



WINDSCREEN

The Magazine of Swansea Motor Club



June 2009

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CHAIRMAN'S CHAT.

I'm writing this, supposedly in summer. The wind is blowing, we've just had another shower and it's not warm. Where is the long hot summer they promised us a while back? I want my money back.

Well what have we been up to since the last Windscreen? We had a Nav-Scatter organised by Ken Bowman. A good event for those who entered but not many entries on the night unfortunately. However, many thanks to Ken for the time and effort put into the event.

The club had another stand at the May Bank Holiday Singleton Show, organised by the Swansea Historic Register, with a few extra cars this year and a bigger area to play with, we had a good varied selection of cars. Newcomers to our stand were Brian Jenkins' Alvis Drophead, and Steve Lloyd brought along his recently acquired 1923 Citroen. A nice bonus was the Third place award won by our club for the quality of our display. Well done to the gang for their hard work. Although Kirsty was a bit miffed at not getting another first place as we did last year. Look out for 2010; she's in determined mood!

May saw the first of our hillclimbs at Llys-y-fran, with a good entry list. The weather was kind to us, despite a grey sky early on. The team did another good job, and despite a number of 'offs' got through the runners without any undue delays. This event also saw the first use of a 'white board' in the foyer of the visitor's centre, to give competitors their times instantly and avoiding the corridor crush by the office. Neil Watkins, whose car wasn't ready for the event, spent the day nattering to the other drivers whilst putting the times up for them. It worked so well; we have to hope he can't get it going before the July event!!

We rounded out the month with a Tabletop rally set up by Neil Samuel. Due to unforeseen circumstances work wise, Neil was delayed in getting home from his travels, and his good lady Julie stepped in to see things underway. This unfortunately was another good, but poorly supported social event. Thanks to Neil and Julie for their efforts.

Next up is the second of our hillclimbs, and as always, Neil is looking short on marshals and helpers. Don't forget, this is the club's main source of income, so please help if you can, the team really do need your support.

Finally,

Remember, you are unique.
Just like everyone else!!

Mike Jones

Monaco and Bust !

Being a birthday boy recently I decided it would be a good idea for my good lady wife to treat me to a Grand Prix. Whilst it must be said she was less keen, particularly on the financial side of things (!), the deal was done. Silverstone? no too near; Nurburgring, no, too many Germans (only joking!), Monaco, yes that had a certain ring to it. My daughter Lisa, who was at the tail end of a 6 month world traveling spree could also meet us there with her husband Toby. Ideal. Monaco it was then.

The wife and I traveled from Bristol the Thursday before the race, with our destination being Ville De France. Once there, there was a fairly laid back (nobody asked to see your tickets!) train journey to Monaco. I always paid though; its my conscience you see, I am a slave to it.

On the Friday I thoroughly enjoyed the GP2 race, which was a perfect build up to the main events which were yet to come. An appetizer if you like.

Saturday, things started to hot up, in pure race terms as well as in centigrade (I have some lovely sunburn photos, but I will spare you those). I found a nice cafe to watch the qualifying in, which had a great view and an even better atmosphere. Now I know £9.50 for a glass of larger is a bit steep, with a Pizza being of a similar price, when you consider that the cheapest qualifying ticket was £180, a few beers and a bellyfull of Pizza, Jenson steaming past the balcony doing the business for £50 all in has a certain attraction to it. In the afternoon I walked the pits, filled my eyes and brain with all things motor sport, mingling with the great and the good. It is fair to say that there are a few people, particularly during race weekend, with a bit of loose change walking about in Monaco. Bugatti's, Porsche, Ferrari's are everywhere, with Aston's as common as Fiesta's in Swansea. Really.

Sunday; show time. In the morning I gorged myself on the Porsche race, then Formula Renault with the GP2 race afterwards. That whetted the appetite. Then the F1 race which was awesome; it is recommended that earplugs are worn and I am glad that my wife (who stuck out the whole race day with me) and I took this advice. But what a noise! Jenson continued his charge, giving a real champions performance on a 'proper' circuit; no run offs, no gravel traps just a proper street circuit. Maybe, with all the alterations going on in Swansea for the Bendy Bus, we can attract the GP here? Hey, now there's an idea; I wonder why nobody has thought of that before? Jenson could even moor his boat in the Marina, shopping for his girlfriend in Morfa, can't see any issues there at all. Perfect.

