



VICTORIAN HISTORIC RACING REGISTER

ABN 97 521 303 894

Incorporated in Victoria

Association Number A 0007117 C

Foundation Patron: Sir Jack Brabham AO OBE World Champion 1959, 1960 & 1966
PO Box 3485 MELBOURNE VIC 3001 Website: www.vhrr.com Reg. No. 57/001
VHRR CLUB ROOMS 30-32 LEXTON RD BOX HILL

NEWSLETTER - August 2020

We meet Bi-Monthly - on the Fourth Tuesday of the Month 8pm
at the VHRR Club rooms 30-32 Lexton Rd Box Hill.

COMING EVENTS

August	1st-2nd	Winton Festival of Speed CCE - Cancelled.....	0412 264 997
August	16th	VSCC Hillclimb Triple Cup Round 2	0407 825 545
August	25th	AGM.....	03 9877 2317
September	25th	All Historic Track Day Winton	0413 702 558
October	4th	Rob Roy InterClub Ch Round 3 (CCE, hillclimb).....	0417 398 606
October	27th	MGM.....	03 9877 2317
November	1st	MGCC 29th Historic & Classic Hillclimb TC Round 3.....	0407 825 545
November	6-8th	Historic Sandown CCE.....	0402 224 133
TBC		VHRR Annual Presentation & Awards Dinner.....	0407 825 545

Please note* At present, many things are being cancelled/postponed so please check before you go.

Committee Meetings 2020

January 20th	April 20th	July 20th	October 19th
February 17th	May 18th	August 17th	November 16th
March 16th	June 15th	September 21st	December 14th

Wednesday Members Lunch - every Wednesday except Christmas Holidays.

CLUB LIBRARY HOURS Wednesdays 11.30 - 2.00 Club Nights 6.30 - 7.30

Club Permit Scheme

(Red Plate)

Chris Nelson0439 955 562

2/1 Rushdale Street, Knoxfield 3180 BH only please.

*CCE = Club Championship Event

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed within this newsletter are not necessarily those of the VHRR Inc. or its Committee and/or its Newsletter Editor. Whilst all care has been taken, neither the club or its officers accept responsibility for the accuracy of information printed and the quality of any items or services advertised or mentioned in this publication. Incorporated association Number A 0007117C. The Editor reserves the right to edit contributions submitted for publication.

The VHRR gratefully acknowledges the support of our major sponsors



IMPORTANT NOTICES

Members are reminded that it is likely that the General Meeting scheduled for August 25 will also be cancelled and AGM rescheduled to October. We will keep you advised in this regard.

It is with a heavy heart that I wanted to inform you and members that legendary motorsport designer and engineer Ron Tauranac passed away yesterday in his sleep at home at the age of 95.

Ron was considered not only Australia's best open-wheeler race car designer, but possibly the best of 20th century. Ron designed every Brabham/MRD car from inception in 1962 to 1972 when he sold the race team to Bernie Ecclestone. He also of course founded the highly successful marquee Ralt. Daughters Julie and Jann Tauranac said; "He led an extraordinary life. Active, healthy, and independent until the end, he felt the need to constantly achieve something and always had the next goal in mind. He was never one to rest on his laurels, with his sharp engineering mind always engaged. We are both incredibly proud of what he achieved and deeply saddened by his loss."

It is a sad passing for the international motorsport community, who have lost an incredibly talented and humble man. When I brought Ron down to Melbourne some six years ago to talk at the VHRR clubrooms, it brought the largest crowd the clubrooms had ever seen. This was testament to the respect the motoring community had for such a brilliant mind.

Robbie Richards

Banbury, Oxfordshire, UK - Friday 17 July, 2020

The Brabham Family pays tribute to Ron Tauranac.

The Brabham family are deeply saddened to hear of the death of legendary racing car designer Ron Tauranac, who passed away on Friday at the age of 95.

Ron was one of the pillars that helped form the Brabham racing legacy, thanks to his work alongside Jack Brabham to both form Motor Racing Developments in the early 1960s, and to push the Brabham Racing Organisation to new heights within the sport. He was also the man behind Ralt – a leading single-seater constructor – and a close friend and confidant to the entire Brabham family.

