

Wigton Motor Club Ltd

Start Line

Issue: 06/16

www.wigtonmc.co.uk

June 2016

Peak Galloping



Over sixty members took part in the three day “Gallop” to the Peak District

ably organised by Ron & Christine Palmer who also managed to get the weather gods to provide us with warm sunny weather all the time so hoods were down and noses were red!

Next year sees the tenth Gallop so what surprises will Ron have for us then?

Motor Sport for All

Diary

Club events over the next month or so

Pub Run. Thurs June 9th.

Meet in Mockerkin lay-by on the A5086. From 7 o'clock .
Please let us know for ordering food.

By email, Land Line 01946861531, Mob 07774733409.
Bob Marshall by email bobnbet.64@btinternet.com
or Land line 01946861493.

Grass Autotest

June 22nd

Whins Farm, High Harrington. Workington. CA14 4NN

6.30 sign on for a 7pm start.. Refreshments

Entries to: fiona.tyson@yahoo.co.uk

WIGTON MOTOR CLUB LTD

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Talking Point

Topical comment from the world of motoring

Now and again my “Talking Points” seem to hit a chord with members and last month’s certainly did from the reaction! Everyone who emailed or spoke to me agreed that the parochial attitude of some one make car clubs was ridiculous. We soul share each others enjoyment of whatever make we choose to own.

Perhaps I can move the argument on to the differing types of motorsport. There are around a dozen disciplines of the sport that come under the MSA banner. Very fortunately I’ve been able to take part in most of them during my life long motorsport hobby. Every one of them involves a different challenges plus a range of similar skills. Some involves cars on the track at the same time others it’s going solo against the clock. Some it involves just getting round the course as in trials and cross country events, many involves speed in various forms.

I find it sad when enthusiasts for one discipline denigrate others which they may not have even tried. I also an disappointed that people do not take part in different types of events as they used. I suppose some events involve different equipment as in helmets and race suits and even changes to the cars but this is sadly due to the MSA over the years has made it increasingly difficult to take part in many areas of our sport.

We are all bonded by our love of mechanical transportation and the fun we can have with them so let’s all pull together!

In these days of internet and mobile phones people do not seem to meet in person and I’ve always felt that the social side of our sport and passion is very important. It can be difficult to get people to come to Club Nights these days as indeed do any sports clubs but we do have the pub runs and with the autotests etc having a food element to them it does gather people together. The same applies to the historic rallies which are as much about meeting fellow enthusiasts as the competition.

This was all brought together in May with the Gallop. It’s hard to believe that this was the ninth evocation of this event that Ron and Christine dreamed up. I think I’ve done six of them but I understand three crews have done them all. We have over sixty members enjoying some great roads and huge amounts of food over the three days and we hit a superb patch of weather so it was hoods down all the way and sunburnt faces! A great weekend in good company and for us some new areas to explore but the roads were marred by the number of cyclists to seem to think they owned them!

I think Ron is planning something special for the tenth Gallop, there are rumours of it being longer or going overseas but I do know it will be excellent and great fun!

GTF



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Classic Column

Nostalgia isn't what it used to be!

I was reading recently about the growth in nostalgia events, vintage fairs, music festivals, 60's clothing etc which have become something of a boom industry cashing in the "baby boomers" who now have time and money to spare.

Of course motorsport is in the forefront of this trend with classic car prices booming and historic racing more popular than modern racing in terms of spectator attendance.

However as the article I read suggests are we not actually looking at our past through rose tinted glasses and not what actually happened? The Goodwood Revival is perhaps the biggest nostalgia event in the world but in fact Lord March has produced a wonderful piece of theatre that is nothing like the real thing. I wonder how many of the 100,000 spectators who enjoy the event actually went to Goodwood or other circuits in the 50s and 60s? Of course it was nothing like it is now in any way! It's all got incredibly pretentious!

As a kid my parents took me to race meetings at Silverstone, Snetterton, Crystal Palace and many other long forgotten speed venues more or less every weekend and got to know many of the drivers and teams. As expatriate Scots they were keen supporters of Ecurie Ecosse and I remember getting to sit in one of their C types when I was about seven.

Of course in those days most cars were driven to the circuits (even the works Jags and Astons) and even the single seaters arrived on wooden trailers! There were no mobile workshops, just a bag of tools and a pal to help instead of a team of immaculately clad mechanics as we have now. At Goodwood these are carefully hidden out of sight in case they spoil the show. The cars are better prepared now and rather more modified than they were in period. This year's Goodwood will see a race for Austin A30/35s. Now I saw one of these cars last year and basically what the firm that is making them does is to fit MG Midget engines, gearboxes and axles and brakes to full race spec. Now I remember seeing Graham Hill racing his Speedwell A30 when he owned that company and they were quite lightly modded in comparison.

Of course Lord March likes to create the right "atmosphere" the sights, sounds and smell of 50s/60s racing. Well again it's all about artistic licence and rose tinted glasses. Spectators dressed in rather bland suits, not in fancy dress and drivers drove in casual clothes often oil stained. And the smells. Now there is an area where Lord March could really make more effort! Not just the smell of burning rubber or Castrol R but the loos! I hated going to the loos at events, they were usually compounds of canvas sheeting with slip trenches and overflowing Elsans. God know what the "Ladies" was like. Perhaps Goodwood could install these period loos?

A big issue in historic racing these days is the standard of driving. Until about 15 years ago vintage and historic cars were owned and raced by people who owned and cherished them and may well have owned them for many years. They were also experienced racers. Now we have multi millionaires buying cars at ridiculous prices in order to take part in events that are seen as prestigious, Goodwood, Monaco, Classic Le Mans etc. The problem is that they are invariably lacking in previous racing experience and there have been some pretty serious incidents of late due to them mixing with professional drivers and experienced enthusiasts.

Watching the live streaming from Monaco proved the huge variation in skill in most of the races with people I've never heard of in decent cars going incredibly slowly. In the "60s" F1 race preparation expert and top driver Martin Stretton put the Scirocco second in the grid. Now the Scirocco was the 1963 equivalent of a Manor in current F1 – complete rubbish, but there were drivers in cars like Lotus 24s that were 20 seconds per lap slower! As touring car ace Andy Middlehurst won the race in a Lotus 25 and was lapping back markers on his fifth lap.

As a final thought, how do some of these 55 year olds who have enjoyed more than a few corporate dinners get in these cars? Look at photos of Clark, Moss, Surtees etc in period and they were slim blokes and the cars fitted like gloves. Have the cars been gently widened for these owners I wonder?

GTF

PG Tips

Maybe my (car) luck is finally changing (said with crossed fingers of course) – Snotty made it back from the Isle of Man event in full working order and fairly rude health! Hurrah.

My annual April holiday to the island was a little shorter than usual due to ferry shenanigans that meant we had to sail on the Wednesday evening from Liverpool, not arriving until 10pm. This year David Wiggins came with us in his 205 Rallye and had the great misfortune of sharing a room with me. This did assist in some ways though because David is relatively sensible and went to bed at midnight, which had a useful knock on effect on me because I did likewise and avoided the 4am casino nights out.

The Thursday event started with some practice snow...which was fun but not fast. By the evening it had dried up somewhat but wasn't what you'd call grippy and the wooded area near the finish line was still lethal being covered in mud and litres of oil dumped by various ancient vintage cars. Now, don't get me wrong here – I love seeing the vintage cars and some of them go crazily quick for such ancient machines – but I do wonder why every single one of them seems to seep oil out of their engines....which plays mayhem with more modern cars running after them on the track. You'd think in this day and age there would be a better way of keeping the oil inside the engine than luck and hoping for the best! At the end of Thursday's event I had failed to improve my previous best time but only by fractions of a second and given the conditions I didn't think that was too bad.

