

Motor Vehicle Enthusiasts Club



No 118

MAY 2017

TRANSMISSION

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

GPO Box 911 Darwin 0801
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Newsletter enquiries to Ted longtelescope@gmail.com



1904 single cylinder Wolseley.
Turn the page for the rest of Gordon
and Catherine Berg's collection

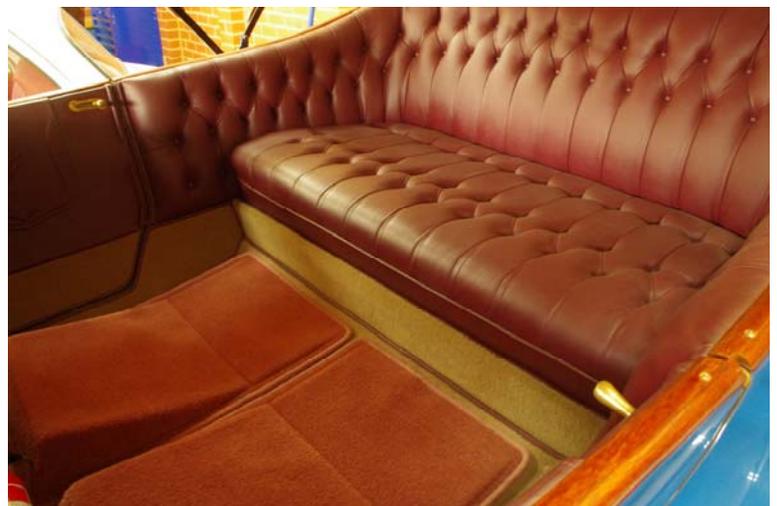


The immaculately restored Fiat and the extravagant back seat compartment.

Sometimes you come across stuff in the most unlikely places. Inner city Melbourne is one spot you might expect to find a cramped little garage with at best a couple of old spanners or signs next to the boring generic modern car.

Gordon and Catherine Berg have blown that idea completely to bits. Right there in the backyard of his beautiful old time house they has filled in the back yard with sheds that match the era of the house, and filled the sheds with cars from 1904 to just short of 1960. And like any real enthusiasts they have more cars than shed space. Some are parked on trailers, other in trailers and at least one, elsewhere.

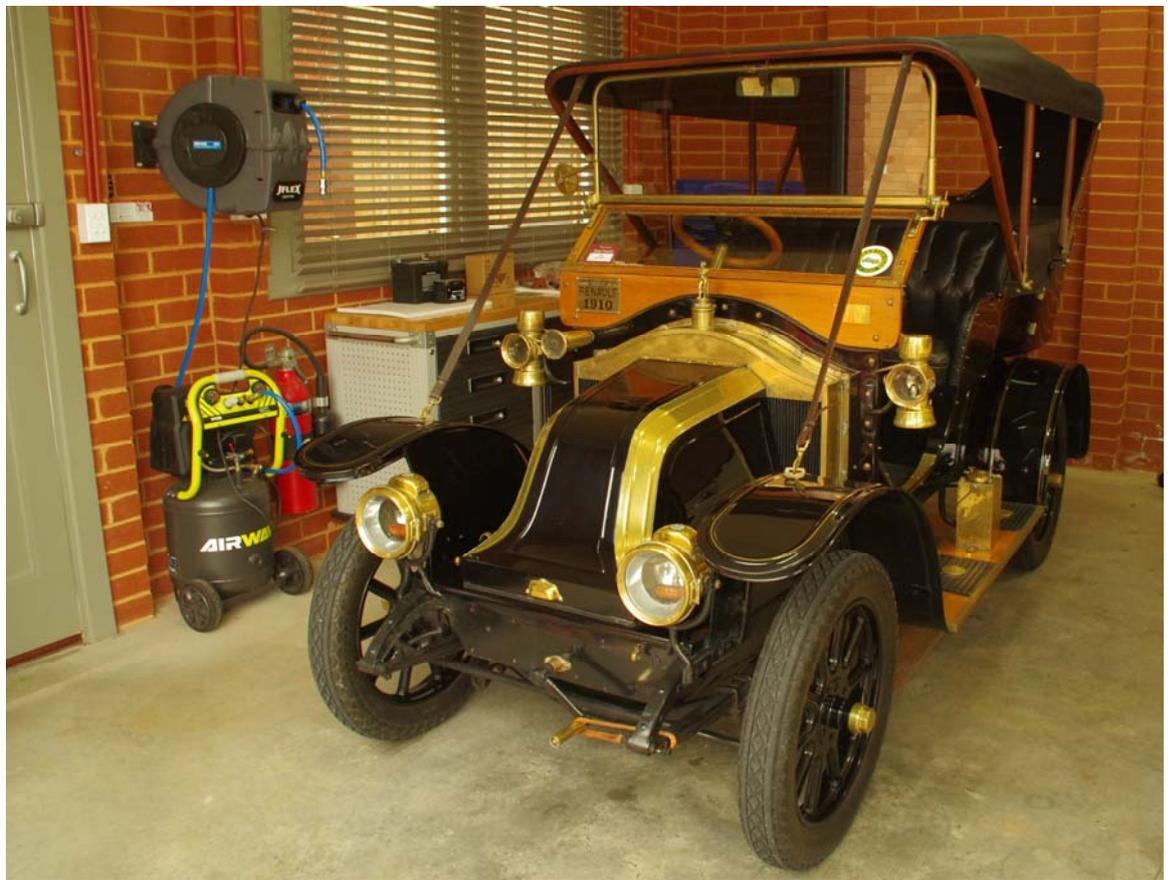
The latest addition to the fleet is a 1914 Fiat. In it's heyday it was a tourist vehicle at Jenolan Caves. With it's cavernous back seat space it was perfect to take 2 tourists and their suitcases up to the caves with style. In more recent times it came into the hands of a professional car restorer in Qld who was doing the vehicle up for himself. Unfortunately the gentleman died before he finished it and his son, who was his business partner wasn't interested in keeping it , so finished the restoration and put it up for sale. Although it is one beautifully presented car, the body is mostly original as is the timber in it. One mudguard was reproduced as being too damaged to repair. The rest is original from new. I crossed paths with Gordon at the veteran rally in Tassie last year where he had en-



