



WINDSCREEN

The Magazine of Swansea Motor Club



Anthony 'Spuddy' Bailey has an interesting moment at May Llys y Fran

September 2017

CLUB OFFICIALS

President	Ken Davies 33, Pennard Road, Kittle, SA3 3JY 01792 232069
Chairman	Neil Samuel 4, Highpool Lane, Newton, SA3 4TT 01792 360887
Vice Chairman	Christine Gibbon 51, Pennard Road, Pennard, SA3 2AA 01792 232644
Secretary	Julie Samuel 4 Highpool Lane, Newton, SA3 4TT 01792 360887
Treasurer	Neil Watkins 24, Carnglas Ave, Sketty, SA2 9JQ 01792 422589
Competition Sec.	Stephen Lloyd 16, Southward Lane, Langland, SA3 4QE 01792 368684
Membership Sec & Chief Marshal	Huw Richards 446, Hendrefoilan Road, Killay, SA2 7NU 01792 527978
Newsletter Editor	Neil Samuel 4, Highpool Lane, Newton, SA3 4TT 01792 360887



Editors Intro

Welcome everyone to another edition of your club magazine.

Since I last wrote we have been through our busiest time, with our two Llys y Fran hillclimbs on 14th May and 16th July. Happily, competitor numbers in May were well up on last year with 53 starters compared to the 31 cars that ran last year, whilst July numbers were basically the same, 72 this year compared to 73 in 2016. Both events were well received by the competitors with lots of positive comments on our Facebook page. It is very gratifying that we appear to be keeping our customers satisfied and makes all the effort involved in putting on our events worthwhile. I must thank all those who give up their time to assist with our events as officials, marshals or in any other capacity – without you there would be no event.

One concern for us with regard to Llys y Fran next year is that we will need to comply with the Closed Roads Motor Racing legislation in order to get closure notices on the footpath at LyF. Though this legislation is already in force in England it is not yet in Wales as the Welsh Assembly Government have to agree that the MSA and the ACU are the relevant bodies to issue permits under the law. Hopefully there will not be any delays in the passing of the statute in Wales so that we can get on with planning for the 2018 events. If any of our readers who live in Wales feel like writing to their AM on the subject please do so as it may help to expedite matters.

On the social side we attended the Inter Club Quiz at Ammanford in May and got back to our winning ways. In June we had a pub run on Gower which was enjoyed by all. July saw the annual barbecue, which for once was blessed with fine weather. My thanks to Chris Gibbon for organising the food and to Ken Bowman for cooking it for us. In August we had a Sphero robots family evening where the children showed us oldies how programming and controlling a robot via an iPad should be done!

Next up is Christmas, all the best

Neil

How to be a Champion in a Road Car

Introduction

Having competed in a few Sprints, Andrew Bisping from Bristol Motor Club chose our May 2012 event at Llys y Fran to make his hillclimb debut, starting a run of three years winning class 1A in his 'Mighty Rover' 214. For 2015 he'd bought his previous Company Car, a Renaultsport Clio 200 and started competing in Class SP, taking a Llys y Fran class record, before entering the Trident Engineering Welsh Sprint and Hill Climb Championship for the first time in 2016. Here's the second part of the story of his season, as originally recorded for Bristol MC's Driving Mirror magazine.

Part 2

When we left the story of my 2016 season I'd completed five events with reasonable success and come-up with a plan for tackling the two single day events on Epynt, with a return to Wiltshire for a concert in between. Would it work?

Well the first and most important thing to do was to keep Roxie the Clio in one piece to get back for the Queen's Birthday concert on the Saturday evening. I told myself this repeatedly as I drove to Built Wells from home in North Wiltshire on the Friday afternoon!

The Clerk of the Course kindly confirmed he was happy for me to drive off the top of the hill and carry-on back to Keevil after completing my second timed run. After following my class rivals up the hill they kindly got out of their cars and moved the barriers apart for me to continue my journey along the Burma Road rally stage.

A quick stop in a lay-by on the ranges to take off my helmet, cover-up numbers and remove the timing strut and I was off.

The journey back across the Severn Bridge was fine and I arrived at the Manor House, Keevil just in time for the large cover over the band's outdoor playing area to collapse in a heap, fortunately without anyone beneath it. I didn't pull-up any guy rope pegs, honestly. There was a mess of poles and tarpaulin lying on the ground, but that temporary misfortune was alleviated by a text from Gary to tell me I'd won our class during the afternoon.

The evening stayed dry, the Glyndebourne style picnic was enjoyed by the guests and the band played well. Happy days. Just like motorsport there was then the packing-up to do; some things never change. After loading my drum kit and wife Alison's bass equipment back into her car before she headed home (still thinking I was mad) I got back on the road for the hundred and something mile drive back to Built Wells.

