



WINDSCREEN

The Magazine of Swansea Motor Club



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Chairmans Chat

First I would like to welcome the new members and some old members rejoined. It was nice to see some new faces at the last hillclimb. We had a great day with plenty of support from the BARC marshals. I would like to thank everybody who has worked so hard this year, especially Steve Lloyd, Neil Samuel and Rob Allender, without them the event would not be running. We are in need of more support for this event to try and take the load off the organizing team, if anyone fancies helping out and would like to get more involved please let me know.

As for current affairs; it is shocking to see the way people have been behaving recently with all the looting and violence. It was interesting to see the difference between the different age groups and nationalities that have been charged with the offences. But no one has reported on the amount of these scumbags who actually work for a living, because I bet if they had earned their money they would have a different respect for other peoples property.

Anyway rant over we can all look forward to the better weather as soon as the kids go back to school, it always seems to be the way doesn't it?

Don't forget to check the diary for the autumn and winter monthly events.
Look forward to seeing you all on Wednesday nights

Huw

Andy Meyrick in Aston Martin colours (see article below)



Le Mans 24 Hours 2011

After 40 years of thinking about it, I finally went to France for the Le Mans 24 hours race on the weekend of 11/12 June. Although the first race I ever saw was the BOAC 500 endurance race in 1967 at Brands Hatch and I've seen other endurance races, I have never been to Le Mans.

That BOAC 500 race had just about every star name in Grand Prix racing, including 6 Formula One Champions (and a few others that would become F1 Champions in the coming years). The high wing Chaparral won, but Jackie Stewart & Chris Amon in a Ferrari 330P4 coupe, helped Ferrari win the Sports Car World Championship; by finishing 1 lap ahead of Graham Hill & Jochen Rindt in a Porsche!

The Sports Car World Championship is to be revived so, inspired by Swansea driver Andy Meyricks big break with Aston Martin, and tales from various friends including SMC members, Ron & Andria, I decided that this year was the year. Having not been there before I decided the best idea would be to take a package with one of the tour firms & I finally settled on a weekend coach package with Grand Prix International as they had a pickup & return to Reading Railway Station at a civilised hour, which made it easy to get the train to & from Swansea. Not being widely travelled, I have nonetheless found Luggage with wheels to be essential, and a wheeled rucksack from Blacks in the High street fitted the bill. Leaving on Friday afternoon we got to Le Mans about 8 am Saturday morning (1 hour forward), so there was plenty of time to get signed in and settled in.

Aston Martin were giving the all new Aston Martin AMR01, LMP1 car its debut. The car was an all new concept, featuring an open cockpit chassis, and a new purpose-designed straight 6 Turbocharged race engine built with the sole purpose of winning the race outright. Aston Martin have had a lot of successes in the GT classes at Le Mans in recent years but their first and only outright victory at Le Mans was in 1959 with the DBR1 of Roy Salvadori and Carroll Shelby. With the team opting for a petrol engined car the odds seem to be stacked against them as diesel engined cars have won 9 of the last 10 races run. However the last win for a petrol engined car was Bentley in 2003, which was also the last time a British driver won in a British car, with veteran Andy Wallace as part of the driving team. Audi have won 8 with Peugeot winning in 2009 and Peugeot would be out to avenge their disastrous showing in 2010 when none of their cars finished; leaving Audi to take the top 3 places. It was left to Andy Meyrick to salvage some French pride by bringing the Oreca car to a 4th place finish, the highest petrol engined car. Aston Martin and their Welsh racing boss, Dave Richards of Prodrive fame, were hoping Andy could do the same for his team and he said: "Having won the GT category twice at Le Mans in 2007 and 2008 and the Le Mans Series outright in 2009, we still want to achieve our ultimate goal of winning the 24 Hour race overall to bring the title back to Britain. In recent years, it has been impossible for petrol cars to compete on equal terms with the diesels. However, we now have assurances from the ACO that, with the adoption of the 2011 regulations, they will properly balance the performance of these new cars. Under these circumstances we have been prepared to develop Aston Martin's first purpose-built racing chassis and engine for more than 50 years. Even with this new car, it will still be a 'David and Goliath' fight against the massive resources of our competitors, but we have become accustomed to this and relish the challenge."

Fine words, but the reality was that the AMR01 was having a troubled time, with lots of testing, but little racing. The team were struggling to make the un-fashionable straight 6 Turbo engine last for more than 10hrs. They found a crack in the light alloy water pump pulley and in an effort to find a quick fix, fitted a new steel one. This turned out to be a really bad move.

In practice clearly all the drivers were trying their hardest, with everyone fighting to get the most from the cars, with spins as evidence, and although the cars were amongst the fastest in the corners, the 007 car would start in 18th place with the Meyrick, Fernandez & Primat 009 car in 24th place. Andy confirmed. "24th place on the grid is obviously not where we want to be, we are losing so much in the straights. Still when I get in, I will drive it like I stole it." I was looking forward to

taking some action shots of Andy on the track, so I took a shot of the car on the grid, thinking I would have many more opportunities. How wrong I was!

