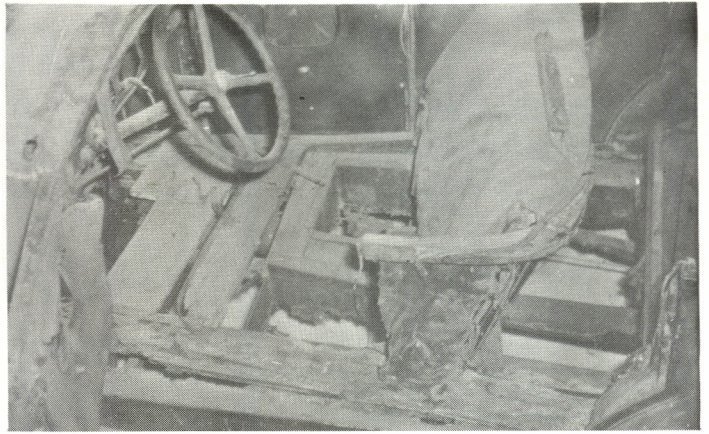


INTERNATIONAL VINTAGE CAR RALLY

Assistant Engineer — Sinter and well known Vintage and Veteran Car enthusiast Bill Hale and his wife Margaret recently returned from the 1978 International Veteran and Vintage Motor Rally in which they entered their 1928 vintage model Fiat 509A. As President of the Newcastle District Vintage Car Club Bill had quite a bit to do with the organisation of the Newcastle segment of the Rally.

The International Rally itself is a biennial event hosted by a different country on each occasion. However, the host country is limited to those whose Federations or Councils of Veteran and Vintage Car Clubs are registered with the world governing body — Federation Internationale Des Voitures Anciennes (or FIVA as it is better known) — which is based in Paris.



Above — The Fiat as it was before some 2 000 plus hours of restoration by Assistant Engineer Bill Hale.

Left — Margaret and Bill Hale alongside the 1928 Fiat 509A which they entered in the 1978 International Vintage and Veteran Car Rally.



As International Rallies are very popular and people from all over the world are eager to converge on the host country with the machine of their choice there has to be a cut-off point regarding the number of entries accepted. This number varies from country to country for a variety of reasons. Australia's reason on this occasion was accommodation. So the limit of 400 cars and 50 motorcycles was set. With Officials, friends, and the back up team required for such an event, the Rally embraced some 2 000 people.

Among the 450 vehicles entered 67 were from overseas countries including Britain, New Hebrides, West Germany, Holland, USA, and New Zealand. The remainder were from all states of Australia.

Arranging accommodation for some 2 000 people for a one night stand in Newcastle was no mean feat for Bill and his team of enthusiasts.

For the uninitiated Veterans refer to vehicles produced before the end of 1918 and Vintage from 1919 until the end of 1930. This means that to be eligible to enter an International Rally all cars must be 1930 or earlier and of course the owner must be the member of a Club registered with the world governing body.

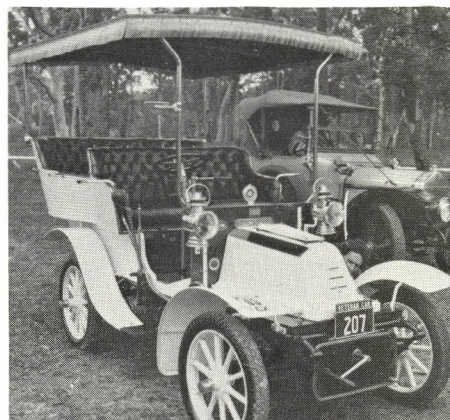
All vehicles accepted for the Rally had to be inspected by scrutineers to ensure that they complied with the standards of roadworthiness as laid down by the Department of Motor Transport.

As the range of competing machines varied from single cylinder veterans circ. 1900, to the straight eights of 1930, entrants were required to nominate an average cruising speed. This divided the

vehicles into 4 categories (A, B, C, and D, viz. up to 25 km/h, up to 30 km/h, up to 40 km/h and 40 km/h, but prepared to participate in a longer run). It also enabled Officials to optimize starting times so that the normal flow of traffic was not impeded by the slower vehicles.

Starting in Sydney and covering some 2 000 km the Rally headed north along the N.S.W. coast and on into south-eastern Queensland before finishing on the Gold Coast 15 days later. The Rally was planned to take in some of Australia's magnificent scenery with ample time to make the journey an enjoyable experience for all concerned.

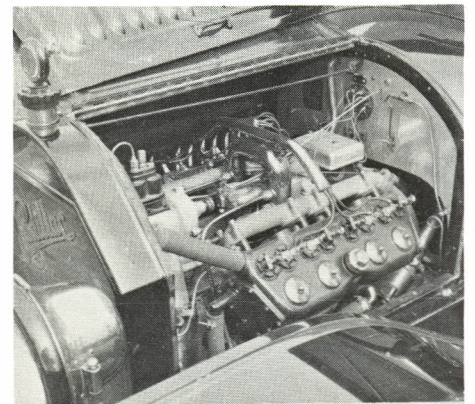
Cars were flagged away from the start at Macquarie University by various dignitaries including the Prime Minister, Malcolm Fraser, who was Rally Patron. Whether by coincidence or not we're not



One of the oldest cars in the Rally a 1901 De Dion Bouton.

sure, but Bill's Fiat was flagged away by Mr. R. Neave, National Sales Manager for Fiat Australia.

The first hour of the Rally was the worst and a gruelling test on all of the older machines. Rain, 6 lanes of Sydney's Saturday morning traffic, inching along with traffic lights on nearly every corner, crash gearboxes, fierce clutches, vapour locks in the fuel lines, and boiling radiators. However, once on the open road and moving along freely most vehicles performed well although some competitors did have troubles. Blown up gearboxes, differentials, big ends, main bearings, etc. were the main source of major breakdown. Tyres with blowouts and punctures were prevalent, and expensive, with some of the older beaded edge type costing up to \$100 each. One competitor blew 8 tyres before Ballina before giving up and putting his car on a float for the remainder of the journey.



Who says V8s are new? Photo shows a 1914 V8 Cadillac engine.

It would appear from all reports that the cause of most breakdowns was due to poor driving technique. Although these cars are generally sound they must be driven sensibly because of their age. The newer models being 48 years old extending out to 78 years for a couple of the older models — metal fatigue is not easily seen. A special thanks must go to the NRMA and RACQ who supplied without charge mechanics and service vans to follow the Rally, and to the Toyota Land