

# **GTR**

**T O R A N A**

# **XU-1**

**CAR CLUB OF WA Inc**  
Quarterly Newsletter Volume 29 Winter 2014



**Whiteman Park  
Barossa Valley Nationals**

# GTR Torana XU1 Car Club of WA Inc.

## Executive Committee

President: Steve Gunn  
Secretary: Val Jenaway  
Treasurer: Ken Parker

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Club Merchandise Officer:  
Nick Phillips

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Librarian: Val Jenaway

Club Registrar (Concessional  
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Special Projects Officer:  
Mark Pitt

Social and Runs Officer:  
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## Why become a member of the GTR Torana XU1 Car Club of WA Inc?

### WHAT WE HAVE TO OFFER MEMBERS

A club is only as strong as its members. The GTR Torana Car Club of WA Inc. is no exception to the rule. Its main assets are its members. There is a diverse range of technical knowledge and skills and all members willingly contribute to the club information base and, we are proud to say, willingly help each other.

### Vehicle Identification

We can give advice to owners and potential owners of either GTR or GTR XU-1 Toranas.

### Information

We provide information relating to the GTR and XU-1 Torana. If you need to know something we can in most cases provide an answer, or at least put you in touch with someone who can assist you.

### Concessional licensing

Club concessional licensing, where upon inspection - if passed - a much lower State licensing fee is charged.

### Quarterly newsletter

Advertising up and coming events, free For Sale section, free Wanted section, free advertising for your business, interesting club run articles, club-attended car show articles and technical articles.

### Club Activities and runs

Club runs and barbecues are organised throughout the year to bring club members together for some fun. The club also attends many of the larger car shows in WA.

### Club Meetings

Club meetings are held monthly and are a great source of information

### Club merchandise

Exclusive GTR Torana XU-1 Club merchandise. Polo shirts, t-shirts, hats, beanies, jackets, stubby holders, decals and key rings.

### Discounts

We are able to offer club members discounts at participating businesses.

**For membership please visit the club web page for an application form**

[www.gtrtoranaxulcarclubinc.com](http://www.gtrtoranaxulcarclubinc.com)

# President's Report

Good to see everyone back safely from the Torana Nationals in the Barossa Valley.

By the sounds of all the stories told, those who didn't go missed a good event. Great effort by the cars that did well in their divisions (Ian, Brian and Cath). Again it shows we can hold our own in the West. Looking forward to seeing some pictures and stories.

Those of us who stayed went to Waroona for the 'All Australian Car Show'. Again we put on a good show with young Reese winning the Peoples Choice with his nicely restored LX Hatch.

The other show we attended was the 'Whiteman Park Car Show', again a solid turn out for the members. Special effort was from Trevor as he only arrived home from S.A. a few days before.

Cat and co. cooked up a nice breakfast and lunch. We also held a little vote for 'Your Favorite Torana'. The general public voted and the interest was amazing.

We have also had a social run for the National Motoring Day to the Brock Memorial and lunch at Noble Falls Tavern. It was a wet day but we still had a good turn up. Trevor again excelled with some great raffle prizes and a few other members also kicked in some prizes. Everyone won something.

Our next big challenge is our AGM. There will be a few positions that will need filling, so please have a think and if you can, have a go at one. It's not that scary, and everyone will help if you get stuck. As this will be



my last report as President, I would like to thank everyone who has supported the club and myself, and would like to wish the new incoming committee all the best. Looking forward to being a back-bencher.

Thanks

**Steve Gunn**



# Editorial

Newsletter overload! Plenty of input from members making this edition the most interesting I have produced. Maybe you all got sick of my resto' and articles. It's great to have your support in putting this edition together.

We have write-ups about the Barossa Nationals, Bathurst Toranas and Whiteman Park. If you look carefully, you'll find my S.M.B. 3 tucked away near the end, and due to a chock-a-block edition it's only a half page.

Some sad news in April with the passing of the Godfather of the Torana, Harry Firth. This man had more influence in these cars than any other and without Harry who knows what we'd have tucked away in our sheds? Thanks to Steve for sending in the eulogy; check it out later in the newsletter.

If you're into the 'Bathurst' XU-1s, you'll want to read page 6 for a very interesting article. This is a culmination of many years of research and experience. Thanks to Mike for sharing this.

Thanks to Russell, we have the return of 'Looking Back'. This is a snapshot of our members' old cars. I always find these interesting and with Russell owning his fair share of cool cars it's a top story.

Russell has also sent in some photos he took at the wreckers in the eighties. Find these rare pictures on page 23.

Natalie has put together a full trip report from her drive to South Australia. Would of been a beautiful sight watching the Lone O'Ranger roaring across the nullabour, with Ken and the others trailing behind. Sounds like one of those lifetime experiences you'll remember forever.

Opposite we have our members cars which made the journey East; well done to all - a mighty effort- especially Trevor to get three cars there and back. The WA crew should be very proud of themselves, to have 11 cars there is amazing.

An extra special congratulations must go to the prize winners. I hear there was plenty of port doing the rounds. There is a full list of winners at the back and the WA winners mentioned in the Barossa article.

Please keep the articles coming in. Looking for another restoration article soon so start writing gang. Mine will be up and driving around the end of this year so a new build-up will be needed.

Also keep an eye out for any interesting bits and pieces that may interest our members.

With the AGM around the corner and having enjoyed the Editor's position, I will be putting my hand up again for the job. So vote Martin  😊

***Martin Sibley***

*Please send any content, articles and photos for the newsletter to [sibhs@iinet.net.au](mailto:sibhs@iinet.net.au)*



# Barossa - Our cars



*Natalie*



*Marlene*



*Ken*



*Cath*



*Ian*



*Mark*



*Pat*



*Trevor*



*Trevor*



*Trevor*



*Brian*

# Bathurst Toranas

**When we refer to Bathurst Toranas it can mean different things.**

I have researched this topic for a while now and have worked out that what most people consider Bathurst Toranas are actually just the XU-1s produced to win Championships more than individual races like Bathurst.

