

**Wigton Motor Club Ltd**

# **Start Line**

**Issue: 04/16**

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

**April 2016**

## **All Set For Drive It Day!**



**At Dalemain Mansion  
April 24th, 11– 2**

# **Motor Sport for All**

# Diary

Club events over the next month or so

## Pre Season Test Day

At  
Rowrah  
April 3rd

1 until 4 pm

## Seagull Autotest

April 17th  
At Maryport

Entry forms are on line

## WIGTON MOTOR CLUB LTD

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# Talking Point

## Topical comment from the world of motoring

This month sees **Drive it Day** on the 24th, the Sunday nearest to St. George's Day. This is an event promoted by the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs to promote the use of older cars, bikes, commercials tractors etc.

There is extra reason to celebrate this year as the government has finally introduced the rolling 40 year tax exemption which will be of great interest to those with "80s" cars.

DID generally means the start of the events for older vehicles although increasingly those that are tax exempt do get used when ever the weather allows.

Our major event is of the course the Cumbria Classic Weekend and entry forms will be going out this month. This year will see some small changes to the classes but also the introduction of classes for "Young Guns" - where the owners are under 30 and for Super Cars. We have to keep up to date and change the format a little to increase interest and keep new people coming both with cars and also with spectators.

The FBHVC does a huge amount of work to protect the sue of our vehicles from over zealous Eurocrats in Brussels. It seems that in very edition of the Federation's magazine there is a some new threat. The latest is that historic military hardware should not remain in private hands even though the guns etc have been disabled. In theory then a medieval cannon not used for 700 years or more cannot remain in it's ancient castle habitat. It's also a threat to collections of WW2 vehicles like that belonging to Kevin Wheatcroft of Donington

As an aside tot ha the current issues as regards "road" tyres for speed events also has an EU angle in that our faceless friends in Brussels are not making regulations regarding tyres noise and thus outlawing ones that make more noise (and provide more grip).

I would point out that I did not write the above on April 1st, whatever you might think!

Let's hope for good weather and a really big turn out for DID!

**Late News: Sadly the Steve McQueen film show has had to be cancelled at the film's "red carpet" premier in London was put back until May for reasons unknown. This has meant that the Kirkgate Centre has not been able to get a copy to use.**

**This will be rescheduled for the autumn**

GTF



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# Classic Column

## News from the Classic Scene

### NEW RULES ALLOW A STEAM CAR TO COMPETE AT CHATEAU IMPNEY

Steam powered machines, after being superseded and phased out many years ago, have suddenly been making a big comeback recently; interest in them has like cycling, suddenly taken off in dramatic fashion.

The Flying Scotsman after a 6 million pound restoration caused sensational numbers of people to gather all over the country on bridges, at railway stations, in fields, anywhere in fact where the locomotive could be seen on its recent series of proving tests. The interest generated was phenomenal and the National Rail Museum in York has all the planned excursions sold out far into the future, such is the interest in steam these days.

Many petrol heads, especially those of us who remember travelling on steam trains, have a great affinity to steam locos as they had a fantastic presence combined with a very unique smell. The smell was a combination of hot oil, smoke, steam and occasionally, sausages, bacon and eggs as the drivers and firemen used to cook these on a hot shovel held for a short time in the firebox to cook the food. Seconds earlier this shovel would have been in use for shovelling coal with never a thought about washing the shovel. I have never heard of any early deaths of footplate crews so it can't have done them any harm.

One well known Cumbrian, Ian Smith from Workington, owner of an Alvis 12/70 and hillclimb competitor, has more than a passing interest in steam locos. Ian was for many years chief engineer on the Ravenglass and Eskdale small gauge railway in Cumbria where he designed and built the stunning loco "Northern Rock" in 1976 for the Queens jubilee. Still going strong and pulling thousands of visitors each year the loco was so successful, two similar locos were ordered by a theme park in Japan. These two locos were also built by Ian, one of them was named Cumbria, I am not sure of the name of the other one.

Ian's brother Alan, another well known person in Cumbrian motorsport, is also heavily involved in steam engines. He manufactures special piston rings called "Clupets" rings at his small works in Maryport. These are used in steam engines, vintage and veteran car engines especially by the type of cars doing the London to Brighton run. Earth moving equipment too uses the cast iron rings to replace rubber hydraulic seals in hydraulic rams because the "Clupets" rings can withstand grit and dirt in harsh conditions far better than rubber "O" rings and seals. If you look at the key ring on a key fob, it's sprung with a double spiral, that is the same basic design as a "Clupets" piston ring.

Ships were also powered by steam; the great ocean liners Queen Mary, Queen Elizabeth and others were often cover illustrations on many a "Boys Own" annual.

Motor cars have also been steam powered but this form of power gave way to petrol a very long time ago, in the very early 1900s in fact, although steam road rollers and steam cranes and excavators were in general use certainly in the 1950s even up into the 1960s in some cases. I personally worked on these in the 1960s when I worked for British Steel at Workington's Moss bay works.

Steam powered cars have been banned from taking part in motorsport by the MSA for countless years but in September 2015 this rule was relaxed. One of the chief lobbyists to get this rule relaxed was Bob Dyke a passionate steam enthusiast, restorer and owner of a number of such powered vehicles. He can now compete with steam vehicles for the first time rather than just do demonstration runs as he has done for a year or two at some of the prestigious motor sport events over the last few years.

The venue for the first actual competition outing is the famous Chateau Impney Hillclimb in Worcestershire on 9/10 July.

This is no ordinary steam car however, it is the most famous steam car ever produced. It was built by the White Sewing Machine Company in 1905, named "White Rocket" but better known by its nickname "Whistling Billy". This was given to it by the spectators because it suddenly emits a loud whistling

noise from its burners as it accelerates. The burners produced steam at 800psi and a temperature of 750 degrees Fahrenheit making the pipes red hot.

