

The Official Magazine of
SUTTON & CHEAM MOTOR CLUB

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Spotlight



TEAM
TEMPEST



CLUB

Thank you to everyone who supported Abingdon Motorsport CAR-nival, particularly those marshalling, officiating and acting as service crew, to enable a very slick weekend of motorsport.

Big congratulations specifically to the large number of club members competing on either the Sprint, Rally or in fact those brave enough to do both events. At the risk of missing some outstanding performances by members, I'd like to highlight:



- Whist Speed events are predominantly about performances in the various classes the rally cars were far from embarrassed by the single-seaters and specialist racing cars. On overall fastest times, notably **Will Nicholls (Subaru WRC) claimed 5th, Darrell Taylor (Ford Focus WC)** was just behind in 6th with **Mark Straker (Darran GTR)** in 8th. Even complete sprint novice **Ryan Fagan (Fiesta R5)** set 13th Fastest time of the Day.
- **Scott Stutchbury (Renault Clio 197)** won the family battle against wife **Kirsten** in the shared car although well done to newcomer, **Jacob Gascoine-Becker (Renault Clio 3 RS)** who managed to split them in his less modified car. **Robbie Durrant (Ford Escort)** took the Rally Car Class 16 honours with Scott just behind him.
- **Will Nicholls** claimed Class C17 win amongst the higher powered and 4-wheel drive rally cars, less than 0.5 second faster than **Darrell Taylor**.
- **Elliot Dunmore (BMW 125i)** claimed Class A5 for road cars, despite having to draft in a late-replacement vehicle whilst **Michael Thornton (Van Diemen Multisport)** was runner up in Class C15 for Sports Libre Cars.

Meanwhile 24 hours later...

- **Darrell Taylor and Steve McNulty (Ford Fiesta R5)** claimed 1st Overall on the rally with **Ian and Oliver Hucklebridge (Ford Fiesta R5)** came home 6th. Just behind the father and son outfit, **Jamie McBain (Peugeot 205 GTi)** finished the day in 7th.
- Overall and Class wins were recorded by **Darrell Taylor, Abi Mahmood** and **Jamie McBain**.
- With a total of 12 crews competing there are numerous tales of success and failures... most I am sure will be told with a degree of embellishment.



The atmosphere on the Sprint was relatively low key but I think that this had a lot to do with the forecast of rain and the list of no-shows was a disappointment – what is wrong with all these fair-weather drivers. Ultimately, the rain came after first timed runs which meant that quite a few drivers did not do second or third runs on the basis that they could not improve their time.

This always puzzles me as any future event I enter could also be wet from the beginning and what I could have learnt at Abingdon about a wet set up and any changes to my driving technique could prove very useful at such an event, especially towards the end of the season where results count towards Championship success.

The atmosphere on the Rally however, from the start of scrutineering onwards, was quite different and there was a much greater buzz.

Ultimately the rain stayed away, competition was fierce in all classes, and I heard many positive comments from competitors and support crews. 7 stages all completed within predicted timeframe with 72 of the 98 starters reaching the final stage finish. We had promised them an efficient, well-run event and let's hope we never let them down!

Abingdon is a multi-club event started 30 years ago and exists on the friendship and co-operation of the 3 main clubs (Sutton & Cheam MC, Farnborough MC and Craven MC) working alongside many others all working for a common good. Those working on the event should be truly proud of their achievement although I do question those that simply sat at home without getting involved.

SOCIAL

I am writing this Chairman's Chatter on the day after Chris Phillip's '**Down the Pub**' at the Hogs Back Brewery in July and what a great evening it was – a warm, sunny night, no queues at the bar and almost thirty members in attendance.

It was great to catch up with so many people and hear about their travails at Abingdon and their plans for the rest of their season.

One of the major topics was the Sunderland's planning their trip to Ypres at the end of June and I dearly remember the days when we took two full minibuses over to the Belgian Round of the European Rally Championship. Many of the memories are iconic although a number may come back to haunt a few over-indulgers in too many bottles of Jupiler!



The Members Competition Table as at the beginning of June is provided elsewhere in the magazine although please remember that I am not only tracking social attendance and article contributions towards the magazine but also points for competing, marshalling and officiating at events although these need to be claimed. Yes, I can spot names at our events but I do need help on others.

RALLYING

By the time you read this article, our 3rd generation member Henry Sunderland should have jumped in '*at the deep end*' and following on from '*passenger*' his father at The 750 Motor Club Summer Picnic Sporting Car Trial, Henry is now leveraging a friendship he has struck up with Elliot Paine.

Elliot is aged 22 and already a two times BTRDA Gold Star Champion and Henry was scheduled to be make his rally debut on the Greystoke Stages on 6th July – Unfortunately disaster struck before a wheel was turned as Elliot suffered an unexpected injury to his arm whilst sorting a supplier delivery. And so everything is on the backburner for the moment, but Henry will soon learn '*That's Motor Sport!*'.



Is Henry ready for this?

When his time comes his biggest challenge for Henry will be deciding on whether to listen to his father (or uncle) on the art of co-driving or whether he wants to do it properly?

We made a real effort this year to better manage the Service Area at the CAR-nival. Specifically, we wanted to control the number of hanger-on cars in the Service Area and keep trailers to the Trailer Park. Now we know that Abingdon is a vast airfield with big areas unused so why?

The answers are not as simple as some competitors and their crews may to think:

1. A congested Service Area increases the risk of an incident, particularly when adrenaline-filled drivers come back from a stage, or conversely early on when they are struggling to get to the Arriva Control late.
2. Fuel and sleeping accommodation do not mix well and it is an absolute NO-NO at CAR-nival – if you are in any doubt watch the video from earlier in the year at Santa Pod <https://www.facebook.com/reel/647673074319845>
3. Kids on bikes and scooters (especially those with rally cars) are one of our biggest headaches and it is getting worse. Everyone thinks they are the greatest thing on 2 wheels but any accident will delay the event as our medical teams deal with injuries – Again at Santa Pod 2 weeks ago the event was held up for over an hour when a spectator was hit by a mechanic on an electric scooter, resulting in a broken pelvis for the innocent visitor and a broken arm for the rider.
4. If we let some people ignore the rules put in place, where do we draw the line?
5. Why should we make anyone comply?
6. What would happen if we allowed competitors out on the stages to decide which bits of the stage route they were going to follow – Is that fair?

My purpose in raising this issue is first: to thank those who complied with the Service Area instructions to the letter; and second: to ask all Competitors and their Service Crews to be more considerate of organisers instruction and other safety of other competitors. When we say no trailers, no private cars and no scooters there is a reason - Service Area instructions are as important as the stage route so please comply. Rant over although one big improvement this year was Bill Stewart who took on the role of Service Area Manager and who made a cracking job of it.



In my role as off 'Non-Competition Safety Manager', I did several checks of the Service Area during the rally and Bill's management of the crews when setting up had certainly led to plenty of room for competitors to be able to move around in relative safety.

Equally importantly, the Recovery Crews were able to get in and out of the Service Area with recovered cars in a timely and safe manner.

MOTORSPORT UK

We have been advised that the National Competition Rules (NCR) Version 10 is likely to be issued in early July. Please be aware that events running after the date will probably be run consistent with this version **unless specified differently.**

The Resource Centre on Motorsport UK's website will show the newest version when issued and should show the various changes against Version 9 – these changes should be what is described as 'clarificatory in nature' but if you are competing it's probably best to check the amendments for any hidden surprises.

In the last magazine, we highlighted the fall out between Motorsports UK and the FIA on governance issues and the so-call accusations of ‘gagging’. This ultimately led to the resignation of Robert Reid as FIA Deputy President for Sport – a bitter pill for Motorsport UK which measures its influence on global motorsport by the number and seniority of positions held at the FIA.

Within weeks it has been announced that Malcolm Wilson has been appointed to replace Robert Reid and some say that this is good for world rallying, because of Wilson’s commitment to the sport - however Robert Reid knew a little bit about rallying too as a former world champion alongside the late Richard Burns!

What is less clear is the strength of Wilson’s relationship with UK Motorsport and I am sure that more indications will emerge.

Footnote: What is more worrying is the recent announcement that Ben Cussons has been removed as a member of the FIA Senate, further reducing the UK’s involvement with the governance of worldwide motorsport. See later in the magazine for more details of the shock announcement.