My research shows that the term “Bathurst cars” comes from an earlier time when there were fewer races and where Bathurst was a more prominent race. In those earlier times there does seem to be some indications that improvements were made prior to this big race so that there was a good chance of success for Bathurst. However, by the time the Toranas came along these improvements were required to coincide with the start of various Championships. There was no direct link between Toranas and the timing of the Bathurst race, but the name stuck!

## **Background information on Aug 73 models which is necessary to fully understand this final model.**

These are the historical circumstances as I understand them (subject to change). Only in the last few days more game changing information has come to light and records of previously unknown Sydney sales of Brisbane production XU-1s has come to light.

The August ‘73 XU-1s were the pinnacle of racing development, and had further development over the August ‘72 XU-1s. I am talking street cars for the moment as track cars are a different version and another story.

## **Dates: there are up to four dates attributable to an individual XU-1.**

First is the date that the Broadcast sheet was issued, then there is the date at which the dealer places a firm order, followed by the date that the XU-1 rolls off the end of the production line (production date). Then at last there is the date at which the purchaser takes delivery.

Some of these dates are only obtainable from an

original sales documents or Broadcast Sheet. The date that CAMS use is the date at which a firm order is placed, and not the date at which most people would think (the production date). In this way an early final spec XU-1 could be either a July or August firm order date (car sales date) and a July ordered XU-1 could be considered one of the final 250 batch.

Due to the many changes that August ‘73 XU-1s could have had since that time, today it proves very difficult to pick out the different versions produced, but there are indicators that can point to the origins if a detailed study is undertaken.

## **Production numbers produced of final spec XU-1s 1973**

Holden failed to SELL the required number of 1972 XU-1s in AUSTRALIA and were compelled by CAMS to produce 37 more in 1973, of 1972 specification in order to be compliant. The last of these ‘catch-up’ XU-1s was L244129 built on the 18th July 1973. Production of the first of the minimum of 250 XU-1s commenced on the 1st of July 1973. There had been an “OVERSIGHT” by Holden (or HRT) in 1972 which may have been a misunderstanding of the rules.

Many people have tried to figure out the 1973 production numbers by counting backwards from the end of production however this is the wrong approach, and Bruce Voycey after 30 years of trying finally worked it out in January 2012 just before the “Torana Tough” book was printed. Most people incorrectly assumed that Holden produced more XU-1’s than were required for racing under CAMS rules, THIS WAS NOT TRUE! The extra 37 were the catch ups from 1972.

1973 CAMS rules had changed from 1972 in which 200 were the minimum number, and instead of limiting numbers of “Race Cars” in public hands it had actually somehow increased

this minimum number to 250!

**The 1973 Bathurst Race cars** could come from the following sources; 1. a LC with a tail light and grille face lift, 2. a 1972 model with final spec upgrades (as shown in some magazine pictures of the time) 3. An early 1973 with final upgrades, or finally a true final spec July August or early September XU-1 race prepared, like the one owned by Bill Nitschke from Perth.

This is not the end of the story because in any of the above categories there were street versions and also Holden built race specials, these had features that were very difficult to duplicate after production without considerable effort! There may well be owners of original Holden Race built specials without the owners knowledge as the signs are subtle.

Track cars in 73 XU-1 under Homologation rules seems could draw on any previously homologated part like LC cast headers or a 186 if they so desired. One thing that was provided for on all of the Broadcast sheets from August 1972 was the use of early 1972 175 triples with rubber fuel lines. The reason for this was likely to avoid fuel pipe breakage due to added stresses in the fuel lines from the changed design. There are some indications that race built specials could be ordered with tripple Webbers but due to extreme sensitivities at the time these were removed during the warranty period under normal dealer servicing. Similarly there is indications that isolated examples of race specials could be ordered with a different stronger type gearbox left over from the late 60s production, though this would have been done on the quiet to avoid CAMS complications.

Engine replacements for this last model are an equally confusing subject as engine blocks appear to have been stock piled for future use. The last blocks cast seems to have been cast in mid 1974 but there are early 1974 blocks with higher numbers than blocks dated 6 months later of the upgraded design, so looks like a case of grabbing the nearest one and stamping the NP number.

For this article I will concentrate on the true "Bathurst Toranas" as being those which did actually compete at Bathurst. I am still looking into the lesser known classes of racing GTR Toranas which seems to have been very much overlooked. GTRs did race successfully at Bathurst in 1972,1973 and 1974. Undoubtedly they also will have competed in 1970 and 1971 as well! In 1973 a 1971 GTR gained a third place in class C. There is some indications that the last LC GTR may have the possibilty of using a different engine block as well. There were 8 XU-1s and 2 GTRs which competed at Bathurst in 1974.

The GTR used in racing also seems to have had the potential of using any previously homologated component by 1973 These components could include the headers and performance cams, and seems was mainly just limited by the WW Stromberg carbic (perhaps a bit like a more recent HQ racer).

**Back to the Bathurst XU-1**, much has been written about the 1972 XU-1, but less has been made of the 1971, 1973 and 1974 XU-1 competition. The final spec 1973 XU-1 model was more successful than the 1972 XU-1 at winning championships, and possibly more reliable too. During the 1970s race drivers were well aware of torsional twisting of the red motor block and there were measures to limit this where possible.

I am concentrating on the 1973 " Bathurst XU-1s as I have a personal interest in this model, some of my earliest memories are of my tradesman Paul Weir referring to Bill Nitschke competing at Bathurst as we were driving down Oxford Street in Leederville in 1978.

**Digressing a little**, I owned my first Torana in 1977 and as my tradesman was a 'rev' head with country origins too, the conversation at times was about Toranas, or performance modifications. In fact he took me to Action Performance on Oxford Street where I purchased my first performance part, a Yella Terra cylinder head, this made my LC 186 powered Torana perform much better!

# XU-1 Nationals

## Barossa Valley S.A. 2014

It's hard to believe we started talking about this trip in February 2013 and now it's been and gone with the next Torana Nationals being considered for 2016.

