

# Motor Vehicle Enthusiasts Club



No 73

Mar 2013

# TRANSMISSION

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

GPO Box 911 Darwin 0801  
In Katherine call 89710605 .  
Newsletter enquiries to Ted  
[propellers@bigpond.com](mailto:propellers@bigpond.com)

## THE NEED FOR SPEED!



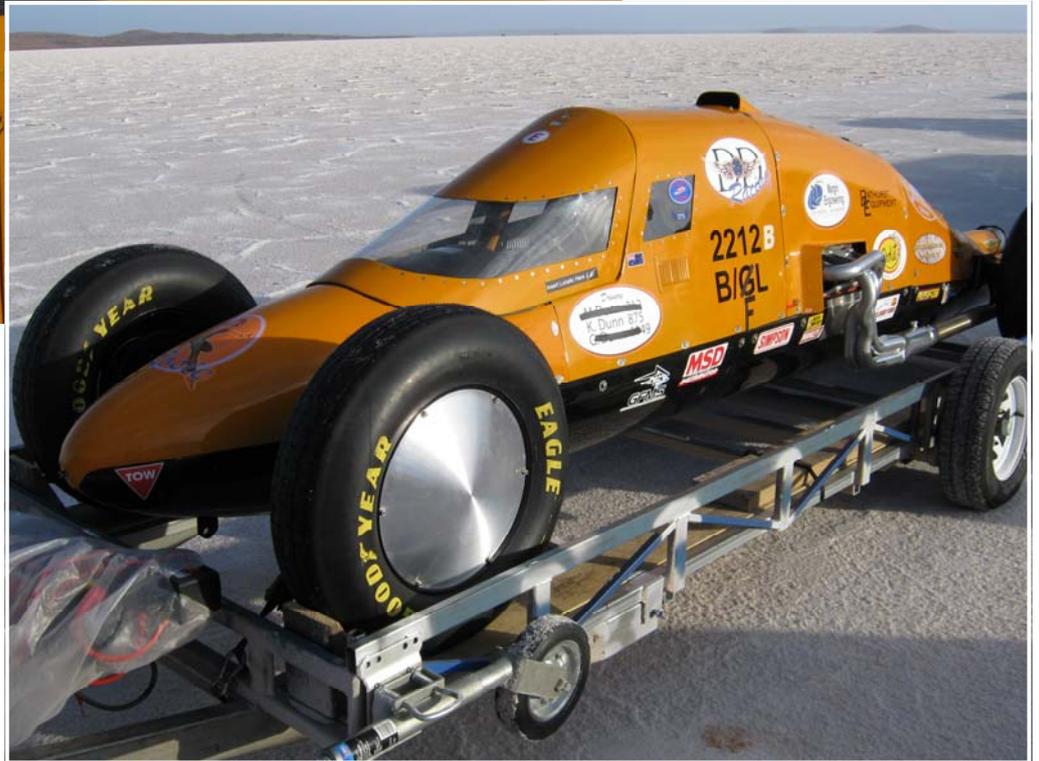
**Neil Bromley is on top of the world.** He has just returned from Speed Week at Lake Gairdner in South Australia. He is now the proud owner of 2 Australian

speed records. That's him with his record breaking 350 BSA Gold Star

All pics by Neil



*The sign sums it up. It's a V8 powered Bellytank Lakester. 201 MPH No record but really cool!*



**The need for speed**

This story started a couple of years ago in 2011 when Neil Bromley and Dick Gryls (Dick has the Indian collection in Dec Transmission) headed off to Speedweek at Lake Gairdner in SA, just to have a look at what it is all about. Naturally it didn't take them long to cotton on that this looked like a lot of fun so same time next year saw them on their way to be competitors. The big catch was that it rained and flooded the lake. That turned them into tourists around Alice Springs way. With a bit of time to kill and a bottle of Canadian Club whisky Dick suggested Neil buy a 125 Honda that he had sitting around. Maybe it was the whisky but the purchase of that bike was something Neil did not regret and it eventually led to him being the holder of the Australian speed record for 125cc motorcycles.

