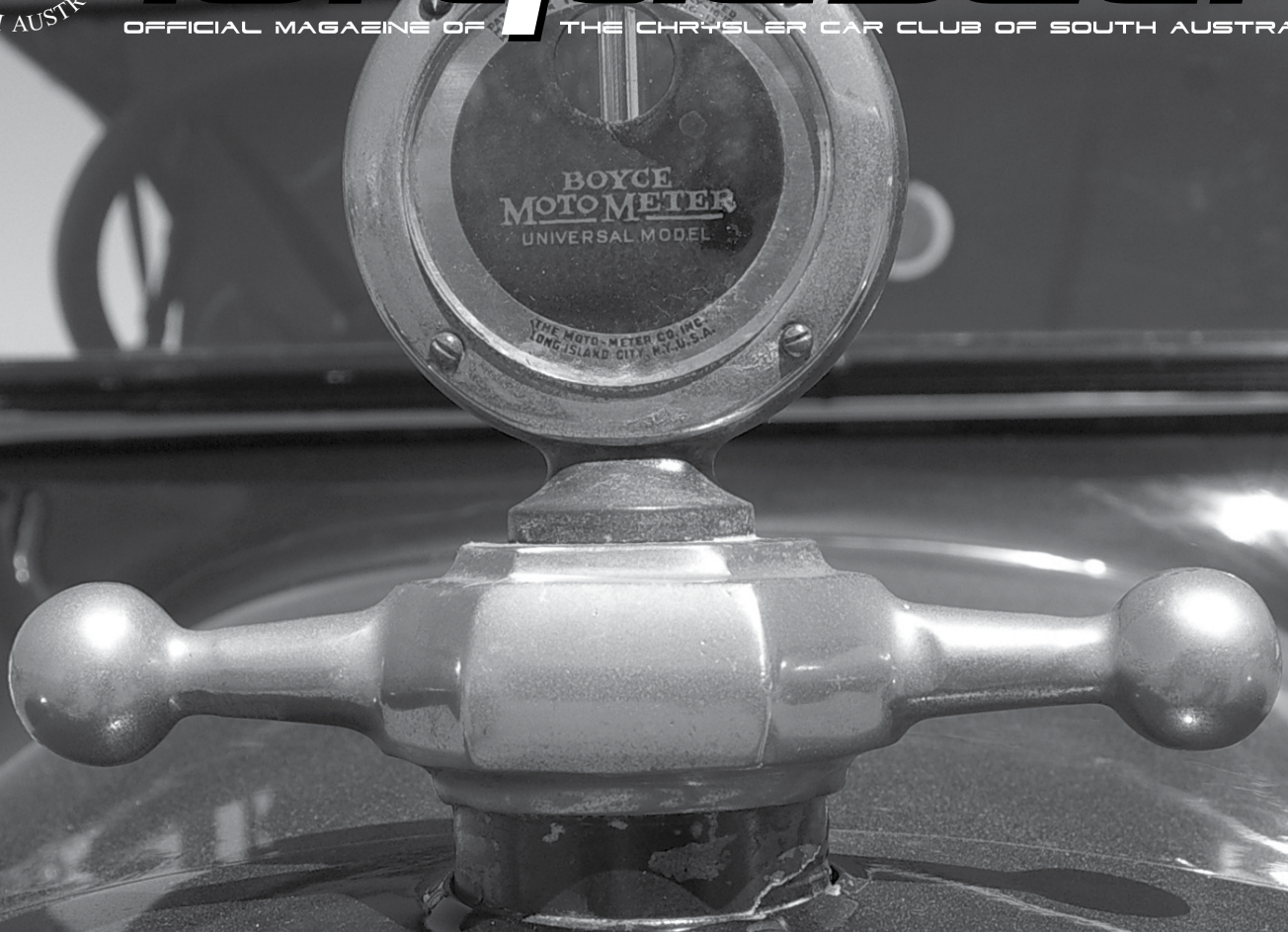


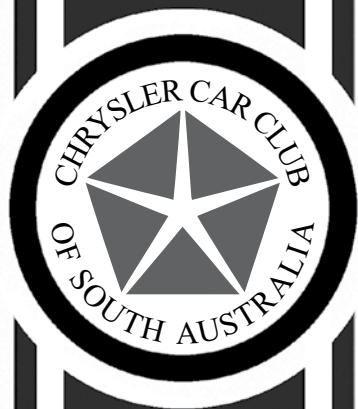


Torqueback

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE CHRYSLER CAR CLUB OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA



**A Brief History of
MOPAR in SOUTH AUSTRALIA**



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CHRYSLER CAR CLUB OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA INC

Torqueback

JUNE - OCTOBER 2011

All correspondence should be sent to:
The Chrysler Car Club of South Australia Inc.
PO Box 240
Greenacres SA 5086

General Meetings are held every second Tuesday of every month at:
Model T Clubrooms
Port Road
Croydon
(directly opposite Officeworks)

Membership Fees
Regular - \$20.00 per year (& quarterly magazine)
Historic Registration - \$30.00 per year (& quarterly magazine)





G'day. Welcome to our pictorial history edition of Torqueback, **A Brief History of Mopar in South Australia**.

I love history and if you're a petrolhead like me - and we all are, let's face it - in the following pages is something of an effort (as best as I could to fit over a hundred years in fifty odd pages anyway) to explain how and when Mopar in Australia (essentially South Australia) all came about. To fully appreciate it, I've always wanted to know where my Valiant comes from.

Being a parochial croweater and Mopar nut, as an Adelaidean I feel a proud association with Chrysler Australia which is one of the better reasons why I dig Mopars and why I'm in this club. We all should. This Torqueback is intended to teach us about our little club and exactly what it is all based upon. As Eric Bana explored in his doco "Love The Beast", non-car people just will never get this, but I don't give a toss about them.

So this edition has been inspired by a couple of people in different places.

First up, I have to acknowledge the precedent set by **Damian Tripodi** and his fantastic cruise guide he prepared for the 2010 MegaCruise. That drive through all the historic sites around Adelaide is now remembered as one of the most successful of our

famous cruise, and it was his original booklet that spurred the theme of this edition in the first place. I 'borrowed' a lot from him. Thanks mate.

Secondly, on behalf of the CCCSA I'd like to thank local automotive historian **Gavin Farmer** for helping me out and granting us permission to use some of his hard work from his incredible book **Great Ideas In Motion**. If you don't own a copy, then you need to get one. Now I don't pretend for a second that what I've put together here will even come close to his comprehensive encyclopedia, but if you'd like to know more - everything, for sure - then check out Ilinga Books, who also published **Hey Charger!**

I also want to thank **Paul Cronin** for starting me off with many of these historic photographs. A few years back, PC was given a ton of photos and multimedia which we then compiled together onto a single DVD and donated it to the State Library of South Australia on behalf of the club. Tah!

I probably need to put in a disclaimer here. While I've made every effort to be historically accurate with all of the text and pix I've collected here to the best of my knowledge and investigation, I may have made a couple of incorrect assumptions here and there. So I'll apologise in advance if you catch me out on anything, but I'm pretty confident because I have some bloody good sources.



I also would like to thank **Stuart Croser, Greg Helbig, Jason Rowley, Iain Carlin, Hugh Mortimer** and **Cathy Groot** for either being sounding boards or contributing to this issue. Cheers all.

Now, nobody is ever perfect, and you can't please everybody all of the time. So sometimes our club isn't perfect, I know. But if reading this issue presents a good case for you to be an active member of the CCCSA, if not to just keep on preserving and driving your Mopar, then I've achieved what I set out to do. I hope you agree, and more importantly, I hope you enjoy reading.

Dave H



adrian brien automotive

PRINCIPLE SPONSOR OF THE CHRYSLER CAR CLUB OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA



As you may be aware Chrysler Car Club of SA recently held its Annual General Meeting and as a result there have been many changes within the club's committee.

Our long standing treasurer **Roy Bussey** has hung up his calculator and pen after decades watching over the clubs finances. Roy is a life member and has been a member of our club right from the start. I wish to congratulate Roy on his achievements and thank him for his valiant

efforts. Roy attends almost every monthly meeting and every monthly committee meeting as well as running around paying bills on behalf of the club. So thanks Roy for contributing so much to the club for so long.

Taking Roy's place on the committee as treasurer is **Greg Heilbig**. Greg has had a year off from committee duties (his previous role was historic registrar). Greg is enthusiastic and is looking forward to his new role as treasurer. "Welcome back on the committee Greg!"

Cathy Groot has also decided to take a break from the secretarial duties from within the club. Cathy has been secretary for many years and has given so much time and effort to the club in many different ways. Especially in the lead up and preparation for our annual All Chrysler Day each year. Cathy has great PR skills and will continue to assist with preparation and promotion of such events where possible (juggling mother and work duties can be time restrictive).

Diane Hastwell is welcomed to the committee as our new secretary. Most of you will know

Dianne who along with her husband, Chris are regulars at most meetings and club outings, and both are life members. Diane is looking forward to her role within the committee.

The Chrysler Car Club of SA is currently looking to update and expand on our records on the clubs history. We are seeking any members who may have any information on the club's history or articles that would be of benefit, could you please contact a committee member so that we can record the information so that it is not lost forever.

For those of you on Facebook you will soon notice the club presence. We encourage all members to visit and contribute where possible. You will find cruise and event details also event photographs and other interesting information within the CCCSA Facebook page.

We look forward to seeing you out and about in your Chrysler this cruising summer season and stay tuned for All Chrysler Day 2012 updates very very soon. Cheers!

Cya on the road.
Raddy





Well folks, it's been eight long, but very fulfilling years, but it's time for me to move on and let someone else take the reigns for a while. In the many years since I started as Secretary, the Club and myself have both had some incredible journeys. We've come a long way with the All Chrysler Day, the Historic Registration, the change of venues for the monthly meetings and the amount of members we now enjoy having.

The Torqueback magazine is one of the most significant changes along with The All Chrysler Day the club has seen. When I started as Secretary, I would have to pick up the stapled and photocopied (more or less) magazine, take it home and sit up for hours folding it before writing the addresses of all the members on the envelopes, squeezing them in and sending them off. What a bloody chore that was for years.

But Damian, Dave and Adriana have made it into one of the best Chrysler magazines being circulated to Australian Chrysler lovers.

The show has been growing so fast, it's been hard to keep up with trying to find good venues. It really is a lot harder than most people think to

find a great venue as there are so many things to be considered, but as usual, I'm sure your new Committee will pull off another complete success in 2012.

As for my life, I was married when I came on board and have now been separated for close to six years. (With any luck I'll be divorced shortly). It's been a long, hard and bloody road to get where I am, but now I am back in Hallett Cove with a lovely home, and three fantastic boys who just won't stop growing. I am slowly becoming the shortass of the family as my eldest at only 16, is 6'1" and going strong.

I am working as well now in the Security industry, and as many of you may know have been caught up in something rather big. This was the main issue for my resigning this year. I've had a massive amount to deal with publicly as well as privately. Yeah, I know, lots of you have seen me on the telly, and hopefully it will all be over soon. The last few months have been pretty stressful.

But all in all, I've really enjoyed serving you, the members, and doing the best job I could as



Secretary for The Chrysler Car Club of SA. I will continue to come to meetings, although certainly not as many and I will miss the job.

It's been fun.

Thankyou everyone, for having me, and supporting me all these years.

PS: My car will take a while but when she's finished..... hoo boy!!!

Cathy



THE CLUB

South Australia became the spiritual birthplace of Chrysler down under in 1951 when Chrysler Australia took over the TJ Richards Body works factory at Keswick (now LeComus). Main production later moved to Tonsley Park in 1963. The Chrysler Car Club of South Australia therefore are the proud custodians of that legacy, and the South Australian All Chrysler Day is our biggest day of the year, with a fully-judged car show, swap meet and entertainment. And the Mopar MegaCruise is the club's biggest annual ceremonial cruise.

