

Holden Torque



June / July 2025

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE HOLDEN SPORTING CAR
CLUB OF VICTORIA

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went racing

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Articles and contributions to the magazine are always welcome. Please forward your items via e-mail to the Editor at editor@holdenclub.com. Microsoft Word format is preferred for text, pictures as jpg (no larger than 1200x900).

This magazine is only distributed electronically via email. A charge will apply if members require a paper copy edition to cover printing and postage costs. Please contact us if you request a paper edition.

Upcoming Calendar

Date	Activity	Event	Venue	Details
Thursday 05/06/25	Meeting	Committee Meeting	Village Green Hotel Cnr Springvale & Ferntree Gully Rd Mulgrave	All members welcome to attend. Dinner at 6:00pm with meeting to follow at 7:00 pm
Saturday 14/06/25	Group 5 Non Speed	Group 5 Khanacross Round 5	Geelong Motorsport Complex Avalon	Asphalt Khanacross Event
Sunday 06/07/25	Group 5 Non Speed	Group 5 Motorkhana	Geelong Motorsport Complex Avalon	Asphalt Motorkhana Event
Sunday 20/07/25	Club Cruise	Ronnie's Red Sox Rally	Details available soon	Details available soon

Interested in advertising in Holden Torque?

If your business would like to advertise in the magazine, please reach out to the editor to discuss your requirements.

The Holden Torque magazine is read by hardcore automotive enthusiasts and your business could benefit by connecting to our readers.

Who is the Holden Sporting Car Club?

The Holden Sporting Car Club of Victoria first came into being in 1972 at Garry & Warren Smith Holden of Oakleigh as The Torana Club of Victoria. In the early 1980's the club was renamed to the Holden Motor Sports Club of Victoria, and then to the Holden Sporting Car Club of Victoria.

You do not have to own or drive a Holden to join the club and compete in the club's events

The club is affiliated with Motorsport Australia (formerly The Confederation of Australian Motor Sport (CAMS)) and is a member of the Group 5 series. If you are not so interested in motorsport, HSCCV is a VicRoads approved car club, which allows you to register your classic car on club permits. HSCCV offers many types of activities for all the family.

The club's magazine, "Holden Torque," is produced regularly and is sent to all members. It includes reports from the committee, details of past and upcoming events, and other articles of general interest to our members.

Advantages of Being Part of the Club.

Motorsport Australia Affiliation (MA)

Being in a MA affiliated car club allows you to apply for a MA license and compete in over 2200 CAMS Sanctioned events.

Common Interest

Be it your FX Holden, LH Torana, HQ Kingswood or your VF Commodore, you will find a member who shares your passion.

Involvement for all

We welcome everyone with a love of cars, not just Holdens. Bring down your friends and family and enjoy a friendly environment.



Club webpage : www.holdenclub.com



Club facebook page: Holden Sporting Car Club of Victoria

From the Editor



Just when you thought, “he couldn't do club magazine like the last”, then another one arrives .

Thanks to those of you who made the effort to give positive feedback with the last magazine. Feedback is greatly appreciated and shows my hard work hit the spot.

However, I don't want this magazine to cover just the things I like or what I think you'll like. Don't feel afraid to make any suggestions or ideas. I'm here for you.

I initially struggled to get this magazine started. I just moved house and I'm sure you all know how stressful house moves are.

However, I know how important a good magazine is to build a club. My aim is to make members, new and old, to feel invigorated to contribute to the club well into the future

My ideas for magazine articles largely come from the 70's and 80's as I have very fond memories of this era. That doesn't mean I won't write about other eras, the 70's and the 80's is where I'm comfortable.

I'm the same with music. Anything produced beyond 1989 doesn't get a run in my Apple Playlist.

Hope you enjoy this mag - don't be shy away from giving me your feedback.

Aerodynamics are for people who can't build engines

— Enzo Ferrari

President's Report

Hi fellow members,

Hope you are all well. Just a short report this time.

It's been a little while since the last magazine, we have had a cruise to the Robin Hood Hotel which I was unable to attend and from all accounts everyone had a good time. Thanks to Dickie Atkins for organising the run.

Our next cruise is Ronnies Red Sox Rally on July 20th. This is run in honour of Ron Klien and is run on the Mornington peninsula with a visit to Ron's property in Balnarring. Stay tuned for details.

Our next committee meeting is Thursday 6th June at the Village Green Hotel. You are all welcome to come along and see how the committee works and we are welcome to any suggestions or ideas you may have. We start at 7.30 or you can join us for dinner at 6.30.

Easter seven years ago, I had the opportunity to race my Hyundai Excel at Bathurst, so I thought you might like to read my article from then.

Keep it on the black stuff.

