

Kent Driver

December 2020

Celebrating the art of Motorsport Since 1935





Maidstone & Mid Kent Motor Club Ltd.

Founded 1935

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2020 - FROM YOUR PRESIDENT.

For a large number of people the year 2020 will go down in history as the most unusual year they have ever experienced and hopefully will not happen again during their lifetime. Nobody has been spared from the consequences of this wretched Coronavirus pandemic and your team of Club officials are acutely aware that our motorsport calendar has been severely affected notwithstanding the efforts of our organising body, Motorsport UK, which has enabled a few of our events to take place under compliance to the strict regulations imposed. The events which we have promoted have hopefully been enjoyed by the competitors who have entered into the spirit of the restrictions in the interests of safety and wellbeing of all concerned for which we thank them. It has also been pleasing to see so many of our Club members entering into events promoted by other clubs and keeping the MMKMC badge to the fore with their achievements. Although at the time of writing this the outlook for 2021 is not too encouraging we must look on the positive side and hope that our outdoor motor sporting events will be allowed to recommence with the Tyrwhitt Drake Trial at the end of March 2021. Until then you are reminded that the Club will be continuing with the Zoom Social meetings on the third Tuesday each month until the social distancing and other meeting restrictions are lifted so it will be nice to keep up to date with our members through this channel.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a safe, happy and prosperous 2021 and a successful year in motor sport.

Lyle

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

On behalf of the board of directors and committee, I would like to thank all of our members for the support they have given the Club in what has been a very difficult year for us all. Special thanks are due to all the key workers who carried on working throughout each lockdown and, as we come to the end of the year, our thoughts are with those who have lost loved ones during 2020.

The club championship results show that our members have claimed points for competing on seven tarmac autotests/autosolos, five grass autotests, four car trials, two special stage rallies and one targa rally. This is an impressive tally for a year in which permits were suspended for more than four months, and in which the implementation of the requirements and guidelines for organizing events led to a much greater administrative burden on those clubs who decided to go ahead with events and were able to access suitable venues.

As we approach 2021 most of our members are subject to Tier 4 restrictions. We have just received news of the cancellation of the MCJ Brands Hatch Winter Stages Rally scheduled for 16 January and we have postponed the 12 Car Rally planned for 22 January. I do hope these latest restrictions and the acceleration of the vaccination programme will lead to a spring in which we can look forward to the reintroduction of events, not only as an opportunity to compete, but also to enable us to properly socialize again.

Happy New Year!

Liz

A Message from the Editor.

Trying to find enough interesting material to put together a Kent Driver that has some relevance for Club Members is difficult enough in a normal year but as you can imagine with so few events this year it has been even more difficult. If you want to read about the events we did hold, these were reported in the Autumn Newsletter which can be found on the Club website. So I make no apology for the following pages which contain a series of articles both past and present. The past are either a trip down memory lane for us oldies or a window into the past for the younger ones amongst us.

I would like to thank all those Members who have taken the time to share their experiences with the rest of us and hope their example will encourage others to do the same for future editions of the Kent Driver

With the possibility of a more normal year in prospect and the hope that our major local highway will be free from queueing 40 tonne trucks, I wish you all a healthy and Happy New year.

Bruce

2020 - It wasn't all that bad actually....

What a strange year 2020 has been. For Andrea & I (and our sons Ryan and Drew) our calendar was *annotated* with all sorts of events from January onwards.

12-Car – for some reason when the flyer came round in august 2019 about the Weald 12 Car series, and Croydon & Districts sub championship the Rod Wray, never having tried our hand at road rallies we signed up for all the rounds. As we came into 2020, we had competed in 3 of the 7 rounds, and even won the CDMC hosted round 3! Not bad for beginners, in a Volvo, and an estate at that! So we came into January in 2nd place in the Rod Wray Championship, and 7th in the overall standings.

Nobody had heard of this Covid stuff at this point, so we were raring to go. The Blackpalfrey round on the 17th January was planned by the devious mind of Dave Clarke, and my word he made us work for our 7th place. The Bexley round on the 7th of February was much better for us with a 3rd place. Suddenly with two rounds to go, and knowing that our main rival in the Rod Wray wasn't competing in the final round in April, there was renewed excitement in the Volvo that were in sight of some unexpected silverware.

The 6th of March loomed into view, and it was a week of rain, rain, and more rain. So much so that our trip down to TV0 at 199/673.5246 had to be taken with caution due to the extreme flooding at Yalding. It wasn't a good round for us, not helped by a road laying crew descending on the roads just before TC2 and closing the roads between the first car and us at no 12. We made it home 9th, and only 11 crews ran (but there were 12 at the pub).

This left us split in the overall table – Andrea in 5th place in the drivers standings, and me in 4th in the navigators. We were still in 2nd place in the Rod Wray, and the maths said that if we managed a 4th place then we'd tie with Wug and Bob for the Rod Wray, and a 3rd or better we'd take the trophy. And then Covid happened. The Southern round was postponed.

What did we think of our first season in 12 car – it was great fun, we learned a lot – about our relationship (yes we were still talking to each other after every round), about our ability to compete (after winning the Croydon round there was some talk about what to do with the Beginners), and most of all we became part of the 12 car social group. We eagerly waited for the regs to drop for the 2020-21 Weald 12 Car, but with a hint of nervousness – in season 2 we were small cogs in a new pond – welcome to the Novices. When the 2020-21 regs hit the inbox, I pounced without reading the regs, cue the need to remove ourselves from one of the rounds to marshal. This years championship is over 9 rounds, with MMKMC and Guildford joining in the organising. Competitors must marshal one round, and only the best 6 count. The first round was the postponed Southern from April. Being a novice navigator was a whole new world, and I got myself flustered and didn't follow my plan. From 12 entries, 2 didn't start and 1 didn't finish, and we came home 9th of 9. Not a good start to the season, but hopefully this will be mopped up in the

two drop scores. Round 2 was the Borough 18 event, and we had a much better event, only a dastardly tulip between TC4 & TC5 causing me grief. We came in 5th with 2 fails and 28 minutes, and we were rather chuffed with that. The year went back into glum mode for the final two rounds before Christmas, both being postponed due to Lockdown 2.0.

