

Western 'A' Model News.



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF
THE MODEL 'A' RESTORERS CLUB (WESTERN AUSTRALIA) BRANCH INC.

November 1985

NEXT MEETING: SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 1985

TIME: 10:00 a.m. at Entertainment Centre Car Park
Wellington Street, Perth.

DESTINATION: Caversham Wildlife Park & Zoo, West Swan

There are BBQs with wood supplied and a Kiosk at the park plus lots of things to have a look at. Entry fee to the park is about \$2.50 adults and \$1.00 children - but - who knows, our Events Organiser Steve may have been able to obtain a group concession for us again. Pack up your family and lunch and we'll see you on the 17th.

OCTOBER 27TH run to Canning Dam was postponed due to inclement weather but we'll keep this venue for a later run. Apologies to those few members who were intending to brave the elements.

NEW MEMBERS:

Welcome is extended to Frederic & Hazel Grown of Bingfield Rd, Medina who have a 1930 Roadster and a 1928 1½ ton Truck. The Roadster running gear is well on the way but body requires a lot of work and parts. Frederic is looking for patterns for all the woodwork and hood bows - if any members can help out, please contact Frederic direct on 419 2165. The truck is second on the list of restoration. Hope to see you along (in your modern vehicle) on some of our runs.

*** Christmas Evening Out ***

DATE: Friday Evening - DECEMBER 20TH 1985

VENUE: BISTRO AT THE MERLIN

TIME : 7:30/8:00 p.m. (to be confirmed in December newsletter)

COST : \$24.00 per person for - Smorgasbord, Wine, Beer, Squash and Coffee, All incl.



Make sure you have your tummies primed for this Christmas outing where you can eat and eat to your heart's desire on the 101 smorgasbord items; cold and hot dishes and the desserts - scrumptious !

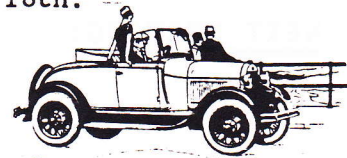
The balcony section of the Bistro has been requested so you can not only enjoy the fine fare and company of other members but have a view of the river night lights as well. This section is semi-private in that it is away from the main eating area but we would need about 45 people to "have it to ourselves".

Therefore, come on along for our end of year social outing. Country members - will you be in town - love to get to know you, and what about those city members who have been unable to attend our Sunday outings - this is a great opportunity to meet up with fellow club members in a very relaxed atmosphere.

Christmas gifts - this year's "theme" has yet to be decided so your suggestions are welcome and the outcome will be published in the December newsletter. Last year's effort was a hilarious success so please join in the fun and participate again this year.

Attached is a RESERVATION FORM and we ask those members planning to attend our outing to complete it and return it this week to our Secretary (together with your cheque) or bring it along to the November 17th meeting in order that numbers can be confirmed by Monday 18th November.

As the Bistro is heavily booked for this time of the year our 'tentative number of people attending' will only be held for us until the 18th.



SEEN AND HEARD AND OTHER THINGS!

- + That Geoff Davies and the Luca family held their own meeting at Sir James Mitchell Park on the 27th October. Thanks for the 'Minutes' report John and glad to hear you all enjoyed your lunch at Hungry Jacks !
- + That twice Ron Andrews has been offered the use of Steve Read's Tudor and twice the proposed runs have been cancelled due to bad weather. Never mind Ron - maybe third time lucky as Louise tells us that Steve is far too busy working to have such luxuries as time off for a club run - so maybe the Andrews will arrive in the Tudor -- if Steve is still on his busy streak !!
- + Bill Spencer is keeping up the restoration pace in order to have his five window coupe ready for the Barossa run next Easter.
- + And talking of Barossa - the S.A. Club advise that they have 110 entries for this event. For any interested members, information on accommodation still available at 4/10/85 can be obtained by phoning our Secretary.
- + Rotary Club of Kalamunda Charity Car Show.
Sunday 24th November 1985 10 AM to 4 PM Hartfield Park, Forrestfield.
Excellent prizes and trophies offered.
All classifications of vehicles welcome.
Write for Info: Secretary, PO Box 206, Kalamunda, 6076 or
Phone: 291 8411
(Our club will not be entering as a group but members can do so individually).

