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Note: Applicants who wish to join part-way through the year will be charged a pro-rata membership fee based on the number of months left in the membership year. See the application form for details.

Meetings

Southern members meet on the final Tuesday of each month, January through to November, at the Civic Club, 134 Davey Street, Hobart.
The committee meeting is held between 6.30-8.00 pm. Drop in any night.

CMI's AGM is generally held at 7 pm on the last Tuesday of November at the Civic Club, Hobart.

All contributions to Veloce Nota are welcome and when published earn points towards the Clubman of the Year Award.

Please send all letters and contributions to The Editor: cmi.editorial@gmail.com

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CMI Life members:

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Veloce Nota is very late this month, and apart from two car crashes, two motor sport events and preparing for Bathurst the week after next, I have simply no excuse.

It's so late that at least one of the events in the next couple of pages may already have happened by the time this is printed and posted. Sorry about that.

However, there is a fair bit of reading in here.

Nobody wrote up Darryl's 'Get Routed' rally, but it gets a few mentions. A fun day despite me being laid out (by the ball) while attempting to take a mark!

The picture shows Mary examining her car after my crash—my first proper collision with another car in the last 45 years.



Presidential Patter

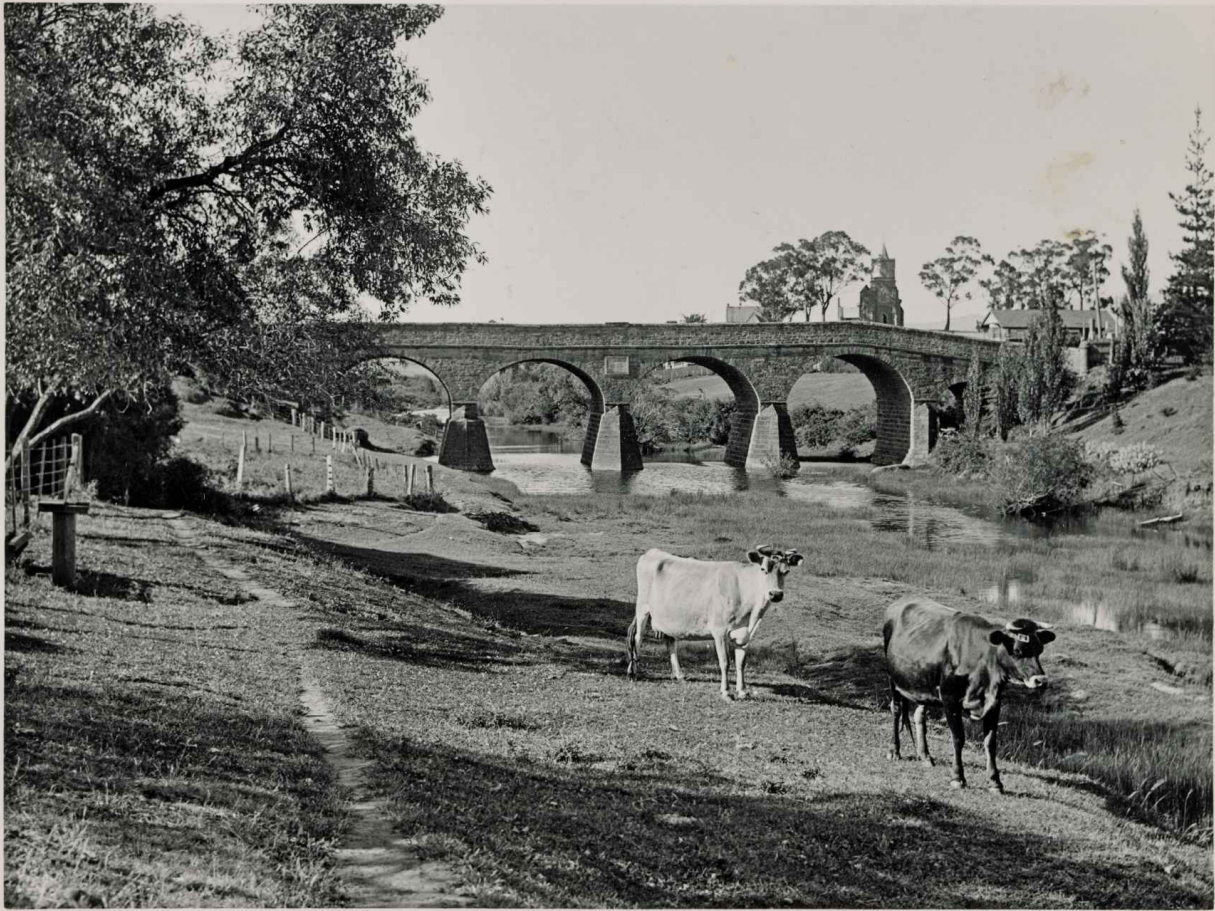
I would firstly like to thank Darryl Bennett, with assistance from Mary White, for organising the 'Get Routed' cryptic rally on Sunday 2 October. We had a good turnout of participants, who enjoyed finding their way from Sorell to Ross for a welcome lunch. There was the effort of decoding the cryptic clues, kicking a football and much more along the way, such as the fundamental difference between a square and a rectangle. Secondly, we have the Domain Hill climb coming up on 26 November. If you are not planning on entering, could you please consider coming along to assist? More people sharing a task makes it easier for all.

