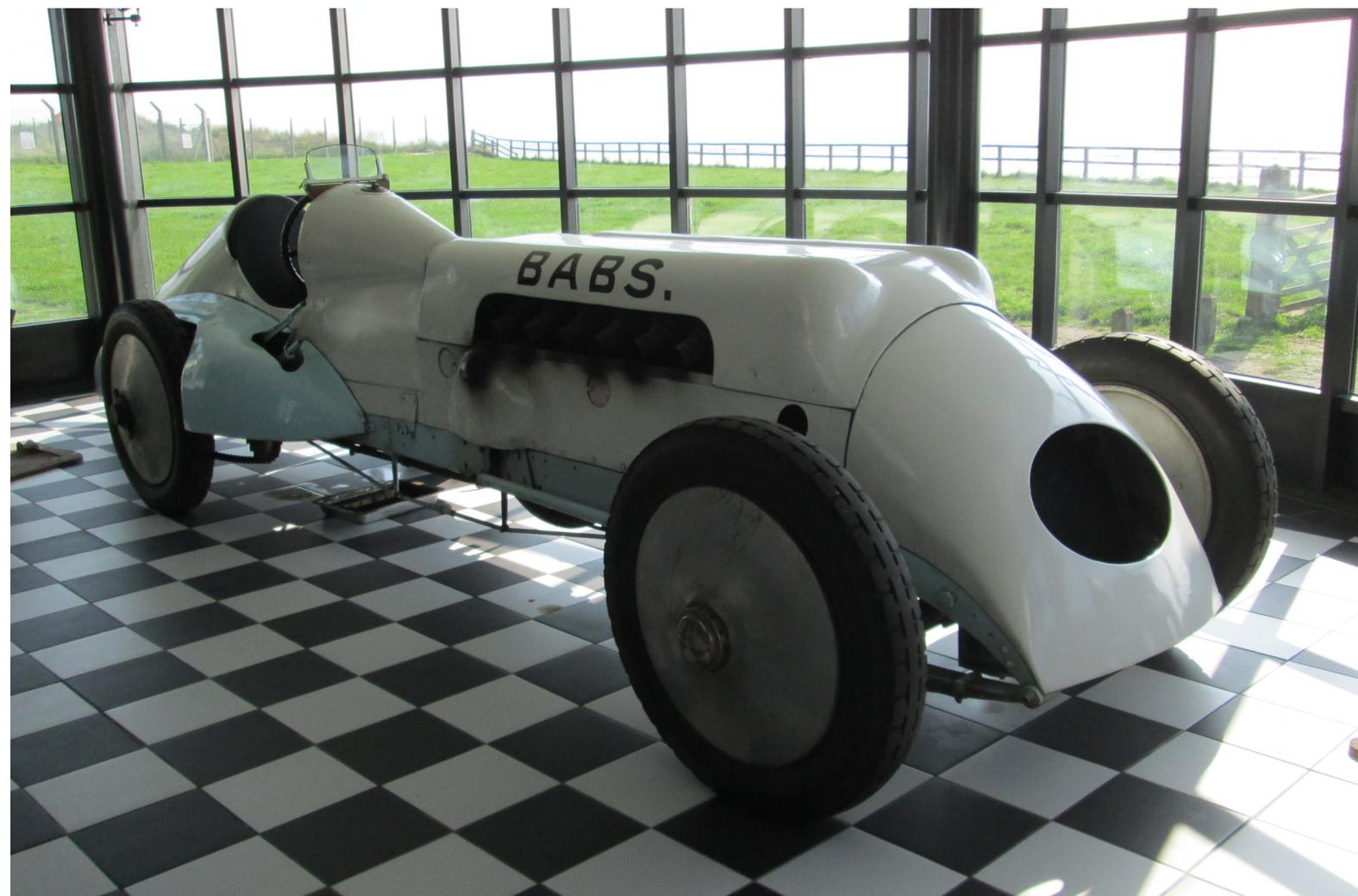




CentreSpoke

March/April 2015



J.G Parry Thomas's record breaking car. *See inside for story.*

Motor Enthusiasts Club of Central Australia

Incorporating The Alice Springs Vintage & Veteran Car Club

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SHARE THE PASSION

PRESIDENTS REPORT February 2015.

