



MEMBERS NEWSLETTER

**JANUARY FEBRUARY
MARCH 2026**



IMAGE CREDIT - WENDY HOWIE



Patron - Howden Ganley
January - February - March 2026

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Newsletter Publishers and Editors

Paul Coghill and Steve Keene

Website: www.classicmotorracingclub.nz

Contact: info@classicmotorracingclub.nz

UP AND COMING EVENTS:

DATE	EVENT	VENUE
9th May 2026	Autumn Fling	Levels
3-5th July 2026	HRCC	Queensland
8-9th August 2026		Lakeside Raceway Q.L
12th September 2026	Brooklands Challenge	Levels



PRESIDENTS REPORT - Karen Clearwater

What a great month February has been. Full on with Skope, CMRC Southern Classic and Speedfest race events, along with the Ayrburn Classic Show, which many of our members took part in. I'm sure there will be a more comprehensive report about the CMRC Southern Classic 2026 meeting in this newsletter but here are a few of my impressions.

Firstly thanks to all the race committee members who worked hard to provide a top class event with over 200 entries. Unfortunately, as always, there was quite a bit of attrition from Skope but the final number of participants was around 180. We were joined by several overseas competitors from the UK, Italy, USA and Australia spread amongst the classes.

It was great to see the Formula Junior entrants as part of their International Celebration and I enjoyed catching up with those that have been here previously as well as those here for the first time. There were lots of comments from drivers and crew on how they enjoyed our event most out as the three as they feel part of the CMRC family due to the friendly welcome they receive as well as the picnic atmosphere of our meeting. I'm sure those that can will be back in the future.



Just a small assortment of Formula Juniors in the busy, but very organised Junior paddock.

Image Credit - Enuuff Photography

It was also pleasing to see the Continental Rennsport Series back as an invited field. They provided a great field of over 20 cars of Porsche's and BMW's and were joined by one little Fiat Uno waving the Italian flag against the Germans.

The Mazda MX-5 Heritage Cup group combined with the BMW E20's to make up our third invited group. This group provided some close racing and one gentleman was so enthusiastic that he brought not just an MX5 to the meeting but also another car which he raced in the Vintage field.

It was pleasing to see the resurgence of the Formula Libre group with at one stage more entrants than grid places available. However by the time Skope was over resulting in a few withdrawals we were able to allow all entered to race. Brian Dixon the co-ordinator of this group had a fire in his Van Diemen RF84 at Skope so had expected to withdraw. However, in the spirit of our club, Vernon Williamson from Scotland offered to let him race his Malloch U2 Mk 6. Brian ended up in the Formula Junior group racing it and Vern joined the vintage field for his racing.

Pre 78's and Allcomers are groups that are continuing to grow and provide some exciting cars. Both these groups are providing some great racing but it's the camaraderie and sportsmanship that I've seen in both these groups that is awesome. The way they help each other out when something goes wrong or just the encouragement given to new members is what this club is all about.



PRESIDENTS REPORT - Karen Clearwater

One of the cars that ended up in the Allcomers group is the ex John Bowe Falcon V8 Supercar no 888 in OzeMail livery driven by Darrell Breen. I was talking with the crew on Saturday night after prize giving and his wife explained how Darrell had been in the right place at the right time to purchase it.

Apparently he had been given a sum of money to purchase an item for her on a trip. Off he went and when he returned was asked where the item was. "Aahh I forgot to get it but I bought a car instead.....".

Turned out an opportunity arose and he had to put a deposit down so her money became the deposit. I reckon she owns the car.....

The buzz from Darrell and team was that they had thoroughly enjoyed the event and will definitely be back.

Tracy and Mark Barrett are doing a great job liaising with the Vintage Car Club for our older single seaters and sport cars. Again there was a good number of entrants. Vern Williamson had such a great time racing with this group that he continued to join it at Teretonga rather than race with the Formula Juniors.

The Regularity Trial (not Trail as it appeared sometimes in the programme) was a great success. This was due mainly to the constant encouragement and advice provided by Nick Simpson and Kevin Telford with the initial briefing from Nick and then the numerous catch-ups before and after each trial in their pit area. Nick's timing program created with assistance from Pauline (his wife) worked really well and we have an overall winner for this event in James May who entered 3 days before the event in his 1974 Mk1 Escort. The Stewards of the meeting were more than happy with how it went as was the Clerk of the Course and his team. On asking if we needed to change anything they all felt the format worked well including the use of the safety car at the start.

I got to see a little of the lunchtime entertainment and watching the Lotus cars go onto the track was a treat. So many all shapes and sizes. Our thanks must go to Lotus Cars New Zealand and Archibalds for allowing us to use the Lotus Emira Turbo as a course car for the event. The support by the members of the Southern Lotus Club was great. I was chatting with Jim Bennett (one of our original club members who has recently retired from racing) on Sunday night as we were packing up. I discovered that he had been fortunate enough to be able to join the parade in the Barrett's Lotus 7 while Tracy had been given the new Lotus Emira Jim Clark Edition that was on display to drive. If you have a spare quarter of a million or so you too can have one of these.



Darrell Breen saving Left front tyres.
Image - Southern Zone Photography



James May comes to grips with his new escort in the regularity trial.
Image - Josh Kelly



A really well supported parade from The Lotus Southern Register and Lotus cars New Zealand.
Image - Southern Zone Photography

PRESIDENTS REPORT - Karen Clearwater

I caught up with David John who had the TKR Commodore V8 on display over the weekend. It was a bittersweet moment for the team as it is 15 years since the death of Jason Richards. Jason's father was at the event and it was awesome to be able to commemorate and celebrate Jason during one of the lunch times. The TKR team had the unforgettable "Bones" Collins driving the car and I discovered that a few weekends prior he had a problem with his vehicle just before the Finish line. No problem Bones quickly grabbed the transponder off the vehicle and sprinted over the line with it to finish first..... needless to say the officials took a dim view of this and a visit to the Stewards and subsequent disqualification ensued. Typical Bones – still got a big smile on his face and mischief in his eyes. Again David and the team were most impressed with the way CMRC looked after them during the weekend and for the opportunity to promote what they are currently doing.



