

Maidstone and Mid Kent Motor Club

February Newsletter 2021

Editors Mutterings.

This is our first Newsletter of 2021 and as you can see by the content, we are unable to report on any Club events mainly because there hasn't been any. You committee still meets up regularly via Zoom to make sure we are in a position to recommence motor sport as soon as Government restrictions are relaxed sufficiently to allow us to do so. We have also been actively pursuing leads for suitable additional venues for future events, particularly autosolo's, to replace the loss of Sittingbourne and Lydden. In the continual pursuit for venues, we would also like to hear any ideas and leads that you may have.

As reported in the Autumn Newsletter the issue of compulsory insurance (Vnuk) for all motorised vehicles has been hanging over us for some time now. As you will see in this issue the UK Government has now confirmed that it is not going to mirror this part of EU legislation. So, it is with great relief that we can continue to own non road going vehicles without the millstone of unnecessary insurance. I am sure this will be a great relief to all our trial and autotesters who trailer their cars to events.

Also, in this issue is the first (we hope) of series of a profiles of a Club Members. This the brainchild of Emma Olsen a long-time member and all-round competitor. Emma has kindly offered to chase members, write up their motorsport history if necessary, and expose their inner secrets!! Be prepared to get an email and phone call from Emma sometime soon! We are all interested to hear how you got hooked on motorsport.

It would appear that the latest bit of technology being introduced on cars, is something called "Android Automotive". This is the next step up from Android Auto. It will be built into your car during manufacture and will know where you are, where you live and through your smart phone know everything else about you. So, through autonomous driving it will take you home (or anybody that steals your car) for you find that the lights are on and your self-driving vacuum cleaner has swept up all the work you had carefully laid out to finish later! It will of courses be necessary to own a smart phone, but these will become miniaturise over time and be implanted at birth carrying all the information that identifies you and makes sure you have paid your dues to the state. The thing I can't understand however, is that If people don't like driving why don't they, rather than delegate driving to a computer, catch a bus or train and leave the roads free for those of us that do?

Although we were not able to run our usual full calendar in 2020 and have our normal end of year celebration of the winners of all the different disciplines, we have however had sufficient to award a truncated Annual Championship. The list of winners is given on page and the results are published in full on the Club Website.

Bruce

STOP PRESS

As you will below Motorsport UK has just announced that motorsport can restart from 29th March.



Motorsport UK confirms motorsport will restart in England from 29 March

Release: 23/02/2021

Motorsport UK is pleased to announce that organised Permitted motorsport can resume in England with effect from 29 March, subject to local restrictions and in accordance with its own Restart Guidance. This confirmation follows the announcement on 22 February by Prime Minister Boris Johnson that the third lockdown imposed on 4 January will be lifted, and formally organised outdoor sports – for adults and under 18s – can also restart but should be compliant with guidance issued by national governing bodies.

As the applicable governing body for the sport, Motorsport UK will now begin granting Permits for all disciplines, and applications are invited in the usual way.

Motorsport UK will resume the sport in accordance with its Restart protocols, which have guided the safe resumption of motorsport through the lifting of the two previous lockdowns. Updated guidance relevant to the latest restart will be available on [MotorsportUK.org](https://www.motorsportuk.org) in due course. Motorsport UK guidance in relation to Exemptions and Elite Sport still applies. The governing body acknowledges the target of late spring for allowing spectators on a limited basis and will follow those developments in order to keep its stakeholders informed. Motorsport activities in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, and the Channel Islands are subject to prevailing government guidance in those devolved territories and we look forward to announcing updates relevant to those nations in due course. The Isle of Man is not subject to a lockdown at this time.