It was all well and good talking about the 2014 Nationals event, but as the time drew closer, plans needed cementing, cars and trailers needed general maintenance and servicing, accommodation needed booking and decisions on how we were getting there and back, had to be made.

The WA attendees quietly beavered away at their plans, sharing ideas at each monthly club meeting while Todd Martin, Muscle Car Event Organiser, kept us updated with the latest information on the events to take place in the Barossa Valley over Easter 2014.

Back in Feb 2013, and caught up in the hype of the club meeting stories of past trips, it seemed so easy for me to say "Yes" to driving to SA in the Torana. It can't be that hard, can it? I've always wanted to drive the Nullabor. I've never been to Adelaide. And after all, this is going to be the closest Nationals to go to for a while ..... [insert me remembering my first attempt at driving the car to Geraldton and breaking down in Muchea] ..... Hmmmmmm

Armed with a list of things that I was aware of that needed attention (and some being a wish list), I was fortunate to have Ken Parker as my assistant (Ha!). We arranged a car swap. Ken's came to my garage whilst he kept mine. For the next couple of months we worked a full day every week through the list (Ken loves lists), receiving some valuable input along the way from our wonderful club member friends and the guys at Rare Spares. Finally, with under 2 weeks before we were due to leave on the big trip, it was time to swap the cars back and give the Torana a big bubble bath. It was exciting. Off I tootle down the hill to home. Well,

so I thought except a couple of rogue plugs had other ideas. OMGosh! It's not pretty breaking down on Guildford Rd at peak hour and having strangers push you across an intersection to get you off the road. "Dumb female – have you been driving this car long"?



So it was a bit of a panic the next couple of days. A quick test run to Jennacubine Tavern for lunch with the club then back home. Now for the big clean. Yeah I know, it seems pointless given it was going to be driven over half way across Australia, but at least I know it started off clean. It's a girl thing.

### Stage 1 – Getting to the Barossa

Our small convoy consisted of two towing - Mark with co-driver Kim and Ian. Two driving - Ken with co-driver Nunzio, myself with co-driver Darren.





**14th April 2014 - Monday morning, 6:30am, Baker's Hill Bakery.**

A little late considering we were to meet at 06:00 ish. No harm done, get out, stretch the legs, coffee to go was awesome for that time of the morning and everyone is beaming. The trailers looked great. The cars were clean. We were already attracting interested glances and comments. I even got "you lucky thing, do you get to drive that?" Grrrr ..... :-)

Without going into an extended day by day breakdown, our trip was a little longer than we had anticipated with 2 nights camping, leap-frogging the Corvette guys along the way, and the last night in a caravan park chalet in Port Augusta before driving the last stretch into Tanunda the next day. Mark and Kim had a worrying ride at one point when they had a tyre blow, with Mark having to control the Jackaroo so the trailer stayed straight. Ian caught it all on dash-cam from behind. Thankfully it was a happy ending with all arriving in one piece. Nights around the camp fire. Well what can I say, Dad jokes and chest beating (and that was just me)!



Now I have to say, this adventure busted a few myths for me which I will share along the way. The first one was very early in the piece:

**Myth #1** – Torana's, particularly XU1s do not have much room. Busted! We packed everything we needed for the 2 week trip for two. Clothes, camping gear, spare parts, tools, food, munchies, alcohol etc. with room left over.

**Myth #2** – XU1s guzzle fuel (this was probably one in my own mind from all the city driving). Busted! The Torrie loved the open roads and I was pleasantly surprised with fuel consumption.

**Myth #3** – the Nullabor is boring. Busted! At least from our perspective. Darren and I thought the scenery was beautiful and the drive was exciting all the way.

**Stage 2 – the Barossa and associated events**

*Thursday 17th April First Day of Arrivals/pre judging*  
 Pulling into the Barossa Motor lodge on Easter Thursday was a relief. We were refreshed from sleeping well the night before and from using the showers which was a bonus! The Motor Lodge itself was a perfect venue for us fussy car owners. Having your own carport and very comfortable accommodation was great. Our Geraldton and Waroona travellers (Doug & Pat and Brian & Kathryn) along with Trevor's clan and Steve and girlfriend Sandy had already arrived and settled in with cars cleaned and gleaming. There were several others from Vic and NSW also. The place was buzzing. Some were heading to scrutineering, some had already been scrutineered. Others were just coming in from touring the wineries – a definite glow happening there, while some were just plain boozing and enjoying the socialising. Not for me yet though. I had a few hours of cleaning ahead for scrutineering in the morning. Darren saw sense to leave me to it whilst he walked to town, did some shopping and was very attentive in keeping me stocked up with a beer. Generally, a very relaxing day for all. Weather was great as more and more Toranas arrived to take up the empty bays and relay stories of their adventures or misadventures during the trip to the

2014 Nationals. There were some pretty hairy moments for some while others had general bad luck stories of the odd stone chip or paint rub. Thankfully we have some experienced drivers who kept their cool and were able to control their



vehicles to save their incident from being an even bigger disaster.

**Good Friday 18th April** *Pre-judging GTR & XU-1 Nationals Official Welcome Function*

Good Friday saw the remainder of cars being scrutineered and a little bit of early morning drizzle. Those who had been to the wineries the day before had promised to bring some Toranas back for a visit. With time to kill before our formal “meet & greet” evening get together, and after a convincing sales pitch, Kathryn managed to wrangle up 5 Toranas to take the drive back to Hemera Wines for some wine tastings, nibbles of assorted platters, several more scarf sales by the women of the group and buying of wine and port by the litre (hey Brian?) Aahhh, I love holidays!

The official Welcome Function was designed for all Nationals participants to spend a couple of hours mingling, dressed up in their car colours and finding out the agenda for the rest of the weekend. Of course our WA team were very reserved and coy. Yeah right! The pic below probably tells the story more accurately!



**Easter Saturday 19th April** - *National Concourse Display @ National Motor Museum Birdwood*

This show was the essence of the Nationals and the place where the qualified judges checked cars for the final time, scoring each judged entrant against something like 160 concourse criteria points. What an event and what a venue. The display outside was awesome. To see so many concourse Toranas in one place and meet some of the people that have an unbelievable level of knowledge was awe inspiring. And even if you're not the museum type, the Birdwood Museum was a fascinating place with so much to catch anyone's area of interest. Well worth the trip.



