

Wigton Motor Club Ltd

Start Line

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www.wigtonmc.co.uk

February 2014

WMC Honoured at the MSA Night of Champions



JLT MSA Club of the Year

Diary

Club events over the next month or so

Novice Training Autotest

Sunday, March 16th

At

Maryport Business Centre

Autotest Championship round 2

Speed Test Day

At Rowrah

Open to all members

Entry form on the website.

WIGTON MOTOR CLUB LTD

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Talking Point

Topical comment from the world of motoring

At the last Club committee meeting a number of radical ideas were discussed to increase participation, help novices and allow more members to compete. It was agreed to use the prize money from the MSA Club of the Year, interest from capital and the profits from last year's Show to help increase entry numbers. More details will appear next month but these include a Marshal's Championship with really worthwhile prizes for the busiest marshals, reducing entry fees across the board, free entries for newcomers and many other ideas to be confirmed. The novice autotest in March will have a free entry for everyone and there will be full details on that soon.

By co-incidence the day after the committee meeting we got the latest MSA News which said that the MSA has declared 2014 the "Year of the Novice". Great minds think alike! It can only be a good thing!

We have had a special car window sticker in silver saying we are the "MSA Motor Club of the Year" these are free to members and some were given out at the awards dinner. If you want one please contact David Wiggins. There is also a special limited edition WMC polo shirt with the same inscription available via our suppliers StitchnPrint of Wigton. See the website for details.

Helen and I had the great honour of collecting the JLT MSA Club of the Year Award at the Night of Champions at the RAC Club in Pall Mall last week. I will reflect on the ceremony next month but it was superbly organised and executed. It was a pleasure to meet so many different people for many areas of motorsport. I was really impressed with the young drivers who were present, we talked to the winner of the Young Driver of the Year, Sennan Fielding and his parents about his future plans which were remarkably realistic. Various other of the rising stars of racing came along and as with the other youngsters who were award winners I was really impressed by their attitude and when interviewed by Steve Ryder, how articulate they were. A marked contrast to the typical half wit footballer you see on TV! I am sure this is partly due to the drivers coming from a different background but it will also be credit to the work of the MSA Academy who do a lot of work on media interviews and presentations. In one case the 12 year old winner of the British Cadet Kart Championship was the youngest champions but still did well when interviewed by Steve.

For those not renewing their membership this will be your last Start Line but the great news is that renewal levels are at a record level! It's also worth mentioning that if you insure your car with our partners Hagerty you get your club membership paid for the year. I know several members who have found that the rates offered are better than with their previous brokers so why not give Hagerty a ring. You deal with a person there not a computer!

GTF



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Classic Column

News from the Classic Scene

A couple of months ago I received a phone call from a gentleman in Penrith asking me if I would like the rallying memorabilia of a late friend of his, Graham Howe, who rallied in the 1950s. I ended up with a car load of stuff and have been slowly going through it. Mr. Howe rallied from 1952 to 1958 in a variety of cars, starting with an MG TC and finishing with an MG ZA Magnette and also including a couple of Hillman Minx. There are some awards from the local club (Cumberland Sporting Car Club) but he also did some of the major events of the era such as the Daily Express Rally which ran over five days and was organised by the MCC. His navigator was a Penrith butcher called Robinson while Howe himself was a local draper.

There are several albums of photos showing the start of the major events in Hastings, stop overs in Penrith and a great shot of a timed section over Newlands Hawse. Perhaps the biggest surprise was several boxes of mint OS one inch maps of the mid 50's for these round Britain events with the route still marked on.

There is also a map board with a WW2 aeroplane clock attached which still works! There is a hand written note book of average speed tables and a large box of spare bulbs and electrical items.

I would like to find out more about Graham Howe and his rallying exploits but nothing has come up as yet. Did he continue his interest after 1958 within CSCC for example?

In the long term I am unsure what to do with all the stuff. I did agree that if any was sold the proceeds would go to the BHF. The main photos of the MGs will go to the MG Car Club archives but what of the rest? Suggestions please!

GTF

LE JOG: Those members who helped on the Gretna test can collect their badges from me along with a small donation (or I will buy your pint). Email me and I will get the badges sent out.

When space permits we will have a new feature in Start Line, "**My Car**" where we will publish photos of your pride and joy. Send in your photos!

MG Cumbria's **Roof of England Challenge** (March 30th) event has just 8 entries left at the time of writing. It's always a popular event and runs north to south this year.

Entry forms for the **Cumbria Classic Weekend** will be issued in early March. Look out for a surprise announcement for members!



www.lakedistricthotels.net

PG Tips

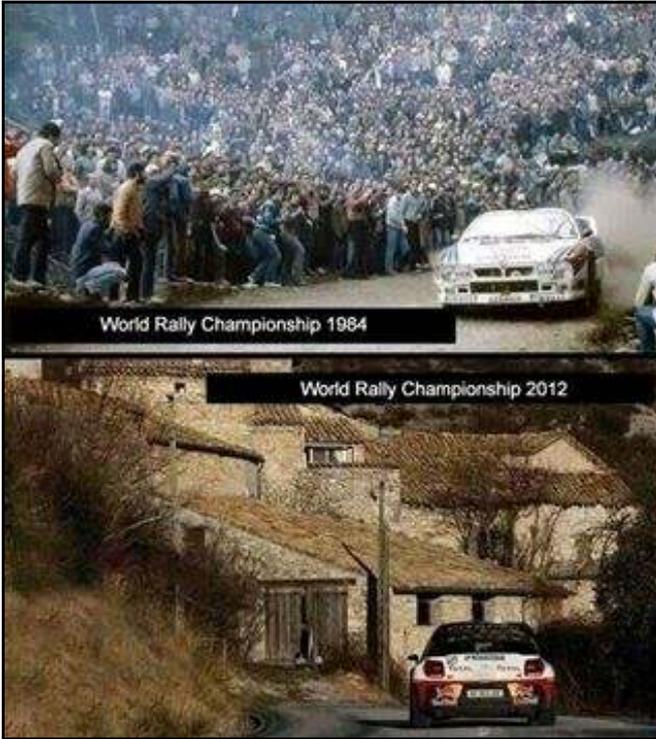
A quiet month this month.....Snotty now has the new gearbox so it hasn't been that quiet because it's very noisy. It has also made the acceleration noticeably more urgent which can be no bad thing!

