

NEWSLETTER*The Society of Automotive Historians*

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PRESIDENT'S PARAGRAPHS

The year of 1974 has been one to remember, for me. I've had the honor of being the president of the only world-wide automotive history organization in existence. To the layman, that may not sound like much. To a person of my interests, it makes me feel very proud that I could do something to help this hobby gain a little stature. As the year closes, we can now look back and see that it wasn't the teeth-gnashing nightmare that it started out to be. We have a healthy Newsletter, an extremely good review, we have the roster sheet finalized, we now have some bylaws and a constitution, and they are both legal. We have a new board of directors and a slate of officers. Our new board will have some familiar names that have been with us from the beginning and as important, there will be new names that will help us grow even more. As Marshall stated recently, we are going through our formation years. An organization such as this cannot be called a closely knit group. We are as far-flung as land formations permit is gratifying to know, despite the miles of land and/or water between us, we are of one mind. The perpetuation of automotive history is a prime objective for us, in any quarter of the globe. I hope that in another five years, we can be truly International, and have representatives of all vehicle-producing nations among our membership.

I intend to channel my efforts into the publication end of this group and if we can instill a little cooperative effort into other members, each issue of each publication will be something to be sought after for years to come. I thank all of those who have helped in this growing year. The wisdom of Fred Roe, the competence of Vern Vogel, the bolstering up from Mike Worthington-Williams, combined with the steady output from Dick and Marshall made the year successful. John Peckham, Keith Marvin, John Smith, Fred Soule, Arthur Homan, Charles Weaver, Perry Zavitz and the awards committee did much good work this year, the kind of work that will make us a solid group and able to carry on in the years ahead. Thanks also to the membership at large for hanging on until we can get this "whole thing together". Let our most anxious international problems be the difference of opinion on the size of a Model T spoke for 1927!!! Happy Holidays!!!

From: John Peckham

This is to inform you of the passing of SAH member Anthony S. Koshland, on December 13, 1974.

A member since 1972, Mr. Koshland died at his home in Sharon, Conn. His special interests in automotive history were sports and racing autos, 1948 to the present and, in particular, O.S.C.A. and Ferrari automobiles.

LETTERS -

From: Frank T. Snyder, Jr., 748 West Laredo St., Chandler, Ariz. 85224

Michael Sedgwick's letter on the MATHIS (Newsletter No. 37, p.5) makes most interesting reading. However it sheds no light at all on the AMERICAN MATHIS. While Mr. Sedgwick suggests that the AMERICAN MATHIS was based on the French Model PY and implies that a 70 x 80mm engine was used, no proof is offered. Basic specifications of the Model PY such as HP, wheelbase, tread, weight, etc. are omitted, Mr. Sedgwick reports that the Model PY cabriolet sold in England for £ 220, or \$1000. This is a long way from the \$455 F.O.B. Lansing, Mich. price of the AMERICAN MATHIS coupe and, to me, would indicate that the Model PY was a larger car.

Marshall Naul's report of the AMERICAN MATHIS specifications (Newsletter No. 36, p. 6) can be verified. Mr. Naul has reported that his information was taken from the Branham Automobile Reference Book for 1934. This make is also listed in the 1935 edition. While I do not have copies of the 1932 and 1933 editions, it can be assumed that the AMERICAN MATHIS was also listed in those editions. While it is a known fact that automotive publications did (and do) make errors, it is doubtful that Branham's would continue an error for four years.

Mr. Naul reports that an AMERICAN MATHIS was shown at the New York Automobile Show in January 1931. It would have been impossible for this car to have been a production model as rproduction did not start until Jan. 3, 1931. This does not discount the fact that this car could have been an import or a hand-built prototype.

Durant Motors were known to have announced cars which never reached production. The PRINCETON and the EAGLE are two examples. (Durant even published a catalog on the PRINCETON.) However, in both cases, prototypes are known to have been built. While production of the AMERICAN MATHIS would have to have been small, if in fact any were built, the possibility of prototypes should not be discounted. My feeling is that this make just needs a lot more research.

From: Fred Roe, 837 Winter St., Holliston, Mass. 01746

Branham did not list the (American) MATHIS in the 1932 Supplement. Publication of a starting date for production in Branham's does not mean that production did in fact begin, even though this is implied.

