

## November 2023 Newsletter

Well November has come in with a bang, storm Ciarán doing its best to disrupt everything but at least the Tamar Trial has passed for another year, hopefully all our readers have come through unscathed. I was out marshalling on the Tamar at a section called Lestitha Well , a new section, Andy Prosser was on the start I was on the restart with Adrian Booth checking all was well a little further up. Some of the cars did have a bit of bother on the diversion necessitating a push from Adrian and myself, in other words we got the muddy end of the job!



Makes us look like we went off for a dirty weekend. Fortunately we got everyone through but you certainly realise how heavy a car is when you are trying to push it up hill and it can't grip .

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### **From our Chairman.**

It seems an age ago now we did a full Tamar Trial drive through in early October, when by half way round it was t-shirts only, even in an open car!

Organisation of the Tamar dominated October, however in the early part of the month we held our EGM. Nothing major in terms of seriousness but in particular, after many years there will be a small increase in membership. This will now rise to £12 from £10 for 2024 (and £2.50 for all ancillary memberships). As I'm sure you can all appreciate, we, like pretty much every part of life now face continually increasing running costs. Our aim will always be to promote grassroots motor sport for all and we are still one of the cheapest clubs to belong to so I hope that this small increase will not deter anyone from renewing or indeed joining in the new year.

On to the Tamar. There was quite a bit of new this year. New sections, new deviations, a new lunch stop and new woods. In spite of the dry conditions a few weeks before the ground by the

day was pretty damp and it proved quite a high scoring day. The highest points dropped for a solo overall win (17) I'm going to say ever (I could be proved wrong). Well done to John Reeves who was in a 3 way tie but by virtue of quicker test times. Whilst the cars had their first Class 8 overall winner for 8 years! Well done to Jack Selwood (youngest overall winner?). The sections in the woods at Horsebridge were new to us and 2 of the 4 took more points than we would have wanted off the lower car classes but now we have the lie to the land, hopefully we will be welcomed again and with lots of scope we can make adjustments and improvements here. We were all done and dusted in daylight which is one of our aims. Thank you to everyone that entered and well done to all the award winners.

I'd like to say a big thanks to our team of Nigel, Andrew and to Jan who did a fantastic job in her first year as Secretary of the event. Also thanks to all others who helped us with preparation it does make a massive difference and shows our strength in volunteers. To all landowners and the various venues and of course to everyone that marshalled, it's always a bit tense, will we have enough? But we did and thanks to everyone that turned out to help it really is appreciated, the snack packs are a little token of our appreciation (thank you Lorraine).

At the end of last month myself and Nigel travelled up to Derbyshire for the Edinburgh Trial. We met up with Simon Oates being passengered by Mark James, at the start. A fairly uneventful night run and thankfully dry, we ran in the first half dozen cars all trial which at least meant we managed to get the majority of the sections done before the heavy persistent stuff came down whilst we waited for an hour or so in a queue as the bikes went through. It was quite a tough trial for us in Class 7 with only 3 awards in our class out of the 20 or so entered and all 3 coming back to Cornwall (Simon and Mark, Rob and Elizabeth Howarth plus myself and Nigel). Mr O and Mr Toad continuing their great form, to win the overall John Tucker Peake Cup - congratulations Simon. A good event and we just about got back to our overnight accommodation in daylight.

The dark evenings are now upon us but it won't be too long before Nigel will be collaring you for the return of your trophies ready for the new year - just in case you need to dig them out for a polish....

**Simon R**

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The club's roving reporter Simon Oates has been to Derbyshire, here's his report, he's quietly chuffed with himself.

