

Wigton Motor Club Ltd

Start Line

Issue 12/19

www.wigtonmc.co.uk

December 2019

Memories of a Great Year's Tours



One from the Cumbrian Canter

Motorsport for All

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Talking Point

Topical Comment from the world of motoring

And it was going so well! The new look Motorsport UK were promising all the right things to develop grass roots motorsport and getting lots of positive vibes from clubs but then they go and spoil it all with a hike in permit fees, universal licencing and the cost of licences. You will see Peter's response on behalf of the Club in this issue but what saddens me most is that they say they have consulted widely but I do not know any club that was asked for a comment prior to these decisions being made. To my mind it should be the top end of the sport, the commercial organisers, that should be paying more rather than a blanket increase for everyone. It does seem unfair that the typical HERO event with an entry fee in the thousands pays exactly the same permit fee as we do on the LDC or the Roger Albert Clark Rally pays the same as the Grizedale Stages.

All the commercial events rely totally on members of ordinary regional motor clubs for their marshals. Those marshals and stage commanders have learnt their skills over the years on club level events. Without them those events would not take place. At this time of year there are WMC members marshalling in various capacities on many events, LE JOG, Roger Albert Clark Rally and the VSCC Lakeland Trial. In the case of the Lakeland it would not take place without the WMC members and those from other local clubs.

In this issue you will see the list of award winners in the Prottyre Rally Awards and we will also send out a list of the club champions later in December. We have the Awards Dinner booked at the Skiddaw so please book your place as soon as possible.

During this month you will receive your membership renewal form. I am delighted to say that John Sloan has taken over as Membership Sec and he will be accepting your forms, it is always great if you can renew early as that cuts down having to chase people in the early part of the year.

The first event of the new season is actually at the end of December with our Festive Autotest at Maryport. Entry forms will be posted out shortly.

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

WMC Dates 2020

Month	Date	Club	Event	Name	Organisers
January	26th	WMC	Autosolo		
February	8th	WMC	Awards Dinner		Charles Graves
March	11th	WMC	Touring Assembly	Midweek Meander	Ron Palmer
	22nd	WMC	Historic/Targa		
	29th	WMC	Autotest		
April	26th	WMC	Drive It Day	Drive It Day	Graeme Forrester
May	6th	WMC	Pub Run		
	13th	WMC	Grass Autotest		David Agnew
			Touring Assembly	Yorkie Gallop	Jim Crockett
June	3rd	WMC	Pub Run		
	13th	WMC	Grass Autotest		
	28th	WMC	Historic/Targa Rally	LDC	Paul Eastwood
July	1st	WMC	Pub Run		
	5th	WMC	Breakfast Meet	Lingholm	Ron Palmer
	22nd	WMC	Grass Autotest		
August	5th	WMC	Pub Run		
	22nd	WMC	Touring Assembly	Rose & Thistle	Ron Palmer

	23rd	WMC	Classic Show		Team
September	13th	WMC	Touring Assembly	Cumbrian Canter	Chris Leece
	27th	WMC	Autosolo		
October	9th	WMC	Touring Assembly	C 2 C	Ron Palmer
	18th	WMC	Targa/Historic		
November	29th	WMC	Autosolo		
December	30th	WMC	Autotest		

These are the planned events for 2020. We now need to put names to these events for organising team. Please let David Agnew know which events you can help on.

Festive Autotest

December 30th

Entry forms and details will be sent
out in due course

PG Tips

Another eventful month at Garforth towers – I basically had a fit and decided I needed rid of the EOS because I was fed up of the creaky roof and there were a couple of things with the roof that made me worry that it was going to stop working at some point and leave me with big bills and frustration. I also accepted that I really need my own tow car because I am fed up of having to be nice to Trudy in order to borrow her Yeti for car shenanigans! I did a price check on ‘We Buy Any Car.com’ (WBAC) and then put it on Ebay with that price as a start point. One week later I had nearly 100 watchers, lots of questions but no bids! I could see this potentially coming so I’d booked an appointment with WBAC the day after the auction in order to just get the car moved on. The site said my nearest dealer was 23 miles away....unfortunately that turned out to be as the crow flies across the Solway and was in reality Dumfries! After no one bid at least one chancer contacted me and said they’d ‘missed’ the end of the auction and could they offer significantly less than the start price. I was polite in my reply! So, partly out of curiosity and partly to get rid the EOS

I drove to Dumfries and went through the WBAC experience, and do you know it wasn’t that bad. They started with the figure they’d offered and then checked the mileage (which had obviously gone up cause I’d driven it for a week) and checked everything over on the car for 10 minutes and then explained how much money they were deducting and why! That could have been a shock, except for the fact I knew it was going to happen and fully expected it. I queried the figure and the guy then agreed that it was in really good condition and added another £100 which he had to clear with a mystery person on the phone (a manager somewhere in the country) – so whilst I hadn’t got the price on the internet it wasn’t far off and I took it. They then bank transferred the money and did the paperwork on line and it was all done – in less than an hour as they say on their advert. Apparently all their cars go to auction, not sure I fancy their chances of making money from a convertible in November at an auction! I then walked to the train station and got the train home. I

n the meantime I’d been looking for cheap tow cars and decided I should go big and found a low mileage 2 owner Citroen C5 estate with towing kit fitted and in excellent condition. Another train journey later and back I came with the C5 which is pretty decent – it wallows along at reasonable pace and has lights in every nook and cranny as well as lot of tech – most of which works (surprising for an older French car) or does now I’ve had a tinker with it. It also returns reasonable MPG for a big old barge.



In the 4 days between the EOS and the Citroen I used my gold BX to travel to and from work which was not as painful as I’d thought. The old girl starts easily enough and will sit at 60-70mph without too much fuss. Not having a heater was a bit grim on my 3am finishes and the stereo is a 1980s cassette player that has seen better days. It did attract a surprising amount of attention though – I put fuel in it 3 times in different places and each time I was accosted by middle aged men saying they hadn’t seen one for years and one of my children’s teachers said her parent had had one back in the day and asked for a look inside it. What driving the car

for 4 days made me realise was how much work would be required to get the car into the kind of order I’d need to make me happy.....and as I totted up the various things it dawned on me that I really needed to get shot of it and buy something else! Lovely as it is in a nostalgic way, the BX was stuck on Ebay last week and a man from Cornwall.....yes you read that right.....is coming to get it – hopefully soon!

Championship News

Protyre Historic & Targa Rally Awards Winners

Historic Overall:

Drivers

- 1 David Marsden
- 2 Brian Bradley
- 3 Malcolm MacKay

Navigators

- Mike Garstang
Michael Marsland
Marc Crack

Class H

- 1 David Agnew

Class P

- 1 John Sloan
- 2 Ian Dixon

Marian Sloan

Targa Overall

- 1 Phil Hodgson
- 2 Robert Short
- 3 Quentin James

Ian Giles
Kirsty Thompson
Tom Howe

Class T2F

- 1 Stephen Short
- 2 Lian Charlton
- 3 Richard Whittaker

Clive White
Geoff Fletcher
James Greenough

Class T2R

- 1

Fiona Tyson

Trophies Returned Please

If you won a main award last year it would be appreciated if you could get it back to Graeme Forrester before Christmas please

Edinburgh Trial 2019 October A Trial of two halves!

