

# NEWSLETTER

of the  
**Dandenong Valley Historic Car Club Inc.**

**April - 2026**  
**Volume 52 - No. 9**



**[www.dvhcc.com.au](http://www.dvhcc.com.au)**  
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**Est. February 1974**

# DANDENONG VALLEY HISTORIC CAR CLUB INC.

## Incorporation No. A0000748U



\*\*\* 2025/26 CAR OF THE YEAR \*\*\*  
1937 Pontiac Silver Streak and Don Caravan - Ray Griffin

**DANDENONG VALLEY HISTORIC CAR CLUB INC. (DVHCC)**

is a member of

The Federation of Veteran Vintage & Classic Vehicle Clubs Victoria (FVVCVC) and  
The Association of Motoring Clubs (AOMC)

The DVHCC Caters for vehicles manufactured prior to 31 December 1942.

Website: <http://www.dvhcc.com.au>

The next meeting will be  
*the General Meeting to be held at,*

***Dandenong Agricultural Society Club Rooms  
on the 3rd of April 2026.***

Dandenong Show Grounds, Bennet Street, Dandenong.

Meeting commences at 8.00pm

***Don't forget the Closing Date for  
May 2026 Newsletter is the  
14th of April 2026.***

***Please get your interesting items in  
well before that date.***

# ACROSS THE EDITOR'S DESK

Hi Everyone,

Boy, it is not fun wearing a moon-boot with strict instructions not to put any weight on my left foot. Still, I guess I will get used to it, as I have at least 8 more weeks to look forward too. It will all depend on the results of an Xray on the 29th of April next. I use a wheelchair to get around most of the time and crutches for those short trips to where the wheelchair won't fit, if you know what or where I mean.

I should really be happy with life as it is. I am so, so much better now than how life looked for me back in 1993 when I had an accident at work which changed my and my families lives in a second. I won't go into details but I am happy that I have mostly been able to continue on my hobby and still get my hands dirty.

I have often been asked things like, "How come you are always happy?" or "How come you are always smiling?" Well it is an easy answer. Friends and family are the answers. I didn't know that I had so many friends, until I was injured. The majority of my friends were or are involved in the collecting, restoring and enjoyment of old cars, trucks and the like. Nowadays it might take me a little longer to do things and to move about than before that day in 1993, but every day I thank you all.

Please spend a few moments and think of those amongst us who are not as fortunate as I am, or for that matter, how lucky you are. I know that, as I think of those not so fortunate, the wearing of a moon-boot is a very small price to pay.

You might be wondering why there is a business card for a computer shop in Paynesville. Well, a week or so ago I was using this, the Clubs computer, doing some more on this Newsletter and I touched some keyboard key or another and I found that I had altered things I knew nothing about. The more I tried to correct my touching, the worse it got, until I had no idea what to do. I am sure you all have been there at some time.



A trip to the Classic Computer shop in Paynesville and I found that the shop was locked up tight as the was no power in that part of town.

When the power was returned a few days later, back I went and the Boys in the shop soon sorted out the problem and I was back in business. Out came my wallet and I was quickly told that it was on the house. When I asked why? I was informed that they knew what I did/do for Clubs around the town and there was to be No Charge. Thank you, Gavin and Andrew, for being so kind. If your in the area and you have computer problems, please get in touch with Classic Computers.

For this month's Newsletter cover I have to thank Kevin once again for his assistance. Kevin altered and made up the whole cover by using a photo taken, I think, by Jodie, at our Australia Day Show. It is of non-member, Leigh Whitfield with his 1927 20/60 Vauxhall sedan which was the winner of the trophy for "The Best Pre-1930 Vintage Vehicle" on the day. If it wasn't for people like Leigh and his wife, Karen, attending our event, we would not have had much of a show. (Who knows, we might even gain a member or two as well.) Thank you Kevin, I appreciate you work.

My thanks this issue, go to the following people who have sent things to me to put into this one or following issues. Les Thomas, Gary Stocking, John Jenkins, Kevin Clarence, Len Mizzi and Ian Clark

***Enjoy the Weekend Away in Bendigo, sorry we cannot be there with you,***

***Cheers Rick 'n' Jill.***

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Ray Griffin	0409 216 273.	picnic@dvhcc.com.au
Michael Cogley	0425 875 116.	picnic@dvhcc.com.au

Please refer to your club register for home phone numbers and addresses.

