

Motor Vehicle Enthusiasts Club



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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.

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In Katherine call 89710605 .

Newsletter enquiries to Ted

propellers@bigpond.com

BIRDUM



bit to wait while they towed a brand new F250 4WD out of its bog? Then I engaged low gear and cruised straight on through, his bog holes making the T bump a bit! Well that little episode certainly raised some eyebrows, but my thoughts had been that my T was brand new in Katherine in 1921 and there weren't any roads at all at the time. So I figured it would be able to handle the tracks around Birdum. But I can hear the thoughts bouncing off the shed walls... Where

*Hooning with the wind in your face.
Mark Swaby's Fairmont M15. 1 cyl (large) 2 stroke. Neat!! Brought it from Vic in his ute just so he could take me for a ride!!*

Imagine how I felt. I had trailered my T model Ford to Larrimah to burn around the district during the back to Birdum celebrations. Someone said "you can't drive an old car like that to Birdum, you need a 4WD" Someone else said something about old cars like that only go from museum to car show. "You don't take em on rough dirt tracks". How do you reckon I felt when I had to stop in one very sandy

and what is Birdum?

Birdum is as far south as the railway line from Darwin ever reached. It was supposed to go all the way to Alice Springs but due to the depression in 1928 they ran out of dough and stopped at a place called Birdum. Because this was the railhead, a small town sprung up around the siding. Come WW2, Birdum was an inconvenient place to drive to because of swamps. Due to a drier location and lots of road traffic transhipping war materials from Alice onto the train to Darwin, the railhead was moved 8 km north to what is now Larrimah. The town followed, they even dismantled the pub and used the bits to build the



are a real bunch of sleuths at work here who can find a seemingly insignificant piece of junk out in the bush and describe in detail exactly what those persons were doing here 80 years ago. It is fascinating stuff!! This year was a bit special though. I was here a couple of years ago and reported on Lenny's Viva powered Loco and the 2 stroke powered Fairmont, but this year there were trains en-masse!! There is an Australia wide (World Wide) following of

Turning a section car around is easy!



Russell Savage's Holden powered A5 Fairmont.

one that is still standing in Larrimah, and Birdum was left to the Termites and forgotten for about 70 years. With our termites there wasn't a lot left..... We move forward a year or two to 2008 and the Friends of the North Australian Railway have resurrected this little bit of line form Larrimah to Birdum and host a show "Back to Birdum". This is historic stuff and the weekend involves stomping around the bush checking out old stuff in the long grass and trying to figure how and why they did stuff back then. There



Plenty of satisfied rail travellers here





Birdum Hotel the morning after with a few hard cases

these machines which aren't technically locos. They have lots of names, fettler's trolleys, motor cars, but the interstate enthusiasts call em "Section Cars". They came from Qld, Vic and SA and Darwin just for this neat weekend. Not forgetting Lenny's local pair that live at Larrimah. Mark Swaby came all the way from Victoria with his Fairmont M15 1 cylinder 8hp 2 stroke powered section car in his ute. It was built in 1967 using 1920's technology. The 2 stroke motor doesn't have that normal 2 stroke ring to it. You start it with a crank in the direction you want to



5 Star accommodation at sunrise at the Birdum Hotel

go (backwards or forward) and it has that chug chug sound of a large capacity stationary engine. Mark took me for a burn up the rails to Larrimah on this chariot. It was unreal! With its flat belt drive we spun those steel wheels seemingly forever and then just cruised. It seemed strange to have no steering wheel but this vehicle was red and was built for

speed! On the way back to Birdum I jumped a different rattler. Russell Savage brought a truckload of section cars. One of the 3 he unloaded was another Fairmont (it turns out they're all Fairmonts, just different models). This one was a bit more substantial. It was powered by a 202 Holden complete with Trimatic and sported flash stuff like a roof, springs, cow catcher and a fair dinkum large economy size set of train horns. The model is A5 as it carries 5 people. The catch here is the Holden sized radiator needs air so this train needs to be able to chuck a u turn and go down the track forwards. How do you turn a train around? This baby is too heavy to pick up! The answer lies in

the innocent looking bits of spare railway line carried on either side. They lift off these 2 metre lengths which clip together with a simple frame. In the middle of the frame is a small turntable sitting on a ball joint a bit like you tow your trailer with. The rails when assembled form a ramp. They then drive the section car using its engine, up the inclined ramps till it over balances on the ball joint pivot. At that balance point they grab the vehicle and swivel it and the rails it is sitting on 180 degrees then reverse off the device and presto, the train is pointing in the other direction! Amazing! Rob

