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Full yearly Membership fees:

1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018
Social \$45
Motorsport/Competition \$65
Family \$90
(2 adults + kids under 18 - Family rate allows up to two competition members.)
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 held at 6.30 pm on the last Tuesday of September 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

Disclaimer

While every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the information, advice and responses in this newsletter, neither Club Motori Italia Inc nor its officers or members accept liability for any loss or damage arising.

CMI Life members:

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David Mitchell
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Welcome to 2020 and what we hope will be another good year for the club.

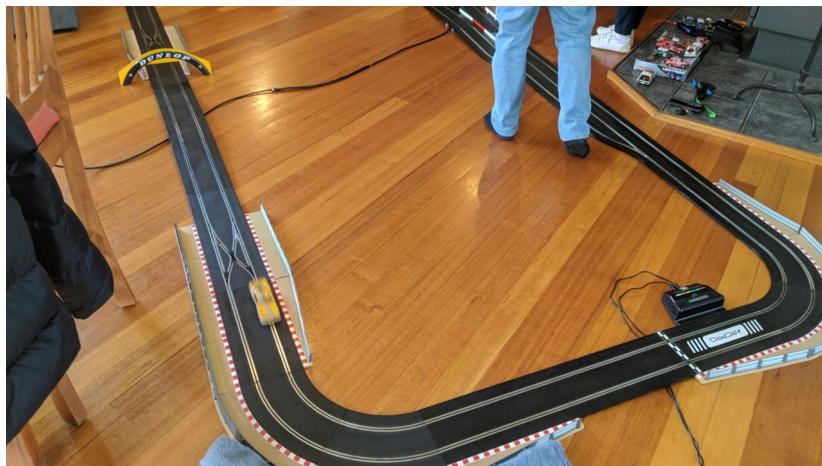
This is a more slender issue than usual, partly because not a lot happens at this time of year and partly because CMI members are not the best correspondents. You may notice that just about everything in here has been written either by me or Bill Fream, who is my best contributor and a member of the Fiat Car Club of Victoria. Bill is a first-class engineer, and former proprietor of Australian Precision Engineering. Anything he has to say about engines is worth hearing, and there is more in the next issue.

My son John and I took part before Christmas in the Pontville

Classic, a two-hour race for slot cars on a track modelled on Bathurst and with only period cars on it.

Originally we were going to use my Fiat-Abarth slot car, but it developed a transmission gremlin so we borrowed a Torana and finished second—by 8 seconds—to an indecently quick Ford Falcon.

If you haven't raced with Scalextric recently, it's somewhat different to what it used to be: Six cars on a two-lane track at a time, lane changing, computerised handicapping, pit stops and lap timing. And the cars go like stink. The fastest lap was about 8 seconds, and it was a huge track.



Fiat 124 Sport For Sale

Monty Reading has a Fiat 124 Sport unfinished project for sale. The main bits:

1. 124 CC shell with professionally fitted roll cage
2. 124 CC spare chassis (for parts only)
3. 124 BC good restoration prospect

It includes some of the highly desirable performance parts.

Monty is open to offers and can be contacted on 0419 112 838.

Fiat 128 Wanted

If you have one or know of one for sale, please contact Cristian Parolin <cristian.parolin@outlook.com>

Coming events

CMI breakfast barbecue—Springs, Mt Wellington, 10 am 12 Jan—Call Graham Mitchell 0418 173 102 to book

Parliament House Show 28 March 8 am–3.00 pm

For Italian cars and those displayed on first Sundays in 2019

Contact Mike Clark on 0409181667

Poatina Mt Race Sunday 1 March 2020—Auto Corsa Facebook page or call Stuart Benson (0412868979)



