

Wigton Motor Club Ltd

Start Line

Issue: 03/16

www.wigtonmc.co.uk

March 2016

Get Involved!



March sees four ways that you can get involved in events!

The Novice and Under 17s Autotest will allow you take part, marshal or learn how to organise. That all happens on March 12th while on March 5th we have our single venue historic and targa rally which revives the famous

White Heather name from our stage rallying days.

It's an ideal event for novice crews in either historic or modern (targa) cars.

It's also an ideal place to learn the art of marshalling on rallies. We will put you with an experienced marshals so you can learn the ropes!



Motor Sport for All

Diary

Club events over the next month or so

White Heather Historic Tests & Targa

Saturday, March 5th

Kirkbride Airfield

Marshals needed

Under 17s and Novice Autotest

Sunday, March 13th

Maryport Business Park

Free entry — Entry forms on the website

WIGTON MOTOR CLUB LTD

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Talking Point

Topical comment from the world of motoring

After the dreadful weather we have had this winter it is great to be looking forward to some of the bigger events. Our new single venue historic and targa looks to be popular and we have a return of the Under 17 and Novice Autotest. Two years ago this brought in a good number of new competitors and some new organisers. For stage rally fans there is the Malcolm Wilson Rally which is always a spectacle although one wonders how many years it will be able to run in the local forests.

In these pages we have the new look sprint and hill climb championships which will take drivers to some new venues.

April kicks off with the pre season test day at Rowrah which is open to all types of cars. Then on the 11th we have our annual big film show at the Kirkgate with the new bio pic of Steve McQueen at Le Mans.

Moving on the 17th we have the Seagull Autotest at Maryport, the last before the summer break to allow the dreaded gulls to breed! The 24th sees the Drive It Day gathering old cars and vehicles at Dalemain. Quite a packed programme!

I see Malcolm Wilson scored up his sixth decade last week and he seems to have lost none of his energy and enthusiasm. I first met Malcolm when as a 16 year old he did one of our PCTs at Heathfield in an Anglia. I remember it was pouring with rain and a real mud bath. Malcolm won, no doubt assisted by half of his Dad's scrap yard in his boot!

A couple of year's later Malcolm scored his first rally win on our first Solway Stages Rally beating the very experienced Dom Buckley. Malcolm went on to success with his own Ford Escorts and then in works cars for Ford, Vauxhall and Austin/Rover before setting up his own team which was initially based at the rear of Cardewlees Filling Station, before going to Threlkeld Leys and finally it's wonderful base at Dovenby Hall.

All credit to Malcolm for sticking in Cumbria as well. It would have been easier at times to set up in the perhaps more welcoming areas of Motor Sport Valley. It is interesting to know that M Sport is a "breeding ground" for new designers and engineers as most of the major rally, f1 and sports car teams have personnel that started their careers at M Sport.

The work on the new evaluation centre starts any day and should be up and running with in a year and I am sure there will be all sorts of announcements about future projects coming out in due course.

Malcolm is certainly not slowing down!

GTF



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Classic Column

Chateau Impney, Leyland and another land speed record holder.

When one thinks about compiling a list of the world's best cars, Leyland doesn't immediately spring to mind, especially for those of us who remember such "iconic" vehicles as the Marina, Allegro and Princess to name just three of the models made in the 1970s. Even those were only produced on the days when militant shop steward Red Robbo and his mates weren't on strike, which wasn't too often anyway in those troubled times of industrial disputes in the British car industry.

However things could have been vastly different as in 1917 Welshman J.G. Parry-Thomas, chief engineer at Leyland Motors in Lancashire, was instructed to build a production car that was equal in quality and every other respect to a Rolls Royce. Initially 18 "Leyland Eight" models were completed, the first one revealed to the acclaim of the press at the 1920 motor show and dubbed "Lion of Olympia." As the cost was £400 more than a Rolls it isn't surprising that the venture was not a commercial success. The project was abandoned and Parry-Thomas worked at Leyland for a few more years but eventually decided to leave for pastures new.

He left Leyland, not under a cloud because he was brilliant engineer and designer, but with the blessing of the directors and was gifted several unused chassis, engines and many spares. These were the starting point for his new business venture. He used many of these parts to build competition cars at his new headquarters at the famous Brooklands circuit in Surrey, the place where aviation and fast cars were being developed side by side.

With a banked track at Brooklands very high speeds could be achieved so Parry-Thomas built cars with which he could attempt to capture world land speed records. One of these cars, the most famous of which is the 7.3 Litre Leyland - Thomas, he used to break sixteen world land speed records.

After breaking records with the Leyland - Thomas he bought the remains of the 27 litre Higham Special that killed Count Zborowski in the 1924 Italian Grand Prix from the deceased drivers estate. He rebuilt it, renamed it "Babs" and was killed himself in the car when it overturned at over 100 mph and was buried in Pendine sands for over 40 years. .

Eventually it was dug up by engineering student Owen Wynn Owen, "Babs" is now housed in Pendine museum.

Pendine is again being used for speed records by the VHRA (Vintage Hot rod Assn). Neil Bennett initially set a new record a couple of years ago in the supercharged 1930's Batten Special doing over 100mph and was telling me at Prescott shortly afterwards it was rather "buttock clenching" as the car starts to weave about on the wet sand at speeds approaching 100mph. I'm sure it is, especially knowing the history of the place!

The chassis and engine of the Leyland - Thomas was for many years in the Museum of motive power in Lytham, eventually they were put up for sale at auction but initially failed to sell. Many people heard about them afterwards and clambered to buy, but steam enthusiast David Haywood also was desperate to own the parts and he managed to persuade the owner to swop them for a very rare gauge dry steam model locomotive he had just finished building. That was 23 years ago.

