



Manawatu Car Club Inc
Club Bulletin
Feb & March '23

FROM THE PRESIDENTS PEN...



Well firstly, my thoughts go out to all of those people who were badly impacted by Cyclone Gabrielle, I can only hope that everyone from the MCC Family is safe and well.

February was a big month for the club... we started off the month with two drift events and our AGM, which was closely followed by a Transpec / GT Oil Manfeild Open Day, then we had a weekend off before getting into our February Flat Foot meeting, but before we get into all of that...

Part of what we are as a club is to support our local community whenever and wherever we can. Late last year, the week before Xmas actually, I was very privileged to be able to present two donations on behalf of the MCC to Manchester House and Feilding St Johns. Both of these organizations do a wonderful job in our community, and also in helping us with some of the larger meetings that we run, so I am very happy that we can help in some small way to help them to continue to do their thing. I only wish that we could give more...



Our grassroots drift events and Open Day in February were extremely well supported, with both drift events being sold out, and the Open Day seeing 47 entries. What was even more pleasing was the number of new entries (Rookies) to these events, lots of new faces and cars, which was awesome to see.

Our AGM at the Feilding Civic Centre went off without a hitch, well we did have to wait for Ross Thurston to arrive but other than that it was a good night. Unfortunately, we had a few apologies on the night but hey that is life, however we might look to move the AGM from a weekday and hold it on a weekend, maybe as part of one of our race meetings, and throw in a dinner as well to entice more people along.

One of the highlights of the meeting was presenting the MCC's most prestigious award, the Farland Award, to a very deserving Mark (Nemo) Whale. Mark began volunteering as part of the Daybreaker timing crew with Dave Hayward nearly two decades ago. He then joined the Manawatu Car Club Crash Rescue Team and has been a regular attendee for over 15 years, assisting at both on track and off-track club events, with the support of his wife Donna.

During this time Mark has supplied various vehicles for recoveries, this has included:

A Toyota Landcruiser wagon and hydraulic lowering orange trailer, an Isuzu truck with a tilt deck, another highly modified Landcruiser, aka Greenie, and a Dodge Ram tow vehicle with an airbag-controlled steel decked lowering trailer. Mark has provided these at no cost to the club, and currently both the Dodge and Greenie attend most events, in fact I cannot remember the last time Mark and Donna have not attended one of our events.

In 2009 the strength of the orange trailer was tested when a BNT V8 got a bit lost on a wet track at Castrol and cleared both the tyre bundles and a concrete block before landing on the trailer. A HIAB was required to reposition it, but otherwise no major issues.



The Landcruiser showed its capabilities by towing in a racing super truck, while Greenie was very useful for recovering a T-Bird, with another tow vehicle still attached, or moving wayward parkers in the pit area.

The Farland award goes some way to recognising the commitment and expense that has been provided by Mark for the club, and its race participants.

The other highlight of the night was to see Tim Wilde return unopposed to the Vice President's role, and the whole 2022 MCC Committee being reelected, again unopposed, for the 2023 year. I say it was a highlight because I know firsthand how much time and passion these people have put into the club in what was the club's 75th

year, which also happened to be one of the club's best, if not the best, year/s. So, from my perspective it is great to have all of these people back on board again to build on the year that has just been. If you could not make the AGM, the reports from the night are available on our Governance page of the MCC Website - <https://manawatucarclub.org.nz/news-information/club-governance/>

The February Flatfoot meeting was a game of two halves that is for sure, overcast and rain on Saturday, and then a near perfect day on Sunday. I mentioned to some that it had felt like an eternity since we were last out on the track, and looking back it was close to it having been sidelined for some 2 & ½ months... however it was funny that we were still working on my car at 9.30pm the night before race day due to a couple of little gremlins that decided to show up at the last minute. We got there in the end and while the first three



outings on the track were a little disappointing, things finally gelled together in the last race of the weekend and we came away with a chocolate fish and a first-place sticker thanks to Summer Series Chocolate Fish Sponsor, Nick Stewart at Safe Engineering.

On the next page you will see that there is a rule change coming into effect on the 1st May 2023. This rule change impacts all race cars in the SF & RS Cup Classes that have a roll cage in them, in that from the 1st May 2023 you must have a Frontal Head Restraint (FHR) system in use in the car for all of our Clubmans race meetings, this means the upcoming Feilding Auto Electrical Winter Race Series that starts on the first weekend of June '23. The only cars that are not impacted by this change are cars that are entered in these two classes that have a current Registration (Rego) & Warrant (WOF), however the Manawatu Car Club highly recommends the use of a full race safety harness and FHR system, along with the minimum requirement to utilize the FHR system properly, in any car that goes out onto the racetrack to compete in a race capacity. The MCC Committee has also decided that from the 1st January 2024, the SF Cup class will also be required to meet this new rule being imposed regardless of whether the car has a current Rego & WOF... that means we are asking that all SF Cup cars have the minimum roll cage required (& Hans bar) for the FHR to effectively do its job properly.

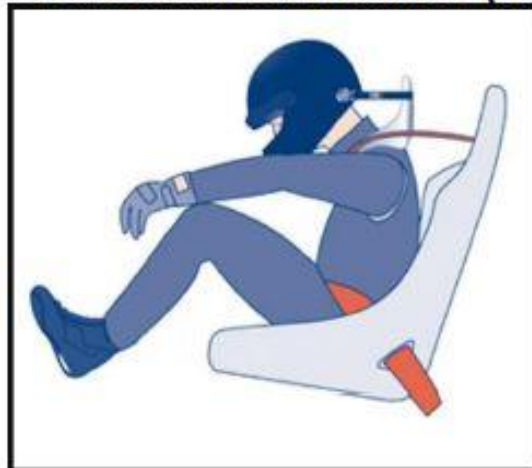
As we know that this will mean an extra expense to some competitors, the club has struck a deal with several suppliers of FHR systems (Hans, Necksgen, Hybrid) and compatible helmets, and we can pass these savings on to you along with a payment plan over 4 months of the Winter Series. If you are interested in getting pricing, please do not hesitate to email me at president@manawatucarclub.org.nz and I can send you some details. We can also help you with what is required in the way of roll cages and Hans bars, again just drop me an email and we can arrange to view your car and work through the details with you.

March is a quiet month for the club as the Central Districts Field Days take over Manfeild, and unfortunately the one off-track event that we had planned, the Pararorangi Road Rallysprint, had to be cancelled due to damage to the road which happened during the recent cyclone, so you will see below the next Track & Yack invite, so why not pop along and have a chat... or should that be yack...???

Richie



FRONTAL HEAD RESTRAINTS (FHR)



Motorsport New Zealand has widened its requirement for competitors to use a Frontal Head Restraint (FHR) system in competition vehicles. [An amendment \(#36048\) to Schedule A](#) of the Motorsport Manual issued on 15 July 2022 outlines the phased introduction of the new FHR requirements.

The Frontal Head Restraint is designed to stop a driver's head from violently moving forward during an impact. This safety device is now an incredibly common part of motorsport safety globally and has without a doubt saved countless lives and prevented equally as many serious head, neck and spinal injuries, even during relatively low-speed impacts. The FHR works by limiting the lateral movement of a competitor's head during a frontal impact.

Currently, Motorsport New Zealand requires the use of a complying FHR device for all 'National Race' and 'Championship Rally' and higher event permit grades in New Zealand. The new requirements will be phased in from now until 1 January 2024 as follows:

- From 1 January 2023: FHRs will also be required for all 'Clubmans Rally' event permit grades.
- From 1 January 2023: FHRs will also be required for all 'National Rally' event permit grades.
- From 1 May 2023: FHRs will also be required for all 'Clubmans Race' vehicles with a safety cage. (RS Cup and SF Cup)
- From 1 January 2024: FHRs will also be required for all 'Rallysprint' event permit grades.
- FHRs will remain recommended for all ClubSport Basic & Advanced events

Note: FHRs will not be required in Clubmans Race vehicles that do not have a safety cage. However, it is highly recommended that all vehicles without a safety cage install the minimum safety equipment to install an FHR system.

MEET THE 2023 COMMITTEE



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Noel Beale



Jill Hogg



Kaye Flannagan



Donna Whale



Greg Browne



Nick Stewart



Markku Braid



Troy Brown



Malcolm Glen



Russell Harris
Club Advisor



Brian Davies
Club Advisor



MARCH

Friday 31st

Manfeild Test Day

APRIL

Saturday 1st

Accredited Classes (TBC)

Sunday 2nd

Mitre 10 Mega Summer Race Series Round 3

Friday 14th

Super Sprint NZ Championship – Test Day

Saturday 15th

Super Sprint NZ Championship – Race Day

Sunday 16th

Super Sprint NZ Championship – Race Day

Saturday 22nd

Mitre 10 Mega Summer Series Prizegiving Dinner
- Feilding Civic Centre



MAY

Saturday 13th

Back Track Drift Tutoring

Sunday 21st

Otara Road Bent Sprint Touge Drift (TBC)



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JUNE

Saturday 3rd

Feilding Auto Electrical Winter Race Series Round 1 – Test Day / Race Day (TBC)

Sunday 4th

Feilding Auto Electrical Winter Race Series Round 1 – Race Day

Sunday 18th

Transpec / GT Oil 4.5km Bent Sprint

JULY

Saturday 1 st	Feilding Auto Electrical Winter Race Series Round 2 – Test Day / Race Day (TBC)
Sunday 2 nd	Feilding Auto Electrical Winter Race Series Round 2 – Race Day
Saturday 15 th	Drift Practice
Sunday 16 th	Transpec / GT Oil Manfeild Open Day
Friday 21 st	Manfeild Test Day
Saturday 22 nd	24Mins of Le Manfeild – Superkarts plus Mini Enduros Day 1
Sunday 23 rd	24Mins of Le Manfeild – Superkarts plus Mini Enduros Day 2

AUGUST

Saturday 5 th	Feilding Auto Electrical Winter Race Series Round 3 – Test Day / Race Day (TBC)
Sunday 6 th	Feilding Auto Electrical Winter Race Series Round 3 – Race Day
Sunday 13 th	Transpec / GT Oil Back Track Autocross / Motorkhana
Saturday 19 th	Back Track Drift Tutoring

SEPTEMBER

Saturday 2 nd	Feilding Auto Electrical Winter Race Series Round 4 – Test Day / Race Day (TBC)
Sunday 3 rd	Feilding Auto Electrical Winter Race Series Round 4 – Race Day
Saturday 16 th	Feilding Auto Electrical Winter Race Series Prize Giving
Sunday 17 th	Transpec / GT Oil Manfeild Open Day

OCTOBER

Saturday 7 th	Drift Tutoring
Friday 20 th	OctoberFAST!! Test Day
Saturday 21 st	OctoberFAST!! Race Day – Super Trucks
Sunday 22 nd	OctoberFAST!! Race Day – Super Trucks

NOVEMBER

Sunday 5 th	Transpec / GT Oil Manfeild Open Day
Saturday 18 th	ShowVember
Sunday 19 th	Transpec / GT Oil Back Track Autocross

DECEMBER

Friday 2 nd	Manfeild Test Day
Saturday 3 rd	Mitre 10 Mega Summer Race Series – Test Day
Sunday 4 th	Mitre 10 Mega Summer Race Series 23/24 Round 1



VALE

One of the key people during the era when the circuit was known as the Manfeild Autocourse was Ian Marsh, probably better known as 'Marshy'. Sadly, Ian passed away on the 8th January '23 following a short illness, his funeral service taking place five days later at William Cotton and Sons Chapel, followed by a private interment, he was 84 years of age.

'Marshy' was the original caretaker and later Track Manager, what you saw was what you got with no pretensions, he was man of the land and wasn't afraid of hard work, often in rain during the early years. He would be remembered by many for his dedication, for his roll-your-own cigarettes and in the early years for grazing stock on the circuits grassed infield areas, minimising the need for mowing! He remained in the role for a period after the track management switched to the Manfeild Park Trust, moving on to work for Higgins Concrete in Feilding as their loader driver.

