



WINDSCREEN

The Magazine of Swansea Motor Club



February 2009

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CHAIRMAN'S CHAT.

I know it's the second magazine this year already, but we are killing the proverbial 'two birds' with one stone by having this issue.

We have a new darts champion for 2009 in the shape of Julie Samuel, who beat off all the hopefuls in last month's social gathering. Well done Julie, Neil had the best lookout with an aim that accurate in the house! There were a good number of 'javelin' hurlers trying to win but, as they say, it's the quiet ones you have to watch! The proceedings were watched over and managed by Chris Gibbon, who kept track of all the wannabes and matched up the winners from each round. Ex-champion Prof had some eye drops in to help gain an advantage, but the hospital thought better of it, giving him dilation drops instead! He didn't know which of the three dartboards he could see, to aim at!!! Everyone had a good night's fun and we all have another year in which to hone our dart-throwing prowess for the 2010 re-runs.

Now to the point of an early second edition, March brings with it, this year's Annual General Meeting. Not everyone's cup of tea I know, but an essential part of the club year.

The committee is not a closed shop and any member can stand for election. To that end, you will find a nomination form at the bottom of the AGM notice. If you wish to join the committee, send the form, or e-mail the nomination to me or to Diane before the cut off date. Under the rules, we are not allowed to accept nominations on the night, so if you want to be involved, don't leave it too late.

Following on from the AGM itself, we will have an 'Antiques Roadshow' for members to bring along any interesting or ancient items for the rest of us to have a look at and maybe guess what the item is or to what use it may be put. Have a good rummage in the garage, attic or around the house for anything unusual, photos etc.

I hope the unusual snowfall, for Swansea that is, didn't cause any problems for anyone. However if you have any amusing tales to tell about it, why not share them with the rest of us. Let Neil know, he can put your tales in Windscreen.

Safe motoring.

Mike Jones

1985 Rallye Jeanne D' Arc – International group B rallying on a Budget

Although not recognised as one of the blue riband international rallies, the 1985 23rd Jeanne D' Arc had a lot of qualities to make it attractive to the impecunious enthusiast. In their efforts to attract foreign competitors, le comite d'organisation was offering free entry, ferry crossing, 2 hotel nights and fuel vouchers. I needed no second bidding ...where do I sign-on monsieur?

In its previous 22 years the Jeanne D' Arc's list of winners read like a 'Who's Who' of French rallying; Therier 5 wins, Touroul 3 wins, Darniche, Beguin, Roussely & Cudini one each and in 1966 the rally was won by a Ferrari driven by Gillet and co-driven by a certain Jean Todt!

At that time, Swansea Motor Club had a dedicated band of international rally stalwarts led by the vastly experienced Stuart Collins, ably supported by Stubby Phillips. They usually contested 1 or 2 international events each year and were currently campaigning group A and group B Opel Manta's respectively and lost no time in persuading me to join them.

The mid 1980's were the Group B era and my simple instructions were 'build your own cut-price edition'! This had been a Vauxhall Cavalier Coupe in its previous incarnation, lightly damaged in an RTA in Shropshire and written-off. I'd rescued it, driven it back to Wales and replaced its crumpled wing and front, by which time it had metamorphosed into an Opel Manta!

The Manta provided a good, solid, easy maintenance rally car with a virtually bulletproof engine and gearbox. Add a pair of Webber carburettors, rally camshaft, shockers & springs, safety equipment and some fibre glass Opel body bits & badges and hey-presto, my passport to group B international stardom!

I should explain that by this stage of the preparation, my shoestring budget left nothing for tyres, but the smart GM alloy wheels that came with my car wore a set of almost new Goodyear G800's and they'd be ok for now - or would they!

My brave co-driver for this event was the late Ceri Gibbon; who'd fulfilled almost every role in rallying during the previous 25 years. Driver, co-driver, service crew, etc, etc. Stuart Collins was co driven by Elwyn Sugden and Stubby by Peter Moss all with considerable international experience and had competed on this rally the year before.

We crossed from Newhaven to Dieppe on the Thursday night packet and drove to Rouen where the rally was based. There, at the Peugeot Talbot main dealer we completed the paperwork and collected the road book before spending the sunny autumn day recceing stages.

Mid afternoon was time to stop at a village café' for refreshments, where other competitors were doing the same. There Ceri and I met a driver in the French national Peugeot 205 GTi Championship class and his strikingly attractive female co-driver. They proved good company and when we left, shook hands and exchanged good luck wishes. When I next met François Delecour, Ford had provided him with a state of the art rally car, but a strikingly ugly Frenchman as co-driver!

Scrutineering was early Saturday morning, after which we were escorted at high speed over the cobbled streets of Rouen by crazy motorcycle riding gendarmes to Parc Ferme. The rally started at 4:00 pm with short après prologue stages, aimed at seeding the entry, before the rally started in earnest at dusk.

Four hours later we returned to parc ferme and took our service barge back to the Novotel at Rouen Sud for a midnight nightcap and a welcoming bed.

Another early start on Sunday and we ran several stages mainly between the north east of Rouen and the south east of Dieppe, mostly over public roads closed for the rally and lined with enthusiastic spectators in all the villages we ran through.

I soon discovered how slippery the morning rain had made the roads, when a level crossing with a narrow downhill approach proved particularly character building. Despite frantic cadence braking I failed to reduce speed enough to achieve the 70-degree right turn just after crossing the single-track rail line.

