



WINDSCREEN

The Magazine of Swansea Motor Club



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CHAIRMANS CHAT.

I'm writing this and it's raining yet again. I have to keep reminding myself that it is actually August, that month when you're supposed to be out in the sunshine and have been so for weeks!

What a washout this summer has been. Going over to the continent hasn't necessarily been any guarantee of finding the sun either, as much of Europe has suffered the same abysmal weather as we have.

Still, we have had some fun. We had a pub run in June, out to the Angel Inn at Pontneathvaughan, the first time we have used this venue for the club. A good number of members took part despite the damp evening; the route taking them along the old roads not used these days since the opening of the dual carriageway bypass. The company was good, as was the food in the end. It was a pity that they seemed a bit overwhelmed by the numbers and took a bit of a time to get everyone's meal served, some waiting a long time for their main course. The Bar-B-Q in July was much better, the weather even attempted to co-operate with us. Our new chef looked quite at home in the open-air kitchen, wielding all sorts of cooking tools around and dressed in very colourful kitchen camouflage treads! As always the food was excellent and a good crowd enjoyed the evening. Thanks to Chris and her helpers for all their work looking after us.

July also saw the second of our hillclimbs at a thankfully mainly dry Llys-y-fran. A few 'offs' during practice meant that there was little spare time for a proper lunch break for the organizing team and the marshals. However the afternoon ran much smoother and the competitors had a good days sport, and the marshals had an easier second half of the day. Many thanks to all concerned for the time taken to come down and help the club on the day.

This glorious month was to have seen an evening car show at the club, but it managed to stay wet and the evening was a washout. I didn't get to attend on the evening, having just come out of hospital, but perhaps we can reschedule the car show for a dryer evening sometime soon.

The September social evening sees the first round of a tri-club quiz. This year the West Wales region of the Jaguar Enthusiasts Club have asked to join in the quiz between SHVR and our club, to inject a bit more spice into the competition. The first round is to be hosted by the Jaguar Enthusiasts Club at their meeting place at the Halfway Inn at Nantgaredig on Tuesday the 16th. September. Please make a note of the date and do your best to support the club at this first round.

It was very sad to hear that Wyndham Rees had passed away a short time ago. Wyndham was a keen motorsport enthusiast supporting our hillclimb as an entrant and providing a recovery team for us. He drove his cars with much enthusiasm and a smile from ear to ear. He also had a successful coach company; in fact, I have been a passenger with him on numerous occasions. The first time he showed me how quick a modern coach could take a roundabout whilst the driver (Wyndham) was talking to the passenger on his left (me). He apexed the turns perfectly. Coach trips will definitely not be the same! To Wyndham's family, I would like to offer our deepest condolences on behalf of the club members.

Finally, my mother-in-law used to be indecisive, now she's not so sure!

Enjoy your motoring,

Mike Jones.

Please play it again Maestro ...

I'm not quite sure now why I did it? It was an easy low speed square left, albeit on greasy tarmac but I decided to use the handbrake. The back came around with too much gusto and made contact with the hedge and a large piece of granite sat just where the wheel struck.

The result was a badly bent rear arm and savage rear wheel steering, but I soon adapted my driving style and we struggled to the finish of the stage and got a time. A quick damage inspection and we set off, fishtailing, vigorously opposite locking and frightening the locals on the main road towards Cork and service.

My common sense however told me that my faithful service crew; Alun Morgan & Bob Jones, would be unlikely to provide solace as our service barge had but a few basic spares, fuel and plenty of coffee & Welsh cakes!

At service, our forlorn demeanour was spotted by Rick Champion's team and they quickly set about my car with power tools, removed the wheel, straightened the arm bolted everything back and sent us off to the next stage. This camaraderie and goodwill had been typical throughout that year, but I'm getting ahead of myself, let me rewind.

In early 1987 my quest for something different had lead me into Austin/Rover's MG Maestro Challenge. Amazingly, that's over 21 years ago and the car now regularly appears in the pages of Classic & Sports Car. Am I really that old?

Sponsored by Mobil 1 and facilitated by the redoubtable Rick Smith, this was an innovative and demanding multi disciplined motor sporting concept aimed at finding the most successful all rounder in a range of events, thus providing an effective marketing medium for AR's much underrated 2 litre hatchback of the time; the MG Maestro.

After its successful inaugural year in 1986, the championship's second year itinerary included some high profile events, even joining its Esso Metro brothers at two races. The list of competitors too read like a who's who of national & international motor sport.

