

Monthly Newsletter May 2022

Welcome everyone to yet another fun thrilled action packed newsletter, or to look at it another way J.T. is waffling on again. We have two reports from the recent Lands End trial which was held in beautiful weather, the event was somewhat long, Richard and I spent the best part of 23 hours in the Dellow so it took a few days for our rear end's to regain normal shape, when we got out of the car at Loggans Moor it was like a competition as to who could do the best John Wayne "walk". We were both very grateful to Vivien bringing the trailer down to collect us, neither of us would have been too excited about a hour and a half drive home, but at least we got around and collected a Silver award to boot, despite that there were times when finishing was doubtful and a clutch which said "that's enough" .

Committee member Simon Oates managed to win class 7 in the Liege so he must be getting to like the car now.

Other local competitors included Dave Craddock with a Class Win; Steve Urell and Julie Williams Field Award for MC Outfits; Ian Cundy Field Award Cars; Photos below also include David Symons, Darren Ruby and Phil Hingley











ACTC Awards Evening

Jan Cooper and Nigel Cowling attended this event on behalf of the club, it was held at the Fingle Glen and Jan commented it was a very nice evening in good company and to top it off our club were awarded the Trial of The Year award for the 2021 Tamar Trial, this is now the fourth time our club has won the award, well done to all.

Forthcoming Events

Northgate Sporting Trial at Ashleigh Farm Lifton, Saturday 7th of May. This is a lovely venue and ideal for those who just want to spectate although we could as always do with some marshals. Anyone wanting to marshal please contact Mike Wevill 01566 784451. We will be back to Ashleigh again on the **19th of June for the Spry Sporting Trial.**

We recently had a very nice social get together at Launceston Golf Club. The next one is to be held at the **Launceston Steam Rally on the 28th/29th/30th of May** where the club will be having a stand, whilst we have some vehicles to display, if anyone has a suitable vehicle which they would like to show please get in touch.

Lands End Trial 2022

by Phil Hingley

I rode in the Lands End Trial in Class O on my old Triumph 500 with my friend Richard on a Suzuki DR350. Despite the perfect weather and entering the class for old codgers, beginners and unsuitable vehicles, I didn't do as well as I had hoped but I still enjoyed it.

The MCC were celebrating the 100th anniversary of their first use of Beggars Roost. My Triumph joined the celebration by failing the restart. I let the clutch out and the back wheel just spun and failed to move me forwards. I must have stopped in a hole or against a stone or something. A marshal helped get me going again.

Kipscombe was the first of several easy tarmac lanes with restarts. My brother was marshalling here, so I had a little chat with him on the start line before riding up the hill. I nearly failed the restart by stopping before the box instead of inside it. Fortunately I realised just in time and stopped correctly. It would have been very embarrassing to have failed here.

A few miles after that, my throttle cable snapped. I was carrying a spare but I had no idea whether it would fit, but had no alternative but to find out. Fortunately it did, with a bit too much free-play but it meant that I didn't have to retire from the trial. That fiddly little job took nearly an hour to do, and I was very grateful to Richard for providing illumination and for looking after tools and things for me.

After all these years, the refreshments at Sutcombe have moved from someone's kitchen to a kitchen/garage a bit further up the hill on the other side of the road. A piece of cake and a cup of tea were just as welcome as ever here.

There was a long queue at Darracott, and then the car in front of me failed, which meant there was another 20 minute wait while he was recovered. The results show that I stopped in the restart box when Class O didn't have to, so that was another fail. To be honest, I can't remember anything about it but I'm not a fan of restarts so I am a bit annoyed with myself for stopping unnecessarily. Richard also failed here – his only fault in the whole trial.

I said 'Hello' and had a little chat with Vivien T. who was manning the restart box at Treworld. (You didn't mention the hug Phil 😊)

At Bluehills, Class O have the choice of the old tarmac hill or Bluehills 2. Being Real Men, naturally we chose BH2. The hill seemed even steeper and rougher than usual and I fell off in a big way. It happened so fast that I didn't know what I had done wrong. I thought the bike was heading for the cliff edge and into the sea! The marshals picked me and the bike up and got us going again. Rich said I received a nice round of applause from the crowd all the way up the section but I was too preoccupied to notice it. This was my worst ever fail on BH2, and I've had a few!

At the finish, we signed off and got ourselves a beer and met up with our friends Matt and Peter who had done the main trial on BSAs. They had both claimed Gold Awards and I wouldn't have expected anything less from them as they are both really good riders. Afterwards I had an enjoyable ride back to Launceston in the late afternoon sunshine via my Demon Back Route which avoids most of the A30.

