

THE CARRIER PIGEON

BULLETIN OF
BALLINA CLASSIC VEHICLE CLUB INC.



Celebrating the Spirit of Classic Motoring



Twenty-one-year-old Santo Pennisi proudly takes his newly assembled 1914 Model T Ford on its first test drive in Bangalow in 1980



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As another busy season rolls through for the Ballina Classic Vehicle Club, it is wonderful to reflect on the enthusiasm, friendship and dedication that continue to make our club such a special community.

One of the greatest pleasures in putting this magazine together is hearing the stories behind the vehicles — not just the cars themselves, but the people, memories and adventures connected to them. Every member has a story worth sharing, whether it involves a long-term restoration, a memorable road trip, or simply the joy of preserving a much-loved classic for future generations.

This edition once again highlights the diversity within our club, featuring member vehicles, motoring history, community events and reminders

about the importance of preserving genuine club culture and responsible historic vehicle ownership.

A sincere thank you goes to everyone who has supplied photographs, stories, ideas and encouragement for this edition, along with our advertisers and supporters whose contributions help keep the magazine rolling along.

As always, contributions for future editions are welcomed. If you have a story, photograph, restoration update, motoring memory or upcoming event to share, please do not hesitate to get in touch.



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PRESIDENTS INTRODUCTION

Ian Cummins

A big 'Thank You' to all those who most kindly asked after me, and offered to visit, following my recent accident: it's much appreciated. Mark and Lindsay both offered to help install my newly-made custom exhaust extractor for the Chrysler, but it will be another 5 weeks before I can get back in the garage. Dang it!

The need to have an extractor custom-made came about because the old one was unreparable and, even if I was in the U.S.A., I doubt there are many used ones available at any price. The brilliant AACA website and Forums pretty much confirmed that good ones are beyond rare and the rest are cracked. All of this and watching YouTube videos about the disappearance of old-style car (and motorcycle) 'scrap' yards, made me think about the future availability of usable old/NOS parts for any of our vehicles.

In modern 'salvage facilities', vehicles are now processed quickly, stripped for parts, and recycled rather than left to wait for a restorer who may never come. Add in stricter environmental rules, higher land values, and a dwindling population of genuinely old cars, and the result is fewer of the slow decaying "time capsule" yards that defined earlier generations.

Perhaps the bigger shift is philosophical. Where once almost any old car might have been saved "one day," today's economics force harder decisions. Restoration costs have risen, parts are harder to find, and only the more viable or desirable cars are likely to be rescued. The rest are dismantled sooner, feeding the parts supply for those that are saved.

So, maybe what we're witnessing isn't just the end of the old-style salvage yard, but the end of a particular kind of romantic neglect. The cars are still there—but they move through the system faster, and fewer linger long enough to become the forgotten treasures so many of us remember.

It looks like we better grab those parts while we still can!



LIFE MEMBERS:

Santo Pennisi, John Mooney, Geoff Wiseman,
David Felsch, Russell Kelly

OPEL MANTA REVIVAL – A FAMILY STORY ON FOUR WHEELS

BEN VAN STRAATEN

Some classic cars are bought on impulse, others are carefully hunted down — but for Ballina Classic Vehicle Club member Ben van Straaten,

his 1971 Opel Manta was already part of the family long before he ever thought about restoring it.

The white two-door coupe originally belonged to Ben's aunt, who purchased the car new in 1971 in South Africa. Later, Ben's father bought the Manta for his mother to use as a daily driver after they married. Over time the Opel was retired to an old farm shed, where it sat forgotten for many years.

That all changed after a family outing near Cape Town, when the family spotted a red Opel Manta driving past.

"We all said, 'look at that nice car,'" Ben recalled. "Dad then said, 'I own one of those cars.' We didn't believe him until we got back to the farm and he showed us the car sitting in the shed covered in dust."



The Opel was a genuine barn find — hidden beneath years of dust, with wiring destroyed by rats, flat tyres and deteriorated interior trim. But even then,

Ben was captivated by the sleek coupe styling and knew he wanted to see the car back on the road.

The restoration became a major family project, with much of the work carried out in South Africa before the car was eventually shipped to Australia. Ben says organising the restoration remotely was one of the biggest challenges.