But Neil already had a 350 BSA. The frame is a 1955 model with an optional alloy motor from 49. He rebuilt it to 1953 road race specs at 9.5:1 compression. Bits for Goldie BSA's can be a bit hard to come by and they made quite a lot of different versions of the same bike, general road use, trials, road race etc. Neil was after a set of road race cams and a bloke in Perth had the desired set but would not sell them, he was only interested

*Just another neat sight at Lake Gairdner. 1934 Ford Roadster. 209 MPH, another record.*



in a swap for a different type. Neil was able to buy the set the feller wanted, on eBay, and was then able to swap them for the ones he wanted. And with the BSA registered he was able to get it tuned to go as good as it could. He tried different sprockets till it was over geared then dropped it back so it could be held flat out and would not over rev. The Honda had been doctored by a previous owner and is described as "cammy". Basically it just needed a cleanup with special attention to the fuel tank which was rusty from sitting around. Unfortunately for Dick, due to an injury from stepping off a bike at speed he wasn't able to make this trip, but another local bloke, Josh Schult took his 1981BMW R100. Neil and Josh each checked the other's bike before they left. At the event the bikes would be scrutineered and it would be devastating to arrive at the lake only to fail scrutineering. One of the requirements was a kill switch and a lanyard attached to the ride which would kill the engine if the bike and rider became separated. The BSA originally had no means of killing the ignition at all, stopping the engine was done by a decompressor. It took a bit of ingenuity to manufacture a means to do this. They also check the speed rating on the tyres for the speed you intend achieving. There is also a 10 year age limit on the tyres, they check the manufacture date stamped on the tyre wall. Neil scraped in with just one month to spare.

The trip down was on the Stuart Hwy until Glendambo where you could stick to the bitumen all the way to Pt Augusta, head west then turn off onto the back track and head north to Lake Gairdner. Coming from North a shorter alternative was to head off onto the dirt at Glendambo, head to Kingoonya and then south to the lake. He reported the 300 km of dirt to be in surprisingly good condition and arriving at the event with plenty of time they were able to snaffle a good spot in the pits to set up their shade. The pits are way out on the salt and this being part of a national park there is quite a lot of concern about polluting the salt lake. Every vehicle, when it was parked, had to have a poly tarp under it to protect the salt from any oil drips. All oil drain plugs had to be wired and glycol coolant was not permitted. There was to be no rubbish on the salt and that included cigarette butts, and all your litter had to be removed by yourself. And you had to



*Neil's 1967 CD125 Honda Ran 61.822 MPH, another Australian record for a modified 125cc running on Gasoline. No allowance for age on this bike, needs to be 1955 for vintage. It is interesting that Neil could pull 70 up here in the top end but only 60 down there. He puts the difference down to 10kg of leather and safety equipment.*



*1979 turbo CBX Honda. 151 MPH. Another record. All these speeds are in MPH due to the rule book being basically the same as Bonneville USA rulebook.*

*1971 650 BSA. The owner spent 4 days kicking this bike and 1 day racing. 87 MPH. No record but he was there!*



keep your pit area tidy too. Naturally to survive you need to erect some shade out on the salt but even though the crust is only thin, it is so hard it is impossible to drive a tent peg into it. Tek screws were the answer. But the size was important. 2 inch worked fine but 3inch would snap off, such is the hardness of the surface.

Naturally a shade over the top was not sufficient to prevent sunburn as the reflection off the salt was the main problem. And because these rays are coming up, you had to be certain you applied sunscreen to the *bottom* of your nose and chin as well as anywhere else your skin was uncovered. Neil told of how he unzipped the front of his leathers for relief from the heat while waiting for a short time at the start line. That left a bright red V on his chest.

The camping area is off the lake and you can buy the necessities of life there. Food is not the only thing available either. There is a bar and a whole freezer truck full of ice for sale. Taking your own drinking water is recommended as is a chemical toilet.

