

Wigton Motor Club Ltd

Start Line

Issue: 02/13

www.wigtonmc.co.uk

February 2013

WMC at the NEC!



Club Members Take Part In Autosolo Demo At the Autosport Show



Angela Jones



Willie Jarman

Always in the lead!

Diary

Club events over the next month or so

February Club Night

Wednesday, February 13th

Lamplugh Village Hall

John Keith will give a presentation about classic car events in the USA & New Zealand

March Club Night

Wednesday, March 6th

Blindcrake Village Hall

Graeme Forrester will give a presentation on Wigton Motor Club and Racing MGs

WIGTON MOTOR CLUB LTD

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Talking Point

Topical comment from the world of motoring

It's great news that our Awards Dinner is a sell out again even well before the night. We have done really well in recent year to keeping a really good awards dinner going and with the quality of speakers, all credit to David Agnew for that. I think all the other Cumbrian clubs have long ago dropped a formal awards dinner due to lack of support so we have done very well here and long way it continue.

With changing trends in how to enjoy yourself and all types of home entertainment and social media club nights for all types of organisations have suffered. People just don't go out as much as they did what ever the "entertainment" is. In turn this has meant that pubs are closing right, left and centre and those that survive are doing it by selling food so the possible venues for motor club meeting are getting fewer by the year.

However we do have very successful pub runs during the summer but filling the winter nights is more of a challenge. This winter we have two club nights with interesting presentation using the excellent facilities that village halls have to offer. By also inviting the good folk of the village we are also selling our pastime to a new audience. This month we visit Lamplugh for which I understand will be an interesting talk about classic car events in the USA and New Zealand. In March we are in Blindcrake and we have a presentation on the history of the Club which of course 90 years young this year. That will be followed by a talk on racing MGs.

Also in March Charles is again running one of his winter "pub runs". This time we are visiting Cumbria's only wine producer where a light lunch will be served along with some tasting!

We really do hope that members will support these events and enjoy them.

Talking of March, on Saturday the 23rd we have a test afternoon at Rowrah. This was popular last year and the speed folk got to grips with their cars again while others sued their historic cars or road cars. It's open to all. You do need a helmet but these can be obtained from the kart club on the day if you don't have one. Places are limited to allow everyone plenty of track time so please book up with the form on the website.

The Novice Speed Scholarship is running again to get new blood into speed events. Up to six people with get a free test day, free entry to the final Kames event, tuition and a "buddy" and £100 towards a helmet and race suit. Again application forms will be on the website. The only stipulation is that you have not held a competition licence before.

Let's all work together to make the Club's 90th year a real Year of Getting Involved!

GTF



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

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WIGTON MOTOR CLUB's

Lamplugh Members

invite you to an open Club Night

LAMPLUGH VILLAGE HALL

at 7-45pm on Wednesday 13 February

JOHN KEITH

(a frequent visitor to the US and NZ)

will present a comprehensive, informative and humorous illustrated portrayal of the vehicles and characters he has encountered on his many trips to both countries and from his visits to their respective largest classic vehicle events.

Admission £3-50

Including light refreshments

Licensed bar

To help us organise the refreshments appropriately please let us know you are coming.

Phone: Kendall 01946/861531 - Edwin 01946/861338

Ron 01946/861975 or e mail bobnbet.64@btopenworld.com

Lamplugh Village Hall is on the A5086, 8 miles from Cockermouth, on the right just before the turn off to Kirkland, Ennerdale and Cold Fell. For Sat Navs, the postal code is CA14 4SF, tel 01946/861779.

Speed Test Day

Saturday, March 23rd

Rowrah Kart Circuit

1 to 5 pm

£40 per driver

Entries limited to 20

Booking form on the website.

The logo for Lake District Hotels Limited features the company name in a blue, cursive script font. A green wavy line arches over the text, and the word 'LIMITED' is printed in a smaller, blue, sans-serif font below the main text.

Lake District Hotels
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www.lakedistricthotels.net

PG Tips

Happy new year to one and all! My main new years resolution is to actually sort out both of my vehicles and the first one is to get rid of will be the Alfa 166...too much trouble just to enjoy the lovely interior and hear that marvellous engine after another garage bill has been racked up over the festive period. This time it's a wheel bearing and some handbrake cables. When I bought the car I thought the previous owner had spent all the money that would be needed for a while, but the list of minor, expensive troubles has just kept coming. The engine is still fabulous and the stereo brilliant but I often wish it was more economical and that it would go for more than 3 months without something packing up. I would buy a diesel Audi, or Hyundai but I just can't sell my soul to that devil yet!

Over the festive period it was good to see the Maryport autotest went well with a good entry and a well run event. I think it did so well because there are so few competitive events in the dark winter months, with almost nothing from November through to March (unless you can afford rallying). Hopefully the success of it will spawn some more events of that ilk...and that I might have a suitable working vehicle to partake in them...and be able to get the time off work as well.

James Martin the TV chef seems to have made a bit of a fool of himself in the last few weeks and upset cycling fanatics everywhere after his comments about how much he hates them on the road. He would probably have got away with that because it's hardly a new phenomenon, but he then went on to recount how he snuck up on some in an electric Tesla sports car and scared them into the ditch as he wooshed past very close. What really topped it off is that he seems to have made up the incident. Now I am no cycling fan and the Lycra clad gangs of them that terrorise the country roads of West Cumbria like they own them often annoy me a lot but I can't imagine deliberately trying to run them off the road. Apart from it being an offence to do so, however annoying they are they are all someone's relative and being run off the road can easily turn into a life ending episode. James Martin is a rather good chef, an excellent presenter of the Saturday kitchen program and a proper petrol head as well – I think he just needs to think before he prints in future and aims his wrath at a far more deserving bunch of road abusers such as middle lane hoggers, or horse riders (I jest!).

That leads me on to what he was doing in a Tesla in the first place. Instead of providing tax breaks and the like for the things they should be taxing electric cars off the road. The country is about to run into big electricity supply issues in a few years time due to decommissioning of coal and nuclear power stations and the fact that no one in government thought to replace them with anything that actually worked. Instead we seem to be fiddling while Rome burns and putting up unsightly wind turbines on every inch of spare land in our most beautiful counties. 6 of the things are currently being built a mile from my house on Tallentire hill and the amount of materials, vehicles and infrastructure needed is creating a carbon footprint the size of a small town and once built they will stand motionless on the coldest days due to lack of wind and operate at less than 50% capacity the rest of the time. From on top of the hill I can now see in the region of 50 turbines and there is no let up in the applications with Allerdale currently having in the region of 90 expressions of interest or applications going through. You won't be able to go anywhere without seeing them soon, nor will you be able to charge your Leaf or Tesla on cold days unless someone comes up with a better way to generate electricity soon.

Have I mentioned Snotty yet this month? No - and I don't think I will....I have everything crossed and the ferry prices for the Isle of Man at the ready. I might even start looking at this year's speed championship but don't hold your breath.