Autotests – 2019 was the year we first tried our hands at autotesting, and with Andrea's son Ryan turning 14 at the end of 2019, it meant that we were going to be a foursome in 2020 with my son Drew as well. After taking home the MMKMC 2nd place Junior trophy in 2019 Drew had set a personal goal of "doing better". So when Lockdown kicked in, we were all a bit glum about our chances of having some fun. When the email dropped into my inbox for the Wings Autotest I don't think the 1's and 0's had finished settling before I banged in an entry for the 4 of us. At last in a year of not doing much there was something to look forward to.

We decided to take the Micra and as Drew had been building his confidence in his Gran's Matiz, that was coming out to play as well. It was a glorious Sunday as we rocked up, our aim on having fun rather than being any good at it. Not having a passenger class (even though we live together) made Andrea quite nervous, as we work as a team when at events. Bruce and Andy agreed that the juniors could ride in with us, so at least Andrea had Ryan to help navigate. It was a hectic day, swapping between riding with Drew and doing my own tests, and similarly for Andrea and Ryan. The boys did really well considering that Drew had lost his confidence, and it was Ryan's first ever driving event. More learning was done, and we all agreed we couldn't wait

for the next event – whatever and whenev-

er that might be.

When the flyer for the Autumn Slalom came out, it was another "should we shouldn't we, i've sent the entry already" moments. It was a damp Sunday morning, and the monsoon-like rain that was more like a lake being deposited on the test site in one go than a rain shower made the conditions.... interesting. Before we even got underway, just getting up to the top fields to compete was going to be a challenge (I still think that Test A should have been "Did you get up the hill?"). The Matiz was woefully underpowered, and even trying to tow it up the hill caused problems (and much hilarity as I had the window open when it got covered



in mud by the Freelander). Ryan was having a great day, and helmed (yes it was that muddy) the Micra through the two morning tests that put him near the top of the Junior class. After lunch, there was just the one test, with two runs each. If you got off the line and up the initial hill, you were in with a chance of a decent time. If you got bogged down, it wasn't going to be a good one. All three of us were in the Micra, and whilst it did alright, it didn't feel like we had done well. On the way home we looked at the results, and Ryan was thrilled that he topped out the Juniors for the day.

We ended the year on the 13th December at Brands Hatch with Sevenoaks District at their autosolo, along with quite a few other MMKMC members. It was just Ryan Drew and myself driving, and the rescheduled event was run in what could only be described as "Mildly Moist" conditions. It was a great way to end the year, and next year we all aim to get our acts together and learn some more to be competitive.

Trials – Andrea and I decided that we needed to have a looky-see at trials, so volunteered to be marshals at the end of September. It was another damp day with some sharp showers that powered across the Stoneacre Farm site, but that didn't stop 18 intrepid competitors from coming and giving it a go. Not sure who had more fun on our bit of the hill – the drivers trying to beat it, or me trying not to go towbar over wishbone on the increasingly slick surface. More

friends were made, and laughs were had. Kudos to all the drivers, as even the grumpy ones smiled at some point and said thank you to the marshals.

Why Covid wasn't all bad for us – Andrea and I had set our sights on getting a classic mini in 2020, and in a way we failed miserably. We didn't get a classic mini – we got two! During the first lockdown, Andrea spotted an advert from a chap near Cirencester, for a 1990 Studio 2. The engine and glass had been removed, and the doors, but they were all with the car. We looked at the price, and thought that as our social lives were on hold, we'd use the money to get the mini. The deal was done, and in June we trundled over to Cirencester and collected Carla. In the intervening weeks between purchase and collection, we found a 1275cc engine from another MMKMC member and got it back ready to transplant. There was some welding that needed doing, and even though we run Iwade Garage, trying to fit the works in meant it was easier to bring in someone to do it. Luckily just round the corner we have a good friend from the Speedway world Graham Miles who is a welder. Graham worked his magic, and we were hoping to get Carla completed to use in the 2020-2021 Weald 12 Car series, but alas life and Covid has gotten in the way. She's currently waiting to be sprayed, and once we finish that then its all systems go to get her prepped.

The minivan is potentially even more interesting. It was July and I was having a flick through eBay, and saw the listing for a 1969 minivan. Not in great condition, but the price reflected that. The only fly in the ointment was that it was up in Peterlee, a mere 630 round trip. Undeterred I set myself a budget, and sat in wait. I first saw the listing on the Tuesday, and it ended on the Sunday. When the day arrived, I threw my top bid into the hat, poured two glasses of prosecco, and waited. The hammer dropped and I was the lucky winner at just under half my maximum bid. It was a long day, running up to Peterlee, but we carefully loaded the mini, the 850cc engine, and some doors and panels onto the trailer and headed towards the south east. We stopped off for fish and chips at Seaton Carew (a highly recommended gluten free fish shop was there) and whilst eating our lunch, a group of kids huddled around the trailer "cor mister, what size engine is it?" – "850cc" – "wow, so it only goes like 40mph". The youth of today has no appreciation of clever engineering!

So all in all, considering the joys of 2020, we've managed to have a good motorsport year, and we hope that 2021 will let us get behind the wheel more often.

Si, Andrea, Drew & Ryan

Christmas Cheese Quiz

Just for a bit of fun:

What is a Pirates favourite cheese?	Chedd- AAAAARRGGH
What is a lion's favourite cheese?	Roar-quefort
What cheese do you use to disguise a small horse?	Mascarpone
How did the cheese paint his wife?	He Double Glouces- ter
Which genre of music appeals to most cheeses?	R 'n' Brie
What cheese do you use to coax a bear out of the woods?	Camembert
How do you approach a seriously enraged cheese?	Caerphilly
What cheese is made backwards?	Edam
Where can you buy second hand cheese?	Brie-Bay
What did the cheese say when it looked in the mirror?	Hallou-mi

Our Motorsport Year 2020

For us 2020, as it has been for everyone, has not turned out the way we planned. It was intended to be a year when we both packed up working and went on a UK tour in our van, taking in motorsport events along the way when we could as competitors or marshalls. Obviously these plans had to change but we still managed to get out and have some fun at events and see lots of friends after lockdown part 1.

Our year started with going to Brands Hatch stages in January that was also on Emma's 50th birthday, for which Richard had got her a massive 50 badge to wear all day, just to make sure everyone knew! It was lovely though to see so many friends and share the special day with them.

