

Wigton Motor Club Ltd

Start Line

Issue 2023/12

www.wigtonmc.xo.uk

December 2023



Having fun on the VSCC Lakeland Trial

For Members By Members

WMC Committee

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Face Book: Wigton Motor Club & Wigton Motor Club Members

Get Ahead, Get A Hat!

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Traditional base ball hat £10

Beanie hats (blue, black or grey) £12 Postage is £4 or collect from Blindcrake



Driving Motorsport Forward

Talking Point

Topical Comment on Motoring & Motorsport

Quite a number of members wrote in after last month's comment agreeing how boring much of current club racing is with hordes of one make series which are great for the drivers but boring for spectators. Also agreeing that the diversity of cars at the Goodwood meetings was far more enjoyable. However as Goodwood is for pre 1966 cars, those that are spectating must have a majority of folk who never saw the cars racing in period.

Similarly The Roger Albert Clark Rally this weekend sees cars mainly pre 1980 providing brilliant entertainment for thousands of spectators, far more than turn out of any other rally in the UK these days. Again a 20 year old watching in 1980 is now 63, so it is again likely that there many much younger folks out enjoying the stages.

It is perhaps a salutary lesson for clubs, Motorsport UK and the FIA that modern racing and rallying does not provide the spectacle that brings in the huge number of spectators that it used. While modern race and rally cars may be much faster, technology has meant they are less spectacular and also look far less like a normal road car.

When I first joined WMC there was a club rule that if you won an event (mainly 12 car rallies, auto-tests and car trials) you had to organise it the following year. Most of the other clubs had the same rule. When it came to running our bigger rallies, everyone mucked in. On the single venue rallies, competitors helped set the stage out the day before and, in many cases, at the end of the event went round with their trailer to collect the cones tyres and barrels before the awards presentation.

Sadly these days many, if not all, competitors see the clubs and marshals as providers that they think they pay good money for. Sadly of course on most events we are all unpaid volunteers doing it at our own cost. Increasingly competitors don't even stay for the awards presentation. In racing I've noticed much the same, the drivers have their race and then load up and leave, having no interest in the other races on the programme.

Given the shortage of marshals on events, perhaps it is time to make it a rule that all competition licence holders have to marshal on at least two events per year? It would be good for them to find out what happens outside the car.

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

Notes from the Committee meeting held on November 15th

From Matters arising: Meeting with Dalemmain to held shortly. Card reader to be upgraded. First aid course to be organised in the spring. Search for land is ongoing. Radio control cars to be bought. Draft information boards on event types are being designed. Safe guarding is ongoing. We are getting an Centenary certificate for MSUK.

Reports:

Solway Rally. Very successful good new venues.

Autosolo: Excellent event. We have had a noise complaint so we will be enforcing noise limits in future.

Cars & Coffee BBQ. Over 120 people there. Well done to Rob and his helpers.

The November autotest and 12 car have been postponed until the new year.

Financial report: We are very healthy financially. £2000 has been given to our charities. Membership renewals start in December.

Motor House. PA Testing to take place and the CCTV needs setting up.

Clothing. Beanie hats on three colours and baseball caps are now in stock. Other clothing such as sweatshirts and body warmers to be investigated.

New permits form MSUL for shorter evening events coming in 2024.

Event Entries

A reminder to members to get their entries for events placed in good time. Entries close for our events either seven or ten days before the day of the event. We need to have enough entries to be viable to go ahead and also there are many things to be done that depends on the number of entries, like rally plates, printing, awards and very importantly for the rallies and tours, the food.

Many hotels and cafes are now asking for prepayment and or exact numbers which have to be paid for irrespective of how many people turn up. For exactly the same reasons we can't given refunds on entries withdrawn after the closing date because the money has already been spent.

We would appreciated your help in this as we don't like to turn away entries. Remember also that the organising team will have been committed the date of the event for months so we hope that competitors can at least commit to it a few weeks in advance.