DVHCC Inc. Bank Details :-  
BENDIGO BANK ONLY.

Name....Dandenong Valley Historic Car Club.  
BSB :- ..633-000 ...Account No. 159 329 507..  
Please ID payments to this account with your name.

## **President's Report, April 2026**

Hello everyone.

This month you will find a flyer in the Newsletter for your 2026-2027 Annual Membership. Our membership fees get set at our Annual General Meeting but your membership renewals are due on the 1st of April each year.

You have a few choices to make this year if you want to keep getting your Newsletter by post. It will cost you \$30.00 extra on top of your Annual Membership. If you do not want a hard copy of your Newsletter, you can receive your Newsletter electronically and just pay your annual subscription. Please fill out the flyer and return it to Brian the Treasurer ASAP. Unfortunately, this goes for Life Members as well, you will have to pay \$30.00 too.

As Easter is very early this year, our April meeting will be on Good Friday, so come along and enjoy hot cross buns and Easter eggs.

Thanks to everyone who attended Melbourne Steam Centre in March we had a good selection of Club cars on display and the general public enjoyed them.

I'm writing this report just before 17th March which is when we will be attending Judith Cowley's memorial service at Parkdale Yacht Club.

I still have to do a couple of jobs on the Sloper before we head to Bendigo for 4 days, where we will relax and enjoy the great company of our Club members.

We have been invited to see the Buddy Holly display at the home of Jill and Nigel Smith in Narre Warren North on the 15th April. As they do not want their address published, you will have to book with Heather 0448 844 460 to get the full details.

Don't forget that the Scoresby picnic is on April the 26th. Please help Gary and Len and their helpers to make this a great day. Please let your friends know, and bring a car for a totally free day.

Cheers Ian.

# Minutes of General Meeting of the Dandenong Valley Historic Car Club held on February 6, 2026 at DAS

**Apologies:** Gary and June Stocking, Jim Lang, Rick and Jill Cove, Marg Detez, Paul Tangy, Graeme Smith, Bev Sinclair

**Motion:** The minutes of the February General Meeting published in the March newsletter be accepted as accurate.

Moved Frazer Careless

Seconded Ron Barnett Passed

**Secretaries Report** – Not represented

February 2026 Inward correspondence

- Whipped Ice Cream Van inquiring about attending the Scoresby Picnic – various correspondence with Gary and Michael
- AOMC British and European shows
- AOMC bulletin by 3
- AOMC Delegates meeting by 2
- Invitation 2026 Rob Roy Revival

Advertising Flyers

- Antique tyres
- Cascade Art by 4
- Retromotove magazine
- Auto Surplus
- Autoequip by 2
- Bend Motor Sport
- Bend Motor Sport y 2
- Micawber tavern by 1

7 Club Magazines by email

February 2026 Outward correspondence

- Confirmation letter to VicRoads

**Minutes Motion:**

Nil due to the absence of the Secretary.

**Treasurer's Report** – Brian spoke to the January financial transactions.

**Motion:** to accept the Treasurer's Report for the month of February 2026

Moved Pam Hopgood

Seconded Carol Carless Passed

**Federation Report:** Max Hobson.

- Geelong meeting two weeks ago
- Federation swap report
- Golden Oldies Tour report
- Horsham Tour on again next year.

**AOMC Report:**

- Direct contact person now with VicRoads
- Several number plate issues.

**Editor Report:** Keep the stories coming in and Rick has had his leg plaster removed

**Web Master:** Nil

**Scoresby Picnic:** Nil

**Weekend Away:**

- All paid up
- There are various ways of getting there.
- John spoke about itinerary and bookings.

**Motion:** The Club subsidise the weekend end away up to \$3500. Moved John Jenkins, Seconded Max Hobson Passed

**Past Events:**

- Lifestyle Village. Thanks Gary.
- Pearcedale Run
- Berwick Show
- Wandin Car night.

**Future Events:**

- Yarra Glen Swap
- Melbourne Steam Festival
- Judith Crowley Memorial service
- Hallam Hotel
- Weekend Away
- Scoresby Picnic
- Winton

Details of above runs in the Newsletter.