## **Edinburgh Trial 29<sup>th</sup> / 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

On the morning of Friday 29<sup>th</sup> September, I went to pull the Liege out of the garage and was greeted with an oil line down the inside of the drivers side alloy wheel. Off with the wheel and out with the half shaft, oil seal replaced, bearing seemed sound and all back together. New bouncer Mark James from 'down west' arrived at 13.30 and off we went with the car on its trailer. Hopefully no more dramas for the Edinburgh Trial. Seven hours later we arrived in Brassington at Roy and Jane Smiths beautiful house. Straps off the wheels and while reversing the car off the trailer, find the handbrake not working properly. Jack the car up and wheel and drum removed only to find a split pin missing that holds the handbrake lever to the brake shoe missing. All put back together with a bent nail and back to the ground. Didn't mother say 'less haste, more speed', of course she was right as always as I had forgotten to reassemble correctly when I did the oil seal. A further 2 hours catching up with the Smith family and off back down to Lichfield Rugby Club for the start of the Edinburgh Trial. Scrutineering completed and a 'token' given to us so that we can sign on and pick up our numbers (black sharpie cross on back of hand!). There was a party at the club downstairs where a lot of falling down water was being consumed. A few had made the mistake of going over the 'peak of pistiness' and were barely able to stand but David Hasslehoff (Knight Rider) was in attendance and having his picture taken with the revellers. Eight minutes past one came and we were away, trying to tick all the boxes and cross all the T's (so many rules in the

program to catch you out) and on to Tissington Ford (Passage Control) with a full moon lighting up the countryside. After 50 minutes we were off to the first section **Haven Hill** (1) with a minimum tyre pressure of 25psi. Bikes were having trouble already with a lot of fails (34 from 80) and a few panicked moments from the cars. Just a bit slippery and muddy on the restart in the dark. On to **Ballidon** (2) where drivers were threatened with penalties if they didn't move in 1 minute and a speed camera on the field track in case we exceeded 10mph or weren't on dipped beam!! Wow, BIG Brother rules OK! All cleared within the rules and on to **Cliff Quarry** (3) for several different restarts and routes out of the section. We were met with a flash light half way up the section to confuse (?), a restart and exit A. The section results were later cancelled. A top up of fuel and on to **Tumbletrees** (4) and a restart for 7 & 8 in the trees and moving on to **Brooks Bottom** (5) for an easy restart and again on to **Haydale** (6) and another restart. Daylight was now with us and all was well and dry with the countryside seen at its best. **Carlton** (7) called with a 'slippery when wet' restart. Luckily it was relatively dry but stopped half (6) of the X90s on the restart. Breakfast halt was next at **The Duke of York** pub who catered well for us all and filled those empty stomachs. Penalties for early or late departures and off we went to **Excelsior** (8) for the start of the real trial. We stopped right at the top of the Red restart box and just managed to pull away with a lot of sideways movement and great bouncing from Mark. We arrived at **Clough Wood** (9) to see Roy Smith (host of our accommodation) and exchanged words of wisdom. **Clough Mine** (10) next to it looked tough on the higher restart. We completed Clough Wood via Ramp A and Exit A and moved on to Clough Mine where it was Exit A and the Red restart box for us. As it turned out, there was ample grip at the restart but flexed those bouncing muscles! Relieved, we exited the complex to the left to have a go at **Old Clough Wood** (11) and a restart for us. A lot of panicking for nothing as we cleared it all. A few miles further on we arrived at **Dudwood** (12) where last year we were the only clear class 7, would we do it again? A slightly different route was proving difficult, the drizzle had also just started and we watched Simon Riddle in his Dutton Melos not quite make it to the top. We had a totally committed attempt up the first part of the hill and just managed to clear and then connected to the second part (exit B) which we also cleared. Behind me was Rob & Elizabeth Haworth in their Liege who also cleared to the top. We then moved on to the first Observed Test 1 (**Deadwood**). After we had pumped up some motor bike tyres we let rip at the first test and took 24 seconds. This then followed into Observed Test 2 (**Robin Hood**) which was longer with a chicane in the middle. I even managed to hit 2<sup>nd</sup> gear and hang the back out to complete in 25.6 secs. Second fastest combined time of the day with 40 bhp as well! We continued along the route to **Hob Hay** (13) where classes 7 & 8 had a deviation to the right through a peaty and mossy area to the finish. Cleared last year and discussed with Simon R and R & E Haworth before attempting the section. Simon Riddle and Nigel Cowling off first and were completely committed to the deviation and cleared it!! I followed and Rob Haworth behind me, all of us to the top which made us 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> class 7 cars to ever clear the section. The rain continued to build which would try us on the remaining sections. We continued to **Hollinsclough Village Hall** for a 30 minute rest stop with tea and fantastic homemade cakes. Time for the roof to go up and off to **Booth Farm** (14) to be greeted with shouting and gesticulated arms to get us to the start line. Told we were blocking the public road although we were 50m off it. Now I was blocking the start while I adjusted my tyre pressures in the rain, but that was what I was told to do! Section completed and there was a sign not to park there so I moved 30 m to the right to pump up my tyres. As I finished pumping (2 minutes), I was told I couldn't park where I was! You can't please anyone any of the time it seems despite following their instructions. We then made our way through the horrendous rain to **Corkscrew** (15) and waited for an hour for the bikes to clear the section (21 bikes failed and 28 cleared). Only 3 vehicles allowed to the section at a time. Our little convoy of myself, Simon R and Rob H. all cleared the section and agreed it was worth the wait. The last section **New Lane** (17) was cancelled so we made our way to the last section, **Litton Slack** (16). It was decided that only Class 7 & 8 cars were allowed to tackle the section. It turned out that I was the first car to attempt it. Not an ideal scenario but we had a go. Slippery and saturated after the bikes, we found grip around the 'A' boards and sped through the 'B' boards for about 20 yrds and spun to a stop. On reversing back as instructed, we landed on top of some large hidden stones in the nettles. We eventually got moving again and did the 'drive of shame' on the escape route out☺ We watched Rob & Elizabeth Haworth get slightly higher than we achieved

