

# The Spoke

Autumn 2024

Magazine of the Sapphire Coast Historic Vehicle Club  
Pambula  
NSW



Member Geoff Graham's restored 1926 Morris Cowley Sports, see story inside



Sapphire Coast Historic Vehicle Club Inc  
15 Greigs Flat Rd  
Greigs Flat, NSW 2549  
Australia  
[www.schvc.com.au](http://www.schvc.com.au)

PO Box 219, Pambula, NSW, 2549

# Club Meetings & Information

Club meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month (except January), at the SCHVC clubrooms, commencing at 7:30pm. The SCHVC complex is located at 15 Greigs Flat Rd, South Pambula, with entry off the Princes Hwy via Settlers Rd.

The workshop is open Tuesdays & Saturdays from 10:00am to 3:00pm for Members to work on their vehicle. Members must check with the Workshop Coordinator beforehand to ensure access is available.

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT:

### **Presidents Report - Autumn - March 24**

#### **Welcome to 2024!**

I hope you all had an enjoyable and relaxing Christmas and New Year. How good does our club look with our beautiful garden after all the rain and maintenance by our gardening crew.

Our Club Christmas Party was well attended and the weather was kind to us. We all had a great day eating lots of yummy food. Thanks to Pam for organising the food and to the many helpers on the day, you make it less stressful, and the day run smoothly. It was nice to have our Mayor Russel Fitzpatrick attend again and help present our awards. Our Club Member of the Year for 2023 is Mark Rosenfeld, a great all-round helper at the club. Congratulations to our new life members Ailsa Sinclair, Dorothy & Jim Hepburn, and Alex McQueen, very well deserved for all the fantastic work they have contributed to the club over many years.

We have already had 3 events since Christmas with the Bega Cup races at Kalaru which from all reports was a fun day out with not too much money lost. This was followed by the Tathra Lions Club 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary where the club had cars on display, another fun day in the sun. Our last event for February was our Italian Run from Wolumla to the Australasia Hotel at Eden via the windy mountain roads of Candelo, Myrtle Mountain, Burragate and Towamba. What a great afternoon tea and diner we had. Pam put on a nice afternoon tea followed by a scenic drive to Eden with a stop at Towamba sportsground. The Hotel management then seated us in the beautiful old dining room for dinner. It was a great catch up for many members after the Christmas break.

A lot has been happening at the club over the last few months with the new WK Autohaus sheds finally starting to take place. We have done a few updates to our plumbing and drainage and many thanks to those that have assisted.

Our Future planning committee has put out a survey which I hope you are all completing and offering your input, it's your club so please contribute any ideas you may have.

The club Mentoring Program with Eden Marine High School has taken a huge change for 2024 with many changes being implemented by the Education Dept. We have enlisted the help of Lindsay McIntyre who with Rod Newman and Cliff Richard have restructured the program for us. Again, many thanks to those that are assisting with the mentoring in 2024. If you are free on any Tuesdays, please talk to Rod and get involved in what is a very rewarding program for the pupils and those involved.

The Peter Learmont vehicle collection should be auctioned in April or May which will then give us a clear run on moving into the Learmont Shed. I hope those interested in some of the vehicles are saving your dollars up as we would love some of the vehicles to stay within the club membership.

Don't forget our major club rally in October to the Temora Airshow and various towns along the way. Get your booking in with Tony Stove. We are also investigating attending the Bay to Birdwood Rally near Adelaide in 2025.

Welcome to our new club members that have joined over the last few months. We look forward to meeting you at our club events, General Meetings or working bees over the next few months. Please remember all the latest club and events information is kept up to date on the club web site.

Craig

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### *Seven decades of style:*

The Mercedes-Benz SL marks its 70th anniversary in 2024, which makes this famous name one of the longest-running models in automotive history. Starting out as a barely disguised racing car with few concessions to creature comforts, the SL has evolved into the seminal luxury, high-performance roadster.



Across the decades, there have been four-, six-, eight- and 12-cylinder engines, all the way to the latest hybrid-powered generation.

What they all have in common is an ability to deliver rapid performance in an effortless, stylish manner.



The Sapphire Coast Historic Vehicle Club

A Founding Member of the NSW Historic Motoring Association Inc  
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# Christmas Luncheon: 2023

Seventy members were very well fed and entertained at this year's Christmas Break Up Lunch. Special Guest Mayor Russell assisted with the presentations to members - John Turbet, Dorothy & Jim Hepburn, Alex McQueen and Mark Rosenfeld. Thank you to all who helped make the day such a great success with special thanks to the Catering Team and the many members who brought along a dessert plate.



Club Member of the Year Mark Rosenfeld being presented with his award by Mayor Russell



Two long term hard working volunteers were honoured with Awards of Appreciation: retired Registrar John Turbet (above left), and retired Club Secretary Dinah Silk (above right).



Four outstanding long term Members were honoured with Life Membership at the luncheon.

Alex McQueen - (above)

Jim & Dorothy Hepburn - (above right)

Ailsa Sinclair - (right)





## The “Bullnose” Morris Cowley Story

A landmark car in the annals of British motor manufacture, William Morris’s “Bullnose” cars first appeared in 1913, initially powered by a White & Poppe engine, later by a Continental unit and from 1919 by the robust Hotchkiss side valve unit. The distinctive solid nickel “Bullnose” radiator was instantly recognisable, becoming a symbol of real quality and yet the Oxford and Cowley models were offered at a price which other manufacturers could not match and still remain in business. Morris was a master of mass production and a formidable negotiator on price for ‘bought in’ components. The Cowley was the economy model, the four-cylinder side-valve engine displacing 1,548cc and rated at 11.9hp, driving through a cork clutch and with a three speed gearbox. Most popularly offered as either a two-seater with dickey or a four seat tourer, there was also a Sports model listed, however original survivors are exceedingly rare.



