

Motor Vehicle Enthusiasts Club

No 156

Aug 2023



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

PO Box 994 Parap 0804

Newsletter enquiries to Ted longtelescope@gmail.com

TRANSMISSION

Showtime!



There wasn't as many of us this year but our grand parade at the Royal Darwin Show was certainly popular with the crowd. Biggest mobs of hands waving at you. Sure gets you smiling!

Well folks, I have been writing about the stuff in people's sheds for close on 20 years and I have always found something to write about. Horrors! this month is dry so I guess its time I looked in my own backyard, so here it is... my own shed story.

I actually got involved with MVEC in a roundabout way. A model engineers club started up and the meetings were held in the old QANTAS hangar. I was building a model steam engine from scrap steel and my goal was to have made one new part by each months meeting. The catch was the club didn't last all that long and in the end I was the only one that showed up. So my steam engine is still at the same stage as it was at that last meeting. But, the then MVEC president was also in the model club and I asked the likelihood of getting my Norton motorbike on club rego if I joined the club. I joined the club. The collecting disease set in pretty quickly then. I had an RX7 at the time but after a couple of years of handbrake turns and the like I got used to it and swapped its place for a model T Ford project. That took a couple of years to finish so meantime there was a 1964 Pontiac Parisienne and our everyday car was to be a 1963 Futura Falcon. I airconditioned it and it was just lovely with its original red bucket seats and dripping with chrome but somehow we never used it much. Maybe we weren't game to park such a lovely thing in a supermarket car park. A Mk V Jaguar took pride of place in my shed parked on a rotisserie for more than 15 years until a couple of years ago I decided I had too many projects going to complete during the rest of my life. The Falcon and the Pontiac were the first to go, then the unfinished Jag. I still have the steam engine to finish plus a couple of motor bikes and another model T construction kit if I get bored. All that left a couple of spare bays in the sheds and we all know Einstein's laws say you can't have empty space. Something will fill it. Somewhere along the way I got interested in fixing pianos and pianolas, so 6 of them got rid of some of that space. Then when I was in WA last year I crossed paths with a 1912 Buick. I am back with the original problem of no room.



Recently retired ghosts from the shed. Top: 1970 Oldsmobile 98. Centre: Futura Falcon from 1963. Bottom : 1964 Pontiac Parisienne.

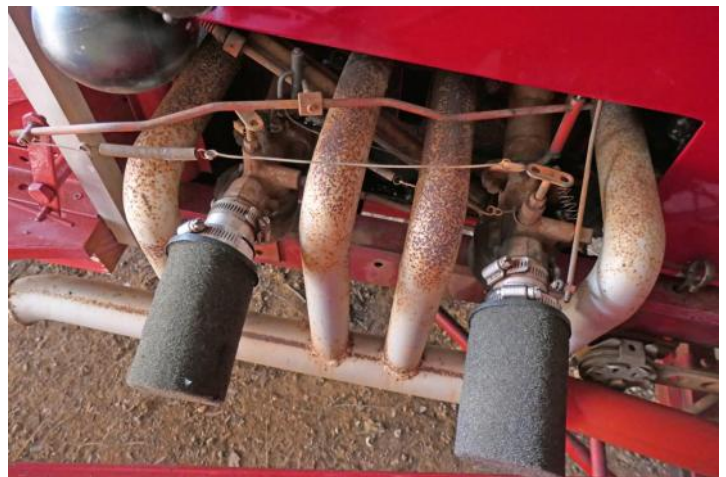
After hooning around in an RX7 for a couple of years doing hand-brake turns between smokies, it all became old hat and I decided I needed something older, with wooden spokes. This model T came up for sale. It started its life new in 1922 in Katherine with a no plate of 52 which made it the 52nd car to be registered in the Territory. It was an unfinished project. I finished it maybe 20 years ago, but it came with a trailer load of model T parts including a banana shaped chassis.



That bent chassis and the load of bits morphed into the Speedster that I built especially for the Centenary of Speed event near Kalgoorlie. That event has now become the Red Dust Revival. And how much speed is the speedster good for? Enough to be scary, so scary in fact the good wife Shirley desired a car with a bit more car around her, and maybe a roof too.



A model T with twin carbs is a bit unusual. Originally I had them operating together but I could not get it to run nicely at low revs. Would run fine mid range to flat out. So I came up with a linkage setup that uses the front carb for normal driving with the second one joining in just before flat out. Works great. And young blokes get excited when I tell em it runs twin Holleys. These are early Holleys, standard Model T carbs.



