

Wigton Motor Club Ltd

Start Line

Issue: 02/15

www.wigtonmc.co.uk

February 2015

Slippery Jack Frost



Read Marian's report on page 7

Motor Sport for All

Diary

Club events over the next month or so

Autotest and PCA

At

Maryport

March 1st

Entry forms on the website

Including the under 17s and novice PCA

Historic & Targa Rally Training

Sunday, March 22nd

Based near Penrith and M6 junction 41

A few places remaining

WIGTON MOTOR CLUB LTD

Officials

President:

Vice Pres. Stan Glaister, Ron Palmer & David Turnbull,

Chairman

Jim O'Neill

01768 870236

elizabeth-oneill@sky.com

Vice Chair

Graeme Mactavish

016973 44542

graeme@pcxinternet.com

Sec/Editor

Graeme Forrester

01900 825642

gtfmg@yahoo.co.uk

Treasurer

Paul Gilligan

07785 293 222

pg@gvcontracts.co.uk

Memb. Sec.

Jaime Hamilton

jaime@jhbookkeepingservices.co.uk

Social Sec.:

David Agnew

01946 841455

DAVIDWAGNEW@aol.com

Child Protect.

Alan Jackson

01900 828428

bigwalk1@gmail.com

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

John Graham

01228 534483

jlg86mpa@hotmail.co.uk

Lynda Graham.

01228 534483

jlg86mpa@hotmail.co.uk

Andrew Graham

01228 534483

andy-lake3rec@hotmail.co.uk

Charles Graves

01768 776551

charles.graves@armathwaite-hall.com

David Wiggins

016973 49488

michellewiggins137@btinternet.com

Peter Garforth

016973 21762

petergarforth@btinternet.com

Chris Leece

01768 867576

chris_lowtherview@yahoo.co.uk

David Exton

01228 675370

d.exton370@btinternet.com

Paul Eastwood

01697 323693

paulandsueeastwood@tiscali.co.uk

Talking Point

Topical comment from the world of motoring

Have you noticed that television and electrical repair shops have disappeared from our High Streets? This is mainly because the cost of repairing a faulty device or unit is greater than the cost of replacement. Is the same going to happen to motor cars?

Statistics tell us that the average life of a car is just seven years, a bit less if it is French or German. In many cases cars bite the dust, not due to worn out engines or the rust bug but due to failed electronic systems which are too costly to repair or replace. Thus cars that are actually good for many more miles mechanically are scrapped. Now this may be good for the manufacturers in that more cars are bought new on a more regular basis but not good for the buyer or for that matter for the environment.

“Practical Classics” had two examples of this in their staff project cars recently with fairly recent cars. A SMART sports car - quite a cute little thing but with many mainly electric problems and not designed to be repairable they decided. At the other end of the scale was a Range Rover HSE which proved hugely unreliable to the extent, that even with the capabilities of the resident PC mechanics, it was moved on.

I rather suspect that the survival rate for most cars from the post mid eighties onwards is quite low and indeed many will be extinct already. It be said of course that many cars of that era weren't worth keeping anyway! On the other the relative survival rate of cars from the fifties and sixties (and no doubt pre war cars as well) is quite high and there will be very few where none have been restored to their prime. An occasional search on Ebay under the “other classic cars” section can bring up some really rare finds like a Gogomobile, a Standard 10 Pick Up and a Standard Vanguard Sportsman currently on sale there. What modern cars will survive? Well in most cases it will depend on the availability of spares. While it is relatively easy to remanufacture parts of MGs and Minis from the 60s, making the equivalent parts for a 1995 Subaru many well not be an economical proposition. Cars that are relatively simple, or have their roots in the 60s, such as the Lada Niva might be a possibility and I would think the Honda S2000 would be a good investment as they were a limited run unlikely to be repeated and many of the mechanical parts are still in use of more recent models.

At the moment the value of classics of any age seems to be rising very quickly as we have people investing with no interest in the cars themselves and also well off enthusiasts buying cars that are eligible to do prestigious events in. Cars with any sporting provenance is desirable and if it raced or rallied at a high level then it's value will be even more enhanced.

GTF



**Editor: Graeme Forrester, Clints Cottage, Blindcrake, Cockermouth,
Cumbria, CA13 0QP. 01900 825642**

Email: gtfmg@yahoo.co.uk

The opinions expressed in this issue of Start Line are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the Club
The contents of Start Line are protected by copyright 2015

Classic Column

News from the Classic Scene

The **Classic Weekend** is over six months away but the sub committee that runs it will be meeting shortly to do some planning. We welcome new members and any new ideas. It's always difficult to get new theses, in recent years we have focussed on particular models or marques and anniversaries. Thus any suggestions or ideas are most welcome or indeed any changes to how we run the Show.

The **autojumble** scene has been in decline for a few years now both at shows and at specific auto-jumbles. There are two main reasons: the lack of stock and the easy and cost of selling via the internet. Over the years the stock of small dealers have been bought up and sold on, enthusiasts have tended to clear their own garages and fewer "dead" cars have been stripped for useful parts. You just have to look at the spares advert pages of the classic magazines, there used to be hundreds of adverts, now there are very few.

At the same time anyone with spares can sell them via Ebay without the effort and cost of taking their stock to an autojumble. Even on Ebay the amount of second hand parts for classics is drying up. If you have a popular classic then most parts are now remanufactured and even for rarer models it is now economic to have batches of rare parts made.

Creative Tax Discs

We wanted to remind you about the new classic car show that is on its way. It will be hosted by Quentin Wilson and the first episode is due to be aired on Thursday 5th February at 7pm Channel 5. We all know that good classic car shows are rarities. However, if this show fulfils its promise and is about the cars rather than the presenters it could prove to be the best find of 2015. Here is the link to the show: <http://www.classiccarshow.com/> (scroll down and click to see the trailer.)

As you may recall we at Creative Tax Discs don't do any direct advertising. We want to keep our prices as low as possible and feel that unpredictable advertising budgets would inevitably lead to increased prices. Word of mouth keeps us going and people like you who have been good enough to mention us to others are our lifeblood.

We have been trading since 2011 so we know what to expect at this time of year. The period from late December to early January sees us virtually vanish from some online motoring forums due to the revolving door nature of new posts pushing down the old posts. Although this is to be expected this year we have taken the decision for the first time to contact our clients with the request to mention us afresh on any of the forums they may be in. It would be really appreciated if you could post our website link should you think it appropriate. <http://www.creativetaxdiscs.co.uk/>

Bill & John

Creative Tax Discs

01226495230



www.lakedistricthotels.net

PG Tips

Well, it's the morning after the awards do and I am a little the worse for wear but otherwise in fine fettle! I think everyone who attended would agree it was a good night and I thought the food was particularly tasty this year. I would at this stage like to issue an apology to anyone who won a speed championship trophy because they were quite frankly rubbish this year. They looked good in the brochure and in previous years the quality has always been good enough. By the time we got them it was too late to do anything about it. Next year they will be better, and it may be that more money is needed to ensure that. Since Brockbanks took over the sponsorship Trudy has always been keen to give everyone something as well as the trophy because a lot of people view trophies as dust collectors and own dozens on the things! In previous years it has always been a bottle of wine, this year it was chocolates. I would appreciate some feedback on whether it's worth doing or if the money should all go on trophies? My email address is in the magazine – please feel free to contact me.

Over Christmas, I took part in the festive autotest at Maryport and had a fantastic day out...apparently I didn't win despite my best efforts but I did do some fairly crazy donuts in my car. I say my car when I actually mean Paul Eastwood's car...which is probably why the donuts were quite crazy. I suspect between us we took off a measurable amount of rubber from the tyres and halved the life of the clutch. We also got lost on the later courses when things got complicated which left me in awe of those autotest specialists (or geeks possibly!) who found their way round them successfully on their own. Paul and I got lost with the other co-driving and giving directions! I recall shouting STOP STOP followed by swearing on several occasions during the day...I found it considerably harder than navigating on the LDC or Solway due to the sheer volume of cones and the fact that all cones are clones. Anyway...I think I've established fairly convincingly that I'm never going to be an autotest or PCT champion but it has been fun finding out and I intend to continue checking on a regular basis...ideally in someone else's car!