**General Business:**

- Who is organising the coin collection tins for Scoresby?
- Ian needs advice re his 46 truck
- Max spoke a Buddy Holly collection we could possibly visit

**Car or Parts for Sale:**

- Irwin Sinclair knows of a 1916 Dodge for sale.
- Lindsay Tharle has a 1927 Rugby for sale.

Meeting Closed: Time not recorded.

(8.56pm noted by the Editor who was watching at home.)

Len Mizzi filling in for Jim Lang, Secretary,

Ian Clark, President

# .....COMING EVENTS..2026.....

## PLEASE NOTE.

*Invitation Events have a (\*) before the date. No STAR (\*) means that it is a Club Event.*

**Thursday 26 until Monday 30 March.2026**

DVHCC WEEKEND AWAY: 2026. BENDIGO Area. Contact John Jenkins for more information.

**Friday 3rd April.**

DVHCC General Meeting at DAS 8.00pm. Be there to enjoy some hot-cross buns and an Easter Egg.

**Wednesday 15th April. Mid-Week Run.**

Our Mid-Week Run is to visit to the "Buddy Holly Collection" in Narre Warren North of Jill and Nigel Smith. Jill and Nigel will supply you with Morning Tea at 10.00am, **so numbers are require before then. Please book through Heather if you would like to attend.** Lunch will be at the Hallam Hotel at 12.00noon.

**(\*) Sunday 19 April. AOMC Aussie Classic Car Show**

Manhattan Hotel · 8:30 am 1:00 pm .

**Sunday 26th April.**

Federation Scoresby Picnic. See flyer below.

**(\*) Saturday 30th and Sunday 31st May.**

Winton Classic. The 49th Historic Winton. Enjoy a weekend of non-stop racing featuring historic car races from the 1920s to the 1980s as well as a huge array of veteran, vintage, rare and unusual vehicles on display.

**Friday 1st May.**

DVHCC General Meeting at DAS 8.00pm.

**(\*) Saturday 16th and or Sunday 17th MAY.**

Heyfield Vintage Machinery Rally. 9:30 am. Gordon Street Reserve Gordon Street Heyfield, VIC

## .....WANTED.....

The Committee want your suggestions for Club runs.

Please tell them where you would like to go to, and to share with your other Club members.

Melbourne is a big place, so please put your thinking caps on and suggest the venue or venues to someone on the Committee.




**FEDERATION**  
**SCORESBY PICNIC**

**Car & Motorcycle Show**

**Sunday 26th April 2026**

*National Steam Centre*  
*1200 Ferntree Gully Rd*  
*Scoresby, Vic*



**Starts 10am**

Hosted by the Dandenong Valley Historic Car Club Inc.

**FREE ENTRY**

Vehicles 25 years and older are welcome to park in the Display Area.

Trade Displays, Machine Displays, Live Music  
Food Stalls or BYO Picnic



Trophies, Free Raffle for display vehicles.

**BRING THE FAMILY**

Enquiries: Gary Stocking 0418 140 844, Len Mizzi 0403 230 641

## ***FREE VINTAGE CAR PARTS.***

Massive garage cleanout.

Everything must go and everything is FREE

Large range of 1920's Austin parts including chassis, axles, wheels, and assorted components.

***Take what you can use. Anything remaining will be sent to scrap.***

***Date : 4 & 5 July***

Location: Cockatoo, Victoria.

For Address and updates or enquiries please send an email to:

**[deannenye@gmail.com](mailto:deannenye@gmail.com)**

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**"It's your turn to put a log on the fire, Stan!"**

**Graham Bates needs to get that massive hole in the radiator fixed**



Article by:Shahram Mokhtari@shahramm

If you haven't already heard, BMW's R&D teams have been busy "innovating." Unfortunately, they aren't focusing on the things that actually matter—like stellar engine performance or the legendary driving dynamics that gearheads love. Instead, the C-suite execs decided that the best use of their engineering budget was to design a proprietary security screw specifically intended to prevent BMW drivers from fixing their own cars.



At first glance, it's almost cute: a screw head shaped exactly like the BMW logo. But the novelty wears off the moment you consider the physics. Because this head prioritizes branding over utility, neither the bit nor the screw head can withstand the torque of a standard Torx or Hex fastener. The result? Broken bits, stripped screws, and more time spent on what would otherwise be a simple task.