It is widely accepted that the CCCSA started out as the Chrysler Modified Car club in 1984, because the long established and respected Chrysler Restorers chapter in our state were not keen to accept modified cars. There were lots of pub meetings, with night cruises, and casual meetings at carparks such as at the service station which once sat on the corner of Anzac Highway and South Road.

Although there are no exact records, it is believed that our former long-serving Treasurer **Roy Bussey**, and the **two sons** of 1995-1996 President **Reg Whitmarsh** were the formation members of that first incarnation of what

is now the CCCSA. Former President **Adrian Cummings** and former Vice President **Kirstin MacDonald** who both served in those offices for many years in succession, were also active from the start. Reg Whitmarsh sadly passed away a few years ago, and his sons have now moved interstate, but his daughter **Sandra** is still around.

In about 1988, the club officially renamed itself the 'Chrysler Car Club of South Australia', as contemporary identities like our recently retired Secretary **Cathy Groot** and current President **Andy Radloff** appeared. Club stalwart **Jason Rowley** joined the club in 1996 and meetings were being regularly held at Gleneagles Reserve, Seaton by then.

Membership really took off when we adopted Historic Registration in 2001, growing tenfold in three years. Today, in 2011, the club numbers 265 members. The total number of vehicles in the club amounts to 405 vehicles (although some of these vehicles belong to people that haven't renewed this year as yet) and of that total 218 cars owned by current members are on historic registration.

THE BIG DAY ONCE A YEAR...

There is some conjecture that the CCCSA held their first official All Chrysler Day at Camden Park in 1987, while the young club which had formed only three years before was still meeting at various pubs - including the now famous Tonsley Hotel "Chrysler Bar".

It is believed however that the All Chrysler Day did not become a formalised and official annual event until 1990, marking next year's 2012 All Chrysler Day as our twenty second.

The All Chrysler Days were held at Daws Road High School in 1987 and 1988, while **Shayne and Jan O'Hara** were still heavily involved at that stage. But it is likely that the CCCSA were not responsible for the event until 1990 when it was moved to Camden, back to Pasadena in 1992, and then back to Camden for 1993 - the notorious year the fences disappeared! Throughout the 2000s All Chrysler Day was held at Gleneagles Reserve, Payneham Oval, back to Gleneagles, and then Lockleys Primary School Oval since 2007.

2009 at Lockleys was our best crowd attendance with 1,916 spectators walking through the gates, while last year's figure of 238 entries on the day was the most cars entered in the show, and 235 cars the record for the most cars on the Megacruise last year also.

Chrysler Action magazine claims that ours is the longest-running All Chrysler Day event in Australia, and in the original home of Australian Mopar many Chrysler devotees interstate consider the Adelaide show to be the most traditional, marking it - as one of 'the five big shows' which all fall around the same time of the year - essential to include in their annual carshow pilgrimage. While certainly not as big as some of the shows in the eastern states, All Chrysler Day SA is now respectfully mentioned (such as on the forum **Hemi 6pack**) in the same company as **Chryslers On The Murray** at Albury, **Chryslers By The Bay** in Geelong, **Mopar Sunday** in Brisbane, and **Midstate Mopars** held in Bendigo as a must-do.

JUST DRIVE, SHE SAID...

Arguably older than All Chrysler Day itself, the traditional Mopar MegaCruise which is now held on the Saturday night before the big show day, has become an institution (quoted in **Street Machine** magazine) as one of the 'most famous cruises in Australia', and not just Mopar. Indeed, it is regarded all around the country as probably the most famous all Chrysler drive in the country.

An ever-increasing number of cars well beyond two hundred now, regularly gather for the annual drive, usually taking in some of the historic CAL sites such as featured in this magazine, along the beaches or through the majestic scenery of the Adelaide Hills and Southern vales. Initially a precursor to the big day - ironically, for many, the MegaCruise has actually become more important than All Chrysler Day itself.

LIFE MEMBERS

Adrian Cummings
Kirstin MacDonald
Roy Bussey
Greg Helbig
Jason Rowley
Chris Hastwell
Dianne Hastwell
Andrew Radloff



C.C.C.S.A. Proudly Presents

ALL CHRYSLER DAY

Top Motors Tribute!
Chrysler Australia 40th Anniversary

2002

Glennagles Reserve
Seaton S.A.
SUNDAY FEBRUARY 24th 2002, 9:00am
General Admission \$4.00
Under 14's Free

2011

ALL CHRYSLER DAY

South Australia

Celebrating 40 years of the Vg Valiant

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 27

Lockleys Primary School Oval
Corner of Sir Donald Bradman Drive and May Terrace, Lockleys
Spectators 9am - 4pm Admission - \$5.00 Under 14 Free
SWAP MEET SITES AVAILABLE DETAILS - PHONE 0412 426 360

Mopar Megacruise
SATURDAY FEBRUARY 26
Finishing at our clubrooms Port Road Crystal for 880

2007

ALL CHRYSLER DAY

SPOTLIGHT ON
Hardtops

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 25th

LOCKLEYS OVAL - MAY TERRACE, LOCKLEYS
SPECTATORS 9AM - 4PM ADMISSION - \$5.00 UNDER 14 FREE
SWAP MEET SITES AVAILABLE DETAILS - PHONE 0412 426 360

MOPAR MEGA CRUISE - SATURDAY FEBRUARY 24th
MEET AT 8:30 AM - SIR DONALD BRADMAN DRIVE, MILE END SOUTH 2PM

CHRYSLER CAR CLUB OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA PRESENTS

2009 all chrysler day

south australia

Sunday February 22

Lockleys Primary School Oval
Corner of Sir Donald Bradman Drive and May Terrace, Lockleys
Spectators 9am - 4pm Admission - \$5.00 Under 14 Free
SWAP MEET SITES AVAILABLE DETAILS - PHONE 0412 426 360

Mopar Megacruise
Saturday February 21
First drive May meet 8am. Cruise starts 9am. Meet and greet at the Lockleys Primary School Oval

all chrysler day

2008

SUNDAY MARCH 9

Lockleys Primary School Oval
Corner of Sir Donald Bradman Drive and May Terrace, Lockleys
Spectators 9am - 4pm Admission - \$5.00 Under 14 Free
SWAP MEET SITES AVAILABLE DETAILS - PHONE 0412 426 360

Mopar Megacruise
SATURDAY MARCH 8
Finishing at our clubrooms Port Road Crystal for 880

Chrysler Car Club of SA Presents

All Chrysler Day

Patterson Reserve, Payneham Rd, Felixstow SA

29th of February

Plus Mopar Mega Cruise
Saturday 28th of February
Leaves from Le Cornu Keswick @ 10:00am

AMERICAN & MUSCLE THEME
Details Ph: 0412 426 360
Admission \$4 - Under 14 Free

3RD ALL CHRYSLER DAY
EASTER SATURDAY SOUTH AUSTRALIA

PASADENA

10.00 AM TILL 4.00
PUBLIC FREE
FOOD AND DRINKS

ENTRY DETAILS : 18.4.92
PH: 2765758
PH: 3400880

All Chrysler Day

2005

Sunday February 27

Glennagles Reserve
Ailsa Avenue, Seaton
Spectators 9am - 4pm
Admission - \$4.00 Under 14 Free
Swap Meet Sites Available Details - Phone: 0412 426 630

Mopar Mega Cruise - Saturday February 26
Le Cornu Anzac Highway, Keswick - 10am

The Chrysler Car Club of S.A. proudly presents

ALL CHRYSLER DAY

2002

Top Motors Tribute!
Charger's 30th Year

Sponsors: Shannon's Insurance, Adelaide City Chrysler-Jeep, Glennagles Reserve, Seaton, SA, Claude's Trim, Smart Road Wreckers, Barossa

SUNDAY FEB 24th 2002, 9am

General Admission \$4.00, Under 14's Free
Details (A/H): Kirstin (08)83821863 Adrian (08)62622919

4TH ALL CHRYSLER DAY
Easter Saturday
APRIL 10th
Daws Rd. H/School
Pasadena

Food Drinks 10am - 4pm
Ph: 3400880

Chrysler Swap Meet Sellers \$5.00

all chrysler day

2008

SUNDAY MARCH 9

Lockleys Primary School Oval
Corner of Sir Donald Bradman Drive and May Terrace, Lockleys
Spectators 9am - 4pm Admission - \$5.00 Under 14 Free
SWAP MEET SITES AVAILABLE DETAILS - PHONE 0412 426 360

Mopar megacruise
SATURDAY MARCH 8
Finishing at our clubrooms Port Road Crystal for 880

Chrysler Car Club of SA Presents

All Chrysler Day

2004

PLUS, Mopar Mega Cruise
Sat 21st February
Leaves from Le Cornu Keswick @ 10am

Patterson Reserve, Payneham Rd, Felixstow SA

29th FEBRUARY

SPECTATORS FROM 9am

AMERICAN & MUSCLE THEME
Details Ph: 0412 426 360 - Admission \$4 - Under 14 FREE

All Chrysler Day

2006

Sunday February 26

Glennagles Reserve
Ailsa Avenue, Seaton
Spectators 9am - 4pm
Admission - \$4.00 Under 14 Free
Swap Meet Sites Available Details - Phone: 0412 426 360

Mopar Mega Cruise - Saturday February 25
Le Cornu Anzac Highway, Keswick - 10am

2010 All Chrysler Day
South Australia

Celebrating FORTY YEARS OF THE Vg VALIANT

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 28

LOCKLEYS PRIMARY SCHOOL OVAL
Corner of Sir Donald Bradman Drive and May Terrace, Lockleys
Spectators 9am - 4pm Admission - \$5.00 Under 14 Free
SWAP MEET SITES AVAILABLE DETAILS - PHONE 0412 426 360

Mopar Megacruise
SATURDAY FEBRUARY 27
MEET & GREET 5:00 PM
AT THE LOCKLEYS PRIMARY SCHOOL OVAL

The Chrysler Car Club of S.A. proudly presents

ALL CHRYSLER DAY

2001

Top Motors Tribute!
Charger's 30th Year

Sponsors: Shannon's Insurance, Adelaide City Chrysler-Jeep, Glennagles Reserve, Seaton, SA, Claude's Trim, Smart Road Wreckers, Barossa

SUNDAY MARCH 25th 2001, 9am

General Admission \$4.00, Under 14's Free
Details (A/H): Kirstin (08)83821863 Adrian (08)62622919

ALL CHRYSLER DAY

2007

SPOTLIGHT ON
HARDTOPS

SUNDAY 25th FEBRUARY

LOCKLEYS OVAL - MAY TERRACE, LOCKLEYS
SPECTATORS 9AM - 4PM ADMISSION - \$5.00 UNDER 14 FREE
SWAP MEET SITES AVAILABLE DETAILS - PHONE 0412 426 360

MOPAR MEGA CRUISE - SATURDAY FEBRUARY 24th
MEET AT 8:30 AM - SIR DONALD BRADMAN DRIVE, MILE END SOUTH 2PM

OUR CCCSA HISTORY



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We come to you

ALL CHRYSLER DAY 2011

The countdown had ended....

Saturday February 26....

The day before the biggest event on the calendar for the Chrysler Car Club of SA....

THE 2011 ALL CHRYSLER DAY

The committee and members had been organising it, the public had been waiting for it, the tension had been with the owners of the cars that participated in it.... it was set. We were good to go.

Day One.

Saturday morning. Get up early, (not my favourite time of day).

Leo Geoghagan is coming to town.

