

Wigton Motor Club Ltd

Start Line

Issue 02/21

www.wigtonmc.co.uk

February 2021

Evans/Martin take second for Toyota in Monte Carlo



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Talking Point

Topical Comment from the world of motoring

The Chairman of MSUK David Richards recently asked for comments on the future of rallying in the UK and indeed for our round of the WRC, Rally GB. We asked members for their comments and ideas and these have been coming in and we will send them to David in the next week or so.

It does seem to me that motorsport and its clubs have failed to change over the last 30 years or so. This is not something confined to our sport but to all amateur sport run by volunteers. In many cases commercial interests have taken over any parts of sport where money can be made.

Here are some examples: **Cricket:** In Cumbria they lose one or two village teams per year and many county teams are struggling.

Rugby: In both codes the top end professional clubs make a lot of money but the town and village teams struggle to get and retain players and volunteers.

Golf: While the professional game seems good, many member run courses are struggling or closing.

Athletics: The traditional athletic clubs are losing out to commercial run “park runs” and the like which still rely on the members of the athletics clubs to marshal them.

Cycling: Similarly the growth of cycling events has been in professional run events for profit which has not been good for the traditional cycling clubs.

If we take motorsport, the clubs and the MSA as was, have really failed to move with the times. For example, **track days** are hugely popular and present much better value than a sprint or tarmac rally. Philip Young invented **historic regularity events**, as now run by HERO and other commercial groups. They get tremendous interest from people who would not think of joining their local club. However these events rely very much on motor club members for marshals. More recently **retro demonstration events** for rally cars of the 60s to 80s are getting a lot of interest although the organisation and insurance of some of them leaves a lot to be desired. These are often run by one person who then calls on the local clubs for marshals but is happy to walk away with the profits.

Perhaps clubs and MSUK need to be exploiting this market by using their expertise and manpower to run those sort of events to build up funding to improve or subsidise their own events and at the same time get new members?

For far too long we have relied on casual agreements for the use of land for events. Only a handful of clubs in the UK own or lease a venue. With venue loss now a major problem this is really affecting how many events that clubs can run. Finding and securing venues is perhaps now a priority.

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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Club News & Events

As far as events are concerned I really doubt if we can see anything happening before June. With the rather more serious virus situation. While MSUK's any COVID measures are excellent, we are dealing with something that causes hundreds of deaths per day and we must do our bit to eradicate it. The other important point is the public perception of our activities. If we resume, say before local football, tennis and cricket for example, it would not look good.

There will be no Gallop in May but it will be back in 2022

Should the situation improve quickly we do have April events ready including Drive It Day.

The accounts for 2020 have been completed and ready to be audited. Given the lack of events and particularly the Classic Weekend we have ended the year in a remarkably healthy position given the cost of the final push to complete the Motor House.

There has been a huge response to our request for your views on the future of rallying. These are being collated and will be sent to David Richards. It's great that so many members have taken the trouble to reply.

The general view is that club level stage rallying has seen its best days with the cost of preparing a car, entry fees and the shortage of venues being the main issues. They all make it beyond the reach of a typical clubman so clubs are then saying why go to the huge effort of putting an event on for a small number of very rich competitors. Will we be allowed back in the forests?

Venues for targa and historic rallies are a major issue while it seems people are preparing cars for targa events almost to stage standards which is not good as it will lead to more damage to the venues.



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PG Tips

Peter Reflects On His Month

Happy new year – or at least it might yet be at some point this year. So far though, we do appear to be stuck in a reoccurring nightmare and now I can't even get takeaway beer, although I have rectified this by buying a beer brewing machine from an advert on Facebook. Hopefully it will be better than some of the junk I've bought as a result of being sucked in by the advertising they slide into my information feed. What I know is that Facebook knows I like cars – all the sites I'm connected to bar a couple are car related and they're devious at Facebook, and hit me with never ending adverts for car based products, and in a lot of cases – Chinese based and produced junk! Last year I bought a car phone holder that looked great in the advert – when the man waved his phone next to it, arms opened and clasped the phone in place and also charged it wirelessly. After ordering this gem of automotive tat,

I woke the next morning with only a mild hangover and remembered my phone did not have a wireless charging facility. Oh well – at least it would cleverly grab the phone and release it at the swipe of my phone/hand like in the advert. It arrived from China a month later and it did indeed open the arms and grip the phone when I put it in place...for at least the first dozen times I used it. Then it clearly decided it didn't like me and waving the phone near it failed to make it open for several seconds. Then it decided it liked the phone too much and wouldn't release it. After a week or 2 of this, I had the last laugh when I ripped it's arms off in order to recover my phone. By then I'd forgotten that I'd paid £20 for it and the relief of not having to deal with it was worth it. I won't bore you with tales of the other junk I've bought from Facebook, but they include car mats that didn't fit (again from China no refund to be had) and some miracle polish that is a bit smeary and not nearly as good as the advert claimed. I have high hopes for the brewing machine though – it's British made and has won awards. It's called The Pinter and made by a company called – 'For The Greater Good' if anyone else wants to try their hand at up-market home brewing with none of the mess.

