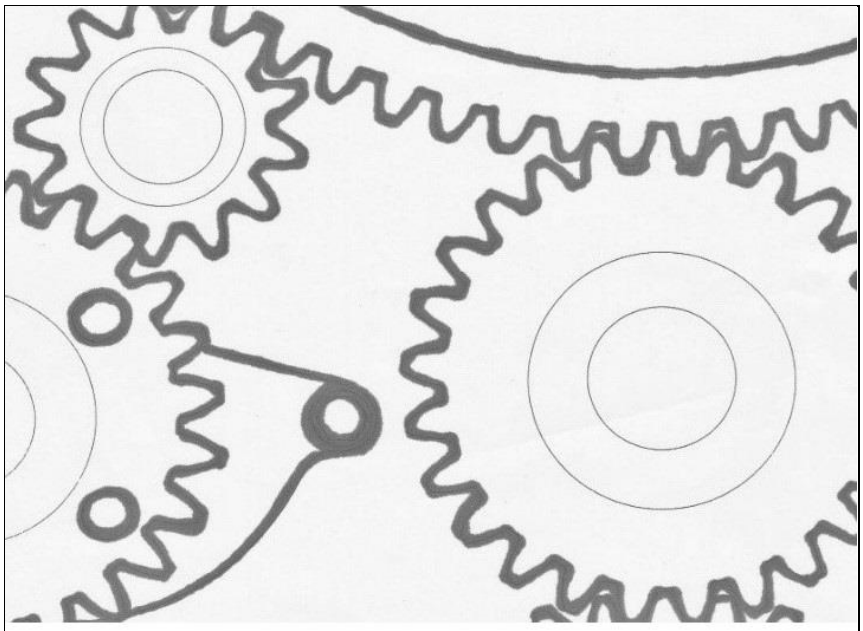
HUNTER MODEL AUTO CLUB INC.



GEARBOX

NOVEMBER 2021 EDITION

CONTACT: Brian Fairhurst Ph (02) 4930 1154 OR Bill Kenchington Ph (02) 4945 4830

2016 Our Town Model Show – Wayne's display.

HUNTER MODEL AUTO CLUB – SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR OCTOBER 2021

"Zoom" October Meeting-

With the Covid-19 Government lockdown in place our "Normal" meeting and model competition for October were cancelled.
Thanks to Allan Evans, a "Zoom" meeting was arranged as a substitute. The following members participated – Allan, Paul, Shane, Terry, Brian F, Diane and Bill.
Whilst there was no business conducted at this meeting, we were able to view an interesting video "Farewell Falcon: Back to where it all began" as well as view the model entries for voting in this month's "Virtual" model competition. It would have been good to have had a few more of our members participating as those who did attend found it enjoyable to meet up, have a chat and so keep our Club alive.

"Virtual" October Model Competition Results: "A Luxury Vehicle" – Any scale one (1) model only and ONE PHOTO ONLY.

1st.……Paul Campbell……1938 Alvis……21 Points
2nd,……Brian Blyth……Corgi Limousine……14 Points
3rd……Terry Payne……1971 Oldsmobile Coupe……11 Points

Next Meeting: **Tuesday 9 November at 6.30pm for 7.00pm at Edgeworth Sport and Rec Club. This will be our Annual General Meeting (Election of Office Bearers, Selection of Model Categories and Setting the Club Subscriptions for 2022) followed by the Ordinary November Club Meeting. The "Actual" Model Competition for November will be dispensed with due to time constraints for the evening.**

***** Please note the earlier start time to allow for both the Annual General Meeting and the Ordinary November Club Meeting as well voting for Virtual Model Competition to be finished in time, as the Edgeworth Sport and Rec Club has stipulated that we must leave the Club premises by the closing time of 9.00pm.***
Entry to the Club will be restricted to those who are fully vaccinated (2 doses) or have an approved medical exemption and are able to present official documentation of such. **

Next "Virtual" Model Category: "Open" – Any scale and number of vehicles and ONE PHOTO ONLY.

Bill Kenchington – Secretary

CLUB'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Unfortunately, with the Covid-19 restrictions being in place we have been unable to hold our AGM since the 2019 Meeting.

