

Wigton Motor Club Ltd

Start Line

Issue: 06/15

www.wigtonmc.co.uk

June 2015

Brilliant Berwick



Ross Butterworth and Ali Proctor won the Berwick Classic Rally, one of the highlights of the historic rallying year!
Read Mike Garstang's report inside!

Motor Sport for All

Diary

Club events over the next month or so

June Pub Run Wednesday June 3rd Mockerkin layby on the A5086

kendall.bruce@sky.com Phone 01946861531
Bob's email bobnbet64@btopenworld.com Phone 01946861493

Grass Autotest at Whins Farm, Harrington Tuesday, 23rd June

Entries to: fiona.tyson@yahoo.co.uk

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Talking Point

Topical comment from the world of motoring

The 2015 AGM saw a good turnout of members and there was a very positive feel to the meeting. Peter Garforth takes over as Chairman and Jim O'Neill steps down to Vice Chair after five years in the hot seat. Peter is a great enthusiast and has had some quite "unusual" cars over the years and has been a past speed champion in his Hawk. He also writes the entertaining PG Tips column in Start Line. I am delighted to say that Charles Graves is our new President, he will be a great ambassador for the Club. Over the years we have been very fortunate in having presidents who are actively involved and not just figure heads.

We also welcome John & Marian Sloan to the committee. They are both keen competitors and are involved in running events and Marian entertains us with her reports here in Start Line.

We now have a very strong committee and we also have a lot of members willing to run events. Indeed we have organisers for all the autotests and pub runs for the rest of this year.

We are of course pleased to hear of anyone with a new idea for an event or a visit to a place of interest. If the summer ever arrives we hope to have some week day lunch runs/meets as well.

Last year when Rob Jones took over at the top of the MSA he must have known he had major challenges ahead with a sport in steady decline and a governing body in need of major reform. However no one would not have anticipated the impact of the accidents on the Jim Clark Rally last year on the sport and rallying in particular.

Perhaps now is the time for a radical rethink on how our sport is governed and also the fact that there are eleven other motorsport bodies in the UK who can authorise motorsport. This has meant that the percentage of our sport run under MSA rules is in steady decline. I personally can't see that being changed without some radical action. Possibly we, as MSA clubs and licence holders, need to be asking for the MSA to have a five year plan for the sport—written by people who are in touch with the grass roots and the reality of running club motorsport.

Once again we have a packed issue of Start Line and I am once again indebted to the regular contributors and also welcome Dave Nicholson with his amusing article. I am always pleased to have reports and features and these make Start Line one of the best motor club magazines in the UK.

If you have been to a different event, a different country or have a story to tell then please write about it.

GTF



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Classic Column

News from the Classic Scene

Quiz: Marian Sloan was the first with the right answer in that Fred Francis invented Scalextric

This magazine road test from 1967 described **which car** thus: "*Twin carburettor punch, five seater luxury, six cylinder smoothness, add up to today's most civilised car.*"

A new race series for Austin A30/A35s is being run by the HRDC. 30 cars have been built and will debut in September prior to the series in 2016.



MG Car Club

MG Live!
Silverstone, June 20th/21st

Featuring
Comps 60, Healey 3000 race.
MG races.
Festival of all things Octagon

Cumbria Classic & Motorsport Show

Sunday, August 28th
At
Dalemain

Featured marques: **Bentley, Mercedes (Pagoda) and MG A**

Entry forms are at: www.wigtonmc.co.uk

Lake District Classic Rally

&

Lake District Targa Rally

Sunday, June 28th

Around 20 tests and no regularities

Entry forms at www.wigtonmc.co.uk

PG Tips

It is with much pride that I am able to announce that not only did I succeed in getting to the Isle of Man Classic speed event in Snotty, I completed all 3 events and got home, all without a trailer or the AA. After ‘rod through block’ gate the hastily built standby engine felt strong enough but was more than a little harsh and vibratey above 5000rpm even after I managed to complete 200 miles on the road in the run up to the event. I also had to undertake a last minute head gasket change as the engine heated up rather disconcertingly when revved above 4000rpm! It would appear the Ebay gamble head gasket probably wasn’t up to the job because the replacement worked a treat.

Due to the fact that 4000rpm equates to 60mph and is rather loud thanks to the straight cut gearbox and barely silenced exhaust we chose to drive down the A6 to get to the ferry at Heysham rather than risk the M6 and Graeme McTavish was unlucky enough to be chosen as the person to accompany me whilst the other 4 in our party travelled in a Jaguar XK-R in comfort. David Wiggins travelled with me in convoy in his 205 which is also apparently quite uncomfortable on longer journeys at speed. Next year I am definitely going back to trailering it!

We went straight through scrutineering off the ferry and then on to our hotel and a night of fine food, ales and entertainment (steak, 10 pints of local beer and gambling in the casino). David declined to join us for our night and instead ate some vegetables and retired to bed early.

On the Thursday I made the drivers briefing with no headache and several minutes to spare which is lucky as the regs threatened of a fine of £170 for anyone who missed it.

Practice at the Governors sprint passed without incident and my times were verging on competitive which was nice! David was doing rather better though and surprised several of the locals in much bigger engined cars.

The field this year was quite heavily biased towards vintage cars with a substantial turnout of Bugattis some of which were being driven to their limits. My personal favourite amongst the vintage cars was a 1920ish Vauxhall that some lunatic had stuck an SE5 WW1 fighter plane engine into....all 12 litres and 300bhp of it. Apparently the driver couldn’t use first gear because if he did, it broke, and he didn’t use full throttle because it would destroy the car! Who said health and safety has ruined everything!? It sounded great and dripped less oil onto the paddock and track than most of the vintage cars. The 1922 Manx tourist trophy winning Sunbeam was also at the event but not competing. It was being driven by a pair of gents (and their mechanic) who looked like they’d have been more at home in a London clothes boutique than on the Isle of Man at a motorsport event! It was a fantastic looking car, however it did use a litre of oil at every event...I say use....I mean dripped onto the track/paddock.

The evening competitive session of the sprint went well, I didn’t quite get the time I wanted and I was nowhere near the fastest cars in my class (Mini that revved to 10,000rpm!) but at least Snotty worked.

We managed a couple of quick pints after the event (not David obviously) and then had an early night so we’d be fresh for the Creg Willey’s hillclimb on Friday morning. This hill is a section of the TT course up the middle of the island and was quite scarily fast....it’s fair to say that although I enjoyed it I never got close to feeling comfortable, hitting almost 100mph over the finish line. David suffered similar issues and finished well down his class after coming 3rd at the first event.

No one had plans for a big night out especially as they’d been marshaling all day so we headed out in search of food...bumping in to David – who looked startled and very disappointed. There was no escape for him now and he was dragged along with us to go for a meal....but it would have been rude not to have a quick drink first. An hour and 2 pints later the search for food looked set to continue until someone piped up “who votes to keep drinking and skip the food?”. It was with some dismay that I saw 4 hands go up. David managed to slide away at about half ten...I wasn’t so lucky. At midnight I was eating a kebab on some garden furniture with a bottle of water. I did then manage to extract myself and head off to bed....the rest of the gang went back to the casino and all won co

pious quantities of money (they really did).

