

Remembering Charile

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Remembering Charlie Berntsen

On 13 October this year, the family and friends of "Big Bad" Charlie Berntsen will mark the first anniversary of his sad passing.

Although Charlie's racing career began in Palmerston North, he was an integral part of Oceanview Speedway from the very beginning.

He helped to build the toilet blocks at the track, and on Opening Day, won the very first race on the new track. He captained the first Wanganui Warriors team,

and of course won the New Zealand Stockcar Championships in 1982, at Oceanview, of course.

The Wanganui Stockcar and Speedway Club is keen to celebrate Charlie's long association with the Club. Charlie was the Club's Patron at the time of his death,

and the wake after his funeral service was held in our clubrooms. The Club has held discussions with Charlie's wife Ann and the family, and it was decided last night that the

clubrooms will be renamed the Charlie Berntsen Clubrooms.. And as an added nod to Charlie, the bar area will be renamed the Brew 22 Bar. Younger readers may

not get the significance of this, but those of us who watched the early days of Stockcars in Palmerston North and Wanganui will remember Charlie's infamous Brew 22 car.

Whilst we are still to finalise the season calendar for Oceanview Speedway for the 2016-17 season, one date is now set in concrete; Sunday 16th October. On this day

we will celebrate Charlie's long involvement with the Wanganui club, and the official renaming of the clubrooms will take place. Thanks to a suggestion from new Patron Bob Smith,

we are also planning a True Legends Day, where some of those drivers who raced in Charlie's era (1963 to 1984) will be invited to come to Oceanview Speedway and turn a few

laps for old time's sake. We are hoping that the Golden Oldies clubs will turn up and make some cars available, so that those of us who can remember how things were back

in the day can have our memories refreshed, and the younger generation can see some of the heritage of the sport on display.

We have chosen this weekend because of its proximity to the date of Charlie's death, but also because Palmerston North Speedway will open on the Saturday night,

and those who have battled withdrawal symptoms over the winter can get a double fix of speedway that weekend, as well as celebrating the life of a speedway legend.

More details will follow in due course, but mark this date in your calendar now. The Charlie Berntsen Trophy for Stockcars will still be contested, but at a stand-alone

meeting later in the season.