

March 2023 Newsletter

The trouble with computers is that they don't actually give you inspiration when you need it, instead you find yourself staring at a blank screen trying to work out what to write about despite various things going on which should be easy enough to report on. In reality there has been all manner of activity and more to come, last week was the very successful awards evening, this Thursday the AGM, at the end of this month the Lanson Trial, which brings me neatly to....

Calendar of Events

Thursday the 9th March Club AGM at Tresmeer Village Hall, all welcome , you don't even need to be on the committee there will be a bar and light refreshments to nibble so do come along.

Sunday the 26th of March is the Launceston Trial at Lew Woods, Nifty Nigel and the team have been working hard to put on yet another superb event, for those who want to enter the reg's are on the club website. If you aren't competing we need lots of marshals, so come and have a day out in the woods.

Friday the 7th of April is the date for the annual MCC Lands End Trial, our club will be out doing all sorts of jobs including marshalling, come and join in, it's actually very good fun and it gets you out in the fresh air (again).

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Chairman's newsletter contribution

This is my last contribution as a new Chairperson will be elected at the forthcoming AGM as after over 40 years on the committee and 2 stints as Chair it is time for me to step back. I would like to give a personal update to explain why you have not heard from me or seen me for a while. This has been a hard winter for me with the flu, a respiratory infection and 18 days of Covid that laid me low through the latter half of December through to the end of February. I am very grateful to the NHS and the vaccine programme that have enabled me to recover and avoid hospitalisation or worse. Covid is still rife and I recommend that you all take up the vaccines available as it could save you being severely ill or worse – it worked for me!

On more positive and club related matters we have just had a successful awards evening. Thanks to the hard work of Nigel Cowling, Lisa Gregory and their helpers nearly 80 people enjoyed a carvery at Trethorne followed by the presentation of an impressive array of silverware and other awards. Vice President Warin Kelly presented the awards with Nigel as MC. There was a special presentation of the Doney Cup that was provided by the MG Car Club and for many years was given for the best performance on the Tamar Trial by an MG. As the MG Car Club no longer have involvement in that event they asked for the award to be retired. The committee decided that this last time it should be presented as a thank you

to MG Car Club stalwart and for many years secretary of the meeting of the Tamar Bob Slatter to mark his retirement from that role.

Congratulations to all those whose achievements and contribution to the club were recognised. This was followed by the raffle that raised approximately £170 for the Air Ambulance – thanks to Lisa and Zak for organising it. Thanks also to Jonathan Kelly for putting together the slide show to accompany the awards and photographing each presentation.

The annual awards evening is always a good opportunity to catch up with old friends and to see people that are otherwise met clad in numerous layers of warm protective clothing, often covered in mud! It was a very pleasant social occasion.

The Launceston Classic Trial is our next event on March 26th so make sure you get your entry in asap. If you are not competing then please volunteer to marshal so that we can have another great days sport. The AGM is this Thursday March 9th so if you receive this in time all are welcome to attend, I hope to see you there or in the woods on the 26th.

Joe Caudle

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Awards evening photo gallery, please don't feel left out if your picture is not here, there were a lot of photos and I'm a bit restricted in terms of space as to how many I can show but well done to all concerned. Unfortunately, our President Robin Moore and Vice President Les Connett were both unable to be there, the club wish them well.











Above: By the look on Mike's face I think Warin has been practicing his Iron Man Grip 😊 And Special thanks to Lisa Gregory (below) and to Nifty Nigel for organising such a splendid evening!



Mr Toad and a Triple?

Simon Oates

Christmas just about over and on Boxing Day I test positive for the dreaded Covid. How can you go this far without catching it and then it appears from nowhere? The BIG question was, will I be clear in time to do the MCC Exeter Trial on Friday 6th January 2023 and the chance of my first triple?

The first completely clear test was at tea time on Friday 6th which meant it was all on and I picked Simon Riddle up from home at 10pm that evening. The forecast was disgusting and didn't inspire anyone to do 24 hrs in a trials car and consider what the poor marshals must have been thinking before going to their posts throughout the night.

The jungle drums were reporting Dick Bolt was out with a dicky clutch on his steed and Bob Blackman was having intermittent problems with the Arkley ignition system but would be spotted marshalling along the route with the 'wet rat look' like so many others throughout the event.