Thirdly, we have the Annual General Meeting coming up. This is your chance to have input into the direction of CMI, by volunteering to join the committee. Fresh views and ideas are important for our club to have a vibrant future. The current event secretary is retiring, so if we are to have motorsport events next year we need a replacement, or no events.

Thanks
Graham

Darryl supervises the handover of the Mentos jar to Franklin and Ann-Maree, who (almost) correctly guessed the number in it.





Good morning, Club Presidents/Secretaries

I have been contacted by a committee member of the **200th Anniversary of the Richmond Bridge** committee seeking our assistance with a parade of vehicles (from 1900-2020) through the Township of Richmond followed by a “show N shine” on the local Village Green to coincide with the 200th anniversary.

The event is being held on the 12th of December 2023


Can you please advise your club members about the parade of vehicles and if a member of your club wishes to participate, could they please contact Gary Richardson by email – gdrichardson58@gmail.com prior to the 15th September.

I appreciate your support

Regards
Rodney Belbin

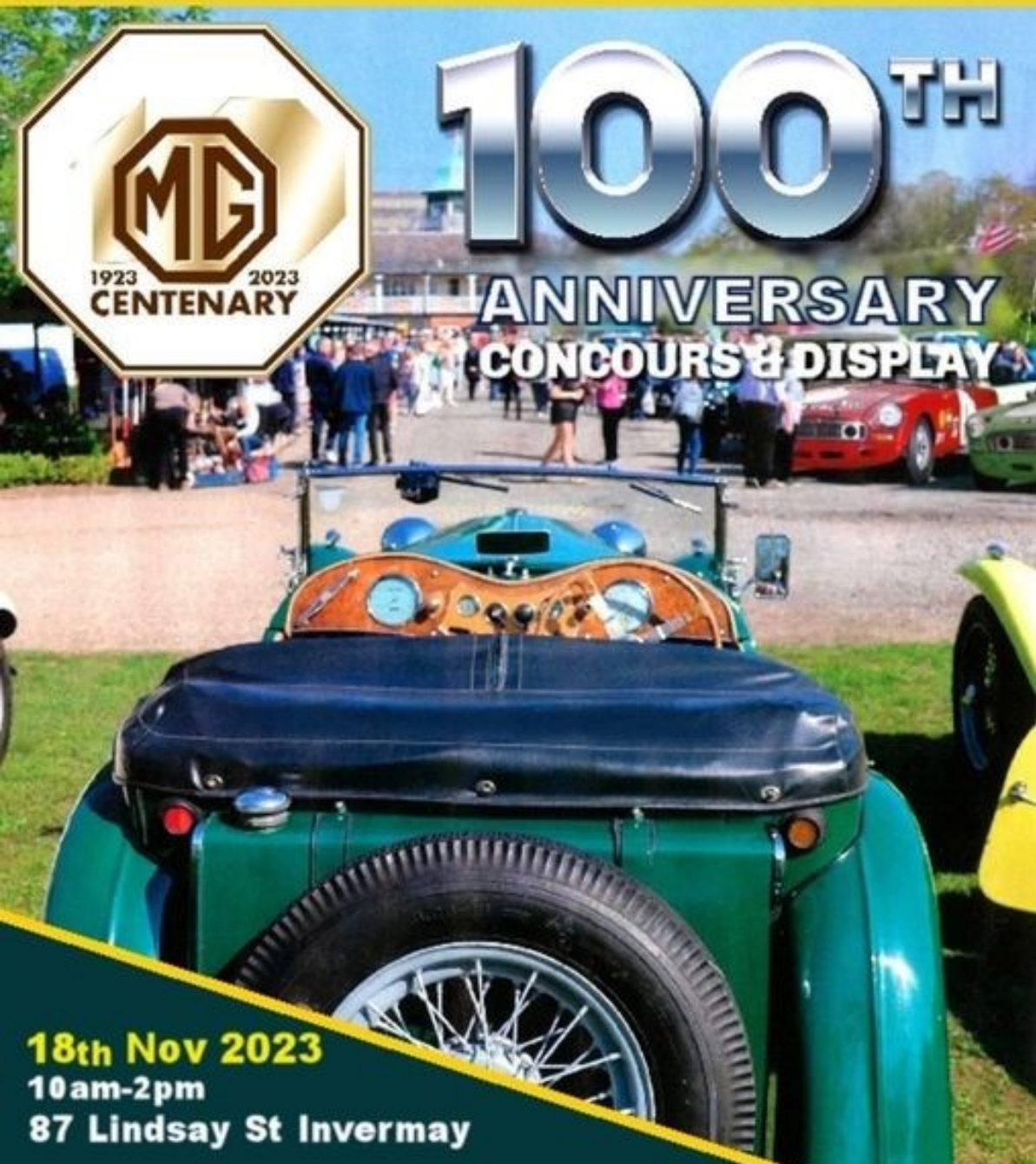
Editor's note: Unless you knew about this already we've missed the deadline, but it looks interesting even if only as a spectator.