Ron was also David Brabham's godfather. David says: "Ron made an immeasurable contribution to the sport. Things are different these days,

but certain people laid the foundations for motorsport, and he's one of them.

"He achieved a lot but, perhaps because he was reticent in public, he didn't really receive the recognition he deserved. He didn't like the limelight and Jack was good at that, but Ron was behind the scenes. Dad got the accolades but Ron should have got just as much recognition."



Despite being born in England in 1925, Ron moved to Australia during his childhood. He first encountered Jack Brabham while contesting speedway and hillclimbs in Australia during the 1950s. Tauranac and his brother Austin had been competing with self-built cars, which earned the name 'Ralt' through an amalgamation of their combined initials. Ron and Jack formed a strong bond during this time and remained in contact even when Jack headed to Europe to compete. And, after two world titles with Cooper Cars, Jack decided to go it solo, and sought Ron's help to form Motor Racing Developments to design and produce cars under the Brabham name, to be run by the Brabham Racing Organisation. All of the new cars would bear the designation 'BT' – for Brabham-Tauranac – and the first of these machines, the BT3, made its debut in the 1962 German Grand Prix. While that race ended in retirement after a throttle issues, it carried

Jack to two fourth place finishes before the end of the campaign.

Learning from the lessons of the BT3, the following BT7 proved a marked step forward in 1963. Using a more reliable Hewland gearbox, more efficient aerodynamics and with chassis input from Malcolm Sayer of Jaguar Cars, it carried Dan Gurney to wins in both France and South Africa to cement the first victories for a Brabham chassis in the world championship. Jack himself would celebrate two podium finishes – in Belgium and France, respectively – to ensure the Brabham team finished the season third in the constructors' championship.

The crowning glory for the Brabham-Tauranac partnership in that period came with the BT19 of 1966. Despite being designed and built around the 1.5-litre Coventry Climax engine, a shift in rules toward three-litre powerplants forced some late changes to the chassis, while Jack talked Repco into building a bespoke three-litre unit to power the car. The completed BT19 was a work of art, with Tauranac carefully crafting its glass-fibre bodywork using the latest in windtunnel technology at the time – its swept-down nose and upswept rear engine cover allowing it to stay slippery while also creating elements of downforce.

Jack used the design to devastating effect, winning four races on the trot to cement his third world title and become the first, and only, driver ever to win the world championship in a car bearing his name. Denny Hulme made it two straight titles for BT-badged cars, when he took the 1967 crown with the BT20-24.

David says: "Jack and Ron were kindred spirits. They had a high regard for each other's engineering, designing and driving capabilities. Dad continued driving and building his cars, but Ron was there in the background, even with the Coopers in 1959 and 1960, before they formed Motor Racing Developments.

"Together, they conquered the world of Grand Prix racing in the 1960s and became the biggest racing car manufacturer at that time, beating the likes of Ferrari. Although Dad sold his half of the team to Ron, they remained friends and weren't shy to bring each other into various projects they were working on, up until Dad stepped back in the 1990s. They had a good friendship.

"When we were about to launch the Brabham BT62, I called Ron to ask for his permission and blessing to continue the BT naming convention and he was quite happy to hear about it." After he retired from driving, Jack handed

control of the team over to Tauranac, who ran it until it was eventually bought by Bernie Ecclestone in 1972.

After Brabham, Tauranac put all his efforts into Ralt machinery, and grew the brand into one of the most successful Formula 3 marques of the time, running drivers such as Nelson Piquet, Derek Warwick, Mika Hakkinen and Rubens Barrichello to titles around Europe, before also adding a trio of European Formula 2 titles, one of which was won by David's brother-in-law Mike Thackwell, when partnered with Honda engines. It was through Ralt that David first really got to know Ron, as he explains: "My first real experience of getting to know him was when I raced Formula Atlantic and won the Australian F2 Championship and CAMS Gold Star in a Ralt in 1987. When I came over to the UK in 1988, I raced a Ralt in F3, and again in 1989 when I won the British F3 Championship and the Macau Grand Prix, then I was back with Ron and Team Roni for F3000 in 1991.