Ian Marsh received few accolades during his time of Manfeild, one of his proudest moments was being acknowledged at the prize giving following the one-off 24-hour Golden Handlebars motor cycle event in March 1992 when he was presented with a plaque and bottle of bubbly for his untiring efforts in making the unique event an outstanding success - he was lost for words but the smile said it all. 'Marshy' was a character in every sense of the word, there was a large turnout of people at the chapel to pay their respects and many stories told about one of the old school and one of the people who helped make Manfeild what it is today...

Six days earlier the legendary Ken Block had died following a snowmobile accident near his ranch in Utah. The 55-year-old was a professional American rally driver who competed in the WRC Rally of New Zealand on three occasions with a best result of 9th in 2012, he returned in 2017 and won the International Rally of Whangarei. However, Ken Block will be best remembered for reshaping car culture to a younger generation and redefining what it meant to be a 'hoon', he called himself a 'hoonigan'. Block knew what people wanted to see - donuts, power slides and jumps which led to him teaching the world what a 'Gymkhana' really is all about. He created the first 'Gymkhana' video at a disused airfield in 2008 and over the next 14 years there were nine more, some in cities like San Francisco, Los Angeles, London and Dubai, there were two 'Climbkhanas' filmed at the iconic Pikes Peak and the most dangerous road in China, the 6.7-kilometre Tianmen Mountain with its 99 switchback corners. Initially he drove rally inspired Subaru and Ford cars before creating the outrageously wild 'Hoonigan' '65 Ford Mustang and Ford F-100 truck.

Block's final episode moved into the world of EV, 'Electrikhana' was the result of Audi joining forces with the extrovert American to use his driving and marketing skills to make electric cars exciting to a new audience. They created the one-off all-electric 1,400 horsepower S1 'Hoonitron' that paid homage to Block's all-time favourite rally car, the Group B Audi Sport Quattro S1. For filming the Las Vegas Strip was shut down, over 100 bespoke Toyo tyres were destroyed, and the 9-minute video had more than six million YouTube hits in just two months. There will never be another like Ken Block, he had endless imagination for creating special cars and special moments which literally meant living on the edge. The motoring world will be a less interesting and exciting place without him, when asked what his legacy would be, he relied in typical Block language - *"Be creative, live a fun life and don't be an asshole" ...*



NEW MEMBERS

The membership reached an all-time high of 481 in 2022, an appropriate milestone to reach in the club's 75th Anniversary year.

In this bulletin we welcome the following members and trust they will enjoy their involvement with one of the founding clubs of motorsport in our country.

Jet Ashworth	Wanganui
Madison Doyle	Ashhurst
Sam Doyle	Ashhurst
Nikita Dunn	Ashhurst
Cameron Ombler	Wellington
Fletcher Sloan	Auckland
Mylam Sloan	Auckland
Guy Brandon	Palmerston North
Hayden Carrick	Wanganui
Kylie Carrick	Wanganui
Philip Chapman	Palmerston North
Jayden Hodder	Palmerston North
Lyle Sharratt	Wanganui
Karen Sharratt	Wanganui



The club welcomes you, enjoy everything that the MCC has to offer with likeminded people. We welcome input and ideas from new members, don't be afraid to speak out, there's no such thing as a bad idea.

CLUB CHAT

One of the key positions at major meetings is the Driving Standards Observer. For the current 5-round Super Sprint MSNZ Championship Series the role is being filled by Chris Pither. Our man has no shortage of racing experience having competed in V8 Utes, Super2 and Supercars during his career to date on both sides of the Tasman. In Round 3 of the CTFROC at Manfeild Chris's biggest moment came in the Dan Higgins Trophy Feature when the race leader Charlie Wurz was nudged by Liam Foster with 10 laps remaining, both cars spun off the seal and lost track position. Foster was deemed the guilty party and received a 'Drive Through' penalty to complete his dramatic weekend. Could the role of 'DSO' be a new direction in the Pither racing career...

Bryce Hogg took more than a casual interest in Lloyd's live 'Unriel Collection' auction at the end of January. Fifty-five cars owned by an Australian enthusiast went under the hammer ranging from his first car, a 1954 Ford Prefect to a Lamborghini Aventador SVJ Roadster, but the 'stars' of the auction were a number of historically significant Australian racing cars. On the mouth-watering list were 'Pete' Geoghegan's 1967 Ford Mustang that won the ATCC on three occasions, three genuine Group C 'big banger' supercars together with race cars driven by Dick Johnson, Peter Brock, Allan Moffat and Bob Jane. Bryce's interest lay in Lot 36223, the last Falcon built and races by Moffat before he switched to the rotary engine Mazda RX7, the Group C spec XD model in the distinctive yellow Federation Insurance/Unipart livery that Moffat and John Fitzpatrick raced in the 1980 Bathurst 1000, the car was retired after three laps with engine problems. Bryce's superb replica of the car has created much favourable comment since it first appeared at the end of a six-year project, the question being asked is what did the 'Real Deal' XD Falcon sell for...



Round three of the Castrol Toyota Formula Regional Oceania Championship at Manfeild Circuit Chris Amon over the weekend of 27/28/29 January brought out the real spirit of the Manawatu Car Club. Nick Stewart sacrificed racing to be the man who checked that the MX5's met the class regulations. When he heard about the MCC Chocolate Fish Saloons (Jeff Braid was responsible for the name) Nick immediately offered to provide the 'fish' and the stickers for all the categories, in his words "a bit of cheeky publicity". Nick was also captured on television doing one of the presentations, the cameraman gave viewers a head-to-toe shot from the wide-brimmed sun hat to the shorts and Red Band gumboots! Perhaps it was acknowledging that the club remembers the importance of catering for the 'grass roots' level? Well done Mr Stewart...

Hugh Wilde (brother of Vice President Tim) really upped his game working the checker flag, by far the best flagman seen to date in the series. Flagging is a true art and an integral part of the circuit experience, particularly important at an event where it's being televised or live streamed. Which raises the question - back home in Marton is 'Skin' quietly working on 'double flagging' like they do in the USA to add to his repertoire? That would look cool, very cool...

Talking of flagging, club secretary Jeff Braid is a man of many hats and an incredible asset to the club for many reasons. One hat reveals that Jeff is also an experienced flagman and appears to be the one of the few who knows how to hold the New Zealand flag correctly to signal the groups starting in handicap races, the art is holding the flag so it can be seen by the drivers at the back of the field. It was good to see him up on the starter's dais over the weekend..

Possibly the highlight of the meeting for the various marshals was being told directly by the new Super Series promoters how efficient they are and being congratulated for their efforts. They have been told the same thing by both the club and MSNZ, but this time it was rather special because it was the series bosses. These actions strengthen the important relationship between the circuit, the club and the promoter. A big tick for all concerned...

Away from the circuit itself the promoters gave Manfeild an interesting new look. The 'garages' for the CTFROC teams were a line of marquees extending from the eastern (Kawakawa Road) end of the main building with direct access onto pit lane. Only two of the permanent garages were used, one for car weighing and checking,

the other was the 'drive through' for the first three cars in each race to the presentation podium that was sited behind the building in a fenced off area, it looked very professional and worked extremely well. Both President Richie and Jeff Braid handled the support race presentations with Andrew Davis, General Manager of Toyota NZ, doing the CTFROC trophies...

On viewer's screen the circuit looked very bland and needed some colour, Brian Davies approached CofC Malcolm Glenn about the flag point marshals leaving their new 'homes' to wave their flags on the slow down lap of the feature Dan Higgins Trophy race that ended the meeting as a salute to the drivers. Malcolm gave his approval, the people were very enthusiastic with their flag waving which made it a very colourful and appropriate ending to the Manfeild round...

Among the tens of thousands of Elton John fans in this country are the senior Hoggs. Jonathan and Jill sacrificed the Manfeild CTFROC round at Manfeild Circuit Chris Amon to have a well-earned break in Auckland with the highlight having tickets for Saturday night's 'Yellow Brick Road Farewell Tour' concert at Mt Smart Stadium. The concerts coincided with areas of the region, including Pukekohe Park Raceway, experiencing unprecedented flooding, the rain was so heavy they couldn't see the huge cruise ships berthed at the wharves opposite their downtown accommodation! Thanks to the continuous rain the Friday night concert was cancelled 30 minutes before he was due on stage, Saturday night was cancelled at 11.45am on the day. Mt Smart Stadium hasn't been a happy place for the now 75-year-old 'Rocket Man', on his previous visit he lost his voice mid-concert, leaving the stage and not reappearing. Watching an entertainer on YouTube is nothing like a live concert...

Spare a thought for club Vice President, treasurer and all-round good guy Tim Wilde who resides in Hawkes Bay, an area that suffered devastating damage along with other east coast areas thanks to Cyclone Gabrielle. For thousands of people, it must have been a worrying and frightening time as the serious flooding got worse by the hour, thankfully the Wilde residence is in the Havelock North area that somehow escaped the carnage. However, they were without electricity and internet but Tim being the resourceful man that he is secured a generator so was able to recharge his cell phone to have 'patchy' communication with the outside world. For the people and businesses affected there must have been many moments of doubt before calm finally descended on 'The Bay' and East Coast...

On the weekend 04/05 February MCC members won two prestigious trophies. At Hampton Downs the Morrie Smith Memorial Trophy that honours Kenny Smith's father was presented to the winner of the feature Formula Ford race, a race that was the most dramatic of the weekend. The leading duo collided on the final lap and the first car across the line was disqualified for a technical infringement which promoted our man Blake Dowdall to the top step of the podium with Greg Murphy alongside after finishing second in his one-off appearance, Murph won the round with two 4ths and a 2nd placing. Congratulations to Blake and his team, a champion in the making...



Deserved congratulations also go to Tim Rush who was awarded a prestigious piece of silverware at the 33rd Skope Classic held at the Euromarque Motorsport Park near Christchurch that was previously known by the Mike Pero title. The meeting included Round 3 of the 2022/23 SAS Autoparts MSC NZ F5000 Tasman Cup Revival Series where Tim was presented with the Stan Redmond Memorial Trophy at the conclusion of the Feature race by the meeting's special guest, Australian racing legend John Bowe. The trophy was awarded for Tim's contribution to F5000 racing and his sportsmanship coupled with the same passion and enthusiasm that Redmond, a founding member of both the F5000 Association and the Tasman Cup Revival Series, exhibited. The award is also a special recognition for the entire Rush team, particularly Tim's parents Terry and Joy together with engineer Ross (Rosco) Dallas. Bowe described the M22 as a *"magnificent car and so very well engineered when McLaren was truly kiwi"*. A very proud moment for both the Rush Collection and the club...



The Skope Classic attracted a field of ten Formula 5000, the number bolstered by the addition of the three South Island Leda/McRae GM1 cars driven by Michael Collins, his sister Anna and Steve Ross. Several of the northern mid-field group that Tim usually races with didn't cross the Strait leaving Tim and Alastair Chalmers to battle against the significantly faster cars, in qualifying Tim's quickest lap was more than 11 seconds off the pole time of Michael Collins but the McLaren M22 was 8/10ths quicker than Chalmers Chevron B32 which meant the pair shared the back row of the grid, at the end of the weekend Tim's result card read 10, 7, 7 with an 'A' for effort. Michael Collins was untouchable in the qualifying session with a 1.18.858 lap, Ross managed 1.20.792 with our man Kevin Ingram P3 with a best 1.21.836, nearly three seconds off the hot pace! Driving his familiar Lola T332 Ingram recorded a 3rd in both the Scratch and Handicap races, in the latter he crossed the line only 2/10ths behind Russell Greer who had led seven of the eight laps, in the 12 lap Feature he finished P2 nearly 20 seconds behind the unstoppable Collins, Tim was a lap down. It was a mixed weekend for the two Feilding drivers...

