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1 January to 31 December
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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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Sorry we're late—again! But lots of people have been on holiday—my good self included. Quite a bit of competition in this issue, and by the time you get it the first social event of the year will be over! I hope you enjoyed the barbecue/breakfast.

I'll use this space to show you some extra pics that I took at Bathurst. We were privileged to have the company of 'The World's Fastest E-Type Jaguar' and its owners, Team Shep.

As my friend Graeme Soden is a Jaguar nut, he struck up an immediate rapport with them. The car has been timed at Lake Gairdner in South Australia at just over 173 mph. (Lake Gairdner follows Bonneville in all things, including imperial measurement, but that's nearly 280 km/h—in a 1962 car.) It ran on alcohol for the record runs, and had big wheels and a long diff, but at Bathurst it was back to 'normal'.

Phil Sheppard (driver) saw me admiring the car, and before he knew I was connected to Graeme, or was running a car myself, he invited me to sit in it and offered to take my picture. Nice people.

And of course, by giving us his book 'The world's fastest E-type Jaguar', he has planted the seed for a trip to Lake Gairdner with the Fiat.

Watch this space.

P.S. After our engine problem at Bathurst, I have pulled the engine apart and it awaits the attentions of various specialists. Damage is limited to pistons and a broken valve guide (I hope).

2024 Dates:

Sun 14 April 2024

Sun 7 July 2024

Sat 24 August 2024

Sun 17 November 2024



CMI Baskerville hillclimb and supersprints. (in association with the Jaguar Car Club—up to 20 Jaguars may be competing)

CMI Baskerville Regularity races.

Lufra Regularity hillclimb

Domain Hillclimb

Domain Hillclimb

This year's Domain hill climb was the wettest event I have ever competed in. The worst conditions I've driven in before this event was some brief drizzle at Baskerville, a place where you have to try rather hard to hit something. This was much more intense. On my way to the event, the wipers were struggling to keep up, the tyres were aquaplaning on occasion, and the course is arguably one of the most challenging in Tasmanian motorsport. But I had a classic Alfa Romeo to play with, and who would pass that up!

It was a clumsy start to the event on my part. Having been running around all morning, I didn't have time to get into my race suit and swap my shoes to some more Alfasud-friendly footwear. (Those who have driven a Sud know what I mean.) I was the first car to go up the hill for the sighting run, and while I had time to put my fire-resistant suit on, I only got as far as taking my big work boots off, so up the hill I went in socks; it felt rather strange, I must admit. The reason I was the first car, is I was attempting to be an official. I was told my task once I got to the top of the hill was to wave three cars through the loop at a time. However, when I go there, David Button already had a flag in his hand. I was a little confused at this point, as I thought that was my job. But apparently not any more. My other task was to control the parking of the finished competitors. As for some reason drivers love to social distance their cars, and in an event where the queue is known to stretch back towards the finish line, you can start to realise why we weren't so keen on that. A big thankyou to all competitors for listening to my instruction,



Two of Italy's finest – Brett Carhart)

and then remembering to keep nice and close; much appreciated!

The first timed run of the day was a little bit nerve-racking. I was recently given a HANS device as a birthday present, and this was my first time using it. Due to my lack of experience, I was having some difficulties getting strapped in, finally strapped in and ready with around 10 seconds to go! And when you're worried about the unknown track and conditions, messing around with your belts and helmet just before isn't fantastic.

Once I was underway, I was shocked; the lack of grip was astonishing! On the start, it felt like I just sat still. I tried for second gear, not much better. As I approached the second corner, I was just starting to find some grip, modulating the throttle pedal between probably 20 & 50%. After a rather interesting start, I made my way to the water tanks, the most dangerous section - a big dirt wall on the left, and barriers accompanied by a drop on

the right. I went to brake, and straight away the inside wheel locked up, then I tried to turn in, greeted by nothing but understeer. I then abandoned my trail braking efforts, and eventually found some traction. On to the next corner, a medium speed, very long left sweeper. The car turned in fine this time, but on exit, just more wheelspin. After flirting with half throttle, I arrived at the chicane, got through there OK, and onto the ess bend, going faster than I would really like, but kept the car in second, just to stay on the safe side. Then you go through the fantastic banked right hander, and up towards the loop. And across the line! (In a time 6 seconds slower that I would end the day with.)