**Easter Sunday 20th April** *Torana 250 - Tour De Barossa Touring Tarmac Rally and GTR & XU-1 Nationals Presentation Function.*

This event was just ‘too funny’. Meeting at Angaston oval, and leaving in entrant number order with 30 second intervals, we were armed with easy read instructions and directions (apparently). Darren and I saw sense to apologise to each other before we started, you know, in case there were some tense moments coming up! Car #30, you're up (that's me)! Make your way through the gate and turn left (that was right cos we were told to do that) and that was the first and last time we were correct. Over 2 hours later and numerous u-turns we arrived back at the starting point for a quick break then to put ourselves back through it again for the second leg. We felt better that we were not

the only ones who stuffed up and to also find out that one of the left turns should have been the “other left”!! I’m so glad we decided to just enjoy the drive and the scenery. At times it was breath taking.

**Myth #4** – WA roads are shocking. Busted! I’m sorry SA but you take the cake here. I won’t complain about our roads again. Not only were the bumps, divets, pot holes and well-worn ruts in the roads making me cringe everywhere we went as I envisaged the air dam crunching underneath, the speed limit signs within 10 meters of each other going from 100 to 55 because of a sharp bend coming up and the lack of street names and signs was the hardest to get used to. We were doomed for this car rally from the start!



So after a great tour around the Barossa feeling like we could’ve been driving through beautiful German countryside, perfect weather, the sound of just under 60 Toranas and an awesome group of people, it was time to get back and scrub up for the Awards night and congratulate our fellow Torana owners and their achievements with their prized possessions. Food and drink flowed and stories came out of the woodwork as we learnt more about others from around the country. The night culminated in a Holden Memorabilia auction but of course the highlight was seeing the beaming smiles from our own WA entrants and

the prestigious prizes they won. Congratulations to each of you. It was fantastic. I’m still smiling as I write this. A full list of Nationals winners is at the end of this newsletter.

### **Original Restored**

Bronze – Ian Hadlow Chateau Mauve LJ XU1  
Original Contemporary Restored



Bronze – Kathryn Taylor Silver Mist LC GTR  
Bronze – Brian Taylor Yellow Dolly LC XU1

### **Longest Distance Travelled**

Trevor Peters - LC XU-1 Rally Red (Driven)  
LJ XU-1 Lone O Ranger (trailed) Bond 24C  
Tribute XU-1 (trailed)...16,400kms travelled.

**Best Dressed Male** (that was a female or was it Female that was a male)?? You decide ....



**Easter Monday 21st April** *Morning T is for Torana – Seppeltsfield Winery*

Another great event to finish off a fantastic motoring weekend. It was a shame that not all Nationals Entrants could attend this. Many were up early Monday morning, packed and commencing their trip back home. The drive to Seppeltsfield was extremely scenic. We still had about 30 cars go along for the drive and were spoilt with a great place to park, lovely morning tea treats and coffee.



**Myth #5** – Jam Factories make jam. Busted! Well according to the Jam Factory in Seppeltsfield. Darren and I moseyed on through, unsuspectingly looking forward to buying some beautiful strawberry or figjam or at least tasting some, maybe manufactured with a hint of wine. Apparently a Jam Factory is actually some spiritual R&D of the mind and body (I think), with haunting flute music and chanting.

What's that on our way back home? The Cheese factory? As if you're gonna catch us out on that one - pffft!

The trip to Seppeltsfield was the last event for the 2014 Nationals, so we said our good byes and returned to the motor lodge for one more night.

**Stage 3** – *The Adelaide Stay*

Easter Monday and by this stage most of our WA friends had started their trip home. If there was a prize for the biggest “sharer” it would have to be Nunzio. Nunz shared himself around with everyone. He was in a different car every day and sometimes several times a day. His last travel companion was Steve Harvey as they happily drove off towards the setting sun together ..... (I think WE should have all been wearing the t-shirt Nunz, with it pointing at you).

Doug and Pat, Ken and Alison and Darren and





I were staying on to take some time to sightsee in Adelaide. Tuesday morning we all left the Barossa with Doug and Pat heading off to see Barb and Pete and Ken, Ali, Darren and I heading to Gawler to drop off our cars, pick up a hire car and head to Adelaide. We were so lucky to have experienced the hospitality of Peter and Helen Tooth and their beautiful place in Gawler. They took care of our cars whilst we went to Adelaide. We had an amazing next few days visiting Monarto Open Plain Zoo, Hahndorff, Victor Harbour, catching a tram to Glenelg and going out for dinner in the Adelaide nightlife. The highlight would have to be visiting the “man cave” of Peter Green in Woodside.



Saturday morning came around way too quick and it was back to Gawler to drop off the hire car and pick up the Torries to start our drive West. What fantastic and genuine people we met in both Peter and Helen Tooth and Peter and Lyn Green. Thank you for making our visit to SA so much more welcoming and sharing your wealth of knowledge.

#### **Stage 4 – Heading Home to WA**

When you know it’s time to head home, you get in that mindset and off you go. This time the convoy was just the two Toranas with Ken and



Alison sharing the drive and myself and Darren. This was Alison's first time ever to drive the car. What an initiation!

Taking 3½ days again we drove through the daylight hours and set up camp by dusk. The trip was trouble-free.

We viewed the Bight from a couple of vantage points, and considered smuggling some chilli seeds across the border without success. It probably had something to do with the driver who was already looking sheepish when she pulled up to the boom gate and offered the information before we were even asked! That would be the same person who, on her way over to Adelaide, when asked "have you got any fruit?" said in a panic, "I've got a Goulbourne Valley two-fruits snack pack". A disbelieving shake of the head, a quick glance at Darren with a knowing look of "I'm feeling your pain mate" and we were waved through.

