

Manawatu Car Club Inc

MAGAZINE

February 2020



Something for Everyone



I recently received an email from a Club member of some 4 years standing which stopped me dead in my tracks. This unfortunate member had only last month discovered (and then only by chance) that the Club actually published a magazine. I'm not sure how he had slipped through, however the constructive criticism and advice he offered has resulted in a review of how we communicate with our members. Look forward to a covering letter with your membership card renewal which will explain some of the "ins and outs" of the Club that us old hands maybe take for granted (this will also be sent to all new members) and more use of Facebook to advise of, for example, the magazine going live. This should hopefully capture ALL our members and open it up for any others that may be interested. Thanks Trent, for taking the time to highlight an issue none of us was aware of, rest assured the Committee realise that effective communication with our members, and the wider community, is a cornerstone to the Club's continued success.

There's an old saying "the more things change, the more they stay the same". I was reminded of this recently when reading a book called "Fifty Years with Motor Cars" by A.F.C. Hillstead. Hillstead was one of the founding members of Bentley Motors, manufacturers of the quintessential English "between wars" sports car. His experience with selling cars went back to the very early 1900's and he was involved with W.O. and H.M. Bentley long before the Bentley marque was created. He left the firm in 1926 and it sadly folded in 1931, to be bought and resurrected by Rolls Royce. I'm sure many of you know the story. Anyway, I found the following passage rather interesting - "motor racing had not yet become a highly organised business which paid little heed to sportsmanship". This was a remark made about the pre WW2 Le Mans races, and written in 1960, so even when it was written it was pre sponsorship advertising on cars, hospitality areas, mobile billboard transporters, huge grandstands, organised campgrounds and side shows. What would he have thought about today's 24 Hours scene??

Sportsmanship is something that still seems to be in ready supply at the lower, more friendly, levels of our sport, but sadly appears to diminish the further up the ladder you go. Why I wonder?? (that's rhetorical question by the way). Is it because the "sport" gets more and more commercialised as you ascend?? Certainly, driver behaviour, even at the very top, is often not setting a good example for beginners to the sport. For example, I find it abhorrent that there is even a need for a rule which specifies how many times you can swerve across the track to intentionally block an opponent, that is most certainly not encouraging sporting behaviour. And that, in reality, is just the tip of the iceberg. Watching the carnage at the TRS rounds this year brought home just how little respect for others these young heroes are taught. I know it's a cut throat development series but even self-preservation seems to go out the window if there's even half a chance of gaining a place in some suicidal manoeuvre. Perhaps that's why I enjoy rallying – just you and the scenery, and if you get it wrong then you have to take responsibility because there's no other clowns to stuff it up for you!!

Apologies for the late publication this month, your major contributors have all had fairly sizable upheavals in the last month and sadly something had to give, and that was getting the magazine out on time. I promise I will do better next time. Honest.



That's it from me this month. Keep the rubber side down

TW



FEBRUARY 2020

Friday 14 th	NZ Grand Prix test day
Saturday 15 th	NZGP Day 1
Sunday 16 th	NZGP Day2
Friday 28 th	February FlatFoot test day
Saturday 29 th	February FlatFoot Leap Day 1



MARCH 2020

Sunday 1 st	February FlatFoot + Mitre 10 MEGA Summer Race Series Round 3
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APRIL 2020

Saturday 4 th	Transpec / GT Oil - Manfeild Open Day
Sunday 5 th	Mitre 10 MEGA Summer Race Series Round 4 (Final)
Saturday 18 th	Mitre 10 MEGA Summer Series Prizegiving



MAY

Saturday 5 th	Alfa May Madness
Saturday 16 th	Drift Tutoring Main track



JUNE

Saturday 6 th	MCC Test Day
Sunday 7 th	Feilding Auto Electrical Winter Series Round 1
Friday 12 th	North Island Endurance Race Driver Series practice day
Saturday 13 th	North Island Endurance Race Driver Series Round 3
Sunday 21 st	Transpec/GT Oils Manfeild 4.5km Bent Sprint
Saturday 27 th	Drift Practice Main Track



JULY

Saturday 4 th	MCC Test Day
Sunday 5 th	Feilding Auto Electrical Winter Series Round 2
Sunday 19 th	Transpec / GT Oil - Manfeild Open Day

AUGUST

Saturday 1 st	MCC Test Day
Sunday 2 nd	Feilding Auto Electrical Winter Series Round 3
Sunday 16 th	Transpec / GT Oil - Back Track Autocross
Saturday 22 nd	Drift Tutoring Main Track

SEPTEMBER

Saturday 12 th	MCC Test Day
Sunday 13 th	Feilding Auto electrical Winter Series Round 4
Saturday 19 th	Feilding Auto Electrical Winter Series Prize Giving
Sunday 20 th	Transpec / GT Oil - Manfeild Open Day

OCTOBER

Saturday 10 th	Drift Tutoring Main Track
Friday 16 th	Manfeild Test Day
Saturday 17 th	OctoberFAST! Day 1
Sunday 18 th	OctoberFAST! Day 2

NOVEMBER

Sunday 8 th	Manfeild Open Day
Friday 13 th	MG Classic Test Day
Saturday 14 th	MG Classic Meeting Day 1
Sunday 15 th	MG Classic Meeting Day 2
Saturday 21 st	ShowVember



DECEMBER

Friday 4th Manfeild Test Day
Saturday 5th NZ Superkarts Nationals
Sunday 6th Mitre 10 MEGA Summer Series Round 1

Manawatu Car Club 72nd Annual General Meeting

The AGM is to be held at the Manawatu Car Club Clubrooms
120 Kawa Kawa Road, Feilding
Wednesday, 26th February 2020 @ 7.30 pm sharp.

**All financial members should attend.
This is the most important meeting of the year.**



0800 025 552 or 021 509 221

Mark & Rachel O'Connor
loos@geckoenvironmental.co.nz
Septic Tank Clearing & Portaloo Hire

Suppliers of Portaloo's to the Manawatu Car Club

"Track & Yak"

Time: 7pm to 9pm

Date: Tuesday 11th February 2020.

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

**So why not pop down and have a chat about what is happening
on and off of the track.**



President: Richie Arber - 027 2900 668
Email: president@manawatucarclub.org.nz



Vice President / Treasurer: Tim Wilde - 0274 729 664
Email: accounts@manawatucarclub.org.nz



Club Secretary / Events Manager: Jeff Braid - 027 477 3337
Email: info@manawatucarclub.org.nz

Your 2019 Committee:



Jill Hogg



Noel Beale



Jaron Olivecrona



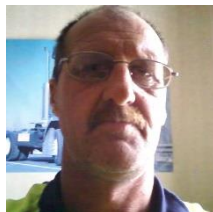
Greg Browne



Gareth Stanley



Aaron Walker



Phillip Keith



Kaye Flannagan



Sean Browne

Club Patrons: Robert Lester, Terry Rush, Russell Harris, Brian Davies

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



So I finished with TR Group on the 5th January and then had three weeks off to spend with the family and bond with our new baby girl Emily, and to support both Lydia and Jack as things were going to change and get busy very quickly. Jack and I spent the three weeks doing guy stuff, mainly out in the Mancave, away from the girls. We would have breakfast together in the morning (sometimes before dawn) and then grab a shower together, I would then ask Jack what he wanted to wear for the day... Buzz Lightyear pajama's... sure, why not... we would then disappear outside for a few hours until the hunger set in then we would head inside for a snack before retiring to the bedroom to enjoy a snooze together. A couple of times I would fall asleep before Jack and I would wake up to him already out in the lounge waiting for me to surface. We had lots of fun together and when you throw in a lot of visits from family and friends to see us... and the new addition obviously, and I can honestly say that it was the best three weeks of my life...



