

March Newsletter 2025

Welcome to March and the full onslaught of Spring and all it has to offer. I am told on the grapevine that the Launceston Trial is now at fever pitch and with a full entry, weather forecast is looking as good as it can so good luck to all, unfortunately I will not be able to join you, can't remember when I last missed this event but it was a long time ago.

Club Awards Evening and Dinner

Well what a night it turned out to be at Trethorne, once again an event I missed but my roving reporter tell me something in the order of 106 attended, surely that's a club record.





Top photo showing a glittering array of awards waiting to be handed out.

Priorities right, eat & drink first then awards

Thanks to Andy Prosser for the photos



From Our Chairman

A bit of a short brief from myself this month as the week is being taken over by Launceston Trial organisation. On that note, a fantastic entry well into the 80's which we admit will be a tight squeeze in the yard, so if joint transport can be arranged that would be great to save on space. We have a catering van, cash only, all support for them will also be greatly appreciated. A really good response on marshals , always room for more though so if you read this and can help out please feel free to turn up on Sunday for 9am and we can find you a spot. It looks like Nigel has ordered the weather - won't speak too soon - so all things crossed for a good event on Sunday.

Last week was our awards evening and wow, what a fantastic turn out, in excess of 100! Thank you very much to all those that attended we hope as a social evening it proved a good occasion bringing all out disciplines of motor sport together for the evening. Thank you to Trethorne, who as usual, put on an excellent carvery and all timed as well as they could. Finally, a big thank you to all those that helped on the evening, collecting cash, selling the raffle tickets etc many hands really do help. Especially thanks to Lisa for taking and dealing

with all the bookings and for Nigel for all the prep work in getting the awards back, engraved and being the evenings M/C!

A flurry of events with our AGM to follow next week as well, 6th March, 7.30pm start at the Fox & Grapes, Tinhay. All of course welcome, especially anyone with an interest in joining the committee, you will be most welcome or even if you have some ideas of events we could run through the year please feel free to pop along.

A bit short from me this month as it's back to the paperwork for Sunday, look forward to seeing many of you there.

Simon R

Simon Oates reports.

The Clee Hills Classic Trial

Sunday 19th January 2025

I thought it was time to have a go at the Clee Hills as so many people have great things to say about the trial. Being over four hours and 200 plus miles away, I decided to stop over on Saturday night so that I was awake enough to fully take it all in. Final instructions arrived on Monday 13th with a link to **Sportity** and all the instructions and information we could ever need including a description of the section— tick, VG, Gold Star! After printing off the instructions and reading through, I spotted only one restart, now that's a bit different!!

Come the crisp, cold and dry-ish Sunday morning, I discovered there were updates on **Sportity** that I should have downloaded (don't carry a printer with me) but there were printed updates at signing on which my wingman (Paul Bunn) diligently copied over to the print out. Four out of seven people at the start in class 7 were in a Liege which I loved to see and Michael Leete was immaculately turned out in his class 7 Dellow and raring to go. We started at 8.51am and travelled about 15 miles to the first section passing four cars that had already needed to stop.

When we arrived at **Harton Wood (1)** we found Ray Ferguson under the bonnet of John and Natasha Early's Liege with a dirty spark plug. It was soon changed and ready for fun. Up a slippery stoney track amongst trees and a sharp hairpin right at the top on 15 psi. Three miles on we increased the tyre pressures to 18psi and knew the car would shake our bones to the core as my comfortable suspension setting is soft tyres! Heywood Common (2) was a suitably stoney track and maybe a few expletives were uttered on the way up. As soon as I could, I let the tyre down to a

more comfortable 12psi and drove on to **Coats Farm** for a timed special test which was swiftly done. Out of the farm yard and up an old railway track to **Coats Wood (3)** where we let the tyres down further. We saw Ray Ferguson struggling on the section and let more air out. Grass that was rutting and turning to mud with a slippery corner at the start and up the hedge line of a corn field. I think I touched a marker board on the ascent but they didn't count on that section.