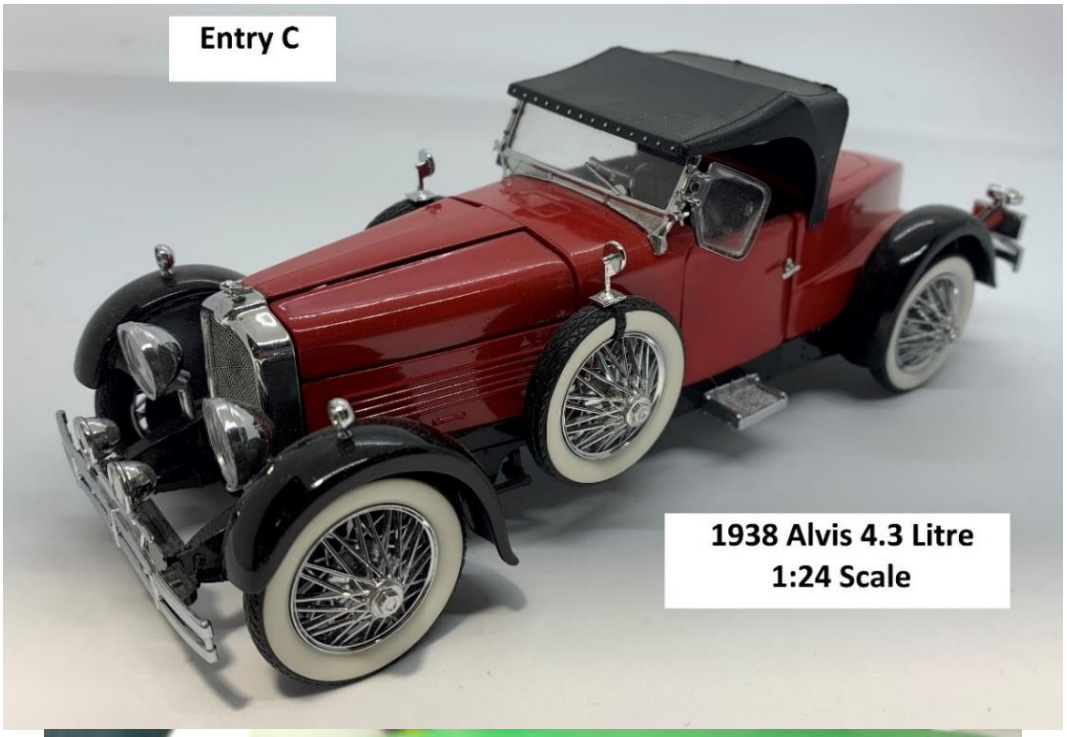
Now that these restrictions have been eased, we plan to hold our **Annual General Meeting (Election of Office Bearers, Selection of Model Categories and Setting the Club Subscriptions for 2022) on 9 November 2021.**

Members are reminded to give some thought as to who you want as our Club Board, what categories you want for the 2022 Model Competition and what the Annual Subscriptions should be set as.

As previously agreed, we propose to continue with the "Virtual" Model Competition in 2022 in conjunction with the "Actual" Model Competition. We will only need to select categories for the "Actual" Model Competition as we will use those categories from the 2021 "Actual" Model Competition for the 2022 "Virtual" Model Competition. This will save us having to select two lots of categories.

Placegetter pics of the Club's October `Virtual' model competition.

First is Paul's 1938 Alvis – Second is Brian B's Corgi Limo and Third is Terry's 1971 Oldsmobile Cutlass Supreme.



On a different note. It is sometimes amazing what you find on the net. When researching in Hemmings, I picked up on a great photo of ***Alan Jones,*** the Aussie F1 world champion, having just won the inaugural Caesar's Palace U.S. F1 Grand Prix in October 1981. The photo also showed the large trophy in the form of a Roman Centurion's helmet. Interestingly, there had been controversy over the decision to hold the U.S. Grand Prix at the Caesar's Palace resort as some believed it had a tinge of organised crime and political intrigue. The other interesting part of the story was that when Alan attended a reception in Sydney the following month, one of the Caesar's Palace executives who attended, was arrested shortly after for currency crimes. *Terry.*

Chevrolet's small car - `Chevy II' and an Aussie connection.

The 1962 Chevrolet Chevy II was a `base' model to its cousin the Nova.

The recent Gearbox article on Argentina's ***Chevrolet `400'*** four door sedan prompted me to check out the history of this little U.S. Chevrolet product, the ***Chevy II*** which was the donor for Argentina's ***`400'*** model as well as its U.S. cousin, the ***Chevy II `Nova'.*** Two things surprised me about it. Firstly, a Chevy Nova was raced in Australia by Norm Beechey, something I had totally forgotten about. Secondly, the compact Chevrolet had a very long model lifecycle as a popular vehicle having been produced from 1962 right up to 1988 and, not only in the United States and Argentina, but in Mexico, other South American Countries and Spain as well. What I also found out was that the *`Chevy II'* name was dropped in 1968 and all continuing U.S. Chevrolet badged compact models of the former *Chevy II* would go under the name of Chevrolet ***`Nova.'***

Before we start, just a quick note on Norm Beechey's little Chevrolet racer as shown ***in the next pic*** with ACE's 1:43 scale model as well. In 1966 Norm travelled to California and purchased his new Chevy II Nova, as it was called then, directly from a Chevrolet dealer over there. His model came fitted with the 327 cubic inch V8 coupled to a four speed manual gearbox that was introduced into the Nova models in 1965 and he immediately took it to Traco Engineering for an engine make-over. Traco was founded in 1957 and was one of the top competition engine builders in the world, so it was a good choice. Traco helped Penske prepare the engines for his 1968 Camaro Trans-Am championship winner driven by Mark Donohue. Before leaving the U.S, Norm had the suspension set up by another top Californian outfit as well. The Nova went on to win 36 races in Australia up to 1968 when he sold it off.

