

Wigton Motor Club Ltd

# Start Line

Issue 06/19

[www.wigtonmc.co.uk](http://www.wigtonmc.co.uk)

June 2019

## Drive It Day Success



**This year's Drive It Day was a huge success with over 270 cars attending and some £1,600 collected for this year's charities: The Calvert Trust and the NW Air Ambulance. We had a suggested donation of £5 per car and owners were very generous as this figure was exceeded on average. Thanks you all.**

# 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](http://www.wigtonmc.co.uk)

# *Talking Point*

## *Topical Comment from the world of motoring*

The turnout at Drive It Day was really fantastic as was the generosity of car owners for our chosen charities for 2019. It was a great way to start the show season! It's a very different event to the Classic Show in that it's so informal with no classes, clubs areas or awards. Thus you can park your 1970s MG next to a modern super car on one side and a vintage Riley on the other. We are all in the same movement and we need to be meeting, chatting and sharing together. I might know a lot about MGs but it's great to learn more about other marques as well. I did notice that one club always keeps itself to itself and parks away from the rest of the cars and I think they are missing out so much from not mixing.

The turnout for the Ferrari film show at the Kirkgate was very disappointing, given that previous ones we had held there were well supported. It would be interesting to know why people did not come. On the other hand the first pub run of the year got a brilliant entry and there was plenty of good craic at the pub afterwards, just like a club night of old! Perhaps we can try a simple pub meet there in the summer.

Formula W got off to a good start with the British girls doing well and lots of publicity. Many have mixed feelings though as motorsport is one of only two sports where both sexes compete on equal terms. You might feel a bit sorry for the lads in the European F3 championship (roughly the same cars as Formula W) who don't get the same publicity. No doubt the backers of FW were fully aware that 20 attractive lady racers would get plenty of photos and write ups. Who said sexism was dead?

The World Rally Championship is proving to be incredibly close, with all four teams putting in very similar stage times. It's also great to see Elfyn Evans doing well in the M Sport Fiesta and proving himself as a top driver after a difficult 2018.

The rebranding of Rally GB is an interesting idea, some creative thinking to offset the issue of rallies taking place in remote inhospitable places. Let's hope it gets more media, and particular national TV coverage.

The Pirelli Rally bore the brunt of the woes of the BRC with a dismal entry. Marshals spent 12 hours in the forest to see a total of 62 cars pass including the double runs. Add to that trying to get out the stage over badly rutted roads. Many have said "Never again". Where does the BRC go from there?

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

## June Pub Run

**June 5th**

Starts from Mockerkinn lay by A5086 at 18.46

Finish in the Lorton Valley

E mail [kendall.bruce@sky.com](mailto:kendall.bruce@sky.com)

Phone 01946861531, Mob. 07774733409

Booking necessary for food

## Grass Autotest

**June 19th**

**At High Harrington**

**[fiona.tyson@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:fiona.tyson@yahoo.co.uk)**

## Lake District Classic and Targa Rallies

**June 23rd**

**Entry forms are now available**

**with 2 free entries going to novices!**

**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

This could be called the Team Wigton edition because it's all about the Wigton members efforts at the annual Manx Classic speed event in April. I've mentioned a few times that I was going with Paul Eastwood and David Wiggins - in Snotty, an Alfa 33 and the venerable 205 Rallye respectively, but we were also joined by Wigton member Andy Walkinshaw who was at the ferry with a massive VW liveried trailer that opened to reveal.....a 1966 Mini!

The first trauma started at the ferry when staff there reminded Paul and I that we hadn't booked any trailers on – just 3 cars (Snotty, Alfa and a support car), fortunately, after a bit of negotiation we were allowed to bring Paul's car on, towing a trailer with the Alfa on it.

The first event was Sloc hill in the south of the island and the weather was not looking good. In fact the weather was not looking good for any of the 3 events and so it proved. Sloc was damp, turning briefly dry in the afternoon and then into heavy rain. Unfortunately in the brief period of dryness someone managed to roll a Caterham R500 and cause a major stoppage. According to the marshals he was lucky to be alive as he hit a bank at significant speed, rolled the car onto its cage and slid up the road many metres and onto a wall.

