

Motor Vehicle Enthusiasts Club



No 23

Aug 2008

TRANSMISSION

If you find you need more information about this club or just can't wait to join ring Peet Menzies on 89814746.

GPO Box 911 Darwin 0801

In Katherine call 89711325.

Newsletter enquiries to Ted
propellers@bigpond.com

MERLIN NIGHTS

Now most of you petrolheads out there reckon a wingnut is a little nut with bizzos on so you don't have to use a spanner to undo it. You are quite right, but since I met Richard Luxton, I discovered he belongs to a crowd of aviation enthusiasts who refer to themselves as wingnuts. After giving a beaut talk about the history of the area around Adelaide River at our monthly MVEC meeting he invited us all to a gathering at his Coomalie property. They call the show "Merlin Night". The wingnuts like to start up their Merlin engine at these shows and because it actually generates a bit of high level "music," they do it away from the densely populated areas. I accepted Richards invite and cruised down to Coomalie. A bunch of MVEC enthusiasts did the same. Coomalie airfield is wholly on Richard's property and was host to a bunch of Beaufighters during WW2 and being cared for privately, it is still in much the same condition. As I drove in a few light aircraft landed and there were quite a few already parked. Something made me look skyward and way up yonder was the unmistakable silhouette of a DC3 but below it the sky seemed littered with more parachutes than I have ever seen at one time. There was none of that rubbish where they land way over yonder. They all came down right in the midst of us spectators. It was great. Then the DC3 came through for a beat up or two. You didn't have to look up at it as it was right there in front of you, and the sound of those two massive radial engines was sooooooo good! It eventually landed right there and the pilot parked it right amongst the small planes and pitched his tent under the wing. After the sun set and during the twilight a Yak took off



The Pratt & Whitney patiently waits for it's cue.

