

Profile – Brian Allan Hood (BAH) alias “Hoody”

Introduction:

Always interested in cars, before joining the Mercedes Car Club, Brian was heavily involved in the Manawatu Car Club (Club Captain for three years and also Trials Champion) and on the Manfield Board of Control. He was one of four Clerk's of Course at Manfield regularly attending meetings for 4-5 years at National, International and Club events. And he was also support crew for the well known Lester family over a period of 20 years, first for Rob (Doc) Lester and then Richard Lester (his son) and then Debbie Lester (his daughter) and finally for Rob again. He also spent 2-3 years flag marshalling at Manfield. Brian has always been a keen follower the Lester's and many others from the racing fraternity of the time.

Brian was invited to drive a car in the “Alternative Fuel Test” run by Holden from Auckland to Wellington and back, in 1973. Other drivers in this were Denny Hulme, Paul Adams, Leo Leonard and Rob Lester.

Brian joined the Mercedes-Benz Club Auckland in the 1978 after being persuaded by Ken William's. He said “you should buy a Mercedes – once you have owned a Mercedes, you will never own anything else” – he was right! Around that time Brian also met Roy Hobson (ex Auckland Club President at Billy Zed's, when he was on his way from Auckland to Manfield for a race meeting. These are friendships Brian values today.

Brian picks up the story.....

Ken knew of a 1961 190C (Finney) which was an ex Embassy car. Black with a white top. I got it for \$600 and then bought an engine for \$100. I had this for about six months. I could never get rid of the gudgeon knock but sold it for handsome profit for \$1,600.00.

My daily driver at the time was a Datsun 180b SSS Coupe but I much preferred my old Mercedes.

I had enjoyed my old car so much I advertised for my next Mercedes in the Herald. I ended up buying a one owner 1971 250 Compact. It had been purchased by a Panelbeater who had rebuilt it as it had been involved in an acid spill, coming out from Germany.

It was manual everything. Steering, gearbox, windows. Being a pretty hands-on guy mechanically wise, I was scared of everything going wrong – goodness these days I barely lift the bonnet as everything is electronic!

The only thing that ever broke on it was the gear lever. I had it two years before selling it to a friend because I thought it blew too much smoke on overrun, and I was concerned about it. I sold it to someone I knew who had it for a further eight years and never did any work on it.

Some more facts on Brian

In the Auckland Club, he has the dubious distinction of having had two wives on the club points list within the same year (ask him about it – he might tell you).

He has been a long standing Auckland committee member, having also served for five years as Treasurer of the Mercedes-Benz Club of New Zealand, (along side his wife Lyn as National Editor and Ken as National President.).

When recently researching information for a revamp of the rules of the Auckland club and reviewing old minutes, Brian was amazed to see that in 1978 he stood in for the President and chaired the Auckland AGM – a long since forgotten moment.

His experience has seen him run many highly successful events in the past, including events such as economy runs, driving trials, concours and mystery runs. Encouraging us all to extend ourselves in these trials and learn how to use/follow some ‘real’ driving trial instructions.

Currently he holds the position of Treasurer and Web Master for the Auckland Club.

Like many in the club he has more one Mercedes tucked up at home. He did achieve this by stealth though according to his wife. A long time ago he changed his much loved bright yellow left hand drive 230C W123 for a slightly updated model. A 1979 280CE silver right hand drive. This later car was in exceptional condition but he had agreed with Lyn that it would be a daily driver. But of course, it was quickly realised that it was in far too good condition for that so it got promoted to living under a sheet in the garage and only seeing the light of day on high days, dry days and holidays – and of course any concours that was going. It has been on most of the AA Classic Car Rally’s around New Zealand though and picked up several concours prizes. The next addition to replace the lovely 280CE was a 190E which though boring in comparison was a great drive and much more suited to daily driving. Many club members at the time had them. And in fact our 190E still belongs to current club member. More recently Brian has progressed to a C200 1995 which is a noticeable advancement in comfort and technology. That first trip to Fielding was a breeze, we arrived so fresh.

Some questions for Brian:

What do you like best about owning a Mercedes?

- Then - That I felt like a million dollars driving it
- Now – It’ safety record.

What do you think is the worst thing about owning a Mercedes?

- That people take advantage of you because you drive a Mercedes- they think you have too much money or are well off. In fact the opposite applies because if you buy a slightly older Mercedes, which is more affordable when second had, it has already taken the biggest hit depreciation wise, and in the long run is more reliable (less maintenance costs).

What would you say to someone contemplating buying a Mercedes?

- Make sure it doesn’t come from Singapore
- Get it checked by someone well versed in Mercedes – a Mercedes expert, (Giltraps, Coutts, etc) don’t just take it to the Automobile Association.

The Mercedes you most enjoyed driving, but did not necessarily own:

- A 230SL owned by Colin Tuck that I used in a grass gymkhana.

The Mercedes that you owned, which you liked most:

- 230CE lefthand drive. A really well balanced car. The engine size is so economic in these. And I loved the colour.

Least:

- A 1972 230 Compact which I bought in 1984 for \$2000.00. The previous owner had removed the motor to replace it with a V8 Chev. I had tried to put it back to original but never got going right.

Lyn is hoping that there will be no more car changes for a while as each car in our little stable is quite lovely, but who knows....if we win lotto I see a SLK coming.....

Cars Brian has owned:

1961 190C

1970 250CE

1971 250 CE

1971 250 Compact

1972 230 Compact

1978 230 CE

1979 280CE (current)

1985 190E

1996 C200 (current)

Did you spot the obvious? Yes, there is a theme here – Brian really enjoy coupes!