December newsletter 2024

Blimey what a month of weather it's been, first a dry spell, then rain, then snow (the real deal) then it's back to serious rain with storm Bert, you know it's a good one when the met people give it a name.

I don't remember a name being given to the infamous storm of 87 which caught Michael Fish out, (weatherman for our younger readers) it was obvious he wasn't going to take it serious because it lacked a name. Anyway sit back and enjoy this bumper edition of the newsletter

From our chairman

A pretty quiet month on all things motor club aside from a committee meeting earlier in the month.

It was sad to hear of the sudden passing of Phil Brooking who had previously bounced for Calvin Kneebone for several years and other competitors on the Sporting Trial scene and more recently had marshalled regularly at several of our events. We send our thoughts and condolences to his family at this time.

As the last newsletter of 2024, a quick bit of reflection on the year. Our summer events and classic trials have attracted terrific entries, on several occasions the most for the particular event or the most for a number of years which is brilliant and it would be fantastic to keep that theme going in 2025. The sporting trials continue to attract the core entry with various other appearances from competitors outside the area, unfortunately the weather meant the David Ayres didn't run on the day in 2024 but in 2025 that event along with the really positive news of the addition of the Northgate as BTRDA round means we will be running two national championship rounds for this formula.

With the end of the year approaching memberships for 2025 will soon be due, I must admit it has been great to see 'Launceston NC or Launceston & North Cornwall' as competitors club on many entry list's for the classic trials through the year. I am not sure of the most recent standings but before the Exmoor Clouds trial at the start of November our club and indeed committee members were fairing very well in the respective classic trial championships with the final round coming up on the Camel this weekend, with again, good maroon colours being represented on the entry list and the marshalling ranks, good luck to all.

Although we are in our quietest period events wise during the winter, we do have the Ron Beer Sporting Trial in December then the awards evening at Trethorne in February to look forward to.

A little early perhaps as we all have different ideas of when the Christmas period starts, but I would like to take this opportunity to wish all our following and families a Merry Christmas and thank you all for your support through the year in whatever capacity.

Simon R

Edinburgh 2024

It's a hard, hard rain that's gonna fall

This was bad, and getting worse. The original route was closed by flooding, the diversion felt like it soon would be closed too as our bowwave got bigger and bigger, and the roads were getting rougher and rougher as we headed into the darkness...but that's the West Midlands for you.

Yes, with torrential rain sweeping up the country, just getting to the start of the Edinburgh Trial was adventure enough.

I was travelling with MCC trials veteran Rick Lees. Behind us in the van nestled two very different motorcycles: Rick's 1967 200 cc Triumph Tiger Cub (one careful owner for the last 50 years) and my slightly newer 300 cc Beta X-Trainer.

This was to be my first attempt at doing a genuine all-night MCC trial on a solo motorcycle, and was inspired by two things.

- Last year I had entered the Derbyshire Daylight Trial, which picks up the Edinburgh route at breakfast time, and having failed only two sections, I'd been awarded a thoroughly undeserved Bronze medal: the first prize of any kind I've ever won for any kind of sporting event.
- 2) This year, the full Edinburgh Trial actually started, breakfasted, and ended all in the same place, at the Duke of York pub. Last

year my good friend Hugh had kindly put his caravan on a pitch at the Duke of York, and he'd agreed to do the same this year. So the usual logistical challenges of getting to and from different start and finish venues didn't apply. If I was ever going to do a full-fat MCC event, then this would be the one.

A plea in the MCC weekly newsletter from Rick for a lift oop north from Gloucestershire had finally sealed the deal.

Eventually, we arrived at the Duke of York. Too late for food, so off to Buxton for a pizza and chips, then sleep.

The next day was mercifully dry, and spent doing a few last minute checks to bikes and gear, and otherwise not very much as we are supposed to start the event as rested as possible. Scrutineering is just down the road from the start at a football club, so having eaten a good meal in the pub we head off down there, where the bikes were scrutinised in darkness.

At 11 pm we hear a countdown in the yard at the front of the pub, and competitor 1, Fred Spaven, rides almost silently away on his electric UCL Enfield Charging Bullet.

