

Wigton Motor Club Ltd

Start Line

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www.wigtonmc.co.uk

August 2019

Great Progress at The Motor House



The building at Moota is now officially “The Motor House” and has its own post code. Here we see the team of volunteers putting in the first section of the concrete floor on July 17th. The electric was also connected on the same day. By the time you read this the floor will be completed and polished. There is still plenty to do inside and it would be great to have more volunteers!

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

Motorsport is fairly unique in that it needs at least may, if not more, organisers and marshals than it has participants. When many of us started in motorsport that was taken as a done thing, indeed there was a club rule that if you won an autotest, trial or 12 car rally, you had to organise it the following year. Sadly in all areas of our sport that seems to be changing. Commercialisation is partly to blame, arrive and drive racing and rallying run by series rather than clubs means competitors arrive, get in the car compete and leave immediately afterwards without ever being part of the motorsport community.

The late Barry Williams and David Leslie both made a point of marshalling at least once a season to show solidarity and appreciation but also to see what like is like on the other side of the banking.

As a club we do better than most but generally there is a pool of perhaps 20 people who help in various ways at most of our events. Marshalling is fun and a great way to learn about the sport. Not only do we help on our own events but at other local clubs' events and even those that visit the county.

There is a saying that you only get back what you put in and that applies to all sports and pastimes. I would ask every member to try and marshal for one day in a year. We have three significant rallies and the Classic Weekend to man, plus the smaller autotests/autosolos. With well over 700 members we can cover them easily with everyone giving just one day or event.

We have the Classic and Motorsport Show coming up this month and the Solway in October so why not put them in your diary now? If you are coming to the Show, you can lend a hand for a couple of hours as we have rotas on the main jobs.

We have vacancies for a couple of official positions in the Club. We need someone to take on the role of Membership Secretary, to update the membership database and send our membership cards to new members. We also need a championship scorer to look after the various club championships.

If you are interested please contact any committee member.

GTF

Wigton Motor Club

Cumbria Classic & Motorsport Show

Sunday, 18th August

11 am until 4.30 pm

Dalemain

By Ullswater (A592, 2 miles from M6 J40)

**Feature Anniversaries of : Bentley, Citroen,
Capri, Mini and MX5**

Around 800 Classic Cars and One Make Clubs,

Autotesting and Motorsport displays

Autojumble and trade stands;

Discounted admission to the Mansion and Gardens

Refreshments & Bar

Adults £7.50 Under 16s free!

Free parking! Dogs Welcome

Supporting the Calvert Trust and NW Air Ambulance

No entries accepted on the day

Forthcoming Club Events

Drive In Club Night

at the

Greyhound at Bothel (beside the A595)

Wednesday August 7th from 20.00

Bring your cherished car or bike

Rose and Thistle Challenge Tour

August 17th

Entry forms on the website.

Possibly a few places left if you contact Ron immediately

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 think the LDC went quite well this year, as deputy clerk of the course to Paul Eastwood (clerk) I put in a fair few hours doing things like mapping and sorting trophies and driving the route but it was a useful learning experience. Paul and I are aware of a few minor issues that we can improve on next year...the catering was acceptable but not as good as it should have been and some of that is down to it being booked via a third party. Now we've had direct contact with the guy we are confident we will get what we need next year. We are looking at some new tests too – this is now the big difficulty because most places don't want the hassle of an event on their land or round their buildings, so if anyone knows of anywhere that might be willing in the Penrith area please get in touch.

It was the Barbon national hillclimb last weekend and I managed to mostly get Snotty sorted for it. A new steering arm, rack and a quick hammer at some of the bodywork put things into reasonable order. Certainly all the wheels appeared to be pointing in the right direction and it worked....I did notice at higher speeds the rear felt wayward and not quite right – apparently the rear wheels were toeing out and there was not enough adjustment to fix it and fixing the adjustment was going to take more time than I had by the time I realised it was a thing. This still needs to be sorted but I wasn't going to miss out on Barbon simply because of a dodgy rear!

