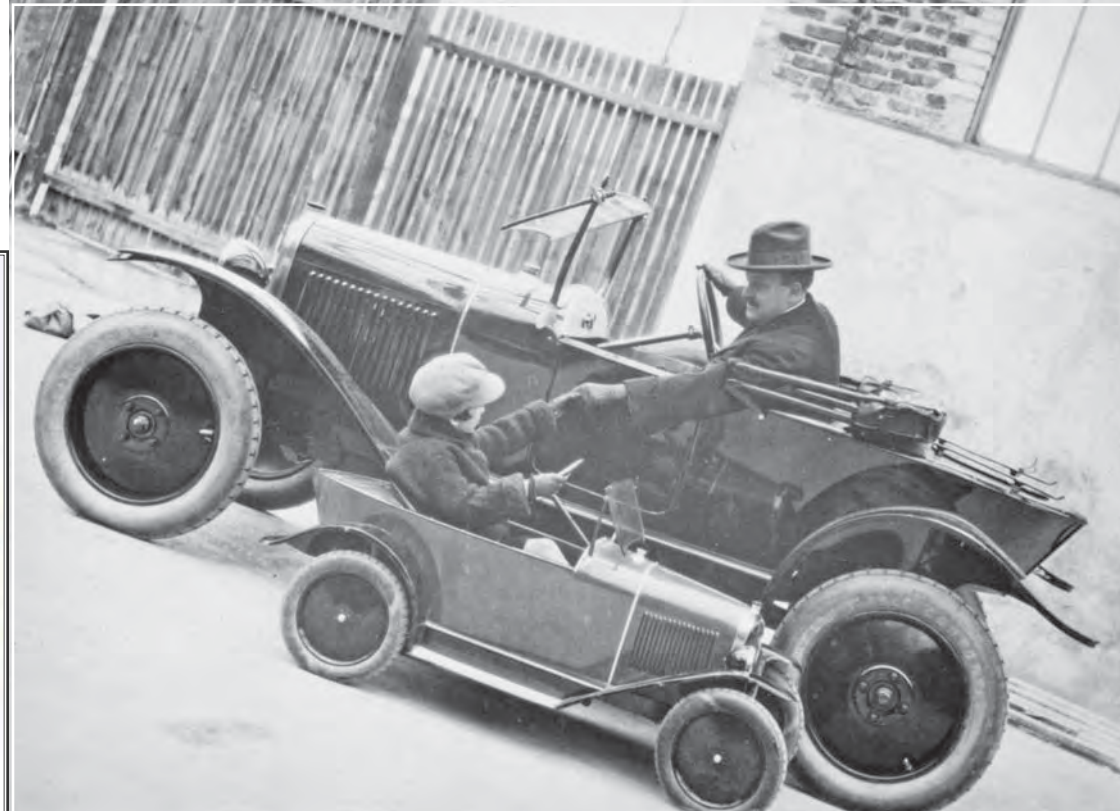
The toys were displayed in the showrooms' front windows and, in the lead up to Christmas, the models were arranged with stunning scenic backdrops. When Citroën released its new range of vehicles, the new toys



in France. Well, I think we still need to get the attention of the 40million inhabitants, even the children we take in at an early age because, as I said at Columbia University, the first words a child needs to say are: "Daddy, Mummy... and Citroën!"

What followed resulted in Citroën becoming the first car company to produce scaled-down replicas of its models.

At the time, in 1922, when a contract was arranged between Citroën and Compagnie indus-



# Les Jouets André Citroën...



mixing and delivering the paint they were currently using.

The only name on the toy would be that of André Citroën. At the time, it was customary to display the toy manufacturer or toymaker's name. André Citroën's name was boldly stencilled under the toy. The strategy was, that when the child turned the toy over to regularly wind up the spring motor, they would see the Citroën name.

Over time, they would associate car and Citroën, so, in adulthood, they would naturally buy Citroën without asking questions.

It was an exclusive contract. CIJ could only make Citroën model toys.

The toy cars were made in 1/10th scale. They were big models around 38cm long, well made from nickel plated sheet and had fine detail, as you can see from the photos.

of that range also had to be available. This involved Citroën supplying CIJ with drawings and access to the pre-production cars.

The models had to be exact miniature replicas of the real vehicles. The colours used on the toys had to match Citroën's colour range. Citroën helped by



Some of the early versions had wooden parts. Most had a wind up spring mechanism that drove the back wheels. The front wheels turned through the miniature steering wheel. Some had an opening driver's

door with an operating door handle, folding front seats or folding hoods. There was an extensive body and colour range. The range also included trucks, vans, taxis, fire engines and special editions like the expedition autochenille [half-track]. 15,000 of the cars were sold in the first year.

Citroën marketed them as 'Les Jouets Citroën' [Citroën Toys] and had a number of attractive posters produced. Interestingly, the posters feature girls using the toys. Citroën had a significant number of women buying their cars, particularly



## Les Jouets André Citroën...

the 5CV, so getting girls used to the Citroën brand for later in life was an important marketing strategy. Promoting the toys as unisex would also widen the sales market. The boy in the poster is driving a Citroënnette 5CV pedal car, but that is another story.

André's view was that the toys, being exact replicas, were a cheap form of ongoing brand recognition, so the more he could sell, the better. Citroën's website states that more than 30,000 examples were produced over a 10-year period.

This is not correct. Citroën managed to sell hundreds of thousands over that period. It was recorded that, in 1925 alone, 47,489 of the B2 and 36,413 of the 5CV were delivered to Citroën. The 5CV was priced at F29, which would equate to around \$60 in today's world.

They also sold chassis constructor kits which were influenced by the Meccano construction format.

During the '20s and '30s, all these toys were available from Citroën branches, especially at Christmas, when magnificent dioramas depicting French or overseas landscapes were used to present these little cars.

At the time of preparing this article the green B14 on the left was for sale on eBay. The price estimate was US\$10,000.

What ecstatic joy any child felt when their father, acceding to their wishes, and perhaps even anticipating them, entered the shop and allowed them to leave with a B14 Conduite intérieure and [this too is remarkable] a spare set of Michelin rubber tyres.

The main stages of Citroën's toy production almost followed the release of the real models: in 1925, the delivery cars and



the B2 taxi appeared; in 1926 the new B12 torpedo, the taxi and the van; in 1927 it was the turn of the numerous B14s with their striking platform, coupé and city coupé; in 1928, the C4s and C6s arrived in countless versions, but, above all, the miniature models in plaster and flour in 1:43 scale.

The 'plâtre et farine' toys were an immediate success, selling 5,200 that year, and production soared until 1933, when 576,000 were sold! In 1933, a total of 850,000 CIJ toys were sold.

The Jouets Citroën 1/43rd scale toys were produced from 1922 to 1934. But this is where the similarity between the little Citroën and the big Citroën becomes apparent once again, because the Citroën toy was so closely associated with the life of the factory, and so closely represented the factory's production, that when the difficulties that led to Citroën's receivership came to an end, the same difficulties arose at Briare by osmosis. Citroën was dismayed when, in 1934, in a bid to diversify, CIJ began manufacturing Renault toys.

For a while, it was envisaged that the toys would be manufactured by the Citroën factory itself, and a few toys were undoubtedly built, but it was a flash in the pan.

*Buying an André Citroën Toy*

If you have read the story so far you will now be aware the toys were an important part of early Citroën history. Want to get your hands on one and have it displayed in your lounge? There is some good and bad news regarding the toys.

