

# Motor Vehicle Enthusiasts Club

No 39

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# TRANSMISSION



If you find you need more information about this club or just cant wait to join ring Peet Menzies on 0417 855222  
GPO Box 911 Darwin 0801  
In Katherine call 89710605  
Newsletter enquiries to Ted propellers@bigpond.com or 89886049

The voice of the Motor Vehicle Enthusiasts Club

## Australia Day Ute Run



*You can't get more Aussie than this. Elizabeth, Richard, Shirley, Aussie flags, Utes, blue sky. Lives tough!*

As you would expect it to be Australia Day 2010 was a blast! With a whole bunch of Aussies celebrating being Aussies. But this year everything seemed even more popular than ever. Starting off the day with a seriously large crowd at the fun run, the ute run was not about to be outdone. It took us a half hour in the queue to get through the gate. Once in it was quite a sight. Just a sea of Aussie flags flapping in the breeze, with utes of every description patiently hanging below waiting for the big procession. From baby Datto utes to Ford F trucks and even prime movers, and mud covered off roaders to gleaming hot rods they were all there, all 721 of them. And most were sporting large numbers of Aussie flags, so there were literally 1000's of flags

and most of them were not small.

Clothing featuring the flag was popular too. There were hats, caps, shirts and shorts, sunnies and earrings but my favourite was the Aussie flag bikinis on the girls. The first 100 cars had a police escort and we were only a dozen or so from the front. It was fantastic. The cops held up the traffic at all the intersections and the lights were always green for us so we could cruise uninterrupted, it was great!

But the best part was the spectators. Their enthusiasm made the day. The whole route from the Hidden Valley Raceway to Casuarina and back to Winnellie Greyhound track had groups of Aussies cheering and waving even more of those Aussie flags. Smiles everywhere, adults and kids alike it was just fantastic to be part of it!

# More Australia Day!



*The spectators made the day!*



*You could have a barbie in the back of a ute so why not a tent?*



*Under the camouflage is Brenton Shevlin's White scout car. With Keziah in the drivers seat it makes the perfect ladies car, not!! Actually this car is LHD and the controls are a bit heavy. Yes it is a ute. A real tough one!*



*A cross section of the utes taking part*



*The 1958 Chevrolet as it appears today and (at right) as found in the wrecking yard*

*All photos by Jason Atwell*



### **58 FEVER**

Jason Atwell didn't have an internet connection at the time and allowed his mate to demonstrate the virtues of Ebay to him. Jason is a bit of a Chev freak so it didn't take him long to find a Hood bow for a 58 Chev. He bid on it and won it, the catch being the bow was in Colorado in USA. He had a trip planned so he told the bloke selling the part he would come over and pick it up personally. Now you wouldn't go all the way over there just for a small part like that would you? Course not! Quick as a flash Jason was back on Ebay buying a 58 Chev to go with the hood bow. The car was in South Dakota and the description sounded pretty good. South Dakota isn't all that far from Colorado. Well, I suppose it depends on what you are used to. Territorians wouldn't reckon it's not far anyway. He rolled up intending to drive away in his new



*There was an optional engine available in 58, which was the "W" motor. It is a 348 Cu. Inch big block. First time offered in 58. Jason decided to put one in.*



*How much 58 Chev can you fit in a Jeep?*

purchase but it wasn't quite as good as he imagined. Matter of fact it wasn't good at all and when he fired the engine up it was even worse. It became obvious pretty quick that this wasn't the car they would be driving around America. The sellers girlfriend was embarrassed that these fine Aussie folks had come all the way from Australia to pick up this car that wasn't as described and was pressing boyfriend for a refund of the purchase price but they were still stuck with no wheels to continue their trip. The seller bloke offered them a Jeep from the 1980's. A bit rough but it ran Ok. So they stripped the Chev of all its good bits and filled the back of the Jeep and off they went to Colorado for their hood bow. The Colorado feller was quite interested in these Aussie people who would come all the way to the US to pick up a small part and when he heard the sad story of the Chev he remarked "you know I have a yard just out of town, if you want to stay the night you can have a look at it, I have a 58 hardtop there".