There are only 2 toilets and 2 showers for the 300 odd competitors and their crew. The water is straight from a salt water bore and your hair tends to be a lot like a board after washing it. At the pits out on the salt the toilets were more plentiful.

And they get up to 1000 spectators. They are not permitted to take their cars out on the salt but are transported out to the pits or the start line. They are free to wander round the pits and interact with the competitors. They stay in a separate camping area.

But Neil went there to ride on the salt.

There are 2 tracks both graded on the salt. Firstly they put you on the GPS track. They stick a GPS to your petrol tank with Velcro and send you off down the track 4 miles long. The GPS records your top speed. This is the test for your licence. If you survive 125MPH you get your licence endorsed to that speed. Lined up next him was Trevor Slaughter and his \$1.5 million special dry lake racer. Big dollar car or not he was still a rookie and had to have his speed test. In Neil's case his bike didn't go 125MPH but he was still passed to go and set a record anyhow, just not a 125MPH record. And you could have as many practice runs on the GPS track as you wished. But you had to get in a queue and wait your turn. After your run you could get on the end of the line again if you wished. Or you could progress to the main track. Once again you could have as many runs as you liked but you had to get in the line. The queue



*M20 1949 BSA 83 MPH a record. The owner also ran a vintage Porsche.*



*Lining up for your turn at the start.*

*1982 Chev Firebird 259 MPH a record.*



was next to the pits and the vehicles were staged to the start line about 3 Kms away in blocks of 10. They would then queue at the start line. When there were only a couple left they would then bring up another block of 10. This all started every day at 7.30 am and went till about 5pm.

Once you got to the start line there was 2 miles to accelerate up to speed. At 2 ¼ miles your speed was recorded, then your average speed between 2 and 3 miles, between 3 and 4 and 4 and 5 miles, then you had till 8 miles to slow down. There were exits between 3 and 4, and every mile after that for vehicles that had attained their max speed, so they didn't have to go the whole distance. Neil attained his max speed between 2 and 3 miles and peeled off between 3 and 4 miles.

And I had to ask "how did you feel at the start"? "Daunting!" was the reply. There is none of that wheel spinning, screeching hype at the start. It's all quiet while the previous competitor does his run and you wait till the track is clear. In front of you is just a lightly graded track sparsely marked with witches hats disappearing into the distance. It is so flat and with nothing to break the horizon you can see the curve of the earth in front of you. It makes you nervous. Talk yourself through it was the accepted way to keep yourself calm. Gently accelerate, change to second gear, third gear etc. The traction on the salt is dismal so there is no wild acceleration, just smoothly get up to speed and hold it there through the timing traps.

Neil ran the Gold Star on Mon and Tuesday at 69.8 and 64.9 MPH, then on Wed arvo about 3pm just when his turn was coming up someone rolled their car out on the track. Nobody was hurt but by the time they had removed the car and fixed a few divots in the track the day was over. That turned out well for Neil as next morning he kept his same position in the line and was at the starting grid early when the temp was about 15 degrees. Also there was a slight breeze to help him. At 74.388MPH it was just perfect! Then out with the Honda at 61.822 and he had a second record.

On Neil's unstreamlined bikes, getting maximum speed, involved making the amount of him presented to the wind as small as possible. That involved letting go of the left hand handlebar to grab it



*1959 Porsche. 80 MPH a second record for the owner.*



*1968 Monaro. Lovely! Fast too. A 200 MPH record. A problem with really high powered vehicles is with the poor traction on the salt it is possible to get wheel spin at really high speeds resulting in a spinout. Scary!*

*Naturally there was a Norton there.*

*1973 850 Commando. Record at 101 MPH*



somewhere around the middle, plus curling up as a ball with his chin on the tank. By the way, the graded salt isn't really all that smooth and it's all shaking around a bit, so much that the video camera clamped to the handlebar of the BSA vibrated loose. You couldn't miss filming your record breaking run could you? With that spare hand not attached to the handlebar he grabbed the camera and kept it pointing forward. Maybe he was concentrating on photography more than breaking records as he nearly missed the exit between 3 and 4 miles. Had to drop it back a couple of gears as braking hard was dicey on the salt.

