

Wigton Motor Club Ltd

Start Line

Issue 2022/01

www.wigtonmc.xo.uk

January 2022

Great End to the Autotest Year



Mark Humphries did a brilliant job with the final event on the old hotel site. Great fun for all and very slickly run by a full team of marshals.

See you all in 2022!

For Members By Members

WMC Committee

OFFICIALS

| | | |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| <i>President:.</i> | <i>Charles Graves</i> | |
| <i>Vice Pres.</i> | <i>Ron Palmer & David Turnbull,</i> | |
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Please ensure that you contact the appropriate official on the correct email address.

Face Book: Wigton Motor Club & Wigton Motor Club Members

Events of Interest

Locally & Nationally

WMC

Annual Awards Dinner

Saturday, February 5th 2022

Skiddaw Hotel

Keswick

Guest speaker David Richards

Tickets £32 from Charles Graves

charles.graves@armathwaite-hall.com

Raffle prizes are welcome

Major Events 2022

| | | |
|---------|------|-----------------------------------|
| April | 2nd | White Heather Tests |
| April | 24th | Drive It Day |
| August | 20th | Rose & Thistle Challenge |
| August | 21st | Cumbria Classic & Motorsport Show |
| October | 16th | Cumbrian Canter |
| October | 23rd | Solway Historic Rally |

Driving Motorsport Forward

Talking Point

Topical Comment on Motoring & Motorsport

This year's New Year message seems to be one of Déjà vu with restrictions on our social and sporting activities on the way for the next few months. However we need to be positive and look forward.

In rallying it's great to see that M Sport have been able to hire two top drivers for 2022 with every reason to think that they will return to the podium. At the moment we don't know if the first or second rounds of the WRC will take place but fingers crossed.

In F1, 2021 was a not a good year for all sorts of reasons, mostly caused by Liberty, the promoters who seemed to wish to create drama and falling out in order to get more viewers. Shades of WWE wrestling! Will we see Toto and Christian having a "face off" an hour before the start of each race? However the UU has decreed that has to be a split between the regulatory authority (FIA) and the promoters so that may help. However surely it is completely wrong for the sport to visit seven countries that have appalling human rights records, purely because they will pay to host the race?

Back home the sport has to look at its environmental credentials following COP26, perhaps more than other activities as our use of fuel is at the point of action. As a club we are working on both financial and environmental sustainability. We have also included MSUK's policy on diversity and inclusion on our website. WMC have always welcomed anyone as members with the only criteria being that they like playing with cars!

Motor Sport UK have made huge strides with the governance of the sport despite the restrictions of the pandemic. Sadly they do seem to get the blame for the perceived "ills" in the sport by people who don't bother to do their research or consult with their clubs or delegates on the MSUK specialist committees who would be only too happy to explain things to them.

Then we have to look to EVs. Can they be accommodated in our activities? Is there an interest or are we going to continue with ICE cars for the foreseeable future?

GTF



Editor: Graeme Forrester - gtfmg@yahoo.co.uk

Contributions are welcomed - deadline the 25th of each month

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

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From The Top

News from MSUK, Associations & WMC Committee

Mohammed Ben Sulayem has been elected the new president of the FIA, taking over from the outgoing Jean Todt after 12 years.

Todt completed his third and final term as FIA president in 2021, but will now hand over the reins of motorsport's world governing body to Sulayem, 60, following a vote on Friday at the FIA General Assembly.

Sulayem defeated Graham Stoker, who served as the FIA's deputy president for sport under Todt, with 61.6% of the vote.

Sulayem enjoyed a lengthy career as a rally driver, winning the FIA Middle East Rally Championship on 14 occasions, before moving into governance. He was the first Arab to be elected to the FIA's World Motor Sport Council, and previously served as vice-president for sport with the FIA.

He also oversaw the running of the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix and its addition to the Formula 1 calendar in 2009.

His election marks a break with the past, becoming the first non-European to serve as president of the FIA, and comes after support was given to his 'FIA for Members' campaign by Motorsport UK, the governing body of British motorsport.

Sulayem enjoyed a lengthy career as a rally driver, winning the FIA Middle East Rally Championship on 14 occasions, before moving into governance. He was the first Arab to be elected to the FIA's World Motor Sport Council, and previously served as vice-president for sport with the FIA.

"I am truly honoured to be elected President of the FIA," ben Sulayem wrote on Twitter. "Thank you all so much. I am humbled by the trust you've placed in me and the team and we pledge to govern in the interests of all members.

