

Motor Vehicle Enthusiasts Club

No 32

June 09

TRANSMISSION



The voice of the Motor Vehicle Enthusiasts Club

If you find you need more information about this club or just cant wait to join ring Peet Menzies on 0417 855222
GPO Box 911 Darwin 0801
In Katherine call 89710605
Newsletter enquiries to Ted propellers@bigpond.com or 89886049

Gone Fishin!



Rick loves trout fishing. Big deal you say, this magazine is about cars. Read on and you will see the connection.

Rick Brown, from USA, travels all over to pursue his love of trout fishing. Along the way gained a friendly rival, a Pommie bloke named Graham. After a bit of fierce competition Graham told Rick about the vintage Rolls Royce he had acquired. Rick was

sucked in like the fish to the fly. Soon he had his own 1923 Rolls Royce Silver Ghost. It was good but not in perfect condition and after pulling the carburettor down and reassembling it the car wouldn't run. Old mate Graham, from England, came straight over to sort the problems out. After a bit, once the car was up to scratch, Graham suggested they have a race. Now Rick likes a bit of a



Rick and Craig and the Rolls Royce Silver Ghost nice and clean at the start

tanks, one on each side of the road both with their gun turrets traversing and the barrels following him! Another time El Capitan would not let him leave the border and a dozen machine gun armed soldiers backed El Capitan up. When a bus arrived Rick figured the soldiers would not shoot them with all the witnesses about and slowly drove away even though there was

challenge and suggested the course be from the top of Alaska to Tierra Del Fuego. That is the top of North America to the bottom of South America. The race never eventuated but Graham did accompany Rick on the drive. It turned out to be quite a drive. By the time he got to central America the bridges had been washed out by a cyclone. Not to be discouraged he put the car on a ship bound for Buenos Aires and continued the trip later. The first problem was to get his car through customs. That took a week of intense bribing. From there it was a battle against the weather.

The mud was not too bad as it had solid permafrost 20 cm underneath. He made it all the way to the most southerly point of South America but it was a battle to get back through the border controls of numerous third world countries. He lost count of how many times he had pistols, revolvers and automatic rifles pointed at him, but the most memorable gun was when he drove between two

a gun held a few inches from his head. Luckily his thoughts were right. He reckoned he had to change his pants though! Later he took a passenger that was able to speak the lingo to help him through he border controls. The passenger had a wife who turned out to have dodgy credentials. She was arrested but Rick got through OK. And when he came across the border to his home country in the state of Texas they started emptying the Rolls out on the carpark to search it when the supervisor at the border looked him in the eye and asked if they would find any wayward thing.



The first taste of Central Australia's nice smooth tracks



A friendly camel drops in to share the campfire!



Rolls Royce service in the bush. Rick does the underneath bit. Craig issues orders!



Lake Caroline was just made for speed trials!

When Rick replied "no" they stopped and sent him on his way.

The assumption that Prudhoe Bay in Alaska was the most Northerly road in the world was shown to be wrong. Nordkapp in Norway was further North so it was back on the ship to Europe for the Rolls and a drive up to Nordkapp. Naturally he has driven to Cape Agulhas the most Southerly point of South Africa and just about everywhere else. During all this touring, the car had it's original limousine coachwork and he was able to take various members of his family with him including his teenage grand daughters. Rick loves to give rides to interested persons and let's face it, who isn't interested in a vintage Rolls Royce.

Interest in the Paris to Peking race prompted Rick to rip off the limo body (He assures me he carefully removed it) and replace it with a replica people carrier which is basically a ute. With his navigator, Tom Stevenson they drove thousands of miles in various off road conditions preparing for the event. On the beach at Morocco in NW Africa they drove 90 miles along the beach below the high tide mark. The beach is mined and the salt water effects the trigger mechanisms and stops them exploding. That's why he kept below the high tide line. Coming to rockbars which extended across the beach to the seawater, they had to time their passage to coincide with the trough in the waves. Drive through the gap below the rocks while the waves are receded. Get it wrong and you drown the car. The alternative of going the dry way round might get you blown up!

Faultless planning and determined driving saw them take overall line honours plus first in their vehicle age category in the Peking to Paris event.

So after all that what do you do for a bit of excitement? Easy, ship the car to Australia, the 57th country he has driven it in.

