

Motor Vehicle Enthusiasts Club



No 141

FEB 2021

TRANSMISSION

Australia Day Ute Run





I have written about the Aussie day ute run before, and I had finished writing this months newsletter, so I wasn't going to worry about reporting on it. But it was such a ripper turnout it seemed a shame not to share it, and when I was told of the protests and bullshit about invasion day in the other states I deemed it necessary to spread the word that Australia day is alive and well here in Darwin. Apart from hundreds of utes decked out with as much Aussie stuff as is possible to fit on, the crowds on the side of the road were what really made the day special. Mobs and mobs of Aussies all madly enthusiastic waving and cheering and waving biggest mobs of Aussie flags. And let me assure you all those Aussies were not restricted to white ones. There were just as many in any shade you could think of. And as for the Aboriginal ones, of which there were plenty, they were just as enthusiastic as the rest of em, cheering and waving and sporting biggest mobs of Aussie flags. If only we could have driven by those interstate protests and showed em what it is all about. So I have tacked this story on in front of page 1.





I responded to a request to send in a pic of our old car decorated, to win a spot on the grid and be part of an unbroken parade and a police escort of the 1st 100 cars. We didn't get there early, so were the last one in the parade. There was a traffic control car with flashing lights behind us and a cop car behind that, and then the rest of the hundreds of utes.

We travel at vintage speed so you can interact with the spectators. Well I guess the cops like to travel at book you speed as they escorted the other 99 cars off at warp speed which left a sizeable gap in front of us, then the sweep vehicle and the cop car behind passed us and we were no longer part of the chosen 100. Never mind, we had a ball. So did the Aussies on the roadside.

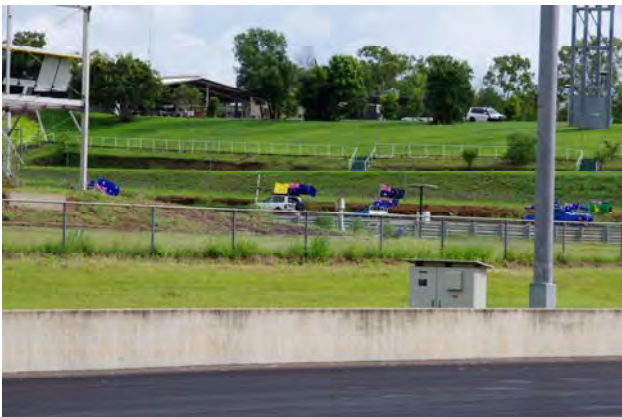




There was 60 odd kms of enthusiastic Aussies to cheer us along the way to Noonamah.

But I reckon the highlight of the day was at the end at Noonamah when a little girl, out of the blue, presents me with a miniature Aussie flag, hand drawn, mounted on a santee stick.





