

GEARBOX

JULY 2023

HUNTER MODEL AUTO CLUB INC.

CONTACT: Bill Kenchington on Ph (02) 4945 4830 OR Andrew Vile on (02) 4933 5607 in business hours only.

***** JUST A REMINDER *****

Our next Meeting will be on Tuesday 11 July 2023 at 7.00pm for 7.30pm at Edgeworth Sport and Rec Club.

And this will be our **Christmas in July** Dinner Meeting with wives, partners, and guests most welcome



PLACEGETTERS FOR THE JUNE REAL MODEL COMP – OPEN CATEGORY (Qualified)

Above pic - 1st went to Paul's Combine Harvesters.

The next pic is 2nd placegetter, Trevor's restored Dinky toys and finally in 3rd place, was Bills 1930's Fords.



*** A mystery entry from the February 2022 'Real' model comp. Who owned these models?***

HUNTER MODEL AUTO CLUB INCORPORATED

Minutes of Club Meeting Held at Edgeworth Sport and Rec Club on 13 June 2023

Meeting Opened: 7.30 pm.

Members Present: 21 Apologies: 5 Visitors: 3

Welcome to Members and Club Visitors: President Andrew Vile welcomed all to the Club.

Previous Minutes: Moved: Mark Jenkins Seconded: Brian Fairhurst "That the May 2023 Club Minutes be accepted". Carried.

Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer reported that the Club funds stand at \$1,177.09.

Moved: Wayne Swanbrough Seconded: Ernie Williams "That the Treasurer's Report be accepted". Carried.

Correspondence:

OUTWARDS:

- i) Members and Others – Gearbox Special Edn. No.2 (email and post).
- ii) Members and Others – June Gearbox (email and post).
- iii) Members – June Model Competition and Meeting Reminder (email).
- iv) South Hants UK MC - Re Last "Wheel Nuts" magazine email from Terry Payne.

INWARDS:

- i) Canadian Toy Collectors' Society – May 2023 CTCS News – Note Lawn Mower Displays
 - ii) South Hants UK MC – June 2023 "Wheel Nuts" magazine.
 - iii) West Aust MCC (WAMCC) – May 2023 "Showcase" magazine.
 - iv) Wessex Model Club – June 2023 "Small Talk" magazine – Note Model Category "Family Cars" and "Lemons".
 - v) South Hants Club – Reply to Terry Payne's email.
 - vi) Coventry Club – "Wheelspin" Magazine Summer 2023.
- Moved: David Rosser Seconded: Trevor Palmer "That the Correspondence be accepted". Carried.

Matters Arising:

- i) Fighter World Visit on Sunday 11 June 2023 – Paul reported that we had great day especially with the very interesting and informative talk by our Guide who was an experienced former RAAF pilot for over 30 years. The lunch provided in the private dining room was up to its usual great standard. A letter of thanks is to be sent to Fighterworld with particular reference to our Guide.
- ii) Hunter Toy and Hobby Fair – Expressions of interest closed on 9 June 2023. Response to date is less than expected with only 11 stallholders expressing an interest. Unfortunately, a number of our regular stallholders had a clash of dates with prior engagements. Registration Forms are now to be sent out to the interested stallholders with the closing date being Friday 21 July 2023. We need suitable donations for our raffle prizes. Members are asked to search their display cabinets etc for models surplus to their needs.
- iii) Show Us Ya Slotz Return Visit - Planned for September 2023.
- iv) Visit to Catalina Plane Restoration, Beresfield - Planned for Sunday 23 July (Duration 1 hour). Time preference to coincide with lunch.
- vi) William IV Cruise – Plan for during warmer months.
- vii) Sydney Tramway Museum, Loftus Visit – Plan for future visit.

General Business:

- i) Christmas in July Dinner – This will be held at our next meeting on Tuesday 11 July 2023. Meals are to be ordered off the standard menu at the Restaurant. Drinks to be ordered at the Bar. Arrangements on the night will be like that of last year, whereby our Dinner will be held in the Auditorium (our usual meeting place). The Dinner will commence at 7.00 pm for 7.30pm, and both Model Competitions will be held on the night.
- ii) Airforce Newcastle Williamtown Air Show 2023 – To be held on Saturday 18 and Sunday 19 November 2023. The free community event on Saturday will include morning and afternoon flying displays over coastal Newcastle. The Sunday event at Williamtown will be a ticketed non-flying open day, featuring static ground displays and a range of military equipment from across the ADF.

