

A short history of the CHVC

The following information brings together information kindly supplied by Keith and Joy White, Wilson Bunton, Graeme Fry and Arthur and Muriel Murley.

The club was founded by George Denner in 1976. George owned and restored many veteran, vintage and classic cars. One car he owned was a red E Type Jaguar. George had this car for 3 months and managed 3 speeding fines in that time! He also had cars that included a 1915 Ford Tourer, a 1923 Talbot, a 1920 Oldsmobile and a 1927 Austin 7. Many of these cars were sold to local enthusiasts who then became members of the CHVC.

George Denner started the Club by placing an advertisement in the Castlemaine Mail calling for a public meeting to ascertain how much interest the idea of starting a club dedicated to Veteran, Vintage and Classic cars might generate. The response, in George's words were, "immediate and exciting."

They promoted the setting of a date for a meeting that was attended by about 30 people. This indicated that there was a huge interest in vintage and collector cars – some of which may have been tucked away in sheds and garages just waiting for such a club to be formed. The outcome of the meeting was to form a Club Committee.

As we approach the first birthday of our Club, I feel that we can view the progress to date with a sense of great satisfaction and appreciation for the work that has been done by the Foundation Committee. It will be surely acknowledged that the work of the first committee of any club is extremely demanding and often thankless as unless we are careful it is so easy to be critical of the work of the pioneers without appreciating the problems inherent in setting up any activity such as ours.

Sure, there have been some teething troubles and not a little frustration for Committee and Club members alike, but the end answer is that today, as we are about to enter our second year, we have 47 members with some 74 cars either restored or in various stages of restoration between them.

George Denner (Newsletter May 1977)

Membership fluctuated but after 4 years the Club was flourishing. In 1980, there was a membership of 85 people, comprising 75 vehicles and 4 motorcycles. On the 10th anniversary, membership was 37 people. The Club first held meetings in the conference room of the Technical School and was able to use this venue until June 1978.

The next 16 years of the Club saw meetings held in the old Church of England in Campbells Creek. Members kept the building in reasonable repair, when birds threatened to take over the roof with nest building. The roof was repaired and the more energetic members painted the interior to make it more presentable. New curtains and cushions were added to make it more comfortable.

However, from 15 July 1994, the Club could no longer use the building as it had been sold. Meetings then moved to the Campbells Creek Community Centre. The first meeting there was held on 19 August. Meetings were held there until 2015 when they moved to Campbells Creek Primary School. From January 2020 meetings have been held in the Uniting Church Hall in Castlemaine.

The first Club event was held on Sunday 30 May 1976. Cars met at the Newstead Shire Hall at 12 noon for a run to a picnic spot for a picnic and/or BBQ and then to take part in some competitive events afterwards.

Rallies and social events were a feature of the earlier years of the Club. Film nights, Christmas concerts, cricket matches against other car clubs, camp outs, balls, pub meals and pie nights in fancy dress were all features of the social side of the club. In fact, in the first 20 years since the Club was founded, there were some 156 activities attended by Club members.

Rallies were a big part of the Club, especially in the early years. Rallies to Wangaratta, Bright, Wandiligong, Mt Hotham, Beechworth, the Dandenong's and South Australia were mentionable. Geoff Pollard arranged the "C" to the Sea rally to Queenscliff and Geelong that was a 4 day event in 2009. The feature of the rallies was a 24 day super rally through Tasmania undertaken by 8 members and their cars in 1994. There were four trips to Tasmania, the last being held in 2014.

Another rally, among the many that were held by the Club, was a 4 day event to and around Swan Hill. This one was arranged by Arthur and Muriel Murley. Many others were planned around the local Castlemaine area where members investigated our own backyard.



There were also bus tours – a memorable one was to Malcolm and Tammy Fraser's farm at Nareen in Western Victoria, where the bus got stuck in his home paddock!

As a side note, we still attend rallies to Mt Franklin on a yearly basis.

Imagine the fun had at the Yabby Day and School Days Dress Up activities! Yabby days were held at Jim Ebery's farm in Sandon. Lots of hilarity and laughter.

A loved feature of the social side of the Club were the Christmas Concerts. Items such as traditional carols were followed by comedy sketches, stories, musical items and "Tales Tall and True". An item that might have been a sight to see would have been the "Heritage Belly Dancers".

There were also treasure hunts and BBQ's.



40th Anniversary dinner held at the Mount Alexander Golf Club