

Western 'A' Model News.



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF
THE MODEL 'A' RESTORERS CLUB (WESTERN AUSTRALIA) BRANCH INC.

May 1987

May 17th (Sunday) - Run to Guilderton

ASSEMBLE AT: BP CHICKEN INN SERVICE STATION
Cnr. Canham Way & Wanneroo Road, Greenwood.

TIME: BY 9:00 am for DEPARTURE at 9:15 a.m. sharp.

This is our next run, organised by Peter & Faye Lynch, up the north coast to the holiday town of Guilderton. Remember, pack your cold lunch or there are a couple of BBQ's for the steaks. For those keen enough, you can pack your swim suits for a dip in the ocean. Refer your April newsletter for a bit more info. See you there at 9:00am.

Coming Events:

You should already have JUNE 28th and JULY 26th marked down on your calendars as future events and now you can mark down:

AUGUST 23RD (Sunday) TIME: 1:30 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
to be held in Drabble House, Nedlands.

For what it's worth!

It is a relief to me (as amateur editor) that this newsletter is not always read and thrown in the rubbish the same day and the articles contained herein and contributed by members are of interest to others. Recent examples include the Moora Number Plates for instance and "A Vintage Car Man Remembers" and now another article "Where did they go to?", supplied by Bill Spencer has brought back memories for someone else who in turn has put pen to paper to share a bit of history of years gone by with all of us. It is thanks to these members that a lot of us, a little younger in years, are able to learn of earlier times and something about the history of 'earlier' vehicles in Perth and Western Australia generally.

If any more of you can contribute articles - on past memories, on present memories of the acquisition and restoration of your vehicle, information of any kind - it will make this newsletter more interesting for everyone.

Thanks again to those who have contributed and I look forward to being able to publish more 'home grown' articles in future newsletters.

L. Cooke

" I too remember "

... by Geoff Davies
M.A.R.C., W.A.

Bill Spencer's article "Where did they go to ?" prompted some nostalgic memories of some of Perth's pre WWII more interesting cars.

I often used to ride in that Auburn Speedster which belonged to Texaco traveller, Dudley Braham, a class mate of mine. However, I would mention that the car's statistics were more like 10 gals to the mile !

The Electric Baker Brougham belonged to a Mr. Thompson whose firm sold musical instruments and electrical goods.

Other cars which took my fancy and doubtless Bill will remember, were:-

- + The Mercedes SSK, 3 outside chrome exhausts and all, of Dudley Everett. A big black menacing object.
- + The Bugattis of Cyril Pool. Reg. 16.
- + The green Chrysler Imperial roadster of Claude de Bernarles - champagne, kid gloves and bowler hat !
- + The Crossley sedans; one used by King George VI, when Duke of York, for the Royal Visit. These came from Spaldings Taxis in King Street.
- + The Police Bentleys - British Racing Green of course, the Lagondas of Clem Dyer, 12 cylinder Packard of Maurice Gibbs, the huge Hispano Suizza of Aubrey Melrose, the wine coloured seven seater Sunbeam sedan with illuminated Lallique radiator ornament of Geoffrey MacIntyre, the Stephens sedan of Bert Meecham who later owned the first double ended Chrysler Airflow. Reg. 168.
- + Very many sports model Baby Austins - single seaters, some supercharged and a variety of body styles.

The above are only a few of the many makes which unfortunately have vanished - which gives the reason for the saying: " They don't build them like that anymore. "

..GD.

Wanted:

- REAR SPRING FOR ROADSTER (Or pattern to borrow) Contact: Steve Read
Ph: [REDACTED]
- FOUR BLADE FAN Contact: Ron Andrews Ph: [REDACTED]

(These items are required to get the cars on the road for Wangaratta).

Vehicle Examinations:

May 2nd saw most of our Full and Concessionally Licensed vehicles inspected at Bill Spencer's workshop by Examiners: R. Mahony, R. Blewett, M. Annear and S. Read.

IF YOUR VEHICLE IS LICENSED AND YOU DID NOT GET IT INSPECTED TODAY -

please note that you are to contact Ray Mahony [REDACTED] to arrange a suitable time for the vehicle to be inspected BEFORE you use it on any future club runs. This is to comply with Club requirements that ALL licensed vehicles be inspected annually. Thank you.