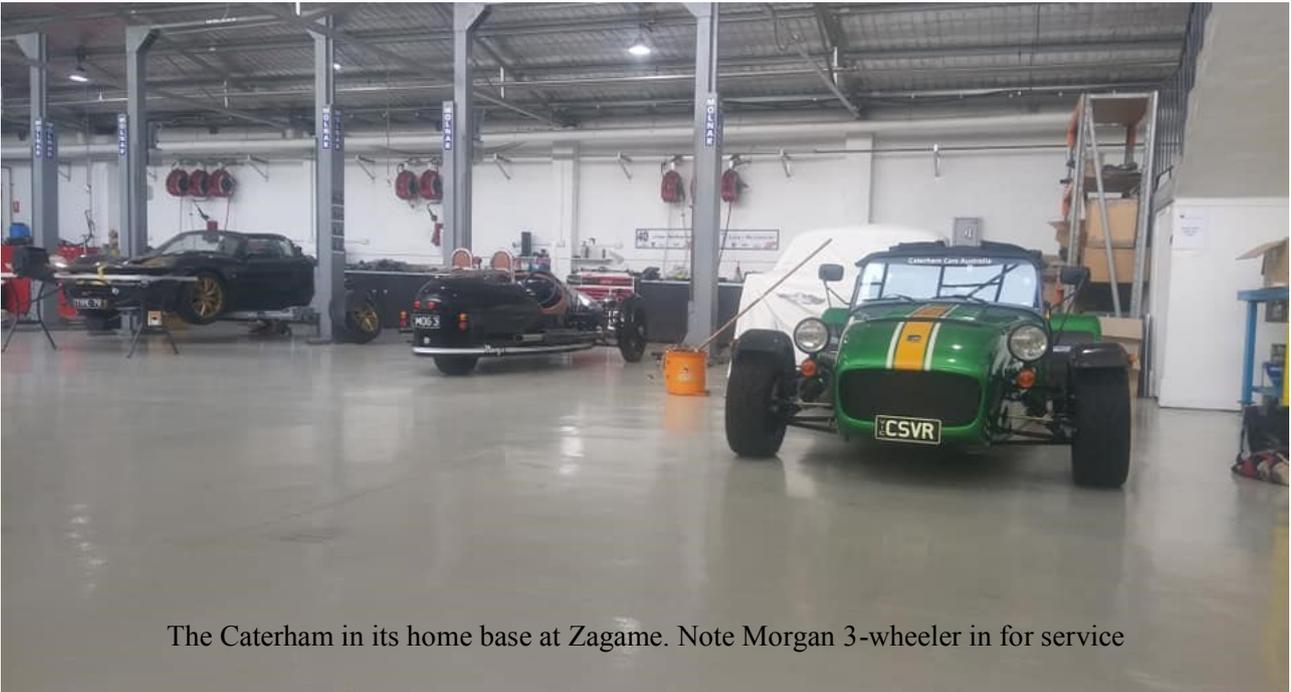
Fiat Samantha by Vignale

Good morning,
I write from Italy. I am a car collector and lucky owner of a Fiat 125 coupé Samantha by Vignale. I am doing researches on this not common model of car and from my searches it results that there should be three in Australia. I am friend of one of the owners but I'm trying to get in touch with the owners of the other two cars. I am trying to set a register for this car and I've already created a little website, there should be 100 made and I am counting how many are still on the road.
I would be really glad to you if you can help me to find these people. I can also send you pictures of the cars that I know that are in Australia if it could be useful.

Please if you know them just give them my mail contact: vecchiosteyr@hotmail.it
I thank you so much for the help I hope you can give me,
best regards,
Fabrizio Civalleri - Cuneo - Italy.

Not to be confused with Fiat Eveline—also by Vignale. (Graham Mitchell has one.)





The Caterham in its home base at Zagame. Note Morgan 3-wheeler in for service

In November I went over to Victoria to navigate in the Three Peaks Rally with Chris Van Wyk in his Caterham Seven 485. The rally took place between Benalla and Bright, with excursions in the direction of Wilby and Albury Wodonga.

