

Motor Vehicle Enthusiasts Club



No 106

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TRANSMISSION

If you find you need more information about this club or just can't wait to join ring Peet Menzies on 0417855222.

GPO Box 911 Darwin 0801
In Katherine call 89710605 .
Newsletter enquiries to Ted
longtelescope@gmail.com



English Mechanic. The first ever do it yourself motor car. Built from articles out of English mechanic magazine. The first was published in 1900. Syd Norman went to great pains to build it faithful to the plans. But that's not the only gem in his shed.

The authors of English mechanic reckoned the idea of the motor car for the average enthusiast as a nifty idea, but did point out that it would never take on as a form of transport as it would never replace the horse.

Syd Norman has one of those sheds that looks just a bit too organised but rest assured this is no sterile environment. Syd has been working on his collection for a long time and has moved his place of abode more than once, so by the time he settled inland from Qld's Gold Coast, he knew what he wanted in a shed and had it built to suit him and his collection. Each vehicle has its own bay with shelves behind to store all that stuff you collect to suit that particular car. And cars aren't just objects in this shed. They all have a name. The first one I met, Midge, wasn't actually a car, but a teardrop caravan.



Midge is short for Midget and the name fits for sure. But Midge is no ordinary run of the mill caravan. If you look on the rego paper the rego number says she is a box trailer, and a small 900 x 1200 one at that. With a bit of ingenuity Syd has built the van to fit over the trailer and instead of just a big bed inside he has split the mattress and with a hatch in the floor open, the bed converts into a lounge with your feet in the bottom of the trailer via the hatch in the floor. He built her in 2012 to tow behind his Morris 8-40, named Morrie, naturally Midge was painted the same colour as Morrie.

Morrie came into Syd's life by chance. He had just managed to lay his hands on a vintage Fiat when a feller remarked "So you're into old cars" (we've all heard this). "There's a car down the road just like this one. Good for a spare parts car" It wasn't much good for parts for a Fiat but it did find its way into Syd's shed. And all the panels and timber are what was delivered new in 1938. The car was built in Melbourne, ordered by an Adelaide gent who was transferred to South Africa during the purchase. He advised the firm selling the vehicle to cancel the order, but they partly disassembled it, and shipped it to Africa where it was completed for him. They painted it cream which makes it a different colour that was available in Australia. During its time over there it also had an altercation with a horse. The scars from that incident are a chrome radiator and headlights, which set it apart from its Australian siblings.

He laid his hands on it in 1976 but it took till 1988 before it was on the road. Since then it has been registered continuously and more recently towed Midge around. Coming back from Tassie on one trip they encountered the odd hot day. One of them was 48 degrees. Syd had fitted a 6V electronic fuel pump which protested at the temperature by giving up the ghost a couple of hours short of getting home. It was still ticking, but seriously slowly. 6volt fuel pumps are not something you can just drop into Repco or Super Cheap and pick up, but in the little van, Midge,

Midge the midget caravan. Those hatches on the side open so you can lift the whole thing off and convert the show into a tiny trailer. Someone told Syd it was a dog box. So Syd obtained a stuffed dog and put up the beware sign.



Even the cushions have been given lots of thought.



Note the towbar on Morrie, for towing Midge.





there was a 12V battery, and with a little bit of bodging up, he got 12v from that battery to the fuel pump. That inspired it to play the game and ticking at a rate closer to normal, he was able to drive the outfit home under its own steam. But even in those severe temperatures Morrie has never overheated. And by the time you read this Morrie and Midge will have been shipped across the Tasman for the Vero Rally plus a few weeks of cruising around NZ. And by the way Morrie had a brief minute of fame appearing in the movie "Australia" That **Fiat** briefly mentioned in Morrie's story, named "Rosa" is a bit unusual being a Holden bodied version. They built 6 of them but only 2 have survived. Syd found it in 1974 being used as a chook shed on a farm in South Australia. Actually bits of it were spread over 3 farms. It wasn't all that flash and it took 26 years to fix it. Syd lived in Adelaide back in those days and was part of the first Bay to Birdwood Run, flagging off the entrants. He remarked that he would be back with the Fiat to be driving in the event. He eventually did come back but it took him till 2009 to get there, even though he had the car running in 2000. It was originally bought by a doctor in Minlaton, SA, but the feller that

Does a Morris look like a Fiat? Someone reckoned they do. Little Morrie engine tows the van no probs.