The TKR Tribute to Jason Richards Image - Southern Zone Photography.



Our new Club Gazebo was on display and on the Sunday we used it for selling our caps, polos and t-shirts etc. Karen Keene is a great addition to the team and her bright smile ensured that this was a success.

One of the other successes of the meeting was the Class Co-coordinators. We had some amazing people take up this role and my personal thanks goes to all of them. Having these people take care of the people in their class made Zara and my jobs easier. It may sound such a simple thing but having one person come and collect the copies of results for their class rather than every person and their dog wanting results was fantastic and more efficient.

It was also great to have the Formula Junior group recognize the work that Julie Benbrook put in looking after them with a Trophy for best assistant in appreciation of all that she did for their group. Now that it's over the Race committee are already working towards the Southern Classic 2027 and the Autumn Fling in May.

The Exec is currently working on the 2026 – 2028 strategic plan which helps to keep us focused on improving the club and ensuring that we stay focused on the reasons the club exists. After 40 plus years it is great way to be able to look back and see where we were, where we are now and where we can be in the future. After some fine tuning it has been approved at our March meeting and will be sent out to members soon. Please have a good look and if there is something you would like to discuss please contact me or one of the members of the committee to talk about it.

RACE REPORT - Paul Coghill

Thank you to all of you for supporting our major club event of the year, the Southern Classic. We had over 200 entries this year but lost about 20 after Skope. 180 was still one of the best entries for a number years and we had over 65% being our club members which shows that we have a strong active membership.

This year's event was well supported by our invited classes with Formula Junior gridding up 25 cars in race one. A truly international class with 12 drivers from Italy, the UK, Texas and Australia along with great support from the North Island. MX-5 along with the BMW E30's provided some very close and exiting racing.



A welcome return this year was Rennsport with a wonderful mix of European cars: - Porsche, BMW and Fiat.

Our club classes of CMRC Allcomers(A&B), Pre78 Classic Saloons, Vintage & Historic and Libre were all well supported. In fact, this year Libre had a wait list of 3 cars as we for this time ever reached the maximum of 30 single seater's for the grid.

There was a lot of work put in to running a new club event this year, the Regularity Trial. This was well supported and will be run at all 3 of our meetings in the future.

So again, thank you to all of the entrants that bring their wonderful cars and compete in the spirit of classic & historic racing: - having fun, staying on the track and not hitting their mates!

Thanks to all the volunteers and the South Canterbury Car Club for providing their facilities and what is the best pit area in the country. This contributes greatly to the relaxed atmosphere that we enjoy at our events at Levels.

We were well supported by our sponsors again this year and we hope you support them off the track as their contribution is greatly appreciated.

Finally, thanks to the Race Committee. Their efforts and involvement in months of prior planning and over the 3 days of the event is immense. The time and effort is in many ways rewarded by the participation and engagement of our competitors.

Our next event is the Autumn Fling on the 9th May, thank you for the entries to date.

Race Radio. This has been around for some time and is used by a number of classes outside classic & historic. The recent meeting at Highlands (where Race Radio is compulsory for all classes) there were a number of our members racing in the Vintage & Historic as well as the HVRA classes that used Race Radio.

As a result of a number of incidents at our meetings in recent times and after discussion with the officials at Levels we have decided to make Race Radio mandatory at our meetings from the Southern Classic 2027 and beyond.

So, for this year's Autumn Fling and Brooklands Challenge it will be voluntary to use it and a great opportunity to get used to it. Motorsport NZ have been looking at this topic for a number of years and I wouldn't be surprised to see it become a requirement from 2027.

CAPTURING THE MEMORIES

The Classic Motor Racing Club would like to say a heartfelt thank you to our loyal and supportive group of Photographers who attend our meetings and brave the elements to capture the images which provide a backdrop to all our racing memories.

Their work is a huge contribution to everything we do behind the scenes in promoting our events to the world on social media, providing content for our programs, and keeping historic reference of events through our newsletters.

If you are to aware you can go onto the classic motor racing website and visit the gallery at any time and see if your car or antics have been captured on film, and what's even better is you can contact the photographer directly to purchase high resolution images for your own use.

The possibilities to use the images are endless, but we will leave these example here for thought, remember, Xmas is only 8 months away !



CLASSIC GARAGE - YOU COULD BE ON YOUTUBE



You may be famous !

Just a quick reminder that our friend Paul Day has been very busy placing videos onto his You tube channel Classic Garage from Southn Classic 2026 and many of our previous meetings.

If you haven't checked out his channel yet, go to YOUTUBE and search for Classic Garage NZ and check out all the action, there are interviews, in-car footage and event profile videos from our last 3-4 meetings. Well worth a watch, and remember to subscribe to his channel - there is NO COST to subscribing, but it will mean when he puts a new video up you will be notified.





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Thank you to our Sponsors

I'm sure it goes without saying that more than ever, we all understand the value of partnerships, and our club would again like to take the opportunity to recognize and say thank you to our loyal sponsors of the Southern Classic 2026.

These business backed our event, and provided us all the opportunity to come together and enjoy our sport, and as a club we are sincerely grateful of their assistance.

Please remember to support them when and wherever possible.

