



# WINDSCREEN

The Magazine of Swansea Motor Club



**April 2011**

# CLUB OFFICIALS

President

Ken Davies  
33, Pennard Road,  
Kittle, SA3 3JY  
01792 232069

Chairman

Huw Richards  
446, Hendrefoilan Road,  
Killay, SA2 7NU  
01792 527978

Vice Chairman

Christine Gibbon  
51, Pennard Road,  
Pennard, SA3 2AA  
01792 232644

Secretary

Sally Jones  
19, Lambourne Drive,  
Newton, SA3 4UW  
01792 362281

Treasurer

Neil Watkins  
24, Carnglas Ave,  
Sketty, SA2 9JQ  
01792 422589

Membership Sec.

Stephen Lloyd  
16, Southward Lane,  
Langland, SA3 4QE  
01792 368684

Chief Marshal

Huw Richards  
446, Hendrefoilan Road,  
Killay, SA2 7NU  
01792 527978

Newsletter Editor

Neil Samuel  
4, Highpool Lane,  
Newton, SA3 4TT  
01792 360887



## The New Chairmans Chat

Hello and welcome to the first of my new columns. I suppose I should introduce myself, I think most of you know me already but for those of you that don't.

My name is Huw Richards and I have the distinction of being the new chairman of Swansea Motor Club. I have some very big shoes to fill; taking over from Mike Jones was never going to be easy, but hopefully if I can do half the job Mike has done I will be very happy.

Now to current matters. We have the first of this years 2 hill climbs at Llys y Fran on Sunday the 8<sup>th</sup> May and we need all the support we can get. If anyone can lend some time either for setting up or marshalling on the day don't be shy let Neil or myself know, if you're not sure what to do on the day, don't worry we have plenty of experience we will gladly pass on.

I would like to thank Julie Samuel for bringing the little robots to this months club function, they were amazing little things and some of us technophobes only just touched on the abilities of something that was designed for 8-12 year olds [a robot that can be programmed to fart on command will always be entertaining in my book] and Jasmine, my 5 year old, still talks about them now.

I look forward to getting to know more of you over the next few months either at the hillclimb or on a Wednesday at Dunvant rugby club. It would be nice to see some better turn outs at the functions on the first Wednesday of the month, but if anyone fancies a pint or two, a few of us are there every week from about 9pm onwards; I can highly recommend the guest ales they serve.

If anyone has any ideas about things they would like to see the club doing or would like to help organizing anything please don't hesitate to call or e-mail me on 07979565328 or [richardsrally@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:richardsrally@tiscali.co.uk)

Huw

Ps I'll get Mikes joke book for the next magazine

## Mark Solloway – Historic Rally Sport

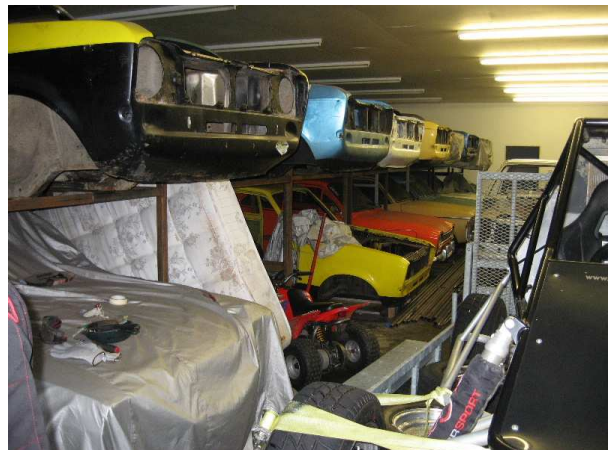
Incongruously situated in a neat farmyard on the main A484 Kidwelly to Carmarthen road, Mark Solloway's Historic Rally Sport team base is home to one of today's most successful rally car builders and purveyors of state-of-the-art group 4 Ford Escorts, both Mk 1 & 2 versions.

When I last visited, Mark himself was away delivering the Mk2 he had just completed for current world rally champion Sebastian Loeb, who now joins his fellow WRC competitors Mika Hirvonen and Jari-Matti Latvala as owners of the most sought after working replica's of this iconic rally car.

In the spacious build shop there were 2 customer Mk 1's awaiting pre event preparation and Mark's own blue Mk2 UAE 72T, which he and Den Golding drove to a spectacular 3<sup>rd</sup> place overall in this year's Isle of Man Historic Rally, also claiming the title of the most entertaining driver and having watched the video, I'm not surprised!

Next door in the fabrication shop there was a bare, bead blasted Mk 2 shell mounted on a 'turnover frame' and in the process of seam welding and gusseting, next to the lathe and a milling machine, recently added to the portfolio of tooling and bringing yet another element of the preparation process in-house and under HRS control.

