

Historical Memories of our Horseless Carriages

The little **1912 Brush**, featured on the **First Brass Era Tour** and was driven by Orin Campion from Santa Rosa, California and was ably escorted, and encouraged, along the way by Bill Shears who previously spent many long hours preparing the Brush for this trip. The Brush had been purchased by the Museum of Transport (MOTAT) from the original owner, Orin Campion who was allowed to drive it for this special event. His wife, Theresa also came down for the occasion and brought with her some beautiful genuine period costumes. Bill and Royce have been faithful helpers, in many ways and on many occasions, even bringing Robbie, the Mayor, to morning tea at Drury in their Moon and often acting as parking marshals. On one occasion they made a frantic dash in their 'modern' to retrieve some keys for a stranded motorist whose husband had blithely driven off in his Veteran with her keys in his pocket! It was in 1986 that Bill and Royce finally purchased their very own Brass Era Vehicle, the 1914 AC, and so proceeded down the roads in a more sedate manner, even wearing period costume! The attractive lunch venue at Gordonton makes for many happy memories!



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The **1904 De Dion Bouton**, driven by Charles Edwards, was purchased from Dave Hall of Huntly who had spent sometime restoring it. The chassis had been known to be on a farm at Te Pohue for many years and so when the farm was sold Dave Hall got permission to conduct a search for the chassis which was finally found in the bush and winched up looking rather like a farm gate! After restoring the chassis and engine etc., Dave Hall had a replica body built in Tauranga and rallied around the area in the car but had trouble getting sufficient power for the hilly terrain. Since purchasing the car Charles undertook an extensive overhaul of the engine, the expanding clutch transmission and fitted the correct carburettor and induction pipe and is now hopeful of obtaining full power! The 6 hp De Dion was built in France by the hundreds and was known as the 'La Populaire' and sometimes it even had a four-passenger body! The car was very likely originally imported into New Zealand by Skeats and Bochart.

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The **1911 Buick Model 14B Runabout** was owned by Bill Miller. This model is reputed to be the last Buick designed by David Buick. It was sold for \$550 when the Model T sold for \$800, so was really cheap at the time. It is a flat-twin and is in contradiction to Buick advertising claims of 'Every Buick ever built' are a side Valve T head motor. Some 2,500 were built in 1911 and as mine is number 2025 it was a late one. As far as can be ascertained, at least three came to Otago, as I have managed to find pieces and enough evidence of this number. This vehicle was originally owned by two brothers from Matukituki Station at Lake Wanaka, and was still their only car in the early 1930's. I met a carpenter in Wanaka who remembered, as a boy around 1932, laughing at the 'funny old car'. It then passed to a Mrs Wiley of Wanaka who, when she died, left it equally to her two sons. These two men divided it 'literally' upon her death. I later obtained it from the survivor in a very sad condition!

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