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NEWSLETTER – FEB-March 2021.

The views expressed within this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Classic Motor Racing Club of NZ Inc or its elected representatives.

Please note: Verbal enquiries may be made to any committee member but all written communications including all acceptance information must be sent to the Secretary so that the relevant Committee Members may be sent a copy and be fully informed.

COMING EVENTS:

Date.	Event	Venue
8 May 2021	Autumn Fling.	Levels Raceway - Timaru

Herewith the SCH race reports along with Wayne's account of comings and goings in the new Pre '78 race class. The Old Timer reminds us that club sport is alive and well in Cromwell, along with Mike Hawthorn's account of the 1953 French Grand Prix.

SOUTH CANTERBURY HYDRAULICS MEETING REPORT.

A normal meeting report would record who done what, and when. But normalcy got pushed aside for this one. The entry list for this years meeting included a bunch of old friends, some not seen for many years, some who arrive year on year and, as it turned out, a whole bunch of new ones as well. I got to do some serious socialising. So this report is not so much about the meeting, it is about meetings at the meeting and the stories that were told.

New Friends:

The first of these came from Bruce and Barbara Goodwin, the owners of car 302. (Or rather Bruce is the owner of this particular car - Barbara's Camaro had been left in the garage at home). Home being 5km or so down a side road from Ohingaiti. These days a location rather than settlement. Just to be sure I looked it up (it seemed appropriate) in a back issue of the 1996 AA Classic New Zealand Road Map. In those days the town was still an S bend. a pub and a railway crossing. Alas no more. These days State Highway One no longer crosses the main trunk line, not at Ohingaiti, not at Hunterville, not anywhere. That would seem to take a lot fun out of the drive.

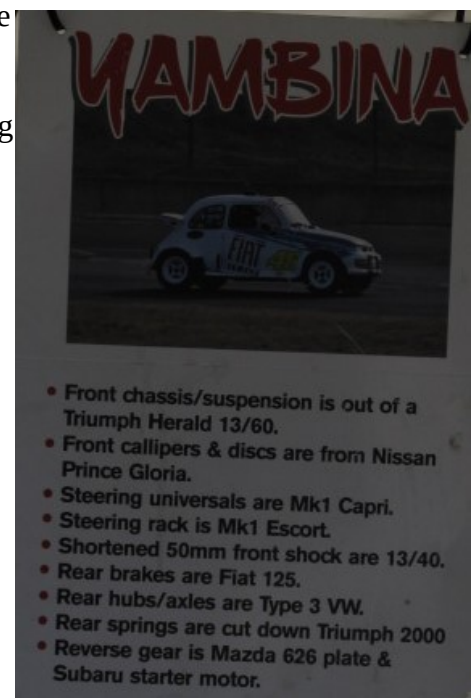


A while back I was ridding shotgun down this very road in a tow car carrying a Formula Ford on a trip from Baypark to Levin. We were getting along nicely when a flashing red light showed up in the rear vision mirror. Not aimed at us as it turned out, but at the Porsche 911 that had blown our doors off just a few seconds earlier. That tale being enough to establish credibility we got down to talking about Bruce's car. A V8 engined Mark 3 Zephyr. A car just crying out to be photographed. The race number sort of giving the game away.

This is not the only Zephyr owned by the Goodwins. They have a collection of them. Even the tow car for meetings closer to home is a Zephyr. And that will hold just as true when it is Barbara's Camaro on the trailer. Next year Barbara gets to bring her car down south.

A little further along the paddock was Lee Crew's Yamaha engined Bambina. Probably the smallest car at the meeting. A peek under the bonnet (can I say that? does a rear engined car have a bonnet?) revealed the wisdom of not poking around in there with hands or fingers. There are chains and linkages all over the place.

The Crew crew helpfully put up a board with all the build details, so I will let the board tell this story. While you read it give thanks to Allcomers and OSCA for having had rules free enough to produce a wee gem like this. The Zephyr and the Bambina were never far apart on the track.



On the other end of the size scale was Jason Galbraith's Plymouth Belvedere. Big and blue. I half expected passing 'planes to mistake it for an Aircraft

Carrier. So far it has done 25 years of service as a pre 65 racer, but these days only comes out for two or three meetings each year. This time it was doing double duty, running, with different drivers, in both the Pre 65 and Mainland Muscle classes.



Having taken over my Dad's '54 Dodge Coronet Hemi in the '60s I had to ask if the brakes on this larger version of it had brakes any better than the old Coronet. Not really was the reply, but awesome fun just the same.

