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The official magazine of
the Thoroughbred Sports
Car Club

Sept-October 2019



Cameron Brackenbury's modified 850 Mini

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Closing Date for the November-December magazine 10th December 2019

About Our Club

Calendar

The [Official Calendar](#) is published on our web site. Print a copy to keep in your historic log booked vehicle.

Club Meetings

[Club meetings](#) are held on the 2nd Wednesday of every month except December and January at Carlingford Bowling Club.

Club Objectives

- To foster a better acquaintance and social spirit between the various owners of Thoroughbred Sports Cars in Australia
- To help and advance Thoroughbred Sports Cars in Australia
- To establish and maintain, by example, a high Standard of Conduct and a Respect of the Laws of the Road

Club Shoppe

Visit the [Club Shoppe](#) and make sure you are dressed appropriately for the next event.

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Incorporation

TSCC is incorporated as an association;
Registered No. Y15083-35

Affiliation

TSCC is affiliated with CAMS Limited

Committee

The contact details of the [Committee](#) are published on the Website.

Other Information:

[Administration](#)
[Annual Awards](#)
[CAMS](#)
[Club History](#)
[Club Plates](#)
[Membership Forms](#)
[Pointscore](#)
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Disclaimer:

Any opinions published in the Newsletter should not be regarded as being the opinion of the Club, of the Committee, or of the Editor. No responsibility is accepted for the accuracy of any information in the Newsletter, which has been published in good faith as supplied to the Editor.

Articles are invited and should be mailed to the Editor for publication showing the name and address of the author

Website

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Top Gear

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Current and previous editions may be downloaded [here](#).

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[Administration](#)
[Annual Awards](#)
[CAMS](#)
[Club History](#)
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Top Gear has been continuously published since September 1981.

Surely five events in twelve days is a record, even for this very active club.

It began with the performance of Gustav Holst's work, *The Planets*, at Sydney Opera House on Saturday 28th September. Any visit to the Opera House is an event and few Sydney experiences can top the walk from Circular Quay to Bennelong Point on a clear night. The second half of the presentation provided a rare spectacle, the presence on stage of almost the entire Sydney Symphony Orchestra. I totally underestimated the number. Our Director of Kultcha and former member of the SSO, Colin Piper, said there were something like 120 musicians on stage including a massive 65 strings and two harps. A substantial choir emerged from somewhere to take the applause. It was a memorable experience of sight and sound.

The next day was POO Day which was held in perfect weather at Terry and Robyn Daly's beautiful Middle Dural home. We are very fortunate to have access to such an ideal venue and I thank them on behalf of the club for making it available and for slaving over the house and grounds to present the perfect place to display our cars. Speaking of cars, the standard was as high as I've ever seen and the variety typical of our diverse membership. Congratulations to Peter Dowrick (Ford Mustang) and Neil Mason (Jaguar Mk11) for presenting the best cars in their categories. A very popular Ladies' Choice award went to the beautiful red Mini belonging to the Brackenbury family. (Your committee promised to look at revisions in the POO Day judging but the submissions from members were so wide-ranging that we could not make a decision in time for this year. It will be passed on to the next committee for consideration.)

Next on the calendar was a visit to the Leura Garden Festival on the Wednesday. It was actually a preview, arranged by club members and Leura residents, Ron Powell and Sue Harris. By avoiding the crowds, we enjoyed Ron and Sue's beautiful garden where we photographed our cars before heading off to see other magnificent displays.

On Friday 4th May a group of us drove to a Goulburn base for our weekend at Taralga, a beautiful little town celebrating its bicentenary. The next morning at Taralga we called in to John and Coleen Pymble's beautifully restored 19th century inn which is now a comfortable home. From there we drove into the main street where our cars and those of a few other clubs, were put on show. It was a very relaxed and interesting day. On Sunday most of us called in to Tathra Place Fee Range farm, an enterprise of Luke Winder, son of Jenny Winder, partner of club member, Trevor Booth. Luke's passion for organic farming and the results he is achieving without pesticides, chemical fertilisers and a minimum of mechanised equipment were amazing to see.

The fifth activity in the twelve days was our October meeting which was well-attended as usual. The next meeting will be our most important for the year, the Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 13th November. This is your chance to participate in the running of this great club by nominating for a position on committee. Nomination forms have been distributed, so come aboard. Our Christmas Party will be held at a new venue this year, Crowne Plaza Windsor, on Saturday 30th November. It will be our opportunity to recognise those who have participated in the club in special ways including presentation of their cars at the Pride of Ownership Day. You'll enjoy a beautiful buffet dinner, live music for dancing and the largesse of the club which will be providing wines.

I look forward to seeing you at the AGM and soon after at the Party.

And then it's Christmas!

Top Gear-September-October 2019

The last two months have been a bit of a blur. August started with a trip to the US for Pebble Beach week. It didn't start too well with a snafu by my travel agent. It transpires that there are two Seaside's on the west coast of the US, both of which have a Holiday Inn Express. Needless to say, the agent booked the one in Oregon. The problem was only discovered when I casually looked at Google Maps to find out how long it would take to drive to Carmel. When it came back as 807 miles and a twelve hour plus drive, I knew there was a problem...The best we could do at late notice to fix it was to book the Best Western Dunes Hotel in Marina CA. There is no good reason to voluntarily go to Marina CA.