MG CAR CLUB OF TAS INC






100TH

ANNIVERSARY CONCOURS & DISPLAY



18th Nov 2023
10 am-2pm
87 Lindsay St Invermay

Supported by:



Proudly presented by the MG Car Club of Tasmania
Food, drink and music available on the day

I left things in my last article on a relative high. We had the old motor out (albeit with a broken speedo cable and possible damage to the speedo itself) and the crankshaft being polished. Things continued pretty well for a while too. We took the cylinder heads off, cleaned them, had them skimmed, reassembled them without issue and Steve Caplice kindly set the valve clearances. We sourced bearings, rings and gaskets easily and at reasonable cost and when we got the crankshaft back were ready to get on with rebuilding the motor.

Before I go too much further I should mention that I rebuilt an Alfa 33 1500 boxer about 20 years ago following the directions in the Haynes manual and felt pretty confident about doing it again. It went really well that time and I now had the same instructions, better tools and more experience. In retrospect what I did have 20 years ago was a single motor which was known to have no faults other than a shot big end bearing. This time around I had four motors that all had problems (known and unknown); that may have been my undoing.

One motor was from a 33 ti and this was known to have had a major issue, i.e. a big end let go, trashed the crank and #1 conrod was out of round at the big end. However, this motor, let's call it the ti motor, had the best cylinder bores and I had read somewhere that they had slightly up-rated oil circulation (probably bullshit) so I wanted to use it.

We had the sludge motor which had good pistons but rust on some conrods and bearing caps and wear on the cylinder wall. We had a spare motor from a

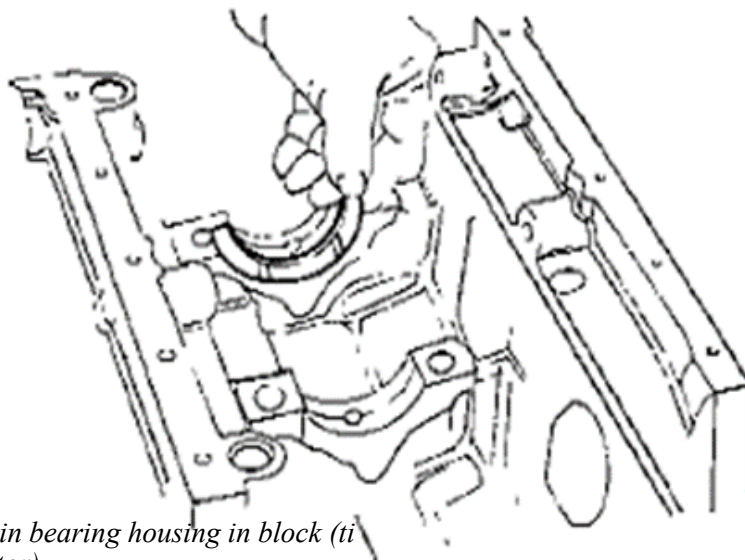
wreck, with a worn crankshaft, low-compression pistons, and wear on the cylinder walls.

