

Monthly Newsletter December 2021

Greetings all from a somewhat chilly Cornwall, fortunately though we have managed to escape storm Arwen as it sweeps across the northern parts of the country. Last weekend we had the Ron Beer sporting trial at Ashleigh Lifton which was a very pleasant and relaxed event. OK the entry wasn't huge but everyone was enjoying themselves with big smiles on their faces and plenty of time to chat, in fact it was very much like we expect it to be. Roland Uglow was the overall winner, John Cole won the class award and Mike Wevill gained a first class award.



In the last couple of months I have marshalled at four events and as I said earlier people are definitely enjoying getting back to participating in their chosen sport/hobby. The last 20 months have been difficult for all, being unable to get out and pursue your chosen enjoyment causes frustration and is damaging to peoples mental health often causing

depression. November is the month when men grow moustaches (known as *Movember*) in support of men's charities for cancer and for mental health which hopefully reduces the cases of suicide in men, let's face it men are not that good at talking about the things in life that hurt them, particularly mental anguishes. The Movember idea was started by two guys in a pub in Melbourne Australia in 2003 and is now a worldwide recognised charity, by 2030 it aims to reduce the number of men dying prematurely by 25%, to me it sounds like a worthy charity.

Sorry if the last paragraph seemed a little dark but sometimes these issues need to be aired, bringing things into the open is often the start to recovery.

Now over to our Club President Robin Moore

The Ramblings of RHTM The Graham Paige story Part 8

I conclude my history of the Graham story by travelling through my copy of "The History of Brooklands Motor Course 1906 – 1940" written by the late Bill Body, and published in 1957. I have been able to extract much of the racing exploits of G.L. Baker, 1931 to 1939. There are five Bakers named in the comprehensive personality index, one of which is listed with no initial, but I have reason to believe this to be G.L. Baker's father who is mentioned earlier in the narrative as having raced a 6 litre sleeve valve Minerva. It cannot be a coincidence that G.L. started his racing exploits with exactly the same make and models.

It was in the 1930's that a significant number of improvements were made to the track, also for the spectators to view the racing. At the spring meeting in the Essex Long Handicap the first mention appears regarding the Graham Paige. "The race was won by Vernon Balls Amilcar Six winning easily at 92.28 mph (last lap at 97.27 mph) ahead of the Graham Paige.

1933 brought a record entry at the Whitsun meeting when for the first time women drivers were to be allowed to race against the mere male, but in one short and one long handicap race only. The second short handicap of the August meeting held by the B.A.C.R deserves mention as Boddy quotes " Baker's 5 ½ litre Graham Paige, re handicapped 4 seconds, probably because it now had two carburettors, lapped at 95.78mph and averaged 91.51mph, winning by four fifths of a second from Hughes Frazer Nash ".

The October meeting of 1935 was held in very rough conditions with the high wind making it difficult for competitors, with Esson-Scott's 2 Litre Bugatti being blown sideways at the Vickers sheds when lapping at 123.28mph in the long handicap race, allowing Fallett to win

in his 2.7 litre Alvis at 95.51mph, comfortably clear of Baker's Graham Paige, which lapped at 105.97 mph.

The first day of August in 1938 the Race Meeting of the BARC took place in sweltering heat . Boddy records, - A big crowd sweltered in a real heat wave, but there were not many new cars in the paddock to distract attention from the ladies sartorial ventures – Boddy goes on to describe the First August Long Handicap race which attracted 20 entries and 18 starters, and which mentions the Bowler Hoffman Special, which didn't do very well on this occasion , having to be towed in. I mention this myself as this was a 4 1/2 Litre Bentley Outer Circuit car constructed by Harry Bowler and Fred Hoffman, WO Bentley Specialists whose works were under the railway arches at Alberton near Wembley. My mother's stepfather Chester Reeve worked for them for many years from the early 1920's to post World War 2 and I visited their premises quite often with my father, more of this another time.

The 1936 season opened early with the BARC meeting on March 4th when Bakers Graham Paige came second in the First Short Handicap. The Bank Holiday meeting was abandoned, the Steward deciding it too wet to be safe.

Moving in to 1938 , the 1st of August saw the BARC,- Bill Boddy noted that Bakers Graham Paige re appeared. I cannot be certain which model Baker was campaigning, but it was most likely to have been the 6 cylinder, 6 litre model, for at the Whitsun meeting of 1939, Boddy writes and I quote,- “The seven lap Locke King Trophy Handicap over the outer circuit came next , Baker old Graham Paige with four Solex carburettors, and exhaust pipes longer for cylinders two and five than the other four, led until displaced by Sumner's Jackson tuned MG.

