

SCCON

Spotlight

The Newsletter of the Sporting Car Club of Norfolk

April 2010

Malcolm Watson Spring Rally Stages

10th & 11th April 2010

Sculthorpe Airfield near Fakenham

Well it's that time again and we really need your help and support. As I'm sure you are all aware, Brian and his team of willing volunteers have taken on the task of running 2 stages at a time over 2 days (as crazy as it seems).



We don't need you to do this.

We need you to do something much more important than that...

We need you to do this



That's right without each and every one of you we cannot run this event.

We need more volunteers. WE NEED YOU!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Currently we have 63 entries, with more expected. Entries vary from former WRC cars to a fleet of Juniors in the 1000cc cars. There is a free Hog roast on Saturday night for Marshals, and free Breakfast on Sunday for those who turn up on both Saturday and Sunday. There may even be more goodies for you on the way. Please help us make this the Best Stage Rally that we have ever run. Please if you are available for the Saturday, Sunday or to help us set up on Friday. Please contact Dave Bell or Howard Joynt via the SCCON website, or Danny Lemmon 07723359136 or Brian Marquis 07774 165964.

SEE YOU THERE,
Danny

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Included with this edition:**12 Car Review****Round 1 of the Summer Series
Regs****Annual Dinner Dance & Prize Giving
Flyer****Midsummer Vintage & Classic Car Run
Regs**

Saturday 24th April

Annual Dinner Dance & Prize Giving

Please contact Lorraine Annison on 01263 513052 for further information

The Latest...

Social Events

Howard – Social Secretary:

Phone Howard on 07917 060052 if you have any ideas or venues for social events

Club Nights

Do not forget that current club nights (unless stated in these newsletters) are at the **Ugly Bug Inn** at Colton

Please join us there on Thursday 15th April for the next Natter & Noggin

Dinner Dance

Please join us at The Old Rectory, Crostwick on Saturday 24th April for the Annual Dinner Dance & Prize Giving

Diary Dates

Wednesday 7th April
Management Meeting at the Ugly Bug Inn, Colton.

Thursday 15th April
Club night at the Ugly Bug Inn, Colton.

Saturday 24th April
Annual Dinner Dance & Prize Presentation – Old Rectory, Crostwick

Sunday 25th April
Autotest – regs included in this issue – Summer Series Round 1 – Brandiston

Wednesday 5th May
Management Meeting at the Ugly Bug Inn, Colton.

Thursday 20th May
AGM at the Ugly Bug Inn, Colton.

Marshalling

Marshal Points:

Have you been out marshalling on any club or invited events?? Then you need to claim your Championship points by contacting Lynne Wellbelove or Dave Bell.

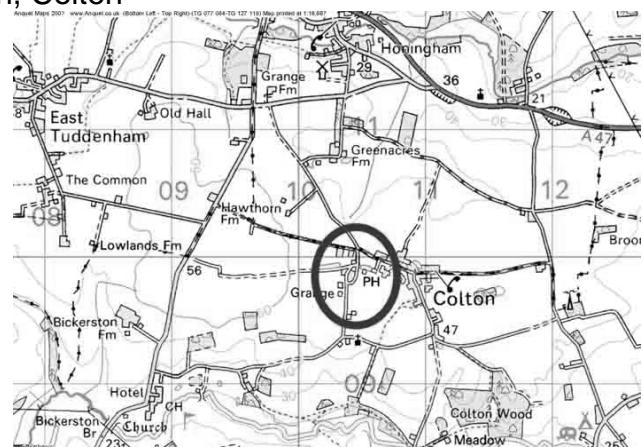
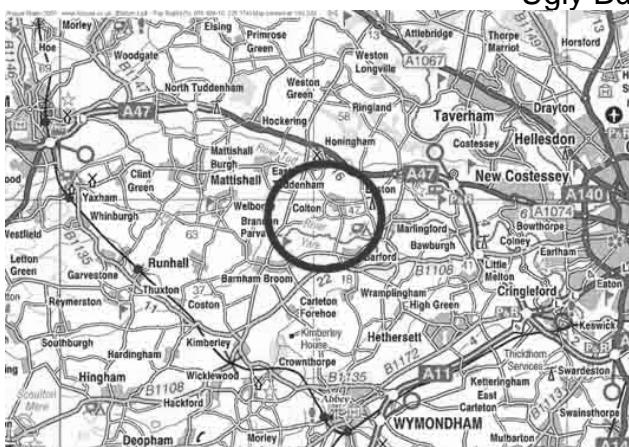
Sunday 25th April
Summer Series Round 1 – Sealed Surface Autotest - Brandiston

Sunday 25th April

Summer Series Round 1

Sealed Surface Autotest at Brandiston

Ugly Bug Inn, Colton



Editorial

Well March has just stormed out of our lives and we head into April busiest month the club has had in a long while.

During March Christine and I have been charging around as what is now become normal, Beginning at the end of February with one of Chelmsford Motor Club's Gymkhana, the main feature of this was it tipped down all day, well not quite it stopped as the event finished.

Next up was the clubs Taster Autotest at Snetterton on March 5th, with a healthy entry of twenty drivers in every type of you could think of from Nova's to a Porsche, the results proved that you do not need a special car to win or enjoy yourself.

The weekend of March 12th, and we were off to Wales for the first round of the Richard

Egger MSA Asphalt Championship. I will write a full report next month but until then the official report is at the end of this article.

Of course we have the stage rally, after months of planning Brian Marquis and his team are ready to go. The cones and bales are waiting in the wings to be placed around the expanse of the Sculthorpe airfield. This year we hope to entice the marshals to come out to play with the offer of a real good feed with a hog roast on Saturday night and a breakfast on Sunday morning. I really hope this works as there has so much work gone into this event and we do not want to fail at the last hurdle.

There are other things going on this month,

The Awards Dinner Dance 2010, As you might have noticed I

Martin Newson

have put another entry form for this event, please get your entries in as soon as possible we would love you all to come along to pick-up you awards in person so we can cheer you on and congratulate you on your achievement over the last 12 months. So please raid your piggy banks and take your partners out for a meal and drink.

The perfect way to get over the night before is a nice quite drive around the Brandiston Airfield with friends against the clock, an autotest is what we have in mind. There will be small tests and long tests where you can let your car go. Please give it a try if you have not tried this sort of event before we will guide you through it, if you do not want to do the tests please come along and marshal.

LLOYD'S HIGH INTEREST ACCOUNT!...

Having registered for the Richard Egger Insurance MSA Asphalt Rally Championship for the first time for over 15 years, Peter Lloyd and co-driver Graham Handley opened their account with an outright win on the opening round of the series, the Fix Auto Swansea Tour of Epynt, at the weekend. Their Subaru Impreza S12 set fastest time on the first of the six long stages on the Epynt Ranges to establish a lead which, following FTDs on each of the next three stages, they maintained throughout the day.

