

GILBERT'S MOTOR MUSEUM

34 High Street, Strathalbyn SA

Another good reason to visit
Strathalbyn!



Many of the world's Motor Museums benefit from the efforts of volunteers to help with the care and maintenance of the displays. There are not many that have been developed from an empty 100 year old building and maintained as a significant local attraction without any paid staff.



Gilbert's Garage as it looked in the mid-1930s

The township of Strathalbyn was first established in support of the new farming community in the 1840's. In the early days of the 20th century (1902) the Gilbert family established a business in High Street, making bicycles which progressively grew to include sales and servicing of new and used cars and agricultural equipment. As the business evolved, the original building was renovated and expanded. Neighboring premises were also purchased over the years to acquire more land space to fulfil the business' needs. The family ran their business from the site until 2018, when the difficult decision was made to close and leave Strathalbyn, after 116 years - leaving an historical site in High Street with an unforeseen future.

The Strathalbyn Tourism Association (STA), a non-profit, volunteer group who promote the town and its attractions and events, saw the premises' potential. With the agreement of the Gilbert family and the STA, several enthusiasts developed a proposal for a Motor Museum on the former Gilbert Motors, showroom and garage site.

Local sponsors, including the Gilbert family, have made generous donations to get the project underway and provide ongoing support. The work required to repurpose the old mechanical workshop, storerooms, sheds and showroom was substantial and included cleaning, lining walls, plastering and painting. All of this was undertaken by volunteers from the community and with the assistance of local tradespeople. Almost 20,000 volunteer hours have been 'donated' to the cause to date (as at Feb 2022).

The original showroom and workshops comprising about 1200 sqm have been repurposed as galleries to provide an ideal base for the Museum vehicle and automobilia displays. The spare parts store now houses the substantial Glen Dix library and his lifetime memorabilia collections. The remainder of the premises includes offices and staff facilities.

All of the museum exhibits have either been donated or are on loan. There are about 80 vehicles including veteran, vintage and classic cars, motorcycles and motor sports vehicles on show, and include some that were originally sold new from the premises up to 90 years ago. A number of the vehicles are of state or national significance, but they all have a story to tell. We have friendly guides available to enhance your experience if you wish.

Highlights of the permanent collections include the Ken Blake and Glen Dix displays and those from the South Australian Vintage Speedcar Association Inc (Rowley Park) and the Angas Go-Kart Club. The Gilbert's Motor Museum does not own any vehicles and those on loan are changed regularly, so that no two visits will be the same. Period themed displays are a characteristic of our collections.

Despite the fact that our opening coincided with the start of the Covid Pandemic, Gilbert's Motor Museum welcomed its 10,000th visitor in mid-February 2022. It has won several local and state awards and recognition, and the STA and volunteers have plans for further expansion.

With low operating costs, low entry fees, an enthusiastic volunteer staff and generous sponsors and people willing to loan cars and bikes, the Museum is undoubtedly going to continue to grow the building's already long history.

If you are a motoring enthusiast, make it your business to visit the Gilberts Motor Museum this year and bring your family and friends you will not be disappointed!



Gilbert's Motor Museum – October 2021



A small taste of what's inside - the old workshop area – August 2021