I managed a respectable time that was someway short of my best previous (dry) time but struggled controlling the front of the car at speed – I had intended to have a new larger front air dam/spoiler fitted for the event but didn't have time to adapt it and instead went with nothing, leading to a bit of floating at high speed particularly at the top of a windy hill!

The hillclimb up Glen Helen in the middle of the island – nicknamed Creg Willys was day 2 and the weather was very wet first thing. I gave myself a massive scare on the first run of the day by aquaplaning on water at about 70mph at the bottom end of the course. The events on the Isle of Man have some very unforgiving high speed sections between walls and banks and where I briefly lost control was one such place. The weather started to dry up in the afternoon and on the last run I almost equalled my best run in a previous year (when it was dry) and was pipped for the class win by a single second.



The final event, as ever, was Lhergy Fris-sell – the mountain road at Ramsey, and conditions were truly horrific. Torrential rain and high winds thanks to storm Hannah. Things were so bad that as I got to the high speed sections near the top, the wind was so bad I did not feel fully in control of the car – the front end was literally jiggling about all over the road at motorway+ speeds. After the 2<sup>nd</sup> run the event was cancelled – the marshals were in danger of getting hypothermia I think. I once more took 3<sup>rd</sup> place some way behind the 2 local Minis due to my lack of confidence in the car at speed in the wind

- leaving me 3<sup>rd</sup> in class overall on 244.39 seconds. With the event cancelled early, Paul, David and I took the opportunity to visit the Manx motor museum which is an extremely interesting and large pri

vate collection of cars, commercial vehicles and bikes from various eras. Whilst there they encouraged us to park in the display area out the front as you can see from the photo.

David Wiggins had a decent event, ending in 7<sup>th</sup> place in his class (14 in total) – not bad considering the class was for ‘up to 2 litres’ and most cars had 2 litre engines. His final score was 255.23 seconds total. He had a few dramas with an oil leak onto the exhaust from the sump that caused a nasty plume of smoke – he cunningly fixed it by nipping up the sump bolts and then wrapped old coke cans thus stemming the flow of oil slightly and most importantly stopping it soaking into the wrap and burning! I very much doubt the small drips of oil he left caused anyone trouble given the huge oil slicks some of the vintage cars were leaving.

Paul Eastwood came 11<sup>th</sup> in the same class as David with a final score of 265.18 seconds on his first event driving (as opposed to just drinking and pretending to help). His car ran pretty faultlessly but suffered the same issue as David in that 1500cc is a bit short of the 2 litres most of the other competitors had so 11<sup>th</sup> place was very respectable.

Andy Walkinshaw did well in his Mini coming 2<sup>nd</sup> in his class (of 4) and only just missing out on top spot to James Mylchreest whose family own the garage that sponsors the event and who has competed many times before. His final total was 242.96 so he also narrowly pipped me for best Wigton driver (due entirely to my shockingly bad performance at Lhergy on day 3!).

If anyone is thinking about doing this event in future, I an highly recommend it; all 3 events are long and in places challenging – with Wigton now being an invited club, members can save the £15 fee to join the Manx Motor Racing club. I probably won’t be doing it next year because we are going to see how difficult walking Hadrian’s wall end to end with a hangover is, but 2021 is looking like a strong possibility!

Peter

## Can You Help?

If you are going to any shows in the region over the next few months we are looking for volunteers to give out entry forms for the Classic and Motorsport Show for us? Please contact Graeme to get sets of forms.

gtfmg@yahoo.co.uk

# Welcome

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

Eric and Lynn Little of Carlisle

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 [wmcmemsub@outlook.com](mailto:wmcmemsub@outlook.com)**

The Stocktonian Targa will now be running on Saturday 14th September due to another event in Hamsterley forest. Afternoon start running to early evening with over 23 miles of gravel tests on only the best roads non rough stuff!!! Regs out in July and max 50 car entry....