Another spotlessly clean building contained the stores and also where the wiring looms were assembled; another critical task undertaken by HRS. Next door a glass fronted showroom contained a surprise in the form of the Ari Vatanen/Dave Richards 1981 championship winning Rothmans Mk 2 - EUW, looking in pristine condition and ready to win again; the walls decorated with a nose cone and rear wing discarded from Lewis Hamilton's McLaren after a grand prix contretemps somewhere!



Across the yard a third, larger building contained a well constructed racking system holding two levels of donor Escorts 6 wide and procured from sources far & wide. These included LHD cars sourced from Europe as well as a rally prepared Mk 1 Lotus Cortina. Other interesting cars included an Aston Martin DB4 and an early Mercedes saloon.

Historic Rally Sport appears to have no shortage of customers and with Group 4 Escort requiring an average ten-week build time and currently an 18-month waiting list, time is at a premium. The cost of the finished article starts at around £80K, but depends on the required specification and list of accessories.

My whistle stop tour was over and I had to leave all too soon but my visit certainly proved the reason why Mark Solloway's cars are sweeping all before them on the current historic rally scene. Next time you're deep in the lush Welsh countryside, just 3 miles south west of Carmarthen near Llyncelyn you must seek out that well manicured farm housing Historic Rally Sport's base and prepare for a surprise!

Ken Davies

## Nick Knight New Venture

I was just reading 'Windscreen' and thought I would drop you an email to say I have just launched an Italian car and bike website [www.italiatorque.co.uk](http://www.italiatorque.co.uk) As you are probably aware I am an Italian car nut especially Fiat Abarth, Lancia and will be looking for like-minded members in West Wales to form a club.

I see that Terry Davison is looking to hold one-make marques at his venue, this is of interest if we can get enough members together. We are based in Pembrokeshire and Nantgaredig isn't too far away. The website went live a couple of weeks ago and we're now about to start trying to generate some interest with Italian car owners. It's all very much in it's infancy but hopefully it will grow. The website will have a shop selling Italian Marque items, including clothing, i.e. T-shirts, Hoodies, Polo Shirts etc as well as mugs, mousemats etc. My partner has her own design and print business as well as the keen interest in the cars and so she designed my website and Italia Torque postcards. The company is called Design Marque and it was set up with the intention of not only providing high quality, low cost design and print to the general public and business sector but also to clubs of all marques and general motor clubs at exceptional rates. If ever we can be of assistance to you at Swansea Motor Club please don't hesitate to ask.

I've spent the winter months building a Fiat Bravo 20v Turbo for sprints and hillclimbs, I will be mothballing the Formula Abarth 033 and only bringing her out for the odd sprint and for shows. I've attached some images for you to see some of the Italian cars within the family (X19 Turbo, Abarth Punto, Abarth 500 Essece, Alfa Mito, Fiat Bravo 20v Turbo for hillclimbs :- ) and Formula Abarth 033 ).



*Nick Knight*

## Forest Rally Tyres

By far the most significant cost a forest rally organiser faces is the charge levied by the Forestry Commission. The power of turbocharged engines coupled with four-wheel drive and ever more developed tyres leads to more substantial damage to the surfaces of forestry roads. The damage can be such that machine regrading is not enough to repair the surface; the underlying layer must be rebuilt by hand. This in turn results in higher charges to organisers and in turn higher entry fees. This situation is not new; it has existed for more than twenty years.

Now there are moves afoot to provide a solution, which is in everyone's interests. If all competitors used tyres with a less aggressive tread pattern, the forestry roads would be less cut up. Tyre wear should be reduced and over time one might expect Forestry Commission fees to come down which should make entry fees lower too.

Is this likely? In June 2009 an event was run in Kielder called the Greener ways Rally. All competitors used a tyre supplied by Pirelli, which had more of a closed pattern. This created substantially less damage to the surface of the Forestry Commission roads. Officials at the MSA are progressing this and a meeting was held on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2010 to move closer towards making this a practical proposition. Most of the British tyre manufacturers were represented at this meeting, as well as other interested parties. One of the questions which needed answering was whether the manufacturers still have their old moulds.

The intention would be to publish a list of approved tyres for use on Forestry Commission roads on national events. These tyres would have a less aggressive tread pattern. The MSA would wish to give competitors at least one year's notice of such a change. The intention would be that many tyre manufacturers would be involved so we are not talking about a control tyre formula. In addition mud flaps would be mandated to reduce stones being ejected off the track into the undergrowth. Interestingly enough, I remember putting forward that idea when I sat on the Rallies Committee more than twenty years ago.