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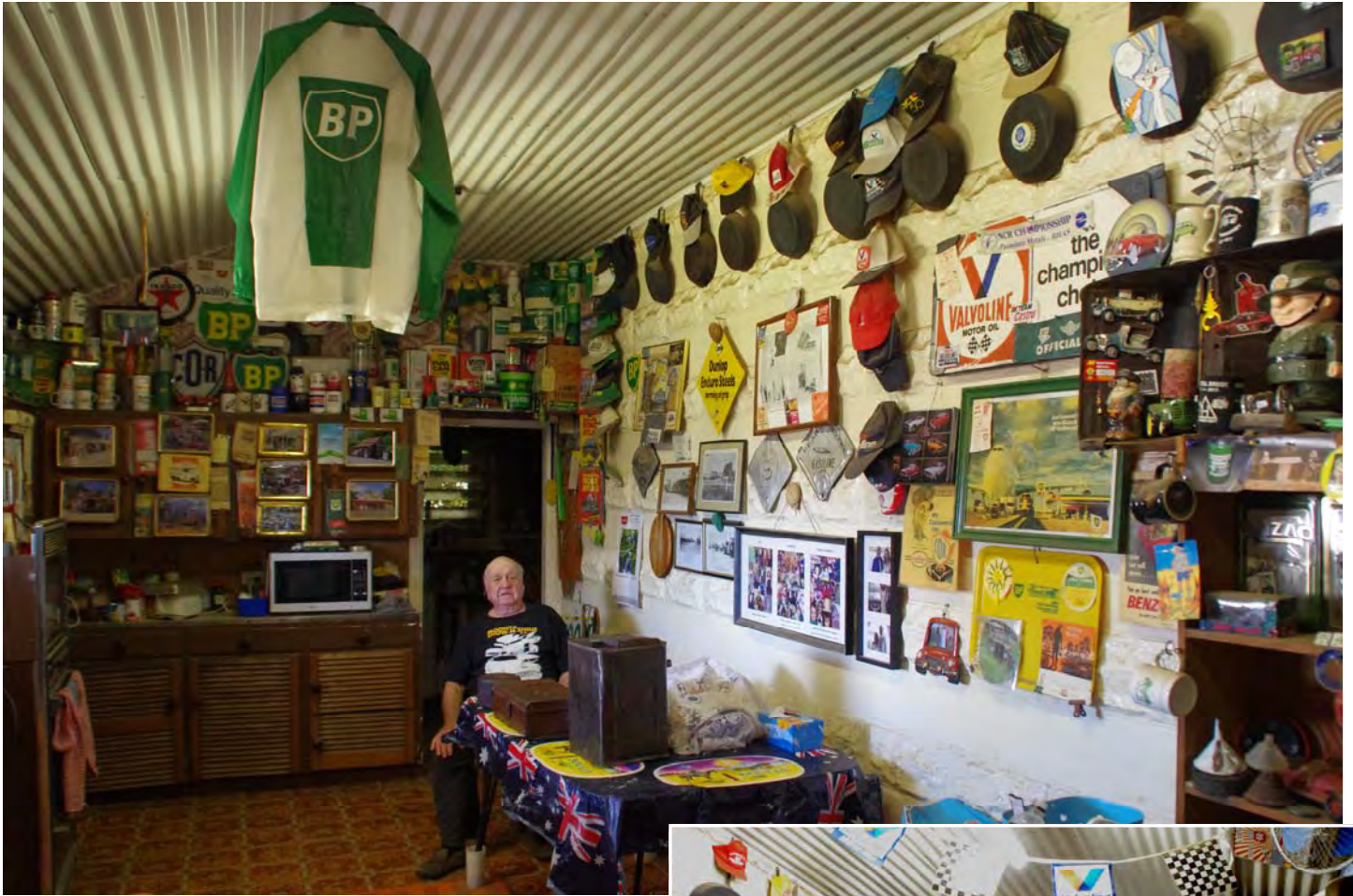
If you find you need more information about this club or just can't wait to join ring Peet Menzies on 0417855222.

GPO Box 911 Darwin 0801
In Katherine call 89710605 .
Newsletter enquiries to Ted longtelescope@gmail.com

UTOPIA : a place of ideal perfection



An arty farty interior designer couldn't have come up with a better layout for one of Doc Watts' bedrooms. Nice curtains and thick carpet under your feet. But this is only one small room in Doc's house. It gets better all the time...



Doc relaxes in the kitchen surrounded with neat stuff!

Doc Watts' collection in country SA is very different than any I have seen to date. Apart from being incredibly extensive, the thing that makes it stand out is where it is situated. Generally you find these displays in a shed, or sheds, but Doc Watts has it all inside his house. All 5 rooms of it. And every one of those rooms is chock a block. There is a bit of it outside under the verandah and in the yard, probably about as much as the average collection in the shed. I was told I would be impressed, I think to say I was impressed would be a vast understatement. Visiting Doc was not to be rushed, we were sat down in the kitchen while he brought out items I think he called depression art. This was stuff manufactured back in the depression days of the 1920's from the likes of discarded tins, especially petrol tins. These items were stuff in everyday use and which you could buy at the shop, but were made by craftsman out of discarded stuff. I almost said junk, but when you see these finished items and the work that went into them you could not call it junk. The first thing he showed us was a cylindrical thing with steps all round it. I didn't have a clue what it was and Doc's grandma had one used as a doorstep for 40 years. Doc could never ask her for it. But one



The kitchen looking the other way. The dark doorway leads to the "Jerrycan Room". The name fits.



The wheel that was like Grandma's doorstep. Made from tobacco tins soldered together.