Friday's hillclimb at Creg Willeys (yes you have read that correctly) started with....wait for it....snow! Yep more snow at the end of April, but by lunchtime the weather had completely changed and it was warm and sunny. The end result was 4 seconds quicker than last year which just about justifies the blood money and sweat I've expended in the last 6 months. David Wiggins seemed to go well but did his usual amount of complaining that he wasn't fast enough, he didn't have the right tyres and all the opposition had much faster cars that weren't legal....I think he missed his vocation in F1! He did have a point about the legality of some of his opponents though. Half of them didn't have a passenger seat let alone a back seat and yet they were running in road cars....I guess if he'd protested it would have been sorted out and he'd have been the most hated man at the event! Perhaps best left alone after all.

David Rushton was also at the event in the monster Morgan and posted one of the fastest times through the speed trap overall.

Saturday took us up to Lhergy Frissell and after a dull start the sun was out again and other than losing a trim vent from the side of the old Skoda (going too fast obviously!) the day went well and I once again went 4 seconds quicker than last year and managed to beat a Mini.

Next year there is a possibility the event will once more include 'The Sloc' hillclimb again. Seemingly the Manx government spent lots of money doing the drainage and resurfacing the remote hill on the south of the island last year and it is now billiard table smooth and seriously quick. Some of the locals weren't very happy with such a spend due to the fact that the promenade at Douglas is more akin to a potholed country road than the main road through the island's capital!

I have already entered both Barbon events in Snotty and looking to do some other events over the summer and autumn.

Meanwhile the yellow Rapid sits in my garage receiving sporadic attention...and being difficult. I am now learning how to make brake pipes after I was unable to loosen even one joiner at the rear of the car to replace the flexi pipes. The car also needs some minor welding.

My aim of having it ready for the August show looks to be a long way off still.

Peter

A NEW BEGINNING FOR MOTORSPORT IN SCOTLAND

Motorsport legend Sir Jackie Stewart joined representatives from sportscotland, the Motor Sports Association, and the Scottish Auto Cycle Union to announce a new partnership to grow the sport of motor racing in Scotland.

Scotland has produced a procession of champions on two, three, and four wheels from motorcycling legends Jimmy Guthrie and Jock Taylor to Jim Clark, Colin McRae, and 'The Flying Scot' Sir Jackie himself.

This new agreement, backed by £360,000 investment over four years from sportscotland, will support the development of the sport and provide more opportunities for people from all across Scotland to get involved at every level.

The new four-year agreement has enabled Scottish Motor Sports (SMS), the umbrella body for the sport, to create two new roles, National Development Manager and National Development Officer, to deliver a new strategy.

This strategy aims to increase membership by 10 per cent. This increase will be achieved through a focus on working with the clubs to increase the number of qualified coaches, building stronger relationships between clubs and local authorities, and developing greater opportunities for student participation.

Speaking at the launch at Ingliston today (Tuesday), sportscotland Chief Executive Stewart Harris said:

"Scotland's success on the world stage in motorsport is unrivalled and we rightly celebrate the incredible achievements of sporting icons like Sir Jackie Stewart and emerging talent like Rory Skinner, who are here with us today.

"But success on the world stage does not happen by chance. It requires a strong club structure, qualified coaches, an army of volunteers and above all, the opportunity to take part.

"This new partnership is about providing Scottish Motor Sport (SMS) with the resources to capitalise on the popularity of the sport and to give more people the chance to experience the excitement for themselves.

"This initiative, together with others like Susie Wolff's Dare to Be Different programme for girls, have a big part to play in highlighting participation opportunities in motorsport in Scotland and crucially, to create more.

There is a strong club structure in Scotland and we believe that this partnership will enable SMS to harness the potential that offers, and build on Scotland's enviable motorsport legacy."

Three-time F1 World Champion Sir Jackie Stewart was on hand to give his backing to the new partnership and said:

"Scotland needs more champions in the world of motor sport. To be global champions is a very big challenge. We have to excite more people in Scotland about motor sport in general. We have also got to encourage more people to come to racing and rally events.

"For a wee country we have done almost better than any country in the world with regards to the number of top motor racing and motor cyclists per head of population. It would be very good for Scotland to invest more to develop more talent in motor sport."

On behalf of Scottish Motor Sports (SMS), Chairman Tom Purves welcomed the investment:

"I am delighted to see the commitment of sportscotland to developing the sport which has brought so many world-class participants from Scotland and given Scots immense pride in their success".

REVIVAL HILLCLIMB NEWS

Boness Hillclimb in Scotland will have regulations ready to download any day now if not already out for their September event, it is proving to be so popular they have increased the paddock area and altered the track so will be able to take an additional 30 or so competitors this year.

Last year there was a full entry and many more people are wanting to compete this September.

At Drive it Day I was approached by a number of Wigton MC members who haven't competed in the event before but they really fancy having a go at this years event on 3/4th Sept.

You can compete on either Saturday or Sunday or both but if you are serious about getting an entry go to their website and register an interest so you will know when regs become available, they were just waiting for the track licence number from the MSA, the new extended track has already been inspected and has been approved.

Many types of events are suffering from falling entry numbers of late, much of this due to the vast expense of cars having seats and seat belts needing replaced due to the liffing of these components even though potentially they may never have been used at all. They may have been bought and fitted to a car that had never ever been used.

HANS and similar type head restraints and other expensive equipment is also required in most classes and forms of motorsport apart from "Historics". Check out MSA regs for details

Revival Hillclimbs on the other hand are gaining in popularity enormously as cars built before mid 1970s are exempt from these regulations so are a very affordable way for people to enjoy motorsport without having to have a fortune in the bank or worse still as many have done overstretch their financial resources and then get into financial difficulties because of their love of motorsport.

Visit Bonesshillclimb for details. and check out "downloads " for regs.

CHATEAU IMPNEY

Chateau Impney is way oversubscribed as far as entries go but if you hurry it was still possible to buy advance tickets at discount rates.

One of Sydney Allards most famous cars is competing in the hands of Dr Jonathan Rose. This car held the hill record at Prescott just after the car was built, it is a fearsome V8 rather agricultural looking machine with lots of torque and very aptly named" Tailwagger"

A couple of years ago it was entered at Prescott in my class, this appearance after no less than forty years laid up in a garage. It broke down after a couple of runs but fortunately the trouble was traced to a burnt out coil and having a new spare with me for my Buckler we quickly fitted it and Jonathan promptly blew the rest of us into the weeds and went on to win the class.

Jonathan and I became friends and I ended up buying a very derelict Austin 7 from him to restore. He lives near Oxford so Edwin Cook, John Hunter and myself went for the car and had a fabulous day with Jonathan looking at his Bugatti, GNs, Morgan 3 wheeler, Frazer Nashes, Austin 7s, Porsches, Allards and many other cars at his place . A great day out indeed.

To see this car in action or to see more information about it.

Google Chateau Impney Hillclimb, click on "blog" and the information is on Chateau website under "Blog"

Keith Thomas

Classic Nostalgia at Shelsley Walsh

On 16/17th July you may think you have been taken back in time to the start of an International Rally from the 1980s as Hannu Mikkola's short wheelbase Audi Quattro 44WMN will be retuning to Shelsley. It was last there in 1986 where it set a closed car record for the hill of 29.51secs, a time that stood for very many years.

Not only the Audi but Metro 6R4, Peugeot 205T16, Lancia Delta S4, Ford RS200 and everything in between.

