

-----◆ The Domain Hillclimb ◆-----

Yes guys, there *is* a God, and she smiled on us on Sunday 4th May at the club's Hobart Domain Hillclimb. It went off so well that next year we're expecting to be asked, nay, *begged*, to organise the Australian Grand Prix ...

In the last edition we gave you an idea of some of the early organisation work that went into the event. Between then and the big day, there were more planning meetings, track inspections and liaison with officialdom (done by our Chief Diplomat, Norman Henry), and in the final week the email traffic between the organisers got so high that Dave Mitchell had to email us to stop sending him emails, so that he could get some work done.

By the start of the final week everything was looking more or less okay, with only two worries – the weather, and the haybales required by CAMS to protect cars from traffic control devices like tree trunks, guide posts and rock banks.

Norman left no turn unstoned in his efforts to source the necessary 100 or so haybales, finally (like, in the last week) locating a farmer at Baskerville who would lend us the bales, in return for a slab of beer. Free bales, and so close to Hobart!

Steve Caplice saw to the scrutineering in the Fogarty's workshop and did all the associated clerical work, as well as collecting entry forms and payments from competitors.

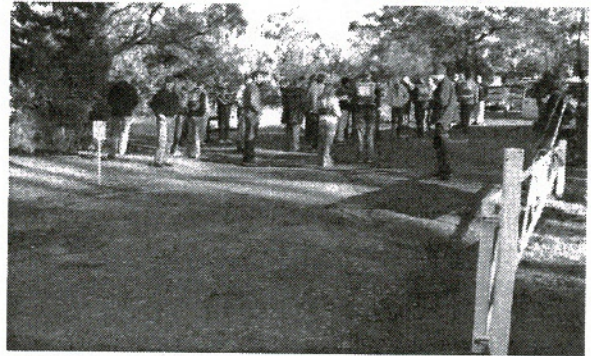
Come Saturday before the big day, KB and Tristan lined up to provide their Range Rovers and borrowed car trailers (thanks, Col) to cart the bales. Alasdair Grenness's dad Malcolm also brought his truck along, and a small group of us choofed out to Baskerville Road and braved the rain squalls to load the bales. Even Norman was seen actually lifting a bale! Several helpers checked their eyes to see if it was an hallucination (or in Matt's case, a touch of the Royal Swans) but no, it really happened. *I was there!! I saw it!!*

We were lucky to have club member Graeme Byrne's Liverpool Engineering yard available just down the hill from the course as overnight storage for the well-tarped bales.

Our only remaining worry on Saturday night was the weather. If Sunday produced the same freezing rain squalls as Saturday, we'd be buggered – volunteers preferring their bedclothes to bright Targa bibs; ruined hay

bales; cars skidding into trees; miserable competitors ...

But Sunday dawned bright and clear, and our volunteers *did* turn up, and were soon setting up the officials' tables at the start and finish lines, placing the witches' hats and haybales, gift-wrapping trees in anti-spectator tape (which also has magical car-repelling powers), checking the stopwatch and two-way radios and generally making the place look like a motorsport venue.

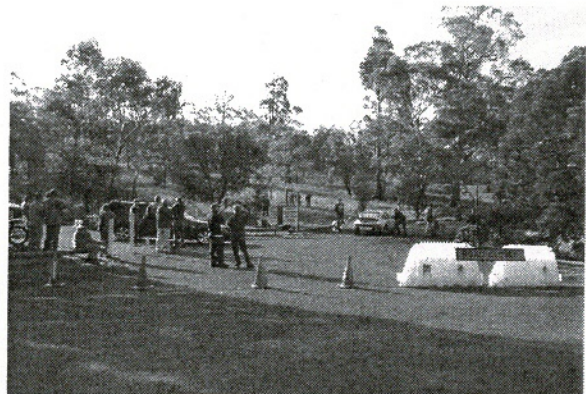


Hordes of helpers lined up for their free (for a day) marshall's jacket

Snow Drake pic

Barbie Queen Janice Cook had thought about the needs of the inner man (and woman) and had brought along home-cooked egg-and-bacon pie and other goodies for the crew, which was a fantastic way of helping keep out the early morning chill before the sun got the air temperature into double figures.

While Steve Caplice completed the last minute scrutineering arrangements, Tristan took control of the gate and directing competitor traffic along the disused road that provided our marshalling area and parc ferme'. He'd be an asset for any road gang or school crossing. It's just as well we didn't give him a lollipop to wave too.