Further on the MATHIS, the following is extracted from a letter of Stan Yost's:

"... I have to get into the MATHIS again. Somewhere I have documented information out of Lansing, Michigan, about the work they did up there on the car. I remember in Chicago, when they showed the car, they had two of them. One with a fabric-like top and the other plain. If I remember properly, they built only a small number and they were practically handbuilt, filled in with parts from the French production. ..."

Editor: After precipitating, quite innocently, the above controversy concerning the AMERICAN MATHIS, I would be quite reluctant to bring up the question, equally intriguing, questioning whether the AMERICAN NAPIER was really built in the U.S. or merely imported. BUT, this also is a fair question! - GMN.

LETTERS - Continued -

From: Max Gregory, 'Beltana', Korumburra Road, Drouin South,
Victoria 3818, Australia

In regard the matter of whether the Society should incorporate the word 'International' in its title, I would put forward the view, for consideration of members, that we should become international in practice rather than merely adding another word to the title. By this, I propose that we should standardize on the use of Systeme Internationale metric units in all Society publications.

This subject of metrication is at the forefront of everyone's mind here in Australia now as we go through the process of conversion from Imperial units. It is appreciated that such a move by the Society would be one which would be a benefit for all non-US members and a great liability to those in the US. As it is, I gather now the US is the only country in the world neither using nor making moves toward the adoption of metrics.

However, I would like to see the matter aired with particular reference to whether our large preponderance of US members would be prepared to accept such a handicap in the interests of making the Society more attractive to prospective members from other countries.

MISCELLANY -

Jeff Caplan has sent a copy of a letter from the New York State Parks and Recreation which relates that the former PIERCE-ARROW factory on Elmwood Ave., Buffalo has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places as of October 1, 1974.

Walter Gosden has sent a copy of a reprinted catalog on the CHEVROLET, ca. 1923 which describes "The Copper-Cooles Motor". This runs to fifteen pages and is available for \$5.50 postpaid. Walter's address: 197 Mayfair Ave., Floral Park, N.Y. 11001.

Two old and respected names have recently been usurped by newcomers to the automotive field: ELCAR is the name for a small electric car whose parent company is located in Elkhart, Indiana. More recently the name WESTCOTT has been placed on yet another replicar, this one being a pretty fair duplicate of a 1930 Model A roadster, judging by a photograph in Automotive News.

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WANTED -

Clear photographs of the following motorcycles: 1930 HARLEY-DAVIDSON "74"; 1902 INDIAN; 1904 SINGER; 1911 INDIAN Racing Model. "These are needed for a book we are preparing on 32 classic motorcycles, and I should be exceedingly grateful for any help which might be given."

T.R.Chilvers, Edita, S.A. - 7, Rue de Geneve - Ch-1000 Lausanne, Switzerland.

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NEW MEMBERS -

Juliet Walter Pesci, 700 Tookany Drive, Cheltenham, Pa. 19012 (Interests: WALTER cars and trucks.)

Richard C. Taylor, 215 River Road, Grandview-on-Hudson, N.Y. 10960 (Interests: Postwar classics, 1946-1975; British classics, 1925-1941; U.S. special-interest cars of all periods; Nash products.)

BOOK REVIEWS -

The S.A.H. library is still flooded with books which have not yet been reviewed, but it is to be hoped that this backlog can gradually reduced to an unembarrassing level.

There have been reprinted by Motorbooks International two books of rather wide-spread fame. The first is Carroll Shelby's The Cobra Story at \$9.95. It is unfortunate that this book covers so little of what the title implies. There is little which bears on the technical development of the Cobra from the AC, and is mostly concerned with the ups and downs of Mr. Shelby. The second book is The Indomitable Tin Goose by Charles T. Pearson, also at \$9.95 and deals with the ups and eventual downs of Preston Tucker and the TUCKER automobile. A third edition of one of the better BUGATTI books is by H.G.Conway: BUGATTI-'Le pur-sang des automobiles', priced . This is a particularly well done treatise on this remarkable automobile, and there is an immense amount of information packed into its 463 pages.

