



WHEELSPIN

October 2012
www.hccc.org.nz

WHO'S WHO & WHAT'S WHAT

		Home	Work	Email
PRESIDENT	Leon Cast	478 3438	0276996 838	mowogeditor@yahoo.com
CLUB CAPTAIN POINTS KEEPER	Webster Gough	2338 601		websterg@paradise.net.nz
SOCIAL CONVENOR	Dave Wilce	233 9757	0275 339 757	
SECRETARY	Brian Craig	239 9542	471 7746	brian.craig@opus.co.nz
TREASURER	Jilly Hutson	475 5599	463 0461	4jilly@clear.net.nz
COMMITTEE	John Tennent	475 9619	477 7965	johntennent@xtra.co.nz
	Andrew Thomson	027 2605 830		
	Adam Fisher	027 4577 149		
	Roger Lyon	027 4911 129		
	Leela Copping	027 2575 328		
WMSA Rep	Dave Wilce	233 9757	0275 339 757	
SOCIAL CONVENOR	Dave Wilce	233 9757	0275 339 757	
WHEELSPIN	Len Fisher	06 364 5336	0274 390 308	elfish9@gmail.com Or mail to 6, Macalister Pl, Miramar
CLUB SCRUTINEERS	Wayne Gair	236 7541		
	Neil Roots	526 7510	027 248 3979	
	Cy Guest	526 6170	021 304253	
	Adam Fisher	027 4577149		

WEBSITE: www.hccc.org.nz

COVER PHOTO

Fleur & Brian at Hokkaido

Harbour Capital Car Club Clubnight

First Wednesday of the month Fireman's Arms, 313 Jackson Street

(North End of Jackson Street, just South of Cuba St intersection) Petone

Committee Meeting 3rd Wednesday of the month, Fireman's Arms, 313 Jackson St Petone, 7:30 pm. Note:— anyone is welcome to attend committee meetings.

Wheelspin is the official magazine of the Harbour Capital Car Club, PO Box 4102, Wellington. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Club or Committee.

To other Car Club Editors: While we do not object to other magazines using articles or material from our Wheelspin, we do appreciate recognition of the source of said material. Originals are usually available on request.

DEADLINE

The Deadline for Wheelspin articles is the 20th of the month approx.

Clubnight

The Fireman's Arms Jackson Street, Petone

Wednesday the 3rd October 2012 @7:30



Relatively speaking, a quiet month of going vroom vroom in cars, which is good for the wallet but bad for the sanity.

We had scheduled a Motorkhana and Autocross one week apart, at the Silverstream paddock. However they had tree felling contractors due to go in there for a couple of weeks and attack some pesky trees (which had caused a couple of big power cuts in Upper Hutt recently). This really only left one event for me to play in, being round #2 of the Upper Hutt sealed autocross events. This time around, it was actually above zero degrees in the morning, which did improve the whole changing wheels experience before racing as I didn't end up frozen to the wheelbrace.

A bit of a smaller turnout to this round though, as possibly some people were scared off by the kerbs, although there's always a change that sometimes it just happens that people have a bunch of other stuff going on that weekend. Still a healthy turnout with mid 30's (a lot better than we typically get at a grass event).

The BMW who cleaned out his front suspension last time was back again, with all wheels facing in the correct direction, and was generally taking it quite a lot easier than the last time out (where a certain amount of kerbage of the high speed understeer variety happened). Cathy Reid wasn't back yet, as apparently the wee Charade had suffered some more damage than had been previously suspected, as when the replacement suspension arm was fitted, the car was still very much cross eyed. So Cathy was relegated to officialdom duties on the day. The day wasn't without incident, as a certain Commodore wagon had a couple of kerb clips. The first was merely a brush and resulted in a bent wheel

The second kerb encounter on the other hand was terminal, and resulted in the diff moving sideways about a foot and banana time for the chassis rails. Luckily however the car was very much destined for parts / scrap duty anyway.

I'm not quite sure what happened to Wade in the super duper fast Sti (proof that all race cars should be white four door sedans). All I know is that he was there in the morning, and then he wasn't any more.

I was having an average day at best, as unfortunately I'd underestimated how much my hand brake needed adjusting, so I wasn't able to get the back of the car coming around for the barrels, and I just generally seemed to be fighting the car every step of the way. But a bad day autocrossing is still better than the best day ever mowing the lawns and doing the vacuuming. The grip level was proving interesting too, as I was running the softs on the front and the

mediums on the back. This resulted in a few interesting understeer moments on the first corner when the rear rubber was still stone cold.

The second lap was getting a bit interesting, as I was completely unloading the entire passenger side of the car and getting wheelspin as the inside front was trying to come off the ground.