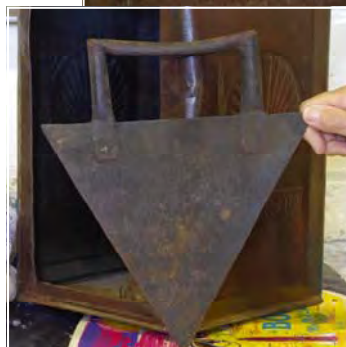
Depression case made from 4 gall tin. Note the soldered up filler hole in the side and the rolled wire edges. Made from just one 4 gallon tin.

came up at a clearing sale and he bought it and an elderly lady explained what it was as her dad had made her one as a child. It was a bunch of tobacco tins soldered together with a bit of wire through the middle as an axle and with a handle to steer it she would push this wheel all around the yard. It was a toy. The next item was a depression case, a bit like a brief case but a bit thicker. This was used as a lunch box. It was made from a 4 gallon tin, beautifully made with the edges rolled around a wire. The hinges were made from the same tin. What really gave it away as a petrol tin was the filler hole was soldered up. The only bit on it that wasn't 4 gallon tin was the catch. That was made from a thicker piece of steel. This was all stuff you could buy at the shop back in the day. There was even a special cutter for dissecting the tins without wrecking them. Naturally Doc has one of the tools. All through the collection I saw more examples of stuff made from old 4 gallon tins. Doc pointed out that he remembers seeing one example for sale at Eudunda Farmers, a large agricultural supply chain, in the 1950's and 60's. Doc has been collecting for about 40 years, haunting swap meets local and interstate, clearing sales and just anyplace they might have motoring items or any interesting stuff. But everything here isn't necessarily old. Interspersed in amongst the old stuff is the odd modern piece, which will eventually get old. There is even the odd framed photo from shops such as Cheap as Chips. It all adds up to a really fantastic collection.

At this stage we were still at the kitchen table and if you raised your eyes there was not much wall that you could see. The walls were all obscured by .. and here is my problem in writing this story.. how to describe hundreds of items in a couple of words. Remember this is the kitchen, other rooms in this house get names like "Jerry can Room" or "Golden Room" but this room has biggest mobs of oil company, tins, bottles and advertising literature, photos, old tinware dozens of other items, not to mention banners hanging from the ceiling. Let's just say its all pretty impressive. And the next



Below: A funnel made from one side of the 4 gall tin. This is the actual tin the funnel was cut from. Notice the shell motif on the funnel.



And this is the cutter for working on these tins.



room is the "Jerry Can Room". I think I will continue the story with pictures....



Left: The far wall in the Jerry Can Room. There are 50 jerry cans in here and they are all different. Naturally there is a lot more than jerry cans here, but most of it has a military connection.



Doc built the miniature petrol bowser as a drink decanter.

A practice grenade from the Vietnam era. There are lots of others too.

A spanner manufactured by David Shearer at Mannum. The blank end was a mystery for years. It turned out to be a spanner used on an anti aircraft gun. The blank end was so an operator using it in the dark would know instantly which way round to hold it.



Below: A Dutch bloke explained the significance of this bike. Back in Holland they used to hire these bikes to tourists. When the terrorists had finished with them they would generally not return them, they would just chuck em in the lake. Later a bloke would fish em all out of the lake and give em to the crims in the prison to refurbish. Then they would rent em out again. Doc bought it from the estate of a Dutch feller.

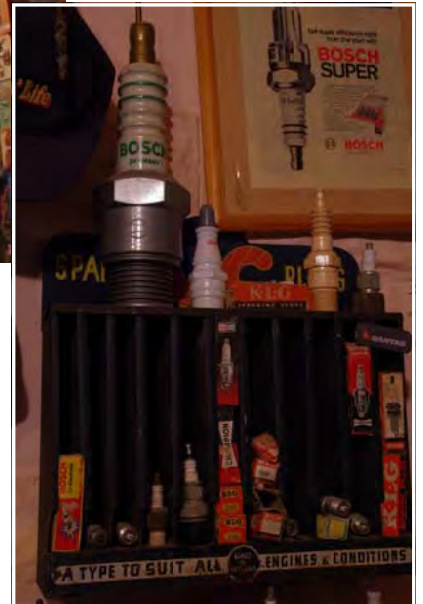


Warships used jerry cans too. They were round!