At Prizegiving that evening, Graham Handley said that, while he and Peter were obviously delighted to win the event, it was also the last 'big' Epynt rally that had, hitherto, eluded them – so, they have now won them all!

2007 MSA Asphalt Rally Champions Steve Simpson/Mark Booth put in a similarly polished performance to take the runners-up spot in their Impreza WRC, while Simon Mauger/Chris Butcher brought their recently-completed 2.5 litre Ford Escort MkII into an excellent 3rd place. Replacing a broken front shock-absorber caused a late departure from the first service halt, but the consequent 30-second road penalty made no difference to the final result.

Andy Fenwick/Lee Tindall are planning a full season of ARC events and, in another Impreza WRC, their campaign has started well with a 4th place finish on Epynt. John Stone/Lee Carter will be particularly pleased with 6th overall in their Skoda Fabia WRC – as they continue the acclimatisation process with their new car, fourth-fastest time on the final stage will be very encouraging.

While their Hyundai Accent WRC is awaiting completion, Stone's Legend Motorsport team-mates Mark

Jasper/Don Whyatt wheeled out their MG Metro 6R4 to good effect – 7th overall, a handful of seconds behind the Skoda, giving them a strong showing in the points table.

Another Championship returnee, George Mackey, brought his Mitsubishi Lancer EVO6 into 8th place and, with three events in his native north-east to come in the revamped calendar (Jim Clark, Tyneside & Cheviot), he is looking forward to some further good scores.

The John Horton Motorsport Management ‘Star Performance’ salver was awarded to 29-year old James Martin, from Aberystwyth, who is just starting out on his first season of Asphalt Championship events. Without wishing to sound rude, James’ Astra is not in its first flush of youth but nevertheless, with co-driver Dylan James reading the notes, he finished 13th overall and won the very competitive B11 class. Well done!

On the other side of the coin, those who didn’t fare too well on the opening encounter included 2006/2008 MSA Asphalt Champions David Kynaston/Andy Russell who put their Audi A3 Quattro off the road. It was ten minutes before they were mobile again and, by this time, the car’s gearbox was starting to play up. To avoid risking any further damage, they retired from 4th place, while Damian Cole/Craig Drew’s event came to halt at about the same time when their Focus WRC’s power steering pump failed. They had been 5th at the time...

With 35 Championship-registered crews taking the start of the Tour of Epynt, other finishers included:

*	Chris Marshall/Simon Hunter	Mitsubishi Lancer EVO5	12th
*	David Hardie/John McCulloch	Subaru impreza	13th
*	Mike Perkin/Martin Bristow	Ford Puma	17th
*	Michael Glendinning/Andrew	Roughhead Ford Escort MkII	18th
*	Steve Cressey/Sam Collis	Subaru Impreza STI	20th
*	Steve Leonard/Sion Humphreys	Ford Escort MkII	21st
*	Geoff Glover/Keith Barker	Vauxhall Astra RWD	27th
*	Graham Muter/Steve Hallmark	Ford Escort	29th
*	Richard Clews/Barry James	Ford Fiesta ST	33rd
*	Martin Murray/Peter Weall	Peugeot 205 GTI	37th
*	Phillip Merrills/William Kelly	Honda Civic Type R	38th
*	Stephen Webb/Steve Tott	Ford Fiesta ST	39th
*	Martin Newson/Peter Morris	MG ZR	42nd
*	Dave Price/Mark Mason	Ford Escort Mk6 RWD	47th
*	Alison Lock/Abi Summerfield	BL Mini	49th

Meanwhile, in addition to Kynaston/Russell and Cole/Drew, the list of those for whom Epynt was not the happiest of events includes :

*	Chris Jones/Ashley Trimble	Ford Focus STI	Retired SS5
*	Chris Rice/Nick Chapman	Subaru Impreza	Clutch – SS1
*	Jim Sharp/Amy Mackinnon	Mitsubishi Lancer	Retired SS2
*	Tim Daltry/Paul Ohren-Bird	Peugeot 205 GTI	Clutch – SS1
*	George Cooke/Geoff Nash	Citroen Saxo VTS	OTL
*	Craig Jose/Nigel Hewett	Peugeot 205	G'box Mount – SS3
*	Richard Egger/Pat Egger	Vauxhall Nova	Core Plug – SS1
*	Neil Arden/Giles Corbett	Ford Escort MkII	Gearbox – SS1
*	Tracey Louise Muir/Garry Muir	Peugeot 106	Driveshaft – SS1

The Richard Egger Insurance MSA Asphalt Rally Championship moves to the Isle of Man for the second round, the Manx Telecom Rally (7/8th May) and, with five events to count from a possible nine, every competitor has a great deal to play for.

Chat from the Chair

Hello all,

I hope you are well,

The is concentrating hard on the stage rally and this month you will see pleads for Marshals for the rally, if you or family and friends or work colleagues could help out on one or both of the dates please let Howard know asap.

As I write this we have 12 days to go! We have 59 entries and as we know we tend to get a flurry of late entries so hopefully when we come to run we may have more than this.

For the Jnr F1000 cars that have entered we have 18 crews, and this includes last years joint winner of the championship Cameron Davis, and Nick Cristofaro who won two rounds last year, and Alex Parpattas who is pictured below and he won this years first round. Of course we also have the 205 / RWD championship taking part, and or event is the first round of this championship and I hope that they will also be entertaining as they try and score points for this years championship.



We also have the annual Dinner Dance and Prize giving on Saturday 24th April, and this is at the Old Rectory, Crostwick.

I haven't been doing much rallying since the March autotest at Snetterton, that was a great day and thanks to all that took part and helped on the event, I know that the 12Car went well last week and well done to Alan and Dave for coming first, no fails, and Robert and David who also got no fails.

That ends this years 12car and I hope you have all enjoyed either taking part or helping out making sure that the events run.

As a committee we are going to meet up in the summer and discuss the 12car with the organisers of the 12cars so if anyone has any ideas please send them to me as we are always looking to improve what we do.

We have had a drop this year in people entering the 12car championship, but I put that down to the same people entering and being organised. Its very difficult to manage when we only have 12 spaces available.

Scon also retained the March Hare against Kings Lynn MC, so well done to the Scon team and everyone who helped put on that event, Mark and Lorraine did a fantastic job in getting it running, its such a shame that KLMC only had four crews, but our team put in a good effort, with Trevor and Andrew clocking up 20 fails!

As I said earlier I haven't been doing much rallying, but I will be a navi on out event in April. What I have been doing is training and taking part in an Extreme 10k run, dressed in fancy dress as a lady, ran in the dark....for fun.

Peter Skillen

It was held at just out side Henley-on-Thames and was a tough 10K course covering gnarly woodland trails, mud, steep banks and pastures and water jumps (in the dark). A group of 5 of us took part and we kept together as we went round, over 400 people entered and it took us 1hr 56 min to complete the course. The guy who won did it in 49minutes and the last place people came in 2hrs 58min, so I was pleased with our time.

