

As a youngster Brian Higgins was fascinated with cars even though no member of his family owned one.

**A**t an early age he attended race meetings at Quorn Hall, Valleyfield and Greens Beach.

In his late teens Brian became a flag marshal at the Longford racing circuit, but after only three race meetings he was convinced he had to be closer to the action on the other side of the fence.

Brian borrowed money from a finance company to buy some furniture, but instead purchased a Fiat Abarth – this was to be Brian's first race car (he considered the seats passed for furniture).

**He set lap records and hill climb records in every class he competed in.**

Brian said it was a difficult car to drive, over powered for its brakes!

It was only ever going to be a class winner, so it was time to move up with the purchase of an FJ Holden for Appendix J racing.

The FJ (an ex-taxi) was a successful car, taking Brian to two Tasmanian Touring Car Championships – the only Tasmanian to win the title, placing his name alongside the likes of Peter "Skinny" Manton, Norm Beechey, Alan Moffat and Peter Brock.

Brian put the success of the FJ down to mechanic Bob Knights, whom he claimed was a genius.

The team had a very limited budget and the car was high maintenance but Bob managed to keep it going with a great record of reliability.

The FJ would get raced in anything possible, with removal of the rear seat making it eligible for sports car races.

After the FJ, Brian never owned

another race car, being lucky enough to become a driver only, and was very successful, at one stage having 22 consecutive wins in various classes.

He had regular drives in a Porsche 365B, Lotus Elite and Elfin Climax, MG Holden Special, MGA Coupe, Ford Special, Buchanan Holden, Honda S600 and also many touring cars.

He often competed in different classes on the same day and raced at Longford, Symmons Plains and Baskerville race circuits, as well as hill climbs at the Queen's Domain (Hobart), Penguin, Trevallyn, Hillwood and Baskerville.

He set lap records and hill climb records in every class he competed in.

In the Elfin Climax, Brian held lap records at Symmons and Baskerville and also came second in the 1964 Tasmanian Sports Car Championship at Baskerville.

The same year 1964 Brian became a co-founder and a major contributor to the Tasmanian Motorist magazine, which covered everyday motoring and Tasmanian motorsport as well.

In this job Brian got to drive even more exotic cars, as he road and track-tested them for his stories in the magazine.

He was also involved in commentary for TV and radio and was Baskerville course announcer when "expert" comments were required.

After retiring from racing he had many years as an entrant and sponsor being involved with both Graham Parsons and Colin "Bric" Noble, amongst others.

After motorsport, Brian took up trap and skeet shooting and represented the State in both codes, and he also got involved in breeding thoroughbred racehorses, where he also met with success.

(Profile by Andrew Lamont).



## PROFILE

*Brian Higgins*



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