

Wigton Motor Club Ltd

Start Line

Issue 07/20

www.wigtonmc.co.uk

July 2020

**Free Membership for 2021
for all current members**

&

**Free membership for all
under 25s**

**Were part of a raft of initiatives agreed at the June
committee meeting.**

Motorsport for All

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Talking Point

Topical Comment from the world of motoring

Six months ago, if it had been announced that the government has told people to use their cars rather than public transport, or that Simon Rogan's Michelin starred restaurants would be doing take-aways you would had though the world has gone mad.

Back in my teaching days in the mid nineties we had a group reading book about a girl who lived in 2030 and she was visited by her grandmother who told her about her childhood. Now the little girls lived with her family in a "living pod". Each morning her parents went next door tot heir "work pod" and the girl stayed behind to do ger lessons in the main room where a wall transformed into a big screen. The teacher and the other children appeared on the screen for the inter action. She had never met any of them. Fitness and sport were all done virtually although hat word was not used. At set times food was delivered on a conveyer belt according to an order placed earlier. All shopping was done on line.

There was no need to go outside as it was believed too much sunlight was not good for you. When holidays happened you chose from a menu of destinations and pressed some buttons on the master computer and your living pod transformed to a Costa or ski slope as required for a week.

Little did the author realise that it would happen ten years earlier! So many things have changed, will local newspapers survive? Will we give up using money? Will people continue to work from home? Will they have "work pods" in the garden? Will we buy cars on line and will they be delivered to our door? Will all our sport be done virtually? Most of these things are happening already.

Will we sit in our classic cars in the garage with a big screen and have virtually classic tours? The technology is there.

I am sure that for motorsport there will be lasting changes. I think that rallying will be the most endangered form of our sport, being multi venue. There will be a need for specific motorsport venues to cover many disciplines rather than the casual use of land as we do now.

Time will tell!

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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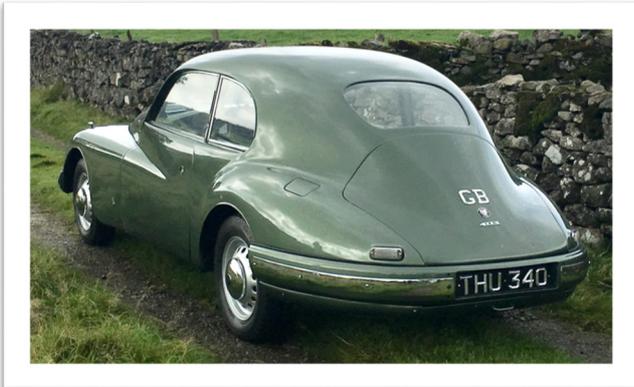
Two Many Projects!

Restoring two cars simultaneously seemed a good idea, when one restoration stalls for one reason or another, you can hibernate it and make progress on the second one (that's the theory). What it means in practice is that instead of having a new car in say 3 years it actually takes more than twice as long and the finances suffer as the expensive painting and trimming costs also arrive simultaneously.

My cars of choice were a 1954 Bristol and a Jaguar XK150 DHC, the Bristol I had bought in boxes following a failed restoration attempt, it had been waiting for 10 years so it was high time to get a start.

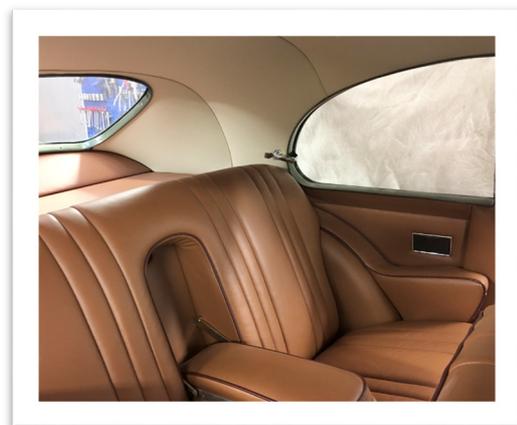
The second car was bought to scratch the DHC itch, it was complete, or so it seemed and in sound condition; even experienced restorers can be fooled, not that that mattered as I only know one way to restore cars, suffice to tell it was a basket case with many incorrect bits fitted during the banger phase of its life.

Bristols are complicated cars with a weird rear axle arrangement and a transverse front spring. Engines are complex with a low set cam shaft driving the valves via push rods on the inlet side and bell cranks across the top of the head to activate the exhausts.



The aluminium cylinder heads were not great quality from the foundry, and with sixty years of neglect and no modern antifreeze or inhibitor its failure was perhaps to be expected. A good second hand head was found and machined to modern standards and fitted with everything new.

The great quality of the Bristol build was evident everywhere even the bolts have part numbers stamped on the head, if all else fails you can refer to the magnificent workshop manual (God forbid).



