

Darlington Dipsticks

of Western Australia Inc.

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The Dipsticks' Rag



Day in the Forrest 2017

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Editor's Comment:

The Covid19 epidemic is still with the world but thanks to quick action by our leaders we, especially in WA, have escaped with minimal casualties. So saying, we still need to be cautious and keep socially distancing and hand washing for the foreseeable future.

Thanks to this month's contributors who have made this magazine- keep up the good work and stay healthy 😊

Contributions:

Barrie Byers: Four new tyres for the Ford, 145/50x19 inch Firestone whitewalls, ex USA, (pre Covid), \$485 each, just saying.



I had the wheels sand then bead blasted and painted, so had to remove the paint from the wheel nut bevels. Tried everything, finally a wood chisel did the trick.

I will tell the story of the blasted blasting man next time we meet.

The car almost steers like a car now.



Ron Smeeton:
has resurrected his
1962 Hillman
Estate and is giving
it an airing!

Clive Ball: Roy's father bought his first car, a Model T Ford, in the 1920s. In those days, goanna oil was sometimes used as a liniment. His father delighted in telling the bush yarn about a man who, running short of oil for his Model T, used goanna oil instead. When the car was started it would run to the nearest tree and try to climb it!

T up a Tree, or Goanna Oil, by Roy Wheeler.

On Mt Majura's lower slopes, beside the limestone plain,
Are tall and graceful eucalypts, where noisy magpies reign.
And in some upper branches is the strangest sight to see –
The engine and the chassis of an ancient Model T.

Just how the car got up there is a story yet untold
But if you care to listen, now the mystery will unfold:
It was during the Depression that a bloke called Battler Bill
Was camped on Mt Majura with his eucalyptus still.

Now Bill he had a Model T, "Tin Lizzies" they were called;
The engine knocked and rattled, the tyres were old and bald,
The tank was almost empty and the engine short of oil,
For poor old Bill was stony broke in spite of all his toil.

One night he sat beside his fire and ate some rabbit stew.
His tattered coat and trousers let the wintry wind blow through.
He crawled into his flapping tent, but creeping up outside,
A ten-foot-long goanna tried the stew – and promptly died!

Next morning while he waited for his billy tea to brew
Bill thought about goanna oil and what that oil could do:
A certain cure for aches and pains, arthritis, sandy blight –
A gallon in the Model T would surely be all right.

Bill chopped the big goanna up, soon had it on the boil;
Within an hour the old bush still produced goanna oil.
He poured the oil into the sump, which filled to overflowing,
Then turned the switch and swung the crank and got the old car going.

The engine roared, the mudguards shook, the horn let out a croak;
With spinning wheels, the car ran off, the camp was lost in smoke.
It steered itself towards a tree, Bill felt his spirits sinking,
And watched it scramble up the trunk with both its headlamps blinking.

It stopped and settled in a fork, high up above the ground,
And there it stayed these many years while seasons rolled around.
And one by one the bits fell off to rust away below
The chassis and the engine held and never did let go.

And when a gentle summer breeze blows softly 'cross the plain
It lifts the gum tree's branches up and lets them down again.
Goannas stop to listen, stock still on tree and stump –
They hear their dear old Grandad as he sloshes in the sump!



LIMITED VEHICLE USAGES

For comprehensive cover, we insure all vehicles as your regular mode of transport; unless you ask us and we agree to insure your vehicle for one of the following limited vehicle usages:

Limited use is when you use your vehicle on average no more than once or twice a week.

Extreme limited use is when you use your vehicle on average no more than twice a month.

Club plate use is when your vehicle is driven only in accordance with your state or territory's rules and regulations for club or logbook registration.

X We do not provide any cover at all under this policy if your vehicle is insured for club plate use and is being driven contrary to your state or territory's rules and regulations for club or logbook registration.

Laid up is when your vehicle is not in use and is:

- located within a private residence;
- located at a Shannons auction event;
- located at a garage or workshop for repair or other work; or
- being loaded or unloaded for transport or being transported to any of the above locations or motoring events.

✓ We will cover parts removed from the vehicle when they are kept in any of the above locations.

X We do not provide any cover at all under this policy if your vehicle is insured for laid up and is being driven under its own power.

