

OXFORD MOTOR CLUB



Simon and Nicola Phillips on the Bramley Targa Rally March 2020

July 2020 Magazine



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EDITORIAL

Hi Everyone, finally some good news in these strange times. Motorsport is GO! Already there have been several motorsport events in many disciplines around the country and we are pleased to share details of our OMC Autotest and Akeman Rally.

The Autotest looks to be running at full capacity and entries are coming in for the Akeman 20/20 rally, there is a link for the regs embedded in the article. I will be looking forward to helping out on the events as needed and it will be nice to see OMC members out competing once again.

Thankyou to everyone that has given me content for this edition, it's a bumper 34 page edition with a nice mix of articles. Please keep writing and sending content to me, there is no need to wait for a reminder.

I'm finally back at work and good to be getting back to a bit of normality. I've already been to three tests in the last two weeks so it looks like people are eager to get out in their Rally Cars. Formula 1 seems to got off to a good start with some interesting races and some fans returning after a few years of disinterest, due to it being the only motorsport you can watch.

I've just about got my own rally car ready to go after 2 years of inactivity and am hoping to do the Jersey Rally in October, so if you want to navigate for me, please get in touch.

I'm looking forward to filling the next magazine with reports from recent events.

Chris Hambly

Laptop Wanted

Does anyone have an old Laptop that is going free or cheap that they wish to donate/sell to enable me to keep doing the magazine and membership work? My current laptop is suffering from old age and it is getting frustrating to edit the magazine when it sometimes takes 10 mins to insert a picture!

If you have anything, please contact me at magazine@oxfordmotorclub.co.uk

Twisted Arms Grass Autotest

Sunday 26th July 2020

With '2 in a car' competition currently prohibited unless from the same household, it was more important than ever that we run our Grass Autotest this year. With lockdown restrictions lifting we weren't certain there'd be enough interest or support from competitors or marshals. Fortunately, our online survey confirmed what I'd hoped/expected; that most people are itching to get back out on events as long as appropriate precautions are in place to maintain social distancing. To achieve this, the event is quite different from previous years. A maximum of 20 entries, with no entries on the day, no scrutineering, no on the day signing on, no drivers briefing, awards ceremony, and most disappointingly, no barbeque. Initially it also seemed that passengers and double driving would also not be allowed but MS UK have since relaxed this restriction.

Due to the requirement to avoid handling time cards, we're now going to use the online timing system created by John Clavey. This will allow us to record times via an app on a mobile phone which is then uploaded to the system, with the results automatically calculated. The link to the site to see the results in realtime can be found [here](#)



Despite all the changes, the basic event format remains the same, with four tests, 2 runs per test at our usual Pusey Farm venue. The low grip surface is perfect for sharpening up your car control at sensible speeds and is a great introduction to motorsport where virtually any car can be competitive.

With over two weeks still to go, the event is already full but we are taking reserves so you might still get a run.

As David Smith is unable to run the event this year, I've stepped into his shoes, so please bear with me as I learn the ropes and the whole club adjusts to running events which comply with social distancing guidelines.

If you are coming along to compete, marshal, or spectate, please pay particular attention to the Covid-19 section of the [event regulations](#) to ensure we keep everyone safe.

Many thanks to Tim & Matthew Green for the use of their venue, John Clavey for use of his timing system, and all the timekeepers/Marshals/organisers in the club. Without your support the event simply would not run.

Look forward to seeing you all on the 26th.

Simon Phillips

Oxford MC AKEMAN 20/20 RALLY - **23rd August 2020**

For most of us life is more than a little challenging at present but trying to predict how and when motorsport will return to any kind of normal requires a crystal ball.

We still require a few new world rulings to fall into place but if they do then we could be one of, if not the first event requiring drivers and navigators to take place.

If this event takes place during 2020, exactly what the format may be remains to be seen but we are doing the necessary work as we live in hope and I am ever optimistic. If we manage to run there will be up to 75 miles of Road Rally for up to 20 cars and if we are very lucky there will be some tests.

We do however have technology on our side. Over the past few months the team have been developing the RalliLink App and an organising program which will enable us to run with the minimum of face to face contact with either organisers, marshals or fellow competitors. This will be different, but it helps under the present circumstances and what is more we have Motorsport UK on side and enthusiastic for our efforts.



Without some explanation the above may look a little complicated but in reality it is quite intuitive and easy to use. A full explanation will be given to all competitors in advance.

It's asking a lot right now but if we are allowed to proceed and if you feel that it is safe to do so then I hope that you will support us.

For further details and the regulations click; [Akeman Regs.](#)

The Organising team.

Another busy weekend

Through February the 205 was treated to some long-awaited TLC in the shape of a new cambelt kit, & water pump. A simple job turned difficult when the Water pump seemed to be seized solid into the block. Many an hour was spent with lump hammer and some heat to finally shift it from said resting place. I also fitted a new master cylinder after the old cylinder started weeping after Bovington last November.

All this work was to ensure the car was in good shape for Farnborough MC's Bramley Targa on March 8th. A few shakedown runs suggested the car was ready to go, although the worn gear linkage was getting worse and would need sorting after the event. Not wanting to risk the car two days before the Targa and wanting to avoid having another weekend with two events, I'd decided not to enter Dolphins' Spring 12 car on March 6th.

However, a call from Brian Cammack on the morning of the event asking if I'd like to step in as Haydn couldn't make it changed my plans. The car was ready and the opportunity to run car 1 was appealing, so I said yes. It was only after hanging up the phone to Brian that I remembered that I'd removed the spots from the car a few days earlier. As 205 headlights are like candles at the best of times, the spots would have to go back on. Fortunately, I work from home so a lunchtime trip out to the garage should see them refitted. Sometime later, after chasing some poor connections, and checking the bulbs, one spotlight was still not playing ball. After much rechecking I found that one bulb had a broken filament which was just making a partial connection so would work intermittently. I had no spare so it was a quick trip to the Motor Factors in Silverstone to pick up new bulbs. Bizarrely, when I returned, the car battery was now holding less than 2v. I'd never seen a battery lose voltage so quickly. Fortunately, the 206 was sitting there. I'd just take the battery from that. Unfortunately, the battery is slightly longer than on the 205 so, while it physically fitted onto the tray, the bolted bracket in the 205 couldn't be used. The solution was one of the most disgraceful bodes I've ever had to do, consisting of a ratchet strap, bungee cord and cable ties. It wouldn't have passed even the most visually impaired of scrutineers, so I was thankful there are no such checks at 12 car. At least it was secure..ish. I'm lucky this Friday afternoon was quiet in work as most of the time was spent in the garage.. The battery failure was a nuisance but it probably saved me an early retirement on Sunday's Targa.

There had been heavy rain on the days leading up to the event but despite Friday itself being dry, there was plenty of water on the roads, especially at the start venue near Chieveley services which was a like a small lake. Despite a few overshoots/missed junctions we had a clean run, apart from dropping 7 minutes at TC7. Ian Hazleton and Paul Hardy were keeping us honest and managed not to drop any time but a mis-written code board by them between TC7 and 8 put them behind

us, and so it finished, with us winning by 3 marks. Two wins in a row for me and Brian's first ever win on a Dolphin 12 car.