Almost an hour later, Rick and I are off into the darkness, with me following the reassuring sound of the Triumph: my first-ever motorcycle was a Tiger Cub of similar vintage, but a good deal less reliable. Almost 24 miles of twisty lanes later and we reach Hobhay: the first section. I rode this last year in the daylight and didn't recall it as being particularly difficult, even though there was an 'off-track' deviation for motorcycles. This is actually the first of two visits to Hobhay, and the results record that I cleaned it this time, although feeling slightly disoriented by my wildly swinging light beams I think I might have put my foot down.

After another 20 miles or so of mostly little roads, we find ourselves at Tissington Park holding control, where we have to wait in absolute silence. There's nothing to do other than admire the starscape. In contrast to last night, it is completely dry, clear, and still. I'm reminded of The Galaxy Song at the end of Monty Python and the Meaning of Life.

Our galaxy itself contains a hundred billion stars. It's a hundred thousand light years side to side It bulges in the middle, sixteen thousand light years thick But out by us, it's just three thousand light years wide We're thirty thousand light years from galactic central point We go 'round every two hundred million years And our galaxy is only one of millions of billions In this amazing and expanding universe And then we are off. Here is Tissington Ford, which I've never seen before. It's dipped-beam only here to avoid waking the locals, and I can hardly see the opposite bank as I splash into the river, which is swollen by the recent rains. I tell myself there's nothing to worry about as others have crossed ahead of me, and there really isn't. It's a quiet ride to the next section, Baildon, which I manage to foot on, destroying any notion that I might come home with a medal. Another quiet ride down from the section and through a slumbering hamlet on dipped beam, then on to Cliff Quarry which is a section that stops three of the field, including me. Again, it's a quiet exit on dipped beam around a farmyard and back onto the tarmac roads.

The route takes us on main roads through a slumbering Bakewell (no sign of the famous Tarts, are they having a night off?) and then up a green lane before we get to Calver, where a cheery crew are manning the village filling station all night for our benefit. We top up with fuel, and exchange a few words with our fellow riders, one of whom is the editor of Bike magazine riding one of the new Chinese 450 cc adventure bikes. "What's it like?" I ask him.

"Heavy," he replies.

A fair answer.

Back on it, and out on the backroads. Our pace is dictated by the Tiger Cub, which on trials gearing is happiest at 35 mph, although it will do 45 at a push. But it's really no disadvantage. Former Dakar Rally rider Stan Watts says the secret of success (or at least avoiding failure) is to ride as fast as you can navigate, and I lose count of the number of times we get passed by other competitors, only to find we are somehow ahead of them at the next stop.

Tumbletrees is a steep wooded climb, with an 'exciting' exit up a big step and onto a tarmac road. It looks worse than it is and like most of the rest of the field, I clean it.

I briefly lose Rick on the next bit of roadwork, and find myself following a much faster group of riders, whom I pass after one of them overcooks it and ends up parked in a hedge. It's lucky it wasn't a drystone wall, there's no damage done.

I realise that Rick certainly isn't in front of me, so he can only be behind me. We regroup and press on to Haydale, which I clean. In a queue for the next section, Calton, we all move aside to allow the passage of a magnificent Scania articulated milk tanker. This is a sign that morning is coming. I clean Calton. That's four clean in a row, and there's a pink light in the Eastern sky.

The route takes us down a gravel track, and then back to the Duke of York for breakfast. The full English and tea warms me up no end, then I

promptly cool down again by necking a tin of Red Bull which has been in the van overnight.

It's full daylight now, and we head off for Excelsior. There's frost on the ground glistening in the morning light. This was the first section I rode last year, and I cleaned it then. Overconfident, I dab this time, but manage the first restart of the day with just a little excessive wheelspin. There's no doubt that the ground is slippery this time around but I'm still annoyed at the failure. Looking at the results, I see that many riders who finished ahead of me actually stopped on this hill, so perhaps I shouldn't feel too bad.

There's a bit of gravel road riding next. I got lost here last year, and Rick and I stray from the route, but by reading the instructions again realise we should have taken the semi-concealed right immediately after the left and we are back on track.

There's another fuel stop, the last on the route. We are only 80 miles from the finish!

Now something very odd happens. We are on a stretch of road I remember well from last year because two bikes ahead of me both got punctures within half a mile. And, there ahead of us is a group of bikes by the side of the road, and they are busy repairing a puncture! Is there a nail factory just down the road?

