

# SIDE CURTAINS



M A Y  
2015

THE MAGAZINE  
OF THE  
ROTORUA  
VINTAGE  
AND VETERAN  
CAR CLUB



- CLUB NEWS
- EVENTS
- REPORTS
- ADVICE
- OPINIONS
- INFO



ROTORUA

### *Cover Photos*

*Top:* 1953 MG TD Sports  
*Owners:* Dennis & Pam Kenny

*Lower:* Treasurer - Mary Watson trying out a Landrover for size

*Back Cover:* Stags in Picton  
*Owners:* Patrician owners

If you want to see your pride and joy on the front cover,  
please supply a good quality photo or digital image to the editor.

## 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.

Doug's phone number is 333 2726.



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# SIDE CURTAINS MAY 2015

MAGAZINE OF THE ROTORUA VINTAGE AND VETERAN CAR CLUB OF NEW ZEALAND



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

**Postal:** PO Box 2014, Rotorua **Email:** [rotorua@vcc.org.nz](mailto:rotorua@vcc.org.nz)

**Website:** [www.rotoruvintagecarclub.org.nz](http://www.rotoruvintagecarclub.org.nz)

**Sun Alliance Agency Number:** HO 0300146

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

## OFFICERS

Patron	Bob Mowbray
Chairperson	Andy Watson
Secretary	Lois Thompson
Treasurer	Mary Watson
Club Captain	Denis Burr
Asst Club Captain:	Maurie Crowe

## COMMITTEE

Steve de Jeu	
Roger Nelson	
Angie Brunton	
Past Chairman	Mel Cooper
Mid Weekers	Bob Mackay
Social Convenor	Angie Brunton
Side Curtains Editor	John Peters
Beaded Wheels	Ronald Mayes
Tea Persons	Pat Burr Pat Mackay Marilyn Sarich
Custodian	Vacant - <i>can you help?</i>
Librarian	Dorothy Clouston
Asst Librarian	Vacant - <i>can you help?</i>
Cards and Flowers	Adelai Skelton
Hon Solicitor	Barry Rodgers
Hon Auditor	Murray Farquhar

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# From the Chair

## *Exiting Chairman's Report*



First off I'd like to thank the Committee comprising; Secretary Lois Thompson, Treasurer Mary Watson, Club Captain Denis Burr, Assistant Club Captain Maurie Crowe, Magazine Editor John Peters and his proof reader Jenny, Social Convener Angie Brunton, Committee members Roger Nelson and Steve De Jeu.

I would also like to again thank Mel Cooper for organising the guest speakers and display cars for our Club nights. They have been an integral part of our club nights for some years now that it is almost inconceivable that we don't continue in this vein.

I thank Roger for taking over the Swap Meet Committee comprising; Neville Harper, Bob Mackay, Steve De Jeu, Terry Wadsworth and David Philps who have worked behind the scenes to bring about another successful Swap Meet in spite of the weather forecast.

Other members I'd like to thank are Adelai Skelton for the cards and flowers, Rocky Fiske for organising the Mid Weekers, our Tea Ladies; Pat Burr, Pat MacKay, Marilyn Sarich and Shona Wickham. Also, Ronald Mayes for his excellent Beaded Wheels contributions and thanks to Librarian Dorothy with assistance from John Kirkland. Finally thanks to all those members that took part in our activities.

As this is my final year as Chairman I'd like to make a few observations and raise some matters that will need to be addressed in the future.

Our magazine and website continue to set a standard for others to follow, however the magazine is our single most expensive item, the printing and postage being the bulk of it.

Our building maintenance and general running expenses, ie insurance, rates, power, gas etc are the next biggest cost.

The Swap Meet nett profits and other income are not covering our yearly expenditure. If we want to preserve our bank reserves then some changes to our lifestyle will need to occur. Such as, just posting the Magazine on the web site, or not having a magazine at all and just updating the web site with event information. No subsidised activities and maybe we will need to consider charging an annual sub based on our running costs.



If these measures are disagreeable to the membership and we are faced with using our capital to cover the shortfall then at the current rate, and with some judicious pruning of costs, we could last 10 to 15 years.

Thank you everyone.

*Cheers, Andy*

# Editor Exiting

Another month closer to Christmas and it is our AGM month so that means a new start to our new club year, with new committee members, and office holders with new ideas for runs and social activities. We have enjoyed our club and midweek runs, and visited many places that we would never have had the chance to see. The social side of runs, especially midweek, are a good way of relaxing over a picnic lunch even if the weather does not play ball.

This month I have assembled most of the magazine and Andy has kindly agreed to finish it, with Roger and Diana collecting the mags from the printers, addressing and posting, so this month it is all care and no responsibility for Jenny and I.

Thank you to the members that sent articles and photos for inclusion in the magazine and I must say that my spelling has improved (Oh Yeah? Proof reader) and hopefully I have learnt where and where not to put commas!! I should have paid more attention at school instead of thinking about my projects waiting for me at home.

*Editor*



# Our Website

**Our website is [www.rotoruaVintageCarClub.org.nz](http://www.rotoruaVintageCarClub.org.nz).**

This is updated monthly with our newsletter and upcoming events.

If you are happy to either read our magazine “Side Curtains” from our website, or receive an e-mail version and not a hard copy by post, then advise the Editor by e-mail, letter or phone.

# From the Club Captains desk

As the May AGM approaches we need to think about whom we would like to help run our club for the next year. We all need to think about this.

Our May run has been put back a week from the 17th to the 24th May so we can visit the Taupo branch and enjoy some of the things that are happening in their area.

The plan is to meet at our club rooms at 9am.

From there you will be told or directed as to what is happening and where to go.

For lunch you can bring a picnic lunch to or buy it in Taupo.

After lunch we are off to visit things arranged by the Taupo Club, but I believe it will be around the Wairakei area. We will head for home around 2:30/ 3:30 pm.

