

Monthly Newsletter November 2021

At a time when we should be feeling pleased with ourselves with the success of the Tamar Trial we are shocked and saddened at the news of the sudden passing of Pete Cooper, the clerk of course of the Tamar. I will let our chairman Joe Caudle take up the story.

Chairman's chat

Sadly, I must write this having recently received the news that Pete Cooper passed away on Monday 1st November.

It was my privilege to know Pete for over 40 years. When I first knew him he used to take part in and help with events when he could fit it in with his globetrotting maritime career. His commitment and enthusiasm for grass roots motorsport never changed and when he settled in Cornwall he became a very active member of our committee, including serving the club as Chairman, Health and Safety Officer and ACTC representative and regularly marshalling and officiating at events.

Pete is probably best known to many in the classic trialling world as the Clerk of Course of the Tamar Trial and has built up a strong organising team. He was particularly proud that the event was voted ACTC Trial of the Year in 2010 and I received many positive comments about the organisation and standard of the event this year.

Pete, supported by Jan has been a tower of strength over many years in Launceston and North Cornwall Motor Club. He was a true clubman and his great experience of Motor Sport, his knowledge and practical support in Health and Safety, as well as his enthusiasm will be very much missed. On behalf of the Club I would like to express sincere condolences to his widow Jan, family and friends.

Joe Caudle



OBITUARY - PETER COOPER

I am sad to report that one of my oldest motorsport friends, Club Member Peter Cooper of South Petherwin, Launceston, suddenly collapsed near his home on the evening Sunday 31st October 2021, and passed away shortly afterwards at Derriford Hospital. Our condolences go to his wife Janet.

Peter was the consummate motoring enthusiast, in fact he was enthusiastic about everything that he did in his busy life. When I first met him in 1976, he was a Merchant Navy officer, responsible for navigating oil super-tankers on the high seas. When ashore on extended periods of leave, he never missed an opportunity to compete in any event that he could with a well-travelled Hillman Imp, be-it a trial, rally or hill climb, he did them all. Later, he competed with an ex-Formula Ford 1600 Jamun in hill climbs and sprints. If he was not competing, then he was involved in the organisation of motor sport for benefit of others.

When Peter left the sea, he continued working for a period in the oil industry surveying cargo on the super-tankers, and later he specialised in safety and maritime pollution control.

Peter was one of the volunteer pit crew that supported me when I made my competition debut with my Terrapin single seater at the Whitecross Sprint in 1984, and we have always been firm friends.

He has been the Clerk of the Course for the Launceston & North Cornwall Motor Club - Tamar Trial for the past twenty-five years, and their Club Chairman and representative to the Association of Classic Trials Clubs (ACTC), until recent times. Peter and I spoke only a few days before his untimely death about the recent Tamar Trial.

Peter was a Member of Torbay Motor Club and actively supported our Trial, Autocross and Hill Climb events as a Marshal, with his customary enthusiasm, and he recently attended our Club AGM.

Peter will be sadly missed
Les Connett. Vice President LNCCMC

Now over to our Club President Robin Moore

The Ramblings of RHTM Part 7 of the Graham Paige Story

I was pleased, but not surprised to learn that XV 4512 has survived,- thank you John for your quick DVLA search ,- but I wonder where she resides ?

Incidentally, there is a Graham for sale, advertised by the Motor Shed Ltd at Bicester Heritage, listed as a 1929 615 model Sedan. I have wondered if this is the only other Graham Paige that I remember seeing very many years ago at the Lost Causes rally at Beaulieu. I remember the owner of that car telling me he was from Bridgewater, and that he knew of a Graham chassis discarded in a hedge in Somerset. (I've just looked up the one for sale at Motor Shed, it appears to have come in from Australia and will need UK registering. The car is mostly standard although it's fitted with a modern 5 speed gearbox ! Ed)

Of the history of the Graham Bro's in the manufacture of motor vehicles I have only limited knowledge, although I believe it is well documented in the States. I do know there was a complete history written and published, and of which I made enquiries some while ago. At the time I enquired the delivery charge from the U.S.A to GB was prohibitive and I declined to follow it up, perhaps I should try again.

Kenneth Ball's Motor Car Index, 1928 – 1939, published in 1964, lists Graham production models from 1931 to 1939, and Graham Paige 1929 – 1931, including models of differing horse power. All the models listed are of 6 and 8 cylinders, the straight 8 being very much in vogue during this period of motoring history.

I'm led to think that there were motor cars manufactured by the Gram Bro's, which were marketed under differing brand names and special markets targeted. When I was using my Graham Paige I well remember Bob Parsons telling me that there was a Launceston gentleman who owned a Paige Jewett in the 1920 – 30's and recalled seeing the car on the hairpin bend at "Prouts" corner.

I have a copy of the Millers Collectors Car Guide, which lists a 1925 Jewett 23/25 Two Door Sedan, having a six cylinder engine of 3,980 cc, developing 63 h. p at 2,800 rpm. The information given is of interest because it confirms the Graham Brothers diversification, and I quote.

Jewett The Jewett was one of the sturdy American cars which dominated the New Zealand car market in the 1920's. They were well sprung and with high ground clearance and handled the primitive roads better than the European models. Named after H M Jewett the president of the Paige Motor Company, the Jewett was in reality a smaller Paige sold as a make on its own. It was a popular car and more than 40,000 various models were sold.

RHTM

to be continued next month

Tamar Trial 2021-10-19

Weather conditions for the 2021 Tamar Trial were so benevolent that the organisers were concerned that the sections would prove an insufficient challenge, and everyone would get around clean.