Last year Rick and Tom picked up the Rolls Royce from Brisbane and drove it to the top of Cape York, Darwin and Alice Springs, returning recently to continue his adventures, this time in the desert regions of central Australia. Shirley and I met him with our Nissan Patrol in Alice Springs after he had dusted off the Rolls and given it a service. He had his sights on crossing the Simp-



son Desert. The Colson track looked like a good route but the Aboriginal owners were not allowing anyone across it. The Hay River was another way across they suggested, but 3 months notice was required to process the necessary permits. Rick handled the situation with International diplomacy. Condensing 3 Months into 2 hours we headed off with the necessary papers. With copilot Craig Simpson, a gun trout fisherman from New Zealand, we set off North along the Stuart Hwy to head East across the Plenty Hwy. By the time we got to Gemtree we had had enough of main roads and turned off on some side tracks which were recommended 4wd only. Next day a bunch of offroad motorbike riders were telling us about the horror track they had traversed and had numerous get offs. It sure raised some eyebrows when we told them the Rolls had been thought there no problems! As the trip progressed we became used to people being amazed. Jervois saw us leave the beaten track again as we followed the Hay River towards Poepells Corner. We hoped to head across to Birdsville from there but a sat phone call to the National Park headquarters assured us Eyre Ck was flooded 50km west of Birdsville. It was several km wide and the track was closed. We decided to travel down till half our fuel was exhausted, then return. That would put us clear of Aboriginal land, in the middle of the Simpson Desert.

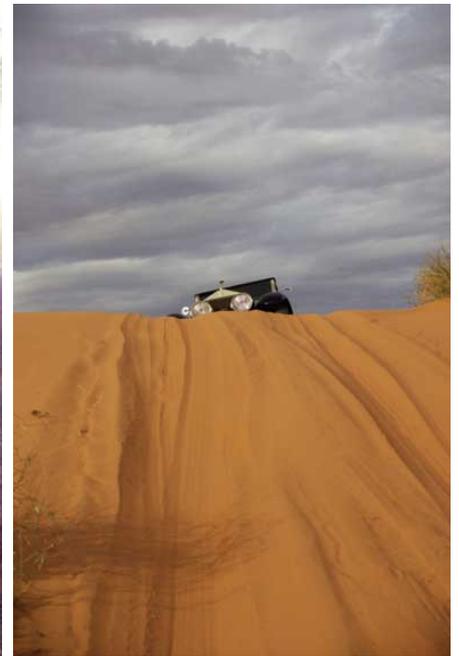


Rick didn't have a problem picking up a lady in the desert. Joyce jumped in for the cruise over Big Red

Vacant land where we could play and not upset anyone. The name of the game was to find out what a 1923 Silver Ghost was capable of. On the map was Lake Caroline. A clay pan several km wide. We reckoned we had found the track to the lake and it involved travelling along the dry Hay River for a bit. The problem was which way as there were tracks in both directions and the sand was really soft and the river very wide. It would be tough for the Nissan, real tough for the Rolls. We all piled in the Nissan for a reconnaissance so we didn't have to unduly stress the Rolls but after driving a few km in the



A million dollar loungeroom setting. Complete with river frontage!



Full noise on the Birdsville racetrack. Left the horses for dead!

sand found out the track went nowhere. Someone had been just messing in the sand. We had to deflate the tyres a bit more when the Nissan refused to go any further. We concluded it would be tough on the Rolls. Downstream we found the correct track and about to head for the Lake when Rick suggested he find a spot where he could cross the river at right angles instead of the lengthy drive along the sandy bed. "There probably hasn't been a Ghost on Lake Caroline for a long time" he said. We left two piles of stuff on the side of the track. Our Nissan back seat full and the stuff from the Rolls to lighten it. The plan was to tow it through the soft sand in the river and it would be ok by itself on the other side. With tyres deflated on both vehicles and a snatch strap attached to the front of the Rolls we were about to start the tow when Rick indicated he would like to attempt it under his own steam first just to see how far he

could get. Craig and I headed down the river a bit with cameras. Then down the bank he went and into the sand. I'm not to sure who was most surprised when Rick and the Rolls cruised past us right down the river and out the other side a half km away. Lake Caroline was made to do speed trials on. Perfectly flat. The cliffs on the other side shimmering in the mirage. We all had a drive of the Rolls. At first Shirley declined. Rick pointed out "When will you ever be able to drive a Silver Ghost on Lake Caroline again!" She accepted!

And driving back out was a breeze. And our piles of stuff were untouched. Amazing! Ever had a bush camel visit your camp at tea time. That's interesting too.