As I write this Emily has just clicked over a month old, whew that went quick! Jack absolutely adores her, in fact he climbs up on the couch and puts his arms out and says "cuddles", not for Mum and Dad but for Emily, so we place her in his arms and he kisses her on the head and smiles... It definitely warms the heart to see this.

I went back to work on the 27th January, so far so good, in fact it is a lot better than that in that I am really enjoying the new challenge and it is fitting perfectly with where I want to go with both my work and personal life, so I could not be happier really.

During the last month I also got a chance to get back behind the wheel for the 2nd Round of the Mitre 10 Mega Summer Race Series and what a round it was. 77 entries which is the most entries we have had for a Summer Series round, which is, well, awesome. The day was hot, damn hot, and so was the action on the track with lots of close and hard racing. With the test & tune, qualifying and four races you certainly got a heap of track time, it was a lot of value for the money that's for sure. I can't wait for the next round on the 1st March, in fact because the Monday after Round 2 was a regional holiday we did a few things to the car on that day so we are fairly well good to go again, which is unheard of for me.

MITRE 10 MEGA

PALMERSTON NORTH

SUMMER RACE SERIES

Round 3

Manfeild: Circuit Chris Amon

Sunday 1st March 2020

February is going to be a huge month. We kicked off the month with a Drift Training Day on Saturday 1st, it was a perfect day both on and off the track. 40 cars entered and had an absolutely awesome day with plenty of runs for all which meant that everyone was smiling at the end of the day. Hats off to Jodie and her crew for making the day a hugely successful one. Two weeks later and we have the NZGP Meeting on the 14/15/16th Feb, followed by our AGM on Wednesday 26th February @ 7.30pm at the MCC Clubrooms. At this year's AGM we elect our Committee Members and our clubs President, these people help run the club and collectively decide what needs to happen and is going to happen over the next 12 months. So if you would like to hear how the past year has gone, and maybe have a say on what you would like to see happen in the coming year, then make sure you come to the AGM. If you want to put your name forward and join in on helping run the club then by all means print out the below form and fill it out and make sure that in accordance with our constitution, nominations shall be received by the Secretary no later than two (2) days prior to the AGM. Please also note that you must be a financial member of the Manawatu Car Club to be considered for any of the positions available on the night so please make sure your club membership is up to date. Return it to Jeff Braid by scanning and e-mailing it to info@manawatucarclub.org.nz or by posting it to: Manawatu Car Club, PO Box 542 Palmerston North 4410.

The last Saturday in February (29th) will see the start of our February Flatfoot Race Meeting which will also run the following day, being the 1st March, which will see us include the aforementioned 3rd Round of the Mitre 10 Mega Summer Race Series. This will be a great weekend of racing with several IRC Classes running as well as the Superkarts, heaps of variety will mean there will be something of interest for everyone in attendance so make sure you pop down and have a look at what is on offer.

If you know me well you will know that Customer Service means everything to me, in my role at TR Group I always said yes then left the meeting or hung up the phone and thought "hell, how am I going to do that", however we always got it done (somehow) and our customers loved us for it. Over the past couple of months I have come across two cases of bad customer service where I was left thinking wow, things could have been done so much better than they were. One of those events I was the one directly affected, the other was a friend of mine, and while I know all of the details of his I can only really comment on mine. I brought several items online from a well-known motor vehicle store, the order had to be split into three as they could not supply some of the parts straight away. The first items were sent but never turned up at the delivery address given, the second part of the order left the warehouse a couple of days later and arrived within a few days, the third part of the order has never been sent to this date. I spoke on several occasions to both the courier company and the store itself, 10 emails and 3 phone calls to be precise, and each time I was told that they would come back to me within 1-2 business days. To date no one has come back to me... so before I started typing this piece I sent them both one final email which stated that if no one comes back to me within the promised 1-2 days from the date of my email I will gladly but on Facebook exactly who they are and how I have been treated, hopefully that gets some action... but I doubt it.

"Good customer service costs less than bad customer service."

I went to Kerry Grant's funeral along with a lot of other people who knew him. There are other stories about Kerry in this magazine so I will not double up here. But what I will say is that he was a good man, a very caring husband, father, grandfather, brother and a friend to many. The moment of the celebration of his life that touched me the most was when the gathering was asked "who did Kerry collect magazines for?" and the result was breathtaking, I could not count quick enough the number of people he regularly collected for and distributed magazines to. We also found out a lot about Kerry that we did not know... it left me thinking about how much do we really know about our families and friends, are we sometimes too wrapped up in our own worlds to notice the little things that the people close to us truly enjoy...

Richie



VOTING FORM

2020 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ELECTIONS

Position: President

Term : 2 Years. Re-election in 2022

Nominee:	Membership #	Signed
Nominated by:	Membership #	Signed
Seconded by:	Membership #	Signed



VOTING FORM

2020 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ELECTIONS

Position: Committee

Term : 1 Year.

Nominee:	Membership #	Signed
Nominated by:	Membership #	Signed
Seconded by:	Membership #	Signed



VOTING FORM

2020 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ELECTIONS

Position: Committee

Term : 1 Year.

Nominee:	Membership #	Signed
Nominated by:	Membership #	Signed
Seconded by:	Membership #	Signed

Please scan and email to info@manawatucarclub.org.nz or post to: Manawatu Car Club, PO Box 542 Palmerston North 4410



CLUB MEMBER OF THE MONTH

NAME: Jonathan Hogg

BORN: June 1959

OCCUPATION: Manager/Electrician

RACE CAR: BMW 3.0CSL replica

EVERYDAY DRIVE CAR: Holden Trailblazer

DREAM CAR: Genuine BMW 3.0CSL road car

YOUR BEST MOMENT IN MOTORSPORT?

Hard to pick one, but when the whole family is together at the track it's hard to beat

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

Electrician, I had a Scalextric set and spent hours wiring little houses and building start lights, just like playing with electrical stuff

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

My Dad, Jim Clark, Stirling Moss

WHO WOULD YOU PLAY IN A MOVIE?

Steve McQueen in Le Mans

THREE WORDS THAT BEST DESCRIBE YOU...

Loyal, honest, persistent

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

Beetle, doesn't look too good but just keeps going

WHAT IS YOUR SECRET VICE?

Old movies

PEOPLE WOULD BE SURPRISED TO KNOW THAT...

Not much, I'm pretty well an open book

FAVOURITE QUOTE...

"The only thing you get from looking back is a sore neck"



**MITRE 10
MEGA**

MITRE 10 MEGA Summer Series

FOUR-ROUND CLUB RACE SERIES AT MANFEILD

R1
Sunday 8th Dec 2019

R2 (Wellington Anniversary Weekend)
Sunday 19th Jan 2020

R3
Sunday 1st Mar 2020

R4
Sunday 5th Apr 2020

Prizegiving
Saturday 11th Apr 2020

FREE SPECTATOR ADMISSION



Photo: Aaron Mai Media

CLUBMANS CLASSES

RS Cup entry fee \$165 (MCC members \$125)

SF Cup entry fee \$215 (MCC members \$195)

NATIONAL RACE CLASSES

IB Cup entry fee \$240 (MCC members \$220)

GT Cup GT-A and GT-B entry fee \$240

(MCC members \$220)



Manawatu Car Club

ORGANISER

Jeff Braid, Secretary
Manawatu Car Club Inc.

