



# SWALLOW TALES

The Official Newsletter for the Members of the  
SIMCA CAR CLUB AUSTRALIA Inc

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John Brown's Matra-Simca Bagheera



**SIMCA CAR CLUB AUSTRALIA Inc.**

Dedicated to the preservation and restoration of SIMCA cars for the purpose of maintaining the Simca marquee as part of the motoring history of Australia.

The Club was formed to provide technical information and spare parts assistance to Simca club members.

The Club has an affiliation with Simca owners and clubs throughout the world, permitting a global update of Simca activities to our members.

The Club maintains a register of Simca owners through our specialist Registrar for both Simca and Simca Vedette.

The views or opinions offered by members in this newsletter – Swallow Tales may not necessarily represent the views or opinions of the Committee of Management.

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## From the Editor's Desk – *by Iain Dyer*

### Greetings All Club Members

If we all sat down and had a quiz on Aronde and Vedette history and spec's, we would have a pretty knowledgeable forum. Be fun actually. I recently thought to myself, what do we know about Matra's, an important model in Simcas history. Who better to ask than Matra expert and good friend John Brown. I asked John to provide us with the run down on the models and include some photos. The cover photo is of his Matra-Bagheera, which he has owned and cherished since 1975-personally I think the lines of the car are absolutely gorgeous, especially when you compare them with some models of Lotus, which from some angles, appeared awkward. Apart from the Elan. I found the article very interesting including reminiscing on great years in the club.

Our thoughts are with John, as he has had to have the recently replaced knee joint taken out due to poor surgery when being fitted. This operation is potentially dangerous and extremely painful to say the least. On behalf of the whole club we wish him a safe journey on this second fitment.

Sorry to hear that Rob Verhagen has broken his ankle over in Egypt. Possibly my fault. He probably fell off the camel I provided him with in the last edition. Camels and alcohol don't mix, but then one must not cast aspersions.

I have been slogging away at getting my 90A finished. With only one arm that works properly, my progress is akin to Long John Silver playing soccer in the world cup. A promise of one of Leila's country style roast dinners and free alcohol, I have been able to get a lot of help from friends. As this goes to print the car is at the upholsterers, which will complete the major work. Blowed if we can get the boot to fit right. We have managed to scrape my expensive two pack paint job. One of Australia's foremost car restorers, Peter Leech (Grand Champion, Pebble Beach. USA.) is taking over, thank goodness. I can't wait to get her out around the local car shows. It will be the only Simca registered in the State.

Thanks to all the contributors who, this time excelled in getting their material in quickly. It makes it a lot easier to put together a co-hesive edition.

Congratulations to Stephen Maloney with his new purchase, a Simca Aronde. Must have been a great adventure driving back from Qld. Obviously he made it back ok, however if it had been a Citroen ....? Sorry Stephen, I don't mind them either. (see story from Stephen.)

Speaking of Arondes Luke and Michelle's has thrown a wobbly. We know Michelle is the centre of attention at present, may be the Etoile is a wee bit jealous. It seems to have its own personality that car. No doubt with a bit of attention from Luke, she will soon be back to her perky self. Luke and Geoff Roses P60's are just about the two signature cars in the club. Speaking of P60's I notice from the NSW report the McGills P60 is for sale. Anyone looking for a lovely useable car should snap this up, as they don't come on the market in this condition that often.

I heard a whisper that Harsha will soon have for sale, a lovely original 90A, obviously not the Hodge car, but one he was restoring. Last time I heard the Grimshaw family also had a tidy



90A for sale. Morrie is familiar with this car. Anyone wanting phone numbers contact myself or Morrie.

I must thank Morrie and John Brown for the extensive help and supply of parts over the last few weeks. Morrie had a part I needed and he went to a lot of trouble making sure it was in good nick, posted it in the late afternoon and was on my doorstep by 10.00 am the next day.

I just checked on the computer and Virgin had flights from Melbourne to Auckland for \$175.00 one way. Obviously we want as many as possible to attend so we need to book very soon. The advice I have from Colin Smith is as follows; members will need to be in Napier by the evening of the 17<sup>th</sup> October when there will be a get together. There will be a tour on Sat 18<sup>th</sup> with the AGM being held that evening. The following day Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> hopefully a small run and display and a chance to play trains. Leila and I will be staying a few more days, so any like minded members, might be able to put some days in together.

Finally, Stephen reports averaging 45 mpg in an old Simca. Hear that Hyundai, Kia, Toyota, no multipoint injection or computers. They will be delivering our bread and milk by horse and cart next. Wouldn't that be nice!

*Good health and safe travels,*

*Iain and Leila.*

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## Blondes & Frozen Crabs



A lawyer boarded an airplane in New Orleans, with a box of frozen crabs and asked a blonde stewardess to take care of them for him. She took the box and promised to put it in the crew's refrigerator.

He advised her that he was holding her personally responsible for them staying frozen, mentioning in a very haughty manner that he was a lawyer and proceeded to rant at her about what would happen if she let them thaw out. Needless to say, she was annoyed by his behaviour.

Shortly before landing in New York, she used the intercom to announce to the entire cabin, "Would the lawyer who gave me the crabs in New Orleans, please raise your hand?" Not one hand went up... so she took them home and ate them and they were simply delicious.

Two lessons here:

1. Lawyers aren't as smart as they think they are.
2. Blondes aren't as dumb as some people might think.





## PRESIDENTS REPORT *by Vince Parisi*

Hello one and all, I can't believe how quickly the year has gone by, I hope that you are all well and have been enjoying your Simca's whatever condition or state they may be in. Great to hear that many have contributed to this newsletter as our busy editor has relayed to me. Keep those stories coming as I'm sure like me we love hearing about anything Simca. I have my Vedette back together after blowing a head gasket in November you may see a couple of photos elsewhere of the refurbished heads and I have commenced work on the ex Ted Luko Vedette, also maybe a couple of photos in the newsletter.. And I managed to attend and complete a great weekend at the Phillip Island historic event on the 7, 8 and 9th of March with my 105 Alfa.. Well onward with the next part of the year with the AGM NZ approaching quickly, I understand those hard working Kiwis Colin and Lucy Smith are arranging a great event for us to attend, I'm sure we are looking forward to going over to NZ and spending some time with them. More on that in the newsletter. Geoff Rose would like me to add some comments re the passing of his beloved Father. He is very grateful for the expressions of sympathy and would like to thank everyone for their support at this difficult time, Geoff is (as usual) keeping himself very busy with lots of projects on the go, one being the formation of a Simca Racing Team which we have been discussing for some time!!!! Watch this space. Stay safe and strong and keep enjoying those SIMCA'S.

