



North Shore  
Vintage Car Club

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# Progress:

The monthly journal of the  
North Shore Vintage Car Club  
February 2022



Happy New Year to one and all! Let us hope we have a better year and are able to re-establish all of our regular activities and enjoy our vehicles again.

We have a wide range of features for you this month including some great photos from the International Festival, some more book reviews, the weirdest Allard that you have ever seen and a trip around Auckland with Barry Birchall as we search for traces of the city's motoring past.

Rather disappointingly I had no responses to my question last month about the future of all our project vehicles..... (TradeMe perhaps??)

I came across some interesting statistics the other day, some of which were based on the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs. On average, classic vehicles cover 1,200 miles a year in the UK and many do much, much less. That compares to the general UK motoring average of 7,200 miles. From an IT source, it has been stated that daily use of a mobile phone and a laptop generate 1,250kg and 1,400kg of CO2 respectively a year. By comparison, the use of a classic car, those 1,200 miles, produces 563kg of CO2 a year – almost a third of that of a laptop in daily use. That really puts things into perspective, doesn't it?

As always thanks to our regular contributors; please keep them coming.

Stuart Battersby  
battersby56nz@gmail.com

## In this edition:

- \* **Chairman's Report:** The club and Covid.
- \* **Book Reviews:** Michael Dorbeck reviews a few more.
- \* **The A-Team:** Pull of a daring rescue mission.
- \* **Surviving Evidence:** Auckland's early motor trade.
- \* **What's On:** Still patchy.
- \* **An Allard?:** Surely not.
- \* **International Festival:** Two full pages of photographs.
- \* **February Club Run Details:** Timings and stops.
- \* **Is it Just Hot Air:** Cleaning up the streets of New Delhi
- \* **Focus on the Marque:** Sunbeam.
- \* **Committee Notes and Contacts.**

*The Focus on the marque this month is Sunbeam.  
Shown here is a 1927 Sunbeam Super Sports.*



# Chairman's Report: Tony Sparkes

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As predicted by many, Omicron has escaped into the community. So, we will follow the rules and, hopefully, keep all of our members and their families safe. Thank you to everyone for having their vaccine passports ready when I have asked to see them. Some members are choosing to stay away for a few weeks. Some members may choose to wear a mask or not join us at morning tea. We have removed every other chair in the clubhouse so that there is some separation. It is important to the committee that our fellow members are comfortable at the club should they choose to attend. We will monitor the situation closely and keep you informed. As always, please feel free to contact me if you have any concerns.

The (Ford) A-team have finished John Higham's car and we hope to see it on the road soon. Does anyone wish to book the Members' Bay? If not, I may have a car requiring some work in the not too distant future.

We need some bits for the Chevrolet. Does anyone know where we can get the clips that hold on the window and door handle escutcheons? What we need may not be original, so I need to be able to go to the store and pick the right size.

We were recently asked to join the Austin Flying "A" club on a run. A few members did and had a good time. In order to boost numbers on our runs, would you please ask your single marque clubs if they would like to join us on our runs. It would give us a chance to show off our facilities and resources and could be good for new members and spares sales. Or if they would like to visit our premises at any time, I'm sure we can find a couple of hosts. The Hibiscus Rodders are visiting on February 19<sup>th</sup> (the day before our club run to the Kauri Museum) and invite all to come have a look at their cars.

Stay safe and look after yourselves.

Tony Sparkes

Chairman

Tony Sparkes

Chairman

Phone: 027-499-5588

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## Dorbeck: Michael Dorbeck Book Reviews.

### **Dust and Glory by Evan Green:** Pan McMillan Publishers, 1990

Three Redex "Around Australia" Reliability Trials were held in 1953, 1954 and 1955. This novel tells what may have happened if a fourth trial had been held.

Key characters are Galignite Jack Murray (infamous for tossing sticks of galignite into rural dunnies, as well as pranks played on the officials, a newspaper reporter and his girlfriend (a tempestuous relationship at times), Jack Davey (a radio star) and an American racer (JJ Chesterfield).

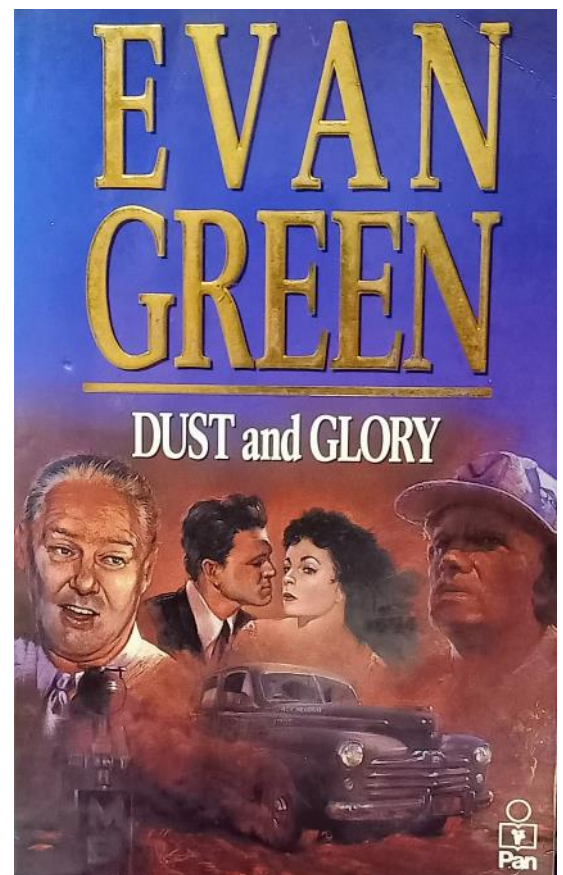
The race is over some 10500 miles of rough roads around Australia, departing Sydney and heading up through Queensland before heading inland to Darwin, down to Perth and across the Nullabor Plains to Adelaide, Melbourne and finishing in Sydney. The plot of the book is full of twists and turns, especially as American and Australian mob (ie mafia) connections play a part in the running of the race. To say more would require the issuance of a spoiler alert.