"I'd also like to pay tribute to Jean Todt for his leadership over the past 12 years, and commend Graham Stoker on his campaign. We look forward to working with all who seek the betterment of this Federation we all love."

"A chapter has come to an end," said outgoing president Todt.

"We can be collectively satisfied of our achievements in motor sport and safe and sustainable mobility over the past 12 years. I would like to warmly thank my team, our administration and all our Member Clubs for their unwavering commitment, enthusiasm and resilience.

"I congratulate Mohammed on his election as FIA President and wish him, his team, and the Federation the best of success for the years to come."

It is interesting that MSUK supported Sulayem rather than past MSA president Graham Stoker and they may indicate the new direction of MSUK compared to the MSA.

Number two in the new team (there are ten of them) is Robert Reid, long time navigator and trainer while South America's representative is Fabiana Ecclestone.

It will be interesting to see how the new team look at human rights and diversity and whether sport should visit countries with poor records.



motor
sport
UK

Recognised
Club

Club News & Events

Club Championships 2022

Overall Club Championship: All WMC competitive events to count with not more than 5 from one discipline. Scoring: 25, 24, 23, etc on overall positions on all WMC run events starting with the Festive Autotest. Event organisers/marshals can get an additional 10 points per event.

Autotest Championship: The scores to count to be two less than the number of events held. Event organisers/marshals can get an additional 10 points per event.

Ladies' Championship: To the highest placed lady in the Club Championship.

External Championship: To a Club member(s) who have competed successfully outside the Club events. (Decided by the committee)

Enthusiast of the Year: To a member who has shown considerable enthusiasm as a competitor, organiser or marshal or a combination of those. (Decided by the committee)

Newcomer of the Year: To the member in their first year of motorsport who has impressed the committee with their efforts. (Decided by the committee)

Stage Rally Champions: To the member(s) who has achieved excellent performances on stage rallies.

.(Decided by the committee)

Marshals' Championship: Scoring 10 for a full day and 5 for half a day on all WMC events and events where WMC are asked to provide a marshals' team.

Scorer is Chris Leece.

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PG Tips

Peter Reflects On His Month

2021 was another odd year – with the shadow of Covid hanging over it, it wasn't as bad as 2020 but the restrictions and changing rules made it unusual for sure. My early year speed events involved self-declaration instead of scrutineering which made for an easy life but reverted back to normal by the end of the year. On-line signing on was also an unusual thing, but that appears to have stuck and seems likely to stay for good now – it saves everyone time and hasn't really caused any issues that I'm aware of, so I guess some good has come of it all. For a change,

I finished the season with the race car in one piece and other than a new harness needs nothing to see me into next season. The trailer is a different tale though – I could hear the axle on the right hand side of it clicking at the last event (Doune) in September and decided to investigate last week. To say that I've been lucky is an understatement! With the right hand side axle off (there is a stub axle on each side with twin wheels that have pins holding them on that simply pull out) and dismantled, all 4 bearings were rusted and damaged – one so severely that it had started disintegrating and was completely seized. I guess that axle was probably only a short journey away from self destruction and possibly causing an accident.

Once I've sorted that side I will be investigating the other side to make sure it isn't in a similar state. The right hand one seems to have suffered water ingress, but the trailer is less than 10 years old and hasn't done huge mileage and as far as I know always been stored inside. It's a lesson to anyone with a trailer – no MOT or checks are required by law so it's easy to assume everything is fine until it's not!

Mice are the enemy – they might be cute and furry to some, but they are a small nibbly nightmare to me. I doubt anyone reading this remembers it, but about 10 years back I bought an entire Skoda Estelle mainly to obtain a set of undamaged seats (back then it was only a couple of hundred quid and I made a decent profit on the parts) and having fitted them to the very clean Estelle, parked it in the garage in the autumn only to find a few weeks later that mice had massacred the rear seat. Well, history is repeating itself! I parked the Astra Bertone up in September for the winter (in the same garage), cleaned and hoovered it, polished it and fitted a cover. I even lined the garage roof to prevent condensation so it was as pampered as any car I've ever had.

In late October I started the car up and ran it til warm, moved it around the garage block to clean the discs and put it back. In late November I went to do the same and noticed chewed foam on the seat and floor of the driver's side. Those furry little *&'&&*s had only gone and chewed a small hole in the leather on the driver's seat and pulled and shredded some of the foam. To say I was unhappy is an understatement. I immediately deployed 2 mouse traps with Snickers bar (mice love Snickers!) and within 48 hours I'd racked up 3 mice. Since then I've had none, so hopefully the problem is now sorted. Just the hole in the seat to fix. The internet tells me there is a place in Carlisle that fixes leather seats and right now I am working at Carlisle – hopefully it won't be too expensive to sort.

