



Manawatu Car Club

P.O Box 542 Palmerston North
E-mail: manawatucarclub@xtra.co.nz

February
2016

Welcome

Don't look back, or you will miss what is coming up, and have we got an exciting year ahead for the members of the Manawatu Car Club.

The Club has a new President, due to Graham's retirement after 6 years in the role. (Well done). A new committee has been formed, with specific areas assigned to them to champion. The programme of events is growing all the time and we look forward to being able to host events to please most members.

Our clubrooms and members hosted Camp Quality (report within the newsletter) and we had Round 2 of the Canteen Summer Series (again report within the newsletter) at the Bruce McLaren Raceway in Taupo. It's great that our club can give back to these two great charitable organisations, and put "smiles on the dials" of their members and families faces. I say "Well done".

You'll discover changes in our newsletter in the up-coming months – We will have photos of our executive committee in each month, so you'll recognise who to approach, should you have the need to. We intend to have a "Bio on a Club Member each month", along with a Club Members car as a feature. Of course our resident scribe Russell Harris will be writing for us each month, along with a new report "From the Presidents Pen", all good stuff to look forward to.

With our membership reaching 300 members, plus another 1100 friends of the club receiving our newsletter, we want you to have a good read.

Geoff & Glenys Boyden

Track & Yak - 9th February 7pm. Speights Ale House Palmerston North

Committee Members

President. Richie Arber - 027 2900 668

Vice President. Tim Wilde - 0274 729 664

Committee:

Jeff Braid. Kerry Halligan. Jill Hogg. Trevor Weir.
Noel Beale. Jaron Olivecroma. Geoff Boyden. Greg Brown.
Danny McKenna. Aaron Walker.

Patrons:

Fordy Farland **Deceased.** Fred Parker **Deceased**
Robert Lester. Stan Turner.
Terry Rush. Russell Harris.

Life Members:

Steve Bond. Brian Davies. Dave Hayward. Sir Pat Higgins. Robert Lester. Wendy Lester. Vern Marshall. Warren Masters. Marion Prisk. Terry Rush. Murray Starnes. Trevor Weir. Alan White. Stan Turner. Raymond Bennett.

Archivists.

Terry Rush. Geoff Boyden – 0274 447 348

Editors.

Geoff & Glenys Boyden

Events over the Next Month

Auto-cross	8 th Feb
Track & Yak	9 th Feb
Public Test Day Manfield	11 th Feb
Grand Prix Test Day	12 th Feb
Grand Prix	13 th Feb
Grand Prix	14 th Feb
Committee Meeting (Clubrooms)	17 th Feb
IRC Test Day	19 th Feb
IRC Race Day	20 th Feb
IRC Race Day	21 st Feb

“From the Presidents Pen”

“I did not have sexual relations with that woman...” (Bill Clinton)- Sometimes presidents, and indeed anybody for that matter, are remembered for all the wrong reasons. So how do I want to be remembered at the end of my tenure as president? Well I wouldn't be worried if you don't remember me at all... this club, the Manawatu Car Club, it not about me or any one single person, it is about the 300 plus members who make this the great club that it is today. I am not a title's person, never have been, so while I am truly honoured and grateful to be the President I am first and foremost part of a team of over 300, and then a team of 12 (your committee) who are tasked with running this club, a team that I believe has the right people in the right seats on the right bus and we are all heading in the same direction. So while I say I won't be worried if you don't remember me, I unashamedly hope that one day you will look back and say “the years from 2016 to...??? were some of the best the club has had”.

I do have many goals I want to achieve for the club, none bigger than making the MCC the club that people want / need to belong to above all others. How do we do that, well communication is the key here, both from the committee to our members and vice versa, hence this segment of the newsletter will be a regular feature each month where I will let you know what I am thinking and what we, the committee are working on and towards. Please feel free to call me or one of your committee members and do the same, the bus has plenty of seats on it so the more people on it all going in the same direction can only but help to create something awe-inspiring. We will also work hard to bring you events that cater for nearly everyone's tastes, both on and off of the track, so that everyone has something that they can involve themselves in to make them feel more of a part of the MCC family.

Being born and bred in the mighty Manawatu Manfeild was a part of my life from a very early age, my Mum and Dad took me to every race meeting they could, so some of my best memories have been made at Manfeild, including being married to my wife Lydia on the start / finish line just on two years ago now surrounded by our many friends and family. Manfeild was also the last place where I got to spend part of the day with my Dad at a Winter Series race meeting before he passed away suddenly, so like so many of you Manfeild means a lot to me, so this is why I must continue to work closely with the Manfeild Park Trust Board and with Julie Keane and her wonderful team in the Manfeild Park Office to make sure Manfeild Park remains a place where memories such as mine can be made. The communication between the MCC and Manfeild is better than it has ever been and I will work hard to make sure this remains that way, there is no more of an “us and them” approach, we all have a common goal now, so I must say a huge thank you to Julie and the current Trust Board for helping make that great relationship what it is today.

And lastly I would like to congratulate both Russell Harris and Geoff Boyden. At the AGM Russell was accorded the honour of being made Patron of the Manawatu Car Club in recognition and appreciation for his ongoing services, support and guidance to the club, while Geoff was accorded the honour of receiving the Farland Award in recognition and appreciation for services to the club above and beyond the call of duty. Both of these men have been great mentors to me and I thank them for this, they also typify what the words “club member” mean...