Sherwood went from SA to Qld to help Russell with the driving. Rod has half a dozen various Fairmonts back home on his own private railway in Truro SA. Russell also has 2 km of track on his property in Qld. MVEC's own Geoff Samuels trailered his newly acquired Villiers Quadracycle which made up the total to 7 trains. That would have to be a record number in Larrimah this century or last. And the Birdum ball, held at the Birdum Starlight Ballroom was attended by more than thirty souls, more than the entire population of Birdum in its heyday in the 1930's. We had a live band using that modern convenience of diesel generated electricity, to amplify their music, illuminate the area and of course keep the beer cold. The

old pub was even licenced for the weekend. And Hank B Marvin would have approved of the music. The old pub has been given a new roof and one thing that the Birdum of old never had, a flushing dunny! Have Birdumites become softies? Find out for yourself next time. You don't have to risk bogging or scratching your shiny new 4WD. You can catch the train!!



Geoff Samuels rolled up at Birdum with this little beauty! He bought it recently sight unseen and arranged it to be transported to Darwin where it rolled up just a couple of days before the Birdum weekend. He decided it would be a good idea to bring it down for the event but as the Villiers Quadracycle hadn't been run for a while he reckoned it would be a good idea to at least start it up. With no luck with the kickstart and being a resourceful bloke he noticed we have a locomotive sitting on rails at the hangar. The train is shorter than the rails which leaves a short stretch to push start the cycle. (No room for error here, push, start, stop real quick or you're up the arse of an immovable steam engine. The rails just are not very long) Anyhow with razor sharp reflexes in gear they pushed it and it fired. Geoff reckoned that was good enough. He still had all his teeth and bones intact and he reckoned there would be someone to help to get it going better at Birdum. He was right and with a couple of spark plug adjustments and relieving the carburetor's main jet of a few years corrosion he was hooning happy as Larry between Larrimah and Birdum. The power plant is a Villiers motor bike engine and gearbox with the whole frame and body of the car made of timber. The wheels are made of wood with steel rims which are important as it would be really different to lay sparkies with wooden wheels and I reckon there would be a danger of setting your wheels on fire when you poured on the power. When you check out the wheels they appear to be all out of alignment but it is necessary to have them set at these strange angles to prevent it climbing off the rails. Although there is a full restoration planned for this baby, just for this weekend it copped a layer of green and white paint just to make it presentable. Geoff says it arrived plastered in purple which just didn't cut it! At the start of the weekend, even before it ran, Geoff had a small ceremony where he named the machine "Uncle Don" in memory of his wife Jude's brother Don Cox who spent many years as a railway maintenance fitter and who passed away in 1999.



Mark Swaby's Fairmont waiting for the crew. That's the old Birdum tank holding up the sky. Mark has his own website. Check it out <http://members.ozemail.com.au/~speeder/fairmont.html>

Route 66 by Mustang

Have you seen the animated movie Cars? Its all about Route 66. A real good show but sometimes you need to see it in the flesh. We went with a bunch of Aussies all driving rented Mustangs. It all started when Shirley bumped into fellow petrolheads Garrey & Lorraine Colliver who were booked on the cruise. Why don't you come along they said! A moment of weakness and we were watching "Cars" somewhere over the Pacific ocean. After an overnight stop in Los Angeles we flew straight to Nashville Tennessee which has nothing to do with Route 66 but had plenty of Mustangs to rent. I was relieved that ours was red. The roof also came off easily with the press of a button. The bit that wasn't easy came when we had to drive to our hotel. It was dark, the steering wheel on the wrong side of the car and everyone driving on the other side of the road. One of the more scary episodes of my life but we made it and didnt scratch the car. After surviving the nightlife at Nashville we started on our way to a Corvette Museum. Just down the road," follow us" someone said! We followed until a half a dozen semis blocked the view. When it cleared we couldn't see any Mustangs so we took the first exit off the freeway and ended up right where we had been on the grog in the middle of Nashville. We were the most seriously lost I have ever been! Anywhere! After some minutes in someones parking lot we decided to try these GPS navigating devices. We had two of em. One came with the car and we brought one with us. They didn't agree where we should go! We followed the advice of our own machine and after twisting and turning on countless freeways, a couple of hours later we arrived at the Corvette museum. Neat! They also make Corvettes next door. There are signs all over the place asking you to not do burnouts. There is also parking places reserved for