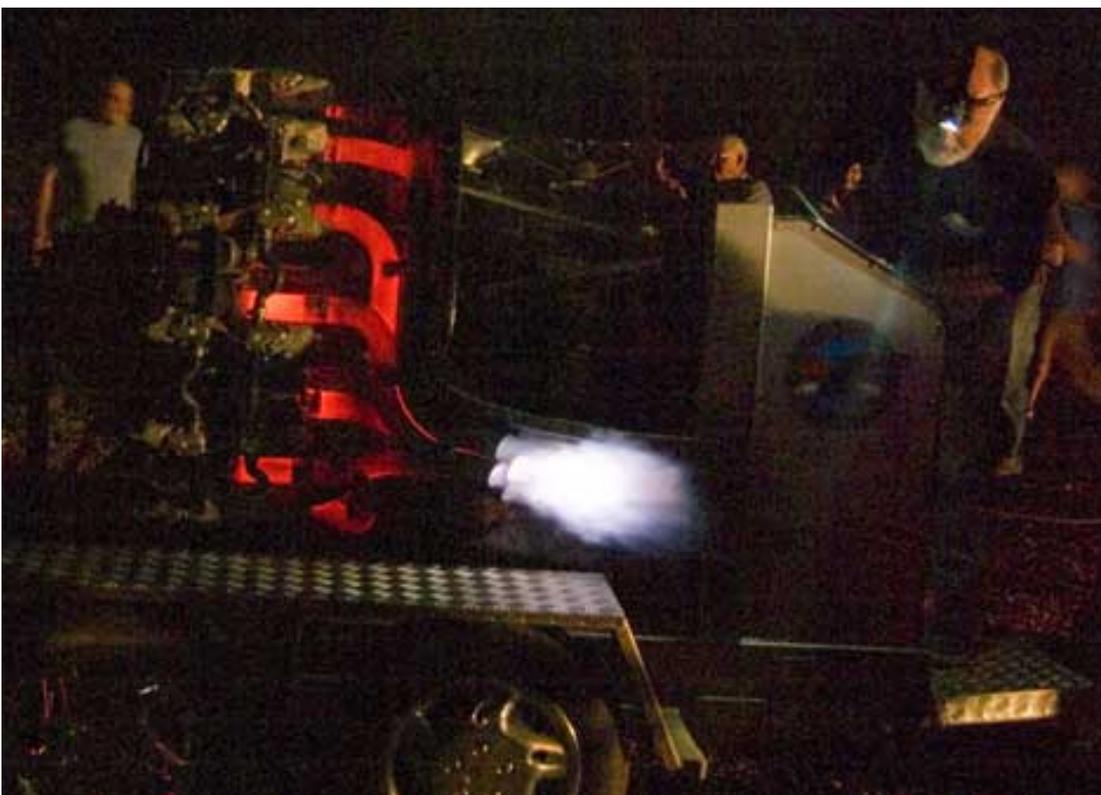


and commenced to seriously carve up the sky and trim the treetops around us. It was a fantastic display, at one stage directly above us the pilot executed a beautiful stall turn and accelerated earthward. He was pointing absolutely straight at our little group and coming down, down, down. I was thinking this is pretty speedy and was beginning to wonder when he would pull up when I heard a feminine scream as the lady behind me dropped her video camera and headed for the trees. Needless to say the plane levelled out in plenty of time. Once it got dark the Batchelor School laid on some terrific food. I had been prepared for the usual stuff that



DC3 cruises in right at dusk.

merely stops you being hungry at these shows, but 10 points as the food was well prepared, tasty and healthy and raised money for the school. While all this was happening the folk club were singing all kinds of neat songs with words you had never heard before and once it was proper dark, the other music got underway. No not the Merlin, I didn't actually see it but instead was the 14 cylinder Pratt & Whitney radial engine. It's the same engine the DC3 runs but you can get a lot closer. It took a while to warm up and run smoothly but what a beautiful sound. With 8 exhaust pipes all belching flames from the ends and the entire exhaust system glowing bright red in the darkness this was one memorable



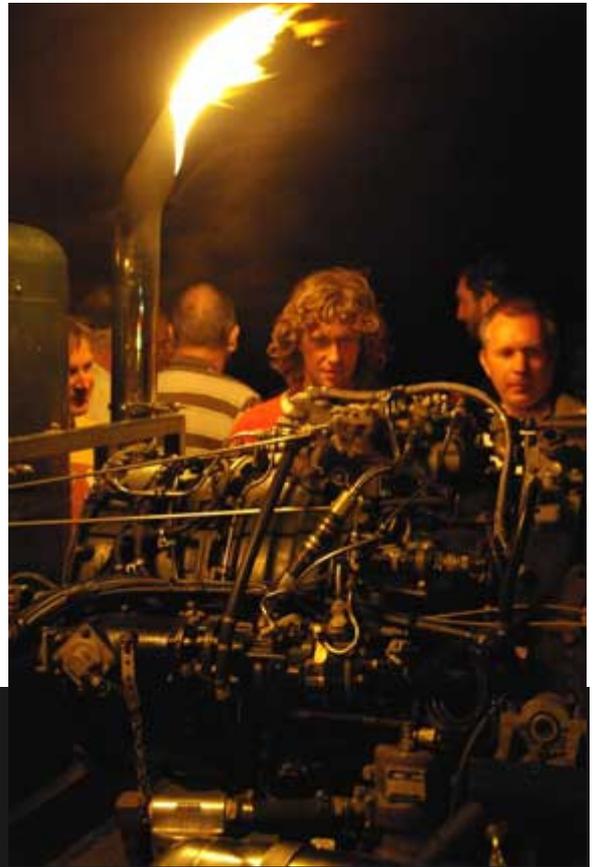
Pratt & Whitney. 14 cylinders to keep you warm on a cool dry season night! Check out those exhausts!!

sight. Actually it tickled all of your senses, you could see it, hear it, feel the vibrations in the air, the smell was glorious and if you couldn't get any emotion from this you wouldn't have been there. This happened more than once through the evening but it wasn't all there was for the power oriented. There was MAD!

For the uninitiated, MAD (that's his nickname, he has a jet powered motorbike) rolled out his other toy. His Jet powered Blitz. It's a fairly



MAD'S mighty blitz. Flaming exhaust stacks are beaut for inspecting the powerplant after the run.



normal run of the mill SWB Blitz with a set of chrome car wheels, but bolted on the tray is a whopping Rolls Royce Viper jet engine. It used to live in a Macchi jet aircraft. (Remember this is an aviation night) With flames permanently belching from the exhaust stacks he lit up the afterburner a few times to singe a few eyebrows and get everyone in the right mood then released the brakes and disappeared down the airstrip. With that afterburner lit up you always knew where he was. Quite a sight in the pitch black bush. Dropping back to an idle (jets idle?) he chucked a U turn and blasted off back towards us. It sure kept you warm on a cool night.