So if you see me around the track or at any of our MCC events please come up and say hi, if you have a story you would like to share about our club, share it with me, as the history of this club means as much to me as the future does.

Richie Arber

Club History

The Birth of the Manawatu Car Club And Early Motor Sporting Events

Extracts from the Manawatu Car Club Inc.

July 1949

Our First Club Rooms 1949

The next most important decision to be taken in the Club was acquiring our club rooms. My father who was Patron on the club at that time owned some sixteen or so acres in Fitzroy Street, where we had already held time trials around the trotting track and gymkhanas in the centre of the oval, made available a ¼ acre section behind one of the newly built houses, at no cost to the club. We purchased a building 13x33ft long, an ex-army hut used for the training of ex-army personnel being rehabilitated for civilian life a scheme which had now ceased. The chief instructor of this course was one Laurie Jackson, also a club member of ours, and he took charge of the removal and replacement of our section in Fitzroy Street. An ideal situation. Laurie had a working bee (we still have working bees), laid the foundations and on the one day dismantled the building and re-erected it on our section. The building was in good shape, of sound construction and gave us a reasonable large room plus a kitchen come bar. At last we had a place where we could hold our committee meetings and socials. The cost of the whole operation was 140 pounds plus another 60 pounds for extras and furnishing.

On moving to Boundary Road the section reverted to the Patron who also purchased the building at the amount the club paid for it. Although we only used these club rooms for a short time they provided an incentive for future events in the club.

Toilets & Mick Page

Another interesting interlude occurred during an early ANZCC Conference in Wellington. Mick and I and our wives all stayed at the old Midland Hotel and were given rooms only a few doors from the toilets. After the conference we had a decent party in the rooms, and later in the evening Mike left the room, obviously to visit the toilets. Being in a frivolous mood I crept down to the toilets and found someone sitting on the last seat. I crept up to the door when the chain was pulled and held the door closed with my boot used as a lever on the door frame. After several violent tugs to open the door I suddenly heard Mike yell out from our room that he had just arrived back with some fish and chips. I was in a hell of a quandary having locked someone else in the toilet. On the next heave from inside I let the handle go and tore back to my room at high speed, I never did find out who I had locked in the toilet.

To be continued.

ATTENTION! Track & Yak ATTENTION

Time: 7pm to 9pm

Date: Tuesday 9th February 2016.

Place: Speights Ale House, Grey Street

Palmerston North

Bring your wife, partner, or friend and enjoy a social occasion a chat and catch up on all the news.

Next Month's Track & Yak will be on the 8th March



Suppliers of Paint to the MCC

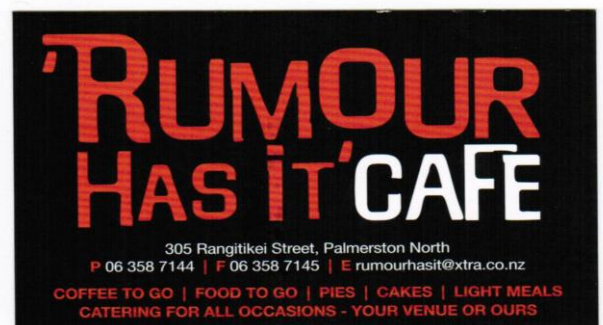
maxtarr

ELECTRICAL

**Doing all the Electrical Work For the
Manawatu Car Club**



Suppliers of Port-a-Loos to the Winter Series.



MCC Palmy Members favourite Café meeting place

Clubrooms

It was great to hold again the AGM in the Clubrooms, particularly now that the Snug is completed. The T.V. needs to be mounted on a swivel bracket and then it's comfort plus.

Our 35 new chairs will arrive this month, giving us a total of 110 chairs to use, saving us from hiring chairs for functions.

The rubbish at the side of the shed has been dumped, weeds sprayed.

We have marked out for the new timber fence to go in along with the new retaining wall, to cover the ugly sight of the tyre wall. This should be undertaken in the next 4 to 6 weeks.

We also want to have a Club working bee on the 27th February.

Welcome to New MCC Members December – January 2016

Micheal DeMalmache	Palmerston North
Julie DeMalmanche	Palmerston North
Adrian DeMalmanche	Palmerston North
Geoffrey Hintz	Feilding

Working Bee

Saturday 27th February.

8.30am to 12.30pm.

Fencing – Wall painting – Clearing out the back store room.

Please lend a hand.

Contact: Geoff Boyden 0274-447-348



Where the MCC go for all Event Equipment Hire

“Camp Quality”

Thursday the 21st January was truly a humbling day for all who were involved in taking the children from Camp Quality, who were in the Manawatu area for a weeklong camp, for a ride around the Manfeild Back Track and then out onto the main roads around the Feilding area. Richard Ransom, MCC and Lions Club (who hosted the day) member approached the MCC Committee to ask if we would donate the use of the MCC Clubrooms for the day so that the Lions Club could use them to host children from the Camp Quality organization, of course the answer to this was yes. Richard is also a member of the Classic Car Breakfast Club, run by our very own newsletter editors Geoff & Glenys Boyden, so at one of the CCBC runs Richard asked for about 10 people to volunteer their time and their cars to take the children for rides, 10 of us quickly accepted his request.

