

No 160

# Motor Vehicle Enthusiasts Club

APRIL 2024

# TRANSMISSION



If you find you need more information about this club or just can't wait to join ring Peet Menzies on 0417855222.

PO Box 994 Parap 0804

Newsletter enquiries to Ted [longtelescope@gmail.com](mailto:longtelescope@gmail.com)



Valiants have always been neat cars. When I was a young bloke they took all the skill out of doing wheelies. With Holdens and Falcons there was a certain skill with lots of revs and some quick clutch work to get a small screech from those rear tyres. But the blokes with Valiants just had to plant their foot

This Valiant has a nicer history to it and it is still running sweet.....

*And back in 1963 people were so honest you didn't have to lock your engine bay. Note the bonnet release is out there nice and convenient.*





### **Lawrie Fitzgerald's S series Valiant, Val.**

I remember writing one of my stories about a Customline ute where the owner had driven it off the showroom floor when it was new. Lawrie Fitzgerald matched that by picking up his Valiant straight from the factory in Adelaide. He had bought it through the local service station in Quorn in South Australia where they arranged for him to pick his individual car. There were 8 of em to choose from. Four were automatic of which 2 were dark green, one black and one grey. Who would choose black? No aircon in these cars. He chose the grey. That happened in March 1963, the cost £1475, £130 dearer than a Holden. Lawrie was 31 at the time and this was his first car. They were farmers and his Dad wouldn't let him buy a car till he could afford it. By afford it, he meant save up the dough to pay cash.

So 61 years later it has never been out of rego and is still running fine and has 57000 miles on



*1960's dirt roads have removed a bit of paint but those are the numberplates that have been there since new. Engine bay too, is totally original, untouched.*





the clock. Its been past that magical 99999 once so that makes it near enough to a respectable 160000 miles. Sometime in its life it had a valve grind and a set of rings and the diff gears were lapped. And that's about it. Lawrie reckons its still got the original air in the tyres. He does remember when he took delivery of it, it had super skinny 5.95 x 14 cross-ply tyres on it. When he replaced them with radials the fuel compulsion improved by 2 mpg.

Lawrie never married so there were no kids in this car and it shows inside. The interior is unmarked. Dust is a bit the norm in the Flinders Ranges and maybe the dust kept the sun off and preserved the seats. In 1963 there were not a lot of bitumen roads around once you got off the highway so it is a bit sandblasted on the lower parts where it points forward, but it is so dry here that nothing rusts.

Its a bloody beauty and no, its not for sale!







*The upholstery is unmarked. Lawrie reckons the colour is a bit faded but I reckon its just the protective coating dust. The rear numberplate is unmarked.  
And within that beautiful dash the odometer reads 57227.*





## Star Town Car 1915. John and Jenny Muhleisen

The story starts when John bought a 1910 12HP Star project from the club in WA . It had come from the east coast, as the club had bought some project cars from over there to sell on to their members. The club is pretty active in supporting restorations. Bear in mind a project of this calibre would be basically a chassis and perhaps a motor and gearbox and precious little more. It was missing the cone clutch and in his quest to find one he heard of a bloke in Pt Pirie in SA with a 15HP Star and a bunch of Star stuff. He had the clutch that John was after but couldn't make up what he wanted to swap it for. It had to be a swap, maybe wheels or something. He didn't want to just sell it. The big problem was that before he made up his mind, he died. But it all turned out well in the end. John negotiated with blokes daughter and ended up buying his whole collection of bits including his 15HP car. When I say "car" here, don't imagine a showroom example, rather a rusty chassis with an engine and gearbox and diff. But it was the correct stuff for the chassis. He picked it up in 2003. It turned out the project he had bought in the first place was an assortment of bits that did not match each other and had gone through some dodgy treatment to get them to come together. The club bought it back from him.