Now, to my cars...rust is the enemy of all old cars and unless you own a Lotus, Reliant or other plastic bodied car it's a never ending battle to ensure that you control what you have or stop your pride and joy from getting any. In my case Ekk seems to be totally rust free and clean whilst Snotty is not. Although the odd bubble sometimes appears on the rear arch or front panel I always assumed Snotty was rock solid and that the rust was only cosmetic...then just before Christmas I noticed a large bubbling in the driver's side sill and after thinking about it for a day or 2 decided to investigate. The screwdriver went straight through, and then along a bit and then filler started falling out and then after I finished crying the angle grinder revealed an 8" long hole. Finding sills for old Skodas is not easy although apparently they are still available new in Hungary...I managed to get a pair from a fellow enthusiast in the UK who had them sat on a shelf waiting. Thankfully I bought both even though I thought I only needed one, because after a closer inspection of the other side a screwdriver could also be shoved through it. Right now Snotty is in being painted after having the new sills fitted...and several inches of floor too. Let's hope my newly built engine produces the goods, because right now I am quite fed up of the old green skud!

Ekk on the other hand is going rather well...I am putting standard springs back on to raise the ride height and improve the ride comfort as it turned out someone had lowered him with a set of Spax springs...which on their own make the car look better but cause a choppy ride. I do get occasional twinges to chop Ekk in and buy something else...possibly even something non Skoda...perhaps even non Eastern block!

Peter

Daytona Asides

The fastest lap recorded at the Daytona Classic was 1.41:6 which looks amazing when you consider the fastest lap recorded by the winning car in the modern Rolex 24 Hours of Daytona was 1.39:8.

Until you realise that the 1.41:6 was set by Andy Wallace in a 2005 Audi R8. You don't have to be very old to be a classic in the USA

The American flag signalling system is slightly different. They have an *All Course Black Flag* This means. Stop racing and return to the pit lane. The Clerk of the Course. Dorsey Schroeder, then went on to say. "But you can still overtake".

With 19 nationalities in the room this created a storm of questions. Solution; The Clerk of the Course decreed. "OK for the avoidance of any confusion, at this race meeting, there will be NO overtaking under the Black flag". Problem solved. They do things differently in the USA.

Normally our pit signalling system consists of a large green board which is hung out over the pit wall when the pit stop "Window" is open. With no pit to car system allowed this works reasonably well.

At Daytona the pit wall is about 75 yards from the track so an alternative had to be found.

It was noticed there was a small set of Bleachers Grandstand) on the outside of Turn3 directly in the eyeline of the driver. Tony Wareing acquired 3 iridescent green boards. Sue, Ann and Di suitably equipped with a board each were dispatched to the top row of this particular set of bleachers. Where, under the expert choreography of Tony, when the green board signal was required they would leap to their feet and wave the green boards.

What the other occupants of the bleachers thought of all this I can't imagine. Unless they thought it was a splinter group from the Rockettes. (For our older readers the Rockettes are the USA equivalent of the Tiller Girls)

George Tuma owns one of the three Ferrari 365 GTB Competizione which were built specifically for the Daytona 24 Hours in, I think, 1967. George is very rich. He entered the car for the inaugural Classic having acquired the services of one of the original drivers. Arturo Merzario. Now there are those who claim that Arturo was the inspiration for the driver "Mad Dog" in Barry Foleys series of Catchpole cartoons. Allegedly.

In free practice, Arturo driving, the Ferrari threw a rod. The cost of a 1967 365 Ferrari V12 can only be left to the imagination. However George is very rich and had a spare engine, so George, not quite as rich as before, instructed the pit crew to install it.

Having worked long and hard the car was ready for qualifying. Arturo was sent out to gain a good grid position: unfortunately the spare engine threw a rod!

We went to commiserate with George who met us with." Its Ok fellas I'm on suicide watch"! I hope they gave him an award for the most expensive meeting.

There are some older contributors who are prone to have a dig at us, often maligned, HGV drivers.

So I thought this photo might have them indignant to the point of incandescence. Which they will probably enjoy)

The truck in the distance on Interstate 75, is what in the USA is referred to as an 18 Wheeler. The trailer was 52 feet long, and it is pulling away from us!

Eddie



Jack Frost Autotest

Oh! The embarrassment of it all – a simple task turns into a right palaver. You pull up close to the double gates of Maryport Arena, jump out trying to look in control and in possession of keys, fiddle with the padlock and discover the gates open outwards and not inwards as expected. Faff about reversing sufficiently to allow one gate to open fully but just NOT enough for the other to quite make it past the front bumper. And all the time being watched by a growing queue of competitors all rolling their eyes to heaven and wondering what sort of numpty can't even open a gate? As much use as a sponge leg. Still, enough of my inadequacies.



The husband fared rather better and took his position in a supervisory capacity for the day. He was, of course, ably assisted by Team Hunter, Graeme and Wiggy so they did all the work while he swanned about with a clipboard and an air of self importance.

No-one really wanted to make a start – we were having a nice time in the dry discussing tactics and the relative merits of a limited slip diff. Then the fire alarm went off in the workshop unit and Wiggy tried to disable it by pressing every button on the display panel. At this point, Steve Dixon helpfully clapped his hands loudly behind Wiggy's head reducing him to a quivering wreck and in need of a change of underwear. He wasn't

the only one.

So we all tramped outside in the cold and wet and got cracking.

The husband and Fiona took charge of the stopwatches, Chris ran about fielding cones like a demented Duracell bunny and I took up position in a nice warm Land Rover complete with heated seats to oversee proceedings and repel any potentially interested visitors. This fact did not escape David Agnew who implied I had a cushy number. Sadly David wasn't the one who got extra homework to be completed by Tuesday in the form of this article – thanks for that Graeme....

And this is how the day went:

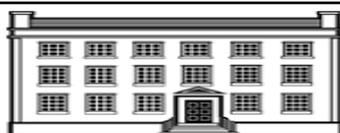
Ron Palmer (roof off – in this weather?) – cool as a cucumber on the surface – Classic FM on the radio - bit of a flap at the far end when the Mazda back end broke away but control was seamlessly regained and Ron came in at Number 9. Rumour has it he's really The Stig.....

Steve Fishwick – dependable as ever until Test 7 when a red mist descended out of nowhere and he sent the Puma into the spin cycle – yes, we've all done it - the Fishcake emerged unscathed, came in at Number 8 and can't wait for his turn to do the next write up.

Tom Hall in the Matchbox size Mini Special seemingly on a Scalextric track. Precision at every move and a joy to watch. All the way from Durham and a very worthy event winner.

The Young Pretenders: Jack Palmer, James Wiggins and Sam Kirkpatrick. Jack's come on a bit since he ditched his dad – obviously a good move as he came in 6th and must surely deserve further recognition for dragging a cone for the longest distance around the course. James' confidence increased visibly throughout the day under Mandy's encouragement and Sam very nearly beat his dad in spite of hitting the same cone EVERY time. Well done, lads!

Roger, in the "Popemobile Mini" failed to repeat his historical (hysterical?) senior moment of the last event in the "sea of cones" fiasco – more's the pity – I was hoping for a bit more entertainment value.....



**Brockbanks
Solicitors**

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

Nigel Moffat (aka Edmund Blackadder) can always be relied on for a few woefully wrong tests – and he didn't disappoint on this occasion either. And it all started so WELL, Nigel.

Megan Iveson, coldest feet and fastest lady of the day, egged on by brother Rob, driving what appeared to be KAK according to the entry form – surely it can't be THAT bad?

Steve Dixon – 3rd today and threatening to lose half a stone in order to get a faster time. Either that or cut the doors off the Corsa – no contest if you ask me – who needs doors? At least he didn't retire hurt this time – that's got to be something of a record in itself.



