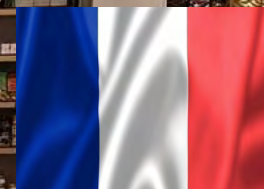




French Car Torque

Magazine of the French Car Club of Canberra



August 2025



On the cover A Citroën 2CV with an eye-catching paint job, in the duty-free area of Charles de Gaulle airport, near Paris, France. Image: Kate Bray

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,

This issue of FCT contains a wonderful story, written by 12-year-old Xavier Bourke, grandson of club member, Paul Ballard. It's a motoring story, rather than a French car story, but Paul thought it would be of interest to many club members, particularly those with children or grandchildren who may be starting the long process of learning to drive. I couldn't agree more, and congratulations to Xavier for writing such a wonderful article about his day at Pheasant Wood Motorsport Circuit. Dare I say, we have a budding motoring writer in the making...

Sue and I have just returned from a 9-day winter escape in far north Queensland (FNQ). We flew to Cairns and hired a car – sadly, not a Peugeot, but a very ordinary MG5. That said, the car did the job, namely, to get us to the places we wanted to visit, such as Cooktown, the Daintree and Cape Tribulation, all of which are accessible on good bitumen roads in a standard road car. To get to Cape Trib, you need to take the ferry across the Daintree River, but that was no big deal, though we had to pay \$51 return for the privilege.



FNQ is a pretty much a French car desert – apart from a sprinkling of Renault vans, I think I only saw two French cars, both Peugeots. However, this was not a French car spotting trip, we were there for the scenery and the weather, neither of which disappointed. The only downside was that all the good-looking beaches and rivers had crocodile warning signs prominently displayed, so we stayed dry!



A disinterested, but dangerous crocodile on the bank of the Daintree River

Peter Rees found an interesting 1960s photo on Facebook – a black and white photo featuring a 403, a Citroen taxi and a man holding a model of the Eiffel Tower (copyright uncertainties deter me from reproducing the image here). The caption says it was taken by well-known French-born American photographer, Elliott Erwitt, in Paris in 1966. Here's the link: <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=2595789587348734&set=a.2593476344246725>. Scroll through the other images to appreciate what a great photographer he was or check out more of his work on other online sites.

Lisa Molvig also drew my attention to another online article about cars in the Renault Museum – tap on each photo for additional information. [The most unusual, forgotten, and rarest cars in Renault's collection | Autocar](#)

Our next club meeting for will be held at 8 pm at the Raiders Club on Tuesday 26 August, with dinner and drinks from 7 pm. I look forward to catching up with some of you then.

Au revoir,

BRAD

Brad Pillans, Club President

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Answer to last month's quiz question:
Where was the picture of the colourful Citroen 2CV taken? Answer: a duty-free shop in Charles de Gaulle Airport, near Paris
Congratulations to Andrew Hankin, who will receive a French beret.

CLUB EVENTS 2025

Calendar

24 August French Car Drive, Morning tea/brunch, Valerie's Sunroom Café at Gehl Garden Centre, Goulburn

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

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

26 October French Car Drive, Café Stepping Stone, Strathnairn

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

1 November French Car Day at Telopea Park School fete, TBC

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

7 December French Sounds of Summer at the French Embassy
Details to be confirmed.



Charles Birch's P407 and Barry McAdie's Alpine, French Car Drive to Valerie's Café, Goulburn, 24th August. Photo by Lisa Molvig

NOTE THE NEW DATE:

All French Car Day 2025

Sunday 14 September
at Silverwater Park

From 9 am.
Entry Clyde Street East

A photograph of a vintage Peugeot 403 car driving on a dirt road. The car is a light-colored, boxy model with round headlights and a prominent front grille. Two people are visible inside the car. The license plate reads 'AB 23440'.

DS – 70 years of innovation – 403

All French vehicles welcome
\$10 display entry, EFT available. Spectators free
Presented by the Peugeot Car Club of NSW Inc.
Subject to weather conditions:
peugeotclub.asn.au or aussiefrogs.com
Chris 0412 306 504 or Ross 0499 708 108
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The logo for Shannons, featuring a green shield with a white 'S' and the word 'SHANNONS' in a checkered banner above it.

French Car Drives in 2025

These occur on the 4th Sunday of even months (except December). If you have any other suggestions of places to visit in 2025, please send me an email on 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

French Car Drive to Goulburn: Valerie's Sunroom Café

Lisa Molvig, French Car Club of Canberra

We had perfect late winter weather for our drive to Goulburn, mild and sunny. The café, Valerie's sunroom, at Gehl Garden Centre was packed with customers when we arrived. Our group was allocated tables on the deck outside, luckily there were heaters and knee rugs to keep us warm.