Peter

Club & Autotest Championship After Two Rounds

Name	Dec AT	Dec AS
Tom Hall	25	
Willie Jarman		25
Archie Simmonds	24	
Edwin Cook		24
Brian Graham	23	
Adam Clark		23
Stephen Dixon	22	
David Rushton		22
Andrew Graham	21	
Angela Jones		21
Neal Horsfall	20	
John Rushton		20
Dave Agnew	19	
M Graham		19
Stuart Turnbull	18	
Chris Graham		18
Charles Graves	17	
Jack Palmer		17
Robert Iveson	16	
M Barnard		16
Peter Keen		15

Winter Pub Run

March 10th

Our winter pub run will take place on Sunday March 10th starting at 10.30 am from the Greystoke road north of the A66 east of Keswick just past the Troutbeck Inn junction (orange arrow at road junction)

Because this event will involve a wine tasting of fruit wines and a sandwich , cheese , and cake buffet at Highcup Winery we must ask for pre payment by cheque of £10.50 per person by 1st March payable to Charles Graves, Armathwaite Hall, Bassenthwaite, Keswick CA12 4RE

Please note that entries are limited on this event.

Adverts

Selling my race car trailer-bed size 12ft 6ins long,5ft 6ins wide,t win axle, 4 very good tyres (nearly new), built for M G F vvc, solid £1000 o n o phone no 07970 115202

A Day in the Lakes with Classic Car magazine

Back in November I got a call from a staff writer from Classic Car magazine as to whether I could arrange an MG BGT for a photo shoot in the Lakes. This was quite unusual in that most MG B features are on the Roadster. As my car was newly resprayed and looking good I offered my services. Eventually a date was set and fortunately it turned out to be perhaps the best day of the autumn with snowy tops to the fells and cold but sunny day.



The staff writer seemed rather vague about the plan but there seemed to be a “Bluebird” theme in that he wanted to start at the Ruskin Museum in Coniston and finish at the Lakeland Motor Museum. I did point out that the Ruskin Museum was probably closed and did not have a car park. He said, “Can you be there at 8.30?” So that was a 7.00 start from Blindcrake!!

As dawn broke over a deserted A591 the Lakes were looking superb and it was fully light as I got to Coniston to find the staff writer and photographer there in separate cars. They had driven up from Peterborough the previous evening. Of course the museum was closed and there is no car park! So photographer took a photo of the writer and myself looking at a rusty old engine outside the Museum.

What was interesting was that Rory the photographer had planned all the locations using Google Earth which he then linked to Google map on his iPod. Strangely enough it worked about 80% of the time!

The first location was up a little dead end road at the back of Coniston which is used by walkers to head up the Old Man. There is a very small tarn (well pond) there and he positioned the car in front of the pond with the hills on the east of the Coniston Water behind. At this point it all got serious as Rory produced 2 massive lighting units from the back of his car with power packs much to the bemusement of some of the walkers who were just setting off for their day on the hills.

Now Peterborough is in the Fens and is, well, rather flat. Sam the writer was obviously new to things called mountains and hills. He seemed to have an obsession with brakes and going down hills! We then had to go to the next venue and he said, “You can go first down the hill (all 200m of not to steep road) in the case the brakes don’t work.” Now as the car had recently had new callipers and new pads I was a bit bemused. Such faith in British engineering - he was in a staff Golf.

The rest of the day was non stop going round various venues to get good landscape photos which just happened to have an MG BGT in them! Initially we went on the east side of the lake but as I had suggested there were really too many trees to make good photos. So we retraced our steps and used the B road down the west of Coniston Water. These involved action shots where I had drive along the same bit of road several times which involved some dodgy turning round manoeuvres to avoid going miles away. We did this four or five times at different place and on one Sam drove the car as he was supposed to be doing the “journey” , in fact in all he only drove it about 5 miles - half a mile each way up a stretch of road about ten times while Rory took lots of shots. Meanwhile I was standing around getting cold.



**Brockbanks
Solicitors**

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

We then headed (with the help of Google Earth again) to a wide section of road near Torver where we had to do the “driving” shots. This involved me driving along the road with the Golf, alongside, in front or behind on the “wrong” side of the road with Rory hanging out the back snapping away. We did this five times and fortunately there was no other traffic around!



We then stopped in a car park to have camera put on the car with suction pads to do close ups of the driver. This involved more driving around the camera taking photos every couple of seconds. Then it was inside shots of the cockpit involving the big lights and umbrella reflectors again.

By this time it was around 3 pm and we had not stopped for any form of refreshment - the guys seemed to just want to press on. We then headed to the Lakeland Motor Museum, supposedly the final destination. However it is not exactly an inspiring building and there were no exhibits visible. So after a discussion with the manager it was decided to head to Lakeside which is owned by the same people who own the Museum. So we got there just as dusk was appearing and we took some nice shots with the car on the pier and the sun setting at the top end of Windermere.

By this time I was feeling quite hungry and suffering from caffeine deprivation! The guys wanted to head back to the Museum to talk to the owner (I assume there was some advertising related to the feature). However I thought I had a ninety minute drive home and I got home just before 6.

What was interesting was that Matt showed little interest in the car. I had already given him its story and when I asked if he wanted more info on MG Bs he said they just looked it up from past articles. I have been promised some of the photos but as yet they have not arrived. The feature is in the current February issue of Classic Cars.

I was amused a couple of days later when I got a phone call saying they had forgotten to take an engine bay photo, could I do one and email it down. So with the many hundreds of photos they had to pick from they had to use one I took on a camera worth a small fraction of the equipment Rory had!

Would I do it again? Well it was a long day and the car did 250 miles. If I did, it would be on my terms. I would find the venues (in the north Lakes where I know all the roads), I would want petrol money and to be fed and watered!

GTF

Galloway Gallop' **26th/27th/28th April 2013**

Entries are now open for the sixth running of ‘The Gallop’ a touring assembly for Classic and interesting cars of all ages. This year’s route will take us back to Galloway which is a vast area of beautiful, quiet countryside and will run over three days, 26th, 27th and 28th April 2013. The start will be from Houghton Hall, Carlisle, around mid day on Friday and finish in the Border area on Sunday afternoon. The three days will consist of up to 140 miles of interesting roads each day with breaks for refreshments, lunch and visits to locations of interest.

We already have around 20 entries and would suggest an early entry will secure a place in the start list and a room at the North West Castle Hotel.