So with Shirley in mind I had been keeping my eyes open for a veteran car that you could get in rather than on, and what should present itself but this beaut 1912 Buick. It has luxury items too. A windscreen, a roof, nice comfy leather seats and it looks very pretty. And little work needed. I had 10000km round trip to drive down Bunbury way in WA to trailer it home, but its a beauty. And Shirley is happy.



The engine is a fairly average overhead valve unit, but you may notice the absence of a join where the head bolts on. The head is cast integrally with the cylinder. Difficulty in working on the valves? Not really, the valve assembly, including seat and guide unscrew from the top. Easy!

And plenty of early engines from this day had their oiling by splash feed. This one boasts an oil pump, but it doesn't pump oil straight to the bearings as you might expect, it pumps it up to a sight glass on the dash and then gravity feeds to where it might be wanted. Why? It seems the general idea is that it makes you feel secure when you can see oil circulating while driving.



The oiler. If its half full of oil while you are cruizin then all is well.



Every instrument you could want. A Speedo and a clock. The clock looks old but that's about as far as it goes.



Once located in sunny Darwin this car would not start before 11am. No sparks! A heat gun would get it functioning earlier. It appears it didn't like our lovely tropical weather. I had the magneto rewound and it works fine now.



And this little beastie next to the fan is an engine driven compressor. A lever puts the gear in mesh with the shaft that drives the water pump. In the toolbox is a hose that will reach all the wheels. In 1912 there were still plenty of horses on the road. They would lose the odd nail holding their horse-shoes on. Punctures were common.

Plaque shows the cars roots. Vintage Motor Car Club America. There is another one showing it as an honour member of the Chicago Vintage Car Club.



Norton Commando 750 Fastback. Back in my younger years I went into Adelaide city one Saturday morning to buy a brand new Honda four 750, but instead I came home with a near new Norton Commando. It had 7000 miles on the clock, was 100% immaculate and in a high state of tune due to being owned by an A grade road racer, who was selling the bike to finance his wedding. It served me well being ridden hard around the beaut curvaceous roads of the Adelaide hills which had no speed limits back in those early 1970's. When I moved to Darwin it just became transport to ride to work from Berry Springs to Darwin but sometimes life became more interesting when I need to get building materials home. Tying 6 metre lengths of steel pipe alongside wasn't all that unusual. But eventually I retired it as getting parts up here was a pain. I bought a Yamaha because the dealer was right next door to work and if they didn't have what you wanted (rare) they would always have it next day for no extra charge. So the Norton rotted in the shed for 20 years until one day my son challenged me to have it restored for my 50th birthday. I had only 10 weeks to fix 20 years neglect but I took the challenge. I found it had seized from sitting around too long, had to drive the pistons out with a block of wood. Nevertheless I had it going for the day. Looked lovely, but I have to admit riding on the bitumen here is not very exciting. I have only used it a few times and the tires are now perishing. Riding in the dirt is where I get excitement.



1935 BSA W35 Blue Star. After driving my souped up model T at the Red Dust Revival, I came to the conclusion the motor bikes might be having a better time than the cars, after all they have scratch races as well as handicaps. So on my way home in 2019 I crossed paths with a fairly cruddy BSA. To race it at Perkollili it has to be before 1939 and bikes of that vintage are a bit hard to come by so I snaffled this one up. I knew it was a bitser, not finished or running but the feller selling it wasn't very cluey, but it didn't look like much work to finish it off. Famous last words, sprockets didn't line up, with a gearbox from a different model I have had to do a lot of lathe work and make my own sprockets, but the end is in sight.



Montesa King Scorpion. This was the bike to have in the early seventies. I remember Two Wheels bike magazine describing it as "a motocrosser with lights". I bought it from the Montesa agent in Adelaide, Vince Emily. There they all were in the shop but one was shinier than the rest. Someone had bought it, ridden it 300 miles and decided he didn't want it, so brought it back and bought a Cota, a trials bike. So the shiny one was considerably cheaper than the others, after all it was 2nd hand. So that's the one I bought. I think it was \$700. I also think it was 1973. I brought it to Darwin with me.