After a 23 year restoration programme this car can be seen competing for the first time at Chateau Impney on 9th/10th July.

Last year's inaugural speed hillclimb at the fabulous venue in Worcestershire was such a resounding success that it has attracted even more world famous cars for 2016, this one and others are now resuming another chapter in their career.

Here cars can be seen hurtling up the track but spectators can examine all cars closely in the paddock as here it is possible to get right up to competing vehicles and chat to the drivers unlike F1 and other big motorsport events.

For more information about this car and its history google "Chateau Impney Hillclimb" and check out the blog.

Keith Thomas.

WMC Speed Championships

This year we are running both a sprint and a hill climb championship based on the Association of North West Car Clubs series. As WMC is a member of ANWCC we will offer awards for the leading WMC drivers in the two ANWCC Championships.

Subject to the number of entries we will give awards to the top WMC driver and the best in each category plus best historic.

The range of events are excellent with some old favourites and some new ones like Loton Park and the Silverstone Stowe circuit which is only used once a year.

SPRINT CHAMPIONSHIP

Date	Venue	Club
April 10	Three Sisters	Longton & DMC
April 23	Aintree Spring Sprint	Liverpool MC
April 30	Ty Croes	MG CC North-West
May 1	Ty Croes	MG CC North-West
May 30	Blyton	Huddersfield MC
June 4	Anglesey - Basil Davenport	Chester MC
June 5	Anglesey - Dave Moore	Chester MC
June 5 (Reserve)	Silverstone - Stowe Sprint	MG CC North-West
June 18	Three Sisters	Longton & DMC
June 19	Curborough - Graham Hill Trophy	Owen MC
June 25	Aintree - Jack Neal	Liverpool MC
July 30	Three Sisters	Longton & DMC
July 30 (Reserve)	Jurby Sprint	Manx AS
July 31	Jurby Sprint	Manx AS
August 14	Curborough	Mid-Cheshire MRC
September 3	Aintree Autumn	Liverpool MC
September 3 (Reserve)	Ty Croes	MG CC North-West
September 4	Ty Croes	MG CC North-West
October 1	Anglesey Sprint 1	Longton & DMC
October 2	Anglesey Sprint 2	Longton & DMC
October 8	Curborough	Hillclimb & Sprint Association

HILLCLIMB CHAMPIONSHIP

Date	Venue	Club
April 16	Loton Hillclimb	Hagley & DLCC
April 17	Loton Hillclimb	Hagley & DLCC
May 15	Scammonden	MG CC North-West
June 11	Barbon	Kirkby Lonsdale MC/Liverpool MC
July 2	Barbon	Kirkby Lonsdale MC /Liverpool MC
July 17	Scammonden	Mid-Cheshire MRC
August 6	Loton Park	Hagley & DLCC
August 7	Loton Park	Hagley & DLCC
August 13	Scammonden	Pendle DMC

Regulations and entry forms are on the WMC and ANWCC websites.

PG Tips

Two cars in a month...that's how many I've killed! The Skoda Felicia never recovered from its misfire that I reported on last month and stopped starting. I cleaned out the fuel system and checked various things but I suspect we 'did' the head gasket when we boiled the engine at the festive autotest and it got worse every time I used it thereafter. The scrap man came at the beginning of the month after I'd removed a few useful parts for other Skodas. At that point I was resigning myself to the fact that I wouldn't be doing the northern trial and then a colleague at work who bought a Golf mk3 to get him through a couple of months announced he had bought another car and he was going to sell the Golf. I snapped that beauty up for £150...more like beast actually...and not in a good way! The interior of the Golf is like a coal mine in the dark. Vast swathes of black everywhere and quite uncomfortable (black) seats too. On the outside it's red, not all the same red and some of the red is more pink than red but at least it's not black. Every panel has damage and lots of things don't work on it and lots of buttons are missing inside. The MOT has a list of advisories as long as your arm and the old dog has covered 150,000 miles. The 75bhp (when new!) 1.6 8v petrol engine gently smokes but it does start first time every time.....or rather it did!

To cut to the chase, it was awful and floated alarmingly at anything over 60mph because the suspension was tired – even before we did the trial in it. The ideal car for the Northern trial! My navigator and bouncer, Graeme McTavish, was hand picked from a list of many (well at least 1 other until Paul Eastwood booked a holiday!) and was ready at 8am on the day of the trial when I went to collect him, although he didn't have the one thing he needed – his Wigton MC membership card! I would like to say scrutineering was a doddle, but we had to borrow an AFF fire extinguisher and even then we failed on the fact the battery was not held in with a strap. With 45 minutes until our start time we rushed into Wigton town centre and Graeme purchased a suitable strap...I say suitable when I actually mean a pink dog lead...yep you did read that correctly! He cunningly tied it round the battery and secured it with some cable ties and we then narrowly scraped through scrutineering. We managed to grab a bacon and sausage roll before setting off on our great adventure...the first test had a note suggesting that anyone with limited ground clearance should skip it and move on – we had a look and did as suggested much to the (amused) disgust of Chris Hunter another Wigton MC member...who had a proper trials looking car and seemed to cope with the event better than us. The tests we then attempted were so muddy and slippery that on some we struggled to get to the start line let alone make it up them. In fact we needed a shove from our fellow competitors to get through a vast quagmire on the 2nd one we attempted because the approach was on a muddy track with 8" deep ruts. Things did marginally improve after that and we did successfully complete 1 and got half way up a couple of others. The state of the forest tracks and green lanes in the Keswick and Cockermouth area is as bad as you'd imagine given the weather – possibly worse! By the 5th test of the day the rear suspension was knocking quite badly and after test 12 (several were cancelled due to trees being down or the tracks being impassable) we headed off down a green lane to get to the next group of tests with water leaking into the car through the front bulkhead and loud knocking from the suspension. The lane was very badly potholed and we hit a few invisible ones (covered in water) quite hard...a few minutes later as we came out onto the proper roads near Lorton the oil warning light came on and a very annoying and quite loud low pressure buzzer. Having a quick look under the front of the car the alloy sump was cracked and we had deposited most of the 4 litres of oil the engine had in it somewhere in the previous few miles. What to do now....after a very quick discussion the best way forward seemed to be to see how far you can get in a car with no oil in the engine...hoping that it was 10 miles...the rough distance back to my house in Gilcrux! As we drove through Cockermouth the engine sounded quite like a commercial diesel engine but was still going well. I switched it off down hills and coasted and as we reached Tallentire, just 2 miles from home it was all looking good...relatively anyway! With 1 mile to go the engine refused to bump start on a downhill run but strangely did start with the key but all the power had gone and I didn't fancy our chances of making it up the final small hill to my house...and I was right. The poor old Golf finally gave up the ghost with 100 metres to go. We parked it off the road and collected my main car to give Graeme a lift home. Not the most successful days motorsport but at least we'd made it home and not had to abandon a broken car somewhere difficult!