I'm the one in the middle of the photo below, and this was at the start.



Well, that's it for this month, please if you can, help the club in any way with the stage rally 10th and 11th April. Just get in contact with any of the team if you don't know how you could help.

Take care
Peter

Malcolm Watson Spring Rally Stages

Final call for help

Marshals desperately needed



No experience necessary

Saturday and / or Sunday

Bring your friends

Championships



Ward Construction AEMC Stage Rally



Junior Formula 1000 Rally



205 RWD Modified



ASEMC Club Stage Rally

Road Rallying March Round Up

No round up for this month; should have been a report on the VK Derbyshire but our season continued on its downward spiral. The season so far: Carpetbagger – DNF broken exhaust manifold bolt, Bruce Robinson – finished but only after me getting out and pushing, Ryemoor – DNS head gasket (queue for noise), VK Derbyshire – DNS various terminal car problems (day before the event).

Lyng Garage 12 Car – 26th March

Out with Alan for a run round on 133 for the traditional 12 car finale, the Lyng Garage sponsored yet again by Dennis Ward, organised by Ian Doble and Chris More. Unusually for the event only two expert crews were on the entry list and I was slightly concerned that Ian might have decided to extract a bit of revenge following my navigational offerings for the March Hare – my fears were unfounded, even the opportunity to have a laugh watching us leave the start in the wrong direction was passed. As usual the event started from Lyng Garage and despite a bit of confusion in the regs (my fault – sorry) finished at the Lakeside in Lyng.

The time ticked round to 8:01 and after a chat with Ian & Clare we were off, Ian & Chris had told us which way to go at the first two junctions and I managed to get the first junction right but it all went a bit pear shaped at the second junction. No idea really, I just wasn't up to speed. We turned left into Elsing rather than the intended straight on. Turned round and back onto the right road behind Mark & Peter. Then another couple of minutes went by as we reversed back to check out the logo on a carrier bag lurking in the undergrowth. It didn't get any better, Alan picked out the board

on the ▲ on the 4th junction before I'd got it plotted and then I managed another wrong slot on the 6th junction requiring another turn round now behind Robert & David. Not bad going, two silly wrong slots in the first 2km and the navigation was about as straight forward as it can possibly be - grid lines, things had to improve. Arrived at TC2 (Martin & Christine) one minute down and left on the same minute as Mark & Peter although they had gone by the time we arrived (hope that makes sense). Horrible road colour junctions, in a horribly horrible font, to TC3 (Damian & Jim), again Alan picked up the board on the 1st junction ▲ while I was still trying to work out the route through Swanton Morley which was a major challenge for my aged peepers, especially the yyb triangle in the middle of Swanton Morley. Passed Mark & Peter parked up on the outskirts but yet another wrong slot (bad call) put us back to running third car before visiting Lorraine and Richard at a PC just outside Robertson Barracks. A look at the navigation this morning showed the road colours were laid out as in on the first colour and out on the last colour with all of the junctions three roads; although I'm still not sure about the significance of the y / Y and b / B combinations. Left TC3 following Mark & Peter with one hand out defining the route to TC5 via TC4. A string of out of order vias took us to TC4 (Mike) on the narrow yellow north of the A1067 at Sparhamhill and then junction departs to TC5 (Chris) at Jordan Green via the Whitwell Common triangles. Slightly worried that there was no code board on the triangle but after a tour round all of the roads we pressed onto the control. We were still running on the same minute as Mark & Peter but passed them at the first junction after TC5. Junction instructions, reading right to left,

took us to TC6 north of Gt Witchingham via Oaks Farm and one of Simon's favourites, the loop under the railway back onto the B1145 to the ▲ on the cross roads and then back across the B1145 towards Whitwell Hall.

Back to first car on the road at TC6 (Peter & Phil) and a slightly puzzling comment from Peter as we left – 'see you in a minute' – had we WDed leaving the control? Now the instruction 'make sure you read everything on the route card' is reeled off ad-nausea by most organisers, do we listen – obviously NOT. We were at the church in Gt Witchingham before I twigged the significance of Peter's remark and a bit on the route card about a double use of cross roads. Moral; read AND UNDERSTAND the route card before setting off. The correct route was to turn left onto Fiddlers Hill White and then hairpin left back to Phil at a PC very adjacent to Peter at TC6. Back to second car on the road until Mark pulled over on the white, followed by a spirited run round the yellows criss-crossing GL 22 to TC7 (Mark) just south of Brandiston airfield, and another minute dropped. Straight forward spot heights with approach and depart directions to TC8, or so it appeared at first glance. Everything worked fine up to crossing the A1067 at Lenwade but I needed a brief stop to plot the correct route around the regularly used yellow triangle in GSs 0917 and 1017. I've been round this triangle several times, both as an organiser and a competitor (usually in the other direction) but Ian & Chris had found a subtle variation by specifying SWT (short way round ▲) requiring the use of a previously unspotted white on the western most point of the triangle. Into TC7 (Martin & Christine) on our minute, straight forward herringbone to TC8 which looked as though it was located

just after the (very) large▲ in GS 0914 (but not on the road I would have expected!). Arrived at TC8 (Damian & Jim) a couple of minutes early and were surprised not to be joined by Mark & Peter.

One section to go and I had a feeling that there would be a sting in the tail – and so there was! Six grid references, a▲, a via and a double use cross roads. Grid references are my least favourite navigation although these were helped by being in order junctions with directions of approach and depart. All went well to the▲ in GS 1113 but the yellow back towards Frans Green is a tad on the bumpy side for comfortable plot & bash. The code board on the yellow below Frans Green suffered from short stick syndrome and took a bit of spotting. Now the results of rallies often hinge on good / bad fortune rather than skill,

it must have been our night. We were very lucky to get away with only dropping one minute on my disastrous first section and on the last section the lady smiled on us again. The final section involved joining (and leaving) the A47 four times, the first depart was right at the staggered cross roads in GS 0911, as we left the junction several workmen were spotted but our only delay was waiting for a gap in the Friday evening traffic. Unfortunately all other crews got the scowl from the lady as when they travelled this stretch they were greeted with two sets of traffic lights. I think everyone was delayed by at least one of them. As it turned out I could have done with a traffic light delay, we were having to stop before each A47 join to plot the next junction. This section also took in a manned PC (Richard) in a lay by on the old A47 near Old Hall and a final

direction / approach requiring a yellow loop towards Whitford Bridge. Into TC10 to find Ian, Chris, Lorraine and Richard waiting to collect the time cards, we sat and chatted for a while waiting to see who appeared next but the wait was in vain so we opted for being first one back to the bar.

Very happy to finish on top of the pile, thanks to Dennis for his continued sponsorship, Ian & Chris for an excellent organising job, all the marshals and all the other crews – 10/10 to everyone involved.

