

**Wigton Motor Club Ltd**

# *Start Line*

Issue: 04/12

[www.wigtonmc.co.uk](http://www.wigtonmc.co.uk)

April 2012

## **Historics in Action**



Photo by Tony North

Charles Graves and Ron Palmer have been out twice in the past month on the Tour of Cheshire and the Three Legs of Man. The trusty Tiger got them to the finish on both events

***2012 - The Year of the Motor Club***

# Diary

Club events over the next month or so

## Drive It Day

Sunday, April 22nd

Meeting at Houghton Hall Garden Centre

3 routes of 40 miles

See page 8 for details

## Pub Run

Wednesday, May 2nd

40 miles, no quizzes or questions! Just enjoy the scenery

Starts near Bothel

Ring Graeme on 01900 825642 for a place by April 30th

## WIGTON MOTOR CLUB LTD

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# Talking Point

## Topical comment from the world of motoring

These are challenging time for anyone who owns a car, let alone anyone interested in enjoying motoring or motorsport. Politicians generally seem totally out of touch with the people who elect them, particularly those who live in rural areas and have to use their cars for the most basic services.

Motorsport has been feeling the pinch for a few years now and already this year we have seen rallies cancelled, even sections of the British Rally Championship “chopped” in order to save money with just 27 entries in the international section. The long standing Formula Renault race series has been canned as only six cars has signed up and several clubby single venue rallies have run at a loss due to the low number of entries. Most of those will not happen again.

It is of course not just our sport that is hit. Rugby teams face higher costs in travelling to away fixtures and if you are a football travelling fan the costs can be much greater than that of most motorsport spectators. If you are a fan of Carlisle United you could be travelling to Colchester as I write!

Obviously the financial constraints will impinge on our activities and how many of our members can take part in any of the wide variety of events we run. We do have strength in numbers though and a very sound financial back up. WMC is quite unusual in that we run events in several disciplines and that is our strength. If any member needs support or advice over any type of motorsport or classic car then we can usually point them to an real expert in that field.

Our members are our strength and we would ask all or you to be evangelical in going out and recruiting new members who may not realise just what WMC has to offer compared to most other clubs. On the website you can down load a membership form which had “introduced by” at the top. If you add your name to that and a new member joins then in December all such forms go into a proverbial hat and two are drawn out for free membership for 2013. The more forms your name is on the more chances you have!

For those of us with classic cars (over 30 years old) we take their use for granted but there are many new laws passed by those over paid EU half wits in Brussels that effect our use of our ladies from the garage! That is why it is important that everyone with an older car supports Drive It Day on April 22nd. We will be doing a major PR exercise about his and we would like at least 100 cars turning up at Houghton Hall. The management there are giving us a very generous 2 for 1 offer so as long as you book in advance (18th).

Full details are on page 8 so please contact the relevant organiser and join us for a great meeting!

GTF



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

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# Northern Trial Feb 18th

On Saturday 18th Feb Edwin Cook and I were one of the 88 entries of both motor bikes and cars in the Fellside Auto clubs Northern trial which started at Wigton and we had a really interesting and enjoyable day and despite horrendous rain during the Friday night and right up to the start. It cleared away as we started and we had warm sunshine for quite a part of the day then snow up in the highest part of the mountains above Whinlatter pass before a cold but clear late afternoon on the final few hills.

Once again I did last minute work to the car as seems to be my usual routine for some strange reason and we chopped up the inlet manifold from the carb to the supercharger and shortened it by about 15 inches to try to overcome slow throttle response, It worked quite well but the mixture obviously needs sorting as on certain throttle openings it spluttered as if it was oiled up or too rich but eventually would clear and feel quite on song much of the time. I developed a technique after a while of holding the accelerator at a steady opening of about three quarter throttle and slipped the clutch to compensate for the rise or fall in revs to keep us mobile. Not kind on the clutch but it kept us going and sometimes it worked and sometimes it didn't. We got round the event and some steep hills we cleaned that we didn't expect to and on some easier hills we stopped when we didn't expect to either !

The organisers were very unfortunate that the torrential rain the night before made some hills impossible after marking them out the day before when the markers would have been in perfect positions. On one long section rain on the track where forestry vehicles had been turning made the track impassable after a number of cars had failed and this caused all manner of problems and having to tow competitors through the long section meant it had to be scrubbed eventually and competitors had a long reverse for over quarter of a mile along a quite narrow track to be able to go to other hills. This affected the timing of the event and closing times of the hills of course but it was no ones fault just pure bad luck.