Saturday was my bogey event – the Lhergy Frissell hillclimb on which I had a large accident in 2011, but I am more cautious these days and with a working car and only the mildest of hangovers it was looking good...until I drove to the event and there were snowflakes falling at the top of the hill! The rest of my ‘crew’ (description should not be taken as any implication that anyone who attended the event with me provided any real assistance or performed the role of pit or service crew in any way, shape or form) failed to attend the event until lunchtime. Thankfully I took it relatively easily on the first run up the hill due to the cold and damp conditions – or at least I did until the top hairpin where I noticed all the photographers and thought I’d show off to ensure there would be a nice ‘tail out’ photo of me to buy later. I did indeed get the ‘tail out’ photo and narrowly averted a crash after sliding every which way on the lethally slippy track! I didn’t try that again during the day. Thankfully the weather did improve as did my times. David seemed a little jaded after his enforced night out but put in some excellent times to once more put some much bigger engined cars to shame in his class. I couldn’t tell you what won the event over all – probably a Subanissabushi 4wd superturbo coupe GTRS IV – but I did have a cracking few days away. I’d like to go back next year and my ever supportive wife has already given me the green light...possibly because she is going shopping to New York with a friend 2 weeks beforehand!

Next up Barbon...but before then a car auction to attend and hopefully a car to buy at it.

Peter



Lake District Classic & Targa Rallies

Sunday, June 28th

In the Penrith area

Marshals needed!

Get a special marshal's pack, a chance to be a millionaire and a free after event meal!!

Contact: David Agnew

01946 841455 DAVIDWAGNEW@aol.com

Chateau Impney and very generous giveaways

Imagine if you can someone leaves you in their will a multi million pound 1960 Ferrari 250GT Short Wheelbase, not only that but the same person also leaves you another immense value 1967 Ferrari GTB/4. It's almost impossible to believe but this is perfectly true. The cars haven't been left to me I'm afraid but they have been left to the Royal National Lifeboat Institution by the late Richard Colton a renowned, serious V12 Ferrari enthusiast and collector.

These cars together with Blower Bentley No5, a Jaguar XJ220 and other vehicles will be auctioned off later in the year at the H&H Classics sale on 14th October and the proceeds will be used to build a new lifeboat for the RNLI which will be named after Richard Colton and his late wife.

What a generous gesture indeed.

These very beautiful cars are regarded by many as the very best cars in the world and prior to their sale will be on display at the equally beautiful Chateau Impney in Worcestershire at the Revival weekend.

This may be your only chance to see them as it's very likely they will be sold to an overseas collector unless of course you have the necessary means to buy the pair of them and keep them here for us all to enjoy.

Don't forget the organisers of Chateau Impney Revival Hillclimb kindly agreed to give away a pair of free tickets worth £50 per pair to readers of our June and July magazines. These tickets are up for grabs and details of how to win them can be found in this magazine.

Tickets are valid for Sunday 12th July at Chateau Impney near Droitwich just off the motorway in Worcestershire which is just a few miles south of Birmingham. It's a two day event with practise on Saturday and actual competition on Sunday.

The event not only has the speed hillclimb with many of the world's best historic cars fighting for FTD but there will be a fabulous selection of cars on display plus many other attractions, lots of exhibitors and trade stands these will make it a real family day out.

You could be there for free, see details of how to win a pair of tickets and don't forget, send in your entry someone will win the tickets it could easily be you.

For further details visit Chateau Impney Hillclimb website or H& H classics website

Keith Thomas

Question: What was the name of the generous benefactor who left a couple of Ferraris to RNLI.

Send your answer in to win these two tickets!



Prescott

La Vie en Bleu

If you've not been to a hill climb at Prescott then you have yet to witness one of the best motorsport events in the UK. While I have visited the Bugatti Trust Museum there on a weekday I had not competed there or seen an event there. I am gradually ticking off motorsport venues I have yet to run at but these steadily get further away.

So this year I aimed to do some of the classic hills I had not visited and perhaps the odd circuit I'd not raced at. Prescott is near Tewksbury and not far off the M5 so it's about five hours of mainly motorway to get there. Unfortunately being the Friday before a bank holiday the traffic got really bad north of Birmingham and the first few miles of the M5 so it was nearer seven hours to get there.

The facilities and level of organisation is way beyond what we get at the northern and Scottish events. Prescott is a small estate and farm which was bought by the Bugatti Owners Club back in the 1930s and has been progressively developed ever since. As well as circuit offices there is a club house, restaurant and variety of food outlets, many stalls, proper loos and great spectator facilities. Plus of course the Museum!

Having found our assigned parking spot in the paddock, marked by a brick laid in the grass or tarmac, placed the trailer in the trailer park and we were ready for a walk up the hill. It is certainly scenic being set at the western end of the Cotswolds. It has a mixture of fast corners and some tight uphill hairpins. There is a return road down a bridleway back to the paddock which means there is no stopping to get cars back down the hill and the timing system automatically allows a car to start once the preceding car reaches the halfway point.

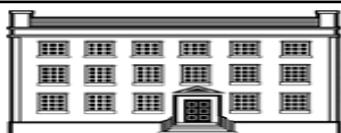
Having found our accommodation we headed out for a meal at a very pleasant riverside pub and watched the boats sail past.

As with most motorsport there was an early start and we had to be on site ready for scrutiny at 0800 with a drivers briefing at 8.20 and practice at 8.45 as there were over 150 entries made up of a number of championships such as TVR, Morgan and MG, Lotus plus the home club's members. The Paul Matty Lotus Championships produced some lovely single seaters from the period when formula cars looked pure and simple! I caught up with an old friend, Dick Swindall from Glasgow who was my main rival for the Scottish Classic Class in the 90's with his Elan that he built in 1967 and is still using. It drives to every event and has done over 500,000 miles which dispels the myth of Lotus unreliability.

There was certainly no shortage of officials and marshals and each class had its own scrutineer and marshal which made for a slick system and you were only called down to the start a few minutes before your run. I was impressed with the friendliness and helpfulness of all the organising team.

My MG B is in race trim and has no power below 4000 rpm so not ideal for the hills and it just went dead on the slow uphill hairpins. Running Dunlop R's was a disadvantage in the grip department as the rest of the class were on Yokos. I reckon they were worth a couple of seconds. Of course the only solution was to go faster! Anyway I chipped away a few seconds on each run and finished mid class in the Luffield MG class. In the other MG class was WMC member Mike Marsland in his MG TF who was putting up some good times.

There was plenty to see and do in between runs with all the French marque clubs being represented with dealers also having displays. Strangely while Citroen and Renault had big displays with manufacturer display units as well, Peugeot were not there despite a place being marked out for them. Once we had done our final run we retired to the restaurant terrace for a drink while the remaining classes completed their run. Very civilised.



**Brockbanks
Solicitors**

Whitehaven, Cockermouth, Maryport, Workington and Keswick (as Oglethorpe & Broatch)

Sunday was the main “French” day with a completely different set of competitors. The BOC kindly let me compete on Sunday in the sports car class as I had travelled a long way to be there, even though MGCC were not an invited club.

There were a couple of classes for Bugattis and there was a huge number of vintage and veteran cars which provided no end of entertainment even getting them started. Add to that about 20 Morgan three wheelers while the sports and saloon classes had plenty of Renault 5 Turbos, Gordinis plus Alpine A110 and GTAs. There were also some more modern single seaters.



An interesting entry was the Renault Zoe driven by Wizzo Williams and a journalist. It seemed quite quick, if silent but spend all the time between runs “plugged in”! A couple of modern Bugattis, a Veyron and an EB110 did demo runs along with an i8 BMW, now of which had any appeal for me!

This time we were in a paddock higher up the hill with a great view over the country side which was even better when there was a stunt plane demo by Rich Goodwin in his Pitts Special. He was almost in direct eyeline for much of the display!

Sadly a slight shower made practice wet but it then dried up for the afternoon. I got delayed on the first timed run so it was red mist for the last run and knocked a further couple of seconds off my time to finish seventh out of eighteen classics, many of whom were Prescott regulars.