This run should give us a chance to meet one of our neighbouring branch members and share ideas for our further cooperation.

As Pat and I will be away at this time, Maurie will be your leader for this.

While we are away your new Club Captain will be settling in so be prepared to help and support Him/Her.

I would like to acknowledge the help and support Maurie has given me over the last year. Thanks Maurie.

Thanks also to our club members for your support. It helped me to continue trying to do better.

See you all at the AGM

*Cheers, Denis*

## NOTICE

**Could all last years' winners  
of trophies please return them  
to the Club Rooms.**

**Thanks, Club Captain**



## **SWAP MEET**

**That time is fast approaching.**

**Please think about volunteering your services on the day to staff Ticket Boxes, Parking and the Car Show.**

**There will be two shifts**

**i.e. 6:30am - 9:30am and 9:30am - 1:00pm.**

**Remember the more volunteers the better, if we have a surplus, we can use them to give people a spell on each shift, thus making the day not quite so onerous.**

**Also, the more volunteers the less outside people we have to hire.**

**So, please put your name on the board which will be available at the Club Rooms through May and June.**

**One never knows, there might be some reward after the event.**

**Roger**



## DIARY DATES

Next club night AGM: 13 May, 7.30pm

Next committee meeting: 18 May, 5.30pm

## RVVCC Events 2015

DATE	WHAT	DETAILS
20 May 2015	Mid Weekers	
24 May 2015	Club Run	Shed view and a wander through rural area
13 June 2015	Prize Giving	Annual Dinner event
17 June 2015	Mid Weekers	
12 July 2015	Swap Meet	Paradise Valley Raceway
22 July 2015	Mid Weekers	

## Other Club Events 2015

DATE	WHAT
30-31 May	Double Fifty, Waikato

*Subject to change, check your latest copy of Side Curtains or our website,  
[www.rotoruvintagecarclub.org.nz](http://www.rotoruvintagecarclub.org.nz) for the most up-to-date details.*

# Club Night

**Wednesday 13 May**

No car on display or guest speaker as it is the AGM.

# Mid Weekers

**Wednesday 20 May**

Meet at Waiteti Holiday Park (Ngongotaha) at 10am for morning tea compliments of our host Michael Thorne. Then we will drive to the Tirau Museum (S/H'way 1), an entry fee of \$5 pp is required. Bring warm clothing as it can get quite cold inside the Museum. Following a café lunch in Tirau we will then make our way home.

# May Club Run

**Sunday 24 May**

Note this is a week later than normal. A run to Taupo to visit three sheds. Meet at the Clubrooms at 9am to travel to Taupo. We will meet up with Taupo people at the first shed in Manuka street. Bring your lunch, car pooling is an option.

Any enquires Ph Maurie 345 6540

## CANTERBURY BRANCH SWAP MEET

There still some sites available for the Canterbury Branch Swap Meet at McLeans Island on 9, 10 & 11 October 2015. For more information please contact: Kevin Clarkson on 021 02706525 or email [kevinclarkson1@gmail.com](mailto:kevinclarkson1@gmail.com)

# Notice of Annual General Meeting

7.30pm, 13 May 2015

The Agenda is:

- Apologies • Minutes of last years AGM
- Chairman's Report • Financial Report
- Election of Officers and committee • General Business

REMEMBER, only financial members may vote. The following positions need to be filled: **Chairman, Dep. Chairman, Treasurer, and Magazine Editor**. If you think you can contribute something worthwhile to the club, then get yourself elected. Don't just sit there and expect someone else to do it, this is YOUR club!!!

Nomination papers are on pages 31 and 32 in last month's Side Curtains.

## *Annual Prize-giving Dinner*

Saturday 13 June

Our annual prize-giving dinner will be held at the clubrooms at 6.00pm for a 6.30pm dinner.

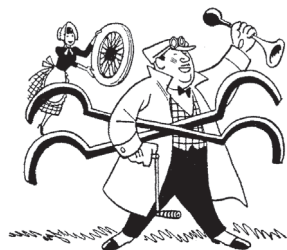
Cost \$40 per person. This is a BYO.

Tickets available at the AGM,  
Andy Watson at The Top Place or  
Lois Thompson at Rotorua Childcare.



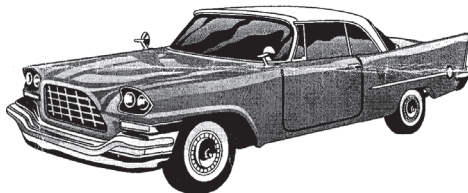
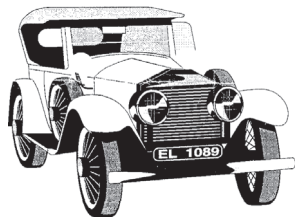


## ROTORUA VINTAGE & VETERAN CAR CLUB INC



### *THE THIRTY FIFTH CENTRAL NORTH ISLAND SWAP MEET & CAR SHOW SPECTACULAR*

**STOCK CAR RACEWAY PARADISE VALLEY  
ON SUNDAY JULY 12th 2015**



**FEATURING VINTAGE, VETERAN, CLASSIC CARS AND HOTRODS**

*This event will be of interest to all collectors of Vintage, Veteran, Classic and Collectable Cars, Motorcycles, Hot Rods, Memorabilia, Old Car Books, Old Toys, Model Cars & Trains, and anything of a Collectable or Antique Nature.*

***Opens from 7am till 3pm with hot food and refreshments available***

#### FOR SITE ENQUIRIES

**Neville Harper** Ph: 07 348 2412 Mobile: 027 494 7249 Email: [daharpers@gmail.com](mailto:daharpers@gmail.com)

**Car Show Enquiries** ph: Bob Mackay ph 07 332 3849 Email: [bob.mackay@clear.net.co.nz](mailto:bob.mackay@clear.net.co.nz)

**Website:** [www.rotoruvintagecarclub.org.nz](http://www.rotoruvintagecarclub.org.nz)

Admission -  
*Seller's vehicle and driver*  
\$10.00 per site



ALL others \$5.00 per person  
(Accompanied children FREE)



As a new member of barely two months, I was not sure what the Night Run would usually entail, but this edition took place with a dark skies start at 6am and concluded with a cooked breakfast back at the club rooms at about 8am.

