

HUNTER MODEL AUTO CLUB INC

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-GEARBOX-



Spotted in Monaco - A Ferrari 458 Italia.

MAY 2022 EDITION.



Winner of the April 'Real' model comp – Ben Wing's Ranger and Landcruisers.



From the top – Equal 2nd was Paul’s Land Rovers and Trevor’s 3 Jeeps. 3rd went to Ken’s Four-wheel drives.

HUNTER MODEL AUTO CLUB INCORPORATED

Minutes of Club Meeting Held at Edgeworth Sport and Rec Club on 12 April 2022

Meeting Opened: 7.30pm

Members Present: 18

Apologies: 5

Visitors: Nil

Previous Minutes:

Moved: Ernie Williams Seconded: Paul Campbell "That the March 2022 Club minutes be accepted".
Carried.

Treasurer's Report:

David reported that the Club funds stand at \$1,382.44.

Moved: David White Seconded: Paul Campbell "That the Treasurer's Report be accepted". Carried.

Correspondence:

Bill in his absence, reported that there was none.

Matters Arising:

i) Steamfest - Has been postponed to last weekend in July due to the flooding around Maitland.

General Business:

i) Frontline Hobbies - Sale Saturday 16 April from 9am for used/damaged stock. CASH ONLY.

ii) George Thompson Auction - Sunday 1 May at Hexham Bowl from 11am. You should have received your catalogue by now.

iii) Kurri Kurri Public School Exhibition - Postponed until Sunday 29 October, will be just held at the school only. No connection to the Nostalgia Festival which was held as planned.

iv) Raffle - At our May meeting we will hold a raffle for a \$25 gift voucher from Frontline Hobbies that needs to be used by 6 Dec 2022.

v) Hunter Scale Modellers Swap and Sell - Was held on Saturday 26 March. Some members attended and said it was mainly military models, but okay for something organised at the last minute. Sheriff was there. He has sold the retail shop to one of his collectors.

But he still is going around swap meets, as he has two sheds full of models that were not part of the sale.

vi) Singleton Army Base - Still on for Sunday 15 May. Instruction sheets available.

Meeting for morning tea at 9.15am at the Lone Pine Café (at Museum). Self-guided tour of the museum starts at 10.00 am. Lunch at Park View Café (at Singleton) approx. 12.30pm.

vii) Show Us Ya Slotz - Still pencilled in for July, date to be confirmed.

viii) Toy & Hobby Fair - Confirmed Sunday 7 August. There will be a vote next month for the charity to which we will be donating.

Please email Paul Campbell with nominations before the meeting. Raffle prize donations still needed.

****Sub-Committee to start next month before our normal meeting at 7.00pm sharp.***

ix) Models for Sale - Peter Ralston has 4 models to sell for a neighbour. Prices are as marked.

Model Competitions:

"Actual" Model Competition: "4WD Vehicle" – Any scale and up to three (3) models.

1 st	Ben Wing.....	Ranger and Landcruisers.....	22 Points
Equal 2 nd	Paul Campbell.....	Land Rovers.....	18 Points
And.....	Trevor Palmer.....	Three Jeeps.....	18 Points
3 rd	Ken McGregor.....	Four Wheel Drives.....	17 Points

“Virtual” Model Competition:” Military Vehicle” – Any scale and up to three (3) models and ONE PHOTO ONLY.

- 1stPeter Ralston..... WW1 British Model T Ford.....21 Points
- 2ndTerry Payne..... WW2 Aussie Air Aces Aircraft.....15 Points
- Equal 3rd..... *Matt Campbell*..... Matchbox Personnel Carrier and Jeep.....*Bill Kenchington*..... Dinky Toys Jeep, Tanker and Lorry..... *Mark Jenkins* Focke Wulf fighter plane all three with 13 Points

Next Meeting: Tuesday 10 May 2022 at 7.00pm for 7.30pm at Edgeworth Sport and Rec Club.

Next “Actual” Model Category - May: “Truck” – Any scale up to three (3) models.

Next “Virtual” Model Category - May: “Blue Coloured Vehicle” – Any scale up to three (3) models and ONE PHOTO ONLY.

