



Classic Trials Newsletter



Classic Trial Championship 2018

Volume 041 March 2018

Welcome to the March edition of the Classic Trial newsletter. After the hectic month of January, we only had one Classic Trial event in February at Pukekohe Park Raceway. This was the first time we had been back at Pukekohe since February 2017 as the traditional TACCOC meeting in October was postponed in 2017 due to the track resurfacing.

Most of the folk who participated in the Trial may not have noticed the work that had been undertaken through turns two and three and down the back straight, but due to an unfortunate incident, and as the Motorsport Steward for the meeting I had to make a track inspection on the Sunday and I noticed that the surface is totally different to Hampton Downs, it will be interesting to see how it ages over time with the use that the track gets.

Well Summer is past and was that a summer? Auckland ended up with 218% of its regular rainfall in February alone.

Recently the Classic Trial Register became the recipient of four Fire Extinguishers courtesy of Gerry Hodges.

These will be made available to Trial members during re-fueling and I am presently getting a crate made so that I can bring them down to the track



There has been a change at the top of the leader board in the Championship. Paul Couper has overtaken Rex Fifield to be just two points clear with one round to go, so it is still anyone's game.

There is another race for third place between Peter O'Sullivan, David Tolhurst and Robyn Riding, all with a chance to take the last step on the podium with only 23 points covering all three of them. The last round is back at Hampton Downs the home track for the Classic Trial. At this meeting, the "Legends of Speed", there are three trophies up for grabs, The Round Seven Trophy, The Manning Trophy for Trial Two and the Sir Stirling Moss Trophy for Trial Three.

Round six of the 2018 Classic Trial championship was at Pukekohe Park Raceway on Saturday the 24th of February, and after days of constant rain we arrived to a wonderful day, sunshine and a great temperature for Trialing. The Classic Trial field was once again buoyed by the addition of some of the "Hooters" field who took the opportunity to run with the Classic Trial as their event is not until the Sunday.



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Some of the regular drivers were missing from this event as they were on an adventure around all the tracks in the South Island, so hopefully we can share an account of that adventure in a future edition of the Newsletter.

A large field of 25 Trialist's faced the starters flag.

Trial One was won by Russell Sykes with Robyn Riding Second and Rex Fifield Third.

Car Number	Driver	Make	Year	Trial 1
214	Russell Sykes	MGB GT	1974	0.61
931	Robyn Riding	Porsche 924	1981	0.85
111	Rex Fifield	Ford Escort Mexico Re	1974	0.90
61	Stephen Wilkins	Sunbeam Rapier	1960	0.96
45	Allan Horner	Austin Healey Sprite	1963	1.04

Trial Two was won by Robyn Riding with Allan Horner and Russell Goodwin Second equal and Paul Couper and David Tolhurst Fourth equal.

Car Number	Driver	Make	Year	Trial 2
931	Robyn Riding	Porsche 924	1981	0.71
45	Allan Horner	Austin Healey Sprite	1963	0.78
4	Russell Goodwin	Ford Escort	1974	0.78
47	Paul Couper	Westfield Eleven	1982	0.79
43	David Tolhurst	Ford Capri GT	1975	0.79

Trial Three was won by Rex Fifield, with Paul Couper Second and David Turner Third. This was David Turners first podium placing for a Trial, and in his first season, Well done David!

Car Number	Driver	Make	Year	Trial 3
111	Rex Fifield	Ford Escort Mexico Re	1974	0.57
47	Paul Couper	Westfield Eleven	1982	0.58
70	David Turner	Ford Capri GT	1977	0.65
51	Neil Moore	Jowett Jupiter	1951	0.72
61	Stephen Wilkins	Sunbeam Rapier	1960	0.83

The Round Six win went to Paul Couper, with Rex Fifield Second and Russell Sykes and Robyn Riding Third equal.



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Car Number	Driver	Make	Year	Average	Position
47	Paul Couper	Westfield Eleven	1982	0.69	1
111	Rex Fifield	Ford Escort Mexico Re	1974	0.74	2
214	Russell Sykes	MGB GT	1974	0.78	3=
931	Robyn Riding	Porsche 924	1981	0.78	3=
61	Stephen Wilkins	Sunbeam Rapier	1960	0.90	5



My Apologies to Russell Sykes, as I do not have a picture of his car (Editor)

After Six Rounds the Championship looks like this!

Car No	Driver	Make	Year	Total	Placing
47	Paul Couper	Westfield 11	1982	583	1
111	Rex Fifield	Ford Escort Mexico	1981	581	2
266	Peter O'Sullivan	Mazda MX5	1990	525	3
43	David Tolhurst	Ford Capri GT	1975	521	4
931	Robyn Riding	Porsche 924T	1981	503	5

Round Seven and the Championship finale the "Legends of Speed" meeting is at Hampton Downs on Saturday March the 17th.

This month we continue with the history of the cars that are driven in the Classic Trial, and this month it is Russell Goodwin's Jensen Healy.



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Russell Goodwin's Jensen Healy.

The Mighty Jensen Healy 1972, MK1, 383rd car built.

Lotus 907 Prototype engine. Sunbeam Rapier gearbox. Vauxhall Firenza front and rear suspension and running gear. The most reliable car I have ever owned, considering the amount of hard driving, racing and over revving it has done. It was purchased by my sister in law in England in 1983, on my behalf, and stored by her for 12 months before shipping, to avoid duty etc. I paid \$3,400 for the car and \$3,600 for the shipping!



It arrived in Wellington in November 1984 and it was the first time I had ever seen a Jensen Healy in the flesh. After a six hour argument with customs over ownership, I finally got my hands on it.