We next caught up with people in February at the Southdown Stages at Goodwood, which as usual was a great event with some fantastic results for MMKMC crews as well with Newtons amazing result of 2nd overall, Tim Mewitt and Liz Jordan 4th overall and in 7th place car the navigator was Barney Lower. Back then we even stayed away overnight and had a meal out – didn't realise then what a rare treat that would become!

The first event that we competed in was an Autosolo in March organised by Devizes Motor Club at Kemble Airfield near Cirencester. We really enjoy these events as they are a friendly club, are really well organised, laid out and attended and it was great to get back out in the BMW, with it's new LSD thanks to lan Mepham. Had to learn a different way of driving, again, but worth it. Bonus of going to Cirencester is the great chippy walking distance from the Travelodge for Saturday night dinner!



We missed the CMSA Autosolo at Brooklands the week after as we were on a walking holiday in Turkey – it still went ahead and we had a great time even with Covid situation changing daily and we came home on the last scheduled flight from Turkey back to the UK. Glad to get 2 holidays in early in the year before lockdown started.

After that lockdown started Emma did not pack up working as the NHS got a bit busy

at the end of March responding to Covid so she decided to stay to help out for a few more weeks – she finally stopped working end of October, just in time for lockdown part 2!!

As like everyone else the spring and summer was disappointing with all events cancelled. However when August came and MSUK announced we could start events again we were poised at the computer to get entries in as spaces became full very quickly as everyone was so keen to get back to some motorsport. Autosolos seemed to be attracting a lot of entries as not many other events were back running, such as sprints and rallies. This caused quite a lot of heated discussions on Autosolo Forum on eligibility to enter events – club members only or championship spaces reserved but was a tricky time for clubs to try to keep everyone happy

with the massive interest. Luckily Emma is fast on the keyboard and we got our entries in.

Our first post-lockdown event was Farnborough Motor Club event at Dalton Barracks near Abingdon on 15th August. We even travelled up on the Saturday, with a picnic tea next to the Kennet and Avon Canal for tea before our luxury accommodation – Travelodge at Chievely Services on M4! Better than getting up at silly-O'clock to drive from home though.

The days was actually quite damp and drizzly rain all day, which was frustrating after all the hot sunny weather we had in July but same conditions for everyone all day, which made it fair. We were in the MG ZR this time. Richard won his class and was 8th overall. Emma was 4th in class and 23rd overall out of 50 competitors so a successful day. Emma's target is to be in the top 50% and reducing the gap to Richard's times. Farnborough have a class 1400 – 1800 which means the MG is not up against the 2.0 Clios in their events, who are often our main competition.

After a long drive home we had an early start to drive the hour and half to Horam for grass autotest organised by Eastbourne and Ram Motor club. These are really nice fun events – quite low key and straightforward all forward tests but a good day out. However, the weather had other things in mind when after a lovely sunny and dry morning the heavens opened at lunchtime and the field turned into a quagmire! As we were in the BMW we were still able to get off the start lines, just, but conditions really favoured the front wheel drive cars including Brian Sharpe who got FTD. Still it stopped raining and we still headed for our usual fish and chip tea at Bexhill on the way home – which is no-where near on the way home but a good excuse to visit the seaside.

The following week was another outing for the MG for the Wings Autotest at Stoneacre which was another lovely day and the first time of using this venue, which had been planned for autotests all year. There was an excellent turnout and good tests devised by Mike Jordan that were finally used. It was great to see so many friends that we had not seen all year.

The next event was another Farnborough event on 6th September. This was a strange event as just prior to the event the Army landlords decided that only 30 people could be on site at any one time so FDMC decided to split the event into 2 half days. Instead of running the rolling marshalls, which would not be practical with ½ the entry we were asked if we would mind splitting up and 1 of us marshalling and the other driving in each part of the day. We agreed to this arrangement and it was quite challenging marshalling 1/3 of the course single-handed for all 4 runs straight off in ½ a day. It was still a really good event though and well done to FDMC for coming up with this arrangement so that 50 competitors could still take part. Emma also got her first class win, but this was only because she was the only entry in the BMW class in the morning session. Richard was 5th in class and 13th overall – not bad for an old diesel!

Next we travelled back to Dalton Barracks at Abingdon on 25th September for the autosolo that runs as part of the Abingdon Carnival and organised by Dolphin Motor Club. With tightening Covid restrictions this was different to previous years with no rally spectators allowed and only competing/support crews (allegedly) allowed access to the site. However, as in previous years we were still allowed to camp overnight so this was the first outing of the year for the Citroen AX that Richard re-built specifically as an autosolo car, which we towed behind our campervan and accommodation for the weekend. Again the weather at Abingdon was windy and damp but good, challenging and fast flowing tests. It was another full entry with Chris Newton only getting the opportunity to double-drive with Ian Mepham at the event. Richard was 5th in class and 18th overall and Emma 13th in class and 33rd overall. The AX is 1600 so up against more powerful cars in the class so happy with these positions. Ian was 2nd in class so shows who we are up against!

As we had travelled with the van and could not stay to watch the rally on Sunday as we normally do we decided to have a mini 3 day holiday in a campsite at the edge of the Thames near Abing-



don. It was really lovely to have some relaxing time away from home and the weather was stunning — lovely Thames path walks followed by sitting in a deck chair waving to boats going past in the sunshine — even got sunburnt. We even had a meal out in a local pub, a rare treat.

As we moved into October the next Eastbourne Autotest on 4th was cancelled due to the weather forecast, which

turned out to be a good call. The next event was Southern Car Club autosolo at Kempton Park on 11th October. We actually drove the AX to this event – 1st time on the M25 and and did feel very small next to all the SUVs. This event is always well attended and organised and this year was no different. The tests are fast and flowing and the long last test when the others from the day are joined together is always great. There were a lot of MMKMC and SDMC members there as it is only about an hour to travel from Kent. Richard was 3rd in class and 6th overall on the day, which he was really pleased with, following up on 1st in class last year. However, after the event it became apparent there was a timing issue with Sapphire Timing App and the synchronisation of the 2 phones being used at the finish line, which made a difference of nearly 4 seconds a run, depending on which phone you were timed with. It is not really clear what the results actually should have been. Bit disappointing but there will always be teething issues with a new system so at least clubs know to look out for this in future. It was still a great day's motorsport and enjoyed chatting to different people during marshalling stints and spectating. This was our last solo of the year but look forward to getting back out on tarmac next year.