The body repair was interesting as the previous restorer had removed the aluminium skin from the superleggera structure, why I never worked out as the body was good except for a little accident damage and superficial corrosion between the aluminium and steel substructure. Much of the substructure had been beautifully replaced but judging by the original pieces which came with the car none of it needed more than a clean and good painting. I always try to retain as much as possible of the original, in fact some of the new bits were discarded and the originals suitably restored were reinstated.

Andy Gibbs



The Jaguar was simple mechanically, I could not buy the parts for the engine for the cost of a professional rebuild so that was subcontracted. The remaining mechanical work included a five-speed gear box, four pot brakes on the front and the renewing of discs all round, suspension bushes, brake and fuel lines was straight forward and extremely enjoyable.

Reassembly on to the original chassis fresh from the grit blasters, repaired zinc sprayed and painted with chassis black was a delight



Sadly, the body was a virtual right off as after soda blasting there wasn't much sound metal left, the way for ward was to replace everything to the rear of the A post including a complete rear end.

Painting and trimming comes down to how far do you want to go, how much can you do yourself and how much are you prepared to spend.

Painting on cars is critical, a poor paint job on a beautifully restored car seems to be throwing away years of work. Unfortunately good paint is expensive even if you do a lot of prep yourself, my view is that it has to be right so grin and bear it.

Foot note

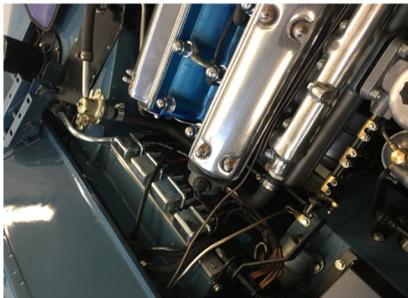
The Bristol is painted Cambridge grey which is in fact green!

Tony Crook the latter-day owner of The Bristol Car company wrote off his MG road car in collision with a green Foden Steam Lorry, hence no green Bristols.

The Jaguar is Cotswold blue an extremely distinctive and rare colour, the car is one of the last 600 XK150s built.

Both cars will be out and around this year, if you spot them come have a have includ-good here).

and chat (I only ed the bits



PG Tips

Chairman Peter Reflects On His Month

I think my chances of making any motorsport events this year finally disappeared when I got an email from Harewood announcing they were opening up again in August (all going well) but numbers would be limited and only their own members would be eligible to enter. So in order to get a place I'd need to join BARC (which isn't cheap by all accounts) and buy a licence, hope to be one of the few to get an entry and all for a possible maximum of 1 or 2 events. Everything else appears to be on hold – most of the Scottish events are cancelled or unscheduled and my little English favourites like Scammonden are off altogether due to access issues. In my heart I probably realised it was going that way some months ago but I had held out hope that more events might run.

In order to cheer myself up I put the Citroen through an MOT (that it didn't need thanks to the government MOT extension) and it passed with flying colours. Of course that didn't really cheer me up but it did make the car more saleable and one thing I learned last month in the hot weather, was that a car with warm air blowing at you all the time is quite unpleasant. The stuck heater flap on the driver's side was a problem of some size – dashboard out and probably 2 days of my life. Then there was the rattling rear suspension that was most likely the beam bushes that are a bitch to replace and not forgetting the clutch and dual mass flywheel that occasionally rattled their intention to die at some point (maybe not for 10000 or more miles but being an older French car they would probably give up at the least opportune moment). You know where this is going now.....I did the man maths and saw a nice Merc 220 CDI estate with a tow bar fitted in black in a dealer just re-opening after lockdown. It had been with them since the week of lockdown when they had it MOT'd and then sat in a lock up. They'd knocked £500 off it to shift it and when I then offered them even less they agreed so the car shuffle was on! The Citroen went on Ebay - I listed all faults because I am always honest about these things and then I had to endure one man messaging me about 20 times asking quite ridiculous questions about it. Including whether or not he'd be able to get replacement rear headrests for it because the ones in it were black and not dark grey (I hadn't even noticed until he pointed it out!). He was the high bidder so I was patient and polite.....and then he got outbid at the last minute by an antiques dealer from Bedford. He asked me how I'd like paid so I told him by bank transfer. He turned up the next day with cash! He'd just run his previous C5 into the ground and didn't seem remotely bothered about any of the faults on my car and after sitting on hold for half an hour to his insurance company in my garage block on his mobile (E-Sure in case you want to avoid terrible customer service!) he set off back with his long suffering wife in a Chrysler Crossfire. He got home in it and seemed happy.

2 days later I got a Shiply company to deliver the Merc. A Dutch sounding man in a lorry with my car and another on it, with a trailer on the back and another car on that dropped it off at 7am on Sunday morning. I'd been on nightshift so it was no great shakes for me. He'd been on the road for 4 hours already and was heading to Glasgow. I am fairly confident he woke up a significant portion of the neighbours when he unloaded it because he had to dismantle the whole rig and move the trailer and the other car around to get it off (bad planning!) but as it was on the main road through they weren't my near neighbours J (good planning!). The Merc is very smart indeed – black and very clean with a lovely interior and only a short list of things to sort. It smells absolutely lovely inside with the leather interior and it feels like you could have a head on collision with a bus and walk away. Its shocks are a bit long in the tooth but it has new tyres and everything seems to work. Obviously as I go along I will probably find a multitude of niggles to sort to occupy me now I can't race, although to be honest I'm busier than I've ever been with home schooling, work, shopping for my parents and the rest of life's tribulations.