Meeting Closed: 7.57pm

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Going back through some old club photos I found a couple more that related to the Cessnock **‘Crazy About Chrome’** event in 2016. Our club also put on a model display that day. These two beauties were among many other great cars on show that day. At top is an FJ Holden Special sedan with plenty of Nasco accessories added. Below that is a pristine Vauxhall Cresta sedan. *Terry.*

## **-Allan Evans -MY BIRTHDAY LAMBORGHINI DRIVE-**

I have been a confirmed motoring nut since my early years, when I failed to negotiate a corner at the end of a high speed downhill run. Terminal understeer led to dropping a wheel off the curb resulting in the rollover of my Austin J40 pedal car. Undaunted by that early bruising experience I have continued my motoring passion to this day. Feeding this passion, my adult offspring clubbed together for my 70th birthday and presented me with a voucher for a three hour self-drive tour of the Hunter Vineyards in a classic *Lamborghini Gallardo*.

Impatiently waiting at the rendezvous location outside the historical Carrington Hydraulic Pump Station, my wife Louise and I heard the distant rumble of the bright yellow sports car which pulled in behind us. We met Dave our tour guide and vehicle owner and proceeded to the rear of the Jeep escort vehicle to complete the formalities, signing my life away and putting a sizeable security deposit on my credit card - the owner is not silly! Dave gave me a run down on the vehicle, the obligatory safety briefing and then handed over the keys.



Louise's initial concern was whether or not she would be able to get in and out of the car gracefully. The Lamborghini has large doors and swinging one's legs in was actually easier than with my Triumph TR7. What was a challenge for me was ducking down low enough to squeeze my head in under the extremely low roof line. Once seated, the driving position was perfect, with just 10mm clearance between my head and the roof. Leg and arm room was better than with my Triumph. I had to look down to locate the brake and accelerator pedals that were offset towards the centre of the car.

The Gallardo is by far the most exotic vehicle I have driven. Being now 13 years old, it is somewhat conventional by my standards with key start, and familiar pedals, switches and dials. The one feature that I wanted to get to grips with was the transmission comprising a six speed electro-hydraulically actuated single clutch automated manual, operated by paddle levers either side of the steering wheel.

Having previously had an exciting experience when the throttle of my car jammed open in heavy traffic, a manual clutch saved me from tailending the car in front, with no direct control over the clutch in the Lamborghini, how could I disable the drive? I was relieved to hear that flipping both paddles at once immediately selects neutral no matter what gear the car is in.

Starting procedure is to maintain firm pressure on the brake pedal and turn the key. No instantaneous burst into life, the motor needs a few laborious cranks before the 5 litre V10 bursts into life with a thunderous roar. To move off, still with foot on brake pedal, select 1st gear with the paddle and transfer foot to the accelerator pedal applying pressure until the car determines you are ready to go and engages the clutch. This was my most apprehensive moment of the adventure, pulling out from a parallel park where you want to be confident that you have adequate clearance from the car in front, which is difficult when you cannot see any of the car forward of the base of the windscreen. There is no slipping of the clutch or gently feeding power through the torque converter, the clutch is either engaged or disengaged.

Setting off down the road behind the escort vehicle, I selected the "auto" option for the transmission by pressing button A on the dash panel. I had enough hand operation to concentrate on controlling the wipers and traffic indicators with stalks on opposite sides to what I am used to. I wanted to relax into the experience and let the car sort the gears out without having to think about flappy paddles.

The car is quite wide and Dave issues a request, over the two-way radio, to be careful not to curb the wheels on the way through the first roundabout. Louise enjoyed responding to Dave over the two-way, evoking memories of Z Car TV shows of years past. Gear changes are pretty brutal at commuting speeds. I do love the way it matches engine revs on change down, perfect heel and toe response, accompanied by a gorgeous roar from the motor. Italian cars have a reputation for being highly strung but I found the Lamborghini to be quite civilised even at commuting speeds. Throttle response, power delivery and acceleration were progressive but never ending. I found myself hanging back from the escort vehicle and then accelerating back up to it so I could savour the performance and the slick gear changes.

At another roundabout the car changed down when part way through, which I found disconcerting as we were on very wet roads on extra wide tyres. Bearing in mind they are snap gear changes likely to put the car off balance, I had visions of coming out the other side on opposite lock.

