



Gnoo Blas Classic Autofest

- Feb 16, 17

By Bob Gilliland

Another extremely good weekend that was thoroughly enjoyed by the lucky participants of this wonderful rural event. Held in the Central West town of Orange in mid February, this is an example of a classic car motor show at its best. Many people travel long distances in their classics annually just to be there – ask Col Trusler from Kempsey and his lovely lady Rhonda who drive each year to attend - this time in the luxury in their 1950 MM Low Light and, I might add, towing their campervan.

Also in attendance this year were Les Whale, Brian and Debbie Condon, Anthony Michael and Bob Gilliland from Sydney, John Ballard and Tom Deveigne from Dubbo, Michael Johnson from Molong plus Don, Wendy and Lucy Gorton from Orange, along with John Hepburn who lives just out of town. We were down in numbers this year but it was still a very enthusiastic group.



The gang at Gnoo Blas

Les and Bob travelled down on Friday morning and met up with Col, Rhonda, Brian, Debbie, Don, Wendy and Lucy on Friday night for a lovely evening dinner at the Waratah Sports Club.

Saturday morning saw us meet up with the rest of the gang at the site of the car show, Sir Jack Brabham Park, which is on the old Gnoo Blas road racing circuit, an area that is steeped in auto racing history, being the site in 1955 of the first FIA-sanctioned international race meeting in Australia. In 1960, it was the venue for the first Touring Car Championship which is now the V8 Series. Gnoo Blas also had the first 100mph lap in Australia. Sir Jack Brabham Park is in the centre of the old circuit.

The weather on the day was conducive to enjoying ourselves to the fullest, meeting up with old friends, chewing over the fat and having a ball looking over all of the beautiful cars on display and believe me, it was a great display (as usual). The country people are very fond of their old vehicles and go to a lot of trouble and expense to maintain them in their initial glory. The food stalls at the ground on the day provided some excellent tucker at most reasonable prices.





scones and coffee was had, followed by a slow and easy return back to Cook Park for a pre-ordered boxed lunch, prepared by one of the local sporting clubs. Never having been up the mountain on previous visits, Bob decided to have a look from the top. The view is spectacular – on a clear day you can see forever.

Considering the quality of cars on display during the day, we were all overjoyed when the presentations were made to the best cars - and for the second year in a row, Col Trusler won a trophy with his MM Low Light, this time for the best 1951 - 1965 car at the show (last year Colin won a trophy for the best 'up to 1950 car' – with his 1950 SMM Lowlight!). Unfortunately, we were pipped at the post and missed out on the Best Club Display award which we won last year.

Saturday night saw six of us front up at the RSL club for the next attraction of the event, the enthusiasts' dinner where we were entertained by 3 guest speakers: Vern Schuppan AM (who achieved so much in his racing career, including victory at Le Mans, that this space is not big enough to list it all), Garry Rogers of Team Volvo fame and Spencer Martin (who entered his first motor race in 1960 in a self built car at Gnoo Blas circuit and was twice victorious in the Australian Drivers' Championship). The entire evening was most interesting and entertaining.

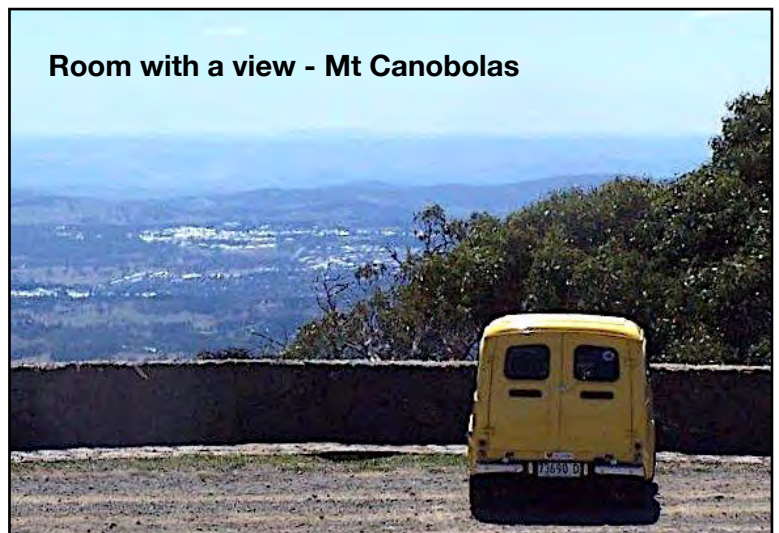
Sunday morning saw us meet at Cook Park in preparation for the obligatory run around the locale before lunch. On this occasion, we only had Les, Bob, Col, Rhonda and the Condons with their two grand-daughters. The route for the day was to take us to a tea-house at the base of the road which leads to the top of Mount Canobolas. An enjoyable morning tea of

Colin Trusler wins... again! 'Best 1951-65' car at the show, presented by Garry Rogers. Really, this was a BIG win for Colin



Les headed off to Dubbo to visit his beloved little grandchildren and the rest of us met that night for dinner at a local hotel. This brought the weekend officially to an end as we all made our way back to our beds to prepare to go our separate ways on Monday morning. The overwhelming thought was that this was another great weekend at Gnoo Blas in Orange and we sympathised with all those who couldn't make it. Better luck next year folks.

Room with a view - Mt Canobolas





Gnoo Blas

Brian Condon checks out the Morrie tip tray. "This would go well with my tow truck at Morris Minor World."



The Shining

