Driving Mirror

BRISTOL MOTOR CLUB 1911

Honda of the UK Manufacturing Ltd

Summer’s finally here!

May-Jun 2017
Officers and Committee Members

CHAIRMAN Matt Nichols..........................07989 601774

VICE CHAIRMAN Pete Hart..........................0117 9372611

TREASURER Vickie Tubb..........................

COMPETITION SECRETARY Paul Parker..............01275 843478

SECRETARY Paul Hemmings......................0117 9566045
Riverwood Lodge, Moorend, Hambrook BRISTOL BS16 1SP

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY Zoë Tooth...............01454 329231
49 Bowling Road, Chipping Sodbury BRISTOL BS37 6EP

MAGAZINE EDITOR Scott Boulton.................01454 852959

PRESS & PUBLICITY Kate Boulton...................01454 852959
159 Long croft, Yate, BRISTOL BS37 7YN

SOCIAL SECRETARY Andy Laurence.............07825 953858

WEBMASTER & PRESIDENT Allen Harris.............07970 198718

AWARDS SECRETARY Dave Greenslade.............07966 540842

CMSG REPRESENTATIVE Mark Benstock.............01454 311712

ASWMC REPRESENTATIVE Mark Chater

CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER Richard Marsh........(after 6pm) 07786 068830

COMMITTEE Chris Dymock.......................(after 6pm) 0117 9394265
Chris Buckley..........................07946 482169
Ady Taylor..........................07957 545432
Mark Tooth..........................01454 329231
Mike Cole..........................07980 416075

www.bristolmc.org.uk
Page 4. Chairman’s Chat
   *Matt’s latest thoughts and insights.*

Page 6. Mark Goes To Kemble In A BMW
   *Mark Griffiths has caught the AutoSolo bug.*

Page 8. HSCC Donington
   *Matt Nichols reports from his race at Donington.*

Page 10. Llandow Sprint
   *Thoughts and photos from our joint venture with Bristol Pegasus Motor Club.*

Page 20. MX-5 Challenge and Bristol Clio Cup Points Charts
   *Latest scores for both of our in house single model championships.*

Page 21. Pure Ford
   *I travel to Castle Combe for the first of their new shows for 2017.*

Page 24. Drive By
   *Chris and Matt are invited to a special day at Combe and Chris talks about VWs.*

New for this issue are clickable links for the song recommendations (online versions only, please don’t keep pressing on the paper hoping something will happen, you’ll just look daft).

The next Driving Mirror provisional deadline is the 11th of August

If you have anything that you would like to send in, whether it’s work you have done on your car or an event you went to, send a few words and some photos if you’ve got them to scott_boulton@btinternet.com
A
other month and another great BMC
organised event, this time working in
partnership with Bristol Pegasus at our
Llandow Sprint. Now I know for some I
might as well have said that Bristol Rovers
and Bristol City fielded a joint football team,
but the slickness with how the event ran
bears testament to just how well both clubs
can work together. BPMC filled some key
roles whilst we filled others, it was very
evenly distributed with everyone playing to
their strengths. If you were there in any
capacity to help then thank you very much,
you should be proud of how well the event
ran.

There were some stunning performances out
on track as well. Our MX5’s enjoyed a battle
royale with Andrew O’Malley, James Hurford
and Tom Caldecourt setting the pace in class
throughout the day. What made it even more
interesting is that Andrew’s times remained
consistent whereas Tom and James were
improving. Not only were they closing the
gap to Andrew after each run, they were also
extremely close to each other. In the end,
Andrew held on to take the class win, James
second and Tom third, all within just over a
second of each other. I wonder what a third
timed run might have delivered, we shall of
course never know. Well done to all three
and the rest of the class, great stuff.

Although not nearly as packed the Clio Class
was even more tightly spaced. Mark Tozer
took the win and so very well done to him,
but can you believe that the gap from second
placed Rob Thompson to fourth placed Peter
O’Connor was less than half a second, and
the gap between Rob and third placed
Andrew Bisping less than two tenths. Their
best times were also just underneath the best
of the MX5’s which is interesting in itself and
so worth keeping an eye on both camps to
see how they compare elsewhere.

In A2 Ellen Worthington was delivering 86
second runs all day in her Elise and in A4
Matt Bennett got down into the 84’s driving
his Porsche Turbo. Both taking well deserved
class wins (I think the times must have all
been a bit off from what they can be as I
managed an 84 in my Mégane 250RS and try
as I might I couldn’t get below an 89 in the
TVR. A time incidentally on a par with the
best I wrung out of a Civic Type R). All of
which makes Sandy Smith’s performance
really stand out, he got his fettled MX5 down
to an 87 in A3 which I think is incredible
being less than three seconds off Matt’s time.
It was a similar story for Steve Adams in A4
piloting his Impreza also getting down into
the 87s.