The renaming of the Canterbury Car Club's circuit from Mike Pero to Euromarque Motorsport Park raises the question of who are Euromarque? Googling reveals they are an automotive dealership in Christchurch's Central City with the Alfa Romeo, Fiat, Renault, Maserati and BYD franchises. BYD is the interesting one, a Chinese manufacturer founded in 2003 that produces a diverse range of electric vehicles, translated the meaning of BYD is 'Build Your Dreams'. The other four brands are much better known...

After completing her first season of racing in the RS Cup class Caitlan Chowen has found a need for more speed from the # 54 Honda Civic. The upgrade included replacing the original 1.6 litre motor with a more powerful 2.0 litre DOHC V-Tech that has taken the available horsepower to around the 200 mark! With the significant increase in 'go' the 'stop' part needed attention which resulted in fitting four-wheel disc brakes in place of the original disc/drum set-up. With the Honda no longer a meek and mild 'first' car Caitlin's first outing was the Transpec/GT Oil Open Day sprint, the breakout time in RS Cup is 1.30, her individual lap times were 1.30.663, 1.26.194 and 1.25.816, that suggests a class change to the SF Cup where the breakout is 1.25 - to spoil the outing the clutch destroyed itself!



Less known on Manfeild Circuit Chris Amon is another fast lady member of the club, Rianna O'Meara Hunt from the Wellington region. A highlight of a very successful karting career was Rianna being the first junior woman to win a Rotax Max Pro Tour Australian State title in 2017, she began serious circuit racing in the 2021/22 Toyota 86 championship driving for 'The Heart of Racing' team that supports Starship Hospital. With the benefit of mentoring from Greg Murphy (driving) and Greg Rust (media), in November last year the 20 years old was one of the hundred female applicants with high hopes of racing in the 2023 SRO GT4 America SprintX Championship, that number was reduced to nine for the two-day 'Heart of Racing' selection trial in the Apex Motor Club in Arizona where she was eventually chosen to alternate driving duties behind the wheel of 'The Heart of Racing' Aston Martin Vantage GT4 with 22 year old Californian Hannah Grisham, it was another very positive step for woman to enter sports car racing, Round 1 will take place at California's Sonoma Raceway on 30 March. Rianna O'Meara-Hunt will be the first female club member to race internationally, we will watch her progress with great interest...



There was second kiwi driver in the selected 'Heart of Racing' top nine, Chelsea Herbert. The 24-year-old is also a former karter who later in her career competed in the SsangYong Ute Series, became the first female to win a NZ V8 Touring Car Championship race, broke her back in a crash at Teretonga in the 2020 Toyota Racing Series and returned for last Year's Toyota 86 Championship where she finished 14th overall. Also making the cut was Chloe Chambers, the young American sensation who created history in February by becoming the first female to win a Toyota Racing Series (CTFROC) race when she beat Kaleb Ngatoa in the second race at Taupo after starting from pole position, another first. Rianna was in good company...

It was kept very low key, but the remarkable Kenny Smith had a new experience at the 67th NZGP meeting. You name it and Kenny has driven it when it comes to open-wheels race cars - Formula Ford, Formula Pacific, Formula 5000, Formula 1, the latter being the Leyton House March that he owned and demonstrated at Manfeild and Ohakea back in the early 1990's. To complete the impressive list of 'cars I have driven' at Hampton Downs Kenny experienced a Formula First, the 'up-for-sale' car that enjoyed a successful record driven by Blake Dowdall. It was a less-than-happy experience for the veteran as a Formula First has its own special characteristics so can take some adjusting to, to his credit he 'gave-it-a-go' in the qualifying session where his fastest lap was 8.9 seconds off the pole time but it's not really a fair comparison. The now 81 year old was a DNS in all three races that were won by our man Chris Symon...

It was brought to RH's attention that the evergreen Brian Green is 'double teaming' with David Rogers in the GT NZ Championship, the pair sharing the driving duties at each round. They met through having their respective rally cars prepared by Neil Allport, joining forces to run David's Porsche Cayman GT4 in last year's championship. This year there's been a major upgrade with the Porsche replaced by a new GT4-spec McLaren 570S, Brian says - *"I like the GT4 cars, though they are physical to drive and you are busy in the car with gears and braking etcetera, they have a few of the niceties like traction control too. The McLaren has better braking, with the V8 it has more torque, and getting in and out of it is a little easier for us older guys"*. A very honest appraisal...



While the 'big names' were away at Taupo with MSNZ's Super Sprint series, on 11/12 February the club had a big weekend at Manfeild Circuit Chris Amon. Saturday was a tutorial day for the drifters with a full house of forty drivers taking part on the 'back track', the clean-up of shredded pieces of tyres suggested that the participants listened to the tutors to make it another successful drift event.



On Sunday the action moved to the 3.03-kilometre circuit for Round 1 of the Transpec GT Oil Open Day series with 46 drivers taking part, the entry including a good number of female drivers. Following a three-lap practice there were three 'official' runs each of three laps with Richard Kelly in his Juno sports car heading the time sheet in each round, his fastest lap was an impressive 1.08.125 on the second run with David Thomsen the closest challenger with a best time that was 2.46 seconds slower! Bryan Hartley's stunning Shell Sport spec BDG powered Mk1 Ford Escort made its track debut but unfortunately was side lined with minor teething problems, the joys of motor racing. Another very successful club day ended with a 'Fun Run' that saw five drivers go out one more time, Michael Hollis being quickest with a 1.21.84 lap that was 0.45 faster than Graeme Bretherton. Catering for all members is part of the club's DNA...

Following a last-minute deal Kaleb Ngatoa made a welcome return to the country's premier single seaters when he contested the final two rounds of the Castrol Toyota Formula Regional Oceania Championship at Hampton Downs and Taupo. Driving a Toyota FT60 prepared by Giles Motorsport Kaleb was one of the nine drivers who took the checker flag in the series, that win was in Race 1 at the NZGP meeting after starting from the front row and beating Laurens van Hoeten by 7/10ths of a second, the 17-year-old Dutchman won the Grand Prix race the following day where Kaleb placed 5th. A week later at Taupo Ngatoa finished a close second (1.58) behind young American Chloe Chambers in Race 2 but in the 23-lap Feature his tyres lost their grip during the race and Kaleb dropped back to P9 at the finish line after being 7th quickest in qualifying and running as high as fourth in the early stages. What do the remaining months of 2023 hold...



Spraying champagne on the victory dais is something of an art and with these teenagers coming up through the ranks watching the telly coverage of the recent CTFROC series showed that there are a number who need some instruction, including our own Blake Dowdall. Maybe there's a need to produce a simple instruction sheet to maximise the fizz? Spraying champagne to celebrate victory goes back more than fifty years to when Dan Gurney and AJ Foyt won the 1967 Le Mans 24 Hour in their All-American Team Ford GT40, Gurney completely sprayed an imposing figure standing below the rostrum before AJ told him "Man, that's the boss you're spraying" - the man was Henry Ford II who was on his honeymoon and witnessed Ford's second successive win in the race...

Popular MSNZ Steward Bill Richie is also a long-time classic racer who drives a rather quick 1968 Alfa Romeo Giulia saloon thanks to being repowered by the 2.0 litre version of the famous twin cam four-cylinder motor. Bill lives in the town of Marton these days and still mixes in the right circles, a friend made contact to say that he and an Auckland group were having a 'tour' and would detour to the capital of the Rangitikei for a coffee and chat. No doubt the people in the street were impressed when thirteen Lamborghinis arrived and parked up! That's a very hard act to follow...

The big news on the drifting scene is that Jaron Olivecrona has seriously upgraded with a new car that has Lexus bodywork covering the chassis and mega horsepower twin turbocharged 5.0 litre V12 created by the genius of Nelson Hartley. Apparently, Nelson has plans to return to the track but won't say if it's 'dirt' or 'tarmac', for a break away from engines he and Annie were in the City of Sails and attended the Australian National Basketball League (ANBL) playoff game that ended with the Auckland-based NZ Breakers securing a place in the best-of-five finals showdown against defending champions Sydney Kings. Seems that they both enjoyed the noisy atmosphere and hype that the game generates...



It was so good to see two club members racing at Pukekohe in what was the farewell meeting for the iconic Formula 5000 'thunderships', the circuit closing permanently in early April. The American inspired stock block

V8s first appeared at the South Auckland track in January 1970 with Australian Frank Matich winning the NZ Grand Prix race driving a McLaren Chevrolet M10A. In 1977 there was a switch to Formula Atlantic as the country's premier open wheel racing class, the previous year Kenny Smith had won the grand prix at the wheel of the famous La Valise Travel Lola T332. It was so appropriate that examples of the first and last makes that won the NZGP at Pukekohe were represented at the farewell - Tim Rush with the Rush Collection McLaren M22, the last F5000 chassis built by the factory, and Kevin Ingram with his Viceroy liveried Lola T332. Pukekohe Park Raceway may have seen the last of the 'golden era' cars, thankfully they live on with the Tasman Revival Series at the country's other circuits...

THE RACING SCENE

The new year heralded the arrival of the new look Super Sprint Motorsport New Zealand Championship that got underway at the Highlands Motorsport Park in Central Otago over the weekend of 13/14/15 January with three MCC members on the entry lists - Justin Allen, Struan Robertson and Brian Green.

Allen began his fifth season in the tenth year of the Toyota 86 Championship, after topping the time sheets in two of the three practice sessions and being second fastest in the other, Justin qualified the NAPA car in 6th place in the 23-car field 0.570 off the quickest time. Race 1 ended in P3, Race 2 in P4 and Race 3 in P5 after battling with Christina Orr-West, the pair split by 2/10ths as they crossed the finish line. Brock Gilchrist won two of the three races, Tom Bewley winning the other.



Robertson was running in the multi-class Pirelli Porsche Championship that includes the 'Boxter' model from the German manufacturer, the lap times varied between 1.39 and 2.11. All three practice sessions weren't officially timed because of transponder issues, in the Qualifying session Struan clocked the sixth best lap that was a full 10 seconds slower than the pole time set by two-race winner Garry Derrick driving a newer more

powerful car. In the three 10 lap races there were placings of P5, P5 and P4, the 30-minute race saw Struan finishing a lap down in P20.

The evergreen Brian Green completed the MCC quartet, racing in the GT New Zealand Championship at the wheel of a McLaren that was matched against the likes of hot Porsches, Lamborghinis, AMG Mercedes-Benz, Ferrari, Aston Martin and other McLarens. The GT races also marked the surprise return of Tony Quinn following his major accident in Australia last year. 'Greeny' didn't run in the practice sessions and qualified P21 in the 23-car field, 14 seconds slower than the Porsche of Heremana Malmezac/Jono Lester that was in a class of its own in terms of speed, lap times through the field were spread by over 16 seconds! The three races were all mini-enduros, beginning with a One Hour that in the hot conditions was a real physical and mental test for drivers, some cars having two drivers. A feature of the race was the farcical handicapping, the Malmezac/Lester car beat Marco Giltrap by a whopping 48 seconds, the two cars having lapped the entire field at least once, Brian took the flag in P19, four laps behind the winners, but did better in the two 30-minute races by securing placings of P19 and P17, the shorter races obviously being less demanding. Thirteen cars were on the grid for the renamed Castrol Toyota Formula Regional Oceania Championship with the field including two female drivers, kiwi Breanna Morris and Chloe Chambers from the USA.

A week later the Summer Series moved further south to Invercargill's Teretonga Park with major changes in the support categories, Toyota 86 and Southern Sprint Tin Tops were in, the GT and Pirelli Porsche championships were out. At the end of the Thursday Toyota test day Justin Allen was second fastest in the Toyota 86 Championship field which was a good omen for the racing. He was in the top six in the final two practice sessions before qualifying P7 with the cars covered by just 2/10ths of a second.