The event was massively over-subscribed and my partner in crime Paul Eastwood was on a reserve list up until a few days before when, presumably, someone crashed or broke down on another event and pulled their entry. In a total change from June, the weather was warm and dry and apart from even worse chaos in the paddock than normal, all was well. A couple of fairly big crashes slowed the day down and with the larger than normal field and the national championship run offs it was a late finish. Despite the rear of Snotty preventing me going quite as hard at the course as I have done in the past I managed to sneak a win, although I was almost a second down on my time last year (also in the dry). Paul was in second place in the same class for most of the day but his Alfa was having an Italian car day and threw up a number of problems including a misfire. By the end of the day he had slipped to fourth place behind a Mini and a Jaguar D-type replica (that was very nice even though I'm not much of a Jag fan).

David Wiggins was also there in his venerable Peugeot 205 competing in the road car class (as opposed to classics) and he managed to come second behind a fairly serious looking Mini. It's been many years since I last bothered to watch the fastest cars go up a hillclimb but with the ice cream van parked near the main straight Paul, Wiggy and I went for some cold refreshment and watched the first run off. The speed of the top cars was truly breath taking – the winner of the first one was a carbon fibre single seater with a 2.5 litre turbo charged ex Le Mans car engine in it putting out 700bhp and it accelerated so quickly I couldn't move my phone fast enough to keep up when I tried to video it. How anyone can cope with that level of speed and acceleration on a narrow short track is incredible. Seeing the fast cars has made me pine for a single seater again....and I've started looking...I may yet change my mind but having used Snotty for 10 years I could be due for a change for next year. The Alfa, lovely as it is, may have to make way for a race car the way I feel right now. Applying rational man logic to it, I will save on insurance, road tax and MOT....I'm sure even my wife would agree it's a sensible idea!! I won't be moving Snotty on of course – whenever I moot that idea everyone tells me I can't and it's too much a part of me....that and the huge sum of money I've spent (wasted!) on it over the years.

Peter

Championship News

Gates/Protyre Historic Awards:

The next round is the Blue Streak Rally run by SMC and then in September we have both the Stocktonian and the Doonhammer. An updated points table will be issued shortly.

Club Championship:

There are no competitive club events in August but there is a demonstration autotest at the Show.

Adverts

Barn Storage: With the WMC caravan and equipment moving out, here is now space for up to four vehicles or trailers. It's most suitable for long term storage. Cars are £20 a month and trailers £30. Contact Graeme for details. gtfmg@yahoo.co.uk

Fuchs Silkolene 20/50 Oil in 4 litre cans. £14.50 a can. Two for £28. Contact Graeme on gtfmg@yahoo.co.uk

Jottings

Ian Callum has retired after 20 years as Jaguar's Design Director. He styles some great looking cars for Jaguar and even made SUVs look good! He also styles the Aston Martin DB9 and vanquish and also in his earlier days the Escort Cosworth. He is moving on to other projects he says. Aston Martin perhaps?

Scottish stage rallying is suffering a loss of entries with events being called off and others running at a loss. A crisis meeting is to be held this month.

M Sport have announced their new Fiesta r1 cars, ideal for beginners. Looks lovely, as does the price of £55K. Not many young professionals or mechanics have that sort of money!

Brian Kinghorn has stepped down as main organiser of the Pirelli Rally (Tour of Cumbria as it was), after 40 years involvement. Well done Brian. Where that leaves the rally now remains to be seen with the dire straits of the BRC at the moment.

With the actual building of The Motor House completed we move on to the internal fittings. We are looking for an electrician to wire it up and some interval wall building. Any volunteers?

Lakeland Trial

Many of you will have marshalled, spectated or even competed on the VSCC Lakeland Trial which has taken place every November since 1968 in and around Lorton, Whinlatter and Wythop forests and up at Honister quarry.

