

Wigton Motor Club Ltd

Start Line

Issue 06/18

www.wigtonmc.co.uk

June 2018

**Have you got your entry in for the
Classic and Motorsport Show?**



A photo from this year's Drive It Day just to remind you to get your entry in for our major event of the year

95 Years of Affordable Motorsport

Club Officials

Wigton Motor Club Ltd Officials

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www.wigtonmc.co.uk

Talking Point

Topical Comment from the world of motoring

“United we stand, divided we fall” is an often used quote, but it can apply to many things in our motoring hobby. We do often seem to be fragmented and not pulling together. This can be different types of motorsport or different makes and models of car.

There are around twelve different motorsport disciplines of motorsport run under the MSA (plus a good few out with the MSA) and yet there is relatively little movement or discussion between them. I’ve been fortunate to take part in most of them and each one has a particular skill or “buzz” whether it be reaching to top of a slippery trials section or passing some cars off the grid in a race meeting. Motor clubs have been traditionally all embracing but some clubs have not embraced change and become too focused on running events in which there is little interest from their own members. We are fortunate in that we still have a wide range of interests and each discipline can help out by marshalling or organising for one of the others.

Many of the same comments can apply to the classic scene. We have too many clubs; take MG, Triumph, Jaguar etc which all have several clubs representing different models or interests. It’s got to be counter productive. Let’s not even think about the number of Ford clubs; for example there are separate clubs for each mark of Cortina!

In the internet era we also have many “groups” for area, types of car, nationality of cars, etc, although many of these come and go very quickly as so often they rely on the enthusiasm of one person rather than a committee and this have no continuity.

You many remember that last month we asked you for your views on the future of UK motorsport and the MSA. I collated the responses and sent them to Dave Richards. He replied within twelve hours:

“It will come as no surprise to know that I share their views entirely.

I am however confident that over the next couple of years you will see a total shift in the cultural at the MSA. I’m committed to putting our Clubs and grass roots motorsport at the center of everything we do, after all you are our customers.

Of course this is not going to happen overnight and I’d be grateful for all the support and feedback that clubs like yours can give us throughout this process.”

Good news!

GTF



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The opinions expressed in Start Line are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the Club

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Forthcoming Club Events

June Pub Run

Wednesday June 6th

Starts at the Mockerkin Layby

Entries to: Kendall Bruce: kendall.bruce@sky.com

Bob Marshall: bobnbet.64@btinternet.com

Grass Autotest

June 14th (Thursday)

Blackbeck

This is the May event that was postponed.

Entries to: David Agnew 01946 841455 DAVIDWAGNEW@aol.com

Grass Autotest

June 27th

High Harrington

Entries to Chris or Fiona : fiona.tyson@yahoo.co.uk

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!

PG Tips

After the last minute panic with Snotty's driveshaft shenanigans I mentioned last month, things were not looking good for my first event of the season at Aintree, however with 3 days to go the newly shortened shafts were fitted and all was well. I went to the event with Paul Eastwood in his violet Alfa 33 and all was looking good with the sun out and a dry track. We sailed through scrutineering and then it was time for the first run of the day. Setting off from the line I was rudely reminded that I had set the rear shock absorbers to maximum stiffness as I bunny hopped round every corner. I have no idea why I had done that but it made for an interesting run, most of which was completed whilst sideways. I didn't have enough time to rectify this issue before the second run and to add further problems, the throttle stuck open at the first bend. It's quite terrifying bowling into a corner at full speed in a car that is sliding whilst desperately applying the brakes. I probably should have just switched it off and stopped but I didn't want to inconvenience anyone and I don't like failing to complete events! Unsurprisingly I went faster but not by a huge amount and Paul was beginning to catch me in his Alfa. After some tinkering with the throttle linkage, run 3 proved that my tinkering was woefully inadequate and I once again completed the run with the throttle stuck open but I had at least sorted the rear suspension out so it wasn't quite as terrifying. During lunch the throttle linkage got a severe tinkering and some testing proved it to be fine. As run 4 would prove, that testing actually proved nothing – however it wasn't full throttle I was now stuck with, but no throttle! I managed to limp off at an exit road without causing any inconvenience and found that at the end of the severe tinkering session I'd failed to tighten a bolt. This bolt now received a good tightening and I had some work to do because Paul had overhauled me in his Alfa (described by the commentator as lurid...the colour of the Alfa not Paul). With the car now functioning I was able to knock several seconds off my time and on the final run of the day secured 2nd place behind a very lovely Healey 3000 – no shame in that at a power circuit like Aintree. Scammonden dam is next...

I have an apology to make to the Wheatsheaf garage Hyundai Getz that everyone now desires – it's a 1.3 not a 1.1 as I stated.

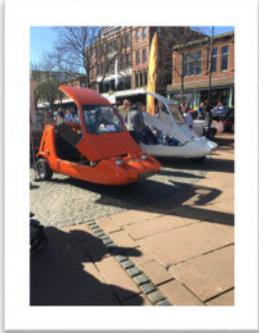


The Saab is alive...but not that healthy. I can confirm it now has significant power – the feel of which is magnified by the ruined suspension on the front and knackered engine mounts. 250 bhp feels more like 400bhp when there is so little control and a set of 4 entirely mismatched, mostly Chinese, ancient tyres keeping the car on tarmac. There is a fair way to go before the Saab will be good to drive, although I have now bolted on a steering rack brace and uprated rear roll bar that has gone some way towards taming the armfuls of torque steer available to me. Prior to these modifications I reckon I could have torque steered sideways off a road by simply applying full

throttle at low speed and holding the wheel! I know I say this often but the internet has been a god send for car repairs and maintenance and a Canadian picture by picture guide with spanner sizes and tool descriptions showing how to replace all 3 Saab drive train mounts has undoubtedly saved me hours of time. Even finding all 3 would have proved difficult without it and every single small problem the guide author had; cropped up in my own experience. I've now successfully changed all 3 but haven't yet had a chance to see what difference this has made. 2 of the mounts did look like a melted welly though so there must be some improvement!

Peter

More Bugs!



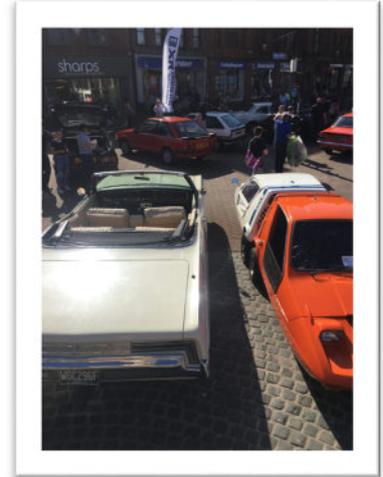
What a better place to spend the hottest day of the year but with the two bugs at the City event in Carlisle, this was a one off event to raise funds for the North Air Ambulance, we were one of only 40 cars invited to show our cars in the city centre on what turned out to be the hottest day of the year

We have always allowed people to sit in the bugs, but it is always the children that want to sit in and have the roof closed..... we lost count of the number of children who sat in the bugs with big beaming smiles we know one day these children will be the future of classic cars and we getting them excited about the cars will give them memories.....

We parked around the monument next to the longest car at the show and at the end of the show we parked our bugs alongside his car which was 18ft long the size of two bugs

It was also good to see the bug on the front of the paper reporting the event with a good write up on the wheeler dealer bug.

A good day top of with good people and a sunny day.



Breakfast Meet at Lingholm,

Portinscale by Derwentwater.

