



**HOLDEN**

## RETIREES' CLUB

*NEWSLETTER No. 60*

*AUGUST 2004*

What a great day for our 100<sup>th</sup> Luncheon on June 3! A record attendance of 175 for a non-Christmas luncheon and it was good to see some faces we haven't seen for some time. There was a festive spirit with decorations around the dining room and an array of door prizes courtesy of Corporate Affairs.

### *Report on our 100<sup>th</sup> Luncheon – June 3, 2004*

President, Hugh Videion welcomed members and guests on this special occasion including 7 new members and particularly Joanne Smith our previous liaison with Corporate Affairs.

#### *Guests*

Michael Case  
Amanda Webb

- Chief Engineer – Vehicles R.A.C.V.
- National Manager – Community Relations,  
Corporate Affairs

#### *New Members*

John Bey  
Tony Brougham  
Doug Cheers  
Peter Duane  
Dick Fowler  
Kevin Ridd  
Phillip Zmood

- Manufacturing, Fishermans Bend
- Experimental Engineering, Fishermans Bend
- Marketing, Fishermans Bend & Dandenong
- Engineering, Fishermans Bend
- Engineering, Fishermans Bend
- HSPO, Dandenong
- Design, Fishermans Bend

#### *Apologies*

65 apologies were received from:

John Bagshaw (NSW)  
Kevin Barkway  
Ian Berry  
Max Bell

Rob Bertram  
Don Bowden  
Bob Burgess  
Alan Chaplin

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David Chard	Martin Kruger
Lorna Cheary	David Lamden
Don Cheyne	Wayne Landry
Don Colwell	Jim McCance (Qld)
Jon Dunning	Bill Maplesden
George Edmunds	Wally Mahoney (in UK)
Warwick Exton	Graham Miller
Frank Fagarazzi	Bill Montgomery
Des Fay	John Moore
Joe Felice (NSW)	Warren Morriss (Qld)
John Finlayson (Sth. Aust.)	Alan Nanscawen
Paul Fontaine	Peter Nathan
Jerry Gifford	Geoff Newell (very ill)
Tom Godden	George Nickels
Les Goding	Jim Nicol
Brian Griffin	Alistair Pearce
Keith Gregory (Qld)	Joe Pulis
Tyler Halsted	Ian Robinson
George Hammond	Ian Samuel (gone sailing)
Mick Hannon	Ken Schofield (since died)
Doug Hastie	George Saaty
Bill Hamel (USA)	Walter Scott (Sth. Aust.)
Lance Harvey	Noel Simpson
Eric Hess (Qld)	Howard and Edna Smith
Vic Hewitt	Ray Stodden
Daryl Hornsby	Ed Taylor (Qld)
Jim Hutton (NSW)	Vic Webster
Brian Jackson	Maurie Wickes

### ***Obituaries***

President, Hugh Videon then announced the members who had died recently in addition to those already listed in our May newsletter

Jack Willis (May '04)	- Service, Fishermans Bend
Bill Matchett (June '04)	- Plant & Equipment, IGM Dandenong

Members observed the customary one minute's silence.

Since our June luncheon we regretfully advise of the deaths of the following members:

Pedro Antonovitch (June '04)	- Frigidaire & Truck Plant, Dandenong
Ray Cox (June '04)	- Manufacturing, Fishermans Bend
Frances Moffat (July '04)	- NASCO, Dandenong
Ken Schofield (July '04)	- SQA, Plant 3, Engineering

### *A Legend goes to "GM in the Sky"*

At the last retirees' luncheon Hugh Videon announced the passing of Jack Willis, better known as "Ole Red" to his fishing mates.

There is a much used photograph of GMH staff at City Rd., before the Fishermen's Bend plant was built, there in the front row sitting on the ground is the Willis lad. Jack joined Holden at the age of 15 and stayed on for 50 years retiring in 1976.

On retirement Jack was Manager Warranty Administration, a job he had for many years. Apart from keeping a close tab on dealership warranty, Jack's department was used as a training ground for future sales and service hopefuls, as they started on the first rung of a career with Holden. Jack often took over where parents had failed as he instilled into his youthful charges standards of dress and grooming, company loyalty and a good sense of humour. Most would stay on with Holden and have a successful career, and some are now retirees.

Everyone knew the exact date of Ole Red's retirement; it would be when he turned 65. This was not to be a normal retirement it would get underway 12 months before the due date. It would start with well planned dealer visits to every corner of every State, the Dealers many of whom, had done well out of warranty, responded by giving Ole Red a farewell party where ever he went. This was reward for all the years he had spent in his office without such visits.

His close friends decided to take him on a special fishing trip as a "warmer" for the eventual farewell. Ed Matthews had offered his holiday home at Loch Sport as a venue and so planning began. The weekend was called "Operation - To Defongerate Ole Red" and so four or five boats and crews descended on Loch Sport

for a weekend never to be forgotten and during which only a few fish were caught. Little did we know that this would be the first of annual fishing trips that would go on for a decade or more, with Ole Red being the star player on each occasion.