Pebble Beach was fantastic, Dave and I picked up a Dodge Challenger RT at LAX, together with co-driver Ollie, for the post PB tour, and drove up to Paso Robles for a wine tour and the first night, then to Carmel for the start of festivities. Colin Allerdice has written an excellent piece on Concorso Italiano. If you're going to drive around the US, I thoroughly recommend a large, loud US V8. Whilst it isn't the runt of the litter at 375hp, they go all the way up the Demon, which has 840hp from its 6.7 ltrs! Based on the performance of our car with less than half the Demon's horsepower, I can't imagine how fast the Demon is. When this photo was taken in the Mojave Desert, it was 47 degrees C! I can report that driving past an Arizona Highway Patrolman at 97 mph wasn't our finest hour and, no, I wasn't driving.

Two weeks after returning I spent a week in both Adelaide and NT for work and on returning, I attended All British Day. Great weather and a great turn out for the TSCC. Two weeks later we had yet another fabulous POO day at Robin and Terry's lovely home. People's Choice went to Cameron Brackenbury's fabulous little red Mini, which appears on the cover of TG this month. The following weekend was Colin Piper's and Jack Jones' Taralga weekend to celebrate the town's 200th anniversary.

There has been some activity in the shed, with the long restoration of my South African Alfa GTV6 nearing completion. A one family owned Citroen DS 23 Pallas has joined and I take great delight in driving it with complete disregard over Chatswood's speed bumps.

Thank you to all who have contributed, enjoy the magazine!



While many TSCC members headed off to the wilds of the USA, Deborah and I headed further north, to the wilds of Alaska, in our Canadian Porsche, a 6 speed manual Cayenne we picked up from the Leipzig factory in 2011. Canadian friends joined us on our 8,500 km trip from BC Canada, to Alaska and back. While this trip could make an interesting TSCC Big Trip, the driving days were sometimes long, with the total trip taking 30 days. The route took us from Silver Star Resort initially to Prince Rupert BC, where we hopped on an Alaska Marine Highways ferry, sailing through part of the Inside Passage, to Juneau, Alaska. Using ferries and planes, we accessed Glacier Bay, Skagway and Haines. From Haines it was all driving (apart from kayaking), up to Anchorage, the spectacular Kenai Peninsula, Denali and along the unsealed Denali Highway. Our overnight stop on this “highway” was a great backwoods experience, complete with “barn finds” in the bushes, an old airstrip and crashed plane amongst the dead vehicles. Just don’t talk politics, or hunting, with the locals. After driving through Chicken, with its alluvial gold fields, we returned to Canada at Dawson City, Yukon, the heart of the 1896-1899 Gold Rush. Staying in a brothel from that era was a highlight, as was the celebration of the Summer Solstice on a mountain top behind town, with an impromptu jazz band seeing the sun go down and rise over the Yukon River. Next to Whitehorse, where many Paddle steamers started downstream to Dawson. Then onto Stewart BC and Hyder, Alaska, before our return to Silver Star. Perhaps a TSCC Big Trip through BC and Alberta, plus a brief foray into southern Alaska, using the ferry from Vancouver Island to Prince Rupert, a quick drive to Stewart and Hyder and then east to Jasper and the Icefields Parkway?



Original bridge on Skagway Railway



As the sign says, “North to Alaska”



Skagway, the entry to the Dawson goldfields



Driving North from Haines



Glaciers in Kenai Fjords National Park



A lodge we stayed in had many barn finds



Cadillac in the bush, as well as a plane



The drive along the unsealed Denali Highway



Chicken, Alaska, with chicken and gold dredge



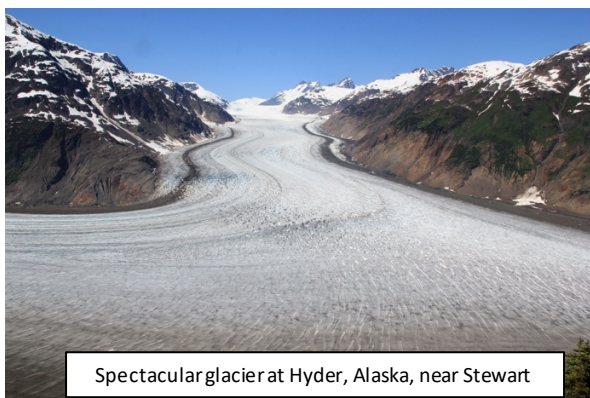
Stewart, BC with unusual over snow transport



Graveyard of paddle-wheelers, Dawson City



RVs often towed pickup trucks, but a helicopter?



Spectacular glacier at Hyder, Alaska, near Stewart



Street view in Stewart BC



Dawson City: effect of permafrost melting

Over the years I have owned several dogs – never one called ‘Rover’ – but now I own a car by that name.