Sunday 8th July. Timing 9am to 11am.

The cafe at Lingholm will offer a free hot drink with any hot food ordered, from a bacon or sausage sandwich upwards on presentation of a Wigton Motor Club membership card. Follow the signs on the road up to the top car park in front of the house at which point the lawn can be accessed. There is no cost for the event but please ensure you let me know you are bringing your old or interesting car in order that we know how many cars to expect. ronpalmer777@hotmail.com or phone 01228 575153. Please drive carefully on the lawn.

MONACO CLASSIC GRAND PRIX WEEKEND

The second weekend in May heralded the biennial Monaco Classic Grand Prix and, as usual, an elite band of WMC members forced themselves to attend. The trip was ably organised by Paul Gilligan, to whom we once again owe heartfelt thanks.



The event is run over three days, Friday to Sunday, with two practice days followed by race day. Our party of nine arrived in dribs and drabs from various UK hubs, with the exception of our Club President who fittingly arrived by ocean liner. I have no quarrel with this, given his ambassadorial function, but could not help but notice he was not invited to the Grimaldi Palace to meet Albert which must be taken as something of a snub to our Club.

This year, four of our team rejected the option of Friday Practice in favour of a different excursion.

Some weeks before departure, Paul suggested

that some of us might like to “do the Turini”. Assuming this to be a nightclub in Nice, a plucky few accepted with alacrity. Things became clearer however when told that the rendezvous point was the car hire desk, Nice Gare Central at 07.00 hours, whence we set off for the Alpes Maritime and the Col de Turini Rally Stage. For those of shorter memory, “The Turini” has mythical status amongst rallying fans. It rises 1600 metres from Sospel to La Bollene, is around 32 kilometres long and has 32 hairpins. Petter Solberg holds the ascent record at an average of 90 kph, in winter snow and ice, which is not too shabby. Our two works crews were Brian Kinghorn, ably navigated by Rob Grant, and myself, less ably navigated by Paul, who in his defence was feeling a bit below par. The start of this world-famous rally stage is about 40 minutes from the centre Nice, or in our case an hour and a half after a scenic tour of the city’s one-way system.

The experience was more than worth the wait however as we blatted to the top of the Col in our semi-works Mini Cooper Diesel Auto Convertible and an SUV of indeterminate far-eastern manufacture - not dream wheels but better than anticipated. Half way up my navigator paid me the compliment that he had never seen anyone take the lines through corners that I was taking (at least I think it was a compliment?) but he was a little pale at the time. It is beyond question one of the great drives and I would encourage fellow members to pay a visit some time.

At the top of the run, Turini itself comprises a small collection of slightly shabby bars and hotels, but they are all full of photographs, rally plates and other memorabilia that are absolutely fascinating. After a brief coffee stop it was back down again to do the whole thing in reverse. This was equally great fun but somewhat more challenging as the brakes got smellier and spongier with every few hundred feet of descent. I am pleased to report no accidents, despite trying very hard to have one. Two emergency stops were required during the morning however, one for a herd of goats sitting at the apex of a blind uphill bend and the second sadly for Paul to continue his “maladie”. Both stops left a nasty mess on the road but no residual vehicle damage. We returned the cars during the afternoon and repaired to a suitable hostelry to de-brief over lager. A truly memorable and fun experience. Later in the evening the full party gathered and the rest is a blurr.

Saturday dawned and we gathered at the station buffet around 07.30 hours for breakfast and then the train to Monaco for Day Two of official practice. Arriving in Monaco by train on such a day is a memorable experience. As we exited the station, first the sound of the cars gradually hits you, then

the smells, and finally as you ascend the steps into the sunshine you see a vista before you of the circuit, the grandstands, mouth watering old competition cars of every type, the harbour and the super yachts beyond, all set against an azure sky. Truly an astonishing experience for the true petrolhead. Our seats in Grandstand K1 at Tabac are arguably amongst the best on the entire circuit. One can see the cars exiting the chicane, down the short sharp straight, through Tabac and on towards the sharp left hander into the swimming pool complex (or Rainier III Nautical Stadium to give it its proper name). The stand is almost dual aspect so any action behind at St. Devote can often also be witnessed if you are lucky enough to pinch a seat in the back rows. Tabac itself is a tightish fourth gear corner in a modern F1 car taken at around 130 mph with cars hitting 145 before braking for the Piscine, barely imaginable from where we were observing. Despite spending the whole weekend watching slightly older machinery, many of the quicker drivers were comfortably beating the two minute lap barrier and showing real commitment in sometimes priceless cars. Watching not one, not two but three ERAs for example, drifting through Tabac was very uplifting.

Throughout Friday we were treated to the following delights:

Pre War Grand Prix cars and Voiturettes

F1 Grand Prix Cars 1961-1965

Pre 1961 F1 & F2 Grand Prix Cars

F1 Grand Prix Cars 1966-1972

Front Engine Sports Racing Cars 1952-1957

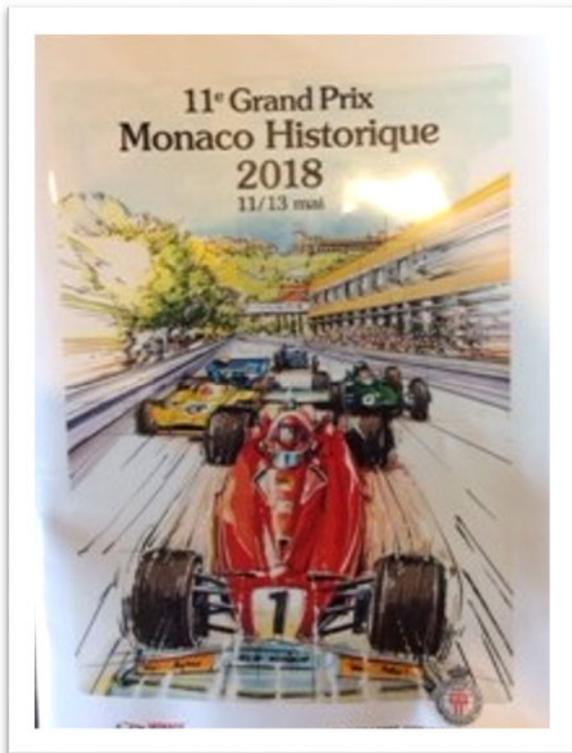
F1 Grand Prix Cars 1973-1976

F1 Grand Prix Cars 1977-1980

The selection of machinery was so mouth watering that it is impossible to choose a favourite, though this gave us ample scope for discussion and friendly argument over dinner and digestifs back in Nice that evening. We slept well.

Race Day dawned on Sunday and Plan B was put into operation. Plan A, train again to Monaco early doors, was scuppered by a Rail Workers strike that day. However even this did not phase our Dear Leader, Kim Il Gilligan, who had the foresight to rent a minibus for the day whilst others ran around like headless chickens. Mr. Kinghorn selflessly volunteered to be Driver of the Day (possibly the first and only time he has or ever will be awarded that accolade?) and we set off along the coast road seeking to get as close as we could to Monaco and then taking Shanks Pony the rest of the way. We expected a long walk at the other end but by acting dumb and largely ignoring directions we managed to park in the car park of the very station the train would have taken us to. Sadly our euphoria was dampened, literally, by the appalling wet weather that had descended on the circuit for the rest of the day. The racing however was top drawer and our spirits were constantly uplifted by the playing of the British National Anthem as, in common with previous years, Brits won most of the races. Between races we ogled the super yachts opposite the stand, filled largely with corporate clients who barely glanced at the actual racing but seemed well victualled and lubricated. Our straw poll vote for best boat of the day went to “Bluebird of 1938”, yes, you guessed it, designed and built for Sir Malcolm Campbell for, ahem, “exploration purposes” and also famed as one of the rescue ships sent from Blighty to Dunkirk to collect our troops from the beach.