Ron at 90 giving advice on how to make the BT31 run cooler at Eastern Creek. Peter Strauss pic.

"Ron has played a significant role in Brabham history, but also from a family point of view as all of us raced and won in Ralt cars – myself, Geoff and Mike Thackwell. Myself, and a lot of other big-name drivers, have a lot to thank him for." Tauranac finally sold the controlling stake of Ralt to rival March in 1988, but remained part of the company in a consultancy role before returning to Australia in 2002 having enjoyed one of the most storied careers in the history of the sport, both with Brabham and beyond. Ron Tauranac is survived by his daughters, Jann and Julie and the entire Brabham family wishes

to express their deepest condolences to the Tauranac family, and their many friends. Reprinted by kind permission <http://brabham.co.uk/>

I had the great good fortune to be visited by Ron at my workshop in Mitcham, some years ago. Ron stayed for about 2 hours and we had a most entertaining and, for me, educational time. There was a lot of friendly banter especially when Ron was criticising the design of the 911. Ron was at pains to explain in detail, everything that was wrong with a car that had its engine hanging out the back. I countered with the fact that the 911 has been, and still remains, one of the most winning designs of all time. Ron thought about that for a moment or two, and then offered the following comment.

"A triumph of engineering over design".

I can only join you in lamenting Ron's loss, but what a privilege to have enjoyed his talents for so long.

Alan Hamilton

I'm sure you have caught the sad news about Ron Tauranac.

And 95 years is well beyond the standard quota. Can you imagine the bench racing sessions in heaven, now?

Ron was certainly a star in our constellation. He was a most charming fellow, dry wit and all. And his influence on our toys-of-passion will be traceable for many years into the future. Predictably, a number of vale notes are appearing. This one from Joe Saward is simply for your Miscellaneous file.

I think his line "A triumph of engineering over design" should be preserved, even if it was said about Porsches.

Perhaps as the punch line on a trophy?

Best regards, Peter (Bready)

Thanks for your email with the sad news.

Pleased that he had a long and active life right to the end.

Ron Tauranac is and was hugely respected over here in the UK as indeed is Jack Brabham.

Sincerely, Keith Martin (UK)

Vale: Neil Crang

Neil's loving wife Dianne and family are saddened to announce that Neil passed away peacefully after a brave battle with cancer. Neil adored his family and his passion was driving. In the 1960's as a boy Neil read about Gelignite Jack and then bought his beloved Austin Healey 100/4 BN2 while studying economics and politics at Monash University. He competed in Rally Cross in an old Renault R 4 (for which he

was his own mechanic) and we would tow it on an A frame behind the Healey out to Calder Raceway at weekends.

In March 1973 we married at Monash University non denominational Chapel and by April we had arrived in Geneva Switzerland. Neil was a commodity trader for an international corporation called Carghill.

In 1976 Neil was a student at Jim Russell Racing Drivers School in England and was successful in Formula ford races. He met and made lifelong friends with many in the motor racing community in the U.K. and began racing with Ian Taylor in Sports 2000. This was his first racing team with mechanics to prepare the car for practice and race days and finding sponsors and putting decals on helmet, racing suit, doors etc. Loads of fun times in the 70's back and forth every weekend from Geneva to London to jump in the old jaguar mark 2 that he kept in England to drive to race meetings. He raced at every circuit in the U.K. Including Brands Hatch, Silverstone, Oulton Park, Thruxton, Donnington and Goodwood.

Such was his passion that at the end of the 70's Neil joined Tim Schenken and Howden Ganley manufacturing TIGA race cars in a factory in High Wycombe while still commodity trading in his own company Agroprom SA from Geneva. Neil raced the world circuits including Le Mans in his own TIGA with Gordon Spice and in 1984 won the World Endurance Championship C2 Class. Nikki Lauder and Alain Prost were C1 Class Champions that year.