Back to the trip. Monday and Tuesday was spent on the beach, with both my wife and I topping up our sunburn. Wednesday, big white bird, Bristol, Severn Bridge, home.

Overall, an expensive experience? Yes without doubt. Worth it....you bet!

Tony 'Monaco Boy' Bailey.



Llys y Fran May 2009

Our first hillclimb of the year was blessed with decent weather and a good entry, though it was noticeable that many of our local regulars were absent. Partly this was due to cars not being ready but it also appeared that many are being selective in which events they do this year because of financial concerns. Notable absentees included our own Anthony Bailey, Neil Watkins and Ken Bowman, but also Eynon Price, Henryk Kowalski, Alun Jones, Gareth Griffiths and Graham and Sue Hollis. Happily, they were replaced by an amazing 29 Caterham 7's and 5 MG's as our event was a round of their respective championships. First practice went reasonably well apart from the halfway split timing beam deciding to go AWOL, which resulted in a few competitors not getting a time and us deciding to switch the split out for the rest of the event.

Second practice was a different matter and gave our rescue and recovery crews several opportunities to prove their worth. Robert Margel in his Caterham Hyabusa sailed off at Quarry, the car and driver buried deep in the shrubbery on the outside of the corner and taking some time to be safely recovered. Happily Rob suffered only minor injuries and was very grateful to the crews who retrieved him – see letter below. Then Martyn Ferris' Mini failed on the hill before Bob Tansell suffered a failure in his Jedi which saw him lose a wheel, necessitating recovery again.

After a short lunch break we were able to get on with the competitive runs. As expected, it was the Lotus 7 based cars which were particularly quick, the Caterhams seeming to have the upper hand over the Westfields. One notable interloper was Mike Griffiths, the Mk 1 Escort driver achieving his fastest ever climb at LyF to be 3rd overall after the first run. Unfortunately, it was not to last, Mike spinning and clouting the back end of the car on the second run, dropping to 5th as a couple more of the 7's went faster.

At the end of the event it was Simon Rogers in his Caterham R400 who had set FTD ahead of two more Caterhams, those of Adrian Williams and Shaun Elwell. Peter Kukainis was 4th and first of the Westfields, with Bob Tansell in his Jedi 6th behind Mike Griffiths. SMC members David Thomas (Global GT) and Andy Dunbar (Westfield) were 7th and 8th with David Nelson and Mark Durrant, both Caterham mounted, rounding out the top ten.

In the classes Andrew meek won 1C with his Subaru Impreza, David Thomas took 2B in the Global GT, Tony Barber took his Golf to 2nd in 3B and Andy and Debbie Dunbar were 2nd and 3rd respectively in 3E. Nick Knight won 5E in his Abarth while Elvet Thomas was 3rd in his Escort in the hotly contested Road Rally Class 7B and Christian Howells was 3rd in 7C.

Possibly the closest result came in the battle for the Ladies award with the first three separated by a mere 14 hundredths of a second. On this occasion it was the Westfield which got the better of the Caterhams, our own Debbie Dunbar pipping Gill Elwell by 0.08 seconds with Suzanne Gibson a further 0.06 back.

Robert Margel (Car 48) wrote:

I just wanted to say an extended thanks to the team of marshals and medics that very professionally rescued myself and my car from the trees on Sunday. I can only re-iterate how professional, calm, organised and efficient they were in dealing with the situation. This is the first time I have had a major incident in motorsport and if all marshals, medics and organisers are this good then I think everyone should be proud. Please can you pass on my thanks to all concerned.

It is at times like these that you appreciate the efforts and skills of all those associated in making the day as smooth and safe for us competitors, without all we wouldn't be able to participate. I was wondering if you had a local marshals fund, or chosen charity that I could make a donation to, to show my appreciation.

On a personal note I am fine following the incident and most of the bruises have gone down. The car is being repaired and hopefully will be sufficiently patched up to let me compete in it next weekend.

Again many thanks, and I am planning to come back to Llys-y-Fran next year and get to the top this time :0

1968 MGC GT

Install yourself into a C and you'll find the mid-season point of MG's perfect pitch. But with a curious sting in the tail – six cylinders. Not in the form MG had initially planned, though. There were rumblings of a BMC V6 in 1960 and even a few designs floating around. But the plan was rubbished during the early Sixties and MG travelled the well-trodden six-in-line path. Initially, it was destined for use in a replacement for the tweed wearer's favourite – the Austin-Healey 3000 – to butch up the already hairy-chested sportster.

