

Wigton Motor Club Ltd

Start Line

Issue 04/19

www.wigtonmc.co.uk

April 2019

Moota Progress



Work started at Moota in mid March and the frame has gone up very quickly. Next step is the roof and side panels. After that comes the floor and access ramps and the three doors. Now we can see just how big it is and start planning the layout.

Motorsport for All

Club Officials

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Visit the Facebook page for the latest news or the webpage at
www.wigtonmc.co.uk

Talking Point

Topical Comment from the world of motoring

Barry Lindsay has had two cracking results this year to add to his multiple ANECCC Stage Championships in recent years, with his 1600cc Peugeot, winning his class on both the Malcolm Wilson and Border Counties rallies by over five minutes. Great derives on both is very difficult conditions and Barry also finished well up overall beating powerful four-wheel drive cars that should have been well in front.

It just proves that there is no substitute for experience, Barry has been competing for many years not just on-stage events but is equally happy on an autotest or navigating on a targa. He is also a king pin of Spadeadam MC and usually organises their marshalling teams on any event he is not competing on. A great all-rounder but sadly one of a dying breed. Thirty years ago, there were lots of people who did all sorts of events and also put something back into the sport as well. That's is sadly, not so now, particularly with stage competitors who now almost seem to be a different breed to the sort of clubman who did our and other club's events in the 80s and 90s.

These days many competitors spend a lot of money on their cars and employ people to prepared and run them , unlike the days when we, as young professionals or mechanics, did it all our selves after work welding a big hammer between events! These days the crew arrives at the event, gets in the car and sets off on the stages. When you watch the live streaming of events you can see that many drivers just don't have the experience to drive their cars at anything like its true potential. The situation is no doubt made worse by any current rally car being much more powerful and more technically sophisticated than the Escorts or Minis that we used to use. Even the current versions of the Escorts used on stages have far more power and better handling than the original.

Perhaps some of the drivers might find doing an autotest in an MX5 now and again would improve their stage rally driving in their R5 car?

It's a great pity there is no FTV coverage of the World Rally Championship this year and there has been some great driving and it's fantastic to see the skill of the top drivers, particularly on snow. It's also great at Elfyn Evans is right up there with the best in the M Sport car after a trying 2018 and Kris Meeke is steadily collecting points and keeping the car on the road.

GTF

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

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Forthcoming Club Events

Spring Autotest

at

Maryport Business centre

Sunday, April 14th

Entry forms are on the website.

Autotest and PCA classes

Drive It Day

Dalemain

11—2 Sunday, April 28th

Celebrate the right to drive your pride and joy!

Discounted admission to the Mansion

Food and drink available

Suggested £5 donation per car for our 2019 charities, Air Ambulance & the Calvert Trust

HAGERTY
CLASSIC CAR INSURANCE

Partners with Wigton Motor Club – please call 0844 824 1135 and don't forget to mention your club when you do!

PG Tips

I need to sell my house, and in a hurry. I picked up a car magazine at the garage this month and found an advert for a Southeby's auction that contains a Lancia 037 Stradale (road going trim), a Lancia Delta S4 Stradale and a Lancia Stratos. Now I realise my house isn't going to buy me all three, much as I'd like them all, but it should buy me the 037 and leave a bit of change to put a deposit on a house to rent. I may have a few difficulties with this plan because the wife seems quite settled and happy with a mortgage but that 037 is a seriously good looking car and lets face it, you only live once (unless you're a Hindu or Buddhist....other religions may also believe in re-incarnation) and petrol is a finite resource so this would be the perfect time to take the plunge. I intend to discuss the subject with her later and I'll advise you all on the divorce proceedings progress next month!

In the meantime I'm stuck with the cars I have and Snotty is newly MOT'd thanks to Bill Kirkpatrick, but has a few issues. The green Skud idles beautifully but will not rev or pull as it should and the rear suspension needs a tweak to sort out the wildly different camber angles on each side. As you read this there are less than 4 weeks until the Isle of Man event and Snotty is up at the rolling road in Kirkbride to try and fathom the cause of the poor power delivery. As I said last year...next year I must try and leave the car alone so I can spend the run up to the season just driving and planning a season of events rather than madly trying to fix a rake of problems!

Today I had a hire car through work again, so it's only right that I review it. It was a Ford Fiesta ST Line...so a fake Fiesta ST. They'd done a decent job of the fakery though – if there had been no ST Line badges it would have been hard for a non-Ford geek to say for sure whether it was or wasn't a real ST. Sporty bits on the outside and sporty looking seats on the inside with a leather bound flat bottomed steering wheel, a convincing facsimile of the ST hit hatch. As soon as it fired up I could hear it only had 3 cylinders but it really revved and pulled very well indeed.

