



WheelSpin

May 2026



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Roll cage and authority card sign off

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Cover Image: by Leo Cast - Otago Rally

Committee Meetings

are held on the third Tuesday of each month
Location: 1841 Bar, Disraeli Street, Johnsonville
7:30pm, everybody welcome

Club-night

first Tuesday of each month
This month - 5th May 2026
Location: 1841 Bar, Disraeli Street, Johnsonville
7:30 pm
All members and friends welcome

WheelSpin is the official magazine of the
Harbour Capital Car Club, C/o 13 Gray Street,
Pukerua Bay, 5026, New Zealand

The views and opinions expressed are not necessarily
those of the Club, its members or the committee.

You're welcome to share the content of this magazine,
please remember to recognise the source,
writers or photographers of the material.
Original photographs are usually available upon request.

Magazine content deadline

The **Deadline** for *WheelSpin* articles is the
14TH OF THE MONTH

*If you'd like to submit a story but feel you need
some editorial assistance please reach out to the Editor
as we can help.*

Maybe something presidential



I thought I might have had a quiet month, but then of course not! Headed over to Wairarapa Car Club's Puketiro Road gravel sprint, took a casual weekend down to Dunedin for Rally Otago, sold & bought a car, did a non motorsport related drive over the Remutaka's, and probably other boring stuff like mowed lawns.

Puketiro Road still isn't my favourite bit of road, which is nothing about the organisation of the event, but is just that the corners

don't really suit me well, so I chicken out more than KFC, and because it's a short bit of road by the time my brain has warmed up, the run is done.

I enjoyed it last year, because the rain made it much slippier, so I didn't take it seriously and just slid around every run.

We didn't have a very big field of entrants for the event, maybe 22-23? Which is a bit odd, because when you look at the sealed sprints locally, they're getting really good fields. Regularly seeing 50 entries is not unusual for the popular events like Mt Vic and Port Road. But gravel we seem to be comfortably in the 20-30 starters, even with a few out of town cars from Hawkes Bay and/or Manawatu.



It did mean that with two groups of about 12 cars, we got through the runs quick enough that they offered a bonus run for anyone who wanted another go. I didn't elect to do the run, as there weren't any people standing around looking like they wanted a passenger ride, as that's probably my main motivation to do a bonus.

I'm still adjusting to the feel of the Zestino front tyres on the Corolla, as this was only event #2 on them (yep, Corolla hadn't been used since November Dorsets Road!). The lack of turn in is disconcerting for sure, as I'm used to a heap of oversteer. But they're a good "drive" tyre, so when I'm back on the power they are really biting in and dragging me out of the corner neatly. It's a matter of re-calibrating my attack on the corners, don't carry so much speed into the corner, but get on the gas quite a bit earlier.

I had a fairly uneventful day, probably due to cautious driving, trimming off a bit of time each



run, four seconds, three seconds, and then one second improvement as the day went on. Ending up second in class behind Chris Hayman, who had dragged his late brother's 4AGE Chevette out of the garage after a few years. So it was pretty cool to see that car looking all smart, and out on the gravel again.

Adam and Murray O'Neil were using the event as an Otago shakedown event. Marty B was also driving Adam's car, whilst Murray entered twice so that he ran in each group. Both cars behaved themselves. Adam and Marty B ended up a frankly absurd 4th & 5th overall. Stupidly capable car, with a couple of good pilots makes many of us in the bigger engine categories look a bit silly.

Connor was giving his new to him KP Starlet a run on gravel, and sliding all over the place. Although he is showing signs of a particular fondness for one corner on that road ... for the good memory people amongst the readers, last year on his gravel debut in the Focus, he vanished down a bank on a particular corner. Well this year he had a pretty good go at going down the same bank about 20 meters further along the same corner. He met the hole beside the road that we were cautioned about heavily in drivers briefing, and a small amount of angle grinder was needed to adjust some clearances on the inner guard after that. We'll blame David's navigating, since he has recently demonstrated his fondness for impromptu rotations during events, and he was in the silly seat that day.



Richard Haines was giving the 2ZZ powered Corolla a first run on gravel, gradually getting up some more speed during the day, and having a great time. The rest of the family was in tow too, picking up various passenger seat rides through the event.

Graham was doing some grass mowing in the Pulsar, but didn't get himself into too much trouble. He ended up being pipped by not much for third in class by Brendon Cantwell in the Evo Starlet (which of course I now realise was also Rally Otago shakedown).