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Club News & Events

Centenary BBQ



Presentation to Cockermouth Mountain Rescue Tea,



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What a superb turnout to celebrate the Club's centenary! Many thanks to Rob and his team for the BBQ and Lynda for the coffee & tea.

In addition Ron Palmer had a significant birthday recently and the club had a suitable Jaguar cake made by Cake A Licious



PG Tips

Peter Reflects On His Month



rally cars with a smattering of Group B cars and a lovely Lancia Stratos that may or may not have been a replica.



probably used up at least one set of tyres as they went round the course multiple times! Sadly the Stratos and most of the Group B cars didn't take part in it – presumably, a bit too valuable and potentially fragile for such shenanigans.

The holiday hire car (only for a day) was a 2020 Renault Twingo – a car that fascinated me when it came out because it's rear engined like the Skodas I had at the time it was first introduced. I am not sure what engine it had, but it had very little power and struggled with the steep Madeiran hills, particularly with 4 of us on board. The interior was a mess of different colours and materials – the car was black but for some reason there were flashes of white plastic around the dashboard, as well as dark grey and black. It was quite well equipped but did feel a bit cheap compared to the Skoda Citigo

The holiday to Madeira was rather lovely apart from the flight there. Madeira's airport is built on the coast and is notoriously difficult with odd weather conditions and in order to fly there you have to have a higher-level qualification than a bog standard airline pilot. So it was that we had 2 aborted landings and a fairly hair-raising actual landing, owing to a minor storm. Thankfully, it passed, and the week was otherwise good. The Madeira legends rally was on when we were there as I had predicted, and whilst not as good a line up as previous years, there was still a nice selection of old

On the final night of our holiday we attended the spectator special on the waterfront. It was after the rally had been won and not all the cars took part, but it was a lot of fun. It gave the drivers a chance to show off in front of a big crowd so as you can imagine some of the old Escorts were sliding around every corner tail out and doing the odd donut for the crowd. There was an exceptionally quick Toyota Starlet, a vast array of Escorts and several modernish Renaults and Citroens from the 00s all doing their best to impress the crowds and it was quite a fun event – some of the Escorts

I used to have. What was a revelation though was the turning circle. Absolutely incredible – it could virtually perform a U-turn on the spot. I've never experienced a car like it and reckon it would be a revelation at an autotest or targa rally with a more powerful engine in it. Seemingly a GT version is available with 110bhp but is quite rare, however it would be an absolute riot at an autotest I think.

I attended the free BBQ at the Motor House, dragging myself out of bed after night shift and to my embarrassment accidentally turned up during the 2 minutes silence without realising it. I brought the Astra Bertone out of the garage for the day with it being dry and almost sunny, and whilst I enjoyed the whine of the supercharger, I also realised that its time is up and I will definitely be putting it back on the market in the spring to move it on, one way or another. If anyone wants it in the meantime, then £4,000 takes it away.

The selection of cars was decent considering a lot are tucked up in garages, but relatively speaking there were quite a lot of modern dailies compared to a normal cars and coffee meeting. The food was excellent with the BBQ far outshining my efforts. I also need to pay tribute to the cake stalls Cake-alicious which I believe is a business from Shap. I bought my kids donuts at it and my wife and her mother (who I knew was landing for lunch at ours when I got back....I am such a good son in law!) vanilla custard slices. Trudy declared it to be possibly the best vanilla slice she has ever eaten, and it has been her cake of choice for all the years I've known her, so she knows a thing or 2 about them. Hopefully, the lady who runs it will be at more events in the future – she certainly won me lots of brownie points...which I'm going to need as I'm off to drive a couple of big lairy 5 litre TVR wedges in the next couple of weeks. More on that next month!

Peter

Jottings

Jaguar Land Rover has run out of courtesy cars and its workshops are close to breaking point amidst a huge global parts shortage. Some 10,000 cars are currently awaiting parts across the country – with 5,000 of them stuck off the road at car dealerships. 'It's been very challenging dealing with a lot of unhappy customers,' said a JLR showroom boss.