Bruce

Holden Racing Team 30 years Ago



Team presentation really went to a whole new level in 1995 Even the workshop ute was hot!

Holden Dealers Who Went Racing

By David Le Mottee



The Holden Dealer Network back in their hey day of the 1960's and 1970's was very different to today's automotive dealer landscape. Today's car dealers are largely bland corporate entities concerned with shareholder returns, brand image and community responsibility.

Back in heydays of 1960's and 1970's, the 500+ Holden dealer network was built around a group of hungry (and often egotist) entrepreneurs keen to sell as many cars as they could and make lots of money. The dealers had big personalities and they enjoyed being famous in their local market.

Most dealers succeeded but some failed. And the failures were often spectacular.

Some were so enthusiastic with Holden, they went car racing. Sure the Holden Dealer Team was meant to represent the dealer network, several dealers used their dealership to pursue motor racing interests.

Here are a few Holden dealers who stumped up their money to take on the Holden Dealer Team.

Ron Hodgson

Ron Hodgson was probably the most successful Holden dealer to go racing. Hodgson himself forged a successful motor racing career finishing third in both the 1960 and 1961 Australian Touring Car Championships as well as entering the Bathurst 500 between 1963 and 1966.

Hodgson was a successful wheeler dealer and he built a large used car dealership network before being appointed as a Holden dealer in the Sydney suburb of Cabramatta in the early 70's.

He was a big TV advertising and he was well known for his "Update with Ron Hodgson" tagline.

His expertise were retail sales when most Holden dealers were chasing fleet and Government sales.

In the early 70's Hodgson built a team for his protege, Bob Morris. With Morris at the wheel, the team became best known for winning the Bathurst 1000 in 1976 and the Australian Touring Car Championship in 1979. Both of these achievements were against the Holden Dealer Team.

The team folded after the 1979 season and not long after that cracks appeared in Hodgson's dealer operation. His dealerships eventually closed due to financial difficulties.

Sadly Hodgson passed away shortly after the demise of his business. However, he can be proud of his motor racing team's success.



Bill Patterson

Bill Patterson was a successful racer in the 50's and 60's in an era known as the Golden Age of motorsport. Bill competed against and beat the very best Aussies; Reg Hunt, Bib Stillwell, Lex Davison and Stan Jones as well as the great champions from Europe.

In the early 1970s, his Holden dealership helped fund Harry Firth's Holden Dealer Team during the early development of the Bathurst Holden Torana XU1s.

During the mid 70s Bill Patterson Holden won a contract with Holden to modify the Torana A9X units which were trucked to the Dealership in Ringwood, where wheel arch flares were added and other minor modifications made, before being sent back to Holden in Dandenong for distribution.

In 1976 Peter Brock obtained a small sponsorship package for his Team Brock Torana L34 from Bill Patterson to run at Bathurst and finished third outright.

During this time Bill Patterson BMW purchased a South African race prepared BMW 3.5 CSL for Peter Brock to take and compete at the 1976 24hr Le Mans.

Mid to late 1970s, Bill Patterson, through his Holden, BMW and Isuzu Dealerships supplied the support vehicles and sponsorship for the Sandown 500.

1977 saw Peter Brock sell his racing team to Bill Patterson. It was then renamed Bill Patterson Racing and a three car team was sent to Bathurst.

Well over 50 years of involvement in motorsport in one form or another is a pretty good racing heritage in anyone's eyes.



Bob Jane

Bob Jane's passion for racing began in the early 1950s as a champion bicycle rider, holding many state records before turning to four wheels. In the later 1950s, he started Bob Jane Autoland, a company that distributed parts for Jaguar and Alfa Romeo. Through this venture, a love of cars and motor sport blossomed and he first entered competitive racing in Australia in 1956. By 1960, he was racing with some of Australia's top sedan drivers.

Jane's business pursuits grew through the 1960's and 1970's. Whilst his T-Marts tyre retailing juggernaut is his most familiar achievement, Jane's car businesses grew to 9 dealerships. At that time, Jane's automotive dealerships were headed by Southern Motors, for many years the biggest Holden retailer in Melbourne.

Jane's racing interests on and off the track were soon to expand. By the early 1970s Calder Park, on the north-west edge of Melbourne, was struggling for survival. Jane stepped in and bought the track and revitalised it.

He got to work selling motor racing with the same strategy he applied to selling cars and tyres; give the customers what they want and they will come back for more. It worked. At half-a-dozen meetings a year, short, sharp races showcased the big names of the day. Gaps between the races were kept to a minimum.

Jane was inducted into Supercars Hall of Fame in 2000 and when he received a similar honour from CAMS, he started his acceptance speech by mentioning there were some officials in the room he would like to see strapped to a rocket...

