

Is This The Future For Speed Events?



David Wiggins took this striking photo at a French hill climb last summer.

In theory with the new road closing regulations now law this could take place in the UK.

There are already closed road hill climbs and sprints in the Isle of Man, Ulster and the Channel Islands.

Will the MSA have the will to sanction such events if clubs can find suitable lengths of road that the local council is willing to close for a day?

Time will tell!

Motor Sport for All

Diary

Club events over the next month or so

Autotest/PCA/Under 17s Autotest

March 1st

At Maryport Business Centre

Sign on from 10.00

Entries to David Wiggins

March 21st

Speed Test Day

At Rowrah

Entry forms have been emailed out

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Talking Point

Topical comment from the world of motoring

I hope that everyone with the vaguest interest in motorsport will read Rob Jones's letter in this issue. It was great that the "closed roads" legislation got through parliament but the serious incidents on events last year have thrown that all into jeopardy. Not could closed roads events of all types be badly affected but also forest rallies. In these days of "H & S" the Forestry Commission do not want injuries and deaths on their land. Over the past 20 or so years the national forests have become a playground for all sorts of outdoor activities and the number of areas where rallies can be held has got less and less. The tracks also need regraded after events and it could well be that the powers that be simply say that they don't need rallies any more.

I am not sure why we seem to have had a spate of bad rally accidents in the last year or so because there are now so many fewer rallies than there were and also fewer folk go to see them. The cars are faster though, particularly through the corners so when they do lose adhesion they travel further. At the same time society seems to lack self discipline and dislikes anyone who suggests that "over there might be a rather safer place to watch." All things that do our sport no good at all.

For the past twenty years I have campaigned for more dedicated motorsport venues rather than relying on informal agreements with land owners or even contracts with forest owners which can easily be withdrawn. Dedicated venues will also be much safer in the same way that race and speed venues are. Perhaps the MSA will now see the light?

It is thus very sad that Teesside Autodrome has decided that there is little point in holding MSA sanctioned motorsport there as it is not financially viable in terms of having to meet MSA requirements and pay for an MSA track licence. Originally the Langbaugh track was built on the former iron works site as part of the re generation programme and was partly funded by the Sports Council. Local council politics got in the way and virtually nothing happened to it until the turn of the century when a Cockney entrepreneur got the lease and greatly improved it, concentrating on "arrive and drive" karting. He had ideas about racing and rallycross which never happened but I was able to persuade him that it would be a great sprint venue and we were able to hold many events there but only on Bank Holidays when his main income from karting was not available. A few years ago we handed the reins of the sprint over to our friends in York MC as they were nearer but they have now been told their date has been cancelled. Over the past twenty of so years we also revived the Knockhill sprint and the one at East Fortune but in both cases the cost became too great for us to charge a fair entry fee so they bit the dust as well.

GTF



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Classic Column

News from the Classic Scene

A little quiz to start of with: Taken from an advert from 1964; “*Vivid Velvet, new 1594cc engine for the XXXXXX. This debonair XXXXXX is now swifter and even smoother with a twin carb 1600cc engine. Power/disc tiptoe brakes, 4 speed all synchro gears, superb road holding, supremely comfortable. Try this latest, liveliest and most luxurious XXXXXX. New deep gloss colours. Complete underbody seal/ Non increase in price. £840 inc. P.T*”

What is the make and model? Answers via email to gtfmg@yahoo.co.uk

During the year we run a number of pub runs, tours etc. These vary from the 30 mile pub run on a Wednesday night up to the full day 140 mile events and also the three day Gallops that Ron and Christine run so well each May.

If you are unsure about what is involved in taking part why not enrol for the rally training day on March 22nd? Much of what we will be telling you about applies to tours as well.

It's worth mentioning that the touring events are open to all ages and types of cars - we are completely inclusive!

We are getting the pub runs planned for the spring and summer, there run usually on the first Wednesday of each month from May onwards until September, we have July and August covered so volunteers are welcomed for May, June and September so why not have ago. If you need help there is plenty available.

Last summer we also had a couple of lunch time gatherings and hopefully we can repeat them once the weather picks up. If anyone has any suggestions as to suitable pubs that are open for lunch then please let us know.

Given the number of pre-war cars in the Club at the moment is there any interest in a touring event for older cars - perhaps a bit shorter and slower than the normal one day events? If you are interested then let us know.

Drive It Day

Sunday April 26th

11 am until 2 pm

Arrive at any time during that time

At

Dalemain

We will be taking a collection in Stuart Turnbull's memory for a charity nominated by his family. This event is open to all clubs and all ages of car so we look forward to a big attendance


Lake District Hotels
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www.lakedistricthotels.net

Legend Fires North West Stages

Blackpool 6th & 7th February



Last year towards the end of the season I had this idea in my head that it would be good to enter the North West Stages. I spoke to Heather in advance to make sure she was available and was willing to navigate, luckily this was one of very few weekends she wasn't busy. The next step was to evict Mums car from the garage and start to prepare the rally car. The list of jobs and hours spent was extensive but the upshot of it was that the car now has an extra 30Bhp, all the electrics work, the panel damage from last season is long gone and it now has many spot lights.

The event itself is known as being a tough one with a high number of retirements, it also has very tight schedule for the road sections. So this would be a good test of the car and of the skill of the navigator. When the final instructions and entry list came I was surprised to find we were seeded car 88 from a 106 entries. Dad had done his part on the build up to the event, he had decided that he wanted a big van for motorsport stuff so found a nice Ford transit. The day of the event came and the nerves had set in, the travel down in the new van was good with the weather looking very promising with blue skies. We found a good spot in service, got signed on and scrutineered. With it being a 2 day event we needed accommodation, so the 4 of us were booked into the Norbeck Castle Hotel, which according to the reviews online didn't sound good! All I can say is that people are far too fussy! It was warm, dry and almost clean, for £35 per person with dinner and breakfast! Most camp sites charge £10pp so a bargain as far as I was concerned.

The first car started at 18.30, we started at 19.55 so by now the clear blue skies had disappeared and the sun had set. We left the start ramp and headed off to Weeton barracks for the first 2 stages. I've been to Weeton before so on stage 1 pushed hard but towards the end the car didn't feel just quite right. Straight into stage 2 and sure enough the car started to misfire was at least 50% down on power. Once we were out of the stage there were management cars parked everywhere with wheels been swapped and work happening. Due to being on a tight budget and not having anyone available we had to fend for ourselves-we had a tool box in the boot with some gaffer tape! The tape didn't fix the misfire, so with giving up not an option we carried onto stage 3. This was a 3 lap blast around a go kart track somewhere near Preston, the stage went well despite the lack of power. By this point I had found the misfire could be helped if the throttle was pumped whilst accelerating, so I was driving around the problem. On the way to the last 2 stages of the evening we passed a petrol station and I decided we didn't need any, the reason being that the car was going to be in the indoor parc ferme and the tank had to be almost empty. Stages 4&5 were on the prom at Blackpool with spectators watching so I tried my best to put on a show at the hairpins with a big dollop of hand brake and

lots of tyre smoke.

