

- GEARBOX -



OCTOBER 2024

HUNTER MODEL AUTO CLUB INC.

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**** NEXT MEETING TUESDAY 8 OCTOBER ****

7.00pm for 7.30pm at the Edgeworth Sport and Rec Club.



HMAC President Andrew Vile, presented Michelle & Susan from Riding For The Disabled - Raymond Terrace & Lower Hunter, a cheque for \$2000, from our Toy and Hobby Fair.

--- PLACEGETTERS FOR THE SEPTEMBER 2024 'REAL' MODEL COMP - TOP TO BOTTOM ---

1ST - David R - Drake assortment and trailers

*** CATEGORY WAS 'CARGO VEHICLE'

2ND - Trevor - Floats

3RD - Ken - GMC Trucks



-- PLACEGETTERS FOR THE SEPTEMBER 2024 'VIRTUAL' MODEL COMP -- TOP TO BOTTOM --

1ST – Bill – Australian National Airways

2ND – Terry – The Combatants

3RD – Brian B – Oxford Authentic replicas

***** CATEGORY WAS – 'ASSOCIATED WITH AVIATION'**



Entry D



THE COMBATANTS

Entry F



Entry A

1/43 oxford authentic replicas

HUNTER MODEL AUTO CLUB INCORPORATED

Minutes of Club Meeting Held at Edgeworth Sport and Rec Club on 10 September 2024

Meeting Opened: 7.30 pm.

Members Present: 21 **Apologies:** 5 **Visitors:** 4

Welcome to Members and Visitors: President Andrew Vile welcomed visitors Michelle and Susan (Riding for Disabled), Evan and David and the Club members.

Donation to Riding for Disabled Association (RDA): President Andrew presented our Club cheque in the amount of \$2,000.00 being the proceeds from the 2024 Hunter Toy and Hobby Fair to the RDA representatives, Michelle and Susan.

Previous Minutes: Moved: David White Seconded: David Rosser "That the August Club minutes be accepted".
Carried.

Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer reported that the Club funds stand at \$1,495.94 plus \$50.00 cash.

Moved: Ben Wing Seconded: Shane Neems "That the Treasurer's Report be accepted" Carried.

Correspondence:

OUTWARDS:

- i) Members and Others – September 2024 Gearbox.
- ii) Members – September 2024 Model Competition and Meeting Reminders.
- iii) Members – Report on Toy Fair result.
- iv) Members – Proposal to top up Toy Fair donation to \$2,000.00.
- v) 2NURFM – Appreciation for support with 2024 Toy Fair.
- vi) Edgeworth Sport and Rec Club - Appreciation for support with 2024 Toy Fair.

INWARDS:

- i) West Aust Model Collector's Club (WAMCC) – August 2024 "Showcase" magazine.
- ii) Des Barnes (CTCS) – Positive feedback on September 2024 Gearbox.
- iii) Barry Lloyd (Wessex) – Comments on September 2024 Gearbox.
- iv) Ian Hind (WAMCC) – Congratulations to Terry on his Life Membership.
- v) Jason Mitchell (Coventry Club) – Thanks for September Gearbox and a well done on the Toy Fair.

Matters Arising:

- i) 40th Anniversary Models – As there are 12 remaining plinths, discussion took place as to what to do with them. As the Club is in profit with the plinths, favoured suggestions were to donate one each to 2NURFM, Edgy Club President and RDA. Any other suggestions are welcomed.
- ii) Hunter Toy and Hobby Fair – Monies raised were \$1,863.25 which was topped up by our Club donation to \$2,000.00 for RDA. The money from the day included \$645.75 from the door entry, \$309.00 from the raffle with the balance being from the table sales.
- iii) 2NUR FM Radio Open Day – The Open Day is in the Language Building at Newcastle University and is on Saturday 28 September 2024 from 9.00am to 1.00pm. Volunteers are called for to participate with a small model display being 3-4 tables and to assist with the BBQ on the day. Paul, Mark, Trevor and Bill indicated their intentions to attend.

General Business:

- i) August Actual Model Competition Results – Andrew queried these results as presented in the minutes. (*See corrected results below*)

Model Competitions:

Results for September:

"Actual" Model Competition: "Cargo vehicle" – Any scale and up to five (5) models.

