

UPDATE NUMBER 2. FEBRUARY 2014

# PERKOLILLI 1914-2014

## 15-LITRE WORLD LAND SPEED RECORD BREAKER TO WHIP UP THE DUST AT THE CENTENARY OF SPEED

**The mighty 1904 Napier L48 Sampson owned by Peter Briggs will attend the Lake Perkolilli Centenary of Speed from 16 to 19 October 2014.**

The 1904 Napier which has been on display at the York Motor Museum was described by one of the most highly-regarded motoring journalists, the late Bill Boddy, as the best recreated car in the world. What sets the car apart is that it is built around the original engine which broke the world land speed record at Ormond Beach in Florida.

The 15 Litre engine was very advanced for the time and remarkably light for its capacity. The car weighs less than a tonne.

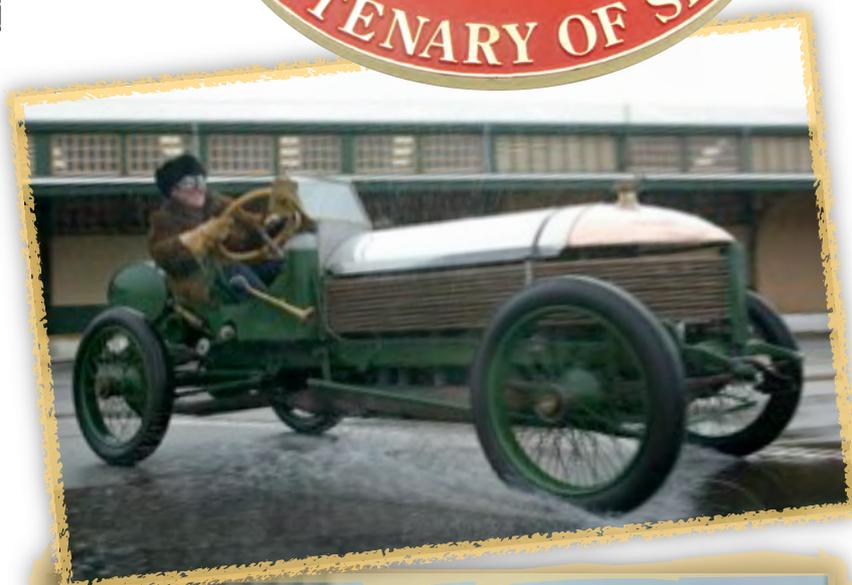
It was the first British car to exceed 100 miles per hour and the first successful six cylinder race engine.

The Chamberlain brothers of Australian tractor fame purchased the engine

which came out of a record-breaking speedboat many years ago. The speedboat was called Nautilus and it is now on display at the National Maritime Museum in Sydney.

The Napier recreation has been exhibited at the Pebble Beach Concours in California where it won a trophy for the most historic car of the concours, and it has also appeared at the Goodwood Festival of Speed as well as many hillclimb events in the United Kingdom.

The Napier is capable of mind-boggling speeds and incredible torque. It will be a terrific sight to see the car at Lake Perkolilli where so many Australian speed and endurance records have been set in the past. Don't miss it!



## Plans are now taking shape for the Lake Perkolilli 1914-2014 Centenary of Speed.

Ross Oxwell from the Vintage Sports Car Club and Graeme Cocks have been working with CAMS to develop the event.

The event will be limited to cars built before 1940 or after 1940 by invitation. The aim is to re-create the feeling of race meetings from the 1920s and 1930s. If you have a car which is a little bit later, but has a pre-war look about it, let us know and we might fit it in. (yes, MG TCs do look like pre-war MGs). Of course, motorcycles also raced and owners of early motorcycles are also encouraged to participate.

The current plan is for activities to begin at Lake Perkolilli on Thursday 16 October. The first two days will be for free practice and trials to test and tune and to work out elapsed times. The claypan is a unique circuit with a rock hard and flat clay surface. The track is defined by the saltbush which grows on the areas which are not driven on.