Most of the time the Rolls went first and we cruised along far enough back to miss the dust. Then one time when looking around at the sand-hills we notice one had a Rolls parked on top. It was time to play in the sand. It would not seem



The Plenty Highway meant plenty of bulldust!

right to describe a Rolls Royce Silver Ghost as tearing up the sandhills. And I don't believe the term would be accurate. With its massive 7 litres it doesn't really blast up the hills, it really just drives up quite elegantly. And silently. Without fuss too! We were off the track now making our own marks over virgin dunes where no wheels had ever been before and it was no problem at all for this 1923 beauty. We reached our lack of fuel induced turn around point just north of the point where Professor Madigan crossed the desert in 1939. Then it was back to the Plenty highway with its bull dust stretches, across to Boulia and down to Birdsville. The recent floods had changed the landscape from what I remember of a searing February many years ago. Where the recent water has been there is lush green grass. Where it hasn't been is dry and dusty. Where there is still water there are millions of birds and more green grass. We had to see Eyre Creek that stopped us from crossing the Simpson. We headed west from Birdsville across the dunes to check it out. We knew the first big dune you come to is "Big Red" the big daddy of dunes across the Simpson, so when we got to a fairly big dune we assumed it was it. I was pleased to blast straight over. Rick got to the top OK but when he stopped we had to put sand ladders under the rear wheels to get moving again. But we were elated that Big Red was so easy. Lots of modern day 4wds have all sorts of probs getting over Big Red. Lots don't succeed and have to take the alternate route over "Little Red" Our enthusiasm was dampened only a little bit when we came to a sign indicating we had in fact defeated Little Red. Ah well we will tackle Big Red on the way out! After crossing numerous sandhills we eventually came to Eyre Creek. It was most certainly impassable here. Not all that wide and no chance of crocodiles but I was not interested in swimming across to check out the other side as it was extremely *cold*. We camped nearby and in the morning headed back towards Big Red. Most of these dunes Rick was able to drive over without a problem. Occasionally though the Rolls would bog down but always a short stones throw from the summit. When this happened we



Night time was just as spectacular as the day!

would lay the plastic sand ladders behind the rear wheels. Rick would back onto these then we would lay another pair in front. Then he would drive over them. Then repeat the process. Three or four goes would get it over the top. You had to be careful behind the vehicle as it could fire those ladders out the back like a gun.

We came to Big Red. Non fussed, Rick drove up. Once again quite within sight of the top it came to a halt with the wheels spinning and it was out with the sand ladders. The sand ladders are about 1 metre long and we were making good headway when a couple of car lengths from the top the clutch started



They weren't kidding when they said Eyre Creek was impassable!

to slip and was exuding the smell of roast beef. It was not happy. We gave it a rest for a half hour but with the symptoms still the same and the thought that there was a fair chance they didn't have a spare clutch plate for a vintage Rolls Royce in Birdsville, we decided to give it a little tug those last few feet to the top. The Rolls had gone up first so I had to find an alternate route over then back up to the other side of the crest. Just a tiny tug and with the Rolls driving as well it was over. What a fantastic sight to see this magnificent car, 86 years old, get over Big Red. Arriving back at



That's Rick and his Rolls on top of Big Red. Absolutely fantastic!

Birdsville we were greeted with the news that they were allowing vehicles across the desert again via a detour to the north. By now Shirley and I were running low on time and heading back across would not get us back to Darwin in time to catch a previously booked plane so it was down the Birdsville Track to Maree. At Maree we took a plane flight to check out Lake Eyre with water in it. Absolutely fantastic but we needed to drive to it and see it up close! That road was seriously corrugated but would it phase a Rolls Royce? Not on your life! And I got my feet wet in Lake Eyre. And tasted it too. It's a bit salty. And it has a beach with white sand just like the ocean. Just needs some bikini girls and would be perfect!

William Creek hotel was just like any other stop on this trip. People appeared like flies but with cameras to check out Rick and his Rolls Royce. When they realised we were travelling with them they would often remark we were the back up vehicle. I would always reply "No, we are just keeping them company" They did not need a backup vehicle. Rick could and did drive the Rolls anywhere we could go. It was 100% reliable. The clutch business on Big Red did not let us down. It was more like we were uneasy about causing a problem that would have soured the trip. The Rolls had to be maintained and most days Craig and Rick would service some part of the vehicle. I was certainly pleased on the odd occasion I was able to help in some way. There was never an actual break down that stopped the car, the problems being a broken generator belt, a small leaf spring broken in the magneto (the engine also runs coil ignition so this did not stop it and there were spares for both problems) and a cracked oil line which was soldered at Birdsville. There were flat tyres during the crossing of the Simpson.