1 st	David Rosser.....	Drake Trucks.....	31 Points
2 nd	Trevor Palmer.....	Floats.....	28 Points
3 rd	Ken McGregor.....	GMC Trucks.....	24Points

"Virtual" Model Competition: " Vehicle associated with aviation" - Any scale and up to two (2) models.

- 1st..... Bill Kenchington.....Australian National Airways.....32 Points
- 2ndTerry Payne.....The Combatants.....22 Points
- 3rdBrian Blyth.....Oxford Authentic Replicas.....19 Points

Corrected Results for August:

“Actual” Model Competition: “Recreation vehicle” – Any scale and up to three (3) models.

- 1st.....Ken McGregor.....Landcruiser.....27 Points
- 2nd..... Pieter Zeeman.....Surfing and Camping.....23 Points
- 3rd.....Trevor Palmer.....Jeeps.....22 Points

Next **“Actual”** Model Category - October: **“Roadside services vehicle”** – Any scale and up to three (3) models.

Next **“Virtual”** Model Category - October: **“Steam vehicle”** - Any scale and up to three (3) models but ONE PHOTO ONLY.

Meeting Closed: 8.15 pm.

Looking back - I have picked two nice model comp entries this year that didn't win a place, but were very close.



FEBRUARY - David S – Trax Utes



APRIL – Ernie - Corgi Transport.

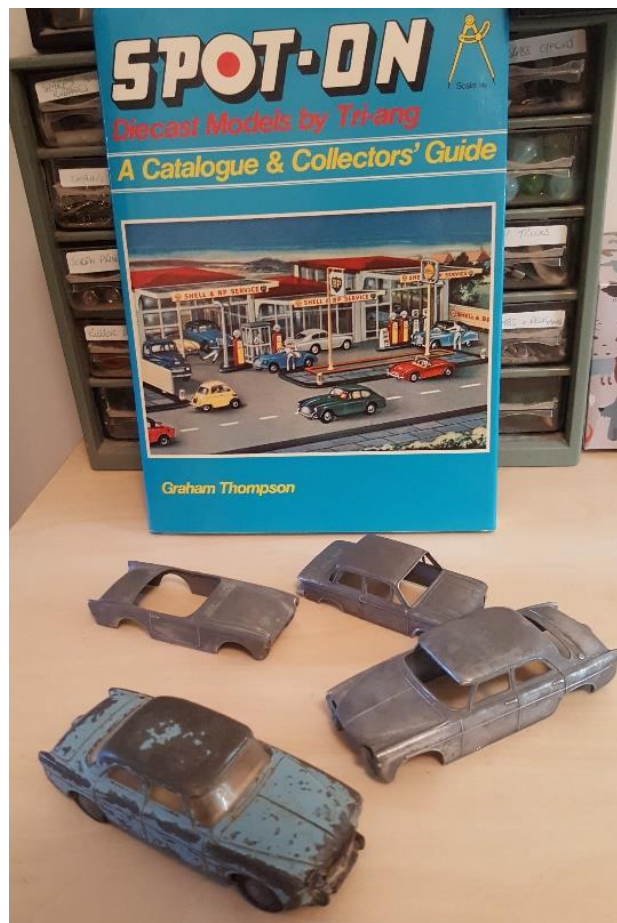
--- MARK'S SPOT-ON MODEL RESTORATION ---

As most of you would know I have a love for all things Tri-ang. I started collecting Tri-ang in the early 1980s. With their Spot-On cars, unlike most people, I am not looking for the mint boxed models. There are two reasons for this, one is price, the other, and without doubt more important, is I get a lot of pleasure in restoration. Having spent my working life restoring 1/1 scale cars and trucks, I find the same enjoyment in bringing a play worn model back from the grave.



Above pic - Heavily play worn Rover 3 Litre and the same car striped down the only difference is the striped one is the model with working lights.

Even if the car is not complete, it doesn't matter. They are restored and the missing parts are found at a later date, (...and this can be a long time) and the car is brought back to life. As with all modelling, a large box of patience is a must and a good supply of magic wands is helpful. As always, a comprehensive book on the subject is also a must, (...younger members may prefer the internet) I myself only use the internet to buy the book and track down parts. It's an age thing. **In the next pic** is a Spot-On book and a Rover 3 Litre x 2, an NSU Prinz 4, and a Sunbeam Alpine.