Busselton Rally - Easter '87

There were initially 11 entrants for this event but when it was announced who the organisers were, 3 members dropped out, one other claimed a rescheduled work roster would unfortunately prevent him from going any further than Capel and return. The remaining 7 Model A Fords complete with 24 occupants could not offer acceptable excuses by departure time and were forced to join us.

We departed from Armadale and travelled to Waroona for morning tea and then on to the home of M.A.R.C. members Michael & Karen Bell at Capel. Michael & Marilyn Oliver came over from Dardanup to meet us and the men spent a pleasant two hours scrounging through Michael's shed and car parts while the women unpacked the vegemite rolls, etc. Reg & Coral then returned to Perth and the rest of us went on to the caravan park at Busselton.

After driving a rotten Model A all day in Easter traffic and then having to unload the car, inflate four air beds without a pump, erect a tent single handed, while politely acknowledging the 'helpful' advice from the wife, wait your turn for a hot shower and then prepare a feast for the family, I felt an early night was in order.
"Camping with the family must be one of life's greatest pleasures!!!".

On Saturday morning it was raining as we headed off to the 'Old Settlement' at Margaret River. It was a great relief to see two people get out of the cars to inspect this historic landmark as I was then sure that everyone was having a good time and were pleased with the itinerary so far.

The townsite of Margaret River was full to the brim with Hippies, Religious fanatics, etc; there was no parking available so we had lunch at a nearby park in the rain, met the local newspaper editor, had our pictures taken and then went on to see Wallcliff House at Prevelly Park. This historic attraction had been closed for renovations for the past three months. I of course knew this beforehand and only included it in the itinerary to test the character of the group. On the way back to Busselton we visited Gracetown, a vineyard to sample some of their produce and then checked out the 'Old Water Wheel' at Yallingup.

At the barbecue on Saturday night a couple of bottles of local wines and Port were used to protect us from the very cold weather. This had an interesting effect on some of our members but I will not elaborate on that matter at this stage.

On Sunday morning we visited an interesting Museum in Dunsborough, the local Bakery Store and then went on to view a nice private collection of large LHD American cars of the sixties era. From there we travelled to Yallingup beach and the Caves.

On the way to Wonerup House on Sunday afternoon we stopped to have a look at two Model A Roadster 'Street Rods' from Perth. I was disgusted to see two of our misguided members admiring and driving these vehicles as I can never understand how anyone should find it necessary to alter the brakes, steering and suspension of a Model A ! This unscheduled stop ruined the afternoon itinerary so we returned to the caravan park without seeing Wonerup House.

Sunday evening 24 of us packed into the four cars that are on Full Licence and with our headlamps aimed at the tops of the power poles we went to an 'exclusive Chinese Restaurant' in Busselton. The debonair English proprietor - waiter - cook - cashier became more confused as the night progressed and I suspect he was pleased when it was all over and we left.

Monday morning the Andrews, Jeffree, Lawson, Luca and Letch families returned to Perth while the Cookes and Spencers spent the extra day quietly touring Busselton.

To date I have only received abusive phone calls from five of the seven members who went on this trip so I suppose it could be considered a success !!

(Editors Note: The organiser/author of this Busselton rally wishes to remain un-named - just in case he is asked to contribute more of his literary and organisational skills to the club.)

Keeping Left:

No, this is not the political column but merely a plea to watch where you position your Model A on the highway (or Freeway - if you're brave!).

Keeping to the left lane is only common sense. Our cars have a shocking blind spot on the rear left side. Modern cars are so low to the ground as to become almost invisible when about a cars length (which is too close anyway) from our rear bumper.

Unless we collectively pay attention to this 'rule' it will only be a matter of time before one of us collects it and that could spell a re-write of what the Police will tolerate on the roads as far as vintage cars are concerned.

Freeways are a trap for us. We all use them from time to time but if you haven't got trafficators (turn signals) and you want to change lanes from right to left, then you had better have an observer with you or make sure your insurance is paid up. Remember 80KPH is the limit and the Police prefer you to drive NO SLOWER than 70 KPH or about 42 MPH on the Freeway - otherwise they may request you to use the highway system.

It's your car and your life - take care !

..BB

Did you know ?