Some weeks ago, we answered a flyer from Dr Tom Aczel promoting a run to Walcha & Armidale, so we booked into the Walcha Motel and paid our subs for breakfast & dinner at Langford House.

In a previous life, I made many trips up & down Thunderbolt’s Way to Nowendoc in rally cars, accompanied by friends including Rob & Sue Clare (who rallied – you guessed it – a Mk11 Jaguar!). Indeed, we even used an alternate ‘road’ (read ‘track’) up that steep climb from Gloucester, with many cattle grids and water crossings. That meant I knew what we were in for and as that big climb is now sealed, I decided it would be a great ‘fang’ for our Volvo 1800S and set about preparing it for the trip.

Dr Tom had other ideas and berated me at C & C @ K one morning as to why I should take my newly acquired Rover 2000TC. He even sent me an email requesting a ride and telling me a story involving his father and P6 Rovers – you reckon I’m long-winded! (Actually, it’s a great yarn!)

‘Why not?’ I thought, with some degree of trepidation. I had already changed all its ‘bodily fluids’, a few hoses and fitted new shock absorbers – which saved wear & tear on the door handles when cornering and reduced the need for sea-sickness tablets – but the rear window seal was almost non-existent and we had never taken it for a longer run than Terry’s Hartley Vale run. I was also concerned that Tom was going to use the infamous pot-holed patched-up road from Dungog to Stroud Road and what effect it might have on Rover’s 50 year old suspension – most of which is still original.

A few calls located a new set of window seals in Melbourne and I found a fitter in Seven Hills who would ‘attempt’ the refitting – that’s a story for another time! With a load of spares and tools in the cavernous boot (including an electric fuel pump, Roger) - we were committed!!

We headed off early Friday morning in the company of Les & Dianne Payne in their BMW 2002. It took a few kms of the Putty Road to master that giant steering wheel but, once settled in, and combined with the new shocks, it handled like my Volvo 1800. The ride was a bit firmer but my fear that we could drive over a coin and tell whether it was heads or tails was ill-founded and Wendy didn’t need any extra pain-killers for her back. By Singleton, I really had my eye in, and Les & Dianne were most impressed with Rover’s performance and acceleration. Needless to say, so was I! However, long hills literally killed it as the gaps in the gear ratio are huge. Climbing up the steeper part of Thunderbolts Way, I found that 3rd gear didn’t have the torque and in second gear, it revved its head off, much to the annoyance of Peter Van Dyk who was behind me. On the run home from Walcha to North Richmond, we averaged 8.6 litres / 100 kms sitting a tad over the ‘legal’ with a couple of big bursts on the deserted Oxley Highway – amazing! All in all, very satisfying – Good Boy, Rover! Good Boy! Derek would be pleased.

I’m sure the actual weekend has been reported by scribes better than I, so I’ll just say thanks to Tom and his friend George from Walcha for a great run with lots of good company. I hope you enjoyed your ‘drive’ Tom - Terry Daly didn’t (you had to be there!) Oh, and by the way, thanks Jeremy & Roger for talking me into buying ‘Rover’.

We arose to find a heavy frost over the cars. As the sun came up full, strong and warm we headed to Langford for a hearty breakfast. The morning drive was to Armidale and the Hardman collection of 150 cars, in storage and on display to those lucky enough to be invited.

There were garages in the front yard and under the house with the restored cars, such as Isotta Fraschini, Lagonda, Alvis, to name a few. Down to the first shed and there were many cars for restoration including a Supercharged Cord. In the bottom shed were mainly unrestored cars in very good condition including, GTR Torana, XY GT Falcon and many other favourites.

The foundations have been excavated for a car museum near the airport where many of these cars will go to a new home.

The next venue was the Top Pub in Uralla for lunch. For the number of people there for lunch, the wait was not too bad. Most of us perused the town and surrounds stopping for a coffee at the book shop. The road back to Walcha is long straights and nice corners with low undulating hills, just right for our cars to stretch out. We returned for a lazy afternoon back at Walcha, many checking out the district. Reports came in that a policeman was breath testing in the main street; traffic is so low he could do both directions.

The formal part of the weekend was sit down dinner at Langford's with Jeremy filling in as MC. Jeremy encouraged stories from several people of past adventures and trips with the Thoroughbreds.

Speakers included Tom Aczel & Steve Cooper told a true story of having to operate on their mate the eye surgeon when he fell off his motorbike. Lindsay & Jill Day told us about their walking tour of Walcha and all the street art. Andra Pyke had the ladies in stitches explaining how to get in and out of a Lotus Elise in a skirt and Darryl told a story against himself on one of Stephen Knox's events. George Pethard told us about driving the length of Africa AND South America in his MGB.



Dinner concluded and the night carried on with a little more drinking and a few more stories

What a difference a day can make. Saturday morning it was minus 5 Celsius with ice covering the cars and Sunday morning it was 10 degrees warmer at just 5 Celsius. A beautiful sunny day was underway in country NSW.