On the club front the screening of Rush at the Kirkgate was a complete triumph. In case you don't know it's a film about the rivalry between James Hunt and Nicky Lauda mostly during the 1976 season. There was some great footage of the cars in action and some very funny moments as well as quite a poignant story at times. It took me back to my child hood when the legend was still fresh and the playground joke was asking "who are those 2 racing drivers again...James Hunt and Nicky?????" at which point the person you were asking would reply "Lauda" and you would then shout the question at them whilst also laughing. I also distinctly remember Hunt on things like it's a knockout celebrity and numerous other TV shows after his career finished. A proper legend of a man, mostly because he had a laid back attitude and a sense of fun, as well as a reckless abandon.

I would like to ask the executives at Renault how on earth they make any money out of selling Dacias! Like James May I have had a strange interest in this company for some time and if I was in the market for a rugged economical runabout on ridiculously low monthly payments I would probably go and buy one! The cheapest car is under £6000 and even the range topping 4x4 with a good level of equipment is under £15000. You can't get a base model VW Golf for that anymore let alone one with a modern diesel engine and some equipment. So the quality of some of the plastics is a bit low rent and the chassis and set up are a bit 10 years ago - so what when the prices are so low? The diesel engine versions allegedly return over 70mpg and the equipment offered on the range toppers is fairly eye opening (cruise control, sat nav, parking sensors) and for 3 years anyone buying one should have nothing to do but service and drive. I realise wages in Romania aren't going to be exactly high but they still have to pay them something, pay for the metal and plastic to make the cars out of and things like tyres and electrical items that won't be manufactured by Renault or Dacia. I wonder how much it costs to make a bottom of the range Logan £5995RRP and ship it to Britain? Can't be much of a profit margin, which might be why the finance deals are so affordable.....if you barely need a deposit and the monthly payment is in 2 figures then it's going to appeal to a lot of people, particularly in the modern world where a lot of people have no savings or safety net. I realise that Dacia are East European but they are doing what the old East European car firms did back in the 1970s - selling cheap, slightly dated cars at a knock down price. Now I'm sure you realise that I have a soft spot for all things 'Eastern Block' but I am also aware that back then a lot of the



Eastern Block imports were appalling - FSO, Yugo, Moskvich and Dacia all had potentially ok products that were so badly put together it would have made the communists at BL on Merseyside blush! I don't think modern Dacias are like that, they are solid, cheap, if a little dated and agricultural cars, but far more advanced and competitive than their communist namesake back in the day. Perhaps Dacia is the new Skoda and in a few years time they will be producing cars that out perform Renault in the reliability and build quality stakes - in fact they probably just about do already given Renaults record! Now where did I put that Dacia Duster brochure?!!



Not much motorsport going on at this time of year – even rallying seems to have stopped for the depth of winter so it's at times like these I end up looking for things on t'interweb and with such a wealth of stuff out there it's hard not to find something good. My most recent find has been the Group B Facebook site – it's a never ending stream of pictures and videos of the glory days of the 1980s. You don't have to watch more than a couple of videos to remember how damn dangerous and exciting it was but it also makes you wonder where it all went wrong. I've said it before and I will say it again – International level rallying has lost it's way. A WRC car may be faster than a T16 or S4 but the drama and excitement is not in the same league. Sadly rallying doesn't appear to be doing anything to change itself – whereas Formula 1 that still attracts massive audiences continually tries (and often fails!) to make itself more exciting and competitive. This year could be very interesting with the new rules...perhaps it won't be a Vettel led parade after all!

Peter



MSA Night of Champions with Alan McNish

The 4x4 Is Alive And Well....And Living In Chelsea , According To New AA Cars Research

Fifteen million drivers aren't confident driving in compacted snow and ice.* Yet as colder weather kicks in, there are more than twice as many searches on [AA Cars used car website](#) for 4x4s in South West London than in rural Aberdeenshire, Cumbria, Dorset, or Monmouthshire where one might think that a 4 x 4 was more essential to cope with extremes of weather, rough country roads and steep gradients.

Hence the notion of the 'Chelsea Tractor' as the vehicle of choice for Sloane Rangers seems to be still alive, according to this new 'State of the Nation's Cars' research from www.theAACars.com

Whilst most 4x4s never go off road, they can be very useful vehicles to negotiate potholes, tow boats or caravans or accommodate numerous passengers who like a better view. However with restricted parking, narrow streets and no congestion charge exemptions for 4x4s in SW London, it is perhaps surprising that their popularity is still so strong.

The AA Cars used car platform currently offers more than 133,000 [used cars](#), of which, more than 5,000 are 4x4s. All vehicles come with a free 26 point AA car data [history check](#). Today 4x4s come in all shapes and sizes from the more traditional off-roaders to estates, SUVs and even sports cars. David Bruce, director of AA Cars said: "It is surprising that there are more searches for 4x4s in South West London than in most rural counties, from Cumbria to Cornwall. Some of this may be linked to the status of the 4x4, the state of the roads or the fact that a proportion of Londoners like to retreat to the countryside in their 'Chelsea tractors' at weekends.

"It's even been claimed that certain Sloane Rangers used spray-on mud on their vehicles to pretend that they had been off-road.

"As colder weather arrives we find that searches for 4x4s on AA Cars increase. If you want to compare what drivers think of their own vehicles then you can check out more than 12,000 [car reviews](#) conducted by AA members on www.theAACars.com."

My particular dislike of 4x4s is for exactly those described above who come to the country but have not a clue as to how to drive their tanks!

When Giles and Cassandra escape the urban jungle and drive their beasts to the Lakes for a weekend, they arrive in Keswick, don their Barbour jackets, walking boots and grab their walking sticks and pound their streets to buy trinkets and stay in our excellent hotels. Great!

Sadly they are sometimes adventurous enough to drive along our country roads. They have no idea how wide their vehicles are and need at least a metre on each side. They don't want to drive on the verge in case their wheels get dirty and then complete disaster, they might have to reverse into a passing place! Despite all the gismos fitted to the 4x4 they have not a clue and blind panic sets in! Some take the attitude that they are bigger than you and this have right of way but I think most Cumbrians now take the defensive attitude of pulling to the side of the road and watch the pantomime!