Claire Tooth was on it in the family Elise with
two 88 second runs that ultimately secured
her a second place behind Ellen in A2, whilst
Mike Smith got the better of Nick Green in
B2 with a strong 85 second time. In Sports
Libre Luke Trotman took the honours by
pedalling his Mallock around in just 76
seconds. Whilst across in the single seat
corner Simon Clemow managed a class win
with a very strong 72 second run after Gary
Thomas went FTD. Simon also managed to put a little bit of clear air between himself and co-pilot Dave Greenslade. Always satisfying beating Dave and so enjoy it while it lasts Simon, it doesn’t happen often as you know yourself already. Fyrth Crosse managed to get down to 82 seconds in his Ensign and Bo Rumary was 2nd in the Rally Cars class driving a Seat Ibiza.

The month of May also saw our annual AGM where the finances of the club for the previous year were formally shared and discussed. 2016, as shared, was a strong year financially which is mostly down to one weekend. The Dick Mayo Sprint on the Saturday and Family Sports Car Day on the Sunday. With an ability to take an entry of up to 155 cars the Dick Mayo is the only event in our calendar that provides us an opportunity to go beyond simply recovering costs. When for the most part recovering costs is the financial goal for all the events we run.

The Family Sports Car Day also proved popular and so between the two there was enough of a return to not only cover the costs of running both events, but also make a significant contribution to the club’s overheads, like the stores and club magazine for instance, and our reserves fund. Of course, it helped that our track day was largely self-funded with other events in the calendar either breaking even or at least not breaking the bank. Another year, another dollar as they say and so a massive thank you to Paul Hemmings and Vickie Tubb for sorting out the accounts and finances, didn’t they do well.

Looking ahead at our calendar and the exciting news is that we have a new venue for our AutoSOLO on Sunday 9th July. Weston Zoyland airfield will play host for which we should thank Paul Sunshine and Dave Greenslade. Paul did all the work up front in securing the venue with Dave supporting Paul by confirming venue suitability and working on course layouts etc. A great team effort, it will be interesting to see what type of event we can run there.

For our championships, it should also prove a real leveller because as a new venue no-one has any advantage in terms of previous experience. Everyone will be driving the course layouts for the very first time. Good isn’t it, a genuine test of who can learn and master the courses the quickest without taking any time penalties. If its anything like single venue stage rally then most advantage will be gained early in the day before things start to repeat themselves.

In Driving Mirror this month you will find my report from Donignton Park, Mark Griffiths has a new found passion for AutoSolo, thoughts and photos from our Llandow Sprint, Mr. editor himself goes to Castle Combe (again), and the latest musing from Mr. Dymock.

Matt Nichols
Mark Goes To Kemble, In A BMW

After almost destroying my admittedly fragile MG Midget at the charity slalom Autotest taster at Castle Combe in October 2016 I was looking forward to competing in a proper Autosolo in a more robust vehicle in 2017. Four months, 1 eBay account and £500 later and I became the owner of a 1999 BMW E36 compact. The purchase was just in time to enter the first Chepstow Autosolo of 2017 only to find it was cancelled. One club night later, Sandy and Ady suggested an entry to the Kemble Autosolo to assuage my disappointment.

So, at 7am on a sunny Sunday Morning in April I arrived at Kemble Airfield. With modest familiarity in the discipline of Autosolo and in a car I had little experience of driving, my goals for the day were to have fun and not worry too much about times. As is usual with Autosolos the participants were split into 3 groups – each taking turns to marshal, rest and drive. After watching the first and second groups take to the course during my turn to marshal and rest I was impressed with the evident driving skill of the other competitors and my expectations of my own performance were severely lessened.

When starting my first timed run my aim was to just make it to the finish without killing anyone, damaging the car or making an arse of myself. Nearly one and a half minutes later I stopped at the line and collected my time – no deaths – goal achieved.

Things did get a little better on subsequent runs as my confidence increased. I quickly learned that traction control cost me around 3 seconds so that was turned off. Despite getting lost on two tests and straying into the loose gravel on many occasions my times decreased throughout the day and ultimately I finished the near top of the bottom third of the clubman championship and my group. As an inaugural event for myself and the car, Kemble was perfect. The weather was exceptional and the organisation impeccable (thanks to all at Bath MC). Even if I don’t trouble the faster drivers, I’m now looking forward to being a regular Autosolo entrant if only for the grin factor and smell of ruined tyres.

Mark Griffiths

Photo by Scott Boulton
www.jackflashphotography.co.uk
Neel somewhere to store your competition vehicle?

We have recently setup a new storage facility in South Gloucestershire close to the current club stores used for the last 5 years, catering for 13 cars each car space is 2.45m x 4.95m.

Spaces available from mid June, with club member discount of £5 per month for 2017.

