

Back in about 1971, my father said, let's go for a Sunday drive to Christchurch and see what's going on. I was 14 and we lived in Ashburton. We set off in his 1947 Vauxhall J and as we went through Templeton, saw a sign with an arrow saying Drag Racing. Off we went to see what this was about. At Ruapuna Raceway, there were lots of cool cars racing and others called dragsters. The cool cars were called Hot Rods. That was it, one day I would own one of those. When I was 18, I joined American Rod and Custom Club. After a couple of years, I was elected Secretary and held that position for a few years. As a mechanic I helped others in the Club build their vehicles, owned a custom Mk1 Zephyr then a Ford Popular. Stayed in the Club until 1983 when the second National Hot Rod Run was held in Ashburton. At that time, I was working for the Ministry of Transport as a Vehicle Inspector and was asked to Scrutineer the vehicles for the driving events. While in the club, attended several Hot Rod events in Christchurch, Blenheim, Timaru, Oamaru and Queenstown. Left hot rodding in 1983 due to family / house commitments. 1990, shifted to Motueka, still vehicle inspecting, then in 1995 transferred to Greymouth as the West Coast Manager. Met several of the Hot Rod people down there, great people but didn't have a car or the money to own one. Went Rugby Refereeing and found that very satisfying. 2000, returned to live in Motueka and set up our own (wife and I) Independent Testing Station business and applied to be a Low Volume Vehicle Certifier. Was successful and appointed as a 1A certifier. 2001, met with other people to reform Golden Bay Rodders Inc., elected Secretary of the Club each year until 2019, when I decided to stand aside to let someone else have a go. 2003, became a 1B certifier and then in 2006 became a 1C certifier. In 2016 we sold the Testing Station business but I continued as a certifier. 2019, nominated as candidate for Zone 8 Director and was successful. September 2020, resigned as a Low Volume Vehicle Certifier due to other work commitments. Vehicles I own at present, 56 Mk1 Zephyr 302 Windsor V8 powered, nostalgia vehicle built in

Nelson in the 1980s. Also, a RHD 56 Ford F100, ex West Coast, I purchased it less running gear and rebuilt it from there. 302 Cleveland powered. 37 Ford sedan, randomly being worked on. Will be 302 Windsor powered.

At present, as well as being Zone Director, I am still an elected Councillor on the Tasman District Council and also hold the voluntary position of Justice of the Peace. I will stand again this year, 2023, for the Zone 8 Directors position. I am positive NZHRA is in a good position at present and also has a strong team of Zone Directors. Some are retiring this year after giving excellent years of service.

I wish them well in retirement.

Barry Dowler, Zone 8 Director,