



# French Car Torque

Magazine of the French Car Club of Canberra



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per i clienti  
Telepass

## Fast Track



September 2024



On the cover Renault Rafale, on display at Rome international airport  
Image: Leigh McEwan

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## FRENCH CAR TORQUE

Official journal of the  
French Car Club of Canberra Inc.  
(FCCC)

PO Box 4183, Hawker, ACT, 2614.

The French Car Club of Canberra website is at:  
<https://frenchcarclubofcanberra.com.au/>

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Bonjour Francophiles,

The internet gods will need to be on my side for this edition to reach you before the September club meeting – it will hopefully come during an overnight stop in Bourke, at the end of a road trip to Winton.

By the time we get home Sue, and I will have covered around 5,000 km in 12 days, in the 508, at an average fuel economy of 5.3 litres/100 km, so around \$500 in fuel. The car has performed faultlessly, on mostly sealed roads, but comes home insect splattered and very dusty. In western Queensland, a 2WD sedan, let alone a Peugeot, is a rare site. Road trains, utes, 4WD and SUV's predominate, despite the fact that all the major roads are easy driving in a 'normal' car (or plane, see below) .

- DAY 1. Canberra to Dubbo
- DAY 2. Dubbo to Lightning Ridge
- DAY 3. Lightning Ridge to Roma
- DAY 4. Roma to Emerald
- DAY 5 Around Emerald
- DAY 6. Emerald to Winton
- DAY 7 Around Winton
- DAY 8 Around Winton
- DAY 9 Winton to Barcaldine
- DAY 10 Barcaldine to Charleville
- DAY 11 Charleville to Bourke
- DAY 12 Bourke to Canberra



Highlights included the fabulous Dinosaur Museum near Winton and the Qantas Founders Museum in Longreach. However, we found interesting things in every town we passed through or stayed in: a still-functioning drive-in picture theatre in Jericho (west of Emerald), the musical fence in Winton, the now dead Tree of Knowledge in Barcaldine, the vortex guns for rain-making in Charleville, bottle trees in nearly every street in Roma, beautiful (but expensive), opals in shops in Winton and Lightning Ridge, country town pubs in various states of disrepair (but still the best place to eat in many small towns).

I bought my first Akubra hat, at Searle's Outback Store in Winton. The salesman and owner, Bernie Searle, has been running the store for 70 years, apparently, having taken over from his father. He's 90 something I reckon, and a local legend. He even features in the official Akubra book (which he is holding). His amazing shop is so full of stuff, you could probably buy almost anything. An absolute pleasure to meet Bernie, and needless to say, he knows a thing or two about hats...

I'm not the only club member who has been travelling -. Leigh McEwan snapped a pic of a Renault Rafale PHEV SUV at Rome Airport, on a recent trip to Europe. Although a right-hand drive version is available for the British market, as far as I know Renault has no plans to sell the Rafale in Australia. Shame – it looks and sounds like a nice car.

The next club meeting will be held at 8 pm on Tuesday 24 September, at the Raiders Club, in Weston, with dinner and drinks from 7 pm. Al going well, I will be back from Queensland and can regale you with traveller's tales from the trip.

Au revoir,

**BRAD**

Brad Pillans, Club President



Bernie and Brad, in Searle's Outback Store, Winton

# 2023-24 FCC COMMITTEE

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# CLUB EVENTS 2024

**24 September** French Car Club of Canberra meeting, Raiders Club, 1 Liardet St, Weston, with dinner from 7 pm and meeting at 8 pm

**24 September** **Members classic car visit**, 10 am in Fyshwick. Details closer to the time.

**22 October** **French Car Club of Canberra AGM**, Raiders Club, 1 Liardet St, Weston, with dinner from 7 pm and meeting at 8 pm.

**27 October** **French Car Drive** to Mt Stromlo Observatory Café; the café has not yet re-opened. Outing venue TBA closer to the time.

**26 November** French Car Club of Canberra meeting, Raiders Club, 1 Liardet St, Weston, with dinner from 7 pm and meeting at 8 pm.