Sadly the day was over all too soon, so back to the minibus for the trip back to Nice. As we set off up the exit ramp there was a very nasty scraping sound from the offside rear quarter as the Minibus hit the wall. Such things happen when the driver is sober and we have learnt a valuable lesson for the future. On return to the Car Rental depot, we parked the remains of the vehicle in Bays 8,9 & 12. We loyally assured Brian that we were “right behind him”, but gallantly left him to explain the situation. Thankfully he was allowed home with the rest of us. Another delightful evening followed before we



all prepared for our homeward journeys. All in all a wonderful long weekend, doing things we love with great friends and largely unrepeatable banter. Sadly we now have a two year wait until our next fix, made even worse because in the intervening year ACM will be running a Formula E event which I take as a personal insult.

Nigel Wright

A DAY OUT IN MARENELLO – PART 2

Last month as my regular reader may remember (unless he/she nodded off in boredom) I recalled taking Edward and William Stobart to the Ferrari factory in Marenello in yet another desperate attempt to sell them Iveco (Fiat) trucks. Edward having originally said he had no interest in owning a Ferrari changed his mind during the visit and wanted to order a new 355, then recently introduced. The car was on a 3 year waiting list but with the help of my good friend Alan Fox who was then MD of Iveco Ford Truck UK we reduced this to 12 months.

I thought this was a marvellous achievement but when I told Edward on the plane back he was less than impressed, leaving me with a big problem. Of course I could have got one quickly by paying about £30,000 over list price but that wasn't an option. I had NO idea what to do.

Then I got lucky. Word had quickly spread that Alan and I were in Marenello with the Stobarts. One who heard was the General Manager of an IFT dealership in Reading owned by Reg Vardy PLC. Who it happened also owned the Ferrari dealership in the North East. So the word spread from Reading to Houghton Le Spring and the day after I returned I had a lovely guy (also Paul) who ran that Ferrari dealership for Vardys on the phone. He explained how he'd heard and asked if by any chance Edward had an interest in a nice red sports car. I told him the situation and he explained he'd been trying to sell Edward an expensive car for about 3 years but never could get past the redoubtable Debbie, Edward's PA. I confided I had exactly the same problem.

Then I got REALLY lucky. Paul explained he had a brand new 355 sitting in the showroom that was due to be registered as a demonstrator on January 1st. Perfect specification, GTS which meant Targa Roof, Rosso Red (what else) with Crema Leather. He'd ask Peter (now Sir Peter) Vardy if he could release it for Edward. 30 minutes later he called back to say all OK the car was Edward's.

I called William and explained that I hadn't slept for 72 hours since getting back and had in fact worked nonstop to sort a car for Edward, mission now accomplished. No need to trouble William with the fact it had been two quick phone calls! And I needed £130k quickly to pay for it. That was no problem and we arranged delivery for the last working day before Christmas. The car was delivered to our truck dealership that morning and hidden away. By that time the number plate ESL 1 was fitted. William persuaded Edward to come round to "see a special new truck". We sat in Jim Stairs' office with Edward both puzzled and a bit angry at his Christmas break being delayed.

One of our sales managers was a big guy in every way (about 24 stone at the time) and he dressed as Santa for kids Christmas parties. So we had him burst in fully robed and he asked “Is one of you Edward Stobart?” Somewhat bemused Edward replied yes that was he. “Santa” then asked “Have you been good all year?” Even more bemused Edward said that yes he had. “Right” said Santa “then I have a special present for you”. We then put a blindfold on Edward and led him to where the car was. I had the pleasure of saying “Happy Christmas Edward” and removing the blindfold. To say his eyes popped out on stalks was a total understatement.

When he got his breath back, which took a while he turned to me and said “How the **** did you do that?” “That” I said “is for me to know and you to guess”. And I couldn’t resist adding (in case he didn’t get the full picture) “And we’re pretty good at supplying trucks as well”.

Edward loved his Ferrari and he even bought another one a couple of years later (from Vardys) then a Bentley (from Vardys) so they got their reward. And once Christmas was over an order for 20 Iveco trucks landed on my desk, so everyone was happy.

Edward insisted I borrow the car for a day because “Without you I wouldn’t have it”. He was that sort of guy. So I went to get it on Easter Sunday because my sons were home from school then. I arrived at his house with No 1 son as agreed about 8.30 and the car was sitting there, freshly washed and dried off and ticking over so it was warm. After a quick coffee I slipped into the seat and belted up. Just as I was about to leave Edward walked over and tapped on the window. Here comes the warning I thought. When I dropped the window he leaned in and said very sternly: “Don’t drive it *****g slowly”. I didn’t!

Paul Gilligan

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Speed News

Congratulations to Paul Bowness on taking FTD at the MGCC Scammonden Hill Climb, held in unusually good weather. Pater Garforth and Paul Eastwood were also in action on the same event.

June is a busy month. WMC are an invited club to the Harewood Vintage and Classic meeting on 2/3 and some members are doing the Silverstone Sprint . Then it’s on to Barbon for the “clubby” with plenty of WMC members entered.

July sees the Barbon National meeting, although you don’t get as many runs at that one.

I am pleased to say that the new regulations for standard cars coming in next year will allow the use of Proban race suits rather than the full Nomex ones while teenage drivers will be allowed to do sprints in lower powered cars. All these were proposals I put forward while on the Hill Climb & Sprint Committee.

The Shelsley Classic Nostalgia Festival at the end of July has a F1 theme with GP cars past and present including a current Williams - let’s hope they don’t send Lance Stroll to drive it!

GTF

The Galloway Gallop 2018 – The luck of the (Northern) Irish!

Crikey, it's been a long winter hasn't it? It dragged on until the day before the start of the 2018 Gallop and then suddenly the sun was out and the threat of heatstroke from exposure to a temperature of 12 degrees C was a distinct possibility.

Of course, senior management in the form of Jim and Anne Crockett had begun the organisation as early as last November with the husband being roped in to help with the route and Ron Palmer, the previous incumbent, providing guidance and advice and Mr Forrester operating the printing press. It was therefore a relief for all parties when everyone turned up at the right place, on the right date and at the right time. Ron & Christine were skipping about like spring lambs free from the pressures of office as the rest of us (OK – it was me) relieved Mr Agnew of his chocolate Revels and prepared for the off. Pity about Gretna's mist and smurry - Bob Little had obviously found his shorts at the back of the wardrobe but I did wonder if this was a tad optimistic.

But what a superb collection of vehicles – a 1949 Bentley, three Jaguar XKs, a Karmann Ghia, an MGC, MGBs and MGTF roadsters, three Austin Healeys, two Triumph Stags and a TR4, three Porsches, a Morgan, an MR2, a Mercedes SLK and.....wait for it.....no, not a partridge in a pear tree - a Honda Civic. That's the downside of being in charge of proceedings - Jim's MGBGTV8 had to be left at home.

So away we went north to Ecclefechan and Torthorald, on through the colourful villages of Kirkton and Dalswinton to Auldgirth, the site of a former hillclimb circuit (1000 metres long, three hairpins and climbs to 90 metres for those of you interested in the details – yawn).

