



## The Utilitarian Vehicle of South-East Asia and Oceania - by Max Gregory

While the trail is still fairly fresh it is perhaps desirable that some record be set down on the development of the "motorized ox-cart" which has taken place over the last few years in countries such as Malaysia, Thailand, Taiwan and the Philippines.

This survey will not, by any means, be exhaustive but will be based on reports which have appeared in Australia, mainly in the motoring press such as *Wheels*, *Modern Motor* and *Motor Manual*, and also *The Age* daily newspaper in Melbourne. The Australian motor industry has been involved, to some extent, with the development of this concept during the period.

However, as a prologue it will be desirable to first look at some of the vehicles of a utilitarian nature which were seen in Australia in the late 1960s and which have led to some of the developments in South-East Asia.

The MORRIS Mini-Moke was first seen in Australia in 1967 more or less in its original British form with its Mini-Minor base, 998 cc engine and 10-inch wheels shod with 5.20 section winter grip tires. The placement of such items as fuel tank, battery, tool box, etc., in structured pannier boxes along each side of the vehicle allowed a clear area behind the seats measuring 45 x 41 inches. However, by 1968 the Mini-Moke had, in the light of experience, become the B.M.C. Moke with 560 tires on 13-inch wheels, these raising ground clearance to 8 inches which vastly improved its ability in the rough at the expense of much poorer steering lock.

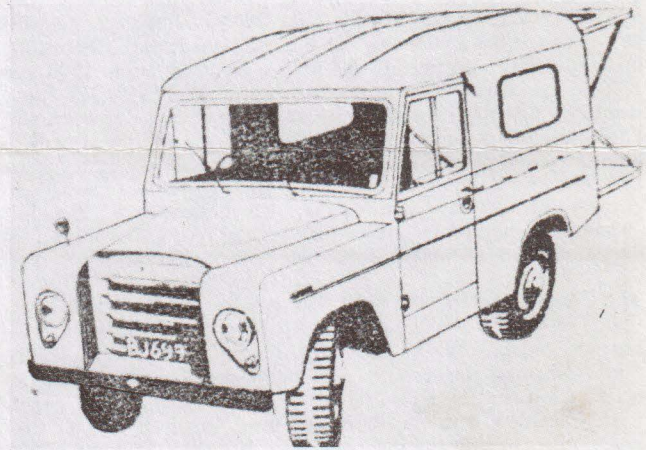
The larger wheels also called for a 4.27:1 final drive ratio and the mudguards were extended on each side. All production of the Moke was concentrated at the Zetland factory at Sydney in 1969 as it was apparent that the major markets for this sort of vehicle lay in the area which could be more easily and economically serviced from Australia than Britain. At this time the engine grew to 1098 cc and the gearbox got synchronized on all ratios.

Development of the export market progressed apace during the ensuing period with sales of the Moke to 53 countries by 1971, the bulk going to the Philippines, Indonesia, Singapore, Fiji, May Malaysia and New Guinea. The Moke alone was accounting for 60% of the company's models being shipped to these markets, 100 units per month being mentioned at the time.

For Australia, a plusher version, the Californian Moke, was produced in 1972 for the fun car market. This had the 1275 cc version of the B.M.C. 'A' series engine, 2-speed screen wipers, reflectors at the sides of the mudguards, a selection of bright paint colors was available and the tops were made of a trendy floral patterned material. All Mokes at this time were distinguished by large oblong flasher/sidelamp units at the front.

The collapse of Leyland's manufacturing activities at Zetland at the end of 1974 did not in any way interfere with Australia's role as the world production centre for the Moke. Leyland Australia's now much smaller operation was moved to Enfield where a subsidiary, the Pressed Metal Corp., had long been in operation building bus bodies, assembling Land-Rovers and other c.k.d. units such as M.G. for the Australian market. Production of the Leyland Mini and the Leyland Moke continue but now with imported power units. A recent news report indicated that the Moke is slated for assembly in the newly independent nation of Niugini, the former Trust Territory of Papua and New Guinea.

Also in 1967 a utility type vehicle appeared in New Zealand. This was the TREKKA which was built by Motor Holdings Group at their Otahuhu assembly plant. The mechanicals were those of the SKODA Octavia, also assembled by Motor Holdings for the New Zealand market, which included the 1221 cc, 47 hp engine, 4-speed transmission, four-wheel independent suspension.



