-GEARBOX-

HUNTER MODEL AUTO CLUB

FEBRUARY 2025

HUNTER MODEL AUTO CLUB INC.

CONTACT: email: huntermodelautoclub@gmail.com

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

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

** NEXT MEETING TUESDAY 11th FEBRUARY **

2025 marks the 60th anniversary of the Ford Mustang . The first Mustang was actually released in April 1964 and referred to at the 1964½. I would expect in the coming year quite a few special releases by model manufacturers to celebrate this milestone. Hot Wheels has started with series of 5 in their standard range and also in their premium range. Below are some iconic models from the Hot Wheels range.



Passing of Life Member Brian Fairhurst

Brian's daughter Judi has advised us of the sad news that Brian has passed away suddenly in hospital after a short illness.
A number of our Club members had visited Brian over the past few weeks and we knew he was far from well.
Our thoughts are with Judi and the family.
Brian has been a long serving member of our Club since October 1986.
He is our longest serving President of 31 years from 1990 to 2021 upon retiring. He is currently Vice President and was granted Life Membership in May 2022,
Brian's detailed knowledge of diecast scale model cars from the early years of Trax, Yesteryears, Micro Models and the like will be greatly missed.



HUNTER MODEL AUTO CLUB – SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR MONTH OF JANUARY 2025

Last Meeting

Our first "get together" meeting for 2025 was on Tuesday 14 January when our Club was once again invited to a Private Opening of The Frontline Hobbies Store, Broadmeadow.
A total of 18 members and 1 guest were in attendance.
Drinks and nibbles were provided throughout the evening, courtesy of Frontline Hobbies.
Frontline Hobbies staff members, Ryan and Steve were available on the night to serve us, as well as answer any questions on the various models that were on display and to take orders for any future model releases.
We were able to wander through the store and browse the shelves of the many plastic kits and diecast model cars, trucks, buses and equipment and even planes and trains and select our purchases at our leisure.
Members enjoyed discounts on their model purchases, for which our Club thanks the Frontline Hobbies management.
Being an informal meeting, there were no minutes for January as has been the practice in past years.



Model Competition

We received 7 entries for the January "Virtual" Model Competition, which is on par with the average numbers throughout 2024 (see results below). We will continue to hold the "Virtual" Model Competition throughout 2025.
We would encourage those of you who have not already joined the Hunter Model Auto Club Group on Facebook to do so. To date we have 33 members and associates in this Group.
If you have any questions in this regard, please don't hesitate to contact Paul Campbell or myself.

Agenda for February Meeting

Being our first normal meeting since November 2024 we thought it would be a good idea to have a general discussion on a number of proposals that we have in mind for 2025.
The following items are up for discussion: -
i) Vintage Day (Nostalgia Festival) - Model display at Kurri Kurri Public School – Sunday 30 March 2025.
ii) Hunter Toy and Hobby Fair for 2025 - Nominations to form a Sub-Committee, setting the date and nominations for our local Charity
iii) Club Visit to "Show Us Ya Slotz" at Lemon Tree Passage – Suggestions for possible dates.
iv) Club Visit to "Sydney Tramway Museum" at Loftus – Suggestions for possible dates.
v) Club Visit to "Fighter World" at Williamtown - Suggestions for possible dates.
vi) Any other items.

Virtual Model Competition (Winners for January 2025)

Category: "Oldest Model You Own"
1st .....Brian Blyth.....1927 Hornby Train.....12 Points
2nd.....Ken McGregor.....1958 Pontiac Concept Car.....11 Points
3rd......Bill Kenchington.....1946/50 Dinky Toy Truck.....7 Points
Photos of all the entries can be seen on our Club Facebook page.

Next "Actual" Model Category (February 2025)

"Open" – Any scale up to five (5) models.

Next "Virtual" Model Category (February 2025)

"Open" – Any scale up to five (5) models and ONE (1) PHOTO ONLY.
The deadlines for this competition are as follows: -
1) ENTRY – Email Paul Campbell campbellp1969@gmail.com your model photo (suitably described) by 9.00 pm Sunday 9 February 2025. *Please include your name in your message to Paul but not in the photo itself and ensure your entry is not lost in the background of your photo.*
2) VOTING – Email/text Shane Neems at email skneems@westnet.com.au or at mobile 0407 950 030 your preferences (1st, 2nd, and 3rd against the letter of the displayed model) by 9.00 pm Tuesday 11 February 2025 (our meeting night).