So the intention is to make forestry rallying more sustainable; it should also have cost benefits. I hope this idea goes ahead and that the tyre regulations can be sufficiently well defined so that we do not gradually creep back to where we are now.

Updates to this information should be available from the News section of the MSA website.

Andrew Bodman



Remarkably, 2010 marked the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the World Cup Rally, universally accepted as the toughest endurance rally ever held and the brainchild of Wylton Dickson, who enlisted Paddy Hopkirk's help to approach the Daily Mirror for sponsorship and the rest as they say, is history.

Starting from Wembley on 19<sup>th</sup> April, scene of England's 1966 FIFA World Cup success and finishing in Mexico on 27<sup>th</sup> May, scene of the 1970 FIFA competition. In between lay 16,000 miles through Europe and South America; almost every single mile unforgiving!

Just over 100 cars entered the RACMSA organised rally and it's good to report that Wales had a strong presence on the event in the form of Alun Rees from Carmarthen, Hywel Thomas from Neath and Washington James from Cenarth forming what was effectively Wales's official (only) 1970 World Cup team.

The intrepid Welsh trio in their Hillman Hunter, number 83, did better than most, eventually finishing 15<sup>th</sup> overall in an event that has played a significant part in their lives ever since.

Forty years on and coinciding with the launch of Graham Robson's excellent book on the rally Hywel and Alun recently met to reflect on the gruelling challenge, in which only 23 of the 100+ starters made it over the finishing line.

Their Hillman Hunter was built by Washington James, also known in South Wales as a tenor of distinction. He was also the co-driver and mechanic, with Hywel Thomas the ace navigator and Alun Rees; legend of Welsh road rallying, the Hunter's principal driver.

"I went to watch the start of the London to Sydney in 1968 and thought that I would love to do that sort of endurance event," said Alun. "It was a rally with a difference."

Hence the seeds were sewn in Alun's head and when the World Cup Rally was announced, the team evolved.

West Wales Chrysler dealer Washington James did not have a suitable competition licence to take part so in preparation for the event he entered the Welsh Road Rally Championship – and won it!

"It was Washington's first ever event. To win the Welsh Rally was hard enough anyway but to win it as your first ever event was incredible", recalled Hywel.

"It was Wembley Stadium to Aztec Stadium via 29 countries. We needed visas and I spent ages and ages getting them. I had to get some from consulates, which were little more than private homes. The sponsorship money we secured was "chickenfeed" really and the event cost us all a lot of money."

Carmarthen was adopted as the team's base and the then MP Gwynfor Evans saw them off as they headed for the start at Wembley. "The event did not really capture the public's imagination until the press started reporting it," said Alun.

Away they went, taking in France, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Italy, Spain, and Portugal, followed by a week off in Lisbon where the cars were shipped out to Rio De Janeiro in Brazil, the crews followed by air.

"In Rio, we arrived at the airport and there were bands playing and crowds waving flags, we thought it was for us and what a welcome they had given us. Then we realised it was for the Brazilian Football team flying out to the World Cup! We had a week off in Rio but I joined the other two Hillman Hunter drivers for a reconnaissance through the Brazilian jungle", said Alun.

"Legendary South American driver Juan Manual Fangio bet the Daily Mirror, sponsors of the event, £1,000 that no-one would get through the jungle, but 45 cars made it. The stages were 11 hours long, with Hywel sharing the driving with Washington on the interlink sections between stages. We ate packets of cream crackers and drank Coke", said Alun.

"We used to use the bottles for a pee. One day I wanted a pee and Hywel said we would be stopping in a minute; it was 500 miles."

"No, I think I said 300 miles," chipped in Hywel.

"No, you definitely said 500", Alun responded.

Tempers could have become frayed as they did in some of the teams. "It was the endurance of it, some teams actually pulled out because they couldn't stand to be with each other any longer in the same car, but we actually became firmer friends after the event", said Hywel.

"It was 100 degrees in the car and when the engine started to overheat we had to put the heater on to draw heat away from the engine", said Alun.

The event, in which footballer Jimmy Greaves and his team came 6<sup>th</sup> and HRH Prince Michael of Kent failed to finish, captured the public's attention as it gathered momentum. That was particularly true in Wales, where the Rees/Thomas/James Hillman Hunter was being followed avidly.

"The organisers told us afterwards that we had received more telegrams than the outright winners. At every control point there was a big crowd and they would be jabbering away in their native language but you wouldn't understand what they were saying. In the throng in Patagonia I was pushing through and a man kept on speaking to me and just kept on going. It was only when I got back in the car that I realised he had been speaking in my native Welsh tongue", said Hywel.

