

Wigton Motor Club Ltd

# Start Line

Issue 01/19

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

January 2019

## We Made It—End to End!



David Martin/Brian Hodgson completed the LE JOG in December,  
the toughest Classic Car rally in Europe!

# Motorsport for All

# Club Officials

## OFFICIALS

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

# *Talking Point*

## *Topical Comment from the world of motoring*

We live in exciting times as the saying goes. I have a very positive view of the year ahead. There has been a lot going on at our governing body in the past year and it's beginning to take shape with a new logo and hopefully a new "helpful" image. Motorsport UK oversees everything from Lewis Hamilton to a six year old Bambino karter; from Kris Meeke our members doing a targa rally and professional historic racers like Michael Lyons to those who are just happy to race their cars at their own pace and those who enjoy classic touring events. Add to that, marshals, organisers and the 100,000 people employed in motorsport and Motorsport UK has an a huge influence and responsibility which it has not discharged very well over the past 20 or so years.

There is now a huge expectation of massive change in how things are run and a big effort to get more people competing. I know some folk in the sport are cynical having been around for many years and seen the "No you can't" attitude but I am very hopeful that we will see a change of culture to "Yes you can, how can we help you?" Time will tell!

Of course we have our own exciting news in that our new building will be going over in the next few months. I think this is unique project for a club like ours. It means that the Club's equipment, materials, caravan and archives can be stored safely in one place while there will also be workshop space for the use of members. At the moment the caravan, trailer and cones, posts etc live in the barn while things like clocks, radios, archives, spare trophies, noise meters, spill kits are in committee members' lofts or garages.

I was left speechless and greatly humbled by a phone call I got a couple of weeks ago. Long term member Peter Wood (he used to do sprints in a Lotus 7) actually emailed me some months ago saying that due to ill health he was giving up his beloved Elan and wished to donate his garage equipment to the club for the new project. In fact Peter was sadly terminally ill and passed away in November having had time to arrange his affairs. His wife rang me in early December to say he had passed away and in his will he had bequeathed the garage equipment to the club plus also the sum of £5,000 towards the new project as he appreciated what I and club had done for him over the years and the enjoyment he was still able to get from Start Line.

A truly wonderful gesture.

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

## Autosolo

January 27th

Entry forms will be emailed out.

## Annual Awards Dinner

Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2019

At the Skiddaw Hotel, Keswick

7.00 for 7.30pm

We have decided to forego a speaker this year as many people have said that they would like the opportunity to spend time having the “craic” with friends old and new.

**Presentation of 2018 awards for the Club Championships and Gates ProTyres Rally Awards**

**Raffle prizes welcomed!**

Tickets £30 per person, available from Marian Sloan  
([mazsloan1@outlook.com](mailto:mazsloan1@outlook.com)) Tel: 01900 85833

**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

Happy new year – or thereabouts anyway. The good news is that as I enter 2019 I have 3 working cars (fingers crossed and touching wood) and oh my gosh the V6 Alfa Romeo GTV is a gem. I took a train down to Gloucestershire to collect it and it is very beautiful indeed with re-furbished alloys and very clean paint work. Fitted with a lovely Italian stainless steel exhaust I knew the second I fired the engine up that I had to have it. The noise the V6 makes is epic – I can't think of a nicer sounding engine and thanks to bags of torque and a good wide power band (4000-7000rpm) it feels quick, probably quicker than it is but most importantly at 7000rpm it sounds like a supercar. I really am very happy with my purchase for a change so I'm ending 2018 on a bit of a high. I might even keep it for more than a few months!

Snotty's engine build seems to have been a success although I've not had time to run the old Skud in properly yet, but oil pressure is good and it starts and runs well.

The good news doesn't stop there, because the Allerdale MP emailed me the reply she'd received from DVLA in relation to my dispute over the month of road fund licence they stole from me and they are sending me a cheque for £25. Sadly it's not an admission that their policies are bordering on corrupt, it seems to mostly be because the MP wrote to them and they took over 6 weeks to send me my refund in the first place, because their email lays the blame squarely on the chancellor for the refund policy. £25 is £25 though and is only £5.25 short of what they actually owe me! I have now given up the crusade because I don't have the time and energy to try and sort the chancellor out.

Those of you who are motorsport licence holders will notice that the MSA is no longer the MSA and is now Motorsport UK or MUK as I'm calling it! I am not entirely clear on why the expensive re-brand was necessary and my licence has gone up by about 6% (way above inflation) and I will no longer receive my free hard copy of the blue book. I haven't actually used the hard copy of the blue book for many years so that wasn't a big loss...in fact it's a positive because it was a waste of trees and energy. I would have expected a reduction in my licence fee though rather than an inflation busting increase and being a bit of a crusader these days I emailed MUK to ask what was going on. The reply came back saying that because they'd lost advertising revenue the move to the on-line only blue book was cost neutral. I can sort of accept that...but I'm still not very happy about the increase in my licence fee. The fanfare that comes with the re-brand promises discount offers for licence holders and the whole thing is intended to highlight motorsport and bring people in at the lower levels of the sport. Perhaps if they start by stripping back some of the excessive safety kit needed for a simple speed event in a road car, they might attract a few more competitors! Anyway, for now I will sit and see if the promise of the new era emerges before I cast full judgement and hope that the change to concentrate on grass roots motorsport is real.

Peter

# Championship News

## Club Championship Rules 2019

### 1.0: Overall Club Championship

#### 1.1) Counting Events:

- 1.1.1 All competitive events organised by Wigton Motor Club with the first counting event to be the Festive Autotest in December 2018 and the last to be the 2019 November Autosolo.
- 1.1.2 The Novices Autotest in March 2019 (if run) will be excluded from the competition as it is not open to all members.

#### 1.2) Scoring:

- 1.2.1 Points will be awarded on a basis of 25 points for the 1st place **overall** in an event, 24 points for the 2<sup>nd</sup> place **overall** and then reducing at 1 point per place down to 1 point for 25<sup>th</sup> place **overall**.
- 1.2.2 Points totals for any one discipline will be limited to the best 5 performances in that discipline. (i.e. The maximum number of points available in any one discipline is 125).
- 1.2.3 Members completing more than 5 events of any one discipline will have the lower points scores disregarded so will receive their best points total based on their best 5 performances.
- 1.2.4 In **Autotest** events points will be awarded to the driver only.
- 1.2.5 In the **White Heather Tests, Lake District Classic** and **Solway Classic** points will be awarded on a separate basis for overall position in the Historics event and overall position in the Targa event and will be awarded to both driver and navigator.
- 1.2.6 In **Autosolo** events points will be awarded to the driver only.

#### 1.3) Event organisers:

- 1.3.1 Members who organise a counting Club Championship event which prevents them from competing in that event will be awarded 10 points in the competition as compensation for loss of potential points for that event.
- 1.3.2 These points will be additional to, but separate from, the points which will be awarded in the marshal's championship for that event.
- 1.3.3 These points will be awarded on a once per season basis regardless of how many events in the Championship a member may organise. ( i.e. Only 10 points can be gained in the Club Championship per season, for organising, regardless of how many events in the Championship a member may organise).

#### 1.4) Event marshals:

- 1.4.1 Members who marshal in a counting Club Championship event which prevents them from competing in that event will be awarded 10 points in the competition as compensation for loss of potential points for that event.
- 1.4.2 These points will be additional to, but separate from, the points which will be awarded in the marshal's championship for that event.

- 1.4.3 These points will be awarded on a once per season basis regardless of how many events in the Championship a member may marshal. ( i.e. Only 10 points can be gained in the Club Championship per season, for marshalling, regardless of how many events in the Championship a member may marshal).

**Note:** Only 10 points per year will be awarded for either marshalling **or** organising an event. Once those 10 points have been awarded any further marshalling **or** organising will not gain any further points in the Overall Club Championship.

## 2.0: Autotest Championship

### **2.1) Counting Events:**

- 2.1.1 All competitive autotests organised by Wigton Motor Club with the first counting event to be the Festive Autotest in December 2018 and the last to be the 2019 October Autotest.
- 2.1.2 The Novices Autotest in March 2019 (if run) will be excluded from the competition as it is not open to all members.