1967 TREKKA

There was a 7½-inch ground clearance and the rear axle featured a limited-slip differential and a shorter final drive ratio. Eight body styles, ranging from a pick-up truck to a station wagon, were offered. Export opportunities to developing countries were actively explored and TREKKAs found their way to Indonesia, Fiji, Samoa, Noumea, Vietnam and the Cook Islands. Australia was, naturally enough, the largest export customer for TREKKAs, of which 1800 were produced in the 1967-69 period.

Volkswagen (Australia) got into the field in 1968 with their Country Buggy, a unique vehicle not to be confused with the wartime Kubelwagen or the Type 181 now seen elsewhere. Developed wholly at the Clayton, Victoria plant for a requirement first laid down in 1965, the Country Buggy embodied all the well-known VW features. Provision for rough use was made by employing the heavy-duty front and rear axles and the reduction gears of the one-ton commercials, these also providing a ground clearance of 9 inches. The structure was welded steel with fully boxed side members, and provided a tray area of 13.2 square feet behind the seats. 1200 and 1300 cc engines were offered and a power take-off could be fitted which was belt-driven from the crankshaft. 1119 Country Buggies were made at Clayton from 1968 until 1970 when VW terminated manufacture in Australia and reverted to assembly only.

1968 VW 'Country Buggy'





The Country Buggy is not dead, however, it is alive and well in the Philippines, according to a recent visitor to Manila.

In 1971 the Philippines Board of Investments Motor Manufacturing Scheme got underway by the acceptance of proposals from General Motors, Ford, Toyota and Volkswagen. The losers of this contest were Chrysler, Renault, and Nissan, who had to cease their assembly operations. The VW involvement was an investment of \$5.21M in cooperation with a local company, D.G.M. Inc. and a plan to build the Beetle and a special local vehicle called the Sakbayan 817. Maybe Sakbayan is Philippine for Country Buggy!

Ford's Asian ox-cart, the Fiera, like the Country Buggy, also has its origins in Australia. It was developed at the Broadmeadows, Victoria factory by a team of twelve engineers working under the direction of Bill Bourke, head of the new arm of Ford called FASPAC (Ford Asia Pacific). Prototypes were built in configurations ranging from a two-seater to a 12-seater minibus at a cost of \$1M. The unveiling of Fiera took place at the 1972 World Transportation Conference at Washington, DC. Of simple design with beam axles, it has a 99 inch wheelbase, a payload capacity of 1500 lbs. and is powered by the well-known Kent engine in 1100 and 1300 cc forms with low compression ratios. FASPAC's first move was to get into the 1971 Philippines scheme with the formation of Ford Philippines, Inc. and a investment of \$31.9M on a plant in Manila. Initial production had a 17% Australian content and by 1974 Fiera production rate was 800 units per month at this facility along with Escort and Cortina models which come within the limit of 2 litres prescribed by government regulations. Other Fiera production centers are at Taipei, Taiwan and in Thailand.

The General Motors contender in the ox-cart stakes was also revealed in 1972 at the company's 64th Annual General Meeting in Detroit, and later displayed at the Transpo Conference. Unlike Ford's offering, this vehicle does not use the same title in all markets but uses indigenous names which mean Little Tiger or Little Elephant in the various countries. However it does, like Ford, use an engine and mechanicals of British origin, in this case the VAUXHALL Viva 1256 cc unit and is generally laid out to meet the same objectives. Of simple construction with a ladder frame to take any body type, a 91.5-inch wheelbase and a 1300-lb. payload capacity, its initial production was at Tamplii, Malaysia. General Motors' acceptance by the Philippines Board of Investments was on the basis of an outlay of \$15.3M in collaboration with two local concerns, the Yutivo Corp. and the Francisco Motors Corp. In the case of General Motors, Australian involvement has not been with the ox-cart project but rather with the production of the HOLDEN Torana which, when powered by the 1.9 liter OPEL engine, comes within the Philippines' stipulated 2 liter limit. Other G.M. production centers in this region are in Thailand, where a plant was established in conjunction with the Bangchan General Assembly Co., and in Korea where a 50/50 partnership with the Shinjin concern formed G.M. Korea and founded a production facility there.

