

New Zealand 2015

After a successful Tasman event in Sydney, eight cars, a Honda motor cycle and a couple of push bikes were packed into the container with a pile of spare engines, tyres and spares for a six week adventure in New Zealand. The six events were comprised of two events to celebrate Howden Ganley at Hampton Downs and four events in the South Island, comprising 27 races plus testing, practice and qualifying sessions. Although most of us had raced at Hampton Downs, the 4 south islands were new and were looking forward to the challenge of the circuits, the hospitality of the people and the sightseeing. We were not disappointed.

Hampton Downs

We arrived a couple of days before and were greeted by Hunter Russell from Auckland and then proceeded to Hampton Downs where to our surprise Tony Roberts and the team from Hampton Downs had already unpacked the container and the cars were installed in their garages. Also next to us in the garages was team USA comprising of Travis Engen, Marc and Cindy Giroux, David Allison with six cars and supported by JR and his crew.

Representing Australia was:

Martin and Michele Bullock in a B34 Chevron
Lance Carwardine in the Jane Brabham
Henry Oosterbaan in the Alton
Brian and Ann Searles in the Royale RP31m
David and Cathy Watkins in the Elfin Catalina
Bruce Edgar and Kathy Price in the Elfin Catalina FJ
Neil and Mandy McCrudden in the Lotus 20/22 FJ
We also had the Macon F2 as spare car for the trip.

We were also supported by Ray and Tinka Mushett as well as Ray and Carol Robertson and Alan Beats.



From left to right: Martin Bullock, Brian Seales (standing), Neil McCrudden, Lance Carwardine, David Watkins, Bruce Edgar, Henry Oosterbaan

The weather was fantastic and the friendship and camaraderie was great as we all settled into the first week of racing. One of our friends Peter Boel had suffered catastrophic engine failures in both his Lotus 41 and 51 on the Friday and was without a car for the weekend. We offered the Macon for the first weekend and we now had all eight Australian Cars running.

In any race there will be mechanical problems and the first to arise was a blown head gasket on the Jane Brabham and Lance was quickly into the job and a new gasket was fitted. There were two new cars on the trip namely the Chevron which Marty purchased in Sydney and the Elfin for David Watkins. Both were to be unreliable. The head gasket on the Chevron appeared to be leaking as it would boil after a few laps. The head was removed and it appeared that the block was less than optimum for a race engine. A different head gasket was sourced and Marty was able to complete the event. David suffered gearbox problems. The car runs a split VW case and after a few races decided to split the case into several pieces. The box was removed and Tony Olisoff reassembled the box with a new crown wheel and pinion for the following weekend.



Juniors doing battle through the hairpin at Hampton Downs

On the Saturday Peter and Bev Boel hosted all the international and formula Junior drivers and their partners at their house for a BBQ and drinks which ended up being held in their garage due to heavy rain. As myself and Mandy were the guests of Peter and Bev for the two weekends it was even better and was able to retreat to our room at the end of the night.

Apart from the few minor mechanical events all the cars ran well over the two weekends. Marty was going very well in his group and was battling with Travis Engen in his Ralt RT1, Lance and also in a duel with Peter Boel in the Macon the ever reliable Henry with Holden powered grey motor and David Watkins were also wheel to wheel. No matter where your car ends up compared to later more powerful ones there is generally someone else to run against. Brian circulated in with the Formula Fords and had a great time. In the juniors, Bruce was quick and consistent over the Hampton Downs event and I was able to be in the mix with them as well in the Lotus. One of the great things about the races at the festival is that there are no trophies for the first past the post. The organizers agree on whom the best driver was given their car and who made the most effort to win. Martin Bullock was deservedly awarded the Denny Hulme trophy for the spirit of the event whilst Travis won for the Formula Libre. The Formula Junior was also deservedly won by John Rapley.