Sixteen Cylinder Motorcars by Roy A. Schneider

Published by Heritage House, P.O.Box 7, Temple City, Cal. 91780
240 pages, 9" x 11½". \$22.95 (after 1-1-75) However, the publisher has kindly extended to S.A.H. members a postpaid price of \$19.95 until 3-31-75.

This book covers in detail the accounts of those few automobiles (Cadillac, Marmon, Peerless, Miller and Buccioli) which achieved the rarified atmosphere of the ultimate in multi-cylinder automobile engines.

Here, with a multitude of excellent illustrations, artists' renderings, photographs and dimensioned drawings, is a complete collection of all varieties of information on the development and production of these ne plus ultra cars of the classic era. The Cadillac V-16 was, of course, built in greater numbers than the other 16s and is accorded no less than six chapters, each dealing with the different vintages within the ten-year reign. Other chapters deal individually with the other makes given above. In an appendix are several reprints from contemporary journals on the Cadillac and Marmon.

In one impressive and stimulating the author has provided a very well written treatise and a fitting monument to an automotive era which, in retrospect, was so very short. This book, at what is not an unreasonable price, is the definitive account of the ultimate classic automobile, and will be a must item for those particularly interested in the classic age, and a very desirable item for those who are unfamiliar with these makes. In short, this book is strongly recommended without any qualifications.

We have also received a copy of The Complete Catalog of British Cars by David Culshaw and Peter Horrobin. This is published by William Morrow & Co., New York, and sells for \$15.95. The editor is hesitant to review this because of considerable ignorance of these motorcars, and has asked a qualified observer to write a review. If first impressions may be relied upon, this is an astounding piece of work giving specifications for all models of all British-built automobiles.

Have also received a copy of a German publication entitled "Automobil und Motorrad Chronik". It appears to be an excellently-done periodical with very fine typography. Unfortunately only the captions on the photos are bi-lingual, the bulk of the printed matter being in German.

BOOK REVIEWS - continued

MERCEDES-BENZ 300 SL by W. Robert Nitske
11 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ ", 164 pages, 130 illustrations. Published by Motorbooks International, 3501 Hennepin Ave. South, Minneapolis, Minn. 55408. Price \$19.50

The MERCEDES-BENZ 300 SL in this reviewer's opinion is the outstanding sports car of the post-war period, to date. It also must be considered to be a true classic with the possible exception that it was not accorded the questionable honor of being custom-bodied - customizers of the 'fifties could only have "cobbled up" the basic design.

Here in one volume is the complete story of the design, production and the glories which have come to this most memorable automobile. (The reviewer bemoans the day he saw one in 1964 with a price tag of \$3500!) It is somewhat astounding to find that the total of coupes and roadsters was only 1858.

Included in the book are owner's manuals for both coupe and roadster.

Here in one very complete package is the complete account of one of the world's outstanding automobiles.

BUICK CARS 1929-1939, edited by R. M. Clarke
7 $\frac{7}{8}$ " x 10 $\frac{5}{8}$ ", 65 pages, 90 illustrations. \$4.95 Distributed by Motorbooks International Publishers & Wholesalers, Inc., 3501 Hennepin Ave. South, Minneapolis, Minn. 55408

This is a soft-bound collection of descriptions, driving tests and ads of the BUICKs of the 'thirties. These have been reproduced from British periodicals, principally The Autocar and Motor. While the viewpoint is of course British, this cannot be faulted, as at least their periodicals were in the habit of making actual road tests decades before the first U.S. attempts toward an enlightened auto journalism.

These critical evaluations should be of interest to all readers with an interest in U.S. cars of the 1930's and in particular to those interested in the BUICK. Many of the illustrations are of custom coachwork. There is a selection of ads from British publications including a surprising one dated Feb. 1940 which indicates that imported autos had not yet been cut off.

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MISCELLANY -

Among new brand-names in the automotive world are:

STRADA - a new British make with 1.6 liter Ford engine, midships.

HYUNDAI Pony - to be built by Sud Hyundai Motor Co., S. Korea in 1976. This is an Italian design with a 1286 cc engine of 82 HP.