"Most of the work was done by workshops, but Dad and I were heavily involved as well," he said.

Today, the Manta retains much of its original charm, including its striking red leather interior, which remains original to the car. Around 70 per cent of the vehicle has been restored back to factory-style condition.

Under the bonnet now sits a 1.9-litre Opel four-cylinder engine paired with a four-speed manual gearbox. While the original Manta A came with

a 1.6-litre engine, reliability issues after arriving in Australia led to the installation of the larger 1.9-litre unit from the American-market Manta S.



Ben says sourcing parts can still be difficult, with many components needing to come from Europe or America. Despite that, the Opel has become a standout at club runs and shows simply because so few survive in Australia.

"There's always people asking about the car because not many Opel Mantas are seen here," he said.

The car also carries strong sentimental value for the family. Ben's parents travelled through South Africa and Namibia in the Manta on their honeymoon, and decades later the Opel also served as Ben and his wife's wedding car.

While the Manta is mainly reserved for fair-weather drives, Ben still enjoys taking it on club runs and local events whenever time allows.

Asked what advice he would give to anyone considering a restoration project, his answer was immediate:

"Make sure you have a lot of patience — and deep pockets!"

For Ben, though, the effort has been worthwhile. The Opel is more than just a rare classic — it is part of the family history, and one he says will remain with him for good.

NEW ONLINE ARCHIVE DATABASE

The Australian Motor Heritage Foundation is proud to launch its new online archive database — a major step in sharing the remarkable resources held within its collection.

The foundation's aim is simple: to preserve Australia's motor heritage and make it accessible. By bringing the collection online, the database allows enthusiasts, historians, educators and researchers to discover the breadth of material held by AMHF.

Please access the database from the button found on the Collections page of the AMHF website, <https://tinyurl.com/ym4ehev>.

"CALL OF THE WILD"

BY TOBY CLARK

*"The joy of the early morning,
The pull for the open road.
The rush of the wind as the
wheels spin around
and the engine takes the load."*

Anon



My father was a plumber so there were always utes and vans that I was fortunate to be able to use on the weekends. I rode a pushbike to work so I didn't need a car, especially one that I had to had to pay for fuel. But then I discovered Land Rovers and what they could offer a young bushwalker/wacker.

Along comes WKL003 a 1964 Series IIA, short wheel-base, hard top Land Rover, about 3 years old, ex Hydro Electric Commission (HEC) for \$1,450.

Life begins!

Just the sound and smell of Solihulls finest heading out of town on a Friday night, it still sends a tingle down my spine. Two or three ugly mates aboard with our packs stuffed with food camping, climbing or caving gear, sometimes a couple of shotguns.

They were great days, Land Rovers of this time only had a ten-gallon tank (45 litres) so generally, a couple of jerry cans were essential, fuel could be hard to find on a Sunday night on the west coast.

"No phone, no pool, no pets, King of the Road.." Roger Miller - that was me.

No radio cassette only the beautiful sound of the 2 ¼ litre OHV petrol powerhouse developing 71 BHP at 4,250rpm, life was good.



DELAGÉ – FRENCH STYLE AND ENGINEERING

Club member Peter Hatfield recently shared a fascinating article from his copy of *The New Illustrated Encyclopedia of Automobiles* by David Burgess Wise, featuring the elegant French marque Delag .

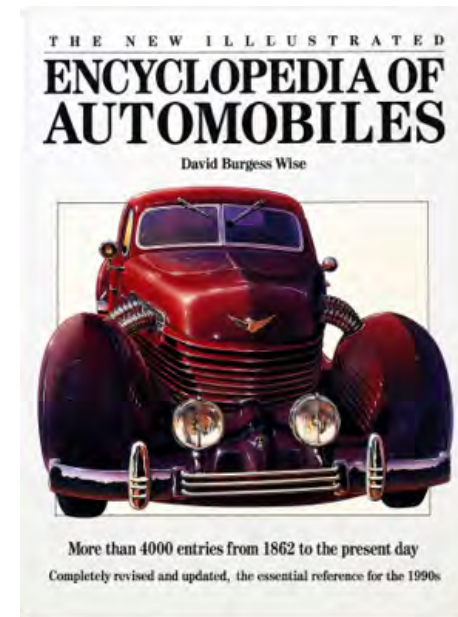
Founded in France in 1905 by Louis Delag , the company quickly became known for producing luxury cars that combined advanced engineering with distinctive European styling. Delag  also enjoyed considerable success in Grand Prix racing during the 1920s, helping establish its reputation for both performance and quality.

