

Manawatu Car Club Inc

MAGAZINE

MAY 2018



Something for Everyone

EDITORSPEAK ...

Sadly we must pay our respects this month to one of the dynamic duo of Manfeild, Wendy Lester, who passed away last month. Julie Keane has written a superb tribute, so I won't steal her thunder, other than to say that the Club owes Wendy a huge debt.

If Rob was the entrepreneur and showman of the team, it was Wendy that quietly (and sometimes not so quietly!!) made things happen and turned those ambitions into reality. Younger / newer members will not realise just how deeply involved Wendy was in Club activities. Not only acting as Secretary at all the Manfeild meetings and for the Manfeild Board), she put together the Club magazine for nearly 2 decades with nothing more fancy than a typewriter, was in the thick of every social event, helped produce amazing meals from the club kitchen, organized and ran all those extra events like the car launches and record runs at the circuit AND simultaneously helped run a business, raised children, then was intimately involved in their motorsport lives. What impressed me personally though, was Wendy's ability to remember names and faces, something I struggle with. She knew everyone, and I truly mean EVERYONE, in motorsport, and could remember the minor details of their lives so that conversational questions came from the heart, even if, in the case of the international contingent, it was on a once a year basis. That genuine warmth and empathy was easy to return, but heaven help you if you got on her wrong side!!

Wendy, you will be much missed, however there is so much too to remember. To Rob and the rest of the family go my condolences on the loss of a truly remarkable lady.



We live in interesting times. The Government, the crowd that a vast minority of NZ'ers voted for, have proposed or passed a raft of motoring related legislation recently. A potential 70 kph maximum rural road speed and 30 kph urban road speed has been touted; billions of dollars to be spent on Auckland roading, light rail and bus links; an increased petrol tax to pay for that – along with the additional Auckland area only increase; a cut of some \$5 billion from State Highway construction, but an increased focus on regional roads and rail; a huge investment in road safety; an artificial increase in the price of petrol vehicles to push consumers towards electric. Hmmm....

I applaud the increased regional spending, and the 10 year plan, however holistic that approach is. God knows the Gorge issue should have been dealt with by now and a new road in place. That it takes so long to get ANY decision is a sad indictment on the system.

Unfortunately though there are some fundamental problems unique to NZ motoring that tend to be ignored.

New Zealand is a relatively clean, green, very underpopulated country, by world standards, and with long distances between population bases. With virtually no public transport between them, it's hardly surprising that we have a very high car ownership per head of population ratio. We are, by the very nature and topography of our country, a highly mobile society. I simply don't see that changing. Where then is the place for an electric vehicle that cannot manage to get further than Tirau from Auckland without having to be recharged??? How does that work in our environment??

I'm all for getting rid of as many cars as possible in the major cities of our country, however the public transport systems in most are sorely lacking and have not had any major investment for some time. The number of single occupant vehicles I see up here in Jaffa land is absurd, but it appears to be just about as bad in Wellington and even Palmerston North. Without easy public transport options it is nigh on impossible to shift people away from their cars. Electric vehicles (and the soon to be coming autonomous cars) are the answer as they don't

pollute, I hear from the Green corner. Well yes and no. Electric cars certainly emit no pollution, however their long term green credentials are open to debate when the resources used to produce the current batteries are so damaging to the environment (and that doesn't address the issue of recycling of old batteries).

Answer me this, how is adding over 30% to our travel times going to achieve anything given that almost everything we produce, sell and buy is transported by road?? The additional cost will be passed on to consumers, surely??

The government has commendably said that it can make roads safer and save lives, and expresses horror at the current road toll. Yes, with the right investment they may be able to. However, have they ever stopped and looked at the increasing number of suicides in our community and thought about the impacts of reduced spending in the health sector?? And don't get me started on education.

Should individual regions be taxed additionally to support basic infrastructure developments in those areas? Isn't that what central government is for? It's a slippery slope folks. I know I am being political here, however I'm branding all politicians with the same brush, and pointing the finger also at one of the pettier and most reactive bureaucracies we have, NZTA. Remember, woolly thinking eventually affects every one of us, and our chosen sport.

An answer?? Well I'm thinking we could declare the peninsula an independent republic, secede, and only allow as residents those with a modicum of common sense and a sense of humour. Hang on....., that's pretty much the case already. And if all else fails it's just as well I can ride and we have horses on the farm!!

On a lighter note, one of the farming papers recently ran an article in which a South Otago farmer praised the T bar roll over protection on his quad for saving him and his two sons many times from serious injury. "It has prevented many injuries from my previous mistakes". It kind of begs the question – what is he doing (or not doing) to be making so many mistakes and being involved in so many roll-over accidents?? Does he not learn or is it a genetic thing seeing as the sons seem just as "accident" prone?? Can you breed stupid?? By my reckoning he would be best to sell the farm and move to town before he actually succeeds in killing himself!!

And a final note. After a disastrous qualifying it was gratifying to see Brendon stay out of trouble and pick up his first F1 points at Baku. Well done under very trying circumstances, now it's onward and upward.

Remember to keep the rubber side down. TW

Email Trevor at littlebarton@actrix.gen.nz

"Track & Yak"

Time: 7pm to 9pm

Date: Tuesday 8th May 2018.

Place: **Rose and Crown Olde English Pub** Terrace End Carpark, Palmerston North

Why not join us for a yak about what is happening on, and off of, the track!



Events Calendar

MAY 2018

- Saturday 19th Dannevirke Car Club Conoor Road Gravel Sprint Round 5 - The Engine Room Sprint Series
- Saturday 26th Back Track Drift Practice

JUNE 2018

- Saturday 2nd Feilding Auto Electrical Winter Series – Test Day
- Sunday 3rd Feilding Auto Electrical Winter Series Round 1
- Saturday 9th Dannevirke Car Club Tararua Road Gravel Sprint Round 6 - The Engine Room Sprint Series
- Sunday 17th Transpec & GT Oils Track Day Series Round 2

JULY 2018

- Saturday 7th Feilding Auto Electrical Winter Series – Test Day
- Sunday 8th Feilding Auto Electrical Winter Series Round 2
- Sunday 15th Transpec & GT Oils Back Track Autocross

AUGUST 2018

- Saturday 4th Feilding Auto Electrical Winter Series – Test Day
- Sunday 5th Feilding Auto Electrical Winter Series Round 3
- Sunday 19th Transpec & GT Oils Back Track Autocross

SEPTEMBER 2018

- Saturday 4th Feilding Auto Electrical Winter Series – Test Day
- Sunday 5th Feilding Auto Electrical Winter Series Round 4 (final)
- Sunday 16th Transpec & GT Oils Track Day Series Round 3

OCTOBER 2018

Saturday 20th OctoberFast

Sunday 21st OctoberFast

NOVEMBER 2018

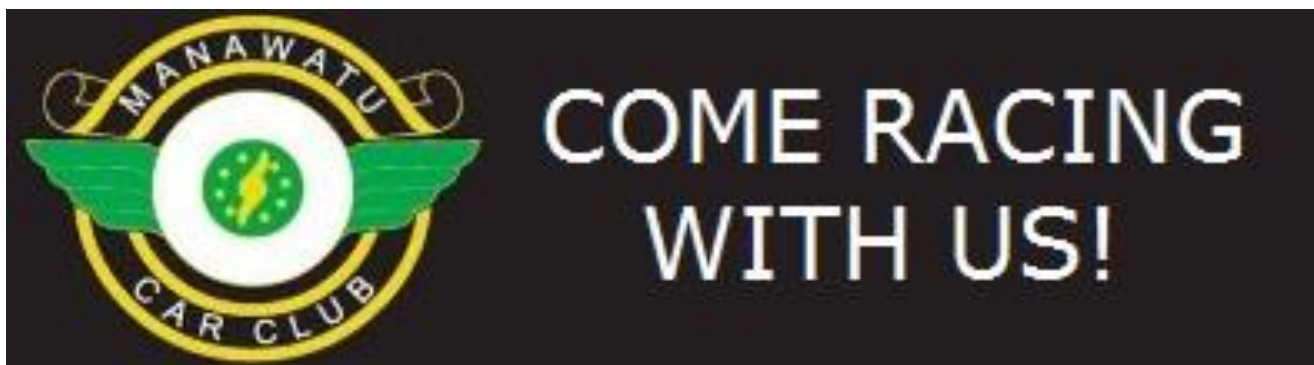
Saturday 4th Transpec & GT Oils Track Day Series Round 4 /Multi Event Weekend

Sunday 5th Transpec & GT Oils Multi Event Weekend

DECEMBER 2018

Saturday 8th Transpec & GT Oils Track Day Series Round 5

Sunday 9th Mitre 10 Mega Summer Series race meeting



0800 025 552 or 021 509 221

Mark & Rachel O'Connor

loos@geckoenvironmental.co.nz

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MCC COMMITTEE MEMBERS



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Your Committee:



Jill Hogg



Graeme Bretherton



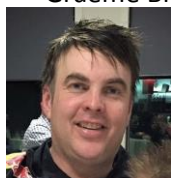
Jaron Olivecrona



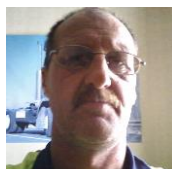
Greg Brown



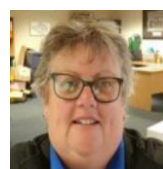
Gareth Stanley



Aaron Walker



Phillip Keith



Kaye Flannagan



Gerald Watson

Club Advisors:



Kerry Halligan



Noel Beale

Club Patrons: Robert Lester, 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, Raymond Bennett.

Archivists: Terry Rush, Jill Hogg, Russell Harris

MCC Magazine Editor: Trevor Weir

FROM THE PRESIDENTS PEN...

Brrrrrrrr, the temperatures are dropping! You know you are getting old and it's getting cold when you spend more time rubbing things like Deep Heat on in the morning, and spending an extra 5 mins in a hot shower, to free up all those aches and pains from injuries sustained when you were slightly younger and didn't care so much about looking after your body. I remember my Grandfather saying to me one Sunday afternoon when I was just a small fella that I should look after myself otherwise I would pay for it later like he was after being a mechanic for most of his life, his hands and other joints badly affected by arthritis... needless to say that fell on deaf ears...

There has been, and is, plenty happening at the Club as I sit and write this. We had the first round of the Transpec & GT Oils Track Day Series held on the 7th April, followed the next day by the last round of the Mitre 10 Mega Summer Race Series. Both events had a large number of entrants, the Summer Series having its best ever number of entries which was great to see. Some awesome racing was seen on the Sunday, you would have thought it was a case of life and death instead of the prize of a chocolate Easter Bunny for winning given the intensity of some of the racing.

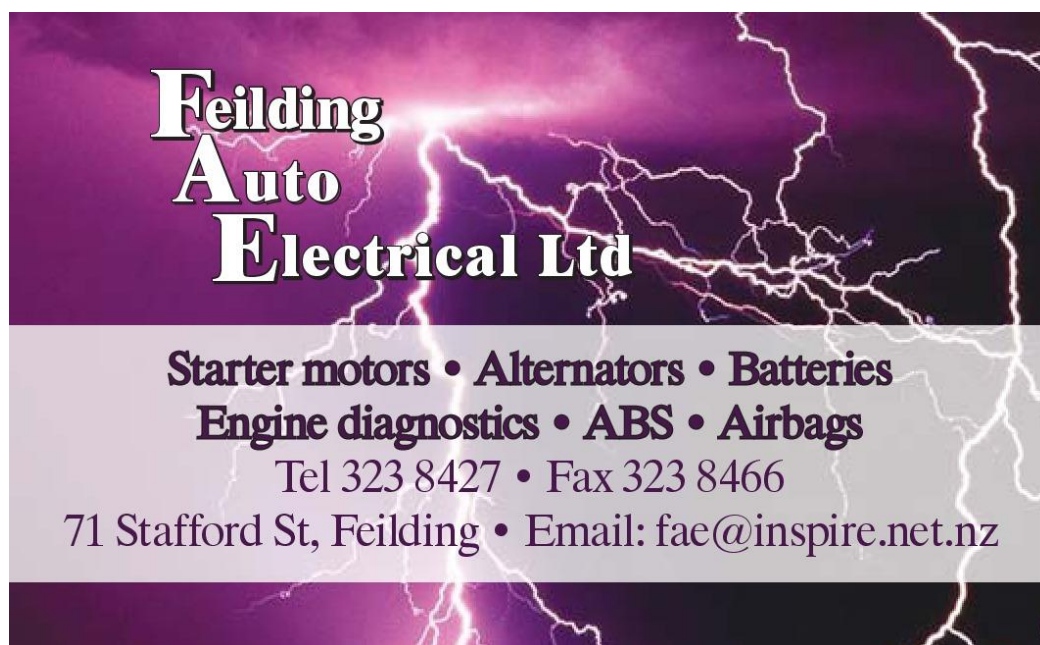


The following weekend was Prize Giving Night where we have around 65 people, including 20 of our awesome volunteer team, turn out for a great night to honour our Class Winners and Place-getters and to see some prestigious awards handed out to some of our great volunteers. I personally love seeing people come forward and accept their awards, the smile on their faces shows how proud they are of their achievements and rightly so. The highlight of the night for me was Bron Bell's acceptance speech, which was from the heart and made us all realise why we do this.

In between the last round of the Summer Series and Prize Giving we had an awesome Track & Yak night at Mike Racing on Napier Road. I said on the night how great a person Mike is but want to reiterate this again here. I first met Mike a while ago, it had nothing to do with motorsport, it was to do with trucks and while we speaking I mentioned that I was the President of the MCC and would he be interested in hosting a Track & Yak night at his showroom / workshop. Mike was only too happy to do this and we put it all together in a very short space of time. The professionalism of Mike's team, his premises and the way they hosted us all on the night was second to none and I want to again thank Mike and his team for what was a great fun night. The passion within his team is clear for all to see and they have some big goals that they would like to achieve, I personally have no doubt that they will achieve these goals given the immaculate planning and attention to detail that

they have. Mike also has some plans locally so we are working with him to make sure these become a reality... so watch this space! We have a couple of other cool Track & Yak nights coming up, probably not over the Winter months as the open fire at the Rose & Crown is hard to resist during the cooler months, but when the days start to get a bit longer and the temperature starts to rise a bit we have a couple of nice nights planned.

