

Wigton Motor Club Ltd

Start Line

Issue: 03/12

www.wigtonmc.co.uk

March 2012

Fun in the snow



There was a great turnout for the winter pub run with crews enjoying a tour of the lovely villages of the Eden Valley, some of which had a covering of snow, as did some of the roads. A few people had an early lunch, particularly Porsche drivers!

Four wheel drive was an advantage when classic needed a tug on snowbound roads! An excellent lunch was provided at the George Hotel in Penrith. The Palmers cleaned up again (not the hotel but the quiz!).

Thanks to Charles & Kitt for another excellent event.

Always in the lead!

Diary

Club events over the next month or so

March Club Night with Solway Jaguar

Tuesday, March 6th

7.30 for 8.00 start

Stoneybeck Inn, Catterlen, Penrith (J41)

**We have two talks: Wigton Motor Club and Racing MGs
All welcome**

Pre season test day

Saturday March 24th from 1 pm

Rowrah Circuit

Speed event test day for all those interested in competing this year.

£40 per car limited to 20 cars

Application form on the website - first come , first served

WIGTON MOTOR CLUB LTD

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Talking Point

Topical comment from the world of motoring

Although the winter is a quiet time for events, the committee is very busy with planning for the new season and of course administrating the renewals of membership. This is the first “renewal” that Liz has done and she has coped very well! Once she has sent out membership cards etc she passes on the email address and postal address to me to add to the respective files. We are using a bought in emailer to cope with the volume of stuff we send out. This does allow us to also send event entry forms or news to people interested in any particular discipline. Once again can we ask that if you write your email on a form, please do it very clearly. I’ve spend several hours trying sort out email addresses that don’t work and then have to refer back to Liz who then has to find the actual form and try and decipher what is written there! If you missed out on magazines and our annual event planner, then this will be the reason!

It looks as though the World Rally Championship is in meltdown, no TV deal, MINI pulling out and general disarray. I bet Malcolm Wilson was glad the very late Ford deal came through when it did as it may have been a different result a couple of weeks down the line. I now wonder if VW will still come in next year or will they switch to something that gives wider publicity? Indeed in the current economic climate does the WRC have a place at all?

There is great concern being expressed these days about shops closing and city centres dying. Now times change, shopping changes but towns and cities continue to fleece you to park your car. Now the only reason you will wish to park in say, Carlisle, is either to work (generating wealth for the city) or as a shopper (spending money).

Now it’s well over a year since I tread the streets of central Carlisle. Over the years I have less and need to do so and no doubt so have many others. Let’s say I wish to buy a book. I drive to Carlisle (round trip of 25 miles) and pay to park. Then I spend time walking to the book shop and hoping the book is in stock. The alternative is to do it online. One click on Amazon and it arrives the following day and the price is probably less than the local book shop and of course you have saved time and the cost of going to Carlisle and parking.

Of course all the shops that sell larger items that you might need to transfer to your car have moved out of town to places that are more easily accessible and of course there are no parking charges and probably the rates are less. If town and city centres die then they only have themselves to blame for driving away customers.

As this issue goes to press we are just back from Race Retro, possibly the best version of that shoe so far and a great chance to catch up with other enthusiasts. It was unseasonably warm on the Friday with temperatures well in the teens.

If you’ve not been to Race Retro then you are really missing something so mark it in your diary for next year.

GTF



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The opinions expressed in this issue of Start Line are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the Club

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PG TIPS

I would like to start this month's rant talking about diesel. I have owned a number of diesel cars but I really despair of the amount of supposed car enthusiasts who actually choose the devils fuel for their vehicle. I have owned diesel cars for 2 reasons, curiosity - about 15 years ago when turbo diesels first emerged and out of thrift when needing a tow car in more recent times. I have not had any serious problems with any of them, but all that torque with short gear changes and the tractor soundtrack is not what fun motoring is made of.

I fully understand why people buy diesel...my wife has one and it goes rather well and is smooth and pulls at low revs but by god its dull. The thing is she doesn't really enjoy driving and has no interest in cars, I do and I find the whole experience a bit lackluster. No revs, no exciting noises and a weight penalty to pay is not good for real car lovers. Thankfully it would appear petrol engines are now making a comeback and with any luck diesel will be headed back to being the fuel of tractors and vans in the near future.

With the new motorsport season beckoning I have been fitting in short (but intense) sessions on Snotty the Skoda which I can officially announce now has a brand new MOT, and what an MOT - its an A4 photocopied sheet of paper. I know everything is now on computer but I do feel a little bit cheated that it is now just a piece of typed paper and no longer a proper certificate. Sending an old car (that's been heavily modified to boot) for an MOT is a nerve wracking experience so when the old boy sails through I expect a little trophy, which until now has been an elaborate and coloured certificate. Hey ho, how times change!

By the time you read this the Northern Trial will have been and gone, and if I didn't have a new arrival in the family I would be out marshalling it. Hopefully next year I will be competing because its one of the best value for money motorsport events I have done - having competed twice in recent years. For those of you who don't know, its open to any (non 4wd) vehicle and involves completing special tests which vary from flat out blats round fields to mud plugs in the forests above Keswick.

I suspect the days of the Northern are numbered and in 10 year time it will be an event of the past, but right now it's a brilliant way to tackle over a dozen tests in areas that are not normally open to vehicles and at little cost. On both occasions I have entered in Ebay specials bought for about £200 and thrashed regardless of suitability - and then sold on at almost no loss (after a quick wash!).

It's a lot cheaper than speed events, it doesn't have the adrenalin rush but it lasts a lot longer and is such a laugh I sometimes consider buying a trials car..

Peter Garforth



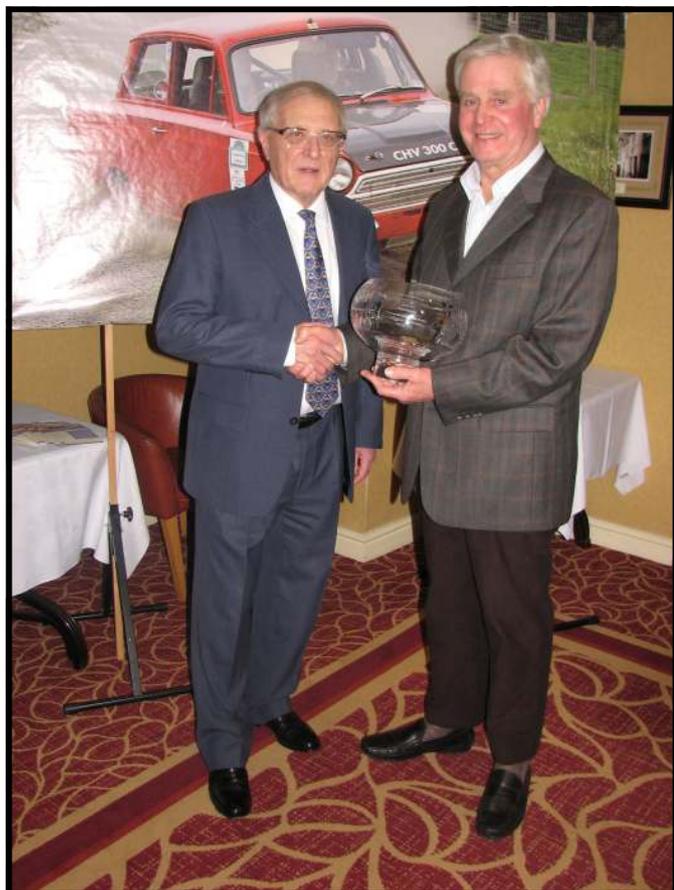
**Brockbanks
Solicitors**

Whitehaven, Cockermouth, Maryport, Workington and Keswick (as Oglethorpe & Broatch)

10% discount to WMC members

Ron Palmer

Live Time Achievement Award



From time to time the club awards a life time achievement award to people who have contributed a lot to the sport, the club and motoring in general. This year Ron Palmer was the surprised recipient.