A full entry of 100 cars built prior to 1930 tackle unbelievably steep and slippery slopes on forestry commission and privately owned land providing great entertainment to the many enthusiasts that come out to watch or marshal.

The skill of the drivers and the toughness of the vintage cars has to be seen to be believed because Bugattis, Bentleys, Model A Fords, Rileys, Lea Francis, Chrysler and seemingly dozens of Austin 7s can be seen tackling rough sections then scurrying from hill to hill finally ending up at the Wheatsheaf Inn in Lorton where marshals receive free drinks and results are worked out and announced.

This event was started in 1968 and run by Dick Smith, his family and helpers for over 50 years, organisation then passed on to other people but it started to unravel rather because fewer locals with intimate knowledge of the area weren't involved. Now the VSCC have sought to redress this they have put out an appeal for other motor clubs to get on board and help in whatever way people feel they can.

Rather over the top health and safety rules for the past two or three years prevented drivers from walking the sections if they wanted to and spectators were banned from the sections, this has now been done away with, spectators are very welcome to enjoy seeing the cars providing they act sensibly although the VSCC would much prefer people to sign on as marshals and be covered by their insurance.

Trials secretary Andrew Tarring came up recently and met locals to sound out what support was available, he was very pleased that tremendous support was indeed promised, about 25 people turned up the meeting he called and many others e mailed, phoned or sent their desire to help with the event.

He wishes to involve all local clubs so as David Rushton who many of you will know has agreed to be clerk of the course I have agreed to compile lists of people willing to help in whatever way they can.

Individuals have come forward willing to marshal, do recovery or tow cars out of sections, offers from people who are experts in radio communications, doctors and first aiders have come in so whatever you can offer we want to hear from you.

Send your e mail address and details to Andrew Tarring at the VSCC address shown or alternatively send them to me and I will pass details on.

You will then be kept informed of all happenings directly from the VSCC office.

Don't worry if you haven't marshalled before, you will be put with an experienced set of marshals but if various motor clubs wish to take charge of a complete hill then they will do their best to arrange this .

The trial takes place on Saturday 9th November but all the sections are set out the day before so if you are available on the Friday please volunteer to help set up, many club members such as Edwin Cook have done this for years, I understand they put on a meal at the Wheatsheaf when the sections have been set up so that sounds a really good idea.

Can you help ? then contact VSCC office or myself preferably by e mail.

Keith Thomas

Marshal Force

Marshals are the life blood of our activities

Classic & Motorsport Show

August 18th

Email Graeme on gtfmg@yahoo.co.uk

Branthwaite Grass Autotest



1st



OA Peter Wright

1st FWD PCA Geoff Ray

1st FWD AT Gary Stamper

1st RWD PCA Phil Hodgson

1st RWD AT Bob Hargreaves

1st Junior Sam Trotter

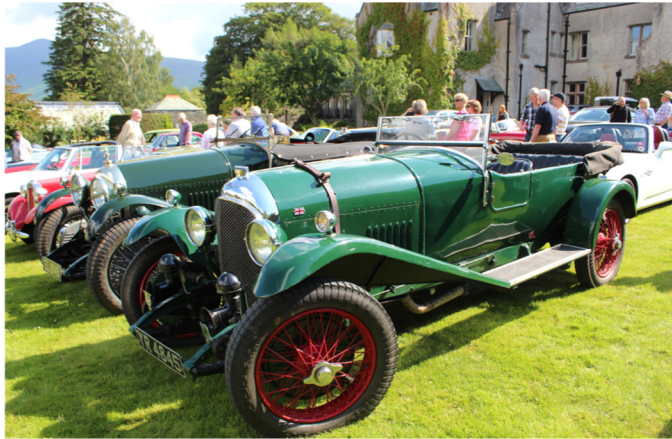
1st lady Jacqui Raine

Thanks to all the marshals and to Ann for the buffet.

Elderly Utterances

The Voice of Experience!