It was great to see various other motor clubs co-operating again and marshalling various hills. Wigton motor club and Ilkley motor club had big signs out on their respective hills and some other clubs from South of Scotland and places much farther afield did a truly great job manning up their sections.

Start and finish at Wigton cattle market was ideal with great facilities and really helpful and friendly waitresses serving great food at very reasonable prices where competitors from all over the country could sit and discuss the days trial and have a really relaxing time. Unless of course some crews had to get off down the motorway to places as far away as Devon London, or places in between.

One interesting combination had a very long trailer pulled by a Landrover TDV6 with two trials cars on and the four people travelling in one vehicle, this they said saved about £150 in fuel costs on their 400 mile round trip, quite a saving.

Everyone appreciated all the effort put in by the hard working organisers for this event and whilst luck might have a bearing on some final positions it was a very well run event and no one could do more to find and run so many varied sections at a number of locations to give every car a chance, paperwork and documentation was superb so thank you on behalf of everyone who took part we will hopefully be back again next year but I will definitely try to prepare the car a bit earlier though !

Keith Thomas



[www.lakedistricthotels.net](http://www.lakedistricthotels.net)

## Northern Trial Photos



**The Smiths plot the best route.**



**Mud splattered veterans**



**The start team at Sandale**

# Let's Go Karting

**Wigton Motor Club are offering the chance or any under 14s to try their hand at karting absolutely free!**

This is under the Motor Sports Association "Let's Go Karting" scheme run by the Cumbria Kart Racing Club at the Rowrah circuit. Sessions will take place on Tuesday nights in May.

Top Grand Prix drivers like Jenson Button, David Coulthard and Lewis Hamilton all raced at Rowrah when they were kids and you could follow in their wheel tracks!

Karts, race suits and helmets are all supplied.

The first 40 applicants will be accepted in order of receipt.

Applicants must have no previous karting experience.

They must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Additional sessions on the karts may be bought via Cumbria Kart Racing Club.

Application forms for the karting sessions are on the website at [www.wigtonmc.co.uk](http://www.wigtonmc.co.uk)



Motorsport is full of famous fathers and sons who have been successful drivers as like many sports the passion is carried over the generations. Think of the Hill family, Graham and Damon both World Champions and now a third generation is making the grade with Josh. Australian World Champion Alan Jones's father Stan was very success and in current racing we have rising stars from the Rosberg, Brundle and Blomqvist to name just a few. Sir Jack Brabham's three sons all found success in racing.

These day's karting is very much the breeding ground of future champions and the Rowrah circuit in Cumbria has seen virtually all the top UK drivers compete there in their younger years. Jenson Button, Lewis Hamilton, Alan McNish and David Coulthard all honed their skills there. Indeed Lewis attributes his expertise in the wet to racing at Rowrah because whenever he came it always rained!

The Kirkpatrick family from Brigham could well be following in the champions footsteps. Bill is a very successful historic racer with over twenty years experience and has competed in the Spa Six Hour race and the Britcar 24 hour event as well has many successes in MGs and Cooper Climaxes. Bill's wife Michelle has also raced and competed in speed events. Now the second generation is climbing the ladder of motorsport Sam Kirkpatrick is just eleven years old but has already won the prestigious "0" plate in the Comer Cadet class at Rowrah.



## PG Tips

This month's main tip is don't buy a 10 year old Renault Laguna with an auto box.....they are a horrible car! The only redeeming feature is that the engine sounds bloody marvelous but that alone is not granting it a stay of Ebay execution in my drive, so its onwards and upwards and probably something safe and reliable like an Alfa Romeo to replace it (!!!). One day I might actually buy something really dull like a Vauxhall Astra or Ford Mondeo but in the meantime I will continue to buy ridiculous cars to make my life difficult and ensure I never have a moment's peace.

The Cumbria Classic show is in August and this year one of the themes is going to be 50 years of the MGB..... as you may by now have gathered I let out a groan when I heard the endless articles on the things in magazines this year have started to get a bit monotonous, but despite all this I do have a bit of a soft spot for the rusty old dogs! It's a muddy bottomless bog near Shap...I jest...I actually rather like the Sebring bodied version and any old sport scar with a V8 fitted (even if it is a Rover) can't be all bad...especially when you remember that they don't weigh a great deal (even less if they are rusty!). So a nice Sebring bodied MGB with a 4.5 V8 fitted would probably be my ideal classic British sport scar, failing that the all new MGB 16v would also do quite nicely. Now I'm sure all you MG types reading this already know what I'm talking about but for those who aren't of that persuasion, it's a limited run (50 is it?) of brand spanking new MGBs. They are being produced with the Mazda MX5 engine and box fitted as well as various other updates to make an authentic looking MGB but with modern running gear to bring the old car into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. I believe the run is already sold out and sadly the price was something mad like £50,000 but I am surprised that they are going to stop at the limited run when there clearly is a market. It's a much better shot at reviving the brand than the last effort in the 1990s where they fitted a rather lame Rover V8 to a smoothed over roadster that's for sure.