We had a good roll up for the February breakfast at Hungry Jacks. It is a good relaxing way of catching up with each other after the Christmas break.

We had five new members at Hungry Jacks, four were from the same family and are keen to join in club activities. It was nice to see some of the longer serving members introduce themselves and welcome the new members to the club.

There is a meeting of the Northern Territory Motoring Council this month and I have sent a brief report on MECCA club activities to the Secretary for the meeting.

The SHANNONS Motorcycle Extravaganza in Darwin went well with quite a few entries on the day.

I will be away for next meeting enjoying the Swap Meets in NSW.

For the benefit of new members and members that missed the last newsletter, I have repeated the next section of my report from last month.

Alice Springs and the whole of the Northern Territory will be filled with motoring events this year and MECCA will have the opportunity to participate, help out or just go as spectators.

May: Bangtail Muster parade Alice Springs.
 National Motoring Day. Held by individual Clubs
across Australia.

June: 40th year of the Finke desert Race.
 Leukemia Foundation Muscle Car Rally in Darwin.
 V8s Hidden Valley.
 All Ford day Darwin.

August: National Road Transport Hall of Fame Reunion. (20
years)

September: Red Centre Nats. Alice Springs.

Check the Red Centre Nats web site.

<http://www.redcentrenats.com.au/>

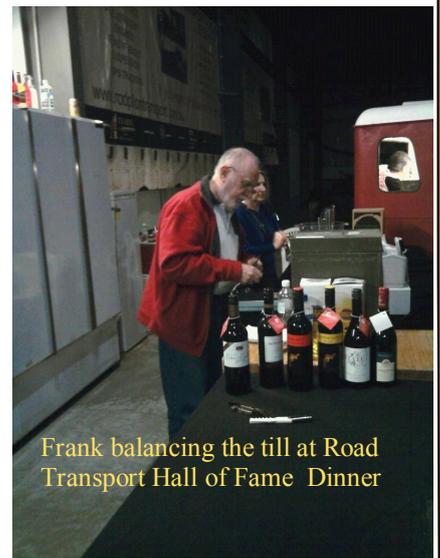
The Leukemia Foundation Muscle Car Rally has been running in South Australia for a number of years and is holding a rally in the Top End this year. This will coincide with the V8s and All Ford day so it will be a good three weeks of motoring events.

The National Road Transport Hall of Fame Museum is expecting a large contingent of Vehicles and visitors to the reunion this year.

The Red Centre Nat's is gearing up and is expected be a large event. There is a lot of support from the N.T. Government and motoring groups. These events are very popular and even though our vehicles possibly do not meet show or drag car class, there will be room for us at the Show & Shine. The more adventurous members can participate in the other events.

If you are considering entering the Red Centre Nats, there is a discount for Clubs. Fill out your details, put down MECCA as the club, do not pay until advised.

Please call me if you need more information. Col Jarrett 0457297271.