Used for dirt track racing from 1905 by a guy called Webb Jay, and capable of 130 mph on dirt roads, it broke many track records but crashed into a pond seriously injuring the aforesaid Mr Jay.

Charlie Bair, a very wealthy sheep farmer, persuaded White Sewing Machine Company to rebuild it for him, costing him 20,000 dollars, a colossal amount of money especially in those days. It paid for itself however, earning over 50,000 dollars in prize money before another serious crash at Los Angeles. This happened when a front tyre blew out at high speed flipping over the heavy machine three times whilst up in the air.

Rebuilt again, it survived several near misses in the next couple of years before yet another serious crash in 1912, going over the top of an embankment and was found smashed in half on the other side with its then driver Chris Dundee lying very badly injured. What remained of the wreckage was kept in storage at a solicitor's premises, eventually moved to a farm, its engine taken out and used to power a boat.

Bob Dyke during his trips to America bought as much as he could from this car together with other genuine White steam car parts from the period then rebuilt the car over a number of years.

I have seen it been demonstrated at Prescott and Shelsley Walsh but at Chateau Impney it is competing against the clock along with 199 other racing machines of all shapes and sizes. It is very unusual, has impressive torque and acceleration but will be tricky to drive on the tight, twisty course. Here is an opportunity to see not only this vehicle but many other world famous cars. The venue being just south of Birmingham is very centrally located with plenty of accommodation in the locality for those who wish to spectate on both days.

For full details of "Whistling Billy" and other attractions, Google Chateau Impney Hillclimb and click on "blog".

Keith Thomas.



# PG Tips

I've had contact from a chap at **The Racing School** offering the club a discount of 15% if you book one of their race car/driving experiences. If you have a look at their website they offer a really good range of cars to drive, from the fairly mundane Fiat 500 Abarth, through things like the Aerial Atom, right up to and including a Formula 1 car – which I would love to try if I had the money! With locations all over England, including the relatively local 3 Sisters track in Lancashire and packages starting from under £99 there is surely something there for everyone. Their website address is <http://racing-school.co.uk/> and you need to use the promotional code WMC15. Please don't hand this code out to all and sundry – it's for club members only and they may ask for your club membership number. In the meantime I'm off to find £1500 to have a go in a Formula 1 car!

As I write this month I am happy to say Snotty now runs nicely and things all seem to work! I haven't quite got an MOT for him yet, but hopefully by the time you read this I will have....I do have everything crossed right now. The long throw crank conversion was way beyond my abilities due to the various mix and match parts needed and a language barrier between me and the man in the Czech Republic who sells these things...and the fact that no one else has yet done the exact same conversion – something which I hadn't realized when I started down this road 9 months ago. Thankfully Jonathon at JDM Dyno on Kirkbride airfield was able to provide the engineering expertise necessary and manufactured a 0.2mm thick spacer and machined the inside of the crank pulley so it all fitted together nicely.

Meanwhile I have been cracking on with the yellow Rapid coupe restoration and have been buoyed by the recent Ebay prices of other Skoda Rapid coupes. A white one that's far from perfect and a more common version than mine went for nearly £3500 – a grey one the same as mine but not in the same condition is sat at just under £3000 with a week to go and the Skoda crazy Czechs are now on the case so it'll probably go for far more! It's a bit of a relief just doing mundane tasks on a normal car with no special modifications or parts needed after the whole crank/engine debacle. Sanding and painting suspension arms is easy enough as are the drum brakes...although drum brakes are a bit of a pain. It's easy to see why they are almost a thing of the past with so many springs, clips and levers. All I really need are some light nights so I can stay out in the garage until bed time without suffering the effects of working under crappy halogen light bulbs! I did manage to find some nice old fashioned 100w bulbs recently at a shop in Aspatria...then I dropped one and the other one blew only weeks after I fitted it to the lamp. Apparently I need LED bulbs but they aren't that easy to find in big screw thread fitting and they are super expensive!

Stop Press...Snotty has an MOT! Hurrah...the old Skud feels pretty frisky too after my cruel car diet program which has shaved about 40kgs off the overall weight of the car. Next month....Isle of Man classic....hopefully.

Peter

## Memberships

**All membership matters including emails, Start Line distribution and membership cards should be directed to:**

**Jaime Hamilton at: [jaime@jhbookeepingservices.co.uk](mailto:jaime@jhbookeepingservices.co.uk)**

**And not to any committee member or official**

# WMC Speed Championships

We are delighted to announce that these championships will be sponsored by the Historics Collection (<http://historicscollection.com>) so there will be some unique awards on offer. Many thanks to Mike and Alex Thornton for their support!

The range of events are excellent with some old favourites and some new ones like Loton Park and the Silverstone Stowe circuit which is only used once a year.

## SPRINT CHAMPIONSHIP

Date	Venue	Club
April 10	Three Sisters	Longton & DMC
April 23	Aintree Spring Sprint	Liverpool MC
April 30	Ty Croes	MG CC North-West
May 1	Ty Croes	MG CC North-West
May 30	Blyton	Huddersfield MC
June 4	Anglesey - Basil Davenport	Chester MC
June 5	Anglesey - Dave Moore	Chester MC
June 5 (Reserve)	Silverstone - Stowe Sprint	MG CC North-West
June 18	Three Sisters	Longton & DMC
June 19	Curborough - Graham Hill Trophy	Owen MC
June 25	Aintree - Jack Neal	Liverpool MC
July 30	Three Sisters	Longton & DMC
July 30 (Reserve)	Jurby Sprint	Manx AS
July 31	Jurby Sprint	Manx AS
August 14	Curborough	Mid-Cheshire MRC
September 3	Aintree Autumn	Liverpool MC
September 3 (Reserve)	Ty Croes	MG CC North-West
September 4	Ty Croes	MG CC North-West
October 1	Anglesey Sprint 1	Longton & DMC
October 2	Anglesey Sprint 2	Longton & DMC
October 8	Curborough	Hillclimb & Sprint Association

## HILLCLIMB CHAMPIONSHIP

Date	Venue	Club
April 16	Loton Hillclimb	Hagley & DLCC
April 17	Loton Hillclimb	Hagley & DLCC
May 15	Scammonden	MG CC North-West
June 11	Barbon	Kirkby Lonsdale MC/Liverpool MC
July 2	Barbon	Kirkby Lonsdale MC /Liverpool MC
July 17	Scammonden	Mid-Cheshire MRC
August 6	Loton Park	Hagley & DLCC
August 7	Loton Park	Hagley & DLCC
August 13	Scammonden	Pendle DMC

Regulations and entry forms are on the WMC and ANWCC websites.