Nick Georgano has corrected the note on the PANTHER in the last Newsletter. The car which resembles the BUGATTI Royale is the "de Ville" rather than the J-72 which is a two-seater sports car. As of mid-October, production of the PANTHER was given as:

J-72	190 units
FF(FERARRI replica)	3 units
Lazer (Three-seater sports)	1 unit
de Ville	5 firm orders

SOME EARLY AUSTRALIAN MOTOR CARS - Max Gregory

Enclosed are two photographs (*) from the Science Museum in Melbourne which might be of interest as they depict some of Australia's historically significant vehicles which are preserved there. We are fortunate that such an important machine as the Thomson Tractor has survived as it must rank as the first wholly successful motor vehicle to be built in Australia. The Thomson Tractor made the epic overland journey of some 500 miles from Bathurst in New South Wales to Melbourne in 1900. The trip yielded valuable promotional material which was used to advantage the following year when shares in the new Thomson Motor Car Co., Ltd. were offered to the public, and the production model, the Steam Hooded Buggy was revealed. This was a totally new design employing an engine which was a doubled-up version of that in the original Phaeton.

The use of pneumatic tires on wagon type wheels now appears a little amusing, but Thomson must be given credit for his decision which no doubt contributed to the success of the machine. The tires were made in Melbourne by Dunlop and had the usual 2½-inch section on 38-inch front wheels and 48-inch rear. A date of 1896 is claimed for the Phaeton and the premises in Armadale, Victoria, still stand and a plaque on the wall bears the following legend: "1896. Australia's first successful motor car was designed and constructed on this site by Herbert Thomson, engineer, of Armadale. In it he pioneered the first long-distance car journey ever made in Australia. From Sydney, via Bathurst, to Melbourne in the year 1900. Born June 1870. Died October 1947."

The reference to Sydney refers to Thomson taking the machine there for the purpose of exhibiting at the Show. While there, he was invited to exhibit at Bathurst, the inland city, some 140 miles west.

Specifications of the Steam Motor Phaeton: Tubular boiler, 14" x 18" x 18", under seat, capable of 600 psi; fired by 150° Flask kerosene. Vertical front-mounted engine, single compound tandem cylinder with 1½" bore (high pressure), 3" bore (low pressure) and stroke of 3". Maximum output 5HP at 1000 rpm. Steam condenser of cylindrical type with forced draft by fan at each end. Primary drive by flat belt to jackshaft with tensioning pulley controlled by foot pedal. Chain final drive to each wheel, 5 ; 1 ratio. Steering by side lever to kingpin and two-piece track rod system. Braking by contracting leather bands operating on lands adjacent to wheel sprockets. Suspension by three full elliptical springs. Wheelbase 63.5 inches, track 53 inches, weight, dry 1050 lbs. Bodywork has accomodation for six passengers, normally four, vis-a-vis, extra dos-a-dos when seat and footrest are unfolded.

Production of the lighter, wire-wheeled, 10 HP Hooded Buggy was underway in 1901 and indications are that ten of these were made, additionally, some delivery vans were built as well as engines for launches and railway trolleys.

E.L.Holmes, Thomson's business manager, had a good eye for publicity. In 1901 for example, Thomson motor cars were very much in evidence one election day and when Holmes married, it was recorded that "after the ceremony the couple steamed away on their motor car - the first time in the Commonwealth."

All during the period of producing his own vehicles, Thomson also ran several imported lines such as the British Simms, the German Benz, the American Motor-Bi motorcycle, Duryea, Mobile, White and Holley cars. Apparently the importations were more a proposition than manufacturing as this activity died away, although Thomson still listed his own machine in the 1904 period.