Jeff Braid is hard into doing the regs for the forthcoming Winter Race Series and we are finalising the sponsors for this series as we speak. What I can say at this stage is that Huw and Kathy from Feilding Auto Electrical will once again be the naming sponsor for this great series. A huge thank you to Huw and Kathy for your continued support.



All of the other Classes within the FAEWRS also have Sponsors and we are just waiting to hear from one other sponsor who is thinking of coming on board as well, so watch this space and our website for those details. Once again all of our awesome sponsors are Manawatu locals who own and run businesses within the region, many are MCC Members as well, so I urge you to support these businesses where you can, remember to mention to them that you are also an MCC Member as I am sure they all have special rates for MCC Members... (wink, wink).

We are going to be sending out a separate piece on the upcoming Feilding Auto Electrical Winter Race Series which will contain all of the information about the series that you will need to know – Regs, Entry Forms, where to enter, Class times, apparel requirements etc... so keep an eye out for this in the coming week.

So yip lots happening, with lots more being worked on behind the scenes, to bring you, our MCC Family, even better events both on and off of the track!

Lastly, it was sad to see Wendy Lester depart us, however I am happy that she is finally pain free and at peace. I was unable to make the funeral in Turangi due to prior work commitments that could not be changed but I was glad to hear that several of the MCC Family made it to the funeral to pay their last respects. As always death is hard to deal with but we must rejoice in what Wendy did for motorsport while she was with us, and what she did was a lot! Manfeild and the MCC would not be where they are today without her. My thoughts go out to the Lester family at this time.

On the home front the next MCC Family Member is growing well, he is practising changing gears and flooring the accelerator on a regular basis, adding to Lydia's discomfort, but she is coping remarkably well given a couple of early hiccups. As I write this we have around 5 weeks to go, the countdown is well and truly on!

Richie

FREE, FREE, FREE...

We all love free shi.... I mean stuff don't we, well let me be the one to bring you some good news. On Saturday 2nd June there will be a **FREE TEST DAY**, yes that's right, just turn up on the day, sign the usual indemnity form in the race office and you can go testing for free, no catches, no gimmicks, absolutely FREE!!!

You don't even have to be racing in the first round of the Feilding Auto Electrical Winter Race Series the next day, if you have a race car in your garage that you have been meaning to blow the cobwebs out of for a while now, load her up and bring it out and go for a run at absolutely no cost.

Free stuff doesn't come along often so make sure you make the most of it!

Richie

LET THERE BE LIGHT...



Our scrutineers were saying that it was getting hard to see the finer details in the scrutineering shed at Manfeild and they wondered if we could do something with the lighting in there to improve things somewhat. A quick call to our friends at Max Tarr, and with the blessing from Manfeild, and before you could say "let there be light" there was light, new powerful bright lights, so bright that our scrutineers can see even the finest of wrinkles on their faces. In fact it is so bright in there they will no doubt be requesting sunglasses, and sunscreen for their bald spots, in the near future. Next time you are getting your car scrutineered please comment on how bright the scrutineering team is looking these days...



Richie

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MCC CLUB MEMBER OF THE MONTH...

(Every month we will bring you a profile on one of Club Members)

NAME: Tom Lancaster

BORN: 30-6-1950

OCCUPATION: Company Director

RACE CAR: 1970 Ford Capri Perana - 233

EVERYDAY DRIVE CAR: Ford Ranger

DREAM CAR: Ferrari 312 Superfast

YOUR BEST MOMENT IN MOTORSPORT?

Winning the 4 wheel drive D-Class, central zone and NZ Championship

WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP AND WHY?

Successful in whatever I did. Failure is disappointing

IF YOU COULD INVITE THREE PEOPLE TO DINNER, DEAD OR ALIVE, WHO WOULD THEY BE?

Dynamo the magician, Carol Shelby (good Ford man), Ritchie Valens (American Rock n Roll singer)

WHO WOULD YOU PLAY IN A MOVIE? Clint Eastwood

THREE WORDS THAT BEST DESCRIBE YOU... Reliable, competitive and adventurer

IF YOU WERE A VEHICLE, WHAT WOULD IT BE, AND WHY?

A Jeep from the long range desert patrol in World War 2... very exciting!

WHAT IS YOUR SECRET VICE? No secret vices

PEOPLE WOULD BE SURPRISED TO KNOW THAT...

Donald Trump is an honest and trustworthy man

FAVOURITE QUOTE...

Go ahead, make my day



Correction. In the '2018 F1 - Melbourne was show time' article in the April magazine (page 37) there was mention of Brendon Hartley getting an over view of the Albert Park Circuit from the back seat of a RAAF Pilatus training aircraft from the 'Roulettes' aerobatic team. It has since been revealed that the aircraft was a civilian registered ex Republic of Singapore Air Force SIAI Marchetti S-211 jet trainer. The true purpose of the flight has also been revealed, Brendon was chosen to launch the new Toro Rosso inspired Casio EDIFICE Limited Edition range of watches and the video links the time requirements of a jet pilot with a race driver. Well worth finding and watching (no pun intended), it's google time...



Motorsport is Manawatu's real money maker. In a just-released Major Events Report by the Central Economic Development Agency, it's been revealed that February's Superstock Teams Championships injected a record \$5.2 million into the regional economy, up \$1.5 million from the 2017 event. One of the interesting statistics is that 82% of attendees are from outside the region, the majority from the lower North Island provinces, with overseas speedway fans coming from Australia, Great Britain and the United States. The report says spending in all areas was up, with the 13% increase in visitors numbers the key factor. If the biggest event on this country's speedway calendar brings that sort of money into our region should they run more than one Superstock Teams meeting a year? The answer is a very definite no...

The right spirit. Seeing people like Brian Kouvelis out on circuit enjoying themselves is a timely reminder of the spirit that at one time embodied the world's greatest sporting tournament. Born into French aristocracy, Baron Pierre de Coubertin was the founder of the International Olympic Committee and considered the father of the modern Olympic Games. He said 'The important thing in the Olympic Games is not to win, but to take part; the important thing in Life is not triumph, but the struggle; the essential thing is not to have conquered but to have fought well'. This was later rewritten in an abbreviated form - 'It's not the winning that counts, it's the glory of taking part'. Not everyone can be a winner, so should more competitors just focus on taking part and enjoying the experience? We should be looking at people like Brian and others like Neil Moore and Trevor Dixon, admiring and appreciating what to do. Most of all, embrace their spirit...



A Mega excitement machine is on its way. Simon Barry's familiar Datsun 1200 Coupe has found a new owner whose upgrading the racer to meet his personal demands. Starting up front the rice burner rotary engine is going, replaced by a potent fuel injected 2.4 litre Esslinger four lugger from a midget speedway car, a stunning piece of kit. It will have to be converted to run on pump gas, remember methanol fuel is not permitted. At the other end a quick change set-up is being fitted, the easiest way to change diff ratios. Other modifications are in the pipeline including aero appendages (a big rear wing?) and you can guarantee there will no shortcuts on this project! The most likely debut date is the first round of the 2018/19 Mitre 10 Mega Summer Series, it would also be the most appropriate timing as the new owner/trainer/driver is Andrew Stewart from Mitre 10 Mega. Might not be too hard to guess the livery...

Appropriate renaming. Following Round 3 of the Stewart Mitre 10 Mega Summer Series there were stories circulating that there has been a name change for the # 162 Rose & Crown Mitsubishi Evo. 'Bust-ed' (or a similar sounding word) has been replaced by 'Eveready', because like the famous bunny the car just kept going, and going, and going! It's a very long time since owner/trainer/driver Ross Thurston has done so many laps in a day, many knew they were in for something very special when the Evo made it through the qualifying session! The outcome certainly justified the expense of the upgraded gearbox, no point in having big horsepower being

transmitted through a box that's not capable of handling it, the word reliability easily comes to mind. There's absolutely no truth in rumours that Rossco was getting giddy by the end of each 6-lapper, he had conditioned himself as a precaution! His long day at the office was rewarded with a fourth, a second and a win which surely convinced him that to finish first, first you must finish...

Success breeds success. The 2017/18 Stewarts Mitre 10 Mega Summer Series ended on a high at Manfeild Circuit Chris Amon and showed that motorsport activities promoted by the MCC continue to be on the rise. Though it doesn't have the exceptional competitor numbers of the Winter Series, the Summer Series plays an equally important role for club racers. On 08 April there was the highest number of round competitors with 77 in total, in the IB Cup there were 21 cars with 19 fronting for the SF Cup. That sort of support makes it all worthwhile for the organisers, officials and the V-Force who all give their time and expertise on a voluntary basis. Next up is the opening round of the 2018 Feilding Auto Electrical Winter Series on Sunday 03 June, Queens Birthday Weekend. Can't wait...

Gone global. The story of the Hartley V12 engine has made the pages of the magazine 'Racecar Engineering', an English glossy leading-edge motorsport technology publication. The seven page article written by Dr Charles Clark is accompanied by many detail photographs, for the technically minded it's a fascinating insight into the 'manufacturing' of this engineering masterpiece that started life as an engine out of a Toyota luxury car, and it was all done in the modest Hartley Engines premises at 27 Domain Street in downtown Palmerston North. The magazine is available in New Zealand and you want the May 2018 edition. Other feature articles include a close-up look at the second generation Bentley Continental GT3, the technical issues that will define this year's Formula 1 season and the evolution of the crash helmet. Something for everyone who studies the more technical aspects of our sport...

Not so global. M2 New Zealand is this country's only men's lifestyle magazine. It's a high quality glossy production with articles/stories covering a diverse range of subjects. Issue 155 (April 2018) has 146 pages that includes a motoring section, an interesting insight in the Volvo Round-the-World Ocean Race that's immediately followed by 'Winning Formula with Brendon Hartley'. It's a six page article, well written by Andrea O'Hagen in an interview type format supported by photographs provided by Red Bull. It's written in a way to appeal to the 'man-in-the-street', but motor racing followers will also learn more about the background of our champion. In short, an excellent read...

That's real racing. Round 2 of the 2018 Verizon Indycar Series was held at the ISM Raceway in Arizona, a one mile (1.64 kilometres) low banked tri-oval. The race itself had the grand title 'Desert Diamond West Valley Casino Phoenix Grand Prix' and was won by Josef Newgarden for Team Penske at an average speed of 147.4 miles an hour (241.7 km/h). Some of the stats relating to the race make interesting reading. Sebastian Bordaís claimed pole position with a lap average speed of 188.5 miles an hour (309.1 km/h). During the 250 lap race there were only 2 caution laps. There were twelve different leaders during the race. There were 279 passes (overtakes) during the race. That's what you call a motor race...

Interesting comparison. The Shanghai International Circuit has the longest straight of the current Formula 1 circuits, measuring 1.17 kilometres. In practice/qualifying for the 2018 Chinese Grand Prix Sebastian Vettel recorded the highest speed of 331.1 kilometres an hour, Brendon Hartley's STR13 was 9th fastest at 325.3 km/h, nearly 3 km/h faster than team mate Pierre Gasly. At the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Indycars are running at better than 390 kilometres an hour as they enter Turn One and the drivers don't lift the right foot too far, in qualifying for last year's '500' Scott Dixon recorded a 4-lap average speed of 379.82 km/h! It's all academic really, but interesting...



So that's who it is. One of the volunteer people recognised at the Mitre 10 Mega Summer Series Awards dinner was Hugh Wilde, possibly a name that's unfamiliar to most. Hugh was the winner of the Volunteer 'Helper's Award' and recipient of the Kirk Trophy, but what is his role at race meetings? Hugh Wilde is the man with the best close-up view of the racing from his position on the starter's platform. While the 'starting lights' are activated by an official in Race Control on Level 2, Hugh uses the New Zealand flag to start handicap races, physically records the number of laps completed, holds out the last lap board and greets the winner with a flourish of the checker flag. He also holds out the black flag from time-to-time to spoil someone's day! Hugh is the brother of MCC Vice President/Treasurer and MX5 racer Tim Wilde. Two good guys doing good things for our club...

Tommy is back. Those with an eye to detail may have noticed a once familiar decal on the front bodywork of the Petronas AMG Mercedes F1 cars. Tommy Hilfiger. The brand was last seen 17 years ago on the rear vision mirrors of the Ferraris of Michael Schumacher and Eddie Irvine, a relationship that was established 1998, but the first involvement for Tommy Hilfiger in grand prix racing was with Team Lotus between 1991 and 1994. The man responsible for developing the fashion brand is billionaire Canadian entrepreneur Lawrence Stroll, father of Martini Williams driver Lance Stroll who won the NZGP at Manfeild to claim the 2015 Toyota Racing Series.



He is reputed to have spent US\$80 million to get his son into Formula 1! Lawrence Stroll is also something of a classic car enthusiast with a collection that's currently valued at NZ\$235,000,000. There's a Porsche 959, Ford GT40, McLaren F1, McLaren GTR, a McLaren M8D CanAm and McLaren M22 Formula 5000. Add to that twenty Ferraris including one of the fabled 250 GTO models and the 1967 275/GT/4 Spyder that featured in the 1968 movie 'The Thomas Crown Affair' which starred Steve McQueen, Mr Stroll took the bidding to US\$25 million before the hammer fell! For the ultimate in performance there's # 6 of the limited edition (40) 1,036 horsepower LaFerrari FXXK hyper cars, but the priceless automobiles don't spend their lives sitting in the collection building, Mr Stroll owns a race track near Quebec that's regarded as one of the finest in North America. 4.26 kilometres long with 15 turns and constructed in a forest, the long established Circuit Mont Tremblant that has been described by Michael Schumacher as 'The Little Nurburgring', the perfect place to play with the toys. Oh to be rich...

On hold. The development of the twin turbocharged 3.6 litre Holden V6 engine for the Ocker Supercar Championship has got a red light. Fans heard the exhaust sound for the first time at last year's Supercheap Bathurst 1000 weekend when Greg Murphy did some demonstration laps in the wicked Red Bull Holden 'Sandman' that's been the outfits test mule. Where to now is the big question being asked...