- 1957 FORD FAIRLANE 500 SKYLINER -

[Pictures in this article courtesy of the Diecast Society.]



Sun Star 1:18 scale diecast model of the 1957 Ford Fairlane 500 Skyliner in colonial white.

Sun Star's 1:18 scale diecast model of the Ford Fairlane in *the lead-in pic* is almost as iconic amongst collectors as Franklin Mint's 1:24 scale versions. The latest news from the Diecast Society web page indicates new colours of Colonial White (*above pic*) and Flame Red (*next pic*) are now available. Though it has been modelled previously in quite a few colours, I think the all-red coloured model is an excellent choice to produce. The amazing part is that all these 1957 Ford Skyliner models actually have a fully functional hardtop roof.

1957 was an interesting year for Ford with the most strikingly changed passenger car styling since the 1949 models. Ford desperately wanted to challenge General Motors for leadership and compete against almost all of the GM range of models. The totally new body style for 1957 was influenced by Ford's space age 'Mystere' show car, and though it had numerous Ford designers involved, the chief of styling, George Walker, and Ford's president, Henry Ford II, had the final say on the design of the new model. The top of the line Fairlane models were longer and the choice of engines available, trim and colour range on all models, was immense. I think they certainly model well.



Though both Sun Star and Franklin Mint offer this Skyliner in many colour schemes, most of FM's colour schemes are quite stark to look at and maybe because of the smaller scale. However, one FM version that is nice on the eyes, and one I'd love to own, is in 'coral sand' with a white upper area. *See next pic.* I also love the dark brown interior. *Terry.*



--- THE AUSSIE MORRIS 1100 STORY ---



Morris 1100 sedan in 1:43 scale diecast by Norev and made in France.

As mentioned in a previous **GEARBOX**, BMC called it the **ADO16** which stood for Austin Drawing Office Project No 16 and it hit the market in August 1962 as the Morris 1100 initially. But it was followed up with badge-engineered models bearing the Austin, MG, Wolseley, Riley and Vanden Plas names with each having different trim levels and personality. As an example, the MG 1100 with a twin SU carbie engine was the sports model and the Vanden Plas Princess 1100 that oozed luxury, was the top-of-the-line model. Some of these models appeared on British roads before the Aussie version hit our showrooms badged only as the **Morris 1100**.

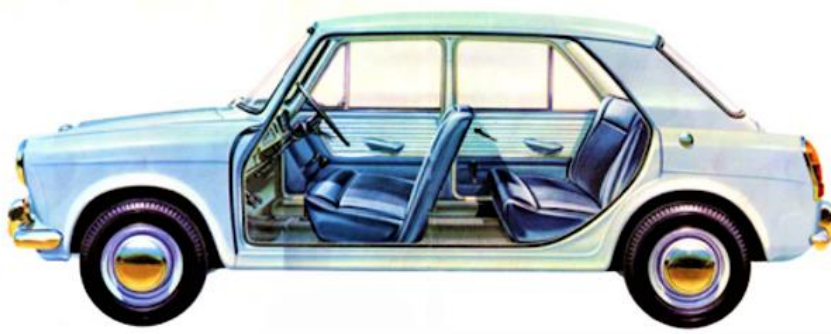
I did read that whereas the Morris Minor continued in Britain till the end of 1971, it ceased being for sale in Australia in 1961 as it would be replaced by the upcoming Mini, which for us, was the **Morris 850** model released in March 1961. The Aussie models had the same 848cc engine but would have many modifications made to suit our motoring conditions.



Above left - Morris 1100 model in 1:43 scale by Hachette. Above right Austin 1100 in 1:18 scale by Cult Models.

In 1963 BMC Australia imported nine **ADO16** models for evaluation as our Country was so different to Britain with our much harsher and hotter conditions and this need for testing had been proved necessary with the Mini models. These test model sedans were driven over 200,000 miles in various conditions including central Australia's roads. Many modifications had to be made including body strengthening, changes to the steering setup to reduce noise and kickback issues and the gearing was altered to allow better performance. One of the biggest issues on our rural roads was dust and BMC were forced to improve the cars dust sealing and ventilation. Many of these modifications were subsequently applied to the British models being built for export.

