

THE CARRIER PIGEON

BULLETIN OF
BALLINA CLASSIC VEHICLE CLUB INC.



Celebrating the Spirit of Classic Motoring



Santo Pennisi's Triumph TR6 - a classic British Roadster

WINTER | 2025 | EDITION 413

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Gordon and I moved to the beautiful Northern Rivers early last year, and we've been loving every moment of it. Our shared passion for vintage and classic cars and bikes made joining BCVC a natural choice soon after we settled in Tuckombil. Since then, we've been fortunate to meet many friendly, knowledgeable, and welcoming members.

As the new kid on the block (so to speak!), I'm excited to take on the role of editor and continue the great work done by Mark, who revived this wonderful magazine five years ago. I hope to build on that legacy with your help.

One of my goals is to make the magazine as engaging and member-focused as possible.

I would absolutely love for more members to submit articles—Alan and Lindsay have been particularly generous in this area, and their contributions are always appreciated.

If you have any ideas for the newsletter, features you'd like to see, or stories you want to share, please feel free to come and chat with me.

Thanks, Janine

EDITOR



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REFLECTIONS FROM THE PRESIDENT

It is interesting to look at classic car trends in a longer-term situation and the changes going on in the BCVC and the wider classic car movement.

When I joined this club, it was called the Ballina Car Restorer's Club.

It changed its name to the Ballina Classic Vehicle Club, and I tend to think there are fewer active restorers in the club but that may well be due to our membership getting older and have restored their cars earlier in their lives.

I think the classic car market is evolving and changing for a few reasons that will affect prices and the availability of spares and services differently for different groups of cars.

The high value and high-status cars are rising in value often because they are extremely rare. Cars such as Bentley Continentals or Lamborghini Muiras are



limited in number and highly sought after. One of two ever built, the Ulenhaut Mercedes Benz, that sold recently for over \$200m Aussie dollars is a good example.

These cars are often in invitation only in car comparison activities such as Pebble Beach or the Villa D'Este Concourse and for the very rich to indulge in.

The other type of classic vehicle is the one based on previous ownership, either personally or within a family or group of friends or cars that we first desired as teenagers and these tend to be



REFLECTIONS FROM THE PRESIDENT

cars more in line with our age. These can be Mini Minors or VW Beetles through to Austin 7s or more Australian versions like Monaros or the Gogglemobil. The issue with these is that they will tend to change overtime as the age of the population changes. I suspect the value of veteran cars



is probably going down while late model Monaros is rising, depending on the engine and history of the car. Earlier much-loved cars like the EH Holden rose to high prices for the 1960 and 70s surfers who used them and want one now but that group are getting older so valuable Holdens tend to be the Maloo or Monaro that the younger generation liked.

Equally the concept of the Hot Rod that was popular in the 50s and 60s, often due to the restricted number of vehicles available just after the war are not so popular now and require more work than the average 20-year-old can do.

Also, the frequency that buyers turn their cars over now is much higher, so people do not get as attached to individual cars as much.

I guess it means you buy something you like and can afford knowing the price can go down or up dependent on others in the market.

I think classic car ownership is a diminishing group in modern society, although they are large enough and a big enough market to keep Governments looking after them for the current time, hopefully for many years yet!!

2024 CHRISTMAS PARTY at The Wharf



Looking Back, Driving Forward: THE STORY OF BALLINA'S CLASSIC VEHICLE CLUB

Based on an interview with Founding Member John Mooney



Foundation member
John Mooney and wife Dianne.



Two photos provided by long-time
member Roy Thompson



In late 1980 a group of like-minded enthusiasts gathered for what would become the foundation of the Ballina District Vehicle Restorers Club.

Among them was John, a passionate classic car owner who has witnessed—and helped shape—the growth of the club from humble beginnings to a respected community of vintage and classic vehicle lovers.

“We had about 20 people to start with,” John recalls. “Most of us were in the process of restoring cars. It was all hands-on back then. John’s own garage has housed a fleet of iconic classics over the years, including a 1948 MG TC and 1966 MG B. More recently, what he likes to call future classics a 2006 Mini Cooper S with John Cooper Works Conversion and a 2007 Mazda MX-5 coupe have joined the stable.