The Shiellers line up to lay some rubber. That's Lorraine closest and Shirley afar.



Shirley beneath the Saturn V rocket . Serious horsepower!!!



The sign says "NO Burnouts" Killjoys! Then I noticed we were on the wrong side of the road!

Corvettes. I had to park the Mustang in one of them. After I had taken a photo next to a "no burnouts" sign I realised I was on the wrong side of the road. Aaaaargh! Across the road was a car museum full of classic cars n stuff but here all the cars were for sale. Mostly 60's stuff, nice but incredibly expensive. I never bought anything. Then I found how boring the interstate highways are. We headed to a place called Huntsville. The drive was amazingly ho hum but next morn we visited petrol head paradise. You see, they have what is probably the most powerful vehicle ever made.

When they were running the Apollo Moon missions back in the 60's and 70's they stopped it all a bit abruptly and they never got around to shooting off the last of the monstrous Saturn V rockets they had built. And they still have it! You can walk round under it. It is amazing that something that big could get off the ground. This is the definition of serious grunt!! Then another mad drive along a freeway to go and meet Elvis at Memphis. About here I have to make note of these amazing things called GPS. We had cruised the country in close proximity with Lorraine and Garrey always within walkie talkie distance and the two lady navigators had, with a map and a GPS and a conference on the radio, always got us to the place we wanted to go. After careful planning we were right on schedule only a couple of miles from the hotel when the aforementioned GPS was most insistent we turn left, turn right, do a u turn or whatever. This is right in the middle of peak hour traffic mind you. We



What would you find in a Corvette museum? Corvettes!!



Ultimate dining setting at Graceland!



Concrete roads clickety clack like a train



*Do they have car shows over there?
Yes! Mobs of em!*

The most iconic part of the highway winding through the mountains in Arizona. Straight out of "CARS"

learned to not trust the GPS, *except when you are really lost*. We made it to the hotel! We also survived Beale St which is the birth place of rock n roll. Next day was the day to meet Elvis. There was plenty of wannabe Elvis as Elvis week wound up at Graceland. Now Elvis was a feller of immaculate taste when it came to cars. They have his collection on display in a museum and what a collection. Apart from Stutz Blackhawks there are the odd Cadillacs amongst the rest of an amazing collection. Then maybe a few more Cadillacs. And they are playing elvis songs and movies the whole time. You even get to sit in a Caddy while you eat your lunch.

Ahhh back to reality. Off we go to Tulsa. And it didnt take 24 hours. This is where we finally got onto the real route 66. You see 66 was one of the earliest highways to go right across the country. It was called the main street of America and supported 2000 odd miles of servos, motels and shops but when they bypassed it with their massive interstate freeways they just lost all of their customers and most of those places folded. They couldn't sell their business, so they just walked away leaving everything right there. Driving 66 is like driving a time capsule and for a nostalgia buff like myself it is heaven. The hustle and bustle of the freeways disappears as soon as you get on the old highway but it's not always easy to find it. 66 doesn't actually exist any more. Some of it has been dug up and is now paddocks. Other bits are fenced off on private property but there is still plenty of it if you don't mind looking for it a bit. We found motels where there were still fridges and beds in the