## Marshal Force

**Marshals are the life blood of our activities**

**Marshals needed for the Grass Autotest at High Harrington 19th**

**Lots of marshals needed for the Lake District Classic and Targa  
on the 23rd in the Penrith area.**

**Contact: David Agnew      01946 841455**

**[DAVIDWAGNEW@aol.com](mailto:DAVIDWAGNEW@aol.com)**

# Elderly Utterances

## The Voice of Experience!

Ron Palmer has his say



Although the Palmer family wasn't awash with money in the '40s and '50s my dad was a great motor enthusiast and worked for Shell Mex and BP which was the marketing organisation for those two well known fuel companies. In the recovering post war days the company produced some excellent marketing books each year publicising the successes in motor sport of those using their fuels. They weren't alone and soon BMC and Castrol followed suit. With each new publication, copies of each found their way into our home. I eagerly devoured the contents and the gods of racing and

rallying became well known and familiar to me. These were the days before TV was a common fixture of each home and only Pathe News at the cinema gave us any footage of motor racing. The quality of these publications was excellent and despite heavy usage they have survived the rigours of my ownership over the past 60 or 70 years and I still refer back to them from time to time. The oldest of

the 29 books I have of this type is the 'Shell Successes 1951' and it is obvious that Ferrari used their products and X-100 Motor Oil was the chosen lubricant which we could all buy at the local garage. The first success listed that year was the Syracuse Grand Prix on 11<sup>th</sup> March where Ferrari took all the podium places and Villoresi won at 90.70 mph. Villoresi was clearly some driver as on 29<sup>th</sup> April despite having a bad crash on the event he won the Mille Miglia in a 4.1 litre Ferrari 'Inter-America' averaging 75.52 mph, lubricated of course by Shell X-100 Motor Oil. The subject of '50s



and '60s motor sport came back to me recently when I took advantage of the Wigton MC supported film showing at The Kirkgate, Cockermouth of 'Ferrari : Race to Immortality'. There were seven club



members plus two other attendees who watched the film in splendid isolation but where was everyone else? Wherever they were they missed an unforgettable racing film and I would urge anyone with a drop of petrol in their veins to watch it next time it appears. Brilliant.

Please forgive me the opportunity of airing blatant advertising for some forthcoming club events with which I'm involved.

Firstly our annual **Breakfast Meet** takes place on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> July at Lingholm, Portinscale by Derwentwater courtesy of the enthusiastic owner David Seymour. Arrive from 9am and depart from 11am. Great coffee and breakfast food is available at this wonderful, picturesque location. Please treat the display lawn area with respect and enter and leave the area from the upper car park in front of the house. Further details on the Wigton MC website events section. There is no charge for attendance but please let me know if you intend to join us. [ronpalmer777@hotmail.com](mailto:ronpalmer777@hotmail.com) or phone 01228 575153

The **Rose and Thistle** one day tour takes place on the Saturday before our Dalemmain Show, the 17<sup>th</sup> August. This is about 125 miles with familiar venues for the start and finish and somewhere new for lunch. I guarantee interesting roads with some of them new and most very quiet and traffic free. We usually get 60 to 80 cars on this one so get your entries in early. My apologies if you get more than one reminder about this event or if you have already entered. Full details are on the Wigton MC website events section where you can print off the entry forms.

The **Coast to Coast** one day run takes place on Friday 20th September and is a new event for the club. Start is from St Bees and the finish at Raven Hall between Whitby and Scarborough. Entries are

building well and more than half of our reserved rooms already taken. To guarantee a room please enter and book quickly. Full details on the Wigton MC website events section.

Ron

Our friends in **Spadeadam Motor Club** are celebrating their 60th anniversary this year. We have been invited to their:

## **60th Anniversary Road Run**

Based in Brampton Cumbria

on the 2nd June 2019

Entry Fee of £50.00 to include

Sausage/Bacon Roll-Tea/Coffee at the start

Light Lunch-Rally Board & Road Book

# Rallying Call

## Historic and Targa Awards:

### Remaining rounds:

2	June	30th	Lake District Classic	WMC
3	July	14th	Northern Dales	H&DMC
4	August	11th	Blue Streak Classic	SMC
5	September	14th	Hamsterley Historic	S&DMC
6.	Sept	22nd	Doonhamer Classic	SoSCC
7	October	13th	Solway Autumn Classic	WMC



