



## Donald Gorrings's motorsport career started in speedboats, in which he set many State records.

One of his long-standing records was set in his speedboat "Doodles Hoo". It made newspaper headlines when he blasted along the river from Hobart to New Norfolk and returned in 55 minutes and 46 seconds.

But Donald's speedboat talents didn't just relate to driving, as he also designed the first skiff-styled speedboat in Tasmania, which became the forerunner of many similar boats.

Donald competed on the mainland in both in cars and boats – a lot of the time with school mate Dick Crawford.

After selling cars for City Motors Donald started a small garage in Queenstown on the West Coast and later moved back to Hobart to establish the first transport company to travel the windy roads to the West Coast.

His Hobart business expanded over the years and included franchises for Leyland Trucks, Land Rover, Skoda, VW, Porsche, Peugeot and Mazda.

Donald competed in numerous trials around the state, mainly in VWs and his name was often amongst the top finishers.

He competed in the first Redex Round Australia Trial (in 1953) in a Jowett Javelin, becoming the first Tasmanian home with his crew of brother Trevor Gorrings and Bill Caldwell.

Although entered in the 1953 Australian Grand Prix, official results say the Gorrings

Skoda did not start.

Donald won the 1954 Tasmanian Hillclimb Championship in his self-built Skoda Special, which started life as a new Skoda that Don rolled when delivering it to a client.

It later became the Holden Special of Don Elliott, who has also been inducted into the Tasmanian Motorsport Hall of Fame.

Selling the Skoda–Holden Special would haunt Donald, as his newly acquired Wyllie Javelin and the special had some great tussles, with the Special proving hard to beat in the hands of Don Elliott – the Javelin was later to be sold to John Youl (also a hall of fame inductee).

But, as with speedboats, Donald's talents were not restricted to racing, and as organiser, he instigated sponsorship for the first Tasmanian Redex Trial and the very successful Mercury Round–Tasmania Trails.

A Hobart Sporting Car Club founding member, Donald assisted the club as much as he could and in 1969 donated the spectator bridge from the old Longford Grand Prix circuit, which he had previously donated to the Longford circuit in 1965.

In return the bridge wore the Donald Gorrings name for many years.

Don passed away in 1975, aged 58.

Profile by Andrew Lamont.



## PROFILE

*Donald Gorrings*



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