# The Marshals' Post

As a club we really support our marshals as without them we would not have any events. Any competitors in our main championships can score extra points for an event he organises or marshals on.

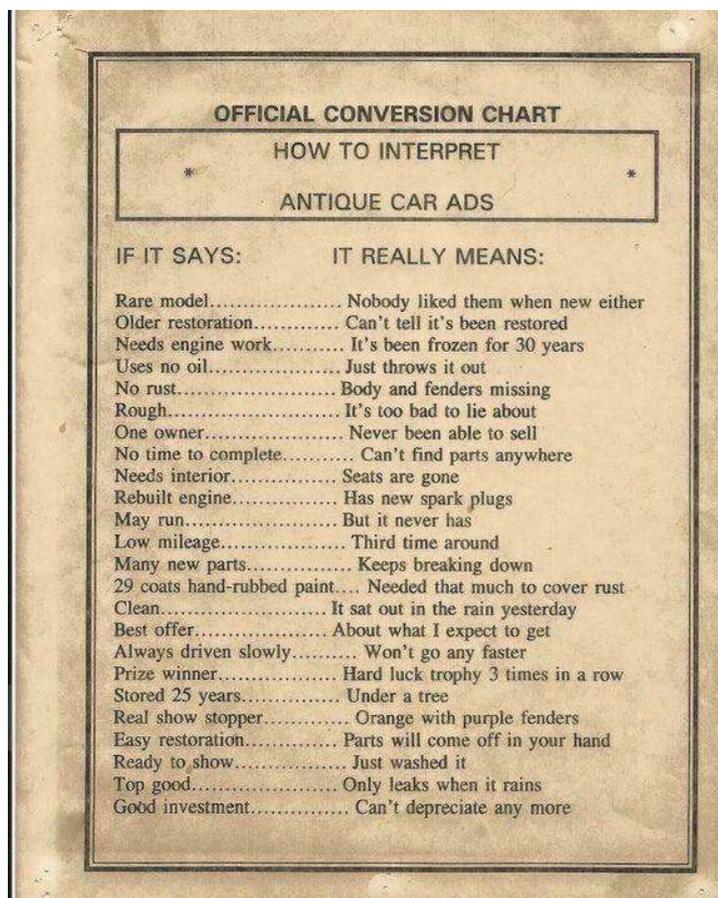
We also have a great marshal's championship with the top ten scorers getting admission to a number of top events.

**This month we need marshal for the following events:**

**April 3rd, Rowrah Test Day (1 until 4) Contact Graeme Forrester**

**April 17th Seagull Autotest (10 until 3) Contact David Wiggins**

**April 24th Drive It Day (11 until 2) Contact Graeme Forrester**



## Saltire Classic Rally, February 28th, 2016.

The call of the Highlands was very evident on the morning of this year's Saltire Rally. An ice blue sky with early morning temperatures of -8/-9C and a landscape of white capped hills greeted a good field of Historic and Targa cars and crews. A strong field of NESCREO regulars was complemented by an impressive contingent of Scottish crews.

Among the Histories was past winner Ross Butterworth/Ali Proctor (Mk1 Mexico), Berwick's John Bertram with Andy Fish (Mk1 Mexico), demon TR2 driver Jim Hendry with Bob Shearer (top navigator in 2015's WMC/Gates Challenge), Ben Blanchard/Bob Hargreaves (Avenger); and, among the Targa crews Craig Wallace/Clifford Auld (Toyota Corolla G6R), Grainger/David Robertson (Fiesta ST) and Jamie/Jack Stewart (Peugeot 205). Despite not being included in the WMC/Gates Challenge, crews "registered" for 2016 who entered the Saltire included David Marsden/Mike Garstang (Mk1 Escort), new member Ben Blanchard with Bob Hargreaves, Ian Dixon/Maurice Millar (MGB GT) and David Heirs/Austin Leaske (Saab V4).

A quiet run from our Pitlochry hotel to the Start at Blair Atholl got the Escort warmed through and gave us time to settle in and look forward to a busy day ahead with 16 excellent tests and 4 challenging Regularities. The first 2 tests were in a local authority depot. They were tight, quick and started the day with something of a "bang". By their usual standards, the eventual top 3 crews all started a bit hesitantly with Ross Butterworth on 1m5s and 1m12s; John Bertram 0.54s and 1m21s; and, David Marsden on 1.03 and 1.18. From the Depot we went straight into the grounds of a stately home for the start of Regularity 1 which ran through the park and then continued on public roads down to Killiekrankie. This Regularity set the pattern for the day with enough ITC's, speed changes and code boards to keep crews on their toes. Ross B/Ali P (the latter just back from the Winter Challenge) dropped only 7s, John Bertram/Andy Fish dropped 10s and we dropped 49s. Ben Blanchard/Bob Hargreaves had a nightmare on this Regularity when Bob wrong slotted (very out of character) costing them 3m09s - much of which they pulled back as the day went on.

T3 was a quick test across farm land and there was little to split the crews. Test 4, by comparison, was on a farm high above Loch Tummel with snowy peaks almost within arms reach. The test was mainly on gravel starting through a tricky farm complex then onto a gravel road with chicanes before descending a steep hill with a big hairpin to keep us all awake - excellent stuff! Two more longish tests on gravel took us to RSC 2 and, again, we were tested with 2 ITC's a number of speed changes and code boards to record - the wintry landscape with views over the icy lochs and snowy hills was a serious threat to concentration for the navigators.