See our website: www.kingdomautostorage.co.uk

Contact Andrew on 07916 723 648.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date (Provisional)</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sunday 9th July</td>
<td>AutoSolo at Westonzoyland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday 29th July</td>
<td>Dick Mayo Sprint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday 30th July</td>
<td>Family Sports Car Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekend 5th-6th August</td>
<td>South Glos Show</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekend 2nd-3rd September</td>
<td>5-Clubs Wiscombe Hillclimb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday 27th September</td>
<td>Llandow Track Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday 12th November</td>
<td>Fedden Sporting Trial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday 26th November</td>
<td>Allen Classic Trial</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Having arrived on the Friday afternoon (a useful feature of what are normally quite busy weekends is that anyone can get their car scrutineered from 4-6pm) the paddock was filling up nicely and weather reassuringly warm and dry. Crucially the forecast also indicated more of the same the following day. With the car stickered, we covered it up, secured the trailer (Richie) and made our way to a local hotel. Now as I always filter by price using Booking.com normally what we get is at the OK end of the scale. Not this time, nope in a moment of wife pleasing discovery we were in a cottage room next to the Priest House Hotel that sits on the picturesque river Trent just outside Castle Donington. The only disturbance being the early morning flights. Following an excellent meal and restricted alcohol intake we settled down in readiness for the next day. In the morning, an equally pleasing cooked to order breakfast set us up before we headed back the way we came to the circuit for qualifying.

Now after two seasons of this malarkey I know just two things. The cars at the front are very expensive. The people who drive them extremely fast. Therefore, as winning anything would require some sort of act of God, a revised goal was set to finish in the top ten each time from a grid of normally just over thirty cars. A track day at Donington a few weeks before had helped with learning some half decent lines and so despite falling into the trap of racing each other round for 15mins myself and another 3000M qualified 15th and 17th respectfully. It was good fun though. After qualifying, and as I met the ‘never raced here before’ criteria, I duly attended the ‘new’ drivers briefing. This is always worthwhile for one reason and one reason only and although not briefed I made sure I asked the question anyway. ‘What are the rules regarding track limits today’? Worth asking because it varies everywhere with circuits having different sensors, cameras and their own particular sensitivities. “We’re not watching at all on the first lap and then looking for repeat offenders who clearly gain an advantage after that”. Ok thanks, got it, not looking on the first lap.

Back in the paddock, and after final preparations, myself and the other 3000M man (Steve) for some reason began discussing start strategies (both cars tend to launch well) and agreed I would go centre left and positioned one row back Steve to the right. Truth is I didn’t know myself as I just tend to go where the gaps are. Thankfully we haven’t had that conversation since, possibly because of what happened next. As we assembled on the Melbourne loop (using the National circuit enables this, not sure where you assemble for
the full GP circuit?) word came back down the line that one car to my front and left was worried about a potential misfire. The problem was I was strapped in and so couldn’t say to Steve that given this new information I might now in fact also go right.

On the grid and as the red lights went out, I not only instinctively went right blocking Steve, I also took to the grass as well, not watching on the first lap remember. Half on the track and half off with the limited slip diff fully locked up, my little TVR lunged past the car in front before I dutifully returned all four wheels back to where they should be and made good progress up the pack. In fact, by the time we reached Redgate I was ninth with the leaders in sight. Something I’ve only seen once before, the one and only time we raced at Combe. This was already turning into a great race.

However, some adjustment was about to take place, because although I hung on as much as I could, I was further up the order than my race pace gave me credit for. That’s not to say there weren’t some great battles. A Ferrari 308 GT4 got past before the chicane, but then after compromising his line back onto the start finish straight, allowed me back through on the outside before holding the inside line once again going into Redgate. Elsewhere one Lotus Europa tried to block a move but had to give it up as he dropped down to three cylinders and so relented halfway down the Craner Curves. A 100mph test (96mph in my case it was later confirmed) of anyone’s nerve. Whilst a second Europa got past and went to the left to hold a wide line towards the chicane that I duly filled down the inside after he appeared to slow a little before we both got on the brakes. In the end out braking himself and sliding with the rears fully locked up straight into the gravel and retirement. Exciting stuff.

In the end Steve in the other 3000M got past and appeared to be on fire to finish seventh whilst I held off an invitation class Alfa 33 (not constrained by our rules such as minimum weight) to in the end finish eleventh. I’ll take that and my target tenth place was only 8-9 seconds up the road.

Successfully holding off an Alfa

Next time you’ll get to hear all about Silverstone on the full GP circuit where it was so wet visibility dropped to near zero at times with the amount of spray. Ten cars failed to make it to the end with two coming together and suffering quite significant damage. Unusual with these boys and one girl, they’re normally quite good. In the same race ex-Le Mans racer Richard Attwood joined us on the grid in a Porsche supplied 928 (Porsche are celebrating the car’s 40th anniversary this year) and ex-TVR works driver (my name is) Michael Caine put a friends immaculately prepared 3000M on pole, three seconds ahead of our usual stars in what were tricky conditions. There’s never a dull moment with this lot, I tell you. 