Tom Aczel scheduled breakfast at 0830 at Langford House and wanted all the cars in position by 0930 for a photo shoot and get together with a few local car enthusiasts. Those who stayed downtown were first on the scene and parked with the old mansion in the background whilst those who stayed in house remained tucked up in bed until the very last minute, and when they finally arrived various humorous stories of their overnight accommodation emerged. Extra blankets and sleeping in their clothes seem to be the normal as various heaters didn't work or didn't do an adequate job. Lovely old mansion with many parts restored but unfortunately the severe drought has left the garden in disrepair.

Three local cars turned up, a well-travelled MGB, a 1930 Packard and a 1951 Lagonda. This car was owned by a local of 40 years Mark Whitehead and was originally purchased by his father from the Sydney dealer in 1951. Of interest, the previous day Mark had met the group for lunch in Uralla and was driving a beautiful Alvis convertible. Some may recall a visit to his shed/property last time we were in Walcha,

It wasn't long after Jeremy had finally taken his 1000 photos that members started drifting off, some back to Sydney via Bucket's way, some via the Putty Rd and some ventured north for a few more days of R&R.

No doubt you have read all about Rob Clare's SU fuel pump problems in his Jaguar 3.8 Mark 2, but come Sunday we had the same issue with the other Mark 2 of Craig Shields on its return to Bathurst via Nundle. I believe it finished on the back of a tow truck. The SU problem has been around for as long as I can remember so best take a spare when travelling if you are lucky enough to own an early model Jaguar.

The writer went north along Thunderbolt's way via Uralla, Bundarra, Gilgai, and Inverell (having lunch with the Braithwaite's which were heading off to Bribie Island for a few days) before finishing a Warialda for a few nights. I must say I have never driven that route before as some of it had been dirt until just recently but what a beautiful quite drive it was. No traffic and no police cars for over 150k. Would make a great route for a future TSCC event. However, I must say that the severe drought was telling with dirt paddocks everywhere with little or no stock anywhere.

Whilst waiting for Robyn I stumbled across a magazine THORP'S WAY, the memoirs of Ron Thorp, entrepreneur, and on the front cover was a photo of that great AC Cobra that Ron raced in the sixties at Warwick Farm, Catalina Park etc. Until I read the magazine (yes, I brought it) I didn't realise that Ron won the Caversham Six Hour race in that same car. This AC Cobra now resides in the Bowden collection in Queensland.

A big thanks to Tom Azcel for organising another great weekend.



Talking about the Triumph Italia 2000 is much like discussing unicorns – unless you have seen one can you say that they exist?

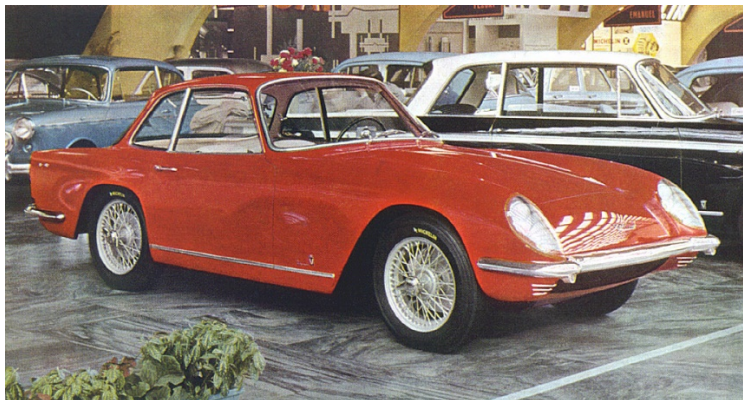
Well not only do “Italia’s” exist but six appeared at Concorso Italiano, Monterey USA in August as part of the celebration of their 60th anniversary. Five were presented by US owners, with the sixth (243 UYS) brought from the UK by its owners, Graham & Teresa Andrews.

The history of the Triumph Italia 2000 is rich, intriguing and, in the end, a sad tale of broken commitments. The Italia was a limited production coupe, built between 1959 and 1962 on the Triumph TR3 chassis, designed by Giovanni Michelotti, with bodywork by Carrozzeria Vignale.

The seed for the car was sown in the late 1950’s by Dr Salvatore Ruffino, Triumph’s Italian distributor, who felt that there was room in the market for an enclosed sports/GT car. As one would expect, the idea was workshopped with several design houses and coachbuilders before arrangements were made for Vignale in Grugliasco (near Turin) to produce a Michelotti designed prototype on an assembly line owned by Dr Ruffino. Dr Ruffino initially planned to produce 1000 cars ... 500 in 1960 and 500 in 1961 ... with each of Triumph’s dealers being required to purchase one.

In fact, two prototypes were produced. The first had a sloping front hood with glassed in headlights and was quite modern for the times. But the front-end treatment did not provide enough cool air to the rather small TR3 radiator. The interior was done in two tone – something that was not repeated. Both prototypes had Nardi wooden steering wheels and, not unsurprisingly, the prototype badging differed from the production cars.