The Toyota interest, in partnership with Delta Motor Corp., in the Philippines motor manufacturing plan is wholly with production of its under-2 liter models, particularly the Corona, and involved the company in an investment of \$10.75M to participate.

In Taiwan, Ford has a competitor in local production operations, this being Yue Loong, otherwise Datsun incognito.

Chrysler is most interested, of course, to get into this area and there has been mention noted of a motor-cycle-engined minicar but no further details can be gleaned about it.

None of the vehicles mentioned are "go anywhere" machines of the 4 w.d. type, although the VW and the Moke have better than average tractive abilities due to the distribution of weight over the drive wheels, but rather they are expected to be at home on 'roads' more accustomed to the tread of hooves. These ox-cart-concept vehicles must represent a base beginning of a motor industry for these developing countries. Panel work is of very plain shape which can be formed with simple stamping equipment and assembly can be done with hand tools. Given the tremendous advantage which flows to industries which can employ low-priced labor, one can only wonder to what extent motor manufacture will become a world force in years to come as skills and production facilities increase in these countries.

## The Walton Special - by D.J. Kava

The Walton Special first came to light when a friend was given the enclosed photograph by the widow of an early Dallas Hudson dealer. It appeared in the national Hudson Club publication in January, 1971 and was identified by a reader from a full page ad displayed in Motor World's January 2, 1918 issue. The ad stated, "Progressive dealers will sell distinctive body styles this spring." They offered The Walton Special, patented on August 7, 1917 and built by the Walton Body Company, 155 Avenue D, New York City. An almost identical profile view was provided except the spare tire was not in place.

My inquiry to the patent office resulted in a form letter without information. The subject was dropped until the past year when I once again took up the subject with the help of John Thomas of Buffalo, New York. He provided two more items to the pool of information. First off, the body was indeed patented on August 7, 1917. The patent was filed by Wirt M. Walton of New York City on April 7, 1917. The patent, 160580, was considered an "ornamental design for an automobile body." From the New York Corporations Bureau came the information that the Walton Body Company, Inc. was filed on February 3, 1916 in New York County and was dissolved by proclamation published December 16, 1929.

This effort was apparently the result of an independent concern to capitalize on Hudson's winning speedway image. The bulge on the hood most likely indicates that the car used the dual carburetion like the factory racers. The 1917 Hudson production consisted of an incredible variety of models including chauffeur driven town cars and landaulets and the Springfield built Touring Sedan. However a body number list only indicates two roadsters were built in 1917. (One went to the Swedish Royal Household along with 14 other Hudsons.) No roadsters were produced in 1918. There was perhaps a limited sporting market for a fast two seater Super Six. Can anyone shed more light on the subject?

## Members In Print

Nick Georgano, with Lord Montagu, has recently published a book entitled *Early Days on the Road*, although the US distributor is not given.

Nick also contributed to a recent catalog for the Museum of Modern Art exhibit on the taxicab which is to open June 16 in New York.

Another forthcoming publication also by G N Georgano is entitled *A Motor Racing Camera 1894-1916*. This is to be published by David & Charles of Great Britain on May 27.



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## Book Reviews

50 ANS D'AUTOMOBILE [50 YEARS OF THE AUTOMOBILE]  
by J.A. Gregoire, Publisher: Flammarion

The bicentennial of the Cugnot automobile seven years ago may help the reader identify this eminent engineer in historical context. Gregoire's career spans one quarter of those 200 years, mostly trying to turn the industry to re-adopt a form of the front wheel drive system inaugurated by Cugnot.

France has its share of anonymous engineers buried in auto plants like other industrial nations, but it was fortunate to have more than its share of individualists bucking the mainstream of automotive practice. Gregoire is an outstanding example, persisting in his creed: that traction and steering were inseparable and belonged up front.

The Tracta was his monument. A front wheel drive with a pleasantly modern aspect, it went to Le Mans an unknown in 1927, quickly gained attention in knowledgeable circles, winning its class in 1929 and 1930. Manufacturers, too, noticed: Patents were ceded to D K W in 1929, Adler in 1931, Chenard and Citroen in 1934. Times were hard, and Citroen was able to get it for 50 cents per car for the first 200,000 cars. After that he got it free!