and then we all returned to the finish at the Duke of York pub. Truly a day of all seasons and a thoroughly enjoyable trial. Well done the MCC, a shame about the authoritarian rules within the route and final instructions, I guess it's necessary for the minority? A massive Thank You to all marshals, land owners and organisers. We ended up being the best overall car by 0.6 seconds on the special tests and winning **The John Tucker-Peake Cup**. Miracles do happen sometimes and I was there!!

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## Future Events

**Ron Beer Sporting Trial** 10<sup>th</sup> December 2023 at Ashleigh Farm , Lifton by kind permission of Paul Webber. This event is a qualifying round of the ASWMC championship. Once again we need marshals please, if you are able to spare some time please let Mike Wevill know on 01566 784451.

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Simon Oates wasn't the only one to travel north in September Richard Simpson was also allowed out to play. (with caveats).

**Down the road to come what may  
O'er the hills and far away.....**

What better possible preparation could there be for a long-distance trial than a 35-mile mountain bike ride in the Peak District the day before?

That was a question I asked myself as I prepared for the MCC's Derbyshire Daylight trial at the Duke of York campsite, having just returned from pedalling from Pomery to Cromford and back again on the High Peak Trail in the company of my loyal wife, who had agreed to celebrate our wedding anniversary by accompanying me to take part in the MCC's most northern event!

A hired van had been packed, and a borrowed caravan placed on the campsite at trial HQ at Duke of York. Having suffered from an unwise intake of two pints of Dizzy Blonde and no water the night before our mountainbike ride, I enjoyed two pints of tap water with my dinner on the eve of the trial.

This had the added bonus of making sure I was awake in plenty of time for the start the following morning!

After a being lulled to sleep by the sound of trials cars leaving the Duke of York to tackle the night sections, I was awake in plenty of time to get ready for the off. The formality of scrutineering over it was time for a healthy English breakfast cooked by the DoY's landlady (who had had all of four hours of sleep), then I was ready for the start along with six other Daylight motorcycle contestants, and a 602 cc Citroen Dyane car.