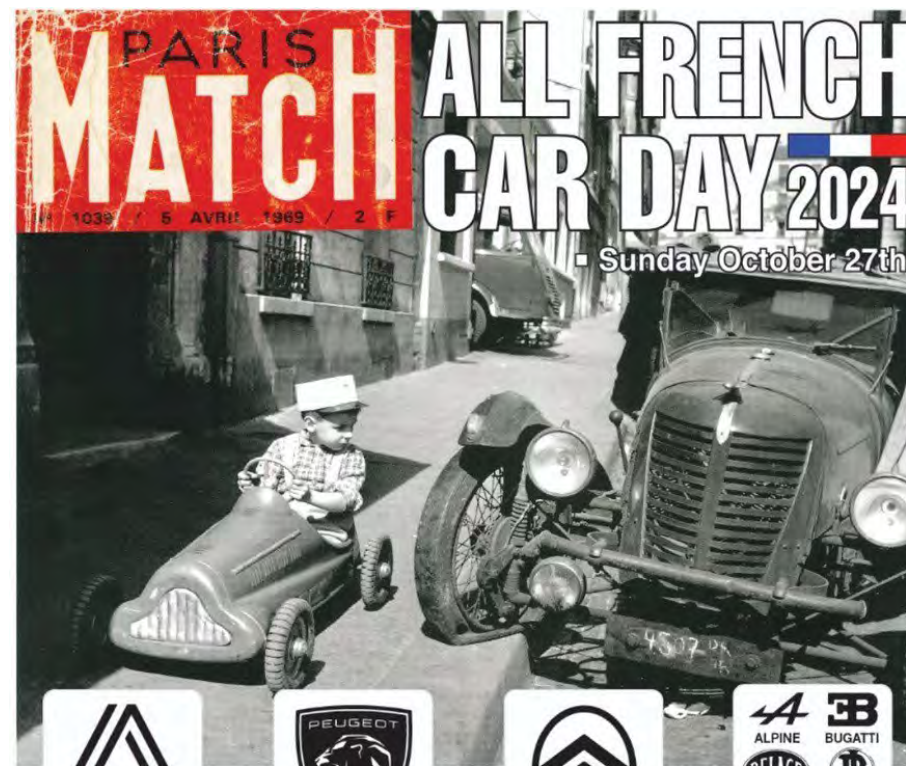
## French Car Drives in 2024

These occur on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of even months (except December). If you have any other suggestions of places to visit, please send me an email on [reno1338@hotmail.com](mailto:reno1338@hotmail.com). Lisa Molvig, Social Secretary

The website of the Council of ACT Motor Clubs has a calendar of car club events in the Canberra region – always worth a look... [https://www.cactmc.org.au/cactmc\\_calendar.html](https://www.cactmc.org.au/cactmc_calendar.html)

**All French Car Day, Silverwater Park, Sydney** is on Sunday, September 29, from 9 am. See flyer on page 6.

**French car festival in Melbourne** is on October 27. Being organised this year by RCCV and will be held at Living Legends <https://www.livinglegends.org.au/> near Tullamarine airport.



Featured horsepower from Renault, Peugeot, Citroen & More

**At 'Living Legends', Woodlands Historic Park, the home of equine thoroughbreds** ([livinglegends.org.au](http://livinglegends.org.au)) Woodlands Drive, Greenvale 3059

All other French thoroughbreds welcome! Think Alpine, Simca, Delage, Amilcar, Panhard and Bugatti. New cars too! This year become a legend. Bring your French automotive beauty and let it shine at our annual spectacular display of all things French automotive. This year at beautiful, historic Woodlands Park.