Further details on the club website or from the organisers on 01228 575153 or e-mail ron-palmer777@hotmail.com

WMC Events 2013

Month	Date	Event	Venue	Contact
February	2nd	Awards Dinner	Keswick	David Agnew 01946 841455
March	6th	Club Night at Blindcrake		
	10th	Winter Pub Run		
	23rd	Speed test Day	Rowrah	Graeme Forrester 01900825642
April	21st	Drive It Day	Keswick	Graeme Forrester 01900 825642
	26-28	Galloway Gallop	Stranraer	Ron Palmer 01228 575153
May	1st	Pub Run		
	8th	Grass Autotest	Blackbeck	David Agnew 01946 841455
	19th	Autosolo	Penrith	Jim O'Neill
June	5th	Pub Run		
	12th	Grass Autotest	Blackbeck	David Agnew 01946 841455
July	3rd	Pub Run		
	7th	Lake District Classic Rally	Penrith	Ron Palmer 01228 575153
	28th	Grass Autotest	Branthwaite	Angela Jones
Aug	7th	Pub Run		
	TBA	Grass Autotest	Trotters	
	17th	Rose & Thistle Challenge	Borders	Ron Palmer 01228 575153
	18th	Cumbria Classic Show	Dalemain	John Graham 01228 534483
September	14th	Autosolo	Kirkbride	
October	6th	Sprint	Kames	Graeme Forrester 01900 825642
	19th	Allerdale Amble	Cockermouth	David Wiggins 016973 49488
	20th	Solway Historic Rally	Cockermouth	David Wiggins 016973 49488
November	17th	Autosolo	Maryport	
December	29th	Autotest/PCA	Maryport	

Please note this is a provisional list and things may change. Up to date news will be in Start Line!

Classic Column

News from the Classic Scene



This year's Cumbria Classic Show will have Toyota, Aston Martin and Morris as the featured Marques as they are all 100 years old this year. We also hope to have a special display of Hillman Imps who celebrate 50 years this year.

Entry forms will go out in April.

We would love to hear from anyone who would like to lend a hand in running the show, "many hands make light work!" Ring Graeme on 01900 825642 if you can.



The Masters Donington Historic Festival takes place over the May Bank Holiday weekend. I have a discount code if anyone wishes to go.

There will be no Classic Speed Fair at Knockhill this year due to lack of support.

MG Live is a week earlier this year due to the British GP moving so it's on June 15th/6th.



The Speed Championship includes classes for classic cars so why not have ago? If you are a novice the Novice Scholarship is the way to go!

Entry forms for the Saltire Historic Rally up in Perthshire are now available if you fancy a good event in the Highlands!



The Devils Own Rally is running in March this year so don't miss it!

Do you have an interesting tale to tell? Following the success of the January supplement we can repeat the idea given interesting material. So get typing!

British Historic Rally Championship

The 2013 Mintex MSA British Historic Rally Championship is shaping up to be as successful and challenging as ever in the coming season, with the first competitor registrations rolling in just two days after the Championship regulations were published, reports Ian Harden.

The eight-round series officially launched at the Historic Rally Car Register's Open Day on Saturday 12 January, and the BHRC stand at the Heritage Motor Centre attracted a high volume of visitors throughout the day, with many potential competitors taking away registration forms. In keeping with the day's theme, celebrating 50 years of the Hillman Imp, the first crew to register was Nigel and Henry Webster in their Category One (pre-1968) Imp!

Reflecting the enduring popularity and status of the BHRC, a complete hall was devoted to the Championship, with the main BHRC stand flanked by further stands representing each of the counting rounds. Organisers of the individual rallies happily answered the many questions fired at them, while series scrutineers Paul Loveridge and Neil Procter were on hand to give advice on preparing cars for competition so that they comply with the MSA Historic Regulations. Julian Reynolds's 2012 championship-winning Ford Escort Mk1 formed the centrepiece of the display, attracting huge interest.

"The new look, more compact format clearly appeals to a lot of competitors," says BHRC Chairman David Lucas. "We fully intend to repay the trust they put in us by delivering a top quality, value-for-money series that will offer close competition in a good spirit of sportsmanship."

The 2013 Mintex MSA British Historic Rally Championship is run by the Historic Rally Car Register. For full details and to register go to hrcr.co.uk.

Race Retro

Feb 22 to 24th

If you are into historic motorsport then this is the best show.

We have a discount code. Contact Graeme to obtain it.

MG Cumbria

Roof of England Challenge

Sunday, March 24th

**Starts at the Crooklands Hotel, near Kendal
Finishes near Penrith**

Open to MGs and other fine cars of all ages
Currently only 20 places left!

Entry forms on the website or ring Graeme on 01900 825642

Marshals' Post

We need marshal for the **Fellside Northern Classic Trial** on Saturday February 16th at Sandale.

Meet at the bottom of the hill at 14.15 please.

If you can help please contact Graeme Forrester on 01900 825642 or gtfmg@yahoo.co.uk

Or David Agnew on 01946 7841455.

Boots and warm clothing are needed!

You will have a lot of fun and see some weird and wonderful vehicles!



Novice Speed Scholarship

Every year we run the scholarship to encourage more people to get involved in speed events (sprints & hill climbs). These are the only type of event where you can drive a standard car flat out against the clock. Indeed speed events are open to any sort of car right up to near f1 single seaters.

Six lucky drivers will get £100 towards their race suit or helmet, a free pre season test day, a speed buddy during the season and free entry to the Kames sprint in October. So why not have a go? Road cars, classic cars, kit cars or a single seater it is open to anyone who has not previously held an MSA Competition Licence.

Application forms are on the website at: www.wigtonmc.co.uk and have to be in by the end of February.



Getting Involved

Almost all motor sport events need volunteer marshals to make sure they are run safely and effectively. Marshalling is a rewarding way of getting more closely involved with motor sport and joining a community of like-minded enthusiasts; general duties range from displaying flag signals to drivers and clearing debris to helping extract drivers and cars that have crashed or broken down.

A Scrutineer's job is to check that competing vehicles comply with the relevant technical regulations, which help to ensure safety and fair play. While experience in engineering or a similar technical field is usually an advantage, it is not essential. The process for obtaining a Trainee Scrutineer licence is free and simple; complete the MSA's [New Officials Registration form](#) and return it by post to the MSA Licensing Department. You will need to tick the relevant box or boxes depending on whether you want to be a Car, Kart or Environmental Trainee Scrutineer and you can apply to be all three if you wish. You'll then be sent a Trainee Licence and an introductory pack, with a Training Module and DVD.

MSA-licensed Rescue personnel provide immediate medical and extrication facilities at the scene of an incident. They move around venues aboard MSA licensed Rescue Units, which are kitted out with the latest medical and extrication equipment. Meanwhile Recovery personnel retrieve stricken rally cars, operating from MSA-licensed Recovery Units fitted with vehicle recovery equipment. To obtain a Trainee licence you will first need to gain the support of a current MSA-licensed unit and then complete the MSA's [New Officials Registration form](#), which must be returned to the MSA Licensing Department with a supporting letter from the unit operator. You will then be sent your Trainee Licence and the relevant Training Module.