currently owned it didn't really want to sell it as he had an idea about fixing it up for his nephew to learn to drive in. But he did want to see it restored. Syd suggested he give him the gauges and he would demonstrate his capabilities by restoring them. When Syd brought em back the bloke didn't believe he had fixed them, they looked like new ones. "Check the serial numbers" Syd suggested. That convinced him, but he wasn't going to give the car away "these things are worth a lot of money you know". After 8 hours of talking he decided he might sell it. Then pondered a while on the price but eventually came up with a price of \$35. (1974 dollars) Syd's father in law reckoned Syd got ripped off. But before he left he promised the old gent he would restore it and that he would return and give him a ride in it. And a promise is a promise. But during the years Syd moved states and ended up living in Mackay in Qld. But by 2003 it was time to fulfill the promise and take the car back and give the gent his ride. The problem was how to find him. All he knew was he was in the Minlaton area in SA. Syd contacted the local newspaper in Mackay. They published a story about honouring a promise from years before, and sent a copy to the local paper in Minlaton. That really got some results. Unfortunately the



old gent had died about 9 months before, but his brother contacted Syd and the Fiat, "Rosa" returned to Minlaton amid great celebrations. The whole town came out to meet them in fairground style celebrations.

The next car in the collection with the classiest name of them all, "**Edward**" is the oldest **Standard** motor car in Australia, from 1910. Named after the monarch at the time, King Edward, there are 2 older versions, a 1908 and 1907 both in the UK. Once again this car wasn't exactly in pristine condition when Syd got his hands on it, and although it is up and running and to we plebs, all complete and finished, to Syd it still has the odd bit he would like to improve on. Doors and a roof being the major ones.

During the restoration of this car it became a rush job. Syd's wife Janet was just as enthusiastic about these restorations as Syd, she being the motor trimmer that upholstered them and she also enjoyed using them just as much as Syd. But during the restoration of Edward, Janet became ill. So ill that it was apparent to them both that she was not going to recover. Being a true motoring enthusiast her one last wish was to be part of the Ipswich rally in the Standard. And so Edward became a seriously rushed job. It still looks fantastic, as a matter of fact to my taste it looks better when a vehicle looks a bit like it might have been used in its life. Never mind, Syd got the car finished in time to take Janet for a spin round the block, and although she didn't make the Ipswich Rally, the vehicle did and it carries a brass plaque to her memory wherever it goes. Before it came into Syd's possession it had sat in a shed in Mackay for 20 years after being pulled out of a farm dump in Western Qld in 1964. Originally it had been a travelling clergymans car but had blown the diff near Blackall and was abandoned in the 1930's. The station workers must have got it going because it had then been used as a hack on the property until dumped in the late 30's. Once it had been removed to suburbia it was to be a 9 month restoration job, but they hadn't quite allowed for the odd bit of rust, especially in the chassis which had a fair percentage of the bottom half missing. That chassis did take a bit of work. A bit of research found the composition of the steel was the same as in a model T Ford chassis and the section was also similar. Syd got his hands on a T chassis that had been hot-rodded, so wasn't concerned about cutting it up, and cut the channel in half lengthwise, cut the rusty bottom half off the Standard, and welded the steel from the Ford chassis in its place.

Apart from the chassis the rest of the car was pretty



The original name plate still adorns the Fiat body

Janet did the trimming on all these cars. She even matched the motif from the doors on a map pouch.



Below: The 1910 Standard 's chassis wasn't all that flash when Syd got his hands on it. Obviously it had the previous owners beat. You can fix all kinds of things with bits of model T.





Syd with the 1910 Standard. It will get some doors and a hood when he gets around to it.