Speaking of pain, our last night of camping just before Southern Cross in a blue metal quarry. OMGosh! We were unprepared for minus 1.6 degrees. After a freezing and sleepless night, hands and feet hurting unbelievably, we scraped off ice and commenced packing to get back on the road. Even Ken pulled out a jumper and shoes and socks (I didn't know he knew how to tie laces).

A morning fire was lit, hairs were singed as we all leaned in too close, then Darren thought it would be a good idea to tell us that we all could've stayed in fully contained and heated sleeping quarters only 30 mins away if he had've thought to ring his work colleague in Kalgoorlie. Standing over the fire, my eyes immediately rested on the star picket laying there. I may have imagined it but I'm sure Ken and Ali were doing the same thing and thinking if it wasn't so damn cold and my hands didn't hurt so much, Darren would be wearing that picket .....

After a few hours, we had the final drive down Greenmount Hill into Perth. With a quick stop at the top to say good bye to our travel companions,

we drove to Mount Hawthorn, pulled into the garage and turned the motor off for one last time for awhile. After a couple of weeks of non-stop Torana-fest, I didn't even have the motivation to think about the cleaning ahead. The bugs were baked on, and the dirt, grime and exhaust fumes film added to the appeal. Close the door, I'll deal with it in 12 months time!

**Myth #6** – Torana seats are uncomfortable. Busted! I really expected to literally fall out of the car after such a long drive there and back. I could not believe how comfortable the drive was, all the way. This would have had to have been the biggest surprise of all.

If you haven't done such a trip before and are thinking about it, I'd absolutely recommend it. We have a great club bond with any number of people that are willing to assist in any way they can, to ensure a safe and memorable trip. A big thank you to everyone for fulfilling this for Darren and I.

Now, back to the garage to finish off that cleaning .....

A special Thanks and Hats Off to Todd Martin and his lovely wife Lucille for their passion and all their efforts in arranging such a well-attended and well sponsored event.

*Natalie*

# CLASSIC CAR SHOW – WHITEMAN PARK

This is always a popular car show, and this year was no different. 76 car clubs fronted up for this year's event. The weather was disappointing as it rained intermittently all day, so attendances were down a bit from previous years.

We all met at Caltex servo on Beechboro and Benara Road in Beechboro and then off to Whiteman Park. Bill, Warren and I got to Whiteman Park early to set up for the breakfast BBQ. As the Show Organiser, I had to randomly direct people into their places for the display as they arrived.

Cat, Val and Nick started cooking breakfast. By the time the display was set up, breakfast was ready. Thanks to Steve Gunn for getting the bacon, eggs, sausages and steaks for breakfast. They were awesome!

Spectators started arriving after breakfast, and we all had a great day chatting with them about our favorite cars – TORANAS!

I wandered off during the day to have a look at some of the other exhibitions. I had a look at a motorbike called "Big Hoss". It's a 6.2 litre Chev engine and there are only four in Australia. These are motorbikes that come in from the United States. This bike was still on dealer plates as he cannot get it licenced because of emission control requirements.

I was very impressed with a red 1962 Falcon Sedan and the display that went with it. The car is fully restored to original condition, plus all the extras that were on display. This car (and the extras) is for sale for \$17,000.

I found the Super Slush Truck! This truck has thirteen different flavours of slushies. It's a pity that the weather wasn't hotter as I would have enjoyed trying all 13 different flavours.

The Best Display Award went to the Holden Car Club this year. They had big, painted boards of a service station (in the background) and they had restored petrol bowsers at the front. The cars were displayed to look like an old service station. It looked great!

We had eleven of our cars turn up for the event – thank you! The weather probably kept our members away, as it was a bit wet!

Hopefully, next year will be better.

*Trevor*



*continued from pg 7*

I chose a mid range performance head, but there was the top of the range head too. This was called the Bathurst 6000, which had port dividers welded in place for the use of Webber carbies.

It wasn't until about 1980 before I actually saw this August 73 model. This was a road going version, in the car park at the Bunbury Speedway, I spoke to the owner, and remember him mentioning details of the number plate and what a pile of crap it was!

It was June 1981 before I next had the opportunity to see one of the final spec models, it was a partially striped wreck, I never recognised that it was the same XU-1 from 1980, and I did not pursue the purchase. Little did I know, how special it was at the time.

It was over 20 years later before I found out that this was the same XU-1 that I had seen at the speedway all those years ago, and the same XU-1 which I could have purchased in June 1981, I now know this because I purchased it in 2006! I will cover the history of this car another time.

**Back to actual Bathurst contenders**, there were just two from WA which competed in 1973, the Bill Nitschke and Ray Thackwell XU-1s. Ray's was the only one of these actually qualified for the Sundays race on the 30th of September 1973, Ray Thackwell was a prominent national race driver based in Perth. Bill Nitschke also competed at Bathurst in 1974.

**Bill Nitschke's XU-1** was only a couple of weeks old when it first competed at Bathurst in 1973, it was number 28, sponsored by Action Performance in Oxford Street Leaderville. This car had unique blue paint-outs, so was likely ordered with paint-outs deleted, and then sign written in Blue. This car was driven by Bill Nitschke and John Lewis

**Ray Thackwells XU-1** number 26, appears to have been a 1972 model which he raced during 1972. This car was driven by Ray and Barry Coleman.

Using published racing results and details from a chance meeting with Graham, a previous XU-1 owner who I was buying rims from for my GTR. I was able to find out about this Racing XU-1 also. Ray mainly raced a Porche but after racing in a 1972 model XU-1, it seems he had ordered a new Black final spec XU-1 for the 1973 Bathurst challenge, this seems to have been a September delivery.

Being ordered for racing it is possible that this one, like others of the era were especially built by Holden in a lighter form to be more competitive. It is not clear what circumstances occurred but Ray never took delivery of his new XU-1 and just used his 1972 painted the same Warrigal Black.



I spoke to Ray on the phone and he said he had the late Harry Firth build him a short stroke engine for his race car and that it cost him 3 or \$5000. This may have caused a rethink about the budget for the Bathurst challenge, another factor may have been the late delivery date of the new car considering that the Bathurst race was held in the same month!

