

Motor Vehicle Enthusiasts Club

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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 08 89886049

The House of Buick



1959 convertible in concours condition totally surrounded by Buick !

In Perth recently I was fortunate to visit June and Les Woodruff and their collection of Buicks. To call it great would be a severe understatement! The treat started when you left the highway. The driveway was fairly impressive. Lovely gardens on either side with a beaut waterfall. There were pieces of vintage farm equipment resting here and there, a

good sign, and then I spied a street sign, Buick Avenue. I knew I was at the right address. Then I realised the trees had blocked my view to a massive shed. Les and his wife June have been collecting since the 1970's and this is no ordinary collection. Others have deemed it the best Buick collection outside the United States. Its not hard



1952 Diamond T and below, as found.



to see why.

The shed itself is massive and was designed and drawn by Les on a piece of graph paper. He had an engineer draw up plans and the only change was conversion from imperial to metric units. The look is exactly as planned. It's impressive from the outside decorated with enamel signs and other memorabilia. A large sign declares "The House of Buick" but when you walk through the door you enter another world! This is one of those times when it is tough to describe that first impression, but believe me it was fantastic, and it sure puts a smile on your face. The atmosphere here will affect absolutely anybody. Another seriously large sign at the back of the shed states "works of art by David Dunbar Buick", the bloke that started it all. Here are wall to wall and door to door Buicks. They are all in mint condition and range from 1910 to the 1970's with every decade represented with some decades having several examples. Some are local vehicles and some are imported from USA. Some are in original condition, others have been restored. There is a 1952 model that has 54000 miles on the clock. A beautiful pink 1958 Century Coupe had travelled only 78 miles when it came into Les's life. The odometer now shows 140 miles. How did this interest in Buicks happen? At the tender age of 9 Les had a clobber



1952 Buick is unrestored and has travelled only 60000 miles



1958 Buick (what else) Century. This car had done 78 miles when Les purchased it. It is up to 140 now!
Century was always Buick's fastest car. It would do 100 MPH.
(left) The muffler stamped with the date 11 1957.



whose Dad had bought a one year old second hand Buick. Les couldn't understand why the secondhand Buick would ride the local, rotten, potholed roads, a whole lot better than his Dad's brand new 1939 Vauxhall 25. The Buick model was a 1938 Century, named because it could travel at 100 MPH. It rode better as it had coil springs front and rear, unusual at the time. It made an impression as 40 odd years later Les acquired one in Melbourne. That was in the mid 1980's and he had it transported to Perth. It wasn't too flash and had been hand painted "yuk blue". It looked "bloody awful". It looks bloody fantastic now and Les and June have driven it all over the place, one year entering Adelaide's "Bay to Birdwood" rally. Other trips included the Buick Nationals. Once again interstate. There are no interstate cities even a little bit close to Perth. From here the collecting got underway.

Les had a contact in America sourcing cars for him when he expressed a desire for a twin cylinder chain drive Buick. It turned out the contact had been walking past a 1910 model on numerous occasions but it was in a sad state and he was never interested in it. Les became the new owner and just like all the other cars in the shed, it is now in original condition. It is not only Buick cars in this collection. The walls are adorned with enamel signs promoting not only Buick cars but anything of a motoring nature. (David Dunbar Buick's other claim to fame is he was the one that invented the process of enamelling steel, used at the time to make signs. (A process unmodified and still in use today to enamel baths and hand basins) Under a mezzanine floor is a bar area adorned with mirrors displaying Buick logos, glassware, model Buicks, any kind of memorabilia you could imagine, its there. There is the odd item not Buick too! I spied a WLA Harley hiding next to a Buick.