Suitable cars appeared plentiful and I acquired a one careful owner model, driven to 5th place in the 1986 championship by distinguished rally driver and fellow Welshman Richard Hill, prepared and sponsored by Greens Motors of Haverfordwest.

Thus It was a brisk spring morning that I stumped up on the rolling West Sussex hills to Goodwood, behind the wheel of maroon MG Maestro C666BBX for the Southern Car Club's sprint that opened the Maestro's 1987 series.

Mike Jones & Dave Lloyd were the mechanical expertise behind the preparation of my car, done at Dave's Gower Road Garage. Mike also drove as one of the non point scoring guest drivers at some speed events. At Goodwood, Mike demonstrated a line through the chicane not seen since the Schneider Pendleton Trophy Races of the 50's!

Goodwood provided a great opportunity to get to know my new car and I scooped some points for finishing 6th. Tony Dron's win in the MG Car Club's entry proved a pointer to the final outcome of the championship. Jeff Allam drove the celebrity car, finding it a little lighter than the works Rover Vitesse he was piloting with Tom Walkinshaw in Europe.

Round 2 was the 300 miles Rally of Cornwall, run in freezing temperatures over 2 days of stages. My co driver on this occasion was Peter Moss, but once again Tony Dron was the winner with his group N car, achieving an impressive overall placing too.

The next event was at Pembrey's WW2 airfield. Tony Pond & Rob Arthur crewed the celebrity car in which they would win group N later that year on the Manx. Tony Dron won again with Jenny Birrell a close second and Neil Calvert third. I was one of 6 Maestros excluded for taking the wrong route at the split. Never mind, I blamed my co driver Peter Moss anyway!

From Wales, Austin Rover's Maestro circus went to Scotland and Doune hillclimb and after a banzai final run, using the Armco to keep his car pointing straight, Tony Dron topped the honours once again to make it 4 wins in a row!

The fifth round was a seafront autotest at Felixstowe where the Maestro's demonstrated a high standard of driving skill. Barrie 'Whizzo' Williams drove the celebrity car with panache, reminding us that he'd cut his teeth on this type of clubman's event as a Hereford Motor Club member. The 1986 Maestro champion and former autotest champion John Chalmers took his first 1987 win with a virtuoso performance and BTRDA's Phil Darbyshire was a close second.

We then travelled to Dorset to compete at a very wet Wiscombe hillclimb where the year's status quo was restored and Tony Dron again ran out winner, I was 6th again!

Roger Dowson Engineering at Silverstone was contracted to run one or two celebrity cars for Austin Rover, which it did with reliability and impeccable presentation, working closely with Gaydon competition department on development. All the MG's competing in the series were subject to regular eligibility checks by Gaydon's eligibility guru Roy Ford.

Only drivers registered for the championship could score points with guest/celebrity drivers only able to claim awards won for individual events.

In June we gathered at Donington for the Maestro's first race, a discipline alien to more than half the mainly rally orientated championship competitors. It was amazing how some formidable rally men looked confused on a circuit. In the event it was another rapid motoring scribe Mark Hales who triumphed in the celebrity car ahead of Tony Dron and Phil Darbyshire. We were sixth again but 7 Maestro drivers were non finishers for reasons associated with GBH!

In July there followed a stage Rally at a cold & wet Croft. Sad to say, our performance was mediocre with Huw 'computer' Davies co driving for me on this event.

A Sprint at Oulton Park followed, memorable for being on British GP weekend when I was staying at Silverstone and met Jenny Birrell outside the main gate early Saturday morning to follow to Oulton. I've never covered 75 road miles as fast before or after!

At Oulton, once again there were a number of drivers struggling with too much tarmac but Tony Dron used his circuit knowledge to win. Rallycross star Will Gollop drove Austin Rover's celebrity car.

After nine events, it was that man Dron with a commanding lead, BTRDA's Phil Darbyshire was a commendable 2nd and Jenny Birrell 3rd. Nottingham's David Croft and Stafford's Dave Taylor closely followed in 4th & 5th positions. I was lying 7th.

The ex army ordnance depot at Ruddington provided a popular 10th round. The tight network of tarmac roads proved ideal for our group N cars to fight in good close competitive rallying, all done at reasonable cost. After 8 stages John Chalmers emerged as winner with Tony Dron uncharacteristically crashing on stage 3 and posting a DNF.

Silverstone next for the August bank holiday MG race day, at which Maestros provided one of the best races of the day, with aspiring F1 drivers Damon Hill & Gary Brabham installed in the celebrity cars. Finishing order was Brabham, Dave Taylor and Damon Hill, showing club racing at its very best. I posted a DNF after breaking the camshaft with an early down-change into Becketts hairpin; RAC Relay sponsored our homeward trip!