The team plan was to try and get one, if not both cars, to the end of the 24hrs race, but there was drama in the first laps of the race, when Adrian Fernandez, the lead driver of Andy Meyrick's car, had to bring the car into the pits, where he confirmed that the engine was the problem. After a lengthy pit-stop, both Aston Martin AMR-1 cars were out, with over 23 hours still to go! The 007 car was having the same problem as its sister 009 car, both suffering water pump failure at the same time; with the steel pulley breaking the light-alloy water pump shaft! Although the team made a major attempt to get 007 back out, it was all in vain. So far from making it last more than 10 hours the modification couldn't make it last more than 10 minutes!

Andy too was understandably disappointed at not even getting to do one single racing lap and said, "It was a really hard blow, so hard to take, but it was a mega mega effort by the team. Obviously there is huge disappointment within the team but believe me we will fight back! Aston Martin Racing are a tough team". The team may only have a little time to address the situation, if they are to make real progress on their 3 year plan to win the event.

So with 23 hours to kill it was time to walk around the infield 'village' of stalls, which sadly wasn't quite what I expected, with too many corporate stands, but the mad French fans in their cheerleader outfits and the lady selling naughty French knickers were much better fun. There was time to seek out a few friends, but sadly my phone was going down so I wasn't able to see if Ron & Andria were there.

Meanwhile the race itself was punctuated by several long safety car periods to repair the crash barriers after a series of serious accidents involving, amongst others, the Audis of Scots driver Alan McNish, (you probably saw it on Eurosport or Motors TV but if not, its on You Tube). How McNish escaped unharmed is a miracle or testimony to modern day car safety. Why he was racing his teammate so hard, so early, is a mystery to me! Later there was another more serious accident to the 2nd Audi which left the driver Mike Rockenfeller with multiple fractures.

As day rolled into night, I tried to get some kip in the coach, but it was one of the coldest Le Mans nights in recent years, so the only option was to get up, and after putting on all the shirts & t Shirts I had, and wrapping myself in a thermal blanket, it was time to have a look at some night racing. Or I might have, if there was any racing to see, as the race was going through another safety car period.

In the end the race was won by the remaining Audi R18 diesel car of Marcel Fassler, Andre' Lotterer and Benoit Treluye with Lotterer on board for the final stint; with a Peugeot diesel 2nd only 15 seconds behind, after 24 hours of racing! So that's 10 wins for diesels in the last 10 years. Aston might take a look at the proverb 'If you can't beat them, join them'

As for me, having found the lie of the land, I may look to repeat the experience sometime again soon.

Rob Allender

Fun Day Out - Teifi Hillclimb – 16/7/11

With this year's activities being placed firmly on hold with my newly acquired steed still in bits in the garage and family/work/car balance becoming increasingly difficult to get right an invite by Dave Kirk to have a blast around the Mid Wales Activity Centre for Motorsports came at just the right time.

Carmarthen based hillclimber Dave and I have often discussed at events over the years the idea of organising a fun day at the centre, commonly known as 'The Bont', located in Pontrhydfendigaid, Ceredigion but for various reasons it's never happened. With the ever increasing financial commitments needed to enter competitive MSA events, with the costs last season for my shoestring

effort equating to £50 a run, Dave decided to try and organise an event again. This time there was enough modest interest to make it viable and cover the hire costs of the venue.

A date was chosen and five cars and eight drivers were in attendance. Weather was reliably shocking but thankfully it did improve as the day went on. Drivers present were representing numerous clubs, with Swansea, Aberystwyth, Gwendraeth and Brecon all being covered. An early withdrawal was the two Robs, who made the long trip from Bristol with their unusual MK Indy deciding to give it a miss in the poor early conditions. The Aprillia bike powered car was beautifully screwed together and testament to the long hours they put in building it.

The four remaining cars, Dave in a Westy, his brother Mike in his recently completed MK3 RWD Millington powered Escort, Alun in his recently repurchased Pug205GTi and myself in the faithful old Chav spent the rest of the day taking it in turns to have unlimited runs on the hill whilst being thoroughly spoilt with Dave's wife keeping us all fed and watered throughout. The hill was incredibly steep and pleasingly smoother than expected, albeit with no room for error over its $\frac{3}{4}$ mile length. The return was another $\frac{3}{4}$ mile making a full loop of approx one and a half miles.

Dave very generously invited me to take his Westy for a spin, with three laps being completed before I decided it best to give it back as I was enjoying myself way too much!!

Mike took me out for a passenger ride in his great looking Mk3 Escort, with my first ever experience of RWD rally car performance being a revelation. 300bhp of Millington power and 6 speed, flat shift sequential box being banged through without use of the clutch being a joy to watch. The hand brake turns weren't too shabby either!!

A great relaxed day was rounded off by a team photo with us all sporting our new Teifi Hillclimb shirts provided by Dave, being a nice touch. I was packed up and on my way home by five.

So there we have it. A great little fun event with more driving action in one day than I normally do in a season and the chance to try out other competitors cars all for £40, the hire cost being split equally between us.