Does this look like a run of the mill jerry can? Check out the writing on it. It probably says petrol of something, but the point is it's in German. Did you realise Jerry cans were invented by the Germans in the war. They were so good the Allies copied them and called them jerry cans coz the Germans were known as Jerries



To the right of the large spark plug notice the wooden one. A bloke made a perfect replica for Doc, but made of timber.



Everywhere there are jerry cans, military models, artillery shells and projectiles, grenades and even a device for locking up a WW1 soldier's kitbag. (that was another item that took some figuring). But check out the smallest jerry can. The lid is a valve cap. (Right)



Right: The Yanks had jerry cans for food too. So as you didn't put diesel on your stew instead of tomato sauce they made the lid significantly bigger so you couldn't possibly mix em up. Could you!



Left: The next room is the Golden Room, but once again there is more than Golden Fleece items.

Below: This bowser is called a Chariot. It is from before petrol stations were allowed to put their petrol pumps on the footpath. It sat on top of a 44 gallon drum and when someone wanted a fill up it got wheeled out, dispensed the juice and was wheeled back inside.

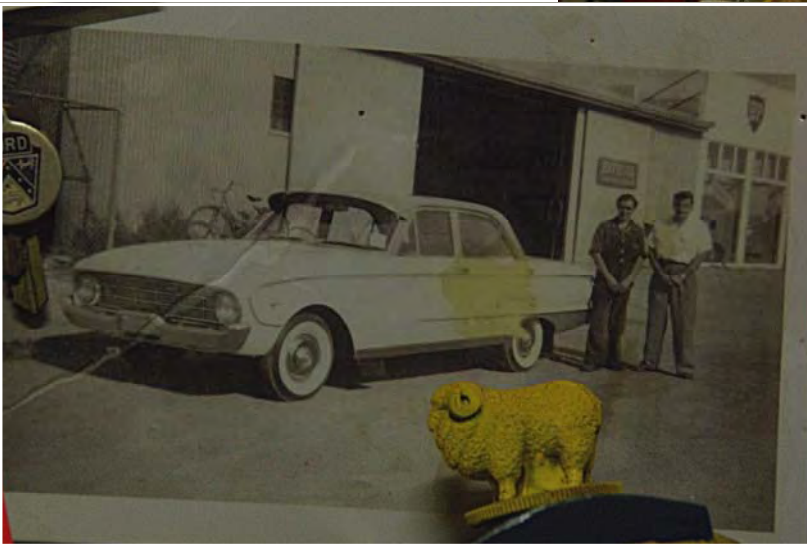


Reserved for Ford hubcaps only.





Remember when servos would give you free road maps?



A young Doc, at 15 years. The XK Falcon is still going. New in Kadina the owner kept it for the rest of his days. His wife then moved to Ardrossan but still held on to the Falcon. Eventually it was sold on to a young feller who has maintained it as original.



And Doc still has his trike and wheelbarrow from when he was a little tacker!





*Movin along to the Shell-Neptune room
a joint venture as Shell took over Nep-
tune back in 75*

*Probably what every motorist dreams of,
a bowser with no dollars ticking over. From
Lochiel salt works. They were only interested
in how many gallons the machinery used.*



The Shell room also contains the Pepsi/Coke collection.



It may be written in a foreign language but its still Pepsi inside those bottles. And Coke in the Americas Cup bottle from 1987.



You have to use the hallway to travel between rooms and its just as good as any of the other rooms. Its also the Mobil room.



This poster was so faded you could barely read the writing on it. A signwriter was able to freshen it up. Unreal!



And as you walk down the hallway you can look up and see you are walking under more treasures. These are timber boxes that 4 gallon tins came in.



And we come to the front room of the house, the only one without a name. In here are the rarest of rare oil tins. And brands that were new to me.

An army oil can.



Daylube oil bottle was made especially for filling Tiger Moth aircraft with oil. The problem was the heat tended to break the bottles, so they fitted the metal shroud over the neck and it cured the problem.



