



*Motor Enthusiasts Club
of
Central Australia*

Incorporating Alice Springs Vintage & Veteran Car Club Inc



CENTRE SPOKE

November – December 2009

THE GOOD OIL

Hello MECCA boys and girls.

November saw our last run for the year. Morning tea at Jessie Gap.

We departed the Masonic Lodge about 0930 with a beautiful blue sky above and a light breeze from the South East. It was a beautiful morning and the old MAC was running like a dream. This was to be its final outing before the big trip over to W.A. for the annual Velocette owner's club rally.

It was decided to let Heather and Laurie lead out in the GTS Monaro. This was so they wouldn't blow the rest of us off the road as they went past.

Brian E rocked up in his ever reliable XR Falcon, Vaughan and Connie in their 1981 Ford Laser, Michael and Michelle rode their 2003 Fat Boy 100th Anniversary model, with JB and Jan on a very interesting 1978 Honda 400.

Col and Vicki brought their heritage listed 1997 EL Falcon and Lyn and grandson Jayden drove the heritage listed Subaru.

Jessie Gap is a delightful place to spend some time with friends over a cuppa and some nibbles.

Everyone had a great time and were entertained by JB's stories of the Canal system in the UK. JB you are a great story teller.

Last week our club put on the annual Christmas dinner.

Prior to the dinner some of us met on the banks of the Todd river for a chin wag, nibbles and a cool drink.

It was great to see Sandy and Mal arrive in their newly acquired 1926 Austin Chummy – what a great little car. Mal inherited this car from his dear old Dad who passed away earlier this year.

The dinner this year was again held at the National Transport Hall of Fame, Stuarts Bush Restaurant. It was a wonderful night enjoyed by all, with 28 people attending.

Many thanks to Liz, Kel and Cherry for the great food and venue. All profit from the evening went to the NTHF. Liz and Kel have been good supporters of our club over the years, so it is good to support them in their endeavours.

May I take this opportunity to thank all the members of MECCA for contributing to the success of our club.

To those of you travelling away for Christmas please come back safe and sound.

I look forward to seeing you all for breakfast, on the club, at Hungry Jacks, 0900 hrs Sunday 7th Feb. We will use this occasion to present Brian Eather with his well earned Overlander badge.

Peace on earth and good will to all. Fred

Club Activities

February 7th Special General Meeting at the Hungry Jacks starting at 9am to approve audit report and share breakfast.

Club Run Suggestions

Meet at Hall @ 9:00 am (summer time alternate fortnight) or 2nd week of month as Col cannot do 3rd week of month due to other commitments.

Overnight to Stuarts Well or day trip

Overnight to Glen Helen (cooler months)

Overnight to Aileron (cooler months) or day trip

Day trip to Corroboree Rock (Ross Highway - end of double lane road - only about 1-2K of narrow road) also visit Emily / Jesse Gap on the way out or return.

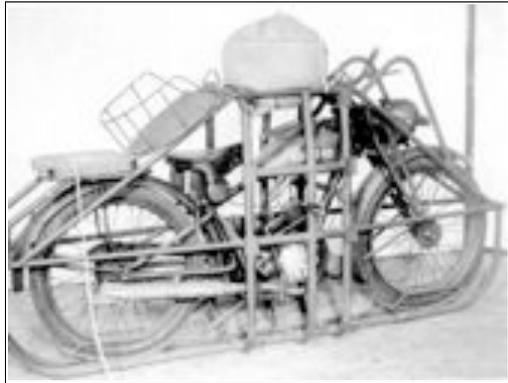
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Royal Enfield Flying Flea ready for parachute drop



Royal Enfield Flying Flea ready for action



Continuing with the theme of small two stroke motorcycles

Front page picture



"Clinton Folger's "Horsemobile" delivering mail, on South Beach Street, at Hayden's Bath House entrance.

For nearly twenty years, from 1900 to 1918, Nantucket was the only place in the nation that successfully fought encroachment of the automobile within its limits. Opposing politicians on the mainland and large property owners, mostly non-resident, Nantucketers kept the island free of the "gasoline buggy" until the final vote of the town on May 15, 1918. By the narrow margin of forty - 326 to 286 - the automobile was allowed entry.

Clinton Folger was the mail carrier for Nantucket. Because cars were forbidden by the town, he towed his car to the state highway for driving to Siasconset."

Historic spark plugs thanks to Chris 73, wikipedia



A Road Story by Brian

It is Friday 2nd October 2009, and I am driving my Mk II Austin 1800 Automatic sedan, returning to Alice Springs after a road trip which began from Alice Springs on Monday 31st August. I had stopped at a "Driver Reviver" rest stop just off the freeway, some 50kms Nth of Yass N.S.W. (It was Oct long weekend). I had spent some time talking with a fellow enthusiast who has six mini minors, and after a cup of coffee and toilet break was about to leave when approached by a man who turned out to be a truckie named Warren. He told me of his father-in-law who had an Austin 1800 which he wanted to sell. It is in original condition, 57,000 odd miles on the clock. He said he had pumped up the tyres, put a battery in it and had driven it in the paddock about three months ago. He rang his father-in-law, David, from his mobile and I spoke with him about the car. He said he is keen to sell it to a good home.