Series leader Gilchrist won Race 1 where Justin finished 6th, Day 2 brought a pair of second places behind Dion Pitt with the biggest margin 0.629. In Race 3 Gilchrist was first across the line but had incurred a 5 second penalty for a rule infringement which relegated him to P6. Mid-race Allen overtook Clay Osborne with a perfectly executed move but to go into defensive mode to retain his place in the long 20 lapper. There was a good haul of points, and the team left the South Island sitting 4th in the championship standings, 33 points behind leader Gilchrist.

On the same weekend Round 4 of the 2022/23 Pirelli Porsche NZ Championship was run at the Ruapuna Raceway which was the opening round of the Speed Works Series that had four classes competing. In a 24-car field, Struan Robertson was 4th and 5th quickest in the practice sessions before qualifying P6. The Levin driver was in top form running against newer models, finishing 4th and 5th in the first two races on the programme, Race 3 brought an 11th place while the long 30-minute race ended with Struan P22, a lap down. The current championship began at Manfeild back in October and will continue at Pukekohe (25 February), Hampton Downs and Taupo...



Also happening, but in the North Island, was the sixth Taupo Historic Grand Prix meeting where the club was again strongly represented. 'Celebrating Jaguar' was the weekend's theme, the cars from Coventry were honoured with a parade and two handicap races. With eight categories the 26-race programme featured Round 2 of the 2022/23 Formula 5000 Tasman Revival Series that had the Feilding pair Kevin Ingram and Tim Rush on the grid. Hogg Racing had three cars with Jonathan, Bryce and Gareth, joined by Geoff Spencer, Richard Clulee, Geoff and Ben Boyden and Dean Curtis in the Heritage Touring Car category. Add the names of Kaleb Ngatoa (Formula Open), Cam Neill, Graham and Shane Barnes (Invited Allcomers), Nathan Harris (Super V8 Series), Keith Pfeffer and Roger Greaney (Historic Formula Ford/Formula Junior/Formula 3) with the list completed by Ian Williamson, Kevin Gimblett, Graeme Bagrie and Natalie Campbell who entered the Historic Muscle Car class, which adds up to twenty-one members or Manfeild regulars on the various grids - apologies if a name has been missed.



Conditions were extremely warm on Day 1 with the track temperature approaching 70 degrees which resulted in a number of cars suffering overheating problems, one highlight for many was track owner Tony Quinn doing a pit walk on crutches to chat with competitors, a nice touch and great PR. Day 2 was a little cooler.

Dean Curtis was the club's sole winner but there were a number of podium finishers - Kaleb Ngatoa (2/3), Geoff Spencer (2), Graeme Bagrie (2), Geoff Boyden (3) and Curtis (3), top six place-getters included Kevin Ingram (6/4), Natalie Campbell (4), Ian Williamson (4), Spencer (5), Gareth Hogg (5), Jonathan Hogg (6), Graeme Barnes (6), Cam Neill (6). There were others whose best result went close, Tim Rush (7), Richard Clulee (7) and Kevin Gimblett (7).

There were several disappointments, perhaps most notably Formula 5000 star Kevin Ingram who had a troubled weekend that began without posting a time in the qualifying session, followed by a DNF after five laps of Race 2 when he tangled passing a slower car and bent a rear rim. The three races produced three winners which would have minimised the damage to Ingram on the points table.

In the first Heritage Touring Car race Gareth Hogg was looking a likely podium finisher before his Red Bull E36 had a serious vibration on the penultimate lap and he stopped out on the circuit, the cause was a blown rear tyre. In the same race Richard Clulee received a five second penalty for jumping the start which dropped him to P7 on the result sheet. Spare a thought for Nathan Harris who drove his Holden V8 Super Tourer, the Super V8 Series had a 15 strong field that included Tranzam Challenge and the new NZTA2 Muscle Car Series cars, placings of 13, 12 and 11 were highly commendable. Nathan did provide one of the weekend's most exciting moments when the front suspension of his car collapsed as he crossed the finish line in Race 3. Perfect timing!

There were also good stories, driving the Rush Collections McLaren M22 Tim Rush would have been very happy with a pair of 7th placings and a 10th in the 13 car Formula 5000 field. Staying with open wheelers it was great to see the highly talented youngster Kaleb Ngatoa racing in the Formula Open category behind the wheel of a Swift DB4 Formula Pacific car and being at the pointy end of the field. For Jonathan Hogg it was his first outing at the circuit in the BMW 'Batmobile', his lap times dropped by a full 10 seconds as the meeting progressed which must have been very rewarding. Summarising the weekend, it was generally a very satisfying meeting for 'locals' and their support teams. Real summer weather, very little damage to cars, courteous staff, shame about the long breaks...

The month of January ended at Manfeild Circuit Chris Amon with Round 3 of the Super Sprint MSNZ Championship, the halfway mark in the series. As with the previous there was a 'local' flavour with the support classes to the main game CTFROC single seaters, at the Feilding Circuit were the Hankook Tyres MX5s and MCC Chocolate Fish Saloons plus the invited HVRA Historic Saloons.

Since the circuit opened in October 1973 there have been many occasions when the weather has been a major talking point, Round 3 of the 2023 series provided changing conditions that's always been an integral element of motor racing. Saturday was warm but varied between dry, semi-wet, wet and very wet depending on the time of day! Sunday was extremely warm with the air temperature in the high 20s, 43 degrees on the track surface, dark clouds hovered around the circuit, but they came to nothing.

Onto the racing, Justin Allen showed the benefits of a busy racing programme when he was pipped by Nick Cummings on the time sheets in both the MX5 practice and qualifying sessions by narrow margins. In practice Dom Fransen, Markku Braid and Dean Evans were within a second of Cumming's time, qualifying ended with Braid a tenth slower than Allen in P3 followed by Fransen, an impressive Shayne Hayter and Evans in the 17-car field. The first 8 lap Scratch race ended with Allen taking the flag ahead of Cummings in a very tight finish, the pair clear of Braid, Fransen, Hayter and Evans, however both Cummings and Evans were deemed to have jumped the start and incurred 5 second penalties which dropped Cummings down the order in the official result.



There was a very healthy 23 car grid for the MCC supported Chocolate Fish Saloons. Chris Huszka topped the practice times from Josh Donohue, John McIntyre (son of Don McIntyre) and David Thomsen but it was Thomsen who dominated qualifying by a massive 3 seconds over Donohue, Jamie Potts and McIntyre with Greg Browne and Zach Thompson completing the top six times. Race 1 was Scratch over 6 laps that saw Thomsen taking advantage of the conditions to beat Potts by 16 seconds despite a five second penalty! Huszka was 7/10ths behind Potts at the line, the trio chased home by Donohue, McIntyre and Thompson.

The invited HVRA Historic Saloons attracted only a nine-car grid that featured cars ranging from a Datsun 1200 to a Porsche 930 and a Ford Mustang Cobra II. Elliott Frame was the practice pacesetter, heading Dennis McConnell by 4.1 and Peter Bromley, the qualifying session ended with McConnell pulling back a full second to 3.1 seconds, Leon Hallet and John Pope would share the second row of the grid. Race 1 ended with Frame holding an 8 second lead over McConnell with Hallet in P3 17.4 behind the winner.

After the southern rounds of the CTFROC Championship the emerging 'stars' were Austrian Charlie Wurz and kiwi Callum Hedge, at Manfeild there were three additional drivers, current Indy Pro 200 champion Louis Foster from England who won seven of the 14 rounds with four other podium results, Irishman Adam Fitzgerald and NZ's Billy Frazer. The 19-year-old Foster flew into New Zealand on the Friday morning and was given two additional test sessions to adjust to driving a Toyota FT-60 for the first time, within three laps he was posting competitive times before winning Race 1 on a wet track the next day - that's impressive!

Day 2 brought two races for each category, in motorsport 24 hours and a weather change can make a very big difference as other winners emerged. The Hankook Tyres MX5 Cup races saw Nick Cummings beat Justin Allen twice, the margins being 2.2 and 3.3. In the Reverse Top 10 race Markku Braid finished P3 only 6/100ths behind Allen with Mike Greenfield and Dean Evans next over the line. Points decided the grid for Race 3 that ended with Evans completing the podium, Dave Thomsen, Alex Corpe and Matt Dilly rounding out the top six.

The MCC 'Chocolate Fish' Saloon races saw Jamie Potts at his brilliant best with two-from-two. In the six lap Reverse Grid Josh Donohue finished second (+ 6.3) after holding off Dave Thomsen by 2/10ths, completing the top six finishers were Chris Huszka, Andrew Wasley and John McIntyre. Race 3 was a Handicap in which the back markers came through the field to finish 1-2-3 with Potts battling with Zach Thompson in an entertaining final lap before conceding defeat by 2.8 at the flag. Dean Curtis took the flag in P3 followed by McIntyre, Layton Hammond and Thomsen, the six cars covered by 10 seconds at the line.



The 'visiting' HVRA Historic Saloons had two Handicap races, Tony Durham easily winning the first (9.79 seconds) from Michael Bailey and John Pope. Driving his Mustang II Cobra Pope took the flag in Race 3 by 2.6 from Calvin Bray with Dennis McConnell a further two seconds back in P3.

Completing each round of races were the CTFROC (TRS) cars, their Race 2 was over 22 laps and saw American Josh Mason score his first series victory after starting from pole position, but he was under serious pressure in the closing laps as Liam Foster chased him down, the Brit coming up short by 0.45 with Ryan Sheehan claiming third.

Race 3 that completed the weekend's programme was the 27 lap Feature with the prestigious Dan Higgins Trophy at stake. Wurz and Foster shared the front row of the grid with the Austrian making a perfect start, their cars were never more than a few lengths apart with Foster attacking at every opportunity. The pair had opened up a sizeable gap over the field but their race came unstuck with ten laps to run when Foster nudged the back of the Wurz car and both spun off the bitumen, there was no damage but they lost track position

which worked in favour of the following drivers. The outcome was a kiwi trifecta with James Penrose on the top step of the podium, Callum Hedge and Liam Sceats joining him for the celebrations, Wurz recovered to finish P7 (+ 8.7) ahead of Foster, but a 'Drive Through' penalty pushed the weekend's star down to P13, more than half a minute behind the winner.

THE DOWDALL DIARY

PNBHS student Blake Dowdall graduated from Formula First to race the # 6 Spectrum 015 in the Formula Ford category in the 2022/23 season.

"I came into the first round (September '22) fresh from some awesome testing in the first 3 Winter Series rounds, the first round of the North Island Championship at Manfeild ran with the last round of the Winter Series. On the test day, we only did two practice sessions to get a feel for the track conditions for the weekend and were stoked to find ourselves second fastest for the day. Come qualifying the rain came down and off came the roll bar within seconds of going out! I went around for the first qualifying of the series and put the car on P3 on the grid! That weekend I was feeling the pressure with it being my first proper North Island Championship race meeting. I turned the pressure into fuel as I finished in 2nd, 4th and 2nd over the meeting, it was awesome to have the track time from the Winter Series up my sleeve at this meeting.

Round 2 at the Pukekohe Supercar weekend was a meeting to remember, and a meeting to forget. During the practice day I met Anton de Pasquale and will Davison, did my first interview, signed my first autograph and was on my first podcast! The weekend was a huge opportunity to get my name out there in front of a huge audience and talk to some future sponsors. One sponsor I talked to during this event was Civiltrain.nz, I met with Stu from Civiltrain and we talked about some drivers he had sponsored in the past and things like that. He ended up coming on board very soon after the meeting!

The on-track was hectic with there being safety cars or red flags in every session of the weekend. In qualifying I put the car in P3 which was an amazing performance in front of a huge crowd and some great TV coverage from the supercar cameras. In the first race I came home in 8th after a crazy race and then 4th in race two. Race 3 was the one to forget with both a safety car and a red flag ... that I was involved in. After the race restarted, I was caught sleeping on the line, I was in 6th as the leader broke a throttle cable and got turned, kick starting a massive crash. I had nowhere to go and went straight into the leader, I sat on the track for eight seconds before another car came around and went straight into me causing huge damage.