We still had 2 grass events to go though and on 18th October went back to Horam for the delayed Eastbourne Autotest. A few less entries with the date change but this time the weather was good and consistent all day and the usual fun tests. And again fish and chips for tea at Bexhill! What a good autumnal day.

The last event of the year for us was the MMKMC Autumn Slalom arranged by Andy Jenner and Toby Groves. This replaced the annual multi-venue event normally in the summer and was at Stoneacre. We had use of both fields with 2 big tests in each. However, the weather yet again played a massive part in the day with heavy rain turning the field to thick mud. Only the first 3-4 cars seemed to get a reasonable time with everyone else getting slower as more people got stuck. We had to use all our Car Trial skills to keep the MG moving. It was a real shame but did make for good entertainment too. Think that Richard has just about got most of the mud off by now!

Emma & Richard Olsen

This article was published in a 1970 Kent Driver. Geraint Phillips was rallies editor for Motoring News and responsible for the Motoring News Rally Championship. He was a first class codriver for the likes of Ove Andersseon and Sheka Mehta and later one of the organisers of the Safari Rally. He was tragically killed in a motor accident in Kenya in 1995.

PROGRESS by Geraint Phillips

Ten years ago, any rally which didn't have its string of "one minuters" was considered to be a bit mild. Pruning was rare, because a stop every half mile meant that the 30 mph average was hard enough to maintain anyway. Besides cars weren't as quick as they are now and navigators not as well stocked with map marks.

It was a time of gaiety in rallying, the Regency period of the sport, if you like. One didn't exactly chase one's opponents like mad towards a narrow gateway only to have the leader politely wave his followers through with a polite "after you" but it was more fun nevertheless. Getting there at all was a thing in those days, not getting there a split second before everyone else as it is today.

One can't complain at progress, I suppose, nor can one bleat about the good old days, but nostalgia is free enough and the occasional bit of reminiscence does no-one any harm.

A30s were frightfully agile little beasties, Bill Bengry was winning 'em all in a Volkswagen and someone discovered a brand new ribbon of road which ran through terrifying meanders and most incredible brows, all the way from Abergwesyn to Tregaron.

Apart from a few sorties in the south East in the early fifties my own rallying beginnings were in Wales. It was natural. I suppose, for I lived there. But even then the lads from over the border used to come across in strength for the Vales. The Cotswold Continental was the teaser of the time, and alas one hears little of the Forces Club nowadays, except in the outposts of the Empire overseas.

Hordes of booming TRs roamed around, and Mike Wood was some comical character that Tom Gold chauffeured around. Gomer Williams and Willy Cave probably knew more about maps than the Ordnance Survey people, whilst there was a chap called Stuart Turner who was to cross the Dyke as often as possible to learn the ones which go.

A completely crazy Irishman called Paddy Hopkirk was doing wondrous things with a Volkswagen, and then there was this young navigator called Roy Fiddler....and something about fish...

I may be confusing my decades a bit, but the beauty of wandering is that you can do it much faster than any special stage and there's no penalty for a wrong approach.

Taga timing hadn't been invented and the number of ways dreamed up to fiddle clocks would have kept a con-man in business for years. There used to be thrashes around the Welsh Lakes at 30 mph averages – John Sprinzel managed just under 60 once, and he was late! Epynt had never been heard of, except for motorcycle racing for which it was world famous, and Rallye Militaire was based on some mystique known only to the boffins of the Royal Military College of Science.

There was this big fella called Graham Robson about, and people were spending so much time wandering through fields in search of controls apparently in the middle of lakes that there became a sudden urge to make one's own maps. And Tony Nash; he was a weird bloke from the West Country who seemed to bring a different car every time he came out. The Waddingtons and Wallwarks were about too, and the Simisters and McBrides. There was a lad called Don Barrow following in the wake, too. Woollen hats were the rage then, and navigators built themselves little cubby holes to protect their delicate ears from the curses of their drivers....just like the telephone arches that one sees in banks. Actually I think they were something to do with lights reflecting from the windscreen. In an open Morgan my canopy blew away, so we took the screen off so that the light from my torch [!] would have nothing to be reflected from.

PR ? what was that ? Some new fertiliser, no doubt. Nobody minded then but they were told anyway – they played hell if they missed the fun. An authorisation was an instrument used by a writer of books and even the Monte was an adventure. Keri Nicholas used a Prefect and

there was this gangling youth called Julian Chitty who left John La Trobe's side only if he spotted a damsel.

If you cleared the top of Hardknott too fast you'd fall off the edge of the world and a forest was merely something that stopped your lights shining far enough ahead.

......Oh well, I'd better rescue my car from the Parking Meter......

How many names do Club members recognise in the above?

Age Perception!

Those mature members who may already have or are about to receive their OBE - 'over bloody eighty 'badge may be amused by the following tale: My brother decided that one of his many sheds needed some refurbishment but in order to do the work it needed to be emptied first. In the back of it he found four complete doors and two radiators for a Triumph Renown. They were taking up a lot of space and he had no need of them, so being a generous sort of chap, offered them free of charge to the Triumph Razor Edge Club. Within only a few hours, collection was arranged and a keen young Escort Cosworth owning enthusiast arrived who needed them for a car he was restoring for his father. He was delighted to get hold of them as they were in far better condition than the ones he had. As he was leaving he said 'I really need to crack on with this restoration as the old boy is getting on a bit and I don't know how long he will last- he's sixty four! However, after my brother had recounted the episode and we had had a little chuckle I recalled that in 1967 some Pop Group (who couldn't even spell their name) produced a song entitled When I'm Sixty Four and at the time seem to remember thinking that getting to sixty four was an aspiration and having little concept of what it would be like.

Ken Kimber

Manure... An interesting fact.

In the 16th and 17th centuries, everything for export had to be transported by ship. It was also before the invention of commercial fertilizers, so large shipments of manure were quite common.

It was shipped dry, because in dry form it weighed a lot less than when wet, but once water (at sea) hit it, not only did it become heavier, but the process of fermentation began again, of which a by-product is methane gas. As the stuff was stored below decks in bundles you can see what could (and did) happen. Methane began to build up below decks and the first time someone came below at night with a lantern...... BOOOOM!