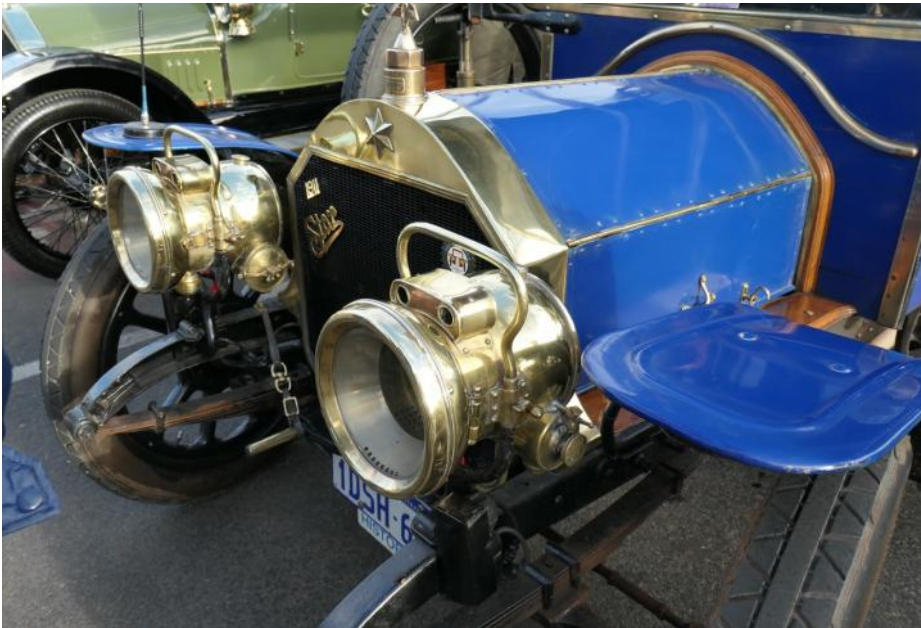
So then came the task to build a useable car from it all. The engine was sent to an engine reconditioner, where it received a set of 186 Holden pistons. Since the Star has only 4 cylinders, he has 2 spare pistons.

Once the vehicle was running it was found to jump out of gear a bit so a new set of gears were cut with the EDM wire cutting procedure (Wire Electrical Discharge is pretty tricky. Check it out on you tube). The crown wheel and pinion received a similar treatment. A set of guards were made with the help of a mate over one long weekend. The interior got the treatment from an upholsterer.

A old friend that had done his apprenticeship on pipe organs in England was now in Australia building stair balustrades. He took on the task of the body with a frame of Tassie Oak covered with 3 layers of thin flexible plywood. And then there were the wheels. I always assumed Sankey wheels were all metal, It turns out they aren't. They have wooden bits around the centre.







*Those magnificent headlights are self generating. The acetylene generator is built into the bottom of each light, so it doesn't need the acetylene generator which normally sits on the running board.*

John's wheels had the odd rust hole in the steel bits but the wooden centres were rotten. So he bogged up the missing bits and used one of them for a pattern and had them cast in marine grade aluminium. But there was a problem here, the original idea was for the wheels and the rims cast in one piece, but when he went to do the final machining of the rim, he found it had shrunk once it had cooled from the temperature of casting. There was not enough metal to do the finishing of the rim. Bummer! But not to be beaten, he machined the wheel down enough to completely remove the rim and had a set of demountable rims made from steel and clamped them on with 5 clamps in the usual style. And the centres were machined for the wheel bearings and the threads turned for the hub-caps. The wheel nuts you see around the centres are not actually nuts. They appear because the whole assembly was used as the pattern for the casting. Altogether it is a really nifty job. In it's original configuration, when you

*Note the one way speaking tube so Lady Muck in the back can abuse Jeeves the driver for not driving fast enough. The tube points right at Jeeve's ear but he can't answer back..*

