



WINDSCREEN

The Magazine of Swansea Motor Club



**Celebrating the crowning of SMC's
Huw Turner as Welsh Sprint and
Hillclimb Champion**

Photo courtesy of Drew Buckley (drewbuckleyphotography.com)

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Editors Intro

Well, another year has come and gone for SMC and, thanks to our competitors, it has been a successful one again. As you can see from our front cover we have another Welsh Sprint and Hillclimb Champion. Congratulations to Huw Turner who stole the title at the last round of the season from fellow SMC member Tony Barber by less than half a point, with Elen Worthington of BARC Wales just 0.3 of a point further back. What a tremendous end to a very competitive season. As well as our champion and runner-up SMC were represented by a further 14 drivers in the Trident Welsh Championship – more than half of all registered contenders. So thanks also to Andrew Meek (8th), Martin Ferris (10th), Adam Phelps (11th), Jeremy Davies (12th), John Phelps (13th), Daniel Owen (14th), Charlotte Phelps (16th), David Campion (18th), Liam Morris (19th), Kevin Cole (20th), Geraint Meek (22nd), Nick Walker (23rd), David Boneham (24th) and Leighton Hughes (28th).

As the year drew to a close we continued our social gatherings, October being a motorsport quiz compiled by Rob Allender. Modesty forbids me from saying who one of the winning duo were but Stephen Lloyd was the other half of the team. Our November meet clashed with Bonfire night so we didn't have a social but a number of members headed for Taff's Well two weeks later for another round of the inter-club quiz, hosted by Ystrad Mynach MC. A good night but the team were slightly disappointed to end up in 5th place – must try harder. We finished the year with our Christmas party with a festive quiz provided by my good lady Julie, then a filling buffet before the joys (or rigors) of Santa's sack.

In two weeks time it will be our first event of the New Year, the annual darts competition, so get practicing over the break.

So in closing may I wish all members and their families a very Merry Christmas and all the best for 2015.

To all our competitors congratulations again and a reminder that you are allowed to let me know how 2014 went for you and what your plans are for 2015 (hint, hint).

Neil

Good Day for Geraint

The 2014 Welsh Sports & Saloon Car Championship Round 5 Sunday 3rd August – Pembrey

Former Swansea Motor Club member Geraint Rees, who started racing in a Ford Sierra after rallying had been banned during the 2001 Foot & Mouth outbreak, has been enjoying some success in the Welsh Sports & Saloon Car Championship with a Westfield SEi running in Class AS (S for Slicks). Geraint, who is always the most jovial of people, has won his class on numerous occasions, racing side by side with Westfield mounted sparring partners Jeff Davies & Neil Watts. This requires an ultimate ability in car control and a high degree of mutual respect! Having won the Class Championship on several occasions, the only thing missing from his CV was an outright race win. After morning practice Championship points leader Keith White (from Bridgewater) took pole again in his Class D BMW Z4 look alike, with a time of 60.407 seconds. Chris Everill (also from Somerset) was 2nd in his Class D Ginetta G50 with 62.034 sec. Geraint was on row 3 with a time of 64.216sec.

Round 5 - The race – Rolling Start 15 minutes plus 1 lap

It was another brisk August day with some cloudy sunshine as the grid came up to the rolling start, and it was Keith who took the lead closely followed by Chris Everill, Neil Watts, Geraint Rees, and Mike Cond. Initially Keith White held the lead which he began to extend over Chris Everill who was starting to struggle, having flat spotted his tyres early on! Mike Cond, driving a bike engine Sylva Riot, had the bit between his teeth and overtook Geraint and then Neil on successive laps, and then began to haul in Chris as his lap times began to suffer, eventually overtaking Chris for 2nd place on lap 8! However almost immediately and un-noticed, Mike retired to the pits without crossing the finish line! 'My mudguard mount broke and I was worried that it would fly off and hit someone!' This put Chris Everill back into 2nd place, which then became the lead, as Keith White slowed to a stop, and pulled onto the grass. Up to now the commentator had been enthusiastic about the variety of cars, and the close racing in the Welsh Sports & Saloon Car Championship, but now as the race unfolded he was starting to go ballistic!

Chris, who had missed Mike going to the pits, saw Keith at the side of the road, and assumed he was back in 2nd place, when in fact he was the leader. However Chris had his hands full defending his place from the Westies of Neil Watts and Geraint Rees. Meanwhile Keith began to get going again, and began to lap slowly but surely. Something was wrong and after the race Keith revealed the bizarre reason behind it all 'My gear-lever snapped-off as I was changing gear. This left me without a gear, but then I could see there was a stump left poking out of the gearbox. I couldn't reach it with my hand, but I managed to kick it into a gear, which turned out to be 3rd. That was enough to get me going again so I carried on.' Keith was managing to run quickly enough to finish a lap down in 6th place, ostensibly to score some Class points!