We parted company just up the road. Rick and Craig and the Rolls headed across to Coober Pedy, Shirley and I headed home. After checking out the opal fields they headed back to Mt Dare. Carrying enough fuel had always been the problem so there they engaged a local to cart fuel and some of their stuff to lighten their load. And then they headed back into the desert towards Birdsville. A bit more exploring south along the Rig road and other tracks brought them back to the French line at Poepells corner. Then the start of a horror stretch where they were bogged over and over most of the day. They still managed 60 km that day. Eventually they came to Eyre Creek, the river that stopped us 2 weeks before. Using the detour some distance North, they were able to cross the river. The water was up to the headlights but the bottom was rocky. When worrisome sounds came from below Rick killed the engine and accepted a tow the rest of the way through the river. The noise turned out to be the clutch which was full of water and spraying water around their knees. It did not turn out to be a problem though. Then on to Big Red. This time the attempt was made late in the afternoon. A bunch of 4WD's attempting to get over had churned the sand up seriously. It made little difference to the Rolls. Once again she got a stones throw from the top and with a small tug on the snatch strap was able to drive up the strap and over the top under her own power. From Birdsville they headed up to Mt Isa, across the Barkly and to Darwin.

Rick is now an MVEC member and the car is on display in our hangar till he returns for the next chapter.

And while we were away.....



Shirley gets her feet wet at Lake Eyre



Cocky early in the morning at Coward Springs



Craig soaks up a bit of literature by the fire



Ted E Bear travels with us to everywhere!



The Flying lady beneath the Southern Cross



The Old Ghan railway line at Curdimurka

Club Registration Scheme 5 months on, a refresher

As annual membership renewals are due members with vehicles registered in the Club Registration Scheme (CRS) need to keep in mind the following points:

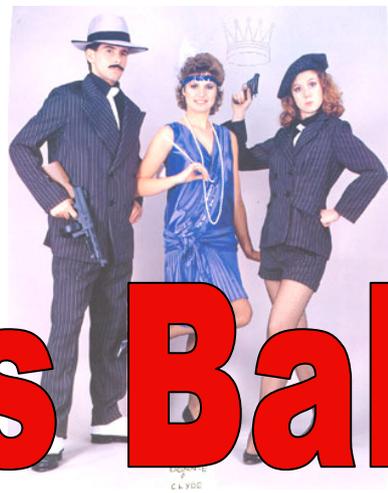
- You must be a financial member of the club, we give 30 days' grace after June 30th in regard to the CRS, after this date the club is duty bound to inform MVR of non financial members with CRS vehicles and your Club Registration may be cancelled by the MVR within 28days
- There are three categories in the CRS:
 1. Historic vehicles on a 30 year rolling cycle
 2. Hot Rods
 3. Individually Constructed Vehicles
- You are entitled to use your vehicle for 90 days each year with 60 days for club events and 30 days for restricted personal use but you cannot drive to work or use your vehicle to earn any income
- If you drive to the hangar this may be classed as a Club event in your log book
- You must fill out your log book at the start and finish of each day that you drive on public roads
- Use of your vehicle for events such as weddings etc: you and or the club cannot receive any reward or donation for this service
- Interstate travel is permitted on programmed Club events or when the Club, or a Club member, receives a written invitation to attend an event from the organisers of a formal interstate Club event. The Club committee is required to advise the MVR, in writing, that members of their Club intend to participate in an interstate event
- When renewing your annual registration, you must present the following to the club authorised signatory before going to the MVR:
 1. The completed R42 form for signing
 2. A current roadworthy inspection form (green slip)
 3. Your log book for checking and stamping
- Log books are issued yearly at registration renewal time by MVR hence there is no provision for 6 monthly registration in the CRS
- The Club does not require a second copy of the R42 form now, your contact and vehicle details will be recorded by the club signatory on a separate form
- Vehicles over 4.5 tonne can now be registered under the CRS scheme but cannot be used for commercial purposes, you are however allowed to carry other CRS vehicles or exhibits to shows and demonstrations connected with the club if your vehicle can do so
- Vehicles with Club Registration can be transferred to a new owner provided the new owner is a financial member of the club if not you must deregister the vehicle or transfer it to full registration before disposal
- Vehicles registered under the CRS must not be driven in any event, approved or not approved, that is identified as a competitive race, time trial, rally or other such situation where part, or all of, the event requires the vehicle to compete against other vehicles where speed identifies a winner or ranking position.
- Failure to comply with the conditions of registration may result in the driver and/or the registered owner being charged under the appropriate legislation. Individuals convicted of such offences may not be eligible for Club Registration in the future.
- MVR advise they will do a revision of the CRS 12 months after the introduction

Peet Menzies, President MVEC



*The Motor Vehicle
Enthusiasts Club*

presents



The Gangsters Ball

Live music by **“THE CELLMATES”**

Featuring **Rob Johns, Alan Campbell, Bill Roy**

Ballroom & Rock n Roll dancing

Sat 11 July 2009 7pm

**Berry Springs Recreation Reserve Hall
Cox Peninsular Rd , Berry Springs (Next door to the school)**

Due to prohibition era all alcohol is bootleg and you will have to bring your own.