The bad news. Most of these toys are now 90 plus years old, and with their fine detail and build quality, they are keenly sought after by vintage toy collectors. Serious collectors pay eye watering amounts for rare examples.

In 2018, a van was put to auction in America. The auction house gave it an estimated value of two to three thousand dollars. Some collectors believed it to be a rare signage design that didn't make the final production range. The hammer fell at US\$48,000 which, if you were bidding from New Zealand, would be just under NZ\$80,000. [below]

The good news. A recession is predicted to hit Europe where



# Les Jouets André Citroën...



these toys are traded. At present, you would be paying between \$2,000 and \$5,000 for a good example [that is not too special enough for collectors to fight over]. Bargains well below this price range will likely appear.

Another option is to purchase



If US\$10,000 is more than you have burning a hole in your pocket this Traction Jouet Citroën was auctioned in 2019 with an estimate of £40 to £60.

a 'restored toy' These have normally been repainted and have had damage repaired or missing parts renewed as a hobby project. They look stunning, but collectors wanting a vintage-look toy run a mile, so the result of all the time and effort is the toy devalues by as much as 50%.

A 'restored' B14 Faux Cabriolet sold at auction re-



cently for NZ\$1,050 [below].

Well used examples, normally passed over by collectors, can be had for a few hundred dollars. These actually make stunning displays and conversation pieces. They are still the real deal and the worn paint and bent axle look shows they have been used as a toy, as intended, and have no doubt given children a lot of enjoyment.

In my opinion, more of these precious Citroën toys should be going to Citroën enthusiasts to proudly display. Just an old toy not a Citroën? Not so sure. They are an exact scale replica of a Citroën. André Citroën has signed these as Citroën and they were sold through the Citroën dealer network. A bébé Citroën? Go and get one!

Honestly though, if you are interested, do your homework first, seek advice and most importantly, get one that appeals to you, and will give you ongoing enjoyment.

Tony Burrell, TWCCCC



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<http://jouetsCitroën.over-blog.com>  
<https://aventure-citroen-min.forumactif.com/>

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## Member's Model: 5CV

I came to be the owner of a 5CV Citroën quite by chance.

With my involvement in restoring a 24/60 Sunbeam coming to the end, Up The Creek Workshop [UTC] in Castlemaine, suggested that I go and look at a Wolsit project owned by Damian O'Doherty in Ballarat.

It was to be an interesting restoration and creation project, being a Florio 1907 Wolsit Racer with a 5.5-litre engine designed by Wolseley and Italian designers.

Yes, English and Italians working together!

Anyway, while looking at this very daunting pile of bits without a body, Damian mentioned that his nearby Citroën, 'Lemondrop', was for sale.

So I chickened out of buying the Wolsit project and became a 5CV owner instead.

The car appealed to me be-

cause of its unique shape with the boat tail and elegant upright stance, and also, because it needed some TLC, which was more up my alley.

In my previous life, I had been a subcontractor installing pre-fabricated storage systems and then a nursing home proprietor and builder.



Before Damian, who had the car mostly stored in his shed for 12 years, 'Lemondrop' had been the project of Frank and Beryl Smith, and their friend Tom Walters, for nine years.

I have been unable to contact Frank and Beryl but have attached some notes from the Gladstone Vintage and Classic Car Club to do with their car creation. [Since writing this article Paul has been

able to make contact with Frank and Beryl. Paul is very sure that they will be very happy to read that 'Lemondrop' has not only found a new home, but also been beautifully restored. Ed.]

Here is what Frank originally wrote... *It all started after finding a right hand mudguard, a valance panel and a running board. After a little scratching around in the dirt*





## Member's Model: 5CV

I dug up a door catch, a door handle and the beading from the only door.

The door beading allowed me to ascertain the size of the door. The remainder of the measurements were mainly estimated from an enlarged photo of an original Citroën. Tom Walters, using his plumbing skills, bent the body parts while I completed the shaping. Most of the timber was obtained from shipyards, with the sections on the door, over the cowl and door frames being fashioned from maple. The body was sheeted with Zincaneal, tacked onto the wooden frame.

After the body, the mechanicals were commenced with the re-boring of the engine, valves re-seated and reground, etc. The painting and the upholstery were undertaken by me, and after about nine years the restoration of 'Lemondrop' was complete.

It can be a long, drawn-out journey, not for the impatient, and when all is found, the old parts will need tender care for, mostly, they will be old, rusty and tired.

1988 Kingaroy

A good chassis, springs, a front axle, motor and radiator. This motor had been used to drive a bench saw and a connecting rod had penetrated the bottom of the motor.

1987 Rockhampton

A broken chassis, springs and



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## Member's Model: 5CV

a few body parts. These body parts were used as patterns. No original tin exists on the car, except for the bonnet.

1988 Brisbane

A good gearbox was found in use driving a factory shaft.

1988 Bororen

A motor and gearbox that had been used in a boat, but it was missing one connecting rod. This motor was good for parts, but the topside of it was rusted out. But it did team-up well with the Kingaroy motor to make a good one. The pistons were from a Morris Minor.

1990 Brisbane

Magneto, wheels, bonnet, brakes levers, an original jack, starter motor and spot lights.

1991 Brisbane

Pedestal for pan. Brake levers and the radiator cap.

Fancy scratching around in the dirt to find bits and pieces necessary to restore or make a car.

The forged door beading that Frank mentions took a lot of work to give it a nickel plated finish, having been previously painted. It involved sand blasting, welding and grinding, soldering up the rust pit holes, sanding, copper plating and polishing, [twice] and, finally, nickel plating.

However, I digress.

To start the TLC process, and make the car brand-new again, I have learnt in the past that to



do that properly you must go back to square one. So I pulled the car apart.

Then good fortune struck.

I heard from UTC that the Motor Life Museum in Wollongong had an incomplete 5CV they wanted to sell, so up we went to bring it back on a trailer.

From this donor car, there were some parts which were particularly useful, including the steering box, the new bottom end of the engine, the rear end, the hood irons and bows, the terrific individually stamped Michelin wheels. But we were also able to make a single good part out of two less attractive examples, like a switch, for instance.

I should also mention that I was able to get a build plate, a double chevron oil pressure gauge, a tail light and a St Christopher badge, to bring good luck, from PreWarCar.com

Also French car club badges came from Donnington's Auctions along with new cast aluminium hub caps from Bendigo.

It has been a two year journey to bring the car up to as-new condition, using Andrews Automotive Restorations for final painting, UTC for most of the mechanical work, Compleat Auto Upholstery for the trimming, and my friend Vic for the bright work.

The attached photos tell the story better than a thousand

## Member's Model: 5CV



Etablir le niveau d'huile en se servant du robinet placé en bas et en avant du carter. Ouvrir ce robinet, verser jusqu'à ce que l'huile coule tel le refermer lorsque l'écoulement s'arrête. Ne jamais laisser descendre le niveau de l'huile dans le carter au-dessous du trait inférieur de la jauge. Vidanger l'huile tous les 1.500 kilom.

## Member's Model: 5CV

words and also show other cars in my collection.

What would André Citroën say if he knew it took 11 years to build a 5CV in Australia? He would turn in his grave... 'Les Aussies, so slo mon dieu, sacre blu... or bloody hopeless,' in French, of course.

The car drives well but doesn't like doing more than 55kph, so the hazard lights are on when beyond the city speed limit.