Allied Vehicles used his joints in the 1942-45 war, including the Jeep, but payment (particularly British) was slight indeed.

Front wheel drive enthusiasts may already know much of what he tells of fore-runners Latil, Christie, Cord, Miller, and the Ruxton Combine, but his own work leads into many fascinating situations. To cite one, the invitation to head up the faltering Frazer car for Henry J. Kaiser, using the Tracta system, which included a surprise ending.

The foreword was penned by Gabriel Voisin just before his death in 1973, but the 50 years from 1923 saw Gregoire pursuing an intensely interesting, if at times difficult and disappointing career, which brought him in contact with the greats not only of France, but also Germany, England, Italy and the United States. A mere list of the names would double the length of this review, but Gregoire was not indulging in name-dropping--he had a great deal to say and to contribute, much of it fresh and original. The book should be in every major automotive library collection. It deserves an English translation.

CHAS. W BISHOP

ON EVERY AUTOMOBILE AND TRUCK 1928-1931 [An illustrated history of automobile license plates of the U.S., including Alaska and Hawaii; District of Columbia and Canada], by Robert L. Gilbert. Profusely illustrated. 27pp., Papercovers. 8½ x 5½. Dahlhouse Publishing House, Box 3262, Hollywood, Calif., 1976. \$4.00 (California residents please add 6% tax.)

At last it is here. A segment--small, perhaps, but a segment and in full color of the automotive license plate history encompassing the years 1928 through 1931.

License plate collecting has mushroomed through the years and the study of it is being taken on by more than the few heretofore uninterested automobile enthusiasts, as a sort of larger form of philately, complete with colors, shades, varieties, rare and common types and ever errors! Not the least value of a guide such as ON EVERY AUTOMOBILE AND TRUCK is to get some idea of what the true colors of the number plates of the period really were. This helps a great deal after one buys a rusted set of tags in a flea market and then doesn't know what color to paint them before gracing the front and rear of his 1929 Hotfoot Six! To those of you who have had this problem (and they are legion), fret no more. Simply send for this book.

Truck plate data is also concluded. This is better still. There is, in addition, a guide to all new car registrations for those years by make, and this isn't entirely accurate.

But the plate data is, and that is what the book is all about anyway. This is a popular field woefully underwritten to date. Excepting for Keith Marvin's LICENSE PLATES OF THE WORLD published in 1963, and Neil Parker's treatise along similar lines and published abroad several years later, the subject still needs much, much more of the written word and the illustration. And here you have it, a good methodical text, and, Glory Be, a COLOR presentation of the plates themselves.

We are told that more of the same will be forthcoming. We hope so and we hope you get this offering for it is well worth it as an adjunct to automotive history.

And automotive history is what the SAH is all about anyway.

## New Members

Michael M. Krieg, 28488 Mission Blvd. #109, Hayward, CA 94544  
Commercial Vehicles

L. Walter Davis, PO Box 302, American Fork, Utah 84003  
Early DeDeion Bouton engines; all Velie racing cars.

Stephen M. Miller, American Graduate School of International  
Management, Glendale, Arizona 85306  
European passenger and sports cars 1925-50

Robert Gibson, 285 E. Deshler, Columbus, OH 43206  
Eclectic cars, especially of the thirties

Former member returning

William Watson, 115 Lipton St., Winnipeg, Manitoba R3G  
2G6 Canada

Change of address:

Richard J. Sagall, 2633 Parkwood Ave., Toledo, OH 43610

## Miscellany

We have received a letter from Donald A. Lubitz, 2679 Peter St., Honolulu, Hawaii 96816 who some time ago found an AVERY truck on the island of Lanai and is attempting to restore it. It has chain-drive and records show it was brought to Hawaii in 1912, presumably in used condition. It is lacking hood and front wheels and he is looking for early photos and/or drawings which might assist in the restoration.

There's yet another replica in the works, this time a STUTZ Blackhawk, so called, circa 1928, and apparently a better reproduction than the Model A by Classic. The STUTZ is by Golden Age Cars of Orange City, Florida.

Yet another enterprise offers a more or less reconstructed FORD Model A roadster, in part at least from refurbished parts such as the frame. Price is given as \$12,000.