The first LJ 202 XU-1s engine according to motoring writers at the time was not as quick as the last 186, if this is correct, certainly many people (including me) preferred the 186 over the 202 engine for a number of reasons, not the least was the problem of 202's leaving the top of the piston at the top of the bore and often destroying the engine. This problem was across all the 202 engined Toranas and most HQ's, the problem was only really solved with a new piston design



for the XU-1 in July 1973.

However these part numbers seem to have again changed before the 1973 XU-1 parts books were eventually printed in 1975. By 1975 there were a few components that were not listed and some components listed incorrectly for this last model.

A word of warning to original 1972 and early 1973 XU-1 owners, pistons used at this time may still be suspect if still in use! Similarly NP replacements can be suspect also depending on their period of production, I have seen a December 73 NP engine which blew up due to piston destruction.

Ray's Bathurst race in 1973 ended prematurely at lap 89 due to mechanical failure.

**Rays ordered final spec race car** may have been test driven by Ray and decided that it was not to his liking. Regardless a person by the name of Graham Dixon purchased this race car from Melville Motors with 24 miles on the speedo, for street use and the engine blew up in a few short weeks, and the XU-1 had to be sent from Mt Newman to Perth for a complete engine replacement, or repair under warranty! It is unknown if this engine had the biggest XJ cam or not, normally street versions could not be registered with this cam, but as this XU-1 was sold in the manner it was, and the engine blow up, perhaps it did?

I have tried to work out exactly which car this is from records but as Melville Motors was owned by Bob Peters who also owned Metro Motors I have struggled to work out the dealership number, there is much confusion over the dealer number for Metro Motors.

**Bill Nitschke's XU-1** appears to have been purchased from a Holden dealer in McLarenvale in South Australia, this dealer also appears to have fitted V8s to some XU-1s for purchasers according to the Holden Torana Forum members.

I have also had a limited involvement with this race car also from a few months ago when a fellow club member rang me asking if I knew of

any white final spec XU-1's. There only appears to have been about 20 of these models in West Australia of any colour, and I have been keeping a look out for any still surviving.

After a brief chat I soon worked out using the "Bathurst XU-1 Torana" book by Stephen Stathis, there was a WA Bathurst entrant which was white. I never expected anything to come of my question if it had any signs of blue paint, but to my surprise I had asked the right question! **THERE WAS BLUE PAINT!**

As I was travelling to Perth on one of my regular trips I arranged to call and see Bill's XU-1, and became even more convinced that this was a Bathurst race contender in 1973, Bill and I were trying to contain our excitement, but everything pointed to this being the real deal!

I will leave the rest of this story to Bill who has done some detective work of his own.

There may be XU-1s within the club that can be matched up to their history before all chance is lost (the years are slipping away). I encourage members to research their cars, one way of starting this process may be to start a section in our newsletter appealing for information on particular XU-1s. I do know of some XU-1s from the country which had ended up in Perth. There are ways to keep things confidential if required.

We all like to say our model is special and this is understandable as each model is special in its own way, and as a friend of mine always tells me none of the later models will have been, if it had not been for the ground breaking work of the first models.

While all the hype since 1972 has been about this model it has overshadowed the success of other models, I like the Aug 73 models, I am also thinking that like my model, the 1971 GTR and XU-1 models are hidden gems too.

**All XU-1s are special!**

*Mike Bell*

# Looking Back...



**M**y first car was a Tunisian Turquoise LC 4 door with Glacier White top. For \$750 it was a bit rough around the edges. I rebuilt the 138 motor at TAFE when I was doing my pre-apprenticeship. I also fitted a floorshift made from an old 4 speed shifter, a custom panel under the dash to fit a radio cassette and extra gauges as well as reclining high back buckets from an Escort. After driving it around like this for 5 or 6 months, I lashed out on a \$300 jam-job in White with some blackouts and a \$50 set of wrecking yard mags.



Not long after getting off my P plates I got the Dublin Green XU1. It too had a few issues, but was well worth the \$2200 I paid for it, considering I got \$1500 for the LC 4 door. This was to be my daily driver for the next couple of years. During that time, the engine was rebuilt and I had my first shot at re-spraying a car. It came up surprisingly well considering it was sprayed with a CIG Little Beaver in a horse stable. After a spectacular high speed engine blow-up, an old 186 was fitted to

keep me going. After getting sick of carrying around 20 litres of sump oil in the boot, and the blue cloud that followed me everywhere, I built a new budget motor from a \$10 bottom end.

While the motor was out, I re-did the engine bay. After seeing how well the engine bay came up, I decided that some of the bodywork wasn't up to scratch, so I got stuck into that, then did and re-did just about everything multiple times as my skills and eye for quality improved. It even ended up on a rotisserie so I could tidy up the undercarriage. During this, along came life and as a result some 30 years later it is still not finished. Although it did get a coat of paint 12 years ago (this time I hired a booth and a decent spray gun).



In the meantime I needed a car to get around in. A bloke around the corner from a mate had an old HR Holden in House Paint Green for \$200. A quick degrease, a couple of re-treads and a trip to the RTA for a new set of plates and I was on my way. About 12 months later I loaned it to a mate and he came back with one of those canary things stuck to the window. Apparently it was blowing

smoke, so I re-built the engine (had holes down the sides of 2 pistons) and rocked up to the local RTA. This time they said the doors etc, had too much rust and they wanted it fixed before they would pass it. Luckily I had scored a set of doors on a trip to Merredin and a guy I knew had a pair of guards for sale. So with the new panels and a couple of patches, on went a coat of Chrysler Coral Blue enamel and a White top (once again in the horse stable but with a real spraygun this time). One shiny new HR, and a gob-smacked pit inspector (a major transition in approx 2 weeks).



Then I started to get carried away, extractors, twin carbs, X2 dash, 7" mag wheels, lowered suspension and a factory Opel 4 speed. I've lost track of how many years I drove this car before I took it off the road (it was starting to get rusty again). It spent its early retirement years on the burn out pad and was sold with another 2 HR's I had picked up before I moved to Perth (about 5 years ago).