Got to be at the airport at 8.30am. Luck had been a kind lady to me. Leo was meant to stay with his mate **John Ellis**, but due to a party being held by John's son at his home that weekend, neither John nor Leo could (or wanted to) stay there. So luck being on my side, I offered Leo a room at my place. A weekend with a legend.

Typical as airlines go, they're not running on time, they're actually early. Shit. Racing through the airport as the hundreds marched the opposite way, searching for the familiar face of Leo but fighting the tide instead.

Of course all the way to the end and no Leo, I was starting to panic. So I called his number several times and got no answer.

Long story short, I missed him in the masses. Almost the last two people near the baggage carousel stands one of the legends of Chrysler racing, Leo himself. He hasn't aged much but because of a recent broken leg, has to use a walker to be able to get around easily. Broken leg or no, Leo was here just for us. They broke the mould when they made this man. They were bred tough back then. No sissy lala bullshit back then or now.

On my way home we went to a laser car wash to clean my poor neglected grubby car, and the jets had been set so strong that they took my passenger mirror clean off. Who would have thought, a brushless car wash? Anyway after freshening up at my place and setting Leo up in my eldest son's bedroom, we headed down to the oval to watch and participate in events unravelling. Many of the cars were turning up all at once and they were being set up for judging.

Unknown to most of the people that came Saturday, we were visited by some of Chrysler history's most elusive men. Racers, engineers designers of engines and body design and others. This made our honoured guest genuinely happy,

as he hadn't seen most of them for a few years.

As usual, our faithful judges **Carmine**, **Slim** and **Rod** showed up early eager to see our beautiful and prestigious machines. Everything ran smoothly, Bradford Badges showed up with their terrific range of wares and later in the day the BBQ was once again seamlessly and successfully run by Hallett Cove Little Athletics Club, everyone enjoying the great Ozzie snags, steak sandwiches and egg sanga's.

Judging over and done, cars started turning up thick and strong for the Mega Cruise. In what seemed like mere minutes the oval was swamped with all God's most beautiful machines – Chryslers, Plymouths, Dodges, Mopars of all size shape and description filled the oval, some noisy and loud, others putt putting in, and the rest somewhere in between.

Big ones, little ones, the variety of colours dizzying and kaleidoscopic. Leo was very impressed at the variety of cars that came from all over Australia to participate in our fantastic event.

Soon we were ready to leave. The mass exodus from the oval was spectacular, and it took nearly 20 minutes for the oval to empty altogether.

The midway point of the cruise was at McDonalds Happy Valley. I have never seen that car park as full as it was that night and chockers with the Mopar brand.

Unfortunately after about half an hour we were washed out by the rain.

So we all left, some to break off and leave as they lived down South and the rest to finish the cruise and end up at Fulham Gardens Shopping Centre car park.

Well done **Iain**, you organised a fabulous cruise with a great route.

Day 2. Show day.

As usual cars were waiting for us to all turn up. Entrants, traders and swap meters ready to go. Leo and I got there a little later than I usually do, and everything was in full swing. The first thing I did was to help Leo set up his display and sale items.

The day went quickly with many, many people visiting Leo and listening to the stories of "The good old days". Some of the things those guys got up to would crack you up. Leo is an incredibly interesting man and has travelled the world to ply his craft. Like driving a charger overseas in Europe over a mountain through a snow storm. Of course, the charger made it through just fine.

Wayne Jones kept Leo company for the day and amongst others made sure he had enough water and food to keep him going.

After the trophy presentation, as usual the oval emptied quite quickly and orderly. As usual a band of faithful band of volunteers was there to ensure the tidying up of the oval, the taking down and packing up of marquees, the emptying of bins (yuk) and less appealing, the sorting of cans and bottles. An idea set up by Jason last year and now will be done every year. Did you know that the club made a couple of hundred dollars just from cans and bottles?

Leo and I left the oval and went back to my place for a quick shower to get refreshed. No time to dawdle, we were expected for dinner at Glenelg with **Roger Carroll** and a few boys who own Lotus's. Leo had raced Lotus's many years ago, with great success and was admired greatly by the masses who love to try to squeeze themselves gracefully into those incredibly fast little machines.

Try getting into or out of one of those gracefully... it isn't easy.

Dinner was great, coffee with the boys, the stories...always the stories made for the end of an exhausting day. A good day, but boy was I glad to crash that night.

So Monday comes and it's time to get Leo off to John Ellis's place, but not before I've held the poor man long enough to meet my beautiful boys. John lives not far from the city in one of those areas where you get big blocks. Not one huge shed, but two. One held an assortment of vintage cars in immaculate condition. All of them old racers. Quite awe inspiring really. I of course had no idea what I was looking at, but could appreciate them anyway.

In the other shed, I was greeted by an R/T charger (bloody beautiful), Ferrari, Citroen and other old relics. I was happy to sit in the Charger while the boys talked about all manner of things, but all too soon it was time for me to go.

So I thankyou Leo, for coming to Adelaide. Thankyou Roger for bringing out the Hemi 4 so many have heard about, but so few have ever seen. For helping to make this weekend even more special than it usually is. And thankyou everyone out there who had even the smallest involvement in organising The 2011 All Chrysler Day.

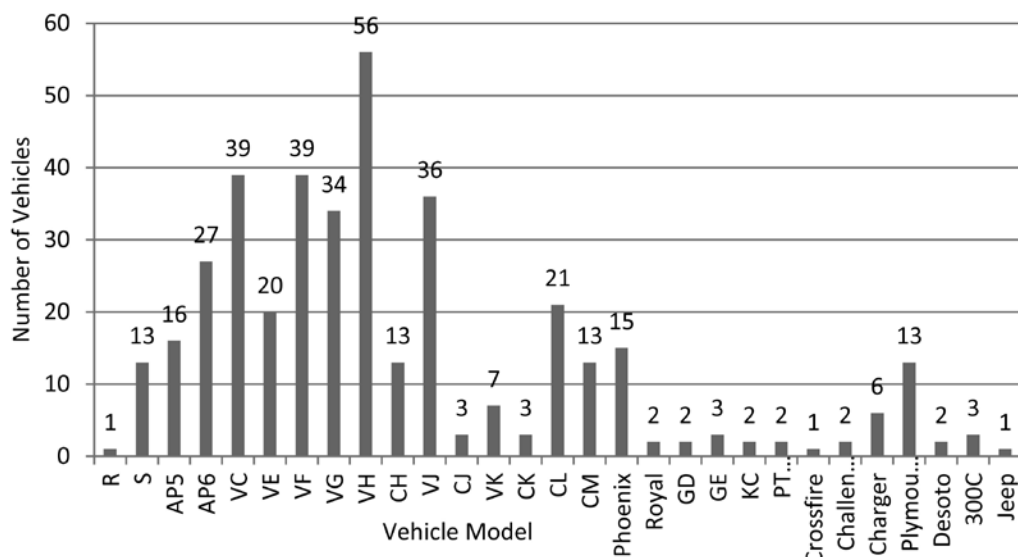
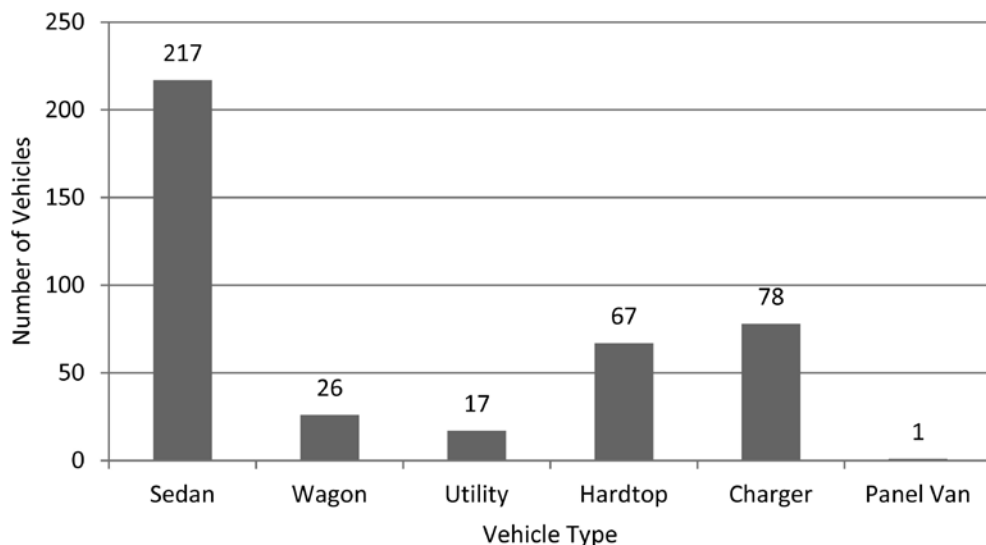
My hat off to you all.

Cathy Groot
Secretary

CLUB PROFILE

With Greg Helbig recently taking over as Treasurer and converting all of the club's bookkeeping into a much more manageable and convenient digital format, for a better secretarial record our Historic Registrar Stuart Croser also recently began the exhaustive process of transferring over all of the CCCSA membership details into a database, producing these fascinating figures.

These graphs illustrate the breakdown of all of the club's members and their vehicles (not just historic). The number of historic vehicles is 218 (all current members). The total number of members is 265.



The total number of vehicles owned by our overall total of 265 members amounts to 405 vehicles (although, remember some of these 405 vehicles belong to people that haven't renewed this year as yet).

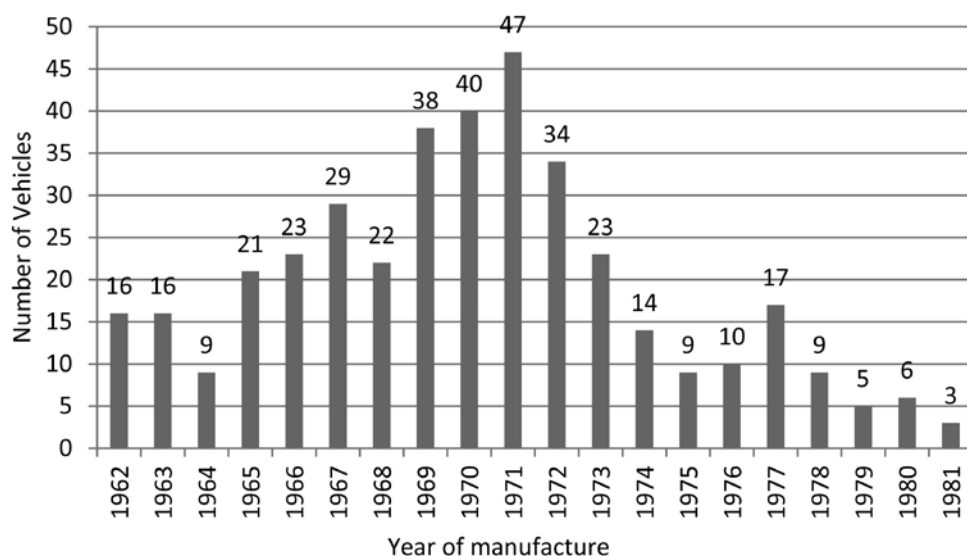
The first graph above displays the range of bodytypes we have amongst the membership. As you would expect, there are more sedans than any other.

Predictably, Chargers remain quite popular on their own, but interestingly there are more wagons than utes, when you might have expected that to be other way around. Panel vans continue to be as rare as hen's teeth.

The figure above plots the instances of the various makes and different models. Per capita we have more VH models, yet the most numerous model produced by CAL was in fact the VJ. Although VH wagons in particular are rare, proportionally, more of any kind of VJ has not survived. So, it seems our club has kept more VH models than any other, dispelling the joking perception that our club is dominated by white VCs!

Another curiosity is a great percentage of those VHs are in fact hardtops, so - together with Chrysler by Chrysler numbers - perhaps there may be something to the urban myth in the eastern states that Adelaide is a hardtop town.