The BARC August meeting took place with the war clouds rolling up uncomfortably fast, with tension and anxiety being uppermost in everyone's minds. The world was about to be turned upside down and changed forever, although not known at the time, the last race of the day was to be the last ever at Brooklands.

To close I quote Bill Boddy's words, “So on that August afternoon, with many thoughts elsewhere, as in 1914, Brooklands ran it's last race. Thirteen multi-coloured cars lined up for the Third August Outer- Circuit Handicap and Baker's old Graham Paige won at 99.46mph, in a magnificent finish, holding off B Burton's 2,970 cc Talbot, which had started with it, by one- fifth of a second , the Graham Paige lapped at 105.97mph the Talbot at 104.19mph.

RHTM

Lanson Hillbillies on Tour (*Goin' Fer Gold*)

Back in the early part of the year I was asked what are you doing on Oct 1/2nd and can you get time off, fancy a trip to do the Edinburgh ? Now there's a question, only one not done, see what I can do, leave it with me was my response. The answer, yes no problem Edinburgh here we come.

The week leading up to the event was well interesting, a new windscreen needed due to the bonnet flipping back over, how did this happen you ask ? Ashley Ruby , he's your person. With Darren working late most days , so lots of last minute prep on the car beforehand

Friday 1st October set off in good time to meet Rob Holden and dad at Exeter services, spirits high off we go, 2 BMW's on their way (on lorry) journey up was interesting at one stage going at a crawl, only to look out of driver's side of lorry and to see a white Scimitar with Blue lines, "morning" came the shout, a few hundred yards on and and pull in for a chat with two regular marshals/competitors Dave and Ann Robinson.

Continuing our journey we get separated from our other crew , drove past the JCB factory (what a place). Arrived at the Duke of York finish venue where we are leaving the lorry at 6pm, unloaded the car, booked into services at Tamworth for well earned rest and tea. How far away is Tamworth ? Only an hours drive, tea booked for 7.05pm , oh dear.....

Arrived at Tamworth 7.05pm to find the place booked up, tea is now on the other side a mile away. We sit down to eat at 7.15pm to be told that table was booked for 6.45pm and there's a 45 minute delay on food, oh well time for a chat with Brian Hampson who we were joining for tea.

Fed and watered we were back to our rest stop by 10pm , we needed to be at start for 12.30 so agree to meet at reception at Midnight. Luckily only a short journey to Lichfield rugby club for the start, club is just closing so no chance of a cuppa.

Allotted start time off we go, only to be told one minute before the 1st bike away that the bridge we had to cross had collapsed so follow the arrows, we saw one arrow and then got lost just like a lot of other competitors but got to our first section ok, we had now teamed up with our 3rd BMW members the Coplestones, Martyn and John.

First few hills interesting but no problem, dry night is a bonus, on to Middlemoor for the 1st timed test and we were fastest time of the three BMW's (just). On to Haydale where we had a 30 min delay, but clear it and on to the Ditch, again a clear and another at Calton after 30 min delay. The off to Duke of York breakfast stop for 45 min, in at 8.20am so we depart at 9.05am. On to Swann which was an extra special test, that was once a go kart track. Darren was champing at the bit to blast the course, which we do no problem but we

did watch a few to make sure we got it right before attempting it. Petrol situation ok so we continue to Ladder Hill, no waiting here and a clear. Then on to Hob Hay for another successful climb to be followed by Brand Top restart. We reckoned it must be easy because it was a 'O' class restart as well, we didn't bother to let the tyres down.

By now it was raining and we were at Booth Farm, if only it had been on video! The other two BM's failed, so we drop tyres to 6psi (a first) as we attempted to drive across the grass to go through gate car started sliding towards tape and poles, hang on we're going through, through up and out, yes a clear but we had taken not only the tape and poles but the tree the tape was tied to, marshals not sure if we get clear or fail, but we're happy despite the rain now pouring down .

Back to the road and not sure which way to go, we take the wrong turning so double back on ourselves, turn around only to be stuck in a queue. There was Formula 1 stock car racing on at Buxton raceway and they were all waiting to get in, with the help of Greg Warren and cooperation from the stock car guys we managed to make enough room for ourselves and fellow MCC competitors could pass. We had now lost our fellow BMW's so travelling solo , never mind we've got the route map to guide us. We arrive at Hollinsclough control wet but in good spirits only to see the other BM's leaving.

