

Magazine of **Bristol Motor Club**

Driving Mirror



March - April 2023



One careful pensioner owner

Also Inside: Cotswold Clouds - **MX5 Contenders** - NavScatter
Price of a Bacon Roll - Ariel Factory Visit #2 - **Drive-By**

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Cover shot: Dave Cook (smugmug.com) of Mike Smith and Paul Barker on the Exeter Trial

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**The next Driving Mirror deadline is
Friday 2nd June 2023.**

Please send any words or photos you have to: Matt@classiccarsdriven.com

Chairman's Chat



Interesting times, don't you agree. As you'll no doubt be aware from TV and Media, there is an increasing focus on the environment, quite right to, which on the surface seems at odds with what we do. Not so say LARA.

You may not be aware but we are in the market for a piece of (hilly) land to permanently host our Fedden Trial and one or two sections of the Allen Trial, plus a PCA and social event(s) each year.

It was after discussing feedback from a local resident (not a fan of our planned use shall we say) on one potential purchase that Committee Member Chris Buckley shared a paper from LARA (Land Access and Recreation Association) to clarify the 14/28 Day Temporary Change of Use rule. Noise complaints upheld by the local planning authority could prevent a change of use incidentally. Something we need to be mindful of.

Also included in the same paper was Motorsport and its impact on the environment compared to other pastimes. This is some of what they had to say.

"...The issues of environmental sustainability and motorsports may at first appear at variance with each other. However, it would be a naïve argument simply to state: 'motorsport burns fuel, creates pollution and is environmentally damaging', without at least a comparison to everyday activities...."

....LARA argues that there is no difference environmentally between fuel being burnt in a car taking someone to the opera and fuel being used in a moto-cross bike: both are discretionary recreational activities. Likewise there is little difference between burning fuel in a car in order for a family to drive to a walking holiday and burning fuel in a rally car.


Every week football matches attract thousands of cars carrying spectators to the stadiums, and hundreds of people drive to National Parks to enjoy their amenity...."

Well, when you put it like that, there is hope yet. In the magazine this month a lovely balance of two Trials, second Ariel visit, our Navscatter, early season success in the MX5's (x2) price of a bacon roll and Drive-By. Enjoy.

Matt Nichols

Revolution

April 2023

The official magazine of  motorsport uk

THE MISSING LINK ON THE KARTING LADDER

Motorsport UK Club Kart permit trial



GET STARTED IN...

AUTOCROSS –
IDEAL FOR NOVICES

INSIDE HQ

2023 COACHING
QUALIFICATIONS

LEVELLING THE FIELD

TEAM BRIT'S
ROAD TO LE MANS

PLUS: MEMBERS BENEFITS + RESULTS + WHAT'S ON

motorsportuk.org/revolution-magazine/

When you drive past a layby full of cars of varying ages and sizes, with people with torches, a man with a laptop and a floodlight handing out paper envelopes, I'm sure the first thought of the general public is not 'NavScatter'. However, this is what the beginning of it looked like on a dark and chilly Friday in January.

This event was our first NavScatter, and the first motorsport event that I actually initiated attendance of. I'd described a NavScatter to him as like a treasure hunt but with a car. Pekka was less keen as he didn't trust my navigational skills. I also wasn't convinced by them, so before the event we did some homework with a previous set of NavScatter questions in the Driving Mirror magazine (issue Mar-Apr '21, readily found online).

We managed to get 5/5 on the test questions, so we arrived with all of our equipment (head torch, roamer, OS map 172, lots of pencils, a rubber and a lap sized piece of cardboard) and a tiny bit of knowledge.

At exactly 19:30 we opened our envelope, which contained a list of 39 coordinates/clues to coordinates and questions.

I plotted and numbered the points on the map while Pekka told me the coordinates and question number. This took us quite a while - we tied with Andrew Bisping/Rob Thomson and Martin Kerly/Dr Alice Kerly for the latest layby departure time of 20:14. The first pair were Mark Griffiths/Paul Sunshine at a speedy 20:05.

We noted that there was a location close to the layby, so we decided to go for that one first, the question was "what's best". After driving to a junction we thought the coordinates correlated with and spotting nothing obvious, we drove back towards the layby deflated but with our eyes open in case we were slightly too far down the road. It was on our return that we drove past Best Western Compass Inn, realised we had gone too far down and collected our first 10 points.

Back to the A46 and the next group of coordinates we decided to go for were a little way up. I directed Pekka left into a very narrow lane, which did not seem to match the map at all. After a few hundred metres I spotted my mistake, I had directed Pekka one left turn too early. There were some points to be had anyway, so we pulled into a junction and set about looking for some H numbers. Not being seasoned NavScatterers, we had no idea what we were looking for. The sign said "Horton 1/2" and "Hawkesbury Upton 2 1/2" so our initial thought was the

distance on the sign, but a quick internet search (this might be classed as cheating?.) and we realised we were looking for the Fire Hydrant sign and the numbers within it.

The next group of coordinates we headed for were in Wickwar. The most direct route was over the top of Hawkesbury Common. At the top of the Common, it was a very cold -4°C , and we were on a sheet of ice. A tentative pull away and we carried on to collect a cluster there, including a few 20-pointers. By this point, we were as far away from the finish line

The October club night will be a table-top NavScatter practise session for anyone who wants to take part, but like us were a bit apprehensive about whether we'd be any good. The next NavScatter event will be on the 27th October.

as we wanted to be, and didn't want to be late. We decided on a route that would take us through a final 4 locations, though one answer we couldn't find so



Sat in a cold car waiting to open the envelope



George Thompson diligently marking the map (Picture: Andy Thompson)

decided to carry on.