Frank balancing the till at Road
Transport Hall of Fame Dinner

MECCA

MOTOR ENTHUSIAST CLUB CENTRAL AUSTRALIA inc Calendar 2015

- March** **Sunday 8th** 9am Meeting. Including :
- Tim's Magical Mystery Tour** at an exciting
Venue which is yet to be confirmed.
But rest assured it will be well worthwhile.
- April** **Sunday 12th** 9am Meeting.
- Followed by **Motorkana** at Blatherskite
Park Org. Tim Schubert.
- May** **Sunday 4th** Bangtail Muster Parade.
Sunday 10th 9am Meeting. Mothers Day run TBA.
Sunday 17th National Motoring Day. Run and BBQ.
- June** **Sunday 14th** 9am Meeting. Run TBA.
6th to 8th 40th year of the Finke Desert Race.
23rd to 26th Leukemia Foundation Rally in Darwin.
20th to 22nd V8s Hidden Valley.
28th All Ford day Darwin.
- July** **Sunday 12th** 9am Meeting. Run TBA.
- August** **Sunday 9th** 9am Meeting followed by **AGM**.
25th to 31st Road Transport Hall of Fame Reunion
- September** **Sunday 13th** 9am Meeting. Run TBA.
3rd to 6th Red CentreNats

The Story of "BABS"

While in England in 2013 Sandy and I visited the Pendine Sands area in the south west. Pendine Sands was used for a short time for Land Speed Record attempts. There is a very informative museum there "The Museum of Speed". Housed there among a few motor cycles is this historic record breaker.

Babs, Pendine and World Land Speed Record.

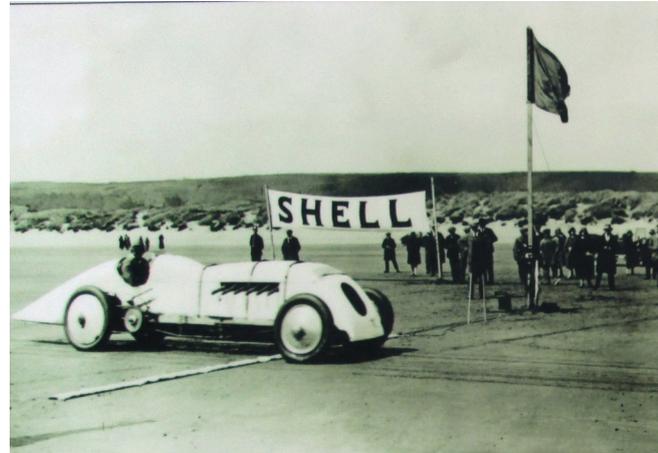
Babs was originally built in 1923 by Clive Gallop for Count Zborowski. It was originally known as the "Higham Special". The Count was killed at Monza in 1923 while racing in the Italian Grand Prix.

J.G.Parry Thomas then bought the car and rebuilt it in 1925-26.

In July 1925 Malcolm Campbell set the World Land Speed record at Pendine Sands at 146.16 mph.

Henry Seagrave took the record to 152.33 mph at Southport in March 1926.

In April 1926 Thomas and Babs returned to Pendine Sands and smashed the record by 17 mph. The car reached a speed of 169.30 mph. Thomas, Babs and Pendine now held the record, but not for long.



The following day Thomas broke the World Land Speed Record again this time reaching 171.02 mph.

However Henry Seagrave was building a 200 mph car. This was too fast for cars of both Campbell and Thomas, but they were determined to raise the record still further.

Campbell was the first back to Pendine.

He brought his brand new car named "Bluebird" and powered by a Napier aircraft engine. On the 4 February 1927 he reached 174.883 mph.

On the 3rd of March 1927 Thomas attempted to raise it still further. Babs had almost reached the end of the measured mile when it skidded out of control, rolled over and then righted itself.

Thomas was killed instantly.

The locals buried Babs in the sand dunes and Pendine was not used again for World Land Speed Record attempts.

Babs remained buried in the sand until 1969 when it was excavated and restored by Owen Wyn Owen from North Wales.

Babs now has a replacement 27059 cc Liberty engine capable of 500 bhp. It is equipped with a Thomas clutch and a pre WW1 Blitzen Benz gearbox. It has a Rubery Owen chassis and Rudge-Whitworth wheels. These take 33 x 5 Dunlop tyres.

Thomas designed the streamlined body in 1925. It was altered in 1926-27. Babs is painted blue and white, these were Thomas's racing colours. The car weighs 1 ton 14.5 cwt (1750 kg) It runs on 60% Shell Aviation spirit and 40% Benzole.