*Best Regards*

*Vince.*

## For Sale

**1958 90A is original no mods needs re chrome and located Queensland.  
Asking price \$3,000.00**

**Please phone Geoff Lee on 02 4963 4210**



## SECRETARY'S REPORT by *Morrie Barrett*

Hi to all

On a sad note we record the passing of Geoff Rose's father Athol. An appropriate sympathy card was forwarded to Geoff and brothers on behalf of our membership.

If you are planning to visit New Zealand and attend the General Meeting in October please advise Collin and Lucy Smith of your intentions in order to assist their planning. Margaret and I plan to fly to Christchurch spend some time on the South Island then travel on the ferry to the North Island attend the GM spend a few more days on North Island and return home from Auckland.

Thanks to all who have renewed their Membership receipts will be posted in the near future along with an adhesive windscreen Simca badge approximately 70mm in diameter, additional stickers can be purchased from the Secretary at a cost of \$5.00.



Smiling faces at the "Lost in the 50s museum."





## Western Whispers – WA State Representative's Report - *By John Pickles* SWALLOW TALES – Club Newsletter

Autumn has crept upon us once again and it's hard to believe that a quarter of the year has come and gone with little to show for it. This last three months has been devoid of any Simca activity to speak of and apart from Mark Bird's Simca 1000 and Darrel's P60 Racer all others are off the road.

Darrel had an almost disastrous outing with the P60 on the Collie track a few weeks back, found he was losing traction on many parts of the circuit only to find out after the race that the track had been used for "Drifting" and that diesel fuel had been poured on the surface to enhance the performance. It's amazing how much attention this little Simca has gained in its time on the track a few weeks ago I was given a couple of photographs taken of Darrel's car when he was competing down in Albany.

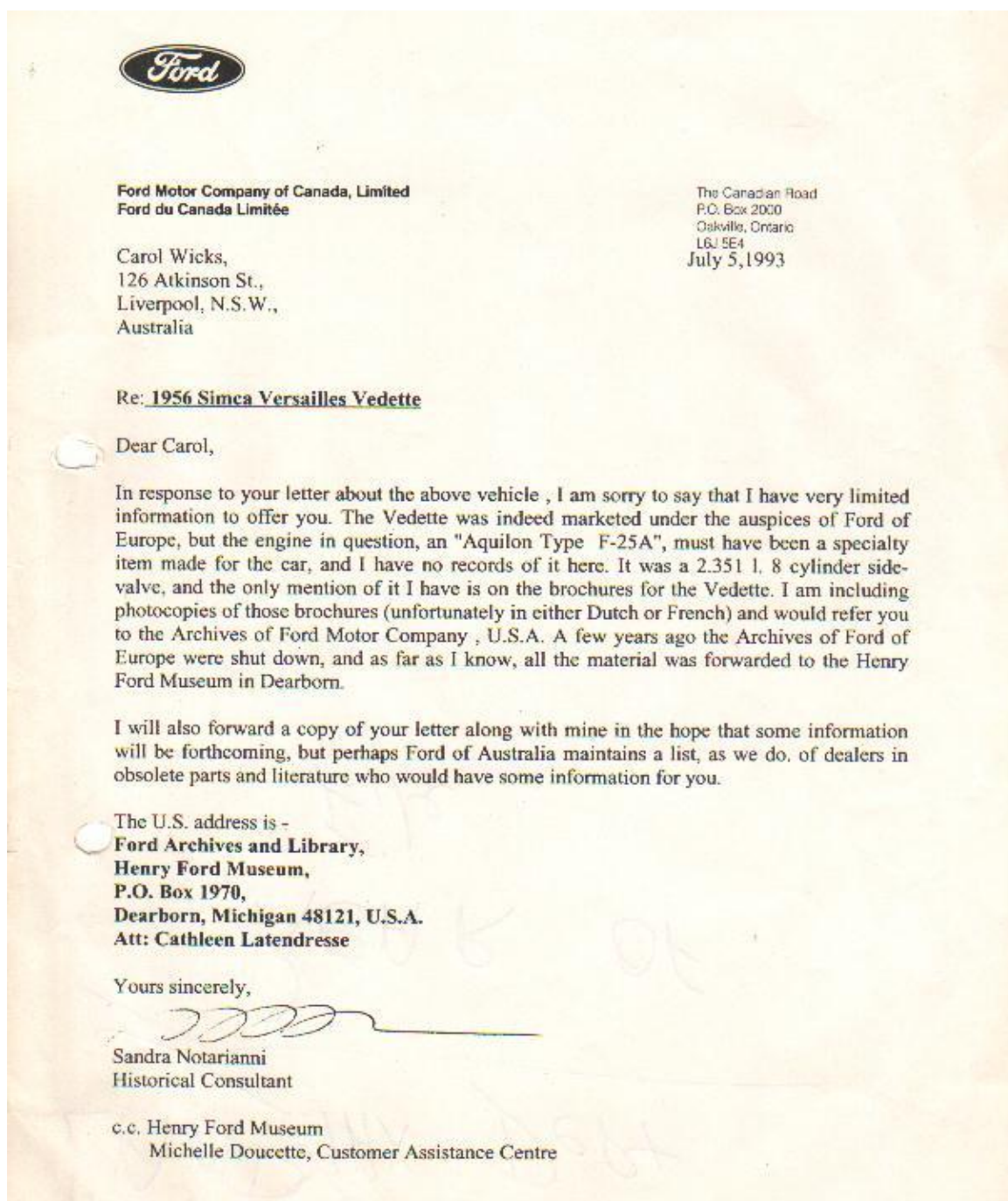


Our new member Mark Bird has been out and about in his Simca 1000 and can't believe how nice it is to drive. Now the car is mechanically spot on, Mark's long term intentions is to completely strip the body, repair where necessary and repaint it in the original colour, in the meantime he is enjoying it just as it is.

