

Newsletter



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2023 ASWMC Championships Sponsored by:



Spring 2023

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Welcome to the ASWMC Spring 2023 Newsletter

This first newsletter of 2023 is a little later than in previous years, partly due to a move to spread the issues more evenly through the competition season, and partly due to a tsunami of unexpected tasks that arrived on my desk in late March. Such is life in 'volunteer land', a situation that many clubs seem to be facing, with dwindling bands of dedicated committee members taking on the increasing demands put before them. If you have skills that will help your club's committee, please step forward now!

In this issue we have all the usual news items and a bumper crop of articles from Newsletter stalwart Ken Davies – so much so that I've held over a couple of items to the summer issue! In 'Around the Clubs' you'll also read a 3-page article from the Gilbern Owners Club's Chris Jones on his exploits rallying on the Isle of Man – event reports and news of competitors' adventures are always welcome. You don't need to be an expert scribe – just send in your account with some images and I'll do the rest.

Lastly, we say farewell to Ken Block, whose contribution to bringing motorsport to a new generation of fans was immense.

I look forward to receiving plenty of news on events for the Summer issue as the season nears its half-way point.

Rupert Barker - Newsletter Editor

The Editor's comments in this column are personal and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Association, its executive committee, or other officers.

Cover Page Photo: Gilbern OC's Chris Jones' racing through the Isle of Man scenery on the approach to the famous Sartfield hairpin – see 'Around the Clubs, page 15 (Image: Kevin Jones).

From the Chair ...

Association Partners:



I was pleased that so many of you were able to attend February's ASWMC Awards Presentation. It enhances the occasion when the award-winners are applauded by their fellow competitors as they are presented with their hard-earned trophies.

Please could you all make a note that our next Awards Presentation, for the 2023 Championships, will be on Sunday 11th February 2024, at our usual venue, the Exeter Court Hotel.

Concerns have been recently expressed at the availability (or otherwise) of tyres for motorsport use in 2024. The Cooper/Avon (owned by Goodyear) factory in Melksham, Wiltshire, is expected to close at the end of this year and I also understand that one of the Yokohama factories is also scheduled to close. It may be that the variety and choice of tyres to which we have become accustomed will diminish.

I know many of you may view the word 'sustainability' as one of those 'buzz words'. However, gaining access to many of the venues we use for motorsport is becoming increasingly difficult, and may become more so as time goes on. If your club can demonstrate that it is taking action to enhance its sustainability it will often improve the chance of gaining access to some venues in some disciplines. If you go to the Motorsport UK website via the two links below, you will find plenty of information on the subject to enable you to take the process towards accreditation that stage further.

<https://www.motorsportuk.org/about-us/environmental-sustainability/>

<https://www.motorsportuk.org/clubs-organisers/club-toolkit/sustainability-accreditation/>.

Finally, it's my sincere hope that our sport continues this year in the way it has begun, with many club's early events filling to capacity, often very quickly indeed.

Paul Parker, Chairman

Self-Declaration & Documentation ...

Torbay MC has compiled a brief guide for competitors to combine their competition licence, club and championship cards and documentation into one file for uploading to event entry systems or e-mailing to Event Secretaries. The guide is available to download on the Torbay MC website - <https://www.torbaymotorclub.co.uk/events/>. 'Download information'

Motorsport UK Club Annual Registration ...

Our Secretary recently received a list of thirty-one clubs nationwide that had not renewed their registration with Motorsport UK for 2023. Please note the association recommends that all our clubs renew their registration before Christmas each year to ensure that they are fully compliant to continue applying for event permits etc. It is a requirement that a member club of the ASWMC is a recognised Motorsport UK club, and vice versa (GR A 4 and 4.4, page 49).

Clubs are also reminded to add their fixtures online to the Motorsport UK Fixtures and Permits National Calendar at the start of the year, and apply for their Permits within the specified timescales in the Motorsport UK Yearbook (D4.1.2). Draft copies of Supplementary Regulations are acceptable at this stage and do not need to be final before making an application. Events may only be publicised and entries opened once the Permit has been issued.

For events requiring a Motorsport UK Steward this is particularly important as it allows sufficient time to appoint someone to the event. If any details on the Permit need to be changed after the Permit has been issued the Competitions & Clubs team will be able to assist.

Permits can be added by logging in as the club at members.motorsportuk.org, clicking Fixtures and Permits, and following the instructions on screen. Login details are often kept by the Secretary or Competition Secretary; however the Competitions & Clubs team can reset the password if required.

Motorsport UK DBS Checking...

Motorsport UK launched the DBS checking scheme for volunteers in January; an integral part of the implementation of the safeguarding measures is ensuring that correct and satisfactory suitability checks are completed for those working or volunteering in roles that are defined as 'regulated' activity.

A full guide to the process, including a list of identified roles that meet government criteria for DBS checks, is available on the Motorsport UK website; if you are unsure whether your role meets the relevant criteria, please e-mail safeguarding@motorsportuk.org.

If you volunteer, and hold a Motorsport UK licence, it is mandatory for you to undertake a DBS check if you are planning to marshal at a kart or drag race meeting.

All licensed/registered volunteers will be fully funded by Motorsport UK. Non-Motorsport UK volunteers will be charged a fee of £21 GBP. Those who earn from their role will be required to cover the cost directly and this is charged at £65 GBP.

Welcome to ...

The Cornish Leaf and Coil Club who have re-joined the Association after a brief absence. Their website is under construction and will be live soon.

Notes from the Executive Committee Meeting, 12th February ...

The Autocross Sub-Committee had successfully negotiate da meeting with Motorsport UK to address the issues of costs and the permit status of the association's championship events ...

A new 'Way Forward' promotion sub-Committee was formed to publicise the role of the Association, look at ways in which it can improve its service to, and engage more fully with, member clubs and promote opportunities for clubs to recruit new members ...

A review of permit levels and fees will be carried out by Motorsport UK in 2023 ...

Reviving the ASWMC road rally championship, potentially running to lower permit and competition licence requirements, was discussed ...

The 2022 year-end accounts showed a reduced surplus, largely through lower competitor registrations and loss of advertising ... expenditure may be reduced with greater use of meetings on Zoom to reduce room hire fees ...

The Military Liaison Officer role has been taken on by Kevin Moore, the ASWMC's development officer.

South-West 'Motorsport Month' was less successful in 2022, largely due to a long delay in Motorsport UK approval and funding, and will not be pursued in 2023 ...

2022 Championship Registrations ... 324 competitors registered for 436 championships ... 2023 entries are currently down by 20% compared to the same time last year, across all disciplines ...

The Mailerlite e-mail process works well, allowing embedded links but not file attachments ... the latter will continue to be sent to member clubs conventionally in batches ...

The 2023 Championship Yearbook and Registration Cards are now fully digital ...

Advertising costs for championship sponsors have been significantly reduced with the move to the digital yearbook ... 1st Choice Finishes (Autocross Championship) and DL Motorsport Parts (Targa Road and Stage Rally Championships) have renewed their support ...

Protechnic (Autosolo) and TyreMarks (Speed) did not renew for 2023 ...the latter's 2023 permits had been issued and TyreMarks will remain as the title sponsor as a goodwill gesture pro tem ... a replacement sponsor is being actively sought ...