Back on cars – I now have literally everything to supercharge the Astra Bertone although that is working out more expensive than I thought at first, because in order to fit the charge cooler radiator under the bumper I needed a new bumper. Thankfully in the Far East they rather bizarrely produce a perfect replica of the Astra GSI bumper from the same era as my car. Given my ramble above, you're probably expecting me to say it is a cheap ill-fitting nightmare, but far from it – it is very well built of a proper flexible resin plastic with all the correct reinforcements and could easily be taken for a genuine GM item. It also arrived primed with a fitting kit. Once painted, it slotted onto the car with only the tinniest bit of tweaking with a Stanley knife and now I have room for the radiator as well as the aircon. I just need lockdown to end so I can take the car to the man who supercharges them!

Barry the single seater is up at JDM having the replacement engine fitted and the rear wing mount reinforced, and without wanting to jinx anything it all appears to be going very well – obviously I can't go and visit due to the dreaded C word, but things do appear to be looking up on that front and with any luck I'll have the car back in a few weeks, all set for whatever kind of season we have this year. Keep everything crossed people!

Peter

SOME CARS I HAVE OWNED

by Kirk Rylands

I started off with an Austin 7 special based on my aunt's very tired 1936 Ruby. As a 16 year old, I really didn't make much of a job of it but managed to drive it back to school for my last term and Carlisle to Wimborne was a fair run out.

My first proper car was an MG TA that looked lovely but had no grunt at all and back, brakes perpetually running in oil. However, in those days, tread on tyres was not a requirement and with the rears pretty well down to the canvas, I learnt the rudiments of the four wheel drift until one day, I got a bit too cocky and stuffed it into a wall.

I then found a very cheap TR2 with serious tin worm but nothing that some perforated zinc sheet and filler wouldn't cure. I did my first competitive event in that car at Fintry Hill climb in 1968 – pathetically slow but at least I was having a go.

I drove that car from Aberdeen to Gibraltar and put in four new pistons in the south of Spain. A great car because a ham fisted agricultural student could usually fix it.

Next came an Austin Healey 3000 Mk2 in a dreadful state but cheap and basically sound. Once I had sprayed it a very fetching shade of metallic BRG, it looked quite smart with its matching hard top.

This was followed by a Morris 1000 for practical reasons and then my first Jaguar.

A 1958 3.4 Mk1 for £120. I thought I was 'jack the lad' in that car until she ran a big end after about a fortnight. Steep learning curve – remove engine and fix it or scrap the car. I learned a lot and later used her to tow my Healey 3000 racer which she did very well until rear wheel steering developed and my friendly garage man decided that he couldn't weld rust to underseal anymore.

By this time, I had fallen in with bad company and went as 'go for' to most of the VSCC race meetings with a chum who had a T37 Bugatti. He spied this 'full race' Healey with an 'international' history in the back of Autosport and persuaded me.

to go for it. In those days – circa 1971 - it was just an obsolete and uncompetitive racer in a filthy state and, after a hair raising test drive, I think I paid £320. I did my first proper race at Castle Coombe in 1972 and spent much of the time in the scenery.

A great introduction and quite a quick car but I never got the handling sorted. She gave way to HWM 1 in 1974 – a car in a different league that is well documented, and I think still for sale with Gregor Fiskien. I kept her for 34 years – brilliant.

Work had taken me to London where I was offered a new Cortina as my company car. I suggested to the M.D. that a MkV1 Bentley would be a better idea – about the same money to buy but in five years' time the Cortina would be worth tuppence halfpenny. and the Bentley probably about what was paid for it. 'Good idea' he said. 'You persuade the Chairman'. I ended up with a second-hand Rover 2000 TC which was a very civilised car and towed quite well.

Following the collapse of the London property company, there followed things like Morris Marinas and Cortina Estates – perfectly functional but of no interest.

Having returned to Cumbria and sorted myself out, I had about four Jaguar XK6s, which were generally lovely cars? I was kicking tyres in a back street garage I knew when the man told me to go and look at the silver XK6 parked in the street. I returned saying it looked as though it had been painted by a blind man with a blunt stick who had then scattered sand on it whilst still wet. 'Have another look – that is the best XJ6 shell I have seen for ages' and he was right. It was not rotten in all the usual places.

but after a run up to Aberdeen, I checked the oil and found that I needed a longer dip stick. A new set of rings sorted that problem, and I ran that 15 year old car every day for work for at least 2 years – bought and sold for £900. With no electronics, I could service it and the car's only crime was

thirst. 16 mpg rarely exceeded but the lack of depreciation compensated. A really comfortable mobile office that towed the H.W.M. very well. I had three other XJ6s, but the last Sovereign had fuel injection which helped the economy a little. However, suddenly, there were all sorts of relays and electronic clever dickery that often defeated me.