It's also a bit nervy to drive in traffic because it doesn't like to stop!

We took it to Tasmania for the pre Cit-In tour but we didn't make it past first base in Ulverstone at the Big 4 Caravan Park.

And because no one from the organising committee has been in touch with us since then I would like use this opportunity to tell them that the car is still in Tasmania and that we flew home safely.

On arriving at the Big 4 Caravan Park, the engine started to run like a chaff cutter, and despite the very generous efforts by Joe from Brisbane [who has a beautiful two-door Light 15] and me, we didn't succeed in getting it going again.

We both thought it was a faulty magneto.

The starter motor also retired itself which meant lots of attempts at jump



starting.

To make matters worse, that day I mucked up the accommodation booking [there is also a Big 4 Caravan Park in St Helens!] and, because of a triathlon, there was no local accommodation. We had to catch a taxi to a Burnie hotel, just to rub salt into the wounded organiser [me].

This is all my wife's fault, of course, because she assumed, incorrectly, that I could do as good a job as her in organising the accommodation.

Anyway the next day, after a few necessary beers the night before, it was a taxi back to the car again but for no avail. It wouldn't go.

So here we were, two elderly people, stuck overseas in a strange country with no car and no accommodation [there was lots of accommodation though, for eight days, in different places in Tassie, and all prepaid for].

The RACT flatbed truck finally turned up at 5 o'clock, so we loaded up the car and got in with the driver to go to Longford where most of the car still is.

It is in a shed in my daughter-in-law's family berry farm.

I say 'most of the car', because the next day, with my brother-in-law Tom's help, with whom we stayed in Launceston, we took off the magneto and starter motor and carby, and posted

## Member's Model: 5CV

them back to Castlemaine.

They have now been looked at by UTC and certified as good to go.

It will be a month before I am able to reinstall these bits on the engine as I have just been given [not financially] a pace-maker; but being positive, I have booked the 'Spirit of Tasmania' for the return trip.

So please all keep your fingers crossed for me.

If you think that this story is a tale of woe then you'd be wrong.

It is all part and parcel of being afflicted with the disease of having to collect old cars and restore them.

You learn to expect the unexpected.

In the restoration process you are often confronted with seemingly impossible challenges but you soldier on to finally defeat, and conquer [thank you Winston].

And in this process you hone your skills, meet lots of very interesting, but sometimes frustrating, people [you want it WHEN!?!], learn a helluva lot, do lots and lots of skiing [spending your kids inheritance], and having great fun.

Au revoir,  
Paul Johnson



## For the Love of Traction

Subiaco is now a city in its own right, but back in my Primary School days, the suburb was one of many rising from Perth's sandy coastal plain.

Grade Five was a good year, and my primary life activities of marbles, cricket and football were complemented by the addition of Catherine M. Catherine was not at all interested in marbles, cricket or football: all the activities then played with intent, and some still played, in the hot, dirty, black sands of Subiaco's playground.

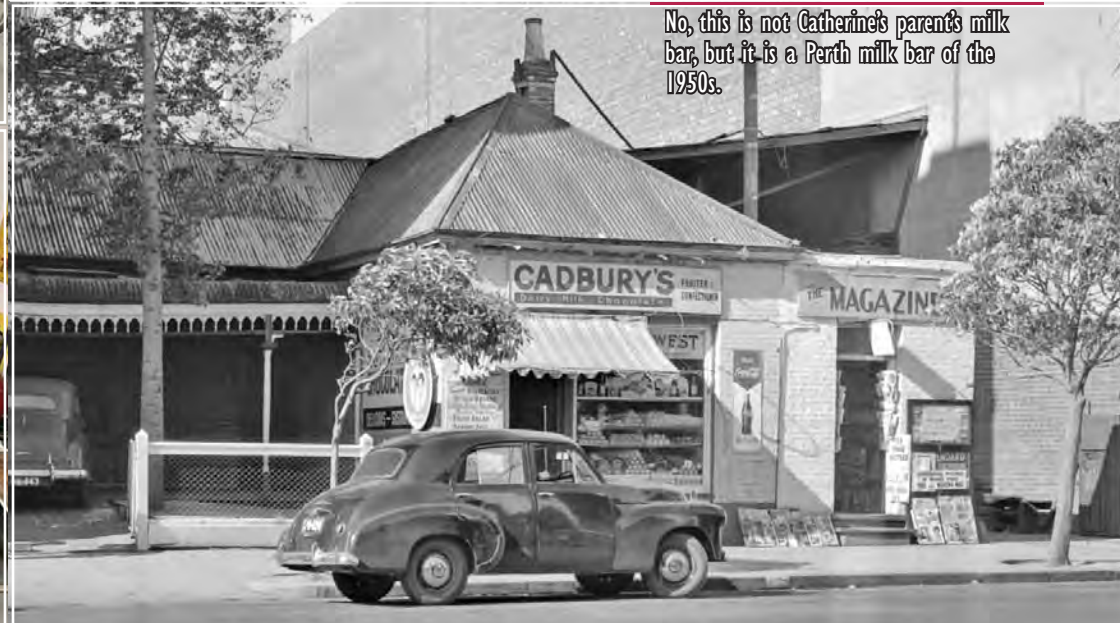
Catherine, however, for some unknown reason, would let me walk home with her after school to her home which was half way to my home some four miles

further. Her home was above her parents' corner shop and located in a quiet area of Subiaco served by a quiet meandering road system in those early days of developing suburbia.

Walking home on these occasions was a 'win-win' situation: the three-penny piece bus fare, normally given to the driver sitting in his enclosed half cabin over the engine and separated from the public by a glass sliding window and a dirty money transfer counter, was saved.

The money saved on the bus fare home held in my hand, along with my varying fortune of marbles in a sock, and Catherine's hand in the other.

Some forty years later, those quiet back streets turned into



No, this is not Catherine's parents' milk bar, but it is a Perth milk bar of the 1950s.

## For the Love of Traction

major roads, but the lesser ones have not really changed and provided me with several 'rat runs' to navigate from one congested area to another.

One of these 'rat runs' would see me regularly pass, on many early insignificant occasions, a discarded black car left to obviously decay in the rising verge grass.

Curiosity eventually made me stop and investigate the ruins, and I was increasingly interested in the experience, just as I was with Catherine, many years earlier, whose corner home now is a thriving, classy coffee shop;

**This is my four-speed ID Traction along with my first 220: a 1955 Mercedes. Both of these marques have run parallel through my life both for their diverse and interesting differences.**



one of many common in most of suburbia these days.

The black car had big headlights, flowing mud guards and a chrome grill. I reflected on Catherine momentarily. After a negotiation process, the car was mine and eventually it was dragged from its hiding place, onto a trailer, and taken home with me.

Later, those in the know, told me the car was a Traction made by Citroën in about 1948, assembled in Slough, England, and given the 'Slough touch' of wood, chrome and leather.

Now in my possession, the car has been given many new face lifts and mechanical repairs. The most significant, and engineeringly worthy, modifications, being the installation of a high-speed crown wheel and pinion

gear and additional output drive shaft bearings on the gearbox, courtesy of an excellent design and engineering manufacturer in England. This modification has endeared itself to me as being almost as good as the, more common, ID four speed conversion for a lot less fuss. Less fuss especially if ID rods were installed in the Traction engine at the same time. The rod selection in my spares box exhibited stretched big end caps that I had not noticed before, so more attention was required to obtain a good set.