Meeting Night Dinner

A few of us have been getting together in the Club Restaurant before our meeting. Why not join us from 6.00pm for dinner and a chat.

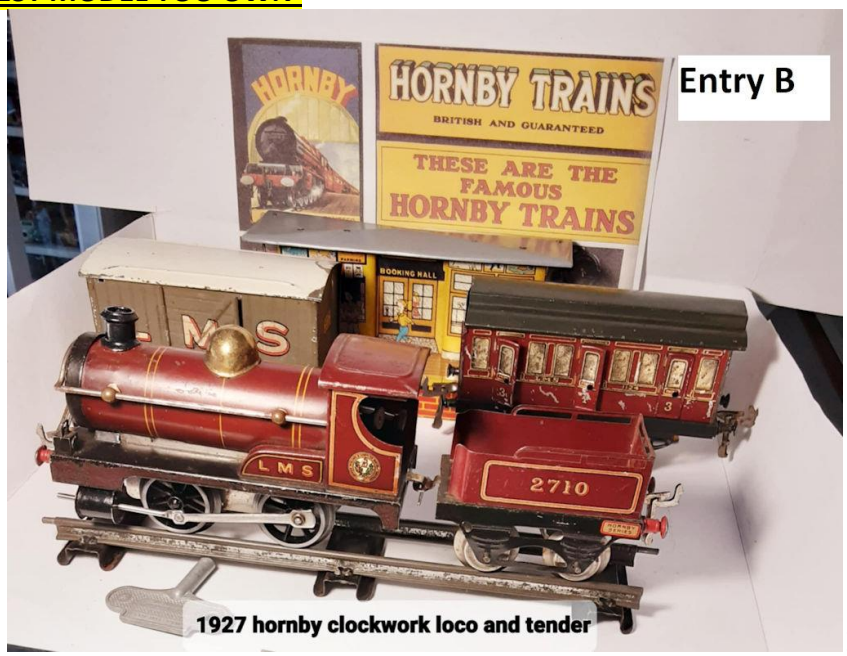
Next Meeting

Tuesday 11 February 2025 at 7.00 for 7.30 pm at Edgeworth Sport and Rec Club (1A Park Street, Edgeworth).

Bill Kenchington, Secretary.

PLACEGETTERS FOR THE JANUARY 2025 VIRTUAL MODEL COMP.

*** ***Category - `OLDEST MODEL YOU OWN'***



1st



2nd

Entry C



3rd

---- SEAT - A Taste of Spain ----

I remember when ***SEAT*** motor cars were introduced into Australia around 1995. At first we wondered why SEAT was to be pronounced as `SAY' `AT' before realising this was a good move because ***SEAT*** actually stood for *`Sociedad Espanola de Automoviles de Turismo.'* A bit of a mouthful. This is a company that was founded on the 9th of May 1950 during the rule of Francisco Franco, the Spanish fascist dictator of Spain at the time, and was the first `family' size automaker in Spain. SEAT's automobile Production commenced in 1953 in Barcelona's Zona Franca District with a sole model, the SEAT 1400 coming out of their first factory that had a workforce of 925 people. By the early 2020's, SEAT directly employed over 15,000 with the company spinning off over 100,000 jobs in auxiliary industries.

This year SEAT will be seventy five years old and is still going strong in Europe. The ***SEAT website*** states they are *`The only automotive company that designs, develops, manufactures and markets vehicles in Spain, it is the leading industrial investor in R&D in the country, representing 1% of GDP and exporting 80% of its vehicles.'*

Having spotted some nice looking IXO brand 1:43 scale diecast models of a 2012 SEAT Ibiza sedan on Ebay recently, ***(See next pics)*** I thought SEAT was a model that warranted a quick look at its history for a Gearbox article.







As a hint to the ***SEAT*** story, ***the next pics*** are 1:43 scale diecast models of a ***1964 SEAT 800 by Solido.*** At first sight you may have thought it was a Fiat, and that is at the heart of the ***SEAT*** story.