The figure right shows the vintage preferred by our membership, from the late sixties to the mid 70s, indicating that our club mostly drive sixties golden age and latey Vals. The spike in 1971 also encompasses the cult following of Chrysler by Chryslers.



Another interesting conclusion to draw from these figures is the prevalence of Dodge and Plymouth models. Phoenix numbers are on the rise - comparable to early Vals, and Plymouth - both Forward Look and musclecar - are well represented in ratio to their production and prevalence in their day.

These figures give us a lot of valuable info and feedback. While they are dynamic and will change from year to year, now that we have them in such an accessible form we'll be able to plot the trends in our community which will help us in future decide things such as themes for All Chrysler Day and targeting new enthusiast groups. Torqueback will continue to publish these findings. Many thanks to Stu and Greg!



FROM THE BOOK 'GREAT IDEAS IN MOTION'

The CCCSA would like to thank renown local automotive history author **Gavin Farmer**, for lending us this excellent timeline he compiled for his fantastic book ***Great Ideas In Motion***, an illustrated encyclopedia of Chrysler's Australian history between 1948 and 1981.

First published by **Ilinga Books** in 2010 (ISBN 978-0- 9805229-1-4), the book is certainly the most comprehensive record of the existence of Chrysler Australia Ltd. ever produced and is a must for any Chrysler devotee.

It follows every make and model officially imported or natively built here under the pentastar, with a number of fascinating essays on the various marques in chronological order. And the many appendices at the back alone are worth the price of the book, cataloguing factory codes and production figures.

The timeline below tracks the evolution of Mopar down under from its humblest beginnings in Adelaide, in relation to the US parent companies and internationally, through to the ultimate signover to Mitsubishi.

CHRONOLOGY: 1855-1981

1855:	Tobias J Richards establishes a blacksmith business at Lower Mitcham, a southern suburb of Adelaide, South Australia.	1957:	The AP1—Australian Plymouth #1—Chrysler Royal is introduced replacing the previous three brands and rationalisation of the complex three-tiered distributor system begins. Engines includes 230-cid and 250-cid six-cylinders and a 303-cid V8.	1971:	Chrysler introduces the totally Australian-designed and built VH series comprising sedan, station wagon, long wheelbase sedan and coupe, panel van, utility and short wheelbase coupe (the Charger); it is the largest and last program undertaken by Chrysler Australia Limited. Assembly of the Mitsubishi Galant range begins in the Port Melbourne factory; Chrysler goes racing with the E38 version of the Charger and surprises its rivals with its performance, gains several class wins.
1892:	17-year-old Walter Percy Chrysler begins his apprenticeship as a machinist in the Kansas Pacific Railroad workshops.	1958:	Chrysler Corporation buys a controlling interest in Simca in France; the Simca Arcade is assembled at the Mile End plant from CKD packs supplied from Poissy; the Royal is updated to the AP2 with unusual fin-upon-a-fin, range now includes station wagon (the Plainsman) and utility (Wayfarer); assembly from CKD kits from USA (not Windsor) of the current large-finned Plymouth Belvedere, Dodge Coronet and DeSoto Firesweep begins at Mile End.	1972:	The most powerful six-cylinder Charger is produced—the E49 with 302bhp—and does well in racing but victory at the prestigious Mount Panorama circuit still eludes Chrysler. New managing director cancels the racing program. Port Melbourne plant closed, production of Galant transferred to Tonsley Park. The new emissions laboratory at Lonsdale is opened.
1910:	Walter Chrysler joins the American Locomotive Company as manager of the Pittsburgh Works.	1959:	A revised Simca Vedette V8 joins the Aronde on the Mile End assembly line, also CKD.	1973:	The updated VJ Valiant and CJ Chrysler ranges introduced now with electronic ignition except on the 215-cid engine. LA Mitsubishi Lancer released. Dodge D5N range of commercial vehicles released.
1911:	He is appointed manager of the Capital Locomotive Company, Pittsburgh.	1960:	Chrysler introduces the P60 Simca Aronde that proves to be one of the most popular small cars available; at the other end of the range came the restyled AP3 with four vertical headlights and three vertically-stacked taillights.	1974:	Militant unions ban the importation of goods from France because of nuclear testing in the Pacific; Chrysler was caught up in this because most of the components for the Centura were imported from France delaying the program by almost a year. Dodge D3F (nee Commer) commercial range released.
1912:	He joins the Buick Motor Company in Flint, Michigan, as works manager.	1961:	The unique Australian-designed and made Simca. Aronde station wagon is introduced and it, too, is popular with buyers.	1975:	The KB series Centura, an Australianised European Chrysler 180, is released with option of French 2-litre SOHC four-cylinder or locally-made 215- or 245-cid Hemi sixes. Media reviews mixed, sales slow. LB Lancer released. VK Valiant released with the Fuel Pacer as an option.
1917:	Walter P Chrysler becomes President and General Manager of Buick.	1962:	The R Series Chrysler Valiant is released to national acclaim and assembled from CKD packs imported from Windsor, Canada. This is followed by the equally-admired S Series; both R and S Valiants are available only as sedans, manual or automatic and with the famous 145bhp 225-cid slant six engine. The Australian-built AT4 Dodge truck range released, its cab is shared with International Harvester Ltd.	1976:	CL Valiant released, range now includes a panel van and buyers could order a CL with V8 engine and 4-speed manual transmission option.
1920:	Chrysler has a disagreement with Buick and resigns. By this time he is a millionaire.	1963:	The restyled AP5 Valiant is released with significant local content and styling that is slightly different at the rear from that of the American model to give more luggage space. Construction of the Tonsley Park manufacturing facility begins.	1977:	Chrysler releases the GE Sigma sedan and wagon to critical acclaim; marketing program boosted by stunning TV advertisement showing a car breaking through a piece of plate glass.
1921:	Chrysler is appointed a vice-president of the ailing Willys-Overland Corporation at a salary of \$1 million p/a for two years.	1964:	The Prime Minister of Australia, Sir Robert Gordon Menzies, officially opens Tonsley Park on October 4. 65 acres of land purchased at Lonsdale, 16 miles south of Adelaide, for a future engine plant.	1978:	The CM Chrysler is released, the last of the Valiant line. Chrysler's Handling Package becomes available and Electronic Lean Burn (ELB) is fitted to the D engine to improve emissions and economy. The last Charger and Chrysler by Chrysler is built. Assembly of commercial vehicles at Finsbury ends.
1923:	Having resuscitated Willys-Overland, Chrysler buys into the struggling Maxwell Motor Company and begins assembling a hand-picked staff for his future corporation.	1965:	The last part of the Tonsley Park project, the administration building, is completed and occupied.	1979:	Mitsubishi Motors Corporation (MMC) takes a 33 percent stake in Chrysler Australia Limited. Manufacture of the Astron engine commences at Lonsdale.
1924:	The Maxwell Motor Company becomes the Chrysler Corporation and the first Chrysler-badged car is produced; it features a high compression six-cylinder engine, hydraulic brakes and many new technical aspects in a volume-produced car. More than 32,000 are produced—a record for a first year's production.	1966:	Chrysler finalises the taking over of the Rootes Group in England; in Australia it means another factory (in Port Melbourne) and the availability for Chrysler dealers to sell the Hillman and Humber range of cars, and Commer trucks.	1980:	October, Mitsubishi officially takes over the Tonsley Park and Lonsdale factories, name changed to Mitsubishi Motors of Australia. The OH Sigma range is introduced.
1927:	The new Chrysler Corporation has risen from 27th ranking to 5th place in the American automobile industry.	1967:	The Lonsdale engine complex is opened in November comprising a modern foundry and machine shop; Prime Minister Harold Holt officiates. The new Rootes-designed Hillman Hunter is released and Chrysler withdraws the Humber range from production; assembly of the luxury Dodge Phoenix is transferred from Adelaide to Port Melbourne.	1981:	July, Mitsubishi announced the limited production Sigma Turbo; August 28, David Brown, former managing director, drove the last Valiant, a CM sedan, off the production line and into history. From that moment onwards, all the cars that rolled off the Tonsley Park assembly line were badged as Mitsubishis.
1928:	Two new marques are created: Plymouth, as a low-priced entry car; and DeSoto as a high priced car; Dodge Brothers is bought for a reputed \$146 million. During this year the first contacts are made with T J Richards & Sons Ltd, a major builder of automobile bodies in Australia.	1968:	Andrew Cowan driving a Hillman Hunter wins the inaugural London-Sydney Marathon; Chrysler introduces the Hillman Hunter GT. Chrysler released the Dodge/Commer D2F with engineering input from local engineers. The last Humber Super Snipe is built and the model discontinued.	Managing Directors	
1929-33:	Chrysler continued to grow even during the Depression and was soon ranked as number 3 in America.	1969:	The Valiant VP series is released and for the first time includes a sports sedan, the Pacer; mildly modified to produce 175bhp, it is a winner with young enthusiast buyers; special 4-barrel versions prepared for racing and are successful with many class wins.	William D Ferguson	1951-1960
1937:	The 18 distributors of Chrysler products in Australia club together to form Chrysler Dodge Distributors (Australia) Pty Ltd and buy a majority share of coachbuilder T J Richards & Sons Ltd to control the importation of chassis and ensure continuity of supply of bodies.	1970:	The new and uniquely Australian "Hemi" six-cylinder engine is introduced in May powering the VG Valiant range; three engines are on offer-245-cid 165bhp, 265-cid 185bhp and Pacer at 195bhp. They are the most powerful six-cylinder engines made in Australia. Stirling Moss is engaged to front the company's advertising program. The last Imp assembled, the model discontinued.	David Brown	1960-1972
1940-45:	Chrysler switched to war production and built a wide range of equipment including tanks, trucks, aircraft and other weapons. In 1941, T J Richards & Sons Ltd is renamed Richards Industries Pty Ltd.			Paul Moore	1972-1972
1946:	Chrysler returns to peacetime production of automobiles.			William Ballthrop	1972-1974
1947:	Chrysler Dodge Distributors amalgamates with Richards Industries and renames the company Chrysler Dodge DeSoto Distributors (Australia) Pty Ltd. In America, Chrysler resumes full production and builds 945,000 units despite shortages of vital materials.			Robert Perkins	1975-1979
1951:	Chrysler Corporation buys a controlling interest in Chrysler Dodge DeSoto Distributors Ltd and forms Chrysler Australia Limited.			T J 'Andy' Anderson	1979-1980
1955:	Chrysler Australia Limited buys a 175-acre parcel of land at Tonsley Park, seven miles south of the Adelaide CBD, for future expansion.			Ian Webber	1980-1983
1956:	Parts and Accessories (Mopar parts and accessories) is opened on time with 100,000 sq ft of floor space: construction of an assembly plant (the Western plant) was commenced.				



WEST MITCHAM, HYDE STREET AND HINDMARSH SQUARE

Tobias John Martin Richards (1850-1939) first started out as a cordial maker at Gawler, but eventually he would get into buggies and cars around the 1890s, and his son Herbert would expand the company to one day eventually become Chrysler Australia Limited.

By 1881, TJ Richards was trading at suburban Unley as a blacksmith, making vehicle hardware and fitting out coaches. The first vehicle of any description he designed would be the 'King of the Road' sulky. By 1885 his smithshop was flourishing and occupied larger quarters at Mitcham where he set up as T. J. Richards & Co., Wheel Wright & Coach Builder, remaining there until 1899.

Expansion accelerated and from 1901 T. J. Richards, Carriage, Buggy and Sulky Builder, operated at West Mitcham, as well as Hindmarsh

Square and Hyde Street in the city. In 1913 the enterprise, renamed T. J. Richards & Sons, began manufacturing motorcar bodies, with Tobias recruiting his sons' assistance. It was a pioneer firm operating in this phase of motor manufacturing in South Australia, pre-dating Holden's by four years in building bodies.