The encyclopedia highlights several notable models including the early

touring cars, the successful D series, and the beautifully styled post-war Delag  D6 3-litre pictured here. With their flowing guards, long bonnets, and refined coachwork, Delag  vehicles represented the height of French automotive elegance.

Although production ended during the 1950s, Delag  remains highly respected among collectors and motoring enthusiasts worldwide. Surviving examples are now rare and admired for both their engineering and timeless design.

A special thank you to Peter Hatfield for sharing this wonderful piece of motoring history from his collection.





SUPER CAR CENTRAL AT GOLD COAST CARS & CULTURE

Held at the Carrara Sports Precinct on May 17, this high energy-energy event attracts some of Queensland's most exotic cars, including many classic icons.



NSW COMPLIANCE CRACKDOWN ON HISTORIC AND MODIFIED VEHICLES

CONTRIBUTED BY LINDSAY SMITH

Recent compliance operations conducted by Transport for NSW and NSW Police have highlighted increasing scrutiny of vehicles registered under the state's historic and classic vehicle schemes, as well as vehicles attending major motoring events.

Conditionally registered vehicles from several NSW car clubs were recently inspected at Silverwater as part of an ongoing Transport for NSW operation directed at historic and classic vehicles. According to the department, further inspections are planned throughout 2026.

Of the 85 vehicle owners directed to present their vehicles for inspection, 46 vehicles were inspected. The inspections resulted in 25 defect notices being issued,

with 16 vehicles identified as having major defects. Six vehicles were considered unsafe to drive from the inspection site, while 19 vehicles were found to be ineligible for either the Historic Vehicle Scheme (HVS) or the Classic Vehicle Scheme (CVS).

Transport for NSW also advised that enforcement action is underway against 39 vehicles whose owners failed to comply with inspection directions. Authorities are reportedly focusing on vehicles incorrectly registered under the HVS despite modifications requiring CVS eligibility, as well as vehicles on the CVS that have undergone further modifications without updated engineering approval.



FROM APPRENTICE TO COLLECTOR

SANTO PENNISI AND THE 1914 MODEL T FORD

Few club members have a motoring story quite like Santo Pennisi. From humble beginnings as a 15-year-old apprentice at Coastal Ford in Lismore, Santo developed a lifelong passion. Coastal Ford holds a special place in Australian motoring history. Founded in 1910 by the Trevan family, it was recognised as Australia's oldest continuously operating Ford dealership and one of the oldest Ford dealerships in the world. It was here that Santo first met Bob Trevan and began his journey into collecting and restoring veteran vehicles.



In 1975, Santo purchased parts for a 1914 Model T Ford from Bob Trevan and began what would become a five-year labour of love. Working in his spare time, he gradually assembled the chassis and tracked down authentic



parts from wherever he could find them. The search for original components proved to be one of the greatest challenges of the restoration.



The vehicle was built almost entirely from collected parts, with the body crafted by panel beater Vic Marsh of Alstonville. The restoration and assembly were completed at Bangalow in 1980, where the vehicle was painted by Santo's brother Frank. At just 21 years of age, Santo was finally ready to put the veteran Ford on the road for its first test drive (front page photo).



In 1984, Santo transported the Model T to Miami in Queensland, where the upholstery work was completed, marking another major milestone in the restoration.

Santo also transported the Model T to rallies and shows using his 1975 Ford F350 truck — a vehicle that proudly remains part of his collection today.



The Model T later took part in the Veteran Car Club of Australia rally at Morpeth and was also displayed at Brisbane's All Ford Day in 1984, where it won the prestigious award as Best Veteran Vehicle.

In 1986, the beautifully restored Model was sold through Giltrap's Auto Museum at Kirra Beach on the Gold Coast to a Japanese hotel owner, who planned to display



the vehicle at the entrance to his hotel.

Santo's contribution to the classic vehicle movement extends far beyond his own collection. He is a founding member of the Ballina Classic Vehicle Club and has served as the club's Registration Officer since the club's foundation in 1980.

