

Wigton Motor Club Ltd

# Start Line

Issue 2024/12

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

December 2024

## Rally Of The Tests



George Topp reports

## For Members By Members

# WMC Committee

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Please ensure that you contact the appropriate official on the correct email address.

**Face Book: Wigton Motor Club & Wigton Motor Club Members**

# **Forthcoming Events**

## **Centenary Award Presentation**

**At the Motor House**

**2pm on Tuesday, December 10th**

**All welcome**

**Coffee, cake and Biscuits**

**We will welcome Elyse White and Ben  
Smith from MSUK**

**A chance to speak with members of the  
MSUK Club Development team**

## **Festive Autotest**

**J38 Services**

**December 29th**

**Entry form with this issue**

**Driving Motorsport Forward**

# Talking Point

## Topical Comment on Motoring & Motorsport

As we approach the end of another year it's important to thank all those who made it all happen. All the committee members, organisers, marshals etc. Without you we would not have any events. We'd love more people to get involved with the events. It's great to be part of a team.

I'd also like to thank all the contributors to Start Line. We have three who provide copy monthly and another four or five report on events or provide photos. Sadly, there are few club magazines left now. I used to exchange magazines with more than a dozen editors but now it is just a couple. If anyone know of clubs with magazines that would be interested in swapping each month, please let us know.

The Classic & Motorsport Show was a real highlight with the biggest ever turnout of exhibitors and the public. The fact that last year's show featured on Channel 5 a month before certainly helped. The Rose & Thistle Tour notched up a full entry list for a superb run in the Borders and northern England. The Meander for older cars is growing in popularity.

On the competitive side the promotion of autosolos as an alternative to autotests is an enormous success. The Solway Targa was fantastic, a tribute to the organising team and the fact we could get so many venues.

The social side goes from strength to strength with the nine Cars & Coffee at the Motor House being well attended as was Drive It Day. We also had a couple of enjoyable pub runs. Many thanks for Lynda & John for hosting the Cars & Coffee meets. The autojumble has raised money each month to more than cover the costs of running the Motor House so please keep the donations of your old spares and tools. At the moment stock levels are low.

We are well on with the planning of next year's events, and a full list will be in next month's Start Line, but the main events will remain on the equivalent date for 2025. We are always looking for new venues to use. Venues are the single biggest issue to all motor clubs, or rather the lack of them. No venues means no events. We are extra ordinarily lucky in our area and our organisers go to great lengths to look after those venues and their owners. It's always been an ambition of the Club to own their own venue and thus have venue security.

Thought for the month. There is only one car on sale now that has a manual handbrake.

GTF



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Contributions are welcomed - deadline the 25th of each month

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

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# Great Memories in Miniature

Most of us will have a number of hobbies outside motor sport and classics. As some of my close friends know I have collected model cars for many years. It's officially called autominology. I amassed a substantial number of Mint and boxed Dinky, Corgi and Yesteryear models plus many continental ones and did a fair bit of wheeling and dealing. I had three big display cases.

Then there was white metal kits and specialised model makers to fill in the gaps. At the same time, the "toy" side dropped away, and the main manufacturers started to chase the collector's market with limited editions.

When we moved to Blindcrake, most of the "toy" ones were packed away carefully and only about a hundred of the more interesting (to me) ones got in a display case in my office. I've tended not to add many to the collection other than ones of cars I am interested in or have owned. Did you know that one of our members became a Corgi Classic? Ed Glaister's Ford 100E race car was modelled a few years back. Now a few years ago my race MG needed a new engine, so a major part of the collection were taken over the Vectis Auctions at Teesside who are the main auctioneers for toys, models and dolls of all sorts. They got a good price and had worked out as a worthwhile investment. As usual if you had known back in the day, you would have bought more and salted them away.

In the last twenty years or so there have been new manufacturers (usually made in China) of highly detailed race and rally cars. A past member of the club and regular Mini competitor Steve Murphy, under the Billy Cooper Models label, imports these and sells them via Face Book and Ebay. I've resisted temptation until now.

Now as I have mentioned in part articles, when I wrote the Motor sport column on the Cumberland News I got to go to the Northern Guild of Motoring Writers press day at the Mintex Proving ground at Sherburn in Elmet in Yorkshire where you could try all the new models on either a road or track session. The track is long gone but it is the venue for The Motorist, car meeting place café, shop and workshop. It's just a short distance from the A1M if you are heading south.

These events were well attended as the hospitality in food and drink was very good. I used to reckon that most of the hacks were only there for the beer! However if you entered the bar you had to hand in your driver's pass. I worked out that by lunch time most people had driven a few cars and retired to the hospitality marquee. This meant that the track was clear of mobile chicanes and you could have a bit of a blast.

One of the features of the event was that they would have at least one guest race or rally driver to give passenger rides. Strangely enough these were not particularly popular. I remember going with Terry Kaby in a Chevette, and Barry Williams in a Colt and a BTCC driver in a Sierra Cosworth.

Now on this particular occasion the guest driver was Willie Rutherford in his MG Metro 6R4 that had won the previous year's national rally championship. Now I knew Willie when he did our events



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in one of his amazing Mazdas. I had a chat to him in the morning and said I'd come back after lunch which I did. I discovered that no one had asked for a ride that morning. How could anyone turn down a ride on a 6R4! So I got in and strapped up and Willie said, "Where do we go?" He'd not even had a practice lap, so I was there with the "stage" map telling him where to go.