SOME EARLY AUSTRALIAN MOTOR CARS - Continued

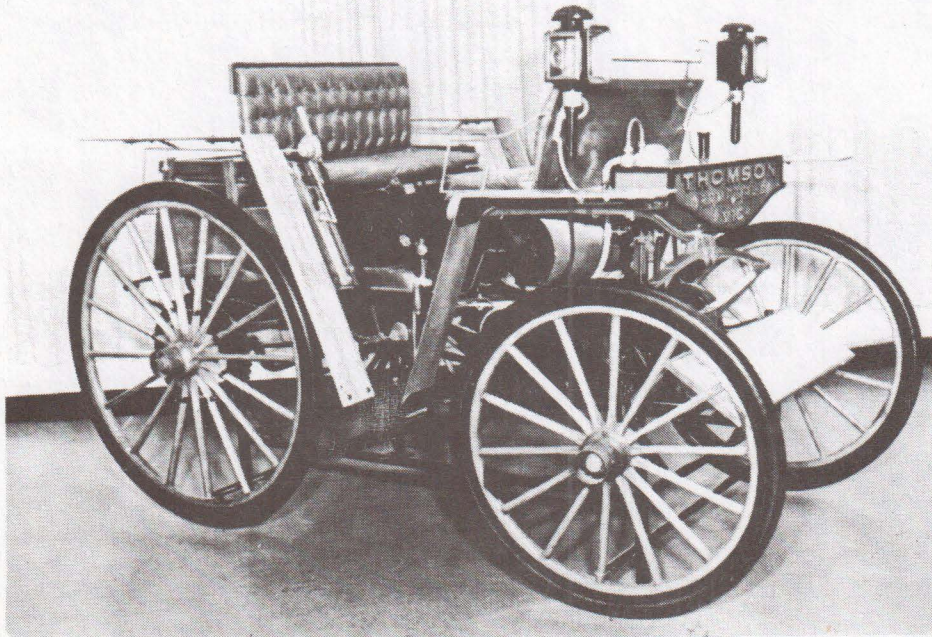
The photograph (*) of the vehicles in the Road Transport Hall is included essentially for the illustration of the Hertel which was brought to Australia by Mr. Pender in 1897 and has been mentioned in earlier Newsletters. As Mr. Pender took out patents on improvements to motor vehicles, he may have modified this particular Hertel. However, its general layout and appearance remains true to its original form.

From the foreground the machines depicted are a 1916 Liberty 33 motorcycle made in Melbourne by the Acme Cycle Co. using a Swiss Moser engine of 1.75 HP. The Ford Quadricycle is a replica made in Australia a few years ago for the Ford Co. who used it on the motor show circuit before donating it to the museum. Following the Hertel and the Thomson is a 1923 Graf & Stift SR3 with Australian Martin & King bodywork. The engine is a great 7.8 litre six-cylinder and the car weighs 2.5 tons. The make was favored by the Imperial Court in Austria. Almost hidden is a Fiat 501 of the early 1920s, so typical of the touring cars of the day.

The 1951 Hartnett HG is a Tasman sedan which was donated to the museum by Sir Laurence Hartnett. Also displayed are sections of the cast aluminum "car-casse" construction used by this make. The outer surfaces of the door pillar, windscreen frame and lower body sills were finished and painted as normal body panels thus assisting with weight reduction.

The best car is an original model Holden, the 48/215 series, often erroneously known as the FX, a title bestowed by used car dealers, X being the unknown, and the subsequent model being officially titled the FJ.

(* See Page 8)



NEW OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS NOMINATED FOR 1975

A nominating committee consisting of Charles B. Weaver, John Martin Smith and Perry Zavitz was appointed by Stan Yost to select the slate of officers and Board of Directors for the coming terms. The selections of this group are as follows:

President: Michael Lamm, Stockton, Cal.
Vice President: Michael J. Worthington-Williams, Hurstpierpoint, Sussex, England
Secretary: Vernon W. Vogel, Edinboro, Pa.
Treasurer: Fred D. Roe, Holliston, Mass.

Board of Directors:

Two-year term: Dave Brownell, Iola, Wis.
Frank T. Snyder, Jr., Chandler, Arizona

Three-year term: John Conde, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan
David L. Lewis, Ann Arbor, Michigan