Entry forms were circulated to all local clubs of those days, some of course no longer exist these days. Those circulated were, 750 motor club, Cumberland Sporting car club, Furness and district, Hexham, Wigton and others who had competitive members, Wigton motor club had several really competitive members among them Peter Huntington whose family owned a garage and Brian Fearon of Fearon's Flowers

Elaine Graham a great friend of mine, was made rally secretary because they had a telephone in their house so she was an ideal choice as not that many people other than businesses had phones in those days. She was the daughter of Ron Graham a prominent WCMC member who was another local driving instructor, certainly mobile phones and the internet were many decades away.

Many of you will know Elaine, she and her husband Michael Burns have run their kitchen and bedroom furnishing business "Modern Homes" in Workington and also in Spain for many years now, previously they had Burns' pet shop in Central Square Workington and Elaine had a bridal shop for a while.

Entries poured in and we had one of the biggest number of cars starting that first rally than we ever imagined, we were overwhelmed and more than a bit apprehensive I have to say.

I did the opening car in my recently acquired Downton tuned Mini Cooper CAO629B, Elaine in the passenger seat and a very young kid from Branthwaite sitting in the back seat, that kids name was Malcolm Wilson, no doubt you will definitely have heard that name before, it was his first real taste of rallying and he loved it.

A fantastic number of people turned out to marshal throughout the night or competed in the rally, many competitors from those days are still involved in Motorsport in one way or another, Russel Grant, Charles Graves, Eddie Farrell, Bob Martin, Ron Palmer, Robin Murray, Edwin Cook, Harry Moody, Pearl Wilson, John Taylor, Eric Atkinson, (East Rd garage) John Hunter, Alan Smith, Ernie Harrison, Robert Gate are just a few that immediately spring to mind.

As opening car I was running 15 mins ahead of the first car setting the marshals clocks at each control but my car developed a slight misfire that got progressively worse so keeping ahead of the first car was becoming increasingly difficult. I managed to get to the halfway petrol halt but only just ahead of the first car but I realised as my car got worse this could not be kept up.

Fortunately, at Watsons garage a guy called John Harkness from Carlisle had turned up in his 1293 cc Cooper S just to spectate still in his slippers, he was a very quick driver and promptly agreed to take me to do the opening car so I abandoned Elaine and young Malcom at the garage much to Malcolm's disappointment and John and I made it to the finish without further problems. It later turned out that my car had burnt out an inlet valve.

Most of the trophies for winning events were donated by generous members of the club or by descendants as memorial trophies; the Sinclair cup and the Arthur Brown Trophy were two I remember. I had decided I wanted something with a bit more competition history so I wrote to the competition manager at Boreham in Essex where Ford works cars were built and asked for a component from a works car. I received a letter from Fords competition manager with a gear cog which he said was an uprated higher ratio 2nd gear cog from Roger Clarks Monte Carlo Cortina GT. The first production Cortina's had a low 2nd gear this was modified very quickly in production cars but the "works cars" had pre production up rated higher 2nd gears fitted, I had this gear cog suitably mounted and called it the "Roger Clark Ford Trophy".

The rally was a great success and other rallies used a similar format for night rallies until the police started using radar or following rally cars over the "competitive" sections. Hardknott and Wrynose passes were favourite sections but occasionally sheep were killed and one farmer in particular started putting rocks in the road just over a blind brow near Ulpha so issues like this signalled the end of an era, rallying changed again and moved on to using the forestry roads which were readily available at the time for reasonable cost. The reasonable cost probably lasted another decade before charges were

really hiked up and stately home owners and forestry companies started charging spectators serious money to spectate. In the early days, cars didn't do too much damage to the forestry tracks. I was car 220 on the 1974 RAC and conditions weren't too bad at all even after the passage of 250 cars on those RAC rallies.