Anyway, the book is a fun portrayal of a serious race. Full of trials and tribulations, shenanigans, pranks, subterfuge and sabotage.

I enjoyed reading this novel. It has been an interlude of fun and frivolity, but underneath gives a sense for the roads the actual races were run over. The author is an Australian motoring publicist and an internationally recognised rally driver. He was a commentator at the Bathurst 1000 motor race from the 1960's until 1983. He did actually compete in the Round Australia Trial as well as the London to Sydney Marathon. His motoring background shows in the technical content of the book. Evan Green is thinly disguised as one of the characters in the book.

The actual Redex Trials continued after 1955, but only on occasions afterwards under other names. The last one was held in 1995.

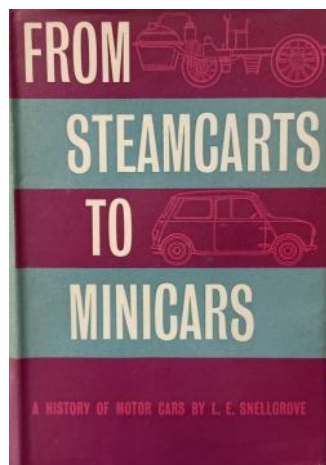
I think most motoring people would enjoy the book as long as they are not looking for a factual account of the rally. There is a love element throughout the book, but it does not take over the plot just enhances it. The book is lightly written and very enjoyable. Fast moving enough to want to keep reading, but also not taxing enough to fall asleep mid-paragraph.



# Motoring Memories from the library of Hans Dorbeck: cont.

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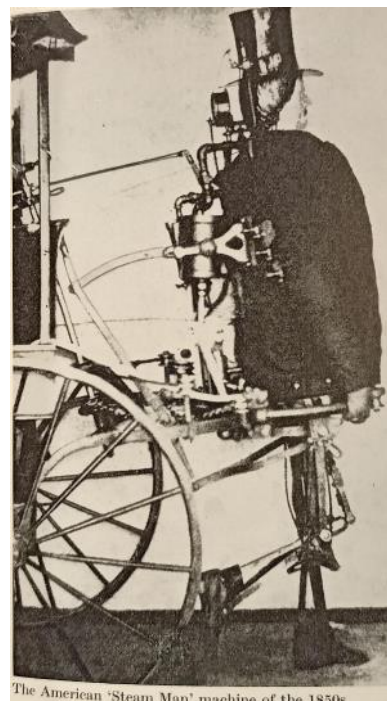
## From Steamcarts to Minicars, A history of motor cars: L.E. Snellgrove, Longmans, 1961



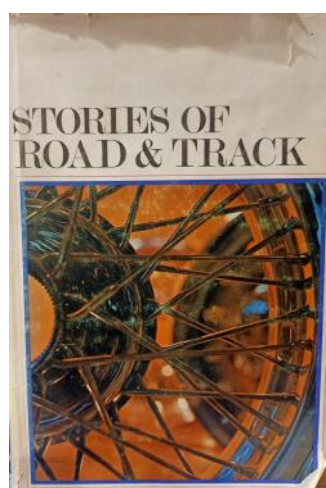
This book is a light-hearted view of the history of the motor car. Technical enough to be interesting but not a tedious read. It covers the various eras of the development of motor cars and other mechanised forms of transport from the Industrial Revolution to the motorways and bubble cars of the era in which the book was written.

Oddities like the American Steam Man, The Inventor of Bagley Avenue, Long Range Desert Group, Mille Miglia 1955, as well as motor racing greats like Mike Hawthorne, Stirling Moss and Donald Campbell, amongst others. It concludes looking at the new-fangled motorways and multi-storey parking garages.

It is a dated look at the history of motoring, but enjoyable in its own way. Not a taxing read. Definitely not worth reading if you are looking for a full and detailed history of motoring. But I enjoyed the book and learnt a few facts, and had a chuckle along the way.



## Stories of Road & Track, Bond Packhurst Publications 1970



This book is a collection of short stories and articles from the magazine Road & Track, covering a span of 15 years from 1955 to 1970. Along with fictional stories are others based on fact as well as historical accounts of cars, races and motoring events. It includes road tests of all sorts of modern motoring necessities (eg the 1955 Poguear), as well as accounts (factual and otherwise) of various racing events.

Fortunately this book is full of short articles, which made it easy to put down. I really enjoyed some articles, but was glad to finish others. But overall, I enjoyed the stories once I decided to stop reading articles I was not enjoying. Saying that, there were not many that I did not finish.

Moments of frivolity and humour poked their heads out being the saving grace for some of the more dreary articles. A number of the racing articles would have been of more interest at the time of publication, less so in these more modern times.

*Michael has kindly offered to loan any of these books to members. Contact via the Editor*



# Model A Story: This is the sad story of a Model A Ford, with a better ending.

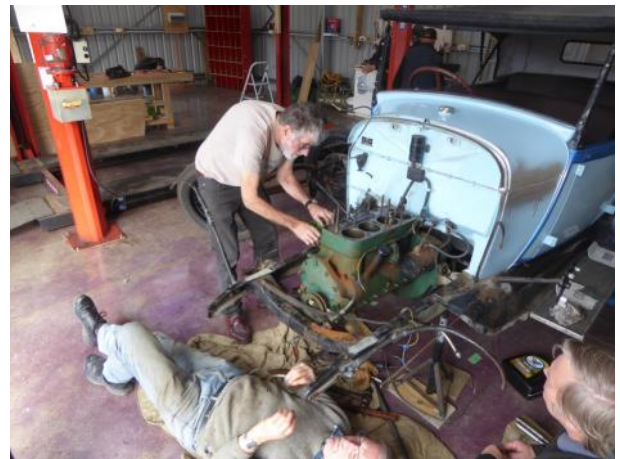
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Our Model A Ford started life with Wilkinson and Company Ltd (later Wilkinson Ford) of Cambridge on 7 September 1929, and had a succession of owners (including dealers) in Cambridge, New Plymouth, Mangitoki, Palmerston North, and Fielding before being purchased by a well-known car dealer and vintage car collector in Papatoetoe who undertook a “full restoration”, and from whom we purchased it in May 1988.