Finally there was the engine we took out of the car' this also had crankshaft wear, low-compression pistons and wear on the cylinder wall.

I did a lot of reading and determined that the block, bearing housings, conrods etc. were the same for all 1500s, so I thought I might as well take the best bits from each motor. This ended up being the block from the ti engine with crank, pistons and main bearing caps from the sludge motor. An engine builder might be waving their arms screaming 'NO' at this point but I still don't know if this was a reasonable idea. It didn't work, then it did work, then it didn't work, then it did work.

and despite everything being well lubricated it was very difficult to turn the crankshaft. The Haynes manual has the following words for the reader: 'This will be difficult but should be possible'. This created a great deal of uncertainty for John and me. It was possible but it was definitely difficult and without recent experience to call on we were unsure if it was normal or not. We decided to proceed with the rebuild so fitted the pistons and torqued the big ends (piston rings popping out of the ring compressor meant this took a long time and I was very agitated at the end). With this done it was now *very* difficult to turn the crank.

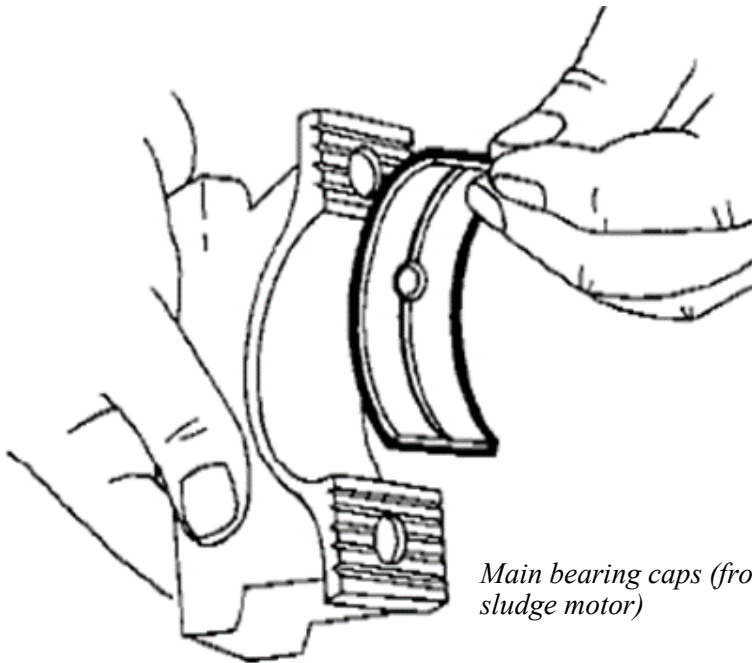
The 'difficult but possible' description was playing on our minds and ultimately we felt



Main bearing housing in block (ti motor)

We fitted the crankshaft into the block from the ti motor using the caps from the sludge motor, and while they seemed unusually tight-fitting the caps ultimately went on. We torqued them up

something must be wrong so pulled it all apart again. When we looked at the main bearings they had wear marks on them so we figured something was probably wrong and started the



Main bearing caps (from sludge motor)

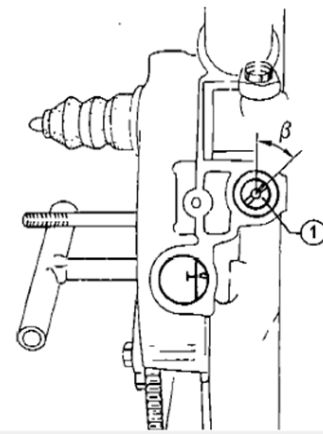
guessing game about where to go from here. Was the problem in the block, the caps, should we ditch the preferred block and use the sludge motor, etc. etc. etc. After a lot of discussion we decided to stick with the block but go with the caps from the ti motor. There was an immediate difference on the second rebuild, the caps fitting much more easily and the reassembled bottom end was still difficult to turn but less difficult than before. Because the main bearing looked a bit worn from the original rebuild we took it all apart again and ordered new bearings (probably unnecessarily – wait for part 3).

We rebuilt the bottom end with the new bearings, fitted the heads, then got to timing the engine. The belt followers I had bought turned out to be crap and wouldn't fit (another stressful few hours) so we went back to old ones. With the belts on, the 'difficult but possible' rotation of the engine was getting much more difficult.

