

## THE 34 AFFAIR Part 2

### The Restoration

The 1950 Jetback Coupe wasn't finished until early 2005 so in reality I didn't touch the 34 until late that year, 2005. I did pull the motor and gearbox before putting the car into a further period of storage. This was mainly because my good friend Rob Fergusson Stewart who was the proprietor of STEWARTS AUTOMOTIVES, engine reconditioners of some repute started talking about retirement!! Rob has rebuilt all my Buick motors and even though a FORD man at heart he has a soft spot for Buicks ( and up until recently owned several ). So fearing the worst and wanting to get the motor into his workshop I loaded it onto his ute while visiting one day with instructions that it be rebuilt before he retire.

I had also discovered EBay while restoring the 1950 and used to regularly check for 34 parts on the American EBay site. The parts that appeared were amazing, NOS crown wheel and pinion, transmission gears, bearings, fuel pumps, carbys, auto chokes, vacuum starter controls – the list went on and on. Occasionally I would get lucky and win, in those days packages could be sent cheaply surface and as I wasn't desperate I was happy to wait the three months they took to arrive. So even before commencing restoration I had a nice stock pile of NOS or good used parts. I discovered Americans like and are prepared to pay good money for a variety of items which in those days were available in second hand shops here so I became an EBay seller, ran a Papal account in the US using these funds to offset the purchases I was making. The good part of this was not having to make those sobering conversions from US\$ to AUS\$.

I had examined the chassis on the 34 closely and had come to the view that it was so badly cracked in a number of places it was probably not repairable. The rear spring hangers had pounded there way through the bottom of the chassis rails, telescopic shocks had been welded on the front and a tow hitch welded directly onto the rear of the chassis. The only good part seemed to be the front cross member, unusual because the generally holds moisture and rusts out.

My friend and fellow club member Murray Lizatovich restored a beautiful 1935 8/40 sedan about 10 years ago and always makes the comment about how everything fell into place with that car. Missing rare parts he required turned up and nothing impeded his restoration of a trophy winning car. Murray and I have often talked about this because the same thing happened with the roadster restoration. An example!!

I had a couple of chassis ( 3 in fact ) but none were really good, suffering from severe cracking, accident damage or just plain rust.

In 2002 I was working at the Wheatbelt District Police Office and spent a lot of my working days traveling to various Police Stations from the coastal towns of Jurien and Lancelin to as far inland as Southern Cross. Another Inspector and myself had overnighted in our swags at Bidgemia Station which is a pastoral lease north of Bencubbin ( West Aussies will know where all these places are, you East Coasters will have to look them up!! ). As we were returning I was relaxing in the passenger

seat enjoying the ride and watching the gradual change from pastoral leases to farming lands. I caught a glimpse of an old wreck on a side road which I convinced my partner we needed to investigate. Unbelievably it was the remains of a 1934 Buick 40 sedan.



While stopped and examining the remains a local farmer pulled up and asked if we needed help ( must have looked a bit odd, a couple of cops closely examining an old car )

So I asked the question “ How long’s this been here? “

He didn’t answer straight away, took his hat off, scratched his head and said “ dunno, but just hang on.”

In an adjoining paddock there was a Header taking off a wheat crop, the farmer looked that way and picked up the handpiece of his two way and said “ Hey Mike, how long’s this car wreck been on the side of the road? “

I guess Mike was watching proceedings from the cab of John Deere Header because it didn’t take long for his reply “ Well, I’m 38, it’s been there as long as I can remember so at least 30 odd years. “

So it could well have been on the side of that remote road for 40, maybe more years. The chassis was in really good shape, the only rust being in the front cross member.

When I got back to the office I rang the CEO of the Wyalkatchem Shire to inquire about the remains. Within 10 minutes I had a letter of authority to recover the remains, with a request to do it ASAP as the Shire was cleaning up road verges, after all, it had only been an eyesore there for the past 40 years or so!!!!

WYALKATCHEM

**Wyalkatchem Shire**

# Memo

**To:** Inspector Stuart Syme  
**From:** Michael Keeble Chief Executive Officer  
**CC:**  
**Date:** 28<sup>th</sup> November, 2002  
**Re:** Removal of Car Body

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In terms of the Shire of Wyalkatchem delegation - 5. *ABANDONED VEHICLES* -  
The Chief Executive Officer is delegated to collect and dispose of abandoned vehicles.  
Adopted by Council resolution 10.7.9 on the 21<sup>st</sup> March 2002.

You are given permission to collect and dispose of a vehicle chassis which is located on the corner of Nembudding Sth Road and Merredin Road.

Would you please ensure this is completed as soon as possible.

So with paperwork in hand, a trailer and a mate, a day trip to Wyalkatchem and I'm the proud owner of another 1934 Buick.

## **August 2005, We really start!!**

The Jetback was finished, the motor and gearbox for the 34 had been rebuilt and sitting on the shed floor and I had accumulated a lot of what I needed to start the restoration ( except money, never seemed to have enough of that ) so there were no excuses, into it!!!

I had cut the front off one of the old chassis and mounted the rear section onto a 4 wheel trolley. The body was removed ( delicately, it was in a very fragile state ) and

bolted onto the trolley. The rolling chassis was brought into the workshop and front end removed, then the front cross-member ( the only really sound part of the original chassis ) was cut off .



The rest was rolled back out, the rear end removed and the remainder of the chassis delegated to the scrap heap.

I had the Wyalkatchem chassis sandblasted and removed the front cross-member with a plasma cutter before painting it with POR.

Murray Lizatovich has the appropriate accreditations and welded the new front cross-member in place for me after confirming correct frame alignment from dimensional drawings contained in the 1934 Series Forty Buick Shop Manual.

With the chassis now painted I moved onto the rear end and front suspension.

To be continued!!

*Stuart Syme WA Buicks*