Next it's Excelsior, seen this one on You Tube so fingers crossed. We do clear it! Fuel required, one minute none, next, full tank, oh dear not good, petrol found , fuel cap off, on let air out sorted.

Clough Wood/Mine cancelled so we are able to catch up with fellow beamers, Dudwood 2 very wet & sticky so we fail this one (believed later to be cancelled). Special test another favourite for Darren, foot down go for it and we achieved a good time. Drive to Old Hall to be told by Dave M rest of sections cancelled for us so no getting to see Litton Slack. Oh well we'll just have to wait for results, so it was back to the finish and sign off , back to Tamworth for tea then home.

Arrived back at Boyton to be met by Lisa and chief marshal Zak. Ashley and myself had crashed asleep on way home, how Darren stayed awake I'll never know, and our award at the end of the event was GOLD. Forgot to say the back suspension had collapsed on the way to Tamworth. And the tune that kept going through my head (All Creatures great and Small) the original, yes I know it's set in Yorkshire but Derbyshire scenery reminded me of it.

Nigel Cowling

Chairman's Chat

Since I last wrote we are still coming to terms with losing our friend Pete Cooper. At the Ron Beer Trial there was a minutes silence and at the recent committee meeting everyone stood and drank a toast to his life.

The Ron Beer Trial was a successful event with a small but enthusiastic entry. Congratulations for a comprehensive win to Roland Uglow. Particular thanks to Mike Wevill for all the work he puts in to facilitate our Trials Formula activities.

The day after saw Mike Wevill, John Turner and Andy Prosser helping me to take down the club's centenary display in the Lawrence House Museum pop up premises. I am now working to return all items to their owners. Thank you for your patience if you have not heard from me yet, you will asap.

The last committee meeting was well attended and we were pleased to be joined by Bob Slatter, so it was combined with the postponed Tamar wash-up. That event was deemed a success with a lot of positive feedback from competitors. The assistant Clerks of Course have been well prepared by Pete and will take the reins of the event next year. It is proposed to run the Tamar Trial 2022 in memory of Peter Cooper.

Following the meeting Andrew Rippon has agreed to be the club ACTC representative, his enthusiasm, experience and knowledge has been a great asset to our committee and there is no one better for the role.

It is a privilege to Chair a committee with such commitment, breadth of knowledge and experience. Hopefully we can look forward to lots of activity and events next year, and plans are being developed to expand the social side of our club.

Joe Caudle

The funeral service of Pete Cooper will take place on Wednesday the 8th of December at 3.30pm at Bodmin Crematorium, please note family flowers only. Donations to the Cornwall Air Ambulance. After the service everyone is invited to return to the Frog & Bucket public house at South Petherwin for refreshments.

MSUK

As of 2022 the requirements for your car fire extinguishers are to change for classic trials, the new requirements are : either 2.4L AFFF or 2.0kg Dry Powder, whichever one you choose it should be accessible from the driving seat to aid your escape in the event of a fire. Many people are also carrying a Fire Stick, this hand held device is extremely effective in putting out fires.

Tailpiece

For several years now I have been a Platelet donor which necessitates me to attend Derriford Hospital every 6-8 weeks, on my journey in to the hospital last week I couldn't help noticing the very large queue of ambulances outside the A & E department waiting to off load their patients, the car park was completely full and one ambulance was having to park in the road outside. On leaving the Hospital I decided to go into Machine Mart at Embankment road in Plymouth to get my fix of all the tools and machinery I either didn't really need, couldn't afford or just didn't have space for, having made my token gesture purchase of £7.42 for a couple of small items it was back in the car and head out of town. I made my way up to Cattedown roundabout and up Tothill Road in the direction of Mutley Plain, window down in a queue of traffic doing about 25 mph with a similar queue also coming down the hill, all of a sudden my eyes focused on a strange sight hurtling down the middle of the road overtaking the traffic coming down. It was a second or two before I realised what it was, a cyclist was giving it all he could, pedalling furiously to overtake everything but with the front wheel of his bike at least two feet off the ground at the same time turning the handlebars left and right as if steering, as he shot past me loud vocal growling noises could be heard as he was also imitating an engine much as a three year old would in a pedal car, I watched in my rear view mirror as he continued down the road and couldn't help also thinking of the large queue of ambulances at the hospital, I hope he didn't come to grief because there might have been a very long wait for an ambulance to come and recover him.

J.T.

All for this month please send contributions to billjan299@gmail.com