Warren said the car is at Wombat, and he was driving his truck back to there now, "could I sit on a hundred?" I said it looked like I might have to. (Remembering the problems I had with the car on this trip, and the total fuel line blockage less than an hour ago). It's the white Kenworth he said, motioning toward a line of trees closer to the highway. I pulled out to the exit and waited for his truck to move out on to the entry lane of the freeway. I moved in behind the Semi trailer as it gathered speed on to the highway. If I have any more car trouble I will lose him and that will be that, I think to myself, having in the excitement of the moment, already forgotten our destination. After a while I remembered the hand held CB radio I had in the door pocket, which I had bought only a few days earlier, thinking of the long isolated stretches of road that I had to cover to get back home to Alice Springs.



As my speedo reached 60 Mph + I gave him a call on channel 40. "Hi Warren, it's Brian in the blue Austin behind you, do you read?" He answered on my second call, saying "go down to channel 39". So at least I was in contact and could let him know if I couldn't keep up, not that I expected he would wait for me if my car broke down again, as it had often done on this trip. We chatted for a while, him asking some questions, about my trip, where I lived, family etc. "Do you stop at truck stops?" he asked, "sometimes" I replied, "that's where you get a good meal" he said "where the truckies eat". "Some of the guys have huge meals" I venture, "yeah"..... we continue in silence.

It was getting dark when he finally signalled his turn off the Hume Hwy, Sth of Yass, towards Harden. His truck was a few hundred metres ahead, but I was managing to keep up, though reluctant to push the old Austin any harder than necessary. On through Harden, turning right on to another road, it was fully dark now, and raindrops splattered on the windscreen, but the low beam headlights on my car showed the road ahead quite well, with the Semi still powering on about 300 metres ahead.

It seemed like we had been going for an hour or more when he finally signalled right and pulled in to a large paddock next to a house on a rural block.

His wife was waiting to greet him, as was his father-in-law, who Warren had told me on the CB would be waiting to take me to his place to see the car. Warren and his wife quickly disappeared into the house, leaving me to show my Austin 1800 to his father in law, David.

I climbed into David's 4wd and we soon covered the few kms of open road, he gesturing left and right, saying "It's the cherry growing capital of Australia here", then on through the small village of Wombat to his place, on a rural block about a kilometre from the village. We pull up in front of a large shed with side opening doors. I had remembered to bring my small LED headlamp, but David soon found the switch and put on the fluorescent light in the shed.

In the far left corner of the shed was a beige coloured Mk I Austin 1800, I switched on my headlamp, as there was more shadow than light in that part of the shed, and flashed it over the car, all tyres flat on it's 13" wheels, David opened the front door and took out the plastic wallet with service log book, previous rego papers etc. I noticed that the red upholstery seemed to be in good condition, door pockets on the rear doors, (not fitted to my Mk II), and detachable headrest. The padding on top of the dash is mostly detached, but could maybe be refitted or replaced I think to myself, David having become absorbed in reading through the documents in the wallet.

"I won't ask much for it" he says, " want it to go to a good home". He tells me he spent eight years living on a yacht near Lizard Island, and that is his interest now. He has lost interest in doing anything with the car which he had bought from a deceased estate. He opens the bonnet, battery has been removed, and no sign of corrosion in that area. We look in the boot, original tools lying there, incl a tyre pump. "I could have used that the other day" he says, testing the pump. I ask about a spare wheel, he says it is over in the corner, he will put it back in the boot.

I ask how much do you want for it? "make me an offer he says", I think to myself, "it needs a bit of money spending on it, and then I guess a couple of thousand to truck it back to Alice Springs. "Ok I'll start and you bid me up", I say. I think \$800 would be reasonable, but I say \$500". "A bit low he says, so I think, cut to the chase, "eight hundred". Ok he says, we shake hands.

We continue to chat as I write out the cheque, his father owned Navair flying school at Bankstown, taught Jack Brabbham and Stirling Moss to fly.

He drives me back to my car, pointing out the now closed shop that was run by the lady who owned the Austin, as well as the house where she lived and the shed nearby where the car was garaged. There was a possum living in it when I opened the bonnet he says.

I set Cootamundra as destination on the GPS and head off toward my planned overnight stop. I muse to myself as I drive, probably as close to a "Barn Find" as I'll ever get, and way too expensive by the time I get it to Alice, but hey, whatever turns you on. I won't restore the car, just clean it up and replace tyres and any other roadworthy items. There are minor dents and scratches, and some cosmetic rust bubbles here and there, nothing serious as far as I could see. I will just stabilise where necessary, and give it a clean and polish. I prefer my cars to be as original as possible, cracked and fading paint and all, as this is part of the cars history, and that is important to me. If the next owner of my cars sees it differently, then that is up to them.