However, Donald Healey, chief developer for Austin-Healey, thought the idea a dreadful one and insisted that his marque wasn't polluted by the far-too proletarian MG brand. Come 1966, the idea was scrapped, and apart from the dwindling 3000, the red-backed octagon was the only badge from BL's sporting stable to use a six-pot.

Although predominantly MGB Mk II-based, at the front end of the monocoque the C needed an Abingdon-style re-think due to the size of the engine. To handle the six-banger's substantial heft, it got box-section chassis legs on each side of the engine and unique inner wheelarch and engine bay balance pressings. Underneath, a U-shaped crossmember was welded in to accommodate the steering viscera and suspension. The latter required a juggle, too. Because of the weight freighted in by the big six, BMC couldn't peer up the lighter-engined B's skirt – an all-new system had to be developed.

The C employs longitudinal torsion bars anchored to the shell under the seat, with telescopic dampers like the Jaguar E-type. There's a portly anti-roll bar, too, keeping the wallowing to a minimum. Outside, it's disguised as its more down-at-heel sister. The one distinguishing feature is a chrome-framed lump on the bonnet with an additional teardrop-shaped swelling, which allows room for the high-slung twin SU carburetors. Apart from the car's upper snout and rearward chrome badge, this is an MGB facsimile.



The bulge gives it away. There's something big under that bonnet.



Behind the wheel, though, its kettle of fish is a very different one. The cabin's all MGB, but the drive is a world apart. As well as the masculinity-affirming bonnet bulge, the extra weight wipes away the skittish ride common to Bs, replacing it with waif-like smoothness. And that beautiful gearbox slurs shifts with the alacrity of a full-on sportster. Flick on the overdrive switch and the C transforms into a floaty, loafers-and-all GT.

OK, so it's a little front heavy. And entering corners with too much haste results in utterly defiant understeer. It could be revier, too – the crank's a seven-bearing job. Then there's the low-speed ride, which, especially on poorly maintained road surfaces, does tend to dislodge even the most tenacious retinas.

But that's not what this car's about or, indeed, best suited to – leg-stretching motorway runs with a quick toe-dip into the sporting side of propulsion is where it excels. And provided your idea of classic motoring isn't wearing out the opposite-lock stops, exuberant driving – within reason – is a seldom-noted highlight of MGC GT ownership.



'LEG-STRETCHING RUNS IS WHAT THE C IS DESIGNED TO DO'

Llys y Fran Hillclimb 19th July

Our second hillclimb of the year takes place on Sunday 19th July at Llys y Fran Reservoir and as I write this we already have over 60 entries. This time the event is not a round of the Caterham 7 championship but five competitors from that club who came to the May event enjoyed it so much they are returning. They are joined by seventeen Westfields, with SMC members David Thomas, Andy Dunbar and daughter Debbie among them. Peter Kukainis, who set FTD and course record at the Epynt hillclimb in May, is also Westfield mounted so competition amongst the Lotus look-alikes should be fierce. Other SMC members entered include Andrew Meek in the rapid Subaru Impreza, Neil Watkins (who now seems to have got over the transmission problems which restricted his activities at the start of the season), and Michael Cond with his Sylva Riot. We seem to have attracted lots of sports cars this time as we also have two Honda S2000's and two Mazda MX5's plus three Renault Alpines and one of the delectable Alpine Renault A110's. As usual we will need all the help we can get to make sure the event is a success. Marshals are required to man the hill on Sunday but for those who can't, or don't want to, stand or sit in the sun / rain / sleet / hail / snow there are plenty of behind the scenes jobs to do. We also need muscle power on the Saturday to put out the tyres, bollards, fencing etc. If you can help on either Saturday 18th or Sunday 19th (or preferably both) please get in touch with myself on 01792 360887 or e-mail neil.samuel@ntlworld.com

One of our regular marshals at Llys y Fran, Trevor Clarke from the Westfield club, has decided to sell his car. Details follow:

Red/white bodywork with detachable arch tub and bootbox modified by me to fit around the RAC roll-over bar. Carbonmods carbon fibre dash with white instruments, LED warning lights and Savage (blue LED backlit) switches. Carbonmods carbon fibre NACA duct for fuel injection on nosecone.