Ron has been active in motorsport and the motor trade to some fifty years. Such devotion both in his hobby and profession is unlikely to be repeated.

He started his motorsport with the 750 MC and Austin 7 specials but soon found his real interest was in the left hand seat and quickly became one of the best navigators in the region and very much in demand from drivers who wished to be told the right direction to go.

He worked for all his professional life in the motor trade, much of it selling Fords and running dealerships in the region for County Garage/CG Ford. At a time when many would wish to take things easier he took on the dealer principal-ship of a brand new Jaguar outlet, Gilligan Jaguar. They quickly built up a good reputation and became the dealership with the best customer satisfaction, not only in the UK but in the world. During that time he founded a local section of the Jaguar Enthusiasts Club.

He navigated on both road and stage rallies, many sitting beside Paul Gilligan in the County Garage

Escort RS's. He gained a national reputation and is still in demand for events like the Rally of the Tests and the Flying Scotsman.

His greatest success perhaps was winning the 1978 National Rally Championship and the Group 1 class of the 1977 RAC Rally alongside a young Malcolm Wilson. However Paul Gilligan does say that at least as important was dragging Paul from an upside down petrol sodden Escort in the middle of Kielder in 1971!

He has always believed in putting something back into the sport, something that is all too rare these days. There is rarely a Wigton event that Ron is not involved with in some way and he still does the odd autotest in his Mazda. He is even more active in his retirement with new events like the annual Gallop long weekend and the Lake District Classic.

Long may he continue.

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2012 Awards Night



Angela, Willie, Stuart Turner & Eileen



Dave Marsden & Mike Garstang



Stuart Turner with Richard & Edwin Cook



Roy Munro with Brockbanks director.



Elderly Utterances

The Voice of Experience!

Ron Palmer has his say

The Awards Night was once again greatly enjoyed by all who attended and judging by the numbers still gathered around the bar when I retired for the night many did not want it to end. Stuart Turner kept us on the edge of our seats straining for each gem of humour as they came at us constantly throughout his address. I have been fortunate to enjoy his after dinner speeches at business meetings on a number of occasions over the years and his standards are always of the highest order. These days he confines his appearances to motor club and charitable events and we are so lucky to have had this motorsport legend at our dinner at the Skiddaw, thanks for that Graeme.

My earliest recollection of Stuart's existence was when he navigated Eric Carlsson to first place on the 1960 RAC Rally in the SAAB 96. I was but a mere youth and had been asked to help marshal a section near Bewcastle together with Ed Glaister, Pat McCaffrey and Bob Myers of the 750MC. From Carlisle we meandered up through Walton and Bewcastle to Park Head where I was dropped off in the dead of night at a gate (I could take you to the place today although the gate has been replaced with a cattle grid) and told to keep the sheep at bay and open it only when the cars approached. My friends drove off to other gates and controls and I was there on my own (apart from the sheep) for about four hours. I could hear the cars for about five minutes before they arrived and it was fascinating to hear the different engine notes of the distinctive 2 stroke SAAB of Carlsson and Turner, the big Healeys, Ford Anglias and Austin Healey Sprites. Certainly a night I'll never forget.

As I write this piece Charles and I should be hammering round Croft on the Croft Historic Rally but alas it was cancelled a week prior due to lack of entries. Hiring the circuit was to be an expensive business for Stockton and District MC but the entry fee of £120 would have made it viable if entries of 30 or more had been received. I think they had perhaps 24 by closing date and a decision had to be made. It's very sad as the first event of the year is an important one to get us into rally mode. I fear the MSA have some responsibility here as they have introduced rule changes which render some cars unusable without removing hydraulic handbrakes and have also banned the top up of numbers on Historic Rallies with post 1981 cars. The Croft estimated that these changes alone cost them in the order of 8 entries – the difference between the event running or not. Meanwhile the Tour of Cheshire has already specified that no cars will be allowed to start their event if fitted with a Hydraulic Handbrake even if it has been disabled – and they have a full entry with reserves, as they do each year. We need to watch out for the smaller NESCREO club events as they may begin to disappear from the calendar especially if the proposal to have eligibility scrutineers comes to pass in 2013.

After the Tour of Cheshire Charles and I are heading off to the Isle of Man for the Three Legs of Mann in mid March. This is a biannual event organised by Fred Bent and the Classic Rally Association. In the 2010 event the organisers incorporated a couple of less than popular Mickey Mouse sections which had the crews heading off in all directions through gorse bushes on Jurby Airfield. They have promised things will be different this year...

There was an unexpected pleasure at the awards night when I was presented with the Club's Lifetime Award by Stuart Turner. This was a great honour and a secret very well kept from me as my being struck dumb at the time would testify. May I take this opportunity to express my thanks to all concerned. Fancy getting an award for a lifetime of indulgence and selfishness, why else would I spend 50 years in motorsport? The rose bowl should probably have been presented to my tolerant, understanding, long suffering Christine.

Ron.



Through the Windscreen, RAC Rally report continued:

Sunday morning was wet & cold for the 08.15 start with 62 miles of stages in front of us. Panic on the way from the B & B to the Start the alternator stopped charging – Dave cursed it, glared at it, sprayed it with WD 40 & it responded with charging again!. Malc was scheduled to drive Mick's van with the tyres in etc. up to Dumfries where most of the days servicing was to be based & in a mad moment I asked Malc to visit the Dunlop tyre truck & have 2 new tyres fitted to the wheels removed the night before.

Seeding order unchanged Bob,us,Mick & out of MTC 5 & 50 miles up the motorway to Ae – 14.5 miles in one of my favourite forests.

Approaching Ae the roads had a light covering of snow & all the hills around were white. The stage had narrow wheel tracks through the snow but at least you could see gravel & the first half of the stage was OK but you had to keep in the tracks, the snow got deeper & we had our only big moment of the rally when after Jct 15 & just going over a crest into a 45R then 45L the car went light & just drifted off the gravel line into the snow & quick as a flash we were in the left hand ditch, somehow it came out nearly as quick & we were in the right hand ditch but a bit slower then back into the left before managing to recover onto the road – phew a close one. We had just recovered our confidence & regained our pace when we got to a section Jct 18-21 that we had been warned about at the stage start as being very slippery – you take these warnings with a pinch of salt cos sometimes you find no problem but this time it was for real – the surface changed to ICE – took us 2 leary corners to realise & back off & then after the next corner we came across Bob across the track with the back end stuck in the deep ditch (we thought he had been caught out by the sudden change to Ice but he told us after his throttle had stuck open, with the help of spectators he managed to get out taking a maximum). That made us first car on the road which was a definite disadvantage in these conditions & the snow did spoil the enjoyment of the later part of the stage for us.