The first prototype remains unaccounted for and is only known from the few photographs in existence. The second prototype still survives, again with slight variations to things like taillights, badging, etc with the big standout being the addition of Borrani wire wheels



Regrettably, the schedule to begin production of the Italia coincided with tough times for Standard-Triumph. The imminent takeover by Leyland plus the planned introduction of the Michelotti designed TR4 saw the Italia being consigned to the dustbin just as production commenced.

Triumph did recognise the Italia and gave it its own production specifications. Chassis numbers were typical TR3 starting with TS of TSF (for the last 30) and ending in "CO" (chassis only) or "COO" (chassis only with overdrive). Except for the last 13 cars, all Italia's received heavy duty shock absorbers, 7-leaf rear springs and a front sway bar. Motors had an "I" at the end of the engine number, indicating that they were Italia's.

Further complications arose when Triumph failed to meet the chassis requirements as agreed in the "Italia Specifications" which led to Dr Ruffino commencing legal action and saw the removal of the Triumph name from the later production run.

The production of the Italia 2000 never reached the proposed 1000 cars. Just 330 were eventually built, including the two prototypes. Only six were RHD.

The red 1961 Italia 2000 featured is owned by Scott Marquis of Tacoma, WA. USA and the pale blue Italia is the UK Italia owned by the Andrew's from Dereham, UK. Both cars have been fully restored and are a credit to their respective owners. Both Scott and Graham were only too happy to talk about their Italia's to someone from "down under" and both said the same thing when I mentioned that I understood that there was one Italia in Australia ... "If you mean the yellow one in Melbourne it has gone back to the UK".

For anyone who would like to own a Triumph Italia 2000, Scott (Italia Web Site Registrar) will happily put your name on the waiting list – but, be warned, there are quite a few in front of you.

No surprises there ... the Italia has to be the prettiest Triumph ever made.

Acknowledgements: Adrian Sinnott ... "Triumph Italia 2000 History" Dario Ruffino (son of Dr Salvatore Ruffino) from an interview with Jorg van Appen
Venue for Photographs: Black Horse Golf Course, Monterey CA. USA

As we walk into the foyer of the County Hotel it feels like coming home, particularly with a hearty greeting from Donal, the Manager.

It's early afternoon on Tuesday so it's quiet and the festivities have not yet begun. We complete the formalities, grab the elevator up. As we enter our favourite room, we see nothing has changed. We also notice that our friends in the suite next door are here again, for their twenty seventh Festival in a row (this is only our 3rd so we are novices!)

From our small terrace I look across Browning St to the Hawkes Bay Club. Napier is a picture.



Bright, sunny, and clean as all of New Zealand seems to be. In the hotel car park is a 1937 Alvis Speed 25, first vintage car I've seen at the 2019 Napier Art Deco Festival.

The Napier Art Deco Festival celebrates all things Art Deco, culture, music, design, fashion, architecture and cars, with the summer festival being held in February each year. The last couple of festivals have attracted over 40,000 visitors some of whom bring their vintage cars with them to show and to participate in the annual parade.

The festival started thirty-one years ago acknowledging street after street of stunning and beautifully-restored Art Deco buildings that have made Napier famous as one of the most complete collections of Art Deco buildings in the world.

This collection of buildings came about due to the occurrence in 1931 of a massive earthquake that rocked Hawke's Bay for more than three minutes, killing nearly 260 and destroying the commercial centre of Napier. Rebuilding began almost immediately, and new buildings reflected the architectural styles of the times – Stripped Classical, Spanish Mission and Art Deco. Napier is often referred to as a 1930s film set.

The Festival is officially Thursday to Sunday, but many events begin on Wednesday and a number of events are repeated two or three times throughout the Festival. There are guided tours of Napier central area, tours of some of the unique homes of the local area which showcase Queen Anne Revival, Art Deco and other architectural styles. There are also tours to nearby Hastings, which was also levelled, and its buildings that are predominantly in the Spanish Mission style.



It's Wednesday morning and we are ready for the fun to start, feeling bright and chipper having not stayed too late in the Hotel's famous Churchill's Champagne and Snug Bar, we are dressed 1930's style and venture out to encounter many similarly dressed festival people and quite a lot of early 20th century cars.



Today we've only booked one event, a dinner, and we will take in the free entertainment and other things on offer. If time allows, we might ride the rails to Hastings and back in genuine heritage carriages drawn by Steam Locomotive JA1271.

A big part of festival attendance is dressing like its 1930s style. Many people can put something together from things they have at home which they accessorise with items bought in Napier. There are a broad range of outlets from the bargain shops where you can get a bow tie or gloves for under \$10. Or, for considerably more, a properly tailored outfit from a ladies or gentleman's outfitter "of the day". The local OP Shops also get a good workout!

This year we booked into as many events as time and our stamina would allow from the 200 plus events on offer in the catalogue issued by the Art Deco Society some six months prior to the Festival commencement. We have dinner events somewhere each night, most featuring live music of the period and later, dancing is encouraged. (For the 2020 Festival we will probably do more of the free events, particularly the live music offered in the "Music Bowl/Shell" on the boardwalk.).