Back at the B&B I crept in for a few hours sleep and then set off to drive on Epynt all over again. The class battle on Sunday was closer and I definitely needed my 0.9 second improvement over my Saturday time to make it a pair of class wins and a double-maximum score weekend.

The event finished relatively early and Alison's advice to stay over at the B&B for another night felt unnecessary initially, but after only about a quarter hour of driving I knew she was right and was pleased to head back there. Waking-up on Monday morning for a leisurely cooked breakfast and sunny drive back to Malmesbury was a treat indeed.

As we moved into July it was time for the second Welsh Weekend of Llandow and Llys-y-fran events. The BARC run Llandow event had seven cars in its Standard Production class and Bristol MC colleague Rob Thomson was back for some more keen rivalry. The track was damp and very slippery initially with Rob nearly two and half seconds ahead in his Clio 172 although I pegged this back to 0.4 in second practice, as we held the top two positions in class. First timed runs were slower, with Rob just ahead by 0.15 seconds. Conditions improved for the second timed run and we both went nearly four seconds quicker and I just pipped Rob by 0.16 seconds to take the class win. I was delighted, he was frustrated, but we both revelled in the close competition and friendly rivalry.

It was a westward drive to Llys-y-fran for Sunday and an excellent overnight B&B where every guest was there for the Hillclimb. Having arrived at different times we all went in separate directions looking for food but found the local pubs either fully booked, or not doing food at all. A relatively early decision to bale-out of searching for more pubs and go for a known good fish and chip shop in Haverfordwest was wise, based on other experiences relayed over breakfast the next morning.

It was battle resumed with Rob and Lyndon and Gary joining too for an eight car class. I was at the top of the class after practice, but Rob was on his first visit to the hill and learning quickly. Come first timed runs and Shellards bend drying under the trees saw Rob take a 0.8 second class lead. I managed to take around 1.2 seconds off my time in the final run, but Rob went faster too and won the class by just over a quarter of a second. A fantastic result on his debut there, while I had the consolation of maximum championship points.

I'd had an ongoing record of winning my class (or sub-class) since my first hillclimb at Llys y Fran and that increasingly improbable pattern had to come to an end sometime. Well done Rob.

The HSA awarded Llys-y-fran the best round of their championship for 2016 and I'd certainly recommend it too, especially on a sunny day sat on the grass bank overlooking the track and reservoir.

This event also gave me a full set of nine qualifying scores and a sense there may be a chance of doing something in the Championship, while aware of class rivals and especially Wyn Edwards in the Road Rally class. The trouble was I couldn't do many more events and knew my season calendar was front-end loaded.



Andrew and Roxie at Llandow (pictures courtesy of Scott Boulton <http://www.jackflashphotography.co.uk/>)

Next up was Curborough, on the figure of eight course on a Saturday. However I had to be at Goodwood Circuit in West Sussex on the Friday evening for Go Motorsport, so it was another drive into the night. That said I wouldn't have wanted to miss the experience of looking out across Goodwood Aerodrome from the old control tower, with the circuit bathed in summer evening sunshine, with the sight and sound of a Spitfire making periodic circuits around us. That was at least a more romantic image than the later reality of a short night asleep in Roxie in a Staffordshire field gateway!

Curborough was a new venue for me and one without a target time in my class. As the only WAMC competitor in a class of seven and with the winner on eligible list 1b tyres a third in class and 19.8 points for setting a new target time was mission accomplished.

By now it felt as though the most important rounds of the championship could be the Five Clubs events at Wiscombe Park. It would be a return visit for many against known and beatable target times in my class. But on the Saturday morning I was miles away, physically, not just mentally, at Monza for the Grand Prix, which just happened to be accessible from our Lake Garda holiday. It was a strange feeling sitting in the grandstand at Parabolica with part of me wanting to be at Wiscombe. As those competitors who were there will remember it absolutely poured with rain with corresponding effect on the times. Sunday was dry with expected improvement in times, so overall not so good for my class rivals, but it worked well for Wyn in Road Rally as he set the class benchmark on Saturday and then beat it for a 21 point maximum on Sunday.

The final full weekend was at Charmouth in Devon, but I was committed to working at RallyDay, Castle Combe on the Saturday and so could only enter the Sunday event. Driving down early on Sunday morning I was greeted by Lyndon's smiling face and the words 'We made it rain for you'. That could make challenging Gary's WAMC target time from the previous day tricky. YouTube videos appear to flatten the course considerably, but the reality was some steep climbing and lots of quite technical bends within its comparatively short distance and a very slippery track. Would it dry enough for me to drop a Llandow score where my points weren't great compared to the target set by a Ford Focus turbo?