A very quirky rally indeed, it was based on maps from the 1960s, with about a dozen ‘via points’ marked on the map for each day, and a description of each in the road book. For example, it might show, and describe, a T junction—but that T junction would no longer be there. What would be there might be a vague track through the trees, at the end of which was a 200-mm square board with a couple of cryptic letters on it. Points were acquired for finding these boards. (There were also ‘dummy boards’, for the gullible, worth less points, and ‘Z boards’, meaning ‘Go no further’.

We had one hour to work on these maps before the start of each day.

A typical day would start with a navigation leg leading to a motor sport venue of some kind, where speed trials happened. (Winton raceway was one, Wilby another, and the Logic Centre at Barnawartha North was the last.) Another navigation leg would take us home.

Chris did very well on the speed stuff, having 240 bhp and a car that weighed 600 Kg (which he could drive); ‘we’ did not do so well on the navigations—a colour-blind novice navigator with macular degeneration is a handicap that is hard to overcome. But we did exactly what we set out to do: have fun.



Under the bonnet...

Regular correspondent Bill Freame, member of FCCV, is a man with an interesting past...

Way back in time I was employed by the Repco organisation, initially in a product test facility. Another department was wholly involved with Product Development – pre-production work on pistons, piston pins, compression and oil rings and valve seat inserts. That department employed some engineers and machinists, about seven men in total. Eventually, during a reshuffle and reorganisation of many parts of Repco, I became the Product Development Department, responsible for making pre-production car company pistons, as well as continuing to support the existing test facility. BMC/Leyland was already dead but Ford, GMH, Nissan and Toyota were still manufacturing vehicles here.

Repco Brabham had disbanded into Repco Engine Development Company (Formula 5000 and L-34 engines), then they disbanded further, transferring some staff and equipment across to where I was working. The same thing happened with Repco Research, with three staff transferring across. These handful of survivors were very smart people and I certainly learnt lots from them. Richard Bendell and Richard Aubert, who were involved with developing fuel injection at Repco Research, took the ‘golden handshake’ and set up in business for themselves: the first was MoTeC and the second was Autronic. You have possibly heard of them?

Around the time when Group C was replaced by Group A in Touring Car racing, I was already very busy manufacturing



sample batches of car company pistons. Additionally, I was also machining Repco brand (sample) replacement pistons for truck engines—International and Mercedes Benz to name just two. It was a busy time and there were only three of us to try to keep up with the demands coming from all directions. To further complicate things, Repco had a major relationship forming with the massive Mahle company, which enabled the ‘Repco Special Pistons’ department, now three machinists plus an engineer, to purchase Mahle forged piston blanks, importing them from Germany. Oh, to be busy!

At this time, Peter Brock was still the ‘Golden Haired Boy’ in the eyes of GMH. The Brock organisation had bought the HDT remnants, and Brock was also building special ‘hi-performance’ road Commodores, with GMH blessing. The Brock race cars had had massive support from a cigarette company, and then Mobil came onboard with huge amounts of money, and the cars were very competitive, most times.

GMH was obviously a huge customer of Repco, with its automotive products knowledge and capabilities. So, if there were problems to be solved, then of course Repco (head office) would bend over backwards to assist and sort it out (or order us further down the line to fix it).

The Brock Commodore race engines were having about 3mm machined off the heads to raise the compression ratio and using Mobil Avgas to limit detonation. This worked reasonably well for the sprint races; however, this reduction in deck stiffness meant that they would blow a head gasket in less than 500km, well below the safe margin for Sandown and Bathurst.

Brock race engineer, Neil Lowe (later at DJR and the world’s quickest Sierras) approached ‘Repco Special Pistons’ to discuss a possible solution - and it was needed quickly! Our head of department, Nigel Tait, and our engineer, Robert Chadwick, took me with them to the race team headquarters in North Melbourne. There we observed

the many problems they were having trying to get the 304ci engine mechanicals to survive under the Group A limitations. Mobil were trying to stop the pushrods wearing through the rockers and the single row timing chain from breaking. The production line engines were all fitted with double row sprockets; however the cost accountants decreed that the V8 engines only needed to use a single row chain, it being a far cheaper chain! Spare parts from your GMH dealer only had double row chains, a replacement at your cost, not GMH's. The race Commodores were required to use the single row chain until it was no longer fitted on the production line, about the time that Hell freezes over with cost accountants involved!