While mourning the futility of carden shaft handbrakes Jason made an interesting point. A while back he was looking at a '61 Studebaker with the thought of building it into a racer, but caught some grief about the sacrilege of doing that to a rare old car.

The person giving the grief had no intention of buying the car, and should a buyer not be found then the Stude would end up in a wreckers yard. In that case no-one would get to see the car at all. His point was a good one. In this sense a racer is also a conservator of automotive heritage.

Rescuing an old car was just what Pete Fitzgibbon had done with his pre 65 Austin A40. An unusual car for the class. It was obviously carrying a big engine. This turned out to be an 1800 BMC "B" series donkey taken out to just under two litres. Noting my raised eyebrows Pete ran me through the pre 65 engine rules. The engine must come from the original manufacturer of the car, be of the same configuration as the original engine, have been available pre 1965 and fit within the original engine bay. So replacing an "A" series A40 engine with a hot "B" series engine is quite OK.



My puzzled frown was put away. The car had had all sorts of engines over its long career. Pat Pascoe built it for beach racing back the 60's with its original engine. An attempt to squeeze in a Zephyr motor was abandoned, but a Lotus twin cam did the trick for early OSCA racing (complete with a big rear wing). Pete found the car in a shed in Dunedin, sent photographs of it to Pat to confirm that it was the car he thought it was, bunged a 1500 Ford engine in and went classic racing. The "B" series engine completes the set.

On a similar theme a friend of mine long ago ran a Vauxhall Viva as a rally car. If asked why the Viva instead one of those nice Ford Escorts he would say that he ran the Viva because it was different. Bruce Farley would pretty much fit this mould. A Viva GT is refreshingly different, and with a bit of prompting from Wayne Perkins, our new pre '78 classic class was interesting enough to draw Bruce to the meeting. He has been rallying for years, but this was his first ever tarmac race meeting. He was having a ball learning the difference between seal and dirt. He admitted to owning a few sheds full of old English cars, and that he had seen the Viva about 10 years ago while sniffing

out an FD Victa to add to the collection. Even so it took him all of those 10 years to get around to buying the Viva.

He thought he might embarrass himself on the speed front but actually qualified the old girl third on the grid and enjoyed his first race immersed in a three car squabble with Graig Pidgeon's Avenger and Ken William's big Mercedes. You can only just see the Viva in the photo. Craig has



monopolised the foreground, but tucked in alongside is Bruce with a grin so big it had to be chiselled off before he could get out of the car. Will he be back? You Betcha!

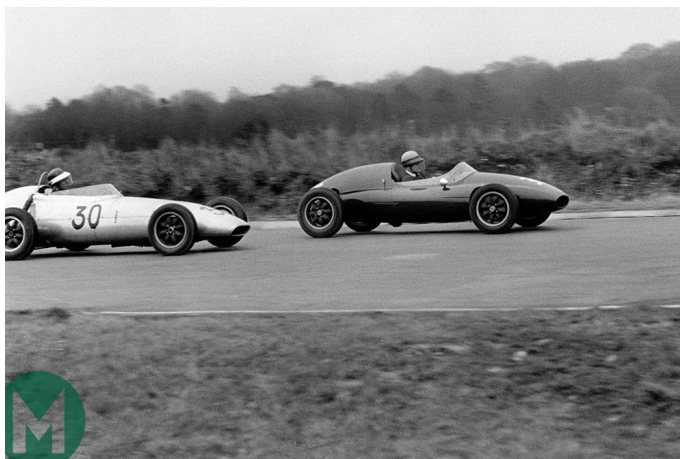
And Old Ones:

Then there is that bunch of old friends that I kept tripping over. First up Phil Foulkes was found behind the counter in the Secretaries office. An engine blow up at Ruapuna had left him with a munted Formula Junior engine and he had volunteered to help out on the admin side of things. All to the good as Ron Wilken tempted him away from paperwork on day 2, with an offer to share the drive of his Elden Formula Ford. A bit of paper shuffling saw PJ take the drive in with the FJ boys while Ron took it back again for the Formula Libra races. Thanks to you both.

A little further along in the FJ tent I came across Peter Benbrook and his Gemini Mk2 front engined FJ. Avid readers of Graham Vercoe's book Historic Racing Cars of New Zealand will note that Peter has owned quite a few of them at one time or another. This one is a recent import. When he asked the importer where it came from he replied "the wharf". Peter intends to keep it in its current BMC "A" series 950 cc form as this sidesteps the FJ weight penalty rules for bigger engines. Even so the car is still heavier than desired and he reckons that the car could shed 40kg or so and still be within the rules. He thinks he that he can find at least half of that without too much trouble and chuckled when I reminded him of my wife's advice from some time back. "If you want to get weight out of the car start with the driver".