What was a Chevy II? With buyers staying away from the unusually styled, rear engined Chev Corvair sedan, General Motors suddenly required the development of a conventional styled front engined rear wheel driven compact model within an 18 month timeline. The end result was the **1962** Chevrolet ***`Chevy II'*** that was created in sedan, hardtop and convertible and, though slightly *`square'* in appearance, it definitely had contemporary styling cues and was available with either a four or six cylinder engine. On top of this, Chevrolet added a ***`Nova'*** badged model which would be sold as a sportier and more up-market version, therefore leaving the Chevy II as an entry level model.

There were three sedan models on sale in **1962**. ***See lead-in pic.*** They were the base Chevy II `100,' the mid-range `300' and the luxury `Nova.' Chevrolet also released a two door `Sport Coupe' and a convertible in the `Nova' range and went on to add a station wagon. The Chevy II had a choice of a 153 cubic inch 90hp [2.5 litre 67kw] four cylinder engine or a 194 cubic inch 120hp [3.2 litre 90kw] six cylinder engine which was the standard engine in the Nova. Both models came with a three speed column shift manual gearbox or GM's two speed *`powerglide'* auto.

They became a big seller almost immediately with around 47,000 base `100' models, 93,000 of the mid-range `300' models and 267,000 `Nova' models being sold in 1962 with nearly 24,000 `Nova' convertibles included in those figures. Interestingly, a couple of auto sports inclined Chevrolet dealerships started to fit V8 engines to the Chevy II and Nova models with outstanding performance figures being talked about within motoring circles. GM executives quickly took note of this situation and the wheels of *`possibilities'* started to turn, and quicker than usual for GM.

1963 saw excellent sales for the Chevy II and Nova and Chevrolet decided to add a `Super Sport' or `SS' option to the Nova and the reason for using it on this model only, was that the `SS' option could only be included on luxury trim Chevrolet models. For the Nova, it included larger 14 inch diameter rims and larger tyres with finned full cover hubcaps, a silver rear boot panel cove, bucket seats and sports instruments in the dash and special `SS' badging. All Chevy II models could also be ordered with seatbelts, heavy-duty springs, a `*Positraction*' diff and there was a taxi equipment option available. The Chevy II received, and would continue to receive minor facelifts, each model year, however, at this stage, it could not match it's Ford Falcon opponent when fitted with their V8 option. Around 50,000 base `100' models, 79,000 mid-range `300' models and 171,000 `Nova' models left the sales rooms in 1963.

For **1964**, the mid-range `300' model and the convertible were dropped from the Chevy II range, though a 283 cubic inch 195hp [4.6 litre 145kw] ***V8*** engine was added and driven through a four on the floor manual or the 2-speed powerglide automatic gearbox. This set the scene for the Chevy II to be part of the muscle car wars in the U.S.A.

In **1965**, with an expanded engine line-up that included a lift in power to their 283 cu inch V8, Chevrolet also added their 327 cubic inch V8 engine with 250hp and 300hp versions. [5.4 litres and either 186 or 223 kw.] **1966** would see a small body style change, mainly around the roofline that showed up more in the `C' pillar of the two door hardtop models. And so, engine and trim changes would go on over the years till **1968** when these compact Chevrolet models were badged as the ***`Nova'*** only, and the body changed to the characteristic GM `coke bottle' hipped shape on a longer wheelbase and available in two and four door sedans only. ***See next factory pic for one of the 1968 models.***

A large number of engine and gearbox combinations were available together with many options including air conditioning, shoulder belts for the rear seats and head restraints. Performance equipment options included disk brakes, a heavy-duty clutch, twin exhausts, rally wheels, Positraction diff and sports instrumentation. The Corvair ceased production in 1969 and that meant that the *`Nova'* became Chevrolet's smallest passenger car. However, it now became available with massively powered 350 cubic inch [5.7 litre] and 396 cubic inch [6.9 litre] V8 engines. The problem was that by now, the larger mid-sized sedans such as the Chevelle were leading the so-called muscle car wars and the Nova was losing out in sales at this point in time with only 106,000 models leaving the sales room for **1969**. However, in **1970** over 250,000 Nova models were sold and this may have been due to the aura of the really hot *`SS' 350* and *`SS' 396* models being added to the Nova range.

