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Motor Vehicle Enthusiasts Club

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Perko is a long way from where I live in Darwin. How on earth did I get involved....

My story started way back when in conversation with my father in law, I found his lifelong wish was to be in the Bay to Birdwood event in Adelaide. By this time he had followed all those other retirees and was in Queensland, so I told him to get himself to Adelaide and I would take my model T down there from Darwin and take him in it. No problems!
But as we know, good plans sometimes go awry. As the date grew near, the generator on the trusty T decided to give up and after many pull downs it just refused to be reliable. There isn't any old model T stuff in Darwin apart from what's in my shed, so I rang a mate in WA to see if



he might be able to find me one down there. Shouldn't be a problem he replied, but after a bit he rang back with a sad story. All the model T stuff had been snapped up to build racers for Lake Perkolilli.

What's Perkolilli? I enquired. It turned out to be an event "Centenary of Speed", a re-enactment of where racing had started big time 100 years before on a claypan called Lake Perkolilli near Kalgoorlie. And the event was open to cars and bikes from before WW2. I had a pile of model T Ford stuff that I had a pipe dream of turning into a speedster, an open sports model of the venerable model T, and it took only a few seconds to figure I could make a racer from my pile of junk and this was a once in a lifetime chance to actually drive in an event like this.

As for the generator, I paid a fortune in freight and got one from America and I did take father in law in the Bay to Birdwood, a ripper day, now I could concentrate on building a racing car.

First up, the chassis I had had suffered from 1920's Katherine roads, or lack of them, and resembled a banana.

I chained it to the platform of my car hoist and with a lot of time and patience with a couple of hydraulic jacks, bent it straight again. Troubles with the engine block had me drive to SA to source one of early 1920's vintage.

I handed it to a machine shop for a rebore and valve seats and guides. Pistons and valves and cam were sent over from America and a new counterbalanced crank came from NZ. I was just getting ready to pour the babbit main bearings when I discovered they were going to have a National Veteran rally to coincide with the Perkolilli event. My thoughts up to now had just been to build a racing car. No guards, no body, no lights, just one seat, four wheels and an engine. The radiator I had was 1915, that was veteran (veteran is pre 1919) the chassis and suspension was right, but I needed a veteran engine. Ring up mate down south, can you find me a veteran block? He did, but it wasn't pretty. Big rust pock marks in the bores and valve seats severely recessed, but it was veteran, 1915. It matched my radiator. Back to the machine shop, this time it was resleeved. Once again another set of new pistons etc from America, this time with a warmer cam and a head with different combustion chambers. Originally these engines didn't have oil seals. They hadn't invented them yet, instead they used felts. They kept the dust out but didn't keep the oil in all that well. The firms in the States that sell parts for these cars advertise modern oil seal kits to keep the oil in. I was sucked in and bought them. When I eventually had the engine finished and mounted in the car, and the time came to fire it up, I even invited the wife to come out and witness this auspicious occasion. When it cranked over it didn't fire but made this unpleasant sound of blowing out of the carbies instead of sucking in. It sounded of incorrect valve timing. Bummer!

I should point out here that time was of the essence. I had to have this car finished quickly as the event was getting close. The scrapping of the 1920's engine hadn't helped matters, nor had a invitation to be part of driving a 1923 Rolls Royce Silver Ghost up the Canning Stock Route right when I should have been putting the racer together, but lets face it the Rolls Royce trip was another once in a lifetime event too. You can't pass things like this up. So I was counting on the model T engine firing up OK. But it didn't. So off with the radiator and pull off the timing cover to check the timing marks. As Henry Ford made the car that would take 10 minutes, just undo half a dozen bolts and off it comes. But I had put these bloody modern day oil seals on the crankshaft, and that seal sitting in a groove that was meant to have a split felt seal in it, made it so that to remove the timing cover you had to remove the sump. Now



28/3/2013 straighten bent chassis.



22/2/14 a long way to go.