One of the changes for the Aussie models was the front seats being a single bench type which seemed to be a reflection on what BMC thought the average Australian family required due to the style of the then Holden and Ford family sedans. BMC were able to claim that six persons could be carried in the Morris 1100, but this would surely be a real squeeze. In any case, the centre passenger would have been at risk to the drivers hand being pretty close when changing gears with the floor mounted gear lever. The trim material was totally different to the British models as it was sourced locally and had different vinyl patterns with a wide range of colours. Also, there were plenty of different exterior colour schemes to choose from over the five or so years of production.



Above left –A cutaway to show interior space. Above right - An Australian advertisement for the Morris 1100.

Production took place at the BMC plant at Zetland in NSW and in February 1964, BMC Australia released the Morris 1100 onto the Australian market where it was praised by motoring journalists and immediately created such a demand that stocks ran dry and a six week waiting list eventuated. Coincidentally, BMC sponsored the Australian leg of the Beatles tour and, having them driven around in Morris 1100s added to the positive publicity for the new vehicle. By the end of the year, the Morris 1100 had scored around 18,000 sales and only 4,000 behind the VW 1200 Beetle, though it would outsell the VW by the end of 1965.

Unique Cars wrote 'You can fit six adults into an 1100.... The boot is sensibly sized for a car of this size and a 39-litre fuel tank allied to 8.5L/100km consumption will deliver five hours of highway running between refills.'

In 1965 the Morris 1100 became *Wheels* Magazine's '1964 Car of the Year' and they stated that 'This award recognizes excellence and innovation in design, fulfillment of intended purpose and performance amongst its many criteria.' Within two years of its release, BMC Australia had sold around 50,000 Morris 1100 models.

The Morris 1100 continued to sell well and in 1966 it outsold both the Volkswagen Beetle and Ford Cortina to be the leader in its class and contributing to BMC's 13% of overall sales that year in Australia. However, by early 1967, the Ford Cortina had just edged the Morris 1100 out of the top spot. In August, a 1,275cc engine was dropped into the Morris and it was re-badged as the **1100'S** and ended up with almost 16,000 sales for the year. To top it off, Avis purchased a large batch of the cars for their rental fleet. 1968 saw an automatic gearbox added as an option and sales were 14,500 which included the auto versions and this put the 1100 in third spot in its class just behind the Cortina and Holden Torana. In 1969 the 1100 was superseded by the Morris 1500 after close to 90,000 Morris 1100's had been sold in Australia up to that point in time. *Terry.*



Front and rear shots of a Morris 1100 model in 1:43 scale diecast by Hachette.



Altaya's version of the Morris 1100 in 1:43 scale.

JUST ONE MORE TASTE OF FRANCE - THE CITROEN 'TRACTION AVANT'



I love Citroens and mainly for their [unconventionality](#). (If there is such a word) Previous articles about Citroen models show just that point. If you are interested, check out the [November 2020 Gearbox](#) for an article on the 2CV post WW2, [January 2021](#) for the H Type Van and [February 2023](#) for the DS, or as it is popularly known, the Goddess.

For me, the most interesting of all their models is the Citroen Traction Avant ([See lead-in pic](#)) and it certainly 'stands out' when seen driven by the stars or as part of the background in so many television shows and movies, especially in any **Maigret** based films. And like the vehicle, the French Detective Chief Inspector Jules Maigret is also unconventional. Georges Simenon wrote seventy-five novels and twenty-eight short stories over forty years about the fictional Detective, and though written in French, they have been translated into many languages and have provided scripts for over fifty films and hundreds of television episodes.



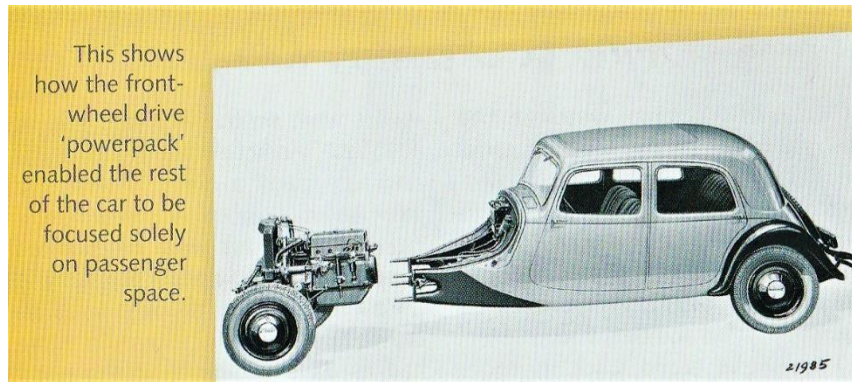
Citroen Traction Avant in 1:24 scale diecast by Burago.

