

# K I N G S   B I R T H D A Y   J U N E   9 t h   1 9 1 3 .

## C H A P T E R   S E V E N .

Our next trip with our own car was on King's Birthday which was kept up in Melbourne on Monday June 9th 1913.

On the previous Thursday evening after much nagging on my part and much dilatoriness on the part of Messrs Bevan Brothers the F. I. A. T. car was delivered at 9 P.M.. Immediately the driver left I attempted to start up the engine and turned it until my arm fairly ached, but without any result more than the creation of a violent perspiration. When Hamilton arrived home he whirled the handle violently but without result. We went to bed feeling bad. another attempt in the morning proved to be useless, and on Friday night Hamilton determined to do or burst. He nearly burst. On Saturday morning my brother James came out and examined the wiring and giving the machine an injection of petrol through the compression taps, whirled and whirled until he became overheated, and finally gave it up in disgust. On Saturday afternoon Mr Lally came out and

traced the spark through the magneto, and then gave the handle a whirl when the engine started up easily. It took him only ten minutes to get the thing going. There must be something in his magic touch. We stopped the engine two or three times and as it started each time without trouble I asked "What was the matter?" His reply was "Nothing". I am rather sceptical. We took the car out and running through Pascoe Vale we found that it ran very well. Bevans seem to have made a good job of it and I am delighted. I took the steering wheel and run through Broadmeadows and around by the Bulla Road home. The machine is first class and is easily driven. When we got back, Mother and Hamilton got in and for the first time I have the responsibility of a car on my own shoulders. We drive around the block, down Pascoe Vale road and in less than half an hour I feel perfectly at home and full of confidence. It was nearly dark when we returned and Mr Lally had gone home. I tried again and again to start the machine but failed every time. Hamilton can start it with a little effort, so that he is sure of being with us when we go out. We started the machine up about ten times on Sunday. I succeeded twice which brought forth rounds of applause from the assembled children.

Monday, the holiday found the car burnished until the brass work shone again. The back seat had been put on; food was prepared and at eleven we were ready. Our load seemed to be enormous. There were in the back seat Mother,

May, Edith, George Scurry, Lily, Jessie and Tom. On the front seat were Hamilton, Alen, I of course being at the wheel. The ten of us looked like a family gathering, and when we stopped and all got out it looked like an accident with a crowd around the car. Going slowly out of the gate on the first we went around by Mrs Browns, around Nicholson and Fletcher Streets and into Pascoe Vale Road where we saw some boys dragging large branches of trees in preparation for hugh bonfires at night. We went slowly and carefully along the road through the railway gates which were open and along past the old farm. The grass is green and the country possesses all the charm of Spring. We find gear changing is much easier on this car than on Mr Lally's Stoewer. We can hear the gears grinding on the back axel which is not pleasant, but this will not be righted until we get a new pinion and driving wheel. We come down to second easily and silently when going up Glenroy Hill, and then when we have got over the rise we get up to top again. The road gets worse after passing Broadmeadows, but we keep on, turn to the right at the top of the road and cross the line and then we run into a few yards of loose small metal, and in another three minutes we are running along the good main Sydney road.

Our engine is now hot and we are on the top. We turn on the new extra air tap and find that we can open it wide and that the car picks up even though the throttle is only half open. This is good news for it means less petrol.

We soon run through the gates at Craigieburn and then follow the road in its turn to the right. We jog along right merrily. Lily stands behind me with her arms around my neck laughing and talking. We pass the Donnybrook hotel on the right and make the pace until we come to the hills. There is a frost in the air and the weather is cold but sunny. A few miles further on we come to Beveridge and wonder how we will get up the very steel hill at the other side. Three motor cycles are in front of the hotel at the bottom. We manage to get up easily enough on the second speed and conclude that if we had had a run at it we would have managed on the third.

Stopping at the top we managed to get half a billy can of hot water at a farm house, and then finding a comparatively warm place on the lee side of a high hill, we back the car against a fence, spread a cloth on the grass and proceeded to discuss lunch. The tea is cold, but we are hungry and in no mood to be captious. The children have all glowing faces through the sharp air. Tom's little nose is cherry red and there are red streaks across his face. The hill immediately opposite is some hundreds of feet high and is sugar-loaf shaped. On the very peak is to be seen a man digging out rabbits. Going along the road we see a party of eight or ten men with guns on their shoulders, rabbit shooting. Hamilton, Edie and the elder children go for a walk across the paddocks to the water holes while Mother and I and Jessie walk up and down the road in the easy places.

Alan is in the car rolled up in a blanket. A single seated "Ford" goes by at a fast pace, the motor bikes come over the hill, a rabbit trapper's waggon passes with the rabbits hanging in rows, and a youth of eighteen or twenty passes with a swag on his shoulder. Camped a quarter of a mile below us are two motors whose occupants, out for a holiday, are having lunch at the way side.

At three o'clock we decide to return home, so all aboard, and after a few turns of the handle the car starts up. Pulling into the centre of the road we all get in and start for home. When we come to the long steep hill into Beverly we turn the extra air in and the petrol off and run down on the engine practically without a brake. The car seems a bit sluggish on the long rise ahead of us, but by a little nursing we get up on top gear. One of the cars that we saw camped by the road side runs past us and is evidently much faster than ours. When we reach the descent we make the pace and consume plenty of air. Mother complains that we are going quickly and suggests that we do not toot enough when we come to corners. Her idea is that the horn should be in the back where she could toot it. We have no speedometer, and at any rate the car that passed us is out of sight. At Craigieburn we have to pull up to allow a flock of sheep to be driven into the side of the road, and through the gates we come to another flock. Turning off at the blacksmith's shop we cross the loose metal, through the railway gates and in another minute we are in Pascoe vale road.

At the cross keys we find the car that passed us is drawn up. The car is all right but the male occupants are taking spirit into their tanks. We pass the Albury Express that is puffing up Glenroy Hill throwing out immense volumes of steam and smoke, and are soon running through North Essendon. We turn up the bad patch at the bottom of Kaleigh Street, and in a minute we are at home. We are cold and ready for tea. It is half past four and we have had a really good day.

Mother says, "You will pass Daddy, get your certificate."

When last I saw friend Borrett he said,—"Have you got your certificate yet". I answered, "No." He said,—"If you go out without a certificate and are caught you will be fined a fiver, and it will serve you right."

So ended our first trip alone with our own car.