Matt Nichols
Great weekend. Camped for the first time which was very convenient. Travelling time on the morning of the event down to 2 minutes. Well organised and slick event after I got over worries about track limits. 2nd practice time had to be a typo but I still enjoyed it!! At my time of life I will take any success.

Good to see China John again who runs such a tight ship. Shame his dog wasn't there but and I quote "he doesn't work Saturdays". Thanks to all marshals and organisers for an enjoyable day.

Tony Adams

Having had a couple of very cold (!) - but very useful - winter testing days at Llandow with our S1 Lotus Exige, my co-driver Paul Jones and I decided to enter a sprint there, now that the car was fully sorted!

What a very warm welcome from Bristol/Pegasus Motor Club we received and what a great event, properly organised and in a really pleasant atmosphere.

Beautiful sunshine and runs in abundance, with no pressure on hasty driver change-over and scrutineering officials who actually knew about the cars and looked to encourage grass roots motorsport for a change... Midlands take note!

Paul Jones won the class ... so he loves Llandow Circuit even more now!

Thanks once again to Bristol & Bristol Pegasus Clubs.
After the long drive over on the Friday night, my first outing at the Llandow circuit was looking like it would be a wet one. However, the cloud on the Saturday morning soon lifted and we were bathed in sunshine throughout the day.

The pep talk from my brother regarding my braking point for the Control tower left hander, clearly fell on deaf ears, as I moved for the middle pedal about 20 meters too late and entered the corner about 30mph too fast. A graceful yet frustrating 360 later and the car came to rest on the track, halfway through the corner pointing the right direction once more.

Subsequent runs all went to plan, finishing the day 2nd in class to the bike engined, slick tyred Sylva Riot race car of Martin Watts by 0.92 seconds.

I was very impressed with how Bristol Pegasus Motor Club ran the event and especially with how they dealt with the horrible accident that Kevin Cole experienced with his space framed Imp. The club kept competitor satisfaction but more importantly safety in mind at all times.

Finally, to further Gary Thomas comment during the awards ceremony, I was also very impressed with the young man who helped organise the paddock and competitors throughout the day.

Great to have young blood in our sport and perhaps a future competitor.

I’m already looking forward to my next event both at the circuit and with the club.

Top job everyone.

Bill Hiscock

All photos in this article by Steve Kilvington
www.sbkmotorsport.com
The Llandow event was the first racing event for me this season. My car has been an ongoing project, after a supercharger was fitted 18 months ago. The new car is a complete different experience from the standard car. It took some time to develop in a way that I was comfortable to drive it on the limit.

The car was well set up by Andy Stanford (QMech) early spring after Gareth Howell (Elise Racing) fitted an aftermarket ECU to harness the power and Simon Rogers (fellow hill climber and owner of Meteor Motorsport) supplied me with double adjustable suspension.

The Llandow sprint was the perfect event to push the car. Well organised by the club, well ran by the marshals and my local track.

My pace at practise was already good, close to my personal best. But my final timed lap resulted in a 2 second improvement on my PB, a time that won the class by ~3 seconds and a 10th place overall (if I counted properly :-)

Great results and having a tanker as a trophy is lovely. Most prizes you can't use, but the tanker allows me to have a beer over summer and reflect on the great event that was put together by the club!

Ben Burggraaf
It’s been a few years since I last competed in a sprint at Llandow - what a great event! This was my first time at Llandow in the Clio and I was looking forward to trying a front wheel drive car around Llandow.

The morning started with a warning at the 'driver's briefing' that track limits would be monitored and anybody exceeding the MSA guidelines would be penalised. Fair enough - it is better to make sure all drivers understand the rules in advance of any penalties. I would normally stick two wheels off at a couple of places around the circuit so I would have to kerb (sic) my enthusiasm and limit the understeer of the Clio.

The two practice runs were uneventful but really good fun - there seems to be loads of grip at Llandow and I never really explored the limits in the Clio. Lunch provided a chance to snooze in the light sunshine and think about the competition runs to come. It also provided a great chance to chat to all the other divers .... meet up with some old friends and to make some new friends. The 'Series Production Classes' always provide a wide range of cars and it’s really interesting to chat about all the different cars and the modifications completed over the winter or planned for the future.

The first competition run of the afternoon was my fastest - 88 secs (video on YouTube - search for 'M100CUP'). Really great fun ..... and I'm sure I could go faster: I just need to brake later at the 'chicane' and the 'bus-stop'. Easier said than done - in my second run I chickened out and braked much too early for the bus-stop and my time was a little bit slower. Overall though a great bit of competition and I managed to win a 'third in class' trophy !!!