In **1971**, the four cylinder engine was dropped and the 350 cu ins V8 became the largest engine available as GM reasoned that the muscle car wars were over and there was no need to fit the 396 V8 to the Nova. The most popular model was the two door coupe with a 307 cubic inch [5 litres] V8 and all up, nearly 195,000 Nova models were sold. Body style modifications and engine power upgrades continued leading to excellent sales figures, often over 350,000 sales per year till **1979** when the rear wheel drive models were discontinued. The Nova became a GM/Toyota collaboration front engined and front wheel drive compact till the ***`Nova'*** name was retired in **1988**. *Terry.*

ANOTHER MODEL FROM MY COLLECTION -- LANCIA FLAMINIA COUPE 3B

Looking back at the scale automotive models I have collected and catalogued over time, many represented a family association, a vehicle with an interesting story or it reminded me of special occasions or memories. I think that reasoning probably applies to most collectors as to why they choose to collect certain models.

In the special edition of the Gearbox regarding the visit to *`Show us ya-slotz,'* I looked back on my ***GMP*** brand 1:18 scale models of the late Mark Donohue's Shelby Mustang GT350 *`Competition'* or *`R'* models. The GT350 Mustangs were often spoken about in relation to the American motor racing scene, especially the Trans-Am series of the mid to late 60's which I kept up to date with through American motor magazines that were readily available in Aussie Newsagent's shops back then.

For this article, I have selected the ***Lancia Flaminia Coupe 3B*** circa 1963 and modelled in 1:43 scale diecast by ***Starline models*** in a light grey colour known as Blanco Saratoga. ***See lead-in pic.*** I have spoken about Lancia previously and they are an automaker that have been making cars since 1906 and have won probably more world rally championship titles than any other maker. Lancia also had the first standard production V6 powered car as well as the first electrical system in a car.

The preceding Lancia *`Aurelia'* models were introduced in 1950 and were subsequently replaced by the Pininfarina designed ***Lancia Flaminia*** in early 1957. Over 12,600 Flaminias would be produced till production ceased in 1970. The Flaminia was available as a four door saloon [sedan] known as a Berlina, a two door coupe and a cabriolet, [convertible] though the two door versions were usually outsourced to Italian coach-builders such as Pininfarina, leaving the four door Berlina to be the only model produced in the Lancia factory and it was only available with the single carburettor V6 engine. Later, a limited number of attractive aerodynamic styled Lancia Flaminia 3C 2.8 litre two-door Super-Sport versions were made by Zagato. In this case, `3C' stood for triple carbies.

The Flaminia 4-door Berlina was powered by a new version of the Lancia V6 that now displaced 2.5 litres with 100bhp or 74.5Kw of power sent through an all synchromesh four speed manual gearbox. The Berlina, as with the previous Aurelia models, had a rear transaxle set-up where the transmission, axle, and differential were in one integrated assembly. After the initial run of about 500 models, some with disc brakes and some with drum brakes, disc brakes became the only stoppers available on any of the newer Flaminia vehicles.

I have read that critics claimed the Flaminia saloon to be stylish and refined as well as being mechanically rugged, but they still suffered problems often associated with previous Lancia iterations, that is, they were too heavy for the available power of the engine. They were also criticised for being a little too expensive, even if they had achieved a reputation for being a very high-tech and luxurious piece of motoring kit.

The Flaminia had to compete against the usual high quality European and British marques such as Mercedes and Jaguar as well as an increasing number of imported American models. Though it was accepted that the Flaminia had an exemplary ride and handling capabilities, buyers now wanted a vehicle, not only fitted out with luxury appointments, but one with effortless power. The reality was that in a straight line, the 2-door Lancias models, introduced 2 years after the four door saloon, could not match the performance of the then Aston Martin models. The problem was that Lancia did not see that the traditional Lancia customer's tastes were changing.

When introduced in 1959, Lancia's Pininfarina designed and built 2-door Coupe models created a situation where interest in the four-door saloon models soon declined, but that was not really unexpected.

A ***Classic and Sports Car*** journalist wrote that, *`Somehow the idea of an all-alloy V6 linked to an exotic transaxle for 50:50 weight distribution seemed to find a more natural home in the Flaminia GT and Sport by Touring and Zagato….in fact, the concept almost hit its commercial stride with the introduction of the two-door, mostly steel-bodied Coupé by Pininfarina that was by far the most successful version. Between 1959 and '67, the handsome, practical Farina Coupé sold to the tune of 5284 cars, outselling the factory saloon by 1341 units.'*

The first 3,200 2-door models had their single carburettor V6 engine fitted with a new sports camshaft producing 119bhp or 89kw. The Coupe was also available with a triple carbie V6 as well, and known as a `3C' model as was the Zagato models mentioned previously. In 1962, they had a `3B' V6 engine available in all Flaminia models and that meant it had a single *triple-choke* Solex carbie and was now 2.8 litres in capacity with power increased to 136bhp or 101kw. For their 2-door versions, Farina had initiated a catch on the seatbacks that released when the doors are opened to allow entry into the rear seat if necessary. Roominess for the back seat passenger, especially for their knees, was increased by having rear-of-seat cut-outs.