Peter Masters – in the Proton Savvy – the Proton what? Never heard of one let alone seen one before. Very impressive though and came in a well deserved 4th over all.

Rob Iveson – a fellow “Newcomer of the Year” and “Club Enthusiast for 2014” and over all 7th today. Did a few running repairs to the City Rover just to keep his hand in whilst waiting his turn to drive KAK. Actually, he's another one to watch. He knocked seven shades of the brown stuff out of Mr Hunter's Mazda in the post event playtime – I should know – I acted as ballast and screamed like a girl all the way.

Chris Hunter – what more can be said, really? Went into meltdown at one point and we thought it had all fallen apart (his driving not the MX5) but no – remarkable recovery and finished a creditable 5th.

If you haven't had a mention here consider yourself lucky to escape – you may not be so fortunate next time when Mr Fishwick takes a turn.

Thanks, as always, to all who competed, marshalled or assisted on the day in any way and especially to Fiona – a gold star award for effort!

Roll on 1st March and the next one – hope we'll see you there.

Cheers!

John and Marian Sloan

PS The husband has had his head turned. Mr Hunter's MX5 was taken for a spin and he returned grinning like a ninny. Here we go again.....must be one on Ebay going for a song.....?

Membership Renewals

If you have not sent in your cheque and renewal form to Jaime then this, sadly, will be the last Start Line you will receive. The renewal rate has been very high this year which is a great endorsement of the Club, our organisers and our contributors to Start Line who make it one of the best club magazines around.

Obviously if you are not a current member you will be unable to do any of our events or championships or take advantage of the reduced entry fees etc we can offer.

When you do renew please use the renewal form emailed to you and not the form on the website which is for brand new members.

Elderly Utterances

The Voice of Experience!

Ron Palmer has his say

Looking back some 50 years or so there were four main clubs in north and west Cumberland and the Cumberland Sporting Car Club and the 750 Motor Club were the ones I was involved with. In my late teens money was short and so navigating and marshalling rather than driving was the extent of my involvement and very satisfying it was too. My first regular driver on rallies was John Butterworth from Longburgh a butcher with George Rigg in Denton Holme, Carlisle. After having had too much excitement on his Triumph 650 Bonneville bike John graduated to cars starting with a Minor 1000 - XRM721 and later graduating via Riley 1.5 - YAO437, MGA - YBG69 and a Mini Cooper - 102 HRM (how sad is that!) before his marriage to Jean and domestic life intervened and rallying ceased for him.

I have recently been talking with the people at Watchtree Nature Reserve (the 2001 Foot and Mouth disease burial ground) who are putting together some information about their site history which was previously the WW11 airfield at Great Orton, only a couple of miles from where I live. In the '60s it was the regular venue for the 750MC driving tests (Autotests today) and the concrete runways and perimeter bays were still in very good condition. Alas today there is very little sound surface left from those days and ownership of the surrounding land now remains with seven or eight farmers who have fences dividing up the vast area of the perimeter roads which used to be ideal territory for motor club events. It was used intensively in the early to mid '60s and in the period June to October 1962 typically the 750MC held nine driving test meetings including one co-promoted with the CSCC.

A good relationship was nurtured with the landowners back then, mainly the Brownrigg brothers, who farmed locally at the Flat and who were great characters. They had a field full of old vehicles of all kinds including old Carlisle trams, commercials, cars and agricultural equipment some of which would have considerable value today but alas they were all removed some years ago. Amongst the other interests of the Brownriggs was collecting gravestones (some kept in the farmhouse), home rule for Cumberland and cock fighting. Although Watchtree have local information from pre WW11 and the post war period they are unable to get anything on the wartime operations there as it is apparently covered by the official secrets act even 70 years on, presumably government policy covers Kirkbride and Silloth airfields as well. It seems strange that we know so much more about the Foot and Mouth burials of 2001 than the wartime activities. I suppose if they release information on one wartime airfield they may have to for all the others too. Ed Glaister recalls a nissan hut close to the airfield entrance which had at some time been converted into a cinema and had rows of seats from a Dakota or similar and period murals on the walls – all now gone. A fellow club member from then Geoff Benson recalls a three hour relay race being held on the airfield but I can find no documented trace of it. Can't have been RAC authorised!

At the beginning of 1965 I was busy most weekends on regional events. After doing five rallies in October '64 (including a win with Robin Murray on the NMC Guy Fawkes Rally), and a further six in November / December the competitive New Year started on 16th January with Alf Sewell in his 'works' (Hepworth Pipe Company!) Cortina on the KLMC January Rally with a 5th place after leading for a while. Then there was a third place on the CSCC Keswick Rally with Robin in the Cooper followed by the Dunfermline Car Club Valentine Rally on 13/14



February with S of SCC member Paul Roxburgh of Lochmaben in his Mk1V Rapier. This was a forest stage event which ended for us with exhaust failure. The following weekend I sat in with Brian Mitton in his Cooper EM77 for the two day NUMC Allendale Rally which we won and had best performance on the road section and the driving tests. February finished the next week end with a third place on the FDMC Towers Leck Rally with Robin in his mother's new Triumph Herald 12/50. It was duly washed and polished on the Sunday morning after and the spotlights and flexilight removed before returning to his mum who was surprised to see it was cleaner than when Robin had collected it. Little did she know....

Next month I hope to have some information on Sprint events which were held at Kirkbride airfield in the '60s including runners and riders. Happy days.

Ron

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.

Les Ellis	– Cheshire	Michael Tutin	Penrith
Dave Winter	– Rotherham		
Dave Mallinson & Lin Makinson	- Preston	Lawrence & Mary Wride –	Beverley
Christopher & Sheila Gibson	– 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.

Autotest News

The planned under 17s event on Feb 15th will now take place with the normal event on March 1st. This is because the original date is in school half term and many of our youngsters will be away.

Entry forms are on the website

Venues

Events cannot take place without venues and we are always looking at places to hold autotests. A car park or other large area of tarmac or concrete is great as is grass fields in the summer. At the moments most of venues for these are in west Cumbria and we really would like to hold some events in the Wigton and Carlisle areas.

If you know of any suitable places we would love to hear from you!

Invited to 10, Downing Street

Arriving home from holiday in November I discovered a letter from 10, Downing Street inviting me to a reception to “**celebrate the success of British Motorsport**”. That allowed just eight days to make arrangements to get there and book accommodation etc. Why I was invited, and who suggested me I do not know but I assume it was something to do with being secretary of the current Motor Club of the Year. As far as I know I was the only “volunteer” to be invited.

The reception was due to run from 17.30 to 19.30 so that allowed for some sightseeing first including a trip on the London Eye. My memory of this was the number of huge cranes working on the construction of massive buildings in very direction.

Back at the hotel I asked the (east European) receptionist to book me a taxi to do to 10, Downing Street at 17.00 it the due time I was summoned and went down to find a large silver Mercedes limo with blacked out windows waiting for me The receptionist must have thought I was important as I was going to Downing Street!

Anyway a rush hour crawl via Oxford and Regent Streets saw me arrive with about five minutes to spare as the great and the good on British motorsport were assembling at the gates. Several looked at my “taxi” no doubt expecting Lewis Hamilton to get out of the large silver Merc! It was a bit embarrassing though as I got out of the limo the black cab in front had Jackie Stewart emerging from it and the one behind, Alan Gow owner of the BTCC.

The small side gate was opened and we were checked in by our invitations. What you don’t see on the TV coverage of 10, Downing Street is the porta-cabin half way up which contains a full airport type security system. Cameras and phones are not allowed in the PM’s home.

We then walked up in groups and I knocked on the halloed door which duly opened. (It is true that it does not have a handle on the outside.) It this point you had to leave your phones and cameras in a special cabinet. My main impression was the size of the building. Given that it looks like a large town house it is a bit of a “Tardis” inside. There must a good number of offices downstairs and many more above plus the Cameron’s family rooms. We were ushered up the famous stairs lined with the portraits of past Prime Ministers and into the two reception rooms were drinks and nibbles were presented to us. The cabinet room was open so we had a look round though no tried the seats out for size!