Since retiring from a few years successfully competing in the Scottish Stage Championships in my Nova and Escort Cosworth, I have been exploring the competitive and black art world of Car Trialing. This has included competing in Sporting Trials in a Crossle and then a Hamilton Trials car on NPTCC and MSA championship events but lately I have focussed on MCC and ACTC Classic Trials in my 1962 DP Cannon Class 8 special. This car was originally built by Dean Partington from Derby who is one of the top competitors and trials-car builders but when the original 1600 Ford engine gave up the ghost on an event I had the car fitted with Suzuki 1600 Engine and gearbox running on bike carbs and engine management.

Living near Edinburgh in it seems a natural attraction to compete on the MCC Edinburgh Trial (although it starts from Tamworth and runs mainly around Buxton) despite it being 331 miles from home. On route to the start I picked up my passenger David Bell from Carlisle (who used to navigate for Mark Eggleston on road rallies many moons ago) and Bill Rhodes in the Trough of Bowland who drives my road car and trailer from the start to the finish. Having competed on Fellside Motor Club excellent Northern Trial earlier in the year, I was keen to have another go at one of the 3 biggest trials in the UK organised by the MCC. I really enjoy these classic trials as once you start the event you tend to be on the go during most of the day with the linking road sections normally well off main busy roads with great views, and it reminds me a lot of the experience you get from multi venue stage rallies only at a much more affordable cost. With entry fees ranging from £40 to £80 for the larger events it's a really cost effective way to compete in a very form of grass level motorsport.

The new smart motorways on the M6 are always a nightmare near Manchester but we eventually arrived at the Tamworth Travelodge and checked in. After a quick bit of wheeling and dealing by Bill on some new Sporting Trial Wheels and Tyres we popped into Tamworth for our traditional Indian meal before returning to get some rest before our start time at 2:35 am

Scrutineering and Signing on passed without event and we were soon on our way to Carsington holding area to wait for our departure time. The biggest shock was the mild and dry weather as we had come through pouring rain on the way down and did not see any again till Sunday morning.

It always surprises me how many people are still on the go in the middle of the night and despite being on quiet country lanes we came across numerous taxis in the middle of nowhere after dropping off their merry passengers.

We were about to get our time card back from the main control when we told there was a delay on the first section with a car stuck. After around 15 mins we got going and the car seemed to be running and climbing well following the work Dean Partington had done on setting up the suspension and we were thought we were clean on all hills as we approached the Duke of York breakfast halt.

The Duke of York pub is great improvement from the old place we had on previous Edinburgh trials and was pleased there was no sign of the powered eggs of previous breakfasts. After a nice relaxing break we jumped into the car and nothing....no life from the starter and no fuel pumps clicking? After frantic search found a blown fuse which when changed sorted the problem but no sign of what had caused the problem?

Anyway after a few miles no return of the issue and we were soon waiting on the start line on Incline which was cleared with no problem and then into what I think is the best section on the trial Corkscrew.

So my Cannon is a very narrow car yet this section looked so thin and overgrown and I have to say it was very challenging and when we approached the restart all I could see were the concrete steps just in front. Decided to give it some and the car flew off the restart box and we bounced and banged our way to clean the section. Great result and off to that most famous Edinburgh Hill ...Litton Slack.

I have only got as far as the A boards in the past when the full hill has been used so dropped the tyre pressures as low as possible and waiting in line to give it a proper go. The view from the holding area was outstanding and I could not wait to give it a go. Off we went and cleared the right hand bend with Dean's tip ringing in my ear to make sure I carried as much speed as possible to the top. Looked like we were going to clean the hill



and then we just lost momentum. We were so close to cleaning the hill only failing about 6 feet from the gate at the top so was really pleased to get so far yet disappointed that we had failed the hill. After stopping it only took a small push and we got to the top of the hill.

Anyway we had the fantastic tea and cakes from the WI in Hollins Clough village hall rest halt to look forward too and we were not disappointed. So up till now everything was going great and then problems started...and it was not just the sugar rush from the cakes!

Hob Hay was next and we were now running very near the front and we're the first car to attempt the deviation near the top. The deviation turned out to be a 90 uphill onto a virgin grassy bank which despite giving it a real go we could not get up. Speaking to Dean Partington after the event I don't think many cars got up this hill apart from him and it probably helped him win the class and the trial.

Off to Excelsior and the red restart was horrible. My car is classed as a special and has to attempt all the restarts

with Red ones being the hardest and typically placed on a steep uphill part of the section or placed on slippery stones or old concrete. Tried and tried to get off the line with tyres smoking but despite words of encouragement from Bill who was spectating here it was another fail. Again just dropped back a foot off the line and the car just drove up the rest of the track..so frustrating this trialing but again driver error.

On the way to Clough Wood we took the opportunity to get Petrol just off the junction with the A5012 in Newhaven as offered in the roadbook. Whilst filling up the petrol pump stopped working after £3 of petrol and the women in the shop said their tank had run dry! Did not think anything about it as we still had some petrol in the tank till shortly on the road section the car started missing and sputtering.

Checked all the electrics thinking it was the fuse problem again but they were fine and then checked the in fuel tank with a torch and inside we could see droplets of water moving around near the bottom. Looks like the £3 of petrol turned out to be £3 of water!!!

Decide to continue on but car had now got really bad and had very little power. Still cleared the first restart and the hill at Clough 12 but has no power to get off the restart on Clough 13.

By the time we got to Dudwood it was so bad we nearly jacked in but managed to get off the restart at Dudwood 1 but had no power to get up mud bank and just pottered on coughing and spluttering through the final test of the day on Dudwood 3

So that was it..a trial that had started with so much promise and performance on the early sections was ruined by some dodgy rural petrol station with water in their main tanks. Note to self..Don't buy Petrol at garages with no cars in!!!!

Managed to limp back to the finish and a quick pint with Clerk of the Course Mark Gregg and the Radio guys before setting off back home to Scotland.

A big thanks to MCC, Mark, his team and of course all the marshals for all their hard work and whilst it had not turned out as planned for us, they put on a great event with improved media and communication before the event this year.

Big thanks to David my passenger on his first big trial and for never getting us lost and keeping us on time and to Bill who drove us back up North. Looking forward to next years event already. Myke Pocock from Carlisle also competes on these events and is one of the key organisers of the Northern Trial in February which is based from Wigton auction mart so if you are interested in having a closer look or keen to support the event just drop Myke an email at Fellside Motor Club more information.

Alistair McVittie

From The Top

News from UK Motorsport, Regions and the WMC Committee

The November committee meeting discussed several matters relating to the 2020 season and in particular the effects of universal licencing and increased permit fees.

The additional insurance to cover The Motor House is now in place. It was agreed to give £1,000 each to our nominated charities for this year, the NW Air Ambulance and the Calvert Trust.. We would like suggestions for the charities for 2020.

It was agreed to give WMC members discounts on entry fees for all our events, ranging from 10% to 20%. Anyone who had not previously competed in motorsport will get a free entry to a maximum of three free entries per event.



Themes for the Classic Show will include Cobra and MG and we have some sponsorship from Hagerty. Marian is standing down for club coordinator so we need a volunteer for 2020 please.

The latest update on progress for The Motor House heard that the interior walls are in place and the roof girder to support the mezzanine floor. It was agreed to accept the tender for fencing. Paul Eastwood is doing a full risk assessment and suitable safety signs will be put up.

John Sloan has taken over a Membership Secretary. Membership renewal forms will be sent out shortly.