It was on this trip that Ole Red went into the Guinness Book of Records, as the only civilian to be tried and found guilty by a Court Martial. It all happened this way:

After a heavy day on the water and no fish it was decided to have a barbeque at Sperm Whale Head a picnic spot about 10km away through the State Forest.

The yacht departed from Loch Sport with a none too alert crew in a gentle breeze and sufficient liquid provisions for a normal trip. All went well until about two thirds of the way to Sperm Whale Head when the wind swung around 180 degrees and it became necessary to tack several times in order to get to our destination. This slowed us down and the provisions ran out. Ole Red fronted the Skipper and told him to start the bloody motor, the Skipper quietly told him to resume his post and shut up. A few more tacks and little progress and no stubbies, was too much for Ole Red he was on his feet appealing to the crew to ignore the Skipper and start the engine, no one else moved. Eventually we were able to sail onto the beach. As we got close Ole Red scrambled forward and grabbed the forestay, he was going to first ashore, at that moment the boat grounded to a halt and Ole Red went revolving at high speed around the forestay, a young kid on the shore sang out to his mum, "Mummy come and see the funny man". A very giddy Ole Red was untangled from the rigging and lowered to the sand and led to the barbeque.

Around the barbeque the only topic of conversation was the boat incident, which

was considered most serious an incident that should not be ignored or we could have a repeat performance. Among those still capable of any kind of thought it was decided that on return to Loch Sport a Court-Martial would be convened and conducted and that Ole Red would be charged on two counts that (i) he disobeyed a lawful command and (ii) that he incited the crew to mutiny.

To this day I and others do not know how a court hearing was conducted on a fishing trip, in the early hours of the morning with such dignity and decorum. The Judge was a guest and a Holden supplier, obviously he had had previous experience, his summing up was impeccable and he found Ole Red guilty on both counts and banned him from boarding the ship on which the offence occurred for 12 months or until the next fishing trip whichever was the sooner. When the judge asked the guilty one for comment he said, "I shall return and may well offend again".

When the official retirement farewell did arrive, it was the biggest ever seen in the Holden canteen. Jack and his wife and daughters were present, and GM visitors from Detroit also graced the scene. From the canteen the party adjourned to the Bleak House Hotel and then to places unknown.

Next day, Jack came to pick up his new car, which had been brought into the service garage a few weeks previously just to make sure that "all was right". Jack noted that his car sat lower than the standard vehicle and so it should have, it was overweight, his mates had seen to it that his vehicle had been fitted with every production option and accessory on the parts list. As Jack drove out in his gleaming machine leaving the plant for the last time, the thought struck him as he approached the guard house that he did not have any paperwork to cover the extras, he

could well spend retirement in "Bluestone College", his honest John reputation of 50 years in tatters.

The security guard, of the Grenadier Guards variety, greeted Mr. Willis in a most formal manner and proceeded to carry out the most thorough and prolonged inspection of the vehicle, Jack could feel the handcuffs and the Judge's pronouncement, when the security guard pronounced with best British accent, "They must love you, Mr. Willis, have a happy retirement". The guard had said it all and so Jack drove off into a long and fulfilling retirement retaining his unique sense of humour all the way.

It was a great pleasure to work with a bloke like Jack Willis.

Jack was 93.

A Workmate  
(*Courtesy John H. Lee*)

#### ***Guest Speaker***

The President then introduced our guest speaker, Michael Case, Chief Engineer – Vehicles with the R.A.C.V.

Michael provided a graphic presentation with video of crash testing of vehicles and reporting that Holden passenger and utility vehicles had a 4 star rating. He emphasised that ABS braking did not stop a car any quicker but more importantly helped to maintain control in an emergency.

However, the subject that created the most controversy among members was the 'bull bars'. Questions and answers flew back and forth and continued well after the luncheon was finished.

Stan Wiseman proposed the vote of thanks and then with Amanda Webb proceeded with the drawing of the many door prizes.

### ***Items of Interest***

Two years ago our newsletter highlighted activities of our members in retirement. One of those was Harold Stevens (Purchasing, Fishermans Bend) who is involved in many aspects of hospital work. He has now completed an Advanced Certificate of Pastoral Ministry which makes him fully qualified in Hospital Chaplaincy and Nursing Home Pastoral Care. Congratulations!

### ***On Display***

Courtesy of Amanda Webb a Holden Crossover Crewman Utility vehicle was on display in the Bentleigh Club gardens.

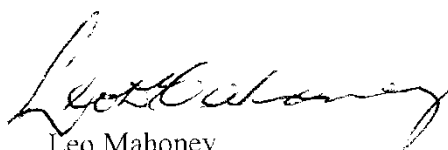
### ***Next Luncheon***

Our next luncheon will be held at the Bentleigh Club, Yawla Street Bentleigh on Thursday, September 2, 2004 commencing at 12 noon. The cost is a very reasonable \$18 per head, payable at the door, with drinks at bar prices.

Our guest speaker will be Peter Nelson who has been one of a four man Organising Committee of the Australian Formula One Grand Prix since 1985 in Adelaide. As Secretary of the meeting he is responsible for the officials involved and the detailed planning for the event on track.

Come and listen to what goes on behind the scenes in staging a world sporting event.

See you there!



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