Plenty of this stuff about

rooms. All derelict, but you could see for thousands of miles how building the freeways had put people out of business. Because of the gaps in 66 sometimes you have to get on the interstate. If you are a law abiding feller and stick on the speed limit, you have countless semi trucks on your back bumper before they tear past. The trucks are punctuated with other cars, all zipping past, apparently not bothered by speedlimits. Its bloody great to get back on 66. You can immediately feel the stress releasing!! All along 66 there are people interested in the history of it all and decorate their premises with good old stuff, including parking any kinds of old cars out front. Every now and then you come across a car yard that sells nothing but the kind of machinery we type are interested in. I might have been tempted but I couldn't really show serious interest. Shirley would have severely battered me but what would have been worse was being deserted in a strange country without my expert navigator. You would never had heard from me again. Most of the way across the country you would not call spectacular, just green undulating hills. Once you got to Arizona things got better. And there really is a "Dead Mans Curve". And the most iconic bit (which is the curvy bit in CARS) was so good I drove it once slowly West to admire the scenery, once East for the scenery then West again at a speed more suiting a red Mustang with the roof down. There were side trips to good stuff like the Grand Canyon and Las Vegas but although we never actually hooked up with 66 till nearly half way through we tried to follow it deep into Los Angeles to its end at Santa Monica pier. I was reliving the words of "The Little Old Lady From Pasadena" as we cruised along into the city and the day faded into night. I did see signs saying we were in Pasadena when we kicked the GPS into life again. This guided us onto those soulless monsters called freeways and with a final bout of motoring insanity we arrived at our last hotel at the beach near the fabled Santa Monica pier. But the interesting stuff was not over just yet. The next day we arrived at the Pedersen Automobile (car for Aussies) Museum. That is another story all by itself.



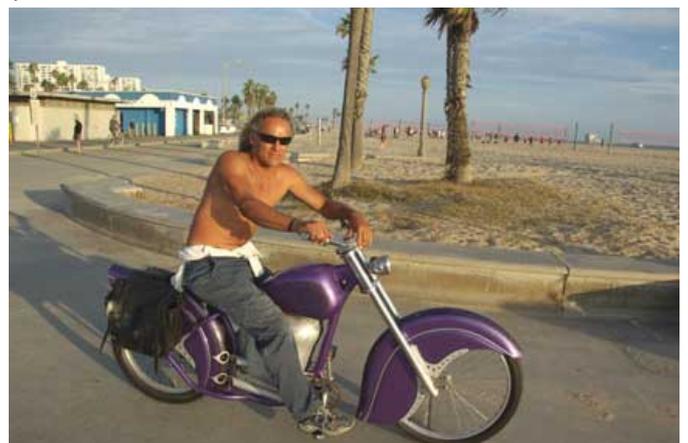
Would you believe they sell burgers in these nostalgic roadhouses ?



Lucky we didn't need petrol, er, gas, here



There were at least 4 '58 Thunderbirds in this car yard. Not a wreckers



Not all cars. Juan rode a custom pushbike. Really well done. He had a shed full of classic cars too!

Cars on the World Wide Web



With the next job on my Sunbeam S7 Deluxe is to have it's wheels rebuilt, I've been looking across the web for guides on respoking rims. I've come across a couple of excellent web sites that will translate well to whatever type of steel spoked rims you have.

Rebuilding a spoked wheel for the Royal Enfield Bullet at

<http://www.instructables.com/id/Rebuilding-a-Spoked-Wheel-for-the-Royal-Enfield-Bu/>

Here you'll find a step by step procedure with good photos showing how one person rebuilt their wheel for a Royal Enfield..



Or another website on rebuilding spokes at

<http://www.webbikeworld.com/motorcycle-wheels/spoke-wheels/>



I apologise for the links being so long this week,

but if you would like an easier way of visiting them simply goto our club website at

www.users.on.net/~mvec and there I've made a page that lists links to all the Cars on the WWW I've listed in the last 12 months.

Just click on the button labelled "Cars on WWW"

WOTS HAPPENING

Last month

At last month's committee meeting the Mandorah weekend for the 20th was put on hold to concentrate on a BBQ and farewell for Ben and Marie on the same day at the hangar. At the member's meeting that followed and after some discussion it was decided that anyone wishing to go to Mandorah could do so when it was pointed out that some had taken time off work especially for the weekend..