*The poorly Model A arrives at the club.*

Unfortunately the engine block had failing a crack repair and we found water in the sump. So, by January 1994 a “fully reconditioned” replacement engine was purchased and installed, only to find water, once again, in the sump. Off with the head to discover that it was never going to be satisfactory, as the head needed to be planed. Due to circumstances of the time we parked her up on blocks, with the head refitting put on hold until another day. We live in an area exposed to on shore north-easterly winds which carry a sea salt laden moist airstream, unsuitable for a parked up vehicle, and the inevitable deterioration set in.



*The “A” Team get to work.*

And then a miracle occurred. Some generous Model A Ford aficionados, led by John Castle, without our prior knowledge, organised to make use of the “Members’ Bay” in the new shed, and get the car up and running. Not a restoration, but a mechanical going over, and make it roadworthy. A very pleasant surprise for us when John came around to our home and explained what his group had in mind.



*Lots of tutting and sighing*

The Model A was trailered to the club on 20 July 2021, and work got underway. The team started with a nose to tail check of all things mechanical, except for the gearbox and diff which were known to be in good order. The sump was dropped and cleaned, pistons removed, gudgeons eased, bores honed, rings reset, bearing clearances checked, valves ground and clearances set, oil pump cleaned, distributor and coil checked, generator checked, carburettor disassembled and checked, petrol tank and lines cleaned, wheel bearings and brakes checked

# Model A Story: Cont.

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and adjusted, windscreen rubber replaced and glass repaired, shock absorber rebuilt, new battery, etc.

The intervention of the August Covid lockdown interrupted activities, but the motor started on the second cranking over on 17 December 2021. A few test drives, and then motored home, after the Christmas closure, on 20 January 2022.

After we get a WOF and take the registration off "hold", a cosmetic clean-up of the bodywork is on the agenda.



*No stopping them now*

A big thank you to all those that helped, and especially John Castle, Bill Duffy, Robert Brown and Garry Learmonth with their able assistance and Model A expertise, and of course to NSVCC for the shed use.



*RESULT!! John Higham drives home on the Model A*



# Surviving early motor trade buildings in Auckland: Barry Birchall

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When researching the history of motor trade in Auckland, it became clear the first dealers were located mainly in Custom and Quay Streets. By 1915, most of them had moved up to Albert Street and later to Beach Road, then out to Newmarket. Recently, once Covid restrictions on movement permitted, I explored the central city locations where many of these dealers were located to see if the buildings they once traded from were still standing, and found that sadly, most have not survived. For example, in the mid-thirties there were about twenty car dealers in Albert Street and not one of those buildings survives today. In this article I talk about those buildings that have survived the wrecker's ball, and how they are used today.



*116 Quay Street today.*

The oldest building to have survived in Auckland is the one built for Ryan & Company at 116 Quay Street, from where they were selling the Oldsmobile, the Milnes Daimler truck and stationery motors. In 1906 there was a major fire in the building, but it survived. After Ryan moved out in about 1910, W R Twigg moved in for few years. It was later the workshop for the Union Steam Ship Company. For a few years it was a fish restaurant and is now occupied by a Japanese restaurant, one of just two buildings in Quay Street to have survived from that period.

The building put up for Harrison & Gash in Khyber Pass in about 1900 is still there. In the 1920s it was extended. Over the years they sold several cars, but they were best remembered for having the Morris agency and for a while it was called Morris House. The building itself is now occupied by several small shops.

In the early 1920s the Colonial Motor Company built a new factory in Fox Street, Parnell, to assemble the Model T Ford in Auckland, and that building has survived. They built the truck bodies and assembled Fordson tractors in the building. The building was also used for the distribution of parts and vehicles to the dealers. Staff called it Paddy's Puzzle after the Irish builder who built it, with all its corridors and small spaces. In 1923 over 350 people were employed by Colonial Motor Company in the Fox Street plant. The Colonial Motor Company used the building up to 1935, when the parent company took over the assembly and distribution in New Zealand and moved it to Petone.



*Colonial Motors, Fox Street today.*



# Surviving early motor trade buildings in Auckland: Barry Birchall

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When the Ford Company moved out of the building, the International Harvester company moved in. Bruce Madgwick told me when he started work there, the gantry cranes were still running on Model T Ford wheels. Many years later, the wheels were recovered by John Stewart. The NZ Herald had rolls of newsprint stored in there for a while. Today the building is appropriately named Fordall-House and it has been converted into up-market apartments. In several areas in the building there are photos of the old Model T Ford assembly line. In some respects, it has been altered very little and it has still got the high ceilings and the windows put in by the old Irish builder. There are several car parks below that would have once been full of Model T Fords.

