



WINDSCREEN

The Magazine of Swansea Motor Club



January 2008

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CHAIRMAN'S CHAT.

Welcome to Windscreen 2008, I hope you all have a very happy and a prosperous year ahead of you. With the delay in the November issue, we missed a Christmas edition and the chance to wish you all compliments of the season and happy New Year. Apologies for the oversight.

We ended the year with the first round of the new inter club quiz with Swansea Historic Vehicle Register in November, and for those of you who missed it, I am happy to say our club upheld their high standards by winning the round with a higher margin than last year. It bodes well for the follow-up round with SHVR on their club night. Do support the club if you can for this round.

Wales Rally GB followed and once again Huw was well supported by the members for the shakedown stages and the refuelling halt. The fuel halt at the Botanical Gardens was a little different this year, with a newlywed couple after some different wedding photos for their album. After a discussion with Huw, a 'photo opportunity' was arranged for the lucky couple. After the pressure washer crew cleaned their car, Petter Solberg and Phil Mills posed with the couple in front of the works Subaru. Phil put his baseball hat on the groom for the pictures, which was a nice touch and one I'm sure they will treasure for the rest of their lives. What a picture for the family album and all credit to Petter and Phil for taking the time out of a busy day to make a special day for two people they didn't even know.

Our year finished off with the Christmas party at the Murton Rovers. This year there were some new faces, more converts for the next Christmas party? The buffet was as usual, super, the table was groaning under the weight of the food. Thanks once again to Chris and her crew for a very tasty choice of dishes. The ritual of Santa's Sack followed the buffet, which thanks to the generosity of those who contributed gifts, took up the rest of the night. Watching the expectant faces when reading out the lucky ticket number, we had a room full of eager kids, young and older versions! Here's to an even bigger one next Christmas.

As we start the new season off. I would like to wish all our competitors, in whatever discipline, good luck for the new championships. And to all our non-competing members who help out, whether by crewing, marshalling or just giving assistance, I wish you all a good year's motorsport enjoyment.

Thank you all for your support of the club and its activities over the last year, and if you feel like getting involved remember the AGM in March; the committee is not a closed shop. Let me know if you would like to join the committee in whatever capacity. It's your club, enjoy it.

Mike Jones.

Norwich Union MSA Classic October 2007

The weather was 'with us' this time, unlike most of the summer and autumn!

We started from Bath, in the car park just below the Royal Crescent, with a superb collection of classic cars, including three other MGC's, at 09.01 hrs as number 62.

The route from Bath took us along country lanes and through pretty villages to Prescott where we were 'launched' straight onto the famous hill without a chance to have a look! The famous hairpin was a bit tight for the C and the 'trap' got a bit close!

After a quick drink it was on to Charlote in Warwickshire by way of the Cotswolds, again through lovely countryside with some super views from high ridgeways. We passed through Broadway and skirted Stratford upon Avon before arriving at the lunch halt at Charlote Manor. Other start points converged here so there were long queues at the café and we decided to move on to Gaydon after having a good look at the many and varied cars.

As we had visited Gaydon several times already this year (Donor Card GT and MGC 40th Anniversary) we decided to just get the route card stamped and headed for Silverstone through country lanes we already knew.



We arrived at Silverstone in bright sunshine (see above) and with a dry track, in the first 20 of a total entry of over 600 cars. As we were there well ahead of time, about 2 o'clock, we were onto the full GP course alone – Great!! (Front cover shows Tony and Angela enjoying the view)

The commentator was still talking about the C as we came off the track after two slow laps as no more cars had arrived. I think we could have done another lap or two as there were no new arrivals for quite a while.

For those, like us, who have not been round Silverstone it is quite daunting; we did one easy lap in 4th gear and the C rolled a bit in the corners as I found that without markers it was not easy to aim. For the 2nd lap I used the gears which proved much more interesting and faster according to Angela's clock.

We stayed on 'til late to see other cars arrive and met a few of our old adversaries from various rallies over the years in both the C and the Mini.

