

## February Newsletter 2025

February has arrived and spring is truly on its way although as I type this and look out the window it could just be the Monsoon. Phil Hingley and myself had a fairly successful MCC Exeter Trial, well once I had managed with more than a little help from the "in house" tech guru to download my MSUK competition licence. A case of why make it easy when you can make it bloody difficult.

Back to the event, collected Phil at just after 11.00pm and had a pleasant journey up to Haynes Motor Museum for scrutineering and signing on, then it's a case of coffee and cake until we head off into the night. I must say that the museum does make a "fitting" start venue for such an event, especially when I think of some of the venues frequented in years gone by, although The Jolly Diner at Tintinhull has somehow got a happy place in my memory.

The night run was without incident, Phil managed to keep us on the right route, we even climbed the hills, breakfast was good, and the eclectic collection of vehicles in the car park at Greendale farm shop was a sight to behold. The early morning brought a sharp frost particularly as we circumnavigated Exeter and begun to climb slightly higher, this did unfortunately cause a few problems for the two wheel brigade with the occasional involuntary dismounting onto the hard road surface causing one or two retirements from the event which is always a shame.

The restart was so icy at Windout that good old Mr Brooking cancelled it so it was a case of foot down and blast to the top, very enjoyable. Once again Fingle 2 start line caught us out but with a short run up we were away and enjoyed the rest of the section, at the top I noticed Phil was fumbling about near the floor, this transpired to be him removing his bicycle clips which he had fitted earlier in the event, something to do with my attempt at trying to drive up the bank at Fingle 2 last year and his concern at us going right over left as it were.

Arriving at Donkey Trot the omens were bad, very bad, the failure gods were in their element, quite a few of the main trial vehicles were failing so our attempt was something of a token gesture. Oh well up to Ilsington Village Hall for tea and pasties. On the route to Bovey Tracey I have often tried to remember the section that goes off left just before Bovey, we did this one many years ago and my only memory of it was following a Triumph Herald into it and watching its rear suspension fold in on the sharp corners, behold, that's where we headed. We arrived to watch one of the Ford model A's turning around after failing, two

cars in a row failed, soon to be three, the marshal warned us that it was tough and long, I shot off unleashing all 602cc's we rounded the bend some forty yards away and immediately sunk into what seemed like three foot of leaf mould, on reversing back out there was no one waiting so we are given a second attempt only to get an extra 30 yards before sinking again, on to the last section which we cleaned and to the finish to sign off and a well earned glass of Sherbert. Ok so we didn't climb everything but the car run superbly and none of the tools were disturbed from their slumber in the box, could be worse.

10:04 Sun 5 Jan 64%



Making easy work of a slippery  
Windout

Thanks as always to all the marshals and helpers in making the event run smoothly. J.T.

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***And now a word from our Chairman King Simon***

After a relatively quiet period in our calendar, we're back with plenty going on in the next few weeks.

First up is the awards evening on Friday 21st February, again to be held at Trethorne who are always very accommodating to us. The evening has been brilliantly supported the past few years so it would be great to see our members and friends out in force again. Please let Lisa Gregory know if you'd like to book a place, ideally by a message on Facebook.

The weekend after, Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> March sees the Launceston Trial at Lew Woods, an encouraging start to entries with 25 or so signed up in the first few days (at time of writing that is). If not entering then of course we would be delighted if you could marshal, it's always surprising how many officials we need to make

the bigger events run as smoothly as possible. Again, contact anyone on the committee or club directly if you can help. Having done a walk around, we are out shortly to drive the woods fully as with various storms, unsurprisingly there are a few trees blocking off tracks we will need to use. With the plan then to do another check for fallen timber the week before as with our current weather patterns anything can happen in a few days. Its great thanks to the Newman family for allowing us to run all on their land once again.