Out of the section and on to **Easthope 1 (5)** which was muddy ruts oscillating side to side through the trees and bad enough to catch a few out. Further along in the woods was **Ippikins Rock (6b)** with a tight right hairpin on a stoney track with tyre pressures of 18psi for all classes which proved tricky and slippery. Back onto the roads and tyre pressures dropped again, we drove five miles to **Harley Bank 1 (7a)** which needed a bit of beans to get us going up through the woods. Seven miles along the roads to holding control before going on in groups of 2 or 3 to **Meadowley Wood (8)**. Panic sets in when the car in front can't get through the section and has to reverse out. Do I change tyre pressures (drivers are on 4.5, passengers on 5psi) but I decide to carry on with what I've got. Very slippery muddy ruts lead into numerous tree roots with chasms in between them but luckily the car rode them well. Relieved that we were still clear, we pumped up to 10psi and drove 10 miles to some new sections at Burwarton Estate.

First was **Hillside 1 (9)** which was muddy stoney base up a cutting with a chicane at the top. A little confusion with the markings at the top but cleared none the less. After 3 had cleared the section, we all returned to the bottom and on to **Hillside 2 (10)** which was similar but with a further circular diversion to the right for our class. Once completed we joined the roads again for 4 miles to **Oak Dingle (11)** where we were greeted with our one and only restart. It looked fairly tame, but it wasn't. We watched Ray in his supercharged Liege have a go and he struggled to the restart and barely moved off for a 5. We seemed to get to the restart fairly well and pulled off as best we could to the 4.

Now for an apology to Celia Walton who was the restart marshal. On reversing back, we spotted her with mud splattered outside and inside her glasses and pretty much everywhere else. She was standing wisely well back and to the side but we seemed to have had a 90% hit rate. I'm so, so sorry Celia. Back sheepishly to the road and 10 psi into the tyres and off back past the start and 18 miles to the last three sections (which were also all new) starting with **Cundalls Rise (12)**. Completely blind from the holding area, we could hear a lot of revving and eventually Ray emerged from the woods not looking too happy. We advanced down a slippery slope to the start and could see a steep slippery right hand bend. I should have realigned the car to be pointing more at the corner, but I didn't and paid the consequence of the car refusing to turn the corner until it was too late. This was so similar to a section on the Bodmin Heights the previous week, clearly I still hadn't learnt how to turn right. I put the front wheel through the 11 for a 10, but that was the best I could do.

Back up the slippery entrance slope and on to **The Goggin (13)** which we managed to turn right and gun it to the top! The final section was **High Cullis (14)** which was a fair challenge and we carried as much speed as we could to get through the middle part of the section. All hills on the trial were completed pretty much without a queue and we returned to The Squirrel to sign off. A thoroughly enjoyable trial with many

entertaining sections with such friendly marshals. I even noticed the car's engine hitting its rev limiter four or five times during the day. The variety of hills and few restarts seemed to work very well with only 3 clears in the cars and 2 clears with the bikes. They must all have driven or ridden exceptionally well. Was it worth the travelling, 100% yes and I hope we will be back next year for my 70th year's celebration. Thank you all for a great days sport.

I pinched the photo below from a book entitled "Motoring in the 30's by Graham Robson, photo by courtesy of Autocar. For those who can't read the faded print it reads, "*Blue Hills Mine on the Lands End Trial, with John Fergusons Triumph Gloria Southern Cross scabbling for grip on the right hand*



hairpin."

I'm struggling, if it's Blue Hills 1 it looks a lot different now, direction of travel ?



Zenith side draught carb, guaranteed to slow down any Ford Escort , but it might just enhance an Austin 7 or similar.

Free to whoever collects J.T. 07971 249783 or billjan299@gmail.com

Books anyone, bit of an eclectic mix but also free, contact as above.



A quick photo of the 1998 Testing Trial, we were all a lot younger then !



Who is in the picture? Answers on a postcard.....

What's on

Sunday March 2nd The Launceston Trial in the Woods at Lee Woods, courtesy of the Newman family, with a bumper entry. ***Please, Please***, we need marshals loads of 'em , experience not needed just a bit of enthusiasm and a desire to get out into the beautiful countryside with like minded people. Contact Nigel 07902 542798, Andrew 07974 390797, Simon 07920 482078.

Thursday March 6th Club Annual General Meeting, all welcome just pop along to The Fox & Grapes pub around 7.00pm get yourself a drink and join us.