Jilly was testing her back, running the Corolla GT. She made steady progress through the official runs, but then must have gotten a bit of feral onboard for the unofficial run, finding another three seconds improvement in the bonus run.

Thanks to Wairarapa for putting on a good event for us, and to Neil's Wheels for the rally rubber.

In between things, I've sold off the Rav, and downsized the budget there into a Prius instead. Sticking with the hybrids, as there isn't a full EV in my budget that does all the things I'd like. Not because I have anything against EV's. Probably over paid for the Prius, but it is a super high spec NZ new one, with leather interior, heated seats, and sunroof. I've added an Android Auto headunit to it, and put some Lexus wheels on it. That's probably about all I'll do to the car other than drive it, as it's just a toaster of a car really. Boy am I glad I didn't end up with a diesel Hyundai i40 wagon, which was a car that I came really close to buying before ending up with a Prius. Ooof, diesel being more spendy than 95 octane, and then having RUC on top of that!!

Took it for an early morning Wairarapa drive over Easter in an attempt to watch the balloons lift off in Carterton. Because, you know, I don't do nearly enough pre-dawn Remutaka drives ... oh wait, yeah I'm doing that run a lot. However turns out that the event information on their website wasn't usefully accurate. So by the time we showed up (on time) balloons were well and truly in the sky. Had a stroll around, and then breakfast in Carterton anyway, so it's not as though we really suffered all that much. Although if we have another go at it next year, going to aim for well early rather than on time, just in case.

We headed down to Dunedin, to partake of Rally Otago's 50th. They had a whopping entry, which just a smidge under 150 starters.



Took advantage of being in Dunedin by going to Larnach Castle for a visit. Has to be said, that's a house with a really bleak story, with suicides, deaths, multiple re-marriages, sickness. Atmospheric as heck, and nice gardens. But oh boy, I couldn't imagine trying to actually have lived there at any point in the history of the building.

The rental rocket this year turned out to be a Ford Escape hybrid. They have a pretty bad reputation for unreliability, but this one worked for three days, which is all that was required of it. Indicator and wiper being on the wrong side of the column required a bit of extra thinking, but I only got it wrong once when trying to clear the windscreen in the hotel car park. So no witnesses! Returned Prius sort of fuel economy, while being a 2.5 litre crossover sized vehicle. So I'm not going to complain about that, given the state of fuel costs at the moment. It was a heck of an improvement on the three Mitsi's that I've ended up renting for the previous three years. Both in terms of power, and economy.

Lucked out on a viewing point on Saturday, climbing a steep paddock to overlook an acute right junction resulted in some pretty decent angle pics. Paid for it on Sunday though, where I ended up trying to take photos from within a dust storm. My camera bag and backpack may never be the same again.



Getting home turned into a bit of a hassle too, as the cyclone up North had flow on effects of plane availability. Ended up being something like seven hours from arriving at Dunedin Airport, to landing at Wellington. Not ideal, but the app did the multiple re-bookings after delays and cancellations kept happening, and my bag turned up at the right airport. So can't get too cranky about it, as it could have been a lot worse.

Of the local (to me) yokels that I was in touch with during the rally, Brendon and Lee got the Adam and Jilly got to the finish line, but did miss stages due to overheats and also the extractors falling to bits. So I'm going to hazard a guess that the Suzuki Starlet will be going to be spending some time (and money) at Macbilt before it is throwing gravel around again. Murray and Shelby appear to have had a trouble free run in the ex David Black Nissan, which is good to see after Murray having been away from rallying for such a long time.

Evo Starlet to the finish line with a good result.



I've had a wee hiatus from autocross events, with a big gap between our early March Neil's Wheels round, and the next one having been scheduled late April. So the 1st has been getting a bit lonely. As I write this, it's the Saturday before the scheduled MG Car Club grasskhana, but there's heavy rain and flooding... so I don't fancy the odds of the event running on the Sunday. Especially now with the Sunday forecast showing

more rain. However, I've loaded up the 1st on the chance that the event does run. There's also a Manawatu Car Club grass autocross scheduled for the same Sunday, but with the price of gas, it's going to be an arm and a leg just do do the 300km round trip commute to the venue!

That's more than enough blah blah from me. See you some place with car things happening.