It was certainly slippery in practice, but lots of gazing over the hillsides and across the sea gave some hope of it drying up by the afternoon. It was time to lecture myself to be careful in the morning and not throw the car off, although I did come close.

Lining up for first timed runs I just wanted to get on with it. The clouds looked horrid and then did their thing and rained. Any hope of a decent time was dashed and my time was nearly five seconds off my best practice. Previous day WAMC class winner Gary was about 1.3 seconds quicker than me too.

Second timed runs and again the track had dried significantly. Surely the same thing couldn't happen with the weather again. But it did! Another set of dampened times (literally) and a moment where the back end of Roxie got quite loose entering the underpass that takes the track under a main road. The only consolation was sneaking past Gary by 0.07 seconds for best of WAMC.

For a little while now it had been apparent that Wyn Edwards in Road Rally and I would probably finish in the top two championship places overall, but the order was uncertain. When we spoke in the Charmouth paddock it turned out that I thought he had the upper hand ahead of the final event and he believed the opposite.

We discussed this before the final Curborough event and the reason became clear. He had been erroneously credited with too many points from an earlier event in the season and had sportingly drawn this to the attention of the Championship Coordinator for correction. We exchanged spreadsheets during the following week, so we could both see each other's calculations and we had agreed scores between us heading into the final event. Neither of us wanted to be uncertain, nor retracing previous results after the last event. It was now all down to this final event where we both watched the weather forecast anxiously during the preceding week.

The only thing was we had different reasons. I was looking at the Peak District, Derbyshire as I was committed to a reunion bicycle ride with a group of ex work colleagues who'd cycled from the UK to Zurich, Switzerland ten years earlier. Wyn looked at Curborough, Staffordshire. He knew the time he had to achieve. It looked challenging, but achievable, given good weather.

On the Friday night the forecast was bad for both locations, but on waking in Derbyshire it was dry. What was it like further south? I could only guess.

As the bike ride progressed during the day I was never far from motor sport. It transpired the Edinburgh Trial was taking place and cars and bikes passed us all day long. Was that a hint of envy as I educated my ex insurance industry colleagues about what was going on in the world of my new day job?

A lunchtime cafe stop in Bakewell and some precious internet access showed that while the riders were still dry, Curborough appeared to be damp, but who knew what would happen. I was just concentrating on getting around what was inevitably a hilly route.

But we all made it around our cycle ride and a long hot shower was indulgently well received; after a pint of course. On emerging from the shower my phone pinged with a message from Wyn saying simply "Well done champ!". It made my day.

The food and drink enjoyed in Buxton that night went down very well. My first overall championship win at the end of a season of adventures.

So what did I learn over the course of the season?

- More English events were weather affected than Welsh ones.
- I could have tied-up the Championship at Charmouth given fair weather, but that thwarted me that day and did the same to Wyn a week later.
- A final points tally of 184.19 to 183.99 is an incredibly close outcome.
- Some of the silly journeys were made worthwhile by this result.
- It would be great to enter more events and have scope for more dropped scores.
- The age of sportsmanship is still alive and well in club motor sport.
- The Welsh Sprint and Hillclimb Championship has a great range of events and a good spread of locations accessible to competitors both sides of the Severn Bridge.
- It's great to be involved in a friendly and sociable Championship where the camaraderie is as important as the competition.
- And finally.....we couldn't do any of this without our volunteers and should always remember to say "Thanks Marshal".

Andrew Bisping

The Story of Jedi Racing Cars

Our correspondent from Nigeria, John Bunting, has been involved with Jedi racing cars since the earliest days and has written the story of their origin, design and development. We will be serialising this over the next few issues – here is part one.

FOREWORD

Pioneered by Colin Strang, Clive Lones and a little later by John Cooper, in the post WW2 period up until the early '60s the race car classes in hillclimbing for 500 and 1100cc racing cars were supported by many big name drivers in very fast and competitive cars. They often chased, and were sometimes beating, the bigger, mostly pre-war single seaters and regularly set FTD.

But the only truly competitive small-engine car to appear at any time from the early 1960s to the mid 1980s had been Peter Voigt's JW4-based Voigt Renwick Special, which had established most of the 500cc hillclimb class records during the mid 1970s.

The most likely reason that the 500 revival didn't happen in the immediate wake of Peter Voigt's exploits was his choice of engine. The 4-cylinder boxer 2-stroke Konig was a bit of a temperamental beast at the best of times. Very few bike racers could get regular results when using them. On too many occasions the Konig engine in a bike was seen to be fast but unreliable, but there were simply no other multi-cylinder 500cc engines even remotely available. Conventional single and twin cylinder 500cc engines that were available would have had about half the power of the Konig and were clearly not able to do the job.