Twiglees 8.5 miles next – we arrived early plus the course opening car had not gone into the stage as they were not ready – it was snowing hard by now & getting worse – we just wanted to get going but had the frustration of waiting 20 mins. When we eventually started it was still snowing but much better than last year – you could enjoy it but not attack it & it gave the later running C2 cars the advantage allowing them to post better times Checked in with Mike/Dave out in the wilds, all OK then to Dumfries service where there was no sign of snow.

We realised that if the snow got worse we might need our snow tyres but they were still in the Frontera in Carlisle – bugger – Malc was despatched in Mick's van to get them just in case.

The short 0.7mile spectator stage at Heathhall only yards from the service area started the next short leg with it's famous water splash the level of which is maintained by pumping water into it from a nearby pond but it is a good little stage.

Repeat of Ae next which with the passing of the main field & the thawing of the icy section was better. We improved our time but only by 15 secs & it was still a slowish time.

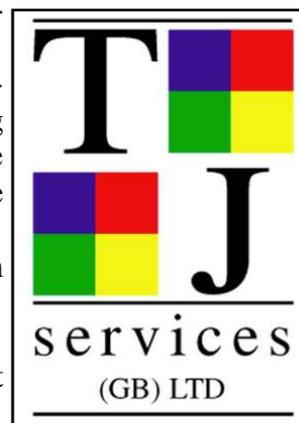
Ideally we should have done another couple of stages but no doubt forest hire costs rule this out at the moment so it was back to Dumfries service.

Ae claimed 3 crews – Paul Griffiths, Pete Smith & Barry Jordan which helped us up to 17th with 28 crews still running & Mick/Paul were 3rd in the Open with 8 crews still running.

I had intended to put the 2 new tyres Malc got us on the back but it was decided to put them on the front for max steering grip in the difficult changing conditions which were deemed not bad enough for snow tyres (which are prone to sidewall damage on gravel) but the snow tyres were loaded into the Galaxy just in case.

The next section was Heathhall again, Twiglees again & then Newcastleton on the edge of Keilder forest.

Heathhall was again good, Twiglees was very difficult for us (I admit I can not drive quickly in snow) but Newcastleton was snow free & great – it ended with a downhill mile long section following the course of a stream



Continued:

which was impossible to read of the maps all 20 to 30 degree bends one after the other but just great to drive.

30 + miles back to service then 30 + miles back to Newcastleton 2 seemed a bit daft – again needed another 2 or 3 stages to pack it out – hopefully if entries break the 100 the extra income may make it possible in the future. Mike/Dave stayed in the area & found a warm hostelry to while away the time & wet the whistle.

Newcastleton 2 was again really good & satisfying & we were back to Carlisle about 9.30pm to our B & B about 10.30 & bed by 11.30.

The drama of the event occurred when Mike/Dave were returning to the stage end & the plastic alternator pulley shattered on Dave's Galaxy. They got to the meeting point where Wayne/John were also waiting & after checking us & Mick through followed Wayne/John to the M6 without using lights then blasted down the motorway towards home near Lancaster. They had to stop & change batteries (our spare + jump leads) half way but made it home, swapped the gear into Dave's works Transit Connect & back to the B & B just after midnight !!

Monday morning changed the rear tyres & ready for the two 17.5 mile stages in Kershope (Keilder). After escorting us to the start Mike/Dave departed to meet us at the end of the stage. Various reports were coming in about deep snow & Ice in Keilder which were confirmed – bugger – we were holding 16th place & I did not need snow. Quick call to chase to divert them to the stage start but they know the area & suggested meeting in a layby on the A7 a few miles before the stage to decide whether or not to fit snow tyres. They made the decision for me – look at where you are going - you need snow tyres OK & they were right . The 2 Saab's passed us & Mick changed his tyres in the same lay-by a touch quicker than us so for the first time we had 3 cars in front of us on the road. The road was blocked at one point resulting in an hours delay & it was snowing hard & when we eventually got to the stage there was another hours delay as there were problems getting marshals in position etc.

We started & it was bad – very bad even with snow tyres. Mark Simpson in a Micra running 1 min behind us caught us after 6/7 miles & we let him past at the next junction. I tried to speed up but after 2 minor off's knew I couldn't so backed off – we must finish now & then a mile or two after just over a crest into a 45R & 45L but Linda was being extra cautious & called it 90R & 90L we came across Mick/ Paul – no car in sight but waiving us on – we could not believe it – holding 3rd in the Open & leading the class by 4.5 mins – we were gutted but there were spectators so hopefully they would get going again – it would have been a slow off – there were no trees to hit, they were just down in a gully.

With great relief the end came into sight.

Due to the delays starting the stage & to meet the schedule for the ceremonial finish in Carlisle City Centre the second run of the stage was cancelled – a shame to loose such a chunk of mileage but in those conditions I was happy

Just a steady run back to Carlisle & WHOOPPEE the final control, we had finished, fantastic. The final control was at the Premier Inn which was a holding area prior to the procession into the City Centre after all finishers had arrived so we had quite a wait. I was sure Mick/Paul would come around the corner any minute but sadly the undamaged car could not be retrieved in time & they went OTL.

Mike/Dave stayed a while & then departed home.

But a final drama was to unfold – we joined the procession for the 2 mile run into the City Centre when half way there the clutch cable broke ! (It was on the list of things to be renewed that never got done)

We were not in a good position but I had a spare on board so drove up a high kerb & jacked the car up as far as I could , donned overalls, changed the cable to the amusement of the local shopkeepers & just made it into the Centre before they closed the barriers.

Prize presentation followed back at the racecourse.

Gwyndaf Evans/ Mike Richardson had won by about 7 mins from Tim Piercey/Neil Shanks with David Stokes/Guy Weaver 3rd & Charlie Taylor/Steve Bielby 4th – there best result on the R.A.C.

The Pre 68 section was won by Bob Bean/ Malcolm Smithson & the Post Historic's by David/ Guy

We had dropped 4 mins & 3 places to 19th O/A on that last stage with the 3 C2 crews all achieving much quicker times than us but we still won our class & had a moral victory over them. We bade our farewells, loaded the car in the rain + all the wheels & tyres from Mick's van & set off home very happy.

A brilliant, proper, well organised rally which we really enjoyed. All competitors, marshals & officials were friendly & helpful & the event had a good atmosphere. Due to the difference in running times we saw little of the C2 crews with whom we were constantly battling which was a shame but unavoidable (so do I hear we need to go to C2 – hopefully but not yet – watch this space). The event was well supported by York & NESCR0 members out speccking/marshalling who kept popping up to say hello which was good – thanks & there appeared to be more spectators this year, long may it continue & hopefully grow to be a well supported truly international event & maybe even proper recognition by the media

The car is totally undamaged, ready to go again but we are ready for a rest & to count the cost.

CheeRStu

Classic Column

Have you noticed how the price of various useful “potions” has gone up in recent years? I was shocked when I bought a tin of “Gunk” cleaner recently and paraffin which has many uses in the garage is now difficult to find and more costly than petrol. I remember when my father used to have a little paraffin heater that went under the engine of his Ford Prefect to ensure it started in the winter. And of course allotment holders still use these heaters in their greenhouse. Makes for expensive tomatoes!

What reminded me of this was buying methylated spirits to clean windscreens. It is very effective and great for cleaning the wiper blades as well. It’s one of those old “chauffeurs tips”. Buying a litre bottle and asked for some £3.45, I remarked to the shop owner that it was cheaper for alcoholics to buy vodka than meth now! I wonder if vodka is any good on glass?