Booking are now being taken for the Awards Dinner



**motor
sport
UK**

**Recognised
Club**

Letter to Motorsport UK

Dear Mr Richards

Following the recent communications from Motorsport UK relating to changes in licences and permit fees we, as Wigton Motor Club committee, feel strongly that we would like you to consider the following -

1. Prior to the changes being announced we had heard nothing about these proposals and certainly would have liked the opportunity to comment. This is very poor communication with your grass roots club members and entirely contrary to the drive towards consulting at grassroots level. Can you provide us with details of who was consulted and what feedback was received regarding these major changes to our sport?

2. We feel that the requirement for a licence for entry level motorsport (autotests, trials, etc) is adding another hurdle to participation and putting more work onto the clubs and event organisers. Whilst we appreciate that the license is free can you guarantee that this will always be the case?

3. The proposed "across the board" increase of £5 per competitor permit per event is wholly unfair on the grass roots participants. Effectively doubling the permit cost to "grassroots" competitor doing autotests/targas/trials whereas it is only a smaller fraction for larger more costly events e.g. circuit racing, rallying. The percentage increases are as follows ;

a £10 autotest becomes £15 50% increase

a £100 targa becomes £105 5%

a £500 race or stage rally becomes £505 1%

a £5k historic endurance rally becomes £5005 0.1%

The fees are not the same for all events so perhaps the costs should be increased pro rata e.g. £1 for autotests etc and proportionally more for the more costly events.

As it stands it looks like the entry level is sponsoring the more elite levels.

4. We have read and looked at the Investment Strategy video but we are not clear on the exact purpose of the need for the entry level licences and what the extra permit revenue will be spent on. Can you please provide us with a figure for what extra revenue will be generated and specifically how you intend to spend that money?

In summary:

We are dismayed that you choose to impose these changes without any apparent prior consultation with member clubs.

We feel that additional hurdles to entry level motorsport are being proposed.

We are strongly opposed to the discriminatory nature of the proposed permit fee increases which will hit the grassroots enthusiast the hardest.

All of these seem contrary to the MSUK ethos.

We trust that you will take note of our comments and urgently rethink the changes. We will not be the only motor club who feel the same way and the relationship between MSUK and member clubs is likely to be eroded by such a widespread move to impose work on organisers and costs on grassroots members.

Yours

Peter Garforth

Chairman WMC

The future is electric ...

... or maybe not. I have just spent a few days with an electric car. I have seen sights and visited places that I haven't noticed before, and not necessarily wish to visit again any time soon.

For instance, there I was yesterday afternoon marooned in the desolate wastes of North Lanarkshire looking over windswept, rain scoured moors with dark clouds dragging their wispy entrails over the horizon while my car was plugged in to a roadside charging station.

The only signs of life were the litter blowing down the car park from the overflowing bins and the diesel lorries thundering past on essential, life sustaining, transport duty. Yes, there was a chuck wagon in a nearby lay-by offering such tantalising delights as polystyrene tea, stale rolls and square sausage that could repair a block-pave drive, but I chose not to treat myself. Aye, VisitScotland - at your peril!

Sitting there watching the wee battery symbol filling up on the display panel, there was time to ponder the wisdom of our elected representatives in Edinburgh and Westminster urging us all to switch to electric cars. This advice coming from people who don't need to use them on a daily basis themselves. People who don't have a 'normal' job like us and therefore don't understand what a 'normal' working week is like for the majority of us.

Unless you have a high capacity charger at home and access to another at your place of business, then reliance on a purely electric vehicle is not an option. Using a domestic power supply can take anything up to 30 hours for a full charge whereas the latest high capacity chargers can accomplish the same task in 4 to 6 hours. Of course you can 'top up' your charge at various locations around the country where there is a mixture of standard and high capacity public roadside chargers.

On Tuesday I tried two, for one hour each. The standard charger gave me 16% of a full charge increasing my range by 31 miles, while the nearby high capacity charger provided a 44% boost, worth 93 miles in the same time. The trouble is there simply aren't enough of these high capacity chargers around. When I went back yesterday, there was a chap from Scottish Power in his electric company car already plugged in to the sole high capacity charger and when I tried the adjoining standard one - it wasn't working!

Annoyed? Frustrated? I let my big pal, Jaggy have a go. He was later spotted kicking sleeping policemen in his frustration and turning 'keep left' signs upside down on traffic islands in his annoyance.

I now understand the term 'range anxiety'. Even with a range of some 200 miles, that is dependent on weather. If it's cold, wet and dark, then wipers, heaters and lights will place further depletion demands on the battery. Those travelling more than just commuting distance will therefore have to plot their route via roadside chargers and then just hope that they work when they get there!

If you are tempted to purchase such a futuristic vehicle then I urge you not to decide on the basis of a test drive - take a week at least. Spend some time with it at home, at work and at play, even if you have to hire one for a week. It's the only way you'll find out if you can live with it.

For those travelling big mileages it will change your lifestyle. You'll become a slave to the machine and road side chargers. A motoring vampire looking for that flicker of life-saving neon indicating the location of a roadside charger from which to draw the lifeblood of the open road warrior once again.

However, the biggest problem was, I really did like this electric car. It was comfortable, quick and quiet. The electric car most certainly has a future, but has the future arrived yet? I don't think so.

And now a warning dear reader, I will return to this subject - shortly. I'm not quite finished with it yet!

John Fife

You can read more of John's excellent articles on Face Book or at: <http://www.jaggybunnet.co.uk/>

A fantastic day at the VSCC Lakeland Trial.

The premier club in this country for people competing with vintage type motor cars is the VSCC or Vintage Sports Car Club who's headquarters are at Chipping Norton near Oxford but they organise all kinds of different types of events all over the country. Some are of a social nature such as scenic tours, some of a very competitive nature in the form of races at the major circuits, speed hill climbs and sprints at various venues, trials either in muddy fields, woods, forests etc and some events that combine social and competitive disciplines to a greater or lesser degree depending on your personality with driving tests at Bicester and Madresfield to name but two famous ones.



One of their best supported and it has to be said roughest and toughest events is the Lakeland trial with its temporary headquarters based at the Wheatsheaf pub in Lorton, the competitive sections are on private land in the forests around Whinlatter and Wythop, a rough track and this year sections in woods near Buttermere as well as a very adrenaline generating ascent of the steep twisty mine track that leads to the top of Fleetwith Pike from Honister slate mine.

This event has been a feature of the Cumbrian motor-sport calendar for over 50 years, it was devised and run for many of those years by well-known Rogerscale character

Dick Smith, helped by his family and friends but with less locals being involved in recent years it was becoming more and more difficult to run it from Chipping Norton and its viability was looking fairly bleak unless lots of people came forward with offers of help.

A plea for marshals and helpers was received by myself from Andrew Tarring the trials secretary of the VSCC which I sent out to local enthusiasts and local motor club members via the various club magazines such as this one, the result was overwhelming.



A meeting was held at Workington golf club where Andrew Tarring came up from Oxford and outlined what was needed to a packed audience, many that couldn't attend on the night e mailed and phoned expressing their support, David Rushton seeing the tremendous support shown agreed to take on the role of clerk of the course so things snowballed from there. Andrew Tarring then drove the 250 miles back home to Tewksbury very pleased that he had made the effort to visit Cumbria, it was a great effort on his part, thank you Andrew.