T7 was run on a gravel road across the contour on the side of a hill before another pleasant run around a loch to T8 and lunch. T8 was a fast test on the gravel roads of a caravan park - this was a test we'd done in the past and with a time of 2m16s there was no question that it was to David's liking. Ross B followed us home on 2.20 and John Bertram on 2.26 - hm! hopefully, this was this a sign of things to come .....

After a snack lunch and a chance to catch up with the other crews we launched into T9 using a different configuration of the roads around the caravan park - Ross took 1.38, we had 1.42s and John Bertram was on 1.44. We had been sitting 4th at lunch behind Ross, John Bertram and Craig Wallace in his Targa Toyota - Craig was probably in reach but Ross and John Bertram looked to be comfortably ahead ..... but, we were going to go for it during the afternoon and see if we could pull back some time on them.

Reg 3 ran along the opposite bank of the loch from the lunchtime caravan park was located - the roads were tight and required total concentration: Ben Blanchard dropped 4s (Bob back in the groove), John Bertram 6s, Ross 8s, Jim Hendry staying under the radar on 11s (Jim had been putting in some phenomenal times in his trusty old TR2) and we had 22s. Three more excellent gravel tests with the temperature

This final Regularity was long and reasonably straightforward but there was still a chance to gain or lose precious time: John Bertram 7s, Ross 8s, Jim Hendry/Bob Shearer 9s, we dropped 10s, Ben B/Bob Hargreaves 11s - all very close with nobody giving anything away.

We lined up for the final two tests back at the local authority depot in Blair Atholl just as the sun was setting and dusk was creeping in. Lessons learned in the morning were duly applied and the leading crews again gave nothing away as they pushed for quick times. We'd left the start at 09.42hrs and with a comfortable lunch break of about an hour we completed the final test as my watch ticked onto 6pm. It had been an excellent day's rallying, the car hadn't faltered, we gradually found our feet and after a hot meal and a "wee drink" we were nicely set up for results and awards.

Ross B/Ali P took a deserved win for excellent times on both the tests and the regularities. John Bertram/Andy Fish took 2nd place and ..... we climbed into 3rd demoting a flying Craig Wallace to 4th. There were great performances right through the field but perhaps the most striking was Jim Hendry/Bob Shearer who took a magnificent 5th O/A in their TR2.

Congratulations to the Saltire organising team and especially to Graham Couser, the new CofC, for organising a super, well balanced event with excellent documentation and outstanding test diagrams. We are already looking forward to next year and, as our respective spouses had a great w/end in and around the Pitlochry area, we have been credited with enough brownie points to come back - so please organise it all again in 2017.

Mike Garstang.



*[racing-school.co.uk/](http://racing-school.co.uk/)*

*15% discount for WMC members*

# Elderly Utterances

## The Voice of Experience!

Ron Palmer has his say

The organisers came up trumps (no Donald among them) when organising the White Heather Tests held at Kirkbride Airfield on 5<sup>th</sup> March. Steve Palmer and Wiggy with a hearty band of marshals put on a non damaging event with twelve tests held before lunch and a repeat dozen in the afternoon. It was entirely suitable for a showroom spec car although a snorkel may have helped on the M-Sport Test water splash.

Ed Glaister navigated for me and threatened a lowly finish (I was last on my previous navigating attempt he confessed). Anyway having threatened him with a walk home if we were last he then did a grand job and we got the award for the oldest crew or would have done had there been one. Kirkbride is a great venue with wide open spaces and the club hasn't yet explored half of its potential which bodes well for the future. It will be worthy alternative as an Autotest venue when the Seagull season starts at Maryport.

Graeme Cornthwaite and Steve Aspin/1380 Mini, carried off the spoils in the Historic event ahead of David Agnew and Alan Jackson/Porsche 911 followed by John and his brilliant navigator Maz Sloan (she of the £10 note) in the Midget. Targa events are becoming ultra competitive and worthy winners on this occasion were Jack Palmer and Tom Hampson in the Rover 25 with a penalty score which was best of the day by a bit. Jack's father Steve assures us that they are old enough to drive on the public roads although they don't look it. They clearly have good potential for the future when Steve sponsors them with a BDA Escort or an R5 Fiesta for forest events. Second in Targa were Daniel and Stephen Place the quiet guys who are always there or thereabouts in the Peugeot 309 GTi, this being Daniel's first event in the drivers seat, followed by Chris Hunter and Fiona Tyson in the twin turbo, four wheel drive Mazda MX5 – well it must be the way Chris drives it. As for us well we would have won by a mile if only...

Half a dozen senior citizens took to the forests to watch the Malcolm Wilson Rally on the 12<sup>th</sup> March. Two of us watched the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage - Wythop starting from Beck Wythop at 7.50am and we watched at the top open hairpin right. The lack of spectators here poses its own problems because there are fewer pushers when a car goes off or drowns out which happened to a couple of cars just a hundred yards before our viewing point. We had the pleasure of the company of Mrs Wilson Snr. who was being carefully chauffeured around the stages by William and Brian (access all areas?) in the Toyota Truck. The crack was good as was the weather and it was a real pleasure to be there. After this we had a quick look in at the later numbers doing the first pass through Greystoke Forest before adjourning to chez Gilligan for a hearty brunch with the rest of the gang courtesy of that talented chef, Paul's wife Jacqui. Having fortified the inner man we made our way to Greystoke for the afternoon run. In general spectators behaved well and followed instructions but there are still the occasional idiots who ignore the marshals and in doing so jeopardize the running of a stage.

So, good weather, good company and great food made for a good day out. Pity that so many of the drivers didn't seem to be getting the best from their cars on the event. The sounds of the good old BDA Escorts on full song continue to be so distinctive in the forests and it was well worth going for them alone with Steve Bannister among them still going strong after 40 odd years of competing. We were less than impressed with some of the 'poppingbangingfarting' cars which appeared to be driven to much less than their potential. As ever it's easy to be a quick spectator. Ron.