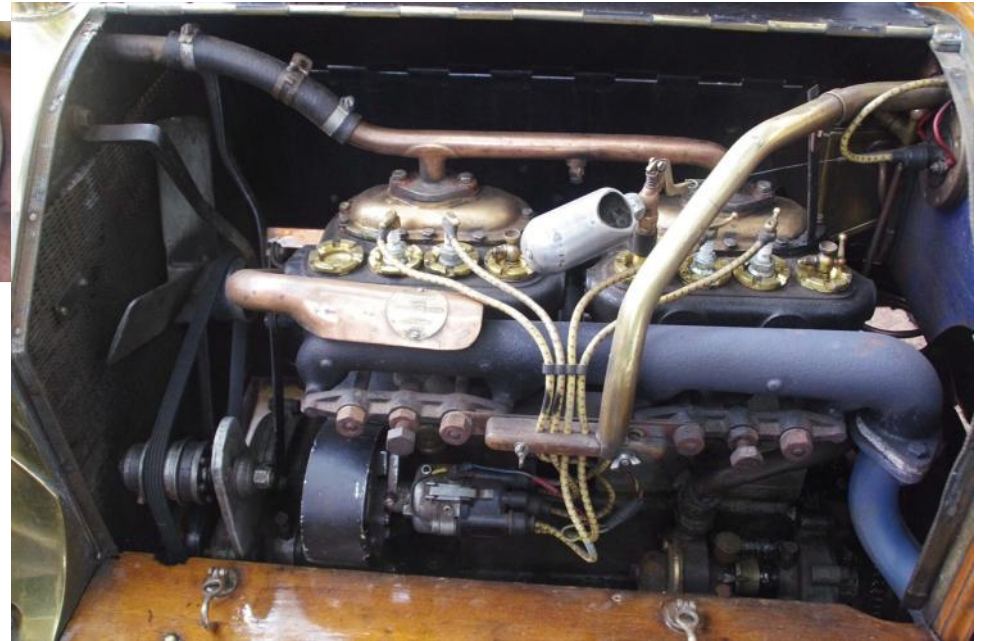


*The wheels are actually aluminium, cast from the original wheels.*





needed to change a wheel, you would have undone the nuts on the hub and changed the whole wheel and rim. Now you undo the nuts around the rim and leave the spoked wheel in place. There is always the problem of getting the valve through the hole in the wheel so John has made a nifty removable gate in the wheel to make fitment easy, with the gate bolted shut once the job is done. And on the subject of wheels, he made the steering wheel too. On a car like this there are countless bits and pieces that can't be bought, they are all handmade, yet in odd places there are bits that look like works of art but actually come from Bunnings. One of these treasures are the intricately carved wooden window sills. From Bunnings. The engine originally ran a magneto but John has built a nifty chain



*Note the nifty conversion from magneto to distributor.*



*A beautiful car from the outside, but to my eyes anyway, the compartment at the back is what its all about. The lady in the back sits in the lap of luxury while the chauffeur toughs it out in the weather. There are vases with flowers and even a drinks cabinet if you get thirsty. The windows pull up with a strap including the one separating the driver. Note the other end of the speaking tube to the right of the seat.*





driven 2:1 reduction drive and runs a distributor. And a distributor needs electricity, but you don't see a generator attached to the engine. The answer is an alternator which runs off the rear end of the tailshaft.

And the 50 litre fuel tank is under the seat where it has an electric pump which pumps fuel to the fuel bowl of an old Holden carburetor. It uses the original float and needle and seat of the Holden carburetor but it is used as a holding tank from where it gravity feeds to the White and Poppe carburetor on the engine.

By the middle of 2011 the Star was on the road with its first club event, an all British day of 30Kms in October. But its first real debut was delivering the bride as a wedding car in Nov.

The car had no headlights at this stage. Those magnificent brass self generating headlights came years later. And the gearbox and diff gear treatments came later but the car cruises in grand style at 50Kms/hr.

Just great! Even better than great!