Yet for John, there’s always been one brand that’s stirred the soul.

“I’ve always had a soft spot for Jaguars, especially the XK sports cars. Never owned one, but I’ve always admired them. I think I’ve got enough cars now,” he laughs. “Time to clear a few out, not add more.”

By 1981 the club was formally established. What followed was in the first decade was rich in activity and camaraderie, from picnic runs and swap meet trips by bus to Bendigo and annual rallies.

“Our first run was a picnic run to the Everglades at Suffolk Park, which is now a Byron Bay resort,” John said. “We did a lot together—rallies, social drives, travelling on a four-day trip to Bendigo swap meets... we’d hire a bus from current member Barry Blanch and drive through the night just to get there.”



Key players in establishing the club the late Tom Shepherd, Santo Pennisi and the late David Ardill



Club members enjoying a BBQ in 1995



The traditional Saturday club breakfast in 2016.

Looking Back, Driving Forward:

THE STORY OF BALLINA'S CLASSIC VEHICLE CLUB

John has great respect for key figures in the club's early days who played an important role in establishing the club. He said these included Santo Penissi, who has held the position of Club Registrar since the club's inception, and the late Tom Shepherd, an upholsterer who contributed significantly to restoration projects.

He said another long-serving member, the late David Ardill, who was instrumental in keeping the club going through tough times—going so far as to personally cover insurance costs when funds were low.

“Back then, it wasn't about buying a car that was ready to go. You rolled up your sleeves and restored it yourself.”

He added the biggest challenges in the early days was getting parts, time and money.”

John is quick to point out that while the club is not unique, it does have a strong sense of purpose. They've always stuck to the rules regarding club

plates, maintaining originality and discouraging performance-modified vehicles.

“We've had people show up with the wrong type of engine or heavily modified cars—we just don't cater for that. We're about preservation, not performance.”

Looking ahead, John hopes to see more young people getting involved.

“Most younger people today aren't exposed to these older cars unless it's through their family. We'd love to see that change.”

When asked what makes owning a classic so special, John doesn't hesitate:

“It's about preserving something for future generations. Modern cars might be advanced, but they don't last very long and if they break down, and with all the electronics you need an expert. With an old car, you could fix it on the side of the road. There's something real about that.”

FROM SOURDOUGH TO SUBARU

When you meet Di Vickery, the Secretary of the Ballina Classic Vehicle Club, you'll notice her love of classic cars. What you might not know is the colorful life that brought her to the rainforest region of the Northern Rivers from the foodie enclave of Melbourne.

Di boasts an impressive career, beginning with a cookery apprenticeship and working her way through Melbourne's kitchens—from pubs to top-end restaurants—before diving into the vibrant catering scene. Managing multiple events in a single day became her norm.

At 40, she took a leap of faith and left city life behind, moving to regional NSW, specifically Byron Bay. Drawn by the subtropical climate and modern food culture, she embraced her entrepreneurial spirit. Noticing a lack of good cheese in the region, she launched Cheese Please, a specialty cheese distribution business. Supplying Australian and international cheeses across the Northern Rivers, her business quickly grew—two refrigerated vehicles and staff to match. After a decade of success, she sold the business, ready for a new chapter.

Passionate about organic food and bread, Di built a bakery with a wood-fired oven in Bentley. Her quiet love of all things French led her to France several times, where a French baker taught her traditional sourdough methods. For five years, she sold her artisan bread at



the Lismore Organic Market before retiring.

Her enthusiasm for classic vehicles had always been in her makeup. After a car accident in Byron Bay, her neighbor offered the use of his 1991 Subaru Brumby. Charmed by its originality, she bought it and sought a club to share her growing passion. The Ballina Classic Vehicle Club appealed not only because she was retiring to Ballina, but because its members valued preservation over modification—just like her. When the Secretary position became available, she stepped up, eager to stay involved in business and support the club.

Concerned about the club's future as members age, Di hopes to attract younger enthusiasts. In November, BCVC held a Show & Shine, which she'd like to see become an annual event to unite clubs across the region. "It was heartening to see young people enjoying the beauty we've preserved," she said.

We're lucky to have such a dedicated Secretary keeping our club vibrant and connected through the shared love of classic cars.