### **2.2) Scoring:**

- 2.2.1 Points will be awarded on a basis of 25 points for the 1st place **overall** in an event, 24 points for the 2<sup>nd</sup> place **overall** and then reducing at 1 point per place down to 1 point for 25<sup>th</sup> place **overall**.
- 2.2.2 Points totals will be limited to the best performances in all but 1 event less than the total number of events held. (i.e. if all 5 events are held the best 4 results will be used).
- 2.2.3 Members completing all five events will have the lowest points score disregarded in order to receive their best points total based on the number of qualifying events.
- 2.2.4 Points will be awarded to **drivers** only.

### **2.3) Classes:**

#### **2.3.1 Overall Championship:**

Points will be awarded on a 25 points for 1<sup>st</sup> place down to 1 point for 25<sup>th</sup> place based on **overall** finishing position regardless of class.

#### **2.3.2 Front Wheel Drive Autotest:**

Points will be awarded on a 25 points for 1<sup>st</sup> place down to 1 point for 25<sup>th</sup> place based on finishing position in the Front Wheel Drive Autotest Class.

#### **2.3.3 Rear Wheel Drive Autotest:**

Points will be awarded on a 25 points for 1<sup>st</sup> place down to 1 point for 25<sup>th</sup> place based on finishing position in the Rear Wheel Drive Autotest Class.

#### **2.3.4 Front Wheel Drive Production Car Autotest:**

Points will be awarded on a 25 points for 1<sup>st</sup> place down to 1 point for 25<sup>th</sup> place based on finishing position in the Front Wheel Drive production Car Autotest Class.

#### **2.3.5 Rear Wheel Drive Production Car Autotest:**

Points will be awarded on a 25 points for 1<sup>st</sup> place down to 1 point for 25<sup>th</sup> place based on finishing position in the Rear Wheel Drive production Car Autotest Class.

#### **2.3.6 Specials Autotest:**

Points will be awarded on a 25 points for 1<sup>st</sup> place down to 1 point for 25<sup>th</sup> place based on finishing position in the Specials Autotest Class.

## **2.4) Awards:**

Awards may be presented at the end of the year to the Overall Autotest Champion and the winner of each class. The Overall Champion is not eligible for a class champion award as well, so in the event of this occurring, the relevant class award will go to the next best finisher in that class.

# **3.0: Autosolo Championship**

## **3.1) Counting Events:**

3.1.1 All competitive autosolos organised by Wigton Motor Club with the first counting event to be the Autosolo in January 2019 and the last to be the 2019 November Autosolo.

## **3.2) Scoring:**

- 3.2.1 Points will be awarded on a basis of 25 points for the 1st place **overall** in an event, 24 points for the 2<sup>nd</sup> place **overall** and then reducing at 1 point per place down to 1 point for 25<sup>th</sup> place **overall**.
- 3.2.2 Points totals will be based on all counting events in the series.
- 3.2.3 Points will be awarded to **drivers** only.

## **3.3) Classes:**

### **3.3.1 Overall Championship:**

Points will be awarded on a 25 points for 1<sup>st</sup> place down to 1 point for 25<sup>th</sup> place based on **overall** finishing position regardless of class.

### **3.3.2 Front Wheel Drive Autosolo:**

Points will be awarded on a 25 points for 1<sup>st</sup> place down to 1 point for 25<sup>th</sup> place based on finishing position in the Front Wheel Drive Autotest Class.

### **3.3.3 Rear Wheel Drive Autosolo:**

Points will be awarded on a 25 points for 1<sup>st</sup> place down to 1 point for 25<sup>th</sup> place based on finishing position in the Rear Wheel Drive Autotest Class.

## **3.4) Awards:**

Awards may be presented at the end of the year to the Overall Autosolo Champion and the winner of each class. The Overall Champion is not eligible for a class champion award as well, so in the event of this occurring, the relevant class award will go to the next best finisher in that class.

## **4.0: Ladies Championship:**

This will be awarded to the highest placed lady in the Overall Club Championship. In the event of a Lady winning the Overall Club Championship, the award will go to the next best placed Lady in the championship.

### **5.0: External Championship:**

This will be awarded to a club member(s) who has competed successfully outside the Club events. (Decided by committee)

### **6.0: Enthusiast of the Year:**

This will be awarded to a member who has shown considerable enthusiasm as a competitor, organiser or marshal or a combination of those. (Decided by committee)

### **7.0: Newcomer of the Year:**

This will be awarded to the member in their **first year** of motorsport who has impressed the committee with their efforts. (Decided by committee)

### **8.0: Stage Rally Champions:**

This will be awarded to the member(s) who has achieved excellent performance on stage rallies. (Decided by committee)

### **9.0: Speed Championship:**

This will be awarded to the highest position WMC member in the ANWCC Speed Championship at the end of the 2018 season.

### **10.0: Hill Climb Championship:**

This will be awarded to the highest position WMC member in the ANWCC Hill Climb Championship at the end of the 2018 season.

### **11.0: Marshals' Championship:**

#### **11.1) Counting Events:**

- 11.1.1 All WMC events (competitive and non-competitive).
- 11.1.2 All events where WMC are requested to provide a marshals team.

#### **11.2) Scoring:**

- 11.2.1 10 points will be awarded for a full days attendance.
- 11.2.2 5 points will be awarded for a half day attendance.
- 11.2.3 Points will be awarded for duties performed either on the day, or prior to the day for setting up, or after the day for clear up.
- 11.2.4 All points must be verifiable by the appropriate marshals signing on sheet.
- 11.2.5 10 points will be awarded in the marshals competition for event organisers.
- 11.2.6 All events will be scored, there is no limit to the number of qualifying events.

Any marshals attending events can contact the Championship Coordinator to ensure their attendance has been registered, preferably by e-mail.

**Championship Coordinator:** Geoff Bateman.

[geoffbateman@hotmail.com](mailto:geoffbateman@hotmail.com) 016973 49919

# Winners All

## 2018 Champions

Club Champion -	Peter Wright
Ladies' Champion -	Fiona Tyson
Autotest Champion -	Phil Hodgson
External Champion	Sam Kirkpatrick
Enthusiasts of the Year	Stephen and Helen Palmer
Marshals -	Eddie Parsons
Speed	Harry Moody
Rally	Tom Pearson & Jim Stairs
Achievement	David Martin & Brian Hodgson

### **Autotests**

FWDAT -	Craig Stamper
RWDAT -	Geoff Bateman
FWDPCA -	Steve Palmer
RWDPCA -	Rob Iveson
Specials -	Terry Peat
Autosolo -	Chris Hunter.

### **Protyres Historic and Targa Challenge**

#### **Historics:**

1st Overall	David Short	Roy Heath
2nd Overall	David Marsden	Marian Sloan
3rd Overall	John Sloan	Mike Garstang
1st H1	David Alexander Callum Alexander	
2nd H1	Graham Cornthwaite	
1st H2	David Agnew	Alan Jackson
2nd H2	Paul Slingsby	Michael Fox
1st P1	Tot Dixon	
1st P2	Charles Graves	Ron Palmer
1st C1=	Malcolm Mackay	Heidi Garstang

1st C1=	David Garstang	
1st C2	Mike Kirk	Ben Jude
2nd C2	Ray Jude	Ben Craigs

**Targa Challenge:**

1st Overall	Philip Hodgson	Ian Giles
2nd OA	Quentin James	Tom Howe
3rd OA	Geoff Bateman	Maggy Bateman
3rd OA =	Chris Hunter	
1st T1	Helen Harkness	Barry Lindsay
2nd T1	Michael Cowling	Kaitlin Mattinson
1st T2	Robert Short	Fiona Tyson
2nd T2	David Winter	Kirsty Thompson
3rd T2	Dave Garner	Michael Pears

**If you are unable to attend the awards dinner, please let Marian Sloan know and arrange for someone to collect your award.**

## Moota Update

The land has now been cleared with some 100 tones of soil moved from the bund. This will allow construction of the building to start in the New Year.



## We went to Italy.....Again

Continuing south from Lake Como last month....