If you have ever wondered what motorsport was really like in the 1920s and 1930s then Lake Perkolilli is probably the only race track in the world where truly nothing

has changed. You will be driving on the exact same surface as those days -- no new bitumen tarmac, no kitty litter run-off areas, and no concrete barriers. It is just the hard red dirt and the blue sky. Yes, even the dust is the same! As there is no need for barriers the only danger from losing grip is to slide out from the racing line.

Saturday and Sunday will feature a program of demonstration events where cars are released onto the track at intervals depending upon their speed with the timings designed to achieve massed finishes for up to six cars on the track at any one event.

The aim is to make participation in the Centenary of Speed as economical for participants as possible.

We had had good discussions with the City of Kalgoorlie/Boulder and we are confident that the event will be well supported locally.

When we have conducted events at Lake Perkolilli in the past, people have either camped at the claypan or stayed in Kalgoorlie and driven out past Kanowna every day. With the extra interest in the Centenary, discussions are currently underway to see what the current requirements are for camping. We'll advise on this in future editions of the newsletter.

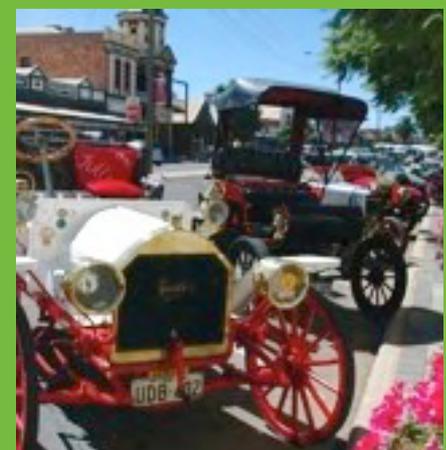
For accommodation in Kalgoorlie-Boulder see <http://kalgoorlietourism.com/accommodation>.



## 2014 NATIONAL VETERAN RALLY

### Part of the Kalgoorlie-Boulder Motoring Festival

The Eastern Goldfields will be alive with the sights and sounds of about 100 veteran (pre-1919) cars and motorcycles from Sunday 19 October to Friday 24 October. Both the Perkolilli and National Veteran vehicle rally are timed to complement each other so that visitors to the region for either event will be able to enjoy both. It is hoped that a good number of the veteran rally participants will brave the dusty track to Perkolilli to add to the atmosphere of the centenary event.



# THE FORD MODEL T AT LAKE PERKOLILLI



**The first Ford to race in Western Australia was at the 1909 Boulder motor race, the first four wheeled motor race in the State. The first Ford to race on Lake Perkolilli was in December 1914. This was a Ford Model T driven by Robert Dixberry. It was also the first car to crash at the claypan.**

For the next 25 years, Fords were regularly seen in motor racing events on the claypan. There were even races exclusively for Model Ts.

Probably the most famous Ford in Western Australia during the early 1920s was called Hezza Henry. It was raced by Ossie Cranston from Ford dealer Grave and Dwyer in Perth and later Lynas Motors. He had access to the best performance gear produced in the United States and his car spun around Lake Perkolilli at 72 miles per hour.

Hezza Henry had an overhead valve race cylinder head compared with the standard flathead arrangement, and it was lowered for better cornering.

The overhead valve conversion probably doubled the horsepower of the standard 20Hp engine. The standard body was discarded and a streamlined two-seater boat-tail body completed race look.

The Model T also raced against Triumph Imps, Austin Sevens and Salmsons in the early days of the Claremont Speedway.

Like all racing cars, Hezza Henry was eventually outclassed and Ossie Cranston had a new Ford to promote.

He progressed to a Model A racer called *Cactus* and then a Ford V8 Special. Replicas of both these cars exist and will make an appearance at Lake Perkolilli.

The most recent Model T to race was In 2009. A 1913 Ford Model T called the Ashton racer was raced around the claypan by Cathy Cocks.