Grip levels were superior to what I am used to so there was no drama. With more experience I found I could influence change downs in advance by tapping the brake pedal enabling me to drive under a balanced throttle through corners. Suspension is firm as one would expect for a performance sports car. You can certainly feel road imperfections but it was not jarring and teeth fillings are still intact. The seats were also firm but very comfortable.

Dave took us on a predominately back road route to our morning tea destination, Café Enzo at Pokolbin. The roads were great to drive, with splendid scenery that we had not experienced before. Recent rains had taken their toll on the road surface and I had to be vigilant to manoeuvre around some choice water filled potholes. We went through the main road of Cessnock and came to a halt at traffic lights in the centre of town. The Lamborghini certainly drew attention from the Sunday morning coffee set seated at tables on both sides of the road. Louise was tempted to practice her Royal Wave.

Having arthritis in my hips I decided at this point to relieve pressure on the brake pedal to give my leg a breather. The car decided I was parking, let out a loud beep and selected neutral. At that point the lights turned green and the escort vehicle took off into the distance. I had to rapidly recall the drive off procedure, foot on brake, flip paddle to select 1st and transfer foot back onto the accelerator. I did manage to achieve this just before the lights turned red again, and took off belatedly after the escort vehicle, probably much to the amusement of diners.

There was one more instruction from Dave as we drove up the driveway to Café Enzo. There is a traffic calming dip across the full width of the drive. Dave relayed instructions on where to locate the button that jacks up the front of the car so that we could negotiate the dip without wiping out the front spoiler on the driveway.

I can highly recommend the coffee and lemon tart at Café Enzo, it is worth a drive out there just to savour the treats. We enjoyed a good chat with Dave, Louise and his discussing their respective Italian heritage. Dave told me that he utilises left foot braking to gain better control over the clutch engagement when manoeuvring.

Dave is retiring the Lamborghini from the self-drive tours, my voucher being one of the last remaining that he will honour. He will continue to conduct scenic passenger drives around Newcastle.



The café carpark provided a perfect photo opportunity prior to our departure. There is no way we could depart unnoticed, the roar from the motor draws attention from near and far. I located the reverse button on the dash and gingerly backed across the carpark to stop in front of an old chapel as our backdrop. Visibility in the rear view mirror is very restricted by the spoiler running across the middle of the small window aperture, but vision in the door mirrors was great.

Photos over, we headed out of the café to take a more direct route back to Newcastle. One more challenge as we negotiated the speed calming dip in the driveway, pressing the raise function disables the auto transmission function. Pulling out of the drive I held first longer than I was comfortable with, with the roar of the motor increasing whilst I located the A button to engage auto again. It was all quite dramatic, people in the café probably thinking, "bloody poser".

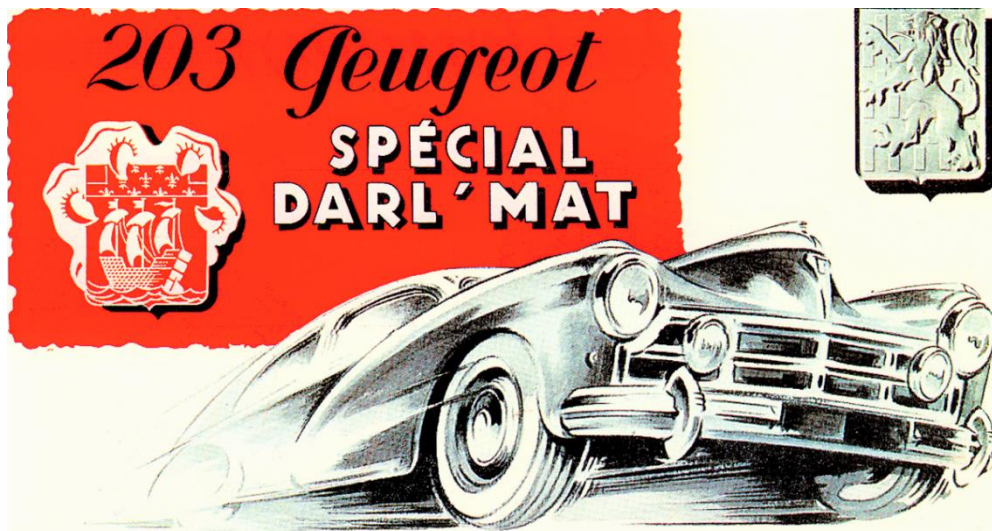
The roads home were more open and smooth allowing me to further exercise the handling and power delivery of this superb vehicle. My entry onto the Hunter Expressway was unimpeded and I took the opportunity to tread on the throttle and savour the acceleration, engine roar, rapid gear changes and we were up to 110km / hour in the blink of an eye. The car settled into 6th gear, hardly experienced on the way out, and the purr of the engine subdued somewhat. I can imagine what fun this car would be on the Alpine passes and unrestricted highways of its home country.