Marshals' training in 2023 will be held on 12th March (Bodmin) and 16th April/7th May at Dunkeswell ... the marshals grading scheme has been overhauled ... new training resources are now available on a dedicated trainers' hub ... Jane Day has joined the South West training team and will be a valuable asset to the training days.

Awards Presentation Images ...

Many thanks to Paul Morris Motorsport Photography for taking the photos at the 2022 Awards Presentation on the 12th February ... the images can be found here:

https://www.facebook.com/PaulMorrisMotorsportPhotography/photos?ref=page_internal

Members Clubs' Anniversaries ...

The ASWMC's record of its member clubs' formation dates is somewhat 'patchy', and also confused by the differences between a club's original formation, any later versions, amalgamations, and affiliation to governing bodies (The RAC, the MSA and Motorsport UK). As far as we can tell, the following member clubs will reach significant milestones this year ...

	Formed:	Anniversary:
Oxford MC	1903	120 th
Exeter MC	1948	75 th
Burnham-on-Sea MC	1953	70 th
Bath MC	1963	60 th
Tavern MC	1963	60 th
Classic & Historic MC	1978	45 th
Heads of the Valley AC	1983	40 th
Weald MC	1993	30 th

There may be others! Please send information on your club's formation to the Newsletter Editor (newsletter@aswmc.org.uk) so we can update the ASWMC records. Thank you.

Training News ...

The new marshals grading scheme started on the 1st January this year, with all grades (e.g., post chief or sector marshal) being re-classified into Grade 1, Grade 2 and Grade 3. With this change, the training modules have also been overhauled and updated. Marshals need to attend at least one training day in a two-year window to *maintain* or *upgrade* their marshal status. The ASWMC, from this year, will hold at least three training days a year at venues across the region to help facilitate this.

We held the first of the our three 2023 marshal training days on the 12th March at the Shire House Suite in Bodmin Cornwall. We also welcomed Jane Day to the South-West Training Team, joining Roger Nunn, Vic Fancy and myself in delivering the training days.

Modules covered at the Bodmin day included speed marshalling, off-track speed marshalling (e.g., paddock marshal, etc.), communication theory, roles and responsibilities, 'First on scene' and rally marshalling. The remaining two days will now take place later in the year due to clashing event dates, possibly in September or October. Details will be released when the dates and venues have been confirmed.

Is there a training module that you need to complete for your personal record card ? Is there something that you would like to see included in the training days? If so, please contact me and I'll see what I can do for you.

Jay Brown, Training Officer (training@aswmc.org.uk)

Reminders ...

Event Regulations ...

Please help the ASWMC's championship secretaries and coordinators to do their job by ensuring that Event Secretaries send draft copies of their event's SRs to the relevant secretary or coordinator before being released to competitors. Thank you.

ASWMC Club Project Fund ...

The deadline for applications to the fund in 2023 need to be made in writing to the General Secretary by 31st October 2023.

Photography Credits ...

When sending photos please include event details, location (e.g. stage or corner), car, driver/crew, the photographer (if crediting is required) and any other relevant information. E-mail contributions to newsletter@aswmc.org.uk Thanks.

ASWMC on FaceBook ...

The ASWMC News page is at <https://www.facebook.com/ASWMCNews>.

The ASWMC Facebook group is at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/331829570210716>

Marshals ... if you haven't already, don't forget to update your registration for 2022 via the Motorsport UK website ...

2022/23 ASWMC Meeting Dates

17th May 2023 Executive (by Zoom)

16th August 2023 Executive (Zoom)

15th October 2023 Executive and AGM (Exeter Court Hotel)

3rd December 2023 Executive (Exeter Court Hotel)

11th February 2024 Executive Committee and Awards Presentation (Exeter Court Hotel)

Please note: all dates and locations are provisional.



Recognised
Club

Motorsport UK Branding ...

Guidance is available from Motorsport UK about branding of event and club paperwork, websites, etc. with the name change. For further information, please e-mail brand@motorsportuk.org.

Guidance and FAQs are also available at <https://mailchi.mp/ea560eadbb60/guidance-for-clubs-using-motorsport-uk-branding?e=8d21b80f3a>

Autosport International ...

A slimmed down version of the popular motorsport show opened the season.

After a two-year hiatus, Autosport International bounced back to deliver its traditional preview of the coming season. Perhaps, understandably, the scale of this year's show was smaller than usual and for sure it lacked that international '*je ne sais quoi*' - nevertheless it made a welcome return to the calendar after its last appearance way back in January 2020.

An early sign of austerity was the absence of the traditional glossy program, replaced by a puny pocket guide containing a list of exhibitors. That said, once inside, the eclectic array of cars on show spanned many categories and formulae - Historic, Saloon, Sports, F1, NASCAR and EV.



A typical jewel on the club racing scene is Mini Spares' innovative creation of the 'Fastest Mini in the World', complete with specially built 2.6 litre V8 engine producing 360 bhp, mated to a bespoke Xtrac transmission system, mounted in a space-frame chassis, clothed in a Mini body, and weighing just 630 Kg. This remarkable car was driven by Le Mans winner Steve Tandy at Brands Hatch in the summer, who reported wheelspin in third gear on a dry track!



Burgeoning second division touring car series, TCR UK, were using the event to showcase some of their eye-catching touring cars. Now facilitated by the BRSCC, the championship bills itself as the '*fastest-growing, most accessible, national multi-marque championship in the UK*', complete with several talented future BTCC drivers-in-waiting and all eager to move to the final rung of the saloon car ladder.

Among racing club stands, the BRSCC, CSCC and Castle Combe Racing Club were busy taking 2023 championship registrations from new and existing competitors, while close by the Silverstone Interactive Museum, in alliance with GP Racing magazine, displayed a Formula 1 spectrum. Spanning 70+ years, cars included the stunning H&H recreation of the 1951 BRM with howling supercharged V16 1.5 litre engine, still regarded as one of the most ingenious engine designs in F1 history. This collection formed the centrepiece of an exciting and immersive display.





Conspicuously absent this year were the BARC and HSCC, both of which had previously provided stellar displays of historic and current race cars.

Motorsport personalities seemed scarce in number but high in quality and included three-time F1 champion Sir Jackie Stewart, in attendance to support his charity, 'Race Against Dementia' and featuring on the Autosport interview stage, as did renowned F1 engineer Pat Symonds, designer William Toet and current British Touring Car Champion Tom Ingram. As could be expected, the sport's governing body, Motorsport UK, hosted by CEO Hugh Chambers, was available for advice and to field queries from competitors, and Autosport magazine's show stand formed a customary meeting area.

Cosworth provided a prestigious focal point for the Engineering element of the show and the quest to identify the next generation of designers and engineers was supported by several universities offering motorsport related courses to aspiring students. In an adjoining hall the Performance Tuning Car Show chose a very special Vauxhall Astra VXR as its car of the show. Perhaps one omission was the lack of rally cars on display, although the Roger Albert Clark historic stage rally had a prominent stand hosted by Clerk of the Course, Colin Heppenstall, which attracted a large crowd – is there a message there?

