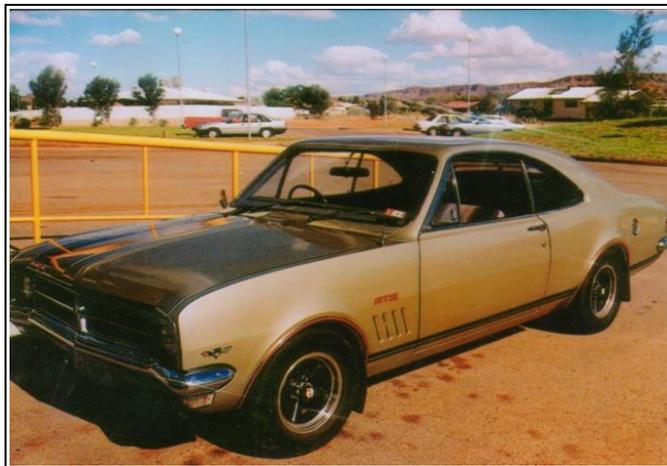




***Motor Enthusiasts Club  
of  
Central Australia***

**Incorporating Alice Springs Vintage & Veteran Car Club Inc**



**CENTRE SPOKE**

**April 2010**

## THE GOOD OIL

Hello MECCA boys and girls.

This is the first news letter for 2010. Things are pretty quiet over January and February, but things are starting to gather a bit of momentum.

In January we attended the traditional Hungry Jacks breakfast with the club picking up the tab for the meal. We incorporated this with a special meeting to approve the auditors report on our financial situation.

The club was delighted to be able to present Brian Eather with an Overlander badge for his intrepid journey in his beloved Austin 1800 to the East coast and back. Congratulations Brian once again. (see story in December News Letter via web site).

In February some of our members attending the funeral of the late Les Hodge drove their classic cars in the cortege as a mark of respect to our old mate Les. This was a sanctioned club event. Thank you Stuart for speaking at the service on behalf of our club and thanks to Marie for organising flowers and the message in the paper.

March saw our first General meeting of the year. The meeting was well attended with some lively discussion on the prestigious Overlander Badge. It is good to see this badge being promoted once again. All news letters will now contain a description of how the badge came about and an application form.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> March we had our first club run of the year. We met at the Mobil Larapinta car park and then proceeded in an orderly fashion to Fred and Mien Blom's house, where we were in for a fascinating morning.

On arrival we were welcomed by Fred and Mien with a lovely morning tea overlooking their magnificent garden.

We then were taken to Fred's workshop where he makes his bellow organs. Fred has made four of these so far each one a little bigger and more complex than the other. We were given a wonderful insight into these magnificent instruments. Thank you Fred and Mien for sharing your stories and for letting us enjoy your magnificent garden.

Our group then proceeded to the Inland Nursery where we rounded out the morning with a great lunch.

Those attending were Stuart and Marie in their MGB, Col and Vicki in the MK2 Jag, Allen and Aileen in Aileen's TE Cortina, Brian in his Tojo, Mal in his Austin Chummy and yours truly on the trusty Mac Velocette. We also had two guests, Dave Sullivan and Joe Matthews in Dave's well restored FJ Holden ute. Dave and Joe work for NASA in a section called Columbia Scientific Balloon Facility. It was great to have you along.

Thank you Marie for organising our visit to the Blom's.

Don't you just love it when your fuel gauge is length of red river gum stick!

See you all at our next meeting.

Regards Fred

## Club Activities

| Date          | Activity  | Start Venue     | Start time | Organiser  |
|---------------|---|-----------------|------------|------------|
| 11 Apr 2010   | Ilparpa-Simpson's Gap-Women's Hall of Fame                              | Masonic Hall    | 09:00      | Fred       |
| 8 May 2010    | Aces & 8's Show and Shine   | Alice Casino    | 09:00      | Aces & 8's |
| 16 May 2010   | National Motoring Day – mystery trip around town ending at Hungry Jacks | Masonic Hall    | 09:00      | Colin      |
| 2-23 May 2010 | Shannon's Extravaganza – Darwin   |                 |            | Individual |
| 5-6/6/2010    | Overnight trip to Glen Helen including general meeting                  | Mobil Larapinta | 09:00      | Heather    |
| 11 Jul 2010   | Aileron for lunch. Morning tea at Native Gap                            | Truck Stop      | 09:00      | Fred       |
| 8 Aug 2010    | General meeting followed by picnic drive to Coroboree Rock              | Masonic Hall    | 09:00      | Ian        |
| 15 Aug 2010   | AGM followed by BBQ lunch   | Masonic Hall    | 10:00      |            |