RAC RALLY 2019

Stuart Egglestone/Brian (Dak) Hodgson

Mk2 Escort 2.0 Pinto No 19

Months of preparation leading up to the event to get everything ready combined with work resulted in the usual late nights and lack of sleep, which isn't as bad as it sounds.

Because of the length of the event, long days with little sleep and wrestling at the wheel for 4 days and 300 stage miles, its actually good training to work long hours getting the car ready as its gets your body and mind used to the task ahead.

The usual getting the car looking presentable, going through every working part, renewing suspension, brakes etc, a last minute engine rebuild, sorting the spares is all hard work but an absolute must to get a reliable car out.



I had decided to try a different tyre brand for this event having tried them on the Galloway Hills, so stepping away from what Id been used to with the escort.

Early Thursday morning, the pickup and trailer with Marcus, Dak, Reece and Bob Hill getting a lift, the van with Andy & Lisa Bird and myself left to head to Leominster stopping for breakfast en route.

Once arriving and unloading we headed straight for scrutineering which didn't take long. After signing on it was a case of making sure the car was ready to start for 2 stages in the dark of Radnor.

Once arriving and queuing at the stage we learned we'd only have 1 pass of the stage due to thick fog which was meaning it was taking to long for all the cars to get through in the allocated time.

Helmets on and 2nd in the queue to start and the stage was stopped. Unfortunately, due to Alan Walkers car taking fire the stage had to be cancelled. So, a disappointing start to the event, so non competitive we drove through in convoy.

Friday

4 stages ran twice over near and on Epynt ranges

A damp day making conditions slippery didn't suit the compound of the tyres, but I had to stick with them to give them a fair chance.

First loop over and a steady clean run saw us 2nd in class just outside the top 10.

As the day passed the wetter it got which maybe made the reruns less muddy which slightly improved my traction and finishing closer to the class lead at the end, maybe darkness helping too.

Then it was a good check over and load up and head for home arriving back late Friday night.

Saturday

Around 100 miles in the Kershope and Kielder complex meant for a long tough day in very challenging conditions.

16 miles of Kershope to begin and what a classic stage this is with barely any straights of any distance for a rest.

Happy with my drive but the time a little disappointing, then across the road into the short Arthurs Seat. Very slippery, muddy stage didn't suit the tyres at all causing us to almost visit the scenery a couple of times, and a time that was the worst of the event resulting in a change of brand back to



Pirelli at service.

After a good check over back to the 2nd pass of Kershope which near the river on the Scottish side had rutted very badly which sadly broke Matthew Robinson's diff.

We had another good go through there and even with the stage being rougher we managed to take around 40 seconds off our first pass giving us a 3rd overall time which did wonders for my confidence which was all down to the tyres.

Next across into Kielder for a very fast stage with blind flat crests, some with corners over them, proper killer Kielder stuff. I took a wrong decision on compound and went for the harder one which was a mistake but didn't cost too much, then spotlights fitted for the next 15 miles of Chiridonhead.

This stage was not only in the dark but also had patchy fog which caught out Simon Webster and Josh Browne who was having a storming rally until ending up in a ditch over one of those deceptive crests. A good time for us took us into service for a routine check before heading across to Harwood forest near to Otterburn ranges.

This forest is on top of a hill and much narrower than Kielder, so a different technique is required, combined with dense fog that provided about 2 feet visibility in front of the bonnet made it very character building.

I thought we were going at a reasonable pace then about 8 miles in, the likeable Irishman Barry McKenna's lights were behind me, so straight away I pulled over to not hold him up and let him lead the way to the finish with us both catching Ben Friend before the finish.

He was a brave man to drive at that pace which gave him the quickest time but by following him, it allowed me to learn some useful things which proved it worked for the final 2 stages back in Pundershaw and Paddaburn giving us 4th fastest times.

The fog in the dark was extremely difficult especially when it was patchy because you are having to switch your lights up and down depending how bad and also adjust your eyes to the changing conditions. Also, not to forget the excellent job from Dak delivering the notes at the right time which is so difficult when you can't see anything.

Safely back to Carlisle for a thorough check and new brake pads, tyres etc lying 4th overall.



Sunday

South Scotland with Greskine and Ae run twice with a service at Lockerbie Truckstop in between.

Had a good clear run over those then off up to Twiglees, Castle o'er and Craik which was the first of the day in the dark.

Craik is quite a fast stage but can be very loose, so it has to be treated with respect and one which I almost got caught out and into a notorious ditch.