So by the early 1980s, the 500cc single seater race car class was all but defunct, The 1100 class leaders on the hills were all powered by Imp or Ford-based car engines and although during the 1980s there were attempts to supercharge 750cc, 4-cylinder Hondas to run in the 1100 class, this seemed to result mostly in blow-ups rather than wins.

Then, in mid-1984, along came John Corbyn with his Jedi T500 Suzuki to start the ball rolling again.

BIRTH OF A JEDI

When I first met John Corbyn in 1982 he had a small garage, John Corbyn Motors, in a side street off Silver Street, the main through road in Wellingborough. His main business was MOT failure repairs, crash repairs and general motor servicing.

I had seen John at hillclimbs when he was campaigning his Terrapin-Cosworth BDJ 1100 with the Ford based engine adapted to fit onto a transverse Mini gearbox, but although this gave John a lot of successes and is still one of the best engine layouts for getting a good launch off the start line there was always, with a Mini gearbox, the limitation of not easily being able to change gear or diff ratios for fine tuning on different hills.

The Terrapin was duly replaced with a Saracen ex FF2000 car, using the same trusty and powerful BDJ 1100 engine but turned around in conventional single-seater practice and driving through a Mk9 Hewland gearbox, with all the changeable ratios one would ever need. This combination gave John more successes, but he was now up against stiff competition, with the likes of Charles Barter, Russ Ward, Jerry Sturman and several others of the period's most formidable competitors.

John was always a very single-minded competitor, doing all his own preparation on a very limited self-financed budget, alongside his small garage business, often working late into the night after his normal business hours. He never liked coming second and was finding it harder to remain competitive at the sharp end of the 1100cc class, as the rising cost of improvement in the continuing quest for ever increased performance continued.

What previously had been relatively cheap motor sport was following that familiar pattern of escalating costs and events were now being won by competitors able to spend a little more money; talent alone is not always enough.

John decided to give up driving in hillclimbs and sold the Saracen (to Dr. Richard Thompson, who later passed it on to the Jerry Sturman/Russ Ward duo in whose hands it won both the Leaders and Midland hillclimb championships in 1985) to pursue his other interest of aero-modelling; strange how many club racers have also been interested in model aircraft...

During this sabbatical period I had visited John several times when on my holiday from working in Nigeria and gave him some pictures I had taken of him performing in his Terrapin and Saracen. During our chats it became obvious he was keen to have another go at hillclimbing but without spending silly money. During several meetings with John, along with Roger Grigg and John Beaden, we chatted about what we could build and what class to enter, with the 500cc class being the most likely prospect of a cheap way to go. With the exception of a few historic F3 500s, the class was almost dormant with just an occasional outing of the odd kart-based special or an old JW4.

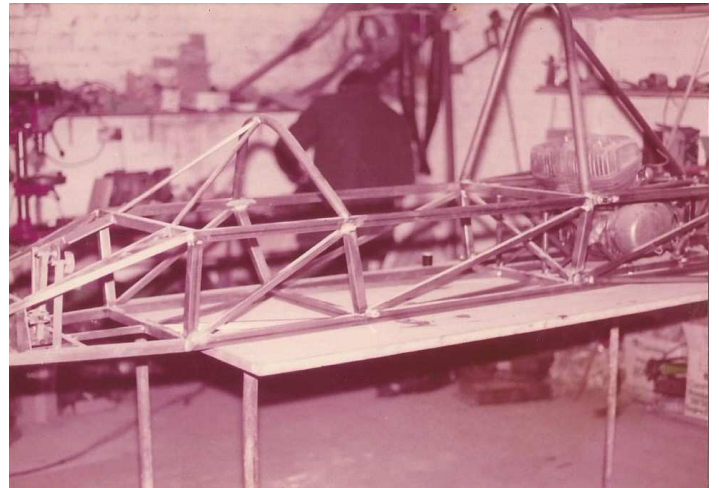
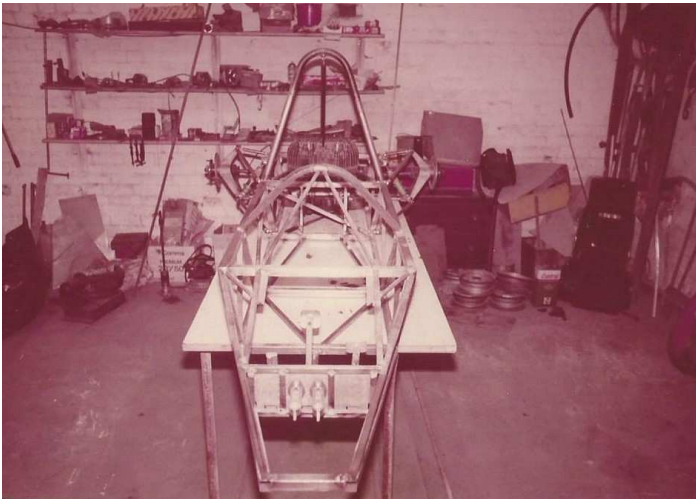
So after much sketching and doodling of ideas on napkins in Indian restaurants – or more likely John's other home, his favourite pub at that time 'The Star', we came up with the plan to build a simple, very traditional space-frame chassis but without the power-plant complications of Peter Voigt's JW4-based Renwick-Konig special that had established most of the existing 500cc hillclimb class records a decade previously.