The advent of 4 wheel drive cars and tyres with a really aggressive tread plus lots of power can now destroy the roads after the passage of only 10 cars. Isn't it time for a rethink limiting tyre choice and perhaps tyre width. What to do about 4 wheel drive is another totally different question, obviously many 4 wheel drive cars have been built at great cost therefore banning 4 wheel drive would decrease their value immensely making them virtually unusable and unsaleable so not an easy or likely decision, rallies are used by manufacturers to develop better systems so I don't know what will happen in the future as I haven't a crystal ball.

It's a great pity but forest rallying in a competitive car isn't affordable for the average clubman any more and with legislation stacked up against petrol and diesel engined vehicles watching silent electric cars won't appeal to the masses I'm sure. Many sprint hill climbs won't accept electric cars because if one is involved in an accident it has to be quarantined, only specialist marshals with intensive training can touch them so it can mean a meeting being abandoned hence the refusal to accept their entries so surely electric cars can not have any chance of helping the average clubman to compete in motorsport.

Who knows what will happen in the next 20 or 40 years, it certainly doesn't appear as things are at the moment to be bringing the same amount of fun affordable to ordinary people as I have had but I hope I can be proved wrong as motorsport has given untold pleasure to a great many people and provided countless jobs over many decades.

This country has been at the pinnacle of world motorsport in every type, racing, rallying and rally-cross. One of the top guys in this ultra competitive sport has excelled as a driver, team manager, innovator and job creator this guy being Malcolm Wilson of course. It has been a pleasure and privilege to have known him from an early age watching his from an early age watching his sheer doggedness and determination succeed against all odds, still pursuing excellence, developing and expanding.

I just don't know how he keeps it up but best wishes to him, its guys like Malcolm we need to drive motorsport into the future.

Keith Thomas

## Moota Update

Did you know that Moota means "meeting place?" Road planings are being delivered and the last of the soil bund removed. The next step is the polished concrete floor and the roller doors plus the outside drains.. After that it's all inside and we will be hoping that members will be able to offer some time.





# Inside The Industry

## Paul Gilligan has his say

### Hard Times For Britain's Largest Car Dealer

Pendragon, the biggest car dealer in the UK recently announced their 2018 financial results – a stonking loss of £44.4M. Revenues declined by 2.4% but the company chose, or perhaps were forced by their auditors, to write down the value of their assets by almost £96M. In simple terms their dealerships both as businesses and as properties are simply not worth what they were. Pendragon has been pursuing a strategy of reducing the number of prestige franchise dealerships they have because of what they see as the excessive demands from manufacturers for very expensive facilities. In particular they have been moving out of Jaguar and Land Rover. They operate a total of 17 BMW dealerships currently and industry rumours say they would like to be rid of all of these. What putting that lot on the market would do to the value of BMW dealerships in the UK is pretty obvious!

Pendragon now operate a total of 32 used car only facilities under their “Car Store” brand.

This hasn't been entirely successful for them, profits for the first quarter of 2019 were £1M below budget and the Car Store boss has been placed on “gardening leave”.

Another large dealer group, Vertu Motors declared itself “pleased” that its 2018 profits were “only” 17% down on the previous year.

These results explain the gradual but continual reduction in the number of new car dealers in the UK. In particular the smaller rural dealers are either closing or walking away from the new car business. 20 years ago there were 12 Ford car showrooms in North, East and West Cumbria operated by 7 different owners. Now there are 5 with 4 owners. Nationally most of the family owned and operated dealers have disappeared placing the lion's share of the business in the hands of the large groups, resulting in less competition, less consumer choice and many would say lower standards of customer service.

### Electric Cars, Good News and Bad

The University of Cologne has just produced a report that contends that electric cars won't in fact result in a reduction of emission in Europe. In fact quite the opposite, the report says that electric vehicles “produce significantly higher levels of CO2 emissions than diesels”! This is due to the significant amounts of energy used in mining the lithium, cobalt and manganese required to produce batteries. Producing the battery pack for a Tesla Model 3 results in between 11 and 15 tonnes of CO2 pollution, The pack will last for 10 years during which the car will travel on average 94000 miles so the result is 116-156 grams of CO2 per mile. Then of course you have to add the pollution from the power stations that generate the electricity required. Until all power is generated by renewable or nuclear the total emissions for the Tesla are actually 249-280 grams of CO2 per mile. This is of course far higher than most petrols or diesels!