With such a long and vast history in the sport he was, ultimately, exactly what was written on many of the tyres he sold; a Bob Jane All Rounder.



Scotty Taylor

Renowned for being a larger than life character, Scotty Taylor was the Holden Dealer in Wodonga in the 70's and 80's. He completed in just about every Bathurst 1000 in the late 70's to the mid 80's. During his touring car career, Scotty campaigned Toranas and later a Commodore. Until recently, Scotty was a regularly historic motorsport competitor.



Fred Geissler

The Geissler Family owned the Goulburn (NSW) Holden Dealership and dealer principal, Fred Geissler was a keen racer. He started with an A9X Torana and later built a Group C Commodore in 1981. Fred competed in many Bathurst 1000's in the 1980's with varying levels of success.



Vice President's Report

Here we are in June, winter is here, and it's time for my next report.

Not a lot has happened from an automotive point of view, but lots of other interesting things have occurred.

HSCCV had a successful run from Rowville, via the Dandenongs, and Yarra Valley, to end up at the Robin Hood Hotel, just outside Drouin. The drive was about 2.5 hours, and the route had some wonderful driver's roads. The road from Yarra Junction to Neerim was a highlight. I'd love to continue all the way to Mount Baw Baw. Haven't been up that way for probably 20 years. Must be good, as AASA clubs run Targa style hill climbs up the road. They also do Mount Buller and Mount Donna Buang. We had 10 cars and 18 members, I think. I took the 98 Corolla. Ran and handled like a dream. Food at the Robin Hood was great, and well priced too. Thanks Richard for picking the roads.

Next touring cruise should be Ronnie's Red Sox in July.

Meanwhile, on the competition side, I've unfortunately missed two events. One was the Terry Baker Motorsport weekend at Bryant Park, put on by Toyota Car Club, FFCC and Ford RS owners club. Motorkhana Saturday and Hillclimb on Sunday. The other was the King of Khana's Gp 5 event. Twilight khanacross run by FFCC at Werribee.

I missed both of these as Andree's and my daughter, Amelia, was visiting from Canada for two weeks. Hadn't seen her for two years, so family, understandably took priority. It was great to have her around for a bit. She used my old 2004 Sonata whilst here, and only drove on the right once, exiting a car park. Well that's what she told me. She was amazed I still had the car. It's going by the end of the year.

Next event for me is the FFCC/TCCAV sprint at Sandown on June 8 of the long weekend. El Presidente, Bruce, is Clerk of Course. Volunteers for flag points are always appreciated. If interested, contact Bruce.

Some in the club will know that I've recently purchased a caravan. Yes, I've become a grey nomad. Had two small trips so far. 4 nights in Beechworth/Bright a month ago, and currently, as I write this, 4 nights in Port Fairy. I can highly recommend both these destinations. Food, wines, scenery and relaxation. The little Jayco Pop Top tows beautifully behind our other purchase, the mighty Hyundai Santa Fe Diesel. Easily betters the old 30mpg with the van behind. Major trip will be late August up to Byron Bay. I've just had an annexe custom made, so we, wife, me and 2 dogs, are looking forward to it.

Cheers to all,

Richard Wales

The most Monaro GTS 350



**Automatic
or manual**



**DRIVE AHEAD
OF YOUR TIME
Monaro**

Announcing the newest Holden, Monaro GTS 350. The manual version gives the performance enthusiast 300 hp and 380 lb/ft of torque. Plus the right instruments and an indash tach. And a range of special equipment to choose from, including rear axle ratios. See your Holden Dealer and find out how a great car feels. Monaro GTS 350 suggested retail price from \$3995.

Member & Club Permit Report

Hello Everyone,

We have 94 members at present, with 69 financial at time of writing.

Please remember as of 2023 the car club advised, yearly membership was due on 1st of March each year.

If you have any queries about your membership, as some members aren't aligned with date yet, please contact me.

Just a reminder you have to be a financial member of a registered car club to maintain a club permit.

Lesley Robinson



Treasurers Report

Covering period from 22 March – 26 May

Incoming:

Membership:	\$558.28
Interest:	\$0.51

Outgoing:

Website Hosting	\$ 132
Membership Refund	\$ 60
Postage supplies	\$ 37.50

Totals

ANZ	\$30980.92
Paypal	\$ 3214.07
Cashbox	\$ 910.10

Kris Lethborg

VINTAGE HOLDEN PRESS IMAGES

Car companies typically issue the media with photographs (now know as images) of their latest and greatest models. I've always found these photographs to accurately reflect fashion and trends of their time. Here are a few vintage Holden images (source GM-Media) I recently found

By David Le Mottee

A 1970 HG Premier Wagon parked outside of the Holden Technical Centre at Fishermans Bend (Melbourne)



Who needs fancy 4x4s and snow chains when you have a HR Holden?