NZ Classic Driver is a publication created by Allied Media, who also produce 03 Lifestyle Magazine, Rugby News, and Kiwi Gardener, so there is far more than just Classic Cars for our members to embrace. Allied Media also produce a wide range of local newspapers, so chances are you may see more articles relating to our meeting in your area soon.

We look forward to working alongside the team at Allied media to increase the profile of the Classic Motor Racing as a whole, and in addition our club and meetings.



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The logo for Upper Classics features a white outline of a classic car's front end, including the hood, headlights, and grille, set against a dark green background. Below the outline, the words "UPPER CLASSICS" are written in a white, sans-serif font.

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PRE 78 SALOONS - Wayne Perkins

Following the Christmas New Year break some of us finally got back on a circuit with several of us attending the Skope Classic at Ruapuna on the 6th to 8th of February even though there was no designated Pre 78 Classic Saloons class.

Skope this year was unusual in that they gave up having separate areas for the different saloon car classes and all four saloon classes were all just bundled in together which meant there was constant coming and going of race cars all the time so the pits weren't their usual periodic relaxed haven and of course we had a massive trailer in the middle of us from a local race clan which blocked the normal access points.

Therefore it was with a certain amount of relief that we rolled into Levels Raceway the following weekend for the Southern Classic 2026 where we had properly organized pits with designated areas for each competitor laid out with dabs of dazzle paint making for a thoroughly enjoyable and civilized area for the weekend. It was the usual Pre 78 get together after a long break with much hilarity and friendly yapping as we all caught up with each other.

The racing itself was just superb and incredibly close with 31 very excited entrants spread across our 7 sub classes with the following class winners being....

Eric Swinbourn	- 1977 Suzuki SC100 CX-G	- 0-1200cc
Blair Bishop	- 1969 Fiat 850 Coupe Abarth	- 1201-1400cc
Brent Findlay	- 1971 Datsun Coupe	- 1401-1800cc
Grant Sprague	- 1973 Ford Escort RS2000	- 1801-2400cc
Ken Williams	- 1972 Mercedes Benz 280CE	- 2401-4200cc
Mark McGuinness	- 1964 Ford Falcon Sprint	- 4200cc plus
Gregg Cooper	- 1974 Ford Capri II 2.0GT	- Historic & CR3

It was an absolutely excellent race meeting with all thanks going to the volunteers involved and especially the CMRC Race Committee plus the valued Sponsors Upper Classics.



Big Fields of close racing. Image Credit - Josh Kelly



Blair Bishop leads the field through turn 1
Image Credit - Southern Zone Photography



Yet another glorious field of Pre 78's awaiting the green light.
Image Credit - Enuff Photography

PRE 78 SALOONS - Wayne Perkins

The following weekend many of the Pre 78's members as spectators attended the world class Ayrburn Classic car show which was a fabulous display of quarter of a billion dollars of motor vehicles in a truly idyllic setting.

A month later we made our annual trip to Teretonga and attended their Southern Thunder Truck meeting on the 14th and 15th March where in our usual lucky style we had four basically dryish races during what was a somewhat squally weekend.

Virtually all of us love the high speed flowing nature of Teretonga and our annual trip South is one of our absolute highlights plus it is also home to our most treasured Trophy being the Brian Crosbie Memorial Cup. It is always awarded to the winner of our handicap race on the Sunday afternoon and what an absolute blast of a race with Bruce Farley driving the wheels off his 1968 Vauxhall Viva GT to come from the back of the field to narrowly win the Trophy race by three tenths from Jason Lambert and Shane Caughey.

In his usual modest style Bruce was quite overwhelmed at the prize giving ceremony but it was a very well deserved win.

The class results were as follows

Eric Swinbourn	- 1977 Suzuki SC100 CX-G	- 0-1200cc
Alan Radburnd	- 1964 Morris Cooper S	- 1201-1400cc
Shane Caughey	- 1973 Ford Escort Mexico	- 1401-1800cc
Bruce Farley	- 1968 Vauxhall Viva GT	- 1801-2400cc
Gerald Hargreaves	- 1973 Jaguar XJ6	- 2401-4200cc
Jason Lambert	- 1966 Ford Mustang GT	- 4200 plus
Gregg Cooper	- 1974 Ford Capri II 2.0GT	- Historic & CR3



Todd Read try's the inside Waye Hull into turn 1.
Image Credit - Josh Kelly



Brent Findlay leads the pack to the chequered flag.
Image Credit - Josh Kelly

So far it's been a fantastic season for the Pre 78's and we're looking forward in about three weeks time to our final meeting being the Autumn Fling at Levels Raceway on May 9th.

And for those of you who are wondering, yes I've fully recovered physically from my spinal damage when the Camaro fell over and hopefully I will be back driving at the Autumn Fling.

Cheers Wayne



Matt Mcleary leads Alistair Campbell and Dave Sampson.
Image Credit - Josh Kelly

VCC AND HISTORICS

Unfortunately we don't have a full briefing for the VCC and Historic category for this month's newsletter, however we have included some great images from the Southern Classic meeting on these pages, and we look forward to a full season run down from the VCC team in the next newsletter.