The Opel reached 45 degrees then exited stage left through the hedge, which by luck appeared to have been built by a master hedger trained at Aintree, for as we punched through the foliage it folded flat, only to pop back up when we were through. Dame fortune continued to smile on us as we slid down a gentle slope into a meadow, landing right side up but 5' below road level!

This provided an unexpected bonus for the small group of spectators watching at this point as now they could watch their hero's passing on rally route to the front, before turning to watch some idiot behind driving around the field

looking for the gate; which we quickly found, leaving the scene of the crime with a nonchalant but sheepish wave – mon dieu!

Throughout Sunday the rally continued at a fast and furious pace but the organisation was excellent and the delays minimal. On average we'd return to service after 3 stages, but time available would allow only the most basic work to be done. Fortunately two of the three Manta's sharing our ex West Glamorgan Ambulance service barge ran reliably and only needed oil, fuel and brake attention, but for reasons I cannot recall, Stuart Phillips retired from the rally during the afternoon after mechanical failure of some sort.

First car back at the finish at Place du Boulingrin, Rouen was due at 5:00 pm. By the time we crossed the finish ramp an hour later, both spectators were about to go home! Cars were locked up in parc ferme again and our 'ambulance' ferried us to our hotel to change for the prize giving.

Whilst waiting for the results to be announced we exchanged pleasant but sometimes confused rally small talk in pigeon French with the assembled throng of pilotes and gave them enthusiastic assistance in reducing the level of their Calvados Lake!

After a dramatic roll of drums and dimming of lights Serpaggi/Lelieve were declared the winners in their R5 Turbo, from Touroul/Ains 911SC and Quignette/Pustelnick R5 Turbo all group B. Best group N was Vernier/Baudoin, 10th overall in a R11 Turbo with Delecour/Pauwels a remarkable 12th overall in the 205GTi.

Best British entry was the Collins/Sugden group A Opel Manta at 45th; we finished 5 places behind but by no means last, still running on my almost unworn set of Goodyear G800's!

As the evening wore on we continued networking, dispensing entente cordiale and warming to our task of lowering the level of Calvados until well after midnight, before reluctantly leaving our excellent hosts and repairing to our hotel for a couple of hours sleep before catching the early ferry to Newhaven and thence driving the 250 miles home to Wales.

Tuesday saw my trusty bolide suitably valeted and back in the safe hands of the memsahib performing domestic duties on the school and supermarket run and demonstrating the all-round versatility of a budget group B car.

I never did explain those strange scratch marks and recount the story of the slippery level crossing near Rouen, but I'm sure she's bound to ask one of these days!

Ken Davies



Topical Joke

As a trucker in Essex stops for a red light, a blonde catches up. She jumps out of her car, runs up to his truck, and knocks on the door. The trucker lowers the window and she says "Hi, my name is Heather and you are losing some of your load."

The trucker ignores her and proceeds down the street. When the truck stops for another red light, the girl again catches up. She jumps out of her car, runs up and knocks on the door. Again, the trucker lowers the window. As if they've never spoken, the blonde says brightly, "Hi, my name is Heather, and you are losing some of your load!"

Shaking his head, the trucker ignores her again and continues down the street. At the third red light, the same thing happens again. All out of breath, the blonde gets out of her car, runs up, knocks on the truck door. The trucker lowers the window. Again she says "Hi, my name is Heather, and you are losing some of your load!"

When the light turns green, the trucker revs up and races to the next light. When he stops this time, he hurriedly gets out of the truck, and runs back to the blonde. He knocks on her window, and as she lowers it, he says.....

"Hi, my name is Kevin and I'm driving a gritter!"

Slings and Arrows

The annual darts contest produced it's usual round of family feuds with first Mike and Sally Jones being paired together, which resulted in a win for our Chairman, then Neil Watkins facing son Tim at the Oche, the past champion going through. Perhaps the funniest contest of the night involved Neil when he came up against Julie Samuel in the semi-final. The two protagonists fought their way down from 301 to the infamous Double 1 to finish. Between them they must have hit every other combination on the board until we were in serious danger of the match going into another day. Agreement was reached to end it on 'nearest the bull', at which point Mrs. S turned and calmly planted the arrow in the center of the bullseye, then going on to defeat Mike Jones in the final.

Diary Dates 2009

Planned events so far this year are:

March - AGM and Antiques Roadshow

April - Navigational Scatter

May - Tabletop Rally

June - Pub Run

July - BarBQ

Odds and

Along with our AGM we will be holding an Antiques Roadshow. Please bring along any old and / or interesting objects, whether motoring related or not, to share with fellow club members. Someone may even know what that strange device you found in the shed is or does !!

Don't forget our hilleclimbs at Lllys y Fran will be on May 10th and July 19th 2009.



..... Ends

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MARCH 18th 2009

Notice is hereby given for the 2009 Annual General Meeting of Swansea Motor Club, to which you are invited as a member of the club.

Please note that only current Swansea Motor Club members may participate in the proceedings, or stand for election as an officer of the club.

The meeting is to take place at the Murton Rovers clubhouse, Murton, Swansea on the 18th of March 2009 starting at 8.00pm for 8.30pm. Please use the nomination form below or e-mail if you would like to stand for election to the committee. Nominations must be received before the 10th March 2009.

Mike Jones.
Chairman.



NOMINATION FORM FOR SWANSEA MOTOR CLUB COMMITTEE

NAME:-

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Please send completed form or e-mail to:

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