

# KLAXON

THE VOICE OF THE VINTAGE CAR  
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*Restoration starts on Great Grandfather's  
1928 Morris Cowley*



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## **Brief outline of Bill Heard's Great Grandfather, W. Gilmore**

**December 1915** W. Gilmore started business in 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue Tauranga, moving to permanent premises in Devonport Road January 1916.

**1916** we see him expand business to motor car painting & trimming as a specialty and selling all classes of second hand vehicles (horse-drawn).

**1918** First offering of a second hand motor car is found selling a Ford motor vehicle.

**1918** his first car agency is "Oakland 6 Cars - for power, comfort and economy unexcelled". Oakland was an American automobile manufacturer and division of General Motors

**1919** onwards sees main advertising move to have your car trimmed and painted, as well as offering second hand vehicles (horse-drawn and motor car).

**1924** he is still advertising second hand horse-drawn vehicles for sale.

**1926** the Morris Agency (Harrison and Gash, Morris House, Auckland) commences: "Buy British and be proud of it" W. Gilmore announces that he has been appointed Tauranga agent for the famous Morris Oxford, Cowley Cars and Morris trucks



### ***Restoration of 1928 Morris Cowley: Story by Bill Heard***

I re-joined The BOP VCC club in Nov 19, after being absent for about 50 years. I had previously joined sometime in the 1970s, I think.

I was then serving in the RNZ Navy, then moved to Adelaide, and on return to NZ, have lived in Welcome Bay, Howick and West Melton (Canterbury), then returning to finally settle in Omokoroa and start the restoration of my Great Grandfather Gilmore's car, that I inherited when I was 21, 51 years ago.

The car was moved to Omokoroa during August 2016 which was an exciting day for the family.

From there the project began. My brother and I started work in March 2019 on the car (known to the family as The Grasshopper) the job becoming first a case of dismantling, water blasting and removing component parts for an individual check



then repairing where necessary. At this stage I wish to point out that a camera is most necessary and used frequently. In some cases it may be a while before you are refitting some components again and a good record is essential.

I first of all removed and carted all of the mud guards around to the front lawn and set the job up for water blasting. Then removed the parking lights & the stiffeners inside the front guards. The stiffeners which reinforce the front guards, are very big, & people lean on them when servicing the engine. A section of the running board had been repaired many years ago. This area and both front guards are rusted quite badly, along with a patch where the stiffener is bolted to the guard.

With all the bolts and bits removed, I cranked the water blaster up and with 90+ pressure, years of dirt and grit departed to the lawn. Random other small panels including the spare tyre bracket were included in the wash down.

Next came the removal of the radiator and engine components so the body could be lifted off. Then more water blasting to expose years of grime and several coats of paint.

At last we could see what we had.

Our next task was to remove and dismantle the engine, clutch and gearbox. The car has a wet clutch consisting of 2 plates which have cork plugs inserted through them. They are sandwiched with a plain steel plate between them. The plates are fixed to the flywheel on pins & are held against it by springs (on each pin). The plates & the flywheel rotate in the engine oil, as the clutch housing is a part of the sump. The clutch pedal is mechanical, & releases the pressure so that all plates slip during the gear change. The gearbox & clutch assembly was in reasonable order so I flushed it out, checked and reassembled.

The engine had 2 stuck valves so they were freed up and the engine block was stripped and sent off to the motor reconditioners. Unfortunately the timing of that coincided with the Coronavirus lockdown so we are still awaiting a report on repairs required.

You have heard about the piano tuner.





Well this is the story about a vintage car brake tuner. All the brakes are actuated by steel rods, controlled from the brake pedal or the hand brake. There are 8 rods in total and all need to be in tune with each other or uneven braking will occur. The first rod goes to a chain and sprocket where it splits to both front and rear drums on each side. The rear drums have 2 pairs of brake shoes. The inside pair are operated by a foot brake and the outside set of shoes are operated by another rod to the hand-brake. To access the rear brakes, it is necessary to remove the axle to get the drum off. This is held on by a large recessed nut. The right side nut was tapped undone with a hammer & a brass punch, however on the left wheel, the large nut was somewhat battered & chipped & wouldn't move. I decided to search in desperation for some kind of socket or spanner to get it undone, so went in search of the cardboard box that I had emptied all the tools & bits & pieces into, from the Grasshopper boot. Bugger me, look what I found? The large ring spanner which was designed to do the job. So back to the job in hand, but the nut wouldn't undo, however I saw a slight movement anti-clock wise, before it stopped. Then I realised that maybe it was a left hand thread. Yep it was, so out came the axle.

Most of the rods were bent from some unknown force, so I spent some time carefully straightening them & making adjustments, starting from the pedal. A spring had been added to the first chain sprocket, & had pulled it out of line so that it was twisted. This was removed, the rods realigned and after more straightening and adjusting was again working. A bracket the rods ran through, close to the exhaust pipe was found to be broken. This job will need to wait until the engine is re-installed though to get the correct dimensions.

The Radiator fan project was next. This was interesting, as the fan had been repaired or modified in the past. I had to remove several coats of old paint before pulling it apart which by now is becoming a normal procedure using paint stripper and scrapers etc. Before any project starts the necessary photograph was taken. This has proven to be a life saver, as there are times when I can have up to 2 ways to put things back together and a lot of time is wasted. This project consisted of 16 parts. As the fan assembly had been previously modified, internal parts had been changed and appears like one was lost & replaced with a substitute. It looks like the original fan assembly was 4 blades, but 2 were cut off & a new blade was





modified to fit. The hub had been cut out with a cold chisel & had been reshaped with a ball peen hammer.

The parts have now been repaired and undercoated, and awaiting the arrival of some black paint, before assembling "carefully".

The carburetor job was interesting. I thought 'what can go wrong' it was working before and anyway they are so easy to pull apart, I've done it before. All I can say to others doing this job is, don't rush, have a clear bench and don't be afraid to take photos from various angles.

On dis-assembling the float chamber, I found that as the petrol had evaporated, that it had left behind a residue that had stuck the float to the bowl. Also the piston was seized in the top chamber. With a good soaking in CRC it was able to be separated and the components polished and cleaned. So here's hoping it works.

If all else fails on start up, then I will send the carb to a re-conditioner. But there have been so many different models produced over the years & this one is obsolete.

So at long last the project is underway and to many vintage enthusiasts probably seems like I have a long way to go, "BUT", I have started and hope to be able to make good progress once the Coro thing is over.

After we got past the lockdown and work resumed, I received a phone call from Tauranga Sandblasting to say that the Chassis and panels were ready to be picked up. When I asked how it went Shane said that it was in Mint Condition.

What a stunning job. I thanked them profusely. They really cared & were proud of their work and even taped up anything that might bump and get scratched on the way home.

Then a trip to Birch Ave Radiator Repairs to drop off the radiator. Yep, the owner Steve was familiar with vintage radiators. The result though was next day I got a call to say that the core was stuffed. Full of leaks and he is awaiting a price for a re-core.

I also called to check the progress at the motor machinist. It was agreed that they would strip the engine and send the block to Rotorua and dip in an acid bath. This was to flush the water galleries & generally clean it. Also it was found a terrible repair had been made many years ago. One piston had been welded and the bearings were badly worn. I returned a few days later with a box of old pistons and new valves etc. So hopefully we have found the worst.

A start has been made and whilst there is a long way to go at least we have something to look at.

