

Roger White

Of Go Karts, Utes and Turbo RX7s

There I was minding my own business when HRCCT member accosted me and said I needed to write up a report about my car and everything or a small child in a faraway land will meet an untimely demise. The thought about writing anything sends shivers down my spine – as my mother will confirm as in the last 20 odd years she has only read a few of my words in the (very) occasional card, so here goes, and maybe I will get close to the required number of words as per my instructions.

My racing career –mmmmm. Can I include the amount of time it was carried out vicariously? If so quite a few years, between crewing for various people, including Porsche, Dragging Karts around the state and jumping up and down besides of all the Kart tracks in Tassie – both to keep warm and in anger – 20+years. If it means the amount of time actually behind the wheel and driving on a track then about, what's the time now? It's less than a year.

It started innocently enough, the purchase of a new V8 Ute and the usual mods required that seemed to snow ball. Didn't sound enough of a v8 so exhaust, cam, suspension and before I knew it I was reliving my youth by taking a perfectly good useable car and turning it into something that wakes the neighbours and drives like a pig in traffic. But God it makes me feel young again and can't stop smiling every time I drive it. Passes everything but a servo – so what do you do with such a machine? Take it to the track because you can't stretch its legs and flaunt the law like I seemed to do years ago. Enter a hill climb they said. Won't cost much they said. You'll love it they said. They got the last bit right, entered and won my class and so the seed was sown and the claws dug in. I realised that after even a fall on wet grass – while sober – required a metal rod to hold my leg together again, a car when travelling fast would feel much better if I placed metal around me instead of waiting for doctors to insert it into me so I began to look for a nice little project to build and have a bit of fun to give the ute a rest.

I had taken a few cars into a car detailing business and was intrigued by the old faded car cover that covered something that never seemed to move. One day I went over and had a sticky beak and found an old RX7 that while the body looked great, it was basically a rolling chassis. I asked if anything was happening with it and was told that it was a project that was waiting to be finished but the owner had bought another, later, model and was working and spending his money on that one. I asked if it was for sale but was told no!!! Sooooo several months and a few more similar conversations with similar replies until one day I asked at the same time he needed a deposit on a house. Didn't take long to grab a cheque book and write some numbers he liked and finally I had myself a new project.

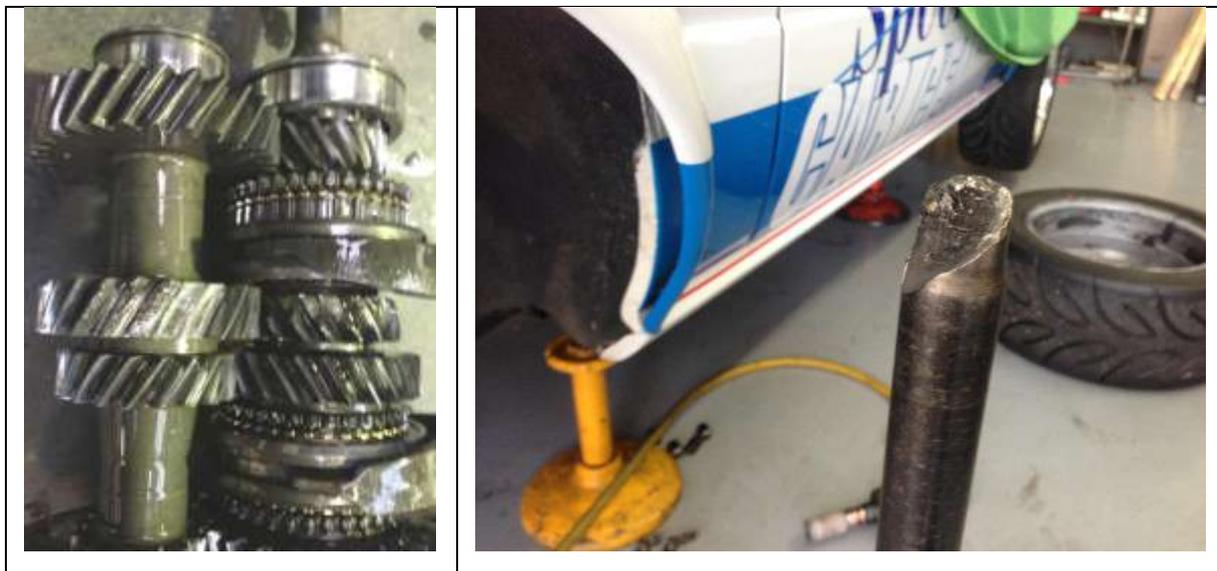


Started by rebuilding / assembling the engine, replaced missing bits and made up intercooler pipes, intercooler and then replaced the old engine ECU with a new system from Link. It took a while to get my head around how the rotary worked, the dark art of the Wankel was explained to me by Brendan Dimsey and with time, several books, the odd can of Jack Daniels and it finally fired into life. Once I had the car driving I took it for a few laps around Baskerville and found the suspension too soft, I rang Bill Schoots from Melbourne and sent over the front struts – he worked his magic and sent me the

springs and shocks for the front and rear and finally had a car that went around corners – so that just about brings me up to now.



So far I have replaced the final drive with a later unit (S3) with bigger axles – they broke up at Simmons, the gearbox lost all its teeth on third gear at Baskerville and so that has been replaced with a later s4 turbo box – and now have a Needham close ratio to go into it – the to do list is growing inversely proportionally to my bank account. I have just purchased a S6 engine and will slowly rebuild it with a few tweaks; I have booked in for the Watts Link upgrade and new fuel cell with a guy that was recommended to me by Craig Quinn.





I was hoping to be able to run at the historic meeting in October (*that year*) but following a conversation with Peter Killick it seems very unlikely I will be permitted to run as the newer type engine that I run turbo charged does not fit the required entry specs – I guess I can see where they are coming from but it's still a bit of a disappointment. So, that's the story so far, I still have a few more plans and things to test. No doubt many will not work but hopefully there will be enough successful attempts that will make the failures worthwhile.