The speed season is not far away and having suffered a few turns in problems on Snotty the Skoda (it didn't.....not even remotely....which is scary on a mini roundabout in a small car with an HGV bearing down on you!) I decided to ditch the front anti roll bar and what a difference it made. Turn in has now been restored to a quite pointy level, the only downside being that the back end is now a little slidey in anything other than dry conditions.....so I have a little more work to do. The Rowrah test day should be interesting and fun...I must remember to avoid crashing.

Car security has come a long way in the last 10 years and thefts of stereos and of the vehicles themselves are almost a thing of the past. Most cars now have model specific stereos that need programmed to the car and every single car on the market is fitted with an immobilizer system far beyond the grasp of 99.99% of criminals. Now I don't want to start a panic here, because car crime as a whole has fallen a huge amount, but thieves these days are looking to steal things like sat navs and laptops that people leave in their cars. Its worth noting that the suction ring most satnavs leave on a windscreen (particularly visible in damp weather) is a fair indication that there is one lying in the glove box of your car because most people don't go beyond hiding them. Genuine car thefts (as opposed to insurance scams.....of which there are now more than genuine thefts I would say) tend to involve keys being stolen first, or farmers vehicles (sorry farmers but you still have a tendency to leave them in the ignition!) or in some of the cities a low loader and a winch. The long and short of this is - when you remove your satnav wipe the ring off the screen, don't leave the keys in the ignition or front porch of your house and don't forget your laptop when you finish work!

Peter Garforth

## Speed Test Day



Drivers enjoying the sunshine



Keiron Bowness

## More Test Day Photos



**Andrew Graham**



**Darren Coleman**



**Harry Moody**



**Paul Eastwood**



**Stephen Palmer**



**Steve Fishwick**

# *Drive It Day*

**Sunday, April 22nd**

**Once again the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs is encouraging everyone with car more than 30 years old to go out and drive it on the Sunday nearest to St. George's Day.**

We are running the Cumbrian part of this event with the cars gathering at Houghton Hall Garden Centre between 11 and 2 on that day. Owners who pre book will be able to have a two for one offer on food there.

**There are four options for the day:**

- A forty mile run starting from the Redmain lay by on the A595 north east of Cocker-mouth First car leaves at 10.00. To book a place contact Roger Pope on 01900 827181
- A forty mile run starting from Halfords in Penrith at 10.00. To book a place please contact Jim O'Neill on 01768 870236
- A forty mile run starting from Houghton Hall, Carlisle at 10.00. Please contact John or Andrew Graham on 01228 534483
- To book for the classic display at Houghton Hall (11-2) only and get the food voucher please contact Graeme Forrester on 01900 825642

You can of course just turn up at Houghton Hall between 11 and 2 but you do not get the two for one food offer which is only pre booked.

For the pre booked runs and food vouchers you must book by April 18th please.



**Brockbanks  
Solicitors**

Whitehaven, Cocker-mouth, Maryport, Workington and Keswick (as Oglethorpe & Broatch)

# RED MIST

*no longer young but still angry!*

## **Europe what is it good for?**

The bleedin Euro Millions that's what its good for, and some of the best driving roads in the world.... but back to avarice, the greed of the masses and the driver of the main problem of what I was ranting on a while back, well to be fair what I rant on about most of the time!....don't get me wrong I love cars, I want them, I would collect them if I could.

The lottery fantasy encourages that side of my character, at work just before we all chipped in our 2 English pounds for our latest punt on the Euro Millions we took the fantasy car journey.... I set the rules a while back in that you're allowed to choose 7 cars max and I must admit being the main of-fice petrol head I struggle to keep it down to just the seven.

So my list, 7 cars, one for each day of the week, 7 cars only...

Whether the jackpot goes ballistic or not, my list is fairly consistent, and is environmentally sustainable with all the vehicles being second hand. This in part comes from the realisation that modern cars are just too damn good.

This hit home to me a few years back, I was invited to an Audi Quattro day by the Newcastle dealership (I had been in there previously, lying through my teeth about my future plans) It was held in an area I knew well and in most cases I took whatever car was allotted to me on a far more involving route than the perma tanned sales reps would really want, that day I drove the then new RS4, the latest A6 Allroad and the bloody awful and irrelevant Q7, the prize drive was the S6, the one with the V10 Lambo engine.