At the end of the first leg we were still running, just! Supper then bed and fix the car at the morning service was the plan. In the morning we pushed the car to the out control and hoped the lack of fuel would get us from the parc ferme to the service. 3 miles was all that we needed it to do, 1 mile down the road it stopped! Luckily rallyists are a friendly bunch and Stephen Johnson in his little mighty Mira pulled over just as I got the tow rope out. Once in service due to where we were set up we had a 1 mile push! Nice morning for a walk at least, 2 tyres were swapped along with spark plugs, ignition coil, king lead and lots of fuel added. Out of service just in time but still misfiring. Stages 6&7 were at Lytham Hall, a nice concrete lane leading to a country house through a farm yard then a slippery wooded section leading to the house with a blast down the last bit of lane to the finish. The next 2 were a run around the barracks at Weeton where many cars were now showing signs of damage and over exuberance. Stages 10 & 11 were a 3 lap circuit around a disused dock yard at Fleetwood, followed closely by stages 12 & 13 on Fleetwood prom. It was good to see the Graham's in their Land Rover at the stage start doing recovery, luckily we didn't see too much of them!

Then off to service where I'd phoned ahead and told dad which parts I wanted changing, with just 30 minutes the ignition amplifier was replaced, the Webers checked for blockages- misfire gone! Quick fuel up, clean windows and back out, didn't even manage to get any dinner but luckily Heather had a good supply of sweets to keep us going. The next 2 stages were on the prom at Blackpool, and the power difference was unreal and we put on a good show despite the boot lid flapping! Thanks Mum that was your job! Stages 16 & 17 around Weeton went very well with the car on song and I couldn't help but smile. At the end of the stage we were advised the traffic was bad and the lateness had been extended, it was a good job as we spent 20 minutes stuck at 1 junction due to road works. Stages 18 & 19 were a rerun of the Fleetwood docks followed by the Fleetwood prom stages, this is where the power was really noticed and the little Peugeot was managing much better. Back in service the mood was good, a final splash of fuel and 1 tyre swapped then we headed back out. Stages 22 & 23 had been cancelled due to an accident, so back to Lytham Hall now in the dark. The stage went well and we thanked the marshals for the efforts through the day and headed for the final 2 stages at Weeton.

On stage 24 we managed to catch up with some other cars, and pass them- first a Porsche 911, then a Tiger Avenger and then a proper Mini. I must have been trying too hard on this stage as I had to be told to calm down and keep it tidy, but no stabbing with pencils was needed (Heathers favourite weapon of choice if I don't behave). The final stage we eased off a little for most of it but fog blew in and pace was slowed massively, vision was limited to the end of the bonnet- but we made it! The final road section was driven very, very carefully and we made it back to the final control. Despite problems in the first half of the rally we managed to finish. From 106 starters we brought the old 309 home in 42nd overall and 6th in class.

Robert Iveson

More Stars from Race Retro



PG Tips

This month's tip is – don't let your wife crash her car....I did, and that means I am driving round in a basic Citroen C1. We haven't had a great deal of snow in West Cumbria, but 2 weeks ago it was very cold, a bit snowy and a stream of water running across the road a mile or 2 from our house froze solid. I got in from night shift and went to bed at 7.15ish. Trudy set off to work and then seemingly re-enacted Torvil and Dean's Bollero on the frozen stream eventually coming to a halt across a ditch with a non-frozen stream running in it. Our 2 daughters were in the rear – Emily, the older sensitive child burst into tears, Heidi, the difficult 2nd child (who people say is like me!) shouted 'WOO WOO CRASH'!

After being rescued and Emily delivered to school I was then woken from my slumber to help sort out getting the Yeti from the ditch. After several hours and a lot of phone calls we successfully achieved that and I went back to bed. A few days later the Yeti went off to be mended and we received our courtesy car – a brand new Citroen C1. I was initially pleased; before I bought the Citigo I did consider the new C1/Aygo/108 but never got round to a test drive. Sitting in the C1, which looks rather funky, it was hard not to be disappointed. Compared to the Citigo it feels cheap and tinny. This feeling is reinforced when the engine is fired up. It's noisy and sounds like it's in the cabin with you. On the move ride quality is a bit choppy and noise is much higher than the Citigo, it also lacks a lot of the clever features of my Citigo. Having decided it wasn't particularly to my liking I was then informed that I would be keeping the C1 whilst the Yeti was away because the rear seat in the Citigo was bigger for the children and Trudy was already familiar with the car and comfortable with the controls. So there you have it, I didn't crash my car (well not the Citigo anyway) and as a result of not crashing I am driving a significantly inferior car to my own!

In other crash news, I sold Ekk over the interweb to someone and then promptly had a 5mph bump with a Transit causing a dent in the bonnet and front panel. Happy days. The sale is still on but I now need to pay to have it repaired first. It is in being repaired now – going on the experience above I should have expected a Moskvich or Wartburg courtesy car – now that really would have been fun!

A new classic car program started on Channel 5 two weeks ago, called (rather inventively I think!) – The Classic Car show. No restorations or presenter and restorer combo like all the other shows of late and no Top Gear 'lads having a lark' angle either. The downside is it is presented by Quentin Wilson who in my book is one of the single slimiest car people in history. My entire experience of Wilson talking about cars is based on big over engineered luxu barges 'wafting' along and earning money because they're soooooo sought after. He didn't disappoint in the first couple of episodes either, coming up with a Bentley and a Rolls Royce as 2 cars he would buy/recommend to buy. He also royally went to town on the poor old TR7 and comprehensively bad mouthed it – which may have been acceptable if he had at least tinged it with some humour, sadly I don't think he has any. On the positive side Jodi Kidd – former model and car enthusiast is an (almost) equal presenter and is more enthused and open minded and brings some excitement to the show as well as a bit of glamour to offset Count Wilson's aging Dracula looks. There are also a couple of features on the program about barn finds and emerging classics under £5000 which hit the spot for me.

So, in summary, I enjoyed the show and would recommend it, it's better than some of the slightly fake restoration shows and if you can put up with smarmy old Quentin Wilson then it's worth a watch.

