

Motor Vehicle Enthusiasts Club



No 76

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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.

GPO Box 911 Darwin 0801
In Katherine call 89710605 .
Newsletter enquiries to Ted
propellers@bigpond.com

Motorcycle louts invade Litchfield National Park



Good things come in lots of two dozen. A carton of stubbies of beer and the number of motorbikes that turned out for the MVEC ride to Wangi Falls. Apart from the motorbikes a couple of classic cars rolled up too and a couple of moderns for fellers that wished they were riding but because of rotten circumstances, couldn't.

Ah, those Nortons, they just can't help looking good!

That's about the whole story, really, just a bunch of like minded people out on a perfect day on a fun piece of road. Great! And the sounds of a bunch of twin cylinder bikes sounds great too(there were bikes with more than two, and less than two, but the vast majority had two) The worst thing that happened was one Triumph fell over when the side stand sunk in the bitumen, but no damage done to the bike. The best thing that happened was the ride. And most of them motorbike people don't want to hang around gasbagging at the end either. They want to keep riding.....



Above: Lorraine being a non rider figured this bike was a bit different than the rest, but there was one of just about everything here. The SR500 Yamaha (bottom left) brought back pleasant memories to me. Another bike I wish I still owned. Totally unpolished they told me it was not slow on the ride out to the falls.





Batchelor store for a break.

Below:

Garrey and Lorraine brought their Pontiac along. It made a good breakdown vehicle, you could fit 4 motorbikes in the boot. But there were no breakdowns.

Maybe the 650 Yamaha was the most represented bike there or maybe they stuck together as a gang and stood out!



Wilco's face (and bike) bobs up all over the place. This is just another picture of him and his bike that you will read about over the page.



And just before the last bike was about to leave (me) a Morri rolled up. But it wasn't the Morri that made them late, that was the party last night. This is no ordinary Morris Minor. But that will be another story.

First view of Wilco's shed. The cars indicate he is a Holden bloke, the stuff hanging on the walls confirms it!

The closer car is 1970 Holden HG 186S GTS Monaro.

Lovely!

Centre: Original interior

Bottom: All those pictures on the walls: Old Holdens, what else?



Wilco van Syl and his neat shed.

You couldn't quite call Wilco a purist. A purist has his vehicles exactly as they came out of the showroom. Wilco's cars certainly look perfectly original, but when you probe a bit deeper they are not quite standard. Without going totally radical, Wilco likes them to go a bit harder than the factory designed them. But we are getting ahead of the story here.

Winding the clock wayyyyyy back when he was an apprentice, his first ever car was a HG Holden premier. (For readers that are uneducated about Holdens that is 1970 to 71). Along the path of life he has owned 13 or 14 of them, but the interesting part started after the married and kids and house stuff were all in place, and driving along one day in 2004 he

spied a for sale sign in the window of an old Holden Monaro. He chased the Army feller to check it out. The car was basically original but was suffering from several patches of rust. The interior was fairly straight, but when he opened the bonnet, the engine bay was one giant oil slick and the engine was from a Commodore. This was back in the days before the price of old Monaros had skyrocketed all the way to the moon and Wilco bought the car with ideas of replacing the Commodore donk with a V8, but when he picked the car up he found it also came with the original 186 that it came out of the



factory with. The plan changed and he reconditioned the 186. While he was on the job though, he figured it had to go a bit harder so a mild cam, high performance pistons and a high volume oil pump were slipped in. With all the rust cut out and repaired it was painted one of the original colours, Silver mist. The interior upholstery was not replaced, it has cleaned up, and while not being perfect, it is certainly lovely. The fact that the original seats are still in good serviceable condition demonstrated the quality with which they built cars back in the nineteen sixties. And the overall result is one lovely Monaro. More specifically it is a 1970 HG GTS 186S. Since it has been restored it has been driven to Alice Springs and Katherine several times. In Wilco's words "it's a pleasure to drive".