The largest Spot-On model I have is this Jones KL 10/10 Mobil Crane. *See next pic.* This model was only in production between 1961 - 1963. So is not common and this one was in a very bad state of repair, not only was it play worn it was also missing two sets of wheels and most of the jib. This did not stop me from repairing it and making a new jib.



The remains of the original jib.

I hope this article has inspired some of you to have a go at restoration. I should warn you it does become addictive. Hope you like this Spot-On story, *Mark.*

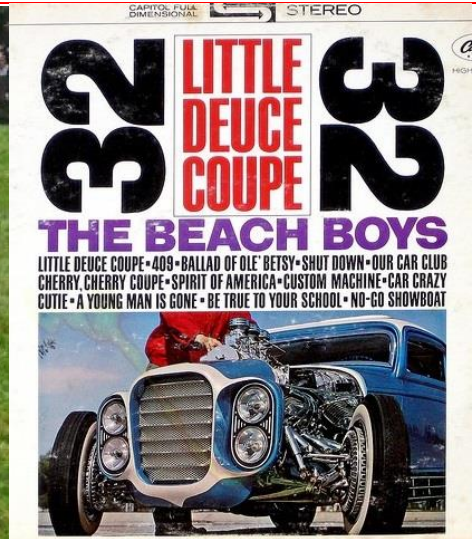
A little snippet revisited: This was mentioned in a previous *Gearbox* regarding badge engineering and came up again in an article I was reading recently. The Honda 'Crossroad' was a chance for Honda to have their first vehicle competing in the lucrative SUV/four-wheel drive market, and by using a re-badged Land Rover Discovery, they would not have to outlay big money for its development. *See next pic.*



British Leyland formed a partnership with Honda in 1978 to share technology and to produce their next family car. It became the 1981 Triumph Acclaim, a re-badged Honda Ballade. Then came Rover's Austin Division Rover 213 and later 216 models with both being good sellers for British Leyland. With Honda's excellent engines and their latest automotive technology going into a British marque, it was a great arrangement for Rover.

On the other hand, Honda should have had a successful four-wheel drive product with the re-badging of the new Land Rover Discovery model, especially with the V8 engine under the bonnet. Released in Japan in 1993, the Honda Crossroad was pretty much the same as the British Discovery and was offered in both a three door and five door versions. But Rover were having big problems with the quality of their products and this came to bite Honda very quickly. The Crossroad became a commercial failure for the Honda Company and ceased production in 1998. But perhaps Honda should have continued with the idea, as the Land Rover Discovery would eventually become sorted out properly, and become a classic British family off-roader. Then again, the Honda CR-V has become one of the better SUVs on the market today. *Terry.*

ALEXANDER BROTHERS – Creators of spectacular custom cars.



In an email exchange recently with one of our Collector club friends from England, the subject of famous automobile Customisers from the U.S.A., came up. Some of the better ones and their creations have been featured in previous **Gearbox** newsletters such as George Barris, Dean Jeffries, Darryl Starbird and Dave Stuckey. Many of their creations became popular scale model plastic kits. A few examples were the Batmobile, the Li'l Coffin and the Monkeemobile.

Reading U.S. custom car magazines and sketching some of the examples shown, was fun. So too was building the plastic custom car models from makers like Monogram and AMT. Popular music by many artists from that era such as the Beach Boys, was often about hot rods. The **lead-in pic** at left is the 'Silver Sapphire' which was featured on the cover of the Beach Boys LP titled 'Little Deuce Coupe' shown on the right of the **lead-in pic**. The fine old gentleman with the **Silver Sapphire** is one of its co-creators, **Mike Alexander**.

After the passing of Mike Alexander a few years ago, **Auto Week** had this to say, 'When Mike Alexander passed away at 80 on July 18, the automotive world lost more than the final half of the fabled Alexander Brothers. It lost a visionary of all things custom, and it lost one of the finest ambassadors for the craft itself.' Mike Alexander, with his older brother Larry, were famous American customisers known as the Alexander Brothers. They were natives of Detroit and their father had started up a single car bay repair shop in the early days of the Great Depression.

After discharge from the Army, Larry studied panel beating at a trade school, then after his discharge from the Army, Mike took up the study of bodywork and paint theory at Larry's suggestion. Within a few years both Larry and Mike began to work in their father's garage after hours doing mild customising and body repairs. Larry had to buy a new house due to an increase in the size of his family and both brothers started to use his two car garage. With an increase in their work, they both left their days job to concentrate on running their body shop business in 1957.