Ron Palmer has his say



The Breakfast Meet at Lingholm of July 7th was most enjoyable with numbers showing a steady increase over recent years and topping the 60 mark for the first time. The quality and age mix was superb and include at least four WO Bentleys and another few Derby and post war models. The venue of the front lawn of Lingholm House is splendid and the weather on the day and in the days before was dry with the grass in perfect condition for our event and we were able to leave it as we found it. Mine host David Seymour had an unfortunate clash of dates and was ab-

sent this year but we are indebted to him for the venue and access to the super Lingholm Kitchen only a few paces away from the lawn.

Contrast this to a report coming through as I write this concerning another Car Meet in Stevenage on a Thursday evening where two speeding cars collided and speared off into the assembled spectators injuring sixteen of them who were hospitalised, some with serious injuries. There is sufficient amateur camera phone footage on record to tell the truth of what happened at this event. Said the organisers 'it was planned (on Face Book) as a static display of cars and the driving wasn't part of it'. Well would you believe it all those lowered suspensions, noisy exhausts, tuned engines and heavy tints are only for static display and tyre kicking. The police are apparently under strength and unable to police the driving, that is until now after the damage is done. So, no marshals, no crowd control, no organisation, a lack of common sense and rather too much testosterone or maybe even other substances?

My continuing admiration for David Agnew, Roger Pope, John Sloan and all who have worked hard on the Moota development, which is approaching completion now. Fuller details will no doubt appear elsewhere in Startline but if you haven't seen the progress take time out to see what they have achieved and volunteer to Marian for painting duties of the steelwork.

Entries for the Rose and Thistle on 17th August have now topped the 60 mark so if you are interested we can take more but only until 7th August when numbers need to be finalised for catering and printing. Full details and entry forms appear on the Wigton MC club website events section.

Ron

OUTSTANDING SERVICE FROM STEVE BENNETT AT SABELT.

Although I had been aware I needed a new spec helmet since last October, as usual I left it until the last minute to do something about it basically because I wanted to try one on as they are expensive; they start at just under £300 and I wasn't aware of anywhere in Cumbria I could try one on.

However, after enquiring on Facebook, several people posted saying Steve Bennett from Sabelt, which is based at Flusco industrial estate near Penrith, was brilliant and he sold helmets, Hans devices, seats and in fact lots of motorsport equipment.

A quick phone call to check he was in saw me off to his unit near Penrith to try on helmets.

He doesn't normally keep full face ones in stock as he specialises in rally helmets with intercoms, however he fixed me up with a nice new open helmet that fitted well without any problem. However, when I returned home my goggles wouldn't fit properly and my wife thought it too modern looking for my car, Barbon was now looming much nearer, mild panic was setting in.

After deliberating for ages, a phone call to Steve at 4pm in the afternoon and he assured me he would get me a full face one for next day, sure enough a new helmet was delivered to my door before 10am the very next morning all the way from Ireland. Unfortunately, different manufacturers size helmets differently and the helmet was too tight, oh dear Barbon almost upon us, even bigger panic and much embarrassment.

Another phone call to Steve and he assured me again another one would be delivered the next day, sure enough the courier was at my house before 10am again this time the helmet fitted perfectly. Steve could not have been nicer or more efficient, he never grumbled at all and when I took the other helmets back. He showed me around his vast stock of motorsport equipment. I cannot praise the guy enough so if you need any equipment give Steve a ring on 01768 480048, his prices were far cheaper than all the other online companies and his service couldn't be better.

Thanks to Edwin & Richard Cook, Tony Grisedale and Chris Spencer for contacting me and telling me how good Steve Bennett and Sabelt were so why not ring 01768 480048 and see what Steve can do.

Keith Thomas.



Reporting Motorsport

I was asked at Lingholm how long I had been writing articles and that got me thinking. I think over the years I've written for over thirty magazines, many no longer published, but hopefully there is no connection!