7/7/14 time is getting on. Henry the pet wallaby lends a hand.

in a model T, the sump is what holds the engine in the chassis. To do this simple job now, I would have to pull the whole engine and transmission out of the car. I just didn't have time for that. I had to come up with some dodgy way around it. The timing cover is cast iron and for these early year models are hard to come by, but in desperation whacked a screwdriver between it and the sump to flex it enough to get a mini hacksaw blade in the gap and hacksaw through the metal case of the oil seal. I had to be particularly careful not to touch the crankshaft journal with the hacksaw blade as a nick would instantly destroy the sealing surface. I cut both sides this way and the final cut of the oil seal lip was done carefully with a Stanley knife. The problem it turned out was the centre punch mark I had timed it with was actually a rust pit. The timing mark on a model T is a small circle (it looked like a rust blister). I put the cut in half oil seal back together with a dollop of silicone and it is still working fine 11 years later.

My original plans were to make the mudguards myself, but with the lack of time problem I had replicas sent from the States. The bonnet was a challenge to make but turned out well, as were the seats. My other model T has wooden artillery wheels and during a hooning event I managed to break one. Since I was going to driving this car at speed around a track I figured I might live longer if I had wire wheels. The 1927 model T's had wire wheels as an option but used different hubs. I scored a set of those wire wheels on EBay and machined up adaptor plates to fit them to the artillery hubs.

Since I was registering the car I figured I had to have lights. There is no electricity generating capacity in this car. I removed the equipment associated with the magneto from the flywheel as it has the effect of a lightened flywheel, and more performance. So the only lighting is by kerosene for the tail and side lights, and acetylene from the acetylene generator and the gas headlights. You need a box of matches or a smoker handy to turn on the lights. When I first got the car finished I couldn't find anywhere that sold carbide for the generator, so I ran the headlights from a concealed bottle of butane gas. Not as bright as acetylene but other cars could see you and it looked good, but drive somewhere where there were no streetlights and you had trouble seeing 2 metres in front of you.

Came the big day and took it for a quick squirt up the road, then onto the trailer to see if I could get it registered.

It was a breeze. Might have been something to do with the rego inspector was a car enthusiast, but with it registered I could try it out. There was no time to run it in. With a mobile phone on GPS in my pocket it showed a max speed of 106 KPH. Not bad for a first run, my goal was for it to do 60MPH, so that was it. Put it on the trailer and off to Kalgoorlie. No time to lose.

On the track after a nervous first and second corner and then just holding it flat out, the thoughts seemed to be along the lines of "how long can

16/10/14 out there doing it!



15/7/14 better get a move on



21/9/14 finished but not quite running well



Mudguard and headlight brackets I fabricated. I was so proud of them I stamped a part number on them.



the engine hold together screaming like this". I still think the same thoughts when I first get there, but it's still going fine all these years later and this car has always been thrashed from day one. Anyhow, when I built the twin carbby manifold, the carbs are nestled between the exhaust pipes. I thought having red hot exhaust pipes each side of each carbby would cause problems so I wrapped each pipe with heat resistant cloth tape.

After a couple of laps my worry about the engine holding together was interrupted by a sudden loss of power. The car would slow right down then a big backfire and off she would go again. This happened several times but I had no idea why. Someone suggested my carbies were freezing up. The jets were getting ice on them, then because it was running lean it would backfire which would blow the ice off and away it would go again. I removed the insulating tapes from the pipes next to the carbies and the problem vanished permanently.

At that Centenary of Speed event we had probably 3 days of practice on the track, getting the cars and bikes going right and getting the feel of the track and getting used to the dust. Most of the crowd were camping at the lake but we were staying at Kalgoorlie and driving the 40 odd km out each morning. The formal events were happening on Sat and Sunday and there were glossy programmes printed. When we headed back to our accommodation in Kalgoorlie we reckoned we were all set for a ripper weekend. During that night we did hear a bit of rain outside.

When we got to the track that leads into the lake there was water laying around, and mud! lots of it!

Once we got into the lake the first thing you saw was that the lake had turned into a lake. The race track was completely under water. Not very deep, but completely submerged. The pit area wasn't underwater but just mud. Sad faces were packing up their camps.

The problem now was getting the cars and the gear out. It was that kind of mud that stuck like glue. Every step you took you got 1/2 inch taller. The rains were described as 1 in 100 years. Both the highway and the railway to Perth were cut.

The event was over.

It was always going to be just a single once only event. Graeme Cocks, the organiser, said never again. With all the stress he had had a heart attack recently.

Then there was the veteran rally. All the veteran cars were assembling in a hall at the showground. They were all freshly polished and gleaming. All except one. Ours was covered in mud. I thought it would be cool to leave it that way. Just to be a bit different.