However there were still a few more twists to come in the race as it drew to a close with Chris Everill in the lead. He was now followed by Geraint, who had nipped by into 2nd place as Neil Watts went wide. Chris by now was really beginning to suffer from the lack of grip from his flat spotted tyres and, as his lap times began to lengthen, so Geraint's more consistent pace began to reel him in.

Going into the penultimate lap Chris tried to respond, but it was too much for his tortured front tyre which exploded with a bang and pitched him off the track just before the last corner at Honda!

So, on the final corner on the final lap, Geraint swept by to his maiden race win in the Welsh Sports & Saloon Championship! By then the Commentator was now almost in orbit! Neil Watts was 2nd and Andy Williams was 3rd for a Class CS 1-2-3.

Almost un-noticed Keith White trundled around to take 6th place, and the Class D win, to put him into the lead of championship. As the extremely happy race winner, Geraint commented 'What a cracking race! I'll be on pole for race 2 so I don't know how to cope with that'. Later he & Neil Watts were considering if they could race side by side for the whole race and keep everyone behind for the entire race. Sadly it didn't work out like that as Keith White re-asserted himself, but Geraint finished in a fine 2nd place overall, winning his class again! In the final Championship standings Geraint took the Class AS winners trophy and was also in 3rd place in the Overall points.



Geraint harrying Chris Everill



The unfortunate Chris revolves in front of Geraint



Geraint with his winners trophy

Rob Allender

Brian Kean

Brian Kean, who died in August had been an active member of Swansea Motor Club in the 70's when he was the proprietor of Swansea Car Sales based in Carmarthen Road, Fforestfach. During this time he competed in a number of sprints and speed hill climbs, principally at Prescott and also Penrice, using a Ford Escort Mexico and later a Mk 11 Mallock clubman's car which had been fitted with a Ford twin cam engine by the renowned Pembrokeshire hill climber Billy Morris at his Dale workshop.

In the earley seventies the sales of second hand cars was booming and Brian acquired a coach-built Ford Transit box van to use as his car transporter, suitably sign-written with the legend 'Deals on Wheels' to promote his business. As his road car he used a distinctive new Volvo 144 in bright yellow. I remember making several high speed journeys with him in the automatic vehicle to various race meetings and also coming to grief on the Mumbles Road early one winter's morning when we connected with some lethal black-ice swiftly followed by a lamp standard!

Along with Brian and Alun Morgan I stood at Silverstone's Woodcote corner watching the 1973 British Grand Prix and saw Jody Scheckter spin his McLaren and eliminate half the field right in front of us! Brian's other main interest was sailing and he owned a number of interesting boats during his life.

Ken Davies

Niven McKay

Niven, who passed away in August at the age of 67 was the son of a Llanelli veterinary surgeon and joined Swansea Motor Club in the mid-sixties. A personable and amenable person, he always seemed to arrive at the Flying Club for a Wednesday club night with a retinue of followers, sometimes requiring as many as two or three cars to transport them!

Rallying was his main interest and he became the envy of us all when he rolled up at the club driving a sparkling replica of a works 1275cc Cooper 'S' he'd bought from the BMC works at Abingdon, finished in red and white. He used this car for a number of events including rallies, autocrosses, autotests and production car trials. Pauline Wilton often drove it and acquitted herself well against some strong male competition.

Howard Strawford, then chairman of the club, was also permitted to drive the Cooper on occasions and I remember him winning an Autopoint in the car. This was a combination of Autotest, Autocross and Production Car trial. Howard trounced all opposition; which included Niven in the same car, before handing it back, ticking, steaming and dripping mud, to its proud owner and Niven couldn't have been happier!

I seem to remember that Niven's Cooper 'S' eventually came to a sticky end when it caught fire in Brecon forest and unceremoniously burnt out during either a Welsh or RAC rally. As a stop-gap Niven then bought the NSU Prinz 600cc that I'd been rallying, even though it had a dodgy gear change mechanism and I never really discovered whether he really needed it or bought it from me out of kindness because I was broke at the time! Niven's funeral service was at Llanelli before burial at the Isle of Skye.

Ken Davies

Welsh Interest at the Nurburgring

Young hard chargers with Swansea connections, Andy Meyrick, and Jake Rattenbury, who is studying for a motorsport degree at Trinity St Davids (formerly the Swansea Metropolitan University), were in action at the Nurburgring in Germany on the September 20th weekend, with championship points & places at stake in the Blancpain finale on the GP circuit. They weren't the only Welsh drivers in with a shout of the spoils, as Julian Westwood was proving there was plenty of life in the old dog yet (he's not that old really, but he's been racing since 1980!). In contrast Seb Morris is just 18, the lad from Wrexham in action in the Formula Renault series. So with Andy, Jake, Julian & Seb all in line with a shout of winning their respective Championships, it was almost too good to miss. Not only that, we had friends in Germany that we hadn't seen for a long time, and as one of the few useful staff benefits of working at Virgin was a discount on Eurostar fares it was worth looking at. Actually when looking at the prices, a through train ticket from Swansea to Cologne with hotels and a Hire Car came out at a bargain price, and it was a lot less hassle than flying. So we went for it!