This car has been driven across Australia twice; most notably to be the only Citroën I could see attending the Shannon's 2002 event, which attracted some 2,000 entrants.

Time moves on, and an ad-

vertisement in a magazine provided a trailer trip to the East coast to obtain my second Traction; a partly finished project with many spares.

What could I do!

On the way back the trailer broke in half along both top rails due to the overzealous loading of many heavy spares.

When in trouble someone appears and helps you and this was in the form of a kind, and clever, mechanic from a back street garage in Ceduna who welded a new top rail repair on both sides. He went out of his weekend safety zone to help us.

Further on in the journey, and approaching Madura Pass, on the saucer's rim of Western Australia, my co-driver announced that he had just seen, out of his side window, a wheel



## For the Love of Traction

racing past us, and vanish into the Madura scrub!

We stopped our now three-wheeled trailer, recovered most of the jettisoned bits and realised all the wheel studs had sheared off from the Holden hub. I had brought many bearings, seals and grease. But not any studs!

We were stuck in Madura at the bottom of the escarpment!

That night we enjoyed, as best we could, what hospitality Madura could muster, which was mainly in the form of a huge campfire, and carefully stowed and carried beverages. This is a typical formula I have used on many of my bush trips.

My friend eventually went to sleep in the Pajero while I stayed up next to my Traction inventing many ways to solve the problem.

At about 02:30 a road maintenance truck, pulling a large trailer, rolled into a roadside bay in the darker perimeter of the scrub, and eventually the lone driver walked slowly towards me from the perimeter of darkness.

We exchanged the usual bush greetings and discussed world problems and solutions. One of the main problems was the fate of my Traction on its foreshortened journey.

As we spoke my eyes slowly focused, strained at first, at a very large generator on the

trailer and next to the generator was an unbelievable welder. The electrical power unit looked as big as the Murex ground power units we used to start the turbo prop engines back in my Perth aircraft tarmac days.

My early morning road maintenance man had a distinct 'in the bush for many weeks' look about him, with his long beard covering most of his chequered shirt, from which a long pair of skinny jeans-type trousers covered the rest of him, down to the rubber thongs on his well-used feet.

'Do you want me to fix your broken wheel?' he asked. 'I

**While this article is about John's Traction collection, long term readers will also recall that he is keen follower and collector of arriere models. Check out the video on the Club's website.**

**RACING ROSALIE**



could weld it back together and not use any studs and nuts for assembly back on to the trailer's side.'

The Murex roared into life and you could safely say everyone in the caravan park would have been awakened. 'Put the wheel on the ground and place the broken hub in position.' I did as requested. 'Now stand on it while I weld the bits together,' was my next instruction.

Not having any shoes on at this time, I was hesitant to oblige so the bearded angel lent me his rubber thongs. What was I thinking? I stood, as instructed, and the arcing began.

The car park lit up as if a noisy spaceship was landing, and after the completion of a magnificent welding job I found my borrowed thongs had several five stud burn-mark patterns to authenticate the weld had suffi-

cient penetration.

After lots of appreciative hugging and suggested children's names we parted company.

The trailer wheel was reunited with my Traction, and with my still-sleeping friend in the Pajero, we were on our way before the sun rose.

Reaching the top of the escarpment my friend finally stirred.

'What's that barbecue smell in here?'

I said, 'Go back to sleep,' and we headed for home!

This car began my interest in the ID conversion which, in those halcyon days of thought and innovations, I diverted from the common accepted mechanical path of an ID gearshift installed inside the bulkhead and a maze of rods and bell cranks down the right-hand side, and eventually operating the ID gearbox.

I wanted, for me, a more direct path down the left side of the engine from a bespoke instrument mounted mechanism and via two flexible cables to another custom lever mechanism on the left-hand side of the gearbox. This worked well for me and, along with the installation of a dual downdraught carburettor and a 123ignition, the car performs well and has been across Australia twice to Cit-In Events.

The narrow engine bay of my

## For the Love of Traction

car allowed just enough space for my modification, but the wider engine bay cars would be more user friendly.

My third Traction, another 1950 or so, Slough assembled car was a local purchase from a fellow who had pulled it apart but then found he had to abandon the project.

Again, a trailer load of Traction bits arrived at my shed, was given a number, and told to sit down, and wait a while.

This car was rebuilt, from what was available, to be a reliable car in its standard form, and I liked it a lot because it didn't jump out of gear, wob-

ble the front end when braking, shudder on the clutch and drive shafts or whine in top gear.

All these symptoms Traction owners would have possibly encountered in many forms and corrected in their favourite method,

This car has also attended Cit-Ins over East.

New Zealand is a source of well-maintained, and daily usage older cars.

A friend of mine here in Perth originated from the South Island. He came from a knowledgeable family and circle of Traction owners and had imported into Perth a pre-war 7C

Traction in original and complete unrestored condition.

In exchange for some money, a very rusty garden trailer and two bales of wool, the car was mine and I parked it in one of my sheds to wait for a time slot.

At first, I probably didn't completely appreciate what I had in front of me, but when the time came to work on the rebuild project, pleasure began to unfold.

I liked the pre-war Traction look in its original design with the obvious engine flaps, skinny

**John's lovely 7C Traction, with its beautifully recreated 'Comet' door trims and superb pleated leather seat upholstery.**

mudguards and the extra effort in the chrome work.

The interior is where Citroën excels, in my opinion, with the curved wooden dash set-off by round gauges. Wooden window winder knobs are a classic feature.

Car upholstery is a dying art here in Perth, but luckily, my upholstery friend, an ex-aircraft upholsterer, faithfully reproduced a complete leather interior featuring the Comet door card design and a vintage style narrow, and raised, seat fluting.

The upholsterer was co-employed by Mac Robertson Miller Airlines at the same time as my





## For the Love of Traction

apprenticeship; 1959 to 1963.

At the end of my apprenticeship, I was too young, according to the Department of Civil Aviation regulations, to hold an aircraft licence but I had passed all the exams to hold a DC3 engine and airframe licence, which was later stamped in my book.

A great day for me.

Mechanically, the 7C is of that period and has a smaller engine capacity, resulting in modern traffic speeds being a problem also, the clutch is extremely hard, which makes driving tedious at times.

Braking is also hard, because the 7C seems to have smaller

diameter brake drums, but all of this is part of the car's evolution to the post-War cars.

All these early mechanical issues don't stop the 7C being my favourite from the period of the Traction's evolution into a remarkable series of models having a great combination of strength, style and innovation.

André Citroën did a great job in sourcing ideas from around Europe and America and combining the best innovative component ideas into a great classic, and I often ponder what the Slough interior would have morphed into if no war had intervened.



Over the years the Traction fleet has been reduced to a remaining number of four, and I chose to keep the ID conversion and the 1937 7C Traction and have moved onto other rebuild projects. I also kept the high-speed gearbox and improved Traction motor combination as a future standby unit.