RACING

Did anyone else see the spat between George Russell and Max Verstappen about the ‘*braking incident under the Safety Car*’ at the Canadian Grand Prix.

I know these things are often said to ‘*get the Race Director to look at a particular incident*’ but the noise over the radios simply came across as petulant and no better than diving in soccer! Why are these complaints not edited from the broadcast to the public as none of the radio messages are transmitted live unless you believe they are intended to ‘spice things up a bit?’ The disquiet created earlier in the season when the selective choice of radio messages shared to the great unwashed simply made it look as though Ferrari and Hamilton were having a spat, a portrayal exaggerated once again at the British Grand Prix.

The debate was resurrected once again at Silverstone with the Piastri incident although swift action was administered on that occasion.

However, and despite him being ‘the victim in Northamptonshire, I’m happy to see Verstappen sitting on 11 license penalty points meaning that he now needs to think very carefully about his on-track actions for the rest of the season. I have always considered the Belgian-born-Dutchman’ is simply a racing bully and that the 2021 Silverstone accident was simply the result of Hamilton drawing a line in the sand, deciding that he was not going to be pushed around any longer.

That said, the 2025 Red Bull RB21 is clearly not a great car but Verstappen’s skill and tenacity are clearly making up for its deficiencies. Maybe this season could actually be the one where he demonstrates what a great driver he actually is?

For much of the Le Mans 24 Hour race this year, expectations were that Ferrari would finish 1-2-3. Indeed, the commentators were trying to spice things up during the world-famous Endurance Race by speculating on what would happen if the ‘Privateer Ferrari Team’ were to beat the ‘Official Ferrari Team’ - which they ultimately did!

In the end, gremlins resulted in the #50 Car finishing 4th although it was subsequently disqualified at post-race checks which revealed four bolts were missing from the rear wing support. This was estimated to allow the rear wing to flex by 52cm whereas the maximum permissible flex is 15mm although no performance advantage is suggested. This left me wondering how this could have happened – removing the bolts in the pit lane would have been time consuming and very visible although Ferrari claim that only 1 missing bolt was spotted during the last pit stop.

Club member Ryan Stutchbury (Team Manager Endurance and GT Team Jolt Racing) put me right and advised that apparently one of the biggest issues in Endurance Racing is keeping bolts in place – not very reassuring when travelling at over 200mph down the Mulsanne straight!

In a more infrequent period of downtime towards the end of June, I watched the coverage of the British Touring Car Championship meeting from Oulton Park and caught the end of the Ginetta Junior race.

Intriguingly, the race was being led by Rocco Coronel, son of Tom Coronel probably the most famous Dutch racing family after the Verstappen's. It turns out that 14-year-old Rocco wanted to race but was too young to compete in saloon cars in Holland. His father, believing that car circuit experience was of more value than karting, brought him across to the UK where he can race at a younger age in the Ginetta Series.



Looks like a good decision as Rocco has won 5 of the six races up to the end of the Oulton Park meeting.



Motorsport UK has become increasingly concerned about the limited availability and rising costs of road section & road rally insurance over the past year. During this time, we have been working closely with insurance representatives to understand the challenges, and to ensure fair and sustainable insurance cover is available for all Competitors and Event Organisers.

Following recent incidents and claims, a major insurance provider has increased their premiums for Events on the public highway. Whilst we recognise the reasons for this, it is disappointing that the actions of a few is having a significant impact on grassroots motorsport, potentially making some Events unaffordable for Clubs and Competitors until an alternative solution can be found.

Motorsport UK has been working with stakeholders for several months and remains committed to protecting our thriving grassroots motorsport community in the UK. We are confident that both short and long-term solutions will be found as this work continues.

In the meantime, we call upon all Competitors, Clubs and Organisers to ensure that all Motorsport UK Permitted Events continue to comply with the National Competition Rules (NCR) and, where relevant, the Road Traffic Act (RTA). Anyone not complying, risks damaging progress with insurers as well as being subject to Motorsport UK investigation and brought before the National Court.

BRITAIN'S REPRESENTATIVE ON THE FIA SENATE HAS BEEN REMOVED BY PRESIDENT MOHAMMED BEN SULAYEM.



Ben Cussons, Vice-President and former Chairman of the Royal Automobile Club, had been on the FIA Senate for three and a half years, after supporting Ben Sulayem's candidature for president of motorsport's governing body. In a shock move he has been unceremoniously replaced by Azerbaijani Anar Alakbarov, a widely known supporter and ally of FIA President Mohammed Ben Sulayem.

The FIA Senate is the body within the FIA responsible for both its financial oversight and governance of its structure.

Cussons told BBC Sport: ***"I received correspondence from the President saying he was appointing my successor. He gave no reason why, and there was no timeline as to when this would happen."***

He said that his 'removal' had taken him totally by surprise, pointing out he and David Richards (Chairman of Motorsport UK, British motorsport's governing body) had been ***"staunch supporters of Mohammed in his election year and his then manifesto"***: ***"As far as I am aware, I haven't fallen out with him,"*** he added. ***"I have written to him for clarification, and I haven't had a reply. I'm a great believer in transparency and good governance."***

In a similar fashion to David Richards, reported in our last edition of Spotlight, Cussons is known to be in dispute with Ben Sulayem over his pushback on a requirement to 'sign a stricter non-disclosure agreement regarding FIA business'.

He says he is ***"awaiting a reply from the FIA"*** having made his position clear and his removal comes just weeks after a change to the rules governing the body's composition at the FIA general assembly. This gave the FIA President the power to appoint or dismiss the required four ***"independent and qualified"*** members of the senate.

Previously, the President could only propose their appointment or removal, which then required confirmation by the remaining 12 FIA Senate Members. The stated reason given for the change was to provide ***"more flexibility in having the expertise required for the many and varied topics [the FIA Senate] has to deal with and which may require an urgent decision"***.

Critics claim the potential requirement was already contained within other FIA rules and that it was a blatant attempt to consolidate power into Ben Sulayem's hands. The other 8 FIA Senate Members are 4 persons drawn from the 'Presidential Team (including the President himself) and a further 4 persons elected by each of the World Councils for Sport and Mobility. The FIA Senate is empowered to take decisions over the FIA's rules (importantly including those governing Formula 1) when the World Councils are unable to meet.

Cussons' dismissal follows the removal of a series of other senior figures, all apparently because they have disagreed or clashed with Ben Sulayem. These include former Senior F1 Steward Tim Mayer, who last week announced he was running against Ben Sulayem in December's Presidential election. Former race driver Mayer is the son of Teddy Mayer, a key driving force behind the early success of McLaren.

Also removed of late is FIA Chief Executive Officer Natalie Robyn, FIA F1 Race Director Niels Wittich, FIA Compliance Officer Paolo Basarri and the FIA Head of the Audit Committee, Bertrand Badre together with UK Committee Member Tom Purves (Tom was not only the Chairman of Rolls Royce and BMW USA in his time but was also Chairman of Motorsport Council at Motorsport UK – *are you spotting a trend?*).

As previously highlighted, Robert Reid had already resigned his position as the FIA Vice-President for Sport in March, over what he described as a "standards breakdown" at the FIA.



Following her 'retirement' CEO Natalie Robyn commented **"The resignation of the Deputy President of Sport clearly indicates there are serious ongoing structural challenges. When professional processes are not adhered to and stakeholders are excluded from decision-making, it undermines the foundation of a strong organisation"**.

She added **"I am saddened to see these developments, as they threaten both the credibility and the long-term effectiveness of an important institution."**

David Richards has in recent months also been critical of changes made by Ben Sulayem to the FIA's statutes and has subsequently been banned from attending any meetings of the FIA World Council on the pretext that he has refused to sign a new, stricter non-disclosure agreement being imposed on its members.

The decision to impose stricter NDAs on World Council members, which has also been resisted by several other members, followed Richards' criticisms of changes made to the FIA statutes last December.



An FIA spokesperson said the governing body **"thanked Mr Cussons for his service during his time as a member of the FIA Senate"**. The spokesperson did not respond to questions as to why he had been removed, whether it had been planned before the statute changes, and as to whether there were any plans to remove other members.