No General meeting for May, July

All listed events are official club activities

Non club members are welcome to attend the activities

## Buy, Sell or Swap

Advertise your items for here:

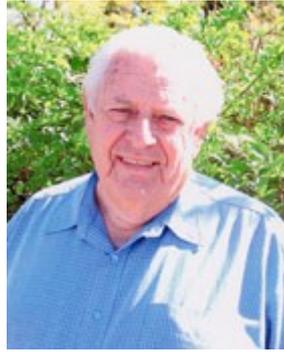
1972 BMW R75/5 motorcycle.

2/3 original, Yamaha headlamp, Suzuki switchgear and Honda gauges.

Unregistered and in roadworthy condition.

\$2000 Contact Ian on 08 89530971





**VALE: LES HODGE**

1/10/1935 -23/2/ 2010

It is with sad hearts that we say farewell to our old mate Les, who lost the battle with cancer and passed away at home on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> February.

Our condolences go to his partner Meg and his children Anita, Rowan and Craig and their families. Les has been a great supporter of our club and has held the position of Club Historian for many years. There were not many meetings or club runs that Les and Meg did not attend.

Les was born in Quorn S.A. At the age of 4 his family shifted to Alice Springs and had a 17 acre farm where Piggly Wiggly's is today. One can imagine him tearing around the place on his push bike terrorising the neighbourhood. Les in fact became a very good cyclist and was selected in the New Zealand squad for the Rome Olympics. A training crash prevented Les from going on to Rome.

When Les left school he took up a mechanical apprenticeship with Transport and Works. Les always had a passion for anything mechanical and became quite knowledgeable in his chosen vocation.

The family then shifted to New Zealand, but Les eventually returned to Alice Springs and amongst other jobs worked at Pine Gap where he told people that he used to refuel submarines.

Les then became a teacher at the Alice TAFE college and spent the remainder of his working life passing on his vast mechanical knowledge to many young apprentices.

Les was a wise and knowledgeable man who did not hesitate to help other people, always with a cheerful heart and a twinkle in his eye.

Farewell Les and may you rest in peace.



Les and Meg

## The Austin 1800 in Zimbabwe 1986-87

Ian Cunningham

My family and I travelled to Zimbabwe in 1986 where I taught at a teachers college for two years. During that time we had an Austin



1800. The third Austin 1800 assembled in Rhodesia. We affectionately called it Roland after a popular British series called Roland the Rat.

Roland had a hard life prior to us.

There was no air filter. We used stainless steel pan scourers dipped in oil as filter elements. The drive shaft splines had reamed out the

front hubs and some judicious welding and grinding were undertaken to re-establish drive. In the course of one trip to Ngezi Dam, the hydro-elastic suspension failed and

rocks and a tyre lever were used to prevent the rear tyre rubbing on the wheel arch. The

tyre lever was also used as a soldering iron to repair the radiator when it developed a

leak. After an exceptionally hot day, we were coasting down a hill near our house when the engine stopped and would not start again. A compression test revealed that all

cylinders were low. Extraction of the engine and examination of the valve seats revealed that each seat was cracked.

There being no replacement parts available, the valves were lapped in their seats. The engine was reassembled and

Roland fired up again. It was amazing how much punishment the car took and still kept on going.



Roland Rat mobile undergoing an overhaul



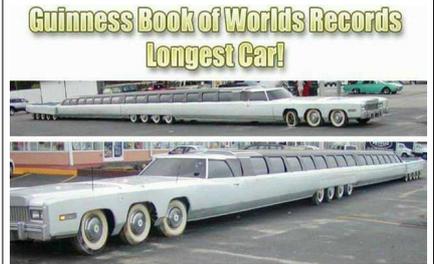
Roland smiling with a leaking radiator

### **WANTED** Your stories

Many thanks to the people who submitted articles for this newsletter. Anyone who has ever owned a motor vehicle has a story to tell. We need your stories and pictures for the club magazine. Please send your articles to the Centre Spoke editor c/o:

**MECCA Contact details:**  
**PO Box 1506 Alice Springs NT 0871**  
**Email address: [mecca@mecca.asn.au](mailto:mecca@mecca.asn.au)**  
**Web Site: [www.mecca.asn.au](http://www.mecca.asn.au)**

The stories can be either wordprocessed or handwritten with pictures.