Ford built a number of experimental racing machines, of which the most famous was the 999 - a vast 4 cylinder affair without clutch or gears, in which Henry himself recorded 91.4 MPH on the frozen Lake St. Clair in 1904.

MARC OF FASHION

by Mickie Parr

Top of "A" Era — Part I-Evening

1927 — Early in 1927 the most widely seen top on gowns was in a basque effect style, rounded neck with the waist very close to the natural or normal line. Other styles included bolero effect tops, straight line in a sheath style, straight long waisted with bloused bodice, and tunic/over-blouse type styles. Necklines included oval, round and V'd. Most were collarless and often banded in ribbon trims. Many V's were found with lace or material insets. Collared styles were Bertha's of lace or a sheer material or over one shoulder cape effect. Shoulder shirring was used on tunic types and sheath styles. The backs were all high cut and straight down to the separation between top and skirt.

Summer saw the style of bodices and necklines about the same with a few gowns showing slightly lower back décolletages, usually in a V, even if the fronts might be round or U-shape. A "new" neckline for late summer was the square which carried into the fall and winter, and were popular when held with jeweled straps.

Fall necklines most widely seen were collarless, in U-V and triangle shapes and the previous mentioned square. Almost half of the gowns showed a lowered back, most in a V and occasionally in a U-shape. Sheer drapery in scarf-like form was seen falling from one shoulder in back for a floating line. Other shoulder decorations popular were drooping flowers or bows with or without long ribbon ends. Many tops were cut as to give a shaped figure effect.

The new style feature for winter was the low cut oval neck, both front and back, as well as the continuation of the other neckline shapes. Bodices on many were long and slightly fitted with bloused waists caught in front with a bow or jeweled piece. Necklines were seen bound with ribbon, or if plain with a bow placed at center back, on side or on a shoulder. Winged drapery or ribbons were also seen falling from one shoulder. Another recent feature seen in gowns of crepe satin was the use of both sides of the fabric, the gown of one side with trim of the other or the top of one side, skirt of the other. Shirring and tucks continued to be used on the shoulders.

1928 — Early in 1928, asymmetric was a widely used word in fashion for evening wear. It signified the diagonal, bias or oblique (sloping or slanting) line seen in both the top and skirts of gowns. The evening décolletage was as varied as the hemlines. Deep V's in front and back was the leading choice. The surplice, square, oval and round necklines were popular. Uneven necklines were seen in off one shoulder in front or in back. Transparent bands and yokes outlining the necklines



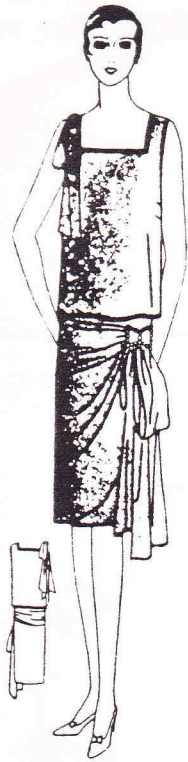
#3711, Spring 1927 —
Basque effect style, with rounded neck.



#857, October 1927 —
Square neckline, held with
jeweled straps,
bolero effect bodice.



#4159, Spring 1928 —
Slanting neckline, held
with jeweled straps.



#1754, Spring/Summer 1928 —
Square neckline,
with bolero effect top.



#1756, Spring/Summer 1928 —
Oval neckline,
with deep cut oval back.



#2112, Autumn 1928 —
"New" neckline, shows
invisible shoulder straps.



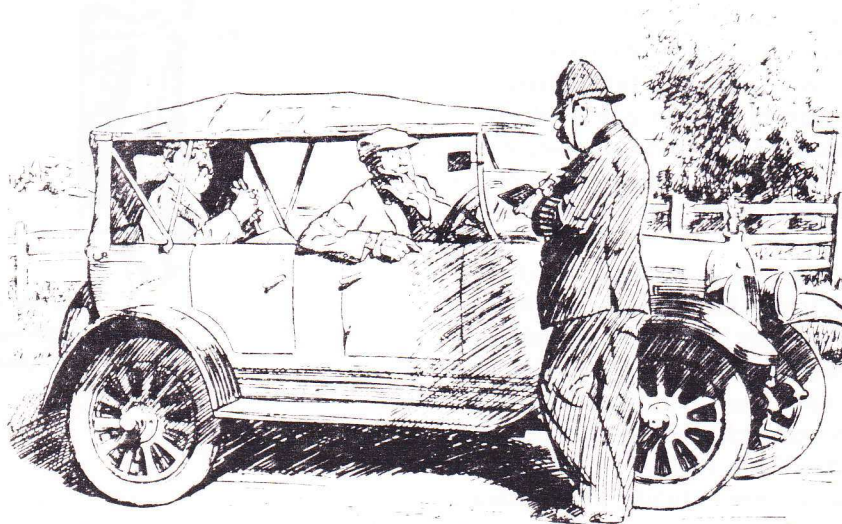
#2111, Autumn 1928 —
Slanted neckline,
with shirred body.