We pulled up behind Andy Thompson/ George Thompson and Mike Lear/ Phil Oliver. Both the navigators jumped out of the car and ran to the pub entrance. Not being aware of the need to be at the finish line at exactly 10pm, I made my way to the entrance of the pub at a respectable pace, and found the Lawrence family at a table ready to meet the finalists.

Our arrival time was luckily exactly 10pm, Martin Kerly/ Dr Alice Kerly had pulled in behind us and Robin Bath/ Marie Bath in quick succession too.

Six out of the eight competitors arrived before or exactly at 22:00, with Dave Greenslade/ Ady Taylor arriving first. Answer sheets handed in, and it was time to discuss tactics and answers while Andy, Emma and Archie marked.

Mark Griffiths/ Paul Sunshine were the last pair to arrive at 22:12 (though we later learnt that this time involved the pair going back to collect Paul's car from the start layby).

We weren't expecting to do very well as we knew we'd wasted a lot of time

searching for things we weren't sure about, and driving quite far between points. As the results were announced, we were surprised to not find ourselves right at the bottom, but finishing a respectable 4th.

Not a podium - (got to give ourselves something to aim for next time.) but a much better finish than either of us were thinking. We had managed to get 150 points, with Robin/ Marie getting 190, Mike/ Phil getting 200 and Andrew/ Rob getting an astounding 274 (28 locations visited, 18 10-point clues and 5 20-point clues correct, with 5 answers incorrect and a 6 minute penalty for arrival time).

Thanks to Andy for the statistics and organising a fantastic event. The October club night will be a table-top NavScatter practise session for anyone who wants to take part, but like us were a bit apprehensive about whether we'd be any good. The next NavScatter event will be on the 27th October.

We thoroughly enjoyed ourselves and despite my dodgy navigation decisions, and Pekka's fearless driving, we were both still talking to each other at the end.

Mary Bartlett



Andy, Emma and Archie Laurence marking up answer sheets (in a pub, of course)

Ariel Factory Visit - Take Two

Every hand-built AMG Mercedes which rolls off the Affalterbach production line wears a signed badge on the engine cover. That badge commemorates for eternity the collective effort of the tens, if not hundreds, of assembly staff who contributed to the vehicle's birth. Ariel Cars of Somerset however, take hand-built to a whole new level.

Despite the morning of Saturday December 10th feeling reserved by Jack Frost, 15 club members braved sub-zero temperatures for a tour of Ariel cars' factory in Crewkerne. As an article for the club magazine, I'm sure Ariel cars need little introduction; most of us will be familiar with the spaceframe car which tried to rip Jeremy Clarkson's face off. Visiting behind the scenes, where the machines are built, I was keen to learn more about what makes the company tick.

The tour opened with an introduction to where Ariel began, including an early Atom prototype, a wall adorned with special nosecones and a historic collection from the original Birmingham-based brand. Little did I know that from 1902 until 1970, Ariel produced motorcycles and quadricycles until the badge was retired by new owners BMC.

History lesson over; we were excited to see where the company are now and swiftly headed for the main build hall. On the way we stopped at one of the company's new motorcycles; the latest Ariel Ace. Taking in the details of the quite particular front suspension arrangement, I could tell I wasn't the only one with a keen eye for technical detail.

We were invited down a short staircase and into the main assembly hall. Across the floor were 8 or so examples of the latest Atom in varying states of assembly. With them, production staff working into the cold weekend to keep up with demand, eager to welcome visitors.

Looking around, the parts awaiting assembly would look familiar to any home mechanic; chassis, suspension arms and wiring looms from local suppliers, control surfaces and brakes from well-known brands and an array of carbon fibre body panels including front and rear wings and seats. At the heart of each Atom is a crate engine supplied from the Honda Civic Type R.

That's where the comparison to the familiar ends however. Integrated together, these parts form one of the lightest performance cars on the market capable of out-accelerating almost anything else with four wheels on the road. Unlike competition cars built for



uncompromising performance, the Atom is also made to drive home in relative comfort; adhering to all the rules and regulations which govern all cars on the public highway. As such, before being released to paying customers, each vehicle is subject to an Individual Vehicle Approval (IVA). Challenging enough for vehicles destined for the UK but only made more complicated by an expanding international customer base – indeed one of the cars on the floor was destined for export to New Zealand.

Quite a feat for a design team of just 6 engineers and a demonstration that collaboration with suppliers is key to developing the product. (For comparison the average F1 team have at least 40 engineers building 2 track-only cars a year).

Ariel builds around 50 cars a year with a 2 week build period for each. I thought I had a reasonable grasp of small volume manufacture; and arrived expecting to find cars marching along an assembly line supported by meticulously documented descriptions of every intricate step of the process.

Ariel however, do things a little differently: The responsibility for assembling each vehicle belongs to just one person. Everyone on the floor is trained in, and will eagerly take on, every step of the process. Each team member assembles each vehicle in the order they

feel is best, based on the time, resources and parts available, even personal preference. Unlike a conventional build process, looking across the floor, there was no way of knowing what was done most recently nor what happens next.

One car was sat on axle stands with suspension arms fitted however a prominent void awaiting a powerplant which was sat nearby on a crate. Another was already fitted with it's internal-combustion heart but missing any suspension arms. When quizzed on why, the assembler openly explained that he feels more comfortable fitting the engine before the suspension to avoid scraped knees and awkward postures reaching into the engine bay.

