

ARBROATH - DAVID DUNBAR BUICK 150 YEARS ON

Last year was the 150th anniversary of David Dunbar Buick's birth in Arbroath Scotland. Buick Owners Club of WA member, Ian Carrington-Jones passed on a newspaper article, clipping and photos given to him by a friend who attended the event when a plaque was installed commemorate his birthplace.

The plaque has been fixed to the wall of the only remaining building in Green Street (apparently high up the wall out of vandals' reach).

The following is an excerpt from the Arbroath Herald, dated 14 September 2004:

"Plaque unveiled at moving ceremony.

Many famous men have come from Arbroath -- James Chalmers, inventor of the adhesive postage stamp; and Patrick Bell, inventor of the reaping machine, to name but two. Few people however, have ever associated the name of Buick with the town. But David Dunbar Buick who was born in Green Street in 1854 has ensured that the name of Buick is one of the most famous names in motoring history.

David Buick's innovative skills were to earn him his place in the history of the motor industry and that the man, who helped launch a giant industry, whose name has appeared on more than 32 million automobiles over 90 years, was honoured at a ceremony, in what is left of Green Street - Lodge St Vigean No 101, yesterday when a plaque marking his birthplace was unveiled by Buick General Sales and Service Manager, Robert Coletta. A number of vintage Buicks from the company's 100-year old history were on display.

The plaque reads:

"David Dunbar Buick - September 17, 1854 - March 5, 1929. American motoring pioneer and founder of the Buick Motor Company of America. David Dunbar Buick was born at 26 Green Street, Arbroath which lay approximately 90 metres north of this, the only remaining building to show the line of the original street. Sponsored by the Buick Motor Division of the General Motors Corporation of America"

Plans for the plaque and dedication were arranged by Buick Public Relations, Angus District Council and Eric Buick, an Arbroath resident who became interested in David Buick because of his name, but who claims no genealogical link to the Buick firm's founder. Buick executives in Europe on business also participated in the dedication. Along with Mr Coletta, the party included Chris A Wolf, assistant general sales manager for customer satisfaction, and Rick Pellafone, director of customer assistance.

Mr Coletta said, "Buick has been one of the great names in American automobiles through virtually all of the 20th century. It is certainly appropriate

for us to honour this man, not only because his name identifies our automobiles, but because his genius and hard work formed the beginning of an unsurpassed automotive success story which is still being written.”

On behalf of the Angus District Council, Provost Brian Milne said, “We are honoured to have helped Eric Buick and Buick Motor Division in providing this tribute to the life and achievements of David Dunbar Buick.”

“It is most fitting that the founder of perhaps the worlds most famous car company was born in Arbroath, a town which has traditionally prided itself in its engineering excellence.”

Mr Eric Buick, no relative of David, said he first contacted Buick Motors in 1991 with a view to writing an article for the “Arbroath Herald” annual. “I am absolutely astounded that so many people have turned up to make this such a special occasion. It has taken several years to come to fruition but it has turned out very well. This plaque represents a man who was an engineering genius and the true fighting spirit he showed throughout his life. I would like to thank the Brethren of Lodge St Vigean No 101 for their help and for allowing us to use their building: Angus District Council who organised the ceremony; and Buick Motors”.

A letter of fraternal greetings and a Lippenon Angus plaque was presented to Mr Coletta by Provost Milne on behalf of the people of Arbroath”.



Arbroath local dignitaries unveil the plaque. Eric Buick is second from right.

Ian also provided the following clipping covering the plaque unveiling event.

Town's tribute to famous son

A SMALL ceremony to mark the 150th anniversary of the birth of one of Arbroath's most internationally-famous, but least celebrated, sons took place in the town yesterday.

David Dunbar Buick was born in Green Street in 1854 and emigrated to the United States with his family two years later.

It was there that he went on to found the famous motor manufacturer which bears his name—now as part of the global General Motors.

A plaque commemorating his birthplace was installed on the Masonic Hall in Green Street 10 years ago after a one-man campaign by local man Eric Buick—no relation—won sponsorship from GM.

A matching plaque is displayed on the company's headquarters in Flint, Michigan.

Eric was joined for yes-



terday's celebration by former Angus provost Brian Milne, Angus Council representative Norman Atkinson and Bill Beedie from the Masonic Lodge.

He said, "The first I knew of my famous namesake was years ago when I was an apprentice at the old Dundee Trades College and my lecturer joked that he hoped I'd turn out as successful as David Buick.

"That got me interested and, over the years, I found

out more and became fascinated by him and disappointed that there was nothing to mark his links with Arbroath.

"It's maybe just as well I didn't turn out like him as, although he founded one of the most famous car companies in the world, he didn't have the business sense to go with his talent and died in relative poverty.

"I'm glad his memory is being celebrated, and it was Norman Atkinson who said

there must be something in the Angus water that produces people like David Buick.

"Arthur Davidson, who was one of the co-founders of the Harley-Davidson motor-cycle company in Milwaukee, Wisconsin—just across Lake Michigan from the Buick headquarters—was born at Aberlemno."

● Our picture shows Norman Atkinson, Bill Beedie, Eric Buick and Brian Milne.

L Haime (WA Buicks)