GTF

Brockbanks Solicitors Cross Border Speed Championship

Novice Speed Scholarship 2014

Introduction:

Speed events (speed hill climbs and sprints) are some of the most exciting events you can take part and you can use just about any type of car from a standard road car to a F1 type single seater!

In order to introduce more people to speed events Wigton Motor Club is again running its popular Novice Scholarship which has brought many new competitors into the sport in recent years. The scholarship is worth around £300 to each driver.

The Novice Scholarship is open to up to 6 people who have **not** previously held an MSA Competition Licence.

Applications for the scholarship must be submitted by March 15th

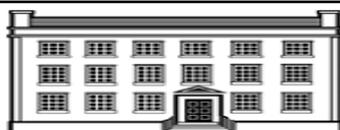
A sub committee will select the six winners. Applicants may be asked to meet informally with the sub committee.

The 6 Scholarship winners will receive part payment towards an MSA approved race suit to a maximum of £100, a **free** test day and tuition, mentoring during the year, **free** entry to the final WMC sprint in the Brockbanks' Solicitors Cross Border Speed Championship, subject to having competed in four other rounds.

The drivers will have to provide their own MSA approved helmet, MSA competition licence and WMC membership and provide a £100 deposit to the Club. This will be returned at the end of the year if the driver complies with the regulations above.

The most promising novice will receive an award at the 2015 Annual Awards Dinner.

Application forms are on the website.



**Brockbanks
Solicitors**

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

Festive Testing

The low winter sun glinted on the waves against the backdrop of the borders hills. A yellow V8 Sunbeam Tiger burred into view driven by Charles Graves, followed by a tidy blue Midget with the top down occupied by John and Marian Sloan, then a gleaming red MGB driven by Steve Douglas. This could have been classic cars gathering for a summer tour.....but no, this was 29th December, ex concrete works, Solway Industrial Estate, Maryport. The festive Autotest was organised by Stephen Palmer, ably assisted by David Wiggins on the clocks and Irving Wilson doing the timing sheets.

There were 23 entrants in total, probably a record turnout for this excellent venue. Although to be fair the Iveson family made up four of those entrants, rumour is that father Brian treated them all to a late Christmas present. We began surveying the parking areas to check out the likely top runners. Steve Dixon in the stripped out Corsa, Andy Graham in his quick Puma, and (not seen by me before), a Suzuki Alto with no roof, windows or any other such unnecessary features. Apparently there was no need for a jack to change a rear tyre, it could be lifted up with one strong arm. Willie Jarman and Angela Jones unloaded the Peugeot 205. Some nameless person suggested sabotage in the form of much lower rear nearside tyre pressure to slow Willie down to other folk's standards. This particular crew sported festive reindeer onesies, although we think Willie shortened his tail and cut out the lining to reduce overall weight.

The plan was for four tests to be run three times each, however with so many entrants and nice long open tests it was evident that this was not going to happen unless we preferred testing by moonlight. So three tests each run two or three times were agreed on with every one counting for the results.

One of the first casualties was Steve Dixon who managed two half tests before the clutch expired. I witnessed some wife – husband goading by the Midget crew after Mrs Sloan completed a nice clean run. WCMC members Ryan and Mitch in the Mk 1 Escort spent most of the event going sideways with very large grins. The rear wheel drive cars struggled with the 360 around a cone and took to the grass, I'll name Chris Hunter in the Imp as the main culprit. This soon turned the smooth concrete into a new Dancing on Ice venue.

A lovely soup and roll lunch was provided by Mrs Palmer in between navigating for son Jack. Nigella Lawson had been due to attend but was otherwise engaged explaining herself to Judge somebody or other. The third test was then run three times and the consensus was that it was the best run of the day. It was clear that things would be close at the top with the super committed Peugeot and Puma drivers. Andy Graham came out deservedly on top followed by Willie, Angela, myself, newish member, Matthew Thompson (Fiesta XR2), David Agnew (First RWD) and Jack Palmer (1st Junior). Congratulations should also go to Megan Iveson who had only passed her test three weeks before and managed a very credible 16th place.

Let's look forward to seeing the same and more entrants for 2014.

Steve F



Elderly Utterances

The Voice of Experience!

Ron Palmer has his say

Fifty years ago.

In 1964 with four years and 45 events under my belt Irving Oglanby, my regular driver at that time, decided a foray into forest international rallies was calling. Irving in common with many rally drivers had graduated through motor cycle scrambles and trials and was keen to try the gravel surfaces in the forests. Although the Scottish Rally had run from 1932 it really grew in status from 1961 and in three years it had become a 'must do' event. Andrew Cowen had already won the 1962 and 1963 events in a Sunbeam Rapier and the big boys were being attracted from then on. In the 750 Motor Club was a local enthusiast called Alf Sewell who competed in lots of local events but thought a team entry in the Scottish would be a good idea.



As we didn't have an international competition licence Alf had sweet talked the secretary at Blythwood Square in Glasgow and the necessary application forms were sent down. All six crew members of Team Cumbria - Mike Telford and Peter Handy, Alf Sewell and Laurie Lancaster and Irving and myself duly completed the forms and Alf took them to Glasgow with the fees and without the usual necessary step graduation towards an International he was able to return to Carlisle with the necessary. To my knowledge the only other notables who were able to buy an international licence in this way were the likes of Graham Hill and Jim Clark for their entries on later RACs.

Our team were all in Minis - Alf in a fairly standard 850, Irving's 998 Cooper and Mike's Cooper 1071 S, but we were still learning how to get a Mini to the finish without some failure or other. Biggest problems were tyres and these could be shredded in a 15 mile stage. Our support crew were Geoff Benson and John Johnston in a Trojan van which was quite roomy but very slow. There was one other local crew, Frank Davis and Ray Heaton in a Cooper S who had a good record on local events were expected to do well.

The Scottish was a highly respected International until 1986 and thereafter was downgraded to a National status in favour of the RAC in Wales. The winners in 1964 were Roger Clark and Jim Porter in a Cortina GT Mk 1 who won again in 1965 and on another four occasions subsequently. That year the event ran from Monday 18th May until Friday 22nd but in later years the first week of June was preferred which was a shame because by then the mosquitoes and midges had emerged from hibernation and were the only downside to a fabulous experience. My records of our finishing positions have hidden themselves but I do remember that clutch slip became a problem on day one and I spent the rest of the week blowing fullers earth down a tube into the bell housing and clutch of the Cooper in an effort to dry up the oil from a leaking crankshaft oil seal. I took part in the Scottish for the next 16 years with different drivers and enjoyed each one. Alas the event is now but a shadow of its former self and with all the giants of the sport having won over that period we shall never see the likes so close to home again.