The RS4 was fun in a slightly numb way, I drove (unfortunately) the rag top version, this failed to distract me from the conclusion that it was great at 9/10ths after which point it all just went wrong and became a 15 year old Renault Laguna on mixed part worns.

The S6 is an awesome piece of engineering and as dull as an uncooked Greggs pasty, it accelerates so quickly that the only true legal excitement it offers (the sound of the engine under hard acceleration) is over in a flash, the fact that the stunned salesman uttered something helium pitched when I reached 142mph (at which time the car actually did become a mildly exciting proposition) made me realise that at sane speeds (and those that allow you to keep your liberty) the Audi S6 was as dull and competent as a bog standard A6 2.0 tdi. Mammoth grip and refinement mean the actual process of driving is nullified. The car I thought the best all-rounder of the day was the Allroad 3.0 tdi, at least it wasn't shouting about the Nurburgring or summat similar, what a great family car (of course you need to sell the family, at a profit, to buy one new)

So my list, 7 cars, one for each day of the week, .....7 cars only

Yes the conversation always has the usual suspects, I laugh at the predictability of some peoples ambitions, I mean if you can actually afford your list what is the point of being sensible, my experience with the Audi S6 made me think (contrary to a recent rant) that maybe historic rallying should be completely period, that no cars made after 1962 should be allowed and no other tyres other than crossplies should be allowed (road tyres, no trick cross plies) and drum brakes, by god it wouldn't be much of a spectator sport but it would be terrifying, all tootling around at sane speeds with zero grip and zero stopping power, only a set of Tena pants between you and embarrassment?

So my list, 7 cars, one for each day of the week, 7 cars only.....

Its not even a top ten is it ? 7, it's hard enough doing a top ten, is it just me or do we all think, in the back of our minds, that if we confirm a top ten then that's it set in stone, like your top ten fantasy members of the opposite sex, what if you made a mistake and then "your God" granted your wish, for me certain elements like Julia Roberts, Penelope Cruz, Susanna Hoffs are slot ins, but what if Kate Bush (1979 model) was an actual loonie? it would be a disaster wouldn't it. This delusion is almost as great as the odds of a lottery jackpot, but just as I buy that ticket, I still would take a chance and ask Kate out if the opportunity arose, hell I rally a Volvo, I know all about living on the edge!

So,... 7 cars, one for each day of the week, just 7 lovely cars....

Of course you cant blow the whole budget on cars, you need somewhere to store them and cash to run them and then of course the money to travel the world, follow the GP circus for a year or the WRC, and of course then the family to look after, the future blah blah...it soon goes from fantasy to sensible doesn't it! Kate Bush from 1979 was a beautiful young woman, but lets be honest at my middle agedness what the hell would we talk about afterwards!

Yes ok, my list, 7 cars, one for each day of the week, 7 cars only

RS 1600 group 4, the fuel injected one RAC used on the circuit of Ireland

Group 4 Stratos Alitalia, big arches, light pod

69 Yenko Camaro (for my Californian jaunts) but with 4 round headlights!

Delta Integrale EVO 2 one of the last ones, yellow, black interior

Alfa 33 Stradale, I have a particular one in mind.....if it still exists

Group 4 Fiat 124 Abarth spider

Ferrari 288GTO but one of the rare competition ones

Audi RS6+ Avant...well you have to have something to tow the Italian stuff with ...FFS!

Alan the fowl mouthed fox.

## **From The Top**

### **March committee meeting**

The new five year agreement for the classic show venues was agreed.

It was agreed to buy 8 fire extinguishers for the start of tests etc

Houghton Hall would be sued for the Drive It Day.

It was agreed to put back copies of Start Line on the website.

The accounts had come back from the accountants who had reported the book keeping to be of a very high standard.

It was agreed to buy 1200 stamps before the price rise.

The Power Point presentation to Solway Jaguar had been well received.

The 2013 awards evening would take place on Jan 26th and a speaker had been arranged.

The Rowrah test day for speed even drivers was in place.

The historic awards series had lost the first round so the Berwick was the next event.

The marshals visit to MSport had been impressive as always.