In other news...Snotty works and is going for an MOT soon.

Peter

WMC and the Kirkgate Centre present

Steve McQueen – the Man & Le Mans (15)

Monday 11 April 8pm



Steve McQueen was the King of Cool and star of classics like *The Thomas Crown Affair* and *Bullitt*. In 1970, the racing fanatic produced his passion project, *Le Mans*, attempting to make the ultimate motor racing movie. This documentary interweaves stunning, newly discovered footage and McQueen's private recordings with original interviews to reveal the true story of an infamously troubled production, plagued by financial difficulties, on-set rivalries and the star's own personal issues.

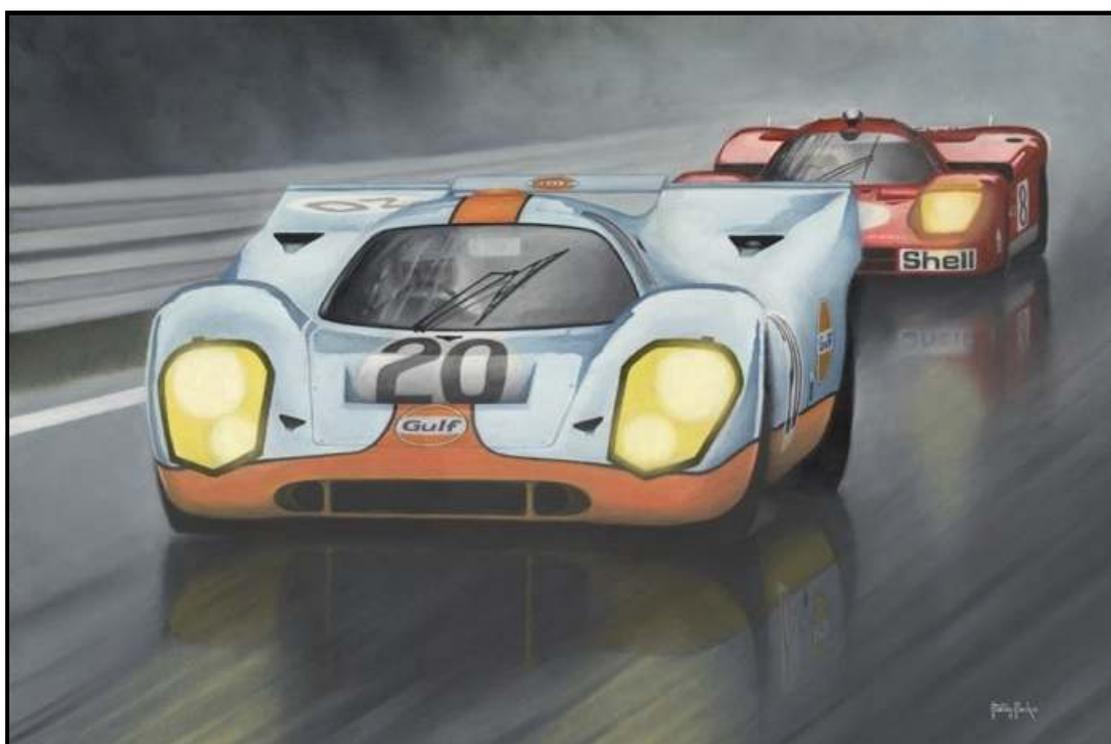
"A beautifully made documentary" *The Independent*

Tickets

Standard ticket prices are £5.00

Concessions from £4.00

Box Office 01900 826448 Booking advised



Dare To Be Different



Susie Wolff and the Motor Sports Association – governing body of UK motorsport – have joined forces to launch Dare To Be Different, a high-profile new initiative that will inspire, connect and celebrate women who work in every aspect of motor sport.

Dare To Be Different is about increasing female participation, not just on the track but in all aspects of the sport and other perceived male-dominated industries. It will achieve this in two key areas – creating an expansive online community, and bringing young girls (aged 8-14) together with some of the sports’ most inspiring women in a series of special events.

Dare To Be Different is not preoccupied with finding the next female F1 driver – it is about inspiring women of all ages and backgrounds to break the mould and shatter perceptions. In the coming months, a fully integrated online community will be formed across our all-

new website and social channels, bringing together girls and women from all over the UK who share a passion and desire to get involved in motor racing.

Susie Wolff said: “Our main aim with Dare To Be Different is to Drive Female Talent. This is an ambitious and long-term project that will build an online community of women from all over the world. It will connect them through a shared passion and empower them to become the next wave of role models, whilst also providing access to some of the most successful female names in the sport.