Lots of us old car enthusiasts have an affinity with old bikes too. And once you finish one car you need some-

thing to occupy your hands and time. Wilco had an association with a Yamaha 650 twin years ago in Alice Springs. He rode one. That set the degeneration to work in his mind. It festered away for years till the opportunity to own one popped up. He found a mate had a rusty one deep in the back of his shed. Wilco let it be known that if mate ever wanted to sell it, that he would be interested in buying it. Months later that offer paid off. Mate wanted to move the Yamaha to fund another bike, so Wilco gained another project. That project multiplied and mutated over 4 years into one original bike, a bobber, plus a beaut wall decoration of the back half of an XS1 650 Yamaha. The rusty bike, he spent 3 years fixing it up and got it to the stage of being registered and was riding it around. But somewhere in that time frame another mate set another set of cogs whirring in Wilco's mind. He broached the subject of the bobber, the art of stripping and customizing a motor bike. Once again a friend who had imported a bunch of Yamahas from the U.S. offered him a pair of them. Wilco decided that the better of this pair was better than the one he had already fixed up, so he could have a better original bike from this one. The other of the pair would go to the mate that had spawned the idea of the bobber and the bike that was already registered would cop the chop and become Wilco's bobber. And the back half that got chopped off when converting into the bobber would make a really neat wall hanging for the shed.

As there is quite a following with these Yamaha bob-



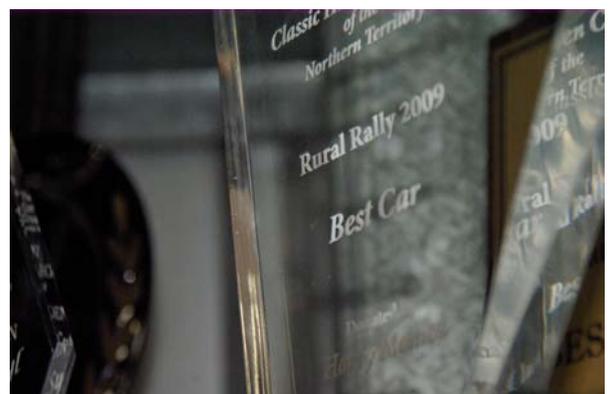
How embarrassing! The gearbox as a result of a warm up burnout at the dragstrip.



Holden wall decorations. These hubcaps for the 1970 Monaro are rare as rockin horse shit. Some of the imitation nuts actually hold the hubcap onto the wheel. Wilco was missing a few nuts. He had his car on show at the 2005 MVEC car show when someone remarked to him about 9 of em for sale at a lawn sale for \$50. He was off like a rocket. But he really only wanted the nuts.

A bit later a young bloke was driving an old Monaro at one of the Shannons club days and was missing the hubcaps. It was his 18th birthday. Wilco gave him a set. He was happy!

Below: Its not just me that think his cars are cool. This trophy states "Best Car" You can't beat that. There are mobs of other trophies too!