Thanks to Dave and Dawn Kirk for the invite and for putting on such a cracking day. Dave has already e-mailed me to say that he has rebooked the hill for Saturday 24th September. He said he thinks that ten cars (any number of drivers) would be an optimum number to have. Any car is welcome to take part, the more the merrier and the cheaper the costs will be too. There's also free camping if required. Anyone interested in being at the next one should drop Dave an e-mail at davidjckirk@yahoo.co.uk

Leighton Hughes



‘Ayent-Anzere Hill Climb’

As I write this article Neil Samuel is asleep in the back of the van (again!) having just had his first driving experience around the Nurburgring in my Honda Integra Type R rally/race/hill climb car!

Our trip started in St Albans 21/7/11 with a very long day's driving to Veysonnaz in the Swiss Alps. We arrived at midnight expecting the bar to be closed only to find it had been a summer market evening and the bar was still open and full of merry Swiss!

The 36th year of the Ayent-Anzere started the following day with signing on and scrutineering, where we expected problems, as we had never experienced Swiss Motorsport before. However, the signing on crew were completely disinterested in my MSA National A Rally licence, instead preferring to accept my UK driving licence as suitable for the event. So, on to scrutineering. Two gentlemen turned up and peered at the car, one taking considerable interest in the seats and belts whilst the other examined the MSA Rally car log book. There ensued some pursing of the lips and they wandered off, one with mobile phone clenched to his ear. A quarter of an hour later they returned, muttered 'd'accord' (ok) and slapped a 'pass' sticker on the car. The expected inspection of race clothing/helmet etc. just did not materialise, nor did they open the bonnet or boot!

Saturday arrived and Neil insisted we get up at 4.30 am to allow us time to drive up the course in the van before the road closed at 6.00 am! A wet practice started at 7 am (or would have done had the car started!). Needless to say we missed the first session and eventually got the car ready for the 2nd run by which time it had almost stopped raining. We kept the wet tyres on as a precaution only to find that 1000 metres lower down the hillside the road had a distinct 'dry line'!

The hill was 5km long and proved to be an interesting challenge with very fast sections, blind brows and 1st gear hairpins. The third practice, or in my case the second, was dry and as a novelty we fitted dry tyres. Halfway up the hill the car suddenly went 'off song' and we crawled to the finish. I was convinced that the car had bent a valve so Neil and I went in search of a compression tester. There were in the region of 200 cars entered which were arranged in 4 different paddocks at 4 different heights ranging between 1300 and 2000 metres around the village of Anzere. We visited all of them, trying to explain what we were looking for in a mixture of English, gestures and Neil's French. It was a tough walk for two old boys, one dressed in winter spec mechanics overalls and the other in a race suit, especially when the sun decided to make it's only appearance of the weekend as we were climbing, empty handed, back up the hill to our paddock which was at the highest point in the village, next to the cable car station.

Having failed to locate the tester we loaded the car onto the trailer with a view to retiring from the event and headed for my other motor club's (Atelier De la Tzoumaz) beer tent located a few metres from the arrival point at the end of the hill. Following a couple of beers we met one of the members who had a compression tester at home, so we carried on drinking while he went off to collect it. Having checked the cylinder compressions we found no problem and now the car seemed to be running ok, so we dropped it back in the paddock and went off home.

Race day came and was dry, well not exactly dry as snow had fallen over night on the mountain and the paddock was engulfed in mist (at least Neil felt at home as it was similar to Welsh mist!). We started the car and set off to complete our 1st race of the day (at 7am!) Unfortunately, the car 'ran like a pig' and we returned to the paddock to investigate. A lot of assistance was on offer from the other competitors, however most, actually all, was in either French or German. Most thought a 'bougie' was the problem and we spent a lot of time changing spark plugs and ignition leads. One guy even went off and returned a few minutes later with his Integra road car, inviting us to borrow any parts we needed. However we eventually found an electrical connection on an injector was to blame. The car had been fitted with a new ECU before we left the UK and the bloke who put the map onto it had been using No 1 injector to set the timing up. It turned out he had managed to bend a pin inside the plug so sometimes it would make contact but then under load or vibration it would

fail. By the time we had found and resolved the problem we had missed our second race run, but were very optimistic that the last run would be good. It was, but the lack of racing on the hill resulted in less knowledge and the time recorded at 2 minutes and 13 seconds can easily be beaten on future attempts.

Despite the difficulties it was a fantastic event and the locals were so enthusiastic about our taking part that we promised we would be back next year – and we will.

Nick James



The motley crew – Allen, Nick and Garry



It runs!! Nick turns in to the last corner

Diary Dates 2011

Planned events for the rest of this year are

Sept 7th – Driving test practice

Oct 5th – Wii night

Nov 2nd – Quiz

Dec 7th – Xmas party

Odds and

Our front cover photo this edition shows the Aston Martin AMR01, in which Andy Meyrick was to have competed at Le Mans, in scrutineering.

Dave Kirk is organizing another hillclimb fun day (as in Leighton's article above) for September 24th. If interested go to <http://davidkirkbmw.blogspot.com/>

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