

Wigton Motor Club Ltd

Start Line

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www.wigtonmc.co.uk

December 2014

WMC Members at Daytona!



The E Type Jaguar of Eddie Farrell and Robert Gate overtaking 1977 Le Mans winner Hurley Haywood's Porsche 911 on their way to tenth overall and second in class at the Daytona Classic 24 Hour race.

JLT MSA Club of the Year

Diary

Club events over the next month or so

Festive Autotest

Sunday, December 27th

At Maryport

Entry forms will be emailed out.

Annual Awards Dinner

January 17th

Skiddaw Hotel

WIGTON MOTOR CLUB LTD

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Talking Point

Topical comment from the world of motoring

If anyone had told me a year ago that I would be attending two prestigious events in London this year I would have said rubbish, particularly given my opinion of our capital city! However as we won Motor Club of the Year Helen and I had the pleasure of attending the Night of Champions at the RAC Club back on January.

Then just a couple of weeks ago, on returning from holiday, I found a letter from 10, Downing Street, inviting me to a reception hosted by the Prime Minister, celebrating British Motor Sport Success. So just a week later I was there with the Great and the Good of British Motor Sport. I'll write more on that next month.

It's been a momentous year for the Club with a big increase in membership to over 750 which must mean we are doing most things right! Perhaps the highlight was the Novice Autotest Training Day which not only increased the number of competing members but also got four new teams of organisers. However we always need more people to get involved in running events, particularly the major ones. Go back to 1984 when the, then, much smaller WMC, ran the following: four single venue stage rallies, one multi venue stage rally, one forest rally, nine 12 car rallies, one road rally, six autotests, one PCT and two treasure hunts! In Cumbria as a whole there were 12 stage rallies, 10 road rallies plus a full championship of autotests and trials. Sadly many of the other clubs have died or are barely operating.

It is certainly not just motor clubs that are suffering a lack of volunteers, just about any organisation has the same issues. Changes in social attitudes, work patterns, obsession with the internet can all be blamed. On the other hand the MSA certainly don't make things any easier to either organise events or take part in them. I sometimes wonder just how representative the members of the MSA's special committee actually are. They should perhaps all have a target for 2015 of increasing participation in their branch of the sport by 10% then their actions could be assessed by performance management criteria.

At this time of year motorsport tends to take a back seat but many of you may need to ask Santa for a new helmet as many in current use will not longer meet MSA requirements. Don't be caught out at the first event of the year!

The committee have tweaked some of the championship rules recently and full details will appear in the next issue. The main point is that the club championship will run December 1st to December 1st as this allows the Festive Autotest to be included as it's only a few weeks prior to the Awards Dinner. Speaking of which please contact David Agnew for your tickets.

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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Classic Column

2015 Classic Weekend

August 22/23rd

We are looking for ideas for the 2015 Show. Can you come up with an idea for the theme? Which make/model or genre can we focus on? What models and marques have significant anniversaries in 2015.

It has been suggested that we bring in some “non motoring” entertainment to the arena. This has a number of consequences the biggest being the cost of the “entertainment”. Is this a good idea, please let us know.

We would like to get more people involved in running the Show, many hands make light work and the old hands need to be passing on their knowledge and expertise to others. Would you like to join the team?

In particular we need someone to take over the role of co-ordinating the visiting clubs, a task that Stuart Turnbull did in recent years. Most of his work is in the weeks leading up to the show and working out where the clubs are to go on the show field. Again we would love to hear from any volunteers.

BYGONES

Anecdotes

A holiday in Scotland last month reminded me of a couple of more “lost” venues. Strathclyde Park beside the M74 near Hamilton was officially a hill climb although the gradient was very small. It ran beside the loch created for the Commonwealth Games and boasted some of the best facilities for a speed event that I have seen. Unfortunately the big issue was keeping the locals off the track. If Mr. Walker took his dog out for a walk in the Park every Sunday morning he did not see why he should not give that up for one day a year. Sadly it was decided that other than using force to stop these folk, it was not safe to continue to run the event. At least I will have the class record for all time!

Another venue for the famous Rest and Be Thankful Climb in Argyll. This was one of the first events in the British Hill Climb Championship and one of the longest as well. It used the former public road in the floor of the glen while the “new” road was further up the slope. It was used from 1951 until 1970 when a serious accident made the RSAC decide the course was too dangerous. However since then it has been used as a rally stage and on classic tours. However the “new” main road has been hit by a series of land slips in recent years which resulted on long detours for traffic so the government approached the land owners to re-tar the old road as a emergency alternative. There has been thoughts of reopening The rest for hill climbs but having walked the now very smooth hill, it would need a lot of safety work as it has a cliff on one side and a big drop on the other and would be very fast in current cars. Sadly one for the history books!

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.

IVESON AUTOTEST

SUNDAY NOV 9TH 2014

It was Robs first attempt at arranging an Autotest and what a cracking event. He got the full support of his family - mother in charge of catering, father marshalling and sister on her first event in the hot seat. There were 15 cars, 10 FWD and 5 RWD, including competitors from as far afield as Cheshire. The rear wheel drive class consisted of a fine array of MGs (Midget & BGTs) and Richard Keen's Austin A40. The front wheel drive class had Roger Pope in a classic Mini and a collection of moderns. After 2 minutes silence at 11.00am the competition got underway under fine skies but with puddled tarmac

Test 1. Willie set the pace in the 205GTi with Angela and Steve Fishwick only 1 sec behind and John Sloan only 1 sec behind them in the Midget. Sadly Eileen & Angela caught 10 secs penalties.

Test 2. Steve (Puma) & Willie set equal times with John, having an entertaining time, 1 sec behind again. Jack Palmer (Rover 25) set an excellent pace and was only 2 secs behind his father despite a 10 secs penalty.

Test 3. This time Willie took 4 secs from Steve F. with John & Steve Palmer (Rover 25) just 1 sec adrift. Steve Palmer must have got his head down after Jacks previous impressive test! Angela sadly picked up another 10 sec penalty.

Test 4. Although Steve F. & Willie matched times, unfortunately Willie now caught a 10 sec penalty but was joined by Jack & Megan Iveson (SportKa).