Although new to the club, I did stints as a competitive driver in the Alfa Romeo club back in the '80s but now have much more a sedate driving nature. I brought my 9 year old son and 8 year old daughter along as navigators/note takers, although I think the lure of a good breakfast was their real reason for coming along. The hardy crowd that turned up very early in cool weather were given three pages of navigation instructions, with a set of about 20 questions to answer about things we'd see on the left as we travelled around.

The route took us to the Blue Lake and then back via the Lake Okereka Loop Rd, then north up the eastern side of the lake and across the top with a rural interlude around the edges of Hamurana, then back through Ngongotaha and then a "long cut" from Fairy Springs through to the city and back to the club house. My junior crew, combined with my limited knowledge of urban Rotorua, saw us question whether we were lost a couple of times, and it was only the security of seeing a red Triumph Stag hove into view at one point that stopped us back tracking or giving up on the course!



The questions were varied and challenging, we missed out on about a third of the answers, and got at least one answer only partly right. There were one or two curly ones too that had us looking for objects when the answer was on building signage etc. We got some answers others didn't so I didn't feel so bad driving past a few "targets" in total ignorance.

It was a very enjoyable drive of about 46 miles (70 odd km) and it was also good to get to know other members better at the breakfast. I certainly enjoyed my first road event with the club and will endeavour to take part in many more as time and family commitments allow. My thanks to the organisers for the fun, challenging course, and to the kitchen crew too.

And just to show observation was never my strongest point, while comparing my '78 Roller to Bob Mowbray's similar '78 model in the car park afterwards, I noticed that one of my car's hub caps was different to the other three! I had never noticed that in two years of ownership, but have since discovered that it is from a late '60s model, so I will be now be on the look out to replace it.

*David Tomlinson*

***Those who took part were:***

Denis and Pat Burr	Modern
Bill and Adelai Skelton	1929 Austin Seven
John Peters and Jenny Gill	1973 Triumph Stag
Roger and Diana Nelson	1975 Triumph Stag
Ross and Cushla Hollings	Modern Min
Mel and Colleen Cooper	1984 Mercedes 230CE
Neville Harper	1961 Studebaker Hawk
David Tomlinson with Sean 9 and Kate 8	1978 Rolls Royce Silver Shadow
Terry Fitzpatrick and Lois Thompson	1973 BMW 2002
Andy and Mary Watson	Cooks

# Midweek Report

Wednesday 22 April

Following a strong turnout of ten club cars for morning tea at the club rooms we drove to the Kawarau area through Rotoma where we were joined by two more club cars and our friends from Eastern Bay to the Feijoa orchard/packhouse.

At the time of our visit, the staff were out still picking fruit in the orchard and the packhouse was lying idle awaiting their return to grade and pack the daily harvest. The orchard is the largest and only full time feijoa orchard in the North Island, and run by the owners Mary and Rob Jessop. Mary explained how over the years they have changed the varieties to give a longer seasonal spread of fruit to make the crop both more marketable and manageable with labour requirements. While the early and late varieties are the most valuable the market is very particular regarding size and quality, which leads to large quantities of small and low quality fruit being left in the orchard to be mulched as fertilizer or discarded on the grader. While the cleaning and grading machine was run for a short demonstration it was explained how the fruit is picked and packed daily. It is then cold stored overnight and transported to the distributor in Te Puke the following morning. In the past they have exported to the likes of Australia and Singapore but this is no longer viable with the present value of the New Zealand dollar. Following a short walk to view the orchard it was time to say good bye once we got the ladies past the craft shop that keeps Mary busy sewing during the off season.

A short drive up into Kawarau and we were at our next venue for the day with Morton and Sheila Coventry. With such great summer weather (25C) we quickly set up for a picnic lunch in the shade of the trees in their interesting garden while Morton played his keyboard and sang a few songs. We were in for a very interesting afternoon, starting with a two performing miniature ponies, it was demonstrated how the one could even count (never seen a dog that could count up to 20), but I guess that unless you were there you will not believe me so if you missed the trip ask someone that was! Morton is a man of many interests, and certainly enjoyed showing us the toys, model helicopters, drones that can return automatically to their heli-pad by GPS, very large working Meccano models, and a very elaborate model railway that must have taken hundreds of hours to build.

Overall, an interesting enjoyable day and a reason to drive our club cars in such good company.

*R&P*





***Those who took part were:***

Maurie and Shirley Crowe  
Vanguard Ute

Ronald and Gloria Mayes

Bob and Pat Mackay

Roger and Keitha Couchman

Albert Litten and Marina Jenkins

Graeme and Dorothy Buchan

Terry and Sandra Fitzpatrick

Michael Thorne

Darryl Stretch

Les and Gail Costar

Les and Thelma Forward

Evan and Win Dorrington

Triumph 2000 (1970)

Triumph Vitesse (1968)

Austin A30 (1957)

Desoto (1939)

Austin A35 (1955)

BMW 2002 Tii

Panther Kalista

Triumph 2000

Austin 12/4

MG

Morris 1000 (1958)

# Rare military vehicle back on the road

A rare World War II German army vehicle has sprung back to life at the hands of Hamilton military vehicle enthusiast Ross Hopkins and family.

The Kettenkrad motorcycle half-track was used for a variety of purposes in all theatres. It could be a personnel carrier and field telephone cable layer, a gun tractor and general tow vehicle.



The Hopkins bought their example in Australia in the mid-1980s. But as Hopkins has 38 military vehicles of wide description and years of work packed into barns, it was only a few months ago that he got serious on bringing the vehicle back to working order.