Although this year's show was a shadow of its former self it continues to provide great opportunities for motorsport folk to network – drivers, teams, promoters, suppliers, and media – prior to another busy season, which according to current gloomy economic predictions looks challenging! In summary, not a bad job and Autosport International organisers commendably made best use of what they had available. They must now focus on restoring the event's status and popularity in time for January 2024.



Left - F1 display area; right – the new Castle Combe circuit logo.

Ken Davies ©

Images: Autosport International & Ken Davies

Race Retro ...

Motorsport Heroes star at return of annual show

Welcome back Race Retro! Providing some indication that normality is finally returning to motorsport, the hardy and bucolic annual Stoneleigh exhibition showcasing the UK's national racing, rallying and speed scene returned to the calendar February 24th-26th following two years' pandemic-enforced absence and, although understandably more compact, the quality counterbalanced a lack of quantity. Shoe-horned into just two halls of Stoneleigh Park's expansive agricultural complex this year, the Reis-sponsored exhibition attracted over 22,000 visitors to what seems to be a friendly and relaxed atmosphere.



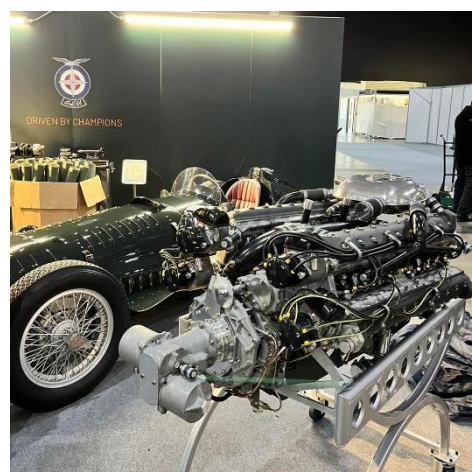
A third hall was exclusively for Silverstone Auction's sale of high-quality competition and road cars, itself perhaps an indication of a tough global commercial climate adversely affecting collectors. That said, the auction achieved a high number of sales, most at strong money. One example was this 5,000-miles-only Ford Cosworth Sierra RS500 (left), which sold for a record £596,250, the result of a bidding war between an on-line buyer in Dubai and one in the UK!

Racing and rallying personalities proliferated the show with some appearing on the Rally Stage and also the Daily Live Interview stage for interrogation. These included irrepressible, twice BTCC champion Jason Plato, Louis Aitken-Walker, the 1990 FIA Ladies World Rally Champion, Welshman Dave Llewellyn, a twice British Rally Champion and son Tom, a former Welsh junior rally and national rallycross champion.



But motorsport heroes weren't limited to the stage and former BRM F1 drivers Howden Ganley, Mike Wilds and Jackie Oliver, together with BRM F1 designers Mike Pilbeam and Tony Southgate mixed freely and signed autographs for visitors.

There were also fascinating interviews with John Saltinstall, author of an autobiography of Belgian F1 hero and 6-time Le Mans winner Jacky Ickx, and family members of British industrialist the late Sir Alfred Owen, owner of the BRM team between 1954 and 1970 and custodians of the iconic marque name. Simon, Nick, and Paul Owen discussed



commissioning the first of three stunning recreations of the high-revving Type 15 V16 1.5 litre F1 car. Chassis IV has been constructed by BRM specialist Hall & Hall who were represented on-stage by principal and former team mechanic Rick Hall. Two more Type 15s are currently being built to utilise unissued and unique chassis plates held in BRM archives, one of these is for renowned international collector and watchmaker, Richard Mille.



Outside in bright spring sunshine 110+ top class rally cars spanning 5 decades, Group A, B and WRC cars – Mini Cooper to Porsche GT3 to Metro 6R4 – tackled the tricky mixed surface stage set up in Stoneleigh's capacious grounds, always a popular feature with competitors and fans. Organised by Group B Rallying.com, there were two sessions on Saturday and Sunday. While for the many fans of Historic Karting there two daily demonstrations on the in-house Kart track organised by the British Historic Karting Club.



All in all, there was much to like about Race Retro 2023 and a big thank you to the organisers, Clarion Events Ltd.

Ken Davies ©

Images: Ken Davies & Lyndon McNeil.

Around the Clubs ...



South Hams MC's annual "Test/Practice Day" at Smeatharpe on the 21st January turned out to be a very cold day - if you were outside the car - but as popular as ever since it was started in 2010. It continues to be a "must do" for many in the south-west who are preparing for the new season. The 55-car entry was notable for cars from many disciplines - stage rallying, road rallying, drifting, autocross and everyday road cars - if you can call a Toyota Yaris WRC an 'everyday' car!



This year we enjoyed enthusiastic support from Historic Motorsport (South West) Ltd who put their name to the day. Proprietor Dave Boucher had three cars for his customers to enjoy, on what was a very frosty morning – traction was in short supply in the shaded areas around the course.

As many of you will be aware, we sadly lost two of 'our own' recently – Martin Masters from North Devon MC and Motorsport UK Steward John Kitson and a minute's silence was observed immediately before the driver's briefing. The briefing - as usual – turned out to be a fun part of the event, with Pete Bold addressing everyone in his customary style!

A presentation to the Devon Air Ambulance Trust followed, with SHMC Chairman Matt Power and Alan Frame handing over a cheque for £600.67 that had been raised at various club events.

Following a couple of low speed safety sighting laps, the track was ready for action. Some stayed all day, and some set their cars up and went home smiling at lunchtime. The 2.8 mile course offers a great layout where drivers can hone their skills, whether that be a hand-brake turn, 'scandi-flick' or full on drift.



The day is billed as "Blow out the cobwebs" - test the car to your heart's content and many did. No timing, no pressure and everyone a winner!



We had 21 helpers and marshals on the day, including Westcountry Rescue, without whom we could not have offered such a great experience to those taking part – so, on behalf of Pete and the organising team, a "big thank you" is due to you all

Andrew Bulpin



The **Isle of Wight CC's** Island Stages Rally will run on 30th September and 1st October, returning to Palmers Farm as well as part of the historic stage at Duxmore Farm. The event will offer over 30 stage miles with no splits or merges.

Spectators will be welcome, with the opportunity to get up close to the cars at scrutineering before the ceremonial start on Saturday evening, viewing the action on the stages and a town centre re-group control on Sunday.



Image: Rob Schaverien (<https://www.facebook.com/RobSchaverienPhotography>).



Truro & District, Plymouth, Newquay and Camel Vale MCs will run their closed-road Watergate Bay Sprint on 16th and 17th September on the B3276 coast road between Newquay and Padstow. Discounted advanced tickets are now on sale at £10 per



The event will donate profits to local charities, which have benefited from over £30,000 since 2018. For more information please visit: www.watergatebaymotorsport.co.uk

The latest event news will be on social media feeds:

<http://www.twitter.com/watergatemotorsport>

<https://www.facebook.com/watergatebaymotorsport>



Bath MC's 2023 season started with 11 entries for a club 12-car, including a few 'first timers' trying out the discipline. All crews made it to the finish and the newcomers are keen to have another go!