A Pontiac Trans Am crossed my path. I saw it advertised but couldn't go to look at it and so asked a chum to do a deal if it looked sensible. I figured that anything with a 6.5 litre V8 had to be fun. Wrong. Fitted with cherry bomb silencers, it made a glorious noise and looked really vulgar in gold with a big black eagle on the bonnet.

But it had been strangled down to 200 bhp and it weighed 2 tons which, coupled with handling worse than a supermarket trolley, meant it had to go. I was very lucky to get out level. Another error of judgement was a BMW 633 automatic – a real feeling of a quality properly made car that went well but, when pushed, the front end tended to let go before the tail and neither my wife nor myself really fell for it.

The firm I unexpectedly found myself working for started to complain that I insisted on running my own cars rather than accepting a company car and would I at least try a 2.8 Sierra 4x4. A very nice car to drive and once we towed HWM 1 back from Montlhery – south of Paris - to Carlisle in a day. Later the gearbox packed up, but they insisted on me conforming so not my problem. However, at 65,000 miles, the whole car felt really tired.

Recently every day cars have been Audis which generally fail to excite but they work properly. The latest one however, both foxed and irritated me when I spent about 20 minutes trying to find the dip stick only to discover that 'progress' meant that I had to prat about on a computer to check the oil level. That and a light that comes on telling the tyres are flat when they aren't means that I will never have any affection for such a machine.

An XK8 was a distraction for a while – a one owner fully serviced example that was very comfortable and far more economical than my old Jaguars but poor build quality.

and not exciting. Just a two door saloon really so that gave way to a 1989 Porsche 3.2 Carrera. Air cooled and with no gizmos – not even ABS or power steering. Having heard so much about 911s, I thought I had better see what all the fuss was about. It is a great car to drive fast but not so good for pootling. Put your foot down in top at 60 mph and not much happens – unless you drop a couple of cogs. I have had my E type for 45 years and I still love it. 5 speed box and slightly tweaked with better brakes and the suspension geometry carefully set up, I still think she is a lovely car to drive.

Bought as a 9 year old and as rotten as a pear. The build quality was appalling but they were half the price of an Aston and a third of a 250 Ferrari. However, once put together properly, they will give either a real chase or with the great advantage that they are fixable at sensible money – unlike the opposition.

Our XK140 roadster is not an exciting car but a great tourer that has taken us round much of Europe, Jordan and New Zealand. In many ways, a better car than the contemporary Aston and again – fixable. When going over the Alps, you miss so much in a closed car and she will steam along all day at highly illegal speeds.

I have been a VSCC member for years but hadn't had a proper vintage car until the Bentley came along about 13 years ago. A 1923 3/4.5 that had been a racer since 1947 so tweaked and goes well. The main alteration I made was adding weight to the flywheel so that it now weighs about half the original instead of a quarter. I got fed up with having to blip the throttle going up the box instead of just down. Lightning fast changes were possible but only if going flat out in each gear so not much use driving through a village. A very capable vintage car but hard work. I would have loved a vintage Alfa or Bugatti, but they are three times the price and not three times the car.

My wife, Alannah, has had her first car, a 1951 MG TD, for 53 years and wouldn't let me sell it. As I get older, I have grown quite fond of it. It wouldn't pull your trousers down and so is quite relaxing as you can't pass anything. You dawdle along looking over the hedges and trying to stay awake. On some of these WMC jollies round the lakes and along roads no wider than a garden path, it is ideal, and I use quite a lot.

In the summer I have sometimes suggested to Alannah that she take her MG, but her reply is often

'No, I'm in a hurry'.

Cars have been great fun and I hope will be again once this Covid business is sorted.

I have no desire to own and can't see the point of a modern super car that only becomes fun when you risk going to jail. The Bentley at 60 mph demands attention and is very involving which makes more sense to me.

Kirk

Membership News

A big welcome to:

Andrew and Chrissy Hill and Ross Crombie Noble and Emily Hill. from Ambleside.

Just a reminder that membership for 2021 is free to all those who paid for 2020.

A few members have kindly offered to pay for this year but we are pleased to report that we are in a sound financial position and the cost of continuing this year are relatively small. Hopefully events like the Classic Show will take place and provide an income boost.

Auto Jumble

Members' Sales and Wants

Trailer/top box. Size: Bed 4 foot, width 4 foot including wheels, length including draw bar 6 foot, could be extended. New wheels and tyres, lighting board and mudguards.