027 477 3337

info@manawatucarclub.org.nz

www.manawatucarclub.org.nz

Supplementary Regs and Entry Forms available on website



**MITRE 10
MEGA**



GRID TORQUE



Big celebrations. The new decade marks 70 years since the first world championship grand prix race was held at the Silverstone Circuit in England in 1950. Over those seventy years more than 150 teams and 750 drivers have participated in grand prix races (nine from New Zealand), there have been 108 grand prix winners and 33 different world champions. The 2020 F1 calendar expands to 22 races with the Dutch GP at Zandvoort returning after an absence of 35 years and the introduction of the Vietnam GP at the 5.57 km long 22 turn Hanoi street circuit designed by Herman Tilke and his associates. The lights go out for the first race, the Australian GP, on 15 March with the season finale at Abu Dhabi on 29 November. Just one request. Please make 2020 more exciting than 2019...

Boys night out. At the beginning of last month Brendon Hartley, Mark Webber, Mitch Evans and Kenny Smith were seen on television enjoying a night out together in Auckland. No, they weren't at some swanky bar in the Viaduct Basin, they were living it up in the world of hot dogs and chips at Western Springs Speedway. The reason they were there was to watch the International Midget 'King of the Springs' Series featuring top drivers from the USA and Australia taking on the best kiwis. Nothin' like a bit of dirt in ya chips...



Much bigger than big. Founded in 1920, C R England is one of the biggest family owned trucking companies in the United States, the Salt Lake City based firm specialising in Coast-to-Coast runs inside of three days and enjoying an envied reputation for delivering on time. But how big is bigger than big? C R England has a fleet of 4,771 tractor units and 6,300 semi-trailers, a thousand units are non-refrigerated. Kenworth was the company's preferred make from the 1940s until the 1980s, but for the last 35 years the main fleet has been exclusively Freightliner - 22,000 of them over that period with a 37 month/800,000 kilometre trade-in cycle! The key to profitability is efficiency and fuel saving that are constantly monitored to the extent that the company is continually testing these key areas, they have analysts who just work on improving fuel economy! Aerodynamics play a key role with trailers having side aero skirts and mud flaps that are perforated to lessen drag, the wheels have disc covers and low rolling resistant tyres with auto inflation, the tractor units have extended fairings over the fuel tanks and behind the cab. Drivers undergo continual monitoring to check their performance which is an integral part of the running costs, the long-haul Freightliner's 455 horsepower Detroit engines are governed to 65 miles an hour on the cruise control, they have a higher final drive ratio but cope comfortably with an all-up weight of more than 36,000 kilos. All this has seen fuel use drop by a remarkable 38% over the past 15 years which is

very significant when the company's fleet consumes between five and six million gallons a month with the diesel price around the US\$3.00 a gallon. In our language that equates to 18.9 to 22.7 million litres costing NZ\$22.4 million to NZ\$26.9 million. Multiply by 12 for the yearly figure...



Driver Training. Club members are well aware of the Manfeild Park Trust's efforts to establish a National Drivers Training Centre on the circuit's 'back track'. The C R England story raises the question about their driver recruitment programme. The firm employs nearly 6½ thousand drivers and has its own training facility that includes a motel featuring a food hall, recreation centre and physiotherapy clinic as well as a bank. The company trains 200 drivers a week which equates to nearly 9½ thousand a year because there's a very high turn-over rate in the industry. Coast to coast long haul driving in the US isn't always living the dream...

Did you know? Most will be surprised to learn that Scott McLaughlin only gets two new helmets a year. One is gifted to Roger Penske, the other is his race headwear. Scotty's 2017 helmet now has a new owner, his 2018 helmet was given to a friend honouring a promise, while he presented the 2019 helmet to his father. A very caring young man...

Back to the gravel? There are stories coming out of Europe that Kimi Raikkonen plans to return to the World Rally Championship when his contract with the F1 Alfa Romeo team ends at the end of the 2020 season. Rallying is not new to the driver called the 'Iceman', he was a full-time WRC competitor in 2010 and 2011. In his first season he drove a C4 WRC car for the Citroen Junior Team, contesting 12 of the 13 rounds, sadly the one he missed was the Rally of New Zealand. The following season he was behind the wheel of Citroen DS3 WRC driving for the privateer ICE 1 Racing Team, both years his best placing was 5th, he won a special stage and finished 10th in the Driver's World Championship standings. So how much would it mean to win the WRC title? 'More than my F1 world championship (2007). Nobody has done it before, that's another aspect that makes it interesting'. A very big ask, is the Finn up to the task...



Not the first. Mr Raikkonen was not the first Formula 1 driver to score World Rally Championship points. That honour fell to Argentinian Carlos Reutemann who finished 3rd behind Walter Rohrl and Hannu Mikkola in the 1980 Rally of Argentina driving a Fiat 131 Abarth, he competed in his home rally again in 1985 at the wheel of a Peugeot 205 T16 and again finished third, the event being won by Timo Salonen in a sister car. But neither Messrs Raikkonen or Reutemann were the first F1 drivers to contest the WRC, it was Leo Kinnunen who was Finland first F1 driver. In 1974 he drove a Surtees TS16 for a privateer team, a supposedly 'new' car that in fact was the test mule and very 'second hand', it was also underpowered and overweight. Kinnunen entered six races, the result sheets show five DNQs and a DNF, in the case of the latter he only 'qualified' because of the generosity of the Swedish officials and the car's Cosworth V8 engine expired after

25 laps! In the WRC the Finn competed mainly in Porsche cars and he enjoyed significant success in sports car racing that included winning the Daytona 500 and Targa Florio, Leo Kinnunen was also the last F1 driver to use an open face helmet. History lesson over...

Important breakthrough. Last year the long established Australian Auto Sport Alliance established a branch on our side of the Tasman and last month announced the appointment of a New Zealander to its newly formed international advisory panel. Gordon Legge is very widely respected in our sport through a diverse range of roles that include governance, race car owner and competitor, for many years he has been a Manfeild regular at classic meetings in his BMW. Legge's role for the AASA will be to advise on and strengthen the operations of the sanctioning Authority in New Zealand with the objectives of enhancing Trans-Tasman relationships between competitors, officials and promoters. Gordon Legge's first project is advising on how AASA it can increase Trans-Tasman events and participation via a single licencing system across different classes of motorsport. You have to say amen to all that...

A must see. You will be able to enhance your 2020 New Zealand Grand Prix experience before the weekend actually gets underway thanks to a special viewing at Palmerston North's Event Cinemas on Thursday 13 February. It's all part of nation-wide cinema roadshow with a feature-length documentary with the title '60 YEARS BEHIND THE WHEEL'. It's the story of 76 year old Kenny Smith. The film following his sixty years of racing that began at the 2017 Australian Supercar Championship round at Pukekohe where he drove a Formula 5000 in the support races through to the NZGP at Manfeild Circuit Chris Amon in February 2018. For many the highlight footage will be Kenny's trip to America where he competed in the 50th Anniversary Monterey Motorsport Reunion meeting at the iconic Laguna Seca circuit in California where close to fifty Formula 5000 cars were on the grids. Tickets are available through Eventbrite. If you only go to the cinema once this year, make it this night...



