

Highwaymen

news

JULY 2026

Clare's Cars...from soapbox to T'birds and lots more

In this inaugural edition of the 'news' we feature an interview with long-time member Clare Pomeroy and some of his cars with a focus on his '34 Ford pick-up.

Clare is one of the longest serving members and his interest in hot rodding can be traced back to his early teens.

Clare, how did you get interested in street rods and custom cars?

"I've been interested in cars my whole life. I built a soapbox car when I was 12 and didn't stop!"

I remember building a 'rod' out of a Toro Tractor that was used as lawnmower when I was working for the KW Parks Department."

The Highwaymen Club began in 1961. How long have you been a member?

"Since 1967."

How many members were there when you joined?

"I think there were 12 original members"

Any idea how many joined the club because of you?

"Heaps. But as to how many, I couldn't say. You just

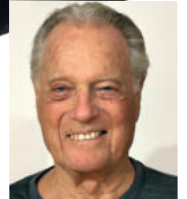
meet people with a similar interest and invite them along."

How many cars have you owned and built? I was told 10 and counting...

"Oh. More than that. My first 'rod' was my parents '54 Ford, I built a '23 cabriolet with a hemi, a Model A sedan, a '23 pick-up and the '34 Ford pick-up (featured in this edition). Also a Falcon Delivery dubbed the 'Hall of Flame' as it had flames on the side, oh and an '89 T'bird that I grafted a 'whole 50's Ford 'front clip to it. It was dubbed 'The Bird Box'..."

Did any of your cars win awards? If so, is there one that you most cherish?

"Awards weren't important to me. Building the cars was. The 'Bird Box' was a Class Winner if I recall. Oh, and
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Clare Pomeroy

Introducing 'No Nukes' Darren



Darren Occleston

Tell me a little about yourself.

"I was born in Dublin Ireland and then moved to the UK then immigrated when I was 3 in July 1966 to Montreal. In 1982 I landed in Kitchener, with only a few bucks in my pocket and no friends. I stayed at the Mayflower Motel my first night and walked industrial parks for a job and was hired on my first day. The company owner told me he would pay me my first weeks wages if I showed up the next day!"

I have been married 37 years to my sweetheart and soulmate, Donna. We have two boys (Dillon and Connor) and two daughter in laws (Sarah and Jessica). One son lives in Drumbo with our two granddaughters (Olivia and Isla). The other is in Tavistock where he is a volunteer firefighter.

Donna, was born and raised in Kitchener."

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Quite the journey... From a member's basement to Lancaster Street

The club started in 1961 in a 12' x 12' room in Don Hishion's basement, on Erb Street.

Then in '62 the club moved to a 40' x 20' space on Frederick Street. There was room for 5 cars!

In '63 the club moved opposite the old Fire Hall in Conestoga.



Gil Lalonde's rod outside the Queen Street Clubhouse commonly known as the 'Taj Mahal'

From there to 'the Queenie' or some referred to it as the 'Taj Mahal' on Queen Street in Kitchener which was cold and damp but reportedly had 8 stalls, a wash-bay and a washroom!.

The club then moved to Centennial Drive - a big building but it cost a lot to rent.

And finally, in 1997 the club purchased the current property on Lancaster Street. The purchase required a number of 'investors' willing to put up \$10,000 each and the club itself put in \$25,000. The rest as they say is history...

More on Clare's Cars...



(FROM PAGE 1)
the '34 Ford won a 'Hall of Fame' award."

What car(s) do you still have now?

"I still have the '34 Ford. That's gifted to my daughter. There's a '71 El Camino gifted to my grandson, a '61 Chrysler gifted to my son, a '63 Corvair convertible gifted to my granddaughter that I'm still working on, and I still drive a '02 T'bird."

painter and body man than I ever was...and a mechanic. We built a dune buggy together as well as a '65 Chev. Most of the family are involved in the annual Graffiti Car Show in one way or another."

How many others outside of the family do you think you have impacted/assisted with their cars or getting into hot rods?

"Hard to say. A lot...and I



I heard that you have inspired multiple generations of your family into street rodding. First your wife, then son and his wife, then a grandson?

"Yes, they're all pretty much involved in some way. My wife worked at A1 Auto-trimmers as upholsterer. She did my interiors. I painted all my own cars and taught my son. He's a better

painted a lot of cars for people over the years..."

I've also heard it said that you were/are a great supporter of Car Shows. For instance, The Highwaymen Graffiti Shows began in 1974? This year was the 50th Show (less the 2 years due to COVID). Can you tell me more?

"Yes. My buddies and I

Right - Clare with Ed Roth and his trike
Below - Just some of Clare's cars



used to support a lot of Shows. We used to drive down to Shows in the U.S...Detroit, the U.S and Canadian Nationals, even as far as Montreal and P.E.I. The Highwaymen actually hosted '87 Canadian Nationals.