Fitting of a new battery, removal of the spots and a very quick wash was all I had time to do on the Saturday before loading the car onto the trailer ready for the following days Targa. The gear linkage had become a lot worse during the 12 car but I just didn't get round to looking at it. Targa's typically only use 1st and 2nd anyway..

My wife Nicola was Navigating for me again. After some good results on our first two Targa's, we'd then had a run of poor ones so hoped this event would give us a much needed boost.

Bramley is a maze of narrow, undulating, twisty roads punctuated by large open pens with a mix of tarmac and gravel surfaces. After the rain the day before, it was all pretty muddy and greasy with large sections of standing water.

The event had 10 tests, mostly run in pairs, a longer test followed by a shorter one. We started fairly steadily as penalties for going the wrong side of cones pretty much wipes out any chance of a result. Something we'd found out to our cost at the last Farnborough event. We were both a little rusty and had a couple of wrong slots, and clipped a cone on test 3, collecting a 10 second penalty. Grip was at a premium, with some overly aggressive driving leading to a few lock ups and stalls. It wasn't till the afternoon that I started using the diff and kept the power on in the tighter section to pull us around. A swap from 14 to 15" tyres on the front also seemed to help with grip. Some tests were restructured due to an access road from one test becoming almost impassable by midday. We also lost the last test due to delays. It seemed quite a few people were struggling with grip and in need of recovery. You only needed to get a little off line to find yourself stuck in a ditch.



In the end we finished 5th overall and best mixed crew. Not quite the second place we'd had last year but still good to be near the front. (are they getting quicker or are we getting slower?). Congratulations to Ben Griffin and Peter Littlefield for winning for the second year in a row. Most importantly for us, we'd had an enjoyable day throwing the car around and the car was still intact.

The speeds are slow and the tests short on a targa compared to a stage event but in the heat of a test they are almost as enjoyable but for vastly less expense. Judging by the popularity of these events it seems many others are of the same opinion.

My Motorsport history is a litany of 'what if's' so these good results were a pleasant change. Unfortunately, with the onset of the Coronavirus, it seems none of us will be competing for quite some time. Let's hope we're all in good shape when we do finally get behind the wheel competitively again. At least it'll give me time to sort that bloody gear linkage!



Hopefully see you at an event soon.

Stay safe.

Simon Phillips

Rallying Tales from another Century.

In response to Chris Hambly's request for any material for the magazine during these strange times, I offer the following as my (brief?) history of motorsport involvement:

Very few people at Oxford Motor Club will know of me, but my name is Alan Jones and I have lived in Swindon since 1989. I first encountered OMC when I marshalled on the Bullnose Road Rally in 1999 and when I found out what a keen and welcoming bunch you were, I joined OMC and have been a member ever since. I continued marshalling on the Bullnose Road Rally every year to 2006, usually wearing a silly hat and accompanied by various family members (son Chris and/or daughter Amy), followed by marshalling on the Bullnose Endurance rally 2008 – 2010.

However, long before these appearances, I was born and brought up in Port Talbot, South Wales (home town of Richard Burton, Anthony Hopkins, Rob Brydon and many others), except I was more interested in motorsport than treading the boards. As a teenager I was scrounging lifts to spectate at anything in South Wales and from 1971 when I had a licence and my own wheels (children could earn money doing part-time jobs in those days, honest!), I seemed to be marshalling or spectating at events nearly every weekend (Boxing Day 1972, by myself, a freezing safety marshal in the middle of Epynt). Having joined Port Talbot Motor Club (PTMC), which was and still is, heavily biased towards rallying and obviously with such fabulous Welsh lanes available, it was a no-brainer to concentrate on rallying.

As with everyone, money (or lack of) often dictates your life choices, so after reading all the books I could find on the subject, I started navigating on road rallies in 1973 (Ford Anglia or Mini 850 for those of you with access to museum books) with the intention of driving as soon as I could. In 1974 I joined the Royal Air Force, which apart from an interest in planes, was mainly to get the money to go rallying. I still managed to fit in some navigating and spectating over the next 18 months while I was training to be an Air Radar technician at Cosford, near Wolverhampton, but I was glad when I had completed the training. "Join the RAF and see the World" was the sales pitch, so my first posting was St. Athan, not far from Barry Island and about 20 miles from my home town! Actually this was a win, win situation for me; as I was still near the best lanes in the country and I could maintain my contacts in PTMC.

So for the remainder of 1975, I continued where I had left off, navigating, marshalling, or spectating and by January 1976 had also prepared my Mini 1300GT and was entered on my first road event as a (frustrated) driver. Familiar story, too fast too soon and despite being quite competitive in the Novice class (ha!), after 50 miles a ravine jumped out in front of me and it took most of Sunday to dig and drag the car out with just a broken rear subframe suffered – very lucky.



My attempt at driving!

Realising I was probably a better navigator than driver, the next month I teamed up with a driver from PTMC (Ken Davies and his Mk1 1300 Escort Sport – how much would that be worth now?) and we entered 12 road rallies over the coming year. Ken was not mechanically-minded, but we were friendly with a local mechanic who kept the Sport working well – this excellent mechanic was John Thomas, a top class navigator and co-driver who was responsible for bringing Ari Vatanen to the UK. Not only was the Sport pretty reliable, but John also acted as my mentor, helping me with advice, sharing his experiences and even lending me his and Ari's pace notes for Epynt.

I did deviate from road events during the year though, doing 2 of those funny stage events with other drivers. One of these forest events was the National level Castrol 76, in a smart Mk1 RS2000 and apart from drowning out in a good Welsh ford on one stage, we suffered a few other car problems and eventually finished 106th overall. Not a good result, but at least we finished ahead of a certain Mr. Vatanen who had car problems of his own and finished 117th!!

Back to the pre-plot road rallies, where Ken and I had some measure of success during the year as we both learnt the skills required, being quick, consistent, but mainly following the correct route and finishing all 12 rallies entered, which somehow resulted in me becoming the 1976 PTMC Champion Navigator.

A slight change for the next year saw me with various drivers competing on five Welsh pre-plot road events, one of which happened to be the Motoring News Championship Cilwendeg Rally, a classic little event of 195 miles all within a 12-mile radius of the Newcastle Emlyn start/finish, where we finished 22nd overall in a Mexico (37th last year in the Sport). Three stage events were also entered including using notes on the Virgo Galaxy over Epynt in a Cortina Mk1 Twin Cam, but the main focus for 1977 was the RAF Motor Sports Association (RAFMSA) road rally championship.