The results for the Annual Awards for 2020 :

Overall Club Driver of the Year:

1st Hayward Trophy - **Brian Sharpe**
2nd Coronation Trophy - **Richard Olsen**
3rd P A Barden Trophy - **Lloyd Covey**

Senior Club Driver of the Year:

David Haynes Rally Trophy - **Dennis Usmar**

Young Club Driver of the Year:

Under 21 Trophy - **Ryan Howatson**

Young Club Marshal of the Year:

Equal 1st - **Jamie Graham and Harry Mewett**

Up and Down the A20

- 174,887 cars were registered in July 2020, an increase of over 30,000 in June.
- MMKMC to introduce Sapphire Timing for 2021 autotests.
- UK Government to allow the introduction of E10 fuel in 2021.
- Mitsubishi to withdraw from Europe by end of 2021.
- The Treasury lost £2.4billion in fuel duty in the two months of the first Lockdown.
- It can cost up to £300 for a car to be recovered from a UK Motorway or 'A' Road, by Highways England.
- Rumour has it that somebody is glad to see the back of a certain green and yellow Westfield.
- Our spies tell us that a long time Mini exponent has been seen driving a Citroen on trials somewhere north of the Thames. Will we now see him in Citroen?
- GB Number plate legislation changed from 1st January 2021. Black and white number plates will not be allowed on vehicles built after January 1st 1980.
- If you have now gone electric, you will be able to complement your new purchase with a Green number plate.

Later this yearmay be?



Brushes with the boys in blue !

Reading almost daily about motorists being stopped by the police, often wrongly, on some Covid related matter has caused me to reflect on the odd occasions over the last sixty years when the traffic police have deemed it necessary to hold a conversation with me! Considering that in my earlier days of driving on the public highway, in what I would have described as 'a mildly enthusiastic manner' for others the word 'hooligan' may have sprung to mind, they have been remarkably few and always with an amicable outcome. The first occasion on which I was stopped was simply that on leaving the brightly lit Hastings underground car park one evening I failed to switch the lights on on my Austin Ruby and was almost immediately pulled over on the well-lit promenade and was asked 'does this thing have any lights because if it does it's a good idea to turn them on when it gets dark'! Roll on a couple of years and I am a student in Bath, early hours of the morning and returning from a party I am enthusiastically tyre squealing my way, in my A30, through the one-way system when I spot some lights flick on in a side road and glance across and realise it's a police car. Quick heave on the handbrake to avoid putting the brake lights on and down to 30 mph by the time the police car is on my tail, he then follows me for about three miles out onto the A4 before pulling me over. "We seem to be in rather less of a hurry than we were before spotting us - Sir !" I said I wasn't in any particular hurry ! "that's not the way it sounded until you spotted us; I suggest that you drive with a little more care and consideration in future, on your way!" Quite why we took my wife's car to a party In Hempstead I have no idea or why we were randomly pulled over by the police. "good evening Sir, is this your vehicle and can you tell me the registration number?" I replied "yes" and rattled off the registration number of my own car! Long pause and then "what type of car do we think we are driving Sir?" Red face but with explanation supported by my wife we were soon on our way. Not being a drinker it made sense for me to chauffeur Trevor Gilkes to a 750 MC party so that he could enjoy a pint (or two), on the way home we were waved into the lay-by outside the Great Danes for a random police check. I put the window down as the police officer said, "just carrying out a routine check Sir." As I responded with "well I've not been drinking", Trevor leant across in front of me and in his best Brian Blessed voice boomed "but I have!" Having recovered from the blast of alcoholic fumes the police officer responded with "so it seems - Sir!" A quick look at the tyres and tax disc and we were on our way.

Whilst on a night rally in my Historic 105E Anglia one very cold winter's night, we hit a frozen puddle which caused the exhaust to sheer off where the front pipe joins the silencer so no chance of any sort of repair. Although we then drove as gently as possible it was extremely noisy! On the way home I was dismayed to come across a queue of cars on the Moor at Hawkhurst where the police were stopping every vehicle. They would have heard us coming from way off! After what seemed an age, we reached the front of the queue and I said to the approaching police officer "I would seem to have something of a problem." A more senior officer strolled across and said "'it looks like a well cared for vehicle, where are you heading?" After being told Maidstone he simply said "Try not to wake the neighbours" and let us make our very noisy departure. All in all, I have no cause for complaint about the way the 'boys in blue' have treated me.

Ken Kimber

Meet the Club Members

A profile of : Emma Olsen

Current role in Club: Competitor and Marshal

First joined: 2004

When and how did you first get involved in motorsport?