This was to be lunch time but by running 2 tests at a time excellent progress was being made so Tests 5 & 7 were also run. David Agnew was now starting to get to grips with his barn Clio (all windows open for full ventilation) and was engaging in a battle with Steve Palmer who had now taken a 10 sec lead between them. In the rear wheel drive class John Sloan was making a commanding statement with his wife Marion (Midget) only 9 secs ahead of the drawing pair of Karl Lord (BGT) and Richard Keen (A40). This was unfortunately to be the demise of Karl as the BGT retired on Test 5 making some strange noises from the engine bay.

Test 5. Steve F. Must have been thinking of lunch as he skipped the last cone to get the first wrong test of the day. Willie now set the pace from John but Jack Palmer was now picking up speed and matched Roger Pope (Mini) who was now buzzing on adrenalin in his recent acquisition. Jack then picked up a 10 sec penalty along with Angela (not a good day!) and Eileen Horsfall who was nipping around nicely in her Shiny Swift. Peter Keen in the other BGT looked like he was struggling with this test as his time dropped away.

Test 7. Willie 3 secs ahead of Steve F. Jack Palmer hammered his father despite a 10 sec penalty as Steve P. lost his way on test.

Lunch and the Iveson's took control offering a selection of Soup & Sandwiches along with Crisps, homemade Chocolate and Ginger Cakes, Viennese Shortbread, Biscuits, Tea & Coffee. Suitably satisfied, round 2 began.

Test 6. Once again Steve F. missed the same cone for another wrong test (\$*!!@%£s) but Wiggy in another newly acquired car (City Rover) decided to join him. It's good to share! Willie set the pace but John (Midget) was only 1 second behind with young Jack beating his father again and 1 second behind John. Peter struggled again with this similar test to 5.

Test 8. Willie at the front with Angela & John matching times 3 sec behind. This time Richard collected a wrong test but was still 3 secs overall ahead of Marion in the rear wheel drives.

Test 9. Willie 1 sec from Steve F. John, Steve P. & David now matched times 1 sec ahead of Angela, Eileen and Wiggy. Cars were sliding around and competition was fierce.

Test 10. Steve F must have thought it would have been better to stay at home as he made his 3rd wrong test of the day. Willie now 2 secs ahead of John and father & son Keen matched times.

With time still on our side a final test comprising both top and bottom yard tests was set. Willie ahead of Steve F. Eileen went astray and collected a wrong test this time, Megan got the 10 sec penalty and Wiggy was now in destruction mode taking out 2 cones.

Solway Historic Rally, October 19th, 2014.

I concluded my report on the Doonhamer (the penultimate round of this year's "Gates" Historic Challenge) with the following remarks: "With only the Solway remaining, the updated "Gates" table shows that David/Nicola Agnew are in the strongest position for overall honours but a couple of WTs or a DNF on the Solway could hand that over to the flying Midget of Rose/Shearer. If the "Agnews" prevail, the contest for 2nd, 3rd and 4th will also be very close..." So, how did it play out?



Firstly, the Solway attracted a fully subscribed entry of historic competitors from across the NESCR0 series including good representation from Wigton MC members. The Historic entry had an impressive range of cars with everything from Minis, Escorts, Porsche and TRs to Volvos, Lancias, Wartburgs, Viva, A35, Sunbeam and Audis – fantastic.

And, secondly, the event attracted a strong, varied and very competitive Targa entry – an excellent entrée for newcomers to the sport especially youngsters (NB Team Iveson brought along a £500.00 EBay Ford Ka and took it to 7th O/A in the Targa class on its first outing!).

Competition at the top was fierce from the Start. By the lunch halt Archie Symonds, MkII Escort RS 2000, had pulled out a slim 11s advantage over Tom Hall, Riley Elf, with David Agnew at 12s and John Bertram, Mexico MkI, at 27s. Archie maintained his quick and tidy style during the afternoon session but turned up the wick a bit and took 1st O/A by 53s from an ever quickening John Bertram, with Tom Hall sliding back to 3rd some 97s (inc 1xPC Fail) adrift of Archie and Dave Agnew maintaining 4th O/A 103s adrift (inc 1xPC Fail). Archie was impressive through the tests we marshalled and provided something of a Master Class for all and sundry – well done Archie, but 2015 is just around the corner and we'll all be in hot pursuit of you.....again!



Amongst the "Gates" contenders, the big battle was between David Agnew/Alan Jackson and Colin Rose/Bob Shearer in the Midget. It was nip and tuck all morning until the final test before lunch when the Midget recorded 60s on T7 against the flying 911's 27s. The interim results at lunch showed Agnew/Jackson on 457s and Rose/Shearer on 512s. But it was still all to play for and both crews went out from the lunch halt in determined mood. Times were close all afternoon: T8 was tied, the 911 then gained 11s on T9, 10,11, but Rose/Shearer got the bit between their teeth and pulled back a whopping 32s on T12,13,14 –

the Porsche also suffered 1xPC Fail. Nevertheless, David Agnew/ Alan Jackson held onto their lead recording 1008s O/A to Colin Rose/Bob Shearer's gallant 1022s O/A; and, David took 1st O/A Driver in the "Gates" Historic Challenge with Bob Shearer a very worthy 1st O/A Navigator.

While the 911/Midget clash was being contested other "Gates" entries were also having fun. Richard Goodacre/Peter Birtles Volvo Amazon put on an impressive show, eg, just 1s adrift of the Rose Shearer Midget on T4, tied with the Midget on T6 and 14s quicker on T7 – 8s separated Midget and Volvo at lunch. Times remained very close throughout the afternoon between the Volvo, the Midget and David Agnew's 911 with the Volvo beating them both on Ts11&14 (T14

must have been dramatic!) but losing time elsewhere. At the finish, the Volvo crew of Richard Goodacre/Peter Birtles came in 8th O/A some 29s behind Rose/Shearer's Midget – this result confirmed them as 3rd O/A Driver and 2nd O/A Navigator in the “Gates” Challenge 2014.

