

E-newsletter September 2010

Longford Revival Festival

Nostalgia's not what it used to be. This whimsy will be put to the test during Targa Tasmania's 20th anniversary celebration in 2011. For a start it won't be just the past twenty years that will be celebrated it will be more like the previous fifty to sixty years of motor racing in Tasmania. Longford in particular, will be the cause for a massive celebration in the lead-up to the 2011 Targa.

The Longford Revival Festival on 1-3 April (2011) is a major initiative of Octagon Australia (the company that runs Targa Tasmania). The festival will be the inaugural annual celebration of Longford Motor Racing from the 1950s and '60s. The organisers, supported by the local council and businesses, intend to create an event with broad appeal that celebrates Longford's international motor racing heritage.

"The plan is to recreate the smell, sound and rumble of past day's historic motor racing where participants, spectators and machines can mingle safely yet close to the action. We're hoping to build a weekend of family and friends, amidst camping, theatre and fairground activities", said Mark Perry of Octagon.

The inaugural Longford Revival Festival will turn back the clock and take people on an evocative journey to when Brabham, McLaren, Hill, Clark and Surtees ruled the 4.5 "mile" (7.2km) Longford track.

The Mayor of the Northern Midlands Council, Kim Polley, is excited by the potential of the festival.

"The recent announcement by Octagon Australia to host the Longford Revival Festival is spectacular news for Longford and the State of Tasmania. The town's proud history of motor racing is very special and to be given the opportunity to have the event back at Longford will be a major economic boost for the local and Tasmanian economy".

Nostalgia is the doorway to connect contemporary Longford with an earlier dynamic period of its history and heritage. Closed in 1968, sections of the F1 track still remain today and the most famous section, "The Flying Mile", where cars once reached 180mph (288kph) will be a feature.

Many cheers and raised glasses would have accompanied the goggled stars of yesteryear as they rounded the corner pub and accelerated away with only hay bales, exhaust fumes and dust separating the sleek racing machines from excited fans.

"At that time the Triumph TR2 (pictured) had not been long released in England and exports to Australia had not really started but with the help of Mr. Bill Mitchell (Mitchell Motors) Northern Tasmanian agent arrangements were made. My wife Sylvia worked for a shipping company back then allowing us to plot the cars progress on its 7 week delivery to Tasmania, and that's how it was 55 years ago", remembers Geoff Smedley.

Geoff can recall memories of all Longford events starting out as a competitor in early times through to engineer/mechanic to some of Australia's now famed drivers of those heady days of Longford. The festival will include demonstrations of legendary cars and bikes driven by famous drivers along the Flying Mile, as well as music, fashion, Tasmanian food and beverages, car and bike displays and trade stands.

Longford's reputation and hospitality around the F1 Australian GP was legendary and the Revival Festival will provide those of the then and now a fantastic opportunity to interact and embellish the stories of the glory days.

Mayor Polley says Longford was host to the best drivers and cars of the day.

"The three day motoring extravaganza will attract motor sport legends from Australia and overseas who raced cars and bikes on the famous Grand Prix circuit in the 50's and 60's and will enable them to re-live the dream of performing on the "Flying Mile".

The Longford Revival Festival will tap into the authentic motor racing heritage of the region to re-establish Longford as a motor racing destination, and once again attract people from all over the world to enjoy its renewed and renowned hospitality. Put the dates in your diary, dust off your 50's and 60's gear, book your accommodation and do your travel plans early.

In the meantime go to www.longfordrevival.com.au and if you're an old-timer and remember going to Longford you might even see yourself in a photo or two. Tell your story about how you were involved so the legends can live on from the Flying Mile on down to the pub that still stands at the corner.