Amongst the many marshals on duty was Ed Littlefield, a regular helper on our northern historic rallies prior to moving south. He sends his regards to anyone who knows him.

If you are a speed competitor then I would suggest that Prescott should be on your must do list!
GTF



Bugatti T13s and T23s



Bugatti vice with roller bearings.



25 litre/200 bhp Darracq of 1905



Babee Bugatti for rich kids!

Speed Championship News

Current positions in the Brockbanks Solicitors Cross Border Speed Championship can be found at: <http://www.crossborderspeed.co.uk/>

Prescott in Photos



Renault Turbo Rallye



Early Ferrari MM



Lotus 23



Lotus 61



Lotus 35



MG B FIA

Elderly Utterances

The Voice of Experience!

Ron Palmer has his say



This year's Gallop ran over the weekend of 8/9/10 May starting from Carlisle with two nights at the Peebles Hydro and the finish at Moffat after lunch on Sunday. The 30 car field included entries from Newcastle, north of Glasgow, Cheshire, Yorkshire, Lancashire and Worcester as well as the usual strong local support. A great mix of classics included six MGs, six Jaguar XK150s, two E-types (Joe and Hazel Norman started in his red coupe and finished in his 3.8 convertible!) two Bentleys, two Healeys (there were three entered but Peter Halstead's had clutch trouble and he started in his Honda), two Morgans, two Stags, two Porsches, two Hondas and singletons from Riley, AC Ace, Triumph Italia, Austin A110, Anglia1500, and John Midgley's authentic looking rally recreation Celica.

A fifty mile run via Newcastleton and Bonchester Bridge took us to tea and cakes at the 'Johnstons of Elgin' cashmere heaven at Hawick – we really do think about the ladies! A further 46 gentle miles via St Boswells and the Tweed Valley rounded off the day at Peebles Hydro where there was a scramble for all the available parking spaces. Anti theft security on classics as we know is not good and a prominent space close to the front door is desirable rather than have it tucked away at some remote spot. If the organisation was not as polished as usual it was because Christine had not been well in the week before and was not feeling up to joining us for the weekend so I became the odd bod who floated from table to table. She is happily well again and thanks everyone for their good wishes.

The hotel food was good and plentiful so after a hearty breakfast on Saturday we headed off along some quiet roads for a 25 mile run to coffee at the National Mining Museum at Newton Grange. Richard Porter's 1953 MG TF was a reluctant starter in the damp conditions and was receiving attention at the bottom of the hotel drive from Andy Gibbs. During the day the TF ignition was fixed and it ran perfectly thereafter. There was no time at this museum for a full mine visit (2 to 3 hours) so cakes and coffee were taken before we headed off to the north east and our next venue some 20 miles distant. This was the quaint Myreton Motor Museum at Aberlady which houses a fascinating collection of cars and light commercials. My favourite here was the 1913 three litre Coupe de l'Auto Sunbeam with a history that would fill a book including having been buried upside down in a field for a considerable period. It was here that Joe Norman was seen with the bonnet raised on his E-type coupe and only about 3 or 4 cylinders performing as they should. Fortunately Joe has another E-Type in his toy box so after making his way back home to the hills north of Glasgow he reappeared by supper time with the replacement convertible running perfectly. From the museum it was but six miles to our carvery lunch at Whitekirk Golf

Club. Charles and I and David Agnew/Alan Jackson had been here only the previous Sunday at the finish of the Berwick Classic and the quality of the food is excellent. After lunch we had the opportunity to give our cars some exercise over the 36 miles to afternoon tea at Thirlstane Castle, Lauder. At this point dear reader you may have gained the impression that for a group of people 60 strong sitting down all day with no exercise we perhaps take on too much food. Well this is perfectly true and without the controlling influence of my Christine I managed to gain three pounds around my waist – shrinking belt etc...



The Castle is an imposing new venue for the Gallop and Philip Davies while indulging in some professional photography shots on the lawn in front of the Castle managed a very athletic backwards roll down the ‘ha ha’ which is precisely the comment Sandra and his friends helpfully made whilst helping him to his feet. The last leg on Saturday took us past the developing line of the new Borders Railway which runs from Edinburgh to Tweedbank and opens later this year. Who knows, it has been said that in time this line may extend to Newcastle and Carlisle – but I don’t think so. On the 30 mile run back

to

Peebles I passed Bob and Jennifer Little in the MGB hurridly erecting the hood in a cloud burst and then Ron and Marjorie Moore XK150 OTS with the bonnet up for some trouble with the damp but he was in control of things and reappeared shortly after at the hotel. Charles and Ian Cowan managed the best two parking slots at the front door and the parking situation eased later as the wedding party cars drifted away. Helen and Graeme were having a ball in the Healey 100/4 generously on loan from Keith Graham and Helen mastered the different car and LHD very well.

Sunday morning and we headed off along the south side of the Tweed past all those wonderful forests which used to be such a challenging part of the Scottish International Rally of the ‘60s and ‘70s - Glentress, Cardrona, Elibank, Yair and Glentress now alas probably turned over to the mountain bike. Passing Abbotsford the home of Sir Walter Scott we paused at the viewing point over the Tweed named after him before taking coffee at the Dryburgh Abbey Hotel in a glorious setting by the river. The staff and scones and coffee were excellent here and we hope to return on some future event. Here the Jaguar brigade had a photo call in front of the hotel.

The final leg of 60 miles took us to the finish at Moffat for another carvery lunch - well some of the entrants were hungry by now, especially Kirk in the WO Bentley, all that work and no power steering. Although it was raining again by now the run down St Mary’s Loch and over Talla and Megget Reservoirs and then down the glorious A701 to Moffat was a suitable way to end the Gallop. After lunch we had the pleasure of Hamish Macleod giving us a talk on the Spitfire. He is so passionate about the RAF and in particular his life experiences with this great plane. Hamish and Irene are long time supporters of the Gallop and along with Malcolm and Ruth Monkhouse and Ken and Glenys Rudkin have completed all eight Tours.

After lunch and on the way home we were invited to do a drive past at Hamish and Irene’s home where there is a full size recreation of a Spitfire on their front lawn – a fantastic sight. A couple of gnomes will never be the same again. Our thanks are due to all those taking part on the Gallop this year for making it a great success and for all the kind comments and cards. Next year we are heading south to Derbyshire for Gallop number nine. Details will be circulated later this year.

An early entry in the Gallop from Alex Clacher and his daughter Julie was withdrawn at the end of April and we have since learned that Alex sadly died on 1st May. He was a regular and enthusiastic entrant with his daughter Julie on both the Gallop and the Rose and Thistle in his 1967 Rover 2000TC. In the 1970s Alex was a successful competitor in saloon car racing at Croft and other northern circuits in his Hillman Imp against the likes of Cedric Bell. We shall miss him.

Entries are now open for the Rose and Thistle on 22nd August and are pouring in fast. Details from the club web site or direct from me ronpalmer777@hotmail.com. Let's see if we can make it a round 100 cars entry this year - all cars are welcome.



Our congratulations to Charles on his appointment as club President of Wigton Motor Club. I can think of no one more suited to the position as he and his wife Kit have been leading sponsors of club events, is a prominent, far sighted local business man and has probably competed in as many competitive classic events especially abroad over the past twelve years as anyone in our club. His experience and wisdom will be a significant benefit.

Ron.

Galloping Over The Pot Holes!

To: Nicola Sturgeon MSP
First Minister
Holyrood
Edinburgh

Hi Nic Old Fruit!