So one of these days it looks like I'll have to do something to seriously stiffen up the front of the car, as that mad lean is being achieved with me running the front sway bar on the hardest setting and carrying a passenger. I'm reluctant to go all in on tarmac suspension though, as I still want to be able to use the car at Kapiti, and one of these days when I have money (ahhahahahaha!!!) I'd like to set the car up for proper gravel use and do a rally. To get the floor of the car far enough off the ground to go out on gravel though I will really have to invest in proper adjustable suspension as the AE92's do end up being a bit of a hovercraft even on standard height uprated springs, and the floor takes a serious beating. I'd rather not have the floor of the car murdered by rocks as it's actually pretty good under there.

Butters The Most Junior cleaned out a suspension arm on the black FXGT, so wasn't able to finish the day, and Neil Tapp had his usual trouble, destroying probably the half dozenth CV joint at a tarmac autocross. Tony Burrow's son smacked the kerb and broke a suspension arm on the Sti rally car, but luckily there were parts to replace it, and Adam Fisher was under the car quickly pulling bits off. So the rally car was able to finish the day.

We've certainly got some events coming up to look forward to. For the gravel aficionado there's Waiorongomai Road gravel sprint up in Otaki (which is always very popular, being a nice smooth bit of road), the Labour Weekend Triathlon (all on tarmac this year by the way) incorporating the always over subscribed Port Road street sprint on Sunday, then a motorkhana and autocross at the HVMC sealed subdivision venue. Regs are out now, so hit the Seabright Motorsport website and get an entry in FAST, before you miss out. I'm looking to run a grass Autocross on November 4th at Silverstream, so weather willing there will be another nice cheap local autocross to get too then!

The Silver Fern classic endurance rally isn't too far away, and they are getting down as far as northern Manawatu and Wairarapa, so if you're able ... sneak a day off work and head up. There's a fascinating looking stage south of Ohakune that has a 70+km stage, with a loop in it ... so I'm almost tempted to head up to that one and camp out in the middle of the stage, as you'll get to see each car twice in the one stage.

That's it from me for now; see you somewhere with cars and probably cones too.

PS: Look out for new club t-shirts ... we're looking at getting some cotton polo's made, which will be a bit more user friendly at events than the existing nylon ones.

Leon



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Harry Carpenter at the Oxford-Cambridge boat race 1977 - 'Ah, isn't that nice. The wife of the Cambridge President is kissing the Cox of the Oxford crew.'

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Hi all,

Another great day's motorsport at Trentham yesterday, with a good field and a challenging track made even more tricky with the arrival of rain in the afternoon.

Thanks to all who attended and congratulations to those drivers who got through to the later stages of the shootout. Well done, Jared, for defending your "Shootout" title. Full results are attached.