Super Car dealer Tom Hartley said he currently has two Land Rover Defenders off the road, both of which have been waiting for parts for four months. He said the situation was 'disgusting'. The problem has come as a result of the car manufacturer building a new global parts logistics centre, dubbed 'Mercia'. This project has seen 18 warehouses condensed to a one million-square-foot site.

The car maker is also changing parts suppliers and bringing a number of legacy systems together into one – and the changes have not been smooth.

This adds to JLR's issues as some Jaguar iPaces have been catching fire.

Elderly Utterances

The Voice of Experience!

Ron Palmer has his say

My classic car insurance became due for renewal in November and both cars have been with L*****r Ins. for some years. I've never had any claim on my classics in over 50 years of ownership and apart from being one year older myself nothing has changed. Nothing that is apart from the Premium for the next year. The B roadster premium has been £106.97 and would be going to £133.57, a 25% increase. The XK150 has been £134.56 and would now be £171.09, a 27% increase. It seems that every commodity we need suffers from a huge increase whenever we buy. Anyway I did my usual research and changed insurers for next year to A*****n F**x. The B insurance is now £91.08 – a 15% reduction ON LAST YEAR and the XK, £107.68 – a 20% reduction ON LAST YEAR. So don't take is lying down folks, fight back and do your research.

For those members who own the older cars you will recall our Coronation Meander which was held in May this year and attracted a good entry of pre 1950 cars. Looking ahead we are planning to repeat the run but as we are not expecting another Coronation in 2024 it will be renamed The May Meander. The date will be Wednesday the 8th May so make sure you wake up your slumbering oldie in good time for early May.

We very much enjoyed the VSCC Lakeland Trial on 11th November and watched the low level sections at Barkhouse and Derwent View in glorious autumn weather. These sections were on a part of the Higham Estate courtesy of Malcolm Wilson and were easily accessible to those of us incapable of the Drumhouse climb on foot these days. Congratulations to Clerks of the Course David and Debbie Rushton and to all the marshals and helpers from near and far who excelled themselves. It is testimony to all these enthusiasts some of whom travel long distances and have nothing at all to do with the VSCC but enjoy supporting fellow enthusiasts, enabling them to enjoy their sport. Amateur motor sport cannot function without them.

As this goes to press I, and a group of pals, expect to be enjoying a couple of days watching the Roger Albert Clark Rally in the forests of Galloway and Kielder. This biannual event is the closest you can get to the RACs of old with a fantastic entry of top class UK and Irish competitors plus a sprinkling of those from Scandinavia, Europe and elsewhere. Two years ago the Galloway stages were snowed off and we retired to the pub on the way home. The weather looks to be better this year which should be a good help to the organisers who include local Brian Kinghorn in the role of Regional Deputy Clerk of the course.

The BBQ and Cars and Coffee meet on 12th November was a great success with Rob Grant leading the team of son Angus and John and Val Nichol producing burger, bacon and sausage rolls aplenty keeping Jim Crockett busy in the distribution department. A very nice cake was presented to me from the club to celebrate my significant birthday. Thank you all.

A Happy Christmas to everyone as we look forward to a successful 2024. Ron.



Autojumble

Items for sale or wanted

Wanted, 14" Ford / Peugeot/ Citroen 4 stud x 108pcd STEEL wheels. 5.5j preferred. Any pattern, ratty is good, must be cheap though!

I need at least 6, so however many you've got, please let me know. Thanks.

David Miller 07877 672680.

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This genuine supercharged a7 Cambridge has a recently refreshed Don Rawson engine fitted with Speedex deep sump and a heavy duty clutch.