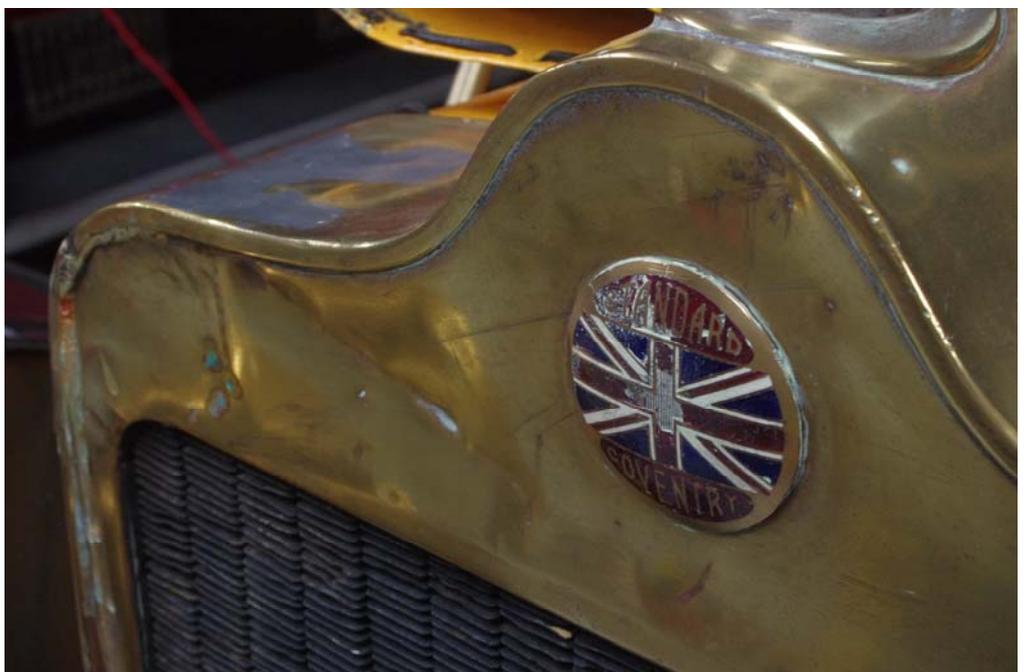
Right: The resto job became rushed so Janet could have a ride in it.

Below: Radiator did remarkably well considering it had been buried and used for an electrical earth.



sad too. On the good side most of the mechanicals were still on it and in good enough condition to restore or to replicate. There were 2 radiators with it. The one that is currently on the car was buried in the sand being used to provide a good earth for a radio antenna. The

body was close to non-existent, but he did have a credit card sized photo of what it was supposed to look like, so he built one from it. There is one very small section of the original body retained under the front seat. Surprisingly, the bonnet is the original. One thing that probably made the restoration a whole lot easier was an original owners handbook at A5 size. Full of technical drawings he could figure how things were supposed to work. Basically everything made of wood had to be replaced, some of the valve covers were missing but he was able to replicate



the existing ones. The controls were all missing, Syd manufactured them (tech drawings to the rescue). A cracked block was more of a problem, with 4 cracks, the longest at 100mm long. It didn't take kindly to welding so with Devcon and a plate over the affected area it hasn't had any problems with leaks. This is before closed cooling systems so there is no pressure in the water jacket. One problem that gives a hint of what Syd is about was in the gearbox. Some of the mainshaft gears were lacking teeth. Same deal with the layshaft. Once again you can't race down to Repco or the wreckers for bits for a car like this. Syd raided his own junkbin and searched for something that had the same size and number of teeth. For the layshaft he came up with an MGB, for the mainshaft gear it was a Renault Gordini. He machined the offending gear teeth off, then cut and bored the guts from the good gear and shrunk it onto the Standard shaft, then pinned it. And it all works like a charm.

The body panels are made from whatever steel happened to be around at the time, the likes of street signs and such. Remember this was a rush job. The painting was done with 4 cans of pressure pack yellow which brought back fond memories of years working for DCA.

But however lovely Edward may look, Syd will never call it complete until it has doors and a hood.

And then there is **Maxine the Maxwell**. Would you believe it, there came a time when Syd reckoned he would buy another veteran car already fixed up. You know, just fork out the dollars and drive it. That's what happened with Maxine. Bought sight unseen from New Hampshire in USA it is a beauty. It didn't come with a windscreen or a roof but it did come with the frames and some very detailed pics of how it was, so it wasn't a problem to get them made. Attached to the hood frame was the original plaque from the original manufacturer, Westchester, which was Maxwell's accessory company. (a bit like NASCO and Holden) The coincidence to Syd was the serial

The original wheels had clincher rims. Syd put em in the lathe and cut the rims from the wheels. He then got a set of well based rims and split them down the middle and welded the two halves onto the wheels. Tyres for well based rims are a whole lot more available and cheaper than for clinchers. Those rims aren't cast. They are pressed steel made in 2 sides and welded together.



The motif screwed to the front seat support is the only original piece of the Standard body.



The engine block had considerable cracking, but plating and generous amounts of Devcon see it with no leaks.

Syd manufactured all the controls and linkages.





Maxine the Maxwell with her colleagues

number on that plaque, 31145. His wife, Janet's birthday was 3/11/45. He bought the Maxwell after she had passed away. There is a bit more info on the Maxwell in Transmission no 103 Dec 2015.