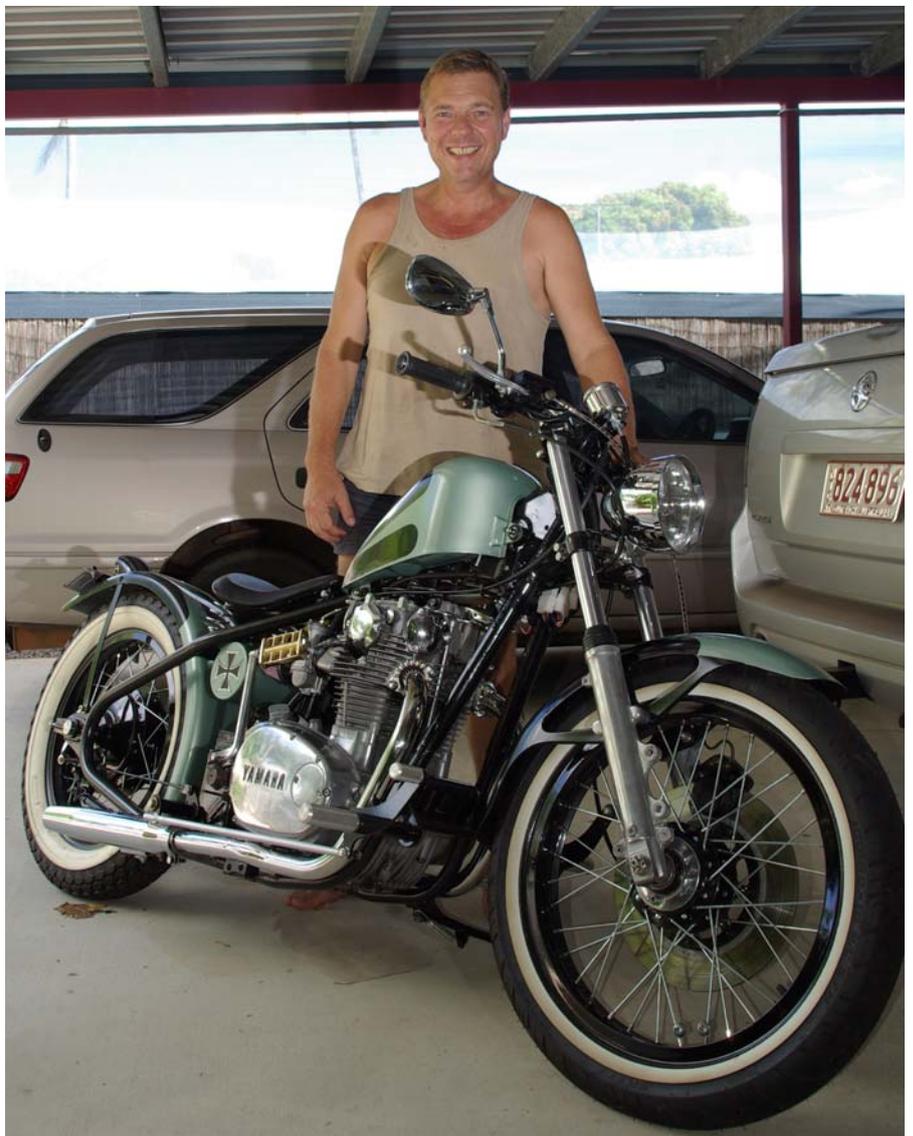


bers and you can buy all sorts of stuff from the U.S. The first thing Wilco had sent over was a hardtail kit. This is basically all the frame from the engine back. It converts the swinging arm frame to a rigid. This is not a bolt on item. It involves cutting the frame top and bottom, discarding the swinging arm and shockers and rear section of the frame and replacing it with the custom job. It also got some performance stuff including carbies and electronic ignition, but the engine itself did not get any attention as it had been done up during the original restoration job previously. When it came time to register it after the mods, the rego people wanted an engineer's certificate. The engineer that got the job couldn't understand why Wilco wanted to cut off the swinging arm frame and convert it to rigid. He just couldn't cotton on to Wilco's explanation that the rigid frame just looked really cool. He had to have a letter from the bloke that welded the frame to state that it was done to some Australian standard, but the engineer wanted a test pilot to ride the bike at speed through a slalom course of witches hats and do a panic stop from 100 KPH. If he survived then the bike was deemed ok and got the tick.

Naturally Wilco was the test pilot. I could have happily watched Wilco jam on the skids at 100KPH and cruise through the witches hats, and declare him to be still alive for a lot less dollars!

Anyway he paid the engineer and it is now newly registered and looks really cool as it was meant to do. It also goes well and handles well hooting round town. And Wilco says it is comfortable, but only for short trips!

But that's not the extent of the collection. Hiding down the back of the shed and just waiting to get out is another Holden (what else) A 1977 HZ GTS Monaro. Once again externally it looks totally standard and totally original. Bought locally, it had been stored with a car cover for a couple of years and it had killed the paintwork. Wilco was after a totally original look and handed the car to a spraypainter. Unfortunately he gave the job of recreating the stripes to a different party to the one who was painting the car. The stripes turned out to be wrong, which ended up costing Wilco the price of another paint job. Eventually they got it right and now the vehicle looks absolutely spotless (and original). The wheels are inter-



Wilco with his newly registered bobber.

The rear sprocket is remarkably small in diameter.





What looks like an oil tank is actually a container for the electrics. So where's the oil tank? It doesn't have one, engine is wet sump.

esting. Showing their GM heritage they are actually Pontiac wheels and although they look like cast alloy they are actually "polycast". In layman's terms that means they are rubber. You can squeeze them with your fingers and they are spongy. But there is steel deep down below the rubber. They are extremely hard to source. But from time to time in America they remanufacture a bunch of them. The problem was the emblem in the centre, normally it has a Pontiac centre. Wilco had to wait till they made another batch and arranged for the centre to be left blank as is original for this vehicle. Incidentally this car is very similar to the Pontiac GTO of the same vintage. Remembering Wilco is not totally pure, he got his hands on another 308 engine. It only cost him \$150 and he went to work on it. Once again it was not totally overboard and he rebuilt it right there in the shed but with \$10,000 worth of performance bits. It has modified cylinder heads, performance cam, pistons etc, but it still runs the stock Rochester carby and air-cleaner. The engine has also been balanced and you can sit a glass of water on it and it runs so smooth it just stays there. But in Wilco's words this engine is "a goer". It goes so well that with it running the stock gearbox, the gearbox had a massive hernia at the drag strip. He was just warming up at the time. The good news with owning an old Holden is the availability of some parts. 5 gearboxes turned up locally, two of those turned out to be totally dead once dismantled, and out of the other 3 he was able to build himself one good one. The rebuilt one is holding up well with times down to almost 14 secs for the quarter mile. A goer it is but this car is still lovely to drive anywhere, anytime.