Maigret, as a BBC television series, was first seen in 1960 to 1963 and later from 1992 to 1993. My favourite is the more recent series from 2016 and 2017 that starred Rowan Atkinson and I think he was brilliant as Maigret. Over the years, many British Police television shows have highlighted their own iconic vehicles such as the Ford Zephyrs in 'Z Cars' and the Ford Consul GT in 'The Sweeney.' But Maigret was different as it was based in France and Maigret used a black Citroen Traction Avant with the model used in the original series being a 1954 'Light 15/6H.'



Citroen Traction Avant in 1:43 scale by Atlas Models.

The Traction Avant made its debut in March 1934 and Citroen dealers were not only amazed by its appearance, but also by the new automotive ideas linked to the new model. Citroen had made a vehicle that was different and with a body style that was like no other European sourced sedan on the road at that point. The new Traction Avant was driven through the front wheels and that resulted in a cabin with a flat floor and a body without running boards and it came with independent suspension and hydraulic brakes. At the time, front-wheel drive cars were unusual in mass produced automobiles and importantly, the floor plan and chassis were formed into a single structure known as unibody construction. Interestingly, with the gearbox being located in front of the engine and being front wheel drive, the drive section was separate to the passenger capsule. *See next pic [courtesy of Giles Chapman.]*



The name Traction Avant means front wheel drive and this vehicle was the start of a new era in automaking for Citroen, and would immediately provide a test for other European auto makers in grappling with the problem of designing a vehicle to match Citroen's amazing new concept in vehicle functionality.

The French Police were soon using the new auto and it provided a long tradition of service there, especially by their Detective services. In 1938, Citroen introduced a more powerful version with a 2.9 litre six cylinder engine called the 15/6 that became known as the 'Reine de la Route' or in English, the 'Queen of the Road'. It was used for high-speed patrol work by the French Police. Production ceased in 1940 due to WW2 and as an aside, the French Resistance were legendary for their use of the Citroen Traction sedans in WW2. Manufacture re-commenced in 1946.

Citroen autos had also been assembled in England since 1920 and the British versions of the Traction Avant were required to use locally sourced parts to avoid import tax and this could include the bumper bars, wheels, radiators, seats and instruments. The British models also had a 12 volt electrical system whereas the European models originally used a 6 volt set-up. They were also fitted with leather upholstery, a wooden dash and a wider choice of colours compared to the French built models that were mostly turned out in black.

The Traction Avant in Britain was available with the 1.9 litre overhead cam four cylinder model in two models, a compact 'Light 15' or a larger 'Big 15' which acquired a larger boot in 1952 to store the spare wheel internally as it had previously been mounted externally. I read that the bigger six cylinder model became popular after the introduction of the Mairret TV series. Maybe! In 1954, this model was used by Citroen to introduce their hydro-pneumatic self-levelling suspension system that would become notable on the following DS models.

The Traction Avant was a sleek low-slung auto with handling and ride quality touted as being quite good. In 1951, Britain's *Motor* Magazine wrote, 'Roll on corners may occur with this car in a strictly geometric sense, but it is no slight that neither driver or passengers are ever really conscious of it.' Though it nearly sent Citroen broke initially, it went on to be a successful model for them and stayed in production till 1957. *Terry.*



Above left and modelled by Hachette, and at right modelled by Atlas. Both are in 1:43 scale diecast.

- TRI-FIVE - MY FAVOURITE CHEVROLET BEL AIR MODELS -

In a previous Gearbox, I mentioned an article from Hemmings about a 1955 Chevrolet up for auction where a reader made a comment as follows, *'This car changed everything in '55. It was so different from the '54's, it took the other car makers years to catch up.'* This was the first model in the so-called 'Tri-Five' [1955 – 1957] Chevrolets.