They also did not respond to a question as to whether it was right to form the conclusion this was an example of the sort of conduct warned about by opponents of the two most recent sets of statute changes, and evidence of what was described as a **"weakening of the ability of the FIA Senate to perform oversight functions, and especially oversight of the President himself"**.

The spokesperson instead explained the role of the FIA Senate, saying it **"plays a crucial role in the governance of the FIA, ensuring effective oversight of its financial and administrative affairs while guiding the strategic implementation of its long-term vision across sport and mobility"**.

They added: **"The past year has marked a turning point in the federation's financial transformation, culminating with the FIA posting a significant operating profit for the first time since 2019"**.

They added **"All proposed amendments to the FIA statutes were voted through by a 'super majority' of FIA member clubs at the FIA General Assemblies, in line with the democratic process which governs decision-making within the Federation"**.

They also reiterated **"The amendments to the FIA statutes further strengthen processes around governance and confidentiality."**

For note: Ben Cusson's replacement Anar Alakbarov has been president of the Azerbaijan Automobile Federation since 2014 and is also a political assistant to the country's president, Ilham Aliyev.

With acknowledgement to BBC Sport on which the majority of this article is based.

Champions Challenge Update

A range of entries were received for the Challenge and to make things more interesting, the entries have been anonymised and ‘progress’ scores are provided in the table below:

Position finalised	Team A	Team B	Team C	Team D	Team E	Team F	Team G	Team H	Team I
0=outside top3. Blank = no results									
F1 World Champion	Norris	2 Piastri	3 Piastri	3 Piastri	3 Norris	2 Norris	2 Verstappen	1 Piastri	3 Piastri
F1 Manufacturers	McLaren	3 McLaren	3 McLaren	3 McLaren	3 McLaren	3 McLaren	3 McLaren	3 McLaren	3 McLaren
World Rally Champion	Evans	3 Evans	3 Neuville	0 Rovannerpa	2 Rovannerpa	2 Evans	3 Rovannerpa	2 Ogier	1 Evans
WRC Manufacturers	Toyota	3 Hyundai	2 Hyundai	2 Toyota	3 Toyota	3 Hyundai	2 Toyota	3 Toyota	3 Hyundai
BTCC - Driver	Ingram	2 Ingram	2 Sutton	3 Hill	1 Hill	1 Ingram	2 Turkington	0 Sutton	3 Hill
British GT - Driver	Mitchell	0 Martin/Mitchell	0 Rob Collard	0 Dawson	3 Tse	2 Tillbrook	1 Mitchell	0 Collard	0 Adam
British Rally Champion	Jurgenson	2 Creighton	3 Creighton	3 M Evans	0 O Price	0 Creighton	3 Creighton	3 Jurgenson	2 O Price
BTRDA Sporting Driver	Bricknell	3 Bricknell	3 Bricknell	3 Bricknell	3 Stuart Beare	0 Bricknell	3 Bricknell	3 Josh Veale	0 Bricknell
Nat Hot Rod World Champ	Cooke	Maxwell	Woods	Roots	Woods	Alexander	McDonald	McDonald	Woods
BRISCA F1 World Champ	Wainman Jnr	Wainman Jnr	Tom Harris	Fairhurst	Hines	Tom Harris	Newsom	Fairhurst	Tom Harris
		18	19	17	18	13	19	15	15

The F1 World Championship for manufacturers looks very predictable as reflected by the entries. The only question is whether Norris or Piastri win the drivers title?

WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

The World Rally Championship is looking much more interesting...



Whilst Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT and Elfyn Evans dominated the early rounds of the WRC, at the last event in Portugal made big improvements in their use of the new Hankook tyres and could be a real threat over the season.

Whilst Kalle Rovannerpää has got to grips with the new tyres Elfyn Evans appears to have lost his mojo and, whilst his championship lead is large, it is going to come under threat unless he re-captures his early season form.

2023 British Rally Champion Adrian Formaux has been a revelation since moving to Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT and expect to see him at the sharp end of the drivers table by the end of the season.

Meanwhile at home...

BRITISH TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP

The British Touring Car Championship has started in rumbustious style with one expected competition entrant (Colin Turkington) not entering the Series due to ‘budgetary’ reasons. Otherwise, The Big 3 three from the last 4 seasons are once again assembled at the sharp end, individually representing BMW (Rwd), Ford (Fwd) and Hyundai (Fwd) although a fourth team, under the Toyota Gazoo Racing banner, has joined in the fun. It’s all a far cry from those heady days of the 1990s when up to 12 different manufacturers appeared at circuits around the UK.



BRITISH GT CHAMPIONSHIP

Possibly the most unpredictable of the National Championships because of its 'Pro-Am format'. Mercedes and Porsche have drafted in German factory drivers to spearhead their challenges. However, Charles Dawson, returning from a foray into European GT racing, is proving to be the driver who is clearly outpacing his rivals. Longtime Sutton & Cheam Motor Club member Rob Collard has also made a late entry to the Championship and could yet prove a dark horse in his Lamborghini Huracan GT3 EVO2. British GT Champion in 2020 and 2024, Rob shares the Barwell Motorsport run Huracan with 20-year-old Hugo Cook and reserve driver 36-year-old Matt Topham. The Series moves to Brands Hatch on 23rd / 24th August.

BRITISH RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

The Probite British Rally Championship looks like turning into a battle between the 2023 FIA Junior World Rally Champion William Creighton (Castrol-backed Toyota GR Yaris Rally2) and Estonian Romet Jürgenson (M-Sport Ford Fiesta Rally2). Whilst youthful Irishman Creighton already has a couple of BRC campaigns under his belt, (including 2024 using the same car as this year), Jurgenson is new to the events and venues that make up the championship. That said, he is being run by Malcolm Wilson's M-Sport operation in a similar manner to Adrian Formaux's 2023 Championship campaign which led to an outright win – the aim being to give the driver seat time and build his confidence.

Following the tragedy which befell Round 3 (The Jim Clark Rally), the event was abandoned, and the next round will be the Voyonic Grampian Forest Rally in Wales on 9th / 10th August

A dominant win on the second round of the Championship for Jurgenson suggests that this approach is working very well and he trails the lead by just 10 points. 4-Time British Champion Keith Cronin has retired from the season despite being in 3rd place overall, reporting 'work-related reasons' to do with the family-owned retail chain.

BTRDA SPORTING TRIALS

Meanwhile, the BTRDA Sporting Trials Championship is being dominated by Thomas Bricknell once again and he is winning consistently, almost unstoppable as he is attending all the rounds.

The efforts of his passenger Beth Carroll should not be underestimated as part of Thomas's success as I have learnt that the lump alongside is as important as the lump under the bonnet!

The final two categories in my round up will be decided by one off races later in the year and qualification tables currently available indicate that all drivers nominated are likely to be on the start grid for the relevant races.



NATIONAL HOT ROD CHAMPIONSHIP

In the National Hot Rods, the outcome really depends on the conditions on the day and the qualifying position achieved through four 'hot laps' on the evening before the race. It would be a National Hot Rod record if Rob McDonald was crowned champion for the third year in succession.

BRISCA F1 STOCK CARS

In the case of Tom Harris in BRISCA F1, he is vulnerable to his competitors deciding that they do not want to see him win again – but then he prepares many of his fellow competitors' cars. Frankie Wainman Junior does many of the rest!

That's the end of the Championship round-up as so it's still all to play for!

GT to Rallying; the ‘Stutchbury Way’

A short look into the background of Club Member Ryan Stutchbury

Ryan Stutchbury, and Sutton & Cheam MC Newbie Gemma Sinclair-Willis, both swapped running a British GT Team and car to compete in their first stage rally together, appearing at Abingdon in the Peugeot 205.



Ryan, who is the Team Manager of Jolt Racing Team and Team Owner of R1 Motorsport, has progressed from the Citroen C1 Series 2 years ago, through to the British GT Championship. This year sees the team running a McLaren Artura GT4. Driven by John Ingram and Rupert Williams.



Ryan's technical background stems from his days at MMS Technik working with another Sutton & Cheam member Dan Mayo. At MMS he achieved a BSc (Hons) in Motorsport Engineering before taking up a post as a Lecturer at Brooklands Technical College in Weybridge.

The College fully supported his growing rallycross activities, where he competed for many years, supported by Dad Scott (who works at McLaren Production Centre in Woking) and Mum Kirsten (and constantly nagged by sister Kesia).

