



WINDSCREEN

The Magazine of Swansea Motor Club



Alun Morgan RIP

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Editors Intro

Welcome to another edition of your club magazine. This is intended to bring you news of what did and didn't go on during lockdown as motorsport was hit, like the rest of life, with cancellations, attempts to run events and even one or two successful events. There are also a number of general items just to give you something to read.

Sadly, one of the things that happened just as we realised the full implications of Covid was that Alun Morgan passed away, a great loss to motorsport generally and to all of us in particular. It did mean that many people had to weigh up attending Alun's funeral against the potential for spreading the virus so the service was a lot quieter than it otherwise would have been. Our cover photo shows Alun, with one of his many Minis and array of trophies, alongside his father. A fuller obituary from Ken Davies is included, along with another tale of adventure with Alun.

With Covid and lockdown keeping us all indoors and motorsport almost ceasing completely except at the highest levels we took very few subscriptions in 2020. Anyone who did pay in 2020 will have 2021 free of charge. Though bad for our finances, as our outgoings significantly exceeded our income, it has given us the opportunity to change the way we manage membership. So in future all memberships will run from 1st January until 31st December and anyone joining in the last three months of a year will get the following year included. That means 2021 subscriptions are now due so if you haven't already paid up and want to remain a member please do so asap.

Stay safe

Neil

Alun Morgan 1942 – 2020

Swansea Motor Club lost a loyal member and great ambassador Saturday 29th February 2020 when Alun Morgan passed away after a long illness. A Life Member of SMC, Alun was widely known within the Welsh motorsport community, having spent a remarkable lifetime in the sport.

David Alun Thomas Morgan was born in Gorslas Carmarthenshire and, after Llandybie Secondary Modern School, went to Ammanford Technical College before joining the National Coal Board as an engineering apprentice, later recalling some of his time was spent at the coalface. After qualifying as a toolmaker, he joined Morris Motors in Llanelli, later to become Llanelli Radiators, where he spent the rest of his career.

After being taken to Aintree as a youngster, motorsport played a major part in Alun's life, starting in the 1960s as an enthusiastic club competitor in SMC autocross, rallies, sprints and hill climbs. He was a competent auto-tester and a member of the Welsh team in the premier league Ken Wharton Trophy at Aldermaston in 1970 and particularly successful in speed hill climbs, using a well-known Downton modified 1293 cc Cooper S registered BCY 404B, originally ex Gerald Thomas and purchased from the late John Pascoe, who'd also had great success with the car.



Autotesting Midget at Caernarfon 1979



Hillclimbing Mini at Prescott

But although the BMC Mini was always his preferred car, he also used quick, road-going Midgets, bought directly from BMC and suitably modified with the right 'works' parts from Special Tuning at Abingdon. In 1983, perhaps his last season as a regular competitor, he drove a Mk 8 Davrian bought from the Lampeter factory and fitted with his BMC Cooper S engine and transmission.



Hillclimbing Davrian at Prescott 1983



Rallying Mini 1966 with Gareth Jones navigating

Aside from being a competitor, Alun was a respected official, club administrator and organizer of events including Penrice and Llys-Y-Fran Hillclimbs, Reynolds Cup Rally and Rally of the Vales, original version and historic retro running 1989-99. Also, in the early 1980s he was instrumental in developing a racing circuit at the former WWII airfield at Pembrey and became a familiar face on Historic rallies including the gruelling Le Jog and Monte Carlo Historique events.

A qualified RAC timekeeper, scrutineer and Speed Clerk of the Course, he could be found most weekends plying any one of his many skills at events throughout Wales and sometimes a wider extent. For many years he was part of the timekeeping team at Castle Combe Circuit in Wiltshire and regular scrutineer at Pembrey circuit. He was the regional RAC Rally Route Liaison Officer for South West Wales, former chairman of

BARC South Wales, a prominent and active figure at the Welsh Association of Motor Clubs and Technical Officer for the International Rally Drivers Club.

When not competing or officiating himself, he could be found supporting one of his many friends who were racing or rallying in the UK or in Europe, usually in the role of team manager, lap-scorer or service crew. He was a competent mechanic, distance no object, favourite destination – Monaco. Considered a safe pair of hands in any role he was asked to perform.



Stuart Collins, Peter Rushforth, Alun and Max Harvey in Monaco

A patriotic and fluent Welsh speaker, Alun's other lifelong passion was rugby and he seldom missed an International if at home. In this short appreciation, it's impossible to do justice to a remarkable competitor, official and good-natured, intelligent friend who contributed so much to our sport. Suffice to say that he will be sorely missed. We offer our condolences to Alun's family, sister Marriane, niece Paula, nephew Phil and his many friends.