*Shirley and I used to consider ourselves pretty tough. At these rallies we would drive our Model T speedster with no creature comforts. No heater, no roof, no windscreen etc, and no matter what the weather was doing we would still drive it even if we got soaked and froze nearly to death. But lately we have stepped down the ladder a few rungs and bought a 1912 Buick that does have some comforts. A windscreen and a rag roof. Still misses out on the heater but has natural air conditioning. When in Griffith last year the met bureau forecast evil winds and enough rain to cause flooding and I have to humbly admit we left the Buick in the van park and drove our camper for the day. It was miserable and cold. But in our travels we came across John and Jenny in the Star and where would you expect Jenny to be? Snuggled up in the back looking at the view from where this photo was taken while she sipped hot drinks while John froze out there where there are no doors? Well she wasn't. She was out there in the rain keeping him company!*







*During the construction stage.*

*The wheel castings were made using one of the originals as a mould, then lots of machining.*



*What could be a better first trip for a vehicle than to carry the lovely bride, especially when the bride is their daughter. And almost as good.. Last year they arrived at Griffith a bit early for the veteran rally and the Griffith show was on and at the show they had a show n shine so they entered the Star. It won the peoples choice award!*





## Neil Bromley's model A

Neil Bromley has been associated with Model A's since he was a young bloke. With a bit of help from Dad he bought one at 16 years old. He was in the process of doing it up when circumstances found him short of dough and he sold it before it was finished. Then after a lifetime of fixing other peoples stuff as a mechanic, in retirement he happened to be driving through Bishop St recently and what should be parked there but a model A ute adorned with a for sale sign. It turned out the owner had come across a for sale ad with 2 Datsun sports cars and a model A, and he would only sell the 3 cars as one sale, he wouldn't split them up. The gent wanted the Datsuns, so bought the three of them and was now selling the unwanted model A.

Neil snapped it up pretty quick. It wasn't in good condition and it wasn't cheap but it was just what he needed. It was a very early model from September 1928, from Canada. From the factory it was a four door sedan but had been modified to be a buckboard, back then terminology for a ute. The buckboard tray was from 1923 Chev and is still in sound condition. Mechanically it is a bit sad The top was off the gearbox and full of rust and the head was

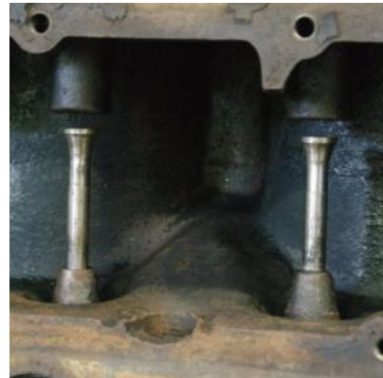


*The multiplate clutch and flywheel.*



off the engine which is not recommended.

So Neil has pulled the whole thing completely to bits and its creating quite a bit of interest at the back of the hangar. The body and chassis are pretty straight forward, first job is sand-blast and paint the chassis. But a surprise appeared once the gearbox came off. The clutch on this car is multiplate and the clutch basket is cast with the flywheel and its so heavy that it's a struggle to lift it. It turns out the very early of these cars had the multiplate clutch. For the examples with a normal single plate clutch, parts are readily available. Not so with this clutch setup. There is no replacement clutch thrust bearing available at all and the one in situ is a bit noisy. So with the gearbox pretty sad and the clutch like it is, Neil is looking for a gearbox and flywheel to support a single plate clutch setup. So he is getting fairly stuck into this job, I couldn't help asking the big question, when is it likely to be finished? There was a bit of serious thought went into the answer, but the bottom line is it would be nice to have it in the Australia Day Ute Run next year, but it might mean having it just in grey primer, no paint. But then it might stretch out to eighteen months or two years. Maybe. So next time you drop into the old hangar, go and check out the model A.



*So how do you get these valves out? The answer is split valve guides. Look carefully at the right pic and see the split in the guide.*

*Remember this car used to be a sedan. When the back has been welded on to the roof it ends up with a cab about 4 inches longer than if it started life as a ute. Neil is a tall bloke. Makes a less cramped driving position.*



*This is not a hotrod. The engine is to be the original type. But the main bearings are to be bored to receive slipper bearings in lieu of the original poured babbit type.*



*Brakes are from a 1940 model Ford and are hydraulic. Easy conversion.*



## HI-TECH PEOPLE PARCELS IN FERNY GROVE

If you thought electric cars and bicycles are new and exciting, you may be surprised to hear that they have been around for a very long time. In fact, both made their first appearance in the late 1800's; but it all started much earlier.....

