

MEDIA RELEASE

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ROBINSON / LANGE – THE LEGACY LIVES ON

For eight years the combination of Barry Robinson driving and Geoff Lange co-driving combined for plenty of rallying success around New Zealand and on Saturday 7 October when the MLT Barry Robinson Memorial Wyndham Rally remembers the late Barry Robinson both the Lange and Robinson names will again be to the fore in the Vauxhall Chevette made famous by the original pairing.

Chris Lange, the son of Geoff, will drive while Barry's daughter Anna will be alongside as the Robinson Chevette acts as Double Zero car for the event.

The Robinson family still own the car and Chris Lange has brought it back to its former glory. The car temporarily left the family ownership briefly when Chris's uncle David Glasson owned it but it hasn't been used a lot in the last 20 years. Barry nearly had the car running again until illness stopped his progress.

Chris finished the rebuild and says the car "is built not designed. It was never crashed but there are a lot of modifications underneath and it is a bit of a Grandad's axe, but everything is for a purpose and designed for speed."

"Having a Lange and Robinson back in the car together is pretty special," says Chris. "It will be very much a demo run. The families are pretty tight and dad had more to do with Barry than us at times during those days."

"The car is bringing back a lot of memories for people," says Chris. "I know one guy who was 14 or 15 years old before he could get to see a motorsport event and his first time was the final stage of a Southland Rally at Teretonga. He remembers watching Barry arriving backwards at a corner in a cloud of tyre smoke and after seeing that he has become a motorsport competitor himself and has built up a fantastic collection of British cars."

Barry was actually Chris' Godfather. "He never gave me a religious education, it was always motorsport", says Chris.

Chris recounts that when he first got the Chevette running and it was driven out of the workshop a rainbow appeared. "It was unreal and a pretty cool feeling that the legacy is living on."

"It will always be Barry's car. The visceral noise it makes is immense. There is a real emotional connection between the families."

Geoff is living in Queenstown now and Chris says he is constantly contacting him saying he has found this part or tool to do with the car.

While Chris was only about 5-years-old in those glory days he remembers going to scrutineering and having some of his dad's mates take him out to Special Stages to watch. "The old man has been telling me the stories for the last 35 years," he laughs.

Chris himself was a successful rally driver, spending five years in the New Zealand Rally Championship and competing in sprints, rallies, circuit racing and hillclimbs. "I got a lot of second placings," he jokes and then he quickly adds, "this is not a comeback!"

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 126km 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 Management Services, 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 – – The Barry Robinson Chevette sits in Chris Lange’s workshop ready for Saturday’s MLT Barry Robinson Memorial Wyndham Rally.

