

Wigton Motor Club Ltd

Start Line

Issue 03/20

www.wigtonmc.co.uk

March 2020

Monte Carlo or Bust!



Nuala Dowie sets off from Glasgow on the Monte Carlo Historique
Full report in this issue.

Motorsport for All

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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

I was interested to read a couple of articles recently that may be relevant to the Club. The first was by a president of a rugby union club. He had been involved since he was a teenage player and then in his thirties was a coach then a committee member and then a national official. He points out that as a player he was also involved in the club in other ways, it was the norm to do work on the pitch in the summer, and over the years the club built a club house and gym and facilities for other sports with much of the graft being done by the active players.

Now he says, things are very different, the youngsters in the teams only want to come and train and play, many seem to have an sense of “entitlement” which comes over in that they don’t feel the need to put anything back into the club as their predecessors over the past 40 years had done. When their playing days are over, they just disappear.

The second article was by a professor of psychology about the growing problem of mental health, depression and suicide in males in the UK. Much of this he puts down to the lack of social activity away from work and family and not meeting other males. The loss of pubs has meant “going for a pint” was now a thing of the past. Social clubs of various types are also dying out and even “going to the match”, is far less a Saturday habit than it was 30 years ago. Many younger men spend much of their spare time on social media or gaming, which does not actually involve a physical meet with those you are involved with. Thus many feel lonely and left out.

I reckon that motorsport is relevant to both the above articles. Competitors are far less likely to help run events, or be involved in the Club, they want to come, compete and go. After their competing days are over, they retire to the sofa. Motorsport used to have a great social scene, club nights, post rally parties and annual dinners. You met up and talked about your hobby and I am sure that was great for stress relief and avoiding the loneliness that so many people now seem to suffer from. A trouble shared etc

GTF

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

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Forthcoming Club Events

Spring Autotest

Sunday, March 1st

Entry forms have been sent out & are on the website

Entries to Peter Wright

Midweek Meander

Wednesday, March 11th

Starts at the Lake District Wildlife park and finishes at
The Motor House at Moota.

Entry fee £10 including coffee at the start

Food will be available at the Moota café at the finish

Entry forms are on the website and close on March 5th

Track Day

At Rowrah

Sunday, March 22nd

Now Full

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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

Chairman Peter Reflects On His Month

I'd like to start with a congratulations.....well done to Cumbria county council for successfully torturing me for 6 months now and spending huge amounts of money making the roundabout at the A66/A595 Stainburn bypass junction look nice! In July last year they started work on that roundabout every night....even Sundays most weeks....which left me sat at traffic lights on my way to night shifts and on my way home in the middle of the night often as not. Several times I got there just after 8pm and had to sit for 10 minutes whilst workmen nonchalantly set things up whilst the traffic lights were on red in all directions. I could cope with that if there was going to be some improvement, but what has emerged is a nice tidy up and some nonsensical arrows on the road that work against the Highway Code guidelines and direct cars to use both lanes to turn right from Whitehaven direction even though there are not 2 proper lanes on the other side of the roundabout.....only a few metres of double lane covered in arrows advising that the lanes merge. Totally pointless, and already accidents have started happening there. Given how long it took, the hours worked and how many people and machines were employed, I'd imagine the project cost tens of thousands of pounds – maybe more. Now that's over they've started on the bottom Cockermouth roundabout in the same vein.....so I have months more torture ahead of me – I only hope they aren't just making it pretty and introducing ridiculous arrows and whacky lane discipline to the thing! Early indications are that a small section of extra lane is being built on the East bound carriageway but otherwise it's a beautification exercise.

The speed season is looming and RBS is still not ready but progress is being made and it's almost time to buy my competition licence which has jumped in price from under £50 to nearly £70 and for that price increase I receive loads of extra.....oh no wait.....I receive nothing more than last year! Apparently my insurance cover has increased and there are some licence holder offers that may save me money. Personally I'd rather have paid less for my licence. Entry fees are also going up by £5 an event so I take the Motorsport UK (MUK) line that they're supporting grass roots motorsport with a pinch of salt – I've been hit twice with licence and fee increases and I can't see any of the offers banded about will save me money and I never have needed the (now free) medicals and eye tests because I don't have the time or money to do circuit racing or rallying. Even entry level motorsport such as auto-testing now requires a licence as a lot of you will be aware. At the moment those licences are free but I'm a cynic and I suspect those free licences will soon become £5 and then £10 licences as MUK attempt to claw back the money they're losing as membership falls. Time will tell I guess but whilst this has been a much vaunted exercise in modernisation if you believe the hype, it feels more like another nail in the coffin of club level motorsport.