Jason's words, "Well, this yard is acres big with more cars than I can count. This was Sunday and after we bought the 58, Charles said "I've got grid iron with my son today, just spend as long as you want here and take off anything from the cars you want. We'll sort out the bill in the morning. Just lock the gates when you leave" I can't speak better of this guy!! Unfortunately I'm not really into the



early stuff so I didn't go too deep into that section, but there was stuff from I guess the twenty's onwards, and lots of it. Those guys in America don't know how lucky they are!"

A happy ending you reckon? Not on your life. From there they went to the Pomona swap meet. By now the Jeep was having a few problems and they had abandoned it in a car park. At the swap meet a couple of Shiellers rolled up with, you guessed it, a Chev for sale. They were selling their 57 Chev to finance their college education (the

way I understand it college is what we call university) anyhow that left them without wheels so once again Jason was able to sell them this slightly used Jeep that just needed a couple of things fixed and he was able to drive the Chev away for \$100 less. There are a lot more Chevs in Jason's life than the two in this story, and over a while he has accumulated a few more bits than he can use all by himself. If you are after Chev bits from late 40's to 1960's give him a call. There is an ad in the classified section of this magazine.

And how did I cross paths with Jason? Why the venerable Ebay of course, but not from Chevrolet parts but early Falcon stuff. But that's a story for later on.



*Above: The '57 at the Pomona Swap*

*Left: The things that happen when you drive a '57 Chev*

*Below: Back in Australia and all finished*





*After years of chasing around the countryside to find things to write about I found some stuff right in my own backyard. Please bear with me while I blow my own trumpet for a bit. This is my 1921 Model T Ford*

## **T Ford Omnibus**

by Ted Mumme

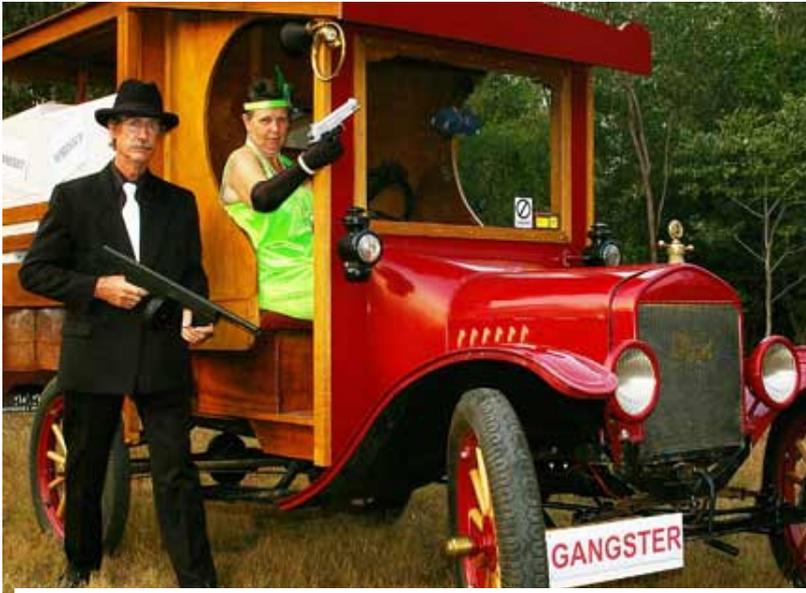
When I first became involved in this club one of the first events I attended was the REJEX rally. I hadn't a clue what it was about, only that it was mobs of fun and it would be OK for my series 1 Mazda RX7. A set of tyres later and mobs of fun we survived REJEX. Very successfully too but what had amazed me was the speed the old cars with wooden spoked wheels could hoon around corners. I had assumed such antics would snap off the spokes. Anyway it looked like heaps of fun. The mental degeneration had set in. Subconsciously I started shopping for an old car with wooden wheels.