Lovely looking engine unfortunately had a coolant leak.



tered the Fiat, but wasn't driving it. Unfortunately he had noticed that even though he topped it up each day, the radiator level was dropping and the car hadn't been started. And there was no coolant dropping on the floor under the car. That meant it was filling up the sump. Bummer!! That doesn't necessarily mean a cracked block as there are a couple of gaskets involved that if leaking could cause the problem, but not wanting to risk being stuck in the back blocks of Tasmania, and having a suitable alternative car, they left the Fiat at home.

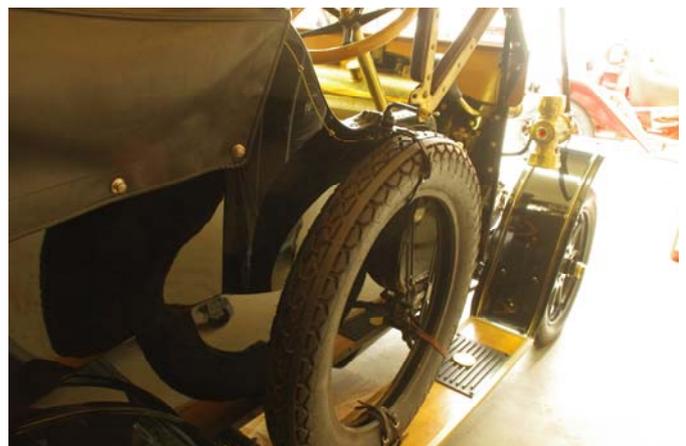


1919 Renault is a pretty car but all that brass needs to be polished.

They actually have two eligible cars that they could have taken, but for the sake of comfort (roof) and performance they took the 1910 Renault. This car had been done up by another member of the veteran car club who had decided to move into smaller premises and was selling his collection. Gordon reckoned it would be a good car for the one and two cylinder rallies they have down there, plus it had the added bonus of a roof and windscreen. (With a fair complexion Gordon reckons he is over getting fried, motoring out in the sun and wind) And the Renault didn't miss a beat during the Tasmania trip. But driving these cars through Melbourne and on and off the ferry certainly raises some eyebrows. The eligible car that they left home is a 1904 single cylinder Wolseley. They have had that one since the 1980's. They already had another Wolseley that was actually an older one although it was a two cylinder model. It was definitely what you would call a project and a massive project at that, so when an acquaintance let it be known he intended to sell his similar car that he had painstakingly restored, Gordon snapped it up. This is not a high performance vehicle but is great for participating in one and 2 cylinder rallies. The lack of any weather protection and no windscreen at all makes the driver and passenger prime subjects for getting fried with sun and windburn, so these days it is reserved for day trips. When this car was found before it underwent the restoration process, the scrappies had previously discovered it and removed all the brass bits they could find. That included the carby and the water pump, consequently neither of the items on the car are of the correct type. The water pump is currently a Jabsco type, commonly found on boats and



A spare tyre, not a spare wheel!