Montesa Cota, trials bike. I was having a coffee in the hangar at smoko one morning, when a bloke walks in and mentions the word "Montesa." My ears pricked up! What would you like to know about em I asked. He was looking for a Montesa enthusiast to give it away to. He didn't have to look any further.

It took quite a few years to get round to firing it up but last year it happened. Once it started and let it warm up a bit I gave it a handful of throttle and it revved up nice and crisp then it slowed down with a not nice sound. Pulled the head and barrel off to find it had ingested a small (4mm) bolt from somewhere and it had caught between the piston and a transfer port. Didn't hurt the barrel but the piston is wrecked. Lucky it came with a spare engine.



1952 Ariel Square Four. 4 cyl 1000cc engine in a square configuration with 2 crankshafts. I always admired these bikes so when one presented itself I had to have it. I have all the bits to fix it up. Just need a couple of spare minutes.



But any good shed has more than cars and motorbikes. Its all those small bits n pieces that make it interesting. Here is just a few of em.

A bunch of stationary engines, the special one is a 4HP Buzacott . This engine ran the bore on my parents orchard in suburban Adelaide, then when I settled in Darwin it ran the 240v generator to supply power to our house at Berry Springs in the 1970's and 80's. It is natural that when you have one old engine they multiply.



Some of you will remember Telex machines. These two will type to each other. The brown one was the very machine that told the world what had happened to Darwin on the morning of Christmas day 1974. Cyclone Tracy had passed earlier that morning. The green thing is the test desk we would use to diagnose where the fault was remotely. No computers to figure it out for you back then. Seen the movie "Balibo?" This is the Telex the Indonesian army shot up before they murdered Roger East.



A piece of the cable that ran between Darwin and Nightcliff telephone exchanges. Each of those little dots is a wire, insulated with brown paper. When you rang from Darwin to Nightcliff or Casuarina, your conversation was via a pair of these wires. This cable is about 3 inches diameter.



Bombs n rockets n bullets and shrapnel from WW2 practice and later.



This is a working telephone exchange made of spare parts from Darwin's original automatic telephone exchange. It has the original sign written plaque from when it was cutover in 1956. You can make a call through this using the rotary dial phones on each side. You can see the switches stepping up and around from the dial pulses.



A magneto telephone exchange and a crossbar switch, the basis of a telephone exchange in the 1980's. The device with numbers on top of the switch is subscribers meters. This is where your telephone bill came from back in the days



My camera collection. Basically all the cameras that I used to drool over in catalogues when I was at high school and had no dough to buy em.

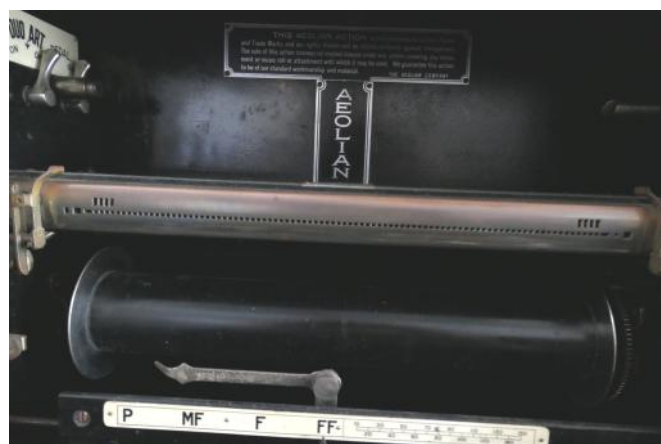
And below is a Relex 127, the camera that started my interest when I was in primary school. I had a search on Ebay for years before one bobbed up. I would have paid some serious money for it but as the only bidder I got it for something like \$5, and it was mint!