Mustang is back. Fans of the Blue Oval Badge are salivating following the news that the Ford Mustang will return to the Virgin Australia Supercar Championship next year with full backing from Ford Performance in America. The news immediately brought back memories of Ford Mustangs racing down this end of the world on both sides of the Tasman. Without doubt the most famous was the Allan Moffatt TranzAm Coca Cola/Brut sponsored car that won 101 of its 151 races. Also over in the Land of Oz was the Castrol Mustang GTA driven by Ian 'Pete' Geoghegan, Norm Beechey was another notable 'pony' pedaller. In the mid 1980's along came Dick Johnson's 'Greens-Tuf' Mustang GT, the Group A category car that was developed by Zakspeed and previously raced by Klaus Ludwig in Europe. Kiwi racer Robbie Ker owned the car for a short time. New Zealand's first racing Mustang was the 'Fleetwood Motors' car that appeared at Pukekohe for a 3-Hour Endurance Race in 1966, it began the 'Mustang Era' with cars driven by the likes of Paul Fahey, Red Dawson, Jim Richards and Graham Baker, with the daddy of them all being the PDL Mustang II driven by Leo Leonard. Remarkably, all



of the best known known Mustangs survive today, immaculately restored and an important reminder of that great era half a century ago. 'Mustang Mania' is making a comeback...

Will the glory days return? Only time will tell. The Ford Supercar teams involved with the Mustang have a major project on their hands to make the Mustang bodywork fit over the category's 'Car of the Future' platform, an aero package has to be developed that will have parity with the Falcons, Commodores and Nissans while the components will require the necessary homologation. One thing is certain, Team Penske DJR drivers Scott McLaughlin and our man Fabian Coulthard are getting very exciting Christmas presents this year...

The General's response. The news that the Ford Mustang is returning to Oz Supercar racing immediately raises the question - What will General Motors response be? The Chev Camaro is the obvious answer because it's a market rival with the Mustang and is now being 'produced' in Australian in right-hand-drive form. But why would GM-Holden want to change at the present time, their new ZB Commodore has won 7 of the 10 races this season with three different teams and its drivers are dominating the podium! There is already a Camaro GT3 variant running in the Australian GT Championship and a GT4-spec car is scheduled for release this year. Like the Mustang, the Camaro is allowed under the Gen2 regulations, and so is the Nissan GT-R. 2019 could be a very interesting year in the VASCC, there's no shortage of possibilities...

Remember this. The possible re-entry of the Camaro revives memories of the Australian Touring Car Championship nearly 40 years ago when Kevin Bartlett ran the Channel Nine Camaro Z-28 from 1979 to 1982. The car is best remembered for its spectacular roll on lap 29 of the 1982 James Hardie 1000 when the left rear tyre blew at Reid's Park. The car slammed into the concrete wall, flipped and slid on its roof across the track before coming to rest against the barrier on the opposite side. The uninjured Bartlett scrambled out of the car, surveyed the damage, pointed to the offending tyre, climbed over the safety barrier, signed autographs and bludged a cigarette from a fan! The incident is well worth a Google. For Channel Nine the crash was of enormous commercial benefit as it was replayed a zillion times from all angles and headed sports bulletins around the world. What made Channel Nine executives so happy was that all this was being screened on rival Channel Seven who had the television rights for the race! One of the great Bathurst 1000 memories...



Back in winning mode. The WD-40 Phillip Island SuperSprint brought delight for Ford and Scott McLaughlin fans thanks to a dominant performance by the Shell V-Power driver, PI seems to be his favourite hunting ground. Two \$1,000 Armor All pole position cheques at a circuit where he's now claimed 8 career P1's, followed up by two race wins and a useful early lead in the Championship. Not such a good weekend for our man Fabian Coulthard. For Race 9 of the championship he qualified P2, then officials picked-up that the height of the back edge of rear wing of the #12 Falcon was illegal by one millimetre. P2 became the back row of the grid, but Fabs was able to make his way through the pack to 13th place at the line. Race 10 was much better, starting from P3 he finished in fourth place which left him in 9th position in the Championship, 285 points behind his team mate. As for the other kiwis, Shane van Gisbergen is 3rd in the standings, Andre Heimgartner 20th while Richie Stanaway is having a wretched run that has left him at the back of the pack, 720 points behind the leader. It can only get better from there...



Forget the weather. The night of the April Track and Yak was a roughy in the weather department with extremely strong winds and relatively light rain compared to earlier in the day. That didn't deter the punters though. It was \$10 very well spent as it included entry, finger food and beverage along with the opportunity to see a mouth-watering selection of competition cars at very close quarters. Surprised to note the number of familiar faces missing, the MCC Committee work very hard putting events like this together for every member's benefit and sometimes deserve better support. Those who stayed home don't know what they missed...

Where is he? More and more concerns are being expressed as to the whereabouts of Lord Verdun over the last few months. Non-appearances at the Track and Yak nights, not even dangling a big carrot in the form of a night at Mike Racing 96 could lure him from his hiding place. What is known is that he still frequents his two homes-away-from home, the Robertson Holden International Speedway and the Higgins Suite at Manfeild. Now questions are being asked about the man's interest in all things with engines. Please come back Vern, there are people who miss you...



Spoiled for choice. In New Zealand this year the market has no shortage of contenders throwing their hat into the ring for the 'SUV of the Year' title fight.

Looking at the SUV alphabet it starts with A (Alfa Romeo/Audi) and goes through to V (Volkswagen/Volvo) with the missing letter gaps being D, E, G, O, Q, R, W, X, Y and Z. 'R' could be added to the 'available' list by the end of the year if production of the Rolls-Royce Cullinan begins. If you buy using a favourite letter your best options are with **H** (Haval, Holden, Honda, Hyundai) **M** (Maserati, Mazda, Mercedes-Benz, Mitsubishi)



and **S** (Seat, Skoda, Ssangyong, Subaru) who each have four makes to choose from. If your taste is at the upper end of the market you'll have to decide between the Lamborghini Urus, Maserati Levante or Porsche Cayenne, and if it's all about out-and-out performance it will be worth taking a hard look at the Alfa Romeo Stelvio Quadrifoglio that has set the fastest lap by a SUV around the famous Nurburgring circuit, the unofficial benchmark. Very definitely spoiled for choice...

Remembering past glories. The Australian Grand Prix winner's trophy is the perfect reminder of the achievements of that country's triple world champion Sir Jack Brabham. It replicates the steering wheel of the Cooper Climax in which he won successive titles in 1959 and 1960, but with a slightly modern twist. Back in those days the wheel was of large diameter with three alloy spokes and hand crafted laminated wood rim, an object of simple beauty. How things have changed...



A clash of wings. What do Chesley B Sullenberger and Brendon Hartley have in common? Both have been victims of high speed bird strikes. On 15 January 2009 'Sully' was the captain of the US Airlines passenger jet that was forced to land on the Hudson River when both engines lost all power after the aircraft suffered a major bird strike shortly after taking off. Brendon's incident in the first qualifying session at Bahrain wasn't as dramatic but the collision between a very low flying bird and front wing of the Toro Rosso STR13 did see the feathers fly. The impact was enough to destroy the car's very expensive front aerofoil device, a hot lap and waste of a new set of tyres. Thankfully, like the crew and passengers of US Airlines Flight 1549 Brendon emerged unscathed from an incident that could easily have been the first 'live test' of the halo device. For obvious reasons the bird missed watching the race...

Thanks mate. It was quite inadvertent but the major beneficiary of the collision between the two Toro Rosso cars on Lap 31 of the Chinese Grand Prix was one of the groomsmen at Brendon Hartley's wedding, Daniel Ricciardo. The always smiling Australian took full advantage of the Safety Car Intervention that followed, pitted for fresh tyres and began a relentless chase for victory, highlighted by stunning overtakes of Lewis Hamilton, Kimi Raikkonen and finally Valtteri Bottas to score his sixth grand prix win in quite dramatic circumstances. In the third



practice session Ricciardo's car suffered a serious engine problem, the Red Bull mechanics performed a miracle engine change in under two hours that allowed 'Dan the Man' to get out on the track and complete four laps at the very end of the Q1 session. The Red Buller just made it into the next round and eventually secured sixth position on the grid. It was massive team effort, the race win was the perfect reward...

300 grand a minute. New Zealand heavyweight boxer Joseph Parker might have lost his titles in the unification fight against Anthony Joshua in Cardiff last month, but it wasn't all bad news. It's been revealed that Parker's cheque was for more than \$12 million, the bout went the full 12-round distance which equates to \$1 million per round. Each round is 3 minutes long which equates to \$333,333 a minute. To the working man that's an hourly rate of \$1,999,980 or \$79,999,200 a 40 hour week. Naturally it wasn't all profit, there were expenses to come out of that 12 mill. Still good money in most people's language...

Big spending kiwis. The New Zealand TAB had a turnover of \$1.75 million on the Parker v Joshua fight, the third biggest in boxing in this country. The biggest single bet was \$50,000 on Joshua to win in Round 11 @ \$1.06. The biggest ever turnover was in November 2000 when \$2.6 million was placed on bets for the David Tua v Lennox Lewis fight in Las Vegas that was promoted as the 'Royal Rampage'. In both cases the majority of the money was placed on the kiwi boxers but David Tua and Joseph Parker lost their respective world title fights on a unanimous points decision. There's only one certainty about gambling, there are many more loser than winners...

Hard to disagree. Some journalists are much better than others when it comes to explaining something or giving the reader a true sense of the message he's trying to convey. Some of the 'quotes' or 'one liners' they come up with are quite brilliant. In a recent article in a very prominent magazine two scribes were talking about the exhaust noise generated by the current breed of Formula 1 cars, it's certainly a major talking point within the sport. One reminded readers of the noise in relatively recent times when cars were running high revving V10 and V12 engines, and went on to describe the sound of a F1 motor winding out to 20,000 plus rpm as an 'audio ear-gasm'. Definitely sex on wheels...

Hampton Drowns. It could be a possible new name for the South Waikato circuit after the weekend of 14/15 April when a round of the FIA sanctioned Ferrari 488 Challenge Asia Pacific Series came to our shores. Thanks to the horrendous weather that had hit the region the scheduled Saturday race was postponed until Sunday morning, the main track action was fire engines endeavouring to pump the water away! So for the 26 mostly Asian male and female drivers (2 x New Zealanders) there were am and pm races on the Sunday, the weather was a vast improvement but far from perfect for people who were driving expensive race cars. Ferrari ran the first of their Challenge Series in 1993 and over the years more than 1,000 mostly amateur drivers from around the world have



been involved. With all the organisation handled by Ferrari's Corse Clienti the 488 Challenge is based on the 'arrive and drive' concept, the owners/drivers fly to the venue, go racing, then fly home again with all the cars freighted, prepared and maintained by a small team of highly skilled factory technicians. Different global regions have their own series and the list of circuits used is impressive - it includes Silverstone, Mugello, Estoril, Spa Francorchamps, Monza, Fuji, Suzuka, Circuit of the Americas, Laguna Seca, Road Atlanta and Daytona, this year's 'bonus' was Albert Park at the Aussie GP meeting. Not quite sure how Hampton Downs faces up against that lot, and the next Asia-Pacific round is at the magnificent Shanghai International Circuit...

Early riser. At 5.20am on Friday 6th April listeners to Newstalk ZB's 'Early Edition' programme heard the dulcet tones of club member/scribe/MX5 racer Richard Bosselman on the airways. RB was interviewed by Kate Hawkesby on the subject of returning to Six Monthly Warrants of Fitness. Apparently figures show that in a high number of fatal accidents vehicles have less than the minimum allowed depth of tyre tread. At the conclusion of the chat RB did the right thing. He didn't make Mrs B a cuppa. He went back to bed to continue his interrupted sleep...

Life on the farm. Mr Editor is going to be a busy man in the coming months with his fledgling sheep milk business. Building a new milking shed will be the easy part, he also has to deal with officials to secure all the approvals and permits for his commercial side of the operation. Typical of the man, it's all very well timed because the sheep aren't milking at present and the black ram is doing whatever black rams do at this time of year. Could it be suggested that a product launch takes place with a 'tasting night' in the MCC Clubrooms and the range of sheep's milk, cheese and ice cream is officially endorsed by the club. Just a thought, and a possible hint...

New contributor. Well done Jack Cleland for taking time to put pen to paper with your report on the Pryces Line Autocross. A well written and honest account of the day from your perspective. Hopefully Jack will trigger others to do likewise, remember it's your magazine and the more contributors the better. As William Cowper wrote in his poem 'The Task' - 'Variety is the very spice of life. That gives it all its flavour'. Cowper wrote the words in 1785, they have the same meaning more than 230 years later...

Play pad. In late March the 'V' 4 & Rotary North Island Jamboree took place at Manfeild, but not on circuit Chris Amon. Described as 'a celebration of modern car culture' it's all about smoke, tyre smoke! Thanks to the organisers funding, the existing burn out pad was extended to 18 metres by 18 metres, the work to create the all-important low-grip surface area being carried out by Concrete Polishing



under the direction of company principal Jeffery Glynn, the Feilding man is a regular at Manfeild's road car track days. The design incorporated a 'tip-in' so that vehicles enter the main area off a driveway to start their 'show', the expanded pad also means that it can now accommodate the larger American V8 cars. Manfeild Park continues to expand in the right direction thanks to some help from the private sector...

Did you know? Last year Motorsport New Zealand recognised seventeen people for their contribution to New Zealand rallying with the presentation of MSNZ Heritage Awards. Three have a strong connection with our region. Brian Green has been a competitor since 1972 and contested more than 400 events, in 2009 becoming the first Kiwi driver to compete in the Arctic Rally. He's been a rally organiser and in recent years his company Brian Green Properties has been the sponsor of the national championship. The two other people recognised received posthumous awards. Robin Curtis was a journalist/photographer who covered the sport for more than 50 years and managed the NZ GM Dealer Team in the 1980s. Dannevirke farmer Malcolm Stewart



competed in more Rally New Zealand events than any other driver and introduced the first locally owned Group B rally car to this country, the Audi Quattro A2. All richly deserved...

The only place to be. This year's Monaco Grand Prix on 13 May could be completely overshadowed by the support races. 2018 will be the 11th edition of the biennial Grand Prix de Monaco Historique, and over the weekend there will be seven, yes seven, races spanning a five decade history of grand prix racing from the Pre-war era through to 1980. Add to that another race for front-engined sports cars from the mid-1950s. Surely this is the ultimate programme for every true motor racing enthusiast...