To cut a long story short we got to the 'Ring in time for Saturdays race one and found ourselves a spot where we could watch the race action on the GP track and a few corners of the classic Nordschleife. Actually I thought there would only be a few cars on the classic Nordschleife, but it was really very busy, with almost at times a traffic jam. Andy Meyrick is a busy man these days, as in addition to his racing duties with Bentley and in America with DeltaWing is now part of the MSA Driver Development Academy programme, as a Performance Manager. Andy, who now lives in Cheshire, has been a long term mentor/manager of Seb Morris who was a near neighbour.

First on track on Friday in the 2014 Formula Renault 2.0 Northern European Cup, was Seb Morris, in a race held over after it was rained off in Most in Hungary. Starting the race 15 points behind Dutch driver Steijn Schothorst, who was then in 3rd in the points standings, Seb lined-up on the second row of the grid. After making a great start, he climbed into third place and then set about applying pressure to Kevin Jorg before passing the Swiss driver on lap three. Immediately pulling clear of Jorg, Seb set his sights on race leader Andrea Pizzitola, and although they drew away from the chasing pack, they were very evenly matched and Seb had to settle for a nonetheless impressive second place. Schothorst, meanwhile slumped to finish in 11th place, and this allowed Seb to cut the gap between himself & Schothorst to a single point.

In Saturdays race Seb made a good start from 6th on the grid and although he had Ben Barnicoat and Pizzitola in his sights, the key challenge was to keep Schothorst behind him for the duration – which he achieved. This meant that Seb was now 3rd in the championship with a crucial one point advantage over Schothorst. However with Schothorst several places ahead of him on the grid for Sundays final round, Seb therefore was being realistic when he said ‘I may have a chance to make up some places if it rains on Sunday!’

Next on track on Saturday morning was Jake Rattenbury in the Blancpain Lamborghini Super Trofeo. The Lamborghini Super Trofeo is split into 3 zones, Europe, Asia and North America, with all 3 joining together for a World Final. Jake, who is also a Student at Swansea taking a Motorsport Management Course at Trinity St Davids (formerly Swansea Met) needed to score well to seal 3rd place in AM Class, and qualify for the world final of the Lamborghini Blancpain Super Trofeo on 20-22 November, in Sepang, Malaysia. However Jake was unable set a time in qualifying for race 1, when the team found a potential problem with the brakes after his team-mate Jan Van Ustel had done his qualifying laps. This left Jan & Jake stranded at the back of the 12 car AM class! There was a thunderstorm just before start, and Van Ustel started the 1 hour race with Jake taking the second stint in the 4WD Gallardo (as in ga:yàrdo) and after taking over, Jake drove well to consolidate himself in 17th place only 2/10th behind the Flamini & Shauto car, sweeping by shortly after into 16th place overall (5th in Class) at the Schumacher Esses! In the closing stages Jake was nose to tail with the cars of Legganov and Tanca, but was not able to make any further headway. Jakes’ father Ken summed up ‘Considering where the car started, for Jake it bring it home 5th in the class was an achievement’ Jake himself confirmed, ‘The front tyres had gone late on, and that made it hard to turn in!’



Jake Rattenbury

Having been nice and sunny for the most of Saturday however the fickle Eifel Mountain weather closed in halfway through practice for the main event of the weekend, the I-Racing.com Nurburgring 1000K. Andy Meyrick, his team-mates Guy Smith, Steven Kane & the M-Sport Bentley team, were in with a chance of winning the Blancpain Endurance Championship at their first attempt with the GT3 Bentley Continental, after winning at Silverstone & Paul Ricard. Although this years' race was on the painful Grand Prix track, Andy, as he qualified & raced on the full Nordschleife in his Aston Martin days, must be one of the only modern British drivers to have a legitimate link with the glory days of the 1000K with the likes of winners like F1 World Champions Alberto Ascari , Giuseppe Farina, Jack Brabham , John Surtees & Phil Hill and other notables Stirling Moss, Derek Bell and Welsh legend Tom Pryce and makes like Ferrari, Maserati , Aston Martin, Porsche and the Chaparral when those marques were in their heyday.

On Saturday, before qualifying, Andy was showing that driving is not the only duty that comes with being a 'Professional' racing driver, as he recorded a piece for Mobil 1, one of the teams sponsors. Having to do take after take, as the director wanted Andy to say or do something different, would have tested the patience of many a professional actor. However Andy took it all in his stride, showing what a consummate professional he is. After the filming was over Andy revealed how pleased he and the team were to be in contention for the title, bearing in mind the strength of the opposition. However after qualifying started, the fickle Eifel weather did it's worst and after torrential rain had soaked the track, Andy and the team in the no.7 Bentley were stranded down in 25th place with their sister car in 36th place!