Not long after, Mike and Larry opened up their first dedicated custom shop that became the '**Alexander Brothers Custom Shop**.' As business grew, so did the need for expansion and that included two more moves to other premises. Overall, the Alexander Brothers created over sixty fully customised vehicles between 1957 and 1969 with many being considered significant examples within the industry.



They had a great start initially having purchased a 1931 Model 'A' pickup which they customised and painted it Jade Green calling it the '*Grasshopper.*' See above pic. This was to showcase their business, especially with a view to attracting a 'higher end' clientele. At the 1958 Detroit Autormama, the '*Grasshopper*' won the trophy for the best paint. They showed the pickup during the 1958 season and then sold it to buy a new 1959 Chevrolet El Camino.

Their new business was having trouble gaining recognition in the West Coast custom and hot rod magazines, however, George Barris had them repair damage to his XPAK400 custom aircar, as one of the shops he would normally outsource extra work to, was flat out at the time. George checked out the end result and felt that their work was excellent and soon introduced them into the West Coast custom car magazine networks.



The pics above at left shows Mike and Larry Alexander and at right the '*Dream Boat.*' This was a 1950 Mercury owned by Dick Bailey that was customised in the more traditional '*Lead Sled*' customizing style of the late 40's early 50's with this type of sedan. The Alexander Brothers took two years to complete the project, finishing it in 1961.



Another creation that enhanced their reputation was a 1955 Ford Crown Victoria that became known as '*The Victorian.*' It belonged to Sy Gregorich and can be seen in the above pic under construction. The pic also shows their new custom shop. Gregorich worked for **AMT** and helped develop the company's 'Three-in-One' optional versions in some of their customizing kits that some members may remember building and still produced by **AMT** today. The brothers were working on the vehicle completing the bodywork, however, at that point they did not do candy paint work and outsourced it to another top customizer, Bill Hines. Hines had been impressed with the quality of their bodywork and then had the brothers do much of the bodywork for his business so he could concentrate on paint work as well as instructing them on performing candy paint finishes. Mike and Larry restyled this Ford three times for Gregorich and it became the first creation to display the Alexander Brothers company badge.

It was around this time that the Alexander Brothers were asked to work on an incomplete '*Silver Sapphire.*' They created the unique grille and George Barris finished the body and paint work. The creation was featured on the front page of July 1961 edition of Hot Rod magazine. Apparently it was seeing the '*Silver Sapphire*' that inspired Brian Wilson of the Beach Boys, with his friend and disc jockey Roger Christian, to write the song 'Little Deuce Coupe.'

Even after two more moves to new premises, the brothers went on to much success in the hot rod and custom world of North America till 1968 when Larry called it a day due to the heavy workload over the years. Mike pulled the plug the following year. The next pic shows their famous '*Deora*' custom creation and one of my favourites.



The **Deora** was based on a Dodge pickup and had been designed by Harry Bradley who collaborated on the design of many of the Alexander Brothers creations. Some members may recognise the **Deora** as it became one of **AMT's** most popular 1:25 plastic kits and among the original set of sixteen diecast scale models produced by **Hot Wheels** in 1968. The **Deora** won the prestigious **Ridler award** in 1967 at the Detroit Autorama and the Alexander Brothers won this trophy three times in their career which was considered a rare feat in the industry. Larry passed away in 2010 but Mike was able to see the Deora restored and start to win awards again before he passed away in 2014.

The Detroit Autorama commenced in 1953 and is one of the longest running indoor car show in America. The **Ridler award** came into being in 1964 and was named after the late Don Ridler, an American football icon and multi-sports coach who became a promoter and was involved in this capacity with hot-rod and motor shows. It was originally awarded to the best vehicle being shown to the public for the first time, being aimed at honouring new creations.

Another of my favourite Alexander Brothers creations is shown in **the next two pics**. It is a 1960 Pontiac Ventura customized for Mike Budnick and known as the '**Golden Indian**' and the pics are courtesy of U.S. site, **Kustomrama**. (If you like customised cars, check out this site on the net.) **Kustomrama** wrote that '**Larry and Mike Alexander gave Mike's Pontiac a new and ultra-clean look that had never been done to any of Detroit's "new-look" automobiles before.**' It took a year and a half to complete the finished product and it was featured on the cover of America's Rod and Custom magazine for November 1963. The striking colour was called 'Lemon-Lime candy.'