Back in Newcastle the sky opened again so we braved the weather for a few more photos before handing the keys back to Dave and thanking him for providing the opportunity to drive his cherished Lamborghini. That is a life experience I will not forget. Thanks kids.

**Allan Evans.**

*[Thanks Allan, a great story – TP]*

**- A VERY SPECIAL PEUGEOT - THE 203 SPECIAL DARL'MAT -**



Many members would be aware of the Peugeot 203 range, especially as the Maitland Pharmacist Ken Tubman, won the initial Redex Round Australia Reliability Trial in 1953 with his navigator, John Marshall, and driving a 1.3 litre Peugeot 203. Eleven 203's were entered and all finished. In the April 2022 Gearbox I wrote that *'Peugeot proved their cars almost unbreakable transport in the French colonies of Africa where they were used on generally unmade roads with very few repair centres outside of major towns.'*

The Peugeot 203 first appeared in 1948 in Europe, commenced sales in 1949 and became available in Australia in 1950. They were initially imported out here unpainted and without rims, tyres and battery. Not long after, they were imported without the bumper bars as well. All this was to gain a certain degree of local content that ended with full local assembly in 1953. *Unique cars* wrote that the *'rear-wheel drive Pugs had magnificent dynamics and almost unmatched talent as long-distance cruisers. The 203 was superior to the FJ Holden... Its 1953 Redex Trial success enabled Peugeot to establish a great reputation locally, especially in the bush.'*

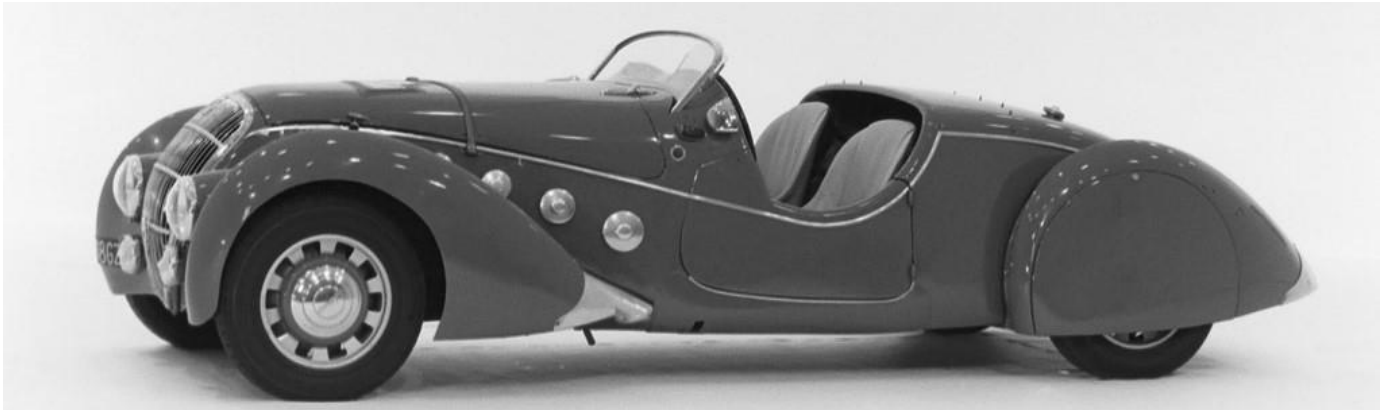
However, this story is not about the Peugeot specifically, it is about the *Peugeot 203 Special Darl'mat*, the car that *Classic & Sports Car* magazine have called France's unlikeliest sports saloon. *See next pic.*



Pre WW2, it was rare to find French built mid-size *sports* saloons (sedans). However, a Paris Peugeot concessionaire, (automobile dealership) Emile Darl'mat, had introduced into the local market in 1937, a Peugeot 302 'Special Sport' as well as a little later, the slightly larger Peugeot 402 versions. *The Peugeot 402 story appears in the February 2022 Gearbox.* These aluminium bodied 'special Sport' models were designed by the famous Georges Paulin who became a member of the French resistance with the outbreak of WW2, but was captured and executed by the Gestapo in 1942. Each automobile was manufactured by the renowned French coachbuilder Carrosserie Pourtout, founded in 1925 by Marcel Pourtout, of which Paulin, also an active dentist, was his chief designer.