Finally a little tale this week that proves we are no longer able to use common sense and the machines have won. At work I came across a chap with his relatively new car on the side of the road. I stopped and asked him if all was ok. He was busy under the bonnet with a rag. Turns out the 'low oil level' warning light had come on (not low pressure) and he was very concerned. He had pulled over immediately and was just checking the oil level for the 3rd time. There was plenty of oil in the engine, pretty much at the top of the dipstick. Shaking his head he announced he would not be able to start the engine and would ring Border Cars and they would probably have to recover it. I

pointed out that he could see there was oil so it was obviously an electrical error. None of it made any difference and I left him sat in his car too scared to start it or drive the 5 or 6 miles to Border car in case his engine 'blew'. He was still there 40 minutes later. I'd have been at Border Cars safe in the knowledge that I had physically checked there was plenty of oil and the car was not about to die. Computers seem to have robbed some people of their common sense! This month's tip is – don't let your wife crash her car...I did, and that means I am driving round in a basic Citroen C1. We haven't had a great deal of snow in West Cumbria, but 2 weeks ago it was very cold, a bit snowy and a stream of water running across the road a mile or 2 from our house froze solid. I got in from night shift and went to bed at 7.15ish. Trudy set off to work and then seemingly re-enacted Torvil and Dean's Bollero on the frozen stream eventually coming to a halt across a ditch with a non-frozen stream running in it. Our 2 daughters were in the rear – Emily, the older sensitive child burst into tears, Heidi, the difficult 2nd child (who people say is like me!) shouted 'WOO WOO CRASH'!

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Peter



Something for Peter to aspire to!



John Hunter's latest acquisition

Grant Construction Knockhill Stages

4th January 2015

Opel Kadett Peter and Dougie Humphrey

It had been a while since the Scottish Historic, which was the last outing for the Opel, and it seemed to be a good idea while we were sitting round the dinner table nice and warm, to put an entry in for Knockhill. Reality kicked in when the alarm went off at 4.30am on the morning of the event.

Colin our minder / mechanic towed the car and Dougie and I travelled separately all meeting at Knockhill in the pitch dark. The standard greeting was Happy New Year and Cripes it's effing cold. It was very cold and very icy.

Scrutineering was between 7 and 8am and we sailed through which is always a relief. The scrutineer managed to take the edge off a bit by letting us know that we were going to have to spend some serious money this year just to stay MSA legal. I had a borrowed comfy seat from Tom and Colin Wilkinson which was about to go out of date. My original seat, still in date, was a bit tight and uncomfortable. So a new seat is needed. He also looked at the helmets and said that these would have to be replaced at the end of 2015. The good news, he said, is that your race suits and harnesses are ok for the time being.

With our start time at 8.46 there was time for a bacon sandwich, cup of tea and a kick of the tyres. The Knockhill event consists of 4 stages 4 – 5 miles long on the racing circuit and the rally school track. Each stage is run twice. Two are run clockwise and two anti clockwise. The circuit is made trickier by the insertion of chicanes and merges and splits onto the rally track. The rally track is a mixture of mud, loose gravel and concrete surfaces and there are many closely linked tight 90 degree bends. A typical stage would be two laps of the race track and split to the rally track and finish.

So on the start line calm and composed as usual, 5-4- 3-2 -1 go..... dropped the clutch first gear then second and there wasn't a lot of forwards movement, it felt as if the clutch was slipping badly, we were both amazed at how slippery it was. Once on the circuit the tarmac was mostly white frost and some black tarmac tracks from the previous 30 cars. We managed to get round fairly tentatively with quite a lot of sideways and only one excursion into the gravel.

Second stage much the same but with a very serious moment on the first bend entering rather too quickly braked hard and lost it, corrected one way, then another, then another and somehow finished on the track facing in the right direction, despite this we trimmed 16 seconds off the first run.

Gradually the sun softened the ice and we got more grip. Having seen some results after stage 4 we were feeling pretty good and we had moved well up the field. It was a shame that Stage 5 changed things. The route for this one was a bit tricky and there was a merge early on and a split to the finish at the end. Our problem was that we split to the finish too early and suffered a stage maximum. Usually I don't get too upset at these things but this was different because we were doing so well. I was a bit bad tempered for 15 mins and Dougie was suitably repentant, apologetic and cross with himself.

The stages got slippery again as the sun went down and the temperature dropped to freezing. We had one or two incidents which involved a bit of off road on the rally track and some damage to back quarter when the loose back end collided with a fence. Fairly superficial and now almost fixed.

We had a thoroughly enjoyable day and finished 24th out of 60 starters. Not bad for an old one! We won the class!

(We would have finished 18th without Dougie's indiscretion. We were the only car in the Historic class. Dougie and I are still good friends!)

Brockbanks Solicitors Cross Border Speed Championship

Rounds:

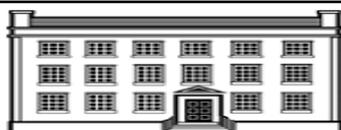
1	Sat	11/04/2015	Kames	CW Sprint	EACC
2	Sun	12/04/2015	Kames	AC Sprint	EACC
3	Sat	18/04/2015	Doune	Hill Climb	LCC
4	Sun	19/04/2015	Doune	Hill Climb	LCC
5	Sat	02/05/2015	Olivers Mount	Hill Climb	Auto 66
6	Sun	03/05/2015	Olivers Mount	Hill Climb	Auto 66
7	Sun	17/05/2015	Scammonden	Hill Climb	MGCC
8	Mon	25/05/2015	Teesside	Sprint	York MC (Cancelled)
9	Sat	13/06/2015	Barbon	Hill Climb	LMC
10	Sat	27/06/2015	Forrestburn	Hill Climb	MSCC
11	Sat	25/07/2015	Kames	CW Sprint	EACC
12	Sun	26/07/2015	Kames	AC Sprint	EACC
13	Sun	02/08/2015	Three Sisters	Sprint	Chester MC
14	Sat	05/09/2015	Ty Croes	Sprint	MGCC
15	Sun	06/09/2015	Ty Croes	Sprint	MGCC
16	Sat	19/09/2015	Harewood	Hill Climb	BARC
17	Sun	20/09/2015	Harewood	Hill Climb	BARC
18	Sun	04/10/2015	Kames AC	Sprint	WMC

Full regulations are on the website on the Speed page.

Pre Season Test Day At Rowrah

Saturday, March 21st 10 until 1pm

Entry forms have been emailed to all current members.