Weird press image No.1 - cant explain how a wheezy HB Torana would be a grazier's vehicle of choice?



Potentially one of the most important Holden models - the VB Commodore in SL/E Model form.



An X2 HD Premier photographed on the balcony of Ernest's Restaurant, a sixties design icon on the River Torrens, Adelaide



There is nothing more 1950's Australia than this image



A very fashionably couple (and their faithful Labrador) sit proudly out the front of their modern 1960's suburban home glaring at the then new HB Torana



Another smartly dressed couple stand proudly beside their new EH Premier out the front of their fashionable house



I bet you this young chap has more on his mind that scuba diving and worrying if he'll scratch his ute bed. His girlfriend's clothing (or lack of) might be hint at what he is hoping for?



Weird press image No 2 - why are ballet dancers performing next to a lake in front of a new Holden HR? Did they get lost on their way to a performance of Swann Lake?



Bathurst Wow

By Bruce Lethborg

A few of you may know that I race a Hyundai Excel in the Victorian Excel series. This is a great series that is growing at phenomenal rate in Australia. It has given many people a chance to go racing on a budget, including me, I am the original budget motorsport.

When we started racing Excels in Victoria five years ago, we all thought it would be great to race our cars at Bathurst but knew it would never happen, well it did. Last Easter the Excels were asked to be a support category for the 6 hour event at Bathurst. The entries were open to all states and Victoria was allocated 11 entries and I was one of the ones selected.

My first trip to Bathurst was in 1972 the year Brocky won his first Bathurst, the next was 1976 as a member of the Holden Dealer Team..... that was awesome. Since then I have been there many times as a spectator, working in a team or as a track marshal wishing I could race there but knowing that will never happen.

The preparation for Bathurst started many months before, I built a new car as my last one was totalled at Philip Island. Car finished, set up and new go fast bits fitted, a dyno run and we were set for Bathurst. Kris and I set off at stupid o'clock in the morning on the Thursday before Easter arriving at Bathurst early afternoon. For any true blue motorsport enthusiast in Australia, seeing those words "Mount Panorama" on the side of the "Mountain" certainly stirs up some emotions, but arriving there with your own race car on the trailer knowing you will be racing there, is just BLOODY HELL WOW.

Find pit spot, set up, do paperwork, get car scrutineered, we are ready for practice and qualifying the next day, Good Friday, let's hope it is a good Friday.

We wake up to clear skies and 30 degrees, nice. Arrive at the track and get the car ready for practice. Time comes to put on all the safety gear, belt up and wait on the dummy grid, the nerves are starting to kick and gees it's hot sitting in the car waiting, anyway it's time to hit the track. All of a sudden the nerves are gone and we are on the famous track for the first time.



With only 20 minutes for practice, it didn't give you much time to get the feel for the circuit. After around 6 laps we managed a time of 3.14, the fast guys were closer to the 3.00 mark. A few adjustments made to the suspension and wait for qualy.

Later in the day we were out for qualifying, a bit more confidence now and staying on the power where before we were lifting brought the times down to 3.09 securing P35. The fast guys got under 3 mins to around 2.58. Pack the car up, a few frothies and ready for racing tomorrow.

Saturday we had two 6 lap races that were absolutely thrilling. In one of the races I decided to keep the foot flat to the floor turning onto Skyline from McPhilamy, bad move, the car was understeering for the big sand trap, so a slight lift and a big deep breath and I was back on track. Won't do that again.

Last race on Sunday was not good, whilst coming over Skyline power was lost, so I had to coast all the way over the top of the mountain trying to keep out of the way of the cars and parking it on Conrod. Back in the pits, we found a fuel line had come off the fuel pressure regulator. Fixed we drove the car onto the trailer with no damage, and it was all done. Had an absolute awesome time and hope to be able to do it again. One bucket list item ticked off.

If you ever get the chance to drive Bathurst at speed.....DO IT.

Cheers Bruce



Group 5 Report



What is Group 5?

Group 5 is a group of 10 Motorsport Australia Affiliated Car Clubs who participate in a year long sporting competition.

The Group 5 Non-speed series consists of approximately 10 rounds of motorkhana & khanacross events.

There are several different classes based on the length of the vehicle.

In 2024, 3 HSCCV members were successful in winning trophies for series. This included David Le Mottee - 1st Class C, James Le Mottee - 3rd Class C and Irene Le Mottee - 2nd Class L.

June / July Group 5 Update.

The first 4 rounds of the 2025 have been run and won. The most recent round was the NCCA Khanacross held at Werribee.