That reminded me that to get your glass really clear and shiny when on road rallies we used to rub them with crumpled newspaper. That really worked but sadly over the years the type of newsprint has changed the current type is much harder and less absorbent. The last paper to use the “right” type of paper was the “Keswick Reminder” but even that changed about ten years ago. Actually if you want an entertaining ten minute read treat your self to a “Reminder” if you are in the area!!!

With a kinder winter so far, I’ve been using the MG BGT quite a bit. Going back a few years I used to go to work in it but more recently it’s had less use due to some “niggly” problems. I rather feel that keeping a car going, rather than laying it up, just stop brakes seizing, pipes drying out, joints cracking etc. It’s actually great to get behind the wheel again!

By the time you read this I should have the race B back on the road after it’s engine rebuild by John Willis. This is a big year for B’s of course and there are several special races planned during the year so hopefully we can manage some of them (potential sponsors please ring!). We put in new lightweight con rods and it is interesting that there are three types, made in America, Argentina and China! We have the Chinese ones so we will see how they perform!

We hope to get the entry forms out for the Classic Weekend (Classic Show and Rose & Thistle Challenge) later this month. They will be posted or emailed to previous entrants and will be available on line. We expect demand will be high for both events so don’t delay in getting your entries in. Additional classes this year will be for MG B convertibles and MG B GTs as we are celebrating their 50th anniversary.

Regulations for the Lake District Classic Rally will also be out fairly shortly. Hopefully it will be open to as many types of car as possible despite the efforts of the MSA!

Adverts

FOR SALE :

MAZDA MX5 1991 first registered in UK 1999 1.6 Ltr in silver alloy wheels ideal for auto tests etc will be MOT'd if purchased £900.00 NROR

DAIMLER XJ6 4.2 1983 This car has had £1,000's spent on it the body work, suspension and brakes are in very good condition but the interior needs refurbishing making an easy restoration or use for jaguar racing. No reasonable offer refused.

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MG B Performance cam: Piper band new and still boxed £100, saving £46 Ring Graeme on 01900 825642.

Red Rotor Arms for the Lucas W25 and W45 distributor as used on most classic cars of the 60s and 70s. £6.00 each

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Red Line water Wetter to help solve over heating: £10.95 a bottle.

Silkolene W20/50 classic oil. 5 litre cans: £14.50

Ring Graeme on 01900 82562

MG Midget 1275 Mk3 parts. Ribbed case gearbox, good condition £50. Differential unit, 3.9 to 1 ratio, quiet runner, no leaks £75

Contact John Holliday, Tel 01228 561251 or 07794471608

Sabelt seat belts, race suits, seats etc plus the SRC budget range. Get yours now at advantageous prices for the new season. Ring Graeme on 01900 825642

Race Retro Photos



Porsche 356 Le Mans



Three works MG Bs from the mid sixties

Inside the Industry

Paul Gilligan keeps us up to date

Petrol or Diesel?

For many years the decision was very simple, high mileage drivers automatically had to have diesel cars. However petrol engine technology is now advancing more rapidly than diesel. Most manufacturers agree that the engine of the immediate future is a small turbocharged petrol, and all are working hard on these. I understand that Ford will shortly introduce a 1.0 turbocharged engine in the Focus (yes 1.0 in a Focus). This will provide similar performance to the current 1.6 petrol unit, 39% better fuel consumption and much lower emissions. This will mean similar economy to the Focus 1.6 diesel, lower emissions and a lower fuel cost per litre, so diesel in cars may soon be a passing trend.

All Guns Blazing Start to 2012

I mentioned last month that many manufacturers were being more aggressive than is normal so early in the year. Often they wait until late March before they realize that they are not achieving the sales they wanted. However this year Mercedes and VW Group in particular have been offering some amazing deals right from the start. Merc kicked off with a campaign on the C Class in January that offered as much as 30% discount, but wrapped into a finance deal so the discount level isn't public information. Then in February they offered the same kind of discount on the BRAND NEW MODEL SLK sports car. Big discounts on models reaching the end of their lives are common, but not so on a new car. Merc's offer means you can drive a £36000 SLK for 2 years for just over £7000, and that includes interest charges and the first year's road tax!

Now VW and Audi have joined the party with some heavy discounts on specified models for March registration. BMW are keeping more quiet, probably confident that the new 3 Series will bring good sales, and also still busy moving all the unsold cars they registered in December to ensure they outsold Audi. Looks like an interesting year ahead with lots of bargains to be had.

Motorway Driving Standards

A couple of weeks ago I had to deliver a car to Cheshire for a customer. Of course I chose the day when rain fell onto frozen tarmac creating lethal conditions. As I crested the rise at Junction 39 I noticed a couple of cars in the barrier on the left and another one off on the right. I might not be the brightest but I took that as a hint that something was wrong and backed off rapidly. It soon became obvious that the surface was VERY slippery and the next overhead sign suggest a speed of 20mph. Believe me, for once 20 really was plenty!

So I trundled down the slow lane at about 20 wondering how late I would be but determined not to damage my customer's new car. I was confident I could achieve that provided I didn't end up embroiled in someone else's accident. In spite of the warning signs and the many cars (and trucks) parked in the barriers with expensive bits missing, many drivers felt 50-60 was OK, and others willing to proceed at my speed felt it a good idea to do that about 6 feet from my back bumper. It wasn't just cars, many trucks continued to drive at 50+. I didn't wish any of them harm, but couldn't resist a wry smile when I noted one or two who had come past at high speed picking themselves out of the remains of their cars or vans a few miles down the road. Between Shap and Preston I must have passed almost 100 accidents, most minor thankfully, but not all. The Citroen C1 that had hit the barrier and rolled on the drop down to Lancaster looked particularly nasty.

Many of the driving standards on display were frankly appalling. These people either lack any imagination or any common sense. For sure their speeds would have been OK for WRC drivers on the right tyres even without studs, but for J. Arthur Sales Manager in his corporate BMW they were just crazy. The many accidents were simply caused by people ignoring the warnings being given by the overhead signs and the crashed cars they were driving past. A week later another major accident on Shap occurred when people ignored fog warnings with inevitable results.

I don't know the answer, but I do wonder how many of those who ended up in the barriers that morning have been charged with dangerous driving, and how that compares to the number caught for 85mph on the same piece of road on a quiet summer evening?

Paul Gilligan

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In Defence of Plastic Look-a-like cars

Ian Cowan

As the proud owner of a “ *plastic look- a-like on 15inch wheels with independent suspension* “ (see an article in last months Start Line) I feel I must come to the defence of such vehicles . I have been a Jaguar enthusiast ever since my father purchased his first Jaguar, a Mk 5 , just after the second world war . I used to sit up at night to listen to the reports of the Jaguars racing at Le Mans and my first car which I constructed was influenced by the “ knobbly Lister Jaguar , although based on a Ford chassis (it did have a genuine D type Perspex windscreen from Jaguar in Coventry !)



I have always considered that the C type and the D type were amongst the words most beautiful cars , but unfortunately as an engineering apprentice on £3 per week such cars were way beyond anything I could afford . When I eventually decided it was time to replace my old E93 based Ford Special I found an XK 120 for sale at Caterham for the princely sum of £100 . This was my first Jaguar , and I have owned many different models since then , and still have my E type which I purchased for £400 from the local yard .