There was a time when I got Gold Awards in the main trial but those days are long gone. These days I just am happy just to finish. Having said that I enjoyed the trial for the most part and the weather was almost perfect. As we often say at the end of these events "There's always next year"

If you can meet with triumph and disaster both, and treat the two imposters just the same.

Amazingly, given that I am half of the Launceston and North Cornwall Motor Club's self-styled Team Incompetence, John Turner asked me if I would navigate him and his Dellow on the 2022 Land's End Trial.

Perhaps he was impressed by my status as a one-time (and it was just the one time) works navigator for the Triking factory team on the same event many decades ago, or perhaps there's no one else willing to do it given just how crippling uncomfortable his car is, especially for a lanky person like me.

Back in the pre-covid days, he asked me to do the same on the Exeter Trial. That didn't come to pass as his car destroyed its back-axle on a pre-trial shakedown. With the benefit of hindsight, that was a lucky escape for both of us as I was harbouring an intermittent heart condition that could have dropped me dead at any time.

Anyway, fast-forward three years: the Dellow's axle has been rebuilt, it's done an Exeter Trial, and the NHS was kind enough to give me a pacemaker for my 60th birthday, so all is well.

And I'm waiting at the end of our track listening to a supercharged Ford Pop engine (no, I'm not making this up, that's what's under the Dellow's bonnet) roaring its way past the farm and up the valley. I can see the yellow glow cast by the old-school Lucas headlamps before the little car that will (hopefully) carry us through the next 23 hours appears.

In I get, and off we go for a thankfully short run to Plusha Services where we are greeted by some familiar faces from the club (Hello, Nigel) and a few questions from fellow-competitors. John is taken to task for not knowing the chassis number of his car.

"I'm lucky if I can remember the registration," he quips.

His interrogator doesn't see the funny side and minces off in a huff. Oh well, never mind. Scrutineering consists of checking that the lights work, and then we are off in number order, taking the officially mandated minor roads route to Bridgewater Rugby Club and the start proper.

John pretty much knows the way, so my main concern for now is whether the little Dellow can keep the pace on the road: we have a relatively late start number and if we fall back down the field there is a real danger that the course-closing car might catch us and put us out of the event.

Fortunately, that doesn't seem to be the case. We are if anything catching the competitor in front (one of the truly nasty 'sports' cars from the last days of British Leyland), and it's a lovely clear night with just the odd bit of mist.

I have however picked up that there is a 'passage control' on the route: a couple of MCC bods in a lay-by just outside Bow. This is to ensure everyone sticks to the route, but could be easily forgotten and missed. We stop, make sure our number is taken and off we go.

All is well until we hit Bridgewater. We must follow the roadbook, and we do until we get to the bit where the road has been closed because someone is building a housing estate on it. No, I'm not making it up. We find ourselves in a dead-end of security fencing and pallets of bricks.

Our mistake?

If it is, we are not alone, an assortment of competitor cars is piling up behind us. A quick conference, lots of swearing, and we form a convoy that heads out of town on the motorway, and then back into town past the service area towards where the rugby club is. We take the opportunity to fill up with fuel before reporting for scrutineering, and then into the club to Time Control and a compulsory hour's rest. We decide to buy a cup of tea. There is a queue to pay for the tea, then a queue to get the ticket that says you paid for the tea, then a queue to get the tea itself. Well, it helps pass the time.

Halfway through our hour's rest, they decide to close the Rugby Club and everyone gets turfed out. The external alarms are on, so floodlights are flashing on and off and sirens sounding. Latecomers are still turning up thanks to the closed road, and women competitors, in particular, are not pleased to find they can't access the toilets.

This really isn't good.

Nor is the attitude of the person running the time control. The roadbook says to get signed out a few minutes prior to departure. He insists that we hang around until departure time, so we are effectively behind schedule when we leave.

Eventually, we escape the Kafkaesque nightmare that is the Rugby Club. We manage to get lost between the car park and the exit, but resist the temptation to open a section across the pitch.

The route takes us up towards the north coast, and we encounter the first section on the way: Fellons Oak.

Queuing for the section, there is little to do but look at the sky: a bright full moon and 50/50 cloud filtering the stars. It's magic.

The section itself will be easy, John says, but there is a restart. At the start, there's a big Honda Africa Twin adventure bike...does it belong to a marshal, or a competitor who has 'fallen at the first'?

The section is a moderate climb on a dryish track, but the section after the restart is rough and rutted. In the headlamps it looks like a load of branches laid across the track...I'm glad not to be on a motorbike, and I don't think that often.

We bump and crash our way to the top: one down and 12 to go!

It's a long drive on the A39 down the North Somerset coast, with the darkness meaning we see nothing of the spectacular scenery: the Dellow is waking the dead as it climbs Porlock Hill (itself a LET section before it was tarmacked) on full-boost in second gear as there are huge gaps between the ratios of its three-speed gearbox.