## Paper Copies of Start Line

The committee had decided that paper copies of Start Line will discontinue after the December 2016 issue. Currently only 14 members receive the “hard” copy and it takes the Editor around two hours to re master and print Start Line in a magazine type format which is quite different to the emailed version. As we progress the emailed version will develop in a form that is not transferable. Already we have to produce units of four pages in order to match the printed version.

We are giving eight months notice so that those members who still get the hard copy can get themselves on line and email. The current format readily downloads onto PCs. Laptops and tablets.

### Wigton Motor Club

## Drive It Day

April 24<sup>th</sup> 2016

11am until 2pm

(arrive and depart as you wish)

### Dalemain Mansion

(On the A592 3 miles west of J40 of the M6)

Open to all classic and historic vehicles

Donations to our nominated charities requested

Dalemain coffee shop will be open

Some of the cars at the  
Novice & Junior Autotest



# Gates Tyres Northern Historic Rally Awards

## Round 1, White Heather Tests, March 5th.

The White Heather Tests launched for the first time and opened this season's WMC/Gates Challenge. It attracted a strong field of 12 Historic entries (and one non-starter) and 13 Targa entries. The event ran on a fine but cold day particularly for the valiant band of marshals who had little shelter at this air-field venue.

Stephen Palmer and his team had put some thought into the layout of the tests and it made for a very efficient event. Six well laid out and varied tests were available with either gravel or tarmac or a mix of both plus standing water to catch out the unwary. Two runs before lunch and two after gave 24 tests in total. Groups of around six cars went to each of the six tests and each set of 6 tests took about an hour to complete. With this arrangement on the runways and only a mile of road between tests crews were kept busy all day.

The first run through Tests 1 - 6 provided an indication of the way things might shake out during the day. Graeme Cornthwaite in the Historic class and Daniel Place in the Targa class got their noses ahead despite Graeme taking a WT on Test 6 - along with about 50% of the entry including Jack Palmer whose WT dropped him to 3rd in the Targa class. David Agnew and John Sloan were setting up to battle all day in the Historics as were MGB GT pilots Stephen Douglas and Ian Dixon and Brian Bradley and John Fenwick in classes C1 and C2. Quickest O/A on this first group of tests was South Yorkshire's David Short and Roy Heath in their Escort Mk2 but they hit problems and had to retire.

On the 2nd running of the tests there was some changing of places and by the lunch break Graeme Cornthwaite had used his considerable autotest experience to consolidate a good lead in the Historics, Dave Agnew took a WT and dropped behind John Sloan on 893s (including a WT), Stephen Douglas on 894s and Ian Dixon on 905s. Brian Bradley went clean on 940s but John Fenwick dropped time on 1009s. In the Targa class Jack Palmer put the rest to the class to the sword with a scorching 787s, Daniel Place was on 804s, mud-streaked Chris Hunter was going well with the hood down on 854s, Ron Palmer was gliding round in 861s, Richard Lewthwaite had 864s and Dave Charlson with 887s was feeling decidedly rusty after a break from competition.

With lunch over the crews set about the 3rd run through the increasingly familiar tests. Graeme Cornthwaite pulled well ahead from the other Historics and completed this group of tests with a total of 1171s. John Sloan held on to 2nd in class with 1298s, Dave Agnew had pulled back to 3rd with 1309s and Ian Dixon was on 1320s. Bradley and Fenwick were still in reasonably close company with 1877s and 1913s respectively. Jack Palmer was doing amazing things in the Rover 25 and was not only leading his class but quickest O/A on 1123s. Daniel Place and Chris Hunter were close on 1201 and 1222s respectively. Richard Lewthwaite and a quickly improving Dave Charlson were in a close battle and Ron Palmer continued to go well but dropped time on "Monk".



The final group of 6 tests sorted out the "minor places" but the two class leaders continued to dominate. Graeme Cornthwaite finished on 1530s while Jack Palmer took 1st O/A and 1st in class with a superb 1479s. In the Historics Dave Agnew climbed to 2nd after an early WT finishing just 6s ahead of John Sloan who kept Stephen Douglas at bay by 22s who in turn was now 22s ahead of Ian Dixon. Daniel Place took 2nd in the Targa class 20s ahead of Chris Hunter who lead home Dave Charlson 1634s and Richard Lewthwaite on 1645s.

The White Heather Tests provided a fine opening Round to this year's WMC/Challenge. Feedback from the crews who entered has been positive and the efficient organisation made for an entertaining and challenging day.

From my scrutiny of the results, the *drive of the day* has to be Jack Palmer/Tom Hampson who took the event by the scruff of the neck and ran quickly and consistently all day - well done to them and also to the event's organising team.

The WH Tests didn't fit into our plans for 2016 so my thanks to John Sloan for supplying facts and comments to underpin my ramblings and to the other crews who furnished me with results.

Mike Garstang.

(NB

As this report goes to press, I'm awaiting a copy of the Hexham Historic/John Robson's "official" results but unofficial sources indicate that David Agnew was probably the only WMC/Gates competitor to enter and finish so he should be heading for maximum points - to be confirmed.)



# BYGONES

## Anecdotes

John Harris has forwarded to me an interesting letter re MGs Bs that hr wrote to the MGOC

### Chrome vs Rubber

**Bravo Roger Parker** – the debate has raged for years and in the meantime much money has been spent, cars butchered and the stock of the final iteration of the MGB depleted. As the owner of a 1971 GT and for a while, back to back, the owner of an early 1978 GT I feel I'm qualified to offer an opinion based on experience rather than prejudice or snobbery.

The 'Chrome' GT has front and rear telescopic dampers, drives and rides well - the 'Rubber' GT was bog standard; in real world driving there was nothing to say other than they were both quick, pleasant to drive and safe. As the 78 car was on 185 tyres there may have been more grip, it certainly wasn't a handful and the ride was if anything more comfortable.

