

No 166

# Motor Vehicle Enthusiasts Club

APRIL 2025

# TRANSMISSION

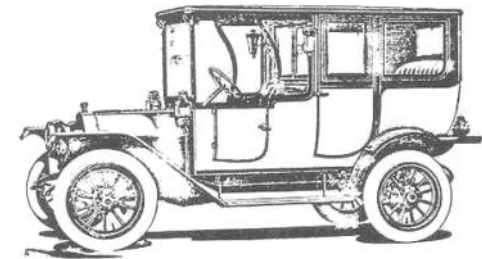


08 89424839  
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## Pat and Terry Campbell's 1911 Russell model R

They already had a shed full of neat cars when a mate remarked to Terry that he didn't have a veteran amongst em. Mate had just the car for him. Hardly been used. Driven once a week to church by a little old lady. Nah just joking! But mate did have a sort of a project. He got a chassis, half an engine, the bottom half, a gearbox with busted gears and a busted diff. And the front axle.

Not to be beaten, Terry took up the challenge. The remains were of a Russell, a Canadian make that were sold in Australia, built as an upmarket vehicle, they are not common. The make was new to me when I heard of it in Tassie last year. There are not a lot of them around. Since eyeballing this one I have come across another example of a smaller model in South Australia, but Terry assures me this is the only example of a 1911 type R in the southern hemisphere. It is a big car.

He was able to get the missing top half of the engine (which includes the cylinders) from a bloke in Kingaroy in Qld, and even the bottom half that he had wasn't all that flash, having been sitting on the ground for maybe 50 years, corrosion had made the aluminium sump look a lot like a sieve. He had new gears cut for the gearbox, with the same deal for the crown wheel and pinion not to mention the timing gear. There was enough of the gears left for the machine shop to copy them and they were able to use the remains of the sump as a pattern to cast a new one.

But there was no body at all. There were photos though, but to get the right look it all starts at the radiator. The bonnet slopes up at the back by a half inch. If it is level, the car has a look about it as if it is sagged in the middle or has broken its back. Then the fire-wall is 2 inches higher, the front seat back 2 inches higher again and the back seat another 2 inches higher. The overall effect is of a very pretentious motor car. Remember, when this car was new, it was meant to impress.

So Terry couldn't start on the body until he could put his hands on a radiator. Remember these cars are far from common. He eventually found one in America and had it sent over. It was a bit sad. He gave it to the local radiator joint where they measured it up and had a new honeycomb core made in New Zealand. They sent it over and the local bloke put it together and it all works like it should.

He had the wheels made in New Zealand too. All they needed was the inside diameter of the rims and the outside diameter of the hubs. And they are smicko.

To mention all the bits he had to make would fill a book but some of the larger items were the intake and exhaust manifolds and instead of persevering with the remains of a busted steering box he adapted the steering column and box from an F100. It gives lovely light steering but in the photos you may notice the lack of advance retard levers.



*This is where it all started. A fairly insignificant looking pile of parts.*



He has fitted a flick magneto that automatically retards the ignition when the motor is stopped and advances itself immediately it starts up. Makes hand cranking easy. He has also machined a bit off the flywheel to fit a ring gear and starter and since the only time you use the retard lever is when starting, there is no need for the lever. But having a starter has made it necessary to fit a battery and a modern day alternator.

That left the body. He had a photo of one from back in the days, and that gave the general appearance as to what it would end up looking like. But to get a feel for where the front seat should be, he built a rough frame from pine and adjusted it until he was comfortable with the drivers position. Then he built the whole thing from Tasmanian Blackwood. Typical cars from this era have the driver reach outside to shift gears. Terry decided it would be nicer to have the gear and brake lever inside and made the body a bit wider to compensate. A double bonus here is when the gear lever is outside you can't have a drivers door. The gear lever is where the door would open to. So this car has a door for the driver, which is really convenient for the passenger. Pat did a magnificent job on the upholstery and stitched a large maple leaf into the door trims in reflection of the cars Canadian heritage. A windscreen surround from California and a set of guards manufactured by Terry had it running fine. But Tasmania not only has Tigers and Devils, it has an even bigger supply of hills, really steep ones! Terry decided the brakes were just not up to the job and is in the process of converting them to hydraulic. With the standard of his work so far as a benchmark, the Russell will stop pretty quick. Or as quick as you can with brakes on the rear wheels only.