Richard, my husband, and I went out for a rare Saturday morning bacon roll at the Eurolink estate in Sittingbourne and saw several cars on trailers go past. Richard has always been interested in cars, so we followed them and came across a round of the National Tarmac Autotest Championship at the greyhound stadium. We got chatting to Dave and Ann Cook who told us about the event and we watched some amazing car skills. They told us that we could have a go on grass in our normal road car at Headcorn Aerodrome the next Wednesday evening. We went along and both had a go, met some really helpful and friendly people and that changed our lives as we have been members and competing ever since.



What was your first competition car?

Our only car at the time - Rover 218 diesel complete with canoe roof rack!

How many competition cars do you currently have and what types of events are they used for?

Some would say too many!

MG ZR 1800 – used and abused since 2009 in autotesting on grass, autosolos on tarmac, multi-venue events and just started to use in targa rallies.

Citroen AX – Richard built specifically for use as an Autosolo car and uses Citroen Saxo VTR running gear.

BMW 120D – yes a diesel! Used in grass autotesting and autosolos.

Citroen Relay Campervan- not really a competition vehicle but used to sometimes tow cars to events and for our accommodation/catering/toilet facilities!



What types of events have you competed in over the years?

Grass autotesting, scatter rallies, production car trials, autosolos, fun events and targa rally. Also, marshall at sprints, targa and rally events, which is also a great way to see good events and get involved.

What is your most memorable event/events and why?

We used to do a lot of Production Car Trials (PCT) in our original Citroen AX which were good fun to spray mud around and also a test of nerve. I had a bit of a reputation of using a lot of right foot – well that is why there is a rev limiter isn't it? Truth is I don't like reversing back out of steep sections so if you get to the top you could often drive back down! Richard only had to swap with me once on a steep section to get back down. However, I did get FTD once, and apparently, I was the first lady driver to FTD at a PCT championship round so proud of that.



Summer Slalom events organised by Andy Jenner have always been a highlight, not that we are competitive in the MG, but for the prison section alone when you get to go flat out down a gravel track, which is a blast. And 1 year I beat Richard on that section too! Probably most memorable for how dirty we can get the car too.

The other event that really stands out was our first targa rally at Rushmoor Arena organised by Farnborough Motor Club in November 2019. We both drove and navigated for each other. I did make a navigation mistake on Richard's first driving run which scuppered his overall result, but, as always, he wanted me to do well and remember him shouting at me to "Go, Go, Go" down the straights. I was shaking at the end of each run as never driven so fast on slippery surfaces and in mud – and laughed so much too. At the end I won the novice class for over 1400cc and was 9th overall, which was such a surprising result and lovely to get so many

congratulations from fellow competitors, some of whom had been doing these events for a while.

What do you consider your greatest achievement/s and why?

I was really proud in 2018 to be awarded the Club Person of the Year award, jointly with Richard, as this is an award decided by the committee for someone who has contributed to the club over the year. Richard and I are always trying to help with supporting the running of events in a range of ways including marshalling, setting up or just getting involved in ideas to improve events. We both really enjoy being able to help fellow competitors too with either advice, hints and tips, or in Richard's case mechanical repairs! It was lovely to know that other people recognised this.

I may not be winning class awards, but I always measure my own improvement as my key achievement – getting times closer to Richard's (down to within 2 seconds), being faster on every run and being in the top half of the entry at solo's are my current personal targets. Small targets but it keeps me motivated to keep enjoying it.

I always try to share my knowledge and experience with newer drivers and to encourage everyone to give it a go. It is really rewarding to see someone progress who I have offered help to. I also see myself as a bit of a role model for other ladies competing as I often get asked by other women about my experience and any advice I can offer. It is great to see more ladies getting involved over the years I have been competing.

From your experience what advice would you give to other club members?

Have fun! Remember this is why you started. I always aim to enjoy myself in the car and with the other people at the event and not take things too seriously.

Now I have shared my responses I will be asking a few other club members to share their memories too, for future editions! Watch out you're next!

Government announces plan to scrap EU law, ensuring British drivers avoid £50 a year insurance hike

Controversial EU Vnuk motor insurance law may be removed from British law.