To finish off, **Hagerty** called them '**the most technically capable builders during the golden era of custom cars in the late 1950s and '60s.**' **Fuel Curve** wrote that... '**By 1968, the Alexanders had been creating awe-inspiring customs for nearly two decades.... they shifted careers. Larry secured a position in Ford's engineering department. Mike soon joined Ford's in-house fabrication/concept section and later moved to ASC, where he helped develop the Buick GNX among other projects.....yet they never lost their love for customs.**' **Terry**.

- *Why are Police cars Black and White?*

The North American motor magazine **Road and Track** asked this question of its readers recently, and they made the statement *'When the world dreams of cop cars, it dreams in black-and-white. Why?'* That sounds interesting, but I think it would relate mainly to American Police vehicles on the whole. Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Britain, just to name a few Countries, certainly never had *'black and white'* as their **dominant** Police car livery.

What I liked about the article was the journalist coming straight out and admitting he didn't have the answer. He also indicated that several books had been written on the history of what he called *'Police Cruisers'*, and no one has ever been able to hint at exactly when a black and white colour scheme became the default livery for them. The article caught my attention as I have a fair collection of diecast scale model Police cars from around the world with some in 1:18 scale, but the majority are in 1:43 scale, otherwise I'd need a bigger *man-cave* for my display cabinets.

The journalist said that most new cars produced a century or more ago, left the factories painted in *'Japan Black'* as seen on all those Model 'T' Fords. Apparently it was a fairly inexpensive product. Perhaps to have Police vehicles stand out, parts of the body were then painted white. In 1929, a time when there was no real consistency in the livery of North American Police vehicles, the newly formed Californian Highway patrol, or CHP, had their cars painted white to distinguish them from the civilian vehicles still predominantly black in colour. An historical photograph of a 1930 Hudson two door sedan belonging to the CHP shows the car being white with a black roof. This is one of the earliest examples of a so-called *'Black and White'* Police car. However, the next pic is my **1:32 scale diecast model of a New York Police Department 1938 Chevrolet Business Coupe**, so they hadn't yet adapted a black and white livery.



The **Road and Track** journalist checked out the Los Angeles Police Department Museum, but was unable to determine exactly when the LAPD first used black and white as a standard Police car livery. Interestingly, he went on to write that, *'it's the LAPD's machines that epitomize the black-and-white in popular culture, because so many movies and TV shows have been made around Southern California.'* That probably sums why most people see U.S. Police cars as being in black and white livery. Yes it is **television**.



The 1950 movie *'Sunset Boulevard'* opened and closed with scenes of black and white Police cars at a murder scene, and *'L.A. Confidential'* with actor Russell Crowe had a fair showing of the black and white LAPD Police cars. In 1952 *'Dragnet'* left the radio airwaves and came onto the television screens with LAPD black and white police vehicles appearing as back up for Detective Sergeant Joe Friday. Interestingly, the article claimed that the producers of *Dragnet* often borrowed genuine LAPD cars for the TV show. *Dragnet* was followed up by other popular Police shows such as *'Highway Patrol'* using black and white Police cars as did another popular Police series, *'Adam 12'*.

However, though the *'Black and White'* Police car theme still exists today with some U.S. Police groups, the majority of my U.S. Police scale models are **not** in black and white livery at all, but in many other colours. **Terry**.

- Only in Brazil - FNM's 1966 Alfa Romeo Onca Coupe -



At first glance you can see that *the above pic* is Ford Mustang inspired till you pick out what looks like an Alfa Romeo front end. It is a **1966 FNM Alfa Romeo Onca coupe** from Brazil. I might add here that '*Onka*' means '*Jaguar*' in English. In *the next pic* of the same model, you cannot mistake the Mustang styling to the bodywork from the 'A' Pillar and door through to the rear end of this coupe. For me, I think it absolutely bizarre that someone could conceive the idea of mixing any Ford Mustang body design with the beautifully styled Italian Alfa Romeo coupes in the first place, or vice-versa. But this little Mustang influenced Alfa coupe never saw full production in Brazil.