The proposed car would be utilizing Mini rear hub bearings in the front uprights and Mini front hub bearings in the rear uprights, along with Mini drive shafts and differential carried in aluminium Plummer's block bearing carriers, with a sprocket adapted to fit in place of the normal Mini crown-wheel. We thought, too, that Minifin drum brakes would be more than adequate for such a light and not very powerful car. Various engines were considered but eventually we decided on a Suzuki T500 as there were plenty around and they were tune-able, compact, light and not too expensive.

Then came a stroke of luck as I found that the son of my parents' neighbours had a T500 bike in pieces. I bought the engine and donated it to the project.

The first car was being built with 10in rims, but due to no suitably soft Mini sized rubber being available it was decided that we should change to 13in rims, so again I donated a set of 13 x 6 Revolution wheels fitted with Pirelli P7s that I'd used on my Cox GTM road car for hillclimbs and sprints.

Jedi number one was completed with a total build cost of about £1800, which was very reasonable even back then, and appeared for the first time at the MG Car Club event at Curborough on 12th August 1984 where John had a class win with a 39.96s run on 'my' Pirelli P7 road tyres – not bad for first time out. Unfortunately I missed it all as I had just returned to Nigeria, where I worked and still live today.



The original Jedi takes shape in John Corbyn's garage

John Bunting (To be continued)

Timo Makinen 1938-2017

An archetypal and proud Finn, Timo Makinen started competing with his brother Harri in a Triumph TR3 and their first 1000 Lakes Rally gave them third in class, just behind a couple Saabs driven by Erik Carlsson and Rauno Aaltonen. Timo's sublime driving talent was quickly spotted by Helsinki's local Morris dealer, who rang Stuart Turner; then BMC's comparatively new competitions manager and asked if he could give Makinen some works support and publicity. Typically, Turner followed this good advice and the rest is etched in rallying folk lore. A works Cooper was provided for Makinen to compete in the 1962 RAC Rally and he responded with a class win!

Turner had seen enough and lost no time in securing Makinen's signature on the bottom of a BMC contract for 1963, mixing his steeds during that inaugural year between Minis' and Austin Healey 3000s'. The first international win came in 1964 on the Tulip Rally. This was followed in January 1965 by victory on the blue riband Monte Carlo Rally with Paul Easter's steady influence in the co-driver's seat. Makinen's win in a Group 3 1275 Cooper S was emphatic, his closest rival being Eugen Bohringer's well-driven 'racing' Porsche 904 but some 20 minutes behind in second and this success kick-started a successful season for the personable Finn.

Continuing to repay BMC's faith in him, Makinen scored back-to-back wins in Monte Carlo January 1966 but was then famously stripped of his win, with contrived and spurious charges made by the French scrutineers that centred on the ability of his Mini Cooper's headlights to dip properly; as if this had in any way enhanced the performance of the winning car! As a result of this scandalous fabrication, Makinen's rightful victory was handed to fellow Finn Pauli Toivonen, driving a French works Citroen! A true sportsman, Toivonen always remained extremely unhappy to inherit his win by nefarious means and even went to strenuous lengths to avoid attending the regal prize giving ceremony at the palace and the waiting Prince Rainier!

Later in 1966 the disappointment of the Automobile Club de Monaco's distorted interpretation of the Monte Carlo Rally rules was more than compensated for by Makinen's second successive 1000 Lakes win and in 1967 he and Finnish co-driver Pekka Keskitalo became the first crew to achieve a hat trick of wins on their demanding home event.

Sideways Minis became synonymous with Timo Makinen, who along with other Finnish drivers pioneered and executed the revolutionary and unthought-of technique of left-foot braking, but he famously reasoned that with just about 100bhp to use, he rarely saw the need to actually lift the accelerator from the floor - once he'd mastered the art of steering the car from the rear!

Throughout Timo Makinen's career Stuart Turner's name has become intrinsically linked and when BMC lost momentum, Turner left and worked at Castrol for a short time before joining Ford for the second act of his successful team management career. Once at the Blue Oval, Turner astutely recruited Makinen and when Timo finally got behind the wheel of one of Ford's sensational RS1600 Escorts, he'd finally found a car with the power and potential with which to deliver his undoubted, world-class ability and as a result, he dominated the RAC Rally from 1973 to 1975 with the late lamented Henry Liddon co-driving.