After having held a competition licence since 1964 my application was returned this year because of my current situation. So I am hopeful that in time and after a full medical I shall continue to enter MSA events. If not I will take part in some of the many competitive events which do not require an MSA licence – daft isn't it?

I have two photographs of our Cooper 998 at a hairpin in Ae Forest. How it used to be – Roof mounted swivel spot lamp, steel wheels, no advertising, only crew names on the wings, no tape at junctions and no crowds. Fortunately the photographers were there.

Ron.



The winning car from the 1964 Scottish Rally.



Hagerty to announce *Unsung Hero* Award at Club Expo 2014

Insurer to honour the classic car industry's quiet achievers during sponsorship
Hagerty, the classic car insurance specialists, will bestow an 'Unsung Hero' award upon one of the classic car industry's most deserving members at Club Expo 2014.

The initiative to honour one of the many quiet achievers in the classic car industry comes as Hagerty announces its inaugural sponsorship of the Club Expo event, held at the Heritage Motor Centre, Gaydon on 1st March 2014.

The 'Unsung Hero' award will be presented at the annual Club Expo event each year and will be awarded to the party(ies) who best demonstrate their outstanding commitments to help their club and community. The winner will be awarded the new trophy as well as a £500 donation to their club.

The winning entry will be judged by an experienced panel including the Chairman of the FBHVC David Whale, representatives from Hagerty, the Heritage Motor Club and is headed by Dave Richards, editor of Britain's biggest selling classic title, Classic Car Weekly.

The annual sponsorship and the award reinforce Hagerty's commitment to the classic car industry and highlight the company's desire to support the hobby at every level of participation. Over the past 12 months Hagerty has committed considerable resources towards supporting classic car and bike clubs through similar sponsorships, pledging funds and offering discounts for their members.

Angus Forsyth, Managing Director of Hagerty International, said: "The clubs and their members are the true lifeblood of the UK's classic car community. We are passionate enthusiasts and long-term club members ourselves and we constantly marvel at the level of commitment shown by the industry's participants.

"The unsung hero award aims to recognise the enormous contributions of all members across the country and honour the work of one of the industry's enthusiasts who until now hasn't received the public recognition they richly deserve.

"It gives everyone at Hagerty an enormous amount of pleasure to be involved with the Club Expo and acknowledge the efforts our industries true unsung heroes."

On the association and the award, Dave Richards said, "clubs are the foundation of the classic car movement, providing a stable base for enthusiasts to share the passion for their favourite cars".

Nominations for the award should be sent to Hagerty at jcesar@hagerty.com by no later than 20 February 2014.



A Cumbrian motorists' hero



In many professions or sports behind all the lead personalities or stars there are key people who are very talented and really skilled in their own sphere. These people often get little or no recognition but without them and the work they have done things could not have evolved in the same way, sometimes this can affect things only locally but often it spawns happenings and this has effects not just locally but much further afield and even globally.

For the past 40 years or so a Cumbrian person who's immense skill and engineering expertise has kept Cumbria's motor bikes and cars, buses and trucks running perfectly with little or no recogni-

tion. This guy has carried out repairs for our transport to work, hauling of goods and people to destinations far and wide, repairs to machinery that just trundles around farms and the locality doing mundane but nevertheless important jobs and not only these I have mentioned but something that interests us all greatly, allowing people to compete successfully in motorsport even at the highest level.

That person is Whitehaven's Tom Lewthwaite and this cheerful, tall, slim guy has performed miracles in his little single storey old fashioned workshop which is tucked away down a bumpy lane behind a pub where thousands of engines have been machined and fettled, crankshafts reground, cylinder heads skimmed, blocks rebored, valve guides and valve seats inserted to name just some of the more mundane jobs that have been done so meticulously over the years.

Often much more complicated machine work has been carried out where only Tom's superb skill has saved an engine or gearbox or other component from becoming a heap of useless scrap but his expertise has often allowed an engine or gearbox etc not only to compete but win important and prestigious events.



Malcolm Wilson was a regular customer when a top driver and winning events and Dick Smith the vintage Fraser Nash racer won the VSCC's premier event after trying for 40 years to win it thanks to Tom's skill after some rather extreme machining work that few people would even have tackled but Tom's skill produced a successful and winning engine and these are only two people that spring immediately to mind in a list of hundreds of successful competitors.

Tom's own passion is vintage and classic motor-bikes and he has a collection of his own with Vincent and other well known makes and Tom has always been a regular visitor to the Isle of Man the

Mecca for motorcycle races, he was always closed on TT week so one dreaded breaking anything prior to the TT.

He has a vintage Austin 7 van which is sign written up with his business details but it spends most of its life on display in motor museums mainly in the Lakeland museums and particularly in the one near Lakeside at Windermere .

This tall cheerful guy started life as a mechanic at County Garage in Whitehaven and after a short spell in London came back to Whitehaven and fortunately for Cumbria and its inhabitants has been doing machining ever since.



Occasionally he would carry out work on buses and trucks, sometimes reboring engines in situ in the vehicle at a firms own garage but generally working in his neat and tidy old fashioned workshop near the centre of the town.

He works mainly on his own but had an apprentice many years ago and in Toms words “the guy turned out to be a superb engineer” but left after 8 years to “explore the world and have adventures” as Tom described it to me.

Strangely enough I met a chap recently called John Taylor from Calderbridge who told me he had built a 45ft long and 22ft wide catamaran that can travel at

over 28knots and can reach the Isle of Man in just over 2 hours and Belfast in only 6 hours from Ravensglass where it is based, that is fast indeed for a sailing craft.

He said designed and built this craft from scratch by himself from start to finish and even made up a steamer to soften and form the wood over the self made bulkheads for the hull in a farmers barn. He laid up and made the carbon fibre mast, fitted out the interior and made the rudder and showed me lots of photos and videos of the construction, it is superb.