His colleague meanwhile didn't face such challenges and had enough time on Friday to fit the engine so went ahead. Whilst a surprising departure from the rigidity I was expecting, the benefits of this flexible approach are clear to see. Ariel have been able to weather the supply-chain issues affecting larger, traditional manufacturers, and continue to offer truly hand-made cars to the market.

Moving on from the assembly hall, we headed for the customer service building containing a number of fully-manufactured road-going vehicles. Firstly, Ariel's road test fleet including several special vehicles. We were particularly drawn to an Atom with a frame manufactured from titanium showcasing

the company's continuing exploration of what can be done with their already unique product. This example however proved prohibitively expensive to put into production demonstrating the constraints which apply even in such a specialist corner of the automotive marketplace.

The tour ended in the customer service hall. Like any good maintenance facility, there were vehicles in for a range of operations from regular servicing of the Nomad press car to an Atom in for conversion from left to right hand drive.

Club members gladly took the opportunity to pour over the details of finished vehicles, from distinct paintwork to unique options to aftermarket modifications. A few even took it in turns attempting to find a dignified way in or out of the Ariel Nomad famously driven by Freddie Flintoff. Before we had any success with that though, our time at Ariel had come to an end and we were back out in the cold ready to head home but not before lunch...

Reflecting together over a hearty meal, I realised how truly hand-built Ariel cars are. Unlike other automotive factories, there wasn't one robot working the line. It's often said that products reflect the culture in which they're developed. In that context, Ariel becomes a beacon of pride; proud to hand-build their vehicles. The company proudly opened their

doors to the motor club, welcoming us in with open arms, candid conversation from the skilled individuals on the shop floor, even donating the tour fee to charity.

Everyone involved appeared proud to be working on something special and showcase their operations. At an organisational level, the company challenge the mould set by faceless production lines pumping out carbon-copies of the same car. Long may Ariel's hands-on approach remain into their fully electric age with their upcoming Hipercar and beyond.

Huw Bowen



Cotswold Clouds – Finisher

It's a Sunday, it's really early, it's flippin freezing, the car window is covered in ice on both the outside and inside but we're having a blast. It's sunny, the Marlin is working perfectly and we've just nailed our first test of the 2023 Cotswold Clouds Classic Trial up our first observed section called **Crawley**.

I was the latest lucky individual that Dave Greenslade had invited to sit in the bouncy chair of his 1.3 litre, A Series powered Marlin which is a kit car based around a Morris Marina. My day involved

navigating us between observed sections, constantly deflating and inflating tyres, bouncing up and down to help get traction and whooping loudly when we reached the end of a section.

We weren't the only ones whooping as there were a surprising number of spectators lining the sections cheering the cars on, the spectators weren't just whooping either as we managed to draw a collective Ooooooh when a tree jumped out on us on Merves Swerve which broke the Marlins front suspension.

That didn't deter Dave as he masterfully



In action



Running repairs (not alone on that front either)

unbent the bent bits with a big hammer and crowbar to get us back on the road. A puncture whilst heading up Nailsworth Ladder didn't deter our progress either on what is an incredibly rough event.

Dave's goal for the day was simply to finish as he'd attempted the event twice before and retired both times with mechanical issues but the third time proved to be the lucky one as we completed all thirteen observed sections and two observed tests well before daylight faded over the beautiful Gloucestershire coun-

tryside.

A huge thank you to Dave for inviting me along the journey and thank you to all the organisers and marshals on the event (which included many Bristol Motor Club familiar faces.). It was brilliant fun, a fantastic event and another grassroots motorsport discipline I would definitely recommend to anyone.

Andy Thompson

The Price of bacon roll

My motorsport interest started a long time ago, in fact it was 1973 when I first took an interest in the internal combustion engine (ICE) gazing at motorcycles parked in the car-park at my old primary school in Buckinghamshire where we lived.

A friend and I hatched a plan (I was a bit of a dreamer and some say still am) to buy an old scooter off an older boy along the road for £10, keep it on the side of an old lane under some bushes hidden away from our parents. Well, how ridiculous, it never happened, and when I reached the age of 11, the family moved house from Old Stratford Buckinghamshire to Dursley in Gloucestershire where my mother came from. This wasn't exactly what I wanted at the time, having to leave all my friends behind.

I started at the local comprehensive school in Dursley and made friends with a couple of lads who also loved motorcycles especially trials and scrambling. I persuaded my dad to let me save my pocket money and buy an old moped called a RAP (an east European bike) very cheap but ideal for haring round the back garden on. This turned to a disaster when a friend of mine clipped the corner of our

fish pond and ended up in the Lilly pond bending the forks of the moped. Next up was a stripped Puch Maxi, this was kept up a mate's farm to ride around an old paddock until the petrol ran out. I eventually reached the age of 16 and bought a



Shaun's written-off AVO Mexico was re-bu

Garelli Concord moped from Claremont motorcycles in Gloucester.

I rode this bike all over the place, but it eventually seized up and I ended up part

exchanging it for a Honda trail bike, what a great bike that could do anything. When I was 17 years I bought my first car, a Ford Anglia 1100cc pale blue with rusty sills. After 3 attempts I passed my driving test (my wife passed first time and



ilt using a bubble arched shell from Wales

reminds me of this often) I got the Anglia on the road and drove it straight down the M4 to Penarth where I was a second-year apprentice at the CEEB training centre. Disaster struck after 11 days the Angle box broke down on M4 just out-

side Newport, Dad coming to the rescue in a milk van, towing me all the way home.