The farewell for Ben and Marie saw around 40 members come to say farewell and wish them well in their decision to up sticks and go live in Maleny in sunny Queensland. A good few miles were covered again reliving past trips and memories in the time that Ben and Marie have been involved with MVEC and we wish them well in their new adventure.

This Month

The monthly committee and members meeting is on the 8th of this month followed by the working bee on Sunday the 12th. This decision runs outside the normal pattern of not having a committee and members meeting during the same month as the AGM

The Deck Bar has been selected as the venue for this months outing for lunch and is scheduled for the 19th. The deck bar is situated on the corner of Mitchell and Bennett Street, off street parking is available opposite in the car park next to Parliament house so come along around 12ish and have lunch with other club members.

The AGM scheduled for the 11th of this month is now planned for Saturday the 25th October at Les and Marylyn Wilson's place commencing at 6pm, all are encouraged to attend, The address is 1051 McMillan's Road Knuckeyes Lagoon, between Stevens and Farrer Roads, entrance is from the service road, there will be a sign and an old car or truck out the front. The club will supply the food but bring your own drinks. The rescheduling was due in part to our auditor requesting more time to complete the audit of our books for AGM.

The Working Bee on the 12th

The initial process of dismantling and assessing the condition of all components of the Sandfly has been completed and the refurbishment phase has commenced. Tom, Leo and Rowan with help from a few members have progressed work on the Sandfly to the point where preparation and painting of the main frame and associated fittings can be carried out, so at the working bee this is what we will concentrate on, you don't need to be a master painter just roll up and give a hand on this great heritage project.

Any retired members with free time through the work will also be welcomed with open arms, if you are available See Rowan who does hangar duty every Thursday

Membership Renewals and VCC registration

A friendly reminder that if a member has become unfinancial and is the holder of VCC registered vehicle the club is duty bound to inform the MVR of the fact and your VCC registration/s will be cancelled,.

Peet Menzies President 02/10/08

**The Motor Vehicle Enthusiasts Club
extends it's thanks to**



**Shannons Insurance
For it's continued support
for the club**

Targa Tasmania Rallye Aril 2009

Howard Moses has entered this event driving his ex -MVEC 1970 Alfa Romeo Veloce and is after sponsors to assist in transporting the car to Melbourne, running and entry costs. He has plenty of room for sponsors signage on the car.

Contact Howard 0408 714 115

howardmoses@hotmail.com

WOTS ON THIS YEAR.....not a lot. Its just about over!

For info on any of these events call Chris on 0419 489 816

October 8 Monthly Meeting
25 Agm changed from 11th Oct
19 Deck Bar

November 12 Monthly meeting

December 13 Xmas Dinner is at Cazalys restaurant at Palmerston 13th Dec 7pm.

The AGM has been moved from 11th to 25th Oct. It will be at Les Wilson's at Knuckeys Lagoon at 6pm.

Food is provided . No charge but bring a chair.

Fancy doing a bit for your club? Consider nominating yourself for a position on the committee.

In particular we are after a catering officer and an events coordinator. Nomination forms at the hangar or can be emailed to you. *You need to go to the Agm just to experience Les and Marylyn's place!*

XMAS dinner cost is \$25 each and bookings need to be made and paid for by mid Nov.

Please bring a present with a maximum value of \$10.

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POSTAGE
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5 Month Management Course Lesson 3

A sales rep, an administration clerk, and the manager are walking to lunch when they find an antique oil lamp. They rub it and a Genie comes out.

The Genie says, 'I'll give each of you just one wish.'

'Me first! Me first!' says the admin clerk. 'I want to be in the Bahamas , driving a speedboat, without a care in the world.'

Puff! She's gone.

'Me next! Me next!' says the sales rep. 'I want to be in Hawaii , relaxing on the beach with my personal masseuse, an endless supply of Pina Coladas and the love of my life.'

Puff! He's gone.

'OK, you're up,' the Genie says to the manager.

The manager says, 'I want those two back in the office after lunch.'

Moral of the story:

Always let your boss have the first say.