Then back to Twiglees and Castle O'er to complete Sunday's 71 miles still holding on-

to 4th but having Wayne Sisson closing in on us in his Mitsubishi Galant.

Monday

The final day back into Kielder but still another 66 miles to get through with the final stage being nearly 18 miles.

A short 7 miles in Whitrope partly foggy and quite loose so respect was needed but losing 9 seconds to Wayne, then 12 miles in Falstone very fast stage with us taking 1 back.

Into service at the dam then the 18 miles of Bewshaugh, Within the first mile of the stage the tyres didn't have enough heat which resulted us off into a big ditch, but in desperation having come this far kept the foot in and somehow she climbed out and on we went now with an extra urgency which further through caused an overshoot on a downhill hairpin. Gathering my head, we pressed on and at the end only dropped 9 to Wayne.

After service we had no new tyres left so had to make the best of what we had but managed to take another second out of Wayne in Falstone with one stage left.

In service we fitted the best tyres we had but it was raining quite steadily which made the 2nd pass through Bewshaugh very slippery.



With what happened first pass through, bearing in mind we had 19 seconds in hand I took it quickly but safely with a clean run 4th fastest convinced it was enough. Dak was sure also but when the times eventually came through, he'd taken 20 seconds to beat us by 1.

After holding him back all day it was a disappointment for me to let 4th go but was still happy to have finished 5th and with little damage considering the length of the event.

Credit has to go to Marty

McCormack and Jason Pritchard who are on another level and making it more exciting to watch.

A big thank you must go to Dak for the effort that's not always recognised as a codriver

Marcus, Reece, Andy & Lisa and Andy Brench for giving up their time to whom we couldn't do the event without them.

Mark for the preparation of the car keeping up its 100% finishing record, Dave and Graham Martin for fitting up the tyres every event and a vital sponsor of Nobles Garage to make such a costly event a bit more affordable, thank you.

Id just also like to say how nice it is to see support on the stages, in the service area and on social media, it all helps to push you on.

Credit must go to Colin, Nicola and the whole RAC team members for top class organisation, to all the marshals whether on stage or in service, in a control standing out in all weathers for long hours, the event wouldn't happen without you.

Stuart & Dak

Solway 2011

Photos by Tony North

From The Top

News from UK Motorsport, Regions and the WMC Committee

Hugh Chambers MS UK CEO

Thursday 25 June 2020

As the 2019 Wales Rally GB drew to a close on the 6th of October last year, the world focused on Ott Tänak, standing on the top step of the podium. Along the sea front in Llandudno, crowds of fans crammed tightly against the barriers, all trying to get a glimpse of the stars spraying champagne and lifting trophies aloft. And now, almost inconceivably, just eight months later, the whole world has changed in every way; no crowds, no cramming and there is no Wales Rally GB in 2020. While significant progress is being made to combat the virus worldwide, there remains considerable uncertainty regarding mass gatherings, social distancing and travel restrictions, plus the possibility of a resurgence of viral transmissions later in the year. After extensive discussions with our principal partner, the Welsh Government, the very difficult decision was taken to cancel the UK round of the WRC. As with all rallies, we rely on the goodwill of the local community and the integration of all emergency services therein, and as such we could not plan with any degree of confidence.

Our collective responsibility and absolute priority must always be the safety of all involved, whether they be competitors, officials, spectators or the many thousands of volunteers who share our passion for this sport. We respect and understand that rural communities are resisting the influx of outsiders into their midst, and in fact the Welsh Tourism Board has adopted a new tagline of “Visit Wales – Later”. The prospect of 100,000 visitors descending on them in October would be met with much hostility now. I would personally like to thank all of the fans and volunteers who support the rally year after year for their generous understanding of this impossible decision.

All of the feedback has been that this was the inevitable and correct decision. Not that this makes it any easier to bear. Our round of the WRC has been a permanent fixture on the calendar since its inception, and in fact the rally goes all the way back to 1932. Since the war the event has only been suspended twice, in 1957 and 1967. So, it is very distressing to see this year’s event come to a halt, especially as Wales’s own star, Elfyn Evans is in such fine form and would no doubt would have given cause for great national pride. The good news is the Welsh Government is very keen for the rally to rebound next year with an even stronger round of the WRC than before, and we are in discussion with the FIA and the WRC promoter to try to secure this commitment for next year.



**motor
sport
UK**

**Recognised
Club**

Like all who have been in lockdown for weeks, there has been time to tackle the tasks that have previously eluded us at home; and probably more than a few motorsport enthusiasts have taken the chance to open a box or two of memorabilia and archive materials. As you can see from the image, one I came across, rolled in a cardboard tube for the past 48 years, was a poster I acquired at the 1972 RAC Rally. As I am sure you are aware, that was an historic event, with Roger Clark and Tony Mason scoring their first win on the rally. The next year, 1973, would see the inauguration of the FIA World Rally Championship, and the beginning of a process that condensed and standardised rallies to the compact format we see today.