Martin Bullock being presented with the Denny Hulme trophy

Hampton Downs continues to be a fantastic venue and the organizers appreciate the efforts made by the international and local drivers. An example is when we needed to move our container as it was scheduled to be transported at the end of racing on Sunday so as to be at the Highlands circuit in the south Island by the following Thursday.. Calvin Bonney who was competing in his F5000 organized one of his trucks to come to the circuit on Saturday night to move the container out from a stack of a dozen containers so the truck could gain access to it the following day. This was all done for free. Another example is that one of the F5000 drivers (Peter Burson) went guarantee so our cars could be imported into New Zealand without requiring the use of a Carnet. This exemplifies the true culture of the sport and the West Australian team was and is very thankful.

We would also like to thank Jim and Joanie Barclay for their support and organizational help in putting on such a fantastic event.

Highlands Circuit – Cromwell.



The Highlands circuit is a creation of Tony Quinn who emigrated from Scotland as a lad and moved first to Perth and then Queensland. After amassing a fortune mainly through the VIP pet products he acquired and constructed a new circuit in central Otago in the South Island. Situated about 40 minutes from Queenstown the concept of a truly vertically integrated facility is something new for this part of the world. There is a large museum which houses a fantastic collection of rare and beautiful cars; a top quality

restaurant called “the Nose” a host of pit garages for the locals and a new multi story control tower and grandstand. Still to be completed are the pit garages / carports for the competitors. Around the perimeter is a host of motor sport venues including, a go cart track, speedway, rally circuit and a host of other facilities. Tony even has his own road making plant to do the development. Around the perimeter is a park with an array of wildlife (Jurassic park) akin to Clive Palmer’s Queensland facility. Free buses took competitors and spectators around the facility at regular intervals. The concept is that of a theme park where the motorsport component is front and centre.

The circuit comprises of three separate sections which can be joined together to form a large and interesting venue (see the circuit map). The circuit is fun to drive on and although in its early stages of use I found the entry to the bridge a bit challenging and would like to see this section modified for the safety of single seater cars. The circuit offers good overtaking opportunities and I particularly liked the large parabolica after the start finish straight.



Which way did they say to go?

We were joined by Ross Zampatti to drive the Macon F2 as well as George and Ina Webber, Colin and Trish McKee and Ray and Carol Robertson from Western Australia. Ross has a long history in formula racing having competed in New Zealand in period in the Atlantics and drives now mainly in Europe for the professional teams.

Marty had his first win in his Chevron whilst I was lucky enough to have one in the Lotus. All the team had a great drive with Bruce, David Watkins and I dicing with each other for the podium. David’s gearbox finally succumbed and the car was packed away in the container for the trip back to Perth. Bruce drove brilliantly despite gearshift issues

and on my Lotus the gear change rod finally broke in the last event. It was given to Mark Roberts from McGregor Motorsports who it had repaired it for the next weekend in Christchurch. Even better, he did it for free. Lance, Henry, Brian all went extremely well. We also adopted David Innes (Lotus 27) as part of the team. Although David is from the UK he spends 3 months a year in Perth and his close relatives are based here as well. Brother John and wife Clare, David's sister Ann and her husband Colin all helped David along the way and all became great friends. David's Lotus was transported in our container throughout New Zealand.

The event was sponsored by ENZED and the Formula Libre and vintage cars, were I feel, just a filler to the New Zealand Vs Aussie Muscle cars and Aussie Legend events. From our perspective all the focus was in this area. This I thought was ironic as many in our West Australian team were major customers of ENZED products.

The event is run as a commercial venture and although we were visiting international competitors we still had to pay full costs for such items as marquees. Hunter Russell had organized NZ Express and the owner of the company John Petrie to transport the two 40 containers to and from Christchurch to Cromwell. John and his son both stayed and watched the event with us over the weekend. This kind offer by NZ Express saved us a significant amount in freight costs. So impressed was John that he invited the wives and partners of the Australian and UK teams to his corporate box at the Christchurch circuit.