What did I like about the Llandow sprint? Well organised, clear instructions at the drivers briefing, paddock marshals who knew what they were doing, great track, great competition, great fun ..... even the weather was good for Wales. My sincere thanks to Bristol Motor Club and all the organisers. I'm hooked on sprints now ..... bring on the Dick Mayo Sprint.

I have a full write up of the Llandow Sprint focusing on all the Clios competing on 'cliosport.net'

http://cliosport.net/threads/m100cup-rb-182-sprint-and-hillclimb-car.805371/page-3#post-11392639

Graham Vingoe
It was my first event of the season. Always one of my favourite events and always well run by Bristol MC. Unusual for Llandow it was a sunny weekend despite weather forecast earlier in the week. My little Renault 5 run well all day. Although my main rival Paul Meadows (205) in the Welsh Championship was in a different class for this event we still had a good days battle. With me winning my Class and just pipping his time to lead the class in our championship.

Martyn Ferris

Llandow Sprint was the very first sprint event that I have entered into, in fact its my very first time entering any motorsport event. Upon arriving I was immediately greeted by 2 scrutineers who I told I needed help with the process, they walked me through everything and were most helpful and my car passed to my relief.

The atmosphere of the venue was electric, the fellow competitors were really friendly and I was amazed with how helpful everyone was. The event was professionally run, I was made really welcome and I was guided though every part of the day by friendly marshals.

I ended up coming 6th in my class, my visions of standing on the winners podium were soon taken away by those little MX5’s and Lotus’s - My heavy Audi TT no match for them but never the less I had a great time and look forward to next time.

Elliot Hall
Once again we were blessed with good weather for the 2017 Sprint series, this time at Llandow.

I made the long journey (for me) to the Llandow Circuit early on the Saturday morning and met up with my fellow competitors in the MX5 Challenge - usual banter and laughs! Also I was joined by a friend and fellow MX5 owner - he thoroughly enjoyed the day spectating, I expect him to be joining us for 2018!

I have never been to Llandow before so made use of the chance to walk the circuit - then it was the convoy run - again very useful for us newbies.

First practice was quite eventful, I did take it steady but braked a bit late at the end of the paddock straight so basically drifted round the Control Tower left hander but managed to hold it together. Thanks to Andy who managed to catch this on film and post to the club Facebook page, it looked good, if only I had been doing it deliberately!!

As the day went on I started to improve and put in my fastest time of the day on the last run of the day - a creditable 4th in class behind the experienced guys. Once again a well organised event with few delays even after a very dramatic crash in one of the other classes.

Many thanks to all the people who give their time and work hard make it a success.

Onwards to Clay Pigeon in July!

Richard Glindon
My great friend Roger Metters, who has spannered all my cars over last 20 years, said “Let’s take the engine out of your (£350) MGZR160, buy a Rover 100 (Metro), another £350 quid in Basingstoke, and see how it goes!” Clue is that both are K series....most scary bit was the 2 ECUs, but Talon sportscars have done this before. So we gave Dudley both looms, and less than £300, and he promised a "Plug and Play" unit. Then one morning I walked up to the kitchen to make us coffee, for Rog and I, whilst the kettle is boiling I hear the engine running. WOW Dudley, it is defo Plug and “Play”. But the car goes like a scalded cat at Llandow and handles like a boat. We are already on front and rear anti-roll bars, lowering, stiffening..this is organic fun. See you all soon.

Charles Alexander
Having recently retired and done all of the gardening a man should be expected to do I decided to dip my toe into motorsport and Sprinting seemed to fit my budget. So 2016 saw me buy and modify a 2004 Mini Cooper S JCW and book myself into as many events as I could possibly get to. As much as I was looking forward to Llandow I didn't realise that the M4 had so many junctions and by Junc.35 I was pleased I had decided to travel down the day before and use a local B&B. And how glad I was as the day of the event, in my eyes, was perfect even including the weather. Seeing the huge diversity of vehicles in the paddock made the journey worth it alone and after walking the track I was eager to get going. What struck me quite early on was the excellent communication and organisation by the Club organisers and at no time did I feel out on a limb even as a novice (as I have been at other events). As the track dried after the early mist and as the practice laps seemed to give me confidence in my new brakes I looked forward to the timed laps sprinting around what I felt was possibly the most enjoyable circuit that I have raced at to date, and that is something coming from a lover of Goodwood. It was all going really well until I got over confident on the final timed lap and over-cooked it coming out of Nook Bend and went grass cutting on the Hanger Straight. Hey Ho! there's always next year. Well done everybody.

Mike Lucas
Landow would be my first event in the Elise since August last year. I had driven it a few weeks earlier to try out the new (softer) suspension, which had made it far less tail happy and much easier to drive.

As is usual these days with having to fit in university stuff, it was a bit of an ‘arrive and drive’, but Dad had it all sorted out for me. There were a few Elises in Class A2, including Elen Worthington, who was obviously going to be a difficult target to reach. I steadily improved my times and after the first timed run was only one and a half seconds behind Elen. On the last run I assume Elen must has transgressed the track limits and was given a fail. I made a mistake in the last corner, but I don’t think it was one and a half seconds worth! So, with a slightly slower time, I finished up second.