Then swiftly after the trial it's the AGM, on 6th March at the Fox & Grapes, Lifton where of course all positions are up for election again, there are a couple of vacancies we are aware of upcoming. So if any members or prospective members wish to throw their hat in the ring you will be more than welcome. Or indeed if you would like to be involved on the committee but without an 'official' position again you will be more than welcome to join us.

Look forward to seeing many of you over these next few weeks.

All for now,  
Simon R

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From Bob Blackman

Hello John

I have just got back from Uncle Adrian's and have some news on the back axle woes, which I mentioned to you at the filling station at Bovey Tracey on the Exeter.

You may remember the offside brake drum was rubbing against the backplate at the bottom while a gap opened up at the top. As mud in the wing dried out, it fell into a widening gap and made a terrible noise especially on lefthand bends.

By the time we were due to set off from Ilsington Village Hall, the hub seal had cried enough and we had to use the spill kit to mop up the mess.

I can now reveal that rear axle bearings had broken up. These were the best quality ones I could find and made by SKF. Uncle Adrian has suggested we go cheap for the replacements!



As you can see Bob's Exeter was all of a sudden terminated, even when buying the best quality components it's no guarantee

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Simon Oates was also on the Exeter Trial

Leaving home with the roof up in freezing fog was the start of the trial. On to Steve Moirs house in Exbourne to pick him up in his fragile state with a bag full of medicine and warm clothes including a heated jacket his thoughtful wife Liz, had bought him for Christmas. We trundled on up the A30 to Sparkford, filled up with fuel, the car was successfully scrutineered and we then signed on. Roof removed and heated jackets switched on and out into the brass monkey weather and the Exeter Trial at 2.37am near the back as car 217. At **Windwhistle** we passed the handbrake test and quickly were into the first observed test where I made sure it was done correctly in a moderate time. **Undertown (1)** caused no problems followed by a stop at Musbury Garage for passage control and on to **Waterloo (2)** for a restart and clear with a bag of mini eggs thrown out for the marshals to consume at the restart. Shortly on to **Normans Hump (3)** for another restart and power up the hill, then further into the woods to **Clinton (4)** without restart for another clear. Two miles further on was a new venue for the second timed Observed Test in the top paddock of the famous **Wiscombe Park** where again I was sensible in an attempt to keep a triple in my sights. Steve was coughing his ring up and consuming pills and water as if they were going out of fashion but his bouncing and navigational skills remained intact. 'Time for another lozenge Steve?' probably wasn't appreciated! **Rill Path (5)** and **Stretes (6)** passed without incidence and then on 10 miles to the breakfast stop at **Greendale Farm Shop**. Two full English's ordered and Steve got two sausages, I only got one! I offered to take Steve home but he insisted we kept going, which we did and topped up with fuel before a long queue on an icy hill before **Tillerton Steep (7)**. I stopped high and right on the restart which definitely wasn't the easiest place but managed eventually to pull away. Relieved to clear the hill, we moved on to **Fingle 1 (8)** and **Fingle 2 (9)** which were cleared without incidence. Back onto the tarmac lanes to go further downstream towards Clifford bridge and into the woods to **Seamans Borough (10b)** for classes 6, 7 & 8. Used for the first time last year, I was a little apprehensive because I thought it could be slippery but we cleared it and it claimed 8 cars. Sixteen miles on the roads towards the Ilsington area and **Tiple Hill (11)** for a really rough climb up the hill followed by the wet and muddy track towards **Donkey Trot (12)** where we blasted to the top but it dashed the dreams of over 30 cars. **Ilsington Parish Hall** was calling with tea and