Cheers

Neil Rush Secretary/Treasurer

Results: HVMC Trentham Sealed Autocross
19th August 2012

Car No.	Name	Club	Car	Class	Practice	Run 1	Run 2	Run 3	Place	Shoot 32	Shoot 16	Shoot 8	Shoot 4	Shoot 2
2	Alan Groves	HCCC	Subaru	4WD	1.36.09	1.14.84	1.13.82	1.10.41	1	1.19.29	1.17.88	1.28.55		
11	Wade Noedl	HVMC	Subaru	4WD	1.25.78	1.11.47	dns	dns	2					
31	Bruce Graham	HCCC	Pulsar	EOD	1.14.41	1.12.63	1.15.15	1.17.24	3	ww				
9	Tony Burrowes	Wgtn CC	Subaru	4WD	ww	dnf	1.12.66	dns	4		1.22.47	1.20.35	1.19.38	
15	Steve Jopson	HVMC	Escort	ENOD	1.32.13	1.21.16	1.15.03	1.17.60	5	1.18.33	1.31.12			
13	Jared Rush	HVMC	Trueno	ENOD	1.20.24	1.17.98	ww	1.15.25	6	1.15.13	1.17.75	1.16.95	1.16.15	1.15.87
6	Brian Worboys	HCCC	Roadrat	ENOD	1.20.84	1.26.41	1.16.99	1.15.99	7	1.17.70	1.21.28			
18	Graham Heath	HCCC	Pulsar	EOD	1.25.33	1.16.01	1.20.84	1.29.63	8	1.20.10	1.20.34	1.18.50	1.22.84	
1	Tim Gaskin	HVMC	Nissan 180X	ENOD	1.23.12	1.18.16	1.16.48	1.18.00	9	1.22.16	1.21.62	1.20.66		
21	Neil Roots	HCCC	Roadrat	ENOD	1.28.63	1.26.81	1.28.62	1.16.88	10	1.18.52				
20	Curtis Estall	*	Integra	EOD	1.21.34	1.17.34	1.19.13	ww	11	1.18.09	1.20.73	1.18.75	1.18.41	1.18.13
4	Kerry Butters	HVMC	Corolla	EOD	1.30.11	1.18.27	1.17.58	1.18.73	12	1.21.06				
8	Leon Cast	HCCC	Corolla	EOD	ww	1.17.84	1.17.58	1.18.90	13	1.22.37	1.35.97			
26	Adam Fisher	HCCC	Starlet	ENOD	1.20.24	dnf	1.17.89	1.19.13	14	1.23.14	1.24.93			
27	Nick Bentley	HVMC	Corolla	EOD	1.28.62	dnf	1.19.78	1.23.00	15	1.23.06	1.21.85	1.20.50		
5	Gareth Cooper	HCCC	Escort	ENOD	ww	1.22.03	1.21.21	1.19.99	16	1.23.84	1.22.22	1.21.18		
3	Brendon Dolan	HCCC	Nissan 200SX	ENOD	1.26.49	1.21.69	1.20.72	1.23.16	17	1.24.67				
12	Shane Atkinson	HCCC	Civic	EOD	ww	ww	1.20.81	1.26.33	18	1.23.10	1.22.76			
28	Peter Scott	WTSCC	TR7	ENOD	dnf	1.21.40	1.23.91	1.24.62	19	1.22.80	1.24.33			
23	Richard Hitchcock	BMW CC	BMW	ENOD	1.25.77	1.26.27	1.22.38	1.22.87	20	1.24.63	1.23.49			
25	Neil Rush	HVMC	Pulsar	EOD	1.23.66	1.22.55	1.38.18	1.37.41	21	1.26.78				
36	Neal Cole	HVMC	Corolla	EOD	1.31.33	1.27.27	1.22.93	1.26.31	22	1.25.75				
7	Dick Butters	HCCC	Subaru	4WD	1.27.82	1.26.24	ww	1.23.86	23	1.40.12				
29	Blair Griffith	*	Corolla	EOD	1.25.58	1.26.99	1.23.89	1.28.19	24	1.26.96				
16	Jacob Lyon	HCCC	Corolla	EOD	1.28.61	ww	1.24.24	1.24.92	25					
17	John Rapley	HCCC	Suzuki	EOD	1.27.91	1.26.11	1.25.45	1.29.87	26	1.27.84				
10	Jilly Hutson	HCCC	Starlet	EOD	1.28.94	1.25.63	1.26.00	1.32.08	27	1.31.11				
14	Anton Zabelin	HVMC	Nissan 200SX	ENOD	1.29.72	ww	1.25.85	1.30.21	28	1.27.49				
19	Zed Butters	HVMC	Corolla	EOD	1.39.33	1.30.88	1.33.59	1.47.28	29	dnf				
34	Cameron Ombler-Welch	HCCC	Holden	ENOD	ww	1.33.45	dns	dns	30					
22	Mike Wallis	BMW CC	BMW	ENOD	ww	dns	dns	dns	np					
24	Robert Burrowes	Wgtn CC	Subaru	4WD	ww	ww	dnf	dns	np	1.49.47				
33	Zanie Vrey	HCCC	Holden	ENOD	2.10.70	ww	dns	dns	np					
35	Guy Ombler	HCCC	Holden	ENOD	1.35.11	dnf	dns	dns	np					

1.15.09 shading indicates 5 sec penalty for cone/barrel applied
ww indicates wrong way on course
1.07.43 indicates fastest time of three official runs
1.07.43 indicates times to progress to next round

US PGA Commentator - 'One of the reasons Arnie (Arnold Palmer) is playing so well is that, before each tee shot, his wife takes out his balls and kisses them Oh my god !! What have I just said??'

Hokkaido Rally, Japan.

How to sum up Rally Hokkaido? Fanatical fans, fast roads, big ruts, friendly, polite and respectful people. And this year, HOT! It was meant to be autumn, but we experienced temperatures in the mid 30s during the rally. This after last year we had hail during the rally.

I love Japan. The people are what make it for me. Oh, and the food! Mmmmmm.....

Over the course of the rally the fans make you feel like a super star! On transport stages they are on the side of the road, taking photos, waving flags or just their hands, and all smiling. If you stop at a set of lights in the small town of Ashoro, children flock to the car asking for you to sign their books. On the flight from Obihiro to Tokyo after the rally, 2 girls very shyly came and show me a photo they had taken of me the day before, in the rally car, and asked to have a photo with me. The bows and giggles and thank you's were almost embarrassing..... How do famous people do it?

My two favourite sets of rally fans are as follows: first - 3 children, two girls and a boy. Brother and sisters. These three beautiful children are true rally fans. They make a book each, A4 size, and on each set of facing pages they stick a full page photo of the driver, opposite the name and flag of the driver. They then take these to the autograph signing session and have them signed. During the rally, these three can be seen with their father at many spots on the transport stages. They know what car each driver is driving, and as we drive close to them, they already have their books open on the correct page! Second - A man and his two bulldogs. This man always smiles, says hello, takes photos and waves. What is memorable about him is his two dogs, which are always with him, and how many places he gets to during the week. We see him on recce, at the autograph session and ceremonial start, many times on the transport stages, and at the ceremonial finish. Last year we spoke to him whilst waiting to recce a stage. One of his dogs was wearing a Citroen t-shirt, signed by Seb Loeb, Petter Solberg, Sebastien Ogier, and Dani Sordo!

Many fans have all the makes of car covered, with Mitsubishi, Proton, Subaru, Citroen, flags. They wave either whatever is appropriate for your car, or just wave all of them!