For those not in the know, the Derbyshire Daylight Trial is the wimps' version of the Edinburgh Trial (it's not in Edinburgh), covering the final 90 or so miles of the infamous all-night trial, and starting off at daybreak. To make it extra easy for us wimps, we are excused the restarts on the sections, and the route returns us to our starting-point at the Duke of York. But, apart from that, it's the same route, the same sections, and crucially, the same weather.

Ah, yes the weather! The sun had smiled upon us all day the day before, and the weather forecast suggested today might be no different. So, I decided to leave my one-piece waterproof oversuit in the van rather than lug it around with me all day. What could go wrong...far from being 'grim oop north' it was lovely. There were baby swallows in a nest at the campsite, and the farmers had been mowing hay yesterday.

We set off in swirling mist, and to be honest I was a bit apprehensive. Excelsior, the first section, had been billed as one of the toughest in the trial.

Well I suppose it might be, if you had been riding all night and had to do the restart, but the reality is that it's just a moderately steep, fairly rough, rocky hill. And the limestone of the Peak District seems to be a good deal more grippy than the polished granite of Cornwall, so I was slightly surprised to get to the section ends board without drama.

I then promptly got lost on the green lane coming out the other side, realised my mistake and retraced my steps, and met a competitor on a Honda step-though who had made the same mistake as me. Together we found our way back onto the route.

The next stop was the Clough Mine complex of sections, but I lost the route again once or twice on the way there. Back on route, I was following an outfit and another competitor on a British two-stroke...I think it may have been an AJS Stormer or a late Greeves...anyway, they both got punctures on the road within half a mile of each other. How weird is that? Avoiding any deflation situations of my own, I got to the Clough Mine complex, where again I found the fearsome reputation of the sections wasn't really reflected in reality.

What was interesting was the huge variety of motorcycles in the event...everything from big KTM twins to a battery-electric Royal Enfield Bullet, which generated massive amounts of torque and would just overwhelm its rear tyre and spin out when any throttle was applied. I managed all three sections clean, much to my amazement!

Then on to Dudwood: clean again, and on to a pair of timed special tests, one after another Deadwood (just to make sure you are paying attention) and Robin Hood (where hopefully the poor riders like me will gain something from the rich). Both tests were 'manned' by attractive young women, who seemed happy to stand outdoors all day being splattered in mud and choked with exhaust fumes as we all did our best impressions of motocross heroes (mine wasn't a very good impression).

Competitors began to bunch waiting at the next section: Hob Hay, where you leave the tarmac road and ride up over a hill. Rainclouds were beginning to gather ominously on the high peaks in the distance too. Us gentlemen waiting for shot at the section all had to turn our backs at one point as a lady competitor needed a wee, and there was no hedge or any other cover available for her!

Again, this section was quite easy. This is some kind of a personal best for me. I haven't even footed yet, let alone fallen off.

On to the lunch stop at Hollinsclough's Chapel Hall, where we are supposed to be logged in and out of a 30-minute break for refreshments. But there's no one there to do it, just some friendly ladies of the parish serving tea and cakes. I fill up with food, and clear off again. The scenery is amazing. A valley with a series of rocky outcrops in it like massive dog molars. There's a green lane, where I find a somewhat bewildered trail rider wondering why there are so many bikes about: it's his first time out on a new Honda 300. I encourage him to enter the event next year. And there's a ford, which is deeper than expected, and I win a bootfull of water!

The climb out of the valley takes leads to the next section: Booth's Farm. I realise I missed a refuelling opportunity earlier, so pass the section and pick up the main road to Buxton, where I find petrol and return.

This little detour means I've dropped further down the field than I would have liked, and the clouds are looking increasingly 'stuck' to the high peaks. Booth Farm is another surprisingly easy section, then it's back on the road towards the difficult part of the trial. Some of this route is familiar to me from 40 years ago when I enjoyed the infamous 'Buxton to Macc' road on a Moto Morini 3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> Strada during my college days in Sheffield. And yes, there's the Cat & Fiddle pub. The last time I was here, was thirty-something years ago doing a lorry photoshoot with Trucking International magazine. That day had been so clear you could see the Jodrell Bank radio-telescope far away to the west on the Cheshire Plain. No such luck today: it's grey, misty, and any desire I might have had to relive my footpeg-scraping antics on the Morini are tempered by the greasy surface and under-inflated trials tyres.