It was scary as I had never been towed before, a short tow rope and drum-brakes all round. Anyway, the Anglia went, and I bought a standard Mini 1000. Soon this car had a LCB (Long Centre Branch) manifold, big bore exhaust and wide wheels and was bright British Leyland Orange. I got bored with the orange Mini and noticed a black with gold stripes Mini Clubman 1275GT (wish I still had it, as it would be worth a few quid now).

I loved that little car, but I started watching car rallying (the old RAC Rally on the telly) and after crashing and repairing the mini I ended up with a MK 1 Escort Mexico AVO (a proper one). This came with all the usual problems, rust, oil leaks and a worn diff. I eventually had the car re-sprayed bright red by a repair guy. My best mate and I planned to follow and watch the 1982 RAC rally starting in Cheltenham with my then girlfriend.

All started well until we got into north Wales (this is the first time I remember

the smell of bacon rolls mixed with the smell of hot rally cars, oh that smell will never leave me). We had to sleep in the car near Trawsfynnd (I remember it had snowed for last few days and the temperature in the old Escort was below zero).

We woke next morning after a horrible night's sleep to more snow; I started the car and drove wearily to the next stage then BANG. I had hit a Council van after turning across a road, it was my fault and the car was a write off, we were all OK, just shaken up.

After the Mexico was written off, I decided to look for a new shell to rebuild the car into a full road rally spec car. I didn't really have much of a clue where to start but first thing was to find a decent double garage to rent (I think it was free as I knew the old lady owner and she liked me for some reason).

Anyway, I located an old shell in mid Wales with group 4 arches and some suspension mods, after 4 months of struggling with the car in a leaky old garage the car was complete. We'd even painted it white with sponsorship from A and B Autos in Dursley on the side.

After several road rallies, I was just getting used to driving all through the night, when going through a special selective stage on Painswick beacon, I got stopped by the local Police force, pulled out of my harnesses and asked, "what the bloody hell was I doing?" I remember this was at 2 O'clock on a Sunday morning in the properly organised Cheltenham 'Thunderball' Road Rally.

I think the coppers said something like "who the hell do you think you are?" And yes, it did enter my head that I was Stirling Moss, but the words wouldn't come out thank goodness. After going to court and getting 9 points on my licence I decided I couldn't afford to risk my licence anymore and so sold the Escort and with a mate bought a Mini 1275 ready to start stage rallying.

After a number DNF due to car reliability we decided to upgrade to a more modern properly built rally car a BL Metro 1275, we also gained some sponsorship from Bristol Rovers football club (my stepdad was vice chairman) we called the car a 4R2 not a 6R4 as we only had 2-wheel drive and 4 cylinders.

We didn't really gel with the car, I got married so funds dried up and my mate was working away, the last rally was in Pembury South Wales but in the last stage we rolled the car and that was the end of our rallying careers in 1986.

After many years with children, house extensions and foreign holidays any spare funds for motorsport were just a dream, I did compete in motorcycle trials for many years, but this didn't fill the hole in motorsport that I dreamed of. 2012 and I had been promoted at work so excess funds became available again.

I bought the missus a Mini cooper S (the supercharged one) and ended up borrowing it to do a few track days and a run up Prescott hill climb but knew I wanted to race competitively so bought my first MX5 in bright red, competing in mainly hill climbs at Prescott, Shelsley and Loton Park and a few sprints at Castle Coombe.

All these venues and a few more all sold bacon rolls, oh the smell mixed with hot engines and exhaust better than any French fancy after shave. Bacon rolls have been priced from £2.50 to a staggering

£5.00 at Silverstone. Just shows how businesses work, we the punter are responsible for this otherwise we'd bring our own sandwiches. I sold the MX5, bought a yellow Lotus Elise then went back to an MX5, this time a blue soft top.

Then last year I ended up with an Ex-Caterham Academy car, wow what a car but there's always a 'but' and I got drenched when it rained and totally miserable driving the car to and from events.

It really needed a trailer but that's NOT part of motorsport in my book. The Caterham was sold last summer, and I've got the OK from the boss (misses) to buy another car.

Now what should I get next, another MX5, Fiesta ST or even another Lotus Elise?

Shaun West

MR2 - Exeter Trail 2023

Paul and I had some serious discussions after the 2022 Cotswold Clouds. As ever the Stroud club had put on a very stiff test of trialing which gave us a bad bad day.

We decided that we would do the Allen and then the Exeter and then draw a line under our joint effort. To put it quite simply we were not enjoying it as much.

Combined incompetence led us to miss the Allen boat and we were on the reserve list. As it happened, I had issues to deal with away from motorsport and would probably not been in a position to compete on the day but had a view from the other side (poacher turned into gamekeeper) when I helped with scrutineering.

Trust me some competitors can be w*****s when seen from the other side. Next event you do maybe have a long hard look in the mirror before you set off.

Back to the Exeter. Not knowing what I was doing, I entered the Exeter in 2017 as our first foray into trialing. Jumping in to the deep end from the highest diving board comes to mind.

This year car and crew were honed to the

sharpest we could be. The MCC have helped and streamlined their events to reduce time wasted and minimize costs. Gone is the long run from Cirencester to Haynes for the start which in our case was rubbing salt into the wound as we drove past both our front



doors of our homes on the way.