In Countries ruled by a dictatorship, the State would own most of the industries as was the case with SEAT being owned by the Spanish Government. But SEAT also had a partnership with Fiat in place when they commenced manufacturing motor vehicles, and that is why the SEAT automobiles were Fiat models, badge-engineered as a SEAT. As an example, the popular Fiat Panda and 600 models were badged as a SEAT Panda and SEAT 600 in Spain. The same with the SEAT 800 in ***the prior model pics.*** The partnership with Fiat was wound up in 1981 and SEAT started to produce its own models, even if they were still based on Fiat designs. Franco passed away in 1975 and in a short time Spain was being led by a conservative Democratic Coalition with a constitutional monarchy back in place. A decision was made to privatise some of the former government owned industries and SEAT was on the list. In 1986 the VW group bought a share of the company and took total control in 1990 making SEAT a subsidiary of Volkswagen.
Before all this, a significant step for the company was the introduction of the SEAT 600 in 1957 that was so popular, it became a National symbol of mobility for the Spanish. And so it continued on with SEAT turning out new models based on the Fiat. In 1963 SEAT replaced their luxury sedan, the 1400, with a badge engineered Fiat 1500, one of the best looking family sized sedans around this time in Europe. ***See next pic.***



1963 SEAT 1500 four door sedan.

The company took their first foray into vehicle exports in 1965 when they exported their products to Columbia. Again SEAT turned out a stunning model in 1968 based on the innovative family sedans from the Fiat 124 series. ***See next pic*** and they reached 1 million vehicles manufactured.



SEAT sold models in Australia between 1995 and 1998 through a VW aligned, but independent distributor. VW considered the SEAT as a cheaper alternative to the higher priced VW equivalents out here. There were three models sold, the small Ibiza hatchback, the small Cordoba sedan and the Toledo sedan which was around the size of the then Corolla models. As can be seen, SEAT named their models after cities in Spain. The brand was wound up in Australia and it may have been due to an unfamiliar name, as well as having a limited sales network footprint out here.
VW has set up SEAT as their strategic leader in new products and services for *`Urban Mobility'* having developed various types of `e-Scooter' concepts that became SEAT's first motorcycle, as well as commencing major electric ventures.
SEAT has grown steadily as an automaker over the last 70 years from the research and design of their own cars, and through their production efforts, on to the large numbers of SEAT models exported. They have become Spain's top industry exporter providing three percent of their total exports. Today they turn out in three minutes, the same number of cars it took a full day to produce in the 1950's. Besides their three factories in Spain, SEAT also produce cars in the Czech Republic, Germany, Portugal and Slovakia. To date, SEAT have produced over 20 million vehicles worldwide, and that includes today's crop of new electric and plug-in hybrid models. *Terry.*

----1997 DODGE COPPERHEAD----

Dodge had been in a bit of a revival mode in the 1990s. In 1992 they released the Viper RT/10 and in 1995 the Viper GTS as a hardtop. These cars were a spiritual successor to the 1965 Shelby Cobra 427 S/C. They had huge amount of power (a V10), but their handling near the limit was ordinary. And at $60,000 USD it wasn't a cheap car in the 1990s.

So in 1997 at the North American International Auto Show Dodge unveiled the Copperhead Concept. The two door roadster was designed as a less expensive version of the Viper at $30,000 USD. It was designed for driving pleasure, comfort, and handling. It borrowed a lot of its design cues from the Viper. And it was shown in a lovely burnt orange colour. pic courtesy of Dodge



The dimensions were 424cm long, 183cm wide and 126cm high. Wheelbase was 279cm, with an overall weight of 1295kg. The car was shorter than the Viper, but the wheelbase was 30cm longer. They had really pushed those wheels to the corners of the car, and did some fine tuning of the suspension to increase its rigidity. Obviously the drop down from a V10 to V6 meant there was a loss in performance. At only 164kw it wasn't really a powerhouse, the lack of power was compensated by better manoeuvrability.

But ultimately (like most concept cars) it was parts bins special, using the components from existing production models. While the chassis came from the Viper the floorpan came from the Neon. The suspension was a mix of the Sebring convertible and the Eagle Talon. The V6 engine came from the new Intrepid and the 5 speed gearbox from the Dakota pickup.