- government plans to bin the EU's 'Vnuk' motor insurance law – which requires insurance even on private land for a wider range of 'vehicles', including ride-on lawnmowers and mobility scooters
- move will ensure every British driver is spared an estimated £50 annual increase in insurance premiums
- decision to scrap Vnuk from British law would reiterate benefits of leaving the EU, as we take back control of our own laws and regulations

British drivers will avoid an estimated £50 a year increase in motor insurance costs as the government confirms it plans to do away with the controversial EU 'Vnuk' law, Transport Secretary Grant Shapps announced today (21 February 2021).

The Vnuk law requires a wider range of vehicles than those such as cars and motorbikes to be insured, including ones previously not requiring insurance, such as golf buggies, mobility scooters and quad bikes.

The law also extends to vehicles on private land, meaning people with a ride-on lawnmower at home would require insurance where it would have previously not been needed.

Had the EU law been implemented in Great Britain, it would have meant the insurance industry would have been liable for almost £2 billion in extra overall costs. These costs would likely have been passed onto their customers – British road-users.

Now we have left the EU, the measures no longer need to be implemented, helping road-users across the country steer clear of increased premiums – a clear win for motorists in Britain.

Bypassing Vnuk will also protect the existence of the UK's world-leading motorsports industry. The EU rules would have meant any motorsports collision involving vehicles from go-karting to F1 would have been treated as regular road traffic incidents requiring insurance. This could have decimated the industry due to the additional insurance costs of roughly £458 million every single year.

Scrapping the rules will save the industry from potential collapse and secure hundreds of thousands of jobs in the sector in the process.

History of number plates format in UK

Following the introduction of the Motor Car Act 1903 on 14 August 1903, vehicles in the United Kingdom were [mandated](#) to use number plates on public roads. The number plates cost five shillings each, and applications can only be made for vehicles that were under 17 years old (14 years for motorcycles).

However, legislators and vehicle manufacturers consistently underestimated the appeal of private ownerships of motor vehicles, and as such, have had to revise the number plate formats six times over the last century to meet the ever growing demands. So what were the previous five formats before the current one?

1. Regional Prefix System (1904 – 1932)

The regional prefix system was the first number plate format to be introduced in UK. It's a six character and a single space permutation consisting of two letters, denoting registration location, and four numbers, a random combination. As such, each registration location could conceivably accommodate up to 10,000 registrations – a pretty large number back in those days. Example: BC 3456.

2. Three letter regional prefix (1933 – 1950)

Demand for automobiles and motorcycles began to increase, especially after World War II, so a new format was introduced to fulfil the anticipated new registrations. It was still a six character combination, but the regional prefix has been changed to three letters, while the random number combination has been reduced to three. Example: BCD 567

3. Flipping the three letter regional prefix (1951 – 1962)

The surge in demand caught everyone by surprised, and the previous number plate format was almost exhausted after just one decade. The brilliant people in government then came up with a unique plan – flip the format. So everything remains the same, except the numbers come before the regional prefix. Example: 567 BCD

4. Suffix System (1963 to 1982)

The number plate format underwent its most comprehensive revision 1963 with the suffix system. It was a seven character and two space system which consisted year of production (first letter), a random three number sequence (between 1 and 999), a three-letter local registration office tag.



over a million annual permutations, this format was bound to last forever (hint: it didn't). Example: D 567 DEF

in
of a
and
With

5. Prefix System (1983 to 2000)

Similar to third revision, this format was a flip of the previous format. The only change is the year of registration tag has been shifted from the front to the back – everything else remained the same. Example: 567 DEF D

The current system devised by the DVLA is a much more complicated and is projected to last until 2051. So, you needn't have to worry about a new plate format anytime soon – unless you're planning on buying a personalised number plate!

The new British Standard BS 145e has now been confirmed as going live from January 2021. It becomes mandatory from 1st September 2021. The following symbols will be allowed to replace the EU symbol currently displayed on numberplates of new cars.

The Union Flag

the Cross of St George

the Scottish Saltire

the Red Dragon of Wales

The flags must be accompanied by one the matching letters:

Great Britain or GB

United Kingdom or UK

ENGLAND, England, ENG or Eng

SCOTLAND, Scotland, SCO or Sco

CYMRU, Cymru, CYM or Cym

WALES or Wales

From the Club Archives

Rally of Kent 2004

Kingswood Stages 9 & 10 ~ Jackets 1 & 2

It's a strange world. There you are, standing in the middle of a wood at 7 o'clock in the morning, thinking that you should still be in bed recovering from the stresses and strains of the working week, when you are suddenly joined by many other likeminded souls. The reason of course why these people have given up their Sunday, is to help make the Rally of Kent run smoothly. It is even more astounding, that getting on for seventy competitors had paid hard-earned cash and a lot of it, to be they're also.