The study concludes that the correct route lies in methane powered petrol engines and/or hydrogen motors. As both my regular readers know I've long contended that hydrogen is the correct answer and that electric is a very expensive blind alley.

Further bad news is another forecast that the precious metals required to make the batteries for electric cars are in short supply and therefore will increase dramatically in price over the next few years. About two thirds of the cost of an electric car is made up by the batteries, so the results are obvious.

The good news if there is good news is that order books have opened for what I judge to be the first REAL electric car, the VW ID. REAL because prices will start at around £23000 and have a range of 205 to 340 miles depending on which version you buy. The ID is just the start of a range of electric VWs based on the same technology, and of course we will see versions from Seat, Skoda and Audi fairly soon. So if electric cars are a good idea, which may be doubtful, here's the start of ones that tick all the boxes.

Next task is to convince motorists. A recent survey of 2000 car buyers showed that while concerns about range and costs continue to be common buyers have other worries. Almost 20% think they risk electrocution when driving an electric car, and a similar number think you can't take one **through** a car wash. One in eight believe the car will fail in heavy rain and around 10% think they're banned from motorways in the UK!

## **Tesla**

While political journalists must be very grateful for Boris and Nigel as reliable sources of something to write about, I feel the same about Tesla boss Elon Musk. In the last few weeks he's reversed his decision to close all Tesla's dealerships. Then having announced a tiny profit for the last quarter of

2018 and predicted that the company's loss-making days were over he was forced to report a thumping loss for the first quarter of this year. Next he promised to produce a fleet of taxis by the middle of 2020 that won't need a driver. Independent experts responded that neither the technology nor the regulatory framework would be remotely ready until years later. Finally last week having promised investors Tesla was now cash positive with no further need to raise additional funding he was forced to go to the markets for a mere \$2.7 BILLION of fresh capital.

I was recently talking to a company with a large fleet of cars who are considering going electric. They made it clear that they wouldn't consider Teslas, simply because they felt they couldn't trust Mr. Musk. Not surprising really?

## **Changing Face of Vehicle Auctions**

I recently enjoyed a long lunch (thankfully I was travelling by train!) with an old friend who's just retired after over 30 years in the vehicle auction business. His reflections on how things had changed in that period I at least found very interesting. When he first started everything was sold as seen and it was up to the buyer to decide if the vehicle was right or wrong. Now almost all cars and vans are offered with a full description, service history etc, and buyers demand they are "graded" in terms of quality and the amount of remedial work that may be required before they can be offered for retail sale.

This has enabled the growth in online auctions where a buyer can sit in his office hundreds of miles from the auction site and bid on his computer. One of the results is a significant reduction in seasonal trends. Whereas 4x4s were worth much more in winter and convertibles more in summer that is much less the case now. Also regional differences in values are less pronounced now buyers can bid from Scotland at an auction in London and vice versa. However some truths remain. Small automatics still make more money in the South East, diesels in the North and rural areas. And electric cars are very much in demand in London, but not elsewhere.

My friend predicted that by 2020 80% of vehicle auction transactions will be completed online. Like many other effects of the internet, many will regret the loss of the physical part of the process.

## **Remember Road Tax?**

This was first imposed to do what it says, be a tax designed to raise money to be used to provide new and improved roads. Of course that was a long time ago. Now it's called Vehicle Excise Duty and the money just goes into the vast Government pot to be spent on goodness knows what. NOT potholes, that's for sure! Recently Highways England quietly announced that 10% of the road building schemes they had promised as part of the biggest upgrade of the network for a generation could be scrapped for financial reasons. A further third of planned improvements are to be delayed, some by as much as 5 years.

## **Official MPGs Still Inaccurate**

What Car recently reported that the average car now consumes around 5% more fuel than the new WLTP figures suggest. Worst offender is the Volvo V60 D4 which consumes over 23% more fuel than the official figures suggest with the Ford Fiesta 140ps at 21% more.