The incredible VCC field heads into turn 1.
Image Credit - Southern Zone Photography



Mark Barrett heads the pack into turn 2
Image Credit - Euff Photography



Graeme Hamilton leads Bryan Ashworth into turn 1
Image Credit - Euff Photography



Russell Greer in the Edelbrock Special holds out Chris Read.
Image Credit - Euff Photography



Royce Bayer leads the pack onto the back straight
Image Credit - Euff Photography

VCC AND HISTORICS



David Owen in his magnificent Jaguar C Type
Image Credit - Philip Dickie Autofocus



Graham Barron in his Gemini Mk2
Image Credit - Philip Dickie Autofocus



James Cowie at speed in the Shadetree MKII
Image Credit - Philip Dickie Autofocus



Neil Kay heads into Castrol in his Mallock U2.
Image Credit - Philip Dickie Autofocus



Bryan Ashworth was "on it" in his Dart
Image Credit - Philip Dickie Autofocus



Graeme Hamilton heads Paul Coghill and Bryan Ashworth
Image Credit - Philip Dickie Autofocus



David Owens heads just some of the 29 car feild into turn 1.
Image Credit - Philip Dickie Autofocus



The lotus 23's of Richard Tyree and Mark Barrett lead Chris Read's Mistral.
Image Credit - Philip Dickie Autofocus

CMRC CLASSIC ALLCOMERS - Steve Keene

Southern Classic 2026 provided another great event for both classes of the CMRC Allcomers. With good number of entrants in Class A and B, and the added advantage of some Rennsport competitors double entering into Allcomers, we again saw a wide range of Classic Allcomers taking to the track.

This event tends to leave me very limited on actual time with the group and I would like to thank Peter Blomfield who really stepped up over the weekend to not only drive competitively but work hard on the ground with the entrants, which they all really appreciated as well. Its lucky Peter is very fit, as he was certainly getting his step count running backwards and forwards in the paddock throughout the weekend !

From my view in the control tower observing driving standards, the group drove very well, and racing was, as always fast and close, but was overall very clean with very little issues arising.

Its satisfying for the competitors but also as a coordinator to see cars going back on trailers without damage. Southern Classic makes up leg 2 of the 3 leg Southern Festival of Speed with a few competitors heading on to Teretonga Speedfest, and its important to keep cars not only running but accident free over this busy time. I feel our driving standards work certainly helps in this regard.

Class A was again very fast with a range of really quick cars with Neville Stowell, John Hepburn and Mike Small topping the time sheets. However new to Classic Racing Darrel Breen is quickly coming to grips with his restored BJR Falcon and is right on the pace. There's not a lot of distance between the mid pack either with David Berry, Tony Mann Choppa Stevenson, Paul Carter and Jim Wallace right in the mix all weekend.

Another welcome return to SC2026 was Neville Agass all the way from the US. Neville ran at SKOPE in Rob Lewis's VH Commodore but suffered mechanical issues, not to be deterred he was then lent the VH Commodore of Janine Wallace and Chris Grey and quickly put it to good use with his time dropping throughout the weekend. It was tremendous to see the return of the Porsche's which once ran in Large Saloons, with a number of Rennsport competitors double entering and providing exciting racing to watch as the outright power of the V8's pulled away on the straights and the handling of the Bavarian bruisers caught them in the corners. Another beautifully presented and original car was Paul Burnett's Group A Mustang from Auckland, which ran consistently all weekend and looked and sounded period correct !



Darrell Breen shows the field the way in his BA Falcon Supercar
Image Credit - Southern Zone Photography



Neville Agass got to grips quickly with the VH Commodore
Image Credit - Colin Lim



Jim Wallace inspects the rear wing of David Berry's HQ Holden
Image Credit - Colin Lim



Paul Burnett in his immaculate Group A Mustang
Image Credit - Colin Lim

CMRC CLASSIC ALLCOMERS - Steve Keene

Class B saw some very close racing all weekend, with some ding-dong battles throughout the field and of particular note Peter Blomfield and Alex MacAskill went to town with close by clean dicing. Adding to that mix was the likes of Corey Ashworth Piers's Mingham and Wellingtonian Marvin Turton battling it out in the mid field.

At the pointy end the three David's - David Stone (sapphire Cosworth), David Hunter (MGB GT V8) and David Henderson (RX3) were all trying their best to go through the breakout times. With Paul Carter and Steve Parker joining the fold in Race 1 with Paul Carter being moved up to Class A and Steve unfortunately suffering mechanical issues forcing retirement for the weekend.

One of the unluckiest teams at Southern Classic this year was the RX7 V8 and the Viva Holden owned by Adrian Dobbe. These guys came all the way from Auckland and suffered issues in both cars with the RX7 out fairly early from Class A and Rod Grimwood out in Class B after race 2 with Gearbox issues. We wish you all the best and hope to see you back again next year with better luck.

Similar luck was being had by Rolleston driver Nick Ilton, we were all looking forward to seeing the performance of Nicks Civic in its first hit-out at Timaru but what turned out to be fuel inlet issues lead to Nick retirement. We hope to see this car back at Autumn Fling. In contrast is Paul Goodwin's Shellsport Civic which is flying, and Paul is continually improving with quicker and quicker lap times and a larger smile at every event.

Piers Mingham joined the Allcomers in his Pre65 Anglia and lapped quick and consistent, as did fellow Pre65 racer Danielle Hurst who is now gaining reliability and seat time her the HA Viva. We look forward to hopefully seeing these cars and more of the same joining the fields shortly.

Another car and driver combination on the improve is Peter Britton with his self - built V8 Avenger. Peter was a busy boy as his wife Julie was also racing in Formula Libre. Peter had great help from his team of loyal friends and the Avenger is really starting to move now. I wonder how many more of the "old school sport sedans" are either sitting in sheds or boiling away in the imagination of racers minds. V8 Escort? V8 Chevette maybe?

The Allcomers grid have got a number of exciting classic meetings coming up for season 2026-2027, with Autumn Fling just around the corner.



