

Western 'A' Model News.



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

MAY 1988

NEXT MEETING: Hills Run

Saturday 21st May

Assemble at La Plaza Bentley at 10 am for a run through the hills ending at Churchman's Brook.

EASTER 89 RALLY

We have booked cottages at Tone River, 42km south of Manjimup. The facility is operated by the Department of Youth, Sport & Recreation. Each cottage can accommodate 10 people and it costs \$8 per adult per night or \$4 per night for children. The units are self contained except for bed linen.

Cottages will be shared between families.

Our booking must be confirmed with the Department by May 13th. If you are interested please contact Gail Andrews, [REDACTED] by May 12th at the latest. A deposit will be required but Gail will discuss this with you on calling.

TOODYAY RUN - Sunday 1st May

Seven A Models along with several V.A.A. vehicles assembled at Midland to drive to Toodyay and be part of their festival.

We must congratulate Phillip Raccuia who drove his newly completed 1928 Coupe on its first club run. Five years of painstaking work has produced a top restoration. Well done Phillip, we look forward to having your company regularly now you are mobile.

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR MEMBERS

Now that all of our A Model adventurers (except for Kelvin) have returned. I will now be looking for members write-ups. Those of you who haven't yet put pen to paper, please do so and send articles to your editor - Alan Jeffree [REDACTED], Dianella 6062.

Many thanks to Bill & Dorothy Bennie and Bevan Sharp for the numerous interesting articles they have sent to me to pass on to members.

On to America

After a few more dramas in France (such as no brakes and more electrical problems, etc.) we shipped to Baltimore, Maryland. We stopped in Pokomoke City where a Ford dealer (Mr Carlton Massey) very kindly allowed us to use his heated workshop to re-fit the lights and radio we had removed for the sea voyage. I also attended to the daily service items such as: grease the water pump, oil distributor shaft and grease distributor cam.

Carlton Massey showed us his modern replica Model A roadster with fibreglass body and Japanese engine, etc. We also saw the now almost derelict factory where the original Model A's were assembled in town.

We crossed the impressive Chesapeake Bay bridge/tunnel and headed west just ahead of a threatening snow-bearing cold front. We stopped in South Bend where Wayne Hendon allowed us to use his heated Amoco workshop to give our Tudor a grease and general service out of the biting cold wind.

The cold front caught us in the Smokey Mountains and it was minus ten celsius (10 F) in the car - which is VERY cold when your home is sunny West Australia! The most heard comment as we drove around America was: "Did you know your steering wheel is on the wrong side?" (usually said with a wide smile). Closely followed by an incredulous: "There is no heater in that thing??"

More Problems

A very loud, intermittent heavy rattle commenced as we drove on through the cold which came and went when we were moving but did not seem related to the actual drive (although it appeared to emanate from the gearbox). I was driving and Geoff was feeling around trying to divine the cause of the deafening, expensive-sounding noise when he touched the speedo cable as the noise returned - that was the source of our problem.

We dropped the dash and gave the speedo cable a good drink of penetrating oil and lubricant. The noise gradually went away so in the meantime we used the age-old cure for a persistent noise: turned the radio up louder!

We continued on to New Orleans for a few days R & R. Met David and Pauline Nobles and their collection of cars in Lake Charles, La. Popped another 20-amp in-line fuse and put a power surge through the car which blew bulbs and fuses all over the place. Visited the Alamo and on up to Dallas.

I had been in touch with the very helpful Charlie Viosca before leaving Australia. We finally met at his home where he offered us the use of his immaculate workshop. We fitted a radiator we had purchased in Beaumont Tx, dropped the sump and fitted new gaskets in an attempt to stem the flow of oil leaking from the rear bearing seal, greased the car and attended to various small items. Charlie also balanced our 4-blade fan (and the spare) which made a noticeable difference to vibration from the engine.

That night we were royally entertained by the Dallas Ford A Club at the Tumbleweed. We met lots of great folks, were presented with gifts and made honorary members of that obviously very active and energetic Club.

The next day Bob Reagan saw us off and Charlie and wife Felecia escorted us to Fort Worth where we were met by about 20 members driving their A's who escorted us through town in a memorable convoy. Lunch was at Angelos's Great Texas Barbecue with a speech and more gifts from J. B. Moates. We shall both have fond memories of Texas for a very long time.