Round 12 was a Hill climb at Harewood where Tony Dron returned to the front.

Back then to where we started, the Fitzpatrick Silver Springs Cork 20, with the Maestro drivers mixing it in international company such as Coleman, Connolly, Fisher & McHale. In Ireland rallying really is a sport and the Maestro circus was made very welcome.

The first wet & misty day saw 3 top international crews go out on the same corner of stage 3, just before the finish board! But the Maestros acquitted themselves well with the first two MG's; Dron and McCullagh/Arthur in the celebrity car, creeping into the overall top 20. After my adventures I finished at the social end of the results sheet with Ian Fisher of Craven Motor Club as co driver for this event.

The final 1987 event was a rally in Cumbria, won by John Chalmers from Jenny Birrell, a fast and versatile driver who would become the 1988 MG Maestro Champion.

Throughout the year Tony Dron had showed his class, proving that racing drivers also make good rally driving all-rounders, winning 9 of this demanding multidiscipline championship's 14 rounds. I was delighted to finish the year in 8th place, also winning the Smith/Ford Trophy for the Spirit of the Series, a testimony to Dave & Mike's thorough preparation and my various co drivers tenacity, stamina and tolerance!

Austin Rover's investment had garnered a great year of publicity and media coverage for their flagship mid range performance hatchback. The adage of 'win on Sunday sell on Monday' proved true and at least 6 friends & relatives bought one of these cars on the strength of its performance in the series.

Will we see the likes of this popular series again is anyone's guess but I've got some great ideas if the manufacturing moguls would like to contact me!

Ken Davies

Thanks, Ken, only had to wait 20 years for the report ;-)

Amazing Amazoning Again

The Leukaemia rally in May was my first rally since November 2005 and the morning started badly as by 6.45am I had already been booked for speeding on a dual carriageway through an empty industrial estate near Caerphilly and upset a resident at the rally finish venue by leaving the diesel engine running on my tow car as I looked for a suitable place to leave the trailer. Fortunately the day, although not trouble free, did get much better.

The Leukaemia has unfortunately gained a reputation for being rough although the regulars, including myself, consider it the best event in the historic championship. This reputation reflects in the poor numbers of entrants, but was made worse this year when the organisers removed a few for not using period cars. It was stressed in the regs and finals that they were going to clamp down on cars such as mark I Escorts but with later running gear. Another local was also disqualified by the driving standards official. Both these issues caused problems at the finish and on the club web forum afterwards.

Whilst using quite a high mileage in the forests and some rough farm tracks the best part was 2 circuits of Caerwent. I thought I had gone fairly quickly until I saw the results. Worst of all I was even beaten by the other Amazon in the entry who I have seen competing before and thought looked very slow. My excuse is I was using forest spec tyres so at least beat them on the loose. Apart from the tyres the other problem with Caerwent was that they placed a couple of tight chicanes which really suited the Mini's and Escort's but were a pain to wrestle an Amazon around.

Not helping my overall result was that I lost about 15 minutes when a cable from the battery broke but although finishing down the order it was an enjoyable day.

Three weeks later was the Ross Traders, on which I was forced to drive the tests very carefully because the car had developed rear axle problems.

When I was competing on these rallies prior to 2005 the road navigation could be very difficult and most drivers got lost causing you to drive fast to catch up. To try and stop everyone speeding you are given more time to plot the route but the timing is much more critical, we had not fully realised this in advance so whilst finding the route was easier our timing needs practice. Finished well down the order and to make it worse the other Amazon beat me this time.

These two rallies are the only ones now in Wales or the West Country which the Volvo is suitable for so not sure when I'll be out again.

Steve Lloyd

Llys y Fran July 2008 report

After a summer of rain which had filled the reservoir to overflowing, the sun came out just in time for our second hillclimb at Llys y Fran which was supported by Chevron's Pembroke Refinery, and the spectators were treated to a display of power driving from Cardiff driver Henryk Kozlowski who took the Fastest Time of the Day Award, taking just 42.84 seconds to complete the challenging 1000 metre course. Kozlowski, driving a Jedi single seat racing car, was in commanding form all day and set the time on his first timed run. Although he eased back a little after the track slowed later in the day, his slower time would still have been enough to put him in to the Top 10 run-off. Henryk only needed one run to seal that too, taking both of the days' top prizes, adding the Top Ten trophy to the FTD Award.