The rally itself is held on very fast but often very narrow roads. The roads generally do not have a hard base, so do rut out. Two stages in particular are very very badly rutted by the second pass. A case of put the wheels in the tracks, ignore the gravel that is polishing the sump guard, and drive. In the forest stages there are often concrete surrounded grids across the road. Imagine that immovable concrete when all the gravel is thrown out before it - they become very harsh, square edged speed bumps. Despite this, most stages are enjoyable, with a few jumps, lots of hills and many flat-out corners.

Last year, we blew an engine on day 2 of this event. This year, Rally Hokkaido threw up another problem for us - though certainly not a major one like an engine - and we suffered a puncture in stage 5. Unfortunately it was a front puncture and we had 16km to go. So, no choice but to stop and change it. What a disastrous tyre change! The car fell off the jack twice. The second time, the jack broke. Brian had just put on one wheel nut, and only just on. He then managed to put another one on slightly. I got him to drive the

car slightly forward and managed to get two more wheel nuts on... I kept getting him to move half a metre at a time whilst I tightened the wheel nuts. Once I was satisfied they were going to hold, I jumped in and we took off. Unfortunately we lost over 7 minutes. We then realised we had pulled out in front of another car and stopped to let them go. A very costly puncture time-wise.

After this we felt our hopes had faded for any good points in the APRC. However, in rallying, nothing is final until the checkered flag drops!

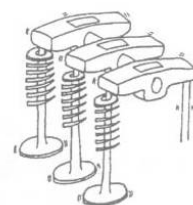
Towards the end of day 1, Alister's engine started overheating in his Proton S2000. This ultimately led to his retirement due to engine failure after the first stage of day 2. Day 2 also saw the retirement of Gaurav Gill in his Skoda S2000, when the clutch failed. The day 2 stages cut up badly, and Gaurav was unable to leave the uphill startline of the next stage after his clutch failed, partially due to how deep the ruts were. On the very same stage, Juha Salo in his Proton S2000 cut a corner and found something solid - resulting in the loss of a wheel and the end of his rally.

These retirements left us in 3rd APRC position, with 2nd within our reach, if we pushed hard and all went well. However, due to the rough nature of the roads on the second pass, and therefore the increased risk of breaking something, Brian opted to play it safe and hold on to our 3rd APRC position. Whilst we were not actually acknowledged for this, we did receive the points for it and now I'm in 2nd in the APRC championship with only one round remaining. The final round is in China at the end of October.



Tappet chatter

Just so you know: - We don't miss much and we will print everything. We never let the truth get in the way of a good story and we will not be intimidated. We can however be bribed, but we can't guarantee that it won't be published anyway!



Note: We trust our informants' 100% and would never question their reliability!



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Clarkson on road safety
Jeremy's wit and wisdom

I'm criticized by some Scottish chief constable one day for encouraging people to drive fast and then lambasted by Welsh assembly members for saying public transport is for poor people. Which it is. My crime is simple. I like cars.

As I drove down the M20 into Kent last Monday, I noticed that most of the speed cameras had been burnt out by vandals. This is disgusting. It is ridiculous, criminal and stupid that the person who savaged these life-saving devices should target the M20. and then stop. Why did you not keep right on going? I can think of six cameras on my way home that would be immeasurably improved with a spot of petrol and a match.

With 6,000 speed cameras nestling in every bush and parked van, they will not stop until they've got the accident rate down to zero. Which will be never. Lycra Nazis have already taken over a third of the roads with their green tarmac cycle lanes, now they want to take over the whole lot.

A third of all those injured and killed on the roads are young men, aged in a startlingly narrow band from seventeen to nineteen. Drowning in testosterone, and filled with a youthful sense of immortality, being seventeen is dangerous. It always has been. The fact is, you simply can't make a seventeen-year-old see sense.

In London, drivers do 42 million kilometres each year while lost, and that's the same as driving from New York to Los Angeles 9,200 times. Needlessly. There are many rules for the elderly in the highway Code. I have one, too. And here it is. Get a bloody move on.

It's this obsession everyone has got with speed now that speed kills — it doesn't. Suddenly becoming stationary, that's what gets you.

A general rule of thumb. If a car has less than 100 horsepower, it is never safe to pull into the outside lane if there is a car in sight even if it's three miles away. If a car has less than 60 horsepower, it is never safe to pull into the outside lane at all.

A female news anchor who, the day after it was supposed to have snowed and didn't, turned to the weatherman and asked, 'So Bob, where's that eight inches you promised me last night?' Not only did HE have to leave the set, but half the crew did too, because they were laughing so hard!

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Pat Glenn, weightlifting commentator - 'And this is Gregoriava from Bulgaria. I saw her snatch this morning and it was amazing!'

Gisborne and Maramarua Rallies 2012

With Bondy out of action, due to his calling in the receivers I was not expecting to co-drive again this year and I began to contemplate retirement, Jilly said “ You are only 68, don’t even think of it”, then Brendon called to say Marty Smith needed a co for Gisborne, and I’m back in business.