Ian Williams is steadily progressing with the Vedette, he has made the extractors which have now been ceramic coated and ready to install, the seats and trim are back from the motor trimmers. Ian was not able to get a good match for the flecked vinyl material used by Chrysler Australia on their cars in the early 1960's but found an almost perfect match in a cloth material which you can see from the photo's look terrific.

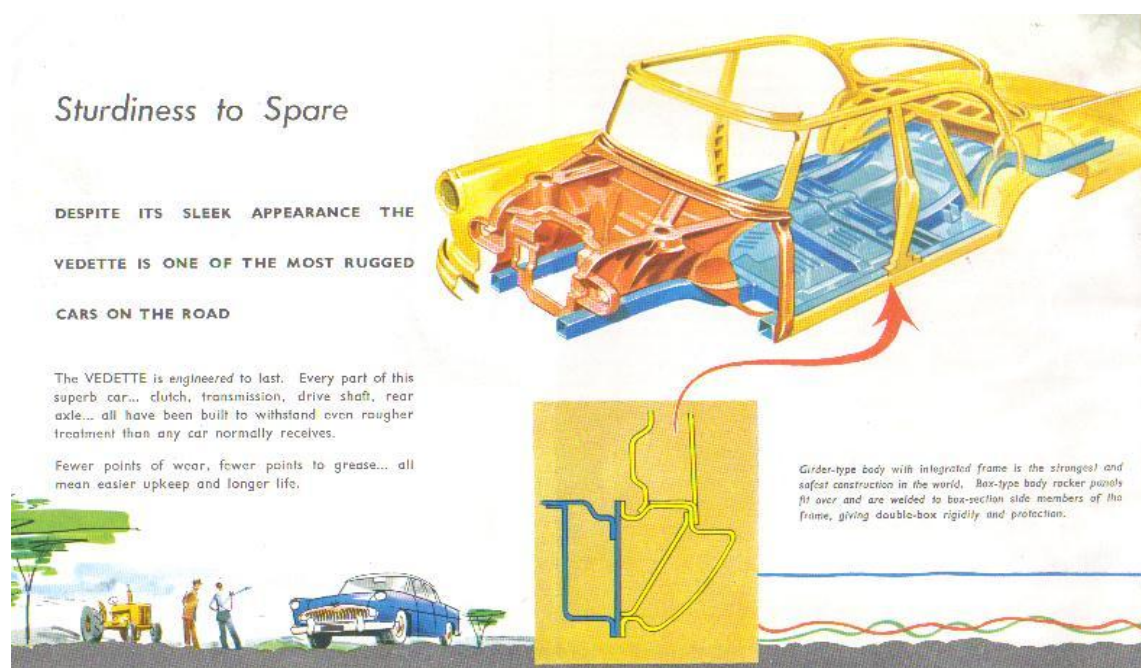


I have a copy of an interesting letter sent to Carol Wicks from the Ford Motor Company in Canada in response to her request for information on the Vedette "Versailles" which she owned at the time. Just like the current staff of Chrysler in Australia this letter shows the ignorance that employees have of the history of the company they work for. Carol sold the car many years ago and the new owner was making a drag car out of the body, unfortunately it ended up being destroyed in a shed fire.





Most exciting news for the ears of us Vedette owners is the whispers that in NSW a Vedette “Convertible” is under construction, this will be a unique vehicle not only in Australia but pretty well world wide. We know that the French coach builder “Chapron” built two 2-door Vedette “Presidence” convertibles for a governor of a French colony and the year after was commissioned to build two 4-door convertibles for the French President Charles De Gaulle. I am aware of Chapron also building 2 more 2-door convertibles for private individuals and there have been a couple more done privately over the years but none in Australia. I am told that after removing the roof of the Aussie car there was no more than 2mm flex in the body, perhaps the illustration below indicates how strongly built is the Vedette.



### FOR SALE

**ENGINE BEARING SETS: For the Simca from 1949 to 1956 – Mains, Big End and Rod – Std & O/Size**

**\$15.00 plus postage (set) Email: [jpickles@dodo.com.au](mailto:jpickles@dodo.com.au)**



A number of years ago I was fortunate in obtaining a number of original documents prepared by Chrysler in America and Australia. Among the material prepared by Chrysler Australia is a 28 page document dated 26.03.1964 outlining the general specifications for the "AS6/2 4 DOOR DELUXE PASSENGER SEDAN" which was generally known as the SIMCA 1300. From the contents of this document it appears Chrysler Australia had prepared this document in readiness to assemble the car in Australia but as history now tells us with Chrysler taking over "ROOTES" they decided to replace the Simca in Australia with the Hillman Hunter. I may talk with our editor and include these documents in Swallow Tales as a series. Speaking of Rootes in Australia, I have heard that Chrysler at the end of assembly of the Humber Snipe they built a batch of 8-10 Snipes with the Chrysler V8 engine, does anyone know if these cars have survived?

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## *My Living Will*

*Last night, my kids and I were sitting in the living room and I said to them,*

*"I never want to live in a vegetative state, dependant on some machine and fluids from a bottle. If that happens, just pull the plug."*

*They got up, unplugged the computer and threw out my wine!*

*The little bastards.*



## VICTORIAN REPRESENTATIVES REPORT – *by Stephen Maloney*

First of all I have to thank one of God's true gentlemen Max O'Connor for all his assistance. Now the adventure begins, I flew up to Brisbane on Sunday morning and was picked up at the airport by Max we then drove back to Max's house where I saw the Aronde for the first time in the flesh and it was love at first sight.

We then proceeded to check the car out from top to bottom finding that the stop lights were not working we set about rewiring the system and changing the stop light switch which had caused all the problems. After checking all oil levels and doing a minor tune up we were ready for the trip home to Melbourne?????.