## QUESTIONS IN SEARCH OF ANSWERS

For some time, the Editor has had in mind a continuing column which would serve as a clearing house for non-routine questions which S.A.H. members have difficulty in finding answers. While suitable answers can often be gotten by writing to a "knowing" member, this is time-consuming to say the least, and at best a hit-or-miss proposition. It is also possible that more than one person is searching for the identical answer. This column will accept specific questions and the answers, if forthcoming, will be published, with an acknowledgement as to the source. At least we can try it, and see if it will serve a need.

To lead off, I will throw out odd-ball No. 1:

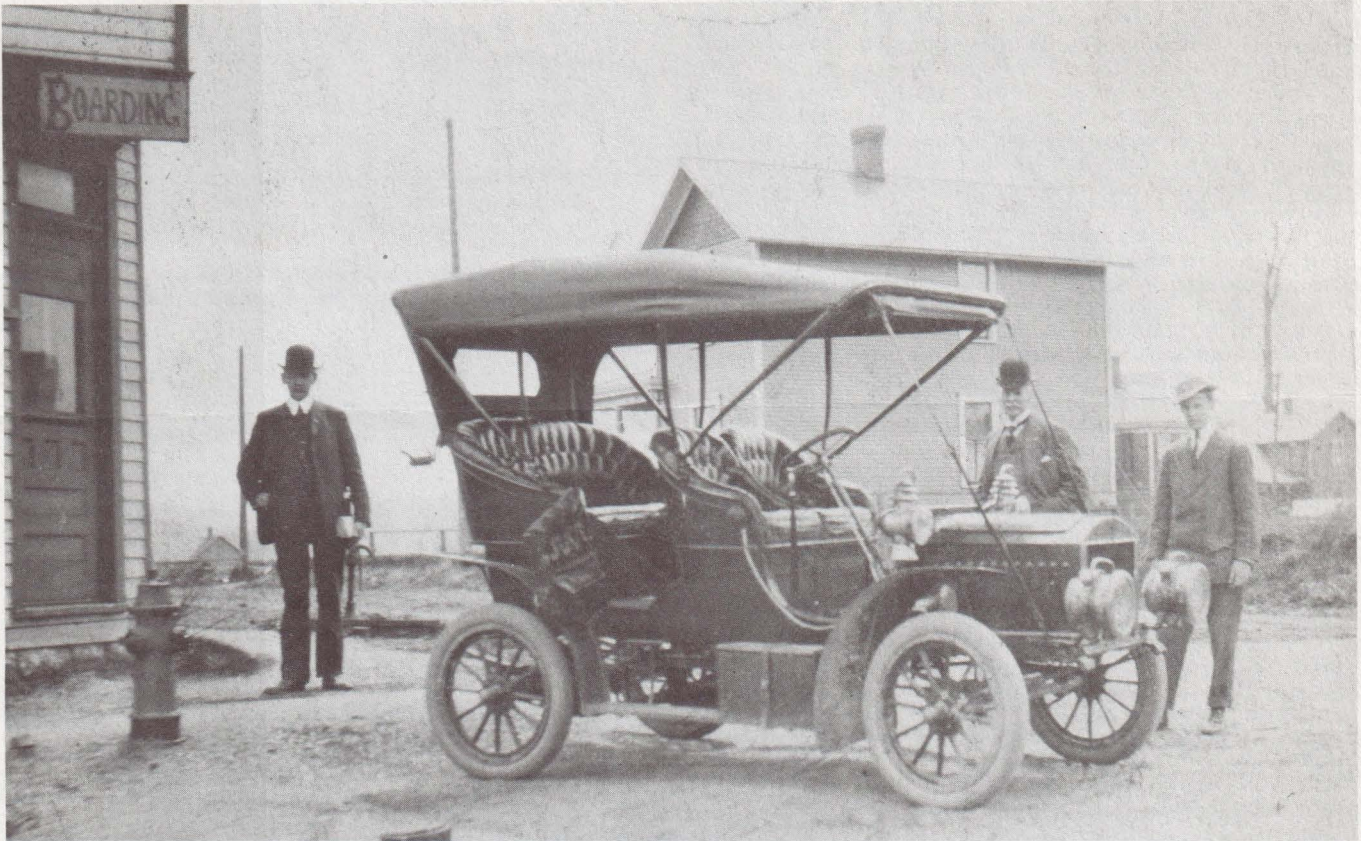
A proposed passenger car to be called FRANKFORD was announced in the Oct. 1922 issue of ATJ. It was to be built in Philadelphia, to have Fleetwood bodies, a six-cylinder engine with four valves per cylinder and was to sell for about \$10,000. I have not seen any further mention of this one, and wonder whether it ever was built, even as a prototype.