Finally this month, and this year – the Motor House BBQ seemed to go well at the second attempt. After getting snowed off on the original date, we dropped it back a week and got the weather we needed. A couple of people who hadn't booked turned up and I burnt a few of the first batch of sausages, but it was a bright dry day, the soup seemed to go down well and everyone seemed to have a good crack. The BX attracted a few admirers and the club banked a few quid from my efforts. All in all a decent day. I might run another one next year if there is enough interest. I hope you all have a good festive break – see you next year!

Peter



Historic & Targa Rally News

2022 NESCR0 CHALLENGE DATES LIST

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Sat 12 th March | Mull Classic | Mull Car Club |
| Sun 20 th March | Shaw | Whickham MC |
| Sat 2 nd April | White Heather Tests | Wigton Motor Club |
| Sat/Sun 30Apr/1 st May | Berwick | Berwick & DMC |
| Sun 15 th May | William Patterson | South of Scotland CC |
| Sat/Sun 4/5 th June | Rallye East Yorkshire | Yorkshire Wolds MC |
| Sun 17 th July | Northern Dales | Hexham & DMC |
| Sun 31 st July | Pennine Targa | Airedale & Pennine MCC |
| Sun 14 th August | Blue Streak | Spadeadam MC |
| Sun 4 th September | Wearside | Durham AC |
| Sun 18 th September | Doonhamer | South of Scotland CC |
| Sun 23 rd October | Solway | Wigton Motor Club |
| Sat 12 th November | Saltire | Saltire Rally Club |

The events in red are the counters for the Wigton MC Challenge

Bob Hargreaves

2022 NESCR0 Challenge Co-ordinator

Champions 2021

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Club Champion | Craig Stamper |
| Ladies Champion | Fiona Tyson |
| Autotest Champion | Geoff Rae |
| Autosolo | Peter Wright |
| Historic Rally | Alex Willans/Bob Hargreaves |
| Targa Rally | David O'Connor/Stuart Davies |
| Marshals | Eddie Parsons |
| Speed | Peter Garforth |
| Stage Rally | Barry Lindsay |
| Enthusiast | David Agnew |
| External | Sam Kirkpatrick |
| Historic Pre 60 | Jim Hendry & Findlay Wyatt |
| Category 1 | David Agnew & Alan Jackson |
| Category 2 | John Haygarth & Bob Hargreaves |
| Category 3 | John Sloan & Marc Crack |
| Category 4 | David Alexander & Clive Fothergill |
| Targa 1 | Peter Wright & Lian Wright |
| Targa 2 | Daniel Place & Ryan Parker |
| Targa 4 | Phil Hodgson & Lewis Hodgson |

These will be presented at:

WMC

Annual Awards Dinner

Saturday, February 5th, 2022

Skiddaw Hotel

Keswick

Guest speaker David Richards

Tickets £32 from Charles Graves

charles.graves@armathwaite-hall.com

Elderly Utterances

The Voice of Experience!

Ron Palmer has his say

As I have no plans to compete much this year I'll recount some of my early motor club days. Please forgive me if you have read some of this before. Having joined the 750MC Cumberland Centre when still at the Carlisle Grammar School, I was fortunate to have a Geography master, Keith Wilson, who was in the Cumberland Sporting Car Club and an English master Adrian Barnes who was an Austin 7 enthusiast so there was no shortage of encouragement in motoring matters. I came across Geoff Benson and other 750 members through my part time job at Morton Filling Station owned by a family friend. One of the club members was Bill Agar whose day job was a rep with a Ford 100E provided as a company car. However his weekend car was an Alvis Speed 20 tourer which was vast and had the straight six engine with triple SUs. When buying petrol he had to switch off the engine as the petrol pump couldn't keep up (joke!).

Club nights took place at the Turf Hotel behind County Garage at Hardwick Circus in Carlisle. As I was not old enough to drive (legally) until later in 1960 I sat in with others on club events and my first attempt at navigating came about by chance. I was with Ed Glaister and Pat McCaffery heading off for a nights marshalling on the John Peel Rally on 16th July 1960 which started from the Golden Fleece (by Junction 42 of the M6 now). As we chatted to the entrants we learned that John Butterworth's navigator couldn't make it so I was volunteered to take his place. John was a Carlisle butcher with a black 2 door Minor 1000 – XRM721 – and was an easy chap to get on with and certainly didn't expect a good performance from a totally novice 16 year old. Maps were provided with a set of route instructions and off we went at 9pm. It was a steep learning curve and we tagged onto other cars when I struggled to find the way and somehow we made it to the halfway halt at the Astra Cafe on the A6 between Carlisle and Penrith at 2.30am after 150 miles.