When you chop the back off a bike you end up with an interesting wall hanging. Wilco intends to chop the tyre into a semi circle to fill in under the guard.

Engines always make nice shed decorations. One is the original 308 HZ motor. The other is from a ute he bought for \$1000. It had a GTS bonnet (value \$900), GTS guards, 253 V8 etc. Bonnet and guards are all wall decos around the shed.





Right: 650 Yamaha in original trim.

Left: They look just like mag wheels but they are actually rubber. Deeper down there is steel to make em a bit stiffer.



The 1977 HZ 308 GTS Monaro. At the power cruise it went on the dyno. 216 hp at the back wheels or about 300 at the flywheel.

Check out the dismantled GTS around the shed. Guards and hubcaps at end either side of the buffalo skull, bonnet on right wall



If you consider this story started in 2004, the amount of stuff in Wilco's shed is from 9 years. Consider also that he has got a lot of years in front of him yet. He is gonna need a lot bigger shed !!

With the Yamaha bobber finished you might reckon Wilco might sit back and play bingo. Nope the next project is a 1973 Honda 500 four. Apart from the bike itself he has been collecting bits for it. Things like new guards are hanging around the shed.



TRANSMATILDA

Way back in 1953 the Renold chain company was skiting that their new “Transmar” chain was so good that one rear chain was good enough to travel right around Australia. Naturally they had to demonstrate this to be true, and coined the name “Transmatilda” for the expedition. They nominated one of their employees, Vern Train to ride the test bike. Naturally there had to be a scrutineer. The Auto Cycle Union advertised for one to make sure all was above board. They selected one of the applicants, Mike Lockyer, a motorcyclist that had done a bit of road racing and not all that long out of Pommy land. But he was to ride the distance on another bike and keep a diary and record the trip photographically (but they wouldn't supply him with a camera) and generally make sure everything was above board.

In 1953 the road up the east coast was bitumen, but from then on it was a bit different. A pretty vague track was the best you could call it. And they started just after the original REDEX trial had been through, which cut up the roads and made things even more difficult. They did call in at Darwin and their photos still show wrecked ships in the harbour and lots of bullet holes in the front of the Bank of New South Wales in Smith St.

Mike let on that the reason the chain lasted the trip was that he would regularly remove it from the bike, hang it from a tree and wash it with petrol till it was surgically clean. Then he would immerse it in a tub of molten graphite grease which was simmering on a kero primus stove carried just for the purpose. Once it was saturated with grease the excess was wiped off and refitted to the bike. And they made it back on the original chain. They reckon the chain was the only part of the bikes that wasn't worn out. That's a pretty good effort.

Benalla was where the Renold factory was situated so that's where they left from, on 1st Sept 1953 and arrived back there from the opposite direction 12000 miles later on Nov 13th, 6 weeks later. There is nowhere in Australia these days where you could find such a challenging route. They had no support vehicle and no radios and the North of Australia was seriously remote in those days. Modern blokes and their long travel “adventure” motorbikes have got nothing on these two blokes with rigid frames and *no one* to look out for them.

Forward to 2013, 60 years later and two blokes have just rolled into Darwin reenacting the trip on similar bikes. It all came about when Danny Curran, from Mildura in NSW became aware of Mike and Vern's story and that their dairies and the photos were still in existence. He set out to lay-out the dairies in book form illustrated with their photos. Once that job was done and the book was published Danny



Smith St Darwin 1953. Bank with ex Japanese bullet holes. Sunken ships in Darwin harbour



showed it to mate Craig Birnie who had since moved to Kalgoorlie in WA. He came up with a great idea, do the same route on similar bikes. The originals were a 1951 Triumph Speed Twin and a 1953 A7 BSA. They were able to buy bikes not all that different to the originals. The BSA had to have the headlight nacelle and front guard changed to match the original and the Triumph differs from the old bike in that it is a totally rigid rear end instead of a sprung hub. Both bikes were totally reconditioned. The Triumph also had a box attached to the carrier and the BSA had an extra fuel tank in lieu of the box. They both had an extra toolbox and extra oil tank. And in the toolbox of the Triumph was the original single burner Primus stove used to boil up the chain in grease in 1953. The Renold company is still going and they donated a set of primary and secondary chains for both bikes, but the Triumph is actually running a leftover "Transmar" chain from the length they were given in 1953. Vern still had it stashed in his shed.