Thursday dawns and the beginning of the Festival proper. We went a bit later at Churchill's last night so not quite as chipper but, no problem, there is no shortage of good coffee in Napier. Great cafés are plentiful where you can watch the passing parade of Festival goers and admire the fashions and ingenuity of some ensembles. Walking about is a car enthusiasts dream, hundreds of beautiful machines and owners happy to chat. Vintage Car tours of Napier can be organised from The Art Deco Trust Shop. Some cars are for sale and I had to be sensible a few times, but it costs nothing to dream. For a paltry \$175,000 Kiwi I could have been the proud owner of a 1936 Packard 120B Convertible Straight Eight Coupe in mint condition.



Napier has lots of retail catering to the Festival. It features a number of antique/curio shops with many items some of us would remember seeing at our grandparents' homes. Lovely glassware, crockery, ornaments and such, plus many other items of the period. Weirdest item I saw was a travelling salesman's sample kit, for denture components, with lots of artificial teeth!

Around the Music Bowl on Marine Parade there are various performers amusing the crowd, in particular a magician who has a large group of school children. The kids are all dressed in period style and are having a great time. A band starts up in the Bowl, jazz and a bit of ragtime, a few people take up the tune and some of the kids join in the dance.



Pre-dinner martini and then a short walk down Tennyson St where dinner tonight is at Caruso's, a Greek Café that has been in the same family since the late 1940's. It turns out to be the quirkiest meal of the festival, featuring the two most popular dishes from the Greek Café food of the 40's and 50's, steak, egg and chips and grilled fish with white sauce, boiled potatoes and beans. Seems in those days the only food people would order in the café was New Zealand food (remarkably like Aussie food), while those in the know ate traditional Greek food out the back with the family. Good company, people from up near Auckland with a '39 DeSoto and two couples from the South Island. Had drinks later in Churchill's.....

Friday dawns bright, sunny and warm. After another great breakfast in the County Hotel's Winestreet Restaurant we take a walk around to see what is happening, spend some time looking at lots of stuff and nothing in particular and I acquaint myself with the 1928 Ford Neville Racer outside of the Masonic Hotel. The Neville Racer is beautifully maintained and looks fantastic, hopefully I'll see it running at some time over the next few days. The number 17 is a nice coincidence, being Dick Johnson's favourite racing number.

There are lots of people about now, including large groups from the local schools watching the dancing demonstrations and listening to some fine jazz. Again, the kids are dressed in their parents best guess of how a 1930's school kid might be dressed; it really adds to the atmosphere.

In previous years we've done architecture and notable house tours along with lunches and winery tours which have been both interesting and fun.

This time we are just wandering around and taking it all in. Most people on the streets are in 1930s garb, cloche or picture hats and an extraordinary array of brightly coloured frocks for the ladies,

boaters, panamas, brightly coloured bowties or cravats, trousers and 'sports' coats for the gents, all very elegant and great fun. It's extraordinary how much effort many people make. We take lunch in The Rose Irish Pub and contemplate taking the RM31 Deco railcar to Hasting and doing a walking tour, which we've not done before. But maybe next year as we start chatting with some people over lunch and spend a pleasant afternoon in good company.



Dinner tonight at the Old Church Restaurant about 15 minutes by taxi outside of Napier. Its Gangsters and Flappers night and the fashions are fabulous, no shortage of black shirts and white ties among the men, flat caps and fedoras. Ladies in a mass of colours, pearls, feathers, beaded crocheted headdresses, fascinators, shiny stuff everywhere, never seen so many 'flappers' before in one place. A great three course dinner and a seven-piece band belting out jazz and swing while the packed dance floor pulsed with action. Tables of eight so six new friends. Two of the couples were acquainted and the other couple, like us, were ready to mix. A great night's food and entertainment, with a dance floor that allowed most people to devour dessert without a care for the calories.

Saturday, day three of the Festival and there are tens of thousands of people wandering about enjoying the entertainment. There are all sorts of vehicles moving about Marine Parade and people are taking rides on a Traction Engine and an old bus as a fly over of vintage aircraft goes by. Groups have set-up picnics along the garden and lawn verges of Marine Parade.



They are enjoying lunch and a glass or two in fine style as another band is playing swing numbers in the Bowl. It's a huge family day outing. We move down Tennyson Street to view the parade of vehicles as an aerobatic display entertains from above. This year's parade is limited to one hundred and twenty vehicles. It takes over an hour to pass and includes bicycles and motorcycles with many rare vehicles some of which have been imported just for the Festival.

Saturday night we are back at the Old Church Restaurant joining with a hundred or so others determined to prove that no matter how energetic the celebration that "A Little Party Never Killed Nobody". This is our



second time at this event, and we are not disappointed. Great food and wines, excellent company, and an atmosphere right out of the Roaring Twenties.

Today, Sunday and the last day of the Festival, we'll need to pace ourselves as we have booked into two events, but first, after a light breakfast at the County Hotel we are off to the Soap Box Derby. This for me is one of the highlights of the daytime entertainment and some of the best Billy-cart racing to be seen.