First thing Monday morning max and I went to get a permit to drive the car home and then we set off for Melbourne with all the apprehension of a new father.

The trip through QLD was a real adventure with numerous road users waving and commenting on the Simca we finally made it to Armidale on the first night. From there the next morning we set off for Lithgow in NSW by this time I was really enjoying my self until outside of Scone where I heard behind me a police siren, I pulled over and asked what was wrong and they wondered where the Number plates were? I then showed them the permit and we spent the next 15 minutes talking about the Simca and the adventure.

I arrived in Lithgow and visited all the family and set off the following day for Melbourne via the Olympic Way through to Albury and finally on to Melbourne arriving on Thursday night. The Simca performed perfectly and returned around 45 miles to the gallon at 85 kph all in all it was one of the most enjoyable drives that I have ever undertaken.

### **Vic Report.**

We as a club have been invited to join both the CCOCA (Classic Citroen Owners Club) and the Reno Club on there outings in Victoria First outing is on the 27 April for rogaining adventure around Phillip Island and a trip to Merboo North with CCOCA later on. The All European Car show is coming up on 30 March at Flemington Race Course.

*Regards from Victoria.*





## **SOUTH AUSTRALIA REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT - by *Robert Stapley***

Hi everyone,

The first national Simca Rally was held in Adelaide in 2001. We had a good representation of cars attending from all over Australia. Some who attended were, if my memory serves me correctly, Kerry Ryan from Queensland, (p60 Monaco). Geoff rose N.S.W. (90a sedan) Ray and Nance Hodge VIC. (90a) John pickles W.A. (Matra) Phil McKumisky N.S.W. (Vedette). Royce Juttner s.a. (simca huit) Stan André s.a. (90a). Richard Gibson S.A. (p60 wagon). James Duggin S.A. (p60 wagon). Ross and Peggy Fleming. S.A. (p60) and yours truly with a p60 sedan don blesing from Yankalilla with the Vedette now owned by the Rogers in Whyalla.

Sadly some members in the intervening years have passed on or cars have changed hands but hopefully some of those cars we saw in 2001 will be back in 2015.

If my proposal to hold the 8<sup>th</sup> National Rally in S.A. is accepted I expect approximately 20 cars will attend, of course the more the merrier.

The 8<sup>th</sup> National Simca Rally will be held during the week preceding the 2015 bay to Birdwood rally as it was in 2001 the bay to Birdwood rally is always held on the last Sunday in September. 2014 is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of production of Simcas in S.A. (1964).

This is of some significance at this stage of history considering the current situation of vehicle manufacturing in Australia. I have done some groundwork and hope to have Simca as the feature car in 2015. This would mean our dedicated parking area at the start and finish with a good opportunity to show off our cars all parked together.

The planning continues and hopefully next swallow tales will have more information but now is the time to start planning for 2015.

*Cheers,  
Robert Stapley*

### **More photos from New Zealand**



**Austin 7 fire truck on display**



**A fine pair of Vedettes**



## NEW SOUTH WALES REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT - Barbara Scanes

Hi from NSW

It has been a very hot summer with very bad bushfires in NSW especially in the Blue Mountains near us. With autumn upon us hopefully cooler weather and much needed rain is near.

It is with sadness that I report the passing of Geoff Rose's father in February this year. Morrie, Don and I attended his funeral where we heard that he was in his 100<sup>th</sup> year, was a retired Naval Officer and had led a very full life. Our thoughts are with Geoff and his family at this time.

Morrie's Grande Large is now finished and was spotted at the Australian Pioneer Village, Wilberforce on Australia Day together with Don in his P60 Aronde. It was a great day with record crowds attending to celebrate Australia Day.

Last December Don was tickled pink to be asked by his granddaughter Caitlyn to chauffeur her in his Simca to her Year 6 formal. It caused quite a stir.

Richard Laney is recovering after a small trip (down the stairs) and is at present converting a vedette to a 2 door convertible. A report on his progress is in this issue.

In February a group of us went to "Lost in the 50's" Museum near Newcastle and had a great time. The museum is well worth a visit, the collection of cars was extensive and the memorabilia unbelievable. I would like to see more outings of this nature where members can enjoy each others company and share Simca stories and knowledge. If you are interested in participating or can offer suggestions of places of interest please let me know.



NSW members are reminded that the NSW French Car Day at Silverwater is on Sunday 13<sup>TH</sup> July 2014. It would be great to see a large contingent of Simcas there on that day.



**Left: One of the many rear ends at the museum.**





A fabulous line up.

### FOR SALE

Ian and Rosemary McKill have decided to sell their 1962-63 P60 Aronde. It is grey with red upholstery. Anyone interested should contact Ian 02 9528 7630.

*Regards*  
*Barbara Scanes*  
*NSW Rep*





## NEW ZEALAND REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT

Greetings from out East

It has been a busy year so far, on the 10th Jan, Lucy and I celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary, we and family and friends gathered at the local R S A on the 2nd February and took our best cars to Daneverke for a display. We were only 5 out of 647 cars. Richard came from Wellington with his Chamboard and Nash Metropolitan. On the 15th Feb we attended the Clive market day and fair a little spot between Napier and Hastings on the coast road where the little red engine missed by one for people's choice. A hotrodded 32 ford took out the prize, you can't understand some people. The 9th of this month saw the whole mob at Windsor Park including the 01 sw just got mobile enough to drive on and off the trailer still have to sort the exhaust and the rear brake equaliser it has been 5 years so far, I also took my mobility scooter (go for in Aus slang) it sure saves the legs when touring the other sites.

Ivan has a new job on a long haul container truck I seldom see him now so good old dad has a bigger work load now, speaking of which we now have a set of brand new o/size pistons for the 1301. The mods on the Austin 7 clutch works fine it has a 3inch travel for very little pressure hard to get used to after 50 years of seven driving.