2026 Provisional calendar for the first half of the year:

April 26th. Grass Autocross (likely gone before the mag is published)

May 24th Sealed Autocross

June 21st Sealed Autocross

July 26th Sealed Autocross

Other local events I'm aware of. 3rd May Tea Creek and also Surgery Sprints. 14th June Surgery Sprints. 21st June (event clash) Manawatu 4.5km full track sprint. 19th July Wairongomai Road. 9th August Manawatu Backtrack autocross.

Otago Rally





WAIRARAPA CAR CLUB – Puketiro Road Gravel Hillclimb

Sunday 29 March 2026



Car #	Name	Club	Car	Practice	Run 1	Run 2	Run 3	Unofficial	Class	Overall
A: 0-1300cc										
142	Martin Bertelsen	Levin CC	Starlet	1:28.48	1:24.59	1:23.15	1:23.36		2	5
42	Adam Fisher	HCCC	Starlet	1:28.29	1:25.16	1:26.32	1:22.69		1	4
68	Connor Pitkethley	HVMC	Starlet	1:59.79	1:56.52	1:54.84	1:48.80	1:48.09	3	20
B: 1301-1600cc										
4	Leon Cast	HCCC	Corolla	1:34.95	1:30.36	1:27.62	1:26.43		2	10
41	Jilly Fisher	HCCC	Corolla	1:58.56	1:54.64	1:48.61	1:48.07	1:45.08	7	19
113	Chris Hayman	Wai CC	Chevette	1:42.36	1:33.69	1:27.70	1:26.13		1	9
13	Jayden Hayman	Wai CC	Chevette	1:51.73	1:42.45	1:38.23	1:36.99		6	18
38	Simon Johnson	Wai CC	Starlet	1:29.78	1:27.39	DNS	DNS		3	12
10	John Keen	Wai CC	Corolla	1:40.03	1:36.53	1:34.03	1:33.99		5	16
5	Neil Tapp	HCCC	Corolla	1:46.14	1:32.69	1:33.21	1:34.25		4	15
9	Murray O'Neil	Wellington CC	Almera	1:42.85	1:40.16	1:32.34	1:30.89	Testing Only	-	-
C: 1601-2000cc										
23	Richard Haines	HCCC	Corolla	1:42.11	1:36.66	1:33.97	1:30.94	1:29.11	1	14
D:2001cc & over										
33	Tim Campbell	Wai CC	Escort Mk2	1:26.34	1:24.42	1:21.28	1:21.85	1:21.64	1	3
2	Brendon Cantwell	HVMC	Starlet	1:31.47	1:27.81	1:26.34	1:24.28	1:22.52	2	6
11	Graham Heath	HCCC	Pulsar	1:28.85	1:26.76	1:25.55	1:24.76		3	7
6	Paul Kibble	Hawkes Bay CC	Pulsar	1:34.03	1:30.05	1:26.75	1:25.50	1:25.71	4	8
369	Graham Moran	Wai CC	RX7	1:41.24	1:37.39	1:31.77	1:29.50	1:54.71	5	13
40	Richard Prouse	HVMC	BMW 318is	1:46.39	1:38.59	1:36.91	1:35.15		6	17
E: 4WD open										
1	Mark France	Wai CC	Impreza	1:34.84	1:23.30	1:23.25	1:18.46	1:17.66	2	2
7	Gareth McLachlan	Hawkes Bay	Galant	1:22.67	1:19.69	1:17.57	1:15.89		1	1
12	Keith Stewart	Manawatu CC	Legacy	1:36.21	1:29.84	1:29.24	1:26.71		3	11

The Competitor Coaching Plan Worked!



Unfortunately for himself, and perhaps also for me, my 18-year-old petrolhead grandson has become increasingly interested in getting into motor racing over the past couple of years. To begin with, I thought it was probably a passing interest, perhaps fuelled by having an awareness of my interest (drag racing for 30 or so years, and circuit racing for the past 10 years). However, his curiosity has been consistent for some years now, and lately he's been playing with hotted street cars; currently an Audi S5 with over 400 horsepower.

Recognising that this might be an itch that needs scratching, our more recent conversations have evolved to whether drag racing, circuit racing, drifting, or rallying might be his thing. He answered his own question as we talked, telling me with great enthusiasm how he loves the feeling of not only acceleration, but also cornering at speed, late braking, and maintaining traction to get from A to B in the shortest possible time. So, all roads led to circuit racing. I figured the best thing to do would be to take him for a ride in my race car to see if he liked it when the opportunity presented itself, but it hasn't been as easy as it sounds to make that happen, when he lives in the North Island and my circuit racing is based in the South Island – and also that my car is on axle stands for a year while a freshen up takes place.