Another old Ford building that has survived in Auckland is the office, showroom, and workshop, on the corner of Glenside Crescent and Symonds Street, built for Universal Motor Company, an Auckland Ford dealer, by the Colonial Motor Company. The Colonial Motor Company had taken over Carlaw & Jones and had the company rebranded as the Universal Motor Company. The building was



*Universal Motors building today*

constructed in 1923 at the height of Model T Ford sales in New Zealand, when one in three cars sold was a Ford. The Ford Times reported it was one of the best car showrooms in the world. When the production of the Model T Ford stopped, there was long period before the first Model A Ford appeared in Auckland, and it was decided to amalgamate the business with John W Andrew. The new company would be called John W Andrew & Sons, and the new cars were sold out of the building in Symonds Street while the truck and tractor sales would be from the old John W Andrew building on the corner of New North Road and Porter Ave. That building has not survived, but the Symonds Street building still stands. Walking through it today you can see it hasn't altered much. There is a safe on one floor large enough to park a car in and a grand staircase that would have gone up in the centre of the showroom. In the mid-thirties Wright Stephenson built a new showroom in Beach Road, and that building is still there and now used as showroom for Electrical Vehicle Specialists.

# Surviving early motor trade buildings in Auckland: Barry Birchall

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Wright Stephenson at the time had the agency for the Renault and the Graham. Campbell Motors were on the corner of Rutland and Lorne Street in the thirties, and that building has survived but it doesn't look like a car showroom today. At the time they were selling Willys and Studebaker. The building is presently empty, so its fate is unknown. In 1938, REO Motors had a new showroom and workshop built on the corner of Federal and Wolff Street and that's now used as a carpark for Wilson Parking; it is still called REO Car Park, so some history has survived. H L White in the 1920s were at Karangahape Road and sold the Triumph, Raleigh and Norton motorcycles and Triumph and Studebaker cars from a building that has survived. So much in the city has been demolished so I do hope the odd old building put up by early motor dealers does survive into the future. More information on Auckland's early dealers in motor vehicles and the buildings they traded from is available in the recently published book on the Early History of Motor Car in Auckland. If someone wants a copy, please make contact with me on 09 818 8755.



*Campbell Motors building today*



*REO Motors building today*





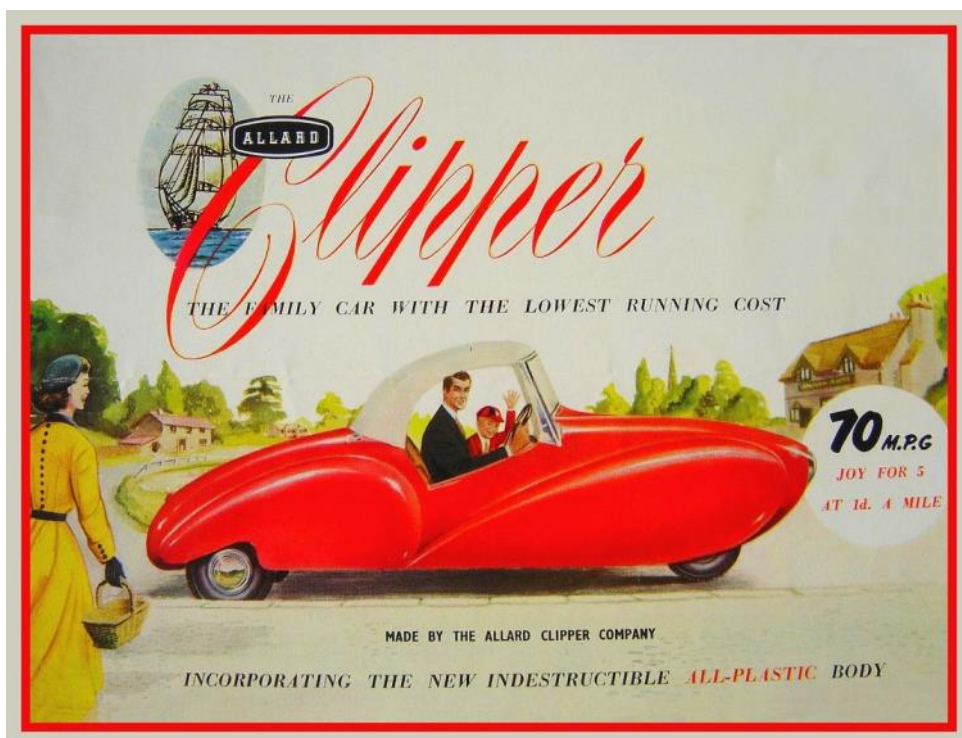
As best as fiberglass car expert Geoff Hacker can figure, the Allard Clipper became the first production British fiberglass-bodied car when it debuted in 1954. It also may very well be the last production car produced with a dickey seat. It's also the least likely vehicle to bear the famed Allard name and certainly the most poorly received, two prime reasons why the one that Hacker recently unearthed and intends to restore is only one of three known surviving examples of the odd little three-wheeler.

The Clipper's one of the least likely vehicles to be sold as an Allard because the design came not from Sydney Allard but from David Gottlieb, an inventor with questionable credentials who briefly marketed the Cymota, a friction-drive bicycle powered by an unlicensed copy of the French Velo-solex engine and marketed in England as "the cheapest form of transport in the world." Despite a raft of advertising that was described as "bunkum," Gottlieb gave up on the Cymota in 1952 and instead turned his attention to microcars, which were just then starting to become popular in England and across Europe.



*Allard press photo, from Grace's Guide.*

His first microcar design called for a three-wheeled car with the single wheel providing the steering up front. However, the body, a roadster with a lift-off hardtop, would appear more suited for a four-wheeled chassis with amply curved front fenders that swooped downward through the doors and into the rear fenders. Perhaps most significantly, Gottlieb determined that glass-reinforced plastic - a.k.a. fiberglass - which was just then being put into use by sports car manufacturers in the United States, would make an ideal microcar body. The material was lightweight, wasn't as easily damaged as steel or aluminum ("indestructible," the advertising claimed), did not require expensive tooling for mass production, and could be impregnated with the car's final color thus reducing the costs of painting. Allard didn't go all in on Gottlieb's design. Instead, he formed a separate company, the Allard Clipper Company, before assigning a few of his employees, including Gil Jepson, to fabricate a pair of prototypes. Jepson and the crew tried a number of different engines and chassis layouts before settling on an air-cooled 346cc Villiers twin driving the left rear eight-inch



*Advertisement from the time.*

wheel via triple V-belts. Compressed rubber blocks would provide the suspension, according to Lush. As Hordern-Richmond employees Margaret Woolsey told Hacker for an article in *Forgotten Fiberglass*, the development of the fiberglass molds for the body was an unconventional process.