The Traction is in its 90th year and this reminded me that not long ago, it seems, I drove over East to a Cit-In with a large '75' decal on both the front doors,

**John, and his ever-present canine companion, Joey, are not averse to also working on the odd DS.**

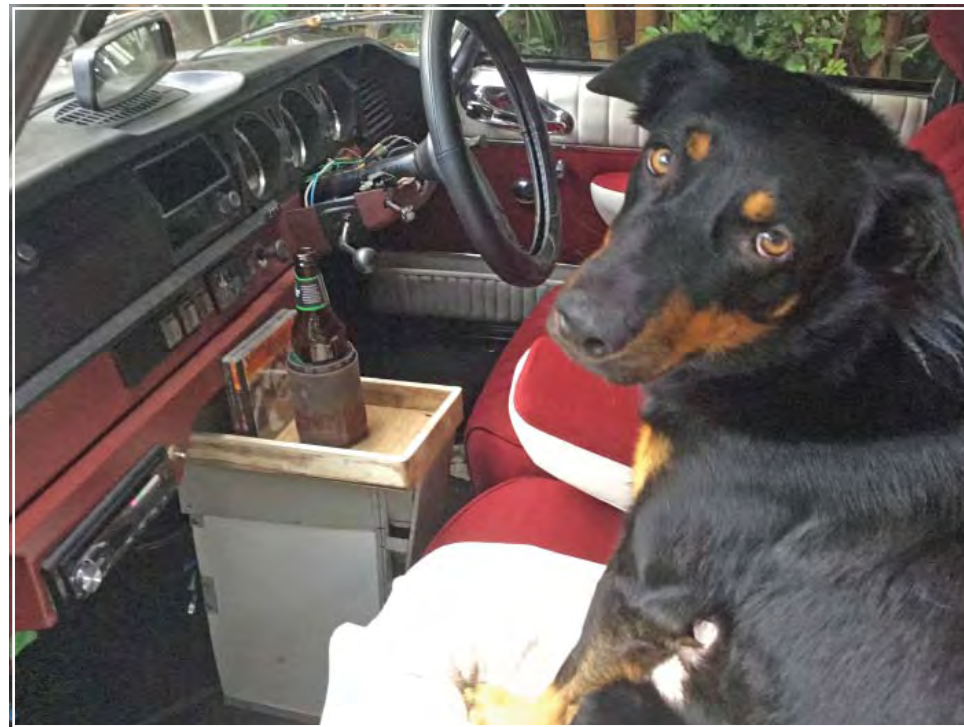
to celebrate that anniversary of the classic.

Thanks to Catherine, all those years ago, for showing me the way to my Traction experience and in saving me all the three-penny pieces. I kept all of them in my golden Commonwealth Bank tin, with its anti-retrieval flap in the top, and invested them in my Traction purchase experiences.

I also have most of my marbles, I think!

I keep them in a jar on my bed side table as a reminder; along with my teeth, hearing aid and reading glasses!

John Freeman and his dog Joey.



## Member's Model: B 14 F

I am a car enthusiast with a love for Citroëns, and own a 1927 Citroën B 14 F. It was exciting to be offered the opportunity to share my love for Citroëns, and in particular, this car with others.

Being built in Italy, as opposed to being built at the French factory, makes this car a little unusual. Before being imported to Australia, from Italy in the 1980s, it was restored

Once imported, the car then came from a bankruptcy sale in South Australia and was transported down to Tasmania. It was owned in Tasmania by a guy at Hagley House, about 30km west of Launceston. The car spent a good deal of its time

being 'stored' in the National Automobile Museum of Tasmania in Launceston.

[While I have your attention, this museum also houses the 1973 DS 23 that was driven to victory by Jim Reddix, André Welinski and Des Tubman in the 1974 London-Sahara-Munich World Cup Rally. You will



Image: Hagley House.  
[www.ourtasmania.com.au](http://www.ourtasmania.com.au)



be able to read the full story is a coming edition. Ed.]

After this, in 2015, I acquired the car and, while it had been loved it was looking fairly dilapidated; sitting in a farm shed with possums living above it. It needed time spent on it and care lavished on it. I got to work to clean up the paintwork, tidy the car and polish it to restore it back to excellent condition.

Once the exterior was back on track, I focussed on the internals of the engine and running gear of the car. After the valve regrind, I got the engine up and running, including repairing the magneto, I have used my Citroën rather sparingly. While it is running, it is also the original engine and, as you'd expect, it's

very tired.

I was invited to take the car to MotoClassica in Melbourne in 2019 to celebrate 100 years of Citroën, and while talking over there, I had a gentleman with an Italian accent come to chat. It was amazing to find out that he was one of the previous owners of the car. Indeed, it was he who had imported the car from Italy to South Australia all those years ago.

It was sad to hear that selling the car was due to financial struggles back then, and he still misses it. Indeed, in some ways he still sees it as 'his', as it was he who brought it to Australia in the first place.

He still has the photographs and information about the res-



## Member's Model: B 14 F

toration and information that hasn't made it along the chain to me when I purchased the car. It was great to receive all the information so that I can ensure the story stays with the car throughout its future years.

In the documents he gave me was a photo album of the restoration in Italy and all the photos are black and white and words typed on a typewriter. There are also line drawings showing how things went back together, even details such as the upholstery details

They've done a very nice job restoring it; all the fasteners are original and there are no Phillips head screws. Everything is as you would expect from that era.

As a full body car, it has a full metal frame and a roof, not like the canvas topped car with a wooden frame. As much as this is nice, the performance suffers badly for it.

Currently, I have taken the engine out of it and am working on rebuilding a C4 engine from 1929 to put in it. This will give a big advantage of a three-bearing crank engine instead of the current two-bearing engine. It also has a distributor with an advance mechanism as opposed to a fixed magneto that came fitted to the original. While not 'original', I think this will be a sympathetic modification.

Most people wouldn't know that it doesn't belong, but the change will make the car a bit

more usable, especially being in Tasmania. With all the hills, and long, windy country roads, the old engine just struggled everywhere. The car is down to walking pace going up most hills.

It's quite an interesting car with a full crash gearbox with three gearbox ratios. Being a three speed gearbox, the first and second ratios are a bit like you would expect in a normal car. Then the last gear, third, is more akin to about fifth. So, if you can't hold top gear on a rise, you have to slow all the way down to 40kmh before you can actually go back a gear.

The car was six-volt originally, but the guy in South Australia had converted it to run on eight-volt. By the time I ac-

quired it, the battery had failed. I converted the car to 12-volt, but to reduce the voltage to the starter motor a little, I fitted a slightly undersize battery lead seven metres long under the floor. This works perfectly.

There's no risk of too much heat or fire because you're never cranking for long enough to produce any heat in the cable, but it does a perfect job of dropping the voltage to 8½-volts while cranking.

I hope to have the new engine fully rebuilt and installed by the end of this year and then hope to be able to use the vehicle a bit more, and get her out to enjoy the beautiful Tassie towns. Bauke Meijer ~ Tasmania





## Totally Traction

them back in the same position on the same camshaft, I would probably have considered that the wear was not significant, and not worried. But because they are going into a different block, on a different cam shaft, I decided they needed to be replaced. I would have bought a complete set of eight, but the TOC spares service had only six in stock, and all the other suppliers seemed to have none at all. Now the TOC also has none, and my engine has six new followers and the two old ones that looked to be in perfect

**Below:** Machined flywheel with spacer.

**Right:** Machined flywheel, fitted with spacer.

**Facing page:** Flywheel trial fitting.

condition.

The new followers have drain holes, whereas my 'original' followers have no hole [are they really the originals? I have no idea]. The purpose of the hole is to drain oil from the bucket, but I am not sure of the benefit. Is this to lubricate the camshaft, or to allow the pushrod to sit better in the bucket? Anyway, my engine now has a mix. This, of course, has nothing to do with using Perfo parts on an ID engine ~ the cam follower is common to both.

