

# SIDE CURTAINS

The magazine of the  
ROTORUA VINTAGE AND  
VETERAN CAR CLUB

DECEMBER 2022



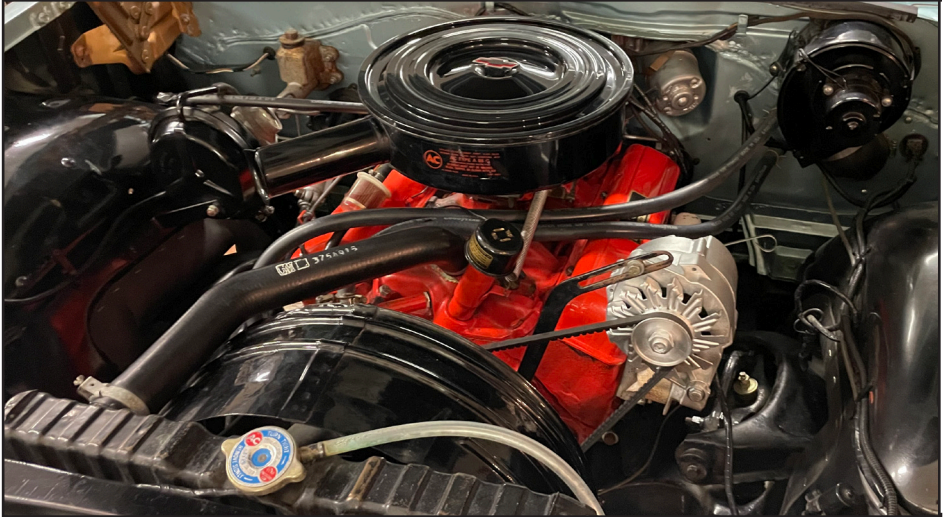
ROTORUA



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# November Car In The Room





# SIDE CURTAINS - December 2022

The magazine of the ROTORUA  
VINTAGE AND VETERAN CAR CLUB

**Clubrooms:** Neil Hunt Park, Tarawera Rd, Rotorua

**Postal:** PO Box 2014, Rotorua

**Email:** rotorua@vcc.org.nz

**Website:** www.rotoruvintagecarclub.org.nz

**Vero Insurance:** Phone 0800 658 411 and quote your VCC membership number

**Club Meetings:** 2nd Wednesday of month (except January), 7.15pm for 7.30pm start

## OFFICERS

**Chairperson** - David Tomlinson

**Secretary** - Dennis Whimp  
021 731 678

**Treasurer** - Maryann Scott

**Club Captain**  
Terry Wadsworth

**Asst. Club Captain**  
Fleur Tomlinson

**Committee**  
Ronald Mayes  
Neville Harper  
Geoff Nitz  
Alan Judd  
Ken Thomas  
John Newson

**Mid Weekers** - vacant

**Side Curtains Editor** - David Tomlinson  
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**Beaded Wheels** - Ronald Mayes

**Librarian** - Dennis Kenny

**Librarian** - Ronald Mayes

**Cards/Flowers** - Doreen Green

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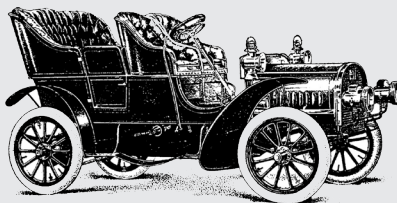
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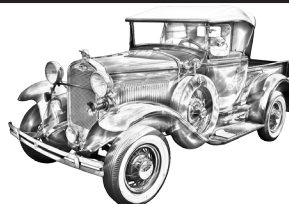
## Cover Photos

Front - 1926 Buick at Tirau Museum

Back - Tirau Museum visit

## CLUB CAR PHOTOS

If you want your club car photo on the clubroom wall then get in touch with Doug Green, and he will organise a time and place for a photo shoot. It would be good if we could have all member's car photos on display.



