

THE 34 AFFAIR – PART 3

By now it was 2006 and work on the 34 Roadster continued at a fairly steady pace. The only thing that seemed to get in the way was work!!!

I don't usually put time frames on my restorations – enough of that with work, deadlines for this, completion dates for that, all outside your control. Vehicle restorations always formed a big part of my “ stress management plan” and I steadfastly refused to put completion dates on any stage.

But, Queensland was hosting the 2008 National Meet and Tour and I started to think it would be nice to take the 34 back to its home, just for a visit of course!

2006 quickly became 2007 and with mechanicals basically completed I turned to body work.

I managed to talk Terry Fullwood (West Australians will be familiar with Terry who used to build replacement wooden auto frames many years ago) to come out of retirement and replace the timber frame in the roadster. Terry had done the frame on my 28 Roadster back in the 80's and his work is exceptional.

The only problem was Terry lived about 120kms from me and I had arranged to have body panels sandblasted, rust repaired and basic panel beating done then deliver these sheet metal components to Terry as he required them. I had a panel beater lined up who promised he could do the repairs and have the panels ready for me to take to Terry as required. Naturally this didn't eventuate, front cowl and doors were on time, floor repairs dragged on and the roadster rear section and deck lid were rushed, sub standard and not completed which meant parting company with that panel beater.

Terry completed the frame but we didn't nail the sheet metal on as I determined I needed to remove it and have the substandard work repaired.

Time was rolling on and by this stage the Nationals were only about 12 months away.

I could see work was really going to be a distraction.

I decided there was only one solution – RETIRE.

Seemed fair, I had done 35 years in the “ JOB ” and was starting to feel a bit like a dinosaur (the young ones in the job used to call my service ribbons dinosaur badges). I reckoned the on going firearms qualification shoots gave me a headache/backache and any other ache you could think of, and then there was the after effects of Capsicum Spray training (I like my pepper on steak, not in my eyes) and then some lunatic decided with the introduction of TASERS it would be a good idea that we all get shot with the Taser to see how effective they are... GET REAL!!!!

So the time was right to retire while I still had a sense of humour and could enjoy the memories of the last 35 years of what for me was a great job and fulfilling career.

I retired at the end of August 2007 which left about 12 months to finish the car if I wanted to take it to Queensland.

I still had the problem of some rust repairs and body work. Fellow Buick Club member Ken Churchman is a very accomplished (self taught I think) body repair person. I caught him at a weak moment just after he had purchased his 1954 Roadmaster coupe and was waiting for it to arrive from the US. Having the woodwork basically completed I did a body fit up and invited (coaxed, coerced, you know what I mean) Ken to come around and cast his eyes over it.



To cut a long story short Ken decided he had some time and we struck a deal. Ken, with me helping out (holding bits and fetching, making coffee, getting lunch, etc) put the sub standard repairs right and the other rust repair/panel work was completed on the front guards, bonnet and running boards THANKS KEN a.k.a. ROOSTER

This entailed removing the entire rear section, having it sandblasted (which hadn't been done with my first panel beater) then reassembling and nailing the metal to the wooden frame. Pretty satisfying work at the end of the day though!



I wrote earlier how things just fell into place with this restoration, another example occurred around this time.

I had rebuilt the original rear springs and noticed the rear end of the car rode high. Even when I did the body fit up with most of the completed car weight on the rear end it still seemed high. I purchased some NOS shock links through eBay and they appeared to be short by an inch or so. I asked Murray Lizatovich to check his 1935 sedan rear springs and ride height at the rear end. This revealed that my springs had an extra 2 leaves and it seemed the main leaf was way too heavy duty. Murray's inspection also revealed he had a previously undiscovered broken spring leaf on his own car.

I knew Les Woodruff had some spares for 34/35s. I spoke to him at a meeting and asked if he had any spare main leaves. In typical Les style he said he thought he may and would have a look. Not long after this he rang and said he had a pair of springs he purchased probably 30 years ago at a swap meet. He didn't know what year or model they were for but they were tagged "**BUICK ROADSTER**". I can tell you I was pretty excited (as was LES) when I identified them as being for a 1934/35 Series 40 Buick. What are the chances of a mate having a set of springs (in all likelihood NOS) in his shed for a 1934 Buick, complete with a tag saying Buick Roadster. No time was lost giving them a paint job and slipping them in, it was nice to see the back of the car sitting level and the shock links fitting.

By now it was the end of 2007, Nationals only about 8 months away. I already had the car booked in for upholstery but it had to be painted prior to that. Once again things

just fell into place. The colour had been decided by Delys. I was keen on red and she had seen a shade of red to her liking on a car taking part in Rally West in October 2007. The car was a Dave Reid restoration so after the Rally I dropped in on Dave to find out the colour. In conversation he asked who was painting it, of course at that stage I hadn't come up with anyone (after parting company with my previous panel beater/painter earlier in the year). It just happened that Dave's son Jeremy was funding the building of a shed/house on his property in Tasmania and was returning to do some contract work. I had seen his work and was more than happy to jump in and take first berth for a paint job.

I disassembled the car again and had much of it delivered to Jeremy before Christmas 2007. He did a great job and I had it back, re-assembled and ready to go to the trimmer by the end of March 2008



Time was rolling on, still a lot of work to do and the Nationals only a few months away.

To Be Continued

Stuart Syme WA Buicks