were numerous. Sleeveless bolero tops were also seen. Many tops were without ornamentation. In place of shoulder flowers seen last season, were worn rhinestone pins, crystal flower ornaments or onyx buckles, many of which matched the other jewelry worn with the outfit.

Summer styles showed very slim, long slightly fitted bodices over bouffant skirts with a continuation of deep fronts and backs in a variety of neckline shapes. Tiers and drapery on the tops blended with tiers and drapery on the skirt. The

shirred body was new and gave a slim slender look.

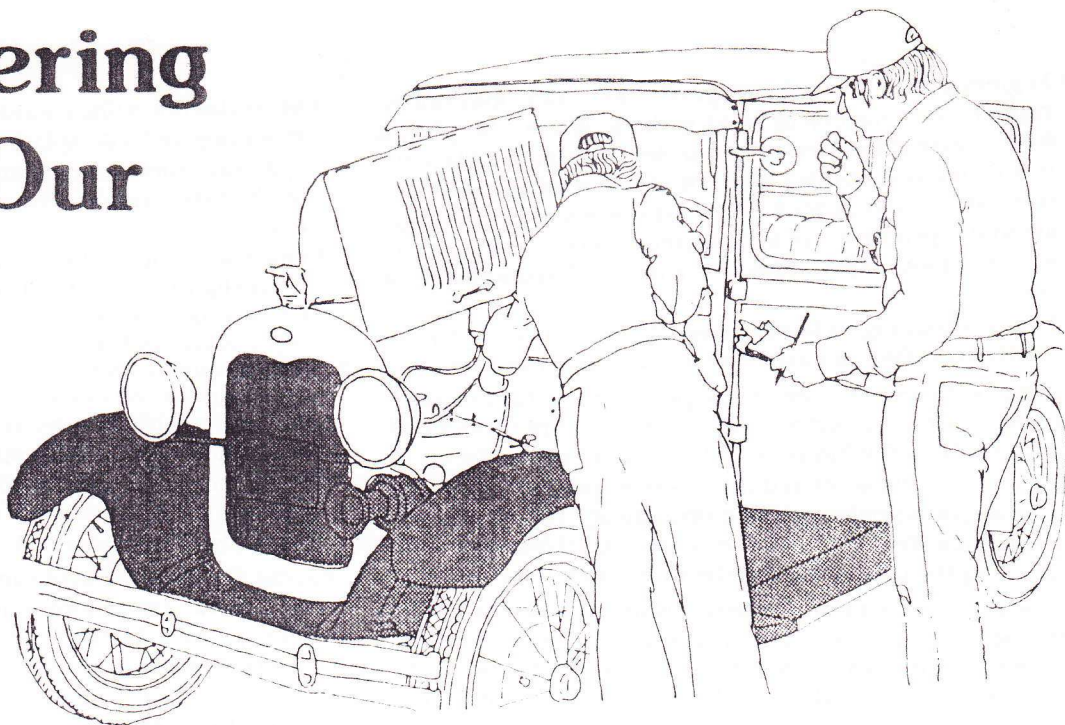
Fall and winter styles showed more formal gowns. The top lines were more fitted and slenderizing to the figure. The necklines were lower with the wide V and deep oval backs most popular. A new neckline was straight across or slightly curving and held by "invisible" shoulder straps, usually of chiffon or Georgette in skin color. Some of the variously cut necklines often added the note of a scarf.



P.C.: "You were doing forty miles an hour, Sir."
Motorist (whispering): "Make it seventy, I'm trying to sell him the thing."