Collecting and restoration also run strongly through the Pennisi family, including Santo's father Sam and brothers Frank, Tony and Mark.

Today, Santo's story remains an inspiring reminder of the dedication, craftsmanship and enthusiasm that continue to preserve Australia's motoring heritage.



MARCH BREAKFAST - SUMMERLAND FARM



Twilight Run

No Maria hasn't turned to drinking! She won this bottle at the Twilight Run at Eltham Hotel and handed in over the "the boys"



CLASSIC VEHICLE CLUB TRIVIA STUMP THE EXPERTS

1. What is the purpose of **cross-hatching** inside an engine cylinder, and what can happen if it's too smooth?
2. Which early ignition system component was designed to prevent arcing across breaker points?
3. What is **king pin inclination**, and how does it affect steering return?
4. In a carburettor, what is the function of the **emulsion tube**?
5. What mechanical issue does "**dieseling**" (run-on after ignition off) usually indicate?
6. Why were some early engines fitted with **rope rear main seals**, and what is their main drawback?
7. What is the purpose of a **harmonic balancer**, and what failure can occur if it deteriorates?
8. In drum brakes, what is the difference between a **leading and trailing shoe**?
9. What does the term "**deck height**" refer to in engine building?
10. Why can **over-advancing ignition timing** cause engine damage even if the engine feels more powerful?
11. What is the function of a **thermostatic air cleaner** on older carburetted engines?
12. What causes **fuel dilution of engine oil**, and why is it a serious issue?





NORTH COAST CLASSIC MOTORCYCLE SHOW & SWAP N^o.6 - 31 MAY 2026



PRECIS OF THE MARCH, APRIL AND MAY MINUTES

as presented by Club Secretary Di Vickery.

March featured the successful release of the Autumn Magazine, once again showcasing the stories, history and vehicles that make the club unique. Members confirmed a full calendar of social activities, including regular breakfast gatherings and twilight runs, while continued growth in membership and registered vehicles reflected the healthy state of the club. Important discussions were also held regarding historic vehicle registration compliance and the responsibilities associated with the scheme.

During **April**, the club focused on future planning and member engagement, including discussions surrounding updated club merchandise and preparations for the 2026 Show & Shine event. Social outings, including the Twilight Run to the Eltham Pub and upcoming gatherings at Wardell, continued to foster the club's strong sense of camaraderie. Members also acknowledged the valuable work undertaken in updating and improving the club website.

May brought further positive developments, including new advertising support for the club magazine and generous contributions towards publication costs. The club welcomed visitors and prospective members, while preparations for a new range of club shirts moved forward following strong member support. Members were also reminded of the increasing importance of compliance requirements surrounding historic vehicle registration. The club's active events calendar continued with breakfast runs, regional outings and participation in community festivals and motoring events throughout the Northern Rivers region. Recognition was also given to the continued high standard of the club magazine and the contributions made by members in sharing stories and club history.



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DESIGNING THE 2026 SHOW AND SHINE TROPHY

Club member Mark Prowse has put considerable thought and creativity into the design of the trophy for the Ballina Classic Vehicle Club's 2026 Show and Shine event on October.

Rather than producing a traditional off-the-shelf trophy, Mark wanted to create something that reflected the spirit of classic motoring and the craftsmanship behind vehicle restoration.



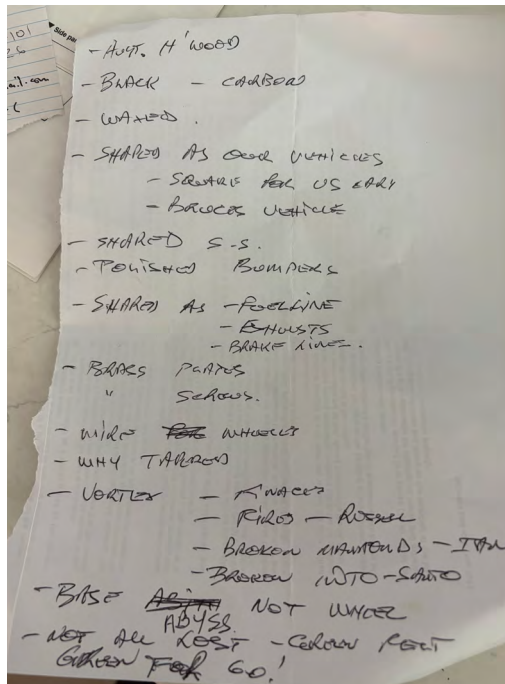
Drawing inspiration from automotive components and workshop materials, the design incorporates elements resembling fuel lines, exhaust tubing, brake lines, wire wheels, brass fittings, and fasteners.