On the day there were over 60 children, each together with their one on one care-givers and with other staff / organisers there were around 160 people that filled the clubrooms grounds for the morning briefing of the day's events. The children were split into two groups, one group went off to do other things (mini golf, small bore rifle shooting) while the other group stayed at the clubrooms and chose to either ride in a truck, fire engine, classic / sports car or on a motorbike and / or sidecar. I truly do not know who had more fun, the drivers of the vehicles or the passengers; needless to say both had huge smiles on their faces right throughout the morning. After an awesome lunch, that was served in the MCC clubrooms, the groups swapped over and the fun and smiles continued until late afternoon.



Morning Briefing before the rides started



Lunch in the clubrooms

The humbling part, seeing children from the ages of 7 to 13 who are dealing with the effects of having cancer forget all about the horrible disease that has invaded their bodies and just smile and laugh and enjoy the day... it certainly makes you think...

I knew of the name Camp Quality but did not know anything further than that so the one very interesting fact that I learnt while taking one of the children and their care-giver for a ride was that no other family members are allowed to attend the weeklong Camp, the children are paired up with volunteers who register on the Camp Quality website. This is a purposely done thing to give both the families of these children, and the children themselves, time away from each other to relax; it also is the one week of the year that the children make decisions for themselves rather than being told what to do.



Huge smiles all round...

So if you have nothing to do during the last part of January each year, jump on the Camp Quality website www.campquality.org.nz and register to become a care-giver for your region, I am sure they will appreciate your help, or feel free to donate to this worthy cause through their website.

Richie Arber



CanTeen Summer Series Round 2 Report

For the second time the Manawatu Car Club partnered with the Taupo Car Club to run a joint club race meeting on the weekend of the 16th and 17th of January on the newly re-named Bruce McLaren Motorsport Park.

There were only 44 entries, which was similar to Round 1 and we are pretty sure we know why. Due to an error on both our parts we thought Monday the 17th was Wellington Anniversary Day, which would have suited more of our members. We have definitely booked the correct date for 2017.

TCC was hosting the BMW Series, SS2000 and K-Sports Sedans on Saturday. The CanTeen Summer Series classes ran on Sunday, with the BMWs running a race each for their four classes spread in between.

With the temperature reaching high 20s in the shade and lord knows how hot inside the race cars, it was going to be a challenging day for anyone in the driver's seat. Thunderstorms were forecast for late afternoon but nobody wanted that.

Attrition took hold of the Classics Cup class with 11 qualifying, nine finishing race 1, eight finishing race 2 and just six crossing the line in race 3. Jack Blakie, Mini Clubman and Russell Gregg, Escort Mk2 both cried enough as the heat got to them, the drivers that is. Geoff Boyden, BMW E36 took the Championship lead from Finian Foote, Datsun 1600, with Leighton Lancaster, Escort RS 2000 now third overall.

RS Cup had seven qualify, including Paul and Chris Greaney from Hawkes Bay in their 2K Cup Civics. Oliver Edmond, Alfa 156 had two wins and a third to win the round and take a healthy lead in the Championship. Anthony Bell, Mini Cooper won the handicap and now sits in second place. Greg Browne drops to third in the points despite being towed in after race 3 after a conrod ventilated the block in the Corolla. Wife Teresa said 'Great! Can we turn it into a barbeque now?' The word is it will be fixed for Round 3...

Ten SF Cup cars lined up for Race 1. Mike Marsh's Sierra Sapphire was having teething issues with its pneumatic clutch and spun off at turn 1. He said 'it's a bit hard trying to work all three pedals with only one leg, so the air-clutch will help heaps once it's working properly!' Matt Smith had a dream weekend with two wins and a fourth to help make up for a disastrous Round 1. There is a bit of a log-jam forming behind Kolin Yannakis, Volvo 850 in the lead with Graeme Bretherton, Commodore second and Simon Manthel, who won the handicap in his Corolla FXGT 20v, third.

Only two GT Cup cars fronted so Rob Trubshaw, Commodore LS3 and Ethan Coleman, Mini Sports Sedan both joined the IB Cup at the front of the grid. Rob Trubshaw had a moment when he overshot the grid box and was waved back into position. He was still in reverse gear when the lights went out and promptly backed up the grid! Everyone missed him and he recovered from last place to a face-saving fourth at the flag. Karl Rastrick ran away with Race 1 in his Mitsubishi Evo and followed Ethan Coleman to second place in Race 2. Leo Van Berkel, Falcon Taxi had a popular win over fellow Napier Taxi Rival Kerry Tong in the handicap. Kerry Tong leads the points over Dave Thomsen, Mirage Turbo and Leo Van Berkel.

The threatened thunderstorms never happened although the road was pretty wet on the drive home. Even with low numbers everyone enjoyed their racing. Big thanks to the Taupo Car Club for inviting us to play and see you next year on Wellington Anniversary Weekend.

Jeff Braid



THIS time in a week we here at Manfeild will be running at full speed – heading into what is effectively a four-day New Zealand Grand Prix weekend!

We're heading into the biggest domestic circuit motor-racing meeting New Zealand hosts in good spirits. The venue is looking extra-smart with a great-looking new surface and also freshly-installed state-of-the-art race lights, the premier category – the NZGP-chasing Toyota Racing Series – looks like it is heading for a cliff-hanger conclusion and all the support series are also providing stunning racing.