This was my first trophy on a scratch basis as opposed to handicap, so I was very happy with my performance. Also it was good to see a strong showing by the ladies, with half of the six entered picking up trophies - Charlotte Phelps won Class C4.

Many thanks to all the organisers and marshals. Also thanks to Dad for sorting the car and Steve Guglielmi for the revised suspension set-up.

Claire Tooth
I’ve always enjoyed competing at Llandow. It’s a good combination of a quick part needing good commitment along with an interesting technical part requiring control and patience as well as a key braking point. I also love to support the track owners who are regularly making improvements to the venue so it’s great to support them.

Although we were asked to park in class order in the paddock, when I arrived there seemed to be no particular order so I parked quite close to the track entrance so that I could see when the other cars in my class were in the queue. The brilliant work by the young paddock marshal got us all into good order and he continued his great work all day.

The briefing included instructions that the track limits were not to be exceeded by even one whole wheel due to those hooligan rally and saloon car drivers turning some corners into rallycross corners last year!

Perfect sprinting weather saw some good times although it was sad to see a couple of potentially nasty incidents on track which, thankfully, didn't result in injury.

After loading the trailer and thanking the marshals and officials I set off on a five hour trip to Snetterton for the next day’s competition.

Great event, thanks all!

Gary Thomas
MX-5 Challenge Points

2017 Vincenzo & Son Bristol MX5 Challenge:
Round 4

Drivers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>RosSolo</th>
<th>GWS</th>
<th>Llandow</th>
<th>AutoSolo</th>
<th>Clay</th>
<th>Kemble</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andrew O'Malley</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Glindon</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Hurford</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rich Welsh</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom Caldecourt</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phil Hawkins</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louis Ruff</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Thompson</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick Revels</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul St George</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ryan Lock</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steven Lock</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curtis St George</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bristol Clio Cup Points

2017 Bristol Clio Cup Championship Standings

Drivers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>GWS</th>
<th>Llandow</th>
<th>AutoSolo</th>
<th>DMS</th>
<th>R5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mark Tozer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter O'Connor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rob Thomson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Bisping</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alan Wakeman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve Hills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Points
Whether you’re a fan of the brand or not, I bet that most of you can name at least 10 models of Ford cars. There is no doubt that over the years Ford has given us many legendary cars, and even vehicles like the Transit van and F-150 pickup. Fords have also featured in quite a few films: Mad Max drove a Falcon with that red push-pull switch on the gearstick to activate the supercharger (something that I have wanted in every single one of my cars), Starsky and Hutch had that beautiful red Grand Torino with the white stripe on the side, and I bet that a lot of people automatically think of Eleanor from Gone in 60 Seconds when they see a Shelby GT500. Let’s not forget British cop shows like Life on Mars, Z Cars, The Sweeney and Minder who have also help popularise Fords.

As a mark of appreciation for this monstrous blue oval Castle Combe introduced a new show this year – Pure Ford. Whilst there is an already very popular RS Combe show, this new Pure Ford caters for a wider audience and is aimed at everything with a Ford badge on it. Walking around the paddock you see modern and classic cars thrown together, a shiny new Focus RS next to Consul Capri, both parked opposite a Granada, it was fantastic.

It wasn’t a particularly busy show compared to other ones at Castle Combe, but for a first event (and the weather didn’t look too promising at times) there was a pretty good turnout. The main paddock was full and there were plenty of folks admiring each others’ vehicles and generally mixing and chatting.

The variety of cars was pretty good for a single marque event, plenty of Escorts and Focuses (or whatever the plural may be), a beautiful pair of Zodias up at the front of the show, a Zephyr tucked away at the back almost hidden from everyone. A chap pulled his Lotus Cortina up to me as I was walking around and asked where he should park as he wasn’t part of a club stand, I pointed him in the general direction of the paddock marshal. Next time I saw the car it was alongside a Mk1 Escort and an F150 pickup truck.

The drifters were back again destroying tyres in the best way imaginable. Veteran drifter Trig Bishop was tasked with putting together a team of Ford drifters. Trig himself drives a MK1 Escort estate with a Honda lump up front. If you’re wondering if I put the word estate in by mistake, no I didn’t, and Trig wasn’t the only one there with a pooch carrier. Dave Wilson was also out in a Sierra estate and Josh Payton took things a little further in a mental Mk4 Escort Van. What next lads, the Transit ice-cream trucks with the jingles blasting as the smoke plumes from the rear? That would be an absolutely momentous sight.

This is definitely a show to keep an eye on and I hope it gets bigger and better every year.

Scott Boulton
Photos by Scott Boulton
www.jackflashphotography.co.uk
“Chris, can we swap cars for a week at the end of May?”