While discussing this with workmate Leon Cast, he suggested the Constructors Car Club and MG Club Competitor Coaching Day on January 19 just gone. Friend and LVVTA colleague Phil Bradshaw would be there too – what could possibly go wrong? Good idea Leon, sounds great, thanks for the tip.

We entered my grandson and myself (as instructor – even though I've never driven a lap of Manfeild in my life) and I really had no idea what to expect. Would it be a complete yawn as a result of a massive dose of bureaucracy or over-conservatism? Would he even get to do a lap of Manfeild at pace? I didn't do anything like this ten years ago in preparation for going circuit racing, so I had no idea of what to expect. My introduction to racing was buying a race-prepared 2KCup Toyota Levin AE111 on a Thursday, doing a test day at Levels Raceway (outside of Timaru) on Friday, and then finding myself amidst a grid of 40 cars awaiting the red lights to signal the start of my first race on Saturday morning. In hindsight, that was bloody stupid, and the absence of disaster was due more to good luck more than anything else. I'd already told grandson that if I was helping, that was exactly what he wouldn't be doing.

While open-minded and positive as we arrived, the explanation of the morning being consumed by a coned slalom test, a series of cones to show the correct entry and exit of a corner, and a braking test, led me to wonder if the day wasn't going to be any kind of

thrill for the lad.

I was completely wrong. And I couldn't have been more pleasantly surprised by the way the day unfolded. My grandson found each of the three exercises in the morning a really good challenge, and far more difficult to execute than he thought. And he had an absolute blast in the afternoon. I sat in the passenger seat and gave him very basic pointers to help him develop confidence and pick up his pace gradually during the first afternoon session.

After session one, I wanted him to get a sense of what a good quick lap by an experienced driver felt like, and because I know Manfield like the bum crack of a truck salesman in Ethiopia that wasn't going to happen with me driving him. I asked Leon Cast to take him out in his little Toyota thingy rocket ship for session two, with grandson in the passenger seat. Boy, did that do the job! Grandson was truly gob-smacked at what a fast lap looked like and felt like. His mother told me the next day that he was still had the grin stuck all over his face.

For session three, I asked Richard Kelly (who I was correctly told was a mega-experienced race driving tutor) to go out with grandson in his car, and sit in the passenger seat. Let the kid drive, and give him some guidance. Grandson came back and said "that was awesome. Instead of blindly attacking every corner individually, Richard showed me about trying to connect them, and get a flow". He was genuinely fizzing. In our debrief afterwards, he was clear that this – exactly this – is absolutely what he wants to do. It solidified his thoughts about circuit racing, and has actually made him realise that the thrill of driving fast and well on a race track will, if and when that day comes, become a far greater thrill than he ever imagined.

I thought the format of the day, the general order, the pace, and the culture, was 100% on the money. Gently ease into it during the morning, lots of track time available in the afternoon, and plenty of opportunities to shoulder tap some expertise when needed. I was really appreciative of everyone I spoke to for the help they willingly gave. In fact, I was quite blown away when I started considering that all these volunteers came out just to help a bunch of newbies, maybies, and wannabies. When racing in the South Island, I'm always incredibly appreciative of all the flag marshals and countless other people who volunteer to make a race meeting happen, but I was even more impressed with the team who showed up on January 19 to make this day happen - they didn't even have the benefit of watching some proper circuit racing from their flag points in return for their time.

So, thank you very much to those who made the day happen, for a very well-constructed, professionally conducted, and friendly day. Top marks. And a special thank you for the specific help given to us by Leon Cast, Richard Kelly, and Phil Bradshaw.

Grandson and I are now looking for tidy, well-built race car for under \$15k. The parameters are RWD, road-legal, naturally aspirated, tidy, and reliable. Please let Phil know if you have that car in your garage not getting used anymore!

Cheers, Tony Johnson.

Prize Giving

5 May 2026

**Please join us for 2026 prize giving at
1841 Bar in Johnsonville from 7pm**

*We'll have a bite to eat a social chat and
into the celebration of our winners for the year.*

Look forward to see you all there.



Editors Report

Hello everyone, and welcome to May, because apparently time flies when you're having fun, or more accurately, when you're hurling a small car up a hill at questionable speeds.