We have just returned from an enjoyable three days classic car event in the Borders. It was lovely and the people were very friendly. However the state of the roads was a disgrace and it is not very comfortable in our older cars.

Now I appreciate that you don't drive and go everywhere in your helicopter but I do think you should take a few trips out in a car to see what the problems are.

I would suggest that you go in a Hillman Imp as it has a lot in common with you: The Imp is Scottish, small and the same age as you; it can be rather noisy, it was rather ill conceived and came in almost as many colours as you do! Imps were prone to under steer, particularly to the left and cost a lot of money to keep going. Imps have a loyal if irrational following, they quite often get hot and bothered and are likely to blow a gasket!

Have a great trip
Yours sincerely
Graeme Forrester

Gates Tyres Northern Historic Rally Awards

Round 3, Berwick Classic, May 2nd/3rd.

Nine of this year's registered competitors in the WMC/Gates Tyres challenge headed to the Scottish Borders for the 20th running of the Berwick Classic. Entries included about 40 historic cars from a variety of marques topped up by a further 15 Targa cars. The weekend's sport started at 5pm on Day 1 in Berwick and finished just after 7pm having taken in two regularities and 3 tests.

Ross Butterworth/Ali Proctor, Mk1 Mexico, were out to repeat their win on the 2014 Berwick but they would be under pressure all weekend. Contesting the WMC/Gates points were John Bertram, Escort Mexico Mk1, Mike Dent/Mark Gilmour, Imp, Tot Dixon/Bob Hargreaves, Mini, Colin Rose/Bob Shearer, Midget, David Marsden and myself, Mk1 Escort, David Agnew/ Alan Jackson, Porsche 911, Charles Graves/Ron Palmer, TR4, John/Marion Sloan, Midget, and David Scott Aiton/Ralph Miller, Avenger. Competition was going to be fierce among these crews and they were going to be pushed hard by some quick and experienced crews not registered in the WMC/Gates series.

A short run out from Berwick took us to Regularity1 which started with an initial steep gradient, then some twists and turns, two speed changes and one ITC before finishing alongside the A1. It had the effect of waking everybody up and flustering a few. Tot Dixon/Bob Hargreaves dropped 3s, John Bertram 5s, we dropped 6s, Charles Graves/Ron Palmer 20s, Mike Dent/Mark Gilmour 24s, John/Marion Sloan 28s and David Agnew/ Alan Jackson 32s. A short run along the B road to Sunwick farm took us to T1 which was a quick blast around the farmyard and along the rear access road: John Bertram took this on 47s, Tot Dixon on 48s, with Mike Dent, David Agnew and ourselves all on 50s (FTD Ross Butterworth 45s). Mike Dent was starting to settle in and the extensively rebuilt Imp would threaten the top three places all weekend. Thankfully, we knew Sunwick and despite starting the rally with only 10 miles on the clock David's "new" Escort went well.

A gentle ride through the lanes took us to Norham for Reg 2 - a longer section than the first Regularity using a "jogularity" type format with 2ITCs but no speed changes. We dropped 2s, Colin Rose/Bob Shearer 7s, Tot Dixon/Bob Hargreaves 9s, John Bertram 10s, David Agnew/ Alan Jackson, now more in the groove, 11s, J&M Sloan 14s, Dent/Gilmour 17s, Charles Graves/Ron Palmer having a bit of a hard day in the office on 25s. Two tests at Shoreswood Farm completed proceedings. Dent's Imp was quickest WMC/Gates crew through Shoreswood 1 but dropped time in Shoreswood 2 after overshooting a corner (red mist?); John Bertram continued to go quickly with quickest combined time on the Shoreswood tests; Tot Dixon put in some consistently quick times and with Bob Hargreaves alongside he was heading for a good result. We were starting to realise that the Escort was very different to the Cortina - nimble, quick, lots of potential and still in one piece at the end of Day 1. Ross Butterworth was leading but WMC/Gates crews were snapping at his.

For those unfamiliar with the Berwick the apparent simplicity of the event is very beguiling and the



speed and accuracy of the leading crews impressive. Card collect, tea and biscuits in Norham Village Hall and a quick chat showed that times had been close during the first leg and with a long Day 2 ahead the competition was going to be tough.

With family and friends joining us in the cottage for "supper" it turned into a bit of a party. Breakfast on Sunday morning was a quiet affair - unlike the weather. Everybody was in denial about the "joys" of late night carousing but the bitter East wind and lashing rain outside soon brought us to our senses. Having competed on almost all 20 Berwick Classics, we have never seen such appalling weather. Marshalls were out in strength despite the conditions and they did a remarkable job all day - inevitably, the weather turned sunny just as the cars started to arrive at the Finish venue!

A run out up the A1 took us to the first two tests at Tower Farm and Drysdale's Haulage yard. Both were relatively short quick tests on good surfaces. Bertram was quickest at Tower farm on 40s, Dixon & Rose on 42s, Dent/Marsden/Agnew on 43s, Sloan 46s, Scott-Aiton 48s and Graves 52s - not much more than one cone or line fault penalty between them. Torness and Howdens followed and they continued the format of quick tests on good surfaces - times continued to be close with the quickest times swopping between Bertram, Dixon and Dent although John Bertram was just keeping his nose ahead of the other WMC/Gates crews.

T8, Eweford, was long, wet, slippery and mixed an initial unsurfaced area with tarmac. Dent's Imp showed serious pace on 1m22s and began to look good for a podium position, Dixon 1m28s, Agnew 1m30s, Bertram 1m33s, Sloan 1m40s, Marsden 1m41s, Graves 1m44s, Scott-Aiton 1m56s and Rose 2m30s - a wrong test (?) which would drop the flying Midget down the leader board (FTD Ross Butterworth 1m20s - yes, he was still setting the overall pace!).

T9/10/11 were a rerun of the tests at Drysdale/Torness/Howdens and then we were into Regularity 3 which was a mixture of public and private roads with a number of speed changes, ITCs and Code Boards. Conditions on the private roads were very slippery and combined with the speed changes and code boards all crews were finding this Regularity hard going. But, Ross Butterworth/Ali Proctor seemed unaffected by the conditions and dropped only 52s; Bertram was next on 1m.00, Dixon/Hargreaves and Agnew/Jackson on 1m25s, Rose/Shearer on 1m27s, Graves/Palmer on 1m36s, we dropped 2m.00 having been held up in an ITC, J&M Sloan on 2m44s and Scott-Aiton/Miller on 3m42s.

A simple and enjoyable lunch revived the crews and the afternoon in prospect would provide a sting in the tail with 7 long fast and varied tests on farms and farm access roads. With no damage to the car and only one snag when the electrical supply lead came off the starter motor, we were very pleased with our new chariot and looking forward to visiting some of our favourite test venues.

T12 was a mixture of gravel and slippery concrete surfaces and included a very fast lap of a small woodland. The rain had eased off and a dry if windy afternoon looked likely. Bertram showed the way on 1m28s with the quickening Dent Imp on 1m31s and Colin Rose's Midget on 1m32s (FTD Butterworth 1m25s). T13 was a fabulous test along a gravel farm road with 3 code boards and then through the complex of farm buildings on very slippery concrete. Bertram began to stretch his lead with 2m05s, Rose showed his speed on 2m09s and Dent on 2m10s.

T14 at South Belton was a big farm complex on gravel and concrete with parts of the test going through the farm buildings - Dent and Dixon tied on 1m17s, Agnew building a challenge on 1m18s and Bertram & Rose on 1m19s (FTD: Butterworth was consolidating his lead with 1m13s).