I don't remember how long after, but I noticed an ad in the MVEC newsletter (as it was called back in the days) for a "Model T Ford 80% completed" at Katherine. I was heading down there for a canoeing event so checked it out while I was there. When I laid my eyes on it I have to admit my heart sank a bit, but the owner did start it up and the engine sounded good. It sounded just like a tractor. The rest of it did not inspire me. I said I'll think about it and off I went.

The bloke selling it, Noel Neil explained the history of the vehicle. It had been bought new in 1921 by C.J.A.Cox & Co, a family business still operating in Katherine, to do deliveries to stations in the area and to bring stuff from the railhead at Pine Creek to Katherine. With a rego no NA 52 (52nd car in NT) it had started life as a tourer, been converted to a ute later and when it had reached the end of its useful life had been abandoned on the banks of the Katherine River and as happened with all abandoned cars, it got stripped and was scattered all over Katherine. Back

about 1980 Noel came up with the idea of collecting all the bits and putting it back together again. Not as a tourer or a ute, but something totally different. An omnibus. (That's bus for you modern types). For the job he bought a rainforest tree and had it cut up into useable dimensioned bits (just like you get in Bunnings except the bits are rough sawn) and started building a body. At this point Noel realised he had met his match. The mechanical stuff was not a problem, but woodwork was something he hadn't tried before. Serious problems saw him abandon the project and it sat for 20 odd yrs.

There are mobs of T Fords in Australia but they all came into the country as a rolling chassis with an engine and transmission but no body. Each Capital city had its own body works so you will find T's from Sydney will be different from those originating in Adelaide and all different from those in USA. A small number had their bodies built by a local coachbuilder to whatever design was asked and this is where the idea of the omnibus body came from. Lucky for me Noel was a pushy salesman and chased me up later on. I became the proud (no not yet) new owner of a model T Ford. Noel delivered it to my place while I was trying to kill my RX7 at the next years REJEX. I remember coming home and seeing it sitting



*The T made a good booze wagon for the Gangsters Ball. That's me and Shirley keeping the punks away*

out front still sitting on the trailer. Cripes what have I done, I thought. Although I was discouraged by some, I decided to stick to the concept of the omnibus. It was after all different. No one else would have one like this. I studied mobs of old photos to figure out how I wanted it to end up.

A few years went by and every now and then I would get stuck into it. I pulled the body to bits and reassembled it using the same techniques I used to build a wooden trailer sailer years before. A few shots of annual leave from work got things moving and when the end was in sight (but still a long way off) Something made me pull the diff to bits. I found the remains of the 98 Katherine flood in it. I sold my beloved RX7 (which incidentally was a birthday present from myself) with the intention of driving the Ford in REJEX. I got it registered on Friday arvo. Took it for a drive to Darwin River Dam (about 30kms) and asked my wife Shirley if she was game for REJEX tomorrow. "Yea lets do it" she said!

It was a 60 km trip to the start. One of the most scary 60km I have ever driven. Model T controls are severely different to normal cars. And when we got to the start we were the second to leave because we were in such an old car! We survived getting out to Hughes WW2 airstrip and to the first competitive motorkhana section. The first routine wasn't too bad. Shirley didn't look totally terrified. I asked her if she was OK to which she replied she was. OK we go a bit harder in the second section then. She was happy! No worries! Lets give it shit! Half way through it felt a bit different, like maybe it was hanging the arse out speedway style! But only for a second! Then there was a crunch and we ground to a halt on a bit of an angle. We had sheared off the spokes on one of the back wheels!

Bummer! We weren't far from home so trailered it there and continued the rally in the '64 Pontiac.