TECHNICAL TIP (from M.A.F.C. of NSW "Going Thing")

Petrol taps can leak past the shut-off valve and can also leak past the valve stem causing petrol to drip on the floor mat. The shut-off valve can be lapped without having to remove the valve from the tank. Just drain the tank and remove the valve stem. Put a small amount of compound or metal polish on the valve taper and using the shut-off handle reversed, start grinding back and forth, like grinding valves. Wipe off and inspect. Repeat until a neat fit is obtained. For leaks past the valve stem, a new graphite seal can be fitted. Alternatively the old seal can be left in place and the space around the valve stem can be filled with silicone sealant (Silicon rubber). Allow to cure over-night before filling the petrol tank. As the valve stem only turns through 90 degrees the silicone sealant can tolerate this amount of twisting.

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How a Country Boy Survived

by Jack Ralph - Alamo A's, Texas

Psychologists and psychiatrists have never settled the argument concerning heredity vs. environment — which has the greater influence over one's life? There isn't one pat answer. A poor, unfortunate individual with an hereditary birth defect can be affected every minute of the life span by that factor. On the other hand, if you have a fairly normal complement of genes and "luck it out" as I have for over sixty years, the environment probably plays a more important part.

1921 was my natal year. Therefore I grew up during the great advances in mechanical technology. Since I was a farm kid, there was a lot of machinery around to emphasize the point.

My dad, on the other hand, had grown up on the same Wisconsin farm, but during the days of horses and a lot of hard, manual labor. Not that farming wasn't hard work in the 1920's and 30's — but I don't know how many times I heard Dad remind me that I didn't know how lucky I was not to have to sit on a cultivator all day, staring at the south end of a north-bound horse!" What a difference one generation made at that time! Because of his upbringing, Dad always liked the "horse" way of doing things, but he knew he couldn't be a good competitive farmer if he clung onto old methods. He was a pretty good farmer. He had gone to the University of Wisconsin and knew his way around the old barnyard, you can bet! But luckily for me, when I got old enough to really help with the heavy stuff, he was content to let me drive the tractor, or the pickup, or the car. He always kept at least two horses and found excuses to use them, while either the hired man or I used the "modern" machinery.

My earliest recollections are my clamoring to go every time the car went any place. The car was a 1919 Model T Touring. Dad tolerated the "durn thing," but was quite overwhelmed by it, as I recall. Mother could drive it, but she couldn't start it. So when she had it out alone, she never shut it off. I'd sit in the seat impatiently waiting for her to do a little shopping, and all the time the "T" would sit there with the spark lever up, idling merrily away.

Mother was campaigning for a car with a self-starter about the time the rumors began about Henry Ford developing a whole new car. That must have been about 1925. Dad was of the opinion that we should wait and see what Henry came up with before we went off the "deep end" and bought any "modern iron." So the matter died down for about a year.

Then one day Mother turned a corner in the Model T and the right front wheel didn't turn. All the spokes shattered and we wound up in the ditch. No one was hurt, but Mom had a better talking point than before.

The "New Ford" talk was getting intense by this time and everyone knew something was up at the River Rouge, but canny old Henry wasn't letting out any secrets. Industrial secrecy was easily maintained at the Rouge as Henry had a big police force of his own. In those days a man's house (or factory) was his castle and everyone understood you didn't mess around if you valued your hide.

Anyway, Dad got the "T" fixed the next day, but Mother refused to drive it. That was a very disruptive development since Dad now had to knock off his chores every time an errand had to be run. On a farm, that can be an intolerable situation. Trips to town had to be pre-planned. You just can't leave those pregnant Holsteins any old time you please.

So there was an immediate pre-planned excursion to the

various local car dealers. In those days, no self respecting citizen would think of taking his business anywhere but to the local merchants. They were your friends and neighbors, and they wouldn't ever forgive you if you went to the "big city" to buy your car. Unfortunately, this fact of life drastically narrowed Dad's choices. The Ford dealer was there, of course. I doubt there was any town of over 500 souls that didn't have a Ford dealer. But Dad had "had it" with Model T's and the "New Ford" was still in the rumor stage.

The only other dealer in town was selling Overlands and Whippets. The Overland enjoyed a very favorable reputation in those days, and was an old established marque. The Whippet was a "baby Overland" with four cylinders instead of six, and was not a proven old-timer like the Overland. So Dad opted for this big 6-cylinder Overland sedan with three tone paint, balloon tires, a stop light, automatic windshield wipers, and bumpers. I still remember how "well equipped" it was. As I recall, at five years of age that was my first real "ego trip." I was so aware of my Sunday school friends staring at the new car the first time to church after the big purchase.