Staying awake wasn't a problem in those days and the adrenalin rush kept me going for the second half of a further 145 miles which took us to the finish at Waterfoot Hotel at Pooley Bridge at 8am. The route had covered parts of five 1" OS maps and by some fluke we finishes 9th out of around 40 entries. A couple of months after this event I took my driving test and passed first time. This was in a Minor 1000 convertible, MHH301 black with red interior, and such an easy car to drive. Light steering easy controls and good brakes unless you had done a 300 mile rally in which case fade was a well known problem. That clever engineer Alex Issigonis had his touch all over the design of the Minor before he turned his attention to the BMC Mini.

After my first competitive event I did smaller club Maiden (12 car) Rallies usually about 50 miles long the first being with fellow club member Pat McCaffrey in a 1937 Austin 7 Ruby. This event ended as the fog and lighting got progressively worse and the finish back at Les Blairs place at Arthur House beckoned. Although Pat was driving, Ed Glaister reckons it was his car at the time as Pat didn't own a Ruby and cars were shared out among friends more in those days.

Back to John and the Minor 1000 which we used on several events until early 1961 when John treated himself to a black MGA 1500 registration VGJ69. A nice sports car but not totally to his liking so that only lasted for 10 months – 3 rallies – after which it was replaced by a Riley 1.5, YAO437, which I liked a lot. It came on cross ply tyres and I remember a trip to Watsons of Waverton to buy a set of Michelin 'X's. After the first two corners on the way home the feel was so unusual after cross plys that we almost returned to Watsons for the original tyres. Once he had a few radial miles under his belt there was no going back. The Riley did sterling service on several rallies until August 1962



when it was replaced by a sparkling new 997 Mini Cooper in Yellow with a white roof – 102HRM which John bought from Howard Lace at Kirkoswald. It was so different to what had gone before that it was little wonder that they sold like hot cakes. Our first event in the Cooper was the Stocktonian on 15/16 Sept 1962 which ran over 250 miles with two starting points at Birtley and Stockton and the finish being at Piercebridge. We retired with suspension damage after clipping a wall. Clerk of the Course was Moss Isley a wise old competitor and timing was by competitors own watches in sealed cases which is a subject worthy of another visit in the future. My last rally with John B was in March 1963 which was my 26th rally of which 17 had been navigating for John. I spoke with him just before Christmas as he lives in Carlisle and he mentioned that he had bought a

Cooper S after he had finished rallying, but no, before you ask, he no longer has it.

I am surprised and delighted to have received an email from MSUK advising that I have been nominated by our Club and awarded a Long Service Award. It was a nice recognition after sixty one years of motor club memberships. I understand the Certificate will be issued in the New Year. I am equally pleased that Graeme Forster has a similar award and his is clearly more deserved for all he has done for the club over many years. Well done Graeme.

I'll follow on next month with some of my motoring history. Here's hoping we all have a better year in 2022 moving out from under the Covid cloud.

Ron.



Autojumble

Items for sale or wanted

The Club can supply race and rally numbers to members and at the Motor House we have lots of parts, accessories, lubricants etc that have been donated. All are available for a donation.

We also have a few hundred "Haynes" manuals, again for a donation. These range from popular models to the very rare! There are also lots of books and magazines for those interested in motor-ing and motorsport history.