Next up was the big event for the club in its 60th Anniversary year, the Festival Targa Rally, once again based at Castle Combe Race Circuit. This multi-venue event offered special tests at four different venues on a route totalling around 45 miles. Entries filled on the day it opened and the club was pleased to start 88 crews.

Under the guidance of C of C Dave Whittock, and with the support of the 238 people who signed-on as marshals or officials, the event ran very smoothly. The club would like thank everyone who came out and helped, in whatever capacity - without them it would not have been possible.



2023 Festival Targa winners - John Davies & Nick Bloxham

The event was dominated by the Ford Puma's of John Davies/Nick Bloxham and Ethan Davies/Dafydd Evans, the former winning by a margin of 1 min 18 secs after about an hour and forty minutes of competition.



Paul Hands and Dan Johnson won the Clubman event in their Honda Civic, finishing with a time that would have seen them finish a creditable 7th O/A in the main event.

*2023 Festival Targa Clubman winners
- Paul Hands & Dan Johnson*

Images courtesy of mandhphotography.co.uk

A fully detailed report of the event, courtesy of Ian Mills of rallyroots.com, can be found at <https://www.rallyroots.com/Reports2023/BathFestival2023.html>.

In addition club member Ben Marshall made a short video of the event which can be viewed via the clubs Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/BathMotorClub>, or on the clubs website at <http://www.bathmotorclub.co.uk/festival>

The Spring AutoSolo, with a full entry of 55 competitors took place 16th April using the usual fast and open tests at Kemble Airfield.

Further into the year the club is busy with preparations for its 60th Anniversary event on the 20th August which will include a social gathering for members old and new, during the day, and an evening meal with a well-known guest speaker to finish off the day.

Keep safe and enjoy your motorsport.

Martin Moore, Competition Secretary



Torbay Motor Club's Junior Driver scheme will enter its third year in 2023, offering a £65 award which can be used to offset an entry fee to their first Torbay MC event in 2023. Eligible junior drivers are those entering a TMC Sprint, Hillclimb or Autocross for the first time, and current TMC Junior autocross members who enter a sprint or hillclimb for the first time.

To qualify, you will need to be a TMC Junior Member (i.e. at least one parent or guardian will be a full member) and be aged between 14 to 16 at the time of your qualifying event.

The relevant regulations are S.7.1.9, 7.1.9.1, 7.1.9.2 and S.9.4.2, on pages 353/354 of the 2023 Motorsport UK Yearbook. Please apply by e-mail to comps@torbaymotorclub.co.uk, giving your full name, date of birth, your parent or guardian's name and the first TMC event you intend to enter.

Roy Sims, Competition Secretary



Gilbern Owners Club's Chris Jones crossed the Irish Sea in 2022 to take part in the Chris Kelly Memorial Manx Stages ... here's his account ...

My Honda-powered Gilbern Invader's first outing on a rally was definitely not meant to be the Manx, but as my son decided to take his historic Vauxhall Astra my wife said I had to go with him - but there was no way I was just going to spectate. I have never been to the Manx before, but it's definitely been on my bucket list!

The common sense approach would have been to take my historic Vauxhall Chevette HSR, as the Gilbern wasn't ready. So I thought I would set myself a challenge to give me the motivation to finish the car. So I entered the rally first - and then the work started! In addition I had an entry for the Five Clubs Wiscombe hillclimb, which put more pressure on me to ready the car. Every day after work, weekends, and in any spare hours I had, I worked flat out on the Gilbern. When I reached the point where it was ready for Wiscombe hillclimb, and the car had a Motorsport UK rally logbook, we could use the event as a 'shakedown', which I was very happy about. It wasn't quick enough to beat my brother, Mark, but to 'wind him up' I said that was because I was saving the car for the rally in three-weeks' time. So we carried on working on the car to develop it further, adding extra fuel pumps, spare wheels, jacks, a sump-guard and (lots of!) water proofing to turn it into a rally car.

A week before the rally I ran as the course car in the 'Motorkhana' to see how the car handled, which showed that the front end was 'diving' under braking – a problem we had to solve. We fitted the suspension arms with rose joints, and altered the arm angles, which solved that issue. The remaining issue was tendency to 'bottom out' over bumps and yumps – but we ran out of time and caught the ferry to the Isle of Man with that issue unresolved, and fingers crossed!

Wherever we stopped on the drive from South Wales to Liverpool, people would ask "What car is that?" and guessing would begin. We landed at 10.30 p.m. in the dark in Douglas after a smooth crossing and set off to find the signposted (!) paddock area in which to leave the cars. We were in the centre of a town with a race circuit going through it - so at this point I knew it was all real!

Thursday: Signing-on first, after which we 'recced' the stages in a standard road car, following and altering the pace notes To save the cost of taking another car, Dan Harris, and I sat in the back of my son's Skoda Octavia where we were forbidden to speak to avoid disturbing them as they revised their pace notes. This took most of the day, and scrutineering for the Gilbern followed, where the officials were intrigued on what the car was - definitely one they hadn't seen before ... but they loved the tow winch!

Friday: At the drivers briefing in the morning the organisers all seemed very relaxed. The only point of note seemed to be *"if you break down, or crash, don't block the stage"*.

The weather started to turn, with an impending storm, as we headed back to the pits to borrow wheels with expensive Michelin tyres from Mark. I'd promised that I would only use them if I ran out of rubber and was desperate. When the heavens opened with torrential rain I sent him a picture of the wheels on the car, thanking him for the sponsorship from Sporting Classic Marques for the wheels and tyres. I had a quick reply back which I can't repeat here!



Dan gave the nod that it was time to leave for the first stage – ahead of us were 2 days, day and night, 135 miles of competitive stage mileage, and something similar in road mileage. And all this with no assistance allowed other than in the service area. So, away we go with 4 stages in the early afternoon. I said to Dan, as I do on every rally – *"the goal is to reach the finish - no pressure, just keep us on the road"*. And so to the first time control, clock in, and before you know it, it's '5 – 4 – 3 – 2 – 1 – Go'!



All the nerves and worry leading up to this point are quickly forgotten, and rally concentration kicks in. The first stage - in torrential rain - went really well; we didn't catch anyone and only one caught us, so we were happy with the 1 minute intervals between each car. The best – and important - modifications I'd made were to improve the wipers and the heater. You can have all the horsepower you need, the best brakes, the

best suspension, and the best tyres ... but if you can't see where you're going they're no good to anyone! Stage 2 was cancelled when an R5 running in the top 5 took out a lamp-post!

The conditions on Stages 3 and 4 were more tricky, but driving at a reasonable pace for the road conditions meant the car behaved itself well, despite bottoming out on the bumps and big dips. The decision was taken to back right off to save the car, and reach the end of the leg. We returned to the pits where the service crew gave the car a once over and adjusted the shocks to give more stiffness in preparation for the night stages, which included repeats of the very bumpy stages.