As it turned out, the Overland wasn't such a brilliant choice. I remember the top of the engine had to come off within the first year for some reason. It ran pretty well most of the time, but Dad thought that, for that much dough, it should run perfectly all the time. I'll never forget one time the two of us were out alone in it, and it seemed to be in good shape that day. Dad said slyly, "Don't ever tell your mother, but we're going to see what this bugger will do!" He stuck his foot in it and, after a good country mile, it was wound out, showing about 70 mph on the speedometer. Gravel was flying clear out into the corn fields. There wasn't a cement road anywhere in the area in those days. Dad didn't think it was running too good because the speedometer had numerals up to 75. He couldn't center that number at the pointer as he anticipated he should be able to. Otherwise, why would they put 75 on the dial? But it was a real thrill for me. We always shared our little secret and Mother never knew.

1927 was a landmark year. First, Lindbergh solo'd across the Atlantic and the world went bananas. That same month I got a new baby brother and our family went bananas. Then that fall the long-awaited Model A Ford made its debut and the world went bananas again. I was only six, but I recall the unbelievable impact the "New Ford" had on everyone. It was the only topic of conversation among the men for days and days.

Being very impressionable, I figured the Model A was the all-time answer to the world's transportation needs, at least until the "Second Coming." That opinion was shared by most everyone it seemed. Those in the market for a car were mad at the dealer because he couldn't fill orders fast enough. To try to pacify some of the customers, the dealer would hire young guys to take the train to Detroit and drive the new cars back to Wisconsin as soon as the paint was dry. That speeded up delivery about a week over rail shipment (which was the only alternative in 1927). I wouldn't have wanted one of those cars though. Word got around that the new Ford would easily do 70 mph, and pass anything on the road. Those customers taking delivery of the "drive-aways" got some well-broken-in machinery. Those high school kids weren't any different than eight years later when I got to high school.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, Mother was happy as a clam with the big Overland, even if Dad was somewhat disillusioned with the monster. The old Model T had been modified into a pickup truck. Any local blacksmith could do the job in a day or two, and was glad to do it for about \$20. They made up boxes in advance and stacked them out in back of the shops. As farmers upgraded from Model T tourings for the family car, they invariably had the modification done. That's why a lot of Model T's didn't survive.

The Model T was starting to get on Dad's nerves something awful. The bands would stick, so he had to jack up the rear wheel to start it. When you kicked it off the jack, you had better be in position to vault into the driver's seat and steer, as it was going to go and the brakes weren't any good. Not to worry; the reverse pedal worked just as well. Clearly the days of the Model T were over as far as Dad was concerned.

He wanted a Model A Pickup, but Dad was a conservative guy. There was nothing very compulsive about my old man. It was a good thing too. The Wall St. Crash came and went, and we read about all the hard times, but weren't affected much. Farm produce prices were way down, but we had no debt. Outside of a lot of grumbling, there was no real crisis. Anyway, Dad was sneaking long hungry looks at the Model A truck line.

Suddenly the plan had to change. I can't recall exactly what went wrong with the Overland, but it was serious. The odometer hadn't yet turned 20,000 — an event I had been anticipating as a great landmark; to see all the numbers change at once — I never got to see it. Dad was so ticked off at that beast that he set out to get "a good car!" For some reason he didn't want a Ford car; only a Ford truck.

After agonizing over various options and listening to his friends and relatives recite their troubles with Erskines, Chevies, Moons and I can't recall all the others, he got the idea that Pontiacs were pretty good cars. The closest Pontiac dealer was in Dubuque, Iowa. Dad was also fed up with being a nice guy, buying locally and getting junk, so to our amazement we were soon the owners of a brand new 1930 Pontiac sedan, with the first hot water heater I'd ever seen, bought in the "big city."

This was a big step up. It had four wheel brakes, and for a while we had to sharpen our reflexes, because all that stopping power took some getting used to. The thing was quiet, had a gas gauge up front instead of on the rear tank, and smelled so good. The only disadvantage was, the old Model T had to be tolerated a while longer until the milk checks could build up the cash reserves. Dad always paid cash.

About a year later the Model T was at a stage where it was not "cost effective" (to use the modern buzz words) to try to extend its life. It would be understating the situation to say it needed everything. It took courage just to drive it around the farm. In order to maintain our economic ties with the outside world of creameries, feed stores, grist mills, etc. it became inevitable to upgrade our working "rolling stock."

About that time a miracle happened, or so it seemed to me anyway. The local Ford dealer drove down one evening with the cutest Model A Pickup which he had taken in on trade. Someone needed a bigger rig and this trade-in had very low mileage. In those days, the used car business was not close to what it became in later years. Hardly anyone in that conservative, hard-working farm area ever got rid of a car or truck until it was practically worthless. Yet here was a golden opportunity, and with hardly any dickering, we owned the Model A. Finally we could hold our heads high on business trips as well as on Sundays.