This month I loaded up the lil' Mirage and headed out to the Race to the Dump with HVMC. As all great motorsport stories begin: it was a dark and stormy night. Well, not quite. The day was threatening rain with the kind of sky that gives you side-eye all morning, but thankfully it changed its mind, and we got ourselves a proper dry day. The event itself is exactly as brilliant as it sounds. You go hell for leather up a hill, reach the top, pause just long enough for your heart rate to consider returning to normal, and then you point it back downhill and remind it not to bother. Thrilling on the way up. Slightly more character-building on the way down.

My first run, as is tradition, was gloriously average. I am not one of those gifted souls who can climb into a car cold and immediately find the limit. I need a warm-up run, a reconnaissance mission if you will, to locate the bumps, sniff out the damp patches, and generally remind my brain what we're doing here. Runs two, three, and four are where the fun really starts.

This year, something clicked coming out of the chicane, that narrow squeeze between the barriers designed to remind you that speed has consequences. I must have found a decent exit because, on the way back down the hill, I was treated to the full stomach-meets-throat experience as the Mirage picked up some very enthusiastic acceleration (gravity, doing what gravity does best). I was absolutely rapt, and also briefly wondering if my internal organs had filed for independent relocation. How the fast drivers manage that sensation without batting an eyelid is beyond me. It takes a moment. Several moments, actually.

No podium finishes for me this time around, but honestly? Every run was a good time. That's the real win.

And it was a big day for Team Mirage, we were out in force, which is always a treat. The highlight? One of our older siblings made an appearance, a classic Mirage being enthusiastically flung up the hill by a very keen young man absolutely living his best life. It was brilliant to watch. That's what it's all about, different generations, same ridiculous grin.

Until next time, keep the rubber side down and the stomach where it belongs.

Chelle



Our Volunteers

This month we throw out a huge
THANK YOU
to everyone who helps run our events.

**Your committee of dedicated,
knowledgeable and fabulous people who work
hard to bring you the many autocrosses and social events.**

**There are a lot who are at every event making sure
you're able to compete and make a
few excellent and poor choices.**

*Leon Cast, Emma Shaw, Neil Roots, Jilly Fisher,
Adam Fisher, Webster Gough, Neil Tapp,
Chelles Roberts, David Kennedy, to name just a few.
Not to forget those who cook the lunch!*

You are appreciated for the time and energy you give freely.

*Next time you see any of these people give them
a pat on the back and a thanks.*

Membership Application & Renewal

Post completed form to: Harbour Capital Car Club, C/o 13 Gray Street, Pukerua Bay 5026, New Zealand

First name: _____ Surname: _____ DoB: _____

Other family members names and date of birth:

Name: _____ DoB: _____

Name: _____ DoB: _____

Name: _____ DoB: _____

Residential address: _____

Postal address (if differs): _____

Phone number: HM _____ Cell: _____

Email: _____

Occupation: _____

Make and Model of car: _____

How did you find out about us: _____

Events I'd like to compete in

	Not many	Some	Lots
Speed Events			
Rallies			
Motorkhana			
Autocross			
Social Events			

I'd like to volunteer: Speed \ Rallies \ Motorkhana \Auto\ Social Events (please circle)

Annual subscriptions paid to: Harbour Capital Car Club

Per year: Single membership \$45.00 - Student \$35.00 - Family \$60 for a couple, add \$15 per additional person.

Name: Harbour Capital Car Club

Bank details: BNZ 02-0500-0351392-02

Reference: your name

The information you provide in this form is used and held by the Harbour Capital Car Club Committee for matters relating to your membership and participation in events. Your date of birth is requested to enable us to register you with Motorsport New Zealand.

GET IN. BUCKLE IN. GO.

SEALED AUTOCROSS

24 May 2026

**Masterton Motoplex, drag strip
Harbour Capital Car Club**

**If you've ever wanted to find out what you and your car
are really made of, this is your day.
Autocross on a drag strip means plenty of grip, plenty of
corners to nail, and plenty of reasons to
come back for another run.**

*Entries open on MotorSport Online
so get in early and lock in your spot.*

**Juniors welcome from 12 years old, right up to those of us who
are very much young at heart. Everyone is welcome,
all cars, all experience levels, first timers included.**

*And because charging around a track works up an appetite,
we've got a BBQ lunch sorted. You bring the enthusiasm, we'll bring the sausages.*

See you there!