In 1915 Tobias retired, though remaining nominal head of his enterprise until his death in 1939 at Malvern. Upon his death he was described as 'one of the most prominent figures in the motor building industry in Australia... the largest Australian owned and controlled industry of its kind in Australia'.

Herbert Richards (1876-1949) first joined the family business at Mitcham, but despite working hard was advised by his old man to go elsewhere before taking over a Clarence Park grocery. This

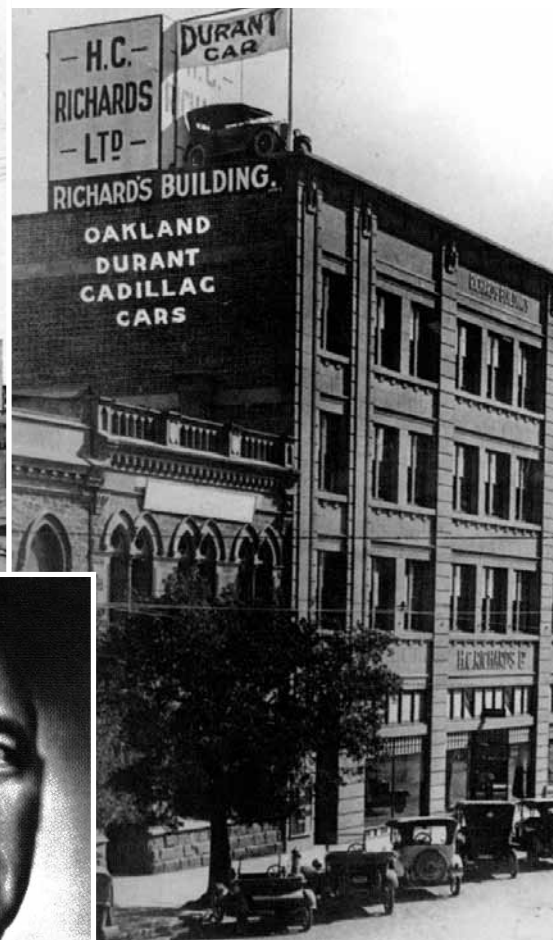
didn't work out either, and after spending some time in Melbourne, Herbert eventually got into windmill manufacturing, which started his career in machinery.

In 1899, now a coach-fitter, he succeeded in establishing himself independently as one of the earliest motor-car importers and dealers in Adelaide, **H. C. Richards Ltd**, at the Richards Building in Currie Street, which in 1922 was described as a 'magnificent motor emporium'. In 1916, Richards & Sons would become a limited liability company and thrive under the de facto protection afforded by World War I.

Herbert joined his father's manufacturing enterprise just before World War I and took over the management of T. J. Richards & Sons Ltd in the mid-1920s, guiding the firm through the Great Depression.

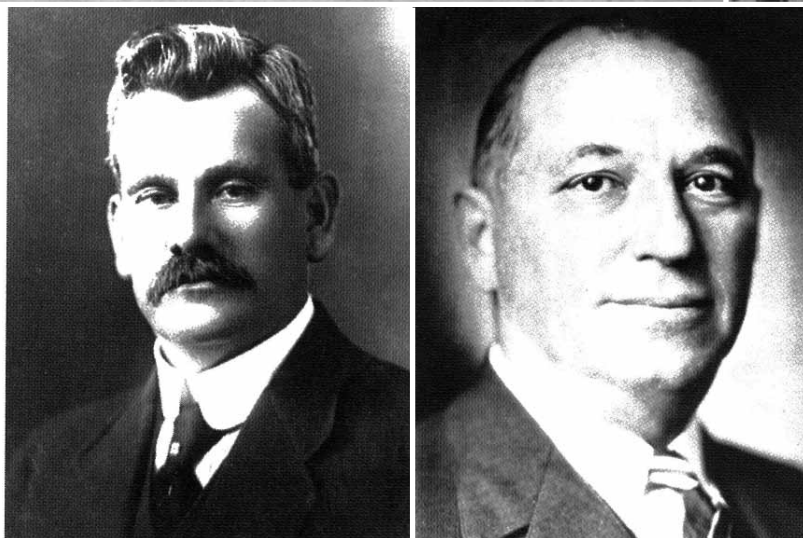


The ever-growing TJ Richards & Sons had to move from the original blacksmith shop in Mitcham to Hindmarsh Square in 1900.



Eldest son Herbert went out on his own for a while and established his own company fitting car bodies and set up in Currie Street.

Tobias J Richards (left) and Walter P. Chrysler (right)



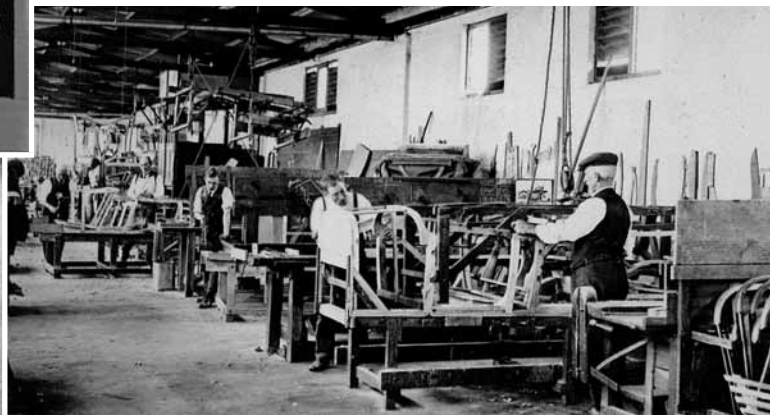


The 'King of the Road' sulky horsecoach started it all for TJ Richards.

Skilled craftsmen making timber bodyframes on jigs.



Richards' paint and varnish shop, 1922.



Cars destined locally were finished almost ready for the road.

This beautiful Dodge rod is actually quite a treasure of Australian Chrysler history...



Long before any Valiant badge...

ANZAC HIGHWAY, KESWICK

T.J. Richards & Sons, established in 1884, eventually centralised its growing operation with new headquarters near the railway line, at what is today LeCornu's, in 1916. Originally a horsedrawn carriage builder, Richards had built their first car body as early as 1905 in previous premises at Hindmarsh Square in the city, but their first Chrysler bodies would appear here in 1928.

Assisted by tariffs, Richards' expanded into this large modern building at Keswick which occupied about 14 acres (5.7 ha) all under one roof. In 1922 the works employed 200 hands.

By the mid-1920s the firm complained of the State government's lack of consideration which, it claimed, favoured primary producers at the expense of local manufacturers. But salvation from the Depression soon would come from abroad.

Walter P. Chrysler, a former railway worker who had risen to fame working for Buick, had recently taken over the Maxwell Motor Company which was heavily in debt. Soon afterwards he bought the Chalmers company and, in 1924, launched

a completely new, ground-breaking car called the **Chrysler**. This six cylinder model had a number of engineering refinements, including four-wheel hydraulic brakes. This Chrysler car came to Australia during the 1920's and, in 1935, eighteen independent agents united to form Chrysler-Dodge-De Soto Distributors (Australia) Pty Ltd. on the coat-tail of it.

From 1936, the distributors were using their combined strength to regularly purchase and market Plymouth, Dodge and De Soto vehicles. The company then acquired a controlling interest in T.J. Richards & Sons, which had continued to be a highly successful body building company in Adelaide, in competition with Holden's body builders since 1922. TJ Richards had been charged with designing and fitting all of the bodies required by Chrysler for its Australian market, and in 1938 Chrysler's Australian headquarters were thus transferred here to Adelaide.

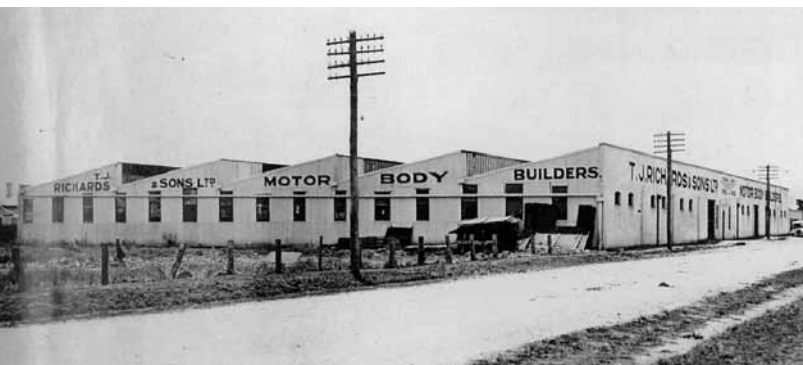
In 1947 - with Plymouth, Dodge and DeSoto cars now flowing from the production lines - an even greater commitment to Chrysler Corporation was

made which resulted in a complete takeover by Chrysler-Dodge-DeSoto Distributors and the formation of Chrysler Australia Ltd in 1951.

A vigorous expansion plan followed, and inspired by the success of Holden, Chrysler Australia aimed at producing a range of cars and light commercial vehicles with ninety percent local content. While this plan was being implemented, the company continued assembling and partly manufacturing a range of six cylinder and eight cylinder Chrysler Royal and Dodge Phoenix vehicles, based on US designs.

In its heyday, the building extended out to Anzac Hwy, fronted by a huge "Chrysler-Plymouth-Dodge-DeSoto" art-deco neon sign on the corner. Chrysler finally sold the site to LeCornu's furniture in the late sixties, after they moved Dodge Phoenix production out to Melbourne.

Today all that is left is the iron workshop building at the back of the furniture store, while the front has long gone to form the car park at the corner of Leader Street and Anzac Highway.



Continued expansion required more factory space, so TJ Richards & Sons unified and moved all of their operations to Keswick in 1922. By the time Chrysler took over Richards Industries, they would inherit these administration offices, the final assembly plant at Mile End, and Finsbury where airplanes were built.



Sadly, this majestic art-deco frontage as viewed from Anzac Highway was removed and is now a carpark.

The second plant on the other side of Kewswick, showing those rail lines we all hate to cross when we're in our low Mopars...





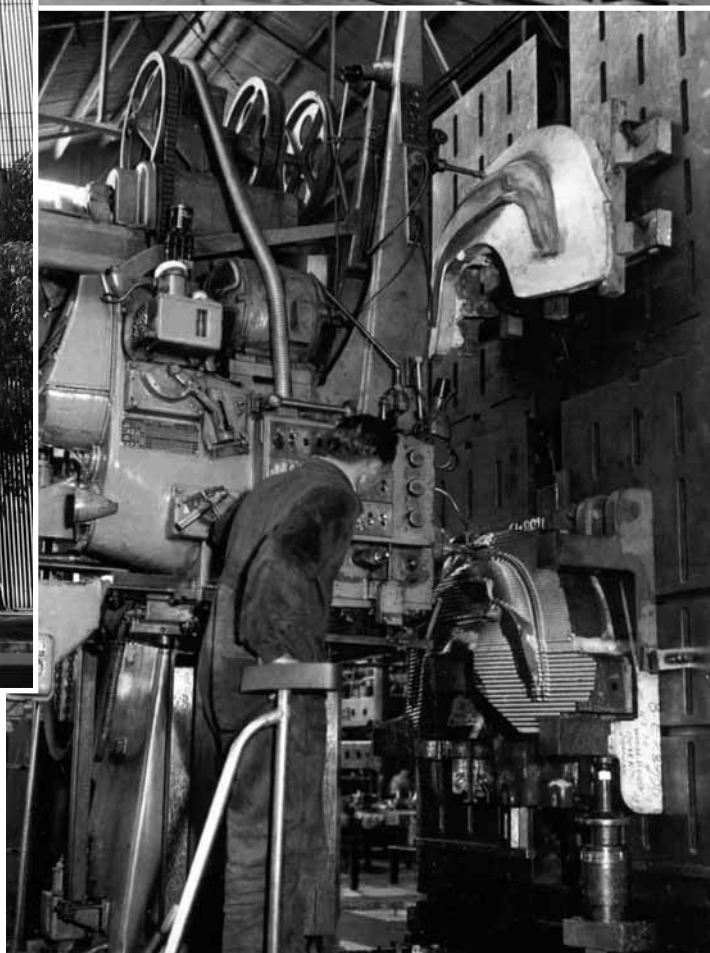
Panel stamping during the late fifties. The post-war industrial boom at CAL provided for many new immigrant workers to help make Adelaide society what it is today.