Venue: the noise test results would be passed on to Allerdale BC

# Elderly Utterances

## The Voice of Experience!

Ron Palmer has his say

GTF has been diligent in researching the histories of both the Wigton Motor Club and MG racing and has committed them to a permanent record on PowerPoint in words and pictures. The results were presented to the Jaguar Enthusiasts Club at their club night at Stoneybeck on the 6<sup>th</sup> March with our club members also invited. As a number of those present were also members of Wigton Motor Club it was a little difficult to estimate the extra numbers provided by Wigton MC but it was a pretty good turnout all told. Graeme kept those present interested with the first half of the evening devoted to the Club and after an interval a history of MG racing kept us awake. It was a good night and dare I say it a good deal more interesting than another presentation put in front of Jaguar members a month ago. Thank you Graeme.

Charles and I headed to Cheshire for the Tour of that name on 3rd March. This very competitive HRCR championship event is one of the best Historic Road Rallies in the calendar and attracted 75 entries plus half a dozen reserves. Who would have thought that there were that many navigators prepared to tackle regularity sections and OS maps? Could it be that that the black art is not quite as scary as portrayed by some? The organising Knutsford Motor Club have a superb manpower resource from both within their club and from members of Ecurie Cod Fillet that revered club of rallying names of old. The organisers condensed eight regularities and twelve tests into a route of about 145 miles and the marshals and time-keepers were virtually faultless in the execution of their duties. It was all very satisfying and worthy of its place in the HRCR championship. John Ruddock and David Taylor were worthy winners in the Mk1 Escort (without hydraulic handbrake!) ahead of the two 911s of Charles Colton and Howard Warren. Of the local entries Steve Entwistle and Bob Hargreaves were 12<sup>th</sup>; Charles and I were 14<sup>th</sup> out of 68 classified finishers.

The Classic Rally Association attracted almost 50 crews to the Three Legs of Mann Rally, run for the second time on the Island with us taking the ferry from Heysham on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> March. After scrutineering and documentation at rally HQ, The Mount Murray Hotel, on Thursday evening we started the Friday section bright and early with the first leg route instructions being handed out from 7.30 so a late night in the bar was not on the cards for any of the crews. Fred Bent was the architect of the taxing route and there was plenty do on both sides of the cockpit. As the event's title suggests there was a day section followed by an evening section to finish around midnight and on Saturday a third leg finishing at 15.00 hours. The first two legs were very wet with soggy paperwork and marshals but some good daylight tests and regularities. The route was broadly based on a full circuit of the TT course which took about six hours as we left the course at intervals for tests and regularities as well as coffee and lunch halts. As we travelled the TT course my admiration increased for the bike racers who ride there each year in the races. The record for one lap of the TT circuit on 2 wheels was set in 2009 by Lancastrian John McGuinness who took 17mins 12 secs. The four wheel record was set by Mark Higgins in a Subaru in June 2011 in 19minutes 37 seconds averaging 115mph and hitting speeds in excess of 162mph. All very scary and not with me on board thank you.

The evening section had closed roads where it was almost a given that you dropped time over yellows that have featured as stages on the Manx Nationals and Internationals for 50 years. Our undoing was the time we spent on Jurby and Andreas airfields where the features were difficult to spot in darkness and the confusion caused led to (my) errors which



which effectively spoiled what otherwise would have been a good performance for us. We had been lying as high as 7<sup>th</sup> on Friday but we plunged down the rankings during the night section and could not pull the deficit back on Saturday. Anyone who has rallied on the Island will recognise such names as Sulby Glen, Little London, Old Mines, Injebreck, Round Table, Druidale etc and at night in the wet these roads were pretty daunting. Being on these roads in a modern stage prepared car is one thing but a classic car with a classic crew fading lights and fading eyes is something different.

Saturday dawned fair and the sunny blue skies gave an altogether different appearance to the Island and the day's route was scenic and consisted mainly of tests on private land and closed roads (mustn't upset the very tolerant locals) in the south of the island. The event in total was pretty tough and may have been too much for some crews to return if it runs again in two years time.

After his second place in Cheshire Charles Colton in the 911 hit the jackpot this time with Guy Woodcock on the watches. Local success was in the hands of the navigators in 2<sup>nd</sup> place, Iain Tullie, 3rd Kevin Savage, 15<sup>th</sup> Paul Bosdet, 16<sup>th</sup> Charles and I and 17<sup>th</sup> Bob Hargreaves.

There is a lull for a while before the action gets underway with Charles and Kit and Keith and Sue heading off for the Flying Scotsman – Duxford to St Andrews in their respective '30s Bentleys and then the Three Castles Classic in Wales.

Meanwhile I am tidying up the details for this year's Gallop for the 18<sup>th</sup> May and with David Agnew and the team the programme for the Lake District Classic Rally on 15<sup>th</sup> July. Busy busy.