Experiments with electric transportation began almost 200 years ago in 1828. Not surprisingly, early creations were primitive and impractical, but in 1859, French physicist Gaston Planté invented a rechargeable lead-acid battery that revolutionized the storage of electrical energy. In 1881 another Frenchman - Camille Faure - improved the design enabling Gustav Trouve to drive a British-made Starley tricycle along the *Rue Valois* in central Paris, thus becoming the world's first road-going electric vehicle.

The first railway locomotive powered by batteries appeared even earlier. Built in Scotland in 1837 by chemist Robert Davidson, the relatively small 7-tonne machine - named *Galvani* - was exhibited at the Royal Scottish Society of Arts in 1841. It managed to haul an impressive load of 6.1 tonnes at 4 mph, but it was destroyed by railway workers who saw it as a threat to employment.

The new light-rail systems rolling out across Australia today are essentially a reincarnation of much earlier tramways. The world's first electric tram appeared near Saint Petersburg, Russia, in 1875, and Berlin delivered a similar system in 1881. British inventor, Thomas Parker, introduced battery-powered trams as early as 1890. He also invented the world's first production electric car in 1884, a year before Carl Benz launched the first internal combustion-engine automobile (so called "ICE" cars today).

Technology improved rapidly and by 1897 London boasted a fleet of electric taxi cabs. A battery-powered car was also the first road vehicle to exceed 100 kph in 1899. The Belgian made 'torpedo' - named *La Jamais Contente* - was driven by Camille Jenatton and officially timed at 105.9 kph, a remarkable speed for a road-based vehicle at the time. Brisbane's first electric trams appeared in 1897. They were hi-tech creations of their time essentially kick-starting the suburban mass-transit systems that we rely on so heavily today.



A motorist charging her electric car — an American made Columbia Mark 68 Victoria

***A motorist charges her electric car — an American made Columbia Mark 68 Victoria, c1912. Original photo courtesy Schenectady Museum; Hall of Electrical History Foundation***



You can see a reproduction of the record-breaking *La Jamais Contente* in Europe, but you can ride a genuine 1901 electric tram at the Brisbane Tramway Museum in Ferny Grove. When you climb aboard, just remember that you are entering a hi-tech people parcel of its time, and spare a thought for the early pioneers who built it. To quote an ancient proverb - *Everything old is new again.....*

David Fryer. maximalist@bigpond.com



The record-breaking Belgian electric car - *La Jamais Contente* (The Never Satisfied). Driven by Camille Jenatzy, it was officially timed at 105.9 kph in 1899.







Something seems wrong with this train. It seems to lack the row of wheels on one side.

Actually it is meant to be like that. This is a photo of the Brennan Monorail, a train that was built to run on one rail only which naturally saved lots of cash when laying rails.

Check out the whole story on you tube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kUYzuAJeg3M&t=21s>

And wouldn't you believe it, they built a 2 wheeled car too, back in the nineteen sixties called the Gyro X.

It never reached production but someone found the remains and restored it and it actually works. Not quite well, but ok for low speeds.

Check it out

<https://cdn.jwplayer.com/previews/yKsVhgTw>

And some more on the same car. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TTCVn4EByfI>





## The Greatest Drive

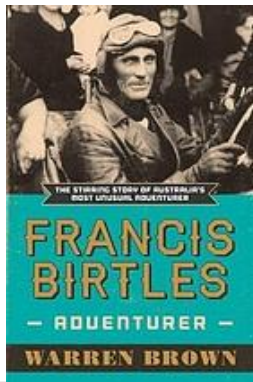
### Recreation of Francis Birtles 1927 England to Australia Journey

The first of April is getting close and that was the planned date for Lang and Bev Kidby's Journey from England. But looking at FIFA's calendar I notice the date has shifted to the 7th April. And remember this event is coming through Darwin sometime in June.

