

SUNBURNT *country*

Icons of Australian Motoring

News Release
27 May 2013



Buckle up for a great ride through motoring history! The National Motor Museum in Birdwood will launch a new exhibition this Friday 31 May: *Sunburnt Country - Icons of Australian Motoring*.

This permanent exhibition brings together a selection of significant vehicles and stories of the first fifty years of motoring in Australia - from 'The Shearer' a steam carriage made in Mannum in 1899 to the ground-breaking 1948 Holden – 'Australia's Own Car'. The vehicles are presented along with photographs, film, soundscapes and objects in what is the most significant exhibition in over a decade, thanks to major sponsor Holden and supported by RAA.

Visitors can navigate their way through a range of exhibits, some representing household names such as Holden, Ford and Kruse and discover lesser known ones such as Ding, Bandt, Dutton and Auger.



One of the earliest examples of Australian motoring, **The Shearer** made its debut journey through the main street of Mannum on 5 June 1899. A horseless steam-driven carriage built by David and John Shearer, it must have been a great spectacle for the local community.



In 1908, Harry Dutton and Murray Auger completed the first crossing of the continent from Adelaide to Darwin in **The Talbot '474'**, so named after its South Australian registration number. The journey of 2100 miles took 51 days to complete. The men crossed deserts, negotiated dry riverbeds and flowing creeks, traversed bogs, bush tracks and grasslands and even escaped a bushfire.

'**The Favourite**' motorcycle will sit proudly at the exhibition's entrance, recently re-assembled after major conservation treatment. It's one of the four known surviving motorcycles built at the Smith Brothers Garage in Peterborough, South Australia between 1914 and 1921.

The **Australian Six** Motor Car Company was one of the more successful ventures importing various parts from the US and the UK to assemble cars in the 1920s. A rare and stunning example is featured in the exhibition, featuring the classic art deco styling of the 1920s era.



In 1933 a farmer's wife reputedly wrote to the Ford Company of Australia, "Why don't you build people like us a vehicle to go to church in on Sunday, and which can carry our pigs to market on Monday?" This led to the development of the quintessential Aussie ute, designed by South Australian Lew Bandt. The **1934 Ford Coupe Ute** is a home-grown hybrid of sedan and light truck, combining the attributes of a working vehicle with the comforts of a passenger car. The Museum's example is shown in an un-restored but gracefully aged condition.



The **1936 Leyland Badger** was the trusted truck used by legendary mail man of the outback, Tom Kruse, to deliver mail and supplies on a fortnightly 500km trek along the Birdsville Track. Originally purchased by trucking pioneer Harry Ding, it was sold to Kruse as part of the mail delivery contract in 1948. It also starred alongside Tom in the 1954 film "The Back of Beyond". His epic adventures crossing some of the most arduous terrain in the land are summarised in the exhibition. A feature video also uses footage from the award winning film and private collections.

The **1948 Holden** is the earliest known surviving example of the 48-215 in South Australia. The car on display once belonged to Prudence Holden, wife of James who was a director at Holden's Woodville plant. Rolling off the production line in 1948, it represents the first post-war example of technological advancement to benefit our growing nation.

Sunburnt Country – Icons of Australian Motoring is a must-see for motoring enthusiasts and an eye-opener for all. In addition to the vehicles, visitors can see Australia's first driver's licence, road maps, car mascots, motoring fashions and fascinating historic footage of vehicle manufacturing in Australia.

So make a bee-line for Birdwood and enjoy this great journey through Australia's motoring past.

Ends

Images available to media on request.

What: *Sunburnt Country - Icons of Australian Motoring*

When: 1 June 2013 onwards

Where: National Motor Museum, Birdwood, South Australia

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