

## Monthly Newsletter December 2020

Yes we are well into December and only just getting this newsletter out to you, apologies but I felt I ought to wait until the committee had a Zoom meeting so as I could report all the exciting news to you. First, there is a change in the position of Chairman, Pete Cooper has done sterling work over the years to keep the club active where possible, but the last nine months as we all know has been a bit of a test for everyone. Unlike a lot of people Pete has been working all through the two lockdowns meaning he has had little time for things outside of work and has therefore decided to stand down as chair of the Club. We are all appreciative of the efforts he (and Jan) have put in over the years, he will still be an active member of the committee.

This left our club without a chairman so a metaphoric box of straws was passed around containing one short straw, yes I managed to pull the short one so I am now Acting Chairman as well as newsletter gatherer/editor. Those of you with long memories will remember I used to do this job many years ago and to be honest I was not expecting to be doing it again, but hey ho, as I have absolutely nothing else to do why not. I did say I would only do it as a temporary stop gap but I'm not convinced anyone was listening at that point.

Amongst the items discussed at committee was the topic of the Launceston Trial, it was decided we should do our utmost to run the event, the date of March the 7<sup>th</sup> is set for it, at the usual venue of Lew Woods, obviously this is on the grounds that the Covid pandemic eases and that Mr Newman is happy for us to use his land. Entries for it will be online and all paperwork is kept to the absolute minimum, Darren Ruby has volunteered to act as Covid officer, fingers crossed for a good event.

The centenary celebration is still very much on the cards, in addition to a display in the Launceston Museum we are planning to take over the square on Saturday the 7<sup>th</sup> of August for a display of bikes and cars, we are also looking at getting a book published on the history of the club, we have a large amount of memorabilia, photographs etc. which will definitely prove interesting.

I have to remind everyone that it's that time of year when your subs are due , online payments are preferred via the website but if you are unable to do this

a cheque for £10 handed to any of the committee members will find its way to the treasurer whereupon a new membership card will be issued.

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It's now time to hand you over to our club President Robin Moore. Although I do have a correction to make concerning last months article. First paragraph line 7 should read Harry Lauder's recording, not Lander.

### **Alvis and the other lady in my life part 7**

*The focal point the next day was Stoneleigh in Warwickshire close to the home of Alvis in Coventry, where everyone was brought together prior to going to the final venue at the Alvis Works. Stoneleigh was later to become the National Agricultural Centre and home to the Royal Show. Close by was the Massey Ferguson Training and Development Centre which provided the ideal location and required space to assemble the largest gathering of Alvis cars ever, for by this time we were over 400 strong. In addition there was an area close to the "Rally Field" where the works had laid out a demonstration of some of the armoured fighting vehicles, Saracen and the Saladin.*

*The weather continued to hold good, as it had been throughout the tour, and this was a bonus for everyone as they made sure their steeds were looking their best for the grand cavalcade under police escort when we departed for the short journey to the Alvis premises in Holyhead Road in Coventry. Here once again the vast car park was able to accommodate all the cars. We were ushered into the large works canteen and given a warm welcome as we enjoyed the afternoon tea provided for us. Lovely individual fancy cakes topped with fondant icing and with the Alvis triangle in red.*

*It was with mixed emotions that we came to the end of this once in a lifetime event. On a "high" that we had been part of this great experience, but tinged with slight morose that it was all over and could not, and would not ever be repeated. As a dear friend often reminded me –"Everything Comes to Go". We had made many new friendships that remained with us always, although over the last 50 years numbers have inevitably reduced. Those of us that are left are "Playing in extra time"*

*However, it was also inevitable that reunions would be held so we could all meet up again to celebrate this major event in Alvis history. And so it was, that for a number of years following whilst the memories remained strong and advancing years took their toll we got together annually. I will recall some of the highlights of these reunions in the final part of my Alvis story next month.*

*RHTM to be continued*



## **Launceston & North Cornwall Motor Club Ltd**

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### **PROVISIONAL YEAR 2021 EVENTS CALENDAR**

**Name Location Date Status**

Launceston Trial Classic	Lewdown Area	07-03-2021	C
Northgate Sporting Trial ASWMC Round	Ashleigh, Lifton	28-03-2021	C
AGM	TBA		
Spry Sporting Trial	Trevilla Farm, Marshgate	05-06-2021	C
Motor Traders Car Trial	Waterloo Farm, North Petherwin	11-07-2021	C
Centenary Parade	Launceston Town Square	07-08-2021	
Testing Production Trial	Cannaframe	15-08-2021	C
David Ayers Sporting Trial MS UK, ASWMC & BTRDA Round	Trevilla Farm, Marshgate	12-09-2021	C
Tamar Classic Trial ASWMC & ACTC Round	East Cornwall & West Devon	17-10-2021	C
Ron Beer Sporting Trial	Ashleigh, Lifton	21-11-2021	C

## *The Inside Line* Book Review by Richard Simpson

### **When two-strokes ruled the earth.....**

It could be argued that there has never been a tougher sport than 500cc world championship motocross racing. And there certainly has never been a tougher motorsport than 500cc world championship motocross racing.