**Brockbanks
Solicitors**

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

39 eme Chamrousse Course de Cote, Isere, France 23-24 Aout 2014 – Championnat de France Montagne



Why - Whilst lounging around the house pretending to look after the kids during the 2013 Christmas school holidays, she who must be obeyed went off to work one day and left me with one task “Sort out our holidays for 2014, preferably Switzerland in August”. Right where would I start? Oh yes of course t’internet. And the starting point for my research was that well known tourist guide ...the European Hillclimb Championship Website. That flagged up loads of exotic sounding events in unknown places, including Czechoslovakia (lots of Skodas?), didn’t think that would go down well. So, sensible head on I looked for something in late Au-

gust and lo and behold Chamrousse Course de Cote (hillclimb) was on the perfect date. But where was Chamrousse?

Where – It’s in the French Alps, 30KM from Grenoble in the Isere region in the South East of France. So that’s nearly Switzerland.

What - A 4.08km hillclimb on the very wide and beautifully smooth tarmac D-111 road up to Chamrousse ski station. It ran for 17kms in the 1960’s and the first event in 1962 was won by Heinz Schiller in a Porsche 718 under the [Ecurie Filipinetti](#) banner.

Accommodation -Unfortunately the hillclimb websites didn’t help with this so after at least 30 seconds deliberation I resorted to typing Chamrousse into Trip Advisor and that immediately threw up Chateau D’Oz in a village called Oz en Osians about 30kms from the hillclimb. The reviews were very very good so that was the accommodation sorted. (An unknown bonus - the owner was a photographer for CAR magazine in the 80’s and 90’s and did he have some tales to tell).



Travel - Now that would be easy, we’ll go in the 205 Rallye via the Chunnel and we’ll be there within a day. Er ok not enough seats and no volunteers to travel in the tin can. So we’ll go in the ubiquitous family VW Golf. Sorted! (Subsequent protestations to my cultural meander through France saw my plans swapped for the much quicker and much less costly use of British Airways from Newcastle to Heathrow and then Geneva and then a lovely VW Golf from Avis (more of which later).

Approval – Was feeling quite smug having met all the criteria I had been set , but then apprehension set in that my plans would be vetoed by the household CEO on her return from work. But NO the plans were approved with one caveat “I’m not going to watch cars”. RESULT!

The event – In the absence of a map (other than a rapidly memorized page from Google maps) James and I set off to watch race day on the Sunday. Arriving at St Martin d’Uriage the last village before the start of the hillclimb, there were some handwritten wooden boards on the entry to the vil

lage saying the road would be closed most of the day from Fri – Sun. Once out of the village it was clear that it was just a free for all for spectators and everyone was flat out, racing lines but very safe. Probably the best drive I've ever had to a motorsport event, hairpin after hairpin and how could I resist in a hire car. Eventually we arrived in a wooded area with cars parked up just like RAC rallies of old, loads of interesting spectators cars from the 70's onwards.

This was August but we were at about 1300 meters and the fog was on the deck, expecting it to be cancelled we dressed up in full "Winter in Kielder" gear and set off to find somewhere to watch. There was a very friendly spectator entrance i.e. four elderly French blokes, who were amazed we'd come so far to spectate, we paid about £10 including programmes etc and off we went. 100m into the forest and there were approximately 20 Formula 3 cars lined up, no back up batteries or mechanics, all waiting for the start, really atmospheric. We headed off into the forest (if I didn't know it, we could have been in Wythop except the air was even fresher). We eventually came back onto the tarmac at a huge 180 degree left hander (again just like Wythop near the FC offices) with V8 powered Norma sports racers with sequential boxes hammering past us at head height.



The format was very similar to UK hill-climbs but with the cars travelling downhill, in batches of 40, from the ski station to the start and then racing up the hill. Between the batches they ran BMW E30 drift cars including Marc Fleury (Google him it's amazing). The cars ranged from the Norma sports racers, F3000, F3, Seat Cupra race cars, Porsche 935, Peugeot 306 MAXI's, R5 Turbo TdC, Gordini's etc etc. Generally the cars were of a much higher quality than at Uk events, with most of the modern stuff running sequential boxes and they were making proper race

car noise levels. We saw a few major blow ups during the day but the organization was super slick. Unfortunately we had to leave when the event was still running at 7PM!

All in all a super day out and a brilliant holiday, so good in fact that we are going again this August but I've tweaked the itinerary so we can watch both days!

Oh yes , the Golf hire car. Well I managed to scratch it on a high kerb driving out of Geneva Airport. Not a problem, fixed it with a touch up, well some black nail varnish. And then on the way home got flashed by a cheeky speed camera doing 3kms over the speed limit, bloody French!

Wiggy

Elderly Utterances

The Voice of Experience!

Ron Palmer has his say

I'd like to apologise to those of my readers who received e-mail spam allegedly from me. Some IT genius hacked my email on the 4th February and sent out rubbish to an unknown numbers of folk on my database – sorry but I don't know how it came about and only hope it's a one off event which was promptly resolved, I know it happens to others.

The 8th running of 'The Gallop' in May has attracted a record number of entries and has already exceeded our expectations now standing at 35 cars. We have attracted six new members and three of the crews entered have taken part on all eight of the events. There is a growing trend in the popularity of Tours – have you tried one yet?

Along with a number of club members I enjoyed a pleasant winter's day marshalling in Whinlatter Forest on section seven of the Fellside Trial. It never ceases to amaze me how far some people will travel to marshal and I know that our friend Stuart Bankier from Berwick was there a little further along the forest on section nine. The weather was a pleasant contrast to last year in Wythop when it rained all day and everything was covered in mud including my Lab Oscar and David Agnew. This year couldn't have been better as we had an early section which finished by 1.30 and I was home in time for the Six Nations Rugby. Amongst the competitors having fun were Keith Thomas riding shotgun for a renowned expert, John Hunter driving his ex Mike Telford supercharged Austin 7 Cambridge and Chris Hunter who fared less well in the Ford Nipper, also ex Mike Telford, and regrettably retired before they reached our section.

I recently had a run across to The Aston Workshop at Beamish with Mike Little to meet up with a friend of his, Brian Spearman who took time out to host us for about five hours – quite a relaxed pace of life over there. They are official Aston Martin service agents but better known worldwide for sales of their classic Astons. One of their customers has a collection of six hundred and sixty (!) and had a further three cars awaiting shipment. Makes you think doesn't it? The showroom alone is worth a visit with 50 or 60 cars on display several of which are in the collection of the garage owner. Recently they have incorporated the long established Morgan dealer Macdonalds into their business now Beamish Morgan and besides Astons and Morgans there were Lagonda, Rolls Royce, Mercedes 600 Pullman and many more. Their website www.aston.co.uk is well worth a visit and if you think a DB5 is expensive at £250,000 they also have a DB2/4 with a Vignale body at around £2m.