We had more problems compounded by snow west of Abilene and were stopping every 15 miles or so to scrape solid ice off the windscreen. At the Grand Canyon we were informed that we had two days to get to California and ship the car in order to make a flight home due to heavy flight bookings to Australia.

We drove 600 miles that day, onto Long Beach, Ca, made shipping arrangements and flew home to await arrival of the vehicle in Sydney, Australia.

Around Australia

Under the rules of the Trial we then had to drive around Australia through every mainland capital city to finish at the Sydney Opera House.

In Sydney we gave the car a good service and changed all the oil in engine, gearbox and differential with specialist Penrite oil.

We set off from Sydney at 4.30am (accompanied by a local television crew) and passed through the national capital, Canberra, on our way to Melbourne where we arrived at midnight.

Some strange noises from the motor gave us a fright. Later in the day the car lost power and was backfiring and obviously had indigestion (or something) we changed the condensor, checked the fuel filters - no better. The fault was eventually traced to a loose lump of insulation tape used to take excessive play out of the rotor on the distributor shaft.

We had started to loose coolant again all over the engine but not out of the gland this time. We traced the fault to a leak under the neck of the new radiator where coolant was escaping out of a badly soldered joint. The radiator was eventually removed and Tony Coppin of Stawell Radiators refitted the entire neck.

The next morning we set off through Adelaide toward the Nullarbor Plain heading for West Australia. We drove all day, then all night to clock up 975 miles in one 24-hour period. We continued to drive in shifts, only stopping to fill that tiny 10-gallon tank and grab some food. At midnight (local time) the next day we had covered a total of 1,761 miles in one run of some 42 hours straight.

We stopped off at Geoff's home 150 miles south of Perth and gave the car a good service. We also dropped the sump again and fitted new gaskets as the rear bearing gasket continued to leak. The car would not start and after considerable searching we traced the problem to a dead short in the wireless lower distributor plate (another modern addition!).

I drove the Tudor 150 miles up to Perth where she went on display at a major shopping center for five days and was seen by 200,000 people. We spoke to lots of interesting, and interested, people who knew (or wanted to know) about Model A's - including 82 year-old Cuthbert Morton who had been a Ford salesman in London when the 'A' was released in 1928.

Driving north up the western coast the engine again made the loud 'rattle' noise when slowing down from speed that we had first heard in Sydney - the diagnosis we arrived at was that all the oil rushed forward and fell into the sump leaving the gallery 'dry' and so the valves made quite a noise.

After freezing in America the temperature was by now a constant 40 C (105 F) with the thermometer reading 50 C on the floor around our feet!

We again travelled all night to clock up 1,000 miles in 25 and a half hours. Driving at night in most of 'outback' Australia requires constant vigilance as Kangaroos bounding across the road out of the darkness are always a possibility and a collision would have totally wiped the front off our Tudor.

To compound the problem further there are no stock fences in the north and huge cattle constantly roam across the roads in addition to smaller wildlife like rabbits and snakes, etc.

Then there are the famous 'road trains': a prime mover with trailer (basic 18-wheeler) towing an additional two trailers. A monster vehicle 50 meters (160 feet) long with 58 wheels chugging along the roads, often in a huge cloud of dust.

It all certainly makes life very interesting driving a comparatively fragile Model A Ford among 2 meter (6 feet) high bounding Kangaroos, huge, menacing cattle, all interspersed with 'road trains' travelling at up to 100 kph (60 mph).

The starter motor gave up just south of Darwin and we discovered that the front Bendix spring bolt had fallen out under the flywheel somewhere (hope it stays there). The spare bolt we had been given in Perth did not fit so we improvised with a brass bolt out of the spares box.

Heading right into the interior of Australia we started to loose power and often were battling to make 30mph. We thought we had blown a head gasket and limped into the mining town of Mount Isa in outback Queensland.

We nursed the car into Ian Brien's Ford dealership and asked if we could use a corner of his workshop for a few hours while we changed the head gasket. He readily agreed but we were there for THREE days. We removed the head and discovered that we had four badly burnt exhaust valves. New valves were air freighted up from Sydney by Alan Crouch of East Coast Antique Auto Parts.