Out on their own for most of the day was the Midget of John & Marion Sloan who were quietly (?) putting in some quick times, eg, tying with the 911 on T4 quicker than the Rose/Shearer Midget by 1s on T6 but a disappointing WT on T7 left them with a lunchtime score of 571s. A

clean afternoon included being just 1s down on Rose/Shearer on T8&9 and beating both the Rose Midget and Agnew 911 on T14 to equal the flying Volvo on 147s. A good day at the office for Team Sloan, 12th O/A and a successful first full year of “Historics” - look out 2015!



David Alexander/Mark Humphries' Viva HB, and Tot & Maureen Dixon's Mini 1380 ran fairly close throughout the day. Both crews had mixed fortunes with some competitive times marred by WTs, eg, the Viva had a WT on the last test before lunch yet put in very competitive times on T6&10 while Tot & Maureen had WTs on T6&7 and a bit of a nightmare on T10 (not taking enough Werthers!) but scorched their way through Ts1,2,4,11,13&14.

Brian Bradley/Paul Makinson, Mini 1275, arrived looking good but dropped handfuls of time on T5&10 and compounded that with WTs on T4&7. Despite those problems they showed great potential and good pace elsewhere especially on T2,13&14 tying on the latter with Richard Goodacre/Peter Birtles' Volvo and Team Sloan's Midget.

Robert Robinson/Peter Mellor brought along their Audi GT but had their day blighted by WTs on T7,10&11. Nevertheless, they were quick elsewhere especially on T12,13&14 where their 144s on T14 was up among the quickest.



Among the “Targa” crews competition was fierce with Stephen/Daniel Place bringing their Peugeot home 1st O/A by 1s from Andrew Graham/George Edminson's Puma (953s and 954s O/A respectively) with Robert Bryn Jones/ Heather Merrison 3rd on 990s. Nineteen Targa crews entered and the Challenge organisers are being encouraged to consider integrating a Targa section into the Challenge for 2015.

The Solway provided a fine finale to the WMC “Gates” Challenge for 2014. Competition was close throughout the day, organisation and results were

slick and there appeared to be many happy crews at the finish.

I'll be promoting the 2015 Challenge in the next edition of Startline so watch this space; and, an updated set of the Challenge Regulations and Registration Form will be available in January 2015. If you have an eligible car and you are a WMC member entry to the Challenge is free.....but I must receive a completed 2015 Registration Form (remember, further details in January).

Meanwhile, have a great Christmas and New Year and come back revved up in 2015 - hopefully, David and I will be revving up with you (either that or we'll be needing therapy!).

Mike Garstang.

Once again the Iveson's set to the kitchen with Tea, Coffee, Cakes & Sweets.

Rob and I set about the battle of the marshals on the Tests with Rob being quicker but catching a cone so victory was mine!

Results below but what a fantastic day. Willie thanked all for their contributions but what a Quality event with Quality (Street) prizes! and all for only £10. Why wouldn't you!

Ian Whittaker

Willie Jarman	205GTi	518	1st overall
John Sloan	Midget	550	2nd overall
Steve Fishwick	Puma	586	1st FWD
Angela Jones	205GTi	601	1st lady
David Agnew	Clio	614	
Steve Palmer	Rover 25	617	
Jack Palmer	Rover 25		1st Junior
Roger Pope	Mini	629	
Eileen Horsfall	Swift	641	
Marion Sloan	Midget	678	1st RWD
Richard Keen	A40	680	
Megan Iveson	SportKa	685	
David Wiggins	CityRover700		

Welcome to the following new members:

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

Derek & Susan Wallace of Penrith

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

Membership Renewals

All those of you who have prepaid their 2015 membership will have had their memberships card in the post.

2014 members will receive a renewal form in the next few days. As usual there is an incentive to pay before the year end. All the forms received during December will be put in a hat and two will be drawn out to get free membership for 2015!

As you will realise the earlier people renew the easier it is for the membership secretary and also for the date on the emailer to be updated.

PG Tips

Can you believe it's November already? Nor can I, maybe it's just that I'm getting older but time does seem to have flown this year. Despite my prediction of victory on the Solway not coming true, Paul (Eastwood) and I did have a cracking time – we avoided wrong testing anything, didn't break the car, fall out with each other or run anyone over, so that in my books is a victory. We also came 2nd in class....ok, so there were only 3 in the class and we were some way off the winner's score but it was not a bad effort given our inexperience and laid back attitude. It was a brilliantly well run event and my thanks goes to Steve Palmer and his team for their efforts.

Now – a big announcement to make. I have finally actually made money buying and selling a car. I bought a very ropey Skoda Estelle through the marvel of Ebay and broke it for parts. I managed to sell enough parts to cover the cost of purchase and came away with an engine that I want for Ekk and a very tidy set of seats. The car itself had been in a rather damp concrete garage near Whitby since 1994 and had only covered 28,000 miles. The damp had eaten various parts of the bodywork but there were plenty of juicy bits that got old Skoda geeks excited enough to part with cash. I ended up with just a shell that I chopped into 3 pieces and weighed in....getting the princely sum of £26 for it!

On the subject of the tidy seats – they were promptly fitted to Ekk who I haven't had a great deal of time for recently. 3 days after fitting them I got Ekk started and went on the afternoon school run. As I set off I noticed the sweets that were in the centre console appeared to have been attacked and I made a mental note to buy a mouse trap as I clearly had a rodent issue. Oh well – it was only a packet of sweets I would probably have binned anyway...and then I moved Emily's booster seat and saw the hole they had chewed in my sought after pristine 'new' seats. It's fair to say I swore a bit....in fact a lot and set my mind



to unleash Armageddon on those mice!

A quick trip to Aspatria to the shop that sells everything (it really does) and for £1.60 I was the owner of 4 cheap but marvelous mouse traps. The first setting of the traps was made using a mouse favourite – Cadbury Fudge (other fudge based sweets are available). The following morning I ventured into the garage with my daughters Emily and Heidi (who were keen to see mice – dead or alive) only to find I had been out played. All the fudge was gone and the traps were still set. Thankfully there were no more holes in the seats. For the second setting I decided to aim for something more difficult to remove

and opted for another children's favourite – Cadbury Chomp. For those of you who aren't au fait with Chomp, it's a toffee version of fudge (if that makes sense). Much stickier I was convinced that it would bag me a mouse. The following morning with the girls in tow I was greeted with my first mouse. It was a fairly hefty beast in mouse terms....probably fat from eating sweets and seats! As the mouse hadn't eaten any Chomp before it met it's end I left the traps as they were only to find the following morning that all the Chomp was gone and the traps were still set. As the kids had a box of raisins on this visit to the garage, 4 were procured and used to bait the traps. For the following 3 days I managed a mouse a day and have had no more since. Hopefully that's it now for the winter and I can rest easy in my bed knowing that there are no rodents attacking the interior of any of my cars. The good news is I have a spare seat cover to replace the chewed article so Ekk will have a perfect interior....and a trap will now forever be set in that garage.