The Gemini emerged at a pivot point in formula car design. Front engined architecture was on its way out and rear engine cars taking over.

Both the very first Gemini and the very first Lotus 18 appeared at the 1959 Brands Hatch Boxing day meeting, but neither ran particularly well. The Motorsport Magazine race report pointed to the front engined Elvas and Lolas as being the way forward, having scooped the first three places between them. This race photo shows Jim



Clark, in his first single seater drive, in one of the Geminis. He doesn't get a mention in the report, and the Lotus is described as "unstable". The world was about to change.

That change took a little longer for "clubmans" sports cars, and a big bunch of old boys were at the meeting still flying the front engine flag. With hellos to John Mines, Bill Roughan and Robert

Hulme the F2 Sports Old Boys were soon back in deep discussion on the intricacies of tying down live rear axles.

Bill was running a rather newer version, a clubmans retrospective special in the way of a Beattie. Beautifully built as always and more Lola Mk1 than U2 in appearance. If you want one for yourself get hold of Steven Beattie in Geraldine. Ten years back Bill did just that and back came two trailer loads of parts just crying out to be assembled.

Most of these cars ended up with 3SG Toyota power but Bill has fitted his out with a 2 litre Honda and just loves it. The Beattie looks great from all angles, but the rear view poses a puzzle, displaying the word "AFRICA" as a registration number. The F means what F always means. Enjoy yourself un-zipping the rest of the message.



Bill still has the Mogal U2 car that we did a whole bunch of suspension calculations for, nigh on twenty years ago, but these days he prefers the Beattie. That said he has yet to beat the Mogal lap times at Timaru. Maybe we should get the slide rule out again!

Robert had an interesting ride in the form of a ground effect sports car. A Gibson RME, rescued from a club racing formula in Northern England. This beast was Quick! A speed matched by the also ground effect LMP3 Juno of Richard Kelly. Along with Sam Smith in the forever quick local built Rhubarb 3 - another left over from the F2 Sports days.

Common sense got these three cars out of the Sports and GT field and into the Formula Libre one. A much better match that had them wheel to wheel both with each other and Geoff Harriman's Toyota TRS Formula car. Even so it took them three races to work out a way around the Toyota. Not helped by a wee coming together in one race that left a bit of hot air to cool off in the paddock. Apologies all round did the trick. Well done all.



SOUTH CANTERBURY HYDRAULICS SOUTHERN CLASSIC 2021 AWARDS

A.F. SOUTHGATE & SONS	Sports & Gt's	Sam Smith	Rhubarb 3
BANKS PENINSULAR VCC	Vintage & Historic	Russ Haines	Frangapelli
KELFORD ENGINEERING LTD.	Pre – 65 Racing	Piers Mingham	Ford Anglia
PAUL SMITH EARTHMOVING.		Classic GP1 Saloons	
		Layton Hammond	Ford Escort MK1
SCOTTS AUTO SALES		Formula Libre	

BRIAN JAMES & ELITE TRAILERS

Steve O'Donoghue Mirage M5
Continental Rennsport
Steve Howell BMW E30

SOUTH CANTERBURY HYDRAULICS

Historic & Classic Pre-78 Saloons
Ewan McPherson Ford Anglia 1500 GT.

MOBIL 1 MAINLAND MUSCLE CARS

Greg Cuttance Ford Falcon XE

SOUTH CANTERBURY HYDRAULICS

Formula Junior
Tony Olisoff Emeryson Elfin MK1

DAVID BROWN TROPHY

Brent Findlay Datsun 1200 Coupe

LES McGRAW TROPHY

David Hunter MGBV8

RON BROOKING TROPHY

Mark Hamilton Lola T340



CONGRATULATIONS TO YOU ALL, WELL RACED & DESERVED

Wayne's Pre 78 Report:

The **Historic and Classic Saloons pre 78** group have just completed the spring and summer segments of their race schedule and the **CMRC Executive** have unanimously endorsed and are absolutely delighted with the enthusiasm of the competitors and spectators to this new period correct saloon car class of the Club. With a monthly newsletter going out to the 60+ competitors and its own dedicated Facebook page with 450 members it is rapidly attracting both new and retired racers who are preparing and refurbishing their pre 78 production style saloons to race in the category. Currently 40% of the cars in the group are either new or have not been on a circuit for over a decade and this percentage is expected to dramatically increase this coming spring with many more cars arriving or returning.