Tristan's amazing gate

Jan Dallas pic

Nicole Bryan and her Uni mates took over the timekeeping equipment and crowd marshalling duties at several spots – thanks guys ‘n’ gals.



*How many CMI members, St John Ambulance people etc does it take to crew the finish line?
Snow Drake pic*

The course

The course, though short (only 900 metres), is challenging, with a mixture of short straights, sweepers and some tricky bends. The trickiest of these are two sharp right-handers near the top of the hill.

The first takes you into the loop, against the direction the traffic normally flows here. It turns in on itself, and has some well-placed trees just after the exit – thankfully no one went off here, but it was a close go for some people, wasn't it, Timbo Byrne?

The second sharp right-hander is an ‘artificial’ corner created with haybales and witches hats, diverting the cars around the edge of the top car park. Again, no one fell off in a big way here, but there were some exciting moments with plenty of tyre smoke, and some of the haybales felt the earth move for them.

This corner leads into another tricky one - a sharp left-hander that has a low stump at its apex. Definitely not one to clip!

The loop at the top gave us an ideal marshalling area for the cars while they waited to return as a group to the bottom for another run.



Trick BMW 2002 waits in line to return

Jan Dallas pic

Similarly, we had an excellent marshalling area at the bottom, in the form of a disused bitumen road, complete with its own turning circle.

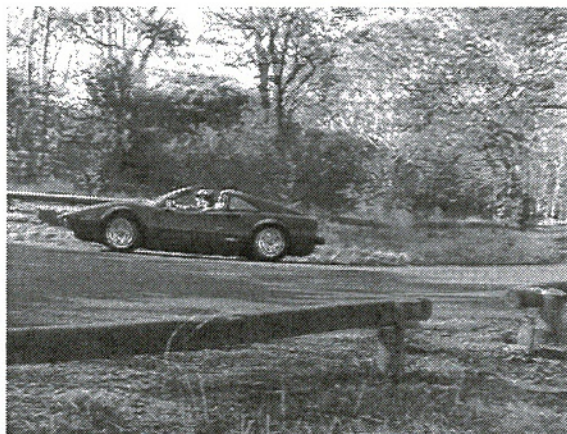
These areas helped us to get the cars organised for a quick turnaround. Combined with the hyper-efficiency of people like Steve Caplice and the various start line marshalls, and the reduced field of starters (several entrants didn't make it, and two couldn't get their cars to fire properly), this allowed us to have seven runs up the hill, instead of the four that we'd been anticipating.

The competition

We must have done something right promotion-wise, as there were nearly 45 entries, with a terrific mixture of cars including circuit racers, Targa cars, street hotties – and a goodly turnout by CMI members, some of whom were taking advantage of our special arf'n'arf offer and competing half the day and officiating the rest.

Blakey did the driver briefing in his usual droll style, and while he didn't actually *mention* that he would knee-cap evildoers who got too silly, we think that his Irish accent helped get the message across. All drivers were terribly terribly well behaved, but didn't let this stop them having a serious go up Hobart's answer to Pikes Peak.

Col Jose in his Ferrari led the field up the hill for two familiarisation tours and did the ‘zero car’ job throughout the day (rumour has it that he nearly posted FTD on one run ... and he's on video with brakes locked up ... tsk, tsk). Clerk of Course Kim Briggs has threatened Col with a good spanking if he does it again. At least it gave navigator Matt Harding some excitement, and a yardstick to compare his Lotus against.



Zero car exits the right-hander just after locking front brake

Sam Cotton pic

On the first free practice/familiarisation run I followed Neville Cook and the Hoglet as it blasted up the hill inside the cloud of smoke that was pouring from Timbo Byrne's Alfetta GTV. *'I hope you realise I had it going flat out,'* said Nev, *'even if I couldn't see where I was going. And if you've got a hundred horsepower to spare I could use them.'* Ha, Neville Cook, if I had a hundred horsepower to spare I could use them!

Once it came to the real runs, things got more serious. The starting arrangements were particularly well-organised. We even had a professional-looking wooden wheel chock on a rope, to stop cars going backwards while waiting for the 'Go!' word. The start line had a full crew with Steve Caplice as head car marshal, Blakey, Finny and Co as starters, Alasdair Grenness and others as chock-pullers, and sundry others yelling encouragement.

For his first serious run, Nev tightened his seat belt, lowered his visor, raised his visor again so he could see, flexed his accelerator foot, and waited for the countdown – before chirruping the Hoglet's front tyres and buzzing off, literally, towards the first bend, all noise and little grunt. Yep, I could see that another hundred horsepower *would* make a difference ...