T15 was to be our nemesis because despite the start marshall's warning about the very slippery grass section that comprised the first half of the test we went off in slow motion on a 90left. We

came to rest with the nose of the "new" Escort inches away from a dry stone wall which was buried at the bottom of a road

bust hawthorn hedge. By the time I'd pushed us out, Colin Rose was appearing over the horizon so at the 360 that followed David let him through and we watched in awe as the Midget accelerated away as though it were on dry tarmac. We struggled on feeling like we were driving on ice but at least the car was undamaged. Just a hand full of cars beat the test maximum: Butterworth and Dent tied on 4m28s with Rose on 4m 47s.

T16 comprised a long uphill blast on gravel before a tight run through the farmyard at Balgone Barns. Weight over the driven wheels was an advantage out of the uphill start so this was Imp territory and Mike Dent obliged with a 1m09s only equalled by the flying Butterworth - how does he do it?! Bertram and Dixon were on 1m11s and we followed with 1m17s. This test confirmed how well Mike Dent had prepared his Imp for its return to rallying and how well he had got to grips with it during the event. As we left the test finish we saw Dave Agnew's 911 retired at the roadside - a broken drive shaft had ended a good run.

The penultimate test on the Scoughall estate (one of the best venues on any event) was a very long run on gravel, tarmac and concrete with code boards to calm us down: FTD Bertram on 2m22s, Butterworth 2m23s, Dent & Rose 2m27s, Dixon 2m31s. The final test was a blast around Lochhouses farm with Bertram again taking FTD 56s, Butterworth coasting home (!) on 58s, Dent and Rose on 59s.

An excellent Sunday roast was consumed and awards were presented at the Whitekirk Golf Club. The organisers are to be congratulated for delivering a first class event and for maintaining their excellent standards over 20 years; and, also the marshalls (from all over the country) must be sincerely thanked for their commitment throughout the weekend.

Ross Butterworth took a well crafted victory in very tricky conditions. WMC/Gates contenders fared well with John Bertram 2nd ; Mike Dent 3rd; Tot Dixon 4th; Colin Rose 9th; Dave Marsden 10th; Charles Graves 16th; John and Marion Sloan 21st (on their first trip to the Berwick); and David Scott-Aiton 35th. For us, it was great to be back in a rally car and by the finish we had concluded that there was a great deal to learn about the Escort before we would get the best out of it - won't that be fun !!!!!!

The WMC/Gates table is taking shape and some close battles can be expected in the coming rounds. The next Round is the Lake District Classic and we will be playing at home so send your entries in early to avoid disappointment.

Mike Garstang.

Navigator needed

"Anyone interested in a run navigating on the Lake District Classic and potentially other events in my Avenger 1600 please get in touch. All reasonable event expenses covered. Contact David Scott Aiton on 01573 410274 or davidscoittaiton@btinternet.com."

Berwick Classic Photos



David Agnew/Alan Jackson

Raymond Rollo



Charles Graves/Ron Palmer

David Marsden/Mike Garstang



BYGONES

Anecdotes

In June 1973 the wearing of crash helmets was made compulsory in the UK

In June 1935 L plates were introduced to denote learner drivers.

On June 2nd 1970 Bruce McLaren was killed at Goodwood when the rear body of his M8D McLaren came adrift when testing.

In June 1960 Jim Clark made his F1 debut in a Lotus at the Dutch GP.

June 1988 saw the first hill climb event take place over a 325 yard course near Richmond in London. Fastest time went to a Barriere tricycle at 14 mph.

Armstrong Siddley produced their last car in June 1960.

In June 2007 Lewis Hamilton won his first GP in Canada.

In June 1930 record breaker Henry Segrave was killed on Windermere after his boat capsized.

The only F1 race won by a six wheeled car took place in June 1976 when Jody Scheckter won the Swedish GP in a Tyrrell P34.

The 1929 Le Mans race was held in June and saw Bentleys take the first four places.

Bentley resumed their winning ways in June 2003 at Le Mans following their last previous win in June 1930.

The Ford Motor Company was founded by Henry Ford in June 1903.

In June 1970 the first Range Rover was announced at a price of £1,998.

Car production at the Ford Dagenham works finished in June 2000.

June 1906 saw the first French Grand Prix at Le Mans. The winners average speed over 768 miles of dirt roads was 63 mph.

June 1985 saw Route 66 cease to exist after the road was decertified.

VW took over Rolls Royce in June 1998.

Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott opened the much hated bus lane on the M6 in June 1999. It only lasted eleven years.

The first Porsche, the 356/1 was made in June 1968. It has just 40 bhp.

The first Saab was made in June 1947. It was the 92. The numbering system continued the numbers given to the firm's aircraft models.

Cumbria Classic & Motorsport Show

Sunday, August 28th

At

Dalemain

Featured marques: Bentley, Mercedes (Pagoda) and MGA

Entry forms are at: www.wigtonmc.co.uk

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June Grass Autotest



Driving down the west coast on a lovely May evening and the mountains were beautifully clear although there was some dark clouds out to sea, David Agnew had set out some simple tests in the field next to his house and we were off to a prompt start. Although a few of the autotest regulars were not present we had some new blood with the Johnston family while we had a rare sighting of Willie and Angela coming out to play again.

Twelve tests were run off in good time with just a hit of drizzle at one point making the field a bit more slippery

later on. Willie Jarman has lost none of his skill and took an outright win in the 205 some 13 seconds up on the Corsa of Stephen Dixon. Steve Palmer was close behind in the Ka, which seems to be the car of choice these days for autotests.

Angela Jones was fourth and first lady in the Pug with Chris Hunter using the grip of the rear engined Imp to take fifth. The came Andrew Graham in the Puma and Jack Palmer in the Ka, before the Iveson ladies in another Ka with Mandy beating Megan by eight seconds. Roger was tenth in the Popemobile and reckons autotests are the best fun you can have without a gun in your hand!



Alan Jackson benefited from rear engined grip in the MG TF to come eleventh in front of Rob Iveson in the spectacular Mini who fell down the order after some penalties.

The Johnstone family enjoyed themselves in the Golf which proved a little reluctant on occasion. Ron Palmer was sliding the MX5 like a young 'un while James Wiggins used Dave Agnew's Clio. The Cowan duo had their own battle in the Escort and may have scored well if it had been ice dancing for their artistic in-



terpretation of the tests.

We then retired to David's barn for a great spread of food and cake provided by Christine Agnew and a chat about the event, past events and looking forward to future ones.

GTF



Rally Torque

Cetus Stages 2015



The call went out in March to see if anyone was available, or brave enough, to sit in the silly seat on the Cetus Stages at the beginning of May. A few people got in touch , but for differing reasons no one could actually make it on the day. So, last resort- persuade little sister Megan- of course there was bribery involved! It all fell into plan- my out-grown fire suit was specially cleaned and was quite a good fit for her, then I paid for her National B licence and Mum and Dad bought her a helmet as her birthday presents- well, isn't that what all 19 year old girls want? Lastly was a trip to Seaton to visit Heather Grisedale for some expert(!) tuition which was a great help.

Saturday night and the car wasn't running well- at 10pm there was a choice- either it started to behave itself or there would be a trip to a secluded place and it was threatened with petrol and a match. The latter threat must have worked as I managed to get it running after advice from Dad and Willie Jarman.

So, after a very early start we arrived at the 3 Sisters race track, nerves were playing a part for both me and Megan as there was the strict scrutineer to cope with- his only remark was that Megan was to wear longer socks! Megan was quietly organising her notes while I went shopping for tyres. After spending an arm and most of a leg I came back with 2 new Hancock tarmac tyres.