Going by the serial numbers, and the best advice available, the vehicle is believed to be the 73rd built and is stamped with the authentic Wehrmacht eagle.

It was built by NSU and powered by an Opel four-cylinder petrol engine. It has three forward, one reverse gear and high and low ratios. It can top 70kmh on the open road.

But Hopkins says that as its been engineered with Teutonic thoroughness it weighs in at 1750kg and is top-heavy and will roll on slopes of more than 22 degrees.

To get it back to running order the steering mechanism and gearbox had to be repaired. A few parts are still required including the fuel, oil pressure and temperature gauges.

It has been resprayed in desert sand colour and there are plans to badge it after one used by the Luftwaffe.

"I like them because they're different," Hopkins said. "Everyone's got a Jeep."

Restoring long-abandoned military vehicles requires a wide range of engineering skills and a "never give-up" attitude as witnessed by the next project on Hopkin's list. It's a pair of mid-1930s Japanese military personnel and cargo carriers.

Hopkins had one, or rather, the remains of one. The vehicle is configured as a trike and powered by a Japanese built copy of a Harley-Davidson V-twin side valve engine.

But Hopkins' example arrived with one barrel smashed off the engine and various covers and key mechanical bits missing.

He came across another example belonging to a Christchurch man. That had an engine



which had the required parts so Hopkins borrowed it and made castings of the parts he needed.

He rebuilt the Christchurch engine and sent it back to its owner.

One thing led to another, negotiations ensued and he was invited to buy the whole thing. So Hopkins was off to Christchurch with a trailer and found the remains of the vehicle spread all over the man's sections.

"Some people would throw their hands up - but I just love making things," he said.

Hopkins makes the point that with him and his wife, Leonie, everything is "ours" not "mine".

He says it's a recipe that works as Leonie is as keen on the whole business as he is. Both became members of the New Zealand Military Vehicles Club when it was established in 1978.

Military vehicles is a family business for the Hopkins and several generations of the family took vehicles including a Long Range Desert Group Chevrolet, the Kettenkrad, a Vietnam-era Mule and Ford GTB 6 cylinder side-valve truck up to the annual meeting of the New Zealand Military Vehicle Collectors Club at Kumeu late last month.

- **Stuff**

*A Lexus mechanic was removing a cylinder head from the motor of a LS460 when he spotted a well-known cardiologist in his shop. The cardiologist was there waiting for the service manager to come and take a look at his car when the mechanic shouted across the garage, "Hey Doc, want to take a look at this?"*

*The cardiologist, a bit surprised, walked over to where the mechanic was working.*

*The mechanic straightened up, wiped his hands on a rag and asked, "So Doc, look at this engine. I opened its heart, took the valves out, repaired or replaced anything damaged, and then put everything back in, and when I finished, it worked just like new. So how is it that I make \$48,000 a year and you make \$1.7 million when you and I are doing basically the same work?"*

*The cardiologist paused, leaned over and whispered to the mechanic, "Try doing it with the engine running."*

# Three-wheeler suits owner's sense of humour

**The Reliant Regal Super-van was designed as a delivery van for the British market. You need a sense of humour to drive this Reliant Regal Supervan, especially given its owner's robust funny bone. Peter Drummond has a 17m-long 1960 Seagrove fire truck with an 18-litre engine and a 30.5m ladder parked in the same shed.**

Both sport his cafe's logos and large speaker boxes. The fire truck is currently being fettled for the annual Variety Trillian Bash charity rally that kicks off next weekend from New Plymouth - the Super-van is too small, Peter says.

As it would be, given the Reliant started in a garden shed. Raleigh Bicycle Co stopped building three-wheelers in 1934 and the works manager carried on in his back garden, producing a 356kg van with a hardwood frame and motorcycle front end.

It was designed as a delivery van for the British market that could be driven on a motorbike licence, and demand saw production move to a disused bus depot, and develop to include conventional seats. When Austin stopped building the 747cc Seven engine, Reliant began building its own, with minor variations, then a broader range of cars, conventional four-wheelers and three-wheeled models that included the Bond Bug and the Robin, the car this Super-van is often confused with.

It was the commercial Reliant Super-van which was made famous by television show *Only Fools and Horses* and by *Mr Bean*.

The Super-van wasn't sold new here, and Peter doesn't know this car's history. When he bought it 15 years ago, it was derelict with a seized engine and no windscreen.

"It's unique, I like different vehicles and I thought it would be a wonderful promo car for the Fishpot Cafe." It's certainly rare - there are only seven Robins and three Regals registered in New Zealand today - and it fits Peter's unique sense of humour, "It's fun to drive, and I like things that are a bit different."

He sent the car to his mate, Vern, whose engineers started on the 850cc engine - this must have been one of the first cars out with this bigger unit. Peter tracked down a windscreen at a second-hand shop in Tooting, London, and while there for a business trip was collected by a friend with a Bentley, of all things.

They went and bought the windscreen, his hotel wrapped it up and he checked it on to the flight as a surfboard, carried it on board, and it was propped up among hanging coats.

Peter Drummond says his Reliant Regal Supervan was derelict when he bought it 15 years ago.

Bar paintwork, radial tyres in place of crossply and the sound system (and cellphone holder), the car remains standard.

"I could easily spruce it up, but I like to keep it as is."

It's now my turn to drive, a problem, as I'm much shorter than Peter. Adjusting the seat requires unbolting it, so he simply pushes the hinged seatback to shunt me into reach and off we go - or not.

An arm recovering from breakage doesn't manage the slightly stiff four-speed gear lever, so I do the steering, accelerator and clutch, he the gears and it all works fine, given Sunday traffic in an industrial area, until we get to a junction with a hill start. Having to do the handbrake and gears he lets go of the seatback, I slide gently away from the pedals and the car stalls. It takes both hands on the wheel to pull me back uphill into reach of the clutch and accelerator, so he now gets key, gear lever and park brake to manage while I pump the throttle until she starts, and we try again, but lurching forward jerks me away from the pedals and ... I'm sure you get the picture.