Round 3. We made it. We came into Round 3 with a freshly rebuilt car after the carnage from the last meeting. We had no practice and jumped straight into qualifying after some damage was found on our harness, forcing us to get them replaced and missing the warm-up. This time we were running at Pukekohe without the chicane, so it was the first and last time I got to race at Pukekohe as it was made to be raced. In qualifying I surprised everyone by putting the car on the front row of the grid, right after having a massive crash and no practice. This set the weekend up as I finished 3rd, 4th and 3rd to keep me second in the championship standings.

Round 4 was the first time at Taupo in a while (November '22). Following a familiar theme, we didn't get much practice as we discovered a broken bolt connecting the bell housing to the chassis, this meant we had to take the whole rear of the car off and had us up until very late at night. I entered qualifying fuelled by Red Bull after a few hours of sleep and put the car on the front row again. I went on to finish 2nd in Race 1 and 4th in Race 2. Come Race 3 the rain came down and I was hunting for my first win of the season. Liam (Sceats) and I pulled a 40-second gap from the rest of the field. I was right on his gearbox and in an attempt to make the move for the lead I tried to take the dry line on the newly resealed Turn 7, I found no grip at all as the track hadn't been swept over the weekend, I spun and finished with my first DNF of the season after getting beached in the kitty litter.

Current Championship standings: 1st Rookie, 1st Class, 2nd Overall.

The Giltrap Group NIFFC series continues at the NZGP meeting at Hampton Downs on 3-5 February and doubles as Round 1 of the New Zealand Championship, before concluding at Taupo (10-12 February) with the final round at Manfeild (15-16 April).

HARTLEY FILE

Following the glitzy FIA prize giving night in Paris Brendon returned to their Taupo home for rest and recreation, there was much more of the latter. Both Brendon and Sarah are extremely keen cyclists and were joined by Nelson for a mountain bike race on trails near the Great Lake, the boys rode the challenging 85 kilometres event, Sarah did the women's 65 k race, finishing fourth. Christmas was spent with families before it was back to Taupo to entertain visiting mates, highlighted by the arrival of Finnish F1 driver Valtteri Bottas and his partner, highly rated Australian cyclist Tiffany Cromwell, the four are very close friends. They arrived here after visiting the states of Victoria and South Australia in the Land of Oz before crossing the Tasman and having their first taste of our country at Waiheke Island before heading down SH1 to catch-up with the Hartleys, naturally cycling the local trails was on the agenda.

With the 'holiday' over, in late January it was back to work in the United States where Brendon was co-driving the new Acura ARX-06 for Wayne Taylor Racing/Andretti Autosport at the famous Daytona 24 Hour in Florida, the race being the first for the new premier GTP (Grand Touring Prototype) category that features hybrid engines. The cars are eligible for both the American ISMA WeatherTech Sports Car Championship and the World Endurance Championship, adding to the interest was the debut of the new GTP Porsche, BMW and Cadillac challengers.



A week before the big race is the 'Roar Before the 24' that sets the grid, the two Acuras dominated the majority of the sessions but in qualifying were split with positions 1 and 3 for the start of the race - the car of defending champions Meyer Shank Racing/Curb Agajanian secured pole position from the leading Porsche Penske Motorsport 963, the # 10 Konica Minolta backed Acura co-driven by Brendon, Ricky Taylor, Filipe Albuquerque and Louis Deletraz was 0.167 off the pole time and sharing the second row of the grid with the Chip Ganassi Cadillac V-LMDh that had Scott Dixon on its driving roster, P5 was taken by the Cadillac Earl

Bamber was sharing. The other kiwis in the 61-car field were Scott McLaughlin whose LMP2 Oreca 07 posted the 9th fastest LMP2 time and Jaxon Evans shared a Porsche 911 GT3 R in the GTD (GT Daytona) class and would start from 57th position. Tom Blomqvist who set the pole time is based in New Zealand and son of the legendary Stig Blomqvist who won the WRC Rally of NZ in 1984 driving the fabled A2 Audi Quattro and became world champion with five victories.

With ten full-time IndyCar drivers in the field and before a capacity crowd, the Rolex 24 started in the afternoon with Blomqvist in the # 60 Acura leading the field over the first two hours that brought the first driver changes for the GTP cars, as strategies came into play positions changed frequently. At the three hour mark the # 1 Cadillac was rear ended when Bourdais stopped to avoid a wrecked LMP2 car, the damaged bodywork was ripped off and with Dixon now at the wheel the car remained on the lead lap in fifth place. Earlier the McLaughlin LMP2 Oreca had issues with the electronic system caused by water leaking onto the ECU, the time taken to diagnose the problem dropped the car 10 laps behind the class leader.

As darkness descended after five hours the best placed kiwi was Bamber in P3 ahead of Hartley as the #60 Acura continued in P1. As the race progressed through the night the Acuras weren't having a trouble-free run as both cars needed to flush the oil system because of the new biofuel ISMA introduced this year getting into the system which is hard on the engine bearings while the new Porsche and BMW GTP cars had problems with their battery packs, earlier Porsche had periods of leading the race.

Positional changes continued with pit stops and driver changes as the race continued with team strategists working through safety car and caution periods. It was in the final hour that the 61st edition of the Daytona 24 Hour really came alive with the top four GTP cars making their final stops, with 50 minutes remaining came the 14h Full Course Yellow following another collision, the race going green with 35 minutes to go. Bamber overtook the sister Cadillac to hold P3 but the positions were reversed on the following lap, the leading cars were running within seconds of each other with Blomqvist in front, when the double checker was waved at the end of 24 hours, 783 laps and 4,486.59 kilometres the first four cars were covered by less than 12 seconds and Acura had a 1-2 result on their GTP debut with the # 60 shared by Blomqvist, Simon Pagenaud, Colin Brawn and Helio Castroneves 4.19 seconds ahead of the Ricky Taylor/Filipe Albuquerque/Louis Deletraz/Brendon Hartley # 10, in P3 and P4 were the Cadillacs by margins of 5.44 and 1.54 with Scott Dixon making the podium and Earl Bamber having to watch the presentations! The third Cadillac (- 12 laps) and leading BMW M Hybrid V8 (- 15 laps) completed the top six finishing positions. Meyer Shank Racing had scored back-to-back wins at 'The World Centre of Racing' while Castroneves became the second driver to win three successive times and climb the safety fence.

The LMP2 category had the most dramatic finish with the lead changing on the final lap and the winning margin 0.016 after 761 laps of racing! LMP2 also had a story of determination, following the early problem suffered by the car he was sharing, McLaughlin posted 'NEVER.GIVE.UP.' on Twitter and the team reacted, with fellow IndyCar team mate Josef Newgarden in the driver quartet they pulled back nine laps on the class leaders with the combination of sheer pace, cautions and traffic, eventually finishing fifth in class (- 2 laps) and 11th overall, a remarkable result in the circumstances. The Porsche GT3-R co-driven by Jaxon Evans covered 699 laps to be placed 16th in the GTD class and 43rd overall.

The race had a great outcome with the New Zealand co-drivers in the top four finishing cars, Daytona was also a great showpiece for the new GTP Hybrid category with its tight racing and frequent lead changes.

Brendon Facebook - *"P2 at the Rolex 24. No regrets, we gave it everything. I really enjoyed my time with @waynetaylorracing, thanks to every member of the team for making it awesome and congrats to Acura for making it a 1-2".*

The IMSA and World Endurance Championships will come together on 17/18 March for the 1000 miles of Sebring with Brendon returning to Gazoo Racing Toyota to start his defence of the WEC title with co-drivers Sébastien Buemi and Ryo Hirakawa..

P.S. The Acura brand was launched in North America in March 1986 as the luxury and performance division of Honda with headquarters in California, today the branding is also seen in Mexico, Panama and Kuwait. The name is derived from the Latin 'acur' meaning mechanically precise or done with precision.

WHAT'S IN A NUMBER

Since serious motorsport began in our country there have been race numbers associated with certain drivers - back in the 1950's Hec Green used # 13, George Smith # 44 and Bruce McLaren # 47, in the 1970s Graeme Lawrence's cars wore # 14, Kenny Smith # 11 and David Oxton # 18, in more recent years Brendon Hartley raced with # 28 from his karting days and had the same number on his Scuderia Toro Rosso when he competed in the 1978 and 1979 Formula 1 seasons. Today # 97 is associated with Shane Van Gisbergen's various motor sport activities, but what is the best-known number linked to a New Zealand driver?

Many would consider the most famous to be Greg Murphy's '51' because of its links with the iconic Bathurst 1000 race at Mount Panorama. Murph had no prior history with the number before it was first used at Philip Island in 2001 and he adopted it for the remainder of the season, but what was the background of '51' - *"At the time there was the Holden Young Lions team running and they had number 15, when the other car turned up there was no number associated with it. I think it was our signwriting guy at the time, Doug Brumby, who was like why don't you save on cutting different numbers, why don't we just reverse the '15' and make it '51'? Everyone was like, oh yeah, what a good idea"*.

Greg Murphy won the Bathurst 1000 on four occasions, 1996 with Craig Lowndes using # 1, 1999 with Steven Richards using # 7 before the Kmart Commodore shared with Rick Kelly was victorious in both 2003 and 2004 wearing # 51. The best remembered is the 2003 race when the pair dominated the weekend, it was the year that Murph's extraordinary 'Lap of the Gods' secured pole position that will forever be part of The Mountain's folklore...

RH



MANFEILD RELOCATED

Can anyone help solve the mystery surrounding a second Manfeild that is sited down SH1 in the Wellington suburb of Tawa. A very large old homestead has been relocated to a newly developed lifestyle block and there's an expensive new entrance with a name proclaiming the property's called MANFEILD. Maybe there's a Sherlock Holmes in the club who can come up with an answer...

RH



FEBRUARY FLATFOOT

The weekend 25/26 February was another big one for the club as the programme included the NZ Superkart Drivers Championship, 2K Cup and Production Saloons supporting Round 2 of the Stewart's Mitre 10 Mega Summer Series. There were 138 competitors with 39 of that number running in the Summer Series.

The 27 Superkarters raced in five categories with spaces between the groups for the rolling starts of the seven lap races. Kart International class drivers dominated the outright results sheets, Andrew Hall won three after fastest qualifier Martijn Weiss won the first by overtaking Hall on the final lap. On Saturday's damp track the fastest KZ2 of Palmerston North's Darryl Currie finished a brilliant 4th outright to start the weekend with Mitch Frazer repeating Currie's effort in Race 2.

The two 'tin top' support categories enjoyed good numbers on the grid and entertaining racing. The 2K Cup had 30 starters, qualifying ended with the fastest five cars covered by less than half a second and the entire field by 7.6 seconds, Karl Gaines topping the sheet by 9/100ths from Nikolas Lowndes! Their two 33-minute races took place on Saturday, Steven Gaskell claiming Race 1 from Lowndes and Rodin Wooton, the trio covered by six seconds, less than a minute covered the first eleven across the line after completing 22 laps. Race 2 was a Reverse Grid with the five groups starting 10 seconds apart, the fastest drivers conceding 50 seconds to the first group away. Gaines started at 40 seconds and worked his way through the field to beat back marker Gaskell to the flag by 1.6 seconds with Jamie Anderson edging out Lowndes by 5/100ths for third place. Crowd pleasers.

The Production Race Series NZ made their debut at the Feilding circuit with a field of 25 that included two utes. The qualifying session suggested that racing would be close with Aaron Clarke, Kevin Hilt, Steve Elliott and Marco Holtrigter separated by 0.86 and the fastest 18 by five seconds.