SMC 70th Anniversary party with Derek Davies and Stuart Collins

Abingdon Long Course Sprint

Once inter club motorsport was able to restart for a brief period last summer one of the first events to take place was the Long Course sprint at Abingdon airfield on the 15th August. I had been asked to timekeep this event when it was scheduled for earlier in the year as the usual timekeeper was unavailable. Despite the usual guy now being available the organisers kept the faith so Julie and I set off up the M4 full of trepidation. After all, we were only just escaping lockdown and weren't sure how all the Covid protocols would work, both for the event and at the hotel. In the end we need not have worried it was all very secure with masks and sanitizer being the order of the day and no paperwork exchanged, everything done by computer / email.

We arrived to do our initial setup on the Friday afternoon and soon met far too many new faces to be able to remember most of their names. First thing to do was to mark out a start box as we were to use the European start method because of Covid and MSUK guidance to start marshals that touching cars was to be avoided. So, instead of the car being lined up very carefully to within a few millimeters of the start beam the driver just drove forwards into the box until told to stop by the marshal. Less accurate but much easier and quicker. We soon had the cables out for both our finish beams and our, often troublesome, display which we sited a hundred yards or so after the finish line. Luckily the start and finish were only separated by about 500 yards so it was only two reels for the finish and one for the display. A quick check that everything was working, as we had had some worrying inconsistencies in the operation of our timing base during the week prior, and we retired to the hotel.

The hotel and restaurant were also very good on the Covid protocols, with one way systems in place, masks only to be removed when seated and the ubiquitous sanitizer everywhere.

Saturday morning dawned grey and drizzly and we headed for the airfield early, got everything set up and working and waited for our customers. It was nice to see a few familiar faces, Andrew and Geraint Meek sharing an Impreza, Andrew Bisping in his OMS and Rob Thomson in his Clio. 117 cars made the start list after various late drop outs and practice went reasonably well, the only problem really being fast cars catching slower ones because of the length of the course – 2 miles. Apart, that is from the finish beam deciding to go awol for a short period in P1, soon cured with a bit of adjustment.

The whole event was being live streamed on youtube at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eta0zje1iFA&fbclid=IwAR1Yv_GGcAjHuhjMI4RTtoFOHH-wykldov4dJeOiNfYcSzbXKx3DrKT0cdSU

For the timed runs they even set up a camera looking at our display, which behaved impeccably all day long!

Happily, the course controller had got used to the relative pace of the cars by the time we got to the timed runs and they proceeded smoothly despite the increasing wind sweeping the course. At the end it was class wins for Andrew Bisping and Rob Thomson with Geraint beating dad and missing out on 3rd in a hotly contested class by just 0.06 seconds. FTD was taken by Will Nicholls in the ex Petter Solberg Impreza ahead of Steve Broughton in his Westfield, the very rapid sports car being the only interloper in a top 5 dominated by the 4WD class B11 machinery.

We ran 2 practice and two timed runs for over 110 cars and were all finished by 3.15pm, allowing marshals to get out of the rain and us to get our packing up done and get on back down the M4 to home. A good day was had by all.

Neil Samuel

Was the F40 Ferrari's Virtuoso GT Winner or Just a 1980s Cash Cow?

Originally designed to celebrate Ferrari's 40th anniversary, the mid-engined, two-door berlinetta sports car was built between 1987 – 1992, during which time it was the fastest, most powerful and, most expensive car offered for sale by the legendary Italian car manufacturer. Racing versions of the F40 aligned with the LM and GTE international endurance racing class structure, meaning that competition cars were built until 1994 and 1996 respectively.

Although assembled at Ferrari's Maranello factory, the tubular steel and composites built F40 is made up from outsourced components, with the exception of its longitudinal, twin-turbocharged and intercooled 90° - 2.9 litre – 475 bhp – V8 engine and 5-speed gearbox/transaxle, which are Ferrari manufactured.



Cynically seen at the time as a purely 'money-making exercise' aimed at wealthy speculators, the F40 debuted in 1987 with a planned production run of 400 units and a retail price tag of \$400,000 or \$880,000 in today's money, although cars changed hands for more, such was the period's clamour to own a super car. In the end, Ferrari built a total of 1,311 cars, including 213 units to the USA. During this period, Porsche's equivalent model – the 959 – was equally if not more popular with city whiz-kids and fund managers.

