

**Wigton Motor Club Ltd**

# ***Start Line***

**Issue: 08/15**

[www.wigtonmc.co.uk](http://www.wigtonmc.co.uk)

**August 2015**

## **All Set for the Cumbria Classic & Motorsport Show**



**Will you be there?**

**Motor Sport for All**

# Diary

Club events over the next month or so

## August Pub Run Wednesday 5th August.

Starts from the lay-by on A595 at Mealsgate at MR 85/208419 facing NE from 6.45pm. Finishes at 9ish with chips and sandwiches, remember the nights are drawing in after that. No brain teasers just a few simple questions and a simple accurate tulip road book.

Please notify entries to Ron Palmer 01228 575153 or  
[ronpalmer777@hotmail.com](mailto:ronpalmer777@hotmail.com).

## WIGTON MOTOR CLUB LTD

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# Talking Point

## Topical comment from the world of motoring

This month the committee wishes to share a couple of very important points that were discussed at our last meeting:

The first is completing and sending in entry forms. The entries secretaries for our various events find that around 10% of entry forms have at least one error in them. Sorting these out takes a considerable amount of time and may involve ringing or emailing the entrant. The most common in terms of accuracy of details is entering the wrong class. Sometimes if this is not spotted it gets itself onto the result system and then we only get the complaint at the end of the event. Please ensure that the details on the entry form are correct. Where ever possible please type these in before printing off the form.

Then we have email addresses! If you have not put your correct email address on your form correctly and types so the entries secretary can read it then you won't get your final instructions etc. It often leads to entries secretary and indeed our membership secretary dealing with membership forms, to tear their hair out!

Secondly is getting your entries in on time and then ensuring your turn up. This point mainly applies to the pub runs and autotests. When someone runs a pub run they need to know how many people are coming, firstly to print the right number of route sheets and to the food at the finish. If extra people turn up on the night then the pub may not be able to get extra food at short notice. By the same token if you enter and don't turn up then the organisers have ordered food for you and have to pay for it.

It's the same with the autotests, organisers need to know how many tests to set out and how many copies of the tests to print.

Please remember that all our committee and organisers are volunteers so please make it as easy as possible for them. Talking of volunteers, we have our biggest event of the year coming up with the Classic an Motorsport Show on the 23rd. Not only is this a great day to meet other enthusiasts and see great cars but it is a showcase for the club and once again Paul Gilligan is running the special offer that includes membership and show admission.

This is also a great time to help the club and get marshals points. Marshalling at the show only takes about 2 hours of the whole day (split into shifts) so there is plenty of time to view the cars or take part in the autotest. We have 705 member and we need around 60 of them on the Sunday to make the event run well. We also need help on the Friday afternoon when we peg the site out. If you can help please email me on [gtfmg@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:gtfmg@yahoo.co.uk). or ring me on 01900 825642.

Let's hope for fine weather!

GTF



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# Classic Column

## Classic & Motorsport Show

A few important points about this year's Show.

Members can enter their cars free of charge

Members who come as spectators, do not have to pay but they must be able to show their membership card.

Every car entering the field for display (or traders) must have a wind screen pass, otherwise you don't get in. Getting over 600 vehicles in the gate in around 90 minutes is no mean feat and just one person appearing without a pass causes a huge hold up.

The Wigton MC display/club stand is for competition cars and an entry form for that went out last week. If you are coming please return the form. We would like to see a wide variety of race/rally/speed etc cars.

The entry forms for the individual displays went out some months ago but are on the WMC web site.

**Entries close on August 9th.**

**We do of course need lots of helpers at the show, please volunteer. An email has already gone out and another will go out shortly. Helping at the Show is a great way to get involved and only takes up a small amount of time during the day.**

**If you are doing the marshals, rally or speed championships you get those vital marshals points by helping at the Show. Please volunteer now.**

## News from the Classic Scene

The answer to the last competition was: Triumph 2000.

**This month fun competition is:** Sonny Duckworth won the only Grand Prix he started, which one was it?

At Angela and Willie's excellent autotest they had a quiz which included the question: "What does TT stand for in the Audi TT?" The obvious answer is Tourist Trophy but then Audi have never had any success or even an entry in the TT. The answer is actually more complicated and not that clear! Indeed the historic of the Audi marque is quite complex and worthy of an article on its own. At some point the Audi company took over the NSU firm which had gone bust after the ill fated Wankel cars. NSU has made sporty little cars, the Prinz, which had performance version called TT and TTS harking back to the firm's motor cycle success in the TT in the inter war years. Hence the TT use on the Audi coupe, a somewhat tenuous link!

However in the definitive book of the Audi TT, "**Das TT Buch**", the author says that TT stands for "Technology & Tradition" which could well fit in with the well known Audi slogan **Vorsprung durch Technik**, meaning "Advancement through Technology".

The jury is out!

# PG Tips

Summer hasn't really happened yet and we're already past the longest day...in fact some (idiot!) sent me a link to the countdown to Christmas website – really! It will soon be the show and as in recent years I will be running a Skoda Owners club stand and had every intention of displaying my newly restored mk1 Rapid coupe. This is never going to happen though. Having started poking at the old girl with a screwdriver it's fair to say at least one third is pure rust. On top of that both the cranks I possess for the engine I need to build are oval in the mains department and square in the big ends! I may have now sourced a replacement crank but could also have mine re-ground of course which will lead to sorting new bearings from the Czech Republic. Why can it never be straight forward!? Despite this I have been busily gathering other parts (mostly courtesy of the bay of e) and cleaning the carpets and seats with a view to having it on the road at some point before it snows....or gets dark at 3pm. I do however reserve the right not to finish it for a very long time depending on what else I get up to! My new trailer came in handy to lug the Rapid to a garage who are going to weld up all the rusty holes. Things have certainly moved on at Brian James since I last bought a trailer both in terms of quality and price. My new trailer is super shiny and has things like LED lights and is generally much sturdier than the one I bought 10 years ago however there is a price to pay.....double in fact. Yep in 10 years the price of a basic trailer has doubled. Yes the quality has improved and what is now the basic trailer would have been higher up the range back then, but double the price does seem steep. Obviously not steep enough to stop me buying one though!



I get Evo magazine on a monthly subscription – mostly because someone bought me it as a gift and it's a decent modern performance car magazine. This month they have a group test including the new BMW X6M...over 500bhp, off road and coupe looks and utterly and totally pointless! Even Evo starts by mentioning that buying a high performance sporty off roader is a bit pointless but they are being kind. If you want a car that goes fast and handles well then you'd buy a big saloon such as the BMW M5. If you want off road ability then you'd buy an X5. The nasty mixture of the 2 – the X6 does neither especially

well and is a bit of a taste void. My opinion seems to be well supported in the media and the fact that the X6's biggest market is the USA where the overall best-selling vehicle is a pickup also speaks volumes. Even Audi haven't (yet) aimed at the very small niche market of a family off road coupe – which got me thinking about other niches BMW could fill to increase sales (to above the levels of Audi and Mercedes of course!). Being a realist I am even coming up with ideas using current BMW platforms to save them extra development costs. How about an off-road 2 seat convertible? They could take the Z4 body and marry it to the X4 chassis....marvelous! Next up – how about a 7 seat coupe...ideally available in convertible and off road versions (all with an M version obviously). This would allow large families to transport their brood around in sporty German luxury with or without a roof on and off road without feeling disadvantaged by the size of their family. This would use a 7 series chassis with an even bigger X6 type body. I was also going to suggest an off road 2 seat coupe but Suzuki filled that niche some years ago with the unloved (except by trailers!) X90, and it proved to be rather bad and sold quite poorly.

Finally – how about a convertible estate.....massive load lugging ability with the roof off! They could use the 5 series estate as a start point. I would imagine that quite shortly BMW will be in contact to offer me some kind of product development contract....although they might have to fight Audi for the signature.

Now some shock news....I am currently mulling over buying another car....and it's not a Skoda or in fact anything from behind the old iron curtain. I have no idea if I can prise myself away from my Skodas quite yet, but it's a real possibility. More next month (by which time I will probably have changed my mind!)

Peter

## 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.**

Andrew Skelton	of Maryport	Rich Skelton	of Maryport
David McGeachie	of Hamilton	Robert Little & Family	of Holmrook
Ken Twigg & Family	of Penrith	Anthony Coates	of Co Durham
Jim O'Neill and Family	of Penrith		

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

By far the best way of getting new members is by recommendation from existing members. If you recruit a new member(s) using a membership form from the website you add your name to the box marked **Introduced by:** and at the end of the year your names goes into the hat to win free membership for the following year.