My initial suggestion for raising the compression ratio was to counterbore the heads by several mm and use a flat top piston with a longer con-rod or taller compression height. That had worked very well on the Toyota Corolla aluminium cylinder heads used in 1300cc racing classes, Clubman and Formula 3. There the counterbore was a generous radius and the crown was raised by 4mm with a similar matching radius. These Toyota engines were very fragile, with the pistons passing through the gasket by 4mm at TDC. To get them out to 1300cc, the 75mm bores were enlarged to 79mm, requiring a special big bore head gasket, which was available.

Doing that to the 304 heads would keep the required deck stiffness and would be a very quick and cheap fix. The alter-

native solution was to manufacture some special pistons with the Holden F5000 crown shape of a combustion shaped lump, with fly-cut valve pockets, as developed for the REDC designed F5000 pistons. This was a far more expensive solution with a much longer delivery time.

We returned from North Melbourne with a verbal order for 24 piston assemblies to be supplied ASAP, all with the F5000 crown shape. Lots of overtime later, our engineer delivered the pistons to be assembled into three race engines, with one as the spare for either car. They were all run on their in-house dynamometer, with the best power engine going into Brock's car, John Harvey getting the next best, plus a spare. All looked like it would be good for the endurance races...

Then along came the polarizer debacle and the rest is history! Brock was no longer the anointed one and many people were desperately trying to distance themselves from his team. GMH were furious and savagely severed all dealings with him, except via court orders and legal threats.

One of my bosses used to say, 'In confusion there is profit'! Desperate to salvage whatever he could out of this mess, Brock had some 'fire sales', clearing much of what he owned to

raise capital. Allan Moffat seized this golden opportunity and bought one of the Commodores. Moffat and John Harvey ended up competing in it, with absolutely minimal spares and pit crew, in the World Touring Car Championship, in Europe.

At Monza they were seventh past the chequered flag, behind six BMWs. In post-race scrutineering, however, the first six cars were found to be underweight and so failed. The Aussie-built Commodore was legal and thus declared the winner. Several weeks later our Repco Special Pistons Department were advised that it was our pistons in the winning car. Smiles all around!

All this happened at a time in this country when we had a vibrant manufacturing car industry. Now we import over 1,000,000 passenger vehicles each year! At least, the cars that were raced were very similar to what we bought from the dealers' showrooms.

I feel very lucky to have been involved, in the right place, at the right time, in this country's motor racing industry. Also, I met a lot of very smart people along the way.



The Fiat 600 and Carlo Abarth



When the Fiat 600 came out in 1955 it attracted the attention of hundreds of thousands of Italian families, who loved its compactness, low cost, simple and robust construction and affordable price.

For very different reasons it also attracted Austrian tuning wizard Carlo Abarth. Abarth recognised immediately that the cheap little car was massively over-engineered for long life, and that its 633 cc engine could be persuaded to make a lot more than the 16-odd KW it produced as standard.

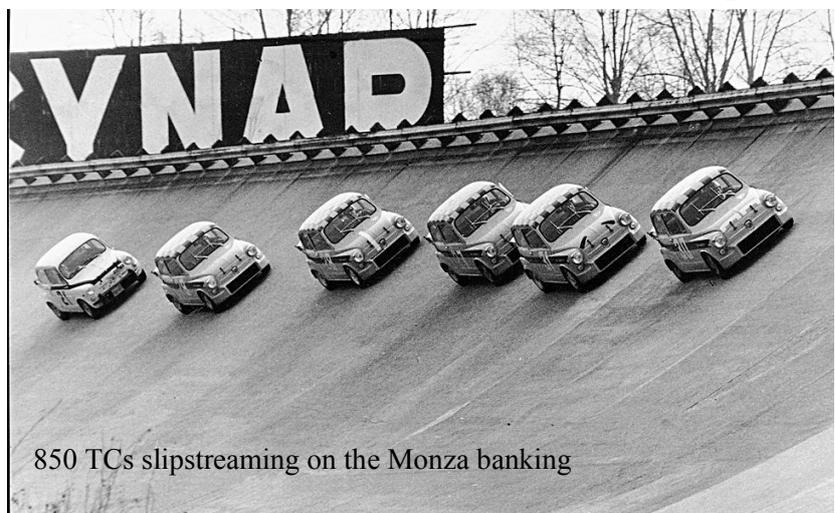
When he got his hands on one, he took it out to 767cc, with a hotter camshaft, a bigger (though still tiny) carburettor and a bespoke extractor exhaust. He festooned it with Abarth Scorpion badges, put a rev-counter in it and called it the Fiat Abarth 750 Derivazione. He had doubled the power.

