

January 2024 Newsletter

Greetings and Happy New Year to everyone, here we go again it's our chance to repeat all the fun we had in 2023 and hopefully a little more added. I sometimes think we are extremely lucky to be able to enjoy our pastime in the way we do with all the freedom we enjoy, at a time when the world is in so much turmoil somehow we can carry on doing our own thing, enjoy it while we can. Mid December I and several others were out marshalling on the Camel Vale Classic trial, seemed like a good event, lots of happy faces and plenty of mud along with on/off rain showers, essential ingredients.

Many of us are putting the final preparations together for the MCC Exeter Trial on the 5th/6th of January, the 2cv aka Mona is about as ready as it's going to be (apart from fitting buoyancy aids) if the weather carries on as it has done it will be a wet one. Phil my passenger/navigator has been stocking up on travel sickness remedies, bouncing along in a 2cv can be somewhat compared to a small boat in a rough sea, he'll love it.

Our Chairman welcomes us to 2024

That's a wrap for 2023, my first year as Chairman of our now 103 year old club and I would like to thank each and every one of you that has supported the club and our events in any capacity. We always need entries of course to run and similarly we need landowners, marshals, organisers so it is always a big team effort.

Our only event in December was the Ron Beer at Ashleigh. With the wet autumn conditions were tricky but with a small team of marshals it seemed to run well and all smiles at the end.

With the new year upon us the annual subscriptions become due, your membership fees go directly into helping us maintain events, equipment, our website and all the bits and pieces needed to keep us functioning. The event entry fees themselves are more the direct costs of those events (which like most things creep up year on year) such as permit fees, toilet hire, land expenses etc. Memberships are easy to renew or indeed join, on our website, it would be great if we could get plenty of early sign ups.

Our first event of 2024 will be our awards night scheduled towards the end of February. Details to be confirmed early in the new year but these have been very well supported in recent years so I'm sure will follow a similar format.

A happy new year to all and if you have any ideas or feedback on anything we do as a club we'll be very pleased to hear from you.

Simon R

Our travelling reporter Simon Oates brings us up to date on what he's been up to.

The Camel Classic Sunday 3rd December 2023

A cold crisp morning and a start from the Borough Arms at 9.58am, so a bit of a lie in. Nigel Cowling was wrapped up warm and raring to go as last minute wing man. It all started with Hustyn (1) which was already stopping a lot of cars due to it being wet and muddy with loose stone. Just in front on the hill was Nick and Ben Symons in their gorgeous and powerful gold Singer Chamois having trouble with fuelling problems with the engine. They'll get it running well soon and be serious threats next years' championship I think. As soon as we started up the hill, I knew I'd forgotten something. I eased off a little early at the summit and lost momentum and stopped on the 1. Embarrassingly we reversed down. I'd forgotten to re adjust the coil over damping (I soften them off for road use and had forgotten to tighten them for the first section) and on to the next hill, Chestnut Rise (2).

Straight up a rutted and rooted hill to the 5. No better than last year and on reversing down, stuck the exhaust tip into a tree stump that stopped us in a millisecond. Nigel jumped out, which was enough to lift the car and get us back down the hill. The two Dean's, Partington and Vowden were the only clear cars (both Class 8). Battered, bent and dented, we moved to Mine Shaft (3a) and another blast to the top of a steep slippery bank in the trees. Jab & Left Hook (4) followed with a sneaky restart in the middle of the left hook which caught many out. A trip on the tracks down to Pump House Climb (5) where we watched several blasts up the hill until Paul Watson in his Golf powered Imp reversed with zest (lost a gear?) on to some logs and a steep precipice to a stream. Drive to the wheels was lost and beached like a whale, everyone jumped into action, stabilising the car. Strap attached to the front which was then attached to Darren Rubys' BMW and off he tried to go with rooster tails of mud over the front of the Imp. 3 or 4 volunteers were pushing in that area, but only room for 3 to find shelter! Poor Ashley Ruby didn't stand a chance. I'm sure it's on video somewhere ready for £250 from "You've been framed"?

Once the car was cleared, we only managed a 3 on the hill. This then led on to Pheasant Pluckers Son (6) where we were met with a higher start for classes 7 and 8. Well the higher start line presented a problem as it had been set up in the dry and some of the class7 cars couldn't even get to the start line, even when coming from below the line. All of class 7 only managed a 12. Class 8 fared slightly better as they bit through the surface and 7 (out of 22) cleared the section which shows the difference between classes 7 and 8. On through the woods to the first Observed Test 1 in the woods and a reasonable time of 15.41 seconds. Back to the roads and on towards Bodmin Station and Penkester Woods. Under the viaduct and arrowed to Penkester 1 (7) we managed to get to the 6, not far past the restart for class 8. How the class 8 cars cleared the restart I'll never know, but we couldn't get any further!

