



## PROFILE

*John Trowbridge*



INDUCTED: 1998



John Trowbridge built a total of 47 racecars from 1956 to 1984, but was always interested in constructing machines – a passion he acquired when he joined the Air Training Corps as a 14 year-old in 1949 and learned about engines, airframes, and firearms.

**A** State rifle shooting representative for four years, he built his first two cars at age 20, in 1956, both Austin 7s, which he raced in hillclimbs and standing quarter events – they were to be the only two front-engined cars he ever built.

He built many cars in the following years, mostly powered by motorcycle engines.

One was tagged “The five-day special”, built over Easter and powered by a 200 cc Tiger Triumph engine – it went on to record numerous class wins.

In 1959 John purchased the first Goggo Mobile Dart in Australia, again competing in many hillclimbs and standing quarters.

In 1977 he was awarded the Formula Vee Association of Australia trophy for Tasmanian clubman of the year.

His like of the unique Goggos produced three more racing cars with engines from Goggo sedans.

In 1965 John built his first Trowbridge Formula Vee for Tasmanian racing legend Dick Crawford, as a one-off project, which Dick renamed a Trojan.

John’s interest in Formula Vees was further aroused a few years later when he rebuilt an Elfin Vee for another customer, prompting him to design and construct his own version in 1971.

This was the beginning of the era of the Trowbridge Formula Vee, many of which went on to hold many lap records and win races at Tasmanian circuits

against top fields in the days when 24 Formula Vees on the starting grid was a regular occurrence.

In 1978 John built and designed the JT-35, which was the first monocoque chassis sports car in Tasmania, with foam-filled fuel tanks and powered by a Mazda 13B rotary engine.

The car went on to hold lap records at Baskerville, Symmons Plains, and Winton (Vic.).

During his construction days, John also rebuilt a number of Matich, McLaren, Elfin, Formula 5000 Lola, Brabham, Vandermeimen, and Cooper cars to name a few.

But his involvement in Tasmanian motorsport was not limited to the workshop and the track and he was also an active member of the North-West Car Club, Light Car Club of Tasmania, 500 Car Club of Tasmania, Hobart Sporting Car Club, Formula Vee Association of Tasmania, and instigator of Tasmania Auto Sport Inc. (TASI), which over a period of seven years raised a significant amount of money for the betterment of motorsport in Tasmania.

John was also involved in the running of the very successful Fiesta Slalom (held on Macquarie Wharf, Hobart) and also organised a number of treasure hunts, cryptic trials, standing quarters, and hillclimbs.

In 1977 he was awarded the Formula Vee Association of Australia trophy for Tasmanian clubman of the year.

John built his last racecar in 1984 when illness forced him to retire from business and unfortunately, also building cars.

Profile by Martin Agatyn

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