The seventy or so present were a very diverse group and I doubt if anyone there know more than a good handful of the other folk present. Obviously the invitation list covered a very wide range of people involved in making British motorsport the success it is. Veteran race drivers like Jackie Stewart, Stirling Moss, Derek Bell, John Surtees and Tony Brooks while there were a handful of our teenage rising stars. As it was just two days after the last GP the only current GP driver there was Max Chilton who in fact did not have a drive in the last race due to Marussia have a slight problem paying their bills!

From the rallying word I was able to chat with Malcolm Wilson, Nicky Grist and also Kris Meeke who was telling me he had made 191 air journeys during the past year! Patrick Head was there representing the teams and designers while there was rightly a good number of folk from the wider motorsport industry who supply all the teams and manufacturers. I was chatting to chap whose firm does a lot of bespoke manufacturing for the main teams including making the wheel nuts for the F1 cars which typically cost £8k each but as he pointed out a faulty wheel nut can cost more seconds than just about any other component on the car. He said there was a huge time pressure from the F1 teams. If he got a CAD/CAM file from the likes of Red Bull he typically had to give a quote for it within 30 to 40 minutes to get the job!

After about an hour The PM arrived with his PA. He had come straight from the House of Commons where he had been lecturing Ed Moribund about Europe! He moved round the room preceded by his PA who got everyone’s name and details first so he could introduce to the PM. In the background a photographer was shooting every handshake.

David Cameron then moved to the front of the main room and took a microphone to welcome the ensembled guests. He spoke without notes on the success of the motorsport industry which I thought was impressive given he had no doubt had a lot of things on his mind that day. He mentioned that his colleague Boris would love a London GP!

The PM then continued to mingle before slipping away for some much needed supper I suspect. Gradually the guests began to say their farewells and head home. Back down the famous street and out the gate saying good night to the police officers there. I think one might have been called PC Plebe but I thought it best not to mention it.

This time I hailed a black cab for the rather swifter journey back to the hotel.

Certainly a day I will never forget!

GTF

Historic and Targa Rally Training Day Sunday, March 22nd

Following our successful autotest test training day last year we are doing the same format for historic and targa rallying. This will cover all you need to know in order to take part, technical and MSA regulations, basic navigation, a simple navigation exercise and how to set up and take part in special tests. As last year it is aimed at newcomers and will also cover how to run events as well.

There is a limit of 40 places and WMC are sponsoring the cost (which includes coffee and lunch) of the day as part of our drive to bring in new competitors. **Thus the cost to members is just £5 per head.** Members of other NESCRE clubs are also invited and NESCRE is covering their costs to the same amount. Quite a number of the places are already taken so don't delay in booking yours!

Entry forms are on the WMC website.

The format will be:

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| 10.00 | Coffee and welcome |
| 10.30 | Rules and regulations, technical regulations, the Law and insurance, types of event, car preparation, running an event and marshalling |
| 11.15 | Rally navigation, maps, routes, equipment, on the event. |
| 12.15 | Lunch |
| 13.15 | Practice navigation run |
| 14.15 | Practice special test, marshalling |
| 15.30 | Debriefing and questions. |

The presenters and tutors will be: Ron Palmer, David Agnew and Graeme Forrester

Championship News

Gates Tyres Historic Rally Awards: Mike tells me that registrations are pouring in with the first two events taking place in January. Please remember that you do have to register and have two stickers on the car at each event that count. If you have not yet received a form please contact Mike Garstang on garstang1948@gmail.com.

This year's series also includes classes for Targa cars as well as historics so if you have a "modern" car you are not left out.

The rounds are:

1. March	1 st	Saltire Classic	SRC
2. March	14 th	Hexham Historic	HDMC
3. March	29th	Devils Own Classic	KLMC
4. May	2/3rd	Berwick Classic	BDMC
5. June	29th	Lake District Classic	WMC
6. August	16 th	Blue Streak Classic	SMC
7. Sept	6th	Durham Dales Classic	DAC
8. Sept	20th	Doonhamer Classic	SoSCC
9. October	18th	Solway Autumn Classic	WMC

Brockbanks Solicitors Cross Border Speed Championship:

The regulations are currently awaiting approval by the MSA and then they will be sent out to all members who expressed an interest in speed events.

This year's series includes many more rounds with the same number of scores so as to give a greater choice.

The full list of events will be listed here next month.

It is hoped to run a pre season event at Rowrah as usual but we are currently awaiting a list of potential dates when the track is free.



GATES



Auto Services more than

TYRES

Tulip Rally 2014

The Tulip Historic car Rally which takes place from 4th-10th May 2014 is a gruelling event with various disciplines; starting in France at Lake Annecy and traveling through Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg and finishing in Holland. Never having competed in this style of Rally before, it came as a surprise to Ian, member of the MGOC Kingdom club, just what level of compliance was required, to compete in this FIVA event.

Up to this point, Ian has been competing in the NESCRO (North East and Scottish Rally Organization) historic rally series over the past 8 years, initially in a MK11 Escort RS 2000 then in 2010 he decided he needed a change of vehicle, firstly something that was tax exempt and a vehicle that no one else was competing in. After considering his options he chose the MGB and struck a deal buying REN 114K. One or two minor repairs and three years later the car is back on the road fully rally prepared.

The restoration consisted of a full strip down to bare shell, welding in new floors and rear arch sections as well as strengthening the suspension mounting points and seam welding. This included incorporating a welded in roll cage complete with door bars. That done it was off to the paint shop for a full British Racing Green re-spray.

Whilst the car was being painted the engine was stripped and re-conditioned with a fast road cam and large valve head. The box and overdrive units were overhauled with new parts. A further modification to achieve the driving characteristics meant an alteration to the rear axle differential ratio and the fitting of a plate type limited slip differential. Then came re-assembly of all services and ancillaries inside the car, this included a new and designated harness for all the in-car rally equipment.

Thinking the job was done, now there was the compliance needs for the Tulpenrallye. Firstly the car, in order to be eligible, must have been manufactured prior to the 1st January 1972. Suspension, brakes and axle have to be in period specification with no dramatic changes, in short it has to be the original specification as applied to the vehicle in its year of manufacture. The softer issues of fire extinguishers, first aid kits and service ground sheets have to be addressed. In Navigating you cannot use GPS; only basic navigation equipment is allowed. Anything showing average speeds is not permitted; your information has to be worked out mechanically.

With the changes now to hand on the MGB GT (affectionately known as “The Beastie” in the Kingdom club) came the real test as to what the car could do. The first of the shake downs was Durham Dales on the 1st September 2013; it came 2nd in class and 9th overall out of approx. 50 cars, 2nd test was the Doonhamer Rally at Dumfries in September 2013 it came 2nd in class and 5th overall out of 70 cars. In the NESCRO series of 2013 out of 147 competitors REN 114K finished 11th overall....”we’re ready says Ian!”

Ian Dixon and his friend Maurice Millar the navigator, have been rallying together for 3 years, in excess of 300 competitive hours together see this challenge as a natural progression from UK based events, also Maurice has covered several other European events over the years, so together these guys have the makings of a great team.

Asking Ian, “Given that the event and the car are new to you, what is your goal for the Tulpenrallye?” he said, “To complete the event and enjoy the experience”. Ian joins the Rally to make a total of seven entered MG’s. i.e. MGC, MGB Roadster and 5 MGB GT’s competing on a world wide stage of up to 230 cars.

Ian Dixon completes the 2014 International Historic Rally

The day had finally arrived when, after years of car preparation and detailed planning, Ian Dixon and Maurice Millar were ready to set off from Scotlandwell; a little known village on the banks of Loch Leven. Ian and Maurice were about to embark on one of the most prestigious rallying events on the 2014 International calendar, the 61st Tulpenrallye. They were to be following in the footsteps of some of the biggest British names in rallying, such as Pat Moss/Anne Riley with their Mini Cooper (1962); the Appleyards (1951) in that ever-famous Jaguar XK120, NUB 120; and Roger Clark/Jim Porter in an Escort 1600 TC (1968).