It actually started in a small way, to be precise to a scale of 1/32. In my teens and early twenties, I was very involved in slot car racing, the expert version of Scalextric, with big circuits with six lanes and hand-built cars. In my student days at Newcastle I was quite successful on the big tracks in the city and made cars for other folk. When making one model, I realised that the motor (all from model railway engines) had a shaft and both ends and that got me thinking that I could do a four-wheel drive. An experimental chassis proved very quick, but it then had to be developed into a car. It was too wide for a P99, so I decided on the Felday 4. I wrote to Peter Westbury at Felday Engineering (all by post of course) and he kindly sent some photos and dimensions. I created the body from balsawood laminates which was light and strong (shades of Marcos) and the car not only looked good but was more or less unbeatable.

It was suggested that I write an article for "Model Cars" magazine which I did on my portable typewriter and took photos and processed them in student dark room. The post to Model Cars and they not only used the article but used a photo on the cover. I still have that magazine. I also got paid! In those days us impoverished students did not get student loans, so the article allowed me to eat for a couple of weeks and the cover photo covered a few drinks as well!

Well that got me started with a few more slot car articles and on diecasts as well. Around the same time, I was appointed Student Union Publications Officer, which mainly meant publishing the Rag Magazine, but it did get me involved with the mechanics of print set ups etc.

My first teaching job was in Ulverston (still in Lancashire at the time) so I had weekday digs. I never found the fleshpots of Ulverston (if there were any!) so I was kicking my heels a lot. So, I got the little typewriter out and the camera and got to work. My father had done a lot of motorsport in the past with the CSMA (the biggest motor club in the UK – that used to be Castrol Quiz question!) and they had a very good magazine which a very general motoring magazine for was its non enthusiast members. So, I did a few touring articles about areas I knew. My parents were lifelong caravanners so I had been on many a caravan holiday so the same information could be used for some caravan magazines. They did not pay much but at that time it all helped.

Of course, pre internet there was a lot of leg work in getting the information, taking your own photos etc. it then got posted as a hard copy to the editors. These days I am sure you can do the same sort of article just with a bit of internet research, use stock photos and never go to the place at all. Indeed, I sometimes read articles about the Lakes or other places I know well and see so many errors I often wonder if the editor told the office junior he wanted an article on somewhere, to fit in with some adverts, and needed it tomorrow. If you think about it is remarkably easy!

Returning back to teach in Wigton got me more involved with the Club and local motorsport. In those days not only were there lots of clubs but lots of local events with full entries. The local papers were the main source of publicity in those days, so I approached the Cumberland News about a weekly column. The deputy editor who looked after such things was Bill Duckworth, a lovely guy who helped me a lot.

In those days the NUJ were very powerful, and each paper had a large staff. However, it was agreed that staff did not have enough knowledge to cover most sports and specialised areas of expertise. So,

freelancers were used. However, they were not allowed a by-line and were given Noms de plumes. Mine being "Wheelspin" and Frank Derbyshire who did the Times and Star was "Turbo". The other sports contributors all had similarly daft names. There were all sorts of rules you had to comply with like not mention a sponsor more than once in an article – difficult if they had more than one car in a rally. Articles were generally to be 500 words, but they could easily be cut to make room for something more important like the Blennerhasset Tiddlywinks Championship! This did cause some issues over the years. A typical rally report would start with an overview of the event, the mains winners and incidents and then a class by class review to try and mention as many folks as possible (another editorial request). Stages rallies usually had four classes so each would get a paragraph. Now if the sub editor was struggling for space, he would often just delete an entire class report. Thus, I would get an irate competitor who had won that class ringing me up and complaining about not being mentioned!

Jim Turner was the CN's chief photographer then and he was a car fan, so we got plenty of good photos as well. However, newspapers preferred people shots rather than action ones as readers would buy hard copies, hence the many school type class leavers, football team type photos published and then doting parents, grandparents and family would buy them.

Of course, getting results and info for reports was not as easy as now, if you were not at the event it involved phoning the organiser and the odd competitor and writing it all down before typing it and posting to arrive by Wednesday.