As well as getting Start Line each month, members get discounted entries on events and as WMC members you can enter events from the north of Scotland down to the Midlands without joining another club.

If you insure your car with our partners Hagerty, not only do you get a very good deal but Hagerty will pay your membership for you, saving you a further £16.

Members not exhibiting car at the **Classic & Motorsport Show** get free admission on production of their 2015 membership card.

Once again I have to thank all our contributors to this packed issue of Start Line. I've actually got two articles and lots of photos ready for the September issue. Due to the unstinting efforts of our contributors and photographers we have by far the best club magazine around. We welcome articles and reports plus photos of interesting events.

Don't forget that we have a very active Face Book page and photos of events go up on there within a few hours of it happening.

# 20<sup>th</sup> Vernasca Silver Flag, June 19<sup>th</sup>/21st 2015

An impression by Kirk Rylands

TOPS Team – Peter Mann - Bristol 406 Zagato. Chris Mann - Alfa Romeo Disco Volante. Michael Parr - Le Mans Rep. Frazer Nash. Isabelle Mathews - Mercedes 250SL. Trisha Pilkington - Sebring Frazer Nash and Kirk Rylands - Bentley 3/4 ½



Why would any of us drive right across Europe to an untimed non-competitive Italian Hill climb 60 miles south east of Milan ? If you have to ask that question, you probably won't understand the answer but.....!

Vernasca attracts an amazing entry of about 200 cars, mostly post war and many of them only seem to appear for this event. They are too precious to race and probably not competitive anyway but there are many that, after 50 years prattling about in old cars, I have never seen before. Like the Maserati 250F Aerodinamica *still on its original Pirelli racing tyres.*

The Serenissima, a glorious quad cam mid engine V8 and a delightful little Giaur 750 but Chris Mann's Alfa would certainly be on my short list of cars to pinch – rare, if not unique, beautiful and quick. Then there was Isabelle's Mercedes looking purposeful as a rally car and using the trip as a shake down for her forthcoming Peking to Paris with her daughter. There are all sorts of nationalities and the whole event is so much more than just a hill climb. It is a party, a real 'event' and something that simply couldn't happen in the U.K. but, above all for me, it's a great excuse to drive a 92 year old Bentley over the Alps. The hill climb is 5½ miles long but straight with a few chicanes to start with. Plenty of scope to be a hooligan which the organisers seem to quietly encourage whilst, at the same time, emphasising that it is non-competitive and that a serious accident would jeopardize the whole show so behave yourself. Many of the drivers put on their full flame proofs which may look a bit poseurish but some are going pretty well flat out in very fast cars – like a 1970 Formula 5000 or a 2012 Ferrari F12 - on a minor public road and anyway, it all adds to the spectacle as did the scantily clad dolly birds holding umbrellas whilst teetering about on impossibly high heels with half their bottoms sticking out. I must be getting old as my thoughts were that I would probably have fancied their mothers more and that they sadly looked rather tacky.

The Saturday night dinner in the 13<sup>th</sup> century square of Castell'Arquato is very special indeed and this year it was the full damask table cloth routine rather than the trestle tables of the past and all for about 500 people. Just watching the swifts doing their aerobatics in the fading light whilst sipping a glass is a most civilised way to dine and as one of the sponsors – Coys – did a lot of loud speaker talking in foreign, swift watching became very welcome. Coys later distributed some forms and asked us to vote for the car that most 'set our hearts racing' which seemed faintly ridiculous and the more childish members of our team therefore filled them in appropriately. Even so, a winner was announced at the prize giving and it turned out to be a 1954 Maserati A6GCS Berlinetta – undeniably quite beautiful but I suspect could only be driven by an anorexic dwarf with a penchant for sauna baths. The evening was rounded off by a firework display – not something that generally gets me going but in that setting...! Having drunk like a plastic flower, my reward was the glorious drive back to our farm. To me there is something about driving an old car in the dark on a balmy summers evening with all the evocative scents of wild flowers and new mown hay mixed in with that of hot oil and old leather. I love it.

Trisha had organised an 'Agriturismo' (holiday farm) where most of us stayed. An absolutely per-

fect setting of an old family run farm with charming hosts who fed us simply but very well with home produced food and wine and didn't seem to mind the oil slick we left on the pool. A place worth visiting again but on this occasion Trisha's TOPS deal meant that not only did we get a free event entry, worth 800 urines, but the organisers paid for a couple of nights as well.

Getting to these events is a huge part of the adventure. We towed the first 400 miles from Zeebrugge as the motorways round Brussels are 'brain damage' in any car and certainly no fun in a vintage Bentley. We met up with the Pilks at Glottertal, near Freiburg where we had stayed before en route to the Bergamo G.P. with Bertie G-S.

and left the trailer there before setting off over minor country roads where possible to spend the night at Triesen in Liechtenstein, a principality we had not been to before but is, for all the world, part of Switzerland. The next day we tackled the Lenzerheide Pass followed by the Albula Pass which was not difficult but at 7500 ft causes engines with fixed jet carburettors, like Webers and the Solex on Richard's Bristol engine Frazer Nash, a bit of a problem but the SUs on the Bentley were hardly affected – unlike the driver. Trisha had arranged a very posh hotel on Lago d'Iseo where I got the feeling that the Bentley's increasing incontinence would be inappropriate on their smart paving. This left us an easy 70 miles to Castell'Arquato. Having been a complete pratt and left my driving licence and other documents in the tow car, I anticipated some grief at signing on but being lovely enthusiastic Italy, there was no problem and they simply relieve you of 40 urines for a local competition licence and hand out the scrutineering stickers at the same time. How civilised.

After the long prize giving lunch on the Sunday where none of us got a mention, we drifted back



to the farm and lounged about by the pool before a quiet simple and delicious dinner with plenty of their wine, some of which we brought home. We set off north the next morning with the Pilks and drove to Crodo in the mountains where we have stayed before and the next day over the Simplon Pass which is great as long as I don't get stuck behind a modern as they do seem prone to dawdling which means I loose momentum and have to proceed in my very noisy 3<sup>rd</sup> gear. At the bottom of the pass, the Pilks turned left toward Dijon

and we turned right towards the Grimsel Pass which was grim indeed. Pissing down, blowing a gale, very cold and visibility in swirling cloud less than the length of a tennis court and I did wonder what on earth I was doing at 7,000 ft in an old car. We then had to cross Switzerland and I always seem to be in a bad mood in that country. You really can't avoid motorways and they insist you buy a 'vinagrette' which lasts a whole year and is a £30 rip off when you only need it for a couple of hours and then, once off the motorway, progress is glacial through the endless built up areas with very slow speed limits and even slower drivers. I was relieved to get back into southern Germany which really impressed us. The road surfaces are lovely, the countryside most attractive and there is no litter. Not because they assiduously pick it up but they don't drop it in the first place. The only fly in the ointment was filling up at a big fuel station on a main road and going to pay, as always, with my Visa card only to be informed that they don't accept any of the normal credit cards. My suggestion that they would therefore have to syphon it out again didn't go down well and so Alannah emptied out her bag to find we were about 10 cents short where upon a long suffering German woman in the queue gave us the money but we had to forego the ice creams we had promised ourselves. A long day, 240 miles<sub>8</sub> in 7 hours over high passes in a vintage car is

quite hard work and I was totally knackered by the time we reached Glottertal again. A modern wouldn't have been much quicker though, just a lot less effort but then having fun always was hard work and I was very pleased with the old nail who hadn't really missed a beat but has become a little more incontinent though – not unusual for olds ladies I am told. We loaded up and spent two days dawdling back to Zeebrugge and certainly felt that we would like to do southern Germany again in something old. Lovely weather on the whole and another good TOPS jolly.

Kirk Rylands

## Speed Event Issues

WMC have been supporters, competitors and organisers of speed events for some 25 years. The club gradually moved into speed events when stage rallying suffered venue loss and increasing cost issues which steadily reduced the number of competitors. At its peak our speed series had over 70 drivers, mainly from Cumbria registered. However increasingly rule changes have gradually driven existing drivers away and prevented newcomers from joining.