Neil became a life member of the British Racing Drivers Club, then with 4 children we returned to Australia where Neil competed in Formula Atlantic, Porsche Cup and the first Targa Tasmania in his Porsche 356 in the 1990's.

A real legend and a wonderful man. Neil will be lovingly remembered by all his family and many friends around the world. RIP.

My Season In Review - 2020

2020, well, it certainly wasn't the year we expected, that's for sure! With the recent announcements that the majority of race meetings have either had to be postponed or cancelled, I thought it was only appropriate to wrap up the rather short 2020 racing season, despite it only being July! Even though I, like many others, am disappointed that the rest of the year in terms of racing won't go ahead, I'm incredibly grateful for the time I spent and the things I learnt aboard the mighty Daveric Formula Vee this year. Overall, I'm stoked with

the progress that we made in such a short space of time, that in itself gives me something to look forward to continuing when we eventually return to the track! Compared to my first outing in May of last year, I've learnt so much, my confidence in not only the car but myself has grown massively. As we know, confidence comes with experience, and I'm looking forward to gaining more experience in future and developing that confidence to a further level. Before I begin, a massive thank you must go to Conor Ryan for giving me this incredible opportunity to live my dream!

The year started for us at Wakefield Park Raceway, for a meeting that celebrated the 55th Anniversary of Formula Vee in Australia. Conor and myself shared the car, with Conor in the 1200cc Racing class, and me in an all Formula Vee Regularity. After a 1500 km round trip, we both walked away with a smile after what was



a really positive weekend, even despite car troubles putting an end to our weekend late on Sunday afternoon. From my point of view, that weekend back in February had to be up there with the best race meetings that I've competed in, after setting competitive/consistent times all weekend, getting faster every session, learning a lot in terms of race-craft and the art of slipstreaming which is crucial in Vees! So of course, that weekend was a great confidence boost and step forward for myself and I came into the next meeting, the Phillip Island Classic, with a really positive mindset. The 2020 instalment of the Phillip Island Classic was a mega experience. Ever since I can remember, driving around the Phillip Island Grand Prix Circuit has always been the dream. Thanks to the incredible opportunity that Conor presented to me, that dream became a reality in March earlier this year. It was set to be a busy one, with 4 drivers sharing 2 cars, with Conor Ryan/John Noble pairing up to steer the mighty

Elgaram Jaguar and Dean McLaughlan/myself sharing the Vee! Conor and Dean both had a win on Sunday, an outright victory in J,K & L and a F/Vee class win respectively which was a terrific reward for what was a terrific weekend of racing. John and myself both wore smiles all weekend long in Regularity, cutting laps and enjoying absolutely every minute we spent driving around one of the best tracks in the country. From my point of view, the weekend was one to be happy with, gaining yet more valuable experience and track time. Despite a fairly wild moment at Honda on the Thursday giving my confidence a bit of a knock, we showed decent pace over the 4 days spent on track, had some great on track battles with some similar cars and I walked away knowing where I can improve for my next outing, which is always a positive!

Of course, none of what happened this year would be possible without the help of some legendary people behind the scenes. It's impossible to list them all, but to those people, you're all legends and I can't begin thank you enough for every single bit of help in 2020, I'm a very lucky boy!

To finish off, I hope everyone is staying safe during this period, and I look forward to seeing you all trackside when racing resumes!

Josh Lowing

Historic Sandown

See last month's edition for all the cancellation details, but these are some of the gracious responses:

Good afternoon Grant.

I'm so sorry the Committee has had to make this decision after all your hard work in preparing for Sandown but it is absolutely the correct one given the current climate. As a VHRR Member I wish to thank you for the effort you have put in to make the event happen and may I wish all of you and your families good health and safe passage through the next few difficult months.

Kind regards,

Kathryn Feehan

(Patrick Ryan's wife, Conor Ryan's mother.)

Regrettable but fully understandable.

Keep well.

Cheers, Regards

Paul and Cameron Sabine

Thanks for the update Grant. Sad fact of life today and totally understandable.