I'd put the roof up on the Liege to keep the worst of the weather off. I may be a bit of a girls blouse, but only the outer arm got wet and the heater (yes, I've even got one of those that sort of works) kept us relatively comfortable on our trip up to the Haynes International Motor Museum at Sparkford for the start. There were no regional starts as previously organised before touring to the start. Maybe this is the way the MCC Trials are moving?

Into the scrutineering shed only to be told that I should attach a rope to the front of the car because the scrutineer couldn't bend down far enough to see the yellow towing eye in the middle of the front axle. No comment. A quick look around the museum and many chats to fellow competitors and wishing everyone a good trial.

We clocked out of Time Control at 1.44am with no issuing of time cards (for the first time?) and away we went into the persistent rain. The roads were slippery and well covered in water and on we went through Crewkerne on to the Windwhistle Test first **Observed Test No 1** which we completed in 18.4 seconds. It's best to be safe early on as a mistake here will count as a hill failure which we don't want. From here we go on to **Underdown (1)** for the first proper section up through the trees on the lumber track and back to the A30 for 12 miles to Musbury Garage where we checked in with the Control Marshal. I waited to see that our number was written down before leaving on to the A3052 through Colyford and on to **Gatcombe Lane (2)** with a restart for all on the main trial. Bravely manned by the fluorescent marshal brigade who were looking somewhat bedraggled but enthusiastic? All cleared and on to **Normans Hump (3)** which last year I had run out of power on the hill and failed in Mr Toad's first Trial with me. Let's hope it's a bit better this year. In front now was another Liege, Thomas Hunt (131) in his beautifully built camouflage wrap car which was belching a lot of blue smoke (a driver's nightmare). Off we went up to the restart positioned on the cross track. A quick stop holding on the hydraulic handbrake and away on the drop of the flag to the top without any problem! A loop around to the right and on to **Clinton (4)** which we had no restart on this year. I always find the first corner a bit unnerving but we bumped and bounced to the top. Class 8 had a restart with minimum tyre pressures of 15psi which caused a few problems.

Back to the main road and 5 miles on to a new section **Stewarts Hill (5)** along a narrow lane to the section start and not sure what to expect. It turned out to be a **BIG** let down with little point of being included in the trial. Others may view it differently but it was over in a few seconds. A little further up the tarmac road was **Pin Hill (6)** with a restart for all. Two poor sections next to each other which don't do the Trial any favours and can't be very fulfilling for the brilliant Marshals or competitors (controversial?). I know it's at night, but it felt as they were there to fill up the hill quota.

We followed a gaggle of cars a few miles further along the minor roads and arrived at **Stretes (7)** for a wet slippery climb up through the woods. The restarts had been cancelled which helped our cause. Back along the road at the top of the section and into **Core Hill** for the second Observed Test that we completed in 19.3 seconds making sure all lines were fully crossed where needed and astride the finish line. By now the rain was easing a bit as we joined the A3072 and passed the Bowd Inn and on to the approach track to **Passaford**

Lane (8). It must be said that the track to the section was indeed a Trial in itself and far more entertaining than a few previous hills mentioned before! The section was fairly stoney and rough but cleared. On to a top up of fuel just before the breakfast stop at **Crealy Park**. They always say that the Exeter Trial only really starts after Crealy Park. Once parked up we made our way to the alternative building for our breakfast but probably should have packed waders as the pedestrian access route was well and truly flooded, another obstacle to overcome and start of the real trial! While having a break, we were told **Tilerton Steep (9)** was cancelled due to 3 foot of water in the ford before the hill. At least this meant one less restart for us to fail.