In fact a big thank you to everyone involved in this season's 12 Car Championship. There should be a review of the season included with this edition.

Results from the Lyng Garage:

Car	Driver	Navigator	Class	Fails	Mins	o/a	Class
1	Alan Shrimpton	David Bell	E		8	1	
3	Robert Aldous	David Mann	I		39	2	1
2	Mark Annison	Peter Riddle	E	1	21	3	1
5	David Leckie	Katy Leckie	I	1	33	4	2
10	Bernie Fox	Howard Joynt	N	2	29	5	1
4	Jonathan Stimpson	David Burlingham	I	2	32	6	3
7	Ant Liddle	Garth Collier	N	3	17	7	2
6	Brian Marquis	Danny Lemmon	N	3	18	8	3
8	Trevor Addison	Andrew Lawson	N	5	17	9	4
12	John Peterson	Rob Cook	N	6	25	10	5
9	Paul Brunton	Nick Wale	N	7	27	11	6
11	Rob Kitchen	Rob Dominy					DNF – coil?

March Hare

On behalf of Kings Lynn Motor Club, I would like to thank David and his team for organising the March Hare Rally 2010. Congratulations to SCCoN for once again taking the team prize; well done. KLMC can take heart that we provided the first two crews home so both clubs went home happy. Thanks to all who marshaled, and to the start and finish venues for providing their facilities to the event.

KLMC hopes to organise next year's March Hare Rally, so hope to see you all again for some more competitive rallying.

Paul Haylock
Chairman KLMC

2009 / 20010 Championship Positions

(top 10 only - full listings on the website)

The Summer Series 12 Car have finished but the other two championships run until the end of March 2010

Summer Series			Clubman		
1	Julian Riley	54	1	Howard Joynt	65
2=	Gill Doble		2	Martin Newson	56
	Ian Doble	36	3	Christine Newson	55
	Chris Barns		4=	Mike Lambert	49
4=	Howard Joynt	32		Bernie Fox	
	Trevor Addison		6	Mark Annison	39
7	David Leckie	31	7	David Bell	38
8	Sara Riley	30	8	Ian Doble	37
9	Linda Horne	28	9	Brian Marquis	34
10=	David Burlingham	25	10	Peter Riddle	33
	Jonathan Stimpson				
Marshal			12 Car (Driver)		
1	Christine Newson	23	1	Chris More	54
2	Martin Newson	22	2	Robert Aldous	49
3	Mike Lambert	18	3	Brian Marquis	48
4	Howard Joynt	15	4	Mark Annison	44
5	Bernie Fox	12	5	Ant Liddle	40
6	David Bell	9			
7	Clare Rix	7	12 Car (Navigator)		
8	Sara Riley	6	1	Ian Doble	54
			2	David Mann	49
			3	Danny Lemmon	48
			4	Garth Collier	40
			5	David Bell	35

20010 Summer Series Championship

Provisional calendar below

Just need some organisers - anyone interested?

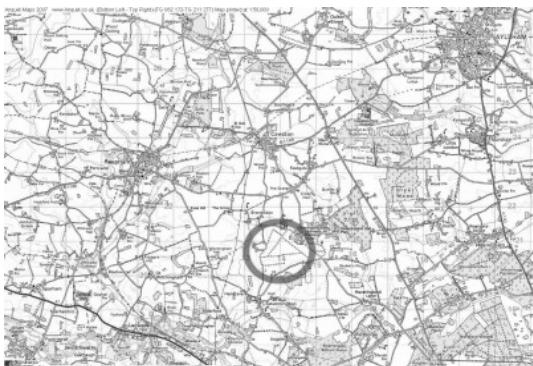
Plenty of help and advice available for first time organisers

Dates at Snetterton confirmed

The other venues will be confirmed ASAP

Date	Venue	Event	Venue Contact	Organiser
Sunday 25 th April	Brandiston	Sealed Surface Production Car Autotest	David Leckie	David Bell
Thursday 27 th May	Snetterton	Mixed Surface Production Car Autotest	Howard Joynt	Howard Joynt
Thursday 24 th June	Tibenham	Sealed Surface Production Car Autotest	Ian Doble	Ian Doble
Thursday 29 th July	Snetterton	Mixed Surface Production Car Autotest	Howard Joynt	
Sunday 22 nd August	Snetterton	Mixed Surface Production Car Autotest	Howard Joynt	
Sunday 12 th September	Cadders Hill	Production Car Trial	David Leckie	

Brandiston



Tour of Cheshire

Ian Doble

Chapter 1

Let me tell you a story about my initiation into Historic Rallying and the Tour of Cheshire, are you sitting comfortably then I'll begin.

It all began at the Natter 'n' Noggin before Christmas. I rolled up on a very cold and snowy night and fell into conversation with Mark Annison and Jim Deacon. It came to pass that Jim's usual navigator on the Historic Rally Championship events had retired due to family commitments and he was looking for a new navigator and would I be interested? Well having not done any "serious" motorsport events since 1984 I was a little reluctant to commit immediately so said "I would think about it".

Anyway Gill and I discussed it over Christmas and we sort of talked ourselves into it, so when Jim rang inquiring whether I had made a decision I was ready to say "yes" but with the proviso that I may not like these Regularity type events so would not commit to a full season. So it was a case of OK lets give a couple of events a go and see how we get on.

I did a bit of swotting up – looking on the Historic Rally Car Register (HRCR) website, and looking at previous rally documentation that Jim lent me - and then Jim suggested we go on the HRCR "Newcomers Event" to be held in Cheshire at the end of January. If Jim was game, being a past winner of these events, then who was I to turn down the opportunity? Before we went I had a "fitting" in his MGB and a ride around the lanes just to see what it was like and I ended up with a cushion on the seat and not being able to reach the foot rest!!!

Anyway come the weekend of the

"teach in" I can't go to Holmes Chapel with Jim because of doing the Plandescil 12 Car, so Gill and I end up driving to Cheshire after the event and arriving at our hotel at 2.30 in the morning. Meanwhile, Jim and his wife Jo, have hauled his MGB on a trailer up to Cheshire, as the session includes a short afternoon Regularity to give us Newcomers a "feel" for what's in store. By this time the foot rest has been moved, thanks to Mark, and I don't need a cushion, but biggest change is that I now have my name on the front wing – never had that before - so looks like this is going to be serious. Most of the talk is about navigation and car preparation but unfortunately very little on timing for Regularities. The advice to newcomers is to ignore the timing just get the route right! Anyway we have an navigation exercise to complete creating a local route around Holmes Chapel and after lunch we set off and I have a practice of my first Regularity. I can't say it went that well, I did not wrong slot or pick up any fails, but the time keeping left a lot to be desired. I even forgot to get one of the Marshals to complete my time card so missed a time completely. I'm not sure whether this was deliberate by the organisers, as I was not the only one, but it reinforced the fact that getting the timecard completed properly is the navigator's responsibility – so a newcomer's mistake which I should not have made.

