

UPDATE NUMBER 1. SEPTEMBER 2013

# PERKOLILLI 1914-2014

16  
to 19  
October  
2014



## HELP US CELEBRATE THE CENTENARY OF WA'S ORIGINAL MOTOR RACING TRACK!

Welcome to the first newsletter for the Lake Perkolilli 1914-2014 Centenary of Speed. In this and regular newsletters over the next year we will tell you how you can be involved in the event either as a participant or a spectator.

The Centenary of Speed will be held at the old Lake Perkolilli motor circuit near Kalgoorlie from 16 to 19 October 2014. It will be on the weekend before the National Veteran Rally being held in the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder. The Veteran Rally is expected to attract 100 cars and motorcycles constructed before 1919.

So why celebrate Lake Perkolilli? The claypan has a remarkable history which goes back almost as far as the motor vehicle in Western Australia. The first racing began at the claypan in 1914 and continued right through to World War II. A grandstand was even erected to cope with the crowds. It is our own Brooklands or Indianapolis. Lake Perkolilli has always been a legendary part of our

State's motoring history and we think that it is appropriate to celebrate this history.

The cars which competed at Perkolilli were not just racing cars – vintage sedans and tourers, even taxis raced for many years.

Every year, cars and motorcycles would be driven from all over the State, shipped on trucks or loaded onto the express train to get to Lake Perkolilli for the September event timed to coincide with the Goldfields horse racing round. The teams often arrived at the claypan a week before the event to tune their machines. On race day, thousands of people arrived by car, truck, motorcycle, bicycle, charabanc and often aircraft. A line of cars stretching a kilometre along one side of the claypan would be full of picnickers and the races would begin!

Our plan is to welcome pre-war cars and motorcycles on the claypan just like the good old days and recreate the race days of long ago. Join us!



**Lake Perkolilli 1914-2014  
Centenary of Speed**  
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**The Kalgoorlie-Boulder Motoring Festival 2014 will take place from 16 to 24 October 2014. It will, incorporate the 2014 National Veteran Rally and the Lake Perkolilli 1914-2014 Centenary of Speed.**

The National Veteran Rally being held at Kalgoorlie-Boulder is expected to attract more than 100 cars and motorcycles constructed before 1919. The rally, arranged under the auspices of the Goldfields branch of the Veteran Car Club of WA and supported by the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder, will be based in the Goldfields city with day trips to nearby places of interest. For more information go to: [www.veterancarclubofwa.asn.au/2014-national-veteran-rally/](http://www.veterancarclubofwa.asn.au/2014-national-veteran-rally/).

With 2014 also marking the centenary of the famed Lake Perkolilli motor racing track 20km north of Kalgoorlie the opportunity arose to bring the two events together for over a week of historic motoring. While the two events are quite different there is a cross-over and it is hoped that many participants in the National Veteran Rally will come a few days early to see the action at Lake Perkolilli, and vice-versa.

A historic motor racing round is scheduled at Barbagello Wanneroo Raceway in Perth on the following weekend so participants

coming from the eastern states will be able to stop off at Lake Perkolilli en-route.

It is hoped to attract as many original cars and motorcycles which raced at Lake Perkolilli between 1914 and 1939 as possible. So if you know of a vehicle which probably raced at the claypan then you're welcome to contact event organiser Graeme Cocks for more information.

Thanks to the support of the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder, Cruickshank Sports Arena in Boulder has been selected for the Veteran Rally Headquarters. The excellent facilities include full security with closed lock-up sheds for all the cars and Lake Perkolilli participants will be able to use the facilities by making a charitable donation. Alternatively, camping is possible at Lake Perkolilli but facilities are non-existent! For accommodation in Kalgoorlie-Boulder see <http://kalgoorlietourism.com/accommodation>.

The Lake Perkolilli Centenary of Speed will be conducted over four days with Thursday and Friday devoted to private time trials with Saturday and Sunday for the public reenactments from the golden era.

More details will be provided in forthcoming newsletters. If you know someone who would like to receive newsletter updates ask them to contact Graeme Cocks at email: [gacocks@inet.net.au](mailto:gacocks@inet.net.au)

Updates will also be posted at [motoringpast.wordpress.com](http://motoringpast.wordpress.com)



## PERKOLILLI 2009



### Boulder Centenary 2009

The last time Lake Perkolilli saw vintage racing cars was in 2009 as part of the Centenary of the State's first four wheel motor race at Boulder. Cars ranging from a 1910 Fuller Buggy to a 1936 Lagonda and Chevrolet rediscovered the track. Untimed events were held under CAMS regulations.



# CARS OF LAKE PERKOLILLI 1914 - 1939

**For 25 years, a great variety of cars raced at Lake Perkolilli. Here's a year to year list, lifted from the race programmes. If you have one of these cars, bring it along. For the next newsletter, we'll have the bikes.**

**1915** - 12/15hp Sunbeam, 35hp Studebaker, Ford, 25hp Buick, 45hp Cadillac

**1916** - 25hp Studebaker, 30hp Overland, 20hp Ford

**1917** - Buick, Overland, Ford, Dodge, Studebaker

**1920** - Studebaker, Austin

**1921** - Ford, Studebaker, Hupmobile, Clement Bayard

**1923** - Dodge, Studebaker, Essex

**1924** - Dodge, Overland, Bean 14, Studebaker Six, Ford, Rugby, Jewett 6, Chevrolet, Hupmobile

**1925** - Oakland Six, Dodge, Chrysler, Willys Knight, Baby Citroen, Fiat (509), Austin 7, Rugby, Bean 14, Oldsmobile Six, Ford, Jowett, Overland, Fiat 4, Chandler, Schneider, Nash Six, Studebaker