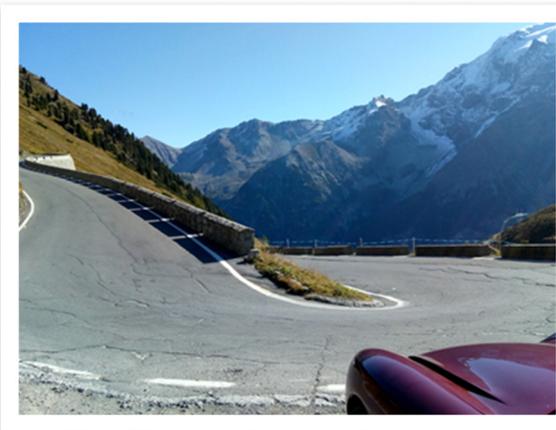
Next stop was Tuscany proper, Lucca and Siena. Both beautiful, cultural cities where we met visitors from all over the world. Many businesses do seem to concentrate on fleecing the many flush Americans. One such couple were Chuck and Debbie whom we met over dinner. Chuck was disappointed that the dense Cumbrians had not heard of his large international recruiting company. Meanwhile 8 stone, blond Debbie was busy shovelling her ravioli onto Chuck's plate saying "Pass me some more sliced cucumber, it is so delicious". Chuck had unfortunately fluffed his hire car reservation and ended up with a battered Toyota Aygo with stick shift. Debbie said she would much prefer to be travelling in a reasonably reliable convertible TVR – or have I just imagined that sentence?

I'm guessing that the production of the Fiat Panda has kept the company afloat because there is little else on the roads in Italy. In Tuscany there were still several original Fiat 500s tootling around the narrow walled streets. The Ape ( 3 wheeled Piaggio) is still in production as we saw several on a transporter. Most of the Alfas were 159s driven by the Carabinieri.

One for the editor – the Maserati Levante SUV in dark blue is really rather nice.

We found that Italians don't seem to go for outright speed, in the way the Germans do, but just don't slow down for anything. On the Autostrada few drivers were doing more than 140 kph but the majority were still doing 140 on sharp bends, through narrow roads and contraflow tunnels. The first lane of the Autostrada is known as the 'lane of shame'.

After a couple of days around Siena it was time to head north via the Chianti region. I managed to negotiate this without actually purchasing any Chianti, a) because I am a tight wad and b) the navigator would be less than useless after a few sips. There are over 100 tunnels and a similar number of bridges on the Italian and French Riviera combined. We passed through Genoa where one of those bridges collapsed in August tragically killing 43 people. There was some evidence of protests of alleged corruption and Mafia involvement.



We turned off the Autostrada at this point to negotiate the Grand Corniche. This is a sort of tarmacked shelf on the side of the mountains overlooking Monaco and Nice. The James Bond film Goldeneye starts with a car chase on the Grande Corniche. Princess Grace of Monaco (Grace Kelly) was killed when her car went off a cliff on the Moyenne Corniche, the road below the Grande, in 1983. We sauntered down into central Nice involved in a minor domestic about the virtues of 28 degrees heat in standing traffic and an ever increasing temperature gauge. Suddenly a middle aged woman clutching a cigarette in one hand and a can of the French equivalent of special brew in the

other staggered out in front of us. She leant on the front wing, stared at me through the windscreen and shouted 'Iz zis Aston Martin?' "No it's a TVR" I said thinking that might disappoint. But no, she wandered off accosting anyone that would listen shouting 'C'est un TVR". Everybody loves a happy drunk!

Next Stop, Route Napoleon, the road actually leads from Cannes to Waterloo and took Napoleon 100 days. We tackled the most scenic section at the foot of the Alps from Grasse to Digne les Bains plus a diversion to the French version of the Grand Canyon, Gorge du Verdon. I would thoroughly recommend



this one, sweeping cambered roads with fantastic views to boot. This was the only place we saw many Ferraris and a McLaren P1.

After that, three long driving days to reach home. Oh yes, there was one other small incident along the way. Suffice to say TVR were supplied with very poor quality fuel gauges and I now know the word 'jerry can' has the same meaning in French. Too embarrassed to go into more detail.....

Steve and Heather Fishwick

**PS.** If you fancy being terrified out of your wits in an exhilarating manner, I would highly recommend some of our route. It consists mostly of impossibly high bridges with uneven road surfaces at ridiculous cambers, and gaps in the barrier just before hairpin bends. No edge to roads with vertical drops, endless tunnels - some over 10k, and worst still city driving with no concept of safe distances or giving way. The English salute given at Agincourt can at least allow a little expression of our nationalist spirit whilst on foreign territory.

Heather x

## RAC Rally Nostalgia



1978 was the first year that WMC manned a stage on the RAC Rally. Despite there being 76 special stages that year there was competition from clubs to get a stage to run. Imagine that now. The stage we got was Setmurthy which is only a couple of miles from where we now live. As it was a weekday I wasn't able to be there but helped with the set up. We borrowed a caravan from Viking of Heads Nook for our HQ. As it was a non spectator stage it was called Derwent in the road book.



The stage has not been used for many years now and it's become quite overgrown. The northern section is part of the Allerdale Ramble and just in the last few months they have cut back part of the brushwood so vehicles can access it. It does have a couple of sections for the Northern Trial in it and also a popular mountain bike track. Looks very narrow now!



# From The Top

## News from UK Motorsport, Regions and the WMC Committee

**Wigton Motor Club** is a member of three regional Associations of Motorsport UK clubs. North East and Cumbria (ANECCC), North West (ANWCC) and Scottish (SAMSC). This means that for events held under a national B permit, our members can compete on any events those associations are invited to from the north of Scotland down to north Wales and Yorkshire and sometimes further south.

ANECCC is divided into three Motor Sport Groups, Cumbria, Tyne and Tees. WMC is part of CMSG.

We are also a founder member of NESCR0, the North of England & Scotland Classic Rally Organisers.

The **Club** is also affiliated to the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs which represented the movement at government and international level (FIVA) as regards DVLA and legislation matters here in the UK.

The **WMC Committee** does not meet in December but we have been hard at work completing the 2019 programme of events. We are open to ideas as to what the Training Day in March should be about - any suggestions?

Looking forward to the **Cumbria Classic and Motorsport Show** in August we are looking for ideas for themes, invited clubs, featured models/marques etc. Also new recruits for the organising team. Let's have your thoughts.

Regulations for the **Protyre Historic and Targa Challenge** will be sent out during January.

**Membership renewals** are pouring in so please let's see if we can get everyone renewed by the end of January.

## A Couple of Photos from the Christmas Cracker Run



**Recognised  
Club**

# Classic Column

## News from the Classic and Historic Scene

### New Poll Shows Interest Growing in Historic Vehicles

A new poll carried out by The **Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs** (The Federation) indicates that interest by the British public in historic cars, motorcycles commercial, vehicles and buses has grown since this audience were last polled in 2016. Then the survey indicated that just over 8 million people had an interest in historic vehicles, but this new survey shows that number has grown to nearly 10 million.

Also, more people claim to own a historic vehicle, 2.5 million regularly read about them and the number of interviewees who know someone who owns such a vehicle has grown by half a million to almost 8 million.

This is all good news for our hobby and for the businesses who support it and generate £5.5 billion for the UK economy (ref:2016 National Historic Vehicle Survey, FBHVC). However, it only scratches the surface in terms of explaining the dynamics of the hobby which are so important to the clubs, businesses and museums that rely on its health and sustainability in the long term.

This national omnibus survey carried out in association with the polling organisation, Kantar TNS, delves deeper into the demographics of this market growth and provides some insights into some of the issues facing clubs and businesses. For example, clubs often complain of the difficulty in recruiting younger members. However the survey shows that an increasing number of younger people are interested in owning a historic vehicle but that they do not think they can afford it.

The research shows that overall a significant proportion of the population believe that historic vehicles are part of the country's heritage, that they should be maintained in as original condition as possible and that they are an important part of our culture and heritage. However, it is of considerable concern that amongst younger people the enthusiasm is much less marked. The younger age groups are only half as likely as older people to share the views about heritage and historic vehicles.