IMPORTANCE OF VEHICLE USAGE

If you do not use your vehicle in accordance with the vehicle usages shown on your policy certificate you may not be covered in the event of a claim.

Reg Kelly: We should all be warned about the fine print on all and any Insurance Policy held over our classic cars.

This is a Shannon's Limited Insurance Policy.

Mike Stoney: **My first car.**

Once upon a time in a land far far away..... or how I got saddled with a truly awful apology of a first vehicle.

My story starts some 50 + years ago in the small Scottish village of Fochabers. Your hero (me) was 17 at the time, and had succumbed to a horrible dose of the flu, and thus was bed- ridden for a few days. My dear old dad (god bless him) for some reason that I will never know, decided that he was going to select and purchase my first car (with my savings) without telling me. So having finally crawled from my death bed, was proudly informed that I was the lucky owner of one 1954 Austin A30.

Now, I had discussed the various vehicles that were on my impending shopping list with my parents, and an Austin A30 was never mentioned. Undaunted, I was ceremoniously handed the keys, and taken outside to view my new transport of delight.

Dear God, it was horrible. The car had been (hand?) painted in some sort of gold / baby poo colour, the interior had been trimmed (?) in a self-adhesive black pvc quilted material (for safety!). I was gutted. My expectations of my first car had centred around a Mini or an Anglia, something with a bit of street cred, and possible performance potential. Instead I had a pram with an 803cc A series engine that could barely get out of its own way!

From “The Motor” circa 1953, the factory claimed top speed of the A30 was 70MPH/110KPH (they lied) The magazine road tested it and achieved 67MPH/108 KPH, then had another go a few months later and then it only struggled up to 62MPH/100KPH. A ball of fire it was not. One also has to take into consideration that these figures were done on new vehicles, with engines in prime condition. My example was some 14 years old, and time had not been kind to it.

So off for my first run I went, first impressions have been pretty well wiped from the memory banks, but I can vaguely recall the sheer lack of power, its inability to keep up with normal traffic (this was 1968) on any road signposted over 30MPH, and finding myself being generally being pushed into the verge of the road by any and all traffic, generally travelling at around the speed limit 70mph.

It was terrifying.

Now, on my daily commute to work from Fochabers to Elgin, there were a number of hills to be negotiated. Even with a flying run at them the loss of any momentum was rapid, and so I ended up struggling up these gradients and about 30mph, foot to the floor and the local bus hard up my exhaust pipe.

Other points of interest were brakes that at best gave a little retardation then locked up, steering that wandered all over the shop due to wear and remould cross ply tyres, that also attempted to shake you to bits over 50MPH. The party trick however was a gearbox that would jump out of second gear on the over-run so badly that it could self-engage first gear!

So embarrassed by the car, I used to park it two streets away so my work mates would not see it!

I soon decided to try and kill it, so drove it flat out everywhere... at 60MPH, but the damn thing would not succumb. So, plan B was hatched. This was to ensure it failed the annual MOT inspection. As I was working as an apprentice mechanic at the local Ford dealership, I got in the ear of the workshop inspector to ensure the A30 met a swift and ignominious end.

And thus, it was in mid May 1969 that the car tragically met its end, and was broken up for spare parts.

Not long after, I spied a maroon 2 door Mk1 Cortina 1200 in our used car department, and shortly thereafter I was behind the wheel of the above Cortina, and that was to be another, but much happier adventure.

The End.

Postscript.

My hatred of the A30 has softened over the years and I now look at it in historical context. Designed just after WW2 and launched in 1951, it was a very advanced product in its day. Its engine was tuned for economy and to cope with the infamous pool petrol of the day, 70 octane! So it's little wonder its performance was staid. That the car ran through to 1956 and then in A35 guise (with larger engine) to 1959, is testament to its underlying sound design. But it was a car of its time, and by the late 1960s its time was long gone, and they quickly disappeared from the UK motoring scene.

Today they are much sought after for historic racing, and even have their own class. How times have changed.

Mike.



Clive Ball: **Blodwen, my first Austin Seven** – by Clive Ball

Characters: Adrian, Tony, Colin and yours truly, all fellow student-apprentices in Welwyn Garden City (just north of London) in the early 1960s. Bear in mind that in those days, the pittance a first-year apprentice received barely covered the cost of his board and lodging.