On top of this, our confidence is bolstered by December having been another profitable month for the venue. More? Following on from having signed off on its business plan, the Manfeild Park Trust Board has now met to turn its attention to a strategic planning strategy discussion that, I'm confident, will deliver even more positive news in due course.

The sign-off of a blueprint for the future that, in particular, resolves our thinking about the short-term goals and also relates to five key areas – finance, assets and information, public stakeholding, facility usage and future event potentials – and also provides clarity on our debt repayment is, of course, of high interest to our supporters and stakeholders. I expect more information to be made public in due course.

From Thursday Manfeild begins an intense 'horsepower' period, starting with the equine kind; the Bates New Zealand Dressage Championship has attracted an exceptional turnout. The count of 150 riders and 180 horses for competition beginning on February 4 represents a 35 percent increase in entries over the 2015 event.

Increased interest has been spurred by this being a qualifier for the next Olympics, at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in August and the Paralympics that follow. The Bates event also immerses the Para Dressage National Championships, with Paralympic hopefuls among the 11 combinations entered.

A new format splitting the championship into open and amateur titles has also been welcomed.

Chief among favourites are Palmerston North's Julie Brougham, on Vom Feinsten, who is New Zealand's top FEI Olympic-rated competitor.

Our focus is also on the NZGP weekend which culminates with a fight for the most coveted title in domestic motor-racing. The TRS series has so far provided fantastic racing and reminded why some of the overseas' drivers are attracting intense international media attention.

That spotlight also fixes on the New Zealand drivers, who have been holding their own against visiting racers who, in some cases, already have their career paths too much higher levels of the sport already mapped out.

If you haven't bought them already tickets are on sale via the TicketDirect website, www.ticketdirect.co.nz.

For Manfeild, of course, the action starts on Friday night, with our annual Fireworks' Spectacular, our family-tailored fun activity that has become an established local ingredient.

A night that culminates with a 15-minute mega-blast showcase in the sky allows the region to come and celebrate having such a high-status race in their backyard and get an informal sense of what the motorsport big time is all about. A 6pm start provides opportunity to meet and greet the TRS drivers who this year hail from 13 countries, plus other competitors.

There's a chance to enjoy live music and sideshows, watch displays and, of course, those on a children's ticket get to enjoy a free ice cream.

It'll also be a night to remember for one lucky family who've won the chance to enjoy the fireworks' from a unique vantage point: The passenger seat of a 'Heli Solutions' helicopter – similar to the model that features in the latest James Bond movie.

The winner of the once-in-a-lifetime chopper ride will have been drawn from entrants to a competition run on the Manfeild Facebook page. Check that page out, also, for opportunities to win entry to the Friday night activities.

Earlier in the evening the helicopter will provide one of the two aerial displays on the programme. The other is from a World War II Grumman Avenger torpedo bomber, flown in from its home at Ohakea air base, where it forms part of the collection owned by local enthusiast Brendon Deere.

The sight and sound of a warbird is always special and, without giving too much away, I can tell you that another special aircraft in Brendon's 'air force' will also have a crowd-pleasing role to play on race day in the immediate build-up to the NZGP.

The programme aims to deliver as a performance stage for local talent in all sorts of aspects. To that end there's a band and lots of staged activity, this year with a new ingredient of a choreographed shadow-dance routine by performers from the Dean McKerras School of Dance, presented on a pair of giant screens facing the audience.

On-circuit activity is also part and parcel of the night; one draw continuing this year is a chance to take a lap of the circuit in a fleet of fabulous cars in return for a donation to charity. All will be made clear on the night!

Sideshow alley is always popular, with two big thrill rides – the Hurricane and the Roundup – set to get pulses racing. The concept of ending the night on a bang never disappoints. Our fireworks display, run by the Kairanga Lions' Club, will see thousands of dollars of the best pyrotechnics available lighting up, and sending blast waves around, the region.

We have priced the occasion to appeal to families (more details about this can be found on the Manfeild website, www.Manfeild.co.nz) and our entertainment is tailored for kids of all ages. So be sure to come along.

On a personal note I would like to congratulate Richie Arber on his recent appointment as President of the Manawatu Car Club. We look forward to continuing the growth of our relationship between the Trust and the Car Club and collectively progressing future Manfeild projects.

Julie Keane
Chief Executive Officer

**The 61st
NEW ZEALAND
GRAND PRIX**
A Festival of Motorsport
13-14 February 2016, Manfeild Park

Featuring:

- The New Zealand Grand Prix - the Toyota Racing Series Finale
- BNT NZ Touring Cars
- Also - NZ Formula 5000, Toyota Finance TR86, UDC V8 Utes, Ssangyong Utes, Formula First and Formula Ford

Come and enjoy a thrilling weekend of Motorsport at Manfeild
Tickets available at the gate and from www.ticketdirect.co.nz

MotorSport New Zealand TOYOTA Racing Series MANFEILD

VOLUNTEER OFFICIALS RECOGNISED

Irrespective of the event sport, volunteers are a vital element, in simple terms, without these people events simply wouldn't or couldn't happen.

Whether it's the smallest local event or the Olympic Games or the Football World Cup, the V-Force plays a vital role, and there are many instances when volunteer officials/workers outnumber the actual competitors.