As with previous Federation research, this national poll is really just the scene setter for a much larger survey of historic vehicle enthusiasts which was launched at this year's Classic Motor Show at Birmingham's NEC, by Research Director, Paul Chasney. He comments,

"It's good news for our Clubs, Commercial Partners, Trade and Museum members that interest continues to grow, but we urgently need more detailed and accurate information about the behaviour of the millions of enthusiasts that sustain this very popular hobby. The survey we are now carrying out looks in detail at cost in use, and will analyse how much and on what, historic vehicle enthusiasts spend. The completely anonymised results will help clubs in their recruitment, commercial partners in honing their marketing plans, in fact a closer understanding of our hobby benefits the whole community"

If you would like to take part in the research, go to the Federations website ([www.fbhvc.co.uk](http://www.fbhvc.co.uk)) and click on the

## The fortieth “One and Only” Preston Rally 2018

When Maggy and I lived in Suffolk we had marshalled on the “Preston” for several years, usually with my pal Rob Philp, who used to navigate Targa rallies for me, and we would usually do three controls through the night. Every time we went, Rob and I said that we would have to have a go sometime but it never happened whilst we were living down there. Nearly three years ago Maggy and I moved up to Cumbria and shortly after Rob moved up to Lincolnshire and although we kept in touch occasionally, we hadn’t seen Rob since we moved and any thoughts about ever doing the “Preston” soon disappeared with all the things going on with house moving and settling in to our new area, and, of course, taking part in all the events which we have been doing in the North of England since moving here. However, when I saw on facebook that this year’s “Preston” may be the last after 40 years a decision was made to contact Rob, see if he still wanted to have a go, and if the answer was “yes” then to get an entry in.

After a few hours of messaging the decision was made and I filled in an entry to find that they already had 90 entries (the limit) and it was only a couple of days since entries had opened, however, as not all entries had paid at that time, and I paid online, we got in as only 70 odd people had paid at that point. The e-mail telling me the entry was accepted was received with much trepidation but it was too late to pull out by then. That was it then, two road rally virgins attempting our first road rally, with me at the tender age of 65, in a 30 year old car, in what must be one of the toughest events out there, what could possibly go wrong?

Plans were made, hotels were booked and we found ourselves on the Friday before the event trailing the car down to Ipswich for our hotel for the next few days. The rain was pretty persistent throughout the journey and the “Preston” does have a reputation for mud if it’s wet, but it would be, what it would be. The car had been sorted out after our little skirmish with a tree in the Saltire and I had been over as much as I could to try and “Preston proof” the car before our baptism of fire.

Fortunately Saturday was mostly dry and we eventually got up to Snetterton circuit about 5-30 to unload the car and get Maggy to marshal’s signing on as she was going to spend the night with Howard Joynt out in the woods somewhere. Rob turned up shortly after we did, only to announce he had left his reading glasses at home but it was too late to think about that, we would get over it somehow. Scrutineering went well and we were soon signed on, looking at the road book and getting something to eat. Time passed slowly until our start time of 23-08 but at least the rain was holding off and wasn’t forecast until about 1-30 am Sunday. I’d bought some Colway copy forest/grass/gravel tyres for the front which I hoped would give us a bit of grip.

Start time came soon enough and we left the circuit via the A11 south to try to find NTC2. I always have a morbid fear of missing the first test or section on an event and am always more settled when we find it. It was about 4 miles down to a yellow on the left and in to the section where there were a couple of cars waiting. The first quarter of a mile was dipped headlights as we were running alongside the A11 but it was on a decent hard surface farm track. This was all right, and it was, until we turned right on to a dirt track and it got very bumpy. About a mile or so in Rob said “Did you think it was going to be this rough” I just said “It’ll probably get rougher”, I was not wrong. The first section was about 3 miles or so in length and did include a couple of short bits on yellows but we were glad to get to the end of it with the car still in one piece. We learned later on that some cars did not even make it through the first section.

Five miles or so of road work saw us to TTC4 in to Harling Forest for another rough ride over farm and forest tracks which was going to be the theme for the rest of the night. Section followed section with each one seeming to get rougher than the one before. We were running as car 79 so we could see where everyone else had been, which was sometimes useful, but the downside was the ruts were deeper and the holes were bigger by the time we got to them.

We got through the first 4 sections and were still in the event when we made our first error of the night. A slight mix up with the map saw us missing TTC8 and ending up in Rushford. We had been meant to go over one crossroads and turn right at the next but we turned at the first one, ended up in Rushford village and actually got to IRTC9 on the road. However, once we knew where we were we were able to retrace to TTC8 and get in to the section before it closed. We were running a bit late by

the time we got there and went in behind car 90 so were probably last on the road.

The Euston section completed, shaken and stirred, we headed off down to Euston for section 5, Foxpin. This was a long section, with lots of sand, big bumps, sliding about and a final last mile where it was impossible to drive round the holes to mitigate the hiding that the car and its occupants were enduring and we were relieved to see the end of it.

Fortunately for us sections 6 and 7 had been withdrawn due to a last minute refusal by the land owners to allow the rally through so we had a longish road transfer up to 8 at Mildenhall which allowed us to claw back our time lost on our wrong slot which meant we arrived at TTC16 on time and had a short wait behind a car waiting to go in the section. The section started well with a nice bit of fire road, at last we thought we were going to have a good run, then we turned left on to a narrow dirt track with trees flashing by in close proximity and the resumption of the “rock and roll” that we were, by now, getting used to. We managed to avoid any arboreal contact and made it out of the section and in to first petrol at Barton Mills bang on our minute for a welcome break for 30 minutes for fuel, coffee and Rob’s first cigarette of the night. A brief check of the car (kick the tyres, lift up the bonnet to make sure the engine was still there), coffee, a much needed toilet break, a stretch of the legs and we were checking out of petrol to continue our nocturnal activities in the Norfolk countryside.

From petrol we headed south to section 9, Bay Farm, more farm tracks, and then on to 10 at Worlington for more of the same. It was becoming a bit of a pattern. Every time we finished a section there would be a moments relief followed by, “Well it can’t get much rougher than that”, only to find, when entering the next section, that it could. Fair play to the organising crew, they said it would be tough, they were not wrong, our biggest surprise was that the car was still in one piece and that we were still talking to each other, and even, in between the “ouch” and expletives which could not possibly be printed here, we were actually having quite a few laughs, if only to numb the pain.

Section 11 was on the outskirts of Red Lodge at Park farm followed by the Herringswell section. Section 13 had been cancelled due to an outbreak of pig disease which allowed us a long road transfer up to Section 14 in the Kings Forest. This section started off well, usual bumps, sliding and avoiding tree contact and we were following the arrows as usual. Suddenly we ended up in a bit of a clearing with 2 other cars and shortly after were joined by a third. There was a large bomb hole which we had narrowly avoided dropping in to and we pulled up to check the diagram, which was what everybody else appeared to be doing as well. No one was moving so we decided to move off, roughly in the direction we had been heading in because the last arrow had been pointing straight ahead. We moved further in to the forest followed by one other who soon stopped and turned back and in the end we did the same. It was difficult to retrace our tracks but luckily we managed to get back to the bomb hole where we stopped again. We could see no other option than to go back the way we had come, even though it would be against rally traffic and see if we could at least find our way out. On retracing our route in we saw the arrow to show our route out! Unfortunately an earlier car had demolished a right turn arrow which was why we had all missed it – it wasn’t there. Much use of expletives followed along with the usual attempt at trying to claw back some time. We got to the end of the section and reported the problem but by then were running late again.

Luckily it was only a few yards from the end of 14 in to 15 at Ingham and we went straight in. It was a long section, seeming to go on and on, leaving us wondering if we would ever get to the end of it. As on other sections there was a lot of going round and over stubble fields which by now were fairly well cut up resulting in some interesting “fish tailing” in the car as I’d just kept the usual road tyres on the rears to help with the use of the hand brake. We eventually exited the section and made our way to 16 which was a rerun of Foxpin but in the reverse direction. This time the really bumpy section was at the beginning and actually eased a bit the further we went in. However as we got to the end of the first part to make a right to go round a field we could see three cars over the other side, stationary with their hazards on – not a good sign. We duly pulled up to be the last in the queue and could see the recovery crew up ahead trying to move a car out that was blocking the way. The minutes ticked by as we sat there whilst the crew worked hard to get the car out which was stuck in the deep sand. They eventually got it on its way after about 10 or so minutes and we waited to see what would happen next. The first car in front went off and just made it up on to the field followed by the next car. We started moving and headed for the same route but I didn’t give it enough right foot and we just couldn’t make the climb up on to the field. To get that far and not finish was not an option and luckily with a little help we got up on to the field and made our way to the end of the section, late but

still in the game. We came out of Foxpin and had a longish road transfer up to petrol 2 which allowed us to claw back a little time and arrive at petrol on our due time out!