I am starting my season with the reintroduced Rowrah track day in March where I will hopefully be able to get some time in the car and figure out how I can make it go faster, before I head to Doune in April – possibly the scariest UK hillclimb. If you don't believe me have a look at the YouTube video 'Predator at Doune' and that car doesn't even hold the course record.

In other car news the Astra is back up and running and waiting for nice weather to arrive – my efforts to sort the engine chains appear to have been successful (touching wood with fingers crossed) and the new exhaust and inlet are all fitted and even after that lot the car fired up first time and seems to run well.

Championship News

Autotest Championship

1	Craig Stamper	25
2	Peter Wright	20
3	Ian Wozencroft	15
4	Jack Palmer	14
5	Drew Maclean	13
6	Rob Iveson	12
7	Geoff Rae	11
8	Phil Hodgson	10
9	Adam Wozencroft	9
10	Steve Palmer	8

Autotest FWD

1	Craig Stamper	25
2	Peter Wright	20
3	Jack Palmer	15
4	Peter Masters	14
5	David Agnew	13

Autotest RWD

1	Phil Hodgson	25
2	Bob Hargreaves	20
3	John Holliday	15
4	John Sloan	14
5	Fiona Tyson	13
6	J Vickers	12

PCA RWD

1	Ian Wozencroft	25
2	Drew McLean	20
3	Adam Wozencroft	15
4	Angus Cowan	14
5	Fiona Tyson	13
6	J Vickers	12

PCA FWD

1	Geoff Rae	25
2	Steve Palmer	20
3	Dave Garner	15
4	Aaron Pattinson	14
5	Ben Rae	13
6	D Grierson	12
7	Aidan Gregory	11
8	Joseph Hodgson	10
9	P Grierson	9
10	Jack Long	8
11	Paul Hodgson	7
12	Dawn Garner	6
13	Callum Alexander	5

Club Championship

1	Peter Wright	45
2	Peter Masters	27
3	Drew Maclean	26
4	Craig Stamper	25
5	Angus Cowan	18
6=	John Holliday	17
6=	Aaron Pattinson	17
8	Ian Wozencroft	15
9	Jack Palmer	14
10	Rob Iveson	12
11=	Geoff Rae	11
11=	David Agnew	11
13=	Phil Hodgson	10
13=	Dan Grierson	10
15=	John Sloan	9
15=	Adam Wozencroft	9

Marshals Championship

1=	Eddie Parsons	20
1=	David Wiggins	20
1=	Graeme Forrester	20
4=	Mary Parsons	10
4=	Marian Sloan	10
4=	Chris Hunter	10
4=	Steve Fishwick	10
4=	Jaqui Raine	10
4=	Robin Heslop	10

Championship positions will be updated in each issue of Startline

Any queries must be raised in writing within 14 days of issue

Chris Leece

Race Retro Photos



Monte Classique 2020:

The UK Committee of The Automobile Club de Monte Carlo do a brilliant job each year maintaining the tradition of a UK Monte Start. So it was that this year two Historiques & eleven Classique entrants left St. Georges Square Glasgow on a drier Friday evening. By way of controls at Dumfries, Banbury and Calais we trundled on to join hundreds of others at Reims – all heading south to the sun of The Cote d'Azur. Ever since I watched Tony Curtis whisk Susan Hampshire off her feet in his immaculate SS Jaguar it has been an ambition of mine to follow in the wheel tracks of those “flying machines!” And, so it was I finally began to live the dream.

For the past three years I've been developing my Spitfire 4 into a loose recreation of the car Jean-Jacques Thuner & John Gretener drove on the 1965 Monte. Although they were arguably the best pairing of rally drivers Triumph ever had - in '65 they were without a “works” drive and so entered a wee green & yellow spitfire of their own. In a year that saw less than 40 finishers (out of a field of over 300) they came a very respectable 28th and were one of three Spitfires that year classed as finishers.