Soon we turn off the former superbike deathrun: the trial is reaching the difficult stage now. The infamous Corkscrew section.

There must be 50 bikes ahead of me in the holding area, which means trouble ahead. It's raining hard now, and having seen some YouTubes of Corkscrew, I'm painfully aware that every minute of rain is going to make it harder.

They let us forward in groups of three: the ride down to the section is steep, and I know the ride out the other side is even steeper and on a mixture of mud and rocks.

Eventually, it's my turn. I go for the wide lines, forcing the tyres into the bank on the outside of the turn. All goes well until the bit where the restart is. I don't have to do the restart, and the marshals, who are probably exhausted from picking bikes up and pushing them yet at me to keep going. But I hit a rock step wrong and spin to a stop. The marshals get me going again, but it's my first fail of the trial. I need a bit more help getting to the top further up the hill, but I get there. Given that the section is only for competent riders on suitable bikes I'm not too upset.

It's now pouring with rain, and I wish I hadn't left my oversuit in the van. But, strangely, it's not cold.

I do find myself experiencing a bit of a navigational challenge getting to the penultimate section: the route doubles back on itself, and I follow some other riders then realise they are even more lost than I am. I stop, and see two riders: one on a KTM 890 and the other a Honda 300 coming at me the other way. I tag on the back of them, and it turns out they are using an intercom and have one rider following the road and the other the route, if that makes sense.

Bonus.

They lead me to Litton Slack, the penultimate section, where we are told the final section is cancelled for motorcycles and the trial proper ends at this section, and we can find our way back to the DoY afterwards. There's a queue here. Of course there is. It's a swamp set at a rakish angle and the water is pouring down. Various riders attempt the hill, most end up in a flurry of wheelspin. It's my go, and I get a good way towards the top before spinning to a halt.

We see others try the hill with varying degrees of heroism. As a former DR350 owner I watch one of the brilliant 1990s Suzukis get all the way to the top with a mix of emotions.

Then I follow my two friends back to the DoY to sign off. The rain washes most of the mud off the Beta.

Two days later, I come down with Covid. A week later, the MCC results service informs me that I finished third in the Derbyshire Trial (out of six). It's the first trial I've done where I haven't fallen off. I even won a bronze medal, if such a thing exists in the Derbyshire Daylight trial.

Boosted by my success, I enter the Tamar Trial (which I was going to skip because of the Covid). Two sections in, I realise Covid has left me a breathless bag of bones and retire. I've gone from my first trophy to my first retirement inside of a month. That'll teach me to be big-headed!

Thanks to all the marshals and officials at both events.

And, if you are interested, here's how to clean every section on the Edinburgh, courtesy of winner Jack Kemp riding a Husqvarna 701

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eLuT3Xfy2bQ>

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## Tailpiece

I made the mistake of crossing the Tamar into Devon a couple of weeks ago, not something I normally do especially when there's a toll booth waiting at the other end I hadn't got far and I started to see strange things before me ( Specsavers came to mind) but no it was real these strange vehicles were heading west in search of the Tamar Trial I was so shocked I turned around and followed them until I got to the hill near Cargreen when they all rolled off the side of the hill, it was like Lemings in Bubblecars, once the first one went they all followed , perhaps they rolled until they reached the river and then just floated, who knows, whatever : Richard you had better watch out I reckon you have serious competition. There used to be a saying " Weebles wobble but they don't fall down" , only problem I can see is whether they have a self righting mechanism, who knows ?

All for this month J.T.

Thanks to my contributors, to contribute it's [billjan299@gmail.com](mailto:billjan299@gmail.com)

