

PAUL AND JANET'S CHRYSLER UTE.



Walter Percy Chrysler (April 2, 1875 – August 18, 1940) was an American industrial pioneer in the automotive industry and the founder and namesake of American Chrysler Corporation.

The original Chrysler Corporation was founded in 1925 by Walter Chrysler from the remains of the Maxwell Motor Company and the rest is history, leading to many popular and well known cars such as Plymouth, DeSoto, Dodge et alia...not a bad effort for a man who started out as an engineer on the railroad.

He was inducted into the American Automotive Hall of Fame in 1967.

And now we start on another of the iconic cars in our club, the aforementioned Chrysler Wayfarer ute, affectionately referred to as 'the Ute.'

This gem of motoring history is owned by Paul and Janet Devine, longtime members of the club.



The ute was purchased in 1992 when Paul was looking for a Ford Mainline Ute to match his 1957 Ford Customline when a mate who was in real estate who also had a 2nd hand car yard on the Gold Coast rang him about an unusual looking ute in his possession. This mate offered to put it on a trailer and send it to Sydney on the proviso Paul could send it back if he didn't like it! Oh to have friends like this!

The outcome is obvious to all and sundry...the vehicle was fairly rare and in good condition and was subsequently purchased by said owner in 1992....over 30 years of continual ownership!

Little is known about the previous owner but the vehicle had been well cared for.



The speedo reading when purchased was showing 60031 miles and now reads 126960 miles...Paul and Janet have covered 66667 miles/107290 kilometres....however it is not known how many times the speedo has turned over!

When first purchased the vehicle had a slant 6 Valiant motor and gear box and was certainly underpowered for its weight.

The result was that at 106000 miles a crate Chev 5.7 V8 motor and a Turbo 700 transmission gear box was fitted to rectify the power to weight ratio. The drum brakes were replaced with disc brakes all round along with the addition of power steering and air conditioning !



The heart of the matter!

The vehicle was yellow when purchased and was resprayed in the same colour about twelve years ago.

The rear tray area originally had a tonneau cover which caused the local people in Coober Pedy to have a look underneath but Paul successfully persuaded them to move on.

Anecdote: apparently one day when Paul put the canopy on the back a would be smarty said it looked like a hearse so, according to Paul, he gave him a withering look, informed him he wasn't in the motor trade but definitely was in the funeral business, specialising in YELLOW CANARY FUNERALS.

To solve the tonneau problem, upon returning home, a canopy was acquired which gave peace of mind whilst travelling at night.. Years later the appearance was once again changed and a customised lid was made for the back.



All major work done on the vehicle has been certified by a mechanical engineer.

The majority of mechanical work was done by Auto Express at Kingsford.

The UTE was converted from petrol to LPG and had two tanks fitted, 140 litres of gas! At the time Paul and Janet were doing a lot of country touring with the NSW Chrysler Club and thus distance travelling now was not an issue... probably reduced the cost into the bargain! The club has national rallies every three years to places in Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria, Queensland and NSW and they were obviously travelling long distances. In 30 years they have visited many cities and small towns in Australia and the UTE enabled them to arrive at their destinations without incidence.

Whilst travelling around Australia and especially in country towns LPG had become difficult to find so the UTE was converted from LPG back to 98 octane petrol and a custom made 135 litre fuel tank was fitted.

The vehicle averages around 14 miles to the gallon but as Paul says, "if I concern myself with the cost of running any of my vehicles it's time to sell them all and start using the OPAL CARD!!"

The vehicle handles well... the whole front end was renewed in 2024.

Top speed of the vehicle is as yet not known but there is plenty of power with a 350 Chev!

And don't you just love the interior....bucket seats, centre console, and the beautiful steering wheel and door trims!



Being a member of the Chrysler restorers club therefore gives Paul access to parts in Australia and America.

At the present time he is aware of 7 Wayfarers. ...interestingly only 1205 Chrysler Wayfarers were manufactured in South Australia at the Chrysler Plant!

The car was on full rego from 1992 to March 2025, and has now been placed on historical plates from 3/3/2025 with My CAR CLUB.

Janet and Paul have attended 8 Chrysler National Rallies and travelled to many states:

Geelong Vic

Mt Isa Qld

Broken Hill

Renmark SA,

Uluru Northern Territory

Cooper Pedy SA

Wangaratta NSW

Brisbane and Gold Coast numerous times

The car has won many awards in the Best Commercial Category, most desirable etc....too many to mention

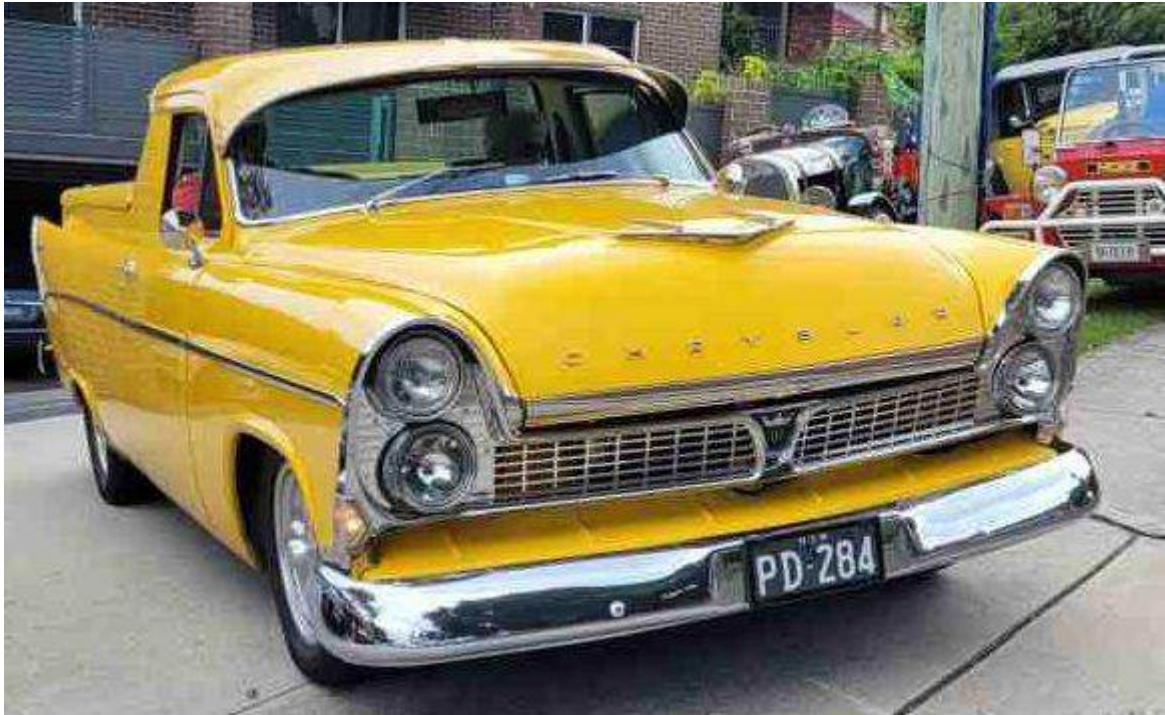
The Wayfarer shares its spot in the garage with some very desirable units:

Mercedes 2002 SL 500 1973 280 CE Mercedes ML 350 CDI Mercedes CLS 350

But they are other stories!

Thanks for the information, Paul

Phil Gordon.



Mopar Magic.