Since Covid, researching material for the *Gearbox* has led me to look at a few of the South American Countries automaking histories, and it can be quite interesting. Brands like **IXO** and **Altaya** are coming up regularly now on eBay with 1:43 scale models of automobiles manufactured in these Countries. Collecting some of their Argentinian models led to some getting a mention in the *Gearbox*. Having spotted a few 1:43 scale model examples of some nice looking Brazilian **FNM** model trucks and cars on eBay, I have now started to look at the history of Brazil's automaking industry. Some of their automobiles, though mainly trucks, have led to brands like **IXO** now making scale models of vehicles that came out in Brazil. One example is shown *in the next pic*.



1/43 scale diecast model of a FNM Fiat 210 lorry by IXO.

FNM, *Fabrica Nacional de Motores*, was initially established in 1940 by the Government of Brazil under the then President, Getulio Vargas who had taken control of the country after the 1930 Revolution. Construction of factories commenced in 1942 with the company to start off by producing aeronautical engines to be used in Brazil's Military training aircraft. During World War 2, in exchange for the use of military bases in Northern Brazil, the United States gave massive financial assistance towards the FNM development.

Aero engine production in their factories was not ready till 1946 when the machinery was finally in place. However, with the end of the conflict, it was soon realised that any aeronautical products coming out of FNM factories now would be close to being obsolete. FNM knew that the machinery that had been imported and set up in their factories was modern and could be adapted to produce other products, so they were soon turning out white goods such as refrigerators. They also went on to produce bicycles, industrial equipment and components for railway stock.

FNM then commenced the local assembly of lorries by signing an agreement in 1949 with the Italian firm, Isotta Fraschini, a truck and car manufacturer that also turned out marine and aircraft engines. However, they were facing financial problems at the time. Before this arrangement was up and running, Isotta Fraschini closed down in 1950, so FNM immediately signed a contract with another Italian company, Alfa Romeo. FNM would now assemble complete Alfa Romeo lorries as well as truck chassis' under licence to Alfa Romeo, becoming the first truck manufacturer in Brazil. The first model built became the *FNM-Alfa Romeo D-9,500* and it was considered a very tough lorry and well suited for Brazilian conditions. It also came with a large two-bed sleeper cab that was ideal for the long journeys often required for goods movements in Brazil. ***Next pic is another model, the FNM D-11,000 in 1:43 scale by IXO.***



In 1960, FNM commenced manufacturing motor cars with the first model, the *FNM JK* being based on the Alfa Romeo 2000. Upgrades would follow before the ***FNM Alfa Romeo Onca coupe*** was released in 1966 at the Brazilian Auto Show as a concept model at that stage. As can be seen from the pics, it had an Alfa Romeo front end with a considerable amount of Ford Mustang styling to the rest of the body shell. It was designed by Genaro 'Rino' Malzoni and was handcrafted in fibreglass. Malzoni was well known in Brazil for his involvement in motor racing and his part in designing Brazil's attractive and successful DKW Puma GT which went on to become the VW Puma GT. DKW was part of Auto Union, which later became Audi. Malzoni's Puma story will feature in an upcoming ***Gearbox***.

The *Onca coupe*, though obviously styled along Mustang lines, was smaller at 4.4 metres or roughly 14 feet six inches in length and with a shorter wheelbase. Though it had an Alfa grille, it was almost like a 'mini' 1964 ½ to 1966 Ford Mustang. All of the *Onca coupe* bodies came out of Malzoni's factory in Sao Paulo, but the vehicles were then fully assembled in Rio de Janeiro. It was a rear wheel driven two door sports car powered by an Alfa designed twin Weber carbie 1,974cc four cylinder engine with a top speed of 109 mph or 175 km/h. The engine had a power rating of 96 kw and was driven through a five speed manual gearbox. Though it did use some Alfa 2000 mechanicals, it was not built on a pure Alfa platform due to its shorter wheelbase over the 2000 model. Interestingly, in researching the *Onca*, I found some specs indicated it had Solex Carbies. Only five versions of the *Onca* were made and it is believed only three have survived. By the way, FNM never bothered to tell Alfa about this project. Alfa was not very happy.

In 1968 Alfa Romeo gained full control of FNM after purchasing it from the Brazilian government and making it one of the first privatisations to occur there. They continued to manufacture FNM trucks before Fiat bought out the company. It was then managed by Iveco, part of Fiat, till 1985 when they ceased operating in Brazil. Though FNM was officially wound up in 1988, it has been re-established now in Brazil partnering with the American based Octillion Power Systems, producers of advanced lithium-ion batteries, to produce electric trucks, buses and tractors. ***Terry.***

- UPDATE 2024 - FESTIVAL OF THE UNEXCEPTIONAL.