By this time we have an entry accepted on the Tour of Cheshire and in discussion with the organisers it seems we fit the requirements for running as a Master because of Jim's previous results, so I am beginning to feel the pressure of what I've let myself in for. When I tell my mate David Bell about this situation he just collapses in laughter, shaking his

head, which does not do a lot to strengthen my confidence. There's nothing for it but to get down to some serious practising. Jim agrees as neither of us want to look too silly so I invent a route around my local area and once a week we have a couple of hours of Regularity sections. To say the results are mixed is an understatement ranging from no penalty to over two minutes in two miles, so there was definitely room for improvement. After four or five of these sessions we have a good one and decide to stop while I'm on a high a few days before the event proper.

By now Finals are issued and I've discovered we are seeded at Car #12, out of 75, – so no pressure!!

Everything is looking to be under control on my side of the car, but a few days before the event Jim has unluckily holed the sump in his Mercedes tow car, but Canada Garage come to the rescue and Mark manages to get it repaired with 12 hours to go!

Anyway I've studied all the Regs and Finals and plotted the various transport sections onto the map so Friday morning we set off on our adventure with a pleasant and uneventful trip to the start venue in the deepest Cheshire Plain. Now this is an area I should have known pretty well as I grew up here. I used to live about 5 miles from the start and spent most weekends driving around the lanes in my 1300cc Ford Anglia fitted with obligatory 5½J wheels and four 7" inch Lucas spot lights looking for a dice with any local Mini drivers – anyway that's another story.

So with time to spare before scrutineering begins we set off to calibrate the trip meter to the organisers distances along their designated route. I've not done

this before so Jim lets me follow the instructions for the Brantz and off we go. Hmm it looks to be miles out, but we do the five miles, change the setting and do it again. I can see we could be doing this for the next 2 hours, so we decide to set it back to where it was in the first place, and guess what, it's correct to within 0.02ish mile – close enough for me.

Chapter 2

Noise test is completed, scrutineering has a minor hiccup when the Scrutineer wants to see the emergency cut out function and the cable decides to snap!!. Thankfully the car stopped and he was not interested in the resulting work he had created for us. Next to Signing-On and getting my detailed navigation handouts for the first two Regularities' and all the Test Diagrams – The fun begins.

The entertainment will begin in the morning with two special tests within the cattle market grounds where we were scrutineered, so I give the diagrams to Jim so he can get acquainted. Meanwhile, I plot the route for the first Regularity which will be 11.75 miles long, although I don't know this at the time. The instructions are fairly easy with map references and spot heights, but I note there are 3 speed changes and an additional 30 seconds to be added when crossing an A road – hmm!

Next section is Regularity B which is 35 miles! The route instructions are a mixture of spot heights, grid lines, over/under and map references to name the simple bits. I get about 10% of the way along when I get stuck with this instruction " Lleoedd Addoli gyda meindwr, minaret new gromen". Needless to say I go straight to the end of the section and proceed to plot it all backwards to see where I get to. I get a little perturbed when the UUUO does not seem to work with bridges alone, but when I am

reminded to read the instructions, by no other than Nigel Raeburn, (you youngsters out there probably don't know him, but he is a hero of mine from Motoring News rallies in the '70s) everything clicks into place except for the welsh bit.

Now fortunately when we went to the Newcomers training day, Nigel had given some tuition on navigation and had pointed out that map 117 included part of Wales and therefore it had a duplicate index which was all in welsh, he mentioned that no one had ever used this in navigation, but you never can tell, so when I was preparing my maps I did not cut it off. Good job too, but I could not find the exact phrase and asked Jim to help. I discover that helping out with the navigation is a new experience for Jim and he seems to be quite enjoying the challenge. Needless to say we can't find what we are looking for but as the remaining 3 miles of route goes past a church with a spire it seems that this is what it means. We seek out Nigel again (He is a past organiser of this event and his current role is that of Consultant) and he confesses to the fact that they had not checked the phrase on the latest edition of the map, and this was an oversight, but yes it was the church – hooray. It's time for a drink; the only worry now is the 14 speed changes and random additions of time which need to be held during the Regularity.

Well to say I had a fitful nights rest would be an understatement, I lay awake trying to do speed changes and checking the route. I did not know it at the time but Jim was in the same situation having been given the test diagram the night before – something new as previously he has been kept in blissful ignorance of what's in store – perhaps he will want to revert to that so he gets a better nights kip!

Chapter 3

The morning of the rally is dry and clear with no frost over-night. The start car park is a hive of activity with everyone carrying out last minute tasks before the off. Our time arrives and we queue up for MTC1, so I sit there waiting for the marshal thinking where are they, it's only a minute to go. So I look around and there are two gentleman sitting under a gazebo waiting for me to hand them my time card – ugh – unbuckle, balance map board on dash, extract myself , get "chipped" and scramble back in all flustered and we set off for the first two tests. 5,4,3,2,1,Go – Wow this old B can't half shift, I'm caught a little of guard as Jim power slides around the first few cones and I am starting to enjoy myself. A 90 left around Cone N offers two choices of going around a pile of pallets/small building or going inside and making the turn tighter. At our speed we go the long way around and think nothing of it. Towards the end of the test a 45 left and right through two cones means we have a short over shoot when they become 90 left 90 right not quite as the diagram, but a good start. Then before I know it we are through Test 2 and within 1/3rd of a mile I need to start Regularity A at 27mph. Aaagh monkey is on my back now – what do I do – Oh I remember. It is a "self start" so no Marshal just like we have been practising in Norfolk and we are away – slowly. I had been doing my practicing just using one stopwatch although the "Wise Men" say use two. I had struggled with the Brantz stopwatch sometimes as the single start stop button has two functions depending on whether it's a short press or long press. Anyway in conversation with Julian Riley at the last 12 car he advised not using it and buying two Salter cooking timers, which I duly did, and was I glad. (Jim had also mentioned these at the very beginning before I had any idea

what I was doing). I ended up with two of these and the Brantz and I used all three of them in the end during the event chopping and changing from one to another. How Jim managed to keep up with which one I'm not sure, although it seemed to work. The first Regularity was soon over, but I did not have a feel for how we were doing as I used the fairly long transport section to the next test to plot some of the next three Regularity route instructions we were given at MTC1 the start. I carried on plotting while we waited in line at Test 3 only to be told that there had been an accident on the test. Jim soon discovered it was fellow SCCoNite Keith Colman who was running 3 cars in front. This threw me into a mild panic as I asked to have my arrival time recorded by the Marshal in case I need to use an official Time Delay allowance – something new to me. Anyway I take the opportunity to continue plotting and it soon becomes obvious that things are a little bit more serious than expected, as the guys are still in the car awaiting the ambulance to arrive. After about 20 minutes we are told the Tests are cancelled and we need to carry on to Regularity B "The Nantwich Monster".