The car's highest recorded speed was 171.02 mph (275.17 kph) for the measured mile.



ELECTRICAL THEORY BY JOSEPH LUCAS

Positive ground depends on proper circuit functioning, which is the transmission of negative ions by retention of the visible spectral manifestation known as "smoke". Smoke is the thing that makes electrical circuits work. We know this to be true because every time one lets the smoke out of an electrical circuit, it stops working. This can be verified repeatedly through empirical testing.

For example, if one places a copper bar across the terminals of a battery, prodigious quantities of smoke are liberated and the battery shortly ceases to function. In addition, if one observes smoke escaping from an electrical component such as a Lucas voltage regulator, it will also be observed that the component no longer functions. The logic is elementary and inescapable!

The function of the wiring harness is to conduct the smoke from one device to another. When the wiring springs a leak and lets all the smoke out of the system, nothing works afterward.

Starter motors were considered unsuitable for British motorcycles for some time largely because they consumed large quantities of smoke, requiring very unsightly large wires.

It has been reported that Lucas electrical components are possibly more prone to electrical leakage than their Bosch, Japanese or American counterparts. Experts point out that this is because Lucas is British, and all things British leak. British engines leak oil, British shock absorbers, hydraulic forks and disk brake systems leak fluid.

Therefore, it follows that British electrical systems must leak smoke. Once again, the logic is clear and inescapable.

In conclusion, the basic concept of transmission of electrical energy in the form of smoke provides a logical explanation of the mysteries of electrical components especially British units manufactured by Joseph Lucas, Ltd.

And remember: "A gentleman does not motor about after dark."

Joseph Lucas "The Prince of Darkness"
1842-1903

Lucas is the patent holder for the short circuit.

Lucas - Inventor of the first intermittent wiper.

Lucas - Inventor of the self-dimming headlamp.

The three-position Lucas switch--DIM, FLICKER and OFF.

Lord Lucas – the Prince of Darkness by Dawson Miller

Was it the fault of Lucas equipment or British Leyland's cost cutting that caused the electrical problems?



Lucas advertising

Joseph Lucas & Son was established in 1872, about the same year that the petrol engine was first patented. The first Mercedes 'horseless carriage' however was still 14 years away and the Ford Model T wouldn't appear for a further 27 years. The business that Joseph Lucas founded in Birmingham is still the global HQ of Lucas today and represents the consistency and durability of Lucas products which has made Lucas one of the most successful automotive brands in history. Through the early years and up to recent times this enormous and diverse company has survived by mixing acquisitions with restrictive agreements. However, in August 1996 it merged with the American Varity Corporation to form LucasVarity. So how did this all come about?

Joseph Lucas was born in Birmingham on 12 April, 1834. His father, Benjamin Lucas was described on his son's birth certificate as a 'plater'. As electroplating had not yet been invented this would seem to indicate what is now known as close plating. That is floating a coating of silver onto a surface of base metal with a soldering iron, a highly skilled operation.

In common with more than 50 per cent of children born in the UK at that time Joseph had no formal education. He attended the local Sunday school run by George Dawson at the Graham Street Chapel where he was taught basic reading and writing skills. Joseph later attributed his progress and prosperity entirely to the education he received under George Dawson. However, all through his life he was embarrassed by his erratic spelling. This later caused some dissension between Joseph and Harry, his eldest son having to rewrite his letters. In 1847 Joseph, age 13, was apprenticed to H & GR Elkington's Silversmiths in Newhall where he subsequently became a journeyman brazier and plater like his father. On completion of his apprenticeship he went to work for a local firm making carriage lamps.

Now 20, Lucas proposed and married a 21 year old Miss Emily Stephens. Conditions in England in the mid 1850's were tough and work scarce. Nevertheless over the next 11 years the marriage was blessed with six children. During this period both Joseph and Emily sought refuge in drink until one day Joseph vowed he would never drink again. It was a vow which he kept and which, ironically led to his death. Joseph became determined to overcome his addiction and to start his own business. He began working with a basket carriage, from which he sold paraffin

from door to door around the streets of Hockley. His wife Emily unfortunately was unable to overcome her addiction. This later led Joseph to championing the cause of temperance.