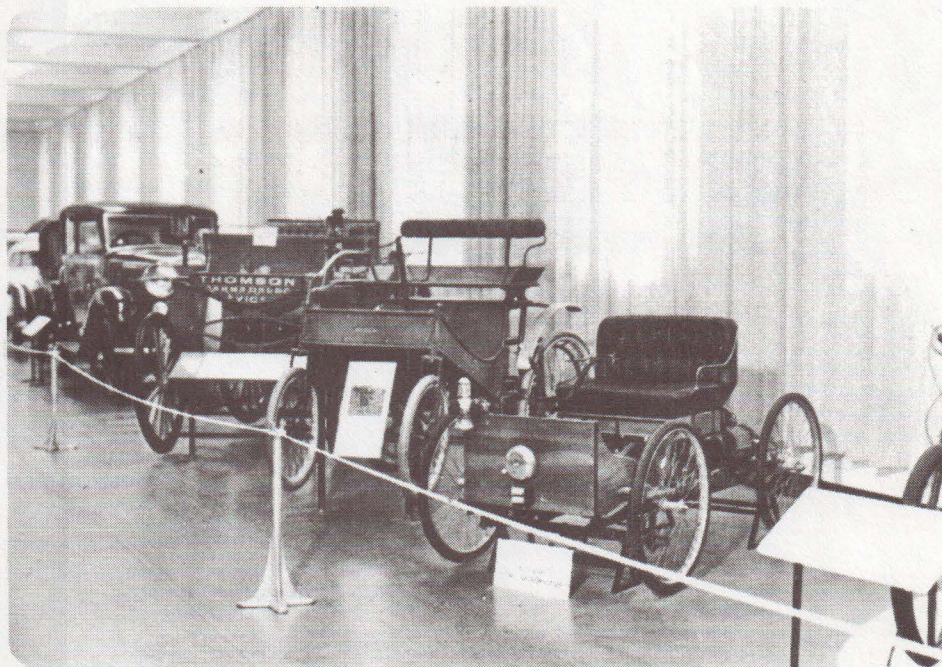
Another committee which included John Peckham, Fred Roe, Keith Marvin and Fred Soules has reconsidered the constitution and the by-laws. This work has been completed and the final draft is being put into legal order by John Martin Smith of Auburn, Indiana.

Stan Yost also reports that the S.A.H. will become an incorporated, non-profit organization.

It is expected that by February the constitution and by-laws will be submitted to all members of the S.A.H. for formal approval.

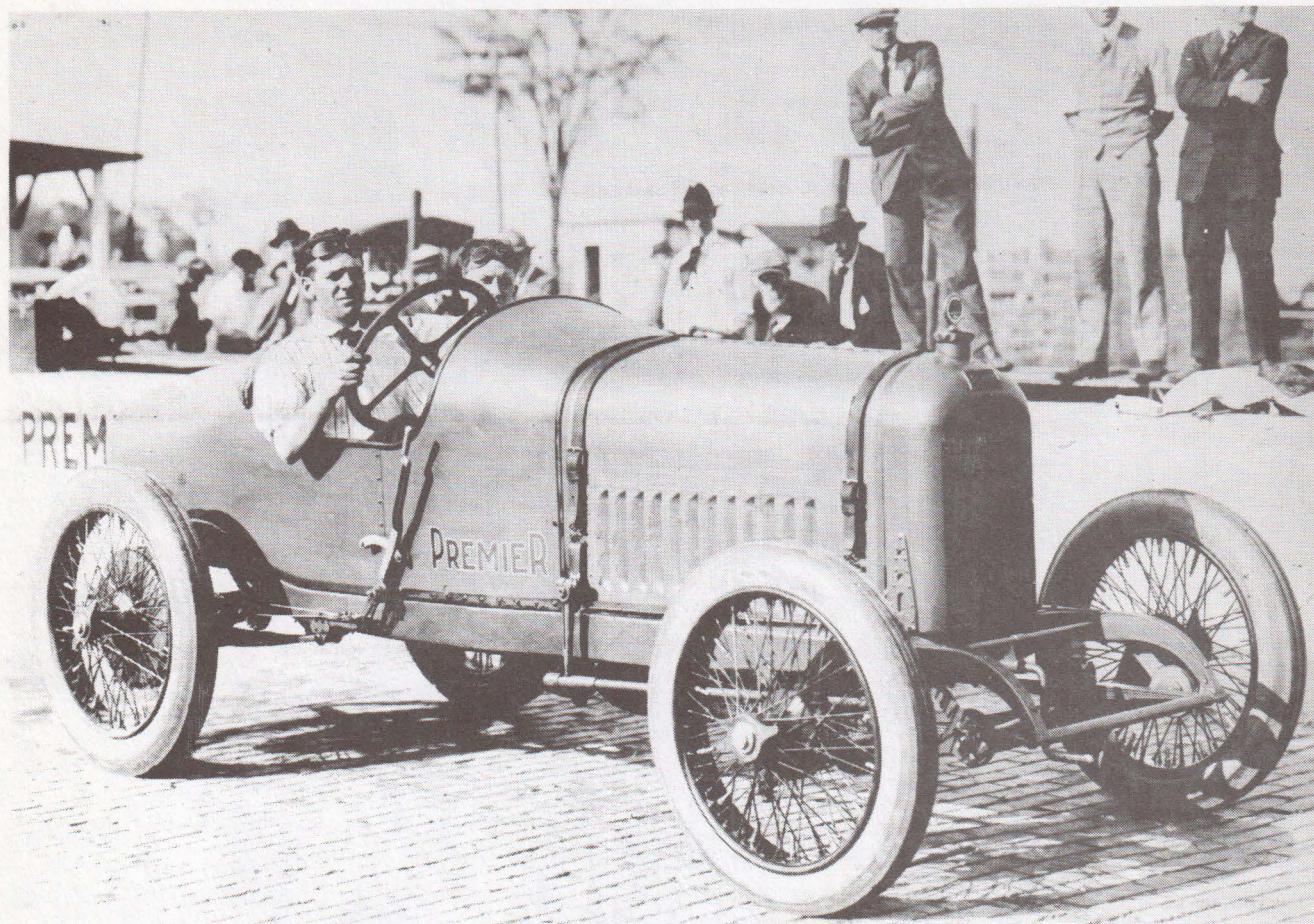
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SOME EARLY AUSTRALIAN MOTOR CARS - Continued from Page 7.