Then we moved sheds. Remember this is in suburbia. The house is on a steep hill and the sheds are beneath the house. The next shed was an eye opener as it was absolutely chock a block with neat stuff, mostly cars. Lots of it was covered with dust covers but this was one of those sheds with the right vibes. First up was a HR Premier which was parked up on the roadside for some time with a for sale sign. But they were a bit ambitious with their price. Eventually they knocked \$1000 off which brought the price down to what it was worth and they bought it. It had the usual rust in the doors which was no problem to fix. The rest of it is totally original, a beauty.

Parked next to it is a 1929 Hupmobile. Once again very straight and very shiny. Terry has replaced all the timber in the frame of this car, without



*The body before fitting and how it looks today.*

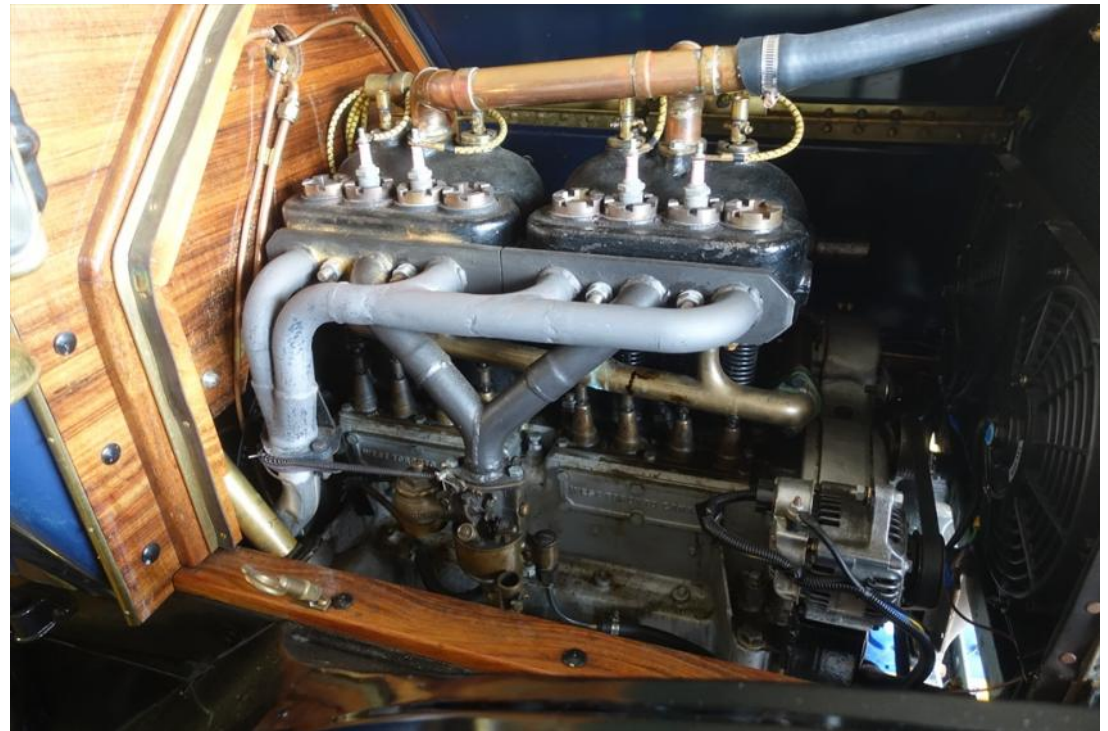


cutting or bending the sheet metal. Quite a task. They have had this car for a long time. There was an old bloke who they used to socialise with and he had old stuff. They had their eye on a Model T that he had. He told them straight "you got kids, you don't want a model T. There is a car up back that would suit you." Then some time later out of the blue he rings up with "If you want that car you better bring x dollars and come and get it." They raided kids money boxes and scrounged, but they got the Hupmobile. And it is lovely.

Over yonder a bit you can see an small nickel statue peeking out from beneath a sheet. It is Pontiac the Indian Chief capping the radiator of a 1929 Pontiac. Terry's Dad bought it in 1955 as a car they would drive around the farm as kids. He drove it to school in 1960, but eventually it was abandoned under a pine tree with a couple of sheets of iron over it. Somewhere along the way they decided they should put it in a shed but while it was in there the tankstand collapsed on the shed and the Pontiac got washed out. Never mind it is all fixed up now and they have driven it as far as Qld.

