

Motor Vehicle Enthusiasts Club



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TRANSMISSION

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

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In Katherine call 89710605 .
Newsletter enquiries to Ted
propellers@bigpond.com

Celebration of a Nation



The Australia Day Ute Run



This owner of this Toyota was the keenest bloke there. He used the oxy set to cut the back off the station wagon and convert it to a ute.

Should you not own a ute, a fair enough reason to get one would be so you could partake in Darwin's very unique Australia Day Ute Run. Fair dinkum, this is one of the most vibrant events you can take part in. That evening following the event, one of the spectators told me she was especially pleased that every ute she waved to replied with an enthusiastic wave and a honk, no matter what age group the ute or its occupants came from. And from a driver's point of view, it was the spectators that made the day. There were thousands of them and they were all super enthusiastic and lots of them had honkers to honk at us. What a blast!

A great day! But for a bunch of MVEC drivers it didn't run quite as smooth as hoped. A small group of about a half dozen or so arranged to travel to the start in a convoy from the hangar, show off through the main part of town, then out to the Hidden Valley raceway. I put myself at the back of the pack, the safest place. My problem then was getting red lights at intersections. The car in front of me went through when it was a bit red, but with a cop car waiting to turn onto our road, I thought it prudent to wait till the next green. Then at the next lights I managed another red. I could still see the others in the distance but they would soon turn a corner and I was not sure which route they would then take so I just hurried along as much as you can hurry in a model T. Surprise when I came to a roundabout and spied Trevor's Dodge truck at the side of the road. I thought maybe they had waited for me lest I was lost. Nope! The truck had conked out. Peet was actually driving the truck as Trevor was crook. Peet drove the truck and Bob drove Trevors old Chev ute. So we pulled over to see if we could help. Peet suspected he had run out of petrol but it turned out a bit of the rotor button in the



Oz doggie with his scarf and hat is cool, but you really can't be a more Aussie dog than a Dingo.



Aussie kids too!



distributor had gone AWOL and there was not a lot of spark at the plugs. About now Les came back in his beautiful Valiant ute and offered to tow the Dodge back to Peet's place where they had a better chance of getting it going again. So off Shirley and myself went for the obligatory show off lap of Mitchell St and out to the raceway. And there on the side of the road and stopped, was Trevor's Chev ute. As we pulled up behind I cracked a funny to Shirley that Trevor's whole fleet had broken down. Then Bob alighted from the cab and let us know that it indeed had broken something in the transmission and was going nowhere. Bob was waiting for a trailer to pick him and the Chev up. Bummer! We expected Peet to get the Dodge going and to make it but he never arrived, nor did Les. Our numbers were definitely getting down. Never mind, and when we got inside the raceway they put all the old cars right at the start





of the parade and being last there we were right at the very front in poll position. Pity it wasn't a race.

And what an electrifying atmosphere! I reckon even someone who was a non-Aussie would have been excited. The first thing you saw was just a sea of waving blue. All of it Aussie flags. Lower your sights a little and there were countless utes. There were big utes, little utes. New ones, really feral old ones, shiny ones and really dirty ones. And in amongst em there were Aussies. Same deal. Big, little, young and old. And the three things they all had in common were they were happy, they were Aussies and they were driving utes. Probably the biggest challenge was to see how big and how many flags you could fly from your ute. As well as the flags it wasn't unusual to decorate the ute with something they thought was typically Australian, or maybe Territorian. Barbeques were popular, there was a crocodile swimming in a pool, and an old outside dunny on the back of a truck, lots of stuffed Koala Bears, Kangaroos and one real live Dingo. But it's the people that make the day. Naturally there were Aussie flag t shirts, tattoos and even wigs, but how about an Aussie flag lycra body suit. I addressed him as "Blokeman" but he corrected me and in-





formed me he was “Aussie Spiderman”
And this is certainly a fitting event for our national day as the ute was actually an Australian invention.
So, get yourself a ute and be there next year.
There was the odd sedan present but they were the target for a lot of sick jokes.



And this event was not just for blokes either. Some ladies brought their dogs along, some their lovingly restored baby Suzuki ute, and others were happy to kick back in the tray and let the fellers do the driving.