I also did some reports for Motoring News as well. The time scale for that could be frantic and those of a certain age will remember that we had several postal strikes which played havoc with getting reports in. This meant driving to Carlisle and handling reports in for the CN and for MN, it went via train, so the article and undeveloped film was handed in at Carlisle Station and was collected at Euston.

When Radio Carlisle started (later Radio Cumbria) the same contributors were asked to do reports for the sports programme. The Sports producer was a great bloke called David Lamb, a cricket enthusiast but keen to see all sports getting their share of airtime. All the contributors went to the studio at Hilltop Heights on a Thursday at 6.30 to tape their pieces. After it was completed David would say, "Who's for a pint?" and treat us at the Hilltop Hotel, or in the summer at the Cricket Club. It was good to meet up with folk from other sports and my entire knowledge of hound trailing, Cumberland & Westmorland wrestling, fell running and cock fighting was based on those sessions! Sadly, over the years the local radio budget was cut and interest in sports other than those played with various shaped balls waned.

The Mintex dos always had a star driver doing passenger rides, although strangely the take up was not that high. I remember Terry Kaby in a Chevette HRR, Barry Williams in a Group1 Colt and particularly Willie Rutherford in his British Championship winning MG Metro 6R4. Now I knew Willie from him doing our events in Mazdas so when I chatted to him no one had signed up for their 5 laps. He hadn't actually been round the track so I ended up "navigating" for him as I had driven round a fair few times by then. I was prepared for the acceleration and road holding but not for the remarkable braking. We were going way past the normal braking point for a quick saloon or sports car at a much greater speed and slowing until it was thrown side ways and powered out of the corner. A lasting memory.

More in a future edition.

GTF

Inside The Industry

Paul Gilligan has his say

Ford & VW Move Closer Together

A few months ago I reported the Ford and VW were in discussions about closer cooperation in the future. It's now been announced that VW will become an equal shareholder in Ford's self driving car company and Ford will gain access to VW's electric vehicle technology. Ford are probably ahead of VW in self driving technology, but are miles behind them in electric car development, so the deal makes sense to both. Now the enormous costs of developing these new technologies will be shared giving each partner a 50% discount.

Ford will develop at least one new electric car using VW's MEB platform, VW will supply battery pack and other components, Ford will manufacture the car in Europe. As previously announced the two companies will jointly develop commercial vehicles in the future also.

Ford have also announced the cutting of 12000 jobs from its European operations which is almost 25% of current headcount, a staggering number. 5 production plants will close in France, Russia and Slovakia as well as the closure of the engine plant in South Wales already announced.

Whether VW Group eventually absorbs Ford of Europe remains to be seen, I certainly wouldn't bet against it.

Dealer Bad News Sadly Continues

Pendragon, Britain's biggest car dealer continues to release bad news. Now the Chief Executive, who was only appointed 3 months ago has left with immediate effect. Next Lookers, another of the industry giants, have been hit by two major negatives. First they were forced to announce that the Financial Conduct Authority was commencing an investigation into the company's retail sales processes. Lookers are "cooperating fully" – given the enormous powers the FCA have they don't have much choice! They have admitted that in certain areas their processes were at fault so have already in effect pleaded guilty.

Only a couple of weeks after announcing the FCA investigation came the news that Lookers Chief Financial Officer was to leave, then a week after that that the second quarter trading had been "extremely tough" and that profits for the first half of the year would be around 25% down on the same period in 2018, and that little if any improvement was expected for the rest of this year.

Inchcape, Britain's 6th largest dealer group has denied persistent rumours that it is to close 20% of its dealerships. However the company did admit that it was carrying out a full review of the business currently so I for one think there's some fire behind the smoke here.

No doubt dealerships will continue to close. A recent survey showed 94% of UK car dealers expect that, 43% think 10-15% will go in the next 5 years, many expect a much larger reduction. Dealers are being battered by a falling new car market, increased costs coming particularly wage inflation, continuing demands from manufacturers and margin pressure in both new and used car sales. Used car demand is patchy and guide values have been falling rapidly leaving dealers with big stock write offs every month. In May the average franchise dealer recorded a loss of over £10000.