Race 1 was a Scratch 8 lapper won by Clarke from Mark Stockton who started from P5 on the grid, Elliott, Hagen Issell and Hilt. Race 2 was 9 lap Handicap with the field spread by 55 seconds, Trevor Newman came from the 35 second group to take the flag 0.54 ahead of Kevin Varney who started 5 seconds later, back marker

Elliott placed 3rd ahead of Colin Abah while Clarke retired after 8 laps had been run. Race 3 was another Handicap with the distance extended out to 12 laps and starting grid reduced to 50 seconds, Clarke was a DNS. Abah started at 45 seconds, took the lead on Lap 6 and wasn't headed to score a 1.76 win over Hilt who started in the same group, Elliott coming from the back row to take 3rd followed by Holtrigter and Charlie Sittiratana. Another crowd pleaser.

The penultimate round of the Hi-Q Components NZ Formula First Championship was also on the programme. Qualifying saw Chris Symon and Jensen Foster split by 0.87 to head the times ahead of Regan Edwards and Liam Foster, Jenson Bate was 6th quickest with Darren Henderson at the bottom of the 17 cars list. All three races were 8 lap Scratch. In Race 1 Harry Scott made a great start from Row 3 but Symon soon hit the front and by the end of Lap 2 had built-up a 4 second lead over Scott, Edwards, Hayden Lines and Bate who were the chasing group, on the following lap Scott and Edwards changed positions and Toby McCormack had moved to P5 from P7 on the grid before being displaced by Bate. The laps ticked off with Symon increasing his lead and the places remaining unchanged behind him, the defending champion crossing the line more than 10 seconds ahead of the field with 7/10ths separating Edwards and Lines in their battle for 2nd and 3rd, Bate was 2/10ths back in P4 with Scott right on his gearbox.



Race 2 on Sunday's dry track was real Formula First with six cars making a break on the field in the order Symon, Jenson Foster, Scott, Liam Foster, Liam Nicholson and Bate with Symon's lead never more than 4/10ths as the tension built going into the final lap. Side by side through Turn 7, Symon taking the flag with cars three abreast as the quartet crossed the line, the winning margin was 0.302 with Liam and Jenson Foster 2nd and 3rd split by 2/100ths, Scott was 1.1 behind the winner in 4th with a gap to Nicholson, Edwards and Bate. An epic finish.

Race 3 saw Liam Foster on pole with Symon alongside, behind them were Scott and Jenson Foster with Bate a lowly 12th on the grid. The 8-lapper would be similar to the previous race, Symon leading a tight pack where positions changed as the race progressed, at half distance Liam Foster was 1.7 seconds behind the # 1 car as

Scott, Jenson Foster and Nicholson formed a close group with Liam Foster at the head. With three laps to run the leader's margin started, on Lap 7 Liam Foster hit the front with five drivers possible winners, through the final sweeper for the race to the flag with Liam Foster 5/100ths in front of Symon, Scott, Nicholson and Jenson Foster who was one second behind the winner - Bate and Jack Groenewald trailed Lines and Toby McCormack in the tense battle for P6 where the four were covered by 3/10ths at the line. Another epic finish that saw Chris Symon finally beaten.

The meeting incorporated Round 2 of the Stewart's Mitre 10 Mega Summer Series where four classes each contested three races on Day 2 - RS, SF, IB and GT Cups with a combined entry of 39.

The RS Cup had 9 starters which was two more than Round 1, Hayden Arnold and Shane Hughes setting the pace in qualifying to share the front row in Race 1. Hughes led the opening lap from Rodney Penn who made a brilliant start from the third row, the pair followed by Keith Pfeffer and Paul Rodgers, next were Arnold and Robbie Steele who were locked in their own battle before Arnold got ahead in Lap 3. Penn built up a two second lead over Hughes which he held to the flag, Arnold headed Pfeffer for 3rd before being relegated for breaking out, Penn also incurred a penalty. That made Hughes the official winner, 2.044 ahead of Pfeffer, Rodgers and Steele with Penn P5 and Arnold P8.

Race 2 was the Reverse Grid that put Caitlin Chowen alone on the front row with Andrew Manderson and Steele on Row 2. Manderson led into Turn 1 before being headed by Arnold and Steele on Lap 2, Hughes retired after 4 laps as Manderson displaced Penn for 3rd on the final lap, both Arnold and Steele incurred time penalties which elevated Manderson, Penn, Rodgers and Pfeffer to the top four places with the winning margin 0.338.

Only six cars fronted for the Handicap with the field spread over 20 seconds. Driving a 'borrowed' car Chowen was first away with Manderson the chaser followed by Penn, when Lap 5 ended back marker Arnold had moved up to P3 and Manderson had taken the lead. Breakouts by Manderson, Arnold and Penn dropped them down the official result that gave Chowen a narrow 4/10ths win over Rodgers and Pfeffer, the latter 2 seconds behind the winner.



There was a field of 11 cars in the SF Cup that saw Darren Utting post the fastest qualifying time 0.62 ahead of Luke Nielsen with Greg Browne quicker than Connor Cleland, Peter Beauchamp, Steen McGhie and Darren Walker, the seven cars covered by 1.7 seconds.

The Scratch race saw Utting's Lancia lead from lights to flag with Browne his closest challenger and McGhie in 3rd place ahead of Walker, Nielsen and Cleland, there was only a single positional change in 18 kilometres of racing! Utting dipped below the breakout time by less than 2/10ths but the penalty dropped him to P6, Browne being declared the winner 0.54 ahead of McGhie with Walker 1.07 behind the official winner.



Graeme Wall shared the front row with Chris Huszka for the Reverse Grid with Chris Huszka a DNS, Spencer Morris and Beauchamp on Row 2 with Utting off the back. Morris made a great start to seize the initial lead from Browne, Walker and Huszka, the latter dropping back before retiring after 2 laps as Utting moved from P11 to P3. Lap 3 saw Walker take the lead, two laps later Utting moved up to P2 but couldn't catch Walker at the line, however both Utting and McGhie in 4th had infringed which dropped them to 6th and 8th respectively, Walker taking the win 1.93 ahead of Browne with a gap to Beauchamp, Eddie Arnold and Cleland. Huszka, Nielsen and Utting were non-starters in the Handicap that had Wall at the front and McGhie at the back conceding 20 seconds. Wall led until the final lap before Walker overtook him, Morris had been fending off the pack that was led by Eddie Arnold and Beauchamp. When Walker picked up penalties Wall moved up to 1st, 3.4 seconds ahead of the fast-finishing Arnold with 3/10ths to Morris in P3, rounding out the top six were Browne, Beauchamp and Cleland who were covered by six seconds.

Following the IB Cup qualifying session Colin Abah and Zach Thompson were 'promoted' to the GT Cup as their times were significantly under the class 1.20 breakout. That left 13 cars and put Ian Thompson and Cooper Cooley at the top ahead of Tyson De Bes and Justin Weir, the four covered by 6/10ths and the fastest nine cars by 2.1 seconds and the full field by 8 seconds.

The Scratch race was a Thompson benefit with the order behind him being De Bes, Cooley, Nick Stewart, Weir and Irdan Harkin. Running his MX5 Cup car Jack Cleland became a DNF after three laps while Weir moved ahead of Stewart, the running order remained unchanged but Thompson had erred and broken out, the 10 second penalty dropped him to P6, 6½ seconds behind the official winner De Bes who headed Cooley and Weir by 0.57, Stewart claiming 4th with Harkin and Thompson next.

Cleland and Weir failed to start in the Reverse Grid which left Richie Arber alone on the front row with Ian Humphrey and Kolin Yannakis sharing Row 2. Arber led the first lap Harkan who started from Row 4, Yannakis, Stewart and Cooley, but Arber's joy was short lived as a recurring computer problem saw him drift back into the pack. Harkin inherited the lead and maintained it to the flag while behind him Cooley and Stewart were scrapping for P2, Stewart making the pass on Lap 4 with Thompson and David Graham ahead of De Bes and Arber. The first three cars were covered by 1.2 going into the final lap, Harkin holding on beat Stewart home by 4/10ths with another 2/10ths back to Cooley, Thompson held off De Bes and Graham Cooley in their battle with the top six finishers covered by seven seconds.



When it came to the Handicap the non-starters nearly outnumbered the starters, leaving a seven car field! Arber and Kannakis were flagged away first, Thompson was alone at the back conceding 20 seconds. With the computer problem solved Arber wasn't going to be denied and scored a flag-to-flag win, building a lead of 9½ seconds going into the final lap while the Yannakis Volvo slipped towards the back of the field. Stewart was on a charge and had closed the gap to 3.84 when the checker fell, the remainder were led by Thompson, followed by De Bes, Graham and Yannakis who was 10.7 behind the victor, Harkin retired after three laps.



The smallest grid was in the GT Cup with four cars that was boosted to six with the two drivers following the IB Cup qualifying. Not surprisingly GT-A drivers Josh Smith and Paul Dewar topped the times with 1.11.429 and 1.14.995, Peter Beauchamp and fellow GT-B driver Tony Stewart posted bests of 1.16.168 and 1.17.502, the two 'promoted' drivers were Colin Abah (1.17.684) and Zach Thompson (1.18.394).

Race 1 had an exciting opening lap when Beauchamp spun his Subaru exiting the esses, there were big avoidances as his car crossed the full width of the track backwards! Smith and Dewar swapped the lead on Lap 2 but it was short lived as the pair drew away from Stewart with Abah and Thompson next as Beauchamp endeavoured to recover lost ground. The gap between the leaders grew as each lap passed, after the six laps Smith was 13.3 ahead of Dewar's NASCAR Chev Impala, 10 seconds back Stewart led Abah across the line, with a big gap to Thompson and Beauchamp.

Thompson was missing when the Reverse Grid formed, pole sitter Beauchamp again provided the excitement by stalling when the lights went out, he got going but pulled into the pits at the end of Lap 1! Further drama came on Lap 3 when Stewart had a big off at the hairpin which took him right out of contention. So, the race ran out with Smith more than half a minute ahead of Dewar with Abah another 12 seconds back in P3, Stewart took the flag more than a minute behind Smith.

The Handicap was the final race of the weekend and had only three cars on the grid with Thompson, Abah and Beauchamp missing. Stewart was first away with Dewar conceding 10 seconds and Smith another 5 seconds, it was effectively game over before it started. Stewart led for five laps as Smith and Dewar swapped positions a couple of times, at the line Smith was six seconds ahead of Dewar with less than four to Stewart, full marks to the three for making something out of nothing. Their best laps told the real story with Smith 1.10.63, Dewar 1.15.10 and Stewart 1.17.74, they avoided a debacle.

The third and final round takes place on Sunday 02 April, hopefully with fuller fields...

RH

RUSTY'S NOTES

The bubble finally burst for Chris Symon after 18 consecutive wins in the 2022/23 NZ Formula First Championship. In Race 3 on his home circuit the Newbury School principal was denied his 19th straight victory by a margin of .058 of a second. On a happier note, his win in Race 1 confirmed he had won the title for the third successive year with a round to go...

With the full support programme, the Stewart's Mitre 10 Mega Summer Series classes had three races in Round 2 with the additional 'marble draw' race run in Round 1 being dropped...

Following her 'promotion' to the SF Cup Caitlin Chowen was expecting big things from her upgraded 2.0 litre Honda Civic, a blown clutch in a Saturday test session looked like an early end to the weekend. Along came a White Knight in the form of Greg Browne who offered a car from his stable, a quick trip to the shed at Halcombe followed by familiarisation laps in the 'loaned' Nissan Primera with the name 'FUGLY'. Back in the RS Cup Caitlin cut lap times in the 1.33's and won the Handicap race. The smiles were back...



The same Greg Browne of GT Oils fame epitomises everything that's good about the sport, whether it's competing, organising, advising or loaning cars.