It's a masterpiece of anti-functional design. To the casual observer, it seems to serve no purpose other than to look "cool", but when it comes to the nitty gritty of DIY repair, it ensures that a standard toolbox is useless for basic maintenance. In fact, the patent explicitly states this as a function of its design in section [0006]: "...to prevent being loosened or tightened...by unauthorized individuals."

This type of insular protectionism isn't a one off either, it's baked into the corporate culture. Our CEO Kyle Wiens observed this firsthand during a visit to BMW's Recycling and Dismantling Centre (RDC) located in Landshut just north of Munich, Germany. It's a peculiar, one-of-a-kind facility that recovers materials from pre-production and prototype vehicles that will never reach consumer hands. The RDC processes a few thousand vehicles each year which represents only a tiny fraction of the more than one million cars BMW produced in 2025 in Germany alone. BMW doesn't seem shy about declaring the RDC's mission either, proclaiming it a "template for the industry" while stating: "In view of new regulations and the BMW Group's ambitious targets, the RDC will play an even more important role going forward..." (italics for emphasis). New regulations certainly have a way of encouraging ambitious targets, that's for sure.

Their barely passive hostility towards repair and recycling is even less hidden on the operations floor. As Kyle noted during his visit, BMW's engineers developed a clever tool to drain oil from shock absorbers so the oil could be reused: "When a member of my tour group asked if BMW sold it to other refurbishes, the man holding the tool looked confused, as though the suggestion was patently absurd. That tool was their intellectual property; it was developed by BMW for BMW. And the patent they filed for the tool ensures that no-one else can invent something similar." So much for a "template for the industry." That tool was their intellectual property; it was developed by BMW for BMW. And the patent they filed for the tool ensures that no-one else can invent something similar."

The justifications are always the same: anti-theft measures or "protecting" the user from dangerous components. While those excuses might hold water for public infrastructure or high-voltage utility boxes, they fall apart when applied to consumer products. In your garage, these aren't safety features; they are barriers to ownership.



A 3D printed screw and matching bit derived from the patent filing. To be clear, it's not like we're anti-new screws or anything, as evidenced by our resident mechanical engineers waxing poetic about the functional benefits of strip resistant Torx Plus screws when compared to regular old Torx or Hex. Fasteners, like all things, are subject to improvement over time and we're all for it. That's not what proprietary security screws are designed to do though. As with any cash-grab engineered to stifle repair, the DIY community isn't taking it lying down. Our friends over at Adafruit didn't even need a physical screw to win this

round; they used BMW's own spurious patent filings to map the dimensions and 3D-print a replica bit to defeat the lock.

This is where BMW's plan hits a wall. We're living in an era where the efforts of industrial giants can be unraveled by a hobbyist with a \$200 printer and a bit of ingenuity. The fact that a grassroots effort can dismantle a multi-million dollar "security" initiative in a matter of days speaks volumes.

## Pearcedale Combined Club Run, 2026.

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Another successful run organised by the DVHCC committee. This time three clubs, DVHCC, CHACA and Mornington Peninsula Vehicle Clubs, were invited to go to Andrew Simmon's property in Pearcedale. There were around 25 cars ranging from English to American, vintage to modified. This was another opportunity for our members to drive and show not only their vintage, but their other cars of interest.

Andrew's property is most interesting. He has a beautiful rear yard where cars can be on display while you and your friends are sitting in the shade or under a roof, eating and talking. Some of us brought rolls or sandwiches, while some others took up the offer of Andrew's BBQ and cooked their own.

Andrew's a Geo Physicist whose job is to measure rock mass change and is highly interested in Jaguars especially the XK120. He has some restored and a couple on the restoration table. He recently acquired a fixed head coupe.

We thank Andrew's for once again sharing his property and allowing us to gather there.

Many of us are involved with other car clubs and I believe we should have more inter-club runs. By doing so, we get to see a variety of cars and interesting places and we get to use our classics as well as our vintage cars.

Thanks to the organisers and helpers on the day.

Cheers Len



*Some of the attendees relaxing and having a chat  
whilst waiting for Kevin to cook lunch.*



A great day with cars and members from the Dandenong Valley Historic Car Club, the Classic and Historic Car Club and the Mornington Peninsula Vehicle Club.