And now for the bad news, my recent surgery for the reflux problem has come undone I'm off to the specialist in two weeks to see what can be done. the AGM is coming along slowly there is a picture of our local mr art deco bertie who has offered his services to chair the meeting be mc for the time you folk are here free of charge some of you clever people will have picked up on his nice little Austin 7 sports car which is his trade mark. We are still hoping to hold a barbie on the Friday night of the 17th Oct so you will need to be aware that the last flight ex Wellington gets here at 8pm and the last one ex Auckland lands at 9pm. Both these flights I feel will be too late to dine out on however not to worry, you will be met whatever flight you will be on if you are arriving by road don't be afraid to ask for directions if needed also chapter three of Steve's big o/e is on the way.

*Colin Lucy Ivan / Jan*



Clive Feb



a kindy visit  
art deco weekend



## Letter to the Editor –

### *Matra-Simca Bagheera – My Story by John Brown*

My Matra Simca Coupe was purchased from a Pickles Auctions in Sydney Australia 1985 so I intend to convey to our Club Readers a short summary on the history of the Matra Bagheera plus a brief summary of my personal experiences with this vehicle, which has been an integral part of my life.

### **MATRA- The Marque**

Primarily an aeronautical company, Matra first became involved in sports cars in 1964. Later Matra graduated to Formula 1 with Jackie Stewart driving a V8 Cosworth Ford, which recorded some impressive results. Jackie Stewart won six Championship events in the superb Matra MS80 and collected his first World Championship and Matra won the F.I.A. Constructors Cup in 1969.

In 1969 Matra began a partnership with Chrysler Simca France, which allowed Matra to market their then current sportscar, the M530 (Ford Powered), in Simca Dealers across Europe. The benefit to Chrysler Simca was seeing their “Matra Simca” name on a series of Le Mans winning cars in the early 1970’s and also the opportunity for their mechanical components to be used in subsequent Matra sportscars. The Matra M530 had Ford mechanicals and Chrysler was understandably not that enthusiastic about it being sold in Simca dealers.

In 1973, Matra unveiled the successor to the M530, which was to be coded as a 550, with the name of Bagheera, after the panther in “Jungle Book”. The Bagheera coded as a 550 was to be similar mid engine to the M530, however it was designed as a much sleeker machine, incorporating three abreast seats and a rear hatch, which gave access to the top of the engine compartment. The mid engine and transmission were to be the same as used by Chrysler Simca in the Simca 1100 TI and tuned by Matra engineers to produce 84 bhp, with a top speed of around 101mph.

The chassis and integral steel structure were flanked by heavy box section and a 90mm tubular cross member at the rear. A tubular roll over structure was integral to the windscreen and doors and then bonded to the “plastic” body components.



## LETTER to the EDITOR

*Matra-Simca Bagheera – My Story by John Brown*

*MATRA- The Marque cont'd*

The vehicle design was both extremely aerodynamically efficient, strong and structurally sound. Unfortunately Matra had not given as much thought as they should to allowing water to drain off the metal structure, with a result over time that the steel framework rusted underneath the smart metal structure.

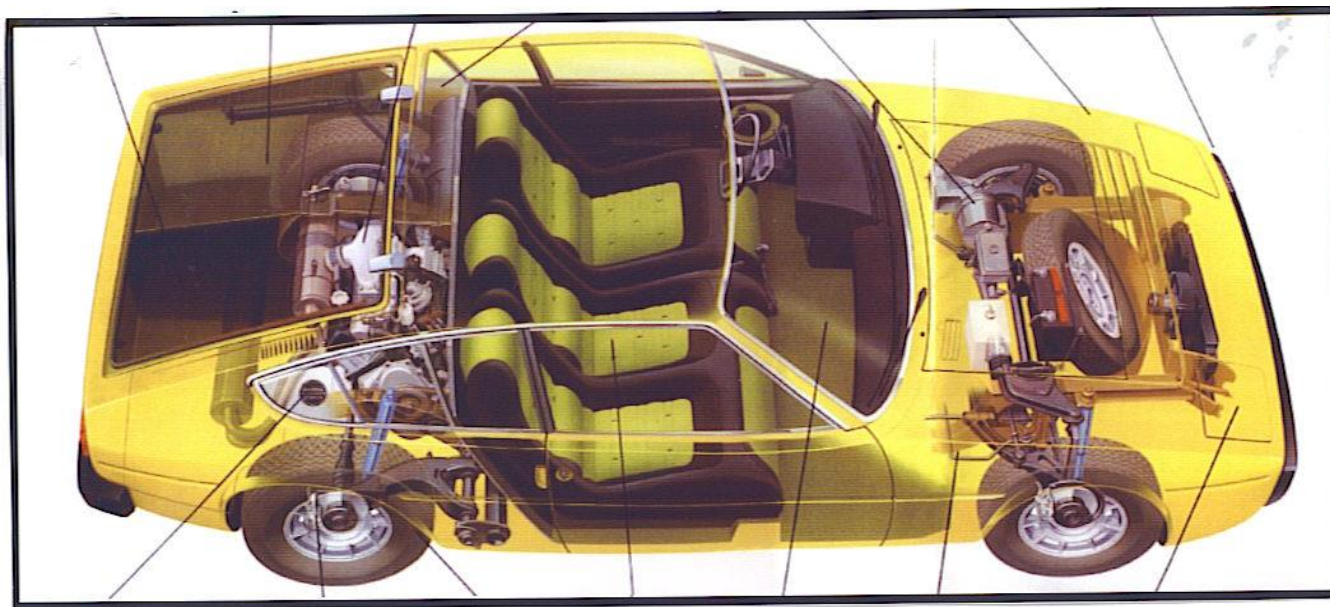
With very few French manufactured sportscars, the Bagheera was an immediate success, although Matra's limited production facilities would prevent it from ever being a common sight.

In July 1976 a new model, the Bagheera S was introduced, which used a 1442cc - 90 bhp version of the Simca 1308, with a top speed of 109 mph.

In 1977 Matra introduced an extensively revised Bagheera, named as a "Series 2" which included a restyled longer bonnet, wrap-around front and rear bumpers, new exterior rear lights together with a restyled instrument cluster and upholstery materials.