Rod Grimwood in the Viva Holden
Image Credit - Southern Zone Photography



Paul Goodwin leads 'em into Castrol
Image Credit - Philip Dickie Autofocus Images



Peter Britton was blazing in his V8 Avenger
as Corey Ashworth (Celica) looks twice up
the inside line!
Image Credit - Euff Photography



What a varied and exciting range of cars and
engines types.
Image Credit - Southern Zone Photography

FORMULA LIBRE - Brian Dixon

Well team, Congratulations, 33 entries for the Libre class and a nice variation of Single seater's and Sports cars. The largest class that we have ever had at our Levels meetings.

Some tremendous and competitive racing was offered to the spectators and other competitors. Poor Paul, our race organizer (tremendous job Paul) was on my phone fairly regular with concerns of how to handle the full grid, with others placed on a waiting list. Both Gill Cox and myself wondered on how 30 competitors in Single seater's would survive the notorious 1st corner at the Levels track after leaving the start line but decided to maintain the status quo of which this particular corner was approached tremendously during the weekend's racing. But there appeared to be an issue at the start of the main straight.



Close Racing throughout the grid was the order of the weekend. A wide variety of open wheel and open top cars enjoyed some really good racing.

Image Credit - Euff Photography



Over 30 competitors lined up for the Formula Libre group with what must be one of the largest fields seen in a long time.

Image Credit - Euff Photography



This image sums up the variety of cars in Libre, with open top, SCANZ, Formula Ford and entry level wing cars.

Image Credit - Euff Photography

FORMULA LIBRE - Brian Dixon

I did not see much of the Formula Libre racing due to the fact that the class that I was racing in, the Formula Juniors, was just before the Formula libre class.

It was good to see Trevor Fairley driving his Lotus 7 Rep. Trevor had missed the Skope meeting the week before when his wife Eileen became very ill, but at the time she insisted that Trevor enter and race at Timaru. Eileen had arranged a friend to take care of her during this time. Thanks Eileen, Trevor drove well.



The Historic Formula Ford group really gave the Southern Classic thier full support, and it was great to see such a variety of these cars battling throughtout the field. Image Credit - Philip Dickie Autofocus

Wayne Colville had a dual entry in, entering two Formula Fords whilst driving one car himself and I loaning a car to an Australian driver. Unfortunately, Wayne was tapped from behind causing some rear suspension damage. He drove back to Christchurch and came back with some spares to fix the car. It was all good until he received another tap the next day causing more damage. This is entirely unacceptable and not what we want at our meetings.

Thanks to those from the Historic FF association and to our entrants from the North Island, Australia and England for entering our Formula Libre class. I know that they have a good schedule of events for their class during the year but we appreciate their entries for our CMRC events.

There was some competitive racing from Steve Donaldson (Brabham BT21), Don Elvy (Swift SE3B FF 2000), Robert Toshach (Swift FB89) and Mick Ross (Reynard SF89 FF2000) were seen to be swapping places reguallly at the head of the field. I hope that all repairs are now well under way to the following who had also entered this class. Gregory Scott, Brabham BT21, Gary Arnold Van Dieman RF75.



Greg Mowat , Trevor Fairley and Andrew McLean demonstrated how good open top sports cars can go in the Libre feild.

Image Credit - Enuff Photography



It was tight ad close racing hroughout the field in every Libre race.

Image Credit - Philip Dickie Autofocus

Formula Junior - Donald McDonald

It is always a nice feeling rolling into Levels Raceway near Timaru as the surroundings and the people are always so welcoming making any race weekend at the South Canterbury circuit that much more enjoyable.

Traveling with the Formula Junior group this summer was entertaining to say the least and the endless banter between the New Zealand entry and the overseas entry added to the sport both on and off the track.



Josh Kelly captures this evocative image of the Junior's on the dummy grid.

While the flying Gemini of Auckland's Noel Woodford dominated at the Skope meeting at Ruapuna, a gearbox issue sidelined the car during the first race on the Saturday at the next meeting of Timaru's Southern Classic at Levels Raceway. Frantic work saw a replacement fitted and the car was running again on Sunday morning. At Timaru UK driver Adrian Russell managed to have the blue Lotus running again albeit with the wrong gearing affecting his starts. Texas based driver Robert Hoemke in his Lola Mk 5A was fast becoming the surprise of the series, having already had a slight coming together with Geoff Underwood's Brabham BT2 resulting in the beautifully presented black Brabham now featuring a rather shortened nose.

Of the three sleek Lola Mk5A models driven by UK drivers Robin Longdon and Tony Lees, plus the American car of Robert Hoemke, the dark blue Longdon car was one of the quickest and very nearly broke the lap record at Teretonga Park.

At the popular Timaru circuit a great battle ensued between the Longdon Lola and the Woodford Gemini which finally saw the American Lola of Robert Hoemke snatch a last gasp win as unfortunately both leading cars finished in the pits. The similar silver Lola Mk 5A of Britain's Tony Lees was also starting to perform well and getting in amongst the pointy end of each race.

Another interesting entry was that of ex pat New Zealander Grant Walker, driving the older Lotus 18 owned by Jim Richards. This superbly presented Lotus was surprisingly quick in the hands of the former 1974/75 NZ Formula Ford champion. Grant was also running his original, beautifully restored Championship winning Titan in the Formula Libre races.



Large fields of close racing were demonstrated throughout the weekend.
Image Credit (above) - Southern Zone Photography
Image Credit (below) - Josh Kelly



Formula Junior - Donald McDonald

Another of the UK drivers, Graham Barron was also running in this category, driving his lovely Gemini Mk2, originally driven by the great Jim Clark. If you watched last year's Goodwood Revival event you would have seen Graham and the Gemini surrounded by a flock of sheep during the Jim Clark parade.