- Concours judging for each club
- Merchandise for sale
- Coffee Van
- BYO picnic
- Historic homestead and grounds
- Cycling & walking trails throughout the park
- Café & food available at Living Legends homestead
- Participating cars arrive from 9am
- Participating cars \$10 entry
- All welcome. Free entry for public

**HERE! SEE YOU THERE! SEE YOU THERE! SEE YOU THERE! SEE YOU THERE!**

Hosts in 2024: Renault Car Club of Victoria

See also [aussiefrogs.com](http://aussiefrogs.com) and F/B

# The Bean “1927 England to Australia” recreation

Leigh McEwan, French Car Club of Canberra

On the 27<sup>th</sup> of August the Council of ACT Motor Clubs held a BBQ at the Spanish Australian Club, in Narrabundah, to welcome Lang and Bev Kidby, and their Bean, to Canberra. I attended this event, which was really well organised at short notice by Greg Francis

In 1927-28, Australian adventurer, Francis Birtles, drove a 1924 Bean 14 sports roadster from London to Melbourne. The trip, which took 8 months to complete, was via Europe, Egypt, Iran, India, Burma and Malaya, before shipping the car from Singapore to Darwin and driving on to Melbourne. In 2024, Lang and Bev undertook a re-enactment of the 1927 trip in a Bean of their own, following Birtle’s route as closely as possible.

Further details of Lang and Bev’s 2024 trip can be found here:  
<https://next-horizon.org/the-greatest-drive/>

<https://www.facebook.com/p/Bean-1927-England-to-Australia-Recreation-61556943867173/>



Local event

# ALL FRENCH CAR DAY

SUNDAY 29 SEPTEMBER, 2024

Silverwater Park, Sydney, from 9.00am

*Enter from Clyde St East*

**ALL FRENCH VEHICLES WELCOME**



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## Letters to the Editor

A new feature – readers have their say

**Electric vehicle blues, President's page, FCT August 2024**

I found Brad's article on his new e2008 interesting but a bit alarming. Can I draw from this that, in some conditions, i.e. cold weather, the usable range may be significantly below what the manufacturers claim? It would be very useful to hear if any other members have experience or information on this issue.

**Mike Garrett**

*Reply from Brad Pillans*

Yes, Mike. Let's hear from other readers... In the meantime, the EV Database, which I mentioned, clearly indicates that cold days at highway speed make a big difference to battery range.

See: <https://ev-database.org/>



# CLASSIFIEDS

## For sale, parts and wrecking

If you want to advertise something for sale or simply offer items free to a good home, then this is a good place to let other club members know.

Please contact either Colin Handley (0414 484 398) or Brad Pillans (0427 662 112) to place an ad.

## For sale

**Peugeot 504 trapezoidal headlights**  
Contact Colin: 0414 484 398

**Peugeot 403's for restoration?**  
Located near Orange; pics below.  
Contact Dieter 0428 173 068



**Peugeot 307 wagon 2008**  
Tubo diesel, 69,000 kms; at least 4 good mag wheels; severe rear end damage; located in Queanbeyan.  
Phone 0414 154 895



**Citroen BX front seats**  
Pair of front BX black cloth seats in vgc, best offer  
Contact Colin: 0414 484 398



# CLASSIFIEDS (cont)

## For sale

### Peugeot 404 sedan

1969 model. Great car but not getting used. Good condition throughout, no rust, excellent interior, door seals replaced, 2 litre motor, Weber carby, square port head, electric fan and upgraded alternator, Super Oscar driving lights and LED indicators. New brakes throughout, suspension good. Some spares. Noisy thrust bearing which will need replacing at some stage. Located Moruya NSW. A great fun car to drive. \$8000 ono. See 4 images, below. Contact Greg Summerhayes 0427 744 813



## For sale

### Peugeot 404

1966 404 straight rolling body shell; no motor or seats. Located in Bywong. Offers. Contact Fritz 0428 253 182

## Wanted

### Peugeot 504 left hand side boot hinge with spring

Contact Colin 0414 484 398

# My cars and their stories.

## Part 4. FE Holden and then a 1956 Mark 1 Zephyr

Barry McAdie, French Car Club of Canberra

When my Mini was out of action, I used to hitch hike wherever I needed to go in Melbourne. One day, I was hitch hiking down Burke Road Camberwell and saw a FE Holden for sale at a service station. It still had 9 months Queensland registration but was missing a spare wheel, so I gathered that the owner had been short of cash, sold the spare wheel and then the whole car.