A collection of interesting cars

# ANOTHER BIG CAT

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On our most recent trip interstate we were fortunate enough to catch up with long-time MECCA members Merv and Adrienne Matthews at their home in Burra where we were introduced to the newest acquisition of the fleet, a V12 XJS Jaguar (1984 model we believe). Merv has always had an uncanny knack of finding classic vehicles of immaculate condition...and this Jaguar is no exception!



Mal & Sandy Trull

## 1947 FORD MERCURY

Owners:- Ross & Marie Sowerby

I purchased this car in 2002, when by chance I went to an All Ford Car Show in Mount Maunganui, New Zealand. As soon as I saw it, it brought back memories of my childhood, growing up in New Zealand, where my grandfather had one very similar. He passed away in 1972, when I was 15. Much as I would have liked to, the family trust (and my mother) would not let me buy it, believing that a boy my age would wreck it in no time or kill myself in the process. The car at that time was in pristine condition.

My siblings and I would have many discussions about this car at family gatherings over the ensuing years, as we all had loved it and wondered what had happened to it.

I managed to track down the owner of the car at the show and had a lengthy discussion with him about the car and its history. In N.Z. the ownership papers stay with the car and each new owner is recorded on these papers. He had the papers at home, even though the car had not been road registered since 1992. The more I looked at the car, the more I believed it to be the very car my grandfather had owned years earlier. The owner, Mr. Thomas Cook, did not at that time wish to sell the car but we came to an agreement that if it was in fact my grandfather's car, he would give me first option to buy, if he ever decided to sell. We even agreed on a price. Later that night he rang me and informed me that the second owner was a Mr. William Norman Johnson. My grandfather's name was William Johnson. Mr. Cook did in fact that night agree to sell me the car, with the proviso he get first option to buy it back, should I ever want to sell, as he believed it to be one of the best examples of that model in New Zealand. We also agreed that the car should stay in N.Z. The car stayed in N.Z. until August 2008, when, after discussions with my sisters who part own the car, and Thomas Cook, we all agreed that the car should be maintained better, as it was only sitting in my sister's garage deteriorating, and Thomas was no longer in a position to buy the car back because of ill health. Thomas agreed that I could bring the car to Australia to better look after this piece of motoring history.

The car has had 11 owners in total, and spent the majority of the last 20 years in storage at one place or another, being brought out for car shows only. New rings and bearings were fitted in 1987, brakes were overhauled in 2000, and various other general maintenance over the years.

I replaced the plug leads, plugs, spring shackle bushes, battery, and muffler in February 2009. Paintwork was also given a buff and polish. Original valve radio still works.

Water pumps (it has 2, 1 for each bank) were replaced, along with radiator hoses in November 2009. The car has now been registered for 12 months and was awarded Best Original/Restored 1940/49 at the Shannons Motor Extravaganza 2009

MOTOR; 24 Stud Side valve V8, Capacity 239 Cubic Inch, Compression ratio 6.6/1, Bore 3.19", Stroke 3.75". CARBURETTOR; 2 Barrel Holley. DISTRIBUTOR; Twin point. GEARBOX; 3 Speed (No Synchro 1<sup>ST</sup> gear), Tyres; Whitewall, Crossply, 6.40 x 15", Electrical system is original 6 Volt. BRAKES; Drum all round, WIPERS are vacuum operated.

March 2010



Two examples of 47 Ford Mecuries

## MOTOR ENTHUSIASTS CLUB OF CENTRAL AUSTRALIA (MECCA)

Incorporating the Alice Springs Vintage & Veteran Car Club Inc

Postal Address: PO Box 1506, Alice Springs NT 0871

Email: [mecca@mecca.asn.au](mailto:mecca@mecca.asn.au)

Web Site: [www.mecca.asn.au](http://www.mecca.asn.au)