Jimmy McCrae is going to be re united with his Works Vauxhall that Pro Drive are rebuilding for him to tackle the famous Worcestershire hill.

Jimmy will be giving it his all, I know him from years ago when I co drove for Malcolm Wilson

in the ex Works Total Escort MK2, HHJ 701N as well as being very good friends with him when I drove the W K Wilson Escort MK1 in Scottish Internationals and other forest rallies such as Granite City, Jim Clark, and Lindisfarnie with Malcolm's dad Ken co-driving for me.

Come to think of it I have even had the pleasure of a young Malcolm Wilson navigating for me in a 1500GT engined Anglia 105E in some big forest rallies, a car Malcolm built before he was old enough to drive.

It will be great to meet Jimmy again after all these years. We sometimes shared service parcs with Jimmy and the Dealer Team Vauxhall guys were the ones that told Ken and myself that Malcolm had had his really bad accident with Terry Harriman on a Scottish Inter-

national when trying for the lead. We were waiting for Malcolm to come out of a forest near Loch Ness and no one had mobile phones then but Jimmy and DTV had short wave radios so radioed on when the stage was stopped. I do hope he remembers me as he was such a lovely guy and they were a really nice family. What a shame Colin was killed, it had to end so tragically

Being a speed Hillclimb, racing cars will of course be there and an incredible 1936 V16 Auto Union type C similar to the one Hans Stuck drove at Shelsley in June 1936 will be blasting up the Teme Valley hill.. This time it will be driven by Hans Stuck's son, Hans-Joachim Stuck. What a sight and sound that will be.

Many Cumbrian cars are entered and this is an event where there is so much going on it is fabulous. Air displays, music from Sam and the sax, interviews with motorsport personalities, concours d elegance, trade stands, car clubs and displays are only part of the attractions.

The event is a counter in numerous championships so ex works Lotus race cars are just one of the famous makes that have a big field of cars entered. Clubs such as Bentley and Bugatti drivers club, plus Porsche, 500cc owners club, GT40 enthusiasts club, TR register, Bert Hadley Austin 7 championship competitors are just a few of the varied types of car competing.

This is the worlds oldest motor sport venue still running events and all the facilities are permanent and superb, restaurant, bars, even garages for competitors cars no wonder I and thousands of others love it.

16/17th July is the date, Graeme Forrester is entered in the MG series and I am tackling the big V8 sports /racing cars in my 1172cc Buckler so not a chance in hell but its great just to be there ,trying not to lift too early for the daunting esses, soaking up the atmosphere, it is so rightly titled "Classic Nostalgia"

Keith Thomas



Jottings

The committee would like to thank Paul Gilligan for his efforts as treasurer over the past three years. He had some original thoughts and projects for increasing our membership. We wish him well with his many "projects" and we will continue to enjoy his pearls of wisdom from the motor industry. We welcome Susan Eastwood as our new treasurer.

We also wish to thank Brockbanks Solicitors for their sponsorship over the past five years and we hope to have an arrangement with them again in the future.

Can we issue our regular plea for people to fill in entry forms, membership forms etc clearly, particularly when it comes to emails: **Please print the email address!** Around 20% of forms have email address or they are difficult to read and this wastes a huge amount of time for those dealing with entries.

A reminder that we are stopping the posting out of hard copies of Start Line after the December 2016 issue. There are just 16 copies printed now and it creates a great deal of extra work for the Editor and also inhibits the design of the on line version that is emailed to members. Will those members who currently get the "hard" copy please ensure that they can receive the **pdf** version from January onwards.

Crookdake Open Garden June 5th

It's that time of year again but this year we are celebrating Alannah having owned her M.G. for 50 years which is quite something. I hope you can all come and support the National Gardens Scheme who, with your help, last year raised over £50,000 for cancer charities from Cumbria. We are open between 1 and 5 pm. Just turn up and we would love to see you in or on whatever form of transport takes your fancy at

Crookdake Farm, Aspatria, Wigton CA7 3SH

Memberships

All membership matters including emails and membership cards should be directed to:

**Jaime Hamilton at: jaime@jhbookkeepingervices.co.uk or
07760 570547**

NOT BAD FOR A 15 YEAR OLD



After 8 years of karting, which got much more serious than originally planned, we were finally preparing for Sam's first car race, which is where we wanted to be. Sam passed his ARDS course at Croft and did a day's testing at Blyton Park with me as a passenger. I was amazed at his smooth driving style and fantastic breaking, probably comes from the years of karting.

Sam is racing a Saxo VTR in the Junior Saloon Car Championship. A one make series for 14-17 year olds, based on the 1.6 Saxo VTR. We bought a car in November which had previously raced in the series a few years

ago and looking on first inspection, it had seen some action! Once it was tidied up and all the wheels were pointing in the same direction, we were ready for the 3rd round of the championship at Snetterton.

So we arrived on the Thursday before the meeting for a track day with a good friend of ours, grade S instructor Colin Elstrop. Colin mentored Sam throughout the day and as the day went on Sam was getting quicker and quicker. Colin learning him top tips here and there on various parts of the circuit. I was also relieved to see the car was performing very well too. The day ended a set of tyres down but had been fantastic for Sam. He still hadn't been in the car on his own at this point though!

Friday was the official test day for the race meeting which was to be the first time in the car on his own. Michelle and I were very nervous at this point but Sam seemed totally unmoved by all the fuss. He settled down well and was on the pace, his lap times were good and he was chuffed to see his lap timer display a max speed of 104mph! Not bad for a 15 year old.

Race day was Saturday, Michelle was a nervous wreck. Sam totally oblivious couldn't wait. The format was quali in the morning and 2 races in the afternoon. Quali was 9am, off they all went. Michelle tried to log onto live timing but it wasn't working so it was quite frustrating for the first few laps not knowing where he was but then the commentator kicked in and we were totally amazed to hear Sam's name been read out in 9th place, out of 23 cars, this was far better than we had expected. Most of the others drivers had done much more racing and many having raced in last year's series.



Race 1 he lined up 9th on the grid. I was in the pit lane and Michelle was watching from a raised banking on the first corner, although she tells me she couldn't watch them going into the first corner. Sam has never done a standing start before, the lights went out and Sam dropped the clutch at 6000rpm, he said the car filled with tyre smoke, loads of people passed him. He finally got going and finished a very respectable 14th. He was furious at himself for the start and was determined never to that again! We did explain it was

his first time but he wasn't having any of it.



Just before race 2 the superkarts had been out and one of them had dumped oil right round the track on the racing line, so we had quite a delay whilst the marshals laid a cement trail round the track. They were finally gridded up, Sam for P9 again. This time the lights went out and he made a text book start and into the first corner lost all sight of them due to the cement dust. Finally they appeared and he had a fantastic mid pack race, doing some brilliant overtaking to end up finishing in 11th place. Michelle and I and Sam were over the moon with this. His first race meeting and only left with a couple of tyre marks here and there. A great end to the weekend. The next rounds are back to

back, Rockingham next weekend and Donington the following, fingers crossed.....

Bill & Michelle Kirkpatrick

Jowett - A lost Cause or a Real Triumph?

Once upon a time, the roll call of British car manufacturers was extensive. Evocative names such as Humber, Morris, Hillman, Riley, Wolseley and Austin will bring back fond memories for those of us over a certain age. Announcing to an assembled gathering that you drive a Humber Super Snipe sounds so much more exciting than perhaps a modern day equivalent, Ford Mondeo 1.6 Edge!

So where did it all begin and why did this once thriving Yorkshire car manufacturer stop production? Benjamin and William Jowett founded the company in 1901, with Arthur Lamb. Initially making cycles and engines for driving machinery, the Jowett Motor Manufacturing Company was formed in 1904 and produced their first car in 1906.