We were warming up nicely as the mist lifted and we headed for Dumfries and the hugely anticipated first scone of the day. On the way we passed a lurid pink stretch Hummer with several other “stylish” limos parked alongside displaying as much charm and imaginative design as a 1960's bungalow with the interiors, no doubt, reeking of the remains of a good night out in Dumfries. Classy.

Scones at the Garden Centre scored a very generous 9 out of 10 although Chris Spencer's heathen practice of mixing jam with cheese is perhaps an acquired taste – bit like Marmite – disgusting.

Then it was off to Gatehouse of Fleet with the roof down and a few wistful glances at Bob and his forward planning in the wardrobe department. Narrow roads and crater sized potholes caused a lot of evasive action around Lochfoot, Milton and Haugh of Urr and only a tractor shedding a metal post in front of the Agnew's Stag caused a minor distraction but fortunately no damage. We had to go past Jim & Anne's near namesake, Crockettford, because it would have been rude not to, and skirted Twynholm, the childhood home of David Coulthard – he of the too tight trousers. Cally Palace lunch stop was impressive with a longer than expected stay but provided a chance to catch up with all the news whilst the staff kept us in a state of anticipation as to when lunch would eventually be served.

The afternoon took us down to the Isle of Whithorn via Wigtown and Garlieston. One of the highlights of the day was tea down by the harbour basking in warm sunshine – it was glorious. John Hunter spotted a seal on a rock “It'll be sitting on eggs” he announced – now we know where son Chris gets it from.....

The road to Stranraer via Port William was like the Big Sur coast in California winding between cliffs and the sea culminating in a pub on a corner before we turned back inland. I had to avert my eyes at this point – the sign was written in two foot high letters for someone's apparent amusement – the **Cock Inn**. Still it could have been worse – there's the **Bunkers Knob** in Surrey and the **Spanking Roger** in Lancashireso we got away lightly.

Now, everyone has their own ideas of the best anti-theft devices for their vehicle. Most people have something sophisticated like a battery isolator switch or they remove the rotor arm from the distributor but not Tom Atkinson. Just to be certain the Healey 3000 would be there next morning he removed the steering wheel. Simple really – the Formula 1 teams have already been in discussions for the patent – although who would want to pinch one of those is anyone's guess.

Our hotel for the night was the North West Castle with excellent accommodation and, after an unseemly rush to the bar for liquid refreshment, our evening meal did not disappoint either. Saturday dawned bright and sunny all ready for the second leg north to Loch Ken. The husband fired up the TR4 and in the process covered the front of Alistair and Robin's custard yellow Stag with black soot so we made a hasty exit before revenge could be extracted. Ailsa Craig appeared on the horizon – the site of granite quarrying for making curling stones - as we turned east for Galloway Forest Park and some remote quiet roads and spectacular scenery. Newton Stewart was our coffee destination and the consumption of more scones, which were by now losing their appeal, before the final leg to the Kenbridge Hotel and the inevitable lunch. We spotted a few red kites and wild goats on the way but, distracted as we were by our close encounter with nature, didn't spot a lot of the massive pot-holes. The Hotel laid on another splendid feast before we said our goodbyes for another year – some to depart for the delights of Primark in Carlisle and others for the fleshpots of Gretna Gateway – you know who you are.

“The luck of the (Northern) Irish” means “extreme good fortune” and that is what we got courtesy of Jim & Anne. No breakdowns (mental or mechanical), no hitches, no notifiable incidents and brilliant weather – not sure we could ask for anything more. So thank you both for all your efforts – you did an amazing job and get to do it all again next year!

Marian Sloan (aka Maz)

PS Looking forward to the trip to Geordieland – are the regs out yet?

Alternative Electric and Hybrid Vehicles

Like many of my fellow members, I am an avid reader of the Motoring Press. Having passed the landmark age of 60 and owned, at the last count, over ninety different cars since passing my driving test, I have a number of stubborn, grumpy and entrenched views. Above all I have developed a perhaps irrational but nonetheless intense hatred of cars that have anything but a full fat internal combustion engine.

Some years ago I was approached in a North London suburb by a lady who looked a bit like Worzel Gummidge who proceeded to berate me for driving a large capacity V8 Ford Mustang Convertible on my daily commute. Why, she asked, was I wasting the Earth's resources in such a way? My riposte, which I am not proud of but I accurately report, was that not only did I feel no guilt but I also had two more V8 vehicles in the garage. At the time, my theory was that until the world oil supply was completely exhausted, alternate technologies would never become economically viable so that in my small way I was actually helping accelerate the process. She was not convinced.

As it happens there is a continuing irony in my personal life. My oldest son works in the USA for a major bank with the grand title of “Head of Renewables”. I do not actually know what that means and do not want to embarrass myself by asking. I think he deals with companies that specialise in some of the very the things I disapprove of such as wind farms, solar farms and the like but I could be wrong. Anyhow, a few weeks ago he rang me to proudly announce that he had just purchased a shiny new Tesla. To my shame, whilst every fibre of my being was urging me to ask him why he hadn't bought a real car as opposed to a high-speed milk float, I actually abandoned my principles and as a loyal father congratulated him on his new toy.

I have recently driven a Tesla and have to report that it was in its way very impressive – quick and well made, if not yet up to Mercedes or BMW standards in fit and finish. But wild horses would not convince me to buy one. I think of such vehicles as automotive white goods, efficient, boring reliable, yes, but hardly likely to put a shiver down your spine. What is the point of a car that has no emotional

pull? As I write this, I am sitting in my office in London, looking at a street full of parked cars including several Teslas and selection of Japanese hybrids (no, not tea plants). Refreshingly I can also see in the far distance an old Mini 850, a Porsche 911SC and a mighty Nissan GTR, so the rearguard action continues!

I am fully aware that I am a motoring Canute, railing against the incoming tide of renewable alternative vehicles and bound for disappointment. Just open any motoring magazine and more and more of the editorial is devoted to eulogising the latest developments in hybrid, electric and hydrogen vehicles. What's to love? They make no sound, they don't vibrate, they all look weird and have a range of about 500 yards. You have to plug them in for God's sake, something I only do with Scalextric. When I hear that even the premium car manufacturers are growing in this area I want to reach for the whisky bottle and a revolver. I am a dinosaur and becoming extinct, but sometimes, just sometimes, technical advances are not always for the best. Look at F1 today – I rest my case.

Nigel Wright

Cumbria Classic Weekend

'Rose and Thistle' one day tour.

Saturday 18th August,

Starts at Brewers Fayre, Premier Inn, Cockermouth and visits the Lakeland Motor Museum en route. Entry forms available now from me or Wigton MC website now. ronpalmer777@hotmail.com or 01228 575153

Autojumble

Classic Oils:

Fuchs Low detergent 20w-50 5 litres £22

Fuchs Classic High Performance 15w-50 5 litres for competition cars, £30.

Fuchs Standard 15w-40 for modern classics £12 for 5 litres.

Racing numbers £1 per digit.

Navigational Romers £5 each.

Red rotor arms for most British classics from 60s and 70s £6 each.

Water Wetter to reduce over heating £15 per bottle.

Contact Graeme on gfmfg@yahoo.co.uk or 01900 825642.

The Classic Weekend

Thirty Years of Success

Back on the autumn of 1988 we called a meeting to discuss the viability of holding a classic car show. Around 40 people turned up and it was agreed to form a committee to run an event in June 1989.