Cars from the 1920's, the 1930's right up to the 1980's were on display for us all to enjoy along with the great company as well.

Scoresby Steamfest 8th March 2026





A great day was held at the Scoresby Steamfest. There was plenty to see for our members as they wandered around the large display area. It didn't matter if you were a steam buff or not as there were old cars, trucks and tractors to keep you busy looking, there was even a train ride to enjoy. Thanks for a great day.



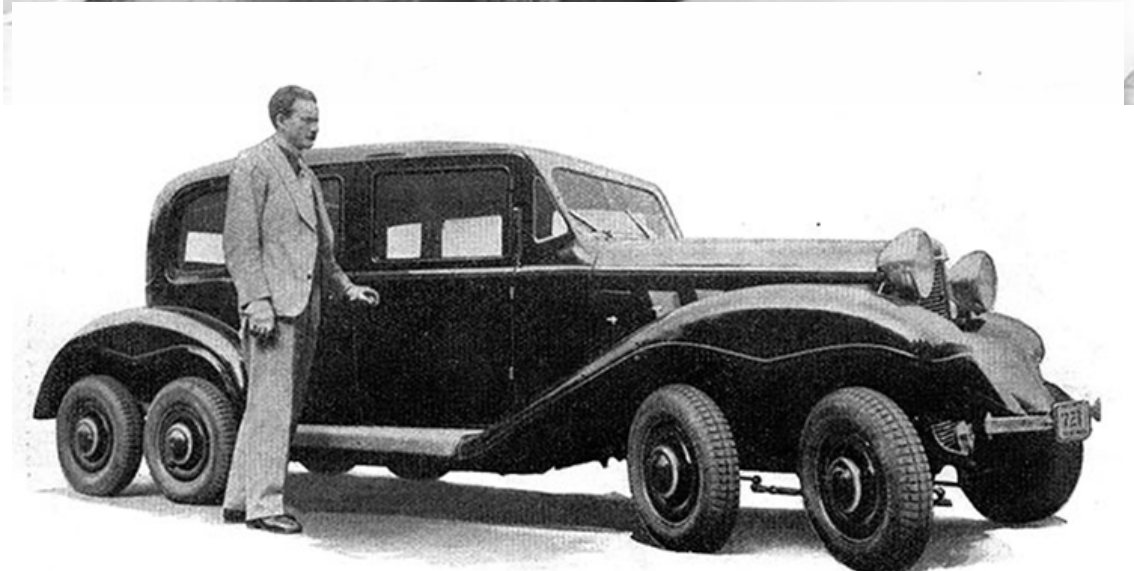
I expect that automotive innovations have produced more variations and dead ends than any other field of venture.

With the benefit of historical knowledge, we may scoff at many innovations that failed. Our lack of surprise that some innovations failed would be matched by the innovator's surprise that they did not succeed.

***The Adler Diplomat is a good example of a dead end innovation.*** It was made by the German auto company Adler, and was introduced in 1930. They had made 6 and 8 cylinder cars. The Diplomat was intended to be an updated and prestigious limousine. Given that roads in the 1930's were poor and often rough, eight wheels were intended to give a better ride. Also, eight wheels would provide enhanced road handling in wet conditions.

The disadvantages of the Diplomat was its heavy weight, its mechanical complexity, and its queer appearance. Automotive success depends on a throng of customers. They failed to appear.

Few records exist on all details regarding structure and production numbers. It is believed that a lone car was produced. Its location, should it be extant, is unknown.





***The 1911 Reeves Octoauto was an 8-wheeled technological marvel.***

Eight is enough—exactly the right amount, as it turns out, when it comes to the number of wheels on a car. In 1911, Milton Reeves tested that theory with an eight-wheel vehicle he called the Octoauto. The odd-looking automobile wasn't his first creation or his last, but it was definitely Reeves' most significant, even though it wasn't a financial success.

Reeves, a native of Indiana who was born during the Civil War, was among the early architects of the horseless carriage in the late 1880s. In fact, his initial iteration is widely considered the fourth or the fifth American automobile ever created.