We manage it eventually: "You're not used to manuals, are you?" Not driven like this, I'm not. An over-vigorous approach to tackling roundabouts has us rolling like a dinghy in a hurricane, but I soon get the hang of smooth cornering and settling her on the throttle, with rear drive leaving only the steering to that front wheel, though I'm not sure I'd be game to do 100km/h. Peter's brother drove it on his daily commute for almost a year, until getting a better car, though neither of them has gone outside Auckland in it, and he admits it gets blown around a bit by passing trucks - it's under 500kg, he thinks.

Has he ever rolled it? "No! Treat it with respect, and going straight you have no issues."

He does enjoy the attention it gets, and of course simply getting a warrant can be fun.

"The guy waves you in and of course hasn't noticed the single wheel, and there's a pit there ... I pretend I'm going to drive it in."

With the back seats in use it must have been a handy delivery van, given the tight turning circle and abstemious thirst for fuel, though you wouldn't have carried much. That didn't seem to put buyers off, and the Reliant three-wheeler remained in production until 2002.

- NZ Herald, Pictures Jacqui Madelin



# The Lycoming goes to Laguna Seca 1991

American Peter Giddings, who regularly participated at the Southern Festival of Speed in Dunedin asked Ralph if he would be interested in taking the Lycoming to the Laguna Seca classic race meeting in Monterey. Ralph said that he would give it serious thought. Peter then told him that it was by invitation only but he was sure that he could arrange it.

Ralph and his wife Ellen and their best friend and pit crew Bill McCabe were keen to go and they invited Ralph Watson to come with them. The invitation was confirmed and shipping arrangements were made and confirmed for the 18th of July, but about 2 weeks prior to this date as Ralph was making final preparation on the car a wire brush touched two electrical wires and the spark set a bowl of cleaning fluid on fire which spilt over his arms and hands resulting in first and second degree burns. Luckily the burns healed in time for him to drive at Laguna Seca.

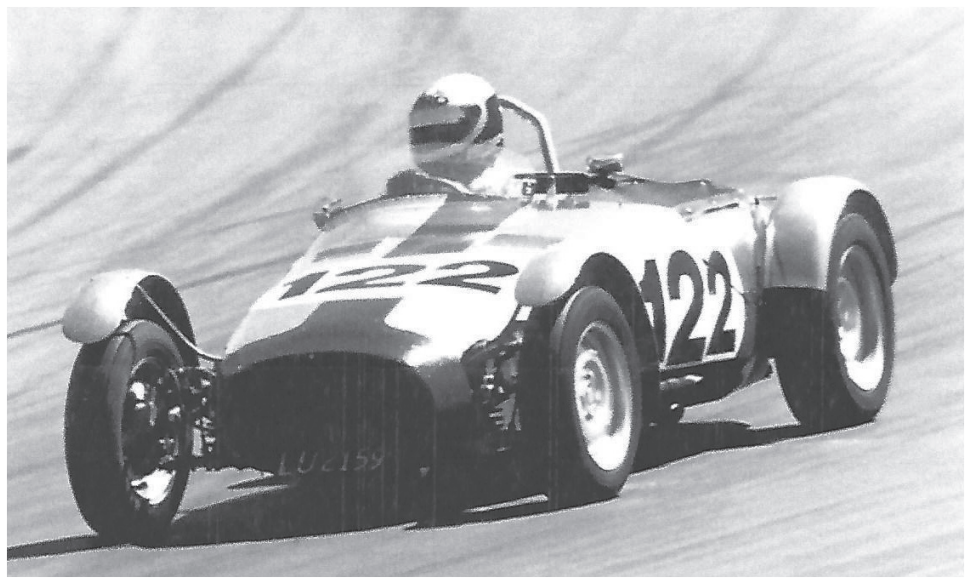
The party arrived 4 or 5 days prior to the race meeting and they caught up with Peter Giddings who gave them a tour of his extensive collection of cars, some of which were under various stages of maintenance or restoration.

A ute and trailer had been arranged to transport the car, this was a new experience for the car, as for the greater part of its life in NZ it had been driven to and from each race meeting and raced in sports car and open wheeler events, from Auckland to Invercargill.

The car was shipped to the Oakland wharf where they lined up in a queue to clear customs at a cost of \$US550 plus a further \$US200 cash (mafia money) for the handling staff or the car would be lost in the system for several weeks. Paid up and on their way in 20 minutes.

On arriving at Laguna Seca it was obvious the many of the competitors and promoters had been there for a few days. Huge areas were set aside for car clubs with about 2 hectares occupied by Ferraris.

The Monterey Classic meetings always have a theme emphasis throughout the four day event and this year was a tribute to Juan Manuel Fangio with cars that he had driven on display including Alfa Romeo's, Maserati's, Ferrari and Mercedes Benz.



*Ralph Smith driving the Lycoming at Laguna Seca 1991.*

Over the four day meeting there is only one proper race and this is the last event for any given class, all other races are heats for fine tuning and to finalise grid positions. In the first heat Ralph took a cautious approach for the first few laps and found that it took maximum confidence on the steep downhill section to achieve a good lap time. The following day was the first heat building up to the final and the Lycoming had qualified 5th fastest.

The following morning Ralph lined in grid formation according to practice times and made a reasonable start and held his position through the first corner, it was on lap three at turn 11 in second gear prior to entering the main straight, there was a distinctive bang from the gear box and he coasted to a standstill and the end of his racing.

There was a memorable incident when Fangio was invited to drive a lap of honour in one of his former cars he drove as world champion. He followed a Mercedes 500SLC which progressed around the track at a reasonable clip considering Fangio only wore sports clothes and a cloth cap. The pace car increased speed when Fangio was on their tail to the point where it spun coming down the steep descent. This allowed Fangio to crack on the pace for a couple of uncontrolled laps of the circuit to the delight of the fans and the ire of the officials who were waving black flags in an attempt to get him to stop.