Looking at the programme for 1972, the rally spanned four days, but within that the competitors only stopped for one night's rest. Other than that, it was flat out all the way. The event was based in York, but encompassed stages in Scotland, Wales and England, with a presence across the country that made national news headlines. Roads were lined with spectators in the fashion of the Tour de France. There were nine factory teams, each with three drivers, and a diversity of cars you do not see today. Of course, we cannot turn back the clock, but what I take from this is that we need to make rallying more visible, more accessible and more relevant. And I don't see that as unique to rallying, but across the full spectrum of motorsport.

That is our challenge and we need to look at ways in which we can innovate with formats, presentation, promotion and above all costs. Perhaps the biggest winner through this crisis has been the broad adoption of Esports, demonstrating the sport's appeal in the virtual realm as well as the real world. The latest edition of [Revolution Magazine](#) is packed full of insights charting the rise of digital motorsport disciplines.

On an equally positive note we have been successful in our lobbying of UK Government in Westminster to allow the F1 races to take place in August, and for the free movement of the F1 personnel throughout the season. We have worked very closely with the government in the form of the Department of Culture Media and Sport, presenting the case for motorsport to resume as quickly as it is safe to do so.

The guidelines we have created with a broad range of stakeholders have been applauded by the FIA and are now being adapted and adopted by other ASN countries around the world. Motorsport will restart on the 4th of July, but that is only the beginning of the journey. The biggest challenge will lie in the safe execution of the guidelines. It is our incredible community and network of clubs that need to execute the delivery and decide how to implement them in practice, on the ground. We are providing training to officials, so they are best equipped to deal with eventualities.

The creation of COVID-19 officers will mean we have people with a specific focus on compliance, and also feedback of how these implementations work in the real world. It will take time for the community to gain full confidence in the measures, but the signs so far are that in circuit racing, at least, the grids will be packed, and racing will resume in a surge of activity. I hope that you and your fami

lies are well and keeping safe. Thank you for your continued support of the sport we all love. Soon it is time to start our engines again

kind regards,

Hugh Chambers CEO, Motorsport UK

Committee Notes

It was agreed that all existing members would get free membership for 2021 due to the lack of events this year and that many members will be suffering financial hardship.. It was also agreed that all new members under 25 would get free membership to encourage more younger members to join.

We are looking to buy a simulator so that members can partake in esports.

We are investigating using a commercial membership system.

Entries for major events will be done via an online system.

We are also looking at how to ease the treasurer's role by taking on outside help.

We will focus on event primarily for our members and reduce the number of major events unless there are new teams willing to run them.

There will be monthly casual meetings, mainly at the Motor House but at other places, with no need to pre enter.

We have two social runs planned for the summer plus a track night at Rowrah.

The Articles of Association of our limited company are being checked as they are 40 years old.

The Motor House is progressing, albeit slowly due to the lockdown.



Classic Column

News from the Classic and Historic Scene

From Joe Norman:

Whilst doing some family research I came across the following:

From the files of the West Cumberland Times dated June 17th 1899

First Lorry, – A large crowd of people was to be seen at the Church corner at Maryport on Wednesday afternoon, word having got around that Messrs Carr & Co's motor lorry was expected from Carlisle. The crowd was rewarded after a wait of about an hour and a half. A number of boys on bicycles had the greatest difficulty to keep pace with the automatic monster.

From Steve Parker:

I spotted this at Muker Show a couple of years ago, it has a suppliers plaque on the mudguard which says - County Garage!! Anybody remember selling it?



It's remarkable how many interesting cars appear on the social media pages: UK Barn Finds & Unfinished Projects. These are not the wrecks that appear in the monthlies' "Rust in Peace" but cars that have been stored away for years and are readily restorable. Most are linked to Ebay ads or other sales pages and it does look as it most if not all get new homes. One or two gems as well. Quite a few of the unfinished projects are kit cars that look 90% complete. You wonder why they have not been finished, is it the wiring or some insurmountable issue that has prevented completion?

Did you know that the most valuable part of your car when you scrap it is the catalytic converter? If you scrap a car you might get £200 for it but the "dismantler" will get more than that for the "cat". If you can find one of the dealers who refurbish them and cut out the middle men you can get over £400 for certain types. Modern ones are in high demand and there is now a criminal element stealing them. SUVs and 4x4s are the most vulnerable as they are high off the ground, allowing the crooks to get under and cut the "cat" out of the exhaust system and escape in a few minutes leaving the car immobile.

Welcome!

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

Jonathon & Janice Shaw and family of Carlisle

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

John Sloan on 01900 85833

or by email at: wigtonmcmemb@outlook.com

Marshal Force

Marshals are the life blood of our activities

Forthcoming events:

**A few marshals needed for the Rowrah track night on
July 21st**

Contact Graeme on gtfmg@yahoo.co.uk

.....HOW much?!!