Charles and I have a busy time ahead in the next few weeks competing in HRCR Championship rounds - The Tour of Cheshire, Ilkley Jubilee and the North Yorks Classic. Also after a date change we can now fit in the Hexham Classic ably run by Ed Graham and also Stuart Bankier's Berwick Classic in early May. The TR4 has had a mechanical makeover recently so should be ready for action – only the crew to prepare now...

Don't forget the Rally Training Day on 22nd March. If you have thought of taking part in one of our club rallies or tours but have not yet taken the plunge this day is for you.

Graeme, David and yours truly will show how simple and straightforward it all is and you will get an opportunity to sample it all hands on. After lunch there will be a thirty mile route where you can try out those new found skills and this will finish at a test site where you can twirl around the cones. All of this for a £5 entry fee. This day is intended for the raw novice and we promise not to bore you.



Ron.

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Gates Tyres Northern Historic Rally Awards

The first two events take place this month with the Saltire and Hexham but sadly the Devils Own Rally has been postponed, reputedly to early October which makes for rather a lot of events in a short time.

Rally Training Day March 22nd

A full day course for navigators and drivers, covering rules and regulations, technical regulations, organising and marshalling, plus basic navigation.

In the afternoon there will be a practice route and test to do and run.

The day will include coffee and lunch and we are covering most of the cost so it will be a nominal £5 per head for members and £15 for non members.

Entry forms are on the website.

Only 40 places available so enter soon!



BYGONES

Anecdotes

Paul Gilligan mentioned a few months ago the **Aston Martin Cygnet**, the one based on a little Toyota, which basically bombed. On visits to family in Newport Pagnell I often have a walk round the Aston Martin Sales and Heritage Centre. The salesmen are usually keen for a chat - not the busiest of showrooms! For the best part of two years they had a row of Cygnets outside and they weren't going anywhere! But then they were gone. According to the salesman a Arab prince had bought them all for his wives to drive around his palaces!

There were plenty WMC members at **Race Retro** as usual. Attendance was said to be about 5% up on last year. The outdoor rally action was good but perhaps the organisers need to put more effort into getting more clubs to exhibit in the halls. Sadly over the years they have put the cost up to a level where the normal clubs can no longer afford to come.



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RACING LINES

News from the Circuits

I don't know how many of you watched the live streaming of the Bathurst 12 Hours on line last month. The last thirty minutes were very exciting and of course Bathurst has to be one of the great circuits to race on. The Aussies have always been ahead of the game on TV coverage; they had in car cameras and the ability to speak to drivers on the track, long before anyone else thought about.

It may be that live streaming will be the way of the future - both the Goodwood events now do it as well. The last few minutes of the 12 Hours were very exciting with the M Sport Bentley in the lead under a safety car period until the last lap when there was a last lap dash when three more nimble cars got past - two on the very last corner! Exciting stuff! In fact the GT events are getting more and more popular, there were seven different makes in the top seven places and the cars were actually identifiable as to what make and model they were which is great for spectators and viewers.

Marshals Post

The current positions in the Marshals Championship are:

David Wiggins	10	10	20
Graeme Forrester		10	10
NealHorsfall	10		10
Chris Hunter		10	10
Helen Palmer	10		10
Steve Palmer	10		10
John Sloan		10	10
Marian Sloan		10	10
Fiona Tyson		10	10
James Wiggins	10		10

All WMC events count plus any to which the Club is invited to marshal.

Future events:

March 1st Autotest
March 21st Test Day
March 22nd Rally Training Day

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 Gorton of Windermere Chris Jones & family of Gosforth
David & Callum Alexander of Windermere Andrew & Lucy Thomas of Carlisle
Graeme Stonehouse of Everthorpe Graeme Clark of Perth
Pamela Mooney of Carlisle

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.

A different Sort of Motorsport

Having recently bought what could loosely be described as a historic trials car, loosely being the operative word, the molecules of metal on the chassis are barely attached to each other, more gaps than attachments but was enough to rekindle my interest in sporting trials .

Our son Andrew has in our barn a rather good sporting trials car that in the past had won the BTRDA trials championship in the hands of a very skilled driver and the car was still in really good condition always having been well maintained although very little used in the last six years or so, it's only use being a couple of outings at Willie Jarman's autotests in the field which adjoins our home.



Andrew competed in one autotest but a clutch cylinder decided to leak due to lack of use so it severely hampered the cars potential and caused us to retire. The other one was just as disastrous due to brain fade and my failure to read diagrams and remember them though I wasn't the only one with this affliction.

This fresh interest in sporting trials had Andrew and myself sending off an entry for the Edenhall trial just outside Penrith. These rather funny looking cars take great skill to drive well, an attribute I do

not possess, spectators at Willie's events could testify to this.

The cars can climb up very steep hills even though limited slip diffs are not allowed by using the independent "fiddle" brakes to help steer as well as maintain traction and control wheelspin, this is definitely a black art.

The fiddle brakes work on each rear wheel and are controlled by hand levers close together, decidedly tricky to get the hang of and if you get to the top because the driver and passenger have worked very hard and "bounced" their way to the top then you feel elated, take in the vista ready for the next part of the section. Euphoria at getting to the top can suddenly turn to fear and definitely focuses your mind greatly when you gaze down the hill and prepare for what can be a tricky descent.

Trials are often in slimy muddy conditions and great skill and care is required on downhill sections using the fiddle brakes and engine braking to descend as safely as possible. The occupants lean in and out of the car to give grip and balance rather similar to a sidecar passenger on a motorcycle event. If you lock up the brakes you accelerate, rapidly at first and then totally out of control but provide much more spectacle for the onlookers. Usually the first aiders jumping up for their bag is a good indication that you are just about to have a very exciting white knuckle ride.

What about the footbrakes you ask as the more perceptive ones amongst you will have spotted that the cars do have a footbrake, well this is connected to the front wheels only, very often a Honda 90 moped wheel fitted with a 2.75 x 18 tyre that doesn't afford any grip but is merely to keep the front end of the car off the ground. Panicking, pressing the footbrake and locking up the front wheels on a descent means you are now right out of control but going so much faster than you were previously.

It will be noted that no matter how far from the beaten track or how remote the venue a sporting trials event always has a proper "portaloo," I now know the reason. It's much more fun though that just taking laxative from a bottle.

With practise one hopes to get better but having just had my 68th birthday I need to "fast track" my

skills or keep remarkably fit for a long time to achieve any success. Having said that I really enjoyed myself and all the competitors were very friendly and really helpful.

Safety is uppermost in everyone's mind, a fact stressed by the clerk of course in his briefing to drivers. You are given help and encouragement but this is tempered with instructions on how to do things safely. Much better to stop climbing if you feel unsure about descending, and if descending look for safe escape routes PRIOR to attempting the climb as you walk the sections first.