John had just returned from Borneo and has been all over the world, travelled all the continents, worked in deserts and African counties, travelled from South America to Canada and going through Peru or somewhere near there gunmen tried to kill him but he just managed to escape.

For the past twenty years he has been the resident engineer at the base camp and research station in Antarctica where he maintains the plant, machinery and equipment in this extremely cold and hostile environment.

He works so many months on and so many months off but he said he loved “having adventures” a phrase that triggered something in my brain so I asked him where he learnt all his skills and his answer was from “Tom Lewthwaite a brilliant engineer and my mentor” in Whitehaven !!!

I just had to write this story after hearing that comment.

Keith Thomas



BYGONES

Anecdotes

Back in the days when rallying in its various forms was the pinnacle of club motorsport I did a lot of navigating on road and stage events. In those days road rallies were real adventures with up to 250 flat out motoring on the twistiest roads the organisers to find plus as many not as map or hidden junctions as he could get in.

As these events progressed (if that is the right word) they got faster as the cars became more developed. Of course that what the “selective” rally to an end in about 1986. Strangely, in retrospect, I did nearly all my rallying as a driver or navigator, in Minis. I think I only ever did one rally in an Escort.

For many years we had various Minis at home which I shared with my father and he drove and I navigated while on other events like autotests and trials we shared the car.

The various bigger events I navigated on in Minis were invariably with three drivers who are all still around today in the Club; Stuart Turnbull, Andy Armstrong and John Willis. Looking back at those time now I wonder how those three seemed to transform into lunatic drivers when seated in an all singing and dancing Mini! Stuart a future captain of industry, Andy a pipe smoking teacher and John mild mannered, Mini tuning expert all seemed to see red inside a Mini.

Stuart obviously learnt a lot about business efficiency when running his various Minis as things were done on the cheap in most cases. I can remember a few “test” runs near to home when we ran out of fuel for instance. Stuart did of course keep to the Mini maxim of if in trouble keep your foot down. In most cases it worked. Once on a 12 car event I called a cross road and straight across but it was more like a 20% left and we went over flat and I saw the ditch and the hedge in front and thought perhaps we were having an early back. However we did go in the ditch at some speed but foot down and some right lock we shot out with Stuart saying “What’s next?”

In 1981 I decided to re-shell my 1275GT which was H registered. With input from John Willis this was the business and I used it for all types of events, autotests, trials and rallies. I was usually in the top three on the Cumbria Field Championship which was made up of autotests and PCTs. I actually paid extra duty to have it registered as a W rather than the H. Of course had I kept the H reg then by the later 80s it would have been a good historic rally car but historic rallying had not been thought of by then.

Wanting to do something different I sold the Mini to Andy Armstrong and bought the first of my MG Midgets for mainly autotesting and trials and alter speed events. However I agreed to navigator for Andy on some of the bigger road events that were still happening. We had a lot of fun and some success and a few non finishes. I remember on a Westmorland Rally getting into Shap quarry on a section on a typically wet and foggy night and getting rather lost when we came to a sudden stop, my glasses fell off and all the lights went out for a moment. Had the world ended? No but we had hit a railway line at 90%! Strangely the car was not damaged but I think we called it a night.

The final road event I did with Andy was the 1986 Devils Own when the Motoring News Championship was at its most frantic and fastest. Those events at that time were all pre plotted, all selective events. Basically a night stage rally. Events in those days used what was called targa timing which was when the control clocks were set to read 00.00 when car 0 was due at each control, Thus if you were on time you arrived at each control at the time given by your car number. That is assuming you were on time which the organisers did their best to avoid! It also made it easy to do the results and also for the competitors to see how far into their 30 minutes lateness they were. The other big advantage was that it allowed the organisers to greatly increases the average speed for each section by tweaking the time allowed for each section.

This was needed because MN events in those days were flat out with some very quick cars. I think the start was at Kendal Leisure Centre and there were some big crowds see the cars off. We were well down the field of course and as the event was in August some of the later sections we did were in complete day light. The final sting in the tail was a section over Tan Hill and down Barbondale. Now Barbondale is a great place to camp and caravan with lots of grassy spaces between the road and the river. It was well populated that night and I always wondered what those families who had headed away for a quiet weekend thought of 90 rally cars hammering down the road for a couple of hours!

Now we lost an incredible five minutes on that section and only just completed the rally with out getting a fail. Indeed we were the final car to do so, coming 32nd I think of the 90 starters and Andy got a special award, as the last unpenalised car, of a day at a rally school. The rally was won by John Easson and Andrew Kellitt in a full house tarmac spec. RS2000 running on slicks and Andrew had full, well practiced, pace notes. Much quicker than our little Mini! Andrew was at the time the WMC Competition Secretary but of course has since put his considerable skills to running the Rally GB and being chair of the MSA Rallies Committee. At a club night after the Devil's I was with Andrew the fact that we had lost 5 minutes on that final section and Andrew said that they cleaned it by a few seconds. He had since worked out the average speed for the section and I won't quote it here but it was quicker than the mini could go flat out! Great days but it had to end as it did shortly afterwards.

The rallies I did with John Willis were all stage events and mainly the clubman's section of Pirelli Tour of Cumbria. This was nearly all forest with the odd trip around Kirkbride at the end. Even then the Mini was at a bit of a disadvantage on rough gravel but John sometimes carried the car over the bumps. The LSD used to be set so tight that if you lifted the car jumped sideways, usually to the left which was disconcerting for the navigator. On one particular Pirelli the rally used the Cliburn forest which is where the Center Park holiday park is now. I remember it was very tight even for a Mini with trees getting all too close!

We got over to Whinlatter and were leading the class and discovered that following a problem Louise Aikten in the development Sierra was running behind us on the road. John was determined that she should not catch us. Of course the inevitable happened and we clipped a bank and tipped on to its side (my side of course). John immediately wanted to get away again so unclipped his bents to get out through the window, rather to my detriment! Anyway we seemed to quickly get it on it's wheels and away with no side window and lots of mud in the car. We can't of lost too much time as we still managed second in class.

Giving passenger rides on autosolos is being used these days as a way of getting people involved but we actually did that first about 30 years ago on a demonstration event at a charity do at Kirkbride. We put up a very simple test made up of four pairs of cones each about 20 yards apart. The test was simple, forward through the first pair of cones, reverse through the second, forward through the third and reverse through the fourth and then slalom through the cones back to the start.