Production proper began in 1910 and the intention was to provide a low weight vehicle at a low price and with low running costs. Engine and gearboxes were made largely of aluminium and the car's low speed torque and gear ratios were ideally suited to the hilly Yorkshire roads. Top speed and acceleration were of little importance. A heady 48 cars were made before the onset of World War 1 and the factory was turned over to munitions manufacture.

After the war, Jowett Cars Ltd was formed and a new site was bought in Idle, just outside Bradford. Production of the Jowett Seven began in 1920 and continued up to 1936. Commercial vehicles built on the car chassis came on stream in 1922 and were to form an important part of the business. 1934 saw the introduction of the Kestrel and Weasel sports tourer.

Once again war would halt car production (the Ten and Eight models) and post war the business found a new owner in Charles Clore. His tenure was short and ownership passed to bankers Lazard Brothers in 1947. At the same time, the popular 'Javelin' saloon model was introduced alongside its 'Bradford' commercial brother. Over 70,000 were made over a seven year period (as well as a modest 900 'Jupiter' convertibles)



The vehicles were a success, with stream-lined design and advanced features such as independent front suspension, unitary body construction and a flat four push-rod engine. The Javelin could achieve heady 80mph and handling was excellent.

Poor business strategy was Jowett's downfall

However, poor business strategy and direction was to be the financially sound company's downfall. Overproduction of car bodies, mechanical maladies and a collapsing export market conspired with a temporary large increase in purchase tax to create difficulties. Furthermore, the Idle plant was unable to produce the expected volume of vehicles, nor was the distribution network able to sell what was produced. Javelin production ceased in 1953 and although demand remained high, production of the pretty Jupiter followed suit at the end of 1954.



The company did not go bankrupt, but instead sold the factory to International Harvester, who made tractors at the site until the early 1980s. The building was subsequently demolished in 1983.

Jowett continued for a short while as a manufacturer of aircraft parts and operated from a former mill at Howden Clough, Birstall, near Batley.

Alive and Kicking!

Jupiters and Javelins are very much alive and kicking on the Yorkshire classic car scene and during the summer months, many will appear at local classic car shows. £5,000 will be enough to bag a reasonable Javelin, probably three times that amount will buy a svelte Jupiter.

The Jowett Owners Club (www.jowett.org) can offer help and advice to would-be owners. Indeed the Jowett Owners Club can claim to be the oldest one make club in that the intital form was founded way back in 1923, although it does not have a continuous history like the MGCC. Classic car ownership need not be prohibitively expensive (cheap insurance, no Road Tax, simple servicing) and what better way to show pride in God's own county, than to drive a car built in its very heart!

Elderly Utterances

The Voice of Experience!

Ron Palmer has his say



Having written about our Monte Carlo visits in the past it is difficult to avoid making it appear to be anything other than a sponsored travelogue. This biannual visit to the Monaco Historique in early May was for us the brainchild of Paul Gilligan who had previously enjoyed F1 meetings at this wonderful venue. I'm lucky to have attended five consecutive Historiques and will keep going back. We dip in and out of the Silverstone Classic and Goodwood Revival but Monaco has become a constant. Our group varies each year with seven from Cumbria and Tommy from Hereford

this year. The latter is the holder of the all important kitty!

David A kindly provided transport for Charles and me to John Lennon Airport early Friday and we met up in Wetherspoons after being 'firmly but not roughly' body searched at security for sun block and water. After a couple of low cal colas we were in the mood for a good weekend. By early evening we were in Nice enjoying a pleasant temperature and further refreshment before heading off for supper. Paul is well versed in the eating places of Nice and we donated a large slug of the kitty to Restaurant L'Ovale which is to be highly recommended for the hearty cuisine of south west France and is strictly not for dieters or vegetarians. I will long remember Alastair and Andy's tussle with the charcuterie planche after which there was still enough for most of us to have some.

Saturday morning dawned warm and clear and we did a passable copy of a tin of sardines on the train to MC. No danger of falling over if you didn't have a seat. On arrival we home in to Stand K1 as usual and make ourselves comfortable. Having paid £80 for the tickets we speculated that those crammed into the same seats for the FI meeting two weeks hence would be parting with ten times as much for the pleasure. For F1 there are packages available for those who can from E3,900 to E39,000. From the K stands the view takes in the track immediately in front and then the motor yachts of the wealthy and then to the outer harbour and out to sea. The boats are hospitality centres and the not unattractive staff can be seen dispensing to the needy. One boat, Kyrenia was graced by the presence of one Quentin Wilson complete with shades and dark suit and this brought the expected groans from the group.

Most of the action on Saturday is taken up by practice and in the case of FJs there are two qualifying heats. Whilst we are taking our group lunch from noon there was a parade of 'Mythical Cars & Drivers' and then three laps by the Credit Suisse Classic Car Rally plus an endless circulation by sundry officials in Clio Sports. Ed Glaister who had been racing at Donnington a couple of weeks previously had given me a catalogue for the collectors' auction to be held from 11am on Saturday. Three of us headed off to have a look but shame we couldn't find the venue despite asking locals and having a map of sorts. So we gave that up and headed for the paddock which was a real gem and spent a happy hour there with a promise to return on Sunday. For me the Sports Cars were the highlights of the weekend with a field of forty four superb cars dating from 1948 to 1955 with the upper age limit having been extended to include cars to 1955 for the first time. That was to make no difference to the results as the JD Classics 1952 C-Type Jaguar won this race for the third time. An Allard J2 (V8 Cadillac powered) was second, a Cooper Jaguar T38 third, Lister Bristol fourth and Frazer Nash fifth – a clean sweep for the Brits again.



As the afternoon came to a close we headed for Nice in the train crush but 30 minutes each way in such conditions is bearable. The evening meal was taken at Bistrot d'Antonine, an old favourite, where we raised a glass to our friend Stuart Turnbull who had been with us on our last visit. By this time Paul had regained some of his sparkle having been struck by some bug earlier in the weekend. During the weekend one of the group had his pockets picked on the tram while none of us noticed until the light fingered ones had fled the tram we had just boarded. On reporting this to the local Gendarmes we told there were hundreds of such cases in Nice each week. Beware of such happenings, it could happen to you!

Sunday's programme was similar to Saturday's with four races in the morning and the three principal ones in the afternoon – Sports Cars, Grand Prix F1 cars 1966 to 1972 and finally Grand Prix F1 cars 1973 to 1976. The winners of all the races except one were Brits with one solus American. You can almost hear the grinding of French teeth.

Nigel had by this time left us due to business demands but I know he might have taken a V12 Matra if baggage space had permitted. Back in Nice, The Pizza Cresci was our evening venue where we had a super pavement table in the warm still evening and managed some people watching whilst enjoying the excellent seafood and rather good

wine. Monday morning was spent at leisure in the Old Flower Market area browsing antiques and coffee bars before meeting for lunch at the Lido Plage Beach Restaurant where we were joined by Kit and Jacqui. This was an excellent venue under beach parasols with the cooling effect of a welcome onshore breeze. David and I flew out late afternoon with the rest of the party following in stages as the week progressed.

Now motor racing can be much the same wherever it happens but MC is different in so many ways. We have the craic and camaraderie of our group of eight which only occasionally delves into the mysteries of camshafts, valves, BHP and final drives. More often we relate to the rasping sounds and the heritage of the machines and the variety of cars to suit every taste. Then there is the venue which has to be experienced to understand how very special it is. The F1 meeting means so much more after a visit when watched on TV and May is the perfect time with an ideal climate. Staying in Nice and taking the train in each day makes the finances affordable and the eating experiences in both MC and Nice are something rather special. Roll on 2018.