£140 o.n.o. Eric Little 0778 3943982



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Racing at Croft



Just to add a bit of glamour here we have a photo of a lovely MG Midget racing at Croft courtesy of Terry Wright.

The driver "Valli" was the model girl friend of Chris Meek who entered her in a variety of cars in the national Productions Sports car Championship with quite a bit of success in the seventies.

She later married pop singer Emile Ford and became a record producer.

The car is still around looking much as it did in its day. Don't know about Valli though!

Information Sheet No. 2 - Continued

LAP RECORDS BEFORE THE START OF THIS MEETING

| Category | Driver | Car | Time | | Speed m.p.h. |
|--|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|---|-----------------|
| | | | M | S | |
| Formula Ford | Peter Harrington | Cougar 75E | 1.12.0 | | 86.54 |
| Prod Saloons Over £1500 | G. Konig | Chev. Camaro 228 | 1.24.8 | | 74.29 |
| Prod Saloons £1050 to £1500 | Bernard Unett | Hillman Avenger | 1.30.6 | | 69.54 |
| Prod Saloons £800 to £1050 | Malcolm West | Ford Escort Sport | 1.37.4 | | 64.68 |
| Prod Saloons Up to £800 | Tony Lamfranchi | Moakritch 4 12 | 1.41.2 | | 62.25 |
| Motorsports 1,301 & Over | John Pearson | Jaguar XK120 | 1.13.6 | | 85.60 |
| Motorsports 1,151 to 1,300 | Tony Williams | Austin Healy Sprite | 1.18.8 | | 79.95 |
| Motorsports Up to 1,150 | Johnny Blades | Clan Crusader | 1.16.4 | | 82.46 |
| T Type MG Cars | Not Yet Established | | | | |
| Formula Three | Alan Rollinson | Ensign LNF3 | 1.10.6 | | 89.24 |
| Special Saloons 1,301 & Over | Mick Hill | Ford Boss Capri | 1.13.2 | | 86.07 |
| Special Saloons 1,001 to 1,300 | Eric Smith | Mini 1275 G.T. | 1.15.6 | | 83.33 |
| Special Saloons Up to 1,000 | Alex Clacher | Hillman Imp | 1.16.8 | | 82.03 |
| Formula Libre (Also outright record) Clubmans Sports | Tony Dean Geoff. Friswell | Chev. B. 24 U.2. Mk.11B | 1.01.2 1.09.4 | | 102.94 90.77 |
| Formula Supervet | Tom Pryce | Royale RP9 | 1.12.0 | | 87.05 |

Amendment to Information Sheet 1.
The Northern Clubs Motorsport Championship for the Northern Sports Cars (Scorton) Trophy

Note: Marks scored at the start of this meeting and at N.S.C.C. Meetings on 17/6 and

| | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Johnny Blades.....33 | Garry Wilson.....12 | Richard Jenvey.....6 | David Blackwell..... |
| Jon Fletcher.....29 | Brian Hough.....11 | John Evans.....6 | John Truelove..... |
| Jim Anderson.....26 | James Duckton.....10 | Richard Storey.....5 | John Owens..... |
| John Absalom.....18 | Brian Lambert.....10 | Bob Craig.....5 | John Gregson..... |
| John Pearson.....15 | | | Max Evans..... |

Croft 1973 lap records.

A couple of WMC members there sadly no longer with us. Eric Smith and Alex Clacher.

See Tom price in the FV, later to go on to F1 and his biography has just been published.

Also Gabriel Konig, a very fast last driver in the Camarao

From The Top

News from UK Motorsport, Regions and the WMC Committee

Report of the Officials webinar by Peter Weall of the SAMSC

Motorsport UK continues to keep fully engaged with all the relevant Governments, including the one in Edinburgh, and SAMSC continues to be involved in that dialogue. For my part, I will continue to keep you as up to date as I can about what to expect but I don't have much to add at this stage to what I said in my New Year update to you recently other than to share my own thoughts. Getting fully back up and running will require us to address at least six separate issues. Five of these apply to all motorsport disciplines while one impacts mainly on rallies. I will come back to car sharing at the end.

My working assumption is that the system of geographic tier or Covid level restrictions, currently based on Local Authority boundaries, will remain in place for the foreseeable future. This means that any general travel restrictions in place will apply to our sport. Specifically, travel in to or out of level 3 or level 4 Local Authority areas for sport events will not be allowed. My view is that sport participation is highly unlikely to be included in the list of essential travel reasons. Remember that these are currently legal restrictions not just guidelines.

I also expect the requirement for people to keep 2m distant to remain for some time. I know how much this has an impact on smaller venues, especially the paddock areas at places like Doune, Forestburn and Kames. Even where there is plenty of space, the current Scottish Government restriction places a limit of 200 participants. This means that even a large rally venue like Leuchars could only have 50 entries if we assume two service crew and two competitors per entry.

