

CASTLEMAINE HOT ROD CENTRE

induction

The Voice of the Castlemaine Hot Rod Centre

Property Inspections

Since members received the last newsletter board members have been inspecting potential sites for the Castlemaine Hot Rod Centre. One of these sites was near Harcourt, north-east of Castlemaine and in close proximity to the new freeway bypass. It has some positive aspects that would suit the project and several that would be disadvantageous, including a creek running through the middle of the property and some very steep sections. On the positive side it does have excellent exposure to the freeway and hence very easy access from Melbourne and Bendigo.

The next site is a property to the east of Castlemaine and adjacent to the Castlemaine Rod Shop. This site is very open and undulating and would be quite suitable, but does have some issues with regard to the provision of services. There is also a subdivision taking place on this land, but that doesn't rule it out of further investigation in the future.

The third site inspected is to the south of Castlemaine just outside Campbells Creek. This is another quite suitable site with excellent highway access and plenty of clear space, but it does have a creek running through the property that would

add considerable expense to its development. We have received some planning advice from a professional development consulting firm regarding this site that indicates potential high cost planning requirements. The site warrants further investigation with regard to alternative ways to provide access across the creek running through the middle of it and the potential layout of the Hot Rod Centre. The Board will be taking another look at this site to ascertain if there is another way to realise its potential.

A fourth property was offered as a potential site but it was considered too far from Castlemaine to be suitable and services to this site would be very expensive.

The search for a suitable site is continuing. There are several other areas close to Castlemaine that warrant investigation and we will be following these up in the coming weeks.

While it is desirable to be able to concentrate on a final site for the centre there is still plenty of work to be done before we are in a position to purchase a property anyway.

Member Benefits

We are often asked, "What benefits can members of the Castlemaine Hot Rod Centre expect?" In the initial stages of the Hot Rod Centre project it is difficult to deliver practical benefits back to the members. Your membership is vital to the success of this project though, particularly in these early stages. Initial funding for our business plan came partly from government via a dollar for dollar grant and we had to fund the balance with a little help from the Mt Alexander Shire. Generous donations from local hot rodders together with the funds generated by memberships to the Hot Rod Centre are funding our share of the business plan costs which are now close to fully recovered. Next we need to build an operating fund to allow us to move onto the next stage of planning which will include setting up partnership arrangements with service providers such as the educational and training bodies.

Once the Hot Rod Centre is up and running we will be able to deliver some real benefits to members for use of the facilities. Until we have something substantial to offer in this way we can only request that you continue to support this important development for the good of hot rodding in general by maintaining your own membership and encouraging others to join as well. The more members we have, the lighter the load will be on those who have supported the project so far.

Members can be a combined unit, husband and wife, individual business, club, etc. There will be a special draw from our members list before the next issue of Induction is produced and some lucky member will win a weekend for two in Castlemaine. Winners notified via the next issue of Induction.



Victorian Hot Rod Show

The Victorian Hot Rod Show provided a great opportunity to increase awareness of the Castlemaine Hot Rod Centre project so we decided to enter four Castlemaine Rods member's rods on a club stand and used it to promote the Hot Rod Centre. Our new portable banner stands were used for the first time at the show and they attracted plenty of attention.

Several hot rodders became members of the Hot Rod Centre during the show, but our planned two information sessions failed to attract much attention. It seemed that there were too many distractions in the show itself for people to focus on our information sessions.

Those that did attend were given the information in written form which satisfied their immediate enquiries and we were able to offer broader explanations to any questions they had. While the benefits to our project weren't as great as we anticipated the show itself was a spectacular success.



The need for Specialist Retirement Accommodation

Since the announcement that we intended to incorporate a retirement living space within the proposed Castlemaine Hot Rod Centre we have had several approaches from developers of such centres and from professionals operating in this area of health provision services. It seems there is a growing realisation that retiring baby boomers intend to remain active and to continue pursuing their special interests. Hence the intense interest in what we have planned for this area of the Hot Rod Centre.