All my practising on working out speed changes and stopwatch starting goes out the window as I realise the first speed change is after 1.14 miles and the second one imminently with no chance of sorting out any time, speed, and/or distance calculations, so I elect to use another stopwatch for the speed change – thank you Julian! But that's not all, I've only gone 2 miles and just over-shot the slot right which coincides with the second speed change to 15mph – uugh! Now someone is behind us and Jim can't reverse because they stop there – go around us you lovely nice person! Thank you. Now we are on our way, rather briskly, only to be confronted by the farmer, whose drive we appear

to be in. "I thought you were only going to be doing 15 mph?" – "Yes we are but we just made a mistake – sorry". Down the hill on a single track with 5 metre hedges either side, and "Oh grand here's the Control" only another 33 miles to go it can only get better – I hope. Now I need to change map for the first time of 6 in total! So that's what this is all about it's concentration and no stop as I have to add 30 seconds for crossing the A road, then 20 seconds for traffic lights between speed changes. Inevitably I find myself in a muddle, having missed a stopwatch start point so wait for the next whole mile to come around, so my clock is 2 minutes slow, but I need to add 50 seconds for the traffic lights etc... or is it the other way around???? Thankfully Jim can drive within 2 seconds/tenth of a mile at whatever speed I ask, amazing, so I leave it to him to stay as close to time as he can until I get back in synch. with the mileage and speed changes. A little further on I am too pre-occupied with speed changes that I call a slot left over a tiny hump backed bridge into a boatyard about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile before I should have – and this is somewhere I used to drive past to and from work every day in 1969 – why haven't I remembered it!!! Eventually, the end of the "Nantwich Monster" is in sight and I hope all my mistakes are behind me!

No rest though as 300 yards later it is straight into the next Test #5. This one is a "Gosularity"? It's like a tarmac Special Stage around Cholmondeley Castle grounds but with intermediate time controls and speed changes from 30 to 13 and then back to 30 with part of the route used twice with a split and merge for good measure. Test 6 is just down the lane. This is a proper flat out blast against the clock with a short reverse through two cones and two stops to read hidden code board letters. We have a great test and beat the

bogey by 2 seconds, that's more like it. The results show we were 1 of only 11 crews to do so,

Chapter 4

We amble off to PCA and the coffee stop for 20 minutes. The navigator's lot is not that simple though, as I still have future Regularity routes to plot. There is chaos at the Cholmondeley Arms venue as it appears the water main has burst with most of the car park and the road in and out flooded. After about 10 minutes I have finished plotting and Jim finds me a cup of coffee. Meanwhile, he has found out that Keith and his navigator, David Taylor, have been taken to Chester Hospital with suspected cracked ribs and vertebrae.

Our time is up and we need to leave and gather the route instructions for the final two Regularity sections, just so I have something to do at the lunch "break"!!.

Now we have two more Regularities. C is about 12 miles and D is 10 before Test #7 and then its lunch.

I'm really confused at the end of Regularity C because it looks like I am over 2 minutes late, and Jim has been complaining about driving for too long at 20 mph. It's not until lunch when I'm plotting the route for

Reg F that it appears we are about to use a piece of road twice, and then I realise I took us around an additional loop on Reg C for no reason at all. It's ironic really because I had tried to go down the correct route, but thought we were going to wrong slot and went the wrong way entirely! Thankfully all crews are allowed to drop their worst lateness penalty at one Control, and this is ours. This is aimed to stop crews going too quickly or being unfairly penalised if they get held up for any reason i.e. walkers, horses etc.

Next it's top up with fuel and continue onto Reg D. This is the first one without any dramas in my seat at least so we make good progress through to Test 7 a very narrow twisty and slippery affair around and through a typical Cheshire farm yard. This went well and results showed we had the third fastest time shared with three others. We seem to be beginning to gel as a team.

Chapter 5

Now it's time for lunch. I must admit to being a little perplexed as we pull in as we seem to be running with cars 25 and beyond and we started out as car 12. But we had been held up when Test 3 and 4 were cancelled so that probably explains it. 50 minutes are allowed here, but I get stuck into my plotting and this is when I discovered the problem with Reg C. After a while Jim comes to find me as I need to hand in our Timecard, grab a sandwich and book out for Test 8. Tony Mason is manning the Control here and he gets very excited when he sees my Paddy Hopkirk Romer that I have used since my very first rally in 1971. Apparently he designed it! I must say it is getting pretty worn now, but I can't bring myself to change it.

Out of the car park into Test 8, a 0.7 mile blast along estate roads with some cone chicanes and, a couple of code boards and two stop astrides. We have a great run and clean it by 5 seconds so get the bogey time.

We have a short run out through Whitchurch for the start of Reg F which is another monster of about 25 miles which seems to flow pretty well and I find keeping my place on the road when only travelling at 23 mph or so becomes even more demanding and occasionally find myself slipping into the old habit of calling bends "60 right, 50 into 45 left etc.." which all seems pretty

pointless at these speeds. Thankfully I remember to go around the very small white triangle on the map to find a Secret Check manned by Will Sparrow, another hero from the past who used to drive for Nigel Raeburn in a Mini. .

Next we are into two more tests, this time in the car parks of a Business Centre in the middle of nowhere.

These are both tarmac but covered in fine gravel like ball bearings. We make small mistakes on each of them as I'm not shouting or pointing loud enough or hard enough and we aim to go the wrong side of a couple of cones requiring a bit of bu**erring about which cost us a few precious seconds; nevertheless, all very exciting.

No time to waste and we are off down the road into another Cheshire Estate, Bolesworth Castle for the start of the final regularity. Speed changes come along very quickly from 30 to 15 to 29 all within about 1.5miles and I'm swapping stopwatches as if they are going out of fashion. These short sections are a real test of accuracy, especially for me. We don't have any dramas and in fact we go around a very low speed loop at Harthill into a Control and find the crew who have been behind us all day get a WD here. No sooner are we at the end of this and we go into the last two tests of the day back at Beeston Cattle market. We are back on form after our last efforts and manage to get 3rd and 5th fastest respectively so we end our first event together on a high.

Chapter 6

While results are being calculated we entertain ourselves by loading the car, finding out how Keith and David are doing, and then listening to Barrie "Whizzo" Williams reminiscing about rallying in the 60's and 70's, not winning

anything on the raffle for Northwest Air Ambulance and listening to an auction for a signed boxing glove belonging to local hero Ricky Hatton.

Jim can't resist going to have a look at the results as they start appearing, which show we were a disappointing 38th at lunch, well it is my first Regularity event, then we seem to be 19th at the Finish, not too bad. I was a very worried at the start because I would have to run as a master being teamed up with Jim as he regularly finished in the top 5 of these events with his previous navigator Dave Wilson, and won the Tour of Cheshire in 2006. I said, half jokingly, that I would be happy if I was not last master, but I must admit to being underwhelmed at 19th.