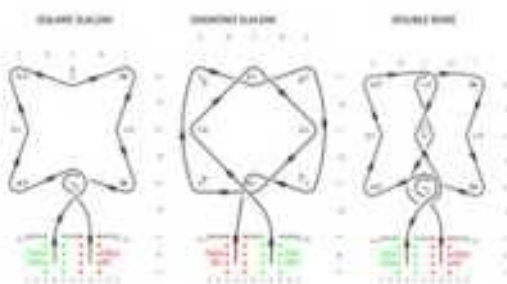
The next rounds are:-

- 14/06/25: Asphalt Khanacross at Avalon
- 06/07/25: Asphalt Motorkhana at Avalon

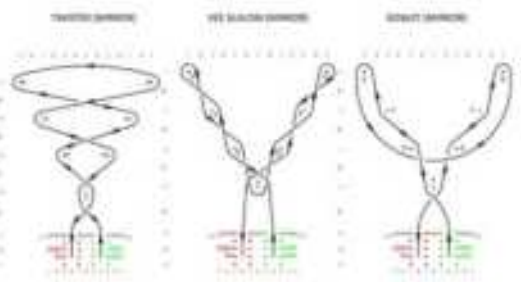
For any information on these events - please contact David Le Mottee



AFTERNOON SESSION "HP TO BE SQUARE" TEST AREA "A" VMC and GROUP 5



EVENING SESSION "SQUAW ARCHERY" TEST AREA "A" GROUP 5 ONLY



THE MERGER BETWEEN HOLDEN AND TOYOTA THAT HISTORY HAS LARGELY FORGOTTEN

IN 1989, TOYOTA AND HOLDEN WALKED DOWN THE AISLE IN A MARRIAGE OF CONVENIENCE. IT DID NOT END WELL.

Reprinted from Drive.com.au Written by Rob Margeit
Original story, by Phil Scott, published in the Sun-Herald on 2 July, 1989



Holden and Toyota were due at the altar yesterday for the biggest automotive wedding ever seen in Australia-but neither bride nor groom showed up.

The marriage was announced in late 1987 and the July 1 (1989) date set for Toyota and Holden interests to form a new joint-venture company.

The merger would create an immensely powerful automotive bloc controlling the core business of both brands – effectively 40 per cent of the new-car market.

Pretty significant stuff, but obviously not significant enough to inform the outside world that the wedding has been postponed.

As best one can gather-and neither side is verbose on the subject-there's been a delay in valuing each other's assets-which sounds suspiciously like a dowry squabble.

The new wedding date is vague. "Some time in the fourth quarter" is the best one can glean. Meanwhile there are some disturbing signs that the aims of the Government's grand plan – the catalyst, after all, for these nuptials-may not be paramount in the minds of the respective captains of cardom.

The Button Plan's underlying goal is to improve the quality of Australian cars and lower their prices through better efficiency and economies of scale.

Consider this, then. The joint venture has so far wound the automotive clock back a few years by re-introducing the carburettor on the Corolla/Nova twins, and is poised to repeat the performance on Holden's upcoming Apollo-badged Camry. Toyota's version will continue to be mostly fuel-injected, but Holden's bread-and-butter Apollo clones get only a carburettor.

Likewise, the matter of pricing is contentious. Word filtering out from behind tightly-shut doors suggests the Toyota Lexcen – a rebadged Commodore-will be priced higher than the Holden original. It's a marketing strategy, apparently based on the limited number of cars Toyota will receive.



It seems the Lexcen will be loaded with extra equipment, whether the punters want it or not, and will be priced accordingly.

Sounds more like supply and demand than economies of scale, but, like everyone else, your scribe is not privy to any but the vaguest details about the inner workings of the joint venture.

It was announced at a press conference at the Melbourne Regent 18 months ago – a conference notable for its obfuscation. In retrospect, the boys obviously began as they intended to continue.

SO, WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?

The marriage between Holden and Toyota, consummated in August 1989, lasted until 1996, and it's fair to say, with the benefit of hindsight, it wasn't a happy marriage.

It's an interesting historical footnote that both companies' histories have largely rinsed the record books of the United Australian Automotive Industries (UAAI), the official name for the joint venture.

The spawn of that ill-fated marriage aren't fondly remembered today, either. The Holdens Nova and Apollo – rebadged Corollas and Camrys built by Toyota – largely forgotten. As for Toyota's ill-fated bastard child, the Lexcen – a rebadged Holden Commodore – the less said, the better.

Drive's Tony Davis summed the Lexcen up superbly when he wrote in 2014, "Sticking different badges on the best-known (and by then best-selling) car on the market was greeted with derision from punters. "They wouldn't buy a Lexcen without a huge discount and, ideally, a set of Holden badges included, so they could disguise it."