The car tested was manufactured in 1991 and then had a comprehensive and expensive restoration at Simpson Motorsport ten years ago, including an attractive LM rear wing. At the same time, the Magnetti Marelli ECU was changed to a MoTec high-performance unit, resulting in a considerable gain of 125 bhp.



For sure, the Gower Peninsula is not the ideal location to test a 600 bhp sports car but fortunately Fairwood airfield – a popular race circuit 1950-55 – is conveniently sited with unrestricted space. On the road, the left-hand-drive F40 is easy to start and very tractable to drive, if a tad heavy without power steering. The handling is sublime. Usefully, the ride-height can be hydraulically adjusted +4" to compensate for speed-humps and rough roads. Predictably, the 18" wheels shod with 245/40 ZR 18 front and 335/35 ZR 18 rear Pirelli tyres tend to follow every raised contour and nuance in the road surface and at 1970 mm, it's a wide car too.



Power delivery is brutal and a seemingly civilised sports car with 150 bhp at 4,000 rpm becomes an insane 600 bhp behemoth at 4,200 rpm with no discernible turbo-lag. On a bone-dry road in third gear at 85 mph it's easy to get wheel-spin by using too much throttle and wet surfaces demand the utmost respect – as there's no traction control. The electrifying acceleration is arrested straight and true by enormous 330mm disc brakes with Brembo 4-pot callipers but no servo. Six-pot callipers are fitted to competition versions. Even though my Ferrari's philanthropic owner is a competent racing driver and Goodwood regular he avoids taking it out in the rain as F40 values have risen to circa £850K – £2M.

Performance figures for the standard 475 bhp versions of the F40 are claimed to be 0-62 mph in 4.1 seconds and top speed of 200 mph but the car tested is more powerful and lighter at 1,000 KG – so it's quicker! Overall fuel consumption is around 10 mpg, which with a 26 gallon tank means at least 4 fuel stops and some economical driving to swing down to Maranello for that quick Milanese espresso and an oil change.

As you'd expect from a car sitting just 44 inches high, access in and out is challenging, made harder by very wide sills and once buckled into the racing-harness there are few creature comforts but there is basic air conditioning and the hip-hugging competition bucket seats prove comfortable despite having wafer-thin upholstery. There's not many places to stow oddments, luggage and shopping with the small front boot limited to soft baggage. If needed, a replacement after-market bonnet comes in at £17K.



Despite its quirky shortcomings the F40 deserves its place in the pantheon of the world's greatest sports cars and brings the added kudos of a successful competition career. To many, it's the greatest road-going Ferrari of all time but one thing is sure, it's unique, as in these homogenised times it's unlikely there'll ever be another sports car built to rival it and the F40 was the last Ferrari personally approved by Enzo Ferrari himself before he died in August 1988.

Ken Davies ©

Abingdon CARnival 26th / 27th September 2020

Obviously my timekeeping at the Long Course can't have been too bad as I was invited back for the CARnival weekend to run the Abingdon course sprint, one of two sprints held at the same time on the airfield, each effectively half of the Long Course. The major difference for me was that the start and finish were now separated by about 1km as the crow flies so there was no way I could cable the distance and would use our radio gear.

Again, initial setup went well on the Friday evening and, after a suitably early start, everything was ready on Saturday morning. As at the Long Course Andrew and Geraint Meek and Andrew Bisping were amongst the entry. I wasn't sure exactly how the runs were organised but the experienced start crew soon explained that we would get half the entry, who would take their two practice runs, then their two race runs. After lunch the same pattern would be used for the other half of the entry. They also pointed out that the Abingdon course had always finished before the Bentley course, despite being the longer of the courses – no pressure then! With a total entry of 130 cars, we got underway just after 9.00am but after less than 10 minutes everything stopped as a car had gone off and landed up a bank. 15 minutes lost straight away as he was recovered, then we ran for another 15 minutes before an MG broke down on the course and had to be towed back, losing us a further 10 minutes. Happily that was the last of the major problems but that first batch had taken over an hour to get through. It was straight into 2nd practice for the same batch of cars and this time there were no problems and all done in 35 minutes.

Immediately we got the same batch back for their race runs and, with no mishaps, got through them in 30 minutes for each of their runs. Time for lunch, which for us was quite a decent one hour as we had finished part one ahead of the other course despite the early issues.