Hoglet blasts off the line at a rate of knot

Snow Drake pic

The day provided heaps of entertainment for both drivers and spectators. At the main spectator points the watchers could get close to the course, safely, making for a more involving day. This also meant that no driver error went unnoticed or unapplauded.

Although no cars fell off the road, some did come mighty close, especially at the long left-hander near the reservoirs (Sam Calvert is said to have done a 360 here), at the tight right-handers and even on the last corner, where Leigh Forrest gave us an entertaining and smoky 360 in the big-engined early Corolla.

And those who drove smoothly, unspectacularly and/or conservatively also had a great time. For some of us it was our first experience of competing in a hillclimb, so we weren't out to make heroes (or bunnies) of ourselves, but it's whetted our appetite for another go – not too far away, either. Just ask Janice Cook, who on the day before the event was thinking about withdrawing – but finished the day having improved her time by four seconds, and she sure had a grin to prove it.

The day-long sunshine and absence of wind encouraged the drivers to stay out of their cars and do plenty of socialising between runs. For many it was a good chance to catch up with mates from the motorsport fraternity, in a very relaxed atmosphere, helped by CAMS steward Dave Button's supportive but non-intrusive approach – there should be more like him.



Matt Harding uses Col Jose's \$90,000 picnic table to good effect

Snow Drake pic

What made the day even better for the organisers was that, come packing away time, there were still so many CMI members who stayed to help collect up the haybales, stack the witches hats, roll up the spectator tape and do an 'emu parade', picking up all the rubbish – mostly left by other users of the area. The area hasn't been that clean for ages.

What's even better, the faithful core stayed on the job until everything was done, with the haybales stacked back in the shed at Baskerville. It's this kind of teamwork that makes the organisers want to do it all again.

Special thanks to Hobart City Council for their support in making the venue available. We'd like to run a similar event there in six months' time, and it just happens that CMI is down on the CAMS calendar to have a hillclimb on November 30 ...

Geoff Cotton

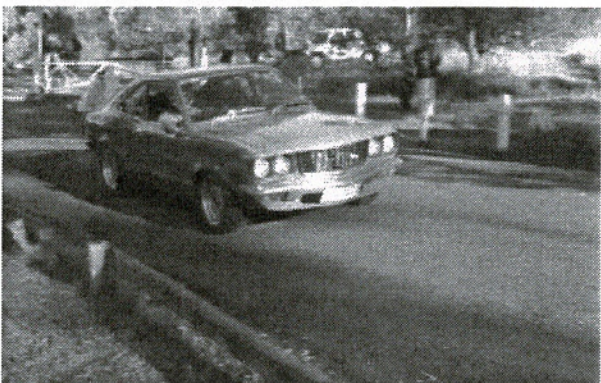
-----◆ The hillclimb competitors ◆-----



Car 1. Robbie Mills' JWF Italia was best-sounding car there (Best time BT 44.84)



Car 7: Andrew Robinson had the Golf's rear wheel in the air through tight right-hander (BT 45.47)



Car 2. Shannon Bygraves entertained the crowd (and kept the tyre dealers happy) with spectacular lockups in the Mazda RX3 buzzbomb (BT 45.25)



Car 8: Encouragement Award winner Nev Cook (BT 53.94) exercises the Hoglet's muscle. Brad Dale (BT 53.06) also drove this yeller terror at death-defying speeds



Car 4/24: Tim Byrne and father Graeme shared the Alfetta GTV. Timbo was entertaining (BT 51.09), but Graeme (BT 49.84) showed how smoothness saves seconds



Car 9: Janice Cook was smooth in her first hillclimb in the Fiat X1/9 (BT 56.81)



Car 6: Captain Pugwash (Norman Henry) drove the Black Pig smoothly to be fastest Porker on the day (BT 45.91)



Car 10: Peter Cook guns the 911 Targa around the sweeping left hander (BT 47.32)



Car 11/11A: Jacques Sapir (BT 47.10) and Evan Lyons (BT 43.69) shared the very racer-ish MGB-engined-Midget circuit racer – Evan was third-fastest



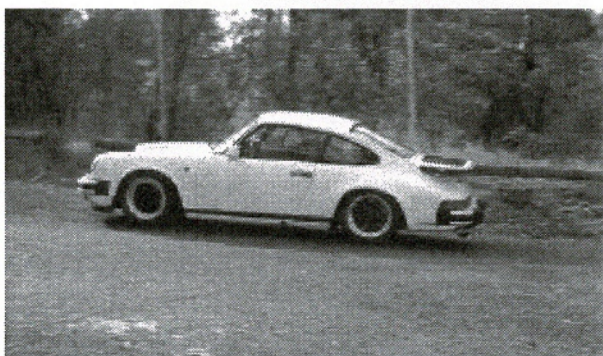
Car 18: No, Leigh Forrest's Corolla isn't quite standard, which explains why he was able later to do a full power-on 360 recovery just before the finish line to win Driver of the Day (BT 43.75)