Above and below - Ertl American Muscle 1955 Chevrolet Bel Air in 1:18 scale diecast.



Ertl seem to have been the biggest producer of the Bel Air models from the 'Tri-Five' series Chevrolets in 1:18 scale diecast, though Auto World are now turning out some nice 1957 convertible models and Acme are also producing '57 Chevrolets in special liveries. Going back many years, and again in 1:18 scale, we could purchase a very desirable Road Tough brand 1957 Chevrolet (two-door) Nomad station wagon, but it is hard to find today. The 1956 models are plentiful in 1:18 scale and mainly from Yat Ming/Road Signature, but one of the best looking models is the Precision Miniatures version of the 4-door pillarless Chevrolet. But, as with most American Big Three brand model cars, 'Tri-Five' Chevrolet Bel Airs are nearly all modelled as two-door versions. Ertl American Muscle also produce many of the 1955 Bel Air models with one example shown above which is from the *'Happy Days'* series.

As mentioned above, the 1955 Chevrolet was completely different to the 1954 model and the Bel Air would be the top-of-the-line model. Body styling on the very classy 1955 Chevs was completely fresh and up-to-date with plenty of chrome on the Bel Air models. The grille on all models was similar to the 'Barchetta' style egg crate grille on the then Ferrari sports cars, though slightly larger, and the windscreen was now in a wrap-around style. With the hooded headlights right through to a finned profile at the rear, it appeared long and low. ***See next pic of the 4-door Bel Air.***





With the 1955 model range, the Chevrolet had certainly evolved from its post war examples and these models now came with a 12 volt electrical system, upgraded braking and a so-called 'Glide Ride' suspension that led to **Motor Trend** magazine's road test of the 1955 Chevrolets praising the ride quality and handling. The new models possessed a longer and lower body shell fitted over an all new chassis with ball-joint suspension, yet it retained its 115 inch wheelbase. The big news for 1955 was the new engine under the bonnet. It was Chevrolets first modern V8, the 265 cubic inch (4.3 litre) 'Turbo Fire' that would go on to be one of the greatest American V8s produced and commonly referred to as the 'small block' V8. Some may not be aware, especially when you consider the reputation Ford vehicles had when fitted with their V8 motor, but from 1929 to 1955, Chevrolet only offered six-cylinder engines.

For the 1955 models, Chevrolet had their 235 cubic inch (3.8 litre) 135 bhp (100kw) six cylinder engine as standard with the V8 an option on the Bel Air. However, the 265 V8 came in three versions producing 162, 180 and later in the model run, 195 bhp. (This was in order, 120, 134 and 145kw.) The icing on the cake for Chevrolet's 1955 model line-up, would prove to be, not just the top the line Bel Air, but it's also being produced as a **convertible**.

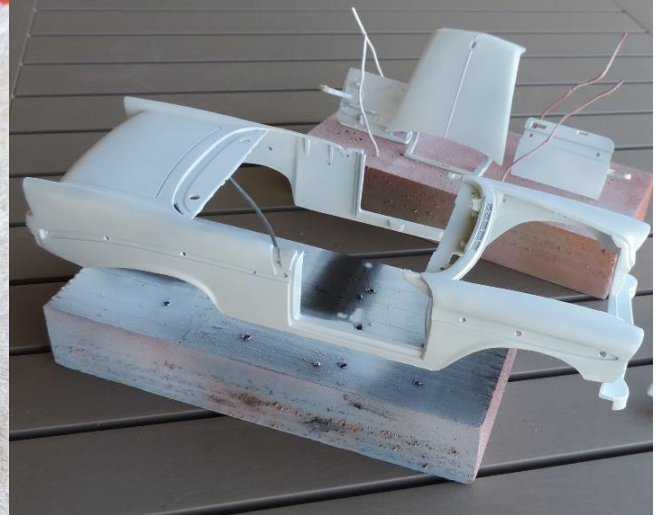
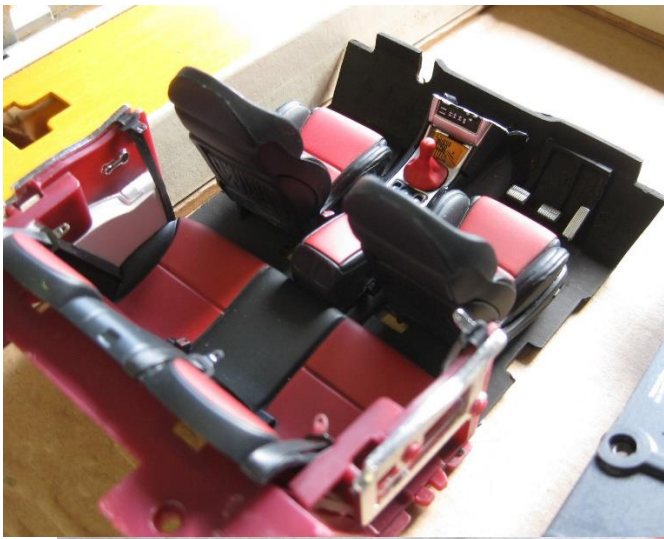
Pre-1955 Chevrolets had been considered solid and dependable motor cars, but when the 1955 models hit the showroom, many felt that the previous 1954 models looked quite 'dreary' in comparison to the new Chevrolets. **How Stuff Works** said, '*In a complete change from Chevy's stodgy past the overall design was balanced and tasteful for the day.*' They added, '*the 1955 Chevrolet Bel Air was America's most popular car for 1955, which is saying something for a year in which Americans bought cars as never before.*'