Water pump is not original but it looks pretty good.

Gordon has no idea what the original may have looked like, but the carby is a different story. Someone in NZ is in the process of casting a brand new replica so Gordon has asked him to cast a second one for him. Once it has been machined it will be exactly as it was when new. The petrol tank was a happier story. Although copper and brass it was painted black and didn't look valuable and survived. When this Wolseley was new it was one of the first motor cars to grace the streets of Goulburn in NSW.

And for times when the weather is not all that flash there is a 1958 Wolseley 1500 in remarkably original condition inside and out. Apart from a small repair on one of the rear quarters the paint is the same paint that was applied at new. Same deal with the interior right down to the rubber floor mats in the front. These cars were derived from the Morris Minor and were basically the same as the Austin Lancer and Morris Major but with upgraded levels of trim.

And every shed needs a project car. In totally dismantled state is a 1916 Buick Cabriolet. What makes a cabriolet different? It hasn't got a folding windscreen and it has glass pull up windows. This one came from Texas and was complete when Gordon got his hands on it. He has driven it. But it has a damaged chassis from a collision a long time ago, with a bodgy repair job. So it is totally dismantled, literally.

Actually there is a second project car here, a '31 model Buick buckboard. It started its life as a tourer, but, as what was common back in the days it was converted into a ute or in the terminology of yesteryear, a buckboard. Gordon has a tourer body to get back to its original shape.

And not at home at the moment is another Buick. A 1930 Marquette, a sidevalve companion for the more expensive models. They only made them for one year. But that second project has Gordon wondering about the logic of the amount of work involved in bringing it



The 1904 Wolseley lives tucked away in it's own covered trailer



Totally dismantled Buick cabriolet above and buckboard/tourer below.



back to glory because he already has a 1931 Buick. This one is no project. It dazzles your eyes, a real thing of beauty. It is no wonder really that Gordon says it's his favourite car. He and his brother bought it in partnership way back in the 1970's when they acquired it from someone that had a grand plan for it, but the project had stalled, would you believe, because the gent's wife wanted a sedan, not a tourer. And once the job was fin-



Gordon with the Wolseley 1500 and grandson and future vehicle enthusiast, Jack.

Interior of the Wolseley is in the same condition as the rest of it, unrestored and lovely.



This is the first of the straight eight Buicks Is remarkably light to drive



Straight 8 looks remarkably like a stretched Holden grey motor.



Buick body was built by Holdens body works.



History of motorsport in the Northern Territory by Peter Forest

A few months ago we were delighted to accept an invitation from MotorSports NT to write and publish a history of motor sports in the Territory. For us, this is a wonderful opportunity to tell the story of sports that have more participants, supporters and spectators than any other sporting activity in the Territory.

In case any of you are wondering how we fit into all this, we have been researching and writing and broadcasting about the Territory's history for forty years now. Some of you may remember our series of historical features that ran in the NT News from 1996 to 2008, also our ABC radio broadcasts. We are always glad to work on important aspects of our history that reflect how our community has evolved - and motor sports have surely been an important part of the Territory's evolution.

We are now well advanced with our research work on this project, but we are a long way from the chequered flag. We need help - from people who have been associated with any aspect of Territory motor sport, people who would like to see the history of their sports recorded before it is too late. We would be really glad to hear from anyone who has memories, photographs or anything else that they would be prepared to share. That material will form the basis of our book, with full acknowledgment. With the agreement of the owner, materials could eventually be included within an archive of Northern Territory motor sports history to be kept by NTMS.

So, if you are willing to help, please contact us - on 08 8941 0435 or 0427 410 435; or by email to history@forrest.net.au

We have promised to keep your editor Ted Mumme advised on the progress of our work and we have agreed to let him have occasional short items for the TRansmission newsletter, based on things that turn up during our research into the earlier days of Territory motor sport.

Here is our first offering, based on reports of the motor sports events held at the Labor Day Sports, at Knuckey's Lagoon on 30 June 1930. So far as we have yet found, this was one of the very earliest, if not the first, organised motor sports activities in the Territory's history.....

