

MODEL A's in WA
1928 Phaeton
Engine Number CA 73461
Colour - Arabian Sand

Owned and restored by Eric and Jeannane Richards (Gnowangerup/Gooseberry Hill) 1970s – 1998?

Purchased by Merv and Thelma Callow (Gooseberry Hill) 1998? – 2000

Purchased by Bob and Jeanette Hembrough (Darlington) 22nd December 2000 – 2003

Owned by Brian and Ruth Walsh (Gibson/Esperance) 2003—

Affectionately known as 'Ruth'



*Ruth and Brian with their Phaeton,
taken in their front drive*

Brian and Ruth Walsh who live in Gibson, approximately 20 kms north of Esperance, are the proud owners of this 1928 Model A Phaeton. Gibson is a small settlement with the Gibson Soak Hotel, a few industrial businesses and a small group of houses. Here Brian and Ruth were able to purchase a nice home with a lot of space and room for sheds. Brian is a full time TransWA coach driver who does the Esperance-Kalgoorlie run several times each week. The bus he drives is stationed at his home, along with a caravan and a couple of vehicles etc. Currently they have a great collection of old lamps displayed in their home.

Brian's love of things old goes back to his days growing up in Henty, NSW in the 1950s. He recalls a modified Fordor driving along their back lane carrying sheep. He can remember saying to himself that he would own an old car like that one day!

After many years of hard work, several moves and the loss of a daughter, they settled in Gibson. Their plan was to settle in Esperance but they wanted a big block with plenty of space for sheds and room to move. The price of land in Esperance meant Gibson was a better deal.

Some time after establishing themselves in the area Brian saw a 1935/36 Wolseley for sale in the city. He had been buying car magazines for years and this vehicle took his fancy. (Brian still has all of the car magazines he has purchased over the years!) A few phone calls and the deal was done. Friend and fellow vintage car enthusiast, Ed Popham, also from Esperance, drove to Perth and trailed the Wolseley home for Brian. The Wolseley was eventually sold to another Esperance family.

Brian had always had a soft spot for the baby Austin 7 and some time later he purchased one, restored, from Dave Reid who lives in the Perth Hills. Dave has been into vintage vehicles since he was a lad and currently is a professional restorer. The Austin was later sold to a family in Armadale.

Brian had his every day driver but if he was away Ruth had nothing to drive so he bought her a 1969 MG Midget. The MG eventually went to Kalgoorlie.

In 2003 Brian saw a Model A for sale in the Just Cars magazine. It was the Model A they now own. After a few phone enquiries, again sight unseen, he asked Ed Popham if he would go to Perth and trail it home. This Phaeton was purchased from Bob and Jeannette Hembrough whose story precedes this story in our Club File.

They have had a couple of mishaps since owning the Phaeton. The two blade original fan split into two, long ways, and did a small amount of damage. However it did not damage the bonnet or radiator which is the usual scenario.

In 2006 Ruth and Brian trailed the Phaeton to Adelaide for the National Model A Meet. On the way home the top blew back when a large truck went past and the top had to be completely redone once back in Esperance.

While being part of the VCC Wagin June Rally a couple of years ago the clutch malfunctioned and the car had to be trailed home. A mechanic in Esperance, Les Lang, does all of Brian's repairs and he always does a great job!

The Phaeton is Desert (Arabian) Sand and Black and its number plate is RW 06 WA. The Phaeton's nickname is 'Ruth' and there is a special plate at the rear on the left, stating this name. 'Ruth', the vehicle, has several extras, mostly added by Brian – headlight shades, white walls, luggage rack and box, vinyl arm rests on the top edge of each door, heel scratch protectors on the bottom edge of the rear guards, quail radiator cap, rear mudflaps, external mirrors, step plates for both front doors, stone guard, running board expandable rack to hold a jerry can, and side lights on both front guards. The sun visor and wind wings are interesting original fittings.



The many extras make the car individually special.



Since owning the Phaeton lots of work has been done – a new gear box, clutch, diff repairs, wheel bearings, steering box rebuilt and an overdrive fitted. The car is on full license and is used regularly around Esperance.

A very special outing was planned for their son Julian's wedding the week after Peter Eardley and I visited and did these notes. The wedding was in Perth and the car was a special feature of the day!



Teagan - the daughter-in-law.



Ruth and Brian are looking forward to being part of our National Meet in Busselton. It was also great to see and hear their enthusiasm for the Model A and the old car movement in general! Brian has been buying up small motoring things which he is donating to our National Meet to be used as prizes or Raffles.

Very special thanks to Ruth and Brian for their hospitality and the information given on my visit to their home in August 2012!

Scribe – Alan Jeffree

August 2012