**1926** - Fiat 509, Essex 4, Oakland Six, Overland Six, Jewett 6, Dodge

**1927** - Jewett, Buick, Chrysler Six, Ford, Whippet, Dodge, Buick, Nash, Bugatti

**1928** - Studebaker, Chrysler 70, Chrysler Six, Ford, Bugatti, Chrysler 72, Oakland Six,

Erskine Six, Oldsmobile Six, Fiat 509S, Buick

Six, Salmson Sports, Essex Six, Whippet, Austin 7, Chevrolet

**1929** - Chrysler, Plymouth, Auburn Six and eight, Graham-Paige, Ford

**1930** - Triumph supercharged, Austin 7, Ford, Hudson, Chevrolet, Whippet, Ford A, Triumph 7, Chrysler, Salmson

**1931** - Chrysler, Chevrolet, Ford, Pontiac, Whippet, Austin Tourer, Fiat, Lambert Sunbeam Special, Lambert Oldsmobile Special, COB Special, GP Salmson, Wolseley, Triumph, Austin 7, Bugatti

**1932** - Chrysler, Dodge, Lagonda, Triumph Imp, Ford

**1934** - Auburn, Vauxhall, Lagonda, Chrysler, Ford V8, Austin 7, Bugatti, Plymouth

**1935** - Ford V8, Ford 4, Austin 7, Buick, Oldsmobile

**1936** - Bartlett Special, Lagonda, Cranston V8, Ford V8, Bslot Special, Bugatti, Lagonda Rapier, MG, Hillman, Chevrolet tourer

**1937** - Ballot V8, Hudson Terraplane, MG Midget

**1938** - Ford V8, Jowett 4, Chevrolet Six, Terraplane, Auburn

**1939** - Chevrolet Six, Ford (V8).

# RED DUST RACERS:

## The Lake Perkolilli Centenary Book By Graeme Cocks

Since 1995 when I began building a replica of the old Chrysler called Silverwings I have been intrigued by the legend of Lake Perkolilli.

It was an unbelievable story. On the edge of a desert in the goldfields of Western Australia was a stretch of dirt so hard and flat that cars and motorcycles could be driven to breaking point.

From 1914 it was called the "Brooklands of the West", a reference to the concrete track constructed near London.

The remarkable aspect of the Lake Perkolilli story is that despite the isolation of the track, it was visited year after year between 1914 and 1939. There was hardly a year when the claypan did not hear the roar of racing engines - unless it flooded.

But the writing was on the wall in the early 1930s when speedway at Claremont and around-the-houses racing brought motor racing to the people rather than the people going to the motor racing.

### Perkolilli Survivors

My initial interest in Lake Perkolilli was through the cars and drivers. By the 1990s, only a few of the original drivers were left. One was Bill Horan who raced a Salmson, and of course there was Clem Dwyer and Alan Tomlinson. These were the only people who were a part of racing at Perkolilli. Fortunately there were the volumes of the Motorist &

Wheelman magazine at the Battye Library which recorded most of the racing carnivals.

### Other Stories

The task of compiling the history of Lake Perkolilli was put on the backburner while I wrote histories of motor racing at Albany, Dowerin, Caversham, Goomalling and Applecross but the filing cabinet at home kept filling with scraps of information and pictures from Lake Perkolilli.

### 100 Years - Already?

Almost two decades had elapsed since my preoccupation with Lake Perkolilli began and then the realisation struck me that the centenary of the first motor race was approaching. It was just what I needed to assemble everything I had into a volume of stories, results and pictures.

As I began writing the book I realised that the motorcycle riders were every bit as important as the car drivers -- and I had to do them justice as well. And then there were the flyers who often landed on the claypan for the carnivals. Just when I thought I had the span of Perkolilli history covered came the new information that the claypan has not exactly

To  
be Launched  
at the  
Centenary



been dormant since 1939. The Goldfields riders and various car clubs have kept the spirit of Perkolilli alive.

So now the true history of Lake Perkolilli is coming together. I have not stopped the search for information and pictures so if you know anyone who has anything in an old family album or scrapbook I'd love to see it.

My plan is for the Red Dust Racers to be a comprehensive history of Lake Perkolilli to do justice to the people who raced there and the people behind-the-scenes who made it happen.

The book will be published before the Lake Perkolilli 1914-2014 Centenary of Speed and it will only be available in limited edition.

In the next newsletter, we'll have an expression of interest form so that you can reserve your copy. This will also give me an idea of just how limited or unlimited the edition will be!



### Updates at:

[www.motoringpast.wordpress.com](http://www.motoringpast.wordpress.com)

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# Bulletin 1.



# 2014 PERKOLILLI MOTORING EVENT



Perkolilli can be dusty and hot but it is truly unique in the world of motor sport - a natural track exactly as it was a century ago . . . unbelievably flat and hard . . . a natural wonder.

## CARS

If you have a car built before 1940 then you are eligible for the Lake Perkolilli Centenary as a participant.

## MOTORCYCLES

Motorcycle racing was every bit as important as car racing so pre-1940 motorcycles are also welcome.

## AND SPECTATORS

If you don't have a pre-war vehicle you are still welcome to attend and soak up the atmosphere.

Updates at: [www.motoringpast.wordpress.com](http://www.motoringpast.wordpress.com)

Event Organiser: Graeme Cocks email: [gacocks@inet.net.au](mailto:gacocks@inet.net.au)