December Autotest





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December Autotest

| No. | Driver | Car | Class | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | TO-TAL | Pos |
|-----|-----------------|-----------|-------|-----|---------|---------|---------|----|----|----|--------|--------|
| 1 | Craig Stamper | C2 | FWD | 67 | 64 | 64 | 64 | 61 | 58 | 57 | 435 | 1st OA |
| 2 | Thomas McCarney | Micra | FWD | 65 | 65 | 64 | 74 | 61 | 62 | 60 | 451 | 1st F |
| 3 | Philip Hodgson | MX5 | RWD | 69 | 69 | 69 | 68 | 62 | 61 | 62 | 460 | 1st R |
| 4 | Peter Masters | Avo | FWD | 69 | 70 | 69 | 70 | 63 | 62 | 62 | 465 | |
| 5 | Geoff Rae | Corsa | FWD | 75 | 70 | 70 | 70 | 63 | 61 | 61 | 470 | |
| 6 | Chris Hunter | MX5 | RWD | 68 | 75 | 69 | 75 | 63 | 61 | 59 | 470 | |
| 7 | Paul Grierson | C2 VTS | FWD | 72 | 70 | 69 | 69 | 65 | 63 | 63 | 471 | |
| 8 | Rob Iveson | KA | FWD | 72 | 75 | 72 | 72 | 72 | 65 | 64 | 492 | |
| 9 | David Oconner | MX5 | RWD | 76 | 72 | 72 | 74 | 67 | 66 | 65 | 492 | |
| 10 | Graeme Mctavish | MX5 | RWD | 76 | 75 | 74 | 76 | 66 | 65 | 65 | 497 | |
| 11 | Drew Mclean | MX5 | RWD | 81 | 75 | 82 | 71 | 64 | 73 | 67 | 513 | |
| 12 | Jacqui Raine | KA | FWD | 84 | 79 | 77 | 76 | 69 | 68 | 67 | 520 | 1st L |
| 13 | Jim Oneil | MX5 | RWD | 72 | 79 | 72 | 74 | 94 | 67 | 63 | 521 | |
| 14 | David Alexander | UNO | FWD | 97 | 72 | 77 | 73 | 67 | 72 | 68 | 526 | |
| 15 | Andrew Stewart | MX5 | RWD | 91 | 80 | 81 | 79 | 68 | 66 | 67 | 532 | |
| 16 | Thomas Robinson | Micra | FWD | 86 | 89 | 78 | 73 | 91 | 67 | 64 | 548 | |
| 17 | Cameron Lord | Micra | FWD | 97 | 95 | 75 | 80 | 69 | 71 | 67 | 554 | |
| 18 | James Oneil | MX5 | RWD | 154 | 10 9 | 16 9 | 12 4 | 94 | 95 | 76 | 821 | 1st J |

Q

Quiz Answer

Andy Armstrong was the first person to tell me that the two drivers who won their first every WDC F1 race were Farina in the first ever F1 WDC race which was the 1950 British GP and Baghetti in the 1961 Belgium Grand Prix.

Classic & Motorsport Show News

Work on the Classic & Motorsport Show starts more or less after the last one when we meet with the venue owners to discuss any issues and the fee for the next year. As might be expected if the Show gets a good turnout the landowners are keen for a bigger slice!

There is a very experienced team at the help with key people looking after the different types of entries, individual, clubs, trade and catering while other committee members look after equipment and admissions. At the same time Ron Palmer and his team run the Rose & Thistle Challenge on the Saturday.

The whole ethos of our show is to give car owners and spectators a good time where commercial organisers are more interested in the profit. It's not just a matter of getting a venue, asking people to turn up with cars and then charging others to view them certainly not for our event.

Over the years we have invested in signage and markers and each year some of these have to be renewed. The same with the gazebos and awnings, nothing lasts for ever. One of the biggest costs is toilets and the more people who come the more loos we need. We hire several hundred crowd barriers to go round the main arenas and we have used the same PA supplier for every year of the show. The second biggest cost after the venue is the attendance awards given to every car owner, the slate coasters are very popular and some people have a full set. There is also the awards for the best cars in each class and the Car of the Show. We generally give more and better awards than other shows.

Every entry received their J hanger and final instructions prior to the show by post which is another cost while the printing of the programmes comes in at around £1,000. We actually ran out in 2021 but in other years with poor weather we had had boxes of programmes left. We also have to pay for the rubbish to be taken away and that is not cheap.

The event has to be insured and we have an MSUK permit for the autotest and we now take out additional insurance to cover all our non motorsport activities. We give a donation to Penrith Lions to man the car parking.

The Show could not take place without the many volunteers who set out the fields on the Friday and the 70 or so who marshal on the Sunday.

Even after the accounts are done we have to pay corporation tax in any surplus.

Some of the plans for 2022:

We add a class for 81 to 90 cars plus post ninety class

Hire a van for three days.

There will be no late entries of individual cars. There will be a maximum of 800 entries on a first come first served basis split between individual and club entries.

Toilets better and more.

Indemnity signs in the car park and in the programme.

We have bought another gazebo for entrance team plus two more tables.

There will be a large sign saying “**Gates open at 11**”

Autotest – no 4wd cars due to the damage to the ground.

More litter bins

The Arena to be enlarged to be twenty-five barriers long.

We are doing training for first aiders.

We hope to have a tent for marshals

The official address of the venue is Dalemain Mansion

Overnight camping will be permitted only on the Saturday night at a fee of £10 per unit.

The entry fee for the Show for non members will be £5 per car. WMC members are free.