Best of all is the camaraderie that is rapidly evolving in the group with the post event refreshment meetings and BBQ lunches for all members and their partners/crew becoming the new normal. As a result the H&CS pre 78 group has rapidly evolved into a fun fast but non aggressive form of racing where the competitors knowing and socialising with the other competitors are avoiding at all costs any sort of car to car contact or bad driving behaviour. Because there is no right of entry to the group it means we can weed out inappropriate cars or drivers who have less than good manners on the track. A lot of the group's success is because of our adoption right from the start of the **Motorsport NZ T&C and Schedule K** rules and usage of the **COD** system along with very valued assistance from the **Historic Commission**. We now have our dedicated grid at Historic meetings run by other Clubs and this is expected to increase markedly over the next year, further to that we are now being invited to compete in the North Islands premier Historic events and next summer we will have guests with complying cars joining us from the North Island, Australia and the UK. Personally I'd like to thank all of our wonderful competitors who have got us to where we are now.

Cheers Wayne Perkins.

The Old Timer's Cromwell Street Sprint Report – 28Feb 2021:

A full entry of 54 lined up for the annual timed sprint around the industrial area of Cromwell. On a very warm central Otago morning. Three timed runs for all on a demanding course lined with large round haybales, plus 4 chicanes and 2 hairpins.

Entries included Pete Templeton in his immaculate VK Commodore, Leigh Shaw's 105E Rotary powered Anglia, Minis, Starlets, Corollas, Celicas. BMWs, Porsche, NZ and Aussie V8 Supercars, EVOs, Subarus, Gordon Beeby's Datsun rally car and Bruce Brown's 120 SSS Datsun.

After the three runs were completed the top 10 lined up for the shoot out. The results of the shoot out were not disclosed until about 7pm at the Old Vic Hotel. A beautiful meal was put on the prize giving.

Glenn Frew had been the pacesetter in all three rounds, followed by Mark Higgins in a similar car. A split second behind Higgins was Josh Mitchell in his Subaru.



Glenn Frew had found some loose shingle and ended up losing valuable time for 2nd place. Mark Higgins was fast all day with a very creditable 3rd place. Josh Mitchell came back to the pits with a rear guard hanging off the Subaru along with a time 4 seconds faster than anyone – all day – to take the top prize for the 4th year in a row.

A fantastic event run by an enthusiastic club of amazing volunteers, helpers and marshals, with great support from local businesses for the fantastic range of prizes.

Classic Formula One:

HAWTHORN'S ACCOUNT OF THE FRENCH GRAND PRIX 1953.

(From Challenge Me the Race. William Kimber and Co 1958)

The usual Ferrari team, Ascari, Villoresi, Farina and I, faced Maseratis driven by Fangio, Gonzalez, Marimon, Bonetto and de Graffenried. The ranks were filled up by HWM, Connaught, Cooper-Bristol, Gordini and Osca.



Gonzalez, who had started off with his tank only half full, rushed off into the lead as pacemaker and in chasing him Ascari, Villoresi and I got involved in a private duel among ourselves.

At one point I passed Ascari and he shrugged his shoulders as if to say "Take it away; I can't go any faster!" Positions were changing several times a lap. I had the lead and then Villoresi came past, and sometimes we would be hurtling along three abreast at 160 m.p.h. down an ordinary French main road. It was a bit frightening to see the nose of one of the other cars come alongside, then drop back again as the driver decided he could not make it before the next

corner. The cars were evenly matched and we could only get past each other by slip-streaming. The trick was to tuck in close behind the other man, get a tow from his slip-stream, ease back the throttle as far as possible without losing position, and then suddenly tramp on the pedal and use the sudden surge of urge to nip out and pass him. Whereupon he would get into a position to return the compliment.

Shortly before the half way mark, Fangio and Farina caught up with us and then we really started mixing it. It was a situation in which the slightest misjudgement by one driver could have meant disaster for everybody, but even so, we usually managed a quick grin at each other when we passed – all except Farina, who sat scowling with concentration.

After 28 laps Gonzalez had to pull in for fuel and lost his lead to Fangio and I. We saw him just preparing for a re-start as we passed the pits. Fangio and I now drew ahead of the rest of the group and began a private scrap that would last without a second's respite for the remaining 32 laps of the race. At that time I did not dream that I had any chance of winning the race; I thought that Ascari, Farina or Villorosi were just letting me keep Fangio occupied and were watching for the moment to come up and take over nearer to the end of the race. At one time I got in front of Fangio and as we accelerated away from the Thillois corner he dropped back several hundred yards, as though he had missed a gear change.