At that time I had a Midget set up for autotests, LSD and fly-off hand brake etc. So it through the first gate, handbrake, engage reverse while turning and accelerate through the second to do a reverse flick to go forward through the third etc. The passenger rides proved popular and there were lots of whoops of excitement although with the hood down you did not hear much. One girl got in and seemed quite vocal but also disappeared into the foot well. It was only when I finished she said she had been shouting for me to stop so she could get out!

GTF

A first time for everything - Autotesting for beginners

It all started at Rowrah Kart Track on a wet Sunday in October. Oh! Wouldn't it be fun to try to kill ourselves within the confines of a concrete car park? I said "No", the husband said "Yes" and, sure enough, 18 days later we became the proud owners of a 1972 MG Midget (soft top – in this weather?). Sorted! Well not quite.....

Two weeks later, John (the husband), continued to do battle with starting problems and handling problems. The postman turned up daily with "presents" which were immediately spirited away to the garage. I had visions of a beautifully restored car emerging, butterfly-like, but, no. It looked exactly the same – teal blue exterior (not bad), curry yellow interior (which defies a more accurate description). But at least it started, (as long as the clutch pedal wasn't depressed at the same time) and the handling was apparently like a skateboard, neither of which did anything to dispel my reluctance to get behind the wheel.

I was eventually press ganged into a test drive and managed to squeak my way into the driving seat like a balloon. It's only a little car but I couldn't see over the bonnet – booster seat required – oh, great, let's add insult to injury.

Well, OK, Mercedes it isn't, but there is something quite appealing about the simplicity of the vehicle – very easy to drive and no technological distractions (what? no power steering?) ooh, not as bad as I expected.

Fast forward to 29th December and our first autotest at Maryport – which was, after all, the whole point of the exercise. Now, it's not an ideal situation to set off on your first motor sport competition having previously driven your vehicle for only three miles on a minor country road, but, at least my expectations weren't high. It would be freezing cold, probably wet, won't have anyone to talk to (John and I had fallen out by this point), I would probably stall on the start line, I would have a senior moment and forget the test route and would, in all eventuality, come in last – deep joy.

Wrong on several counts. The day was cold but dry and sunny, the organisers and other competitors were so friendly and encouraging, I didn't stall on the start line and I wasn't quite last – yippee!! I did cause Stephen to utter the dreaded words "wrong test" on only one occasion (which was one up on John – who had two – snigger). I know, it is bad form to cheer at others misfortunes but I couldn't resist. I remember asking Charles (Graves) at one point if he had ever done a wrong test – as if – and high fiving Roger (Pope) after a mutually successful run – eeh, we did have a laugh!

The whole experience has now got me somewhat hooked. The surge of adrenaline when you hurtle off, the panic when you can't select reverse, the gritted determination as you haul on the steering wheel with handfuls of opposite lock, the sheer relief when you stamp on everything at the finish line. And I still took twice as long as everyone else..... In my mind I was the hare, in reality, I was the tortoise.

"It's not the winning- it's the taking part" I hear you say. To be perfectly honest, winning must feel a lot nicer than being almost last, so next time I will give it a bit more welly.

John and I are now back on speaking terms and it pains me to admit that, on this occasion, he was right about the fun factor. He came in 11th out of 23 so is feeling a bit smug. He thinks I have "potential to improve" (thanks, pal). I somehow feel Willie and Angela (Jarman and Jones) have nothing to fear from Team Sloan – well, not just yet anyway.

So, thank you to everyone involved for making it a fabulous day – can't flipping wait for the next one. Special thanks to David (Agnew) for the loan of the spanners – hope the battery will be more firmly attached in future.

If anyone out there fancies having a go, take it from me, it's brilliant – but don't forget the brown trousers.....

Marian Sloan
High Lorton



RACING LINES

News from the Circuits



M Sport's Bentley GT racer - it certainly looks a winner!

One of the new rules for racing in the UK and indeed even in F1 is that you are not allowed to put more than two wheels over the white line designating the edge of the track. Modern circuits have massive run off areas and also the way the course was designating in the past, by straw bales, oil drums and more recently by kerbs of differing heights no longer work. If kerbs were too high they damage the underside of the car and if they are too low then they are ignored. I can see more work for the marshals/observers and queues at the Clerk of the Course's office.

Peter Garforth will be interested to learn that there are rumours of a new F1 team for 2015 from Dacia using Romanian money and run by the same guy who started the recently failed HRT F1 team.

F1 might be big money but quite a number of teams had little or no sponsorship last year, even teams doing well like Lotus and Sauber. F1 pays out on where you finish in the manufacturers championship and those who don't score points don't get any money. In addition the "favoured" teams get "appearance money from Bernie. Ferrari get \$99m; Red Bull \$75m and Williams Mercedes and McLaren get \$45m each. Thus there is a huge diversity of budgets so you have to hand it to Lotus and Sauber for doing well on a fraction of what the front runners have. Even the two back marker teams do well to be only a couple of seconds off the pace. Those two or three seconds per lap they need to improve by will cost perhaps \$250m!

Rally Torque

News from Road & Stage

The **Monte Carlo Rally** was the first round of the WRC and in rather untypical conditions saw some interesting performances which might make this season more interesting. It certainly looks promising for M Sport with Kubica leading until he went off and Bouffier coming second and Evans sixth. Kris Meeke got third for Citroen so we had two UK drivers in the top ten for the first time for 15 years I think. Just a pity that the WRC gets so little media coverage. Given the Monte is one of the three “prestige” events of the series with all the glamour and historic that does not look good for the other events.

I see the MSA has noted that the **number of rally competitors is steadily falling**. It’s surprising that they did not notice before because it’s been obvious for years. 30 years ago WMC ran 6 stage rallies with full entries, mainly from our own club. That steadily dwindled so that by the late nineties we had no stage events and now we have just three or four stage rally crews who mainly do a few events each. I think over the years I’ve run a few editorials as to the decline in stage events so the evidence and reasons were there all the time.

I see **Barry Lindsay** had another great result on the Jack Frost Stages at Croft getting seventh place in the 1600cc Peugeot. It shows that a good driver does not need a costly four wheel drive car to get decent results.