What the… Hang on a second, haven’t I already used a similar introduction for a ‘Drive By’ article this year?

Well, uhm, yes but this request was from a different work colleague (that’s different as in, not the previous person borrowing my car, as opposed to ‘different’, meaning you know, a bit unhinged) and would at least give me a chance to experience another car for a week and share my observations of it with yourselves.

However, as I’ve also attended a couple of interesting motoring events since my last bout of journalistic excellence graced this magazine (ahem), we’ll return to my car review a little later, and I’ll warn you now, my opinion will be considered by many Drive By readers to be nothing less than heretical!

So, whilst you’re trying to remember where you stashed your pitchforks and flaming torches, to the BMC Great Western Sprint, and what an event this year’s GWS turned out to be.

With a reasonably bright, dry, warmish day on which to play, we were fortunate that the weather gods had decided to give us their blessing, given that this earliest event in our competition calendar has probably experienced just about every type of weather pattern known to man, most of which were so rubbish (bitter cold, high winds, torrential rain, sleet and snow, to name but a few of my own experiences of previous GWS’s) that we would have joyously welcomed just a dull, overcast day.

Once again I had my usual roll of Commentator (more Announcer, in reality), and with a goodly number of marshals signed-on, we were anticipating a reasonably smooth day. Famous last words… We were soon underway with the first of the practice runs, and the beginning of a day full of stoppages - blimey, from my vantage point in my ivory tower it appeared that I was soon announcing a halt to proceedings in almost every class for either ‘failure’s to proceed' or the occasional, overly-enthusiastic dynamic connection with the scenery, and it quickly became evident that we would be in for the long haul at this year’s event.

Our main problem of the day was Jeff Wiltshire’s Sylva Phoenix deciding that it couldn’t be bothered to contain the contents of its sump any longer and promptly dropping enough oil on the circuit to warrant a ‘Thank You’ card from the OPEC nations, only to then burst into flames on its re-entry to the paddock! Fortunately, serious damage to the Sylva was avoided by the swift actions of our own Andrew Bisping who happened to be loitering at the pit lane entry point to the paddock and who leapt into action with daughter, Suze and another spectator, grabbing some fire extinguishers from the store under the footbridge and putting out the fire before the rescue crew arrived on the scene, phew.

The real issue however, was that the Sylva had smeared its oil on the racing line from the second chicane to the paddock and it took a concerted effort from a large number of marshals for nearly forty minutes to return the track to a usable condition - I should imagine the last time the human race used such a quantity of cement, the Germans were building the ‘Festung Europa’ Atlantic Wall.
fortifications…

Anyway, we managed to finish the day, including the Top Twelve run-offs, with just a few minutes to spare before the six o’clock circuit curfew, and I think the 2017 Great Western Sprint was an absolute triumph of the organisational skills of the Bristol Motor Club team and a huge ‘well done’ to all involved just doesn’t seem close to being adequate.

My next motoring event also happened to take place at Castle Combe just after the Easter weekend and came about when Matt Nichols forwarded an email invitation for ‘The Guild of Motoring Writers Big Day Out’ being held at the circuit.

Given the astonishing lack of any journalistic talent being displayed in Drive By over the years, it’s blindingly obvious that The Guild of Motoring Writers hasn’t exactly played a major part in my life (yes, yes - or even the tiniest part, thank you…) but the invite probably came about because Matt and I attended a writers workshop held by the Guild a number of years ago and we’re still on a mailing list.

The day is an open invite for guild members to bring along any car and have a thrash around the circuit in 15 minute groups, together with a number of manufacturer’s providing their press fleets for either use on the track (thank you Honda, for bringing your latest Civic Type R for track use) or on local roads - with the latest offerings from Volvo, Fiat and Suzuki available for road testing - and the chance for some passenger laps in a race prepared GT86 or Mazda MX5 operated by an organisation called Mission Motorsport (more on this brilliant organisation another day).

After a breakfast coffee at Matts and then following his TVR 3000M race car to the circuit (who knew a tuned version of the humble Ford V6 boat anchor could do such an awesome aural imitation of a full-on Le Mans competitor), we signed on, booked the Type R drives and, in my case, also booked an early GT86 passenger trip.

Regrettfully, I wasn’t in the greatest of health on the day, but I thoroughly enjoyed my passenger ride in the Mission Motorsport race prepped GT86 and, a little later, my sitting alongside Matt during his drive of the Type R was an object lesson in how he’s managed to accumulate so many sprint awards over the years.

The paddock was also awash with interesting cars to look at and photograph and I spent a considerable time chatting with various owners, some of whose columns I regularly read in the various monthly automotive publications I purchase.

At the end of the event, we were all invited to a rather fab afternoon tea with the Guild President at his house; a certain Nick Mason, no less – Pink Floyd drummer and famous owner of one the world’s most enviable collection of cars, a number of which having appeared on Top Gear over the years, and who had earlier rocked up (how else!) at the circuit in his Ferrari F12 TdF. I’ve had worse days.