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Historic & Targa Championships Final Positions

Overall

HISTORIC

Driver			Navigator		
1	Alex Willan	114 (5)	1	Paul Taylor	50 (2)
2	David Marsden	66 (3)	2	Stuart Davies	46 (3)
3	Alan Hawdon	65 (3)	3	Richard Welsh	45 (2)
4	John Sloan	47 (2)	4	Michael Garstang	43 (2)
5	Tot Dixon	45 (2)	5	Judith Grasse	40 (2)
6=	David Agnew	44 (2)	6	Ron Palmer	37 (2)
6=	Brian Bradley	44 (3)	7=	Heidi Garstang	25 (1)
8	Ian Dixon	43 (2)	7=	Alistair Maxwell	25 (1)
9	Nick Grasse	37 (2)	9=	Alisdair Venn	24 (1)
10	Charles Graves	35 (2)	9=	Rob Grant	24 (1)
11	Joseph Hardy	34 (2)	9=	Matthew Alexander	24 (1)
12	Ian Maxwell	25 (1)	9=	Roy Heath	24 (1)
13=	David Garstang	24 (1)	13=	Ross Blyth	23 (1)
13=	David Short	24 (1)	13=	Jason Ferris	23 (1)
15	David Alexander	23 (1)	13=	Callum Alexander	23 (1)
16=	Mike Cook	22 (1)	16=	Shane McKeon	22 (1)

Numbers of rounds (*)

Class

Cat 1			Cat 1		
1	David Agnew	20 (2)	1=	Shane McKeon	10 (1)
2	Jim Hendry	10 (1)	1=	Jason Ferris	10 (1)
3=	Thomas Pearson	9 (1)	1=	Euan West	10 (1)
3=	Stuart Bankier	9 (1)	4=	Thomas Waterhouse	9 (1)
			4=	David Alexander	9 (1)
Cat 2			Cat 2		
1	David Marsden	27 (3)	1	Richard Welsh	18 (2)
2	Tot Dixon	19 (2)	2	Ron Palmer	15 (2)
3=	Ian Dixon	18 (2)	3=	Ross Blyth	10 (1)
3=	Joseph Hardy	14 (2)	3=	Michael Fox	10 (1)
5=	Charles Graves	14 (2)	3=	Heidi Garstang	10 (1)
5=	Paul Slingsby	10 (1)	3=	Alistair Maxwell	10 (1)
7=	Ian Maxwell	10 (1)	7=	Mike Garstang	9 (1)
7=	Mike Cook	9 (1)	7=	David Garstang	9 (1)
9	Anthony Tindall	6 (1)	9	David Smith	6 (1)
Cat 3			Cat 3		
1	John Sloan	20 (2)	1=	Alisdair Venn	10 (1)
2=	David Garstang	10 (1)	1=	Rob Grant	10 (1)
2=	David Short	10 (1)	1=	Matthew Alexander	10 (1)
4=	Mike Kirk	9 (1)	1=	Roy Heath	10 (1)
4=	Heidi Garstang	9 (1)	5=	Michael Garstang	9 (1)
4=	George Noone	9 (1)	5=	Aidan Walsh	9 (1)
Cat 4			Cat 4		
1	Alex Willan	45 (5)	1	Paul Taylor	20 (2)
2	Alan Hawdon	26 (3)	2	Stuart Davies	19 (2)
3	Brian Bradley	17 (3)	3	Judith Grasse	17 (2)
4	Nick Grasse	15 (2)	4	Callum Alexander	10 (1)
5	David Alexander	10 (1)	5	Beth Nichol	8 (1)

Overall

TARGA

Driver			Navigator		
1=	Philip Hodgson	93 (4)	1	Fiona Tyson	94 (4)
1=	Chris Hunter	93 (4)	2	Lewis Hodgson	93 (4)
3	Kevin Stones	87 (4)	3	Christopher Holden	86 (4)
4	Barry Lindsay	75 (3)	4	Martyn Petry	75 (3)
5	Craig Stamper	65 (3)	5	Andrew Graham	69 (3)
6	David O'Connor	61 (3)	6	Heidi Garstang	56 (3)
7	Patrick Pennefather	51 (3)	7	Ross Blyth	44 (2)
8	Mike Cook	43 (2)	8	Geoff Rae	41 (2)
9	David Garstang	41 (2)	9	Matthew Horne	38 (2)
10	Michael Horne	38 (2)	10	Mark Humphries	25 (1)
11	Paul Grierson	34 (2)	11	Terence Peat	24 (1)
12	Jamie Barnett	25 (1)	12=	Michael Garstang	23 (1)
13	Robert Hargreaves	24 (1)	12=	Sam Jaggard	23 (1)
14=	Matthew Burton	23 (1)	14=	Sam Wigham	22 (1)
14=	Ben Jude	23 (1)	14=	Peter Gardner	22 (1)
16=	Kimberley Gardner	22 (1)	14=	Alan Place	22 (1)
16=	Daniel Place	22 (1)	17=	Simon Bentley	19 (1)
18	Frank Mattocks	21 (1)	17=	Adam Taylor	19 (1)
19=	Michael Pears	19 (1)	19=	Richard Bickley	18 (1)
19=	Connor Stephenson	19 (1)	19=	Matthew Alexander	18 (1)
21	Brian Bradley	18 (1)	21	Orlando Harrison	16 (1)