These events were dotted all around the country so it involved driving to the start area (e.g. Sheffield, Norwich etc.), meeting up with the driver and competing overnight before returning back to South Wales. Only two slight problems, quite often the navigation used was all of the plot and bash variants which OMC know and love but came as quite a culture shock to me, while occasionally the event used pre-plot, or even a combination of the two!! And the second problem was the long drive

home on Sunday, trying to stay awake by turning the radio up full, winding the windows fully down, or singing loudly, until it was obvious I needed to stop somewhere for a nap, then repeat.

My RAF driver and I entered six of the championship qualifying events which proved to be a steep learning curve for us both, his first year driving and me grappling with English roads and the navigation, but we were classified as finishers on five of these events and didn't even start the sixth rally in Bedford when the car broke on the way to the start and I went marshalling instead. This resulted in us both finishing 3rd in our respective Road Rally Championships.

1978 started on Epynt again, using notes on the Virgo Galaxy Rally but gearbox problems saw us retire. However, it became clear that Ari's pace notes were actually costing us time in places!? Let me explain – for example where the note said “flat over jump, immediate 90R”, my drivers would perhaps be slightly more cautious with their speed approaching the jump and then find they had to accelerate again to reach the 90R. Obviously Mr Vatanen travelling at Warp factor 3 was landing from the jump and had to brake immediately, so the notes were correct but just too fast for us mere mortals in places.

I had a new driver for an attempt at the RAFMSA championship this year, Alastair Roe, an RAF mechanic from Cosford, with his Mini 1070S. A very highly-strung machine but smelling lovely running on Castrol R and handled beautifully by Alastair. In fact our first event together was the Three Counties Rally, starting and finishing from Banbury and while we finished 11th overall, more importantly we were first RAF crew home. But the car was quite noisy and I was hoarse by the finish. We did have a few other good finishes but the noise was a problem occasionally and on one event in Norfolk we were experiencing brake problems when the noise marshal also took a dislike to the noisy Mini and we were out.

Then, in August I received a phone call from John Thomas, asking whether I was available for the National status Peter Russek Manuals Stage Rally since neither he nor the usual co-driver (Rob Roebuck) could make it. Could I make it?? Silly question. So I was co-driving alongside David Jones in his Preci-Spark Gp1 RS2000, back on Epynt again but at night and without notes plus the local forests mainly in the daytime. (Twins David and Godfrey Jones rallied identical cars at this time, but eventually went racing, becoming British GT Champions.) Again it was a steep learning curve for us both, Epynt was brilliant, but we picked up 2 punctures on Esgair Dafydd early in the day after hitting a bank. Then typically after we had set a fastest stage time on Stage 19, the exhaust started blowing on the next stage before we picked up another puncture which contributed to us rolling into a ditch (Godfrey also rolled out during the day). We were stuck there, despite being in the top ten overall at that point and the event was won by David Stokes with Jimmy McRae second.



David Jones / Alan Jones on the Peter Russek 1978

Back in the lanes again at the beginning of September, despite it not being in the RAF championship, Alastair and I entered the Cilwendeg but after nearly half the route, a driveshaft broke on an uphill hairpin and we were out of that as well. Things were getting busier than normal now, with another championship round in Mid-Wales, the Acropolis, which turned out to be our first in the car in truly wet conditions and the twitchy Mini hit standing water and spun us out, leaving us stuck in a muddy ditch and no points for our efforts.

Apart from actually working in the RAF between rallies, I was also getting married on the weekend after the Acropolis!! (A back-story to this was that I had checked with the RAF administration people if there was any chance of a posting to Germany? *Possibly in 7 years time* was the reply. Ok, with no possibility of a posting soon, could we buy a house locally before we got married. *No problem.*) So we got married on the Saturday and travelled to Devon for the first part of our honeymoon, then came back to our house on the Wednesday to pick up some stuff before going to stay in the Chester area. While there, we looked at some of the lanes in North Wales, as you do – because the week after our wedding I was leaving my new wife Karol alone to go competing on the Bartley rally in the Mini again. (How on earth did I ever get away with this? Oh, and I was posted 6 months later by the way!) Alastair and I did not have a good run in the fog on the rally and basically just went for a finish after having to bodge a fix on the front suspension. Honeymoon over.



Alastair Roe / Alan Jones on the Western Jeans Nocturnal Rally (Sheffield)

The next month saw us back on the championship trail near Weston-s-Mare where we again had some car problems but managed to finish and this all helped to put me in a strong position with the championship drawing to a close. However, Alastair and the Mini would not be available for the rest of the year so I was on the hunt for another RAF driver for the last round near Sheffield and finally got a ride in an ex-London to Sydney, Cortina MkII Twin Cam. Neither the event nor the result was memorable but after all the problems and sacrifices throughout the year, I was the 1978 RAFMSA Champion Navigator and Alastair finished as 2nd driver.

Amazingly for me, the RAF had now decided to enter their Land Rovers on stage rallies in 1979 alongside the Army crews and had been running tests to find the fastest RAF Regiment drivers. To make sure these drivers were kept on route and followed the rules, they were to have experienced RAFMSA co-drivers with them and I was lucky enough to be one of those selected. Apart from safety modifications the vehicles were typical Service Land Rovers, underpowered with flimsy, flapping doors, canvas roof and very vague steering! If I had thought the Mini had been twitchy and highly-strung, these took it to another level. Plus the other rally crews knew that all the Service Land Rovers were running at the end of the field, so if anyone had gone off on a stage and had time to attach a tow rope they would be looking for a Rover to tow them out and usually any of the Rover crews who were not running competitively by then would oblige.

Based out of Catterick, the first event for our team of three Land Rovers was a very snowy Mintex International in February. Ideal conditions for a 4WD you might think, but the route had to be shortened because of the conditions with the sheet ice causing everybody problems but at least my driver Willie Meldrum and I were classified as finishers, nearly last, but first RAF crew home.



Willie Meldrum / Alan Jones on the Mintex International 1979

My next event was the Scottish International in June with Mel Bonfield as my driver this time, except it was our turn to have problems when we rolled our Rover onto its side (my side!) on Stage 27. Apart from trying to get out of the car as fast as possible, which is normal, our added incentive was that we didn't know our position on the track but did know that Roger Clark was running late and had started behind us in the experimental Ford Fiesta! But all was well, he got past easily and we had a tow rope attached ready for the next Rover able to stop and pull us upright. We were driveable but with a bigger gap than usual above my door and black tape covering half my screen. Because we had lost about 15 minutes, we were stopping to pull other cars/Land Rovers out of the foliage for the rest of the rally (including the car of dancer Lionel Blair – a big celebrity in those days, just ask your grandparents) but we still finished and weren't last.

I wasn't expecting to get back to road rallies for a while, but another navigator (Keith Bevan) who was competing against me in 1976 had now built an Avenger 1600 and invited me to navigate on Port Talbot's Novice Rally. So despite never having practised together, we joined the other 83 crews for the 120 mile route and promptly won it. Whereas I was merely a frustrated driver, Keith was obviously a better driver than a navigator (and he was a pretty good navigator), so we started what turned out to be a very long partnership as we continued 1979 with regular top ten finishes on Welsh Association Championship rallies and would even finish just outside the top ten on Motoring News rounds.