Direct to Haynes for a 2.27am start on Sat 7th January allowed both of us to have rest if not sleep before the start. Weather condi-

tions were encouraging in that it was warm but raining a little when we set off from Haynes. The 'Trialing Gods' noticed our departure and arranged the rain intensity to increase from steady downpour to monsoon as we went through Yeovil.



Paul and Mike clearing Fingle

Nothing of note till we got to the first hill at Underdown. The most exciting aspect of Underdown is the descent to the foot of the hill. If you get to the start of the test without punching a hole in the floor of the car then you can almost certainly do the rest of the event. At this stage we appeared to be amongst a rash of 2CV's who had no ability to start on a muddy track - I know they were designed for French farm fields but they were rubbish on Devonian hills. They wasted a good 40 minutes and then we were allowed to start the trial proper with a clear run.

The next hill was Gatcombe (no royalty in sight – wrong Gatcombe) with a gentle restart and straight forward hill as a preparation for the real tests of Normans Hump and Clinton. These had been our undoing last year

and I knew the driver meant business when I was bounced off the inside of the hardtop of the MR2 half way up the first of the two similar tests. In truth, we cleared both with ease as the rain had washed away traces of slippery mud leaving rocks which our van tyres deal with well.

We popped in to see Pete Hart at a blink-and-you-miss-it, Stewarts Hill. Interesting but half a mile too short followed by a Disneyland restart at Pin Hill.

Stretches we always do as dawn breaks and the dark blue skies are always impressive. Sadly, we had been caught and passed by our 2CV friends who were unable to start the test in a conventional manner and wasted even more



MR2 FOR SALE - Never Raced, Rallied or Rolled. Careful Pensioner Owner.

time before Core Hill and its storm drains followed. Passaford Lane was next, which was gentle once you had covered the war zone of an approach road. Daylight really switched on here just in time for a very passable breakfast at Crealy Park where one can be very superior and ask "Do people really go all that way there for a holiday?" Bit like judging the North by Butlins at Blackpool.

We were due at Tillerton Steep at 10.27am and arrived with three other competitors to find no one there. One of the others had signal on their mobile and found out that Tillerton was cancelled because the ford we had driven through was too dangerous. Shame as it is a real challenge and all you see is sky and track all in very quick succession.

Fingle Hill, is classic North Dartmoor terrain, which we cleared and then on to Wooston Steep which looks so tame now it has had a haircut and the trees are gone.

On the way to Islington for our next top up of food we contrived to run out of fuel for the car approximately 4 miles from the nearest garage. Having stopped we rigged up our tow rope and waited 3 minutes for the next competitor to pass who we waved down and they towed us to petrol. Many thanks, Michael and Richard.

Islington Parish Hall Holding control allowed us to thank them with a pastie and cup of tea.

All proceeds to Parish Hall funds. A wait forever for Sims followed. We left Islington on time and were one hour late doing the hill. Queuing, queuing and more queuing. Having lost the will to live, we attempted Sims getting further up the rock slab than we ever have before, but in the wet conditions for our car it was just not viable.

Two left and only failed one. The word "medal" was banned from conversation in the car. Tipley was very rough but we cleared it and Slippery Sam was reached after sampling Newton Abbot's worst traffic. Notable because of the red soil which leaves its mark on the car we cleared the hill before blowing the tyres up ready for the journey home.

The Passage House Hotel at Kingsteignton is a quality venue for the finish. Celebration pints were drunk and we set off for home at 4.45pm having decided not to attend the club dinner in the evening. Back to Devizes by 7pm and Calne by 7.30pm rounded off a great event. One fail and no punctures is a great result. The Exeter was, as planned, a grand hoorah to our trialing career and in our terms it worked.

Anyone wants to buy an MR2? Never Raced or Rallied. Careful pensioner owner.

Mike Smith

That's better - Competitive once again

Since I changed my MX5 for a MK2 I have been struggling to match my previous PBs. I am not good at understanding what is needed for a set up that works for me. It is something I am working on.

I have made some changes to the new car since I got it, the main changes being an upgraded front ARB, and I have softened the coilovers, as that is something that seems to suit me.

Towards the end of last season I took the car to Bristol Wheel Alignment (aka club members Paul and Curtis St George) and had the "RS" alignment done. It is named that as it came from the set up Andy Laurence and Dave Greenslade used on their MK2. This setup sacrifices camber for caster on the front.

This year I managed to get into the test day before the first event of the season in the mx5 challenge at Clay Pigeon raceway. I noticed straight away that the car felt better. After the equivalent of four sprints worth of runs at the test day I came away feeling that I should be able to beat my previous PB of 85.62

I woke up expecting to get maybe 5th or

6th at Clay with the MK3s being on better rubber, and Dave Greenslade being a master there. On arrival the weather looked like it would be good so no excuses.

After the practice runs I was third, with Phil Oliver in second and Ben Marshall , doing his first mx5 challenge event, first.

I was pleased and a bit confused. I was expecting Aaron, Dave and Chris to be ahead of me but I was ahead of them. This continued through the day. The others closed the gap but Ben, Phil and I stayed in the same positions.

So well done to Ben, clearly someone to watch for the rest of the season. Well done to Phil, I will be fighting with him for the class A honours and I feel like I should be at least able to keep him on his toes. As for my PB, I beat it by 0.8 of second to get an 84.8 which is not too shabby. I had a great day and was buzzing being competitive once again.