THE 1915 PREMIER RACING CAR - Harry Pulfer

I ran into a rare and unpublished photograph in my collection which is shown below. It shows the PREMIER that was built by Premier Motor Co. of Indianapolis at the request of the Indianapolis Speedway in 1915. These three cars were exact copies of the last 1914 PEUGEOT racing car to come to the U.S. before the outbreak of war. One of these cars is now in the hands of Lindley Bothwell.



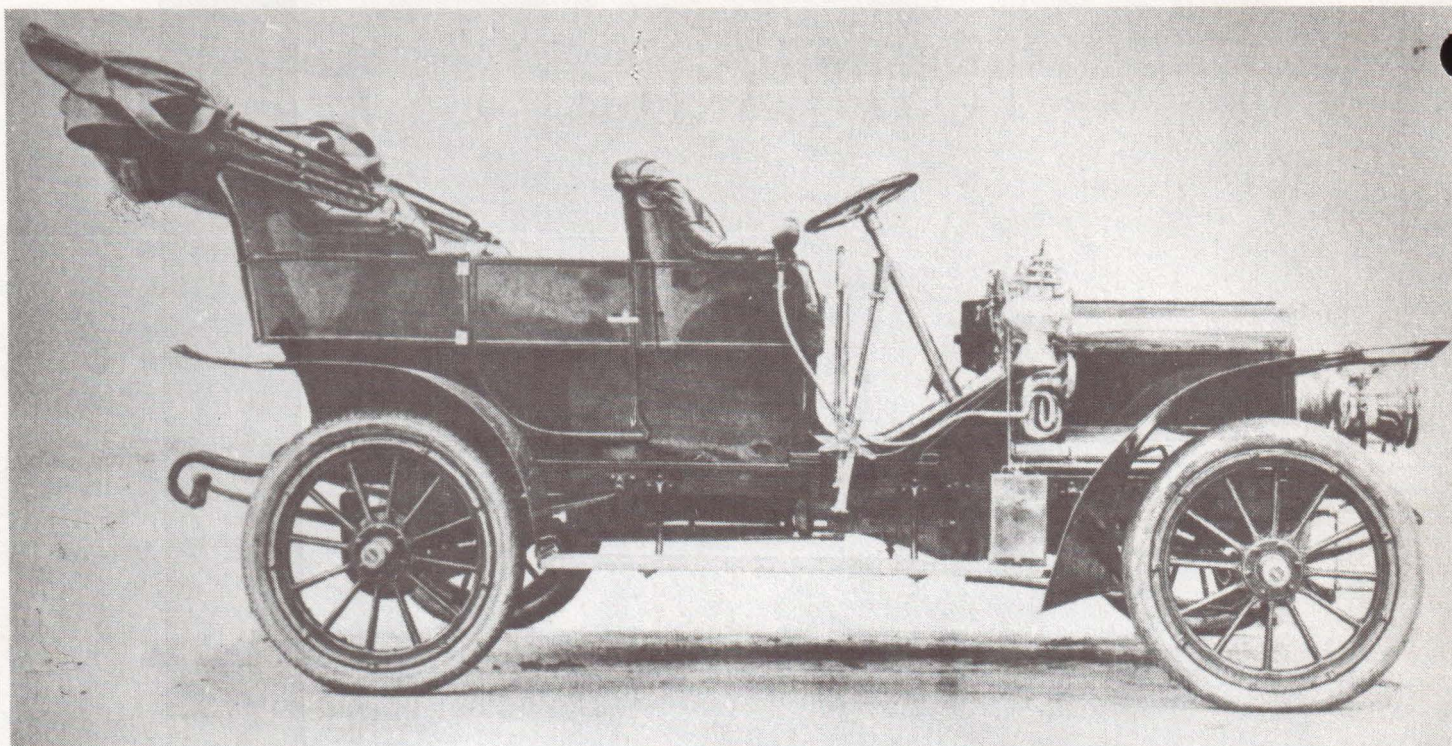
The Speedway was afraid that with the source of cars from Europe cut off they would not have enough entries to continue first class racing. The cars were designed by that great engineer, Ernest Henri in France in 1912 and were the first small displacement engines with two overhead cams and four valves per cylinder. This set the trend which the Germans soon copied and in 1914 the same type engine was unbeatable in Grand Prix racing in Europe. However, the Speedway had both German and French racing cars and chose to have the French car copied.

The car pictured had a PREMIER nameplate which I have not seen elsewhere.

One of the PEUGEOTS was loaned or sold to "Wild Bill" Burman who was killed in it at the Corona Road Race in California in 1916. Barney Oldfield bought the wrecked car and asked his old racing mechanic Bruno Siebel to take the racer over to Harry Millers and rebuild it that winter. Bruno needed a job and gladly took on this task. This provided Harry Miller with his first look at this engine and it was only a short time later that he was building faster and better engines.

A last remark about Ernest Henri - he built a very fast straight BALLOT racer and brought it to the U.S. Offenhauser and Miller had a chance to see that engine and saw the improved valve arrangement and that is the reason we use cups over the valves, even today.