How did it start? In 1937, Emile Darl'mat, through Carrosserie Pourtout and Paulin's design, had three identical bodies made with modified Peugeot 402 engines and built on the shorter Peugeot 302 chassis for the 24 Hours of Le Mans race. These Darl'mat roadsters came in 7th, 8th and 10th overall. They then returned in 1938 and one of the vehicles won the under-2 litre class.

Darl'mat, still with Carrosserie Pourtout and Paulin's design work, also manufactured road going versions of the Le Mans cars that became the Peugeot 302 and 402 Darl'mat 'Special Sport.' They turned out 106 models in this range with 54 Roadsters, 32 Cabriolets and 20 coupes. Darl'mat had earlier reached an agreement with Peugeot in relation to providing the chassis and mechanicals for the project as Peugeot knew that if successful, it would improve their image by having their name associated with such a powerful, lightweight and aerodynamic sports sedan.



*1938 Peugeot 402 Darl'mat Special Sport- Courtesy of Bonham's Auctions.*

Near Paris was the famous Montlhéry motor-racing circuit built in the early 1920s due to its proximity to Paris which was the centre of the French automaking industry. It hosted the first Automobile Club of France Grand Prix in 1925 and most of their GPs in the 1930's before WW2. The Peugeot 302 Darl'mat Special Sport set many speed records there in 1937, but it all came to an end with World War 2.

**Post WW2**, and after managing to get their industries back up and running and seeing a rise in demand for motor vehicles, French automakers such as Renault, Citroen and Simca, started to turn out their locally designed and, importantly, mostly economical models. Peugeot was in the same boat and started manufacturing their new '203' family sedan in January, 1949. As an aside, the Peugeot 203 ceased production in 1960 with almost 700,000 versions being built.

Peugeot were in a great position now by being flat out keeping up with the demand for their vehicles. A discourse between Darl'mat and Peugeot would again lead to the production of a special sports car, but being unable to divert any resources to its production, Peugeot were happy to allow Darl'mat to again produce a 'Special Sport' model, and in this case on the Peugeot 203 platform, and in the Pourtout factory.

The problem was that the new 203 model was of monocoque construction which negated the chance of fitting a Darl'mat styled body to an existing Peugeot chassis. As Darl'mat had no trouble in convincing Peugeot to send the vehicles to his factory in partly 'knocked-down' form, this made it easier to modify the body shell to turn out the sleek new Specials. The most interesting part of this was having seven centimetres or almost three inches chopped out of the pillars on top of modifications to the suspension allowing it to be lowered seven centimetres as well. All up, the height of the vehicle was 14cms lower than a standard Peugeot 203 and it appeared wider. **See next pic.**