One of the most charming visitors was the Italian driver, Andrea Guarino with his lovely looking BMC powered Elva 100. Although playing with the local front engined cars at the blunt end of the field, you would think he had won every race as he received the chequered flag with such exuberant arm waving each time. How very Italian.

Michael Sexton's silver front engined Gemini Mk2, Peter Benbrook's similar car and Nigel Russell with his Canadian built Sadler, all had their own entertaining races giving way to the quicker later model rear engined cars, but still having a great time. The very pretty F3 Brabham BT21 of Tony Olisoff with its interesting "screamer" engine was giving it driver a few headaches but when behaving itself was right in the mix.

The general feeling amongst all the Formula Junior group was that this meeting at Timaru was a circuit which suited these cars, great racing was enjoyed and particularly the Clubroom after race nibbles were greatly appreciated. At least we know all the New Zealanders will be back next year and who knows, maybe we will see some of our new friends from overseas return too.



Ray Mallock leads the field through turn 1 in his Mallock U2 MK2.
Image Credit - Eneff Photography



Keith Pfeffer heads onto the back straight in his Talisman FJ
Image Credit - Eneff Photography

Some very sleek side profiles captured by Image Credit - Eneff Photography



Kevin Anderson - Cooper T52



Andrea Guarino - Elva 100



Mark Barrett - Lotus 20

THE SNOOP

Hi all. For a lot of us fellow racers, February has been a massive month. The Skope, Southern Classic Levels and Teretonga Speedfest Classic Race meetings have been and gone. It seems that spending copious amounts of money and time prepping our cars along with the travel involved for not only our three day meetings and our more relaxed Club events, it is not only hard on our poor race cars, it is hard on the body and pocket.

It must boil down to being extremely passionate or slightly mad, but generally, the effort is worth it, along with the comradery. I tell myself if we did not have hobbies life would be rather boring and I know that I would be poorer without the tremendous friends that we have all met through our competing.

Unfortunately, many of you will now know that my racing season came to a fiery end with Blue catching fire at Skope. I was looking for a hot lap but not quite in that context. My extreme thanks must go out to all of the helpers from the Pit garages who got to me very quickly to help extinguish the fire until the Fire rescue team could arrive and get me out of the car to prevent serious injury. Well done everyone. I was on my way back to the pits with an engine miss not knowing that I was on fire until the car stopped at the entrance to the pits and the rest is history. I thought that this was the end of the season for me but our good friend Vernon Williamson from Scotland who races an early Mallock here in NZ told me that I had to get back onto the horse and offered to share drive his Mallock at our Levels event. He would drive in the VCC Class and myself in the Formula Juniors class. I gratefully accepted his offer and after a few getting to know laps I really enjoyed the experience.

Thanks go to Paul and the officials for allowing this to happen.

Blue is now in bits and a rebuild is under way. Rear suspension has arrived back cleaned and re-plated, bushes sourced and gear box being checked and cleaned. Motor is out and being checked by the mechanic with the chassis about to be cleaned and refurbished. A huge thanks to Gerald Duncan for supplying a replacement carb. Much appreciated Gerald. And to all those lovely people who offered their help. It certainly helped to get over the shock of this unfortunate incident.



The Snoop with his hands full getting to grips with his "renta -ride" Mallock U2.

Image Credit - Euff Photography



THE SNOOP

As one of the Formula Libre coordinators, I have followed up Greg Scott and Garry Arnold who both had the misfortune of damage to their beautifully prepared cars at our Levels Southern Classic meeting in February. Greg had a half shaft in the Brabham BT21 let go causing a fair amount of damage to the rear of his car. Greg has stripped the motor and rear suspension out in readiness to repair the chassis and hopes to be ready for the start of our next season.

Gary had to take evasive action to dodge a car coming backwards on the track after recovering from a spin. The other car perhaps came back onto the track too fast.

The damage to Gary's FF Van Dieman was very severe.

The rebuild is underway and luckily he has the skills to do a fair amount of the repairs himself. I look forward to having these three cars back on the track racing. It was great having the Formula Juniors from the UK and New Zealand back visiting us once again.

These little screamers are beautifully presented and the rear engine ones extremely fast for their diminutive 930 and 1100 cc engines.

Some of the UK drivers were aggressive at times with their driving. Vernon had warned me that if I was passed by one, then there would be a swarm of them following and he was right. I guess that they are very competitive in the UK.

My apologies if this report is a bit single seater orientated but after being involved with a fire in Blue, racing a Mallock with the Juniors and being a coordinator for the Libre class my focus has gone AWOL a little.

To the Club members who will be racing in the CMRC's Autumn Fling meeting in May, have a safe and great days racing.

The Snoop.



CMRC Classic Regularity Trial

The inaugural running of the Classic Motor Racing Club Regularity trial has proved a hugely positive success, and everyone involved feels pretty happy with the initial results.

This was an initiative which the Club has worked on for a number of months prior to the Southern Classic, and whilst to an entirely new concept, the additional benefits of having road registered cars running in the same competition as homologated race cars in a form of competition certainly required strong investment by the executive team to turn into reality.

At SC 2026 we were lucky enough to have 2 executive committee members taking part in the trial, with Kevin Telford competing in his Peugeot 205GTI, and Nick Simpson coordinating the class and running the timing system. Nick enrolled the assistance of his wife Pauline to cross check the timing systems and manage the data, and the committee would like to thank them both very much for their hard work to provide accurate and informative information to the drivers throughout the weekend.

Kevin was out on track skidding tyres and assisting the other competitors throughout the weekend in the paddock. He really enjoyed the relaxed and fun environment, and after 10 years or so since he last competed in club racing, he found it was the best way to get back out on track and sharing the road with others but in a non “door handle to door handle” environment to get the eye back in.