It is said that engineers register very high in the job satisfaction stakes , but unfortunately this is not usually accompanied by very high remuneration , and so to my point

I would love to be able to afford one of the original C or D car or even a genuine replica , but a glance at the motor magazines will show that companies such as Lynx charge prices that would enable the purchase of a small house . I have no doubt that they are wonderful cars , but I would be more likely to strap on a pair of wings and fly than be able to afford one of these lovely machines . No , some of us have to buy what the general public refer to as kit cars with look-a-like body shells , and yes , the body shell is very often fiberglass (more correctly termed glass reinforced plastic or GRP) After a lot of very hard work over literally thousands of hours it is possible to produce a reasonable re-creation of the original car . The running gear for the Jaguar versions is very often from the XJ series of cars and , yes , the rear suspension is usually independent . I don't think that any of us claim that our cars compete with the replicas with the treasured FIA papers , but I personally get immense satisfaction every time I look at my recreation knowing that it is unique , and I have personally built it .

My own re-creation is of an XKSS . Jaguar made 16 of these and ,with the exception of the XJ13 , they must be one of the rarest models and therefore command astronomical prices. I decided on the XKSS as it had some rudimentary weather protection and would

therefore be more user friendly in our climate. It was built on a tight budget , and for this reason the drive train is pretty well standard . No triple Webbers or knock on wheels , but in spite of this the 4.2 litre Jaguar engine and wonderfully smooth Supra gearbox makes it a pleasure to drive . I still harbor the desire to build a C type recreation , but I think that the GT40 which is also a recreation , and the Escort Mk1 rebuild is going to keep me busy for quite a while.



Speed Events

Pre season test day

Rowrah Circuit

Saturday, March 24th from 1pm.

£40 per car. All cars must be road registered or comply with MSA rules.

Application form on the website.

First come first served as places are limited.

Advertising in Start Line

Members adverts in Start Line are free and must be submitted via email or hard copy by the 20th of the month preceding publication.

We can now over trade advertising from as little as £50 per year (about £4 per month) for a 5 x 18 cm advert at the bottom of a page. £70 for the front page footer. Please contact the editor for details.

We can also include flyers, either as hard copies, or email versions, which go out to 600 members. Please ask for details.

BERWICK & DISTRICT MOTOR CLUB LTD

Berwick Classic Rally and Tour Saturday 5th / Sunday 6th May 2012

Berwick and District Motor Club's annual historic rally, the Berwick Classic, takes place on the weekend of 5th / 6th May. Starting from the Woodhorn Museum near Morpeth at 13.00 hrs crews will tackle a 140 mile route including five regularities on the quiet Northumbrian roads and seven special tests before halting for an evening meal at Longridge Towers near Berwick-upon-Tweed.

After a leisurely 09.30 hrs start on Sunday morning crews will head across the River Tweed into Scotland. This year the route will head over the Lammermuir Hills and include a number of tests and a short regularity before the lunch halt in the historic village of Oldhamstocks. The afternoon tests will all be in East Lothian and include a number of old favourites before heading for Whitekirk Golf and Country Club where a presentation dinner will take place.

The Rally is open to all vehicles registered before 31st December 1981.

This year there will also be a Tour which will follow the route of the competitive event but which will not tackle any of the special tests.

- Historic Rally suitable for novice and expert alike
- Experienced organising team
- Great tests, including some new ones, designed by competitors for competitors
- Quiet roads ideal for regularities
- No competition licences required
- Two day OR one day events in both the Rally and the Tour
- Entry Fees
 - Two Day Classic Rally £ 150
 - One Day Classic Rally £ 90
 - Two Day Tour £ 70
 - One day Tour £ 45

For more details watch the Berwick & District Motor Club web site

www.berwickmotorclub.co.uk

or contact Stuart Bankier stuart@sbankier.wanadoo.co.uk 01289 382025

Drive It Day

Sunday, April 22nd

Meeting at Houghton Hall Garden Centre (11 - 2)

Routes from Cockermouth & Penrith

More details next month

Servicing on the Roger Albert Clark Rally 2011

Early in 2011 I received an email from Stuart and Linda Cariss (they of the super quick RS2000 on Historic rallies and Mk1 Escort Sport on Endurance and Stage events) and it was entitled "OAP Treat". Reading on, I found that I was invited to run the Management/or chase car for them on the Roger Albert Clark (RAC) Rally. Yippee! All I needed was a good chauffeur who could double up as an ace Ford mechanic: "Hello, is that David Marsden - can you get a couple of days off and a domestic pass out in December?"

The deal was quickly done and I set about finding out as much as I could about the role of Management Car and about the RAC Rally 2011. Late in November we all got together at my place for a briefing and Stuart and Linda handed over the Road Book, relevant road and stage maps and other information related to our job – the documentation for the Rally was excellent. After a very useful discussion over a meal and a few drinks we all felt a lot more confident about what was in store. Over the next couple of days I went through all the information from the organisers and made sure we had a clear understanding of when and where we needed to be and then built in a few contingencies to deal with mechanical maladies and the vagaries of the weather.

Stuart had struck a deal with Geoff Jones Motorsport to provide support at the main service venues so our primary role was out on the road providing emergency service and also secondary support as needed at the main service venues. Stuart had also booked all the accommodation for both the first night near Duncombe Park and thereafter at Carlisle. Initially, it looked like Dave and I were destined to "share" a double bed at Carlisle (imagine that!!) but an extra bed was found so we didn't need to do our Eric and Ernie pyjama routine (*coming to you soon at a nearby panto*) – Dave was going to smoke the pipe while I was going to take on the Little Ern role by writing newsletter article for the motor club "just like what I used to write".

We spent some time at the Duncombe Park Start venue getting to know some of Stuart's friends in a quick Micra from York (Mick Smith/Paul Osmond) and their management team (Wayne/John) who were also using Geoff Jones for main service support and staying at our B&Bs. We also had a chat with Robert Harris who was scrutineering and said "Hello" to Katy Mashiter (navigating in Gerald Braithwaite's Sunbeam Lotus), Colin Wallace and many others from the our world of historic rallying.

Stuart is scrupulous when it comes to car preparation and many hours had gone into preparing the Escort for this year's RAC. The proof of the pudding is in the rallying and apart from an occasional drop of oil, petrol (at 15mpg), one round of brake adjustments on the rear and water checks the car ran faultlessly throughout. On the navigational front Linda looked calm and confident although with the deceptively tight road timing I'm sure there must have been a few anxious moments, eg, after running out of fuel on the first evening on the way back to the final TC (just as well Batman and Robin/alias Eric and Ernie were close at hand in the Management Car).

The first night consisted of two runs at Duncombe Park and two at Dalby with the stages run alternately. Dave and I stationed ourselves just beyond the stage finish at Dalby so that we could do a quick check of the car and crew before they returned to Duncombe Park. Stuart was running at 2 on the road behind Bob Bean in his immaculate Mk 1 Lotus Cortina and Mick/Paul in the Micra were running in the next 3 or 4 cars. Everything was well after the first run through Dalby and after a quick valet of the windscreen we sent them off for their second run through Duncombe. After listening to the Stratos of Steve Perez and a few roaring BDAs we decided there was just time for a quick pint down at the pub on the main road – it is as well we took this opportunity because the opportunities thereafter were few and far between!