A bit more road work and, thankfully, no punctures and we are at the Clough Mine complex. There are three sections here. Last year I cleaned the lot. This year the ground is slick and wet. I foot on one, stop on another, and fall off on the last one after I've crossed the line! Then it's a short ride to Dudwood, where there's an observed section followed by two special tests. I foot on the section and go to wait my turn at special test one: Deadwood. Just like last year, the tests are 'manned' (womened?) by a group of lovely, cheerful girls. To my horror, I realise I'm in third gear, not second, as I leave the start, but the forgiving X-Trainer hurls me forward to a semi-reasonable time.

The next special catches me out: Robin Hood. It's got corners in it! I foot and accrue a massive time penalty.

The route returns us to Hob Hay, where this time there is a deviation, and it catches me out too. What's wrong with me? I cleaned it last year. And the next section is the most difficult of the lot. Corkscrew. We waited here for hours last year in the pouring rain. This year, it's mercifully dry, but we still have to wait hours because someone who has nothing to do with the trial has got a van wedged in the section. I'm practically falling asleep perched on the bike now.

Eventually the van is removed with the combined efforts of a winchequipped 4x4 and a farm tractor and the trial can get going again. But my fire has well and truly gone out, thanks to the enforced inactivity. Rick goes up the section ahead of me, with the cheery tones of the Tiger Cub echoing off the hillside. The two ladies marshalling the start remark how sweet it looks and lovely it sounds.

"He's owned if for 50 years," I tell them.

They exchange looks and make it plain that he would be ideal husband material. I don't have the heart to tell them he has nine more bikes in his garage and a wife in his house!

Rick gets to the top. Now it's my turn. I cheer myself up by realising that last year there was so much water coming down that I couldn't see the stone surface at the start, but I foot before I've really got my mojo back. With an early fault, I elect to storm through the restart and make it to the top.

YeeHar!

The route loops back on itself here, and when we get back to the site of our enforced wait there's a queue of cars with 'straggler' bikes being waved through in front of them. Andrew Rippon from the Launceston Motor Club is there, and assumes I need to go up the hill. I almost take him up on the invitation, but instead assure him I've done it already. Next to Hollinsclough time control, where we were scheduled to spend 30 minutes consuming tea and cake in the village hall. But the trial is so far behind schedule that we are told we can go whenever we want. There's a massive queue for refreshments and the cars are now mixing with the bikes. Rick and I decide to press on tealess, but Rick leaves a cash donation with the ladies at the hall anyway, and receives two marriage proposals in return!

We are in the heart of the High Peak now, and encountering walkers and tourists, most of whom seem friendly. Booth Farm section is high on a windy hill, but the weather is still fine and the ground here has dried out. It's an easy clean.

There's only one section to go now: Litton Slack. Last year this was so wet very few competitors cleaned it, and this year, there's a restart. What are they thinking?

There's also a promise of tea and cakes at the top, if we can make it. Spurred on by this, we arrive at the section and find that this year, it's easy!

Sadly, the cakes at the top are long sold-out but we content ourselves with tea.

And then it's a last bit of navigation back to the Duke of York, sign off, pick up the finishers' certificates and enjoy dinner with a convivial car crew from Germany.

One of the Germans says: "We wanted to buy some English lamb chops yesterday, but the only place that sells meat in Buxton is Lidl, and that's rubbish!"

I assure him that what he needs to do is enter the Lands End Trial next year and buy his meat from Philip Warren, Graziers and Butchers of Launceston.

Final scores: Rick finishes fourth with four proposals, and I finish 54th with none. A triumph for him and a result for me.

Post-script

They Paved Paradise and Put Up a Parking Lot

It appears that I may have ridden in the last-ever Edinburgh Trial, at least in its current form. The landlord and landlady of the Duke of York are retiring, and the pub's owner is apparently going to flatten the site, including the camping grounds, and build houses on it. The Motor Cycling Club now has to find an alternative venue to host the event, or this 120th iteration of the trial may well have been its last. You really don't know what you've got 'til it's gone.