There's another compulsory hour's stop at Barbrook Village Hall, where we arrive in dawn's early light. The main street of the village is jammed with trials cars, and there's a forlorn Royal Enfield trials sidecar outfit parked in the garage forecourt opposite.

The time control here is operating in the same way as it was in Bridgewater: the roadbook instructions are disregarded and you have to wait for your minute to tick around at the control. But we are wise to it by now: John sits in the car in the queue and I wait for the man to tick our number off the list.

It's literally just up the road to the next section: the famous Beggars Roost, and one of just two LET sections I remember from my Triking escapade. Then, it was covered with pea-gravel that provided a traction-free zone on a compulsory restart. Today it's all lit up to celebrate a century of use as a trials section and surfaced with shale. There's a 'preferential start' for Class 2 cars like ours and no restart. The Dellow makes easy work of it, but there's a near-disaster waiting at the top where there's a kind of kerb separating the tarmac road from the shale. The front wheels just float over it, but I feel the nearside rear hit with a

smack that shakes the car to its core. Later we find a sharp dent in the wheelrim, and conclude that we were lucky to have not lost both the tyre and the wheel.

From there, it's a misty drive over Exmoor to the first timed-test at Barton Steep. The gap between the first two lines is enough to force a change up from first, but the incline is so steep it bogs the engine as second gear is engaged. No chance of a good time, but we are here to have a good time and not just record a good time so we are not disheartened.

And on we go...observed section Sutcombe includes a restart, but the Dellow takes it all in its stride. We pass a village garage in Bradworthy Wicketts where others less fortunate than us are undertaking running repairs, but we mustn't feel smug yet, as the trials gods have more challenges in store.

And on we go. Cutliff Lane is an eventful section for some ahead of us. There's a long wait while an Austin 7 is put back on its wheels and the delay is enlivened by the car in front of us backfiring and setting its airfilter alight. Luckily, there's no harm done, but it shows the fire extinguishers we all must carry are more than box-ticking and ballast.

Ahead of us, as many cars seem to be failing as succeeding. Parts of the section are very muddy, but the Dellow climbs to the top with a stunning lack of wheelspin. John confesses that he's activated the traction control: meaning he set off forgetting to release the handbrake and it stopped the wheels spinning!

I agree not to tell anyone, so you can read it here first.

And on we go, through North Devon where some of the minor roads are as rough as trials sections, to a point where the route loops back on itself to take in two sections in one wood. We manage both without drama but driving out through a farmyard at the second there is a sudden eruption of steam from the front of the Dellow.

This is a catastrophe! The fan on the Dellow is electrically driven, but looks like a metal version of a 1970s model aircraft propeller. It has somehow managed to slice a slit in the top hose, and put a convex dent in the spigot. We execute a temporary repair, using a product that John says is very good for repairing roof-flashing. We have three litres of water, but it's not enough to refill the system. Luckily, the family who run the farm are watching the event, and are only too happy to replenish our stocks of water. If the repair holds, we can finish. But it doesn't. As we head towards Bude and home territory, the water temperature gauge shoots up, and then down. This is a very bad thing, as it means the water is below the level of the temperature sensor.

We stop, and pour in more water. And carry on. And repeat. And now we have no more water. Our aim now is to survive until the time control at Wilsey Down, which will at least be a convenient place to recover the car from if we can't repair it.

It's disheartening. The car has done all the sections, I've managed to keep us on the route, and John's careful driving has seen us get back on schedule on the road after every delay. We were going to stop in Bude for fuel anyway, and elect to still do so, and I buy the car a very expensive bottle of Evian Water in the hope of flattering it to the finish. But the unsaid reality is that our chances are now less than 50 per cent.

It's a flying visit to the Widemouth Bay check, and then some very hilly roads to Crackington: our home section. We queue for Crackington in the tiny hamlet of Mineshop. There's an explosion of expensive Evian Water steam from under the bonnet. It's carnage. The roof-flashing has melted!

I tell John I'll get some more water, and I'm sure we can sort it out. But I'm not really. I'm gutted.

Clutching my bottle, I hobble down the hill towards the ford at the bottom, and narrowly avoid collision with a vision of female loveliness.

I must be hallucinating. She's wearing Daisy Duke shorts and a Kelvin Klein bikini-top, has blonde hair caressing her bare shoulders, and is sipping a can of cider.

It's been a long day. I'm short of sleep. I'm seeing things. If I blink, she'll go away.

I blink. She's still there.

"Are you OK?" she asks, her pretty face clouded with concern.

"We need some water for the car, please," I gasp.

"Hold my cider."

She presses the can into my hand. It feels slightly chill.