The Blue Oval's relentless drive to keep winning and its constant desire to recruit the best of the 'current' crop of international drivers, resulted in Timo losing his seat at Ford to Bjorn Waldegaard in 1977 but undeterred, Makinen's adaptability and versatility enabled him to morph into a classic long-distance racer and joined by co-driver Jean Todt, the pair became regulars on the African marathons for Peugeot in a V6 504 Coupe.

But was always far more to Timo than just rallying and eager to try anything with an engine, he won the inaugural round Britain powerboat race in 1969, but only after he'd convinced his boat-builder to install a third V8 motor on the back of his boat! He was also a useful racing driver, starting in his native Finland during his formative years in a Jaguar D type but also at other times during his career, including racing a Mini Cooper for BMC's Australian distributors in the 1965 Bathurst 500 road race where he finished 6th overall and 3rd in class with Paddy Hopkirk and again in 1967, finishing 7th overall and 3rd in class with Australian co-driver John French.

In 1994, Mäkinen made a brief and final return to international rallying in a Mini to celebrate the 30th anniversary of Paddy Hopkirk's 1964 Monte Carlo Rally victory but was forced to retire his car on the second stage with a fuel system problem. He also made several appearances at the Goodwood Revival and Festival of Speed meetings, including the rally stage where he always remained a firm favourite with the knowledgeable crowd.

The writer vividly remembers being at a Ford Sport seminar in Cardiff during the 70's when Timo was a part of Ford's celebrity panel, but his only chivalrous concern after the Q & A forum finished was picking the winning tickets belonging to female fans in the audience when he drew the raffle and, on viewing the bucket bulging with tickets, he loudly asked the compare in Finnglish, "Where the ladies are?"

The quintessential rally driver, Makinen was largely responsible for the evocative and much used title 'Flying Finns', describing that small elite category of drivers from a tiny Scandinavian nation who seem to have dominated rallying since the 1960's and Timo must be credited with much of that early success.

On May 4th 2017 we lost a true gentleman and legend of motor sport – Timo Makinen, the rally driver's rally driver!

Ken Davies



Timo Makinen and with Paul Easter on the 1968 Monte Carlo Rally

Ross Takes First Junior TKM Win

SMC's Ross Deal took his first win in the MSA British Karting Championship Junior TKM series at Fulbeck on 25th June.

An incident in Saturday's practise session left Ross nursing an injured wrist and unsure if he could race or not, but happily he was OK and he qualified 7th for the 1st heat.

During the 1st heat, Ross dropped back to 11th place but then fought his way back up to 3rd, followed by a 2nd place finish in the 2nd heat of the weekend.

Sunday's pre-final saw Ross race nose to tail with four other drivers. Eventually he and team-mate Abbi Pulling worked their way past pole-sitter James Pashley with Ross finishing the race in 2nd place.

Ross started 2nd on the grid for the final, just behind current championship leader, Abbi Pulling. A very close race saw the lead change many times but a relentless battle saw Ross take the lead three laps before the chequered flag. Driving strategically saw him hold off Abbi, the two karts crossing the line side by side but with Ross winning by 5 hundredths. The first five karts finished within 0.7 seconds.



What I did on my Birthday - Driving 5 Classic cars on 'The Welsh Triangle'

The pre-event publicity for the 'Great Escape Road Trip' gave the roster of cars (subject to availability) as a Jensen Interceptor, an E type Jaguar, a V12 E type Jaguar, an Austin Healey 3000 and finally a 2.8 Ford Capri. It sounded nice, but when Marion & I rocked up to the workshop, only the Jensen Interceptor was still available, but the big Healey was now a Triumph TR6, and the rest were Jag Saloons! Although I knew the Jensen was an automatic, it seemed that, apart from the TR and a MK 2 Jag, the others were too! At the start I picked the Jensen from the draw and my immediate thought was that I knew some nice dual carriageways where we could allow the big car to stretch its legs, including the A38 that ran close to the workshop! Sadly the 'road book' with the car took us from Redditch via Tenbury to the Salwey Arms! The Road book was certainly a high quality affair with only 2 instructions per page in big type and a photo of the turn. Also we were given a bottle of water, 2 brunch bars and an emergency mobile number which was linked to the 'Sweeper', a 4WD with Trailer and a Mini Cooper on the back, in case one of the cars broke down. So, although my licence allows me to drive anything but a HGV, this was going to be the first time I had driven an Automatic car. It was just as well I had one of my 'compression' socks on my left leg as it was going to be unemployed for most of the day! Indeed it was weird at first when your right foot pressed on the brake to find your left arm fishing for a gear-stick that didn't exist! Now bearing in mind, we had a massive 7 litre Iron Block at the front end, and a suspect set of tyres on the car (ie not anything from Messrs Michelin, Pirelli, or Goodyear), off we went on the twisty A roads that weren't the natural territory of a big GT like the Jensen. The car was ok, without having any chance to experience the 'Wow' factor! The real problem was the weather, the early forecast for a nice day had changed to rain showers for most of the day, so it was a search to find the wiper switch, which Marion found from a bank of switches - thank you my love. So on wet roads, we went on and passed fields and fields of hops on the way to Tenbury. The 'Tenbury Show' was in full flow and I was tempted to give the car a blast around the parade ring! Anyway we arrived at the end of stage one with the car in one piece, and moved on to a Daimler/Jag XJ6, a car full of fond memories for our neighbour. Anyway this time the first part of the 'Stage 2' took us up the A49 past Ludlow. Joy of joys, it is a road we know well and it was an opportunity to allow the car to 'stretch its legs'.