*One of the first ever model A's, it used left over model T parts. A genuine bought new in Australia vehicle with a known history since it rolled off the showroom floor. We call it a ute but it was probably known as a buckboard back then.
Pic: Doug*

Doug Brooker never set out to own a model A Ford ute, it just sort of happened. What he did have was an enormous collection of car books that included parts books and manuals for model A's. He worked with a bloke that owned one of these cars, not quite pristine, but not a basket case yet, you might call it a project vehicle. The colleague hadn't actually touched it for a considerable time and when he planned to move to Qld he suggested to Doug that he should make an offer. Doug got permission from the family boss and made the offer and became the proud new owner of a Model A construction kit. Graham, the previous owner, had begun pulling it to bits in the early 1990's, but after a marriage bust up, it and all its bits were shoved into a shipping container in the rural area and forgotten. But there is quite a story that goes with this vehicle..... Graham has an uncle, Ray Cronk. Ray Cronk's father bought the model A brand new for a work vehicle on his cattle station, Medway Park, in Qld. It was also used for rural mail work. Ray had taken over the station and ran it till around 1990 when he sold up. He knew Graham had been interested in the old model A that had been holding the shed floor down for years and when the property was up for sale he encouraged him to come and get it. This wasn't a sale, this was a gift. Graham travelled over to Qld and brought it home. It had been sitting in the same place in the same shed since 1948. Ray still remembers (he is still going) the day when he asked a bloke to drive him to the railway station in the Ford. The feller promptly ran it into a stump and severely bent the front axle, so they shoved it into the shed and there it sat for the next 42 years, until Graham



*Rolling the A out of the shed at Medway Station at Bogantungan, Qld. That's Ray Cronk and his nephew Graham. The vehicle had been sitting in that shed untouched from 1948 till 1991.
Pic:Graham*



The next change of ownership. Coming out of the container at Humpty Doo, NT. It only rested a short time here, till 2010. Less than 20 years!

Pic:Doug

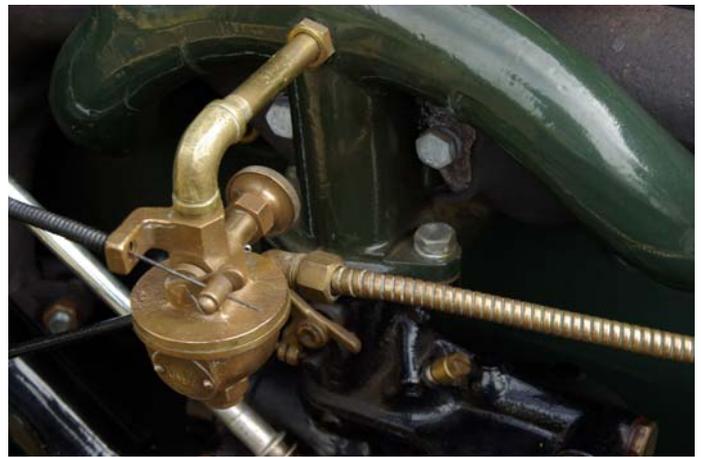
came along.

Once he had trailered it home to Darwin, Graham proceeded to pull it to bits intending to do it right up. Unfortunately this is when his family fell to bits and priorities changed, but luckily the vehicle wasn't left out in the weather. It and all its bits were put in a container and there they rested until Doug came on the scene.

When it came out of the container 18 years later it certainly was partly dismantled, but mostly was in one piece. Luckily the mechanicals were still together and mostly it was the utility section that was reduced to parts, and all those parts were also stored out of harm's way in the container.

Doug had no intention of failing in the restoration as the previous owner had. Once he had it in his shed he pulled it to bits to the last bolt. Then once the chassis was stripped and painted he proceeded to recondition every bit of it and section by section he put it all back together again. Most of the timber was beyond reclamation but he was able to get a bunch of good used Tassie Oak, consequently the timberwork looks lovely. The only surviving timber part is the seat base. Generally the panels were not too bad. The driver's door was somewhat dented from opening against the spare wheel, but with patience he was able to straighten it ok. The outside panels of the ute body were a different story. The tailgate was way beyond repair and the sides had been cut up, but once again, he had the pieces to use as a pattern to make a replacement. It appeared the sides had been cut with the intention of manufacturing the

sides in smaller pieces then welding them together. Doug set his goal to make the whole side in one piece. He made his own set of rolls to do the raised section around the bottom. But there was a rectangular section at the top just behind the door that stood proud about 1/4" but it didn't go the whole length of the panel so it couldn't be folded on a panbrake. Using bits of steel plate he manufactured a die and found he could press the required shape with a hydraulic press. After practicing on small bits of sheet with good results he then attempted the same procedure on a panel that was complete apart from this detail. He was understandably pleased with the result and was able then to do the same trick on the other side. That left the tailgate, but being close to a flat panel that was fairly straightforward, and once again he had a pattern to copy. The inside of the ute well looks lovely too as it is made from the aforementioned Tassie Oak. It has a bit of extra bling though as the planks are held in place by highly polished stainless steel round head bolts. To keep it all neat, the wood was tapped and the longer bolts were screwed down tightly using vice grips on the thread of the bolt where it had protruded on the underside. When the bolts were satisfactorily tight the extra threaded bit that



A period accessory that was retained is a "vapour humidifier." It attaches to the radiator overflow and routes the humid air to the intake manifold as an aid to combustion. Remember these cars used a non pressurized cooling system.