Andy Meyrick in the rain

After a night filled with the most spectacular thunder & lightning, when Sunday dawned thick fog covered the track. This swung the situation in Seb Morris's favour as the organisers had no other option but to cancel the F Renault race! This gave Seb a well deserved 3rd in the championship, on his European debut in the ultra-competitive NEC category. The 18-year-old Fortec Motorsport driver made a huge impact against incredibly tough opposition and concluded the campaign with a tally of two race victories and three other podiums. Speaking afterwards Seb commented "Obviously I'd have liked to have won the championship but considering where we were mid-season, (when Fortec stripped the chassis to fix an underlying problem) and to come back to third in the standings is pretty amazing from both me and the team. I think I've been the top points scorer out of any of the drivers since Assen, it's nice to end the season well and to have made a big impact over the last few races. Everyone remembers how you finish a season and a championship, so hopefully that will stand us in good stead for next year'

2014 Formula Renault 2.0 Northern European Cup Standings (after 15 of 16 rounds):

1st Ben Barnicoat, 258 pt, 2nd Louis Deletraz, 241 points, 3rd Seb Morris, 224 pts

Jake Rattenbury scores a podium to qualify for the Lamborghini Super Trofeo World Final!

On Sunday morning with the 'Ring covered by a blanket of fog and rain, Race 2 started behind a pace car but the race was underway after 20 minutes, and this time Jan & Jake were able to make use of a better starting position, and Jake brought the car home in 11th place overall & 3rd in Class AM, behind Swiss driver Davide Durante and Roberto Tanca, to seal his 3rd place championship finish. Both the start and the finish of the race were under safety-car conditions, as the first 20 minutes were deeply affected by thick fog, while with just ten minutes to go, torrential rain had drastically reduced visibility. Even so Jake and his dad Ken were delighted, as Jake has impressed the grid with his application and efforts, and he is picking up some welcome recognition for his work with simulators, and as Lamborghini launch their new Huracán LP 620-2 car, further opportunities may come his way. Next up will be Sepang, Malaysia for the world final of the Lamborghini Blancpain Super Trofeo on 20-22 November.

Blancpain Lamborghini Super Trofeo Europe

Class Am

1st Simone Pellegrinelli, Italy 126 Points. 2nd Abkhazava Shota, Georgia 100 Pts. 3rd Jake Rattenbury, Wales 66 Points.

N.B Jake went onto win Class AM in the world final of the Lamborghini Blancpain Super Trofeo, with 4 wins out of 4 races! It may not be in the Lewis Hamilton league but it must the first time for a Swansea student to be a World Champion!

Andy Meyrick clinches second place in Blancpain Endurance Series Drivers Championship and M-Sport Bentley takes 2nd place in Team Championship on their series debut season!

Meanwhile in the main event of the weekend, the I-Racing.com Nurburgring 1000K, the Msport Bentley started the race in joint second in the Teams Championship and third in the Drivers, and the team knew that they would have to fight hard to improve their standing. With the whole grid on wets Guy Smith took the first stint and confirmed "My two-hour stint at the start was one of the toughest I've ever driven – the track was soaking, everyone was struggling for grip and we didn't have the perfect setup. Andy, whose second stint driving has been rock solid all year, had a difficult time "We knew today would be difficult, but the conditions on the track exceeded even those expectations. Guy did a great job keeping us in the top ten before he handed the car to me, but while I was happy enough with my speed on track, I had a spin and a really unfortunate drive-through penalty which hampered our progress". Steven Kane finished the race and made a vital overtaking pass in the last 30 minutes: "I was lucky enough to get to drive the car on a drying track, and at the mid-point of my stint we made the call to switch to slicks. The car was instantly one of the fastest on the track, and I could push hard to chase down the Triple Eight car that was ahead of me. It was only after I got past him that the team told that it was his fifth-in-class place that we needed to secure second place in the championship! It's been a phenomenal season and I'm looking forward to celebrating'. The championship was won by the Belgian Audi Club Team WRT and Laurens Vanthoor, who were also the race winners.



Meanwhile Julian Westwood was helping his teammate Ian Loggie & Team Parker Racing into 3rd place in the Gentleman Trophy section of the Blancpain Endurance Championship. Going into the race Julian & Ian had put the Audi R8 LMS Ultra on pole for the GTR class (21st overall) and kept on the pace throughout the 6 hour race and then powered through as their rivals hit trouble and the track dried to finish in 17th place overall and 1st in the GTR class.

All this was a moot point for us as our hire car threw a wobbly on the way back to Cologne, and we had to be rescued by the ADAC (the German AA). Having got back to our hotel several hours late, and with us needing to be back at the 'Ring by 8.00 we decided not to risk breaking down again and handed the car back, when the car hire firm office opened, which on a Sunday was not until 9.30. Instead we decided to do the tourist bit in Cologne and catch up on the racing via the internet in the hotel on my notepad. However when we opened the curtains in the hotel, the square outside was stiff with Police vans. There was a big football match involving a local derby. On the advice of the hotel staff we were able to dodge the local drink-crazed football fans by going to the 'Old Town' on the other side of the massive & interesting Cologne Cathedral. Overall both Marion & I enjoyed the trip. We found the Germans polite and helpful overall and Germany was a very nice country. Not only that we had money back from the car hire people and there was a nice tax rebate waiting on the mat when we got back home!