The result is a unique handcrafted trophy with an industrial automotive feel — a piece designed not only to recognise achievement, but also to represent the passion, ingenuity,

and hands-on skills shared by club members.

Mark explained that he wanted the trophy to tell a story, using shapes and materials familiar to anyone who has spent time restoring or maintaining classic vehicles. The finished design combines flowing lines with strong mechanical influences, creating a striking modern trophy while still celebrating traditional motoring culture.

A big thank you to Mark for the time, imagination, and effort that has gone into producing such a distinctive award for the club's upcoming Show and Shine event.



WINTER FEATURE – SIMPLE STORAGE CHECKLIST

Winter Storage Checklist

Before putting your vehicle away for winter, a few simple steps can make all the difference:

- Fill the fuel tank and add stabiliser
- Run engine to circulate treated fuel
- Change oil if it's due (old oil holds contaminants)
- Inflate tyres slightly above normal to prevent flat spots
- Clean and dry vehicle thoroughly (inside and out)
- Disconnect battery or fit a maintenance charger
- Cover vehicle with a breathable cover (avoid trapping moisture)

Taking an hour now can save hours of work—and headaches—when it's time to get back on the road.



DIARY DATES

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

Our breakfasts are held on the first Saturday following our monthly meeting at 8am at various locations.

All members, visitors, and members of other car clubs welcome.

OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST

- June 7 Mid Coast Motorfest 26. John Wright Park Tuncurry. Hot rods, motorcycles veteran, vintage and classic cars, street machines.
- July 4 "Walk on The Wild Side" Vintage Market Fair. Ballina Sports Club Cherry Street.
- August 1-2 Golden Oldies Truck, Tractor and Quilt Show, Dubbo Showground 8130 am to 5 pm
- August 20-23 Northern Rivers Vintage & Veteran Car Club Inc. Annual Rally, Lismore.
- August 29 PCYC Lismore Sutherland Sports and Classic Car Club Car Show and Coffee. Crn Orion & Dawson Street Lismore 9 am – 11 am

SAVE THE DATE:

Council of Heritage Motor Cubs NSW Annual Rally May 14-16 May, 2027.



STUMP THE EXPERTS - ANSWERS

1. Cross-hatching retains oil on cylinder walls for lubrication and helps rings bed in; too smooth = poor lubrication and ring sealing. 2. The condenser (capacitor) - it prevents arcing at the points and improves coil efficiency. 3. King pin inclination is the inward tilt of the steering axis; it helps the wheels self-centre and improves stability. 4. The emulsion tube mixes fuel with air before discharge, improving atomisation. 5. Dieseling (run-on) is usually caused by carbon buildup, hot spots, or incorrect idle/timing allowing fuel to ignite without spark. 6. Rope seals were used for flexibility and availability; drawback is they can leak and wear more easily than modern seals. 7. A harmonic balancer reduces crankshaft vibration; failure can lead to crank damage or breakage. 8. A leading shoe self-energises under rotation (more braking force), while a trailing shoe does not. 9. Deck height is the distance between the piston top and the block deck at TDC. 10. Over-advanced timing can cause detonation (knock), leading to piston, bearing, or engine damage. 11. A thermostatic air cleaner supplies warm air during cold running to improve fuel vaporisation and drivability. 12. Fuel dilution is caused by excess fuel entering oil (rich running, short trips, worn rings), reducing lubrication and increasing engine wear.

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About B-Line Auto

A locally owned and independent auto parts company with stores in Ballina, Mullumbimby, Byron Bay, Yamba and Tweed Heads.

We have many years of local experience, and stock one of the largest range of auto parts in the region, focusing on genuine and genuine quality products.



Proud supporter of
Ballina Classic Vehicle Club

Supporting local car enthusiasts and helping keep our community's passion for classic vehicles driving strong.



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