After a delay of some months waiting for a gearbox we decided to push ahead and get the motor into the car with an old gearbox. Getting the motor and gearbox into the car went reasonably well but is a lot of work. When I went to fit the distributor it became clear that the engine was 180 degrees out. This was infuriating! I had been so careful with this while building the motor but still managed to get it wrong. I was focused on the angle of the slot the distributor fits into and had not noticed that the slot is not centred on the shaft. I swapped the leads around to get the firing order right and hoped for the best.

John and I connected everything up and were eventually ready to start the car. With the engine being so tight we decided to leave the spark plugs out and turn it over on the starter motor to ease the load and build up oil pressure before trying to start it. With equal measures of anxiety

Distributor coupling positioning
 $\beta = 22^\circ$



The slot is actually closer to one side than the other and you need to get it right or the motor is 180 degrees out. I got the angle right but Murphy's law took care of the rest.

and excitement we turned the key and the motor turned over reluctantly, then more reluctantly, then smoke started coming off the starter motor and we stopped. We tried turning it over manually and it would do about 270 degrees then stop. We double checked camshaft timing and everything looked fine so we concluded the problem was something internal and related to bearing clearances. This was devastating! We spent hours under the car with the sump off checking things, undoing and redoing things but nothing helped!

In the first article in this series I asked you to try to identify the point where the engine rebuild topped being fun ... this was it. There were a lot of stressful and disappointing moments leading up to this point, but this was the point where things really turned. Sadly, worse was to come.

'I'm just going to give you some Fentanyl for the pain ... how's that?'

'My hands and feet are tingling.'

'That's normal.'

(Long sigh) 'Oh yes ...'

'That's normal too.'

As part of my careful preparation for Targa New Zealand, I had just driven Mary's Mitsubishi Lancer into the back of a parked car at 50 km/h and stopped dead, hitting the steering wheel and bruising my sternum (and wrecking both cars).

The team that took off for NZ was John Stanton and my bruised self – Porsche 924 Turbo – and Jeffrey Wilson and Michael Blake – Subaru WRX. We were accompanied by Mary Blake, and Ross and Barbara Hearne, who would service the cars between them.

The service vehicles were a hired Navara canopy ute and Toyota Corolla, the ute laden with both teams' tools and spares.

After documentation and scrutineering, our first stage was at Hampton Downs racetrack, a spectacularly appointed place with restaurant, bar, accommodation and a very nice undulating layout with several possible circuits. We were supposed to do four laps, and distinguished ourselves by doing five! And there is no place to hide when your start number is ONE.

No on-road recce is allowed, so we had only rehearsed the notes on video footage with the speed wound up. So the stages were unfamiliar, even if the notes weren't. Second stage was Hwy 22 (29 km), followed by Wain-

garo Road (12 km). the stages – even the really fast ones – were full of brows, crests and narrow bridges, and were generally longer than Targa Tasmania stages.

We set off into Stage 4 – Te Miro – and made about 20 km before arriving at a blind 6 Right, a moderately fast bend. John placed the car wide on the entry, hit some gravel, locked the brakes, unlocked them, re-locked them and we went off the road, down a 4-metre bank and through a barbed-wire fence, snapping off one large post which then speared the windscreen on my side. Once it stopped I told John to turn it around and drive back out through the hole we'd made in the fence, and then ran off down the road to put out the triangles and show the OK sign. The car was invisible from the road, and I hoped as the field hurtled past that no-one else would ram it from behind.

There was no sign of the Porsche emerging, and when I went back to the spot later I found that it had failed to start and the farmer had towed it into his workshop area.

The farmer and his wife, Glen and Suzie Parker, were the soul of kindness, lending us tools and

'That was close!' Near miss No. 78



workshop space, and keeping us supplied with tea, coffee and snacks until the service crew arrived. They also borrowed a trailer from a friend so that the Porsche could be taken to an auto electrician. We returned to Rotorua for the night, and as we drove back to the farm to get the car we discovered that they had found a sparky who was a rally driver and was keen to help. Suzie then drove their ute with the trailer and Porsche to Morrinsville Auto Electrics, where the boss and his offsider went at it like F1 mechanics, one fixing the starting problem and the other a split oil line from the crash.

While trying to fix all the assorted problems, we had been pursuing a new windscreen. I had found a roll of contact, which I stuck over the shattered parts of



Suzie towing the Porsche to Morrinsville Auto Electrics



the screen to stop the shower of broken glass we were getting. We eventually found a supplier who said he could fit the screen if we had the car there at 7.30 the following morning – ‘there’ being Cambridge, a considerable distance in the wrong direction from the rally route.