New sections were found, work parties were organised prior to the event cutting back dangerous branches or removing tree stumps, route details were submitted and permissions obtained from the forestry commission and other landowners. Entries rolled in and have to be capped at 100 but a reserve list was also created with people standing by in case some had to drop out for any reason, the trial once again was on a high.

The Lakeland took place on November 9th but all the sections were marked out the previous day and with cold but dry weather it was a great success, marshals and competitors came from all over the country, local hotels, B&Bs and holiday cottages were full, evidence of this could be seen when driving around the area, vehicles towing trailers loaded with trials cars were everywhere so a great boost

for the local economy.

Our own Dave Nicholson from Coulderton together with daughter Victoria and Eamont resident Andrew Wright passengered by Alister Kyle from Buttermere were competing and both pairings loved the tough testing day, completing events like this is akin to doing an SAS course at times as up on Fleetwith Pike it wasn't just cold and dry it was blowing a gale and sleeting, ask Edwin Cook and his mates.

Edwin was lowering cars with only brakes on two wheels down the mountain, Edwin driving behind the competing car with a stout sling attached to the front of Edwin's big pickup, passengers are not allowed to ride in cars back down the hills so it's a bit of a route march from the top of Fleetwith Pike especially as many people have been collecting their old age pension for very many years.



After the event finished on Saturday I have no doubt that a world record for the number of people possible to get in a pub was broken, the Wheatsheaf pub was totally grid-locked inside with muddy faces grinning, laughing, shouting and joking while trying to consume drinks that kept being passed over the heads of people to others nowhere near the bar.

Four competitors were staying with us who are friends of ours, Jonathan Rose being one of them in a wonderful old car that was Sydney Allards own car with its V8 3.9 Litre engine sounding magnificent as it reverberated

around the sections on Saturday.

After the trial and a hot bath we went to Keswick for a meal with other friends Peter Kite and his partner Di who won the trial outright in their GN, this has an even more distinctive and wonderful sound than the Allard.

It was fantastic to see so many people working together for the good of the sport, I spent my day at the new sections at Buttermere helping push and pull cars through the muddy field on the approach to the sections, then extract the cars that got stuck with people who came from Chester, Durham, Windermere, Whitehaven Whickham and Worcester to help as well as club members John & Marion Sloan, David Agnew and recovery teams led by Malcolm Fotheringham and Will Sherwen with their 4x4s without who's assistance the trial could have sunk out of sight.

We met many other enthusiasts and were even shown a collection of classic cars locally and invited for coffee by a very hospitable and friendly local, The land owner Alister Kyle has already agreed improvements to improve access to the wood for next year which is really fantastic news so make a note in next years diary it's always in early November.

The Lakeland Trial is a really unique event what a magnificent spectacle it is to see cars worth fortunes being pushed to their very limit and beyond, why not come and help next year we like many others meet some really enthusiastic people that often have become really great friends.

Look at the pictures they will show what a wonderful day it was.

Keith Thomas.

Saltire Rally

The weekend of November 9/10th was a busy one for motor sport with the Lakeland Trial, Jim Clark Rally, Rally of the Tests and a select entry of 40 historic and targa crews heading to the Highlands for the 2019 Saltire Rally. This event has an established reputation for scenic and competitive motoring and 2019 wouldn't disappoint – after 16 excellent tests and 4 regularities the final result would see 1st and 2nd in the historic class separated by 1 second and the top four historic separated by less than 1 minute; and, while the targa class had a clear winner, 2nd, 3rd and 4th were also covered by just over 1 minute.

The Atholl Arms Hotel in Blair Atholl provided a warm and comfortable Rally HQ and event sponsor Blair Atholl Garage hosted scrutineering & noise within ¼ mile of Rally HQ. The first car away at 09.01 was Andy Beaumont/Bob Hargreaves in their Sunbeam Rapier, followed by David Marsden/Mike Garstang Escort Mk1, Jim Hendry/Findlay Wyatt, TR3, Ian Dixon/Maurice Millar, MGB, and from Ireland Michael Reid/John Lindsay, MG Midget. Lurking further back in the field were the experienced crews of John Haygarth/David Taylor, Opel Kadett Rallye, David Short/Roy Heath, Escort Mk2, and Stephen/Daniel Place in the ex-Archie Simmonds MG Midget (a crew to watch out for in future). Jamie and Jack Stewart, Peugeot 205, opened for the targa cars and would end up in the top two while the other top targa finishers were scattered across the entry list.

Tests 1 & 2 were within ¼ mile of the start and provided a smooth introduction to the day. Some crews dropped time on T1 which ran as a mini regularity including ourselves. T2 was an excellent mainly uphill tarmac test with a couple of tight chicanes. Beaumont/Hargreaves set the first of their 8 fastest test times with 1m10 but Reid & Place were both on 1m11s, Haygarth 1m17s and Short & Marsden on 1m18s (these 6 crews with interventions from Hendry & Dixon were to push each other hard all day). Targa cars were recording quick times on T2 with Ross/Ross, Citroen C2, Stewart/Stewart, Peugeot 205, Buchan/Henderson, Impreza, Nicoll/Nicoll, Peugeot 205 all on 1m05s; Haygarth/Gleich, Toyota MR2 on 1m06s, Morrison/Gordon, Fiesta, 1m11s, Jennings/White, Peugeot 1m 1m12s and James/Howe, C2 on 1m13s.

Test 3 was a quick sprint around a council depot laid out in a typical autotest format with Short quickest here (recovering well from an illness that laid him low after the Berwick). Crews then moved to RSC1 for the start of Reg1 which was a long regularity with a number of ITCs and five speed changes. It was very close on times among the leading crews – unfortunately, we dropped time here because my dose of navigators' *WD(Reg)40* didn't kick in until Reg 2!

T4&5 were new to the event with T4 making use of a loose forest road up to a dam and T5 the downhill tarmac access road from the dam. Haygarth was fastest on T4 with Beaumont 2 secs in arrears then Marsden 3rd, Short 4th and Reid 5th while T5 saw Beaumont strike back with Haygarth just 1 sec down, Reid 3rd, Short 4th and Marsden 5th. T4 also saw a bit of a shake up among the Targa cars with Stewart/Stewart fastest on 1m47s, Hughes/McInnes, MX5 on 1m48s and Tong/Steeley, Peugeot on 1m50s. The quickest Targa on T5 was Haygarth/Gleich 1m20s, Hughes/MacInnes on 1m21s and Ross/Ross 1m22s.

T6 was a quick sprint on loose around the outside of a storage building and T 7 was a good blast on the loose with a demanding downhill section and chicanes. Haygarth was quickest on T7 with Reid, Marsden and Short following in quick succession (Beaumont enjoyed a few moments of extra excitement here and dropped time!).

RSC 2 took us to T8 via a run over the tops with three speed changes and ITCs before descending towards Loch Tummel. A better regularity for me dropping just 15s to the best time of 5s – “Thanks to

WDR40, the tonic for ancient navigators". T8 & 9 ran either side of the lunch break on the roads of a caravan park which provided an opportunity for competitors to watch other crews tackle the tests. Both were excellent tests on loose with plenty to entertain. Midway results showed minimal time gaps between the leading crews in the historic and targa classes so it was all to play for during the afternoon.