After a couple of sighting laps he got it wound up. I was expecting the huge acceleration but not the Incredible braking. I'd spend the morning going

round in some assorted quick road cars and we were now braking far, far later for the corners. It was incredible fun and something I will always remember.

Now move on to the present time and Stave Murphy advertised a small number of Willie's Sanyo Metro and I managed to get one to add to my collection. It's remarkably detailed, I just have to find a space in the cabinet!

GTF

## Media News

Watching the ITV4 review of the British Rally Championship a few days ago, which covered all the rounds in various parts of the UK, what hit me was the apparent lack of spectators. Now it might be that the places that the cameras were there no spectator areas but even on the in-car footage there seemed to be very few folk out watching. The same seemed to apply to the Anglo Caledonian Rally in our own area. Now it wasn't the best of weather, but it did not used to stop us in the past. Perhaps we are all older and wiser, but where were the young and hardy spectators?

I watched the free online coverage, again hit by the adverse weather, but looking at the rolling figure for the number of viewers, it never got over 500. That has to be worrying. What all the video rally coverage seems to lack is to give some idea of the size of the event, the number of entrants and the large service areas which are a hive of activity. In the case of the WRC it would appear to the non enthusiast viewer that there were just eight cars taking part, whereas on some it would be well into three figures. Very often the antics of those lower down the order are more interesting than that of the top crews.

I was sad to see that Autosport magazine is now going monthly. Together with Motoring News/Motor Sport News, it used to be eagerly awaited on a Thursday, but the internet with live streaming and results have more or less put those magazines out of business and they became full of press releases about drivers you had never heard of and were unlikely to hear about again. I cancelled my subscription many years ago having read MN since I was 14. Sign of the times?

# VSCC Lakeland Trial

Since November 1968 the Vintage Sports car Club (or VSCC for short) have run a reliability trial for cars that are eligible to compete in the trial held in the locality around Buttermere, Whinlatter, and Lorton area, it is called the Lakeland Trial and is one of the premier trials held by the VSCC. The trial is open to cars built before 1931 although cars built before 1961 using a conglomeration of components from specified cars built before 1941 with permission of the VSCC committee can be eligible.



When the trial was first run I used to go and either marshal, help in some other way or occasionally just spectate, it was commonplace for cars such as Bugatti, Vintage Bentleys, Vauxhall 30/98s, Frazer Nash's, GN and Rileys to take part as well as Austin 7s and other less known makes such as HRG.

As values of Bugatti's, Vintage Bentleys and 30/98s became astronomical the Austin 7s became even more popular and nowadays they are by far the most prolific cars taking part in trials, these are by far the most successful type of trials cars especially if the total number of awards won by these little cars is anything to go by.

A series of sections are laid out in forestry type land or in fields, one very special section exclusive to the Lakeland trial is called "Drumhouse" this very iconic section starts in the slate quarry at the top of Honister pass and climbs up the very steep, rough, boulder strewn track right up to the top of Fleet-with Pike.

This is a serious test of man (and ladies of course) and machine, some cars don't get very far, others get quite a long way up and some get to the very top but no matter how much power you have there is no guarantee you will reach the top as massive 12x6 inch steel girders are laid across the track often at an angle to shed the torrential rain that falls in this part of the world, they help to stabilise the track from being washed away. Trying to get across these has been the downfall of many trials' drivers especially the ones in powerful cars.



Speed doesn't come into any part of the results, it's just a matter of who climbs the furthest up each hill with a maximum of 25 points being available to cars who "clean" the hill or pass the top or 25 marker. "Clean" is certainly not the condition of the cars after a hill or two with some of the sections entailing traversing deep rutted tracks with mud over 18 inches deep.

To anyone unused to trialing these feats would be thought impossible and certainly a modern car, even a Range Rover straight out of the showroom wouldn't complete many of the sections but seeing a little Austin 7 climb, usually with the occupants "bouncing" vigorously to aid grip the little cars often complete the sections and are quite capable of winning the trial outright.

# November Autosolo

A super event run by Rob and the team after the Rally of the Tests. Some fast flowing tests.

2024 Nov 10 AS Kirkbride results

Car No	Driver	Class	Pos	TOTAL SCORE	TEST 1	TEST 2	TEST 3	TEST 4	TEST 5	TEST 6	TEST 7	TEST 8	TEST 12	TOTAL SCORE
9	John Holliday	FWD	1st	547	62	81	58	78	55	82	55	76	0	547
5	Steve Fishwick	FWD	2nd	555	56	78	55	91	53	77	61	84	0	555
7	Martin Breen	FWD	3rd	557	71	80	75	76	52	75	51	77	0	557
6	Chris Addison	FWD	4	559	62	88	59	81	58	78	53	80	0	559
1	Tom Robinson	FWD	5	561	74	80	62	78	55	75	62	75	0	561
11	Kye Jameson	FWD	6	576	85	82	56	74	54	78	52	95	0	576
13	Richard Chapelhow	FWD	7	593	62	98	59	87	62	82	57	86	0	593
8	Dan McKelvie	FWD	8	600	63	83	75	76	53	95	61	94	0	600
2	Thomas Breen	FWD	9	612	67	98	62	96	60	83	71	75	0	612
14	Patrick Pennefather	FWD	10	630	76	91	75	83	74	80	71	80	0	630
10	Luke Henley	FWD	11	642	72	98	62	87	72	95	71	85	0	642
4	Roger Pope	FWD	12	646	76	89	72	88	64	95	67	95	0	646
3	Charlotte Woodruffe	FWD	13	651	76	111	65	94	66	95	56	88	0	651
16	David O'Connor	HIST	1st O/A	509	49	84	53	80	47	74	47	75	0	509
15	Lei Mashiter	HIST	1st	546	54	85	53	79	67	78	54	76	0	546
17	Ken Atkinson	HIST	2nd	646	69	104	62	99	62	94	61	95	0	646
21	Drew McLean	RWD	1st	557	78	79	53	76	51	97	51	72	0	557
22	Tom Waterhouse	RWD	2nd	580	58	99	57	96	57	80	51	82	0	580
20	Nigel Moffat	RWD	3rd	582	61	100	57	83	56	77	56	92	0	582