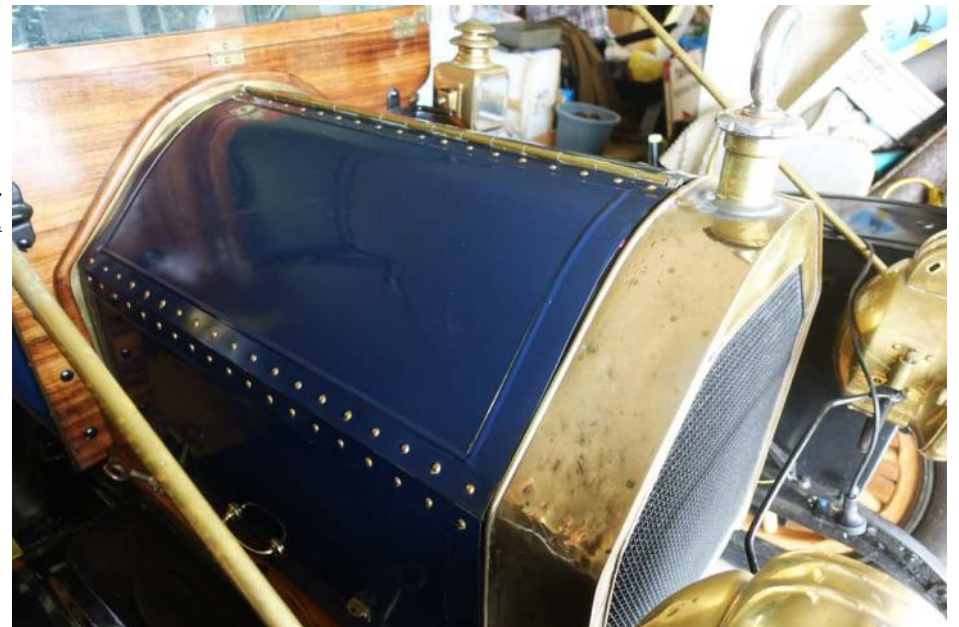
And just for a bit of contrast, under the covers was a 1927 Harley and a Suzuki Katana. And every available bit of space between these vehicles was taken up with tools for working on them and general good stuff.

One of those sheds it is just good to be in.



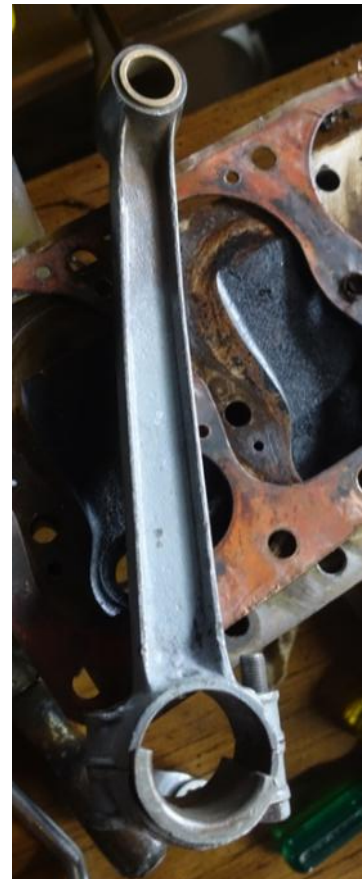
*With the gearlever inside the car the driver gets a door. Its a bit of a task getting past the gear lever and handbrake handle but it beats having the passenger get out to let you out.*

*The beaut bonnet is more of Terry's manufacture. The brass rivets are actually brass bolts with the head turned down and obviously assembled after painting. Looks great.*





*Part of the clutch pressure plate. They had to cast a new one. This car has a fairly conventional disc type clutch. One step away from conventional though is the clutch plate is steel. And it works well and doesn't slip.*



*A Russell piston. Thick rings back in those days.*

*A Russell conrod, a bit bent. That's why it isn't in the engine. But notice the big end has a replaceable shell. It is solid Babbitt. Not common in this era.*