Beaumont had pulled back time on T8 but it was Haygarth who took the initiative after lunch on T9 with a stunning 1m22s, Beaumont chased him round on 1m27s then a significant gap to the duelling crews of Short, Hendry and Marsden on 1m36s, Reid and Place on 1m37s and Dixon on 1m38s – close or what!! After a strong showing during the morning, Haygarth retired his targa Toyota at the lunch halt leaving Stewart/Stewart to take quickest Targa entry on T9 with a flying 1m26s followed by Hay/Thomson (now making a podium bid) on 1m32s and Morrison/Gordon 1m33s.

T10 was a quick out and return across a slippery field before a road run to just south of Pitlochry for T11. An old favourite on the Saltire, it has an excellent uphill start on loose then through a sequence of uphill bends before breaking out into the open on a track across the fields, chicane, through a tight set of farm buildings and a short spurt to the finish. Beaumont and Short tied here on 1m05s, Haygarth 1m06s, Marsden and Place on 1m07s, Reid 1m10s, Dixon 1m12s, Gavin Thomson/Dave Lauder (Mexico) 1m16s and Jim Hendry 1m17s.

The run up through Pitlochry to RSC 3 included a cunningly sited code board which would catch out some inattentive crews. This regularity included 6 speed changes and ITCs during a long route going west along Loch Tummel before turning south past tiny Loch Kinardochy and then north-west to RFC 3. Best on regularity here were Reid/Lindsay with 13s (they went on to win the Best on Regularity award), we dropped 27s but it kept us in the mix.

Test 12 was a repeat of T7 with a fast out and back route on loose and including long sweeping bends with some adverse camber and a tight 180 turn in farm buildings. Haygarth and Marsden tied on 1m06s, Beaumont & Reid were on 1m07s and Short on 1m08s – the Saltire was proving to be a real drivers event among the historicists and boy were they enjoying themselves! The targa crews were not to be outdone and Hughes/MacInnes were quickest on 1m08s, Crichton/Dougan, Fiesta ST, had 1m09s, and three crews tied on 1m10s Hay/Thomson, Jennings/White, Gavan/Matchett, Peugeot 106.

From T12 it was off through Kinloch Rannoch (with a code board on a "long way around" triangle) to a Card Collect and then a superb mid afternoon run over the tops with the Highland hills capped with snow, the trees displaying the last of their autumn colours and an early hint of a hard frost in the air.

T13&14 mirrored T4&5 with the forest test up to the dam and the tarmac access road back down the other side. Haygarth took quickest on T13 with 1m50s from Beaumont by 1s then the pair tied for quickest on T14 with 1m20s – Phew! It was going to be a battle right through to the finish. Also, on T13 Marsden had 3rd by 1s from Short who took 1m 59 and Reid 5th on 2m01s but on the smooth T14 Reid's Midget went 3rd on 1m23s with Short on 1m24s from Marsden on 1m25s.

And so to RSC 4: another long regularity with just one speed change and the inevitable ITCs taking crews from Trinafour via Calvine and back to Blair Atholl for Tests 15&16 (reruns of Tests 1&2). On T15 Reid dropped 2s, Haygarth and Beaumont dropped 3s and Short dropped 5s – we dropped 26s (nightmare) as the *WDR40* wore off. T16 was kinder to us with Beaumont and Haygarth tied on 1m05s, we tied with Reid on 1m08s, Jim Hendry took his amazing TR3 to 1m10s while Short & Place tied on 1.11s, Dixon had 1m15s and Gavin Thomson finished with 1m16s. On T16 it was very hard to split the targas: four crews shared quickest with 1m05s - Stewart/Stewart, Hughes/MacInnes, Crichton/Dougan and Matchett/Matchett, while Jennings/White had 1m06s, Hay/Thomson, Ross/Ross, Morrison/Gordon and Gray/Tinline all shared 1m07s.

Throughout the day the crews of Andrew Duns/Patrick Shannon, Volvo Amazon, Duncan Menzies/Robert Stubbs, Morris Minor, and Dave Charles/Ralph Harrison, Imp had a close three way battle lower down the field.

We arrived back to the final time control at around 4.15pm after an excellent day's motor sport. A welcome pint or two slipped down and a cracking hot meal (with an excellent scotch broth to start) was served in the Atholl Arms while the organisers prepared the results.

The final results were incredibly close and underlined just how competitive the event had been. In the Historics, Beaumont and Haygarth tied on test times with 16m 29s, Beaumont had dropped 14s to Haygarth on the regularities but.....Haygarth had missed a code board on a road section (15s penalty) and forfeited the overall win to Beaumont/Hargreaves (17m42s) by 1 (one) second. As a consolation Haygarth took the Class 5 win; Reid took 3rd with 18m15s and Best on Regularity; Short was 4th with 18m35s and won Class 6; and, we took 5th with 20m00s.

After a very competitive day, Hay/Thomson took the outright targa win with 18m12s, Ross/Ross came 2nd and won Class 2 with 18m45s, Stewart/Stewart 3rd on 18m52s, 4th was Jennings/White 19m23s and 5th Hughes/MacInnes who also won Class 3 with 21.08s. Rae/Rae had a good run to win Class 1 Novice award with 21m48s.

As with all good historic/targa events, speed on the tests has to be matched with accuracy on the regularity sections and those sections can so often decide the outcome – and long may this format continue. In conclusion, a big thank you goes to the organisers, the marshals, the new sponsor and the landowners whose support and commitment made this event possible and very enjoyable. Let's hope that the Saltire will run again in 2020 – I think we'll all be hurrying back!

Mike Garstang.

Another Photo from the Cumbrian Canter



Classic Column

News from the Classic and Historic Scene

I didn't head down to the NEC this year, it's a bit of "been there and done that", but also, it's a pretty tiring day even if you go by train. The lack of seated rest areas is a regular comment I see and even more so as we all get a year older at each show!

Have traditional one make car clubs had their day? The internet and the wider appreciation of classic cars has changed so many things that the clubs were used for. I think the Jowett club claims to be the oldest one make club in the UK closely followed by Bentley, MG and Bugatti. Clubs have been the main, and in many cases, the only source of technical information and historic that you could find. Now, if you need to find a rear view mirror for a 1958 Vauxhall Wyvern, or find out why your 1974 MG Midget is misfiring, all you do is type that into Google and the answer will appear from various forums, websites or social media.

It's the same with social meets, it may be OK for MGs, Jags and Ford for example who are around in large numbers to have local meet ups, but if you fancy meeting fellow Panhard owners there might not be many (or any) within a 200 mile radius. This has led to the growth of many informal gatherings of enthusiasts and pubs and cafes, irrespective of what make they own. At the same time many traditional motor clubs have branched into the classic side of things as their membership matured and of course historic racing and rallying has become the growth area of motorsport in the UK.

The traditional clubs have got to change. If a member of his local MG club decides to swap his car for an MX5, which many have done, is he automatically barred from the group of enthusiasts he has been with for years? It's also important for owners of rarer cars from long lost makes to get out and be seen instead of hidden meets of half a dozen cars. Remember it is nearly 40 years since the last Triumph sports car was built and that was the most recent of our great names to go AWOL. Then think of all those marques that left us in the post war period to 1980. We will have to rely on people who weren't even born when the cars being built being enthusiastic about them. Food for thought?

I was sorry to hear of the death earlier this year of Norman Elliot, chairman of the Hethersgill Vintage Club who have run vintage shows in north Cumbria for many years, initially at Warwick Bridge and latterly at Carlisle airport. For many years it was the top "tractor" show in the region plus having a few steamers as well although the attendance has dropped off in recent years. Norman will be a huge loss to the Club as he was the moving force and organiser for not just the show but their social activities as well.