# Chairman's Report

## - November 2022

*by David Tomlinson*



November's car in the room was a beautiful 1961 Chevrolet Bel Air, that was sold new in New Zealand as a RHD car. It is surprising what we can fit through the club room doors.

We also enjoyed a great club run out to the Tirau Museum, a real hidden gem that defies the size it looks from the road. The midweekers had their last outing for the year too, and we had our end of year Christmas Social at the Distinction Hotel.

The Christmas Social was a little down on numbers, but we had just shy of 40 present. This is a busy time of year and even some of the Swap Meet volunteers could not make it. Having it catered certainly reduced the workload in hosting the event, and made it more enjoyable for all. We still did the left/right parcel game, and it was a good dinner to round off the year.

December's club night will be our last for 2022, and will feature a 1929 MG as the car in the room. We will have our final club activity for the year on the following Sunday, a "High Tea luncheon" run. Lets hope the endless rain of the last 6 months gives us a break so we can have many club cars take part.

We will finally get to host our Lakefront Car Show in January, our only club activity for January. This edition of Side Curtains will be the last one until February. In both February and March our club activities will be the second Sunday after our club nights. This is to avoid clashes with events such as Brits At The Beach, which at least 5 branch cars are registered for. February will have a different twist to the BBQ Run, with the BBQ being

held away from the club rooms. Our March event is also set back a week to avoid clashing with Taupo's annual rally.

You will read in Dennis' column that he will stand down as Secretary at the May AGM. Dennis has really kept things working and happening at the branch, and both he and the committee will ease his replacement into the role with a lot of support. It is one of the roles we can't do without, so if you have some spare time to give, think about joining the committee in the new year. Even just taking on a general committee position will help, as it could mean a more experienced committee member can take on other roles to keep us all moving forward. We are also still looking for a more permanent co-ordinator(s) for the midweek runs.

As I reflect on 2022, it has been a challenging year, but we did manage to put on a successful Swap Meet, which has kept our books in good order. There were a number of challenges, such as having to place restrictions on branch member involvement early in the year and other interruptions to activities. The weather has been generally poor all year too. Things can surely only be better in 2023.

Fleur and I will be travelling to the other side of the world just after Christmas, and we won't be back in the country until 18 January, just before the Lakefront Car Show. If you do need to discuss branch business while I am away then contact Dennis, or if you have questions about the Car Show contact Alan Judd. Hopefully we will return refreshed for the new year ahead, but I will settle for still talking to each other!

I hope you enjoy the Christmas break, I know some members have suffered poor health during the year, including very recently, don't overdo it over the break, we hope to see you all back safely for the new year ahead.

# FROM THE SECRETARY

by  
*Dennis Whimp*



One of our longest serving members, Alan Young along with his 1923 and 1925 Studebakers has moved to Cambridge to be nearer to family. Alan joined the branch 49 years ago and his engineering workshop did many repairs on cars being restored in those early years. The 1930 La Salle coupe owned by Bob Mowbray had been converted to a ute and I know Alan spent a lot of time with Bob getting the dickey seat and surrounds reinstated.

If you are going past Ralph Bennett's house in Okareka, call in and see him. He was laid up with a broken leg and is slowly getting mobile again.

Great to see John and Gayla out for the first shake down run in their 1961 Rover P4 100 saloon. It had been off the road for 10 years when John got it and the whole front end was off. It has a P5 engine and seats. There were a few issues to sort out on the Wednesday run to Julian's Berry farm but nothing serious. John was very pleased with the performance and comfort.

I see that the Omapa Classic Car Museum (outside Blenheim) that has 65 cars is restructuring their display and have put 28 of them onto Trademe. They are mainly 1960 to 1990 models. I had a good look at the collection a few years ago and it takes you back as I had owned many similar models. There is a very nice 1986 Rover 3500SD1 Vanden Plas that is the pick of them although I could be tempted by the 1990 Lada station wagon at \$4,000. Or maybe not.