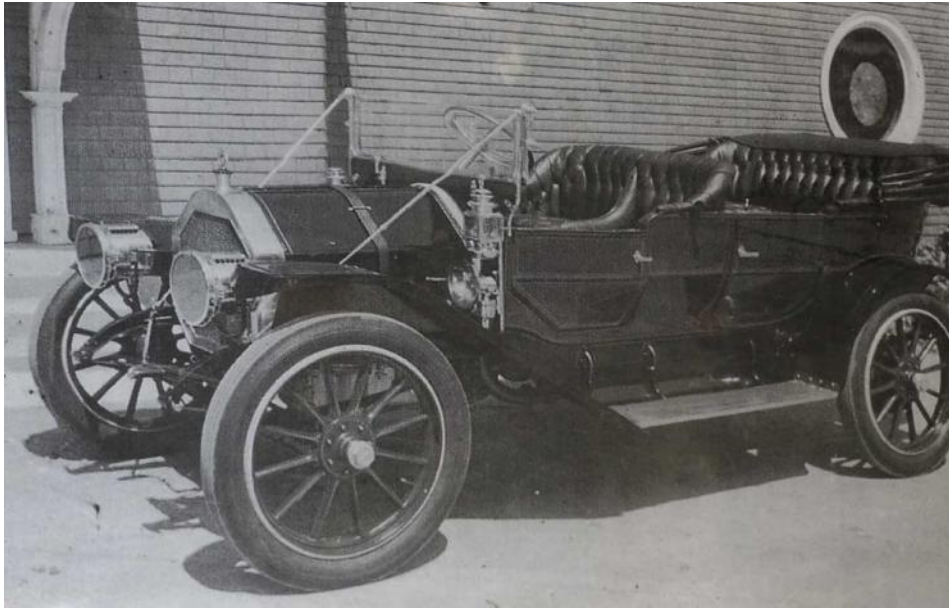


*You can see the slots that engage the lugs on the end of the axle. Notice also the beautiful job the Kiwis did of rebuilding the wheels.*

*More casting. They had the hubcaps cast from brass. The only difference from the originals is they are missing "Russell" scripting.*

*This car doesn't follow the normal ways of doing things. First off the rear axles are fully floating which does away with the need to have the hub attached to the axle via a taper. You can see the end of the axle is square on both ends, one for the diff and one you can see with the adapter which engages in the slots in the back of the hub. Makes working on the back axle easy. Another bonus is you don't lose the wheel if you break an axle. Terry is in the process of setting up hydraulic brakes.*





*A photo gave the idea of how the body was meant to look.*

*Some of the notes on the sales poster state "You can secure better quality in a Canadian made car."*

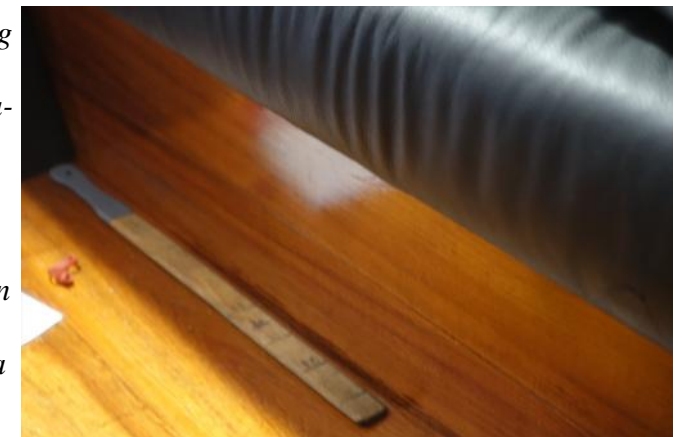
*'You should prefer a Canadian product'*

*No wonder Donald Trump gets cranky at Canada.*



*Pat has stitched the Canadian Maple leaf into each door trim.*

*This insignificant stick laying on the floor in the back is actually the fuel gauge. Is calibrated in gallons. Beats looking in through the filler cap with a match.*

