The book is like a family album, with the cars as stars in loving depictions of Holdens at work and play." – Deborah Bogle, Adelaide Advertiser, on Me and My Holden.

Don Loffler has now written five outstanding books on Australia's Own Holden. Unlike many motoring enthusiasts, Loffler's interest in the cars comprises a deeper interest in Australian social and cultural history. For the first time, he looks at models made between 1956 and 1967 and explains why photos of the early cars still predominate: "I do not think it is due to the fact that this is my first venture into territory beyond those first two models, but that it is rather explained by the fact that after the FJ, the novelty of acquiring a car became less dramatic. Consequently, people tended to photograph their new cars less often." The photos may be worth many thousands of words but how telling the words are, too: "Vic and Ad's graduation from a four-cylinder Singer SM 1500 to an up-market V8 Customline typified the growing prosperity of farmers in the district in the 1950s." If Holden Days was all in pictures with brief captions, it would still be a book to cherish, but Don Loffler uses individual memories to create a rich social history of Australia from 1948 right through until now as Holden owners relive their stories.'

Dr John M. Wright (PhD), eminent Australian motoring journalist and author of landmark Holden history, Heart of the Lion, and the ground-breaking research book, Special: The untold story of Australia's Holden.

"You've really surpassed yourself this time. The book [Me and My Holden] is the nicest bloody thing I've received in my life. It's a work of art! I think you deserve an AM for this – for preserving Australia's history." – P.P-N

This fifth Holden book by Don Loffler is a new initiative. It extends beyond the first two Holden series, the 48-215 'FX' and the FJ, and comprises a chapter on each of the first 10 Holden series, finishing with the 1966 HR. It is amazing that, although Don has already published over 1000 different photographs of FX and FJ Holdens in his four books, he has tracked down another 100 new images for this book in addition. 100 photographs covering the HR to FX chapters. All images are from the era in which the cars were in their heyday.

While the research and search for the images has consumed considerable time and effort, the results have brought the handsome records of many new friendships and contacts, and are a welcome addition to the book. "I hope you found the time and energy for this book in your retirement," Dr Wright said. "It's going to do you many thousands of words but have telling the words, too." Is it and AM graduation from a House of Representatives speaker in an incredible undertaking. Dr Wright replied the growing prosperity of farmers in the district in the 1950s. "Holden Days will be in pictures with brief captions, it would still be a book of a lifetime, but Don Loffler has added immeasurably to create a rich social history of Australia from 1948 right through until now as Holden owners relive their stories.'


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The Liersch family is typical of many Australian families, who over the years became devoted Holden owners. Here, Hartley Liersch is standing next to the HD sedan he had just bought second-hand in 1969, and his son John is next to the family’s beloved FJ, which was about to be sold. ‘I still grieve over the thought of that,’ says John. His sentiment is echoed by many Australians, who became so strongly attached to the first Holden they owned that it was with some sorrow that they traded the vehicle in on a later, or the latest, version. The blow was softened, however, by the marked improvements they enjoyed in the replacement vehicle. John Liersch
By the same author

She’s a Beauty!
Still Holden Together
The FJ Holden
Me and My Holden
HOLDEN Days

DON LOFFLER

FROM THE ORIGINAL 48-215 ‘FX’ TO THE 1966 HR
PREVIOUS PAGE: This picture of Peter Heuzenroeder’s 48–215, the original Holden series, standing beside his father’s brand new HR utility, the 10th series, reflects the scope of Holdens featured in this book. It also illustrates the advance in Holden styling over the period from 1948 to 1966. Peter Heuzenroeder

OPPOSITE: A publicity photograph for the 1960 FB station sedan, with the underlying message that the Holden is truly Australian. GM Holden Ltd

FOLLOWING PAGE: A 1963 EH Special station sedan in a typically Australian spring setting. GM Holden Ltd
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INTRODUCTION

This volume might be seen as a nostalgia book. It certainly is that, but it is more. It is also an archival production, documenting an era very different from that of today. The brochure pictures, photographs and colour slides, featuring the first 10 Holden series, capture something of the lifestyle of Australians from the late 1940s through to the 1970s.

As you page through the chapters, you will notice how colour photography increasingly replaced the longstanding black-and-white era. While that change was a welcome one, the long-term ramifications are serious. At the time, people took hundreds, if not thousands, of slides, and stored them in boxes, often without any labelling, far less documentation of individual slides within those boxes.

Over the years, many slide collections have been thrown out because families cannot face the daunting task of making their way tediously though them, mostly without the aid of projectors or viewers, to see if they can find anything of special interest. Within a decade or two, an era of colour photography will be largely lost.

I am therefore greatly appreciative of the people who have spent hours locating slides to lend me for possible inclusion in this book. Some wonderful treasures have come to light, with significant historical value, a wide range of appeal and a strong element of nostalgia. My only regrets are that I have not been able to include all the suitable pictures that were offered to me, and that some people’s searches turned up nothing that I could use.

My introductions to the chapters are highly subjective and may cause debate and disagreement, but that does not worry me, because I am recording my own personal reactions from my late teens and early 20s, when each new Holden series appeared on the market. My hope is that, regardless, readers will enjoy the photographs and the occasional story from an era very different from the one in which we now live.