Looking at motorsport, both circuit racing and rallying, the majority of the V-Force are required to do their allocated job irrespective of the weather, they also have great responsibility to ensure both the successful running of the event and most importantly, competitor safety. They are amateurs who are required to act as professionals, their reward is to reflect on a job well done, mate working with mate to make it happen - as an additional bonus there are many instances when life-long friendships have been established.

Disappointingly we seem to live in a world where brickbats are plentiful but bouquets are rare, so full marks to the organisers of the MG Car Club's 2015 Classic Meeting to include a 30th Anniversary Dinner that placed the major focus on the V-Force.

The Manawatu Car Club rooms were the perfect venue for a very informal and relaxed occasion with catering courtesy of Andrew Hoffman's Tasty Spit Roast.

Without doubt the highlight of the night was the presentation of plaques from the MG Car Club Wellington Centre recognising five long standing volunteer officials; three are members of the Manawatu Car Club.

JILL COWHAM (Flag Marshall) - *FOR EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE AS A VOLUNTEER AND TO CLASSIC RACING IN NEW ZEALAND.*

WARWICK LAW (Flag Marshall) - *FOR EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE AS A VOLUNTEER FLAG MARSHALL AND TO CLASSIC RACING IN NEW ZEALAND.*

TREVOR GOULD (Crash Rescue) - *FOR EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE AS A VOLUNTEER AND TO CLASSIC CAR RACING IN NEW ZEALAND.*

Also recognised were Gordon Gandy and John Rapley, their plaques read - *"FOR EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE TO THE WELLINGTON CENTRE AND MOTORSPORT FOR YOUR VOLUNTARY STEWARDING AND TO CLASSIC RACING IN NEW ZEALAND"*

Both men officiated at the inaugural meeting and have enjoyed a long association with the event. John is best known for racing a rare 1962 Brabham BT2 Formula Junior (only 11 cars built) in the Historic Single Seaters, obviously a man who has busy days both on and off the track.

We must also be mindful that volunteers do age like everyone else, so "recruiting" is an ongoing requirement to ensure continuity and maintaining the high level of friendly efficiency for which Manfeild and the Manawatu Car Club enjoys an envied reputation.

For any volunteer it's important to be acknowledged, so to all members of motorsport's V-Force - organisers, secretariats, officials, crash rescue, timekeepers, scrutineers, flag marshals, grid marshals, road block marshals, competitor relations people, gate keepers, first aiders, and the many others not in the front line, including the important people in the kitchen - THANK YOU...



Trevor Gould receiving his plaque from MG Race Committee member Malcolm Glenn. Trevor was part of the crew at the inaugural MC Classic Meeting in 1986.

Photo by Craig Swift

MCC AutoCross Funday

Monday 8th Feb 2016



**Fun day skidding at Barber road, Shannon
at Ian 'Jack-Jack' Easton's farm
on the Monday of Waitangi Weekend.
Road tyres only. Road cars, race cars,
BOS cars to Schedule A.**

**Fire extinguishers recommended but not essential.
Helmets and clean full length cotton overalls.**

**Clubsport Basic event so ...
anybody over 12 years old can have a go!**

only...

\$30
per driver

**Sign in from 8.00am,
Bring your own food and drink.
and good attitude !!!**

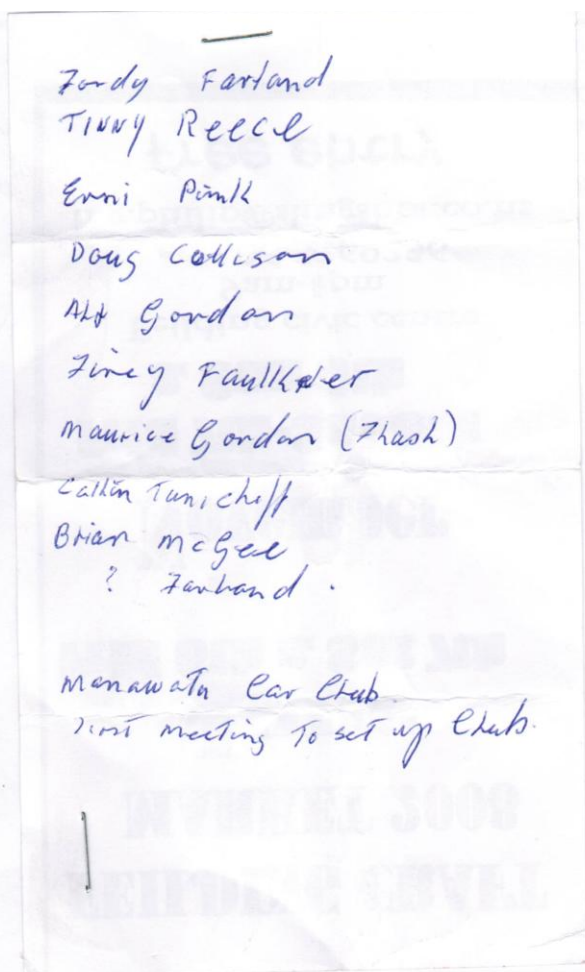
Track will be over 1.5kms in length!!

Original Inaugural Member Discovered

By sheer chance and because the member (Danny McKenna) had a Manawatu Car Club sticker on his vehicle, he was approached by a very elderly gentleman, Maurice (Flash) Gordon, who informed Danny that he attended the Inaugural meeting of the Manawatu Car Club, at Fordy Farland home back in 1947.

His memory is a little slow, but he did bring back into Danny a handwritten note of members he could recall from back in that period of the club.

