

Waikato Club Day. Raglan. 1<sup>st</sup> July

Well, just goes to show, if you stick at something for long enough shit will eventually fall some place else.

After yet another engine rebuild, a dry sump system redesign and rebuild, two new axles what else would you wanna do on a one out the bag, cold but fantastically fine winter Sunday.

Try getting out of bed in the dark, packing Di, Dink and all the luggage into the trusty Mitsubishi Canter with the off roader in the trailer behind, we set off to prove to ourselves that with hard work, determination and money we can get more than three laps out of a race car.

So, with sunrise over the Rangiriri swamp, kiwi breakfast and meet up with Poss and Steve in Ngaruawahia we were off to The Waikato Club day at Raglan. Bit of a drag getting out there but well worth the effort, the ground was soft and dry, the track had had the bulldozer over it the day before, the Waikato Club was welcoming and friendly, the sun was shining. The Omens looked good, we thought four laps would be a five year record and darnt hope for that elusive prize at the end of the day, that drive the car onto the trailer bit. You know, the bit we haven't been able to quite nail for half a decade.

Anyway, after a thorough scrutineering and the drivers briefing setting the tone for racing just how I like it, casual but serious, competitive but still loads of fun a dozen or so cars, mainly Challenger, few class 5 and 3, class 4 truck, the Polaris and our class 1 were set off in 3 all in 7 lap heats.

Our objective for the day was mainly to drive back onto the trailer but also test the car to see what it actually does, bearing in mind bum in seat time hasn't be extensive so far.

The track was dry but no dust at all, hilly and a bit short for a class 1 but technically just what we needed, busy short braking areas, gullies after jumps, even the wall of death on the front straight proved a hand full. Its been so long I had forgotten how quickly short coarse laps take and it was all over in a flash. So far the engine had run perfect apart from dropping a bit of oil pressure at full revs, torque to spare and feeling like a race engine at last. Gearbox seemed good but still a bit stiff and the longer axles seemed to fix the sheered bolts problem.

The car is a bit of an odd one to get used to as the extra rear end weight seems to snap the car tight into the corners but because of the softer shock set up on the rear it feels like it lowers the cars centre of gravity through the apex which increases your confidence to back it in but maybe loses some of that advantage by probably lifting the inside wheel to much. This is all guess work of coarse and we have a long way to go handling wise but up to this point it was a big bonus just finishing 21 laps.

After an hour for the club sausage sizzle and catch up or for Craig Carlisle and Louis a mad scramble to remedy a persistent fuel blockage problem, we were all lined up for a 15 lap all in feature. Flag dropped and we were off with a hiss and a roar and that was it, 15 laps over, I couldn't believe how quick that went. Car went really well apart from a minor design fault which left the front trailing arms just hanging in there, lucky it was only 15 laps, oil pressure problem fixed, engine running like a clock and to top a good day off I drove it onto the trailer. Mission accomplished.

Bit like sex really, worked my guts out getting there and poof, its all over before you know it and now all I can think about is doing it again real soon.

All in all a fun day out, thanks to The Waikato Club and its members who made us all very welcome. Not often in our sport do you get a near perfect days racing in the middle of Winter and Sunday was as good as it gets. Shame wasn't a few more of our club members there to enjoy the day with us, but then, there's always next time.

Grant Sleeman 197