But possibly the most amazing car is in the small garden shed behind this shed. That car would be the English Mechanic. This is the worlds first do it yourself motor car, way before all the GT 40's, and Bolwels and myriad others. It came about from a series of 31 weekly articles in the English Mechanic magazine. They designed a car that a man of moderate means could build himself. They then contracted various firms around London to build all the bits, which you could buy, or you could build some, or all of them yourself. This is the only example of this car in the world, and it is built faithfully to the plans designed in 1902. As with many kit cars there were choices as to how it was constructed, for example there were choices between a wooden chassis or a tubular chassis, or solid wheels or pneumatic wheels. Very early in the project Syd advertised for a suitable engine and received a reply where someone had the remains of a car his great uncle had built for use on the farm. It had proved unsuitable and the engine had been removed and used for pumping for years. That person was pleased to give Syd the engine and all the associated bits that went with it. He got the engine and the transmission, frame and the diff housing, not to mention 1/2 the front axle He even got the remains of the body. It had been used for a billy cart. And it



Some more views of the English Mechanic. Note the fire damage behind the driver seat and the missing door below it.



turned out the old car was the English Mechanic. Great! It was a good start, but the aluminium crankcase castings had gone rotten. They were recast.

At this stage Syd took a course in blacksmithing for the knowledge he would need to make the rest of it, especially the springs. And after 6 years he finished it. After all that time how would you feel after being told you couldn't register it.

At his initial contact with the rego people the lady on the counter asked him what make it was. When advised of the English Mechanic name she replied she didn't have that one on her list and went off to ask for advice. She came back with the news that he wouldn't be able to register it. "You can't build a car from parts" they said. Things were not looking good, but sometime later a gent that was admiring the vehicle was aghast that it couldn't be registered. It turned out he worked in the rego department. He promised to investigate the matter.

Syd wanted the car to be seen and just to show it off had taken it to Bundaberg to a rally just as a static display. While he was there he received a phone call to tell him to take it round to the rego dept and get it registered. Naturally it had to be inspected. When he drove it into the inspection shed the bloke there took one look at it and said that if he could drive it there, then it passed. No worries!

From there it has had mixed receptions. One rally in his home state of Queensland would not accept his entry as they reckoned it wasn't the genuine article. They reckoned it was a replica. (beats me too!) Then a steam rally in NSW heard of the car and begged him to bring it down to their event. And everyone there loved it. Since then it has been all over the place and to 8 rallies. A real gem. But then disaster struck!

Unbeknown to Syd, the carby caught fire. And because it is hidden down below where you can't see it, the fire went unchecked for a bit, enough time for it to melt the cast aluminium fuel bowl that sits directly above it. Once that melted through it allowed the contents of the fuel tank to pour out and turn the small fire into a big one. The result didn't completely destroy the car by a long shot, but it did burn off all the belts and burn part of the engine cover and seat and generally mucked things up.



Engine is 3.5 HP 1 cylinder water cooled with belt drive to 2 speed transmission, There is no reverse. You carry a passenger to get out and push backwards. Belts are missing due to the fire. Final drive is via chain. Syd reckons top speed is "frightening"



Mudguards are leather Controls are Syd brand. And they designed safety into this car too. You can't get out of it unless the belt tension is off and the handbrake is on.





24th NATIONAL MODEL A FORD MEET

22 MAY - 28 MAY 2016



Busselton WA 2014

A National Meet is held bi-annually in a different state and it's now the Territory's time to shine. Over 90 Model A vehicles will be travelling to Darwin via Katherine from all over Australia and this is your opportunity to view these magnificent vehicles up close.

KATHERINE:

Sunday 22 May and Monday 23 May

A public display will be held at the Katherine Museum Grounds Sunday between 2:00pm and 4:00pm

Tuesday 24 May, they will travel up the Stuart Highway to Darwin

DARWIN:

Wednesday 25 May to Saturday 28 May

A public display will be held at the Mindil Beach Sunset Markets Thursday 26 May from 4:30pm



The Model A Ford was manufactured between 1928 to 1931 with close to 5 million Model A's being produced.

Renault 4cv 1950

Mechanically sound. Tidy.
Recent total brake system reco
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Patricia **0425 842 164**



1965 VINTAGE Crusader caravan

Top condition, new annexe \$7000
Grumpy 0428 88 2424.