At this point I can imagine the cries of heresy but withhold your judgment and if necessary re-visit Roger's article.

As the 78 car benefited from the later suspension set up and as both cars were GTs could it be the 77 model year modifications allied to the much derided steel beams behind those black covers lowered the centre of gravity to the benefit of late model GTs – discuss!

It would take a Stig or perhaps Tony Dron to pronounce a definitive verdict and I don't think the Club would pay their fees; suspend your prejudice and as Roger says try both before becoming judgemental.

John Harris

p.s. Brooklands green and other dark colours rather suit the Rubber bumper GTs



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# Novice & Juniors Autotest



## White Heather Historic and Targa Rally

A new venture for Wigton MC saw a single venue rally held on and around the old airfield at Kirkbride near Wigton. When I say new venture, I mean in the last 20 years and when I say old airfield, it is still in use by small planes and gyrocopters.

After signing on we sat down to decipher the tests. It was at this point that Robin and I lost the plot - we have tried, 'A on the right' and 'left of A' so my brainwave this time was 'A your side' - I know some make this work but not us!

Chief organiser, ever enthusiastic, Steve Palmer briefed us on the day and most importantly, the method of crossing said live airfield strip.

The crews were made up of young and old, 17 year old Jack Palmer and his young navigator Tom Hampson (more of them later) ranging up to much older, sorry experienced, crews, the combined ages of which probably equal Methuselah.

So 26 cars, split 50/50 between Historic and Targa, a couple dropped out after mechanical problems and a couple more were to suffer later.....

We were split into 6 groups, each to start at one of the 6 tests and move round throughout the morning. The tests were mostly tarmac and concrete with a little gravel, cattle grids and a water splash thrown in for good measure.

12 tests before lunch back at the very hospitable White Heather Hotel. The half time results were already up. Leading the Historics at this point was Graeme Cornthwaite/Steve Aspin in the 1967 Mini and Jack/Tom heading up the Targa group in the Rover 25. I spotted the Moffat Celica being loaded onto the trailer. Navigator Nancy looked blanched but I did sympathise, I have witnessed Nigel's 'competitive' driving before!

After lunch onto another 12 tests, a repeat of the mornings events. By this time we should have learnt the course but half of us still managed a wrong test somewhere on the score sheet.

Two more mechanical issues developed, Joe Harwood/Jai Wall can tell you how to change a Puma driveshaft in 15 minutes. John/Marion Sloan can tell you how to change a Midget fuel pump in 10 minutes. I'm sure Marion's input from the passenger seat was very valuable.

The M Sport test track was one of the excellent sites that we used. Today it had 3 inches of standing water at cone J. Robin Murray/David Rice finished with the windows steamed up like a courting couple. Even hardened MX5 owners (if there is such a thing) raised their soft tops. So my plan - wipers on, blower on full and we are off. Ahh, forgot the navigators window - never mind that'll teach him for calling a wrong direction earlier!

At the end of all this malarkey it was back to the hotel for a fine roast beef dinner in the ex officers mess. Graeme F had been staring at his laptop in a darkened room and emerged with the results.

About 2 years ago I wrote in an autotest article that Jack Palmer had beaten his Dad Steve. Well on this occasion he beat the lot of us - congratulations. First in the Historics were Graeme Cornthwaite/Steve Aspin followed by David Agnew/Alan Jackson and John/Marion Sloan. Other class winners were Stephen/Callum Douglas, Robin Murray/David Rice and Brian Bradley/Michael Marsland.

Targa class winners were Daniel/Stephen Place, Chris/Fiona Tyson and Dave Charlson/Jim MacDiarmid. Let's hope this can be an annual event.....

Steve F

# Rally Torque

News from Road & Stage



## INVITATION

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IN CONJUNCTION WITH

THE ASSOCIATION OF NORTH EAST AND CUMBRIA CAR CLUBS  
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## *M Sport News*

Congratulations to M Sport on a run 200 points scores in the WRC, a feat unlikely to be beaten I would think.

These days it looks as if there are more Fiestas on WRC events than any other model!

Also a great win on the opening round of the BRC.



# Inside the Industry

**Paul Gilligan keeps us up to date**

## **Driverless Drives Forward – With The Occasional Stumble**

You expect cars to be on the front cover and front page of a motor magazine, that's what we buy them for after all. It's unusual though to see cars feature on the front cover of one of the World's leading news magazines. Recently Time magazine ran as their front cover a picture of a car with 3 happy passengers, plus a dog, but no driver. The headline was simple:

“No traffic - No accidents - No Deaths

All you have to do is to give up your right to drive”

Now Time is an American magazine. And our Transatlantic cousins do have a tendency to exaggerate. Also to threaten to elect unsuitable people as President. Time though commands enormous respect all over the World. Their article stresses that pretty soon (if not already) driverless cars will drive better and more safely than humans. Time recognises that US drivers will be even more unwilling to give up their licences than their guns, but forecasts that sky high insurance premiums for those who insist on taking the wheel may force them to?

Last year 33000 Americans died in traffic accidents, over 2 million were injured. 94% of accidents were apparently down to driver error. I could go on but hopefully you're getting the picture. Let me give you one last, and VERY chilling quote from, remember, one of the World's most respected journals:

“Because the gulf between human and machine is so vast – and growing – the next step after making driverless cars legal will be to make them mandatory.”

Opponents are making a big thing of the fact that recently a Google driverless prototype was involved in a collision with a bus on the public road in California. The car ALMOST stopped, it was doing 2mph at the time of the bump, the bus was doing 15 mph. Nobody was hurt. It's the only accident in almost a million miles of Google testing, so maybe they're not doing so badly?

Meanwhile 3 professional US race drivers recently drove a Tesla from Los Angeles to New York in two days. Equipped with Tesla's latest autonomous software the car steered itself 96% of the way, so for about 3000 miles. And didn't hit anything!