To this day I remember how I loved that little Model A. It seemed to be so "purposeful." It didn't pretend to be anything but most practical, dependable piece of equipment. I was ten years old by that time and took over most of the responsibility for keeping it clean and serviced. I don't mean I did any difficult repairs, but I learned how to grease it, check the oil, tires, water, etc. I gave it a lot of "T.L.C." and

was rewarded by being taught to drive it almost immediately. Only on the ranch, of course, but what thrills!

City kids never got to do those things. It made up for the long hard days during summer vacation, when the city kids were playing and the farm kids were cutting hay, putting it in the barn, or doing the multitude of other essential chores. Wisconsin's minimum driving age was 16. Special permits were issued to farm kids at 14, however, if they had to provide their own transportation to high school. Oh boy, what a break for the farm kids! I turned 14 a week before I enrolled in high school, so I had to be proficient at the wheel. There was no time for Mom or Dad to indulge in such foolishness as carpooling or busing kids to school.

No problem. Highway law enforcement was almost unheard of in those days out in the rural environment where we lived. All summer before high school started, and while I was 13, I got my experience driving the roads around the farm and gradually worked up to the heavier traffic in town. Then, armed with my brand new permit, I would take the milk to the creamery, attend school, pick up any items needed from the farm stores, and be home by 4:30 p.m.

Quite often there would be a delay as I would note a damsel in distress, because of inclement weather or other disaster (like the prospect of walking home). Being sensitive to these crises, I did the gentlemanly thing, delivering her unharmed to her home.

Keep in mind, however, that it was 10 on a scale of 1 to 10 in that little town, at that time, at the age of 14. After all, the city kids were still stuck with bicycles.

I wonder if any of you appreciate what to me was the biggest improvement of the Model A over the Model T — the ability to start in winter. You in the sun belt wouldn't appreciate it, for natural reasons. It doesn't get cold down there. Cold means 40 below, with nothing between you and the North Pole. In Wisconsin we got a few days like that every winter, and lots of them at 20 below. The Model T will always be known as the hardest starting, most cantankerous, most frustrating vehicle ever manufactured. Even in warm weather, you had to know your car. As the sailor said about women, "They're all alike, but each one's different." When the thermometer got below freezing the normal laws of physics didn't apply to the Model T at all. Take it from me, you could pour boiling water into it, build a fire under it, take out the plugs and pour raw gas in the cylinders. If it started, you were afraid to go anyplace for fear it might not start again until spring.

Although he never acknowledged it, Henry Ford must have smarted from the criticism heaped on the Model T for that one reason. With simple, yet brilliant design, the Model A was probably the "startinest damn car" ever produced. This is not idle rhetoric. Any old Model A that would run, would start at 20 below if it had a decent battery. Any Model A in a good state of tune would kick off almost instantly, even at 40 below. There were many days in winter when the only thing moving would be Model A's. All the rural mail carriers had them. Those that had to negotiate the back and side roads had tracks on the rear drive and skis in front (Snow-Flyers).

Oddly enough, those early Pontiacs quickly developed a reputation for being hard to start. It didn't do my Dad's disposition any good when we had to get out the Model A to tow the Pontiac to get it started, but he got used to the idea.

The "good old days" to Dad meant the days of horses, and he had at least one until the day he died. The good old days to me mean the times of the Model A, and I'll have a least one until the day I die. Our environments were different and we like different things. I guess I still haven't settled the question of heredity vs. environment.

Reprinted for enjoyment of our members.

M.A.R.C. (WA) - RESERVATION FORM
CHRISTMAS SOCIAL FUNCTION

DATE: FRIDAY EVENING DECEMBER 20TH 1985
VENUE: BISTRO AT THE MERLIN
TIME : 7:30/8:00 (to be confirmed in December newsletter)
COST : \$24.00 PER PERSON for Smorgasbord, Wine, Beer, Squash & Coffee.

PLEASE RESERVE ME _____ PLACES AT \$24.00 PER PERSON FOR THE ABOVE
FUNCTION.

MY CHEQUE FOR \$ _____ IS ENCLOSED. (*Made payable to MARC (WA) Inc. please*)

MEMBER: _____

SIGNATURE: _____



RSVP ADDRESS Secretary, M.A.R.C., 9 Kilrenny Cres., Greenwood, 6024