James Hurford

Winter Decisions - Season Start

Last December was decision time for my MX5. The rust had been getting worse over the course of 2022: was it worth fixing it or was the step to class B the way forward? As I'm no good at welding (or rather, didn't want to mess it up) and the car required an MoT in January before the new season started, I took the plunge and went to get a few quotes.

As the costs came back in, it was getting harder to decide between fix the MK2 or buy a MK3. It was very close, but I was rather attached to my MX5, so decided to fix her.

I found a rather good guy called The Metal Monkey. He gave me a good fixed price for the initial repairs. However, under further investigation the dreaded rust was further spread than first thought. In for a penny in for a pound, or maybe two....!

The car was repaired very well, so I decided to also get the paintwork done (I did consider a rattle can as it's 'Race Car'). I decided to spend a little more to finish the work and get it done professionally. Unfortunately the MoT date was missed and she didn't pass first time, as a brake calliper also needed to be replaced.

Some more changes from last season



Left to Right: Ben Marshall, Phil Oliver and James Hurford (Picture: Huw Bowen)



were carried out. The mx5 challenge cars generally run either Pilot sport 3 or 4, depending on the class of car. After a few conversations last year with James and also being beaten a few times by some others competitors at SOLOs, a change of tyre brand is being tried for this season, Premium Contact 6 from Continental. These are only available in 16s. Maybe big brother was watching as some just happened to pop up on social media.

Also the change from Roddisons brake pads to PBS pads was done. The results of these changes so far are yet to be fully confirmed, but after the first MX5 round at Clay with Ben ahead of myself and James and a resent FTD at an AutoSOLO, the changes seem to be working. It's only the start of the season and as ever the mx5 challenge is going to be a close one.

Phil Oliver



Winning ways

(Picture: Ben Marshall)

Spring is here and most of our championships are already underway. The MX5 Challenge kicked off in style with a big grid and a new championship leader in the shape of Ben Marshall.

The championship continues to go from strength to strength leaving just a few stalwarts in the older Mk2 cars, whilst most are now campaigning a Mk3. There are three past champions and a further two past class champions competing, showing that people like to hang around in the championship.

In contrast, the Two Litre Cup isn't showing as much popularity. Now in its fourth season, it has ups and downs in the entry list. Few drivers do the whole season and whilst some events (e.g. Combe) have big numbers, others have just one or two. Is this season the final one?

Meanwhile, we have strong numbers under the age of 17. Families Benstock, Clemow and Thompson are competing together on many Autosolos. The low speed events suit inexperienced drivers as the concentration is on manoeuvres without the inherent danger of high speed.

In our speed events, we ran a class for Juniors (14-16) last year without much take-up. The national regulations require the car to be completely standard and under 1400cc (or 823cc turbo) with 4 point harnesses. In practice, this means a racing seat and a harness bar too.

Do you have a child who could compete at this level? What would compel you to start? Should we start a championship? Get in touch and let me know your thoughts. We're talking junior drivers at the Sprint and Hillclimb Committee meeting in May.

Andy Laurence



Drive-By

‘498. 499, and...there it is, 78,500’.

Hi everyone, and a special celebration recently as I watched the odometer on my ancient but worthy Vauxhall Vectra click pass 78,500 miles.

Which means I’ve added a full 50,000 miles to the original 28,500 it had on the clock when I purchased it almost exactly two and a half years ago.

Yep, 50,000 miles in a Vauxhall Vectra. Blimey, that’s the equivalent mileage of twice circumnavigating the planet, except in this case mainly accrued by trudging up and down the delightful M5 most days and not the far more exiting prospect of actually driving around the planet which would be a wonderful adventure, no doubt.

Probably best to sort out the route before you commence though, given the amount of countries you would have to drive through and that might not take too kindly to an eccentric Brit driving an ancient Vauxhall Vectra rocking up at their borders: “no, honest, I’m just driving around the planet, that’s all, sort of Around the World in 80 Weeks”, “I see sir, no problem in principle with the idea, but you’re not driving that piece of crap into our country...”

Hence the celebration as it can only mean that sometime soon my automotive penance

will be properly recognised by those in authority and I’m expecting at least a *VC/OBE/Knighthood (* delete as appropriate) to drop through the letterbox in the very near future.

I mean, 50,000 miles in a nearly sixteen-year-old Vauxhall Vectra, I wouldn’t have put my money on that happening in my life just a few years ago when I was thoroughly enjoying a brand new, top specification Mazda Six as my daily transport.

However, there’s no denying the cost savings of opting to take a car allowance and running around in a private car, rather than having a company provided car and the attendant taxation and mileage costs, with the real-world annual saving to my sorely stretched wallet being in the order of around £2,000. So, a useful exercise in financial planning, if not in any level of enjoyment.

A bit of a shame though, as the company cars my employer has recently been dishing out are the latest Tesla 3.

I have to admit that this was definitely food for much thought on my part, and if I still lived in Bristol, it would be a no brainer. Unfortunately, after chatting with my work colleagues about the practicalities of merrily running silently around in their all-electric steeds, I really don’t think a tesla 3 would meet the requirements of my daily commute of around 150 miles.

Apparently, the maximum real-world range of a fully charged Tesla 3 is in the region of 250 miles if you're a reasonably steady driver. Which, on the face of it, would appear to be fine for my commute, but only if I can charge it up at both work and home. And at work we have just three chargers, and I would need to upgrade the electrics at home to accommodate the installation of a 7kw charger as I presently only have a 20amp supply to the garage.