We often get requests for people running various events to ask if we can bring some "vintage" cars to their show. The word vintage seems to have become a generic term for anything slightly old. However, in car terms there are clear definitions created by the Veteran Car Club, the Vintage Sports car Club and Motorsport UK. Veteran is pre 1919, Vintage pre 1941 (VSCC say vintage is pre 1931 but they include Post Vintage Thoroughbreds made up to the second world war. Post WW2 classics is a more general term and Motorsport UK has clearly defined classes for motorsport for rallying and racing according to age.

Team Wigton

Team Wigton – Toby Cook – Autotest – Update no. 4



Now, one definite thing with Motorsport is “it’s not done till the fat lady sings”! Things have a habit of changing at the last minute.

It was certainly true for me at the end of September. The plan was to do the final round of both BTRDA and MSUK Autotest Championships on 29th September – Whitchurch Motor Club’s Firefly Autotest back at Demon Tweeks, Wrexham. That bit went OK, but I was originally booked to go straight to Llandudno for Wales Rally GB, Sunday night – last minute change. The weekend before, Gaurav Gill was involved in a terrible freak accident whilst rallying in India – and was unable to do Rally GB. So, we were one Fiesta R5 down and myself, plus several others were no longer needed.

Anyway, back to the Autotest. We were again staying at a fellow autotester’s farm about 30 minutes from Demon Tweeks – spot on. So, I went down from Cockermouth on Saturday and my parents came up from Kent again, with the motorhome and micra.

Demon Tweeks is a great venue for autotesting and the Whitchurch tests were excellent. Three layouts,

one on concrete and two on tarmac. It had been raining and the surface was very wet with puddles – then it chucked it down.

The test on concrete was like driving on ice – but there seemed to be plenty of grip on the tarmac. After the first runs, I was struggling for any speed on the slippery concrete and 2nd to Lee Matthews (2.0 litre Corsa). So I was again pleased to collect a class win by the end of the event.

As it was the last round of the MSUK Championship it was all off to a nearby hotel for ‘afternoon tea’, courtesy of MSUK, and their awards presentation. A great end to a fantastic season.

So, just one more event to go – The Ken Wharton Memorial International Team event on 19th October, run by Hagley & District Light Car Club at the Chateau Impney Hotel, Droitwich. I had been asked to drive as England Reserve – Class B Saloon.

As the event is on a Saturday I went down by train Friday pm and came back Sunday.

The venue is fantastic – I have competed at the Wharton a few times before but at the old venue – The Arrow Mill Hotel, Alcester. The format is a bit different to ‘normal’ events with just one test site used, down a narrow road with a junction at the bottom, overlooked by the amazing ‘Chateau like’ hotel on a fine sunny day.

There was just one test run 4 times in the morning and a different test 2 times in the afternoon.

Now the micra is usually reliable on events but clearly all was not well on the first run. It just topped out at about 4600 rpm – strange – we don’t have a rev limiter! Turned out to be a problem with the carbs, so spare set fitted and all better – over 7000 rpm now! Well almost better – it would not idle below 1200 rpm – turned out to be a failed ‘o’ ring on an idle mixture screw.

Anyway – the tests were fantastic but seriously challenging – with quite a few penalties being collected by many of the top drivers.



TC

The eventual winners were Northern Ireland with the Republic second and England a disappointed third, with a number of penalties and breakages. Still – that’s motorsport!

So, Autotesting done for 2019 and back to work. I’m off to WRC Rally Australia in November then it’s straight from Coffs Harbour to Ad Diriyah, Saudi Arabia, with the Jaguar I-Pace e-Trophy cars, again, for the 1st round of the Formula E Season 6it’s a tough life !!!

Jottings

When you hire a car when on holiday you don’t really know what you are going to get so you are able to sample cars that you wouldn’t normally consider. Back in September we had a Citroen C3 for a couple of weeks. A pretty non-descript car really but lacking in any power. I don’t know which petrol engine it had but with two up it would only get into first gear on a completely flat road and with four up on a typical twisty main road I was often in third gear. More recently in Portugal we had a Fiat Panda, surprisingly better than you might expect, albeit it was only six months old. Buzzed around very well with a nice driving position and visibility and suited some of the narrow country roads.

My travels in the last month took me to the Algarve Historic Festival, as part of an autumn break which we extended by three days to take in the meeting at the superb circuit that was built about 12 years ago north of Portimao complete with linking roads to the main motorway network. It is nearby, an off road and a karting facility. It was built with regional money and EU grants but actually went bankrupt and is now run by the regional government. Imagine that in the UK.

It’s a cracking circuit with quite a bit of elevation change and a variety of corners. The Festival was very much an end of term jolly for the top UK racers and there were some good grids but also some single figure ones as well.

The surprising thing was the poor turnout of spectators, just a few hundred on both days. I would think and this despite some great cars racing and on display, you don’t often see a genuine Ferrari 250 GTO racing these days for example. There were a handful of stalls selling the usual memorabilia and about 30 local classics on display which was strange as I understood the classic movement in Portugal was quite strong.



One of the star cars racing was a beautiful ex-works Austin Healey 3000 driven by the equally lovely Katarina Kyvalova who told me it was raced by Jim Clark at Brands Hatch in 1960 one of his rare drives that was not in a Lotus or Ford powered car.



Something that has always amused me in historic racing is that the people who are now able to afford the cars raced in the 60s and 70s etc are quite mature and having usually enjoyed more than their fair share of corporate dining and are thus quite a lot bigger and heavier than the likes of Moss and Clark driving the same car when they were new. Formula Juniors like the Lotus 22 are beautiful little cars and very slim. It was interesting watching some of their owners get in their cars. In one case the driver was literally shoehorned into his FJ by his team. It does make you worry about how he would get out in an emergency.



Welcome

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

Ken Wilson of Preston

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
John Sloan**



Charles Graves & Andrew Fish on the Rally of The Tests

Marshal Force

Marshals are the life blood of our activities

Marshals requests:

Festive Autotests Dec 30th

LE JOG December 7th

Elderly Utterances

The Voice of Experience!

Ron Palmer has his say

I see that Graeme has been organising the MG Christmas Cracker run for the past 20 years and is now looking for someone – an MG club member surely – to pick up organising the event which has given so much pleasure over the years. It has been a great success and Wigton MC members have always been welcome to take part in this pre Christmas event. I'm sure Graeme will make this last one something special as his swansong. Many of the participants of this run have taken part many times that they should be able to take it on blindfolded, but organising is not for everyone or so it appears.

Having recently been on the receiving end of highway robbery or rather car park robbery I cannot let this pass without a word of warning. The Britannia Parking Group operate a park in West Walls, Carlisle which is camera monitored on entry and exit. The ticket machines at £1 per hour require input of your car registration number and records the time. On 24th October I apparently omitted to record the registration number – which was strange as we use the park regularly – but let's assume it was my fault and not the machine's. At the beginning of November I received a £100 fine. I appealed and sent a copy of the ticket which proved I had paid the correct amount and the times matched to two clear images recorded of me at the car park entrance and exit. But the appeal was turned down because I hadn't used a valid ticket. In a properly controlled industry it should be impossible for a machine to issue a ticket without all the required information on it. So it was a £100 fine or if I paid promptly £60. So be warned this organisation has no reasonable appeals process and are just there to take your money by whatever means they can.