As mentioned earlier, I was now posted to – Brawdy, near Haverfordwest in West Wales, so besides having moved house this also meant even more travelling to get anywhere in the rest of the country but at least I was still in Wales.

I was back in the Land Rovers in November when a team of six RAF Landies drove to Germany to take part in the 3-day Exercise Magnum Spirit '79 event. A BAOR (British Army of the Rhine) Championship round, it involved a 500-mile navigational road event split over two nights with 4WD tests including a special stage sandwiched between the two nights. It was as hard as it sounds, especially the 3½

hour rest halt after the first night with over 100 military Land Rovers parked up in a forest “somewhere in Germany” and the temperature at -3°C, with all crews sleeping, eating and washing in tents (the Army) or their vehicles (the RAF)! My driver this time was the team leader, Dick Lewis, and after an exhausting few days the RAF team finished 3rd, 5th, 7th (me and Dick) and 16th, with two of our crews non finishing. One of the other team navigators who I met for the first time was Mike Kidd, but I would continue to see him on various road rallies around Wales over the next few years as he built up his experience, before he went on to be the last Motoring News Champion Navigator in 1987 with Ron Beecroft!

I had only just got back from Germany and yet was competing again at the weekend with Keith on my favourite rally, the Cilwendeg. Despite Keith’s relative driving inexperience and my tiredness, we had a good run and finished 13th overall although we were both having to work really hard just to keep the 1600 on route and snapping at the heels of the more powerful RS2000s. We finished off the year by competing on a slightly snowy Virgo Galaxy Stages over Epynt where we finished 18th out of the 90 starters on Keith’s first stage event.

Back with Keith in the lanes in 1980 and we picked up a couple of 2nd place finishes (behind RS2000s!) early in the year including the Sarn Helen, near Lampeter, where we were only 56 seconds behind after 140 miles. These road events were in-between the Mintex and Welsh Internationals in the Land Rovers again, both with Mel Bonfield although we didn’t finish the Welsh after finishing up 40 feet down a bank against some trees. No damage done (apart from my trousers!) but needing some heavy duty winching to get back out.

Zenith Motor Sport, a Swansea motor factors, was now sponsoring two Avengers courtesy of Mike Bowen (who won many Asphalt Championships alongside the late John Price) with Keith and myself on road events and Geoff Kitney/Alan McCann on stage events and both crews continued to punch above their weight over the year (we were 11th overall on a Motoring News round near Aberystwyth).



Keith Bevan / Alan Jones enjoying the Welsh lanes

Then out of the blue came the chance for me to compete on the first Air India Himalayan International Rally in October with Dick Lewis in one of the RAF Land Rovers which had been “beefed up” and turbocharged for the occasion. Along with one Army crew similarly equipped and another 80 entries, the 3500 mile, 8-day marathon event was planned to run from Bombay (as was then) to New Delhi with minimal rest stops. The event started OK with some “stages” and “roads” re-defining the meaning of the words but after a few days some political dissidents started disrupting the event to cause problems for the government. The argument turned nasty at times with organised mobs throwing rocks at the rally cars and trying to ambush cars and crews, so the route was recalculated with more rest time which allowed the leading cars to be worked on so they resembled armoured trucks with mesh welded over the windows to provide more protection for the crews. Unfortunately for us, we had no such capability; you can’t even lock the flimsy doors on a service Rover and although we had fitted a hard top in place of the canvas hood we did not get the rear hatch in time so there was a big gap at the rear. Suffice to say, whichever one of us was driving when confronted with a large crowd which forced us to slow down and when we could no longer hold the doors shut from inside, we would use the “presence” of the Landie to continue on our way through the angry mob.

We were lying about 10th overall before the last few stages in the mountains and with a comfortable class lead we eased off to save us and the car (why are the sheer drops always on my side?). Although the route was shortened in length, the organisers still had the surviving crews drive into New Delhi in a police-escorted convoy with a great flourish on the final day as if nothing untoward had happened. It had been quite an adventure and we were all just pleased to get to the finish where Shekhar Mehta won in his Ascona 400 and we finished 12th overall and received our 4WD Class awards from Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Ghandi.



One of the “Stagess”



Alan and Dick after the last stage and covered in dust!

A couple of weeks after my return and having barely recovered from the inevitable “Delhi belly”, I was out on the Cilwendeg again with Keith and a newly rebuilt gearbox in the Avenger. Of course, testing is no substitute for actual competition and the car kept jumping out of 3rd gear which meant a steady night and another 13th overall finish for our last event of the year.

Keith and I were back out in the lanes at the end of January 1981, seeded at #7 and running with the leaders until after Time Control 7, when a con rod escaped through the block! (We didn’t like running at car #7 after that.) Another engine was built and we were back out again by the end of March, but with it barely run-in we took it steady and kept the revs down. The next month was better and we finished 2nd overall again on the Sarn Helen, only being beaten by 17 seconds this time!! We continued doing events until July when we were joint leaders on a rally and a conrod escaped again on a very, very fast stretch of road (after TC7 of course). Keith decided to retire from rally driving at this point and I decided to retire in sympathy.

Or so I thought, until I was coaxed back out in the lanes 2 months later by Adrian Thomas and his ex-Bill Gwynne RS2000; and then in October as well with Robert Tout who was giving his newly built RS2000 its first run out. It was only a small event but we finished 1st overall and also won Best Team with another crew – Ray Thomas driving, with Keith Bevan back in the navigator’s seat again! Robert and I then finished 9th overall on the Autumn Rally, a Motoring News round, despite picking up a puncture halfway through and a wrist injury which caused him some trouble and put him off work for a week afterwards.



Adrian Thomas / Alan Jones on the 1981 Rali Mynydd Ddu

For the Cilwendeg in November 1981 (200 miles; 106 entries), I was back with Adrian Thomas and we were lying about 5th overall with only 30 miles to go when the exhaust came apart at the manifold and we were out. Rats! The next month I finished off the year with Robert and a 2nd overall, which was small consolation after the disappointment of the Cilwendeg.

Robert and I teamed up for 1982, with the car sporting Zenith Motor Sport sponsorship now and we were regularly finishing inside the top ten even on Motoring News rounds (I was an RS2000 convert by then). Except for the Sarn Helen in April when I was hoping to finish on the top step after being 2nd for the last two years! Karol was pregnant and our first child was reluctant to be born on time so I had to miss the rally and Robert promptly won it with Andrew Sleeman (who also used to sit with Motoring News Champion Driver Mick Briant on occasion).



Robert Tout / Alan Jones on the Cambrian News Trophy Rally 1982

Then on the Autumn Rally in October, we were having a good run despite a buckled wheel rim and a puncture which was changed at first petrol, when we had another puncture after second petrol while lying 3rd overall and decided to call it a night. (The results showed the following navigators finished: Mike Kidd 4th; Andrew Sleeman 5th; and a certain Nicky Grist 6th, with Steve Davies in their rapid 1300 Escort!).

