

There are many more records for the worlds' fastest vehicles, ranging from radio controlled cars at 325 km/h, a wind powered car at 203 km/h, a human powered car at 133 km/h and even a manned rocket sled which runs on train tracks reaching 1017 km/h. Aircraft also have records from the very slow, a human powered craft that reached 44 km/h, to the very fast, an unmanned rocket which reached 21245 km/h. Going this fast is really very dangerous and many people have been seriously hurt or have died attempting to set speed records. However, if you are looking for a safer way to fill your need for speed, you could always try the world's fastest roller coaster in the United Arab Emirates which reaches 240 km/h, or even the Tower of Terror II in Dreamworld Australia which gets up to 160 km/h. Humans will always try to be the fastest and hold records but remember, speed is deadly and roller coasters, eating chillies or doing exercise, can give the same enjoyable chemical rush to your brain.



## Mini-Biographies of Three Famous New Zealanders



### John Britten

John Britten was born on the 1st of August, 1950 in Christchurch. He had a twin sister but they had different birthdates, this isn't what makes him a remarkable man but it is quite interesting. John was born just before midnight and his sister just after midnight and therefore on a different day, hence the different birthdates. He suffered from **dyslexia** and found school very hard. Despite these difficulties, he **persevered** and through the help of reader/writers, he graduated from university and became a successful engineer and architectural designer.

John Britten had a passion for motorcycles and spent many years designing and building **custom** machines with unique modifications. In 1992, he began manufacturing racing motorbikes through his company the Britten Motorcycle Company. His homemade bikes broke and set new world records in many big races. He surprised professional riders when the bike he made came second and third in an important American race. The bike he designed and produced had some radical innovations for its time. Many of his designs and ideas are now common place in racing bikes. Special features that his design included were:

- Carbon fibre body and some structural components.
- The radiator was under the rider's seat instead of under the handle bars near the front of the engine.
- The **chassis** had no frame and used the engine as structural support.
- The engine had computers that recorded data from rides.



Motorcycle legend Bruce Anstey on a Britten V1000.

His company produced and sold only a few of these motorbikes and they are now located in private collections or museums all over the world. Te Papa in Wellington has one of the 10 Britten V1000 motorcycles on permanent display. Unfortunately this 'can-do kiwi' died in 1995 at the age of 45 due to illnesses related to skin cancer. He truly was a motorcycle engineering pioneer who revolutionised motorbike design.

## Scott Dixon



The IndyCar Series is a season of car racing on a variety of track types and shapes mainly in USA. It is a set of races that use **single seat open cockpit** cars that have been recorded reaching speeds as high as 378 km/h. Racers gain points throughout the season and the top scorer at the end receives \$1 million US dollars as a bonus prize (approximately \$1.4 million NZ dollars). The most famous part of the IndyCar Series is the Indianapolis 500 which is a race around a 2.5 mile (4 km) oval circuit. Drivers cover 500 miles (804 km) which is 200 laps. In this race alone, the first place getter receives over \$2.5 million US dollars (\$3.4 million NZ dollars). Australia born New Zealander Scott Dixon has won the IndyCar Series three times and the Indianapolis 500 once.

Dixon started racing karts at the age of seven and saloon cars at 13, for which he had to be granted a special licence as he was too young to drive legally. He has raced many different types of cars and after winning many New Zealand competitions, he moved to Australia. This allowed him to build on his skills and he soon became one of the top drivers in the Australian Formula Holden series.



Motorsport is expensive and his career was initially funded by a private businessman but with the move to Australia, came huge costs and a shareholder company was set up to pay his way. Once he decided that IndyCar was the best category for him to race in, he had to shift to America. This happened in 1999 and at the age of 19, Dixon was signed to an Indy motorsport team. He has gone on to be a **formidable** racer and now lives in the United States with his wife and two daughters. Due to his sporting excellence, he has won the New Zealand Sportsman of The Year award twice and in 2012 was appointed a member of the New Zealand Order of Merit which recognises his amazing contribution to motor racing. He has also won two important motorsport trophies multiple times; the Jim Clark Trophy three times and the Bruce McLaren Trophy twice.



## Bruce McLaren

Bruce McLaren was born in Auckland in 1937. He was interested in cars and racing from an early age. Bruce entered his first race at age 16 and showed a natural talent for driving. From there he entered many more races throughout New Zealand and modified his own cars to improve their performance. He competed in the New Zealand Grand Prix in 1958 and for his outstanding performance, he was given a scholarship to race overseas. This gave him exposure to world class racing all year round. From this, he moved onto racing in the Formula One competition. This sport

involves a series of Grand Prix races held in some of the most **luxurious** locations in the world. It uses the best technology available and the Formula One cars are said to be the most advanced motor vehicles on the planet. The 'Formula' refers to a set of rules the cars must follow in their structure and materials. It is a very wealthy sport and the high-tech state of the art cars can cost over \$2.6 million US dollars (\$3.5 million NZ dollars) in materials. Formula One is often criticised for being unfair because the richest team always wins since they can afford the best cars. Some people see it more as a money race than a race of driving skill.

Bruce McLaren was a promising young driver who, in his first year racing, won the 1959 United States Grand Prix. Not only did McLaren drive the cars but during his career he also built cars, made modifications, analysed data and managed his own team (initially called Bruce McLaren Racing Ltd). An example of his engineering brilliance is when he was out driving, he saw that the door which covered the fuel hole was flapping and he realised this movement was affecting the **aerodynamics** of the car. He then used a pair of metal shears to cut two holes in the body of the car, creating air flow and instantly stopping the flapping. He then continued to drive and his lap times were faster. These holes are found on all McLaren team cars to this day and are called 'nostrils'. In 1970, at the young age of 32, he tragically died after a catastrophic crash while testing a newly modified car in England. His name lives on in the McLaren Racing Group which is based in Britain. This team is the second oldest team behind Ferrari and is the most successful in Formula One history, with the most series wins ever; a great tribute to the amazing innovative man it is named after.