The VSCC are based near Oxford but have worldwide membership of many thousands of people, the majority of their top trials are probably within 150 miles of the Cotswolds and this area is most definitely VSCC country as most of the race circuits, speed hill climbs and trials are easiest reached if you live within these areas but regular competitors travel very large distances to compete, regular trials drivers often come from Ireland.

Usually, I help organise the trial then on the day travel around the sections doing breakdown assistance and recovery if needed, I take a few pictures

whilst doing this. However, both last year and this I ended up at last minute passengering for a competitor whose passenger couldn't come. This year I was asked by a top driver and multiple trial winner to passenger for him in a Ford Model A special with a 3300cc engine, a fantastic opportunity but there is pressure to make sure you tell the driver which sections have stop/starts in them and get all the points and signatures in the correct boxes.

It's just like co-driving for a top rally driver, you can't win the trial as a passenger but you can easily lose it for the driver if you get the paperwork wrong. Years ago, when Malcolm Wilson won the British Rally Championship I had to co-drive for him in his Ex Works Escort BDA sponsored by Total Oil as his usual co-driver Terry Harryman was unavailable. Those were fantastic experiences; we won one event from Jimmy McRae and Tony Pond in the Yorkshire forests in April which was amazing. In October we were 2<sup>nd</sup> to Ari Vatanen in the Wales forests, the first 28 cars on Castrol rally entry list were genuine "works" cars as it was only two weeks before the RAC rally so all were getting in practice for the event, Hannu Mikkola was 5<sup>th</sup> !

So, it was with great excitement but also trepidation I took the opportunity to passenger for top driver Simon Price on the Lakeland trial., he comes from mid Wales so hopefully this event would be a lucky one too. Cars are each given a start hill to ensure each hill has competitors waiting to start as the sections open and so as to spread the cars out to avoid congestion on the narrow lanes, we were given Drumhouse as our first hill so after scrutineering in a layby just out of Lorton before dawn we gently drove to Honister to await the hill opening. It was initially shrouded in mist but cleared and although chilly it was a lovely late autumn day in wonderful scenery.

On Drumhouse passengers are not allowed to ride back down in the cars, everyone must walk down as the drop over one part must be getting on for a thousand feet in some places, cars with only brakes



on two wheels and with many of these being early 1920s cars it's quite a few of them, they are shackled to a big 4x4 vehicle at the rear then lowered down the hill back to the quarry, they still have to descend Honister though using their own brakes, not for the faint hearted this trial.

My driver was superb, we cleared hill after hill and so did his son in a very similar car, generally if possible, we walked the hill, decided the best way to tackle the climb, looked for hazards, rocks, sticky muddy holes, tree stumps or any other obstacle to impede our climb. We let rear tyres down to the 7psi to get as much grip as possible this is minimum as allowed by the organisers then tackled

each hill in turn. On road sections between the hills we blew tyres back up to about 25 psi using 2 Makita battery tyre inflators carried in the car these were brilliant tools.



As you can imagine marshals came from all over the country to overnight in the locality as well as lots of competitors who stay and have done for years, Simon had stayed at the same hotel for 37 years, some on the reserve list were up hoping to get one of the 110 places allowed as the event was as usual oversubscribed. The event brings a big influx of people who put a great deal of money into the local economy as they stay in the area they are not just passing through like some events do.

Lots of marshals are needed of course and whilst many are VSCC members from miles away lots are members of local motor clubs, they are really

enthusiastic and help beforehand preparing sections if needed for the trial as well as marshalling on the day.

There were 13 different sections in the trial, we only lost one point during the whole trial, and it was on the section looked after by Chris Hunter and Dave Martin from Langwathby, we were short of the 25 marker by about two inches, we just didn't get enough grip or have quite enough momentum to clear it. Simon's son Matt was running just behind us and he was able to benefit by watching our lack of traction right at the top so went a fraction faster than us in a very narrow 90 degree tight right hand bend, they avoided hitting the marker flags Matt and his girl friend bounced vigorously and just cleared the hill.

He and one other car cleared all the hills so were joint 1<sup>st</sup>, we dropped 1 point so we were 2<sup>nd</sup> overall so a great day out that I will remember for a long time, 3<sup>rd</sup> was a little Austin 7, just how they do so well is absolutely amazing.

Trialling these days has many very young people taking part especially all female crews, no wonder there are a great number of young males attracted to the sport as well !As a picture is worth a thousand years hopefully the editor will find space for a number of photos so you can see what some sections of trials are like.

Why not come along next year and marshal, that way you can drive deep into the forestry commission land to get to the sections, the event is on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> November. Contact myself if you are interested and I will pass your details on to David Rushton the clerk of course.