All-Australian Chrysler Royals being finished on the Final Assembly Line at Keswick, 1957.



Although the signs of what was once the house of the old throne of the kingdom are gradually - but stubbornly - fading away, Keswick is still a mecca for Mopar cruisers and nostalgics alike. This derelict furniture warehouse was once the engine workshop long ago, but it still makes for a great photo opportunity today.



Hard yakka in the toolroom at Keswick



2006
All Chrysler Day



SCOTLAND ROAD, MILE END

T J Richards & Sons continued its expansion in 1927 by buying a further plant at Mile End, and in 1930 the Duncan & Fraser Ltd premises next door. The eventual 4.45 hectare Scotland Road plant would house Richards' second motor body operation, conveniently close to railway yards. It was here where they would first assemble trucks and cars for the Australian market.

The company remained solvent during the Depression, though there were intermittent closures at Mile End and a number of layoffs at Keswick. Despite this, Richards' remained an independent manufacturer longer than its rival, Holden's. In 1935 Richards' threatened to move interstate to avoid excessive taxation and transport costs, however, reduction of wharfage duties next year aided them. Most of the skilled workforce remained when the firm returned to motor vehicle production at Kewswick and Mile End after World War Two in 1945. The company had been entirely owned by Australians until June 1951, when

Chrysler Corporation bought a controlling interest and changed the name to Chrysler Australia Ltd.

A vigorous expansion plan followed, with much of the workload fanning out from Mile End and Keswick, and inspired by the success of Holden, Chrysler Australia aimed at producing a range of cars and light commercial vehicles with 90 percent local content.

While this plan was being implemented, the company continued assembling and partly manufacturing a range of six cylinder and eight cylinder Royal and Dodge Phoenix vehicles, based on U.S. designs. Toward the end of 1958 Chrysler Corporation acquired a 30 percent interest in Simca Automobiles of France, thus enabling Chrysler Australia to import and assemble a range of Simca cars.

So bodies for Plymouths, Dodges, R and S Series Valiants were assembled at Mile End, as were Simca

Arondes - a consequence of the French manufacturer having been bought from Ford from 1959.

Chrysler Australia is best known, however, for the Valiant, which was introduced in January 1962. The Valiant was a sensation - and it arrived at just the right time. In the early 1960's Chrysler's operation had been looking shaky with its range of big American cars continually losing ground to the Holden now GM. Simca sales had tapered off, and with the release of the Ford Falcon, Chrysler's problems became worse.

The response came in early 1961 when company officials devised a plan to assemble a US-designed compact six-cylinder car in Australia. To get the new model released as soon as possible, the firm imported just over 1000 US-built R Series Valiant sedans. These were assembled in the Mile End plant in Adelaide, and when they hit the showroom floors in early 1962 the response left no doubt that Australians were going to fall for the new brand



The famous MegaCruise of 2010 transformed the ghost town of Scotland Road back to its Mopar heyday. Participants on the cruise arriving late found it hard to find a park, but didn't mind, seeing it was like a guard of honour. With your lights coming on and the sun setting, it was a simply amazing and unforgettable experience.



The classic Forward Look era were trimmed and finished at Mile End. Here we see Desotos and Plymouths on the Trim Line in the late fifties.



By the time the R Series went on sale (it sold out within days) Chrysler had imported a large number of S Series sedans and local assembly had already begun. Chrysler assembled 10,000 Valiants in 1962, lifting its registration figures for the year by 146 percent, but the company still could not meet the demand. This spectacular introduction was the start of a twenty year story which saw Valiant's fortunes snowball for a while and then slide in dramatic fashion.

In 1962, Chrysler Australia reorganised their sites by moving all aircraft manufacturing to Finsbury, and also moving the truck production which had originated at Mile End there too.

In 1965 Chrysler took over Rootes Australia, an outpost of the UK corporation which produced Hillman and Commer products, and acquired that company's Port Melbourne manufacturing and assembling facilities. Much of the small car (previously Simca) work done at Mile End went there.

The Mile End plant did much of the 'dirty work', including building Chrysler Royal chassis, and early Valiant front-end assemblies, which were trucked to Tonsley Park. Many parts (e.g. steering boxes) were sourced from the adjacent Perry Engineering foundry and stamping plants. Perrys purchased the property when Chrysler

moved out, and it was used to build the chassis for HQ Holden One-tonner into the '70's! LeCornu furniture bought it from ailing Perrys in the 80's.

Little is left to indicate the building's history, but the interior still has an 'old car plant' character. The old assembly line frontage still stands along Scotland Road and many of us will remember that amazing site on the 2010 MegaCruise, where this was meant to be a pull over to wait for stragglers to catch up. Instead it became an unofficial stop to go down in history, with almost 200 Mopars parked on both sides of the that historic street. At the time, *Chrysler Action* magazine wrote that "it sure was enough to put a lump in your throat."



A Simca Vedette going through a drying booth at the paint shop back in the day. While Chrysler, DeSoto, Plymouth and Dodge products only visited Mile End intermittently during their birth journey from Keswick - and later Tonsley Park, CAL's 'foreign' cars were entirely built here, up until Port Melbourne.

The skeleton of a Simca Vedette coming to life on a rather intimidating jig. In its day, Mile End was renowned for cutting-edge technology.



AUDLEY STREET, ATHOL PARK

In May 1937, the Richards' company announced a £500,000 expansion programme and renewal of a contract with Chrysler Dodge Distributors, guaranteeing production for five years. For the 1937-38 selling season, T.J.Richards beat Holden's to the punch by producing Australia's first all steel sedan body. On the strength of this, in 1938 they negotiated with the government for munitions work in the shadows of World War Two. So they were doing well despite the troubles of the world.

Following the outbreak of World War Two, the Finsbury industrial precinct was set up between 1940 -1945 with commonwealth money to help out with the war effort.

Richards' plant there would become part of a complex of factories, solely intended for armaments production. Though accused of being in Chrysler's control, T. J. Richards & Sons remained Australian throughout World War II. In 1941 its name was changed to Richards Industries Ltd — Motor Builders and Metal Stampings.

In 1946, after the war, Richards' bought two of the buildings to build RAAF aircraft such as the

Lincoln bomber and Wirraway fighter. And as part of the Chrysler Aircraft Division from 1946 to 1958, the Finsbury plant continued to produce various airframe sections and components. By 1947 Chrysler Dodge de Soto Distributors Ltd had formed a company to take over the assets and interests of Richards Industries Ltd which, by guaranteeing body supplies, paved the way for the formation of Chrysler Australia Ltd to enter into full car-manufacturing in 1951, with the headquarters based at Keswick.

Within six months the Finsbury plant was converted from airframe to truck manufacturing. Chrysler took out the aircraft tooling, and transplanted all of the truck manufacturing from Keswick and Mile End to these premises.

From the mid 1950s, Canberra bombers had by now been built at the Finsbury factory, until 1962 when the contract finished. The yellow and white building at the corner of Audley and Ninth Streets - which had been a Lincoln bomber aircraft assembly plant during World War II - was retained as a motor body factory from 1946. Fuselages for pilotless Jindivik target drones and turbine blades for Canberra bomber jet engines were also made there until

1958. Keswick had become dedicated to cars, and there is also some speculation that CAL had begun developing the R Series at the component works at Mile End.

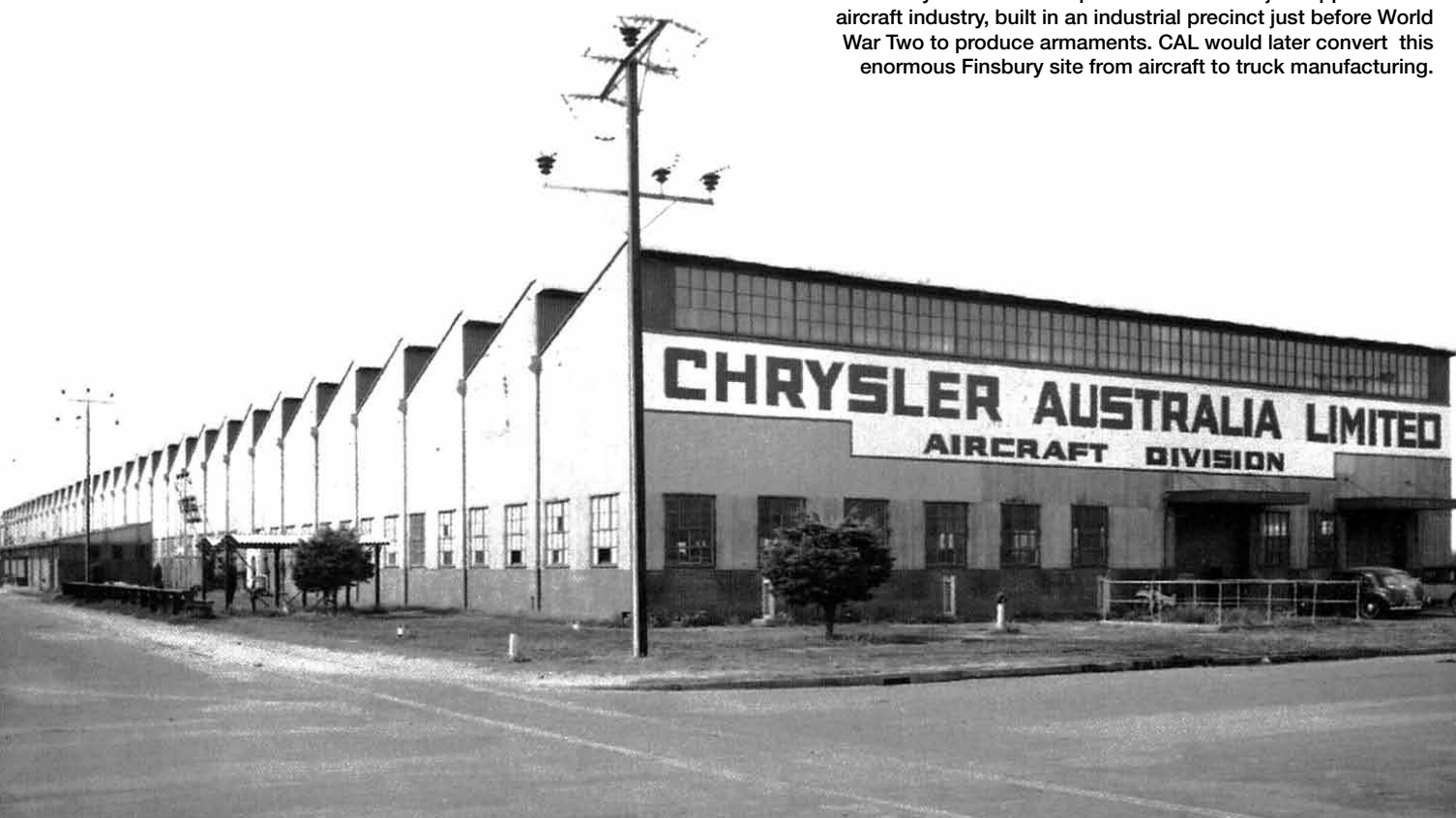
As Plymouth, Dodge and DeSoto cars were soon flowing from the production lines at Keswick, Morris, Standard, Nash and Studebaker bodies were being finished at Mile End, while Dodge and Fargo trucks and their International clones were being produced at Finsbury. Australian Chrysler Royals were first built at Keswick, and later the trim and wiring looms for the future Valiants were fitted there.