Tinkering With Our Toys

by Arnold "Bud" Dodge
—Yakima, Washington



Very often a simple hint or procedure can save considerable disappointment and frustration. Many of us working on the mechanics of our Model A's have become experts "after-the-fact." The following is a personal on-the-job compilation of brief and to-the-point suggestions. These might be helpful in an endeavor to become a "before-the-fact" expert.

With 50 years of writings in this area by numerous authorities, it is not without some trepidation that there can be recall of some "old hat" and debatable ideas. An honest attempt has been made to avoid a major invasion in this area.

ENGINE

- Many poorly idling engines simply need a new intake-exhaust gasket set. Some current composition replacements split after a short period of use. Metal clad gaskets are best. Check compression and timing and don't be afraid to turn the idle jet down to its seat. Some "A" engines idle best at or near this setting.
- Wasps and similar insects love to crawl into dark hiding places especially crankcases of Model A Fords. The entry point is the oil filler tube during storage periods. The oil screen on the oil pump can grab these pests and they are not drained out with the oil. Solder a copper screen on bottom of filler cap or cover filler opening with a single layer of cheese cloth or similar.
- When removing engine head, first flush out any antifreeze with a couple of water changes before loosening head bolts. This will save cleanup of a disagreeable mess on parts, engine block and floor.
- When replacing front crankcase oil seal soak it overnight in STP (or equal parts STP and motor oil). This will help to avoid an excessive smokey burn-in and future oil leak.
- A 15/32 drill will effectively clear rust and residue from the bolt holes in cylinder head. This avoids messing up gasket surfaces with sluff and allows easier installation.

- Ford put out a "high compression" head as a standard parts item. Part # A-6050-B with a compression ratio of around 5.5, about the same as the Model B. Fit all Model A's.
- A .125" overbore increases the displacement of a Model A about 13 cubic inches or about 6.5% over standard. This increases compression ratio about 5% with standard head.
- Some Model A owners obtain a bit more power from their engines by installing a Model B camshaft. This requires the Model B pushrods which are a fraction longer or adjustables. This seems to cause no side effects and will permit some improved "top-end" performance.
- The cylinder head makes an excellent guide for drilling the primary hole for Heli-Coil insert installation to repair stripped block threads.
- The removal of .065" from the surface of an original Model A cylinder head was a simple way to pick up a few "horses" for the high school crowd of the 30s. As long as at least .035" remained of the original recess in the cylinder head no identifiable problems came up since the head gasket added another .065" of clearance. Some rebuilds permit piston tops to rise a bit above the block and should be considered in any "shaving off."
- Headbolts and nuts with threads chased and oiled will provide an adequate gasket seal when finally torqued to 50-55 foot pounds on a warm engine. Strong arm tightening can cause gasket leakage by warping block. Any headbolts that are stretched (May Wested) must be replaced.
- Castellated nuts do not always line up with the cotter pin hole in the bolt. Switch about the nuts if working on rod bearings or try another. A gentle facing on the flat side of a grinding wheel often works. Do not loosen or go grossly over the torque range to align.
- When inspecting a set of rebabbited rods, never swap or reverse the various caps. The babbit on some remakes is not centered nor are they sufficiently standardized from rod to rod to permit this.
- When installing crankshaft do not swap or reverse #1 and #2 main bearing caps.

- Engines overbored in the range of .100—.125" may not accept some replacement head gaskets. Where the pistons have square shoulders, the upstroke position will place the piston in direct contact with the gasket resulting in an elusive, but positive, knock. Since pistons with beveled edges avoid this problem, cut a 45 degree bevel on top edges to a width of about .135". This knock has confused some of the best.
- Before installing cylinder head check each cylinder for small parts. This can avoid some unusual experiences
- *Some replacement front engine pulleys are off-center* both at the packing seal surface and belt groove. A permanent oil leak and fanbelt whip results. A truing cut on a lathe up to .010—.015 (diameter reduction—new pulley) and a reasonable cut on pulley groove may salvage the pulley. It is best to identify the problem prior to original installation by chucking the unit in metal lathe to measure the run-out.
- New rear motor mount rubber cushions can cause a frustrating tight squeeze when installing an engine. Two 6" C clamps will usually draw the motor into place. Locate the clamps between the flywheel housing lug and frame motor mounts.
- Watch threads on replacement exhaust pipe clamp bolts. Some threads run out before clamp halves are in tightened position.
- Some adjustable pushrods (tappets) can be adjusted only in the up (toe of cam) position. Some extra trial and error is required but results are satisfactory.
- General Rule: Your engine will always keep its poise with a little valve noise or, "It's better to hear 'em than repair 'em." Never less than .010" on intake and .015" on exhaust. Err on the higher side; never adjust closer than specs to remove noise.