cake and maybe a sausage roll! After a 30 minute break, we approached **Simms (13)** still clear and amazingly still on track for a Triple. The sounds in the air hold the story of failure after failure. Confirmation from spectators leaving the hill did little for our confidence either, but we were up for it! When we were in sight of the hill, it was car after car reversing down but we had a point to prove. All was fine up to the restart and I pulled away up the left side but soon started to loose grip. I eased off a little to try and find grip again but failed miserably. This was followed with the 'reverse of shame' to the bottom of the hill. With hindsight I should have given it hell and gone to chapel earlier in the day, it just wasn't meant to be. A special mention to Jon and Calvin Moores in their modern engined MG J2 for a storming climb up Simms (only class7 car to do it) brilliant partnership and skills. I believe that only two cars with restarts managed to clear the hill, the other one was Ashley Clarke & Robert Shaddick in their class 8 Silva Mojo J16 off the higher restart line - respect. After leaving the hill we went through Newton Abbot and overtook a few cars at the Penn Inn roundabout and missed the right turning to St Marychurch and took them all on a magical mystery tour for a good mile before I realised my mistake. How embarrassing!! A quick turn around and back on the correct route to the final section, **Slippery Sam (14)** at Rocombe. The previous year I'd hit a restart marker on the right and lost another Triple and I was determined not to make the same mistake this time. Off around the first two corners to the restart where I decided to go high and left. Not the best place but we bounced and got off the restart only to pause while continuing to bounce to get out of the roots and ruts but the flag marshal was extremely quick stopping us from continuing. I shouldn't have stopped where I went and got just deserts and a Bronze Medal for the first time in the Liege. The last Edinburgh and Exeter Trials had proved a true challenge for both us and the car and the MCC should be congratulated for both events despite some long queues. The weather again caused some difficulties and enhanced the event with Simms reminding us all of what a 'stopper' it can be some years. Massive thanks to all marshals (some did 2 hills), land owners, organisers and everyone else involved in any way. Oh and thanks Steve Moir for sticking in there with your ailments and passing it on to me a week later!



Simon's Liege in the best of company at the breakfast halt.



A few more pictures from the Exeter



Top left a brace of Class R Morgans

Top right outfit ready for the off

Above motoring has changed over the years !!



This has got to be one of my very favourite road signs, on the way down to Fingle, not the sort of sign you see every day.

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### ***Calendar of Events***

**03/02/2025 Committee meeting** at the Fox & Grapes, Lifton.

21/02/2025 **Annual club dinner** and presentation of awards at Trethorne Leisure Park. Please let Lisa Gregory know of your intention to come. 2 course carvery meal, adults £27, children under 12 £12, Lisa needs to know numbers by the 14<sup>th</sup> February please. 7.00pm for 7.30 start, please bring cash to pay for meal, she doesn't have a card reader. 😊

02/03/2025 **Launceston Classic Trial**, single venue in the Lewdown / Chillaton area. Yes once again we are appealing for marshals so please do give it some thought, contact either Nigel 07902 542798 or any committee member.

03/03/2025 **Club Annual General Meeting** to be held at the Fox & Grapes, Lifton 7.00pm. This is your chance to depose the committee and take over the club, failing that just come along and say hello to those "who do" make things happen. All welcome

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**Simon Oates** was also out on the Camel Vale Bodmin Heights Trial

Following a cracking 1<sup>st</sup> Trial last year, this was one not to miss this year and it was included in the ACTC schedule for the first time. I drove down to Bodmin and the new start at Bodmin Nurseries where we signed on in the Mill Café. As I waited for scrutineering I spotted Liam Hartley at the side, ready to bounce for me. He'd been on the lash the night before and seemed a little subdued but soon was back on form



and raring to go. He reminded me that the last time he'd been with me he had a TIA a week later and we both hoped the same wouldn't happen again.