There are a few things we would do differently next time. For instance we would book the Premier Inn nearer St Pancras on the way out, and make an early booking for a room at one of the circuit hotels. Also, although the German Inter City trains were nice, and very fast at times with almost 300km (187.5 mph) clocked on several stretches, we would avoid travelling on a Friday as they were packed out with students and the like travelling home. Some of them had suitcases the size of wardrobes on wheels! Waiting for the train to start the journey back home on Monday at Cologne station, the announcer gave a list of trains that were cancelled that morning due to breakdowns. We were ok but our train was late leaving so they were not that more efficient than us. Also on the Autobahn, it was noticeable that service stations were few and far between, as were rest stops with toilets.

On the plus side we had a beautiful scenic rail trip down the Main River valley (past Jochen Rindt's birthplace, which those who did the last club quiz will know was in Mainz) to see our friends in Frankfurt. Also we got quite used to the continental breakfast, which was more substantial than you might imagine, with boiled eggs, cold ham & other meat and cheese, as well as fruit and cereals, and Marion has now taken a liking to Lidl's rye bread (pumpernickel). Would we go again? Yes, and next time by avoiding the pitfalls, it would be an even better trip. In short – Love Europe & love the Euro! (It avoids the tedious chore of changing your money into Belgian Francs, German Marks or Irish Pounds and back again!)

Rob Allender

Elizabeth 'Libby' Collins

Libby sadly passed-away in the summer after coping with a long and debilitating illness with her inimitable positive and dignified attitude, remaining an inspiration to all those around her.

It was 1967 when Libby first arrived at Swansea Motor Club with a group of female friends in a BMC Mini Traveller - the in-car for girls at the time! Educated at St Winifred's Convent in Swansea and Roehampton College London, Libby later fitted a teaching degree in among her domestic duties before embarking on a successful career. She also embraced the true spirit of motor-club life and rallying in particular.

In January 1968 Stuart Collins and Denzil Price entered a Mini Cooper 'S' in the Monte Carlo Rally and a group of club members waved them off from Dover. Love blossomed between Stuart and Libby and they soon became an item. Later that year when we entered a SMC team on the Rally of the Vales, a Motoring News Championship rally, the duo were team manager and service crew,

appearing in all sorts of inaccessible places in mid-Wales throughout that endless night and undoubtedly contributing to our motley group of 3 cars winning the gong for best team!

They were married in June 1970 and the stylish wedding breakfast was served in a marquee erected over the tennis court at 'Fensala', the Hunt's family home in Langland. Daughter Joanna arrived two years later and was inducted into the world of rallying at the tender age of one week when Libby took her to greet Stuart at Llandow when he arrived for the last stage of the 1972 Welsh Rally. Katie followed her sister two years later, by which time the Collins Household had become synonymous for warm welcomes', generous hospitality and good-natured humour.

Throughout the 70's and 80's Stuart rallied a couple of Volvos' and also a wide range of other marques with Libby's enthusiastic support. In the eighties they acquired a redundant ambulance to use as a service barge and this distinctive vehicle became a familiar site on rallies with Libby dispensing hospitality from its capacious portals.

Stuart then moved into the historic rallying arena with a Volvo 122S and from 1990 Libby was on the organising team for the Rally of the Vales, helping run signing-on a role she also fulfilled on the popular Targa Rusticana Rally and thus forming many indelible friendships in rallying. In 1995 Stuart and Peter Rushforth scored a popular win on the Vales' and I remember the delight on the Collins' table at the prize giving dinner with Libby leading the wild celebrations late into the night! The year before she'd organised a memorable 70th birthday dinner for Swansea Motor Club with her usual panache and style.

The large crowd of friends who attended Libby's funeral and memorial services demonstrated the love and affection that friends held for her, Stuart and the family. I'm sure that club members will join me in extending our condolences to Stuart, Joanna, Katie and their families.

Ken Davies

Legend Boucles de Spa / Rallye International du Valais

Club members Nick James, Neil Samuel & myself have travelled twice this year to Europe to watch 2 different types of rallies. In February it was for the historic Boucles De Spa in Belgium and in October for the European championship Rallye Du Valais in Southern Switzerland.

In February we as usual drove to Switzerland for a couple of days skiing which from a motoring viewpoint was notable for 2 events, firstly the difficulty in digging and pushing the van up the hill to the chalet on a couple of occasions not mentioning the burning clutch. The other occurrence was on the final morning when it snowed heavily, we fitted snow socks to the van and 2 other members of our group had their own car and they fitted chains, on driving down the mountain the road cleared so both cars removed their chains/socks. On the next corner we hit black ice and the car disappeared over the edge, luckily they hit a small tree about 10ft down otherwise it could have been a big accident. They rang a local garage who pulled them out with a 4x4 although we had left for Belgium by then.