Ryan saw a degree of success on the shale and tarmac in the BTRDA Rallycross Series before taking time out for his new family and to expand his career into other areas. He then joined Jolt Racing in the Spring of 2023 and simply loves the diverse yet challenging role.

Gemma, who has been developing and learning the engineering roles, also runs the Artura British GT campaign alongside Ryan. The Abingdon Stages in June were a *‘temptation too great’* for the pair and so they both took a sabbatical from normal day duties to compete in their first rally, with Gemma in the co-driver's seat.

The pair were seeded 75 and initially were making good progress on Stage 1 before a small mistake by Ryan who despite his suggestion that he ‘clipped’ the bus stop chicane pallets, arrival in service revealed extensive damage to the car.

Despite missing the second stage due to engine issues, the R1 Team went about their business repairing the car to get it back out for the remaining stages and they decided to use the event as an ‘extended test’ for the newly built Peugeot 205.

Unfortunately, the remaining Stages 3 to 7 were dogged with a battle of various electrical gremlins including the fan fuse blowing on the stage start!



Pre-event nerves were soon dismissed by the pair despite the first stage ‘incident’ and subsequently having to monitor engine temp throughout the stages.

On the final stage and still battling electrical issues, they managed a very credible 29th overall stage time, indicating the potential for a good result if things had gone their way.

Gemma and Ryan hope to be back out in later in the year once the 205 is repaired and the GT Season comes to a close. Both Ryan and Gemma “loved every minute and can't wait to get back in the car”. We wait in anticipation of great things to come!



In the rearview mirror

A quick look back at who has been doing what?

There's been a lot happening since the start of the new year and several

members have been very active. Whilst we attempt to give EVERYONE a mention, we are not clairvoyants and cannot know everything so drop an email to Nigel Griffiths to help him in his research, especially for the Competitor of the Month Awards.

Please note that this report is very rally based as most other disciplines do not get underway until April.

GENERAL

We certainly have been 'International' this past few months with club members competing far and wide. Steve McNulty and Rob Swann have been collecting a huge amount of sunshine in Barbados whilst others have been 'touring' the dusty lanes of the Mexico alongside Mr Rovannerä.

MARCH Competitor of the Month – Jamie McBain

Jamie continues his run of giant killing results in his Peugeot 205, this time taking 4th o/all 1st in class at the Bovington Stages during the first weekend of March. With Jordine Crooks alongside him, Jamie had a day long battle with the Darrian's and R5's and only managed to lose one wing mirror along the way!

Sutton & Cheam Motor Club members also competing a Bovington were, Paul and Ben Garraway taking their Sunbeam to a fantastic 18th o/a - 3rd in class whilst Pete Wilkins & Caroline Brampton took 31st o/a in the BMW.

Enjoying their first outing of the season, John & Sharon Mills finished 38th o/all in their Mini.

Other notable SCMC results in March included Declan Dear co-driving Matthew Hirst to 3rd o/all on the Malcolm Wilson Stages held a week after Bovington.



On 16th March on the Tegiwa Dukeries Rally, Ben Smith / Ben Smith finish 16th o/all 4th in class with Oliver Hucklebridge at 36th o/all 8th in class and Scott / Darren Stutchbury 40th o/all 11th in class.

APRIL Competitor of the Month

Angelica Fuentes and Jacob Gascoine-Becker

Angelica co-drove Kurt Thiel in his Porsche 911 Carrera RSR to 7th o/all and 3rd in class at the Tour Auto.



Starting in Paris and ending 7-days later in Nice, the route took in some classic French roads and race circuits along the way.

Our other competitor of the month is Jacob Gascoine-Becker who's just recently joined the club and is starting out on his motorsport journey. After initially trying an Autosolo at Brands Hatch, Jacob entered the Regis Sprint at Goodwood and finished 8th in class against some established sprinters.

Other notable Sutton & Cheam Motor Club results in April included Declan Dear co-driving Matthew Hirst

to 6th o/all on the Carlisle Stages which is a round of the British Rally Championship which as you'd expect, attracts an excellent entry.

Paul Braddock also entered his Mini in the Regis Sprint and finished 9th in class whereas our very own chairman has been bitten by the motorsport competition bug once again and surprisingly has taken up Sporting Trails. I believe the full purchase of a car has now occurred but for this month he was the 'Bouncer' to driver James Tickle in his IbeX at the Alan Gisby Trial. Ian has certainly settled into his new motorsport discipline as the crew finished equal 2nd.

Unfortunately, Darrell Taylor & David Burden had bad luck on the Manx & SMC Stages respectively but hopefully they'll both have better events in the future.

MAY Competitor of the Month - Oliver Hucklebridge

Several club members had good results in May but after much debate Oliver Hucklebridge was selected by the Committee for COTM for his 10th overall and 3rd in class on the Compbrake Stages at Three Sisters Circuit near Wigan. Oliver has only just moved across to the driver's seat from the other side of the car and was trusted with his Dad's Ford Escort for this event, so I'm sure there was relief when it was returned in one piece.

Jamie McBain was also competing at the same event and continued his run of good results with 6th o/all.

Other club member results to call out for May include David Martin & Jordine Crooks claiming an excellent 17th o/all, 7th in class in their 205 at the Fulbeck airfield-based Lincoln Green Stages, a great result.

Our very own chairman continues his venture into Sporting Trails and now has his own car, a Sabson no less. Partnered by his co-driver from his rallying days, Matt Sunderland, they finished 8th o/all 1st in class at the Bluebell Trial in East Sussex.



JUNE Competitor of The Month - *Darrell Taylor*



June was a very busy month for Darrel, with events on 3 consecutive weekends. June started with a 2nd in the very competitive C18 class at our own Abingdon Carnival sprint and followed that up the day after by winning the Carnival stages outright with Steve McNulty co-driving. The following weekend saw a trip to Anglesey for the Menai Stages with 3rd o/all and a further trip north for the Argyll Stages the weekend after.

It was great to see so many members entered for both the sprint and rally over the Abingdon Carnival weekend. Results for all members can be seen on the Abingdon Carnival website <https://abingdoncarnival.com/>

Outside of Abingdon, Angelica Fuentes wheeled out Maurice the #minisprint for an outing at the Brooklands Museum Double 12 Auto Tests. An excellent morning saw Angelica lying 2nd o/all at lunchtime but a couple of test errors resulted in a 9th o/all finish at the end of the day.

Sorry if I missed anybody but please let me know your results so that they can be considered for COTM.

Sorry if I missed anybody but please let me know your results so that they can be considered for COTM.

LATEST NEWS:

Last weekend saw the Hucklebridge's visit Pembrey again for the Kath Curzon Memorial Rally with some father v son rivalry. Ian had issues on the first stage dropping him towards the back of the field.

Good stage times for the rest of the day brought him back up the field to finally finish 24th o/all just three places ahead of Oliver but it was close!

Let Nigel Griffiths know your results (email the.gs100@gmail.com) so the committee can consider you for competitor of the month award.



We need hosts for Down the Pub in 2025. It's not onerous – you just need to nominate a nice pub with good beer and easy parking. If you can get some member friends along to join us so much the better.

Down the Pubs are generally held on the second Tuesday of every month.

PLEASE CONTACT IAN BROOKS

Email: rs8001146@gmail.com)

or 07801 038160

British Sprint Championship

Pembrey Race Circuit – Round 13 & Round 14

Saturday 7th June / Sunday 8th June 2025

*An article from the Sprinting and Hillclimbing magazine – **Speedscene**; where your intrepid editor gets to grips with the cockpit after a few half-hearted attempts at the British Sprint Championship.*

As with all good British Sundays, conversation started and ended with the weather. The day opened with blue skies and hopeful commentary from the paddock and sceptics alike.

Practice commenced promptly as ever with the BARC Wales and began with the reigning champion Chris Jones still suffering with a slight clutch slip during periods of full power identified from analysis of the previous day's data.

Steve Brown was lucky to escape with minor damage when the RLM Empire suffered a catastrophic failure of the rear lower wishbone joint on the entry to the very quick Honda Bend but was able to control the three-wheeled car sufficiently for the marshals to recover.