The interior of the Lancia 2-doors had a body coloured aluminium panel with a matching housing for a full range of instruments, sports steering wheel and a good sized glovebox. However, there was no large centre console on a transmission hump, just an almost flat floor with only a slim tunnel with a small open parcel tray, as all the Flaminia models had a transaxle as mentioned previously. Though they were not the most popular Italian car made then, they were admired and driven by many celebrities and I think the Flaminia Coupe is still a nice looking cruiser.

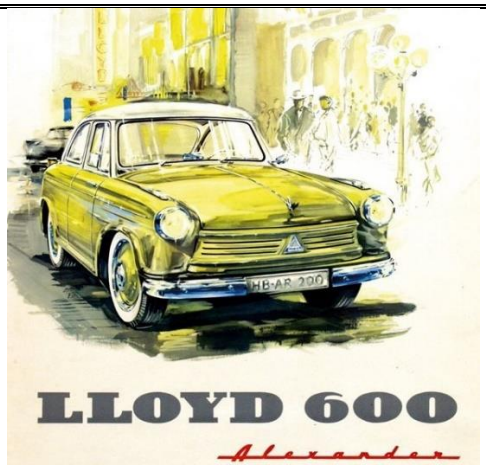
Above - The real thing – An excellent example of the Lancia Flaminia Coupe.

Above - More pics of the Starline 1:43 scale diecast model of the Lancia Flaminia Coupe 3B

For the Collector:

Starline make the Lancia Flaminia Coupe model in 1:43 scale *diecast,* as seen in the attached pics of the author's model, and they are available in other colours as well. ***Atlas*** are making the four door Berlina and the Zagato Sports models in 1:43 scale *diecast* as well. ***NOREV*** make a 1964 Lancia Flaminia Super Sport in 1:43 scale. You may find an early ***Solido*** 1:43 scale model of the Flaminia Coupe that was made in France with the original packaging, but for a model in very good to excellent condition, expect to pay well over A$200 landed out here. The odd one is a ***Politoy*** 1:43 scale *plastic* model of the Lancia Flaminia coupe and these models were made in Italy, but you can expect to pay well over A $100 landed. Both ***Matrix*** and ***NEO*** make the later model Flaminia touring coupe in 1:43 scale *resin,* but they are usually well over A $100 landed from overseas Ebay sites. ***Terry.***

THE LLOYD MARQUE – ANOTHER STORY WITH AN AUSSIE CONNECTION



A while back Ken Neal mentioned the ***Lloyd***, a marque once seen on Australian roads, but almost forgotten today. We had a box of old Wheels Magazine donated to the club years ago and this led to some Gearbox articles with one taken from a May 1956 Road test conducted by Wheels on the then newly released Lloyd 600 sedan. So, using that article, as well as an April 1956 Modern Motor item and other research, this is a condensed Lloyd story.

For those who are not familiar with Lloyd, it was a brand of car produced in Bremen, Germany, by Lloyd Engine Works, a company started in 1908 and owned by the Norddeutscher Lloyd Shipping Company. Their vehicles were badged with the Lloyd marque and were mostly luxury models. Founded in 1905 to build light cars, another German company, Hansa Automobile Gesellschaft, merged with Lloyd in 1914 to become Hansa-Lloyd Werkes and concentrated on passenger cars under the Hansa marque and commercial vehicle manufacture under a Hansa-Lloyd marque.

In the late 1920's, they became a subsidiary of the large German company owned by Carl F. W. Borgward and passenger vehicles ceased to be made by the company, though commercial vehicles were still produced under Hansa-Lloyd badging. Prior to Borgward taking control of Hansa-Lloyd, he made small three wheel commercial vans called the Goliath Blitzkarren [lightning cart] and this kept him economically viable during the depression and he built up his company post WW2 with his own range of motor cars. In 1950, Borgward re-entered production of cars and light trucks using the trading name of the Lloyd Motoren Werkes and, remaining in Bremen, Lloyd now became a separate marque again. Borgward's aim was to produce a range of smaller cars that would sit below the then Borgward array of family sized cars. The idea for these cars was to provide a small inexpensive auto for post-WW2 German citizens, but they also provided a high degree of comfort and reliability overall. In the 1950s, the Lloyd was often third in sales figures to VW and Opel.

The first of the new Lloyd models was the LP300 and interestingly, it was made from plywood laminated with artificial leather as there was a real shortage in the late 40's Germany of suitable material for auto production. It was powered by a small 300cc 10bhp [7kw] two-stroke engine and was front wheel drive. By 1953, Lloyd was able to start using thin steel on the body shell though timber was still used on the door frames and other selected parts of the vehicle. In 1954 Lloyd turned out the LP400 with a slightly larger 13bhp [9.7kw] engine, though early models still used leather laminated plywood.