Saturday dawned cold and clear with a chilly wind from the North West. The morning would consist of two runs at each of Langdale (near Dalby), Duncombe Park and Gale Rigg. With the main service team at Duncombe, Dave and I were present at the finishes of Langdale and Gale Rigg. Stuart was settling into a smooth, crowd pleasing stride and was already setting quick times while Micra Mick was just beginning to get his nose ahead in his class - so we were all pretty happy as we set off North for the two stages at Croft in the late afternoon.

Continued:

Croft is a cold place at the best of times and Saturday was no exception. Some vicious squalls began to blow through and we also expected the weather to deteriorate as night approached (proper RAC conditions). After fitting the spotlights to the Escort and ensuring Stuart and Linda progressed smoothly through main service, we took time out to stand on one of the high banks around the circuit to watch some of the cars compete (we've had some rare times at Croft in the Cortina). Car 0 was a fire spitting Land Rover Discovery (I jest not) and as twilight began to settle over the circuit the Disco looked and sounded for all the world like an early Quattro. Our two cars also went quickly on both runs and with no problems they were ready for the night ahead. Just before we left the banking we had time to watch Bob Bean catch and pass a Saab 2 stroke and a Lancia Fulvia who were dicing through a chicane. Bob caught them as though they were standing still and flew round the outside of them on a long right hander. It was awesome and brought back memories of saloon car racing in the 60's (Oh dear: yes, I did spectate in the 60's – I even watched the British GP at Aintree on two occasions! Mind you with Bob Bean now into his seventies maybe there are still a few more seasons left for me and the chauffer).

From Croft we sped North to Hamsterly Forest. The rain had made the stage very slippery and our service site was wet and slimy. Fortunately, all was well with Stuart as he emerged so we headed North again for the forest stage at Shepherdshield (just North of Haltwhistle and in Hexham Rally country!). Again, the rain and wind had made conditions a bit tricky but Stuart was through early and with no problems it was off to main service and supper at the racecourse in Carlisle. Well, the rain came down heavily and temperatures started to fall. By the time we got to the B&B we were ready for a pint and once the *Eric and Ernie sleeping arrangements* were sorted we settled down in the lounge with a drink – it was post mortem time for Stuart/Linda, Mick/Paul and their Management crew. Many were the tales of “*Daring Do*” and “*Phew that was close*” etc but when the texts started to come in from the organisers just before midnight we had both cars leading their respective classes.

After a decent nights sleep and an excellent breakfast at 06.30, it was off to the Restart venue on the racecourse. But not without a minor hiccup because Stuart's alternator decided not to charge just after he'd left the B&B. I'm not sure what Dave said to that alternator when he glared at it but it started charging on command and didn't miss another beat for the rest of the event!

With both crews safely parked in the restart venue Dave and I pushed off to Ae. It was dark and wet on the M6/M74 and by 07.30 thick snow was driving in from the North West. Proper RAC Rally weather had arrived with a vengeance. We located our service spot and, with plenty of time in hand, decided to pop into Moffat for a quick coffee at Rumble Tums (honest, that's what the excellent little café is called). It was going to be a long day with two runs through Ae and Twiglees interspersed with service and two stages in Dumfries before trekking across the fell roads to Newcastleton for two late evening stages.

With Stuart running at 2 on the road and then at 1 (after Bob Bean went off for a while in Ae) we had the choice of service venues. Apart from some simple checks and ensuring the crew were comfortable, fed and watered the biggest challenges we faced on the roads were up around Twiglees where snow and freezing conditions were the order of the day from late morning onwards. By late afternoon when we visited Twiglees for the second time the earlier snow had frozen on the roads making both the stages and the bits in between quite tricky. Various “moments” were reported including Stuart who'd become quite intimate with a long stretch of ditch on both sides of the track in Ae after going sideways over a blind brow. “It seemed to last forever,” said Linda after which the sympathetic Management team responded: “If it seemed to last forever, you weren't going quick enough.”

Between Newcastleton 1 and 2 the cars returned to Carlisle for service. We reckoned that we'd have to wait at the end of the stage for nearly 2 hours before they came back so the bright lights of Longtown proved irresistible (food and drink beckoned). Beckon they might but there is only one pub in Longtown and that was packed with people celebrating somebody's 40th. Fat chance of getting served there! After searching high and low and with that ever growing thirst that you get when the prospect of a decent pub is diminishing by the minute, we had to settle for fish and chips. Well, they were OK and inevitably as we set off back towards Newcastleton we found a good looking hostelry hidden round the back of Cannonbie – but we hadn't time to stop!

Continued:

As we approached the final stage of the day (via a series of steep climbs and descents on black ice) the alternator pulley on the Galaxy disintegrated - it immediately stopped charging and we lost power steering. Fortunately, cooling is driven off a different belt so, with care, we were able to get back on station in time at the exit from the stage. That's when the "What do we do now conversation started". After discussing various scenarios we elected to get Stuart through then head home to Dave's house to pick up his van and transfer all the gear into it. We arranged to wait for Micra Mick then follow Wayne and John (using their full beam) down to the M6 at Carlisle and then head home to Lancaster. We had the spare 12V battery for the rally car with us so we hoped we'd make it. The original battery conked out just south of Carlisle so after a rapid battery change we were off again and, fortunately, despite heavy snow on Shap and at Killington we got home without any further problems.

With everything swapped over we were heading North again just after 11pm. Heavy snow/hail slowed progress between the River Lune and Carnforth but after that we had a straightforward run back to the B&B. 05.45 came round a bit quick but we had time to sort out a couple of jobs on the Escort before settling in to another fine breakfast.

On Monday morning the rally was scheduled for two 18 mile stages in Kershope. Conditions through the night had been rough (tell us about it!) with reports of a 4" covering of snow at Kershope so after a roadside telephone call with Stuart and Linda we decided to fit their snow tyres before leaving the A7 for the lanes between Canonbie and Kershope. It's just as well we did. Road conditions deteriorated quickly and although Stuart got through to the Start OK we had to reroute to a location well south of the Stage finish. The Start was delayed for various reasons and while that was being resolved we found a good place for service at Sleetbeck (appropriately named!). Before long, one or two other Management crews joined us but it was some time before rally cars began to arrive. When they did we discovered that because of the delays the organisers had cut the morning to one run through Kershope.

Stuart arrived unscathed but reported that conditions in the forest were poor. Micra Mick had started the day leading his class by over 3 minutes but he fell foul of the conditions in the forest, went well off and OTL - a very sad end for the crew after a well driven/serviced event. Stuart and Linda kept it all together and took 19th O/A and a very well deserved class win.....helped, I hope, by me and Dave.

The RAC is a fantastic event and a grand way to end another excellent year of motor sport. This year many cars went out of the RAC even before the ice and snow set in. But, it is a credit to all the crews who almost without exception were prepared to give it 110% - in some wonderful and often very expensive cars.

PS to the RAC: After ensuring Stuart and Linda got into the final main time control in good time we had a chat with various folk and then took our leave. It appears that we had no sooner turned our backs on them when they set about destroying their clutch cable on the way to the ceremonial finish in Carlisle city centre. Stuart fitted a spare cable on the roadside and made it over the ramp somewhat later than planned. I guess some days you deserve a bit of luck! By the way, if anybody fancies sponsoring two likely lads in their Mk1 Cortina on the 2012 RAC.....