Throughout the event, everyone would push themselves. Some found the limit, some went over it. Most notably, Ed Newton's yellow MK2 Jaguar became stuck and pivoted on the edge of the steep bank, just before the chicane, as well as Franklin in his Galant, who had a spin, and had to abandon his run.



The MK2 Jaguar hanging off the edge – GVS Media

On my final run, I too had found my limit, narrowly avoiding the outside bank at the Water towers (wonderful world of understeer), later locking the front inside wheel at the Esses. Dad (Robert Madigan) seemed quite alarmed by this, having heard lots of lock

up noises, and then had to wait to see if his car was still in one piece when it reappeared through the next corner. (Don't worry, it was all under control.)

In the end, everyone (I assume) had a good day's motor racing.

Even better, everyone made it to the end in one piece (despite the best efforts of some). There were some tight results too! With the Italian machines putting on a show, most notably Gary Lucas, not just winning Italian B, but Class B outright! As for my results, I brought the Alfasud home 4th in class A, 5 tenths off 3rd, and within a second of 2nd place! However, I can report I dominated Italian A, the Sud unmatched in its capabilities! (See the results, and you'll find out why.)

Big thankyou to all the volunteer officials, for braving the cold and wet conditions so we can play with cars all day. Without officials, there is no motorsport!

Below: The Alfasud through the Esses – GVS Media





My last visit to Bathurst was in 2018, and I enjoyed it so much that I resolved to go back. Four times I attempted it, and four times outside forces prevented me. (Once the obstacle was the height of my ambulance. At 2.3 metres, it was too tall for the return trip – and I didn't want to *live* on the mainland.) I lowered the van, which I had already fitted with a table/bed combo and extra internal storage/seating, as well as an awning and a fridge. I finished the rebuild and shortening of the trailer I had inherited from Jack Waldron, and the whole combo was under 2.1 metres tall and under 9.9 metres long. (These figures matter on the boat.)

2023 was my year. Entry accepted, boat booked, campsite paid for, dried food laid in, all cooking utensils aboard ...

Graeme Soden (builder of the Marmot and Meerkat) agreed to come along as (his description) 'Pit Bitch', and we set off for Mount Panorama. We overnighted in Gundagai, which gave us an easy run into Bathurst next day. Our campsite was cunningly close to the 'amenities block', which is large and comprehensive, with a multitude of showers and toilets.

Scrutineering and documentation were fine. One little hitch was that I couldn't get my electronic MA licence to come up on my phone. The Event Director just said, 'I already know that everybody here has a licence. You're OK.' Nice. Also I had to get rid of most of the padding on my roll cage, in case it was a fire hazard!

We had six sessions, the first being familiarisation, the second practice, and the remaining four competitive.

When we went out for familiar-

isation it was lashing down with rain – the first time I had driven there in the wet. As I crossed the line after the first (no overtaking) lap, a modern Commodore pulled out from behind me and roared off towards Murray's Corner. He left me for dead up Mountain Straight, but when we got to the technical stuff after Griffins Bend I think he may have scared himself. I caught him at the Cutting, where he had a big moment, and overtook him through Sulman Park. I did not see him again.



The first time I went down Conrod Straight at full noise I got a bit of a scare: once I was over 175 km/h, the steering wheel started vibrating. I assumed that a wheel weight had fallen off.

On the second quick lap I kept the brakes on a bit long going into the Dipper, and got into an enormous tank-slapper between two concrete walls – neither of which I hit. The lap after that, I spun it coming out of Forrest's Elbow – again without hitting the wall. Exciting times. It was remarkably slippery but at least I was now all too familiar with the grip. (David Bushby had a scare in his BMW as well.)

Happily, the rain stopped, with only the odd shower for most of my runs.

One thing I did notice was that the car seemed much less stable than it had been last time. In 2018 I had kept my foot flat to the floor from the Cutting until a quick lift before McPhillamy Park. I now found that when I tried to do the same thing, the car oversteered – not sliding, just lurching at the rear and trying to turn in further – at 150 km/h. We diagnosed that the rear shocks needed more rebound damping,

and took them up from 9 to 14 clicks. This made it slightly less frightening over the top, but it was still edgy. Especially when being overtaken – sometimes on both sides at once.