Another great reason to include the Goodwood Festival of Speed on your travel plans for this year, as if the usual FoS action isn't enough, is the annual Bonhams auction held as part of the festival on the Earl of March's country estate. Included among the entries this year is the famous Aston Martin DB4GT Zagato "2 VEV" which was driven in period by the likes of Jim Clark (who famously spun into John Surtees' Ferrari 250GT at Goodwood, taking Robin Benson's Ferrari 250 SWB with them. They were just race cars then, now all 3 are priceless). With an estimate of over 10 million pounds it's not a bad investment for the family who have owned it for the past 47 years after buying it for 3600 pounds!! Another entry is the well-known Alfa P3 Tipo B Chassis 50007, sister car to 50005 and 50006 that were raced in New Zealand through the 1950's and 60's by drivers such as Tom Clark and Ron Roycroft. Deep pockets required me thinks ...



It must be something in the water. How else would you explain the Land Rover Defender 70th edition, the final iteration of the humble and venerable Defender to hit the roads? The Land Rover works have bought 150 late model, low mileage base model examples and re-engineered them with the Range Rover/Jaguar 400hp 5.0 litre V8 giving the almost 2 tonne vehicle a 0-100 kph time of 5.6 seconds. Yes, you still sit miles up in the air, yes, it can be had in a SWB version, yes, despite revised springs, shocks, roll bars, a stability system and effective brakes, the steering is still wandery in traditional fashion, yes, it costs close to NZ\$300,000, but hell why would you not? All are re sold, so clearly others of a like mind are around.

Coming soon for those with an interest in 4 wheel drive is a new book outlining the story of the Ferguson Formula four wheel drive system called simply "Traction For Sale". See www.earlswoodpress.co.uk for details.

White knights? Those of you that follow the historic racing scene will be aware that a contingent of F5000 cars from the Antipodes made it to the Goodwood Members meeting, where, far from the summer race conditions they had just come from, they were greeted by freezing temperatures and falling snow for several of their races. It certainly made for very pretty in car footage, even if most of the drivers emerged with bottom cheeks firmly clenched ...



Final thought. *'Life is about passions - Thank you for sharing mine'*. Those words were written on Michael Schumacher's red Schubert helmet for his farewell grand prix races before he retired from the sport in 2012...

VERY SPECIAL TRACK & YAK...

Close to fifty people assembled at Mike Racing 96 HQ on Tuesday 10 April to get an exclusive first-hand look at the competition machinery inside the building on the corner of Napier Road and Limbrick Street near the city's eastern boundary.

Everything is absolutely immaculate, Mike Chua and his small team certainly known the definition of professionalism, it shows everywhere you look.

The range of competition cars is amazing, stretching from a Mitsubishi Evo to a Group 3 spec 'gull-wing' AMG Mercedes, in-between there were examples of Aston Martin, Porsche, Lotus, Nissan and lower spec Mercedes Benz, all factory built. Each is finished in the distinctive orange and black Mike Racing 96 livery and presented in 'showroom condition', not a single stone chip in sight!

Sharing the floor were road going examples of Aston Martin and Porsche, there was one of the massive original AMC-built Hummers that was the 'Goliath' of the room, the 'David' was an outrageous KTM X-Bow. Oh yes, there were also a pair of matching orange/black road racing cycles, possibly for city commuting but more likely for fitness training.



Austrian based company KTM are globally renowned for their range of motocross and trail bikes, so their entry into the four wheel market in 2008 had to be something very special - the X-Bow definitely meets that criteria. The ultra-light open two-seater is constructed in carbon fibre, powered by a mid-positioned turbocharged 2-litre Audi engine and is rear wheel drive. With a kerb weight of 790 kilograms and an engine developing 225 kW the performance is astounding, 0-100 in 3.5 seconds and maxing out at 220 kmh. The road legal X-Bow is definitely competition orientated and visually would look very much at home in a Batman or James Bond movie. Not entirely practical, but if you like that 'wind through your hair' feeling

On the night there was much more than the cars themselves.

Following complimentary drinks (MCC) and finger food (Aaron Walker), Mike spoke about his background before MR96 media man Aaron Mai delivered a superb visual presentation of the future plans of Mike Racing 96, both

at home and abroad. Without going into detail it's all very exciting, involves a number of young kiwi drivers and Manfeild Circuit Chris Amon. There's a race driver training programme in the pipe line. Just 'watch-this-space'.

There was a Q&A session where the reason for locating the operation in Palmerston North was revealed, family are studying at Massey University, there was an opportunity for Mike to secure his PPL (Private Pilot's Licence), and there was a very good racing circuit in the area.

An outstanding night for the club that drew much favourable comment and drew many unfamiliar 'older' faces back into the fold, another successful occasion organised by the 'A' Team, the Arbers.

Mike Chua and his staff were most congenial hosts, so professional, and speaking with them you understand the meaning behind the Mike Racing 96 catch words - 'Driven by Passion'.

We thank them for sharing that passion...

RH





MANFEILD'S story involves a huge count of characters, but among those many stand a few identities whose dedication to our facility is especially relevant.

Wendy Lester was one of those special people. Her funeral service in Turangi on April 24 provided opportunity for reflection on a rich life in which Manfeild was, for so long, a major focus.

Rob's moving valedictory to his wife and helpmate touched us all deeply; it was an unqualified tribute to a person who had stood with him through years of triumph, failure, despair and challenge while also raising three children: Richard, Deborah and Rachel.

A comment raised during the service seemed to encapsulate how we should remember Glynis Wendy Lester (nee Sell): That time is not measured by the years in which we live, but in the amount of living we achieve during those years.

Though Wendy's life was cruelly cut short by illness, no-one should be in any doubt that she made the most of every moment. With business, with family, with her church ... and, yes, with Manfeild.

There is every good reason why Rob and Wendy are, to so many, naturally known as 'Mr and Mrs Manfeild.'

Motorsport was part of their married lives from the start; in 1960, the year they wed, Rob recalled being persuaded to make a 2am drive to Ardmore to queue for the NZ Grand Prix. His first experience with car racing, something that "was pretty much unheard of in Fiji".

The bug bit on their transfer to Palmerston North, for Rob's work; they accompanied enthusiast relatives to the Manawatu Car Club's Ohakea motor races.

In 1968 Rob joined the Manawatu Car Club and, so effectively, did Wendy. With her husband being elected vice president at that year's annual general meeting, she was soon also immersed in the club's secretarial work. And, of course, this was also the period when thought went into the exciting idea of this region having its own permanent motor-racing circuit.

The period of 1970-75 was halcyon; being the period when the circuit was designed and created. The decade started 'hot' for the Lesters, Rob becoming club president, Wendy taking on editorship of this very magazine, which she would write for 18 years.

It might be less well known that, in the first year of the decade, they were also invited to join the Levin Motor Race management team; Wendy as Assistant Secretary and Rob as an Assistant Clerk of Course. As early as 1971 they were given a confidential heads-up on the impending fate of the Levin Circuit – knowledge that Rob had to keep to himself, a remarkable challenge as by then he was Manawatu Car Club President and the new Manawatu Circuit Project was gaining momentum.

The story of the how and why the Manfeild site came to be chosen is complex but well told, and the stresses of the facility's evolution on the club during that period were patently huge.

One of the positive highlights was the 'naming' competition launched in April 1973, with the winner's prize of \$25. A number of entries were received, and Judges Fordy Farland and Fred Parker selected the winner, which was lodged under the pseudonym of 'Carlton Fosdyke' – the name was MANawatu/FEILDing – MANFEILD

AUTOCOURSE. Only the Club Secretary knew the real identity of the winner, and it was many years before the winner's name was revealed: Wendy Lester.

And all this before the circuit even hosted a race. The period from that landmark inaugural meeting, a clubmans' on October 13 1973, through to the end of their involvement, in 2003, was a whole different story, but one in which Manfeild became an international name and the Lesters were to make a lasting impression on the many thousands for whom 'seeing was believing'.

Perhaps it says so much about the impression Wendy left in that time that, despite having determined to keep the news of her passing low-key until after her service, inevitably word got out, and not just within New Zealand.

During the post-service get-together, Rob reflected with quiet wonderment that among the messages of condolence was a phone call from Jos Verstappen. The dad of F1's prodigal child raced here during the Formula Pacific period. Word of Wendy's passing had reached him while en route home from the Bahrain GP; he called while transiting Chicago airport to pass on his respects.

Wendy was a central figure of our venue during its evolution and the formative years of operation: The Lester family's legacy imprints strongly onto Manfeild; Rob as the circuit promoter naturally took the spotlight back in those days, but he is first to concede that the show only really went on thanks to Wendy.

We will remember her as a strong-minded, forward-thinking personality; a person of quietly fierce resolve whose focus, commitment and dedication was remarkable. We also remember her as a wonderful wife, mother and grandmother; a warm-hearted friend to so many.

Manfeild and the Manfeild Park Trust extends its sincere condolences to Rob and family.

Julie Keane
CEO



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A COMMON DENOMINATOR...

There are two international motor racing circuits that are 9,695 kilometres apart and separated by the world's largest ocean, one is in the Northern Hemisphere, the other in the Southern Hemisphere.

One is on the outskirts of a town of 14,000 people, the other in a city of 24 million people.

The two venues are Manfeild Circuit Chris Amon and the Shanghai International Circuit in China whose opening meetings were 30 years apart.



Manfeild was designed on a dining room table with pieces of paper and a specific length of string, with 'outside' assistance from local Formula 1 driver Chris Amon. The first meeting was held in 1973.

SIC was designed on a computer with 'outside' assistance from the modern day architect of circuit design Hermann Tilke. The first meeting was held in 2004.

Manfeild has a circuit length of 3.03 kilometres with 7 turns.

SIC has a circuit length of 5.45 kilometres with 16 turns.

Manfeild has a seating capacity of 10,000.

SIC has a seating capacity of 200,000, the covered main grandstand seats 27,000 spectators.

Manfeild was built in 8 months with the circuit itself the responsibility of D Higgins & Sons, the remainder of the work being carried out by local specialist contractors and weekend volunteer workers.

SIC was built in 18 months with a workforce of 3,000 working around the clock and having access to the latest machinery and equipment available.

Manfeild was built at an estimated cost of under \$200,000 excluding the cost of the land

SIC was built at a cost of NZ \$562,679,000



Manfeild has hosted World Superbike Championship Series, Toyota Racing Series, and New Zealand Grand Prix.

SIC has hosted MotoGP World Championship, FIA World Endurance Championship, World Touring Car Championship, Australia V8 Supercar Championship, A1 GP, and Chinese Formula 1 Grand Prix.

Manfeild you can see the entire circuit.

SIC you can't see the entire circuit.

So what is the common denominator?

Both circuits are built on swamp land.

It's probably all useless information, but you may have learned a little bit more about your 'home' track...

RH

In 2005 an Australian V8 Supercar Round was held at the Shanghai International Circuit, the first time the cars had raced outside of their homeland or New Zealand.

To relate more closely with the local market a number of teams changed their liveries for the weekend. At the time Buick was the principle GM brand in China, the HVS Dealer Team car of Rick Kelly was rebranded as 'Team Buick' with the event marketed as the 'Buick V8 Supercars China Round'.

The three sprint races (100km, 140km, 140km) were dominated by the Holden Racing Team, Todd Kelly winning Race 1 and 3 with Mark Scaife claiming victory in Race 2. The event received poor support from the public and plans for the following year were abandoned when the Chinese officials rejected the proposed dates.



HIGH EXPECTATIONS...

Thanks to a combination of television and social media our sports people have unprecedented exposure, they are portrayed as future 'champions' early in the careers and are burdened with meeting the expectations placed on them. In sport only a relative small group reach champion status, with that comes even greater expectation from a nation like New Zealand where sport rates so highly, where second is last. Failure is unacceptable in a country where winning is everything.

Since Brendon Hartley made his Formula 1 debut in Texas last year the world has taken a significant interest in his progress, here in New Zealand the profile of grand prix racing has been raised to almost unprecedented levels.

Coming into motor racing's premier category off the back of a second World Endurance Championship title and Le Man 24 Hour victory, there was big excitement when he got the call-up as a replacement driver for Scuderia Toro Rosso for the US Grand Prix at the Circuit of the Americas. That drive led to a full-time contract for 2018, Kiwis around the globe were buzzing.

It's said that it's tough at the top, and motor racing is no exception. The first targets for Brendon are making Q3 which guarantees a Top 10 grid position, on two occasions he's been mere 10ths of a second away from achieving that goal, the second is scoring his first world championship point. Of course the two could be reversed. His highest finishing position to date is 13th, considering he's a double WEC champion and Le Mans winner have fans been expecting better?

Do we need to take a step back and be asking ourselves if our expectations of Brendon in his first full F1 season are too high?

In the build-up to the Chinese Grand Prix one of the F1 television commentators questioned Scuderia Toro Rosso Honda team principal Franz Tost about the performance differences of his two drivers, and their boss was very open and candid in his response.

'Brendon is doing a good job, because you must not forget that most of the tracks he doesn't know. It's not easy to get everything together with these real strong midfield competitors and I'm quite convinced that Brendon is on a good way and he will quite soon be quite close to Gasly'.

Tost suggested that Hartley's performance had been lower than Gasly's so far because of experience - ***'He was coming from a completely different type of car this season'***. He went on to explain that between 2014 and 2017 Brendon was predominantly driving for Porsche in the World Endurance Championship with Le Mans prototypes. ***'The one big difference between those cars and Formula 1 was the tyres. Le Mans prototypes use the French brand Michelin, whilst F1 uses Italian tyres from Pirelli. Gasly is more familiar with Pirelli tyres because he's driven in F1's feeder series, GP2, which uses extremely similar tyres to F1'.***

Another significant difference in the cars is that the Porsche was four-wheel-drive.

He urged people to ***'remember that Gasly has done lots of tests in F1 machinery, whereas Hartley's experience in the new generation of F1 cars is limited to the four grand prix he raced in 2017 and two this year'***. He concluded by saying ***'Hartley can take big step forward in the coming races, in a very short time he'll be on Gasly's level. I am not worried'.***

Good to have your boss's confidence, and Brendon backed up Tost's words by out-qualifying Gasly at Shanghai by two grid positions!

Whilst acknowledging that Brendon had considerable experience as a test and simulator driver for AMG Petronas Mercedes Benz, F1 cars changed very significantly over the period when he raced for Porsche, so many factors come into play for the drivers, designers, engineers and technical staff.

Looking at the category lap records for the Shanghai International Circuit backs up what Franz Tost alluded to with regard to the difference between LMP1 and Formula 1 cars. The fastest race lap for an LMP1 car was in

November last year when Kamui Kobayashi clocked 1.42.470 in his Toyota TS050 Hybrid, in last month's Chinese Grand Prix Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel set a new record of 1.31.095 - a difference of 11 seconds is a very long way in motor racing terms.