(I’ve just received an email from Bondy to say that he is back in business and has fired the receivers, so great news. I guess he will struggle for a while to re-build the business, so rallying will be on the back burner).

Marty also needed crew, and Adam & Jilly stepped up to fill that gap, so off we all went in my new (ish) Caldina GT4, with everybody volunteering to drive to Gisborne.



Marty Smith and Flying Fish at Gisborne
Did I say “don’t cut”?

The rally runs for two days, with a “central” service park for each day. Day one in the hills west of Gisborne and day two at Tolaga bay.

This service park was hardly central, Adam & Jilly were About 30k from the nearest stage, so didn’t get to see any gravel, and we had to tour huge distances to and from the stages, which were mostly run twice.

Stage one was a revelation to me, in 2010 with Bondy we had an awful run, slippery as hell, and I told Bondy that if he didn’t change the Kumhos to Dunlops, I’d walk home! Needless to say the change to Dunlops did the trick. This time, Marty was on new Dunlops, but inside the first K I had lost the notes, and in the second K started to throw up, after 45 years I have NEVER thrown up, (the only exception being in the UK when I was in a left hand drive VW Beetle, I had mounted the seat facing backwards, since a practice run found me bumping my head on the flat screen — I was prepared with a bucket between my knees; you should have seen the marshals’ faces when we pulled into a time control, faced with the driver and a crook co)

Back to Gissy, I can only assume that I was nervous (new driver, lots of left foot braking — but I’ve had that before). Anyhow I enjoyed the same breakfast 5 times, since I didn’t want to ruin my full-face helmet!

On Stage 2 I came right and was fine for the rest of the day. Marty never faltered, a great

drive, his style is a bit like Rex Vizable — go for it! While Marty uses a lot of left foot brake, Rex just chucks it like it's an Escort (both Marty & Rex have Legacy's). I was talking to Paul Black after one stage and he said he had given up left foot braking, it made him too slow! I'm inclined to agree, both Rex and Marty, I think would go faster without their slow-down habits.

However, on stage 2 we had our only "moment", it was a 6 right with a "don't cut", so quite fast, but the bump that we were meant to avoid really needed a "keep out" — we hit it, bounced across the road into a muddy bank and water table, Marty did well to drive through it and we did a bit of damage to the guard (later found a bent susp Arm). Many cars hit the same bank, with much more damage. Matt Jansen was tipped onto his side, so it ended his rally.



Kylie, Marty's daughter who usually co's for him, is doing the National Championships with Dave Strong, but nonetheless she supported dad at every service, keeping a track on our times. They finished the rally 3rd overall.

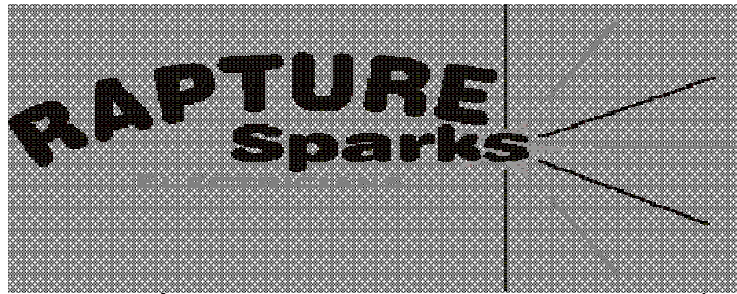
Well, the roads were good and we ended up with trophies. The rally could have been better organised, especially since the organisers are professionals, and charge enough entry fees. I will not dwell on that, but when you think of the superb organisation of Wairarapa, Daybreaker, Far North and Otago all by enthusiastic amateurs, how come the pro's make such a fist of it!

Two weeks later, Marty and I were back together at Maramarua, now this is a rally I was not really enthusiastic about, since I've done the same roads many times on Rally NZ and the Greg Todd memorial rally, however for Marty it was his first excursion into the forest. Well. What a superb rally it turned out to be. For a start it did use roads that I'd done before, but in a very clever random mix, which gave the impression of completely different stages, we only repeated one stage, and that was a blinder of 28k.

Central service at forest HQ, had Portaloos, results, a Latte cart and food by a local school, and three stages even ran right through the middle! A great concept; organised by the Hamilton Car Club (amateurs again). The only downside was having to go all the way to Hamilton to sign on and Finish. (There was provision for sign-on before the start, but that left no time to doctor the notes!)

Well done HCC, I'll return for that one. Marty took a while to settle into narrow bumpy roads with a real mix of surfaces, but once again we finished with an armful of trophies.