Several ships were destroyed in this manner before it was determined just what was happening.

After that, the bundles of manure were always stamped with the instruction 'Stow High In Transit' on them, which meant for the sailors to stow it high enough off the lower decks so that any water that came into the hold would not come inti contact with this "volatile" cargo and start the production of methane.

Thus evolved the term 'S.H.I.T', (Stow High In Transit),

"So it's really not a swear word" which has come down through the centuries and is in use to this very day. Next timer you hear someone use this word you will be able to put them right.

An All Too Familiar Story

When I was living in France my principal hobby was buying Triumph TR's, working on them and then selling them. I did 7 or 8 but two were particularly interesting projects. A TR3B and a TR4A bought from an Indian car dealer in New York. Sharp negotiating skills were needed to buy them and patience to get them imported into France!

The 3B needed a new rear end welding following a shunt and that was expertly done when I invited my son over for short holiday! I then made it into a very nice example, had it painted professionally and sold it at a good profit.

I bought the 4A in 2014, hoping for the same result, but within a year my arthritis was preventing me from doing any serious work on cars, so I subbed out the engine rebuild and a few bits

of bodywork to an English mechanic who came recommended through several members of an Anglo French Motor Club. The work progressed well for a few weeks then stopped and he could not be contacted. Months passed and when I eventually got to see the car it was stripped to virtually a bare shell and he was claiming loads of work was needed to make it roadworthy, Not true, but he had me over a barrel and I provided the spares needed. Two years later the engine was built and it was still in pieces but ready for painting. After another year it was painted, but still in pieces and in two separate garages. By this time we had sold the house in France and were living in England, but eventually a friend got it all together and delivered it to a garage which sold British sports cars, for safe keeping. The only good thing



to come out of the Covid Pandemic was this garage had no work and the owner offered to reassemble it. He made an excellent job of it with what they had, and me supplying yet more bits that had been lost or broken. In October it was shipped to the UK and my son has since done the remaining work, including repairing some of the work the original "expert" broke, like the overdrive, whilst I have worked through the paperwork. Finally in mid December 2020 it is UK registered and ready to drive,

Yet another tale of putting trust in other garages, even when they come recommended. I thought for a couple of years that I had lost the car, but I am pleased to say, after five years there is a happy ending.

Maybe, you might even see me driving in 2021!

Trevor Gilks

Up and Down The A20 (Operation Broke!)

- Government looks at road pricing to plug fuel duty gap crated by electric cars.
- Monday is the best day to take your driving test with a pass rate of 46.9%
- Just 5% of mechanics in the UK are qualified to work on electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles.
- Green number plates have been available since Tuesday 8th December. Some of us have had them for years if you look at the car parked round the back!!





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I've heard that if you have relatives round on Christmas Day the police can force entry and make them go home. Do you think this is a free service or do you have to book???

A DELIVERY TO IRAN.

During the last week of April 1976 I received a phone call from Caravans International Ltd PR Manager, Martin Lumby, who asked if I would like a trip to Tehran delivering a CI Travelhome [motorised caravan] to a trade fair leaving in just a weeks' time! Luckily my employer agreed to a fortnight's holiday and the next few days were spent obtaining a Passport, Visas, inoculations etc. ready to fly to Brussels to join Martin who had gone there a couple of days before to register the new Travelhome on transit plates as the vehicle was to be left in Tehran. The bodies for the Travelhome were built in Poole and shipped to Charleroi where they were mounted on a German built Ford Transit chassis.

My connection with Caravans International Ltd was that for the past eight years I had driven one of their outfits in the International Caravan Road Rallies having successfully won the 1976 event in the Lee Davey/ Drake & Fletcher Team.

Our journey was scheduled to take twelve days with a day's break at half distance. The target overnight stops were to be at Aachen [Germany], Salzburg [Austria], Maribor [Yugoslavia now Slovenia], Nis [now Serbia], Edirne, Istanbul, Yozgert, Erzurum, [all in Turkey], Tabriz, and Takestan [Iran], and then to Tehran. No forward arrangements were made for overnight stops which we had to resource when reaching the target area. Our instructions were from Istanbul on - no night driving due to the extremely dangerous driving behaviour of Turkish drivers which we were to witness when we left the night halts early each morning seeing the overnight crash carnage.

Being a brand new vehicle it had its first service at the Ford agents in Salzburg which gave us the day to tour the beautiful city. On returning to the Ford dealers we were met by an apologetic manager who told us they had "dropped" the Travelhome off the hoist and damaged the full length side panel and had made temporary repair with fibreglass! With the running-in of Travelhome now completed [on the boring German/ Austrian autobahns] driving was more relaxed on the single carriageway roads which were generally tarmac surfaced until we reached Bulgaria where unmetalled roads were to become the norm being continually maintained with Blaw Knox [made in Rochester] grading machine! Such were the pot holes you were driving into and out of them so the roads were giving the Travelhome a good testing which was one of the objects of the overland delivery



to Tehran. The countryside from Salzburg became far more interesting albeit the roads were very busy with trucks heading to Iraq and Iran.

During the first half of our journey we observed several convoys of vehicles heading east which included a fleet of over twenty Mercedes car transporters carrying Mercedes cars with each tractor unit carrying a large number on its door so these were named the "racing Mercs"!

Up to and including Istanbul we found BP MoCamps to overnight at but once across the Bosphorous into Eastern Turkey we utilised the guarded TIR lorry parks and facilities as a se-

cure and safe place to overnight.

Although we were travelling in a motorised caravan we were only allowed to use the cooker for boiling water as everything else had to be kept new as the vehicle was going on public display in Tehran. As the toilet was out of bounds we used transport café facilities and it was not uncommon to meet others from the UK as I did in Sofia when the person next to me asked if I was English and where from as, he was from Park Wood, Maidstone!

As no cooking allowed we had one cooked meal a day at a roadside or similar café and this meal was supplemented by purchasing local produce which caused some raised eyebrows in countries where English was not spoken as we would help ourselves from the shelves to the surprise of the locals!

Our halfway halt was taken at Istanbul and was spent in the city going to the Blue Mosque, the Bazaar etc. and sampling the cuisine by the busy Bosphorous waterside.