It came completely to bits, here it is on its way back to being a car again. While it was apart it received a taller diff. Cruises at 100KPH no worries.

Pic:Doug



Rear quarter panels that Doug manufactured. The challenging part was the rectangular raised section at top right. He accomplished it with no welds.

Pic:Doug



Carries the name of Ray Cronk, the person that gifted it to his nephew.

Vehicle is in original brand new condition but with a bit more bling due to the stainless and chrome bits.



The car has a name "Poppy" it is in memory of Doug's Dad who did his apprenticeship on model T's

Where to put your stuff, a period trunk, naturally. Check out the writing on it!



Above: The seat base is the only piece of original timber left in the car. Pic: Doug Below: The swarf that Doug found in the nick of time. He kept it for a souvenir. Doug actually keeps just about everything, including all the receipts. That's dangerous practice as you can actually tally up what you have spent. In this case it was about \$30,000.



was protruding was cut off flush. Then with the outside panels fitted it all looks trick.

The engine and transmission were dismantled and reconditioned where necessary. Doug decided to replace the cast whitemetal main crankshaft bearings with modern replaceable shells. This involved having the block machined to accommodate them. When the machine work was all finished and cleaned up ready for assembly, and Doug was just about to place the crankshaft in place he noticed that one of the oil galleries seemed to look different than the rest, so he put the crank aside. On a closer inspection the difference was that he could see right down two of the holes but not the third. What the problem turned out to be was swarf. When they had line bored the block to make room for those bearing shells, the debris from the job had gone down the oil hole and packed itself tightly in. Doug has kept what he removed from that hole as a souvenir. The amount of it was surprising and you could be assured that if he had not found it, that lovely new rebuilt motor would have lasted only a few miles before it seriously damaged itself. And somewhere along the way he dreamed up the idea of taking it to the model A nationals event in NSW. That was cutting it fine and when he took it out for its first spin it didn't even make it to the highway before it boiled its head off. A brand new radiator fixed that problem though and while he didn't actually drive it to the nationals (trailer it over) it never missed a beat.

Graham points out this model A is one of the first and it is unusual in that it was born as a ute (or probably more correctly a buckboard) as most of them that survived as a ute were actually manufactured as a tourer and later converted to a ute and it being from 1928 it was one of the very first A's. It was built new actually using left over Model T rear guards and hood bows.

All the tools you need to keep a model A on the road. All original even the instruction book.



And of course a bloke doesn't want to get caught with nothing in the shed to play with. With finishing the A in sight he imported a 1955 Thunderbird from the states. It came here via the middle east and Brisbane then by truck to Darwin. Unfortunately that last bit in Australia didn't go quite as planned. It appears while in the care of the truck company, someone reversed it into some immovable object, like a wall, and at a fair speed. That severely spoiled the rear end and sprung the whole car. Apart from the busted tail lights and bent bumper and exhausts, it buckled the rear fins half way along and shoved the door pillars into the doors and the doors into the front guards. Luckily he also had it insured with Shannons and was able to get it fixed up ok. But he didn't just get it fixed up, he had the whole thing repainted and then the beautiful paintwork on top didn't quite match the shabby chassis. So he parked it on his car hoist, unbolted the body from the chassis, and hoisted the body away. It was a bit rubbery without the chassis attached and he had to tie it together a bit but there was no damage caused. Then he could wheel the rest away from underneath and completely pull all that to bits and make it all new as well. He didn't have to do much to the engine or gearbox as the engine and transmission had been overhauled before he bought it. The most it got was a couple of new oil seals. The chassis was totally stripped as was everything that was attached to it, and made brand new. Right now the engine is back in and the body bolted back where it's meant to be and just needs a couple of finishing touches before rego.



Notice in the other pic the T'bird body sitting patiently, if a little embarrassed with all its underneath bits elsewhere. To get it all back together is relatively easy. Just raise the hoist and wheel the chassis back underneath and lower. Here it is all bolted together again awaiting that piece de resistance, the bonnet.



Not quite what you need when you pick up your new car. The truck company were quite unapologetic about it all. Be careful who you choose to cart your toys!
Pics: Doug



As you can see with the T'bird undressed it's all brand new down in it's private parts. The engine is 292.



As with any sporty car of the era, the interior is very flash! Perfect for our tropical evenings!