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Wellington Motorsport Association Calendar 2012

September	1				
	2	CF/GM	Race (Winter Series)	Manawatu	Manfeild
	12		Night Trial	Kapiti	NT
	16		Motorkhana	Harbour Capital	Silverstream ST/VB
	23	GG	Intermarque Sprint	IM(?)	Manfeild IM
	30	WG	Sealed Sprint	Wellington	Shelley Bay DM
October	6				
	7		Gravel Sprint	Levin	Wairongomai Road, Otaki GS
	10		Night Trial	Harbour Capital	Titahi Bay NT
	14	WG	Gravel Sprint	Wairarapa	Puketiro Road GS
	21	SM	Sealed Sprint (Triathlon)	Hutt Valley	Port Road DM
	22		Autocross/Motorkhana (Triathlon)	Hutt Valley	Trentham/Silverstream(?) KN/ST
	21-28		Targa Rally	Targa	
November	3				
	4	SM	Hillclimb	Wairarapa	Admiral Road DM
	10		Race (Classic)	MG	Manfeild
	11		Race (Classic)	MG	Manfeild
	10-18		Silver Fern Rally	Marathon RC	North Island Nat
	18		Autocross (Gravel)	Kapiti	Otaihanga
	19		WMSA Meeting		HVMC Clubrooms, Petone
	22	All	Stewards Meeting		
	25	GG	Gravel Sprint	Wairarapa	Dorsets Road GS
December	1				
	2		Sealed Sprint Autocross	Dannevirke Hutt Valley	Blairgowrie Road Silverstream KN
	9	AW	Intermarque Sprint	IM	Manfeild IM

Abbreviations

KN	Kim Naylor Autocross Series
DM	Duncan McKenzie Sealed Sprint Series
ST	Stewards Trophy Motorkhana Series
VB	Vesta Battery round of ST series
GS	Gravel Sprint Series
RT	Road and Track Sprint Series
RS	Rallysprint Series
IM	The Surgery Intermarque Sprint Series
Nat	National meeting
NT	Night Trial Series

Club Contacts

Levin	027 442 1639 (Chris)
Hutt Valley	021 515 642 (Geoff)
Wellington	021 717 676 (Jody)
Harbour Capital	027 6996 838 (Leon)
Kapiti	027 446 9986 (Bryan)
Wairarapa	027 627 8005 (Mort)
MG	04 970 8644 (Terry)
Intermarque	027 232 2523 (Alan)
MOWOG	

Stewards

AW	Alan Wright
BS	Barry Swanerton
GG	Gordon Gandy
GM	Gus McMillan
JR	John Rapley
IS	Ian Snellgrove
PT	Paul Te Punga
SM	Stephen Marks
WG	Wayne Gair

Ted Walsh - Horse Racing Commentator - 'This is really a lovely horse. I once rode her mother.'

It's far too cool for you, Mr Footballer

Mazda MX-5 Roadster Coupé 2.0i

As the reputation of all the most exquisite cars continues to be embrowned by the nation's footballers, those who try to combine extreme wealth with a splash of discretion and good taste find themselves in a bit of a quandary.

In the olden days, if you were to turn up at a party in a Ferrari or a Maserati, women might imagine that you were the Aga Khan. Today, however, they will cower in a cupboard all night, fearful that if they come out they will be roasted in front of a jeering mob that'll record the event on their mobile phones and, in the morning, upload it all to the internet. 'I have a Ferrari,' is code for 'I am a rapist.' Or, worse, 'I am Kerry Katona.'

The solution, then, for wealthy people who are not rapists or Kerry Katona is to buy a car that simply isn't on a footballer's radar. A car that manages to be expensive and comfortable, and possibly even quite fast, without shouting, 'Look at me.' A fatboy car.

The Bristol Blenheim is a fatboy car. So is the Mercedes SL. Then you have the Rolls-Royce Phantom, the Bentley Continental Flying Spur, the Jaguar XJR, the Range Rover — but emphatically not the Sport — the BMW 7-series, and the car I was given for Christmas. A thirty-seven-year-old Mercedes 600 Grosser.

Launched in 1963, it was by far and away the most expensive car in the world, with a price tag, in America, of \$20,000. In its eighteen-year production run only 2,677 were made and almost all were bought by people who did not play football. Idi Amin, Louis Winthorpe from the film *Trading Places* and Leonid Brezhnev. Mao Tse-tung was said to be very fond of his, and it's easy to see why.

Today we marvel at the power-operated boot lids on cars such as the Lexus LS 600h but the Mercedes Grosser had this feature forty-five years ago. And yes, while it does without such luxuries as a heated rear window, and the dim/dip light switch is on the floor, it does have power-operated seats, windows, sunroof and even doors. And the power does not come from a fickle electric motor either. Oh no. Everything that moves on the Grosser is powered by hydraulics. Small wonder it weighs three tons.

It's not a car you can just get into and drive, either, because hydraulics also operate the suspension. So after starting the engine you must do a crossword while the body rises to the correct height.

Still, you can then make up lost time because it has a 6.3-litre engine. The first production V8 Mercedes ever made, it develops 300bhp, thanks to fuel injection. In other words, in terms of luxury and power this was quite literally forty years ahead of its time. In terms of style, however, it was bang-on, pure, 100 per cent 1963. This was a time when designers were allowed to fit a car with ornaments, and the Grosser is fitted with so many it could almost be twinned with Elton John's head.