I thought "good, now I can disappear!" but as I went round the long, fast right-hander under the bridge after the pits, I found Behra right in front in the Gordini. I had to slow down for a moment and as I went past I spotted Fangio right on my tail again; the old wheel to wheel struggle began once more. Officially we were limited to 7,000 r.p.m. with the Ferrari's, but lap after lap I was getting 7,600 on the straight and the engine stuck it without missing a beat.

We would go screaming down the straight side by side absolutely flat out, grinning at each other, with me crouching down in the cockpit trying to save every ounce of wind resistance. We were only inches apart and I could clearly see the rev counter in Fangio's cockpit. Then once, as we came into Thillois, he braked harder than I had expected and I shunted him lightly, putting a dent in his tail. That shook me for a moment, for I thought it would take some living down. "New boy shunts Fangio" they would say. But he showed no resentment at all; he just kept on fighting every inch of the way, according to the rules, in the way that has earned him the admiration and respect of everyone in motor racing.



I did have on anxious moment when he pulled across fairly sharply just as I was trying to come past on the right but I was quite sure it was unintentional. Another time we were running abreast when we came up behind a much slower car and I pulled over, clipping the grass so we could both pass him in line abreast. At this time I had no idea what was going on behind us, for the pits had ceased hanging out signals. I heard afterwards that the mechanics were jumping around gibbering with excitement and even Ugolini seemed ready to throw his pencil away.

About 10 laps from the end, I suddenly thought "Good heavens, I could win this race!" and I began to think about ways of crossing the finishing line first. If I came out of Thillois first, with Fangio in my slipstream he could always find the extra spurt to beat me over the line. If I tailed him round the corner and stayed in his slipstream, I could probably spurt past him at the critical moment; but he

was too old a hand to be caught by a simple trick like that. The only hope was to stake everything on getting into Thillois first and pulling out with a sufficient lead to keep him out of my slipstream.

Then I had a totally unexpected piece of luck. As we swung into the last lap, it suddenly dawned on me that Fangio had not changed down into first gear for the Thillois turn. Perhaps he was having trouble with the gearbox and could not get the gear in. Wheel to wheel we flashed around for the last time and I knew that everything was going to depend on perfect timing of that last change into first gear on the last corner. We were only inches apart as we braked, changed down and down again. Then I slipped into first, cut around the apex as close as possible, straightened up the wheels and simultaneously slammed the throttle wide open. The engine screamed up to peak revs, but the tyres gripped; I gained the precious yards I needed and was leading by a second when the flag came down.



During the last lap I had realised, almost subconsciously, that we were no longer alone. Gonzalez and Ascari had been fighting a second duel only a short distance behind us and on the last sprint for the line Gonzalez, driving with colossal determination, had closed the gap so he finished only a few feet behind Fangio. Ascari was only 3.2 seconds behind Gonzalez.

Just to show how remote the driver, concentrating on his job, can be from what is going on around him I will quote from what Rodney Walkerley wrote in *the motor* about the end of the race:

“I will not attempt to describe the final laps. The whole thing was fantastic. The crowd was yelling, the commentators were screaming. Nobody paid much attention to the rest of the drivers at all and the drivers themselves slowed up to watch this staggering display.”

And the Autocar said:

“It was a battle which exhausted even the spectators with its intensity and duration.

Fangio says that it was brakes not gears that made the difference. Those of the Ferrari being in better condition than his own. “On the last corner he waited until the very last second before braking.... I thought he would go off the road, but his brakes held. His audacity gave him a tiny advantage as he swung into the last last straight, because I had to brake earlier and for a longer time. The small difference was enough England had a new and worthy champion.”

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ADVANCE NOTICE
THE CLASSIC MOTOR RACING CLUB of NZ INC NEXT EVENT
Come and join us for the 2021 AUTUMN FLING CLASSIC MEETING, 8th
MAY, 2021. LEVELS RACEWAY, TIMARU.

FACEBOOK PAGE:

Our club facebook address is www.facebook.com/cmrcnz?fref=ts The normal posting rules apply. The post will be promoted as long as it is positive and about club type stuff. Don't forget to “like” the page and ask your friends to like it as well.

WEBSITE

www.classicmotorracingclub.co.nz

Remember this is your website and you can add photos to it to make it more interesting.

Contact Karen on furore@xtra.co.nz or call on 03 217 7019. The latest entry form is always on it as is the membership form.