Timekeeping is an essential element of most motor sport events, with the timekeeper's role being to record competitors' times and positions in order to determine the event results. The tools used range from simple hand-held stopwatches to complex electronic timing systems that can accurately measure to the nearest thousandth of a second. To acquire a Trainee Timekeeper licence you simply need to complete the MSA's [New Officials Registration form](#) and return it by post to the MSA Licensing Department, having ticked the Timekeeper Trainee box. You will then be sent a Trainee Licence and an introductory pack with the Training Module.

Minimum Requirements In general terms, there are none. Volunteers are welcome at any age, although the duties of young people may be limited in certain situations. Those aged between their 11th and 16th birthdays qualify as cadet marshals and though are unable to perform trackside duties can get involved in a host of other interesting roles. Motor Sport offers 'equal opportunities' at all levels, although there are a few legal exemptions, including certain competitor disabilities and minimum ages for both competing and officiating. If you already have special skills – technical, mechanical, rescue, vehicle recovery, medical, first aid or administration; you may wish to use them as a volunteer in motor sport

There are also lots of roles in the administration of events and the club itself. Every event needs an entries secretary for example or if you enjoy working a computer we have computer results at all our event.

So, Get Involved - speak to any club official

The Roger Albert Clark Rally 2012

We had only done 2 rallies since the 2011 R.A.C – Melbourne Airfield SV in May & Greystoke Forest SV rally in July.

The car was thoroughly checked over for Greystoke – we were away most of September & the beginning of October but no problem as there was not a lot to do prior to the R.A.C – or so I thought !

Mid October I made a start - Investigation of a crack in some filler revealed 2 cracks in the body which necessitated a front wing off to sort properly + repairing another crack which I knew about which by the time I had repainted took over a week.

Then in an attempt to go faster I had the bright idea of lightening the car & myself – plastic windows, fibreglass boot & bonnet, drilling holes in various brackets, alloy battery carrier & lightweight sealed battery – oh & me eating the same but less of it. Good result – the car lost 30kg but it worked out at £22 per Kg & I lost 10lbs in 10 weeks at no cost – reminds me of the old joke about the guy who started rallying & said he had made a small fortune from rallying – he started with a large fortune !!.

So another week or so passed & the rally was approaching.

It has been a concern to me that the engine sump was not baffled & whilst I was sure it would be OK I wanted to check the clutch so after much pondering the decision was made to remove the engine – 2 weeks before the rally. Clutch OK, sump removed revealed a small sliver of metal stuck on the pump pick up pipe filter & a bigger piece wedged in the drain plug boss – oh b***er . All seemed to be OK but then I found a bigger half moon piece which had to be from the timing chain – yes a broken roller was found. A careful check of the cam, followers etc showed no damage, so new chain fitted, sump baffled (thank God I decided to do it) & engine back in.

So after all this the car was not driven on the road until a few days before the start & when it was the oil pressure had dropped a bit – oh bu**er. I changed the pump & all was restored.

Geoff Jones Motorsport was looking after Main Service, Dave Marsden & Mick Garstang agreed to do chase/management again, this time in a Pye Motors Ford Ranger. After they did such an excellent job last year we would have been very disappointed had they declined & York mates Pete & Malc & Pete's wife using our Frontera carried the heavy spares & supported Dave & Mick & made up the team.

As last year we just had one meeting with Dave & Mick about 1 week before the start(which with Mick & Ruth playing mine host was really an enjoyable night out for Linda & I) once we had the Road/Service / Map books & delivered the spares/wheels etc. to pack into the Ranger. This enabled Mick to spend a couple of days to go through the route & plan times/ meeting points etc. & with his rally experience & careful planning we had 100% confidence in him as a navigator & likewise with Dave as the driver which is very reassuring to Linda & myself.

So the day arrived – Pickering Showground was the start venue – very wet & muddy & we spent 2 hours queuing to go into Scrutineering which was inside the Showhall. – All OK, signing on was equally slow with foreign entries in front of us not understanding & paying for their entry in cash !!. By the time we got through the start was about 1.5 hours away.

As last year cars up to 1300cc ran with the pre1967 Historic entries. First away was Bob Bean in his familiar Lotus Cortina surprisingly followed by John Sutton (another York entrant) in a 1300 Micra & we were third away. Start time was 17.30

A 13 mile run out to 2 stages 9 & 4 miles in Dalby forest to do twice with in forest service in-between the 2 runs . D & M positioned themselves between the 2 stages & saw us into the first.

We know the first stage quite well (includes the Woodyard twice) so it was a good stage for us to start with & it went OK. We were told all the roads in Dalby had been regraded so I thought the bad bump at the bottom of White Cliff Rigg would have been sorted – No – not a big problem at our speed but Steve Bannister pushed the front of his car back when he hit it.

On the 2nd Stage we had a half spin otherwise OK & into service for a long 1 hour – car OK then of for the second run.

We caught John in the Micra going into the second Chicane 2 miles before the end. I thought he would let us past on the exit but No – it appears he had not seen us behind – so we had to follow him 1.5 miles up the Rigg & despite my best efforts he chose not to let us past at any of the three 90's at the top of the Rigg . On the final straight to the finish although we had a bit more power than the Micra (yes there were

cars with less power than us) we could not pass but were so close at the Flying Finish we got the same second albeit 1 minute quicker !

The second stage had cut up a bit, we managed not to spin this time but were 1 second slower.

It was really noticeable that there were many Spectators in the forest which was a boost to the event.

So Friday night was very enjoyable with no problems – 2 top crews – Julian Reynolds & Matt Edwards were already out – both with engine problems. Tight time allowance – why? back to the Showground where we could leave the car secure inside the Hall & then back home – about 40 mins arriving home about 22.30 by which time it was freezing. D & M were staying with us & Linda had left a large stew in the slow cooker which smelt great as we opened the door & then Dave rolled in with a wine box which was much lighter when we went to bed about midnight all happy.

Restart times are received by Text – we started Saturday behind Bob & lying 36th O/A. Steve Bannister was leading Marty McCormick by 30 secs – much less than we expected with Banners knowledge of Dalby but he had had a puncture.

Up at 5.30 & off back to Pickering at 6.30 with our start time 8.15 & it was quite Frosty

Saturday's action started with 6 miles in Gale Rigg followed by Duncombe Park 2.5 miles which you did twice, back to Pickering service then the 3 stages repeated.

Gale Rigg had not been touched since the Malton Rally 3 weeks earlier & was a bit rough in places.

We compare our times with Bob Bean & the C2 1600cc cars & although we thought we went OK they were quite a bit quicker.

Duncombe Park was very slippery with leaves so we drove it with caution on the first run & a bit quicker the second. Pete & Malc met us at the end – we had planned to meet them in the Park just before the stage start so they could see some action but with a mile long queue of spectator cars trying to get in they would have no chance to get out again so they wisely changed the plan Again it was great to see so many spectators – just like the old RAC days & at £10 per car someone made some money.