MYSTERY CAR OF THE MONTH -



This is from John Peckham, with the following information:

"The picture is from a postcard I bought at Carlisle. While it is not clear in this print, there is a 'radiator' shell and a very slight indication that it has an upswept peak. There is no radiator cap. This last item plus the lack of anything that looks like a steam gage would indicate the engine is air-cooled. Other notable features are: very long forward extension of front fender; front fender extending below the running board with quite square corners; placement of acetylene generator (?); style of headlamps and side lamps; louverless hood which flares outward at the bottom and which has hinges at the top and sides; small panel between side door and front seat; small curve and point at bottom leading edge of rear door; bright metal hinges on this door; setback of rear seat arm rests; upswept rear fenders; graceful rear dumbirons.

Now, in checking through the 1907 MoToR's Motor Car Directory I found something which seemed to match, except for one major item: the rear springs. The car in the Directory is a 30 HP EAGLE built in Rahway, N.J. Unfortunately the specifications say that this model has full elliptical springs in the rear. The small picture in the Directory (*) seems to fit in every detail, but the rear suspension is not visible.

I wonder if any of our members have anything which would indicate the EAGLE was equipped with semi-elliptical springs. If so, it would solve the problem. If not, what is the above auto?"

(* Small photo which unfortunately cannot be copied. On close comparison of the two photos, John's points are well described, and I can find no discrepancies between the two photos. Ed.)