Names "Flash" could remember from
1947



It would be good to catch up with "Flash" for a coffee and a chat plus a photo opportunity.

We just need a person to organise it.

Race Licences

We now have 3 new licence examiners within the club, these people are:

Richie Arber	027 497 5675
Danny McKenna	027 240 1291
Jeff Braid	027 477 3337

and

Dennis Martin	06 355 4055
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who is also a licence examiner and has been for a number of years.

For your race licence or renewal please contact any one of these MCC members who are keen to get you out on the track.

BRENDON HARTLEY - OUR WORLD CHAMPION

PART ONE

For the first time in its 40 year history the Manawatu Car Club has a world motor racing champion, a home grown talent who has reached the pinnacle in sports car racing.

Brendon Hartley is also in a very elite group as only the third New Zealand driver to win a Federation Internationale l'Automobile (FIA) World Championship - Denny Hulme won the Formula One title in 1967 driving a Brabham Repco and in 2003 Wade Cunningham claimed the CIK-FIA Karting Championship at Samo in Italy.

In recognising the achievement of Brendon, looking at his motor sport career tells an extraordinary story about an extraordinary talent. At six years of age he was presented with his first trophy in the modest clubrooms at the Manawatu Kart Club track, fast forward 20 years he was presented with a World Endurance Championship Trophy at the 2015 FIA Prize-giving at the famous Le Lido Theatre in Paris.

It's a story of following a dream and strong self-belief, a story of dedication along a road of highs and lows for a young man with huge natural talent, who had the full support of his family and later, a small group of businessmen with confidence in what he could achieve given the opportunity.

From those early days in a Cadet Class kart when he won four Gold Star titles Brendon's career has many milestones.

In 2003 he graduated from karts to Formula First and quickly to Formula Ford, two years later he won the inaugural Toyota Racing Series (TRS) race at the Timaru circuit and two further rounds during the season. In 2006, and while still a student at Palmerston North Boys High School, Brendon was across the other side of the world in the Red Bull Junior Programme competing in the Formula Renault 2.0 Eurocup, a title he won the following year with 5 wins and 13 podium placings.

That championship resulted in a switch to the highly competitive British Formula 3 when he claimed 5 wins and a stunning 3rd placing in the famous Macau Grand Prix after starting 20th on the grid. This race on the tight and narrow street circuit where overtaking is extremely difficult has been an important stepping stone for many of the top drivers seeking to advance their careers.

The game was upped again in 2009, starting with the Formula 3 Euro Series before moving onto the bigger and faster World Series by Renault 3.5 single-seaters, then at just 20 years of age he was signed as a Red Bull Formula One test driver, proving that dreams can come true.

The following season brought promotion to Red Bull/Toro Rosso Formula One reserve driver, together with racing in both GP2 and World Series by Renault 3.5 to maintain the required levels of both physical and mental fitness - it was also a year of huge disappointment when dropped from the Red Bull F1 programme and forced to continue in the two lesser categories.

It was possibly the most character building period of his life, but with the strong support of long-time partner Sarah Wilson, his family and key advisors Brendon rebuilt his career during 2012 and 2013.

His exceptional technical ability was recognised by the Petronas AMG Mercedes Formula One team who signed him in the critical role of simulator development driver. On the track there was racing at the wheel of a Murphy Prototype sports car, highlighted by the Irish-based team's Oreca 3 Nissan finishing 3rd in the LMP2 class in both the European Le Mans Series and FIA World Endurance Championship in the first year.

Closer to home, 2013 saw Brendon compete in the Bathurst 12 hour race in an Audi R8, he was in the top six with little more than 30 minutes to the finish but damaged suspension forced the withdrawal of the car, Mount Panorama's concrete walls are very unforgiving.

Along the journey there were invitations to drive a diverse range of exotic, historic (and irreplaceable) racing cars at sponsor functions and events like the Goodwood Festival - it rarely gets better than that.

With the Murphy team his 2013 CV included the Le Mans (6th place LMP2) and Daytona 24 hour races. There were wins in the European Le Mans and Grand-Am Rolex Series - collectively, they were results that helped lead to the door of the legendary Porsche sports car team in Germany.

Proving that there is life after Formula One, the guitar playing and mountain biking kiwi was signed as a factory Porsche works driver and named with the more experienced Mark Webber and Timo Bernhard to drive their new 919 Hybrid sports car, Brendon would prove to be the perfect fit in the line-up.

The trio would be driving the most complex competition vehicle ever built, more technically advanced than any car in motorsport history. A 2-litre direct injected turbocharged V-4 engine powered the rear wheels while the front wheels are driven by a Kinetic Energy Recovery System (KERS) system, one of three different energy recovery systems that added to the car's complexity.

In its debut season in the 2014 FIA World Endurance Championship, the car placed 3rd in the first round at Silverstone and again at Fuji and Bahrain. It was leading the Le Mans 24 hour race with less than 2 hours to go before it was forced out with a powertrain problem. However, the overall analysis of the racing programme confirmed there was the potential to end the domination of Toyota and Audi.

2015 would be game on between the biggest players in the fourth year of the World Endurance Championship. The Porsche design and engineering team would give their drivers a heavily revised title challenger that featured 85-90% new parts and one thousand horsepower ...