Leaving Istanbul into Asia and Eastern Turkey we opted to use the northern route, known as the Military Road, as the southern route via Agri had the reputation for the local population throwing bricks at vehicles which is why lorries using that route had mesh over their wind-screens! The Military Road had many Turkish Army Camps which became more frequent as we neared the Russian border with lookout posts about a km away.

We witnessed many serious crashes, generally involving HGVs, and previous fatal crashes were marked with roadside shrines which were a positive reminder as how dangerous the roads were. Several HGVs were seen off the mountain roads hundreds of feet below

spread over a large area following a crash!

It was in the Erzurum TIR park that we met two HGV drivers from Hull one of whom had been forced off the road by a "mad Turk" and his HGV was on its side which meant the two drivers had to right the cab and trailer and reload the bales of wool they were delivering to Tehran plus running repairs to the lorry cab [imagine that happening in the UK]! We understood that when HGV crashes occurred that if an armed guard was not posted immediately the vehicle and its load would be looted by the locals!

Whilst we had a few difficulties in obtaining fuel through Bulgaria and parts of western Turkey it became a major problem in eastern Turkey as the fuel stations would not sell fuel to foreigners and this lead to hefty bribes to get a tank full! It



became almost accepted practice that when we stopped to refuel the attendants and local children all gathered around the Travelhome and wanted their pictures taken!

The last 40km along the Asian Highway which was so rough and potholed it took over 2 hours to cover 40km. We then queued up at the Bazargan customs control which was notorious for delays in processing entry to Iran with up to a thousand lorries in the queue. We had

allowed 24 hours to get through but in fact managed it in 2 hours after our documents were returned on three occasions until the enclosed bribe reached the necessary level! We were driving a Belgium registered vehicle and at most of the previous border crossings the officials were very friendly once we handed them our UK passports, unlike the Germans who appeared to be having a rough time at the custom posts.

Into Iran and the roads immediately improved and we were able to cruise at 60mph for the first time since leaving Austria! We arrived at the overnight stop at Tabriz in a violent storm which we later discovered was the edge of an earthquake and we were certain the storm water was running uphill! We found the municipal camp site with the only other occupants being three UK registered motor caravans all separately touring Asia. The next day we could have driven to Tehran but stopped at the Takestan camp site to give the Travelhome a four hour clean before delivering it to Roosevelt Avenue Tehran!

The story did not quite end there as when we tried to leave Tehran we discovered we were short of an entry visa into Iran which air passengers received when arriving at Tehran airport. With the only means of communication with the UK by booked Telex it became a problem and the suggestion to go to the UK Embassy was quickly dismissed by our Iranian contact. However eventually a message from UK said remain at the International Hotel, hire a car and do a bit of site seeing which we did for a week including a trip over the Alborz Mountains to the Caspian Sea! We had threatened to drive the Travelhome back to Turkey and dump it there but eventually I was able to fly home and Martin followed a few days later having removed the Travelhome from his passport documentation.

An interesting journey for my first time out of the UK which I would not like to repeat in today's volatile world!

Basic journey data:

3443 miles. 92 hours driving time. Average speed 37.4 mph. Fuel consumption 19 mpg





Typical Turkish road with travel stained Travelhome and a clean Travelhome by Shahad Tower, Tehran.

Lyle Cathcart

Dukeries Rally Donnington Park Round 1 MSN Rally Championship

This event was our 1st since February where Anthony piloted the car to 2nd overall at Goodwood Southdowns Stages. Since then we have been fortunate to have been approached by my our long term engine builder Bill Falconer, who thought we needed some more power from our 1400 16v engine! A sponsorship deal was agreed and this event at Donnington would be the depute for the new engine. We were both eager to find out if the numbers from the dyno would increase our pace relative to our competitors. Since the last engine we purchased from Bill some 7 years ago we now had around 175bhp and more importantly with the aid of throttle bodies and Bill's improvements, more torque at lower revs. In preparation for the event the first job was to get an entry. This normally isn't too much of an issue, but due to the limited rallying this year the event attracted 160 entries in 30 minutes! Lucky for us we got an entry, but in the rush to complete the entry form, we didn't put in any seeding information. In addition I didn't update the form before the seeding was done, this caused us to be seeded at 87 for the event, out of 100 entrants. Lucky for us we were reseeded at 55 due to our pace. But a lesson was learnt.

Due to Covid restrictions and distance, we decided to travel up the day before and sleep in the service van! Ian Mepham from Performance Automotive was helping service on the event. He also joined us in the service area and slept in his BMW 1 series overnight. Light Snow was pre-

dicted overnight followed by a cold day, but fortunately for us at about 4am the rain started and this didn't stop until around lunch time. This made tyre choice for SS1 very easy, with standing water the Michelin extreme wet tyre was used. These tyres need surface spray otherwise due to their soft compound, they don't last very long.



The stage started well and we started to get into a rhythm in the very slip-

pery conditions, our pace felt good and this was confirmed when we were catching the car that started 30 seconds in front on stage. On the second of three laps a "James Bond" smoke screen appeared down one of the straights into a chicane. We had to drop our speed to 10 -15 mph and even at this speed we struggled to find the tyre stacks marking the chicane. Our biggest fear was someone stationary in the smoke or someone behind not slowing down and crashing into the rear of us. On the exit of the chicane we saw a parked up Mk 1 Escort with engine failure. We finished the stage and were happy to be 35th overall and 1st in class by some 26 seconds.

During SS2 we caught a Mk 2 Escort at the Melbourne hairpin near the end of the lap, we had



superior grip and took a tighter line as he was sliding wide. This enabled us to get alongside him, but for some reason he had no idea we were there even with our horns blaring! Then he proceeded to squeezing us towards the grass into the entry of Goddards. We were later on the brakes which enabled us to drive around the outside of him onto the start finish straight.

Stage 3 & 4 were still very tricky including some oversteer moments in 5th gear down the Craner Curves, not the place you want this to happen. Despite these "moments" we managed to continue our pace and open our lead in class to 1.54 seconds after 4 stages. For stage 5 the track was still wet but the large puddles were gone. This enabled the higher powered cars to start getting some grip and take time out of us.

