BUSH TELEGRAPH

COUNCIL OF HERITAGE MOTOR CLUBS NSW Inc.

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30 YEARS AND COUNTING

Here it is 2019, now the conditional registration availability reaches back to 1989. Popular vehicles of 1989, featured power steering, computer management, fuel injection, air conditioning magical automatic gears, personal use seating and many more innovations. Yes, there is a 1989 coming to you or a car club near you.

Right: 1989 Holden VN Calais.

To many 30 to 40 year old's out there that was the family car, the car they grew up in, the car that was family to them. The vehicle age range in many car clubs is now over 100 years and the public education and appreciation of the movement has been enhanced by this impressive time span. As an older car buff with an even older car [yes it is true].

I have an acceptance to make, that a new member will be driving a car that perhaps to me was just a getting from A to B but is now a defining part of the ongoing automotive history. I go out raise the shed roller doors and look at my time, you go out raise the roller door and look at your time. We are not so different, we share the same appreciation, just don't expect me to keep up with your 89'er. Time moves on and my time will always move slower than yours.

Be there for your club, variety is the spice of life and the life of your club.

Bob Willis
CHMC Editor.

Image:
1989 Holden VN Calais. Creator: Jeremy. Creative Commons 2.0 Generic License
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1989_Holden_Calais_(VN)_sedan_(17401747665).jpg.

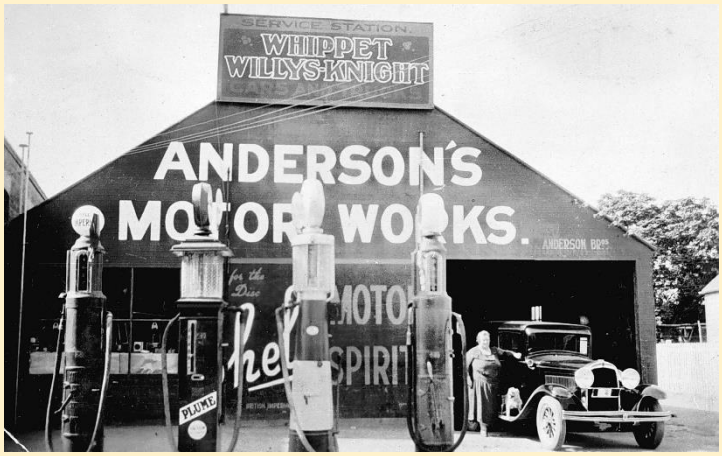
THE DRIVING DEAD

The driving dead are obviously not people. The dead that are now driving lived many millions of years ago, died in their millions and became compressed and over millions of years their energy was stored. These were the organisms that became the petroleum oil that drives the world today.

In 1859 Colonel Edwin Blake drilled the first successful oil well in Titusville, Pennsylvania. Drake and his backers were looking for a source for lighting kerosene to keep the lights on and the infant industries running in the 19th century. Kerosene was the gold standard and gasoline a mere byproduct that had a very limited commercial value. Kerosene was a much cheaper alternative to whale oil.

Kerosene was dealt a blow by one Thomas Edison when he invented the light bulb and was responsible for the creation of the electrical generating industry, in 1882. By the turn of the century there were 18 million light bulbs in use in the U.S. alone. The oil industry had lost its major market. However, when all seemed lost as is often the case a new breed of inventors stepped out of the dark, The Automobile Makers. The automobile engine needed a new fuel to service the combustion engine and to drive the industry forward. As fate would have it there it was sitting on the shelf begging for a chance to be put to work.

And yes, there was work out there, from 1900 to 1920 the car numbers went from about 8,000 to 23 million. There was a mix of electric, steam and gasoline vehicles and the one's forging ahead were the gasoline powered. A world in conflict in 1914 saw the petroleum industry rise to a new extreme level of importance a level where it remains to this day.



Right: Newcastle, New South Wales, 1926 Anderson's Motor Works.

Over the decades that spurned byproduct and its competitor diesel have been subject to a very high degree of scientific research to meet the demands of the industries it serves. Added to that is the growing concerns supported world wide of environmental issues such as the effects of climate change. To meet the challenge of newer more efficient vehicle engines gasoline has been changed in its construction to meet the challenge. Newer more efficient engines meant higher octane ratings.

We the motoring public in the majority think that the higher octane rated fuel supercharges the combustion in an engine cylinder resulting in additional power and performance. When you drive in to fill up and stop at the pumps and read the octane ratings, what does it tell you? Does it tell you that if you use the highest octane rated fuel that your vehicle power and fuel use per mile or kilometer will be better. Octane rating does not seek to tell you the foregoing. The octane rating of gasoline essentially tells you how much the air-fuel mixture can be compressed before it will spontaneously ignite. Manufacturers design their engines to perform as required to a predetermined fuel octane rating. Thus petrol with an optimal rating is best suited to an engine designed to run on that octane level. The optimal octane rated fuel is the industry standard produced to meet the specifications of most engine types.