Sun in Wales!..... The day gradually clouded and resorted to annoying downpours



Of those currently jostling for the upper echelons of the British Championship, Goulding, Loudon, Miles, Harden and Faulkner had trouble free runs with little to report.

In the Challenge Cup, Froggett and Buckingham were making steady progress in their rebuilt OMS CR04 and were encountering few issues with the car. Froggett created issues of his own however by selecting Saturday's track layout which made for an interesting recovery line to the Sunday circuit. Montgomery-Smith completed the excitement in practice with a trip across the grass on the exit from Debeni, coming to rest outside the café – just in time for a late breakfast with a side of adrenaline.

Qualifying started under foreboding skies. Steve Broughton in his heavily developed 1.4 DJ Firehawk led the pack with the only time being in the 104's.

Close in attendance was Jones in the 1.0 Force TA, whilst Goulding slotted into 3rd with a time comparable to practice. A further second back was Ethan Faulkner in his Force 1.4T, closely accompanied by Miles and Loudon. Duncan Barnes, driving the 2.1 Norma, the formidable vehicle of the BSC contingent, expertly navigated his laps despite encountering occasional throttle issues. At 170mph into the hairpin one can only wonder where he chose to lift for braking. Joining the upper echelons of the session were Grahame Harden, peddling the 1.6 Radical to a comfortable 8th position and content with the neutral handling.

The final 4 run off places comprised of a 2-sec group led by Porrett and Taylor, both with 1.6T Mygales and setting identical times, followed by Pickles and Torkington making up the runoff contingent.

There was barely time to tend, fettle and lovingly stroke the cars before being recalled to the start line.

Almost predictably and despite his clutch woes, Jones managed to wring over 2secs from his qualifying slot to claim P1 in the runoff. Goulding was equally keen to improve on earlier runs but tried a little too hard, overdriving the lap and consequently tumbling to an unaccustomed 5th place.

Moving in the opposing direction was the revitalised Miles. After a slow start and adjustments for oversteer, he vowed to commit to Honda, the fast left-hand bend leading onto the long straight. A smooth, fast entry paid dividends, removing nearly 2secs from his qualification time to elevate him to a lofty 2nd. Broughton quite literally moved the other way in the timing table after another adrenaline moment at Honda, the car unnervingly heading for the grass and tyre barriers at over 100mph in a fit of understeer. Although recovered, the loss of speed down the straight killed the time for the second lap and he slipped to 3rd.

Ethan Faulkner, whose dedication to travel to each venue in the BSC this year, places all others in the shade (bar that of Kirkistown) and will require a ferry trip for the Northern Irish Team. Except for Pembrey (where car removal and storage had been arranged), the Support Team could fly each way! His commitment continued on the circuit and in only his third lap of the venue he posted an error free run to secure 4th place.

Duncan Barnes was next to the line and who is difficult to ignore in the bulky but sleek Norma M20FC. Producing the fastest straight-line speed of the day, he also claimed a new class record. Loudon fumbled his launch control for the start of his run and as the red mist descended to recover lost time, he produced two scruffy laps full of effort and determination but ultimately only a small improvement on qualification.

Also of note on the timing table was Harden, who nudged the class record in qualification and remained delighted with the confidence inspiring handling of the 1.6 Radical PR6 and consequently produced a near identical time in the runoff. Holmes, a welcome returnee to the Paddock with the fabulous Lola Tegra Judd, completed practice in the morning without issue.

However, on this occasion he was caught out by a damp patch and spun at 140mph on the entry to the hairpin, joined by a short journey across the grass to regain the tarmac.



At the lower end of the running order, times were equally tight for those that had battled to qualify. Pickles dispatched with excess weight at the start line, the engine cover performing a theatrical 360 before landing close to where it had started. Not to be outdone, Mike Froggett, competing in the OMS CR04 similarly parted company with the engine cover, his second circus trick of the day exuberantly demonstrated at a three-figure speed.

Woodford Trailers British Sprint Championship - Top 12 Run-off: Pembrey Club Rd 13

1. Chris Jones (1.0 Force TA) 103.97 (+0.00)
2. Stephen Miles (2.0 Van Diemen RF96mm) 105.59 (+1.62)
3. Steve Broughton (1.4 DJ Firehawk CT004) 105.81 (+1.84)
4. Ethan Faulkner (1.4 Force PT) 106.32 (+2.35)
5. Peter Goulding (1.6t Mygale FF 200) 106.60 (+2.63)
6. Duncan Barnes (2.1 Norma M20FC) 106.66 (+2.69)
7. John Loudon (1.0 Force TA) 107.02 (+3.05)
8. Grahame Harden (1.6 Radical PR6) 112.85 (+8.88)
9. Graham Porrett (1.6t Mygale FF 200) 113.66 (+9.69)
10. Mike Taylor (1.6t Mygale Ecoboost) 115.93 (+11.96)
11. Carole Torkington (1.5 OMS CF08) 117.53 (+13.56)
12. Martin Pickles (1.0 Jedi Mk1) 118.25 (+14.28)

Afternoon conditions became less reliable with the morning sunshine replaced by grey and threatening clouds, which occasionally deposited their contents to add to the coolness and variable track conditions, with several succumbing in qualification to the moisture.

Regardless, Steve Broughton set the target with a time that would have placed him 2nd in the previous run off but without drama following a few paddock handling adjustments.

Jones however, was now 3-secs slower than the morning time and continuing to nurse the slipping clutch. Loudon correctly initiated launch-control this time and produced the third fastest time for qualification. Goulding, Miles, Holmes and Faulkner all allowed for conditions in their efforts and opted for 'error free and sensible', knowing that their inherent speed would be sufficient for qualification. A similarly reserved attempt produced a controlled time to qualify for Barnes, Porrett, Harden, Torkington and Taylor.

There was a rush now to prepare for the final attempt of the day before the track dampened. Broughton, despite overheating on the line waiting for track clearance, pushed on and cooled during the lap. Unfortunately, he was two tenths down on his Q time to land him 3rd overall and being pleased with the weekends haul, he jetted off to Malta for a break before the next round at Mallory Park.

Next up was Jones, who battled through the slipping clutch issues and consequently, in his efforts to combat this, locked up into the chicane. He ran wide on several bends, the resulting in a less than precise lap, netting only 4th for the current champion. Loudon produced a new Personal Best for the final attempt, despite momentarily selecting 3rd gear instead of 5th, on an otherwise precise run for 6th place.

Goulding then produced the 'Run of the Day' with his fastest-ever speed into Honda and a resultant PB but more importantly, propelled him to the top of the time sheet.

The consistency of Miles was sufficient for a comfortable 5th whilst Faulkner removed 5-seconds from his qualifying time to snatch 2nd place from Broughton. Ethan was naturally excited and pleased with his performance whilst dad was further up the exuberance scale, circling like an excited puppy with exclamations of joy and jumping up and down. I suspect it was validation of his faith in the young talent. Undoubtedly Faulkner will impact the lofty placings this year if he continues with his current commitment.

Holmes kept the best for last and removed some of the dust of retirement to produce his best time of the weekend, despite a 'steering wheel sawing' episode exiting the hairpin. Down on his earlier times, Barnes eased into 8th place, whilst in the *Circle of Delight* sat Harden with a new class record, leaning on his confidence of Saturday and clipping a further 2secs from his best time. Torkington also completed the day with a PB, Porrett and Taylor making up the final points scoring places.

Woodford Trailers British Sprint Championship - Top 12 Run-off: Pembrey Club Rd 14

1. Peter Goulding (1.6t Mygale FF 200) 104.43 (+0.00)
2. Ethan Faulkner (1.4 Force PT) 105.10 (+0.67)
3. Steve Broughton (1.4 DJ Firehawk CT004) 105.13 (+0.70)
4. Chris Jones (1.0 Force TA) 105.22 (+0.79)
5. Stephen Miles (2.0 Van Diemen RF96mm) 105.63 (+1.20)
6. John Loudon (1.0 Force TA) 106.07 (+1.64)
7. Terry Holmes (3.5 Lola T90) 106.54 (+2.11)
8. Duncan Barnes (2.1 Norma M20FC) 108.11 (+3.68)
9. Grahame Harden (1.6 Radical PR6) 110.89* (+6.46) - record
10. Carole Torkington (1.5 OMS CF08) 115.14 (+10.71)
11. Graham Porrett (1.6t Mygale FF 200) 116.13 (+11.70)
12. Mike Taylor (1.6t Mygale Ecoboost) 116.71 (+12.28)

Mallory Park - Round 15 & 16

Saturday 21st June / Sunday 22nd June



Before.....