With the light starting to fade we fitted our light pod before SS6. By the time we launched off the line it was almost dark. The first lap of the circuit was ok with no issues, but on laps 2 and 3 gear selection issues appeared. Lucky it was only in 4th gear on the upshift, and with the gearbox being so close geared we didn't lose much time and crossed the finish line. We finished 30th overall and 1st in Class A by 2.27 seconds. A good start to our championship campaign. It was a great event, which was made a lot easier with the support/help and servicing from lan Mepham, Suze and Matt Endean.

Round 2 of MSN Rally Championship kicks off at Brands Hatch on 16th January 2021.

Christopher Newton

Caravan Road Rallies

The Caravan Club promoted the first British Caravan Road Rally [BCRR] in 1954 with one of the objects to show the combination of a car and caravan is a highly roadworthy outfit showing the striking improvements in design and performance particularly braking and stability as a result of the rally. The events for club members using their outfits on a navigational rally with special tests to check the proficiency of the crew in handling the outfit in situations such as parallel parking, reversing, braking efficiency, caravan uncoupling and levelling and checking the caravan is in touring trim!. During the 1970s the caravan & car manufacturers used this event [from 1975 the Caravan Club International Road Rally [CIRR] as a marketing tool employing professional drivers such as Pat Moss-Carlson, Vic Elford, Roger Clark, Tony Pond, Andy Dawson, etc. The events up to 750 miles of road sections with progressively more Special Tests on private and forestry commission roads became out of reach for many of Caravan Club members as the risk to the outfits was now considered high!



Early events attracted up to 200 outfits in a navigational rally making the use of remote areas in the Lake and Peak Districts, Wales, the Midlands and East Anglia. The caravans had to be in "Touring Trim" carrying food, water, bedding, clothes, crockery, cooking utensils, gas supply, and toilet facility. The challenge to keep the weight down to a minimum was achieved by using dehydrated food, paper plates, plastic cutlery, aluminium utensils, small gas bottle, and plastic spade as a toilet. Attempts at weight reduction were often challenged by the scrutineers but those experienced usually won the argument as to regulation compliance. At the end of the road event outfits were entered into a

"Concours" which necessitated cleaning the outfit to perfection [often following a road rally through muddy lanes etc.] Many entrants prepared their outfit by colour matching car and caravan resulting in some stun-

ning outfits.

I had never considered "Rallying" with a caravan in tow as a sensible option to the 60s club road rallies and the thought of rushing around the countryside keeping to a 30mph average did not have any appeal until in 1969. I was invited to join Lee Davey [Lee Davey Caravans at Harrietsham] as co-driver in a "Works" Caravans International [CI – caravan manufacturers] outfit with navigator, Mike Cockle. I did most of the driving as Lee Davey slept in the back and woke up to drive the Special manoeuvring tests. The caravan was pulled by an automatic Simca 1100



and **CI** and Lee were pleased with our **5**th **overall** finish and invited me to drive again in 1970. This was great as it was an all-expense paid event and the beginning of a long term relationship with Mike Cockle being my navigator / co driver for many years to come.

As a "works entry" CI allocated the outfits and for 1970 the tow car was a Simca 1000S with Eccles Opal caravan and I did not use top gear during the event! With the event based at Snetter-

ton there were not to many hills to climb on the navigational road sections! The Special and Surprise Tests were driven by me for the first time and we finished **2**nd **overall** with cash bonus from **CI** and an invitation to drive in the "CI works team" again for 1971.

For 1971 [Mallory Park] I had an automatic Rover 3500 and Eccles Topaz caravan. The car was



for most of the arduous road sections [in the Peak District] held in lower gears resulting in a fuel consumption of 10mpg with us finishing **9**th **overall** and winning the Team Award so in the Silver again and cash bonus from **CI**.

The **1972** [Mallory Park] event took in 500 miles of roads over two nights in Wales. The first night was very tough on narrow roads and I severely damaged the caravan and was advised to retire but with ropes and gaffer tape we tied the caravan together to finish the event **20**th **overall** and again won the Team Award. The damaged caravan attracted much publicity which **CI** put down to the strength of the caravan! The **Range Rover** used was more economical than

the previous years Rover 3500 and returned about 14 mpg!

The **1973** the event moved to the Silverstone. With more interest by the car manufacturers **CI** secured three **Ford Consul GT**s for our Team which looked adequate albeit we had suspension and clutch problems and were pleased to finish in **10**th **place**. The BBCTV Wheelbase programme showed the event before we returned the cars to Ford who were not happy seeing their cars being driven at speed on Special Stages and even more upset when they inspected the underneath of the cars - but they did get publicity from the TV programme with several shots of our outfit running No 13! The event was monitored by the Road Research Laboratory and Ministry of Transport with the view of raising the national speed limit for caravans/trailers on the UK.

The **1974** Fuel crisis caused the Caravan Club to cancel the event announcing that in **1975** the event would break from tradition and become a Special Section Event of about 700miles including 35/40 Special Sections. This now put the event outside of the average Caravan Club member due to the risks of damage on Special Sections. The night sections in Wales were most enjoyable using the traditional rally roads with a caravan in tow at what we now realise were at ridiculous

average speeds where knowledge and "marked maps" were essential and wrong slots were out of the question! CI announced they were no longer going to enter "works" outfits which meant either we withdrew from entering or formed a new Team as we were now enjoying competing on these "crazy" events. The Team drivers would of me, Martin Lumby [PR manager for CI] and Chris Daisy who had competed on previous Caravan Rallies.

Discussions with Lee Davey concluded with him providing 3 caravans but we had to find the cars! With no success from car manufacturers we tried local dealers and



came lucky with Eddie Moon, director, of Drake & Fletcher, Maidstone, Vauxhall dealers who offered cars from the demonstrator fleet being two Vauxhall Firenza HP [Thruxton] Droop Snoots [RKR101M Lyle & RKR102M Chris Daisy] and a Vauxhall Victor 2300 [with Blydenstien mods GKR55N] which were gratefully accepted.

We formed **Team Lee Davey - Drake & Fletcher** with event preparation for the new format requiring upgrading the outfits with suspension and under shielding to withstand off road Special Stages. We now had a Team manager and two service crews [car and caravan] and were ef-



fectively a disguised **1975** "works" team "totalling" 20 people! We used Manston Aerodrome for special test practicing with high speed testing on the M2 late at night! If we set the outfits up to do 6 wheel drifts at 70mph plus we were happy!