In the past I have posted updates on the British *'Festival of the Unexceptional'* in the *Gearbox*. Apparently the first festival was held in 2014. In August 2015, the *UK Telegraph* ran an article with the following line, *'the second Festival of the Unexceptional championed the unsung, ordinary cars that were once common and are now seriously threatened'* and it was that particular article I read on-line that started me taking an interest in this concept and I have posted updates in the *Gearbox* on most of the years the festival has been held.

I love this idea and have said previously that in Oz, most of the cars at show and shines and similar vehicle displays today, are the classics or muscle cars. However, it is now rare to see your ordinary, everyday set of wheels from the past at these shows, they just don't exist anymore. You know the ones, the basic family sedan and station wagon or even a tradie's modest ute before they were replaced by the modern utilities on steroids.

As an example, my parents family cars were, in order, a 1959 FC Holden Station wagon, the first car my Father could afford to pay off, followed by a 1969 HK Holden Kingswood station wagon. And finally, a few years before he retired, a 1980 XD Ford Falcon sedan. Most of the neighbours had similar family vehicles except for one I recall who drove an early 1960s fin-tail Mercedes-Benz. However, I found out years later that he was the local S.P. bookie back then.

I think the *UK Telegraph* was correct in 2015 when they reflected on the fact that *'the biggest percentage of today's current British drivers were born in the 70's and 80's. The next biggest group would be those born in the late 40's to late 60's.'* That is probably the same in Australia.

Just catching up with Britain's *AUTOCAR* magazine on-line, I found their story on the 2024 festival which marks its tenth anniversary and I thought I'd post an update. *The next pic*, courtesy of *AUTOCAR* is this year's winner. It is a *1982 Toyota Hilux ute* and was in pretty much near pristine condition.



In relation to this year's festival, *Autocar* said, *'It was founded to highlight vehicles from 1969-1999 that would never be seen at the likes of the Hampton Court Concours d'Elegance.'* This year's festival of the unexceptional is said by *Autocar* to have attracted more than 4000 people with around 2000 cars in attendance.

The current owner of this ute purchased it from the proprietor of a strawberry farm and it had close to 10,000 miles on the clock. (16,000kms) He has since added another 10,000 kms to the ute's mileage. Apparently there were a few tiny dents from general farm usage, but a good wash had it ready for the festival. Even with its working history, one of the judges found it to be, *'surely the best one in the world'* according to the motoring magazine. Another Judge remarked that, *'Most Hilux's get used and abused and ultimately scrapped, but here is one which has actually been preserved during life on the farm.'*

A Renault Clio took out second prize, but I won't mention other placegetters as, like in previous years, these vehicles never set foot in Australia and would be unknown to most members. The funny thing to me is that I have seen plenty of these Hilux utes in Australia over the years and I'd say that many were this same red colour with similar side stripes to the above posted winner for 2024. Most HMAC club members could probably say the same thing. I have to admit that this ute looks absolutely fabulous and these models were extremely popular out here as well. *Terry.*

- Another 'Only in Brazil' - VW Karmann Ghia TC -



I recently purchased some 1:43 scale models of automobiles manufactured in Argentina and followed up with articles in the [Gearbox](#) about each one. You may recall the IXO 1:43 scale diecast model of a **1982 Ford Falcon Ghia**. This was basically an early 1960's Ford Falcon with 80's front and rear ends tacked on. Nearly half a million Ford Falcon models were turned out in Argentina from 1962 to 1991 and all built on the same early model U.S. Falcon, but with slight 'modernizing' over the years. Their automaking history is fascinating to read, especially when you consider that besides Ford, the Chrysler and GM divisions were also involved in making vehicles in that Country.

Sometimes it is worthwhile researching other Country's motor vehicle manufacturing history as a change from the usual Aussie, European and American brands we all know. An item on a Volkswagen model in the Spanish motoring site, [La Escuderia](#), caught my eye recently as it related to a 'VW Karmann Ghia TC' model manufactured in Brazil. Not your well-known Italian Carrozzeria Ghia designed classic seen in [the next pic](#), but a nice fast-back 2 + 2 coupe developed exclusively for the Brazilian market as shown in [the lead-in pic, a NEO brand model in 1:43 scale resin](#).