"You can have some if you want, but not if you are driving."

She takes the bottle and departs to the houses that line one side of the road. And then she's back, clutching the now filled bottle.

Wonderful. And even more wonderful is that her partner and his friend are in her wake, clutching tools, radiator hoses, and heavy-duty tractor hose clamps. She's dragged them away from barbeque duties to help fix the car.

Remember, this is Cornwall, home to the best 'rustic' engineers in the world. They invented deep mining. They invented the steam engine. They can fix anything. They laugh, they joke, they help us fix the car. There's more clamp than hose, but it's not going to leak again.

They get a garden hose and fill the cooling system.

Can you imagine this happening in Surrey? Nah, they'd call the police.

Our friends return to their garden barbeque with our inadequate thanks ringing in their ears, and we clean Crackington in fine style.

And on to the next speed test...it's dead flat and the lines are far enough apart for the Dellow's gearbox to not be too much of a handicap.

We arrive at Wilsey Down. The officials there have realised there's no point in keeping everyone hanging around for an hour: with over 400 entrants starting at 60 second intervals everyone has had more than enough rest queuing for sections. The planned hour stop is now 30 minutes. We had discussed finding ways to protect the hose from the fan, but it's not going to happen in half-an-hour.

So we leave, conscious that this is like the 'last lap' of the trial and feeling relatively confident that we might actually see the finish. Little do we know, but fate still has a couple of curve balls to chuck at us.

Two holding areas filter us onto Warleggan, and we are clean again!

All is good. And then I balls up.

To be fair, up until now my navigating has been confident and accurate...so much so that we often find ourselves as leader of a small pack who opt to drop behind and follow. But there's some ambiguity in the roadbook on the outskirts of Bodmin and I lead us into town. Bodmin is where Cornwall Council sends its traffic planners to die. You can't drive from one side of the town to another. It's like Oxford, only without the University.

We see other trials cars heading in all directions and opt to put the roadbook aside, head out of town and use the What Three Words reference to get to the new section of Great Grogley, which is on private land. We are still being followed.

Out of Bodmin and we stop at a crossroads. What Three Words says we should turn right, but we've turned left. John goes to restart the car...nothing. We're toast.

Our 'friends' who have been riding on our navigation for much of the event roar off down the right road. Hey, thanks for your help in our hour of need chaps, and we'll do the same for you anytime!

We push the car across the road more in hope than expectation, and unaccountably, it bump starts easily. The ammeter is showing a normal charge and we try a restart at the top of a hill. Now the car is confident that it's pointing in the right direction, it fires straight away.

No, we can't explain it otherwise either!

Great Grogley is easy, if a bit bumpy, but the drive back down to the road is quite exciting. Withielgoose is the next section, and clean again.

On our way to the final route check at Perranporth, John says "We are on for a Bronze if we finish," meaning there are just two sections to go and we are clean so far.

This is good news, but the bad news is that the final section is the notorious Blue Hills Two: it's a smasher of bikes, a stopper of cars and a breaker of dreams.

John navigates Blue Hills One easily; our car is excused the restart, but it looks like one we could tackle if we had had to. There is a restart for all classes on Blue Hills Two, but how hard can it be?

Bloody hell. Blue Hills Two is worse than I remember, or it looks on YouTube. Even the access track is tougher than most of the sections we've driven. But we get to the restart in fine style. It's hellish steep, but there's firm rock under the back wheels. We can do this! But we can't. It's too steep. If we could only get the back wheels to spin a bit, John could get the clutch home and we would claw our way up. No chance; these wheels aren't for turning. We stick. The cockpit fills with smoke, the clutch is cooked. There goes our Gold.

Frustratingly, when we roll back five metres or so and go again the Dellow leaps the rock step that stopped us in fine style and we get to the top without drama.

All we have to do then is limp the car to the finish, greet John's dear wife Viv who is there to meet us with a car trailer, eat fish and chips, and let her drive us home.

And a few days later, we get notification that we have won a Silver. It's the first thing I've won at any sport, ever, and I'm 62. It's all down to John's efforts of course in preparing and driving a fragile and elderly car about 350 miles through the night on some of Britain's toughest roads. I just held the route book and shouted at him, but, hey, someone's got to do it.

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Chairman's Chat

Since the last newsletter many of our members competed and officiated as part of the MCC Lands End Trial. There have been the usual reports of success and failures from competitors together with the usual 'might have beens'. Bill Rosten and his team are to be congratulated on another successful event. No mean feat after loss of forestry sections, holiday traffic etc don't make the job any easier.

Next month we have have agreed to support the MCC 3 Day Trial and would appreciate any offers of help to marshal sections and the lunch halt car park in Launceston. If you are available on Saturday June 25th please let us know.