We also found the culture of the contracted staff at Highlands Park to be not in keeping for this type of event and were disappointed by the action of a couple of security guards. I am sure Tony Quinn or his staff would not have condoned this approach and hope that these types of teething problems are quickly resolved.



A packed grid approaches the chicane at Highlands

The Skope Classic at Mike Pero Motorsport Park Christchurch. (Ruapuna)



The atmosphere was like chalk and cheese from the previous circuit. The Canterbury Car Club had, through their sponsors, provided the internationals with marquees and offered the ladies a room to view the events. We unloaded the container and placed the cars into the marquees on the Thursday afternoon. I placed my race bag in the seat of the Lotus and after checking the cars went home for the night. The next morning we arrived at the circuit and there was snow on the Southern Alps and it was freezing. The rain must have been almost horizontal as the race bag was completely drenched and my normal race suit was soaked. Luckily I had a spare and it was still in the plastic from the drycleaners. It was that cold that even with our fireproof underwear and 3 layer race suits we still needed a coat.

The event is sponsored Skope Industries which provides New Zealand with most of its refrigeration needs. The owners (Stewart family) were racers for many years (via PDL Plastics) and have been active supporters (and racers) of the historic movement and this was evident through the weekend.

As part of the entry we all received a complimentary entry to the function on Saturday night. The circuit is level and quite easy to learn. The circuit can easily be seen from most points around the perimeter. Families would park their cars up to the fence and have a great vantage point to follow the event. Also competing were the F5000 s and the

mainland muscle cars as well as Historic touring cars, Formula Libre and the Vintage Cars which included the Formula Juniors.



Lance Carwardine in the Jane Brabham leads Ross Zampatti in the Macon

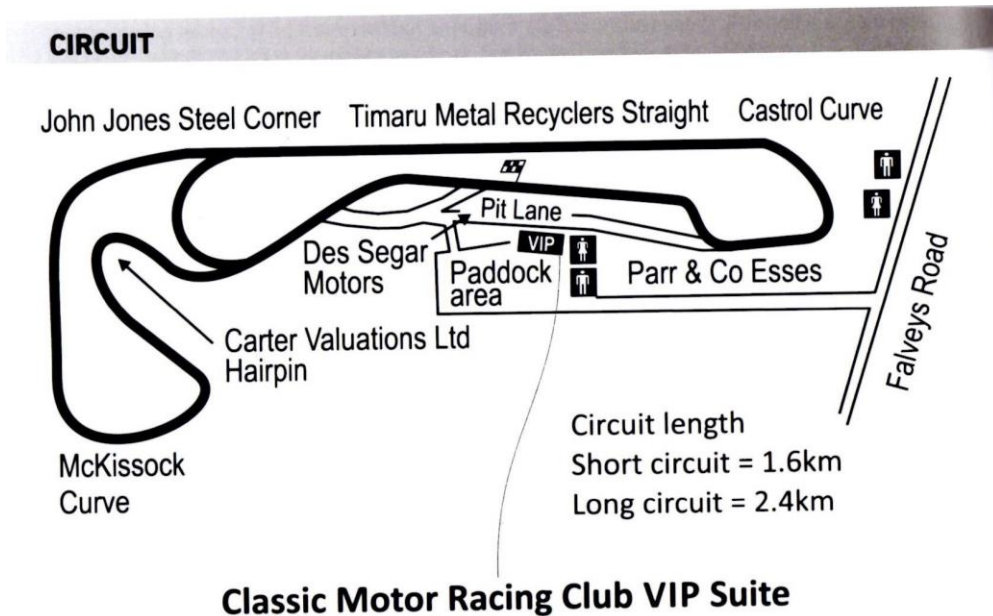
The Formula Junior events were fierce with the battles between New Zealand (John Rapley - Brabham and Chris Atkinson - Lotus 20/22) vs the Brits David Innes (Lotus 27), Vernon Williamson (Lynx) and Ray Mallock in a very fast Mallock with Bruce Edgar (Elfin) and me in the Lotus. Chris won 2 races, Ray Mallock one with my Lotus able pick up a win as well. The racing was extremely close and in the last event the first six cars crossed the line in just within one second.