It was a bit embarrassing actually. The Highwaymen built a 'yellow T' to raffle at the '87 show and I won it! I still had to finish it off with a motor, steering, etc.

Kitchener before a local radio station took over the event."

I heard Ed Roth drove one of his cars to a Highwaymen Show years ago. Is that correct? Other famous names/cars that attended Highwaymen Shows?

"Yes. We met Ed down in the U.S. one time and he decided to come to one of our Shows on the way to Alaska...driving his 'Trike'



"A wild guess? At least \$75,000. We've supported a number of Charities over the year. Big and Little Brothers, Accessibility Charities, The Humane Society, The Food Bank, local Hospitals, and currently the Make A Wish Foundation."

What are your thoughts on the state of street rodding today and in the future?

"Positive. Cars will always bring people together. The younger guys these days are more into 'tuner cars' than

the Hot Rods that I grew up with and love, but people will always love to make their cars unique.

Sadly though, Government regulations and safety concerns make modifying cars these days more difficult. And the days of individuals working on their own cars and learning skills along the way seem to be less common, being replaced by professional shops building cars on behalf of their owners."



I was one of the members that started the Highwaymen Shows. I've been a Coordinator, or on the Executive Committee for most of the years since. We've held indoor Shows but now they're outdoors and we regularly have 300 plus cars to the annual Graffiti Car Shows."

The Club also hosted '50's and '60's dances in

from California. He didn't realize how far Kitchener was from California and Alaska. We also had a then famous radio announcer 'Wolfman Jack' emcee one of our Shows..."

And what about charities? How much do you think your involvement in Shows has raised for charities over the years?



STALL PROGRESS

Ventura Highway?



OK, maybe a stretch to link to the Eagles 'Ventura Highway' but...Bill MacGregor's car is a 1965 Pontiac Catalina/Ventura.

The Ventura add on was an interior trim option with accompanying name plates.

The car is quite rare as only 743 full size 65 Pontiacs' got this engine. YK code.

The car has the 421 tri-power HO designation and is backed by a turbo 400 trans. It has a 3.23 ratio positrac diff, heavy duty cooling and factory air shocks. Even stranger is the column shift and bench

seat.

The Catalina was the base model full size car so the engine option was \$490 on top of the basic car price and the automatic was another \$238. Add all the options - posi, ps, pb, radio, reverb, transistor ignition, and dealer installed air and the final price totalled more than \$4,000 in '65. You could buy a base Buick for this price.

Of course Bill plans to add more of his own options.

What's next? Finish the exhaust, paint the car and assemble.

On the road next spring.

IT'S CLASSIFIED

'63 Acadian Canso 4 door - \$4,000 obo

Disassembled and stripped to bare metal.

250 cu in six cylinder with 2 speed power glide auto.

Originally black car with red interior, bench seats redone in red vinyl, with kick

plates and arm rests (\$800). \$1,500 in new parts.

All chrome trim, in good condition.

Contact Paul Balzer at
pbalzer@sympatico.ca

'No Nukes' Darren

(FROM PAGE 1)

Tell me about some vehicles you've owned...

"My first car was a light blue Plymouth Duster. As a rebellious and activist youth I spray painted "No Nukes" on the trunk. Sadly, I drove it into a cement road block and that was it. Interesting that I worked in the nuclear industry and now enjoy an enlightened view of that technology.

My second car was a 1969 Chevelle which I drove 'till it died.

My favourite car was my 1965 Acadian Beaumont. Red on red interior. Never did have a ragtop so only ever drove it on sunny days. Hence the vanity plate "NESNYDAY". I bought it sight unseen in 2003 and it was a blast for myself and my family for 19 years.

I went to the Barrett Jackson Palm Springs auction for my 50th birthday, my wife had made it a surprise. I surprised her by buying a 1963 Grand Prix after explaining we would get better seats if I registered as a buyer. I sold the Beaumont and Grand Prix and bought a 1968 Firebird project car, then a year later I bought a 1967 Pontiac Beaumont. Both convertibles as my wife likes them, but I love coupes so we comprised lol.

The project car is in a stall at the club where I am learning quickly. I am not a hands on car guy but I'm enjoying the education."

What kind of work have you been involved in?

"I worked as a CNC machinist till the early 90's where I was also getting my university degree. I then did my masters at Laurier and moved to management roles in manufacturing operations and purchasing."

Why did you join the Highwaymen?

"I had heard of it for so long through my buddy Andy Rester. Having volunteered for various not for profit organizations for over 25 years and travelled extensively for work, I didn't have much time for anything else but once I retired I decided to check it out.

I really liked the idea of a club that loved old cars and shared that with each other. I wanted to get involved more formally and the club offered that.

I love talking to the members and finding out about their past as well as just talking cars. The guys have been a volume of experience for me and very supportive of a guy just learning.

I've learned a ton about the club while being on the car show committee. I also got to know the members better going through that process. I really like how we are not only a car club but also support local charities.