Shirley, the loving wife straightened that thought out straight away. You see at veteran rallies the idea is to dress up in the period of your car and she was fairly emphatic when she pointed out she wasn't getting dressed up to get in a filthy car. Our car got polished up like the rest of them. But cruising around --with a bunch of similar age cars in standard trim proved to be a problem. With our taller than standard diff to make the car go faster, and a lumpy cam, it



In the shed at the showgrounds. The red cars in the background are of a similar model.



Out there and shining at the Vet Rally. Someone commented at the Red Dust Revival this year that the old bus doesn't have quite the gleam that it did back in these days. Sad but true, but on the other hand it is getting used which is good.

was difficult to drive slow. We were always passing someone. I found it embarrassing. Later, once we were back home I installed a 2 speed Ruckstall diff. That made it much more driveable in slower traffic.

The racing car became just another veteran car at veteran rallies, then 5 years later, in 2019, out of the blue the word came out there was to be another event at Lake Perkolilli, this time called Red Dust Revival. The same sort of event but the weather was drier and it lived up to its name. There was plenty of dust. And then Variety took the event over as a fundraiser. One big change was the provision of hot showers, and one evening there was an auto polo event. Unreal fun but I found it a bit too easy to get carried away and I was so close to a collision I was bracing for the crunch.

But all that is history. I am now writing this story at the 2025 event. Things are changing all the time. When we first went there it was a dirt road once you got out of Kalgoorlie, and each time we went there the bitumen had progressed a bit further. This time it finished right at the turn off to the track into the lake. And instead of a dusty track, it had been watered by a cart. And as we drove through the bush it became apparent there was biggest mobs of spectators camping here. Once on to the claypan we could see there was a fence around the pits. A lot more competitors and things have gotten a lot more formal this time. Never mind, all is still good and after getting through registration and scrutineering I just made it to the starting line in the nick of time for my first practice. Arriving late in the morning I had missed drivers briefing by 4 hours. Never mind, I never even thought about it. You got waved off from the starting line one at a time with maybe 5 secs between cars. Off I went and caught the first car right on the first corner, got through on the inside and battled through the dust and had the next 2 cars in sight and was about to pass when I remembered past events here. Passing is prohibited! I quickly slowed down and stayed behind, eating these 2 cars dust and hoped no officials saw me pass that first car. Once back in the pits the bloke I passed stopped to tear strips off me for passing. Boy was he shitty! Reckoned I kicked up so much dust he couldn't see where he was going. (I wondered why he came to such an event) Never mind sometimes it's best to eat some humble pie and apologise, and I did. And the car didn't run very well either.

Next run a couple of hours later I started behind a car similar in speed to mine. It was great trying to catch him. The most worrying part is running full noise into the dust and knowing there is a corner coming up but you can't see it. Never mind, once the breeze is across the track you can really get moving. The car ran pretty well but at the end whilst idling it decided to conk out and refused to start again. Then after a couple of minutes it started and ran perfect. Beats me. Perhaps a carby iced up. To finish the day they asked for volunteers to take some celebrities for a lap. It seemed to me they should eat as much dust as possible.





Once again there was no passing allowed so it was pretty easy to get into a pack and get some close racing (even if it wasn't strictly racing). When you are really close to the car in front of you, you are on top of the dust and you can see a lot better than when you have to fight your way through his dust cloud from behind. It turns out the celebrities were people that had paid Variety for a ride and my passenger loved every second of it. Come evening and the atmosphere completely changed to campfires and it looked a bit like Christmas with quite a lot of campers decorating trees and bushes with festoon lights. And it must be remembered this event is a re-enactment of an event a long time ago. One part of it was definitely not like the old days. They had hot showers. It doesn't get any softer than that. Day 2: More practice, 2 laps at a time today and while waiting on the grid the lady official came out to give us the news: passing is allowed today but only on the outside. How good is that! But my first run I was 1st off the start line. The model T ran like a dog for the first couple of hundred yards, so bad I was considering pulling in, but shortly after fired right up and away I went, and in clean air I could see where I was going. It flew. And I had the GPS speedo app running on my phone. Checked it at the end and showing 104.2. I was a happy chappy. Later in the arvo I had another go. This time I was 6th away, plenty of dust ahead! Once again ran like a dog off the start line but quickly cleared up. Passed the first car on the outside of the first turn and the 2nd by the end of the next straight,