From the styling you could see that it originated from a Viper. I think the only disappointing part is the front headlights, which look like an afterthought.

The interior was unique to this car. The bright orange highlights inside is the sort of thing you get on a concept car. The speedometer is in front of the driver, but the remaining gauges are housed in a large centre console. The centre console looks a bit like a copperhead snake head.



After the car was revealed at the motor show a complaint arose regarding the name 'Copperhead'. Billy Gibbons from ZZ Top owned a car that had been registered with the 'Kopperhead' name. So Chrysler renamed the car and it would thereafter be referred to as either the Dodge Concept Car, or the Dodge Concept Vehicle. Thus any literature referring to Copperhead is quite rare.

Apparently the debate went on for three years in the boardrooms as to whether this car should join their line-up. But it never came to fruition, so there was only one ever made. The car was on display on the Walter P. Chrysler Museum until its closure. These vehicles are all in storage but are displayed on special occasions.

The Model Cars

Because of there being only 1 car made, it sort of really limits the colour choice if you want to be true to the original.



In 1:18 scale I have releases from both Anson & Maisto. But the Anson version is the incorrect shade of orange. I've shown them above for a comparison (Anson is shown on the left).



The Maisto version is a great model of this car. As always both bonnet and boot open. And the interior is the correct colour combination, unlike the Anson version, which is all black. With regards to 1:43 scale releases, I couldn't find any which was quite interesting.

In ~1:64 there are releases by Hot Wheels and Matchbox.

<u>released by Matchbox</u>
1999 - correct colour (see pic)
1999 - first edition in the correct colour
with a zamac version in a twin pack
2003 - Justice League promo in black/ pale green
2004 - Justice League 5pack in metallic green
2004 - Justice League promo in yellow



With regards to Matchbox cars I have none
of these, as they were all released exclusive
in the USA.

<u>released by Hot Wheels</u>
1998 - correct colour, either black or purple interior
1998 - Sugar Rush II series 'Baby Ruth' in white
1999 - standard in metalflake silver
1999 - in the Super Roadster set from Ames
2000 - standard in pearl
2002 - standard in metallic lime
2003 - Pride Rides series in copper
2008 - Web Trading series in pearl or black
2009 - Mystery Cars series in red



front row - First Edition, Sugar Rush II series, 2002 blue stripe, 2002 Pride Rides series
rear row - 2000 blue stripe, 1999 blue stripe, 2008 Web Trading Cars x2

Thus I'm only missing the Super Roadsters set and the Mystery Cars versions. And in 2009 mystery cars with the black blister were really a mystery, unlike the current ones. The earlier releases also had a metal base, so they were great on the tracks due to their low centre of gravity. ***Dave S.***



Some of my latest purchases from Tomica. Yes you can still find them in Australia.

----FAST 111's----

1982 was a great time for Kenner. They were riding high on the success of their Star Wars toy line and sales were booming. They looked at the success of Mattel with their Hot Wheels cars, and thought that they could crack into that lucrative toy market.



But they needed something special for kids to buy their cars instead. The decision was made to supply them with different number plates for different US states. The downside of this was each model now had a large angled section across the rear of the car to display this. Of course with the USA number plates, this would give them limited appeal elsewhere in the world.



I purchased my models here in 1983. Australia was often the dumping ground for the excess stock that didn't sell in the United States. Their price was slightly above that of Hot Wheels cars.

The wheel design was little unusual, in that each tire had a raised strip down the middle of it. So they had a very narrow contact patch on the ground. And true to their name their speed was faster than a comparable Hot Wheels model.



My entire collection of Fast 111's cars is shown above. As you can see none of the cars are faithful reproductions of actual cars. They are more in the hot wheels vein where it is based on the actual car, and then given the 'hot rod' treatment. The names were all made up and bore no relationship to the real car. Examples are Sport Shifter, Evil Eye, King Cobra, Piston Pusher, to name but a few.

But by 1984 they had all but disappeared. Clearly they weren't making any money from this line. Return Of The Jedi had been released in 1983 and was a cash cow for Kenner. So the Fast 111's line quietly slipped away and was forgotten. I had a quick look on ebay to see what was for sale. They want about $25 for a carded model. But I'm not seeing many buyers. ***Dave S***