Stage 1 and 2 went smoothly without any problems and we got back to service with both of us pleased that all had gone well, Megan even had a smile on her face. At the end of stage 4 the car was running hotter than normal and the cooling fans weren't kicking in. After a cup of tea and 10 minutes later we worked out that the fault was due to the antique French wiring causing a poor connection. The next several stages went well with no more than re-fuelling and kick-testing the tyres. Angela and Willie were doing well with no problems with the car but couldn't quite match our pace. A handful of cars retired but we still couldn't get any higher than 25th with Angela and Willie 45 seconds behind us in 29th place.

Robert Iveson

My Cars

I've heard it said that as we get older we recede back to our childhood. Well, I think I've succumbed!

I'll start at the beginning. My first 'covered' vehicle, as opposed to a motorcycle, was as a result of the winter of 1963. It was one of the worst winters on record with the UK frozen over for months. Professional football matches were postponed week after week for so long that it became the norm for a panel of "experts" to predict what the outcome of matches would have been, had they been played, so that the punters could still have a go at winning on the Football Pools.

I was a 1st year student during that winter, with a girlfriend living about 20 miles away from my college to whom I commuted backwards and forwards twice a week. At either end of each journey I'd climb from my machine so cold that I couldn't undo the buttons on my coat let alone get up to any hanky-panky. As the winter progressed I decided that I'd had enough of two wheel transport, slithering along the A126 between Rugby and Leicester, and down the long hill from the students halls to the college each morning. I needed a more comfortable means of transport. The colloquialism "Street Cred" hadn't been invented yet but I was about to buy a vehicle that has less Street Cred than a fair-isle tank-top. I was persuaded (conned) by a fellow student into buying a Reliant Regal Van. For those of you somewhat younger than I, you may have in your mind's eye something akin to a Dell Boy look-alike vehicle. Well I'm sorry, but my Regal van was far from the iconic plastic pig version made famous by the Trotter brothers. My Regal van was more like an accident between a motorcycle and a garden shed. In fact it rather looked like the motor cycle was emerging from the front of said shed and the single front wheel, with calliper suspension, motorcycle mud guard and single headlight, led the way. It had an Austin Seven side valve engine between the driver and passenger seats (which was a bit of a turn-off with the ladies) but the space behind the two seats (in the shed bit) was enormous and could take a double mattress. The shed bit was made of a timber frame with aluminium cladded sides and double doors at the back. This particular vehicle had no reverse gear which was common at the time since those drivers who only had a motorcycle licence could drive this machine legally. Under most circumstances the lack of a reverse gear was not a problem, but more a matter of planning. It was certainly not a good idea to park the Regal front end into a car park space, especially on a Saturday night, when the prospect of 'picking someone up' from the Palais De Dance was on the cards. The phrase "Can I give you a lift home?" lost its charisma when the passenger was asked to push the vehicle out of its slot in the multi-story car park! (As I write this I've just realised that the word Regal has cropped up again in my life quite recently but this time as a boat - I must write a similar article on boats in the future).

I soon realised that the word 'Reliant' is a misnomer, certainly as far as vehicles produced by the Reliant Motor Company is concerned. I must either be a forgiving soul or a slow learner because I've owned two further Reliants (two and a bit really) in my time but all will be revealed later.

As the discerning amongst you can imagine, my girlfriend of 20 miles away was less than impressed by my Regal van and was banned from travelling in it by her parents. It must have either been the external colour (dark green), or the fact that it had a mattress in the back but they made it clear to me that they were not impressed with it. To be honest, it failed to live up to expectation for me too! We were still in the grips of the 1963 winter and this vehicle had no heater, it was draughty and was slower than my motorcycle. Hence I was colder when I arrived at point B in the van because it had taken me twice as long to get there. Add to this the fact that I spent most evenings laying on the frozen ground under the van with a torch in my mouth trying to keep it running on a daily basis.

Thankfully fate took a hand as I was in the college restaurant lunch queue one day in May. I saw someone putting an advert on the notice board for a 1937 Austin Seven Ruby. The vehicle had been in the same family from new and was at an address a short walk from the college. I skipped the first lecture after lunch (again) and walked round to the address in the advert in the hope of seeing the car. Despite having nothing approaching the £25 asking price to my name (all students are destitute and £25 was a sizable sum in those days) I agreed to buy the car at the asking price (the seller was clearly re-

luctant to reduce the price since it had only been on the market for an hour or so). I borrowed the £25 from my Mum (she reminded me not 5 years ago that I still owed her the £25) but It was one of the best investments of my life. Over the next 5 years I travelled over 70,000 miles in that car. It too had no heater but I didn't care, the worst winter in living memory was over and I had my old girlfriend back – her parents must have thought their daughter was safer in the A7. Compared to the Regal van the A7 was sheer luxury. I could drive rather than lurch around corners. The A7 had a cruising speed of over 40mph and the brakes actually worked, unlike the Regal where the term 'standing on the brakes' was invented. I can't remember who I sold the Regal to, it couldn't have been any one who lived nearby or they would have pushed it back to me. Without dwelling too long on my misspent youth during my time at college, I also acquired a Triumph Gloria and a beautiful 1932 Austin Seven with hydraulic brakes, both cars having been won in card games (don't ask!).

So, where is this all leading? Well, I've recently bought an Austin Seven Special based on a 1937 Ruby chassis with a Reliant 850cc engine. How's that for a co-incidence?

The car is wonderful and whilst there are a few tasks to complete, I'm never happy unless I'm tinkering and fixing things. A car that needs nothing doing to it is boring as far as I'm concerned. The A7 Special is a joy to drive and my wife and I hope to compete in WMC rallies in it.

Back to the 1960's and following graduation I moved to Liverpool and to a job that paid reasonably well. I still enjoyed playing with cars and a few work friends and I frequented the Liverpool Car Auctions on a weekly basis looking for bargains. I rented a local lock-up garage where I fixed the cars purchased at the auction in my spare time before selling them on. My favourite money makers were Ford Populars, Anglias and Prefects (the original upright ones before the boxy shaped versions and before the acute angled rear windowed Anglias.) The original Fords were reasonably reliable but suffered from ignition problems and serious corrosion along the running boards. The ignition problems were easy to fix and by removing the running boards completely, tidying up the resultant gaps and some paint spray, a presentable car could be fixed and sold within the week either via the notice board at work or back through the auctions. This venture more than covered my weekend beer money and entertainment costs but it was soon to end when the company I worked for sent me to Manchester to wind up a similar company they'd recently taken over. However, just before I was given this new task I'd bought a mark 2 Ford Consul that I'd seen at the auctions a couple of times. It had a recent respray and was very tidy but the suspect respray and the high reserve put a lot of punters off. I agreed a sale with the owner out with the auction charges and we were both happy. I kept the car for four years and put over 80k miles on it. The move to Manchester to wind the company up was a baptism of fire for me. Moving complete designs for complex switchgear, tooling and machinery 30 miles down the road to Liverpool and making people redundant was not my idea of enjoyment. I was, understandably, persona non grata at the company in Manchester, until that is, I started dating the Chief Engineers secretary. This proved to be the watershed and the enormity of the task before me suddenly became much easier. We've been happily married for 45 years this year so the secondment to Manchester was not all bad news.

We kept the Ford Consul until the insidious spread of rust finally took its toll.