Reeves' historic roots as an inventor officially began at age 15 when, while working in a sawmill, the teenager noticed that his coworkers could not control the speed of the pulleys used to power the saws, a problem that often caused the wood to split. Reeves provided the solution by designing a variable-speed transmission that allowed the saw blades to turn slower or faster as needed. He would go on to patent 100 inventions in his 60 years.

Reeves is best known for his eight-wheel, 20-foot long Octoauto, which may seem unconventional today but made perfect sense for the time. In 1911, Reeves modified a 1910 Overland by adding four wheels and creating two sets of four in front and back. Roads in his time were generally horrendous (particularly in rural areas), and since suspension consisted of leaf springs and tire design wasn't what it is today, passengers felt every bump and pothole. Reeves simply borrowed a design employed on railroad cars, which used quad-wheel "bogies" to distribute the weight and smooth out the ride. According to [silodrome.com](http://silodrome.com): "The design incorporated front twin steering coupled with steering by the wheels on the rearmost axle. The forward rear axle had no steering and was the only one that was driven, making this an 8×2. The driven axle was the only one that had drum brakes on each wheel."

The idea worked brilliantly. So much so that few argued when Reeves began calling the odd-looking automobile "the only easy riding car in the world." The problem was that it cost too much to build. The four-passenger Octoauto—powered by a 40-horse engine—retailed for \$3200, which is nearly \$100,000 today.



## EASY RECIPE :- Hearty Maroilles Tart

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Recipe: Hearty Maroilles tart

Try this simple traditional dish from the north of France, also known as 'Flamiche au Maroilles'.

If you are feeling the need for a warm, hearty, comforting dish this winter... look no further than Maroilles tart (Flamiche au Maroilles).

This recipe from the north of France makes 2 × 24cm tarts. It will require 40 minutes of preparation time, about 70 minutes of rising time and 1 hour of cooking time.

### Ingredients

- 80ml water
- 20g fresh (cake) yeast
- 1 tsp superfine sugar
- Half tsp salt
- 50ml extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 eggs
- 190g all-purpose flour
- 2 × 200g squares Maroilles cheese
- A little freshly grated nutmeg



### Method

1. Heat the water until it is just lukewarm (no hotter than 46°C; about 15 seconds in a microwave). Pour it into a mixing bowl.
2. Crumble in the fresh yeast, add the sugar and salt, and stir until dissolved.
3. Let sit for 5 minutes, then whisk in the olive oil. Add one egg and whisk quickly, by hand, to blend, then add the second egg and whisk even more vigorously.
4. Add the flour and whisk it in until just smooth. Avoid over-whisking, which could make the dough dry. Cover and let rise for 30 minutes at room temperature.
5. Line two 24cm tart tins with parchment paper. Divide the dough into two equal pieces and place in the tart tins. Using a flexible spatula or your hands, press the dough evenly over the bases of the pans and up the sides.
6. The dough layer will be thin, but it will rise when baked.
7. Remove the rinds from the sides of each Maroilles square, but leave the top and bottom rinds on. Cut the cheese into slices and arrange in a crisscross pattern over the dough, leaving a 3cm border. Sprinkle the tops lightly with grated nutmeg. Let rise for about 40 minutes at room temperature.
8. Preheat the oven to 200°C. Bake one tart at a time for about 30 minutes, or until deeply golden.

# 15 Precis Minutes of the AOMC Delegates Meeting 9th February 2026

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There were 81 attendees representing 63 clubs and 2 visitors

**Chair: Keith Mortimer, President AOMC**, welcomed delegates and guests and noted that 2026 is the 50th Anniversary of the AOMC.

**Guest Speaker:** Tina Doran & Chris Carr from Bendigo Bank. Chris Carr started by giving a background on the bank and Tina the talked about the situation for clubs with regards to the impending phase out of cheques.

**The minutes of the November 2025 Delegates meeting.** Moved Peter Welten (Triumph CC), seconded Bill Reid (FB-EK Holden CC) and carried.

**Business Arising from November meeting.** Keith reported on the RACV Total Care issue that was raised at the November meeting and noted that AOMC are meeting with RACV shortly and Total care will be on the agenda.

**Correspondence:** AOMC Secretary Tony Hall reported that after consultation with VicRoads, any club issue that needs escalation can be done through the AOMC, and the issue will be triaged to the relevant supervisor with priority. Any issues should be directed to Tony. Keith Mortimer added that this was not for general enquiries, but for following up on outstanding issues.