Numbers of rounds (*)

Class

Targa T1 (FWD)			Targa T1 (FWD)		
1	Barry Lindsay	30 (3)	1	Martyn Petry	30 (3)
2	Craig Stamper	25 (3)	2	Heidi Garstang	19 (3)
3=	David Garstang	16 (2)	3=	Geoff Rae	17 (2)
3=	Mike Cook	16 (2)	3=	Ross Blyth	17 (2)
5	Michael Horne	14 (2)	5	Matthew Horne	14 (2)
6	Paul Grierson	12 (2)	6	Mike Garstang	10 (1)
7	Jamie Barnett	10 (1)	7=	Alan Place	9 (1)
8=	Daniel Place	9 (1)	7=	Sam Wigham	9 (1)
8=	Matthew Burton	9 (1)	7=	Peter Gardner	9 (1)
8=	Kimberley Gardner	9 (1)	7=	Terence Peat	9 (1)
11=	Frank Mattocks	8 (1)	11	Sam Jaggard	8 (1)
11=	Ben Jude	8 (1)	12=	Adam Turner	7 (1)
13=	Connor Stephenson	7 (1)	12=	Simon Bentley	7 (1)
13=	Brian Bradley	7 (1)	14	Matthew Alexander	6 (1)
15	Michael Pears	6 (1)	15	Mitch McGrath	3 (1)
16	James Fee	3 (1)	-	Robert Iveson	R (1)
-	Jacqueline Raine	R (1)			

Targa T2 (RWD)			Targa T2 (RWD)		
1	Chris Hunter	38 (4)	1	Fiona Tyson	38 (4)
2	Philip Hodgson	37 (4)	2	Lewis Hodgson	37 (4)
3	Kevin Stones	35 (4)	3	Christopher Holden	33 (4)
4	David O'Connor	25 (3)	4	Andrew Graham	27 (3)
5	Patrick Pennefather	20 (3)	5	Mark Humphries	10 (1)
6	Robert Hargreaves	10 (1)	6=	Orlando Harrison	7 (1)
			6=	Richard Bickley	7 (1)

Award winners in bold

Membership

WMC is registered with the Information Commissioner to hold members data.

Welcome to new members

Kai McSorley	of Ulverston
Chris Addison	of Carlisle
Martyn and Dee Copeland	of Mawbray
Oscar Massey	of Rosley
Jake Donnelly	of Flimby
David Moffat	of Carlisle

Membership Renewals

If your membership is up for renewal you will get an email from the membership mojo shortly and it is very simple! Just click to renew. It would be great to get everyone renewed by the end of the year. Those who have joined in the last few months will get an email with their 2024 membership card attached.

Many thanks for Bon Hargreaves for doing the championship tables for the Targa & Historic Championships.

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**rect at
2023**

VSCC Lakeland Trial

The Vintage Sports Car Clubs Lakeland Trial was a real success with over 100 vintage cars coming from all over the country to tackle the steep, muddy or rocky climbs in the forests and on private land in the Bassenthwaite, Buttermere and Lorton areas.