After lunch we got the other half of the entry which included all the serious 4wd machinery and the single seaters. Initially things went well and we got through their first practice in 30 minutes. The next session didn't go so well as a competitor demolished the barriers at the chicane and ten minutes were lost as they were repaired. The first race run for this group started well but then there were several missed pulses from the finish beams so I had to do a thorough check of all the gear. No problems were found and I think the issue is with the wind affecting the radio pulses. The wind had certainly increased very considerably and had now got so strong that extra weights had to be added to the ropes of our timing tent to stop it blowing away! All this meant we had taken 53 minutes to complete that run. On to the last run and we tore through it in just 27 minutes.

I looked over to the other course about ten minutes before we finished and could just see the last couple of cars going in to their run. So it seemed as though I had let my crew down and Bentley had beaten Abingdon for the first time. Imagine my surprise as we started to pack up to see cars just going in to Bentley – what I had seen earlier was competitors just finishing their first race run on that course. Face and reputation saved. Best times for each competitor on the two courses were then added to give the final results. On this occasion, with a dry track, it was the single seaters that dominated with Steve Broughton and the Westfield again the only interloper.

Andrew Bisping ended up 6th overall and 4th in class whilst Geraint beat dad again, this time getting 3rd in class.

The following day was a stage rally using the runways and some of the perimeter roads of the airfield, which had 100 entries. We had volunteered to stay on and do any job we could, with the proviso that we wanted to head off after lunch to get back to Wales before the latest lockdown kicked in. As it turned out we were gainfully employed, as a glitch with the 'no contact' timing systems and marshals struggling to get used to them for the first time meant the check sheets were required to confirm times. So we spent the morning collecting them in a very socially distanced fashion, with lots of hand sanitizing after touching them. Happily all was running smoothly by the time lunch came around and we were able to get off home in good time.

All in all a very enjoyable weekend.

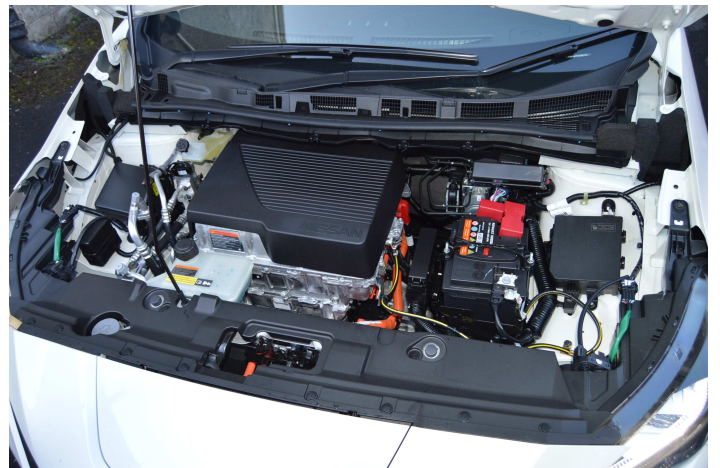
Picture shows 2nd place finisher Chris Wood / Keith Hounslow in their Porsche 997 GT3 after damaging the car early in the event. Behind them is the Lotus Exige of winners Simon Mauger / Matt Faulkner and rear right is the ex Petter Solberg Impreza of Will Nicholls / Nick Broom which retired with fuel problems.

Neil Samuel



72-Hours with an Eco-Friendly EV

The international Formula E racing championship is now into its fourth season and the switch to electric cars has been rubber-stamped by the FIA in 2018 and a technical template for a new-look FIA rallycross championship. In addition, a Renault Zoe recently made history after becoming the first electric car to compete in a car rally but in truth, most car manufacturers are still about two years away from launching their first 100% electric cars so it's amazing that Nissan has already launched its second generation LEAF.



This latest super-stylish iteration proved a pleasant drive with instant torque and fast, smooth acceleration from its 100% electric motor. Nissan claims the 5-seater hatchback provides more user confidence and with battery location giving a low centre of gravity, road holding is good and firm. That said, the main barrier to Electric cars remains – Range. It's not the car for people want to rack-up 500 miles in a day without incurring costly time penalties for stopping

to recharge at least 4 times! It's five years since I first tested a LEAF – Europe's 2018 top selling electric vehicle with sales of 250,000 – when its fully-charged range at that time was 120 miles.

Now Nissan has now extended the LEAF's range to 168 miles but it's exponentially factored by speed, terrain and even the electrical gizmos being used. During my 3-day tenure I had a 120-mile round-trip, but once cruising at motorway speeds the battery life was falling disproportionately to miles covered, so on arrival at my destination I found a fast-charging station to be confident of completing my return journey without running out of battery. However, the recharging process was relatively painless, even to an inexperienced EV driver.