Whether your coming back into racing from a long break, getting into it for the first time, or keen to reduce your pressure and do something more low key in your car, the Regularity offers an ideal group for all.

Drivers came from a number of backgrounds with some having little or no track racing experience, to drivers like Darrell Harding in his Torana A9X enjoying a different track challenge to his normal racing exploits, and proving that no matter the value of the car, its about the enjoyment of actually using it for its intended purpose.



Darrell Harding in his immaculate A9X Torana
Image Credit - Eneff Photography



Greg Davis in his 100% original Charger
Image Credit - Eneff Photography

Classic Motor Racing Club regular Greg Mowat was a very busy man, not only did he race his Triumph TC in Regularity, he was also busy steering his Lotus 7 in Formula Libre, and if that wasn't enough of a challenge, he decided to use his Triumph 2.5 to tow the Lotus 7 down to the track! This seems like an incredible ask for your race car, but many of you will remember a time not long ago when it was perfectly normal to drive the race car to the track, put on a number, race all day and head home, and the trial is trying to make this an option for many in the current day.

I feel from personal experience the most enjoyable part of the event was watching people who have never raced, getting out on track. And of course once the initial nerves are gone, their times improved and become not only quicker but also more consistent - which is the main aim of the game!



Connor Goddard in his Vitesse



James May got to grips with his Mk1 Escort



Mark Taffard in his MG BGT

The variety of the entrants vehicles was also great to see, and one of the aims of the club was to try create new pathways for a wider range of classic car marques and types to take part in our events, and so far we have success !

The trial saw two open top sports car, two "muscle cars" and a range of smaller bore saloons with varying amounts of race preparation, from Mark Taffards stock standard MGB GT to Bruce Farley's rapid Pre 78 spec Vauxhall Viva which Gary Grant ran for the first time.

A neat car which entered was the Mk1 Escort of James May from Ashburton, this was a club car which James brought about 2 years ago. Hes done all the restoration and modification work himself in his single car garage and has built up a really cool escort which could have come out of any mid eighties rally / hillclimb sealed sprint event. It was Jame's first time on track and hes absolutely hooked, and we hope we will see him back soon as he really got to grips with his car and the track.



Peter Jones in the very pretty Alfa Avanzo



Greg Mowat was "Mr consistent" in his Triumph TC

The furthest traveled award must go to Neil Blackie who traveled all the way from Lower Hutt to take part in the Trial and drove very well in his Almac Clubsprint, lets hope this is the beginning of a lot more Lotus 7 derivatives to come a have fun !

We have already seen inquiry for SC27 event from the regularity guys in the North Island, we also have Tim Neal from Feilding coming down for Autumn Fling so maybe this could be the start of a trend for a North vs. South battle, and roll on Autumn Fling for the next round of the trial.



Gary Grant tries Bruce Farley's Viva GT out for size.



Neil Blackie in his Almac Clubsprint



Kevin Telford gets a handle of his 205 GTI



SOUTHERN CLASSIC - MX-5 and Continental Rennsport

The 2026 Southern Classic saw the welcome return of the MX5 Heritage Cup and the team from Continental Rennsport. The racing was close and of a very high standard throughout these fields, and both groups saw great entry numbers.

MX-5 Heritage Cup contested their 3rd points round of their championship at Southern Classic, and saw 2 drivers from the North Island join drivers from around the South Island in close competition in these now classic roadsters. It is of particular note how affordable these cars are to race, and with good parts availability and strict regulations which limit modifications there is no surprise that more of these cars are currently being built to join the grid. We wish all competitors luck in their final round of the championship.

Of equal interest was the Continental Rennsport group who returned to the Southern Classic after a few years absence. It was thoroughly enjoyable to see such a wide range of European marques racing so closely with a very high level of driving standards throughout the field.

We look forward to welcome back both groups at future events, but for now we leave you with some great images of both fields from Levels.



SOUTHERN CLASSIC - MX-5 and Continental Rennsport



CLUB AWARDS

PDL Best NZ Special

Awarded to Andrew McLean -

Running a car built by Dave Hamlin, and restored by Andrew and looking polished and running well.



Ross Clifford Sportsmanship

Awarded to Ewan McPherson -

Always helping others and gave away his spare well to allow another competitors to continue racing



Peter Gendal Most polished Performance

Awarded to Tim Stace -

Car is beautifully presented and has been increasing his times over the last few meetings



Lindsay Neilson -Best Performance

Awarded to Todd Read -

Good clean battles with other competitors



Spinners Award

Awarded to Trevor Fairley -

Nice pirouettes in his Seven.



Scott Auto Best Presented Saloon

Awarded to Shane Caughey-

For his Immaculately presented Ford Escort so well polished you could use it as a mirror



SOUTHERN CLASSIC - AWARDS

Ransley Shaft - Hard Luck

Awarded to Greg Scott -

Lasted 7 seconds on track before presenting other competitors with donuts



Volunteers Award

Awarded to Steve Sole -

In Rennsport qualifying car spun - displayed yellow, Next lap another car spun -displayed yellow, next lap car spun displayed BLUE, oops should have been yellow.



SPECIAL AWARDS

David Brown Memorial Trophy

Awarded to David Berry -

In his HQ Holden, well driven.



Les McGraw Trophy

Awarded to Greg Mowat -

Drove his Lotus 7 to the circuit behind his Triumph TC road car which he then entered in the Regularity Trial.