Thank you. After three years at the coalface as treasurer for Wigton MC, Paul Gilligan has now stepped down and his efforts and creative thinking are much appreciated by us all.

Ron.



Unintended Consequences

I don't often feel the need to reply, but here is a thought.

I am a great believer in the power of "unintended consequences" whereby somebody does action A to achieve outcome B and without being aware completely screws up C which was not even on their radar.

Example. Round about the 80s car manufacturers worked out how to stop cars rusting away, Unintended consequence, the supply of panel to restore your classic stops with cars from this era. At some point in the future try getting some skills to restore your cherished KIA So try this.

Driverless cars

Due to the liability issues involved with ensuring correct maintenance these will be Leased (or some other deal) not owned.

Cars will have a fixed life probably amazingly short (lets say five years) and be correspondingly expensive.

Consequence 1

The £300 banger will disappear. ok so how does your not very highly paid shift worker get to work? hmm that's a lot of hospitals and other essential services screwed.

Consequence 2

Motorsport using "current cars" will cease and there will be a parting of the ways. One branch will use current specialist cars (Caterhams and the like) the other branch will continue with cars that are maintainable & accessible, which looks sort of historic to me.

So the consequence of driverless cars will be a strengthening of the historic movement competitive and non competitive.

Richard Egger

Wigton Motor Club

Rose and Thistle

Our 28th Annual Classic Tour - Part of the Wigton Motor Club Classic Weekend

Saturday, 20th August 2016



Entries coming in fast – don't delay.

Regs from ronpalmer777@hotmail.com or wigtonmc.co.uk

Gates Tyres Northern Historic Rally Awards

Round 3, Berwick Classic Rally, April 30th - May 1st.

After a week of snow showers at home, it was a pleasure to load the car, trailer, wives and luggage for a week's holiday and set a course for Berwick. A relaxed lunch was taken in the Cross Keys at Denholm (an annual event) and by 4.30 we had unloaded, been scrutineered and made a start on Day 1's route instructions.

A total of 60 crews were entered in a great variety of historic and Targa cars. Among them were ten WMC/Gates Challenge crews including front runners David Agnew/Alan Jackson, relative newcomers John Fenwick and Ben Blanchard, Dave Short with his quick Escort, the MGBs of Ian Dixon and Paul Slingsby, John and Marion Sloan's Midget and the Targa cars of Geoff/Maggy Bateman and Joe Harwood.

Saturday evening is intended as a limbering up session with two regularities through scenic areas of the Tweed valley and two farm tests. Despite the straightforward route instructions, I didn't settle down until well into the second regularity (I was determined to make it more difficult than it was) but, as with all events others were also having problems as they settled into the evening's challenge. The final test on Day 1 was a driver's delight and David made the most of it, grabbing handfuls of opposite lock as we headed for the finish control.

Overnight results showed Paul Crosby/Ali Proctor (Porsche 911) leading on 2m.10s. Paul could certainly handle the quick 911 and he was well in the lead of the event when mechanical problems forced retirement on Sunday afternoon. Close behind were John Ruddock/Roger Burkill, Escort, John Bertram/Andy Fish, Mexico and many of the WMC/Gates competitors were well up among the front runners.

Day 2 dawned showery and cool with the restart up the East Lothian coast at Torness. Fifteen tests were ahead of us interspersed with three Regularities (two on private roads and one on a very quiet public road). Three fast tests in the Torness area had us concentrating from the off which was just as well because the first Regularity of the day was mainly on private roads and you had to be on your toes. John Ruddock and John Bertram were the only crews to drop less than 20s; Ben Blanchard 25s, Dave Short/Roy Heath were pulling back handfuls of time on 27s, we dropped 1m 05s after hesitating half way through the test whilst Crosby/Proctor opened the doors to their immediate rivals with 1m58s and Dave Agnew/Alan Jackson went walkabout dropping fatal minutes. One thing about Regularities: you might love them or hate them but they do assure a result and it is reassuring that even the best crews get it wrong and drop time - occasionally!

After a farm drive/grass test and a tarmac regularity we headed for a well earned lunch in the village hall of a quiet and picturesque village - just one of many in this lovely area of the Borders



where the sun was out and the bees were buzzing. Ian Dixon had suffered mechanical problems during the morning which dropped him down the order from a good early position but the other WMC/Gates crews were going well. From lunch we headed via a superb off road Regularity to Spot where a fast farm test calibrated us for a run through eight of the best tests in the country. Test 10 saw John Ruddock getting well into his stride with 1m45s over a long gravel and concrete surfaced test. Dougie Humphrey Cooper "S", took 1m51s, John Bertram 1m53s, Ben Blanchard 1m55s, David Agnew 1m58, Jim Hendry pedalled his TR3 to 2m01s and we had 2m03s.

And so the afternoon proceeded with little time dropped amongst the leaders and even less time to take in the stunning views across the Borders and the Firth of Forth. Pressure began to tell on some cars and crews with Paul Crosby/Ali Proctor abandoning their Porsche on Test 12 when a shock absorber broke and ruptured a fuel line. The Sloan's adventure also came to an end on Test 12 when the gearbox cried "Enough" - both crews were recovered by David, Heidi and I'al Will Garstang who were marshalling the finish. Trevor Barnes/Andrew Shelley retired their well used but quick Rover 2000 on T16 when the engine developed an ominous death rattle.

South Belton provide the final test on smooth tarmac and gravel. The test had to be shortened at the last minute and most of the leading crews beat the bogey - still a good test though!! A short drive took us to a new finish venue where a cracking meal was provided. Provisional results were issued not too long after the last car arrived and after a few timing queries Results were declared final.

Victory went to John Ruddock/Roger Burkill - John had previously won the event in 2009. John Bertram/Andy Fish took 2nd O/A and 3rd went to Richard Goodacre/Peter Birtles who grabbed a superb result in their Volvo Amazon. Ben Blanchard pipped us for 5th by 6s after navigator Bob spotted a timing error in the provisional results. Dave Short/Roy Heath were 12s down on us in 7th; Jim Hendry/Graham Couser, TR3, were 36s down on them in 8th; Paul Slingsby/Michael Fox were 12th; David Agnew/Alan Jackson 24th; Ian Dixon/Maurice Millar 27th and John Fenwick/ Doug Carmichael took 31st. Among the Targa cars, Craig Wallace/Cliff Auld were first home with Joe Harwood/David Lumsden 2nd and Geoff/Maggy Bateman 14th.

This was the 21st running of the "Berwick". I've competed on 19 of them (David on 20) and the standard has always been high - but this one was amongst the best. A big thank you to all the organising team. They put on a memorable event in what are increasingly difficult times for rally organisers and their efforts were greatly appreciated by all those who travelled to the Borders to compete on the event.

Mike Garstang.

Measured Mile

For those of you in Cumbria who want an accurate measured mile to set your trip meters by I have measured it out on a straight section of minor road near Isel Hall in Blindcrake Parish. It's accurate to less than half a metre and is also marked at a half mile. It was carefully done with a trundle wheel and also matches perfectly with the trip on the modern car, so is as good as you can get but every event's mile is likely to be slightly different!

MG Cumbria

**Invite WMC members to take part in the
Reivers' Raid Run**

July 10th

Starts and finishes in Gretna

**Entry forms available (gtfmg@yahoo.co.uk)
or on the MG Cumbria Face book page.**

**Wigton MC
Cumbria Classic Weekend
August 20th/21st**

**Rose & Thistle Tour
Saturday 20th**

**Cumbria Classic & Motorsport Show
Sunday 21st**

Entries are pouring in for both events! Have you sent in yours yet?