Snotty.....is just about running again. More on that next month I hope!

Peter



RED MIST

no longer young but still angry!

By the time you read this the F1 season will be over, I write this drivel in the fluttery sunlight of an unseasonably mild pre-winter the morning after Lewis Hamilton took a 24 point lead into the last two races. Now in seasons gone by, this would most likely have nailed on the end of the season, bringing to it a slight touch of ground frost to flush away the summers points gathering, the seasons end if you like, the natural order....But what we have now is a prolonging of that warm season, where the grass still grows, the wasps are still flying (OK I made that bit up) but you get what I mean....The RAC (and the Wales GB single venue event) are just around the corner and I have yet to even think about putting the winter wheels on!

The folly of predicting the weather is every bit as ridiculous as the current obsession with dicking about with traditional forms of sport and entertainment...the rush to modernise, to appeal to the great unwashed, those who have the interest spasms of a gnat are, well its unsustainable that's what it is!

I think many are harping back to the first flush of live GP coverage, the BTCC in its prime and Gp B rallying...these were exceptional times, times that fed the marketing frenzy that gave great careers to hordes of previously unemployable (at least in their chosen subjects) graduates. This unsustainable lie (for what is marketing?) has been a leaky bubble ever since and like all leaky vessels; they tend to be picked off by the first predatory recession that turns up.

So you have to applaud (sorry I forgot to use that first word in its now fashionable sense).. So,you have to applaud Bernie's ability to ride out the world crushing scenario we have had since the bankers got found out. In his rarefied atmosphere (you try breathing the air around your waist... where Bernie lives...its very nice) money is no object, it can get you anything you want and it has, its brought him power and freedom, but crucially its brought him perspective.

He perceives that Caterham, Marussia and the new Hass team, probably don't have the cash to operate in the ridiculous bubble that is F1. Rather than change F1 back into what it used to be, he wants to take it further than ever away from what made it so exploitable in the first place, and the greediest of the stakeholders are quite content to go with him.

The only fly in the ointment has been the TV audience, now I'm not suggesting that the Beeb losing the rights to show each race live is the main factor in this country, but even if it is, that doesn't explain the global reduction.

The answers to combat this decreasing interest have been a mixed bag, the racing is more unpredictable (apart from one team running away at the front whilst the minor places have become where the action is) but the ways this has been achieved, well they are all contrivances.

The overriding factor isn't anything to do with tyres, or whether the engines sound right, or the qualifying, or the weather...it's the same reason you can get in your road car right now, fill it with go go juice and drive it until its empty, then repeat...its reliable!

The push to make engines and gearboxes last longer, therefore making them reliable has crippled the sport more than anything. It, at a stroke, made it boring. Even in the days of the Lotus 49's,79's and McLaren Senna Prost years, the domination was still hanging on the feeling that anytime a tell tale puff of smoke could turn into a mess of molten metal. Of course Caterham and Marussia can tell you how affordable the more reliable engines have now become!

So the casual fan becomes disenchanting and starts to watch other things now the cars don't blow up anymore! The sport, rather like a lot of sports riding the crest of a wave, returns to its core. Undoubtedly there are still a lot of passionate F1 fans out there, those that will have taken the plunge to watch every race live, but maybe the casual passing fan has passed by never to return....Bernie

of course is only interested in numbers that get bigger, so rather than look after the sport, he is knee jerking his way to the grave desperate for the numbers to keep growing.

It will be a sad way to go, maybe he should be swiftly moved aside to let someone take over who isn't just thinking about his own legacy, but rather think about the sporting legacy, the fact that this is just a sport and the stuff around it is fluff, for if you lose the core, the heart of the sport, like rallying has done, then it becomes pointless and will take generations to heal if ever, if you're lucky enough that people will buy into your new product.

But sports based on a fundamental so important as racing cars and rallying cars already have a core, the rules and regulations were always there to stifle development, or cheating as we know it to be, our sports are based on that assumption that we will do whatever we can to be quickest, there's an understanding, that's the point of it. Rallying puts endurance of man and machine against time and the elements, racing puts distance and time as its focus. We have allowed the pinnacles of the sport to be moved away from these tethers in reality, all the other things that have been brought in that have saved lives would still have worked in a more relaxed, more sporting focussed game.

But to allow the premier series in both disciplines to be watered down, become so contrived, so, dare I say it, showbiz, but half heartedly so....it can't even be insulted by calling it so..American, it's just not good enough!

There are many many times that the championship has been lost, that the best man didn't win, but days gone by that was usually the team as a whole that blew it, that's sport....but if the wrong man wins by dint of double points, you may just find that like the battle between The X factor and Strictly, that the public will only take so much and then vote with their remotes, who will save us then? Len Goodman or Simon Cowell? ...FFS!

Alan the fowl mouthed fox

Annual Awards Dinner

January 17th

Skiddaw Hotel

Keswick

1900 for 1930

Guest Speaker

Howard Davies

(International Co-driver)

Tickets £25

From David Agnew

01946 841455 DAVIDWAGNEW@aol.com

Mdina Grand Prix

The Mediterranean island of Malta may not seem to be a likely place for a major motor sporting event but despite be less than 25 miles in length there is a flourishing motorsport tradition there. The Island Car Club runs up to ten hill climbs or sprints a year and there is also a well used drag strip.

As a former British colony Malta is very much “Britain in the sun” with driving on the left and red telephone boxes while everyone speaks fluent English and there is a large ex pat community.

Malta was famous for the number of old cars on the road twenty or more years ago due to the lack of imports but now all the remaining classics are well restored and only come out on Sundays as well as the beautifully restored old buses. This partly due to the poor driving standards, there is saying that the “Maltese don’t drive on the left or the right, they drive in the shade.”