Maybe it's that 11 second differential that will help make people be a little more understanding of where Brendon is at right now...

RH

What has generally been overlooked is that Pierre Gasly has an impressive racing record. Like Brendon, the 22 year old comes from a karting background and is also a graduate from the Red Bull Junior Team programme. He won the Eurocup Formula Renault 2.0 title in 2013 and the following year was runner up in the Formula Renault 3.5 Series. In 2016 he claimed the highly coveted GP2 Championship and last year was runner-up in the Japanese Super Formula Championship.



ANOTHER MCC CHAMPION...

Since the introduction of Formula Vee racing to this country members of the Manawatu Car Club have enjoyed great success in a category that has produced many drivers who have gone on to achieve on the international stage.

The list of names includes Scott Dixon, Shane van Gisbergen, Richie Stanaway, Earl Bamber, Nick Cassidy and Brendon Hartley who have made big impacts in their respective categories.

Club member Norm Lankshear won the first New Zealand Formula Vee Championship in the 1974/75 season, 43 years later club member Callum Crawley has won the Formula First Championship in the 2017/18 season.

In between club members have enjoyed significant success in the highly competitive grass roots open wheel class, Ross Symon was a four-time winner in the 1980's, while along the journey the category name was changed to Formula First prior to the 1998/99 season.

The 2017/18 Hi-Q Components Formula First Championship drew more than 20 competitors, and heading to the final round at Pukekohe Raceway on 31 March/01 April there were three in contention for the title - Caleb Ngatoa, Callum Crawley and Liam Foster. The trio were separated by 69 points, and there were 225 points on offer over the final three races.

Crawley was the fastest qualifier but it was Foster who won Race 1 from the pole sitter with Ngatoa finishing fourth, the point's gap narrowed. Billy Frazer took out Race 2 in which there was a collision between Ngatoa and Foster which cost both vital points. Crawley claimed third place with the recovering Ngatoa crossing the line in 4th but picking-up a post-race penalty. One race to go with Crawley holding match point.

There was a Safety Car intervention to add to the drama in Race 3, but in true champion style Callum Crawley took the chequer ahead of Amy Smith and Foster for his fourth win of the season to clinch the title. Caleb Ngatoa finished 5th in the race which brought enough points to be runner-up in the championship, with Liam Foster claiming 3rd overall. 2017 Speedsport Scholarship winner Conrad Clark impressed right through the series on his way to 4th place in the standings and was named 'Rookie of the Year'.

So, is Callum Crawley the next Formula Vee/First driver to go onto much greater things in his racing career...

RH



THE BRUTE IS UNLEASHED...

The Date : 09.04.2018

The Place : Spa-Francorchamps Circuit, Belgium

The Car : Porsche 919 Hybrid LMP1 Evo

The Driver : Neel Jani

Former FIA World Endurance Champion Neel Jani set a new 'unofficial' outright lap record of the famous 7.004 kilometre Belgian circuit, setting a time 0.783 of a second faster than the pole position lap of Lewis Hamilton in last year's Formula 1 Grand Prix - 1.41.770 v 1.42.553.

This achievement answers the often asked question - How fast could the Porsche 919 really go?

So what were the differences between the LMP1 race version of the 919 Hybrid and the one-off 919 Hybrid Evo?



Thanks to the LMP1 fuel flow regulations the 2.0 litre V4 engine produces 500 horsepower in race spec, the 919 Evo was tuned to produce 720 horsepower with the output of the hybrid system tweaked to give an additional 40 bhp. Externally, the obvious changes were the larger front diffuser and rear wing, both incorporating DRS.

Porsche WEC drivers Neel Jani, Timo Bernhard and Andre Lotterer were involved in an intensive three days of testing at the circuit to complete the final preparations. It was Jani who got the drive on the big day and during the record breaking lap the car's speed peaked at 359 kilometres an hour (223 mph).

'I knew on the very first lap in the morning that that the car's performance was super. The race engineers did a great job setting up the car and the Michelin tyres were sensational. The 919 Evo is brutally impressive, definitely the fastest car I ever drove. The grip level is at a fully new dimension for me, I couldn't imagine this amount beforehand'.

'The speed on which everything happens on a single lap with the 919 Evo is that fast that the demand on reaction speed is very different to what I was used to in the WEC. We are not only faster than the F1 pole from 2017. Today's lap was 12 seconds faster compared to our WEC pole position from last year'.

Porsche LMP1 programme boss Andreas Seidl was quick to praise his team of people - *'This additional success is the result of the LMP1 team's hard work and a proud day for the engineers. One can only congratulate Neel and the entire crew for achieving it. All six 2017 LMP1 drivers contributed to the project. It was our target to show the Porsche 919 Hybrid's abilities when we ease the restrictions that came from the WEC regulations'*.

Watch footage of the car here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AyWki3yvfWs> and a comparison with Lewis Hamilton's Mercedes F1 car, both onboard views, here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kojipYfnTOQ>

It's also been announced that Porsche will be embarking on a 'World Tour' with its now retired LMP1 car and the 919 Evo will be seen at this month's Nurburgring 24 Hour, the Goodwood Festival of Speed in July, Brands Hatch in September and at California's Laguna Seca circuit in October.

'World Tour' - read into that what you will. Brendon Hartley comes home for his new year break, is it too much to expect 'The Beast' appearing at Manfeild Circuit Chris Amon around the same time...

Excluding the World Endurance Championship, have you heard the name Neel Jani?

Did you know, or remember, that he raced in New Zealand three times?

Neel drove the Team Switzerland entry in the A1GP Series that came to the Taupo Circuit in 2006/07, 2007/08 and 2008/09. He won the A1GP title in the 2007/08 Series and was runner-up in 05/06 and 08/09, in that final year he finished 2nd in the Sprint race and won the Feature at Taupo.

Jani has also raced Superleague Formula, Champ Cars, GP2, Sports Cars, GT1 and was the test driver for Scuderia Toro Rosso in 2005, the career highlight being winning the Le Mans 24 Hour and World Endurance Championship with Porsche in 2016. The 35 year old is currently racing in the FIA Formula E Championship.

RH



PITHER PERFECT, NEARLY...

For obvious reasons the Virgin Australian Supercar Championship overshadows all domestic motorsport in Ockerland, here in NZ we follow it very closely because the entry list includes five kiwi drivers who wave our national flag with considerable intensity and can be more than a little annoying to the Aussies by beating them in their own backyard.

Overlooked to some extent is the supporting Dunlop Super2 Series that includes MCC member Chris Pither in the driver line-up, a line-up that's definitely not short of talent, both young and a little older.

The 7-Round Championship opened in March at the Clipsal 500 meeting in Adelaide, with the highly experienced Paul Dumbrell winning two of the three races and finishing second in Race 2 behind Gary Jacobson to give himself a more than useful lead in the standings after just the first round! Driving the Garry Rogers Motorsport First Security Holden Commodore, Chris scored three Top 10 finishes, but they weren't as high as the team had hoped. Qualifying showed they weren't quite on the pace, sixth in the first race was encouraging but that was as good as it would get. The other two races brought a pair of 7th places but they did score useful points in the title race.

A month later it was across the Bass Strait for Round 2 at the Tyrepower Tasmania SuperSprint and a memorable weekend for the GRM-Pither team. Symmons Plains is an interesting circuit, simple in design it's only 2.4 kilometres long with 7 turns, one of them a tight 180 degree hairpin, full throttle is used for 57% of the lap and in some areas the track surface is definitely bumpy.

But Symmons Plains suited Chris and the # 44 Commodore and the combination were front runners all weekend, by comparison to Adelaide they were hot, white hot!

Chris topped the time sheets in the opening practice session, then repeated the performance in qualifying to secure pole positions and put Dumbrell under serious pressure. Unfortunately our man has a little work to do on his starting technique and was beaten off the line in each race! The Egglestone Racing driver won Races 1 and 3 with Chris in second place, Chris taking the chequer in Race 2 with Dumbrell back in 5th spot.



When the points were tallied it was confirmed that Chris had won the round and moved into second place on the Championship table, 86 points behind Dumbrell who has won four of the first six races.

Paul Dumbrell is very much the driver to beat, his CV reveals twice Dunlop Supercar Development Series Champion and co-driver to Jamie Whincup in the Triple Eight Racing Holden Commodore since 2012. That year the pair won the Supercheap Bathurst 1000 and since then there's been back-to-back wins in the Sandown 500 and claiming the Pirtek Enduro Cup in 2014

which makes the Melbournian the right yard stick to be measured against.

Reflecting on the weekend in Tazzy, for Chris Pither it wasn't perfect, but it was damn close!

The Palmerston North born and raised racer and club member certainly eased the pain of the big name kiwis disappointing performances in the major league Supercars, quite a contrast to last year.

Round 3 of the Dunlop Super2 Series is at the Perth SuperSprint meeting at Baragello Raceway on 05-08 May...

RH

THE WORLD'S FASTEST BILLBOARD...

Your business is going downhill and losing its market share, it's costing and it's hurting, it's time to look hard at finding a solution. The giants of the business world can lose very large sums of money in a very short time before they can stop the downward spiral.

Back in the mid-1990s, American soft drink maker Pepsi-Cola found its sales graphs were heading in the wrong direction so its marketing people began looking at ways to redress the situation. It took two years to come up an answer that would be a spectacular way to introduce a new brand style onto the international market.

On 2nd April 1996 invited guests, together with then celebrities Andre Agasse, Cindy Crawford and Claudia Schiffer, assembled in a hangar at London Gatwick Airport for the company's launch of their US\$500 million re-branding project. Unveiled to the world was the Pepsi Concorde.

People were stunned to see the supersonic airliner painted dark blue with the new Pepsi logo emblazoned on the vertical tail fin and PEPSI in large letters on the front fuselage!



Following the launch function the Pepsi Concorde with the call sign 'Sierra Delta' began promotion flights to 10 cities in Europe and the Middle East, there were 14 flights in all and on each the passengers had the experience of going supersonic.

It was a bold gamble that paid off, a creative solution that matched anything the world had seen. But what did it take to make it happen?

Proposals involving Concorde operators Air France and British Airways were studied with the French carrier securing the contract, the entire project was top secret.

By late March 1996 Concorde F-BTSD was in the Air France maintenance facility at Orly Airport near Paris and the transition began while scheduled maintenance was carried out. 2,000 working hours and 200 litres of paint later the task was completed and the entire aircraft covered in brown paper to keep the livery hidden from prying eyes. Late at night on 31st March 'Sierra Delta' was rolled out onto the runway for the relatively short flight to London Gatwick where it was immediately taken to the hangar where the presentation would take place - there was also an unusual requirement with small but obvious Air France logos placed below the cockpit, an opportunity not lost on the fact that an Air France Concorde was right in the middle of British Airways's backyard!

The transformation wasn't as simple as it might sound. The aircraft was only certified with an all-white colour scheme, there were consultations between Air France and the makers Aérospatiale (formerly Sud Aviation) to find a solution as heat build-up is a critical factor at supersonic speed. The decision was made to leave the delta shaped wing white because of the fuel temperatures, speeds of Mach 2.02 could be sustained for up to 20 minutes but there was no restriction under Mach 1.70, that wasn't a problem because the scheduled flights weren't on long sectors.

Rumoured to have cost US\$200 million, the Pepsi Concorde was the high point of the re-branding exercise, it was a one-off with a short life span and when the campaign ended 'Sierra Delta' was returned to its all-white livery and regular service across the Atlantic, with no speed restrictions!

The Pepsi Concorde didn't meet with universal approval, British aviation enthusiasts thought it was sacrilege to disfigure such a beautiful aircraft. In the end, business is business and the Pepsi greenbacks helped keep the world's most famous passenger aircraft flying.

RH

Post Script:

Aérospatiale-BAC Concorde F-BTSD first flew on 26 June 1978 from Toulouse in France and holds the record for flying around the world in both directions. Westbound in 32 hours 49 minutes and 3 seconds on 12/13 October 1992, Eastbound in 31 hours 27 minutes and 49 seconds on 15/16 August 1995. 'Sierra Delta' was retired to the Museum of Air and Space at Le Bourget Airport in France on 14 June 2003 after logging 12,974 flying hours.

2017/18 STEWARTS MITRE 10 MEGA SUMMER SERIES...

The three round series began at Manfeild on 10 December, continued at Taupo on 14 January, then returned to Circuit Chris Amon for the third and final round on 08 April.

The final round drew 77 competitors across the five categories with racing taking place in ideal seasonal weather conditions. With series points at a critical stage the buzz word for many was 'Breakout', some ignored it, most didn't.

Looking at the classes and the day's highlights. The RS Cup drew a field of 12 and the major drama came in the qualifying session when Bron Bell pulled off the circuit, the problem was a completely destroyed BMC A-Series engine. Knowing what was at stake, husband Anthony immediately offered his 'sister' car, Bron recording a trio of 4th places which was enough to secure the class title. Hilary Ashworth picked up big time penalties in the Scratch and Handicap races, in between she won the Reverse Grid with no Breakout penalties, Hilary may have left the handbrake on! Jonathan Hogg managed to breakout in each race and the series ended on a high for Samantha Stanley by winning the final race. Tessa Field has been one of the standouts, making the transition from speedway to circuit racing look relatively easy, two third placings and a ninth were enough to claim second overall just 3 points ahead of the fast finishing Ernie Greenwell who ended the round with a 1st, 2nd and 5th placing against his name.

Nineteen cars contested the SF Cup 6 lappers that produced some very good racing. David Anstis took the overall honours for 'breakout of the day', picking up 80 seconds for his indiscretions on four successive laps in the Scratch race, setting the fastest laps in each event was little consolation! There were good races within each race with groups fighting for series points. New driver Stephen Samuelu again impressed but it was seasoned campaigner Graeme Bretherton who topped the SF Cup points table in a repeat of his 2016 series performance.