The flywheel returned from the machinist. I had asked them to open up the 8mm holes to 10mm and to add another 10mm hole for the location

dowel pin in order to match the ID 19 crankshaft bolt and dowel holes. The holes are on the same PCD, and the dowel hole is halfway between two bolt holes. If that had not been the case, I would have had to send them the crankshaft, which would have been very frustrating. As it was, I just had to make sure I identified which two holes the dowel needed to go between ~ this matters because one of the bolt holes is offset by a few degrees, so that the flywheel always fits in the same place. This is necessary because there is a slot in the flywheel that marks 8 degrees before TDC.

I also asked for 2mm to be

taken off the back of the flywheel and for a 2mm spacer to be made. The reason is that the end face of the ID crankshaft is 5mm closer to the engine than the Perfo's. If you mount the Perfo flywheel on the ID crank, there are three problems:

- ⚠ The flywheel will be touching the block ~ there is a 5mm gap between them on the Perfo engine. Taking 2mm off the back and adding a 2mm spacer results in a 4mm gap.
- ⚠ The starter motor will be 5mm closer to the ring gear and may interfere when it is engaged. The 2mm spacer means the ring gear is now only 3mm closer.
- ⚠ The clutch face will be 5mm further away from the operating lever, which might be too much to allow it to disengage. Again, the 2mm spacer means the clutch face is only 3mm further away.

The last two points leave some uncertainty, which could only be checked by fitting the flywheel, the starter and the bellhousing.

And so, at the earliest opportunity, that is what I did. I found that, at full travel, the starter pinion still has plenty of room before the flange will contact anything and it probably did not need the spacer. I also found that the clutch will disengage properly, but I did not try it without the spacer or stick a



## Totally Traction

camera inside the bellhousing to see how much headroom there is. I also have to plan for wear of the clutch material, so I am very happy with the 2mm spacer.

The spacer could not be more than 2mm thick because the rebate in the flywheel in which the crankshaft locates is only 5mm deep. The spacer reduces that to 3mm, but there is a 1mm chamfer which only leaves 2mm engagement, which is about the minimum I would be happy with.

The work was done by Automotive Machine Services in Ditchling, East Sussex. I would be happy to recommend them to anyone. <https://www.automotivemachineservices.co.uk/>. They were very pleasant, gave advice and were a bit quicker and cheaper than they originally said. At some point, I will get my Perfo crank ground and rebuild that engine with new con rods and shell bearings. I will ask AMS to grind the crankshaft ~ I think it has one more regrind left in it.

A huge amount of oil and gunk had accumulated on the engine and gearbox and inside the clutch housing [but only on the gearbox side of the flywheel].

My crankcase breather on the side of the block is completely open, but it seems from the parts list that it probably should have some kind of mesh fitted. Is this to keep small animals out

or to keep oil mist in? I will investigate, but for now it remains mesh-free.

The filler cap also acts as a breather and allows some mist to escape and settle on the rocker cover and then run down the sides ~ this gets a wipe down every time I check the oil level, and I'm happy with that.

But what about the gearbox leaks? There are three ways for oil to escape. The shaft seals to the drive shafts, the input shaft seal and the gasket between the casing and the bellhousing. I notice, as I have been looking at ID parts lists recently, that the latter leak path is not present on



an ID as the gearbox casing and bell housing are designed differently. But, on a Traction, all you can do is make sure the mating faces are clean and undamaged with a decent gasket, with appropriate sealant. Particular attention must be paid to the T-junction where the shaft seal OD meets the gearbox casing and the bell housing.

The output shaft seals are very simple and crude with a single lip and no pumping action. A while ago, I fitted Speedi wear sleeves to the flanges on which the seals run. One of them looks completely unmarked, but the other one does show a slight wear mark. I left them alone, but did fit new shaft seals: not that the old ones look at all worn.

As I write, I realise that what I have not done, I have never done ~ and maybe I should, is to have put some sealant on the flange splines. I saw a comment on Aussiefogs that oil can leak out that way, but I have not seen evidence of oil at the flange nuts.

There was evidence, though, of oil leaking from the gearbox into the clutch housing via the

**Facing page:** The black, and the original silver cam followers.

**Top:** The Jack Weaver Plate as it was delivered.

**Bottom:** The Plate after it had been trimmed.

## Totally Traction

input shaft. This only has a labyrinth seal. I see later gearboxes have a breather, whereas this labyrinth seal is the only path for air to escape on the Traction gearbox.

So, will it leak? A day after filling the gearbox, the bottom of the gasketed joint felt damp. I tightened the nuts as much as I dare and we'll see what happens.

Before I fitted the gearbox, I added a Jack Weaver plate. This is a 3mm thick steel strengthening plate developed by New Zealander Jack Weaver, who raced Traction-based specials in the '50s and '60s. It braces the two bearings supporting the differential against each other.

The reaction of the pinion against the crown wheel tends to push these bearings apart. In extreme situations ~ ie when the second gear bush seizes, or some other trauma occurs ~ the bearing supports can break, if you are lucky. If you are not lucky, the gearbox casing splits. For some reason that is beyond me, the plate is oversize. The instructions [in Dutch] suggest you may need to file off some aluminium from the bellhousing. But the amount of metal you would have to remove seems too much, so I took metal off the steel plate as well as a little off the bellhousing. I have read that some people even remove a couple of the studs that attached the gearbox to the bellhousing to give room for the plate.

The bellhousing attaches to the ID engine block exactly as it does to a Perfo ~ except at the bottom. The Perfo uses a pair of triangular braces that stiffen the bellhousing-engine block structure. I was about to fit these to the bottom of the ID block but found that this job is done by the ID's cast sump. The holes are in the same place [that's good] but they are a different size. Instead of 10mm clearance holes, the sump has M7 tapped holes. Suitable bolts have just arrived from West-

**The Jack Weaver Plate fitted.**

field Fasteners who, together with Accu and Boltworld, have proved very useful sources of bolts, washers and keys.

What's left to do to get the car going?

- ⚡ Fit those bolts.
- ⚡ Reconnect the gear linkage ~ the gear lever has become dislocated behind the dash and needs resetting.
- ⚡ Refit the rubber block at the back of the engine and set the engine height.
- ⚡ Connect the distributor to the coil.
- ⚡ Fill the engine with oil and water ~ I really must not forget to do that.
- ⚡ Reconnect the headlamp wiring.
- ⚡ Reconnect the speedo cable.
- ⚡ Reassemble the top swivel, which needed to be broken to allow the drive shaft to get out of the way of the gearbox.
- ⚡ Reconnect the alternator wiring and the battery.
- ⚡ Start it up and set the timing.

⚡ Refit the grille, bonnet and bumper and wipe a lot of greasy marks of everything.

The remains of the old engine were sitting in front of the car, getting in the way. Now that it has yielded all the parts that needed to be transferred to its successor, I have made a trolley on which it now sits upside down. When I have got the car going I will wheel it to the back of the garage and forget about it, until I have done some other things. I will then take it apart and decide what to do with it. My inclination is to rebuild it, but it has to await its turn behind the gearbox and driveshafts.

Next month, when [not if] the car is running, and I can call this project complete I'll tell how it runs and I will give a complete list of the points you have to worry about if you want to fit an ID engine block in place of a Perfo block in your beloved Traction.