The branch will need a new secretary at the AGM next year, as I will be standing down. It is a very enjoyable job that gives you a great

insight into all the workings of the branch. I am happy to assist whoever takes over and I have a book with all the contacts in for the tradesmen that do repairs on our building and those that rent it. See me if you are interested and I can give you a run down.

# 10th Anniversary Annual Rotorua Lakefront Car Show

10am - 2pm, Sunday, 22nd January 2023



## ALL CARS, BIKES & COMMERCIALS WELCOME!

Join us for the 10th Anniversary of this fabulous event. Numbers have increased every year with almost 500 vehicles on display in 2020 and again in 2021.

The venue is the Rotorua Village Green at the lake front, off Whakaue Street. This is an informal car show open to any individuals or clubs to display their vehicles. Drivers and visitors will be encouraged to make a gold coin donation during the event for St Johns Ambulance.

Car clubs are welcome to display their vehicles in a group. During the day drivers and their companions can enjoy their own picnic lunch under the trees, or take advantage of local eateries, including Rotorua's "Eat Street" which is at the southern end of the show area.

Come and see Rotorua's newly developed waterfront boardwalk, as well as many other attractions. This event has been very popular with locals and holiday makers alike. Vehicles range from early vintage to almost new.

For more information email [info@rvcc.org.nz](mailto:info@rvcc.org.nz) or check our Facebook page for updates. See you there!





# November Car Run to Tirau Museum

*by Fleur Tomlinson*

It was a mixed bag day weather-wise, one minute it was nice and sunny, next minute there would be a big down pour of rain. We all met at the club rooms around 10.30ish to head away by 11am in a convoy along State Highway 5 towards Tirau. After a gossip session and catching up with some members we hadn't seen for a little while we were soon in our cars, trucks, convertibles, pre-war, post-war, modern cars and heading off. Some stopped at the bakery at Fairy Springs to pick up something nice to eat for their picnic lunch at the Tirau Museum.

Soon we were on the road past Fairy Springs and Crankworx, the traffic there wasn't as bad as predicted, we were soon cruising along the highway and before we knew it up the driveway of the museum and parking under some lovely shady trees. We were greeted by a lovely elderly gentleman who was the owner who gave us a Health and Safety briefing before letting us have free rein of the place to leisurely wonder about and admire all the treasures that were kept very safe behind many glass cabinets, rooms, and corridors.

We entered the museum and we so did not expect to see what laid out before us. It sure was a Tardis that seem to go on forever and held so much. One corridor was like a scene out of Alfred Hitchcock's movie "The Birds". It had nests, dead birds and bird skeletons. The history of the area was mind blowing and very insightful, the collection must have taken many years to collate and it not all about cars! It had lots of other things too. We all were amazed by it even Alex who is only 9 kept



coming up to me dragging me off to show me things he had discovered. He has even asked if we could go back again to have another look as it was so cool.

After all that exploring our tummies started to rumble so we sat out under the covered deck and enjoyed our picnic lunches chatting away. Beside us in a drum was a birds nest with actual eggs in it with the mother bird keeping a close eye on us and its eggs making sure we didn't disturb it. The owner showed Alex by very carefully opening the lid and showed him the mother bird watching. After lunch we had a stroll around the property discovering more things that laid about like a wreckage of an old aeroplane, the biggest grapefruit tree I have ever seen, with fruit laden on it.

We packed up our picnic stuff and thanked the owner for a lovely visit and were soon cruising back along Highway 5 towards Rotorua. If you are ever passing the Tirau Museum I highly recommend popping in and visiting. Its only \$5 cash only and it is well worth it.



# Chronicle of a Bel Air. Take Two.

*by Tony (Yankee Clipper ) with additions by Dennis Whimp*  
**1961 Chevrolet Bel Air**

Tony and Marilyn Sarich had their immaculate 1961 Chevrolet Bel Air in the clubrooms as the November car in the room. Tony had written the following article on the vehicle back in the Feb 2011 Side Curtains and used it as the basis of his talk with elaborations throughout.