Owning my own business in Albany, I needed a vehicle for a parts chaser come mobile billboard. I bought an old HQ Ute for \$600 and was about to get stuck into that when I spotted a local plumber selling a HR Ute for \$400. Having plenty of HR parts, I thought this was a better option and promptly got stuck into it. It turned out to be a lot bigger job than expected with extensive rust in the floors and under the boards in the tray (thanks to building sand etc...).

But, I persevered and it came up a treat in its nice new coat of straight White. Next was a new Dark Brown vinyl interior, re-built 202 engine, detailed



engine bay (later fitted with twin carbs), a set of deep dish steelies and sign writing on the tailgate. I think I only got about 18 months out of this Ute before a young bloke in the club I was in (Great Southern Street machines) talked me into parting with it for \$4500.

Now I needed another work vehicle. I was put onto an Escort panel van for \$300 (only Ford I have ever owned). With the help of a mate, we bogged it to within an inch of its life. Poured on



some mis-mixed 2-pac from a local paint shop (think it was meant to be a VW colour). It's only mods were a set of deep dish steelies and a blown



big block Chev conversion courtesy of photoshop, for my business cards.

I got many years service out of the Escort before the rust started to pop and the signwriting started peeling. So when a customer decided he wanted to sell his WB panel van I sold the Escort and bought the WB. I had it re-sprayed and signwritten, fitted 8" jellybean mags, power steering, got the factory A/C working and lowered the front end. I drove it for about 10 years and sold it when I left Albany.

During this time I've also owned 2 other Toranas. A one owner Burgundy Maroon/Ermine White HB SL 4 door with fabric trim, disc brakes and series 70 engine, I got it from an old lady customer for \$500. A Flamenco Red UC Torana with a 3.3L blue motor and 4 speed that I was given for

free. This car replaced the HR as the daily driver and gave many years of faithful service. I also did a ground up re-build on a two-stroke LJ50 Suzuki 4WD that I had for a couple of years.

As if that wasn't enough, I had a 1979 Corvette that I did a full undercarriage and engine bay restoration on, but still retained its sun bleached Silver paint. I had this car for about 10 years. I also had a foray into speedway in a couple of Toranas (see what I mean about life getting in the way) but I think we will cover that another time. Last but not least, my current toy, the Matt



Black LJ GTR replica I am sure most of you are familiar with. I picked this car up about 9 years ago in pieces for \$500 and just managed to get the rego paid up before the grace period ran out. It was originally Brooklands Blue/Glacier White with a 173, column shift auto and drum brakes.



With a bit of bartering with some Panel Beater mates, a pile of second hand parts and a donor LJ 4 door that had been rolled (it had been in mint condition with only about 40,000 miles on it) the project had begun. With the shell back from the Panel Beaters, rust free, the guard flutes that came with it fitted and begrudgingly painted in Matt Black (they wanted to put a “real” colour on it), I fitted up the disc brake front end and carpets out of the 4 door, fitted a GTR dash, steering wheel and badges, XU1 door trims, an old 4 speed and patched up LSD. I then fitted the previously mentioned budget built engine from the Green XU1 and a set of triple SU’s. It only took about 6 months to put together and I’ve been having an absolute ball with it ever since. I have used it to

compete in hill climbs, track days, drag racing, car shows and of course, club runs.

Thanks for taking the time to read about my toys.

Cheers

*Russell Rouse*



# Bits & Pieces

## Send in the clowns

Long after the Nationals are over, we had Trev, Steve, Ian and Helen over for a BBQ; they're still wearing their outfits! lol!



Who is old enough to remember when...



You needed two keys for one car?

## Latest BMW

Spotted in Japan, this newest sports pack is sure to be on Mr Pitt's wish list!



## Under the Scope

How well do you know your Torana parts? If you don't recognise this bit, the answer is later in the newsletter.



# The Wrecking Yard!

Who was lucky enough to experience this? Getting first dibs at the wreckers for parts of an XU-1. This was a common sight in the early eighties, there was always a couple getting wrecked

every weekend. Russell remembers tuning this car, only to find it wind up in this condition a few days later.



If you have some pictures of bent Toranas, please send them to the editor.  
[sibhs@iinet.net.au](mailto:sibhs@iinet.net.au)

## S.M.B. part 3

Let the paint dry for 2 months before cutting and compound. Really happy with the result. Applied the cavity wax through-out the chassis rails and panel cavities. This was a messy job due to using the wrong hose applicator.

Black-outs finished to give the final look.

Next step is getting it on the ground with wheels and engine. Hopefully driving under it's own steam by December.

*Martin*



## Old-School Limo Service

It's always good to help a mate out when he asks. I've known my mate, Steve Reynolds, just about all of my life (we went to high school together). So when he asked me if I could help out at his son's wedding, I was happy to. Two cars for a few hours is not much to ask.

The Torana was nearly finished – just a few scratches to be taken out and a sticker to go on the spoiler. The Falcon GT had been finished for months. So, just a matter of a few things to do and a good clean up ... and to drag my suit out to see if I could still fit in it! All good.

The special day came and I drove my orange XU1 Torana, and Steve drove the Falcon GT. The wedding was held at Amberley Gardens in Cardup. The day turned out really great. The cars were very popular and the bride and groom (Josh and Stacie) had a great day. Congratulations!