To me this will happen step by step, but I firmly believe it will happen. All the big manufacturers are on the case, terrified of being beaten by Tesla, Google, and perhaps Apple. In April (yes this April!) Mercedes will launch the new E Class, which will be capable of overtaking on its own, all the driver needs to do is hold the indicator lever down ( or up) for 2 seconds. Not yet legal in the UK, it will be offered in other markets first. Nissan will be making cars capable of running on autopilot in Sunderland next year. And it was recently announced that convoys of up to 6 driverless trucks will be tested on the M6 over Shap this year. One of the world's largest minters Rio Tinto has been using driverless 150 ton dump trucks in its Australian mines for years, with no problems.

## **SUVs Power On**

It's almost 50 years since Range Rover more or less invented to SUV (Sports Utility Vehicle). Now these are the most popular of all new cars, and with one notable exception every manufacturer seems to have to offer one. Jaguar recently launched theirs, Bentley have shown theirs and deliveries start soon. Rolls Royce (!), Maserati, and Lamborghini are not far behind. Aston Martin have recently announced that they are to build a new factory in South Wales to a completely new model, SUV of course.

So it's a very competitive market, and few would dare say that those who've been at it for a while are making bad cars. That covers Range Rover of course, but also Audi, BMW, Mercedes, Porsche etc,

plus all the US manufacturers. So success isn't guaranteed for the new arrivals. I understand that many Bentley customers who'd put in advance orders for the Bentayga simply didn't like it when they saw it in the flesh, and many cancellations have resulted. With no rush of people to "buy" the place in the queue. Perhaps the SUV bubble is bursting? And the one manufacturer who won't build one? – Ferrari, thankfully.

### **Great News at Aston Martin**

With Mercedes now owning 5% of the shares, and providing some very useful technology as a result Aston is on the up again at last. As mentioned above new SUV to come out of a new factory in a couple of years time, but right now Aston have revealed the new DB 11, which just seems to tick ALL the boxes. Quicker, lighter, more economical (like it matters!), and just STUNNING to look at. Hopefully they will get their SUV as right.

Meanwhile their winged badge now adorns Red Bull F1 cars, genuine exchange of technology not just a sponsorship apparently and part of that deal is that Adrian Newey will help design an Aston supercar. Aston CEO Andy Palmer said part of the agreement was that it had to be capable of lapping Silverstone faster than a Red Bull F1 car. I had the pleasure of meeting Andy a good few years ago when he was in the early part of his career at Nissan. He rose to Number 2 in the Nissan world. And left because they told him only a Japanese person could be Number 1. Genuinely nice guy and frighteningly clever. Not given to light hearted business remarks. So I think we'll see an Aston go round Silverstone at F1 speeds somehow.

### **TVR to Restart Production**

South Wales seems to be about to become a new heartland for British sports cars. As well as Aston Martin a consortium involving renowned designer Gordon Murray is threatening to start making TVRs again. The money comes from a computer games tycoon, and Cosworth will make the engines. Objective is to compete with McLaren, Ferrari, Porsche and Aston Martin.

I only write this stuff, don't shoot the messenger!

### **Jaguar's Product Strategy**

Last month I wrote that I couldn't understand why Jaguar were launching the F Pace SUV when the LR part of JLR were already doing such a good job in that segment. Since then I've done some more digging. Theory is that everyone has to have an SUV, except Ferrari and so far as we know TVR that is. Jaguar are betting that people who would have bought an estate car will increasingly go SUV. So the XF Sportbrake (Estate) is being dropped. And probably the planned smaller XE Estate. F Pace may well get a smaller brother to fill that gap. So if you want a Jag that does the job of an estate car and has 4WD you will buy F Pace or a smaller version of. Being thick I still don't get it. Audi, BMW, and Mercedes offer a variety of estate cars all with the option of 4WD. AND they offer a variety of SUVs with the same option.

Meanwhile Jag have announced another new model which I do get and is a guaranteed money spinner. Most of you will be familiar with the 1957 XK SS sports car. This was a conversion on surplus D Types which couldn't be sold except at a vast loss (honest!). So a second door was added, a full width windscreen, and a rudimentary convertible roof with side screens. 25 were to be produced, but after only 16 had been finished the Browns Lane factory was engulfed by fire which destroyed the remaining 9 cars. Jaguar have now decided to finish the job, and 9 brand new XK SSs will be built by their classic division, and all have already been sold to "friendly collectors" at "over" (well over I hear) £1M each. That bit I do think makes sense!

### **VW Woes Continue**

Large institutional shareholders of VW have filed law suits demanding \$3.67 Billion in damages because their shares lost that much value due to the emissions scandal. Meanwhile the European Commission could fine VW another Billion Euros for failing to meet agreed emission targets. All this is on top of the 5 Billion Euros VW has already set aside to deal with the scandal. And the fact

that they are the only top ten brand to see market share falling across Europe currently. Meanwhile VW have been forced to recall 800,000 cars worldwide because of a safety concern involving the foot pedals. The models involved are the VW Touareg and the Porsche Cayenne, which are of course built on the same structure and share many components. Admitting this to Porsche buyers may be the most embarrassing bit.

### **Does Racing Success Sell Cars?**

An old argument. One industry leader who says a resounding “YES” is Mercedes CEO Dieter Zetsche. Few spend as much as Mercedes between F1 and DTM. In the past 3 years they have dominated F1, and guess what their worldwide sales have gone up by 20%. Renault/Nissan boss Carlos Ghosn has just approved 300 million Euros a year to buy the remains of “Lotus” and turn it back into a winner. Of course both have Boards and Shareholders to answer to, so they’re hardly going to say it’s a bad idea, but interesting numbers from Merc?

