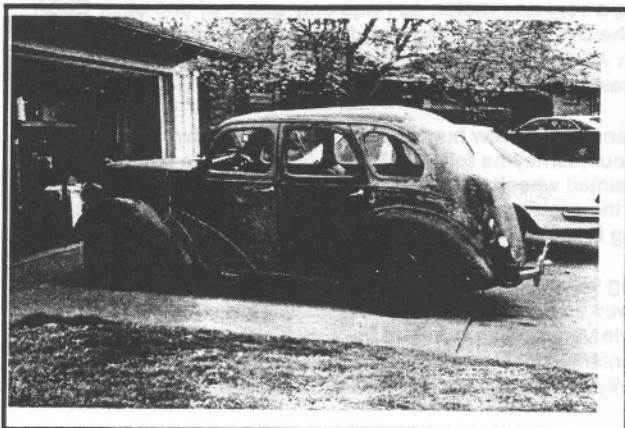


# They came out of the Woodwork

By Bill Ballard



The Dagenham built, left-hand drive export model E93A Prefect that Steve Hodkinson found near his home in Oklahoma City, USA, which has an extended boot similar to that on Australian models.

Photo: Steve Hodkinson

There is an international flavour to my feature this time, and I begin with a 'find' in the U.S.A., which has all the experts puzzled...

Our Club swaps newsletters with the North American English Ford Registry and some time ago I spotted an item in their newsletter relating to a new member of theirs with an E93A Prefect who turns out to live just a mile or so away from Steve Hodkinson in Oklahoma City. I sent Steve on a mission and he duly returned with information about the car and some really good photos of it. We're truly grateful to you for your good work Steve!

With its extended boot the car in question, at first glance, appears to be an Australian built A53A Prefect. However, such cars had the rear number plate mounted in the bottom right-hand corner of the enlarged boot lid, and the right-hand side of the rear panel was specially moulded to form the base of the number plate light/brake light cluster. The American car does not have these features; instead, it has a matching pair of plastic brake lights mounted either side of the car, and its number plate is mounted on the post-war-type rear bumper.

The more observant reader will also see from the accompanying photograph that the interior of the boot is of a different design to English and Australian-built sedans, resulting in the spare wheel being stowed inside the boot, taking up valuable space. On English-built cars, the spare wheel was kept in a locker beneath the higher, wooden floor of the boot and accessed via an external locker lid; on Australian-built cars you fully opened the enlarged boot lid and accessed the spare wheel from its stowage space between the upper and lower floors of the boot.

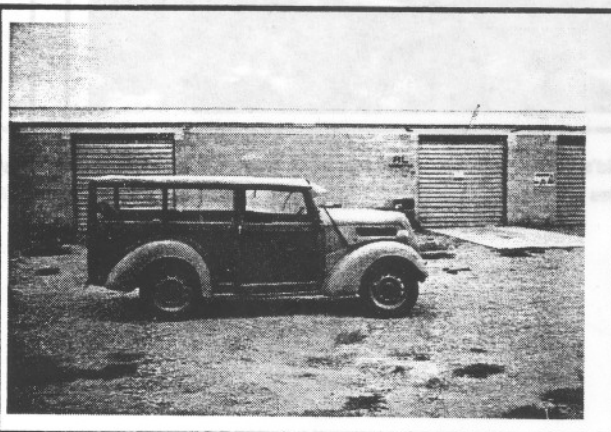
So who made this mystery car? There is no doubt about that! It was obviously made at Dagenham, as there is a Briggs Body Number tag attached to the top of the bulkhead in the usual position, and it reads "620D/1384". There is also the typical square plate, printed, "A Ford Product - Made in England", fastened to the bulkhead, which has the Engine Number (C356528) and Model Number (E93AF/A) stamped on it. Together these identify the car as a 1948 built, export (left-hand drive) model E93A Prefect. Incidentally the car has another English Feature; a fabric roof!

And that extended boot? From Steve's photos, there is no doubt that this was on the car from new, and I am satisfied it is not a more recent addition by a customiser. Perhaps this mystery car was built as a prototype for the Aussie-built A53A Prefects?

Can anyone out there enlighten us?

The second vehicle to come to light recently is a unique "woodie"...

The dust had hardly settled on a very successful "Ally Pally" show the day before and I was feeling rather chuffed with myself as, having spoken to members Julian Pennell and Chris Sanders at the show, I thought I was well on the way to solving the mystery of who actually built Julian's E93A Prefect 'Brakenvan' shooting brake (that's another story, to be recounted sometime!). Then in one of those remarkable twists of fate, in the post on the Monday morning came a welcome letter from Geof Neill, my correspondent in Western Australia. It contained a photograph of an unusual 103E Popular 'woodie' he'd discovered in New Zealand. As can be seen from Geof's photo this 'woodie' had coachwork which had a much lower roof profile than the 'Brakenvan' and had only one door on each side. In fact it was of a design I have never seen before. Yet another mystery to solve! Can anyone out there help?