I didn't manage to fully establish its specification but my bum dyno told me it was most likely to be a 120 bhp 1 litre Ecoboost. Overtaking was a breeze and it handled very well with decent feedback from the wheel and chassis, and whilst all of that was fine, fuel economy is something people tend to want from a small engined, small hatch back and given the power and way it revved I wasn't expecting great things. Surprisingly I was proved wrong – it used £8.81 of petrol to get from Workington to Penrith and back. I should add that the £8.81 was bought at the ridiculously rip off prices charged at Cocker-mouth Oakhurst garage where they look around the rest of West Cumbria and add 5p a litre to their prices!

By my calculations it used just under a gallon and a half of petrol and therefore turned in approximately 50mpg – not bad considering there were 3 of us in the car. The fact there were 3 of us is my only issue....it was very cramped compared to my old Skoda Citigo which was supposedly a size down in the scale of cars. The Fiesta had non existent door bins and a narrow centre console and yet I my arm touched the door at one side and the front seat passenger on the other. There was reasonable legroom in the rear but headroom was poor and it all felt very pokey. So there you go – a great drive, decent quality and kit and economical too, just don't buy one if you're carrying more than just yourself! Incidentally I never buy petrol for my own cars at Oakhurst due to the rip off pricing, however the tiny amount of petrol we used was put onto a corporate fuel card and Oakhurst was a handy place to stop. I hang my head in shame!

Peter

Championship News

There is no championship news this month as there have been no events.

Training

The training day was cancelled as there did not seem to be enough interest. As with Sod's Law, as soon as we decided that we got people asking for details! We don't produce training at the drop of a hat, a great deal of effort goes into it.

We are willing to put something together later in the year but we do need to know what areas of motorsport, classic cars or marshalling you would like it to involve. Please let us know and we will do something!

Moota - The Build!

It's finally happening and we are posting regular updates on the Face Book page. One the basic shell is completed and the floor there will be the opportunity for members to get involved in fitting it out.



From The Top

News from UK Motorsport, Regions and the WMC Committee

In one of the most significant changes to the administration of motorsport in the UK, the governing body has adopted new articles of association, which bring it in line with Sport England's Code of Governance and best practice.

Motorsport Council Members voted unanimously to approve the new articles during an extraordinary general meeting (EGM) at the Royal Automobile Club in London (12 March).

The new articles see the Motorsport UK Board become the ultimate decision-making body in the governance of UK motorsport. This has historically been the role of the Motorsport Council, who will now become the body that informs and advises the Board on key issues affecting motorsport, helping to shape strategy and promoting the sport in the UK. The Board will be made up of a greater proportion of independent non-executive directors, in addition to the members representing the sport's direct interests.

The Council will expand significantly to include representatives of a wider range of stakeholders, including motorsport venues, broader motorsport activities such as commercial karting and the motorsport industry in general. This will allow a greater range of views to be considered and ensure the governing body better reflects the whole sport.

A new Rules Committee, drawn from across the disciplines, will be established to review regulation changes proposed by the various specialist committees. Meeting bi-annually, the Rules Committee will review proposed regulation changes and ensure that full consideration is given prior to submission to the Motorsport UK Board.

David Richards CBE, Chairman of Motorsport UK, said: "This is a very significant moment in the history of Motorsport in the UK, as we commit to becoming a modern governing body that is truly representative of our members and motorsport in general. The changes approved this week have come about after lengthy debate and meet the objective of ensuring that we will now provide the highest standards of sports governance.

"This is a journey of modernisation that over 50 sports governing bodies in this country have already taken. As sport has developed from its amateur roots it has become highly complex, commercial and multidisciplinary. Motorsport is no exception and these changes now provide the foundation for the future development and promotion of motorsport in the UK."

Another important decision taken by the Board was the appointment of Tom Purves as the new Chairman of the reformed Motorsport Council, taking over from Tony Scott Andrews at the end of his nine-year tenure. Purves has previously served as a Director of Motorsport UK and is also a former Chairman of the Royal Automobile Club.

Purves said: "As a stalwart supporter of motorsport for decades, it is an honour to be appointed as the next Chairman of the Motorsport Council, especially at this pivotal moment when its role is being redefined. By including a much wider range of stakeholders and views, the Council will become the ultimate conscience of motorsport governance, advising the Board of the key issues affecting our community's ability to enjoy fun on four wheels."



WMC Matters:

Contacting committee members or organisers:

Thanks to the wonders of the internet there are several ways of contacting committee members and event organisers. It would be greatly appreciated if members used the email address given in the regs, or event details as otherwise your message ends up in generic in-boxes and someone else has to forward it on.