It was not quite our first interest though as we had been involved with a car show at charity day with Wigton Round Table at Kirkbride where we ran a demonstration autotest (nothing is new!) and did also run a classic car run around the same time (Autumn Gold).

The plans for the Cumbria Classic Weekend were ambitious with Carlisle Race Course being the centre for the Show. On the Saturday there was the Classic Caper and Classic Canter which started from Carlisle Castle. The Caper featuring about 8 simple autotests en route while the Canter followed the same route but without the tests. Lunch and an autotest were taken at Dalemain.

The first running of the Weekend in June 1989 was a huge success with some 120 cars on the Caper/Canter and about 150 at the Show. Numbers grew over the next few years. To the extent that we outgrew the space at the Race Course. That venue had many advantages being on the edge of Carlisle, lots of tarmac, toilets already there and turnstiles for admission. However the space we had was long and narrow and we were also running out of space as the numbers increased.

Strangely the numbers doing the Canter/Caper peaked in the early nineties and then dropped away. When we started we were the only classic touring event or classic rally event and the nineties saw lots more starting. Early Capers saw a huge variety of cars, many now very valuable, taking part in the tests but as values went up people were less likely to use them enthusiastically and we also some of the front runners being more specialised with Minis and Midgets and then RS2000s taking the top places.

The decision was made in about 1995 to move to Dalemain where there was more room for the increasing number of cars. The decision was also made to not run the Caper on the Saturday as the effort required to run two major events were too much. The Show was moved to the August date, initially over the bank holiday while the Caper (then the LDC) stayed in June. So in 1998 we ran three events over the bank holiday, the Queen of the Lakes on the Saturday, The Classic Show on Sunday and the Pennine Tour on the Monday. We must have been gluttons for punishment or just very enthusiastic!



Initially the Show was held on the parklands in front of Dalemain, as we do with DID, now and we had to route the spectator cars round the outside of the field to park on the slopes about the field. Once again we outgrew the parkland and arranged with Dalemain to use the large field on the other side of the river. This works very well and the bridge over the river acts as a very good turnstile! So far no one has tried to get in free by fording the river!

Using what is effectively a green field site means quite a lot of expense. Barriers, PA, toilets, skips, signage etc all cost a fair bit along with the venue fee. The cadets that do the parking also need a donation while

programmes have to be printed etc. The cost of putting the show on last year was not far off £10k before we get any income.



Of course in the past thirty years others shows have come and gone, some do well others have declined but we come up with new ideas and refresh things every year. Back on 1989 cars had to be 15 years old, or models that were in production in 1974 but manufactured after that date. Now we don't have any hard and fast rules but we have progressively added classes for 80s, 90s, and post 2000 cars. We work on the basis that if someone is proud of their car then we welcome them what ever it is.

There are a good number of "commercial" shows i.e. Those run for the profit of the organiser who get a field, invited car owners to come and then charges spectators to view the cars, although that is perhaps a simplistic view. Some charities have also cottoned to car shows being a good source of income, the danger is that car owners have too much choice and numbers fall while Joe Public has to decide how many car shows he wishes to attend. This in turn not only reduces the ticket sales but also how much the food and trade stand owners take.

In our case the aim of the Show is to provide a good day for our members, make a surplus that can fund better equipment and facilities for the club and support our chosen charities.

Our big advantage is that we have a willing team of volunteers who run the event. The show committee really start in the autumn with a debriefing meeting and plans for the next year. Different people have different responsibilities. This year we have four entries secretaries for different areas of the event, cars, clubs, trade and our WMC display. Others look after all the facilities that have to be booked; loos, skips, toilets, barriers etc.

On the Friday before the event we peg the field out and this takes about twenty members most of the afternoon. Then on the Sunday we have around 60 marshals signed on to man the classes, the admission gate, the autotests, the WMC display and the Help desk. That's something the commercial shows can't afford to have. All our members are volunteers!

This year our featured classes are celebrating anniversaries: Sprites, Escorts, Land Rover and Citroen 2CV.



We also now have a specific entry form for the WMC display, so if you have a competition car or a significant car for the display please use that entry form. This will make it much easier for the team to plan the display when they know which cars are coming.

Diversions

The recalling of 300,000 BMWs has led to a rash of jokes such as : “*3000,000 BMWs recalled for safety check - drivers changed!*” Or, “*BMW recall 300,000 cars, third lanes of motorways now empty.*”

More photos seem to appear almost weekly of **Teslas on fire**, and really severe fires at that. Given modern cars rarely go on fire it is surprising that the authorities are not taking action. How does a Tesla come under NCAP regulations for example? It seems any crash involving a Tesla turns to fire, and not just any fire, one that takes up to twelve hours to deal with and creates huge hold ups on the roads while it is dealt with. However as far as governments are concerned Elon Musk can do no wrong so these dangerous cars are still allowed on our roads.

BMW have produced a SAC, - **Sports Activity Coupe**, what ever that is meant to mean. It's a term a bit like SUV, completely meaningless. SUV is label applied to make believe 4x4s which have no practical advantage over a normal car other than perhaps the higher driving position stops you being blinded by the headlights of other SUVs! In American SUVs were basically trucks where you chucked the surf boards, BBQ and the kids in the back and set off for the beach. Strangely SUVs are far more popular in the UK than in other countries.

Will **Lewis Hamilton** retire at the end of the season? He's not signed a new contract at Mercedes so might want to head off to enjoy his playboy lifestyle in Hollywood. I must admit to not being a Lewis fan, his victory speeches sound too rehearsed and he always has to whinge when he does not win. We can do without him. Daniel Ricciardo as a replacement? Or a long shot Fernando Alonso, perhaps still the best driver in F1? Although he may well concentrate on doing the triple crown, F1 Champ, Indy and Le Mans, a feat only achieved by Graham Hill.

Kris Meeke has been sacked by Citroen for having too many big crashes. The problem would seem to be that the current Citroen rally car is not as quick as its rivals and Kris is having to drive it at 120% to be competitive. His team mates, even Seb Loeb, have not been competitive this year. Could Citroen withdraw at the end of the year?

Are WRC cars now too fast for safety? Making cars faster with dramatic aero packages does not make them any better as a spectacle. The current WRC drivers are incredibly talented to drive them at the speed they do but as cornering speeds rise then the terminal velocity of an accident rises as well.

If your classic car “**fails to proceed**” as Rolls Royce like to say, then it is likely to be one of two things, fuel or electrics. Older fuel pumps like SU ones often dry up and seize if not used for a while and even the legendary tap with a hammer does not free them. This can also be due to ethanol in the fuel which tends to create condensation in the tank while the actual ethanol can damage pipe and joints. As for electrics, it can be the quality of replacement parts, most current “Lucas” parts are of dubious quality. Rotor arm failures are common place and fitting a “Red” rotor arm which is made to a higher quality is worthwhile to prevent such failures.

When you watch historic racing these days you wonder if some of the cars have been “widened” to accommodate the current drivers. If you look at photos of Jim Clark in a Lotus 25, a slim young guy and it was a sim car as well. Now look at the current drivers, in their 50s and 60s and with the benefit of many years of corporate lunches behind (or perhaps in front) of them, you have to wonder if the cars are the same width as they were.

Club News

Welcome to the following new members and we hope that you will enjoy our events and social activities.

Michael Brooks of Stainton

Rhona Mackinnon of Long Marton

Terence Peat from Cleator Moor

Michael Plowden from Lancaster

For most of you this will be your first magazine and we really hope that you will enjoy reading it.