In the meantime we had contacted the organisers and said we were ready to bring the car to be scrutineered – apart from the broken screen. They suggested that the scrutineers come to us, which three of them did! They passed the car as fit once the screen was in – and even hinted that if we couldn’t get one, they might overlook the contact.

Up at 5.30, off to Cambridge, breakfast while they removed the old screen, then a two-hour wait for the mastic to set, and by 11.30 we were on the road again. Nearly 500 km later we caught up with the field at the Chris Amon Manfeild (that’s how it’s spelt) racetrack, the last stage of the day.

No trouble, for a change, and everyone was very glad to see us back on the road.

That night we were in Palmerston North, in an apartment Mary had secured, 100 m from the overnight parc ferme. *Very* civilised. A bottle of wine and several truly gigantic pizzas saw us ready for bed. In my case sleep was helped by my diet of Nurofen, which I needed every

four hours after two prangs and constantly crawling under the car to fix things.

Next day was nearly uneventful (apart from biblical rainfall – which leaked into the car), and contained four stages between 15 and 20 km long, and a last one that was 46 km long.

Back to Palmerston North, another feed of pizza and salad, and pack up for an early start ...

An early start which the Porsche did not provide. It would turn over, but it would not fire. I set off to find an auto electrician, and eventually tracked one down – to be told that he was ‘off helping some blokes in a 924 Porsche Turbo.’ Which he was. We missed our No. 1 starting spot and were advised by the Competitor Relations Officer to start at the very back, so that our 160 km/h speed restriction wouldn’t clash with the faster cars. And we just made that last position, to cheers from the organisers and start personnel.

The stages were long: 40, 27 and 36 km in the morning, and 13 and 17 in the afternoon. That last 17 k stage, Ponatahi Road, was quite an eye-opener. Straights over a kilometre long, blind crests, very fast bends ... Michael and Jeffrey averaged over 160 km/h on it, and we managed about 135. Blindly quick and great fun. 18 k in about 8 minutes for us.

Presentations and dinner were at the Copthorne Hotel in Masterton. We were second in Retro, despite everything. The absence of any other competitors may have helped. But we felt deserving enough.

Next morning the Porsche again failed to start for the

drive back to Auckland. We bought a new battery, which cured it. Obviously the ignition system required more than average power, and the battery was on its last legs. So it would turn over quite happily without firing, or it would push-start.

I have to mention here the help gladly given by other service crews, including another F1-style pitstop on day 5 when the car was overheating and a human chain provided bottle after bottle of mineral water!

But there was one last treat in store: 5 km North of Tokaroa the car lay down and died, having – I suspect – dropped a valve. This time there was no fixing it, so it was a 300-km tow on a trailer by Tokaroa Towing that got us back to Auckland, where we had started a week before.

More interesting times than we really wanted, but a great event, run by real enthusiasts and populated by them as well.

Several doctor visits , CTs, XRays and an ultrasound later, I’m on the mend but still pay in spades for any chest muscle exertion—like, let’s see, driving a race car.



I'd been looking forward to the Baskerville Historics ever since I entered in mid-April. And the night before the meeting, despite my best efforts to get some much-needed sleep, I simply couldn't rest. After getting bored of lying in bed, I decided to get up early Friday morning, and head off to Baskerville at 5am. When I arrived at 6 however, I was in for a rude surprise, in the form of a locked gate at the entrance of the track. Luckily, I had parked the race car at the track on Wednesday, and although inconvenient, I saw a nice little parking spot just across the road for my "support" vehicle. After jumping a fence, I walked down the entry road carrying all my race gear and supplies, and into the pit complex. My reason for getting to the track so early, despite the lack of sleep, was I had lots of stickers to put on the car, as well as setup my pit area etc. After putting up a gazebo (which normally requires at least 3 people) by myself, I began sticking up the car. Annoyingly, I ran out of time, and had to finish off 'the look' in between sessions.

On to the track action, we made a setup change the weekend before the meeting, in the form of some Spax adjustable dampers in the back of the car. This stiffened the back up no end, the car was much more responsive, its balance and predictability were much improved, but that came at the expense of being a lot less forgiving when you got it wrong. My first hot lap in practice, I sent it into T1 as I normally would, waited for the rear to come around, and was ready to catch the impending slide. However, with the improved setup, the slide never came, the thing just gripped, and then gripped



some more. Unfortunately, muscle memory kicked in, and I went to counter steer a slide that didn't exist, meaning I was turning left through a very fast right hander. And despite what Doc Hudson tells you in the *Cars* movie, 'turning left to go right' don't work so well. After establishing Doc Hudson doesn't know what he's talking about, I wouldn't make that mistake again.