Entry forms on the website: [www,wigtonmc.co.uk](http://www.wigtonmc.co.uk)

**Cumbria Classic & Motorsport Show
August 21st**

We are looking for programme advertisers, class sponsors and trade stands. If you know of any likely supporters who could benefit from being involved with the Show please let any committee member know

HAGERTY
CLASSIC CAR INSURANCE

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

The Gallop for Beginners – Derbyshire May 2016



Ridiculous idea. Three days in a Midget surrounded by spare wheels, oily rags and only enough room for a bus ticket between me and the husband. It would be asking for trouble especially since there would be no space for the vast amount of luggage required for a two night stay in a decent hotel. Maybe another year..... And then the unscheduled arrival of a 1962 Triumph TR4 shed a whole different light on things and a chance remark resulted in a late booking on THE GALLOP. The tenner which changes hands frequently in the Ron/Maz Mutual

Appreciation Society found itself back in Ron's pocket and we were in.

So the weekend arrived and all winter clothing was abandoned with a cavalier attitude in favour of warm weather gear and sunglasses – yippee! We met up at Crooklands near Kendal and took on board the usual calorie overload and then went to drool over our fellow Gallopers vehicles.

There was a 1949 Bentley Special, a 1954 MGTF, numerous Jaguar XKs, MGBs and a C, Austin Healey 3000s, Triumph Stags, Porsches, a Morgan, a Triumph Italia, a Gilburn GT, an Austin Westminster and an Aston Martin to name just a few, all groomed and shiny while their owners sweated up, champing at the bit, ready for the off (ged it? The Gallop?) Tony & Margaret in the Austin 110 appeared to be the only ones with a back seat – several folk were making a mental note in case bad luck struck in the form of a breakdown (mechanical as opposed to nervous). I secretly wondered if Hamish and Irene, in the Bentley, might be interested in a change of navigator. That'll be a “no”, then. Might have more luck with Edwin's Aston Martin but again, no amount of persuasion could evict Mr Hunter from the front passenger seat. Pity they took a wrong turn in Stockport.....



Now, I am firmly of the opinion that, in all forms of motorsport, some days you are the dog and some days you are the lamppost. We have had our fair share of lamppost days recently in the Midget (no – far too boring – a knock on effect of fitting a limited slip diff without upgrading the gearbox and half shafts, if you must know) so we were hoping for a few dog days with the TR4. We reached the car park exit without any trouble which is more than Ron & Marjorie did in the XK150 having conked out at Tebay before reaching Mission Control. We were soon wending our way through incredible scenery and blue bell woods to the

Trough of Bowland (which the husband thought was a pub) and on to Whalley Golf Club for afternoon tea. Scones the size of a small planet disappeared at an alarming rate and then it was on to the M60 south and the pit of hell, a.k.a Stockport, en route to Shrigley Hall, our hotel for the weekend.

Slow moving traffic is not ideal for older cars and some succumbed to the road conditions. Helen & Graeme in the MGB roadster overheated and Alistair & Joe in the yellow Stag (previously in the ownership of Edwin Cook) also got into bother. As luck would have it, David and Christine, in the white Stag, were close at hand to do a temporary running repair with a new coil. The rest of us marvelled at the number of takeaway premises per head of population and breathed in the delights of suburban living. Suddenly we hit open countryside again and discovered what ap



peared to be a ready-made hill climb at the entrance to our hotel. What luck – didn't say anything about that on the website! The husband could not resist the temptation to hurtle up to the car park on the door handles whilst removing several millimetres of tread from the tyres in the process. The lure of beer in the courtyard, however, soon put paid to any further racing activity.

New friendships were quickly established over dinner with Tom & Barbara in the Healey and Duncan & Carol in the Gilbern. The various merits of overdrive on fourth gear, or perhaps the loss

of it, were dissected at length only to be trumped by the husband who extolled the virtues of overdrive on all gears including reverse. Well, that's what it sounded like to me – nothing to do with the beer talking, of course.

Next day dawned with more blue sky and, with total disregard for the probability of sunburn, off we went to Butterton for coffee and more scones – which were quickly becoming a major feature of the weekend – followed by a visit to Chatsworth for lunch - groan. I jumped into the driving seat to see if I could master this overdrive technology malarkey whilst the husband sat on the

edge of his seat pressing the “jesus” pedal at regular intervals as we veered around various hairpin bends and perpendicular drops amidst the most spectacular scenery and the most delightful villages. The fun factor was off the scale.



After lunch we drove to Crich Tramway Museum and experienced a different form of transport controlled by an official looking suspiciously like Stalin in a blue serge uniform. He explained about the simple system they used which involved the transfer of “keys” between trams at strategic points on the track and sidings to prevent collisions. The husband was tempted to nick this key and replace it with a pair of elderly pale blue Y-fronts. However, he didn't fancy going commando for the rest of the day so the idea was abandoned.

Alistair's custard yellow Stag hadn't made it down to the museum car park and a growing crowd of onlookers were peering inside the bonnet and discussing possible solutions to stem the flow of petrol which was pouring from one of the carburettors. Edwin had obviously given Alistair a lifetime parts and labour guarantee when the car changed hands several years ago so he rolled his sleeves up and got cracking whilst we all stood at a safe distance and either supervised/cracked jokes/got dirty/offered advice and tools or just generally caused a nuisance. To cut a very long story short, the Stag ended up on a low loader back to Cockermouth and Alistair and Joe ended up in a taxi.

The last day of the tour wound its way to Holmfirth via reservoirs and moorland on a route made even more interesting by the addition of several hundred Lycra clad cyclists all looking for new ways to kill themselves.



Charles & Kit in the XK150 took over the lead when the husband hoyed a wobbler and lost his place on the tulips and led us up a vertigo inducing road to a vineyard overlooking the town where, yes, you guessed it, more scones were lurking. Penny & Clive in the MGC muttered they were “sconed out” whilst we all inspected our radiator grilles for bits of bicycle residue.

The final leg went through Todmorden, perhaps not the most attractive of towns so we will draw a veil over it and move onto our last port of call at Bashall Barns for, would you believe it, a slap up Sunday lunch. Joe & Hazel in the red Porsche emerged mysteriously in front of us from some-

one’s front garden – got mixed up with the date and venue of Kirk & Alannah’s Open Day, I expect. Joe then kept us entertained with stories about why he never buys large tubes of toothpaste – ha, ha - you’ll have to ask him.



Ron & the lovely Christine (fellow Geordie but a bit more classy than yours truly) did us proud with their seamless organisation and superb choice of routes and halts – a brilliant weekend all round – we can’t thank them enough and we can’t wait for next year. Rumour has it we’re off to Scotland – form an orderly queue!

Cheers!

Marian Sloan (aka Maz)

PS A word of warning to open top car owners and the sun – and for those of a nervous disposition look away now: whilst preparing for a nice long soak, I

caught sight of myself in a full length mirror..... found a Swan Vesta staring back. Not a good look.

PPS Ron - it’s my turn for the tenner.....



Rally Torque

News from Road & Stage

The MSA have been holding a series of Rally Future Forums around the UK in recent months to consider the future of the sport in views of the loss of events, fewer competitors and the stringent safety requirements that have been imposed. Just as these have been taking place Natural Resources Wales, who now run the Welsh forests, decided to virtually double the rate to hire forest roads for rallies so as to recoup the true cost of repairs.