Luckily for us Model A expert Harry Mason was in town and he did a wonderful job of seating in all the valves on Sunday afternoon. Everything was reassembled and we drove onto Brisbane on Monday morning, accompanied by some problems with the bottom seal on the oil return pipe.

More testing problems with brakes, distributor, ignition cable and so on dogged us down the east coast and we fixed each problem until we finally officially finished in Sydney on Thursday, April 21, 1988.

On our way home to Perth problems continued: the alternator was not registering any charge. After floundering around in the dark we eventually discovered that gremlins had been having a small barbecue behind the ammeter and had fried out the insulating seal under one of the posts creating a short.

The left rear wheel bearing started to complain so we nursed the Tudor into Port Pirie and attempted to remove the hub. We ultimately received welcome assistance from local vintage car enthusiasts Pat Greenfield and Frank Ventura - which was just as well as it took considerable pressure from a large wheel puller and heat from an oxy torch to remove the hub.

The end of the axle was very badly damaged and beyond temporary repair. It was also obvious that it would be foolhardy to attempt to drive the car to Perth across the desert again. We drove slowly 100 kms north to the railway station and loaded the car, and ourselves for a relaxing ride home.

So that was that, it was all over. I am now writing a book with full details of our adventures, fascinating people we met along the way, places we visited, all the problems we encountered and how we eventually solved them somehow. If you would like to be advised when the book is ready please contact me: Bevan Sharp, P.O. Box 42, Palmyra, West Australia, 6158, Australia.

10TH NATIONAL MEET - WANGARATTA - EASTER 1988

60 YEARS OF MODEL A FORD AND THE AUSTRALIAN BICENTENNIAL YEAR
(In order of priority of course!)

Another Meet has come and gone. However, plenty of happy memories for all those who attended the gathering. Approximately 150 Model A's arrived, plus quite a few Moderns and some cuckoos in the nest. Those sighted were a Morris Six (belonging to Kevin Churchill, somehow it didn't seem right without your two-tone Commercial and your beard), a Chevy Street Rod Utility (Ron McDonald's, but he did have his Model A's), and a Pontiac Roadster (owner not known to the writer, which was converted to a Ford with a placard over the spare wheel inscribed with the magic word Ford).

I am stating the obvious . saying we were the host club. All hail to our leader, salaam salaam. Goodness Kevin Wright really must have had a direct line upstairs; the weather was superb. Many thanks Kevin for your magnificent production, it was a monumental achievement for you and your merry band of workers. Have you ever thought of going into the catering business, if so, we shall give you a glowing reference.

Now the writer didn't arrive until late Thursday evening, however, my roving reporters assured me it was a well behaved and happy nibble and natter - the meeting up with old friends and the making of new ones, nobody dropping any clangers - odd - perhaps the stirrers hadn't arrived, or was it a conspiracy of silence?

Easter Friday saw the cavalcade of cars divided into two groups; destinations Glenrowen (Kelly country) or Airworld a.m. and vice versa p.m., both not to be missed as tourist attractions. Prior to departure we were welcomed by our President, Keith McKinnon, and wished a happy get together.

We had the Wangaratta Police on side (Airworld a.m. tour) and it really was a treat to sail across the Hume Highway with the police holding back the tide of Easter holiday road users. Gave us that feeling of being above mere mortals - perhaps royalty?!

The really noisy faction in our club seemed to be with the a.m. group at Airworld. In the Aviation museum there was a raucous group who kept singing "happy birthday" to Graeme Wallace. Poor Graeme, not only was he 52, but April Fools Day was the big day. He seems to get older every Meet, he was only 50 at Barossa. A fascinating collection of antique planes, a lot of us were sceptical how they got into the air even in their heyday, however, they proved their point the next afternoon at the flying display. Whoops, almost forgot there was a collection of Holden cars (Australia's largest), boo hiss, they should have been Fords, also antique bicycles (now I know where my old Malvern Star bike ended up!)

Lunch back at the High School and off to Kelly Country - us and approximately five million others, well almost. Saw the Kelly homestead and museum, however, missed out on the computerised re-encactment of the Kelly Gang's Last Stand,

which we were assured was a "show of a lifetime" by those who saw it. Murphy's Law prevailed in our case, the tickets ran out for the show we were queued up for when our turn came.