A few years ago there was an event based on the roads round the outside of the capital Valetta which was grandly named the Valetta Grand Prix. This hit problems with the amount of redevelopment being done and traffic issues and the Island Car Club took on the event and moved it to the ancient fortress town of Mdina in the centre of the island. This makes for a spectacular venue for the four day event held on the first weekend of October.

The bulk of the cars entered were British as you might expect from the former UK colony with a sprinkling of the Italian Alfas and Fiats. Strangely there were no Ferraris or Maseratis entered. The rules tend to be made up as they go; for example a Fisher Fury was allowed to enter as it “looked” right despite being made this century while the Chevron that won all the events did not get a main award as it was deemed too fast! Sometimes the debates between the officials reminded me of the Italian parliament!



The event is spread over four days on the first weekend of October and finishes with a Gala Dinner at a top hotel. The essence of the event is all about taking part rather than winning.

The standard of driving was quite variable while some of the cars were completely standard road cars. The fastest car was the Chevron B16 of Italian Giovanni Rosi who was never really challenged. As well the Maltese drivers and some visiting Italians there were a number of ex pats and visiting British drivers including former F1 driver Rupert Keegan in an Alfa while Triumph specialist Neil Revington was in a TR. Lotus parts specialist and ex racer Pat Thomas was driving an Elan while Jaguar restorers Guy Broad and Neil fender were in an MG and Jaguar respectively. One of the smartest and quickest cars was the immaculate Turner of former F3 racer David Waterhouse.

Day one is actually held on the coast at the resort of Mellieha where a newly built length of dual carriage way from the sea is used for a hill climb. It must be the only motorsport venue built with EU money! The road rises quite steeply with a couple of chicanes to keep speeds down and goes to the top of the hill where there are two hairpin bend and round a roundabout to the other side of the carriageway and the stop line and the rest of the road down the hill is the paddock.





The second day is the Concours d' Elegance which takes place in the central square of Mdina, normally a car free zone. As well as many of the competing cars other beautifully preserved cars are on display as well and this year it was the turn of the local Maserati club to have a feature display. There were various awards one being a "people' choice" voted on by all the visitors. It was obvious the good and the great of Malta were there enjoying the cars and some fine wine!

Day three was the Mdina sprint which took place on the roads around the city walls linked by a section of dual carriageway which closed for the event. The paddock was between the city walls which made for spectacular setting for the start and finish. While the track was well laid out with lots of straw bales I rather doubt the MSA would have approved!

In the morning the President of Malta arrived and she enjoyed a trip round the track in an Alfa Spider. There was a large hospitality area for the drivers and guests.

The climax of the event was the races on the Sunday using the same course. Parts of it are rather narrow so no passing was allowed there and it reminded me of those evocative photos of the Targa Florio which took place in nearby Sicily until the seventies. Cars were set off in batches of eight for a four lap race with the groups based on the results of the sprint. This led to some curious grids with Minis, MGs, Fiat 500s and AC Cobras in the same races.



With the B16 Chevron being the quickest car by a fair margin the next cars up were the matching pair of "Alan Mann" Escorts of Charlie Cutajar and Mark Mills who were very close and battled hard during the racing. Also fast was the Alfa Spider of Nikolia Degorgio and the Datsun 204Z of Zak Matten. The Porsche of Gordon Vella looked great but seemed to have handling problems while the Cobras were actually quite slow on lap times.

There was a good turn of British sports cars in the event with the quickest being the MG B V8 of Ray Vella who finished just outside the top ten. Jason Spiteri was going well in his MG. Guy Broad was driving one of his customer's cars to good effect and Alan Said had a replica race B but in fairly standard mechanical specification. Ian Froggett had his B GT taken out from the UK for the event. Local men Paul Ciappara and Stephen Azzopardi had tidy Bs as well. Remarkably quick were the Triumph Vitesses and there were a couple of fairly standard E types as well along with replica D and C types from the Siad family.



A fair number of ladies were taking part including MG Bs for Pamela Said and Olivia said. In the pre war class there were two MGs for Italian Giordano Mozzi in a J2 and local man Joe Garada in a PA but they were a long way behind the group winner, a Fiat 501 which was driven very spectacularly by its Italian pilot.

While not on the same scale at Goodwood this is certainly a great event to visit or indeed compete and the Maltese are very welcoming.



It's quite possible to ship cars out to Malta for the event and you can combine it with a holiday. What about a WMC invasion next year?

Graeme



Brockbanks Solicitors Cross Border Speed Championship

I am pleased to announce the revival of the Wigton Motor Club Speed Championship. Some of you may have missed the earlier announcement that we planned to take a year off, but a number of you got together to see if there was anything that could be done to keep it going into 2015 and beyond. A good deal of work went on behind the scenes and a presentation was made to the committee to make a case for the creation of a speed sub committee to help run a series on behalf of the club.

There are a number of new ideas based upon many of the current competitor's thoughts and views. Proposals currently include a larger number of events to choose from, so the championship may look quite different from what we are used to. The committee has agreed in principle to take this forward, and whilst no firm details exist at this point, the coming weeks will see applications to other clubs to incorporate a wide variety of events into the WMC Speed calendar for 2015. Watch this space for details as they emerge.

This is a fine example of help being offered to the committee to take some of the burden and enthusiastically seeking a way forward. This is very welcome, and a great example of the membership coming together with solid proposals rather than the committee driving matters. The committee will oversee the developing proposals on behalf of the club, but some new angles should be allowed to be explored in the coming weeks and into 2015.

As soon as confirmation of dates and MSA approved regulations are finalised, we will let you know. Let's look forward to a refreshed series and let's try and generate interest in the championship and make sure we sign up a good number of competitors for the coming year.

An early commitment to the series is our current sponsor Brockbanks Solicitors - they have confirmed they will back the series into 2015, so many thanks to them and let's give them an action packed year!

Jim O'Neill



**Brockbanks
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Elderly Utterances

The Voice of Experience!

