

MEDIA RELEASE

6 OCTOBER 2023



PATERSON'S MEMORIES OF A GOOD FRIEND

Many of the drivers competing in this weekend's MLT Barry Robinson Memorial Wyndham Rally on Saturday 7 October were either inspired by or admired the man that the rally honours – the late Barry Robinson.

One who knew him really well is Wade Paterson who will be stewarding the event but spent many rallies co-driving for Barry. Wade is stewarding with Wayne Scott, another with a strong connection to Barry.

“Barry was a total enigma,” says Wade. “He spoke so slowly but drove so fast, it was bewildering. After co-driving with Inky Tulloch for several seasons I couldn't believe how bad the Chevette was. Barry wasn't busy in the car, he was slow and measured in his actions, just like he spoke, I think he just had the ability to read a road. He didn't crash often, the Chevette would let him down from time to time but it was normally mechanical, and in the Canterbury Rally one year he hit a bank. In the Pulsar at Gore we rolled on a slow corner, 'there goes another bloody mirror' said Barry. When he had the Nissan Pulsar, he had a box of mirrors and he used the whole lot.”

“The old adage in motorsport is that if you look spectacular you are actually going slow but Barry was blindingly quick yet still spectacular. I did a couple of rallies with Barry in the old Vauxhall Viva and then did nothing till 1985. I remember a duel with Wayne Muckle at Otago in 1991. Barry hated 4-wheel-drives.” “There is no way that bloody thing is going to beat me,” he said. “We lined up for the final stage and Barry was telling me he had won the rally many times but I want to win one for you, and he did.”

“Both Ian Begg and Geoff Lange, another of Barry's co-drivers said Barry was a great assessor of risk. He had the ability to know how to go quick without risk. As a result, most of his DNF's were mechanical. That is how he lost the 1983 National Championship. It was an engine failure.”

“When he had the Viva GT his brother Darryl had one as well – Darryl's was silver, Barry's white.”

“I remember when Barry made his debut with the Pulsar at Wyndham. It was a nightmare. We did Slopedown and Barry said they have changed the bloody road. I said no they haven't. He replied the corners are arriving so much quicker and he had to change his whole approach. It took a wee bit of time for him to adapt to its 4-wheel-drive quirks. To be fair he had done 25 years in rear-wheel-drives. It was always fun with Barry. If we had a DNF (did not finish) we would still go to the pub for a beer.”

“He had an amazing way of communicating, very deliberate. If you were on the phone, you often wondered if you had been disconnected such was the length of a pause – it was like an elephant pregnancy.”

“He was a very, very, good friend.” Wade recalls when his wife Heather passed. “I heard a rumble coming down the road and there was an EVO 10 with Barry and wife Jane. Barry had got up that morning and said to Jane, I need to talk to Wade and he had one digit left to push on the phone when he hung up and said I've got to go and see him and he did 200km from Earnscleugh to Wendonside to do just that.”

“He was generous to a fault and I am lucky to say we met and were friends.”

“Before he started rallying Barry was a member of the car club and he hated what he called roundy,

roundies - circuit racing. But he wasn't bad on tarseal. He rolled his Vitesse at Teretonga once, and another time he went into the lupins at the loop. There were no cars around him and there was a plane coming into land at the nearby airport and he was watching that."

"He was laconic, the way he spoke, He was a good car club man, and in the car he was blindingly quick and well respected. If Barry turned up you knew you had a fight on your hands."

"On the road from Mokoreta to Wyndham he and Ian Begg had a minimum speed on every corner. In today's new cars with all their technology those minimum speeds can scare you a bit but Barry was doing those speeds in old, less sophisticated cars."

"It is hard to define one thing about Barry. If you had a chat, it would be a minimum of one hour but you were always welcome. He spoke to everyone. He was well respected and well liked. Sometimes you wonder if he had taken a conventional approach to his rally cars and driven something like a BDA Escort you wonder how far he would have gone. He ran a 1600 BDA once but if he was impressed, he never admitted it. He said cars like that were like arseholes – everybody's got one. I have nothing but good memories of Barry."

The rally will be centred on the township of Wyndham, 45 kilometres east of Invercargill and 25km south of Gore. It will start at the MLT Three Rivers Hotel in Redan Street, Wyndham at 9.30am on Saturday 7 October from where competitors will embark on five Special Stages consisting of 126km of magic, gravel special stages with no stage repeated throughout the day.

The rally then ends where it began, at the MLT Three Rivers Hotel in Wyndham after 109.5km of Special Stage competition linked by 110km of touring stage mileage.

With the start and finish plus two Service Parks in Wyndham, the township will be a real focal point of the event.

The event prizegiving will take place in Gore at the MLT Croydon Lodge with the winning crew awarded the Barry Robinson Memorial Trophy. The rally also carries points toward the Eastern Southland Car Club Rally Championship.

Rally Secretary, Roger Laird says, "we are delighted to have the support of Matura Licensing Trust, as our naming sponsor, plus that of Traffic Services Management, Rayonier NZ, the Southland District Council, Gore District Council, Prime Range Fresh Shop Lorneville, Matt McRae and the landowners on the rally route plus of course all of our Special Stage sponsors.

Those in the region can pick up a copy of The Ensign (4 October edition) for the complete rally guide while the event will be livestreamed on the Eastern Southland Car Club facebook page.

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Photograph: Barry Robinson and Wade Paterson in the Nissan Pulsar at an intersection near Dunsdale on the Southland Rally in the mid-1990's.