A recent article in the Sunday Herald Sun Magazine (Sunday Magazine Jan 27, 2008) reinforces this trend in retirement living. Following are some figures quoted from that article.

"Kate Hammond, CEO of Retirement Village Australia, estimates the whole retirement industry is conservatively

worth more than \$23 billion and is set to double in the next seven years. Golf courses, pools, health spas, billiard and card rooms, bowling greens, tennis courts, gyms, beauty salons and broadband are becoming commonplace." (Why not hot rods?)

"There are approximately 1720 Australian retirement villages, we need to build 40 new villages annually to keep up with demand."

As you can glean from those figures, retirement living communities that cater to specialist needs are going to become incredibly important in the next 15-20 years. That's why we are planning the Castlemaine Hot Rod Centre now. It may take us several years to see the results of our endeavours but they will be seen as visionary once in place.

Thanks to the VACC

The involvement of the Castlemaine Hot Rod Centre in the Victorian Hot Rod Show required that we have legal liability insurance cover for the duration of the exercise. Tim O'Brien, Senior Manager, Marketing, Media and Publications for the Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce indicated that the VACC wished to be involved with the Hot Rod Centre project right from the start and they were quick to respond to

our plea for assistance in this area. The VACC not only organised for us to procure the insurance required through CGU Insurance, they also offered to pay the cost of said insurance. This was a very generous gesture that is much appreciated by the Board and members of the Castlemaine Hot Rod Centre. We look forward to an ongoing relationship with the VACC as the Hot Rod Centre project develops.

Castlemaine and Hot Rodding

For what is a relatively small rural city, Castlemaine has always had a high profile in the hot rodding field. Why is it so?

There are several reasons, but one of the main links can be traced all the way back to the gold rush. In the 1850s the Thompson brothers came to the Forest Creek gold diggings (Castlemaine) and tried their hand at gold mining. They were very successful and used their new found wealth to establish a foundry to manufacture mining equipment. Evidence of their manufacturing prowess can be found all over Australia in old mining areas where you will see their name on mining batteries (ore crushers) and other related equipment.

As mining diminished the company turned to other forms of manufacturing from the same foundry, Thompsons became known for large engineering projects such as locomotive manufacture and later still as pump manufacturers, an industry in which the same establishment is still heavily involved.

Over the years ownership of the “foundry” has changed several times, but one thing has remained the same.

Thompson's has always maintained an extensive workforce of highly trained personnel who are proficient in all forms of metal working.

With the advent of the motor car it was only natural that many of the people who worked at the foundry would also become interested in these new mechanical devices called motor cars and use their skills to improve them. A high percentage of the people who currently work in the hot rodding industry in Castlemaine did their apprenticeship training while working at Thompsons.

While all of this was going on at Thompsons, over an extensive period of time, the development of the motor car was also taking place. Motor sport evolved from that and the nearby Maldon Hillclimb was a favourite place for young drivers to try out their racing cars and “specials”. One of the fastest up the hill was Keith Laity who drove what we would now call a hiboy '34 Ford tourer. Later still Harold Ely was a regular competitor in his stripped down '32 Ford V8 roadster. Today we would call it a '32 hiboy.

It is interesting to note that when the hillclimb began in the late 1920s the cars made up from various pieces were called “specials”, usually designated by whatever body or chassis they were based on. Hence they would be referred to as a “Rugby Special” or a “Ford Special”. That's how it was up until 1948 when the same “Ford Specials” that raced in 1947 were suddenly referred to as “Ford Hot Rods” in the 1948 event program. The influence has been around a long time.

Move into the late fifties and several youngsters in the area started playing with old cars and turning them into true street driven hot rods. Eddie Ford, Peter Swift, Alan Chapman, Bert Butcher, Bob Bailey and several others were involved in what became the seeds of the Castlemaine Rod Club and their contact with other rodders from the USA and Melbourne saw that interest soon spread throughout the district.

Today there are many business interests based on hot rodding that are located in Castlemaine and many hot rodders have made the decision to move to Castlemaine

to be part of this exciting lifestyle. The Thompson Brothers' foundry is still operating, these days known as Flow-Serv, and still training apprentices in all forms of metal work.