Early promotional materials claimed that the Clipper would easily seat three adults and two children, weigh about 300 kilograms, attain speeds of up to 40 MPH, and get as much as 70 miles to the gallon, all for a price of £268. Motorcycle dealerships signed on to distribute the Clipper and the microcar earned not unfavourable press in comparisons with the Bond Minicar and AC Petite.

Of the 20 Clippers that Allard built, two went directly to the United States, but both of those appear lost to time. Instead, the Clipper that Hacker recently bought had been imported by a Pittsburgh collector about 10 years ago, but never restored. Only two other Clippers are known to exist: one in Germany, and one in the Hammond microcar collection in England.



**Upcoming Events:** Events are a bit thin on the ground at present because of you know what.

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Please drop us a note if you know of an event that might be of interest to our members. Remember that **North Shore Branch events are in RED**, whilst other branch and private events are in our usual blue font. Obviously all these events are subject to Covid postponements.

## February

Note that the **Brits at the Beach** event in February IS NOW CANCELLED

**February 12: Auckland Veteran's Rally:** Entry forms at <https://avvcc.org.nz/entry-forms>

**February 19: Hibiscus Coast Rodders** are meeting at our clubrooms.

**February 20: Club Run** to Kauri Museum. Leave clubhouse at 8am, breakfast in Wellsford. (see flyer in this edition for more details)

## March

**March 10: Mercedes Club** holding an event at 40 Masons Road.

**March 12-13: Auckland Hunua 100 Rally:** Entry forms at: <https://avvcc.org.nz/entry-forms>

**Brits and Euros Show** is CANCELLED

## Regular Diary

**Committee Meetings:** Last Monday of every month, 7.30pm.

**Tuesday Mornings:** Restoration shed open. Coffee and tea around 10 - ish.

**Wednesday Evenings:** Club night. Coffee, tea and banter.

**Thursday Mornings:** All sheds open. Why not come along and explore the parts shed? Fantastic experience, even if you don't need any bits! Coffee, tea, cakes and savouries at 10.30am.

**The club will now be opening under the current Covid Protection Framework (Traffic Light System) Guidelines. Vaccine Passes are required for all club activities and events.**

The New Plymouth festival seems to have been a huge success, feedback from branch members who travelled to 'naki as well as photos published on Facebook have told a tale of fabulous vehicles, amazing runs and faultless organisation. Here are a selection of photos from the event.

*Top Photo award must go to our Club Secretary Maurice Whitham for this shot of his newly restored 1919 Model T Ford about to haul his daughter's 1976 Mini.*



*Cadillac and '54 Chevrolet in Opunaki.*



*1932 Peugeot 302, with French Resistance markings.*



*1935 Auburn 858 Phaeton.*



*1981 De Lorean DMC.*





*1966 Vauxhall Viva owned by Graeme Banks, Branch secretary of Waitemata Br.*



*Arnold Van Zon's 1929 Packard Victoria.*



*1975 Mitsubishi GTO.*



*Bruce Skinner's 1933 Pierce Arrow.*



*Busy Street Party.*



*Inglewood Rugby Club.*



# February Club Run: Kauri Museum, Matakohe.

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## Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2022

Run to the Kauri Museum, Matakohe.

Leave from NSVCC Clubrooms at 8.00 a.m.

Stop for breakfast in Wellsford

For lunch there are cafes at Matakohe, or take your own picnic.

The Kauri Museum is one of the most interesting in New Zealand.

Lot of mechanical stuff for the boys.

Lots of social history, furniture, gum collection etc. Plenty of interest for one and all.





# Is this just hot air? Tata Mini-CAT, compressed air driven car.

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Indian manufacturer Tata Motors is getting set to release an air-powered car. The auto giant plans to have about 6000 of the MiniCAT – short for Mini Compressed Air Technology, as they’ve sexily christened it – on the streets over there by the middle of next year, with a retail price of around US\$8000.

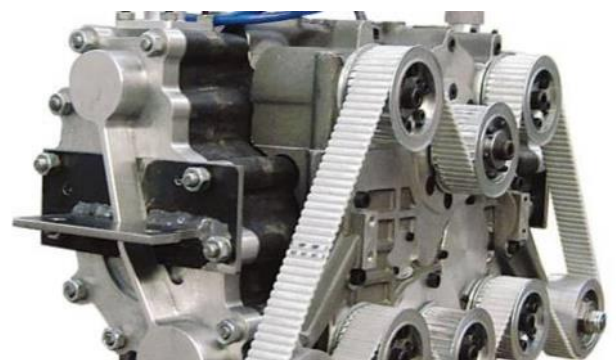
This should make it an attractive option for small commercial enterprises, and go some way to avoiding the kind of pollution problems that are growing in India and other emerging economies. The MiniCAT is said to have a range of 300km, and can be refuelled for just a couple of dollars because the fuel is needed only to run the compressor that fills the air tank in about four hours.



*Surprisingly conventional design*

The car has a superlight fibreglass body built on a tubular chassis – which somewhat scarily is held together by glue rather than anything as reassuring as metal welding. On the other hand, we spent several teenage years in the company of a station wagon that used increasing amounts of fencing wire as the primary structural element (and a large flat-bladed screwdriver jammed into the open transmission linkage to change gears), so perhaps glue can do the job just as efficiently.