OUR SHOWS
BCVC SHOW
NOVEMBER





**CASE EVENT
AND SHINE
ER 2024**



THE 23-YEAR STOWAWAY

David Felsch built his Eureka in 1980—the same year the club was founded — and in that time, it's had six engines: three Volkswagens, two Audis, and now a Subaru EJ series that's powered the car reliably for 23 years.

That engine was recently due for a head removal after a broken water pump shaft caused the timing belt to slip and bend a valve.

But what he found inside the intake manifold was more surprising than any mechanical failure - a 9V battery.

"I had no idea," Dave says. "My only theory is that my son, who was about three at the time, dropped it in when the engine was just sitting in the shed."

Incredibly, the battery had been there for 23 years without causing a single issue. "No warning signs at all—it always idled smoothly and ran great,"



"You expect worn parts or oil leaks," he laughs. "But not a three-decade-old battery hiding in your intake."



My Bucket List – THE STORY OF MY '32 COUPE

By Alan Riordan

Owning a coupe has always been on my bucket list, but I'd never had one – until a friend sold two cars and bought a hot rod. That inspired me, and I started searching for a Model A, or a '32, '33, or '34 coupe. Eventually, a 1932 Ford Three-Window Coupe caught my eye: C&W body and chassis, big block Chev, Turbo 400 auto, Ford 9-inch diff, fully fendered.

I contacted the seller, who wasn't really a hot rodder. I checked it out and loved everything except the big block engine. I made an offer, which he accepted.

The next day, I told Jan the engine was too big for our driving, so I called him to back out. He dropped the price twice – by \$10,000 total – and said I could swap the engine if I wanted. Deal done.

The builder, Mark Bainbridge of Old School Auto Electrician in Jimboomba, built it for drag racing



– it reportedly did 11.3 seconds at Riverside. He did a top-notch job, but it wasn't fully sorted.

Driving it home, something felt off in the rear. The 3.07 diff ratio seemed wrong, so I switched to 3.0. That's when we found the true-trac gears were badly worn. Replacing it fixed the cornering.

The 2800 stall torque converter caused overheating at 110 km/h. I added a larger chassis rail cooler and another up front – problem solved. The engine didn't make enough vacuum for the brakes.

A vacuum tank helped, but adding a CRV electric vacuum pump really fixed it.

I also corrected the drag link alignment and added a "tuning fork" to stabilize the front axle. Then, after losing a wheel weight and still having issues post-balancing, I tried balance beads – no more problems.

That's the story of my '32 Coupe – and I'm glad I own it.





NORTHERN RIVERS SHOW AND SHINE - MAY 2025



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SUMMERLAND FARM BREAKFAST MAY 2025



From Wedding Cars to Wilderness: MY LIFE WITH A LAND ROVER

By Toby Clark

I've owned this crappy Land Rover since 21 August 1976, it wasn't historic then. I paid \$3250 in 1976. (Paid extras included the interior mirror, electric windscreen washers, safety harness anchorages, rear reflectors, and even an ashtray!)



*Freycinet Peninsula
on the east coast of Tassie.*

This Rover is flash by 1972 standards, I mean it had deluxe seats, the modern 4WD scene was in its infancy. At this time the "Hydro" (Hydro Electricity Commission) was in full swing pushing roads into damsites, power stations and transmission lines.

It has played a big part in our family's history. Brought my two youngest home – Remo (1979) when we lived in Christchurch, NZ, and my daughter, Evette (1981) born in Launceston. My eldest Gus (1975) came home in a previous Land Rover, we also had Land Rovers for wedding cars.





These tracks in the Mersey Forth and the southwest opened better access to the mountains for us peak bagger/ bushwalker types and the Land Rover was a useful tool.

Unlike here on the North Island (Tas speak) we didn't have to travel great distances. For instances from Launceston to the Arm River track via Deloraine and Mole Creek is about 115 kilometres. The Arm River track gives you access to the mountains at the centre of the Cradle Mountain Lake St. Clair National Park. Upon leaving the Land Rover it's about a four hour walk into Pelion Pass usually in the dark on a Friday night.