In 2018 Markus Bewley & I slithered north over a snowy Beattock on the B7076 to do the companion event called Monte Heritage – this saw us start from Paisley Abbey and run down to the first passage check at Auldgirth Inn. In 2019 and growing in confidence, I was joined by a fellow Club Triumph member and we did the Monte Heritage from John o Groats to Clydebank via very snowy Grampian roads and an overnight in Aberdeen to the Monte Start at Clydebank. Technically, The Monte Classique is only open to cars registered before 1966 but I'd noticed that (as ever) ACM are prepared to play loose with their own rules when it suits their purpose – perhaps because JJT & JG had entered The Monte nine times in various Triumphs and that JJT died last June - my '67 MKII entry was accepted. & Alek Krestenic from Pocklington agreed to be my co-pilot. Shake downs on Rose & Thistle & Col de Ruisg helped resolve some niggles. Last-minute difficulties fitting an extravagant Restall Recliner were resolved with the help of John Jackson. Preparations were really no more than the servicing and “winterising” that most conscientious classic drivers do routinely. Things that break – are things that move – and these were thoroughly checked and replaced where suspect. A fresh MOT added another level of scrutiny and a new set of 145/80 R13 winter tyres were fitted to refurbished 3 1/2 “ wide-slot “original” steel wheels.

At £1700 it's not cheap – but there can be no easier way of attempting an “official – ACM Monte” As the Classique & Historique share the same controls on the concentration run down through central France, it's also a very good way of getting to know what a proper Monte Rally might entail. There was plenty of time to mingle and observe the hundreds of other entrants at Reims & Valence. Alpin's, Mercs, DS's & 2 stroke Saab's jazzed up the entry of predominantly Porsches, Lancia's and Alfas. There were only 3 Triumphs, a TR3, GT6 MKII and a Triumph 2000. Sadly Glasgow & Athens had far fewer entrants – with even Brits choosing to start from Reims, Monte Carlo or Bad Homburg. This is a great pity – I hope others reading this may be encouraged to enter and choose a Scotland start to support UK Motorsport.

The unpredictable nature of such events soon showed. Mutterings at the start were suggesting that the A66 was closed at Warcop – so we would need to re-route via Skipton. Leaving Gretna, we noticed that the extremely high winds had also resulted in sectional closure of A69 & M6. was closed south of Carlisle for resurfacing. Having gone over the ramp outside Glasgow Civic chambers at 7pm we finally made The Majestic Hotel in Harrogate about 12.30am. The re start in Banbury is another great send off – all around the market square is closed off with many motor clubs bringing stands – its quite a show – even David Richards came to say hello.



Classique times are relaxed and the requirement is only to visit each control while it's open. Running along the Rhone valley we were dogged by thick mist and reached Borgoin-Jallieu for a much needed pre-dawn kip. Pushing on for Buis les Baronnies we lost 2nd gear and were fearful that the rest of the gearbox might fail too. But rallying wouldn't be rallying if we'd given up just because the hills became a struggle. We thought we'd try a gentler route back up to Crest but wrong slotted at a roundabout and headed up the hilarious D70. We eventually made the Valence control tired but elated. All classiques made it, but unfortunately a pretty red A40 Farina could go no further having lost compression. The 1936 Riley Sprite, '52 MG YB, '53 Ford Popular '54 Daimler Conquest showing the collection of 60's sports & sport saloons that they remembered their heritage and knew the way!



Nuala Dowie

A prolonged wait in Reims while 100+ Historiques left before us was used to grab a meal and tighten a front wheel bearing. Then we were away along streets lined with cheering fans. Through villages with pull ins where we were given gifts of Champagne Biscuits & Turkish Delight chocolate to sustain us through the night. The first section was aided via a Tulip road book but beyond Bar-sur Aube we were linking Bif this with Bif that – thankfully Rally Maps had produced a wonderful route map and we'd also managed to load some GPS way-points. We lost a lot of time in Lons-le Saunier looking for a mis plotted control – but on the

While the Historiques had already done a couple of ZR regularities and would be spending the next couple of days in The Ardeche & Vercors – after an over-night halt we headed on to Monaco via Die, Sisteron & St. Andre des Alpes. What a relief to corkscrew down the tunnel onto the Albert 1er Quay and take the ramp in front of the marina. The rest of the evening was a whirl of flashing cameras, champagne, hotels on Loews Hairpin & Black Tie Dinner in ACM Headquarters.

Sadly, the Mini from our Glasgow start of The Historique were timed out at the very last time control, while the splendid RS2000 of David Glen & Andrew Surgess finished 216th in a similar car to the out-right winners Djerregaard & Svec.

Would I recommend the event? Certainement. Would I consider doing the event again – mais qui!

From The Top

News from UK Motorsport, Regions and the WMC Committee



Chairman Peter Garforth presented a cheque for £1,000 to the Calvert Trust . A similar amount was donated to the NW Air Ambulance, all from our collections at events in 2019 and rounded up by the Club.

The **February Committee** meeting saw fifteen committee members attend with two apologies.