Our target was the Team Award with the two Droop Snoots competing in the Caravan races at the Silverstone. The 47 outfits left Silverstone in bright sunshine but soon heavy snowfalls resulted in very slippery conditions throughout the event. The route went from Silverstone to the West Country and back then to East Anglia to finish at Silverstone with 35 Special Stages using airfields, private estates, race circuits, and forest tracks. On a windy

Stage at Castle Coombe I unfortunately put the caravan on its side – I jumped out and almost righted it by the time Mike got out and we continued to the finish [losing 30 seconds] having passed the approaching rescue vehicles! The damage to the caravan was rectified with a large hammer! Chris also suffered damage when a sheet of ice came off an approaching coach bouncing on the bonnet, cracking the screen and going right through the caravan doing considerable damage which was quickly patched up by our Service Crew! Back at the finish with track tests completed the Team finished in **6**th **[101] 7**th **[102]** and 24th places to win the Esso Team Award. Only 28 outfits finished the rally. The Droop Snoots took part in the Caravan Races with never more than a cars length between them and finishing side by side with Lyle just in the lead. During the summer of 1975 the Team Outfits were displayed at Lee Davey Caravans

and **Drake & Fletcher** showrooms capitalising on the success of the Team.

The target for the 1976 **CIRR** was an outright win!. The same caravans were to be used but the question of cars was not agreed. This was resolved with Eddie Moon supplying two Blydenstien modified Vauxhall Victor 2300 plus one on loan from Bill Blydenstien. The modified Victors were quicker than Droop **Snoots** the achieving 0 to 60 with caravan in 10 seconds! Practicing again



Manston was going well until last year's **Victor** was rolled during high speed test. As Team leader I phoned Eddie Moon with the "bad news" but he was fantastic in that he replaced this "write off" within a week with another fully modified car!

Competition for 1976 was tough and we felt "Our Team" was looked down upon by the might of

the Ford, BL and GM teams. During preparation CI asked us to "test" various prototype components including a new design of tow hitch. Testing modifications were carried out and we had to use these hitches on the event. I had problems with juddering under heavy breaking and ordered all the Team Caravans to have the original hitches put back on which did not please the makers of the new hitch! [This hitch design is now fitted to most new caravans and trailers]

The event started with spectators Special Stage at Silverstone and then Special Stages to the night sec-



tions in Wales where disaster struck when Martin left a mountain road ending up with a fence post jammed in the engine compartment which put paid to our efforts to win the Team Award for the third year running! At the end of the Wales night sections [including Epynt stages] we were leading the field of 54 competitors by 3 seconds with Chris in 3rd place. We had trounced the main Ford [Roger Clark 10th], GM [David Terry 6th, Colin Grewer 35th], and BL [Russel Close 2nd, Andy Dawson 4th, Ray Cook 5th, Tony Pond 35th] Chrysler [Colin Malkin. ret] drivers! Two main contenders, Tony Pond and Colin Grewer, incurred damage penalties on a Special Stage but notwithstanding these we were still the outright winners. Tony Pond wrote unfortunate reports saying he was "robbed of the outright win" which many people took issue with in the motorsport press. We achieved our goal coming 1st & 3rd overall - a boost for CI and Vauxhall who made much publicity of this success. We were pleased with our results as was Lee Davey as it was the first outright win during his involvement and competing in in Caravan Road Rallies. Mike and I also competed in 1976 Caravan Rally Championship events for the year and finished 2nd overall. The spoils from our years caravan rallying were silver trophies, prize money and bonus payments which enabled me to buy a Vauxhall Magnum [from Eddie Moon] which was suitably modified by Bill Blydenstiem and then used by Mike & I for road rallying - a very successful outcome. RKR101M finally came into my possession in 2007 having been almost unused by D & F. It has travelled under 2k miles since with speedo now reading just under 14k miles. RKR102M was sold by D & F in 1976 and has not been seen since but Chris Daisy would love to know where the car is!

The **1977** event was cancelled I believe due to low entry numbers so **1976** was the last of the Caravan Road Rallies. We will all miss the thrill of driving the outfits at speeds into the 90s and through the forests as fast as possible [and safe!] all in the interests of caravan safety!

Footnote: Many people do not appreciate the amount of preparation that "our" Team put into these events. We practiced for 2 months and took the caravans almost everywhere we went so towing came naturally. We also did a lot of research & development under extreme conditions for the manufacturer the results of our work being incorporated in future caravans. The fact that we took the event very seriously brought its rewards whereas some of the "works team drivers" treated the event light-heartedly! It was great to be involved in this different sphere of motor sport!

Lyle Cathcart November 2020

FIXTURE LIST 2021

STATUS

Interclub	I	Clubmans	CM		
National	N	International	INT	Dual permit	DP

Date	Туре	Status	Name of Event/Venue	ASEMC C'ship
22 Jan	12 Car Rally	ľ	POSTPONED	Yes
28 March	Car Trial	СМ	Tyrwhitt Drake	Yes
9 May	Autotest	CM/DP	AT Taster Day	
2 June	Autotest	CM/DP	Evening Autotest	
12 Jun	Tour	Exmp Cert	Mike Jordan Tour	
16 June	Autotest	CM/DP	Evening Autotest	
30 June	Autotest	CM/DP	Evening Autotest	
14 July	Autotest	CM/DP	Evening Autotest	
18 July	Autotest	СМ	Summer Slalom	
28 July	Autotest	CM/DP	Evening Autotest	
22 August	Autotest	CM/DP	Wings All Day Autotest	Yes
26 Septem- ber	Car Trial	СМ	Brian Lewis	Yes

The Clerks of the Course for the autotests have yet to be fixed. Please contact Andy Jenner to let him know your availability if you are willing to Clerk an event in 2021.

We have an urgent need for new event officials both Clerks of Course and Secretary of Meeting as can be seen from the chart above. If you would like to take on an event your help would be most welcome because if we do not have some new people events may not be able to run in 2021. Help will given to anybody willing with many club proformas already in place, so not too much work involved in running at least one event. Please contact Bruce Jenkins or Andy Jenner for more information,



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Address and Postcode [1]	
Occupation	
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Sporting Trials	
Speed Events	
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Stage Rallies	
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Club Records/Archives	
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Social Activities	

Signed

1]	[2]	

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