STOP PRESS

Both kiwi Porsche factory drivers had Top 10 finishes in the Rolex Daytona 24 Hour race on 30/31 January.

Brendon Hartley's Ford Ecoboost Riley Prototype finished 5th, 11 laps behind the winners, while the Earl Bamber Porsche 911 RSR crossed the line in 9th place and 3rd in the GTLM class, 14 laps down.

Defending champions Scott Dixon, Tony Kanaan, Kyle Larsen and Jamie McMurray in the sister Ford Ecoboost Riley were classified 13th, 28 laps behind the first three finishers who were on the same lap. A Honda HPD Ligier took the checker ahead of two Chevrolet Corvettes.

Qualifying was held in atrocious weather which made for an interesting grid. The Bamber car shared the front row with the other Porsche Team North America RSR, well back in the pack were the two Chip Ganassi Racing Ford Rileys, the Hartley # 01 car was in 26th position with Dixon's # 02 six slots further back.

Follow-up story next month...

Russell Harris



MANFEILD - INNOVATORS, NOT IMITATORS

Since the circuit opened more than 40 years ago Manfeild has been regarded as an innovator in New Zealand motorsport, thanks to a great deal of imaginative thinking.

Their latest idea was radical but brilliant in its concept; promote the 2016 New Zealand Grand Prix meeting at a venue that is very different from anything done in this country before, Palmerston North Airport.

Appropriately named the “Flying 400”, the one hour event would take place on the airport’s runway featuring vehicles from each of the categories at the GP meeting together with a limited number of exotic cars. Each would have several individual timed runs against the clock with the terminal velocity also recorded, comparisons would make interesting reading.

Spectator numbers would be limited with access off Richardson’s Line and there would be no disruption to the normal airport activities. The enthusiasm from everyone approached to be involved was amazing; sadly the idea would remain just that thanks to health and safety concerns following a risk assessment report.

A very disappointing outcome but full marks to enthusiastic Manfeild CEO Julie Keane and her team - keep the ideas coming.

Looking back, the older club members will recall the major kart meetings held in Palmerston North’s Square and the section of Broadway from Rangitikei Street down to the Regent Theatre. Big fields, big crowds, with a truck load of straw bales in strategic places for safety purposes, and Palmy was on national television with full delayed coverage.

Move into this century when the Toyota Racing Series (TRS) was born in 2005. What better place to showcase the new car than downtown Palmerston North on peak time live radio early in the morning when people were either travelling to or preparing for work.

With the start/finish outside Manawatu Toyota the “circuit” was down Taonui Street, into Cuba Street, onto Rangitikei Street and back into Walding Street - no full road closures, hi-viz cones lined the route, officials on each corner to control pedestrians/traffic and a Police car setting the pace!!

There were two TRS cars involved in the “demonstration”, one driven by a young teenager.

His name... Brendon Hartley.

Those were the days...

Russell Harris



MG CLASSIC MEETING REFLECTIONS

The 30th running of the MG Classic at Manfeild on the second weekend of November was memorable in many respects.

To celebrate the occasion the organising MG Motor Racing Committee of the MG Club (Wellington) staged its most ambitious weekend with practice on the Friday and two full days of competition with a record 50 races on the programme, a big contrast to their inaugural event in 1986 that was a one-dayer with 16 races scheduled including a unique novelty event. Would you believe a 30 minute Relay Teams Race with a Le Mans start!!

There were three drivers who participated in the 1986 meeting - Don McLean was driving the same Datsun 260Z, Andrew Fox had gone from a 1970 5.3 litre V8 Aston Martin DBS to a more modest 1997 1.8 litre MG F, while Tony Roberts went in the opposite direction by switching from an Alfa Romeo 1750 GTV to a thundership in the form of a McLaren M10A Formula 5000 - a common denominator was the fact both cars were of 1969 vintage!!

There were more than 300 competitors racing over 8 classes, cars and drivers of all ages, in the case of the former ranging from Alan Blundell's 1936 Jaguar SS to the wickedly fast 2015 Juno sports car driven by David Glasson. There was everything you could imagine in between the years of these two cars and it seemed most appropriate that the Jaguar SS won the Sybil Lupp Memorial Invitation event for British sports and saloon cars.

Talking silverware, Peter Edmond took the chequered flag to claim the Mike Booth Memorial European Handicap, the familiar Volvo S40 crossed the line ahead of a pair of BMW's and the very fast finishing Porsche 964 RS of Andrew Whittaker.

The meeting really was a numbers game - the Historic Single-seaters drew the biggest entry for many years with nearly 30 monopostos facing the starter, the meeting started with 8 Formula 5000s, around 30 Allcomer Saloons and a similar number of Central Muscle Cars, 20 Sports Cars, 19 Pre-65 Saloons, countless Beemers were contesting the two BMW categories and 20 plus Historic Group A Touring Cars that were appearing at Manfeild for the first time, most from the South Island.

Spare a thought for Pit Lane announcer Jeff Braid who had to choose someone from each race to receive a bottle of bubbly and Mothers Car care products for their efforts, 50 races, 50 different recipients and there had to be a good reason for the selection!!

30 years previously the Exotic Sports Car field included five Ferraris, pairs of 427 Almac Cobras, XJS Jaguars and Sunbeam Tiger V8's, along with names like Morgan, Lotus, Porsche and Alfa Romeo. There was a very different look to the grid in 2015 with none of those famous names, replaced by the new generation of lightweight racers with high power-to-weight ratios together with the brutish rumbling CanAm McLarens of Andrew Robertson and Warwick Mortimer - in the case of the latter you measured his passing with both decibel metre and Richter Scale readings.