In 1990 all you needed was a crash helmet, then you needed Proban race suits, (OK £50) and that did not diminish numbers, however the need for Nomex overall at £200 plus did mean many of the more occasional drivers dropped out and even with our Novice Scholarship we were not getting newcomers. Then you had to have Nomex gloves, more cost. Interestingly you don't need gloves for stage rallies! Then you have helmet lifing, so helmets that are still OK to be used on motorcycle racing are not OK for sprinting. The latest edict from the MSA which was not open to comment was that Head and Neck Supports (HANS) are needed for many classes of speed, racing and stage rallies. This comes just as many folk have got their new helmets, only to discover that the helmet they bought does not have HANS clips! Competitors are rightly livid.

MSA Rally Safety Inspector Nicky Moffat is quoted as saying that the cost of a HANS is “only two tyres and people can afford it”. That underlines how out of touch with competitors the MSA is. OK, the folk at the top of the rallying tree may buy many tyres per even but rally clubmen and those doing speed events will expect tyres to last for at least a season. Even in historic racing my tyres will do two or three seasons of racing.

Ultimately it is the cumulative effect of the various lifing regulations that add to the cost. If you rally/race etc you have to replace your helmet, seat and belts every five years, irrespective of how many events you have done. Many people in all disciplines rarely do more than a handful of events per year. Is it any wonder that competitive numbers are dropping and we are getting few newcomers into all areas of the sport?

Talking to a race wear supplier recently, he was telling me that when drivers buy new helmets, seats, belts etc now they are generally buying the cheaper ones rather than the best they can afford because they know they will be replacing them in five years. He also noted that new race suits specifications come in around 2017. Will the MSA want us to buy new suits?

We have reprinted the open letter to the MSA from Shenstone DMC, one of the very active speed club in the Midlands and operators of the Curborough circuit.

There is now reason why events cannot be run authorised by one of the other ten bodies listed by the Government to authorise motorsport on private land. Grass track racing, many karting events, drag racing and track days are already run successfully like that.

Sadly the MSA is intend or either reducing competitor numbers across the board or driving organisers to run events under other authorising bodies.

We really hope that the MSA will have a complete rethink before it is too late.

# ***Brockbanks Solicitors Cross Border Speed Championship***

**Shenstone and District Car Club** (who effectively run Curborough - or at least many sprints there) have written to the MSA (sharing it with the Regional Associations) raising objections to the imposition of FHR, in particular the threat it holds to deter new entrants to the sport.....:

## **"Dear Sir MSA Potentially 'Destroying' Regulated Grassroots Motorsport**

I refer to your recent announcement regarding the mandatory use of Frontal Head Restraints to certain classes (and recommended for all others) to all MSA regulated Hill Climb and Sprint events with effect from 1st January 2016 and on behalf of Shenstone & D.C.C. Ltd I would like to make the following representations.

You may be aware that Shenstone & DCC (SDCC) have been in existence for over 80 years and have operated the Curborough Sprint Course (near Lichfield) for 52 years. As a motorsport club we have gone out of our way to promote grassroots motorsport with the operation of Curborough Sprint Course which includes in excess of 20 MSA regulated sprints per annum, the promotion of the MSA registered Curborough Championship, an annual Introduction to Sprinting Day (free for allcomers to be inducted into sprinting), an AHASS registered Sprint School, the provision of a club vehicle available for first time competitors and a host of other events and initiatives designed to promote sprinting in the U.K.

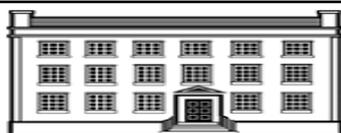
The Club has always taken safety very seriously. We were one of the first clubs to hire licensed Rescue Units for Sprint meetings when they were not a requirement and we have organized training days for our Marshals not to mention invested substantially in the safety requirements of the venue itself.

In recent years the MSA have introduced a number of regulations that have made it difficult for first time competitors to become involved in the sport and established competitors to remain with the need for additional equipment to comply with MSA regulations. This has included revised helmet regulations, changing race suit requirements and now the introduction of Frontal Head Restraints (FHRs). Whilst accepting that there is a need for safety rules to be adequate, we believe the extent of the changes made in recent years has been unreasonable in the basic world of grass roots motorsport and is driving competitors away from MSA regulated events into unregulated competitions and track days that do not require such additional regulated equipment. We therefore believe that the MSA in recent years has embarked on a campaign in pursuit of safety which will inadvertently 'destroy' grass roots regulated motorsport.

Please consider the following facts.

The Curborough Championship regularly operates with 60/70 contenders each year. In 2015 there are 65 and an analysis of these competitors indicates that 30 will require FHR's in 2016. Feedback "from the paddock" makes clear the exceptional cost of these FHRs together with potential changes to seat belts, seat configurations and roll bars in cars to accommodate FHR's will drive these competitors away from regulated competition into the many track day competitions that do not require such a degree of equipment. This is the most commonly cited reason from newcomers at our taster and other events who do not want to enter formal competition. Some of these competitors allocate a budget for only 5 or 6 Sprint meetings per annum and the requirement for FHRs will drive them away from the sport. Some of them have only recently purchased helmets without adequate notice from the MSA that there would be additional costs involved for next year. They will not be replacing these and therefore will revert to competitions or other unregulated events where they can be used.

The 'recommendation' that Standard Road Going cars (where most cars these days have NCAP 4 or 5 crash test results) should also include the provision of FHRs is considered by various motorsport person



**Brockbanks  
Solicitors**

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

nel to be potentially dangerous. Classes with unsuitable seat-belts, no race seats and with no roll cages required are not suitable for FHR's and even if supplied could cause injury to individuals in certain situations. These 'technical' considerations do not appear to have been investigated by the MSA before making this announcement

.As the club running the most used sprint venue in the country, SDCC see this starting a domino effect which could close the venue. If around 25% of competitors decide not to invest in the updates due to the cost implications and stop competing, then many clubs, already running meetings on minimum entry levels, will cancel their events. There would not have to be many events being cancelled before the circuit lease cost would be too prohibitive to operate the venue any more. It could also see the end for some of those car clubs if they are not able to run meetings due to lack of entries. SDCC are already seeing events being booked for the circuit which are being run outside of the MSA banner, which are growing in numbers and the driving force for this is purely the number of competitors who can't afford the continuous increasing costs of safety equipment. You must appreciate that grass roots competitors can budget to spend circa £600 per season including fuel, tyres, entry fees etc. which is a world away from circuit racers who spend £10K per season or significant hillclimbers whose vehicles cost £100K. We also have a number of double driven vehicles where the costs are obviously being shared but personal safety equipment will be specific to the individual - which again disproportionately increases budgets required. It is these grass-roots people that the MSA is driving away from regulated motorsport activities with the constant inclusion of additional equipment regulations. I would be grateful if you could address the following questions and provide a response which we can share with our membership and other clubs with whom we are in correspondence over this matter.

#### **Questions:**

1. What consultation has taken place with the motorsport world on the mandatory introduction of FHR's in Hillclimbing and Sprinting ?
2. What evidence has been produced to substantiate the need for the introduction of FHRs in a discipline of motorsport where cars run singly?
3. Has the MSA Hillclimb and Sprint Sub Committee recommended this introduction of FHRs ?
4. Why is it becoming immediately mandatory from 1st January 2016 without the usual lead-in time of a 'recommendation' with further consultation and analysis of practical considerations ?
5. Have MSA licensed Scrutineers been consulted or approved this rule change ?
6. Motorsport carries a degree of risk which competitors choose to accept when participating. What is the justification for mandating this very expensive safety requirement, rather than advising , sharing the facts and allowing competitors to make their own judgement about the risks they wish to take.

#### **Recommendation**

SDCC would recommend that the MSA General Council should amend the decision for mandatory introduction from 1st January 2016 to that of a 'recommendation' with a meaningful consultation and analysis of the practical effect on grassroots motorsport particularly National B Permit events. Without this change SDCC considers that we will be forced, in the interests of our members and the sustainability of the Curborough Sprint Course to move away from promoting MSA regulated events as its primary focus to supporting the increase of unregulated activity which after running MSA regulated events at Curborough for over 50 years would be a retrograde step.

The Club wishes to continue to support MSA regulated events and we can be available to discuss these issues at your convenience. However this decision to mandate the use of FHRs in Sprints and Hillclimbs from 1st January 2016 gives no adequate notice of implementation and does not appear to address various technical considerations regarding its practical implementation.