Keith Thomas  
07778 659 338



# PG Tips

## Peter Reflects On His Month

So here it is, nearly Christmas and the weather has turned to proper freezing winter weather. Ideal for my Superb 4x4 to show it's prowess and grip, well it would be if I hadn't got bored of it 2 weeks ago and decided now I had a new job I needed a new and more exciting car! I decided a change to something slightly smaller but still an estate and practical, but more sporty, was the way. I've had plenty of Skodas and thought I'd branch out and look for a Volvo or a Merc again instead. Cumbria is by and large a terrible place to buy a car as prices are inflated and stock limited, so after many hours of searching on Auto Trader I found a nice C class Merc with a fairly powerful diesel engine and lots of toys.

Arriving at the specialist in Manchester and spotting 'my car' confirmed what a fine looking vehicle it was. After a bit of car parking shenanigans they freed my car from the mass and let me loose with the keys and told me to take it for a drive. Inside it was absolutely lovely, lots of chrome and black ebony effect surfaces and lighting effects, and then I went for a drive and realised the auto gear selector was a stalk on the steering wheel binnacle and the thing where you'd expect the gear change to be was a function selector dial. And what a function selector – the tablet attached to the dash contained almost everything, and other than 5 buttons below it, everything else was accessed and selected by the dial. You want to increase cabin temp? Find the temp menu and increase it via the dial and tablet. Want to increase fan speed, radio station, change aircon settings, play a CD or connect to your phone – all of it via the one dial as were dozens of other things.

The car drove nicely and went well but the final nail in the coffin came when I got back and had a look in the surprisingly small boot (for a family estate car) to find that not only did it not have a spare wheel, but there was not physically room to fit one under the boot floor due to a battery and a box of electronics. I asked the salesman and he said that people didn't worry about spare wheels too much and it had been a deliberate move by Mercedes to fit more important things in. So a can of foam and a pump was all you got.

The day I went to drive the Merc was a week after Trudy had experienced a puncture in her virtually new Dacia. Her car also did not come with a spare wheel and the can of foam and pump did manage to inflate the tyre enough to get the car to a Kwik Fit (a mile away and closest to her work), but only just. By the time I'd gone in and arranged to get them to sort a replacement, the tyre was half deflated. The can of foam also ensured that a repair wasn't possible, although in this case the object embedded in the tyre wouldn't have allowed it anyway. Had the same scenario played out on a motorway or on route to somewhere at night we would have had to get breakdown recovery out to get us somewhere. A spare wheel kit for the Dacia was purchased as soon as we arrived home, and thankfully there was a full sized space for it to fit under the boot floor.



So the hunt for the replacement went on and after looking at some Volvos and a few other VWs and even a Ford, I almost predictably decided what I probably needed was an Octavia VRS estate and a petrol one at that. They seem to hold their value very well and are a capable, sensible but relatively quick car.

To cut a long story short I bought one from a dealer in the midlands that comes with a year's warranty and must have been a company car

because whoever ordered it ticked every box on the extras list, including panoramic roof, 4 heated seats, epic stereo, heated screen, the list goes on. I'd imagine the extras would have added many thousands to the list price which is very good for me. I had mild anxiety after buying unseen again, after reading that the water pump on the TSI engine costs about £750 to replace and is a common fail, but was relieved to see in the service history that it had already had one....and anyway, I've got a warranty, which has only ever happened to me once before. Hopefully I won't need to use it!

I'm not talking about the Fiat this month, other than to say it is not yet totally solved and it's garage has been full of bathroom and rubbish while we've been having work done on the house, so it's probably for the best.

Enjoy Christmas dear reader - with my new job, it is only the second time in 31 years that I've had all of it off, so I intend to make the most of the break.

Peter

## 2024 RAC Rally of the Tests, organised by HERO-ERA



Eighty historic rally crews from 11 countries gathered in Darlington at the start of November for the RAC Rally of the Tests - the must-do event that re-creates the flavour of the RAC Rally before it became a forest-based special stage rally in the early 1960s.

Renowned as the ultimate challenge on the historic rally calendar, the "Tests" featured a rigorous blend of regularities, tests, and time controls across iconic roads and venues in the North of England and Southern Scotland

There was forestry, tarmac, fast sections and technical stuff, and the night sections where this event can really be won or lost, all spread across 750 miles with 34 tests and 24 regularities, plus a pair of Sporting Time Control sections

A traditional Thursday evening prologue saw winners for the previous two years Dan Willan and Niall Frost (Volvo PV544) overcome mist and slippery surfaces to finish seven seconds ahead of Andy Lane/Iain Tullie in their BMW 2002tii with Angus McQueen/Mike Cochrane, Ford Cortina in third.

The shorter but still demanding 'Lite' version of the Rally of the Tests, running behind the main field today, was led by Dick and Harry Baines in their Mini Cooper S from Malcolm Dunderdale/ Anita Wickin's Mercedes 190.

### **Leg One, Redworth to Edinburgh 8th November**

Leader Dan Willan was soon in trouble, having to do a test and regularity with no brakes, which saw Niall calling hairpins from about 500 metres away, so they could slow down! Luckily the event's sweeps (mechanical assistance crews) were able to get the cylinder back in and the Volvo back on the road, and still in the lead.



John King and his 18-year-old navigator Oli Waldock took a surprise second place, 46 seconds adrift, in a Toyota MR2, which was sporting damage after an indiscretion on the day's first test.

Scotland's Callum Guy and Amy Henchoz also enjoyed a good day finishing third in the fabulous 4.2L growling Sunbeam Tiger.

However, the rally had started to take prisoners - Jon Dunning/Pete Johnson, RS2000 dropped

from the leader board after losing time on the first test, while Andy Lane dropped out with broken rear suspension. Tim and Ruth Birkin's TR4 was left on rear jacks as the sweeps patched up the rear trailing arms as they crossed the Border only for them to split again. They eventually made the Dalmahoy overnight halt and managed to keep going after sourcing a pair of trailing arms in Glasgow.