Mitsubishi Magna Virado 2005

V6 All Wheel Drive
\$8000 ONO

Jack 89412405

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a lover. Got a story to sell? Whatever you like.
Email Ted at longtelescope@gmail.com
Or phone 89886049

Deadline.... The end of the month.

Previous editions

All previous editions of Transmission are now
available at mvec.weebly.com

1926 Dodge 30 Cwt truck

Has a magneto, generator/startermotor. Starts
no worries from the starter motor.
Running, all complete except the wood-
work.\$2500.

Also if anyone is after hard to get bits off old
cars or the cars themselves please ring as there
are lots of old cars around here (Port Niel, SA)
Please call Danny Acheson 0428147169 prefer-
ably evenings



WOTS ON THIS YEAR

Heaps! Come along and enjoy!

On the 2nd Wed of every month there is a members meeting at the hangar 7.30 pm plus bbq beforehand. Also there is a working bee at the hangar the following Sunday.

*This Sun's working bee will include checking the brakes on the fire truck and firing up the Thornycroft. **FUN STUFF!!***

2 May Mayday. Cruise to Adelaide river Historical Railway precinct .
Meet at hangar to *leave at 9AM*

8 May Aviation museum open cockpit day . Cook snags for Legacy. Show off your vehicles.

24-28 May Model A national rally rolls into Darwin. 92 A model Fords in town.

They need some volunteers to help especially parking attendants at the Mindil Markets. Please call Chris on 0419 489 816 if you care to be involved.

9 July Gangsters Ball at Berry Springs Dress up and dancing Ted 89886049

10 July MVEC vs Holden club cricket match at Batchelor

17 July Darwin to the Doo. Cruise out to Taminmin library for show n shine + swapmeet.

And the first ever Coffee cars and donuts at Howard Springs Bakery went off well so from now on it will be on the second Sunday of every month from 9 till 11am. Enquiries to Rod 8983 1959

Stuff on the net

She will not buy a new car until she has worn her old one out and it is still in new condition - after all it is only 84 years old (the car that is, oh the lady.....she's 101!!!). This lady's car is a 1930 Packard.. https://www.youtube.com/embed/qxCpK1W_Gjw?feature=player_embedded

And for the most unusual F truck you will ever see check this one out.

<http://safeshare.tv/w/uKAIfLZUsX>

How about a different view of our hangar. Use your mouse to look around.

<http://www.hiddenmelbourne.com.au/mvec>

Heaven

All arrivals in Heaven have to go through a bureaucratic examination to

determine whether admission will be granted. One room has a clerk who inputs computerized records of what each applicant did on his or her last day of life.

The first applicant of the day explains that his last day was not a good one. "I came home early and found my wife lying naked in bed. She claimed she had just gotten out of the shower. Well, her hair was dry and I checked the shower and it was completely dry, too. I knew she was into some hanky-panky and I began to look for her lover. I went onto the balcony of our 9th floor apartment and found the SOB clinging to the rail by his finger tips. I was so angry that I began bashing his fingers with a flower pot. He let go and fell, but his fall was broken by some awnings and bushes.

On seeing he was still alive, I found super human strength to drag our antique cedar chest to the balcony and throw it over. It hit the man and killed him. At this point the stress got to me and I suffered a massive heart attack and died."

The clerk thanked him and sent him on to the next office.

The second applicant said that his last day was his worst.

"I was on the roof of an apartment building working on the AC equipment. I stumbled over my tools and toppled off the building. I managed to grab onto the balcony rail of a 9th floor apartment but some idiot came rushing out on the balcony and bashed my hands with a flower pot. I fell, but hit some awnings and bushes and survived, but as I looked up I saw a huge chest falling toward me. I tried to crawl out of the way but failed and was hit and killed by the chest."

The clerk couldn't help but chuckle as he directed the man to the next room.

He is still giggling when his third customer of the day enters. He apologizes and says, "I doubt that your last day was as interesting as the fellow in here just before you."