The entrance gate to the parkland is to be widened and we will bear some of the cost. This should make access into and out the field much quicker. This will allow entrants from the west and south of the county to come via the Ullswater end of the A592.

We hope to be able to give out the featured marques for 2022 next month.

The Most Beautiful Car in the World?



Another suggestion (Toyota) from Bill Sykes

What is your suggestion?



Clubs And Things

Recently I was thinking about the many clubs that have come and gone over the years and how clubs have changed. When motoring was in its infancy clubs of enthusiasts were formed for support and competitions. It was mainly the rich who could afford cars, so this made the clubs a bit elitist and some continued that way for way years. The AA & RAC were typical.

The Motor Cycle Club was formed in 1901 and continues to this day with three major “classic” trials for cars and bikes. The Midland Automobile Club was also formed in 1901 and is still very active owning and running the Shelsley Walsh Hill Climb.

The oldest one make club is the Jowett Car Club formed in 1923 and many single make clubs followed. Many have survived to this day and many more groups have been formed for one make or model thanks to the internet.

There was a time when there were car clubs formed by groups of employees at various works or professions. This was perhaps when businesses employed far more people and supported the recreational activities of their workers. I remember in my student days in Newcastle that one of the main clubs was Reyrolle MC based on the firm that made electric cables and switchgear. Banks also had motor clubs; the Nat West had a number of regional groups as did the Federation of British Police Motor Clubs.

The 2300 MC in was a works clubs from the Mullard section of the Philips electrical empire who employed 5,000 people in Bury. A major player in road rallying they started and ran the Tour of Mull Rally for many years.

Locally the United Steel Social Organisations Motor Club in Workington was a works club that eventually became Workington & DMC and later merged with West Cumberland MC to create the current West Cumbria MSC. The biggest works club in our area was the Vickers (Barrow) MC who at one time had over six hundred members when the firm supported their activities with facilities and printing the magazine. The club were particularly strong on providing marshals and regularly won “stage of the day” in the RAC Rally with their running of the Grizedale stage. Sadly, interest waned and number of employees at what is now BAE dropped and the club closed.

Spadeadam MC were another works club at the time when Rolls Royce and the Blue Streak rocket project were based at the now RAF base. They survived the projects closure and were one of the last clubs to become (then) RAC affiliated. There was also a Pirelli MC at Carlisle although it was purely social, running treasure hunts and the like.

There used to be many university based clubs but many have folded, mainly due to the lack of continuity of membership as students came and went. In the past there were even some clubs formed by past students of public schools (as were there with rugby clubs).

By far the biggest motor club in the UK is the Civil Service Motoring Association which has around 230k members, and now known as Boundless. It was able to negotiate big discounts and was perhaps the first to offer discounted insurance based on the fact that people who worked in the civil service or local government was usually boringly safe drivers! These days they have holiday accommodation and also own the Cotswold Motor Museum.

These days there are fewer “local” clubs as people are more mobile and there are also economies of scale when running events. I would think the number of competitive events of all types is way smaller than forty or more years ago, and clubs in urban areas have been hit hardest as they have no places to play.

On the other hand the internet has produced all sorts of fairly informal groups interested in particular makes, models and activities. These can be quite transient in that they have no formal committee or organisation and if the key person gives up the whole thing dies. Very often they don't realise that organising events does involve a lot of work to comply with the law and also the need for insurance.

Hopefully, club will continue to thrive.

GTF

More Beautiful Cars



Ten fascinating facts about the very first F1 race

Did you know that the field for the first ever world championship F1 race included a Swiss baron, a Thai prince and a well-known Jazz musician? Exactly 66 years on, we present a compendium of the most interesting, little-known and downright unusual facts about the historic Silverstone event...

1. The race had two different names

Believe it or not, the first world championship race had two titles. Officially it was the Grand Prix d'Europe - the first time that title had ever gone to a race outside Italy or France - but as the race was held on UK soil it incorporated the British Grand Prix. Unlike today when the season-opening event is traditionally held in March, the race took place on May 13. Only six world championship season openers have been held later in the year. They were: 1951 (May 27), 1952 (May 18), 1961 (May 14), 1962 (May 20), 1963 (May 26) and 1966 (May 22).

2. Woodcote was the first corner the drivers tackled

From 1952 until 2011 Woodcote was Silverstone's final bend, but for the inaugural world championship event the sweeping right hander was the 4.6km circuit's first corner - and thus the first corner tackled in the history of F1 racing. From there the drivers would take on six other turns - Copse, Maggots, Becketts, Chapel, Stowe and Club - before arriving at the final corner, Abbey. The pit lane and starting grid were situated between Abbey and Woodcote, with the cars lining up for the start in 4-3-4 formation.