Richard Simpson



Above left: Rick'sTiger Cub Below left: Two hour wait at Corkscrew

Below right: Fred's charging Bullet

Above right: Dirty Beta



Regalia Team Rippon have been at it again increasing our clubs portfolio of goodies, two new items, there's a smart looking umbrella in club colours with the club logo on it priced at £18, or if you want to be the complete man or woman on the hills we have a very smart jacket, wind and waterproof, for just £45. Just think how impressive you'd look on the hills with these items and wearing the club budgie smugglers!!



To order either call or text Lorraine 07767 201847 alternatively email arippon@btinternet.com

Get Well

Committee and club member Darren Ruby is slightly under the weather at the moment so his trusty BMW is earning a rest at present, from all the club we wish him a speedy recovery, whilst nurse Lisa is looking after him, not sure a nurse's uniform is good for his heart rate but get well soon Darren.

Garage Imposter



I eventually found my donor bike an ex Metropolitan Police BMW R850, otherwise known as the hulk. It's a real lump of a bike, Andy Prosser likened it to a Citroen 2CV but on two wheels as he struggled to hold it steady as we both unloaded it from my trailer to get it in the garage, downhill slope and no front brake!!! We were both quite relieved to get it in and on its stand, it really made you wonder how a "dishonourably dismounted" policeman would get it up in the event of it going horizontal.

Now all I have to do is strip it down, after all I only want the engine, first remove the fairing, this then reveals something of the challenge that awaits, complicated? I'll say, I know the Germans enjoy building complicated machinery but this is a bloody motorbike, why so complicated? I can't believe the amount of wires, connectors, cable ties etc, etc. It's one of those jobs where it's best to do a little, go away and think about how you're to tackle the next bit and so on.

Needless to say after nearly two weeks of nipping in and out of the garage the engine is very snug and secure still in the frame, but I do have an impressive pile of mostly plastic parts piled up. If anyone is in need of any parts for a 2000 model "oil head" R850 I'm your man. As I said I really only want the engine so if

you need gearbox, wheels, fuel tank , front forks, headlamp and a whole host of other bits get in touch with me. 07971 249783

On hearing I had taken ownership of it Phil Hingley commented "I bet the indicators don't work" wrong, the combined mirror/indicators actually do work as does the rise and fall windshield

J.T.

Simon Oates has been out and about again

Mechanics Trial Sunday 27th October 2024

After a wet and windy week prior to the event, the weather gods smiled on us with a good dry forecast for the day. I picked Steve Moir up at 6.00am en route to the Stroud start. On entering the car park at Fromebridge Mill car park (Glos), I was asked if I was Simon Oates (which always has me worried) and was given a lovely glass trophy for second in class 7 from the Cotswold Clouds in February 2023. Scrutineering completed and we entered the mill to sign on and were given the route instructions for the day. I award a Gold Star for observation to bouncer Steve as we had been given two first pages so that we would only get to the lunch stop! Once given the full instructions and written down the tyre pressure limits (there were a lot of them), we left to give it all a go. The first two hills (Tin Pan Alley & Axe) caused few problems. Next was **Wood Lane** which guickly had a right bend up a bank and then on to a restart 100m further up the field. We put our front wheels through the restart and at the drop of the flag, bounced forward past the 5, only for someone without a tabard to shout and wave us to a stop saying we hadn't gone through the restart. Both Steve and I said we had but reversed out of the section. We later found out and saw on video that it was a competitor from an earlier class 8 car that was trying to stop people he thought were too competitive, he also did the same to other cars. I've never experienced anything like this while trialing before and hope that Stroud Motor Club can control their members better in the future because that sort of behaviour is not acceptable at any sporting event. Definitely not the early flavour to the event we were expecting and it knocks you back a bit with a sour taste in the mouth. A suck on a mint toffee sweetened my taste buds and helped us clear the next three sections (Mackhouse, Bulls Cross & Catswood) although Mackhouse was particularly rough. We had a lunch stop in the local Tesco carpark and helped straighten a few car wheels before clearing Bulls cross and Catswood. Prickley Pete followed with Sapstead Surprise where we dropped 6 and 2 points. On to Mini Hoskin where I swerved to miss hitting the front passenger wheel and mudguard only to clip the rear drivers side which ended with me walking the 'walk of shame' back down the hill to retrieve part of the rear mudguard (a long way and very steep and slippery – knackering!). From now on, all the mud and water was showering me from the rear tyre, how refreshing! For the first time since owning the car, it had started to use water and luckily one of the marshals had 2 ltrs of water to spare, so I used it but couldn't see a leak. The first special test was slippery and hard to stop while reversing down a hill but achieved in 10.7 seconds. A short run and chicane up into **Don't Blink** didn't work out for us as I found no grip and dropped 8 points!! We