Generally it seems that those that look after our forests (the Forestry Commission in the rest of the UK are getting less keen to allow roads to be rallied on. Certainly the number of forests available in England has declined steadily over the years as they get used for other purposes that don't involve extra work. I certainly think that our North Lakes forests will be the next to become unavailable.

Some people vent their anger at the FC but they are now a commercial body and also have to increase access to a whole range of activities that do not cause them extra work or cost.

Perhaps we as a sport need to look at where we went wrong?

I've been saying in these pages for some 20 years that stage rallying was in serious decline but many folk have been in denial of the true facts. They are: Loss of venues, particularly non forest events for clubby events of the type we ran so many of; Loss of competitors; the sort of people who sued to compete can no longer afford to; Loss of organisers; most organisers are ex competitors so that is an immediate issue, if clubs don't have many competitors then why bother to run an event? The new safety regulations have increased the work load for amateur officials and many have called it a day as it no longer a fun thing to do. Marshals no longer wish to marshal in forests as the tracks are so rutted when they have to drive out after the event.

We have to say that our problems are self inflicted. Thirty years ago the major rallies could have 150 entries and the forests were never left as rough as they are now with a third of that number. Cars are far more powerful, tyres have more grip, we have four wheel drive with all sorts of traction control devices so is it any wonder that the forest tracks suffer?

Not too many years ago there was the Greenways project where the MSA did tests with tyres that had less grip and did less damage, what ever happened to that?

Modern rally cars are also incredibly quick, as the Pirelli found out a few weeks ago when a third of the stage saw the world class drivers in R5 class cars beat the 70 mph bogey time. With the limited numbers of roads available the only answer is to put in man made chicanes - yet more work for the organisers and marshals.

Perhaps a more "social" issue is that many of the folk who are able to afford to compete at the higher levels now have no contact with club, indeed many may not even be a member of a club. Public interest has steadily declined for the days when Keswick came to a halt when the RAC Rally was in the Whinlatter forests. There is virtually no publicity in the national press or TV other than the potted coverage of the WRC on ITV4 which gives the impression that there are only ten cars in the event.

I think the MSA have a major problem on their hands and there may not be a solution!

GTF



Autojumble

Buy, Sell, Exchange, Give!
Free to members

Hi- I contacted you last year re: selling a classic car project **Rover P4**.(interior leather seats already completed) I have reduced this sale price now to £350 o.n.o. I am local (Cockermouth) contact Richard knight 0774 7857920 or 01900 828495 unfortunately, I don't have the space or time for this lovely car any more hence the price. if you could add to your magazine that will be great thanks.

For sale due to a lack of time to complete:

TR7 V8. built 1976 re as new to BL power train division. Likely development car. Sold in 1977 and converted to V8 in 1982, also appeared in the TV show "River City". Requires light restoration. Red with white works stripes Reg: SHP641R

Also 1981 TR7 for spares with no reg. 5 speed box model.

Two Rover V8 engines: Standard SD1 engine and box 23,00 miles.

Fully built unused V8 250-270 bhp. Full spec available. New downdraft Weber carb in box all in unused condition.

Best offer when seen. Tel John Hume on 07836 584880 (Moffat, D & G)

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

Silkolene 20/50 oil for classics. 5 litres for £15.00. 10/40 Semi Synthetic 5 litres for \$10.

Red rotor arms for most British cars of the 60s and 70s plus condensers. £6.00

Lots of new and second MG B bits.

Race & Rally numbers 50p each

Ring Graeme Forrester on 01900 825642

Some Photos from the May Grass Autotest Report Next month



Inside the Industry

Paul Gilligan keeps us up to date

Mitsubishi Emissions Problems Result in Nissan Takeover

Last month I reported that Mitsubishi had confessed to manipulating fuel economy and emissions figures for the past 25 years on cars for the Japanese market. In the immediate aftermath the share price plunged by about 40%. Step forward Carlos Ghosn, worldwide boss of Nissan/Renault and never one to miss a bargain. Very quickly he wrapped up the purchase of a 34% stake in Mitsubishi which apparently under Japanese law gives him control of the company. The disgraced President and Vice President of Mitsubishi will leave in June.

Meanwhile Nissan themselves were busy denying that some of their Sunderland built Qashqai models have broken emission laws in South Korea. Whilst pleading innocence Nissan have paid fines levied by the SK Government though?

Suzuki have "Found discrepancies in their testing procedures for emissions and economy figures going back to 2010." However Suzuki claim "No wrongdoing"????? They have also refused to change any of the figures produced by their flawed tests?

You simply couldn't make most of this up and be believed, and I continue to think there is lots more to come.

Ford GT Demand Soars

I mentioned this last month. Ford allowed a one month period for applications supported by whatever evidence the hopeful buyer liked to include to justify being allocated a car. With 500 cars available over the next two years just over 6500 people applied! Some have included professionally produced videos to state their case, others have flown to Detroit to try to make personal presentations. Over 500 applicants came from the UK where about 30 cars will be available.

Having forecast the UK price at "about £300,000", Ford have now firmed that up at £395,000. What's £95k between friends? Well absolutely nothing when the queue's this long. The speculators will have a field day, but only with those willing to pay a great deal more than list price, perhaps as much as double?

VW "Dieselgate" Rumbles On

I could fill all my allocated space with this one, so I'll be brief:

UK MPs have attacked the Department For Transport for being "Frighteningly complacent" in not pushing for more action against VW. One MP described the Minister responsible as being "More concerned with protecting VW's reputation than with punishing a business that has poisoned the people of this country".

VW expect Worldwide sales in 2016 to be around 5% below 2015 despite most markets growing significantly, so VW market share (the industry holy of holies) could be approaching 10% down.

VW set aside £12.61 BILLION in its 2015 accounts to cover modification of affected cars and potential legal claims. Many observers think the provision for legal claims needs to be far higher, and that VW may need to dip into reserves for billions more before this is all over. The US Justice Department alone is suing VW for £32.5 Billion. And US dealers are planning to sue also.

UK VW dealers are becoming very worried by the slow pace of technical fixes for affected cars. The only one currently available is for the Amarok pick up, which takes only 2 minutes. Passats were due to start being modified this months, but the fix has not yet been approved by the German authorities. One VW dealer said he now thought it would take 2-3 YEARS to complete the work, clogging his workshops with low profit warranty jobs for that period.

Dealers are also unhappy that while VW moved quickly to guarantee sales bonus payments in 2015, for 2016 targets were set “in line with market growth forecasts”. Fleet sales are well down but retail sales supported by generous incentives and loyalty vouchers of up to £1500 for existing customers have held up. Dealers do report slow sales of used diesel models though.

April Car Sales Rise But Private Demand Drops

Fleet and business sales supported an April result just 2% ahead of last year with retail sales 2.5% down but fleet about 5% up. So far this year the market is 4.4% up. Most industry pundits continue to forecast a record year, maybe 2.7M new registrations or even more. However all caution their forecasts with a reduction expected if we vote to leave the EU as both business and private buyers are expected to postpone purchasing decisions until the economic consequences unravel.

I continue to maintain that if we do see anything like 2.7M on top of almost 2.6M last year there will be a massive glut of used cars in 3 years time. If buying new (instead of near new where vast savings are still very possible) a product like PCP where the manufacturer or finance company guarantees the future residual value, is well advised.

Manufacturers Disagree Over Showroom Requirements

One of my favourite subjects as my regular reader knows. I've said before that I think the vast expenditure being demanded by some manufacturers is frankly nonsense. They seem to think that a multi million pound showroom will of itself sell new cars while paying scant attention to the staff working there. One WMC member was recently in the market for an expensive new car. He visited a prestige showroom in Carlisle and one particular model caught his eye. He found a salesman sitting at his desk busy texting and asked the price of the car in question. “It's on the windscreen mate” came the helpful reply as the sales guy returned to his texting. Nor surprisingly the customer left and thankfully called me the next day.