Ron Palmer has his say



I closed last month's words with some anticipation of the Rally of the Tests which promised much but alas was to disappoint as the Jag's half shaft broke mid afternoon on the Friday. After a slowish start the previous evening we had pulled up to about 7th and were really getting into the swing of things when forward motion ceased. We were towed to a pub south of Much Wenlock by the flying spanners where we ate and enjoyed a couple of glasses of ale whilst waiting three hours for the recovery truck home. Charles suffered in some silence curled

up in a very small truck cab and we arrived home in the wee small hours. Still, better than last year when I spent six days in the Wrexham Cardiac Unit on my way home. Interestingly the Tests had over 30 first time entries so the event's challenging reputation does not scare potential entries away.

We then both entered the Solway Classic, Charles with his son-in-law Ian in the TR4 and me with Robin Murray in the 1275'S'. We had a fun day with the odd wrong test thrown in whilst the TR4's clutch let go not far from home for Charles and Ian. So the dead car park at Armathwaite Hall has some fettling to do before the next outing. The Solway was good fun, enthusiastically run by Stephen and company with some good tests and cheerful marshals. For Robin and me it coincided with our 50th anniversary since we started competing together and it's true to say we are getting slower with the passage of time whilst the car gets quicker.

'A Christmas Tale'.

At the end of the 1000 Mile Trial in July each crew member was presented with a mighty tome of 364 pages penned by Elizabeth Bennett commemorating the first running of the event in 1900. In those pioneering days a good deal of planning and route reconnoitring was necessary carried out largely by the Secretary of the Automobile Club in late 1899.

Sunday 24th December 1899 – the alternative route from Kendal to Keswick via Thirlmere was attempted in the Critchley of five and a half horse power. The road via Bannerigg is a stiff hill – one in ten and the car needed help here. Again when reaching Dunmail Raise (one in ten) the ascent was made but the car was going very badly – inexplicably so. But with patience and pushing the top was reached in a rattling hailstorm and strong wind. Then followed a weird drive in the dark along the new road by Thirlmere. The car was going worse and worse. The belts either slipped or broke continually; the engine however was working splendidly. More pushing up hill and at last with a car that would scarcely run with the aid of the engine down a steep hill (subsequently found to be because of a bent axle) Keswick was entered at 1.30 on Christmas morning.

'The host of the George Inn is a man to be remembered with gratitude, since instead of grumbling at being required to get up at this hour he and his wife and daughter gave us a hearty welcome and a good hot meal. He then blew merry calls on a



posthorn outside the hotel to announce our arrival to the neighbourhood'

Another version was possibly nearer the truth. The little town was in darkness as we groped our way down what appeared to be the main street until we arrived at an inn that seemed the most inviting of those we had seen. Not a soul was about so blowing our horn and shining one of our lights on an upstairs window to awaken the landlord and get a 'shake down' for the night we awaited results. Several minutes elapsed when finally there appeared at the window an old woman in a nightcap who told us to Go Home and then closed the window. Renewed horn blowing however brought her once more to the windows I steered the car closer to the house and enquired

if we could put up for the night. 'George and Dragon' have gone to bed was the reply. I know that said Johnson but get George to come down and let us in!

After waiting what seemed like a quarter of an hour we heard footsteps descending the stairs, a light appeared on the ground floor and the landlord opened the door. Much to their surprise he beckoned them into the house and the care they received thereafter was excellent.

Not so different to Classic rallying today. As we approach the end of another year I would like to thank Charles for a successful and entertaining competition year in a good selection of his cars.

I have insured my classics over many years with Footman James but with our club's recent connection with Hagerty I decided to give them a try. Not only was their premium competitive (yes cheaper) but the staff enthusiastic, knowledgeable and very helpful. They now have my custom. I wish everyone in Wigton Motor Club a Happy Christmas and a successful and enjoyable 2015.

Ron

Gates Tyres Northern Historic Rally Awards

Solway Historic and Targa Rally.

A full entry for the event gathered on a fine, windy Rowrah Kart track.

Test 1 around the track was fun, test 2 on the car park, consisting of 90L-90R's. a short run out to Fultons test track on a windy hill top, which was clear to follow on the test diagram. Next on to Energus' car park, not too difficult to remember. Test 5 at Broughton quarry, always fun here! Going ok so far. A run out to the car park at Maryport karting, where a senior moment took place, wrong test! Down to a new test at Gates Tyres, another senior moment, disaster! Lunch next at Energus, followed by a repeat of the test. Back to Broughton quarry, where the test was even more slippery. Return to Maryport and Gates where we took our time to get the tests right. Back to Fultons for a different test, then return to Rowrah to repeat the car park test, and a final blast of a double lap in reverse direction, great fun here!

Many thanks to the organisers for a well run event. Also the marshals and landowners

But the question is WHO can beat Archie?!

Tot and Maureen Dixon



Club Championships

180 members scored in the Club Championship and 46 in the Autotest Championship. A total of 143 people scored in the Marshals' Championship.

The leading scorers in the Club Championship were:

Angela Jones	113
William Jarman	113
Steve Fishwick	109
Andrew Graham	94
John Sloan	92
Rob Iveson	91
Stephen Palmer	83
David Agnew	82
Jack Palmer	78
James Thompson	73
Brian Iveson	68
Roger Pope	58
Mark Messenger	53
Marian Sloan	53
Eileen Horsfall	50
George Edminson	49
Andy Fish	48
John Bertram	48
Archie Simmonds	47
Ralf Millar	47

Ties were decided on the score on the first event.

We would like to thank our main sponsors of our championship and also those who donated awards for the Marshals' Championship. If anyone wishes to donate an award for that this year please let us know.