Motorsport UK has begun issuing the new for 2020 FREE RS Clubman Licence. This is available for everyone and gets you access to a number of benefits from MSUK and allows you to enter Clubman's events. I applied for one and received confirmation of issue within 24 hours and as I write this the card is 'in the post'. To apply on line, access **motorsportuk.org** and complete the on-line form. There are no downsides and lots of good reasons to get this free licence and support the controlling body of our sport.



I've been gathering copies of old rally photographs but any of Chris Lord and I in his Chevette 2300HS RVA841S have been scarce. I was surprised to see one on FB recently courtesy of Steve Brockbank and I hope he doesn't mind me reproducing it here. It's taken on a snowy Lakeland Stages in 1979 when we finished 5th. I did a few events with Chris that year including the Lombard RAC when we retired with transmission trouble in Grisedale. Chris was great fun to be with - an ebullient cheerful character who knew everyone and had great sponsorship from ESSO, Barkston and Elgam Organs. He took part in every RAC rally from 1974 to 1989, sixteen in total and finished in half of them, in a variety of

cars ending with an Audi Quattro.

May I wish everyone a Happy Christmas and Healthy and prosperous New Year, after all who knows what awaits us all in the year ahead. Ron.

Social Scene

Charles Graves reports

Wigton Motor Club

Annual Awards Dinner

Saturday, 8th February 2020

at the

Skiddaw Hotel, Keswick

7.00 for 7.30pm

Please contact Maria Quigley at the Skiddaw Hotel to book and pay for your table/seat on 017687 72071 or sales.skiddaw@lakedistricthotels.net

Raffle Prizes needed please

Autojumble



MG B Roadster It is Feb 1973, bronze colour, with soft top, tonneau cover and bermuda hard top (black). Fully restored with many new parts and wax oiled. Since we have had it, it has full electronic ignition upgrade, new electric fuel pump, various pipes and misc stuff under the bonnet, and we have had the seats re-upholstered in black with yellow piping - looks really nice. £18.000

Letters

Hi Graeme,

Thanks for another great 'Startline'.

However, having owned my Healey 3000 for 50 years, I was disappointed to see Andy belittling the Healey 3000's performance figures. The BHP figure he quoted referred to the earlier 2.6 ltr. 100/6. The Mk1 3000 was 124 BHP and it may have been more relevant to quote the figures for the later Mk111 model which were:

Power 148 BHP, 0-60 mph 9.8 secs. Top Speed 123 mph.

The Healey 3000 in 1964 cost £1,106 and, according to the advert, was the fastest sports car you could own for less than £1,500.

It was a very successful rally car and could be geared for short-stage events to give 0-60 mph in under 6 secs. and they are still being raced and rallied very successfully in historic events.

Maybe Andy should have gone to Specsavers!

Keep up the good work.

Regards,

Ian Clayton



Inside The Industry

Paul Gilligan has his say

Proposed PSA & FCA Merger To Create World's 4th Largest Carmaker

Lets get the initials out of the way first I think? PSA are Peugeot & Citroen who now also own Vauxhall and Opel. FCA are Fiat Chrysler Automobiles who in Europe own Fiat, Alfa Romeo, Abarth, Maserati, Lancia and a chunk of Ferrari. In the US they own Chrysler, Jeep, Dodge and Ram. They now propose to merge the whole lot into one company.

Idea is PSA are strong in Europe, FCA in North America. So to start with PSA get better access into North America. As ever when these deals occur the main driver is to cut costs largely by spreading the enormous costs of new vehicle development (particularly electric and driverless vehicles) over much higher volumes. This plan envisages cost savings of no less than 4 Billion Euros a year! It was also stated that there were no plans to close factories but you can believe that if you like, and the unions (rightly I think) don't.

Although the deal is dressed up as a 50/50 merger in fact PSA is buying FCA because it had a significantly larger market value before the deal was signed. Of course nothing is done until it's done. There are complications in that the French government owns around 12% of PSA and Peugeot family still have about the same stake. The Agnelli family still own 29% of FCA. So as well as winning regulatory approval there will be a need for these 3 powerful forces to get into the same bed?

My bet is that it will happen because if it doesn't neither party is big enough to compete in the future. Big question is where that leaves Renault. It looked secure as part of the Renault/Nissan/Mitsubishi alliance but now that is in total disarray Renault looks very exposed and vulnerable. Once again the French government has a significant stake so perhaps sooner or later Renault will become part of the new PSA/FCA giant?

Aston Martin – Is The Darkest Hour Before the Dawn?

AM has faced a lot of dark hours in its history. Forget the Le Mans win (one only – 1959) and the James Bond glamour this is a company that has gone bankrupt seven times. Now while it fights to keep going until the new DBX SUV goes on sale next year it has announced some pretty terrible financial results. Sales of the current model range are down on last year and losses in the first 9 months of 2019 totalled £92M. AM have found the Far East market particularly tough with sales there now 34% down.

The dawn, if there is to be one, is the DBX. Certainly adding a luxury SUV to the range can work wonders, although Bentley is still losing money even with the Bentayga selling well. Then again just look at what the Cayenne and Macan have done for Porsche. Which is really the problem for Aston. They've announced the DBX will be priced from £158000. So firmly in Bentley, Lamborghini and soon Ferrari territory. With excellent cars like the Cayenne and the top ends of Range Rover and BMW X5 and X6 far cheaper. Aston need to sell 4000 DBX models a year for the grand plan to work. Will they?

Make no mistake Aston Martin are close to the brink. A few months ago they raised a desperately needed £120M on the bond market but had to agree a 12% pa interest rate. It's unlikely they could go back for more so they have to have the cash rolling in from DBX sales early next year. I think the car looks fabulous inside and out, let's hope at least 4000 people with close on £200k to spare agree with me next year.

AM may draw some comfort from what the Cullinan luxury 4x4 SUV has done for Rolls Royce. Although I love the interior of this car I've always been surprised that RR could make something that from the outside looks even uglier than the Bentley Bentayga. However that won't matter to RR as I'm a touch short of the £300k it takes to buy one of these. For the first 9 months of this year Rolls have sold 42% more cars than they did last year. That's 3777 cars of which 1780 so almost half were Cullinans. Some of this is new business, some is existing RR customers switching from saloons to the SUV but the end result is very positive. Let's hope Aston get the same benefits.

Green Issues

Sadly I can't seem to get away from these now. Latest news is that Bristol is to ban diesel engine cars and vans from a small area in the city centre and establish a larger charging zone for less efficient older commercial vehicles. These charges will be between £9 and £100 A DAY! Closer to home (for me anyway) in the Lake District the National Trust which owns about 20% of the area is discussing banning cars from some of the most popular areas. In this case the motive is largely congestion. I can actually see the benefit of this quite clearly IF public transport is greatly upgraded to fill the gap.

Thankfully some people are looking at other things than cars as the great polluters. I read recently that because of their sheer size, therefore the size of their engines, the fact that those engines run 80% **of the time when cars run**

2%, and that they use "dirty" fuel, the 40 largest cargo ships in the world pollute as much as many millions of cars do. There are almost 100,000 ships operating worldwide now and it's being suggested that cutting their speeds by 20% would have a dramatic effect on pollution levels.

Meanwhile more and more well qualified voices are speaking out against the rush to electric cars because of the environmental damage caused to the production and later disposal of lithium ion batteries. We live in confusing times indeed.