I decided to take a 10 minute stop instead of 30 minutes, not realising that we would be penalised for it, not being familiar with road rally timing rules, so that we would only be 10 minutes late in to the next section to try and stay ahead of OTL. In the end it stretched to 15 minutes when we left petrol and headed off to 17 at Croxton. This was another forest section of rough tracks through the trees but by now having spent all night being thrown about we were getting used to it and as we avoided any tree contact we were happy to get out at the end and on our way to 18 at Wretham.

The farm tracks of 18 were of the usual standard and there was beginning to get a little light in the sky as it was past 6-30 am and we were still going. A short run out of 18 got us to the start of 19 at Larkshall which was mostly farm tracks with some forest dirt tracks thrown in, for good measure. It was here that we came across a car on it's roof just after point 12, a 90 left through gate followed immediately by a 90 right. The crew were both out and walking round and there was just enough room to get past. We went to pass and were waved down by one of the crew. We naturally stopped and opened the window. "Can you tell us where we are?" came the request. We told him his position, politely suggested that perhaps his navigator should have been able to tell him, and then gingerly went to pull away on the soft sandy soil, whilst both of us wondering how he had managed to flip the car over in such a tight space.

Out of 19 and we could smell the finish. We were heading back toward Snetterton with only three sections left. We soon got to Hockham which passed without incident but then, unfortunately, wrong slotted on the way to 21 at Shropham. A retrace saw us arrive at TTC46 behind the car that had been trailing us for a while. We followed them on our minute only to have to make a diversion in to a field to get round them when they stopped in the section. We got through and just had Larling to get through for a finish. I think we arrived at Larling as the last car through, but knowing there were several we had passed during the last few sections. The course closer was waiting to go through but we had got there just before his due time. We got through the final section and found ourselves out on the road with a short run to Snetterton and MNTC50 and breakfast. The car was still running OK despite being a bit noisier, ( as a result of the sump guard forming itself round the sump – as I was to find out later) but we had made it, we had got round the "One and Only" at our first attempt, for our first road rally and were pleased and relieved that we had made it.

There had been 90 starters, 34 had failed to finish and we ended up 51 out of the 56 finishers. We had made the mistake of missing some route check boards at the beginning of the night so in the end decided to ignore them and just concentrate on getting round which resulted in a huge amount of penalties but we weren't bothered by that, the main object had been to get a finish which was what we set out to do and for many a finish in the "Preston" is a win.

There is no doubt that this was the toughest motor sport event we have ever competed in. We did have some idea of what it would be like but it exceeded all of our expectations and the bruises were still coming out several days later. Still the car made it in one piece and after washing about 2 buckets of sand off the underside and another bucketful once I got it back on the lift, it seems to have survived the ordeal quite well. I've had to buy a new sump guard and perhaps I should consider buying one of those limited slip diff thingies which apparently can be quite helpful in those conditions, but, overall, a hell of an event, a great experience and a most satisfying achievement.

A big thank you must go to the organising team, the brilliant marshals who stand out all night, the wonderfully decorated controls with Christmas lights and to all involved in this amazing event which creates this wonderful unique atmosphere which draws competitors from all over the country and beyond, such is it's reputation.

Geoff and Maggy Bateman

# Welcome

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

Danny Shaw of Barrow in Furness

Geoff Maine of Aintree

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 [wmcmembersub@outlook.com](mailto:wmcmembersub@outlook.com)**

Renewals are pouring in at the moment! Please make it easier for Maggy by getting your renewal done over the Festive Holiday. Please ensure you tick the boxes for the events you are interested in so we can send you details and entry forms.

## Marshal Force

**Marshals are the life blood of our activities**

**December 30th**

**Autotest at Lillyhall**

**contact Stephen Palmer**

**Jan 27th**

**Autosolo at Maryport**

**contact David Wiggins**

# Elderly Utterances

## The Voice of Experience!

### Ron Palmer has his say

Our first club run of the New Year will be held on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> February. The Midweek Meander will start at a sensible time from Dobbies Garden Centre near Dalston and finish at Moota Coffee shop near the site of our new club development, both hospitable locations. Entry will be £5 per car and entry forms and details will be available on the Events 2019 section of the club website. It's a good opportunity to take your car – any type or age - for a run on quiet, local, low level roads and we look forward to a good entry from members who can spare the time on a Wednesday in February. All of course weather permitting.

HERO's Le Jog 2019 will be the 25<sup>th</sup> running of this endurance event in which competitors subject themselves to sleep deprivation and total concentration over four days and 1500 miles. Of course you have the same mileage to add for travel to the start and home afterwards. The lucky ones have a crew with a trailer to take them home. For many years the event has passed us by almost without a whimper but since the explosion of FB everything is now revealed almost as it happens. David Martin and Brian Hodgson were our local entry in a Volvo 142 this year. It was their first Le Jog and they did well to finish while at least 20 crews retired en route out of 79 starters. To achieve a medal position – gold, silver or bronze, competitors need to achieve a high degree of consistency and concentration with little respite. These days there are a large number of European crews who look on Le Jog as a 'must do' challenge. Any car of a type made before 1986 can be used and Mercs and Volvos are a popular choice. For any members looking for such a challenge get your entry in for next December but remember the formula – reliable car a good crew who have stamina and to finish near the front you need a navigator who can do regularities.



As usual a carload of members manned a Le Jog Time Control this time in the Borders near Denholm on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> December. Rob Grant, Ed Glaister, Mike Little and self enjoyed an excellent day's weather (plus 5 degrees instead of minus 5 last year) and helped our pie and sandwich picnic go down with some home-made Damson gin. Plenty of banter, all very relaxed and home before dark.

I was watching some excellent YouTube footage of the '76 Scottish International Rally recently which included all the greats of the day, Russell Brookes, Roger Clark, Pentti Airikkala, Tony Fall, Ari Vatanen etc. etc. and included a stage on the 'Old' Rest and be Thankful, which we used in its

new format on the Gallop in 2017. At this point in the Scottish Ari's Escort had its diff fail with no spares

carried because Ford had never had one fail on a UK rally. Peter Bryant, Ari's co-driver, managed to spot a passing 3 litre Capri and sweet talked the owner into lending them the diff from his car. The relevant parts were swapped over and away they drove, still in the Rally. Alas it failed again after three more stages, they did need to be set up correctly but time was against them. I wonder which parts from a current Ford would fit a WRC Fiesta these days? Happy New Year.

Ron.

## Our Sponsored Drivers

Once again **Wigton Motor Club** has broken new ground in 2018 by sponsoring two young drivers in their differing motorsport disciplines. The Club, which is the biggest motor club in the north with over 700 members, sponsored Sam Kirkpatrick from Brigham in racing and 18-year-old Jack Palmer from Maryport in autotesting.

**Wigton Motor Club** draws most of its members from the northern half of Cumbria but has many from a wider area as well. It has twice been the **UK Motorsport Motor Club of the Year** and its well known for innovative approach to getting more enthusiasts involved in most of the dozen different motorsport disciplines.

Seventeen-year-old Sam Kirkpatrick has just completed a very successful first year in senior motorsport the graduated after five years in karting and he raced in the ultra-competitive Millers Oils MG Trophy: one of the best supported one make saloon car series in the UK. Sam drive an MG ZR in the class B 170 bhp class. Although giving away 20 bhp to the class A cars in race tyres Sam of usually in the leading group.