In the absence of a home charger, I'd be at the mercy of the various charging networks and where I live the largest charger available is just 21kw, meaning potentially an awful lot of time spent sat reading in my Tesla whilst it sips (very) gently from the national grid.

Not for me at the moment, I'm afraid, and there appears to be quite a long way to go for electric cars and current (sorry...) battery technology to catch up with the five minutes or so it takes me to tank up my old Vectra from zero to a comfortable five hundred miles or more. Bugger.

But for my colleagues who are now driving around in the electric dreams, and boys being boys, it didn't take overly long for the bunch of reprobates that I work with to interrogate the functionality of the Tesla's various systems and discover a rather fun item...

You see, the Tesla, and I'm guessing all electric cars, is fitted with an external speaker

which emits a noise when the vehicle is travelling at less than 30mph as a warning to pedestrians (I believe this might be law?), and the Tesla emits a sort of muted, man-made, sci-fi electric motor whine.

Which is all well and good, and no doubt invaluable in preventing idiot pedestrians from stepping into the road without looking but, what my colleagues have discovered buried deep in the software sub-routines is the fact that Tesla have seen fit to give its drivers options of what noise the external speaker emits.

Yep, you've probably guessed where this is going, and one lunchtime as I was chatting with a couple of our latest Tesla pilots as we stood in the car park, they suddenly went all conspiratorially on me as one of senior administrator ladies was approaching one of their cars.

And as the lady in question reached the Tesla, a button on a mobile phone was pressed and our administrator was slightly shocked (to say the least...) as quite the loudest fart I've ever heard echoed around the car park from exactly where she was standing. And they say electric cars aren't any fun. Hats-off to Elon for signing off that particular piece of software, top job.

Well maybe, except for a very minor fact that one of the new Tesla (Teslas. Tesla's. What is the plural?) recently threw a wobbly after just

11 days in service and suffered an ongoing steering failure, resettable by turning the car off and back on again and really not much fun when you're travelling at speed, and which has ultimately resulted in the car being replaced rather than just repaired. Hmm, new algorithms anyone?

Infinitely more fun for sure though than a Mercedes A200 that I recently borrowed for a trip into Bristol for a meeting and which would have incurred a £9 congestion zone charge in my old warhorse of a Vectra.

Maybe it's just me, but I found the Mercedes to be something of a disappointment as although the steering appeared to be quite a quick rack, it was wasted operating on a truly stodgy chassis. And what is it with flat bottomed steering wheels? Really rubbish idea and feels odd in your hands when you're driving around town – leave it for the F1 cars, chaps.

Add to the mix a drivetrain that appeared to have far too much driveline shunt when you come on and off the throttle, seats that I just couldn't get comfortable with (that could be the AMG trim items, perhaps) and a cabin that felt like you were driving a mobile coal bunker as it was so dark inside due to the blacked-out rear side windows and tinted rear window, and the whole experience left me cold.

Probably speaks volumes about badge snobbery though, when you see just how many of these Mercedes are on our roads. Never thought I would be saying this, but I'd actually stick with my ancient Vectra rather than swap to an A200, a damning statement

but true, I wouldn't want one.

Finally, the latest update on Ruh, our rescue Lurcher. Lynnette has been observing our hound's love of life and his latest habits, (both good and bad...) which have recently expanded to tearing up any piece of paper he finds lying around (it's like owning a canine shredder), peeing on every plant in the garden at every opportunity as he marks his territory and letting rip truly stinky farts that have probably only been previously experienced at a rugby clubs, end of stag night curry.

Ruh also has an endearing habit of dropping his constantly chewed favourite toy in your lap to induce you to join in his play, and which is a furry stuffed soft animal toy thing of some indeterminate species and usually quite sodden (yuk...) which Lynnette named 'Hoglet' for some reason.

So, based on his range of habits, Ruh now has a new nickname given to him by Lynnette, bearing in mind that this is the lady who once described other drivers' impatience as 'a lot of people in a tooty temper', and the accelerator in her old Rover Metro as 'the petrol peddle'.

And which now means the latest Harry Potteresque novel I find myself dwelling in is: 'Rip Tiddlebum and the Tail of the Soggy Hoglet'.

You couldn't make it. Uhm, actually, I do just that...

Chris Dymock



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Join Bristol Motor Club

The screenshot shows the Bristol Motor Club website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Information, Subscriptions, and Events, along with social media icons. The main header features the club's crest and the text "Bristol Motor Club Promoting club motorsport since 1911". Below this, the "Sign in to Bristol Motor Club" section is displayed. It includes a "Username" field with a placeholder "Username" and a "Password" field with a placeholder "Password". To the right of the login fields, there is a "Not a member yet?" section with a "Register here" button. The footer contains copyright information and a notice about data collection.

Information Subscriptions Events

Bristol Motor Club
Promoting club motorsport since 1911

Sign in to Bristol Motor Club

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Note by signing in, you agree to our [Terms & Conditions](#).

Not a member yet?
Use this website to join the club and access a whole host of benefits including the ability to browse and sign-up for events, contact other members and renew your subscription.

[Register here!](#)

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Joining Bristol Motor Club couldn't be simpler, just visit our dedicated membership and event entry website: <https://my.bristolmc.org.uk/> and follow these steps:

To Join BMC*:

- 1) Visit <https://my.bristolmc.org.uk/>
- 2) Choose the Sign-In Option
- 3) Select Register Here
- 4) Complete the Registration Process
- 5) Go To Subscriptions
- 6) Accept Our Offer of Membership
- 7) Pay using a Debit/ Credit Card

NOTE:

*The Committee reserves the right to refuse membership to any person without reason (See 4.2 of Bristol Motor Club's Articles of Association).