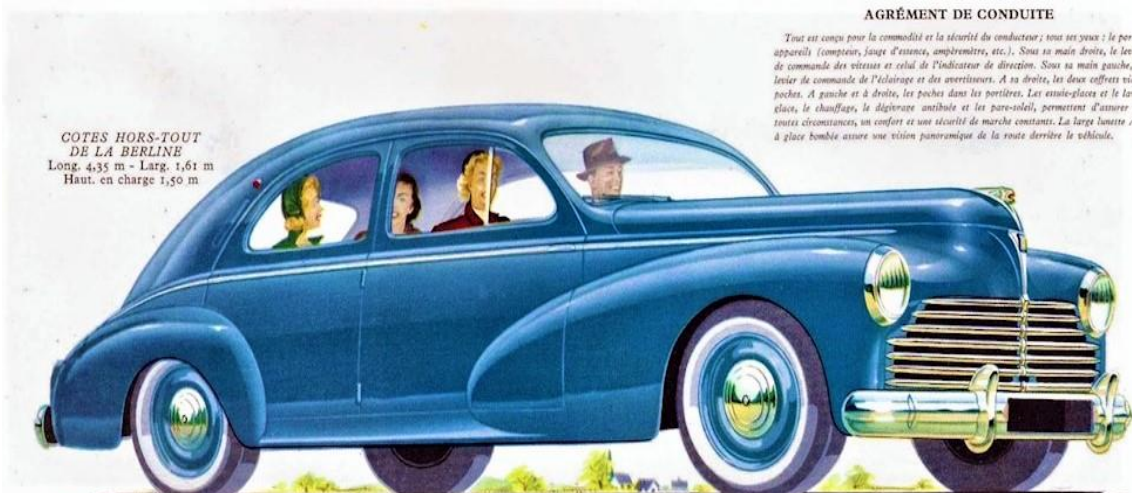
To make for a more streamlined body, Darl'mat also had the bonnet sectioned to lower the height and the boot lid was redesigned with a small central fin added. **See next pic at left.** The rear mudguards were altered and widened with spats fitted and the front wheel arches were reshaped to give wheel clearance on full lock due to the lowered suspension. There was also new polished aluminium trim and a new grille made in the Pourtout factory, very much of an American sedan style, as well as polished aluminium stone guards front and rear. Interestingly, due to its reduced cabin height, the 'Special' was fitted with traffic turning lights rather than the semaphores fitted at the rear of the 'C' pillar to the standard Peugeot 203 till 1956. Most 'Specials' were ordered with the optional auxiliary driving lights as well as a metallic paint finish.

The Peugeot 203 Special Darl'mat Special had an excellent hydraulic braking system and a modified coil spring live rear axle with a torque tube and Panhard rod to control the rear-end lateral movement under hard acceleration and braking. To aid in lowering the suspension, the transverse front spring was reversed and an additional upper and lower leaf was incorporated. The engine had an alloy head and hemispherical combustion chambers with twin Solex carbies and a 'four into one' type of exhaust that with other slight modifications, increased power by around 10% over the standard engine and gave it a top speed of just over 80mph or 130kph.



**Norev 1:43 scale diecast model of the Peugeot 230 Darl'Mat - Courtesy of Ken Neal.**

There were changes made to the interior, though the only change to the dashboard without a special order, was the addition of a tacho. Seats were retrimmed in leather facing and the door panels were changed. Special steering wheels were an option and the design was up to the client. As far as the wheels went, any Darl'mat Special could be ordered with wire wheels or standard rims with wire wheel trims as well as full alloy rims. There were changes later with a 1467cc engine in 1952 that gave the Darl'mat 203 Special a top speed of almost 100 mph or 160 kph and, as with the standard Peugeot 203, the Darl'mat received a larger rear window in late 1952. It is thought that Darl'mat produced around 125 of his 203 'Special' models till 1954. **Terry.**



**Part of a Factory ad for the 1955 Peugeot 203. Note the turning indicator semaphores in the 'C' pillar.**

## A REAL CLASSIC BRIT - *THE TRIUMPH VITESSE.*



The Triumph Herald was released in April of 1959 and the **April 2017 Gearbox** had a story about this great little four cylinder British car. In 1962 the diminutive Herald was the basis for the release of the six cylinder **Triumph Vitesse** which I think of as being the Herald on steroids. **See lead-in pic.**

A short history of the Triumph Herald tells us that it was designed by the famous Italian Giovanni Michelotti who was responsible for, not only classic Italian sports cars for Ferrari, Lancia and Maserati, but also other Triumph models such as their Stag and Spitfire models. As we know, the original Herald model was released as a two-door *pretend* four seater coupe, but soon after became a two-door sedan with a proper four seat arrangement. A convertible model was released in 1960.

It was a modern looking vehicle for the period, but was built on old underpinnings and, unlike the latest unitary construction method used by many automakers, the Herald had a separate body bolted onto a chassis. However, this did have advantages for Triumph as far as repairs being simplified and, with the large one-piece bonnet hinged forward, there was easy engine access. Would you believe that the roof was a 'bolt-on' section allowing various model styles to be adapted to the main body enabling a range of different body types such as station wagons and vans to be produced, with little effort and expenditure impact.

Some areas of design though were quite modern. As an example, it had an exceptionally light, though quite precise, rack and pinion steering and was the first mass-produced British car to have all wheel independent suspension. It had a collapsible steering column and a steering wheel that was adjustable. The use of nylon and rubber bushes eliminated most grease nipples on the chassis reducing maintenance time.