The entry forms for the classic show are ready and just awaiting the sponsors logo. A feasibility study is to be done into getting containers for members car storage.

John Holliday is taking over the club stand entries for the show.

Peter and Paul are looking for new test venues within 15 miles of Penrith for the LDC. Has anyone any suggestions.

The awards dinner had run smoothly with excellent food. It is intended to return to having a top guest speaker at next year's dinner.

Membership is currently 564 with quite a few still to renew.

David gave an update on The Motor House.

It was agreed that any queries re championship points must be made within 14 days of publication.



motor
sport
UK

Recognised
Club

Classic Column

News from the Classic and Historic Scene

There are a couple of interesting Face Book pages: UK Barn Finds and Unfinished Projects. It is interesting that there are still interesting cars appearing, literally, out of the woodwork, most in very sound condition and not the piles of rust that you see in the "Finds" pages of certain classic magazines. I do wonder how many find good homes and get restored. Is there say an interest in a 1955 Hillman Minx or a 1960s Riley? Even if they are sound they are not easy restorations as you can't just ring up and order a new part as you can on the later more popular classics.

The Unfinished Projects are often kit cars and look to be 80% completed in most cases, perhaps it's the wiring and actually getting the thing going that makes owners give up?

The Race Retro rally demonstrations for historic and modern rally years drew 145 entries with some lovely cars but rather too many for the format and you had to stay there several hours to see them all. It would be better to have half the entry, concentrate on quality of car and driver and run them consecutively and not multiple runs. The crowds at the show on Saturday did seem larger than in past years.

On the live stage it was interesting listening to the MD of HERO events extolling the virtues of their events. He kept saying about how their events are like what rallying was in the 60s and 70s. Now he has an incredibly successful business which obviously appeals to a certain type of people who are generally not involved in motor clubs and motorsport. However the events are not like the ones we used to compete on. Indeed it would be impossible to run those types of events today and I doubt if there would be much interest in "plot and bash" road rally type events anyway. Later that morning I was chatting to a top lady "HERO" competitor and mentioned the word "selective" and she had no idea what I was on about, although to give credit she probably wasn't born until well after the last "proper" road rally was run.

Cumbria Classic Weekend

August 22/23rd

Cumbria Classic & Motorsport Show

Sunday August 23rd

Entry Forms for vehicles, trade stands and clubs will be emailed out in March and will be on the website.

Welcome!

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

Jamie Stuart

Declan Richardson

Derek Best

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 on 01900 85833

or by email at: wigtonmcmemb@outlook.com

Marshal Force

Marshals are the life blood of our activities

Forthcoming events:

March 1st Autotest at Maryport (Peter Wright)

March 14th Malcolm Wilson Rally

March 22nd Rowrah Test Day (Graeme Forrester)

Elderly Utterances

The Voice of Experience!

Ron Palmer has his say

Having previously spent 40 years of my working life in the motor trade I have watched with interest the many changes which have taken place in the 15 years since I retired. Of all the changes the most significant will be the outlawing of sales of all new petrol, diesel and hybrid cars by 2035 or maybe even 2032! This is only 15 or 13 years from now and whilst I may well not be around to experience the optimistic madness of this date, when the appointed day approaches there will be a rush from those wishing to enjoy the old style of motoring to buy up all the impending illegal cars before that date. And in following years when snow blocks our motorways as it has from time to time in the past the flat batteries will not only disable the EVs but also prevent the ICE vehicles from any progress. Some bright spark will no doubt have the complete answer in good time but I think having access to an ICE car for a while after the date of the ban will make some sense. Another question – for how long after the deadline will we be allowed to use our illegal cars?

Entries have been coming in steadily for the Meander on 11th March and as the closing date for entries will be 6th March get your entry in now if you intend to join us. Remember the finish is at Moota so that will be a good opportunity to see the progress David Agnew and team are making on fitting out the club Motor House.

I've just caught up with the Swedish Rally footage from ITV4 and have to say I was impressed – with the excellent footage, the coverage of Elfyn Evans' and Scott Martin's fabulous win, the first by a Brit, the superb 3rd place by 19 year old Kalle Rovanpera and the sheer speed of those cars on snow, ice and mixed with a breaking gravel surface. The in car footage of a Hyundai flat in 6th at 183kph for a prolonged period in such conditions can only be marvelled at. Toyota are apparently trying to dissuade Ogier – their multi world champion team leader from retiring at the end of this season. With first and third place Toyotas ahead of Oggy on the Swedish they may change their minds and save a few million by letting him go.