Unlike most motorsports, it was one where you could not buy your way to success: every rider was there on merit. And unlike virtually every other sport you can think of, each round consisted of almost 45 minutes of maximum physical and mental exertion, followed by a brief period in which machine and rider had to be repaired and readied, before the whole process was repeated with another race just as long, and even tougher given the track would now be rutted out of all recognition, than the first. Relax, even for a moment, physically or mentally, and you would be overtaken, or fall, or both.

Just how tough?

Like riding a bucking bronco, while other competitors throw rocks at you.

No F1-style starting grid, just 40 riders all lined up in a row, and all aiming at the narrow inside line of the first corner 200 metres away. Fail to be first to arrive there and the rear wheels of every machine in front will be firing dirt and rocks at you until you can pass it.

And *The Inside Line* is former racer Rob Andrews' new book, which details what it was like behind the handlebars of a 500cc two-stroke monster motocross bike, with a 60 + bhp engine, a foot of suspension travel at each end and an all-up weight of just 220 lb or so. For the record, that makes it lighter and far more powerful than any of today's motocross machines, and the races themselves were substantially longer and on far tougher tracks than today's.

Andrews admits that he was never the best of the world championship's riders, but, as one of the most dedicated, he raced against the best, including a second-place finish in a field containing seven past and present world champions.

He was beset by a variety of problems including the inevitable mechanical failures, manufacturer team 'politics', and a bizarre and horrendous injury sustained when he came off second-best in an argument with a plate-glass window in the Tewkesbury branch of Tesco!

Andrews writes vividly of both the raw excitement of the races and the contrasting hard grind of training, travel and machine preparation that it took to get there, all unfiltered by any ghost writer. The days of the 'wild men' of motocross were over by the time he reached the top, so sex and drugs and rock & roll are in short supply (although he hints that his first child may have been conceived on honeymoon in the parking lot of a suspension factory in Holland), but the gut-wrenching thrills of the greatest circuit of all: The Citadel, Namur, Belgium; are described in graphic detail.

Injuries and bad luck combined against Andrews, but ultimately the entire sport was doomed. At anything less than the highest professional levels, the average rider would go faster on a cheaper and less-powerful 250 cc machine than a 500. Anyone good enough to ride a 500 faster than they could a 250 would also be good enough to command a sponsorship deal, so in the end there was no-one prepared to hand over their own cash for a 500, and the class went the way of the dinosaurs. From the top of the mountain, the only way forward is downhill.

However, Andrews' lucid prose and a wealth of spectacular contemporary photography combine to take the reader back to a never-to-be-forgotten, or repeated, era, when dinosaurs, in the form of 500cc two-stroke bikes, really did rule the earth, or at least the track.

You won't find The Inside Line in bookshops or on Amazon, but you can order it direct from <https://theinsidelinebook.com/products/the-inside-line-racing-the-500cc-world-motocross-championship>

At £40, it's not cheap, but I'd defy anyone to name a better sports biography.

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### ***Ignominious Rescue !!***



It's amazing how the simplest of ideas can all of a sudden turn badly wrong. Last Monday was a beautiful frosty day so I thought what better day to take the Dellow for a spin, after all it needs to get miles on the clock to get it run in. I had an early lunch and set off into town to do a quick bit of shopping, then headed out of town on the road in the direction of Bude, the car was sounding lovely as we climbed the hill from Yeolmbridge, as I entered Ladycross approaching the school there was an extremely loud bang from the back of the car followed by the rear wheels completely locking up, sending the car into a full 360, then 180 spin coming to a halt in the middle of the road straddling the white line facing the direction I had just come from.

For a moment I was in a bit of a daze trying to comprehend what had happened and at the same time being grateful that the car hadn't turned over

or hit someone coming in the opposite direction. I'm now sat there holding up two rows of traffic, I get out, but the car will not move, it's all a bit surreal, first try to direct traffic, then in the lull try to push the car but it refuses to move. After a few minutes a couple of guys stop their cars and come to offer assistance, between the three of us we spend the next ten minutes slowly pushing/dragging a reluctant Dellow, if it were a donkey a carrot would have worked miracles, eventually it is moved to the side of the road, I'm now hoping no one drives into it. I thank the two good Samaritans and they trundle off. Club Sec and stalwart Andy Prosser lives some 400 yards back the road so it's on the phone to him, he's in town but says "I'll be there in ten" and he is, farmer Julian is just around the corner so Andy commandeers him and his tractor to get the road cleared (hence photo) which is done by lifting the back end of the car and taking it to his yard. Fortunately Andy also has a trailer in his drive so the car is loaded onto it and taken back to my place where it is now undergoing axle surgery.

In a nutshell the whole diff/planet gears and pin shattered, and no it wasn't low on oil, it's all a bit of a mystery, but as Andy says "it's nothing that can't be fixed if you throw enough money at it". As they say you never know what's around the corner! As you have probably guessed I am very grateful to those who assisted me, in particular Andy, always the man who can!

Before I sign off I would just like to say get well soon to Alan Merton who is having a bit of NHS TLC at the moment.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy, Healthy New Year, let's all hope it's a better one than 2020.

All for this month.

J.T.            Please feel free to send your contributions [billjan299@gmail.com](mailto:billjan299@gmail.com)