A week later was the fist big Shannons car show. I wanted to show it off! I had a couple more back wheels with some really ratty rotten spokes. I bent up a bit of 1/4 " thick steel to take up the end play and with a good sandpaper and a couple of coats of varnish they looked pretty good. After all I only had to drive it on and off the trailer and maybe 30 yards. I missed the ramps reversing it off the trailer and nothing broke and at the end of the weekend I had won a prize. Obviously the judges hadn't picked the bodge spokes. The Ford sat around for a bit as I intended to make a new set of spokes myself, just for the challenge, but out of the blue I received a phone call from a lady organising a charity fair at Humpy Doo and would I be inter-

ested in bringing a couple of old cars along and maybe taking rides? What would you say? A second later I said no worries. A second after I had hung up I remembered the spokes! They'll be right wont they? ... .They were OK for a while. The rides were pretty popular. So popular the suspension was bottoming out from having too many passengers. This was a slow ride though on a small windy track off the road. There was a crunch, a lurch and a scream and that was it for the afternoon, the rim lying next to the car. To rub it in the tyre blew out a bit later when I was talking to someone about it. Months later I was still intending to make those spokes when I realised my grandchildren were coming on their one and only ever visit to Darwin. I had to have the T going to take them for a spin! I ordered a set of spokes from U.S air express. The freight cost was more than the spokes. When they arrived I realised I had ordered the wrong ones. They were too short. I Send them back and got the proper ones. More airfreight but the second time the fit was perfect. I took the grandkids for a hoon. The grandkids



*Bloody gangsters everywhere. Thats Bob, Jonita and Daniel*



and we had a ball taking others for rides. It surprised me how well it handled deep sand. With a bit of confidence under the belt

were ok but the daughter was terrified!

Then there was the REJEX again. All fired up and checking things out found some play in a rear wheel bearing. The parts catalogues show bearing sleeves of normal or high quality. I had chosen normal. It should have read poor and normal quality. The bearing sleeve was mild steel and had split after less than 200 miles. No REJEX that year

2008 was the celebration of 100 years of model T's. The Sydney club was celebrating by driving their T's right around Australia. Wouldn't it be neat to be with them at their grand entry into Darwin I thought. I had it all polished up and arranged to meet them on the Stuart Highway and escort them to my place about 20kms away. The day before it was running better than ever. I wasn't game to run it flat out, it was too scary. On the trip to the highway it started to slow down. After the rendezvous it got so sick as to barely get home. The problem was due to a valve spring retainer failing rendering one exhaust valve closing by the force of gravity only. This problem was cured with a 1/4" washer, but too late for the grand entry.

It was time to start using the vehicle. In it's first year of rego it was used on 2 days. The next couple of years was even less. The Birdum weekend sounded like a good place to shake the cobwebs out. We trailered it to Mataranka where it raised a few eyebrows. You need a 4wd to go out there they said. Well we showed em up. We went places that a modern 4wd got stuck

we have taken it to do the fortnightly grocery shopping, a trip of 80 km. The biggest problem is getting out of the carpark before all the frozen stuff thaws as people are anxious to check out the car. The latest success story was the Trucking association Kids Convoy. A fantastic day. We were awarded a prize for the oldest truck. Since we got the Model T going we have been awarded "best car", "best ute" and now "oldest truck". This is one versatile motor vehicle!

And last years 2009 REJEX rally saw us finish with absolutely no problems at all. We even came home with a prize!

*Alicia, at the Vickers Vimi commemoration at Fannie Bay recently*



*Shirley drives it, in old time clothes too*



*This is how it was when I first saw it!*

Long time readers will remember John Price's column "Cars on the World Wide Web".

Here is your editors version of Cars on the World Wide Web.

**Got some ideas**

On what should be on  
our club's new website?

Send those ideas to [mvecnt@gmail.com](mailto:mvecnt@gmail.com)



**The 1932 Helicron**

In the early part of the 20th century, France spent a lot of money on aeroplane development. The natural offshoot of this is the motor car. In the 1930s idea people with money built propeller driven cars. This is the story of one such vehicle.

In 1932, one propeller driven Helicron was built. It had a wooden frame, body, and even a wooden propeller. In the late 1930s the car was stored in a shed and forgotten until it was discovered in 2000.

When found the Helicron was missing its engine, but otherwise complete. The motor was replaced with a Citroen GS 4-cylinder motor from the 1980s. The car steers by the rear wheels.