After a days sport enjoyed by all, Andrew Webber from Sevenoaks made the long trip home with some silverware, after winning the well supported Class 1B for up to 2 litre Road Cars, in his Lotus Elan, but he was run close by our reigning Welsh Champion Neil Watkins. David Williams and Huw Scourfield from the Gwendraeth & Teifi Valleys respectively, featured in a dead-heat for 3rd place.

SMC's Andrew Meek, who is a bit of an expert at Llys Y Fran, dominated Class 1C for over 2 litre Road cars, his Subaru Impreza being over 5 seconds faster than the second place man whereas only 2 seconds covered the next 5 cars.

Other notable performances came in the Sports car Classes with Andy Rusworth winning the up to 1700 cc class in his Westfield Bird, despite having the smallest engine in the class. Richard Kerr won the well supported over 1700cc Class in his Westfield Jocksport despite only finishing 1 timed run.

In the Modified Car Classes Martyn Ferris from Swansea won the battle of the Minis in Class 3A. Gareth Griffiths won Class 3B but Nick Meakin and Tony Barber upheld Swansea Motor Club honours and seemed to enjoy themselves, as did David Kirk who took Class 3C in his wonderful sounding BMW 325 Sport.

The drive of the day however came from Simon Rogers, who won Class 3D in his Caterham R400 with a time of 44.69 seconds which was only bettered by Henryk Kozlowski in his single seater! Simon, who went on to finish 2nd in the Top Ten run-off, was ably backed up by SMC members Kevin Evans and Michael Cond, who sandwiched Clive McCall in the middle of the well supported class.

Barry Slingsby driving a Westfield SEi won Class 3E, but if there was an award for the nicest looking car Geraint Davies' Hawk Lancia Stratos would surely have been a top contender, the Swansea MC drivers' car looking a real picture. One of the most interesting cars in the Single-seater classes was Nina Morgans' vintage JW car which uses a Norton motorcycle engine running on methanol, which added a new sight, sound and aroma to the event. Fellow Swansea member Nick Knight ran her close with his interesting Abarth 033 car which, using a Fiat engine, has raced in Italy in their equivalent of Formula Ford. Nick steadily reduced his times throughout the day, finishing with a time of 49.32 seconds which was good enough for 20th fastest time, not a bad effort on his first run in the car at Llys y Fran.

In the Classic & Rally car classes, Huw Edwards won Class 6A on his debut in his Austin Healey 3000 and Tim Ayres was the fastest of the Morgan Championship runners to win the class. Roger Turner gave his vintage Austin 7 a run, adding another fascinating vehicle to the event.

Eurig Howells won the 1600 c.c Rally Car Class, but Swansea driver Colin Caplin had a wild ride in his Vauxhall Corsa, actually rolling the car in the 2nd practice run! However there was only slight damage to the car and after a medical check and some panel bashing, the car and driver were cleared to carry on competing.

There was a Battle Royal in the over 1600 cc Rally Car Class with only a couple of hundredths of a second separating the Mk1 Ford Escort of Mike Griffiths and the Mk2 of Graham Hollis throughout the day until Griffiths sealed the class with a sparkling final run. The rivalry between Griffiths and Hollis inspired them both and they continued the battle into the Top 10 run-off, with Griffiths finishing as the fastest saloon in 7th place overall.

Rob Allender

Marshals

Thankfully this year we were blessed with better weather for both of our hillclimbs but, whatever the weather, we rely on marshals to make them run. Prior to the July event I was seriously worried that we

would struggle to get enough people to man the hill as the Swansea Bay rally on the Saturday took out most of those who might have assisted from the local clubs such as Teify Valley, Tregaron, Carmarthen, Pembroke etc. So it is a huge thank you to all of you club members who turned out on the day, especially those who also dragged friends and family along to assist. Along with very welcome assistance from Brecon MC, BMRMC and the Westfield Owners Club the hill was about as well manned as I have ever seen. Once again, thank you all.

Neil Samuel

Membership news

It has been sometime since I gave an update on new members to the club.

At the July hillclimb three joined, Geraint Davies from Llanybydder in his very smart Lancia Stratos replica, Huw Scourfield and Colin Caplin. Both Huw, who shared Neil Mathias' Nova, and Colin have been members before.

Colin had intended to enter the Swansea Bay forest rally the previous day until he had navigator problems, his problems got worse during practice when he became the second orange car to have an accident, rolling at the hairpin (at least I was marshalling there so had a good view of the underside of a Corsa). This was Colin's first visit to LyF - hopefully not the last.

A number of other drivers joined earlier in the year and made their debuts at LyF in July, Michael Cond from Aberaeron in his Sylva Riot, Gowerton's Nina Morgan in the 500cc JW4 and Ammanford's Tony Barber. Tony came spectating in May and after speaking to Andrew Meek, Neil and others decided to compete in his racing spec Golf.