Dads build the carts and the kids race them starting from the top of Tennyson downhill for two blocks and into the hay bales. The Billy-carts are many and varied in design and the racing is classed by age and also an open category. Some families have their kids sharing the same cart. The crowds are back again and I check out the form in the paddock and on the dummy grid. Drivers psyching themselves up and Dads have a stretch and warm-up prior to the push start. I'm pleased to say that no Dad face planted after the release, although a few stumbled.





Racing goes through a number of heats and the drivers all take it very seriously with much of the competition being very close. As the heats progress the crowd is starting to pick their favourites, some for driving prowess and others for their fashion sense. The day was won by a very determined young lady in a sleek white racer who showed her appreciation to the crowd by executing a perfect 180-degree spin and stop just short of the hay bales, and the crowd went wild!

Just below the gardens on Marine Parade, but before the beach, are various displays such as vintage fire appliances, tourers with 'trunks' fitted out for cocktails and canape's, a fashion parade and a beer tent from Hawke's Bays' only brewer. We are booked into the Art Deco Festival Luncheon which takes place in a marquis at the beach. We see a few familiar faces from the other events we've been to and meet more new friends, Kiwis local and not so local and

another couple from Sydney. I've picked a Canadian accent, a few Irish accents and a probable French from the surrounding tables. Another great afternoon of good company, good food and good wine.



After an afternoon snooze it's time to dress for dinner at the Hawke's Bay club, our final event of the Festival.

The Hawkes Bay Club was founded in 1863 about 8 years after Napier was established. It sits on the corner of Marine Parade and Browning Street, a magnificent two storey timber building built in 1906 which survived the earthquake. The Club is old world and very exclusive with membership only open to those people invited to join. That probably makes this dinner event one of the few events where non-members or guests are permitted to enjoy the Club. Dinner is a buffet affair and as usual the company is excellent. A small jazz band entertained us through dinner, and they were joined later by a vocalist.

The summer festival is held in mid-February each year, information can be found at the Art Deco Society's web page <https://www.artdeconapier.com/>

Napier is on the east coast of New Zealand's North Island and is about midway between Wellington and Auckland, about a 4 ½ hour drive from both. There are flights every 1 ½ hours or so between Auckland and Napier.



RED 850 started life in 1962 at the Zetland, Sydney BMC factory as a cherry red Morris 850 with red and grey flecked seats and black rubber flooring.

It was sold by Lancaster Motors to the Commonwealth Bank and was used to deliver documents between branches. Grant has kept the original sales documents, which came with the vehicle.

It was driven by one lady employee and was bought by her when she retired in the early 1960's.

One evening on my way home from work, in 1978, I came across a very faded cherry red mini with a very forlorn lady standing beside it in Castle Hill. Doing the right thing, I stopped and offered assistance. The lady informed me she couldn't get any gears. She was waiting for a tow truck to take the car home. She had been to the mechanic across the road and he had informed her the car needed a new motor and gearbox. I had a quick look and suggested to her it probably only needed the clutch replacement, and offered to do it for the princely sum of \$150. She said she would consider my offer and let me know.

Around three weeks later she phoned me and told me she was going to sell the car instead, so I enquired as to the selling price. She offered me the car for \$150. Deal done!

I replaced the clutch with a later diaphragm type, as the original was the very early multiple coil spring type. I drove the car to work in Smithfield for a few years then placed it into storage in a shed with horse feed at Maroota, where the local rats ate the insulation off the wiring.



I then brought it home to Galston and stored it in the back of my garage.

In 1992 our youngest son Grant who was at that time 15 years old, asked me if he could have it to “do up.” He promised me he would do it properly with my assistance and look after it.

It received its first coat of red paint in our backyard, and although a very amateur paint job it didn’t look too bad. We built a Mini K 1098cc motor and gearbox and replaced all the brakes with later Mini K ones.

When Grant got his licence, he was so proud of the little car and drove it everywhere. One trip ended in disaster as the car threw a conrod through the side of the block on the M1. Time for a new motor!

We then commenced to build a 1220cc motor with Hillman Imp pistons, offset bores, weber carbie etc and full synchromesh Mini K gearbox. That lasted longer than the first one.

When Grant was doing his apprenticeship with New Roley Motors, who had also just taken on a Peugeot dealership, he fell in love with a traded Peugeot 405 Mi16, so the mini was relegated into the garage again.

Then the fun began. Firstly a 1275 1100S Motor bored to 1310 cc, then disc brakes new wheels, half roll cage, and numerous other modifications. But no, it wasn’t fast enough. Grant decided to turbocharge it. He purchased a Mini Metro setup from the UK. Guess what, it didn’t fit! We spoke to a local engineer who agreed to us cutting the firewall out and welding a box inside the car so the turbo would fit. This was all ok, but then it was almost impossible to get the exhaust down past the axle. The subframe was modified and a pipe fabricated to fit.

The car was certified by an authorised engineer at that time.