In my experience you either have the time or the moneyor on some occasions, neither. I find mechanic-ing is best left to the professionals these days. Not for me the shredded knuckles and oily finger nails, freezing your 'nads off in a desolate garage with only an ancient radio tuned to The Archers for company. I don't complain about paying a fair price for the services of my local garage – we have had a good relationship over the years. Well, you have to if you own a Land Rover. Sorry to keep banging on about it – but those of you who read this drivel now and again will know that mine has a particular habit of presenting me with a stream of bills with monotonous regularity which I suspect is majorly helping to keep JLR in business. The Landie that is, not the local garage.

I confess to having been singlehandedly responsible for climate change in West Cumbria a couple of months back. I drove 8 miles from home with what smelled like a minor fuel leak but by the time I reached the garage premises it had developed into a seriously leaky fuel filter which had liberally coated the whole vehicle with a layer of diesel and then, to add insult to injury, dumped half a tank of it onto their forecourt before they got it sorted. Got away with paying £80 on that occasion - plus the cost of the leaked diesel, which was nearly as much, but we'll draw a veil over that bit. Anyway they threw in a free pressure wash so I could see out of the windows on the drive home so that was all good.

Now, I have a brother who is the font of all knowledge when it comes to anything mechanical or electrical. He runs a 21 year old Toyota Yaris and an 18 year old Toyota Corolla T Sport. Both are low mileage, both of them are immaculate but neither are worth much money on the open market – but to him they are his pride and joy. And he has lots of time so he does all his own repairs, except, that is, for exhaust systems. Well, they're enough to try the patience of a saint, aren't they? Never quite the same as the original and always needing a bracket that doesn't appear to be supplied with the new part and the old bracket requires three tins of WD40 and the skills of an orthopaedic surgeon to remove it. So he went to Quickfit – like you do. They gave him a quote of £150 to replace the midsection on the Yaris – a car whose trade-in value currently stands at three times that for the whole vehicle. So Ron (the brother – not our equally lovely Mr Palmer) ordered the part from the internet for £45 which was delivered FOC the next day and fitted by his local garage for £30 the day after. RE-SULT and £75 saved. Bargain.

So I also have a sister who drives a 4 year old Vauxhall Corsa which developed a misfire at 28K miles. In order to maintain the warranty she took it back to the Main Dealer who diagnosed a faulty coil pack and probably worn spark plugs neither of which were covered by the aforementioned warranty. (Well they wouldn't be, would they?) But they would be delighted to relieve her of £180 to put matters right and when would she like to bring the car in? The sister is not to be messed with – it runs in the family – so the answer between clenched teeth was a very polite “Never”. So she had a go herself (she also has lots of time) and took a punt on new plugs not being required. Ordered the TORX tool necessary to remove the coil pack under the plastic housing and took it all apart and found this:

So instead of ordering a full replacement pack costing upwards of £80 she found a coil repair pack on Ebay, fitted the new springs, put it all back together and BINGO – problem solved. Took half an hour. No more Mr Main Dealer.



Nearly forgot to say.....HOW much.....? The answer.....SIX POUNDS AND SEVENTY FIVE PENCE – yes, really. You do the maths.

Cheers!
Marian (aka Maz)

Elderly Utterances

The Voice of Experience!

Ron Palmer has his say

One of the unforgettable benefits of my 40 years in the retail motor trade was joining other dealers whether Ford or Jaguar at the launch events for new models. The following is largely a reprint of an article I wrote in the winter of 2001/02.

‘We were running line astern with three other cars on a quiet stretch of motorway. Nothing too unusual about that except that our car was the new Jaguar S-Type ‘R’, the road was the A8 Autoroute in the south of France and the speedo was reading 220kph plus.

As part of the launch programmes for the new models I had been invited to a weekend in St Tropez to appraise and drive them. Waking at 4.30am and dragging a reluctant right leg (recovering from a recent repair to a ruptured quadriceps tendon) I was greeted by 4 or 5 inches of fresh snow and blizzard conditions as I made my way to the car to drive to Newcastle to catch my connecting flight to Stansted. I almost turned round and headed back to bed but the attraction of what lay ahead made me carry on. Whatever snow you have in Carlisle you can be certain the A69 will have rather more. The deciding factor to continue was my transport from home which was a Jaguar 2.5 X-Type Auto with AWD. Roads are quiet at 5am on a Saturday and my progress was steady on the largely untreated road surfaces and I began to enjoy the experience of driving on snow for the first time in this car. Approaching the Corbridge roundabout a little too briskly still in driving snow I found myself confronted with a police car with the blues lit and the officer out of the car talking to a motorist. With no braking whatsoever there was no alternative but to continue for a full 360 circuit at the roundabout while I slowed sufficiently to take the correct exit as I passed the two still deep in conversation.