I believe this was Michael's first event and Nina is fairly new to hillclimbs, she had problems finding bits for the car prior to LyF. Her partner Michael had hoped to enter in his vintage motorbike if we allowed them.

Westfield driver David Thomas from Caldicot joined in April and entered both events although he debuted his 3 litre Diesel BMW estate in July (to keep Ken Bowman company) after he had damaged the Westfield engine at Llandow.

Nick Knight from Ammanford, who joined the club last year, debuted his rare Abarth 033 in July, SMC will soon be getting a name for unusual single seaters, long may it continue.

Michael Potter, Handel Ellis Jones and Jason Birch all joined at the May meeting. Michael from the West Country in his Subaru has been to LyF a number of times before. Ellis from Llanelli in his Nissan Sunny entered both events.

Jason, who lives local to Lyf, has spectated over the years and decided to enter in 2008, doing both events in his Subaru. His friend Chris John joined him in July in the Honda Civic but is a member of road rally club Teify Valley (after visiting a pub some miles from LyF on the Saturday night I can see why the locals all enter road rallies).

Two daughters of competing father's joined earlier in the year, Debbie Dunbar and Alisa Ferris. Both enter sprints but have yet to enjoy LyF. Debbie unfortunately had a heavy accident on her debut sprint but has been out since in her father Andy's new Westfield and Alisa shares a Mini with her father Martyn. Hope to see you both on the hill in 2009.

Carmarthen's David Kirk rejoined the club earlier in the year and entered both events in his BMW. He is in the same class as Pete Salter's Toyota but unfortunately Peter is banned from entering LyF (he's got to marshal!) so I presume is leading him in the class (sorry Peter).

Our regular start marshal Tim Coulson visited our autotest and joined the club although couldn't be persuaded to enter.

As can be seen we have gained a number of new and experienced drivers to the club and hope to see you all in May next year at sunny LyF.

Welcome all and apologies if I've left anyone out.

From our new members to one of our oldest “The Bishop” aka Denzil “Blue Book” Price. Denzil will be 80 on the 23rd October and is keeping well. He shares his birthday with his younger brother John who has won the British Tarmac rally championship at least a dozen times now and won maximum championship points on the recent Sligo rally in his usual MG 6R4.

Denzil now lives at Morris House Nursing Home, Eaton Crescent in the Uplands. Brian Jenkins recently called and discovered that Denzil attended the Fairwood races of the early 1950’s and also owned a Kieft in the late 1950’s. This previously unknown ownership has added another piece to the jigsaw of the history of the Kieft and I believe it has been worked out which car Denzil owned although it did not survive.

As Brian will confirm, Denzil has an excellent memory and loves to talk of his long and varied motorsport life, call round to see him.

Diary Dates 2008

Our next Social is the first round of the expanded Inter Club Quiz, the Jaguar Enthusiasts having asked to join in. In fact it is they who will host the first round at their usual meeting place the Halfway Inn at Nantgaredig on **Tuesday** 16th September from 8.00pm.

Odds and

Paul Jones, though not a club member, has assisted with marshalling at Llys y Fran on a number of occasions and tells me that he is going to attempt to run the **ING New York Marathon** on 2nd November. Paul will be running for the **Army Benevolent Fund**, which for over sixty years has worked tirelessly to provide financial support to soldiers, former soldiers and their families in times of need. The people they support include those with disabilities or mental illness, people experiencing homelessness or unemployment, and older people.

If you would like to make a contribution at his **Justgiving** website the link is:

<http://www.justgiving.com/nypauljones>

All the results from the hillclimbs can be found at the clubs website www.swanmoco.co.uk and some of them make fascinating reading. In July Jason Birch made two race climbs in exactly the same time of 54.47 seconds. I thought we might have made a mistake and accidentally credited him with the same time twice but examination of the raw timing data, which goes down to one millionth of a second, showed that he had indeed done the same time to within a few thousandths of a second – how’s that for consistent.

Sadly our car show evening was ruined by the ongoing foul weather but thanks to Neil Watkins for bringing the trusty RS 2000 along and it was really nice to see Golf driver Tony Barber, who made the long haul down from Llandybie to meet his new clubmates.

Our cover photo shows Andrew Meek passing the timing display, located just after the hairpin, at the May event. Clearly visible are the banners of our Club and our sponsor, Chevron. The marshals are Amman and District members Terry Frayne and John Thomas. A great example of what we need for a successful event – half decent weather, good timing, sponsors, competitors and marshals.

..... **Ends**