Our group consisted of 10 people from FCCC (Barry, Leigh, Neil, Charles, Lawrie, Jane, Natalie, Chris, Lisa, Rob) and seven from the Rover club.

The café offered a wide range of quality sweet and savoury dishes for brunch, also very good coffee. Some people were also tempted by the plants in the adjacent garden centre. A great venue for car club outings as there was a big off-street carpark. Following this, some people went to visit the nearby shed of Ian, from the Rover car club, to see his latest restoration projects.



Photos by Lisa Molvig and Chris Forsey

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

Citroen 1975 2cv 250 van

This LHD vehicle has been restored in France, including an engine upgrade to 602 cc. Such a delight to drive and has potential to be used as a marketing tool if sensitively sign written. \$22,500. Viewing in Moruya. Contact Ian 0404 821 153 or thegamboli@gmail.com



Citroen DS drive shaft

Contact Manfred: 0408 232 273

1962 Peugeot 403 motor

Complete in good condition \$500. Also 4x 16" wheels and old tyres with stainless steel trim - free.

Contact Peter Withington 0407 940 918 Batemans Bay area.

Citroen 2cv 1983

One for the adventurer, boasting the Swiss conversion to 4WD and powered by a Visa engine., this vehicle will truly go anywhere and at speed. The Swiss conversion comes at a cost of \$10,000 and this 2cv is priced at \$20,000. Viewing in Bega

Contact Ian: 0404 821 153 or thegamboli@gmail.com



1978 Citroen four speed manual Pallas 2400 sedan.

Mechanically faultless throughout. Maintained by one owner since 1991. No smash, body very straight. Exterior and interior need restoration. \$3,500. firm. Contact Ross (02) 6247 5345.

Peugeot 505 Familiale (7 seat wagon)

First Registered 1992. Acquired 2014 with intention of getting it back on the road; but that's never happened and becoming less likely than ever! VIN VF3551F8903245388. Driven into shed, but brakes and other things suspect so not used since. Have accumulated a range of spares which might be needed. Needs a home with less cars and more spare time. Price \$500 Very Negotiable. Paul Ballard, Cootamundra, 0419 973 822 or westkinloch@outlook.com.



CLASSIFIEDS

For sale, parts and wrecking

Peugeot 307 XSE HDi touring

I wish to dispose of this car in the next couple of weeks while it is still registered. Date of manufacture, March 2007. One owner – me! I would be happy to part with the car for a nominal fee. I do not intend to sell it on the open market. The car is in reasonable condition with new clutch and battery, but the engine is not running well, and the particulate bag arrangement has failed. I have all registration, insurance and maintenance documents. I'd be happy to speak with anyone in the club who may be interested.
Contact: Heath McMichael 0426 141 912



Peugeot 203 ,403, 404

Second hand parts for sale
Contact Colin Handley 0414 484 398

Peugeot 505 STI auto sedan

Not going, sell whole or parts, cheap.
Contact Neville at Bombala 0429 168 595



Peugeot 504 sedan

White manual, aircon, GTi wheels, new tyres, no rust, very straight, interior very good condition, drives really well, \$7,500. Selling for owner who is unwell.
Contact Geoff Boyd 0427 269 343.



Xavier goes to Pheasant Wood

Paul Ballard* and Xavier Bourke

*French Car Club of Canberra

You've probably all heard of Pheasant Wood Motorsport Circuit, but did you know that they run regular Driver Training Courses for Underage (but at least 12-year-old) Children? Well, they do, and my grandson (Xavier Bourke) spent a day there last school holidays. In anticipation of others perhaps being interested in such an activity, I asked Xavier to write about his experience, and he sent me the following:

It was a sleepy start to the day as my mom woke me up to get the driving lesson I'll never forget. After a four-hour journey (most of which I snoozed through), we arrived at the training centre, buzzing with nervous anticipation and the scent of rubber on bitumen.

Once all the learners checked in – and everyone had their correct wristband on - the coaches told us “It was go time” - I met my coach and climbed into the driver's seat of a manual green Mazda 2. His first question: “Ever driven before?” I nodded, mentioning a quick lesson with my grandpa two weeks earlier.