**President's Report:** Keith Mortimer started by asking how many delegates were at the Festival of Motoring? It was another well patroned day, and over \$10,000 was raised for the designated charity, Red Kite.

**Treasurers Report:** The Treasurer, Mark Fenton, reported that as of 31st January 2026 the AOMC has \$344,224 cash at bank. MembershipPLUS affiliation outcomes have been on target with 78 clubs now subscribed, with positive benefits such as significantly reduced insurance costs for all participating clubs. Clubs are reminded that funds are still available for sponsorship from the RACV which the AOMC facilitates via its Small Club Fund initiative. The Treasurer's report was moved by Mark Fenton, seconded Andrew McDougall (Alvis CC) and carried.

**MembershipPLUS Insurance Report:** Mark Fenton reported that member clubs can sign up for reduced insurance costs through the AOMC MembershipPLUS scheme. The cost savings do come with some obligations, such as drafting a Risk Management Plan. All clubs need to make progress towards getting their documentation in place. Most clubs have used the simplified template available on the AOMC website. Some have used it as it is, some have customised the template for their own circumstance. AOMC made the decision to have authorised First Aid at events, and our events are large events, but for clubs it is not an expectation, depending on the venue requirements. He added that clubs may also have trained first aid people within their club that could be utilised for such requirements for the smaller events that they run. ACTION: Mark will look at the wording of the document to ensure it is not conveying the message ambiguously.

**VicRoads / CPS Report:** Keith Mortimer reported that a revised CPS Handbook has been drafted and is now under review with VicRoads.

**Minute Secretary:** The AOMC minute taker, Daryl McMahan, will be taking 6 months leave to travel overseas. A temporary replacement is required for committee meetings and the delegates meetings. Clubs are urged to canvas their membership to see if anyone is interested in assisting in this role.

**AOMC Events 2026:** RACV British & European Motoring Show. Sunday February 15 at Yarra Glen racecourse. Florence Thomson Tour – Friday May1st to Sunday 3rd. Maureen Ross reported that 111 cars and 229 people are booked in to participate. AOMC Aussie Classic Car Show - Manhattan Hotel Sunday April 19. The event is open to everything manufactured or assembled in Australia.

**Engine Number Records:** Keith Mortimer reported that someone has been appointed to take on the role of Engine Number Records manager.

**Delegates Reports /General Business:** Peter Paproth (FX/FJ Holden CC) reported that his club visited the Trafalgar Holden Museum and their display commemorating the Holden Ute. He recommends the museum for a visit. Daryl Meek (Veteran CC) reported that the Ballarat Swap was held last Saturday at the Ballarat Showgrounds & Events Centre. There were 680 sites and it was privately run.

Keith Mortimer declared the meeting closed at 9.05pm.

We had received some advice about arrival in Afghanistan. Firstly, get insurance at the border, where we will also have to pay the toll to Herat. Low exchange rate at the border so get money exchanged before leaving Mashhad. The old 5 afghani note is very similar to the new 50 Afghani note and advantage is taken of this. Make sure petrol pumps are zeroed before starting your fill. The petrol was better as coming from Iran.

So, with all this in mind, we rose at 6:30 and were in town, outside the Bank by 7:30. Shelagh and Jim were travelling with us and Fred pulled up next to them at the Bank into which Shelagh went. The remaining three of us sat in the vans talking but, after about 15 minutes, during which time no-one else had gone into the bank, I went in to see what the hold-up was, only to find no sign of Shelagh. I asked at the counter where she might be, but no one had seen her. Now, in these countries this situation is somewhat disturbing, and I find it difficult to put into words exactly how useless one feels; I might even say frightened, or at least apprehensive. Luckily, one of the tellers had gone to the rear of the building and now returned with an English-speaking person who, when she came up to me smiled and said, 'I'm so sorry, but we could not exchange the type of travellers cheques the young lady had, so I had to send her to another bank.' She then proceeded to take me to another door in rear of the bank and pointed out the bank she had sent Shelagh to. I thanked her and began to walk across to the bank and at this point Shelagh emerged and we walked back to the vans, with me much relieved.