A little while later we looked again and we were 16th. If we wait long enough who knows where we will be.

Another half hour goes by and we look again, now we are 10th Wow! I start to take an interest in our times and penalties and realise we have been given a maximum for Test 1 – that can't be right surely, so I hand in a results query form and await the response. We have been considered to have gone the wrong side of Cone N according to the marshal's check sheet. In fact we didn't, we just went the long way around a pile of something adjacent to the Cone, but there is no point in querying further as we are both satisfied with our position and we can get off on our way home before it gets too late.

What a fabulous day, hard work, but with such a great result it's all been worth it. However our dramas are not over yet. We are bowling along the A14 near Cambridge about 11.00pm on a nearly empty road when suddenly brake lights appear on the car in front, then what does he do but

pull across both lanes and starts to do what looks like a 3 point turn...!!!! A few expletives in our car as Jim attempts to stop and pull over to miss the obstacle by using the hard shoulder to go around the idiot. Thankfully all is OK and we get home safely.

Reflecting now on our performance as I right this I'm really looking forward to the next event, The Ilkley Jubilee, in Yorkshire next month. I just need to refine my time keeping and

learn how to cope with the unexpected – wrong slot, baulking etc – and of course plot the route correctly. Jim seemed pleased as I think we both did better than expected. There are some jobs to do on the car – like repair the emergency cut out cable and lower my seat so I can get in and out more easily, and there must be a performance benefit from the resulting lower Centre of Gravity?????????

I hope I haven't bored you all, but

it's quite a while since I've been so "revved up", and it's only two days to go to the March Hare with Chris. It's never too late to become a rally groupie/w**re it seems.

Thanks for reading
Ian

PS (**IF** the Test 1 penalty was corrected, we would have been 5th - unbelievable!).



March Hare 12 Car

This is the annual 12 car rally challenge between six crews from Kings Lynn District Motor Club and SCCON. It is a team event with points allocated for overall position from 12 to 1. Each club nominates two experts, two intermediates, and two novices. SCCON has narrowly won for the last two years. This year's event was sponsored by Mark and Lorraine Annison of Canada Garage, but the route and navigation has been devised by David Bell. He is an ideal choice as he has competed on both SCCON and KLDCC 12 cars. The latter's events have much more of a "brain teaser" element to the navigation instructions than SCCON's. This year he was promising more challenging navigation so SCCON crews needed to beware.

The event started at Canada Garage premises in North Walsham, and after scrutineering and signing on there was very little to plot, although the Final Instructions held several notes and warnings for navigators to remember at various points during the evening. The envelopes containing the navigation for the 90 miles route were handed out at MTC1 just a minute before departure time, and although going slowly I managed to miss the first slot left in 50 yards, even though it was easily recognised by the tulips shown on the handout. This initial error cost us 1 minute at the next Control – maddening. We were seeded car#2 behind last year's winner Bob Baker and Brian Cammack (B&B) of KLDCC – a crack crew who would take some beating – and this early error would be severely punished, I thought.

STC2 to STC3 was straightforward grid square departs, but with coded letters depicting N, S, E, & W just to absorb a little time, but no problems as the route took us anti-clockwise around Trunch.

STC3 to STC4 was a little more complicated as the grid lines and spot heights had to be decoded from a

string of letters taken from the words GUNTON PARK which represented 0123456789. Not too complicated but enough to make you think and work harder to stay in front on the road for your driver. So far so good as apart from that first silly minute we are managing to not drop any more time, but only just.

Next it's the road colours but not the usual yybbww etc, as this time David has elected to use the last letter of the colour so we got w,D,E,N for yellow, red, white and brown/green; another time waster that worked to good effect. I managed to sort it out not realising the letters referred to the last letter, until Peter Riddle pointed it out to me at the finish! There was now a 15 minute rest on the white in GS2037 and I was pleased at only dropping a minute, but annoyed with myself doing so.

STC6 TO STC8 Looks simple enough being a list of numbers with the helpful hint grid lines and ?. It takes a little while for the penny to drop that the? means Control number, so that gets me going, but half way thru' I have some difficulty trying to sort out where to go when Paul and Peter go past and give me another "steer" as I am trying to make the route cross GL 18 when it should be crossing GL 19 twice!. That's sorted out but now I've had one of Peter's "crisis of confidence" so when I come across a 717 in the list I am thrown off course. I have completely forgotten that the first 7 is TC7 and the 17 is the next grid line. While I'm sorting this we get to the control do the paperwork and before I know it we are away again. There is also a helpful note on the navigation instructions saying "did you read the finals" so while I'm trying to get the exact wording – something about not going shortest route we disappear up the road to Bessingham church where I want to slot left, but Chris has already passed it by the time I call it, and we must turn around. When I see the results we have picked up a fail here as I missed

the intended left slot before the village. It just goes to show just one digit more than expected and the whole rhythm goes out the window. Happily we were both in blissful ignorance of my cock-up!

Mind you when I open the envelope for the instructions from 8 to 9 I wish I was home watching the telly. Two sets of info depending which edition of map one is using! Hmm great which one is this – D2 I think – quick scrabble to find my etching in one of the corners. Now what does all this mean.....A big capital T, then a church with tower symbol then GC GC GC GC. What the ***** this mean. – Oh David why have you done this to me??? After some pontificating I decide it means grid crossing – of course it doesn't it means Green Circles but I don't know that until the finish. Anyway with some guess work and collation of other symbols I make up a route that looks feasible. I've got the beginning and the end but the middle is a bit doubtful, so I'm grateful when Paul and Peter rush past at high speed seeming to know where they are going and we tag along at a respectful distance – thanks again guys – unfortunately they attack a right a bit too quickly and don't quite make the turn so we nip up the inside and lead the way to TC9. Miraculously we did not get a fail on this section but they did, so my guess got the first bit right, but Peter's got the second bit, luckily for me! Oh I forgot to mention David did not provide his usual helpful hint on this last piece of paper – he obviously thought it was obvious – not! We drop 3 minutes at TC9 not as bad as I had thought.

STC9 to STC10 is not a brain teaser just hard slog as the grid lines and spot heights are within a coded 5 by 5 spreadsheet, and there are 32 of them for a 9 mile section – no horrors here, just trying to keep in front of Chris on the road, and navigate at the same time – who says only women can multi-task. This little puzzle has taken

us just to the west of Saxthorpe and now we have an all roads circular herringbone to keep us amused from STC10 to STC11 and our next rest. David has done a magnificent job here using all the combinations of roads through and around Tyby, Wood Dalling and Norton Corner. I managed to find the start at first go and it's just a matter of multi-tasking for another 18 minutes, which I'm pleased to say went quite well and we cleaned it, although I'm also very grateful for the 15 minute rest before we set off for the final leg. David says to me "the next bit's easier" which seems music to my ears, but in fact he is just trying to lull me into a false sense of security.