Vintage cars are generally ones from the 1920s/30s and to see these “old timers” climbing up sections that modern cars could never climb is a revelation, even fairly capable 4x4 vehicles can't climb most of the hills that these cars tackle and the competitors do it using only ordinary road tyres, no fancy Town and Country type tyres are allowed.

Dozens of locals were out marshalling but marshals came as usual from all over the country too as they have done for many years.



Locals Dave Agnew, Dave Nicholson, Andrew Wright and Chris Hunter were entered driving Austin 7s, a Chrysler 75 and Ford Model A respectively, I was roped in at last minute to passenger for Robert Hayes Brown from Kent also in an Austin 7, all the vehicles mentioned were open type vehicles rather than saloons although there were saloons entered too.

Poor Dave Agnew had cruel luck when doing an oil change a couple of days prior to the event he found metal from a big end or main bearing in the oil so had to withdraw his entry, he turned out to marshal instead, what a great guy.

Chris Hunter faired only marginally better, he smashed his gearbox casing climbing up the Drumhouse section which runs up to Fleetwith Pike from Honister slate mine, the section starts way up above the slate mine and it contains a number of tight, unsurfaced hairpin bends, imagine Hardnott pass before it was surfaced with tarmac and you have some idea of what it's like, very challenging indeed. Many cars don't make it up to the summit but hundreds of spectators lined the track cheering on the cars as they attempted to scrabble their way up. The weather was absolutely stunning with bright blue skies taking over from the white wilderness after Jack Frost had worked his wonders during the night.

Other sections were in Darling How Forest on Whinlatter and in Wythop forests, these were a mixture of muddy ones, some very muddy indeed and others consisted of loose rocks and shale, all very punishing for the assorted vehicles that most people are amazed to see used in this way, but they do and they do it regularly and keep on going year after year. Some cars dating from the early 1920s are still capable of winning, Duncan Pittaway has a GN that often wins trials but he is most famous for being the owner / restorer of the fire belching monster called “Beast of Turin often seen at Goodwood and other high profile events.



A couple of sections near the Whisky Distillery at Bassenthwaite were held on land with the kind permission of Malcolm Wilson, they were very muddy and did look impossible. Indeed, they were deliberately made impossible so that at the end of the trial the organisers didn't have a few cars that had climbed every hill, these two hills certainly did as they were intended. Most of us had a substantial coating of mud on ourselves when we slithered our way back down the section, the cars were equally well plastered with mud.

The event finished at the Wheatsheaf Lorton where score cards were handed in and results were worked out, during the day it was great to see lots of enthu

siasts from all our local clubs working together marshalling the various sections. Club members such as Edwin and Richard Cook were doing recovery, they were also lowering cars with only two wheel brakes back down Drumhouse. Some really old cars don't have any brakes at all on the front wheels, sounds as good as a laxative to me driving down Honister with only brakes on two wheels !



At the top they attach a tow rope to the rear of the competing car and to the front of a big 4wheel drive pickup then lower cars back down the loose shale track to the slate quarry. No matter what car it is all passengers have to walk back down, no one is allowed to be a passenger on the descent as there is a tremendous drop over the edge if the cars brakes fail or the tyres lose grip on the shale surface.

Other specialist marshals set up the radio masts more usually seen on high-speed forest rallies, these guys maintain radio contact with hill chiefs in case of emergencies deep in the forests so medical assistance could be deployed quickly if needed, fortunately they were not needed on this event but were there anyway.

It was a fantastic event, man in overall charge was Cockermouth resident David Rushton ably assisted by VSCC comp sec Adrew Tarring together with the head office VSCC staff, clubmen from all over the country assist although our local motor clubs must have provided the biggest proportion of marshals by far, if you wish to be involved in future events get in touch with me and I will pass your details on.

Special mention must be made about David Agnew, after he had to withdraw his entry he marshalled a section deep in Darling How Forest, not only that but when a competitor broke down with a failed battery David took the one off his pickup and gave it to the competitor so the competitor could finish the event. David was awarded the McDonald award at the prizegiving which in the opinion of the Clerk of Course and the VSCC goes to" the person who has done the most for the event on the day". David Agnew certainly did the most and that award was richly deserved.