“Our UK events for young girls will boost awareness and demonstrate the varied and exciting areas of the sport – showing that they too can dare to be different.

“I’m proud to launch today and must thank my team and our ambassadors for their invaluable contribution and dedication to the project.”

Our Community

The Dare To Be Different network will bring women in motor sport together in an unprecedented way, with members benefiting from direct access to their peers, colleagues and even their idols for information, advice and inspiration.

There will be networking events exclusively for Dare To Be Different Community members, bringing aspiring girls and women face to face with our Ambassadors. In addition there will be giveaways, competitions and other benefits.

Set up as a non-profit organisation and access to the community is £25 per year. As the initiative grows, so too will the benefits to its members. For more information on the community, visit www.daretobedifferent.org/sign-up

Our Events

In its first year, Dare To Be Different will aim to inspire the next generation with five free special events across the UK:

13 April, Daytona Sandown Park, Surrey
5 May, Nutts Corner, Crumlin, Northern Ireland
24-26 June, The Sports Show at the NEC, Birmingham
25 August, Knockhill Circuit, Fife, Scotland
15 September, Daytona Manchester, Manchester

(All dates are provisional and subject to change. These events will offer a money-can't-buy experience to girls, and will be open to school groups as well as passionate individuals. Girls aged 8-14 will be getting tips from some of the top female racers in the world – Susie will be at every event along with an incredible team of ambassadors including current racers Alice Powell to inspire the racing spirit. The Williams F1 show car will be there for the girls to get up close and snap a selfie with, but it's not just the driving that Dare To Be Different is here to promote.

**The world's worst Golf
about to fail to leave the
start line of a test**



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.

Mike & Lesley Geen
Sean & Christine Silverwood
Owen Harris

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.

Politics In The Snow



Sixty years ago one of the greatest scandals on motorsport happened on the Monte Carlo Rally which at that time was one of the major sporting events in the world. The BMC Mini Cooper S team were expected to add a third win to their tally with the Flying Finns and Paddy Hopkirk at the helm and Stuart Turner bringing new ideas as team manager.

Using skills British navigators and the Scandinavian drivers the Minis took the top three places helped by the first check

on ice conditions when Stuart Turner has mechanics run into the mountain stages to see how much ice there was and then fit the right tyres prior to the stage.

After the finish the zealous French scrutineers just about took the Minis apart in order to find something wrong with them. There was nothing and in fact Stuart took a standard car out the showroom and did a speed test against the winning car and showed that the rally car was actually slower (due to the extra weight).

Undaunted the French decided that the fitting of halogen bulbs to the British cars was not within the regulations. It would seem that the regulations sent to the RAC had said they were OK but not in the French regs used for the event!



Thus all the British cars with these bulbs were excluded including Roger Clark's fourth placed Escort and Rosemary Smith's Coupe des Dames winning Imp. They even excluded cars that had retired!

No one was happy about this and the French crew who had "won" in a Citroen refused to attend the prize giving. The winning Mini was flown back to the UK and appeared on the stage at the end of the ITV's Sunday Night a the London Palladium" show draped in a Union Jack to great applause.

There was a great outcry and questions were asked in high places. However the resultant publicity was far greater than if the cars had won with no issues! It was of course at a time when UK/French relations were not good anyway and it is said that sales of Citroens and French wine dropped for the next few months!

GTF

Elderly Utterances

The Voice of Experience!

Ron Palmer has his say

I have deep respect for anyone who can drive fast on ice and snow and look forward to watching the WRC Rally Sweden usually held in deep snow conditions in February. Not so this year as those who tuned in to the TV report will be aware the event had to be shortened because of the mild weather conditions and a lack of the white stuff – no not that white stuff although you could be forgiven for thinking the drivers were on it. Fortunately fresh falls of snow created the right conditions for studded tyres before the start of what was a much reduced event.

Ogier as usual demonstrated top form but behind him was an interesting mix of crews and cars. That cool dude Hayden Paddon brought his Hyundai into 2nd place which was merit worthy and upheld the best traditions of the All Blacks. Ostberg was top Fiesta in 3rd and Ott Tanak also Fiesta WRC mounted finished 5th and was flying the flag for Carlisle's D-Mack Tyres, another great result. In 8th place Craig Breen and our local man Scott Martin had a great first time result in a wild card Citroen WRC DS3. Next along in 9th was Elfyn Evans doing what he was there by for winning WRC2 in the Fiesta R5 EVO. So that's two out of two for him in WRC2, the 'Monte' and the 'Swedish' - a great start to the 2016 season.



Now that would have Malcolm Wilson smiling I know and with his 'factory' churning out vast numbers of successful rally Fiestas he has good reason to be happy. This month Malcolm has another reason to smile as he clocked up his 60th birthday. Now at the risk of being accused of bias I don't think he looks it. I remember when he was 21 he seemed to hold that age and his youthful looks for years. The photograph is from the York finish of the RAC rally in 1977 when he won Group 1 and his class and finished 12th overall against the best in the world in the County Garage RS2000. I was fortunate to sit alongside him in those days.

Back in 1971 when I was based at County Garage on the Quay at Whitehaven my company car was one of the first Escort Mexico's – CRM29K in Diamond (or was it Ermine?) white with red Mexico decals. I used this and the following one (Sunset red) in local rallies with Eddie Farrell on the maps. I did enjoy this period and must tell a tale or two at some time. Anyway not having driven much on events since then I have entered the White Heather Targa on 5th March in the MX5 with Ed Glaister directing me. It should be a bit of fun and only a few miles from home. If only I still had that first Mexico....