And there were fireworks too!!



way is the 1937 6 Cyl Oldsmobile truck. Most of the stuff around here comes from clearing sales and he goes far and wide when there is something on offer he is interested in. The Olds came from one of these sales. It had a flat tyre and the tray was a bit sad. Somewhere in its life it had a rod out the side of the block but it was original and no one was interested. Neil got it for \$100. Put some juice in it and a battery and it started but had to stop it quick as the fan was wob-

Neil checks out some gear in the R&T Dept. \$5 Bedford in background

HEAVEN!

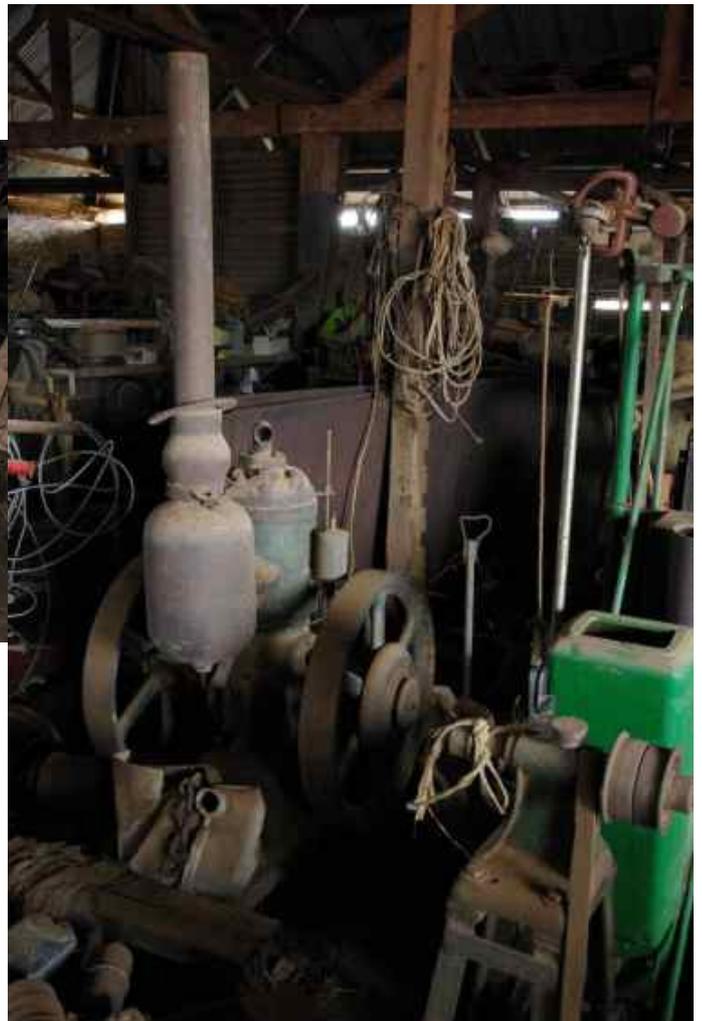
Neil Chapman and his father, Tom, together have put together the greatest collection of "stuff" that I have ever laid my eyes on, anywhere, anytime. Space is often a problem but not to Neil and Tom. They have a farm near Clare in SA. The collection gradually filled the enormous 1860's shearing shed and overflowed into other sheds created to house the problem, errrrr, collection. I have visited their place previously but every time there

bling and just touching the radiator. A new water pump cost \$300 and she goes like a beauty. This vehicle had the body made by Holden and the gear-



6HP Bagshaw runs a VW fuel pump This is quite a large engine

are more engines, tractors, cars, you name it. I started my tour in a rather large shed mostly full of those gigantic machines involved in planting and harvesting grain but filling in the spaces were all the items vintage enthusiasts chase. It was like a department store. The first department was Kawasaki Ag bikes. Every model from 1971-77 was there and Neil is still using them. He reckons his KL is the "Rolls" of the Ag bikes. Just across the



Neil sold this Petter only to buy it back years later



Under the dust is a mint 250 Motosport. Held down by 3 Bantam barrels

box and diff by Chev. The only bits missing are the grille and the air cleaner. Round the header a bit is a 1954 Commer truck which supports their modern day Seed and Super unit. They only seed once a year so it doesn't matter that the starter doesn't work. It cranks starts easily. Once again it came from a clearing sale for \$100. There is a 1948 Cat-