On the other side of one wall of the shed is the workshop. With a collection like this you would need a fairly substantial workshop, eh? You needn't worry. The workshop is nearly the same length as the display shed and just as spotless. It also contains a Diamond T fire engine and a Diamond T truck, both in brand new condition, The truck door signwritten to reflect Les and June's association with farming. Outside the workshop there is another immaculate 1952 Diamond T 520 halfway out the door, but on closer inspection the door really isn't a door and the Diamond T is really only half there. You see Les found it on a rubbish tip. Someone wanted the back half to build a fertiliser spreader. They cut that bit off and dumped the front half. Lucky Les came along and rescued that bit. Looks pretty impressive, it may



This is the 1st Buick Skylark in Oz. These were all pre sold before release. Was the 1st V8 Buick.



1940 50 Series Coupe. This car is about to be moved to its new home in Switzerland



1938 Diamond T Fire engine. Notice every car's number plate reflects its model.

Below: The workshop. Dreamsville!





This is where it all started! A 1938 Buick Century. Great suspension to soak up the bumpy roads of the era and it would do 100 MPH.

be only the front half, but it is totally immaculate inside and out
But not everything is like new. There are a couple of “as founds” parked outside under a tarp. A 1929 Silver Anniversary model, a 1926 ute and a Lanz Bulldog tractor. The ute had been sitting around so long the oil had separated. It was brand new oil on top but not too flash down below where the oil pump draws it from. All he had to do was put some real oil in it and hot wire it and it runs like a beauty.

The sad thing about this story is that the collection is to be broken up. Les set himself a goal to keep it intact till he reached 80 years old. He has reached that goal and admits it is a bit of a task maintaining so many vehicles. That and his high maintenance very large garden he has decided to downsize the collection. The first car to go was already on a trailer when I was there. The 1940 50 series coupe was about to embark on a journey to it's new owner in Switzerland. This car gets around a bit. Les got it from the Hersheys swap meet in USA about 14 years ago. But maybe there is some good news after all. If you are interested in becoming the owner of one of these lovely vehicles, contact me and I will forward your contact to Les. My contact is on the front page.



There is more than just cars in this collection!



The blue 1936 Roadmaster convertible has had more than \$50000 spent on the restoration, and Les has done some of the work. That amount doesn't include the initial purchase price!

The sign above the end door states "works of art by David Dunbar Buick" They sure are!



Models, mirrors, memorabilia, most of it has Buick on it!



Enter the unassuming green door and you are in a different world, the world of Buick!



A 1929 model, and a 1926 ute. Les' Dad had one so he wanted one. A blacksmith built the ute body. Car runs fine. Rubs shoulders under the tarp with Lanz Bulldog tractor

1910 model was the 1st 2 cylinder car with the engine under the bonnet. (it was also the last)



The legendary Bill Eldridge and co-driver Peter Langford with the 1928 Chev. They have been across every track in Oz except the Canning Stock Route. With the mention of a 4wd Bill replied quick as a flash "might as well not do it!"

crucible and a piece of pipe from a fencepost as a mandrel. And here was the old engine demigod in person. He wasn't alone either. His co-pilot in the 1928 Chev was Peter Langford and they were accompanied by Herman Christian and Ray Smith in Herman's 1928 Chrysler. All of them were from Melbourne. They were away on a 6 week holiday and seeing they were driving such old cars they didn't take the longest route possible. From sunny Melbourne they headed north to the middle of NSW, to Whitecliffs, then via the Channel country to Longreach in Qld, the Plenty Hwy to Alice Springs in NT, the Tanami track to Halls Creek in WA, Kununurra, across Ivanhoe crossing to Wyndham, the Gibb River Rd, (remember my thoughts at the start) Derby, Marble Bar and I

met them in Karijini National Park near Newman in WA. From there they were actually going home via

Cruising vintage style

A few years ago I remember a club event where participants were to travel over the Gibb River road in Northern WA. The event was advertised for modern 4WD's. No old vehicles welcome on this run. My thoughts at the time were that the old vehicles had a better chance of getting through than the modern ones.