The third, and last vehicle to be featured this time is - yes! - another unique 'woodie'

With two 'woodie' mysteries 'on the go' simultaneously I though I'd got my fair share of things when around midday on 27 March, the phone rang and it was this guy from Queensland, Australia who had discovered an E93A Prefect-style 'woodie' and wanted some information about it. From magazine cutting in his possession, he though it was a 'Brakenvan' shooting brake, and from the way he described it to me, it cer-

The New Zealand 'woodie', which has a chassis number C825583 and body number 103E-84/895, identifying it as a late 1954 model 103E Popular

tainly seemed that it could be such a vehicle. So how did it come to be 'down under'? Was it shipped out in c.k.d? form or was it built locally ( i.e. in Australia) to a pattern supplied by the licensees of the 'Brakenvan' design ? These were questions I was not prepared to answer until I had actually seen the vehicle ( or a photograph of it). Within a couple of weeks, I would be on my way to Australia and the 'National Rally' in Griffith, New South Wales, where I could arrange to meet the enquired, Brian Shields from Brisbane. I simply told Brian that whatever the origins of his 'find', it was a very rare motor, as I was only aware of one other E93A Prefect 'shooting brake' – Julian's splendid car – and that was here in the U.K. I commented that, from the description of its condition he had given me, I believed that if it were being sold for less than A\$ 5,000, it would be a bargain. To assist Brian properly identify the car, I sent him some photos and copies of everything I possessed about 'Brakenvans'.

To my surprise and delight, Brian decided to buy the mystery 'woodie' and, after a few hurried days making it roadworthy and registering it, actually brought it down from Queensland to Griffith ( a 20 hour journey he told me) from the 'National'. As soon as I saw this Prefect shooting brake, with re-painted steel bodywork and blue painted wheels ( the woodwork being in the usual varnished finish), roll into the car park of the Griffith Motor Inn ( rally HQ) early on the evening of the 23 April, I knew it was Brian and furthermore, I knew his acquisition wasn't a 'Brakenvan' but a another shooting brake of unknown origin!

Examination of the bulkhead and front chassis rails of Brian's interesting vehicle revealed that it's original Engine No./Chassis No. was C382317 and its body number was '53A85/13' confirming that it was an A53A Prefect ( an Australian-built model base upon the post-war English E93A Prefect). Its wooden bodywork was of a style very similar to that of the E494C 'woodie' in Ford's possession at Dagenham ( and I don't know who built that either!) Brian confirmed that it was not originally painted red ( he believes it was beige when new) and admitted that the blue wheels were temporarily borrowed from his A493A Prefect sedan (under restoration) to get it through a roadworthiness test !

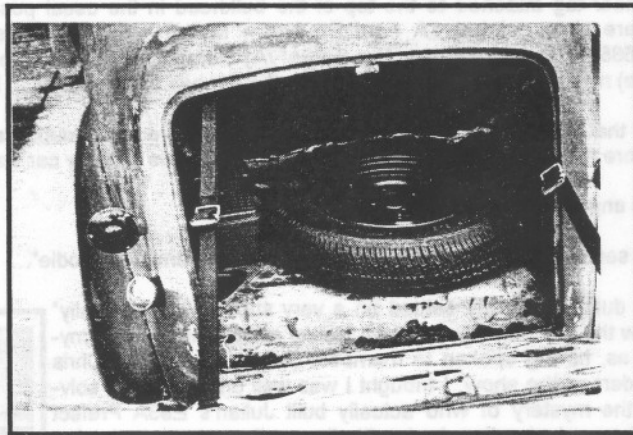
Incidentally, Brian's car also introduced something else new to me: the '85' part of the body number on his car! I used to seeing the likes of '73' ( sedan)( and '75 (tourer) as part of the body number, but not '85', which I can only assume represents a 'chassis/scuttle assemble in the factory for bodying elsewhere'.

So now I have three shooting brake mysteries to solve!



Brian Shield's 1948 A53A Prefect 'woodie' at Pineoer Park, Griffith, New South Wales on 25 April 1999.

Photo: Bill Ballard



Rear view of the North American Prefect, showing the unusual layout of the floor in the boot ( or trunk to our US colleagues)

Photo: Steve Hodgkinson