The double bumpers, the enormous grille, the chromed wheel arches: it is a festival of bright work and I'm only surprised it isn't followed everywhere by a flock of magpies.

It's the same story inside, where it's fitted with nothing so vulgar as tinted glass. Instead you get curtains, along with interior glass wind deflectors should you feel the need to drive along with the windows down, waving serenely at the Untermenschen.

The only thing that it didn't come with as standard — but that I shall be adding as soon as I've designed them — are two flags on the front wings. This is the only sound you want to hear as you cruise along. The fluttering of two pennants.

Or, rather, this is the sound I imagine you'd like to hear. I can't say for sure because I've had the car for a week now and so far I haven't actually driven it. This is because most of the time it won't start.

Sometimes it turns over with a decreasing level of enthusiasm for ten minutes before the titanic battery gives up the ghost. And sometimes it doesn't turn over at all. Occasionally it coughs a little burp of hope and I prod the throttle, trying like a man marooned on a desert island to breathe a little life into the sliver of flame. But never quite succeeding.

So then I plug it into a trickle charger, and after two hours have been spent pumping some fresh enthusiasm into the battery, the engine bursts into an uneven V8 strum. The sound of joy. Followed by the groan of despair as I realize that, this being Christmastime, I've passed the time as the battery charged with my face in a bucket of red wine. And now I'm too drunk to go anywhere.

And so we must now leave the olden days when cars worked only if there was some warmth in the month, and look at the complete opposite of the 600 Grosser. The Mazda MX-5. When I first encountered the new version of this modern classic, I reported that it was a better-looking, more practical version of something we all loved anyway and that you should all have one. And you all responded by buying something else.

No, really. The new MX-5 is like the new Ford Mondeo and the Subaru Legacy Outback. It is one of those cars that's absolutely brilliant ... and nobody buys it. You never see one on the road.

Fearful, therefore, that I'd missed some crucial aspect of the car — a spike in the driver's seat, perhaps, or a snake in the glove box — I decided to have another look. And there's nothing; not even a preposterous price tag. The new soft-top Mazda starts at just £15,730.

So what's the problem? I've given the matter some serious thought and I've decided what the car missed most of all was the mark. I liked the way the old car had few luxuries, because that made it light. For the same reason it had a canvas roof you raised and lowered by hand, and I liked that too. But actually, the fact is most of us would prefer some creature comforts and a roof that moved about using electricity. We may have been drawn to the idea of an MX-5 but actually we all went out and bought a convertible Vauxhall Astra instead.

Well, Mazda has obviously realized this too because the new 2-litre Roadster Coupé I tried has a superfast electric metal roof, a surround sound Bose stereo, and a button on the dash that says 'Media'. God knows what it did.

All of this must be terribly galling for the engineers who struggled to make the new car only 22lb heavier than the old one. To find the marketing department adding stuff is probably enough to have them all disembowelling themselves but the fact is this: it doesn't make a jot of difference.

The engine still feels unsullied by cotton wool damping and active exhaust tuning. The gearbox still snicks. The handling is still deliciously front-engined and rear-drive. You still feel hemmed in behind the wheel and the plastics appear, correctly in a car of this type, to have been fitted

to shroud various wires and rough edges. Not as a surface you feel inspired to lick and caress.

The MX-5, then, still feels simple and sprightly and lively. It still feels basic and honest and wonderful. It's still a bacon sandwich made with good bread, good butter and good meat. Only now it has a splash of HP sauce.

It is an epic car, this. A car for fatboys who are still thin.

Jeremy Clarkson

13 January 2008



Brian Craig One hand drive at Daybreaker



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Fax (04) 384 5282
Mobile 0274 436 742
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Reproduced from "Spare Parts", published by the Constructors Car Club, Wellington.

I've had the RoadRat back on the road since New Year but haven't done a lot with it due to house building taking prior call on my time. Earlier in the year I did the Wallaceville and Alexandra Road hill climbs and on both occasions I was a bit disappointed that I hadn't been able to match the times I had done earlier and the new engine seemed to run a bit flat towards the top of the hill. The new engine is 100 ccs bigger than it was previously, but otherwise is pretty much the same spec. It has also been a bit disappointing in that it has a few oil leaks, which, damn-it, doesn't have to happen.



At Alex road I noticed that the coil was getting hotter than it should so I had made a mental note to sort that out before I did anything more with the car.

HVMC have started up an autocross series using a new industrial area behind the Trentham Racecourse. The roads are all formed, they even have streetlights and bus stops, but there has not been any buildings built, so the Council has permitted HVMC to hold motorsport events there. The course for the last two events has made use of an extended T-junction with cones and barrels defining the course. Since the Slipway track has been closed pending the resolution of resource consent issues there was great enthusiasm for the first of the HVMC events with a field of 50 starters. But a significant portion of the field hit kerbs and damaged their cars, so when I entered the RoadRat in the second of these events, on 19 August, the field was smaller at only 35. To make it more interesting I invited Neil Roots from the Harbour Capital Car Club to share drive the Road Rat. Neil is a top competitor in these local club-sports events but his usual weapon, the unlikely but very effective Honda City, was temporarily out of action. So I saw this as an opportunity to give Neil a ride, but also see how the car might perform under experienced hands. For a car constructor, I feel it is nothing special to drive the car you have built yourself, but the real validation comes from other people driving it as if it is just another car. Even if there is a risk they will do it better than you can 😊 .