If your reply to the emailer which sends out Start Line and other news items, then it goes to the emailer administrators, Maggy Bateman and Graeme Forrester. If you use the contact box in the website it comes to Graeme, while if you send a message via our Face Book Messenger the replies will come from either Peter Garforth, John Sloan or Graeme.

Committee meeting notes, March:

The fire extinguishers have been checked and two new ones have been bought.

The autotest resources boxes are now ready for use.

The Gallop currently has 24 entries. The Coast to Coast in September has ten entries.

Work on Moota was expected to start soon.

The Meander had been popular despite the wet weather and the inevitable last minute road works.

New venues were being investigated for the LDC and other events.

Start Line Contributions

We always welcome reports, event reports trips reports, articles, restorations, memories, photos past and present and even letters. If you would like to contribute then the normal deadline is the 22nd of the month prior to publication although this can vary. Send via email or in Word, 12 point, Time New Roman if possible and unformatted to gtfmg@yahoo.co.uk

Diversions

A recent trip to Spain saw a Ford Ka as our hire car. Noting special about it, the basic model and on 6k Kms on the clock. Buzzed along quite nicely but on anything other than a flat road top gear was useless and there were a couple of times on main roads with a bit of a slope that third gear was needed. It had a hugely sloping windscreen and it must be almost impossible to wipe the lower part while sitting in the car. Other than that it was just another car, or Ka!

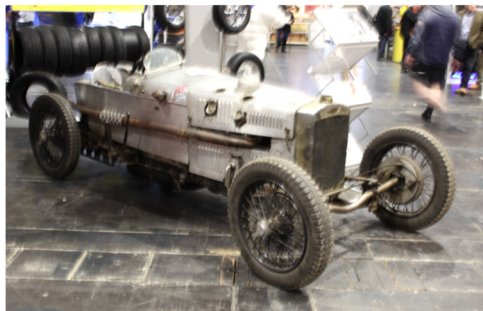
The roads in Spain are superb, not a pot hole in sight and most roads seem to have been built in last 20 years or so with lots of tunnels and viaducts to get around the mountains. Indeed many of their C roads are better than our A roads. Given that Spain is the second most bankrupt country in Europe that is surprising until you see all the signs that say "Funded by the EU Regional Development Fund"!

GTF

Classic Column

News from the Classic and Historic Scene

I popped down to the NEC for the Practical Classics Restoration Show. I went by train from Penrith which was a rare experience for me and of course the train was half an hour late getting to the NEC. I think the last train that I used that was on time was on the “Ratty”.



Not having been before I did not know what to expect really. It was different from the Classic Show at the NEC in November, being smaller and while there were lots of clubs there it was more about the cars rather than the lavish club stands. It was interesting to see some rarities and even some that you had forgotten about.

There are clubs for Ford Cougars, Probes and Pumas, all being relatively recent but being quite rare. Apparently there are at least 25 clubs for various type and models of

Fords which makes you think that, given that many will come from the same parts bin, that they would be better off under one umbrella. There have always been multiple clubs for MGs, Triumphs and Jaguars, all have an element of competition to get members but there are other examples such as the Volvo Enthusiasts Club and the Volvo Owners Clubs which seem to be doing much the same thing.

As the title included the words “practical” and “restoration” I had expected to see rather more of both of those than there actually was. There were certainly things I wanted to find out about but even asking did not produce any information. There was plenty of autojumble, parts and tools for sale but I did expect there to be more practical demonstrations going on other than on a couple of small stages.

Would I go back? Well perhaps in a few years, it’s certainly not on the must do list like Race Retro.

GTF



WMC Member Paul Henley who’s 260Z won Best Restoration of the Year.



A half scale Austin 7 which had a full sized version exactly the same, along side.

Some reflections on the early days of club-man's motorsport in my life.

Part 1 by Keith Thomas

In 1961, I was a 14-year-old schoolboy helping serve petrol at Winthorpe's little garage in Workington on the corner of Vulcans lane and Harrington road now the sales showroom for Keswick Superglaze. I didn't get paid, I just enjoyed meeting the various people that came for petrol mainly business people in cars or vans. Lots of motorbikes some ridden by leather clad enthusiasts or "Ton Up" boys such as the well-known demolition contractor Alfie Parker who had a Road Rocket and was a wild guy on it. Others had Triumph Bonneville's, a couple of guys had Vincent's, these were the real Rolls Royce's of the bike world. Other people rode bikes just to get back and forward to work, motorbikes were economical machines as very few people had cars if they were ordinary working folk. Buses were plentiful; the workers buses to the steelworks, local collieries or Sellafield were packed with people every day which these days seems amazing, how times have changed. The biggest changes occurred between about 1960 and 1975 as in that short space of time car ownership generally went through the roof.