The row over the **lifing of rally seats** rumbles on. Those who do very few events a year are rightly annoyed that they will need to replace their seats every four years. Crews who invested in the best seats they could afford are now saying they will now replace them with the cheapest available. Still an added cost to an expensive part of our sport. (See para 2 above!)

Entry forms for the 39th **Malcolm Wilson Rally** are now on line. March 8th is the date and it offers 44 miles for a basic entry fee of £445. The format is rather different. Roadworks in Cockermouth means the rally starts at Dovenby Hall with the first stage at Wythop, followed by Comb, Hobcarton being used as the car park and not a stage. It’s then to Greystoke, and then south to three shorter stages in Grizedale due to larch disease and then a final run at Greystoke. 30 second starts are being used on the shorter stages. The finish will be at the Rheged Discovery Centre

Rallying members will be saddened to hear of the sudden death of **Dr. Maurice Hamilton** who was our club doctor for many years and was chief medic on most of the major rallies in the north. A real “character” he greatly enjoyed the post rally parties.

New rules for historic rallies mean that category 3 cars (our class C) can compete for overall honours this year and there is a new category for later cars which will not be eligible for outright wins. The rights and wrongs may be debated but the category 4 cars will now be at least 30 years old. Perhaps a case for no overall winners but just class winners of use the Index of Performance system?

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For sale Mini Cooper 1963

It had the engine re-built by Paul Gardner a few years ago, a fine highly regarded private specialist and has run perfectly ever since. I replaced the front brake callipers, pads and seals, rear pistons and all seals during the restoration. The rear suspension has new rubber cones and adjustable trailing arms to ensure the ride height can be altered as the cones start to settle over time. It is rust free, fully wax treated and it passed it's MOT first time out and had it's first run on the Christmas Cracker run in 2012 without a hitch. Since this run it has just been dry stored. I'm open to reasonable offers

Contact Edward Stuttard (0)1524 237 766



Barn Storage:

There are a couple of spaces in the barn near Wigton for longer term storage of a project or trailer. Ring Graeme for details on 01900 825642.

Black Sea Holiday villa:

www.blackseavista.com. Reasonably priced rates may to September.

WANTED

Pancake type air filter such as K&N etc for a Ford 1300cc crossflow engine from a MK2 Escort with a Weber carb. Engine is fitted in a Locost type kit car and air filter which is missing has obviously been sticking up through the bonnet

Keith Thomas 01900 603073

Fuchs Titan & Silkolene Oil. 5 litre cans. 20/50 £14.95 and 10.40 semi synthetic £16.95. Ring Graeme on 01900 825642.

Race and rally numbers and romers. The Club has supplies of these are cost price. Ring Graeme on 01900 825642.

Inside the Industry

Paul Gilligan keeps us up to date

2013 Final Scores Announced

In early January the final UK 2013 car registration figures were released. At 2.26 million units registered this was the best result since pre- credit crunch 2007. Big news was that even though BMW had a storming December to be 4th best seller behind Vauxhall, Ford, and VW, Audi beat them for the full year for the first time ever, and by a convincing 6500 units. Audi were 15% up on 2012, BM only 6% up, but Mercedes over 19% up. In 2012 Merc were 29% behind BMW, in 2013 19% behind. They are spookily on plan to overtake their fellow Germans by 2015.

Electric cars achieved just over 4000 sales of the 2.26 million, hardly a big impact yet. I may have more to say on the whole alternative fuel subject soon as I'm discussing doing some consultancy work for an outfit involved in hydrogen vehicles. The technology is all fine, the only problem is the lack of refuelling points, there are only 3 in the UK currently. However hydrogen can work well in specialist applications. One is a London bus where the fuel is carried in big cylinders on the roof and the vehicle is refuelled every night, it's working fine and no reason every single deck London bus and all the taxis shouldn't go hydrogen.

There's good news on UK car manufacturing too. In 2013 over 1.5 million cars were built in this country, over 50% up on the low of 2009. The record number is 1.92 million built here in 1972, but forecasts say this could well be beaten by 2017.

Targets Set For 2014

With the books closed on 2013 manufacturers turn their attention to the New Year. Most forecasts are that total sales will be about the same as 2013, perhaps 1% up. Of course every manufacturer is forecasting they will take a larger share of the available volume. I was chatting to a friend the other day who heads up a motor group with a total of 7 franchises. All 7 manufacturers he represents have given him increased sales, the lowest a 10% increase, the highest over 50% up! The average is over 20%, in a market set to remain about static, maybe 1% up. Achieving these targets mean dealers get big financial bonuses, so as they strive to get to the numbers there will again be lots of bargains to be had.

US Sales Boom Also

Whilst the UK celebrates just over 2 million sales, in the US last year cars and trucks sold totalled 15.5 million, 1.1 million higher than 2012, and 50% up on the crisis years of 2008/09. Hopes are for over 16 million sales this year. Manufacturers are investing again in both new models and new technology, with Ford planning 23 new model launches this year and Chrysler investing a billion dollars to build their new 200 family saloon.

Land Rover Go For The Cream

One of the great UK success stories of recent years is Land Rover. Every new model introduced has proved a great success and there are still long waiting lists for Range Rover and Range Rover Sport (although I have to say I did manage immediate delivery on a Sport for one of our footballer friends this week). It wasn't for him but for his unemployed brother!

The two Range Rover models and the Discovery are all made on the same production line in Solihull. Even working flat out on 3 shifts they can't keep up with the demand. To maximise profits LR have quietly dropped the cheapest versions. The Sport range starts at £51,000, only that model's not being made any more, so Sports now start with the HSE at £60k. The Discovery has just been face lifted for 2014. There used to be a "Commercial" version with rear side windows blanked out and only two seats, beloved of the construction industry. Price was a bargain £30000. It's not listed for 2014. So the Disco starts at £39000 for the GS model. However although production of the 2014 models started in September of last year they haven't made a GS yet. Neither will they until at least April/May. In fact my pet LR dealer told me the other day that they might not build GS at all for the fore

seeable future except for military and police, so start point is £46000 for the XS model. Only a very confident manufacturer can behave like this, although they can of course re-introduce the cheaper models in the future if demand drops a little.