Yours sincerely"

# Elderly Utterances

## The Voice of Experience!

Ron Palmer has his say

Charles and I entered this year's HERO 'RAC 1000 Mile Trial' on 13th – 18th July which was the second running of an event celebrating the original event in 1900. The entry list numbered 45 cars against the 47 last year but the surprising thing was that only 13 of the entrants from last year returned for a second time. Compare this to the other principle UK vintage trial – The Flying Scotsman, which caters for similar cars, and started 115 cars in April. Essentially the Scotsman is half the distance less than half the entry fee and has a much higher competitive content.

This year's 1000 mile Trial started and finished at the elegant RAC Club at Woodcote Park, Epsom



and meandered through England and Wales over six days. The entries consisted of a mouth watering selection of pre WW2 motors ranging from an Austin Seven Sports to a super-charged Mercedes Benz 500C Convertible. This latter car was withdrawn on the second day as allegedly it had been sold for £5.2M and the buyer wouldn't want it scratched, would he. In between these two extremes were three MGs, five Rileys, three Frazer Nash/BMWs, two Bugatti, two Alfas, two Talbot Alpines, five Lagondas, seven Bent-

leys, three Alvis and singletons from AC, Triumph, Jaguar SS, Citroen, Adler, Sunbeam and Morgan. The north was represented by us in the Bentley, Jayne Wignall and Kevin Savage in their Sunbeam and Fred Bent navigating Robert Crofton in a Riley 9 Brooklands. In addition Bob Hargreaves and Ali Proctor had forsaken their usual navigator's roles to help the organising team.

The Monday route ran from Woodcote Park at Epsom to Tylney Hall at Hook with the first test along the Captains Drive through the Golf course in the RAC Club grounds where the electrical gremlins struck and we stuttered through minus a couple of cylinders. We were fortunate that a following regularity was cancelled due to road works and a reroute as otherwise we would have suffered further penalties. The problem was diagnosed as a faulty condenser and the 1937 original was replaced with a modern copy and all was well. Until, that is, the fuel pumps started blowing fuses. This was cured with help from the support crews who are 'bush mechanic magicians' and much in demand by the crews. We encountered a record of sorts that evening as our room at Tylney Hall Hotel was 275 yards walk from hotel reception. I guess the exercise made up in part for sitting all day in the Bentley. Jayne and Kevin in the Sunbeam had time consuming technical problems during the day and their accumulated penalties placed them well down the order. They fought their way back up the field during the week to finish a creditable 19th.

Tuesday's route took us via tests and regularities, to lunch at Blenheim Palace, the very grand birth-place of Churchill and further tests at Bicester Heritage and Wilton Mill. The finish was at Coombe Abbey near Coventry a dark and gloomy edifice where a headlamp would have been useful to find the rooms and bar. A Medieval Banquet and 'entertainment', again in the gloom, concluded the day's activities.

Wednesday was the best so far after an early start with the tests including the sprint course at Curbor

ough and a superb route through Derbyshire taking in lunch at the splendid Chatsworth House. The Peak District has some glorious roads and views including the Goyte Valley and quaint villages and stunning scenery. I picked up lots of ideas for next year's Gallop Tour so put that in your diaries as a must do event for 2016.

After a night in the Double Tree Hotel at Chester we headed west into Wales taking in regularities through World's End and round Lake Vyrnwy. The five regularities and four tests were interspersed with lunch at the Gregynog Hall a grade 1 listed property with splendid gardens. As we left the Welsh Marches we had afternoon tea break at the National Trust's Croft Castle where we were greeted by a jazz singer and band in a garden setting and yet more food. Next was a test on the famous Shelsley Walsh hill climb, the oldest continuously used motor sport venue in the world. The day concluded with another speed fix up the recently revived hill climb at Chateau Impney near Droitwich.

Our early electrical problems on day one had us down in 11th place but a fight back had us by



this time up in 7th with two days still to go. Friday morning saw us heading south through the leafy lanes of the Cotswolds into Oxfordshire and finally Hampshire and Sussex. Coffee was taken at Lower Slaughter on the banks of the River Eye, a beautiful setting, before lunch at the fabulous Wilton Hall, the home of Lord Pembroke. In case you are

tempted to think this was a touring event around the nicer venues and stately homes of England and Wales we were tackling several tests and regularities each day and Friday finished at Goodwood for tests and an overnight at the very pleasant Goodwood Hotel. We were not allowed to spin the wheels on the test start over the 'Indianapolis Bricks' on the Goodwood Hill but nevertheless recorded a couple of good times. The evening meal here was a disappointment after being listed as a BBQ it was anything but – the only downside of the whole Goodwood experience. By now we were up to fifth overall and 2nd in class but any improvement was hard fought and the competition was watching each other closely for the odd second's advantage.

Saturday began with another four tests at Goodwood and a country regularity in between. We almost caught the Talbot in 4th place which was leading our class as we were 12 seconds better than them on the day but alas still 13 seconds shy at the end. We finished back at Woodcote Park with a test down the Captains Drive and a good time after our slow run up back on day one.

The event was memorable and enjoyable. We met great people, many from Europe and enjoyed competing against very special cars on challenging venues and routes. Old car events are very different from classic rallies and although perhaps only about half the field take the competition seriously it's still very competitive and good to see these expensive cars being used seriously and not languishing in a museum.

The whole event was run with finesse by an expert team headed up by Jeremy Dickson and Clerk of the Course Guy Woodcock. The lunches and coffee stops were excellent and picturesque with the evening meals leaving something to be desired on only a couple of occasions.

Our week finished with a fifth overall, second in class and members of the winning team, more trophies for the garage....

Don't forget the pub run on Wednesday 5th August and the Rose and Thistle on Saturday 22nd August – get your entries in today.

# Gates Tyres Northern Historic Rally Awards

Report Mike Garstang and photos by Tony North

This year's Lake District Classic (LDC) attracted a strong field with 30 crews contesting the Historic section and a further 13 in the Targa section. The entry included many of NESCR0's regulars and 20 of the 26 registered contenders for the WMC/Gates Awards.

With scrutineering, noise and paperwork quickly sorted there was time for navigators to plot the compact route and mark up their test diagrams.....and time for the drivers to buy the bacon butties and tell each other some tall tales.



Tests 1 - 8 would complete the first time card and these initial tests quickly sorted the crews into a variety of dog fights throughout the overall classification. In the Historics, John Bertram/Andy Fish (Mexico) would take the overall lead on 417s, closely pursued by Colin Rose and Bob Shearer (Midget) 422s, David Short/Roy Heath (Mk2 Escort) 435s and David Marsden and myself (Mk1 Escort) 455s. Test 1 was a big tarmac venue and Bertram/Fish took it on 53s from Dent's Imp and ourselves on 54s. We dropped time at Birds, Mill "A" and Highfield 1- at Birds we were still getting to

grips with the "new" car on the loose gravel but at Mill "B" we took joint fastest time so we were certainly finding our feet on tarmac. Mike Dent was putting in quick times but two Wrong Tests spoiled time card 1 - in fairness, Mike's navigator hadn't been out competitively for about the last 7 years and things come at you very quickly in that Imp!

Through Tests 1- 8, the Targa crews of Stephen & Daniel Place (Peugeot 309) and Andrew Graham/Dionne Taylor (Puma) were locked together resulting in times of 421s and 422s respectively after time card 1. John and David Ruddock (Escort and Viva) were re-categorised from Class H6 to T2 and although both have podium potential they took a while to settle in: John recording 428s and David 482s. John Hill/Mick Pears on 434s were slightly off the pace in this first group of tests but, like David Ruddock, they would come back strongly as the event progressed. Chris Hunter (Mazda MX5) took 447s, Stephen & Jack Palmer 465s, Angela Jones (205) 467s, and Stuart & Siobhan Bankier (MX5) on 473s.

Time Card 2 would see the crews take on the farm test at Kirkbarrow, another run at the two Auction Mart tests and a pre-lunch test back at the Truck Stop. Kirkbarrow could have proved to be our downfall. When marking up my test diagrams I failed to highlight the final cone and guess which one we missed. These details are so important to a good finish and I'm usually scrupulous about them - still a bit ring rusty after a year out? Probably.

While we came away from Kirkbarrow feeling fed up, John Bertram maximised his advantage with 68s, Short 70s, Rose 73s and Dent/Sloan/Staniforth all on 76s. Despite dropping time to his nearest rivals on T12/Truck Stop, John Bertram had taken his lead of 5s after Time Card 1 to 10s after Time



Card 2 recording an interim total of 640s. Colin Rose was on 650s, David Short 674, Darrell Staniforth (Cooper S) 679, Tot Dixon with grumbling gearbox was on 718s and after our WT we were tied with Brian Hodgson on 725. Elsewhere, David Alexander (Viva) 733s, Stephen and Callum Douglas (MGB GT) on 770s, Dent's tale of woe continued with a WT at the Auction Mart and 824s, new to WMC/Gates Ian Dixon (MGB GT) 826s and Brian Bradley (Mini 1275) 849s.