The season started badly at Silverstone national circuit where he was victim of a first corner incident, resulting in his car being written off. After unfortunately missing the Brands Hatch round, the car was re-shelled, and Sam was finally ready to resume. There were four double header rounds left in the series: Silverstone GP, Donington, Oulton Park and Snetterton. Sam immediately challenged the regular front runners and ended the season with two wins and three second places. He was consistently on the front row in qualifying, including four pole positions.

Sam will continue in the MG Trophy next season with the aim of winning the championship, despite it being his final A-level year. He also aims to race his dad's historic MGB later in the season in the ultra competitive Equipe GTS series.

Sam has been awarded the **Wigton Motor Club** External Championship Award for 2018.

2018 was the first year entered in the BTRDA Autotest Championship for Jack Palmer from Maryport running a Vauxhall Nova in class B. Jack entered 5 rounds during the season with much appreciated support from **Wigton Motor Club**. The rounds were held in Curborough Lichfield, Hartlepool, Wrexham and Shrewsbury with one round closer to home actually in Maryport! Results through the year were mixed but Jack managed 3<sup>rd</sup> in class on 2 occasions and 1<sup>st</sup> novice also on 2 occasions.

At the end of the season there is a inter country event that is invitation only and Jack was invited to be the Reserve Nova driver for the England squad, quite an honour for your first year. In 2019 the

## Classic Column

A couple of events that won't take place next year are the **Classics at Bywell** show run by MG Northumbria which has been the biggest event on Tyneside but the club feels it does not have enough people to organise it now. Secondly the **Manchester Classic Show**, which ran each September is not taking place again as the venue hire is now too great.

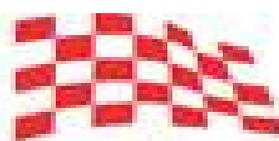
It's sad that the **Donington GP Collection** has closed. I've been a few times over the years and it was a wonderful array of F1 cars. The last time I went was just after the track re opened after the abortive attempt to make it into a GP circuit. I was racing at a VSCC event and popped into the museum after practice. For those who have never been the halls were arranged like a crankshaft and the lights only came on when someone went into each hall. As I was the only person there for much of the time it was a bit strange and by the time I got to the far end I was almost getting concerned I might end up locked in!

It's strange that MSV, who have taken over the running of the track, do not see the museum as part of its future. You just have to look at how Gaydon, Beaulieu, Brooklands and Bicester Heritage seem to do well with events and special meets and displays.

Talking of **Bicester Heritage**, it seems to go from strength to strength with over 3,000 cars attending the monthly breakfast meets and plans have just been approved for a massive hotel. Nearly all the work units based in the former RAF buildings are filled with classic car related businesses.

If you have a car over 40 years old you can now register it as a **Historic Vehicle** which means it is exempt from the more stringent MoT tests for modern cars.



  
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# Inside The Industry

**Paul Gilligan has his say**

## **Decline In UK Car Sales Slows**

In November UK new car sales declined by 3% compared to last November although the decline for the year is still almost 7%. Sales of diesel cars were 17% down for the month against 30% down for the year. Whilst private and large fleet sales are both around 7% down for the year fleet business in November just about matched last November. Sales to small businesses were actually up over 8% for the month compared to last November and this would agree with our experience here at GVC, small business customers are currently where the action is both car and commercial.

The decline in diesel is not spread evenly across all market segments or all customer types. The rental industry has just about given up buying small diesel cars, and because of customer demand (and some very tasty discounts) are buying quite a lot of hybrids in the medium and large car sectors. The leasing industry serving largely higher miles users remain strong buyers of diesels, and of course they fact that the leasing company guarantees the residual value of the car takes away one big concern many customers have about diesel.

Amongst the prestige German manufacturers Audi have fallen well behind due to supply shortages caused by their failure to prepare properly for the new emissions and fuel consumption tests that came into force at the beginning of September. Audi have sold 137400 cars so far this year, well down on 2017. BMW and Mercedes continue to fight for the top spot here, BM on 160448 so far this year and Merc on 160873. The competition is now around who preregisters the most cars in December! Interestingly these two have taken entirely different approaches to achieve these numbers. Mercedes subsidise their lease deals to get some very attractive monthly payments whereas BMW supply very high volumes into the rental market.

## **UK Car Production Drops Also**

In October of 2017 UK car factories produced 155,000 cars, this October it was 140,000. Eight out of every ten cars produced here is exported, more than half of them to the EU, and the manufacturers are very concerned about the consequences of a failure to agree a tariff free B\*\*\*\*t deal. Of course Audi, BMW, Mercedes, VW etc must be equally concerned! The drop is down to a number of factors, general drop in UK sales and reliance on diesel being the most important.

The consequences are painful. Land Rover have cut another 200 jobs from their Solihull factory and close their engine factory in Wolverhampton for 4 weeks not 2 over Christmas. Vauxhall have this year reduced staff numbers at its Ellesmere Port factory by 40% to 1100.

## **Used Car Demand Remains Strong**

Lower new car sales means less part exchanges coming into the dealerships and less ex fleet cars being disposed of. And short supply for some manufacturers has reduced pre registration activity. This has led to a shortage of used cars in almost all sectors of the market and consequent price rises. Interestingly values of used diesels are rising although not by as much as petrols and hybrids. Many new car dealers are planning a greater emphasis on used next year as they see more growth opportunities in this area of the market and we expect demand for stock to be very strong in January, and probably for the rest of the year barring an economic disaster caused by the dreaded B\*\*\*\*t.

## **Ford & VW Group Cuddle Up**

Impeccable sources suggest that Ford and VW are close to announcing a close and perhaps industry-changing alliance, and we should expect an announcement early in the new year. The deal is thought to be designed to allow each to play to their strengths. The two will share the enormous costs of developing electric and autonomous vehicles, so each will gain a handy 50% discount on a multi billion dollar bill. VW, who are considering building a new production plant in the US may instead take over one of Ford's surplus plants there. Again obvious savings to both.

In June of this year Ford and VW announced they were going to jointly develop and assembler commercial vehicles, but it seems now this is just the start. Items on the agenda are said to include:

Sharing of assembly plants outside the US.

Combining marketing and distribution (does that mean dealers?) with Ford leading in the US and VW in Europe and China, each playing to their strengths.

Joint product development of all cars and commercials.

Just about the only thing said to be not up for discussion is any cross shareholding in each other's company, but I'd say never say never to that one?

### **Hyundai Investing Heavily In Hydrogen**

As my regular reader knows I still stick to my belief that hydrogen power, not electric, is the true future. Hyundai I think agree, they've just announced an investment of £5.3 Billion in the development and production of hydrogen fuel cell technology for not only cars and commercial vehicles but also trains, fork lift trucks, ships and drones. Hyundai currently produce 3000 fuel cell systems a year. By 2022 that will be 40000, by 2030 500,000. And that might not be anywhere near enough – Hyundai are forecasting global demand for hydrogen fuel cell systems to be over 5 million units a year by 2030.

### **London's New Pollution Charge To Hit Hard**

Currently those who drive into Central London pay a Congestion Charge of £11.50 per day (plus £10 extra for heavily polluting vehicles), weekdays only 7am-6pm. In April of next year the emissions standard before the extra charge is added will be lowered meaning many more vehicles will have to pay that, and the "fine" will be increased to £12.50 per day. This "fine" will apply to diesel cars and vans first registered before September 2015, petrol cars and vans first registered before 2006 and motor bikes and mopeds registered before July 2007. Larger diesel vans registered before September 2016 are also liable.

That's only the start. In October of 2020 lorries and coaches will have to pay £100-£300 a DAY to enter Central London if they don't meet latest emission standards.

It's in October of 2021 that the noose really tightens. The Congestion Charge area will be dramatically widened from a few square miles of the centre to include all of the area within the North and South Circular Roads, so as much as 10 miles from Trafalgar Square. AND the charge will then apply 24 hours a day 7 days a week. 3.8 Million people live within this area. 26% of the cars in London are registered to addresses in this area so it's thought that around 150,000 car drivers in London will be liable to the charge if they move even a few hundred yards in a day. Then there's the drivers from other parts of the Capital that drive to within the Circular Roads, and those from outside London.