It took a while for the penny to drop, but eventually I realised that it wasn't all about suspension. The car was just faster: arriving at corners faster and accelerating harder through and out of them.

This translated into a 6-second reduction in lap time, with a best of 3:21 (my first time under the max of 3:22!). Other statistics of note – to us at least – were a top speed of 186 km/h down Conrod Straight – shaking wheel and all – and a peak rev figure of 7700 rpm. This last was presumably in 2nd or 3rd gear, and the gearing seemed to be spot-on, thanks to Noel Clark's rebuild of the VW gearbox with a lower third gear. We were reaching 6500 in top at the Kink, and if we had been on the longer original straight I'm sure that 7000 rpm (205 km/h) would have been achievable. Only Lake Gairdner will tell if that is correct ...

So I had achieved a couple of my ambitions: going faster down the straight and cutting my lap

time. One ambition remained, however. I still had not gone through the Kink flat out. On my first lap in the next session, I took a deep breath, steered out into the bus stop and kept it nailed all the way through. This resulted in an off-road excursion when I couldn't get it stopped for the Chase left-hander; and after doing it once more I decided it was not the fastest way round; it put me in the wrong part of the track for braking for the Chase, whereas with a quick lift on the way in I could keep it flat and still get slowed enough.

In my fifth session I had a bad feeling going along Pit Straight, and on the way up Mountain Straight the car lost power. I quickly killed the engine, put the clutch in and parked just before the 200-m braking mark for Griffin's Corner. Certainly out of the way and just about invisible to other competitors, who were all going past at full noise. Terrifying.

Back in the pits we diagnosed a partial seizure, caused by a water pipe that (we later heard) had popped off on the way down Conrod. The gauges and lights don't operate when there is absolutely no water! Lucky it didn't seize in the Kink ...

Graeme – who was a real help to me in the pits, aided on Sunday by my Targa NZ team-mates Ross and John, who had driven up for the day – remarked that he was truly startled by the number of other competitors who stopped by to look at the car.

I don't need to go again, but I am happy to have driven my car at Bathurst twice in anger.





I finished the previous instalment of the ill-fated Alfasud engine change with John and me at rock bottom. The engine we had built had seized before firing up and the time we had set aside for completing the job was fast running out.

Our first move to try to diagnose and resolve the seized engine was to make sure we hadn't over-tightened the mains or the big ends. So with the car jacked up it was sump off to loosen and then re-torque the bolts. Sounds simple enough but of course there was a complicating factor. We were using a modified sump which can't come off with the front cross-member and exhaust in place, so all that had to be taken off – with the exhaust fighting hard all the way. We were also angry, tired and feeling time pressure, which never makes any job go better. Everything we checked seemed fine but there was clearly a huge issue as the motor would not turn through a full revolution even with everything loosened off.

At this point we had to decide how to recover the situation and get the car back on the road by

the end of the holidays. We had two choices: i) pull the motor out, tear it down and rebuild it from scratch; ii) use a bottom end that Warwick Hughes had kindly given us. The first option was preferred but we had to assume there would be damage to bearings and we had no replacements on hand and at least a two-week wait to get them. The second option was pretty attractive, except that the condition of the bottom end was unknown. It had been sold to Warwick as a 'strong motor', but it was untested. We decided to go with this second option.

Stress levels were high as we started assembling this motor. There was the time pressure I mentioned previously but also the underlying concern that the motor might not be good and all the effort we were putting into building and installing it would be wasted. Long story short, we got the motor built, connected to the gearbox and back in the car without anything too much going wrong. The only complicating factor was that the sump had been off this motor many years and the crankcase was pretty

dirty and needed a good clean. We wanted any muck to fall out of motor rather than fall into it, so had to clean it while it was hanging in the car. Not a difficult job but somewhat uncomfortable doing it on your back with lots of dirt falling on your face – and stressful making sure there was no muck left in the crankcase.