Leaving at 7.00 p.m., we set out on a long night ahead, with another 4 stages, one 18 miles long. The first night stage went well, but we saw many cars out with mechanical issues, or crashed out due to trying too hard in the conditions. The adjustments seemed to have worked, with the car handling better on the bumps. Standing water was another hazard, convincing us that backing off slightly was a sensible policy - a local lad caught us towards the end of the 18-miler but by now I was struggling to see in the dark. I now understand why the Escorts all had six spot-lights, compared to our two! Despite our lack of experience on night-time stages, we both enjoyed rallying in the dark again, which reminded us of road rally events. We survived with no problems, and returned to service at 11.30 p.m., giving our service crew about an hour to work on the car before we all retired for the night.

Saturday: 8.30 a.m. and ready for the next full day of stages. The roads were still damp, but we fitted dry tyres, banking on having enough grip to make everything OK. Stage 1 of the day - start and quickly up to 4th gear, fast downhill and into a chicane. On the start line Dan repeatedly warned me about the end of the straight, and the chicane just around the corner but for some reason I thought it was further down the road so came into it way too fast ... cue surprise,



tyre smoke, and skid marks! The car went in several different directions, somehow missing bales, signposts and the odd marshal, and went up a grass bank. We stopped. I went to turn and pull away but it wouldn't turn and move forward. Rally over? I tried again and a traffic cone shot out of the front wheel arch, normality resumed and off we raced again with plenty of laughter in the car.

The following stages were puddly and slippery, with more and more cars stopped or damaged, making us more determined than ever to finish, driving on stages that we'd seen on TV for years. The morning stages were all good, then back to the service for checks and refuelling, and off again to the four afternoon stages.

We completed the afternoon stages without a problem, reached the finish and enjoyed the whole experience, with the car doing well to stay together on a long distance two-day event, with over 2 hours of competitive stage mileage - I was proud of the car for that!

Throughout the weekend people were coming to see the car whilst we were queuing for the start line and asking "*What is this car?*" Popular guesses were that it was some sort of Lancia, Datsun, or Honda, and most had never heard of a Gilbern. The car made the local Isle of Man paper, although I did wonder whether it was included just to put everyone's mind at rest about its true identity!

A great result – 31st overall and 2nd in class. 'Thank you' to the photographers for sharing their pictures, Marcspics, Kevin Jones, and Ben Lawrence, my navigator Dan Harris for an excellent job, slowing me down at times and helping us to reach the finish, Mark Maides and Craig Harris for servicing the car all weekend, my family, and friends for helping to build the car - and my wife for putting up with not seeing me for two months!

Chris Jones

All images courtesy of Kevin Jones.

Editor's Note: Chris and Dan can be seen in action on You Tube – watch out for car 53 at just 2 and 57 seconds, and again at 6' 06 ... <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JVho17yCNbE>.

BHP Fuel Fest ...

The ASWMC has teamed with the organisers of BHP Fuel Fest to promote a new feature, the Motorsport Paddock, at the June 11th event,. Held at Westpoint Arena, Exeter, the show attracts an exceptionally good attendance and is a great opportunity for member clubs to talk to the public about motorsport, attract new members and marshals, display competition cars and raise the profile of the sport in the South-West.

If your club would like to take a display space, please contact the paddock organiser, Colin Anderson via his e-mail, autocross@aswmc.org.uk.





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Castle Combe Racing Club - Media & Trackday

Competitors and teams gather to meet the press and test race cars.

Castle Combe Racing Club successfully previewed its 2023 racing season to the media on Saturday 18th March with a Media & Track Day, providing an opportunity for drivers and teams to test cars and meet journalists and snappers from motorsport magazines including Autosport and Motorsport News, before the season starts in earnest at Howards Day, Easter Monday April 10th.

Typical spring weather provided an ideal combination of wet and dry conditions to test chassis set-up and tyre choice at the 1.85-mile Wiltshire circuit. Cars representing the club's five resident championships - Formula Ford, GT, Saloon, Hot Hatch and Mighty Minis - ran on track in four 15-minute sessions each hour, running six times between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., allowing teams plenty of opportunities to tweak suspension and engine settings in between.



Some of the two-seater GT, saloon and Hot Hatches provided white-knuckle passenger rides to demonstrate the challenge that the circuit – based on the former WWII airfield perimeter track – presents to drivers trying to achieve the perfect lap!

For those wanting to sample Castle Combe's challenges without risking their car or no-claims bonus, Wiltshire College, resident at the circuit, provided their Caterham race simulator throughout the day, which encouraged a steady stream of aspiring - and more experienced - race drivers eager to test their skills. The quickest lap of the day was rewarded with a trophy.

Steve Billet (Spectrum O11B Formula Ford) was quick to compliment CCRC: *"Just wanted to feedback what a fantastic day the Media Day was. Good vibe in the paddock, plenty of track time, looking forward to seeing the pics/vids etc. Also, just to say the quality of the food in the Tavern was fantastic. Please pass on my thanks to all involved"*.



Also using the pre-season test day for his Formula Ford racing team was Wayne Poole, who said: *"Don't change anything for next year, leave the format of the day exactly the same, including the weather!"* Souley Motorsport, another professional FF racing team based in Stroud, Gloucestershire is operated by former competitor Brian Soule who said: *"We've enjoyed a useful and productive day testing before the season starts and like the format."*



Anniversaries being celebrated this year include 80 years since the MoD constructed the tarmac perimeter track, the Circuit's 73rd birthday in July, 25 years of Mighty Minis thrilling crowds and 70 years since Stirling Moss last raced there in October 1953. 2023 also marks the 10th anniversary of the annual Dave Allan 40-minute race for Saloon, Sports, and GT cars in memory of the popular Honda test driver who lost his life in an accident while testing a car. This year the Dave Allan race is on Monday 1st May. The Media and Track Day is now firmly established as an annual feature on Castle Combe Racing Club's sporting calendar.

Castle Combe 2023 Race Calendar:

- April 10th Howard's Day Race Meeting
- May 1st Mayday Madness Race Meeting
- June 10th/11th Summer Spectacular Race Meeting
- July 15th Carnival Race Day Race Meeting
- August 28th Combe Countdown Race Meeting
- September 23rd Autumn Classic Historic Festival
- October 7th Finals Race Day

Ken Davies ©

All images: Michael Stokes

Racing to the Front line ...

Supply & Deliver 4X4 Trucks to Ukraine

In January a motor racing themed initiative was launched by Stuart Rolt, former racing driver, entrant, and owner of the unique Ferguson P99 Climax 4x4 F1 car. Stuart was supported by his friend Nick Adams from Bath, who was the 1989 FIA C2 World Champion and who now occasionally races Stuart's 1961 Ferguson in Goodwood's Glover Trophy.



Above: Stuart Rolt's unique Ferguson P99 4WD driven at the Goodwood Revival by Nick Adams

The objective was to supply and deliver a 4X4 pick-up truck as part of a convoy to Ukraine where 4X4s are much in demand for medical and military use. This would be Stuart's third trip.



The Trustees of Castle Combe Racing Trust quickly agreed to support this worthy cause with a £500 donation and a suitable vehicle swiftly purchased for £5,315 and prepared. Eight vehicles were to be delivered in two convoys leaving on a Friday; by Sunday the convoys were just 10 miles from the Ukrainian border and Monday saw the British party take 3-hours to clear customs and drive to Lviv before driving for a couple more hours to a military outpost to hand-over the vehicles. A minibus then took the weary drivers back to the border to take a train to Krakow and their flight back to the UK.