There were two 'visitors' on Level 2 of the Control Building over the weekend. At the final round of the MotorSport NZ Super Sprint Series at Taupo Jackie and Mark from the Manfeild team were there to assist with the timing. As a result, the two relatively inexperienced Taupo Car Club timing people came to Manfeild Circuit Chris Amon to observe the operation and assist, they were very impressed with the set-up and couldn't believe they could view the entire track, the banked corners also caught their eye. Maybe the start of an 'exchange' programme for officials...

The 2K Cup is very popular, the meeting had thirty cars on the grid with drivers from as far away as Whangarei and Christchurch, but rather surprisingly none from the region! Apparently there is a serious shortage of good \$2,000 cars which has meant revising some of the rules, eligible vehicles have to be mass production models released pre-1996 with original specifications, have a maximum engine capacity of under 2.0 litres and be road legal...

The variety of entries for the Production Race Series NZ was amazing, not many would have expected to see a 1960's Renault R8 Gordini, a Lotus Elise or a Porsche Cayman racing. Among the 25 entries were the number of micro-Daihatsu Miras and Sirions, apparently they are a new category who will be competing in the Daihatsu Challenge NZ for their own silverware with the number expected to grow. Not quite those epic David v Goliath battles of sixty years ago with the Mini Coopers against Ford Mustangs and 3.8 Jaguars...



The 'oddballs' racing in the Production Race Series were a pair of Ford Falcon utes that are contesting the 2023 Ryco NZ V8 Ute Racing Championship. Points leaders Brad and Greg Kroef entered to hone their skills and assess vehicle set-ups on the circuit where Round 3 of the championship will take place on 15/16 April, clever thinking. It was also revealed that the championship Race Director is MCC committee member and Clerk of Course Malcolm Glen, one of the country's top motorsport officials. The perfect choice...



It's always interesting comparing lap times, Josh Smith was the quickest car over the weekend with a best 1.10.144, in the Superkarts Andrew Hall clocked the fastest race lap of 1.07.877 which is averaging something like 158 kilometres an hour, so close to the magic ton. These people really like the circuit with its cambered corners that means they can maintain higher speeds...

With the long break between the first two rounds of the Stewart's Mitre 10 Mega Summer Series it appeared that some drivers forgot what two key words meant - 'break out'. Several lost big numbers of series points but those first across the line could claim the chocolate fish as an eatable consolation...

MCC President Richie Arber had a frustrating day with gremlins in the engine room computer that affected the cars and driver's performances, his quickest qualifying lap was 1.26.58 that put him at the bottom of the IB Cup time sheet and well down the results in the first two races. The problem was solved in time for the Handicap 6-lapper where the # 46 was the first car flagged away, he led from flag to flag with a best lap of 1.23.52, that's a full three second improvement. The joys of racing...

We're living at a time where 'retro' has become increasingly popular; motor racing is no exception with possibly the best example being the Aussie Supercars having a designated 'retro round' at Townsville in the Northern Territory. Seeing old liveries on appropriate cars revives many memories, a standout at the weekend was an older model Holden Commodore in the 2K Cup with last year's Red Bull/Ampol livery which suggested Dave Verryt is a very dedicated Holden fan and it was his tribute to the 'Roaring Lion'. There is a growing number of retro liveries on club member's cars and the next could be Richie Arber's Honda Accord with hints that the black bodywork, green wheels and red rear wing could be the clue. Thinking caps on...

On Saturday's programme were two scheduled 'Live Marshal Training Exercises', the first was staged in pit lane and involved Kaitlin Chowen as the injured 'victim' being removed from the car, the entire procedure using

lessons learned from the serious incident in Round 2 of last year's Winter Series. The second after racing ended was Fire Extinguisher Training on the Esses gravel trap. The efficiency of the V-Force marshals is a vital and integral aspect of the circuit's envied safety record. Well done Noel Beale and the team.



JAROD CARRUTHERS PHOTOGRAPHY

MANFEILD LOSES ANOTHER FRIEND

Celebrity chef Hester Guy passed away on Saturday 8 February in a Havelock North hospice. The 76-year-old enjoyed a close link with Manfeild when she catered for the functions and corporate suites, possibly best remembered for the outstanding food provided for the Manfeild 40th Anniversary dinner in the stadium on the 9th November 2013 where the waiting staff were senior students from Feilding High School.

Julie Keane was Manfeild CEO at the time and has fond memories - *"Hester was very astute in what she did. Her expectation on quality were immeasurable, and she put high expectations on staff. It produced such amazing quality food. The New Zealand Grand Prix, in particular, had presented considerable logistical challenges around timing and quality, and one year a function for 900 guests had presented Guy with her biggest assignment. But she nailed it"*.



There were occasions when Hester had a stand at the popular Friday Feilding Farmers Market in Manchester Square, in 2012 she served a dish to then Prince Charles and his wife Camilla during a Royal visit, earlier in the same year there was a special outdoor lunch in the Square for legendary Pink Floyd drummer Nick Mason and his wife Annette who arrived to the band's big hit 'Another Brick In The Wall', the Masons being in the country as guests of the NZ Vintage Car Club Rally. A former staff member described Hester Guy as *"eccentric, flamboyant, outgoing and incredibly talented at her craft. She called a spade a spade"*.

Another chapter in the Manfeild story has been lost, but not forgotten by those who knew her or enjoyed her amazing culinary skills..

RH

ANOTHER ANNIVERSARY YEAR

Last year saw the 75th Anniversaries of the Manawatu Car Club, MotorSport New Zealand and famous car maker Ferrari, 2023 sees the McLaren name celebrating 60 years since Bruce McLaren Motor Racing Limited was founded in 1963 when Bruce left Cooper after seven years. Tragically, at 32 years of age, he was killed at the Goodwood circuit in June 1970 testing a CanAm sports car, but his name lived on.

In those sixty years McLaren dominated the North American CanAm Championship between 1967 and 1971, winning 56 races during that time and the fabled Indianapolis 500 on three occasions, but it's in Formula 1 where the greatest successes came. The McLaren CV reads 183 grand prix wins, 8 Constructors Championships and 12 Driver's Championships, first achieved with Emerson Fittipaldi in 1974, names on the honours board include James Hunt, the trio of Niki Lauda, Alain Prost and Ayrton Senna won the title seven times between them, Mika Hakkinen twice and finally Lewis Hamilton in 2008 - today McLaren is the second most successful team in Formula 1 after Ferrari.

During his career Bruce McLaren won four Formula 1 races including the United States Grand Prix, three with Cooper with the other at Belgium in 1968 where he became the second driver after Jack Brabham to win a Grand Prix in a car with the driver's name. In his homeland he won both the NZ Grand Prix and Tasman Series in 1964 driving a Cooper Climax, two years later Bruce won the famous Le Mans 24 Hour race co-driving a Ford GT40 with Chris Amon, the kiwi pairing gave Ford their first victory in the French classic.

Today the McLaren home is a lavish architecturally designed NZ\$575 million Technology Centre at Woking in Surrey, a far cry from where it began in a shed with a dirt floor in an earthmoving company's yard near Heathrow Airport...

RH



PAYING HIS OWN WAY

It's an 'amateur' driver who probably enjoys the highest profile in America's new VP SportsCar Challenge Series for LMP3 prototypes and GT4 cars. He drives a Ford Mustang GT4 and creates a great deal of attention in the paddock, his name is Jim Farley and when away from the track he's the CEO of the Ford Motor Company. The global boss of one of the world's biggest automotive companies is a die-hard racing fan but is restricting his on-track activities to 'gentleman' categories, at least for the moment, while carrying out personal track testing of his company's products. This is no FoMoCo joyride, Farley's entry into the six round VP Challenge is entirely self-funded with his wife in charge of the budget! A quick Google reveals that last year Mr Farley's basic salary was US\$1.7 million with his total package US\$22.8 million. Surely more than enough for both racing and housekeeping...

RH



ON THE TRACK

February began with Round 4 of the Super Sprint MSNZ series at the Hampton Downs circuit with the CTFROC (TRS) having six support categories that included club members on the entry list.

In the Toyota 86 Championship Justin Allen topped the first practice session and was in the top six in the other two before qualifying P2, 2/10ths behind series leader Brock Gilchrist. There were placings of 3rd, 5th and 3rd in the three races with the widest margin behind triple winner Gilchrist being less than five seconds, the weekend left Allen sitting 3rd in the standings.

In the GT NZ Championship Series there were 26 cars on the grid with Brian Green sharing driving with David Rogers in a McLaren. Green placed 20th in the first 30-minute race, 1½ minutes behind the winner, while Rogers was P20 in the 56-minute Race 2 and P22 in the final 30-minute race, a lap down in both starts.

Andrew Stewart, Jamie Potts and Simon Barry were contesting the GTR NZ 1-2 series and ended the first practice session in P5, P8 and P11 respectively, qualifying saw Barry 11th and Stewart 15th quickest as Potts had switched to the GTR NZ 3-4 class! When it came to the racing Barry was the only club representative, achieving placings of P7 in the 8-lap opener and P15 and P16 in the two shorter six lappers.

The GTR NZ 3-4 grid included Sean Browne, Bayley Walker, Nathan Harris and Jamie Potts, there was a promising start to the weekend with Browne fastest in the first practice session by 1.7 seconds, qualifying ended with Potts P2 with Walker and Browne 4th and 5th fastest so it was looking promising. Race 1 ended with Browne P4 and Harris P16 with Potts on his tail, Walker was a DNF. The MCC members were well beaten in Race 2 but bounced back strongly in Race 3 with Walker finishing 2nd, Browne 4th and Harris 15th while Potts became a DNF after 3 of the 8 laps.

The open-wheel categories saw the Manawatu contingent to the fore. In the North Island/NZ Formula First Championships Chris Symon qualified P4 before continuing to dominate the racing with three from three to maintain his unbeaten record for the season. Jenson Bate upped his game and qualified second quickest behind Brody McConkey but couldn't sustain that effort in the three races that produced results of 10th, 4th (1.47 behind Symon) and 5th to wrap up his weekend.

There was special interest in the NAPA Auto Spares NZ Formula Ford Championship with Greg Murphy turning the clock back to when his circuit career started 33 years ago in the category. Practice indicated that Murph and the MCC's Blake Dowdall were evenly matched with small margins separating their times. Dylan Grant headed Dowdall in qualifying by 2/10ths with defending national champion Alex Crosbie P3 and two spots ahead of Murphy. For Dowdall there wasn't a good start to the racing, completing only four of the scheduled 10 laps in the opening 6 lapper, but the youngster fought back to finish third less than a second behind winner Crosbie in Race 2, his big moment came in the dramatic 10 lap Feature. Grant and Crosbie were locked in a fierce battle from the moment the start lights went out, behind them Zach Blincoe, Dowdall and Murphy led a train of cars. On the final lap the leaders collided (Grant deemed the driver at fault) allowing a surprised Blincoe to take the checker ahead of Dowdall and Murphy but the drama wasn't quite over as Blincoe was disqualified post-race which elevated Dowdall to first with Murphy second 3.96 behind and winning the round with two 4ths and a 2nd! That win and the points that went with it resulted in Blake holding 6th in the NZ Championship standings, 40 points behind leader Alex Crosbie and 2nd in the Giltrap Group NIFFS after five of the seven rounds, 20 points behind Liam Sceats.

It was great to see Kaleb Ngatoa back in a TRS car, the NZGP meeting attracting a very strong field at 20 starters. Kaleb was right on the pace from the time the weekend began, topping the sheet in FP2 by 0.39 and backing that up in the two qualifying sessions with P2 and P3, then winning Race 1 with a 0.727 gap to Dutch teenager Laurens van Hoepen in second place. Race 2 ended in 13th and 16.7 behind winner Charlie Wurz then the focus moved to the 67th NZGP where Kaleb started from P4 on the grid. The 24-lap race became a two-car affair between Louis Foster and van Hoepen, the Dutchman taking the lead after the halfway mark and beating the Englishman by 8/10ths of a second. Behind the pair Callum Hedge led the long train of cars in single file with little overtaking, Kaleb being unable to pass Hedge before a momentary lapse allowed Chris Van Der Drift to overtake the young Marton driver who had to settle for P5 at the line, 15 seconds behind the 'Flying Dutchman'. On his way to victory van Hoeten set a new track record of 1.30.061, earlier in Race 1 Kaleb clocked his meeting best of 1.30.229.