On to the present and while cruising around the many gorges in the Pilbara, once again in WA, I spied a couple of older vehicles parked in amongst the sea of shiny, if not dusty, brand new 4WD's. Being a sticky beak by nature I put myself in a position that allowed me to keep my eyes on one of them while I boiled the billy and sure enough, someone eventually came to the old Chev and started digging through its contents. The owner hopefully? I took a punt and introduced myself. The gent assured me he was the owner and introduced himself as Bill Eldridge of the Vintage Drivers Club all the way from Victoria. Straight away I recognised the name as the bloke that had come to the aid of Don at work when his Chev had died at Nullarbor (Transmission 33 July 2009) Bill had ripped the engine out of his own Chev, chucked it in the back of his Falcon ute and taken it across from Melbourne to Nullarbor, halfway across the country, to get Don mobile again. Don was fairly emphatic about Bill's engine fixing ability and recalled the time he poured a whitemetal bearing using a campfire as a forge, a baked beans tin as a



The Chev tows a well laden trailer no worries



Trackside fix for a broken manifold. Working fine too!



Hermann Christian and Ray Smith with the '28 Chrysler. Hermann is really proud that he could extract a brand new Toyota from a hopeless bog with it. It's the only time the winch got used. The bent drivers side mudguard was courtesy of a Skippy the second day out. Note the modern tyres. They last infinitely longer than the reproduction old school ones!



Leonora and Kalgoorlie which is a surprisingly short route. They could have stretched it by going to Perth, but Perth is a big population centre with bitumen roads and you can see they tend to steer clear of these places.

And did they have any problems? Well yes. There were a couple with the Chev. It broke the steering tie rod on the Tanami track. Solid 5/8" steel and it snapped in half. 1928 Chev spares are a bit scarce around here so they sleeved it with a tent pole and bound it up well with wire. They then drove it 600km to Halls Creek and welded it back together. Later on the Gibb River Rd a large hole appeared in the exhaust manifold. The solution: a large blob of silicone, a couple of bits of scrap metal and some tie wire to hold it all together. It was still working fine when I saw it and I have no doubt it made it all the way back to Melbourne.

When I asked them if the cars were standard I was devastated when Herman admitted his Chrysler had an engine swap. The '28 Chrysler was running a '26 engine. Herman had also changed the wheels

to modern 16" split rims. The reason was so he could fit modern tyres. Both cars had started the trip with new tyres. The Chev's old style tyres were worn out and the Chrysler's were still as new. The modern tyres also cost a fraction of the price of the reproduction old tyres. But the Piece d'resistance was hanging off the front of Herman's car. An electric winch! Herman proudly explained that the only time it had been used was to pull a brand new Toyota Prado out of a bog on the Gibb River Rd.(remember my thoughts at the start) For the 1928 Chev, this is it's 3rd trip around Australia (including Tassie) since it was reconditioned 250000 miles ago.

They have done every track in Australia except the Canning Stock Route. When a suggestion of attempting it with 4WD help came up, Bill replied "you may as well not do it"

And remember Don? He started out on this trip in his Chev but turned back at Alice Springs. Not from car troubles but due to the love of a lady.

And to my original thoughts I mentioned at the start. I think they were well founded!



The next instalment of Colin De La Rue's collection.

1926 AJS G8 498^{cc} (3½ Hp.)

Engine No. G 85624

Frame No. G 85624

A spare left crankcase half (drive side) No. G 90069, including crank & con rod, barrel and piston was picked up in Melbourne in about 1963.

This bike was bought new by my father in December 1926 from the Melbourne agents Stillwell & Parry. The G8 model has some degree of historical interest, as it is the first 500cc single that AJS made. Dad used it for day-to-day riding and also for some dirt-track racing. He found it not really ideal for the dirt; probably because the frame was rather too long and high.