## **VW "Dieselgate" Rumbles On**

You might be forgiven for thinking this was all over a long time ago but sadly not. Recently Porsche were fined 535M Euros by German prosecutors for neglecting its legal duties to comply with emissions regulations. Meanwhile former VW Chief Executive Martin Winterkorn has been charged with fraud in Germany on the basis he was aware of the cheating 16 months before it became public.

If you'd like to receive the full version of this article which Startline has insufficient space for please email me.

Paul Gilligan

[pg@gilliganvehicleconsulting.co.uk](mailto:pg@gilliganvehicleconsulting.co.uk) [www.gilliganvehicleconsulting.co.uk](http://www.gilliganvehicleconsulting.co.uk)

07785 293222

# Andy's Armchair

## Andy Armstrong takes an irrelevant look at motoring and motorsport

I'm writing this as I've nothing else to do.

I should have been on my way to Donington for the BTCC qualifying day but thanks to the desperate weather forecast it doesn't seem worth while to be honest. I must be getting soft in old age. Anyway, as if the above isn't bad enough I'm now in the position of having to make a decision about 15 June as there's a clash between the saloons at Croft or the Wolds Trophy at Caldwell so it's hard to pick where to be. Having said that there probably won't be a choice as being June there'll probably be snow! I suppose I could just stay at home and watch Le Mans instead on the television, talk about a sporting overdose.

If anyone ever reads these ramblings they might remember that last month I was making tongue in cheek comments about the rich being the only ones allowed to have cars travelling at over 70 miles per hour. Well for once my predictions appear to be coming true, as Volvo has announced that in the not too distant future all their cars will be restricted to a maximum of 112 mph. Now this is obviously better than the 70 but hang on a minute, this won't apply to their Polestar brand which can carry on unrestricted. When asked a spokesman simply said it wouldn't fit in with the brand image or business plan I suspect what he actually meant was that the top end customers wouldn't wear it. So I was right for once.

The other week Autosport carried a headline claiming Jaguar had had its first big international win for 30 odd years. Great news I hear you say, but hang on, we're talking about one win in Formula E in a chassis that has nothing to do with Jaguar other than it's got their name written on the side of it. Granted the company have built the engine and battery parts which can provide a slow car with a life span of 45 minutes before it conks out so I suppose that's something, but not much.

Never mind, if you take the above to its logical conclusion Lotus never won a Grand Prix, Coventry Climax and Cosworth did. Tyrrell didn't win a race, March, Williams, McLaren etc were all total failures, and suddenly BRM who did build its own engines, usually bad ones, (think V16 and H16) becomes the most successful British Grand Prix team in history. Put it another way, further proof that statistics can be made to prove anything.

After writing the above and noting down a few famous constructors my mind turned to variety in motor sport. In a Formula E race the only thing that visually differentiates cars are the colours they're painted. Likewise in most championships to be honest, just think if you take out the saloons on a BTCC weekend you only actually see 5 different cars (Porsche, Ginetta large and small, Cleo and Formula 4), all beautifully presented but all identical to every car they're competing against. On the other hand the saloon car field has a big variety with cars of all shapes and sizes racing against one another. You can't help feeling that it's this which keeps the crowd involved following their favourite manufacturers and as a consequence coming back for more.

And finally, I bumped into John Willis, my old driver, at Croft the other week. He's still ultra keen, even keen enough to see if I wanted to make a comeback to the land of fear and projectile vomiting. I didn't! In all honesty he's safe enough, but don't expect his advancing years to have blunted his love of speed. If you're a decent stage rally co-driver (don't have to be good, he put up with me) and can help with expenses he might just like to hear from you.

AA.

# What's On

## WMC events and other events of interest

### June

2nd	SMC	60th Anniversary Run
5th	WMC	Pub Run
9th	KLMC	Barbon Clubman's Hill Climb
10th	WCMC	Autotest
16th	SMC	Grass Autotest
16th	Rotary	Classic Show at Grasmere
19th	WMC	Grass Autotest at High Harrington
23rd	WMC	Lake District Classic Rally

### July

3rd	WMC	Pub Run
7th	WMC	Lingholm Breakfast Meet
24th	WMC	Grass Autotest at Branthwaite.

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