**Please bring a plate of supper.
Soft drinks on sale. Tea and coffee provided.**

Heaters, Rods and Tommy guns welcome please ensure safety is on.

**Dress: Formal as the 1920's prohibition era. Prizes for....
best gangster and moll couple
best gangster car**

Bring your van or swag and stay the night. Alternatively accommodation available nearby at Lakes Resort. For accommodation book well in advance.

**Entry \$15 kids free Counterfeit notes not accepted
Bookings welcome
Contact Ted 89886049 or propellers@bigpond.com**



2 door 1954 morris minor
needs restoration 90% complete.
complete set of new rubbers.
\$600 Mick 0427827179

Free stuff

Get your free ads in here. Give stuff away, sell stuff , get information. Whatever you like.
Email Ted at propellers@bigpond.com or 89886049.
Deadline.. The end of the month

Do you want a special hobby car ???

MAZDA RX7

Limited Edition 1983

Not Registered

Only One Owner

Engine Rotary - needs

Phone 0414 813 996

SOLD

replacing

FIAT 132 Saloon car, 1979 WRC winning DOHC 2000cc motor, 5 speed close ratio gearbox, 14" wheels; suitable for recycling/ engine/gearbox transplant, or major restoration
\$250 ono

Mag wheels 13" Attractive Italian cast alloys by Alfa Romeo of Milan. \$200 set of four.
Howard Moses 0408 714 114,
4A Stokes St, Parap.



Hats off for the Beetle that didn't make it, years ago on the Birdsville Track!

The Gangsters Ball

This is shaping up to be a memorably fantastic night with 2 separate live acts. Rob Johns is reputed to be one of the best RnR acts anywhere and I am told he can get the whole place up on the dance floor, even people who can't dance! Alan Campbell will play anything Rob misses. Bill Roy is a DJ that I reckon has just about every song recorded by anybody and its all on his computer.

It's the middle of the dry season with cool nights so if you fancy getting the double breasted suit out, you wont cook in the heat. Wherever you have gangsters you have cops so you are sure to see Elliot Ness as well as Al Capone and his mates. Tommy guns will be the theme on the night. (Ask your kids for a loan of theirs) Or you can just come and have a ball watching the others. There will be real ballroom dancing as well as rock n roll. Never danced? Here is a chance to have a go. You are asked to bring a plate of supper to share. Softies on sale \$1 tea & coffee provided.

Did you realise you can book seats so you can have all your cobbles together at the same table? You will also guarantee you will get a table! Just ring Ted at 89886049 or propellers@bigpond.com You will also make it easier for the organiser (me) if you prebook!



The motor vehicle Enthusiasts Club
Extends its thanks to
**Shannons
Insurance**
For its continued support for the club

WOTS ON THIS YEAR

June	28	Bark Hut (Mary River) and back, with stop offs at Window on the Wetlands, Leaning Tree lagoon and Annabaroo Billabong Meet at Berrimah Caltex at 9.30am to leave at 10am; Wishart Siding - 10.30am Bring your own food or buy at the Bark Hut.
July	8	Monthly meet at hangar
	11	Gangsters Ball at Berry Springs Community Hall. Cops (Elliott Ness and mates) welcome too! Press your pinstripe suit. Oil your machine gun.. Cost \$15 kids free We now have two live professional acts (real good rock n roll plus middle of the road stuff) plus another playing recorded music. Bring a plate of supper. Don't miss it!
	12	Working bee at hangar
	19	MVEC vs Classic Holden Car club cricket match. At Batchelor oval. A blast! Leave Caltex Brmh 8am Wishart at 8.30am. Lunch supplied.Small charge. bring drinks and chairs
Aug	1-3	REJEX Rally Fantastic fun, Be there!
	12	Monthly meet at hangar

If undeliverable return to;
MOTOR VEHICLE ENTHUSIASTS CLUB
GPO BOX 911
DARWIN NT 0801

**PRINT
POST**
PP 545393-00032

POSTAGE
PAID
AUSTRALIA

Aug	16	Working bee at hangar
	22	Katherine Flying Fox Festival car show
	23	Mystery Run Palmerston to Dripstone cliffs for sunset tea. Meet at 3pm in carpark between Police Station and Council Chambers (off Chung Wah Tce). Bring your own everything.
Sept	6	Fathers day car show.
	9	Monthly meet at hangar
	13	Working bee at hangar
October	14	Monthly meet at hangar
	18	Working bee at hangar