Talking F5000. Last month's Taupo Historic Grand Prix meeting at the Bruce McLaren Motorsport Park included Round 2 of the SAS Autoparts MSC New Zealand F5000 Revival Series. When you talk the history of F5000 the dominate make has been Lola with their T332 heading the numbers game, more than thirty chassis were built. The following T400 appeared in the mid-1970s and featured a radical rising rate rear suspension that wasn't easy to set-up and gave the car a difficult start to life with its drivers, at Taupo four of the twelve T400 cars still in existence were on the grid, two coming from England. Joining them on the grid were five T332s, a single T330, two McRae GM1s, two Talon MR1s, three McLarens and a Begg FM5. That's mouth-watering stuff in any language...

Excitement machines at The Mountain. The entry list for the 2020 Liqui-Moly Bathurst 12 Hour race on 02 February had a record GT3 field with teams from Asia, Europe, North America and Australia entering cars

representing 11 different manufacturers - Aston Martin, Audi, Bentley, BMW, Ferrari, Honda, Lamborghini, McLaren, Mercedes AMG, Nissan and Porsche. This year's event also marked several firsts with the Australian debut of the Honda NSX GT3 and Aston Martin AMR Vantage and there were two McLaren 720S GT3s in the field for the first time. The defending champions were Earl Bamber Motorsport whose Porsche 911 GT3-R won the 2019 race by three seconds. That's not much after 12 hours flat-out...

Another new toy. Mr ENZED Paul Dewar has realised that his ex-Penske Racing NASCAR Dodge Challenger is a very valuable and historic piece of kit that shouldn't be risked by racing it, demonstrations are OK, racing is not! To rectify the situation he has acquired another NASCAR racer, a three year old 2017 Chev Impala that has never been on the track and driven in anger. The car is in Auckland awaiting Custom's clearance before Motorsport NZ do their inspection to check the car's compliance with our rules, the next step is making it compliant. Another exciting new toy in Paul's shed...

Uncle Sam calling? Scott McLaughlin's new-year visit to the United States at the invitation of Roger Penske ended with more questions than answers. The Indycar rookie evaluation test at the Sebring International Raceway on 10 January saw Scott cover a total of 141 laps during the day in different scenarios with the biggest challenge being to trust the car's aerodynamics with the high levels of downforce. There was a critical audience too with Team Penske Indycar regulars Will Power, Josef Newgarden and Simon Pagenaud watching on with the legendary Rick Mears. Apparently McLaughlin took part in a test last year on the Indycar simulator and



reputedly matched the times of Newgarden and Pagenaud on the Indianapolis road course. The Sebring test certainly got people talking about its significance and the possibility that the 2020 Virgin Australia Supercar Championship could be Scott's last series at the wheel of the Shell V-Power Ford Mustang. So what does 'The Captain' have in mind for the Supercar Superstar...?

Marshal's meeting, On Saturday 18 January, Level 2 in the Control Tower at Manfeild Circuit Chris Amon hosted around 35 crash rescue and flag marshals for a 'refresher' course. Their time was highlighted by involvement in a live fire-fighting scenario in the back track area, it was expertly conducted by Noel Beale with all participants



having the opportunity to extinguish an under-bonnet fire and there was a 100% success rate in putting out the flames! There was also a spectacular demonstration of a vehicle interior fire that produced much comment and vast quantities of black smoke! Special thanks to Peter Edmond's Specialised Autos for the donor Volvo convertible that showed significant accident damage from some previous encounter, and to 'Harley' Davidson of Manawatu Towing for transporting the one-time Swedish beauty. All round, a most worthwhile exercise for everyone involved. A Dominos lunch too...

More Charity work. On the same day several Manfeild Muscle Car group members were out on the track to complete promised charity rides for a group with which they are involved. There were the Ford Mustangs of Ian Easton and Ken Lupton, the Dick Johnson replica Ford Falcon of Greg Cuttance while Geoff Spencer fronted with his racing V8 Ute. The really happy chappy was Mr Spencer who again thrilled to the sound of a V8 engine, quite a contrast to the in-line six luger is his BMW race car. What a difference two cylinders seemed to make...

Serious commitment. During the charity rides Greg Cuttance suffered a bird strike on the middle straight which seriously damaged both the Falcon's windscreen and bird which is assumed to be deceased. Weekend over, no. Greg was reminded that there was a spare tucked away in the shed rafters back in Dannevirke which meant a quick trip to the other side of the Tararua Ranges to retrieve the spare. Back to Feilding where the local Novus man fitted the new glass and # 17 was good to go for Round 2 of the Mitre 10 Mega Summer Series. Great work by a great team...

Expanding. Observant people entering the city from the eastern side may have noticed a new Coresteel Building being erected on the property on the corner of main and Limbrick Streets. Mr Coresteel Manawatu, Geoff Spencer, confirms it's the new workshop for AFC Motorcycles. As thought the former Mike96 Racing building with the street frontage is AFC's new showroom for its motorcycle franchises and Seadoo PWCs together with a large range of accessories and clothing. With the café situated between the two buildings it could become a mecca for bike enthusiasts. Just leather, no lycra...



Wave rider? Personal Water Craft (PWCs) have become one of the most popular recreations vehicles and today they offer very high levels of performance with some having supercharged engines. They are also very versatile, some makers offer models specially built to cater for the requirements of recreational fishing, excluding big game striped marlin and the like. The word is that Geoff Spencer is joining the PWC ranks and become a Seadooer, doesn't motor racing hold the same appeal anymore? Can't imagine no more racing. Maybe a case of every boy needs a toy...

Interesting hybrids. Much has been written about Andrew Stewart's Datsun powered by a Gaerte speedway midget car motor, and if you fully read the January issue of the MCC magazine you should be aware of the details of the car raced by Phil Dravitski. If you didn't here's a reminder. It's a Toyota Altezza re-powered with a supercharged V6 Holden engine, definitely an interesting combination. Both the VS and VT Commodores offered the supercharged V6 as one of the engine options. Really good power too...

The biggest news story. It had to be this year's ITM Auckland 400 being held at Hampton Downs and not Pukekohe. The reason - laws surrounding the running of competition cars at the South Auckland circuit on Anzac Day means the event couldn't go ahead as originally planned, so the race will take place 30 kilometres further down SH1. No doubt Tony Quinn is smiling at snaring the big one after someone involved with the Pukekohe race slipped up, it's all about knowing the rules, or in this case the law. So what of the future?

Alternate
years
perhaps...



OMG. A prominent MCC official and his wife were enjoying a relaxing breakfast at the 'Local' café on Broadway. The morning calmness was broken with the arrival of a small peloton of cyclists who looked like they may have been members of some 'old farts cycling club'. Hair colour was grey, silver or white, and some seemed more alive than others, they wore bright coloured jerseys so they looked like Tour de France competitors, and they all had one thing in common, the mandatory lycra shorts. Has anyone been able to explain the attractiveness of a man in lycra shorts! The cleats on their riding shoes made a terrible clattering noise on the floor but it's all seemed to part of the persona. Do these 'lunitics in lycra' just ride from one café to the next with the most strenuous activity lifting their cup of latte. That morning one of the riders was recognised as a former Manfeild racer, car dealer and prominent man around town. If you've got it, flaunt it... (Eds note MAMIL's – middle aged men in lycra!!)



