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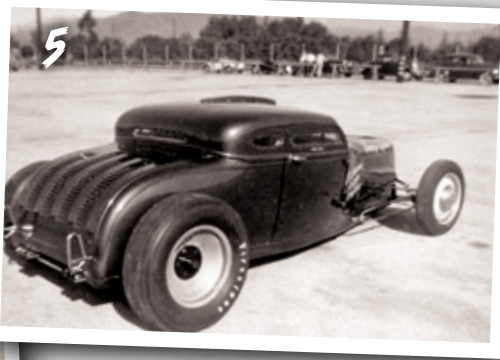


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1 DLRA President Norm Bradshaw checking out Bonneville 2014.
2 A Motely Crew from Down Under about to get their feet wet!
3 Art's planned '53 Studebaker coupe still hangs on the notice board.

4 Chet Herbert's 230+ mph streamliner now on show at the NHRA Museum.
5 Chrisman's '34 Coupe in 1953.
6 Art Chrisman doing what he loves.



Bonneville Speedweek 2014, celebrating a century of speed at Bonneville Salt Flats, was a complete washout. Scott Andrews, SCTA president, and his crew made the tough call to cancel the meet after the rain turned the race track into a lake. To try to put a smile back on the faces of racers, crews and spectators, the SCTA are extending the World Finals weekend meet to a full week. The World Finals are on from the 27th September to the 3rd of October 2014 and Speedweek pit passes will be valid for the World Finals. I hope September brings SCTA a dry lake to race on. I thought how lucky Big Knob Racing had been in the past. Twice we transported our race car to the States and all went well. This year I feel for the Harris family from New Zealand who made the long trip with

their 1932 Ford Roadster to a cancelled event. With no salt racing happening we headed to Los Angeles to check out the car scene and to catch up with some old friends. We called in at the NHRA museum in Pomona – it's always good for a dose of salt racing history and it's been revamped over the last couple of years, it was very impressive indeed. A couple of Art Chrisman's race cars were featured in a new display. We first met Art Chrisman when Vicki and I were filming Under the Radar in 2008. Hoping to get an interview with a salt lake legend, we drove to Art's shop, Chrisman Cars in Santa Ana where Art, his son and a skilled crew screw together some of the USA's top street rods. Art was out the front of the shop, I introduced myself and told him I had come all

the way from Australia to meet him, he replied "Well you'd better come in a have a beer then". I was smiling, Art was more than happy to share his stories about Bonneville and we found him to be a true gentleman. Art described himself as an old racer, he first raced at Bonneville in 1951 driving a 34 Ford coupe, in 1952 he returned to the lake with Chet Herbert of speed shop fame. Chet had a brand new streamliner he wanted to prove and Art wanted to help out where he could. When Chet's driver didn't show on the second day of racing (wonder what he thought of the first day), Art put his hand up and finished the week owning a 238mph record. When he did this, there was not a 200 mph club but when Hot Rod Magazine started the 200 mph in 1953 he become one of the five

original members. To become a member you must break a record over 200mph. Today membership of the 200mph club, now in the hundreds, is still the badge of honour most salt lake racers strive for. In 1953 Art returned to Bonneville with the now well known chopped and channelled A model coupe. The nose was made from 1934 Ford bonnets, it ran a Flathead Ford with Ardun heads and the car looked fast, but didn't quite run a record. Art soon fixed that, in 1954 and 55 he replaced the Flathead firstly with a Desoto Hemi then a big Chrysler Hemi earning Art three class records. All of these records he smashed by over 20mph. In the plans, Art had a 53 Studebaker coupe lined up, it was to be chopped, channelled and Hemi powered in the rear. He took the plans

to a club meeting and showed the officials. He was told the car would have to run in streamliner class, up against streamliner records which were miles above what he was hoping to be running against. Art disagreed so strongly that he left salt lake racing and started playing back on the drag strip. He still has the original drawings of the Studebaker up on his notice board. In the early 1960's Art was working for Ford Motor Company, Ford wanted to demonstrate the capabilities of its Mustang with a quad cam Indy engine and also their Ranchero running a S.O.H.C. engine. So Mario Andretti of Indianapolis 500 fame was recruited as the driver, and Art was sent back to Bonneville as the spanner man in charge of tuning the tough Fords. Both vehicles proved their worth by running F.I.A. world records.

Art ended up spending the next 10 years at Bonneville Salt Flats reading spark plugs and tuning Fords. Art says "Bonneville is a great place to run your car" and he still attends Speedweek and the annual 200mph dinner whenever he can. Remember back here in Australia if you want to be part of our very own hot rod history, the DLRA is celebrating 25 years racing on the salt at Lake Gairdner South Australia. The dates for Speedweek 2015 are March 23-27 and you are all welcome. If you want to find out more check out dla.org.au or come to our next meeting in Melbourne Sunday October 12th at 11am check the website for location. See you at the salt
Norm Hardinge



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