A little further on towards Newcastle on the A69 there is a long stretch of uphill gradient where ice had stopped any progress from traffic in both lanes with the blockage extending for two or three hundred yards. Nothing moving with the jam mostly caused by articulated trucks. Even at this time of day the traffic was building with apparently nowhere to go. After a little time for thought a Range Rover ahead of me moved over to the left on to the hard shoulder and grass verge still covered in fresh snow and began to pass the jam. Seemed like a good idea so I followed and cleared the blockage in a minute or two. Nothing else seemed to follow and soon the lights of the stranded vehicles were left behind.

I left the X-Type in the snow covered car park and thought it had acquitted itself well in the conditions. After changing planes at Stansted into a shiny new 737/700 of Fordair we flew to Toulon and transferred by coach to the splendid Chateau de la Messardiere hotel on a hilltop overlooking the Med. just outside St Tropez. After a pleasant (dry) lunch we were ready for a briefing and our first ride and drive in the 2litre X-Type. Two drivers were allocated to each car and at intervals changed cars and drivers.

This run lasted two hours and the 20 cars in the convoy were headed and tailed by BMW bike riding gendarmes who had volunteered to escort the British Jaguar Dealers. These guys carried out their duties with flair and imagination, blocking off all traffic from intersections and waving us through traffic lights at red. Our only instructions were not to damage the cars, not to get lost and not to overtake the cops. The X-Types were a revelation on the smooth twisty roads selected for us in the foothills of

Fife Road Trip

Back in early March in times of normality (seems a life time away) we had a week in Fife. As a “native” of Fife being born in St. Andrews it was a trip down memory lane as over the years with a loss of relatives visits have been increasingly infrequent.

We had very good accommodation at the Kilconquhar Castle complex, a lovely bungalow and excellent food. It was also the first holiday for our puppy Gem,. As well as visiting old haunts we were planning on doing part of the Fife Coastal Path.



The drive up was not too pleasant being wet and sleety but the rest of the week was great for walking. The coastal path is easy going with the lovely fishing villages every few miles.

Fife has a lot of motorsport connections perhaps the most important being the birthplace of Jim Clark at Kilmany, whose is usually linked to Chirnside and Duns where his farmer parents moved when he was about six.

St. Andrews is a lovely little city with a real buzz from the throngs of students there. Not too far away is Tentsmuir Forest. This was used as a rally stage is years gone by but being very sandy it cut up badly. It’s now a nature reserve with forest and sand dune walks, well worth a visit.

Dundee is just over the Tay which can be crossed these days by both trial and road bridges but it was the scene of the tragic Tay Bridge Disaster on 1879 when the bridge collapsed with a train on it and all were lost. The Cumbrian connection is that it was

designed by Sir Thomas Bouch who was born in Thursby.

Just to the south of St. Andrews is the Kinkell Braes caravan park. In days gone by it was used as a hill climb out of the holiday season and was quite a steep climb.

Another venue on the coast is Crail airfield or Crail Raceway as it is now called. There is a rally there each spring and monthly drag/drift types of event out with Motorsport UK regulations. However for many years it was a venue for sprints and a round of the Scottish Championship. On a bad day it can be a God forsaken place on the edge of the Forth if the wind is blowing the har in. It was quite a long course taking about here minutes and there was a real danger of catching, or being caught. I remember once catching George Cooper’s MG J2 and then getting a rerun with hot tyres and red mist! I got a class record which still stands today, purely because it was the last sprint to take place there!

East Fife was a haven of top drivers in the heyday of the sport with Donald Heggie,, Bill Taylor and Charles Sampson all being natives of the area. It would seem that both the local car clubs have bitten the dust with Dunfermline CC being the main one for both Fife and Edinburgh.

While we think of Knockhill as the Fife racing circuit some seventy years ago there was racing at the Beveridge Park in Kirkaldy in the early post war years. Mainly motor bikes but the fledgling 500cc F3 cars had a few races, although parts were too narrow for passing.

On the way home from Fife I bought some fuel, nothing special about that until I say I next filled the Octavia up on June 18th!



We stopped off at the Kelpies en route. This is near Falkirk and are huge metal sculptures of the mythical Gaelic sea horses based around a bason on the Forth Clyde Canal. They get illuminated a night so are quite striking.

They are part of the Helix Parkland project with lots of walks and cycle ways.



Not far away is the Falkirk Wheel while joins the Forth Clyde Canal with the Union Canal which had previously bene done by a flight of eleven locks, long dismantled. The project uses the weight of the water to life the lower tank with the boat in to the top. There are all sorts of other attractions a the visitor centre.

If you are into industrial archaeology and modern engineer solutions it's a well worth place to visit.



Provence although the Saturday traffic even in February tended to slow things just a little. A business presentation followed the drive and was followed by cocktails, dinner and a very pleasant evening in the Chateau.

Sunday opened with breakfast at 7am and following a driver briefing we were on the road by 8.00. This time we were driving the new S-Type, again with two to a car and the opportunity to try three derivatives. In our case we had a 2.5 V6 manual, a 3.0 Sport Manual and a range topping 4.2 super-charged V8 S-Type 'R' with 6 speed auto box and 400 bhp on tap. This time the traffic was light and the police even more enthusiastic. After settling in the pace quickened and we were able to put the cars through their paces in a way not remotely possible on the road in the UK and with police encouragement.