The plan was to build on the earlier rounds scoring to elevate my position in the British Championship to one of the coveted top ten places.

Saturday at Mallory went well initially with some points bagged from the first run off. The event was cut short however when a driver suffered concussion during a high-speed accident.

The resulting circuit repairs, clean up and temporary loss of the Medical Team pushed the timetable beyond the event finish time and so the beers were cracked open earlier than normal.

Sunday progressed equally well 'on track' until upon exiting the hairpin, I ran wide onto the mushroom shaped rumble strip, unique to Mallory. The rear of the car was launched into the air and when it landed, I was a passenger to the scene of the impact.



.....and after - The 'Room of Gloom' as the garage has now been renamed

3 cracked ribs, bruised and cut ankle, strained neck (thank the Lord for HANS!) etc.

Unfortunately, the car did not survive unscathed either.

The left side of the car was completely wiped out; drive shaft joints, differential, chassis, wheel, front and rear suspension, rear upright, front and rear wings, aero floor, nosecone, engine cover.....the damage list goes on and on.

Repairs are now in progress around the country ready for a return to the circuits.

NEW LARGE CLUB STICKERS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

**HELP US PROMOTE THE CLUB BY
DISPLAYING YOUR MEMBERSHIP
ON YOUR COMPETITION CAR,
SERVICE VAN OR ROAD CAR**

MEASURING 210mm x 175mm

AND SUITABLE FOR USE AS A ONE PIECE OR

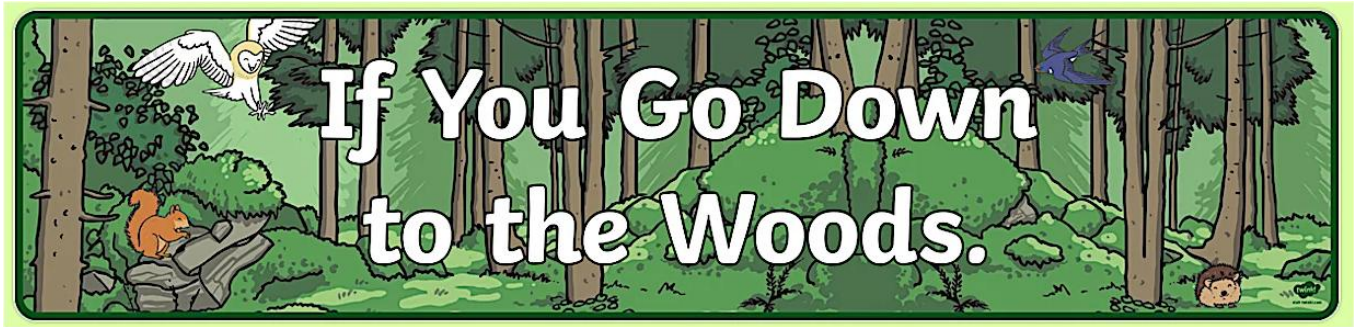
2 PIECE STICKET (CUT TO SUIT)

Contact Barry Guess at

barrygcharlie@aol.com



This article from Ian Brooks was accidentally omitted from the last magazine.



What a difference a few months make....!

For the past couple of years, I have done my post-Christmas exercise by attending the Plum Pudding Sporting Car Trial, hosted by Southsea and 750 Motor Clubs. The venue is the very convenient (for me) Queen Elizabeth II Park just off the A3 south of Petersfield and only a few miles up the road.

It's a strange event in that whilst Southsea MC had to cancel both their other Sporting Trials in 2024 for lack of entries, this event had 50 plus entries across historic and modern classes. This probably



represents 50% of the active sporting trials cars in the country so it is clearly a popular event, as evidenced by the cars and trailers squeezed onto the forest road through the park.

Sporting Trials are typically run over eight hills, with two runs in the morning and one run in the afternoon on adjusted courses. The aim is to get as far as possible up each hill with each route marked by 'gates', with each gate being numbered to give a score – the gate numbered '1' is at the top of the hill and normally the one at the bottom being number 10 – get through all the gates and you score '0' for that hill attempt. The aim is

to achieve the lowest penalty score.

Since each hill might be made easier or more difficult by cars attempting the hill, competing cars all start at different hills, typically in groups of four or five. This means that each competitor gets to compete on near 'virgin' hills as well as 'used' hills. It also means that the lunch break occurs on all the hills at pretty much the same time, enabling the Clerk of the Course and his helpers to re-set all the hills as necessary during the break.

One of the reasons for the popularity of the Plum Pudding Trial is likely to be that there is sufficient space at the venue to set up separate hills for the historic and modern cars. This reduces waiting around and generally improves the quality of the hills. The image the right shows competitors inspecting and then waiting to climb several of the hills set up for the modern cars.



Note the car in action – a 'mature' husband and wife team demonstrating the accessibility of the sport. Whilst typical of many teams, a wide variety of ages were represented with roughly a third of the competitors being female.

A further attraction of these events is that

cars can be double entered, often with the driver and 'bouncer' simply swapping seats. I'm not sure why

there isn't considered to be an advantage in going second and effectively being allowed to 'reccy' each course, but it may be down to the condition of each hill changing with each run.

Moreover, any waiting competitor can watch preceding competitors on a hill and learn from their successes or failures.



A typical Sporting Trials Car

Sporting Trials cars are specialist machines, normally small, barely fitting the two occupants. They are subject to construction rules with most of the weight shifted as far back in the car as possible.

One consequence of the weight distribution, together with motorcycle front wheels (to aid manoeuvrability), is that the cars understeer badly. This has resulted in the use of 'fiddle' brakes as seen with the red tops on the outside of the cockpit of this car. The fiddle brakes slow each rear wheel independently and facilitate the steering of

the car much like the steering of a tracked vehicle.

Engines are generally a maximum size of 1650cc with any modifications designed to exploit the torque band of the engine. Gearboxes are (I think) relatively standard with an emphasis on low-gearing and being able to pull off in first, second and possibly even third gears, depending on the requirements of any hill. Gear changes on a hill are sometimes necessary but generally avoided where possible, certainly when heading up hill where smoothness and exceptional throttle control are vital. Limited slip diffs are not allowed. And this results in drivers needing to use the fiddle brakes to balance out the speed of rear wheels where one is getting better traction than the other.

The picture shows action that was typical of the day.

After a long diagonal run on this hill, where the challenge was to maintain grip and stop the back end breaking away, competitors had to turn round a tree and straight up the hill. This took them over tree roots onto a steeper section of the hill.



Here the 'gates' were trickier with a 90 degree left turn

across the hill, followed by a hairpin to traverse the climb to the right. On this hill I never saw anyone go beyond Gate 3 – the problem being that the turn through this gate was bounded by a tree on the outside, and a tree stump on the inside. Travelling at a speed to enable such a tight turn was resulting in a loss of traction. This demonstrated one of the challenges of Sporting Trials for the Clerk of the Course – some hills may be too easy, and others may be impossible.

Whilst such challenges can be addressed by re-defining hills at lunchtime, competitors still have to judge what is and is not possible.

The final challenge in Sporting Car Trials is to judge your pace – whether to ‘blast’ or ‘trickle’ up the incline. Blasting is what you and I can all do... foot to the floor and hanging on to a bucking bronco whilst trying to get it through the gates. Whilst blasting can work sometimes, it has to be done judiciously ensuring adequate traction when accelerating and avoiding the rear of the car losing traction on the turns, taking the car out of position and hitting gates or trees.

Trickling on the other hand is much more subtle and requires the driver to keep revs at a level whereby the wheels are about to.... but do not break traction.

On the day there were many compelling examples of trickling with competitors ‘cleaning’ hills by trickling (and looking like they were going to stall at many points on a hill) whilst others attacked the hill only to spin the rear wheels up on a turn and achieve early ‘fails’.

What was interesting was that competitors would adopt different trickling speeds for different hills.

On one hill, it was very easy to spin the wheels up as they turned round trees going from left to right across the hill and vice versa. The critical challenge seemed to be minimising the time spent facing up the hill on the turns.