BRISTOL MOTOR CLUB



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL

To the Membership Secretary,

Bristol Motor Cycle and Light Car Club Limited ("the Company")

In order to fulfil Bristol Motor Club's contractual obligations with me/us, I/we hereby authorise you to enter my/our name(s) and other information entered in this form in the Register of Members. I accept that as well as being a requirement of Company Law the information will be used solely to produce mailing lists for club publications and event notices and will not be passed to any third parties unless required to do so to meet a legal requirement. The BMC Privacy Notice and Data Management Procedure are both available for me to read on the Club's website - www.bristolmc.org.uk/reference. If you agree please tick box ☐

Full Member	First name		Surname	
	Email			
Associate member	First name		Surname	
	Email			
Address				
Postcode				
Main phone		Alternative		
Have you previously been a member of Bristol Motor Club?		YES / NO	Membership No(s)	
Do you wish to receive the club magazine, <i>Driving Mirror</i> , by post? <i>(Delete as appropriate)</i>				YES / NO
Full membership		tick boxes that apply y)		£ 20.00
Associate membership (see www.bristolmc.org.uk/join-us for membership categories)				£ 10.00
Additional windscreen sticker (first one is complimentary)				£ 1.50
DEDUCT REWARD POINTS £1 each		(NOT applicable to NEW club members)		
TOTAL cash / cheque payable to BRISTOL MOTOR CYCLE & LIGHT CAR CLUB LTD				£

DECLARATION

I / We, the above-named applicant(s), hereby:

- apply to become a member/members of the Company and agree to guarantee the sum of £0.13 (thirteen pence) in accordance with the Articles of Association of the Company;
- agree to be bound by and comply with the provisions of the Articles of Association and the Bye-laws of the Company which can be found on the Club website www.bristolmc.org.uk/reference;
- agree that notices and other general information may be sent by the Company to me/us, either at the email address given here, or by being published on the Company's website.

Signed

(Full Member; and Associate if applicable)

Date

For further information email membership@bristolmc.org.uk

Please post the completed form with your payment to: Andy Thompson, 46 Arden Close, Bradley Stoke, BRISTOL BS32 8AX.

FOR CLUB USE	Date received	Membership No(s).
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Privacy Notice

Bristol Motor Club respects your privacy and we will only use your information in the way we describe in this notice. When using your information, we aim to be fair and transparent, and to follow our obligations under UK data protection laws. Your information is used for administering club membership, activities, and competitions.

Bristol Motor Club is the data controller for the purpose of GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. Our club contact for privacy and data is our Chairman and their contact details can be found at <http://bristolmc.org.uk/committee-officers/>

Collecting your information

We collect your information when you fill in a membership application form, such as the one opposite. You can give us your information using paper forms or online forms. The information you give us may include your contact details (name, address, telephone number, email address). When you give us information about another person, such as an associate you should let that person know that you have given us the information.

If you are under 18 years old, we will also ask for information from your parent or guardian.

Using your information

We use your information when you first apply to become a member of Bristol Motor Club and then to administer and renew your club membership and provide you with member benefits.

Sharing your information

We may share your information with Motorsport UK as required by its General Regulations for governing motor sport, or if we have to comply with a legal obligation.

Security for your information

Your information is held securely by us. We have taken all reasonable steps, and have in place appropriate security measures, to protect your information.

Your rights

You are entitled to a copy of the information we hold about you, and to ask us to correct any inaccuracies. You may ask us to stop using your information, and to delete it, although by law we must maintain a permanent record of members. If you ask us to do this, we will not be able to continue our contract with you.

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Date	Event	MX5s	2L Cup
Friday 27th January	Winter NavScatter (BMC)		
Sunday 19th March	Clay Pigeon Sprint (BDCC)	Yes	Yes
Sunday 16th April	Kemble AutoSOLO (Bath MC)	Yes	
Saturday 22nd April	Wiscombe Park (Woolbridge MC)	Yes	Yes
Sunday 23rd April	Wiscombe Park (Woolbridge MC)	Yes	Yes
Tuesday 2nd May	General Meeting & Buffet (BMC)		
Saturday 10th June	Prescott (Bugatti Owners Club)	Yes	Yes
Sunday 11th June	Prescott (Bugatti Owners Club)	Yes	Yes
Saturday 24th June	Llandow Sprint (BMC/ BPMC)	Yes	Yes
Friday 7th July	Castle Combe Track Day (CCRC)		
Sunday 16th July	AutoSOLO Ashton Down (EMCOS)	Yes	
Saturday 22nd July	Dick Mayo Sprint (BMC)	Yes	Yes
Sunday 23rd July	Classic & Performance Parade (BMC)		
Sunday 6th August	Kemble AutoSOLO (Bath MC)	Yes	
Saturday 2nd September	Wiscombe Park Hillclimb (5-Clubs)		
Sunday 3rd September	Wiscombe Park Hillclimb (5-Clubs)		
Sunday 10th September	AutoSOLO Wroughton (BMC)	Yes	
Saturday 14th October	Great Western Sprint (BMC)	Yes	Yes
Friday 27th October	Autumn NavScatter (BMC)		
Sunday 12th November	Fedden Sporting Car Trial (BMC)		
Sunday 26th November	Allen Classic Trial (BMC)		
Tuesday 5th December	General Meeting & Buffet (BMC)		