It was great for about 10 miles, until we turned left at the 'Clive Arms' and back on the twisty A roads, that again weren't the natural territory of a big GT like the Daimler/Jag XJ6. In contrast to the Jensen the Daimler/Jag brake pedal had a 'Dead' feel, and a good hard press was needed to drag the car to a halt at 'T' junctions! I could see a queue of locals was building up so we did pull off to allow them past, only to catch them up again! So it seems we weren't doing too bad after all! We then went through Knighton to a Lunch break at Pen y Bont, and a time to switch cars again.

This time it was the TR for us. We were warned by the last user that the clutch was 'a bit fierce'. OK, but the main problem for me was getting into the car! Having got in, I lowered my backside expecting to contact the seat sometime soon. When I ended up on the floor I realised I hadn't driven a sports car before! Anyway after getting under-way I realised I was at home as the clutch was just like the one on my old Dolomite Sprint and my left hand at last had a gear lever to play with. So we moved off on our way to the next stop at Brecon via Builth Wells with the exhaust pipe burbling away and a nice agile chassis beneath us. As the route unwound we found we were climbing up on to the edge of Epynt with some lovely twisty uphill corners! Indeed we passed one of the other cars who may have thought they had gone wrong and they latched on to us. With rain showers still around, the hood was up, although again the wiper switch took some finding. Later, as we entered Brecon, we missed our count of Traffic Lights (actually one was a Pelican crossing). Anyway our tail-gunners turned right, but we sailed on! I was not au fait with the Brecon one-way system, so I wanted to go to a place we could turn around. However we ran into a line of traffic queuing for the Brecon Classic Car show, so that was out. A quick look at the next stage notes showed us that the next route was via the A40 to Abergavenny so we carried on until the first parking place on the A40 and phoned in to let the rest know where we were. We later joined up and headed to the next stop at Skenfrith Castle. So from having a fun time with the TR, we went from the sublime to the ridiculous, and took over the MK 2 Jaguar. Actually it should be said some of the cars were far from pristine. One of our group was from Pontardawe and he was unhappy with the state of the Jag, saying he had recently sold one better than this! Anyway it was now our carriage to the final stop at the top of the Malvern Hills. Now I have some unkind comments about one car or another car being a 'Barge', but this one truly was. The clutch had a massive travel, coming right up until the car began to budge. The huge steering wheel had the shakes and a dead feel in a straight line but was ok in a corner! There was a massive amount of heat coming from the engine, not helped by the sun coming out! All in all, it had been a long day and as I was still recovering from a chest infection when the final change was to an XJS I decided I was all Jaguared out and swapped with one of the organisers (Marion doesn't drive) and I did the navigation job on the last stretch back to Redditch! On arrival at the hotel (Travelodge) it seemed that the area had been subject to a torrential rainstorm that we had largely skirted! Even so one of my lasting impressions of the cars was the puny size of the windscreen wipers on all the cars compared to the chunky one on my Kia! There were some highlights, the TR6 and the blast down the A49, but in the main I found the other cars out of their depth on the roads chosen. Now how much do these TRs go for?



Rob and Marion with the Jensen and the preferred chariot the TR6

Llys y Fran May 2017

A much healthier entry list saw 53 competitors start at LyF in May. On the weather front it was an 'improving' day with early rain leaving the track damp for first practice but getting better all day long. That dampness caught out second man on the hill, Richard Gaylard, who slithered on at the first corner, stalling the Force PT single seater he shared with Peter Smith. With no on-board battery to restart he had to wait until a starter battery could be brought down so there was a short delay. Happily the rest of P1 went without incident and it was the Force with Peter Smith at the wheel that set the pace.