Ron

## Adverts

**Barn Storage:** Room for one car £50 per quarter. Ring Graeme on 01900 825642

**Red Rotor Arms** for the Lucas W25 and W45 distributor as used on most classic cars of the 60s and 70s. £6.00 each

**Quality condensers** for the Lucas W25 & W45 distributors, long or short wire versions. £6.00 each.

**Red Line water Wetter** to help solve over heating: £10.95 a bottle.

**Silkolene W20/50 classic oil.** 5 litre cans: £14.50

Ring Graeme on 01900 82562

**Sabelt seat belts, race suits, seats etc** plus the SRC budget range. Get yours now at advantageous prices for the new season. Ring Graeme on 01900 825642

# Historic Sporting Trials Association

A new organisation the "Historic Sporting Trials Association" has been formed to promote historic trials for vehicles such as Cannons, Dellows and even Bucklers to name but three and any similar type cars comply that used engines such as the side valve Fords, Austin 7s BMC A series or any other similar period engines.

Already 50 cars have emerged from dereliction and even some of the drivers have emerged from dereliction as well. Drivers such as Gordon Jackson former championship winner from many years ago are looking or have already found cars and are restarting their motorsport involvement again. Many people are now looking to buy old cars that comply with the spirit of the regulations so start looking in those garages you may find some valuable vehicles awaiting a new lease of life.

Several Wigton members have suitable cars under restoration and these will be appearing in the next few months as they are completed. The newly formed club will be represented at motorsport shows such as race retro where information can be obtained and videos of former events from years ago will be shown but the cars are eligible to compete in various classes at many events up here so if a bit of muddy fun interests or you are interested in this form of cheap but competitive motorsport check out the HSTA website.

Keith Thomas

## More Photos from the Speed Test Day



**Peter Garforth gives Snotty some stick**



**David Wiggins did more laps than anyone else.**



## Classic Column

**1962 was a “classic year for new cars.** This year sees celebrations for the 50th anniversary of the Ferrari 250 GTO, AC Cobra, MG B and Lotus Elan, all iconic models that are still treasured and revered today. However 1962 also saw the launch of the Ford Cortina and Austin/Morris 1100, two models that dominated the UK market for the next ten years. The 1100 (now a rare sight) was the best selling model right up until 1972 when the Cortina took over.

There could not be two cars more different than the **GTO** and the **Cobra**, one a refined, high tech product from Italy and the other a rather outdated British chassis with a big American lump stuffed in the front. Over the next two years these cars dominated the World Sports Car Championship. Of course only 39 GTOs were made compared with some 7000 genuine Cobras.

**Going, going gone? Well perhaps?** There are only 15,646 Ford Sierras on the road and just 2789 Orions. Austin Maestros sees just 1045, down from 73,531 in 2000. Just 685 Marinas are still on the road. Almost gone are the Alfa Romeo 33 with just 2 left and the Fiat 127 with just 196.

Surprisingly some are on the up with classics being re – imported. The MG RV8 has gone from 268 in 2000 to 952 this year and the Triumph TR7 has gone from 348 to 511 in the same period.

Mentioning the **MG B and the Lotus Elan** reminds me that today’s most popular sports car, the **Mazda MX5** has its roots in both those cars. Mazda was just getting a foot hold in the USA in the early seventies when MG B production stopped. A leading MG dealer also sold Mazdas and he remarked to the top Mazda guy in the USA that they should make a successor to the MG B. This did in fact come up as a basic project which was then put into the hands of International Design Associates of Worthing who owners, John Shute, was a keen MG enthusiast with a collection of over 40 different MGs. The body design was based on the Elan and the concept as a “modern” MG B. Famously even to the exhaust was tuned to sound like an MG! If you look at an early MX5/Miata you will see how like an Elan it is. Of course the early MX5 are now considered classics themselves!

I am surprised that the death throes of **SAAB** have not received more mention in the classic press. Perhaps it is because their cars over the past 20 years have been rather mediocre and indeed latterly based on the Vauxhall Vectra? The heady days of RAC Rally wins with the 95/96 and even the exploits of the 99 are now far back in history. I remember at a press day enjoying one of the powerful Carlson models. By mid afternoon it was taken out of play as its front tyres were bald! I reckon the trouble with SAAB was that they effectively had only one model and variations in just one market segment and perhaps no money to develop newer smaller cars. Presumably there are now a lot of unemployed Trolls!

Mentioning above the **decline and rise of different models** over the years makes me wonder if, in the case of cars of the 80s and 90s, we will see most models disappear altogether. In the past it was usually the dreaded rust that got most cars followed by mechanical failure but these issues have been largely solved now so it is now the failure of costly electronic items that leads to cars being scraped along with the deterioration of plastic body parts and trim. The lack of the once much loved **Ford XR2 and XR3** models on the roads is largely due to the plastic bumpers and trim suffering solar deterioration and becoming brittle and discolouring. Replacement parts are not available.