For any changes or queries about membership please contact Maggie Bateman on 01697349919
or by email at wmcmemsub@outlook.com

A.G.M.

Many thanks to the members who came along to the AGM to support the hardworking committee. All the current committee and officials were re-elected. The annual accounts reported a strong position despite our biggest ever charity donations of nearly £4,000 in 2017.

Our major project is going ahead steadily (lawyers are incredibly slow) and we hope to be able to give members details next month.

Our events were well supported last year and this should continue but as always we are willing to change as to suit the interests of our members.

Marshal Force

Marshals are the life blood of our activities

Marshals are needed for:

Autotest	June 14th	Contact David Agnew
LDC	June 24th	Contact David Agnew
Autotest	June 27th	Chris Hunter
Classic Show	August 19th	Graeme Forrester

Elderly Utterances

The Voice of Experience!

Ron Palmer has his say

After one of the wettest winter and spring periods I can recall the sun came out for a while in early May around the same time as the Monagasques held their biannual Monaco Historique weekend of which I have been fortunate to have enjoyed the last 6 of the 11 meetings. It all started out dry sunny and warm until the sports car race was about to start at 2pm on the Sunday and then the downpour started and lasted for the rest of the day and much of the Monday before we flew back home. Those back in Carlisle sent messages of encouragement and lost no opportunity to mention the warm sunny spell being enjoyed back home. Hey ho that's the way it goes sometime but we had a super time and the racing was great, the paddock visit well worth while and the excellence of the food and drinks bore testament to Paul Gilligan's thorough pre event planning. Elsewhere in Startline there will be a more comprehensive report from Nigel Wright.

Last July we held the first of our club **Breakfast Meets** at Lingholm, Portinscale by Derwentwater by kind permission of David Seymour. This year's event will be held on Sunday 8th July between the hours of 9am and 11am. There is no cost for entering and the cafe will offer a free hot drink with any hot food ordered, from a bacon or sausage sandwich upwards on presentation of a Wigton Motor Club membership card. There are new kerbs on the upper drive and the lawn can only be accessed from the car park in front of the house. So come right up to where the entrance to the lawn will be marked. All I ask is that those intending to bring a car, old or interesting, for display give me a call – Ron Palmer on 01228 575153 or email ronpalmer777@hotmail.com so that we know how many to expect. Please ensure we do no damage to the lawn when driving over it, we managed OK last year. Remember to let me know you are coming.

Regulations and entry forms are now available for the '**Rose and Thistle**' our one day tour taking place on Saturday 18th August which is the day before the Dalemmain Show. It starts from the Brewers Fayre restaurant at the Premier Inn just off the A66 roundabout at Cockermouth and follows a route down the western Lake District taking in a visit to the Lakeland Motor Museum at Backbarrow. If you haven't yet got your copy of the entry form let me know or see the club website. We usually attract 70/80 cars and already have received a goodly number of entries. Go on, enter now before you forget!

Fifty six years ago on the 7th/8th July 1962 the 750 MC ran the John Peel Night Rally over 230 miles in Cumberland starting from Longtown. In fact the start was from the home of the organiser Stella Blair, Arthuret House, a former vicarage with long sweeping drives would have been very suitable for a test but not on this occasion. Stella's brother Cowan Scott, a character with a wicked sense of humour, had asked me to navigate for him on the John Peel. Well I had visions of an exciting night in his Healey 3000 but at the appointed time I arrived to find we were competing in his Mini pick up, a new experience for me. However although it had minimal cab room it was light and nimble and he was a quick driver. At one point in the night we overshot a marshal by a few feet and so I opened my door for the marshal to catch up. At the same time Cowan selected reverse to rectify his overshoot and as we were in a very narrow lane the door caught the verge and the damage to the door was significant. Anyway Cowan's size 12s straightened it sufficiently to close and we shot off at unabated speed. Breakfast was at the Waterfoot Hotel at Pooley Bridge where we found we had finished 4th overall and 1st in class - happy with that out of 38 finishers. Winner was a Scot called Paton in a recently introduced Mini Cooper an early sign of what was to come.

Ron.

Rallying Call

WMC/Protyres Challenge 2018.

Berwick Classic Rally, May 5/6th 2018.

The "Berwick's" new organising team returned their event to an earlier format with a longish Saturday afternoon (7 tests and 1 regularity) and a full day on Sunday (12 tests and 2 regularities). Some of the long tests in East Lothian were rested this year but the long tests at Winfield and Langtonlees (alias "Col du Langton"!) were back in play on Sunday after a long absence. Start/Finish venues on both days were in Berwick making accommodation and trailer parking convenient for competitors.

The overwhelming majority of competitors were entered in the Historic classes but there was also a good turn out of Targa cars. The event attracted a full entry of 70 cars which provided quite a nostalgic spectacle as the route weaved its way around the Tweed valley, Borders and East Lothian. Crews travel to the Berwick from far and wide and this year it was noticeable that a number of experienced HRCR crews had decided to join in with the regular NESCR0 and WMC/Protyres competitors.

Some route information was supplied with the Final Instructions and the remainder was made available either at Signing On or on Sunday morning. This certainly makes the event less daunting for inexperienced crews but leaves enough challenge to keep the experts on their toes. By the time the 1st car started on Saturday the weather was warm and sunny and it stayed like that for the whole of the event - a real bonus as the countryside was just coming into the best of its Spring colour.

The first three tests were farm based with two being short, fast and furious and one with a decent stretch of loose to get the juices flowing. Then onto Regularity 1 which started on tarmac, went through a farm, onto a long loose section to ITC1; emerged onto the public roads before heading back onto a tarmac/loose white near Chatton. Some early crews were baulked by a shut gate but when we got there in car 11 the confused locals ("We thought you were coming tomorrow!") were leaning over an open gate thoroughly enjoying the spectacle. Another ITC as we left the loose and then a nice blast along a tarmac section to RFC1. Nicely limbered up we set off for a relaxing run to the next of 4 more tests. All four were designed to give crews a buzz and the tests at Hetton Steads and Laverlock Law resulted in silly grins all round and me on the edge of my seat. True "Berwick" tests!

We cruised back to the finish at East Ord village hall to hand in the time card and have a brew with some of the other crews as they arrived. Already there was keen interest in the results and the usual mixture of joy and woe but for Day 1 the new organisers had got off on the right foot. We didn't hang about at the finish because it was time for our traditional Berwick fish & chips and a glass or two of amber fluid.

Sunday morning saw us down on the Quayside raring to go and having a quiet look through the overnight results. Dougie Humphrey/Chris Loudon (Cooper S) were leading, John Ruddock/Roger Burkill 2nd (Escort Mk1), Darell Staniforth/Les McGuffog 3rd (Cooper S), Dave Short/Roy Heath 4th (Escort Mk2), John Haygarth/Bob Hargreaves 5th (Opel Kadett), we were 6th (Escort Mk1),





Stuart Banker competes in the Berwick for the first time!

Paul Crosby/Ali Proctor 8th (Porsche 911), Dan Willan/Martyn Taylor 9th (Volvo PV), Andy Beaumont/Andy Fish 11th (Avenger), Mike Kirk/Mal Capstick 13th (RS2000 Mk2) - still some life in these old birds, Paul Slingsby/Michael Fox 16th (MGB), Gordon/Ben Craigs 26th (MGB), John/Marion ("this is proving to be hard going...") Sloan 36th (Midget), Kevin Savage/Nick Townley (Volvo PV) 37th (What Code Board?) and Brian Bradley(this is proving to be even harder going!!!)/Michael Marsland 47th.