When I turned 17, Grandad gave me a 1920 Model T Ford which he'd had in a shed for 30-odd years. After some self-taught fettling, advice from Thomas the Garage, and a coat of paint, I drove it up from west Wales (about 250 miles) and used it for a few months as daily transport, much to the disgust of my landlady, who asked me to park it at the end of the road – what *would* the neighbours think of her with that old thing outside?



The Model T with me on a run with a friend.

Thus, I came to meet, and pal up with Adrian, who was running a 1930 Austin 7 Saloon called Josephine. He commuted daily from his home in nearby Broxbourne, and I was very impressed by his little car, which used much less petrol than my Model T, was relatively waterproof, and a lot easier to start. Adrian, Tony and I used to pile into Josephine and drive to the town centre at lunch times; I generally sat in the back and Tony established the left turn hand signal protocol with Adrian – “You twiddle, and I’ll stick.”

Josephine was painted bright blue and black and equipped with a push bike’s bulb hooter to warn unwary pedestrians. Most of the interior trim had long since disappeared, apart from a piece of

brown leathercloth which served as a roof lining, and which used to detach itself from its tacks and flap if the windows were opened. The C-clip in the gearbox had broken, so the main shaft used to run out and cause the fabric coupling's nuts to make wonderful sounds as they argued with the handbrake lever. After a while, Adrian put some copper coins of the realm in the cardan housing which cured the symptoms if not the problem.

With the end of summer approaching, I took the Model T back to Wales, as I had nowhere to garage it through the winter. I also changed lodgings and moved in with Bill and Rose Baillie, sharing a room with Colin who came from Swansea. After cycling to work for a few weeks I decided to get another car and, having liked Josephine, looked out for an Austin 7. Colin, with an eye to cheap weekend runs to Wales, said he'd go halves with me.

The Exchange and Mart was a good publication to find second-hand cars. Sure enough, there was one in Hornsey, in north London:

FOR SALE: 1932 Austin Seven Saloon, good runner, suit beatniks or clergy, £10.

Colin and I went down by train after work. It was dark and raining when we arrived. The merchandise was parked under a street lamp and glistened tantalizingly in the dim glow. The vendor took us for a test run. The fact that he had to push it to start didn't put us off, neither did the howl from the rear axle. He pocketed our £10 gleefully and we set off home up the A1. On the way, we decided to give the car a Welsh name and called her Blodwen.

Next morning, in the cold light of day, Blodwen didn't look quite so good. The tyres were almost bald, each wheel had broken or missing spokes, and the front spring was broken. The red and black paintwork, which had sparkled under the street lamp, was a generous crust of household paint apparently applied with a broom, and tufts of grass sprouted from the roof gutters and between the running boards and body. Colin took one look, gulped, and demanded (and got!) his £5 share back.

Luckily, there was a wrecker's yard not far away, run by Arthur Bennett, a Steptoe-like character with cloth cap, greasy scarf, stubbly chin and home-rolled fag permanently glued to his lip. "Arfur Bennett, known the world over," he announced importantly, then seeing my disbelieving look, corrected himself, "Well, nearly all the world!" I haggled and got a replacement front spring and four wheels for two quid, which solved my immediate needs and emptied my savings account.

Blodwen's first major outing was to follow the veteran cars from London to Brighton in November 1960. Colin came with me. The run down was uneventful, but the fan belt broke just as we set off home; they were obsolete even then, but a helpful garage man cut a band from an old inner tube, which did the job. In south London the generator gave up; even driving on parking lights didn't get us very far with the dodgy battery. There was nothing for it but to ring Adrian who brought a spare generator in his dad's car. On our way again, the axle moan suddenly got louder and nastier and we just made it to Welwyn Garden City, with Colin now totally convinced that he'd been wise to back out of the deal.



A 1932 Austin 7 Saloon similar to Blodwen, but in rather better condition!