The mechanicals of this Series 2 were the same as the earlier Bagheera S.

Manufacture of the Bagheera Series 1 and Bagheera Series 2 was completed in 1980 following the completion of 47,802 vehicles.



**Cross Section of a Matra Simca Bagheera – Series 1  
As manufactured between 1974 and 1976**





## LETTER to the EDITOR

### *Matra-Simca Bagheera – My Story by John Brown* **My Matra Bagheera – Manufactured 1975**

When I first observed the Matra advertised for sale in Sydney through Pickles Motor Auctions I was aware of the marque but unaware of any in Australia at the time and as such had no idea of its physical makeup, so fascination got the better of me and I went along to observe and test the value of the car.

Following some reading in local magazines I had mind to place a bid on the car to see the reaction. The very first bid was placed by others for what I had in mind as a top Price, so I simply folded my arms and listened to the “in-house” enthusiasts fight out their assessment of the value of the car. At Auction in 1985 the car sold for Au\$19,500, which simply amazed me.

One month later the car appeared again at Pickles, with “no reserve” price and I went along and after some slow bidding I purchased the car for only a little more than what I had considered reasonable. At the time of purchase the car had some 24,000 Km on the clock, which appeared rather strange for a car 10 years old.

Following considerable research and survey of the car a Plan was established on what was required to return the car to its original “as new” condition. I joined the “Matra Enthusiasts Club UK” so that I could gain assistance in technical advice and spare parts as required to restore the car.

The first item was to arrange for a 1442cc reconditioned engine and transmission to be assembled in the UK and sent to Australia as a complete package, thereby eliminating any mechanical faults that may be likely to surface later in the car.

The next item was to replace all components in the hydraulic system and return future reliability to the car. As standard, the car was fitted with front and rear disc brakes so it was relatively easy to remove, replace or refurbish all the braking components together with the master cylinder and brake calipers. The “vacuum” brake booster was reconditioned so as to ensure that the brake system would operate reliably at its maximum efficiency.



## LETTER to the EDITOR

### *Matra-Simca Bagheera – My Story by John Brown* **My Matra Bagheera – Manufactured 1975 (cont'd)**

The survey of the vehicle clearly indicated the professional design and construction by Matra and the reasons why Matra was held in high respect over the quality of sports and racing cars that they had already manufactured.

The notable features of the *Bagheera* design and manufactured by Matra are as follows:

- a) The vehicle has an all “steel” platform and sub-structure.
- b) All external body panels were manufactured from an injection moulded fibreglass technique.
- c) The front suspension is a well tried and proven upper and lower control arms and assisted from individual torsion bars and adjustable shock absorbers.
- d) The rear suspension designed by Matra has parallel trailing arms assisted from individual torsion bars and adjustable shock absorbers.
- e) Two integral air ducts, with entry from the either side of the car provide ample combustion air to be directed to the engine compartment for the two twin choke Weber Carburettors. Circulation of the combustion air and extraction of “hot-air” from the engine bay is assisted through two integral ducts from the engine bay to two openings through the rear bumper bar.
- f) “Drag Efficiency” has been designed into the body design and is further assisted by designing the under nose panel to extend to the front cross member and a full width aluminium panel is extended from the cross member to a further 1220mm under the vehicle.

The Matra was shown at two motor Clubs that I was a member with before I joined the Simca Car Club in 2003.

The Simca Car Club was a complete unknown quantity when I first joined, however I did have many years of experience (in my younger years) driving a 1958 90A Simca Aronde, which had been driven at Warwick Farm race circuit in Sydney, Oran Park race circuit also in Sydney, together at numerous Hill Climb events in New South Wales.



## LETTER to the EDITOR

### *Matra-Simca Bagheera – My Story by John Brown*

#### **My Matra Bagheera – Manufactured 1975 (cont'd)**

My limited automotive experience very quickly demonstrated as to the “rev limitation” of the Simca Flash engine and it took five (5) complete engines to be destroyed before I realised that a Flash engine would fracture the conrod at the 8100 rpm and at each time fractured at the “bigend” of the conrod.

The fractured conrod would rotate with the crankshaft and then “punch a hole” in one or both sides of the engine block, resulting in a terminal condition.

A design aspect that the conrod, has an “offset” from the centre of the bore to the centre of the conrod bearing on the crankshaft, was the major contributing failure factor.

A “rev limit” of 6500 rpm did resolve the “failure factor”, however this limited the road speed range of the car.

The Flash engine was operated with an “*Oxford Head*” with a single Solex carburettor, then with twin Solex carburettors with suitable jets and finally a downdraft twin choke single carburettor, with a compound throttle mechanism, which assisted the car very well at Hill Climbs.

I purchased the Simca Aronde new in 1958 and finally “scrapped” the body in 2008, when a serious fracture was discovered (during restoration) in the integral chassis and determined as terminal.

The first event that I attended with the Simca Car Club was at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Simca National Rally at Dubbo NSW in September 2003.

Twenty Eight (28) Simca enthusiasts attended the Simca National Rally from NSW, VIC, QLD, SA, WA and one from overseas, all in various Simca Aronde models, including Kerry Ryan’s beautiful Simca 8, Phil McCumisky Vedette Beaulieu and my Matra Simca Bagheera.

At a local public park all the attending Simcas were judged as to their presented condition and on that evening at the local RSL Club most attending enthusiasts were awarded with some form of memorabilia and as a very pleasant surprise my Matra Simca was awarded with a Trophy as “*Best Simca*” and has been proudly kept since that time.





## LETTER to the EDITOR

### *Matra-Simca Bagheera – My Story by John Brown* **My Matra Bagheera – Manufactured 1975 (cont'd)**

All Trophies presented at the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Simca Rally 2003 were procured by the Event Co-Ordinator Rob Verhagen and were a credit to his innovative nature.

This Trophy will always be treasured by me and holds pride of place with the Matra Simca Bagheera at home.

The second major event that I attended with the Simca Car Club in the Matra Bagheera was the 3<sup>rd</sup> National Simca Rally 2005 held at Echuca VIC in October 2005.

