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WP

Hi All,

Yes I know it's been far too long since I last dropped you good people a note but being honest I've been very busy with my business interests which occasionally interfere with my running of the pre 78 Classic Saloons so apologies for that. Anyway, what did you think of that for a summer season, I thought it was a boomer so to quickly recap.



On Saturday 3rd September we excitedly attended the Brooklands meeting at Levels Raceway which was to be one of three of our Classic Motor Racing Club 'home' meetings. We had 19 entrants with good weather and it was a great start to our best season yet with young Monty Mchaffie making a very welcome debut in his 1974 Ford Capri 3.0 V6 GXL. It was so so good to get back into the race seat.



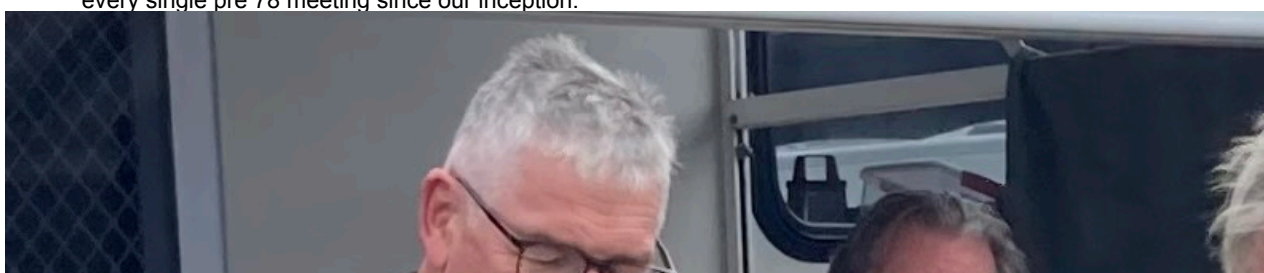




Six weeks later we rolled into Christchurch for the Wigram Revival at Ruapuna on Friday 28th October. Testing was held on the Friday with qualifying and racing on the Saturday and Sunday. We had 20 entrants with Garry Cliff being a new welcome addition in his 1977 Datsun 160J, Tony Pearson was a guest in his 1977 Ford Escort RP2000 and we welcomed Paul Peryman back in his 1977 Alfa Romeo Giulietta. As always we had a great weekend racing with an excellent discussion at the Saturday afternoon debriefing about the direction that we are going as a class and how I need to be quite a bit stricter with our criteria for acceptance.



At the start of December we were 560 kilometres further south at Teretonga. We had 15 entrants which is about the minimum that we can turn up with and still be considered a stand alone class at race meetings. We were delighted that Monty and his family made the road trip down from Christchurch and he once again absolutely shined on the track, others making welcome returns were Tony Forde in his 1974 Ford Capri II 3.0 V6 GT, Rod Sinclair in his 1965 Alfa Romeo Guilia and Alistair Campbell debuting his newly acquired 1972 Fiat 128R. At the Saturday debrief is where Mark McGuinness from Wellington with his 1972 Alfa Romeo GTV won the 2022 pre 78 Driver of the Year award which was richly deserved by a chap who lives in Wellington but has travelled south for every single pre 78 meeting since our inception.







Next meeting for the pre 78's was back at Levels for the South Canterbury Hydraulics meeting at Levels starting on Friday 10th February with testing and qualifying. We had a superb field of 26 with Matt McLeary in his 1974 Triumph 2.5 PI along with Crew Chief Laura making a welcome return as well as David Wood with his maroon 1976 Triumph 2.5 PI. Tony Adams debuted his 1964 Ford Anglia 1500 GT but sadly was involved in a suspension damage incident when Noel Parrish in his V6 Capri made an unfortunate mistake whilst alongside him. The Saturday night prizegiving was at the Phar Lap Raceway where the pre 78 guys received their 2023 Trophies. The Sunday racing was the usual exuberant fun with close racing and was capped off at the end of the day when we had a flying farewell race with 4 of the HVRA guys joining us and a rather random Ford GT40 where we got pretty well smoked.



Following weekend we rolled up onto the grid at Teretonga for the Star Insure Classic Speedfest with 18 entrants including Kynan Yu from Cromwell in his 1971 Alfa Romeo GTV and Bren Findlay in his 1971 Datsun 1200 Coupe both making welcome returns to the 78's. Steve and Barb Pauling made the 2,000 kilometre round trip from Nelson with their 1974 Ford Escort RS2000 and were rewarded with excellent results once Steve had removed and repaired the gearbox twice.

Local Teretonga aficionados Todd Read 1969 Ford Escort 1600GT and Todd Blackmun 1976 Datsun 120Y were back in attendance with Todd taking the much coveted Brian Crosbie Memorial Trophy in squally conditions on the Sunday afternoon.







Five weeks later we cruised back into Invercargill for the much hyped George Begg Festival and we were not disappointed in any way shape or form, it was incredible. Right from when we rolled into the pits and saw the marques laid out the pre 78's with our own individual names and numbers above our garage areas we were impressed. The displays were fantastic and there were exotic cars and race cars everywhere, the food was scrumptious and I was overwhelmed by the fact that the majority of attendees adopted the Goodwood tradition of dressing in age appropriate for the year of your race car.







Unfortunately we only had 16 entrants and after a long season we started to have mechanical issues so our numbers continued to fall so on the Saturday night I made the decision to invite the HVRA guys to join us in our Sunday afternoon handicap race and they reciprocated by asking us to join in their handicap race. Thankfully the two groups then made a semi respectable field numbers wise so that the early saloon racing finally lived up to the expectation that the spectators had of us so all in all it was great and we look forward to returning in strength in 2025.



On the 13th May the pre 78's reassembled for their final race meeting of the summer season at Levels for the Autumn Fling meeting run by the Classic Motor Racing Club. Our numbers had climbed back up to 18 with Alan Radburn returning with the engine rebuilt in his 1971 Mini Cooper S, not only that he'd had the little brick on a rolling road dyno which turned it into a green and white rocketship. Money well spent according to Allan. I managed to accidentally Chernobyl the engine on the Viva when it spat its water out and I didn't notice quick enough so that was a bit of a downer but I cheered up no end at the end of the day when Laura on behalf of the rest of the pre 78 group gave me a stunning presentation pack with embossed glassware and labelling which I was quite gobsmacked with, so thank you.







It was another great season. We had three minor panel damage incidents as we collectively did over 3,000 laps of some of the closest and most exciting racing seen in this country for many many years. We had 46 different competitors at our 7 different events and we had superb fun but best of all we thoroughly enjoyed each other's company and wholeheartedly welcomed new competitors to the class. Personally I'm very proud of what we've