King's Wood is Forestry Commission Property that is used by people indulging in many different pastimes. Many people use the tracks for walking, and this is just one of the major hazards in running a Rally at this location. The Stage Commander Steve Groves and his Team had obviously put considerable effort into making everything safe as possible for competitors, marshals and members of the public alike.

On arriving at the Stage I joined the queue, yes queue, for signing on. At the head of the queue, I was greeted by the smiling face of Tim Carthcart who was doing his best to dispatch the queue to the appointed posts before the arrival of the competitors. I will not however blame him for parking in the muddiest patch he could find, but just put it down to entering into the spirit of the day. Having collected various envelopes, bags of goodies etc, I retired to my car to read the instructions and get my bearings. John Ashwell and I had been appointed to monitor the section of the stage leading up

to the morning start control, where due to the competitors having to run in both directions, they were under a pit lane speed restriction. I could feel a stop and go penalty situation coming on here!

Having found John's correct location, I then moved further down the track to that allocated to me. Having got out of the car and marched up and down I thought that the instructions given at the Marshals training session under 'Personal Equipment', were very relevant. Warm clothing and suitable footwear were certainly going to be needed as the wind was getting up and the forecast rain was threatening.

Soon after arriving at my post a chap in a Peugeot turned up and seemingly knowing where he was going, parked up behind the tapes. This mystified me a bit, as I was not expecting company at this point, but I thought more help in booking speeding competitors wouldn't go amiss. A steady stream of spectators started passing my position and all asked the same question, 'how much further'? A little while later the various organisers cars started driving up and down, with smug warm faces peering out of the windows, so I knew the first car was due soon. At this point the Chap in the Peugeot got out of his car and I could see he had Press emblazoned across his jacket and was carrying a camera with a 'milk bottle' screwed to the front of it. I enquired if he was aiming to take pictures of the competing cars, because if that was his intention he was in for a long wait! Upon explaining that this was not a competitive section in the morning, panic set in and he hurriedly threw everything in the car and drove off in the direction of the start.



Around 09.00 a stream of very clean and tidy competitors cars started to make their way passed me towards the start. To my surprise a number of older vehicles such as MK1 and MK2 Escorts as well as proper Minis were entered. After a lot of roaring and snorting in the distance, the cars that had passed in such pristine condition started to return. Their identities were now hidden by mud or in some cases completely changed by an obvious visit to King's Woods panel beaters. I counted them out but not so many of them back in.

During the three-hour gap between the morning stage and the afternoon stage, I was joined by John Ashwell, Tom Thompson and a man in a radio car. Having consumed everything in the way of food and drink that I had brought with me, and that the organisers had kindly provided to fend off the wind and rain, I was ready for the afternoon's proceedings. Having adjudged where the cars would end up when the drivers inevitably got it wrong, John Tom and I found a safe vantage point from where we could render assistance if needed. By this time, it was blowing a hooley and making a proper job of raining. Tom Thompson however did not endear himself to the assembled company when he repeatedly complained of how cold and wet, he was and that he was glad that he was off to Benidorm that night and would sitting on a warm beach this time tomorrow.

The first two cars through were the Impreza's of Will Nicholls and Simon Cole. Both were going well and completed our section without drama. The same could not be said for one bright red Impreza, which despite being four-wheel drive, came flat out into the corner understeering like mad. Net result was a very lucky, non-damaging trip into the bushes. It was good to see a varied field and be reminded of the sideways style of the RWD Escorts. The Minis had gone missing, but Patrick Watts set teeth on edge and helped the other competitors, by grading the ruts with under shield of his Sunbeam Tiger. I

still haven't worked out how you get your hand in to change the plugs on a Tiger? Nice to hear it, though.