Before I get to the end of this episode, I have to take a little detour. In a previous article I mentioned an 'impossible' brake problem with a different Alfasud project we had on the go, i.e. the rear brakes which had been fine locked on mysteriously when the brake circuit was totally open. Well, we had another one. This time the accelerator cable – which worked perfectly when we took the motor out – was now binding. How could this happen? It had been hanging in the engine bay, had not been exposed to weather etc. In normal circumstances this would be an irritation, but with emotions already running high it was infuriating.

Back to the main story. The moment of truth arrived and at

about 7pm the day before we were due to fly out of the state we turned the motor over. We expected the worst but the results were great. The motor fired and ran smoothly. A huge sense of relief came over us. Finally the ordeal was over.

... or so we thought.

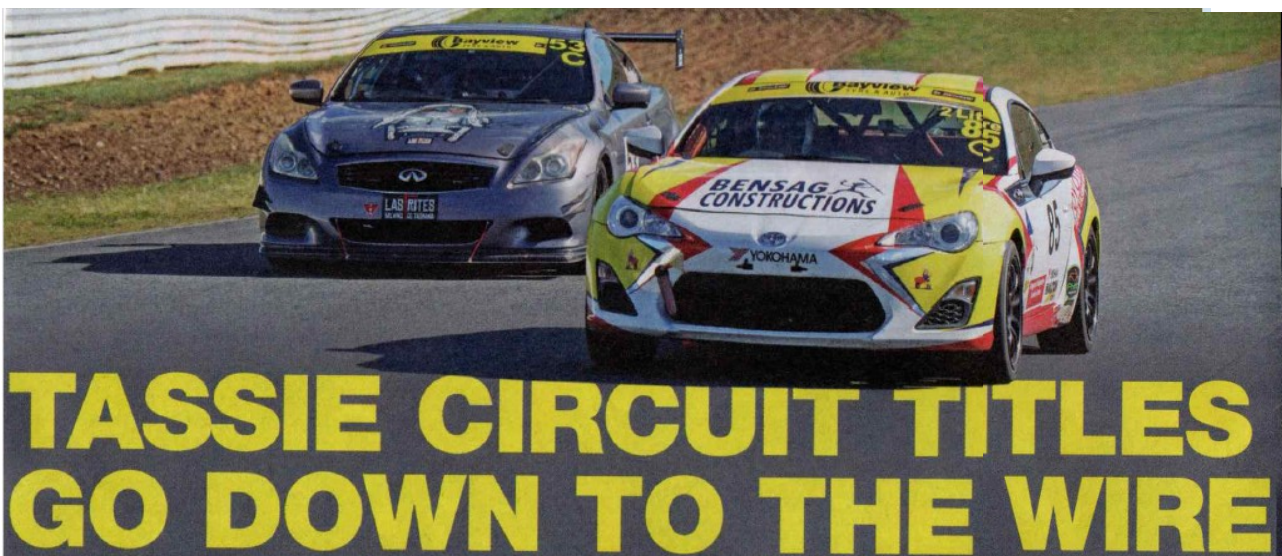
You might recall from an earlier article in this series that the gearbox had been playing up a bit (jumping out of second) before the engine let go. We had the gearbox inspected and there was nothing obviously wrong so we put it back in with fresh oil and some oil treatment and hoped for the best. We knew this was a risk but the 1.2 gearbox has really short gearing and the spare gearbox we had was much

less desirable so the risk was worth taking. Unfortunately a short run in the car revealed the problem persisted. Damn!

Never mind. We had a car that was running and the second gear problem wasn't a big deal on the track. We did the final preparation and the car was ready for the events we wanted to do in March. It turned out the bottom end was a good one and the motor felt strong at the CMI Super-

sprint and TCR round 1. Finally we could relax and enjoy the car again.

Then it all fell in a heap. The rock bottom where we thought we were at the start of this article turned out to be a platform that had been stopping us falling to the lowest point in this whole endeavour. But that is a story for a later edition!



Darryl Bennett and Mary White were featured in a recent Auto Action article after achieving the success they've been chasing all season in the Tasmanian Circuit Racing Championships.

Darryl won the State Sports GTC title from Shawn Sheather, who went into the last round at Baskerville with a 6-point lead. Darryl put his car on pole every time and won every race, with Sheather coming second each time and watching his lead being whittled away.

Darryl also won the Improved Production under-2-litre championship, with Mary White coming third. Well done both.

For sale—Fiat 128 3P

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