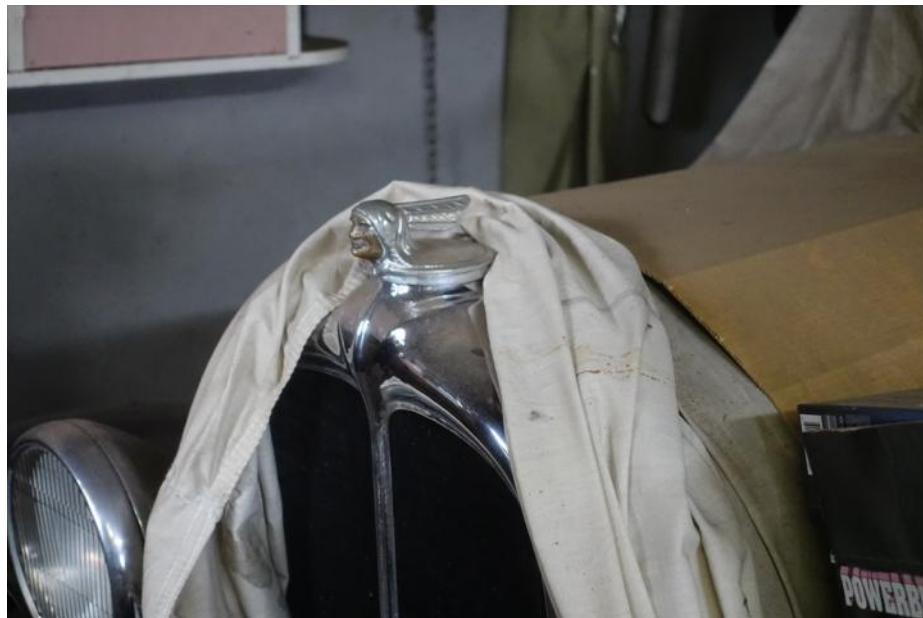




*1929 Hupmobile.  
This is one of those  
sheds that makes use  
of every cubic inch  
of room.*



*Hiding beneath the dust covers is the 1929 Pontiac  
that has been in the family since the 1950's.*



*HR Premier is also protected from dust or other nasties.  
When I come to think about it, I don't believe I came across  
any dust at all during my couple of weeks in Tassie.*





## Impala Dies Again

This article reproduced with thanks from WA's Early Auto

By Bill Buys

THE General Motors bean counters killed off the last of the Chevrolet Impalas in 2020. The last one, finished Cajun Red Tintcoat, came off the line at GM's Detroit-Hamtramck plant, bringing to close a much loved nameplate that dated back to 1958. However, it might not really be the end of the car. After all, production of the Impala was stopped not once, but twice before.

The Impala, named after the nimble gazelles of Southern Africa, was one of America's most important vehicles, setting the standard in comfort and value. It began as an upmarket version of Chevrolet's Bel Air and in 1959 it became a stand-alone model that soon earned its stripes as America's most popular full-size car. Through the years, the Impala featured some dramatic front and rear-end styling that led to many new trends, new engines, and new looks. The top model in 1959 had many unique features, including the roof simulator extractor vents, a two-spoke steering wheel and the iconic triple-circle taillights.

Buyers could choose from three engines: a 235 cubic inch Blue Flame I6, 283 Turbo-Fire V8, and a 348 Turbo-Thrust V8.

Early Impalas had a distinctive 'batwing' boot lid with 'cat's eye' sideways teardrop taillights but in 1960 the cat eyes were gone, going back to the symmetrical triple circle tail lights, and the bat wing was less dramatic. About 60,000 were built in 1958, growing to close on 500,000 in 1960.

They were popular in other parts of the world too. Right-hand drive cars were made in Ontario, Canada, for New Zealand, Australia, and South Africa and assembled locally from CKD or SKD kits. Australian models were assembled by hand on the GMH Holden assembly lines.

In 1961 came the SS, with the big 409 engine: America's first true muscle car. There was another new design in '62, with the cars offering a 'velvet soft and whisper quiet,' ride on its four massive coil sprung suspension which 'soak up bumps like a sponge.'

The Turboglide trannie gave way to a choice of three-speed synchromesh, overdrive, four-speed synchromesh, and Powerglide transmissions and six engine options that ranged from 135 horsepower to 409. It was also the first year, the all transistor deluxe push-button radio was offered as an extra option. Minor updates followed until 1965 when there was another full revamp that resulted in an all-time industry annual sales record with more than 1 million units sold in the US. Steady changes in buyer climate continued until 1980 when the fuel crisis had a dramatic effect on the Impala. Overshadowed by the steady rise of the more fuel efficient compact cars, called pony cars in the US, Impala stopped building its sport coupes and by 1986 production of the glam car was stopped. For the first time. It came back in 1994 with the S260-horsepower 5.7-litre V8 LT1 engine, but with a four-speed automatic transmission and the selector mounted on the steering column. The SS lived out its final year in glory before it got chopped once again and after a short run as a pure SS, the Impala and Caprice production line was stopped for a three-year period. GM brought the Impala back to life in 2000, but as a front-wheel drive, and for the first time in its history sans any V8 options. The next year it tried to fix flagging sales with the introduction of the LS Sport. But the 'sport' bit was limited to new gauges on the dash, a restyled front bumper, a chromed exhaust tip and dual temperature controls and an AM/FM stereo with cassette.