Robert decided to retire from rallying with immediate effect, although after a long break he returned but on (easier?) tarmac stage rallies where he won numerous awards and Championships in Mitsubishi Evos and he is currently still rallying (as is Geoff Kitney).

I also “retired” again, but this time stopped competing for good and concentrated on wife, growing family and career. Within six months I also had my first overseas posting away from Wales – across the Severn Bridge to Boscombe Down near Salisbury and in fact we have lived in Wiltshire ever since.

I feel very privileged to have been involved as a clubman during such a highly competitive era and as an observer of the different styles and characteristics of both the drivers and their vehicles. But assuming I had the money and the car, the question has to be whether I would have been able to copy the skills I had seen being used and become a competitive driver myself? Answer, not while I have a, that will be a NO then.

However as you all know, once you have caught the motorsport bug, you never get rid of it completely. So thank you if you have managed to read my motorsport story and I hope that you can all get back to your preferred motorsport bug soon.

RAJ

As a footnote, I left the RAF in 1998 and so it was probably all my fault that my son (Chris) joined up in 2003 and went on to be part of the support team for the Land Rovers of the Armed Forces Rally Team. He has driven his Rover 25 on Autosolos and 12-car rallies, the 2008 Bullnose Endurance Rally with Jonathan Sargeant and they have also won awards on the Brace’s Bakery Thousand Lanes Rally in Wales (a report appeared in the OMC Newssheet of July 2008) and in his Peugeot 205 GTi on the Fat Albert Stages in 2009. At least someone in the family can drive!

Another Tick on the Bucket List

This event, the 2017 RAC ticked a MASSIVE box for me, I've always felt like I've missed out on the days of 'proper' rallying back in the 70's and 80's but nothing I could do. A last minute shout from good friend Kev Mathers saying he'd been given the chance to navigate for Magic Macombie in the big Saab 900 and would I chase for them with Kev's dad Gordon. I jumped at the chance. Now Magic hasn't finished the RAC for a long long time but neither of us do anything half arsed and neither of us do failure!!

We set off on the Wednesday to get down to South Wales and we weren't going to be home till late the next Monday night!! GAME ON!!!!!!



Well..... here's an adventure if ever there was
1. Chasing for Per Eckland this weekend 🏆

The blood sweat and tears to keep that car going for 4 days was something the likes I've never experienced before, sleep was non existent, from Friday till the end I don't think we had more than 10hrs sleep, stage by stage, service by service, day by day we kept plodding on, meeting new friend (other chase crews) as we all experienced the same slog day on day, keeping an eye out for our fellow competitors incase they needed help along the way.



It was on the Sunday night however as I stood at the end of Twiglees waiting on the guys coming through, it was 10pm, it was probably -3 there was maybe 30 guys all waiting on their crew to get through, jeeps and cars all set up for any issue spread over half a mile from stage exit. I had a torque bar, window cleaner, a bottle of water for them and my head torch, we still had to drive all the way out to Craik then back for another run through Twigless or Castle O'er THEN!!!! Back to Carlisle for overnight service before we drove to bed in Gretna I realised I was living the dream!

This was utterly mad, your couldn't justify it to any normal human if you tried we had driven well over 1000 miles and we still had a fairly big day to go!! The car had been hard work, VERY hard work, but it was all part of it and to be honest it made the event, overcoming issues, we should have retired probably 3 times, 24hrs previous we towed it 50 miles plus in the pitch black all the way home to replace a blown clutch overnight at Magic's garage, then drove all the way back to Carlisle, we got to bed at 4am and we were up again at 6.



Day 4, everyone is prob going to work but not us, we're off to Kielder again for a bit rallying

Monday was the final day, the last stage was 25-30 miles long, there were some serious emotions when the auld red Saab came into sight and rolled to the final stop control. It was a fantastic experience and I can now say I've ticked the hardcore rally box!



For 4 days we watched a crew get continuously get fed by a nice lady, always the best of food, we had eaten out of McDonald's since we left Wales... on day 4 she finally came over as she couldn't take our drooling any more. RESULT!!!!!!



What a feeling... like properly!! What A feeling!

Just after this, and as random as you like I got overtaken at this speed by a car towing a Toyota Corolla, they had to be doing 90!!!

Des Campbell

The Newquay-Brussels Lockdown Trail

March 23/24 2020

They met on a beach in Bali: she the adventurer, he a surfer. Two weeks of holiday bliss and then – BOOM, it was time to head home. Tiphaine, from Brittany, was returning to Brussels where she worked as a product manager in an automotive component company, my son Paul, a catering manager, was cutting short his stay in Indonesia to fly back to Cornwall. *Ah, parting is such sweet sorrow...*

But this was no holiday romance ending with a tearful wave, '*Adieu*'. This was something far more: Tiphaine was coming to live in England. *Très sage!* The problem was COVID-19. In no time, she was 'locked-down' in the Belgian capital. With the UK about to follow suit, what to do? Tiph had given notice on her flat – and her job, so Paul was desperate for his own employers to shut-up shop before any government ruling here. The days ticked-by then finally Newquay Zoo closed its gates to the public. It was 23 March, twenty-four hours to UK quarantine measures.

Literally, as Boris announced the impending lockdown, Paul declared, 'I'm going...' Official clearance had been obtained, and his trusty Ford Transit 'prepped' in advance of the trial. The van was filled with bedding, clothes, food, drink, Jerry cans of fuel and enough tools to open a workshop – you name it. There would be no shops open, few facilities available and several high hurdles to overcome: the French border guards this side of The Channel might get sniffy, likewise the Belgian authorities later. Would he make it?

5-4-3-2-1-GO! He was away, with our best wishes (and not a little concern). The first leg of the 'Newquay to Brussels Lockdown Trial' would take Paul from Cornwall to Folkestone through an empty night/early morning. One advantage was that the roads were abandoned, but the resultant feeling of isolation tangible.

Back at home, we were getting regular updates on *WhatsApp* and relieved when Paul made it to the Channel Tunnel terminal. Here came the first real challenge: the French border. Thankfully, the domestic side of the terminal was deserted, but approaching a glass booth packed with French guards, he was greeted with shaking heads:

'Where are you going?'

'Brussels'

'Non.'

'But I must get there, my partner is going to be homeless – and with no job!'

'The Belgium border is closed.'

'No, it's not!' Paul's riposte flew from his lips before he knew it.

'How do you know this?' he was quizzed.

'I called the Embassy yesterday...'

The stand-off continued, papers being scrutinised thoroughly.

'Also,' Paul added, 'her family are in Brittany and unable to help her.'

Ears prick. 'She is *French*?' The mood shifted. *The girl is one of their own...*

Paul pleaded, explaining that he had a valid reason for 'essential travel' (which he did).

'What if you get stuck in Belgium?'

'I don't care,' came the reply.