This Daylube can has instructions printed around its base to cut the bottom out of the tin once it is empty, and to then use the tin as a funnel. This tin is very rare. Doc found it on the last day of the Bendigo swap meet and he couldn't believe it was still there. It turned out the big dollar collectors had spied it but would not buy it because they reckoned it was damaged as it had the bottom cut off. So he got it for a lot less than he thought he would have to pay, and he was pleased it had the bottom cut out because, that's the way it was meant to be.



When shifting spanners were a different shape.



These tins have had their original livery repainted on them.

Note the built in pourer on the Opaline oil drum.



Some of these beer cans bring back memories. And the Caltex oil drum has the Golden Fleece emblem at the base. From the changeover period when Caltex was absorbing Golden Fleece.



And after touring such a collection the thought of 4 gallons of CSR methylated spirits is enough to make you downright thirsty.



THE REDEX TRIALS



Races and reliability trials have been conducted since the earliest days of motoring. In the 1890s such events as the Burke to Burketown Bash attracted enormous interest although for sheer excitement there has been nothing to match the Redex Trials of the 1950s. For three years, from 1952 until 1956, the Redex Trials lured amateur and professional drivers alike, all intent on pushing their skills and machines to the limit — and beyond.

The first Redex trial was organised in 1953 by the Australian Sporting Car Club and Redex (Australia) Limited, manufacturers of an engine lubricant. The route covered almost 10 500 kilometres, from Sydney north to Townsville, to Mount Isa and Darwin, then south to Alice Springs, Adelaide, Melbourne and back to Sydney.

The response far exceeded the organisers' expectations. A total of 167 cars left the Sydney Showground on the first day of the trial. The first driver, E. Hoy, at a Chrysler Airflow, was flagged out at

2pm, just a crowd estimated at 50 000. Another 150 000 waited along the route out of Sydney, cheering each competitor as they passed at three minute intervals; many were still waiting as the last driver, Miss J. Hill of Queensland in a 1950 Renault, left the Showground at 11.33 that evening.

Everywhere along the route, people crowded the roadsides to catch a glimpse of the cars. At the control points, where timekeepers checked competitors' times and deducted points for early or late arrivals, the crowds wanted to see the crews. Outside the major cities many of Australia's roads were little more than dirt tracks, there needed to be more than a touch of the pioneering spirit in the crews who entered the Redex Trial.

The location of each check point was well known and smart drivers would speed between checks, stop just out of sight of the officials and use the time to carry out repairs.

Demolition derby

The road conditions to Brisbane did not tax the entrants although there were numerous breakdowns and accidents. Engine trouble, jammed gearboxes and broken axles were common. Few of the cars had been specially adapted for the grueling trial and many models soon displayed their unsuitability for Australian conditions. As the field sped north through Queensland, cars drove into ditches, collided with kangaroos in each other. In addition there was enough out-

side trouble to maintain the thrill of a well-organised car trial gone seriously wrong. At one town, rival garage proprietors battled to attract the competitors' business, with the police forced to intervene.

At Townsville, 177 cars remained. Of these 128 had lost no points. By that stage, the full horror of the primitive Queensland roads was becoming distressingly apparent. Drivers and navigators alike had to carefully watch for a variety of dangers, from loose cattle grids that often disintegrated under the relentless pressure of speeding cars, to sand and water bogs or creek crossings that proved deeper than anticipated.

The rules provided that the fastest time over two outback sections, from Townsville to Mount Isa and from Alice Springs to Kingoonya, could decide the outright winner in the event of a dead heat. This, however, was misunderstood



by many drivers with the result that the trial soon became a no-holds-barred demolition derby; a frantic struggle to obtain line honours by any possible method.

Tricks and trials

The terrain element enjoyed an unobstructed run. Valuable points were lost for arriving late at the control checks and it was soon apparent that whoever managed to delay their rivals, won themselves a greater chance of eventual success. The trial was now a struggle of the fastest pilot against the worst. Near Julia Creek in the Northern Territory, an unidentified stranger directed competitors onto a wrong turning. Those who fell for the trick eventually discovered their folly; one unlucky driver retraced over 220 kilometres in the wrong direction before turning back.