Holden, meanwhile, ceased local manufacturing in 2017 before shutting up shop entirely on 31 December, 2020.

The children of the union, like so many kids of broken marriages, languish on in classified listings desperately looking for someone to love them.

The Commodore team drivers in the Repco Reliability Trial talk about the car that circled Australia and swept the Rally 1.2.3.

Commodore has swept the Repco Rally, judged by competitors as the toughest ever run in Australia. The proof? Of 167 cars that started the Rally, only 13 completed the full course. 20,000 kilometres in 14 days. And the Marlboro Holden Dealer Team Commodores ran superbly from start to finish. If ever there was a car built for Australian conditions — this is it!



"It's one of the longest and toughest rally courses in the world."
— Rauno Aaltonen
(Finland)
Mehta Team
Co-driver



"I really thought that nothing's going to survive this."
— Noel Richards
Brock Team Navigator



"I don't think I've driven a rally which is so rough over such long distances."
— Shekhar Mehta
(Kenya)
Third Place Driver



"The driver had complete control over the car at all times."
— Wayne Bell
Ferguson Team
Co-driver



"All cars in the event were rally prepared. But we had the edge — the Commodores were extremely strong to begin with."
— George Shephard
Team Manager



"Durability was the key to the whole operation."
— Barry Lake
Mehta Team
Navigator



"While everybody else was stopping for repairs, we were able to drive on."
— Dave Boddy
Ferguson Team
Navigator



"The Commodore was the strongest car I've ever driven."
— Peter Brock
Winning Driver



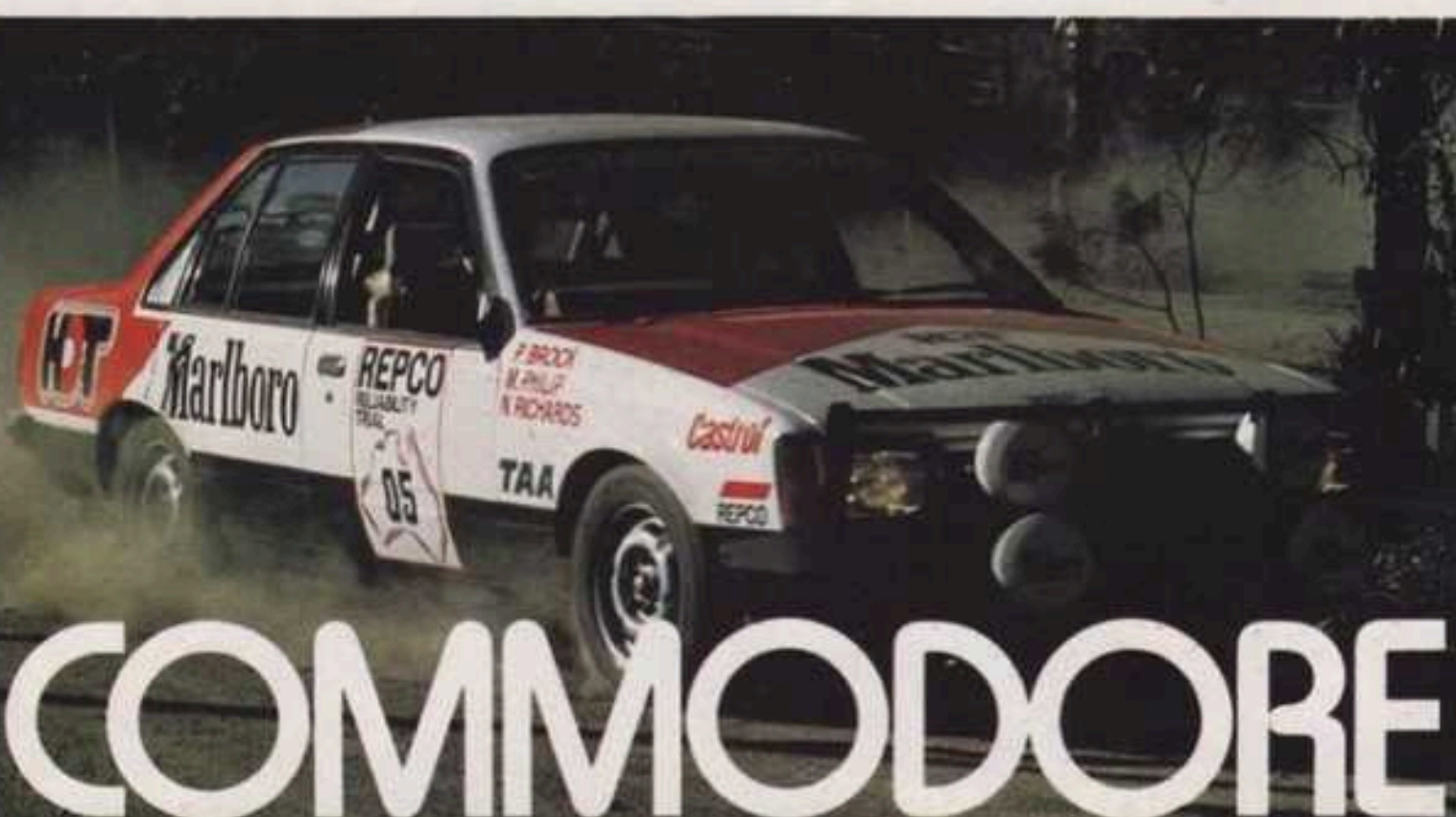
"We just ran the engine for the whole event and didn't even bother to change the oil."
— Barry Ferguson
Second Place Driver