After the Mexico period we continued to enter the West Cumberland half night rallies and on one occasion in about 1973 we were in an 1100 Escort (ahem) borrowed from our hire fleet, just pootling along at a reasonably sedate pace down the Red Beck road from Cleator Moor to Rowrah School when head lights lit up my rear view mirror. I upped the pace a little expecting them to disappear but no they came closer and closer. Being a gentleman and not much bothered by someone catching us I pulled over to let this unknown car past. An Escort MK1 slipped past and rapidly disappeared into the distance – it was 17 year old Malcolm on one of his early events probably with Keith Thomas or John Davies on the maps.

Ron.



Autojumble

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Ring 01900 603760

ROVER P4 80 YEAR 1963.around £800 o.n.o. I am local (Cockermouth) and have owned this car for over 10 years. tel no 07747857920 Richard Knight

Wanted: navigator for classic rally events, Tot Dixon 01539 821345

Dunlop Winter tyres size 255 x 35 x R20 £350 ono for the set of 4. Steve Wilson tel: 0774 040 4686 (St Bees)

Silkolene 20/50 oil for classics. 5 litres for £15.00. 10/40 Semi Synthetic 5 litres for \$10.

Red rotor arms for most British cars of the 60s and 70s plus condensers. £6.00

Lots of new and second MG B bits.

Race & Rally numbers 50p each

Ring Graeme Forrester on 01900 825642.

Annual Awards Night



Winter Autotest – Maryport - 24th January 2016

It was still dark at 10am but that didn't stop our intrepid competitors turning up from all over the county and beyond in spite of bridge closures, major detours and general mayhem on the roads. Angus (Cowan) had driven up from Guildford (yes, the Surrey Guildford) Brian (Bradley) from Lancashire, Drew (McLean) from Dumfries all in search of a good day's motorsport. We welcomed a few new faces as well; Richard Lewthwaite in the Ford Focus, John Holliday in the white Midget and Michael Marsland in the black MGTF. And the usual motley crew all champing at the bit, exchanging pleasantries and wildly exaggerated tales of mechanical achievements with only the aid of a cross head screw driver and a roll of duct tape.

Even an unattractive grey, freezing cold, breeze block building, complete with several elderly photocopiers, proved to be significantly more inviting than a grey, freezing cold autotest arena with a gale force westerly wind blowing. A few of us were dragging our heels, I have to admit. Graeme (McTavish) kept sloping off to calm his nerves with a quick drag closely followed by the husband (a mostly ex-smoker) who stood as near as he possibly could to inhale a bit of passive smoke whilst avoiding my evil eye and, in turn, trying not to alarm Graeme with his proximity.

Mr Forrester whipped us all in and gave us our final instructions, which most of us ignored. I say "most of us" but it was mainly Mr Agnew who didn't understand the term "numerical order". I have to say, I didn't realise "1" came after "3" but I wasn't about to let everyone else know about this gap in my education.

There were three tests each to be completed a total of six times, some before lunch and some after. Two marshals were allocated to each test and a slick system operated to keep things moving at a rate of knots. Don't ask me about the actual tests themselves – they were all a bit of a blur. The usual sea of cones when viewed from knee level, a lot of struggling with reverse gear and lack of power steering, a massive pool of muddy water, most of which ended up in the rear footwell of the Midget and down my neck when I forgot to close the window. Oh, I mustn't forget test two – a vortex of ever decreasing circles which ended up with everyone disappearing up their own ar... er, exhaust pipe.

If you want to spend all day in a tin box with plastic windows and no visible signs of comfort - and no heater – in January – then how about a Corsa Special a la Mr Dixon? The power to weight ratio can be improved in two easy stages by removal of the bonnet and dispensing with the exhaust system. Every little helps. In this case, it helped Stephen to win the day overall – again.

On the other hand, if you wish to spend the day in relative comfort and still do rather well, then a Mazda MX5 seems to be the weapon of choice. Cue the aforementioned McTavishes, "the Legend that is Ron Palmer", Drew "Needs Stiffening a Bit" McLean (not sure you can mention that in mixed company.....) and not forgetting Chris "Cossack" Hunter. They all made it look easy and ever so slightly cool. With the exception of Chris, of course, who hit so many cones that he ruled himself out of the running early on. Something to do with the hat, I understand. More Deputy Dawg than Dr Zhivago - might have worked better if he had put it on the right way around or, indeed, the right way up. Graeme and Sarah put in an astounding performance and won RWD PC class – yeah, I know, I couldn't believe it either.

And a welcome return to Mr "Cruising" Fishwick (don't ask – couldn't possibly explain). A past winner of this event but not today - Steve's not going to Awards Night either – we never did establish why.....

Sam Kirkpatrick has grown at least 12 inches since last time out - put in a very tidy effort ably assisted by dad Bill who may have to dig deep for a bigger car at this rate.

And then there's Jack Palmer – what IS he on? Not content with outshining his dad and winning the FWD Autotest class, he also managed to beat Stephen Dixon's time in Stephen's own car. A risky strategy but can't help admire his style.

Now, I have learnt a lot in my two years of autotesting. The main thing is I'm not very good at it but the husband apparently is. I have to admit that today he put in a sterling effort and won the RWD class. I think it is something to do with "focussing his strategies" whilst I am only there to make up the numbers, apparently, and to generally make a nuisance of myself by putting off the competition. Of course, selecting first gear whilst the Midget is still going backwards is a cardinal sin if I'm driving but perfectly acceptable if it's the husband. I was hoping the screeching sound of metal cogs disintegrating inside the gearbox would divert attention from my particularly woeful performance. No such luck - Michael (Cowling) sauntered across and said the battery had gone flat on his stop watch, I had taken so long to get round. Cheek.

There were a couple of retirements – Tot (Dixon) snapped the throttle cable on the Mini and the Iveson family's Fiesta was running on three cylinders - at best. Never one to do things by half, Rob had everything apart and back together in double quick time somehow managing to make things worse in the interim. Nothing for it but to throw in the towel and take Mandy and Jaqui home with him. (Just to clarify that last bit – Mum and girlfriend respectively – don't want everyone thinking he sloped off with all the female competition in tow.)