## **AUSTIN SEVEN CLUB**

John Dymond of the Penrite Oil Company in Australia was the catalyst in arranging a sponsored trip to Australia at the invitation of the Austin Seven Club who met the cost of shipping the Lycoming to Melbourne.

On their arrival they travelled to the Penrite factory and met John and Mark Dymond who had already cleared the car through customs along with the Alpha Romeo of Peter Giddings from the USA. This race meeting is held at Winton about 150 miles from Melbourne. Also sponsored for the meeting was Russell Greer from Blenheim who had taken over the Stanton Special.

The Lycoming performed very well in practice, and in the first race was well matched with a blown Zephyr Special until the clutch disintegrated and that was the end of the meeting.

The car was left with John Dymond for repairs to the clutch assembly. The Dymonds have a very well equipped engineering workshop to restore, maintain and support their classic car collection.

## **EASTERN CREEK, SYDNEY SEPTEMBER 1994**

The trip to Eastern Creek was complimented by the presence of Ralph Watson. The Penrite Oil Company had towed the car from Melbourne to Sydney and return, a distance of over 1200 miles.

Everything was organised by Penrite Oil and all that Ralph had to do was turn up and drive, he said that he felt like a Formula One driver.

That special feeling changed very quickly when about an hour before scheduled practice Ralph noticed a damp patch under the car, it was a fuel leak from the fuel pump. A quick change out of race overalls and off came the fuel pump and it was found that a carbon seal was the problem and luckily enough he had a spare. Ralph Watson appeared, looked on for a brief moment, shook his head and walked away looking very dejected.

On this occasion luck was on his side and the repair was successful and the car started, he left it running while he changed back into his race overalls and then to the marshalling area for the practice. Ralph Watson appeared, lifted the bonnet, had a look and walked away with a big smile and never said a word. Practice went well and was spent mostly learning the course.

The first race was a mixed bunch of sports cars and single seaters of varied engine capacity and performance with a reverse grid. The Lycoming was off the back of the grid along with the Carter Corvette driven by Mark Dymond who led the way through the field with Ralph trying to hang on to his tail but with Dymond's previous track experience and the superior performance he soon left Ralph and the rest



of the field behind.

On the third lap Ralph was black flagged and was told that the car was exceeding the noise level. After much negotiating Ralph was allowed to continue racing but had to reduce his revs.

## THE LYCOMING TODAY

After 30 years of regular classic racing since restoration, averaging about seven meetings a year, the car is in need of some tender loving care, mainly in the front suspension, motor and gearbox departments. Ralph has purchased some gear box items from America and hopes to also build a spare engine. The body work is still in good condition.

## RACING INCIDENTS

There have been few racing incidents and very little damage to the car. A near miss was in the Wellington street race when the car hit an oil spill, swapped ends and stopped 150mm from the armco. Only two accidents happened at Wigram and both times resulted in damage to the front suspension and steering.

## NATIONAL MEETINGS SINCE RESTORATION

Whenuapai Airfield Circuit	Ardmore Airfield Circuit
Pukekohe Racing Circuit	Hamilton Street Race
Ruapuna Racing Circuit	Wellington Street Race
Wigram Airfield Circuit	Levels Circuit Timaru
Waimate Street Race	Dunedin Street Race & Hill Climb
Teretonga Circuit Invercargill	Southern Festival Of Speed
Ryall Bush Road Race	Cromwell Motorsport Park
Queenstown Street Race, Hill Climb & Bent Sprint.	

*Terry & Sandra Fitzpatrick*

With all the new technology regarding fertility recently, a 65 year old friend of mine was able to give birth. When she was discharged from the hospital and went home, I went to visit. "May I see the new baby?" I asked. "Not yet" She said "I'll make coffee and we can talk for a while first". Thirty minutes had passed and I asked, "May I see the new baby now?" "No, not yet" She said. After another few minutes had elapsed, I asked again, "May I see the baby now?" "No, not yet" replied my friend. Growing impatient, I asked, Well, when can I see the baby?" "WHEN HE CRIES!" She told me. "WHEN HE CRIES?" I demanded. "Why do I have to wait until he CRIES?" "BECAUSE I FORGOT WHERE I PUT HIM!!"

# Jury orders Chrysler to pay \$150M in fire death of 4-year-old Georgia boy

*By Tom Krisher and Dee-Ann Durbin, AP Auto Writers | Associated Press – Fri, Apr 3, 2015*

**NEW YORK (AP) -- A jury in Georgia has awarded \$150 million to the family of a 4-year-old boy killed when a Jeep Grand Cherokee exploded into flames three years ago after being rear-ended. The jury said Chrysler, the maker of Jeeps, must pay nearly the full amount.**

Jurors in Decatur County ruled Thursday that Chrysler acted with reckless disregard for human life in selling the family of Remington "Remi" Walden a 1999 Jeep with a gas tank mounted behind the rear axle.

Walden, of Bainbridge, Georgia, was killed when the Jeep driven by his aunt was hit from behind by a pickup truck in March 2012. The fuel tank leaked, engulfing the Jeep in flames and killing the boy.

The verdict comes nearly two years after Chrysler compromised with a federal safety agency and agreed to a scaled-down recall of some older-model Jeeps with the rear-mounted tanks. The tanks have little structure to protect them if struck from behind, making them susceptible to punctures and fires.

Federal documents show that at least 75 people have died in post-crash fires because of the rear-mounted fuel tanks.

The 11-woman, one-man jury ruled after a nine day trial that Chrysler was 99 percent at fault for the crash and the pickup driver was 1 percent at fault. Jurors also determined that Chrysler failed to warn the family of the hazards of driving the Jeep. They ruled that the Waldens should get \$30 million for Remi's pain and suffering and \$120 million for the full value of his life, according to a verdict form.