All the best to you and the VHRR committee.

Stay well.

Graeme Stevenson

I'm sorry it's come to this Grant. The ladies and

gents of the VHRR work very hard to put on world class events. Please pass on my best wishes to all involved and boomer events in 2021.

Thank you and regards
Gordon Cox

Coxys Motorsport Spares

Thanks Grant, How very sad "the future is not what it used to be!"

Regards to Brenda and yourself.

Rob Rowe

That was quickly becoming a reality,,

1/-

The Story of Writing a Book about Fred Opert

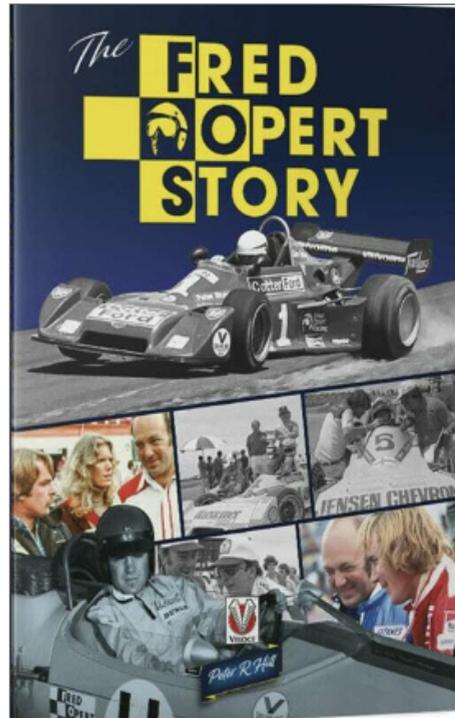
It's three years since I started work on my book about Fred Opert, and four years since he died. I met Fred Opert in 1977. A group of us had gone to Fred's room at the Travelodge hotel overlooking Auckland harbour in New Zealand. It was the year that Opert brought out the Finns, Rosberg and Kozarowitzky to race in the Peter Stuyvesant series. Keke Rosberg won the championship and repeated the effort the following year. The previous year Opert had brought Brian Redman to NZ to take on the F5000s in a BMW powered Chevron F2. The Opert cars were always immaculate and Opert and his drivers really enjoyed their time in New Zealand. As it happens, Opert's cars were Chevrons, built in the Lancashire town of Bolton in the UK, where I was born.

Fast forward to August 2017. I was writing a blog post about Phil Randall's historic Chevron B14 when I discovered that it had been originally imported into the USA by Fred Opert. It was then that I discovered that Fred had died one year earlier. More research revealed that there was very little information about the man, which struck me as strange given his achievements and personality.

With the help of the internet, I managed to find Fred's sister, Judi and her husband Jim. They told me that no one had written about Fred and they had no objection to me taking on the project. Later I got to talk to other members of Fred's family. They were friendly and patient sources of all manner of information about Fred. But my first port of call was my Kiwi connections. I emailed race driver and engineer Garry Pedersen, who raced a big banger sports car and F5000s, to tell him what I had in mind. Before I even received his reply, emails from NZ mechanics Barry and Ross Sale arrived and

the flood gates were opened. It turned out that Fred Opert employed a large number of Kiwis and Aussies. All the ones I made contact with were happy to help, and full of great anecdotes. People like: Dave McMillan; Tom Hooker; Barry Green; Dick Bennetts; Bernie Ferri; and "Wombat" Devereaux. Their lives have been so interesting, I could have written a story about each of these men from 'Down Under.' Each call I made created another call and the snowball grew as it gathered pace. I knew there were many racing drivers who would be able to give me insight into Fred, but I thought it might be difficult to get some of these busy and famous people to spend time chatting with me. Fortunately, Fred was a popular person and, luckily for me, everyone wanted to tell me a story.

In the end I interviewed more than eighty people: drivers; employees; family; friends; and



business associates. Most of the interviews were via Skype as these people were scattered all over the world. Less than a handful were in Australia, which strangely Opert didn't visit, as far as I could establish. His teams raced just about everywhere else including Japan, North &

South America and Europe.