With the dawn of the 1960's, the age of extravagant style came to an end. It wasn't that the cars no longer had style but the style was changing. Bill Mitchell, Head of Styling at GM had his own ideas on what an American car should look like, and his ideas were beautifully interpreted through the design staff, from Chevrolet to Cadillac. The Chevy's of the 60's were much leaner and conveyed a sense of power and speed - even when standing still. They were all highly identifiable. Chevrolet designers wanted everyone to know what was coming at them, and what they were following. The best advertising and it cost nothing.

So in 1961, the cargo ship "Cape Wrath" arrived in Wellington Harbour en route from GM in Canada, with her NZ shipment of 144 of these new, highly identifiable Chevy's in Complete Knocked Down (CKD) form. Bel Air VIN number NZ3045 among them was sent to the GM Petone plant and production of the car finished on 27.6.1961, a V8 auto powerglide. The car was then shipped to Schofield and Co, Chev and Holden dealer in Newmarket, Auckland on 28.6.1961. Then at the pre-delivery stage, Schofields (at their discretion) fitted this vehicle with some rare extras including Impala wheel discs, heater and Air Chief radio. Then it became the Managing Director's personal car, who took a new car every few years. Tony was a mechanic at the time

and joined Schofields in 1963. Little did he realise that way down the track he would own this Bel Air. It had a Nutmeg Brown top and Beige body.

The car was sold to a Chev enthusiast, who owned it for over twenty years. It then went to a King Country Farmer on a metal road, who used it as a typical farm vehicle. Tony heard about the car being for sale in the early 1990's and wasted no time in purchasing it. The car needed a total refurbishment, both inside and out. It was basically sound, with no rust but full of rattles and gravel. Tony was working full time so progress was slow.

When he finally retired in 2000, things moved quickly - total tear down, engine reconditioned, all glass, all panels including the dash, mudguards and doors removed, all upholstery removed and the paint stripped.. The 283 V8 was totally rebuilt by Matamata reconditioners. The paint and panel was beautifully done by PSY Panel and Paint. The colour was changed to a 2 pack Aqua mint with clear coat which was similar to one of the optional colours for these vehicles when new. Paul Yerex did the headlining and trim. Late Great Chevy's in Florida USA supplied the correct interior seat trim, door panels and carpet in the correct colour and patterns for this Aqua mint Bel Air. This was a big project and thanks to Ralph Bennett (when help was required) and the late John Platts, an old friend from Schofields who knew the Chev from his days as workshop supervisor at Schofields. He would come on the weekends, offer advice and he kept his hand in. The gearbox and diff were in good condition and are original. The doors and mudguards were all shimmed to get perfect panel alignment. The Bel Air re-emerged afresh in 2004.

An absolute pleasure to drive, solid, effortless and quiet. It was awarded Restoration of the Year 2005 by the Chevrolet

Enthusiasts Club and People's Choice twice at other shows. In the US, if you bought a 61 Chevy, you had the choice of a six cylinder engine or 4 other types of V8 and five different transmissions. A further choice was three different rooflines, one of which is the flat canopy roofline on this Bel Air. There were three different series - the Biscayne, Bel Air and the Impala. In this series were sedans, coupes, station wagons and the convertibles. Options included; power steering, power brakes, power windows, six way electric power seats, the turbo glide, triple turbine automatic, air con, positraction rear axle, choice of radio, and power antennas.

It is interesting that Ralph Bennett got Tony into Chevrolet cars back in the mid 1950s. Ralph and Tony's dads went to school together and remained close friends for the rest of their lives. Tony and Ralph saw a lot of each other growing up. In 1955, Ralph had a 1939 Chev but they were too expensive for Tony so he settled for a 1937 Chev Coupe. He then owned a number of late 1940s and 1950s Chevs and has a nearly completed even nicer 1947 Fleetline Aero Coupe waiting to be finished.