Blasting was simply resulting in oversteer and a loss of control on the turns. Trickling too slowly led to competitors losing traction immediately the cars faced straight up the hill. In between was a sweet spot where the cars just glided through these turns.



In this final picture it shows a final throw of the dice by a competitor. The smoke is from the tyres as he attempts to blast up to the next gate.

There are a number of Sporting Trials held in the area. Queen Elizabeth Park hosts three trials each year, there is a venue near Gatwick which is used a couple of times and one near Sevenoaks.

For those who are interested in playing around in the woods there are also a number of

Production Car Trials held around our region although these are predominantly in the Autumn or Winter. Falcon MC are one of the biggest exponents of the art although many other clubs hold the occasional event in Kent, Sussex and Surrey.

Details of Sporting Trials can be found at:

<https://www.sportingtrials.co.uk/> - <http://750sportingtrials.co.uk/>

There also seems increasing use of a Facebook page:

https://www.facebook.com/groups/4902783218/?locale=en_GB

www.scmc.co.uk

And now as a result...

True Novices - How did I get here?

Sunday 18th May saw a couple of Sporting Trials virgins on their way to their first ever event near Wadhurst in East Sussex. The 'band' was reunited with Matt Sunderland and I sitting in a car together for the first time since about 2007.

How did I get here?

Well, following my visit to the Christmas Pudding Trial reported in the former article, I became convinced that the cost, limited car maintenance requirements and availability of local events made this a sport for me. Serendipity then stepped in when I found an event taking place on the Goodwood Estate in early February.

In planning to attend I also discovered that the 'Chief Driver' of the 750 Motor Club's Sporting Trials activities, Kevin Judd, also lives close by in Pagham. After the event, a quick email led to me buying Kevin a couple of drinks at our local pub and me getting an extremely useful brain dump on how to get into Sporting Trials.

By this stage I had realised:

- (a) Cars are not easy to come by*
- (b) Cars are not easy to drive*
- (c) There is great potential to do yourself*
- (d) Damage can be done on the hills if you don't know what you are doing.*

The best piece of advice Kevin gave to me was to book a session with Ian Wright in Maidstone, and to talk to him about cars.

Ian has been involved in Sporting Trials all of his life and runs [The Wright Event](#), a Corporate Hospitality Company which includes Sporting Trials and 4x4s as two of its core activities. Ian must have had any number of people pass through his doors claiming to be interested in Sporting Trials but taking that interest no further. Nevertheless, he took me very seriously and in mid-March I had two and a half hours with him one-to-one getting a crash course in Sporting Trials driving.

Initially, we drove one of his 'activity' cars which ran a Triumph Acclaim (all alloy) engine with an automatic gearbox. This was a great starting point because, although you don't change gear on hills, the auto box removes the risk of stalling.



However, in the latter part of the ad-hoc lesson we used a car with manual gearbox. At the end of the session, he announced the car was for sale – he also showed me a number of suitable trailers he also had for sale - Pretty quickly, I had my first Sporting Trials 'rig'.

Given my lack of mechanical knowledge, I agreed with Ian he would give the car a service and arrange for replacement of the mouse-eaten seat cushions.

With an event coming up near Maidstone in mid-April, we also agreed that since I had no one to compete with yet, a sensible target would be to have the car ready to collect by that date. With everything in place, but no passenger, my efforts turned to getting someone lined up.

Second piece of serendipity: Matt Sunderland called me out of the blue and was looking for a catch up. Innocently Matt agreed to meet up for a drink and at the end of the session I told him about my Sporting Trials plans. I agreed to send him some YouTube videos of what it was all about, and he quickly confirmed that he was up for it – problem solved in a matter of days.

Alan Gisby Trial

Taking place in mid-April and it was originally my intention was to spectate with Matt to give him a flavour of what goes on at a Sporting Trial whilst conducting a bit of research. Whilst the event was a 750 Motor Club event, the BTRDA was also including the event as a round of its championship as its planned event at the venue in February had been rained off (water-logged venue). This would ensure numbers and the quality of entry.

In the week before the event, Kevin contacted me and suggested that I speak to James Tickle who was looking for a passenger for the Alan Gisby. I had seen James competing at the Goodwood event and was aware that he is one of the top 750 Motor Club competitors – how could I turn him down?

The Alan Gisby Trial turned out to be a very good event to start with. Conditions were very dry – min 10psi in the rear wheels – and the venue was a grassy ‘U’ shaped channel in a field with the hills set out up one side. This made spectating very easy – you could see several hills at once – and there were few trees or other obstacles. As ‘instructed’, Matt attended, and we had a great learning day:

The car control of the top drivers was phenomenal, and they also make it look very easy.

Matt became mesmerised by the activities of one competitor and his rather unathletic-looking female passenger. The reasons for this were two-fold: (1) the detail of the driver’s reccy of every hill and the subsequent precision of his driving; and (2) the obvious and significant contribution the activities of his passenger was making to his success on the hills.

We subsequently learned that Matt had been tracking Thomas Bricknell – four times British Champion and only beaten on one event so far this year.

James Tickle gave me a great ride and was very tolerant when my failure to deploy my weight correctly prematurely ended some of our climbs. We finished tied second of the 750 Motor Club competitors on 60 points. To put things in perspective, Thomas scored 13! Included in our competing group was Stuart Beare, Chairman of BTRDA Sporting Trials and owner of Tulley’s Farm, who finished second on 20 points. Again, it was great to see how he approached hills and where we were making mistakes.

Bluebell Trial – Wadhurst

Matt and I turned up bright and early ready for the day. Concerned about whether we could both fit in the car I was relieved to find we could. The Bluebell Trial on 18th May ran close to Strakes Farm just south of Bewl Water in Kent and was expertly organised by 750 Motor Club.

After a quick briefing about how the day would work, we were soon heading to the first hill – fortunately, I had James Tickle in my group so I had someone watching out for me. Arriving at the base of the first hill my enthusiasm turned to trepidation.



Whilst Ian Wright's venue was lightly wooded, and the Alan Gisby Trial had few trees or obstacles; this venue was relying on heavily wooded areas to provide the hills and create the challenges in incredibly dry conditions. Car control would be paramount – not ideal with just ten minutes in the car previously and me still trying to get the hang of fiddle brakes.

The day passed in a blur – With a short lunch break, it was four hours of intense motorsport for £40!

Unfortunately, on the hills we used in the morning a couple of trees were definitely out to get me and I unwillingly obliged. To explain... Having actually made a decent pass of the second hill on the 1st climb, I proceeded to hit a tree at the 10 Gate the 2nd climb before finally messing up my 3rd and 4th climbs. Things were not going to plan as I also performed very poorly by doing a 'U' turn halfway up another hill and kept slipping back onto the inside gate – I needed more experience and lots more talent. Nevertheless, Matt was learning very quickly, and it soon became clear that his contribution – by getting his weight in the right place, at the right time – could be significant to the outcome of the day.

In addition, as I began to play more with the fiddle brakes, I realised just how well they could: (a) resolve traction problems; and (b) stall the engine if braking was not balanced with increased engine revs – a very difficult balance!

In the afternoon, things went much better on the other three different hills.

However, they also went better for everyone else and whilst I dropped just 16 points in the afternoon I had dropped 41 in the morning with the result that I finished 8th out of 12.

This placed me first Novice (no more than 10 events) and I was only 10 points off 5th overall so I must conquer that tree obsession. I'm now chomping at the bit to do more Trials but the next event clashes with Abingdon CAR-nival and then there is a summer layoff through to the end of August.



The next local event is 750 MC's Autumn Cup Trial at Horsmonden near Tonbridge in early October so give me a shout if you want to know when and where.

