

# VOLKSWORD

April 2021



**Racing, at long last, into 2021**



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# From the prez...



Greetings Fellow VeeDubbers,

Getting back into the routine of attending meetings (let alone remembering when they are actually on) is proving quite a challenge. Incredibly, I've managed to attend the first two this year, so that is a good start.

**Our next meeting is on Wednesday April 7th** and will be our AGM. At the AGM all current committee members will stand down and then the process of voting in a new committee begins. Sadly, our two main protagonists, Denise and Hardy Sorenson, who kept the club running so well during the upheaval in 2020, are taking a well-deserved break and will not be re-nominating for secretary and treasurer.

On behalf of all club members, I extend a heartfelt thanks and appreciation for everything they have both done through the terms of their positions for the VWDCQ. The roles of secretary and treasurer have certain demands and expectations, and Denise and Hardy assumed these responsibilities with professionalism, dedication and care. Thank you both again.

Of course, this means the club needs fresh faces to fill the roles, plus other positions within the committee. The club can only continue with all positions filled, and with healthy membership numbers, I am hoping this will be easy to achieve. While the roles do involve some work, it is the committee as a whole that bands together to help, so no one person is expected to carry the load.

Here's looking forward to some excellent club activities and gatherings for 2021 (including re-birthing the entertaining tech sessions at each meeting).

Cheers

**Craig Hughes**

# First meet up in, well, ages!

Thanks to the pandemic we had to cancel pretty much everything, including Action Day 2020 (and who knows about 2020!) But we grabbed a chance in a recent no-lockdown period to meet for a picnic at the Wynnum foreshore park where Action Day is staged. It was great to see so many members, and since the event was promoted on our Facebook page, we had some some visitors and drive-bys with VWs we've not seen before. Thanks to all who came, as it reminds us we are a club that meets, not just posts stuff to social media. Here are a few scenes from the day.













# The most stylish VW ever made

It's surely the best-looking VW ever built. It draws eyes wherever it's seen, commands very high prices, and delivers Italian sports car looks without the mechanical fragility. The VW Karmann Ghia is a classic.

The first Karmann-Ghia was developed in 1954, introduced in Europe in 1955 and arrived in America (it's biggest, and intended, market) as a coupe in 1956. The convertible soon followed in 1958. It cost \$300 to \$400 more than the coupe, but was sportier to convertible-loving Americans, for whom it initially was built.





The first Karmann-Ghia enhanced Volkswagen's image when the Beetle was fairly new to the world market in the mid-1950s. Each one built reminded Beetle buyers that Volkswagen could make a dashing, solidly built car with the Beetle's famed quality and reliability.

It couldn't be any other way, because the Karmann-Ghia was a Beetle under its sleek body, with the same simple rear-mounted, dependable, air-cooled engine, chassis and other mechanical components.

Even the nicely padded convertible top with its glass (not plastic) rear window was easy to use, especially when compared to troublesome soft tops of popular British sports cars sold in the 1950s and 1960s.

The Karmann-Ghia had a sportier dashboard than the Beetle's, and wide, highly padded adjustable front seats that made Beetle seats look cheap. But, after all, the Karmann-Ghia initially cost (in most countries) a third more than the Beetle and was expensive by Volkswagen's 1950s standards.



Volkswagen never called the Karmann-Ghia a sports car, although its tight fold-down back seat essentially made it a two-seater.

One clever VW advertisement from the era pictured it with racing stripes that made it look ready for the track. "You'd lose," said the advertisement's tag line.

At first, the Karmann-Ghia just had the first Beetle's fuel-slingy 1200cc 36-horsepower four-cylinder engine. But acceleration was acceptable because the car only weighed approximately 770kg, or about 66kg more than the Beetle.

The Karmann-Ghia was 7cm longer than the Beetle and nearly 18cm lower, although front headroom was good. Its low-slung body helped it handle better and made it more resistant to crosswinds than the slab-sided Beetle, although it had the Beetle's excellent traction.

The Karmann-Ghia's aerodynamic body let it reach almost 130kmh, which was acceptable because most countries' high-speed interstate highways weren't in existence during much of its life.



The Karmann-Ghia's styling was from Italy's famous Ghia studios, which worked on exotic Italian sports cars. It's apparently not clear who did the Karmann-Ghia's actual styling work. But strong styling influences were from American Virgil Exner, who created Chrysler's sensational 1955 "Forward Look" styling, and Italian Mario Boano. Ghia styling director Luigi Segre, who helped promote the Karmann-Ghia project, combined their ideas with the work of other Ghia personnel.

Ghia, also called Carrozzeria Ghia SpA, is a famous Italian automobile design and coachbuilding firm. The company was established in 1915 in Turin by Giacinto Ghia and Gariglio as Carrozzeria Ghia & Gariglio. The company initially made lightweight aluminium-bodied cars, achieving fame with the Alfa Romeo 6C 1500, which won the Mille Miglia in 1929.

The Karmann-Ghia had a specially crafted body from the respected Karmann coachworks, which was making excellent Beetle convertibles in the early 1950s. Karmanns saw a car such as the Karmann-Ghia as a way to make more money.

Chassis side rails were widened to handle the four-inch-wider Karmann-Ghia body. A front anti-sway bar was added for better handling, and there were different springs and shock absorbers.

Beetles without bodies were shipped from Volkswagen's main plant to Karmann's facilities, where Karmann-Ghia bodies were made, painted, trimmed and put in Volkswagen's distribution system.

That process wasn't easy. The complex Karmann-Ghia body called for many internal pressings to be welded together and to the main panels. Almost hand-construction methods were required. They included filling, filing and sanding all seams before painting. This "one-piece" body helped make the car look great, but led to expensive repairs if a body panel needed replacement (and the use of triple skinning in places makes rust repairs a very exacting job).