watched Paul and Kate Price clear **Merves** in their white Liege but when it came to our attempt I dropped a further 2 points, where has all my grip disappeared to? **Battlescombe**, **Bulls Bank** and **Viaduct** were all cleared by us but overall another disappointing performance by me where higher tyre pressures don't seem to suit me or the car. Instructions and signage were good, Marshals were brilliant and one competitor was definitely not a sportsman, what more can I say? Once we had signed off at the finish, we loaded the car on the trailer and topped it up with water again, unhitched the trailer and left it for Paul Watson (burnt out Imp) to use on the **Exmoor Clouds** on Sunday 3rd November. We both spoke the week before and Paul had found the bottom water pipe had rubbed through, so he had a friend weld it together. He also zip tied the rear wing together and completed the trial with a win in class 7 and 11 points ahead of 2nd place. Not a bad result first time out in the car especially when you're used to an engine in the back and 100+ hp. Congratulations Paul Watson.

Forthcoming events

15th December is the date set for the Ron Beere sporting Trial to be held at Ashleigh Lifton, for those not familiar with sporting trials it is a single venue event so nice and easy to spectate and watch these fascinating little cars climb hills that the big 4x4's would baulk at. As always we need **marshals** so please do contact Mike Wevill on 01566 784451.

4th/5th January 2025 MCC Exeter Trial

Joe Caudle has been plotting

16 Point Challenge Navigational Scatter

6 years ago I enjoyed taking part as a driver, with David Southwell an experienced navigator who started rallying with Russell Brooks, in the 16 Point Challenge Navigational Scatter organised by Roger Hoskin and his family in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support. However various things had conspired to me not being able to enter until this year when I suggested to Andy Smith that if we entered in his ex- Stirling Moss and Roger Clark Marathon FIA MGB rally car then I would navigate.

So on the 17th of November we met up at the start at the start at Trevathan Farm Shop and Restaurant St Endellion. Andy had come up from St Ives and followed in Patrick Shaw and Jill Sanders in their MGB GT that had had driven from St Buryan. After a brief welcome by Roger there was a minute silence in memory of the late Phil Brooking, proprietor of Brooklands Garage and well known in Cornish motorsport, who had recently passed away. We were then provided with the maps and some coordinates for the first squares to visit. At this point I was happy that we could find our way. However, regarding the next stage of puzzle solving I was less confident. As it turned out that was well founded!

After plotting and coffee we started at the start time and set off around the highways and by ways around Wadebridge and the edge of Bodmin Moor. Some lanes were very slippery ad finding clues was challenging. We found 8 of the 16 points and clues and I was happy with our progress so far. Returning by the due time we then enjoyed a roast lunch in good company before setting off to find the points I planned to visit in the afternoon.

My plans then had to be modified as there were road closures in the St Breward area so we had to miss 2 points. However we returned to the finish on time. The second and third level clues baffled me as when we visited the points I plotted there were no clues, but I am sure with practice we could do better. We returned to the finish without time penalties and enjoyed tea and cake while the results were worked out and announced.

Driver Andy Smith felt that it was a great event in a good cause "It provided an interesting navigation exercise on Cornish roads that I had never driven before." Congratulations to those who received awards. As complete beginners were happy to finish in the middle of the novice class after a great day out. Thank you to Roger, Shirley, Jemma & Maddie. (The organising team).



Andy Prosser has been let out from the garage



A visit to County Classics Motor Museum in Taunton.

I had heard a lot of great things about a new motor museum that has recently opened in Taunton by a lifelong car enthusiast called Patrick Hawkins, so took the opportunity to meet a few motorsport friends there a couple of weeks ago. The museum is on two levels in the main street, in a building which had been a country store from 1832, finally closing its doors in 2019, spanning five generations of the same family's ownership.