The next issue relates to spectators. Even if and when they are allowed to return, I expect there to be limits and restrictions. This presents a variety of issues for events depending on the venue. Fully closed events, like single venue rallies on a military base, are perhaps the easiest. Other venues, like Knockhill, are able to manage spectator access. But multi venue rally events, both forest and closed road, are likely to have to prepare a plan to satisfy the authorities that Covid safe protocols can be applied.

This brings me to my next point. I know that last year, some clubs cancelled events that were allowed under the restrictions because of a wider concern about public perception. This is especially the case at a venue which is visible to passing public. There is a widely shared view that our sport will not look good if it is seen to be going ahead when other social activity is not allowed. We may not all share this view but we must be conscious of it.

Finally, I promised to return to car sharing. To repeat what I said in my New Year message a couple of weeks ago, in early December, the Scottish Association and Motorsport UK were actively engaged with SportScotland on this matter and were making good progress constructing a case to present to the relevant Government decision makers. While nothing was guaranteed, I had a degree of confidence that we might get the go ahead for rallies from perhaps March this year. But we must all accept how things have changed. With the escalating cases and additional restrictions announced just before Xmas, we decided the time was not right to press this case. We are now working towards starting up again and hopefully we can make some progress on this point but I can't at this time have any confidence of seeing a rally car in action in Scotland at least until April and probably beyond that.

Pete Weall

Chair SAMSC

News Snippets

As you will have gathered I am no lover of the current breed of Chinese MGs, on the basis that they do not have any of the genes that every previous MG has had. However SIAC obviously think that the name still carries some kudos or they would have called them something like “Ping Pong Poo”. Then of course in the UK we have had some famous marques revived in low production like Alvis and Allard, but one strange one is Borgward. The German marque died in 1961 so there is no continuous history like MG.

The former Borgward car manufacturing company, based in Bremen, Germany, was founded by Carl F. W. Borgward (1890–1963). It produced cars of four brands, which were sold to a diversified international customer base: Borgward, Hansa, Goliath and Lloyd. Borgward's Isabella was one of the most popular German premium models in the 1950s, while Lloyd's Alexander / Lloyd 600 model offered affordable mobility to many working-class motorists. The group ceased operations in 1961, following controversial insolvency proceedings. The brand was revived in the 21st century, with the Stuttgart-based Borgward Group AG designing and marketing cars manufactured in China.



Bill Blydenstein raced an Isabella in the British Saloon Car Championship in 1958 which started his career as an ace tuner with Vauxhall and DTV.

Stirling Moss used Borgward 1500cc engines in a his F2 Cooper for a couple of years with great success and the Borgward made some very pretty sports cars.

There is a conspiracy theory with a lot credence, that the firm was not in fact insolvent but was damaged by stories put about by other German manufacturers such as BMW who were jealous of the firm's success.



The current Chinese made Borgward BX3, a typical SUV with no character.

Elderly Utterances

The Voice of Experience!

Ron Palmer has his say

I had intended to continue with the monthly Tourally details until the spring but as driving out for recreational purposes is now against the law I have discontinued this for now.



It was sad to note the passing of another local driver from the 1960s era, recently announced in the Cumberland News. Les Todd of Irthington was a member of the Cumbria squad that tackled the tough Scottish International from 30th May to 3rd June 1966. His co driver was Peter Oddie from Carlisle who in his rallying career was to partner a selection of notable drivers including Paul Gilligan and Russell Brookes. Peter had been suggested by Gavin Waugh when Les Todd was without a co

driver. Interestingly Les was amongst the cluster of locals who had bought brand new showroom fresh Mini Coopers to enter the Scottish International in 1966, others being Mike Telford/Peter Handy starting at 18 in a 998 Cooper and Malcolm Wright/ George Rice 1275 S at 86. In addition others locals entered in Minis were Irving Oglanby/John Taylor 1275 S at 32, Brian Mitton/Gavin Waugh 1275 S at 40 and Robin Murray/ myself 1275 S at 42.

The Scottish International of the '60s was a stern test of man and machine, on this occasion limited to 100 entries. The total mileage was 1700 including 324 stage miles over the 54 special stages. Scrutineering, documentation and road books were issued from 10am on Sunday 29th May and navigators' heads were down and fully occupied for the rest of that day in plotting the route onto 1" O S maps. The start was from a ramp outside the Royal Scottish Automobile Club in Blythswood Square, Glasgow on Monday at 08.01 flagged away by the Lord Provost with lots of pageantry and a great sense of occasion. Service crews were much in evidence and followed us throughout the event as without them a finish for most cars on the rough Scottish would have been unlikely.