The MGB of Dave Maryon/Andy Ballantyne had bent a valve; Gavin Webster/Andy Chun had an overheating Jaguar Mk 2 to cool down to try and get to Edinburgh, but Test newcomers Chris and Claire Day, Cooper S, were fastest on test six, around big storage barns with some high speed and loose surface corners.

Heading north there were some incredible regularity roads, narrow, twisting, long and fast, climbs out of County Durham and into Northumberland, and into real rally territory, Keilder, and Otterburn, then on into the borders and Jim Clark Rally ground.

Fourth place in Edinburgh after a real fight were Paul Crosby/Ali Procter in their Mini Cooper S, just ahead of the Volvo PV544 of Paul Dyas.

Proving that the rally is not just about the big competition at the front, Germany's Barbara Richter had returned with her Golf GTi Mk 1 for a second time. Despite breaking her trip master sensor in the Otterburn gravel, she was loving it.

Dick and Harry Baines were still leading the Lite section on their first try out in the event.



### **Leg 2 Edinburgh to Carlisle 10<sup>th</sup> November**

From the first regularity of Leg 2, crews had an idea they would be in for a long, hard day, as the variety of terrain through Scotland and England brought pure driving challenges. From hill climbs to racetracks, narrow hillside tracks to farmyards and Roman roads, there was something different for everyone in the UK's most competitive regularity rally.

The most impressive venues were the heritage forest tracks that Clerk of the Course Andy Pullan, and his team had managed to secure. They included Castle O'er, the Forest of Ae, and Kershope (at night) which started as a long test with two further regularities in the forest.

Following a short lunch break at the Drumlanrig Castle, crews went straight into a regularity, taking crews around the slippery roads of the estate before heading onto tarmac then suddenly off road and into the forest!



Throughout all of this, the hardest and longest day of the rally, Dan Willan and Niall Frost, managed to actually tighten their grip on the event out front by 1m 48 seconds from second place chasers John King and Oli Waldock in their Toyota MR2.

The battle for the final podium place raged all day. Callum Guy in his fantastic sounding V8-engined Sunbeam Tiger was leading Paul Crosby by just one second.

Both had ‘moments’ at the Larkhall International Kart track test, an impressive venue whose past winners have included Lewis Hamilton

The Scot so nearly hit the pit - wall as the Tiger’s tail snapped out quickly, but with rapid oversteer from Callum, he just held on. Just as dramatically, but this time mechanically, Paul Crosby was out of the Mini Cooper S at the end of the Larkhall test with the bonnet open and not looking likely to re-start. It was a throttle cable, but the ex - race engineer Crosby made a rig to keep it going until help could be found!

Bron Burrell/ Suzanne Barker limped their way into the first rest halt with the front of Bron’s Austin Maxi from the 1970 World Cup Rally, collapsed on the left front. The hydrolastic suspension on the 70’s chariot had not been able to take the punishment, so the HERO-ERA Mechanical Assistance crew had to shore it up with wood which meant keeping going but no tests!

Ex-racing driver Thomas Koemer’s Porsche had stopped in Kershope forest with electrical issues, but another Scottish crew, French-based George & Rosalind Topp, didn’t get that far.



Their Volvo Amazon’s alternator failed just before Drumlanrig. Sweeps gave him a new battery which let him continue until Castle O’er, tackling the first of the two sections (on dipped headlights!) before that battery also failed. Rescued by the closing car, battery three was fitted and they skipped Kershope to make the final test of the day and data collection at Carlisle Airport. Unfortunately, that battery failed on the test start line – battery four was eventually fitted, getting them to the Carlisle overnight halt, where sweeps fitted yet

another battery, and a new alternator.

Angus McQueen was well inside the top ten and enjoying a great run in the Ford Cortina until the gearbox broke three teeth. They drained it, got the broken teeth out the way, and planned on running on, and then change the gearbox in Carlisle. Then they were approached at Drumlanrig by a Dumfries man, who just happened to have a gearbox in his loft and which he said they could have!

### Leg 3. Carlisle to Windermere 11 Nov

The final Leg started by going straight into a test at Carlisle Airport at 8.00 am.

From there the constant pace kept crews on the edge as the RoTT went from regularity back to test and then through farm tracks via gates that were barely wide enough for a Ford Escort, never mind the 90-foot Buick Century of Swiss Carlos Reider and Stefan Roth.



Two great tests at Kirkbride Airport, run by Wigton MC, was followed by a regularity where an ex-Renault F1 had allowed the route to run along his tracks, past the front of the house and out the other side!

And next time you see the sticker saying “My other car is a Porsche” think of Brian and Janette Dwelly who had last

minute problems with their Porsche 924S, so turned up with their “other” car – a 1961 Morris Minor that looked as if it had just emerged from the Morris Factory in Oxford, as it looked so standard and almost new!

Greystoke Castle, of Lord Greystoke and Tarzan fame, was the magnificent setting for a halt followed by a test on gravel and concrete at the side of the castle, with a cattle grid included!

After the first three cars had set off, all the action was suspended as everyone observed the Remembrance Day silence.

Included in the Lites category were three crews out for practice before they tackle the Peking to Paris Motor Challenge next year. All three were in a variety of 1930s Fangios, from Coupe to Roadster and Master Coupe. Brian Scowcroft was in a Coupe with his friend and navigator Mark Oates who competed on the HERO-ERA Lima to Cape Horn, whilst Brian’s sons Andrew and David were in the Roadster which went off the circuit at Larkhall damaging the tracking a little.