My next venture into cars was a selection of ubiquitous Austin Minis – a saloon, a van and a couple of Travellers. We were now a two car family, with a baby on the way and a new caravan but no car to tow the caravan with (that's another story!). However, I did a swap with one of our Minis for a mark 2 Humber Hawk with a guy from Bury after I'd put an "exchange wanted" advert in the Manchester Evening News. The guy must have seen the writing on the wall because within a few months of getting the Humber there was the threat of petrol rationing, fuel prices through the roof and a 50 mph speed limit on motorways. Not the time to have a thirsty Humber as a tow car. It was luxurious and wonderful to drive but a financial drain on a young family's income.

It was 1975 now and I'd changed jobs from Liverpool and was working for the nuclear industry based in Warrington. My new job entailed a lot of travelling in both the UK and abroad and I

needed a car that could cope reliably with an annual mileage in excess of 40K miles for work alone. I bought a one year old Austin Maxi HLS. A twin SU carb, 1750cc family car with a wheel at each corner. Not the most attractive of cars but boy was it practical. It was also reasonably economic, comfortable, it towed well, and was reliable. It did everything I wanted it to do including taking us (we now had two daughters) to Italy with all our camping gear without flinching. It was so good that I purchased two more new Maxi HLS's in subsequent years before the Reliant ghost reared its head again.

When you've had three cars of a kind in succession the third one never appears to be as good as the first. I should have learnt my lesson because I did the same trick with Mazda MX5s around the turn of the century. The Maxi's practicality had ceased to be attractive and I fancied a complete change. What I bought was certainly a change. I bought an SE5A Reliant Scimitar from a garage in Todmorden. It was a change in every way. Gone was economy, gone was reliability, gone was practicality. OK, it was comfortable, it towed well and it was also charismatic. Unfortunately even without the bent rear axle it was not the ideal car for doing 40k miles a year for business. However, I soldiered on, using my wife's Triumph 1300 when the Scimitar was off the road which was about one week in four. Until, that is, I took it to a guy down south (Robin Rew) who fitted a reconditioned engine, a new automatic gearbox, a new rear axle (the old one was bent and set up an uncomfortable vibration above 60mph), a stainless steel exhaust system and new steel wheels (the original alloy ones were rubbish). It was a different car and one that we kept as a second car until we changed to a SE6 Scimitar a few years later. The SE6 was marginally more practical but we were back to the unreliability.

The SE6 was used predominantly by my wife since I needed a reliable car for work and was working my way through Nissan Stanza's (dodgy gearboxes), Vauxhall Cavaliers, Fiat Tipo's and a Mercedes 190E (arguably the best car I've ever had) and a Mercedes 300D before I decided to take early retirement from Warrington. The 300D was a wonderful car to drive but without a turbo and as a tow car it was pathetic. Since the Austin Maxi days we'd always holidayed on the Adriatic Coast in Italy and dragging our caravan over the Brenner Pass between Austria and Italy each year with the 300D was hard work and eventually I succumbed to the four wheel drive brigade. We bought a Jeep Cherokee, in fact we had one after the other and whilst they were good tow cars they were too agricultural in most other ways.

Holidaying in Italy since 1980 we developed an affinity with Italian cars and Fiat 500s in particular. We had three 500's at one time in the 1980s and our eldest daughter passed her driving test in one of them in 1992. I still have a 1972 Fiat 500 that I've owned for over 20 years and I'm the second owner. I refurbished and re-sprayed it in 2013.

Having become disillusioned with the cost of spares for the Jeeps, I had a test drive in a nine month old BMW X5. I never thought cars could be so smooth to ride in, so responsive and so wonderful to drive! We still have this car after almost nine years. Its only covered 60K miles and it's a dream to drive. My wife refuses to part with it. In the mean time I had three Mazda MX5s, one after the other, but my latest acquisition is an Alfa Romeo 159 bought as an ex demonstrator and one of the last RHD 159 to be produced. It's a great car to drive but leaks like a sieve but then so does the A7 Special and I wouldn't criticise that either.

The performance and road holding of the Alfa matches that of the MX5s and all in all it's a far more practical car.

I'm not sure what my next vehicle will be but I'll keep you posted.

Happy motoring.

Dave Nicholson.

Inside the Industry

Paul Gilligan keeps us up to date

The Pre-Registration “Curse”

I've talked about the pre-registration of unsold new cars and vans before. At the end of the month or quarter manufacturers who aren't reaching their sales targets encourage dealers (by giving them big discounts) to register unsold cars. Alternatively dealers do that themselves in order to reach the sales targets the manufacturers have set them and earn the vital financial bonuses that go with that. This has been going on for a very long time, but now has reached epidemic proportions. Glass's Guide Research recently stated that the number of cars under 12 months old sold in the UK was 91% higher in March than last October, and that their view was that the “vast majority are pre-registrations”.

Dealers hate the practice. If they were forced for one reason or another to register a lot of cars or vans at the end of March the cars officially have to be kept for 90 days before being sold (vans can be sold immediately, “tax & turn” is the slang). I say the cars have to be kept officially, often they're not and manufacturers turn the proverbial blind eye. In any case these unsold registered cars take up space and a great deal of money (dealers have to pay for them the day they tax them, and fund them until they are sold). Predictably the manufacturers who may have insisted on the pre-registration in the first place care little once this is done as they have the registration and the car has been “sold”, by them to the dealer.

For the dealer a vicious circle now starts. They registered lots of unsold cars at the end of March to reach Quarter 1 target. They now have to sell these in Quarter 2. However each one sold is normally sold to a customer who would have bought a brand new unregistered car. Which makes it all the more difficult for the dealer to reach his Quarter 2 target. So at the end of June he has to register even more unsold cars, and so it goes on.

Dealers are now offering pre-registered cars at EXTREMELY competitive prices to move them out of the way before end June. This is good news for the customer, but there's bad news as well. Sales of cars between 12 and 24 months old have reduced because the pre-reg models are so cheap. Which makes the customer's current car worth less, so it's hardly a win win situation.

The rental industry is suffering because of this also. Typically they sell their cars at between 6 and 12 months old. Now pre-reg are so common and such value this is becoming very difficult for them. And if they keep their cars longer they buy less new ones, meaning the manufacturers have to move those cars somewhere else, perhaps by pre-registering them?

The volumes involved are scary. One large Ford dealer I know registered 1000 unsold Focuses on March 31st, another smaller operator with a total of 6 sites reckons he had to register 400 unsold cars on the same day. The other day I walked past a small Suzuki garage. They only had about 2 dozen used cars on show. Almost HALF were 15 plate pre-registered cars!

Yesterday I was talking to a friend who's a senior buyer for one of the largest used car supermarket companies. They only sell cars from 6 to 24 months old. On average they sell 1200 a month, currently they are down to 500. He's been put on “gardening leave” until further notice because they are simply not buying any cars until they have stocks down in line with current sales levels. The reason is simply people buying pre-registered cars instead of the slightly older ones they offer. Auctions report sales of cars between 12 and 24 months old are “weakening by the day”.

In spite of all the negatives I see no possibility of pre-registration going away. In fact next month we're launching a new product in our company specifically to market pre-registered cars – the dealers I've spoken to about this already are DESPERATE for some help to do this. Always happy to help.....

The Commentator's Curse

All curses this month it seems? Last month in my piece about the Bugatti Veyron I mentioned that VW Group Chairman Ferdinand Piech was to retire in 2 years time when he reached the age of 80, and hoped to launch the new Veyron before them. I had read rumours of rumblings in the VW boardroom, but like most others I was very surprised when Dr. Piech lost the power struggle and resigned. His number 2 was his Chief Executive Martin Winterkorn, for many years seen as his closest ally, but in recent years relations between the two had become strained, in particular about how VW should tackle the North American market. Piech openly criticised Winterkorn in a newspaper interview with a major German news magazine without caring his remarks with other board members. He obviously thought his position secure because he and other members of the Porsche family control 51% of VW shares. However it appears that not all family members agreed with him and were eager to see Mr. Winterkorn take over now rather than have him depart instead.