His popularity with his customers and his flair for business led him on quickly to the sale of buckets, shovels and other ironmongery. Through his hard work Joseph was soon able to move to a larger house "The Firs" in Stoney Lane, Birmingham. In 1860, he began manufacturing domestic tinware. Of his six children, the eldest, Harry was the most useful in the business. Harry joined the firm around 1872, aged 17. The company was initially called, Joseph Lucas & Son and along with five employees was based in Great King Street, Birmingham.



Joseph and Emily.

At first they made general pressed metal merchandise including plant pot holders, scoops and buckets and later in 1875, lamps for ships. In 1879 oil and acetylene lamps for bicycles were added to the range. However it was the line of ship's lamps, marketed as the Tom Bowling Ship's Lamp which really got the company going. But the real sweet smell of success came in about 1880 with the introduction of the "King of the Road" bicycle lamp developed in the early days of the cycling boom. By 1885 the Lucas family was on the move again, this time upmarket to Denmark House, Trafalgar Road, Mosely. The family had not been settled in the house long when Joseph's wife Emily died, she was about 52 years old. Later the same year Joseph remarried his 51 year old widowed cousin, Mary Tyzack.

Harry was now a partner and the driving force in the business. Under his direction the original factory premises at the family's home in Great King Street were expanded into a five-storey factory covering some twelve acres. In 1896 Joseph and Harry formed a joint stock corporation with the New Departure Bell Co., of America, to enable Lucas-designed bicycle lamps to be manufactured in America. Joseph Lucas Limited was formed in 1897 with a minimal share value of £225,000 to take over the business of Joseph Lucas & Son. Father and son were both gluttons for work, but were considered to be enlightened employers who treated their workforce with every consideration. Both Joseph and Harry had little time for hobbies but were fond of music and concerts at the factory and elsewhere were encouraged.

Now about 66 years old and a strict teetotaller, Joseph was leaving the business largely in the hands of Harry while he devoted a good deal of his spare time to philanthropy. He helped found the Temperance Hall and enjoyed giving lectures there

condemning waste, gambling and drink. On 30 July 1901 Joseph remarried for the third and last time. With Harry looking after the business Joseph arranged to mark the occasion with a leisurely cruise along the Mediterranean with his new wife, 51 year old Mary Anne Owen. The voyage was to be a combination of business and pleasure. On arrival at Naples they found the city gripped by a raging typhoid endemic. Joseph was still maintaining his strict abstinence from alcohol and refused to drink wine instead of water. Unfortunately while staying ashore at the Hotel Bristol he contracted typhoid fever, possibly from drinking contaminated water and died on 27 December 1902 at the age of 68. It was reported that, true to his dislike of waste to the last, his body was brought back to the UK in a "King of the Road" packing case. He was buried in St. Mary's churchyard, Moseley, on 14 January, 1903.



An early Lucas lamp.

Great King Street 1930



Under Harry's direction business prospered but he kept in touch with the workers, by touring the large factory twice a day. Unfortunately Harry became very deaf and was glad of the help of his son Oliver, who entered the business straight from King Edward's School, Birmingham. Oliver and his sister Hilda were popular with the workers for their musical performances at various factory concerts.

From 1904 to 1907 Lucas' sales and profits rose steadily stimulated by the legislation of 1903 that made cars more attractive to potential customers by raising the speed limit above walking pace and making lights compulsory at night.

Motor manufacturers found that companies already established in the Midlands were well able to supply the components they needed, so unlike elsewhere there was no development toward vertical integration. Harry Lucas retired from management in 1919 and his son Oliver, became a Joint Managing Director of the company in 1925. Oliver later died in Nassau in 1948, aged 56 years.