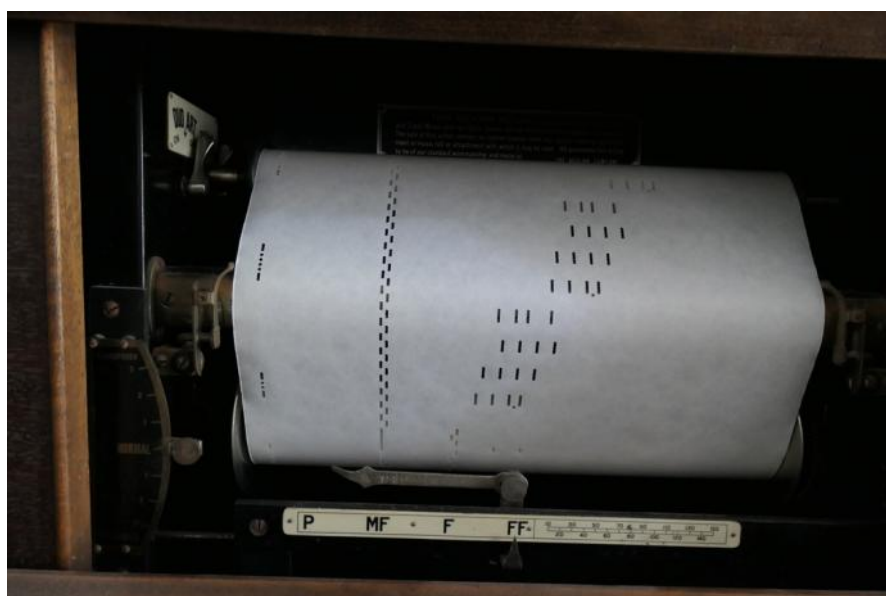
With a couple of cars vacating bays the fascination of fixing old pianos has seen them muscling in on the space. There are currently 5 pianos and a pianola getting in on the deal. This one is a Beale, entirely made in Australia dated between 1895 and 1904 and its a beauty.



The pianola has been likened to a cd player of a hundred years ago. You could buy rolls with your favourite songs recorded on them. The notes are recorded as holes punched in a paper roll. As you operate the pedals with your feet the roll passes over a bar and when the holes line up with holes in the bar it will play the notes. A normal Pianola will play all the music required at the correct tempo but all the notes are played at the same volume. This instrument is called a reproducing piano and will vary the intensity of the music as required. It has an extra 4 holes each side of the music roll and this accounts for many levels of intensity.



Each of those holes is a note on the piano. Line up with a hole in the roll and that note plays. Heaps more exciting than a CD player. Kinda magic.



The pedals under the machine are attached to bellows which generate a vacuum. When a hole in the paper roll lines up with a hole in the bar behind, air is allowed in which causes a key to be depressed and a note to play. This roll is "Bumble Bee Boogie". Real foot tappin stuff. Can keep you fit pedalling too!



The conditions under which the men worked are shown in this picture. Personnel are engaged in extricating a tractor and scoop from the mire.

DARWIN WATER

Built by an Australian Army Unit, the Howard Springs Water Scheme is supplying Darwin with an additional 400,000 gallons of water per day.

WE Australians have always been vaguely aware of the potential importance of Darwin; yet, remote from our capital cities, it remained remote, too, in our plans for development.

We knew that some day the progress of civil aviation would force us to the realisation of its high place in the country's future; we knew that its proximity to rich consumer markets in the Netherlands East Indies would ultimately make its development an economic necessity; we knew that within the area called Northern Territory were immense and unexploited pasturelands and that the pearling industries which flourished—in other hands—along the coast could provide a new and worthwhile income for Australian workers.

Most of all, we realised that, strategically, Darwin represented our most vulnerable spot.

We knew these things . . . and continued to leave the development of the town and its resources to a handful of public servants, a few hundred pioneers, and a conglomeration of alien races—including predominantly, the Japanese.

Inevitably, Darwin assumed the role of an unwashed and unwanted ward of the nation, sustained on the most meagre of rations merely because it might one day of its own accord help to enrich its

foster parents. Allowed to hack out its own destiny, to grow up without encouragement or assistance . . . forced to exist on the leavings of the more favored sisters in the south. . . Darwin stagnated in its orphan-like character—until December, 1941, when temporarily it became the most important capital in the country.

War has changed Darwin. To-day, it is a comparatively well-ordered town of made roads and organised facilities. Shaken out of the torpor induced by neglect, it pulsates with new-found vitality. Its progress has been simply an accident of war.

One of the major difficulties for the Army was to secure sufficient water to supply the increased population; the service from the Manton Dam, previously capable of pumping 50,000 to 60,000 gallons per hour, was reduced to a capacity of only 25,000 gallons per hour.

In an attempt to remedy the shortage, the Army established 400 shallow bores over a wide area, each producing from 400 to 2,000 gallons per hour. In addition to these supplementary resources, however, it was necessary to provide a permanent water supply.

