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RECREATIONAL VEHICLES, A WORLD HISTORY 1872-1939

It has often been said that the more things change the more they stay the same. This observation is reinforced by even a quick scan through the newly released book, *Recreational Vehicles, A World History 1872-1939*.

Written by Australian resident, Andrew Woodmansey, this beautifully printed and packaged 240-page tour de force requires no fuel-thirsty tow vehicle or long transport stages to enjoy, only a comfortable chair and a willingness to let your fancy be tickled by the inventiveness or daring of those who came before us in seeking to enjoy the outside world in comfort.

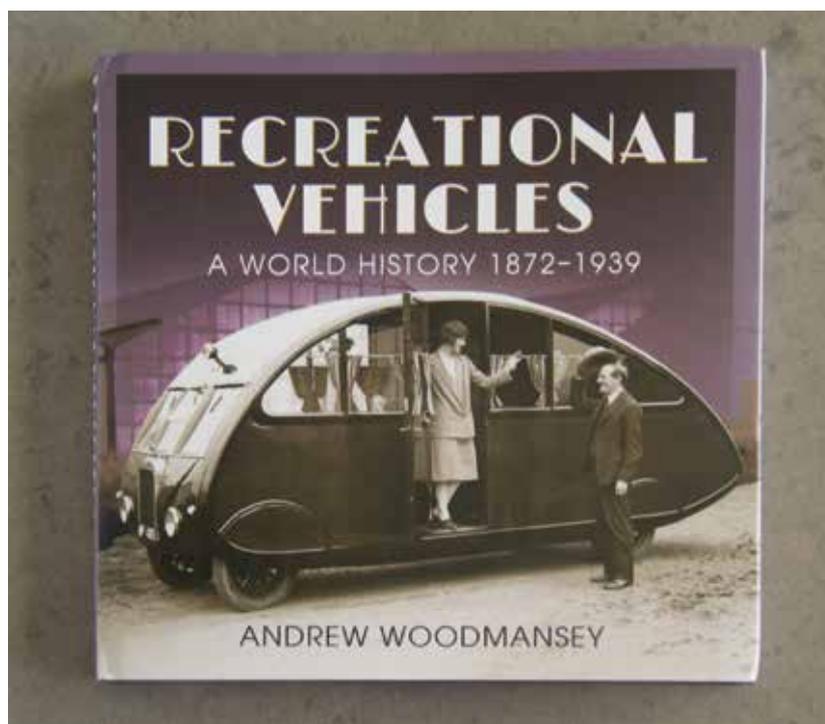
You can't help but be amazed by the often peculiar and creative attempts to blend the fashion of the day with the practical needs of touring the roadways, especially by those who had no paradigms on which to draw. This is the raw history of invention, creation and brave attempts to match the desire to travel with a degree of comfort at a time when most roads were gravel and the world was a much larger place. These inventive individuals seem to have come up with their own unique versions of so many recreational vehicles that we know and love today.

There are the first roof-top tents, rear-fold camper trailers, vehicle side-awnings, end verandah extensions (as seen on some Royal Flair vans in recent years), pop-up roofs, fifth-wheel towing arrangements, an extendable body in a unique French van that makes the Ultimate Nautilus look puny, double side-fold campers (as seen in WA's Camprite campers, and several Chinese campers) and the usual exaggerated claims for set-up and pack-up times. Keep in mind this is all pre-1939, which is all part of the unique charm of this book.

But among the many hundreds of images are those including experimental ideas which never seem to have caught on — usually with good reason — like a tail fin on your van, or suspension outboard of the wheels (how you ever swapped out a flat tyre is not explained), double storey vans and a van which looked more like a Zeppelin than a camper.

There's a Leyland motorhome from the UK in 1933 that looks remarkably like one of the NSW Government buses of the 1950s and 60s.

There are chapters covering the origins of the recreational vehicle from as early as the 1870s; RVs in the UK, France and Belgium, the



USA, Germany, Australia, and New Zealand; special purpose coaches, caravans and motorhomes; and patents on RV design. In this latter we see an original concept for the A-Van caravans. There has obviously been an awful lot of research in this book, calling on resources from around the world.

The author, Andrew Woodmansey, is himself a keen traveller with his own camper trailer and the author of *The Caravan Buyers Guide*. Born in the UK, he now resides in Sydney. While this isn't a cheap purchase, with a recommended retail of \$85, it is a great coffee table book and would make an excellent gift for that keen RVer in your life who has pretty

much everything else he could want and will provide many hours of reading that will be both educational and frequently surprising.

Recreational Vehicles: A World History 1872-1939 is published by Pen & Sword Books, ISBN 978 1 52679 245 7.

MORE INFO

RRP: \$85

W: booktopia.com.au/recreational-vehicles-andrew-woodmansey/book/9781526792457.html