then quite a way to the next one, but eating a lot of dust you couldn't really tell how far the car making the dust was in front. Maybe 10 metres in front he appeared but I couldn't seem to make any progress in lessening that distance. But there is a bit of a sharper corner coming into the longest smoothest bend and I found I was actually getting past, and I did, then clean air to the finish line. That run was just the blasiest yet. Worth the drive all the way over to there. And somewhere during that day, Shirley reminded me it was my birthday. Great! But the day wasn't over yet. checking out some bikes I came across a couple of blokes that were a bit bewildered with their BSA. It had no compression they said, and someone had suggested their decompressor was stuck. He had left them with no clue to how to fix it and walked off. The blokes asked for some advice. The decompressor seemed fine to me, I found what they thought was a lack of compression was actually a slipping clutch. A quick adjust and a short course in starting an old Pommie single had them back on the track and smiling. Later in the day I was sought to assist with an even earlier BSA with a slipping clutch. It seems I had earned a reputation as the BSA guru. A quick clutch dismantle and clean had another old Beezer on the track again. Stuff like this is what

makes this event so great. There is no snobbery here. Everyone is happy to help everyone, just getting bikes and cars back on the track is the name of the game. And today practice is over. Tomorrow time trials begin.

Day 3: At drivers briefing they had a display table with all the bits they had picked up on the track. There was just about enough to build a car. Today we were grouped into lots of 6 derived from our times recorded yesterday. That put me 25th in a field of about 140. I was pleased. But more significant I was 1st in the 5th group of 6 and as the fastest car in the group would be flagged off first, all I had to do was drive like mad and stay in front and I would be in clean air. I had 3 runs today, every time the car would cough and fart on the starting straight then clear up and run beautifully and fast and no one caught me. It was a bit embarrassing that at the end of the day I was still clean. Took another celebrity guest for a spin at the end of the day. Ate a small amount of dust. They posted my fastest time as 2 mins 32 secs. I will find out tomorrow where that will put me. At no 1 in the group: no dust, or no 6: biggest mobs of dust.

Friday: The weather was different. Hot and windy, and as the day progressed, even hotter and even windier. The groups were a bit rearranged. I was now in group 6 position 7. I assumed I would now be eating dust from 6 cars in front. Never mind, dust is what I came here for. But when I lined up at the start I found out they had changed the setup. They flagged me off first. Quite a surprise, as normal it coughed a bit at the start but this time it didn't clear up. It just didn't feel as fast and when I saw my times of 2:55 for the 1st lap and 22:40 for the 2nd, my doubts were confirmed. That morning I had put new air cleaners on, I decided to clean the old ones and put them back on. Also there were problems with my oil level indicator. I thought it was malfunctioning which first led me to believe it had low oil, then high level which led me to drain a half litre out. Later in the day I had time to dismantle the indicator and find there was nothing wrong with it and I had been driving with a dangerously small amount of oil in the sump.

Never mind that, it was a seriously dusty day. Even with my slow lap time no one passed me. Maybe I kicked up too much dust. I reckoned there were faster cars behind me. By the time all the cars had completed their run, it was 36° with the wind howling and the willie willies they call dust devils were all over the place. When a devil cruised through you could see nothing but dust and the officials deemed it too dusty to continue. The bikes never ran at all and the track was closed for the day. I wanted to get my car up to speed again but with the track closed my only option was the public road we used to get here. My car is road registered. Using the portion of the road(dirt) that continued on after turning off into the lake was a bit daunting at first. It was severely rough and corrugated but I found a bit about a Km long which wasn't too bad, on one side anyway. And after multiple runs on that good side I reckoned I had it running better. It is hard to tell if the motor is running

You can tell this photo was early in the event. The overalls were still white.



At the end of it all these signs were auctioned off for charity (Variety) Some went for over \$1000.



And how would you feel, a lowly model T, to have a Rolls Royce and a Bentley on either side. The Rolls had whitewall tyres when it arrived.

rough or if it's just the bumps in the road. I will find once on the nice smooth race track tomorrow. A lot of people are packing up their camps and their cars and leaving. The definition of a winner at Perko is someone who can still drive their car onto their trailer at the end of the weekend. These people are not winners, they left too early. Later we used the car to go looking amongst the spectator camps for some of our fellow Territorians that we knew were in the area. It can be hard at times because lots of people want you to stop while they photograph you. With the coming of the evening, the wind dropped, the dust eased, but the weather forecast says there is a chance of rain tomorrow. We hope there is no rain as it could turn into the Red Mud Revival. Like 2014.