I know that some of our members have some **quite rare cars**. One past member owned a Crossley I remember. Crossley Motors, based in Manchester, England, produced approximately 19,000 high quality cars from 1904 until 1938, 5,500 buses from 1926 until 1958 and 21,000 goods and military vehicles from 1914 to 1945. There are some fine examples in the Manchester Science & Industry Museum.

If you have a rare car let’s hear about it, write an article about it and share your passion!

If you are involved in an **event, show or run** during this season please send us details

# Inside the Industry

Paul Gilligan keeps us up to date

## Inside the Industry

### 2012 – Tough but how tough?

There is disagreement in the industry over just how tough this year will be. The Society of Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) insists sales will be just about level with last year at over 1.9 million car sales. However one of the industry's leading gurus Professor Garel Rhys has recently forecast that last year's increase in sales to business users was a one off, and that therefore 2012 sales will be below 1.8M. Ominously, Professor Rhys called on the industry to "batten down the hatches" as "adverse economic conditions will seriously undermine UK car sales".

1.9M is not a good year, below 1.8M is a very serious prospect for manufacturers and dealers. March sales will provide a good guide as this is now the biggest month of the year.

### February Results

Sales to the end of February are just under 1% below last year. Many prestige makes have done well with Bentley almost 50% up (although I was last week offered 20% discount on brand new Bentleys!), Porsche 21% up and Land Rover supported by the new Evoque 36% up. BMW however dropped by 23%, 3000 units below last year, which funnily enough is just about the number of unsold cars BMW allegedly registered in December in order to beat Audi last year. They are now 3000 sales behind Audi this year, but are hopeful the new 3 series will correct that. Last week I received an unsolicited e-mail from a large BMW dealer saying candidly that things were "dreadfully quiet" and that the dealer would "greatly appreciate any business I could put their way."

Vauxhall have publicly announced that they will concentrate on reducing their losses this year and have reduced their big discount business to rental companies and the like by 40000 units in 2012. This is already showing with Vauxhall sales 24% down so far this year. Meanwhile Lotus continue to struggle (see below) having sold only 25 cars in the UK in two months, and Renault's problems continue with sales 26% down on a poor 2011.

### How Do They Afford Motorsport?

Lotus are in deep trouble. Their sales are very low and their incredibly ambitious plans to rival Aston Martin and Ferrari are in disarray. They had planned 5 new models in the next 3 years with the Esprit (target Ferrari 458) and the Elite (target Ferrari California) due to launch this year. Lotus is currently owned by Proton, in which the Malaysian government has a 42.7% stake. However that stake has now been sold to a private company who have announced that they may well sell Lotus (to whom?). All Lotus product development has now been put on hold as a result, so it seems Ferrari and Aston Martin can sleep easier for a while yet.

Meanwhile the Lotus name pumps millions into the Formula 1 team that bears their name and many other race categories. Where this money comes from, and whether it will continue to flow, remains a mystery to me.

Chinese owned MG recently announced their entry in the BTCC this year with Jason Plato as lead driver. It is widely thought that due to his talents in term of driving and PR Mr. Plato is the highest earner in BTCC so the budget must be considerable. The racer is based on the MG6 saloon, which last year found 290 UK customers. So far this year MG have sold 210 cars in the UK?

### 3 Door Cars

Hyundai recently announced their new Velostar with the unusual (but not unique) feature of one door on one side of the car but two doors on the other side. I was reminded of 1970 when Ford were planning their (eventually successful) attack on the World Cup Rally. At one point three man crews were considered, and someone had the bright idea that Escorts with 2 doors on one side and one on the other would enable the crew to get in and out more quickly.

Someone from Competitions called their production colleagues at the Liverpool plant where Escorts were made to discuss if it was possible for them to build some body shells with this feature. They were informed that this was no problem and that in fact a quantity of bodies had been built to this specification by mistake when the computer delivered 2 door near side panels and 4 door offside to the production line.

Ford didn't have the foresight or perhaps bravery of Hyundai. They quietly crushed the shells, and 2 door Escorts won the World Cup Rally with 2 man crews.

### **Focus 1.0 Litre**

My regular reader may recall that I recently mentioned that Ford were just about to launch a new one litre petrol engine in the Focus. Details have now been announced. The engine is a 999cc which produces 123 bhp thanks in no small part to a tiny turbo which spins at 4000 revs **PER SECOND!** The power is the same as the previous 1.6 litre petrol engine, the torque is higher, and the fuel consumption at 56.5 mpg is 20% less and close to the diesel.