In auction news this month, perhaps the steal of the year (yes I know it's only just started) was put under the hammer by Goodings at Scottsdale in Arizona. A two owner, absolutely original, bog standard, 14,500 mile FJ40 Landcruiser was surely a bargain buying at just a shade under NZ\$40,000. Makes a change from the multi-million dollar exotica

I'm reliably informed that the fastest dog in New Zealand currently resides in the Manawatu. A majestic pedigree greyhound perhaps with a name as long as your arm?? Well, no, Lexi is more your dog next door type, so how did she claim the exulted title? Apparently it involved a Mustang, a lap belt (well she is a lap dog) and a 1- 17 .00 lap of the circuit. Good credentials there I would have thought ...

RH

THE CHEQUER FALLS...



On 18 January the Manawatu Car Club's first National Champion passed away after a brief illness.

Kerry Grant was one of the giants of this country's motor racing scene in the 1950s and early 1960s, it was sixty years ago that the then teenager appeared on the saloon car scene with an Austin A40 Farina, the car that would be forever linked to his name.

Kerry became a member of the Manawatu Car Club when he was only 14 years old and was a regular at the Thursday night gatherings in the Clubrooms.

An apprentice mechanic at Ford dealers Selwyn Motors, each car that Kerry owned underwent serious modification, first a Morris 8 Series E followed by a side-valve Ford Anglia 100E and then the iconic Austin A40 Farina. He honed his natural skills working alongside Syd Jensen as he prepared his successful single-seater racing cars, there was more valuable time with the highly rated partnership of Frank Hamlin and Murray Charles whose workshop was in a section of Southward's building in Seaview that incorporated the tube mill and produced Lesco automotive products, including the iconic Pour-a-Can fuel container - the Southward name played a major role in Kerry's racing career.



At the Levin International meeting at Levin in 1962 Southward Engineering put up a 25 pound prize for the best performance by a New Zealand driver, the recipient was Kerry Grant.

Len (later Sir Len) Southward watched the racing that day and was so impressed with the A40 driver that he offered him a drive in a Ford Cortina GT in the 1963 Wills 6-Hour race at Pukekohe. Partnered with Frank Hamlin the pair won their class and finished third outright.

That success led to the Lesco Lotus Cortina with its 1600cc Willment pushrod engine, it was the car that saw Kerry really stamp his mark in saloon car racing. But for spectators at the four circuits hosting rounds of the International Series that year Kerry was one of the star performers, Bruce McLaren had brought one of the new Mini Coopers in his luggage and the duels between the A40 and the potent Mini were epic.

The 1964 New Zealand Saloon Championship had six rounds spread around the country, Renwick, Maunganui and Waimate were street races. It was the year that the supremacy of the Mk2 Jaguar came to

an end after three years of domination. The title race became a head-to-head battle between Kerry in the Lotus Cortina and veteran Ernie Sprague in his famous Mk3 Ford Zephyr, the outcome went down to the wire. Sprague won the opening rounds at Renwick and Maunganui, Kerry took the honours in the next three at Levin, Wigram and Teretonga, the decider was on the streets of Waimate, close to Sprague's home town. Despite Kerry winning more rounds Sprague led the points, 37 to 35. Two preliminary heats were run to decide the grid positions for the final on the basis of best times, Kerry easily won his heat to put the pressure on the home town hero. Sprague had to win and set a faster time to secure pole position, he built up a big lead but at the halfway mark went into a corner too fast and slid off the road into the protective straw bales, the Zephyr was so badly damaged it couldn't contest the all-important final. Sprague had to hope that the # 43 Lotus Cortina would fail to finish, but Kerry drove with restraint to cross the line behind Paul Fahey to clinch the coveted title by 5 points over Sprague, with Paul Fahey third ahead of defending champion Ray Archibald in the first of the Jaguars.



The Southward backing was extended to a 1½ litre Lotus Ford single-seater followed by a much more powerful 2½ litre Brabham Climax for the 1965 International Series, at Pukekohe the car broke its crankshaft and Kerry was forced to run the smaller Lotus. A week later at the tight and twisty Levin circuit he was back in the Brabham and back on home turf, and the main race enhanced his growing reputation. He qualified in the middle of the second row, made a superb start, out-braked both Bruce McLaren and Phil Hill at the hairpin then set-off after Jim Clark who had a three second lead. The chase saw Kerry at his brilliant best but it ended at Lap 10 when he attempted to correct a slide at Cabbage Tree bend, dropped a wheel into the rough and spun out of contention. At Wigram he qualified to start on front row and finished fifth, at Teretonga he again started on the front row, finished fourth and the first 'resident' driver to finish.



The highlight was the 10 laps at Levin where he showed he had tremendous potential.

There was a second A40 Farina, the black 1293cc Sebring car with its unique extended nose that carried on the Grant tradition by dominating its class and pushing the bigger cars on the tighter circuits during the 1965/66 season. The combination finished fourth overall in the All-Comers Saloon Championship behind David Simpson and Paul Fahey in their 1650cc Lotus Anglia 'fastbacks' and Rod Coppins in his fearsome Corvette powered Ford Zephyr.



There was also a second 2½ litre Brabham Climax in which Kerry won the Fred Zambucka Memorial Trophy at Levin and set a new lap record for the extended circuit, but the 1966/67 International Series campaign ended during practice for the NZ Grand Prix at Pukekohe, two cars touched wheels at the end of the back straight, Kerry spun and his car caught fire, inflicting serious burns - the short but spectacular single-seater career was over.

Kerry returned to racing in the 1971/72 Castrol GTX Production Car Championship that saw the high performance models of the big three Australian manufacturers going head-to-head - the Chrysler

Valiant Charger E-49, Holden Torana XU-1 and Ford Falcon GTHO

Kerry converted a Torana GTR into a full blooded Bathurst-spec XU-1 and was on the grid with the likes of Jim Richards and Leo Leonard.

The cars and top drivers were evenly matched and produced outstanding racing at circuits around the country, for Kerry it ended in a serious accident at Bay Park when he spun exiting the big sweeper, the car stopped sideways across the track and was hit by Leo Leonard's Charger, the right side of the Torana taking the full high speed impact - Leo became a hero that day for his extraordinary actions, the full story that only he knows was told at Kerry's funeral.



Kerry returned to the racing scene preparing a small number of saloon cars that met with considerable success. There were the BMW 2002 variants that were driven by David Owen, Paul Adams and Ken Adamson, highlighted by Paul finishing second in the 1974 Shell 100 at Levin and Ken winning the four round North Island Long Distance Series.

In the same year Paul Adams finished runner-up in the Castrol GTX Championship at the wheel of the Grant-Day Fiat 124 Coupe after a series long duel with Kevin McNamara, again Kerry's immaculate preparation paid dividends.