### Overlander Badge History & Particulars

The members of the **Alice Springs Vintage & veteran Car Club** originally created this very special and much sought after award in the mid 1970s in recognition of the many Veteran, Vintage and Classic motor vehicles whose drivers took up the challenge to travel from interstate to visit Alice Springs. Back in those days the roads to Alice were not the wide, smooth roads we have today but were narrow, undulating strips of bitumen with rough shoulders and causeways where we now have all weather bridges. The Stuart Highway from Port Augusta to the Northern Territory border was still a rough boulder strewn, bull dust and corrugated dirt track which tested the endurance of man and his machine. The sealing of this part of the Stuart Highway was not completed until 1987. The award was appropriately named the **OVERLANDER BADGE** to commemorate the vast distances covered on these roads, the confidence or blind faith the owners had in their vehicles, and the courage of the drivers and passengers who travelled in them to reach Alice Springs. In July 1996 when the **Motor Enthusiasts Club of Central Australia** was formed and incorporated the **Alice Springs Vintage & Veteran Car Club** it was decided that a new category be established to award vehicles from 1947 to a rolling date of 30 years old that make the journey to Alice Springs. This is called the **Special Interest** category.

Today the **OVERLANDER BADGE** is available to anyone who is confident enough to take up the challenge to drive their Veteran, Vintage, Classic or Special Interest vehicle or motor cycle either to or from Alice Springs over an approved distance. The Badge can only be awarded to the nominated driver and vehicle which must arrive at or depart from Alice Springs and cover the specified distance under the vehicles own power.

#### THE APPROVED DISTANCES FOR THE FOUR CATEGORIES ARE:

|                   |                      |                 |
|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| Veteran:          | Up to 1919           | 500 kilometres  |
| Vintage:          | 1920 to 1930         | 1500 kilometres |
| Classic:          | 1931 to 1946         | 3000 kilometres |
| Special Interest: | 1947 to 30 years old | 3000 kilometres |

The badges are 90mm wide by 100mm high and differ in design to distinguish the different categories:

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Veteran Badge:    | White tyre, red spokes, silver grey background and yellow scroll.    |
| Vintage Badge:    | Black tyre, green spokes. Silver grey background and yellow scroll.  |
| Classic:          | Black tyre, orange spokes. Silver grey background and yellow scroll. |
| Special Interest: | Black tyre, blue spokes. Silver grey background and yellow scroll.   |

**TO APPLY** for the badge, contact your club secretary, or apply directly to the MECCA Club secretary. An application form will be sent to you or your club secretary, as required. This form is self-explanatory and must be returned to the MECCA club secretary on completion of the road kilometre requirements. Fee for the badge and engraving is \$75.00. We recommend payment in advance, ie., upon application, to ensure engraving is completed in time for presentation at the completion of your trip.

**ALL APPLICANTS**, whether arriving from interstate or originating in Alice Springs, must submit reasonable proof of their completion of the qualifying road kilometres in order to be awarded the Overland Badge. This is typically in the form of fuel receipts from the service stations along the route.

**AFTER APPROVAL** by the Overlander Badge committee, the badge applicable to your vehicle will be duly inscribed with the applicants name and vehicle and registered in our files. The badge will then be posted to you or your club secretary's postal address, as specified. If you have completed your required kilometres upon arrival in Alice Springs, MECCA can present the badge to the applicant in person.

For further inquiries email us, or drop us a line at the above addresses.



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Incorporating the Alice Springs vintage & Veteran Car Club Inc

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VETERAN



VINTAGE



CLASSIC



SPECIAL INTEREST

## *Overlander Badge Application*

I HEREBY MAKE APPLICATION TO RECEIVE THE **OVERLANDER BADGE** FOR THE FOLLOWING CATEGORY  
VETERAN, VINTAGE, CLASSIC, SPECIAL INTEREST, Please circle.

### YOUR DETAILS

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Nos. Home: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Where should we mail the badge to: \_\_\_\_\_

### VEHICLE DETAILS

YEAR \_\_\_\_\_ MAKE \_\_\_\_\_ MODEL \_\_\_\_\_

BODY STYLE \_\_\_\_\_ No OF CYLINDERS \_\_\_\_\_ TYPE OF MOTOR \_\_\_\_\_

### PROPOSED ROUTE

START: \_\_\_\_\_ FINISH: \_\_\_\_\_

VIA: \_\_\_\_\_

START DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ FINISH DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE:** Please enclose the fee of \$75.00 with the application and allow time for the engraving.