3. A very regal guest was in attendance

It was estimated that up to 120,000 spectators lined the track on race day, though by far the most important was His Royal Highness King George VI, who attended the race with Queen Elizabeth, Princess Margaret and guests Lord and Lady Mountbatten. It remains the only time a reigning monarch has attended a British motor race.

4. A Thai prince and a Swiss baron took part

Rather fittingly for a race attended by royalty, the entry list had a distinctly aristocratic flavour. Among the 21 drivers that took the start were Prince Birabongse Bhanudej Bhanubandh (better known as Prince Bira or B.Bira), a notable racer and member of the Thai royal family, and Baron Emmanuel 'Toulo' de Graffenried, a Swiss driver who'd won the 1949 edition of the British Grand Prix in the pre-world championship era. Bira, who remains the only Thai to have raced in F1 competition, qualified his Maserati fifth at Silverstone but retired in the race when he ran out of fuel. Similarly De Graffenried failed to make the flag after his identical 4CLT-48 developed engine problems.

5. The surnames of the three pre-race favourites all began with 'Fa'

Alfa Romeo's 158 may have been 13 years old by the time of the first world championship race, but the 1.5-litre supercharged machine was still the car to beat, and that helped the Italian manufacturer sign three of the era's biggest names: Guiseppe 'Nino' Farina, Luigi Fagioli and Juan Manuel Fangio, affectionately known as the 'Three Fs'. The trio duly qualified their scarlet cars in the top three grid slots, with British driver Reg Parnell a second down the road in fourth in the final Alfa Romeo entry. In the race Farina, Fagioli and Fangio predictably ran away from the rest of the field, which was otherwise made up of a mixture of ageing Maserati's, ERAs, Talbots and Altas. After 70 laps and nearly two and a quarter hours of racing - during which the leading trio had traded places several times - it was Farina who triumphed, leading fellow Italian Fagioli across the line by 2.6s. But it was Parnell and not Fangio who completed Alfa's clean sweep of the podium places after the Argentine had been forced into retirement with a broken oil pipe - possibly as a result of clipping a straw bale at Stowe.

6. The local wildlife got a little too close to the action

Despite their obvious speed advantage, Alfa Romeo were lucky to get three of their four cars to the finish after Parnell's Alfetta came into contact with an unlucky member of Silverstone's hare population. According to reports from the time, the animal caused a significant dent in the cowl of the British driver's car.

7. The average age of the field was 39

The average age of the drivers who lined up on the grid for this year's season opener in Australia was a spritely 26, but for the very first world championship race it was a much more mature 39. Three of the 21-driver field at Silverstone were in their fifties (pre-war aces Luigi Fagioli, 51, Louis Chiron, 50, and Philippe Etancelin, 53), while five more were forty or over, including race winner Giuseppe Farina (43). The 'baby' of field, if you could call him that, was British racer Geoffrey Crossley, who at 29 was just 12 years older than Max Verstappen was on his world championship debut...

8. A jazz musician finished in 11th place

No it's not a joke - a well-known jazz musician did indeed take part in the inaugural round of the world championship, though it's fair to say that Johnny Claes enjoyed considerably more success with his splendidly named combo 'Johnny Claes and the Clay Pigeons' than he did in Formula One racing. The Belgian driver (who was born in London) qualified his Talbot dead last at Silverstone, a full 18s back from Farina's pole-sitting Alfa, but he did at least reach the chequered flag in the race, coming home six laps down on the Italian in 11th.

9. BRM debuted their fledgling F1 challenger before the race

Up-and-coming British constructor BRM had hoped to debut their V16 Type 15 at Silverstone, but after experiencing a litany of technical problems the pale green car was only able to complete a handful of pre-race demonstration laps with team founder Raymond Mays at the wheel. The car would eventually make its long-awaited world championship debut at the following year's Silverstone round.

10. Stirling Moss came second in the support race

Stirling Moss would go on to win the British Grand Prix in both 1955 and 1957, but at the inaugural world championship Grand Prix in his homeland the then 20-year-old only appeared in the 500cc support races, not in the main event. Moss won his heat and was involved in a barnstorming battle for the lead in the final, but in the end had to settle for second place after his Cooper-JAP suffered a piston failure at the final corner. Still, at least he got to meet the King...