Along a track to the next section, Penkeastle 2 (8) where we watched Phil Thomas and "Father" attempt the start where 'snick' the half shaft snapped.

The car didn't move forward, so did he attempt the section? Greg Warren (marshal) said he did, otherwise the half shaft wouldn't have broken. Fair comment, we could argue the point, but Greg was right! A great opportunity to gain points on Phil here then. I took the start too casually as I didn't recognise any real problems off the line. The car just sat there and eventually crept up to the 11. What a cock up. I suddenly remembered last year the restart was where the start was this year and I didn't get off the restart, serves me right!! As we passed Phil and father, they had already got the broken half shaft out and were unpacking a new one to fit, I think they've done this before. On to the queue for Clinnick (9) where we failed to clear and scored a 3. Phil and father in their now running Melos plus Joe & Gary Browning in their Baja cleared the hill in class 7. Four class 8 cars cleared the hill even with a restart – respect. Back under the viaduct towards Cardinham and in to Laneskin Woods to Where there's a hedge (10a) with a restart and 2 points dropped. Laneskin (11) again had a restart which we successfully cleared but still dropped a point. The last one in the woods was Anthill (12) which was cleared and without a restart. We were then back on the roads to the final Observed Test 2 at Helligan. An anti-clockwise dash around some cones done without hitting any in 13.65 was ok. This then led to Helligan 1 (13) which was looking very slippery. Keeping it as straight as I could we managed a 5. On to the queue to the last section of the day Helligan Zero (14).

I heard that some of the bikes had got to the top, but cars were struggling to get up the last bank where class 8 had a restart. We gave it a go, but didn't climb the bank and dropped 7 points. In summary, this truly was a hard trial with grip hard to come by. Several sections were blind sections which had to be reversed down which isn't always ideal. Thoroughly enjoyed the day run by a brilliant club and fantastic marshals.





Simon's Summary of 2 years of ownership of Mr Toad The first trial was the MCC Exeter 2022 with cross ply tyres all round and an underpowered engine that hadn't been used in anger by me yet. It all started poorly with 5 hills failed mostly because of the engine dying on the steep hill gradients. I tried to increase tyre pressures so that the wheels slipped and the engine couldn't lose power with limited effect. I was heard to say at Ilslington just before Simms 'the bloody things no good and couldn't pull the skin off a rice pudding' with a few choice expletives thrown in as well.

A week after the trial I went to Mark Shillaber owner of SRD on Newport Industrial Estate and had a short session on his rolling road where he managed to extract a further 10bhp to a staggering 40bhp, 29% of what I was used to(140bhp) in Torum, my previous other car. I carried on with the same cross ply tyres to manage a 4th in Class 7 on the next trial to also find the engine power cutting out mid-section a few times. It was progress which was further continued to a 3rd in class on the next trial and the addition of radial tyres (Michelin Taxi) on the back. I was starting to understand how the car worked and next did the MCC Lands End Trial 2022 where the car kept power to the end and won a Gold Medal and class 7 win!! On a high we competed in the Torbay trial and had a few engine power cuts but still managed 2nd in class.

The Exmoor Clouds was the first winter trial where we managed to split the rear axle tube which we then held together with ratchet straps and retired to the trailer park. To this date, that was the only trial where I have had to retire because of mechanical failure! (30 trials entered). Two weeks later after drastic strengthening of the axle casing, improved internal gear structure and the addition of 175/80/15 Yokohama Geolandars, we managed another class 7 win in the MCC Edinburgh Trial. A massive improvement in grip at the rear. The Tamar Trial followed with another class 7 win. The Camel Vale Presidents was next where I turned the car over and retired after 2 more sections (the adrenalin soon disappeared). This caused another mod to the car of the addition of a hydraulic handbrake. On to the Allen for 2nd overall and 1st in class 7 and finally in 2022, the Camel Classic with another class 7 success. Results for the 13 trials entered in 2022 were: Class 7 wins – 6. 2nd – 1, 3rd –1, 4th – 1, unclassified – 2 and retired – 2.

I decided to enter the ACTC and ASWMC championships for the first time in 2023 because of half decent results at the end of 2022. I had 4 months of chronic back pain and sciatica in my left leg which wasn't the best way to start the year. The MCC Exeter returned another class win and my 1st Triple. Cotswold Clouds and North Devon Exmoor trial yielded two class 7 2nd s. Next was the Torbay where I lost power on a few hills, thought I hadn't done very well, bought a supercharger for the car, only to find I was 1st class 7 and the overall winner of the trial. I was gobsmacked!! Andy Prosser drove the car in the Launceston Trial to a 2nd in class (first time he had ever driven the car).