"Commodore was the only car that could hold the pace."
— Matt Philip
Brock Team Co-driver



People
Trust
Holden



COMMODORE

General Motors-Holden's Sales Pty. Limited. AE10

I dont think this will buff out.....



I was there.....

By David Le Mottee

In 1984 and at the ripe old age of 21, I joined General Motors Holden in their NSW Sales Office. It was some years after the closure of the Holden Pagewood plant and my fellow staff were still feeling the grief of the closure.

I initially started in the Vehicle Distribution Dept before becoming an Area Manager, a job I did for 9 years before moving to another car brand.

Now that Holden is long gone, I thought I would share my stories and i have a few of my time at "The General"

Episode 2. VN Group A Press Launch

Holden produced 4 homologation models to enable the Holden Commodore to then Group A Touring Car Regulations. First was the HDT built VK SS Group A (Formula Blue) followed by the HDT Built VL Group A SS.

When HDT and Holden parted company, the Tom Walkinshaw HSV business became Holdens performance car partner. HSV first project was to develop the 3rd Group A SS, the controversial VL Group A SS (fondly know as the Walkinshaw) which featured the first fuel injected Holden V8 and that complex high downforce body kit.

Group A regulations were convoluted as the cars had to have close relationships to production cars. The regulations allowed for a special ran of 500 units which were allowed to have special options to benefit the racing program. That's a discussion for another time.

The first 2 Group A SS iterations were limited to 500 builds and they sold well as they were highly sought after. Holden and HSV were confident the new model could easily find 750 homes. They were initially wrong and the last 250 units took a long time to clear.

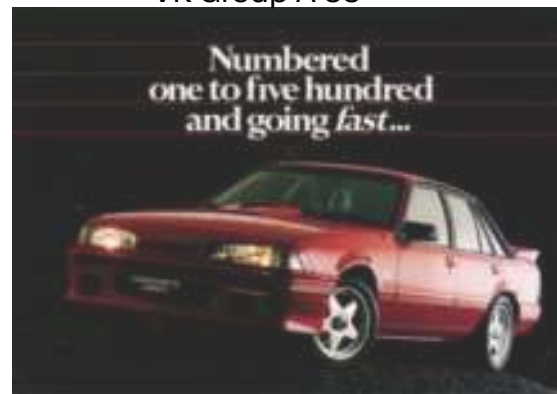
By the time the VN model came around, HSV was cautious with their sales projections but they needed to build (and sell) 500 of the model to be homologated.

Holden were able to lobby the Confederations of Australian Motorsport (CAMS) to allow the VN Group A to be homologated with just 300 builds (plus 2 prototypes).

The VN Group A SS went on sale in November 1990 to allow it compete in the 1991 Touring car season.



VK Group A SS



VL Group A SS



VL Group A SS - HSV



VN Group A SS

The VN Group A had a number of upgrades over the previous model - namely 40kw power lift and the ZF 6 speed manual gearbox from the Chevrolet Corvette.

At that time I worked in the Holden NSW Office and I managed a group of Holden dealers. The NSW Office had its own Public Relations Office given the major motor magazines were Sydney based and newspaper motoring journalists were very influential. I was often seconded to the PR Department for big PR Launches.

It was decided that the VN Group Launch would be held at the brand new Eastern Creek Raceway (now known as the Sydney Motorsport Park). But there was one problem - the facility wasn't finished and hadn't fielded a race meeting. The race track was complete but all of the buildings were in construction.

Just about every motoring journalist turned up along with the contracted Holden Racing Team Drivers including a very young Neil Crompton and Brad Jones.

The day got under way and the journalists were keen to find out how good the new car was. So they got stuck into doing mega hot laps on the new race track.

4 early build cars were on hand to drive plus a display car.