As I mentioned in 1961 most cars were owned by business or professional people who used to come in for petrol, no diesel at a normal filling station in those days. It was served by the attendant who often happened to be me or the garage owner, Ashley Winthorpe, or his mechanic, Michael Harper at other times, self-service was something for future generations.

When buying petrol many caring owners would ask for "shots" of upper cylinder lubricant to be added, these were dispensed by a pump and added in with the petrol, I remember petrol being 4s/11d a gallon for a long time plus 1d or a penny per shot, bringing the total cost to 5 shillings a gallon, 25p in today's money so £1 bought you four gallons and four shots !

The local motor club was the West Cumberland Motor Club, prominent members and some of the cars they drove were as follows, John and Ian Sinclair, Rover 3 litre & Triumph Herald, Paul Walker MK1 Cortina GT, all well-known jewellers in Workington. Jonathan & Anthony Saul had an architects' practice, they had very sporting cars, an Aston Martin DB4, Reg No 4 SMU formerly I was told the personal car of David Brown owner of Aston Martin. Also, a 1275cc Mini Cooper S reg no 200 LRM and a Lotus Elan. Derek Blacklock, the pharmacist from Boots Chemist, had an Austin 1100, Bill Rook, bank manager of the District Bank in Pow St Workington, a rather similar car. Mick Morgan, a teacher with a splendid moustache and a Morgan, milkman and driving instructor Ron Graham had a Riley 1.5, car salesman Gowan Couthard who worked for County Garage, the huge Ford dealership owned by Paul Gilligan's family, drove anything Ford usually Cortina GTs or Corsair GTs and used them in the various events such as autotests, rallies, he even did the Mobil economy run. He sold dozens of similar cars to the ones he drove and many cars with what we now call cherished numbers. Gowan used to select numbers that looked pleasing to the eye as it was at no extra cost in those days. My parents bought a bright red Cortina MK1 from him and chose the reg number CAO 777B. It was bought when car ownership amongst working people became common, it did very many rallies and autocrosses with my dad and I sharing it but ended up being written off on a rally when, with dad driving and me navigating, he lost it on some mud and hit a concrete milk churn stand that all farms had at their lane ends in those days before milk tankers collected the milk. Fortunately, Cornhill insurance didn't exclude rallying in their policies so paid out the £375 for the write off, this enabled dad to buy another second-hand Cortina GT to replace it.

Andrew Ferguson, a window cleaner from Whitehaven, had a grey minivan then a grey mini 111 LAO, he was the fastest window cleaner in the west, he also bought a red Lotus 7 with a 1340cc motor that he occasionally raced at Croft and I accompanied him as paddock helper.

Wilson Watson, a garage owner from Waverton the first specialist tyre business in Cumbria, had a Mini Cooper then a Lotus Cortina MK1, Bert Lowry, of Stainburn post office who was also an engineer with the Workington town council, had a series of VWs Beetles, a VW Variant (anyone remember those) and then a 970cc Cooper S DRM13C if my memory is correct. Not many 970 Cooper S were produced, they were a most unusual special model designed for racing in the 1000cc class with suitable engine boring.

One of the best known members and a chap who lived for cars the whole of his life was Max De Redder, chief electrical engineer at the steelworks, he had a TR2 then an Aston Martin DB2/4, a 1904 Cadillac that he and his wife Pat competed in the London to Brighton run before they bought a much later car, it was a 1910 Renault which also did the London to Brighton many times.

About this time, 1963 era, a young farmer's son was doing autotests and was by far the best driver doing this type of event, he could make his Frog Eye Sprite do handbrake turns, reverse spins like no one else, according to my brain the reg no was XAO 495, the young lad was Edwin Cook. Yes, that's the same Edwin that had the yellow Triumph Stag for many years, now has the Aston Martin and still performing miracles in autotests in his red Cooper S and Mini special as well as navigating for son Richard in the ex-factory Subaru Impreza. They are so good they take top places in such events as the Malcolm Wilson Rally, the Tour of Mull as well as other top events. A keener enthusiast, nicer guy, better driver or co driver it would be virtually impossible to meet. He is still tinkering with cars, competing at the highest level and known by everyone including Lord March. Edwin is a regular visitor to Goodwood House at the Festival of Speed and Revival weekends! Ask him sometime, keep- up appearances Edwin.