Left: Nick Adams hands over the Mitsubishi 4X4 for the Ukrainian Humanitarian Appeal

The Ukrainian organiser said: *"A huge thank you for the generosity of those who have so promptly donated to the fundraising which has brought us up to nearly 70% of the £5,000 target."*

Some weeks later this touching message of thanks was received from someone on the front line:

"The job you did for my country is amazing. Just amazing. These 8 cars now work at multiple different parts of the frontline and are doing a really important job. Just one of these cars can support 10-15 of our heroes in difficult situations. I have heard too many stories about guys, Ukrainians, dying because their unit had no good car for evacuation. Now, because of you, some guys will be saved. For sure you save a lot of my friends. I just want to say thank you. From my name, from my family, from my country. Thank you for your support. Hope see you soon in Ukraine. Hope war will finish soon, and we will spend some time in "Lviv Croissants" in peace. Take care."

Mission successfully accomplished!

CALENDAR



RACING CLUB EVENTS 2023

- March 12th** Marshals Training Day
- March 18th** Media & Track Day introducing Racing Club Championships/series
- April 10th** Howard's Day Race Day
- May 1st** May Day Madness Race Day
- May 5th** Castle Combe Racing Trust Charity Track Day
- June 10th/11th** Summer Spectacular Race Weekend
- July 15th** Combe Carnival Race Day
- August 28th** Combe Countdown Race Day
- September 23rd** Autumn Classic Historical Racing Festival
- October 7th** Grand Finals Race Day
- November 18th** Castle Combe Racing Club 2023 Annual Awards Dinner



Check out the club website for all the latest info
www.ccracingclub.co.uk
 Follow us on **Instagram** and **Facebook**
 Contact the club info@ccracingclub.co.uk
 Office number 01249 784160

CASTLE COMBE CIRCUIT EVENTS

- April 1st** Spring Action Day
- April 22nd/23rd** Motorcycle Grand National Race Weekend
- May 13th** Performance German Day
- June 17th** Summer Action Day
- July 1st** Rally Day
- July 8th** JDM Combe
- July 29th & 30th** Motorcycle Grand National Race Weekend
- September 2nd** Forge Action Day
- October 28th** Halloween Action Day



Check out the circuit website for all the latest info
www.castlecombecircuit.co.uk | 01249 782417

2023 Championship Updates ...

TyreMarks 2023 ASWMC Hillclimb Championship

Registrations for the Hill Climb Championship are almost the same as the 2022 end-of-season total, a significant increase on the position a month ago when we were 50+ down.

The first hill climb of the season took place at Gurston Down on the 1st & 2nd April; entries for the Woolbridge Wiscombe, Werrington, Torbay and Wildlife Wiscombe events filled within minutes of opening.

TyreMarks 2023 ASWMC Sprint Championship

Registrations for the Sprint Championship are also about equal with the end-of-season 2022 total, so it's looking good registration wise.

The first sprint of the year was held at Clay Pigeon Kart track on the 19th March. Entries opened and filled quickly, as did the Abingdon Long track event. The next event is at Portreath on the 15th & 16th April; their entries filled in half an hour. This year Sprints seem to be filling almost as fast as Hill Climbs.

Some clubs, most notably those in the M4 corridor area, seem reluctant to supply me with entry opening times and regulations but then wonder why entries for their events are not as good as expected. Clubs from Bristol westwards seem to have understood what they need to do.

Roy Sims (speed@aswmc.org.uk)

2023 Classic Trial Championship

The start of the championship has been very busy with five rounds already completed. 'Recruiting' has been very good, with twice the number of registered contenders compared to previous years.

The season started with the Clee Hills on January 22nd. This is the furthest north of our trials but several contenders still ventured up in the very cold, but dry, conditions. The start location was ideal, with parking and a pub next to a garage and Travel Lodge. The trial had a good range of sections, including the famously steep 'Jenny Wind' and new last year 'Abdon Liberty', which went from a rocky and rutted track to a steep grassy slope. The trial was well received and new contenders Bob Tozer and Steve Hill joined past champion Charlie Merson as third in their class whilst Rob Holden in his BMW won his.

On February 5th the popular Cotswold Clouds ran with a full entry and many reserves. Conditions were still very dry, but the infamous 'Crooked Mustard' still presented a challenge to most, with only some of class 8 specials reaching the top. This included Stewart Green for the first time. Most competitors managed to reach the top of 'Wicked Juniper' for the first time and 'Talbots Terror' was more like a lamb this year. In fact the only muddy challenge was 'Jerry's', where the restart sorted out the class winners. Charlie won class 8, and the trial outright, and Dean Vowden (Notchback) took class 6, with Dave Haizelden and Simon Oates 2nd in class.

A week later, North Devon MC's Exmoor Trial included the infamous 'High Bray' and the run across the moor to Beggars Roost. Conditions were still dry but the sections were challenging. Karen Warren, Dave Haizelden and Steve Hill (Model A) won their respective classes and Jack Selwood won the trial outright.

On February 26th Holsworthy ran their popular Chaiman's Trophy Trial which included 'Cutcliffe Lane' and Sutcombe. Jack just beat Charlie on observed test times to win outright, Dave won the sports car class and Karen and brother Greg came second in theirs.

On March 12th the popular Torbay Trial started at the Exeter Court Hotel again, another ideal location. With Dave Haizelden and Keith Sanders in charge it was going to be challenging, with ground conditions wet and muddy, and the weather even more wet for the later classes. Simon Oates (Liege) won his class and the Trial outright, and Steve Hill and Rob Holden again won their classes. Karen Warren ran as last car to 2nd in class and now leads the championship.

Carlie Hart (classictrials@aswmc.org.uk)

2023 Autosolo Championship

We have a good entry for the 2023 championship, with seven new competitors registered, three of which already have a healthy points total. The fourth round will be held by Bath Motor Club at the very popular Kemble venue on the 16th April. Currently Phil Oliver (MX5) leads Steve Connor(Ford Puma) with Marek Wojciechowski third in his rapid Audi S1. Further down the order Chris Kent is having to work extra hard this year to keep his young son Ian behind him.

The timing hardware has been used twice so far this year and will be used again on the Bath MC event. At the Brands Hatch event, run by Sevenoaks MC, the Bluetooth link kept dropping out, we think because they were running two complete systems simultaneously. I have been working with John Clavey (Timing App Live) to try to understand the issue and have now obtained cables to remove the blue tooth connection from the system. John has modified the app to work with the cables, but this currently only works with Android 'phones. Sevenoaks MC has also purchased identical cables and will test the solution at their next event in April.

Devizes Motor club used the equipment straight after Sevenoaks MC and it worked well, without any major issues. We are still trying to work out the issues are 'finger trouble' or intermittent hardware problems.