Met D & M on the way to service – refuelled, then had to push to get back to service on time. Generally road timing was a bit tight – partly due to fuelling between stages where possible to run the car lighter but most competitors do this.

Second run of Gale Rigg was much better as was the third run at Duncombe Park but in an attempt to better it we half spun on the fourth run.

Two 5 mile stages at Croft race circuit next, run in daylight but it was quite foggy – pity because there were again a lot of spectators. We used Tarmac tyres this time which I had bought for Melbourne. To say that I am not a lover of tarmac we enjoyed the stages, our times were respectable but I was surprised how slippery the circuit was.

Hamsterley 6 miles & two runs of Pundershaw 6 miles completed the days Stages. We enjoyed them with no dramas & arrived in the rain in Carlisle on time about 19.30hrs.

The car had run perfectly & we were not expecting any service issues but on checking the rear brakes found the oil seal on one half shaft bearing leaking badly. We removed the shaft to find the bearing US so changed the shaft. The other side was only weeping oil but we removed the shaft to find that bearing was also US – These bearings were fitted new for Greystoke – wonder where they were made – not in England I'll bet. I had another shaft but it needed a mod before being suitable for my set up so we changed the bearing which took quite a while – fortunately we had a Gazebo for shelter. By the time we had done this it was about 22.00hrs but we were at our warm homely B & B by 22.30hrs & after a drink into bed by 23.30hrs.

Sunday was the big day – 85 Stage miles in a total route of just over 200 miles & we were ready for it. We followed Bob out again who was lying 28th O/A, we were 34th. Steve Bannister was still leading Marty almost unchanged at 28 sec.

A wet 23 mile run out to the first stage Glen Dhu 7.5 miles. We enjoyed it – went well we thought but were a bit disappointed with our time & then a 0.25 mile link & straight into 9 miles of Newcastleton – very wet in places – some huge puddles that almost stopped the car when you hit them & some areas had been resurfaced by just adding a layer of loose stone on top of the existing road which resulted in a very marbly surface with many flying stones battering the car but we had a good run – even beat

ing Bob & all the C2 lads

Running at the front we usually get the best of the roads but sometimes as above it is a disadvantage. – in the afternoon run the puddles had almost gone & there was a clear track on the original road through the loose stones & on the corners.

Met D & M at the end then straight into Florida 3+ miles & again some areas had been resurfaced with loose stone. About 2 miles in was one such area – slight downhill to a clearly visible i.e. no trees 90L – should have been no problem but I cocked up – turned in a bit late & just slid on the stones & found the deepest widest ditch in Keilder with a bog in the bottom as I found out when getting out of the car & sinking up to my ankles in water. As Mick has said in his report “ Stupid Boy” & how right he was. Despite the efforts of marshals & spectators the car would not budge & no amount of discussion over the nearby radio point with the Stage Commander would persuade him to recover us in the 10 min gap before Banner & Co came through.

Pete & Malc in the Frontera waiting with M & D at the stage end upon hearing about our off set off to walk & find us in the hope that their muscle could get us going – they were very disappointed to arrive & discover that more than man power was needed but top marks to them.

As the time passed Mick was busy plotting our rejoin point after hearing that we & the car were OK & that we were itching to get back into the event.

Eventually & over 2 hours later we were recovered onto the track & set off to the stage end. Quick check by Dave gave the thumbs up, fuel added, Linda & Mick discussed rejoin/timing & then a very quick drive to rejoin at the service exit reaching it just as Bob was booking out so we just slotted in 1 minute behind him. I had messed up our fine run (we were lying 28th when we went off) but hey ho there was still 45 miles of stages to enjoy – we had cut 2 to get back on time.

Craik 2 was the first – 9 miles which we enjoyed & back on our usual pace. Met D & M at the end, refuelled & changed rear wheels that we had planned to do at service along with fitting the lights – our first change since starting on Friday. This unplanned change made the 23 mile road section look a bit tight so we set off on a mission – quickly but safely – headlights on – as cars pulled over to let us past on the mainly single width road I reached across & pipped the horn as thanks – accidentally & not knowingly I knocked on the hazard flashers – I realised later why cars were pulling up so quickly & getting out of our way – we had headlights & hazards on for about 10 miles !!

13 miles of Wauchope next – the reverse of the earlier stage that we had missed. I decided to have a push on this one, we were nearly in a ditch Linda's side – she was looking down into it on a RH bend & advised me one ditch was enough so I just eased a bit after that but a good time for us.

Mick had worked out that there was just enough time to fit the lights before the 3+ miles of Florida in reverse which went well – we flashed the marshals as we passed where we went off earlier & they gave us a big wave & then the final long 17+ miles of Kershope. We thought we might get through in the fading light but the course opening car had gone off & had to be recovered so this delay saw darkness fall. Linda enjoyed the stage, it went OK but I was glad to get to the end.

Met our chase crews at the end , drop of fuel for the 15 miles to the finish in Brampton.

Dave & Mick returned with us to the Carlisle service area & then set off for home the rest of us had a simple meal at the service area where the prize presentation was to be held & caught up with a few friends etc. We stayed the Sunday night , loaded up in the rain on Monday & with the Escort fully loaded with wheels & spares on the trailer, the Frontera loaded likewise & with the 5 of us aboard we had a happy journey home with an enjoyable snack lunch on the way.

We had thoroughly enjoyed the rally, it was well organised, had a friendly atmosphere from the organisers down, the car ran perfect (rear bearings apart) & we had tremendous back up from our team of 5 helpers without whom we could not have done the event. Linda did an excellent job of keeping us on time & excelled at reading the stage maps – not an easy thing to do & wants to do it next year (providing I get the car ready well before) so I suppose I will have to force myself to do it but hopefully we will be in 1600 C2 class which means we will be running at the back of the field not the front which we like – hopefully our team of helpers think the same .

The icing on the cake & much to our surprise was that despite our “off” we still won our class & finished 32nd O/A.

Marty McCormick just beat Banner on the last stage to win by 17 secs (after 165 miles !!) – these 2 were in a class of their own – absolutely committed & brilliant when they passed us whilst we were spectators.

CheeRStu + Linda

From the Service Crew’s Viewpoint!

For the third year in a row, Wigton members Stuart and Linda Cariss entered their Escort 1300 Sport Mk1 in the RAC and for the 2nd year they invited Dave Marsden and I to act as their Management Car/Fast Service Crew. With the 2012 Historic Challenge completed, we were looking forward to the repeat invitation.

Following various emails and phone calls, we had a get together the weekend before the event to finalise arrangements and give me access to the Road Book, Maps and Stage details. Documentation on the RAC is excellent.