For Brian and John Caudwell in their Chevrolet Master Coupe it was their first rally, although both have raced before.



But as the cars headed into the Windermere finish after 750 miles of day and night motoring over 34 tests and 24 regularities, there was only one winner.

Dan Willan and Niall Frost scored an incredible third consecutive RAC Rally of the Tests win, the first crew ever to achieve that since the inaugural RAC Rally of 1932.

The Volvo PV544 crew and the car beat the opposition by four minutes, with Dan winning the Test Pilot Award for

fastest driver over all the tests, and Niall winning the Clockwatchers Award for best navigator.

Paul Crosby and Ali Procter were a battling second in their Mini Cooper S, equalling their best ever on RoTT, and holding off a late challenge from Paul Dyas and Martyn Talyor.

Callum Guy had been second at the lunch halt but lost time on regularity four in the Warcop Ranges and dropped to fourth overall and a class win.

At the finish RoTT Triple Crown winner Niall Frost was one of many who praised 18-year-old navigator Oli Waldoock’s performance as ‘superb.’



Together with driver John King, the pair were third on the road and won their class in their Toyota MR2, a car ineligible for the overall positions

Running behind the main rally was the RAC Rally of the Tests Lite version, taking in the bulk of the schedule but not all the tests and regularities into the night.

This was keenly contested and won by Dick and Harry Baines in their Mini Cooper S on their first attempt. Second was Malcolm Dunderdale and Anita Wickins in their Mercedes 190 with David Ward, who normally rallies a Ferrari, third in his Lancia Fulvia navigated by Tim Sawyer. They were third overall despite their car's rear suspension being held together by wood blocks and chains having broken their leaf suspension. For the podium achievement despite the damage, they were also awarded the 'Against the Odds' Trophy!

George Topp

#### 2024 RAC Rally of the Tests

- 1 – Dan Willan/ Niall Frost – 1962 Volvo PV 544
- 2 – Paul Crosby/ Ali Procter – 1966 Mini Cooper S
- 3 – Paul Dyas /Martyn Taylor – 1963 Volvo PV544

#### The winners of the RAC Rally of the Tests 'LITE' :

1. Dick Baines /Harry Baines – 1965 Austin Mini Cooper S
2. Malcolm Dunderdale /Anita Wickins – 1985 Mercedes 190
3. David Ward /Tim Sawyer – 1972 Lancia Fulvia 1600HF

Photos by: Billy Quigley & Tim Sawyer

## Solway Military Trail

### [Trail One - Silloth to Carlisle | Solway Military Trail](#)

This interest in that nearly all the venues have been used for motorsport. What is also interesting is how they were all built in a very short period of time. That must have involved a huge number of men given the rather simpler machinery available. Perhaps we could have the same level of achievement when building new roads?

For the link click on it and Control



# Elderly Utterances

**The Voice of Experience!**

**Ron Palmer has his say**

Year end is a good time to look ahead and plan for the future. On the 2025 Tours programme we have a great variety including our long established events and some new ones for your delectation!

For the older pre '50s cars we have the John Peel Meander for the third year. This will run on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> May starting from the Motor House as usual and we expect to attract 20 to 30 entries as before. Once again the route will be around 50 miles and finish at Base Camp on the A66. We will endeavour to use interesting roads not too challenging for the cars and light commercials involved. If anyone knows of period motorcycle owners who may like to join us we will endeavour to include them. Details and entry forms out in January.

Following up on a previous successful and popular 'Coast to Coast' we have one on Thursday and Friday 15/16<sup>th</sup> May. Titled 'Coast to Coast – Trains and Boats and Beamish' the route begins at Bowness on Solway and heads east for an afternoon in Beamish Museum before overnighing at Hartlepool. The second day begins with a visit to The National Museum of the Royal Navy, which is only a couple of minutes from the Hotel. Then follows a 25 mile drive to Locomotion – The National Rail Museum at Shildon. After our visit there we pick up the A689 which takes us back to Cumbria. This is a co organised event between John Ross, our two Christines and myself. We promise a well organised event with interesting roads and three of the best visitor attractions in the North. Entries and further details in January.

Over the weekend of 14/15 June, John and Christine Ross have a two day run into Northumberland and over the Border. The 'Gallop – i to i' will cover around 220 miles over the two days with an overnight in the Alnwick area. Full details and entries will be available early in the New Year.

August 16<sup>th</sup> is the Saturday of the Dalemian Show weekend and The Rose and Thistle will run for the 36<sup>th</sup> time. We are heading north over the Border and Rob Grant is investigating suitable lunch venue and once that is confirmed I will join up the dots with an interesting route. Finishing back in Cumbria.

The last of our principal Tours will be Chris Leece's Cumbrian Canter scheduled for the 28<sup>th</sup> September. It will be of approximately 90 miles and will be based on Basecamp once again.

So we have lots of enjoyable Touring Events for 2025 which need entering in your calendars – we don't want any clashes with less important events! Remember these events do not require a competition licence. We would like club membership which is only £20 a year. No special equipment is required and help is freely available from the organisers or myself prior to any event. They are very sociable events and excellent value for money and we look forward to your continuing support and your entries. As this is my last article of 2024 I wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Ron.

# Membership

WMC is registered with the Information Commissioner to hold members data.