Keith Thomas

Roger Albert Clark Rally

Congratulations to Start and Linda Cariss on finished a fine 38th overall and 3rd in class in their Escort Mexico.

Looking forward to 2024

We have already published our draft calendar of events for next year with the main ones, like the Classic Weekend and the Solway & White Heather rallies being set date. The other dates are more flexible and often depend on the availability of venues.

If you know of any likely venues for autotests, trials or special tests etc please let any committee member know. We take care of all our venues, don't over use them and keep in regular touch with the land owners. There is a rule in motorsport that you don't "poach" venues used by other clubs as this invariably leads to the venue being lost.

Have you any ideas for events? We have always been willing to change what we do to suit the needs of members. Is there something you would like to see the Club do that we currently do?

Would you like to help organise an event? It's good fun and you work with some very knowledgeable folk.

Advertising in Start Line: We can offer very good rate for adverts in Startline for related business, either one off or for a year in various sizes. We have 1030 members who get Start Line each month plus about 100 "friends". Our Face Book page has 2340 followers and a reach of 6731 like minded folk.

Start, finish and lunch halts on tours. We are always looking for new places to start our touring events, or have lunch or coffee halts. In the past there was never an issue with finding cafes, hotels or castles keen to have us but more recently quite a few are not interested in have a big number at a set price for coffee or lunch, reckoning that casual visitors spend more. I recently approached a venue about starting a run with them with coffee and then people could buy more food as they wished, but the venues wanted everyone to have a bacon roll as well as coffee, This would have added £10 to the entry fee so I went elsewhere. Thus the venue lost a guaranteed £240 trade between 0900 and 0930. In another case a venue was booked for the finish of a run months in advance and confirmed. Nearer the time the venue "lost" the booking and it transpired that they had got a bigger booking on that day!



Andy's Armchair

Andy Armstrong takes an irreverent look at motoring and motorsport

I finished last month's effort by saying the subject of the article, the Cisitalia 360, was probably the most unsuccessful racing car ever produced. Anyhow after sending the draft to our editor I got to thinking and realised I was mistaken, the Mastercard Lola T97/30 Formula One car of 1997 was even worse.

From all accounts Eric Broadley was convinced he could get a computer to design a successful F1 car, and no human input would be necessary. What he managed to prove was that he was in fact wrong.

The car was rushed into service at the start of 1997 instead of 1998 because of pressure from Mastercard the main sponsor. Little testing had been done and the car was desperately slow in Australia. Undaunted the team turned up in Brazil for round two, realised they were flogging a dead horse so packed up after practice and went home, never to be seen again.

A sad state of affairs for a designer who before this debacle had produced some very capable single seaters and sport's racing cars including the iconic T70 coupe.



Changing the subject, another famous driver associated with the Mini passed away recently. This time we lost Will Sparrow who started rallying a mini van in 1962 before graduating to some very rapid home prepared 'S's. He did eventually move onto other marques including by 1974 Vauxhalls run by Chris Coburn but to me he'll always be remembered in his red and black Triple C sponsored Mini tackling Motoring News night rallies. 1971 saw him involved in a titanic battle with George Hill in his Twin cam Escort which the Ford man ultimately won. The picture below shows them both on the Rally Dubonnet, a night I remember quite well as I talked to Sparrow at a petrol

halt somewhere near Melton Mowbray.

His other major achievements saw him win the 1970 RAC Rally championship, finishing 1st on the Welsh international in 1970 and 2nd on the same event the following year. All these were mini mounted when the car was by any standards at the end of its front line career and shows the driving talent he must have had.

Finally, I've had a smashing weekend recently watching the Formula Ford festival at Brands Hatch. Another is due tomorrow with the Walter Hayes Trophy at Silverstone. These are both run for enthusiasts in simple single seater cars and believe me the entertainment they provide makes the hyped up processions served up by F1 look about as exciting as having a nap, something I have been known to do in the middle of a Grand Prix by the way.

Ends
AA.