I told the service station owner that I would buy it for the asking price of \$80 and inquired about papers for the car. "What", he said, "for \$80 you want f...ing papers?!!" Nothing more needed to be said and I drove off in the car on 25 June 1970.

It was reasonably reliable except one day when I was leaving Monash Uni, I was turning out of Wellington Road into Dandenong Road when the cars behind me started tooting their horns. Then the car lost drive, and the rear end dropped to the road on the left hand side. The left-hand rear axle bearing had collapsed and the wheel plus axle decided to part company with the car and invade the adjacent traffic lane. I owned it for around 14 months and sold it in October 1971 for just \$20.

Talking about hitch hiking, Monash Uni had acquired a left-wing reputation due in part to Albert Langer, an avowed Trotskyite, making headlines during the Vietnam War. He was in one of my tutorials and I remember him one year denying that Stalin had committed atrocities when setting up the collective farms in the Ukraine. Most students, including myself, were against the war and participated in anti-war demonstrations.

It was against this background that I was hitch hiking from Monash down North Road. A truck driver pulled up and I got in. As he drove along, he asked me what I did. I said I was a student at Monash, and he immediately stopped the truck and put me out. Bloody red neck I cursed as I continued hitch hiking.

When my Mini was occasionally out of action, Dot would lend me her Mark1 Zephyr. She had bought it from her brother, Des, and had refurbished the front seats. It had a 6-cylinder 2262 cc motor producing 68hp with a column gear shift and ran quite well. One unique feature was that it had a 2-inch copper exhaust pipe hanging out the back.

One day, I was driving it along Fitzroy Street, St Kilda, and stopped to give way to an oncoming tram before turning up the side street next to the George Hotel. After the tram went past, I accelerated to get around the corner and heard an unusual bang in the rear of the car. Damn - a broken axle. Apparently, unbeknown to me, the car was prone to breaking axles and Dot later said that her brother had cleaned out all the wreckers in Frankston of all their axles.

One other time, we were out with friends in Dot's Zephyr, and she was wearing a low cut, short purple dress. As we travelled down Punt Road in Richmond towards Alexandra Avenue, the gear lever became stuck. Never mind, said Dot, and she jumped out, laid on the road on the driver's side beside the car and gave the gear linkages a good thumping. Problem fixed and I was hugely impressed at her mechanical expertise. However, I have always wondered what the motorists thought as they passed seeing this girl in a very short dress lying beside a stricken car. Funny that Dot never saw that dress again – she thinks her mother burnt it.

One weekend, we went up to my hometown of Ararat and the boys were organising a party in an abandoned house near the Ararat Mental Hospital. Everyone was busy during the afternoon setting up the beer kegs, the stereo system and the lights. During all this activity, the local constabulary turned up to check out what was going on. The constable seemed satisfied that all was OK and as he left, he spotted Dot's Zephyr and asked who owned the car "with the sewerage pipe hanging

out the back?" – referring to the 2-inch copper exhaust pipe. Everyone in unison pointed at Dot shouting "She does, she does..." Nothing happened and the constable went off shaking his head and laughing.



# Canberra's Renault buses retire after 35 years

Georgia Curry, Canberra Daily

The chassis was made in Brisbane and the body was made in Melbourne but by golly our old, blue-and-orange Action buses are 100 per cent Canberran and since 1987, they've driven the equivalent of 75 times around the planet. Until now. After racking up about three million kilometres each, the last Renault PR 100.2 made its final trip last month.

Transport Canberra purchased about 250 buses between 1987 and 1993 and like our iconic bomb shelter bus shelters, our blue-and-orange public buses were distinctively Canberran. They also happen to be the oldest city buses in the country. The last three original buses, which finished up service this week, just turned 31 years old.