Philip Turner (autosolo@aswmc.org.uk)

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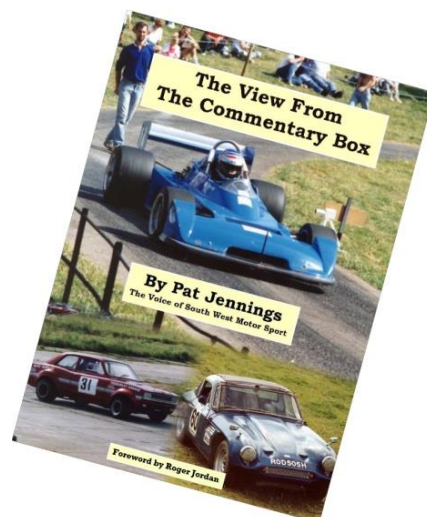
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Book Reviews ...

The View from the Commentary Box

By Pat Jennings

There will be few people in the ASWMC region who are involved in hill climbs, sprints and autocross from the early 70's to the start of the 21st century who have not heard of Pat Jennings – at least, even if they have not heard of him, they would most certainly have **heard** him. For many years he was the regular commentator at most rounds of the hillclimb series, at over sixty St Eval and Chivenor Sprints, at a huge number of autocrosses and an occasional stage rally.



In the paddock of the 1998 Werrington Park Hillclimb, the idea for a book was mooted by Pat and the late Ian Thomas – he of the very rapid Vauxhall Viva GT. Although, with some preparatory work having been done over the years, it wasn't until 2022 that the book was finally published – the end result being a hefty tome of some 333 A4 pages containing 277 driver profiles, 265 event reports, 156 photographs, 112 logos, programme covers etc., etc. Oh, and a sprinkling of anecdotes, many concerning those still actively competing today.

There are nine 9 hillclimb and sprint course descriptions, and nine major South West motor club profiles, providing the reader with a comprehensive insight into the world of grass roots motor sport in the South-West. The foreword and editing was carried out by one of the leading drivers of the day, Roger Jordan, whose Chevron single seater takes pride of place on the front cover.



The book has been marketed as ***“The first and only book on South West grassroots motorsport”*** and this must be true, because as far as I know nothing like this has ever been produced before. For everyone involved with this extremely active corner of UK motorsport in the last few decades, this book will make compulsive reading – and not just by the hundreds of people referred to within its pages.

Further details and sample pages can be found by visiting www.patjennings.com.

Copies are available from the website, on eBay and will also be on sale at selected South West events during the year.

Rupert Barker

Life on the Wilds side!

My half century-plus as a professional racing driver

By Mike Wilds with Geoff Thomas

It seems that Mike Wilds' face has been a familiar sight in motorsport forever and the versatile driver has grown into a motor racing treasure. In May 2019 I had the pleasure of interviewing Mike for *Castle Combe Talk* and he was a delight to work with - friendly, helpful, modest, and completely grounded. The opening paragraph of this interview read:

'Mark Twain coined the cliché 'Lies, damn lies and statistics' and in terms of our interviewee, the hackneyed saying only serves to confirm that these cold statistics – eight Grand Prix entered with just 3 starts – fail to do justice to the depth and success of the versatile British Driver's enduring motor racing career.'

Mike has now chronicled his fascinating life in a well-written and compelling book graphically charting the highs and lows of a stellar career in motorsport and aviation, with foreword by his good friend, five-time Le Mans winner Derek Bell MBE, whose early racing career sometimes ran parallel with his own, together with a glowing citation from former F1 driver Mark Blundell.

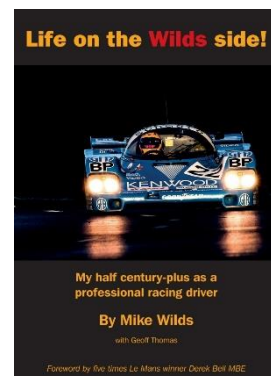
For sure, growing up in London during the swinging sixties provided plenty of opportunities which the young Wilds perceptively exploited and perhaps the earliest of these was his Saturday job washing cars at the celebrated Chequered Flag garage close to his Hammersmith home. There, despite his youth, Mike networked with many influential people in the motor racing world. This was followed by a job with Firestone's racing tyre division which got him involved in supporting international racing, whilst also starting to race himself at weekends.

Beginning in 1965 with an 1172 cc Ford-engine DRW Mk1 clubman car at Snetterton, Mike's first three races resulted in podium places before progressing through F4, FF and F3, first in an Ensign LNF-3 and then March 733 supported by Dempster Developments with a distinctive red and yellow livery.

He then raced a March 741 in F5000 for Dempster before some privateer F1 drives and testing led him into that infamous contract with enigmatic Louis Stanley to drive his recalcitrant BRM P201, but the days of many cars prequalifying for fewer places, meant just 3 race starts.



A change to the Shell Sport and British F1 series followed with more a lot more success before he swapped to world endurance racing and four happy seasons with Ecurie Ecosse C2 team, latterly with Metro 6R4 power by Austin-Rover. Although Mike's results were good, his seven attempts at Le Mans netted just one finish in the fearsome turbo Nissan R88C with Win Percy



and Allan Grice. Mike rated the Nissan as not the best but by far the quickest race car he ever drove, with 1,400bhp available – on a light-switch basis!



While all this was going on Mike was forging a successful parallel career in aviation, first on fixed wing aircraft and then helicopters where he found his forte as a skillful and intuitive charter pilot and instructor, all neatly dovetailed with hiring and selling light aircraft.

With a career spanning over 50 years, Mike is still racing as enthusiastically as ever but mostly now in historic categories. He sums-up his evergreen philosophy in the final sentence of his book: *'You don't stop racing when you get old... you get old when you stop racing!'*



Although not indexed, this is a good quality, 240-page hardback book co-written with Geoff Thomas and illustrated with a great selection of quality images. Published by Douglas Loveridge Publications the book has a cover price of £50 + £10 P&P and is limited to 400 copies so be quick!

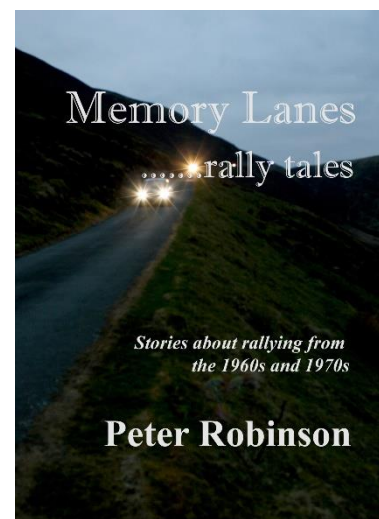
Ref: ISBN 978-1-900113-20-5 Available from: mike@mikewilds.com

Ken Davies ©

Memory Lanes ... Rally Tales

Stories about rallying from the 1960s and 1970s by Peter Robinson

The latest volume of Peter Robinson's Memory Lanes Rally Tales series has just been released and the hexad of this popular double trilogy is possibly his best so far! Providing stories about rallying from the 1960s and 1970s, Peter's latest A4 size high quality hard back provides 425 pages split into 53 fascinating chapters, each telling its own diverse rally tale and making it convenient for readers to dip in and out of the 425-page book at will. Packed with an impressive level of detail, the book also carries 570 atmospheric black and white images of cars, personalities, and places, many not seen before.