The mood here makes an old engine feller breathe heavy

erpillar D7 Bulldozer. This has been in the family for many years but was incapacitated with a cracked head. Recently Tom saw a head at the scrap yard and recognised it as the caterpillar. With a couple of new seals the big Cat runs again and is used on the farm. There is a 1950's tractor and every implement used in making hay. Not to mention another 1952 David Brown tractor with a scoop attached to the rear which was used in the 50 year re-enactment of the 1956 floods at Renmark (the SA

premier Sir Thomas Playford described the floods as 1 in 1000 years) Everything in the re-enactment was dated at 1956 or earlier. We moved on to another smaller shed. This was the Ronaldson and Tippet dept. It also housed a \$5 Bedford truck. In amongst every type of R&T engine 2-7 hp and both air and water cooled were a few rock ins. Cooper Southern Cross and Villiers protruded and an R&T dragsaw peered over them all. Neil pointed out a Southern Cross engine he got for \$5. It had a broken crankcase cover. He couldn't figure out how it got broken as it runs fine. There is a 6 hp open crank Bagshaw from the mid 1930's. It had a fuel pump problem. Neil adapted a VW pump and it runs great. A 25hp Southern Cross engine from Marree keeps a bunch of Caterpillar tracks company. We move on to the motor bike shed. Here, under a layer of protective dust are more BSA Bantams than you thought they ever manufactured! There are 125's 150's and 175's. Keeping them company are amongst others, a 125 Honda Elsinore, 250 BSA and a bunch of Hondas including a mint example of the original XL 250 Motosport. Neil reckons they are a heap of shit. I reckon they are great! And there is a Bombardier! Then we get into the more serious stuff. We enter the old shearing shed. As you enter it takes a while for your eyes to adjust to the low light level. When they do you are in a different world. The old shed with its dirt floor and layers of dust and the low light set the mood for the most amazing display of everything mechanical. A Gunsmith garden tractor from 1951. They only made 250 of em. A 1956 Chev truck full of pumps from the same era. This is another vehicle that took place in the '56 flood re-enactment carting dirt for levies. There are more old tractors than you can poke a stick at. It's bloody fantastic. Squeeze past a pile of Mk1 Zephyr engines and a 8 hp 2 stoke Petter stands supreme. Neil sold this in 1975 and it



How many tractors? They all run! This a very small bunch of em. Amongst them are stationery engines and lawn mowers decorating the walls

took him till 2008 to buy it back again. (Why? Ask Neil!) A 1962 125 single Cyl Kawasaki guards a very feral 1930 Chrysler ute bought by Tom in the mid 60's for \$5, used severely then sold in 1975, bought back in 1981 and gotten going again in 2000. Tom reckons it has never failed him in all that time. There is an engine driven machine like a giants dentist drill for drilling fence posts and a very large Southern Cross BDL 10 hp engine and pump from the old Ghan. Cruising along it gets even darker as we make our way past an Imperial hay bailer from Horwood Bagshaw to a Buda stationery engine on a transport. This engine has its history in the local area. Neil exchanged 2 cartons of beer for it. He freed a stuck piston and it runs like a beauty. Neil turns on a couple of light bulbs and we can see he gets serious about this hobby sometimes. A Sandwich open crank engine from America of about 2hp cost \$800 and is the most he paid for a single item. A row of Southern cross Diesels keep a 1951 Mk1 Consul safe under covers while every Buzacott vertical engine ever made lines the other side of the narrow walkway. Neil points out that where an engine

has enough of its original transfers and colour, he would not repaint it as it would lose its appeal. In this area there are Ronaldson and Tippet Diesel engines of 5.5 and 6 hp from the late 50's and a variety of early ice cream tins. This is the dairy dept. Separators and Homestead milkers which are milking machines for one cow at a time and a wide variety of suction cups had me intrigued. On to the BSA Bantam dept and there are even more Bantams but with a Lambretta to keep them company. There is a Villiers dept with every engine from 1957-71, Fairbanks Morse, then we go outside to check out a 40hp Southern Cross compressor. 1946 model 150 CFM. Serious stuff! As we head back to another section of the shearing shed there