A shrug of Gallic shoulders. Further discussion. A sage nodding of heads, followed by: 'Okay – you can go...' The relief was palpable and tears flowed as the pressure was released. Paul parked the Transit in one of the near-empty lanes and awaited the train, eventually burrowing beneath The Channel with just a handful of other vehicles.

FRANCE. After driving along the coast for a while, seeing refugee camps full of hopeful migrants at the side of the road, Paul eventually came close to the Belgium border. It was getting late in the evening of 24 March. There was no real reason to not make it across the border but the thought of another 'grilling' – and possible refusal – was too much.

After consulting Google Maps for some 'goers', Paul left the motorway and headed for the infamous Ypres area. A few attempts to cross into Belgium on single-track roads came to nothing when venturing upon makeshift barriers – and a highly-curious, shifty mob on a caravan site which Paul had used to turn-around. By now he was getting very fatigued and aware that the journey had suddenly become a lot more difficult.

One final attempt (after taping an arrow to the top of the windscreen to remind him to 'Keep Right' in the lanes), Paul selected one other road. *'Welcome to "Orange" Belgium...'* popped up on the mobile. He had made it. He was in Belgium!

We received a call to say he had arrived in Brussels and was with Tiphaine, the two of them waving at us through the power of technology. By this stage, Tiph had been 'confined to barracks' for well over two weeks. There was still that all-consuming issue: Coronavirus. But hey, they were together – that's what counted.

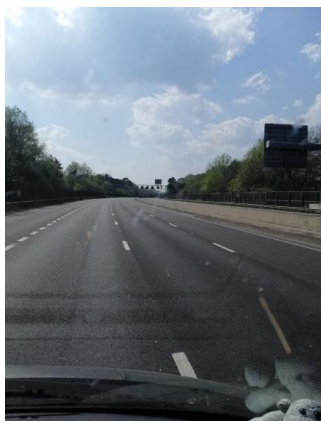
All Paul's years of competing in rallies, chasing WRC around the countryside in Wales and on the Continent, working with Steve Hill Motorsport on the RAC Rally – and his childhood experiences with the army cadets – seemed to have been preparation for this one defining moment: the 480-mile mercy-dash to Brussels. And his faithful white charger hadn't let him down!

Paul and Tiphaine are now here in Cornwall, having been given the 'okay' to return to the UK (as Tiph was, in effect, travelling home). The return leg of the journey wasn't quite so frenetic: the M25 being deserted (so too the M3, A303 and A30) but the scale of COVID-19 was evident when driving through three countries of emptiness and closed-up businesses.

They are now settled into their cottage in Newquay, continuing with lockdown and staying alert, of course!



Brussels desolate



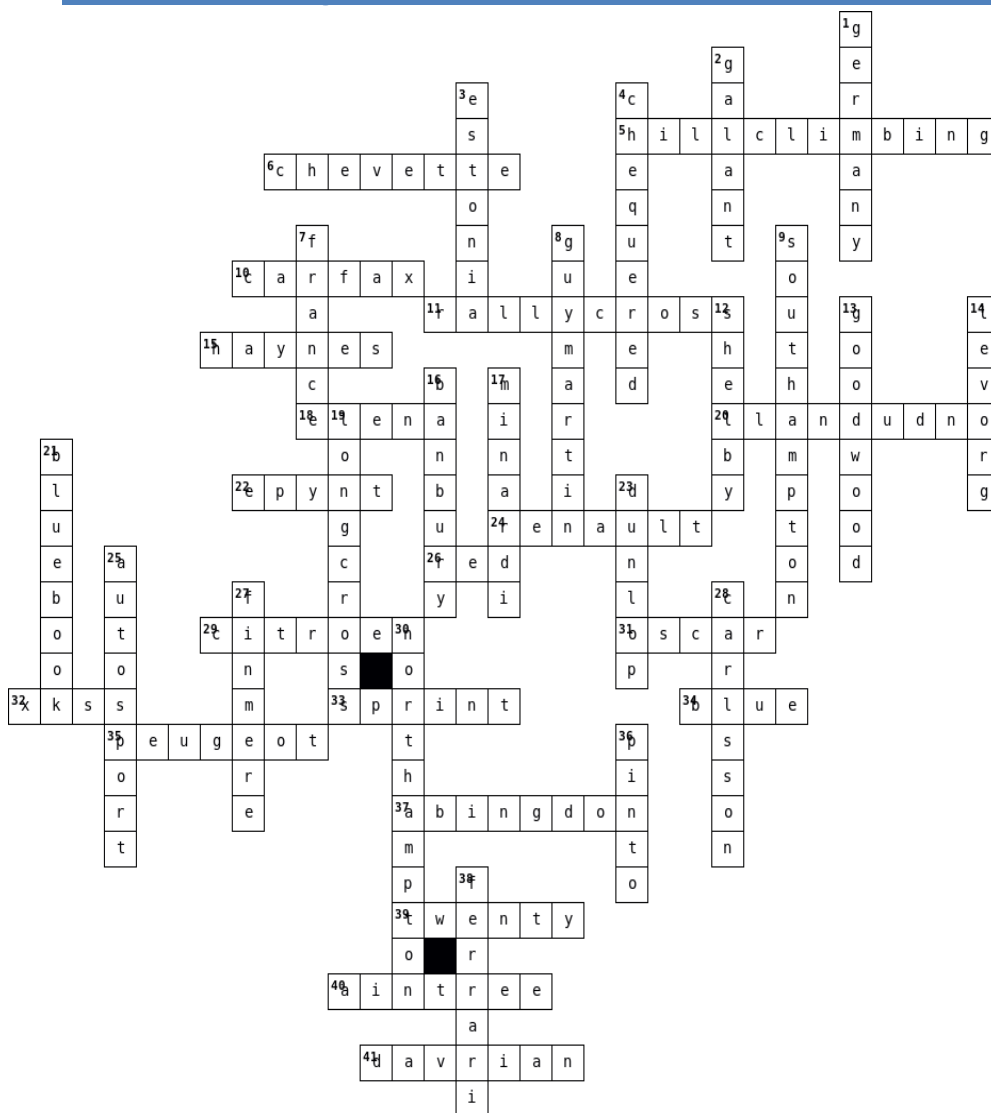
M25 deserted



Tiphaine and Paul delighted

Richard Sumner
OMC Cornwall Correspondent

OMC May Crossword Answers



Our RAC Rally Adventure

There was a mention on Facebook recently about the Ex-Works Peugeot 309 GTI G222AHP and our adventures on the '94 RAC, and I thought it might be worth recording what I can remember.

The car was crewed by Margaret Maundrell and Simon Pain, and had just had major repairs following some unpleasantness on the Border Rally. The trusty Transit barge (crewed by Jonathan Dunsheath, Dave Clements and Marcus Hazelgrove) had also just been converted from petrol to

diesel, and to spare their embarrassment it is probably best not to mention who did the work on both vehicles: let it just be said they weren't involved on the event. Promptly on the Saturday morning we set off from our midlands base for Chester: Transit barge, and Toyota Land Cruiser and trailer with rally car. I was in the Land Cruiser with Les Allfrey, intending to chase through the event. Well up the A5 we get the first call: "the Transit has stopped". Interesting news, but with scrutineering beckoning we had to press on. Once we were through scrutineering the Transit turned up, and we were told that when converting to diesel the supply and return fuel lines had been fitted the wrong way around, so unless the tank was almost full the pump was drawing air. The lads in the van soon sorted that. To our horror we discovered that all the accommodation was in double beds except for one single which needless to say Margaret had!