In its heyday, “the Tulip” was a speed event which attracted the ‘Works’ teams and many UK privateers. Nowadays, it is a navigation and regularity event over six days which attracted 230 entries in 2014. So popular is this event, that all 230 places were filled within 12 days of entries opening; most of them Dutch rally crews.

With his rally prepared MGB/GT and with fellow team member Maurice guiding him, they were set for what was to be a testing rally, start-

ing in France at Lake Annecy and travelling through Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg and finishing in Holland. The scene was set and 2nd May 2014 had arrived when Ian and Maurice were given a traditional Tulip send off from their friends of the MG Owners Clubs, Kingdom (Fife) and Tayside who accompanied them safely over the Forth Road Bridge before they headed down to Hull to catch a ferry to Zeebrugge.

Saturday 3rd May and a sunny morning for motoring south across Belgium; heading for the French border and onto Reims for lunch. The car was running well in overdrive-top gear. “I can almost hear myself thinking, says Maurice”.

They managed a stop at the pits at the historical grand prix Circuit de Gueux, Rheims. Ian recalls “What a nostalgic moment that was, it was a real spooky eerie feeling. There was a real presence standing there with the main road running between the pits and the old grandstands,” There were echoes of Fangio, Moss, Benoist, Clark and other grand prix drivers from the 1920s to the early ‘60s.

On the Sunday afternoon they arrived at the start in Annecy with minutes to spare for scrutineering and with worrisome noises which had developed from the transmission, it made for an anxious arrival. A later inspection revealed that the gearbox had lost all its oil from the rear oil seal. In time, more would be revealed on the transmission concerns and they hadn’t even started the rally. “It didn’t help” said Ian “that my brain was working overtime trying to sort out the possible causes for these and some other noises only to find that one noise was Maurice’s alarm clock beeping away in his bag”.

What was left of the day they used to do a bit of homework and study maps.

Ian describes the driver/navigator experience as, “the co-driver sees the maps, I have to visualise it through the windscreen”.

That evening at dinner and thinking of the leak and transmission noises, Ian’s concerns were added to when the Dutch competitors said “tomorrow you are going to the mountains”. “that was an understatement” said Ian “you are so focused when competing that it wasn’t until the Monday night we realised that we had clocked up 250 kilometres on Day-1 with several hundred hairpins, up and down, and dropping some 5,000ft over a mile stretch. Taking in the view on this leg of the journey was a

clear no-no!”

Monday 5th May was a misty morning, but as it lifted it was bright and sunny, a good driving day, it was to remain more or less this way with a bit of drizzle here and there as the week progressed, but by day six it was heavy rain and that was to prove a hair-raising driving experience on their then very worn tyres.



Ian summed up their first day “the gear box rear seal has developed a leak, and at first we thought it was due to a failing bearing, but after today’s run I am hoping that the bearing is OK and that the seal is the problem. A soft drinks bottle, plastic fuel-can spout, gaffa tape and a Blue Peter badge and we had a solution. We topped up the gearbox twice a day and hoped it would get us home. Secondly, the offside rear wheel bearing is rumbling, but holding on”.

The second day was a complete turnabout; on the first day of rallying, where the car and driver took the brunt of the punishment with

what seemed hundreds of hairpins, today, the pressure was on Maurice as it was a day of intense navigation with numerous detours, in and out of old roads and junctions covering 360 km.

The car stood up very well, the gearbox leak has steadied down to an egg cup full of oil twice a day and the rear wheel bearing had not got any worse. A new problem however had manifested itself in the afternoon as an intermittent electrical glitch was switching off the ignition feed for a split second every time they cornered or hit a bump.

Eventually Ian realised if he touched the harness at the column ignition switch it came back on. After further investigation he realised that while he had been under the column filling the gear box with oil he had inadvertently disturbed the connectors which were put right with a quick fix.

Day three kicked off from the Midipolis Exhibition Centre at Besançon. Clocking up several hundred kilometers on different roads and then onto a karting track. Maurice explains “After the out lap, there is the reference lap and then you complete lap-1, lap-2, then an in-lap. The objective is to complete lap-1 and lap-2 in exactly the same time as the reference lap time (timed to the second), so you can’t afford to over-cook it. Not as easy as it sounds.”

Comparing the conditions to the previous day, where the roads were very wet and slippery which led to some excitement, Maurice reports “today has been different, we have had fewer hairpins in the Jura and Alsace regions and the car is going well with regular attention from Ian to the gearbox oil level. We are doing fine, but continuing to miss secret route control checks in unknown and obscure locations. We have kept to time all day today, unlike yesterday. We are on a steep learning curve”

That evening after 3 days, Ian fitted the two spares and replaced both front tyres, although the rears were also worn out. I think we get the idea that this international rallying business is not about dawdling between meals. Ian sums up that point, by comparing the Tulip Rally of some 365 miles per day, was like doing 12 Berwick rallies back to back.

They completed their day, staying at Horbourg-Wihr, near Colmar, still in France and near the German border.

Day four sees them heading to Saarbrücken: the car is performing well and the new front tyres are making a difference, however the rear tyres are now close to borderline. A long day ahead of them, this will be a tiring drive.

On day five the route took them through parts of Germany, Luxembourg, Belgium and finishing in Vaals in southern Holland; just over the German border from Aachen.



Ian reports that the MGB is going well and stopping and turning better with the new tyres on the front. However they have not been able to find replacement tyres for the rear because the schedule did not allow for time during the day; when tyre suppliers are normally open for business. He goes on to say that, “this rally is fully of tricky surprises for the navigators”. The route is handed out twice each day. The roadbook comprises deliberately out-of-date old maps with key points marked. The navigator has to ‘join the dots’ carefully and then find the route. There are secret checks of different types and rally

crews must constantly be looking for ‘codeboards’ – single letters on boards displayed on the roadside – or route stamps (have your ink-pad ready!) to prove that the correct route was followed.

Another Dutch trick is to issue route maps with the route shown as a plain black line on a white circular background, with no other roads or markings of any kind. This plain white circle is imposed on the usual roadmap. You have to measure the distances and interpret the actual road and junctions etc to find the correct route”.

The final rally day and the dash to the Dutch coast. The weather was now closing in, with strong winds and heavy rain. There was only one navigation section in today's route, but five speed tests (flat out against the clock); one regularity run on a karting circuit, and one, short regularity up a steep hill.

The crew beat the bogey time by 2 seconds on the first test; plus 5 seconds on the second one. The third speed test was 10.6km around an airfield with long “flat-out” straights and various bends with no codes or landmarks. The car had so far held up well, but this was not going to be easy. The rain and the worn rear tyres meant that the going was slippery in places, especially on the karting circuit.

The final, traditional test of the Tulpenrallye is a straight-line sprint on the boulevard by the sea in Noordwijk-ann-Zee. This is a simple thrash with two stop-astrides. Maurice had their Saltire unfurled all the way on this test, as Ian struggled with the slippery wet tarmac.



Ian with the MGB GT...just completed and full Rally spec'd

Auto testing for beginners – Part Four – Awards Night

Well – what a week! Who'd have thought it? Not only have I been promoted to sock monitor at home but I became the proud new owner of the latest edition of the Screwfix catalogue. Life could not have been better – until the night of WMC's awards dinner arrived.

First hurdle - what to wear? I had nothing, as usual - the husband was all for wearing anything that didn't involve thought or effort. No change there – but he DID insist on wearing a 50 year old schoolboy tie from his karting days – which finished mid way between neck and waist and had a miniscule knot. Thought it would be a good talking point – which it was..... but not in the way he anticipated. Mind you, doesn't everyone look different when they're all scrubbed and tidy? Walked straight past David Agnew and Chris Hunter. Hang on – double take. Was that David – smart as a carrot in a SUIT? Worse – Chris in a TIE? Goodness me – whatever next? Ooohh yes – a chap in a kilt! My evening, at least, was off to a good start.