The best looking 'Tri-Five' model would have to be the Bel Air **convertible** and **the previous pic** shows a 1955 version in a great turquoise and white colour combination. Motoring journalists considered this model as one of the most exciting cars produced in 1955. Chevrolet were on a winner with the 'Tri-Five' series and they came up with new body styling upgrades for each model year from 1955 to 1957 and their convertibles became an affordable automobile for most drivers wanting to enjoy '**top down**' motoring. Chevrolet produced over 41,000 convertibles for their 1955 model year, yet couldn't keep up with orders for this popular open top vehicle. Believe it or not, they are so in demand by classic car collectors in North America that there aren't enough left on the road to satisfy demand.

I've collected many 1:18 scale models of these Chevs and my favourite over the years is the 1956 convertible by Yat Ming/Road Signature. The best part for me is that I have been able to modify and respray some of these models. Unfortunately, a couple had developed '*hair-line*' paint defects in the white duco sections, so I took the opportunity to strip the body shell back for a respray and modified them with wrecked Holden/HSV Commodore parts. This was mainly the V8 engine, wheels, suspension and interior. I have also modified a few of my 1:18 scale **1957** models. In **the next pics** is the start of a 1956 Chev Bel Air convertible model project. Plenty of parts ready to go.



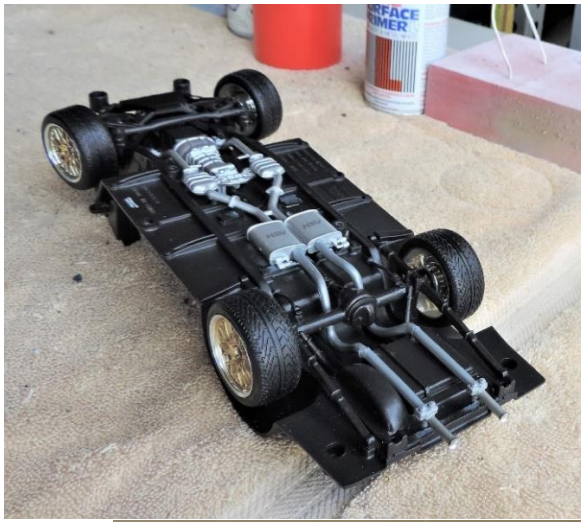
After dismantling all the parts from the 1956 Chev and the doner car, in this case a wrecked 1:18 scale HSV GTS sedan, the work begins. Plenty of cutting, grinding and gluing for everything to fit in the right place including the conversion to right hand drive. Some drilling and screws are used, but you have to use a top quality super-glue as well. **The next two pics** show a refit of the interior, wheels, suspension and engine bay with the selected HSV parts.



Above, after stripping the paint, a light grey undercoat is the next stage.