Alfa Romeo Walk Away From Sports Cars

News that will shock Alfa enthusiasts: the company announced this week they were cancelling the planned 8C supercar and GTV sports car projects in order to divert resources to the development of two new SUV models. The 4C sports car has already been dropped and the Giulietta hatchback will go soon. Going forward the Alfa range will consist of the Giulia executive saloon and 3 SUVs. Alfa bosses explain they must go where the demand is, simple as that. Can anyone hear the cacophony of Tazio Nuvolari spinning in his grave at

something well beyond maximum revs?

New Car Dealer Numbers Must Reduce, But How Quickly

I don't think there's anyone left in the industry who doesn't believe that the number of new car dealerships in the UK and the rest of Europe will reduce the only question now is how quickly. Most manufacturers are adopting a policy of natural wastage so when a dealership closes for whatever reason they are not replaced. Sometimes the manufacturer simply can't find anyone to take over the area, sometimes they don't replace the dealer to improve the business of the neighbouring dealerships. Many think this sort of policy isn't moving the changes quickly enough. A major industry think tank recently issued a report saying that "substantial" car retail network reductions are required before remaining dealers can see a significant increase in their profitability.

Across Europe the number of new car sales points has declined by 16% in the past 10 years, a tiny 1.6% per year. In the UK the decline has been only 2% over 10 years. Expect many more to close in the next few years than the last.

Tesla Return to Profit!

When Tesla announced their Quarter 3 financials a couple of weeks ago they surprised the markets by delivering a return to profitability recording a surplus of \$261M having delivered 97000 cars in the quarter. Cost cuts are as much a factor as increased sales and not unexpectedly the margin per car dipped as the cheaper Model 3 volumes increased. The company was happy to announce more good news coming. Their new factory in China is ahead of schedule and within budget and the next new model an SUV (surprise!) is also ahead of schedule with launch now planned for Summer 2020.

Ford of Britain Moves House

60 years ago Ford moved their UK Head Office to just outside Brentwood from Dagenham. Now

that iconic site has been sold for housing (what else). The vast office building will become 250 flats and the even bigger car parks will have houses built on them. All the office functions have moved about 20 miles to the East to share the site of the Dunton Technical Centre. While Ford are putting a brave face on this as a great step forward the main benefit will be cost reduction. The property sale will put a lot of cash in the bank no doubt.

Ford's recent history in the UK has been one of retreat. The Southampton van plant closed 6 years ago, the Bridgend engine factory closes next year, now the Head Office has been sold off. Good news is that apparently all these painful decisions are bearing fruit with the company at least moving closer to profit.

UK Car & Van Sales Decline, European Sales Rise

October was another poor month for UK vehicles sales. New cars were almost 7% down on 2018 and year to date the decline is almost 3% so the drop is gathering pace. Analysts think the main problem is uncertainty and a lack of confidence caused by election worries and the dreaded B****t. Certainly those who make individual decisions are backing off more, retail sales were down 13% in the month and small business **over 30%!**

Only big fleet business (where the manufacturers and dealers don't make any money) held up.

Equally worrying for those involved in commercial vehicles was an 11% drop in new van sales. So far this year van sales have held up at 3% higher than last year. The crash in October was there fore unexpected and an unpleasant shock. It was concentrated in the bigger van area (think big Transit or Mercedes Sprinter) where sales were a staggering 19% down. Once again small businesses being cautious?

Across Europe the picture is different. Latest figures available are for September where sales were up over 14% against last September. This has almost made up for a slow start to the year with year to date sales only 1% down. There were wide divergencies with in the month Sweden 40% up and neighbouring Norway only 5%. Critically the large markets of Germany, France and Italy were all well up.

Star performers in September were VW almost 58% up on last September when they were very short of vehicles. While the Golf continues to be their top seller it is VW's strength in SUVs that is now driving their growth. Which perhaps explains alfa's decisions? Tesla sold 17500 Model 3s across Europe in September (more than Mini!) to make it the 11th top seller, amazing result for a car that starts at over £40000.

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Andy's Armchair

Andy Armstrong takes an irrelevant look at motoring and motorsport

We all certainly had a shock a few weeks ago when Autosport , the weekly magazine, increased its price from, in rounded figures, £4 to £11 per week. I , like I suspect many others, left my copy on the shelf which is presumably what they want us to do so they can just kill the print publication off once and for all. There appears to be the option of subscribing to the online issue which is all well and good, but with the broadband connection we have at home there's quite a lot of time each week that it would take an age to download, or when the home hub decides to have one of its regular holidays, and you'll have subscribed to the latest issue of "Safari cannot connect" which is a commonly used website on our i pad.

On the plus side I have bought Motorsport (Motoring) News for the last few weeks and actually found it a better read. I've got up to date with the British rally scene, which I couldn't with Autosport ,and club racing events have much better coverage. All well and good then, but no, apparently this publication is also on it's last legs so I'll soon be left in the wilderness with no chance of keeping up to date.

On a less negative note, I see that they've made a film about the 1966 Le Mans 24 hour race ,an event where Ford finished in the top three places and so won the war they'd been having with Ferrari for about three years, since their attempts to buy out the Italian company were rebuffed. They tried to engineer a dead heat, but when starting positions in the echelon (the race was pre starting grid), were taken into account the Amon /McLaren car took victory from the sister entry of Miles/Hulme who should in all honesty have finished first, but were beaten by 0.012 of a mile at the end of 24 hours of racing. To rub salt into the wound they'd been ordered to slow down in an attempt to engineer the dead heat mentioned above. Ouch! no wonder the second placed crew looked so disgruntled on the podium.

Continuing the Le Mans theme, granted the '66 race was interesting but really there's a better story to be told about the race the year before. Ford and Ferrari were daggers drawn then as well ,but by the small hours all the works cars had failed and the race was between two privately entered 250 LM Ferrari's and one Ford Daytona Cobra. Now the Taff Gosselin/ Pierre Dumay Ecurie Francorchamps car was leading from the Jochen Rindt/ Masten Gregory North American Racing Team entry with the Ford in third place. Rindt wasn't enjoying the event, having to drive to conserve the car wasn't his idea of fun, so when Gregory pitted unexpectedly and wanted his co driver to take over due to his spectacles constantly steaming up in the damp early morning atmosphere no one could find the Austrian. He wasn't expecting to be needed so had wandered off. Panic set in and their solution broke all the rules when they decided to send out Ed Huggus, one of their pit crew, and an experienced driver masquerading as Rindt. It took 6 or 7 laps before the errant Austrian was tracked down and then took over from his doppelgänger.

While the above was going on Ferrari officials were begging with Luigi Chinetti, head of NART, to let the Belgium Ferrari win as it was using Dunlop tyres and the American car was on Goodyears. Ferrari were terrified that having their Formula One supplier beaten would anger Dunlop and they'd lose their free works team tyres. Chinetti was being offered free cars, money etc in ever escalating amounts until the Dunlop shod car had a puncture and spent so long in the pits having resultant bodywork repaired that the Goodyear car was well ahead, and it's victory now unassailable. Chinetti was out of pocket but his team had won the most important race in the sports car world.

Maybe this race can be the sequel, if Star Wars can do it then why not Le Mans?

Ends AA.

What's On

WMC events and other events of interest

December

1st	Christmas Cracker Run	MG Cumbria
8-11	LE JOG	HERO
30th	Festive Autotest	WMC

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