The drivetrain, if you can use that term for something that is more like a “drive-bellows”, uses 300 litres of compressed air stored in carbon fibre tanks under the body. Essentially, outside air is pulled into the engine chamber and compressed to 290psi, by which time has a temperature of 400C. Compressed air from the tank is then injected, and being much colder expands quickly in the heated chamber, pushing the piston. The process is called a thermo dynamic cycle and admittedly there’s a bit more too it than our simple explanation, but this is not Mechanics Monthly and we don’t really care.



*Not immediately recognisable as an engine*

The MiniCAT uses a continuously variable transmission that relies on belts rather than cogs – so no chance a screwdriver will get you out of trouble – and produces a, well, continuously variable set of gears. The Tata baby is the invention of an insane Frenchman called Guy Negre, who was an engineer in Formula 1, where he became fascinated by the compressed air system used to start the race cars. And also designed a W12 engine – think two V6s jammed together – which only serves to reinforce the insanity tag.

However, Negre is adamant that his car will be a solution for the increasingly crowded streets of India and any other countries where presumably people are looking for cars glued together from leftover lego and styrofoam, sitting on top of a highly pressurised balloon.

# Focus on the Marque: Sunbeam

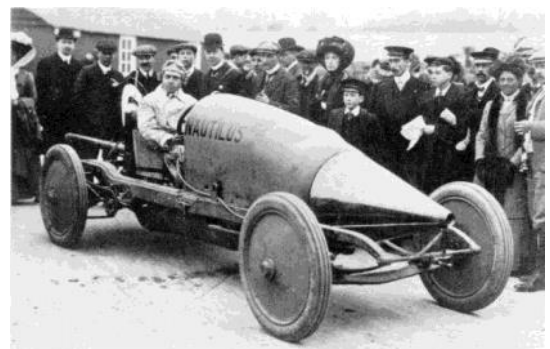
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**Summary:** was a British motor car manufacturer with its works in Wolverhampton in Staffordshire, England. Its Sunbeam name had been registered by John Marston in 1888 for his bicycle manufacturing business. Sunbeam motor car manufacture began in 1901. The motor business was sold to a newly incorporated Sunbeam Motor Car Company Limited in 1905 to separate it from Marston's pedal bicycle business; Sunbeam motorcycles were not made until 1912. In-house designer Louis Coatalen had an enthusiasm for motor racing accumulated expertise with engines. Sunbeam manufactured their own aero engines during the First World War and 647 aircraft to the designs of other manufacturers. Engines drew Sunbeam into Grand Prix racing and participation in the achievement of world land speed records.



*1902 12HP Sunbeam by Berliet*

In spite of its well-regarded cars and aero engines, by 1934 a long period of particularly slow sales had brought continuing losses. Sunbeam was unable to repay money borrowed for ten years in 1924 to fund its Grand Prix racing programme, and a receiver was appointed. There was a forced sale, and Sunbeam was picked up by the Rootes brothers. Manufacture of Sunbeam's now old-fashioned cars did not resume under the new owners, but Sunbeam trolleybuses remained in production. Rootes had intended to sell luxury cars under the Sunbeam name, but almost four years after their purchase, in 1938, the two brothers instead chose to add the name Sunbeam to their Talbot branded range of Rootes designs calling them Sunbeam-Talbots. In 1954 they dropped the word Talbot, leaving just Sunbeam. Sunbeam continued to appear as a marque name on new cars until 1976. It was then used as a model name, firstly for the Chrysler Sunbeam from 1977 to 1979, and, following the takeover of Chrysler Europe by PSA Group, for the Talbot Sunbeam from 1979 through to its discontinuation in 1981.



*Louis Coatalen in the Nautilus at  
Brooklands in 1910*

**Early Years:** John Marston, the London-educated son of a sometime mayor of Ludlow and landowner, had been apprenticed to Edward Perry, tinsplate-works master and twice mayor of Wolverhampton. In 1859 aged 23 Marston bought two other tinsplate manufacturers in Bilston, four miles away, and set himself up on his own account. On Perry's death Marston bought his Jeddo Works in Paul Street Wolverhampton, left Bilston and continued Perry's business. An avid cyclist Marston established his Sunbeamland Cycle Factory in 1897 in his Paul Street premises manufacturing and assembling pedal bicycles he branded Sunbeam. His Sunbeam trademark was registered in 1893. In 1895 a company, John Marston Limited, was incorporated and took ownership of John Marston's business. The Sunbeam trademark was registered for motor-cars in 1900.



Rugby-educated Thomas Cureton 1863–1921 began as his apprentice then became Marston's right-hand man in the cycle works and the cautious advocate of a motor-car venture. Their board of directors did not favour it but Marston and Cureton continued their project. Between 1899 and 1901 Sunbeam produced a number of experimental cars driven about Wolverhampton but none was offered for sale. In late 1900 they announced the purchase in Blakenhall of "a large area of land in Upper Villiers Street for the erection of works for the manufacture of cars". The first announcement of their new vehicle was in 22 September 1900 issue of ***The Autocar*** but no full description was provided to the public until February 1901. It would be supplied with a 2-seater body on a channel steel frame powered by a 4-horsepower horizontal engine with electric ignition intended to run at 700 rpm and have two forward speeds and reverse using belt drive to differential gears on the live axle.

**The Cyclecar:** The first production car branded Sunbeam was not Marston and Cureton's but a car designed and developed by a young architect, Maxwell Maberly-Smith, powered by a single-cylinder 2¾ horsepower De Dion engine. Described as a "sociable" it carried two passengers sitting close together facing the roadside from above a central belt-drive. To begin with they faced opposite roadsides. This layout provided propinquity while maintaining propriety. Their driver at his tiller sat behind them his body facing the opposite roadside. Wheels were arranged in a diamond formation. They used a frame like a motorised quadracycle version of Starley's Coventry Rotary and were to be referred to by *The Automotor Journal* as "the curiously light vehicles with which their (Sunbeam) name has for some time been associated". The Sunbeam Mabley was a limited success, several hundred sold in 1901 and 1902 at £130 each.



