

## **D.R. FILTER GRASS TRACK RACES**

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[Reprint of article dated March 1980 with additions and corrections] May 2012

As President I was approached by the D.R Filter cigarette company asking if the Northland Car Club would put on an annual grass track race meeting to be part of a series with other clubs. I know Rotorua also did this because I competed there in the RGR [Cooper] Norton.

This was an exciting promotion for our club and gained us a lot of favourable publicity. The City Council and the Farmer who leased the land were very helpful and very soon planning and venue preparation was taking place. The venue was Pohe Island an area of rough paddocks between Onerahi Road and the Harbour which developed later on into the City Dump.

We spent days setting up a big rectangular circuit - filling and leveling and pulling out fences. We borrowed trucks and carted soil from the Quarry just South of Whangarei to try and make the ground more even.

Club Captain Graham Wright was Clerk of the Course and he was responsible for the basic layout of the track and club members worked all Saturday the week before the event doing the final set up. Graham had been away on Saturday racing at Pukekohe but when he arrived back on Sunday he decided the straights were too long and added chicanes. As President I received a deputation at home that night demanding the chicanes be removed. At the ensuing committee meeting I also sided with the deputation and the decision was made to remove the chicanes. In retrospect I am not happy with the way I handled this situation, because Graham was an experienced and hard-working club member and deserved the situation being discussed more fairly.

However the whole situation was negated by a deluge on the Thursday night which left the whole race track under water.. Amidst cries of cancel I drove down to the track early Friday morning and we found an adjacent paddock out of the water. We immediately set out a new track and our first grass track meeting was underway.

Okay it was all a bit rough and ready, but the racing was exciting, the spectators loved it, and we were in business. We must have held 3 or 4 meetings because I remember competing in 3 of them and being flat out on administration on the first one. When we were cleaning up after the first meeting a young spectator on a Honda 90 motorcycle rode across a drain and bent his front forks so as a gesture of goodwill I took it back to my garage and with the help of Bruce Pullman we straightened the forks and gave him his bike back as good as new. And I looked around and saw Graham Wright in his VW fly across the same drain. He hadn't seen it but his speed was perfectly judged and there was just a little thump, thump and he was over with no damage.

There were some dramatic rollovers, a Cortina which made front page news as we pulled the driver out through the broken windscreen. [I think it was Mum's car too]. Kem McLennan flipped the Northland Special which left Ken studying the world with a bemused expression and Fred Courtney rolled his Vauxhall/ Dodge saloon.

That grass is great while you're sliding, but if the wheels dig in it's, oops and she's over.

There was a Landrover entered with a Chev. V8 motor which was pretty intimidating and all in all we had some great events.

Brian Skudder

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

WELCOME to the Northland Car Club's first grass circuit motor race meeting, an event which we hope will become an annual Northland feature.

The staging of this day's racing has only been made possible by the enthusiasm of my committee and club members and by generously given support from businesses and organisations, both local and national.

We hope that the spectators will enjoy their day's motor sport and invite motoring enthusiasts to join our club and participate in the large number of events — hillclimbs, rallies, gymkhanas—and the social activities we hold during the year.

We hope also that the drivers find the circuit an interesting one and trust we will see them all again next year.

B. R. SKUDDER,  
President, Northland Car Club (Inc.)

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# DREAM IS ON THE WAY TO BEING FULFILLED

Brian Skudder made his motor racing debut in gymkhanas and trials with a humble little Morris 8.

That was in 1956 when the Northland Car Club was formed.

Since then 31-year-old Brian has held almost every post in the club—committee member, secretary, competitions secretary, club captain, vice president, president—and now holds four club hillclimb records.

This weekend is an important one for him with the DR Filter grasstrack race meeting at Pohe Island.

Brian was one of the club members who fought to organise the first such meeting in Northland three years ago. He argues that if the club is to progress it must hold more meetings to attract public support.

In the back of his mind is the hope that one day there will be a fully sealed race track in Whangarei.

Brian's interest in motoring does not end at racing. He is a keen triallist and runs his own garage in Whangarei.

In 1959 he was in Graham Wright's crew which came third in the New Zealand Gold Star Trial series.

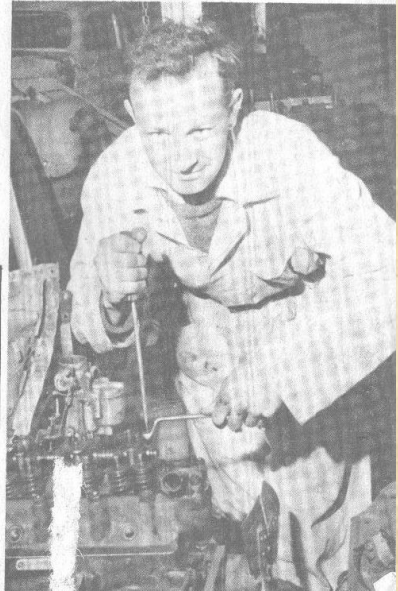
He bought his present competition car, a Cooper Ford single seater, in February 1967 and since then has made a name for himself as an aggressive and spectacular driver.

Last year he came to grief at a hillclimb in Maungaturoto.

His car slid for about 30 yards before clipping a bank and rolling in mid-air. Brian broke his neck in this accident and spent several months with his head and shoulders in a plaster cast.

Undeterred he returned to racing as soon as this was removed.

Being president of the club Brian's time will be taken up with official duties to get out on the track this Saturday but he will be happy knowing that proceeds from the meeting are going towards a sealed circuit.



## GRASS TRACK RACES

this is the filter



**DR filters**  
**BEST**



Northland  
Car Club

•  
Waitangi  
Weekend,  
Saturday,  
4th Feb.

•  
Pohe Island  
Whangarei

1/-