And this is where we came in, the roads were a superb mix but all with billiard smooth surfaces chosen with care by our hosts. Through the hills there were endless twists and turns with sheer rock faces and vertical drops to catch the unwary. Inevitably at the pace we were travelling gaps appeared in the convoy and the catch up was great fun. Having climbed to a plateau the road was wider and as the landscape opened up we joined the Autoroute. Words alone cannot fully explain the sheer pleasure of driving these excellent new cars on superb French roads without the usual limitations. Jaguars are made for this and driving on our domestic roads will never be quite the same again despite living so close to the great roads in Cumbria and the Borders, after all the police are more likely to welcome us back home with a camera van than encouragement go faster.

After some four hours of driving the keys were prised from our grasp and we were taken to lunch at the splendid Joseph Restaurant on the quayside at St Tropez. After our farewells to our hosts we headed reluctantly back to the coach for the homeward flight to Stansted and onward to Newcastle arriving there at 9.30 and being relieved to find the weather much improved. This had been a weekend to remember with a combination of blue skies, warm temperatures, fabulous accommodation and food, wonderful roads and the fantastic Jaguars. Tough but someone has to do it!

Alas that was the way things were in the days and years before I retired some 15 years ago. Nowadays the media still get the freebies and mild bribery but the dealers seem to have to make do with something much more modest and usually in the UK.

A good time to be retired methinks.

Ron Palmer



Forthcoming Events

Evening Touring Event

By Dave Nicholson. This is subject to a number of factors.
It may be postponed until later in the summer

An email will be sent out in due course

Rowrah Test Night

6—9 on July 21st

This will replace the event cancelled in March
Entry forms will be emailed out.

August Evening Tour

August 12th

Organised by Charles Graves
More information in the next issue

Andy's Armchair

Andy Armstrong takes an irreverent look at motoring and motorsport

Both my readers might remember a couple of months ago when I was asking if anyone had photos of the late Eric Smith's racing mini as I was keen to paint a picture of the car being used in anger. Nothing came of these pleas and so as I had no way of getting the details of the car correct I reluctantly shelved the whole idea.

Anyhow last week I went to buy Motorsport (Motoring) News, having missed the previous issue as the shop was closed for some reason, and while I was picking it up my dear wife said "they've still got a copy of the one you missed, we'd better get that one as well".

What a wonderful woman, when we got home I opened the missed copy, and there inside was an article about the long defunct Ingliston circuit in Edinburgh, there was also a very tiny photo of Eric and his Mini lined up on the front row of the starting grid. It was miniscule but under a magnifying glass I could get lots of the necessary details and so, once the eye strain has gone the painting can get under way. Talk about lucky, I just hope I can do the lad justice now he's made himself available for me to put brush to paper.

Sad news about Stirling Moss, no doubt the greatest non champion champion and along with JYS probably the best ambassador for the sport our country is ever likely to produce. There's nothing more to say really after what contributors wrote in last months magazine, that's the penalty of having your copy in too early as he passed away after I'd sent my ramblings into the editor. So all I'll add is thank you Mr Moss, yours was the first racing drivers name I ever heard and as such was the impetus which created a passion for motor sport I'll have for the rest of my days. A pretty good gift from him to me as far as I'm concerned.

Moving on. I haven't competed in any motor sport events since 2005 but being a bit of an old sentimentalist I still have overalls, boots etc in a drawer under the spare bed. I was in there recently, looking for something else and came across a Sparco balaclava. Now this makes a super mask for when we're told to wear them. Don't put the whole thing on mind, they'll think you're a robber, just wear it round your neck and lift up the front as and when required.

On the subject of the virus, what do we all reckon on the likelihood of all the current British circuits surviving? Presumably up to now this year they've made absolutely nothing, and the likes of MSV which is run by Jonathan Palmer and maintains at least 5 venues must be starting to worry! It's a shame as he's certainly pumped a lot of money back into the track's he's taken over, and now his income from them has dried up. You can't help wondering if some current venues will follow the likes of Rockingham, Charterhall and Crystal Palace and join the list of ghost circuits around the country.

And finally what about F1? Much like top flight football its now more of a business than a sport. Currently it relies on selling TV rights and advertising but can't provide what its paid to do, can it survive?

In times gone by it would have, the likes of Ken Tyrell with a tiny staff and similar overheads would have hunkered down and when things improved reappeared at the circuits. The racing would have been just as good, the crowd would have been true enthusiasts and everything would have survived. Nowadays to make a fortune you have to spend one but when the vehicle you're using collapses business plans don't look so clever. I just hope Liberty Media have got contingency plans in place.

Ends

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What's On

WMC events and other events of interest

July

TBA Evening Run by Dave Nicholson

21st Test Evening at Rowrah, limited to 20 cars.

August

12th Evening Run by Charles Graves

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