1914 Sunbeam 12/16 4-cylinders 3 Litres

**The Motorcar:** At the annual Stanley Cycle Show in November 1902, Sunbeam, thoroughly approved by the magazine's correspondent, displayed beside more Mableys, a 12-horsepower four-cylinder car with the engine beneath a bonnet at the front, camshaft within the "crank chamber", a four-speed gearbox and all four artillery wheels of the same size fitted with pneumatic tyres. Price £525. In February 1904 the 12-horsepower car was given a six-cylinder 16-horsepower stablemate. Like the earlier 12 the new engine was designed to give its full power at what were even then considered low engine speeds. Particular note was made that special attention had once more been paid to further controlling the airflow beneath the car's apron and the chassis to reduce that bane of passengers' comfort, the car's disturbance of dust on the road. The new car also featured chain cases so the chains ran in oil, were rendered almost silent and were protected from dirt.

**Thomas Pullinger:** London-born Thomas Charles Willis Pullinger (1866–1945) joined Sunbeam in 1902. He had repaired, then made bicycles, and then in 1891 was sent by Humber to France for Humber's joint venture with Gladiator but Humber struck difficulties and Pullinger stayed in France with Alexandre Darracq as Darracq's designer and personal assistant. He moved on as works manager to other French firms, designing perhaps the first small car and certainly designing the first water-cooled cylinder head. Very keen to design and build his own car, he moved back to England and arrived at Sunbeam in Wolverhampton on a motor-quadracycle he had built himself. He prepared a report for the Sunbeam directors and delivered it on 11 November 1902. His first recommendation was that Sunbeam should buy-in a car from an established firm, then as sales built-up, buy them without certain components which would instead be made by Sunbeam until all that was bought in would be an engine. The report concluded with his advice that the cars should be supplied to Sunbeam by Berliet. He also advised the remaining stock of Mabley cars should be sold off as quickly as possible.

In January 1905, the Sunbeam Motor Car Company Ltd was formed to purchase and remove motor cars and their Villiers Street Works from the rest of the John Marston business which retained Sunbeam Cycles. Six years later after several further issues of shares to provide capital for greater expansion there was a (technically) public offer of ordinary and preference shares to Sunbeam agents and their customers representing a small part of the company's capital. Twelve months later in January 1912 its shares were formally listed on the London Stock Exchange and Sunbeam became a public listed company.

**Louis Coatalen:** The Breton car designer, Louis Coatalen, joined Sunbeam from Hillman-Coatalen in 1909, and became chief designer. He soon reorganised production so almost all parts were built in-house instead of relying on outside suppliers with their variable quality. He quickly introduced his first design, the Sunbeam 14/20, their first to use a shaft-driven rear axle. It was upgraded in 1911 with a slightly larger engine and rebranded 16/20. Coatalen was particularly fond of racing as a way to drive excellence noting that "Racing improves the breed". After designing his 14/20 he began to design advanced high-power engines combining overhead valves with a pressurised oil lubrication system. In 1910 he built Sunbeam Nautilus, his first dedicated land-speed-record car, powered by a 4.2-litre version of this engine design. Sunbeam cars powered by more conventional (for the time) side-valve engines featured prominently in the 1911 Coupe de l'Auto race, and improved versions won first, second and third the next year. Sunbeams continued to race over the next few years, but its management had moved on to other interests.

**First World War:** In 1912 Sunbeam began to make aircraft engines introducing a series of engines that were not a commercial success. Coatalen seemed to believe the proper solution was a bespoke design for an aircraft designer's requirements instead of designing and producing a successful engine to let the aircraft designers build their aircraft around it.



Sunbeam's designs included the troublesome V8 Sunbeam Arab, which was ordered in quantity in 1917 but suffered from continual vibration and reliability problems and only saw limited service and the more successful V12 Sunbeam Cossack. Meanwhile, Coatalen continued to experiment with ever-more odd designs such as the star-layout Sunbeam Malay, which never got beyond a prototype, the air-cooled Sunbeam Spartan and the diesel-powered Sunbeam Pathan. However Sunbeam was successful with the introduction of newer manufacturing techniques and became one of the first to build aluminium single-block engines, a design that would not become common until the 1930s.

### Vehicles and aircraft

During the First World War Sunbeam built trucks and ambulances. It also participated in the Society of British Aircraft Constructors pool which shared aircraft designs with anyone that could build them. In this role Sunbeam produced 15 Short Bombers powered by their own Sunbeam Gurkha engines, 20 Short Type 827s, 50 Short 310s, and others including Avro 504 trainers; they even designed their own Sunbeam Bomber, which lost to a somewhat simpler Sopwith design. Sunbeam had produced 647 aircraft of various types by the time the lines shut down in early 1919.



*1916 Sunbeam Ambulance*

**End of an era and sale to Darracq:** Marston's third son, Roland, had been expected to take over as chairman of Sunbeam but he suddenly died in March 1918 and John Marston himself died the morning after Roland's funeral. He was aged 82. Cureton was already in poor health and would die in 1921. They had made Coatalen a joint managing director in 1914 alongside William Marklew Iliff. In June 1920 Darracq bought Wolverhampton's Sunbeam Motor Car Company Limited. In 1919, following the First World War, Darracq had bought a London motor manufacturer, Clément-Talbot. The Sunbeam Talbot and Darracq businesses retained their separate identities. The Sunbeam car would continue to be made at Moorfield Works, Wolverhampton, the Talbot in North Kensington and the Darracq at Suresnes with central buying, selling, administration and advertising departments with S T D in Britain. On 13 August 1920 Darracq changed its name to S T D Motors Limited. The initials represented Sunbeam, Talbot and Darracq. S.T.D. Motors Limited had been first incorporated in London in 1905, at that time bearing the name A Darracq and Company (1905) Limited, though it continued to manufacture its Darracq cars in Suresnes, Paris.