Perhaps deliberately using a tree at the top to stop you is more sensible than hoping to miss the bottom tree if out of control. Members are very willing to help manhandle cars back down if it's too difficult for your abilities and no one makes fun if this needs to happen. On the Edenhall trial I got the car down on my own but in a couple of previous trials having been drafted in at last minute to double drive the car I have suggested to Andrew he might just like to take over the car at the top of the hill as I needed to take a suitable photo, have a wee, check something under the car or any other feeble excuse I could come up with at the time.

I now plan to take the car where I can get in some practise as I loved my day out and double driving the car allowed each of us to tackle the six sections four times, giving one the opportunity to get a feel for the hill as both a bouncer and driver, I was much better and able to control the car with much more confidence by the end of the day.



When Andrew told Robert Gate owner of Gates Tyres and Wigton Motor Clubs generous sponsor a few years ago he had bought a trials car Robert said "you don't want one of those, have a look around at the competitors you will be the only one at the venue under seventy years old" ! Not exactly true although many competitors are well over seventy but their skill makes up for youth and physical fitness and there are now a great crop of young drivers taking up the sport Thinking about Roberts comments I well remember someone very close to him saying Robert, my bum is flabby, my eyes have bags under them, my skin has wrinkles and my boobs have dropped, Robert quick as a flash quipped

"theres nowt wrong with your eyesight then" ! Can't say who he was talking to.

Cars are front engined, rear wheel drive, maximum engine size 1650cc, regulations are in MSA Blue book and cars can be bought from about £1500 for starter car that will certainly do the job although a new car built by racing car manufacturer Crossle in Ireland will set you back well over £20,000 with a Hewland gearbox so you can tinker and change ratios between hills if you wish.

Honda Accord engines are very common, some are converted to run on propane as petrol in float chambers can cause problems with very steep hills as the floats can stick and affect mixture. Gas also seems to make cars run smoother at low revs when "trickling" ie when going very slowly to prevent wheels spinning and losing grip.

This is a sport where self builders can excel, Cannon, Sherpa, SRB and others were just some of the self built cars that were so successful that many replicas were made from the original successful car and it's still possible to build your own car today from a set of plans.

Many F1 racing drivers competed in this sport years ago, Stirling Moss, Peter Collins, Mike Hawthorn, Ken Wharton, Tony Marsh and many other drivers did it to learn throttle control and to keep fit and active in the winter months.

Nowadays many more racing drivers are taking it up and the historic trials cars those with engines such as 1172ccsidevalve Fords and BMC A series engines are making serious money. Some cars change hands for £15,000 I'm told. Demand is outstripping supply, adverts appear regularly in the wanted columns so If you own a nice Cannon you could well be in the money.

£25 entry fee and two gallons of petrol is all you need spend, tyres last forever and only 165x 15 Firestone F560, Vrederstein Sprint and a couple of other tyres are allowed, a roller test is carried out to ensure no LSDs are used. Visit Historic Sporting Trials Assn, HSTA or NPTCC websites and on here you will find loads of information and videos to entertain you and give you a great insight into this relatively cheap but friendly form of motorsport.

Keith Thomas.

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For Sale: 1978 MG B Roadster, converted to chrome bumper. Leather seats, Walnut dash, alloy wheels. Full history file MoT to June 2015. £4,740 Can be seen in Penrith. Ring John on 01768862243

Barn Storage near Wigton: Cars £50 a quarter and trailers £60 a quarter. Ring Graeme on 01900 825642

Fuchs Silkolene 20/50 classic oil 5 litres for £14.95, Titan 10/40 4 litres for £14.95. 1 litre of diff oil £4.00, Water Wetter to aid cooling £12.00. Classic oil filters for MGs, Minis etc £3.50. Competition car safety stickers sets £2.00. Diesel engine cleaner £10.00. Red rotor arms and condensers for classics - solve your ignition problems £6.00 each Windscreen wipers for classics £2.00 each. Competition numbers 50p each. Ring Graeme on 01900 825642.

Race Retro

Race Retro continues to be successful with an increase in attendance over last year. Certainly the number of competitors and organisers attending does seem to be far higher than at any other show. Star this year was Ari Vatanen who entertained in the interview stage. He only did one run on the rally stage due to being an “ambassador” for BMW which prevented him from driving the Escorts or Peugeots as was advertised. I wonder when the show organisers know of that fact? However Wiggy was pleased to get his bits signed by Ari! There were many other top drivers including Paddy Hopkirk, Dai Llewellyn, Russell Brooks and Jimmy McRae who all drove a variety of cars vigorously. DJ Chris Evans was a visitor.

I spend two half days helping on the MGCC stand where there was a constant stream of visitors. The Chevron 50 display was good although the advertised celebrations of BMC Comps and Brabham consisted of three cars in each.

The auction preview was not open to the public this year which was a shame.

Rally Torque

News from Road & Stage

An open letter from the MSA Chief Executive regarding spectator safety on UK stage rallies

This weekend marks the second anniversary of the tragic death of a spectator on the Snowman Rally, and of course on the Jim Clark Rally in 2014 three more spectators lost their lives in equally tragic circumstances.

As a result the Scottish Government, following an emergency debate in the Scottish Parliament, commissioned a major review of safety on stage rallies. This Scottish Government Motorsport Event Safety Review published its final report in January, and the MSA has since gone on record confirming its commitment to the implementation of the report's recommendations, not only in Scotland but throughout the UK.

Clearly, there is going to be a period of transition while everyone concerned works as hard as possible to introduce the recommended changes. In the interim, I need to remind all spectators of the fact that they are ultimately responsible for their own personal safety.

I say this because despite these well-publicised tragedies, and despite the sport being well aware of the changes being brought about by the Scottish Review, I am astonished and dismayed that an irresponsible minority – and I stress minority – of spectators continue to display a wanton disregard for their own personal well-being.

This was brought home to me when viewing YouTube clips of last weekend's Wydean Forest Rally, and also from the truly shocking photograph from the same rally in yesterday's *Motorsport News* (18 February, page 34) of a 'spectator' lying flat on the ground on the edge of the forest track, apparently taking a photograph extremely close to a competing vehicle.

This behaviour not only shows a complete disregard for personal safety but in addition places other spectators, officials and competing crews in danger. It also undermines the considerable efforts of the dedicated rally organisers, officials and marshals, who do all they can to ensure that events run as safely as possible.

The MSA is currently working on a daily basis with all other stakeholders in rallying, particularly the Forestry Commission, and I can confirm from discussions within the last few days that unless these few idiotic spectators concerned change their attitude immediately and behave responsibly, there will be no future for stage rallying in the UK. I am not talking about next year, or the year after; I am talking about right now. Even in the meantime, this sort of behaviour will mean that stages are cancelled and rallies disrupted or even stopped.