The IB Cup was the day's standout category. Twenty two entries that included five Taxi Cup Winter Series class cars and qualifying suggested it was going to be 'game on' when it came to race time. Point's leader Richard Clulee claimed victory in the opening Scratch race, 0.999 ahead of Andrew Johnson, with Bayley Walker close behind. In the Reverse Gridder there was an Intervention on lap 2 that resulted in 9 drivers receiving 30 second time penalties for passing under the Safety Car! The SC was off the track one lap later and the intervention probably had little or no effect on the final outcome of the race. Aaron Walker was sensational, overtaking 16 cars and crossing the line 2.4 seconds ahead of Clulee with Peter Beauchamp in third place. Peter Edmond saved his best until last to win the Handicap race from Beauchamp, Walker and Clulee, the Volvo crossing the line 4/10ths of a second ahead of the tight group. For Richard Clulee it was another Series win, backing up his success in the 2017 FAE Winter Series.

Both the Classic and GT Cup classes had small fields, 7 and 8 respectively with Ian Easton running in both, the Roush powered Mustang definitely earns its keep.



Looking at the Classic Cup, the hard luck story of the day definitely belonged to Alan Limmer, in the Scratch race the white Porsche 930 pulled off the track on the final lap with expensive looking smoke suggesting an engine problem, Alan's day was over before it hardly began! The Easton Mustang won the first two races by large margins over Layton Hammond and Richard Field who is really getting to grips with his Ford Sierra Cosworth and found some serious pace. The category's best race was the Handicap that saw the 'ebony and ivory' BMWs of Graham Moody and Stephen Marks racing either 'door handle to door handle' or 'bumper to

bumper' from the drop of the flag, swapping places on numerous occasions. Marks managed to get a small break on the final lap to claim victory with Easton closing to within 3.6 seconds of the duelling Bavarian cars after six absorbing laps. The genial Tom Lancaster picked up three 4th places in his familiar Ford Capri V8, he also picked up the silverware as the series class winner.

The GT Cup group certainly left their best until last, Brett Killip ended the day with two wins and a second, Ross Thurston winning the Reverse Grid race to spoil a possible clean sweep. Looking back there was much to talk about with one of the day's highlights being extraordinary spin achieved by Gavin Stewart when his Mazda snapped sideways off the judder bars exiting Turn 7. The 'journey' replicated that of Red Dawson's Chev Monza back in the 1970's but with the ditches long gone the wild ride was much smoother. Somehow the car came to halt without hitting anything, Gavin grabbed first gear, made his way around the tyre barrier onto the track to cross the finish line. Definitely a butt clencher!

Mr Thurston's investment in the best available gearbox for the powerful Mitsubishi Evo was rewarded with a fourth, a first and a second. Justin Allen was most impressive in the ex-Rob Trubshaw Holden Commodore that's something of a contrast for the man whose name is normally associated with Mazda rotary power. The Commodore recorded faster lap times than the Easton Mustang and the Feilding Auto Electrical team believe the car has much more potential, take it as a warning! Ian Easton and Gary McKelvie relived the battles of their old speedway saloon days but this time on a bitumen track, the # 111 Mustang finishing ahead of the superbly presented HMC Holden Monaro in all three races. Easton claimed the series category win by a very comfortable margin on the points table. Such was the driver's enthusiasm that Gavin Stewart and Gary McKelvie both received 10 second time penalties for jumping the start in their first race!

STEWARTS MITRE 10 MEGA SUMMER SERIES AWARDS

President Richie invited Andrew Stewart to present the 2017/18 Series Awards.

RS CUP

- 1 Bron Bell 516 points
- 2 Tessa Field 471
- 3 Ernie Greenwell 468

SF CUP

- 1 Graeme Bretherton 525 points
- 2 Matt Smith 422
- 3 Stephen Samuelu 402

IB CUP

- 1 Richard Clulee 509 points
- 2 David Thomsen 474
- 3 Tony Allpress 445

CLASSICS

- 1 Tom Lancaster 565 points
- 2 Graham Moody 520
- 3 Ian Easton 435

GT CUP

- 1 Ian Easton 392 points
- 2 Brent Killip 217
- 3 Mark McIntyre Jnr 209

CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS

Tom Lancaster



Classics Cup



RS Cup



SF Cup



MANAWATU CAR CLUB VOLUNTEER AWARDS

The judging was carried out by people directly involved in the specific sector areas, then ratified by the MCC Committee. As these are club awards recognising volunteer officials. The presentations were made by President Richie Arber.

ALWYN DAVIES MEMORIAL TROPHY - RESCUE MARSHALL AWARD - Bob Higgison

KIRK TROPHY - HELPER'S AWARD - Hugh Wilde

BLAIR TENNANT MEMORIAL TROPHY - OUTSTANDING CLUB PARTICIPATION - Malcolm Glen (absent)

ROSS TILSON MEMORIAL CUP - LONG SERVICE AWARD - Kaye Flannagan

SPECIAL PRESENTATION - Richie concluded the awards by making a presentation to Andrew Stewart in appreciation of the continued support of the Summer Series by Stewarts Mitre 10 Mega.

The awards night again proved what a valuable asset the revamped clubrooms are, with the staging of the event being the result of another exceptional team effort. Special mention must be made of the outstanding meal prepared by MCC house chef Aaron Walker, also the small team of 'real blokes' who without being asked descended on the kitchen and completed the dishwashing (the machine has a limited capacity) and those who remained to clean-up and put everything away. All done in minutes without fuss, job done, everyone went home at the same time...

RH



Bob Higgison



Hugh Wilde



Kaye Flannagan



Andrew Stewart



The "Real Blokes" cleaning up....

THE HARTLEY FILE...

Following the opening round in Melbourne, for Scuderia Toro Rosso and Honda there were encouraging signs as the teams headed to the hot desert of the Middle East for the Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix. STR arrived in Bahrain with the promised new aero kit and for the first day of practice the new components were fitted to the # 10 car of Pierre Gasly while Brendon had the Australian set-up, this enabled the engineers to make instant comparisons and it soon became apparent that the aerodynamic people had done their homework. Gasly finished the practice sessions in 8th place with a fastest lap of 1 minute 31.232 seconds while Brendon was 20th and last with a best 1.32.908 seconds.

Both STR cars had the new aero package for Day 2 of practice and qualifying, Brendon was quickly on the pace and the target of making the Q1 session became a distinct possibility. Gasly was right on his game and qualified 5th fastest with 1.29.329, it was delight for the 22 year old Frenchman but disappointment for the 28 year old New Zealander who ran an outstanding 1.30.105 but missed making the Top 10 by the narrowest of margins, 9/1000ths of a second to start the race from P11 on Row 6 of the grid. Qualifying wasn't without its dramas, during Q1 Brendon's car was involved in a collision with a bird that didn't survive the impact, the front wing of the car didn't survive either!

It all looked very good for Scuderia Toro Rosso come race day with both cars so far up the grid, but again there was delight for one driver and disappointment for the other. Gasly continued to impress and drove a flawless race to cross the finish line in 4th place, the highest placing for a Honda powered car since the Japanese maker entered the hybrid era in 2015 with McLaren. Understandably the Toro Rosso garage was the happiest place on Planet Earth! For Brendon the problems began on the opening lap where there was contact with Sergio Perez, the impact damaged the front wing of the # 28 STR13 and the race officials launched an investigation, Brendon was found guilty of causing the collision and was given a 10 second time penalty that would be served at the first pit stop - during the opening laps there were two other 'contacts' but no further action was taken! Strategies changed and as others made their first stops Brendon got as high as 4th place. At his stop on lap 21 the field was so close that he entered pit lane in 5th position and emerged in 18th place. Word came through of a second investigation involving Brendon and Perez, this time for not maintaining position on the formation lap. Brendon became a man on the move, up to 13th on lap 30, seven laps later it was P9 and in the points, the second tyre stop came on lap 42 which dropped # 28 back to 14th at the back of a battling group of mid-fielders for the closing laps. There was a big lunge to overtake Perez as the line approached but he missed claiming 12th by 2/100ths of a second - another 13th place to match his best F1 result on debut at the last year's US Grand Prix.

It was a historic day for the Italian team who had brought some joy for their sponsor after the Red Bull cars of Max Verstappen and Daniel Ricciardo were out of the race by lap 5! But much of the shine was taken of the celebrations when the outcome of the official's post-race investigation was released. Brendon was deemed to have contravened the formation lap regulations when he was passed during the green flag lap by Sergio Perez and unable to resume his correct position until they returned to the starting grid. As a result of the misunderstanding he was handed a further 30 second penalty, it was added to his overall race time and P13 became P17. Despite the setbacks



there were many positives. The new Honda package was proving to be very good in terms of power and reliability, the Toro Rosso aerodynamicists are up with the best of them and the car has very good race pace. Brendon's times improved with each outing over the weekend and he recorded the 10th fastest race lap. Brendon - *'An amazing day for Toro Rosso but a disappointing day for me. I had a good start and first couple of corners but had a small contact with Perez in Turn 4. This not only damaged my front wing for the remainder of the race but I was also given a 10 second time penalty. We had the pace to be comfortably in the points without the penalty so it was a bit frustrating. A big thanks to all at Toro Rosso and Honda, it has been an amazing turn around since Melbourne which bodes well for the next few races'*.

From Sakhir it was onto Shanghai for the following weekend's Heineken Chinese Grand Prix, in Brendon's words *'a weekend to forget'*.

Weather wise it was very difficult, there were high winds that changed direction during the practice sessions, there was a heavy overnight rain storm, while on race day the track temperature almost doubled! The Shanghai track has the longest straight of any grand prix circuit (1.2 kms / ¾ mile) so wind direction can be very influential with the cars being faster in a head wind. FP1 ended with Gasly 11th fastest (1.36.037) and Brendon 16th (1.36.715), Gasly leading a group of nine cars that were within one second of each other. With revised car set-ups times improved in FP2 with Gasly down to 1.34.859 (12th) and Brendon 1.35.333 (15th) with five cars behind him. For FP3 the following day the thunderstorm had washed the rubber away so the track was 'green' again, there was a 180 degree shift in the wind direction and a much warmer track temperature, the outcome was that times dropped significantly for the mid-fielders. In a team reversal Brendon improve his best time to 1.34.991 for 15th place on the grid, 0.250 away from grid 10, the first target for the season. Two positions back was Gasly, both STR drivers being close to two seconds slower than Sebastian Vettel who clocked a 1.33.018 - the Ferrari driver went on to claimed pole position with a time of 1.31.095, a clear indication of how competitive it is in Formula 1.



The warmer weather brought changes in team strategies, both Brendon and Gasly started the race with different approaches in an effort to quickly improve on their lowly grid positions, for Brendon it meant starting on 'Ultrasoft' compound tyres, but they offered poor levels of grip which necessitated an early pit stop. His car simply didn't have the pace to match and catch those ahead of him. On lap 31 Brendon was hit by his team mate which sent the # 28 STR into a half spin, the incident being put down to 'miscommunication'. The collision brought out the Safety Car so the carbon fragments from Gasly's front wing could be cleared from the track, the

Frenchman receiving a 10 second time penalty which resulted in him being classified as finishing in 18th position. It was an incident that would have a significant impact on the eventual outcome of the race. A frustrating day ended on Lap 51.

Brendon - *'It was a tough day for us, at the beginning of the race I had no grip on the Ultrasofts so that compromised our strategy. Starting near the back of the grid we tried alternating strategies to give us a better chance but unfortunately that didn't work. I think the accident with Pierre was down to a miscommunication. The team asked us to swap positions because we were on completely different strategies, so I was to let him by on the exit of Turn 14 like I did at the start of the race. The second time we had to change positions I planned to do the same but I got hit from behind at the apex. Then towards the end of the race I had to retire because the team saw an issue with the gearbox. In the end it was a long afternoon'.*

Following a two week break the F1 Show assembled in Baku for the Azerbaijan Grand Prix. For the benefit of those not strong on geography, Azerbaijan has a coastline on the Caspian Sea and land borders with Russia, Georgia, Armenia, Iran and Turkey. Baku is the country's capital, a curious mix of an old medieval walled city mixed with modern and ultra-modern buildings that look like they belong to Abu Dhabi, all sited 28 metres below sea level. The 6.11 kilometre long Hermann Tilke designed circuit through the streets of Baku has 20 turns, the layout including an extremely narrow uphill section with a very high speed 2.2 kilometre section along the city's promenade that incorporates one of the longest straights in F1. Following an on-foot lap to study the layout and road surface Brendon described it as *'a bit tight'*. Both the FP1 and FP2 sessions brought problems right across the board with drivers from world champion Lewis Hamilton down flat spotting tyres and using escape roads, on three occasions Brendon had to select reverse gear to back-up and get his car back on the right road!



As usual teams were running different configurations during the first day so times are not indicative of each driver's true level of performance. At the end of FP1 the two STR cars were split by 0.255 of a second with Pierre Gasly posting the 9th fastest time and Brendon three spots back. When the 90 minute FP2 session ended the pair were separated by 0.339, Gasly in P15, again three positions ahead of his team mate and nearly 1½ seconds slower than Kimi Raikkonen at the top of the time sheet. Brendon - *'Love the track here at Baku. Always lots of adrenaline in my veins driving a F1 car but when you're millimetres from the walls, or sometimes kissing them, there is much more, it's a nice feeling'.*

Onto the critical FP3, and even more critical Qualifying. Conditions were far from easy with strong gusty winds upsetting the stability of the cars and lower track temperatures. For many their best time was recorded when they were able to pick up a 'draft' on the long high speed waterfront section of the circuit. For STR there wasn't a good outcome with neither driver looking potential Top10 material at the end of FP3, Gasly was 13th quickest,

1.882 seconds away from P1 and more than a second faster than Hartley in 20th place. Gasly's car was third on the speed trap list so time wasn't being lost in terms of straight line pace. The pressure was on and it was about to get much worse in Q1 where the word 'miscommunication' surfaced again. The final minutes of the short qualifying sessions are the most frantic periods of the weekend with teams rolling their dice for prime grid positions. On the track it's fast and furious with the driver's 100% committed looking for that elusive 10th or 100th of a second improvement, it's the danger zone.