I competed in many rallies in the early 1960s navigating for many of the people mentioned sliding about on the leather bench seats of many of the bigger luxurious cars or bracing myself and holding on whilst trying to read a map in the Rexine seats of the 850cc Minis or recently introduced Mini Cooper. When lap and diagonal seat belts came out you felt much safer having adjusted the belt to suit as maybe it had previously been occupied by the driver's wife and she may have been a large rather heavy busty lady. The belts were not inertia ones but rather like those in an aircraft often made by Irving too, but they did hold you quite well. Roll cages? never heard of them. Even the safety belts weren't fitted by manufacturers, but keen sporting drivers often had them fitted rather than buy leopard skin imitation seat covers that Sunday drivers tended to buy as extras for their pride and joy that they washed on Sunday mornings.

Rallies were held on Sunday afternoons or sometimes, if a big one it started in the morning,, a series of spot heights, map references, puzzles, crossing electric and power lines or similar clues led cars and crews to a hotel maybe at Lockerbie, Penrith, the Queens Hotel in Keswick market place was one venue where you parked the car right outside in the street. The Queens is now the Bronson Steak House owned by Charles Graves and there is nowhere you could park 20 or more cars right outside without any problem in Keswick market place these days.

Club rallies were really nothing more than treasure hunts in those days, even the RAC Rally was called the rally of the tests and, unless bad weather intervened as it did in 1959 with snow blocking the Tomintoul road in the Scottish Highlands, it was often a leisurely tour around Britain with driving tests at such venues as Blackpool prom. In 1959 a guy called Gerry Burgess in a Ford Zephyr was brave enough or foolish enough to tackle the deep snow blocked route closed by the police, in doing so he managed to get a signature at every control thus allowing him to win the rally but only after many protests by other "works" teams.

Welcome

Welcome to the following new members and we hope that you will enjoy our events and social activities.

Ann Kendrick, Richard Fern and Jacob Fern-Kendrick of Roweltown

Andrew Moss and Steven Hullock of Camerton

James and Margaret Fee of Kells

Richard, Kay and Louise Chalmers of Wigton

Tony and Lynn Whittaker of Dalston

Ralph and Margaret Clark of Southport

For most of you this will be your first magazine and we really hope that you will enjoy reading it.

For any changes or queries about membership please contact

Maggy Bateman on 01697349919

or by email at wmcmembersub@outlook.com

Marshal Force

Marshals are the life blood of our activities

April 5th (F) Tests on the Flying Scotsman at Rowrah (Names to Graeme Forrester on gtfmg@yahoo.co.uk)

April 28th Drive It Day at Dalemain 10.30 - 14.00 (Names to Graeme Forrester on gtfmg@yahoo.co.uk)

Elderly Utterances

The Voice of Experience!

Ron Palmer has his say

The 'Coast to Coast' or C2C is as you might expect a way of getting from one side of England to the other along a challenging route. We are fortunate to live in the area most popular for walking, cycling or running the C2C and participants can travel in either direction. Christine and I recently caught up with some old friends from Guernsey who told us they were planning to walk from St Bees to Robin Hoods Bay in June and we offered to join them on short sections of the route which is around 200 miles in total and will be spread over 18 days. We have in the past taken part in long distance walks such as Hadrian's Wall Walk, Liverpool to Leeds Canal and the Dalesway Walk with these friends but are definitely not up to walking the entire C2C these days – but a short spell, perhaps.

Our counter to these physical exertions is our club's motoring C2C which will take place in September. Full details were emailed to interested members recently and these also appear in the Events section of the club website. You may think September is a long way off but the hotel rooms we have reserved at the finish venue are limited to 40 and will only be held for us until 1st May. After that they may be offered to other guests. So if you are interested in taking part book your accommodation before 1st May, pay the deposits of £25 per person and send in your entry to me. Your event entry cheques will not be banked until September. When you read this there will only be one month left to guarantee availability of the rooms and already we have had a good response.

Charles and I have our start number 81 allocated for the Flying Scotsman which takes place on 5th to 7th April. With the maximum entry of 100 already exceeded the cars will be a sight to behold especially if you are marshalling at Rowrah on the Friday or at Dundrennan on the Saturday. Keith Graham and Sue Hoffman are running at car number 59 in their 1935 Bentley 3.5 VDP and Charles and I will be in the 1937 Bentley 4.25 Derby. On the first day cars will be running in numerical order but the field will be reseeded from the restart on Saturday in order of performance. We hope the weather is kind.