Tyre pressures of 14 psi for us on a number of hills (I normally run 12 psi on the road) may prove a problem for us but class 8 were on 16 psi. After starting we drove to Colwith for some new sections and on arriving we could see there were some sticky problems ahead. Groover was clearly in a panic mode (we felt terrible for him so early on) and had to cancel the first section as there was a problem getting the cars out (Is there still be one in there?). Once the classes 1 – 6 had been cleared out, class 7 had a go at **George's Gallop (2)** and struggled to get going. By the time it was my go there were some tracks to help me and we managed 3 only to get stuck behind a tree stump! After revving, pulling and bouncing we managed to clear and then watched Calvin Moores in the J2 get a 2. Off next to **Daisy's (3)** and a restart with 14 psi. It was a struggle to get to the restart for our class, but then Henry Hoggart & Sarah Howarth in Simon Riddles old Melos powered off the restart all the way to the top. How do I follow that? with a bit of forward motion to the 5 and that was it! **County Climb (4)** followed further up the road in Laneskin Woods with free tyre pressures but again we only managed to the 5. Further into the woods we came to **Tall Trees (5)** and accelerated off the access track, sharp right up amongst the trees to yet another 5. Once back down we followed the arrows to a big queue for **Robbyduggan (6)**. The holdup was down to lack of traction into the section and a sharp right up into the trees and roots. I managed it fine last year and expected the same this year. How wrong I was, I just couldn't get the car to turn and ploughed straight on into a downed tree, but somehow managed an 11. Liam wasn't pleased and said what he thought with points dropped on every section so far! It must have done me some good as at the next section, **Kingswood (7)**, we managed to clear the long, extremely muddy and slippery new section and **Hoskin Hill (8)** with a restart was also cleared. We then went back through Bodmin and on to Wadebridge, past the showground and to Hay Farm and section **Hay Pole (9)** which we cleared again with a restart. At the top we followed the arrows to **Hay Twist (10)** with yet another restart and hairpin near the top which we cleared. The pep talk by Liam had clearly worked and he was superb in the passenger seat. **Hay Fork (11)** was next with a restart which stopped us on the 5 and was bettered by Henry Hoggart & Sarah Howarth in the Melos again. **QE 2 (12)** followed with a left hairpin at the top and once cleared we found Andrew and Lorriane Rippon driving towards us in their Beetle. Directions were a bit spread out and they were the first car to clear the section. Eventually we found our way out and had the timed **Observed Test** to do. I gave it my all and Liam paid me a compliment!! Shocked, we made our way to the exit and made our way to **Hustyns (13)** which had proved no problem before Christmas. We watched Francis and Philip Thomas clear the section and expected to do the same, but not today. I was stopped just short of the top and couldn't quite make the summit. From here we went on to a new section **Eddy's Incline (14)** which had been cut into the opposite side to the start of Eddy's Branch line. Steep, slippery and tight, it proved challenging but achievable. Straight into Eddy's **Branch Line (15)** and up and off the restart only to diff out on the 2 and be pulled off by a very efficient tractor. We stopped and watched most of the final class 8 car finish the section and then drove to the finish at The Borough Arms. A special thank you to Liam Hartley for his input and company. An absolutely belting Trial which was a credit to all the effort and hard work put in by all the organisers. Sections were superb, Instructions were simple and accurate, marshals were heroes as usual and a brilliant addition to the ACTC championship. A "Must Do Trial" in my opinion.



A few pictures from the CV Bodmin Heights Trial



Spreading the mud

Mind that tree







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### **This one's for Robin**

I received an email from Chris Need the other day who is researching the history of his Riley 9 GT216, an ex Frank Martyr car. Chris is actively campaigning the car in VSCC and MCC trials and is keen to know more about the car's history. Unfortunately it now has a different registration, some cad in a Land Rover Evoke nabbed it, and it's a different colour to what it used to be, otherwise the car is very much as it was. Any info on its history would be appreciated.





Chris Need and navigator on the MCC 2025 Exeter Trial

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### *Tailpiece*

And so another newsletter in the bag, I can now return to my hidey hole in the garage until I'm called out again, but otherwise it's time to play with my toys unless called out to a muddy section near you.

Thanks to my contributors

J.T.

Please send contributions to [billjan299@gmail.com](mailto:billjan299@gmail.com)