In the Targa Class Stephen Short/Rob Brook were 1st (Proton), Craig Wallace/Cliff Auld 2nd (Toyota), Robert Short/Kirsty Thompson 3rd (Proton), Geoff/Maggy Bateman 6th (205 GTi), Quentin James/Tom Howe 8th

(Citroen C3) and Phil Hodgson/Ian Giles (MX5) 9th.

There had been some casualties on Saturday including David Garstang/Mathew Alexander who struggled to a solid 15th with an ever worsening misfire (the inside of the distributor was trying to destroy itself). A long trip back home for David to "borrow" the dizzy off his RS got him to the start smiling but somewhat bleary eyed.

As we waited for our start time it was evident that we'd have to be very focussed to hold onto our position as we were surrounded by quick and experienced crews; and, Sunday morning would include two Regularities one of which would prove to be long and include the challenging upland desert plateau that is "Crystal Rigg". Tests 8,9&10 got us all off to a good start. T8 was on the loose and seemed endless. Quite a few crews overshot Cone L but were able to correct without penalty. T9 was a fast concrete farm road with chicanes and code boards but it proved to be the graveyard for quite a few crews including Haygarth/Hargreaves (back axle), Garstang/Alexander (engine mountings/gear selection) and Jim Hendry/Graham Couser whose usually reliable old TR called it a day half way through the test. Test 10 was the famous "*Col du Langton*" which starts with a long loose downhill section with slaloms and a line astride, then through a farm complex with slalom and onto a long uphill tarmac section with slaloms. A moment in the farm complex cost us time but there was no time to think about it because we started Reg 2 immediately after the test.

Reg 2 had a long 30mph section over the hills and off into the blue yonder of East Lothian before a tarmac 26mph section which took us into the Crystal Rigg windfarm (the scene of many a navigator's nightmare in 2017). This year things came up immediately from the map and we made good progress initially but dropped some time towards the end. Savage/Townley were seen with the PV's bonnet up just before Crystal Rigg and they appear to have retired there or thereabouts. From the end of Reg 2 there was a longish and pleasant run out to Test 11 at Spott - a quick farm test on tarmac and loose. Then into Reg 3 which was on a mixture of smooth and loose surfaces with speed changes and ITCs. It was quick and enjoyable. And then we were off to lunch at Stenton village hall (an excellent light lunch provided by the "Berwick" ladies - thank you!).

The morning had certainly shaken up the leader board: Dougie Humphrey was holding onto the lead, Paul Crosby/Ali Proctor had moved quickly up to 2nd, Staniforth was holding on to 3rd, John Ruddock was 4th, Dan Willan going well and up to 5th, Andy Beaumont also pulling back time and up to 6th, Dave Short =8th, we were down to 10th, Mike Kirk was 13th, Slingsby/Fox up to 15th, Craigs 27th and Sloans up to 34th. In the Targas, Stephen Short held the lead with Craig Wallace 2nd, Robert Short 4th, Batemans holding on to 6th, Hodgson/Giles 9th and James/Howe 10th.

The afternoon was a hot run around a selection of good East Lothian tests before heading south with tests to the east and west of the A1. The final test was held on the Speedway track in Berwick Ranger's stadium and consisted of 2.5 laps on the loose with chicanes and banked corners - quite a spectacle!!

With a few exceptions crews were heading into the finish with smiles if not healthy silly grins. David and I were 1st - into the bar (of, course!!!). Rally Roots did a great job with the results keeping crews updated throughout the event and produced the Final Results reasonably quickly (there appeared to be quite a bit of debate about the results among one group of crews and lots of i-phone activity while most of us were settling into the *apres* rally food, ale and *craique*, eg, "If only we'd gone down the right roads fast enough.....etc.....etc" ad infinitum).

When the results were announced, Dougie Humphrey/Chris Loudon had put us all to the sword with a masterly display in their Mini Cooper and took a well deserved win, Paul Crosby/Ali Procor 2nd, Darrell Staniforth held 3rd, Dan Willan/Martyn Taylor 4th, Andy Beaumont 5th, John Ruddock 6th, David Ruddock 7th, Dave Short 8th, we held on to 10th, Mike Kirk 15th, Paul Slingsby 16th, Sloans 31st and Craigs 38th. In the Targas: Stephen Short took a convincing class win from Craig Wallace 2nd, Robert Short 5th, Batemans 6th, Phil Hodgson was 7th and Quentin James 8th.

We had a cracking event and went on to have a relaxing and sunny week in the Borders - even persuaded some Tweed trout to take my dry flies. The rally organising team looked exhausted at the finish but they can be assured that the event was competitive and a grand success - thanks! Please do it again next year because after twenty or more years we'll be turning up in Berwick with the rally car on the Spring Bank Holiday weekend looking for an event.

Mike Garstang.

Russ Swift

Russ Swift, the Darlington based stunt driver started off in autotests and gradually developed his hobby into a lucrative business. I remember competing against him in Minis, needless to say he was much quicker, but he did in fact start with a VW Beetle with Porsche engine. He used the Mini to win the British championship several time sin the early eighties but it was down to Dave Richards that he turned professional. Dave organised a rallysprint a the old Lambton Lion Park and asked Russ to entertain the crowd during the lunch break. That was the start of his professional career and he did a lot of work for Vauxhall at race meetings while also rallying a Nova.

Rover offered him 80 dates to promote the Montego as a full time job so he jumped ship. A team of drivers were recruited and the displays were so popular that Saatchi & Saatchi, who handled Rover's advertising, decided to turn it into the iconic advert.

He also holds three Guinness World records for his parking manouvres, He is a big star in Japan and has been doing shows with Subaru for 17 years. He has a thirty strong team there. He is so popular that Subaru made a special edition of 80o cars which were sold out in just four days!

Russ has a great collection of classic cars and often comes to the Cumbria Classic Show. Last year he came in his Cobra - not any Cobra but the first Cobra built by AC in the UK!

These days most of his UK work is for MG and he will again be at MG Live! at Silverstone doing his two wheeling, J turns and reverse parking in an MG3.



Inside The Industry

Paul Gilligan has his say

What Is WLTP?

In short Worldwide Harmonised Light Vehicle Test Procedure. This is designed to provide car buyers with more accurate information on the fuel economy and emissions of the car they own or the one they are considering buying. Experts suggest that on average although your car will be no different official figures will show it as around 20% less economical and 20% more polluting. So more truthful in short. Although the new regulations have been under discussion since late 2007 (yes almost 11 years) the industry simply isn't ready for the implementation on September 1st.

From that date only new cars that have passed the tests and been certified under the new rules can be registered in Europe. Which has it seems come as a complete surprise to the manufacturers and complete chaos now reigns. How this has been kept out of the press I don't know, but you're reading it here.

Manufacturers are desperate not to be caught with unsold non complying cars in late August as they will have to either pre register them or SCRAP them. Which is a different sort of industry scrappage scheme. In most European countries some flexibility has been allowed so an agreed number of non complying cars can be registered for a period of time this has not yet been conceded by the UK Government. So it appears that even though we're leaving Europe in less than a year our policy of strictly obeying the rules while the other countries avoid them to a greater or lesser extent continues.