After an overnight stop in Freiberg in Germany we arrived for the Boucles which is based in Spa.

The rally was in 3 groups, firstly Demo which had 9 cars including a couple of Quattro's, a 6R4 driven by Marc Duez, a Peugeot 205 T16 & Bridgend's John Morgan in a Sierra Cosworth. It was called a Demo class but they were all being driven quickly. Next class was the Classic with 133 cars of all makes, a large number of Porsche's but with BMW's, Volvo's and even a Daf & a Citroen 2CV. Next came 100 cars in the Legend class, the top drivers were Francois Duval, Gregoire de Mevius, Alistair McRae, Bruno Thiry, Freddy Loix, Patrick Snijers, Kevin Abbring a quality entry in Mk2 Escorts, Porsche's, Renault 5 Turbo's.

The timing is similar to a British road rally on closed roads with no practice. The legend class has a high average speed so are driven at full speed but have to stop at manned controls on the stage to have their time card either signed or stamped, this could be exciting for the marshal having a car approach at full speed and then brake and stop beside you & then departing again at speed.

Whilst the legend's were full stage rally cars the Classic class cars were not, many not having cages or overalls being worn, though helmets were required. These cars were meant to be averaging about 30mph on the same roads & stopping at the marshals. This we assumed would be like the old Swansea MC Historic rally of the Vales of the late 90's. It was not, we only saw them once on a fast approach to a greasy 90 right, they seemed to be running about 3 cars a minute and whilst not being driven at full speed they were going far quicker than a 30mph regularity and were good.



Alister McRae enjoying himself



Stephen Lloyd enjoying himself

This being a Nick James trip he obviously had his Belgium CAMRA book with him and we spent time in the afternoon at a very pleasant brewery bar with a log fire with a drunken rugby team and a number of German / Belgian old bike enthusiasts. He found a second bar selling local beer in the evening after which we went into a forest to watch a night stage, unfortunately nobody had brought a torch which caused a problem trying to find our way out when the stage was live.

Nick's cousin Gary was also with us and is very interested in WW2 and has visited the area before. This December is the 70th anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge which the American's fought in this area and it was very interesting in driving around seeing all the monuments and plaques and Gary knew a lot of the history. This year being the 70th is going to be the last big American anniversary as any surviving soldiers are now getting very old. We watched some of the rally very close to a German war cemetery.

In October we went back to Veysonnaz in southern Switzerland for the Rallye du Valais, this is about my fourth visit and Nick & Neil have been a couple more times.

After arriving Neil, myself and 2 others hired a car to visit Italy. Neil had booked a small 1500cc Alfa but on arriving at the car hire office the girl was very sorry but she was unable to give us the Alfa but instead a Volvo V60 Sportwagen, this was a 4wd, automatic 2.5 Turbo Diesel with leather interior and all the toys fitted, we were very upset ! UK price over £35,000.

We started from Sion and after about an hour went over the Simplon pass, a very impressive road with high bridges and tunnels which took us into Italy and eventually the shores of Lake Maggiore which we drove alongside for some miles passing all the old villa's. We then drove through northern Milan on a very busy motorway to the Monza race circuit which is in the suburbs and is like having a race circuit in a town park. 4 Euros per car allowed us in, although you can't go on the circuit you can go anywhere else, time was getting on, so after taking a picture of Fangio statue by his Mercedes, seeing a couple of corners and part of the old banked circuit we left. Neil had driven up to now but he kindly let me drive the best part of the whole trip, and the last part of the next day on some of Europe's best roads and in a decent car, thank you Neil !

That late afternoon and evening we went over about 3 passes including the Vivione and Presolana, these are famous passes from rallying in the 50's when they were gravel, they are still steep, very narrow in places with large drops with no fences just a couple of white stones marking the corners. It is difficult to imagine driving over these roads on the Liege Rome Liege rally in a Healey 3000 hallucinating and exhausted.



The Vivione



The Stelvio

Whilst the Volvo was an excellent car and pulled out of the tight hairpins well it was not so good going down the mountain in the dark going around tight hairpins as you could not see any bodywork past the windscreen and it was left hand drive, even so I enjoyed the evening. The roads were empty and we only saw 1 car on all the passes.

On rejoining the main road we went through a road tunnel of a couple of miles and reached Bormio where we stayed, a very pleasant old town which is now a ski resort in season.

The next morning we were told that the classic Gavia Pass was closed for the winter, a great pity as I've been over it before in my Morris Minor and it's another classic road.