Saturday: During the early hours of the morning there was a few seconds of rainfall. It went rattle rattle on the van roof. That's all. Enough to put some dots in the dust, no more. But people got up, packed up their gear, and left. By sun up the place looked bare and the pits looked sparse. It seems people were afraid of what might happen if it rained hard and all the dust turned to mud. What a bunch of pussies! And our groups of 6 went awry as in most cases there was only a couple out of the 6 turn up at the start. So



Some of my groupies came all the way from Darwin to explain to me that I am mad. We had a contingent from NT as spectators and competitors.

A lot of us helped keep the dust down this way. It made it easier on the feller behind you.





those that were left organised ourselves into groups and carried on. I realised that the day before I had filled up with 91 petrol. As I normally use 95 I thought if I drained off some juice and refill with 98 that might solve my running bad problem. It didn't. Then I replaced no 1 plug with another new one and once again the car ran great. Even got to pass a couple of cars, but it was short lived. Took a passenger for a couple of laps to show her what it was like and once again back on 3 cylinders. Another new plug in no 1. One new plug per run is not very good mileage for spark plugs.

By the end of the day most of the cars had left and we are advised they will make the decision to continue or to end the event first thing in the morning. The sky is a bit cloudy.

Due to more bullshit rules (to make us safe)(if you were really worried about safe you wouldn't bother driving in an event like this would you) they have banned fuel in the pits. They had a whopping big fuel container of 91 and 44's of 98. They would pump it straight into your car. The price was variable. To get your price you had to throw a dart into a dartboard and your score gave you your price. If you scored a bullseye you paid 1914 price for your fuel. if you scored 8 you paid 2008 price, 15 was 2015 price. It was a novel setup. Pretty good!

Because of the uncertainty of tomorrow's weather the speeches and presentations were held this evening. Part of these proceedings is always an auction. They auction off all



the signs and all sorts of stuff that people donated and the proceeds go to Variety. People bid amazingly high prices for all sorts of stuff. A bucket of bits of bits that had fallen off cars on the track and had been picked up brought hundreds. The signs always bring a premium. The sign that all the drivers were invited to label with their monogram sold for \$6000.

By bedtime there were only 4 cars left in the pits. It looked a bit eerie. We will see what the decision is in the morning.

Sunday: About 2 am heard the rattle of rain on the roof and heard a truck pulling out. It's not too hard so went back to sleep. Woke up again when it was daylight and what a sight. Puddles everywhere and people packing up. The dust had turned to mud. When you walked on it it stuck to your shoes, every step made you a half inch taller. And it was slippery! It was an interesting sight watching a Range Rover with a big van on tow driving out with all his wheels turning twice as fast as his car was going. But it wasn't boggy, just slippery. No one was dumb enough to drive on the racetrack. That would have wrecked it. We didn't put our racer on the trailer, just towed the empty trailer and drove the T out to the bitumen before putting it back on. I have to admit driving it out in the slush was a lot of fun. There was an endless procession of 4wd's with caravans crawling along. I could hoot past them all, I was having a ball even if I was wet, muddy and freezing.

So at the end of it all, it was much like what happened in 2014. You could after all call it the Red Mud Revival.

Bloody fantastic!

There were a team of professional photographers running all over the place. The photos have been handed to organiser and author Graeme Cocks who is putting them together into a glossy book as a photographic record of this event. The book is called "Dustopia". To get a copy you have to pre order it. Its \$150 but a deposit of \$15 will reserve you a copy. www.motoringpast.com.au

Does all this sound like a lot of fun? Fancy owning a suitable car? Janice's 1939 Vauxhall is a ready built Perkolilli racer. You could drive it to the event , race it then drive it home again and at the price she asks is a lot cheaper than building a car especially for the event. Plus you can use it for whatever and cherish it too. Check it out in the for sale stuff at the end of this newsletter.



Some of the camps were a bit away from the action (and the dunnies) so some people brought along their own custom wheels. There was just as much variety as the racers but here are just a couple that happened by when I had a camera handy. Left: Not quite a Norton but old mate pulled quite a good mono just before this pic. And to the right really is a Mini Moke but it had suffered from rust so some of the superfluous bits were cut off.