On 24 June 1930 Darwin's *Northern Standard* newspaper reported 'The Committee have the ground preparations well in hand, a motor track has been cleared this year for motor events and these promise to be well contested. This is a new departure for sport in Darwin and the committee is desirous that it should be a big success, if only to popularize motor car sporting events. The Ten Mile picnic ground has been well cleared, the lagoon is covered with beautiful water lilies and the day's outing should be availed of by those who wish to get out from town for a good day's outing and sport. A special train will run to the ground ... motor cars will also run.'

The feature event for motor cars was the Slow Race (for any make of car), won by J. Lee's Nash, driven by Ah Fook, from Fang Cheong Loong's Dodge, driven by A. Jan. There was also a Blindfold motor driving competition and 'Spearing the Balloon from a Moving Motor Car.'

The novelty events were hugely popular. Motor sports in the Territory had got away to a flying start. They are still flying!

I am looking for a project bike

Something not too hard if possible something like a BSA or Triumph but open to anything similar possible part complete with rough panel work maybe not all original not fussy just something to play with.

Steve 0439836548 or stevlynn3@gmail.com

2 Daimler 250 sedans

One white, one sky blue.
\$10000 ono each

Bob Kennedy 0427803329

Club Rego scheme

MVR have been conducting spot checks on log books lately. Make sure you make an entry each time you take your club registered car out. Apart from having your own rego cancelled you could muck up a good system up for everybody by non compliance.

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Email Ted at longtelescope@gmail.com

Or phone 89886049

Deadline.... The end of the month.

Previous editions

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

1980 GH SE SIGMA

2 litre, Auto, 148000kms, Club Rego. Call or email for more info. Located in Katherine \$3500

0415 974254 – ben_thomp@yahoo.com



**The Motor Vehicle Enthusiasts
Club
extends it's thanks to
Shannons Insurance
For it's continued support for the
club**



WOTS ON THIS YEAR

Come along and enjoy!

On the 2nd Wed of every month there is a members meeting at the hangar 7.30 pm plus bbq about 7pm.

Also there is a working bee at the hangar the following Sunday.

May 14 Sunday Tomorrow. Legacy day at Aviation Museum. Open cockpit day. Club will be selling snags to raise money for Legacy. Also old cars on display so bring along your interesting old car and have a sit in the cockpit of a Sabre or something that jogs childhood memories. From 9 am.

July 8 Sat night. Gangsters Ball at Berry Springs. Dress up. Dance. Drink bootleg liquor.

Spark Plugs

With injected engines the norm these days, the problem of spark plugs becoming wet with petrol vanished, so spark plug manufacturers stopped glazing the porcelain insulator. With a modern engine this is not a problem but some of us still drive cars with carburetors and sometimes those spark plugs do get wet and die. They just stop sparking. Cleaning them doesn't help, the porcelain just stops insulating the high voltage and all you can do is chuck them and buy new ones. I personally have chucked heaps of them.

But I am now digging in the rubbish tin as I have found a way to fix them.

Get your oxy torch and adjust it to the smallest neutral flame you can get and heat the insulator till it glows white hot. It doesn't take long. You will probably have the electrode and the end of the thread glowing red hot but that doesn't seem to matter, the main thing you need to be careful of is not melting off the outer electrode. I held the torch long enough to have the electrode white hot for maybe 3 seconds and plugs that were totally dead are now back in my engine and running fine.

An Aussie digger is captured in the desert by Rommel's troops during World War 2. He is brought before the commandant who says, "We decided that you will be executed as a spy, but you can walk free if you can complete three tests we will give you. If you don't complete them successfully, you will die anyway. What is it to be?"

The Aussie, figuring he's got nothing to lose says, "OK, I'll do the three tests. What are they?"

"See those three tents?" Says the commandant. "For test number one, you will go into the first tent where you will find five bottles of schnapps. You must drink each bottle until it is empty. For test number two, you must go into the second tent where you will find a ferocious lion with an impacted wisdom tooth. You will remove the tooth with your bare hands."

"Crickey!" says the digger. "What's the third test then?"

"In tent number three, you will find a beautiful woman who has not been made love to for over ten years. You will stay in her tent until her cravings are completely satisfied. If you complete all three tests, you are a free man," says the commandant.

With that, the Aussie goes into the first tent and about an hour later comes staggering out and zig zags his way into the second tent. All of a sudden there is a gigantic roar from the lion, the walls of the tent begin to flap furiously as it rocks from side to side. After about five minutes of roaring and crashing, the digger comes staggering out. He weaves his way up to the commandant and slurs, "OK Fritz, now where's that shiela with the impacted wisdom tooth?"