Mike Palese, spokesman for Chrysler parent company FCA US, said the company is disappointed with the verdict and would appeal. Chrysler, he said, was prevented from presenting data submitted to federal safety regulators showing that the vehicles did not pose an unreasonable safety risk.

"The vehicles are not defective," Palese said.

Although the verdict is large, it isn't the largest judgment ever against an automaker in a per-

sonal injury case. In 1999, for example, a California jury ordered General Motors Co. to pay \$4.9 billion to Patricia Anderson and Jo Tigner after their Chevrolet Malibu was rear-ended and burst into flames. In that case, four children in the back seat were severely injured. The amount was reduced on appeal to \$1.2 billion.

And in 2004, a woman paralyzed when her Ford Explorer rolled over won a \$369 million verdict from Ford Motor Co. That was later reduced to \$83 million, which Ford eventually paid after exhausting its appeals all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Carl Tobias, a professor at the University of Richmond law school, said it will be difficult for Chrysler to overturn a jury verdict, but an appeals court might reduce the amount. He questioned Chrysler's decision to take the case to trial because of the horrific nature of the crash. Tobias said the Walden verdict is likely to lead others to sue the company or to speed along cases that are already in the system.

Chrysler has long contended that the Jeeps were no more dangerous than comparable SUVs built at the time. It used that argument to convince the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in 2013 to allow it to recall 1.56 million Jeeps after the government agency initially recommended that 2.7 million be repaired. Under the recall, Chrysler agreed to install trailer hitches in the rear as an extra layer of protection.

Safety advocates have called the size of the recall and the fix inadequate. On Thursday, Clarence Ditlow, the head of the Center for Auto Safety, called on the government to reopen its investigation against Chrysler.

NHTSA spokesman Gordon Trowbridge said late Thursday that the agency monitors legal decisions and "if new information emerges, we take it into account and act appropriately."

Atlanta attorney Jim Butler argued during the trial that Remi's death resulted from the fire because of the gas tank's poor position. The child was on his way to a tennis lesson when the SUV was struck from behind.

"Numerous witnesses saw Remi struggling to escape and heard him screaming for help," the family's lawsuit alleged.

The lawsuit alleged that Chrysler placed the gas tank in a "crush zone" behind the rear axle and knew the location was dangerous, and that the company failed to protect the gas tank against rupturing.

Trial testimony showed that the compromise with safety regulators over the recall was worked out in a Chicago airport meeting between Fiat Chrysler CEO Sergio Marchionne, former Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood and ex-NHTSA Administrator David Strickland. Ditlow noted that Strickland now works for Venable, a law firm that has represented Chrysler.

**Durbin reported from Detroit.**

# WD-40



We've all been there, just four bolts to undo to fit that replacement part to our MG, simple, until you come to undo the last of the four bolts and it won't budge. Most of us then grab a can of WD-40 and give the stubborn bolt a good spray, allow time for it to penetrate, and with some gentle persuasion the bolt comes free. We also use it to dispel moisture and give protection by spraying the electrics and various metal parts while our cars are laid up over the winter period.

I've used WD-40 many, many times and indeed this wonder liquid has always been there during my lifetime with motorbikes and cars. In fact even before I could ride a motorbike on the road my Dad gave me a can to help fix a sticking throttle cable on an old motorcycle I used as a field bike and that was when I was 12 years old, in the early 1960s. I decided to research the history of WD-40 and thought I would share my findings with you, the reader.

It all started in America in the early 1950s when the Americans were trying to stop corrosion of the then most powerful weapon in the world, the Atlas missile, which was 100 times more powerful than the bomb dropped over Nagasaki in 1945. It was developed as a water dispersant to protect the 80ft rocket's thin outer skin, to stop corrosion of its balloon tanks, and keep moisture away from the sensitive electronics. It's a sobering thought to think that if a third world war had started, the successful launching of these rockets would have been partly down to the use of WD-40.

The man behind WD-40 was a serial inventor called Norman Larsen. He was a chemist from Chicago and was tasked to come up with something and quick. It took him 40 attempts to come up with a formula that had the properties to do what the military required. He called it a Water Displacement liquid but then abbreviated it to WD-40, the use of 40 in the name being down to his 40 attempts to get the formula correct. It is believed that he hit upon the correct formula in 1953, but the general public had to wait another five years before they could get their hands on it.

In those five years it was used by aerospace giant *Convair*, who built the Atlas missile, but many of their workers were sampling the benefits of WD-40 by taking samples home with them and using it on their cars and bikes, plus many other uses they found. It's stated that WD-40 was never patented because to do so would have meant disclosing its formula, although it was said to consist of solvents, various oils and hydrocarbons which, mixed together, produce the wonder liquid we love to use. Interestingly; in Germany the formula had to include mandatory safety-relevant ingredients.

Since its release to the general public all sorts of uses have been found apart from what was initially intended, such as cleaning wheels, plastics, rubber items, piano keys, freeing off zippers, getting chewing gum off jeans and even keeping slugs away from your precious plant pots by spraying WD-40 around the pots edges. In fact the WD-40 fan club list over 200 of the most popular uses! It's also been used for some very unusual purposes such as the bus driver in Asia who used WD-40 to remove a python snake that had coiled itself around the undercarriage of his bus, and the police officers who used WD-40 to remove a naked burglar who was trapped in an air conditioning vent. Other excellent products have come along such as GT85, ACF50 and branded products by the likes of Halfords. But WD-40 always seems to be the name that springs to mind when we are looking for such a product, and I bet most of you reading this have a can in your garage.

But back to the story. The original company set up by Larsen to market WD-40 was called the Rocket Chemical Company, a very suitable name in view of its origins, and sales took off immediately, being firstly commercially available in stores in San Diego, California in 1958. Sales rocketed, excuse the pun, when a few years later they started to produce WD-40 in spray cans. The company was renamed in 1969 by the then President and CEO John S. Barry, using its brand name WD-40 as he felt the change was necessary as the Rocket Chemical Company didn't make rockets! At this time WD-40 was the only product they produced, although they now market such names as 3-In-One Oil, Carpet Fresh and many others. The company was listed on the stock exchange in 1973.