### **Electric Cars March On**

Tesla are pushing forward despite financial analysts questioning the validity of their business model. The new Model X has just been launched to broaden the range, but lurking in the wings is the Model 3. This will be a 4 door saloon of similar size to a BMW 3 Series, aimed to sell at about £30000. If Tesla can make this target the only problem they will have, as I may have said before is making enough. The combination of low operating costs and low company car taxation will wipe BMW etc off the corporate sales floor in the UK and most of Europe,

However to get to that goal Tesla will need to fund a very large manufacturing operation. They intend Model 3 to take them to a level of selling 500,000 cars a year. They currently sell not much more than 10% of that. Their business model is to own their own dealerships so they can totally control the sales and marketing process and avoid giving margin away to dealers. That’s working fine currently, but can the system cope with selling that many more cars? Also the “conventional” manufacturers are not ignoring this challenge, but improving their own electric offerings. So there’s a big fuht coming.

At the other end of the electric car pricing scale Indian manufacturer Mahindra will next month launch their e20 electric car in the UK. It’s a small 3 door city car, certainly won’t win any beauty contests, but they are rumoured to be aiming for a £10000 selling price. They reckon the average owner doing 8000 miles a year will face a fuel cost of under £10 a month. Like Tesla they will avoid using dealers but handle everything themselves. They say avoiding expensive dealer showrooms will enable them to reach their target price. All sales will be over the internet and test drive offered from their HQ in West London. They will establish servicing via mobile technicians. I think I’ve mentioned before that dealership glass palace showrooms and £150 per hour service charges may soon be a thing of the past?

I think the critical thing for Mahindra will be product quality and establishing credibility. They’ve had two attempts in the UK before. The first was a cheap pick up launched I think in the 1980s. Quality was absolutely awful and although cheap to buy the fact they were worthless second hand ant very unreliable soon brought an end to that. Then they made a small hatchback that in its dying days Rover imported and marketed as City Rover. Again quality was awful. One large Rover dealer I knew refused to take any more after his first batch. Rumour had it Rover were paying about £1000 + freight for them and charging the dealers 4 or 5 times that to try to keep their business afloat. Few were sold, again they were unsaleable second hand, none I think survive. So hopefully nobody thinking about buying a Mahindra EV will have as long a memory as me!

Paul Gilligan  
pg@gilliganvc.co.uk



# Andy's Armchair

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

I've spent a bit of time recently trying to sort up events worth visiting during the coming season. We've got a busy programme mapped out including Silverstone in April for the WEC round. Now I know six hour races maybe don't make for the most riveting of viewing but seeing the last World Championship Sportscar race I attended was the BOAC 500 at Brands Hatch in 1967, won by the Chaparral driven by Mike Spence and Phil Hill, his last race before retiring, it's maybe time I made the effort to see another one. I was looking at the programme for the Brands event and it's really amazing how many Grand Prix drivers, and by that I mean active ones, were taking part. I suppose the only modern equivalent was "the hulk" racing and winning at Le Mans last year.

By the way there's a smashing little documentary on U Tube if you type in BOAC 500 1967, which gives a really good overview of the whole thing. There's a lot of interesting footage but the most bizarre is the Maranello Concessionaires Ferrari 330 P4 arriving in the paddock on the most clapped out trailer I've ever seen. The thing is a total "lash up" and when you consider the car it's carrying would nowadays be worth north of 20 million it really does make you think.

I was keen to have a day at Silverstone for the Classic week-end as as I've written before I wanted to see the Can Am cars, but I'm afraid I've decided to do that at the Donington event in June instead. The reason is two-fold, first I don't want to pay in advance as I'm afraid we're becoming a bit more choosy about the weather before committing to a sodden airfield for a day and second cost. Now by nature I'm not a miser but over £100 for the two of us for one day seems a bit steep. All we want to do is see some interesting cars and a bit of racing, we're really not wanting to pay for the live music, fashion show, fire-work displays etc.etc. – Simply not interested, off home at tea-time and yet expected to contribute to all the frills and fripperies going on 'til 11 o'clock at night. It's really quite annoying when you consider we religiously attended the original week-ends in the early 90's. At that time it was just getting off the ground and was simply a brilliant race meeting, just what the doctor ordered, if they're not careful the glitz will become more important than the races.

Is anyone else having trouble with Motors TV? We never had a problem when it was Channel 71 but since it's moved to being streamed on Channel 240 it's decided to shut itself off for no apparent reason after about 20 minutes. It simply turns the television off and even stops you getting back on to ordinary channels without a great deal of trouble. It's such a nuisance we've stopped using it but would like to get it back so can you help with some advice please.

At the time of writing the new F1 season is almost upon us. Testing hasn't thrown up any great surprises but we're hopeful Williams can spring one or two in the races. It'll also be interesting to see how Haas gets on as well.

I can't say I'm overly keen on the Halo safety device. I know all about young Surtees, Bianchi, Wilson, and Massa and the spring, all very sad but there really does come a point when some risk is inevitable and from where I'm sitting this monstrosity has gone beyond it, it's the equivalent of demanding huge sponge mattresses at the bottom of every rock face, banning the Isle of Man TT and not letting boxers actually hit each other. At worst couldn't it be made optional as apparently a lot of drivers, Lewis included, are far from happy.

On a happier note let's all rejoice that thanks to Bernie F1 is now going to be cheap to enter. You'll be pleased to hear that your engine supply is only going to cost 12 million per season. I think we can all agree this is a true bargain maybe Wigton should consider entering it's own team!

Ends

AA

# What's On

## WMC events and other events of interest

### April

3rd	Sun	WMC	Rowrah Test Day (1-4)
10th	Sun	MG Cumb,	Roof of England Challenge
11th	Mon	WMC	Film Show (Postponed)
17th	Sun	WMC	Seagull Autotest
24th	Sun	WMC	Drive It Day (Dalemain)
30/1st	S/S	B&DMC	Berwick Classic Rally (Gates Awards)

### May

4th	Wed	WMC	Pub Run
6-8		WMC	Gallop
18th	Wed	WMC	Grass Autotest

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