At Howard Springs, 17 miles from Darwin, a peacetime pumping plant already existed, capable

of an output of 16,000 gallons per hour. At this spot, under the direction of engineers of an Australian Field Company, working parties set about the construction of a weir.

Roads were built to link the site to the main North-South highway; working knee-deep in mire, men of engineering and infantry units cleared acres of thick jungle growth; camps were built; bulldozers, graders, mechanical shovels, and "carry-all" scrapers worked from morning to dusk and beyond.

The pressure was on, for the dam had to be completed before the start of the wet season. With the preliminaries completed, the engineers commenced work on the dam. An improvised "blower" cleared much of the slush from the bottom of the pool, and a concrete weir-wall with a ninety-feet long spillway built. Designed to hold 150,000 gallons of water in storage, it was constructed so that the back-pressure of the water in the dam would not interfere with the flowing of the spring.

The project was completed in under four months. Most of the 17 miles along which the pipeline is laid contained sandstone, whilst one creek was crossed by a specially constructed steel trestle bridge 220 feet long, held high above the creek to ensure its permanence during flood periods.

At a cost of £150,000—probably two-thirds peace-time costs—Darwin's water supply has been guaranteed.

The dam, built by an Army as it stood on guard, is a tribute to the Engineers' enterprise and skill. It is a reminder that despite its destructive aspects, war can also be creative.

The men who constructed the dam not only contributed to the safety of the country, but gave it an asset of permanent value. Before the official opening of the Howards Springs Water Scheme, they were praised by the G.O.C. Northern Territory in these words:

"Before turning the 'tap' on, I would like to congratulate you on the job you have done in building the Howard Springs Weir. Works that the Navy, Army, Air-force and A.W.C. have done in the Territory—main roads, access roads, wharves, airfields, electric light, and power installations, refrigeration, railway sidings—are not only essential for the prosecution of the war, but will be of national value when the war is over."

Commenting on the vast amount of work done by the Army in the north, Mr. W. M. Hughes, veteran Australian statesman, said:

"It cannot be too greatly emphasised that Northern Australia is not another country, but an integral part of the continent. Its development was necessary for national reasons, particularly those of defence."

The old Darwin is gone. The passing of "the Suez of the South" calls for no regret, for the new town will become a key city of the Australia of the future.

General view of the construction work in progress, showing men working on forms, excavations, and laying sand-bags.



One mans rubbish...

A few years back when I started getting rid of some car projects I advertised a VW Kombi van as a giveaway free.

The bloke that took it away was very pleased and told me straight that people would have paid a good price for it. So as my getting rid of stuff continues I thought I should get rid of this old Austin van. It was on my block when I bought the place something like 45 years ago. It was used as a storeroom for tools and building materials. Over the years it had been used as a kids cubby house and then a storeroom again for old car parts.



So with what that bloke had said all those years ago I advertised it on Facebook as garden art, or for the basis of a hotrod. All for a bit of a laugh. I put \$200 negotiable on it.

Well the response was immediate. The first bloke that came thrust the \$200 into my hand.

He was going to make a bedroom of it on a block at Dundee. I was going away for a couple of weeks, he would figure out how to move it when I got back.

Very soon afterwards I got another enquiry. A lady wished to get in touch with the buyer and offered him \$500 for the van that he had just paid \$200 for. He accepted the offer.

The van had sunk into the ground over the years and it was a bit of an effort to get it out of its long term home. It involved pulling a couple of trees out and then lifting the back with the tractor bucket and reversing it out. But with the weight hanging off the front of the tractor it didn't have enough traction to pull the van out. The next trick was to attach the tractor to the 4wd to pull the tractor which was lifting the van. That caused the tractor to get on 2 wheels to the left, then to the right and finally on just the front wheels. All good fun mind you!

And the new owners presented me with an extra \$100 for extracting it and assisting getting it on the traytop.

ON THE NET...



Babes on Vespas, but that's only a small part of it.

It seems we in Darwin missed out on this beaut exhibition: *This world-exclusive exhibition, only in Brisbane, showcased the art, design and history of one of the most iconic objects of the last 150 years, the motorcycle.*

Featuring radical concepts, record breakers and road icons, the fully-immersive exhibition showcased 100 innovative and influential motorcycles from the 1860s to present day, it considered the vehicle from the perspective of social history, popular culture, design and technology.