This year’s start venue was on the Pickering Showground which had a number of advantages including a large modern building for scrutineering, documentation and snacks and large service/parking areas on mainly hard standing. After what seemed like weeks of rain Friday dawned dry and the forecast was for dry weather until at least late Saturday night. We loaded up a Ford Ranger with all our tools, spares, waterproofs and with all the recent rain and prospects of some gooey terrain, we were glad to have the Ranger’s 4WD capability.

Pickering showground was the proverbial hive of activity and we arrived shortly after Stuart and Linda who were in the queue for scrutineering. After a brief catch-up with them there was plenty of time for a leisurely wander around scrutineering. The RAC had attracted a good entry this year and the continentals were back in force – about 18 crews from Holland, France, Belgium etc. There was a surfeit of beautifully prepared Mk1&2 Escorts, a few Talbot Sunbeams, the Stratos, a bobtailed Citroen DS11 (amazing), a well rallied Healey 3000, a big Fiat Abarth Coupe, a Datsun 240Z, Lotus Cortina, numerous fit 911sand so it went on. Robert Harris was on scrutineering duty and enjoying the amazing range of cars lined up for his inspection.

First car away for the 4 evening stages (two runs at Dalby and two runs at Newclose Rigg) was at 18.01 so at about 4.30, after a brief chat with Marcus Noble’s support crew, we headed off to pick up fish and chips and find our first service point on Dalby 1. We had good access to the rally route and the organisers had arranged a substantial management service point between the two pairs of stages within the forest complex (huge saving on road mileage and a continuing feature of this year’s event which minimised road mileage and maximised competitive stage miles to everyone’s’ delight).

Stuart was running 2 on the road behind the well prepared Lotus Cortina of Bob Bean and continued to hold that formation throughout the event. It had advantages for us in that we had the pick of the pitches at the management service points and quickly built up a rapport with the crews running close to us (useful if things start going pear shaped). Generally, the first stages were relatively smooth and provided a good shake down for cars and crews. Stuart and Linda were quickly into their groove and we had little to do on Friday other than regular checks that car and crew were in good shape. The early evening was dry and frosty and as the evening went on the stage surfaces became more slippery as a hard frost began to bite (thank goodness for thermals and furry hats!).

Stuart had organised a separate crew for main service and had a spare road crew providing for our catering needs, emergency back and transportation of his trailer as the event moved north. Also this year Stuart had chosen to measure his fuel carefully into the rally car’s tank so that it had just enough at all times – something we got the hang of but we could quickly tell how hard he was pushing on some stages by the amount of fuel that got consumed over and above what had been calculated!

Saturday morning arrived all too soon and with it both a heavy frost and thick fog. We regrouped at Pickering service and after a few checks and food collection from the ever efficient Jean, Dave and I pushed off to Gale Rigg forest (to be used twice) for our first rendezvous point. As we climbed out of

Pickering towards the forest we also climbed out of the fog but lower down it didn't go away and Duncombe Park (where the crews had four runs at the stage interspersed by Gale Rigg) was wreathed in fog for most of the morning. It soon became evident that spectators were out in abundance on the stages and the crews were both surprised and delighted with the amount of support they were getting. As the morning went on we started to get some great feedback from spectators and other crews about "that couple in the 1300 Escort" who were reportedly "going really well". Good news indeed and a real spur to make sure we kept them in top fettle for the rest of the event. By lunchtime we were on our way to Croft via a quick check and comfort break for the crew at Sutton Bank. From there to Croft the fog closed in again and traffic through the Northallerton area was very congested. Road timing wasn't over generous at any point so the Saturday afternoon shopping traffic was just an added test of our crew's composure.

The rally car had two runs at the Croft stage. Tarmac tyres were fitted and while we had time we mounted the spotlights for the evening and night stages. A few KLMC spectators were among the many spectators including Tot and Maureen Dixon but we had little time to chat and after a quick coffee we headed off for Hamsterley. The fog was thick at Croft so I'm not sure how much the many spectators could see but the cars sounded great! Stuart had continued to put in competitive times and was already building a big lead in his class and embarrassing a number of more powerful cars by setting a few top 20 stage times.

We'd barely got set up at the stage finish at Hamsterley (now fog free) when Bob Bean came hammering through in the Lotus followed quickly by Stuart – with Bob running car 1, the sound of his twin came gave us some warning of their impending arrival. A few checks, fuel top up etc and then Stuart and Linda were away. We loaded up and were quickly up the road behind them for the long section to the two Pundershaw stages north of Hexham. We made it in good time and Stuart completed two competitive runs through the stages before we all headed for the overnight halt at Carlisle auction mart (a great service venue).

The Pundershaw stages were entertaining because we could hear the cars throughout much of the stage and some were really pressing on – sounding just like the RACs of the 70s with Works Escorts howling through Grizedale. The Healey emerged after its second run with some form of transmission malady and while being towed down towards Gilsland the whole transmission seized causing the back wheels to lock up. Sadly, with one full day still to go they were out of the rally – apparently, a rock had smashed the overdrive switch out of the gearbox casting and all the oil drained away until eventually the box seized up.

Carlisle service saw Dave and Stuart removing both half shafts to change the rear wheel bearings. The weather turned wet so we were glad of the awning provided by the main service crew. Other than the bearings the Escort was still in excellent condition so we went through our systematic checks and top ups without too many problems. Sunday was going to be a major day's rallying with 85 stage miles in some of the south of Scotland's premier forests. The morning was wet but our spirits were high and Stuart was both leading his class and lying just outside the top 20 – terrific performance for a 1300!

Dave and I were off up the road well before Car 1's due start time and found a convenient parking spot just before the first stage. On arrival Dave was out with the torque wrench checking the wheel nuts on the back axle before Stuart launched into the first of three back to back stages in the Kershope and Newcastleton forests. We had an opportunity to see them briefly after the first two stages and following a further reassuring check with the torque wrench they headed off for Stage 3 Florida. All went well through the stage until about 2 miles from the finish when Stuart ran wide on a left hander and the car slid into a deep ditch. Gradually word got to us that the car was well off and that the crew were out and OK. Inevitably there was a sense of concern and disappointment but as time went by we became really worried that the car might not be extracted in time to cut and get back amongst the competition. Running car 2 meant that we had a long wait. Eventually (about two hours later), the course closing car emerged and said that the car would be winched out when the stage commander and his team came through and.....that the car was virtually undamaged and crew raring to get back into the event. Hooray!

After another delay Stuart and Linda emerged driving down the Stage. I'd spent some time studying the road book while they were trapped in the stage trying to find the most efficient cuts to get them back into the event without too many maximums. A quick heads together with Linda (while Dave checked out the car and topped up the fuel) confirmed that we could cut the next two stages and because of the Service Halt at Hawick we could probably rejoin behind Bob Bean without excessive time penalties (in fact, only three stage maximums). Linda was frozen to the bone but at least it had stopped raining so we loaded them up with food and drinks and sent them scurrying off towards Hawick.

