

*MODEL A'S in WA**1928 Utility**Registration GN O10**Owned by Tom and Georgina Hart**1964 -***History of Hart's 1928 Model A Ford****As recalled by Tom Hart      December 2010**

Our Model A arrived at our home as a Christmas present for Tom, Brian and Grant Hart in 1964. My parents had bought it off Jess Reader from Katanning in the spring of that year for 50 pounds. We had seen a Walt Disney movie featuring a flying Model T Ford and we thought Mum and Dad should buy us a Model T. My father liked old cars, loved Fords and was a bit of a car man. They bought the Model A and brought it home and hid it up the back paddock in a patch of bush until Christmas. It was a great secret with our three older siblings knowing about it and sworn to secrecy.

I recall driving past the Model A parked in the driveway in Katanning and we yelled out to our parents about seeing an old Ford. They were very non committal to us about it. Little did we know it was already ours - Dad had bought it and just had to pick it up. He could have been checking to see if it was still there!

Jess Reader was an old gentleman who my mother remembered as being old when she was quite young. Mum had come from that area. I did see his name mentioned in The Great Southern Herald, the local Katanning paper, regarding the closure of some old club in town that had its membership dwindle down to only a few. I was amazed to think he was still around and did put out a couple of feelers regarding contacting him but drew a blank. I wish now I had tried harder.

I drove it to the bus stop for two years with my brothers and when I had gone to high school they continued driving it to the bus stop. We never abused it at all, we just loved it. School holidays we puttered around all over the farm, it almost never got cold. It never used water or burnt oil, and always started when the battery was good. We had a complex set of tracks through a nice patch of bush just behind our home and we had endless fun down there. Summer time she was always parked on the dam bank while we swam for hours.

Brother Grant had the misfortune of having the steering arm fall off near a dam and he drove it straight in! We retrieved it with a tractor and soon got going again. Another disaster was the roof catching fire in the padding on the hood bows. There was a little courtesy light up there which shorted out. I came outside one day to find it a raging inferno. I put it out with a garden hose and it was a blackened mess, all the paint burnt off the dash or fuel tank. It must have been close to exploding. This was a major blow but I set out to resurrect the poor old girl and I did. I was 14-15 at the time with not much money. Some of my early efforts at restoration were a bit rough to say the least but we scratched around and got it back to driveable condition.

We lost our father in October 1966 and the Model A has always been very special because he bought it for us. We always looked after it and never abused it.

The previous owner had painted it with a brush including all the chrome but it was in pretty solid condition when we got it. It was basically dent free with only a tiny bit of rust. The starter operated by switch instead of on the floor.

We also gave it a couple of paint jobs with a brush, Verdant Green and silverfrost for the chrome.



Tom Hart in the Utility in the 1980s prior to restoration. Note the fire damage.

In the early eighties I decided I would attempt a restoration. Eric Richards, the local Ford dealer in Gnowangerup, was working on his phaeton and he got me lots of parts and generally inspired me. I was sorry to see him leave and go to Goosberry Hill but we kept in touch until his premature death.

One of our neighbours Wayne Flint was a panel beater and he started the body work, doing all the minor dents and rust. There was a painter in Ongerup at the time, Mark Nulmyers, and he painted it, now dark blue as it appeared to have been this colour when I ground all the old paint off with electric drill and sanding disk. Eddie Quinn made the new ute back out of jarrah and I had the upholstery done in Albany by an older Dutch trimmer. He did a great job and it's all still good in Dec 2010.

I couldn't afford to go much further as money was hard to come by and I was busy trying to run a farm, survive and bring up four children with my wife Georgina. Expensive things like engines brakes, etc. would have to wait.

1998 outside our home prior to final restoration.



1995 was a bumper year so I bought a reconditioned engine off Steve Read and installed it myself. Bit of a task as anyone would know when you haven't got a proper workshop. This got me back to driving around the farm and it was in the 2000's I finally decided to finish the job. I was now selling real estate, having stopped farming after the very dry year of 2000, and finally had a bit of money to spare. She was pulled to bits and sat in the middle of my workshop on drums for nearly three years. Finally she was back on the road with new brakes, king pins, spring reset, steering column repaired and numerous little details all done. I got onto Keith at Henry's in Victoria and he has been very helpful in sourcing all manner of little things as well as a new radiator. Ray Abbott reconditioned the engine and she now purrs like a kitten. I got a reconditioned speedo from ebay and that works beautifully.



Tom either tidied up before this photo was taken, or he maintains a tidy working environment.

What a great photo!

I am still learning about Model A's and a recent visit to the Jeffree's in Perth was most enlightening, resulting in another order from Keith at Henry's.

I am finally back on the road and I think my Dad would be well pleased to see it today.

Hopefully one of my family will take care of it when I am gone, I have been teaching the grandchildren to drive it, one in particular loves it! It has been part of the family for a long time.

Tom with daughters Jennifer and Felicity, and granddaughter Georgie.

*It was a big day, as we had just got it running with the new engine reconditioned by Ray Abbott. It was a very tricky installing it, and I had to get my wife Georgina to assist with all the delicate lining up required.*

*Georgie loves the Model A and is nearly able to drive solo, though she is still a bit small.*

*Most of the family were there that weekend, which was fantastic!*