Twenty Five (25) Simca Enthusiasts attended the Simca National Rally from NSW, VIC, QLD, SA and WA together with Colin and Lucy Smith (NZ).

On Friday 14 October 2005 at the Farewell Dinner Rob Verhagen presented a well earned range of Trophy's to the members and as I recall *Rosalind Rose* (may she rest in peace) made a special thankyou to the young family attending with the Stapley contingent

The Matra Simca was awarded the Trophy as "Best Simca", which was considered a pleasant surprise considering the range of well presented cars at the Show-N-Shine.



**Display of various Simcas in Echuca for their Show-N- Shine Presentation**



## LETTER to the EDITOR

### *Matra-Simca Bagheera – My Story by John Brown* **My Matra Bagheera – Manufactured 1975 (cont'd)**

The third major event that I attended with the Simca Car Club in the Matra Bagheera was the 4<sup>th</sup> National Simca Rally held at Tenderfield NSW in September 2007.

Nineteen (19) Simca Enthusiasts attended the Simca National Rally from NSW, VIC, QLD and SA

On Friday 14 September 2007 at the Farewell Dinner at the Historic *Stannum House* I presented 14 well earned Trophy's to the members, where Fred Schodde was presented the "**First Place**" Trophy with his beautifully prepared P60 Simca Wagon and the first John Pickles Perpetual Trophy as "**Best Simca Aronde Type P60**" was awarded to Geoff and Rosalind Rose NSW.



**Display of various Simcas in Tenderfield at the Kurrajong Downs Restaurant for their Show-N-Shine Presentation**



**Our Club Member Fred Schodde was a very excited recipient of the "First Place" Trophy and also celebrated a major Birthday milestone during the Simca National Rally.**





## LETTER to the EDITOR

### *Matra-Simca Bagheera – My Story by John Brown*

#### **My Matra Bagheera – Manufactured 1975 (cont'd)**

In regard to attendance to other venues with the Simca Car Club the Matra Simca Bagheera began attending the French Car Day in Sydney in 2006, where a number of stalwart Club Members, namely Ian and Rosemary McKill, the late Charles Grimwood and his wife Yvonne, together with Keith and Natalia Reddacliff, had been attending for some time. My attendance continued on with the Matra Simca in 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013.

In 2009 at this venue we were fortunate to have another Matra Simca Bagheera. This car is owned by a former club member David Ius.

In 2011, 2012 and 2013 we were fortunate to have yet another Matra Simca Bagheera. This rare and genuine Bagheera “S” car is owned by club member Ian Powell.

In 2008 the then club committee decided to bolster the Simca attendance at the French Car Festival in VIC, thereby encouraging more of the local members to visit for a social chat. This event is very well attended by the French Car fraternity and supported by Peugeot, Renault and Citroen cars of historic to modern variety.





## LETTER to the EDITOR

*Matra-Simca Bagheera – My Story by John Brown*

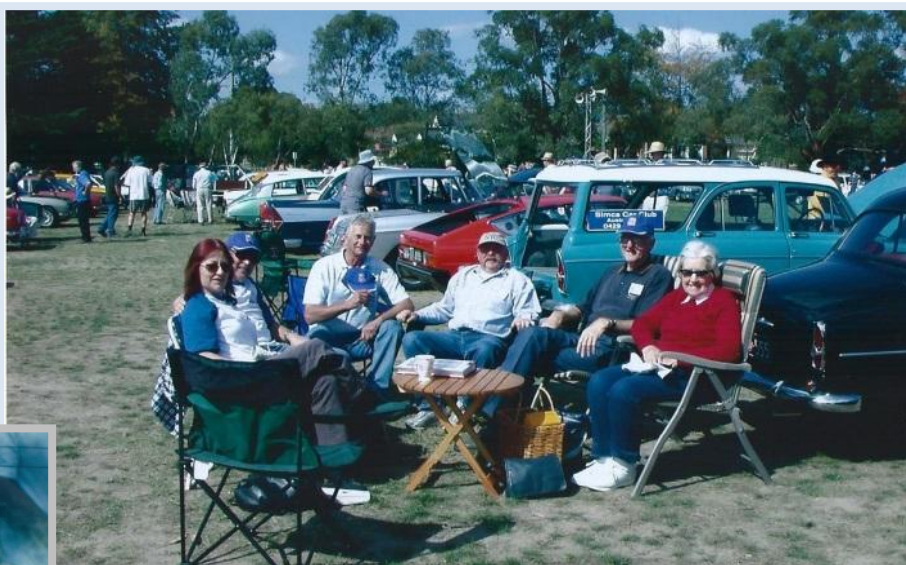
**My Matra Bagheera – Manufactured 1975 (cont'd)**

Those attending were:

Morrie Barrett, Stephen Maloney, Ray and Nancy Hodge (may he rest in peace), Peter and Maree Walker, Phil McCumsky (not in photo) and “jaybee” taking photo.

On the day independent automotive judges assess all the cars and in the mid afternoon the winners are announced.

On the day the Matra Simca Bagheera was awarded the Trophy for **“Best Marque Simca”**



This was an honour and has been cherished, which has made this owner very proud of the Matra.

In 2010 my Matra Simca attended this French Car Festival in VIC and I was fortunate to meet up with two other

Matra owners, which is indeed a very rare meeting of a similar Marque.

The owner of this 1982 LHD Matra Murena is Ian Turner of VIC, who owns two other Matra Simca Bagheeras.



## LETTER to the EDITOR

### *Matra-Simca Bagheera – My Story by John Brown* **My Matra Bagheera – Manufactured 1975 (cont'd)**

The owner of this RHD 1982 (1.6L) Matra Murena is Sam Szulman VIC and was being photographed arriving at the French Car Festival VIC.

This car is one of very few Matra Murenas in the world, which have been converted to RHD.

In regard to future development my Matra Murena has finally been moved from the place of its (uncompleted) restoration and long storage to the special garage that has been built for the two Matra Coupes

It is expected that this motivation will enable me to complete the work required to have this car registered for the road and fulfil a dream to have two mobile and unique Matras here in Australia.