The MCC 99th Lands End Trial again ended with another gold and class 7 win. Various people drove the car in the next 4 events with varying success but always with a big (surprised?) smile. The Minehead Exmoor Clouds yielded a 2nd overall and 2nd in class 7.

I visited the Stroud Mechanics trial in dry conditions for the first time to a 3rd in class. The MCC Edinburgh again was another gold, class win and overall win. A week later we did the Ross Kyrle Trial for the first time to another class win, getting to be a bit of a theme. The last three trials of 2023 were the Tamar, Allen and Camel Classic

where my form seemed to desert me with 2nd in class for all three. The results for the 13 trials I drove in 2023 were Class 7 wins – 5, 2nd – 7, 3rd – 1 including 2 overall trial wins, much more than I could possibly have expected. Over the two years the car has entered 30 trials, 26 driven by me. It has broken down once and not finished once but was still driven home to be straightened out, modified and ready for the next trial three weeks later. The last 5 consecutive MCC trials, the car has managed to win class 7 on all occasions, so no pressure in the Exeter on 7th January 2024!!

The car is meant to be the first road registered production car out of the factory. How different is the car to a standard Liege? I've raised the windscreen 2" and fitted bucket seats, added a heater that works (sort of). The rear wings have been widened to accommodate wider tyres but keeping the original profile. There's a Suzuki 3 cylinder G10A engine, Jimny gearbox and Super Carry 5.125:1 back axle (all allowed in the class 7 regulations) instead of original Reliant Kitten parts. Standard suspension and brakes with a mixture of Protech coilovers at the front and Gaz at the rear with 15.5" x 90 lbs springs at the rear (probably need stronger). A hydraulic handbrake, 4" x 15 steel wheels are used for trialing although the original 16" Liege alloy wheels are used when not trialing for pottering around. The original alloys are so nice, I just don't want to chip or buckle them on trials. There are classic mini wheel spacers' front and rear to aid steering lock and keep the front and rear wheels in line with each other. The Yokohama Geolander tyres on the back have made a big improvement to the grip and I run all radial tyres without inner tubes down to 4 psi on sections without any punctures so far (kiss of death). I have been doing this for over 3 years so far without incident. I have added 25 kg of weight between the spare wheels 4 times and not really seen a big increase in grip.

The steering isn't as direct in my opinion with the weight added. Nothing to hide and all information available to anyone that wants it. It's important to know your car and use it regularly and have faith in the car on sections, trusting that it will go where you want it to go and sometimes pull you out of situations that you shouldn't be in. It's a very direct and forgiving car often making the driver look better than they really are! It's important to give the car a really good check over both before and after events. Will I ever add the supercharger that's sitting in the garage to get the power above 40bhp? It's doing well as it is, but if I put more weights in the back to improve grip, it will need more power from somewhere. Clearly the original concept and design by Peter Davis as a 'lightweight two seater sporting and competition car for the enthusiast' was bang on the money in my opinion.

Simon Oates.

The Ron Beer Sporting Trial

Our last trial of the year was held at Ashleigh Lifton on 10th December. This trial was the last round of the ASWMC Championship but the positions had already been decided with Thomas Bricknell being the clear winner. This meant the Gloucester contingent, apart from John Cole, did not travel leaving an entry of only seven providing a friendly trial that is just about viable.

The site had been checked several times in the week leading up to the trial because of the constant rain but fortunately the drainage is good and things looked OK.

Three old codgers & one approaching that status met to lay out the sections in glorious weather on the Saturday morning. It was reminiscent of scenes from "Last of the Summer Wine"; I will leave it to your imagination to match the characters. Three familiar hills were laid out in the woods; three new hills out in the field. Overnight there was heavy rain which just petered out by the time of the start of the trial. 3 PSI tyre pressure was decided & off we went to do 3 hills in the woods 4 times. There wasn't much grip, one could be caught out anywhere. It was soon apparent that Jerome Fack was in a class of his own on the day; he led comfortably at lunchtime. John Cole, Alan Murton & myself were all within 4 points of each other but 16 behind Jerome.

During the leisurely lunch break Ann Cole generously provided festive mince pies for all. Suitably fortified, we set off to tackle the 3 hills in the field 4 times. I started off with great expectations, with a fine trickle, by clearing section 5 which involved a set of difficult ruts over virgin grass the surfaces soon cut up and it was all downhill from thereon. Jerome continued to show us the way and consolidated his lead. There were good climbs right across the entry. It was good to see Stewart Stamp out in his newly liveried Hamilton & first time out Steve Pritchett should have been pleased with his 3 clears. When the scoresheets were added Jerome Fack was the clear winner on 46. John Cole pipped Alan Murton by just one point to win the Blue class on 83 with the rest further behind.