Later the same decade he took up the challenge of Off-Roading, a sport that was attracting big crowds and enjoyed television exposure. Big V8 engines and big tyres were the order of the day, but Kerry went the other way, at the time Grant-Day Motors held the local Suzuki franchise and off-roading could be the ideal promotional tool as their range included two small 4x4s, the Jimny and LJ50. Kerry opted for the latter with its bigger 539cc three-cylinder two-stroke motor and it was like the A40 days had returned with David beating Goliath, it culminated in winning the 1977/78 New Zealand Four-Wheel-Drive Championship Series - there was nothing as good as a day playing in the mud and taking home the spoils of victory!

That same competitive spirit carried over into road cycling and later marathon running, he competed in many of the gruelling 42 kilometre races including the iconic Fletcher Challenge Marathon in Rotorua, in the 1984 event he posted his fastest time of 3 hours 35 minutes and 51 seconds.

But Kerry also enjoyed life in the slower lane. When he moved to Foxton there was the sand and surf to be enjoyed, playing vinyls on his latest stereo system, model cars and aircraft, photography and he also took an active interest in conservation and the native bird life of the estuary.

Most important of all, he was a family man in the true sense of the word, he loved his family and they loved him

Kerry Grant raced in an era when drivers didn't receive the recognition they deserved. He was versatile, his car preparation was flawless, and he was a crowd pleaser and the super hero of the big Levin crowds. Fame never affected him, and there was always the familiar black helmet.

And he had his own hero. Not one of the grand prix stars that he raced against but an English medical practitioner, 'Doc' Shepherd. In 1958 Shepherd drove an Austin A35 in the first year of the British Saloon Car Championship,



he switched to an A40 Farina the following year and was runner-up, 'Doc' won the 1960 title and his engine found a new home in the Grant A40.

Kerry Grant led a full and courageous life, but where did that need for speed begin?

Possibly when Kerry was 9 years old and sitting on his father's lap as they travelled home from the milk factory in the family Ford V8 $\frac{3}{4}$ ton truck. An Austin A90 Atlantic overtook them at speed and the chase began. Empty milk cans clattered around in the back of the truck, but despite the V8 giving everything it had the chase was futile. Dad might have had more than a little encouragement, but maybe that was the day the mould was cast.

The 'celebration of Kerry's life' took place at 1pm on Monday 27 February at the Central Baptist Church in Palmerston North. The large auditorium was filled to capacity for the service, attendees came from as far as Auckland and Timaru to mix with many older generation Manawatu Car Club members, among the prominent drivers were Leo Leonard, Grant Sprague, Allan Woolf and Paul Adams.

In the foyer of the church were the black Austin A40 Farina that had been transported from Blenheim and a Cortina GT, reminders of racing successes, on the street outside a long line of classic cars.

It was a fitting farewell to our first national champion...

RH



GENEROSITY...



Heads win. The horrific bush fires in Australia have seen millions of acres of forest destroyed, a billion animals and other wildlife burnt to death, human lives lost with hundreds of families left homeless and left to ponder their futures, for many it would be a time of bewilderment. A question of where do we go, will our town be rebuilt? Whatever, it will take hundreds of millions of dollars to rehouse the people who not only lost their homes but also all their possessions. Various sports and sportspeople raised their hands offering support, offering money or items of great personal value for auction. Scott McLaughlin gave his prized first DJR Team Penske race helmet that he wore at Darwin to start the second half of the 2017 Virgin Australia Supercar Championship from which point he scored five race wins, 10 Armor All Pole Positions and won the Supercheap Auto 1000 Shoot Out at Bathurst, it's also the only helmet that he had kept from his time with the Shell V-Power Racing Team. As well he vowed to personally match the amount paid for the helmet. The auction ran for one week with bidding reaching AU\$46,200 at the close. Add Scott's pledge to match the amount raised by the helmet and the final figure became AU\$92,400. A magnificent outcome...

Meanwhile. In support of the Bushfire Appeal legendary Australian leg spin bowler Shane Warne gave the most treasured reminder of his 145 match test cricket career, his 'baggy green' cap. Back in 2003 Sir Donald Bradman's 'baggy green' sold for AU\$420,000 in a charity auction, Warne's 50 year old 'baggy green' easily eclipsed that figure. On the eve of the week long auction closing two bidders were going head-to-head, at 9.30pm it was AU\$650,500, two hour later it was AU\$850,000, when bidding closed at noon the following day Warne's 'baggy green' sold for an astonishing AU\$1,107,500 which is \$1,725,803 in Kiwi currency. It was later revealed the winning mystery bidder was the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (CBA) who plan to take the cap on a national tour of the country to raise further funds for the Red Cross Bushfire Appeal before it becomes a prime exhibit in the Bradman Museum and International Cricket Hall of Fame at Bowral, the New South Wales town where 'The Don' grew up with the museum sited at his old home ground. Warnie's 'green baggy' bowled 'em over...

Go back 3 years. A series of major earthquakes struck central Italy in October 2016, the country's largest quakes in 36 years. There were 299 deaths, 388 were injured and 4,500 left homeless. That tragedy saw the world's most famous marque come forward in support of its homeland. When the flagship LaFerrari was unveiled at the 2013 Geneva Motor Show it carried a price tag of US\$1.4 million, the 499 units were all pre-sold with the final 500th car produced in August 2016 being auctioned to benefit the relief fund. The car was shipped to America for the December RM Sotheby auction at the Daytona International Speedway as part of a global Ferrari weekend. When the hammer fell the proceeds amounted to US\$7.5 million, more than five times the original asking price! That's 1,309,353,778 Italian lira. Grazie Ferrari...

More Italian style generosity. Produced between 2016 and 2018, the Aperta was the open top roadster version of the LaFerrari, all 209 units were pre-sold to customers by invitation. The Maranello factory made the decision to build one more special Rosso Fuoco liveried Aperta to benefit the global 'Save the Children' charity. Again teaming up with RM Sotheby, this car went under the hammer at the auction house's 'Leggenda e Passione' at Ferrari's Fiorano circuit during the famous company's 70th anniversary celebrations in 2017. The lively bidding stopped at US\$10 million! Obviously Prancing Horses are great fund raisers...



90 YEARS AGO...

On the 28th December 2019 a very important milestone slipped under the radar. The speedway meeting held at Central Energy Trust Arena was the 90th anniversary of the first speedway meeting held at the then Palmerston North Showgrounds.

New Zealand's first speedway track was at Kilbirnie in Wellington and opened in March 1929, closely followed by Monica Park in Christchurch, while November saw Western Springs begin operating. In February the following year Dunedin introduced the sport at Tonga Park, nine months later the November 20 edition of the 'Manawatu Evening Standard' broke the news that speedway would be coming to Palmerston North at the city's Showgrounds.

In a few short weeks a 440 yard long track was laid, an approved safety fence constructed, fifty seven 2,000 candlepower overhead lights installed along with other upgrades to the facility, even provision was made for a full size football field in the centre of the track.

That first meeting on Boxing Day 1930 was billed as 'MANAWATU'S NEW BIG THRILL' and three top Australian riders featured on the night - 'Flat Out' Eric Whittle, 'Dare Devil' Herb Durkin and Eric Hamberger who was promoted as 'A Real Cinder Shifter', the trio competing against a mix of Wellington and local riders, headed by the country's top rider of the time Wally Kilmister who had returned home after a season of racing at the famous Wembley track in England.