I wasn't a great scholar in my time Carlisle Grammar School but amongst my handful of O levels was Geography and my passion for maps has always meant a lot to me. I rarely leave home without an appropriate OS map in the car and on travels abroad in the past I would always come home with a map of the area visited. None measured up to the quality and detail of our Ordnance Survey maps and only the French Michelin maps get close. Recently I was given by a friend a framed page from the first British road atlas by John Ogilby published in 1675, the year before he died. The double page covers what we know as the old A6 from Garflang (Garstang but no sign of David Marsden on the map) to Carlisle. Only the road in question is shown and is in fact a straight line strip map nicely drawn and later decorated with a colour wash. The distance is recorded as 78 miles and 1 furlong and shown are the borders of Lancashire, Westmoreland and Cumberland. This map is one of 100 road strip maps contained in the first edition and as is common practice many old book have since been subsequently split up and framed for display as works of art.

Ron

Restoration Show



A real rarity, can you name it?



Chairman Peter's new team cars



Another rarity, any ideas?



I wanted to bring this home!



Team Wigton

Our Team Wigton members for 2019 are:

Robert Gate	Historic racing
Toby Cook	BTRDA Autotests
Sam Kirkpatrick	MG racing
Ed & Chris Glaister	Historic saloons
Peter Garforth	Speed events
John Haygarth/Bob Hargreaves	HRCR Historic rallies
Geoff & Maggy Bateman	Targa rallies
Nuala Dowie	Historic Rallies
Charles Graves	Historic Rallies
Malcolm McKay /Tom Forrest	Historic Rallies
John Proctor	Historic Rallies
Doug Carmichael	Historic Rallies
David Wiggins	Speed events
Paul Eastwood	Speed Events
Dave Smith	Speed events.
Malcolm Mounsey	Historic stage rallies

We are open to further nominations, we are a bit thin on stage rallying for example.

These are likely to be the members who will be considered for our External Championship Award which is decided by the committee. The current trophy , the Masons Garages Trophy goes back to the 70s and is now looking a little tired so we are keen to replace it if anyone know of someone who might like to have an award under their name.

Marshalling Thanks

The members and organisers of the Fell Side Auto Club 2019 Northern Classic Trial would like to thank all those members of Wigton Motor Club who helped out with marshalling on the event. Once again a team from WMC provided valuable assistance to enable us to run our national trial for the 17th time and ensure that it was a resounding success. It appears that for the last few years our ability to run a successful trial has been tested both with the effects of severe weather from floods and storms and also from the continuing thinning and harvesting operations within the north Lakes forests. this year saw 6 of our best sections lost to access. Nevertheless we managed to put two old sections back in to use with some hard graft and used two within the Leesrig Farm complex that WMC marshalled.

Classic and vintage trialing within the North Lakes is under pressure with the permanent loss of some sections within the forests and both Fell Side Auto Club and the Vintage Sports Car Club are continuing to work hard to find alternative sections to complement those lost. Any assistance to find such sections would be most gratefully received.

Myke Pocock

Chairman

Fell Side Auto Club

Social Scene

Marian Sloan reports

Visit to Paul Benn's Showroom at Cockermouth

Thursday, April 11th from 19.00

Coffee and refreshments

Films, quiz, WRC cars to view.



Please note this is
on a Thursday

Enzo Ferrari Bio Pic

8pm on **Tuesday** 30 April

at the Kirkgate Centre, Cockermouth

CA13 9PJ.



**Tickets £6 but £4 for WMC
members**

Book online (no booking fee) at
www.kirkgatearts.org.uk

Box office open 10am - 1pm
Mon - Sat. 01900 826448

Inside The Industry

Paul Gilligan has his say

B**T**

I've been trying very hard to mention this subject hardly at all but now it really is the elephant in the room. I'm writing this on March 16th so things will no doubt have changed dramatically by the time you both get to read it, but I thought some feedback on the chaos caused currently for our industry might be interesting.

A few days ago we were contacted by the Fleet Sales Manager of the largest Ford Dealer in the UK, a company we do a fair amount of business with. He told us that he's been told from "on high" that he wasn't under any circumstances to quote a customer for any vehicles that weren't in the UK currently. Ford of course don't make cars or commercials in the UK any more, but almost everything they sell here is manufactured in the EU. And therefore as things currently stand liable to a 10.65% import tariff if brought in after midnight on March 29th. Customers are claiming they have a valid contract, manufacturers are pointing out the small print that says under this circumstance they haven't. Chaos reigns. Audi have told their customers they can cancel, from the same parent company VW have told their customers they can't!

IF, and everything associated with this subject is a big IF, this tariff comes in then clearly good news for those few that still make in the UK, and bad news for those who import from the EU, and their dealers. Of course there will always be those who seek to profit from such confusion. One of our customers was told a few days ago by a major Land Rover Dealer that he needed to order quickly to avoid having to pay the import tariff. Customer was pleased when we confirmed that if the UK left the EU on the 29th Solihull was still part of the UK so this wouldn't apply. Customer ordered anyway, but from us as he didn't like being lied to!