When the wooden propeller is spinning at full speed and efficiently, this little 1,000-pound boat-tailed skiff can hit freeway speeds exceeding 75 mph. Since France has safety inspections for vehicles, this car was inspected in 2000 and was approved for use on their roads. This is the one and only Helicron in existence, owned by Lane Motor Museum in Nashville, TN. USA

Check it out some more at these two websites

<http://cruisin2.wordpress.com/2008/11/28/the-1932-helicron/>

<http://www.conceptcarz.com/vehicle/z11262/Helicron-No-1.aspx>



**Wanted: -**

Mechanic who enjoys Restorations.  
I have an FJ Holden and a Fiat Bambino in desperate need of attention. If you are interested please Phone Brian on 0418 893 008

**Free stuff**

Get your free ads in here. Give stuff away, sell stuff , get information. Whatever you like. Email Ted at propellers@bigpond.com or 89886049.  
Got a story to tell?  
Deadline.. The end of the month

**Looking for Chev parts?**

Late 40's to 1960's  
Call Jason 07 54 646 728

*thechevshed@yahoo.com*

The email address says it all!

**1951 2 door morris minor**

needs to be restored,  
side valve motor in pieces.  
90% there  
free give away to a good home.  
Mick 0428827179

**I was depressed last night**

so I called Lifeline.  
Got a freakin' call centre in Afghanistan .  
I told them I was suicidal.  
They got all excited and asked if I could drive a truck.

**Honda CBR 1000 1993 motor cycle.**

Good condition \$ 4500  
Phone: Cody 0419717339

Last year I wrote of a new steam locomotive they built in England. Its name is Tornado and it is a replica of a type built in the 1940's and 50's.

It seems that in the cold snap they experienced over there recently, their modern day electric trains could not function. Tornado was in the area taking people for Christmas meal trips and was about to head for home. When they heard of the plight of the stranded commuters, they offered a bunch of them a ride home. How about that for a beaut Christmas spirit story!

You can read about it on the BBC's website  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/8428097.stm>

I like the bit when the spokesman for Tornado said "If any of the train operators want to modernise their services by using steam trains, I would be happy to give them a quote."



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

## Wots on

- Feb**
- 14th Working bee at hangar
- 19-20th Bombing of Darwin commemorations and open days at hangar  
Bring your stuff in to show it off
- 28th Come and have a social evening at the Dripstone Clifftops. Watch the sunset in perfect Darwin style while you have your tea and a beer or two. Bring whatever it is that you like to eat or drink. Also a chair. Bring your classic car if you fancy. The first social event of the year, come and have a good time. If the rain is really bucketing down we will call it off but it will have to be *really* bucketing! More info ring Ted 89886049
- Mar**
- 10 Monthly meeting
- 14 Working bee at hangar
- 21 Club run (details not available yet)

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**Murphy's old lady had been pregnant** for some time and now the time had come. He brought her to the doctor and the doctor began to deliver the baby. She had a little boy, and the doctor looked over at Murphy and said. 'Hey, Murph! You just had you a son,!' 'Ain't dat grand, !!' Murphy got excited by this, but just then the doctor spoke up and said, 'Hold on! We ain't finished yet!' The doctor then delivered a little girl. He said, 'Hey, Murph! You got you a daughter, !!!! She is a pretty lil ting, too....' Murphy got kind of puzzled by this and then the doctor said, 'Hold on, we aint got done yet, !' The doctor then delivered another boy and said, 'Murph, you just had yourself another boy, !' Murphy said to the doctor, 'Doc, what caused all of dem babies,?' The doctor said, 'You never know Murph, it was probably something that happened during conception.' Murphy said, 'Ah yeah, during conception.' When Murph and his wife went home with their three children, he sat down with his wife and said, 'Mama, you remember dat night that we ran out of Vaseline and we had to use dat dere 3-in-1 Oil.' She said, 'Yeah, I remember dat night...!' Murphy said, 'I'll tell you, ....it's a good ting we didn't use WD-40.'"