

March 2024 Newsletter

Hard to believe a month has passed and we're now in March, I'm still getting over Christmas, who says I live in the past. The month of February is a funny old time for the club, seemingly not a lot happening but in reality a lot is going on if only in the planning.

Awards Evening

Nigel had been working overtime to make sure the annual awards evening would go to plan, it was a full house at Trethorne,. as you can see in the photos a large table of awards was beautifully laid out awaiting the freshly spruced up recipients (amazing how splendid they all looked) after a very nice two course meal it was down to Nigel and club President Warin Kelly to bring everyone to order and hand out the awards.

A selection of the winner's photos below but a full batch of all the winners are on the club Facebook page.









From our Chairman

A generally quiet spell of club activities came back in to life last Friday, with the start of a busy couple of weeks, with our awards evening.

A fantastic attendance at Trethorne, with a two course carvery followed by Nigel's presentation of the 2023 awards and then an hour or two of socialising. It was great to see our youngest members right through to our oldest there. Thank you to Lisa for taking the bookings and sorting the money side on the night along with her assistant Lorraine. The raffle raised over £150 for the air ambulance.

Extended thanks to Warin and Nigel for sorting the awards and the engraving. Furthermore to Nigel for MC'ing the night as well. Again the arranging of it all is a task not to be underestimated. Our new cameraman Mr Turner too with his snappy lense, I'm waiting for the selfie with Warin to go viral! Thank you to everyone that came and made it a very enjoyable evening. I hope you all enjoyed the evening and the opportunity to chat amongst like minded people.

This Sunday is the Launceston Trial at Lew Woods, once again by kind permission of Peter Newman who has been allowing the club to use his land for well over 40 years. We have an excellent entry of 62 at the time of writing. Of course offers to

marshal will never be turned down so if you're not competing but fancy a day out on Sunday you'll be more than welcome. The popular Proper Ansome catering are in attendance. We plan 22 sections for the bikes and 18 for the cars (slightly conditions dependent).

There's no respite, as on Thursday 7th we have the AGM at the Fox & Grapes. They have been very welcoming to us since we have started to use them as a base for meetings so if you have an interest in our events then please feel free to come along, a 7pm start.

Finally for this month from me - from a club perspective it's great to see so many active competitors of all ages in our membership now. I remember a few years ago, you'd look through an entry list on a classic trial and at best one or two of us would have Launceston down as their club. Now when I scan through the list there is noticeably a significant number more which is brilliant, so hopefully we are doing something right and appealing to all with our events. Long may it continue and remember we are more than open to suggestions for events or activities from any of our members.

Hope to see many of you on Sunday, where our new gazebo should be making its debut!

Simon R

Annual general Meeting

As Simon has just mentioned next Thursday March the 7th is the all important club meeting, the chance to have your say in what the club does and how it does it, and **who does it**. The Fox and Grapes Lifton, for those who want to make an evening of it there is food available, if you can't find us ask at the bar as they may well have put us in their hall next door.

Whilst on the subject all jobs on the committee are up for grabs, including the Editor's job so if you think you might like to try your hand at the newsletter don't be shy, obviously it should be someone with good IT skills and with a reasonable command of the English language (there's always Spellcheck) and also be prepared to get out and monitor some of our events so that there is something to report on, a *chance of stardom*, perhaps I'm overselling it slightly.

Forthcoming Events

Sunday the 3rd of March

Launceston trial, the entry list is pretty much full but you could still have a great day marshalling, Nigel would love to hear from you 07902 542798.

Simon Oates has been allowed to travel a little further.

Exmoor Trial Sunday 11th February 2024

Nigel Cowling agreed to bounce for the day instead of marshalling which sometimes makes the driver feel a little guilty as there was a late shout out for marshals for the trial due to illness. They eventually mustered enough willing bodies from up to 200 miles away (thank you all 😊) to keep all the sections running. As we drove up in the morning and crossed Bideford Bridge, we were aware of the Spring tide and only about 2ft before the tide would touch the top of the bridge arches and it was still coming in. The forecast was variable and wet all the way up to the start at Porte Farm. Too wet to park cars, vans or trailers in the field, so we were distributed around the yards and buildings and unloaded, scrutineered and signed on for a day's fun. With the car off the trailer, I decided to put the roof up to keep the worst of the rain off the occupants and let the tyre down to 8 psi. Running as 45, we started at 8.45 and on to **Porte Farm 1 (1)** with a sharp left into the section and up a slippery track. On the corner I didn't judge it well and was pushed wide hitting one of the markers and then struggling to the top slipping the clutch to keep moving all the way. Did the marker count? I didn't see anything in the regulations so assumed it was OK.