Patrick took the opportunity to buy the building which has been beautifully restored, and use it to house his personal collection which comprises some 100 cars and 80 motorcycles, opening in November 2023. Every vehicle in the collection is in immaculate condition and well looked after by a very friendly and knowledgeable team of volunteers. Many of the cars come from the 1970's and 80's so they really struck a chord with someone of my age. Most makes are represented from Austins and Porsches to Rolls Royce's. There are several areas dedicated to one brand, there is a good selection of Ford Escorts for example, including rally versions that have been driven by the likes of Hannu Mikkola. Unlike many museums in my experience, there was a very good write up about the history of every vehicle so it was easy to spend many fascinating hours there. There are also replicas of old garage workshops, offices and stores displaying parts and oils etc. from a bygone era, all extremely well done. The café is also excellent, with lovely food and amazingly friendly service resulting in us "having" to visit it twice during the day. I would highly recommend a visit as Taunton is not far away and it is well worth seeing with entry only currently costing £13.95. If enough people are interested maybe we can arrange a club group visit.



Andy's also been to Brighton, once he gets the travel bug

...testing his new motor club brolly on the pier and identifying as a "mod" 🐵

More from Mr Oates, he's a busy man.

The Allen Trial Sunday 24th November 2024 "I was there" Storm Bert was brewing with the worst due on the Sunday so I was watching emails and social media half expecting the trial to be cancelled. Five am came after a restless night and even my dog Bertie wasn't very keen to venture outside with the howling wind and detritus littering the drive and garden. Not much better at the top of the drive or on the lanes to the A30 with mysterious shadows and shapes plus branches everywhere. Not much traffic on the way up to Bristol but the rain eased around Wellington but started again as I neared Bristol. I was picking my bouncer for the day (Paul Bunn) up from Temple Meade train station at 8am and he rang me when I was 5 minutes away. This resulted in the car sat-nay disappearing while the phone was active, right where the route got complicated. Disaster avoided with my 7th sense and he was picked up on time and off to the start at The Bull Inn at Hinton where we parked in a very wet field, unloaded the car, put the roof up, were scrutineered and then down to the pub to sign on. After the usual banter and catch ups we decided the rain had eased enough to take the roof off as I prefer to trial topless!! (the truth is, I didn't want everyone to call me a girls blouse with the roof on). Within minutes of starting the heavens opened and water came from every

angle imaginable and a few more unimaginable. Soaked doesn't cover the situation, so there was no point in scrabbling around for cover, just another 6 hours to the finish. Tyre pressures were set at 12 psi for all sections for class 6 &7, so in theory we didn't have to pump up tyres at all for the trial. In reality we did pump up a few times depending on the pressure gauge being used by a marshal (this doesn't matter if all cars are checked on a section) where on one occasion my two gauges were out by 2.5 psi. Unfortunately for the organisers and competitors, the weather conditions washed out the challenges of the sections which took most of the sting out of the hills. Little Uplands which was the 4th section had to be abandoned due to the conditions. Probably the biggest challenge of the day was getting between sections due to debris, flooding and pilots in their boats coming too fast the other way on the roads. We had earlier been informed that the organisers had lost some of the usual sections and in reality probably didn't have time to get permissions and permits in time for new ones to be included in the trial. I expect there will be a lot of clear score sheets from the day which will mean the results will depend on Special Test times which I'm sure no one really would want, but that's the way the cookie crumbled on the day. We ended up with nine sections and two Special Tests. Commiserations to the organisers who bravely fought against so many obstacles in an attempt to keep the Allen Trial going, I doubt if anyone could have done more. The marshals were true heroes and without exception threw everything they had into the trial and continue to support us all so enthusiastically when every type of weather is against them. The big lesson to me was confirmation that our club (Launceston and North Cornwall Motor Club) are so, so lucky with the land owners, patrons and marshals that support our sport and club, no one can praise any of them highly enough. Happy Christmas one and all, plus a happy and prosperous New Year.



Simon drove miles to get a good soaking but he's still smiling, note the club beanie hat, thankfully waterproofed (not)

Tailpiece

Kamikaze- Test Pilot required for my straightliner project, the plan is to take it up to Davidstow Airfield, being air cooled it should pull itself along on the fitted castors I just need someone young and fit to sit/hang on behind and work the throttle, chair provided.

Applications to the editor.



That's all for this month folks, get prepping for the Exeter Trial in January. Good luck to all who are out on the Camel Trial this weekend. See you all in the New Year.

Keep those contributions coming billjan299@gmail.com