Autojumble

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Free to members

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1974 Reliant Scimitar GTE with O/D (tax exempt from next April)

Owned by me for 15 yrs. Had loads of work done to it by Keith Thomas over the years

Used regularly on pub runs until 2011. Basically sound but needs bodywork, a respray and much TLC. Would make a good winter project

Graham Kirkpatrick 01900817491 / 07527044849 / gkandjk@btinternet.com

WMC Events 2015

Month	Date	Day	Event	Name	Organiser(s)
January	17th	Saturday	Dinner	Awards Night	David Agnew
	25th	Sunday	Autotest		
February					
	28th	Sunday	Autotest		
March					
	22nd	Sunday	Training Day	Historic Rally/Targa	Ron Palmer & Graeme F
April	26th	Sunday	Drive It Day		Graeme Forrester
May	6th	Wednesday	Pub Run		
	8th - 10th		Tour	Gallop	Ron Palmer
	20th	Wednesday	Autotest		
June	3rd	Wednesday	Pub Run		
	17th	Wednesday	Autotest		
	28th	Sunday	Historic Rally	Lake District Classic	
July	1st	Wednesday	Pub Run		
	26th	Sunday	Autotest		
August	5th	Wednesday	Pub Run		
	22nd	Saturday	Tour	Rose & Thistle	Ron Palmer
	23rd	Sunday	Show	Classic Show	
September	2nd	Wednesday	Pub Run		
October	17th	Saturday	Tour	Copeland Canter	Neal & Eileen Horsfall
	18th	Sunday	Historic Rally	Solway Historic Rally	Steve Palmer etc
November	15th	Sunday	Autotest		
December	30th	Wednesday	Autotest		

Hopefully in the next few weeks we can fill in the gaps for the organisers. If all volunteers can get in touch to say where they can organise or help organise in the case of the bigger events.

Inside the Industry

Paul Gilligan keeps us up to date

New Car Sales Boom Continues

Although many (including me) have been predicting a slowdown in the rapid increase in UK car sales, October came in at a stonking 14% above last October, raising year to date to a 9.5% increase and seeing over 2M new cars registered by end October for the first time since 2007.

As ever there are winners and losers. Audi continue to pull away from BMW, Mercedes continue to catch up with BMW. Bentley are 22% up on last year and Maserati 275 % up. You did really that right over 1000 new Masers against 271 last year, amazing what starting to offer diesel can do! Lotus up too, but going from 169 sales to 188 is hardly the answer. Within the VW empire it's not just Audi who are doing well, SEAT are 20% up and Skoda over 18%. Mitsubishi and Renault are both well up on what were dreadful performances last year, surprisingly almost the worst score is Mini, over 5% down in a market almost 10% up.

The used car glut I mentioned last month which results from these record new sales is really starting to bite. I was talking to a Skoda dealer friend a couple of weeks ago. He's taken an order for a new car to be delivered in late October. The part exchange was a Volvo. Not wanting to retain that car he agreed a deal to sell it to a Volvo dealer for £10000 provided it was delivered by the end of the month. Unfortunately the new car was late and the Volvo wasn't available until November 4th. He called the Volvo dealer to agree a new deal depending (he expected) on how much Glass's Guide had reduced the value in the revised guide. His Volvo friend explained that unfortunately he could no longer buy the car at any price. His dealership was owned by one of the top ten motor groups in the UK, and head office had issued an edict that they had far too many used cars in stock, used sales were slow, and no more stock was to be purchased other than by part exchange. Penalty for disobeying this instruction – instant dismissal. Similar stories abound, and several dealers I know have held big and expensively marketed used car sales events recently with little effect on sales.

If Glasses Guide values continue to drop large dealers will be facing very big year end stock write downs, damaging fragile profitability further. Average dealer profits are about level with last year in spite of increased new sales, evidence of the heavy discounting needed to achieve these sales.

Electric Cars

It will surprise my regular reader, but I'm going to say something positive on this subject this month. Sales remain slow, only 5000 pure electrics registered so far this year out of 2.1M. The positive is (as it was always going to be) a technological advance. And I'm pleased to see it comes from Renault, who have for a long time now been the industry lead balloon.

Renault look like being the first to adopt the aluminium-air battery. I'll not try to explain the technology in detail (I know when I'm beaten!). Suffice it to say that by using these batteries the operating range of the electric Renault Zoe goes from 130 miles to almost 1000 miles between recharging. However you will have to stop after about every 250 miles to top the system up with electrolyte. The aluminium-air batteries are smaller and lighter than the equivalent lithium-ion batteries currently used, and probably less than half the price.

Probably not available for another 4-5 years, this could be the game-changer the electric car fans have been waiting for. And if it all works as planned it will render the current crop virtually valueless.

Meanwhile Mitsubishi have a new boss who has killed off the iconic Evo in order to concentrate on developing electric cars and hybrids. The last UK Evo has been sold in the last few weeks. Meanwhile the Mitsubishi Outlander plug in hybrid has easily become Britain's best selling plug in car. Since it was launched it has outsold the Nissan Leaf by 2 to 1 and the much-hyped BMW i3 by more than 10 to 1. Helped by me selling one this week!

It seems you may have to get used to me saying nice things about electric cars.

Manufacturer Standards Battle Continues

Despite dealer profit margins being thin, despite the growing part played by the internet in customers research and even purchasing, manufacturers continue to demand bigger and better showrooms from these dealers. I referred to this problem recently, but it seems to be even bigger than I thought.

Earlier this month I received a call from the Senior Salesman at Creamer's of Kensington, one of London's oldest established Jaguar dealers. I've done quite a bit of business with them over the years, and the service has always been excellent, which is why I keep going back to them for Jaguars required in the South. Purpose of the call was to tell me that after 50 years Creamer's were to close as Jaguar sales dealers at the end of this month, but will continue as authorised service dealers. So he would be out of a job after 10 years. The reason is simple, they cannot afford or justify the investment required to meet Jaguar's new showroom standards.

I find this very sad. Sidney Creamer, who founded the business was a wonderful man. I had the pleasure of sitting with him at a Jaguar dinner about 10 years ago. A true enthusiast, he had been very much part of the motor racing scene in the 1950s and early 60s. His fund of stories about those times, and the likes of Moss, Hawthorn etc were as brilliant as they were unprintable. As the nearest dealer to Buck House Sydney was entrusted with the delivery of all new Jaguars required by members of the Royal Family. This he always did personally, even being the last person to polish the leaper on the bonnet before taking the car to the Palace. Had he not wanted to do the job himself he soon had no choice, the late Queen Mother for one insisted on it.

He must have impressed because a few years ago, shortly before he passed away, he became Sir Sydney. After his death his management team (to who he left the business, not having any children) resolved to continue to his standards, and they did. Now they can't because they don't have the many millions required to build a property in Kensington that meets Jaguar's new standards. Sadly there are many similar stories around just now.

Nice Buildings, What About the People?