*Trevor*





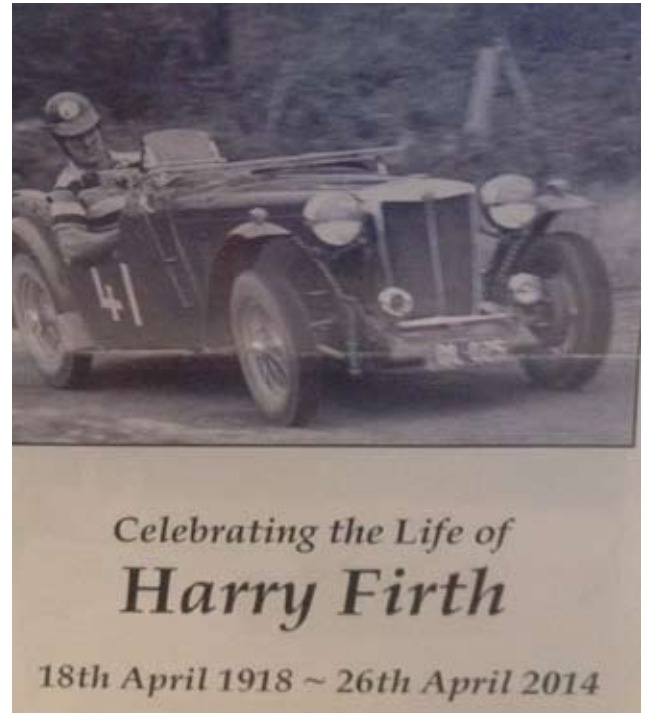
# Harry Firth 1918-2014

Some of you may already know, Harry “The Fox” Firth passed away on Sunday 27th April. He was 96 years old.

Some of our members had the great privilege of meeting Harry at various events over the past few years.

Henry Leslie “Harry” Firth was born on 18 April 1918. Harry was a leading race and rally driver during the 1950s and 1960s and continued as an influential team manager with the Ford works team and then the Holden Dealer Team (HDT) well into the 1970s.


Harry won the Bathurst 500, including its predecessor at Phillip Island, four times, also won the Southern Cross Rally and the Australian Rally Championship. He was inducted into the V8 Supercar Hall of Fame in 2007.



RIP Harry

*Nostalgia*

And when you travel throttled back - along your part of history's track  
The memories will all come back.  
The cars and girls and greetings - and all the pleasant meetings  
Just something all the time.  
Remember all the pleasures - the money you made  
or in love you were unlucky and never learnt to trade.  
Just take me now - along that track  
In the car I carried on my back - and lay me gently in the sack.  
To Dream Of Life The Same



Harry's family would like to thank you for your attendance here today and for your love and support during this difficult time. Following the service you are invited to join the family for refreshments in the Function Room.

Order of Service

Opening Music  
'Summertime' ~ Ella Fitzgerald

Welcome & Introduction  
Don Kinsey

Eulogies  
Peter Otzen  
Ian Tate

DVD Presentation (15 minutes)

Reflection  
'Barefoot Days' ~ Blueberry Hill Band

Closing Words  
Don Kinsey

DVD Presentation (15 minutes)

Closing Music  
'What A Wonderful World' ~ Louis Armstrong



# Club Preferred Businesses

These are businesses that support our club

**RARE PARTS**  
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**TODD GARDNER**  
45 Welshpool Road, Welshpool WA 6106  
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If you know of any other business that has supported our club please let me know so they can be included.

# Calendar of Events

## June

- 14 -15th Claremont Hot-Rod Show - Claremont Showgrounds  
22nd Mini Moke 50th Anniversary Display

## July

- 6th York Show  
20th AGM@ Fred Bell Parade, East Vic Park (11-2pm)  
VCC Winter Auto Jumble Sale@Southern River (Warton & Ranford)

## August

- 14-17th Targawest @ Crown Perth

## September

- 4-8th Buick Nationals  
13 -14th Toranarama, Brisbane  
27-28th Southern Cross Car Show  
27-28th Albany Car Show

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## XU-1 NATIONALS 2014 CLASS WINNERS.

### CLASS 4 - ORIGINAL PRESENTED VEHICLES

- BRONZE - Jason Ashcroft - LC GTR Warrigal Black / Mel Griffen - LJ XU-1 Mustard  
SILVER - Mick Dakers - LJ XU-1 Baroda Silver Mk 2  
GOLD - Darren Carr - LC GTR Lone O Ranger

### CLASS 3 - ORIGINAL RESTORED VEHICLES

- BRONZE - Janine Moar - LC GTR Plum Dinger / Gavin Kuhl - LC XU-1 Duchess Gold / Ian Hadlow - LJ XU-1 Chateau Mauve  
SILVER - Dave Pulling - LC GTR Verdoro Green / Brenton Kells - LC XU-1 Plum Dinger / Greg Pfitzner - LJ XU-1 Wedgewood Blue / Sharon Chapman - LJ XU-1 Chateau Mauve  
GOLD - Scott Hudson - LC GTR Platinum Metallic / Ted Walker - LJ GTR Sable Metallic (1 Owner owner) Brent Matheson - LC XU-1 Baroda Silver / Dane Nicholas - LJ XU-1 Sunburst Gold

### CLASS 2 - ORIGINAL CONTEMPORARY RESTORED VEHICLES

- BRONZE - Steve Douglass - LC GTR Lone O Ranger / Kathryn Taylor - LC GTR Silver Mist Metallic Brian Taylor - LC XU-1 Yellow Dolly / Kim McConchie - LJ XU-1 Chateau Mauve  
SILVER - Bob Zelesco - LJ XU-1 Tangerine  
GOLD - Dominic Vartuli - LJ XU-1 Glacier White

### CLASS 1 - ORIGINAL UNRESTORED VEHICLES

- BRONZE - Steve Mahoney - LJ XU-1 Sunburst Gold  
SILVER - Peter Davis - LJ XU-1 Glacier White (1 Owner owner)  
GOLD - Peter Bateson - LJ XU-1 Mustard  
Award for Excellence (Highest Points Scored overall) Ted Walker - LJ GTR Sable Metallic  
Longest Distance Travelled & Driven - Trevor Peters Western Australia, LC XU-1 Rally Red (Driven) LJ XU-1 Lone O Ranger (trailed) Bond 24C Tribute XU-1 (trailed)...16,400klms travelled.  
Best Individual Display - Peter MOUF MAN Morris  
Shannons Spirit of The Nationals - Ronnie Pond

# Club Merchandise

## Club merchandise available to club members:

Stubby holders

T-shirts

Polo shirts

Jackets

Beanies

Hats

Key rings

Assorted Stickers



**For purchasing please see our club merchandise officer Nick Phillips.**

*Note: club merchandise is generally available at each club meeting and events attended.*

## Parting quote.....

**If you want the job done right, do it yourself!**