An evening barbecue meal was served at the hall and then movies (you'll never guess what one was about - old cars), then to bed to do battle the next day. A very important day for the cars entered in the concours judging and their owners.

Concours judging took place Easter Saturday morning, so a free few hours for those not involved and off to Airworld in convoy early afternoon for an antique aircraft flying display, also our lovely old Fords were an added attraction for the crowd and they did look magnificent en mass. Well those old planes certainly flew and did amazing things, aerobatics, mock battles etc. Also there were sky divers, hang gliders and a glider, no end of death defying stunts, or that's what it looked like from the ground. For crowd appeal I should say the replica of the Red Baron Triplane won and also there was a tiny plane named "the flying flea". In the museum it looked like a large model plane, but it was in the air with the best of them and must have had a pilot - very claustrophobic!

The alternative contingent went off on a wineries crawl and I was with them in spirit, the enthusiastic participants came back with glowing reports (or was it noses?) of an excellent afternoon.

A spit roast meal and then a "Bush Dance", which was great fun for young and old alike, even those who preferred to watch got plenty of exercise toe tapping and clapping along with the music. The "Bush Telegraph" band even got a self confessed non dancer, Margaret Turner, up to dance, so that speaks for itself. However, there was a remedial group who kept their two left feet throughout the dances no matter how patient the caller was. Thank you to Joan and Bob Griffiths for the organisation of the bush dance, hiring the band, prizes etc. Joan as you know was the cheer leader of the ladies group, who over the past two years raised a little money to help with the Meet. The money paid for the band, the lucky spot prizes throughout the night and the prize for the best dressed couple (fancy dress) on the Sunday night. So now you know why we flogged snowballs etc., at the bi-monthly meetings.

A few snippets heard on the bush telegraph (not to be confused with the band).

Graeme Kurzman had water pump trouble, a blow at any time, but far worse when its a case of "get out and get under" on a fun weekend. Next morning there was water again under the car. Perhaps a dog could be blamed, not the water pump, which was the first conclusion poor Graeme jumped to. However, sharp eyes saw firstly Alan Wilson then Brad Slavich leave their contributions (out of the Motel jug of course) in the early hours of dawn. Who needs enemies with friends like that.

Overheard from those who wouldn't pay the writer off -

"What was Bill doing before he married me? There are a lot of Mayberrys in the country areas". A travelling salesman perhaps?

Famous last words after Concours judging. "This will be my last judging". Ha, ha. Sign here please Frank Smith.....

"I thought I had haemorrhoids, but it was a screwdriver in my hip pocket", was actually uttered by our President, whilst sitting on a hard plank at the Air Display.

Graeme Wallace didn't have the complete monopoly on birthdays. Ron McDonald admitted to 49 (true or false Ron?) at the bush dance, at least you missed out on April Fools day.

Young Jack Sharp was present (only nearly 82 this year if he ages at the same rate as the rest of us), plus his new wife Jean. His car was on the road for Barossa, Jean for Wangaratta, what will you do for Cleveland Jack?

Seen on Ellie Wallace's windcheater top, a bare bum peeping out from under a gum leaf. Did it belong to Snugglepot or Cuddlepie?

There are a couple of hoons within our midst, they were seen passing every Model A in sight. Their excuses were "Have to get back to help at the Town Hall". The red flags got windblown and tatty. Nobody is supposed to know, but they got lost out of Beechworth. One of the drivers was heard to say "Well I wouldn't mind a speeding ticket in the A, however, even the police wouldn't believe I was speeding". We would!

Sunday saw us in cavalcade for the mandatory run for the Concours entrants. Again a magnificent sight if we had seen it, we were tail end Charlies picking up the road direction signs before anyone else did! Talking of signs - LOST ONE ENTRANCE BANNER FROM THE HIGH SCHOOL GATE. Wonder who took it? Or was it a case of "Go West Young Banner"?

Brown Bros. Winery was our first visit on the agenda; wine tasting for the dedicated in our midst, craft stalls to browse around also. A picnic lunch in the park at Beechworth, then after the inner man had been fed, it was a free afternoon to wander around historic Beechworth at our own pace.