A few weeks went by. I was flat broke and couldn't fix the car. Then Mum sent me a couple of quid for Christmas. Whoopee; off I went to Arthur Bennett and bought a complete rear axle. Unfortunately, it was off a short chassis car and Blodwen's was wider. Not to worry! Bill Baillie kindly let me use his garage which was situated in a complex of 50, about half a mile away. It was New Year's Eve. I set to work to use the best bits of both axles to make a good one. The day wore on; evening came, and Colin and Tony called round to tempt me to come out and celebrate the New Year. No, I was going to get the car mobile. The hours went by; the concrete floor was freezing. Stiff and cramped, I did up the last few bolts around 1am as my dim torch finally died. Now to try it! I wound the crank, got in and selected reverse. Bang! I hit the wall in front. A horrible sick feeling – I engaged first gear and reversed out of the garage, changing gear as I went. Three reverse gears and one forward! Round the complex and back into the garage. I switched off the engine and laughed like a maniac.

With the axle finally sorted and a new battery, it was time to try a weekend run home to Wales. Colin and I set off after work at 6pm and reached Swansea six hours later with no problems. I had a further 40 miles to go; as I approached our village a hole blew through the muffler and livened things up a bit. ("We heard you arriving last night", said Mrs Davies, Opposite, with a meaningful look.) A piece cut from an old tin can and a couple of large hose clips fixed the muffler and there

were no dramas on the way back, except that Colin's parents wanted to pay his train fare to make sure he arrived!

Blodwen was reasonably reliable now, with problems few and far between. I made small improvements as I could afford them, including fitting a pair of Wipac headlamp units into the Austin shells – these gave a much better light, and dipped properly.

I joined a local drama group, who were staging Dylan Thomas's *Under Milk Wood*, and played the Reverend Eli Jenkins. The show ran for a week. Just before the first night, I got a letter from my great-aunt in Wandsworth, south of London, asking if I could come and stay. Uncle was very ill, and she would appreciate having someone there, in case he needed the doctor in the night. I was happy to oblige, but it meant long days: up early, a drive across London to work, the evening's performance, then the drive back across London again. Blodwen behaved herself all the week and saved her trump card for the last night.

On my way home after the play's last performance on the Saturday, I toiled up a hill on the A1 just before joining the North Circular Road, when the engine made a horrible clatter and died. It didn't take long to confirm that the crankshaft had broken. I managed to push the car over the brow of the hill and freewheel down the other side, through the traffic lights which luckily stayed green, turned right on to the North Circular and coasted into a lay-by, where I left Blodwen looking forlorn. It was late and public transport had stopped running. I suddenly realized I still had my stage makeup on – I looked like Dracula! (As the play had a large cast and backstage facilities were very cramped, I'd been cleaning off my makeup when I got back to Aunty's.) Hastily wiping off what I could with an oily rag, I tried to hitch a lift; eventually someone stopped and took me most of the way. I arrived very late, glad that tomorrow was Sunday!

In the morning a neighbour of Aunty's kindly towed Blodwen to her house and introduced me to a friend who just happened to have an Austin 7 engine in his shed. It was mine for nothing – he could use the space, he said! By the evening Blodwen was mobile again and I drove to work on Monday morning as if nothing had happened. On Wednesday I came home to find that Uncle had died; after the funeral other relatives took care of Aunty, and I returned to Welwyn Garden City.

I got a bit more ambitious for Blodwen. The old engine block and pistons were still usable so I opened out the inlet ports, relieved the block, flattened the tappets and fitted a Ruby head, side-draught manifold and carburettor (all for ten bob from Arfur). She had noticeably more power now and went faster, but as all the brakes were oily, stopping became an issue and more than once I had to run on to the verge to avoid something that had stopped suddenly in front of me.

Back to Arfur's again. "This any good to yer?" he asked, waving a Bowdenex front brake conversion at me, "Two quid!" "One!" "OK, one it is". With new felt seals in the hubs, and relined brakes, things were much better. Then I saw a brand new SU carburettor for sale in an accessory shop for £1. It was for a side-valve Morris Minor and bolted straight on in place of the Zenith, which was badly worn. Blodwen now ran and stopped quite respectably, and I planned another trip to Wales with Colin.

All went well until we ran into a heavy rainstorm on appropriately named Stormy Down, near Port Talbot. I pulled over and stopped as I couldn't see a thing. When things had calmed a bit, Blodwen flatly refused to start. We had petrol, sparks, but no go. I was about to tear my hair out after half an hour without success when I happened to put my finger in the carburettor's air intake and found the damper piston jammed shut. It hadn't occurred to me to oil the new carby! Blodwen behaved herself for the rest of the trip.