Time is soon up and we are away with another envelope containing various map features labelled with various letters to be used in reverse alphabetical order – with the helpful hint "did you read the finals" Now there are only 11 symbols to define 8 miles so they are few and far between which means they all need finding before you can be sure that you go round the route in the order intended. I pick this up quickly for a change and we pass Bob and Brian parked up still head scratching which pleases me no end – it's the first time we have seen them except when waiting at the rest points. This route takes us from the start south of Saxthorpe out through Oulton on a road I can't remember ever having been down then across to Abel Heath and down the little yellow which is not tarmac then back towards Cawston and finally to STC 13 south of Marsham Heath to find Josh and Sara Riley, both of whom seem surprised that we are a couple of minutes early! Mind you so am I!.

The next section is slackly timed without code boards but it is a written narrative of where to go which makes it surprisingly time consuming to decipher and plot. We have a short overshoot here in Brampton before reaching STC14 near Felmingham Hall where the real sting in the tail is about to begin. En route B&B have caught us up again and Chris moves

over so they can get back on their minute at the next control. At this point Chris has to pick up his pace a little to match their progress, which he keeps up for the rest of the night.

So STC14 to STC15. There are two rows of numbers very close together which if read horizontally read 21 21 etc and if read vertically go 20 12 etc. the helpful hint is junction instructions. I immediately think "clock navigation" 21 is 9 o'clock maybe, 20 is 8pm and 12 is straight on so off we go. The first two or three junctions work and then I come to a grinding halt and find Bob and Brian also stopped at the same place. Well I rack my brain and cannot figure it out, so resort to counting the number of junctions I think it defines, plotting the next control and then trying to make up a route that fits – which I do. So turn around and hooray here's a code board. We are underway. A little further and we see B&B coming out a road on the left which has gone around a triangle and we elect to go around it the other way just to see if there is a board there. We don't see one, but it is to become our second fail of the evening because there was one there - we just did not see it – damn. The rest of my guess works pretty well, but we waste a bit of unnecessary time using roads not needed but luckily pick up the remainder of the code boards and we drop 9 minutes at the next control, but unknown to us at the time collected another fail. Along here we had a bit of an overshoot at a

T junction when I was calling right, but Chris was having to go left to scrub off speed. As we slithered to a stop we noticed another code board up the road which nearly enticed us that way, but I resisted as it could not be on the route to the control, but it did give me a bit of an insight into where the last section might take us, and it proved useful, even though we were actually off the intended route at this time!!! For those of you who want to know, the numbers represented the letters of the alphabet – things to memorise T=20 L=12 etc just work it out. I knew that, I just got stuck on the

clock thing ..uggghhh!!!

Anyway we are less than a mile north of the finish, not far now. Handout comes in STC 15 to STC16– it's another 8 miles defined by six map references not in order. I start to plot, but I'm useless at it in a moving car so we stop and I ask Chris to call them out. Which he does with great speed and I plot them with the directions of departure, unfortunately I did not label them 1 2 3 etc. and when we had got them all down Chris says "there were approach directions too". Oh, Ok I'll sort it out lets get going I have a route. So off we go and I make sure I have the approaches correct. I soon find one I have wrong and then discover I have departed south instead of WSW at the previous junction and we are going around a 2 mile loop on a narrow twisty road we have no need to be on, but at the pace Chris is going it's probably just as quick to go all the way round rather than try to turn round so I decide to keep going. This allows me time to find another mistake on arrival direction so by the time we are back on the correct route I have a pretty good idea of where we should be going. It's amazing how difficult, what appears to be the easiest navigation, can be. Even with our detour I am pleased to discover in the results we only dropped 5 minutes while the two crews who beat us dropped six each, so I think David had been a bit "optimistic" with the distance on this section, although it's a good way to make sure we have a result at the end.

We are all in need of sustenance at the finish and we soon get stuck in to the chilli and jacket potatoes at the Alby Horse Shoes. It's not long before the results are announced and we are third having been beaten fair and square by the two KLD MC crews of Bob and Brian who we tussled with for some of the night and the event winners Tony Duckhouse and Mike Baker who dropped 19 minutes without any fails – well done to them. Chris and I enjoyed our evening and think we did quite well, considering as Chris says, we are in a 40 year old car with all the

creature comforts that provides!

Although KLDMC had the top two places SCCON once again picked up the Team Prize through force of numbers as we had six crews to KLDMC's 4, so it was not really an even match. If we only used the top four placings to calculate the score then KLDMC would have won.

I just want to say a very big thank you to all the marshals who came out to support the event, one chap I spoke to

had come all the way from Spalding probably well over a 100 mile round trip – just for a 12 car – so thank you very much. Also special mention to Paul Haylock who was alone, without a car, somewhere in Norfolk, and rightfully collected the marshal's prize. Also thank you to David Bell for coming up with a really good route worthy of a full night event with instructions that were probably more akin to a KLDMC 12 car, but nevertheless not too tricky. Although I think the SCCON crews may have

struggled a little. Not forgetting Mark and Lorraine for organising and sponsoring the event, and to Richard and Margaret at Alby Horse Shoes for staying open very late to cater for us.

Let's hope KLDMC can muster a full team next year and that they won't make it too hard for us SCCON folks as it will be their turn to organise.

Car #2

SNIPPETS

Panhard - one of the great names in motoring history

In 1887 René Panhard and Emile Levassor established a car manufacturing company, offering their first car for sale in 1890. The early 'Panhard and Levassors' were very advanced; they were the first front-engined rear-wheel-drive production cars, and their specification included a clutch pedal and front-mounted radiators. Levassor entered one in the Paris-Bordeaux-Paris race of 1895. Driving solo for over 48 hours on the dirt roads of the time, Emile won the race and became a national hero in France.

Sadly during the 1896 Paris-Marseilles-Paris race, Emile had an accident while avoiding a dog in the road. His Panhard overturned and he never recovered from his injuries, dying in hospital the following year. René Panhard continued to run the company, still called Panhard et Levassor, though the cars became just Panhards. Charles Rolls drove a 1904 Panhard until Rolls Royce started making their own cars and this same car is now kept at the Gressenhall Museum of Rural Life just north of Dereham.

During the 1950's, Panhards dominated the 'Index of Performance' at the Le Mans 24 Hour Race and in 1961, Maurice Martin and Roger Bateau won the Monte Carlo Rally in a Panhard PL17 with PL17's second and third too (though, it must be said that the handicap system was particularly favourable to them that year). You still hear the name today - my Austin Healey 3000 and many works Escorts use a Panhard rod (invented by René Panhard in the early 1900's) to provide lateral location of the rear axle.

Panhard stopped making cars in 1967, but the name was revived in 2005 for a range of French PVP military vehicles built by Auverland. PVP means Petit Véhicule Protégé or small protected vehicle.

From this (1898 racer)



to this (1961 Monte)



to this (Panhard PVP)



Peter Riddle, April 2010

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