The second session on Friday was a bit more chaotic. This was where I really needed to get an idea of what lap times I could hit. Unfortunately, lining up in the pit lane, the field was a jumble of fast cars, slow cars and everything in between. And in a low-powered car, that goes through corners faster than it really should, mixing it in with amateur drivers in fast cars, getting a clear lap was hard to come by. For most of the session, I was following Philip Blake in his yellow rocket ship. After around 10 minutes of frustrating traffic and blue flags, Phil came

in early, later saying 'I had seen enough'. Meanwhile, I stuck out the rest of the session, getting more and more frustrated. Out of a 20-minute session, I got three clean laps. two of them I made a mistake, so only had one representative lap to go off, and in the Regularity class, that was just fantastic.

On Saturday, I nominated a time. Given that Friday wasn't particularly useful, I nominated a time based off my previous regularity outing (1:10.5). However, I forgot that the tyres Phil Blake had supplied me were no longer so fresh, having done two hillclimbs, almost 60 laps of the track, and over 1000 kms of road use since the previous regularity meeting. Hitting that time was going to be, let's say, pushing it.

Lining up on the grid, I was confident I could hit that time, despite the tyres being past their best. After the green flag dropped, I was doing well ... for a lap. On lap two, things got a little more interesting: at T7

(Calvin's), unbeknown to me, or anyone else (Including the flag marshal), a Ford Cortina decided to part with all of its oil. This sent someone a couple cars ahead of me into a spin. But the car in front of me kept it straight, so as racing drivers do, I saw a nice opening on the racing line and took it. The moment I went to turn, though, the back came round, and I was going backwards through Calvin's, heading straight for a Volvo at 120 kph. I was sure I was going to take the back of the Volvo, as well as collect a blue Gemini, and those two drivers shared the same thoughts. But somehow, we all avoided contact. Due to the oil on track, the red flag came out, so we all came back into pit lane. When we were finally released back onto the track, we were all out of order, so hitting my nominated lap time was almost impossible. Overtaking around six cars in two laps, as well as taking a less than ideal racing line through T7, I ended up seventh in that session.

The second session wasn't quite as spectacular, but I had a great battle with an annoyingly swift AE92 Corolla and a lovely old red Ford Cortina, both lapping faster than their nominated times. I tried my best in the Sud, but couldn't keep those two behind, and it cost me in the results, ending the day with a 4th place. I was happy with the result, but knew I could have done better without the side-by-side action.

Heading into Sunday, I spoke with the driver of the Corolla, and we decided to swap places, as to keep out of each other's way. I wasn't quite prepared to submit

to the Cortina though, so he stayed behind me on the grid. On Sunday morning, I was hitting my times, the car felt good, and was quick. However, come lap 3, I got done by the Cortina at Skyline, and that really slowed me down. Much to my surprise though, I came in in 3rd place!

For the last session, I was caught out by the programme running over 30 minutes ahead of schedule. I went to off to spectate a race of formula cars, featuring John Bowe, only to realise that my group was next out! After running back to the car, performing a truly shocking park on the dummy grid, I had no choice but to head out. I was quite concerned though, as I didn't have enough time to refuel the car.

Once we were under way, I was a little worried about the fuel situation, considering the fuel light was now a permanent resident of the instrument cluster. But I couldn't worry about that and turned my attention to hitting my times. I was keeping better pace than I had all weekend, but that red Cortina was still there, and was challenging the little Alfa up the hill. On lap 3, he had a crack at Skyline, but when I saw he was coming, I

went defensive. He then poked the nose heading into Calvin's. I really didn't want him coming through there, so blocked the inside again. Heading down the back straight, I thought maybe I can keep him behind here too, and took the inside line. I thought I had put him off making the overtake, so reverted to the racing line, but inadvertently left the door wide open for him to send it down the inside, and sure enough, down he goes under brakes. I hang on round the outside of the final corner, only to chicken out around 100m before the timing line, and ahead he goes. Then on the 5th, and fortunately untimed lap, as the 5th lap is there to ensure the slow cars get their full four timed laps, I got fuel surge at Skyline, and decide maybe that's enough race driving for the day, and let the Cortina go. Somehow, after my shenanigans with the Cortina, the results showed I came first! So that was a nice way to end an already fantastic weekend.