1961 wore on and the summer came. "How about a 2-car Austin 7 run down to Wales?" suggested Adrian brightly one day. Great idea: next weekend, we decided. Tony and Colin were in on it too. Off we set, enjoying daylight until after 10 pm, Blodwen and Josephine on their best behaviour. We dropped Colin and Tony off in Swansea, continued on to Mum's, and had a great weekend.

On the return trip things started going badly wrong. Realising that Adrian wasn't following me I turned back to look for him and found him looking very glum. A sump bolt had fallen out and he'd lost all the oil. We found a bolt to fit and scraped up enough oil between us to half-fill the sump, but the big ends were knocking ominously. We filled up with oil at the next garage with little improvement. Collecting Colin and Tony, we decided to press on regardless, but it was very slow progress and soon Josephine sounded her death rattle. Adrian produced a tow rope and we trundled along for some distance until Blodwen's clutch began to slip as we went up a hill.....

We stopped to confer. Clearly, we'd never get back to Hertfordshire like this. The only sensible course was to abandon Josephine. There was a garage a little way ahead and we headed there. The owner gave us permission to put Josephine on some waste land nearby.

We transferred Adrian and Tony into Blodwen, together with their luggage, Josephine's radiator, battery and sundry other bits and pieces which Adrian insisted on salvaging. (He eventually sold the rest of the car to a local enthusiast.)

Off we set again, rather more slowly than before, with the rear wheel arches rubbing on the tyres on bumps and bends. The hours crept by. Around 1 am we reached the outskirts of St Albans, where the generator expired. As I poked about under the bonnet, a police car drew up. Having satisfied himself that we were not stealing the car, the Law decided to make helpful remarks. It was the weekend before MOT annual tests were going to be introduced for cars aged ten years and older, and this was a good topic for conversation. "Off the road next Tuesday, then?" said the Law, more of a statement than a question. "Bullshit!" came a muffled response from the depths of the back seat. The Law looked puzzled and shone his torch into the car where Adrian and Tony were barely visible under the pile of luggage and car parts. "Gawd Awlmighty, Bert, there's two MORE of 'em in 'ere," he gasped to his mate." "Well, we'd better be going," I said, bidding the cops goodnight and driving off.

When we were far enough away, I drove on parking lights wherever possible to save the battery. I dropped Colin and Tony off in Welwyn Garden City and took Adrian home to Broxbourne. He urged me to keep his battery in case mine ran out – a good move, as it did! I finally reached my lodgings about 4.30 am – it was hardly worth going to bed. Boy was I tired the next day!

On Tuesday morning, I got a letter from Mum telling me that Dad's cousin had left me £350 in her will. I decided to forgo the MOT test for Blodwen and advertised her for sale 'as is' for £10 in the Exchange and Mart. Much to my surprise she sold immediately, to a local farmer for his teenage son to drive around the fields. Soon afterwards, I bought a brand-new Minivan – in those days there was no purchase tax on vans in the UK, which made them considerably cheaper than the equivalent car. The trade-off was that you couldn't legally exceed 40 miles per hour. Of course, I never did – but it's amazing how quickly Colin and I used to get down to Wales.....