The Mayor of London has forecast that around 138,000 vehicles "might be affected" every day. Independent forecasts have suggested the truth is likely to be between 8 and 10 times that number. Of course this will raise an enormous amount of money. The Mayor of London has denied this is the motivation saying he is only seeking to clean up the atmosphere. However if the independent forecasts are right the charges imposed will total between £1 billion and £1.5 Billion every year. That money goes to Transport for London (TfL), which is facing a financial crisis after the Mayor froze its fares and the Government reduced its grant. And if you're in a financial crisis a windfall of £1.5 Billion a year certainly helps!

By the way don't think this will stop at London!

### **Car Makers Face Massive Fines**

By 2021 car manufacturers selling in Europe have to meet stringent emissions targets or face some pretty big fines. The introduction of more accurate testing procedures has made reaching these targets even more difficult. Currently Toyota, Jaguar Land Rover, Renault/Nissan/Mitsubishi, Volvo and Honda are forecast to meet the targets. All the others will unless something radical is done. VW are facing a fine of 1.4 Billion Euros, Peugeot/Citroen/Opel/Vauxhall 600 Million. No doubt the European Commissioners will spend it wisely.

### **Autonomous Vehicles To Cause Massive Job Losses**

When (the time for if is long past) driverless cars, vans, and trucks become more common this will have dramatic and far-reaching consequences for the employment market. It's forecast that this will start to happen by 2023. Possibly 2-3 million jobs will be involved with two thirds likely to be lost. Among professional drivers only driving instructors are unlikely to be replaced by a "robot", although as it's thought that many more people simply won't bother learning to drive their roles are hardly safe? Here's what this forecast predicts:

98% of food delivery driving jobs will go.

93% of waste delivery drivers will go. Volvo already has a working refuse lorry that uses drones to identify nearby bins although some human involvement is still involved.

88000 fork lift drivers work in the UK. Automated fork lift trucks are already available, they obviously have far fewer hurdles to overcome than driverless cars on public roads so many of these jobs will be gone well before 2023 surely?

Driverless buses are already being tested at Heathrow and Gatwick. Currently for airline crew only (like they don't matter?) but will soon be passengers also. 89% of bus driving jobs predicted to be lost.

Taxi drivers. Addison Lee London's largest taxi company has already stated they will have driverless taxis operating by 2021. In Tokyo a driverless service has been operating from the airport to city centre since August using a set route only. There are almost 300,000 licensed taxi drivers in the UK currently. How many in 2023?

There are over 300,000 HGV drivers in the UK. Most of these jobs are at risk. However that's nothing to the van situation. There are over 4 million vans licensed on UK roads. Some are used by for example builders and other tradesmen who use them to drive to where their work is then carry out their "normal" job. Having said that the vast majority of these vans are used to deliver goods. This task will be taken over by driverless vans or drones. There are no accurate estimates I can find but I'd suggest we could easily have well over 2 million jobs at risk here?

So at a conservative estimate driverless taxis, vans and trucks are likely to eliminate let's say 2 million UK jobs within a maximum of 10 years. At least you now have something bigger than B\*\*\*\*t to worry about!

### **Seasonal Greetings**

At this special time of year I'd like to wish both my regular readers, and in fact the 3 or 4 additional ones who only read my witterings occasionally, a very Happy Christmas and a Healthy and Prosperous 2019. For some time at least there will still be motoring to enjoy, but do enjoy it while it lasts!

Paul Gilligan

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07785 293222

## **VSCC Lakeland Trial, a potted history of Drumhouse, a Lea Francis Special and the early days**

A young guy called Aaron Spence has fairly recently moved up to Dean the next village to me and he has a lovely sounding Audi RS8, it turns out he is the great grandson of a guy called Harry Spence who some older enthusiasts with a knowledge of VSCC competitors may recall was superb a trials driver in years gone by.

Harry along with his wife Molly were well known in VSCC competitions, great friends of Max and Pat De Redder and also of Frazer Nash man Dick Smith who is one of the best known VSCC people not only in this country but abroad too, Dick lives near Lorton well known to many of you as a local retired dentist who had a practice in Whitehaven. Many of you have watched him racing very successfully a passion he has had or over 50 years racing not only in this country but all over Europe including events at Monaco and Pau to mention two events recently attended by Wigton M C members. Sadly Max passed away about eight years ago but Dick is still very much alive and kicking and Aaron wanted a photo taken of Dick and him together as he had heard from his family what a great character Dick was. In fact he had been told by his family Dick was a living legend a fact that anyone acquainted with Dick would wholeheartedly agree. Chris Spencer Aarons mate was appointed official photographer and recorded the meeting for the Spence family album.



Very appropriately the VSCC Lakeland Trial had just taken place the previous Saturday this being one of the toughest and it has to be said roughest of the VSCC trials but being held predominately in the lake district forests the challenge of trialling on the hard rocky terrain with unforbearing natural elements providing some formidable hazards it is one of the reasons the trial is always over-subscribed.

Dick recounted various tales of Harry's involvement in various VSCC trials but none more significant than when Dick being one of the original instigators and joint clerks of the course of the Lakeland trial which they started in the 1960s was having discussions with a local land agent who acted for one of the local landowner Lord Egremont of Cocker-mouth who owned thousands of acres of Cumbria. Dick and the land agent were discussing what Dick had been told might be a great section for the Lakeland Trial situated way above the top of Honister Pass, a place known to the quarry personnel as Drumhouse.

This was a quarry track, unbelievably steep at 1 in 2.5 yes that's right one in two and a half, very narrow, very rough, extremely bumpy with a sheer drop off one side of between 500 and 1000 feet as the track wound its way up clinging to the mountain side, It was so steep in fact that the quarry owners paid the workers danger money to operate the tracked vehicles on that particular route.

Wondering about the viability of this potential section Dick contacted Harry Spence one of the most experienced trial drivers in the VSCC who promptly came up to Cumbria or Cumberland as it was then called towing his Lea Francis Special to test out the section, you really need Dick to tell the tale to do it justice but I will endeavour to do my best.

Dick said he and Harry went up to Honister leaving their two wives at home talking about what wives talk about (Dick's words not mine), once at the slate quarry offices which is now the Honister café Harry took off like a scalded cat up the rough mountain track with Dick hanging on for grim death being in great danger of being thrown right out of the car as the track was really rough and very bumpy indeed. Harry was driving like a demon giving it everything he could he was that sort of driver, evidently the track was much worse than it is now, the hairpins were much narrower and far steeper because these days they have been graded and widened to allow Landrover's and similar quarry vehicles to use the track for operational purposes.

When I was a child in the 1950s there were Via Ferrata type cables strung across the mountain bringing slate down in some form of buckets or little skips from the upper workings of the quarry as it was so steep and the terrain so difficult. Presumably the name "Drumhouse" has connections with the cables and winding drum needed for the aerial ropeway. A similar ropeway carried coal from Ghyllhead pit between Flimby and Broughton Moor down to the coal washing plant at Risehow so a fairly common but effective way of carrying materials it has to be said.

Having reached the top of the track way above Honister quarry and surviving the white knuckle ride Dick had second thoughts and considered that in reality it probably was far too dangerous which is rather unusual for him as his maker forgot to equip him with genes that would alert him to any sense of danger at all.

It was equally dangerous coming back down as some early VSCC cars only have brakes on two wheels and many that possess four wheel brakes are decidedly inadequate as anyone who has driven an Austin 7 with standard production brakes will tell you, most trials Austin 7s these days have the optional hydraulic brakes as fitted to the later cars. Drivers find cars with rod/ cable brakes need to leave the adjustment backed off otherwise as the tiny chassis twists going over bumps the brakes apply themselves, but when backed off the brakes are pretty non-existent and with the handbrake on the front wheels the descent would be a real buttock clenching trip!



Having now been driven up the section and realising just how dangerous it was he thought it maybe was unsuitable so mentioned the fact to Harry, however Harry who was very prone to stammering when really excited said "no Fffffff???? way, its Fffffff???? ing great" tell them Harry Spence says this section will go down as "The" section in the history and folklore of VSCC trials, it is a section everyone will want to climb just as climbers want to climb Everest, the section MUST be used in the trial. So it came to pass Drumhouse was introduced at the very next trial, it's remained there for years and remains in the trial today, still daunting, still dangerous, a bit tamer than in the early days but continues to be the section everyone wants to climb and talks about both before and after the event. You can only fully appreciate this story though if its told by Dick Smith himself.