Interestingly, with Standard-Triumph in financial trouble in the late 50's, Leyland took full control of the company and injected massive funds into the Herald project so that a new model, the Triumph Herald 1200 was released later and sold alongside the original 948cc engine models. Basically, though the 948cc engine, originally from the Standard ten, was a reasonably nippy powerplant, the 1200 model had a more powerful 1147cc engine fitted and a few luxury items thrown into the interior. Under Leyland's control, a station wagon was added and in 1962, a panel van as well. The 948cc powered models and the coupes were dropped in 1964 and there were changes and upgrades made till all Herald variants ended production in 1971.

The Triumph Herald was quite a success for the Standard-Triumph Motor Company, now a modest player in the Leyland Organisation, and over a half a million models were produced over twelve years with around 15,000 assembled in Australia from 1959 to 1966 by Australian Motor Industries from kits shipped in from the UK. On top of those figures, just over 50,000 Triumph Vitesse models rolled off the assembly line.

These were nowhere near the sales figures recorded by its cousin, the BMC Mini or Ford's Cortina, but after taking over Triumph, Leyland was aware of the fact that Triumph would never be able to compete with the other British automakers, so their goal was to produce noteworthy cars that were finished to a high standard and considered great value for money. **So, back to 1962** and Triumph had a new offering hit the markets, a two-door saloon [sedan] and convertible **Vitesse Mark I** model fitted with a 70bhp [52kw] 1596cc straight six cylinder engine which was a modified version of their Standard Six sedan powerplant. This new model was blatantly designed to be a high-performance version a Triumph Herald sedan with luxury appointments being an element of the package.

The Vitesse had a re-styled front end with twin 'slanted' headlights and that really gave it a different visual stance to the more sedate looking front end of the Herald. It was fitted with disc brakes and had reinforced chassis sections due to the bigger six cylinder engine. It was not offered as a station wagon, though some were made by after-market coachbuilding firms. Results of initial road tests by motoring journalists indicated that the new Vitesse was an excellent drive on the open road and its six cylinder engine was very smooth with plenty of low down torque.

I read that that before Triumph had started its downhill spiral financially, they had been considering building a small six cylinder sedan since the end of WW2, so many people in the motoring world were not surprised when the six cylinder Vitesse came to fruition in 1962. Interestingly, Triumph initially considered using their 2 litre engine for the Vitesse, but felt it might be too powerful, yet a 2 litre Vitesse Mark I was released in 1966 with the 1998cc straight six putting out 95bhp. [70kw] This would be followed in 1968 by the Triumph Vitesse Mark II that had their 1998cc six cylinder engine fitted with a revised camshaft and head that was now putting out 104 bhp [77kw] with a top speed a tad over 160kph.

The rear suspension had to be re-designed due to handling issues resulting from the extra power and, regarding one they had for sale, *Classic Cars for sale* said that the Vitesse 2 litre models, *'had a sharp gearchange, reasonably light steering and a very comfortable ride all come as standard on the Vitesse's menu. The brakes aren't bad either... On the move the Vitesse is surprisingly refined, with the engine being much quieter than you'd think.... In many ways the Vitesse was the BMW 3 Series of its day: stylish, big-engined and classy. A hotted up herald it may be, but for those after a car that lives up to its name and can cut it on modern roads plus is a cinch to maintain by the kerb, this Triumph almost sells itself.'* The Vitesse ceased production and was replaced with the new Dolomite range in 1971.

#### **For the collector:**

Looking at eBay, the *following two pics* show an original *Dinky* 1:43 scale diecast model of a Triumph Vitesse saloon in slightly play-worn condition but in a reproduction box for A \$280 landed from Britain at the time of writing.



Or you could have a *Cult* brand 1:18 scale resin model of the Triumph Vitesse Mark II convertible, as in *the next pics*, for around A \$380 landed from Britain as advertised on eBay at the time of writing.



Though I also found a *Kenna* brand 1:43 scale white metal Triumph Vitesse convertible model for A \$375, less expensive models of the Vitesse seem non-existent when searching through the Corgi/Lledo/Vanguards products, though they all have Triumph's Herald versions well modelled. I did find that both *Classix* and *EFE* have modelled the Triumph Vitesse models in 1:76 scale. *Terry*.