Peter Moore: Dear readers,

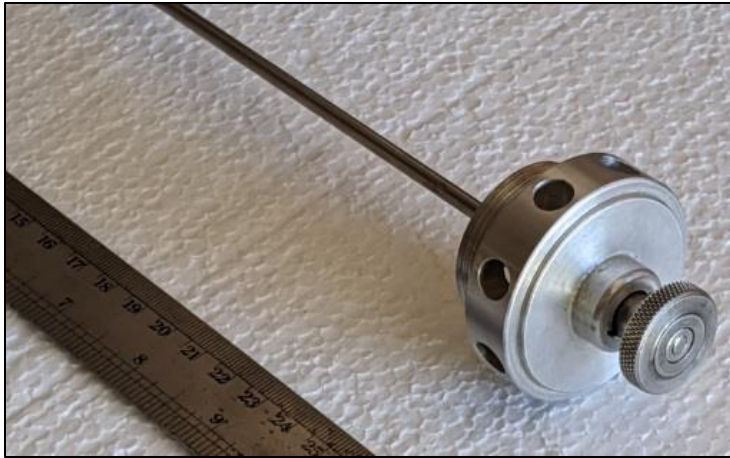
Our associate, Pierre-le-fou has asked that we record for posterity his hunt for a dipstick. Dipstick you say, surely Plf is a Dipstick so why, oh, why would he want another. We can go down either of at least two paths here, Mills & Boon style or the Truth. This is, I am afraid Myrtle not a bodice ripper nor something that would get your vital juices pumping unless Plf's excitement in his search for a Dipstick, his eventual success and then his agonizing and fearful wait in these times of CV (or as the Don would put it, "just a little flu") for the little guy's arrival was something that you could identify with and get very excited about. This might seem unseemly but I understand that although Plf has only been a relative newcomer to Darlo in his 35 years in town and has not yet qualified for full acceptance let alone citizenship, he does understand that other denizens of the valley appreciate excitement in the printed word. Eloise, stop that now or Plf will need to bring out the whip to ensure acceptance and submission.

So let's get into the truth and avoid misunderstandings. Plf has a very old pile of parts that are somewhere stamped as made by Andre Citroen sometime back in the mid-1920s. These parts don't make up a full automobile but might one day if Plf's experiences with finding a dipstick can be repeated quite a few dozen times. In searching that wondrous environment we all know as The Net, he found a few bits, some new as in reproductions and others very originally nearly a century old and lo and behold the originals were sometimes cheaper than the repros.

Imagine his delight and great good fortune when he spied in March an original combination of a *reniflard d'huile* (aka *bouchon de remplissage du carter moteur*) and its associated and fitted oil gauge rod!! Plf had had some experience with la francais but his vocab ordinaire left him floundering in his various dictionaries for clarification. He stumbled on the verb *renifler* which suggest sniffing!?! Ow could this be? Then he realised he had not pressed the translate button for that website. Glory be, all was revealed, and he had the Truth! Plf had a few motors for his chassis (stop that Mabel!) but none retained "the sniffer". On these old side valve motors, the point at which oil is introduced to the motor is down near the crankcase and at this entry point what we all know as a breather cap is located. Through this cap an oil gauge rod is inserted and locked (Yea, a Dipstick).

Pierre had found an outstanding pair of matched items and at half of the price of repros. Plf asked no questions but took a deep breath and inserted his Euros through that slot that is labelled Pay Me Here. He stuffed it up once or twice and then found his mates at Paypal had all been there before

him and had worked out a way to do this from one side of the World to the Other. Plf was so excited, he was effervescent (ah for Pete's sake Eloise, that was not your trigger to do That!) He



told his fellow Dipsticks in the valley not once, but many times and they quietly ignored him, just hoping he would go away and avoid embarrassing them in public. Yesterday, Pierre's parcel arrived!!!! Six weeks of sitting waiting for a flight in the Netherlands and then two weeks waiting to be cleared by Customs at the airport in Kewdale.