They obviously hadn't spotted my entry...and little did they know that I would be trying as hard as I could to retain my hard-won status as the highest scorer, with the main competition coming from my friend and neighbour Merv 'the swerve' and his Honda XR400. The entry secretary clearly seems in on the joke, as he gave Merv and me consecutive entry numbers, meaning we can ride around together as a comedy double act and stop the observers going to sleep as we vie for the highest score of the day on each section. Merv's XR400 gives him a bit of an edge here, but my Gas Gas Pampera had a little trick up its sleeve to keep the comedy coming.

As ever, my problems began long before the event. A mysteriously flat front tyre ate into the time allocated for machine preparation, so I decided to 'save time' by not going to the petrol station, but scavenge pre-mix fuel from my chainsaws and strimmer instead. Not the best decision ever, as it turned out.

Flagged away by the Mayor of Launceston, with the usual serious competitors in front of us and a collection of Noddy cars and Mad Max buggies behind, Merv and I set off into the mists of the Tamar Valley. Riding in groups is not allowed, but we found ourselves in one at the Tamar bridge traffic lights. Anxious not to break the rules, we managed to overshoot the route for a while, before gathering at section one.

Here I started as I will go on with a fail...never mind, only three points, and onto the next; another fail for 12 points and a graceful fall back to the start of the section. At which point a marshal helpfully pointed out that my back tyre was getting no traction...ah, that would be because I had forgotten to let it down. Down from 12 to 6 psi and off we jolly well go to a clean on section three, followed by a four on four.

And now for the tough bit. Angel Steps, where this trial will pretty much be lost or won. There's the predictable chaos ahead: with a restart stopping most competitors. So we wait,

engines off. I go to start up, the Pampera bursts into life, then splutters and dies. Maybe it's just run onto reserve?

Maybe not.

Maybe it needs a new sparkplug?

Maybe not.

Bugger!

Carb floatbowl off, and there's a small quantity of what looks like sawdust floating around...now where did that come from?

Dunno, (well I do really) but there's a kindly spectator from the Wirral on a trials bike festooned in petrol bottles, who insists on giving me a litre of premix, and helping bump-start the bike. Ring-ding-a-ding, and we are back in business.

My helper and his mates run up the hill to watch the fun. I'm now the last bike and I can hear the Mad Max buggies helpfully polishing the last remnants of grip from already slippery rock on the section ahead of me. The longer I wait, the harder it will get. So go now.

I trickle past the queue of cars, and get flagged off. Yes, it's slippery and bumpy, but the Pampera is finding grip every time the now suitably deflated rear Pirelli touches the ground. But, what's this?

A car sliding half sideways back from the restart, that's what. NOOOOOO!

I stop. Is that a baulk?

Looking at the provisional results, apparently not. It's a seven. No matter: a restart proves tricky, and a kindly marshal shoves me onwards and upwards until I regain momentum.

After that, everything gets a good deal easier. The next section is gentle, and I clean it. Then a nine, and a bit of road work back to Launceston. The Pamp really does run onto reserve as we pass under the A30, and I divert off route to the BP station before heading to Tresmeer village hall and lunch where I am reunited with Merv and Ben, who is riding an XL185.

Lunch digested it's off to the special test at the amusingly-named hamlet of Scarsick ("Mum, I feel Scarsick"). I do really well here...then forget to stop on line C. Another disaster snatched from the jaws of victory.

No matter, the seaside beckons. It's Crackington, and another clean...is this a glimmer of competence. Not really, as we revert to norm with a six at the next section. Then there's a one, followed by an eight on a very muddy hill that proved tricky for most. I didn't fall climbing up it, but I did coming back down it!

On to the next one. It's turning into a bit of a mudlark now, and very slippery. Merv and I conspire to get Ben to go first to see where the traction is...amusingly, he finds some grip, and we see an XL185 appear on the skyline in vertical mode with Ben clinging to the bars! "That must be the grippy line," Merv observes.

Ben gets nine points for style. My turn, and I spin to halt before falling off for an eight.

The next section, I surprise myself with a three...no worse than most of the other competitors. Then on to the last. Suddenly, I'm knackered. It's a 12. Oh well.

Then a pleasant ride back to the Frog and Bucket, with the Pamp running onto reserve again. Sign off, eat more food, get an undeserved 'finishers' sticker, fill up in Launceston and home.

Congratulations to the real winners, (especially Chris Barham on his BSA C15) but I scored the most points and enjoyed myself as much as anyone so in my eyes, I'm a winner.

Can you beat my score? See you next year!

Richard Simpson

Pop up Museum Our club exhibition in the “Pop up Museum” is proving popular, lots of people are leaving positive feedback in the visitors book, the exhibition is to end on Saturday the 20th of this month so if you haven’t been yet don’t delay or you will miss it, our chairman Joe Caudle does a Wednesday afternoon stint there as a steward, but don’t let that put you off , he’s a nice chap and very informative, he also did a huge amount of the work in getting this project to reality.

Events

Our next event is the Ron Beer Sporting trial at Ashleigh , Liffon on Sunday the 21st of November, feel free to come and spectate or even marshal, a good day to be had for all.

Tailpiece

Last month you had to endure the sorry saga of the reluctant Dellow. Just after publication went out I received a new “dizzy cap” for it, fitted, deep breath and turn key, it’s ok it still didn’t start. (Actually that’s not what I said but I can’t print that). I am now wondering if there is a timing issue so I remove the cylinder head and check the timing , which is questionable, so remove distributor drive, fiddle around for an hour trying to get it in what I think is a better position and re-assemble everything, another deep breath, turn the key and hey presto – I’m lying it still refuses to run.

Ok I’ve had enough for today, lock up garage and pour a beer. The next morning I have to go in the garage to get something so I think, I’ll surprise it, turn on ignition, pull out choke, pull starter and it bursts into life sounding as sweet as it ever has, you couldn’t make it up.

All for this month J.T.

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