They have a website <https://next-horizon.org/the-greatest-drive/>. It has lots of interesting reading in it about this event plus all the other ones they have done over the years. It will also give updates as to how they are proceeding.



**Birtles London departure 1927. Miss Australia Phyllis Von Alwyn on left and aviator (centre no hat) Bert Hinkler .**



*And if you have never heard of Francis Birtles you need to read this book written by Warren Brown a few years back. It makes pretty good reading. Its still available to buy new or you can borrow it from Darwin public libraries.*

### Re-creating the First UK to Australia Overland Journey

In October 1927 Australian adventurer, Francis Birtles, departed London for a 20,000km drive to Melbourne, Australia. Driving a 1923 BEAN 14 car he faced many trials and tribulations including almost freezing to death in Iran, and suffering malaria and starvation as he cut the first vehicle track through the Naga Hills between India and Burma (Myanmar). He eventually arrived in Australia to be welcomed by tens of thousands of well-wishers.

In April 2024 another Australian adventurer, Lang Kidby and his wife Beverley, will depart London in an identical 100 year old Bean 14 car. They will trace Francis Birtle's path as closely as reasonably possible. Lang and Bev are not new to international expeditions and more can be found on their web site. [www.next-horizon.org](http://www.next-horizon.org)

Approximate timings and exact route subject to sponsor requirements and on-road developments such as changes in environment, vehicle repairs etc.

- Depart London 01 April 2024
- Arrive Istanbul about 10 April 2024
- Enter Iran about 15 April 2024
- Enter Pakistan about 26 April 2024
- Enter India about 03 May 2024
- Enter Myanmar about 20 May 2024
- Arrive Singapore about 10 June 2024
- Ship Singapore to Darwin (weekly service)
- Depart Darwin about 20 June 2024
- Arrive Melbourne about 10 July 2024

Within days of the project being launched support has been offered from around the world. As usual, the main purpose of Lang and Bev's trips is to bring to life the heroic efforts of our early transport pioneers. Their names, now forgotten, will be introduced to new generations who know nothing of their history.

Lang and Bev have an excellent record supporting sponsors and are seeking partners for the expedition and believe they can offer excellent returns daily for 3 months across the world.

Lang and Bev Kidby  
+61 0439677279 • [langleykidby@gmail.com](mailto:langleykidby@gmail.com)



### Wedding bells

We are looking for a classic car, preferably British (e.g. Jaguar or Rolls Royce or similar) to transport the Bride and her Dad from Nightcliff to Darwin Surf Club on 29th June 2024 (4.30 - 5pm). Please contact Emma on [emutty93@gmail.com](mailto:emutty93@gmail.com) if available.



### Free stuff

Get your free ads in here  
Give stuff away, sell stuff, get information, find a lover. Got a story to sell? Whatever you like.  
Email Ted at [longtelescope@gmail.com](mailto:longtelescope@gmail.com)  
Or phone 89886049

**Deadline.... The end of the month.**

### Model T front axle wanted

Also an oil pan.

Plse contact Ted  
0889886049  
[longtelescope@gmail.com](mailto:longtelescope@gmail.com)