The good part is you can go on a virtual tour right here with your computer:

<https://www.qagoma.qld.gov.au/exhibition/themotorcycle>

And if you go a bit deeper you can read about the Spencer, probably the first motorbike built in Australia

<https://blog.qagoma.qld.gov.au/brisbane-born-the-spencer-motorcycle-story-the-motorcycle-design-art-desire-australia/>



And mid air collisions usually have disastrous results, but in this case, in NSW between 2 Avro Ansons, the crew of one plane bailed out and parachuted to earth safely while the crew of the other plane landed both units safely. Read all about it at:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1940_Brocklesby_mid-air_collision



Re-creating the First UK to Australia Overland Journey



In October 1927 Australian adventurer, Francis Birtles, departed London for a 20,000km drive to Melbourne, Australia. Driving a 1923 BEAN 14 car he faced many trials and tribulations including almost freezing to death in Iran, and suffering malaria and starvation as he cut the first vehicle track through the Naga Hills between India and Burma (Myanmar). He eventually arrived in Australia to be welcomed by tens of thousands of well-wishers.

In April 2024 another Australian adventurer, Lang Kidby and his wife Beverley, will depart London in an identical 100 year old Bean 14 car. They will trace Francis Birtle's path as closely as reasonably possible. Lang and Bev are not new to international expeditions and more can be found on their web site. www.next-horizon.org

Approximate timings and exact route subject to sponsor requirements and on-road developments such as changes in environment, vehicle repairs etc.

Depart London 01 April 2024

Arrive Istanbul about 10 April 2024

Enter Iran about 15 April 2024

Enter Pakistan about 26 April 2024

Enter India about 03 May 2024

Enter Myanmar about 20 May 2024

Arrive Singapore about 10 June 2024

Ship Singapore to Darwin (weekly service)

Depart Darwin about 20 June 2024

Arrive Melbourne about 10 July 2024

Within days of the project being launched support has been offered from around the world. As usual, the main purpose of Lang and Bev's trips is to bring to life the heroic efforts of our early transport pioneers. Their names, now forgotten, will be introduced to new generations who know nothing of their history.

Lang and Bev have an excellent record supporting sponsors and are seeking partners for the expedition and believe they can offer excellent returns daily for 3 months across the world.

Lang and Bev Kidby

+61 0439677279 • langleykidby@gmail.com



MVEC Club Event



78 years ago, on the 15th of August 1945 a lone Mosquito Bomber from RAAF No 87 Squadron, started the last Australian based aerial mission of WW2 from Coomalie Creek Airfield, it was called back to base mid-flight because of the end of WW2.

On the 12th and 13th of August there will be a celebration at Coomalie Creek Airfield to commemorate the event

Bring your family, food for a BBQ and camping gear to have a great weekend.

Saturday night there will be a Bon Fire, BBQ plate, Band, Concert and Magic as Richard moves among us dispensing the usual glass or more of Port.

At 9.30-10.00am on the Sunday morning the service in the Airfield Chapel will commemorate 80 years since the Chapel was built.

To get to the Airfield turn hard left at the bottom of the hill just past the Bachelor turn off and follow the signs.