**Production cars:** When at its height in the 1920s, Sunbeam Motor Car Company's Wolverhampton works employed 3,500 staff on their 50-acre site. The buildings covered 15 acres.

Coatalen's obsession with improvement meant that there were numerous small changes in models from year to year. Therefore, although his designs are basically similar, few parts are interchangeable.

Two models dominated production: The most successful, judged by volumes, was the 16 hp (16.9) followed by 20 hp (20.9) made from 1926 to 1930. Whilst the 16 was solid and very reliable, it was a little underpowered at 2.1 litres; the 20.9 made a big jump to 3 litres and 70 bhp (52 kW; 71 PS) with similar body weight and vacuum servo brakes and was capable of 70 mph (110 km/h). Sunbeam built their own bodies but also supplied to the coachbuilder trade; many limousines were built on Sunbeam chassis. The sales catalogue illustrates the standard body designs.



*1927 Sunbeam Super Sports. A major rival to Bentley in the day.*

Financial difficulties arose in the early years of the Great Depression and just before the opening of the October 1934 Olympia Motor Show an application was made to the court for an appointment of a receiver and manager for the two major subsidiaries of S T D, Sunbeam and Automobiles Talbot France. Clément-Talbot remained profitable and was sold to the Rootes brothers. It proved impossible for the directors to avoid the appointment of a receiver to Sunbeam Motor Car Company and S T D was unable to complete its sale to Rootes. However six months later in July 1935 Rootes Securities announced they had bought Sunbeam Motor Car Company and its subsidiary Sunbeam Commercial Vehicles.



*1932 Sunbeam 16/6 Light Saloon*

*The end of the line: 1930 Speed 20 Sports Saloon*





# Notes from January Committee Meeting.

Progress  
February 2022

**New Members:** David Street, John & Sharyn Pearson, Charles Armstrong

## **Matters discussed:**

**Transit Fence line:** Email to be sent to Northern Alliance re reinstatement of boundary fence.

**Covid Response:** There is a need to have a Covid response plan for the Club. At this stage a statement will be put out by the club outlining the official position in accordance with the current Government guidelines.

**Fireplace:** As part of the clubrooms 'makeover' it is suggested that the fireplace be removed. Possibly cannot sell it as it will not comply with the new stricter building restrictions and its disposal will need to be considered.

**Strategy Review Projects:** Need to restart work on projects

**Newest Shed:** Channel across from the front of the building is being considered with conventional heavy duty channeling proving quite expensive. Options being looked at.

**Website:** Approval has been given for expenditure to upgrade the website.

**Ground parking area:** The issue of the parking area in front of the clubrooms was discussed and costs are now being finalised.

**Financial limits** The committee needs to approve purchase of workshop tools. Committee members need to be able to purchase small tools where necessary and it was decided that a limit of expenditure up to \$150.00 is approved with 2 committee members agreement.

**Chairman position:** The position of Chairman will be vacant in the next year or two and committee members are asked to consider the position.

**50 Years Project Group** for next year's celebrations. T. Sparkes to publish article in the newsletter regarding this.

**Constitution:** Constitution put out to committee before Christmas for discussion but only one comment received to date. It is urged that committee members review the proposed Constitution as it will be finalised at the AGM in June 2022. Information will be sent out to members in the intervening period for members to consider the proposed changes.



*1950 Hudson Pacemaker.*

*This photo recently voted  
"Best of the Decade" in a  
recent poll on the National  
VCC Facebook Group*

# About Us

Progress  
February 2022

**Club Address:** 40 Masons Rd, Albany, 0632

**Phone:** 09-4792779: **email:** [northshorevcc@gmail.com](mailto:northshorevcc@gmail.com)

**Website:** [www.vintagecarclub-northshore.co.nz](http://www.vintagecarclub-northshore.co.nz)

**Club Nights:** Every Wednesday from 7.30pm.

**Restoration Shed:** Every Tuesday & Thursday morning 9am - 12pm.

**Committee Meetings:** Last Monday of the month, 7.30pm .

**Club Runs:** Normally 12.30-1pm start, 3rd Sun. of month. Always check the 'Upcoming events'.

**VERO Branch Reference Number:** HO0300144 (Quoting this number when renewing your insurance gives a small commission back to the club).

## Club Committee

**Chairman:** Tony Sparkes 09-473-5872 or 027-499-5588

**Secretary:** Maurice Whitham 09-627-0310 or 027-296-9293

**Treasurer:** Ross Moon 09-426-1508 or 022 426 1508

**Club Delegate:** Stuart Battersby 022-471-2759

### GENERAL COMMITTEE Members:

**John Higham** 09-478-7973

**Barry Thompson** 09-959-0206

**Peter Lloyd:** 09-426-7179 or 021-298-8795

**Richard Lloyd:** 09-420-5048 or 027-483-2898

**Mike Swanton:** 09 426 0011

**Arnold Van Zon:** 09 473 5750 or 027 2765336

### OTHER CLUB OFFICERS (Non Committee)

**Members' Garage Manager:** Kevin Lord 09 413 9157

**Welfare Officer:** Brian Bisset 09 554 1740

**Librarian:** Kevin Benseman 022 678 5629

**Beaded Wheels Correspondent:** Richard Bampton 09947 3042

**Magazine Editor:** Stuart Battersby: 022 471 2759 or email [battersby56nz@gmail.com](mailto:battersby56nz@gmail.com)

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