Practice 2 also went well, with the shared Force at the top of the sheet, Peter ahead of Richard. Unfortunately Fred Smithson clattered his Ferrari 348ts against the armco at Monaco, the wide car just stepping out of line. Sadly the damage done meant we saw no more of Fred as he headed home. Anthony Bailey also had a heart stopping moment in his Mk1 Escort but survived intact (see front cover).

With the possibility of rain in the afternoon it was decided to get on with the race runs before lunch. Again it was the Force at the top of the times but this time Richard was ahead.

The deciding race run saw the top two change places as Peter took FTD with Richard next and John Phelps winding the Westfield up for third. The Mk2 Escort brigade entertained all day and finished fourth to sixth, Graham Hollis leading from Terry Brown and Peter Barrett. The top ten was completed by Daniel Owen in the Mini Honda, John Bunting with the Jedi, Mathew Powell with the Cox GTM and Charlotte Phelps in the shared Westfield.

These ten then contested the top ten runoff, with the top three remaining the same.

With time still on our side a fun run was offered to any competitor who wanted another go and 13 cars duly lined up. For our correspondent from Nigeria, John Bunting, it was well worthwhile as he went almost 1.5 seconds quicker than at any other time of the day to head the times. Happily there were no problems with the fun run and it brought to an end a fantastic day, with all the action completed before 4.00pm allowing those with a long journey home to get away early. Full results from the event can be found on our web site www.swanmoco.com.



Alistair Dent entertained all day with the Hornet



The Force PT in the hands of Richard Gaylard

Llys y Fran July 2017

Our second Lewis Motorsport hillclimb took place at LyF in July and attracted a good entry, 72 competitors taking the start of which 22 came from the Lotus7 Club. The weather was similar to May with initial dampness clearing up all day.

First practice seemed to take an age with lots of minor incidents and mechanical malfunctions delaying the event. It was the Empire Evo2 single seater of Ben Wheeler that set the pace, closely followed by Simon Rogers in the Caterham Hayabusa.

Practice 2 went the same way, for some reason taking an hour and a half to complete the run, meaning we didn't stop for lunch until 1.20pm. The top of the leader board also stayed the same, Ben Wheeler well clear of Simon Rogers and Shaun Elwell.

After lunch it was down to the serious business of the first race run. This went fairly smoothly and the positions at the top changed as Simon Rogers really got into the groove with a 42.48 to lead from Ben Wheeler on 42.80. In the second race run Rogers was slightly slower on 42.51 whilst Wheeler improved to 42.45, taking FTD by 0.03 seconds. In a similarly close finish the Phelps father / daughter combo were separated by just 0.06 seconds in the shared Westfield. John did 47.47 on his first run but came unstuck on his second, Charlotte taking the opportunity to grab the class win with 47.41.

In the classes Gary Morgan took SP, Rebekah Edwards 1A and Dean Cubitt in the Mazda MX5 held off the Honda S2000s of Ray Worrall and Michael Thomson in the 6 car class 1B. 1C also had six cars with Gordon Hick taking the win in the Seat Leon Cupra. Simon Howells was alone in 3A in the Mini, as was Frank Harries in 3C with his Renault Clio Turbo. 3B was the largest class with 8 cars and was won by Christian Evans in his Golf from Martyn Ferris in the Renault 5 Turbo. The Phelps' were the only representatives in 3D. Daniel Owen and Lyndon Evans were alone in 4A and 4B respectively. Class 5A had 5 competitors from the 500 Owners Association, four members of the Dent family ganging up on Max Mackintosh with Alistair Dent taking the win after a thoroughly entertaining battle. Bob Tansell's Jedi was too good for Mike Machell's home built TriTor in 5B and Ben Wheeler went away with FTD, though he was alone in 5E. There followed a string of single entry classes, 6a Huw Edwards (Healey 3000), 6B Finlay Mackintosh (Mini), 7A Sam Bacon (Peugeot 106), 7B Neil Thomas (MG Midget), 7C Owen Evans (Nissan Micra). 7D had a good variety of cars with 3 Mk2 Escorts, Mk1 Escort, Talbot Sunbeam, Subaru Impreza and Peugeot 205 Maxi, but it was the Escort of Peter Barrett on top followed by Paul Robins (Escort) and Tony Palfrey (Peugeot) on identical times. In the Lotus classes Richard Abraham took L7-1, Richard Jacobs L7-2, Jeff Smith L7-3, Jeremy Davies L7-4, Mark Durrant L7-6 and Simon Rogers L7-7.

Full results can be found at www.swanmoco.co.uk



Ben Wheeler en route to FTD



Steven Hall gets the hairpin slightly wrong



Ray Worrall approaches the finish



Frank Harries enjoys the hairpin