The weather held out & there was bright sunshine in the afternoon. I know I am bias but I thought we had a really good trial & hope it was enjoyed by everyone involved. I must admit I was quite knackered after unloading; I slept soundly that night.

Thanks to the Landowner, Warin for acting as COC, & the small band of Marshalls. My special thanks to Andy Beveridge for stepping in at the very last minute to passenger for me after Nigel dropped out with flu (a bit of a come down from bouncing for Thomas B)

Mike Wevill





Thanks to Andy Prosser for photos of Ron Beer Trial

AWARDS

Nigel Cowling has asked me to remind all award winners from last year to please return their awards to him, the awards evening is looming (date to be confirmed, probably early March?) and he needs to get them sorted and engraved so as to be ready for the new recipients. If you need to contact Nigel please ring him on 07902 542798.

Success in the Landscapes Review

Some great news to start the year.

You might remember that back in the Spring of 2022 we encouraged everyone involved with the club to take part in the Government's Landscape Review Consultation, which contained a not very subtly-disguised attempt to get motor vehicles banned from using unsurfaced roads and byways in the countryside.

Most significantly, it asked: Should we legislate to restrict the use of motor vehicles on unsealed unclassified roads for recreational use, subject to appropriate exemptions? As a club we decided that the appropriate response to this question was: "Local authorities already have regulatory powers to restrict motor use where there is a legitimate reason to

do so (while a route is being maintained, for example) so there is no need for more legislation from a Government that is supposed to be 'deregulating' where possible." And we asked people to make this point when taking part in the consultation. Incredibly, it seems that for once the Government actually listened to reasoned argument on this topic.

The Government's response reads: "The consultation shows many people feel strongly about protecting green lanes, but it did not identify clear support for removing vehicular rights. Therefore, we will not proceed with this proposal. We believe that the current Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) process is legally robust enough to protect green lanes with carefully targeted local action to protect sensitive areas while allowing vehicle users to responsibly enjoy the countryside."

This was exactly the point that we had made. On a more local level, a green lane in Derbyshire was recently saved from an attempt by two women to downgrade it to Bridleway at a Public Inquiry by evidence from the Long Distance Trials community. The Government Inspector was swayed to the view that vehicular rights existed on the route because it had been used by hundreds of drivers and riders on two occasions as part of the MCC's Edinburgh Trial. The MCC had informed locals, the parish council, the country council and the police that the route of the trial would take in this public road, and no objection had been raised. This established that the route had been used without stealth, permission or objection, and vehicular rights were therefore conclusively established. This indicates the importance of archiving route-books and entry lists, together with supporting photography.

Congratulations to all who joined in the efforts to save our green lane and trials heritage.

We will keep you posted when more effort is required, because we can be sure that it will be!

Richard Simpson



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YEAR 2024 EVENTS CALENDAR

Name	Location	Date	Status
Awards Evening	TBA	23-02-24	
AGM	<u>Fox & Grapes</u>	07-03-24	
Launceston Trial Classic	Lewdown Area	03-03-24	C
Northgate Sporting Trial ASWMC Round	Ashleigh, Lifton	18-05-24	C
Carr Cup Testing Trial	TBA	09-06-24	C
Spry Sporting Trial ASWMC Round	Broadwood	15-06-24	C
Motor Traders Car Trial ASWMC Round	Waterloo Farm, North Petherwin	07-07-24	C
Invitation Testing Production Trial	Trevilla Marshgate	18-08-24	C
David Ayers Sporting Trial MS UK, ASWMC & BTRDA Round	Trevilla Farm, Marshgate	08-09-24	C
Tamar Classic Trial ASWMC & ACTC Round	East Cornwall & West Devon	20-10-24	C
Ron Beer Sporting Trial Aswmc Round	Ashleigh, Lifton	15-12-24	C

Tailpiece

The photo below which has been doing the rounds in Facebook is taken in Western Road, Launceston, cars lined up are taking part in the 1930 Lands End Trial, presumably a lunch stop on a somewhat rainy day. I've also seen the photo in colour but in some ways it seems nicer in black & white, maybe because colour was unusual in the thirties. One thing that is

very striking is the lack of visibility from inside the cockpit of the average sporting car, once squeezed in with passenger the driver has very little forward or sideways visibility, no wonder it's more likely to see old trials photos with the hood down whatever the weather.

I tried going on to the DVLA website and doing a vehicle check to see if any of the cars were still listed but alas no, probably stored away in someone's private collection.

All for this month, please keep the contributions coming in billjan299@gmail.com J.T.