I was looking forward to heading into the woods to marshal on Saturday 22nd when word came through from Steve Fishwick advising that the Fellside Motor Club Trial had been cancelled. The decision to close the forests had been made by Forest Enterprise in view of the forecast wind speed expected to be in excess of 47mph. This led not only to the cancellation of the motoring tests but also closure of the Whinlatter Visitor Centre and the mountain bike activities therein. It a shame but in these litigious days they could otherwise leave themselves open to legal actions and claims. So sad when such a vast amount of work had already been put into organising the event.

I've been spending these past rainy days putting together this year's Coast to Coast run and booking the refreshment and comfort halts. It should be well worth doing but please put the date – 9th October - in your diary and book early as numbers will be restricted to 30 cars. Entry forms available in the next few weeks.

Ron.

KIELDER FOREST RALLY



Marshal Request **Saturday 25th April '20**

Marshals required for various roles. Instage, timing, radio. New look one day event with a compact format with 3 stages ran twice, plus start, service and finish all in Kielder Forest .

To Marshal :-

Visit www.kielderforestrally.co.uk/volunteer-to-marshal/

Or

Contact Chief Marshal Barry Lindsay,

Email barry.Lindsay206@gmail.com

07745450714

Or

Contact Stage Commanders Direct,

Jon Binns – jon.binns1@gmail.com

Karen Spencer – karen.spencer@buccaneermc.co.uk

Neville Simmons – Neville.simmons@live.co.uk

The Motor House

There is a weekly work party at the Motor House with usually six to eight volunteers but we have seen a dozen on a good day. All are welcome and David Agnew is our team leader if you wish to volunteer. The days vary from week to week. We usually work from ten until two-ish with lunch and social breaks!

Currently all the internal walls are in place and the electrical wiring is being put in and the plaster boards nailed to the frames. Once the electrics are in place we move on to the plumbing.

Rallying Call

With the first round of the British Rally Championship (plus other major series) having taken place in Wales with the route being shortened due to the poor level of entries and at the other end of the scale the single venue events at Croft (Jack Frost) and Knockhill (Grant Construction) have had less than the full entries they have had in the past, is it time to be concerned? Each year for the past 25 or so there are fewer stage rallies but in most cases they have got viable entries until the last couple of years. Certainly the BRC is a shadow of what it was years ago. And almost at the point where everyone who enters will win a prize.

Next month sees the Kielder Rally, basically risen from the ashes of the Pirelli Rally which in turn was the Tour of Cumbria. The ToC was created back in the seventies by a consortium of local clubs in order to ensure local crews had a locally run rally in which to compete in, such was the demand for forest allocations back then. Many of our current members were involved back then. The new rally is run over three stages run twice and is based at Kielder Castle and is a counter in the British Historic Championship and local series.

The WRC has had two rounds as I write but with just three teams we only have nine works cars, so it's a straight fight between Hyundai and Toyota with M Sport Ford as always punching above their limited budget. The TV coverage seems to imply there are no other cars in the event and we don't see the classes, or the size of the whole service area for example.

The entry forms for the **Historic & Targa Rally Awards** have been sent out and are on the website. Please get your form back to Bob Hargreaves ASP. The first round is the Berwick at the start of May. We welcome our new sponsor, Proline Automotive Services of Carlisle.



Quiz Question: One of these won a WMC organised event. Who was the driver?

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On the Grid

I just read “The unknown Kimi Raikkonen” which is an interesting book. About the senior driver in F1 and his dislike of the PR and media side of things and how he preferred the company of his Finnish friends to the GP gloss. I reckon that he and Lewis are the last two drivers from ordinary backgrounds to get into F1. His father was a mechanic and his parents work hard all year to fund the karting of their sons. They lived in a very small house and the first thing that Kimi did when he got a paid drive in F1 was to buy them an inside loo! The thought of an outside “cludgy” in a Finnish winter does not bear thinking about!

I also read that Lando Norris’s father spend over £3m on his son’s racing career and no doubt similar figures for Alex Albon and George Russell, who are our latest F1 prospects but at least they are talented, unlike Lance Stroll whose father had to buy a team to get him on the grid. Clothing billionaire Lawrence Stroll has now bought into Aston Martin so presumably now when you buy one of his exclusive T Shirts you will get a free Aston Martin.

There seems to be a cut back on motorsport at Croft this year; no Nostalgia Weekend, no sprint and no rallycross. They seem quite happy to run track days and non M UK events now.