Those cars that survived the spectacular crashes or could limp to the nearest town for repairs carried onwards. At the Morpethville racecourse, it was discovered that 11 cars were still holding perfect scores. The organisers, fearful of such a monstrous dead-heat, introduced an elimination session. The survivors who opposed their staid orders after leaving Melbourne found their route was across an old stock trail between Marulan and Bowral, New South Wales. Much of it was almost virgin country and included a one metre deep river crossing.

The badly battered cars that emerged from the track made their last lap in the final stages. New Zealand and Singapore flag rights.



EVERYONE WANTS TO PROVE SOMETHING



No shortage of Redex gear here.





And just because we were outside the story wasn't finished. Another collection of petrol cases and others held up by an ex PMG extension ladder. Of note in this photo is the Castrol tin that has printing on the inside as well as outside. Also the caddy (left bottom). Another item made from recycled tins. Doc remembers buying one in a large hardware stores in the 1950's.



Remember mile posts? This is a beaut one. The B is for Bute. PB is Port Broughton .



How did Doc get to be Doc? When he was a little tacker his Mum bought him a small kitbag to take his gear on a school picnic. It was too big to carry on his bike so he walked to school that day. Some of the kids hanging about saw him walking down the street with the kitbag that was the same bag that doctors carried in them days. They called out "here comes Doc Watts". And he has been called Doc ever since. That's not the actual bag, but it's just like it, so when he spied it in a secondhand shop he snafled it. And it wasn't even expensive.

And while cruising South Australia, which, by the way had mobs of neat old cars, I came across this car dealership in Kadina. And the showroom was chock full of new looking old Holdens. I went past the same place the next day and what should be parked outside but, no not the same old cars, but different old cars. I was impressed!



Inside the showroom at night

And outside the same place next day!



And another country dealership that needs mentioning is one that still sells new cars. They used to sell Valiants and satisfied customers would trade in their old Valiant on a new one. Often the trade in had been well cared for. So it occurred to the owner that it might be an idea to hold on to these better examples. So he has collected at least one of every Valiant they ever made. He has sheds and sheds full of them all covered in tarps waiting for an opportunity when a large showroom might become available and he can display them. Meanwhile they are nicely tucked away in a climate that is nice on cars.



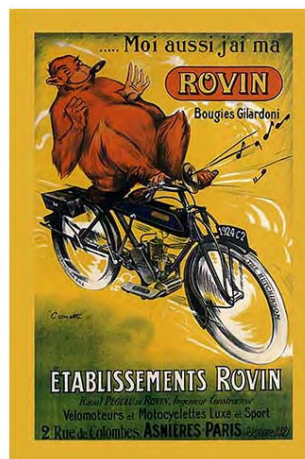
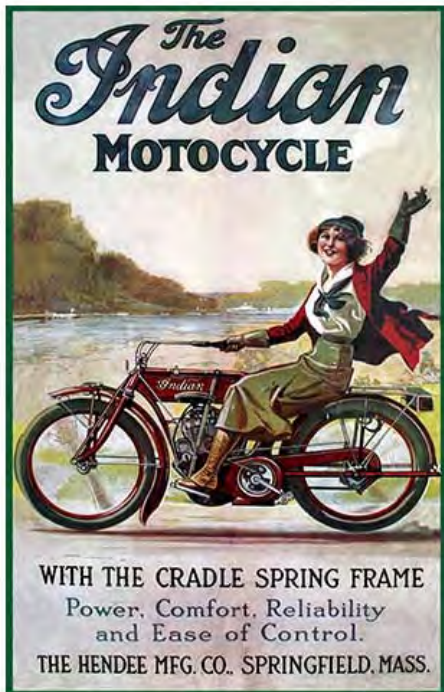
The numberplate peeking through gives an idea of the age of the car holding it up under the wraps.

Not the average scene in your modern dealership. The old sedan had been traded in by a customer on a new car. It had been sold to someone interstate but he couldn't come and pick it up because of virus restrictions. Old Valiants under covers right across the shed.



STUFF ON THE NET

This website has a page entitled “a ride through 100 years of motorcycling” basically it is the whole of the 1900’s and its pretty neat. Its interesting that the greater part of the ads either have an attractive lady someplace in the picture, or the ad depicts the motorbike at speed. There are a lot of ads here and brands I have never heard of. Its all pretty neat. Have a look at <https://halleyaccessories.com/blogs/news/a-ride-through-100-years-of-motorcycle-advertising>



Wanted a 1934 or 35 Hudson Radiator

I have parts to swap
Pls ring Barry 0435596203 or email
ozhudson@gmail.com

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

Deadline.... The end of the month.