In 1952, Lloyd started to release two-stroke engined commercials as well, commencing with a van and followed by a six seat mini bus, ***[See previous two pics]*** and then a pickup in 1953. These would be upgraded with 4-stroke engines in 1953 with longer wheelbase versions being available. In 1955, Lloyd released their next sedan model, the LP 600. It featured a new 596cc 14kw air-cooled in line two-cylinder four-stroke overhead cam engine with a top speed of 100kph. In numbers, this would be largest produced Lloyd and as an example, 58,000 models were turned out in 1955 alone.

Above left - Revell 1:18 scale model of the Lloyd 600. At right - Mo-Miniatur brand 1:32 scale model

At this time, the Lloyd was also being exported to North America in reasonable numbers. An upgraded version was released in 1957 and re-named as the Lloyd Alexander and in 1958 there was the option of a sportier version of the Alexander, the TS, and this had a 25bhp [18.6kw] engine. Unfortunately by 1961 Borgward was failing and went into bankruptcy. This was mainly due initially to a high cost in developing and then producing their 1959 Lloyd Arabella model which then had the added problem of technical issues that required recalls for rectification. These models continued to be sold till 1963 though after 1961, they were re-badged as a Borgward. All up, around 360,000 Lloyds were turned out of the Bremen factory.

Not only was the Lloyd LP600 exported to North America, it also made its way to Australia. We already had a ***Borgward*** product being sold in Australia, the ***Goliath***, and in December 1956, ***`Cars today'*** said it was one of the most interesting small cars on the Australian market because of its unconventional petrol injected water cooled two-stroke engine. It was imported by the Kenneth Wright Motor organisation from 1954, and to reduce tariffs, was fully assembled in Melbourne. The Goliath's Sydney dealer was Bill Buckle Motors.

I also found that the Lloyd 600 was imported for a number of Australian distributors. One such distributor mentioned is Bill McIntyre for NSW. In May 1956, Australian Motor Manual said that the Lloyd 600 was *`recently introduced'* so this was obviously before they started to be assembled in Australia. This is backed up by Wheels pointing out that it carried a large `body duty' of 90 Pounds and a `sales tax' of 100 Pounds. This made the retail cost climb to 775 Pounds which, according to Wheels, was a shame as Australia needed low cost cars and economical motoring. When looking at both the April Modern Motor and May Wheels stories on the Lloyd 600 in 1956, there is no mention of it being associated with Hartnett at this point in time.

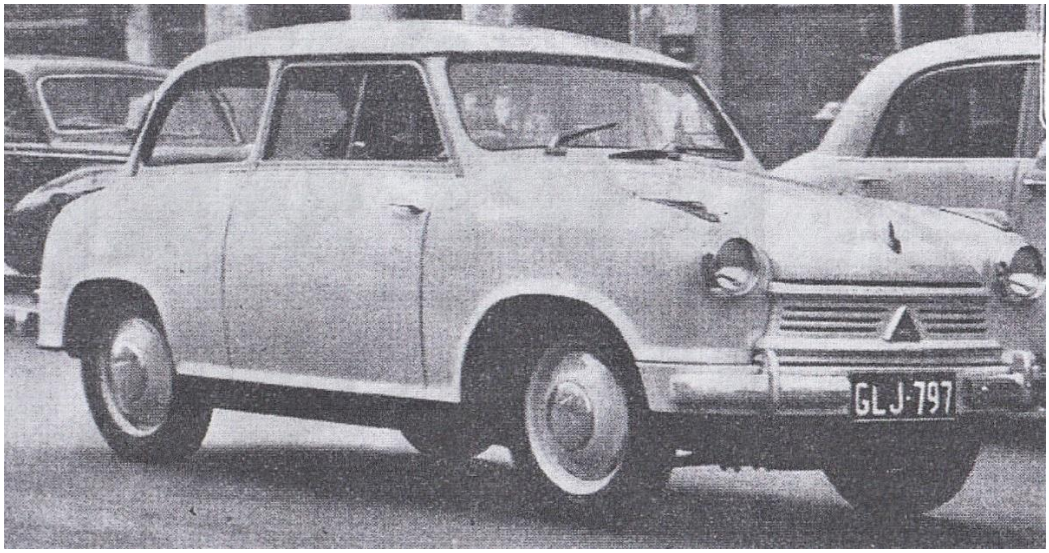
Sir Laurence John Hartnett was the Managing director of GMH from 1934 to 1947 having served GM in other Countries after his service in WW2. After conflicts with General Motors executives in America, Hartnett left Holden and eventually created the little 600cc Hartnett sedan. ***See next pic.*** There were production problems and the venture failed after only 120 odd vehicles had been manufactured and was terminated in 1955.