Not surprisingly Kenny Smith took out all three Formula 5000 races in the La Valise Travel Lola T332, the sight and sound of these cars remains unique in motorsport and long may they continue to race. For reasons unknown at the time the F5000 drivers requested an "additional" race on the Saturday afternoon which was duly granted. Someone in their group obviously had close contact with the weathers gods and received some inside information because the wet Sunday afternoon meant the cars stayed indoors - it also meant that the punters still got their promised 50 races!!

To many, the stars of the weekend were the eagerly anticipated of the Historic Group A Touring Cars, a relatively new category that is quickly gaining serious momentum, particularly on the south side of Cook Strait. Thanks to the massive efforts of Palmerston North award-winning builder Warren Dunn they came, they saw and they conquered. The Manfeild grid had never looked so colourful with the cars required to wear appropriate period original liveries, and they went as well as they looked.

In visual terms the stand-out was the extraordinary ex Hans Heyer 1971 Zakspeed Ford Escort of Gary Wilkinson that won the first of the four races. Enthusiasts would have recognised the Schnitzer BMW M3's and the names of Pirro and Ravaglia, the Listerine sponsored BMW318i that won on the Wellington Waterfront in 1994 driven by

Englishman Tim Harvey, the TWR Jaguar XJS carrying the names of Denny Hulme and Armin Hahne, the Tic Tac BMW M3 with the name A Berg on the side windows, the Canadian once raced at Manfeild driving a Formula Pacific car. BMW's dominated the entry, there were two Ford Sierra Cosworths, two Jaguar XJS V12s and single examples of the Nissan Skyline GTR and VL Walkinshaw Holden Commodore - the white # 11 Jaguar XJS driven by Angus Fogg was the actual car of Alan Prince and Mike Hourigan that ran in the very first Nissan Mobil 500 back in 1986.

Talking nostalgia, Geoff Boyden entered into the retro spirit by presenting his BMW 325i in the CiBiEmme Castrol livery of Fabrizio de Simone who competed with some success in the Italian Super Touring Championship in a similar car in the late nineties. During his career the Italian driver had been a world karting champion and was the test driver for the Jordan Formula One team in 1996.

The most popular win of the weekend??

It had to be Grant Dalton in the "Tribute to Red Dawson" Marlboro Chev Camaro. In race 46 the Americas Cup yachtie scored his first Central Muscle Car victory, no doubt a special moment in his motor racing career. He certainly deserved a bottle of bubbly for reviving the memory of the popular Dawson whose career ended in a massive crash at Manfeild in 1976.

It has been said that "variety is the spice of life" and the MG Classic certainly reminds you of those words. David v Goliaths with Mini v Ford Thunderbird, Trans-Atlantic with Chevrolet Bel Air Sport Coupe v Vauxhall Velox PB, exotic V8s with Shelby Mustang v Alfa Romeo Montreal v Ford Capri Perana and maybe best of all, the annual 1950's "Battle of Britain". Humber 80 v Jowett Jupiter v MG Magnette at the back of the pack, wheel-to-wheel with their "pilots" enjoying every moment, bloody marvellous stuff and what the spirit of the meeting is all about.

As always there were a number of stand-out cars that were a little different, one with a roof and one without. In the historic single-seaters the most talked about racer was the 1959 Elva Formula Junior of Walter Findlay. The front-engine car is powered by a 1098cc three-cylinder DKW two-stroke engine that produces a unique exhaust note accompanied by copious amounts of smoke. However, this is offset by the glorious smell of the Castrol R oil that lubricates the rotating parts, it should be bottled as a real blokes after-shave!!

On display only was a typical New Zealand racer that would have evoked memories for many of the older generation and made the younger gaze in astonishment. The Normac Special 3 was the third car designed and built by Reg McCutcheon, an amalgamation of components from Chevrolet, Ford, Buick and Jaguar propelled by a 1946 3.8 litre 6-cylinder Chevrolet engine with a cross-flow cylinder head and Hilborn fuel injection. The car was built in 1957 and appeared the following year, making its debut at the NZ Grand Prix at Ardmore, also competing at Ohakea and Levin. It was eventually dismantled before being acquired in the mid-sixties and much later underwent a rebuild over a 15 year period, the car is a true blast from the past and like so many ingenious kiwi-inspired "specials" is an important part of our country's motorsport heritage. Perhaps one of the most intriguing facts of the Normac story is that the cars were built in the garage/service station that McCutcheon owned in Norsewood in Central Hawkes Bay.

The other car creating more than its share of interest is a "work-in-progress" project that appeared among the Classics, a replica BMW CSL "Batmobile" that's owned, trained and driven by Jonathan Hogg. Introduced in 1972, the CSL is widely regarded as one of the most desirable classic cars of all time, and for very good reason. The Hogg car is definitely worthy of a separate story in the future.

For those with a taste for the exotic the Wellington Ferrari Owners Club provided eleven of Maranello's finest for the Sunday Charity Rides supporting the Cancer Society, over the years these rides have raised in excess of \$100,000 and have been a popular and integral part of the programme.

The 30th MG Classic certainly had something for everyone...

Russell Harris

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