Club Member Geoff Graham purchased his restoration project 1926 “Bullnose” Sports from Bendigo in August 1983 and set about a full ground up restoration. His purchase comprised a trailer load of parts including a Sports chassis, engine and body frame. Geoff undertook a panel beating course at Wangaratta TAFE to help with body fabrication work, and his woodworking skills were essential in the creation of the timber frame which was constructed using Mountain Ash from the Victorian high country. His restoration job is simply stunning and the end result worthy of being placed in a motoring Museum. Geoff maintained a journal of the work carried out including time taken and cost of each project. The work was finally completed on June 1, 2020 during the Covid lockdown and totalled 1,388 Hours and \$10,965-91 being spent on the restoration. The Cover photo and the other pictures on this page show the high quality of workmanship and skills Geoff has, and it would be wonderful to see his vehicle proudly displayed at the Club premises.



## *The All Australian VW Country Buggy*

The first official VW imports arrived in late 1953, and were offered to the public in March the next year. At £972 the Beetle was not cheap; for comparison a Renault 750 Deluxe was £861; a Morris Minor 2-door was £848; a Ford Anglia was £922; a Fiat 600 was £838; an Austin A30 was £846 and the six cylinder FJ Holden Standard was £1142.

Nevertheless, the VW persevered in Australia, due in no small part to the durability it displayed in our harrowing Redex and Ampol trials. By 1956, VW was fifth in market share behind Holden, Ford, Morris and Austin.



Since 1954, the Beetle and Transporter had been produced CKD locally at the Martin and King premises in the Melbourne suburb of Clayton to take advantage of local tariff benefits. When VW supremo Heinz Nordhoff himself visited Australia he decided to purchase Martin and King, and thus was born Volkswagen (Australasia) Pty Ltd.

The existing factory was expanded to include a new press hall, paint shop and assembly hall. In 1959, the first body pressings were produced locally, and CKD was phased out that same year. The first VW to land on Australian soil had been a Kübelwagen in 1946. It was gifted to us by the British Army from Wolfsburg to be appraised for possible domestic use.

These lightweight vehicles proved adept in the Australia-like desert conditions in Africa – particularly when fitted with their balloon-like aero tyres. Rommel himself claimed the Kübelwagen saved his life; his own making its way safely through a minefield that sent the Horch carrying his luggage close behind skyward.

In 1964, plans and first drawings were prepared by VW Australia for the Type 197 utility vehicle and within a year they were running prototypes. This vehicle was conceived and developed locally under the aegis of Engineering Manager, Cyril Harcourt and Quality Control Director Rudi Herzmer – who was himself familiar with the Kübelwagen.

In 1966 permission was sought from Wolfsburg to commence production. Head Office insisted on evaluating the vehicle for themselves, and so two of the three prototypes were flown over at great expense along with Rudi Herzmer.

The three Type 197 prototypes were run through 50,000 km of testing over some of the most hostile terrain on earth, actually circumnavigating the continent three times during its two-year shakedown. It was an entirely versatile off-road vehicle; a 51 degree angle of approach at the front and 32 degrees at the back. 230mm of ground clearance was matched with exhaust pipes sitting 600mm from the ground and making their way through apertures in the body itself.

But crucially, this was not a 4WD vehicle. Somewhere along the way this Australian Army



requirement was set aside, and as a result not a single Type 197 would be purchased by our armed forces.

Componentry was sourced from all three Volkswagen types then in production. The Beetle donated the chassis frame, front axle and fuel tank, along with items such as clutch, torsion bar and spring plates, steering wheel and headlights. The Transporter gave rear axle tube, axle shaft, reduction hubs, reduction gearing, brake drum mechanism, road wheels and brake components. From the Type 3 came the steering and part of the pedal system. The Country Buggy was powered by the F-series 1,300cc engine, with the option of taking the 1,200 instead. The new Volkswagen utility vehicle was shown at the March 1967 Motor Show, and profiled in Modern Motor a month later when was yet to be named and floatation was still apparently a part of its offering. It was officially released to the public in April 1968, a whole year later thanks to delays in approval from Wolfsburg. A dealer launch film was made of the now-named Country Buggy enjoying the beachside environs of the Mornington Peninsula south of Melbourne.

Despite the minuscule production quota, VW Australasia managed to send the Country Buggy to New Zealand, Malaysia and Singapore.

It was also sent CKD to the Philippines, where they were built in LHD configuration and made available with steel roof and doors. Once supply of body parts from Australia dried up, Volkswagen DMG started building their own version of the body (renamed the Sakbayan -car of the people). Headlights were changed to an inset arrangement and some of the ribbing along the side was eliminated.



Despite the Beetle's platform's natural affinity for utility, of all the VW satellite operations Australia was unique in developing a bespoke vehicle. On paper, the Country Buggy seemed the ideal middle ground between utility and lifestyle.

The Country Buggy was doomed before it was even released. In 1967 Volkswagen Australasia recorded its second significant loss in a row; \$2.6 million after 1966's \$3.7 million. 1968 saw a rationalisation of the business in Australia with press shop equipment being scattered around the globe to Germany, Mexico Brazil and South Africa. The Beetle reverted to CKD, and before too long the company was assembling Datsuns alongside, and eventually Volvos as well.

Eight months after it was launched to the public, the Country Buggy was cancelled. Total production was 1,956, with approximately 400 made in LHD.



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