The inventor, Norman Larsen, sold his rights to the product for \$20,000 soon after it was launched, feeling he could invent other items that would be more successful. How wrong he was, as his future inventions didn't even come close to the popularity of WD-40. Sadly he died at the early age of 47 but his legacy lives on, to the benefit of all those that use his invention.

*Colin Grant*

# MALE OR FEMALE?

You might not have known this, but a lot of non -living objects are actually either male or female.

Here are some examples:

**FREEZER BAGS:** They are male, because they hold everything in, but you can see right through them.

**PHOTOCOPIERS:** These are female, because once turned off; it takes a while to warm them up again.

They are an effective reproductive device if the right buttons are pushed, but can also wreak havoc if you push the wrong Buttons.

**TYRES:** Tyres are male, because they go bald easily and are often over inflated

**HOT AIR BALLOONS:** Also a male object, because to get them to go anywhere, you have to light a fire under their butt.

**SPONGES:** These are female, because they are soft, squeezable and retain water.

**WEB PAGES:** Female, because they're constantly being looked at and frequently getting hit on.

**TRAINS:** Definitely male, because they always use the same old lines for picking up people.

**EGG TIMERS:** Egg timers are female because, over time, all the weight shifts to the bottom.

**HAMMERS:** Male, because in the last 5000 years, they've hardly changed at all, **and are occasionally handy to have around.**

**THE REMOTE CONTROL:** Female. Ha! You probably thought it would be male, but consider this: It easily gives a man pleasure, he'd be lost without it, and while he doesn't always know which buttons to push, he just keeps trying.



# Business terms and what they mean

<b>DELEGATE:</b>	Pass the buck
<b>FILED:</b>	Lost
<b>PENDING:</b>	What the hell do we do with it?
<b>DELAYED:</b>	Forgotten
<b>URGENCY:</b>	Panic
<b>EXTREME URGENCY:</b>	Blind panic
<b>FORECAST:</b>	Wild guess
<b>LONG RANGE FORECAST:</b>	Wilder guess
<b>PERFORMANCE COUNSELLING:</b>	Do better or else
<b>NATURAL ATTRITION:</b>	If you are old, watch out
<b>PROFIT:</b>	Profit
<b>PROFIT AFTER TAX:</b>	Loss
<b>DEFICIT:</b>	Staggering loss
<b>INDUSTRIAL BY PRODUCT:</b>	Our waste
<b>POLLUTION:</b>	Their waste
<b>PILFERING:</b>	Theft by employee
<b>FRINGE BENEFIT:</b>	Theft by executive
<b>NEW:</b>	Last year's model
<b>ALL NEW:</b>	Last year's model in new colour
<b>INGENIOUSLY ENGINEERED:</b>	Incredibly difficult to install and service

# DOWN UNDER!!!

For the past week motorists in the Southbank Centre carpark beside the London Eye have been greeted with the unusual sight of a Vauxhall Corsa 4.5m in the air, upside down, seemingly gripping to a piece of tarmac it has torn up.

No, it wasn't the result of a particularly brilliant accident.

It was a brilliant piece of art by British artist Alex Chinneck, commissioned by Vauxhall as part of its "A to Z of Corsa" campaign to launch the new model and celebrate 22 years of Corsa sales in the UK.

Chinneck worked with structural engineers, steel benders, scenic artists, metal workers, carpenters, tarmac layers and road painters to create the sculpture.

It was designed to occupy the absolute maximum UK road-legal dimensions so it could be installed overnight.

Chinneck said: "I see sculpture as the physical reinterpretation of the material world around us and so by introducing fictional narratives into familiar scenarios, I try to make everyday situations as extraordinary as they can be.

"I choose to do this through illusions because I think there is something both optimistic and captivating about defying the realms of possibility.

"With an effortlessly curling road I hoped to transcend the material nature of tarmac and stone, giving these typically inflexible materials an apparent fluidity.

"Vauxhall Motors allowed me a great amount of creative freedom and this collaboration offered my studio an exciting platform to explore new areas of engineering and fabrication."

Which is all fine and well in an artistic sense, and while The Good Oil doesn't know much about art, we do know what we like.

And we do like cars hanging upside down in random places.

*Vauxhall Corsa. Photo / Supplied*



# Coming Events

	DAY	WHAT	MEET	STARTING PLACE	PAGE
May	13	Club Night AGM	7.30pm	Clubrooms	8
	20	Midweekers Run	TBA	Waiteti Holiday Park	7
	24	Club Run	9.00am	Clubrooms	7
June	10	Club Night	7.30pm	Clubrooms	
	13	Prize Giving	6.00pm	Clubrooms	8
	17	Midweekers	TBA	TBA	
July	8	Club Night	7.30pm	Clubrooms	
	12	Swap Meet	6.30am	Paradise Valley	9
	22	Midweekers	TBA	TBA	

## Newsletter Contributions

***Do you enjoy our newsletter? Is there something else you would like to see included?***

Letters, reports, articles of interest, photos, ideas and feedback are all welcome and should be sent to the editor, John Peters, before the 25th of each month.

These can be **emailed to [jwpete@xtra.co.nz](mailto:jwpete@xtra.co.nz)**

or posted to 9 Taiporutu Place, Rotorua, 3015.

Or drop it in our home mail box yourself. You can phone me on 07-348 6825.

### **Text should be provided in MS Word format.**

Photos should be scanned in colour at 300dpi or higher or taken on a digital camera at the highest possible setting to enable good reproduction. Save as a jpg file to email.

The opinions or statements expressed in Side Curtains are the authors own views and do not necessarily express the policy or views of the Rotorua Vintage and Veteran Car Club Inc. The editor's decision is final.



## **ROTORUA VINTAGE AND VETERAN CAR CLUB**

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