NOISES

- A strange idle knock can come from a crankshaft pulley that is slightly short. The ratchet nut can not be drawn up enough to tighten the pulley on the crankshaft. A thin washer under the ratchet nut (or a new pulley) will repair this and stop the oil leak at the same time. A loose pulley can usually be easily found by rocking the fan blade.
- To remove a fan blade from the water pump shaft, remove blade retaining nut, screw on a headbolt nut about half its depth, follow this with a headbolt stud, tighten, rap bolt sharply with a hammer while holding fan blade. The fan blade will loosen and pump shaft will not be damaged.
- Intermittent noises in flywheel region can originate from starter Bendix drive working its way into the flywheel ring gear while car is being driven. a small spring loaded retaining lug located at the edge of the Bendix gear is usually at fault. If stuck, light oil will free it up, if broken or worn out it will no longer hold the idle gear in "home" position.
- Constant or intermittent valve noise after installation of adjustable pushrods is not uncommon. The lifter surfaces are not always square with the valve base and the oil cushion is lost. While this is annoying there is no harm if valve adjustment is within specs. With wear-in the noise often quiets down.
- An unexplained intermittent noise in front of engine can be caused by omission of the tension plunger on the end of the camshaft. The side cap of the timing gear cover can be carefully removed to check.

- Many disconcerting sounds can originate from front motor mounting and side splash pans. Pushing in the clutch can aggravate these sounds especially when motor is warm. With a bit of patience these nuisance noises can be eliminated.
- One source of hard-to-locate engine noise can be the fan. Even slightly loose fan front roller bearings can set up a nasty resonance or clatter at certain engine speeds due to a small degree of blade imbalance, a whipping fan belt or an out of round pulley. The sound is usually low, wavy, puls or piston slap and usually occurs in the higher speed ranges and can be detected by temporary removal of fan belt. While the noise, once identified, is of minor consequence, it may mean that the fan will self destruct in time. Replacement parts may be the only answer. In any case, frequently inspect fan blades for cracks and loose rivets if of that type.
- Some fiber replacement camshaft timing gears are off-center. This can create some unusual idle knock frequencies. A faulty gear can be readily noted during engine assembly by observation while turning engine over. Replacement with a quality gear is best. A rat tail file can be used to adjust and center the gear mounting holes. It is essential to draw up the large mounting nut very securely.

WATER PUMP

- New or rebuilt water pumps take a while to settle down and stop leaking. The leverage afforded by a large screwdriver on the gland nut can break off tightening lugs especially if you run out of threads. Back off and add a packing ring or two. Tighten slowly over several hours of operation. This can be done very effectively while motor is idling if due respect is given fan blade and tightening is not overdone. Leaking will stop.

WATER OUTLET

- Save your nerves and the flanges on the upper water outlet. File head (usually not needed) and outlet mating surfaces square. Use a thin layer of non-setting Permatex. No gasket. You can now tighten all headbolts without wincing. Replacement outlet gaskets often squeeze out on the ends and can eventually cause a break in outlet casting as head is drawn up.

OVERHEATING

- Many Model A's have been accused of overheating just because a leaky radiator cap gasket permitted windshield spotting from expanding coolant from a normal operating engine.
- Air bubbles showing at the radiator filler neck may not be a leaky head gasket, but air pulled in through the water pump grease fitting or past pump packing. Always use a capped type grease fitting at pump base fitted with a gasket under screw cap. Properly packed and maintained pumps should not leak air.

COOLING SYSTEM

- A leaky gasket on the water inlet on side of engine is just in the right place to trickle coolant on the dipstick and into crankcase. This can cause an unfounded worry.
- No use trying to fill your radiator to the top as it will just bubble out the overflow tube to seek an operating level. Don't be over confident, though, add a bit of coolant now and then to assure a safe level. A rubber tube extension on your overflow tube outlet will help keep water marks off of the firewall.