Opert's life was a fascinating one, full of great adventures which took him from racing a Elva Courier while working with Carl Haas, through Formula B, Formula Atlantic, F2 and a stint as manager of the ill-fated ATS F1 team. He imported and exported all manner of race cars, invented the rent-a-drive business, then started racing schools. Twenty drivers who drove for Opert went on to race in F1 including world champions Alan Jones and Keke Rosberg. Opert was a master deal-maker and his air travel and air freight deals were the stuff of legend. There was never a dull moment learning about this colourful personality's life and adventures. Two years after I started this project, I signed a contract with Veloce Publishing in the UK. Almost a year later the book is finally printed and has even received its first book review. I have some airfreight copies that I am happy to sign and ship — order details can be found on my website:

<http://www.peterroberthill.com/order>

It's been a long, fascinating and rewarding journey through the life of one of motorsport's real personalities. Peter R Hill

Today the Brisbane Courier Mail

reported that it was 50yrs ago today that Glynn Scott was killed at Lakeside. By pure coincidence I was talking to his youngest daughter by phone on Saturday. Stu (Anderson) (27th July 2020)

Rudyard Kipling

With the increasing popularity of the automobile, Kipling became a motoring correspondent for the British press, writing enthusiastically of trips around England and abroad, though he was usually driven by a chauffeur. Of his first experience he wrote "It was a twenty-minute trip. We returned white with dust and dizzy with noise. But the poison worked from that hour." The full story can be read here: https://www.telelib.com/authors/K/KiplingRudyard/prose/SomethingOfMyself/myself_chap_7.html
Thanks to Phil Memery for this.

Not sure if members are aware but sadly this is all that remains of Harry Firth's legendary Auburn garage. No heritage protection and so we lose an important part of our heritage in favour of yet another apartment block no doubt.
Ross (Jackson)



I've sought permission to reprint the whole of the following article but haven't received a response as yet. If and when I do it's a good read but it can be seen in the meantime at <https://amcn.com.au/editorial/peter-molloy/> Thanks to Peter Edwards for the tip....

Peter Molloy - Not Forgotten

10 July 2020

Arguably Australia's most adept and celebrated engine builder
Words Don Cox

One of Peter Molloy's first bosses told him: "as long as your arse points towards the ground you won't make a mechanic". Thankfully for the subsequent history of Australian motorsport, Molloy ignored him. He reckoned he was sacked for kicking another boss in the shins. What he did do was "read every piece of paper I could get my hands on about engines," and it paid off.....

Classifieds

Trailer for hire - single axle drop-deck Nevco car trailer. Includes electric winch and 4 x wheel ratchet strap tie-downs. 1800mm deck width. Can carry up to 1650kg. \$200 per weekend. Please contact Richard Mann on richard.mann047@gmail.com or 0419 565 959

Porsche air cooled engine tools for hire – engine support cradle. Attaches where the bellhousing bolts on. Fits VW as well. \$50 per month. Crows foot and cam tool also available. Please contact Richard Mann on richard.mann047@gmail.com or 0419 565 959

Classic and race car storage – located in Sunshine West. Various size spaces available. Please contact Richard Mann on richard.mann047@gmail.com or 0419 565 959

Wanted ~ 2 Lockheed rear calipers
They are 1.1/4 inch and appear to have the number FCP825H. I think these were pretty common around 1980.

Norm Falkiner 0409 868 973

Some “happy snaps” taken from the best seat in the house at the 2010 VHRR Phillip Island Historic Classic Festival of Motor Sport
Cheers Ron

1. David Fogg and Bob Morrow.
2. Brian Smith and David Fogg.
3. Ron Simmonds.
4. Chris Smith.

A photograph of a red vintage open-wheel race car, likely a Porsche, with a driver wearing a helmet and racing suit. The car is shown from a front-three-quarter view.

ALL HISTORIC TRACK DAY

**WINTON MOTOR RACEWAY
FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 25TH**

ONLINE ENTRY ONLY
WINTONRACEWAY.COM.AU



Photo: Neil Hammond