By about lunch time we found a problem. The diff oil wasn't up to rigger of racing speeds so 4 cars went down to 3, then down to 2. I jumped into a car with Neil Crompton for a hot lap but we didn't make it - diff failure.

The master PR manager, Marc McInnes, managed to tap dance around the problem and our audience weren't aware of the problem.

The right diff lubrication was found for the production cars and life went on.....



VN Group A SS- Prototype



VN Group A SS- Interior

Amaroo Park Sun-7 Touring Cars

Motorsport Finally Gets Regular Telly Coverage

By David Le Mottee

Back in the 70's, motorsport in Australia didn't have regular TV coverage. Yes the annual Bathurst race in October was a certain televised spectacle, but beyond that, if you wanted to know about motor racing, you either went to watch the races or you read about the races in various specialist magazines such as Racing Car News, Chequered Flag, etc.

The ABC dabbled in covering some racing, but it was very hit and miss and usually the production was pretty amateur at best. If you get a chance, check out some old ABC motorsport productions on YouTube and you'll see what I mean. Though to be fair, sport coverage in general around this era wasn't great mainly because of technological limitations.

I'm not certain of the exact year, but a watershed moment arrived when the geniuses at the Australian Racing Car Drivers Club (ARDC) worked with Channel 7 to regularly cover Amaroo Park motor racing events. You have to remember that no other races had regular coverage including the Australian Touring Car Championship. Full coverage of the Championship was still 10 years away.

The ARDC secret weapon was a guy called Ivan Stibbard who promoted and managed race meetings with a level of professionalism not previously seen in Australia. He was able to deliver a product suited to TV audiences and the ARDC enjoyed consistent TV coverage up until the mid 1990's.



For those who don't know or don't remember Amaroo Park, it was a tight 1.9 km circuit located in Annangrove which was on the north-western outskirts of Sydney. The circuit was carved around a valley and it didn't offer a lot of run off area.

The Amaroo Park circuit worked perfectly with the ARDC concept for short sprint races with close racing.

The race meeting was ran with strict discipline where races were held back to back to engage with the TV audience. As one race finished, Channel 7 switched to a commercial break and when they returned, the next race was ready to start.

A typical race meeting included races for Formula Ford, Sports Sedans, Formula Vee, various one make series (TR7, Alfasuds, Ford Lasers and Nissan Pulsars) and Clubman sports cars but the headline act was always Touring Cars



Sun -7 Chesterfield Touring Car Series

The ARDC held their own Touring Car Championship ran exclusively at Amaroo Park and it was the headline act of their televised race meeting. It was initially called the Sun-7 Chesterfield series - Sun being a Sydney newspaper, 7 being Channel 7 and Chesterfield being a tobacco brand. The actual series name varied from year to year, according to the commercial sponsorship secured the ARDC.

When the series started, it was run for Group C Touring Cars and it was largely dominated by the smaller more nimble cars such as XU1 Toranas.

From 1975, the Sun-7 Rothmans Series was restricted to cars with an engine capacity of under 3 litres, meaning that larger engined cars such as Torana's and Falcon's could no longer compete. Keep in mind, the Bathurst 1000 race featured several classes so there were no shortages of smaller engined cars.

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With guaranteed TV coverage, sponsorship was easier to obtain so the series enjoyed full fields. Racing was always tight and the TV audience loved the racing and crashes that went with it.

The early hero was Barry Seton (Glenn Seton's Dad) who won a close competition in his Ford Capri V6 in 1975. Barry would go on to win the series 4 more times.



Other heroes were Bob Morris and Allan Grice. Both drove Torana's in the Touring Car Championship and they also competed in the Amaroo Series driving Triumph Dolomites (Morris) and a Mazda RX3 (Grice).

In 1978 and 1979, the then President of the Holden Sporting Car Club of NSW, Barry Lee, was a consistent competitor in the series in his Mazda RX3. He would go on to win the 2000cc-3000cc class at the 1979 Bathurst 1000.

Races were always tight with many different winners including Peter Williamson (Toyota Celica), Colin Bond (Ford Capri), Bob Holden (Ford Escort), Steve Masteron (Ford Capri), Barry Jones (Mazda RX3) and Don Holland (Mazda RX3).

Controversially, for the 1981 series the engine capacity limit of the competing cars was increased from 3.0 litres to 3.5 litres. This was to allow Allan Grice to race his then new BMW 635.

The following year the 3.5 litre capacity limit was removed for a new touring car series called AMSCAR. That's a story for another time.



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Magazine Content

Love to get your input on content for the magazine whether it be a suggestion for an article, a report on club activities, photos, item on interest, etc, etc.

Feel free to submit anything.....

David Le Mottee
Editor

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Closing word - advertising was very different in the 1970's





HOLDEN TORQUE MAGAZINE