The big night- the dinner at the Wangaratta Town Hall; approximately 370 attended. What a sight when the curtains parted on the stage. There was Henry's Lady (Brad Slavich's A) in all her glory on one side and a new 1988 red Falcon on the other, representing 60 years span since the Model A Ford was first produced in Australia. Between the two cars on a table was a lovely two tiered cake to celebrate the occasion, set off by an O.S. Ford Logo backdrop.

Keith McKinnon, our President M.C.'d the night in his pleasant able manner as always and Frank Smith presented the prizes and awards. In our midst were some overseas visitors from America and New Zealand, who were given presentation plaques to take home. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor and their wives attended the dinner and were enthusiastically applauded when a cheque was presented to help defray the expenses. The cheque was made up with monies from the Council and the bicentennial funds.

Congratulations to all those who won prizes and awards, very well deserved, no doubt your names will appear in lights elsewhere

in this newsletter. Noticed a couple of winners stock piled duplicate prizes, good for Chrissy presents.

Joan and Cameron Noal of S.A. won the best dressed couple Model A period costume prize, they made a colourful impact on stage. There were some excellent costumes, the ladies from W.A. were especially spectacular, there was a beaded number that was really beautiful, we should have had a prize for the best dressed lady also. Actually you all looked good, thank you for dressing up and coming on stage, we know a lot of time and effort went into some of the costumes. Out of time but in character with the region was a lone Ned Kelly - turned out to be Neil Phillips clanking around, another South Australian. Some outfit, however, Ned Kelly perhaps wouldn't have come to a sticky end if he had had a Model A to escape in.

Kevin and Hilda Wright were called up on stage. Honestly Kevin you didn't think you would escape that did you?

Ellie and Graeme Wallace organised the dinner and it really was a first class function. The caterer was really the part, he paced around to see all was well, looking every inch the English Butler (sorry cm). Wonder if his name was Jeeves?

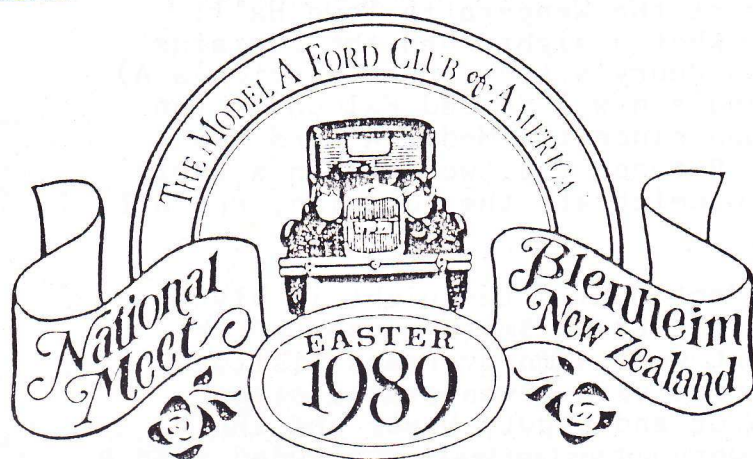
Although there was still the farewell breakfast to come, the wonderful get together was almost to an end. Time went all too quickly. We now have Cleveland to look forward to in 1990.

Monday morning the farewell breakfast, cars homeward bound in all directions and in a few cases a little extra holiday time and a well earned rest for some of the organizers and workers.

But wait - 10.00 a.m., is that another Model A coming through the gate- yes its a Ford Delivery van, none other than Kath and Terry Payne's, now there is always a late comer but this is ridiculous.

Something I would like to know. How many cups of tea, coffee and cordial were poured Maureen?

Rusty Rubble.



CANTERBURY NEW ZEALAND CHAPTER

NEW ZEALAND NATIONAL MEET EASTER '89

We received a long letter from one of our Wangaratta National Meet entrants, Bob Hoy from N.Z. He invites us to their easter '89 National Meet in Blenheim at the top of the south island of N.Z.

They have offered to find us some loan cars over there if we wish to attend.

For further information contact Bob Hoy, 24 Coniston Avenue, TE ATATU, AUCKLAND 8 N.ZEALAND (Interstate Clubs please copy)