Among the Targa cars, Stephen Place had kept his nose ahead on 642s with consistently quick tests, Andrew Graham was giving little away on 647s, John Hill had pulled back a load of time especially on Kirkbarrow to 648s, John Ruddock (not his normal self) on 657s, Chris Hunter 697s, Angela Jones 714s, David Ruddock 720s, the Bankiers 738s and the Winters 775s.

By lunch at the Truck stop we were ready for a break and the light lunch provided was spot on. Dehydration had set in so plenty of fluid was taken

on. David wandered off to check the Escort and go for fuel. He didn't get far across the car park before the ignition light came on and stayed on. Investigation revealed that one of the terminals inside the alternator cover had sheared off. Initially, it all looked a bit final but with a bit of ingenuity a temporary repair was sorted and proved good enough to get us through the afternoon.

Scare over, we settled into the afternoon with the prospect of some excellent tests at Shap. But first there was another run through the two Auction Mart tests and another trip to Highfield. Times remained close between the leaders in the Historic and Targa classes on these three tests - all relatively smooth and straightforward. It was then off to Shap for two runs through Waters Farm (with Code Boards) and one run on the gravel of Hardendale quarry. These three tests were excellent ..... time could easily have been lost but there was also everything to be gained. Darrell Staniforth's excellent run was spoiled by a WT at the quarry, Colin Rose kept the pressure on John Bertam, David Short was keeping his nose ahead of us and we were pulling away from Brian Hodgson's Imp. Brian Hodgson, Darrell Staniforth, Stephen Byrne (Fulvia), Tot Dixon, and David Alexander were closely grouped as they slugged out for 5th - 9th overall. A simple run back to Penrith for the final Truck Stop test was all that remained: Bertram/Fish finished in style with 38s, Staniforth and Dent 39s, we took 40s, Rose/Short/Byrne 41s and The Sloans 42s.

Competition was equally fierce in the Targa Class. Stephen/Daniel Place continued to go well setting very quick times through Waters and Hardendale and whizzing through the final test on 39s. Andrew Graham traded times all afternoon with Stephen Place and tied on the final test with 39s. Also on 39s after an excellent afternoon with quick times especially through Waters 2 and Hardendale was Jon Hill. John Ruddock went extremely quickly during the afternoon but his day was ruined by a WT on the final test.

Results were processed while crews tucked into an excellent Truck Stop tea. John Bertram/Andrew Fish and Stephen/Daniel Place were worthy winners overall of the Historic and Targa events with 1120s and 1130s respectively. Colin Rose 1141s and David Short 1184s took 2nd and 3rd Historic. In the Targa event, Andrew Graham took 2nd with 1139s and Jon Hill 3rd on 1144s.

Congratulations to the organising team for putting on a compact, straightforward and very competitive event. Competitors enjoyed an excellent days sport and there was a real buzz at the finish. We went home very pleased with our day out and the Escort is proving to be very nimble compared to the Cortina and deceptively quick. It'll be a few more events before we really get to grips with the car but it was good to be competitive again and there seems to be more to come - and I'll have to get back into the habit of going clean!

# BYGONES

## Anecdotes

There may be many things wrong with motorsport but one area where we do have an advantage over many other sports is that there are often occasions where we can compete with some of the best drivers in the country, or indeed in the world. Can you imagine as an amateur football player being on the same pitch as Beckham or Rooney?

Back in the 70's I was a keen autotesters and was one of the most successful in the Cumbria Field Championship so I tried a few rounds of the British Autotest Championship, including the one held at the Pirelli factory run by CSCC. Against the top Irish lads I was well out classed as I was by **Russ Swift** in a similar Mini 1275. Paul went on to be the country's top stunt driver and record holder for parallel parking.

Of course in the great days of rallying it was quite normal for the top drivers to take in the main forest event in the region and the bulk of the entry would be taken up with local clubmen. Even on the internationals like the Scottish, our members could compete against the top works drivers and the legendary **Flying Finns!**

Even at club level I remember the Furness DMC's Festival Stages run over farm tracks etc in west Cumbria which had Tony Pond in a DOT Opel and Jimmy McRae in an Vauxhall. More recently both Matthew and Malcolm Wilson have run on the MWR.

Thinking back to WMC's first single venue events at Kirkbride, we had Harold Morley (MN and BTRDA Champion) enter in his Porsche 911 and Escort Mexico and take first and second places. In the hill climbing world I competed in the same events as Andy Priaulx, who went onto be hill climb champion and works BMW driver in saloon and GTs and also won an MBE.

On the race track I've raced against or in the same meeting as Rob Huff (WTCC Champion), Jack Goff (BTCC MG driver) and Rob Gravitt (past BTCC champion) who all started racing MGs. Of course many other members will have shared their cars with top drivers at Goodwood as Ed Glaister has done. Just last weekend Robert gate shared his E type with John Cleland at the Silverstone Classic.

Earlier this month at the Shelsley Walsh Classic Nostalgia event Anthony Reid (former BTCC and sports car ace) was running a Chevron B1 continuation while Derek Bell (5 times Le mans winner) was doing demo runs in a Porsche 956 and a modern Bentley Continental GT.

Perhaps other members would like to add to the list?

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# **Cumbria Classic & Motorsport Show**

**Sunday, 23rd August**

**11 am until 4.30 pm**

**Dalemain**

By Ullswater (A592)



**Bentley, Mercedes “Pagoda” MG A**

**Over 600 Classic Cars and One Make Clubs,  
Autotesting and Motorsport displays**

Autojumble and trade stands; Cars for sale area, Go Motorsport, Refreshments

**Meet the Meerkats!**

**Adults £7.00 OAPs £5.00**

Accompanied school age children £1. Free parking!

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## A man walks into a bar.....

Just heard a really good joke: “My car broke down this morning and I don’t have breakdown cover. Luckily I managed to push it into the free recovery zone on the M6 roadworks. It was a bit of a struggle - it broke down on my driveway.....” Yeah, alright - so it was marginally amusing but it reminded me of the recent run of vehicle related bad luck in the Sloan household.

Funny old world, isn’t it? You fork out lots of dosh for a vehicle, own it for five years, service it regularly, wash it occasionally and just when it has lulled you into a false sense of security it all goes spectacularly wrong. And always on the way back from holiday. Happened to us a couple of weeks ago. Land Rovers aren’t known for their reliability after the first three months of ownership so we had done rather well to get to this point. Should have known better really – discovering the free bus timetable in with the instruction manual was a bit of a giveaway.

We’d had a bit of “previous” over the last six months. Take Christmas Day for instance – not the sort of day when you would expect to incur a massive repair bill, is it? Whilst most of us were firmly ensconced in front of the telly with a glass of something pleasant, the husband was out in the “day” car (BMW 3 series) busily colliding with a faulty fire hydrant cover in the road and opening up an 18 inch gash in the floor pan like a tin opener. Oops – that’ll be £2000 quid, please. United Utilities eventually gave in and paid up after a tirade of abuse and several threatening letters. But that wasn’t the end of it, oh no. Lloyds kindly lent us a courtesy car (a nice new 1 series) and the husband parked it in Sainsburys (the carpark not the shop) only to return and discover someone had keyed it from front to back. Thank you so much.

Then it was my turn. Nice young man came hurtling round the corner on his door handles and on my side of the road forcing me to take evasive action and kerb both of the nearside alloys. Lost so much alloy that the front wheels had to be rebalanced and the tracking re-aligned. Not content with that, the husband does a three point turn, whips it out of reverse whilst the car is still going backwards, parking sensors stop bleeping so he thinks he’s OK and then wonders why he collides with the wall. Fathead.

And that’s not all – the Midget has had yet another set of shockers (don’t ask – lost count) and two new fuel pumps. Hitting it with a 10lb lump hammer wouldn’t have helped (the fuel pump not the Midget – keep up) neither would wiring the pump up wrongly but we will glaze over that bit – not the husband’s finest hour. His wallet didn’t think so anyway.