A happy and successfully sideways New Year to all,

Mike Garstang.

80 Years of History of My Ford Model A

Some of you may know my car and some of the history of my car in as much as dad purchased her for the sum of £75 in 1954 with his continuation form being stamped for the first time on July 16th 1954 for £3.8.9.

Taxation Class:	Private
Make:	Ford
Engine number:	4477047.
Chassis number:	4477047.
Rating:	14.9hp.
Original date of registration:	May 1 st 1931.

Other than this dad had know the car at ICI Blakely where he worked being owned by a lady chemist, how I wish I had written her name down, and had been owned for 4 years by her.

The car was run for 10 years dad thought until he received a company car and she was put in dads mums garage until 1978 when we moved to the Lake District, in 1990 Dad started to restore her and unfortunately Mum was diagnosed with terminal cancer which stopped the restoration and trips to the states for bringing back many parts!

In 1999 I had badgered dad to get her restored and he gave me the car as he was “sick of me going on about it” until a guy from the Model A Club named John Charlton phoned out of the blue and they chatted about Model A’s and dad’s Cabriolet. That night over tea he asked for her back and I reluctantly agreed on the proviso she was restored starting the following weekend. This occurred and we got her back May 4th 2004 six months before dad passed away, he did get to drive her and taught me the skills and I drove him around as long as was possible, lets hope I can pass the same skills onto my girls.

In the August I met David Knott’s at the Dalemain car show, we became friends & decided to attend the Club tour in the New Forrest in 2005, this had been organised by Peter & Denise Scott, we would stay at the Moorehill House Hotel near Burley. On the way down my steering had become somewhat stiff, as we did not carry any 600 weight oil so we went to the local Sainsbury to get some grease as we did not have sufficient in our kits, coincidentally we met Murray Walker in the car park who admired our cars, see huge grins. Back in the hotel car park we were greasing the cars, thanks to Alan Crossland who lent me his grease gun, when two old chaps came over and started looking round the cars and asked me in his broad Oldham accent “dust thee know where that cars frem” to which I answered “aye its an Owldham car” in a similar mimicking accent explaining dad had lived in Crumpsall. At this point the discussion turned to Joycee’s history and I explained what I knew to which he replied I should get in contact with OMC Ford (Oldham Motor Company) as he had lived in Oldham for over 70 years and only OMC had ever sold Ford with BU being from Oldham. He said they were a family owned business still were and still operated in Oldham and I should call them to see if they had any old records – you just never know. I have asked myself on many occasions what were the chances of going on tour to a hotel picked by someone else and finding two brothers on holiday in the same hotel who were Oldham born and bread, many millions to one is as near as I can get.

On returning home I called OMC and was provided with the name of Jonathan Eglin who was busy and did not call me back, six months later I thought I would push the matter and eventually spoke to the said Mr Jonathan Eglin. I explained the story and said there were some old ledgers at the Oldham site and he would see if there was anything going back to May 1st 1931. A few days later the email came stating indeed the car was:

- BU6829 Ford Cabriolet sold by Oldham Motor Company Limited on May 1st 1931 and they still had the registration book plus other evidence.
- Sold to a Mrs Crabtree of Low Farm in Rochdale.
Engine / chassis number of 4477047.

On my next conversation Jonathan asked what I was looking for and I simply asked for a copy of the ledger and said I would call in for it when passing, this I did however the safe was locked for the day and he would post it on. A short time later a full copy of the ledger arrived showing all the details of the sale, on thanking Jonathan we discussed the possibility of using Joycee for the launch of the SMAX later that year which did not come off and then the following year for the launch of the Focus Cabriolet again this did not occur due to a subdued launch.

In February this year I received a call from Jonathan asking if I still had the car as OMC were to celebrate 80 years as a Ford dealer and 100 years of Ford manufacturing in the UK with a bit of a show using some Ford cars later in the year, they would like to use mine if it was possible. I agreed to this request immediately and the date was set for October this year.

I dropped Joycee off on my way back from John Mould's all be it a week early due to work commitments it worked out well the journey was some what poignant. Monday morning after a stay in Knutsford overnight dawned without a cloud in the sky and a superb drive from Knutsford having stopped off at Dad's mum's house where Joycee was garaged for some 20 odd years, through Altringham and Sale all roads Dad used to drive her on when going to see his mum in Knutsford, to say this was emotional was an understatement and the fulfilment of an ambition. I took the M60 round the city and then turned off to Oldham, the feeling was quite extraordinary and unexpected as to drive my car up the same road she was driven 80 years previously was an amazing experience although the current showroom is on the opposite side of the road to where OMC were in 1931. I had a great reception from OMC and quite a fuss was made and although they have Model T from a local dealer this is the oldest car they have sold come back to them. The showroom is something to behold as there are large scale pictures displayed throughout the show room from pre 1931 of the old showroom and premises, including that where my car was sold, including different models to the modern day. If you have the chance it is worth a visit for the pictorial record alone, this is a very friendly family run dealership who have become part of our "A" family in a many ways.

The show was to be held in an old brick warehouse on site that had been completely sandblasted internally and a new floor put down, cars were also supplied by the Ford Museum and also from other Ford owners in the area. Thursday saw a visit from the Ford Directors Andy Barratt – Ford Sales Director, John Coffey – Ford Credit Director, Jon Wellsman – Ford After-Sales Director. The cars were arranged in date order from the Model T including Model Y, Ford Pilot, Mustang, Mark 1 Cortina, Mark 1 Escort RS2000, Mark 2 Escort 1600 Sport, Capri 2.8 Injection, Cortina's, Granada, Sierra, Sierra Cosworth, Escort RS Turbo through to an Escort Cosworth.

OMC had arranged for local schools to attend the exhibition throughout the week, pupils had drawn pictures of cars and of futuristic cars in many instances as part of a competition, all of which were displayed on the walls.

I attended on the Saturday with my youngest daughter Jenni where the public were invited along with local Ford car clubs attending on the Saturday. The winner of the design a car for the future schools completion Liam Rodgers of Saddleworth School with his Ford Idro-Fresco attended and was presented with his prize and was then photographed in my Model A. Despite some appalling weather the event was well attended and some super family entertainment was supplied by OMC, lots of questions were asked and it was quite something to attend this event.

All in all due to some routine maintenance I have discovered a massive section of my cars history and have relived its original journey some 80 years ago from driving away from the original place of sale adding to our own existing 57 years of history.

Jon Davidson

RED MIST

no longer young but still angry!

At the time of writing we were just about to schlep into Christmas, or the “winter festival” and 2011 is over, we enter that nether world where we are supposed to get our fun from other non motoring related sources, you know the drill, family, beer, food...at least until the Monte Carlo Rally kicks off.

What disappointed me this year?

The worlds wholehearted hug to electric vehicles....and subsequent refusal to buy them....but the disappointment came from everyone thinking it's the answer, of course its not, the only answer is to go back to horses

Sebastien Vettel, being so boringly predictable in his celebrations, saying the same things what was it, 16? 25? 48? Times this season, great driver, silly catchphrases

The riots, so poorly executed even apathetic youths said it was wrong, how long before someone actually admits that they are a symptom of a real problem (ooh politics without Bernie!)

The coalition..... or FOTA as its known, I think it's a symptom of the on track action getting better that I have fallen out of love with the political side of F1, even the silly season has been boring, its all too....., organised and seems to serve nothing more than elements of itself whilst having no real affect in the wider sphere.

