

VALE: Mal McPherson

Malcolm McPherson - 09 February 1925 – 04 December 2009.

Mal was born in Ballarat and educated at Pleasant Street Primary School and Ballarat High School. During his secondary school education he met his love Valda Jean. They were to marry and live a long, loving life together until Val's death on December 1, 2009, just days before Mal's death.

After his education, Mal worked in his family's electrical goods business, Homecrafts, located in Sturt Street, Ballarat. He was to operate the business himself until he established his own used car operation in the 1960's.

Mal's sporting interests were golf and particularly motor sport, where he built an enviable reputation, which continues to inspire competitors to this day. He was one of the founding members of the Ballarat branch of the Light Car Club Australia, which is now recognised as the BLCC. Mal became an integral part of the club's executive, holding all committee positions, some many times, culminating in his life membership award in 1965.

Mal competed in local rallies, initially as a privateer and then became a Ford factory driver in the 1961 BP Rally and the 1962 East African Safari Rally. From 1963 to 1966 he drove for General Motors in all State Championship events and selected National events.

In 1966, General Motors withdrew from the sport just as Renault were getting involved. Mal soon became a works driver with Renault, with immediate success. He was a driver with an excellent "feel" for his vehicle, resulting in an enviable finishing record. He won the 1967 BP Rally, (then Australia's only international rally), the 1971 Victorian Rally Championship, as well as finishing third and fourth outright in the Australian Rally Championship.

After Renault withdrew from the sport, Mal competed privately in his old factory R12 Gordini before a final flurry with a Datsun 1600. After rallying, Mal bought an Elfin Catalina open wheeler and competed in Historic Racing for about five years before announcing his competition retirement.

In 1970 Mal was part of the group who created a new event, the Sunraysia Desert Rally, an event, which evolved into the famed BP Hattah Desert Rally. By 1979, Hattah hosted over 500 motorcycle and 250 four-wheel entries, thought to be a world record at the time. Mal was an integral part of the executive working committee every year. In fact Mal continued actively contributing to his club's events until just a few years ago, when deteriorating health made this impossible. In 2006, Mal was inducted into the Victorian Rally Hall of Fame, an award he richly deserved.

Mal will be remembered by many and missed by all he associated with
Ian Ellis.