For Scuderia Toro Rosso Q1 proved to be a near disaster. Near the end of the session Brendon punctured a front tyre and that set off a chain of events. He hadn't put a lap on the board because there were yellow flags and wasn't aware that Gasly was on a flying lap - *'I clipped the inside wall and through the left hander (the track's fastest corner) I knew I had an issue and slowed down, I was unaware Pierre was so close behind me. Obviously I was going at half speed, trying to figure how bad the problem was and I completely messed it up. The problem is, with the walls, you don't see them coming. I made a big mistake, I'm sorry for him. I owe him a big apology for getting in the way and nearly causing a huge accident. I'm disappointed how that went down. Not a good day'*. Pierre Gasly was an angry young Frenchman on the team radio, but calmed down back in his garage - *'It was really scary, the scariest moment of my career. I didn't know if he was going left or right. I don't know what happened to Brendon, he slowed down massively, I was at 320 kmh and, honestly ... he almost stopped, I tried to avoid him and I was sure I was going to crash. I could already see myself in the air, I don't know how I avoided it, but it was a pretty scary moment. I'm sure it wasn't on purpose, maybe next time we need a bigger gap between our two cars'*.

The expert television commentators explained the build-up to the incident in detail and the problems caused by the puncture on the fastest corner which cleared Brendon of any deliberate intent, it has to be remembered that it all happened in a very short space of time. The the end result of Q1 was that Gasly would start in P17, but starting the race wasn't as straightforward for Brendon. He and Romain Grosjean had failed to set a Q1 time within the 107% requirement and only took their place on the grid at the discretion of the Stewards! It wasn't a very good day at the office.



Race day was not going to be easy either with the wind changing direction and gusts of up to 80 kilometres an hour and F1 cars do not like cross winds. The race was billed as the '**Street Fighters Showdown in Barku**', it was an inspired choice of title. The first Safety Car Intervention came at the end of Lap 1 so the track could be cleared of the debris from a number of collisions, the STR cars avoided the dramas and Brendon completed the opening lap in 15th place, at the end of Lap 2 he was 13th when cars pitted to replace damaged front wings. The Honda powered pair simply didn't have the necessary race pace but their steady

approach and keeping out of trouble paid a big dividend in the end. On Lap 40 the two duelling Red Bulls Verstappen and Ricciardo KO'd each other in spectacular style, the Safety Car returned and stayed out for the next seven laps before the pack was unleashed again for a three lap sprint to the flag. Vettel outbraked himself going for the lead, Bottas was in front and punctured which handed Hamilton an unlikely win! While all eyes were following the drama among the leaders, further back Brendon created his own piece of history when he

crossed the line in 10th place with Gasly two places behind after a late race incident involving another car and the unforgiving wall.

For Brendon it was a day to remember for all the right reasons - his first Top 10 F1 finish that brought his first F1 World Championship point, and the first New Zealand driver to score a WC point since his boyhood hero and later friend Chris Amon finished sixth in the 1976 Spanish Grand Prix, 42 years earlier. In sharp contrast to 24 hours earlier, it was a very good day at the office.

Red Bull motorsport supremo Dr Helmut Marko was there to watch all the dramas of the Baku weekend unfold, he certainly would not have been happy with the antics of Messrs Ricciardo and Verstappen, but would have had a wry smile thinking about the performance and achievement of the driver in car # 28. Brendon - *'That was an interesting race! From my point of view, I kept it clean but we really didn't have the pace today to challenge in the midfield. In the areas we needed to overtake we just couldn't get close enough. There was a lot of drama around me but I managed to keep my nose clean and take home my first World Championship point in F1, which is great! It was important for me to get to the end of the race today - especially after yesterday! I think at times during the race the pace was OK, but on the Ultrasoft tyre at the end I didn't feel I could challenge the cars in front. I would have loved to attack a bit more but let's be happy with a point on the board'*.

While the car may lack outright pace, the combination of the STR13 and Honda is proving to be reliable. Honda F1 technical Director Toyoharu Tanabe - *'The whole package lacked top speed today, more so than on the first two days and we must now look at the cause of that. However, it is clear that part of the reason for this is that we are still slightly down on power compared to our rivals. We knew this and are working hard on development to improve, while not compromising the reliability of the PU units'*.



Brendon left Azerbaijan with ticks in two important boxes, the Top 10 grid position remains a work in progress. The month of May includes two F1 races, the Spanish GP at Barcelona on the 13th and Monaco GP on the 27th, throw into the mix that May is Indy 500 month with practice and qualifying followed by the race itself at 4am (NZ time) on Sunday 28th, live on ESPN.

That's about as good as it gets for open-wheel enthusiasts...

RH



THE MANAWATU CAR CLUB CONGRATULATES

BRENDON HARTLEY

**ON SECURING HIS FIRST FORMULA 1 WORLD
CHAMPIONSHIP POINT**

AZERBAIJAN GRAND PRIX

30 APRIL 2018



HILL CLIMBING HAS A LONG HISTORY...

For today's generation the discipline of Hill Climbing means very little in historical terms, but in fact it is one of the oldest forms of motorsport with the first known event being held more than 120 years ago.

The date was 31 January 1897, the venue was La Turbie near Nice in Southern France, but the claim to being the first actual 'hill climb' is disputed by some because it was the final 'uphill stage' of a three-day event that began in Marseille. Whatever, the climb to La Turbie was 16 kilometres long with the fastest time set by a 15HP De Dion Bouton steam car that covered the distance in 31 minutes and 50 seconds.

The concept of the La Turbie event caught the attention of the Automobile Club de France (A.C.F.) and late the following year a true hill climb was staged at Chanteloupe-les-Vignes near Paris. The chosen course contrasted to La Turbie, it measured only 1.8 kilometres in length but was relatively steep with sections having gradients of up to 11%. There were 95 names on the entry list, 54 faced the starter and only a handful failed to finish.

The winner was Camille Jenatzy driving an electric Postel-Vinay Dog Cart that weighed 1,800 kilograms, his time was 3 minutes 52 seconds. Forty-eighth and last was 6HP Delahaye that completed the course in a more leisurely 22 minutes and 15 seconds. Known as the 'Red Devil' because of the colour of his beard, Jenatzy was from Belgium and the only non-Frenchman in the field, he won the event again the following year and later became the first driver to break the 60 kilometre an hour barrier to set a new world land speed record.



In the same year the first climb event took place in England on Petersham Hill at Richmond-on-Thames. Forty competitors tackled the 325 yard hill that had a 12 mile an hour speed restriction, the winning vehicle was a Barriere Tricycle which 'only just infringed the law with an average speed of 14 miles an hour'. The fastest car managed 8.75 mph, a Panhard-Levassor driven by one of the most famous names in motoring history, the Hon. Charles Stewart Rolls. It was reported at the time that the most exciting part of the event was the descent after the finish when 'speeds were considerably in excess of the vehicle's braking capabilities'.

There was little fear of exceeding the speed limit in England's second event at Mucklow Hill, thanks to country's changing weather, the event was held in snow! The course was one mile long and the winner's time an eventful 9 minutes and 2.4 seconds

In 1902 a climb was established at Mont Ventoux near Avignon and at the time was extremely challenging, being 21.6 kilometres long with a rise of 1,612 metres to the finish at the summit. Driving a 70 HP Panhard Levassor Paul Chauchard won the inaugural event with a time of 27 minutes 17 seconds, and it was French drivers in French cars that dominated the hill for the next 21 years, the only 'foreigner' to win during the period was Italian Alessandro Cagno who took the honours in the 1905 climb driving a Fiat. Between 1931 and 1967 eight grand prix drivers won at Mont Ventoux before the last climb on the full course took place in 1973, the record time standing at 10 min 0.5 secs, an average speed at 129.429 km/h, set by Peter Schetty in 1969.



The initial growth of the sport in Britain was extraordinary, by the end of 1903 there were 26 hill climb courses dotted around the country, all on public roads that weren't always closed for the competition. The answer to that problem was resolved by the Midland Automobile Club who persuaded a land owner to let them use 1,000

yards of his private driveway to stage an event. That venue was Shelsley Walsh and the first event was staged on 12 August 1905.

Shelsley Walsh was relatively short, was narrow in parts (3.66 metres) and was steep, rising 100 metres over its length with the steepest section being 1 in 6.24 (16%). Such was the gradient of the gravel road that in the earliest days there were doubts that some cars would make it to the summit!



At that time hill climbs were not referred to as 'speed' events because performance was rated with a formula based on power, which meant that cars of 20 hp or more had to have four seats and carry passengers! Mr Ernest Instone won the first event driving a 8.5 litre 35hp Daimler, stopping the clock after 77.6 seconds for an average speed of 42.08 km/h (26.15 mph). The 'formula' was withdrawn in 1913 which made specialised racing vehicles eligible and the FTD was 55.2 seconds, in the 1930's the course was sealed and international events were held which drew the big names, the times tumbled and in the last meeting before the outbreak of WW2 Raymond Mays set a new record of 37.37s

second at the wheel of his ERA. By 1992 the record stood at 25.34, 10 years later the 'magic' 25 second barrier was broken and the current record set in 2008 stands at 22.58 seconds.

While France can rightly claim to be the birthplace of hill climbing, England can claim that Shelsley Walsh is the world's oldest surviving motorsport venue, but the 'hill' in Worcestershire has other historical significance. Stirling Moss would have made his competition debut there in 1947 except for one thing, the entry list was full! He won a year later. It was where famous commentator Murray Walker began his career behind the microphone and there are New Zealand connections, popular Englishman Ken Wharton broke the hill record on four occasions before he tragically died following a crash in a NZGP support sports car race at Ardmore in 1957, while between 1967 and 1978 the ladies course record was held by Patsy Burt driving a McLaren Oldsmobile.



Just six years after the sport was introduced to Britain many venues closed as interest focused on racing with the opening of the Brooklands Motor Course in 1907, a track with its own place in motor racing history. Built around the perimeter of an airfield, Brooklands was the world's first purpose built circuit, 4.4 kilometres long with banking on some corners. Racing continued at the track until the beginning of WW2 when the facility became an aircraft factory, but there is one fascinating aspect of motor racing at Brooklands in the earlier days. Like horse racing, for quick and easy identification the drivers wore jockey's silks and bookmakers operated betting systems!



But it wasn't all bad news, a small number of major events like Shelsley Walsh continued, so too did Aston Hill in Hertfordshire whose major claim to fame is that it was the place after which Lionel Martin named his famous Aston Martin marque. Manufacturers became involved with 'works' entries from makes like Humber, Rover, Riley and Singer. Public interest in climbs was rekindled at the end of WW1 with events drawing crowds of between 4,000 and 5,000 spectators to watch the top drivers tackle courses on roads that were in less than ideal condition, but the war did have

a side-affect because the competing cars were mainly British with vehicle's from 'enemy' countries being refused entry, the exceptions were the French Bugattis.

It was a sport with the curiosity factor that had wide appeal, but only in England would you see a gentleman entrant being driven by his fully uniformed chauffeur!

By the mid-20's there were problems, serious problems. For organisers crowd control became a major problem, the public were involved in a number of accidents, competitions on roads ended in April 1925 and for hill climbers there were only two events a year, both at Shelsley Walsh.



The arrival of the 1930's brought better news when several new hill climb courses appeared, the best known being Prescott, and the spectators were treated to watching cars that were 'specials' one of the most famous being John Bolster's 'Bloody Mary' that was mentioned in Trevor's 'EDITORSPEAK' in the MCC January magazine.

Hill climbing became more serious as the Europeans and English continued to embrace the form of motoring competition, but there were big differences. The British preference was for short courses, the longest being Cairncastle in Northern Ireland that measured only 2.65 kilometres (1.65 miles) from start to finish. The Europeans preferred long mountainous courses, mostly in the famous Alps, and with the continent being the stronghold of the sport it probably explains why there has never been a European Hill Climb Championship round in the United Kingdom.

The 1930's were a great era for hill climb enthusiasts as it was the period of the mighty grand prix Auto Unions and Mercedes Benz with top factory drivers like Bernd Rosemeyer, Hans Stuck, Rudolf Caracciola and Tazio Nuvolari regularly appearing at the major European climbs. Countries spread right across the continent were hosting events and the European Hill Climb Championship was established in 1930 by the Association Internationale des Automobile Clubs Reconnus (A.I.A.C.R.), the predecessor of today's F.I.A. It was these climbs that attracted a huge following with tens of thousands of spectators and there were meetings that became part of hill climbing folklore.

The stand-out driver of the era was national hero Hans Stuck who won the inaugural European Championship with victory in five of the 10 rounds driving a Dr Ferdinand Porsche designed Austro Daimler. The Austrian born German enjoyed great success and is possibly best remembered in hill climbing history for his 1938 win at Feleac in Romania when he powered his Auto Union through the 7 kilometre long twisting gravel course in 2 minutes and 56 seconds, a record that was never beaten despite a number of attempts during the 1970's before the road was deemed unsuitable for racing.



Known as the 'King of the Mountains', Stuck had an extraordinary record of success during a career that spanned nearly forty years between 1924 and 1963, there were a remarkable 427 victories before he retired at 60 years of age.

The Stuck name also has a strong link to our country. His son Hans Joachim Stuck became a top driver in his own right and co-drove with Chris Amon in rounds of the 1973 European Touring Car Championship driving a factory BMW 3.0 CSL. There was a DNF at the Le Mans 24 Hour but the highly rated pair won the Nurburgring 6-Hour

raced on the 22.85 kilometre long Nordschleife circuit, the first outing of the 'Batmobile'. Many years later Stuck described Amon as 'the best driver I ever shared with, I learned a lot from him'.

In Europe one of the most famous courses was the 17.3 kilometre long Trento-Bondone in the Italian Alps that has an average gradient of 7.9%. The first competition event was held in July 1925 and is still held annually with a big entry. It was once described as 'an absurdly dramatic climb' and until the public road was sealed it would definitely have been challenging for the most powerful cars, they were the days when medals should have been awarded to drivers for bravery!

With today's technology you can appreciate what a challenge the Trento-Bondone was, and still is. Simply google 'Assetto Corsa, LaFerrari on Trento Bondone Hillclimb', the run takes 12 minutes and a few seconds, and the V12 sound track isn't bad either!

Following WW2 hill climbing in Europe became more of a 'specialist' type of event, the big name drivers were concentrating on grand prix and sports car racing so much lesser known names became the new stars, though they were well known in their home countries.

The injection the sport needed came in the late 1950's when Porsche arrived on the scene with full factory support for Edgar Barth, the East German winning the 1959 title, three years later there was a second injection of interest when Ferrari became involved, works driver Ludovico Scarfiotti won the championship in 1962 and the following year scored victories in the Le Mans 24 Hour and 1,000 kilometre Nurburgring endurance races - it was successes like these that did much to enhance the glamour and reputation of hill climbing in the eyes of the public.