Next morning Neil drove up the Stelvio from the south which whilst not the famous part is a more exciting road being less hairpins and more open and better views, he then drove down the hairpins and I drove back up, I slowed near the start to let an Audi TT pass as he obviously was out to play. We also passed a post bus crawling up the mountain towing its' trailer. At the top we stopped for coffee and a walk about, there was snow about and some skiers but few motorbikes and cyclists. When I came over in the summer of 2010 there were masses of German motorbikes and cyclists. Just before we left I had a last look down at the hairpins and could see and hear 2 open Porsche 911's coming up the mountain both being driven as they are meant to be, their engines echoing off the frosty mountain side, a good way to spend an autumn Tuesday morning.

We came down from Stelvio back into Switzerland on the Umbrail pass which again had open unfenced hairpins near the top although the road was not as narrow as the Vivione. Coming up we saw a British Triumph 2000 Estate and an XR3. Whilst the Stelvio is the best known pass we all decided we preferred the others.

We drove into Austria stopping for lunch in a pleasant bar where the local cows tried to join us and stayed the night in the mountain village of Fliess.

We woke the next morning to snow which meant all the remaining passes were closed and we had to drive the long way around Switzerland on the motorways which took most of the day. We passed through many long tunnels, one being over 15km's and in another I was following an artic in the inside lane when for some unknown reason the outer lane suddenly stopped, the artic jack knifed, hitting the side kerb / wall, seemed to go up and hit the roof but luckily missed all the stopped cars.

Next day saw us out on the rally, a round of the European Rally Championship. The top part of the entry consisted of a number of Skoda & Peugeot S2000's, Fiesta S2000's, R5, RRC (all very confusing!). The usual R3 Citroen's & Renault. British drivers were Craig Breen who was 2nd overall after losing a minute the 1st day with a puncture (he was 3rd last year), Mark Higgins retired from

leading the Production class with transmission problems, Chris Ingram was 2nd in the Junior European championship until he clipped a stone and slid down a bank in his undamaged car but couldn't get out, this left the other British junior Alex Parpottas to finish 4th in class in his Fiesta R2. The junior class drivers who were mostly in R2 Peugeots seemed to be all driven very quickly.



Breen with puncture



Higgins

We watched the 3 day rally at 4 different places, my favourite was the same as last year in a vineyard eating grapes as the cars passed followed by sitting in a bar drinking as the cars passed (that should be the other way around but the vineyard had a corner & the bar was a straight road !)



Civilized rallying



Waiting for rally cars

On the return trip we stayed in Arbois, another French town which has just celebrated 70 years since the Americans liberated it.

Final bit of excitement was at Calais when we watched the Police remove some attempted illegal immigrants from a Slovakian truck full of old pallets.

Plenty of Rallye du Valais available on You Tube, next trip to Boucles being planned for next February.

Stephen Lloyd

Edward 'Ted' Purcell

Sadly, Swansea Motor Club lost another of its former prominent members when Ted Purcell passed away on December 17th following a long illness. He'd been an active member of the club during the 60's and 70's and a lifelong motoring enthusiast - two and four wheels.

Ted was a multitalented individual, whether it be practical engineering or design and theory. After leaving Swansea College of Art, he was employed on the technical sales staff at Signode before working for Alan 'Bunny' Lewis at Swansea Garages, a Ford main dealer, as Sales Manager at the Carmarthen Road garage in

Fforestfach. He later held technical and design roles with other companies and I recall many intricate sketches showing performance improving components for various cars being enthusiastically produced by Ted on paper napkins late at night in the local curry house!