As ever – a big cheer for our organisers and marshals who really made it a great day for the rest of us, Graeme, Nigel & Nancy, Maureen, Fiona, Sarah, Michael and Ian – thank you!

Cheers!

Marian Sloan (aka Maz)

PS: Ron – that's a tenner you owe me.....(remember the "Legend" bit?)



Gates Tyres Northern Historic Rally Awards

1. March	5th	White Heather Historic	WMC
2. March	19th	Hexham Historic	H&DMC
3. April/May	30th/1st	Berwick Classic	BDMC
4. July	3rd	Lake District Classic	WMC
5. July	24 th	Rowrah Classic	WMC
5. August	14th	Blue Streak Classic	SMC
6. Sept	18th	Doonhamer Classic	SoSCC
7. October	16th	Solway Autumn Classic	WMC

Mike tells me there are already 25 crews signed up so things are looking good with most already entered for the White Heather

Wigton Motor Club

Drive It Day

April 24th 2016

11am until 2pm

(arrive and depart as you wish)

Dalemain Mansion

(On the A592 3 miles west of J40 of the M6)

Open to all classic and historic vehicles

Donations to our nominated charities requested

Dalemain coffee shop will be open

GATES



The Hidden Cars of Cuba: Piotr Degler's Odyssey

By: John Mayhead



At the end of 2013, Cuba announced it was to allow unrestricted car imports for the first time in 50 years. Until then, the locals had to make do with the cars they had- mostly 1950s classics, many from the USA. Every tourist brochure and every film about the island featured these cars: brightly-coloured Chevys, Cadillacs and Fords, all a little dented, but all going strong. In terms of values, the half century-long Cuban government policy created an automotive alternate reality-

one where the manufacturer, the provenance and the model became irrelevant; the only value was attached to whether the car actually worked or not. Thus family saloons- practical, easy to fix and capable of generating income as a taxi- remained popular and many sports cars- expensive to maintain and too small to carry anything but a driver and passenger- fell by the wayside.

This led to legendary stories of ultra- rare classics simply being left to rot- and one story lit the public's imagination like no other: the [Mercedes-Benz 300SL](#).

One man who was entranced by this story was Spanish/Italian automotive photographer Piotr Degler. So last year, he decided to spend a month in Cuba, looking for the elusive derelict Gullwing but also searching through the garages and lock-ups to see what other automotive jewels he could find.

Degler travelled the island from Vinales to Santiago de Cuba, stopping in dozens of towns and cities. He forged friendships with local enthusiasts and mechanics, which opened doors that would usually have been barred to foreign tourists.

The cars he found were extraordinary- not just the Mercedes-Benz 300SL Gullwing that he had been searching for (found extremely derelict, rusting under a banana tree and part-sprayed yellow) but also a very dusty 300SL Roadster and Porsches, Jaguars and even an Hispano-Suiza.

But it is Degler's photographs of the cars still being used that may prove to be one of the most important legacies of his trip. For as new cars being to be imported, the colourful Impalas, Bel Airs and Crown Victorias will soon be gone, replaced by the cheaper, safer, more efficient but eminently more dull cars of today.

In total, Degler took over 25,000 photographs during his month in Cuba. The best 200, all with natural colours and unretouched, have been published into a high-quality book of over 300 pages- *Carros de Cuba*. Printed in Europe, Degler self- published, using the crowdfunding site Kickstarter to keep prices low. This was a resounding success- Degler raised over 42,000 Euros with each donation receiving a signed copy of the book.

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CLASSIC CAR INSURANCE

Partners with Wigton Motor Club – please call
0844 824 1135 and don't forget to mention your
club when you do!

Berwick Classic Rally Saturday 30th April / Sunday 1st May 2016



The organisers of the Berwick Classic Historic Rally and the Berwick Classic Targa Rally welcome enthusiasts to the 2016 Berwick Classic. Regardless of whether you have a classic Mini Cooper S, a Lotus Elan or a Smart Car you will enjoy our relaxed friendly event with a mixture of regularities and tests, some of which are new.

Leg 1 starting from Berwick-upon-Tweed in late afternoon crews will tackle two regularities and two tests in a 50 mile route before returning to Norham Village Hall for refreshments.

Leg 2 sees crews restarting at 09.30 hrs from Torness for a challenging day which will include fifteen tests and three regularities, two of which have never been used before and will be held on private land.

Some of the navigation will be issued before the event however the remainder will only be issued at the start of each leg to keep the navigators on their toes !

The entry fee will be £ 115 per car including a picnic lunch on Sunday and a carvery meal at the finish at Whitekirk Golf and Country Club.

For more details contact Stuart Bankier on 01289 382025 stuart@sbankier.wanadoo.co.uk

Regs will be posted on the events own web site www.berwickclassicroally.co.uk and on motor club's web site in early March

www.berwickmotorclub.co.uk

Frontal Head Restraint Night



The HANS/FHR Night at Stoneybeck was well attended with some 40 people turning out, a mix of speed and stage rally folk mainly

At least we know the difference between a Head And Neck Support and a Frontal Head Restraint!

The evening was well put together by Kick Automotive and Motodrive who are offering discount to WMC members, particularly if there is a bulk purchase.

Here David Rushton tries on a helmet and FHR system.

Photo by Keith Thomas

These are now a requirement in speed events for all cars other than those in the road classes and pre 1977 historics.

In racing it is all classes other than historics but may include historics in 2017



Rally Torque

News from Road & Stage

MSA launches online marshals' training and accreditation



Legendary co-driver Nicky Grist helped the Motor Sports Association (MSA) launch a new online training and accreditation scheme for rally and cross country marshals today at Autosport International.