HR SEDAN OR UTE WANTED

For project. Driveable would be nice...pay a fair
price for something I can restore over time.

John Williams 041841473

Previous editions

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

Jay Leno's Garage is now selling car care products in Australia and is offering
MVEC members 15% discount.

Visit <https://jaylenosgarage.com.au/> and just enter MVEC in the window for pro-
motions and it will automatically knock off 15%

Alternatively you can enter MVEC's Rally to the End on the 2nd May. Jay
Leno's Garage have given a couple of \$50 vouchers which will be handed out as
prizes for the event.



Technology update.

Many of the newer cars have a Back-Up Sensor that warns the driver before the rear bumper actually comes
in contact with something. Who invented this sensor?

I'll bet you think it was Ford, maybe GM, how about Chrysler?

No.

Then how about Mercedes Benz, or possibly the French or an
Italian car manufacturer?

No.

It was a Japanese farmer named Kawasaki. His invention was
simple and effective. It emitted a high-pitched squeal just be-
fore the vehicle itself backed into something.

Here's where the idea came from.....



WOTS ON

19TH FEB Bombing of Darwin commemoration. MVEC are supplying military vehicles for the occasion.

25th APRIL ANZAC DAY MVEC providing military vehicles to transport veterans.

2nd MAY . Rally to the End. Welcome in the dry with a start at the hangar to navigate and find out stuff round greater Darwin and a BYO picnic at the end. See attached flyer.

You've read about Perkolilli and seen it on TV. Now with plenty of notice you have a chance to be part of it.

Get building!

"What? They've set a date?"

Yep!! It's on again!

Lake Perkolilli

Red Dust Revival 2022



19-25 September 2022

The Legend Continues

More details to come!

Rally to the END



SUN MAY 2ND

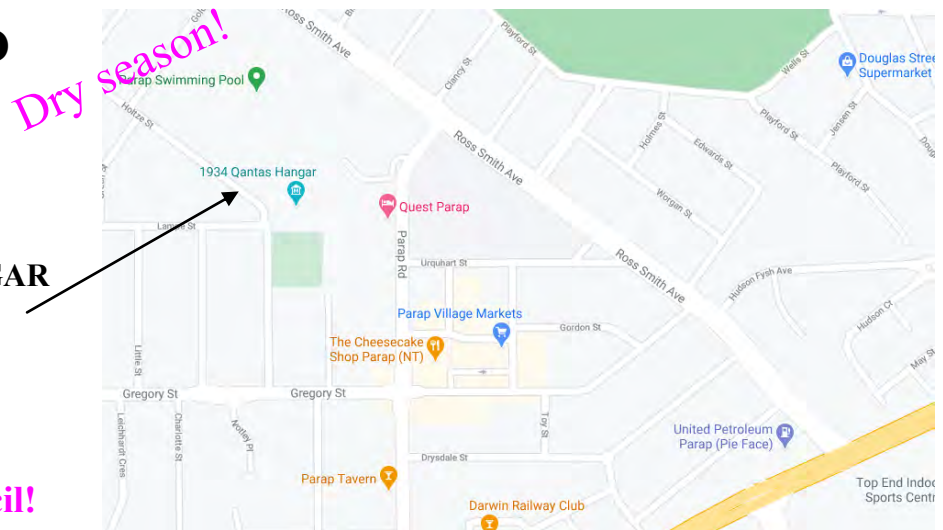
9AM START

At:

**OLD QANTAS HANGAR
22 MACDONALD ST
PARAP**

ENTRY FREE

Bring a pen or pencil!



Where is the end? You will have to come along to find out.

The start is at the old QANTAS hangar

SUN May 2nd, 9am start.

Absolutely anyone welcome to enter. No entry fee.

Prize for the winners. Scoring is rigged to give older cars an advantage. Speed is not an advantage. Skillful driving is.

Event will navigate around greater Darwin area collecting information along the way and will finish up at a park for lunch with the odd driving test on the way.

Bring your own picnic lunch and chairs.

Enquiries: Ted 89886049