Come 2004 and the SS Impala was back, with a supercharged engine that lifted power from 200 to 240hp and a tighter suspension.

But it was still a V6 automatic and in 2010 the SS was dropped from the range once more and the Impala family downsized from five trim options to three, the LS, LT, and LTZ. Four years on there was another big change in style and power, with buyers given the option of three direct injected engines: a 3.6-



litre V6, a 2.5 four-cylinder and a 2.4 four-cylinder with eAssist. Now it's goodbye again, after Impala sales dropped from 311,000 in 2007 to less than 45,000 last year.

The Detroit-Hamtramck plant is to get a multi-billion dollar investment that will have it building battery-electric SUVs, pickup trucks, and even the Origin self-driving car unveiled in January. The plant is to be GM's first dedicated to zero-emission vehicles.

The final car built there had a piece of paper stuck on its nose that read: "Farewell to the Chevy Impala, the last model of gas-driven vehicles at D-Ham."

Many fans might shed a tear. But bear in mind GM has not said it is retiring the nameplate.

So who knows?

Maybe the Impala will leap back into motor world again one day.



A teacher is teaching a class and she sees that Johnny isn't paying attention, so she asks him, "If there are three ducks sitting on a fence, and you shoot one, how many are left?"

Johnny says, "None."

The teacher asks, "Why?"

Johnny says, "Because the shot scared them all off."

The teacher says, "No, two, but I like how you're thinking."

Johnny asks the teacher,

"If you see three women walking out of an ice cream parlour, one is licking her ice cream, one is sucking her ice cream, and one is biting her ice cream, which one is married?"

The teacher says, "The one sucking her ice cream."

Johnny says, "No, the one with the wedding ring, but I like how you're thinking!"

## Why Do We Say Cars Are 'Souped Up?'

By Jason Torchinsky

Quick, think of things that are fast! Rockets? Okay. Cheetahs? Sure, absolutely. Bullets? Oh, yes, quite. A piping-hot bowl of rich, creamery soup? Ah, generally, no. Not so much. Then why do we call cars that have been made to go faster "souped-up?"

When I first decided to write about this idiom, I was going to take a much different tone. Much more of a draconian asshole sort of tone. I was going to demand that people start spelling it 'suped-up' because, clearly, the term has to come from superchargers, and not some mythical hot chowder injection system.

But then I started to do a bit of research and realized that, no, as usual, I'm the asshole here. As it turns out, it does not seem that 'souped-up' has its origins in superchargers, or even anything strictly automotive. And, the "correct" spelling seems to actually be "souped-up," after all. I've been humbled, and now I want to pass what I've learned on to you because, as you know, I have feelings for you.

We all agree, at least, on what the idiom means: something (usually a car's engine) that's been modified to provide performance beyond the limits of how it was originally built. These modifications may not, necessarily, involve the use of superchargers at all, of course – there's lots of ways to get more power from an engine.

The actual origins of the term are pretty murky. There's sources that show usage of it in the 1920s, in this context in an ad, which suggests that if it was in common enough usage to be used in an advertisement for a car, it must already have been in widespread use.

Let's look at the timeline of supercharging, first. It has been understood since the mid-1800s, with the first supercharged engine appearing in 1878. While some one-off cars were built with superchargers, the first production cars with a supercharger were built by Mercedes-Benz in 1921.

That's pretty early, but it seems that the term 'souped-up,' spelled like the liquid meal, predates even these early forced-induction engines. The 1911 edition of Webster's Dictionary has in its definitions of the word 'soup' the following:

"Any material injected into a horse with a view to changing its speed or temperament."

... and it wasn't uncommon for a horse, so injected, to be referred to as "souped up."

Lots of liquid concoctions of drugs, performance-enhancing or otherwise, have been referred to as "soup." So has nitro-glycerine, in the early part of the 20th century, and that certainly is a soup that exhibits a hell of a lot of power.