"I don't know," replies the man, "Picture this, I'm buck naked, hiding in this cedar chest"

Motor Vehicle Enthusiasts Club "Whats On" in April, May & June 2016

Type	Vehicle/s	Month	Date	Depart From	Departure Time	Destination or Details
Club Meeting	All Members	Apr	Wed-13-Apr-16	The Hangar	7:00pm	The Monthly Meeting to discuss club matters. Come and have a chat, listen to what's happening and maybe take part in our next project and it's planning. There's usually a sausage sizzle and maybe a couple of tasty pies donated by Tim from Outback Bakeries to be had for a small donation. 08 8942 0758
The Hangar Working Bee	All Members	Apr	Sun-17-Apr-16	The Hangar	8:30 to 11:30	Come and give us a hand to keep the Hangar looking clean and tidy, bring the next generation with you and teach them how things work and show them some of the Territory's History. Learn how to start one of Leo Izod's historic engines. 08 8942 0758
Bikes, Cars Coffee & Donuts	All Members	Apr	Sun-17-Apr-16	Howard Springs Bakery	9:00 to 11:00	An all Car and Bike Club event for like minded people. Come and have a chat, a cuppa and a donut from 9:00 to 11:00 no matter what you in or on. 290 Whitewood Road, Howard Springs
ANZAC Day	All Members	Apr	Mon-25-Apr-16	QANTAS Hangar	9:00 to 3:00	Open Day at Club 08 8942 0758
Morning Highway Blast	Bikes	May	Sun-01-May-16	Caltex Berrimah to Darwin River Dam	8:30am	Darwin River Dam. Stuart Highway South through Noonamah right onto Cox Peninsula Road, left onto Darwin River road to the Dam. Back via Old Bynoe Road to the Highway and then Noonamah Pub for a squash. Pete 0459 818131
Cruise to Adelaide River	All Members	May	Mon-02-May-16	Meet at the Hangar	8:30am	A cruise to Adelaide River Railway Museum, depart the Hangar at 9:00am.
Chrome Bumper Cruise	Cars	May	Fri-06-May-16	Fishermans Warf	7:00pm	Get yourself some Fish & Chips and come down to Fishermans Warf and check out the Classics, Gassers & Hot Rods till 8:00pm then join the cruise through town and head on out to Truck City at Berrimah and then home. Pete's Tip: Come Early and get a good spot to park as some nights there are over 60 cars and parking becomes difficult. No BBQ's.
Aviation Museum BBQ & Show	All Members	May	Sun-08-May-16	Aviation Museum	TBA	Fundraiser BBQ and Show. Details will be in the New Letter and on Facebook.
Club Meeting	All Members	May	Wed-11-May-16	Hangar	7:00pm	The Monthly Meeting to discuss club matters. Come and have a chat, listen to what's happening and maybe take part in our next project and it's planning. There's usually a sausage sizzle and maybe a couple of tasty pies donated by Tim from Outback Bakeries to be had for a small donation. 08 8942 0758
The Hangar Working Bee	All Members	May	Sun-15-May-16	The Hangar	8:30 to 11:30	Come and give us a hand to keep the Hangar looking clean and tidy, bring the next generation with you and teach them how things work and show them some of the Territory's History. Learn how to start one of Leo Izod's historic engines. 08 8942 0758
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Motoring Heritage Week	All Members	May	Sun-15-May-16	TBA	TBA	Check the Newsletter and Facebook page for details.
Shannon's Motorcycle & Hot Rod Extravaganza	Bikes	May	Sun-22-May-16	Foskey Pavilion Darwin Showgrounds	10:00 - 3:00	Entires via John Palamountain on 0417 262 918 close 7th May, proceeds to the Leukeamia Foundation.
Model A Ford Rally	Cars	May	24th to 28th May	Various venue's	TBA	Check the Newsletter and Facebook page for details.
Chrome Bumper Cruise	Cars	Jun	Fri-03-Jun-16	Fishermans Warf	7:00pm	Get yourself some Fish & Chips and come down to Fishermans Warf and check out the Classics, Gassers & Hot Rods till 8:00pm then join the cruise through town and head on out to Truck City at Berrimah and then home. Pete's Tip: Come Early and get a good spot to park as some nights there are over 60 cars and parking becomes difficult. No BBQ's
Afternoon Highway Blast	Bikes	Jun	Sun-05-Jun-16	Caltex Berrimah to Darwin River Dam	3:00pm	Stuart Highway South through Noonamah right onto Cox Peninsula Road, left onto Darwin River road to the Dam. Back to Litchfield Pub for a drink then back to Cox Peninsula Road then Left onto Finn Road, Right onto Channel Island Road and back to Palmerston. Left at the roundabout then Wishart and Berrimah and Tiger Brennan Drive home.
Club Meeting	All Members	Jun	Wed-08-Jun-16	Hangar	7:00pm	The Monthly Meeting to discuss club matters. Come and have a chat, listen to what's happening and maybe take part in our next project and it's planning. There's usually a sausage sizzle and maybe a couple of tasty pies donated by Tim from Outback Bakeries to be had for a small donation.