Chris Bailey

### CCCV Club Advice Line

|                |              |                      |              |
|----------------|--------------|----------------------|--------------|
| Traction Avant |              | CX/C5                |              |
| Ted Cross      | 9819 2208    | Graeme McDonald      | 0409 134 836 |
| 2CV            |              | SM                   |              |
| Dave Rogers    | 0422 229 484 | Lee Scholte          | 0407 150 038 |
| AX/Berlingo    |              | John Wyers           | 9787 6280    |
| Kirk Kirkcaldy | 9363 2464    | XM and modern models |              |
| GS/GSA         |              | Salman Chaudhry      | 0410 040 505 |
| Andrew Smith   | 9755 2439    | C2/C3                |              |
| ID/DS          |              | Don Scutt            | 9807 8999    |
| Contact CCCV   |              | C6                   |              |
| BX             |              | John Fedorko         | 0438 597384  |
| John Wyers     | 9787 6280    |                      |              |



## Papybus Omnibus III



April 2024. Papybus takes neighbour Fabien's quite presentable 2006 Xsara Picasso to the metal recyclers. Scrapped with a blown headgasket at 300,000kms. Fabien received €120 for the car, and almost as much for the 180kilos of defunct batteries in the boot. Batteries turn out to be a bit of a theme this month...

### Amnesia Ampericana ?

« En avril, ne te découvre pas d'un fil » ~ French proverb which roughly translates as « In April, check your bloody battery cables »...

Bonjour les amis Citroënistes des Antipodes.

In this month's tale: acronyms, pilgrims and other stuff as the Vendéen spring momentum shifts up a gear. We shall delve into the mysteries of electrical charges and discharges, encounter a Queen of two countries,

and attempt to understand the local passion for... French letters.

#### I ACRONYMS AND SEAGULLS

Our Voisins Vendéens are fond of acronyms and abbreviations; especially ones which make up a pronounceable word, like NATO [which of course they know as l'OTAN]. In French, the latter are referred to as « sigles ». This word sounds a bit like « seagull », uttered while swallowing that first throatful of Fourex, VeeBee or

other appropriately abbreviated beverage.

As all good Citrophiliacs know, this love of siglism/initialism/alphabetism is not restricted to the modern day or to our patch of Western France: the Parisian design bureau of our favourite marque showed considerable flair when unveiling

its two-letter acronym-ed DS/ Déesse/Goddess to a wide-eyed public at the 1955 Paris Salon de L'Automobile. Then the follow-up shortly afterwards, with a new idea, when a simplified version of the Déesse became the... ID.

Quelle bonne... idée.

Did you hear the one about the Ami 6, amis australiens? During a Sunday arvo conversation last November at French Car Day in Kalamunda Western Australia, I heard Thomas and Frédérique, the charming couple from Perth's Alliance Française cultural centre, ask my old pal Ralph Hibble if it was true that Citroën in 1961, with an eye to exporting the about-to-be launched Ami 6 to the growing, unsuspecting American lady-driver market, had called its latest création... La Missis. Ralph gave his characteristic West-Aussie laugh, and showed them his own création: a home-built aluminium-and-yellow electric 2CV roadster.

#### II AMNESIA AMPERICANA

Well, one morning last week, Papybus refused to crank: just a groan and a quintet of clicking from the doorlocks and jangly warning-gong sounds from the dash.

Last time this happened was

Ralph's Aussie ingenuity is admired by Thomas and Frédérique from L'Alliance Française de Perth.





## Papybus Omnibus III

during the pandemic. It was the battery. I had to print off a special permit allowing me to drive into Chantonay in the Deuche to pick up a new one. On the way home, I was flagged down at the Mouchamps crossroads by a bored and solitary middle-aged gendarme who, by the sound of his accent, had been transferred from Marseille. He inspected my permit, the battery receipt, Moquette's tyres and did a half-hearted Inspecteur Clouseau salute prior to waving me into the non-existent traffic.

This time, there was no need for a permit. I was almost sure it was the battery again. Although electrical faults on Papybuses are far from unknown... La C8 vénérable has taken to randomly forgetting to switch to « overnight/économie électrique » mode during recent months. I suspected this may have been allowing the battery to discharge. At first, I labelled this as post-400,000km mechanical dementia ; another sign of advancing age. Just like when the gearknob broke into three pieces two weeks ago and had to be re-constructed using Sikaflex. Then I decided, out of kindness, to downgrade the electrical diagnosis to amnesia. And anyway, maybe it was simply the battery...

### III PILGRIM TRAIL REVISITED

I resolved last Friday, while



**In April Vendée, marsh orchids take over from primroses.**

the charger was doing its work, to visit Voisin Vendéen Yvonnick and consult about the battery theory.

As I walked up the lane out of Les Roblinières, joined the walkway which skirts the hedgerow below the top meadow, then headed towards the 1669 windmill, I had a premonition that Yvonnick would confirm the battery fault, and that at least one « sigle » would creep into conversations before lunch-



**1660 windmill tower. Can you spot the date of construction ?**

time...

It takes less than half an hour to walk from our hamlet to Yvonnick's ; longer if you pause to take in the burgeoning April flora and listen out for a cuckoo, an oriole or the woop woop woop of a hoopoe.

After the windmill, the track segues into a 500metre segment of an ancient « chemin creux », literally a « Hollow Way », which takes the walker to La Joussière. Well, almost.

A section of this thousand-year-old track was bulldozed in the 1980s, and replaced with a « chemin de remembrement », wider and treeless, allowing for the passage of modern farming machinery. Had they known at the time, Midnight Oil could have penned a lament about the disappearance of the characteristic pollarded oaks known as « têtards ».

The better news is that these days, with state financial incentives given to landowners to plant new hedgerows, more lanes are once again becoming tree lined. Perhaps our great-grandchildren will one day embrace one of these oaks and stretch their arms, unable to clasp their hands on the opposite side of its trunk.

I arrive at Annie and Yvonnick's house and look along their driveway . Yvonnick's lower half is leaning against his 1953 black and café-au-lait Traction. His upper half is ensconced under the bonnet. The battery is next to his foot. Even from twenty metres, I can hear him softly swearing in Vendée patois. I know that, as soon as I indicate my presence, he will switch to his Scots-accented English to make the most of this weekly opportunity for language practice.

A golden oriole calls from the budding branches of a poplar tree down on the banks of Le

## Papybus Omnibus III



« brrricht gooid mornnin to ye ! »

He says, holding a red battery cable in one hand, and rubbing the emerging lump on back of his bald patch through his Breton sailing cap with the other.

He points to their friend's Hyundai hybrid parked next to the Traction.

« Frrrom six volts to eight hundrrred in just seventy years ! »

He roars with laughter, and rubs the back of his head again.

I tell him that I have come to seek his opinion about the Papybus refusal to crank.

« HaHa, mon ami. Les Batterries. They don't make them like they used to. My Trraction battery is twenty years old. Lucky to get threer our four years out of one these days. Let us

**Yvonnick and his black and ccafé-au-lait Traction.  
Hyundai and Traction**

Ruisseau du Parc. I spot it, flitting like a flying banana to the next peuplier. It is rare to see this notoriously shy bird, especially once the poplars are fully-leaved. I utter an audible « Waaaouh ». Yvonnick straightens up, forgetting the Traction's opened bonnet, but remembering to side-step the battery.

IV BATTERIES, THEN AND NOW

« HaHa Misterr Brrrown ! A



sit for a moment and... rreflect on your problème ».