The inaugural meeting drew a crowd estimated at 5,000 people who saw Hamberger winning the feature race the 'Grand Opening Handicap' in the fastest time of the night, 1 minute 35 and 3/5ths seconds.

Of particular interest is that the second 'GOH' heat was won a by a Palmerston North rider who was contracted to Wellington, his name was Dan Higgins, the same Dan Higgins who started the iconic family contracting company that built Manfeild and today remains involved with the track preparation.

In the immediate following years the Palmerston North track regularly saw top riders from the United States, England and Australia featuring in the programme, more and more people became attracted to the sport and the seeds were sown for the future. In later years top English riders would compete down-under in their 'off-season' and the race programmes listed the names of the great kiwi trio Ronnie Moore, Barry Briggs and Ivan Mauger.

There were other speedway classes that were introduced over the years, particularly when solo number began to drop - Speedcars/Midgets, TQs, Stockcars, Saloons, Sidecars, Super Modifieds and Sprint Cars, but





it was the introduction of stockcars in the early 1960's that led to a major change of direction for the Palmerston North speedway and it would become one of the greatest success stories in the history of the sport in our country.



In 1981 entrepreneurial promoter Bruce Robertson created the New Zealand Superstock Teams Championship and on 07 March the first event was held that attracted 8 teams and a record crowd. Despite the undoubted success Robertson offered the event to all the country's track promoters, none responded and it stayed in the city with team numbers reaching a high of 14 two years ago. Every year the two-night championship has been sold out, usually months in advance, additional temporary seating has increased seating for around 14,000 fans in recent years, some travelling from overseas. The 'Teams Champs' became New Zealand's premier speedway meeting, it's also an event of great financial significance to the region, bringing an economic boost in excess of \$5 million.

Ninety years on, Palmy speedway remains 'THE BIG THRILL'...

PS

During last month's Australia Day celebration former Holden Dealer Team Manager and 1983 Bathurst 1000 winner John Harvey received a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM).



John Harvey was a highly talented speedcar (midget) racer, winning three New South Wales titles before he switched to circuit racing in 1966. The previous year he had travelled to New Zealand as part of a four-car Australian team and the quartet raced midweek at the Palmerston North Showgrounds, attracting a record crowd. The great Ray Revell and Andy McGavin drove Offenhausers, highly modified six-cylinder Holdens powered the cars of Len Brock and Harvey's 'Mobilgas Special'. Only Auckland rookie Barry Butterworth was capable of extending the visitors.

McGavin and his 'Offy' were the stars of the night, winning two of the three Australia-New Zealand Challenge races, the Open Handicap and the Feature.

RH





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The opportunity to watch on-the-up talent from our own homeland as well as around the world fighting for the most coveted title in domestic motor-racing will bring attention to Manfeild Circuit Chris Amon on February 15-16.

For me, though, the excitement of the New Zealand Grand Prix is also flavoured by knowing that a great friend and supporter of our circuit will also be involving. Kenny Smith needs no introduction to you; a regular racer at our venue since the 1970s, he is also a legend, and not just in this country. I was so delighted to be able to announce recently that our old – and, at 78, I think he can wear that one gracefully – friend will join the Castrol Toyota Racing Series when it contests the NZGP.

This being the 49th time he has contested our nation's most prestigious domestic circuit event means, of course, he is just one short of achieving a long-held ambition to reach a target unsurpassed in the world of motorsport. I really hope you all come along to support and honour him; Ken has always cited Manfeild as his favourite place to race, calling it his home track and a magical place. It really does seem remarkable that, in the year Manfeild opened, it was 10 years after he first contested the NZGP and he was already a big star of the racing scene.

I would imagine we will see quite a lot of our venue and a few familiar faces – including, apparently, Brendon Hartley talking about how he was taught handbrake turns by his old friend and mentor - in the documentary film, Kenny Smith: 60 Years at the Wheel, whose regional premiere is in Palmerston North on February 13.

You will know that this is our 13th consecutive year hosting NZGP and the last under the current contract. Assuredly, we will push to retain host rights; there are many reasons, we believe, why Manfeild should continue to call itself home of the NZGP.

This month's race also gives opportunity to assess the merits of the FT60, the third-generation car for a class respected internationally as a technology pinnacle and a worthy springboard to overseas' success.

Our other recent news is in relation to National Driver Training Centre. I am delighted to share that a teaching base in heavy and specialist machinery competencies unlike any other in New Zealand will progressively take shape on the area you will know as the Manfeild back track. This development stamps realisation of a new role for our organisation, whose dedication to shepherding new drivers, mainly secondary school students, through to achieving general licences has resonated strongly in this region.

What you will see arise progressively between now and September over three phases at a cost of \$1.3 million are classrooms and a warehouse which form the centrepieces of a special training zone dedicated in particular to training heavy and special vehicle competencies.

The lead on the project build is Palmerston North-based Colspec Construction and the core funding is drawn from the provincial growth fund allocation delivered from Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment in 2018.

The transport, logistics and civil works industries are crying out for younger people to take up job opportunities.

We see this project being well-timed to deliver skilled local talent to the construction of the Manawatu Gorge replacement road and the Palmerston North bypass project.

MBIE has established a skills hub at Manfeild and we have worked closely alongside economic agencies in the Manawatu, Government departments, secondary schools and the wider transport and civil works industries to further this initiative and have found considerable support for driver training.

Our aim is to provide classroom training and practical skills in a real road situation on-site with added access to heavy equipment training that will be second-to-none.

Phase one comprises construction of classrooms, a central administration block and a services building, with completion expected before May 1. Phases two and three follow consecutively and provision as accurate reproductions of actual working areas that operators of specialist machinery can expect to encounter, but also designed as teaching zones.

Phase two comprise a 400 square metre warehouse that will provision as a storage centre and a forklift and truck driver training facility in portage and vehicle loading and unloading can be practiced.

The final phase is a 1000 square metre open hard stand which is required for teaching big rig proficiencies, including parking. This area, and the warehouse, are designed to cater for the largest-sized truck and trailer units allowed on New Zealand roads.

The classroom development follows the same ethos of functional practicality that shaped the signature Manfeild Stadium and The Manfeild Circuit Chris Amon pitlane redevelopment.

Cathy Gibson CEO



FIFTEEN YEARS AGO ...



During 2004 Toyota New Zealand imported a 'Formula Toyota' racing car from Japan, it was similar to a Formula Ford with the addition of aerodynamic wings. The concept wasn't fully embraced, it was back to the drawing board, the outcome was the Toyota FT40 open wheeler and the Toyota Racing Series was born.

The inaugural TRS was staged in 2005 with six rounds, three in each island with two of the North Island rounds at the Manfeild circuit, the series attracting 18 drivers to the grid with a single entrant from overseas, Walter Grubmuller from Monaco who only contested the South Island meetings, only fourteen took part in all six rounds. The series opened at the Timaru International Raceway on 08/09 January with two Manawatu Car Club members in the field, Brendon Hartley and Chris Pither, the pair being joined by a number of now familiar names, notably Kenny Smith, Wade Cunningham, Daniel Gaunt, Andy Knight and Andrew Higgins. There was also the little known local driver Brent Collins who had a club racing background, raced a V8 powered AP5 Valiant in Pre-65 races, twice won the Mazda RX7 (Series 1) national title and the 2000 South Island Formula Ford Championship.