In the 1960s in the United States the legendary unreliability of Lucas electrics fitted to imported British cars such as MGs, Triumphs, Jaguars and Rovers led to the coining of the nickname - "Lord Lucas - The Prince of Darkness." As such Lucas became the butt of many jokes, but the unreliability of Lucas electrics is overstated. The fact that many cars employing Lucas electrics are still on the road some 30, 40, or more years after their manufacture is proof surely of their durability. It is often said that the biggest problem that Lucas electrics suffer was that of previous "repairs" and "improvements" carried out by DIY car owners. To all those motorists who would complain about being left in the dark by the failure of a Lucas electrical component just remember, "... gentlemen do not motor around after dark."

References:

www.gracesguide.co.uk
www.lucas.info
www.lucasmemories.co.uk
www.moseleyhistory.co.uk

Thanks to Stuart Gear and Catalog the magazine of the Victorian Jaguar Club for this article

Maybe Mr Lucas was not so bad after all ED.

Free!!

Rover V8 Alloy block good coffee table project.

Call Mal 0488 232 169 or 89532169

For the want of something better here are some motoring photos from our trip to the UK .



Here is a funny little retro vehicle we saw in Edinburgh. It is a Nissan Figaro built on a Pulsar platform by Nissan.



We found the "Heartbeat Police car" at Goathland in Yorkshire.



When we came down from Ben Nevis there were these two Healeys with QLD rego. Didn't find the owners however. On tour no doubt.





A few random shots from the
Beaulieu Motor Museum





THE OVERLANDER BADGE



Details

The members of the Motor Enthusiasts Club of Central Australia Inc. (M.E.C.C.A.) originally created this special medallion in recognition of the many Veteran, Vintage, Classic and Special Interest motor vehicles that traveled interstate to visit Alice Springs. It was appropriately named the "OVERLANDER BADGE" to commemorate the vast distances covered to reach Alice Springs. Today, the Overlander Badge is available to anyone who drives their Vintage, Veteran, Classic or Special Interest motor vehicle either to or from Alice Springs over an approved distance.

The badge can only be awarded to the nominated driver and vehicle. Vehicles are classified by year of manufacture into the four groups below. Definitions of classes and minimum approved distances for the award of the badge are:

• Veteran	Up to 1919	500 Kilometers
• Vintage	1920 to 1930	1500 Kilometers
• Classic	1931 to 1946	3000 Kilometers
• Special Interest	1947 to 30 years old	3000 Kilometers

Due to a change of supplier, there are two versions of the badge, an early version which is 100mm high by 90mm wide and the late version which are 80mm high by 68mm wide. Stocks of the early version are limited and will be supplied if requested and available, otherwise the late version will be supplied. The colours of the badge differ according to class as follows:

- Veteran – white tyre, red spokes, grey background and yellow scroll.
- Vintage – black tyre, green spokes, grey background and yellow scroll.
- Classic – black tyre, orange spokes, grey background and yellow scroll.
- Special Interest – black tyre, blue spokes, grey background and yellow scroll.

TO APPLY for the badge, complete the application form and return to your club secretary or to the M.E.C.C.A. secretary. The form is self-explanatory and must be returned to M.E.C.C.A. with \$75.00 to cover the cost of the medallion and engraving.

ALL APPLICANTS, whether arriving from interstate or originating in Alice Springs, must submit proof of completing the required road mileage prior to the award of the Overlander Badge. This is typically in the form of petrol receipts from the service stations, depots along the route.

After approval by the Overlander Badge Committee, the badge applicable to your vehicle will be duly inscribed and registered. The badge will then be posted to you or your club secretary for award, as specified. If you have completed your required miles upon ARRIVAL in Alice Springs, M.E.C.C.A. can arrange to present the medallion to you in person at a club function.





MECCA Club appreciates the help given to us by Shannons.
Please support those that support us.