The first leg covered 884 miles including 40 special stages covering 186 miles over 31 hours and took the weary crews via several loops eventually to Grantown-on-Spey for the overnight halt on Tuesday/Wednesday. The social side at Grantown was something special in a large marquee erected in the HQ hotel grounds and after two days in the saddle it didn't take too many drinks for everyone to be very happy and being able to rub shoulders with the rallying royalty was a bit special. Top crews included Roger Clark/Brian Melia, Tony Fall/Mike Wood, Lars-Ingvar Yitterbring/R Hakansson (the



only Mini to finish ahead of Robin and I), Rosemary Smith, Andrew Cowan, Tiny Lewis, Jack Tordoff etc.

The Wednesday loop started at 8am and consisted of 331 miles including 10 stages of 57 miles. Thursday's section was 302 miles with 10 stages totalling 66 miles. Friday morning saw the crews and organisers decamp from Grantown-on-Spey with the remaining stages being completed enroute to the finish at Stepps. The black tie prize presentation and reception was back at the RSAC to round off a memorable event.

The private entrants were at a disadvantage to the works cars as the Minis had been in development for six years and the standard cars were a bit frail when subjected to a week's punishment on the Scottish. Results showed Robin and I finished top locals in 7th place o/all, Irving Oglanby/John Taylor had a class win and Team Treadfast won the team award yet again. The 750 Team of Les Todd/Peter Oddie, Malcolm Wright/George Rice and Mike Telford/Peter Handy all retired in Clashingdarroch. A memorable event for all.

Ron

NAVIGATOR REQUIRED FOR 2021 TARGA/HISTORIC SEASON

(optimistic I know)



John Sloan will be needing a navigator for Targa/classic rallies in 2021 and beyond.

M has decided to retire whilst ahead (in the midget) and is not really keen on the Mk2 Escort!!!

Car is a solid Mk2 Escort, with rally seats, harnesses, full bolt in cage, firewall and hand extinguishers. The driver is reported to be 'steady' which I take as meaning a bit slow/safe but am not easily offended!

Looking to contest events that are driveable to in a day, no overnights, no cost to navigator, meals etc paid.

Not fussed if person has no experience but knowing your left from right would be helpful, ability to shout but not swear also a plus....could do a couple of autotests with passenger/navigator to learn. Will need a free MSUK license to compete...this applies to all of our non tour events.

No pressure, just to have a bit of rear wheel drive fun.

Drop me line or give me a bell if interested.

johnsloan02@outlook.com



**Recognised
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Who Could Have Said Twelve Months Ago?

Back in my teaching days we, at one point, used group reading books as that was the in thing at the time. You ended up reading the same book many times with different groups over the years. One book stuck in my mind. It was about a girl who lives in 2020 – about 30 years on from when it was written.

The girl lived in a “living pod” with her parents. Each morning her parents went next door to their “work pod” where they worked on their computers. The girl staying in the main pod and the main wall turned into a screen linked to her computer and her teacher and classmates all appeared on the screen and they did their schoolwork. She had not met most of her classmates but communicated with them by computer.

In the afternoon they did PE with their PE teacher on the screen and she did her exercises in the living pod. Anything they the family needed could be bought via the computer and delivered by a conveyer belt that ran through all the pods. When food was needed it too came via the conveyer.

When it came to holidays, they did not need to go anywhere as the room could be changed into a beach, holiday centre etc at a press of a button.

Later in the story the girl’s grandmother came on a visit and told her all about her childhood, pencils and paper, caving money coins and notes, going to shops, climbing trees, going for walks, travel and outdoor fun.

Even twelve months ago you wouldn’t have bet that that would have actually come to pass in 2020!

John Aley

John Aley died early in the year. John was a very quick racer, mainly in Minis but is best remembered for being a pioneer of roll over bars (or ROPS as we call them now). The early ones were simple loops to keep the roof from coming down on the driver. He, with a business partner, were the first to mass produce them as Aley Bars. His partner went to =n to form Safety Devises.

RIP

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Auctions and Things

The world of car auctions has been turned on its head by the pandemic with live auctions at exotic venues being replaced by online versions which must have saved the main auction hours millions. However there doesn't seem to have been a drop off of people willing to spend big money so presumably the profits for the likes of Bonhams will actually be bigger due to reduced costs. Will they see a need to go back to the show piece venues ? I would think that most of you watch "Bangers and Cash" about Mathewson's Auction in North Yorkshire. In most episodes you see WMC members in the audience. Although they don't get the big spenders, they do have a very high sales percentage and again their costs will be low as they do the auction in the village hall next to the garage. I know quite a few people who have used them and they are well thought of and considered very honest to deal with, unlike others we could mention who have all sorts of additional fees, even if your car fails to sell.