I think the ACTC rules for 2024 says markers don't count unless the regulations state otherwise. I'll put my neck out and say that I think it should be the other way around with all markers counting unless stated otherwise. If they don't count it could be tempting for some competitors to knock them over if you can get an advantage on a section and that could be all the markers without any penalty! One section over and I'm controversial already. Next section **Porte Farm 2 (2)** was further along the ground with a restart for most classes. Up a slippery bank and off the restart with little problem. Looping around the same tracks, we made our way to **Porte Farm 3 (3)** with a restart only for class 8. Only 4 of the 12 class 8 cars cleared the hill and some didn't get to the restart. When our turn came I just gunned right towards the hill and bounced off the left bank back into the hill, struggled through the first bit with clutch being ridden and then managed to keep going through the restart markers to the top.

Quite relieved to get there which no other class 7 car managed on the day. Tyres pumped up to 14psi for the road and off to **Loxhore Cott (4)** which was a sunken track and bridleway which only stopped one bike at the start. We also took the opportunity of taking the roof down as the weather improved. Once through the section we waited for Alex Gray in his Fugitive to try and keep the class 8 cars in front. He was having trouble with the engine and kept fettling it throughout the day but managed to complete the trial with a creditable 11th overall for a novice. Further up the road just before **Becotts Lane (7)**, they had to stop again and insisted we all carried on. Tom Walker in the class 8 Liege stayed and helped (Stroud Team mates), both continuing but mixed in with class 6. The section was potentially tricky especially for the bikes but all cars got up.

On through the lanes to the woods and **Stoodleigh Stream (8)** where I rolled back on the restart last year. No such problems this year and around the tight right bend

to the finish. Following the track through the woods (well actually most of the woods has been clear felled) and on to **Stoodleigh Steep (10)** and a lower restart which we cleared with more riding of the clutch to the top, to then reverse down and out to the next hill **Clockhay Climb (11)**. A quick blatt up the section which all class 7 & 8 cleared. At this point we were unbelievably still clear (along with 4 class 8 cars), the sun was trying to shine and a couple of kites decided to show off in the sky. We made our way across country to South Molton and a refuel at Rogers Garage (pasty, drink and some mini eggs for dessert). The stop here gave time for a good old chitter and an opportunity for some of the morning marshals to move to the afternoon sections for us to continue playing in the mud. To the next section **Holdridge Hell (12)** which had a tricky lower restart for class 8, up a muddy bank with tree roots thrown in. Four class 8 cars were successful, so well done Paul Merson, Tom Walker, Thomas Jones & Jack Selwood.

The higher restart was failed by us due to a tree root just at the wrong place, but there was one exceptional result by Dave Haizelden (class5) in his Scimitar who completed the restart. We watched and listened to the class 8 cars on the next hill **Holdridge Hill (13)** which was pure clay. None got higher than a 6, so I thought I'd drop to 4psi and blast the hill. "What happened was", not a lot. The car just refused to rev and pull, maybe because of too much grip and not enough power but we managed to struggle to the 8. The tyres were then pumped to 14psi for the road and on to **High Bray (14)**. Last year we managed to clear the restart after a late stop (didn't see the R markers) so it shouldn't be a problem. WRONG, rough as rats to the restart that was lower down the hill. I should have stopped on the right but kept high to the left and no matter how much Duracell bouncing Nigel did, we were stuck good and proper. Having failed we dropped back a few inches and drove off up the hill, but it wasn't over yet. After 15 to 20 yds, I managed to hit one of the rocks so hard that the drivers front tyre lost air straight away (I could put my thumb straight through the side wall) but we continued through the section for about half a mile until we found somewhere safe for cars to pass and relatively flat.

That is the first puncture in the Liege in 33 trials and I don't think an inner tube would have saved us. The front tyre was on 12 psi which is pretty standard for the road in this car. Since I have been adding weight (64kg this week) over the back wheels this year (3 trials), I've buckled two wheels badly and now a puncture, I guess it's got to be expected! Once we had changed the tyre we moved on to the **Bentwitchen Test (OT 1)** and manages a time of 14.14 seconds. We then followed the lanes to **Floyds Bank (15)** where 6, 7 & 8 went on the right hand track. The more cars that went through, the more slippery the section got. In retrospect I should probably stayed as high to the right in fresh ground and knocked all the markers over (a bit tongue in cheek) but I didn't and slid sideways failing to pass the last 4 markers. That was four failures and points dropped in a row, as they said at school all those years ago, "could have done better".

It was great to see Charlie Merson taking video of the section with his arm in a sling and grin on his face as we failed miserably! Quarter of a mile further up the hill was **Cross Lane (17)** which needed commitment to clear the rough terrain. On past Simonsbath to **Scoresdown (18)** (with two of the What3Words being gobblers.dribble!!) and a restart for 7 & 8 which caused no problems. The last section was **Beggars Roost (19)** also with a restart for most classes which again

was pretty uneventful. With the last section completed we drove to the finish at the Old Station House Inn, signed off and had a swift one (0%). Weather and ground conditions were truly variable which made a massively challenging and enjoyable trial. Route instructions were clear and marshalling excellent. At the end of the day we managed a class 7 win and 7th overall behind all those class 8 cars. I've just spotted some drops of oil under the back of the car – Oh dear, more fettling required!!