Alun said; "I would do an interview for Welsh television every night and I was told that the viewer figures increased by 240,000 during the event."



At the Wembley start, Lord Stokes with the crew of Triumph 2500 PI No.92. L to R, Evan Green, Hamish Cardno and "Gelignite" Jack Murray.



Paddy Hopkirk on the way to the Wembley start in his works Triumph 2.5 PI

Alun did a Welsh language interview in Patagonia, part of the South American leg of the rally along with Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, Peru, Columbia, Panama, Costa Rica and of course Mexico.



**SANTIAGO, Chile, the 43 surviving crews at rest 13<sup>th</sup> May, after their grueling 3,800-mile nonstop drive from Rio de Janeiro.**



**Headed by the winning Mikkola/Palm Ford Escort, the finishers are escorted to the Aztec Stadium at the end of the rally.**

Overall winner of the rally was Hannu Mikkola & Gunnar Palm, driving a Ford Escort 1850GT, one hour and eighteen minutes ahead of Culcheth & Syer's Triumph 2.5PI who in turn were 21 minutes ahead of Aaltonen & Liddon's Ford Escort 1850GT. True to form, the Blue Oval's marketing department used their success on the event to good effect for some time to come and it spawned a whole new model line in the UK with the birth of the Escort Mexico and all that went with it.

After all the fanfares at the end of the rally, it was time to fly home, but there was a sting in the tail for the Welsh team.

"Alun went on ahead at the airport and then we noticed that Washington's passport had recorded that he had entered the country with a car, but was leaving without it," said Hywel. "Alun had gone through, Washington was next and I thought that I had better stay with him. Alun did not know



what was going on and only learned of the cause later. Washington and I had to stay on in Mexico and Chrysler arranged for us to fly back two days later.”

The team recently attended the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary reunion of the rally at Gaydon. “It was very well attended”, said Alun “there were a lot of fans there and we all had to sign autographs. “Our car is now owned by someone in Gloucestershire, who had kindly brought it along to the reunion”.

Hywel, a computer engineer who now runs a rally timing and results service said; “before the event Alun was a well known rally driver in West Wales but after the event he was well know throughout the whole of Wales”.

At Carmarthen Park a crowd of over 2,000 turned out to welcome the team back from the rally, which Alun, who has been a hotelier and coach driver, still recalls with a wry smile. “We spent only 4 nights in hotels on route, other nights were spent on the road and I never wanted to do another event of that sort; it was cruel”!

*Ken Davies*

## **Diary Dates 2011**

Planned events for the rest of this year are:

May 4<sup>th</sup> – Navigation Scatter

Jun 1<sup>st</sup> – Car Show

Jul 6<sup>th</sup> – BarBQ

Aug 3<sup>rd</sup> – Treasure Hunt

Sept 7<sup>th</sup> – Pub Run

Oct 5<sup>th</sup> – Wii night

Nov 2<sup>nd</sup> – Quiz

Dec 7<sup>th</sup> – Xmas party

## **Odds and .....**

Our front cover photo this edition shows Tony Jones’ mini, nearest the camera, at Aix les Bains overnight stop on Minis to Monte with the Mini Cooper Register in September last year.

I have again received some interesting e-mails this month, one from Richard Hill who was a member of SMC, along with his father and uncle, in the 50’s, 60’s and 70’s. Richard now lives in Australia but commented on the characters who were members of SMC in those days, regaling me with a tale of Dick the Fish from the Mermaid Hotel in Mumbles. Unfortunately legal considerations prevent me from publishing said tale, but catch me in the bar at Dunvant RFC and I might be persuaded to repeat it.

I also had a message from Jerry Vitarelli of Virginia, USA. He has acquired and is restoring a Morgan F4 first registered to Handel Davies in Swansea. Our historian and Morgan aficionado Brian Jenkins is on the case trying to provide some history to the car.

Following the article about Terry Davison’s brunch meets at the Cothi Bridge Hotel some of the club members went down to the first meet and had a thoroughly enjoyable time and a jolly good breakfast. It occurs to me that we ought to pay a formal Club visit so if anyone fancies a jaunt to the Cothi Bridge on June 4<sup>th</sup> let me know. If there is enough interest I could put a little route together to make the drive down a bit more challenging. Over to you.

Huw Richards writes: I have agreed to marshal at Caerwent on Saturday 14th May to run a test for the Leukaemia Classic Rally. I need approx 12 people, but the more the merrier. It will be from 11.30 am till about 4pm. Please let Huw know if you can help.

**..... Ends**