Scarfiotti got his second victory in 1966 and also triumphed in the F1 Italian Grand Prix at Monza, Gerhard Mitter headed the Porsche challenge and was joined by Abarth driver Hans Hermann to form a three car battle for top honours, the crowds returned to the hills in droves to witness the intense duels but Scarfiotti lost his life two years later after crashing during a hill climb in the German Alps.



However, Ferrari had caught the climbing bug and in 1969 entered a car that caused massive interest everywhere it appeared, the unique Ferrari 212 E Montagna. It was a one-off Dino 206 S open sports racer repowered by a 2-litre version of the 1.5 litre flat 12 engine used by John Surtees to win the 1964 F1 World Championship. Chris Amon did the initial testing of the Montagna in late 1967, there was a further programme the following year but the car wasn't thought to be reliable enough to be run in endurance events, so the full focus of its development switched to the European Hill Climb Championship with its short winding courses.

Swiss hill climb exponent Peter Schetty completed the testing and with his previous experience was the obvious driver choice. The combination proved to be unbeatable in 1969, seven victories from seven starts, six outright

course records, the championship trophy, game over. The Ferrari 212E Montagna laid the foundation and evolved into the 3-litre 312PB that dominated and won the 1972 World Sports Car Championship, with Schetty in the role of Scuderia Ferrari Team Manager.

Perhaps that period was the high point of the 'modern' European Championship. Today there are categories for single-seaters, Sports Cars, Silhouette and Touring cars but it remains but a shadow of the glory days. Historically, the European Hill Climb Championship is the oldest of the FIA Championships still running.

It was a different story across the English Channel. The 1960s saw two of the four-wheel-drive grand prix cars taken out of museums and given a second life in the British Hill Climb Championship, they were better suited to climbing because of the massive traction advantage they enjoyed on the short courses. The Fergusson P99 won the title in 1964 and the BRM P67 in 1967, ironically for both cars their competition careers actually finished on a winning note!

A decade later British designers/constructors began producing specialist hill climbing open wheel and sports cars.

Leading the way was Mike Pilbeam (responsible for the BRM P67) who quickly realised it was a sport that's about 'horses for courses', as a result his cars were powered by four, six or eight cylinder engines. Pilbeam chassis dominated the British Championship over a period of two decades before David Gould arrived on the scene in 2000. Like Pilbeam, Gould cars have used a variety of engines in the quest to win the championship.

Visually, hill climb open wheelers show little resemblance to Formula 1 cars, simplicity and lightweight are the name of the game, they are a science in their own right. The Pilbeam looked very similar to the Formula Holden cars that raced here during the 90's and continued until their demise in 2007, the Gould looks a slimmed-down version.

If you go back to the mid-1970's there was another New Zealand link to the British championship. At that time Roy Lane was one of the most prominent drivers in the UK, during his career he won more than 90 championship rounds. In 1974 Lane took delivery of a brand new GM1 from Graham McRae's factory at Poole in Dorset, driving chassis '012' he won back-to-back championships in 1975 and 1976.

But hill climbing wasn't restricted to Britain and Europe. Pre-1920 it had been embraced by America and eventually found its way across two of the US borders into Canada and Mexico. In the last decade the sport has seen events being staged in South Africa and Kenya, a case of better late than never!

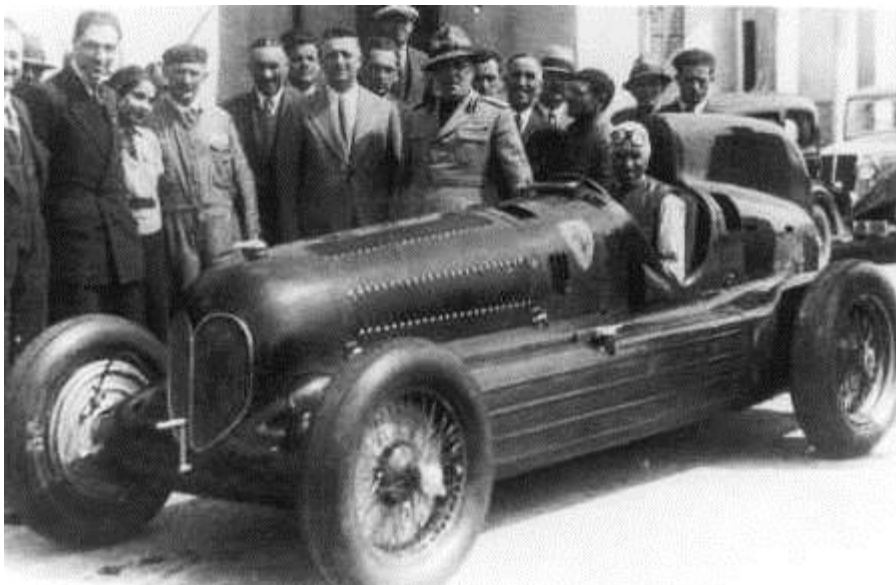
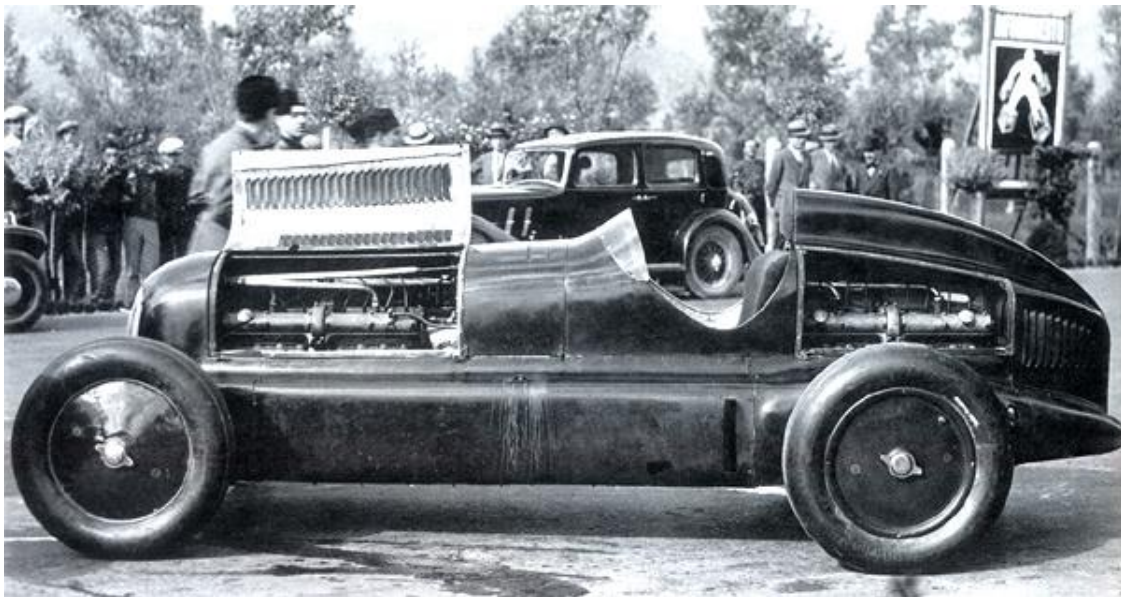
Part 2 next month will look at 'Hill Climbing in the three 'A's - Australia, America and Aotearoa'...



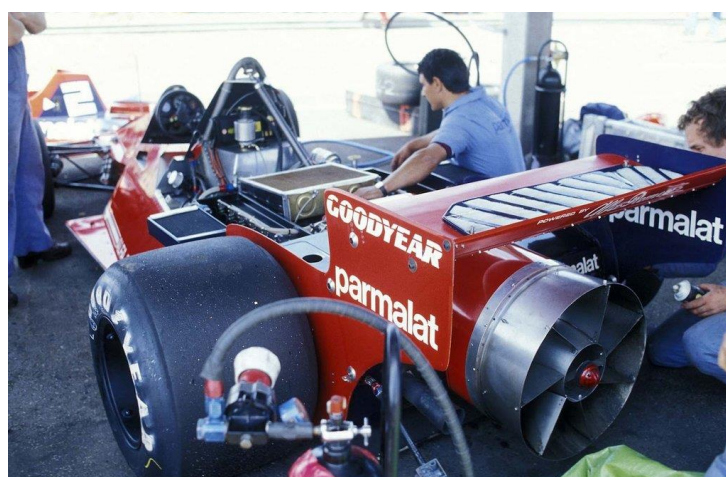
YET MORE WACKY RACERS...

Continuing to look at the unusual vehicles our sport has thrown up

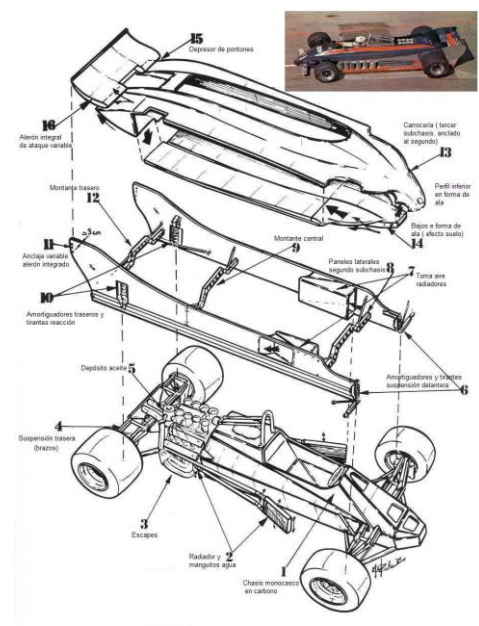
The Alfa Romeo Bimotore was one of those great ideas on paper that didn't quite make the transition to the track. Conceived by Alfa as it's star faded in the early 1930s, it was to be the answer to the dominant Silver Arrows from Mercedes and Auto Union on the superfast tracks such as Tripoli and Avus. Scuderia Ferrari were tasked to build the car and Luigi Bossi designed a chassis based on the current P3, but lengthened to accommodate 2 supercharged straight 8 engines, one in the conventional position in front of the driver, the other behind him. Both drove a centre diff from which power was supplied to the rear wheels by twin driveshafts forming a Y. Fuel was in tanks between the wheels. With 6.3 litres and 540 bhp they were entered for the 1935 Formula Libre Tripoli race, driven by Nuvolari and Chiron. They were fast, but Nuvolari was in for new tyres after 25 miles of racing (3 laps), then 4 laps later. While he eventually finished 4th the Achilles heel had been exposed, they were simply too thirsty and too hard on tyres. While one was used for a World 1km record of 321 kph, they were essentially mothballed. One was broken up by the factory, the other sold to Arthur Dobson in England. He raced it then sold it to Peter Aitken who removed the rear engine and further modified the car. It eventually found its way to NZ when John McMillan bought it for the engine. The chassis suffered through various owners before ending up with a 6 cylinder GMC truck engine. Eventually Gavin Bain realised what the car was and rescued it from oblivion. He later swapped it (the story is cloudy) with Tom Wheatcroft who restored it to its original form and put it on display at his amazing Donnington Collection.



The Brabham BT 46B was an attempt by Gordon Murray to combat the Lotus 78 with its revolutionary ground effects package. The BT46 was designed with Murrays signature trapezoidal chassis and was initially tested with flat panel heat exchangers in place of conventional radiators for the Alfa Romeo flat 12 engine, though the cars never raced in this form. Lotus had discovered the effects of an underpod venturi in 1977 and the Lotus 78 had exploited the extra downforce to dominate the season, let down only by mechanical failures. Murray had, by early 1978, begun to grasp what Chapman and Wright had done, but the bulky Alfa engine precluded a full length venturi, and the chassis was the wrong shape, so taking his cue from the 1970 Chaparral 2J "sucker car" (see last month) he devised a method to extract air from beneath the car to gain the same downforce benefits. Though the rules stated that moveable aerodynamic devices were illegal, Brabham argued that the primary reason for the fan was to draw air through a horizontal radiator above the engine, which was legal. That the car had sliding skirts to seal the rear and the air within was also removed was merely a fortuitous by-product !! The fan was driven by the engine through a series of clutches, so that the more the engine revved, the faster it spun, and blipping the throttle in pit lane produced a noticeable lowering of the car. The car was ready to race in Sweden in June, and ended up winning by over ½ a minute, with Lauda driving around the outside of Andretti at one point. Immediately the other teams protested and though it was declared legal, Brabham withdrew the cars from further races as the CSI took measures to ban it.



Lotus, having pioneered ground effects, were at the forefront through to 1981 as g forces increased, moveable skirts were banned and a minimum 6cm ground clearance mandated. While other teams, notably Brabham, used hydropneumatic suspension to lower the car under aero load in a bid to get around the new rules, Colin Chapman and Peter Wright at Lotus did something truly revolutionary. They invented a twin chassis car. The Lotus T88 cleverly isolated the ground effect underbody and sidepods from the sprung part of the car, connecting them directly to the outboard ends of the lower suspension members, thus ensuring an improved ride for the driver, and no loss of downforce. The secondary chassis therefore was the monocoque, with engine, suspension and gearbox, softly sprung, while the primary chassis, the bodywork, sidepods, wings and undertray were stiffly sprung and placed around the secondary chassis. In effect, the car was one giant ground effects system without conventional wings. "We wanted the second chassis to go down fast, and come up slowly, to ensure it stayed down if speeds dropped momentarily. It needed very soft bump damping, and very stiff rebound. We found these characteristics in the type of pressurized gas strut used for hoods and tailgates on road cars and found a supplier who was prepared to tailor the exact characteristics we required," Wright detailed. Needless to say the other teams immediately protested on the grounds that it breached the "moveable aerodynamic devices" regulations, and despite Chapman being resolute that it didn't the FIA ruled against it. I have to say after close up viewing of the car that I side with Chapman.



LOOKING BACK...



Sometimes, in motor racing, it just goes pear shaped.

Clockwise from top left

- Even the mighty Jim Richards makes the occasional mistake. Here at Levin in October 1973 his Team McMillan Falcon GT shows the scars of a trip into the horse rail and fencing during a close fought Castrol GTX race.
- Gary Sprague's Charger E49, likewise at Levin, but in October 1975, shows similar scars after a practice incident and some panel beating prior to the race.
- Don Scott's Monaro at Manfeild in 1975, rubbing is racing??
- Barbara Hatfield made a mess of her Mini 7 after rolling it comprehensively at Manfeild in 1975. It sits forlornly in pit lane.

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PARTING SHOT...



Looking sharp Mr Hartley. Hugo Boss suit, M2 photo.