That was Hampton Downs where for the first time a Dutch driver won the NZGP, the fifth and final round of the SS MSNZ series was another week later at the Taupo International Raceway.



The club was well represented at the Taupo TCFROC finale with members competing in five of the six support categories on the programme, the NZ V8 Utes were the exception.

The BMW's had four different classes with 'Fast', 'Slow', 2-litre and E46/30, Scott McCaskie being the sole club representative who took on the 'big boys' in the 'Fast' races where an interesting addition to the 15-car field was yachting legend Grant Dalton. Scott had a massive task in front of him and was only once outside the top ten in the three practice sessions before qualifying P11, 6.4 seconds slower than pole sitter Dalton, however they were hard days at the office in the races with results of 14th and 13th separated by a DNS

Eight MCC MX5 drivers were on the grid for the New Zealand/North Island Nexen Tyres Mazda Racing Championship Series that attracted a massive grid of 38 cars. The 1.8 litre MX5s were no match for the rotary powered RX7 and RX8 cars and had their own class with Nick Cummings setting the pace, albeit 28th on the qualifying time sheet. He headed Markku Braid with Shayne Hayter, Dean Evans, Chris Greaney, Paul Greaney, Matt Dille and Mark Smith filling grid positions 31 to 37! The finishing order in the first two races was Cummings (25th), Braid (26th) and Evans (27th) followed by Hayter and Dilly, the drama came in Race 3 that ended with Braid finishing ahead of Evans after Cummings retired following the an unfortunate second lap incident caused by oil dropped on the track, his car suffered considerable damage after tail ending the RX8 in front of him, that win resulted in Braid topping the MX5 points for the weekend.



Taupo marked the halfway point in the Nexen Tyres series, the remaining North Island rounds are Pukekohe, 25-26 March, with both Round 5 and 6 at Hampton Downs on 22-23 April and 6-7 May to end a long season.

Chris Symon firmed his grip on his third successive Formula First Championship title with a clean sweep of the four races to maintain his unbeaten record in the series. In FP1 the defending champion was only 10th fastest and two spots behind Jenson Bate, Symon moved up one place in FP2 with Darren Henderson edging out Bate for P10. FP3 saw Symon at the top of the 16-car field by 0.66 and he increased that margin to 7/10ths in qualifying with Bate 6th quickest and 1.54 off the pace, Henderson would be P14 on the grid.

In Race 1 Symon beat Brody McConkey by 3.1 seconds, Henderson finished 11th with Bate retiring after four of the 10 laps. Race 2 finished with Symon in front of Liam Foster by 1.31, Henderson crossing the line in 14th ahead of Bate. Race 3 ended with McConkey in 2nd place only 0.164 behind Symon, Bate placed P10 (+ 20.5) with Henderson three places back. Race 4 became 4/4 for Symon, this time he was 6/10ths ahead of Foster, Henderson took the flag in 14th to head Bate again with the pair split by 3/10ths. For the MCC trio the remaining rounds are both on home territory at Manfeild Circuit Chris Amon, 25/26 February and 01/02 April.

The NAPA Auto Parts Formula Fords have been producing outstanding racing just like the old days and the club's sole runner Blake Dowdall has been right in the thick of the action at the front of the big field. With points for two titles at stake, New Zealand and North Island Championships, Taupo had 18 cars on the grid headed by reigning NZ champion Alex Crosbie, but in practice it was Sebastian Manson who topped the first two practice sessions before being headed by Leo Scott in FP3. Dowdall posted the 4th, 6th and 3rd fastest laps in the three sessions but was only tenths of a second off the quickest times.

Qualifying is the key, and it was Crosbie who claimed pole position by 7/100ths from Manson and Dylan Grant while Dowdall was P7 and 9/10ths behind Crosbie who went on to win all five races on the programme. Race 1 ended with Manson and Grant sharing the podium with Crosbie, Dowdall finishing 5th, 7.2 seconds behind the winner, in Race 2 the placings were a repeat of the first with similar gaps between the cars. Race 3 had the same podium but Dowdall dropped two place to cross the line P7 and 8.3 behind Crosbie, Race 4 brought drama before the race started when Dowdall's car suffered damage from a small fire and his team were still making repairs when the race started! He was classified 17th in the results to lose valuable points, a very disappointing outcome. Meanwhile it was Blake Knowles who chased the champion home.

Undaunted Dowdall bounced back in spectacular style in what was one of the best drives of the meeting. Race 5 was another one-man show as Crosbie completed his whitewash, it was what was happening behind him where the interest lay as Manson and Dowdall locked horns in an intense battle for second. Manson held the advantage as Dowdall tried every move to overtake in bold and brave attempts, the cars often side-by-side through corners. As the laps counted down Dowdall's bravery paid off with a brilliant move to claim second spot and take the checker 1.37 behind Crosbie with Manson retaining P3, 3 seconds behind Dowdall who easily drew away when he got ahead, Blake also recorded the fastest race lap.

The final two rounds of the NAPA Auto Parts New Zealand Championship will be raced in the South Island (two in each island), at Teretonga on 18-19 March and Ruapuna a week later. The points table is led by Crosbie (550) while Dowdall sits P5 (345). The seven round Giltrap Group North Island Series concludes on 15-16 April at Manfeild Circuit Chris Amon. Dylan Grant tops the points (1013) with Dowdall laying second (980).

The sole club member in the Castrol Toyota Formula Regional Oceania Championship was Kaleb Ngatoa who competed in the final two of the five round series against several of the world's most promising 'stars of tomorrow'. The three practice sessions ended with Ngatoa twice P7 and P10 in PF3 as Callum Hedge, Charlie Wurz and Louis Foster set the pace. Saturday's first qualifying session saw Ngatoa 6th quickest half a second slower than Hedge who topped the times by 2/100ths over Foster, the pair sharing the front row of the grid for Race 1 later in the day. In the 18 lapper Kaleb placed 6th just 8/10ths behind Wurz, Hedge winning from Foster and NZGP winner Lauren van Hoeten.

Sunday brought qualifying for the Feature race with Wurz claiming pole ahead of Liam Sceats, Ngatoa posted the 7th fastest lap that was 0.377 behind the young Austrian with the top ten cars less than a second off the pole time. Race 2 was a Reverse Top 8 from Race 1 which put young American Chloe Chambers and Ngatoa on the front row. Chambers has been impressive throughout the series and led from lights to flag to create history by becoming the first female driver to win a TRS race, but the victory didn't come easy with Ngatoa 1½ seconds behind at the flag, the pair finishing the 18 laps more than 11 seconds ahead of Wurz in P3 after he opted to run with 'old' tyres. Race 3 was the 23 lap Feature, Ngatoa had bolted on fresh tyres for the qualifying session which would affect his car's grip as the race progressed. Wurz made a perfect start while alongside him Sceats went fractionally early which resulted in 5 seconds being added to his race time. Ngatoa picked up three places on the opening lap but dropped to P5 the following lap. Wurz was never headed, with a flawless drive he crossed the line a full second ahead of van Hoeten, third was James Penrose who started from P12 on the grid. As his car's grip levels deteriorated Ngatoa dropped places to finish 9th, 11 seconds behind Wurz and again behind Chambers by 8/10ths. A late Safety Car intervention had closed the field up with the race becoming a four-lap sprint to the finish.

A fourth win in the series confirmed Charlie Wurz (343 pts) as the 2023 CTFROC champion, 14 points ahead of Callum Hedge (329) and American Jacob Abel (265). It was Wurz first major junior formula championship title that gained him 18 FIA Super Licence points towards following his father Alexander into Formula 1.

For the benefit of the younger generation, and the older generation who can't remember, Hamilton's Jim Palmer was widely regarded as this country's most versatile driver during the 1960's and early 1970's, racing both saloons and single seaters. Highlights of his career included winning the 1964 Wills 6 Hour at Pukekohe co-driving a Lotus Cortina with Paul Fahey and joining Phil West to finish second in the 1968 Hardie-Ferodo 500 at Mount Panorama in a 1-2 finish for the new HK Holden Monaro GTS350. In single-seaters Palmer twice had podium results in the NZGP and became the first driver to win three successive Gold Star Championship titles, the first in 1964.



The weekend schedule was 36 races involving 12 classes with eleven Manawatu Car Club members competing in seven of them. Winding the clock back more than decade, for the Pukekohe meeting the back straight chicane was removed for the first time since 2012 which allowed cars to really stretch their legs before braking for the hairpin with some lap times dipping well below the magic minute on the 2.91 kilometre circuit. Saturday brought periods of rain and wind; Sunday's weather was more racing friendly.

The feature category was Round 4 of the 2022/23 SAS Autoparts MSC NZ F5000 Tasman Cup Revival Series that saw Michael and Anna Collins head north across the Strait with their Leda-McRae GM1's to compete against eleven North Island drivers that included the Feilding duo Kevin Ingram and Tim Rush in what was the final appearance of the legendary Formula 5000 cars at the circuit.

The first surprise came in qualifying where Michael Collins was only fourth fastest of the 13 cars, 1.31 behind Ingram at the top of sheet, Kevin recording a 58.21 lap that equates to an average speed of 179.94 km/h, Rush was P10 and 26.16 off the pole time, likely as a result of the conditions.

The two Scratch races ended with the same result - Collins 1st, Ingram 2nd with the gaps varying between 1.98 and 2.03 seconds, in the Reverse Grid the pair were 3rd and 4th one second apart - Michael setting the fastest lap of 54.98 in race 3. The highlight for Tim Rush was finishing P9 in the Handicap behind Anna Collins' McRae, the McLaren M22 was also P9 in Race 3 while the opening race was a DNF after 7 of the 8 laps.

In the Formula Open class Sam McNeill topped the qualifying times by 6/10ths of a second with a best lap of 58.34 (179.55 km/h) but his weekend result card read 4, 3, 5.

The remaining club members contested five 'tin top' classes with varying degrees of success. Struan Robertson was sixth quickest qualifier of the 26 cars in the Pirelli Porsche Challenge before finished third in Race 1 that was reduced to four laps, he was a DNS in the remaining two races. Tony Elminger and Bill Robson were 3rd and 8th respectively in the Mini/Pre 65 qualifying session which looked promising, Race 1 brought results of P3 and P6. For Elminger the remaining two races brought a 9th and 11th, for Robson there was a DNF and a DNS. Ben Boyden was the sole entry in the Improved Production class that attracted 26 entries, qualifying ended with the BMW driver P16 and 9.4 off the pace, there were a 13th and 19th in the two 20-minute races followed by a DNS in the 15-minute Handicap.

The biggest field was the ERC (European Racing Classics pre-1978) category where Layton Hammond and Geoff Boyden were on the grid, qualifying ended with the pair P11 and P33, the Scratch race saw them cross the line 19th and 31st. The following races were Handicaps that ended with Layton recording P9 and P18 while Geoff scored P25 and a DNS in the final race.

The TCM (Touring Car Masters) attracted a field of 19 cars that included Waka Nathan Harris, Greg Cuttance and Philip Macey. The trio qualified 13, 14 and 18 with the three race results around the same marks, Harris did best with a 14, 12, 14 score card, Cuttance had 15, 17, 15 and Macey 17, 15, 16.

Hopefully the MCC contingent enjoyed their 'last hurrah' at Pukekohe Raceway that closes on the 3rd of April after 60 years of operation, probably not so much the Saturday weather with rain and wind to spoil the occasion...

RH