So the second largest car maker has, effectively, a new boss after many years. How that changes things remains to be seen.

Unhappy Customer Costs Watford Audi Dear

A lady recently purchased a used A3 Convertible from Watford Audi for £20000. Unfortunately before the car could even be moved off the forecourt it was damaged, so delivery was delayed whilst repairs were completed.

The lady was understandably upset and was without a car. The dealer supplied a courtesy car and as a gesture of apology offered to pay for a dinner for two. The lady took her mother to a 5 star restaurant in London's West End. They enjoyed very good food, cocktails, champagne, and fine wines.

The bill, which she later presented to Watford Audi, came to £714.61, which she thought was entirely reasonable and, perhaps not surprisingly, they didn't. The dispute continues, they have offered to pay half, she has said that if they had a limit in mind they should have said so. Local publicity has resulted, one observer commented on social media "How dare an Audi garage call a bill excessive, have you seen what they charge for a service?"

Massive Airbag Recall

A Worldwide total of 5 million Toyotas and 1.5 million Nissans are being recalled because they are fitted with potentially unsafe airbags. It is rumoured that Honda will soon announce that they too are recalling a large number of cars for the same reason. The problem is apparently not that the airbags fail to go off in an accident, but that they sometimes go off during normal driving. It is rumoured injuries and even fatalities have already occurred.

I remember when many years ago airbags were first introduced arguments raged about whether they were a good idea or not. One engineer who opposed them asked "Do you really want to spend some, or many, hours a week sitting 2 feet behind an unexploded bomb?" Seems he may have had a point?

Dirty Diesel Debate

Since I mentioned this last month the debate has become noisier. Yesterday (as I write, yes working on a Bank Holiday for WMC!) the Sunday Times launched a "Clean Air Campaign" which specifically targets diesel vehicles. I've mentioned often how unfit for purpose the official tests that measure fuel consumption and emissions are, and the Sunday Times specifically targets these and demands they be replaced urgently with more accurate procedures. With which I fully agree.

Diesel cars have become more popular over the last 20 years because:

The technology has improved resulting in more powerful and quieter engines.

Diesel cars offer better mpg so lower fuel costs, a big attraction to high mileage fleets in particular.

Diesels produce less CO2 so were seen as the better choice for the environment.

Now it is being said that because diesels produce more Nitrous Dioxide they are definitely a BAD choice for the environment. However it seems to be a question of which expert you believe currently. There are some enormous potential consequences here, and there is an old saying that you can't believe everything you read in the newspapers. However there is no doubt they have power, and to me it is vital that our masters in Westminster get to the truth of this as quickly and accurately as humanly possible.

Ford Miss Targets, Daimler Beat Theirs

Ford, where Mark Fields last year took over the Chief exec's chair from the retiring Alan Mulally, has missed its first quarter financial targets. Worldwide profits were still a pretty impressive \$924M but that was down from \$989M last year and analysts were expecting about \$1050M. The company are blaming delays in getting new products to market and the strength of the dollar, and promising they will more than make up the shortfall by the end of the year. Europe continues to be an unhappy place for Ford with losses there of \$185M in the quarter. The only bright spot is that this is slightly less than the same period last year, and a lot less than GM lose in Europe.

Meanwhile Mercedes continue to make the progress I've been forecasting for a while now. Their global vehicle sales rose by 13% in the first quarter compared to the same period last year, within this car sales (as opposed to commercial vehicles) were 16% up. This brought profits of over 2 Billion Euros, almost double last year's result. Comforting that they can clearly afford to pay Lewis Hamilton all that money.

Paul Gilligan
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Welcome to the following new members:

We have pleasure in welcoming the following new members to the Club and we hope that you all enjoy our events and social activities.

5697/99 Chris, Jamie & Daniel Kirk –	Brampton	5700	John Hume	Moffat
5701 Mike Dent –	Lancashire	5702	Mark Gilmour –	Lancaster
5703 Michael Marsland -	Darwen			

For most of you this will be your first magazine and we hope that you enjoy it and that you will take part in many of our activities.



Andy's Armchair

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

We visited Donington on the Saturday of the recent Historic week-end. The weather was nothing to write home about but as usual there was plenty to keep us interested. I even managed to get a splendid deal on the new Jim Clark book as there was a tiny mark on the slip cover which meant I got an almost half price reduction on an original cost of just south of £80. It's strange really but during the course of the day I found myself reacting completely differently to two replicas, re-creations, copies, call them what you will. On the one hand the Broadley Lola T70GT made in 2014 racing against it'd "grannie" an original Lola and a host of Chevrons now reaching their half century just didn't seem right.

The other car was the pre-war Mercedes Grand Prix machine built by the Wheatcroft family many years ago to help them celebrate their circuit hosting such brutes racing there in the 1938 British Grand Prix. Now this one totally thrilled, yes it was a copy but first it wasn't racing anything else and more importantly it gave everyone there a chance to see something circulating that you're very unlikely to catch sight of if you wait for the genuine article to turn up. Somehow that second point justified the car's existence, but I'm still struggling to come to terms with the reason for building the new Lola.



It's now ten days since I started this article so GTF will no doubt be after me with a big stick pretty soon. Anyhow there is a reason as I had to wait until later in the month, when I'd ventured up to Duns in mid May for the celebration week-end of Jim Clark's 1965 World Championship. I really wasn't sure what to do to be honest as from where we're living at the moment it was a 340mile round trip, the weather forecast was far from good and it seemed a lot of effort to see three or four cars standing in the street. Never mind we risked it and it was absolutely brilliant. There were thousands there but after they'd stopped the driving demonstrations the crowd

thinned out and it was access all areas. I got a chat to Alan McNish and Bob Dance (ex Lotus F1 mechanic) and got them to sign the book I'd bought earlier in the month. The cars were A1 with the H16 F1 car running, an Indy V8 static, Scott-Watson's Porsche 356 and Jim's Elan. There was a flock of Cortinas, the real McCoy, Lotus 25 x2, 23 etc. even the ex-Dougie Niven super saloon plastic V8 Beetle thundering up and down the road. That reminded me what proper saloon car racing used to be like. I saw JYS at close quarters also Scott-Watson but couldn't get near enough for a signature, never mind it was altogether a splendid "do" and if they do similar in 2018 on the anniversary of his death you should all make the effort. On the way back we stopped off at the grave at Chirnside and after the crowds and noise of Duns we had it to ourselves. As usual the headstone got a pat and he was told he's still the best. Then we set off back to the wilds of deepest Yorkshire.

Ends

AA

What's On

WMC events and other events of interest

June

3rd	Wed	WMC	Pub Run
13th	Sa	LMC	Barbon Clubmans Hill Climb (BSCBSC)
18-21		MGCC	MG Live! at Silverstone
23rd	Tues	WMC	Grass Autotest at Whins Farm
27th	Sat	MSCC	Forrestburn Hill Climb (BSCBSC)
28th	Sun	WMC	Lake District Classic Rally (Gates HHRA)
28th	Sun	WMC	Lake District Targa Rally (Gates HHRA)

July

1st	Wed	WMC	Pub Run
4th	Sat	LMC	Barbon National Hill Climb
12th	Sun	WCMC	Greystoke Stages
19th	Sun	KLMC	Cars are the Stars Show
26th	Sun	WMC	Grass Autotest at Branthwaite

Visit the website for all the latest news

[Catch up on Face Book](#)

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

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