Locally (for those of us who live in Cumbria or South Scotland) we've just witnessed the collapse of Border Cars, a company built up from nothing over the last 40 years by Mike Fusco, a good friend of mine. Mike hasn't achieved his success by accident, it's been the result of many years of intelligent hard work. Sadly he won't be the last to succumb to the changes in the market, manufacturer demands and very tough trading conditions. As I've said before less dealers means less competition which is bad for the customer at the end of the day, but inevitable I feel?

Now Mercedes Face "Dieselgate"

In late June Daimler, parent company of Mercedes-Benz issued a profit warning detailing that it was being forced to recall 60,000 cars in Germany because they had been found to be fitted with software designed to manipulate emissions tests. The cars will only pass the tests when "a certain function is activated".

The recall only effects the GLK 220 model produced between 2012 and 2105, but of course many other Mer

Mercedes models built at the same time used the same engine, so the German authorities are now looking at them also.

BMW Boss Falls On His Sword

Harald Kruger BMW's Chief Executive since 2015 decided to resign recently just before the board meeting at which his future was to be discussed. He stated he wished to "pursue new professional endeavours".

Since he was appointed the shares have dropped by 36% and Herr Kruger has been widely criticised for allowing VW to pull well ahead of BMW in electric car development. BMW have now formed an alliance with Jaguar Land Rover for electric car development, proof perhaps that it had a problem it simply couldn't solve on its own?

Electric Car News

Apart from the difficulties facing UK dealers this is the big subject this month. Jaguar Land Rover announced they are to invest £1 Billion to produce a range of electric cars at their Castle Bromwich plant in Birmingham, which many feared would close. JLR had confirmed earlier this year they were to bring battery and electric drive unit assembly to the Midlands, but with their recent financial losses many were nervous for the future until more details emerged.

JLR will establish a new battery assembly centre at Hams Hall near Birmingham set to be operational next year with the capability of producing 150,000 batteries a year. Meanwhile Castle Bromwich will be "transformed" with the installation of all new facilities and technologies which will enable flexible production of diesel and petrol cars alongside hybrids and pure electrics.

The first pure electric model from JLR will be the replacement XJ with a launch date still to be confirmed, but more battery powered models are expected to follow fairly quickly.

Meanwhile the pure electric Mini has been announced to be produced near Oxford starting this autumn. Range is claimed to be 124 miles, Mini say they have limited the range to this to reduce the number of batteries required thus lowering the cost. Prices will start at £24400 net of the Government Grant. However it seems likely VW will be offering much more range in a similar sized car for the same money, perhaps as suggested above VW really are ahead in the technology race?

Going back to the present low emission car sales dropped in the UK in June for the first time since 2017, reduction in the government grants are being blamed. Better news is the announcement that company car drivers choosing an electric vehicle will pay no benefit in kind (BIK) tax in 2020/21 following a Government review. This and the availability of electric cars with longer range will provide a very significant boost in sales. Typically a company car driver can save between £1000 and £2000 a year if they go electric, as well as saving on fuel costs for their private miles.

This will put more pressure on the recharging network which is already thought to be inadequate. More rapid chargers are now to be installed on motorways and major A roads. Highways England have "discovered" that 17% of these roads didn't have any such chargers. Even in areas with rapid chargers the RAC have reported that "hoggers" who leave vehicles plugged in for periods are a problem, as is the fact that they found many of the chargers simply didn't work!

Ford Revamps European Product Range

As well as putting in place the drastic cost cuts referred to above Ford are also taking more positive steps to correct the gaps in their product range. They have been left behind by the move to SUVs and were until the VW deal mentioned well behind on electric car development. Now Mondeo, S-Max, and Galaxy are all to be dropped and replaced by one as yet unnamed new car. This means Ford are exiting both the large saloon/hatchback and MPV segments of the market. Early 2021 is the expected launch date, and the new car will be sold in the US as well as Europe. It's rumoured to be a "high riding estate" comparable to the Subaru outback which while virtually unknown in the UK sells very well in the US.