The scheme is part of the RallyFuture campaign to further enhance safety on UK stage rallies. Its purpose is to ensure that all Rally marshals have a common understanding of their roles and responsibilities, the management of spectators and how to handle an incident.

The online training takes less than an hour to complete, and has been designed as a supplement to – not a replacement for – the

high quality face-to-face training sessions currently being delivered across the UK.

Nicky Grist said: "Safety has become a highly contentious issue. This new scheme will dramatically speed up and improve the quality of new marshals, and it's exciting that they can now do it online and so quickly."

Jon Binns, Marshals' Representative on the Motor Sports Council, said: "I wholeheartedly support what the MSA is striving to deliver with the new online marshals' training and accreditation scheme. It will help to ensure that everyone who marshals on a rally stage will have received a common level of training relating to their personal safety, managing spectators and what to do if an incident occurs. This not only better equips them to do their roles but also demonstrates to external third parties that we take safety very seriously."

Existing and prospective Marshals can undertake online training and accreditation by logging in or registering at members.msauk.org.

A dramatic photo of an M Sport Fiesta on the Swedish Rally, February 2016



Inside the Industry

Paul Gilligan keeps us up to date

January Gets the UK Industry Off To a Flying Start

The strength on new car sales in the UK continued in January with almost 170,000 new cars registered, the best January for 11 years. In 2005 January represented a much higher proportion of the year's sales as the registration plate system was different, so it looks like we could be on course for another record year.

Some interesting (to anoraks like me and my regular reader) scores within that overall total. Nice to have a couple of my predictions come right. First BMW was 3rd amongst the German prestige manufacturers after having pre registered so many cars in December. BM registered 8265 in January, Audi 11513. However Mercedes, who I've been tipping for top spot in this particular contest for a while now made it this time with 11800 registrations, just ahead of Audi. I'm not saying Merc will definitely be come out on top by year end, but for sure it will be an interesting 3 way fight.

VW Group (Audi apart) continued to suffer from their diesel emissions scandal. VW itself was 14% down on last January, Seat 25% down and Skoda 3% down, all in a market 3% up. Fiat were 15% down and I know their dealers are not happy bunnies just now.

Some of those who've had a really hard time over the last few years continue to bounce back from the low levels they sunk to. Renault 37% up, Mazda 28% up, Subaru 25% up. All still a long way from where they want to be, but at least going in the right direction.

Lotus fans will be cheered by their 23% improvement on last January. However that was achieved by 16 (yes SIXTEEN!) new cars registered this year against 13 last January. I bumped into an old friend recently who had worked for Lotus until about a year ago. Said he'd left because he genuinely feared for the future of the company, and told me some things that even I wouldn't dare repeat here. Let's hope he's wrong!

Are New Cars Too Cheap?

Silly question perhaps, for potential buyers can they ever be? Point is that the market is a complex one that splits into several different areas. New cars become used cars. Many are sold as "near-new" which are normally either pre-registered, ex demonstrators, or ex rental.

As new cars become in real terms cheaper, because of big discounts and extremely attractive finance deals, then the near news become less attractive. So dealers find it harder to sell their pre-registered or demonstrator cars. One group extremely unhappy currently are the car rental operators. Theirs is a thin margin business, and the price they get for the cars and vans they sell on after between 3 and 9 months of hire make all the difference between a small profit and perhaps a big loss for their business.

In Europe the rental sector is responsible for about 10% of new car purchases every year. So in The UK between 200000 and 250000 cars a year. That's a lot! These buyers benefit from VERY big discounts from the manufacturers, but however big those discounts (I could tell you but I'd have to shoot you), if a new car can be had for under £100 a month then a 6 month old one has to be cheaper to sell. Part of our business involves remarketing ex rental cars and vans to trade and direct customers. The prices these vehicles command in the market place has fallen as new cars offers become more attractive.

Which not surprisingly upsets the rental companies. The manufacturers with whom they spend millions and millions every year are damaging their business. So they ask for even more discount than they're already getting. Just another reason that volume manufacturers struggle to make money in Europe.

Optional Extras Help The Bottom Line

One area that manufacturers definitely make money in is the provision of optional extras on new cars. The days of many prestige cars being only basically equipped as standard are gone, but the options list is still long, and in some cases very expensive. Often it seems the more expensive the car the less comes as standard, whilst “cheap” cars are very well equipped as standard these days. I (and I hope one or two reading this) will remember when a heater was an optional extra? Now the “basic” cars come with air conditioning, and this is becoming the norm for many vans also. Rolls Royce were, I think, the first to offer cruise control on a new car in the UK, now it comes as standard on many mass market cars. As do leather seats, climate control, self parking and loads more. Yet if you buy a new Porsche Cayenne for about £72500, sat nav will cost you £2300. Or you could get a Garmin for about £100? On the same expensive Porsche you don’t even get Bluetooth as standard, that’ll be £446 sir, or a DAB radio is £324 extra,

Metallic paint is almost always extra, Now even white often attracts an extra charge. Why? Well car makers have to make a few quid somewhere. Audi charge £6300 for an upgraded sound system on some models.

While spending a small fortune on the options list is normally very bad news for the new car buyer, it can be great for the next owner. We recently supplied a 9 month old Audi Q7 ex demonstrator to a customer. The General Manager of the dealership had ordered the car as his own company vehicle. It carried virtually every possible option. The new retail price went from about £52500 to £69000 as a result. Our client got it with 5000 miles recorded for under £45000, I know who was the winner there!

PS – It seems as ever few BMW drivers pay for the indicator option?