We left Mashhad at 8:00am. The usual overheating began, it was obviously going to be a hot day, but we had found a new trick, lifting the back of the engine cover. The heat, combined with cross-winds didn't help with the cooling.

No problems passing through the Iranian border, then through an Afghani checkpoint, followed a little further on by Afghani customs. It's 12:15 and the customs doesn't open until 2:00, so we brew up some tea and wait. We now need to advance our watches by one hour. By 2:00, eight vehicles are waiting, and when the office finally opens, we are given 3 forms to fill in. Then the van was quickly checked, passports stamped and we are sent to the police. Passports stamped again and then, realizing we are going to need more afghanis we went to the money exchange but unfortunately our advisors were correct and the rate was very low, even after some persistent haggling, so we didn't exchange any. We then attempted to pass the border but were sent back to get our inoculation certificates stamped and it's a good job we had them as the atmosphere was thick with the smell of drugs, the doctor was off with the fairies and his equipment was a tray with half a dozen ancient syringes rolling about in it. Couldn't get out of there quick enough, only to run into children selling drugs, 'Very good quality mister, only 200 afghanis, you buy'. Back to the border to buy insurance, 450 afghanis, so finally we have to bow to the money dealers and receive a pathetic rate of exchange. Everything finalised, we got away after being there three and a half hours.

Others were not so lucky. When we first arrived at the border area there was what looked like a semi-dismantled Volkswagen in the compound. In our time there I had taken the opportunity to go and have a chat with the owner of this vehicle, a Frenchman. He told me they were looking for drugs but wouldn't find them. Which implied they did have some. Probably secreted inside their own bodies. Their van was a highly decorated vehicle which had been painted in Pakistan and they had arrived before 10:00 am. and had emptied out the main contents of the van onto the ground as requested. He had then been told to move the van over a pit where two afghanis, one a soldier and the other looking just like any old peasant, began removing every screw and nut and bolt. They took off the tail lights and hub caps and let all the air out of the tyres, smelling it for hashish. Having not found what they were looking for, they proceeded to remove all the insulation, plywood and hardboard paneling, table, cupboards and shelves. They banged and poked about with everything and even resorted to drilling holes in the hollow bracing struts that they couldn't remove.

The two inspectors then climbed onto the roof to inspect items that were packed up there. After they had been checking for 2 hours they simply walked off for a two-hour break although one did sneak back to check they weren't doing anything with the van. This was when we arrived. When they finally returned from their break and decided they were finished they simply told the Frenchman to move his vehicle as they needed the space. His reply to that request, I suggest, was not nice. They had been there seven hours when we left.



***French Volkswagen at Afghan border. Note inspectors on top.***

Back to us. Arriving at Hotel Ariana in Herat we met Alan, who took us to the Herat Samovar Restaurant. We were just sitting down when who should walk in but Henny and Lies, so we all enjoyed a lovely meal of interesting food at a fair price with a background of afghani music, but the local Pepsi Cola was terrible.

We spent the next day in Herat. Not a cold drink available anywhere. Walked around general shopping area which was very unimpressive. All a bit poor and pathetic. People are very nice though. English spoken by many of them, from the youngest child to the oldest tribesmen. Went back to Herat Samovar again in the middle of the afternoon for drinks. Choice; water or green tea. Booked table for meal for this evening and were surprised when the owner didn't take any money but said we could pay for everything that evening. One can just never tell. Bought some postcards and went back to the campsite and wrote a letter to Mum and Dad to send with a postcard for Mum's birthday; but won't post until we arrive in Kabul. Went to have a shower but the water smelled of sewage (poorly filtered ex-toilet water) so I gave it a miss. Had a wash at the van and went for our evening meal at Herat Samovar. Henny and Lies turned up again. Devoured enormous meal of pilau rice, spinach, kebabs and green tea, after which I felt really bloated. Said goodbye to Henny and Lies, and retired early, 10:30, ready for a 5:00am start for Kabul tomorrow. I felt rough during the night and relinquished much of the pilau rice.

When we were speaking to the owner of Herat Samovar he asked us if we smoked opium. When we asked 'Why, could he get us some?' he just replied 'It's not good for you'. That ended the conversation.

Les T.

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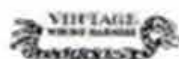
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