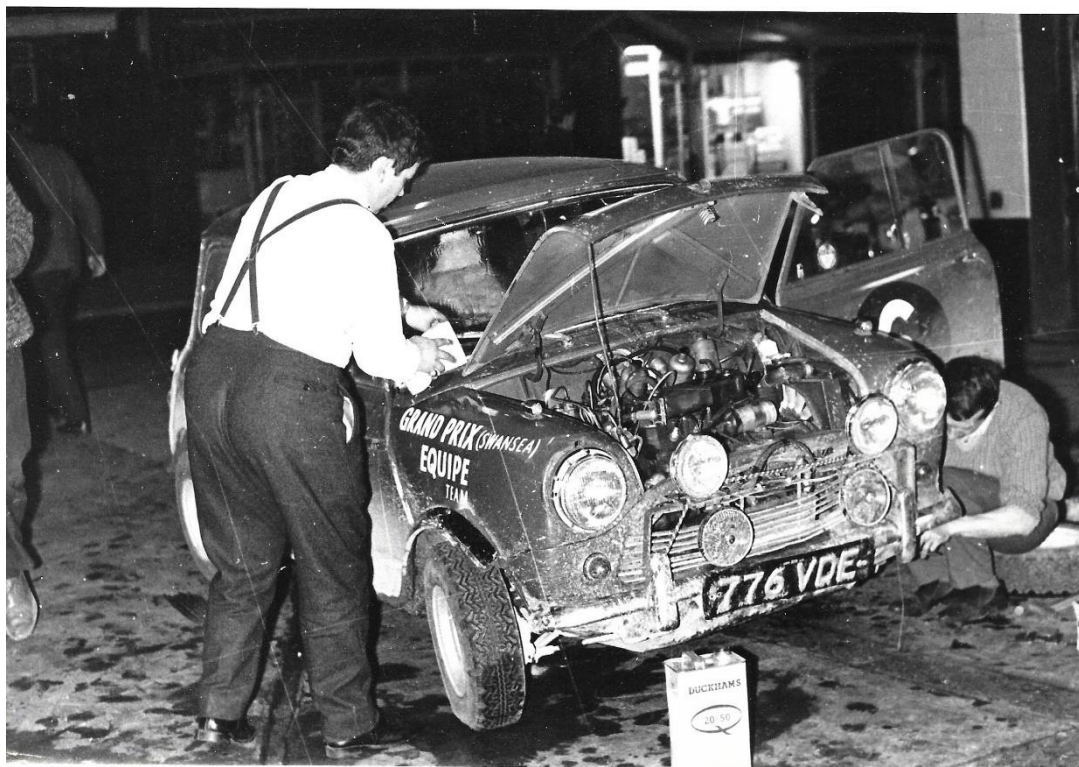


Each story captures the true spirit of that iconic era with lots of 'wing & a prayer' and 'David & Goliath' stories including, the bog standard Peugeot 504 that successfully took on and beat the daunting RAC rally, the unlikely sport of caravan rallying which perhaps mercifully enjoyed but a short life, and detailed biopics of some popular rally steeds of the period, including Healey 3000, Escort Mexico, RS 1800, MGB, Cortina, Corsair & Anglia, Clan Crusader, Datsun 240Z and the rare Messerschmitt 4-wheel bubble car!

Among star names profiled are the irrepressible Tony Fowkes, Colin Malkin, Peter Valentine, Kevin Gormley, Tony Pond, Don Barrow and Bill Gwynne who began as a successful motorcycle protagonist. Also featured are the various journalists who wrote under the famous pseudonym Verglas in Motoring News and of course Martin Holmes, an integral part of motorsport for over 60 years. John Bloxham gets a chapter, as the versatile Midlands driver with enough natural talent to take a standard Fiat 125 from the showroom, win a Motoring News rally and return it to the showroom! Cal Withers is featured too as the resourceful Winsford breakers yard proprietor and respected entrant and driver mentor.

Among the events spotlighted are the Cilwendeg, Bolton and Welsh Marches rallies together with internationals such as the Tour de France, rallying in Oman and the infamous Gulf Rally, which offered competitors – and artful dodgers – free fuel! Then there's a series of images dedicated to old school servicing and another to Classic rally clothes, featuring some well-known snappy dressers!

I'd originally intended to read only a few chapters to get the flavour of the book but on starting, I eventually hoovered up every single word, I found the contents so compelling. I even discovered two of my images taken at service in Llandrindod Wells on 1967 Rally of the Vales with Pentax and flash; Roy Fidler's Triumph 2000 on page 19 and Alun Rees's Cooper S on page 209, although the latter caption referred to Alun's stylish sponsor and team manager, Geoff Thomas, who was the genial proprietor of Grand Prix motor accessories Swansea and resplendent in white shirt and braces while checking the oil of Alun's battle scarred Mini complete while sublimely marketing the Duckhams 20/50 oil brand, for which he was an agent!



Left, Roy Fidler's Triumph 2000 at halfway service in Llandrindod Wells (page 19);

Below, Alun Rees's Cooper S also at service (page 209).

This fascinating cornucopia of rally stories has already received complimentary comments from a number of rallying luminaries, some of whom feature within its pages. This is an unmissable tome covering an iconic period in rallying history as well as being a thoroughly absorbing and entertaining read.



Self-published by Peter Robinson, the cover price is £50: ISBN 978-0-9558074-9-7

Ken Davies ©

Obituary ...

Ken Block, 1968-2023

We are sad to report that Ken Block tragically died at the age of 55 on Monday 2nd January after an accident when his snowmobile overturned on a steep uphill slope and landed on top of him. He was pronounced dead at the scene and had been riding his latest and most powerful Ski-Doo Summit X Turbo snowmobile.



Block had captivated his legions of fans for almost two decades with his exhilarating and dangerous stunts which made him a very popular internet sensation as well as being a fast and competent international rally driver. In 2005, he came to prominence as part of the Vermont Sportscar team driving a Subaru WRX STi and at the end of his first season, was awarded the Rally Car Rookie of the Year Award after finishing third overall. He then spent several years competing in various North America rallies as well as global events including the X Games and World Rally Championship, where he commendably achieved numerous podium finishes.



But it was in 2009 after filming his YouTube show Gymkhana 2 that he was propelled into TV and internet stardom, quickly growing a loyal band of committed fans enthralled by his escapades. Appearances on BBC's Top Gear, where he took presenter James May rallying across an airfield, increased his daredevil profile. In addition to his success as a rally driver,

Block loved all action sports and demonstrated his versatility by competing in motocross, skateboarding, driving UTVs, snowboarding, and snowmobiling. He incorporated all these extreme sports into his online platform, amassing over eight million Instagram followers and two million subscribers to his YouTube channel.

Perhaps a little-known indication of Ken Block's sublime versatility and potential was that his fame and superstar status was such that a decade ago F1 tyre supplier Pirelli paved the way for his participation in testing a current grand prix car, although these plans ultimately fell through.

Always a popular and accessible driver at the Goodwood Festival of Speed at which he drove, we extend our deepest sympathies to Ken's family; his wife Lucy, his three children and his many international friends and fans. RIP Ken, a true motorsport legend, enthusiast and engaging human being.

Ken Davies ©

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