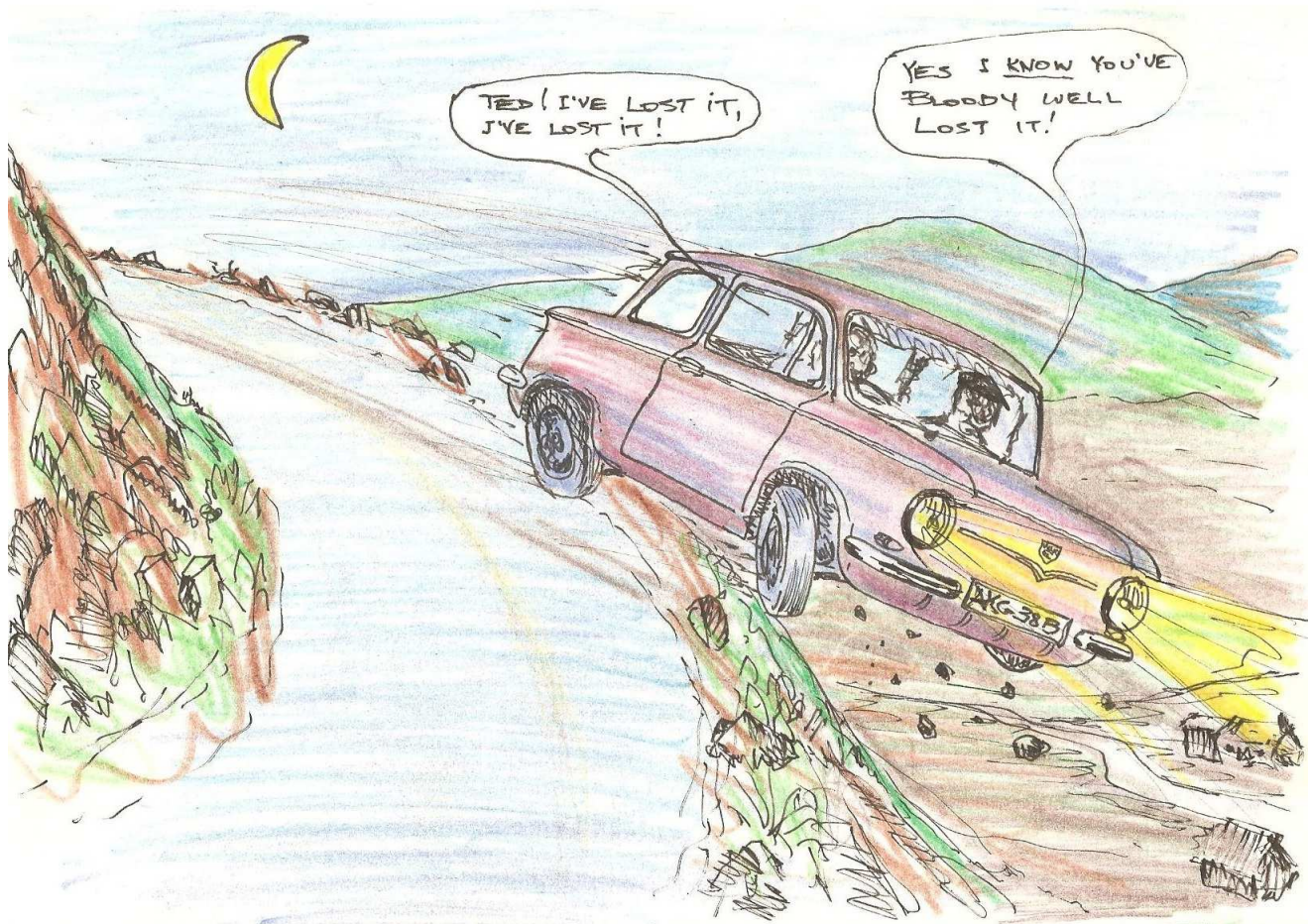
I also remember that Swansea Garages would become a hive of activity at the weekend as some SMC members prepared their cars in various corners of its capacious workshop for an imminent event. If a customer appeared Ted would occasionally slip away into the showroom and nonchalantly sell a car, before returning to the workshop to oversee operations!

He'd owned an eclectic selection of performance cars which included the famous ex 'Tiny' Lewis Morgan THY 60, Lagonda Saloon, Lotus 11, MGVA, MGA and a wide selection of Rileys from Specials he'd engineered and built himself to his most recent restoration project, a fabric-roofed RME saloon, completed just weeks ago.

During his active days at SMC, it was a Fairthorpe powered by a crossflow Ford 1600 engine taken from a GT Cortina and constructed from a DIY kit of parts from the Fairthorpe works at Denham that Ted became synonymous with. He successfully used this white fibre-glass sports car for a variety of club events; auto-tests, rallies, sprints, hill climbs and even raced it at Llandow. In this car he won many awards. But although the Fairthorpe was extremely quick and maneuverable, it was also very fragile and often retired with broken transmission or suspension and on some occasions, even its engine. When this happened, Ted would usually fill his pipe with tobacco, adopt a philosophical attitude and start repair work in readiness for the next event!



In early 1968 I was due to navigate in the Fairthorpe on a local rally, but mechanical problems sidelined the car so we swapped roles and cars and he navigated for me in a 600cc NSU Prinz I owned at the time. Driving flat out over the Bettws in the middle of the night we started catching glimpses of the rear lights of the car in front but my youthful enthusiasm got the better of me. As a result, we rolled spectacularly down the grassy hillside, stopping just short of a stream fortunately without injury! Ted later illustrated our nocturnal adventure with a great cartoon - which I still have!



Ted was extremely amenable, highly intelligent and a generous and loyal friend with a lively and zany sense of humour. He was great social company and a gifted raconteur, able to communicate at all levels with great authority on a wide range of topics. From time to time he wrote magazine articles with great clarity, even profiling SMC for Classic Car Mart some years ago. He was one of the first members of Swansea Historic Vehicle Register and also a prominent and long-term member of the Vintage Motor Cycle Club.

My memories and recollections of Ted would fill a sizeable volume and undoubtedly, life will be far duller with his passing. We extend our condolences to Ted's wife Linet, sons Edward and Alex, together with the rest of his extended family.

Ken Davies

Odds and

Some early good news for the New Year. We believe we have found a venue suitable for autotests – more news soon.

Cover picture shows Huw Turner at the July Llys y Fran event, where he was out of luck as the Mini failed after the first race run. Picture courtesy of Drew Buckley Photography - See swanmoco.co.uk for a link to Drew's gallery of the event.

..... Ends