Because the bikes were prepared at Mildura and Craig lives in Kalgoorlie, he couldn't have a test ride. Modern bikes have the rear brake and the gears reversed. If you have been used to a modern bike it's all a bit strange. It took Craig a couple of days to figure out these strange controls. The couple of days included riding right through the middle of Sydney including over the bridge. Scary stuff! Danny and Craig aren't doing it as tough as the blokes in 53, as they have a support vehicle carrying their camping gear and stuff. Generally they just camp in the bush wherever they happen to be, but the places they visit are tied to the route Vern and Mike took all those years ago. In particular they are photographing the bikes in the same situations and same places they were photographed in the original trip. And although the roads are mostly bitumen these days, sticking to the original route will take them out via wave Hill after they leave Katherine (dirt roads and lots of corrugations). When I met them they were having a luxurious break in a motel in Darwin and the original riders, Vern and Mike had flown in to meet them halfway through the trip. And the chains and the bikes and the riders look like they will finish the trip, as before with no real problems.

On that original trip, at the start, Vern and Mike had never met. On the route they



Been to Kalgoorlie lately? I believe this is the main street in 1953.

passed through Adelaide and stayed the night at Vern's Parents home. Vern had a sister who was a nurse, and an attractive one too. Back in those days a nurse wore a specific uniform that included quite a large hat. Because she was working night shift, Mike was given her bed to sleep in, but in the morning when sister arrived home and found a bloke in her bed she gave it a good kick to wake him up. Immediately he awoke and opened his eyes to see a nurse bending over him and assumed he was in hospital. He quickly checked his limbs to make sure they were all still there. A couple of years later they were married and now they are just a couple of years off their 60 year anniversary. By the time you read this they will be close to completing the trip but you can check out their website

<http://transmatildarevisited.blogspot.com.au/>
 And you probably need a copy of their book "Operation Transmatilda". It contains the diaries and the photos of the original trip. All the old time photos in this article are from it. Available from their website or email transmatildarevisited@gmail.com
 And read a bit more about Vern at <http://www.mmg.com.au/local-news/benalla/book-details-epic-journey-1.37380>
 And you can see the segment ABC TV broadcast about them..... www.abc.net.au/landline/content/2013/s3762379.htm



Mike and Vern meet up with the modern expedition in Darwin.



Craig and Danny with their bikes. The box on the back on the BSA is actually an auxiliary tank and is plumbed into the fuel feed. The Triumph carries stuff in the box including the primus stove for chain lubes.

Vern's nursing sister and Mike's wife Kathleen happily married nearly 60 years later. And Mike is still riding motorbikes!



Cheeky bloody copper on an Indian pulled em over and gave them a speeding ticket. Be careful in those eastern states!



Clockwise from top: That's a petrol tank on the back of the Beezer: Both bikes carry a tin of oil in a rack: Triumph box is just a box., they both have that extra tool box mounted: The Triumph box contains the original primus stove for lubing the chains.



Stop press: Wilco has been busy

After finishing up Wilco's story, I received an email from him: "Not sure if you have written the story but I have acquired a new project (I know I was gonna rebuild the Honda but this will be much more fun).

MVEC Katherine member posted a Mini Moke for sale on facebook, it lasted about 20 seconds before I bought it. It will be a full restoration and will be a car for my partner Mary-Louise, in fact it's a joint project and she has "temporary rights" to the shed.

Borrowed a mates car trailer and went down to Katherine with a couple of other mates to pick it up. On the way down I picked up another mates wrecked VP Commodore ute in Adelaide River and dropped it off in Katherine, done the deal with Heath and got the little beauty home safe and sound, \$250 in fuel but...

Anyway I have started to pull it apart and amass a huge parts list. It's amazing what you can get on the internet and have discovered a very active mini community here in Darwin to help us along."