I eased the froggy green car forward down the straight as my coach directed, nerves tingling and excitement building with every metre, the sun glinting off the windshield like a spotlight on my debut - this wasn't just my first lesson; it was the moment I became a driver.

Warm-Up Circuit The setup was simple for our starting task: weave between cones, stop precisely between four markers, navigate a left turn, reverse cleanly whilst not hitting the 4 cones, perform a U-turn, and loop back. My cousin and another learner driver joined me as we tackled the course under watchful eyes. By round three, I was surprised when my coach told me to pull over and he got out of the car and told me to drive - pure freedom within the course.

Pit Lane Challenge After 45 minutes of practice on the first circuit we moved on to a tighter course, weaving between poles before attempting a U-turn into the pit lane—a narrow channel framed by towering concrete walls. Intense? Definitely. But surviving that built up my confidence. On the second lap, a coach encouraged me to shift into second gear for the first time. Zooming up to 40 km/h felt like breaking the sound barrier.

ABS Slam Test Then came my favourite activity of the day: full acceleration followed by a hard brake at the blue cones, engaging the clutch and ABS. It was dramatic, thrilling, and real-world applicable. Five laps, five adrenaline bursts. My biggest problem was changing gears, so I asked my instructor to hop in and help me because it was hard for me not to look down to change gears while I was driving at 80 kmph.

Lunch, Laps & Lessons Learned After a quick picnic, it was time for a final spin around the racetrack. Although the cars were not speed limited, the speed limit was 40 km/h - and believe me, I wasn't eager to exceed it. Starting in first gear at a cautious 30, I eventually graduated to second. A coach hopped in for part of the ride and pushed me - just enough - to get me up to 3rd gear.

The Finish Line When it was time to park in the garage, my coach shared a cautionary tale: a previous student who had perfected everything... until he crashed into the tire barrier trying to park. A reminder that driving is equal parts thrill and discipline.

We wrapped up the day with certificates and stickers.



Xavier behind the wheel. Photo by Carolyn Bourke (Xavier's mum)

Travels in a Peugeot 403 wagon

Colin Handley, French Car Club of Canberra

My first Peugeot in 1972 was a pale blue 1957 403 wagon which I bought for \$80 with a months' rego. After fitting with a couple of tyres, and a second-hand windscreen, the faded paint was buffed and it passed a RWC!

We needed a robust vehicle in which to look for land in the country, and my Morgan was not suitable, nor could you sleep in it! The girlfriend and I threw a mattress in the back of the wagon and headed off for East Gippsland, touring the back blocks, admiring the magnificent forests and dodging logging trucks.

The Princes Highway in the 1970s was narrow, with one lane each way, but not nearly as busy as today; secondary roads were narrower and usually gravel. The further east the cheaper the land. After looking at properties at Briagolong we headed north from Bruthen to Galantipy to a very dry and too remote Suggan Buggan. The narrow descent, with no guard rails, from Seldom Seen to McKillops Bridge over the Snowy River, remains a memorable experience.

We decided the 200 acres at Tubbut at \$10 acre was not suitable as it was mostly cleared and too dry.

While crawling through a very quiet Delegate near dusk I noticed the garage, bearing an Atlantic sign, had a faded Peugeot sign in the front window. We camped at the Delegate campground by the river, it must be one of coldest spots in Australia in winter, and Jack Frost settled early !! In the middle of the night, we were woken by one loud bang and the vehicle shook. It took a while to get back to sleep, after recently seeing the Easy Rider film (in which young travellers encountered locals with guns).

We walked around the car in the morning finding no visible damage. We had to be back in Melbourne for work the next day, but when we drove off, the front wheels scraped in the arches. The front transverse spring had broken in the cold night, so we drove back to the Atlantic garage where we had seen the sign in the window. Yes he did have a front spring for \$5.00 but not fitted. Back to the campground with basic jack, a hammer, a shifter and a screwdriver and we fitted the front spring.

We did get back to Melbourne in time and the wagon took us on several more trips after that.

Apparently, Stewarts had sold sixteen 203s in a year from that Atlantic Delegate garage. They were rewarded with some of the first 403 models, the remains of which are still in the area.



Sadly, I don't have a photo of my first 403 wagon, however, I still own one. The white wagon, above, is my fourth 403 wagon. It came from Melbourne, after I spotted an ad in Torque, the magazine of the Peugeot Car Club of Victoria. Not driven for 20 years and needed a bit of body work but runs well. Not registered yet.

Postscript: Girlfriend was Kay. She and I ended up buying land on Mt Delegate with two others. We are all still good friends.