The technology is staggering for a family car. Variable valve timing on each camshaft, direct injection, a water cooled exhaust manifold, a cam belt that never needs changing and a block so stiff that the gap between the bores is only 6.1mm.

As if that's not enough a high performance twin turbo version is under development with a target of 180 bhp! Ford are so confident of this new engine that the current 1.6 litre petrol engine is being deleted. I just wonder if they're brave enough to put a 1.0 badge on the back?

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## **Jottings**

### **How many words does it take to explain something?**

Pythagorean Theorem	24 words
Archimedes Principle	67 words
Ten Commandments	179 words
US Declaration of Independence	1,300 words
US Constitution & Amendments	7,818 words
EU regulations on the sale of cabbages	26,911 words

The EU obviously has a different view of things!

## **Championship News**

### **Brockbanks Solicitors Cross Border Speed Championship:**

Round 1: Kames      April 15th      EACC    Regs available on line

Round 2 Teesside    June 4th      YMC

### **TJ Services Northern Historic Rally Awards:**

Round 1 Berwick Classic    May 6th      BDCMC

Round 2 Stobs Classic      June ?      H&BCC



# Andy's Armchair

**Andy Armstrong takes an irrelevant look at motoring and motorsport**

Well another F1 season is upon us and by the time you read this we'll have a pretty shrewd idea who's been bluffing and who's really got their act together as, depending on publishing date, they'll be one or two races into the season.

Now using the old adage of "if it looks right it'll go right" then McLaren'll win every race as they're the only team except Marussia who haven't got the plug ugly step on the front of their car. On the other hand after the first race they might have to have one, if everyone else is proved to be right. Red Bull's step is the only one with a hole in it which, if you believe the flannel, is to keep their drivers cool. You can't help thinking it's more likely it's KERS cooling which if it works should cure their Achilles heel of last year and make them even more dominant.

Ferrari don't look too happy at the time of writing, Raikonen seems to be pedalling the Lotus to good effect and Force India look strong with Di Resta and Hulkenburg. It would be nice to see Williams shine again but I doubt they will and surely this will be Schuey's last season if the Merc isn't on the pace, maybe even if it is come to that.

All in all it's shaping up quite well, it's just annoying I won't see it all live as I've no intention of feathering the Murdoch nest any more than it is at the moment. It's a shame I can't say my phone was hacked but first I'm not famous and second I don't have a mobile so I guess I'm on a loser there.

Changing the subject, I got my new car last week and up to now will less than 200 miles on it I'm very pleased. Driving wise it's spot on but the screen on the dashboard and the twisting, sliding knob thing between the seats is, and I suspect will remain a mystery. Thankfully mine is pretty basic with no sat-nav or a Google thingy. I can't help wondering if a lot of people who up their specification do so for effect rather than because they know what they're doing or need said toys and that a lot of expensive kit never sees the light of day.

Finally I understand that the MG name is going to be back in the BTCC with the bold Mr. Plato at the wheel. It just seems a bit of a shame it's Chinese with a NGTC engine, gearbox, suspension etc. and a shell that's been built by someone like Gartrac. Why anyone would allow this mishmash to influence them to by an MG car from a showroom is beyond me but obviously they think it will or they wouldn't be spending the necessary to race.

Ends

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# What's On

**WMC events and other events we are invited to**

## April

1st	MGC	Roof of England Challenge
1st	YMC	North Yorkshire Classic (NESCRO)
8th	MGCC	Racing at Donington
15th	BARC	Harewood Hill Climb
15th	EACC	Kames Sprint ( <b>BSCBSC Round 1</b> )
15th	SoSCC	Grass Autotest
20-22nd	ERA	Flying Scotsman
22nd	IDMC	Ilkley Jubilee Historic Rally
<b>22nd</b>	<b>WMC</b>	<b>Drive It Day</b>
27/28	CSCC	Pirelli International Rally
28/29	BARC	Racing at Croft

## May

2nd	WMC	<b>Pub Run</b>
6th	BDMC	Berwick Classic Rally (TJSNHRA counter)
16th	WMC	<b>Grass Autotest (Egremont)</b>
18-20	WMC	<b>Lowland Gallop</b>
27th	WMC	<b>Autosolo (Penrith)</b>

**Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is a mystery. Today is a gift. That's why it is called the present**

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**News Blog: <http://wigtonmc.wordpress.com/>**

**Please only phone club officials between 19.00 and 21.00 in the evening.**

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