## Welcome to new members

Alan Bushby of Carlisle  
Peter & Ashley Storr of Laversdale  
Bill & Janey Shuter of Pica



Great result for Barry Lindsay & Caroline Lodge on the **Anglo Rally** in Kielder .  
Third overall and first in class.

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

# A Sporting Spectacle?

Courtesy of John Fife

A sporting spectacle .... Standing with a bunch of auld, and not so auld, rally hands at Kames yesterday, some of the wizened, battle hardened desperados reckoned it was an awfy expensive way to go rallying with not a lot of bang for your buck and wondered what enjoyment the competitors got out of it.

They missed the point. The folks that were actually taking part were thoroughly enjoying the whole affair and its challenges. With regard to cost, it can't be compared to a modern special stage rally, it's more like an endurance Targa Rally. And yes, a four day event of this nature might well have an entry fee upwards of £5000, but what cost is a family holiday abroad these days, just to lie on a beach with a gallon of sun cream?

The entry fee at first sight might be worth a gulp or two but it is an all-inclusive figure. In the case of the 'RAC Rally of The Tests' that means four nights bed and board with regular meal stops and evening get-togethers. Compare that with the Entry Fee for a one day stage rally these days which is heading upwards of £1000 before you add in accommodation for one or maybe two nights for crew and service crew. And that's before you add in the cost of tow vehicle, trailer, tyres and fuel.

And we haven't even mentioned the cars yet. What price a stage prepped Mk2 Ford Escort these days let alone a Fiesta R5, and compare that with a 'road rally' spec Escort Mk1, Sunbeam, Corsa or Golf. The price differentials are huge here. Of course there is also a wide choice of sports cars from which to choose, from MGBs and Triumphs, to Sunbeams and Healeys, whilst the more affluent members of society may hanker after more exotic and expensive historic machinery, like Bentleys, Jaguars, Rovers, Alfas and Lancias, but again, most of what is available costs far less than a current spec World Rally 1 or 2 car.

Like any form of motor sport, the competitor's budget will determine the vehicle choice, for instance, there was a Morris 1000 and a Maestro out there yesterday with their crews having a ball.

No race suits or crash hats, and no roll cages, but if Nomex panties are your thing, then go for it.

For added fun and challenges, some folk go for the weird and wonderful. Vehicles that would give some Scroots the heebie jeebies if you turned up for one of their sanctioned historic rallies as evidenced by some Buicks and Chevrolets yesterday. These were often favoured by the American moonshine smugglers 60, 70 and 80 years ago who raced across state lines in America to the beat of flat head V8s and straight sixes. And maybe that's why some folk choose these – the noise!

Of course navigation skills are required and this is where the team effort comes in. In some events, all the navigation can be done prior to setting off, which helps those who may succumb to motion sickness when the head is down poring over maps, while others require a bit more concentration whilst on the move. Along the way there are Driving Tests and Regularities which exercise driving skill, and to ensure that the correct route is being followed 'Code Boards' may be set up to be recorded in passing. Local car clubs are offering an increasing number of Targa Rallies these days and folks can dip their toes in the water using their regular family runabout before taking things a bit more seriously. The atmosphere around these events is also rather different to stage rallies where there is time to chat and compare notes, and the competition is less intense with folk willing to share tips and hints.

And whilst the bystanders stood around yesterday harumphing about the lack of spectacle, the participants were having a ball.

This was, and is, quite simply a sporting celebration of the automobile with added camaraderie and endeavour.

# Jottings

We often see the term “Vintage” used for anything old, but there are strict definitions for cars:

Veteran                      Pre 1905

Edwardian                 1905-1919

Vintage                     1919-1930

Post Vintage Thoroughbred      Post 1930 cars of a vintage type.

After that there are looser definitions, although for motorsport there are now categories, usually for rallying, which now go up to 2000.

Can anyone tell me what the Hyundai TV commercial is all about?

The motor industry seems to be in a bit of a mess at the moment with no one wanting to buy a new car it seems, me included. I am due a change, but I am not inspired by any new model and put off by all the “driver aids” and gongs and beeps that cars have. Perhaps manufacturers need to speak to their customers and ask them what they want?

The Chinese are pushing hard with their brands of EVs to sell in the UK. This is what is available and coming. BYD (Build Your Dreams), Great Wall Motor, Maxus, Omodo, Leap Motor, Skywell, Volvo, MG, Polestar, and coming: Aiways, Jaecoo, Nio & Zeekr, All cheap and “disposable” ? Who is going to buy one?

No more new Jaguars for at least a year and then just large electric cars on a par with Bentley and only 20 dealers. The big cat has been killed off and the adverts have gone woke! Willian Lyons will be turning in his grave.

MSUK have adopted Sport 80 to do club registrations, licence renewals etc. It seems much more complicated than the old system. We will see what the feedback is.

The coverage of the British Rally Championship on ITV4 has been good this year. Just sometimes a bit late after the event. Well done to MSUK for arranging it. Indeed the coverage way better than the coverage of the WRC which relies too much on in car footage and drones.

## N.E.S.C.R.O.

The NESCR0 officials feel that there is no interest in having an "official" championship without jumping through a lot of costly hoops (costly being the appropriate word!). Thus NESCR0 will continue as a body to promote Historic and Targa rallying in the North of England and Scotland via it's Face Book page. The website will be taken down. A full list of events will be published on the Face Book page in the near future.

# Autojumble

Items for sale or wanted

We have lots of ex Caterham stuff. Wings, etc and K series engine parts, oil coolers and new pipe work. It can all be viewed at the Motor House.

Also some MG B wings and 8 wire wheels.