Focus RS Sold Out

Last month I reported that the initial allocation of the new Focus RS had already sold out. In fact, as I discovered when I was asked to supply one a couple of weeks ago, it’s actually sold out for 12 months. I can’t remember when that last happened to a Ford, perhaps would you believe Cortinas in the early 1980s.

Top Gear magazine had the first road test of the Focus RS. Their verdict was simple: “The World’s Greatest Hot Hatch”. So the queue lengthens. Over list price is being paid for early delivery.

My customer gets his in May, let’s just say I have few favours left to trade with old friends from Ford days.

Where Will Car Retailing Be In 2020?

A respected industry consultancy recently published an interesting paper on this subject. Some of this I’ve covered before so just a confirmation of trends perhaps. Online will become ever more important. Big City buyers are losing interest in spending time travelling to out of town big showrooms. They want smaller city centre facilities where they can gather all the information they need, then often the option to complete the transaction online. 70% of dealers’ marketing spend will by 2020 be allocated to online. Most telling comment from this study to me was:

“To say the day when car buyers purchase their next vehicle online is still a long way off is to bury your head in the sand. That day is already here.”

Another study said that less than ten years ago the majority of used car buyers visited around 5 dealerships before buying a used car. Now the majority visit only one, having selected their car over the internet before leaving the comfort of their armchair. And the only thing you can say about change in the current world is that it happens ever faster.

Paul Gilligan

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Andy's Armchair

Andy Armstrong takes an irrelevant look at motoring and motorsport

Autosport recently printed an article to mark the tenth anniversary of the demise of the “best loved underdog”, Minardi F1 Team, who by the way, even though they hardly ever had any money were the only team to support the Saggersons when they opened their museum in Cockermouth. The story was, every team of the day were contacted for items to display on an intended F1 exhibit but only the Faenza based paupers put some bits in a box to help out, all the other big teams ignored them.

One thing leads to another and I got to thinking that compared to some other constructors Minardi were actually a big player so I set out to find the ultimate under-dog. The most unsuccessful, pathetic, useless, over-ambitious heap of scrap that ever turned an F1 wheel, forget the word “under”, “dog” is sufficient for the cars described below.

So here they are then my top bottom five F1 cars of all time. The only criteria I've used is that they had to be built after the start of the 3 litre formula of 1966 therefore excluding such fantastic vehicles as the Aston Buterworth, Jessop Special, original ATS and Aston Martin.

Fifth and therefore the best of a bad lot goes to the Connew of 1972. Built in a lock-up in Essex by Peter Connew, an employee of the Surtees team on a fresh air budget. Entered for the British Grand Prix it failed to qualify when the front suspension collapsed. It was then trailered to the Nurburgring only to be turned away when the Germans didn't like the cut of it's gib. Things improved when it made the race in Austria but retired after 22 laps this time the back suspension collapsed. Finally it qualified for an end of season race at Brands Hatch, but this time the electricians went on strike so it stayed in the paddock. Last heard of as a bare tub nestling comfortably in a bed of nettles at the bottom of it's creators back garden.

Fourth, so getting worse we have the Maki of 1974. This Japanese car managed to split in two at the Nurburgring injuring Howden Ganley. Other teams commented that their wheel and tyre trollies were better built. It was shovelled into a bin liner and taken away but 1975 saw it return. It failed to appear for it's first two events then trundled round in Holland, failed to qualify in Britain, Austria and Italy before starting a non-championship event at Dijon where it finished last having been lapped 6 times. 1976 saw a final fling at the Japanese Grand Prix, it went home after qualifying. Amazingly enough the above “shed” is now being prepared for current historic F1 events.

Third we have the Shannon built by Aiden Jones and Paul Emery in 1966. It was a monocoque chassis fitted with a 2.5 litre Coventry Climax V8 engine, which the factory had rejected itself but was still happy to sell to the ambitious pair. Sadly the engine had been designed for aircraft fuel but due to rule changes would have to run on pump petrol. Problems abounded but the car managed to start the British Grand Prix, stopping on lap one. The V8 was never used again.

Second worse we have the Kauhsen. This was a well funded professionally designed and built German attempt readied for use in 1978. Failure to qualify in Spain five seconds off the pace didn't auger too well so Mr. K poured in more money only for another total failure in Belgium. He thought better of it sold the whole project to Arturo Merzario who used the bits and pieces to improve his own F1 specials, they got slower!

And so to the winner, the worst F1 car ever is the Honda RA302 V8. This was an extraordinary air-cooled car ignoring accepted engineering principles and heading off in a totally new direction which included hanging the engine on a chassis running backwards from the roll hoop. The car cost a fortune to build and even though team leader John Surtees said it was hopeless the bosses insisted it compete in the French Grand Prix of 1968. The car started, handled terribly and suffered a mis-fire, a combination of which caused Jo Schlesser to crash, the car exploded, the driver died. The project was shelved.

So there we are my top five bottom five cars in F1. I could have included the Bellasi, Cosworth, Rebaque, Token, Amon, Tecno, Spirit, HRT, the last Lola, even the 2015 McLaren. No doubt many others spring to mind but I'm pretty sure my five would justify their places in most selections.

Ends

AA

What's On

WMC events and other events of interest

March

5th	Sat	WMC	White Heather Historic Rally (Gates)
12th	Sat	Trio	Malcolm Wilson Rally
13th	Sun	WMC	Novice & Juniors Autotest
19th	Sat	H&DMC	Hexham Historic Rally (Gates)

April

3rd	Sun	WMC	Rowrah Test Day (1-4)
10th	Sun	MG Cumb,	Roof of England Challenge
11th	Mon	WMC	Film Show (The Man - Le Mans)
17th	Sun	WMC	Seagull Autotest
24th	Sun	WMC	Drive It Day (Dalemain)

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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WWW.M-SPORT.CO.UK

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