The most demanding manufacturer just now is Jaguar Land rover. The LR bit is a gold mine for dealers and Jaguar is improving for them, so JLR have the whip hand. I note that a new showroom for the two brands is shortly to open on Aberdeen. Total cost is over £8M! The building is on 2 floors linked by escalators. There are two business lounges. To keep customers refreshed there is an in house barista. Yes I had to look it up too, it's an up market coffee shop apparently. Also a chef is on duty!

More sensibly the World boss of SEAT has called for an end to this “nonsense”. He said that over the next 15 years less and less people will visit showrooms as they gain information digitally. So he says that SEAT will help its dealers to develop the best digital tools rather than demand they build bigger and better showrooms which he feels “will be increasingly empty”. Someone's right and someone's wrong here, I know where my wager is.

Driverless Cars Drive On

BMW recently announced that their profits would probably dip this year because of the investment they are putting into driverless vehicles. They have dramatically increased R&D spending in this area and are competing to recruit the best computer engineers. As one industry analyst said “BMW need to spend this money. They need to innovate to keep up with everyone else, or face being left behind.”

One benefit of driverless cars perhaps not fully recognised is the freedom it will give those of advancing years who sooner or later face the decision we all dread of when to admit we really shouldn't be driving any more. The loss of mobility this brings can have a devastating effect on people's lives. Having been used to the privilege of a car and a licence for maybe 70 years seniors can become almost housebound overnight, particularly those living in rural areas. Loneliness is recognised as one of the greatest problems of old age, the driverless car can

solve this overnight.

JLR's chief executive recently spoke on these subjects, instancing his own father who's life had been transformed (and not for the better) when he had to stop driving. There will, he said, be more change in the motor industry in the next 5 years than there has been in the last 25, and "I look forward to my own retirement much more knowing (not thinking) that a driverless car will be available to keep me mobile for as long as I want."

Alternative Fuels Advance Also

London's first public access hydrogen refuelling station has recently opened, with two more to follow shortly and another 9 by this time next year. In opening the facility the Transport Minister (same chap attacked for being soft on VW) announced it is now Government policy to make all cars and vans zero emission by 2050.

The station uses hydrogen produced by wind turbines when they are generating more electricity than the grid needs so claims to be 100% green. Apparently there is enough such electricity available to power 3 million hydrogen cars for 350 miles every day.

I have the feeling that hydrogen, like driverless, will happen a lot quicker than many currently think.

Car Crime Rises Again

Last year vehicle theft in the UK went up by 8%, the first rise in over 20 years. Attempted thefts went up by about 35%. Favourite targets are luxury 4x4s where the thieves are finding ways around the keyless systems, apparently it's quite simple if you have the right laptop and knowledge. Classic cars are also being stolen much more often as values rise and healthy export markets beckon.

Happier Subjects

A lot of the above reflects that currently there seems in most areas more bad news than good. However WMC members regard cars as a pleasure, and in many cases older cars in particular. I'm typing this in the South of France having stayed on for a few days after spending last weekend at the Monte Carlo Historique GP with a carefully chosen group of WMC members and friends. I know Ron is covering it fully so I'll simply say to me the best event on the calendar, and an enormous pleasure and privilege to share those fabulous cars and this wonderful area with such a great bunch of people. THAT is what cars are about not VW emissions or fancy new showrooms.

Off for a vin blanc in the sunshine now!

Paul Gilligan

Blindcrake Garden Safari and Arts Trail

Sunday, June 26th

See twelve super gardens plus artists, craftsmen and photographers

Plus a classic car display

New this year! The Tour d'Isel, a tour of our lovely area plus admission to the gardens and artists plus 2 coffees/teas for just £10!

Plus refreshments available in the village hall!

A great afternoon out!

10.30 to 4.30



Andy's Armchair

Andy Armstrong takes an irrelevant look at motoring and motorsport

The debate about the dwindling interest in F1 rumbles on, audience figures continue to drop and those at the top (i.e. those making money from it) keep coming up with “half baked” plans to re-invigorate their product and thereby keep their profits healthy.

Let's look at their efforts up to now.

Qualifying worked well, exciting and after the first two unpredictable, so what did they do? Their plan was to hype it even higher and they ended up with all the quickest cars sitting in their garages during the last half of the final, supposedly most important part of the process. Pit stops and tyres. We've now got a choice of three compounds and must use two during the race. The consequence of this is that no-one, including the team strategists, if the number who get it wrong can be used as an example, can really predict what'll happen and it's now got to the stage where the only time track positions are relevant is during the last few laps when all of the pit stops are completed. Even then some drivers are in fuel save mode, (driving slower) and others are driving round on tyres so worn their lap times are dramatically slowed.

DRS, moveable wings, allows a car to pass on a straight by reducing drag but equally the “passer” then becomes the “passé” on the next lap so the status quo is retained. Penalties where a driver is rammed up the rear and retires through gear box damage so ruining his race which surely is a big enough problem without then getting a five place grid penalty at the next event for needing a gear box change. His erstwhile assailant gets off with a slap on the wrist. There are more, such as energy recovery systems, (artificial), aerodynamic designs which only work in clean air. Why design them like that and then be surprised when other cars get in the way? It's called racing, if you want an empty track try sprints or hill climbs. You could go on but I suspect you've got my drift by now.

There seems to be some rose-tinted view of what F1 was and what we want it to be again. First it usually was BORING, the Fangios, Mosses, Clarks, Schumakers, Stewarts etc. weren't great champions because they “nicked” wins in blanket finishes on a regular basis, they were usually dominant and winning comfortably or put another way boringly. Grids were smaller, cars were slower, races were longer, more cars broke down so you often ended up with less than ten cars circulating in a spread out convoy, is this what those in charge really want?

The difference is this. The sport, and that's a key word, was watched by those who simply loved it. They didn't need entertained, the smell, the noise, the atmosphere was enough, and exciting race was a welcome bonus but a boring one certainly didn't stop you watching or reading about the sport. Of course there wasn't only F1, a true fan follows all categories, a clubby at Croft can very often be more interesting than a Grand Prix.

I was at Donington in the snow a few weeks ago, frozen and fed up, but to closely inspect R1B and be told that Richard Seaman's signature is still visible on the petrol tank fairly made my day. Maybe I am the proverbial “anorak” but as such I can't help feeling the current push to make F1 a show rather than a sport can only end in attracting fans who are transient, constantly seeking new entertainment and one day they'll go elsewhere. What happens then?

Ends

AA

What's On

WMC events and other events of interest

June

5th	Sa	JCRC	Jim Clark Rally
9th	Wed	WMC	Pub Run
11th	Sat	LMC	Barbon National Hill Climb
18/19		BARC	BTCC at Croft
22nd	Wed	WMC	Grass Autotest
26th	Sun	BVH	Tour d'Isel

July

3rd	Sun	WMC	Lake District Classic Rally
6th	Wed	WMC	Pub Run
10th	Sun	MGC	Reivers' Raid Tour
27th	Wed	WMC	Grass Autotest at Branthwaite

Visit the website for all the latest news

[Catch up on Face Book](#)

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

M-SPORT CAREERS



ALL VACANCIES CAN BE VIEWED ONLINE AT:

WWW.M-SPORT.CO.UK

To apply for any of these roles, please download an Application and Medical History form from the website and forward it to:

Rozalyn Howell, M-Sport Ltd, Dovenby Hall, Cockermouth, Cumbria, CA13 0PN