Willing horses by Richard Simpson

Trialling in a 2CV

Before the years of PSA corporate blandness and common platforms, Citroens always seemed as though they had been designed by an engineering genius who had never seen a motorcar, but had heard about them, and was determined to build one that could beat all comers in a particular niche market.

Hence, we had wonderful creations like the DS (Goddess) designed to whisk a French family and their luggage across Europe equipped with 'magic carpet' hydraulic suspension and headlamps that could see around corners. And the 2CV (two horses), which was designed to carry four French farmers wearing hats, and a basket of eggs, across a ploughed field without breaking any of the eggs!

The latter's unique qualities would appear to make it ideal for use as a trials car. It comes as standard with the world's cleverest car suspension, and really not much else. You don't have to strip it out to make it into a trials car, there's nothing in it that isn't essential anyway. And given it's built to drive across fields, there's not a great deal more needed in the way of modification.

Hence, one has appeared in John Turner's garage as a replacement for his much-loved Dellow. And having suffered for a night and a day in the passenger seat of the Dellow doing the Lands End Trial, the idea of doing the one-day Chairman's Trial in a car with proper seats and a roof seemed quite appealing. I might even still be able to walk at journey's end! The roof was very welcome, because after rain all the previous night, the downpour continued all the following day. Even with the roof, we still finished with a pool of water in the front footwell. Over-vigorous 'fording' of floods caused water to rise up through the heater vents and hit us in the face. Hilarious!

The day got off to a flying start when we arrived at the venue to be told that the scrutineer had drunk too much cider the night before and was still in bed. We retired to the cattle market café to await our start time, only to be told that the motorbikes had all left, and we were the first car away so there was already a queue behind us.

The 2CV clattered heroically out of the car park, and I used a high-tech navigation aid John had fitted: a GPS trip meter accurate to 0.1 of a mile.

It was brilliant, I don't think we missed a turning all day. Just reset read the distance to the next junction in the roadbook and start looking when you are within 0.1 of a mile of it. The trial itself was relatively straightforward: some of the sections had been quite rightly cancelled because it was so wet, and most of what was left was at least partially driveable. Although the 2CV's air-cooled flat-twin engine would run out of puff on the steeper climbs, the suspension did an excellent job of maintaining traction and a relatively smooth ride. Just for the record, the 2CV's engine output is 29 hp, less than that of most of the motorcycles taking part in the event!

We did end up with a wheel in a ditch on one of the lanes between sections, but the crew of a following BMW kindly helped us to lift it out. To celebrate, John drove over my foot! Only once did we actually get stuck on a section, and that was one that defeated most of the other cars.

We were told that we would be towed up by a tractor, and then that the tractor wouldn't start. So we sat and watched as the rest of the field tackled the section with limited success, churning it up all the more.

Finally, they got the tractor started; A Renault tractor. No doubt it had gone on strike, faced with the prospect of having to recover a Citroen. It pulled us to the top the hill to the amusement of on-lookers.

Having gone from first car on the road to almost last, the remaining sections were badly rutted and a bit too much for the little 2CV. But it got us to the finish, having used a tiny amount of fuel, pulled up some horribly steep inclines, and never missed a beat.

I can confidently say that we won Class One. I confess we were the only car in class. We didn't have a basket of eggs with us, but John and I both wore hats because of the rain. Oh, and I could still walk at the end of the day. Citroen's design brief fulfilled, I think!



John thought he'd ditch the car but I finished up washing my socks after he'd run over my foot!



For Sale.

Alternator I bought this a couple of years after converting the Dellow from dynamo, the idea was to carry it on long distance events in case the one on the car failed, as it happens it did several events but never got used so in as new condition.

First £30 buys it

J.T. 07971 249783

The Bikers on the Holsworthy Chairman's Trial found it muddy as well !



Tailpiece or was it a wise move

Having got the 2CV in a reasonable stage of fettle it seemed a good idea to maybe enter a one day event, AHA the Holsworthy Chairmans Trial is on the horizon let's give it a go. I summoned Richard and he was up for navigating so the entry was pinged.

I should have known better really, it has rained virtually solidly since the beginning of the year but so what let's give it a go. I don't want to steal anything from Richard so I will just add a photo although I was stunned to having won the event "outright", well I think so as I did have the highest score and as trialling is comparable to cricket when it comes to scoring I must have, anyway we survived and are still able to laugh about it.



That's all for this month, please send contributions to billjan299@gmail.com