The establishment of Custom Rodder Magazine by Eddie Ford in 1967 was instrumental in focussing attention on the activities in the district and Street Rodding Magazine continues that role today.

The many dedicated hot rodding businesses in the Castlemaine area contribute significantly to the wealth of the community as a recent study revealed that combined they contribute in the order of \$30 million to the local economy annually. That figure is sure to grow when the Castlemaine Hot Rod Centre becomes reality.

The establishment of the Castlemaine Hot Rod Centre is the next step in the continuing love affair that this area has with hot rodding. It is also an opportunity to further develop the skills training of our youth and provide the facilities to ensure that hot rodders always maintain their close links to Castlemaine.



Late Breaking News

Just as this issue of Induction was going to print the Board was contacted by a representative of the Victorian Education Department responsible for specialist school training courses who are very keen to get involved with the Castlemaine Hot Rod Centre. Meetings are currently being set up with the principals of the local secondary college and other Education Department representatives to investigate ways we can

develop a working partnership, even before the Hot Rod Centre is built. There are facilities and some funding available that may be able to be channelled into a partnership arrangement with the Castlemaine Hot Rod Centre based on the use of and expansion of these existing facilities.

This is exciting news indeed and we will report further in the next issue of induction.

As this issue of Induction goes out to members we have just received the final material that will form the basis of our Community Enterprise scheme in conjunction with the Bendigo Bank. The official launch of this part of the project will take place very soon and then everyone will get to hear about it. The scheme will be heavily promoted through the hot rodding magazines and directly to the local Castlemaine area community in general.

The basic foundation of the scheme involves supporters of the Castlemaine Hot Rod Centre becoming, in essence, marketing promoters for the Bendigo Bank. Every account switched to, or established with the Bendigo Bank and given a special "code" will result in a percentage of the fees attached to that account being redirected to the Castlemaine Hot Rod Centre. Even existing accounts with the Bendigo Bank can be given the code and there are no new or increased charges to the customer as a result. In effect the Centre is given a small share of the bank's fees as a "reward" for introducing, or encouraging an account to remain

committed to the Bendigo Bank.

This type of enterprise is already operating in other areas where the Bendigo Bank is established and is proving a marvellous boon to those community projects with which it is associated. Even more encouraging for us is the fact that the Bank only supports one such project in each community where they are involved so the effectiveness is not diluted. The Castlemaine Hot Rod Centre is to be that Community Enterprise Project that will benefit all hot rodders.

Please encourage everyone you know to take part in this scheme. It is the easiest way to help give the Hot Rod Centre a real financial boost and it won't cost them anything to participate, the Bank does all the work once you have pledged to be a part of the scheme and there are no hidden costs to the participant.

You can probably tell that the Board members are very excited about this scheme as it is one thing that can really set us up for all of our future plans, knowing we have a sound financial base established to work from.

Thanks to the ASRF

The Board and members of the Castlemaine Hot Rod Centre would like to take this opportunity to express their appreciation to the Australian Street Rod Federation for their generous offer to sponsor the Castlemaine Hot Rod Centre Newsletter "Induction". This sponsorship will extend to the first four issues of Induction and is a great indication of the co-operation that will see this project become a success for all hot rodders.



The Lucky Member is

In our first issue of Induction, the voice of the Castlemaine Hot Rod Centre Limited we indicated that there would be a lucky draw from our list of members and that member would win a weekend for two in Castlemaine.

The draw was held on February 29th and the name drawn out was that of Wayne Poulton.

Wayne will have the opportunity to enjoy a weekend for two staying at the Castlemaine Colonial Motel.

While staying in the Street Rod Centre of Australia the winners will have the opportunity of visiting some of the prominent hot rod establishments in the town while also enjoying the many normal tourist attractions and fine dining that the district has to offer.

There will be another draw for a lucky member to win a weekend for two in Castlemaine with the winner announced in the Winter edition of Induction.