The two years we took it to the "Shakey Isles" (NZ) we did a lot of trips with the Canterbury Land Rover Owners Club plus skiing,

climbing and shooting trips with mates. The Landy also performed as shopping trolley and general run around as we only had one car. I rode a bike to work and I still have it from when I was 15, 60 years old (only had my wife Nessie for 52 years!)

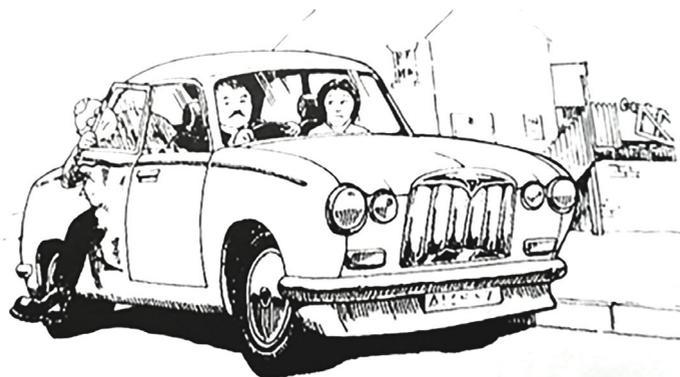
This Land Rover has been an integral part of our family for 48 years. It has spent every skiable weekend on Ben Lomond where we shared a ski hut. (Benbullen).

Often covered in snow and ice and occasionally a little reluctant to start, but it does have a crank handle. I'd like to see you crank one of those high comp Japanese marques.

Fond memories

AUSTRALIAN CAR TRIVIA QUIZ

1. What was the first mass-produced car in Australia?
2. Which iconic Australian car brand was discontinued in 2020?
3. What is Australia's best-selling car model of all time?
4. What famous Australian car model was featured in the movie Mad Max?
5. What was the first electric car model introduced by an Australian automaker?
6. Which V8 Supercar driver holds the record for most Bathurst 1000 victories?
7. Which Australian luxury car brand was founded in the early 20th century?
8. What is the nickname of the Holden EH, known for its popularity in the 1960s?
9. Which Australian car brand produced the Monaro coupe, a famous muscle car?
10. What was the first car ever built in Australia?
11. What Australian car manufacturer launched the "Ute" (utility vehicle) concept?
12. What was the last car ever manufactured by Holden in Australia?



As Malcolm got out, he suddenly remembered that Lucinda's father's car was the two-door model

DIARY DATES

Ballina Classic Vehicle Club Monthly meetings are held at 7 pm on the first Tuesday of every month at the Ballina RSL.

June 3 7 pm – Ballina Clasic Car Club June Meeting – Ballina RSL

June 7 8 am – BCVC Saturday Breakfast - Byron Bay Wildlife Sanctuary in Knockrow

OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST

June 4-8 Cooly Rocks On

June 8 John Wright Park Tuncurry

August 14-17 Northern Rivers Vintage and Veteran Club 65th year rally – Lismore Showground

August 30 PCYC – Summerland Car Club Car Show

September 20-21 Clarendon Classic- Hawkesbury Showground



1. Ford Model T 2. Holden Commodore
3. Holden Commodore
4. Ford Falcon XB GT
5. Blade Electron Coupe
6. Peter Brock 7. Tarrant
8. The Humpy 9. Holden
10. Tarrant Automobile
11. Ford Australia
12. Holden VF Series II Commodore

TRIVIA ANSWERS

Connecting Classic and Vintage Car and Bike Enthusiasts Since 1980

Ballina Classic Vehicle Club

Founded in 1980, the Ballina Classic Vehicle Club Inc has been bringing together people with a shared appreciation for classic and vintage vehicles and good company. (Full story Page 6). Whether you're restoring a long-loved car, enjoy going for a drive on a sunny weekend, or simply like talking cars over a cuppa, there's a place for you in our club.

We're a socially active group made up of individuals, couples, and families who enjoy spending time with fellow enthusiasts. Our regular outings include breakfast gatherings, social events, club runs, and monthly meetings.

We always welcome new members who have an interest in classic vehicles and enjoy sharing their knowledge, stories, and time with others.

Club meetings are held on the first Tuesday of every month at 7 PM at the Ballina RSL Club. Guests always welcome.

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