On the day, the weather was a bit damp, with off-and-on drizzle. Apart from the uncomfortable dampness, this is pretty much ideal weather for the Road Rat competitively, but unfortunately we were plagued with gremlins. The car would set out on the course really well, but by the halfway mark the motor would start running flat and it was generally then limping home just trying to keep the motor going. Neil and I rushed about trying this and that to make it work properly. We put more fuel in the tank, we put a new coil in (still ran hot), took out the in-line fuel filter, but all to no avail. It was good that we were share-driving because we got twice the

number of runs to test out the changes. Even with this problem we were still running close to midfield. Then we did some flow tests on the fuel pump and discovered that there was hardly any fuel coming through, and it was very hard to blow air back to the tank down the pipe. Further investigation discovered that the fuel hose from the tank to the pump had been pinched when I last bolted the tank in. With the problem rectified and a good flow of fuel we just had one timed run each to go and I managed a time to take overall 7th place and Neil was less than a second behind in 9th.

The event then proceeded to a shoot-out phase, where the fastest 50% of entries had another run, and the top 50% of that lot proceeded to the next stage etc. until there was a final winner. With the damp conditions the oil that the RoadRat was dropping was getting a bit obvious and the organizers asked us to clean it up if we could.. and we made an attempt at this... but then, in my next run a flexible connection on the oil-filler/breather split and a lot of oil came out over the hot engine. I noticed this during my run as smoke started coming into the cabin and I jumped out with the fire extinguisher at the ready when the run was over. But it wasn't that bad...fortunately. Oil was everywhere at the front of the motor. I had visions of what happened to Dave Frost (Former club member) and his Cobra on the Paekakariki hill road a few years ago when oil sprayed onto the hot exhaust. The car was rather a mess, and it was not going to be easy to temporarily patch it up, so we called it a day. Better to retire at this point than risk dumping more oil and spoiling the chances of HVMC being able to continue to use this facility.

So, all in all, not the best day out for the Road Rat, but it was at least satisfying to discover why the car had not been performing at it's best, and considering all this, not a bad result. I was disappointed that Neil didn't get a decent go of the car, but there will be another chance I am sure. Meantime, I will have to find some car time in the garage before the RoadRat can strut its stuff again. This may take a while.

Hi Guys,

I'm just sending out a quick inquiry for those of you that may need our assistance in the near future or know someone that may do. Trying to spread the word :)

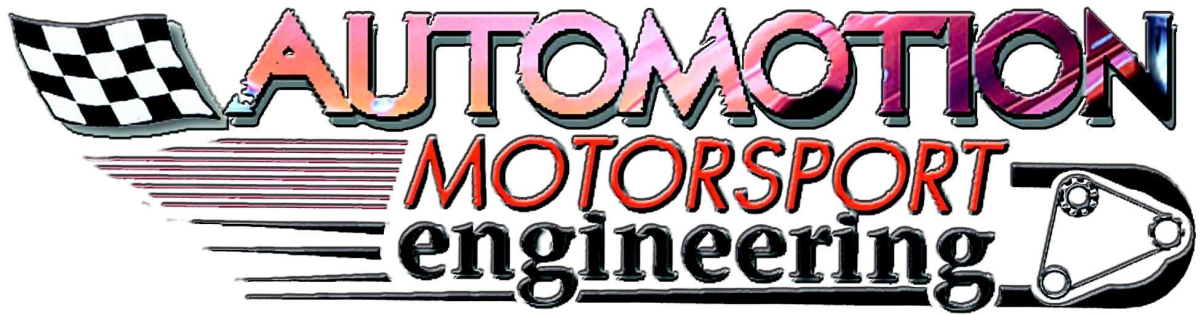
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A highway patrolman pulled alongside a speeding car on the freeway. Glancing at the car, he was astounded to see that the blonde behind the wheel was knitting!
Realizing that she was oblivious to his flashing lights and siren, the trooper cranked down his window, turned on his bullhorn and yelled, 'PULL OVER!'
'NO!' the blonde yelled back, 'IT'S A SCARF!'



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Attached are some photos taken by my brother Phillip at Daybreaker rally, thanks, Brian Craig



Stew Taylor Winner



Stuart MacFarlane Porche 911



0 Car getting it sideways



9640 Alex Kelsey Home built STI



9661 Andrew Hawkswood Audi Quattro



9748 Jason Weld Datsun 180B



Campbell Wright Commodore



Mike Bunyard After the bank, before the roll

Two blondes living in Oklahoma were sitting on a bench talking, and one blonde says to the other, 'Which do you think is farther away... Florida or the moon?' The other blonde turns and says 'Hellooooooooooooo, can you see Florida ?????'