Interestingly Ford still see a strong future for diesel in this class of car. Their latest diesels they say are as clean as petrol engines in real world conditions and more economical than mild hybrid/petrol engines, as well as being less expensive to produce. Last years Ford in Europe sold 50000 Mondeos, 24000 S Max and 12000 Galaxies, so you can see why they're doing this, these numbers are too low to be profitable. Ford are also dropping the C Max and B Max models, with the B Max to be replaced by the new Puma SUV.

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Andy's Armchair

Andy Armstrong takes an irrelevant look at motoring and motorsport

You're probably wholeheartedly sick of all the moaning I do in these articles about electric cars, so just for a change I'm going to keep it to an absolute minimum this month. I was reading somewhere recently that in the current state of play there is ONE publicly accessible charging point for every one thousand three hundred cars on the road in this country. Now if you compare the time it takes to fill up with fuel to the time it takes to recharge a battery, which is massively longer, then that makes the ratio even worse, 5 minutes for the petrol, god knows how long for a battery top up. I'd also like to bet that of the available battery chargers the vast majority are well south of Manchester let alone Cumbria. Oh, and by the way I also read that if you've got one of the first Nissan Leafs which is now a bit long in the tooth you're quite lucky to have a range of about 35 miles. Useful?

We were at Croft for the TCR cars but much the same as last year the grid was pathetic with only three turning up. Luckily, four TCT cars supplemented the entry but even seven isn't really anything to shout about. James Turkington, Colin's younger brother was there as was Henry Neal using one of his dad's older Honda Type R's. "Sherman" the well known Rob Austin Audi A4 was in attendance but even so it was all a damp squib. During the two days these seven cars accounted for one hour forty minutes of track time which when they're so spread out doesn't make much of a motorsport spectacle.

While being "entertained" by the above, I sat on the trackside grassy knoll and for the want of anything better to do reckoned up the number of Cumbrian drivers entered on the programme which came to a total of 5. Sad, looking back, granted quite a long way, there were that many in the saloon car races let alone Formula Ford, sports cars etc. I did notice that three of the five were in the Civic Cup so started to root for them as they were qualifying. The curse struck, as more or less as soon as I'd identified the locals one of them spun into a very solid pile of tyres at Clerveaux corner. Anyhow he kept going and when I caught up with him in the paddock later on he was pleased with himself as he said he was quicker after the "bump" than before it. His mechanic (dad?) reckoned the thump had maybe straightened the shell out, so unlike most Cumbrians they were optimists! Let's hope they can continue to do as well as at the start of the weekend when Daniel Reason the young driver from Whitehaven was lying third overall in this national championship.

Finally I was watching some DTM racing from the Norisring. Interesting cars which certainly look as though their engines are bigger than the four pot two litres they run. I assume that the turbo must be massive to make them go like they do. Anyway as I watched I got to thinking that it was 48 years almost to the day since Pedro Rodriguez one of my all time favourite drivers (watch footage of the 1970 BOAC 1000 km race to see why), met a fiery end on the self same, largely unchanged circuit. It makes you thankful that modern drivers are so much better protected than they were in those far off days.

Ends

AA.

What's On

WMC events and other events of interest

August

3/4th		Croft Nostalgia Weekend	
7th	W	Pub Run	
11th	S	Blue Streak Historic & Targa	SMC
17th	Sa	Rose and Thistle Tour	
18th	S	Cumbria Classic & Motorsport Show	
24/25th		Oulton Park Historic Racing	

September

8th	S	DAC Wearside Targa	
15th	S	Autosolo	
15th	S	Stocktonian Targa/Historic	
21/22		C2C Run	
22nd	S	SoSCC Doonhamer Historic/Targa	
28th	S	Breakfast Meet at Gilcrux	

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