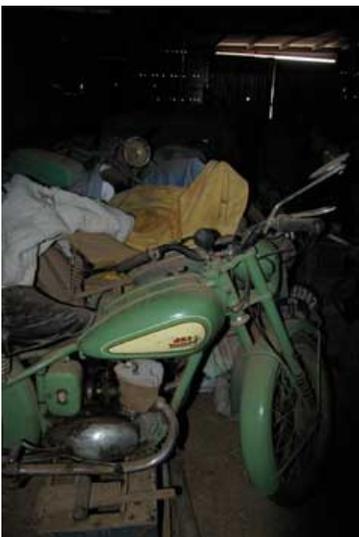
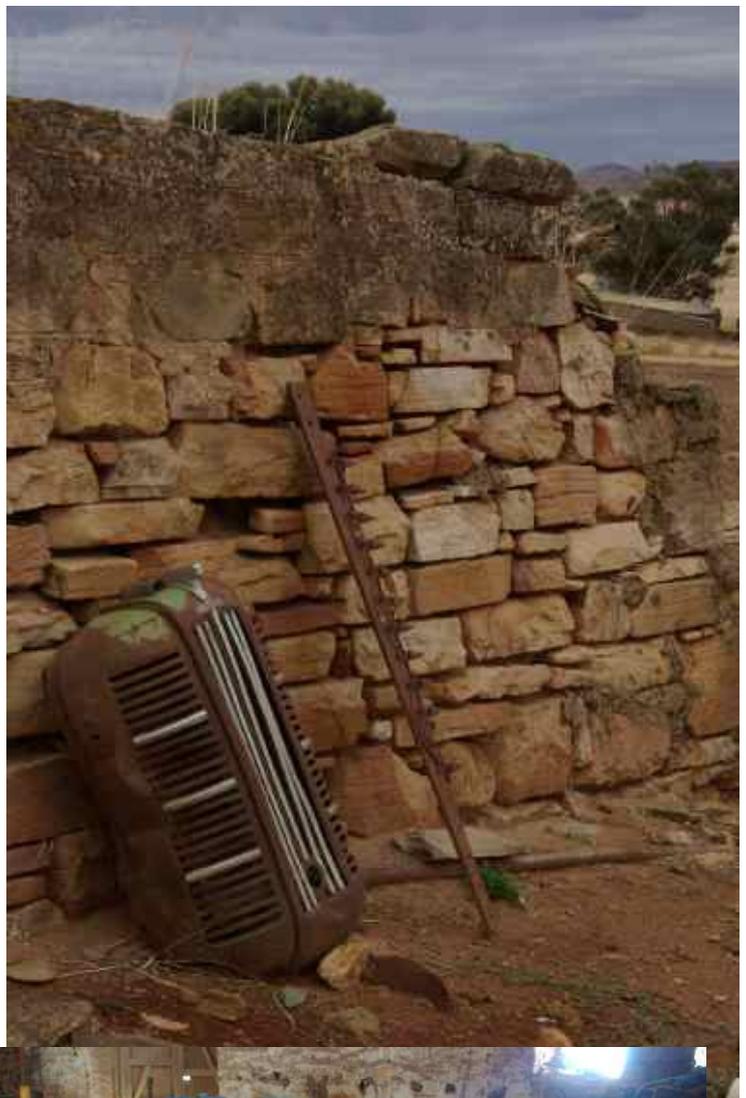


This car was bought about mid 60's for \$5. Never shedded and never failed the owner. Last used about 1973, sold in 1975, bought back in 1981 then sat in Shed till 2000 when it was got running again. This unit never failed the owner all the time it was in use. Tom's car. 1930 Chrysler 65. 26 Chev g/box. Vanguard diff. Holden seat. Radiator Mk1 Zephyr. Carb Holden grey motor. Ignition 12v total loss.



are Chev bits sneaking around all over the place, but this is the tractor dept. The rule here is every tractor had to be driven in under its own steam. There are literally dozens of tractors in here. Not in rows or anything. Just fit em in! They range from 1924-55. One of them, a 1932 steel wheeled Fordson, Neil uses at the Tractor Pull. It is unbeaten in its class. This section also houses the lawn mower collection. They decorate the walls. If they ever made a model of a lawnmower, chances are there is one of them here. And there is another Kawasaki too. Moving around the outside of the shed to another section and there are even more tractors. This is the Fordson dept. The oldest is from May 1923 when Ford made the first one nicknamed the "Widow maker" after its tendency to fall over with its very direct steering. After creating many widows Henry's solution was to advise the operators to be more careful, or that's the way the story is told anyway. Another section devoted to post borers and chain saws that would need arms like Popeye to operate them. I spied a bunch of old sewing machines peeking out from behind even more engines. How about a Volkswagen country buggy. This one has never been registered. It spent its life on a property near white cliffs. It's in remarkably original condition. And where did all this start from? Years ago Tom was doing a job for a feller and found a rusty spoked steel wheel lying in the grass. It now holds up the side of the shed with a couple of mates. And is the collection complete? Not on your life! He was off to another clearing sale next Sunday!