They rejoined in time for the second run through Craik where they emerged full of smiles and definitely "on it". A quick change to new rear tyres, fuel and routine checks and they were off to take on another 30+ miles, Wauchope, Florida and the final 17 miles of Kershope (as if we needed a sting in the tail!). Our crew was certainly back in its stride and put up some good times throughout the afternoon. We saw them first after Wauchope where they'd gone well and then again briefly before they launched into the final run at Kershope. They emerged unscathed and grinning. A good top up with fuel set them up for the run down to Brampton for the formal finish (with Bob Milloy and the Mayor, of course) and then to Carlisle for the awards.

Feeling content that the car had made it to the finish and that the crew had enjoyed a great final day, Dave and I wandered happily into Brampton to be greeted by an overjoyed Stuart and Linda who'd just been told that they had won their class despite the off.....Hooray, again!! They'd finished 32nd overall and we calculate that without the three stage maximums that would have equated to about 23rd overall – a fine result in anybody's terms.

You know, there's a lot to be said for a well driven, well prepared uncomplicated car if you want to go out and have some real sport. The crew performed exceptionally well. Linda's organisation and calm in the cockpit is exemplary and she did well on the maps and stages as evidenced by the good times. Stuart's quick, tidy driving style and sympathetic feel for his car are well known and just what's needed on an event like the Roger Albert. However, I'm sure the voice of Captain Mainwaring's ghost could be heard echoing around the cockpit of that Escort as it landed in that deep Scottish ditch, saying "*Stupid Boy!*"

And, next year? Well, Stuart and Linda are already talking about entering the RAC again..... but in a 1600 Escort. Watch this space.

Mike Garstang.

Book Sale for the BHF

From previous magazines and mails members will know that I was having a big clearance of motoring books in aid of the British Heart Foundation. I am pleased to say that I have been able to write them a cheque for £350. Thanks to all those members who bought books. There are still a large number left. Email me if you want to see the list which includes a lot of Profile Publications now.

Graeme.

Donington Historic Festival (May 3/4/5th)

If you would like the discount code for tickets please email Graeme

Inside the Industry

Paul Gilligan keeps us up to date

December Car Sales - BMW Trounce Audi!

December brought a surprisingly high total of over 123,000 new car “sales” to the UK, so the full year figure topped 2 million for the first time since 2008. Retail sales were relatively stronger than fleet, with private buyers tempted to buy small fuel-efficient cars with low road tax and subsidised monthly payments. Many dealers complained that although they were selling cars, they were all the cheapest models with very thin profit margins.

Winners for the year based on increase over last year were:

Land Rover + 29.2 % (Evoque!)

Porsche + 25.3% (What recession?)

Suzuki + 22.7% (Cheap small cars)

Bentley +22.2% (See Porsche above)

Fiat + 19.9% (Cheap small cars)

Skoda + 18.9% (Value for money)

Hyundai + 18.1% (See Skoda)

Mercedes + 12.2% (Getting the prices right)

Nissan +9.9% (Juke + Qashqai well priced)

BMW + 9.3% (See below)

Audi + 8.6% (See below)

The big losers were:

Lotus – 58.4% (see below)

Alfa Romeo – 37.3%

Renault – 40.5%

Subaru – 23.2%

Mazda – 16.1%

The battle between Audi and BMW for top-selling German prestige manufacturer produced an interesting December. BMW came of November 1500 units behind. Last December Audi sold 6300 cars BMW 7500 so the scene was set for a close finish. No such thing. December 2012 Audi did only 4800 cars, BMW an “amazing” 10200 which made them the 3rd best seller behind Vauxhall and Ford with Volkswagen 4th on 9650. BMW outselling VW? Quite where all these BMWs are is still a closely guarded secret but I’m sure truth will out before too long.

To add to BMWs “stock” it has now transpired that all the 3500 cars they registered last summer for the Olympics have not in fact been sold. It was said that they had been offered to Olympic volunteers at very advantageous prices, and to BMW staff similarly, and had all been disposed of in that way. However BMW dealers have just started advertising quantities of these cars. Clearly they were held back into 2013 to avoid spoiling December sales/registrations, but it seems that BMW may be entering the New Year with a four figure number of ex-Olympic cars to sell plus an undefined number of unsold cars registered in December. There MUST be a day of reckoning when they have to clear these problems before moving on to sell new cars “properly”?

Lotus Situation Worsens

I wrote more than once last year about the parlous state of affairs at Lotus, a manufacturer held in great affection by those of us who grew up admiring Elites and Elans, Colin Chapman, Jim Clark and on through the JPS years. Last year Lotus dismissed their very ambitious Chief Executive Danny Bahar who they were paying a salary of £1.2M a year. The lawyers are now arguing with each other on behalf of DB and Lotus. It is alleged that in addition to that salary he claimed rather more than he should as business expenses. Quite why any motor industry executive should claim an expensive luxury watch on expenses is a little difficult to understand, but 10 luxury watches.....? The man only has two wrists as far as I am aware! *(Does he have a pet octopus? Ed)*

In 2011 Lotus sold 329 cars in the UK, in 2012 137. Worldwide sales dropped to 1043 cars and the latest accounts show a thumping loss of £115M, or around £110,000 on every car sold. Given the cars sold for about £50000 each that means they cost in fact £160,000 each to build. That cost includes Mr. Bahar's expenses of course. Bankers will advance no more funds and Lotus is now dependent on funding from their Malaysian parent, which appears to be not by any means secure. Whilst hoping for the best, I fear the worst for Lotus.

BMW Invest One Billion Pounds In Electric Cars

I've discussed electric cars before and indeed drove a Vauxhall Ampera recently which was very impressive until the battery ran out after 30 miles and it was forced to switch to petrol power. Sales of electric cars have generally been very disappointing and only 2237 were registered in the UK last year out of over 2 million new cars in total. Despite strenuous efforts in the US Nissan sold under 10000 Leafs there last year against a target of 25000.

Against this "difficult" sales background BMW have just announced the investment of a nice round Billion Pounds into electric car development and revealed two prototypes, the i3 family saloon and the i8 sports car which offers Porsche 911 performance. Both have electric power and small petrol engines for when the batteries die. Both bristle with expensive technology, light-weight aluminium and carbon fibre construction to save weight being just one example. Interesting that BMW will not say how many they target to sell, or even what the prices will be even though the cars go on sale later this year. What is clear is that BMW will only lose money whatever they charge. Their intent is to be seen as the leading electric car manufacturer, so if the market swings that way they will profit in the future.

Some gamble! Meanwhile Audi & Toyota have abandoned plans to mass produce electric cars as they see no future for them with the technologies currently available. Someone's right, someone's wrong. The ones who've made the wrong call will no doubt be called to account. As a senior Ford friend of mine used to say "When we get it wrong heads roll, but when we really screw up COMMITTEES roll!"