Factory pic of the VW Karmann Ghia (Type 14)

[Volkswagen do Brasil](#) is a subsidiary of the German VW company that, as we all know, emerged over time from the ashes of WW2 into a massive automaker today. They started to make the **Type 1** VW that we know as the **Beetle** in 1946, and it was soon being exported. First port of call was into Holland in 1947 through the Dutch businessman Ben Pon and his dealership, 'Pon's Automobielhandel.' Pon would soon become the importer of Porsche vehicles as well, and is credited as being responsible for the creation of the original VW Van that became the Kombi.

In 1949, VW entered the North American market, and though it was not that promising at first, the U.S consumers would eventually become one of the biggest purchasers of the brand. The VW Company was quickly positioning itself for global expansion and in 1953 established [Volkswagen do Brasil](#), a division that till today, has built well over 25 million cars since its establishment. As expected due to its growing popularity in many markets throughout the world, the Volkswagen Beetle soon became a big seller in Brazil as well. It was known in Brazil as a 'Fusca.'

By the late 1950's in Brazil, the economy was growing and there was a need to produce another model that was of a modern design. It would have to stand out to appeal to the slightly wealthier clients as had occurred earlier in Germany with the 1955 **(Type 14) Karmann Ghia**. This was a remarkable coming together of the Italian coachbuilder Ghia and the German coachbuilder Karmann Karosserie who had previously been building the VW Beetle based convertibles in his factory. The Karmann Ghia combined the chassis and mechanicals of the (Type 1) Beetle in 2+2 coupe form and was produced from **1955 to 1974** with a convertible being produced from 1957. So [Volkswagen do Brasil](#) commenced production of the Type 14 Karmann Ghia in 1962 for their local car sales markets.

Interestingly, before the Type 14 had commenced production in Brazil, VW Germany had also begun production of another Karmann Ghia in 1961 and it was known as the **Type 34**, often referred to as the **'Razor Edge'** model due to its sharp edged bonnet. **See next pic.**



Factory pic of the Karmann Ghia (Type 34) 'Razor Edge' model.

The Type 34 was slightly larger, being built on the VW Type 3 structure which we knew as the VW 1500 in Oz and upon release, was the most luxurious Volkswagen made. But it was quite different to the Type 14 Karmann Ghia in appearance in that it was more angular in design, was taller, and its overall looks and stance could be viewed as being of an acquired taste.

For some reason though, it was never officially released in the United States. Its higher price over the Type 14 and the fact that it was almost twice that of the standard VW Beetle sedan, may have also been an issue here. As well, it never had a convertible model spin-off that was a popular vehicle type in the U.S. In any case, it was always outsold by the Type 14 and that was the same in Brazil, even after production of the Type 34 had commenced there. Around 42,500 Type 34 Karmann Ghias were built worldwide which was miniscule compared to the 450,000 odd Type 14 models produced. Production of the Type 34 Karmann Ghia ceased in 1969.

Interestingly, even before the demise of the Type 34 Razor Edge Karmann Ghia, **Volkswagen do Brasil** was already considering building their own distinctive model in spite of the fact that sales of the Type 14 were still very strong in Brazil. If they went ahead with the idea of turning out a **'Brazil only'** model, it would actually be a third iteration of the VW Karmann Ghia series. The Italian coachbuilder, Italdesign, was approached to style the new coupe and the body was designed by Giorgetto Giugiaro, one of the best in the business. The end result was a modern 2 + 2 fastback style coupe that had a spacious and comfortable interior. It also had a large lift-up tailgate which made it a very 'usable' four seater automobile with the split folding rear seats dropping for more rear luggage room. It was designated as the **Volkswagen Karmann Ghia TC or Type 145** with the 'TC' standing for 'Touring Coupe.'

The Type 145 was built over the Type 14 structure, but now with a 1,585cc air-cooled four-cylinder boxer engine instead of the Type 14's 1,192 cc unit. By using such a flat motor in the **rear**, it allowed for luggage space in the rear as well as in the normal front boot section. Produced solely in the Brazil VW factory, it was released in late 1970 and sold over 18 thousand units till production ceased in 1976. The 'TC' is close to being unknown outside of Brazil, but one of the early prototypes is held in the Karmann factory museum collection in Osnabruck, Germany, and some models did make their way into Europe as they occasionally come up for auction over there. **Terry.**



Factory pics of the Karmann Ghia TC (Type 145) and note the large single piece tailgate over the rear engine bay.