Marty was the most successful of the Australians with two wins in his Chevron, still learning the car and circuits, whilst the rest of the guys battled it out mid field. These cars ranged from Henry's Alton all the way up to the late 1980s cars, including some fast Formula Ford 2000 cars "slightly" modified.

We had a birthday party for Mandy at a local restaurant with great food and even greater wines (so they told me).

Nigel Russell, Vernon and Copper Williamson put together a fantastic BBQ on the Friday after practice, which included a cake for Lance's birthday and we all enjoyed the leftovers for lunch the following day. What was interesting about the BBQ was that there were over 60 competitors and their partners in the marquee and no one had a match or lighter to ignite the BBQ. It certainly illustrated the lack of smokers amongst the historic movement.

The Southern Classic at the Levels (Timaru)



This event was sponsored by ENZED and was held at the Levels Circuit at Timaru. The first thing we encountered was the members of the club inviting the internationals and their partners to the club's hospitality room overlooking the circuit. Like the Scope event we all received entry to the Saturday night function and were made to feel welcome. Brian and Diane Dixon were instrumental in ensuring the international drivers and their partners gained access to the corporate hospitality area overlooking the circuit and presented the ladies with New Zealand Silver Fern emblems as well.

Scrutineering was a breeze and we were all ready for practice and Qualifying. By this time we were down to seven cars with Henry back in Australia and David's car broken. We were also joined at Christchurch by John Rowe in his new Lotus 18 he had just acquired from David Fenton. Team Australia had now increased to three Formula Juniors. John's car experienced some teething problems but he persisted and improved greatly.

During practice, Vernon Williamson detonated his engine with a large hole out the side of the block. With no spare his tour was over. This was particularly disappointing as it was a new car and he had traveled all the way from Scotland to race. My goal was to have one race at each circuit so I offered to share the Lotus with Vernon over the next couple of events. We were both roughly the same size so the pedals did not become a problem in swapping drivers. Nevertheless we both had a great time at Timaru and I managed to pick up a second. Marty was able to win a race in the Chevron and the rest of the team were competitive. Perhaps the standout was Bruce Edgar who during the entire campaign started and finished every race near the front, with a great second place on Saturday.

Lance broke a CV joint on the Brabham and one of the locals drove 40kms home to pick one up for him. The guy did not even want to be paid and it typifies the commitment and support we received from some of the locals.

At the Function which is held on the Saturday night and halfway through the event the Club presented a series of trophies. Like Hampton Downs they are for the spirit of the event and it was not surprising to see that Ross Zampatti won the Formula Libre award. Sunday was another fantastic event in warm weather and in the Formula Juniors Chris Atkinson was the standout in his Lotus 20/22, winning all events at Levels. The container was then loaded and we were off to our last event for the season.



Neil, Colin & Bruce in a strategy meeting

Evolution Motorsport Speedfest at Teretonga Invercargill



By this time a third of the drivers had departed back to Perth and remaining from West Australia were: Lance Carwardine, Ross Zampatti, Brian Searles, Bruce Edgar, John Rowe and Neil McCrudden.

We unloaded the container and were greeted by a reporter who wanted to run a story on the West Australian Racing Museum. They did not want to photograph the Lotus as it was too dark and only needed the Brabham and Macon (see article).

Friday afternoon was used for practice with qualifying first thing on Saturday morning. Both Vernon and myself had a drive around in the Lotus on the Friday. The weather forecast was to be fine in the morning with showers after lunch. I took the Lotus out for qualifying and managed to score pole. As it was going to rain I thought it wise to put a wet weather driver from Scotland in it for the afternoon events. It rained so hard in the afternoon that Vernon thought it wiser to come in after a couple of laps as it was impossible to see where you were going through the spray. Bruce and David Innes had a great first race in the wet through the rain and spray, with David finishing first in the Juniors only slightly ahead of Bruce. In the second race, David elected not to start and Bruce won his first in the slippery conditions, ahead of the front engine brigade.