Turning right at the tee junction onto Audley Street, the black building numbered #70 you'll see in front is the old press shop and the main Chrysler truck assembly plant is on the left as you drive past.

Finsbury continued to roll out Dodge and Commer trucks from here until this plant was closed in the late 1970s once Mitsubishi imports were declared more economical.

The entire factory precinct used to be called Finsbury, but it is now part of the suburb named Athol Park.

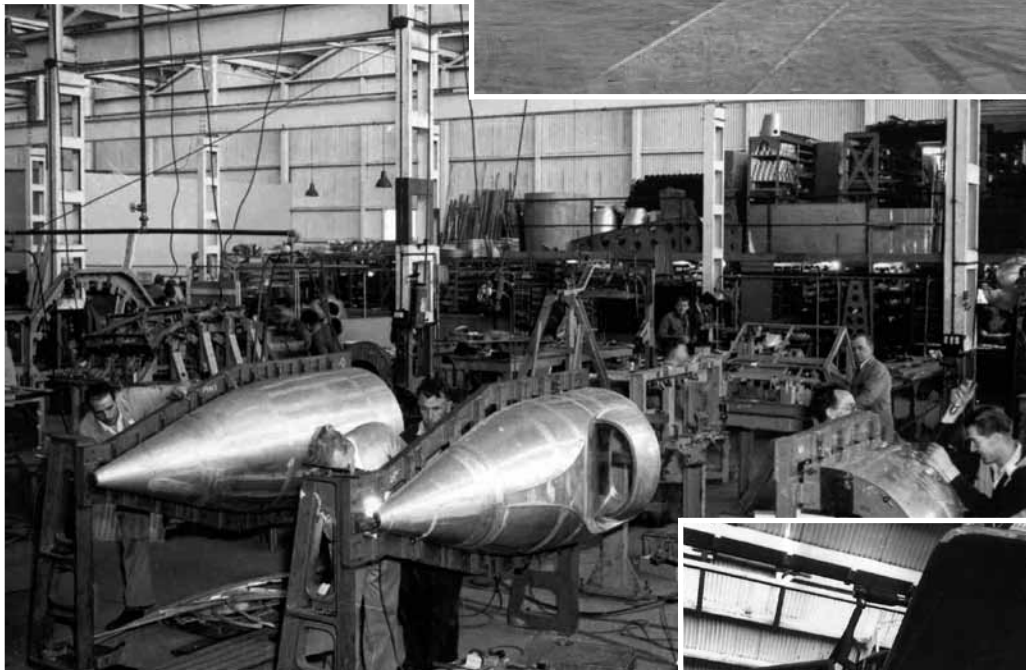
Chrysler inherited a plant that was a major supplier to the aircraft industry, built in an industrial precinct just before World War Two to produce armaments. CAL would later convert this enormous Finsbury site from aircraft to truck manufacturing.





Cars bound for Keswick did share the early Body Line at Finsbury with the trucks for a time. Here we see Dodge truck cabs and Plymouth sedans simultaneously in process during the late 1930s.

Dodge Fargo trucks in the Finsbury yards ready for export to Indonesia in the late 1940s.



Airframes being assembled for the RAAF.



Aircraft components being manufactured during World War Two.



A Dodge ATA cab about to meet its chassis on the Finsbury production line, early 1970s.

SOUTH ROAD, TONSLEY

If Keswick was the seat of the throne of the old republic, then Tonsley Park was meant to be the new capital of the empire, throughout a golden age.

The 1962 Valiant was slightly dearer than the equivalent Holden or Falcon models, but it was bigger and far more powerful. It immediately won a reputation for being a superior performer and its popularity led Chrysler into a \$36 million expansion plan to build over 50,000 units a year. Construction of the Tonsley Park manufacturing plant began in 1963, and by May of that year, the 'Australian Valiant' sedan was introduced.

Purchased by Chrysler Australia in 1955, the 71 hectare site at the end of South Road wasn't productively utilised until 1963 when it was expanded to include operations from Keswick, Mile End and Finsbury to provide for the Valiant AP5. Streamlining future production was a prime objective.

With the condition of local content increasing progressively, and a design adapted for local conditions, this 'AP5' Valiant strengthened the brand's position. The Australian Valiant AP5

station wagon followed in November 1963. In March 1964 the first Valiant was completed at the new plant, and in April it was announced that the \$36 million expansion program had been doubled to \$72 million.

The mid to late 1960's were halcyon times for Chrysler Australia because the company could not satisfy demand despite regular increases in production. By this time was the eleventh largest company (of any kind) in Australia and the second largest exporter of cars. 1969 was Chrysler's best year with 42,654 Valiants sold. Net profit was a record \$7,225,931 and total Chrysler Australia Ltd sales stood at 66,948 units.

Most people in 1969 thought that Chrysler's great automotive success would continue into the 1970's, but it was not to be. A series of misfortunes, fuel crises, quality control problems, unpopular models and blunders saw the Valiant lose sales during the early 1970's.

Tonsley Park plant had been extended ten years after to boost Valiant production to 200 per eight-hour shift in the most modern vehicle building

plant in the southern hemisphere. That figure was soon lifted to 250 per shift, with 200 engines per shift being produced at Lonsdale. At that time, Chrysler's market share was optimistically predicted to rise from 10% to 15% by the end of 1974. Mitsubishi Lancers (a name borrowed from Dodge) and Galants replaced the Hillmans and would later be followed by Sigmas.

The marque then slipped further and further down the list of best sellers, despite such trump cards as the mighty Charger sports coupe. Many problems were sorted out and the company became the local pioneer of such features as electronic ignition and computer aided fuel management. It also produced the fastest accelerating Australian production car ever made, the awesome E-49 Charger.

But the fightback came too late as public confidence was down, and with reduced sales combined with an ailing US parent company, the funds needed to retool for new models were no longer available. In retrospect it seems one major mistake was that Valiant prices were held back in the late 1960's to meet Holden and Ford head-on.



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SOUTH ROAD, TONSLEY PARK

Then: An evocative photo taken in 1956 of the Tonsley Park site before the any of the original fences and gates had been taken down. How South Road has changed.



And now: one of the last shots of the Tonsley Park site shortly before Mitsubishi closed in 2008. At its height during the 1970s, Tonsley Park was a vast state-of-the-art plant, virtually a city in itself.

When this happened, people seemed to stop considering the car 'a cut above' its opposition. By 1977 Valiant was still producing a variation of its six year old VH model. Sales that year slumped to 17,500 units. Nevertheless, South Road was making good progress in the smaller-car field.

The US parent company had bought into the vehicle division of the Japanese Mitsubishi company and in 1971 Chrysler Australia arranged to assemble Mitsubishi's Galant at Tonsley. The Galant wore a Valiant badge and succeeded brilliantly in Australia, giving Chrysler the share of the small-car market it had failed to win with the Simca and Hillman.

Chrysler expanded once again, this time to manufacture the Sigma, a local version of Mitsubishi's Japanese Galant model. The factory continued producing Valiants in ever diminishing numbers but with higher standards of equipment and finish. Small car sales went from strength to strength and in 1978 Sigma became the top selling four-cylinder vehicle on the market. Despite this success, Chrysler Australia Ltd ran into severe financial problems.

In the US the Chrysler Corporation had run into even harder times and was on the brink of being closed. Former Ford president Lee Iacocca took

charge of the US Chrysler Corporation during the late 1970's and set in motion some drastic measures to keep the company afloat.

These included selling off almost all of Chrysler's overseas interests, including the Australian operation. Ninety-nine percent of the equity of Chrysler Australia Ltd was acquired by Mitsubishi, and in October 1980 the name was changed to Mitsubishi Motors Australia Ltd. The last Valiant, the CM, was produced in August 1981. And the Sigma was replaced by the Magna which, alas, died with Mitsubishi downunder.



AP5s on the body building line in 1964.



AP6s on the slat conveyor in 1965.

VEs queueing off the assembly line in 1968.



A giant body transfer hoist lifts a VH shell in 1972.



A CM receiving its undercarriage in 1978.

CHRISTIE ROAD, LONSDALE

In 1967 Chrysler opened the Lonsdale engine plant to meet Commonwealth government local content requirements, as the company gained third place in the national sales chart with 13.5 per cent of the new vehicle market. By that year Chrysler had gained control of Rootes Group, acquiring its Port Melbourne plant, and was producing Hillman Minx, Gazelle and Imp cars, soon followed by the Hunter, Hustler and the Humber Super Snipe.

With CAL kicking off in Victoria, the demand for local content just kept rising in leaps and bounds. It went from 1962's minor assembly

work on the R and S Series to 65 per cent in 1965 and an average of 95 per cent in 1967. By that year some models had as much as 97 per cent local content.

The Lonsdale plant was properly finished in 1969 at a cost of \$60 million and tooled up specifically for the impending arrival of the all-Australian 245 Hemi 6 cylinder.

This modern, lightweight engine replaced the venerable Slant Six in the new VG model, introduced in 1970 - increasing local content, although the 225 continued to be built for export vehicles and trucks for a few more years.

V8 engine components were also imported from Canada or Mexico and 'built up' here too. Even towards the end of Chrysler Australia's time, the Lonsdale foundry continued to produce aluminium and iron castings and assembled the Mitsubishi Magna V6 engines right up to 1980.

Today, if you take the Southern Expressway to Christie Road, Lonsdale, you can park within sight of the 1,150,000 square feet Lonsdale engine plant and still see the fading giant letters of Chrysler Australia Limited along the factory roofline, from across the Impound yards behind the cyclone fencing.

Shades of a distant past. The giant fading letters on the roofline of what was once the Lonsdale engine plant as seen from Christie Road today. The yards are now a police impound lot.



The factory-sponsored Daredevils Stunt Team in their VHs at the gates in 1971.

Hemis being assembled at Lonsdale in late 1971.

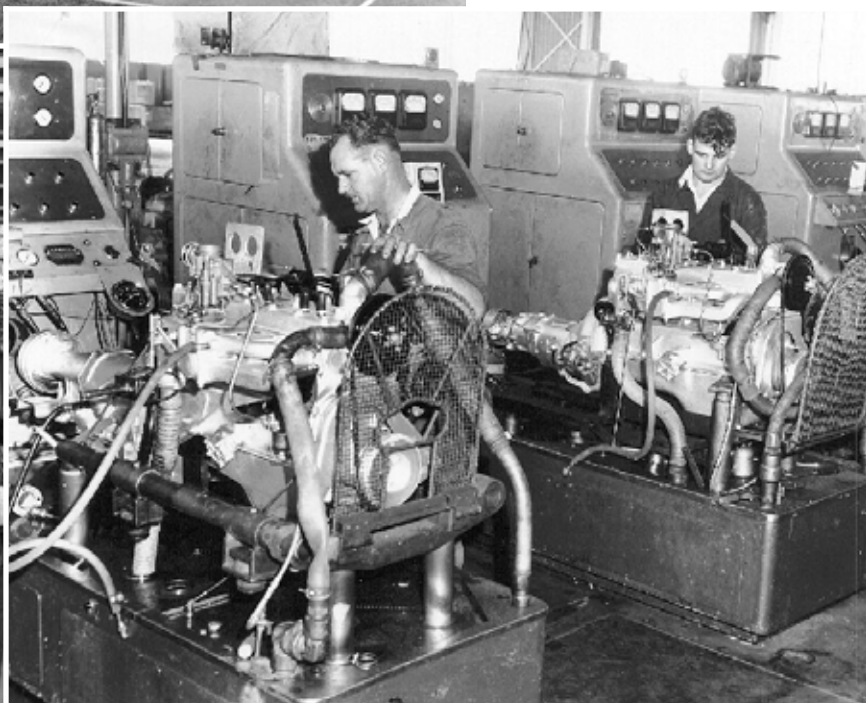


The Daredevils line up outside the Lonsdale plant for a promotional visit.