So, it looks like my initial insistence that it should be spelled 'suped-up' is dead wrong, and the origins come from, like almost everything good in life, the process of injecting a horse full of drugs.

## STUFF ON THE NET

### Drinking coffee on the way to work

Once upon a time nobody had come up with the idea of parking a van on the side of the road and dispensing cups of coffee to delirious motorists. So back in 1959 someone at the Volkswagen factory was so desperate for a coffee on the way to work he came up with the idea of the car making one for him while he drove to work. Perhaps the traffic was a bit more sedate in 1959 and as the machine dispensed your drink into the cup which is magnetically attached, you weren't likely to have to do any violent manoeuvres that would spill your elixir vitae.

Read some more about it at

<https://www.drive.com.au/caradvice/forget-cupholders-the-1959-volkswagen-beetle-could-be-fitted-with-a-coffee-machine/>



Paris's pneumatic clock system of about 7800 clocks, all driven by compressed air. The clocks even kept perfect time during the flood of Paris in 1910 when the river Seine rose eight metres. There were public clocks in the streets and railway stations and public buildings, but private offices etc could also subscribe to the service. The clocks were accurate to the minute. The hands didn't move slowly like a conventional clock, but they would increment instantaneously every minute. The website has diagrams of how it came to be and how it worked. Check it out at:

<http://www.douglas-self.com/MUSEUM/COMMS/airclock/airclock.htm>

A man was driving down the road and met a car coming the other way. Although there was room to pass easily, he forced the oncoming car to slow down and wound down his window and shouted 'Pig!'

The other driver looked in his rear view mirror raised two fingers and swore at him. Then his car hit the pig.

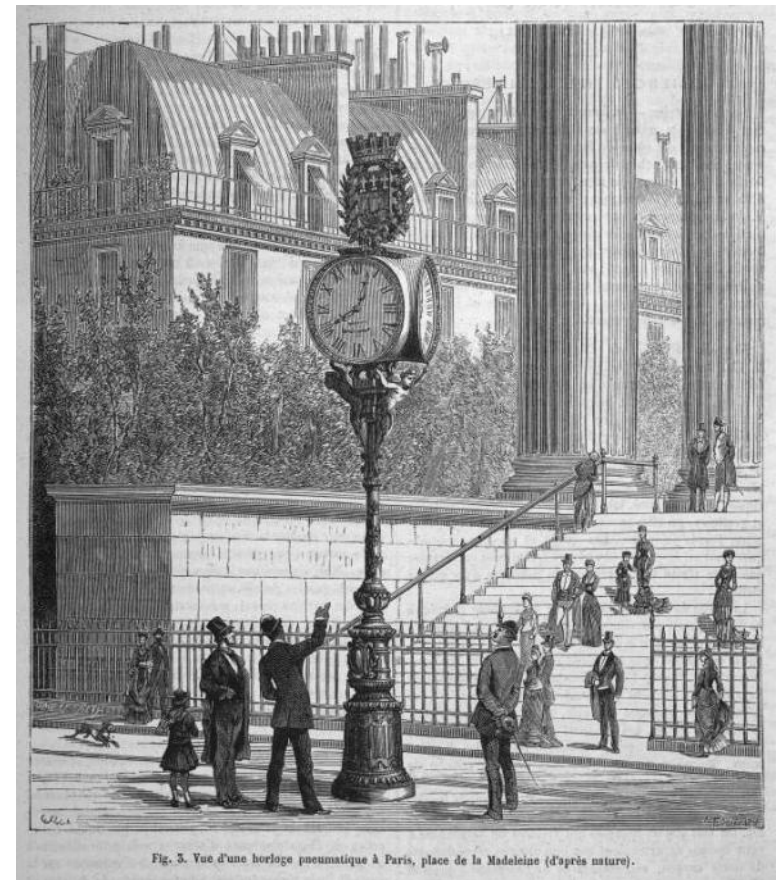


Fig. 3. Vue d'une horloge pneumatique à Paris, place de la Madeleine (d'après nature).

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### **Previous editions**

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From a passenger ship, one can see a bearded man on a small island shouting  
and desperately waving his hands.

"Who is it?" a passenger asks the captain.

"I have no idea. Every year when we pass, he goes mad like that."