Nowadays a big 4x4 often driven by Edwin Cook is on hand to lower cars with poor brakes down the hill with a towrope attached to the rear of the competing car and current VSCC rules stipulate that passengers must walk down they are not allowed to ride in the competing car on the descent. David Rushton and Bill Kirkpatrick have been heavily involved with the trial over a long period being joint clerks of the course at times, David may be getting involved again for future events so if you want to be involved David is the man to contact, it's a great way to spend a November Saturday along with many other Wigton members.

Many years ago I helped Max De Redder build a 1928 Austin 7 between Christmas and New Year in his very spacious residence Clifton Hall which had its stables, coach houses and former servants quarters full of old cars and car parts, the reg number of the 7 was RN132 which we built probably about 1982/3 era, the car is still competing regularly on the Lakeland and other events today so I've attached a photo of the car probably at Easter 1983 when we went to Holker Hall museum for its first test run which was a round trip of about 150 miles with Max's wife Pat, my wife Carol plus our daughter Claire following in Max's brand new 2600cc Rover SDI. Claire is seen sitting on my lap in the Austin 7 prior to our departure.

We used the Austin 7 a year or two later on a VSCC Scottish trial that was based near Coulter in the Scottish borders nor far from Biggar it really was a fabulous trial in fact it still is and well worth making the effort to support it, it's run by the very experienced Jock McKinnon well known for his exploits in vintage Bentleys and Austin 7s. Jock is a regular at Boness hillclimb and races in vintage Bentley events against Robert Gate.

The year we competed in RN132 the VSCC held a dinner the evening preceding the event to celebrate a significant history of the VSCC Scottish trial, it was stated that not only had Harry competed in every trial that had been held but unbelievably he had done all the events in the very same car his beloved Lea Francis so they

presented him and his wife Molly with an award. According to Aarron the Lea Francis is now owned by John Gill clerk of course of the current Lakeland trial but it's had to have a new chassis as it was full of cracks with botched up welding, Harry it seems was a much better driver than a welder !

The recent VSCC Lakeland was another huge success, many of us Wigton M C members were involved in one way or another, competing, marshalling, organising, or enjoying the event in some way shape or form, it's the sort of event where you meet people just by chance, get on well with them and they continue the friendship and become great friends. For instance a few years ago I was able to help a competitor to get an Allard he was driving at Prescott going after it broke down by giving him a new spare coil of mine, this turned into a friendship like the ones Ive mentioned. Because of such a friendship we had Dr Jonathan Rose and Sarah at our house for a bit of hospitality and the same Allard they were competing in on the Lakeland was the one that broke down at Prescott those years ago. Originally built, owned and driven by Sydney Allard himself it spent the night prior to the event in my workshop nicely tucked up with the rain and gales howling outside.

Fortunately the awful weather passed during the night and held off until about 2.30pm on Saturday afternoon so many people had a relatively dry event, those that were still out and about after 2.30pm will have a very different story to tell as the heavens opened and the marshals did a superb job coping with conditions in the heavy localised downpours.



With the rigid planning rules allowing virtually no new properties to be built in the Buttermere valley it looks no different now seeing a GN or an Austin 7 or similar car travelling along those picturesque narrow roads alongside Buttermere Lake than it did in the 1930s and 40s, the Herdwick sheep often lying in the road as they have done since roads were first constructed as the tarmac seems to attract the sheep as a bed for some strange reason. The tarmac was originally laid by steam road rollers many years ago, prior to that they were unsurfaced tracks of course but surfacing the road up Honister Pass would have really been a difficult job, someone told me they used steel cables and winches as the road rollers themselves didn't have enough grip with their steel wheels, it would be really interesting to see some photos or film of this work being done.

A few years ago Fred Dibnah went over some Lakeland passes with his traction engine and made a documentary about it but Fred's traction engine was shod with rubber tyres so afforded much better grip than the steam rollers. Another Wigton member Ian Smith from Harrington is well known as one of the country's best steam engineers, a real hands on expert on steam engines, he comes to Dalemain classic show and on pub runs in either his green Alvis 12/70 or his or maroon one. Ian was a friend of Fred Dibnah's as Ian was chief engineer on the Laal Ratty for many years and Fred made use of the facilities filling up the water tanks at the Ratty station. Ian built the steam loco Northern Rock in 1977 at Ravenglass, this loco has been in continuous service since and many of you like myself will have been on a train pulled by it on a "Santa Express" or during a summer trip, Ian built another couple of similar locos and they went to a theme park in in Japan.

Lets hope with all the new regulations that seem to come out endlessly people will still be able to pit their cars and their skill against other similar individuals for many years to come in the Lakeland and other trials, it is a real adventure for those taking part, provides great entertainment and a reason to visit Cumbria for lots of others and the event because its bringing lots of visitors to the area greatly benefits the local economy as well as providing employment for those with businesses up and down the country providing parts and services for these wonderful old cars.

Keith Thomas.

## Autojumble



A set of 4 alloy wheels size 7.5J x 17 shod with Dunlop Sports D3 winter tyres that have had little use as can be seen. From an E Class estate in 2011.

The asking price is £200 which seems reasonable given the tyres are currently circa £113 each. Tyre size is 225 x 45 x 17

Contact details are Dr J Burn on 016977 2424.

# Andy's Armchair

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

An experiment is about to start, approved by Ofgem, which over the next three years will monitor up to 3000 electric cars on British roads. This hopes to assess and understand the impact and demand placed upon the national grid and find out the amount of energy consumed, time taken to charge, overall distance travelled and the cost. Maybe it's just me being a cynical old whatsit but wouldn't you have expected this to have been done some time ago? That way we could all feel secure in the knowledge that the lights wouldn't be going out at 7pm when the car charging points were all switched on. One thing's for sure, if the results look dodgy they'll either be massaged or swept under the carpet and we'll all be left in the dark quite possibly in more ways than one.

I was recently having a quick browse through the Graham Hill biography "Life at the limit" and noticed what I felt to be an interesting photo on page 145, which showed Mr Hill running onto the grass at Crystal Palace the date being 3/6/68. The car, a Lotus 48 F2 machine is shown on three wheels, the offside rear being detached and rolling across the track away from the car. Now on closer inspection the rim and tyre are intact but the whole centre, spinner, and stubs of the six alloy spokes appear to be still attached to the hub.

This got me thinking as the race took place less than two months after Clark was killed at Hockenheim in April and the car raced by Hill in June was the sister car to the one in which Clark crashed so could there be a link between what happened at Crystal Palace and what happened in Germany. I then turned to the findings of Peter Jowitt's report which he made after studying the remains of the wrecked car where I concentrated on aspects relating to wheels and tyres which I hoped would provide a link between the two accidents.

The main points are that only the left rear tyre remained inflated after the crash and the right rear being flat and having a small cut in the tread which stopped it retaining air when re-inflated, a possible cause? Both front tyres were flat, showed signs of impact and both front wheels were fractured, one tyre being completely off the rim, the other loosely attached although the whole outer rim edge is dramatically chewed away right round the circumference.

Looking at another picture, the long scrapes on the track would seem to indicate more of the car than the tyres was in contact with the Tarmac well before it went onto the grass.

Obviously nothing will change, it's all history, probably no one will ever know for sure what happened, but could there be a link between the two events outlined above. Were the wheels a poorly manufactured batch, and did a fracture in one of the fronts, probably the left, cause the crash, the tyre coming off the rim and tugging the car to the left would explain the chewed up outer edge and the scrape marks on the road. It's possible, after all the rear tyre on that side was still inflated so it couldn't have caused any damage to the Tarmac.

Who knows but it's certainly food for thought.

Ends.

# What's On

## WMC events and other events of interest

### January

10-14		Autosport Show at the NEC
16th	Wed	Committee Meeting
27th	Sun	Autosolo ay Maryport

### February

2nd	Sat	Awards Dinner at Keswick
20th	Wed	Midweek Meander
22-24		Race Retro at Stoneleigh
23rd	Sat	FSAC Northern Trial

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