Aussie flags fly in the Teretonga pits

The next day was dry and warm and I was able to get to the front early and had the first win in the Lotus. The plan was for me to take in the second race and Vernon the last. However the engine expired with one lap to go so that strategy came to nothing. The Macon also had clutch problems and after changing a clutch Ross noticed the bell housing was cracked and retired the car. Lance completed all the Formula Libre races as did Brian Searles. Bruce was able to secure 3 second places and John Rowe improved considerably over the weekend after partially fixing a sticking accelerator. The cars that gave the least amount of trouble over the six events were Brian Searles Royale and Bruce Edgar's Elfin (which finished 27 out of 27 races).

Like the other two club circuits Teretonga hosted a fantastic function on the Saturday night and I was able to walk away with the Formula Junior trophy whilst Lance picked up an award for his outstanding efforts.

The cars were all drained of fuel and cleaned, tyres wrapped in cling wrap and then loaded back to Australia. The container will return with nine race cars, Honda Motorcycle, 2 push bikes, half a dozen engines and gearboxes, dozen of wheels and tyres plus enough spares to practically "sink a ship". It was a great adventure made possible by a fantastic team of drivers, partners, friend, and locals.

The locals were enthusiastic and interested in our exploits and cars. The local paper, the Southland Times, ran an article on Neil and WARM (see below) with photos and a report following the event.

Race cars not just about racing

[NICCI MCDUGALL](#)



JOHN HAWKINS/FAIRFAX NZ

West Australian Racing Museum owner

West Australian Racing Museum owner Neil McCrudden with his 1969 Jane Brabham BT23 and 1969 Macon Formula 2 ready to race in the Evolution Motorsport Classic Speedfest at Teretonga Park this weekend.

"They've all got a story to tell and they should be able to tell it."

For West Australian Racing Museum Owner Neil McCrudden it's not necessarily about racing his collection of historic cars or even travelling the world.

It's about preserving the history of his beloved vehicles.

McCrudden is one of more than 120 worldwide entries in the Evolution Motorsport Classic Speedfest at Teretonga, which starts tomorrow .

Perth-based McCrudden, who can't stand to see a neglected car, doesn't just race his historic cars. He hunts them down, restores them and houses them in his museum -

believed to be the largest collection of historic racing cars which actually race in the Southern Hemisphere.

After racing his cars throughout the world - Ireland, the iconic tracks in England, South Africa - McCrudden has decided to try the Teretonga track out for the first time with his team of race car drivers.

He freighted three of his treasured cars - a 1969 Jane Brabham BT23, 1969 Macon Formula 2 and Lotus Formula Junior - from Australia to New Zealand on his container on a ship.

The cars cost about \$2000 each to freight and were on the water for three weeks, he said.

McCrudden has raced some of his cars in the North Island but recently decided to head south after being told he should by the Formula Junior co-ordinator Nigel Russell.

Formula Junior Diamond Jubilee organisers are now considering Teretonga as part of the world series in 2017, he said.

McCrudden has been involved in motorsport since 1969 from drag racing to speedway and circuit racing.

For McCrudden, motorsport has been a life-long passion and a five-day-a-week job.

Starting his museum - which is located on his six-acre property in Perth - came about because he realised no one seemed to be interested in cars from Western Australia, he said.

So he set about hunting some historic Western Australian race cars down, restored them and raced them.

His museum houses a list of more than 20 historic cars including a Jane Brabham BT23, MRI F2, Lotus 20/22 Formula Junior, Macon FF, Fielding F2 and Befu F2. If the cars weren't at the museum they were being restored and cared for at the driver's homes.

His most precious cars were not the most expensive, but those with the most history and that had been built in West Australia by West Australians, he said.

The 24th Speedfest starts at 9am tomorrow and Sunday , featuring classic saloons, vintage racing cars, pre-65 saloons and more.

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