Where manufacturers don't yet have cars that will be "legal" they have stopped production for the UK rather than being left with cars they might have to scrap in 3 months' time. One such is Jaguar Land Rover who haven't built a new car for the UK for about 8 weeks now. Another is VW who stopped 3 weeks ago. There are more who are keeping information very tight. So there are dealers all over the country sitting in the new multimillion pound showrooms the manufacturer forced them to build with no new cars to sell and no real idea when supply might resume. Far East manufacturers have stopped sending non compliant cars even if they are sold because they might not arrive in time, compliant cars will be sent instead when certified so delivery dates are slipping. Customers are looking to source from the remaining stock of non compliant cars and fighting over available stocks of pre registered and near new cars.

Although billed as "Worldwide" in fact the new rules will only initially apply to the European Union, Norway, Iceland, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Turkey and Israel. Others are adopting in part or (Trumpland) not at all.

Hang on until late August and unless the UK allows concessions you might be talking to a manufacturer who has a choice of selling you a new car cheaply or scrapping it! I've honestly never seen a situation like this.

Fuel Made From Fresh Air Is On The Way!

No April 1st was weeks ago this is serious, this may result in the internal combustion engine having a new lease of life and make electric and hydrogen cars an expensive blind alley. This is how it works:

You build a production plant probably in a desert so you have access to lots of solar power. There's a big bank of fans sucking in fresh air which is passed over Potassium Hydroxide to separate out the CO2. A typical plant will separate out almost a million tons of CO2 every year which is equivalent to the emissions of around 250,000 cars. So about 120 plants would "clean" all UK car emissions.

770 plants would clean all Europe's transport pollution, cars, vans, trucks, buses, planes, trains, boats the lot.

Once you've harvested the CO2 you add hydrogen (pay attention at the back please), then in a pretty clever process you produce a synthetic fuel SYNFUEL for short. Take this way via pipeline and job done. When burnt in a car etc CO2 is produced, which is then harvested so 100% carbon neutral. To do all this you need lots of electricity which is why you build in a desert and use free and clean solar power.

Serious people are taking this seriously. Audi have taken a share in a Swiss company that's involved, Bill Gates is a major funder of a Canadian company that reckons their Synfuel will cost 70p per litre once volume production is under way. Mazda are funding a programme in Japan that does the same thing in a different way. Currently the forecast time scales are for a pilot plant to be operational in 5-7 years with the sort of numbers to make a significant Global impact in 30 years. Personally if it works I think it will be a lot quicker.

A Couple of Scary Safety Issues

Most people will have read of the current BMW safety issues. In short over 300,000 cars have been recalled because they can stall without warning. At which point all the lights go out and the hazard flashers don't work. This has caused one fatality in the UK. Last year BMW recalled about 36,000 cars in the UK over this issue, pretty dreadful of them to try to avoid the major recall they apparently knew was required. Apparently they'd known since 2011, in 2013 they recalled over 500,000 cars in the US and Canada over the same fault but obviously hoped to get away with it in the UK. They probably would have if one innocent person hadn't died.

Meanwhile VW have been advising owners of the VW Polo and SEAT Ibiza and Arosa models not to use all 3 rear seat belts at the same time. The fault was not found (they say) by VW but by a Finnish magazine. If all 3 rear belts are in use and the car turns left at speed the central seat belt buckle is forced against the outer left belt buckle and pushes the release button. Interesting that a Finnish magazine is better at discovering this sort of thing than VW's vast engineering resources. VW are "working on a solution" and have advised customers not to use the outer left belt for the moment.

Paul Gilligan

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Andy's Armchair

Andy Armstrong takes an irrelevant look at motoring and motorsport

Strange how things happen when you're out for a walk. As a couple, my wife and I are addicts, but thankfully it's a healthy problem as if we don't walk at least 5 miles per day, every day, then we start to suffer withdrawal symptoms. Now the above reason led us to be tramping along the Carlisle western bypass at about 8.30 on a recent Sunday morning when we came across a broken down transit sized van. Mother and daughter were standing on the path while their male companion was looking under the bonnet with the recently arrived breakdown mechanic, apparently sorting out a flat battery caused by a dead alternator. Anyway the little girl was performing cartwheels and round offs along the pavement so I commented on the fact she was obviously well coached, (our own daughter was a successful gymnast many years ago). Mother smiled and said yes gym was on a Friday night and today was meant to be racing at Rowrah in the Bambino class kart which was in the back of the van. Needless to say conversation turned to motor sport and it transpired that the man looking at the oily bits was actually Paul Di Resta's dad. For those who don't know, Paul is currently racing in the DTM German touring car championship and is an ex Force India and Williams Grand Prix driver. We had a bit of a natter and went our separate ways but not before I'd been left in no doubt that if our Scottish friends could have come up with the "scratch" either Sirtokin or Stroll the pay drivers racing for Williams this season wouldn't have got the seat. Shame I don't suppose a mediocre footballer would get to play for a leading premiership team by buying his way in, but it seems to work at the pinnacle of motor sport.

We were at Donington for the Historic Festival on Saturday 5 May but came home earlyish as the sunshine and heat were a bit overpowering. We're daft mind you, rucksack each, folding chairs, ground sheet plus food, drinks, camera etc and then wandering about non-stop so that by the time we came home we'd walked in excess of 8 miles, at approaching 70 maybe we were overdoing it a wee bit! Ironically when we were at the same meeting in 2015 on virtually the same date it snowed and we came home early to avoid hypothermia. Anyway the racing was quite good so that's what really mattered. On the minus side I must say the variety didn't seem as good as some years. Saloons dominated by Minis and Cortinas, too many E Type Jaguars and a pack of A30's or 35's, I forgot to look. It's also got to the stage where there are so many huge wagons in the paddock it's starting to resemble the "Golden Fleece" truck stop just off junction 42 of the M6 and the cars themselves are lost amongst all the juggernauts.

As an aside I think £30 each and £8 for a programme is a bit on the heavy side, especially as they've also started charging for grandstands which used to be included in the general admission charge. The number and quality of stalls was also down with only one smaller outfit offering models and no major book dealer present only a pretty poorly stocked used seller attending. I can honestly say I've more books myself than were on his stall.

Whether we go back or not is up for debate. I admire what Jonathan Palmer is doing with his MSV company and he's obviously pumping a fair bit of his profits back into the circuit, but value for money? I can only say from our perspective the jury is still out.

And finally, since going back to petrol from diesel I've been underwhelmed by the consumption figures. I couldn't get anywhere near those quoted by the manufacturer. On the way to the above meeting I bit the proverbial bullet and used the "Eco pro" switch. It makes driving pretty tedious but proved beneficial as consumption improved dramatically. On the minus side it was so boring that once free of the motorway I engaged "sport plus" and had some fun.

Ends

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What's On

WMC events and other events of interest

- June**
- 2/3rd MG Live! at Silverstone
 - 3rd Dumfries Targa Rally (SoSCC)
 - 6th **Pub Run**
 - 9th Barbon Clubmans Hill Climb (LMC)
 - 10th Shaw Trophy Targa Rally (Whickham DMC)
 - 14th **Grass Autotest at Blackbeck**
 - 19th **Committee Meeting**
 - 24th **Lake District Classic and Targa Rallies**
 - 27th **Grass Autotest by Chris Hunter**

July

- 4th **Pub Run**
- 7th Barbon National Hill Climb (LMC)
- 8th **Breakfast Meet**
- 18th **Committee Meeting**
- 27th **Grass Autotest at Branthwaite**

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