Above - Finished project. A 1956 Chev Bel Air in a pearl white duco. Besides the HSV parts, there are exhaust extensions and a Jaguar bonnet emblem. **The next pics** are of another 1956 Bel Air project using CV8 Monaro parts. This time, the end result is in a pearl clear finish over hothouse green. The wheels are off a wrecked Ertl Special edition Corvette Stingray. **The final pics** - 1957 Chev Bel Air sedan conversion project, one of four 1957 model projects completed. *Terry.*



---THE TROUBLE WITH PLASTICS---

I read a story in *Hemmings* about '*Plastics*' recently and it made me smile. My great friend and former workmate, our late HMAAC member Chris Manning, once owned an SUV, and though I won't mention the make, I will always remember how every so often a plastic panel would creak, and sometimes crack, when he leaned on it inside the cabin. (*Some members will know why*) Though the Hemmings article was focused on aging in automobile plastics, as small scale model collectors, we know how aging can impact negatively on our diecast or resin models. Think Bill's Trax Falcon sedan he mentioned recently on our Facebook page that seems to be falling to pieces in front of him.

Besides paint blistering issues to some of my older 1:18 scale diecast models, and that even includes some very expensive brand names, I had a model of the HSV coupe with a bonnet that almost disintegrated into diecast powder. I also had an elderly American Muscle model where the body warped slightly over time as if something unknown was twisting it. Don't start me on those tyres on some models starting to melt over time, or eating into the plastic base of a perspex display case. These issues are all about age I'd suggest.

However, when looking at the real full size automobiles of today, the Hemmings article turned into an interesting read as it gave an insight into a few issues concerning modern cars being considered as '*future collectables*'. They wrote that the worst part about owning a modern collectible is *plastics*.

Thinking about it, I recently sold my VYII 'SS' Commodore and something I had noticed in the last few years was how the centre piece of the steering wheel had become sticky. The steering wheel rim was leather bound and the rest of the structure was plastic. Luckily, my 18 year old 'SS' was always garaged and, with the exception of the Steering wheel centre piece, there didn't appear to be any damage to the many plastic panels that made up large areas of the interior of the car. However, I have come across friend's cars, and not old models, where some serious warping to plastic parts have occurred and it was not through abuse.

The thing is, right now we are talking about some of the more modern types of automobile that could become a *classic* roadster one day like a Mazda MX-5 or a sought-after *collectible* muscle car like the last of the turbo Ford XR-6 Falcons or Holden V8 models. So, no matter how you look at it, plastics can become cracked, crumble or distort when they age. But as Hemmings said, not all modern plastics are substandard and their use became a legitimate advantage in the production of vehicles through manufacturing efficiency and cost savings.

So, if you intend to keep your vehicle for many years, especially if you feel that it could become a genuine collectable down the track, we now have a real 'Catch 22' situation as most plastics are not designed for a long term career. Hemmings pointed out that replacement parts for aging cars will eventually go into the 'no longer available' bin and, as we have heard so many times before, most parts on a modern car are designed to last around ten years.

I found that out a few years ago when having to replace a rear seat belt after the retraction mechanism failed. The local dealer spare parts computer indicated they were no longer available in stock anywhere and we had to source one from a wrecker's yard. Luckily, it was in good nick and actually worked properly.

There are a few reasons for plastics aging according to Hemmings. There are different kinds of plastics in every motor vehicle, and each has a different resistance to aging and tolerance to ultraviolet light. Constant sunlight will eventually cause the polymer chains to break apart and lose flexibility even though modern plastics have UV stabilizers in the recipe. Also, the plasticizers in the recipe used to increase flexibility, will eventually break down and even evaporate with age. So heat and light need to be kept away from your future classic auto.

The use of plastics in modern cars is unavoidable as it is reasonably inexpensive, an easy installation process on the assembly line and enhances the appearance of the finished product, particularly in cabin areas such as the dashboard and centre console. With what we know about plastics, it is obvious that many types of plastics will not survive long term on most cars being turned out today. Hemmings said that '*Given the complexity of interior designs and the wide range of models on the market this problem will get worse, not better.*'

Protection is one answer to prevent aging issues in vehicle plastics. Hemmings suggests that you should limit the exposure of your automobile to the elements, especially high temperatures. So, I guess you should keep the surfaces clean and use protective coatings which contain a degree of UV protectors and can be purchased at our local Repco, Supercheap or similar stores. But then most of us knew that already didn't we. *Terry*