It was great to see the success of the M Sport Bentley at the Bathurst Twelve Hours but sadly so little coverage of the event which has some iconic sections and the superb photos of the kangaroo racing the leaders.

Drive It Day

Sunday, April 26th

At Dalemain

11 until 2

Suggested donation of £5 per car to our charities

Blood Bikes & Hospice at Home

Inside The Industry

Paul Gilligan has his say

Aston Martin Rescued

As discussed previously Aston Martin's desperate need for cash brought two suitors to the table, Chinese company Geely who already own Volvo and Lotus, and a consortium led by Canadian billionaire Lawrence Stroll. In the end Stroll who already owns F1 team Racing Point won and acquired a 17% stake in the company in exchange for an investment of £182 million which will be boosted by fresh investment from existing shareholders. This fresh cash should be enough to get Aston through until the point later this year when the new DBX SUV starts to generate significant profits. Racing Point will be rebranded as Aston Martin F1 although Aston will see out its contract to sponsor Red Bull until the end of this year. Mr Stroll's son Lance will continue to be one of the drivers for Racing Point.

After that further funds are promised for the development of a mid engine two seat sports car to "go Ferrari hunting", and the introduction of hybrid and later pure electric models.

Aston has been owned by a succession of rich men in the past including 1950s tractor tycoon David Brown and later none other than Henry Ford, but all have got bored in the end with throwing money down what appeared to be a bottomless pit. Let's hope Mr Stroll and his co-investors (who include Lord Bamford of JCB) have more stamina.

New Petrol, Diesel & Hybrid Cars To Be Banned From 2035

The industry had already been told that the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans would be banned in the UK from 2040. In early February the Government announced this would be brought forward to 2035 and would include hybrid cars as well. Then last week said they would advance the ban further to 2032 if possible.

Industry reaction has been pretty consistent that the ban is simply unachievable, and that it isn't currently supported by a detailed plan to make it happen. Industry heavyweights have cited the high cost of electric cars, the lack of recharging points, shortage of raw materials to make batteries and the inability to generate the required electricity anyway. Others have pointed to the lack of technicians trained to service and repair electric cars, only 5% of the current pool are currently so qualified. Electric cars being produced now normally use 400-600 volt systems and manufacturers are working on 1000 volt systems. These things are simply lethal in untrained hands.

The scale of the changes to the new car market needed to meet the target is simply amazing. Currently pure electric cars represent 1.6% of sales. Of the 32.5M cars on UK roads only 155,000 or less than 0.05% are pure electric. If a smooth growth from 1.55% of the market in 2019 to 100% in 2035 is achieved then electric/hydrogen cars sales need to increase by 6.5% market share or around 160,000 units every year for the next 15 years. So this year we need to go from last year's 38,000 sales to 200,000! And in 2021 to 360,000. Perhaps its understandable that people are sceptical. If the growth from 1.6% of sales to 100% over the next 15 years is smooth then the industry will need to produce 17 million zero emission cars for the UK market in that time, over 1 million a year when last year the figure was 38,000!

Tax Changes Needed To Support 2035 Ban

Whilst bringing the ban date forward by 5, or maybe 8, years the Government hasn't yet announced what it intends to do with the electric car and van grant which is due to expire at the end of March. This was cut in 2018 by £1000 per vehicle and hybrids previously included were excluded. The continuation if not increase in the grant is seen by many as a vital part of there being any chance of reaching the 2035 target.

One thing that will boost the move to electric (or hydrogen) is the announcement that the Benefit In Kind (BIK) charge company car drivers pay will be reduced to zero for tax year 2020/21 if they choose a pure electric or hydrogen car, as long as the operating range is at least 130 miles. Choosing zero emissions will save company car drivers broadly from £200 to £500 a month. This will put an enormous pressure on employers to provide those cars to their staffs, who will also benefit from reduced fuel costs for the private miles they pay for themselves.

Companies can also benefit from attractive tax allowances when they buy zero emission cars, for the present at least.

However nobody has said yet what the Government intend to do to replace the fuel duty they currently collect from the sale of petrol and diesel. That was £28.4 Billion last year! Some form of road pricing seems inevitable?

Toyota Takes The Hydrogen Road Long Term

Toyota pioneered the hybrid car and over half of their production of 9.5 million cars a year are now hybrids. They have taken 15 years to get to this point. In 2014 they launched their first hydrogen car and say the timescale will be similar, so expect hydrogen powered cars to be mainstream by the late 2020s. However the company has recognised the need to fill the gap between now and then and will be producing its first pure electric cars soon with ten models available in Europe

by 2025. Toyota is clear that this to them is a temporary measure. Their Chairman recently said “Gasoline has been the primary fuel of the first 100 years of the car. Hydrogen will be the primary fuel for the next 100 years”.