Community ARTS

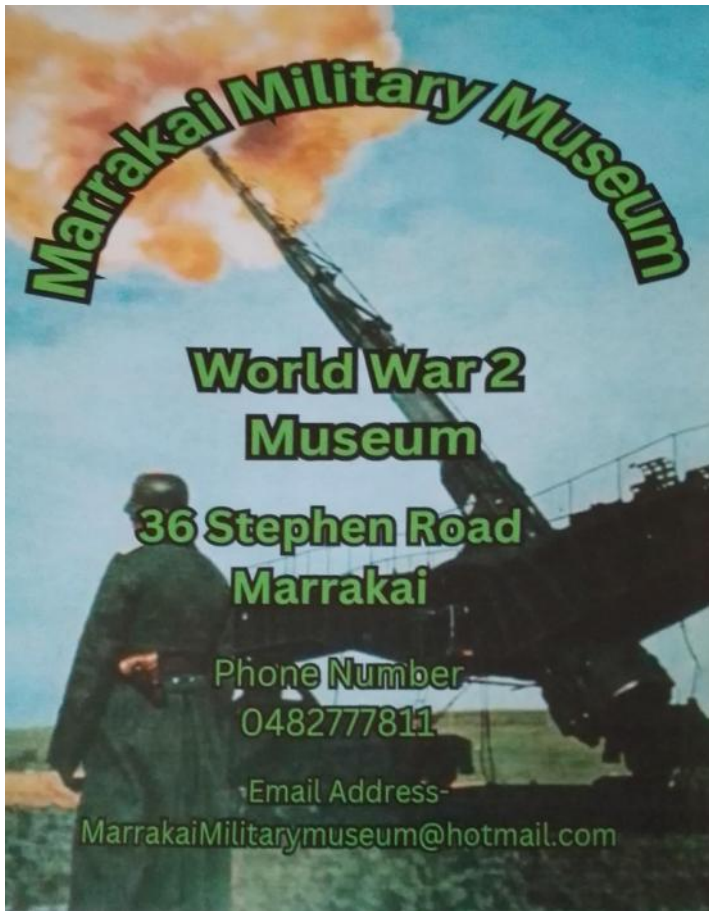
& CRAFTS Fair

**SUNDAY 20th AUGUST
10AM — 3PM**

LIVINGSTONE RESERVE

**Bar, Food, Coffee. live
Music & More-----**

They have invited MVEC members to display some cars at this event. If you reckon you might come please let Ted know on 89886049 or longtelescope@gmail.com so we can get an idea of how much room we need.



 Three small photographs showing the interior of the museum. The top photo shows a display case with various military uniforms and artifacts. The middle photo shows a display case with a Japanese flag and other items. The bottom photo shows a display case with several military uniforms hanging on a wall.

World War 2 Museum
featuring Australian, American, English, German, Japanese, Chinese and Russian uniforms and artefacts.

The military collection contains thousands of objects related to the Second World War. These include very rare items, a one-off in the world used by the Australian 2 special unit and commandos in World War 2, the only known Mark 8 Cockleshell Motorised Canoe, items from Gallipoli, Midway, Tobruk, Band of Brothers, Z Force, Flying Tigers with various uniforms, helmets, gas masks, binoculars, weapons and tools. We offer a guided tour of marrakai military museums The museum has easy access, air conditioning, and free parking. Set in beautiful bushland it is located one kilometre from Corroborree Tavern, be sure to follow signage.

Open
All public holidays Wednesday to Monday 9am to 5 pm Closed Tuesday Saturday 9am to 5pm Sunday 10am to 4 pm Audits \$20 Seniors / Pensioners \$15
Children below 16 \$10
Children below 10 Free

Club run to Marrakai Museum leaves Wishart Siding 10 am 27th Aug.

Reports from club members say this museum is excellent and that there is stuff here that you wont see elsewhere.

Entry fee costs. Lunch available at Corroborree Tavern

Need more info? Ring Ted 89886049

Free stuff

Get your free ads in here
Give stuff away, sell stuff, get information, find a lover. Got a story to sell? Whatever you like.
Email Ted at longtelescope@gmail.com
Or phone 89886049

Previous editions

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

Wots On

12/13 August **VJ Day at Coomalie Airstrip**. Details page 16.

Sun 20th Aug. **Livingstone Reserve art and craft fair**. Vehicle display.

Sun 27th Aug **Club run to WW2 museum at Marrakai**. Meet Wishart siding 10am.
For more info ring Ted 89886049 also see flyer.

A man was walking down the street when he was accosted by a particularly dirty and shabby-looking homeless man who asked him for a couple of dollars for dinner.

The man took out his wallet, extracted ten dollars and asked, "If I give you this money, will you buy some beer with it instead of dinner?"

"No, I had to stop drinking years ago," the homeless man replied.

"Will you use it to go fishing instead of buying food?" the man asked.

"No, I don't waste time fishing," the homeless man said. "I need to spend all my time trying to stay alive."

"Will you spend this on greens fees at a golf course instead of food?" the man asked.

"Are you NUTS!" replied the homeless man. "I haven't played golf in 20 years!"

"Will you spend the money on a woman in the red light district instead of food?" the man asked.

"What disease would I get for ten lousy bucks?" exclaimed the homeless man.

"Well," said the man, "I'm not going to give you the money. Instead, I'm going to take you home for a terrific dinner cooked by my wife."

The homeless man was astounded. "Won't your wife be furious with you for doing that? I know I'm dirty, and I probably smell pretty disgusting."

The man replied, "That's okay. It's important for her to see what a man looks like after he has given up beer, fishing, golf, and sex."