Then in another email there was a request to place a for sale ad: "1970 Mk1 Mini clean and straight except for a little ding in the front, rebuilt 1100cc motor, disc brakes, new interior, with many new parts and spares. This car is nearly ready for the road."

Then in another email he says to not worry about the ad for the Mini, he bought that one too!



Power window problems?

Having problems with power windows on your old car and you can't buy bits to fix it anymore? I have by chance come across a firm called Electric Life in Sydney. Send them your mechanism and they actually fix this stuff and are remarkably cheap and reports I have received say they do good work. They also advertise a range of power window switches

http://www.electricle.com.au/html/s01_home/home.asp

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

or phone 89886049

Deadline...the end of the month

Ford Model A Wheels

Wanted one or more 1928 21" wheels
Please phone Rod Cocks 08 94102009

Adelaide River club run. 23rd June

Meet Coolalinga servo 9 am for 9.30 start. Pleasant drive to Adelaide River. Check out the Railway heritage precinct, They are such a go ahead bunch that there is always a bunch of new stuff to see. Lunch available for about \$10. And motorbikes are always welcome! So are modern cars! And old cars too!

1990 Toyota Celica Cabriolet (Convertible)

\$2000 Ono

Contact Geoff 0417 843728



Gangsters Ball Sat 6th July 7pm

Berry Springs Community Reserve hall. Live music, dancing.

Get dressed up. Good times guaranteed ! \$15 entry. Camp the night. Good times! Enquiries..Ted 89886049



1987 Corvette Convertible

Beautiful condition 50,000 miles

Callaway body kit, Boyd wheels, \$30,000 Ono

Call Geoff 0417843728



REJEX Rally 3-4 August

For vehicles of absolutely any age or type. I have seen anything from a vintage fire engine to a Lotus rally car competing. Take it from someone who has done it before, Rejex is a fantastic event. You drive to Emerald Springs via a secret route which has a series of motorkhana routines along the way. This involves driving through a sea of witches hats. Great fun but for a husband/wife driver/navigator team it is a great test of the relationship. Party overnight at Emerald Springs. There is a Dixieland band. But you have to enter by June 21. Entry forms at hangar. Enquiries to Laurie 0417834884.

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



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.

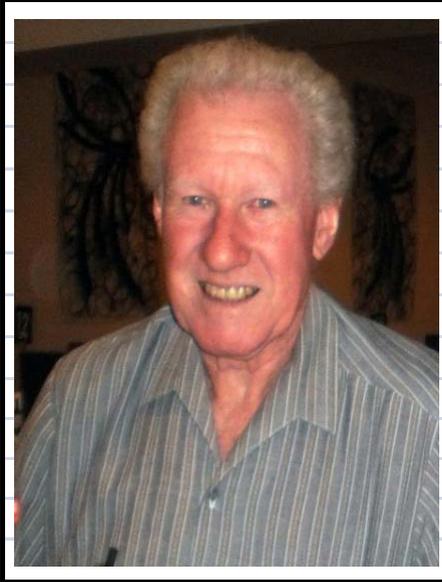
- 23 June** 2013 Club Run to Adelaide River
- 6 July** 2013 Gangsters Ball Berry Springs
- 14 July** 2013 Cricket Match MVEC vs CHCC at Batchelor oval.
- 21 July** 2013 Taminmin Darwin to the Doo
- 26 July** 2013 Darwin Show Parade
- 3-4 August** REJEX rally see previous page
- 10 August** 2013 Overnighter 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 Night-cliff Sports Club

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<p>FEEHAN Trevor John 25 May 1937 - 3 May 2013</p>		<p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Feehan Family</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>thank you for your comforting visits messages cards flowers prayers and attendance at his wonderful 'send off' (for those who could make it.)</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">A very special thank you to the MVEC members for all their assistance & support</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>We can't thank you enough for helping us celebrate his life lived to the full.</i></p>
<p>Loving husband and soul mate of Pauline. Devoted father to Laurie, Cath & BJ Welcoming father in law to Debbie, Brendon & Donna Inspirational grandpa to Matthew, AJ, Tim, Conor, Rowan & Josh Mate, Mentor & Mechanical Guru to All He never met a stranger he wouldn't talk to, a kid he couldn't teach, a car he didn't want to fix. Life of the party, Salt of the Earth, One of a kind Forever in our hearts</p>		