Qualifying at Timaru was held in very wet conditions which added to the pressure, taking advantage of his home track knowledge Collins topped the time sheets with a best 1.08.919, despite spinning in the session Brendon was second quickest at 1.09.023, next came Smith 1.09.110 and Knight 1.09.148, Pither clocked the 8th fastest time, 1.09.771.

Conditions were dry for the 12-lap race, Brendon made a better start than the pole-sitter, he led into the first corner and was never headed with a nicely controlled race to take the checker flag ahead of Collins and Gaunt, Smith crossed the line in sixth position, two places ahead of Pither.

Brendon had turned 15 years old a couple of months earlier - 'I was nervous before the start, I think we all were, but I got a clean start and that was great. I'm really pleased to have the first race under my belt and great to win it too. I could see Brent (Collins) and Daniel (Gaunt) behind me but not the rest of the field'.

From Timaru the TRS circus went south to Tereonga Park where Chris Pither took out the Round despite Cunningham winning two of the three races, Collins won the other. Brendon had his worst Round result with 8th place.



The following weekend at Ruapuna Park saw Brendon in sixth and Chris tenth position overall after the three races, both hoping for better things back on home soil.

Round 4 took place at the Manfeild Autocourse on the weekend of 19/20 February, Brendon winning the first two races from pole position and setting the fastest race laps in his # 28 GVI backed Tatuus Toyota, with Wade Cunningham taking out the Sunday afternoon Feature - Collins took out the Round honours ahead of Brendon with Chris fifth for the weekend.

The TRS returned to the Feilding circuit on 02/03 April for Round 5 where Knight won two races and Ben Harford the Feature, Knight claiming the Round ahead of Chris with Brendon fourth, a fortnight later came the final round at Pukekohe Park Raceway.

The programme included only two TRS races with Knight and Gaunt the victors, Gaunt claimed the Round overall while Chris headed Brendon, the pair 5th and 6th respectively.

Winning four of the 18 races, Brent Collins was crowned the first Toyota Racing Series Champion (942 pts) ahead of Andy Knight (904 pts) and Daniel Gaunt (874 pts). With three race wins and worst round placing of 8th Brendon

Hartley finished fourth overall (861 pts), for Chris Pither there was the satisfaction of winning overall at Teretonga and runner-up second time round at his home track, the end result was fifth overall (782 pts).

Somewhat ironically Kenny Smith finished the series 11th in the overall standings in a car carrying his best known race number, '11', achieving two top 10 round finishes with a best 7th in Round 5 at Manfeild.

The TRS car with its slicks and wings were a big learning curve, few of the teams really knew what they were doing with car set-up. Series winner Ben Collins - 'It was myself and a couple of mates from Timaru that ran the car that season. None of us had any knowledge of running a slicks and wings single seater. After the first test day at Ruapuna leading up to the opening round we went to the pub and had a yarn about it. Here was I thinking I had spent a lot of money on nothing. The car was so difficult to drive even though I was fourth quickest that day. It turned out that basically we had got our initial set-up completely wrong. What was on the back should have been on the front and vice versa'.

In that first season there were teething problems with the engines, starter motors and wiring looms, all soon rectified. Now, fifteen years later there is a second generation TRS car, the FT50, hitting our circuits with young international drivers chasing their dream and a 79 year old veteran starting the New Zealand



Grand Prix at Manfeild Circuit Chris Amon for the 49th time.

Without doubt the Toyota Racing Series has been a success story for motor racing in our country and was a major stepping stone in the careers of two MCC members. A year after the inaugural series Brendon Hartley was a member of the Red Bull Junior Driver programme in Europe and went on to win two World Endurance and become the ninth New Zealander to compete in Formula 1.

Following significant earlier successes Chris Pither won the NZ V8 Ute Championship in 2010, the following year he took out the NZ/Australia Ute Racing Series. Success eluded Chris in the Australian V8 Supercar Championship highlighted by finishing 4th in the 2017 Supercheap Auto 1000 with Dale Wood in an Erebus Motorsport Holden Commodore, the same year he won the Dunlop Super2 Championship Series for Garry Rogers Motorsport, the feeder category to V8 Supercars.



We should never forget or overlook the achievements of members like Brendon and Chris, they are so inspirational to our younger generation...

RH



THE HARTLEY FILES



For Brendon and Sarah Hartley it was an unusually quiet start to the New Year, time out enjoying their new home near Taupo, out on the bikes to maintain those all-important fitness levels.

Mid-month Brendon headed off to Cologne in Germany for commitments with the Gazoo Racing Toyota LMP1 Hybrid programme, a very short break followed, then it was off to Santiago in Chile for Round 3 of the FIA ABB e-Formula Championship with the GEOX Dragon team.

Tweet - Been switched off and on charge for the last weeks. Feeling great and happy to be back at a race circuit. It's hot.

FP1 ended with Brendon posting the 22nd fastest time while his Penske team mate Nico Muller was fifth quickest, 3/10ths off P1, the two Penske cars separated by 1.2 seconds. Mitch Evans was 13th on the time sheet.

Brendon caused the 30 minute FP2 practice session to be brought to a halt for an unusual reason - a cooling fan had been left on his car and the assembly dropped off as he rounded Turn 1 causing the stoppage. An embarrassing moment that cost the team 5,000 Euros. He was holding 10th place on the time sheets before his problems continued, flagged to the stewards for 'undertaking' under the second red flag! There was no penalty and he retained P10 after a much better session, 6/10ths quicker than in FP1 and 7/10ths off P1. Muller was 19th fastest which shows how quickly the picture changes, Evans improved to P3 to ensure his place in the Shoot Out and continued that form to secure his second pole position for Panasonic Jaguar Racing. Andretti-BMW's Maximilian Gunther joining the e-experienced kiwi on the front row.

Gunther won the 45 minute plus one lap race, two seconds ahead of Antonio Félix da Costa who started P10 with Evans completing the podium. The Santiago e-Prix wasn't kind to Brendon, he retired on Lap 36 with

damaged suspension while team mate Muller finished 12th after receiving a 10 second penalty for causing a collision

Tweet - Not the weekend we hoped for. We didn't have the pace to challenge for points and had to retire with suspension damage. We will keep working on it.

After 3 of the 14 Championship Rounds Mitch Evans sits 8th in the standings, Brendon 19th



and Muller 22nd in the 24 car field.

As an interesting aside, Maximilian Gunther drove for GEOX Dragon in last year's championship series, finishing 17th and highest placed of the team's three drivers.

No doubt Jay Penske's GEOX Dragon team will be hoping for better results in what is a double-header month. Round 4 takes place at a circuit familiar to Brendon, the Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez in Mexico City on the 15th, two weeks later the cars are on the grid for the Marrakesh e-Prix in Morocco.

In between the two e-Prix, Brendon will suit-up in his Gazoo Racing Toyota overalls for Round 5 of the World Endurance Championship, the Lone Star Le Mans at the Circuit of the Americas (COTA) in Texas on the 23rd of the month.

From a quiet January the pace rapidly quickens for our man in February...

RH





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Remember to renew your Membership to continue to receive all of the benefits of belonging to New Zealand's premiere Car Club

It's easy to renew, just go here:

<http://manawatucarclub.org.nz/get-involved/membership/>



COME RACING WITH US!

PARTING SHOT



Yep, it's changed a little since then!!