And now he has 2 Australian speed records he is surely hooked. He will have to go back and defend them of course. There are classes for all kinds of bikes and cars and quite a few are still open, but the bottom line is it's just a fantastic place to be. There is a great atmosphere of camaraderie here, everyone is in the same boat. No snobbery, just a bunch of petrolheads playing. Petrolhead heaven in fact. Spectator or competitor, it's probably somewhere you need to be. By the way, the other local bloke Josh Schult came away with a record with his BMW at 144MPH and when Neil told Dick of his success Dick let him know he was a bloody bastard!



*The pits out on the salt. From the camping area.*



*Neil leaving the start line on the Beezer for his record breaking run.*

*This is what you see at the start line. No speed limits or anything to get in your way for 8 miles.*





1940 Harley WLD 72 MPH a record.



499 cubic inch 1968 Mustang. 202 MPH another record.

Green blown XJS Jag. 182 MPH. a record, naturally.



Belly tank racer gets a push start at the line. 277 MPH. Once cars get into these high speeds where there are no tyres rated for such speeds, it is recommended that you machine off all the tread so there is not as much mass trying to tear the tyre apart due to centrifugal force. Remember Bert Munro and the tyres on his Indian?



This is a 1000cc Honda motor bike. It's a bit hard to put your foot down so you don't fall over when stopped. To combat the problem there are trainer wheels each side about mid-ships. They get retracted once away. 136 MPH.



Homebuilt Lakester. 750 Norton Commando engine, 83 MPH.



*Trevor Slaughter's \$1.500000 Toyota powered streamliner. A record at 253 MPH. A rookie first timer this meeting. He plans to swap the engine for one from a Chinook helicopter and attempt to break Donald Campbell's record from 1964.*



*Dragster 145 MPH  
Dragsters would replace their normal fat tyres with skinny ones for the salt.*



*The worlds fastest Velocette. 1959 Venom. A record 171 MPH.*



*GSXR Suzuki 750. 177 MPH a record*



*2012 AMS 250 A record at 113 MPH.*



**Wanted  
Early Mini**

Any condition suitable for restoration  
Please phone 89886075

**Triumph Speedmaster 2007**

7100km Metallic Black , Sensible mods to exhaust & inlet, windscreen, ex Chrome, excellent cond, spares & manual, \$8200 ONO

**Premier Sidecar**

Fibreglass, 20l reserve tank, good cond, single seat, storage boot \$1000

**Wanted BSA B31/b33/M20**

Rigid Any cond.

Neil ah 0889276397 Mob 0400420120

**Free stuff**

Get your free ads in here.

Give stuff away, sell stuff, get information, find a lover. Got a story to tell? Whatever you like.

Email Ted at [propellers@bigpond.com](mailto:propellers@bigpond.com)

or phone 89886049

Deadline...the end of the month



B

**Hey, why not join us for a tour and brunch at the East Point Military Museum on Sunday the 24<sup>th</sup> of March**

**Meet at the museum car park at 9.45 AM**

**Cost is \$5 per head for members and guests,  
children ten and under free**

## WOTS ON THIS YEAR

**Heaps. Come along and enjoy!**

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.

**24 March** 2013 East Point Museum see page 9

**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

**30 November** 2013 Christmas Dinner at Nightcliff Sports Club

If undeliverable return to  
MOTOR VEHICLE ENTHUSIASTS CLUB  
GPO BOX 911 DARWIN 0801

**PRINT  
POST  
PP 100003160**

POSTAGE  
PAID  
AUSTRALIA

**Wife texts husband** on a cold winter's morning:

"Windows frozen, won't open."

Husband texts back:

"Gently pour some lukewarm water over it."

Wife texts back 5 minutes later:

"Computer really screwed up now."

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