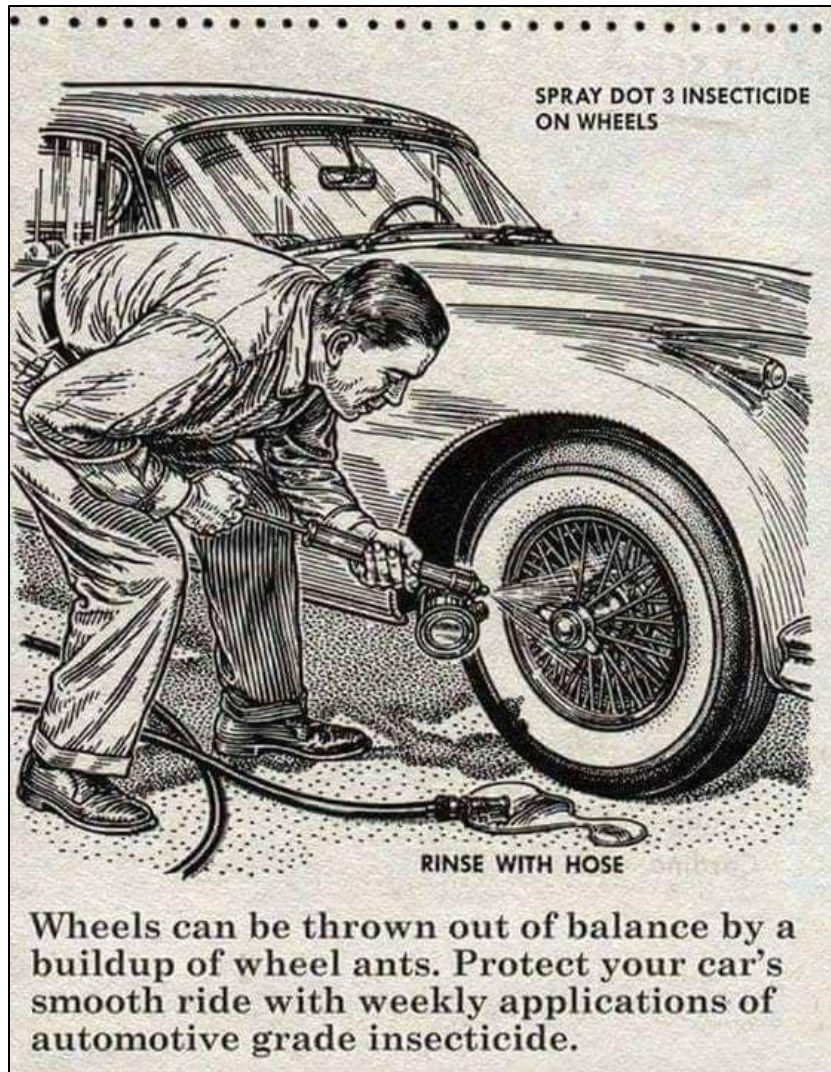
It will be some long time before Plf's 5CV maybe percolates under its own steam but the process of fumbling around on a keyboard and talking to people in Switzerland, Holland and France has Plf excited. They only know him by his real name and have yet to appreciate there may be a disturbed mind behind those enquiries but Plf reckons he is now just as

disturbed as his fellow Dipsticks and probably a little more sane than others in the valley so Darlington is a great place to stay.

There is no end to this story, no great climax (Joyce, No!) just a wonderful saga that goes on and on and on. Plf will keep us informed of his quest, the hurdles he must vault and the challenges of the course. He will not joust with Jaguars, Rovers, Fiat 500s or bloody great Pontiacs but his afternoon in the sun will come.



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Some old advertisements with WOW factor!

**Nash Thought of the Children, too,
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Tradespeople Listing

Name	Email	Phone number	Address	Function
Tavis - Vintage Classic and Custom	www.vintageclassicandcustom.com.au	0408 955 717	Shop 6 / 110 Briggs Street, Welshpool WA 6106	MG Specialist
Galloway Engines	www.gallowayengines.com.au	(08) 9531 1366	25 Baker St, Pinjarra WA 6208	Engine Reconditioning
Motteram Motors	www.motterammotors.com.au/	(08) 9250 3395	3 Elmsfield Road, Midvale WA 6065	Engine Reconditioning
D'Uva French Polishers	www.duvafrenchpolishers.com/	(08) 9274 4056	21 Elliott St, Midvale WA 6056	French Polisher
Peter - Holley Parts	www.holleycarbs.com.au	0455 602 618	49 Swan Street, Guildford	Carburettor restoration/parts
Stuart Pekin		0404 231 712	4 / 6 Bookham St Morley WA 6062.	Citroen mechanic
Kathy Arts - Badgemate	info@badgemate.com.au	(08) 9255 1577 Office, 0400 165 423 Mobile	4 May Street, Bellevue WA 6056	Badges
Alex		0411 550 250		Mobile Auto Electrician
Mike - Car Services and Electrics	Mva81555@bigpond.net.au	(08) 9274-6606	11 Bushby St, Bellevue WA 6056	Auto mechanic
Bruce Sharman	bruce@bygonerestorationsandspares.com	0408 889 279	PO BOX 1505 Toodyay, 6566	Car restorer, wiring looms
Tom Sharman	vintagetommy@icloud.com	0430 046 729		Car/bike restorer
Franc Fonte, FMJ Motors		(08) 9458 3433	U 8/35-39 Tate St, Bentley WA 6102	Jag Specialist