Talking of dodgy auctions the Coys saga continues. After five bankruptcies under various permutations of its name it has now been bought by The Calleri family, who are lifelong classic car enthusiasts and run a worldwide geological services company, have partnered with Nick Wells, formerly a consultant to Coys. Nick, as part owner, has taken on the position of Managing Director and has assembled a team of car experts and enthusiasts. The previous MD Chris Routledge is reputedly in Canada but there are several disgruntled car owners who would like to speak with him as to where their money has gone! It would seem that the Coys name still has enough prestige as to be worth investing in.

Classic car dealing seems to pay: Bake Off presenter Prue Leith has reportedly sold her £10million home to a racing driver who once bought a £37million showstopper car.

Upmarket car dealer Gregor Fiskens knows more about avoiding rusty undersides rather than soggy bottoms, but is said to have snapped up Prue's famous Cotswold's kitchen as soon as she put the manor house on the market.

And although £10million is the kind of price tag that would make most people blow a gasket, the enthusiast is used to handling large sums of money at his showroom in Kensington Mews.

This second hand car dealer handles some of the rarest and most expensive cars in the world on a daily basis and in 2020 won a court clash with an American lawyer over a gearbox from a £37million 1962 Ferrari 250 GTO he bought and sold.

His website profile says he fell in love with cars while riding in the back seat of his parent's Bentley during his time growing up in Scotland. After starting out as an apprentice mechanic with the famous restorer Bunty Scott-Moncrieff, he combined racing with working at Coys of Kensington, an upmarket classic car dealership. Since opening Fiskens Fine Historic Automobiles, in 1996 he has become a well-known colourful figure on the racing scene and is one of the few people to have contested the Le Mans 24 Hours across all four classes.

Trusted as a driver he can boast of being able to put his foot down behind the wheel of iconic motors such as a Ferrari P3, a Maserati 250F, a Jaguar E-Type, a McLaren F1 GTR. and a Ferrari 250 GTO.

Race victories include the Monaco Historic GP, Goodwood Tourist Trophy and Tour Auto, and his website boasts that Fiskens is where the world's greatest cars come to be sold.

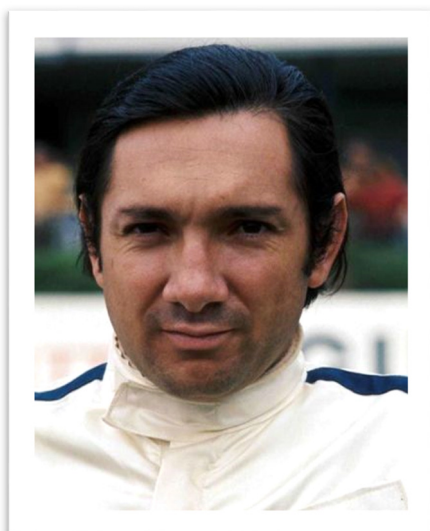
Andy's Armchair

Andy Armstrong takes an irreverent look at motoring and motorsport

You can't help admiring Sergio Perez who at the time of writing has just been announced as a driver for the Red Bull F1 team where he'll partner Max Verstappen next season. His journey to one of the top teams has been far from smooth, on the way to the top he's been sacked by McLaren, rescued Force India when bankruptcy loomed and been dumped by Racing Point even after winning them a Grand Prix and being far and away their best driver. It's a strange old world.

Sergio is definitely very capable of that there's no doubt but is he the best Mexican ever to race in Formula 1? There are 5 others to consider in answering this question, Moises Solana (1963-66), Hector Rebaque (1977-81) and Estaban Gutierrez (2013-14 and 2016) can be pretty quickly dismissed as their achievements don't come anywhere near those of Perez so the two remaining drivers in contention as the leading Mexican have to be the brothers Ricardo and Pedro Rodriguez.

Born in the early 1940's, the sons of a wealthy businessman who was alleged to have made much of his fortune through some rather dubious dealings, the boys started racing in karts and motorcycles but had, by their early teens, progressed to cars. Ricardo the naturally more talented was winning races in both Mexico and the USA by age 16 and showing great promise, his friend the leading race engineer Joe Ramirez describing him as a potential great, another Senna, and remember Joe observed and engineered many of the greatest drivers of his time. The brothers came to Europe and entered the Le Mans 24 hours race in 1958 only to be thrown out as Ricardo was only 16 and considered too young. They went back in 1960 and almost won. Enzo Ferrari spotted Ricardo's talent and gave him drives in which he further proved his worth. Keen to race as much as possible, especially in front of his home crowd, Ricardo accepted a drive in the Mexican Grand Prix of 1962 in a Rob Walker Lotus. Fighting for pole position in practice the young driver lost control at the Peralta bend and crashed with fatal results. Was he pushing too hard? Did something break? No one knows but what had seemed a great career was cut short age 20.