Coronavirus Threat To Production

The Coronavirus outbreak which started in China but is now spreading poses an enormous threat to the vehicle industry. Many Chinese factories are closed or operating on a reduced basis . indeed Tesla who have been enjoying good news recently have been forced to close their Chinese factory only weeks after it full opened.

Now I’m not an expert in this but I’d be willing to bet that there isn’t a car produced in the World now that doesn’t have some components manufactured in China. Fiat Chrysler have already announced plans to close at least one of its European plants within a month because of these component shortages. Both Kia and Hyundai have put some of their South Korean factories on part time working. Just how bad this situation will become is impossible to forecast currently, but I’d say “very bad” is probably an understatement.

UK New Car Sales Off To A Bad Start

As feared January brought no good news for UK manufacturers and dealers. New car sales were over 7% down on last January, itself well down on January 2018. Pure electric cars were over 200% up but still only 4000 sales or 2.7% of the total. Diesels fell to 20% of sales. These are frightening numbers for manufacturers and dealers alike. As ever some fared worse than others. Alfa Romeo were 32% down on last year, Citroen 22% down, Dacia 51% down, Hyundai 31% down, Kia 25% down, Mazda 26% down, Mini 33% down, Renault 14% down, Ssangyong 51% down, Suzuki 40% down and Vauxhall 25% down.

Few were smiling. Audi did well at + 13%, Mitsubishi at +16%, Porsche at +10% and that’s about it. Amongst the tiddlers I can’t help wondering why they bother. Remember these figures include the registration of dealer and manufacturer staff cars, courtesy cars and demonstrators, Alpine registered 10 cars, Lotus 9, Subaru 49, and Ssangyong 103?

Falling New Car Sales Create Used Car Shortage

As new car sales have slowed but used car demand has remained strong used car supply in the trade has become very tight indeed. Franchised dealers are hanging on to the lower number of part exchanges they take in to fill their own used car lots, leaving the independent trade fighting over what little is left. Inevitably the good old laws of supply and demand have seen used values rise significantly. There are reports of traders paying over guide retail prices in the auctions just to get stock, how they then sell on at a profit is a mystery.

One large wholesaler I know who normally has over 12500 vehicles available currently has under 8000 and says they think the number will drop further. The rental and leasing companies who unload tens of thousands of cars a month are enjoying a bonanza. I was talking this week to a friend who manages a leasing fleet of 20000 vehicles and sells about 600 a month. I suggested he must be enjoying a windfall profit of about £300,000 a month just now. “More than that” he smiled.

Out Of Space

Space restrictions mean that for Startline I have to end here. I do produce a full length version for other magazines which includes articles this month on Mercedes Profit Crash, Alfa Romeo slashing new product plans, Uber going electric, how Italians pass their driving tests (or don’t!), Brighton going car free, European massive pre registrations in December and progress on self driving cars. Please email me if you’d like the full version.

Paul Gilligan

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MG Cumbria

Roof of England Challenge

Sunday, April 5th

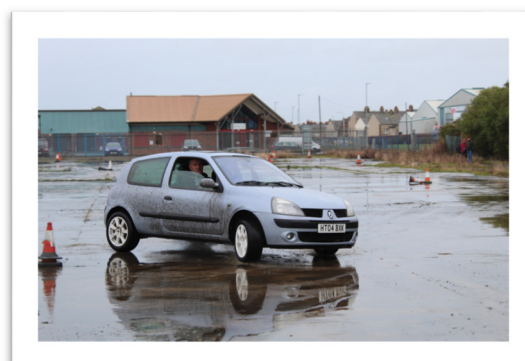
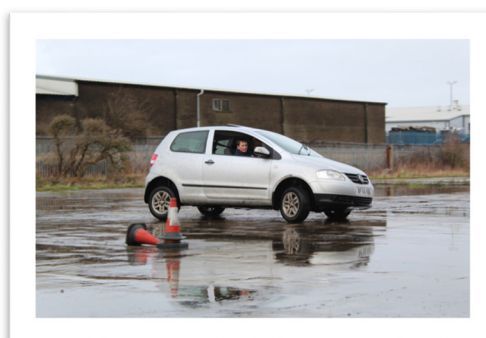
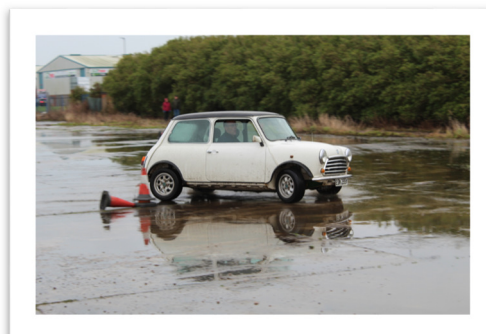
120 miles in the Pennines

Entry form on the MG Cumbria Face Book page.