I somehow think I'll be forced to mention this subject again next month sadly?

Geneva Motor Show

This and Frankfurt are by far the two best shows in Europe, I've been lucky enough to attend both in the past and like most people Geneva would be my choice. Both great shows but takes a lot to beat Switzerland in early Spring!

The big news about Geneva broke before the show even opened. Ford, Jaguar Land Rover, Volvo, and Vauxhall wouldn't be exhibiting for the first time in living memory. Vauxhall you can understand as the brand is only sold in the UK, the same cars being sold as Opels in Europe. However Opel didn't exhibit in Geneva either. Ford went so far as to say the Goodwood Festival of Speed was a more effective place for them to exhibit these days, and all the absent companies were at pains to point out that they felt "traditional" motor shows were "less relevant" to younger customers these days. Having said that all except Volvo are currently losing money and cutting jobs so cost saving was no doubt the real reason.

Those who did exhibit put on a great show by all accounts although one friend who attended told me the time had come to rename the Event the "Geneva ELECTRIC Motor Show". There was no doubt that this is what it was all about this year with manufacturers vying to show off their electric offerings, and Mercedes even putting a petrol C200 beside a hybrid S560e limo on the stand with large signs pointing out the CO2 of the limo was 59gr/km, the much smaller C Class 167gr/km. Seems pretty obvious which way we're going doesn't it.

Although at least one lucky motorist isn't following that path. Pride of place on the Bugatti stand was taken by a one off car they have created for a very wealthy client. Christened "La Voiture Noire", literally "The Black Car" the price is anywhere between £10M and £14M plus VAT depending which rumour you believe. Makes Bugatti's "normal" offering which run from £1.5M plus VAT upwards seem positively cheap.

Morgan Sold To Private Equity

Shock news announced at Geneva was the sale of Malvern based Morgan Motor Company to an Italian private equity outfit. Morgan currently employ 200 people to make 750 cars a year being a mix of 3 and 4 wheelers. And they don't do it for nothing, last year they made a profit of £3.2M that's well over £4000 a car. That's shall we say an "unusual" margin in this industry, many volume manufacturers would be happy only to lose £4k a car!

The Italians have taken a majority controlling stake and plan to more than double production whilst protecting Morgan's heritage. Whilst many die hard Morgan fans are very nervous the very same Italian company is a 31% shareholder in Aston Martin and Aston's progress over the last few years has been pretty good?

Lots Happening At Tesla – As Ever

It seems pretty clear I can't get through a month without mentioning Tesla. This month they've announced they are closing all their US showrooms to cut costs. Tesla own all their own dealerships rather than using the normal model of independent franchisees. In total they have around 200 dealerships Worldwide with 80 of these in the US. Tesla are fighting to be able to sell their new smaller car the Model 3 for \$35000 to American customers, and they claim that closing the showrooms will save then 5% of total costs. Many were in very expensive high profile locations (like central Manhattan for example) so this is perhaps credible.

So how do you get a test drive? You don't, but if you buy the car and don't like it you have 7 days and 1000 miles to reject it and they'll take it away and give you a full refund. What happens to Tesla showrooms outside the US hasn't yet been decided, there are 16 in the UK and Ireland. UK buyers for the Model 3 will have to pay a lot more than US price. UK cars will be more highly specified but when the first deliveries start later this year the price will be close to £50000apparently, which is almost double \$35000?

To say that other manufacturers are watching Tesla's "no dealerships" approach with interest is a big understatement. Many observers feel that it's inevitable others will follow as otherwise they simply won't be competitive. One said (chillingly I thought): The fact remains that with a good digital sales and marketing strategy, you no longer need salespeople to sell great products". Hyundai have chosen to sell their new Kona electric car online only in the UK and have so far sold 700 all at full retail price. The cars are sent to the buyer's local dealer who hands it over and currently receives the full profit margin from Hyundai. Don't see that last bit lasting somehow?

Dealers Judge Manufacturers

It's that time of year when the National Franchised Dealers Association (NFDA) publishes the results of their survey of dealer's opinions of the manufacturers they represent. Dealers wishes are pretty simple really. They want to have available great products at sensible prices well marketed so they have the opportunity of making money. Then they want minimal interference from the manufacturer.

Well liked by their dealers currently are Kia, Toyota, Mercedes, Lexus all scoring over 8 out of 10. Mercedes only scored 6.5 last year now 9.0 so they have really changed things around.