**BEL AIR SPORT COUPE** IN ROMAN RED AND EMBINE WHITE



**BEL AIR 2-DOOR SEDAN** IN TWILIGHT TURQUOISE



**BEL AIR 4-DOOR SEDAN** IN SHADOW GRAY



**BEL AIR SPORT SEDAN** IN ALMOND BEIGE

## BEL AIR SERIES

**CHEVROLET'S POPULAR PRICED MODELS**—Again, for 1961, the Bel Air has all it takes to make it America's most popular model! Chevy's slim new size makes it easier than ever to drive, park and garage. Its clean lines promise lasting beauty and value. And such comforts as glove box light, automatic dome light, foam cushioned seats front and rear, color-matched carpet in sport models, de luxe door handles and window cranks, twin rear ashtrays and de luxe steering wheel with thumb button horn are standard equipment. All these basic Chevy virtues are yours in Bel Air, plus a price that makes buying too easy to resist.



# CLUB NIGHT - December 14th

Neil Hunt Park - 7.30pm

Car In The Room: 1929 MG M type Midget

Followed by tea and coffee.

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## High Tea Run    Sunday, 18th December

Our annual “High Tea” run will be a luncheon style affair. Meet at the club rooms at 10.30am, first car away by 11am. The run will be about 1.5 hours, with the complimentary “High Tea luncheon” at end of the run back at club rooms. Bring your finest china cup and plate, cutlery etc as usual. There will be tea and coffee available, all other drinks BYO.

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## Midweekers

Our mid week runs are over for 2022, as soon as information is available for the first outing in 2023 it will be in Side Curtains.

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## Lakefront Car Show - 22 January 2023

Third time lucky! After the “red light” settings postponement in January, and the weather bomb at the end of October, our 10th Annual Lakefront Car Show will finally take place on Sunday, 22 January 2023. This will be our only formal event for January, with no club night and no issue of Side Curtains.

Bring along any interesting vehicles, even moderns. Bring more than one! We may also be joined this year by some trailered boats from the the Rotoiti Wooden Boat group. Let's hope for a great turn out on a great day to set the platform for a good year after 3 years of some turmoil.

Any questions about the event to Alan Judd or Dennis Whimp.

# COMING EVENTS

	Date	Event	Time	Venue	Page
Dec 2022	3	Xmas Social	6pm	Distinction Hotel	
	14	Club Night	7.30pm	Clubrooms	11
	18	High Tea Run	10.30am	Clubrooms	11
Jan 2023	22	Lakefront Car Show	10am	Village Green	5
Feb 2023	8	Club Night	7.30pm	Clubrooms	
	19	BBQ Run	TBA	TBA	
	22	Midweekers Run	TBA	TBA	
Mar 2023	8	Club Night	7.30pm	Clubrooms	
	19	Chairman's Run	TBA	TBA	
	29	Midweekers Run	TBA	TBA	
Apr 2023	12	Club Night	7.30pm	Clubrooms	
	16	Twilight Run	TBA	TBA	
	26	Midweekers Run	TBA	TBA	

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[www.rvcc.org.nz](http://www.rvcc.org.nz)

The branch website aims to meet the needs of our members, to promote our branch nationally, and to potential new members. If you have any suggestions please contact David Tomlinson.

Please also make sure you “Like” our Facebook page to keep up to date.

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## Contributions to Side Curtains

This is your magazine! Please feel free to share anything you think might be of interest to the membership by sending it to the editor, preferably by email, and a picture says a thousand words, so include photos where possible. Members taking part in club runs or events hosted by other branches are encouraged to pen a short piece about their experience to include in the next issue going to print. All items to the editor by the end of the month.

## Xmas Social - December 2022



## Tirau Museum - November 2022





# Tirau Museum - November 2022