So where do old buses go to die? Well, there's no bus graveyard because many old Renaults have been "cannibalised" for spare parts over the years. The last remaining intact buses will be used by Transport Canberra for driver training. About 10 learners go out each fortnight.

Some have been sold to private buyers over the years and converted to accommodation or RVs. There are also several old Renaults put out to pasture on farms and urban backyards around Canberra.

Meanwhile, at Transport Canberra, there's now a modern fleet of about 450 buses, including electric, which have gradually replaced the old fleet over the past decade. The main reason for the bus upgrades is not mechanical (they were built to last), it's accessibility. The old Renault's have a high step to navigate. Full story: [One-way ticket, Canberra or bust | Canberra Daily](#)

*[My thanks to Georgia for allowing me to reprint her story. Ed.]*

**NEW BOOK: The First 120 Years of Renault in Australia** 2 years in the making. The history of 120 years of Renault in Australia from 1903 to 2023 has now been completed and printed in an 80 page hard cover book of history, including photographs. For further information contact Gary McCrohan by email at [gmcrohan@optusnet.com.au](mailto:gmcrohan@optusnet.com.au)



The last Renault leaves Woden Interchange, 31 August 2024. Photo: Kyle Hanley

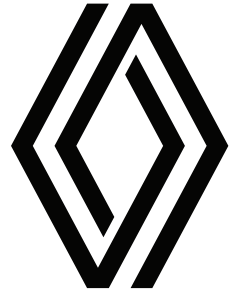
## From George Cook:

Below is a great photo of the first 4CV Muster gathered outside the old Parliament House, in 1989, two years after the 4CV Register was formed. Canberra had received the PR100.2 buses not too long before and I was pretty sure they would be a complete surprise to all the interstate people. So, as the organiser for the event, I got in touch with ACTION and explained about the event and said it would be great if they could bring along the latest rear-engined Renault as the little 4CVs were the precursors for Renault using that engine placement. Not only did they provide the bus, but they made sure they sent along number 750 (check the numberplate) and the destination sign was 750 SPECIAL. After we all admired the bus, everyone who wished was given a trip in the bus. They certainly have been great buses over the years, and it will be a shame to no longer see them on the road.



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\*\$500 accessories bonus is on the full rrp of any new vehicle in stock. ^eligible for financial members of the club and anyone they refer only. 10% discount applies to the retail service and retail parts price. National Capital Renault reserves the right to vary, extend or withdraw this offer.

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French Car Club of Canberra Inc  
General Meeting  
27 August 2024  
MINUTES



**1. Present**

Lisa Molvig	Neil Sperring
Neil Birch	Mike Ford
Barry McAdie	Jim Taylor
Leigh McEwan	Brad Pillans
Bill McNamee	Charles Birch
Joel Krewaz	Ross Stephens

**2. Apologies**

Greg Francis	Colin Handley
Pat Stone	Bernard Wright

**3. Introduction**

The meeting opened at 8.17 pm.  
Brad Pillans welcomed everyone to the meeting,

**4. Minutes of the previous meeting**

Motion: Brad moved that the minutes of the July meeting be accepted, seconded Joel. Carried.

**5. Financial report**

Our Account balance with Bendigo Bank is \$1,695.25, with three Term Deposits totalling \$15,325.26.

Motion: Neil Birch moved that the report be accepted, seconded by Jim. Carried.

**6. General Business**

CACTMC report

Not much at last meeting; many delegate were sick.  
Still no club has put their hand up to run Wheels 2025.

Social

Run to Sutton had 30 people see FCT for report.  
All French Car Day in Sydney on 29 September.  
24 September 10 am visit to a FCCC member's classic car collection in Fyshwick.  
Next French Car Drive in October is to Mt Stromlo Observatory Café, this will be changed if the café has not reopened by then

**7. Other business**

Barry has one more of his articles written and some more to come.  
Brad said all newsletter contributions are welcome.

**8. Close and next meeting**

The meeting closed at 8:48 pm. The next club meeting is scheduled for the Raiders Club in Weston, at 8pm on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> September.



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