Sunday was the traditional loop of speccy stages, finishing in Harrogate, and was uneventful except for a major problem when the lights all failed on the start line for the second trip round Donington. Moving off the start line they waited 30 seconds for the next car and tucked in behind it! Monday involved a loop through Yorkshire, Kielder and the Lakes, back to Chester. Les and I had just got set up at the end of Hamsterley, kettle on, when the phone goes: "the Transit has stopped". It eventually transpired that the flywheel had come loose, and they were recovered to a local garage, so Les and I had to step up and service the car for the rest of the day. Fortunately, we were well prepared, and even had a spare set of spot lights which we jury rigged to the 309 at Kielder Water. The day went well with only a puncture in Kershope, kindly replaced by Charles Golding and his pals, and we were all reunited with the repaired Transit back at Chester.

On Tuesday all was going well until at service somewhere above Devils Bridge I noticed someone checking the strut top nut. "Do that again" I said, and it was clear the strut tower was no longer fully attached to the inner wing. We didn't have time to do any repairs there, so sent the car on its way, looking at the service plan to decide when there might be time for a fix. The next chase car service was at a small farm yard, and Les had a root around and found an old road sign and some 14-gauge sheet. "Finding" a MIG welder in a shed I concocted something that might make a strut brace. We were relieved when the car arrived at the next service point at a farm near LLandoverly (those were the days when you could service almost anywhere)

and set to making a repair to get us to the end of the rally. Jonathan had somehow, with sizes from memory, cut out a gusset plate to brace the strut top back to the bulkhead. Although we had oxy-acetylene he'd also managed to find a MIG welder at this farm, and in not too many minutes we had a good, temporary, repair.

Amazingly, Wednesday was drama free (apart from helping Rich Stoodley after he had thrown his 309 off on the last stage) and the car made it to the finish in 90th place from the 178 starters, even gaining a Club Team Second Award for Redditch & DCC. The second team members were Rupert Hopcraft & Richard Pomfret in their 205GTI who had an eventful rally which involved a tree, loss of brakes for 22 miles in Grizedale, plenty of punctures and a persistent misfire on the last day; they eventually finished 73rd. The third team members were Bob Ceen & Andy Bull who drowned out in the ford in Hafren and had a roll in Trawscoed, 4 stages from the end, after which Andy ran 1 ½ miles to get help to right the car; they finished 56.

The photo shows repairs about to begin near Llandovery.



Dave Oldridge

Motorsport in Lockdown

After four months in lockdown, like many others, I've missed my sport. It's hard to know how much of it is missing the sport and competing and how much is missing friends and the social side, and exactly where the balance lies. However it lies, it's certainly been a change for everyone (for all the right reasons) as we adjust to a new way of living.

Fairly early on into lockdown we decided to buy a PS4 and steering wheel, pedals and seat. That has proved fun and interesting, and we deliberately went for PS4 games that were more sims than games (Project Cars 2.0 and Dirt Rally 2.0) and it has provided entertainment.

Aside from the PS4, the one thing I've really enjoyed is doing a variety of scatters and the like, using clues, plotting and then finding answers via Google Earth or Street View, across a variety of clubs.

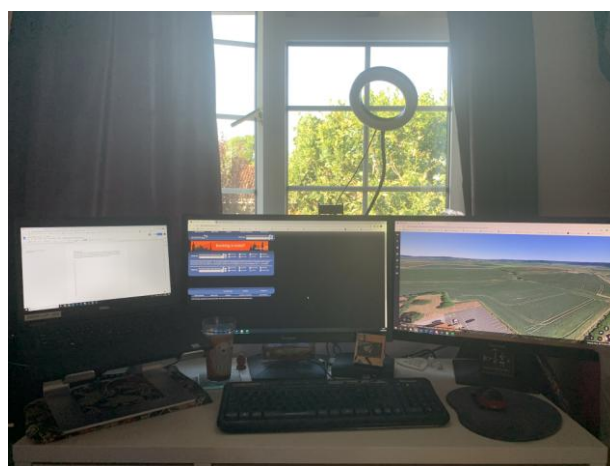
My first event came about by accident, when with about two minutes before an event I teamed up with Lucy Fryer. It took me a little while to find a reliable grid reference website that was free for use (I use Streetmap) but we had a good night.

From there, we progressed with the highlight of our seven events together being winning consecutive events; a 1st overall on the Ilkley & District MC Raven Scatter in May followed by winning the South Oxon Car Club Virtual Walkabout a week later.

The Ilkley events made up a Championship, and we came fifth overall which was a great result. The virtual events really did give something to look forward to on a Wednesday evening (as well as a proving a challenge!). The irony is, Lucy and I have now competed together virtually (seven events) far more than we have in real life (one event).

We competed on events run by three clubs over the seven events we did and they would all have been a considerable effort to organise, so I'm grateful for the enjoyment, entertainment and problem solving challenges to keep me occupied and amused.

Suze Endean



Three events in eight days

Back in March, I competed on three events in eight days. Little did I know that just four days later, I'd be packing up the contents of my desk, ready to work from home for the foreseeable future like so many others. At the time it felt very busy, but hindsight is a wonderful thing and I'm glad I did them all! Here's the story of the three events...

Event 1, Sevenoaks & District MC Scatter, Kent, 5th March - "Clueless in Kent"

With Matt due to be away with work (his trip ended up being cancelled due to Covid-19), I agreed to navigate for Mike Thomas on a 7oaks Scatter in Kent.

It had been pouring all week and we expected to find the lanes flooded, and they sure were! I was wearing almost knee high waterproof boots and at one particularly large puddle offered to wade through to see if it was passable – it was, but it was at that moment I discovered a hole in my boots...

Mike and I hadn't competed together before, and one of the things I can find hardest on a scatter is cryptic clues and, of course, planning a good route. The clue planning had shown my lack of knowledge of roman numerals (swiftly resolved the following week with the addition of a new crib sheet for my nav bag!) but with Mike's help, we'd got everything plotted.

It felt like we were having a good night, but unfortunately there were a couple of locations we got to and we couldn't find the clues. We knew we had answered 24 questions which was the maximum score for the night, but it was all going to come down to whether we'd got the answers right.

The long and short of it was we got two wrong when we had been at the right locations – one was a maths error on my part. The clue was "add up the mileage on the signpost" and I had 31.5 when it should have been 32 – frustrating when you know you have been in the right place! I'd just miscalculated all the different distances to the local villages, there had been more than 12 and I'd miscalculated when doing it on paper (I felt a calculator wasn't in the spirit of things!).