Home charging the LEAF can be done from a special charging post – £500 installed – or a 13 amp domestic plug and averages 4-hours at 7kWh for a half-charged battery. The cost of a full charge is £3.64 but some supermarkets and car parks provide free charging points, especially in London. The Blink EV network of fast charging stations costs between 30p & 60p per kWh. Nissan is also installing more high-power DC chargers, in fact it already has twice as many across Europe as Tesla has Superchargers, but with shorter range than a Tesla the LEAF has to visit them more often during a journey. The LEAF's Battery longevity is estimated at 8 years or 100,00 miles and Nissan's warranty covers this quantum.

Fundamentally the LEAF is simple to use with its Intelligent Key in purse or pocket. Just press the brake and push the power button and pop the stubby gear lever into D and you're away. No need to release the electric handbrake, it's done automatically, although I'm not sure I liked that. On the road the front-mounted 148 bhp electric motor, powered by a 40kWh battery, takes the LEAF from 0 to 62 mph in a very respectable 7.9 seconds and a top speed of 93 mph. At low speed, four cameras provide a virtual 360° bird's-eye view, plus selectable split-screen close-ups of the front, rear and kerbside, which along with object sensors make tight manoeuvres easy. There's also ProPILOT Parking system to do the hard work for you. No hands, no feet – just press the button and parking is a spectator sport. The impressive 435 litre boot is five litres bigger than that of a Nissan Qashqai – rarely criticised for its lack of space.



Spelt with capital letters, Nissan explains that LEAF is a descriptive acronym representing 'Leading Environmentally friendly Affordable Family vehicle'. The top-end Techna model has LED headlights, black leather interior, heated seats and steering wheel, an electronic parking brake, and a great quality 7-speaker BOSE sound system. All this and Nissan's ProPilot semi-autonomous driving mode, maintaining speed and distance from the vehicle in front whilst also keeping the car within the lane markings. It also lets you know if you need to slow down and will apply the brakes to help avoid a collision, minimize an impact or detect an object, such as a pedestrian or large object in the road.

Nissan's e-Pedal system, allows you to accelerate and decelerate in a single, seamless movement. Just release the accelerator for automatic regenerative braking and depress again for acceleration. If you ever need a more immediate stop there's always the brake pedal. However, I never fully exploited these two innovations and I'd want more experience with the ProPilot before relying on it. It also seemed unnatural to have the steering wheel move of its own accord whilst loosely held in my hands and put my trust the automatic distance detector keeping me off the car in front.

The price of the LEAF Techna as tested is £31,500.00, minus a £3,500.00 government grant. Range notwithstanding, the British built LEAF will certainly turn more drivers towards environmentally acceptable Eco-green EVs but residual values are low. In addition, Nissan has just abandoned its battery leasing scheme, which is a pity as the cost of replacing a battery was as expensive as buying a used EV. There again, prices of lithium-ion batteries have fallen steeply as production scale increases and manufacturers develop more cost-effective methods. All in all a great car for city use.

Ken Davies ©

Castle Combe Pegasus Sprint 17th October

My last event in 2020 was assisting Tony Parker at the Bristol Pegasus MC sprint at Castle Combe, using three quarters of the circuit from the pit lane exit to just after Bobbies chicane. After a 'far too early' journey up from Swansea we met up and organised the jobs for the day. As we needed to be close to the start line to clearly see the lining up of cars we agreed Tony would sit in the back of his van with the timing gear whilst I would sit in the front with the results computer. All very social distanced and with the doors / windows open for good measure. Andy Moss from BPMC provided a laptop with a phone dongle attached and a google document already loaded so all I had to do was enter the times and the document automatically updated every so often. This was then visible on the web for competitors to see their times and seemed to work really well. First task was to go and cable from the van to the finish so I set off. As I was reeling the cable out I bumped into Jeremy Davies who was looking at Camp corner, having not driven it before. Eventually I was able to persuade him that he would not be driving it on the day as we were finishing before the pit entry. Soon, everything was setup and we started practice for the 120 car entry. In fact the whole session went very smoothly and we were able to take an early lunch and get the race runs underway afterwards. With Combe, organisers are always wary of the circuit curfew so decided not to offer a third race run as they originally thought might have been possible. This seemed to be well accepted by competitors and marshals so we were able to start clear up before 4.00pm and I was on my way home shortly after 5.00.

The event was won by Matt Hillam in the shared SBD Dallara F3 from Steve Broughton in the same car. Jeremy Davies took a convincing win in the class in his Caterham 7 and Andrew Meek took 6th in class.
Neil Samuel



Glove box lid, laptop, google doc and dongle – what more does a results man need.