And so back to the Agricultural Integrale and the M74 just north of Ecclefechan. You know the smell you get in your nose when you’ve walked into something like a lamppost because you’ve been talking over your shoulder to someone and didn’t see it coming? Just like hot aluminium? That started it, followed by the call to abandon ship as smoke appeared in the foot well and all the dashboard lights lit up. Terminal failure of the power steering pump, water pump, drive belt and tensioner together with some unrelated electronic relay issues was diagnosed and we were deemed suitable for rescue by the BIG TONKA TOY – the recovery vehicle. Normally I would have seen this as a bit of fun but the cab was like a goldfish bowl with a massive floor to ceiling windscreen acting like a magnifying glass – I thought I might spontaneously combust so the driver kindly lowered the window by a millimetre – didn’t want me to catch cold obviously. He refused all offers of help to load the Landie in sweltering 25C heat wearing several layers of quilted fluorescent jacket so we sat and sulked at the lost opportunity to play with levers and winches and the inevitable ratchet straps.

And so a few days later the garage relieved us of another £1000 quid – we got half a mile down the road and the ECU packed in. Still we DID get a power wash thrown in for free and now all the carpets are wringing wet – so that’s all good.

And then the final straw. The husband shouts “You’ve run over my bike” to which I pointed out he shouldn’t have left it on the lawn.....

Cheers!

Marian Sloan (aka Maz)

## Chateau Impney - Magnificent in every way.



Magnificent, fantastic, superb are all words expressing satisfaction of the highest order yet these words hardly do justice to the organisation, spectacle, architecture, scenery, and quality of cars and everything else at Chateau Impney near Worcester on 11/12th July. The Chateau itself is a copy of a Loire valley Chateau with typical exquisite architecture for which France is so well known. Many of the cars that visited the Droitwich parkland to race up the deceptively testing course laid out in the grounds of the Chateau were equally handsome and good looking. Some were very

functional, some very brutal looking, built with one job in mind and that was to go as fast or faster than any other car in the world. At least two cars achieved that distinction, going faster than any other car in the world had gone previously. This event was a "Revival Speed Hillclimb" as competitions of this nature were held here from 1957 to 1967 and no cars built after the stipulated date were allowed and strictly adhered to. The course through the scenic parkland had been extended from 550yds to 1000 yards to comply with MSA rules. The flat main drive was beautifully surfaced and fast, it took a 90 degree left then through a chicane to another 90 degree left to take competitors hopefully past the front of the wonderful Chateau. An off here was very public as the balustrade enclosing the high level gardens was thronged with VIPs and other competitors watching the cars hurtling round the very fast left hander. Lurid slides, spins, even off road excursions along the grass were quite common and greeted with great cheers. The course then continued though a high speed bend before negotiating a roundabout then climbing up to a very tight kink/roundabout arrangement. Big square straw bales were waiting to arrest any wayward cars, continuing onwards and upwards through a series of fast sweeping bends to a tightening left hander through the finish banner. All sections were deceptively tricky as the black marks on the tarmac and tyre marks across the grass indicated. It was a real driver's track and every mistake a driver made was captured by the TV crews filming high on the elevated platforms and shown on the various big screens around the venue. A very varied entry featured cars from the Edwardian period right up to the 31/12/1967 cut off date. The very last car on the entry list was "Bluebell" a Minor 1000, not really what you would expect is it? Not an ordinary Minor 1000 I must add, it was as quick as a formula 3 car, didn't lean or roll in corners but looked remarkably standard from outside even the paint was pale blue, district nurse colour, only wider wheels outwardly gave the game away but boy it could fly. Some cars must surely come with a health and safety label attached, Mark Walker's 1905 Darracq reminded me of a "Buckboard" from the Wild West. Wild it certainly was as it has a 25.4 litre V8 engine producing 300 horse power according to the programme listing, no floorboards, no bodywork, two forward gears, no reverse, no front brakes, unbelievable. This monster held the English Land Speed record at Saltburn in Yorkshire in 1909 achieving a speed of 120.26mph. I hope there was a laundry handy for dirty underwear. It was astounding to see Mark wrestling and drifting this monster at speed with some potentially dangerous steep banks near the track for such an exposed driver. It was really flying; Mark is a brave guy indeed. Another "Monster" was Chris Williams' Napier Bentley this crowd pleasing vehicle having a 1929 Bentley chassis, a 24 litre Napier aircraft engine producing 550 BHP and 1400 ft/lbs torque. Plumes of smoke came from the rear wheels as soon as he touched the throttle often meaning the car couldn't be seen once it has gone past you. Visits to his tyre dealer are as regular as going to the loo. Even bigger still was the "Beast of Turin", this real fire breathing monster makes the ground shake when started up, its massive 28.5 litre Aero engine belches flames from its short

stubby exhaust stacks but no silencers. Its driver, Duncan Pittaway, is perched even higher off the ground whilst grimly hanging on trying to control the aptly named "Beast", this Fiat S76 also a former World Land Speed record holder. This wasn't just a normal club event, it was a big international event drawing many of the world's best cars not only to compete on the hill itself but 70 vehicles were consigned for sale at the H&H auction held in one of the large function rooms at this



superb Midlands conference and wedding venue. Ferrari, Jaguar, Maserati, Bentley, Frazer Nash, MG, Lagonda, BMW, Porsche, were only a few of the sports cars on sale. Lots of high powered saloons from the same companies and several racing cars from Chevron, Alta and others headed a varied selection of the 70 cars that came under the auctioneers gavel for those with pockets deep enough to indulge in this part of the action. A separate Marquee housed a "Concours De Elegance" and here 25 cars worth many millions of pounds were on view. 1960 Ferrari 250GT SWB, 1967 275GTB/4, 1950 250 MM/ GT, 1934 Alfa Romeo 8C, 1930

Bugatti Type 50 Le Man Tourer, 1926 "Bloody Mary" racer ex John Bolster, 1936 ERA 8C, 1931 No 5 Blower Bentley ex Tim Birkin and others from Aston Martin, Lagonda, Sunbeam, Jaguar and more too numerous to mention. An air display by Rich Goodyear a former RAF pilot in his Pitts special Bi plane was amazing, the smoke trails showing clearly looping the loop, vertical spins figure of eights plus many much more difficult stunts. I cannot understand how he knows his proximity to the ground or how he keeps his breakfast down after whizzing upside down so many times! Over 100 trade stands allowed one to buy everything from a bulb to a classic car, join the VSCC or a number of other clubs, partake of refreshments or ice cream and buy books old and new. You could have a waistcoat or handbag made with material of a motoring theme, buy massive trucks capable of transporting your stable of several classic Ferraris very discreetly as the sides were roller shutters enclosing the normal hydraulic platforms seen on car transporters transporting cars from factories to dealers. It was even possible to invest in Allard cars as Sydney Allard's son Alan is planning to produce a car his dad designed many years ago using Jaguar XK engine and components. Seriously, Alan was telling me he is looking for investors with a few thousand pounds and the car looked great as a rolling chassis. Allard cars are very competitive, highly sought after even today despite being produced before the war and their Shorrock supercharger business in the 1960s/70s was very highly respected and a superb product. The last time I saw Alan was in 1973 in Keilder when I rolled my MK2 Cortina GT end over end with my wife navigating and Stewart Martin from Newcastleton strapped in the back seat. He wanted to see what rallying was like. It didn't put him off evidently as he went on to build a 1293 Cooper S and win many awards with it. Stewart also went on to found "Teviot Motor Factors" then later along with his brother and Malcolm Wilsons dad Ken Wilson my long time co-driver "TMS Motor Spares Ltd". This is now a massive business and has branches all over northern England and Scotland. My car had a full harness belt in the rear that was also used at times by a very young Malcolm Wilson whom we also took with us on rallies in those days. Since then of course he went on to become British rally champion, works driver and boss of the Ford rally team and M Sport and currently running the Bentley race team.