Beetle sales were climbing so rapidly that Volkswagen did little to promote the Karmann-Ghia until 1961, when it got 40 horsepower. After that, the car just kept getting better in small ways because it received the mechanical changes that improved the Beetle.



Front disc brakes were added in 1965, and a semi-automatic transmission was made available for 1968. Horsepower climbed to 53 in 1967, and the car could hit 150kmh by 1972 with its larger 1.6-litre, 60-horsepower four-cylinder.

The Karmann-Ghia's main attractions, though, were its sporty appearance and quality, not its performance. Still, it was fun to drive and could keep up with traffic. Its basic outline never changed – a reflection of how on target the original design was. Volkswagen built a second Ghia model, the Type 34, based on the platform of the 1600 sedan, but it enjoyed much less favour, and never made it to the US, the target market of the original.

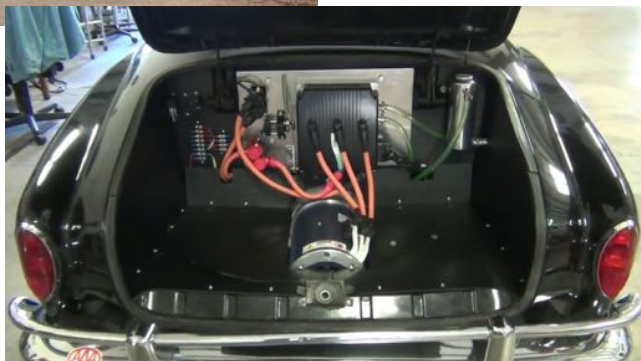
The Karmann Ghia's great looks made for a fairly good selling car, totaling over 10,000 the first year. When the convertible came out a couple of years later in 1958, sales jumped to around 18,000 cars per year. Sales climbed steadily until the late 1960's when they peaked around 33,000 cars a year.

The VW Karmann Ghia was last produced in 1974 to make way for the new VW Scirocco. Only 365,912 coupes and 79,326 convertibles were produced, which make the Karmann Ghia a fairly rare car considering it was produced for nearly 20 years. Of that total, a substantial 279,000 were sold in the USA.



In Australia today, Karmann-Ghia values continue to climb. Rough ones start at \$15-20,000, good useable drivers are around \$35,000, restored originals are \$50,000 and more, while 'restomods', customs and the fast emerging electric motor restorations are fetching way beyond that. Makes you wish you'd bought one years ago, but maybe they were never really cheap. There's always been something special about them.









### You'd lose.

The only-looking car in the prize world  
back in 1964, Karmann Ghia was a Volkswagen.  
Because it was a Volkswagen. Inside.  
Outside it's a Karmann Ghia.  
A Karmann Ghia was a really winning car.  
Through it's a 1964-1965 Karmann Ghia.  
Its lines are too sculptured for mass  
production.

The Karmann Ghia, for instance, has to be  
forced in three sections.  
Each section is welded together. They  
ground down, flattened, and then  
they're bent into shape. That's why it's a  
Karmann Ghia.  
Some Karmann Ghia, some Karmann  
Ghia. Which means some reliability, some

reliability.  
Volkswagen  
Ghia



## Start it up and it turns into a Volkswagen.

## Deep down inside, it's a Volkswagen.



**Karmann Ghia**

Twist the key of the Karmann Ghia, and all kinds of  
wonderful things happen.

For one thing, the motor starts.

Don't laugh, a lot of other conventional engines might  
not. Especially on a miserably cold winter morning.

The reason the Ghia won't start is because it's got  
one of those air-cooled Volkswagen engines in the back.

Drive a Ghia for a while, and your gas and oil bills  
will fall into that economical Volkswagen tradition. They  
will take you some 41,000 miles Volkswagen style.

You'll get that remarkable Volkswagen traction. The  
easy availability of Volkswagen parts. The reasonably  
priced Volkswagen service.

Gifts for everything else Volkswagen.

But there is one thing that's a far cry from our bee-  
f-necked job: the Karmann Ghia's beautiful Italian-designed  
body.

So you can start it up, turn into a little bug,  
and nobody will know you're undergoing a  
metamorphosis. Except you.



**When you have too much  
time on your hands...**



# Club merchandise for sale!



**Sizes S to XXL**

**\$55**



**Members \$5 a  
set, non-  
members  
\$7.50 a set**

**They fit  
standard plates**



# For sale, swap, wanted or donate

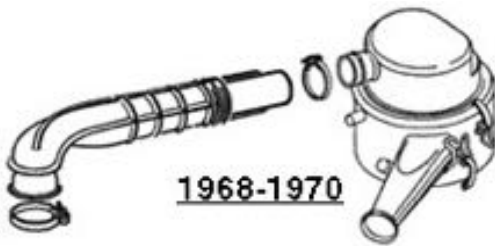
Wally has 4 x 15 inch Mercedes steel wheels, Kombi pattern. The tyres are 205-65-15. Contact Wally on 0412 154 500.

Hardy is thinking of selling his 1986 944 Porsche. You can contact him on 0437 433 939.

## Wanted to buy

Anita is simplifying her Karmann Ghia's induction system back to something like factory stock (the electric motor conversion can come later ☺). She is looking for a good Solex 34 PICT3 carburettor, and a side-mounted air cleaner set that would look like the pics below (bottom one is a K-G, upper one a late '60s Kombi).

Contact her on 0429 509 900



# Club committee 2021

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Craig Hughes

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Wally Penboss 0412 154 500

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