A FEW 2025 COMPETITION DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

07/09	Borough 19MC	Hethel Test Track - Norfolk	Sprint
14/09	Green Belt MC	North Weald Airfield - Hertfordshire	Sprint
28/09	Herts County Auto & AC	Debden Airfield - Essex	Sprint
05/07	BARC SW	Gurston Down Hillclimb - Wiltshire	Sprint
05/10	Farnborough DMC	Eelmoor Driver Area - Hampshire	Sprint
05/09	Aberystwyth & DMC	Rali Ceredigion - (T)	M/V Rally
08/09	Bath MC	Castle Combe Stages - (T)	S/V Rally
02/03	Bournemouth & DCC	Bovington Test Track - Dorset (T)	S/V Rally
10/10	Jersey MC & LCC	Jersey Rally - Channel Isles (T)	M/V Rally
10/10	Mull CC	Mull Rally - Isle of Mull (T)	M/V Rally
19/10	Bournemouth & DCC	Bovington Test Track - Dorset (T)	S/V Rally
12/04	Midland Manor MC	Severn Vally Stages - (G)	M/V Rally
08/09	Stonehaven & DMC	Grampian Rally - (G)	M/V Rally
25/10	North Wales CC	Cambrian Rally - Aberystwyth (G)	M/V Rally
04/09	Santa Pod Racers Club	FIA European Championship - Euro Finals	Drag
19/09	Santa Pod Racers Club	MS-UK British Championship - National Finals	Drag
02/11	London to Brighton VCR	London - Brighton	VCR

Dates correct at time of publication



36 hours of heat, glorious cars and sore feet

8th – 9th July

8 of us assemble at the 30-acre RAC Club, Woodcote Park near Epsom to assist in the arrival of around 8 lorry loads and 30 trailers of ~~erotic~~ exotic cars, all destined for display at the inaugural RAC Members Concours.

Managing traffic flows past the Motor House as the juggernauts unloaded their treasure trove of iconic gems was often traumatic, especially as the Queen Mother's Iconic 1970 Daimler Vanden Plas DS 420 rolled down the ramps alongside a host of other veteran and classic racing cars.

Even as we supervised the traffic flows, alongside us and undergoing a much-needed spruce up was the 1928 4.5 Litre Bentley Blower which had been driven to success by Jan Lammers at Le Mans just 3 days earlier. Around 60 cars arrived that afternoon, most expected although there were a few issues with early and unexpected arrivals, all expecting a VIP welcome of course.

Tuesday continues some 20-miles south at Guildford Tyres Markenfield Road Depot, where Ian Brooks had amassed a wide selection of Competition Cars, spanning a range of motorsport disciplines. Rally Cars, Sprint Cars, Saloon Racing Cars all gathered alongside Rallycross and even the Charman's new Trials Cars. Around 25 exhibits were on show, supported by a tricky quiz and a Matt Sunderland 'Ted Talk' on the relevance of competition tyres on what we see on the roads today. The 50 or so attendees enjoyed the 'free' social side (*the beer was free*) as was the outrageous claims by many of the so-called drivers accompanying the cars.

5:30am next morning arrived very early and although the stunning sunrise made it worthwhile. The

gathering back at Woodcote Park for the Main Briefing was only slightly improved by the welcomed coffee and bacon rolls.

Over 30 foolish volunteers were allocated their tasks and duties across the sumptuous Golf Club, and they welcomed, guided and parked the remaining 200 or so exhibits arriving for the day. By far the largest 'contingent' was the RAC Members collective and it soon lost its excitement as *yet another Aston Martin DB5* joined a dozen or so others in parking alongside just about every marque of Bentley ever made.



There was a smattering of less exotic but certainly more interesting motor cars such as the 957 BMW Isetta 300 (thought to be worth around £30K), an Austin 1100 and a pristine original 2CV.

The focus of the Concours were the 7 Main Concourse Arenas (Grand Tourers, Riviera, Coachbuilder's Art, Limousines, Mille Miglia, Pioneers, and Motorcycles) supported by a Special 75th Anniversary F1 Display which provided the backdrop for all the interviews and prize giving.



Amongst the Concourse Winners was John Lennon's iconic Rolls-Royce Phantom V winner in the Limousine Class whilst other notable winners included Carl Fogarty's 2000 Ducati 996 F00 Superbike, and the extraordinary 1936 Packard Twelve by LeBaron – featured in The Godfather movies - which received the RAC Chairmans Award.



The centrepiece was the original Golden British Grand Prix Trophy, as presented to Lando Norris at Silverstone 4 days earlier, and already bearing his name amongst the greats.



Other winners were:

Grand Tourer - Winner: 1958 Bristol 406S owned by Gale Barton

Riviera: 1938 Talbot Lago T15 cabriolet owned by Felix & Toby Ross

Mille Miglia: Ferrari 166 MM/53 Spider owned by Lord Anthony Bamford

Coachbuilder's Art: 1932 Bentley 8-litre by HJ Mulliner owned by Mihai Negrescu

Spirit of the Show: 1956 Alfa Romeo Giulietta Sprint owned by Keith Harrison

Best in Show: 1927 Bentley 3-litre Boat Tail Speed Model owned by the Jaques family.

The 'Super Car Boulevard' was something to behold although I am not too sure what the collective noun is for a large group of red Ferrari's?

Amongst the other gems on display at Woodcote Park were a few 'minor-celebrities' such as the Owl, a 1899 Wolsley 3.5hp Voiturette (named after its registration plate), the first motor car designed and built by Herbert Austin, he of Austin Car Company fame.



The Owl will be joining us the celebrations of the 125 Anniversary of the 1, 000 Mile Trial, being honoured on this year's London to Brighton Veteran Car Run in November.

An incredible hard but fascinating event was experienced by all involved, made both enjoyable and arduous given the glorious weather. This was the first-ever RAC Members Concours and based upon the reviews so far it won't be the last. Yes, there were a few things wrong which will be reviewed and altered for 'next time' but all-in-all there was no better way to spend a day than amongst literally millions of pounds worth of some of the most beautiful motor cars in existence.

By 6pm the 4 of us of us that remained help send the exhibitors on their weayy way could no longer feel our feet but maybe that was a good thing given all the blisters and aches we suffered the next day! A short video link is found here to give you just a taste of the day,

https://www.facebook.com/royalautomobileclub/videos/701023046142850?locale=en_GB

MEMBERSHIP CORNER

Membership of Sutton & Cheam Motor Club offers a huge number of benefits to both competitors, marshals, officials and enthusiasts alike.

In addition to the experience and support offered by TEAM TEMPEST, competitive members can enjoy the ability to enter most events held South of Manchester (including Wales) as the Club is affiliated to the following Associations:

ACSMC (Central Southern), ASEMC (South East – Kent), AEMC (East Anglia), ASWMC (Southwest), AWMMC (West Midlands) and WAMC (Wales)

This makes Sutton & Cheam Motor Club truly a 'One-Stop Club' that eliminates the need for multiple-club memberships to be able to compete outside of the region.

In addition to the events, membership also provides you a voice in motor sport through representation at the Motorsport UK, as well as via the various Specialist Committees.

Club members also enjoy discounted services (see member services) from other club members, as well as monthly social updates and our digital quarterly newsletter (Spotlight). For those who prefer, a hard copy via post is available at a small cost.

The club arranges special visits to places of interest, as well as Marshalling and Spectating Tours throughout the UK and Europe.

TYPES OF MEMBERSHIPS AND FEES

- * Full Membership with all benefits (£25 per year / £60 3 years)
- * Associate Membership (Additional £10 per year - See below)
- * Student Membership - Student Card / ID Required (£15)
+ *Hard Copy Magazine (£10 per year)*

Associate Membership Requirements

Any current member may extend their membership to include one person as an Associate Member who may compete as a member of Sutton & Cheam Motor Club in respect of motorsport competition where an entry is shared by the fully paid-up member only.

Associate Membership is ONLY VALID for competition when competing with said first nominated member and does not extend to competing either with non-members or as an individual at competitive events such as Race, Speed, Kart, AutoSolo etc., where full membership will be required. Associate Members will receive all other membership benefits and voting entitlements although these will cease should the first nominated membership expire.

To renew simply pay the annual membership fee applicable to the account shown below – Don't forget to put your name as the reference!

To join, complete and return one of the following membership forms:

[On-line application form](#)

[Membership-Form-pdf](#)

Membership Fee payments should be made via bank transfer to:

Sutton & Cheam Motor Club Sort Code: 40-47-19 Account No: 71188003



Sutton & Cheam Motor Club

Established 1959

2024/25 Management & Committee

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*Officers and Committee members are nominated and elected at the
Annual General Meeting each year.*

*They convene on the first Tuesday of each month (Usually via Zoom)
and volunteers can be co-opted at any time*