Go East Young Car

Top end cars that are around £100k in this country can cost several times that in certain Far East markets, Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong etc. Part of this is import duty but part is simply pricing. Therefore a niche industry has built up exporting UK cars to these countries. The margins are reportedly “huge”, and the impatience of the wealthy customers such that large cars such as Mercedes S Class are being AIR-FREIGHTED to the East.

Of course the manufacturers don't like this as it upsets their overseas pricing structures, and their local importers and dealers, but it's a hard thing to stop. BMW are apparently employing people to “spot” exports at ports and airports, and those customers caught are blacklisted from future purchases. However it's a game of cat and mouse, and motor traders are pretty resourceful particularly when “huge” margins are on offer.

Good Club, Bad Club

Whilst Wigton enjoys being named MSA “Club Of The Year”, across the water the national German motor club (ADAC) is not such a happy place. Every year ADAC announce their Car of the Year, this is something they have been doing for 10 years now. Because the club is highly respected and Germany has such an important place in the worldwide industry this award is well-regarded and the results undoubtedly influence sales not just in Germany.

For the past 4 years only German cars have won. It has now merged that the results have been fixed on a monumental scale. For 2014 the new VW Golf won with 34,299 votes. It actually got only 3,409. In 2012 the Audi Q3 won with a reported 330,000 votes. In fact only 76,000 votes were cast in the whole contest.

Red faces all round!

Manufacturer News

The ownership changes at Peugeot are close to approval. The main shareholders will now be the Peugeot family, the Chinese state-owned Dongfeng Motor Co, and the French Government. Peugeot lost a whopping 5 Billion Euros in 2012 so drastic action is needed. With 3 drivers in the seat seems doomed to failure, watch this space.

The best selling car in the US is in fact a truck, the Ford F 150. Not exactly small, or light, or fuel-efficient. However now the new F 150 will be made largely from aluminium, and the entire Ford US product range will be aluminium in time. Or perhaps more accurately “aluminium”? Given that all Fords are to be World cars we'll see alloy Fords here before too long. Of course Jaguar developed their aluminium body technology whilst under Ford ownership, so the Blue Oval has the knowledge to make this work.

Fiat are poised to take full ownership of Chrysler and become the 7th largest vehicle manufacturer in the World.

Whilst Mercedes are determined to overhaul both BMW and Audi, VW Group have just announced they will invest over \$30 billion (that's a lot!) to overhaul BMW who still lead their German rivals Worldwide. This money will be spent between now and 2018 on new models and expanded production facilities to drive Audi volume to over 2 million cars a year.

Audi's \$30 billion may seem a lot, but it's only part of the budget of \$115 billion that VW have set aside to overtake Toyota and GM and become the World's largest vehicle manufacturer. Of course the German's do have a history of aiming for world domination?

In the UK Vauxhall have a new Managing Director (again!). The last one promised to walk away from chasing volume via cheap fleet deals, then reversed the policy a year later. Vauxhall remain in second place in the UK, about 50000 sales behind Ford last year. Vauxhall's new boy has promised to overtake Ford by 2015 or 2016. Ford have been UK No 1 for 40 years now since they overtook British Leyland (remember them?). No way will they give this position up easily, should be a good fight to watch!



Andy's Armchair

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

Poor old Michael Schumaker, at the time of writing no-one seems sure what's likely to be the outcome of his injuries. We can only hope he'll survive and make a full recovery.

Most people I know know of my interest in motorsport and they've invariably started talking about Schuey when we've met of late. It's interesting that they always comment how ironic it is that his injuries came while ski-ing and not during all those years when he put his neck on the line in a Formula 1 car. There seems to be this assumption that F1 is dangerous and ski-ing isn't, when in fact you're a lot more likely to injure yourself on the snow rather than on the tarmac. I'd venture a guess that you're more likely to do yourself a mischief up a ladder cleaning the bedroom windows than in F1 come to think of it. By the way, let's not forget that as well as our multiple world champion being seriously hurt we've also lost Philip Favre while ski-ing this year, granted not as famous but no mean racing driver!

Hearing about Schumaker made me think about Mark Donahue who crashed during practice for the 1975 Austrian Grand Prix. It wasn't a bad accident but he managed to clout his helmeted head on a catch fencing post. He climbed out, walked back to the pits and had no apparent problems other than a bit of an ache. Anyhow over the course of the next couple of hours the symptoms grew much worse and eventually he felt so ill he was taken to hospital. He soon slipped into a coma and died the following day. It all sounds quite familiar but thanks to circuit safety which looked after Michael during his racing years and now modern medical science he should have a much better chance.

When you come to think of it it's far from uncommon for racing drivers to come unstuck either after their career has ended or outside of the racing environment. Mike Hawthorn, Mike Hailwood and Clay Regazzoni all met their end in car crashes on the public highway. Graham Hill, Tony Brize, Carlos Pace and David Leslie in normal aircraft while David Purley and Derek Bennett died while doing aerobatics or messing about on a powered hang-glider. Didier Pironi and John Cobb overdid things in powerboats and amateur racer David Blakely annoyed his girlfriend Ruth Ellis enough so that she shot him. They are just off the top of my head, there must be many more.

To change the subject, I've just been hearing about the department of the environment decision to restrict motorway speeds to 60 mph on certain sections of our road network. Apparently they claim it's all to do with emissions but does doing 10mph less really make such a huge difference? I've also heard that the roads in question are very busy and are those where the hard shoulder is being converted into a fourth lane in an attempt to ease congestion. With this in mind maybe 60 is marginally safer than 70 but wouldn't it be better still to do the job properly, widen the road and leave the speed limits alone. I know we're in austere times but for some strange reason the letters and number HS2 keep coming to mind but I can't think why!

Well that's it again really my new year resolution is to make a real effort to visit two tracks this year where I've never been before. I quite fancy Cadwell and Mallory if it stays open but I suppose Rockingham could be an alternative although it doesn't seem to have much character, we'll wait and see.

Ends

AA

What's On

WMC events and other events of interest

February

21-23rd

Race Retro at Stoneleigh

March

2nd	SRC	Saltire Classic Rally (Perth)
8th	Trio	Malcolm Wilson Rally
15th	KLMC	Devils Own Classic Rally (GTNHRA)
16th	WMC	Novice Autotest
23rd	WMC	Speed Test Day at Rowrah
30th	MGC	Roof of England Challenge Tour

April

25-27	WMC	Getaway Gallop
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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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