Then in 1957, Laurence Hartnett and Carl Borgward set up a joint venture to import the components and assemble the Lloyd 600 in Australia. The first factory was in Brisbane with other States becoming involved in the vehicles assembly and it was then released in December 1957. The Lloyd 600 then became known as the Lloyd Hartnett. Perhaps this is why the Aussie Motor magazines saw no connection with Hartnett when looking at the Lloyd 600 in 1956. Distribution networks for the Lloyd-Hartnett were established and with the initial sales success, construction of a new factory in Frankston Victoria commenced in June 1958. About 3,000 cars were produced before Borgward ceased operations in Bremen which ended any chance of the Lloyd Hartnett staying viable.

In looking at the Lloyd 600 in Australia, we have to take into account the storylines from Wheels and Modern Motor to get a handle on this little vehicle, remembering that this was before the Borgward and Hartnett assembly operation commenced in Australia. Both magazines based their article and road test on the Lloyd 600 being cheap and having outstanding fuel economy, which as Wheels wrote, was its *`trump card'* and due in part to its little air-cooled 596cc four-stroke 2-cylinder engine. Power was driven through a three speed manual gearbox with syncro on 2nd and 3rd gears, even though Modern Motor said it was slow and vague in operation. Another issue seen with the front transverse mounted engine was that it was just in front of the axle and very close to the grille with little protection if involved in a front to rear accident. The front bumper bar, being open in the middle, would not give much protection either.

A lengthy road test showed excellent handling qualities but a noisy engine at certain revs. Top speed attained was 58mph [93kph] but it's downfall was on uneven surfaces as it tended to skip around too much. Braking was considered very good but the handbrake lever was placed in an awkward position due to its left hand drive origins. It easily achieved a tad over 50mpg [4.7 litres per 100kms] under a combination of very heavy driving followed by easy cruising. There were two electric windscreen wipers that were quite efficient and another feature mentioned was a half-gallon reserve petrol tank controlled by a foot operated tap. What could be a problem on Aussie roads was the fact that the front suspension transverse leaf springs, at its lowest point, and close to the inside edge of the rims, had only 4 ½ inches of clearance.

From the outside, it's body style was described as a `squeezed up' Borgward Goliath in appearance, but with the obvious intention of providing the cheapest possible motoring. Though allegedly having this accent on austerity, it could be had with a two tone paint job. A bonus for Australian conditions was the fact that it also provided an excellent fresh air heating, demisting and ventilation system. Entry was easy through wide rear hinged suicide doors and access to the rear seat was by folding down the front seat squabs, though getting into the rear seat could have been a difficult exercise. There was no boot lid and goods could be placed in the boot area by folding down the rear passenger seat squabs. Though the seats were small and comfortable, there was just enough room for two adults in the rear seats as the rear wheel arches protruded into this area. There was excellent vision for the driver but the single instrument, a speedo with the usual warning lights, was located in front of the passenger.



Above pic of the Lloyd 600 is taken from, and is courtesy of, Modern Motor's 1956 road test article.

As written in the previous Gearbox article, the now badged Lloyd Hartnett must have been a tough little machine as it won its class in the 7,000 mile 1958 Ampol Trial and was the only car in its class to finish. It also won its class in the earlier run 1958 BP Trial. However, in June 1958, the Sydney Morning Herald wrote that with a maximum speed of 60mph, you wouldn't want to go any faster in a small, lightweight car, even though you couldn't call it unsafe. *Terry*

DID YOU KNOW – The first Chevrolet Corvettes were powered by a straight six cylinder engine hooked up to an automatic gearbox.

Could a `sports car' in the 1950's be really considered a `sports car' when it had an automatic gearbox? It doesn't seem right, but back then General Motors under their chief designer Harley Earl, were developing a two-seater sports car, soon to be the Corvette, to compete against similar vehicles being brought back from Europe by American servicemen post WW2. More often than not, these would be British MGs and Jaguars, though a few Italian models were also brought back.

GM planners felt then that if the proposed Corvette was fitted with a manual gearbox, the public would see it as being a bit old fashioned, so the new Corvette was never going to be considered as a manual gearbox optioned sports car. As well, GM considered automatic gearboxes as being innovative at that time and believed that their `Powerglide' two-speed auto complemented Chevrolet's re-engineered 235 cubic inch straight six-cylinder engine earmarked for the new Corvette. The Powerglide auto box was used in mainly Chevrolet cars and lorries, but occasionally would be an option in certain Oldsmobile and Pontiac vehicles. It was also used in Holden motor vehicles commencing with the 1965 HD models till replaced by the *Tri-matic* in the 1971 HG models.