Bernie Ecclestone, even he sounds like he can't be arsed anymore.....

Sky....nuff said

BBC....nuff said

McLaren MP12C, is it just me or did we all know it wasn't going to beat the Ferrari even before all the magazine tests? Because it looks like a kit car! the Ferrari 458 Italia however looks like the cars I used to draw when I was, a kid/when we used to have longer meetings (see coalition)

Rally Wales GB, sorry but I wont stop harping on about this until it reverts to a proper rally, and what's the point of PIAA and the like making expensive lights if no-one professional uses them and makes them sexy!

Top Gear, and its not just that Clarkson is a tool, the BBC does this to everything successful, 3 men in a bath rolling down a hill, is it a vaguely car based programme or Last of the Summer Wine?

MSA (see Sky/BBC)

Kimi Raikonen, Schumacher, BTCC, WRC coverage, fuel prices, Traffic Jams (actually no, I wasn't disappointed in them; I have been stuck in some corking traffic jams and been genuinely late because of them!)

So what's to look forward to in 2012

Petter Solberg in a works Ford, for the first time in years I am genuinely excited about Fords driver lineup, I was never completely sold on Hirvonen, but Latvala and Solberg makes me think they will either win both championships or leave more Fiesta shaped holes in the Worlds landscape... possibly both!

Will Mini do the full/part championship? At the time of writing they had just missed out on the entry deadline, looks like Chris Meeke will take one for the team!

VW's development year, could they and Ogier really be the next big thing? I have my doubts, Audi were only kings because they brought something new to the table then kept that advantage for a while, I know that's ancient history, but VW hasn't really ever set the world on fire competition wise, maybe they will learn from their Porsche bedfellows.

F1, will we have a different game? Will RB just run away again, will Raikonen do a Prost/Lauda/Mansell or a La Rosa, personally I don't care, Kimi doesn't, so why should I!

What will happen at McLaren, will Lewis find his feet again and realise his potential or has Jensen become the Golden Man? All depends on who Lewis hangs around with I suppose.

Ferrari, does anyone think they will not want to make something happen this year? I think this maybe the backlash and Alonso will make it work or walk

Mercedes....flattering to deceive yet again I think

New cars for the rest of us to buy....but how many of us will take advantage of the stupendous offers on used vehicles, my tip is keep an eye on the diesel/petrol divide, do your sums over 3 years and see what it works out at A diesel averaging 40mpg costs the same as a petrol averaging 37mpg in fuel, add in the purchase prices and servicing and you may find overall less of an advantage to the diesel than you once had! I think if you keep your miles down there's still some smiles to be had before the food runs out!

What of other sports?.....The Euro Championships and the Olympics will be exciting one way or the other, but I do think ultimately the public will be disappointed that we didn't do as well as the ridiculous hype lead them to believe, so then we will have protests and riots.

Buuuut it's a chance for the public to box the government into a corner and I think it should be acted on, of course they will play on fear and some sort of moral ambiguity to make people think that protest is immoral. No doubt Clarkson will have them all up against the wall (as long as it helps sell his latest DVD) but until voting is mandatory and people are made to think about whoever they put in charge, then this sort of disaffection, whether its envy or injustice, is set to continue. Make the population accountable, then the bankers may have been kept under control and the BBC may have been able to keep F1...ffs!

Alan Hawdon

Championship News

Speed: Do please get your registration forms in ASAP. Stickers are now available. We have a pre season test day at Rowrah on Saturday the 24th and the first round is at Kames on Sunday, April 15th which is run by EACC. Regs will be sent to registered drivers when available. Please make sure that you have sent in a championship registration form

Historic: Sadly the first event at Croft did not run so we now move to the Berwick in May when the Sunday section will count. Entry forms are now available. Series stickers are now available. It is hoped that regs for the Lake District Classic will be on line and emailed out very shortly.

MG Cumbria

Roof of England Challenge

Sunday, April 1st

120 miles in the Pennines

Open to all MGs and other fine cars of any age.

Start & finishes at Tebay Services southbound.

Entry forms on the website



Andy's Armchair

Andy Armstrong takes an irrelevant look at motoring and motorsport

Have you noticed how each time a car is remodelled it seems to grow a little? A case in point is the BMW 3 Series, the new shape of which is a whole 9 cm longer than the one it's replacing, and this in turn grew about the same amount over it's predecessor. It's not only BMW doing this, the Mondeo grows with every change, the current Focus dwarfs the original, and the modern VW Polo is now almost the same size as a supposedly bigger Golf used to be. I've no doubt the same applies to other marques which I haven't checked so maybe there's some other "sad whatsit" out there who'd like to undertake this riveting piece of research.

It's quite amusing to conjecture what would happen over the next 25 years if the present pattern continues. By then a 3 Series would be well over a foot longer than it is now and the smallest car available will be as big as your medium sized hatch is at the moment. Presumably a Bentley would equate to your biggest non-articulated lorry and goodness knows what a stretch limo will look like. It can't be good for road congestion!

I've recently been ordering a new car and the following just goes to show how your attitudes change with the passing years. Now for most of my motoring life the word "diesel" was virtually swearing, but in 2004 I was talked into the fact it would make economic sense so I took the plunge down the rattling smokey route.

Now after 7 plus years and many thousand miles, I was tempted to go back. I assessed annual mileage, fuel costs, initial purchase prices, depreciation etc. and it really was pretty obvious that from an economic standpoint it was indeed more sensible to return to petrol power.

This was quite exciting really, a new design twin turbo, pretty good consumption and no shortage of oomph, my mind was made up, it would be a petrol, and I was sure the test drive would confirm it. It didn't!

To me it felt light, buzzy, busy, the torque wasn't there and it certainly lacked the lazy option of leaving it in a high gear and just letting it plod along. At the other extreme that turbine-like push you get with a decent diesel was missing and that was the clincher. So there we are the order's gone in for an oil burner and I'm looking forward to pottering along in sixth not to mention 0-60 in 7 seconds.

It really did shock me mind, after all these years the term "diesel-head" still doesn't sit too comfortably.

Ends

AA



What's On

WMC events and other events we are invited to

March

3rd	Trio	Malcolm Wilson Rally
4th	SRC	Saltire Historic Rally (NESCRO)
4th		Penrith Autojumble 9-2
10th	MCR	Mini Cooper Borders Rally
17th	WDMC	Brick & Steel Stages in Kielder
18th	SoSCC	Tarmac Autotest
25th		<i>British Summer Time starts</i>
24th	WMC	Test day at Rowrah
25th	BARC	Members Practice at Harewood
31st	BECC	Charterhall Stages

April

1st	MGC	Roof of England Challenge
1st	YMC	North Yorkshire Classic (NESCRO)
8th	MGCC	Racing at Donington
15th	BARC	Harewood Hill Climb
15th	EACC	Kames Sprint (BSCBSC Round 1)
15th	SoSCC	Grass Autotest
20-22nd	ERA	Flying Scotsman
22nd	IDMC	Ilkley Jubilee Historic Rally
22nd	WMC	Drive It Day
27/28	CSCC	Pirelli International Rally
28/29	BARC	Racing at Croft

Visit the website for all the latest news

Forum Log in: wigtonmc. Password: marshals

News Blog: <http://wigtonmc.wordpress.com/>

Please only phone club officials between 19.00 and 21.00 in the evening.

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