After the end over end I found myself parked neatly alongside Alan in his Supercharged Escort in the trees. Fortunately I didn't hit him but the two cars were parked very close to each other, too close for comfort I can tell you. I still have a photo of my crashed car in the trees with his navigator helping to pull it out; he wants a copy of it he told me. The Chateau event was by invitation only just as happens at Goodwood Revival and Festival of Speed. It was way over subscribed with people clambering to enter their classic cars and a selection committee selected cars which had either competed at the venue in period or a car of the same type competed there providing the applicant's

car had also a genuine competition history. Luckily I could produce evidence of a supercharged Buckler 1172cc sidevalve competing there in September 1962 and my own Buckler MK5 started its competition career at Barbon in 1954. I have a lovely photo of it lined up with other cars on the startline at Barbon. In the last 10 years since I restored the car with lots of help from my wife Carol and mate Alan Smith whose day job is manufacturer of Clupet piston rings. I have competed at every Classic or Revival hillclimb as they were introduced at venues such as Shelsley Walsh, Prescott and Bo'ness. It competed on the first couple of Solway Historic Revival rallies when they took place to help Cockermouth get back to normal after the floods. We also took part in Jim Clark rally revival around the first stage in Duns in 2014 and have competed at many Wiscombe Hillclimbs in Devon plus several classic trials. After sending photos and proof of these events I was really pleased to get an invitation and being able to take part in this event was a great thrill. Indeed I will remember this event for the rest of my life. My Buckler went really well and attracted lots of interest in the paddock, it goes to show that it's possible to compete and enjoy motorsport without having to spend a fortune. So next time you see a rusty wreck for sale check it out, it may just give you the key to open doors to events that ordinary people wouldn't normally be able to contemplate entering. Other competitors were very friendly, many of course I know from other events but as most drivers tend to look after or have a great interest in their cars there was a lot of common ground anyway. We made many new friends over the course of the weekend including the guy next number behind in my class driving the ex Ken Rudd AC Ace development car that was in effect the grand dad of all the famous AC Cobras. Steve Gray also owned the little A35 that he and Tony Jardine used to thrill the crowd overtaking Jag 3.8s on the inside at Goodwood Revival. They had just returned from Italy where they had been competing on the Millie Miglia and also competed in the Venasca Hillclimb driving it to and from both events. Steve has a classic car restoration and sales business at Brooklands near the famous "Test Hill" where he is in the former Brabham factory; Jack Brabham and Ron Tauranac were great pals of his. He has invited Carol and me to visit his works so we are really looking forward to that. The car running one car in front of me was a Frog eye Sprite driven by a lovely girl called Louisa Treutlein, a really bubbly chatty person but between runs she was nowhere to be seen. In the evening there was a fabulous "Black Tie dinner" for 500 people comprising of driver's, one guest and VIPs. At the dinner Louise came and sat next to us with another nice girl and explained her partner Mike was sitting elsewhere with her friend's husband as he was also competing hence her absence between runs. During the meal which was exquisite I have to say I asked her what her partner drove to which she replied a Bugatti. On enquiring what sort of Bugatti they owned she explained they have three, yes, three Bugatti's and they both race Bugatti's at circuit races and Hillclimbs.

She explained they towed the race car with another Bugatti which I was thinking wouldn't be big

enough to tow another car and a trailer. She did explain though it was big enough as it was a Type 50 with a 5 litre engine. This meant nothing to me even though a Bugatti Type 35 is one my most favourite cars. The tow car was evidently at that very moment sitting in the Concours De Elegance marquee. ( Look at the photos and you will see what this fantastic outfit looks like). Her partner and his mate came over see us later and what a nice couple of guys they were, it turned out Mike was Mike Preston a guy I have watched many times, a great driver and his cars are prepared beautifully, he really loves his cars. Louise also races a Healey 3000.



and his cars are prepared beautifully, he really loves his cars. Louise also races a Healey 3000.

.Other cars in my class apart from Louise Frog eye were a couple of Coventry Climax Lotus Elites, a very potent full race Sebring Sprite belonging to Irish rally driver Adrian Boyd's family. It was bought for him by his father when he won the Circuit of Ireland rally aged only 20. It could leave two black marks off the start line for a hundred yards easily, what power it had. Frazer Nash Le Mans Replica, MG TA & TF, TriumphTR2, Healey 100S, AC Aceca/ Bristol, AC Ace, Riley Treen, Morgan Plus 4 and an out and out racing car a Cooper Bristol T24/25 so a real mixed bag in the pre 1961 sports/racing car class.



With an entry of 200 cars other classes comprised of every other type of competition car you could think of. A full class of 500cc race cars such as Bernie Ecclestone drove in his day as a competitor. Other classes had Lotus racing cars and their opponents. Jaguars of every type, HWMs, Astons, Elvas, no less than ten ERAs, Delage, Riley, Connaught, Maserati, Hudson, Railton, Bentley, Bugatti, BRM, Lola T70, Chevron, TVR, Alan Manns Lotus Cortina, Two Broadspeed Mini Cooper S, the very first Cooper S ever, press car 732 HOP, Sunbeam Rapier and that is not even all the makes represented. It was a fabulous weekend, they had gathered together

the biggest selection of hillclimb cars that it was possible to have, over a million pounds had been spent extending the track and the car parks had probably a mile or so of aluminium roadways laid in case it was wet. Fortunately it was 99 percent dry, the only rain believe it or not was when I and only six or so other cars did their first run on Sunday. Suddenly the heavens opened without warning and a deluge drenched us, it was like driving up a river. Just as suddenly the sun re appeared, dried the track and that was the sum total of the rain. I was saturated, my in video camera lens misted up after the run but it did record the horrendous rain during my ascent just to prove it did happen. This event was made possible because of the vision of vintage car enthusiasts Guy and Rod Spollon the owners of Chateau Impney. On behalf of everyone I wish to thank them profusely for their vision of reviving the event, the hard work and investment they then put in to bring it to fruition. It is a superb hotel and venue, staff was so helpful and friendly and like Chateau Impney itself it was most definitely "Magnificent".As it's impossible to give a complete list of cars, times, class and overall results etc go to [www.tsl](http://www.tsl) (Timing Solutions Ltd) where you can see each and every run in detail with positions, class results even speeds through the speed traps are available online.

Keith Thomas.



Highly modified Morris 1000



The "Beast of Turin"

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## **Barn Storage:**

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

## **MARSHALS' POST**

The latest update on the Marshals' Championship will be emailed out shortly. All WMC events count plus any we are invited to marshal on. The Historic Rally and Speed Championship also award points to members to marshal on WMC events.

The next event is of course the Classic and Motorsport Show on August 23rd.

### **Prizes:**

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| <b>1st</b>  | <b>Passenger ride in an M Sport Fiesta</b> donated by Malcolm Wilson       |
| <b>2nd</b>  | <b>Two tickets to the Croft Nostalgia Weekend</b> donated by Croft Circuit |
| <b>3rd</b>  | <b>Two Tickets to the Knockhill BTCC round</b> donated by Knockhill        |
| <b>4th</b>  | <b>Two tickets to the NEC Classic Show</b>                                 |
| <b>5th</b>  | <b>Two tickets to Race Retro</b>   |
| <b>6th</b>  | <b>Two tickets to Autosport Show</b>                                       |
| <b>7th</b>  | <b>Two tickets to the Donington Classic Festival</b>                       |
| <b>8th</b>  | <b>1 ticket to the Autosport Show/Race Retro/NEC Classic</b>               |
| <b>9th</b>  | <b>1 ticket to the Donington Classic Festival</b>                          |
| <b>10th</b> | <b>1 ticket to the Croft Historic Meeting</b>                              |

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# Inside the Industry

**Paul Gilligan keeps us up to date**

For a first only one subject this month. Every other bit of news I have pales beside this one!

## **The Tesla Experience**

My regular reader will be well aware that I am less than enthusiastic about the current crop of electric cars. Both some of my customers and I have experienced in real life the VERY limited range (say 25 miles) that makes these devices pretty useless in practical terms, except perhaps in big cities. However there has for some time been one exception perhaps, the American designed and manufactured Tesla range. These are a large (think BMW 5 Series) 4 door saloon. They have a pretty (see below can be VERY) high level of performance, and are pure electric cars with no petrol power back up. They have a range of 300 miles due to their very advanced battery technology. Until last week that's about all I knew, except that prices start at about £60k and go up from there.

Then I got an invite to see and drive the cars, didn't need to be asked twice, and last week was the day. I now know that the car comes in various power outputs from 400 bhp to an almost incredible 700! Torque is a max of about 900 lb ft which wouldn't disgrace a Scania! Almost all are four wheel drive and with some VERY clever software the traction is perfect, in the dry at least.

After a very informative presentation about the cars I was asked which one I'd like to drive. "The fast one" was the only possible answer and so it was arranged. The Tesla guy drove first and asked me if I'd like to experience the full acceleration performance. "Yes" was the only possible answer so we did. In the middle of the dash are two screens about iPad size. One controls via touch screen pretty well everything apart from the pedals and steering wheel, the other the sat nav. Of course the car has internet and email capability wherever it can get a 4G signal. So my chauffeur went to the control screen and pressed the "Power" tab. 3 choices were displayed "Normal", "Sport", and "Insanity". I jest not. "Insanity" apparently unleashed the full 710 bhp etc.