This is how you should buy petrol: 1. fill up via a pump from that big white tank. 2. Throw a dart at the dartboard. 3. Pay for your juice using the price per litre according to your score. This bloke got 2005 price @ 112.7c/litre. If you got the bullseye you got your fuel at 1912 price! Then you signed the board. They auctioned that board at the end of the event for \$6000 to Variety.

Waiting to get on the track was inevitable.

At times it could be difficult for spectators to find their cars.





The bits of cars they picked up off the track. Put it in a bucket and it sold at auction for \$200 odd.



The Buick was said to pass anything..but a petrol station.





They had a grand parade. All the vehicles on the track at once. But half the field had already gone home. It would have been unreal with the whole field out there. Actually it was unreal anyway!



It was great to see some ladies dressed to the occasion. Me too with my designer overalls. Naturally they were seen later riding in the Rolls Royce.

Two Territory cars coming over the finish line together. Don't be fooled though, Jim Henderson's supercharged Austin leaves me in the dust.





Check out the size of the blower out front!



MVEC sticker amongst em!

MVEC member Jim Henderson's Austin 7 is a beauty. He discovered it in Unique Cars magazine. (that's dangerous reading) He rang the feller selling it but the price was a bit out there. Jim mentioned his Austin Chummy, was he interested in a trade? The bloke was an Austin enthusiast and they did a deal, the Chummy and some cash. Jim drove to Vic with the Chummy on the trailer and found the street, but knocked on the wrong door. An old lady appeared and Jim asked for Harold, the gent with the racing Austin. "Oh, you're Jimmy"! she exclaimed and checked out the Chummy. "Oh he'll like that" and as they walked down the street absolutely everybody knew Jimmy and his car and everything about him. It was great.

The bloke was an 82yr old and had bought the car to race, but had pulled it to bits enough to make some of his own modifications, but that's about as far as he got. The car had been built by a Swiss engineer that had emigrated but his qualifications weren't recognised in Australia, however that didn't stop him designing a tough car. The supercharger looks as big as the engine. Jim has raced it at Mallala and Winton but here at Perkolilli he managed to miss a corner in the dust. It was getting a bit bumpy and when the dust cleared he found himself way out in the bush. Some of those clumps of grass are pretty solid and he found himself airborne. It wasn't a smooth touchdown and the car was running severely rough and he suspected some serious damage. It turned out to be just a plug lead had jumped off but the radiator mounts were all busted and it is now held by cable ties. At 2 mins 15 lap time he is up there embarrassing some big cars!



Note the extra gauge Super Charger!

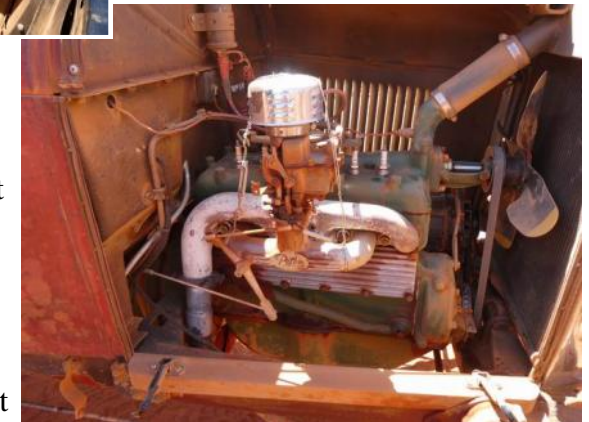


Paul Buenfeld, Peter Brockwell and Alan Bergdorf with the Howler. The other partner Splash was crook and didn't make it this time.



Humpty Doo Howler. Another Territory car. In true Territory style 4 hot rodders, choking stubbies, realized they each had a bunch of leftover model A bits and decided to join forces and build a car worthy of Perkolilli. After messing with a couple of motors they opted to buy a good useable one from Qld. Other bits came from all over including Alice Springs. They had it finished in time for some decent runs and ran it for 30 kms at Dundee without any problems. They named their machine "The Humpty Doo Howler"

Perhaps the lovely humid weather of the top end is more conducive to old cars running well because once they got to the dry and dusty lake, after a couple of good runs, it died. It stripped a timing gear. Repco was only 40kms away at Kalgoorlie, but a part for a 1931 model? I don't think so! Well there were probably more model A's at Perko than anything else and one bloke just happened to have brought a spare. He wasn't exactly giving it away but when you have driven halfway across the country its worth spending a bob to keep running. But it still didn't run well, burning points. They tried a new coil, points, condenser, even a borrowed distributor but the Howler kept missing and backfiring to such an extent they were worried they were going to blow up the engine and so they pulled out, vowing to come better prepared with spare parts next time. This time they only brought spare beers .