Our conversation continues on the two chairs of their porch. Annie brings out two cups of her excellent coffee. We discuss world events and the worrying situations in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. The oriole punctuates our paragraphs, with a timeless call which seems to state : « I'm an ori-ole. »

For the most part, we forget to talk about batteries. When we do, it is not to discuss Papybus's present problem, but to exchange thoughts about the notion of « disposable electric cars ». Yvonnick's friend had recently been informed that his ten-year-old Renault Zoe was worth less than the cost of a replacement battery pack.

V PASSING PILGRIMS

As we finish our coffees, two tall grey-haired walkers smile and wave from the lane at the end of the drive. The scallop shell which hangs from the gentleman's backpack is a giveaway sign of their status. The lady is wearing an orange headscarf.

« Pilgrims, mon ami. Walking the Vendée Camino. Judging from the lady's orange headscarf, I'm guessing they are from Holland. You know, we are



seeing morre and morre pilgrims in the lane since we did that rresearch last year about the ancient route which came through La Joussière. »

He goes on to explain that one of the long-distance pilgrim trails leading from Le Mont Saint Michel

to Santiago de Compostella in Western Spain passes north to south through central Vendée. He reminds me of the bench over in Mouchamps, four kilometres away, with its plaque indicating the 1,397kms of route remaining...

« But you know, the rreal route prrobably passed not through Mouchamps, but through the chemin creux, the hollow way, at the end of our garrden, because here the rriver is easier to crross »...

My host suggests that we walk past their flowering irises, through their veggie plots, past the donkey paddock and across to the two lines of ancient oaks which form a natural boundary with their neighbours. The edge of their property is a natural granite ridge. The short walk between our two villages takes you from limestone bed-

# Papyrus Omnibus III



rock to the harder, colder substrates. From our vantage point we look down into the chemin creux which follows a natural faultline in the rock. Centuries of passage of ox-carts, livestock, locals and others have eroded the softer layers, and the canopy of oaks has transformed the track into a tunnel.

We stand in quiet contemplation. I imagine a footsore pilgrim, perhaps in the early 13th century, stout « bourdon » staff

in hand and water gourd tied to his belt, pushing on towards Santiago.

I share the image, verbally and en anglais, with my companion. VI ELÉONORE, ELEANOR, ALIÉNOR

« Indeed, cher ami. At the time of Eléonore d'Aquitaine, these pilgrim ways may have existed already ! Eight hundred years ago and more... »

I mention that I seem to recall that Eléonore had been Queen of France and Queen of England ~ as Eleanor ~ at various times.

Yvonnick embellishes my recollection with his encyclopaedic knowledge, lapsing into French with the excitement :

« Oui, oui mon ami. You know her birth name was Aliénor. This year, 2024, is the 900th anniversary of her birth. Queen consort of France from 1137 to 1152, as wife of Louis VII. Then Queen consort of Angleterre from 1154 until the death of her second husband, Henry II of England in 1189 ! Such a powerful woman ! Mother of Richard Coeur de Lion ! »

He notes my admiration of his factual memory, and continues :

« She died not far from here in 1204, at Abbey of Fontevraud up near where the Loire and Vienne rivers merge. Her tomb is still there. Did you know that there is a legend that wine of Sainte-Cécile, from the vineyards at the end of this lane, was

transported to Eléonore's royal court ? Now just three or four rows of vines remain there, the rest is canola fields. But if you look at the survey plans from 1850, even those from 1950, you can see that the vineyards between the windmill and the village of La Commanderie over there covered many hectares »

I remember when he told me the story of La Commanderie, a 12th century outpost of the Knights of St John of Jerusalem, of how the ruins had existed until the 1950s, before being razed to the ground by a local farmer, with the stones having been used for centuries

as building material for houses and outbuildings.

I tell him :

« Yes, mon ami, like most neighbours, I have some stones which seem far too grandiose for modest village houses such as ours. How fascinating to think that they could be linked to the Commanderie and to Eléonore and the Crusades... »

Walking back through the spring lettuces and leeks, I tell Yvonnick that our daughter and

**Driving to Provence in 2018. Château de Montsoreau on the banks of the Loire, near to Abbey of Fontevraud. Inset: Eleanor of Aquitaine's tomb.**



# Papybus Omnibus III



In April, Vendée fields display Australian green and gold.

son-in-law chose to call our grand-daughter... Eleanor.

« Ha Ha, how clever! And spelled the English way, also ! »  
VII AN APPROPRIATE ACRO-  
NYM

Back in front of the house, we fit the 6-volt re-charged battery, and the Traction fires up first time. With its 1,911cc engine purring on tickover, Yvonnick leaves me sitting in the passenger seat while he goes to look for something in the kitchen. I take the time to admire the elegance of the ivory-faced speedometer, and to absorb the flat-floored comfort of this



interior.

Yvonnick returns, opens the suicide door and sits behind the

steering wheel.

« Well, we have talked of history and pilgrim trails, of wine, of Citroëns and of stone ; now let us talk of trees... I saw you admiring those oak trees, mon ami. And I know you will have spotted those remnant têtard trees on your walk here this morning ; I am a member of a tree-preservation association and we are concerned about the status of trees in Vendée. »

Over the next ten minutes, and with the Traction's motor still gently ticking, he explains that Vendée languishes near the bottom of the national league tables with regard to preservation of hedgerows and forests : just 6% of Vendée is given over to woodland.

He gives me a friendly rundown of the objectives of his association, one of which is to create a national database of « arbres remarquables », trees of special botanical or historical interest which need to be protected for posterity. He shows me that there are already more than 500 trees listed across France.

I am spellbound by his knowledge and his communication skills.

I know there will be an acronym/sigle moment when I ask him the name of the association. His reply comes with a knowing smile :

« Arbres Remarquables-Bi-

lan-Recherche-Etudes-Sauvegarde »

I smile back, as he switches off the engine.

« A.R.B.R.E.S... »

I gently imitate his Franco-Scottish brogue :

« Rolls off the tongue, really... »

As we walk away from the Traction and past the kitchen door, he spots the clock behind the dining-table, and suggests we pause for a glass of crisp Muscadet before lunch.

I look back down the drive, admiring his Traction once more.

« Ha Ha, sacré électronique ! We never had electronic problems in 1953 ! I think for your Papybus, you should start by changing the battery ; perhaps it is some complicated fault, but look for simple solutions first ! Bon courage, cher ami. »

After the Muscadet, on the



## *Papybus Omnibus III*



Solitary oak tree sunrise, Sainte-Cécile  
April 2024

walk home via the chemin creux, beneath its canopy arch, and skirting around the remaining puddles, the oriole sings once more. The sun filters through the emerald oakleaves.

As I walk towards the windmill, the pathway is bordered by flowering cow-parsley. I see an orange headscarf and realise that the roofless stone tower's doorway is playing host to two pic-nicking pilgrims. Approaching them through the knee-high meadow grass and buttercups, I call out the pilgrim greeting :

« Ultréïa, les amis. Et bon chemin ! »

They smile and beckon me towards their sunny lunch spot.

Stay tuned, Amis des Antipodes, for the next Voisins Vendéens tale from May in Vendée. Will the Saints of Ice make an appearance after the russet Moon this year? Will the Papybus battery fix prove to be effective? Will we hear again from those pilgrims as they head towards the Pyrenees at 25 kilometres per day? And will the Association Retraite Sportive Essartaise be voted most amusing French acronym of spring 2024?

Alan Brown, April 2024

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