More about this unique 1982 2.2 litre Matra Murena that I purchased from the UK will be presented in the future.



I do trust that *all* Simca Car enthusiasts will read this article and will recall very happy memories of the Club past events.





## Letter to the Editor - From Richard Laney.

*Shows the quality of the workmanship and the enormity of the task .-Editor*

Well after a long time getting over my knee operation, I now feel like doing some work on my Vedette. But first, I will take you back to September 2013 when a long time friend, George Vella, came to see me about a Ford rear end which I had.

During George's visit, he spotted my green Simca Vedette in the carport at the rear of our house and it was love at first sight! - where do I get one of these? Not knowing about any for sale, I said that I would keep an ear open for any around. Two weeks later, Roger Skeers from Wagga rang to say "you can have these two Vedettes I have down here". On hearing this, George wanted to go to Wagga ASAP. On the way to Wagga with George, I showed him a photo of General De Gaulle's convertibles. "I like the look the look of them - I think I'll make one." I must mention that George builds Hot Rods and is a very neat worker with a great mind.

With both Vedettes at George's Martinsville workshop - one minus front struts - it is around about now that things start to move very quickly. I gave George a complete front end. I dropped it off to George at 4 pm Sunday and about 6 pm I received a phone call - "Richard, that front end now has disc brakes". The discs are from a Mitsubishi L300. Bearing cones were removed, the hub placed in a lathe and the space where the bearing cones fit were machined about a further 3mm in front and rear. This allows original Simca cones and bearings to fit. A small spacer was made to fit in the rear of the hub so that the Simca grease seal will fit. We now have the disc fitted to the Simca stub axle washer and nut on. A small adapter plate was then made to attach L300 calliper to three of the four bolts that normally hold the drum brake backing plate. In the case of the convertible, it has been fitted with an XR-XY pedal box, allowing the fitting of a Falcon booster and dual master cylinder.

Now with the brake work all roughed in, it is time to work on the motor and transmission. Firstly, an adapter plate was made so that a Borg Warner four-on-the- floor gearbox (Falcon-Valiant) could be fitted to the rear of the Simca side-valve V8, the flywheel machined down to take a Holden pressure plate, Falcon tail-shaft shortened so as to fit 8 inch Ford differential. The axle housing has been shortened and spring saddles moved to suit the Vedette. The axles were no problem as Falcons have a short and long axle and two short axles have been fitted. Now the transmission has been roughed in, so when the body is complete, brakes and transmission will go to final installation.

The body - I do hope the photos of the body print OK in the Swallow Tales. All doors were left on the car with all door gaps being measured and recorded. The car was raised on the hoist, the gaps remeasured and recorded. The car was then lowered and the roof removed, the door gaps rechecked. The car was raised again on the hoist and the gaps remeasured - a variation of approx. 3 mm. As Vedette bodies are very strong, it was decided not to add any stiffeners to the body at this stage, awaiting engineers report. The explanation of body modifications are as follows:

LHS doors removed and door skins removed. LHS door of the spare Vedette also had its skin removed. Measurements were taken from the De Gaulle convertible photo, and converted to real size. Both LHS front door frames were cut so that one door had a long piece from door





hinge towards the door lock; the other long section from door lock towards the door hinge. Now, taking the two long sections, jiggling them and welding, we now have a long door frame (as convertibles do). This method only needs one weld so there is less grinding and preparation. Next, the door pillar was removed – this has a piece of metal that goes down to the bottom of the sill. The car had to go up on the hoist, so that spot welds could be drilled out from the bottom of the sill. The pillar has now been moved back so as to suit the longer door; the frame of the rear door shortened and tack welded in position between the door pillar and rear guard, as seen in the photo taken from inside the car. This photo also shows the extended front door frame.

The photos taken from outside the car, show the door and rear section fitted with electric windows – this is easier than trying to modify the mechanical mechanisms. In the photos can be seen ply patterns of the shape and contour of the glass. The front window with a few cut-outs here and there to give strength and support, just go up and down. The rear window is a “D” shape with a pivot on the lower front corner and cable operated so it lowers itself down inside the rear panel.


I hope this explanation of the progress and work on the convertible. Anyone with any questions, please feel free to email or phone me and I will try to answer any questions. Hopefully more photos next issue!

Richard Laney

Phone: 02 4399 1738 Mobile: 0414 991 738







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## PS - From the Editor...

Please remember any contributions welcome or suggestions.

### Reminders:

The 2014 renewal of membership is due on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2014. If you are overdue, please pay now. Don't forget members can pay their subscriptions by bank transfer or to the club secretary.

Electronic Funds transfer (EFT)  
BSB: 633-108 Bendigo Bank (branch at Braidwood NSW)  
Account number: 135350668

Please identify who is paying and for what if possible in the reference section with name and subs amount.

Don't forget to fill out Renewal Form attached so that all your details are correct/current.  
Please don't copy them from the previous year.



## Breaking News

Our esteemed Führer, Vince Parisi phoned me the other night with some interesting news. The Historic Winton Race meeting, 24/25<sup>th</sup> May is on the agenda honouring 80 years of Simca. They would like as many cars as possible on display. Until I became ill we attended most years and it is simply the best historic car and bike racing. Vince will be racing his superb 105 Alfa and hopefully Geoff Rose will be racing his famous 90A.


Bonus – there are six free entry tickets available.





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**HISTORIC**  
**WINTON**  
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Winton Motor Raceway, Benalla, Victoria  
[www.historicwinton.org](http://www.historicwinton.org) enquiries: 03 54282689








Photo: Neil Hammond







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**Any more/fewer cars than last year? If Yes, then please let us know below.**

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**Annual Membership Subscriptions**

**Fees are set at each Annual General Meeting for the period 1<sup>st</sup> July – 30<sup>th</sup> June the next year.**

**Annual Subscriptions are currently:**

**Single \$40**

**Family/Joint: \$45**

**Signature:** ----- **Date:** -----

(both signatures required for Family/joint membership)

**Signature:** ----- **Date:** -----

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