Engine blocks and components are cast in the foundry before passing to the machining shops. After assembly each engine is "hot tested" and thoroughly inspected before shipment to Tonsley Park.



A Hillman hanging in a body-drop at the Lonsdale engineshop.



It'll probably be painted over one day, but just like the Keswick letters, for now the Lonsdale factory roof still carries this giant fingerprint - a memorial to the glorydays of our marque.





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rear window and front screen.

Steve 0458 760 600

2.26 E5 Dodge Tray Top.

Red. 7500 lbs. Kew Side Valve 6 cyl.

Motor only 4000 miles since rebuilt.

Transmission manual 4 on the floor.

Tyres front 700x16 8ply. Dual Rear 650x16 8ply.

4 spare wheels. Approx \$1800

Bob Wakefield 0407 394 860

VJ Town and Country Ute

– needs full restoration.

John (Two Wells) 0419 146 294

1970 Dodge Sportsman Van.

V8 on gas. Barn doors on both sides.

\$16500

Lee Rothe 0403 014 448

CM Wagon Suit Restoration.

418,000KM. 245 Auto. Electric Tail Gate.

Complete car with lots of rust but too good to just
wreck. Motor runs but trans needs work. \$500.

Iain 0417802474

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worth a look \$12,000 on window.

CARS WANTED

AP5 - AP6 or VC

Brodie 0412 888 897

AP5/6 or VC

to buy at Christmas time.

Cathy 0433 755 132

PARTS FOR SALE

222 hyd cam, Keith Black 30 thou over pistons,

SRI rods . 4000km. almost new

Cathy 0433 755 132

VC V8 All original Call Spil Dais

4 NOS VF770 VIP Wheel Trims

suit 5.5" rim only.

Herman 0412 108 990

Wrecking:

AP5 Safari;

2 x VC Valiant Sedans;

2 x Valiant Safari;

2 x CM Wagons.

John (Two Wells) 0419 146 294

Wrecking:

CM Regal (Possibly Le Baron but not sure). All

trim and interior available. No running gear. Silver
with blue interior.

James 0415 150 166

PARTS WANTED

Bucket seats to suit an AP6,

also after an auto gearknob

Steve Tabaka 0412 802 948

Panel Strips for R Series Valiant,

Donna Biddick/Dean Shone

0411 033 765 or dean@shone.com.au

Original Radio for Charger or VH.

Preferably from 770 or Regal.

Damian 0412 693 213

2x14" x 5 1/2 " VG Pacer Rims

Mike 0409 076 832

1970 VG Valiant Heater Demister Assembly
(blower type).

Rosemary 8367 5238

Sump to suit Hemi 6.

Pat 0409 404 940

Air filter assembly for CL 318. Non ELB.

Robert 0405 425 960

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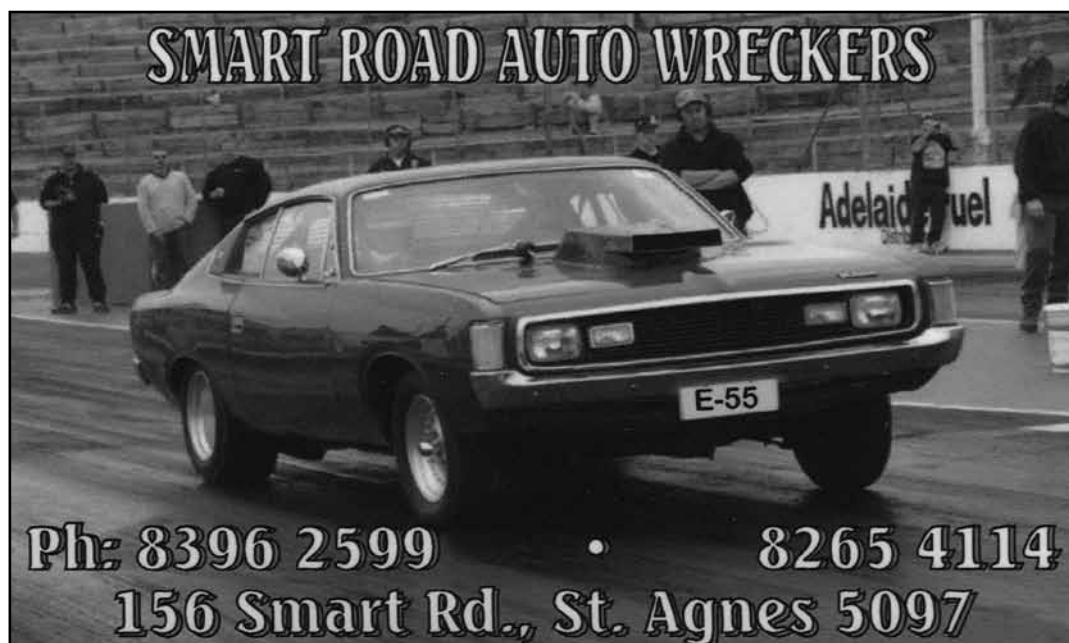
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September:

1st: Drive your old car to work.

1st: Bethany Reserve, Bethany via Tanunda.

BYO Lunch at 12:30pm

11th: Gawler Swap Meet @ Showgrounds

13th: CCCSA Meeting

– 7:30pm, Combined Car Club Rooms, Port Road, Croydon.

13th – 18th: Sept Supaloc Classic Targa Adelaide Rally

<http://www.classictargaadelaide.com.au>

16th – 18th: Sept Toop & Toop Rock 'n Roll Festival at Victor Harbor

<http://www.rocknrollfestival.com.au/>

25th September Bay to Birdwood Classic

<http://www.baytobirdwood.com.au/index.html> (Note entries are now closed).

Club members meet at 6am. Location TBA.

October:

1st: Last of the Chrome Bumpers – other side of Melbourne

1st: Karoonda Centenary.

Main Street Parade, lots of car clubs. Meet near freeway.

11th: CCCSA Meeting

– 7:30pm, Combined Car Club Rooms, Port Road, Croydon.

November:

12th & 13th: Mopar Rumble, Sydney

TBA CCCSA End of Year Run.

Suggestion to return to Ankara at Walkers Flat.

If you know of an event not mentioned here contact
Hugh at huanddi@bigpond.com

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PIG, WE'RE GOING ON A HOLIDAY & FOR ONCE WE'RE DOING SOMETHING THAT DOESN'T INVOLVE CARS!

HUH?

I'VE DECIDED WE'RE GOING TO SPEND A WEEK IN THE MOUNTAINS, CAMPING & GETTING BACK TO NATURE

BUT...BUT...

NO BUTS, WE'RE GOING!

IN THE BUSH...

WHAT A LOVELY SPOT YOU PICKED, PIG! THE PEACE, THE QUIET...AREN'T YOU GLAD WE CAME?



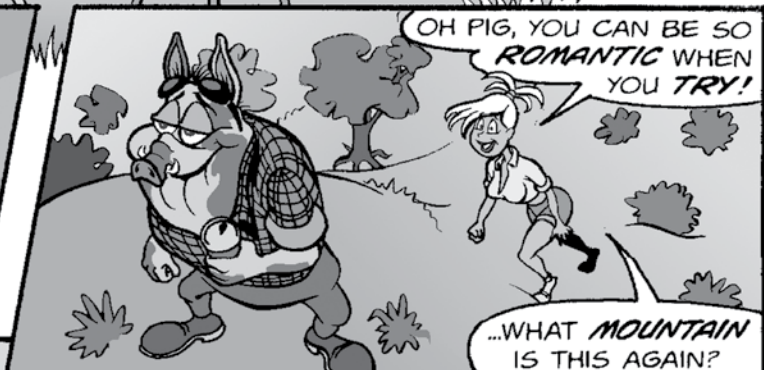
YOU BET I AM, TRUDY.

I MIGHT JUST WANDER UP THE HILL & CHECK OUT THE VIEW.

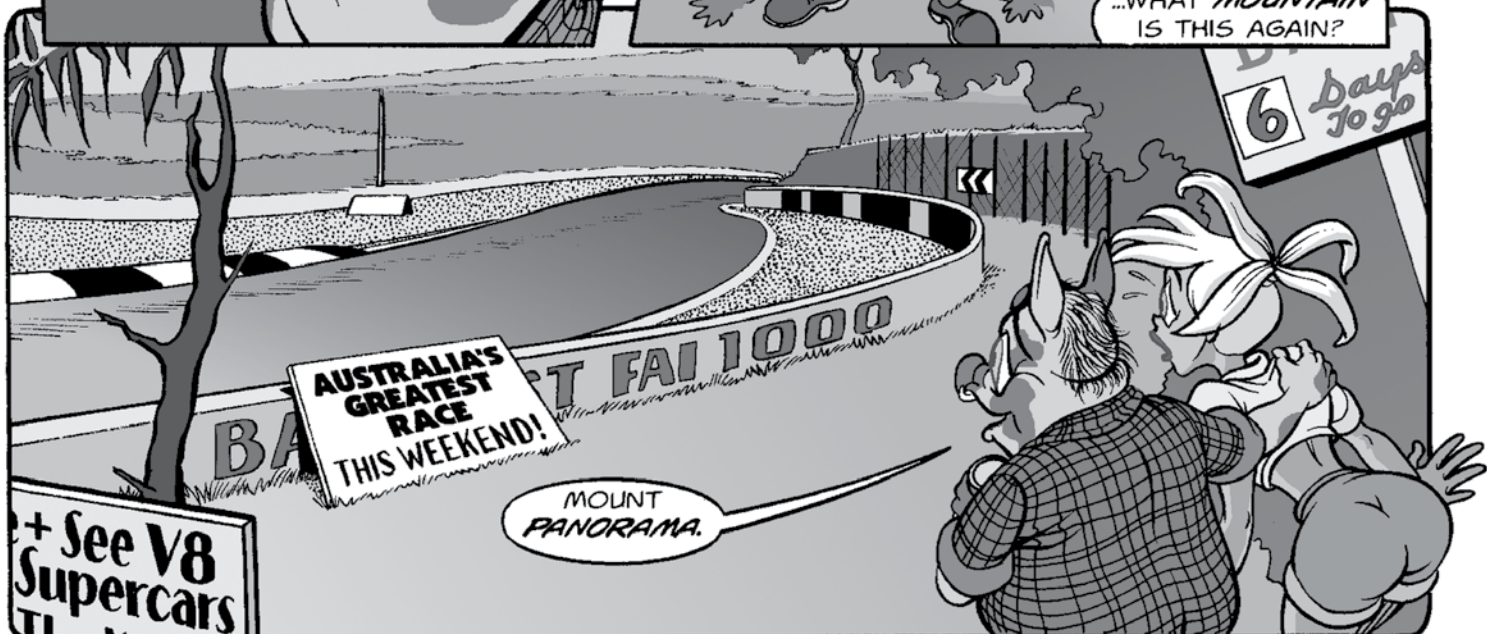
AHHH...NOW THAT'S A SIGHT THAT MAKES YOU FEEL GOOD INSIDE.



OH PIG, YOU CAN BE SO ROMANTIC WHEN YOU TRY!



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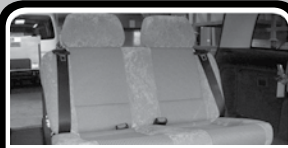
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