The car went quite well, but to Grant it wasn’t good enough. He upgraded to a Nissan EXA turbo, which, although better, was still not good enough. He contacted a Turbo charging expert in Wollongong who custom built the turbo on the car as it is today. There were lots of issues with gas bypassing into the crankcase as the engine block, which was bored to the maximum, and a stroker crank fitted from a modified 1100S was used taking the capacity to 1430 cc. This was a great engine, but the block was flexing, and the cast aluminium pistons ended up melting around the top edge. Grant then purchased an A+ engine block as used by the Austin Metros from the UK which had increased strength with extra webbing cast into it. This block was bored out only slightly to give 1310cc. He purchased forged pistons from the UK as well and a special grind camshaft. Still not good enough! He had a custom grind camshaft made locally by Graeme Russell and the pistons had combustion chambers to match the cylinder head. It now has square combustion chambers in both the head and the top of the pistons to increase the swirl of the fuel mixture. It is 7:1 compression ratio. This new motor had 175 hp at the flywheel on 12 psi boost. Grant has in the past run the car up to 20 lb boost, and had it revving to close to 10,000 rpm.

Around 1998, Grant decided the car needed a professional paint job. A neighbour who was a spray painter prepared the car with assistance from Grant, the original Cherry Red was not available in 2 Pak, so the search began for a colour as close as possible. This turned out to be a Ford colour, Hermitage Red, with a white roof, but Grant being a

little different mixed a pink pearl into the white. The car was prepared at home then driven without windows, bumpers, and lights etc, from Galston to Arcadia, where they had hired a spray booth. The car still retains that paint to this day.

Around the early 2000's Grant entered the car in a Mini Car Club Horsepower competition entering in the BMC A series engine class. He won the class outright with 132 bhp at the wheels!

The engine has no distributor, but uses a crank angle sensor, a Ford Mondeo EDIS coil pack and ignition module. The timing is adjusted by laptop computer plugged in under the dash. It also has a close ratio straight cut set of gears, and quick shift gear lever. It is also fitted with a limited slip differential.

Grant then decided he needed to upgrade the brakes, so he fitted a set of 7.5 inch disc rotors from an Austin Metro, more purchases from the UK, and he also purchased four piston brake callipers from the UK. He then needed to run the car with 13-inch diameter wheels. He was not happy with the cars handling so began a search for 10-inch diameter wheels which would fit over the larger front callipers. These are Minator wheels from the UK. The interior was also upgraded with "Paddy Hopkirk" front bucket seats and custom-made red carpet.

The car was featured in an article in a Mini magazine, Mini Experience, in 2008.

The car has never been in an accident, nor has it had any welding done except for the turbo box welded into the firewall.

Grant was also going to fit a crossflow cylinder head and his own design fuel injection, but along came his children and the car was put on the backburner, as his wife and children then became his priority.

Unfortunately, with Grant's illness over the past seven years, no further development was carried out, and when Grant passed away recently, he left the car to his son Cameron.

I would think Cameron is probably the only four-year-old boy to own a car, let alone this particular one-off vehicle, fondly known as "RED". He is very proud to own the car and boasts that his Daddy built it!



The day started off well with a departure time from McDonald's Mt Colah at 9.45: meaning we all missed most of the peak hour traffic getting there. For those who had travelled the backroads to Mt Colah, the welcome rain gave us wonderful sights of waterfalls that have not run for many months. McDonald's car park was not its usual sight of sports cars. It was more a sight of sports UVs and cars, although a few did show their enthusiasm for the day and drove their sports sedans. Hats off to these guys!

The drive up the Old Pacific Hwy never ceases to give enjoyment to any traveller and today was no different. Views were not diminished by the rain, and in fact with very few cars on the road, the drive was even more pleasant.

Kulnura, Peats Ridge and Central Mangrove offered green paddocks and gardens, a sight that many of us have not seen for a while. The usual offering of fresh honey and farm veggies tempted us all as we meandered towards Yarramalong and the green pastures of the many horse studs that dot the valley region. The drive from Wyong, through Palmdale then up Dog Trap Road to Wisemans Ferry Road was really enjoyable. A part of the Central Coast that many have not seen. The scenic Brisbane Water Drive led us to our destination, Margarita Daze, at Umina.

Set on the beach with magnificent views across to Lion Island and Barrenjoey, the restaurant did not disappoint. The rain even stopped for a while for us to appreciate the views and the clouds even parted to give us a glimpse of blue. With a light entree and very fresh salads to start our taste buds were woken to appreciate the beautiful pizzas that followed.

Vic and Jane Clarke very generously offered coffees and home-made slices and cake at their beautiful Pearl Beach home to those who didn't have to leave immediately following lunch. This was the perfect opportunity for a catch up with friends who we had missed at drinks prior to or during lunch.

So often we travel the M1 not giving a second thought to the scenic roads that hug its periphery. Today travelling across it numerous times we could allow our minds to wander away from getting from A to B by the most direct route and reflect on what can be missed by travelling the main highways.

Thank you, Vic and Jane, for organising an extremely enjoyable day. 32 People and 16 Cars participated, and as someone said, "next time we want a drought to break, we know who to get to organise a run!"

Stars on a fairly reasonably priced car



Brooke Shields, Peter Fonda and 1950 Studebaker

The End



Some other things to see in Death Valley