Another not often know fact is that ethanol is partly used to increase the octane rating of petrol. Fuels without ethanol have other chemicals added to achieve the result caused by ethanol. When engine knock occurs it is because two exploding "flame fronts." One explosion from the pre-ignition of the fuel-air mix caused by compression and the other from the rest of the fuel-air mix being ignited at a slightly different time by the spark plug. The two flame fronts explode and send shock waves through the air of the cylinder, which meet in the combustion chamber and the result is engine knock. So, octane does not enhance the explosion in the engine cylinder like most tend to think. It just prevents the air-fuel mixture from igniting before the spark plug does it. Firing the air-fuel mixture at the proper time gives you the maximum power your engine was designed to get. Using a higher-octane petrol than your engine is designed to utilize is only wasting your money.

Bob Willis
CHMC Editor

Acknowledgement: Bell Performance.
Image: *Newcastle, New South Wales, 1926 Anderson's Motor Works*. Creator: Dick Anderson. Image located at Museums Victoria. https://collections.museumvictoria.com.au/items/766383. Public domain.

A RECORD BREAKING TALBOT

For the Vintage Motor Club I run a monthly column in the Club Bulletin called "What car is that" with a period photo of a (usually) vintage car for readers to identify Responses to this photo correctly identified the car as a Talbot and some suggested maybe the 1908 Dutton and Aunger Adelaide-Darwin car?

So, was it Dutton's Talbot and if not then whose, and what sort of event was it prepped for?

The following extract is from the VMC's November 2015 Bulletin

The original photo of this exciting looking car is held in the State Library of Victoria, the Library catalogue information simply states "*At the wheel of an early motor car. ca.1920?"*

Comparing period photos of Dutton and co-driver Aunger and both of Harry Dutton's Talbots it seemed unlikely the stripped-down mystery Talbot was either of the 1907 or 1908 Adelaide-Darwin cars, and neither men Dutton or Aunger.

Left - Dutton's 1908 Talbot at Burra, S.A.

Then Leon Mitchell's earlymotor.com website provided some "who and what" clues, as did my sleuthing in old newspapers. The mystery photo shows the **c.1908 35 hp. Talbot of George Gilmore White with riding mechanic Fred C. Custance.**

G. Gilmore White (1885-1920), a grazier from a wealthy Adelaide family was an early motoring enthusiast who purchased his Talbots, at least 3, from the noted Adelaide firm of Vivian Lewis Limited. In January 1909 White and his chauffeur P. Donoghue drove from Adelaide to Melbourne in the Talbot, then in standard touring condition, accompanying Bertie Barr Smith and H. M. (Murray) Aunger in their 60hp Napier. Barr Smith was intending to set a record for the Melbourne to Adelaide run, which he did in 22 hrs 24 mins in February 1909.

Left - The Napier of Barr Smith and Aunger leaving Adelaide for Melbourne for their record attempt.

By March, and having driven the route several times, Gilmore White was set to make his own record attempt with co-driver Fred Custance, one of Vivian Lewis's top mechanics. The Talbot had a special body fitted for the record run to Adelaide and having significantly higher clearance than Barr Smith's more powerful Napier White's car handled the treacherous Coorong sand hills and tortuous road conditions better– the Talbot's time was 20 hrs 6 mins, an average speed of 29½ mph for the 597 miles.

In December 1909 White and Custance, in the 35 hp Talbot, broke C.B. Kellow's Melbourne to Sydney 1907 record by 4 hours making the run in 21 hrs 19 mins. A contemporary newspaper photo of the time is almost identical to our photo, except for the angle, and was supplied to the Adelaide papers by Darge Studio in Melbourne, so it we could assume our photo was taken just prior to the December 1909 drive. Gilmore White commented after reaching Sydney that the roads had been far worse than those on the Adelaide record drive and that he might now retire from inter-city record attempts, the Talbot had suffered too – from a broken headlight and mudguard.

But White was back again in March 1910, with Custance and the same 35 hp Talbot to successfully set a Sydney to Melbourne record at 19 hrs and 47 mins. They then had the distinction of holding the record for the journey both ways, in addition to that for Melbourne to Adelaide. The Clement-Talbot Company were so impressed that they had two massive gold medals struck and forwarded to the Vivian Lewis Co. for handing on to White and Custance.

Period newspaper reports indicate Gilmore White's Talbot was painted red and used leather tread steel studded Continental tyres. As White and Harry Dutton competed in the same Automobile Club events around 1908-1909, some similarities in the appearance of White's Talbot and Dutton's Darwin cars for record runs are probably not coincidental. Also, not a coincidence - Murray Aunger and Fred Custance were both Vivian Lewis Ltd. employees.

Fred Custance (1890-1923) went on to become a prominent aviation pioneer and is credited by many as making Australia's first powered flight on March 17, 1910 at Bolivar, South Australia, piloting a Bleriot plane. He flew with the Australian Flying Squadron in Palestine in WW1 before returning to the motor trade in South Australia. Custance died on a lonely outback track while attempting to recover a stranded vehicle.

Noted rifleman and militia officer G. Gilmore White served in the 1st AIF in France but shortly after returning to Australia was struck down by an illness from which he never fully recovered, he died in 1920.

As to where the Gilmore White Talbot finished up or where the Clement-Talbot gold medals are – many of us would be fascinated to know.

Member of Automotive Historians Australia Inc. and The Society of Automotive Historians Inc.

Image sources:
Gilmore White & Custance – Talbot. Original image sourced from State Library of Victoria. Out of copyright http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/24488
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