There are hundreds of machines in this collection, and hundreds more items. Very few of them are not functional but it is not just the vast numbers or the variety that make it so good. It is the way they are stored. The gloom and dust of the old shed creates the perfect atmosphere. You couldn't recreate this any where else. It is unique and it is just bloody fantastic!



And this wheel is what started it all!!

Cars on the World Wide Web

By John Price



Love the BBC show TOP GEAR and can't get enough on the television. Well the answer is to have a look at their webpage at www.bbc.co.uk/topgear

Everything you wanted to know about the show and clips from the show are on this web page. And if you consider yourself a fanatical fan try taking "The Stupidly Hard Quiz" to test just how big a fan you really are.

But if you would like to know more about the actual cars, well then go over to www.topgear.com and here you'll find another Top Gear web page run by the publishers of the magazine Top Gear. It still includes videos from the show, but also includes bloopers and more technical information on the cars. You can look at reviews, download posters, or just cruise through the galleries of sports cars



And for an Australian twist on TopGear check out <http://topgear.sbs.com.au/>

TOP GEAR AUSTRALIA – HOSTS REVEALED!

After an Australia-wide call out, 4,000 DVD applications and months of interviews and screen tests, SBS and Freehand are pleased to announce the hosts for Top Gear Australia - Charlie Cox, Warren Brown, Steve Pizzati and of course, The Stig.



Top Gear Australia is the first of a global roll out of the BBC Worldwide franchise. The three motoring larrikins and The Stig's Aussie cousin will present Top Gear Australia on SBS in late 2008.

August Mandorah Trip

Due to logistical problems the Overnight Camping trip to Mandorah has been postponed to Sept. Dates will be set at the August meeting and posted here

For sale

Peugeot 505 4 door sedan 1982 2 litre 4 cyl 5 speed manual \$2500

Motor only Vauxhall Cresta 2662cc 162 ci in line 6 With Hydramatic \$500

Fiat 2 litre DOHC with 5 speed manual gearbox Same as Lancia 2 litre similar specs to Lotus 2 litre high performance motor \$900

Howard Moses 0408 714 115

Wanted

A pair of front seats from a Morris or similar vehicle from the 50– 60's era. Nothing fancy, these seats are required for our Morris Commercial J-Type van. We can repair if necessary. The slide or adjusting mechanism is not important, as the existing driver's seat base is intact with the sliding mechanism, and the passenger seat will be fixed in position and not required to slide. Something like the photo.

Lou Cowan
8988 4217



Rock n Rod Show Sept 20th

Have a "drive in era" car ?
Have any neat car you like to show off ?
Fancy dancing but never got round to it ?
Here's your chance to show off your car and have a go at rock n roll dancing. Heaps of fun!!
Proceeds to cancer council
Need some dance tuition
Contact Ted
propellers@bigpond.com

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



If you had as much "stuff" as Neil Chapman you would be smiling too!

WOTS ON THIS YEAR

For info on any of these events call Chris on 0419 489 816

August

O/night Mandorah has been postponed till Sept. Date to be advised

13 Monthly meeting

Guest speaker is Bob Foster, author of "Birdum or Bust" which covers the NT road transport industry in the 1950's and 1960's.

20 Crossing re-enactment concludes

September 6 Katherine Flying Fox Festival

17 Fathers Day Open Day

10 Monthly meeting

20 Rock n Rod Show

21 Mystery Run

October 8 Monthly Meeting

11 Agm

19 Bark Hut/Deck Bar

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November 12 Monthly meeting

16 Les Wilson's

December 13 Xmas Party

5 month Management Course

Lesson 1:

A man is getting into the shower just as his wife is finishing up her shower, when the doorbell rings.

The wife quickly wraps herself in a towel and runs downstairs.

When she opens the door, there stands Bob, the next-door neighbour.

Before she says a word, Bob says, 'I'll give you \$800 to drop that towel.'

After thinking for a moment, the woman drops her towel and stands naked in front of Bob, after a few seconds, Bob hands her \$800 and leaves.

The woman wraps back up in the towel and goes back upstairs.

When she gets to the bathroom, her husband asks, 'Who was that?'

'It was Bob the next door neighbour,' she replies.

'Great,' the husband says, 'did he say anything about the \$800 he owes me?'

Moral of the story:

If you share critical information pertaining to credit and risk with your shareholders, in time, you may be in a position to prevent avoidable exposure.