Ron Brooking Trophy - Enjoyment of the sport

Awarded to Alan Radburn -

for not giving up. Rolled his car last weekend, stole his son in laws car for this weekend, broke it on Friday but fixed it overnight to continue racing this weekend



CLASS AWARDS

Regularity Trial - Auto Restorations

Awarded to Connor Goddard -

First time out doing well with his times in his Triumph Vitesse.



Formula Libre - Kelford Engineering

Awarded to Grant Walker-

From Auckland to Melbourne then the South Island, and good clean racing in his Titan FF



Pre78 Classic Saloons - Upper Classics

Awarded to Matt McLeary-

Nicely presented as are all Triumph's and he is a good clean racer.



Continental Rennsport - Willis Bond

Awarded to Jim Wallace-

Living in Australia but returns to race, Driving well, tremendous supporter of classic and historic racing.



MX-5 Heritage Cup - AF Southgate

Awarded to Mick Toll -

Loves racing so much entered in two different classes with different vehicles



CMRC Allcomers (A) - Fibre Systems

Awarded to Darrell Breen -

Ex John Bowe Falcon Supercar, and the first time its been driven at Levels



SOUTHERN CLASSIC - AWARDS

VCC & Historic - Banks Peninsula VCC

Awarded to Russell Greer-

In the Edelbrock Special. Totally undriveable but he did it - gave his arms a good workout !



CMRC Allcomers (B) - Merrin Street Brewery

Awarded to David Hunter -

Driving his MGB GT V8 like he stole it !



Formula Junior - Archibalds Lotus

Awarded to Martin Bullock -

Driving his Wren FJ, no its not a bird but it fly's like one !



Information means safety ! Tuning into Race Radio

In recent years we have had a number of incidents on track that Race Radio would have minimized the impact and, in some cases, avoided vehicle damage.

The benefit of direct contact with entrants is that it makes the meeting flow with communication such as call up to the dummy grid, indication of pit gate opening as well as race messages relating to yellow flag, slippery surface etc which are given immediately as the officials become aware. Most importantly any red flag incidents are broadcast so you know before you get to the next flag point. The CMRC will be making Race Radio mandatory in 2027 starting with our Southern Classic (12-14 Feb). Prior to that it will be optional for our Autumn Fling (9th May) and Brooklands Challenge (12th Sept) which is a great way to get used to it prior to 2027.

Recently at the Highlands FOS meeting the Vintage & Historic and the Nostalgic & HVRA classes had to use Race Radio. The feedback we have received was very positive and happy to have it as part of their equipment.

It was also made clear that you need to use the best head set by putting speakers into your helmet permanently rather than using the earpieces.

Here is the link to the Harris systems.

<https://harrisraceradios.com/products/gt-members-race-receiver>

There is a large number of Earpieces, speaker as well as cables available depending on the helmets involved.

<https://harrisraceradios.com/collections/race-receivers>

Bags to hold the receivers that can be attached to race harness or overall epaulets etc.

<https://harrisraceradios.com/products/receiver-bag-for-nitro-bee-xtreme>

Contact :-

Rex Harris

Harris Technology Ltd

Email: rex@raceradios.co.nz

Call: +64 21 682 912



10 minutes in the shed can save hours of repairs

Just in case you missed this in the last newsletter, we thought it would be a good idea to re-publish this again as a reminder.

Here is our simply self scrutiny checklist for a helpful guide to the key items to look over, before its all to late.

It is a pre-competition checklist to help you ensure that when a vehicle is presented at a safety audit, it should pass.

LOGBOOK & LICENCE

- Is the logbook up-to-date? e.g. is the photograph of the vehicle current and accurate?
- Is my COD with my logbook and licence?
- Have any repairs to be done noted in the log book by an auditor been completed?
- Is my licence current (i.e. not expired) Is my Club licence current?

Checked

VEHICLE GENERAL CONDITION

- Do a walk-around - is there any loose bodywork or panels that require repair?
- Steering - is the system working properly – no excessive play etc.
- Brakes - functioning well – good feel and pressure
- Battery - properly secured and charged
- Lighting and wiring – functioning – in good condition - is the rain light working?
- Exhaust system – secure – no leaks – noise within limit
- Throttle return spring(s) – functional with no sticking
- Fuel system – caps/vents in place and working - no leaks etc.
- Fluids – check brake and clutch master cylinders for level as well as coolant

The numbers with each item below refer to Schedule A – Driver and Vehicle Safety. If there is any doubt that an item complies with the rules, please check online at <https://motorsport.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/Schedule-A-Part-One.pdf>

DRIVER APPAREL

- Protective helmet Art 4.1 Good condition- no significant scratches/cracks etc. – expiry date?
- Frontal Head Restraint Art 4.2 Good condition – restraining straps - no fraying/stretching
- Race Suit Art 4.3 Clean (free of oils stains etc.) and within expiry date
- Protective clothing Art4.3 Clean and free of holes/damage – fitting well

VEHICLE SAFETY

- Safety structure Art 4.6 In good order – padding as appropriate
- Race Seat Art 4.7 Properly affixed to car – check mounting points
- Safety harness Art 4.4 In good order – within expiry date – check mounting points
- Fire extinguisher Art 4.8 Securely mounted – check gauge for good pressure - expiry date?
- Firewall/rear bulkhead Art 4.12 Secure – no gaps to driver safety cell
- Interior – General No loose items

This is not intended to be a complete list of what you need to ensure is in good order. If in doubt about anything on this list please contact Grant Littleton - 0274 691 655 or Kevin Telford - 0276 235 455.



PADDOCK PIC's

We sent out a roaming reporter into the paddock at Southern Classic with only one job "capture pictures of people in the paddock when they were not looking", well it looks like a lot more people WERE looking.....



PADDOCK PIC's



PADDOCK PIC's



PADDOCK PIC's