Please, for the sake of rallying in the UK, can all spectators take full responsibility not only for ensuring their own personal safety but also the future of the sport we all love.

Yours in motor sport,

Rob Jones
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Race Retro Photos



Inside the Industry

Paul Gilligan keeps us up to date

Interesting January, March Ahead

While on the surface January new car sales looked good, underneath not so good. Retail sales were in fact down on the same month last year for the first time for almost 3 years, sales growth was supported by fleet sales. There is no doubt that corporate confidence is increasing, and skilled staff are hard to find, so the old carrot of a better company car is returning. Meanwhile returning to something I've been boring you all with for years now, Mercedes beat BMW in the UK for the first time for a very long time. They said they would!

Now everyone in the industry is revving up for March, the new 15 plate and the biggest sales month of the year. Can I just say the temperature is rising, lots of business out there, but a big dogfight to get the order. The top end of the market is very strong, hard to get a BMW X5 or any sort of Range Rover. I quoted this week for a £113000 Mercedes for a London customer. He wanted white with red leather. (The customer is always right). Merc do white paint but only black or grey leather. I was told to sort red leather, so I did as a re-trim before the car is delivered. Only £3500 extra. The customer may not always be right, but the rich customer ALWAYS is.

Rolls v Bentley

On the subject of the top end of the market the fight between these two is becoming intense. Rolls (owned by BMW) refuses to be classed as a "Luxury" brand. That is left to Bentley (owned by Volkswagen) because they claim to be "the World's most sought after luxury car brand" because they sold just over 11000 cars last year. Rolls say they are "Super Luxury", they sold just over 4000. Rolls say they will never dip below £200k in today's money, and their average sale price is way above that with most cars leaving the factory with a significant level of "personalisation" Spelt fffffffffffff.

However both want to sell more cars. Bentley recently announced they would definitely launch their luxury SUV. 200 mph and £200k as my regular reader may remember from last month, and a stupid name. Rolls have long been rumoured to be launching their own SUV, and this week they confirmed they would. No confirmation, but it is expected prices will start at £300k. Before "personalisation". Footballers and Sheiks will be spoilt for choice. Particularly with SUVs from Maserati and Lamborghini on the way.

As well as the SUV Bentley are working on something Rolls will never do. A "small" sports car. Internally nicknamed the "Aston Fighter" this would start at around £100k. Looks like Crewe, and Goodwood will be busy.

GM Europe

In the last 15 years GM Europe (Opel + Vauxhall) have recorded trading losses of around \$20 BILLION. I'm not sure but I think Greece may have been more profitable. We've heard it all before, but ANOTHER new boss has just arrived to say the corner is being turned, breakeven next year (why is it always next year?), lots of new models, less factories. Interestingly Vauxhall performs better in the UK (11% of sales) than Opel does in Germany (6% of sales). So it's Germany they have to fix first. One to watch, from the sidelines.

Alfa Romeo

This once revered name has been a bad joke for too long. With UK sales at about 4000 a year and dropping (about 0.2% of the market) it's amazing they haven't actually disappeared from the UK entirely. I can only imagine dealers are being "supported" by the manufacturer to stay open until the good times return. As it appears they might. Currently Alfa have a pretty awful range. Most sales are the Mito, basically a rebadged Fiat Punto. Need I say more? However in the next 3 years Alfa will give us 9 new models, that's 9 more than we've seen in the last 3 years I think?

Later this year we see a new Giulia to compete with 3 Series etc. Alfa will ditch front wheel drive to

go RWD and “reclaim its sporting heritage”. Then in 2017 a new Giulietta to compete with Focus/Golf, its 2017 the real fun starts.

A new compact car to compete with Mercedes GLA etc, a coupe to fight Audi TT, a BMW X3 rival, a sports convertible to sit above the Fiat 124 Spyder MX5 clone, a BMW 5 series car based on the Maserati Ghibli, and loads more in 2018. Let’s hope they make it, iconic names like Alfa shouldn’t die.

Are Car Showrooms Dying?

On this morbid subject I was interested to read recently that many senior representatives of UK car manufacturers believed this to be the case. A showroom they said could be “a pop up at a major train station or shopping centre” or even “an app on a smart phone”. It was cited that 10 years ago the average new car buyer visited 3 showrooms before choosing their new car. Now the average customer visits only one, having done all their research on the internet. If the average is one visit, then many make no showroom visits.

Yet while agreeing that the traditional showroom is dead these same manufacturers are “encouraging”, some would say forcing, the independent businesses who hold their franchises to spend hundreds of thousand, sometimes millions on new showrooms.

What will happen to these glass palaces I wonder, when reality dawns. Tesco won’t be buying them it appears, so who?

Detroit Show Stopper

Every proper motor show has a “Car of the Show”. Sometimes these are boringly predictable in advance. Sometimes the car is not that good, just the best of the bunch. With spy shots all over the internet it’s almost impossible to keep new cars secret. At the recent Detroit Show something happened that we haven’t seen for years.

A stunning new sports car was launched that took everyone by surprise. Even within the company that made it less than 50 people were aware of its existence before the show. Just as surprising as its launch was that it was made by one of Detroit’s own who don’t often make 200 mph supercars. Perhaps most surprising of all given the austerity programme they have been on for a long time now, that manufacturer was Ford. The car was the new Ford GT. Son of the 2005 car of the same name, grandson of GT40, some lineage!

The harsh regime of the last few years saved Ford from the bankruptcy that GM and Chrysler accepted. The blue oval is making money again, lots of it. Now is the time to re-establish sporting credentials, to launch cars that will do for Ford now what the GT40, Cobra, Lotus Cortina etc did in the 1960s. So the Ford GT is not just a car, it’s the first product of a new division of the company called Ford Performance. Detroit saw Ford Performance launch their second car minutes after their first – the Mustang GT 350 R. More than 500 bhp, more than 400 lb ft of torque etc etc. The idea is what it always was, the Performance products create a halo effect that benefits both the engineering and the image of the rest of the company’s products. Just as the RS models did in the UK for so many years.

Interestingly Ford Performance HQ isn’t in Detroit. It’s in Charlotte North Carolina. Where most of the NASCAR teams are located. Where the HAAS F1 team is developing its cars for Grand Prix next year. Where the most talented automotive engineers in the US are already based, a talent pool Ford will no doubt be dipping into. Hope they have time to develop some products for Europe!

Driverless / Electric / Hydrogen Cars

I’m sure it had nothing to do with my witterings last month, but apparently it is now possible that if the testing programme is successful our Lords & Masters may well permit driverless cars to be just that.