Car 14: Phil Logan's BMW E30 M3 brakes hard for the second right-hander (BT 46.34)



Car 20: Ben Ritchie's Golf was a three-wheeler on the tight right-handers (BT 47.31)



Car 15: Geoff Cotton takes the 911SC (aka Flying Pig) around the first right-hander (BT 46.91)



Car 21/21A: Justin Thorpe (BT 50.18) and Brent Killingback (BT 47.22) shared the blue Escort – making it easier for each to claim that it wasn't him who had trouble stopping at the second right-hander



Car 16: Simon Thomson's Targa-trained BMW 2002 was quick (BT 44.59)



Car 22: Howard Calvert's new turbo XR6 ute looks like a hearse, but goes like an ambulance – to be the fastest CMI car on the day (BT 45.59)



Car 23: Robert Cooney was steady in the Sprite all day (BT 51.82)



Car 29: Sam Calvert hides behind the trees at one of his 'off' places in the Fiat X1/9 (BT 48.72)



Car 25: Leigh Finlayson had the Alfa GTV tarmac rally car cranked up all day (BT 46.16)



Car 30: Bjorn Dattlen slid the 3-speed HQ through the tight ones (BT 48.69)



Car 26: Robert Barrow in the Nissan Pulsar GtiR was second fastest (BT 42.69) – and one of the slowest when he missed the last right-hander



Car 31: Disc jockey turned wheel jockey Matt Wardle enjoyed his drive in the Commodore (BT 49.12)



Car 28: Nigel Nicols boots the pokey little bug-eye Sprite towards the finish line (BT 49.15)



Car 32: Andrew Blakney takes the Targa Torana XU1 off the start line for a quick run to the top (BT 46.53)



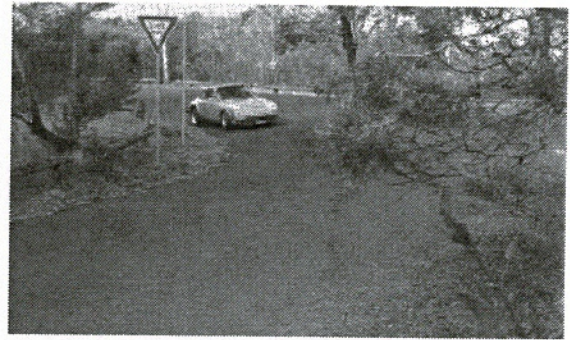
Car 33: Nicole Bryan tries the inside line in the Peugeot 205 Mi16 (BT 49.25)



Car 34: Ian Sylvester lifts a wheel in the Honda S600-and-a-bit Targa special (BT 48.16)



Car 37: Ross Thorne tried out his new old Alfa Romeo (BT 50.66)



Car 39: Andrew Forbes lines up the Porsche 911 3.2 for the first tight right-hander (BT 51.00)



Car 44: Damien Moore and the Escort: Fastest on the day (BT 42.53), with a series of flat-out superb drives that were a joy to watch – and you could hear him coming ... from anywhere in Hobart

Photo credits

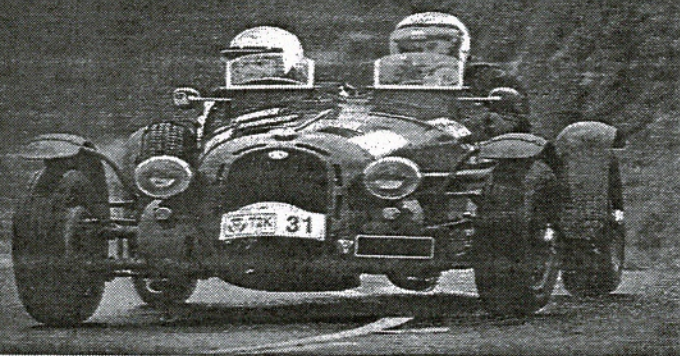
Thanks to our expert photographers:

Snow Drake: 00, 1, 6, 7, 8, 9, 25, 16, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 29, 32, 39

Jan Dallas: 10, 11, 18, 33, 34, 44

Sam Cotton: 2, 14, 30, 37

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