A delightful dinner preceded the evening's speaker – always a highlight of any hospitality provided by our hosts Charles and Kit. We had plenty of time to catch up with all the latest news – rumour has it that John Hunter has acquired a 1935 Riley Brooklands – couldn't happen to a nicer chap – and Richard Cook is on his way to Abu Dhabi for three weeks driving wagons for 12 minutes a day. I promptly offered my services as navigator and was disappointed to have said services turned down. Robert Gate didn't need to be asked twice and he drives an E Type Jag..... Stories of horrific episodes involving injuries from angle grinders were exchanged just to whet our appetites for the coming season and the husband let slip the “actual” cost of restoring an MG Midget.....Big mistake.....£40 quid? That much? Really?

But back to reality – David (Agnew) reminded me of my rightful place, hoping that I would act as secretary to the organisers of the 2015 Lake District Classic Rally. Brian Jones wondered if I could possibly fit in a spot of dusting and Hoovering at the same time – who said chivalry was dead?

And then it was the turn of Howard Davies. I had expected (and secretly hoped for) someone tanned and toned but who, on the downside, would probably have left his personality at home. We would listen politely to his speech while surreptitiously glancing at our watches and desperately trying not to yawn after such a good dinner. But no - Howard was a revelation. Welsh, for a start. A pocket Hercules of a man and a bundle of laughs all the way through his 5ft 6in 4XL frame. He was a breath of fresh air, numerous stories were told and we laughed like drains. The image of Howard in his Speedos (without the “S”) will stay with us all for a long time. An absolute treat. And as for Malcolm Wilson and the “lady boys” – what can I say? Or was that a dream.....?

Anyway, midnight, and the awards presentation, was upon us. I was relieved to be stationed at the front near to the action – not so for Angela and Eileen. Both had to navigate the corridor of uncertainty between the tables from the back of the room, handbrake it at the corner and slot in neatly next to the presenter. Not an easy job in dress and heels - big cheer and round of applause! Oh, oh – my turn, jump start, teeter to the front, stop astride, kiss and shake hands, photo opportunity (chin up – both of them) and reverse back to the start in double quick time. Just like an autotest really apart from the “double quick” bit. Now, I don't like to blow my own trumpet but I was presented with WMC's equivalent of the “Claret Jug” in the form of “Newcomer of the Year”. AND third place in the Gates Historic Rally navigator's championship. How did that happen? It is a complete mystery to me. The husband did, of course, point out that neither award was for driving – unlike his.....fourth for something or other. The timing of the remark was ill advised and as the result of bravado from too much beer. My shiny new trophy was duly tucked up in bed next to me that

night and the husband was banished to the spare room. OK, OK, that's enough of our domestic arrangements – until next time at least. Don't think the husband will be spending ANOTHER £40 on the Midget.....

So – a great evening and a massive pat on the back for the organisers is well deserved. Thank you to everyone on the committee and to fellow members for all the friendship and fun and mickey taking over the last 12 months – it's been great and here's to a brilliant 2015.

Finally, a special thank you from me to Graeme for all his encouragement and who works so tirelessly behind the scenes – you're a star, x!

Cheers!
Marian Sloan (aka Maz)



BYGONES

Anecdotes

The end for **Motoring News/Motor Sport News**? Well for me certainly. My subscription finished at the end of the year and I've not renewed it. I used to buy MN on the way to school at a 14 year old when it was still B&W and continued to collect it each week until I went on to a subscription a few years ago to save on the high cost it rose to.

It now arrived by post and it lasts as long as my afternoon coffee to read. Over the years it seems to have completely lost its way and its mantle of the "*voice of British motor sport.*" MN (as it was) was always better than Autosport for club motorsport of all kinds but now it just seems to be endless press releases pasted in by a bunch of lads straight out of university journalists' school. When did you last see a staff member at an event? When did a staff member ever compete?

There are hardly any adverts now so no doubt costs are being cut all round while the internet and sites like Motorsport Monday provide up to date info and results. It's very sad but unless it re-invents itself and gets back in touch with club motor sport I can't see it surviving particularly as it now has the same owners as Autosport which has the same issues.

Dovenby Hall

The good news is that the plans for M Sport's new development facility and test track have been passed by Allerdale B.C. and also that they have not been "called in" by the Secretary of State. That means work will start shortly.

Many members of the Club wrote to ABC in support of the plans and I was invited to attend the planning meeting in Maryport to speak in favour of the development. That was an interesting experience! The plans were vehemently opposed by about 20 NIMBYs from Dovenby who seemed to be unable (or unwilling) to understand the strict noise limits that were to be imposed. ABC had produced an 141 page documents of comments from the pro and anti sides plus all the many agencies that have the right to comment. Far too many seemed blind to the need for new high tech prestigious employer in west Cumbria. Some of the vitriol aimed at Malcolm Wilson by the protesters was really quite out of order.

The following morning I was waylaid while doing my shopping on Cockermouth by one of the protesters who then proceeded to harangue me for supporting the project. I was able to point out that many of the facts they presented were totally wrong although of course she was unconvinced! These days as a parish clerk I get to see a fair number of planning applications and I sometimes feel that the system is weighted against applicants. I am quite sure that the many conditions and consultees don't exist in most other countries where they seem able to get on and get things done so much more quickly. In some cases the rights of toads, newts and bats seem to be more important. Indeed bats have more rights than people in some circumstances. If for example some bats decide to make their homes in your house you can't chase them out or shoot them! There are "bat consultants" who have a nice little earner going to potential restorations and developments to check if there is a bat population that might be upset by the new works! Has the world gone mad?

HAGERTY
CLASSIC CAR INSURANCE

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

Awards' Night Photos



We would like to thank all our sponsors for their support and also to Nichol Signs for the donation of a new award for the Enthusiast of the year and to Nigel Hepburn of NEH Engineering for the new (clock) award for the overall Club Championship. This is a very fine award made from ex Newland gears from a Lister Storm LM car made by members Mike and Alex Thornton with their new business <http://raceautomobilia.com/>. The website is well worth a look. I am sure we will be using some of their smaller awards in the future.

Bicester Heritage

An exciting concept

“RAF Bicester is the best preserved of the bomber bases constructed as the principal arm of Sir Hugh Trenchard’s expansion of the RAF from 1923, which was based on the philosophy of offensive deterrence. It retains, better than any other military airbase in Britain, the layout and fabric relating to both pre-1930s military aviation and the development of Britain’s strategic bomber force in the period up to 1939.”

So say English Heritage, but the flying history of Bicester predates its development as a bomber base: a Bristol Boxkite flew from the town as early as 1911. The first military occupiers of the airfield were the Royal Flying Corps in 1916, which became part of the newly formed Royal Air Force on 1st April 1918 when RAF Bicester, as it now was, became a Training Depot. In the three years from 1925, the airfield was transformed into a state-of-the-art Bomber Station.

In 1936 it expanded as the country prepared for war with Germany. As Britain went to war, RAF Bicester was home to such legendary flying machines as the Hawker Hart, Bristol Blenheim and the first flight of the Handley Page Halifax four-engined bomber, the Royal Air Force’s first heavy bomber to enter production.

By the time the Allies were ready to liberate Europe, training was well under way at RAF Bicester for glider pilots and their tug aircrews. Soldiers of the Glider Pilot Regiment trained at Bicester before setting off for D-Day, Arnhem and, eventually, the Rhine Crossing. As the battle moved towards Berlin, RAF Bicester was transforming to become a busy maintenance unit dealing with both aeroplanes and motor transport.

Now RAF Bicester is transforming again. Its War Department specification redbrick buildings are being restored and updated as it becomes home to the UK’s first centre for historic motoring and aviation. Just in time to celebrate the centenary of powered military flight at Bicester’s airfield in 2017.

The inspiration behind Bicester Heritage is to create a robust future for our sector, the hobby and the businesses, people and skills that make it possible.