Tesla have not surprisingly attacked hydrogen cars because you have to generate electricity to make hydrogen, so why not just use the electricity to power the car? I’m not able to assess the scientific arguments, but do I detect a hint of self interest?

Rumours are flying that Apple are planning to build a car. Word is they have been headhunting engineers from Tesla. Watch this space.

GM in the US have just launched a new version of their Volt (get it?) electric car. Well not really launched as it won't be available until 2017. It's supposed to have a one charge range of 200 miles, sell for around \$30000 after Government rebate and generally be a good idea.

Meanwhile in Europe GM have withdrawn the hapless Ampera after selling only a fraction of the forecast volume. This is the car that my regular reader may remember couldn't get me from home to my local Asda and back (24 miles) on a single charge. There are still a good number left unsold and they have to be registered by end August when new emission regulations come in which ironically this "green" car doesn't meet. These will be as cheap as they are useless. This car must have increased GM Europe's gigantic losses significantly on its own?

Jaguar's New "Not An SUV"

Jaguar have confirmed that in 2017 they will launch a very different new car. It will have a greater ride height than other Jags, it will be 4WD in all versions, it will have 5 doors. It will be marginally longer and higher than a Porsche Macan, slightly longer than but not as tall as a Land Rover Discovery Sport. So it looks very much like a sporty medium sized SUV. But it's not an SUV, because Jaguar say so. The LR bit of JLR make SUVs. So the new Jag, now christened F-Pace, is "a family sports car". So FSC not SUV, hopefully that's quite clear to you both?

Borrowing the F from F Type is supposed to allow the Pace to show it has a clear relationship with the sports car. To emphasise the point the two models have the same rear lights, similar aluminium architecture, and share engines. Jaguar intend their FSC to be "bang on the Porsche Macan in terms of the driving experience". No small challenge. If it's going to be that good I bet Land Rover are very glad that Jag didn't make it an SUV?

People Always Want What They Can't Have

It seems to be me that the best way to create demand for a slow selling car is to announce you're going to stop making it. I've seen it happen so many times before. The first example was the 3 door Sierra Cosworth with huge rear wing attached. At first it sold very strongly, then it became the favourite of the criminal community who found it less expensive to steal the cars than buy them, resulting in the car becoming very difficult to insure. Demand slumped and didn't really pick up until Ford announced the 3 door hatch was to be replaced by the 4 door saloon with boot, which was as bland to look at as the hatch was exciting. Ford struggled to get dealers to take the last hatches, but Ron Palmer and I took a gamble and managed to secure almost 50. Cost a very good lunch if I remember, most things did in the 80s. Once word got around that these genuinely were the last demand went wild. We went from selling one or two a month at big discounts to moving all 50 in a few weeks at full retail price. The same thing happened with Escort Cosworth when production of that stopped.

Now it's the turn of the Land Rover Defender. Later this year they stop making this icon which traces its history, and styling, back to 1948. Suddenly people want them. I think we've handled 3 or 4 Defenders in the last two years. In the last two weeks we've had 5 or 6 serious enquiries. One was from a gentleman in the Borders who's insisting on an absolutely basic model with no electric windows or other "modern stuff". When it arrives he's going to put it in a heated garage and apart from starting it regularly, just leave it. "In ten years time" he told me "I hope to have the only brand new Defender in the World".

Bad news for him perhaps is the Tata (who own JLR of course) are taking all the tooling to India and will resume production there. Several Defender specialists I know are already planning to bring new Indian built cars to Europe once production starts there. However I'm sure "Solihull built" will have a different value.

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Andy's Armchair

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

From what I've read of late it seems that the proposed Circuit of Wales is having a few problems. The scenario would appear to be that the new track, which doesn't exist, has a contract to run the MotoGP events (motorcycle Grand Prix in other words) from 2015 for 5 years. Now because they haven't got a track they'd arranged with Donington to run this year's event and then take it over themselves next year when the new Welsh venue was ready. The owners of Donington have now pulled out claiming that agreed funds from the Welsh operation haven't been forthcoming. It now seems that Silverstone will be running the event again, although as things stand they haven't even said they want to, as there's been a change of management in Northamptonshire and no-one can comment! A mess, it all sounds terribly like the debacle that led to Donington closing down for a while after some "dreamer" managed to arrange to hold the British Grand Prix there when the track wasn't fit for purpose, the money to improve it didn't exist, only enough to wreck it. Why do we get in such a state in motorsport you'd think we'd have learnt our lesson by now.

I was reading about some cyclist who on his daily commute, takes videos from his helmet cam of motorists breaking the rules of the road. Apparently he sends the proof to the local constabulary and as a result 70 plus drivers have received a summons. Now that's all well and good but I think someone should redress the balance and take a few videos of the antics cyclists get up to. Just out of curiosity while out walking lately I've observed, riding on the pavement, riding across pedestrian crossings, jumping red lights, riding with no lights, overtaking on the inside, no hands, wheelies and riding in pedestrianised zones. So "Mr. vigilante biker" maybe it's a case of glass houses and throwing stones etc., get your own house in order first.

On the motorsport front we've now had the first session of F1 testing and although it's early days it looks as if McLaren Honda have a good deal of work to do. Ferrari look to have moved forward so considering the move Fernando has just made you can't imagine he's full of the joys. Mr. Kyvat didn't impress his new bosses at Red Bull by driving into the barriers at slow speed while fiddling with his knob. Seemingly the controls on his steering wheel are laid out in a confusing way. Toro Rosso have their junior team with two babes in arms doing the driving. Verstappen is so young that if he was in the English schools system, he'd still be required to be in full time education. Finally apparently Marussia has morphed back into Manor Racing and made a half-hearted bid to be allowed to compete this year using last year's cars. Considering how slow they were last season I presume they'd be even further behind this year's offerings. At the time of writing they've been sent packing but who knows, at least they've got real cars which is more than can be said of the phantom track owned by the Welsh developers. There we are, back where I started so I'd better call a halt.

Ends

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What's On

WMC events and other events of interest

March

1st	Sun	WMC	Autotest/PCA
1st	Sun	SRC	Saltire Historic Rally (GTNHRA Rd 1)
7th	Sa	Trio	Malcolm Wilson Rally
14th	Sa	HDMC	Hexham Historic Rally (GTNHRA Rd 2)
21st	Sa	H&BMC	Border Counties Rally
21st	Sa	WMC	Speed Test Day
22nd	Sun	WMC	Historic and Targa Rally Training Day

April

12th	Sun	MGC	Roof of England Challenge.
26th	Sun	WMC	Drive It Day at Dalemain 11 to 2

Visit the website for all the latest news

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

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