More On Fiat's Plans

Last month I mentioned that Fiat were intending to use Maserati as their premium brand in the future taking Maserati sales from 6500 a year to 50000 a year by 2015. Fiat have admitted that a car with their badge cannot compete with VW Golf, so that task will be given to Alfa Romeo where there will be nine new models by about 2015. One thing I wondered when I read all this is what about Lancia? Now all has been revealed. Apparently the best Lancia enthusiasts can hope for is that the badge will be applied to the more upmarket versions of the Fiat 500 and Panda. A bit like the awful Austin Allegro Vanden Plas then? Stratos and Integrale fans can pass the tissues around now.

Fiat's Chief Executive is now campaigning for the European Commission to support European manufacturers to reduce productive capacity in an "equitable" way. Currently Fiat are firing workers in Poland (relatively low wage) because it is more difficult for them to get rid of more highly paid and less productive Italian workers. It is estimated that European manufacturers will have total losses of between 4 and 5 BILLION Euros for 2012, and the market is not expected to recover until perhaps the end of the decade. Much more pain to come.

Jaguar, Good News & Bad

This week Jaguar announced they were recruiting 800 more employees in the Midlands. However these will very largely be joining the Land Rover part of Jaguar Land Rover where demand for the Evoque and the new Range Rover is very strong. Jaguar themselves are having a quieter time. The new F Type sports car has had rave reviews and long waiting lists have built up ahead of the first deliveries in the spring. Many of the orders have been placed, I understand, by loyal Jaguar customers, and XK sports car owners in particular. The result is that XK orders have virtually stopped and I hear of discounts of over 30% to shift the existing stock. I even heard an unconfirmed report that as F Type production builds up XKs may be built to order only and in very small numbers for the UK. Certainly it is reckoned that very few Jaguar dealers saw a profit last year, so they must be very eager for those F Types to arrive on the scene.

Long term with the development of a smaller Jaguar to take on BMW 3 Series and the like confirmed the future is bright, but new cars take a long time to arrive in the showrooms, so there will be an element of teeth-gritting going on for a while yet.

Manufacturers Open 2013 With a Bang

Historically manufacturers have entered a New Year full of optimism and discounts given in January have tended to be lower than those on offer in December. This year is different. I think most people in the industry are of the view that 2013 will not be any easier than 2012 so they may as well roll their sleeves up from the start. Alfa Romeo, who had a dreadful 2012, have opened the batting by reducing their monthly lease rates by up to 20%. Mercedes, who as I've said are determined to overhaul Audi and BMW within 3 years have laid out some tempting offers especially on the E Class where the face lifted model arrives in May. A £30000 + E Class can be had for under £250 a month, cheaper than a decent Mondeo. Audi are pushing hard as well with offers over the whole range. It's snowing lightly as I type, but it won't all year and a lovely A5 Cabriolet for about £10 a day seems tempting if there's a risk of the sun shining sometime.

WRC Shambles in Monte Carlo

I am very close to GTF's deadline so can only report on the first day of the Monte. Firstly the WRC promoter apologised for the fact that they had not yet been able to conclude a deal for the rally to be screened on ANY UK television channel. They recognised that UK was a "significant" new car market (not completely blind then), and hoed to resolve the situation in time for the Swedish to be shown here next month.

Then the contractor they had appointed to take over the provision of timing equipment failed to perform. Inaccurate times were reported, sometimes none, and nobody knew who was actually leading the rally for some time. The previous contractor had performed without fault for many years. Why the change then?

Those who compete in and support the WRC deserve much better. The ability of the FIA to organise a party in a brewery must be questioned.

Paul Gilligan

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Celebrity Charity Forum

May 14th we are organising a "Motorsport Evening with Stuart Turner" at Stonybeck Inn near Junction 41 of the M6. The evening will also feature twice BTCC Champion John Cleland, WTCC racer Alex MacDowall, WRC driver Matthew Wilson and Historic Rally winner Paul Wignall. Tickets are strictly limited to 250 and we expect to sell out. Proceeds to local and motorsport charities.

For more information and to advance register for tickets please contact

Paul Gilligan pg@gvcontracts.co.uk or Ron Palmer ronpalmer777@hotmail.com



Andy's Armchair

Andy Armstrong takes an irrelevant look at motoring and motorsport

There was a programme on television recently about a group of rich young men from the Middle East, who air freighted their expensive cars, things like Bugattis, Ferraris, Lamborghinis, Porsches etc. every summer to England,, and then played about by driving them round Knightsbridge and Chelsea at all hours of the day and night. From what I could make out the cars were revved up to make maximum noise and then driven flat out in first gear for no more than a couple of hundred yards before having to stop at a set of traffic lights. The whole thing seemed utterly pointless, why on earth they weren't belting round Brands Hatch, Donington or Silverstone on track days or actually competing in some way or another beggars belief. Obviously their wallets were vastly bigger than their imaginations, or maybe their ultra rich fathers keep them on a very tight rein.

The World Rally Championship seems to be looking up somewhat, Ford seem to have survived, although not as a work backed outfit, VW have got sorted and look set to be competitive in the near future while Hyundai have started muttering about a return in the next couple of years. I keep hearing that Mini are still trying to make a re-appearance if they can find some money and the French steam-roller continues whether Mr. Loeb gets involved or not. On paper it all looks quite exciting but the "spanner in the works" still appears to be that the media coverage ranks somewhere below that of the Carlisle under nines 5-a-side football league. Hopefully they'll get something organised because there's no doubt rallying in general needs a shot in the arm if its going to survive.

Talking of rallying, I got to thinking the other day, exactly how long will it be before Escort Cosworths, early Subaru, 6R4's etc.etc. are going to come under the umbrella of Historic rally cars? It's ironic isn't it, that all the originals like Minis and Cortinas seem to have vanished to be replaced by dozens of Escorts and if dates are anything to go by they too will soon shuffle off the scene to be replaced by the cars listed above. When you think about it it doesn't look good for the modern British rally championship when the front running cars driven by up and coming young stars are a whole lot slower and less dramatic that Histories driven by their grandads. It's not exactly the right image for a sport when the supporting cast outshine the stars of tomorrow.

Ends

AA

What's On

WMC events and other events of interest

February

2nd	WMC	Annual Awards Dinner
8/9	NMC	North West Stages
13th	WMC	Club Night at Lamplugh
16th	FAC	Northern Trial
17th		MG Spares Day at Stoneleigh
22-24		Race Retro at Stoneleigh

March

2nd	Trio	Malcolm Wilson Rally
3rd	SRC	Saltire Historic Rally
6th	WMC	Club Night at Blindcrake
10th	WMC	Pub Run & Wine Tasting
17th	KLMC	Devils Own Classic Rally
23rd	WMC	Speed Test Day
24th	MG C	Roof of England Challenge

April

21st	WMC	Drive It Day
26-28th	WMC	Galloway Gallop

Visit the website for all the latest news

Forum Log in: wigtonmc. Password: marshals

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

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