Sunday May 25th Northgate Sporting Trial at Ashleigh Farm, Lifton, arrowed from Lifton

Fox & Grapes – Lifton PL16 0AJ
VE Day Weekend
80th Anniversary 1945-2025
Saturday 10th – Sunday 11th of June



- *Military & Classic Vehicle Displays*
- *Static & Live Fire Weapons Displays*
- *'Living History' Displays*
- *Military Charity Stands*
- *Reenactment (with weapons& fireworks)*
- *Saturday Evening Party with Live Music*
- *Remembrance Ceremony*
- *Helicopter Fly in from Historic Helicopters*



For more information, to book tickets for the evening, camping or a stand, please contact us on 07909102167 or foxandgrapespub@gmail.com

Fox & Grapes
Presents;
80th ANNIVERSARY
VE DAY WEEKEND
EVENING
ENTERTAINMENT
10TH MAY 2025



Music from 7:00pm with:

One Point Five

Followed by:

The Hummingbirds

Period Fancy Dress and/or Uniforms are welcome.
Enjoy a great night of Music and Entertainment.

Doors Open 6:30pm– Music from 7:00pm

Tickets £10.00 per person

Coronation Hall, Fox & Grapes, Lifton, PL16 0AJ

foxandgrapespub@gmail.com 07909102167

Richard Simpsons joys of trialling.

Lighter and brighter

When you enter a Motor Cycling Club Trial, you must prepare to tackle most of the sections and road miles in darkness. So, here's what I did to prepare for last year's Edinburgh Trial.

My Beta X-Trainer 300's standard lights aren't the best, being directly powered off the alternator. I'd long ago replaced the back light with an LED stop/tail and number-plate illuminator from Oxford Products, but a useable replacement for the feeble 35/35 w headlamp was more of a challenge. Eventually, I found a company in Poland: ET Racing; who make an LED replacement, incorporating a rectifier to stop the AC supply from turning the headlamp into a strobe.

It fitted easily and cast bright beams, but the X-Trainer's front mudguard is just that bit too high so there are also sharp shadows just in front of the bike. Not a problem on the road, but a bit of a hazard off it. Good but not good enough.

I'd also purchased a Strands Syberia LED floodlight from 24-MX that would hopefully fill some of the gaps, but hadn't worked out quite how I would attach it to the bike. The next challenge was navigation. I've been using a home-made roadbook holder that John Turner built from a posh whisky bottle box and two pieces of water pipe, but it has become increasingly battered over the years, and now was probably a good time to retire it.

Having already blown the machine preparation budget on the ET Racing headlamp, I fell for the sunken-costs fallacy and invested further in an illuminated manually-operated roadbook holder from f2r, and a cheap but very well-made mounting bracket from Nice CNC in China. Bolting these to the handlebar of the X-Trainer, I realised that I could make a plate bracket up from a scrap fragment of aluminium sheet, and use this to attach the floodlight to the roadbook holder via pre-drilled holes in the base. Bingo...it all fitted.

I reasoned I'd only be using the floodlight on the sections, and being an LED unit it would need a DC supply so wired it directly to the X-Trainer's battery via a handlebar switch and an in-line fuse, then back to a pre-existing earth on the main frame of the bike. If you are doing this, establish the polarity of the lamp before finalising the connections: being LED the lamp will only work if wired the 'right way around'. The X-Trainer's dash incorporates a voltmeter, so I could

make sure it didn't place too great a load on the electrics. The entire rig is attached/detached by just four bolts and two plug-in electrical connections.

Illumination of the roadbook is handled by LEDs built into the rollers, which backlight the roadbook scroll, and I powered this using a Michelin Bibendum powerbank that I had been given as a promotional gift some years before. Static testing revealed the roadbook's LEDs still glowing brightly after being connected for 24 hours, so it could handle the dark part of the trial with ease.

A night-time roadtest with the rig all in place revealed the bike now had enough lighting to illuminate a football field, and the bike's battery could easily power everything. All I had to remember to do was to not leave the floodlight on if the bike's engine wasn't running. The Edinburgh Trial itself was not without its challenges, but at no point did I feel my lights weren't bright enough. The spotlamp was far too bright to use on the road. The only issue with the kit I'd fitted was that at one point the roadbook went mad, and wound the route on all by itself. I can only think it was a vibration issue. Luckily my companion Rick Lees had the navigational lead at that point.

On trials gearing, his Triumph Tiger Cub is happy at maximum speeds of between 35 – 45 mph. Particularly at night this is a sensible pace, as there is far less scope for navigational errors that can sap morale, see you slip behind schedule, and (worst of all) put yourself and others in danger riding against the flow of trials traffic.