So "Insanity" was selected. I was advised to sit back in the seat because otherwise the G Force would throw me backwards with possible injury resulting. He wasn't kidding! This 2.5 ton car (batteries are heavy) does 0-60 in 3.1 seconds. I've been lucky enough to fly in Concorde, but Tesla accelerates a lot faster. I was literally pressed back in the seat. No hint of wheel spin, no drama (except me trying to get oxygen in the lungs). Because we were on a public road it all stopped at about 60, I just wondered how long the beast would have kept accelerating for?

Then I got to drive. Even though it was LHD I felt immediately at home, once I'd got used to the silence. A whiff of throttle sent me towards the horizon. When you lift off the 4 electric motors (one for each wheel) go into reverse which slows the car and recharges the batteries. The result is once you're used to it you hardly use the brakes at all. I was approaching a roundabout at about 60 mph. Maybe 400 yards out I lifted off, the reverse electrics immediately started to slow the car, and only when it had got down to about 10 mph did I need to use the conventional brakes to stop at the white line.

This car bristles with technology. Because it rides on air suspension you can adjust the ride height if approaching a rough road. Because it has high level GPS it knows where it is. If you have ONCE chosen a high level ride height to cover a piece of rough road and you EVER visit that location again the car will automatically raise the ride height when arriving at that point.

It's only 10 years ago that I first had a car with what they call Intelligent Cruise Control. That means there is a radar unit in the front bumper. If you've set the cruise at say 70 mph on the motorway and a truck pulls out in front of you doing 50 mph the radar "sees" it, slows the car down to 50 (you do nothing), then goes back to 70 once the truck pulls back in. Pretty clever. The Tesla sees the car or truck in front, follows it, and if it stops stops behind it. Then when the vehicle in front starts off, say at traffic lights, the Tesla starts and follow it like an obedient Labrador until it pulls in and then acceler



ates past. More than pretty clever?

So where are the catches? I tried hard to find them, that's what my customers pay me for. I tried VERY hard.

The Achilles Heel of electric cars if it isn't operating range is battery replacement cost. It's generally reckoned that the battery pack life is about 3 years and the new pack will cost several thousand pounds, which effectively

destroys the second hand value of the car. So I asked Mr. Tesla. The warranty, which covers the batteries is for 8 years and UNLIMITED miles. After 8 years you can buy an extended warranty, again covering the batteries, for another 4 years. The price of this is not yet confirmed.

So what about servicing I asked. Tesla "recommend" an annual service, but it isn't compulsory. I said I presumed if that wasn't done the warranty would be valid, but that simply isn't the case. Price is about £500 per service. As Mr. Tesla explained there isn't much to do. They check and reset the alignment of all four wheels which is vital to the car handling correctly, which it does superbly. Then they upgrade all the software to latest standards. Finally if necessary they replace the discs and pads. If those require replacement there is no charge for that, presumably as the electric motors do most of the braking there is little need.

By now I'm grasping at straws! What about second hand value? This is a big unknown, although the 8 year warranty including batteries takes most of the concern away. In case you're still worried Tesla will guarantee the value of the cars after 3 years and up to 45000 miles at a very sensible figure. They seem to be thinking of everything.

OK the car has a 300 mile range between charges, but how easy is this and what does it cost. You can charge from any domestic power point, this would cost very little and take up to 12 hours. With a range of 300 miles this would be every week or two for many users. However Tesla at their own expense are putting in a network of "Supercharge" recharge points. These will recharge a "dead" car to 50% of full charge in 20 minutes, 100% in 40 minutes. Best of all at these points Tesla pay for the electricity. The network is limited at present but growing rapidly. It is already possible to drive from Edinburgh to Rome at no fuel cost!

If the charge level is running low from 100 miles to "dead" the car restricts the acceleration power you can use, and then reduces it again at 50 miles. Clever as I said?

So the only downside to the present Tesla offer in my opinion is that the cars start at £60000, and the quick one is over £80k. Next year a 7 seater arrives, prices probably similar. The real game changer comes in 2017, a smaller car to compete with BMW 3 Series etc. This will cost about £30000. Because it's smaller the range will be about 220 miles as there simply is room for less batteries. However recharge time will reduce in proportion, so in the hands of a typical company car driver it will be perfectly usable, recharging while he has a quick coffee and a comfort break on the motorway.

There are tax advantages both for employer and employee which I won't bore you with, but they are real and only add to the savings on fuel, service, and probably depreciation. My only question is whether Tesla will be able to keep up with demand for their smaller car? If they can Audi, BMW, jaguar, and Mercedes have a SERIOUS problem.

So all in all a bit of a Damascus moment. From someone who had no time for electric cars to a true believer. So long as they have a Tesla badge that is!

Paul Gilligan

pg@gvcontracts.co.uk



# Andy's Armchair

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

I know I'm not exactly famous for extolling the virtues of F1, but just for a change I'm going to hold it up as a paragon when compared to the new Formula E series, which has just finished its first season with what was reportedly an exciting race round Battersea Park in London. Unfortunately I didn't watch it.

I tried, I really did, I watched the preamble and the first couple of laps then gave up, switched off, and read a book. Why?

First of all the track, it's so artificial it makes a Tilke creation look as flowing and interesting as Spa or Monza. The cars are ugly and identical, their noise, a whistling "swoosh" makes the much maligned F1 power plant sound at worst majestic, and the highly acclaimed screeching of tyres slightly less exciting than you'd hear at a club autotest. The drivers are either "has beens" who can't get a seat in any meaningful championship, F1 nearly boys whose talent or money ran out or even "names" who failed to inherit their father's talent. It's also somewhat ironic that the new champion, Piquet junior, has managed to win a series based solely on tight street circuits, amusing when you consider his F1 career came to an abrupt halt when he clobbered similar barriers on purpose to help his then team leader Fernando. Finally, and probably most depressing of all is the ridiculous system by which spectators are allowed to vote for the two "prettiest boys" and so award them a couple of power boosts more than the opposition which hardly seems fair on the small quiet driver with acne! Surely this point alone should deny the series the right to call itself a sport, and make it at best an entertainment for the masses and a joke for the enthusiast. As a simple comparison I know my daughter, a properly trained dancer with a degree in the subject who's worked in professional companies, and as an amateur, considers "Strictly" as "bilge" and as an insult to dance, artificial at best, much like E racing.

Finally it's very worrying that there are people out there talking this pantomime up as a natural successor to F1. I can only hope they're having a joke.

On the subject of real racing our own Grand Prix provided a brilliant spectacle with racing so good I was physically drained just by watching it and yes I know it ended as the usual Mercedes dog-fight which people are moaning about. I don't understand why, everyone looks back on the Prost/Senna, Moss/Fangio, Villeneuve/Pironi duels as classic episodes in the sport's history, what's different? If there was a disappointment it had to be that Williams couldn't sneak a win or even a podium position. Let's face it they're a long way behind much of the opposition financially and are genuine under-dogs. I'm sure everyone was rooting for them, something you can't really do when all the cars are the same and there's no history surrounding where the teams have come from. This in the case of Formula E is a simple workshop at the back of Donington's Melbourne loop by the way.

In closing, and as a change of subject can we now assume that any worries about climate change and the motor car are a thing of the past. I say this because Mr. Osborne has decided to do away with the subsidy on electric cars presumably because they no longer matter in the scheme of things. He's changed all the VED classes and is now saying there's no need to worry about emissions as the vast majority of cars will attract the same cost irrespective of how clean/efficient they are. The world is saved. ]

Ends AA

# What's On

## WMC events and other events of interest

### Aug

5th	Wed	WMC	Pub Run
16th	Sun	SMC	Blue Streak Historic & Targa Rally (GTHRA)
22nd	Sat	WMC	Rose & Thistle Run
23rd	Sun	WMC	Cumbria Classic & Motorsport Show
29-31		HSCC	Oulton Park Gold Cup
30th	Sun	KLMC	Pendragon Stages

### September

2nd	Wed	WMC	Pub Run
6th	Sun	DAC	Durham Dales Classic Autotest (GTHRA)
20th	Sun	SoSCC	Doonhammer Historic Rally (GTHRA)

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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