## Mystery Car

From *David W. Glass, Jr.*, 5950 Wilson Blvd. Arlington, Va. 22205. The photo was taken by his grandfather. This is an exasperating print as the details are either indistinct or are hidden. I can't make up my mind whether the front springs are half or full elliptical, or even whether it has the engine under the seat. Even the type

of drive, shaft or chain can't be determined. However, it does not appear to be one of the run of the mill makes, as I have not found a single make which had a rear entrance door of that peculiar shape. It almost appears to be a removable tonneau. Possibly it is as early as 1904, but not later than 1906, judging from the lamps and fenders. Re: chain drive; it couldn't be d-ch-d but could be a single chain drive. It certainly looks like some subframe under the front seat section, so I would say the engine was located there.



### WHAT'S OUR SCORE ON IDENTIFYING MYSTERY CARS?

We have published a considerable number of photos of unidentified cars and commercial vehicles in the last two years. Identifications have been made on some of them, but quite a number are still there, quietly challenging us to make known their history. This is a summary and a score card of how we have done, and will also serve as a reminder to keep trying on the ones still unknown.

1. CHASSIS, in #34, March 1974. Six photos of a chassis taken in New York in 1913, source John Peckham. Still not identified.
2. FIRE ENGINE, in #35, June 1974. Never identified by a member although make is known to owner of the photo. Also in this issue are three prototype cars on which Stan Yost requested more data. However, since their origin is known, I am not including them as mystery cars.
3. CLOSED CAR frontal view, in #37, November 1974. This looked like a hard one, but very comprehensive identification was made by William J. Lewis and others, published in #39, March 1975.
4. EARLY TOURING CAR, in #38, January 1975. This was identified as a Corbin in #39, March 1975.
5. SERIES of Eight CARS, *AUTOMOTIVE HISTORY REVIEW* #2, Summer 1974. Of these eight photos, three have been identified. Number 1 was shown to be a Lexington at the time of its publication. Number 6 proved to be a Pope-Hartford by letters in *AHR* #3, while Number 8's identity will be revealed in *AHR* #5. The remaining five photos from Nick Georgano remain to challenge you.
6. HANSOM CAB, in #39 March 1975. This car was first identified as a Rockwell, in #40, April 1975, but a howl of protest was heard from the west, and this identification had to be withdrawn, as those who have actually physically inspected the car emphatically say it cannot be a Rockwell.
7. ELECTRIC RUNABOUT in #40, April 1975. This is a deceptive photo, looking easy to pin down, but as yet no one has given any idea what it is.

8. PANEL DELIVERY TRUCK in #44, October 1975. This photo from John Montville looks easy too, but if John can't put a name on it then it has to be a puzzler. No identification yet.

9. MYSTERY CYCLECAR Drawings in *AHR* #3 from England. No data yet. Also four more mystery cars from Stan Yost in the same issue, none yet named. In addition Walt Godsen's two photos of a racing car at Brighton Beach, N.Y. in the same issue remain unknown.

Of the twenty one different vehicles in these nine issues of the Newsletter and Review, only five have positively named. This is less than twenty-five percent, and it looks like we will have to do better than that to preserve our reputation as historical experts.

## Classified Ads

*Wanted:* Information concerning any connection between *Stewart Motor Corp.*, Buffalo, N. Y. and *Step-N-Drive* delivery trucks, and between these companies and *American LaFrance and Foamite Industries, Inc.*, Elmira, N.Y., about 1928. John M. Peckham, 675 Pinewoods Ave. Rd., Troy, N.Y. 12180

*Wanted:* Information, photos, recollections, etc. of the *Indian Fire Patrol*, manufactured by the *Indian Motorcycle Co.*, Springfield, Mass. about 1923. This was a motorcycle and sidecar equipped with Foamite-Childs fire fighting equipment. John M. Peckham, 675 Pinewoods Ave. Rd., Troy, N. Y. 12180