Alison and Craig Felton 1930 BSA. They were both sharing the same bike which they bought just for this event. At the time of interview Alison had the fastest time. Rather than have an argument, the solution was easy, buy another bike. Unfortunately they also seized the gearbox, this one wasn't a quick fix.

Model T pedal functions are a bit different to your average car and when you are new to the game it is possible in a moment of panic to forget which does what, so to be safe, they have labelled them.



Susan and Ken Brenchley were spectators at 2022 where Susan decided "I can do that." They bought this 1922 Ford speedster which had competed here in 2019. Now they are taking turns in driving it. Susan reckons she is a bit anxious as she is a 70 yr old lady. Crickey, half the people here are 70. No age discrimination here.

Their car runs a beaut chain driven maggie





When the bikes were running I could see something red fluttering behind one riders helmet. what could it be? Latest fashion? Then the bike dies right in front of the grand stand. The rider got off. Even with all the red dust it didn't look like a bloke. It was Liselle Carroll and the carby had come loose on her mint 1939 AJS. She explains in her French accent that she has only gained her bike licence last December then needed a bit more of an adrenalin rush so found an ex race bike to buy and now she brightens up the place with her red hair ribbons flapping in the dust.



Russ © Foot in Bowl Photography 2025



Quite a lot of the stories I was told here started with "over a few beers we decided to make...." This is another one. It was during the 1990's when 2 blokes in their 80's decided to put together a bike using their combines bits. One had an AJS V twin frame, the other, a Matchless M3S engine, a very upmarket power-plant. Both were from 1927. And this bike is what they built. The current owner has had it for a couple of years but has basically just tidied it up. The finer details like what AMAC means have died with the old gentlemen. But boy, does this bike move! Sort of makes you just feel good when it thunders past!



Wayne Murray "The Mad Scotsman" he has written on his bonnet, you might agree with when you see his driving position. He is basically laying down with his head next to the rear wheel and while he is to the left of the tailshaft, his right leg is on the right side of it. The principle is to be able to make the profile of the car lower and less wind resistance. The idea is not new, it was around in the early days of motor racing. This is a model A Ford but severely modified, and the quick change diff allows him to change the final drive ratio in 10 minutes and so get the perfect ratio for that particular track. And how does it go? Just great! he is right there with the fastest cars.







Muzz Wood has traditionally been watching the goings on from above while flying as one of the Kalgoorlie Dust Devils. Since last time he has bought himself an Austin 7, now he can chase his daughter Casey who is driving a borrowed Austin 7. Casey is experienced at this event driving a model T in 2022. Somehow she manages to always have a spotless smile in all that red dirt.



Notice the towbar.

*John and Bianca Everett 1929 model A
This 1929 model A was built for Bianca by her Grandpa and her Dad when she was 9. They had just decided they had built their last car when Bianca as a 9yr old pleaded " Just one more!" And they did, just for her.
Same old story, just had a chassis, cowl and motor, they adapted or built the rest. Now she is 26 and they have driven it from Sydney towing a tear drop caravan. And when it's all over they will drive it back again, camping all the way. Bianca also, now owns her Grandfather's model A ute.*



It hasn't had the cobwebs blown out of it yet.

27 model T body and chassis has 1928 model A engine transmission and running gear, an overdrive and a super-charger running off a v belt. Gordon informed me he hadn't actually tried it out yet. Trust me, it went like a shower.



Nick Palmer and Jim Neville 1939 BSA. Jims uncle raced here in 1938. With that knowledge they went shopping for a suitable bike. The one they found had been restored by a now deceased ex speedway rider that had restored the bike for this event but never made it. His daughter said he would have been impressed with it being here. But these blokes knew nothing about mechanicals. On their second run the gearbox seized. A helpful bloke found the gearbox had no oil. Some oil fixed that problem. When I found them it wouldn't start. No compression they had been told and they were looking at a stuck decompressor. I found their problem was a slipping clutch, cured with a quick adjustment. They were learning fast. They were also having a ball.



And then there was rain...



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