They said that it would get a bit hectic when the cars started their second runs, as competitors would be started at 30 second intervals. They were right, as by the time cars got to us the faster cars on their second run had caught up the slower cars on their first run. This made thing interesting as some tried passing manoeuvres through our section. Steve Stringer for one confused the opposition by testing his emergency flashers in front of the following car. It was all too soon over, and we were glad to be able to collect up all the equipment and get back in the car to start to thaw out, if not to dry out.



I said goodbye to John and hoped Tom **did not** have a relaxed and warm break, or that his plane should be delayed, or some other happening that would take the smile off his face and headed for home to dry out. I could not understand how Tom could complain about the weather when he knew he was off to Benidorm. I did understand one thing though, and that's why the Stage was called Jackets 1 & 2, and that was because you needed both of them, to the keep out the wind and rain!! Oh, and they tell me Will Nicholls and Nick Broom were the eventual winners in their Impreza WRC.

Well done Steve, Roy, Mike and Team.

BAJ 20.03.2004

MMKMC Club Driver of the Year 2020

| | Competitor / Event Type | Grass Autotests | Trials | Tarmac | Road Rally Driver | Stage Rally Driver | TOTAL |
|----|-------------------------|-----------------|--------|--------|-------------------|--------------------|-------|
| 1 | Brian Sharpe | 51 | | 33 | | | 84 |
| 2 | Richard Olsen | 27 | | 34 | | | 61 |
| 3 | Lloyd Covey | 44 | | 14 | | | 58 |
| 4 | Alan Scott | 30 | 10 | 7 | | | 47 |
| 5 | Des Crocker | 41 | | 5 | | | 46 |
| 6 | Dave Cook | 45 | | | | | 45 |
| 7 | Toby Groves | 3 | | 40 | | | 43 |
| 8 | Christopher Newton | 20 | | 8 | | 10 | 38 |
| 9 | Emma Olsen | 16 | | 13 | | | 29 |
| 10 | Dennis Usmar | | 28 | | | | 28 |
| 11 | Roger Ashby | 12 | 15 | | | | 27 |
| 12 | Tim Mewett | | | | | 25 | 25 |
| 13 | Ryan Howatson | 23 | | 1 | | | 24 |
| 14 | Jim Pullar | 5 | 18 | | | | 23 |
| 15 | Jay Grossmith | | 22 | | | | 22 |
| 16 | Cameron Ferris | 20 | | | | | 20 |
| 17 | Steve Groves | | | 12 | 4 | | 16 |
| 18 | Drew Kellow | 14 | | 1 | | | 15 |
| 18 | Jamie Gorham | 15 | | | | | 15 |
| 20 | Ray Lane | | 14 | | | | 14 |
| 21 | Roland Brown | | | | | 12 | 12 |
| 22 | Anthony Newton | 3 | | | | 8 | 11 |
| 23 | David Fleck | | 10 | | | | 10 |
| 23 | Toby Cook | 10 | | | | | 10 |
| 25 | Les Rayfield | | 9 | | | | 9 |
| 25 | Si Kellow | 8 | | 1 | | | 9 |
| 27 | Ben Sinclair | 7 | | 1 | | | 8 |
| 28 | Ricky Sinclair | 6 | | 1 | | | 7 |
| 29 | Peter Gorham | 6 | | | | | 6 |
| 29 | Robert Ferris | 6 | | | | | 6 |
| 31 | Gavin Lane | | 5 | | | | 5 |
| 31 | Tiff Amsden | | 5 | | | | 5 |
| 33 | Andrea Sterry | 3 | | | | | 3 |
| 33 | Rebecca Groves | | | | 3 | | 3 |
| 35 | Andre Layne | | | 1 | | | 1 |
| 35 | James Muir | | | | | 1 | 1 |
| 35 | Liam Carfrae | 1 | | | | | 1 |
| 35 | Mens-Sana Tamakloe | | | 1 | | | 1 |
| 35 | Tom Grant | | | | | 1 | 1 |

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| Club Driver Winner | Brian Sharpe |
| Club Driver Runner-Up | Richard Olsen |
| Club Driver Third | Lloyd Covey |
| Senior Club Driver | Dennis Usmar |

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|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| Young Club Competitor of the Year | Ryan Howatson |
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