Some of the major players disappoint, Ford static at 5.0, VW down from 5.9 to 5.0, Audi down from 5.4 to 4.5 and BMW crashing from 6.0 to 4.4. Fiat/Chrysler occupy 3 of the bottom 4 slots with Fiat on 3.7, Alfa Romeo on 3.5 and Jeep 3.4. Wooden spoon goes to Citroen on 3.3.

The Jungle That's Car Finance

The Finance Conduct Authority (FCA) recently issued a damning report suggesting that car buyers were paying sometimes more than £1000 more than they should on a car loan because dealers and brokers had freedom to set interest rates charged and were increasing these to up their commissions. Well frankly this has been going on for ever, and if the dealer is to be criticised for charging a bit more to boost their profits then surely should be criticised for charging more than cost price for the car? Dealers have to live and pay for all the facilities demanded of them.

Financing a car is infinitely more complex than simply buying one and consumers need to become experts, or consult one if I'm allowed to suggest that?

The Full Monte

So that's used up my space allocation in Startline. For those who want to read the Full Monte version, around twice the length or more, that other clubs get please email me as a gratifying number of members already have.

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Andy's Armchair

Andy Armstrong takes an irrelevant look at motoring and motorsport

When you look at a car magazine and they're doing a road test of a new vehicle they usually quote a residual value as a percentage of the initial cost. This is based on the car being three years old and having covered 36000 miles or 12000 per annum. Now I've never seen a PCP deal advertising more than 10000 a year and some are now down to 8000 so why quote 12 as an average on a three year old car?

Another mystery that I'm sure there's someone out there who can help me with. Why do some dealers have second hand cars standing outside with their boots or hatchback doors open? I was brought up with a father in the motor trade and can never remember this being done half a century and more ago so what's it in aid of?

Moving on to sporting matters and the Formula 1 testing has just finished with Ferrari appearing to have a distinct lead. This is a bit of a change from Mercedes usually heading the field so it could prove an interesting season, with Lewis having to work a deal harder if he's to prevail, quite likely against Leclerc rather than Vettel if the Ferrari pair are allowed to race. At the other end of the grid Williams seem to be in a mess with their new car not being ready for testing until the session was nearly half way through and then being way off the pace when it did appear. It's sad, they're a great team with a 50 year history and season after season they seem to sink further into the mire, mind you it's happened before, you only have to think of names like BRM, Tyrrell and Lotus to realise that heritage and previous success count for nothing in the F1 "bear pit". I hope they can put things to rights but it's starting to look like a very big ask.

I was reading in "Motor Sport" that the lack of free to air coverage of Grand Prix racing is causing consternation for teams and Liberty Media who own the sports commercial rights. As you probably know Sky TV have exclusive live British Coverage up to 2024, (with the exception of our own Silverstone event), but there are serious doubts about their ability to keep audience figures at their current level. Apparently team sponsors and circuit advertisers are taking some convincing that having an audience of only half it's previous size warrants them "splashing out the cash" to tempt viewers with their wares, therefore reducing the overall income of the sport.

Who knows maybe things will change, but one thing's for certain and that is that I won't be paying for Sky coverage and I suspect that I won't be alone in that. I was brought up in the days when there was no F1 on TV and as a kid I developed my obsession with the sport largely through the written word. It's a bit ironic really as it looks to be heading back that way. It would certainly be strange if that by the time I "conk out" we're back with sponsor less cars driving round largely advertisement free tracks watched by "anoraks" who are quite happy to stand in mud and eat a hot dog. You know, maybe it would be a distinct improvement and returning to a point mentioned previously might even enable the likes of Williams to rise up from the financially induced mire that it's presently sunk into.

Ends

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What's On

WMC events and other events of interest

April

- 5th F **Marshalling on the Flying Scotsman Rally** in west Cumbria Contact Graeme on gtfmg@yahoo.co.uk
- 7th S MG Cumbria's Roof of England Challenge , Contact Graeme on gtfmg@yahoo.co.uk
- 11th Th Visit to **Paul Benn's collection of WRC cars**, films and refreshments from 19.00.
WMC Members only
- 14th Su **Autotest at Maryport**. Entry forms on the website.
- 27/28 Pirelli Rally in Kielder
- 28th Su **Drive It Day at Dalemain**. Marshals needed
- 30th Tu **Ferrari Biopic at the Kirkgate Centre** in Cockermouth.

Visit the Facebook page for the latest news or the webpage at
www.wigtonmc.co.uk

M-SPORT CAREERS



ALL VACANCIES CAN BE VIEWED ONLINE AT:

WWW.M-SPORT.CO.UK

To apply for any of these roles, please download an Application and Medical History form from the website and forward it to:

Rozalyn Howell, M-Sport Ltd, Dovenby Hall, Cockermouth, Cumbria, CA13 0PN