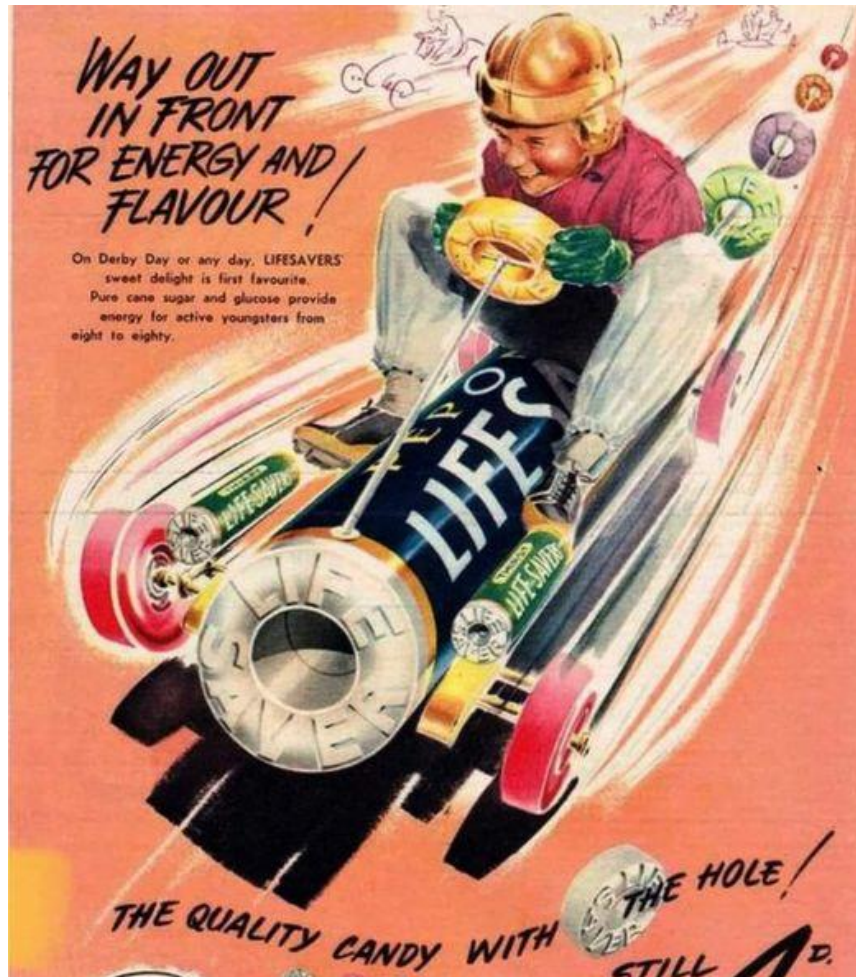
### Ford Model A 1928-31 parts wanted

Gearbox, flywheel, clutch, plus any other parts considered.

Neil 0400420120

### 1928 Dodge Bros 6

**Distributor** smicko \$100  
Gbox free  
Diff free  
Springs and other stuff mostly give away. Starter.  
Ted 0889886049



### Previous editions

All previous editions of Transmission are now available at [mvec.weebly.com](http://mvec.weebly.com)

An elderly couple who are both widowed have been courting for a long time. They decide it's finally time to get married. Before the wedding, they go out to dinner and talk about how their marriage might work. They discuss finances, living arrangements and so on. Finally, the man broaches the subject of their physical relationship. "How do you feel about sex?" he asks, rather tentatively. "I would like it infrequently," replies the old lady. The old gentleman sits quietly for a moment, adjusts his glasses, leans over towards her and whispers: "Is that one word or two?"





For our non truck enthusiasts ...<https://www.kenworth.com.au/category/legend-900/>



The FBI had an open position for an assassin. After all the background checks, interviews and testing were completed, they had narrowed the field down to 3 possible agents. For the final test, the FBI agents took one of the men to a large metal door and handed him a gun. 'We must know that you will follow your instructions no matter what the circumstances.'

Inside the room you will find your wife sitting in a chair... we need you to kill her' The man said, 'You can't be serious. I could never shoot my wife.' The agent said, 'Then you're not the right man for this job. Take your wife and go home.'

The second man was given the same instructions. He took the gun and went into the room. All was quiet for about 5 minutes. The man came out with tears in his eyes, 'I tried, but I can't kill my wife.' The agent said, 'You don't have what it takes. Take your wife home.'

Finally, the last man was given the same instructions, to kill his wife. He took the gun and went into the room. Shots were heard, one after another. They heard screaming, crashing, banging on the walls. After a few minutes, all was quiet. The door opened slowly and there stood the man, wiping the sweat from his brow. 'Some idiot loaded the gun with blanks' he said. 'I had to strangle that bitch to death'.