Factory Carbon-effect plastic arch protectors and carbon effect rear light pack fitted. Cobra seats bolted to floorpan: Sliders included if required, but you will need to fit spacers (10-15mm) and/or remove the carpet under the seats to allow the sliders to work freely.

Schroth harnesses with six-point mounting and 2 inch lap/crutch straps fitted in 2008. Padded 3inch Anti-submarining Shoulder straps (not HANS compatible). 2004 SEiW chassis with inner ally panels and brake lines fitted by the factory. Completed in late May 2005 and SVA eventually passed as a new vehicle and registered on 16 November 2005. Home built, but to the same spec as a factory 1800 Sport. 9,000 miles since new. Taxed to the end of October 2009, but the MOT runs until mid March 2010. The battery was playing up when the first MoT fell due in November 2008 and it needed a new steering rack gaiter. I couldn't get both sorted until last month because of work pressures.

Engine: 1800 Zetec 130PS destined for an Escort XR3i, but diverted to a tuners for a cancelled project: fitted by me direct from the original Ford delivery pallette. Now fitted with 45mm Jenveys with 60mm trumpets and a Pipercross airbox/filter.

Standard Westfield exhaust with factory Cat.

Emerald ECU fitted by me and engine then mapped and dynoed by Dave Walker himself, putting out 157bhp @ 6891rpm (above 155 from 6500 up) and 127 lbft @ 6291rpm (above 120 from 4600 to 6800). Needs minor remapping now the engine has bedded in and the 3D software upgrade (3-position map plus gear sensing and full throttle upshift capability, etc.) has been installed.

Suspension standard and set up by Factory prior to SVA. Factory Wide track front suspension fitted in 2006.

Wheels: 7Jx15 ET 35 Compomotive MOs all round (inc spare) in Anthracite, fitted with Toyo 195/50 T1-Ss, and at least 4mm tread left all round. 10mm Eibach spacers on rear. Minor paint damage to one wheel, but spare is pristine (tyre still has its moulding bobbles) and has a factory cover when on the car.

Full wet weather gear (hood & sidescreens), plus half doors. Breathable soft cover also included, as the hood has been converted into a 3/4 hood to fit around the RAC bar and no longer keeps the rain out when the wind blows from the back when parked.

Yours for £9,500, although I will take any offer above the £8,700 that webuyanycar.com offered me last month.

There are a few spares included in the above, plus the build manual and the usual history file and a CD with pictures of the build in case you need to take it apart again.

Contact Details:

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www.trevorclarke.co.uk



Leighton Hughes writes:

Something happened on Sunday morning (24th May) at the Epynt hill climb that made me chuckle so I thought I'd send the short story in to share with other club members in the next edition of Windscreen.

Epynt is my first run out this year and I entered the trusty 'Chavectra' in class SP on the event.

A nice run up the Swansea valley saw me arrive on the range in good time. As I approached the paddock I was greeted by 2 marshals who signaled for me to stop. I wound the window down and we exchanged pleasantries.

One of them then said 'That will be £5 please'

Confused I asked what the £5 was for, and they told me it was the admission fee for spectators !!

Laughing I said I was entered in the event. They then asked me what car I was driving. I said this one.

They both looked at each other in disbelief and with a shrug of their shoulders, waved me through.

Moral of the story – always display your paddock pass if driving a hopeless shopping trolley on events.

On the event I did a PB by over 2 seconds and won the Trident SP class. A good day in the office.

Diary Dates 2009

Planned events so far this year are:

July – BarBQ

August – Car Show

Odds and

Just to prove that you can't believe anything you read in Windscreen, last month's front cover did not show Eirian Jones partnering Peter Watts at Pembrey last year – it was Eirian but with Neil Watts at Talbenny.

This month's front cover shows Michael Burnham in his Caterham Academy passing the SMC banner after the hairpin with marshal Julian Thomas of Amman and District looking on.

Want to Be on TV?

BBC Wales are looking for 2 families for a new series of Changing Lives Going Green. This time the whole family will exchange lives for just over 2 weeks in August. One of our chosen families will live within a green community in Wales and learn some lifelong skills along the way. Each family will receive a participation fee.

If you think your family are up for the adventure, please contact Helen Cawley on 029 2057 5729

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