The loss of his brother shocked Pedro and he briefly retired from the sport but his pull was strong and he returned after a short break, eventually getting into F1 with the Cooper team. Results weren't wonderful, the car was at best average and it wasn't until the early 1967 he won the South African Grand Prix in a Cooper Maserati, a lucky win but none the less the final victory for the once mighty team.

From here much of his success came in sports cars facing both Ford and Porsche cars for the JW Gulf team, winning the 1968 Le Mans race at last with Lucien Bianchi (uncle of Jules who died after crashing at Suzuka in 2014) in a Ford GT 40. From here he raced largely Porsches, either the 908 or the fearsome 917 and became renowned for his ability in these cars, just watch his performance in the 1970 BOAC 1000 at Brands Hatch on "you tube" to see what I mean. Along with Jo Siffert he formed the spine of the team enjoying a firm friendship with the Swiss driver whose famous tongue in cheek comment sums up Pedro's attitude to racing.

"Usually he's friendly and quiet but once he's in a racing car the little b-st-rd tries to kill me"

Jo and Pedro teamed up again in F1 with the BRM team, both winning GP races, Pedro's coming at Spa in 1970, the last time the old circuit was used for a Grand Prix. Things were looking up. The car was successful and both drivers looked likely to show their true ability in single seaters but it wasn't to be.

Pedro raced whenever possible and he accepted a drive in Herbie Muellers 512M Ferrari at the Nor-rising. The end came while leading, and lapping a back marker, who moved across him, he crashed, the car was torn apart and he died in the ensuing inferno. He was 31. His great friend Jo Siffert died 3 months later racing a BRM at Brands Hatch when the suspension broke and he too met a fiery end at Hawthorns.

So, back to my original question, who's the best Mexican driver to race in F1? Well, in my opinion Sergio has a little way to go to pass Pedro, but I wish him well, and I'm sure Pedro, if he's somewhere he can watch from is doing exactly the same.

Buena Suerte Checo!

Ends

AA.

Jottings

What has Newcastle United and windscreen wipers have in common? Not a joke but a local bit of history

Gladstone Adams was born in Newcastle-upon-Tyne on 16th May 1880

Becoming a professional photographer, he went on to own two studios. Adams caused a bit of a stir when in April 1908 he drove down to Crystal Palace Park, London in a 1904 Daracq-Caron motorcar to watch his beloved Newcastle United play Wolverhampton Wanderers in the FA Cup final (Newcastle lost 3-1). It was such a novelty to see a car in those days that it was placed in view of the public in a showroom window as so many people wanted to see it. On the journey home, snow building up on the windshield meant Gladstone frequently had to stop his car to clear it. His experience led to him designing the windscreen wiper which he patented in April 1911 with Sloan & Lloyd Barnes, patent agents of Liverpool. The prototype is held by the Discovery Museum photo below.

He and his brother also invented the '*trafficator*', a forerunner of the car indicator.

What Three Words – A Complete Con?

You will have seen the adverts and wondered what it is.

For a start it's grammatically incorrect, it should be "Which Three Words." It uses GPS to give your position buy using words rather than grid lines. The firm makes money by selling advertising based on your location. So if the App locates your position you will get ads for the local Indian Restaurant or boot repairer etc. From what I've read, it's not that accurate anyway so it's not approved by the mountain rescue teams.

You are much better paying a subscription for the Ordnance Survey which can go on the PC or your phone and is 100% accurate. It's about £2 per month. You can also print of sections of maps of different scales and mark routes on it.

Un Smart Motorways?

Smart motorways are 'inherently unsafe' and 'should be abandoned', a police and crime commissioner says. Dr Alan Billings, PCC for South Yorkshire, has written to the Government saying the abolition of the hard shoulder should be 'abandoned' before more people die.

In a letter to Transport Secretary Grant Shapps, Dr Billings accused Highways England of trading 'driver safety for lower costs' and using 'flawed' logic to justify smart motorways. It comes days after a coroner ruled that the deaths of two men on the M1 near Sheffield was in part due to turning the hard shoulder into a live lane.

Dr Billings wrote in his letter: 'I think the coroner's verdict makes it imperative now to abandon this type of motorway before more lives are lost.' He says he attended a meeting with Highways England in January last year to 'discuss road safety', claiming they 'sought to persuade me that smart motorways were as safe if not safer than the usual type of motorway'.

Dr Billings said he believes their conclusion was arrived at through 'flawed' arguing, and it was not 'helpful' to compare collisions or deaths on the two types of motorway. He added: 'The relevant test for us is whether someone who breaks down on this stretch of the motorway where there is no hard shoulder, would have had a better chance of escaping death or injury had there still been a hard shoulder - and the coroner's verdict makes it clear that the answer to that question is: "Yes".'

Highways England has been 'seduced by false comparisons' to increase the number of lanes and aid traffic flow at a lower cost than if a hard shoulder had been built, Dr Billings claims.

Tail Piece

