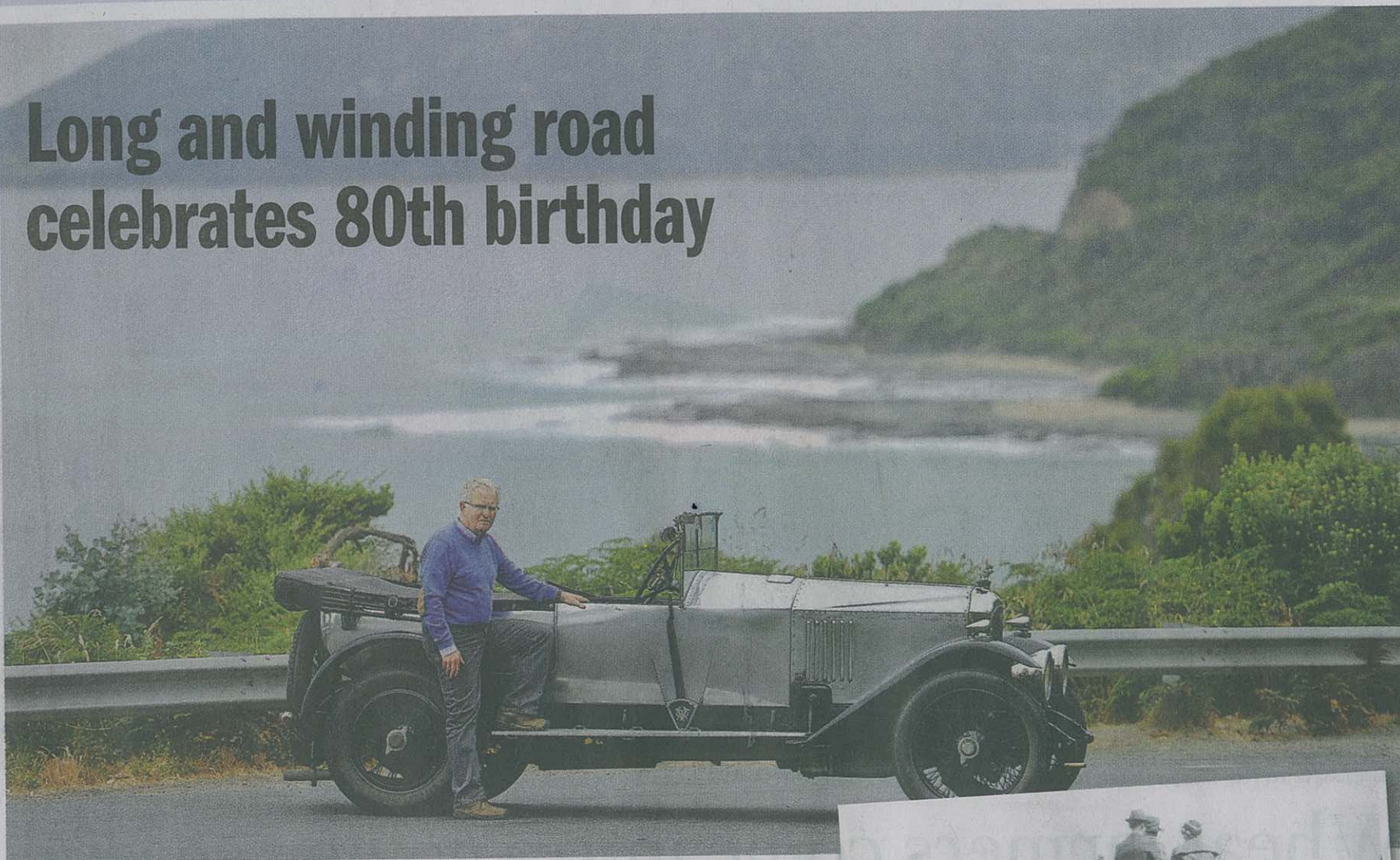


MILESTONE *'It's Bonnie and Clyde style . . . minus the tommy gun'*

## Long and winding road celebrates 80th birthday



BY ROBERT UPE

**STEVE Heard is taking a spin to the beach today along the Great Ocean Road. He won't be wearing boardies or thongs but will be in gangster gear.**

"It's Bonnie and Clyde style," he said. "With a hat, but minus the tommy gun. I thought if I hop out of the car with a gun the locals may not like it too much, especially the cops."

Mr Heard will be behind the wheel of a 1928 Essex Tourer, part of a motorcade of 50 vintage cars on a five-day trek from Melbourne to Port Fairy to celebrate the 80th anniversary of the Great Ocean Road on Monday. Many of the drivers will be in period costume, including top hats.

It was on November 26, 1932, that a ribbon was cut outside Lorne's Grand Pacific Hotel to open the road after a 13-year construction that employed 3000 World War I returned servicemen working with dynamite, picks and shovels.

The vintage cars will stop at

the hotel again on Monday for a re-enactment of the opening ceremony, recently found at the National Film and Sound Archive, will also be unveiled.

Mr Heard's Essex Tourer is similar to a car that belonged to his grandfather, Charlie, who was the first mailman along the road and the toll-gate operator.

Mr Heard said Charlie is also credited with the longest taxi ride in the world with a 1930 journey from Lorne to Darwin.

"You have to remember in those days there were no roads to speak of when you left the capital cities, so he navigated by compass."

Other rare cars in the \$16 million convoy include a 1924 Vauxhall 30/98, a 1908 Isotta Fraschini and a 1921 Ballot.

The Great Ocean Road is 312 kilometres long and officially gazetted from Torquay to Peterborough, according to the executive director of Geelong Otway Tourism, Roger Grant.



**AirLink iPad**

Focus on Peter Latreille to watch recently found old footage of the Great Ocean Road.

It is one of Victoria's biggest tourist attractions with 7.2 million visitors a year and an annual economic value of \$1 billion from tourism. By 2030, it is predicted the road could have as many as 10.5 million visitors a year.

Mr Grant said the road needs new "quality" tourist facilities to keep pace with its popularity.

Mr Grant said some work is also needed on the road. "It has to be brought up to showcase standard and we need to address issues such as drainage and rock falls.

"The shoulders of the road need to be expanded in recognition that there will be increased cycling. But we don't want an



**ABOVE: Horse-drawn travel before the road's construction; TOP: Peter Latreille with his vintage car on the Great Ocean Road.** PICTURE: PAT SCALA

autobahn down there. The last thing we want to do is take away the thing that makes the road so fabulous."

Mr Grant said the history of the road is colourful. "There was a toll for the first six years and drivers would try to sneak down to the beach to avoid it," he said. "And there was a time when a sailing ship ran aground and its cargo of whisky came ashore. It

stopped construction on the road for a week."

Lorne local Doug Stirling, 90, was at the original opening ceremony and will attend again on Monday. "People were thrilled [when the road opened] that they could get their morning paper by 10am."

Today's motorcade will leave from the Shrine of Remembrance at 9.30am.