Sidelight: Prior to stopping at the "Driver Reviver" I had been delayed for 15 - 20 mins by a total blockage of the fuel line from the petrol tank. Managed to blow it out using a hand held fuel pump, with some difficulty. I suspect that an intermittent blockage of the fuel line had played its part in my trouble with engine failure during cruise, which had first appeared way back on the Barkley Hwy, and had re-appeared intermittently for the rest of my journey. The blockage would seem to self correct, as up to now, although noticing that the fuel filter was often near empty, the fuel flow would resume once the line was disconnected from the carby float bowl. The blockage has not re-occurred since, and my MK II Austin 1800 has since been trouble free (except for a burnt valve, but more on that later).

Without the delay due to the fuel line blockage I doubt that I would have met truckie Warren at the rest stop, and my "Barn Find" would not have happened! What to make of chance encounters, of which I had more than one on this trip, but that is another story.

This year the rally was based at an old milling village called Donnelly River in between Manjimup and Bridgetown in the South West of W.A. It was known as the Tall Timber rally.

The rally is an annual event and is hosted by a different state each year. This is the third rally I have attended, the first at Mylor in the Adelaide Hills and the second at Warrnambool and Apollo Bay in Victoria. Next year will be at Lennox Heads in the Northern Rivers area of NSW.

This year wife Lyn decided to accompany me, as an old friend of ours living in Bunbury is not going too good so thought it would be good to catch up.

Son Matt kindly lent us his BA Falcon ute for the trip.

We allowed four days to get there having decided to drive across the Great Central Highway. Left Alice bright and early Thursday morning 12/11 and were in Yulara for morning tea. Then hit the dirt, through Docker River, over the border to Warakurna and then on to Warburton roadhouse for overnight camp – about 1000 km.

Had a bit of a nasty experience at Warburton where driver side and passenger side windows smashed by petrol sniffer, who stole jerry can of fuel locked in front of vehicle. This all happened with me asleep on the tray and Lyn on the grass next to vehicle. Please don't ask!

Anyhow onwards to Kalgoorlie where we were fortunate enough to get the windows replaced early Saturday morning. We camped that night at a delightful little caravan park at Lake Grace. There was a vase of freshly picked roses in the two shower blocks.



Arrived at rally headquarters the next day – 3000 km with 1100 km dirt - unloaded MAC and our gear and booked into our motel accommodation that was the converted Loco shed associated with the mill.

Had welcoming dinner that night in the old timber works canteen. Breakfast and evening meals were taken each day in this building, dubbed "Hall Green" for the duration of the event. Hall Green was the location of the Velo factory in the UK.

Monday 16/11: Rode to Walpole for lunch and then on to tree top climb, back to Hall Green for dinner followed by quiz night. 252 miles

Tuesday: Rode to a place called Gnomesville where we each placed a gnome to commemorate the rally, lunch at the Red Bull Brewery then home. 174 miles



Wednesday: Rode to outskirts of Pemberton where we assembled for a mass ride down the main street accompanied by local riders from area. On the way I climbed a very, very big tree that had spikes driven into the trunk in a spiral pattern to a fire lookout at the top. 125 miles.

Thursday: Rode to Collie race track, where we were able to do some practice laps and then take part in a time trial event. There was also a demonstration of vintage racing. I found the day quite enjoyable. 186 miles.

Friday: Rode to Cape Leeuwin light house, where the Indian and Great Southern Oceans meet. Lunch at Augusta and then home to Hall Green. 201Miles.

Gnomesville



Cape Leeuwin



Vintage Racing



Gathering for the ride into Pemberton

Saturday: Rode to Nannup for a charity fundraiser. Parked our bikes in the main park and collected for the Flying Doctor. Back to Hall Green for presentation dinner. I was fortunate to win a trophy for best presented pre-alloy MAC.



Best presented pre-alloy MAC

Sunday: Farewell breakfast pack up and head for home.

Lyn and I travelled back via Esperance where we had a look at the magnificent bays and beaches in the area..

We then travelled the Nullabor with an overnight at Eucla. Our intention was to take a short cut from Ceduna through the Gawler Ranges, however due to recent rain we were advised not to, so onward to an overnigher at Port Augusta and into Alice Thursday evening. Our total distance was about 7000kml in the vehicle and a further 1600kml on the bike.

There were a total of 112 people at the rally with 80 odd bikes. 5 people from the USA, 2 from the Netherlands, 2 from NZ and 1 from the UK.

I find it quite refreshing to spend a week on the bike riding on some great roads seeing new and interesting country and sharing it all with some wonderful people. And do you know what else, some of the riders are in their eighties. Inspirational stuff.



Relaxing on one of the beaches at Esperance

MECCA end of year get together



Pictures from the banks of the Todd

MECCA Contact details:
PO Box 1506 Alice Springs NT 0871
Email address: mecca@mecca.asn.au
Web Site: www.mecca.asn.au