Okay, time to return to my opening subject and my swapping cars with a colleague for a week.

As my colleague’s company car had just finished its lease term and been returned to the lease company he had been provided with a rental car as a stopgap until his new car arrived but, as he was to attend a family wedding on the continent and the rental car couldn’t be taken abroad, I naturally agreed to swap with him to help out, and it’s always interesting to drive something different occasionally.

Which was fine in principle until the handover
day actually arrived and I discovered his rental was? A 1.4 petrol Skoda Octavia. The estate version. With a roof rack. Oh crap…

So, before we go any further, I guess now is the time to utter what is probably the most heretical sentence ever to make it to print in a motoring magazine, “I personally think Volkswagens are cars for the witless”.

Sorry(ish), but the whole Volkswagen thing has always left me cold, as I’ve long considered Volkswagen (‘Peoples Car’, how proletarian) and its various subsidiary companies (Volkswagen Group - VWG) to be some sort of cynical German joke on the rest of us, with their use across the group of a common chassis/engine platform for squeezing maximum profit from economies of scale and meaning you’re fundamentally being offered just the one car in each class, for which they merely offer variations on body style, trim quality, chassis and engine settings etc depending on which of the VWG products you’re considering.

Please don’t misunderstand me; range toppers, GTIs and low production volume halo models aside, I totally agree that VWG’s standard everyday road cars are also awesomely competent. But purely being competent, however great, without having any individual stand-out qualities must ultimately result in characterlessness.

Harsh? Not really, the Octavia provided exactly what was expected of it, in that it was a highly competent car and possessed of a perfectly acceptable drivetrain, chassis dynamic, interior, etc, but having no true excellence in any one area. Indeed, it was a perfectly honed ‘Peoples Car’, designed to be the default choice for people who really don’t care what they drive providing it’s good enough at most things and comes with minimum ownership grief – fine, if that’s all that matters to you.

If VWG were a food, it would be vanilla custard, with Skoda being the store brand and Audi being the ‘Taste the Difference’ range – far more flavour in the expensive version certainly, but there’s no getting away from the fact that whichever one you choose, they’re all just milk, eggs and sugar blandness.

In case you’re wondering about my experience of VWG products to back up my opinion; over the past 12 months I’ve driven the top spec Audi A4 and A6, Volkswagen Golf and CC, Skoda Superb and Octavia, and Seat Leon. And each of them was beautifully built, drove exceptionally well and performed faultlessly.

And every one of them was as dull as dishwater.

Oops, must dash, I’ve just spotted a large gathering of pitchfork wielding VW enthusiasts at the end of my road apparently hunting for a custard hater…

Chris Dymock

Chris Dymock. Never knowingly correct about anything for over half a century.

Big Ed says: Chris’s opinion is just that, his opinion, it does not reflect on an official club stance (that bit was for the solicitors). On the other hand I feel this could be the start of a healthy debate, so if you have any other view you would like to share please write it down and send it to me at

scott_boulton@btinternet.com

I myself will be writing a response as a Škoda driver. If you have any experience of the Volkswagen Group cars: VW, Audi, Škoda, Porsche, Seat, Lamborghini, Bently or Bugatti, we would love to hear your thoughts.
Motoring royalty, and Nick Mason

Yikes! Imagine seeing that coming at you in the rear view.

All photos by Matt Nichols and Chris Dymock
OFFICERS & COMMITTEE MEMBERS’ EMAIL

Pete Hart  
peter.j.hart@btinternet.com

Paul Hemmings  
paulhemmings2@btinternet.com

Chris Dymock  
chris.dymock@intoheat.co.uk

Richard Marsh  
r_marshy22@yahoo.co.uk

Paul Parker  
britisprint@paulparker.f9.co.uk

Mark Benstock  
benstock.mark@yahoo.co.uk

Vickie Tubb  
vickie.tubb@hotmail.co.uk

Matt Nichols  
matt@classiccarsdriven.com

Mark Tooth  
mark.tooth@tiscali.co.uk

Zoë Tooth  
membership@bristolmc.org.uk

Allen Harris  
allen@harris-bristol.com

Andy Laurence  
andy@andylaurence.co.uk

Dave Greenslade  
davegreenslade@zoho.com

Kate Boulton  
kate-boulton@virginmedia.com

Mark Chater  
mark@chater.demon.co.uk

Ady Taylor  
ady_tayloruk@yahoo.com

Mike Cole  
cole.mike@btinternet.com

Scott Boulton  
scott_boulton@btinternet.com

Chris Buckley  
cbuckley@slb.com

---

**CLUB NIGHT**

THE PAVILION, COLSTON’S SCHOOL

Exclusive use of room with bar

First Tuesday of each month from around 8.30