I read that this Chevrolet engine was originally known as a `stove-bolt' six as the bolts used in the engine resembled those from the old fashioned wood burning stoves. However, for the 1953 Corvette it gained a new name, the *'Blue Flame.'* Quite often this is the name given to a range of Chevrolet six cylinder engines from this era, however, the `Blue Flame' designation was officially given to one engine by GM and that was the triple carburettor 235 cubic inch [3851cc] version fitted to the first Corvettes.

In January 1953, Harley Earl had a concept Corvette up and running and was first displayed at the General's Motorama auto show in New York City. As the response was positive, GM went ahead and commenced production for release by mid-1953 and most of us would have a general idea of its history from then. The main thing here is that it was not a V8 powered sports car. That would not arrive till the 1955 when a V8 was offered as an option to the six followed by dropping the six totally for the 1956 model. The V8 introduced in 1955 was Chevrolet's new 265 cubic-inch [4342cc] small bock engine and it was available with a *three-speed manual gearbox* as well.

The history of the 235 six is quite interesting as in standard form, it was a passenger car version of an engine that had powered Chevrolet lorries since 1929 in various sizes and power outputs. For the Corvette though, it was worked over by the Chevrolet engineers and had many improvements made including a special rocker cover with the oil filler cap moved to the rear. ***See lead-in pic.*** Though it had a cast iron head and block, the compression ratio was increased from 7.5:1 to 8:1 and a mechanical camshaft with aluminium timing gear was installed as well as new aluminium pistons. Dual exhausts exited from twin outlet manifolds and triple Carter high performance single barrel side draft carbies were fitted to an aluminium intake manifold. Side draft type carbies were used to cut down on the vehicle height profile. Interestingly, the fibreglass body meant less shielding creating annoying radio interference from the ignition, so a shield was specially designed to cover the wiring leads, distributor and coil.

The `Blue Flame' six in the Corvette developed 150hp [112 kw] compared to the standard passenger 235 engine that put out 136hp [101 kw.] From 1953 to 1955, only 4,640 Corvettes were sold and GM almost ceased production till Zora Arkus Duntov and the new small block V8 arrived on the scene. You know the rest. *Terry.*

SOME OF MY LOCKDOWN *MOTORING THOUGHTS ~ IT STARTED WITH AN MGB*

The ***lead-in pic*** was taken in England and shows a line-up of MGB roadsters. I love taking pics of classic cars of all types and I find myself admiring what I see as real *beauty* in the body style of older sports cars in particular. There are some very nice vintage and classic cars garaged where I now live, and every so often the owners take them out for a spin. Before our *Victorian Lockdown Number 5 of 6 so far,* I was talking to a local when a nice red MGB convertible went by and I said that they are still a great looking sports car. That started a conversation on the many old sports cars garaged around the area and he said that he often wondered whether they were able to stand alongside late model roadsters with their up to date safety features and all the luxury appointments we have come to expect in this modern motoring age.

I have never thought of an MGB being in any way an *equivalent* to a modern roadster as it was initially released way back in 1962 as a replacement for the MGA. Then, and having had over 100,000 roll off the assembly line, the MGA was the top selling sports car of that era. However, styling wise for the early 60's, some so-called experts are supposed to have said it had become *`dated'* and was being kept *`alive'* as its proposed replacement, the MGB, was slow getting into production. I must say that I think that the MGA, like the MGB, is still an eye-catching classic convertible comparative to the era it was being produced in. ***Next two pics*** are at left, an MGA modelled by ***Corgi Vanguards*** in 1:43 scale diecast and at right, in 1:18 scale diecast, is Elvis Presley's MGA by ***Greenlight.***

Later, and thinking about the MGB I spotted, which was probably a mid to late 60s model, I asked myself would you really want to compare it to a modern sports car and look at its deficiencies compared to cars produced today. Should we do that with classic motor vehicles whether they be sports cars or just plain old family style autos? My answer is ***no.*** I think it would be unfair due to body styling trends changing over time as well as the increase in safety features on modern vehicles that have been demanded by the regulators. In relation to sports cars in particular, I have to admit though, that I am not overly attracted to many of the modern examples.

So, what do many of us see in those old *`classic'* vehicles today? Nostalgia perhaps. Then there is the thought many of us have that life was probably simpler back then, and I have written about all of that in the ***Gearbox.*** Back in the 50's and 60's, many of us had enjoyable motoring experiences when families went for a drive on quiet rural roads or along our picturesque coastal regions. A casual drive was just so much fun whether it was off to the beach in summer, or to a picnic place somewhere out in the country in the cooler months. I don't think that *`family drives'* happen that much today. Eventually we obtained our drivers licence and our first motor car. *Enough said about that!* Anyway, I have to admit that traffic regulations and the enforcement of the road rules, has put a dampener on some of my old motoring cravings today, and with a V8 Commodore *`SS'* still sitting in my garage waiting for a bit of a run to clean the gunk out of the exhaust after ***lockdown***, maybe it's for the best. *Terry.*