In the end, I don't know where I came in the standing, 4th or 5th probably. But that really doesn't matter, as this meeting isn't about results, it's about classic cars going at it, and it certainly didn't disappoint!



Shocks with shocks

Some time ago I ordered a pair of QA-1 double adjustable shock absorbers from JEGS in the USA to tame the back of the OT.

They wrote back to ask me to wire them the money, as I was a new customer. This I did, under protest, as it took longer and cost quite a lot more. Banks have a way of playing with exchange rates, and there is an extra cost at each end for the transfer.

I did ask them what was wrong with Paypal, and found that I *could* have paid with Paypal but hadn't been given the option.

Then I waited for JEGS to respond. This took some time, and when the response came it said that the shocks were not in stock and would be available about the end of November.

I am slow to anger, but making me jump through all those hoops to pay two months in advance for something they were advertising but could not supply ...

I sent them an email pointing all this out and got yet another apologetic response. Did I mention that every single email I got from them was sent by a different person?

Finally someone wrote back with about the third apology, and suggested that I contact someone else to order an alternative. I wrote back again saying, No, you suggest an alterna-

tive—preferably one that exists—and send it to me.

They suggested a slightly cheaper alternative, their own brand, which I ordered.

When I suggested they keep the extra money as a credit for me, so that I could order a couple of other things to be sent with the shocks, they said that wiring it back had already been processed, and that the shocks were already being shipped.

Which they were, as they arrived a week later.

Then they asked me to fill in a template for wiring the money to me, and when I didn't respond, they said they would turn it into a credit for me. Which was what I had suggested in the first place ...

I tried hitting myself over the head with a baseball bat, and it was an improvement on trying to communicate with JEGS.

But the shock absorbers looked the business. Very well made, with 18 adjustments in both bump and rebound.

All problems from here on were not the fault of the shocks, I have to add.

The main problem was that they didn't fit. The top ends needed some doctoring, as they were a bit fatter than my old ones and didn't fit my brackets. (See photograph).



The method I evolved for doing this was to colour them with a black Sharpie and then remove a little at a time with a die grinder.

And if you're wondering what it feels like to start carving bits off the ends of a pair of new \$1200





shocks with a 20,000 rpm burr, it's a bit scary.

They needed to be sculpted on four sides, and it took several hours before both were in and moving freely.

I also had to put in new bump stops and restrictor straps so that they would neither 'bottom' nor 'top'.

Then there was the matter of adjusting them. They were on the rear of the car, and the fronts were OK, so that took some of the uncertainty out.

But 18 times 18 is 324, and that's how many possible adjustments there were—323 of them being wrong.

I read everything I could about shock adjustment before laying

a finger on them.

When Darryl and Mary's cryptic rally came around I confess I took a little punt and set all adjusters on the halfway mark. It was satisfactory but skittish.

Once that rally was behind me and the scars of not winning had healed, I started adjusting in earnest.

You can do it on the road, apparently. So I took the car to Fingerpost Road—hilly, twisty and bumpy, with a couple of good straights—with both adjusters on zero clicks. That's as soft as it gets. Not pleasant. At the other end I reset them with rebound still fully soft, and bump fully hard.

I know this sounds extreme, but Dave Dungey showed me how to make adjustments this way. It's called a binary search. You adjust one thing at a time, and you go from zero to max, then halfway between, then halfway in an up or down direction depending on the result. Then split the difference again, and so on. It's quick, and the adjustments get steadily finer. (It also works for things like finding where you are in a video recording.)

The car was now hopping all over the road. So I went back from 18 to nine clicks of bump.

Much better, but still not right. When I went back to five, it was pretty good, so I started on the rebound.

What I ended up with was five clicks of bump and eight of rebound.

When I took it to Baskerville for a test day I used this setting first to see what it was like—pretty good—and then repeated the whole process, starting again from zero on both sides.

I ended up deciding that what I had found on the road was good enough, but added one click on each adjuster for the more extreme conditions of the track.

I now found that I could, if I was careful, trail brake into some corners. (For anyone who doesn't know what trail braking is, it means starting your braking hard in a straight line and then easing it off as you turn in.)

During the Historics I even had a three decent loses while doing this into the esses, and managed to catch two of them.

So—a qualified success.

Below left and right: putting in a block for the bump rubber to strike.



Tailpiece

Not Italian, but like most of what turned up for the Historics, a serious piece of kit!



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