My cars and their stories. Part 12: 1969 Alpine A110

Barry McAdie, French Car Club of Canberra

Targa Tasmania 2016 was its first big event and proved to be a shake down for the car. While we were lining up to board the Princess of Tasmania, it started to boil and spilt coolant on the wharve. Later, we found that the seal to the coolant bottle had been fitted incorrectly.

On one stage, the car stopped with a flat battery. We secured another battery and next day we went to an auto electrician who advised that the amp gauge had blown. He fixed the problem by providing a fusible link from the alternator to the starter motor. On the last stage (Tinderbox), the car was losing power coughing up furballs and we retired from the rally. Our service crew found that a cap off one of the Webers was missing and fixed it using a water bottle cap and gaffer tape until we could replace it



On display at the Velodrome in Launceston, prior to Targa Tasmania 2016

The car went well after that, and we even got booked for speeding following our service vehicle into Hobart. Then we discovered the car could not start to make it across the finish line. The points had burnt out and we were able to obtain a new set from Repco. The car once again played up leaving Hobart. We found that the new points had closed and after readjustment we were on our way to Richmond for lunch. Then the car would not start, and I replaced the coil lead, and we were on our way.



make sure all fuel was picked up.

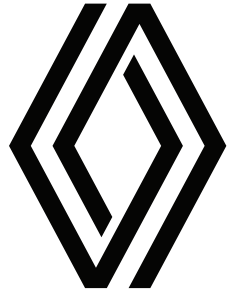
Of course, I had a long "to do list" by the time I arrived back in Canberra and the car performed very well in subsequent events until Targa High Country in November 2019.



Targa Tasmania 2016 -the Rihanna Stage

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**French Car Club of Canberra Inc
General Meeting, Raiders Club
22 July 2025
MINUTES**



1. Present

Greg Francis	Mike Ford
Leigh McEwan	Brad Pillans
Barry McAdie	Joel Krewaz
John Hyslop	Ross Stephens
Neil Birch	Charles Birch
Bill McNamee	Natalie Johnson

2. Apologies

Neil Sperring	Lisa Molvig
Colin Handley	

3. Introduction

The meeting opened at 8.10 pm.
Brad Pillans welcomed everyone to the meeting, and introduced new member, Natalie Johnson.

4. Minutes of the previous meeting

Motion: Brad moved that the minutes of the June meeting be accepted, seconded Leigh.
Carried.

5. Financial report

Neil reported that our account balance with Bendigo Bank is \$2,024.50, with three Term Deposits totalling \$15,581.72.
Neil moved that the report be accepted, seconded by Barry. Carried.

6. CACTMC Report

Pie Cart. Now sold for \$35k, a very good outcome.
Money to be used for the benefit of all member clubs
Wheels Event: Thoroughbred Park is the tentative venue in 2026. New providers being sought and reviewed for event and club public liability insurance.
Greg will update the FCCC on progress

6. CACTMC report (cont)

Greg advised that ACT car club memberships do not entitle a club member's family members to any concessions, especially with respect to vehicle registrations.

8. Social

French Car Drives: Brad noted the run to Wildbark Café at Mulligans Flat, and the Bastille Day gathering at the Breizh Café in Ainslie last month.

The next French Car Drive will be to Goulburn on Sunday August 24th. Meeting at Valerie's Café, in the Gehl Garden Centre, 70 Fitzroy St, Goulburn for a 10:00AM start.

[VALERIE'S CAFE | gehlgardencentre](#)

Lisa asked Brad to highlight that after refreshments, we have been invited to visit the shed of one of our friends in the Rover Car Club, who lives nearby in Goulburn.

9. General business

Battle of Waterloo: After the success of BOW, we should make every effort to support the Spanish-Australian Club. Suggestions included holding an FCCC concourse event, at BOW, similar to that of the MG club this year. The Alliance Française representatives were superb in their judging and in awarding of FCCC prizes for the BOW event. It was moved that they should be invited to do so again at an annual concourse at the Spanish Club during the next BOW. This suggestion is to be followed up by the committee.

Newsletter: Brad invited contributions from all members.

Membership cards: available from Barry McAdie.

Last month's quiz winner: Andrew Hankin was first to identify the Citroen 2CV in Charles de Gaulle airport near Paris. He will receive a French beret, tout suite, from Brad.

10. Close and next meeting

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm.

The next club meeting is scheduled for the Raiders Club in Weston, at 8pm on Tuesday 26th of August, with 7 pm dinner.
All welcome.



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