As we were leaving Crealy we saw Thomas Hunts Liege engine had finally had enough and had to bow out of the trial. Hopefully we'll see him again soon on another trial. We moved on to **Fingle Hill (10)** where the River Dart was in full flood and we waited for our turn to climb the hill. There were several people taking the atmosphere in, helped by the lull in rain from the heavens. We even took the hood down which always feels better when trialling and off up to another clear on the hill. A steady drive along the top of the hill and downstream to **Wooston Steep (11)** and a flooded access track with the Dart overflowing, haven't seen that before! We joined the queue and watched a few cars fail and return down to track. We had a restart next to a tree on the corner and eased away with little drama to clear again. Our next experience was taking the A382 towards Bovey Tracey with several sections of the road flooded and a few drivers coming the other way too fast and giving us a little shower in the car – how refreshing. Have a look on YouTube – 2023 Exeter Trial by pipinhispop (Phil Parker, Ford Escort 1600 class3, Class win and a Gold) to give you a flavour of the conditions. One thing you have to do with all this water around is to drive the car steadily with one foot on the brakes to dry the drum brakes that have been emerged in water. After doing this several times on the main roads, we were following another car approaching a roundabout at Bovey Tracey and the Liege tried pulling us towards the middle of the road when I next braked. All was fine, but easy to get a nasty surprise. Note to self – update front brakes to discs when I've got time.

We then drove to Ilsington parish Hall and signed in at the Control Desk who then said 'go whenever you want' We decided to stop and have some cake and a well-earned cup of tea before using their facilities. Well worth a mention was the brilliantly updated toilet facilities that the hall was justly proud of. I wish I'd taken a photo of them to share with you ☺☺. **Simms (12)** was calling just down the hill, so off we went to join the queue. Lots of noise and smoke and spectators coming back up the hill to Ilsington saying 'there's only been a couple get up so far' and 'you never know, you might be lucky'. George Osborn and Celia Walton were a few cars in front in the 3 wheeled Reliant and class E. They 'only' had to get to the 'A' boards to get a clear on the hill but showed true grit and determination to conquer the hill all the way to the top. There was a tyre pressure (12psi) check by a marshal at the start. His gauge said 12psi, mine said 10.5psi, so more air was put in the tyre to agree with the official gauge. I've since bought a new certified gauge which reads 1psi less than my usual gauge (would be 2.5psi different to the official Simms gauge), who knows which one is correct? We followed after a couple of failures and went away from the lower restart with good grip but could do with more power. The first bump took some momentum out of us and as we neared the top of the slab we were struggling for grip despite Simon R getting 8 strong bounces in, so I dropped the revs to look for the grip and more by luck than judgement, to car started to climb again, all the way to the top. What a relief and then the question 'should I have gone to the left more?' answer – probably. With some of the weight now off my shoulders we followed the track down to another queue at **Tiple Hill (13)** where there was only a restart for Class 8. The water was cascading down the hill where hopefully there should be loads of grip. It was stoney and rough as usual but no problems making the top. Last year the lane at the top was severely flooded due to blocked drains so the dirty water came into the car and my bouncer John had his sandwich box breached and floated away. This year the drains were cleared by an excellent crew and no floods for the ducks. We were just on our way to the next section and the skies were looking angry, so we stopped to put the roof up again. Just as well we did as the heavens opened up once again. 20 miles towards Torquay we eventually arrived at **Slippery Sam (14)** for the last section which can sometimes have a tricky restart depending where it is or how/where you stop. It turned out that the restart seemed to have been placed on a leveller part of the hill with a long box to stop in. We succeeded with the restart and cleared the hill and then made our way to the finish at The Passage House Hotel in Kingsteignton. We arrived at 14.32 which was 3 minutes after our scheduled time and in daylight. This has never happened to me before as it's normally been getting dark when we get to Simms!

There were 5 people competing for Triples during the Exeter and I am pleased to confirm that all 5 successfully had Gold medals and Triples including myself for the first time.

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Still available

Dellow Mk2 yes you still have a chance of buying yourself a fully sorted Dellow , ready to go and do some events or just enjoy as a touring car. Rebuilt 100E engine with Shorrock blower, low ratio gear box, uprated rear axle etc etc £15,750 contact the editor 07971 249783 for full specification. *Please no more time wasters.*



Tailpiece

Things have been relatively quiet in the garage, the 2CV is making steady progress, more progress when the new galvanised chassis eventually arrives but the welding to the windscreen and lower bulkhead is now all completed, even painted. Still not sure the Rover V8 engine is the way forward, but it would certainly be forward, well, give or take the braking capacity.

All for this month J.T.

Please send your contributions to billjan299@gmail.com