Don Laffler
Adelaide 2012
What memories this picture brings back! When I married Lois Wilksch (now my late wife) in 1968, my father’s immaculate, white, 1966 HR Special sedan was the bridal car. Dad spent many hours returning the car to showroom condition, if not better. ‘She’s shining like a new pin,’ he said proudly. This is one of the black-and-white photographs taken on the day. Many colour slides were taken by family and friends, but unfortunately none provide any views of my father’s HR next to my uncle’s identical white HR, which was the bridesmaid’s car.

Don Loffler
1948–1953

NEAT, STUDY, RELIABLE

48–215 sedan – November 1948 to October 1953
50–2106 utility – January 1951 to October 1953

All commonly known as the FX Holdens
OPPOSITE: The front and back covers of the original sales brochure for the Holden sedan.  GM Holden Ltd

ABOVE: Image from the first sales brochure for the Holden utility.  GM Holden Ltd

RIGHT: Image from the second sales brochure for the Holden sedan, showing how the original carpet in the front compartment had been replaced by a more serviceable rubber mat.
GM Holden Ltd
THE HOLDEN TAXI

WITH 12 SPECIAL FEATURES

for Taxi operators

Designed by General Motors-Holden's Ltd. from specifications suggested by Taxi owners.
The first Holden Business sedan and Taxi sedan models were released in mid 1953, a few months before the arrival of the FJ. The brochures for these models were almost identical because the only difference between the two was that the Business sedan had heavy duty springs, whereas the taxi had standard springs. For the FJ model, the Taxi version was deleted.
I well remember the many old-fashioned cars on Australian roads in late 1948 because my family was driving one of them – a 1928 canvas-topped Chevrolet tourer – but it took a photograph like the one opposite to drive home to me the fact that very few Australians at that time enjoyed the luxury of driving a post-World War II car manufactured between 1946 and 1948.

The photograph shows a scene that was replicated the length and breadth of Australia in December 1948, when whole communities gathered in the nearest town with a Holden dealer to have their first look at the newly unveiled Australian car. In this picture there is not a post-war car to be seen. Two of the cars in the photograph are particularly interesting, as the canvas inserts in their roofs show the 1930s transition from a fully canvas roof to one made completely of steel.

No wonder the styling lines of the new Holden looked modern against the backdrop of these cars. The Holden did not even have running boards! What it did have was a boot curving out from the rear end of the body, instead of a suitcase-like appendage grafted vertically onto the rear of the car, or a slanting back with a metal parcel carrier attached, as on some of the 1930s cars.

The Holden’s virtues, however, were more than skin deep. Beneath the bonnet was a six-cylinder engine, which surprised and impressed people with its liveliness and fuel economy. The size of the car was another winning feature, as it was not small and under-powered like the popular English cars, nor was it large and heavy like the American cars of the time, yet there was adequate room for five adults. In addition, the car’s toughness and reliability on Australia’s shocking roads soon won it many friends.

Fortunately for General Motors-Holden’s, thousands of Australians added their names to long waiting lists for the new car. It was an instant success.

GMH supplied dealers with pro forma invitation cards for their previews of the Holden. This invitation for a preview was filled out by Clarice Budarick, wife of George Budarick, the General Motors dealer in the South Australian River Murray township of Mannum.

The Budarick family
ABOVE: The Mannum crowd listens to speeches by George Budarick and the General Motors-Holden’s regional sales representative, Alwin Schulz, who proclaimed the virtues of the touring demonstration Holden.  The Budarick family

LEFT: Alwin Schulz, in suit and hat, and George Budarick pose for photographs, while the men of the town examine the Holden’s engine.  The Budarick family
ABOVE: The Holden is lost in the crowd that gathered in Mannum to see this new Australian car.

RIGHT: Off they go for a test drive, with George Budarick at the wheel. Although the car was only in Mannum for the afternoon of 11 December 1948, about 200 people were taken for test drives, the car at times being crammed with up to eight people.

The Budarick family
A fleet of General Motors-Holden’s demonstration cars toured country districts throughout Australia in December 1948, to ensure that everyone had the opportunity to see a Holden before Christmas that year. This photograph was taken in the Victorian Gippsland town of Yarram, where Stan Gooding was the Holden dealer. The car, which I think may have been one of the touring Holdens, or the dealer’s first display car, was parked on a vacant block in the main street, between the Commercial Hotel (left) and the Bank of New South Wales. Norma Chambers
BOTH PAGES: Cars registered 11–312 and 11–313 were two of the initial batch of eight announcement Holdens, assembled in Melbourne, and shipped to Perth on the Manunda, arriving on 29 November 1948. The photograph of 11–313 (bottom left), on display outside the Perth dealership of the distributor for Western Australia, Sydney Atkinson Motors Ltd, is well known. The pictures of 11–312, however, which became one of the country touring demonstration cars, are published here for the first time, and were taken by Murray Kleemann when the car visited Cranbrook, 88 kilometres north of Albany, in December 1948. Murray’s parents ran Cranbrook Motor Garage, which was a Holden sub-dealership to George Manley’s GMH dealership in Albany. The photograph opposite shows the three leading personalities on that occasion; from left, the driver of the car, a Mr McDonald, from Sydney Atkinson’s; Henry Kleemann, the Cranbrook dealer, and George Manley, the dealer from Albany. Murray Kleemann remembers the great excitement that the arrival of the car created. He was impressed by the thought that this car symbolised a great advance because it had been produced entirely in Australia.

Murray Kleemann – photographs of 11–312
GM Holden – photograph of 11–313