Barry's Steam Engine

Following the sad passing of Barry Stach last year, Janice, Barry's widow and his sister Brenda offered to donate his favourite childhood steam engine to the MVEC.

The engine, in a dismantled and rather sad condition, was collected by Mike Wright and reassembled after repainting the components in their original colours. However, the engine could not be made to run due to the condition of the boiler and its fittings.

Rowan Charrington took on the refurbishment of the steaming components and after resoldering of boiler fittings, fabrication of a new whistle chime and other minor repairs, managed to get the engine to run, albeit intermittently.

A display stand was fabricated and completion of the project was celebrated at the Hangar on Friday, 2 November 2012 with the attendance of Janice Stach.

The engine currently rests on display in the main hall of the Hangar in remembrance of sadly missed MVEC member, Barry Stach.



Barry's engine with Rowan, Janice and Mike.

WANTED

Fuel tank for EK Holden station wagon ute or van or Xa,Xb tank to replace rusted out one.

Email Paul, jac09@bigpond.com or 89889717

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Email Ted at propellers@bigpond.com

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Deadline...the end of the month

Wade RO34 Supercharger as used in TS3 Commer trucks and quite a few Hot Rods. Made in Brighton, England between 1953-57. \$300.
Phone Michael 8945 4113



Information needed

MVEC member, Bruce Edwards disappeared while sailing his yacht from Nhulunbuy to Darwin in June of last year. He hasn't been seen since. Just before his sailing trip he moved a 10' container, to a temporary home, somewhere in the greater Darwin area, to be moved again when he completed the trip. Sadly he never returned. Where that temporary home is, is unknown. It is assumed to be on a block.

His family are trying to sort out his affairs and are trying to locate that container. Bruce also had a 1928 Dodge.

If anyone knows where that container is located or any info that might help please contact Lisa Edwards Lisa.edwards@pfes.nt.gov.au or (08) 8985-8831 bhrs

Bombing of Darwin open day. Traditionally we have an open day on the weekend adjacent to the actual date. This year to coincide with commemorations and plaque unveilings at the East Point Military Museum, the open day will be the actual date of Tuesday 19th Feb. Come along and welcome the old diggers.

Breakfast at Cornucopia. Cornucopia is the restaurant at the museum overlooking the sea. The museum's official name is the Museum of Arts and science. Our old cars are all works of art and the reason they run is pure science (unlike modern cars which tend to run, or run out of luck). It would look great if the carpark at the museum was chock full of these beautiful works of art, and there has been a bulk number of tables booked for your convenience. So come along, show the public some decent art and some useful science and have a relaxing and sociable morning from 8.30am on Sunday 24th Feb.

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



WOTS ON THIS YEAR

On the 2nd Wed of every month there is a members meeting at the hangar 7.30 pm plus bbq beforehand.
Also there is a working bee at the hangar the following Sunday.

Motorcycle louts, notice there are 2 motorbike runs. First will be to Wangi falls.

19 February 2013(Tuesday) Bombing of Darwin
Open Day

24 February 2013 Breakfast at Cornucopia

24 March 2013 East Point Museum

21 April 2013 Berry Springs Mystery Run

25 April 2013 (Thursday) ANZAC day parade
and Open Day

28 April 2013 Open cockpit day aero museum
volunteers needed for BBQ

19 May 2013 club motorbike run to Wangi Falls

19 May 2013 AHMF day of motoring

23 June 2013 Club Run to Adelaide River

6 July 2013 Gangsters Ball Berry Springs

7 July 2013 Cricket Match

21 July 2013 Taminmin Darwin to the Doo

26 July 2013 Darwin Show Parade

10 August 2013 Overnighter at Coomalie

25 August 2013 Motorbike Run

1 September 2013 Fathers Day Open Day

22 September 2013 Mystery Run

20 October 2013 Fannie Bay Breakfast

9 November 2013 AGM

If undeliverable return to
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POSTAGE
PAID
AUSTRALIA

A blind man walks into a bar, sits down and orders a beer. He does not realise he has walked into a lesbian bar.

After a while he says to the barman: Would you like to hear a joke about a dumb blonde?

The whole bar falls silent. The woman next to him says in a deep voice:

Listen mate, before you tell your joke there are five things you need to know.

one: the barman is a blonde woman.

two: the bouncer at the door is a blonde woman.

three: I am blonde and weigh 90 kg and am 1.9m tall and have a black belt in karate.

Four: the woman sitting next to me is blonde and does weight lifting.

five: the woman sitting on your other side is also blonde and does wrestling.

Do you still want to tell your joke?

The man thinks for a couple of seconds and says: No, not if I have to explain it five times.