We’ve already made big strides in developing Bicester Heritage, but like realising any big idea, it doesn’t happen overnight. Here you can read a snapshot of where we’re up to and the plans we have in place. As you’ll see, by ‘the future’ we mean 2016: we already have 10 specialists, including a classic car storage business, and have hosted events from the All-Party Parliamentary Historic Vehicle Club to the VSCC.

Home to a complete portfolio of specialists

The coming months will see us adding to the specialists already here. Our philosophy is simple: we want a full range of complementary specialists to provide a complete ‘eco system’ for classic cars, motorcycles and aeroplanes, and we want the best.

We also see Bicester Heritage as a home for car clubs: a ‘club of clubs’ in effect, offering smaller and larger marque clubs alike a space to store their archives, host their AGMs and meets and improve the service they offer their members.

Heritage, restored

In total we will have some 50 units housed in 40 refurbished red brick buildings of the technical site and will have space for some 500 vehicles to be stored on site. We have already restored and activated 15 of these buildings, preserving their authenticity but adding the services and utilities modern businesses need, including self-contained accommodation for overnight visitors. Our on-site catering facilities will also play a key part in the planned calendar of events run by the leading names in classic car world.

The road ahead

Bicester Heritage is big: 348 acres to be exact. We already have one mile of private road for testing, tuning and simply enjoying classic cars and motorcycles, registered or not. The airfield also has a 2 mile perimeter track, currently a bit more suitable for 4x4s than classic cars, but plans are already in place to refurbish these additional two miles to track standard. And, thanks to our resident gliding club, the airfield itself is well maintained and completely operational.

Autojumble

Buy, Sell, Exchange, Give!

Free to members

Mercedes 190 2.5 Cosworth Sept 1991 black /blue full spec leather interior skirts spoilers etc must be one of the last made. Offers over £ 7500. Never raced or autotested. Contact Willie Jarman on 07850392854

MGB roadster 1973 - Nearside wing required, if anyone has one available.
Contact Lesley on 07884044617

Practical Performance Car magazines. FREE for collection near Cockermouth.
2006 - Dec 2014, about 60 in total.
Ring Steve Fishwick on 07796 871899.

Barn storage near Wigton: £50 per quarter for cars, £60 per quarter for trailers. Ring Graeme on 01900 825642.

Shelsley Walsh

Shelsley Walsh is the oldest motor sport venue in continuous use in the world. First used in 1905, it is older than Indianapolis, Le Mans or Monza. Brooklands has been and gone, but Shelsley Walsh is still here, as old as the sport but as modern as today.

The venue was the first purpose built motor sport venue in history and has continued to be at the heart of motor sport and sporting innovation. It featured the first electrical motor sport timekeeping and the first motor sport outside broadcast with the innovations continuing through more than 100 years of continuous improvement. Raymond Mays perfected his ERA racing cars at Shelsley in the 1930's and his later BRM's featured at Shelsley.

Shelsley was founded by and has always been run by the MAC. The Midland Automobile Club is arguably the oldest motor club in the world, certainly the oldest still using its original name although there are a few close rivals. The club was founded by a number of prominent members of the early motor industry whilst Queen Victoria was still on the throne. The MAC is Shelsley Walsh but it is not all we do. In addition to Shelsley Walsh speed hill climbs, the MAC organises sprints, sporting trials, classic car events and social events. We feature something for every motor sport and motoring enthusiast. We are the heart of Motor Sport in the Midlands.

The future of Shelsley has been secured with a 99 year lease secured in 2005. Work is underway renovating buildings at the base of the hill to provide improved facilities for the use of competitors, spectators and visitors alike.

If you haven't bought a yard of tarmac, or entered the Monthly Draw, then please do so. You will be helping us to continue with these improvements to a piece of Great British sporting history. We look forward to welcoming you at Shelsley Walsh.

For further details see www.shelsley-walsh.co.uk/

Inside the Industry

Paul Gilligan keeps us up to date

Busy December For UK Dealers

Over 166000 new car registrations in December brought the year's score to just under 2.5M, almost 10% up on 2013 and although not quite an all time record, certainly the highest number for a very long time. As ever in December an awful lot of unsold cars were registered as manufacturers and dealers strove to hit, or at least get near, annual targets. It's fairly easy to see who the guilty parties are. For example BMW have been about 7% behind Audi all year. In December BMW were 55% ahead of Audi! And I happen to know that Audi pre-registered a lot of unsold cars in December so goodness knows how many BMW did, and educated guess would be somewhere between 6000 and 8000 cars?

Similarly Vauxhall have been about 20% behind Ford all year, but beat them by almost 13% in December. Of course all these cars have to be sold to a "proper" customer one day and will represent bargains to those who can locate them.

Great New Models To Look Forward To

New products are the lifeblood of the industry. They give customers a logical reason to buy a new car, dealers busy showrooms, and all of us observers something to get excited about. 2015 looks like a bonanza year with almost every manufacturer having something new to offer. This list isn't exhaustive, just some of the ones that interest me:

ALFA ROMEO are saving their big news for 2016 and beyond, but the glorious 4C Coupe is joined by a Spider (convertible) version. A strong contender for the best looking new model of the year. Then late in the year Alfa launch the new Giulia to take on BMW 3 Series etc in what is becoming a very crowded market sector with the arrival of the Jaguar XE soon.

AUDI have a new A4 to take on the Jaguar XE and for lottery winners the R8 is now available with just rear wheel drive as well as Quattro which sound fun, until you lose it that is.

BENTLEY at last launch their SUV to sit well above Range Rover. 200 mph and £200,000 are the rumours. Hopefully it will be a lot better looking than their last attempt 3 years ago. They have decided to call it the Bentley Bentayga which may not be the best start? In addition Bentley will debut the "Grand Convertible" which is in fact a droptop version of the Mulsanne. When I tell you it features the largest piece of wood veneer EVER fitted to a Bentley I know the queue will quickly form.

BMW have a 3 Series facelift together with new engines which are even lower emissions than the new Jaguar engine, a vital factor in the company car market.

FIAT will launch yet another 500 badged car, the 500X designed to compete with the very successful Nissan Qashqai. It's based on the Punto not the 500, but Fiat understand which name is the better seller! In addition the Fiat Group version of the new Mazda MX5 which was to be badged as an Alfa will now be the Fiat 124 Abarth, recalling an old name which many of us remember. It's to me EVEN better looking than the new MX5 which is saying something!

FORD have just launched the new Mondeo 3 years behind schedule, so not quite the leap forward it would have been had it been on time. They also have a new S Max and facelifted C Max people carriers to come later in the year. Most exciting of all (to me) is the official right hand drive Mustang coming in the summer. RHD never been done before in 50 years of Mustangs, neither has proper back suspension, the "live" axle has at last officially died. About £35000 for a 5 litre V8. You can buy a 2.3 litre 4 cylinder for a bit less, but who would? The same 4 cylinder engine goes in the new Focus RS, but I'd still buy the Mustang, V8 convertible please Santa!

HONDA as reported last month are looking to climb out of the doldrums with new Jazz, Civic, HRV, and most important to enthusiasts NSX. If you haven't ordered your NSX yet you're too late, all 100 UK cars already have deposits against them.

JAGUAR have a very important year with the launch of the XE to rival BMW 3 Series, Audi A4 etc. Over recent years Jaguar losses have been absorbed by Land Rover profits, now the cat has to stand on its own four legs. Proper servicing of the corporate market by the manufacturer and dealers will be vital, I'm not sure that's there yet. The F Type range expands this year to feature a manual gearbox! – and 4WD (but you can't have both in the same car). There's also a brand new XF and a major facelift to the XJ, so the results of many millions in product development. No pressure then.

LAND ROVER have launched the Discovery Sport to replace the Freelander, first customer deliveries are scheduled for March. Waiting list are about 4 months, no discounts yet but I somehow feel this won't be the same as the last few models LR have launched and we'll see shorter lead times and maybe some discount before too long. One new car that won't be discounted is the Evoque Convertible, due with us later in the year. Pictures look great, but they only show it hood down, perhaps for a reason? Whatever this will be THE car this year in Chelsea, Monte Carlo etc.