Seven Model T speedsters are under construction this year to put on a show at the Lake Perkolilli Centenary of Speed and it is hoped that many of them will be finished in time!

Everyone with Ford Model T speedsters, tourers, roadsters and sedan are welcome to bring their cars to Lake Perkolilli to help celebrate the good old days when the Universal Car was a fixture at all the events.

# LAKE PERKOLILLI CENTENARY BOOK TAKING SHAPE DO YOU HAVE ANY FAMILY PHOTOS?

Do you have any photographs which you think were taken at Lake Perkolilli? If you do, then I'd like to hear from you. There are some years where many photographs exist and for other years there are very few photographs out there.

## The Early Years

Photographs of the early motor races are perhaps the most scarce. There are many more motorcycle shots from 1914 to 1918 than shots of the early cars which raced on the claypan.

## Taxi Cabs

The most common cars in the Goldfields in the early days were taxis so it was natural for the taxi drivers to have their own races once they'd transported people

out to the events. Few photographs exist of these races.

## 1939 - The Last Gasp

The last race meeting in 1939 was a local affair and no photography has emerged from the races. The last motor race in 1939 was a stock car race won by

an unknown driver of a Chevrolet six. We do, however, know who he beat - Cugley driving a Ford V8. Any ideas welcome to solve this mystery!

I haven't yet seen any photographs of the bicycle races on the claypan but they did happen. It was tough for the cyclists as they had to ride on the rough track out from Kalgoorlie. Perhaps the most unusual event was the croquet club picnic - no photos of that one as yet!

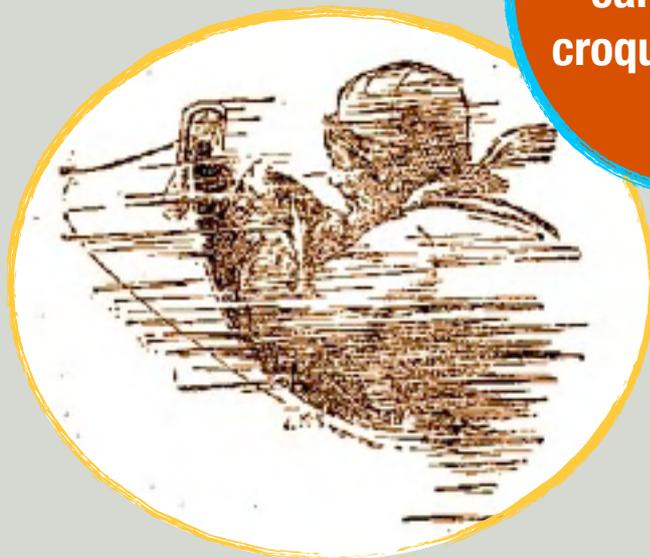
The Coolgardie Grandstand was transported to Perkolilli by camel but we don't have any camel train pictures.

All these photographs aren't critical to the book but it would be great to get some in.

The book will be published before the Lake Perkolilli 1914-2014 Centenary of Speed and it will only be available in limited edition.

In the next newsletter, we'll have an expression of interest form so that you can reserve your copy.

**Chasing taxis, bikes, camels and croquet players**



### Updates at:

[www.motoringpast.wordpress.com](http://www.motoringpast.wordpress.com)

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# Bulletin 2.



# 47,021 MOTORING PAST PERKOLILLI



Tom Benson in his Chevrolet Badger Special gets the dust flying at Lake Perkolilli in 2009. The winner of the last motor race in 1939 was a Chev, the driver was unrecorded.

## CARS

If you have a car built before 1940 then you are eligible for the Lake Perkolilli Centenary as a participant.

## MOTORCYCLES

Motorcycle racing was every bit as important as car racing so pre-1940 motorcycles are also welcome.

## AND SPECTATORS

If you don't have a pre-war vehicle you are still welcome to attend and soak up the atmosphere.

Updates at: [www.motoringpast.wordpress.com](http://www.motoringpast.wordpress.com)

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