The second question we got wrong was "what is the make and type of padlock?" We got the make correct, but not the type and so whilst we'd been to both locations, we got 0 points for those answers.

With Matt's work trip cancelled, he had entered with Kevin Ablitt on the maps. They beat us by one correct question – two wrong answers and two clues we couldn't find cost us the win. I like to learn from events, but that was a rather frustrating result.

Second is good but it could, and should, have been better! Roman numeral and padlock type swotting is required.

Event 2, Boundless by CSMA 12 Car, Hertfordshire, 6th March - "Two nights out in a row"

Following navigating for Mike the night before on a Scatter, it was Matt's turn to navigate for me on a local 12 Car. It was an event and start venue we had been to before, and I knew there was a tricky lay-by slot that the organisers could use early on. Instead, however, they took us in the opposite direction – where there was another tricky slot that saw us drop some time and caused a little confusion and debate on the correct route.

I had the benefit of having navigated the night before and being "match fresh," but it was nice to drive too; that's the challenge of having two drivers in the house. We soon righted ourselves, and like the night before, the lanes were really flooded. Some of them were like nothing I'd driven through before, but we got round.

The organisers did a good job in challenging conditions with reroutes etc required, and it was good to be out driving with Matt alongside again. We finished second in class which was a pleasing result.

The event went through lanes in an area where I used to live (and which formed part of my old commute), so it was good to drive some familiar areas and again, know some of the trickier junctions and tricks the organisers could play!

Event 3, South Oxon Car Club 12 Car, Oxfordshire, 13th March - "That winning feeling"

Three events in eight days – it was a busy week!

Having navigated for Mike on a Scatter and had Matt navigate for me on a 12 Car, it was my turn to navigate for Matt on a 12 Car.

It was one of those weeks that had been extremely busy and I wasn't truly feeling competing on the Friday evening. I've had it before, and they've ended up being the best nights and this one proved to be no exception!

It was our first SOCC event and having signed on, we were ready to go. The first lot of navigation just clicked, as did the next section, and the next section. Nights where everything clicks feel rare! It was all going well, until a particular lay-by and control where I just couldn't get the next section to work. I tried, and tried, but was convinced I had been too slow and had cost us a good night. I got it down eventually, but it had cost us many minutes.

We got back to the pub where the club had put a buffet on, and it was results time. We were first! A real relief having thought I'd been too slow at plotting, and a great team effort. Matt commented on how well it had gone, my confidence and my improvement in map calling. I've always been able to do it, but the more events, the more knowledge and experience grows and maybe, just maybe, it's starting to show. It was one of my most enjoyable events on the maps in a long time, especially

having been disappointed with some minor mistakes costing the win the week before with Mike on the Scatter.

I really enjoyed the 12 Car, and with the benefit of hindsight I'm so glad we did three events in eight days with three different crew combinations, because little did we know how much things would change with lockdown.

Suze Endean

Oxford Motor Club Committee Roles

The club committee is essential to the running of the club. At the end of this year, we have John And Shirley Blackwell are stepping down from the committee after many years of hard work. This leaves several important posts to be filled. If you think you'd like to get involved, take a look at the roles below then email the club secretary. No prior experience is required and we're always keen to welcome new committee members. We will be happy to help ease you into a new role and you can start now! Post we know will be vacant are highlighted in red, but we welcome interest in all roles.

Chairman - The figurehead of the Club, whose motor sporting experiences and management qualities influences the path the club goes down, instils confidence and guidance in the general membership and is a steadying influence at committee level. The Chairman will have sufficient knowledge of the clubs activities to deliver a report to the assembled membership and will chair the main meetings at committee and will preside over the Annual General Meeting.

Vice-Chairman - The Vice Chairman acts as back up at Committee meetings and the AGM should the Chairman not be able to run the meeting on the night. Vice-Chairman should also have sufficient knowledge of the clubs activities to deliver a report to the assembled membership. Vice-Chairman may also chair sub committees and run special projects or events

Secretary - The official point of contact for people inside and outside the membership of the club; deals with the official paperwork from Companies House, receives most of the correspondence from Motorsport UK (MSUK) and from the Regional Associations, other clubs, the membership and general inquiries from people outside Motor Sport.

He / She records the minutes of the AGM and the full committees, prepares and distribute minutes in good time for the meetings, attends regional meetings where possible, sees to the clubs registration annually with Motorsport UK, answers correspondence and is the custodian of the clubs archive.

Treasurer - Manages the day by day finances of the club and gathers payments from individual event organisers. Receives and banks all the monies and pays the bills either by cash, cheque or direct debit, records all the transactions and maintains

the records. Delivers report to the general committees and a final report at the AGM in February.

Executive Committee

Chief Marshal - A point of contact for members and other clubs looking for marshal on events.

With the Motorsport UK licencing of Marshals the Chief Marshal will be responsible for passing on any relevant information to Club Members on all aspects of Licence application, training etc.

The need for marshals is important not just for our clubs event but our friends in other clubs who we also rely on for our events.

Child Safeguarding Officer - This position is now compulsory for all Motorsport UK motor clubs and is an MSA Licensed position. The person appointed will be subject to a CRB [or equivalent] check paid for by the Motorsport UK, be given training by the Motorsport UK and will look after the interests of any person under 18 attending our events.

The role of the Club Safeguarding Officer is crucial in ensuring that the Motorsport UK Safeguarding Policy and Implementation Procedures work in practice.

They act as the first point of contact for anyone in the club (staff, volunteer, parents or children) who has a concern about a child and about poor practice/possible abuse by adults working with children. The Safeguarding Officer therefore needs to be perceived as being approachable and as having a child-focused approach.

Details of our safeguarding policy can be found [here](#)

Competitions Secretary - Is responsible for the Clubs event calendar and is involved with and oversees the motorsport activities of the Club and its members. Is a Club contact for the motor sporting activities. Be a mentor to new event organisers coming up from the general membership.

Magazine Editor

Gathers information from the membership and outside of club for the magazine, collates, compiles and edits articles. Word processing skills are will come in handy!

Media Officer - Responsible for publicising the club, on Social Media sites and other outlets where possible.

Membership Secretary

Records member's detail's and issues membership cards. Attends Committee meetings and reports on the membership details.

Social Secretary - Organises social events, compiles a calendar for the year's social activities, acts as contact point at social events.

Web Master - Maintains the Club website. Like the Magazine Editor, the Web Master gathers reports, tables, photographs and news and converts them to web pages. The site needs to be kept up to date to reflect the current club status.

Points Collator - Although not a specific committee role this position can be filled by any of the Committee or members and consists of compiling the club championship tables throughout the year. The post requires the completion of a pre-programmed spreadsheet and to remind members via email and the magazine to send in the points claims!

Non Portfolio Posts - No official responsibilities but can add their opinion during meetings and learn how motorsport works. The executive is generally for the new comer to the committee to learn the ropes. Their opinions are just as valid as the Chairman's.