Early Spring Autosolo

David Wiggins ran a very successful autosolo at the end of January and while conditions started off damp they improved during the day. No less than 18 tests were run giving an average of 20 minutes test times so fantastic value for money!

1	Peter Wright	Mini	FWD 1
2	Peter Masters	Suzuki	FWD 1
3	John Holiday	Mazda MX5	RWD 2
4	Aaron Pattinson	Corsa	FWD 2
6	Drew Mclean	Mazda MX5	RWD 2
5	Angus Cowan	Escort	RWD 2
7	David Agnew	Mini	FWD 1
8	Dan Grierson	Clio	FWD 1
9	John Sloan	Escort	Hist
10	Jack Long	VW Fox	FWD 1
11	Paul Grierson	Clio	FWD 1
12	Brian Bradley	Golf	FWD 2
13	Stuart Peglar	Midget	Hist



Andy's Armchair

Andy Armstrong takes an irreverent look at motoring and motorsport

I've got to say I'm feeling just a bit smug at the moment having beaten the BBC Panorama programme by several months when it comes to pointing out how dangerous smart motorways are. It's pretty obvious that those in power have at last realised that their "money saving" method of cramming more vehicles onto our motorway network is basically a recipe for disaster, but of course some poor souls have had to die in order to demonstrate the ineptitude of those who should know better. Shame on you!

For those of you not following this sorry tale the scheme was trialled on the M42 using "refuge areas" (i.e. lay-bys) 500 metres apart. The results were OK and so the design was rubber stamped for further expansion. Fair enough you might think, but in the next batch of development the positioning of refuges had gone up from the previous 500 to, in some cases, 2500 metre gaps. Ouch!

The M25 smart motorway (NB round London) also has radar coverage, which can spot a stationary car reasonably quickly and take action to close lanes, but other smart motorways haven't got this. Yet again, more financial pruning, no doubt needed for the "Elizabeth line" or HS2.

In closing this rant can anyone in government answer two simple questions? Firstly, if I'm on a standard motorway and break down on the hard shoulder I'm told for safety's sake I should get out of the car and stand behind the barrier. On a smart motorway Grant Shapps our transport minister tells me that in a live lane with a speed limit of 70 mph I should stay in the car and wait to be rammed into. How is this an improvement? Secondly, and thanks to Paul Gilligan for this, who mentioned in his article about going into a bus lane and getting fined. How is it possible to have cameras aplenty to spot such so called terrible indiscretions and not enough to make people safer? I guess it's because one makes money and one costs it, would sum things up.

Enough of this, onto motorsport, thank goodness I hear my reader sigh. Well the Monte answered a few questions didn't it? Elfyn Evans obviously has what it takes, surely he can muster some wins this season in his new Toyota. Ford aren't quite there at the moment, maybe the soon to appear upgrades might help, but I'm not totally convinced they've got the experience on the driver front they'll need to win anything, maybe Mr Meeke could come back as long as he could avoid the expensive accidents he seems prone to on occasion. Talking of which, young Mr Tanak looked like he was after a private pilot's license when he finished his rally early. You can't help wondering if such a fright, and frightening it most certainly must have been, will have lessened his resolve to go at 100% a tiny bit. I hope it hasn't because things are so close at the front the slightest doubt can lose a whole lot of points.

Having looked at how the passenger cell of his car survived maybe we should all get a similarly strong one when we want to go on a smart, oops! Sorry I said I'd finished on that topic, but I couldn't resist such an obvious link.

Ends

AA.

What's On

WMC events and other events of interest

March

11th	Midweek Meander	WMC
14th	Malcolm Wilson Rally	KLMC
20/21st	North West Stages	NWMS
22nd	Rowrah Test Day	WMC
27-29th	Restoration Show at the NEC	

April

5th	Roof of England Challenge	MG Cumbria
3-5th	Flying Scotsman	HERO
12th	Warcop Stages	NMC
19th	Autotest	WMC
26th	Drive It Day	WMC

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