# Andy's Armchair

Andy Armstrong takes an irreverent look at motoring and motorsport

Picking up the story of Mike Pilbeam in the year of 1972 when he had a short spell at Team Surtees working on the TS 9. From what he said I think he rated "Big John" as a driver very highly but wasn't quite sure about what he achieved as a designer.



He hadn't been there long when BRM came calling. Tony Southgate had left the Bourne team, and they were short of finances as the Owen Organisation had stopped supporting them, even so they needed a new car designing, Mike got the job. The car he created was the P201 (see green/ silver car below) which made its debut at Kyalami for the South African Grand Prix of 1974 where it finished second being driven by Jean Pierre Beltoise. It had flattered to deceive, achieving another 5th place and suffering many retirements during the season. As mentioned money was tight and the V12 engine the car had inherited from its predecessor proved the weak link breaking regularly when decent results looked likely,

another good result was also lost at Monaco when Denny Hulme ran into the car when it looked very competitive.

At this time Louis Stanley was running BRM with his wife Jean, a lovely lady according to Mike, and the daughter of Sir Alfred Owen the team's previous major backer. As things turned out it was a downward spiral, even financial help from "Rotary Watches" wasn't enough, and the once proud team eventually petered out to become a part of motor racing history.

By this stage (1975) Mike had departed and set up his own company working freelance for Tom Wheatcroft the owner of Donington Park designing a Formula Atlantic car for Richard Morgan to drive. The car (R18 see white car below) was an innovative design and featured ideas adapted from his time working on among other things the Lotus 72 F1 car. This new car was very successful so Wheatcroft decided to convert it to Formula 2 specification. In this guise it was to be driven by Brian Henton with the engine provided by Brian Hart, a man Mike held in high esteem not only for his developments of the Ford BDA from the FVA, an engine which ruled the F2 roost for years and dominated world rallying in a similar way, but also his development work at Cosworth. While there he carried out research improving the DFV and making it suitable for more applications than F1. Many people feel he never got the credit he deserved for this work.



In all 6 of the R18 cars were built and raced successfully around the globe for many years often showing a clean pair of heels to chassis from more famous constructors.

1976 saw Tom Wheatcroft starting a new F2 project again involving Mike. This car the R26 (see black car below) was unusual in that it was powered by an Abarth engine prepared by engineers at Holby. It was basically a 6 cylinder using one half of a 3 litre V12 Ferrari motor. Brian Henton who raced it once at Thrux-

ton in 1976 described it as a very nice car spoiled by a chronically unreliable engine. It was finally fitted with a Hart motor and driven by Bob Evan's.

So there we are, I thought I could get to the end of the Pilbeam saga but it'll take one more month to achieve that. If you want more details about the man he's working on an autobiography but even in his late 80's he's got "too much on" to devote a lot of time to it. Hopefully it will appear eventually.  
Ends  
AA.

## Fifty Years Ago



Exactly 50 years ago this week I rolled my car on the first stage of the 1974 RAC Rally of Great Britain. I had set the car up sideways for a hairpin but the hairpin was cut up and very soft as we were car 220, the car dug in and gently rolled over onto its roof but luckily for us there were a lot of spectators and they quickly rolled it back onto its wheels, I turned the ignition key, luckily the car started up again so we were able to carry on our way with minimal loss of time.



The spectators got us back over onto our wheels so quickly that the car that set off a minute behind us never even caught us up, he was amazed when he arrived at the finish control, we were getting our card signed and were ready to continue but our car was badly damaged, in fact, it had sustained more damage than many other rolls I've had at much higher speeds.

Our service crew consisted of Mike Beaty, John Donovan, Bill Brookes and 18 year old Malcolm Wilson, they were rather shocked as you can imagine but over the next few days of the rally they repaired what they could to keep us going, the rally lasted several days and went all through the night in those days doing stage after stage all over the country, up deep into Scotland with many of the special stages covered in deep snow and ice as it was a hard winter that year.



We were competing in the Clubman's class where the first prize was a very valuable one as it was a free, guaranteed entry to the 1975 RAC Rally worth not only a lot of money but your entry was guaranteed when these rallies were well oversubscribed. The 50 or so cars in our class were all trying like hell of course so the competition was red

hot.

We did loads of stages in Northumberland, Kielder, right up via Peebles into Scotland over the Firth of Forth and way up past Dunfermline to take in classics like Devilla. Having been doing stages all

day and right through the night many in snow and ice it was a relief to get to the breakfast halt at Erskine Bridge, here we found we were in the lead, but we still had a lot of rallying still to do.

Lots of Scottish border's stages plus Wythop, Whinlater and Grizedale in the Lakes before a run back to York and a welcome night in bed.

The following day we had another full day of stages in the Yorkshire forests so everyone was trying really hard with very long fast straights in many of them.

When the rally finished, we had finally pulled out a lead of 1minute and 29 secs on our nearest rivals so won the fantastic first prize plus a lot of bonus money from firms such as Dunlop, Champion and Castrol as it was a full international rally and we carried their stickers on our car.

It's a rally I will never forget, our service crews were brilliant and I'm sure it gave Malcolm excellent "work experience" carrying out body and mechanical repairs, fitting windscreens and rear windows in horrendous conditions, as he embarked on developing one of the world's most successful businesses in motorsport competing against all the top motor manufacturers, building cars and winning world championships with both rally and race cars. Fortunately, we had that other vital element too, luck, without it you cannot even finish let alone win.

Keith Thomas



The car as it is now, beautifully restored.





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