It was stored at the family farm in western Victoria from about 1939 to about 1953 when it was sketchily re-fettled for me to learn to ride. I had great fun riding around the paddocks and back lanes, but after a couple of years the piston broke (fortunately with no corollary damage) and it was laid up again, except for one brief flurry around the end of the 50's when Dad had it running (generating billows of smoke), with an undersized piston.

Once again the AJS was tucked away in a shed, as Dad was spending his time tidying up a Norton Dominator 88 he had acquired. It was during this period that I located the spare engine parts mentioned above. The barrel and piston would solve the main problem with the bike, but due to Dad's age and my absence living interstate the poor machine languished there for many years. After he had been admitted to a nursing home in the 1980's Dad gave the AJS to me, while my brother was given the Norton Dominator.

I brought it up to Darwin in January 1984, to be tidied up and take its place in the sequence of family machines. Once again it languished while I allowed myself to be distracted by such frivolities as work. At last, God willing, 2010 might be the Year of the AJS.

There are a few mechanical jobs to be done to bring the AJS back to top condition, but its main need is a sympathetic tending up. As Dad was not the sort of person to throw anything away, the tools, owners manual, acetylene lights, racing numbers and various replaced bits & pieces have been kept with it and should make the task of restoration relatively simple.

Some modifications were made to the machine in its heyday – and will be carefully retained:

- A Binks "Mouse Trap" sports carburettor was fitted, more or less from purchase, and a lengthened and curved inlet tract was made for the carbie, so that it would clear the frame saddle tube.
- The lower brackets of the Druid front fork springs were lowered and gusseted, to fit longer, stronger springs.
- Cut-down mudguards were made up for racing; although the originals were kept.
- The evil-looking steering damper cross bar adjuster was replaced with a rather elegant spoked knob, and the fork bump damper adjusters were fitted with adjusting thumb levers.
- The contour of the handle bars was altered for better handling.
- Spare hubs are available to convert the bike to wired-on tyres, if this seems suitable.

The only difficult problem with the machine, other than age and neglect, is the Mazak mechanical oil pump, which has disintegrated over the years. As a back-up hand pump is fitted it can still be ridden, but new oil pump parts need to be made up.



The AJS in the 1920's

And the 1930's (Editor's note.. Times still have not changed. There are always chics around good bikes!)



For sale 1926 Dodge parts,
Chassis, Cowl, Bonnet,
Radiator surround, Radiator
\$500 ono
Ph Eddy 0437426468

**WANTED---GEARBOX OR PARTS
TO FIT 1927/28 CHRYSLER.
PHONE STAN 89270117**

**Wanted
secondhand car trailer**
with a winch in reasonable condition and
reasonable price

Gwenda 0409826745

Help, save me from the crusher!

I have a 1980 1600 mk2 Escort 4 door sedan that needs a new home. The body has rust. Mechanically it was OK when laid up on blocks 4 years ago. I don't have the desire to either rebuild it or strip it for parts, but I do need the space it occupies! I would rather give it to someone as a parts donor than see it Crushed.
Contact Rod Barker on 0418 891 878 or 08 89453566"



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get information, find a lover. Whatever you like.
For photos to be published they need to come to me
straight out of the camera with no editing at all.
Email Ted at propellers@bigpond.com
or phone 89886049.
Deadline.. The end of the month

MVEC has a new website
www.mvec.org.au
Check it out

**Vincent Aviation are looking for someone to cut
and polish their aeroplanes** (small ones) If you
reckon that sounds like a fun way to make a dollar,
contact 0438 406 190.

Wanted
A station wagon from the chrome bumper era
In reasonable condition
Up to \$2000
Anthony
0434585526

The Federation of Vintage and Classic Vehicles in Victoria granted \$750 to help with Katherine clubs project to cement the floor of their shed (we are a member of this organisation) What a neat bunch!

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

Reminder MVEC NT Club Registration Scheme 2010/2011

The final day for renewal of MVEC membership is 30th September 2010

- Any member owning one or more Club Registered vehicle/s must be financial by the above date, after this date the club is duty bound to inform MVR of non financial members with CRS vehicle/s 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.