Keeping warm

While it was incredibly and mercifully dry and clear, temperatures during the night of the Edinburgh Trial fell to zero or below. I confess it didn't seem that cold to me, and I only realised it was freezing when I saw the roadside frost after breakfast on the way to Excelsior.

Here's what I wore:

Base layer: Mountain Warehouse long-sleeve thermal top. Tesco fleece leggings over my underwear. Long 10000 Step lined boot socks.

Middle layer: Mountain Warehouse Coolmax long-sleeve top. Mountain Warehouse midlayer long-sleeve top. Thor thick cotton MX shirt.

Protection: Alpine Stars soft kidney belt. Solid motocross knee/shin armour. Axo full-sleeve body-armour with a one-piece chestplate and a spine protector.
Alpine Stars

Enduro boots. Bell Adventure helmet with visor.

Outer layer: O'Neal motocross/enduro pants with a water-repellent coating. Hein Gericke Tuareg lightweight ventilated enduro jacket with armour in shoulders and sleeves. Alpine Stars neck tube.

Gloves: Mechanix Coldworks gloves.

Storage: CamelBak rucksack, which contained a cheap lightweight one-piece waterproof that I didn't use.

Here's what I learned:

Cycling tights with a padded seat might have kept my arse more comfortable after many long hours on the X-Trainer's narrow saddle.

Multiple layers of thin fabric keep you warmer than a single thick layer. I think the friction of the fabrics rubbing against each other generates a heat of its own.

Wicking fabric, which dries the skin, is vital to avoid the post-section chills you'll get from a cotton T-shirt or similar if it is next to the skin.

The necktube can be pulled over your head to stop you getting too cold during long 'helmet off' waits.

I fell off once, and did a backwards downhill somersault to the concern of watching marshals. My body armour meant I could just jump back to my feet again, with no pain or injury.

The Mechanix gloves, which are designed for manual work in hazardous sub-zero environments and incorporate impact and friction protection and high-grip panels on the palms, are the best winter motorcycling gloves I have ever worn. They allow reasonable dexterity, and are so well insulated that, although my motorcycle has heated handlebar grips, I never needed to turn them on!



Tailpiece

So here we are with my very final newsletter. Way back in August 2018 at a committee meeting there was a discussion regarding regular newsletters and the fact when it did come out Joe had little to put in it, add to this the cost of photocopying and mailing, along with a falling membership it became obvious a change of direction was needed.

“So what happened was” as they say this bloke opens his big mouth and says “why don’t we do an online newsletter” ? All eyes fell on me, for the third bloody time I was the new editor with sod all to write about. The first edition was a solitary page in September of that year reaching all of around 60 people. Never mind plod on, as the months went by the readership steadily grew, then good old Jonathan Kelly had the idea of sharing it on something called Facebook ... this also worked, between the two methods of media not only did the readership grow but so did the membership.

Things seemed to be progressing nicely the celebrations for the Club Centenary were also coming along really well, BANG, Covid hits, motorsport and our celebrations go on hold, eventually things eased the Club took over the square in town for a Saturday with a good showcase of 2,3 & 4 wheeled vehicles, the rain put in a good show for us but we are trailers we don’t let showers holding hands put us off, even 90 year old David Uglow drove over from Callington in his HRG to bolster things.

Eventually things settled down again and the club committee went from strength to strength, event attendance is good (as shown by the awards evening) Don’t get me wrong I don’t take any credit for any of this, we are all a team, and what a great team we have. I recently asked Jonathan what he reckons is now the current readership, between the two medias it’s somewhere between 400 – 500 readers a month, brilliant, but as Nigel commented so why do we still struggle getting marshals ? Good point.

When I first started doing the newsletters roughly 1987 (via The Reluctant Publishing Company) my first contributor was Robin Moore, he has been a stalwart contributor over the years with his “did you know series” , since the online version Robin still contributed, but I also have many other regular contributors (you know who you are). As with any good front man there is always the lady in the background giving support, this particular one is also blessed with better IT skills than me and has helped me out more times than I care to admit, thankyou Vivien. Jonathan (Jonno) Kelly has been the man who puts it into a form that we can understand so another brick.

Anyway that’s enough from me, please do give the new editor your support otherwise it makes for an impossible job, Thanks again to all the contributors.

J.T. signing off.