

*Across Australia by Motor Car - by Francis Birtles
In The Lone Hand July 1 1912*

The next six days travelling were uneventful. After leaving Eucla we climbed up limestone cliffs, and soon after crossed the border into South Australia. Later we passed through a vermin fence..... to prevent dingoes and rabbits invading the coastal country.

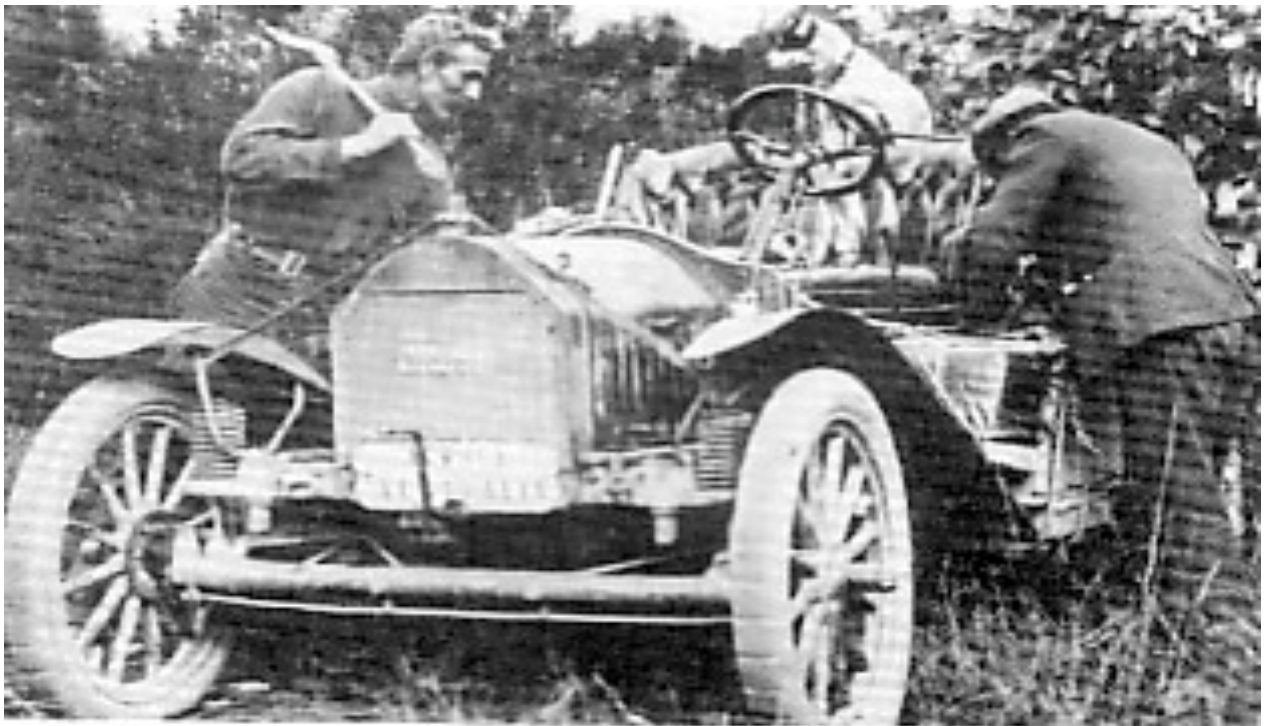
On April 3 we were following the route of the overland telegraph. Hundreds of cockatoos were perched on the wires, some upside down, screeching.

Next day we were battling through heavy sand-hills and had to repeatedly cut a track through the scrub and mulga.

On Good Friday we dined on turkey and washed our only trousers in a rock-hole the size and shape of a bucket.

Next day we were climbing up and down the Gawler Ranges and on Easter Sunday arrived at Port Augusta, the eastern port of the transcontinental railway scheme....it is becoming an important town and is backed up by some splendid wheat growing lands.

Vessels of the deepest draught berth right alongside its wharves.



L to R – Frank, Rex and Syd and the 1910 Brush

LEGEND – It is said that they suffered an engine bearing failure near the SA border – (possibly the big-end) and Syd, to Birtles' alarm, made a replacement bearing out of a piece of the bike frame – and they were able to carry on.

Director's comment – this legend has been repeated by several writers and in my opinion if it is correct then Syd is not only a hero but also a miracle worker.