Note: A written submission to the club committee is required, we then must advise the MVR, in writing, that a club member/s intends to participate in an interstate event

- When renewing your annual registration, you must present the following to a club authorised signatory before going to the MVR:
 1. Two completed R42 forms (valid for 6 weeks) for signing with your membership and vehicle registration plate number included in the space provided.
 2. A current roadworthy inspection form (green slip)
 3. Your log book for auditing, stamping and signing.
 4. You must tell us of your registration date after you pay at the MVR and registration plate number when issued for new registrations.
- Log books are issued yearly at registration renewal time by MVR there is no provision for 6 monthly registration in the CRS.
- The second copy of the R42 form is kept by MVEC, your contact and vehicle details will be recorded on our club register.
- 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 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.
- Members may use their Club Registered vehicles in events such as Variety Club bashes, provided that the club committee is informed in writing, these events may be classed as a club run by the committee. log books must be filled in according to the rules
- 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.
- 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

Peet Menzies

President MVEC



**SHANNONS 2010
HIDDEN VALLEY
INVITATION RUN
Sunday September 26th**

John Palamountain and SHANNONS Insurance again invites members of Darwin's motoring clubs to experience the thrill of driving your classic car or bike around Darwin's Hidden Valley Race Circuit. Members of those clubs invited to attend include CHCC, CFCC, MGCC, MVEC Darwin & Katherine, Nameless Nomads, Porsche Car Club and Ute Club. Only members of these clubs are invited to participate.

This year groups will again be divided into Tourers who wish to cruise around the circuit, and those who want to drive a little quicker around the 2.9km circuit.

After a couple of familiarisation laps in convoy, Tourers will then be free to relax and watch the rest of the proceedings while the rest will line up in pit lane for 3 quicker laps.

Those doing quicker laps are reminded that this is not intended to be a speed event nor is it a race event, it's simply a chance to enjoy your car and have a couple of laps of the circuit at a respectable pace.

Drivers and passengers will be required to sign an indemnity form prior to going out onto the track.

Details.....

ASSEMBLY: MVEC Clubrooms, QANTAS Hangar, MacDonald Street, Parap, 8:30am.
There will be a short briefing before the convoy departs.

DEPART: Cruise convoy will leave the Hangar at 9:00am sharp and proceed around town making its way to Hidden Valley.

A BBQ and drinks will be provided to participants, courtesy of SHANNONS in the Pit Garages.

If you have any queries, please feel free to contact John Palamountain on 0417 262 918

See you there.....

Laurie Feehan
Event Co-Ordinator

John Palamountain
BusinessDevelopment Manager
Shannons NT.

Wots on

- 26 Sept **Shannons Day.** Cruise around town then get to hoon around Hidden Valley Raceway
See attached flyer for details.
- 13th October **Monthly meeting** at the Hangar.
- 6th Nov **AGM** at the hangar. Barbie afterwards. It's only once a year. Be there!
- 25th Dec **Christmas Day.** You didn't really need a reminder did you.

The monthly meeting is always on the 2nd Wed of the month.
On the following Sun there is always a working bee at the hangar.

If undeliverable return to;
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During a commercial airline flight an Air Force Pilot was seated next to a young mother with a babe in arms. When the baby began crying during the descent for landing, the mother began nursing the infant as discreetly as possible.

The pilot pretended not to notice and, upon disembarking, he gallantly offered his assistance to help with the various baby-related impedimenta.

When the young mother expressed her gratitude, the pilot responded, "Gosh, that's a good looking baby . . . and he sure was hungry!"

Somewhat embarrassed, the mother explained that her pediatrician said nursing would help alleviate the pressure in the baby's ears.

The Air Force pilot sadly shook his head, and in true Air Force pilot fashion exclaimed,

"What a shame. And all these years, I've been chewing gum."