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Membership

WMC Membership; a short reminder that annual membership renewals are now due. If you have yet to pay you should get an email in the next week or so with a link to enable you to renew and pay online. The membership number issued will stay with you in future years. You will need to print a paper copy of your membership 'card'. If you wish to renew sooner just go to the Membermojo website <https://membermojo.co.uk/wmc/membership> and enter your email address, it will then send you a password link to your membership details. We have kept the membership at £20 a year for individuals and families (at the same address), under 25s get first year free. If you are unable to renew online you can use the form on the WMC website.

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WMC Dates for 2022

| Month | Date | Event | Name |
|-----------|------|----------------|-----------------------|
| January | 23rd | Autosolo | Winter Autosolo |
| | | | |
| February | 5th | Social | Awards Dinner |
| | 20th | Autotest | Autotest |
| | | | |
| March | 13th | Social | Coffee & Cars |
| | | | |
| April | 2nd | Rally | White Heather Tests |
| | 10th | Social | Coffee & Cars |
| | 24th | Gathering | Drive It Day |
| | | | |
| May | 11th | Grass Autotest | |
| | 15th | Social | Coffee & Cars |
| | | | |
| June | 8th | Grass Autotest | |
| | 12th | Social | Coffee & Cars |
| | | | |
| July | 10th | Social | Coffee & Cars |
| | 20th | Grass Autotest | |
| | | | |
| August | 7th | Social | Coffee & Cars |
| | 20th | Tour | Social |
| | 21st | Show | Cumbria Classic |
| | | | |
| September | 11th | Social | Cars & Coffee |
| | 25th | Autotest | |
| | | | |
| October | 2nd | Social | Cars & Coffee |
| | 16th | Tour | Cumbrian Canter |
| | 23rd | Rally | Solway Historic/Targa |
| | | | |
| November | 13th | Social | Cars & Coffee |
| | 20th | Autotest | |
| | | | |
| December | | | |

Obviously at this time this is a provisional list. Dates for pub runs and whole day tours etc will be added when the future becomes clearer.

Andy's Armchair

Andy Armstrong takes an irreverent look at motoring and motorsport

For the life of me I can't recall who it was, but I distinctly remember hearing about a famous racing driver who always wore a "lucky" pair of underpants when he was competing. Legend has it these got rather tatty and baggy as the elastic gave way and it's said he got very concerned about what people would think if he crashed. Dragged unconscious from his car, overalls cut away to reveal, well you get the idea! I often wondered how he overcame the problem, when the underpants fell to bits, did he have to retire?

Of course he was far from the only driver to be afflicted by superstition and I've been looking into others, some tragic and others simply comical.

Let's start with Mike Hawthorn who always raced with a bow tie on after an ordinary one had flapped into his face while racing (surely no tie at all would have made more sense). He always wore a black helmet, light green jacket and socks which had to have the tops folded over twice. He had a lucky belt covered in charms and insisted on climbing into any car he raced from the right hand side. He died in a road crash on the Guildford by pass in 1959 presumably without his "safety kit". Ironically the car hit a hawthorn hedge.

Nuvolari wore a golden tortoise badge and insisted on a yellow shirt, while Herman Lang's wife nailed a horseshoe to the pit wall. Carracciola took things to another level by having his pet monkey Anatol at every race meeting looked after by his wife, which certainly gets more "Top Trumps" points than Lewis Hamilton's bulldog. Even Stirling Moss wore a gold horseshoe on a chain round his neck and regularly checked it was the right way up. Peter Collins is reputed to have insisted on having a child's bucket and spade in his car when he raced. Hopefully it wasn't this which got in the way of the pedals when he crashed fatally at the German GP in 1958.

Finally Alberto Ascari must be mentioned. He was terrified of black cats, would only wear a blue helmet and had a deep fear of number 13 and multiples thereof, so much so he refused to race on the 13th and 26th of the month. His father who was named after St Antonio of Padua had died on 26 May 1925 at age 36 in the French GP the same day of the month and at the same age as the saint. Four days before his death Antonio had survived a serious crash on another circuit.

Moving forward to 1955 on 22nd May Alberto the son crashed his Lancia into the harbour at the Monaco GP fortunately, or so it was felt at the time, without injury. The car was race number 26. Four days later he attended a test session at Monza, borrowed a white helmet from Castelotti and went out on an empty track to test his friends car. Three laps later he was dead having crashed at what is now called the Ascari chicane. The date was, you've guessed it, 26th May he was 36 years old and had survived a crash four days earlier. At the time of his death Alberto had lived for 13466 days, his father lived for 13463 before his passing.

So there you are, maybe some of you out there will feel relieved you're not the only superstitious ones about in the motorsport world.

Ends
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