The motor had frozen through lack of use (standing for 12 months in the damp UK climate) so I set it up on an A frame and towed it home with my trusty Escort van, very exciting! Motor came out for rings and bearings, replaced the very rusty floor pans, WOF and we were on the road by April 1985, even more exciting!

The gearbox kept jumping out of 3rd and top gear and on disassembly, I discovered it had been like that for so long that it had worn out the syncro hub. So in went a Hillman Hunter box, identical except for more user friendly ratios.

First Event TACOC Practise Day May 1985 Pukekohe, discovered that when one drives a Jensen Healy around corners very fast, the engine oil surges to one side of the sump, and up the inside of the block, and doesn't cover the oil pump pick up anymore resulting in zero oil pressure until you straighten up!

Luckily I noticed this before the crankshaft was ruined and remedied it by over filling the oil by 2 litres.

I did several events over the next few years, Pukekohe, Baypark, Manfield, Taupo (it didn't like the short circuit), both Telecom Hamilton Street meetings, 1982 and 1983.

I remember having a great duel with Chris Watson in his TR5, along the main runway at Ohakea. There was a huge tail wind and we were side by side making faces at each other. My taco was reading 8500rpm, the red line is 7000. Chris did some calculations and reasoned we were doing 140mph.



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Targa, the Jensen has done three Targa Tours, none of them with me in it, 1999, 2001 and 2003. Southern Festival of Speed 1990, won all three races at the Dunedin Festival road race, down town Dunedin, what a fabulous event. In those days I drove the Jensen to all events and displayed lots of responsible driving, like cruising at 100mph (plus), to keep adrenalin levels up to avoid falling asleep. The

Jensen is just fabulous to drive at those speeds, unfortunately the law in this country won't allow that to happen anymore.

The only major breakdown was at Manfield 1988, Whittakers Meeting, when an exhaust valve seat broke, fell out and destroyed No three piston, liner and combustion chamber. Engine rebuild, four new liners and pistons etc. Again at Whittakers 1994, dif started whining on trip to Fielding and had to stop at gas stations and hose the rear axle to cool it down. By the end of the two day meeting it was fair screaming. Made it home okay but with a little ear ache.

Another time, Pukekohe 1993, it broke a spider gear and I spent the race day operating on the diff, but still managed to drive it home.

More recently at Hampton Downs Festival Weekend 2014, left hand rear axle flange and wheel parted company with the rest of the wheel, half way around turn six. Very exciting when you get a massive thump in the back while looking down at the tar seal through the front windscreen, then come down with another thump and screech off onto the beach.

Brent Middlemiss was following closely and was startled by the view of the underside of my Jensen while wheels and muffler were flying at him. I remember getting out of the car and staggering around quite dazed. The trial was red flagged. I was spoken to by the CRO afterwards for not jumping over the tyre barrier.

Ten minutes on the phone located another axle and brake assembly in an old haybarn at Papakura. I got the car together again just in time to miss the next trial, but completed the weekend okay.

A year later the Jensen developed a misfire. After checking everything, as you do, I decided it was a failing coil. Brent Middlemiss was beside me in the pits and had a spare coil that he gave me, but the missing persisted and only stopped when I replaced it with



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a new coil. I think Brent may have been paying me back for throwing large pieces of my car at him.

Some memorable moments... first trip away with the Jensen, I "had a go" with a 240z on the motorway, I passed him at around 115mph. The Jensen was surging a bit. Sometime later after cleaning all the gunk out of the carbs, it went much better.

Another moment was coming back from the Southern Festival, chasing a GT Falcon XW, up some windy bits north of Taupo, about half a metre from his back bumper, as you do, that opened up onto the forestry straights. slip streaming is a wonderful thing. I was just about all out at 125mph, but managed to pop out beside him and wave before backing off.

Another memorable moment was during the Dunlop Targa 1993 when my good friend Vic Jensen drove the mighty Jensen in the Targa tour (I was officiating that year). We were all in our motel on the evening after a publicity stage on Manfield and Vic's co-driver showed a video he had taken on our motel TV for us to watch. Vic had taken the air box off the carbs to let the Dellorto symphony orchestra out to play. And while they were on the main straight the motor was revving very hard. I turned to Vic and said I can hear the orchestra playing and the 8-grand overture what the hell happened to 4th gear. Vic just puffed on his pipe and said mmmm! I knew he was just mesmerized by the music!



OFF's. Yes! there has been a few, worst one was at Whenuapai 1987 or 88 when I lost it coming out of a corner and the nose came into contact with a Lotus Elan. The Jensen had a bent tie rod that I straightened with a large hammer and was out in the next race.

Another very exciting off was at levels when I completely missed turn one in practice at huge speed. I pirouetted right across the infield, across the other side of the track to the outfield and stopped in a huge cloud of dust just short of a wall of huge tyres. Man did I heave a sigh of relief. Started the motor and drove across the grass on to the track and settled down. It was so embarrassing because everybody saw it!

I could go on and on, but to sum the Jensen Healy is among the most underrated cars ever built. It is certainly the most reliable competition car I have owned.



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Next Month, Robyn Riding's Porsche 924T

The next dates for the 2017 / 2018 Classic Trial Championship are as follows;

Round 7: 17th March 2018 (Sat) - HRC Legends of Speed, HD
Round 8: 5th May 2018 (Sat) - HRC Endurance Round (Non-Championship)

As in past years only the four best scores will count for the Championship.

Well that's it from me for this edition of the Classic Trial Newsletter.

I look forward to catching up at the Historic Racing Club's "Legends of Speed" meeting on Saturday the 17th of March.

Terry Riding
Classic Trials Director

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