MAZDA launch the new MX5 (see FIAT above). We have become used to every new car being longer, wider, heavier than the one it replaces. Not this car, shorter and 50 kilos lighter, what can be wrong?

MERCEDES will no doubt hit us with lots of new products as they continue to attempt to overtake BMW and Audi. The one that came to my notice is the revival of the Maybach name to be applied to a stretched S Class limo. 8" longer, all allocated to extra back seat space which is intended to emulate a Business Class aircraft cabin. I've been shown the sales training manual, the car costs £150000 + but all the comparisons are intended to show how superior it is to a Rolls Royce costing far more. Rolls owned by BMW of course!

SKODA have a new Fabia which is based on the latest VW Group small car platform and a transformation by all accounts, and it will still be great value. Superb gets a major facelift later in the year and remains the car of choice for those who'd like an Audi A6, but would also like some cash left over.

VAUXHALL continue to provide us with anything but excitement with a new Viva to start at about £8000, and a new Astra which is important to keeping open the Ellesmere Port factory which has won the battle to build it, but apart from that.....

There will be lots more no doubt, those are just the ones that caught my eye, or are important for different reasons. Still the 'Stang for me though! For 2016 the big news seems likely to come from Italy with Alfa and Maserati promising some fantastic new kit. Plus Jaguar's F Pace SUV, designed to compete with Audi Q5 etc, not with anything Land Rover honest.

Driverless Cars

These will shortly begin public road tests in Greenwich, Bristol, Coventry, and Milton Keynes. Good to see MK included, that means there is some confidence the things can manage roundabouts. However our Lords & Masters have decided that a "driver" must be on duty at all times, seated behind the wheel, belted in, licensed to drive, sober, not using a hand-held mobile phone, paying full attention, and ready to take control at any time. The "driver" will also be responsible for the fines and points should the "machine" commit any traffic offences.

This reminds me of the Lords & Masters of over a hundred years ago who insisted a car be preceded by a man walking in front of it carrying a red flag. Hopefully eventually the technology will be proven and the true benefits enjoyed by all. And somehow I think "eventually" might not be too far away.

Car Show or Tech Show?

The last few weeks have seen the Detroit Car Show and the Las Vegas Consumer Electronics Show. The latter received far more attention from both car makers and customers. Driverless cars, self-parking cars, cars that go off and find their own parking space, park themselves, switch off the engine and lock themselves, then come back to the owner like an obedient dog when summoned, all this and lots more was on show. Apple and Samsung are fighting to extend their smart phone technology to control cars. That will leave car manufacturers in a junior role, producing as FIAT boss Sergio Marchionne said "tin cans – a venue for other peoples' parties".

Are Lease Cars Cheaper?

Andy Armstrong posed this question last month. The simple answer is “most of the time yes”. “Leasing” covers several different finance products, for the private buyer principally Contract Purchase or Contract Hire. Manufacturers like both these because they tie the customer into a planned change cycle. If you have a 3 year agreement at the end of the 3 years you HAVE to do something other than just deciding the car is fine and it will easily do another year. In addition the manufacturer can “track” just where you are in terms of your car being worth enough to settle the agreement early so you can take another car without having to pay much or anything in terms of a new deposit. You may be in a 3 year agreement but one manufacturer I know is targeting dealers to get those agreements settled after 18 months on average, simple, they sell twice as many cars. That in simple terms is why manufacturers are willing to incentivise customers to take a CP agreement, most often by offering a deposit contribution which can be worth as much as £5000 from Audi currently.

Contract Hire is a slightly different product, most often offered to the business market. However manufacturers are now increasingly offering it to private individuals. The advantages (to the manufacturer) are similar to the above, but under the law they do not have to declare the price of the car, which they do under a purchase agreement of any kind. No manufacturer wants it to be known they are giving discounts of 30% or more to shift unwanted product, so they simply slide that discount under the table to their own finance company and as if by magic a very low monthly rental appears. At one point last year Mercedes were offering E Class for £100 a month less than C Class, it should have been the other way round.

So Andy you are right, the customer who sticks to the old fashioned approach and simply pays for it will more and more often end up paying more.

Finally on your subject of high sided vehicles on the A66 in high winds I couldn't agree more. I had a similar experience a few weeks ago, scary indeed. Simple answer, get the insurance industry to agree that if a driver disobeys the sign that says the road is closed to high sided vehicles then he is driving without insurance. There will be a computer somewhere that knows when the sign was switched on, more and more trucks are fitted with telematics devices that will record when the truck passed that sign. The driver is then risking his licence, the operator their truck Operator's Licence, as well as a claim for an accident that could run into hundreds of thousands. The insurance company wouldn't cover them if they were driving without brakes, where's the difference?

Paul Gilligan

pg@gvcontracts.co.uk



MG 3



MG SUV



Andy's Armchair

Andy Armstrong takes an irrelevant look at motoring and motorsport

I was reading an article recently in one of the Sunday business supplements which was claiming the tax payer stood to lose more than £10m as a result of the Marussia F1 team collapse. Apparently the total debt owed to creditors amounts to £31.4m, much of it unsecured, unlike the tax payer owned Lloyds Development Capital Group whose loan is supposedly secured against the team's F1 assets. Unfortunately, according to the article, these amount to £1.6m at most and so Lloyds, i.e. the tax-payer stands to lose £11.6m.

You really can't help wondering which "expert" thought it was sound business to loan such an amount to a team, which if they'd asked anyone with even a vague interest in F1, they'd have soon found out that the team were totally uncompetitive, attracted no sponsorship, and with the cost of the new powerplants, were going to struggle desperately to keep their heads above water.

The article also claims that one of the drivers was being backed to the tune of £7m per year. This money came from his personal backer but when you work out that each race week-end was costing the thick end of £0.5m to trail round at the back it hardly seems good value for money. Never mind, I suppose we can all claim that we've now sponsored a F1 team!

It was sad to see that both Brian Lister and Mick Hill had died recently. The former was of course best known for his Lister Jaguars which did so well on the international sports car front during the late 50's, especially in the hands of Archie Scott Brown. The latter was a great builder and driver of amazing, brutishly powerful special saloon cars. These came in many shapes and sizes, but one of them, the "Janglia", ended up in our area when Norman Hodgson raced it in the early 70's. I wonder if it still survives somewhere?

On the road car front, our new one arrived just before Christmas, and considering it's basically the same as it's predecessor the difference is remarkable. The whole thing feels so much tighter and quieter and I'm sure gives a clear indication of what 30k miles on our pot hole riddled roads does to a vehicle.

I see that car sales were up again in 2014 and that compared to most of Europe British business was booming. Apparently 80% of new registrations are subject to PCP deals which involve, as best as I can understand, leasing rather than buying the vehicle. The question is should such deals actually be called "sales" as at the end of the day I don't suppose many customers stump up the final lump sum to make the car their own. In this case surely the first true sale happens when the garage sells their car on as a used model.

Ends

AA

What's On

WMC events and other events of interest

February

15th	Sun	WMC	Under 17s and Novice Autotest postponed to March 1st
19-21		LP	Race Retro at Stoneleigh

March

1st	Sun	WMC	Autotest/PCA
7th	Sa	Trio	Malcolm Wilson Rally
21st	Sa	H&BMC	Border Counties Rally
22nd	Sun	WMC	Historic and Targa Rally Training Day

April

12th	Sun	MGC	Roof of England Challenge.
------	-----	-----	----------------------------

Visit the website for all the latest news

Catch up on Face Book

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

Careers at M-Sport Limited

See all our vacancies online at

www.m-sport.co.uk

To apply for any of these roles, please forward an application form & medical history (available on the website) along with your CV, to Rachael Hook at M-Sport Ltd., Dovenby Hall, Dovenby, Cockermouth, Cumbria-CA13 0PN