Manufacturer standards cover hundreds of requirements, mainly about buildings and facilities the dealer must have. In these aspects they go into enormous detail so that every dealership has the same signage, lighting, floor tiles, desks, door handles, etc etc.

As far as people are concerned the manufacturer will specify how many staff and management there must be, and also insist on the number and type of training courses each person must attend each year. What they haven't yet found a way of setting rules for is the to me most important thing, the quality of those people. So far too often you have wonderful multi million pound showrooms staffed by people (salespeople in particular) who are frankly well below acceptable. We source between 5 and 10 new vehicles most weeks. We therefore get to talk to lots of dealership sales staff. Many are regulars, because frankly when you find a good one you tend to stick with them, mainly because good ones are so rare. However they don't always have the car we're looking for, in those cases we have to cast the net much wider. We have a system that enables us to email every dealer in the UK for each manufacturer in seconds. So if we're looking for an ex-demo Audi A4 Avant Quattro Auto 2.0 TDi 177ps in black or grey, must have heated seats, must be under 5000 miles and £27000 as we were the other day, we simply email every Audi dealer in the country, then we get to talk to dealers we don't regularly use. Here's some anecdotes from this and other enquiries, all of the took place this month:

We sent an enquiry to every VW dealer for a new car. Almost immediately we received what was obviously an automated reply from the Customer Car Manager at one large dealership. She explained how delighted and grateful they were to have received our enquiry, that it had already been passed to one of the sales team, and that that person would be in touch very soon. All very impressive, problem is that was 3 weeks ago and they haven't got round to calling us yet.

An Audi enquiry resulted in me receiving a call from a London dealer salesman. Once he had established that I was the person who had sent the email and required a new £45000 car he en

quired after my health by saying “Y’allright mate?” Call me old fashioned but until I picked that phone up I’d never had any contact with him. I’m hardly his “mate” yet, nor he mine. I don’t expect or want to be called Sir, but surely one of the expensive training courses he went on should have covered the basics of opening a conversation with a customer?

We were looking for a limited edition Skoda Yeti for a customer. Unfortunately the Skoda website didn’t have detailed information on either specification or price, so I called Skoda UK customer helpline. They gave me some specification information that the lady “thought” was correct, but said they didn’t know the price of any of their cars, I would have to call a dealer. I said that Tesco’s knew the price of thousands of items in their stores and on their website, the reply was that selling cars was more complex than groceries.

Determined to get accurate information for our customer we then embarked on calling dealers. Jacqui called one dealer and was put on hold while the switchboard lady tried to find a salesman. After about 5 minutes, which as ever seemed like 5 hours, she was told “Sorry all the salesmen are busy, you’ll have to call back”. No offer to take our number and call us back.

I then spoke to another dealer where the salesman could give me the on the road price but not the split between the price of the car, on the road costs, and VAT. This I needed to structure the discounted deal for my customer. The salesman said his manager had that information, but he was “in a meeting”.

Still determined Jacqui phoned a third dealer where the salesman gave her the price information. He wasn’t sure about specification, but eventually obtained it by shouting across the showroom to a colleague while Jacqui was still holding on.

I don’t care how much the showroom these people were sitting in cost, how expensive and attractive the floor tiles were, and so on. None of those dealers did or will get our business, because their people are as bad as their showrooms are good.

Paul Gilligan
pg@gvcontracts.co.uk



I saw this in London and immediately thought of Paul!

GTF



Andy's Armchair

Andy Armstrong takes an irrelevant look at motoring and motorsport

2014 is drawing to a close and at the time of writing we are waiting to see who's going to be the F1 champion. Hopefully Lewis can pull it off but with the farce of double points hanging over the last round there's no way of knowing what'll happen. I suggest the two contenders jointly announce they're going to ignore the double points rule. They can then race in Abu Dhabi using the usual format, and if double points change the outcome the "pseudo winner" will decline the accolade and take second place instead. Let's face it it's a stupid system which is only being used this year so why don't drivers and teams make a stance and do the sensible thing. In the final analysis a champion relying on double points would never be regarded as such so why accept it.

This year has as always had highs and lows. On the minus side there have been too many fatalities and bad injuries in Historic events. We had spectators killed on the Jim Clark and more deaths in Irish tarmac rallying. We had Bianchi's crash in Japan, something which many have expected for years when JCBs were trundling around gravel traps during a race.

We've lost the British F3 championship, once the best route to F1, and the British rally championship dies off in 2015 (will it come back). Club grids are pretty thin when there are only single figure entries for some major national championships on their visit to Croft. I think they're afraid to come north of Donington.

We've lost Marussia and Caterham from F1 because they couldn't afford more than 60 million pounds for a season and even when they did they still couldn't race anyone except each other. It's ironic really but one of the biggest expenses is the estimated 20 million pounds need for new engine supply, which if I'm not mistaken was introduced to show how frugal, efficient, green and gorgeous F1 was. Maybe it would have been better to have kept the old motors, bought a tad more petrol and saved a fortune. There's a link here to buying a Fiesta or a Leaf but you can work that out for yourself.

On the plus side there have been some exciting Grand Prix races and Vettel's off the pace. The World Endurance Championship has been good, unless you're Porsche, and Anthony Davidson looks more like our next Bell or McNish. The British GT Championship is well supported and Bentley are keeping Msport to the fore.

We've 2 Brits in world rallying but Meeke needs to learn a podium outscore a ditch and Elfyn needs just a touch more speed, possibly some practice in his dad's school bus would help.

Young Brits coming through in single seaters Palmer, Rowland and Stoneman, who nearly died of cancer a couple of years ago,, are doing really well in global championships. You'd hope at least one would get to F1 but I doubt it unless the necessary zillions can be found.

Finally the demolition derby which masquerades as the BTCC has been entertaining with Turkington putting one over the squabbling pit lane pensioners.

There are many more pluses but the main one is the continued success of WMC, let's hope that can be maintained again in the future.

Ends

AA

What's On

WMC events and other events of interest

December

6-9th	HERO	LE JOG
7th	MGC	Christmas Cracker Run
27th	NAC	Christmas Stages at Croft
28th	WMC	Festive Autotest

January

10/11		Autosport Show
17th	WMC	Awards Dinner
25th	WMC	Autotest

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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