The little 750 was very successful in competition, and soon the development continued. The 850 TC (Turismo Competizione) was born, and then the 1000 TC, with a 982 cc engine. The power increased each time, extra radiators were added and the handling and braking were forced to improve alongside, with a double

wishbone front end at last replacing the transverse leaf spring, adjustable coilover shocks, disc brakes, big wheels, fat tyres ...

Abarth did develop a double overhead camshaft head for the little engine, but it was confined to the tiny coupes that were also based on the 600 floorpan.

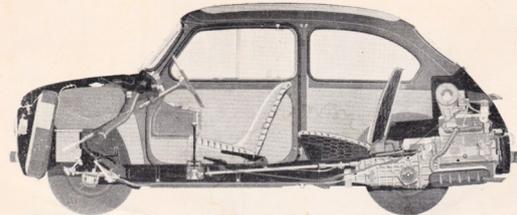
The ultimate racing development for the 600-based Abarth engine was the Radiale head – still overhead valve, but with hemispherical combustion chambers, equal-length inlet tracts, twin Weber 40DCOE's and a pushrod/rocker system that cunningly replicated the action of an overhead camshaft. Like the twin-cam, it was outlawed by the SCCA in America



850 TCs slipstreaming on the Monza banking

**Fascinating FIAT "600"
Was Show's Big Attraction**

▶ Rear Engine
▶ 45 m.p.g.
▶ Family Baby



for being too fast. (Hello?) But, confined to using the 'normal' head, Al Cosentino still-managed over 50 victories in about as many races...

The final version of the 600-based Abarth was the Group 5 1000 TCR (R for Radiale). This brutal object had huge wheel flares front and rear, special suspension, four-wheel discs and a power output of over 80 kw, which gave it a top speed of over 200 km/h.

An interesting side-note to the Abarth story is that Fiat gradually adopted many of Abarth's modifications: the Fiat 600D was a 767 cc version, and when the new Fiat 850 and 850 Sport came out they enjoyed a big-valve 843cc engine with a twin-choke carburettor. The pushrod



Werner Fessler's 850 TC at Abarth Cenenary, Vienna



Klaus Kleber's 1000TC



Leo Aumuller's 1000TC Radiale



70 hp 127 Sport, Vienna



Author's 600/850TC replica competing in Italy

engine would continue in 903 cc form to power the Fiat 127 and early Panda.

(Naturally, Abarth modified each of these modifications! The 850 therefore spawned a line of OTs (Omologato Turismo), including one with a Radiale head – the OTR. There was also an OT 1300/124, using a hot 1300 124 pushrod engine, and finally the fearsome Abarth-engined OT 1600.

I am often asked why the 600-based competition cars 'drive about with the boot open.'

The answer is that while Abarth engineers were testing new components on the Autostrada, the boot was gradually propped further open to try to keep the engine cool—and after one run (with the boot now horizontal) the test driver commented that the car was not only running cooler, but was 8km/h faster than it had been earlier. They had accidentally found an aerodynamic advantage, and all racing '600s from then on 'drove about with the boot open'!

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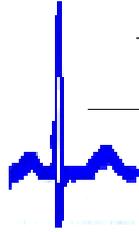
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