This was a fine event, re-established after seven years with starting points at Norwich, York, Epsom, Silverstone and Bath. All the routes visited motor sport and motor industry venues and other sites of historic interest on their way to the finish at Silverstone after a mileage of about 160 to 180 miles.

The route and road book were well organised so very little bunching and convoying occurred, though at times we did travel with a Mustang and Jag 120 / 150. We will certainly enter again though perhaps from a different start point so that we see other venues.

Tony Jones

Llys y Fran News

There is a full championship list for Llys y Fran this year for May 11th with The Trident Engineering Welsh Sprint & Hillclimb Championship, joined by The MGCC Luffield Cars Speed Championship, The Hamilton Classic ACSMC Speed Championship, The Bridge Tyres & Wheels ASWMC Hillclimb Championship. Coming back for a second year, and hoping for some warm and sunny weather (aren't we all?) is the Lotus 7 Speed Championship.

On 20th July we will have a second round of the Trident Engineering Welsh Sprint & Hillclimb Championship with The Toyo Tyres Westfield Sports Car Club Speed Series and The Sevenoaks Speed League. New for 2008 is The Austin Healey Club who are at Llandow on the Saturday and they have asked for an official invite for our event. It's hoped that we will get a good showing of Healeys and who knows maybe we can be a proper championship round in 2009.

For both events we will be using the clubs TAG Heuer timing gear which has been certified by the MSA tester Tim Saunders, who confirmed the equipment proved 'very satisfactory over the test range'.

Both Neil Samuel and I have got Trainee Timekeepers Licences and will be going through the 'modules' and Tony Parker from Oxford will be overseeing us through to qualification. We are continually testing and using the programme and should be able to produce a full set of results and analysis i.e. FTD - Class results - Top 10 etc within seconds of the last car crossing the finish line. We will also be doing the 64ft split again and should have the digital display working properly so spectators can see what's going on and the long suffering Tony Allen will have a better idea of what to commentate on. I should be doing the timekeeping with Tony Parker in May and Neil should be doing it in July. We would also like to hear from anyone else who would also like to follow us through the timekeeper training scheme and get qualified so we are spreading the knowledge base throughout the club.

regards

Robert

Robert gets the by-pass (or do things pass him by?)

As you should know by now I had some health problems in 2007 (thank you for all your cards and calls) which meant I wasn't as active as I would have like to have been, missing the July hillclimb after a mini heart attack. Starting in January 2007 I noticed I was getting short of breath. I knew it wasn't simply due to over indulgence during the festive period; so after visiting my GP several times I was eventually referred to the Cardiac Unit in Morrision Hospital. A treadmill test revealed all was not well with my heart and I was booked in for an angiogram (which consists of the doctors opening up an artery and inserting tiny fibre optic cables). During that they had found I had one blocked and 2 narrowed arteries, and I would need an operation to by-pass them. That was a shock I can tell you! After the doctors left, I said a silent prayer, and decided the best thing was to remain positive. Fortunately Morrision is one of the top hospitals for by pass operations in the whole country, and the survival rate is over 99%. Also since the news got out, people were so kind in re-counting tales of the success they or their relatives had with the operation. I saw a specialist, who agreed to book me in for the operation in August. In the meantime, I was to continue to live life as normal, which wasn't easy, even with the GTN spray you get given! August came and went, but eventually my works Bupa scheme finally got me a date of October 6th.

Going in and preparing was routine, but after waking up I knew I had been in an operation! To do the graft they had to take a vein out of my left leg, and that was the most painful area. I was warned about this and I felt happy to know at least I was through it, but there were several other moments of extreme pain, especially when they took the drains out, when I felt the need for a silent prayer. Still, no pain - no gain, as the saying goes. Most of the pain is in the past now and I can certainly feel the benefits.

Although the left leg has taken a long time to heal, I'm about 95% fully fit at the moment. So I'll probably have to go back to work sometime soon, as I don't think I can stretch it for 5 or 6 years!

Meanwhile I am just about to finish phase 3 of the Cardiac Rehabilitation course, which gives you lots of information as well as the exercise, and apparently there are many factors, like a poor diet, too much weight, smoking, drinking, family history and stress (age isn't particularly relevant as there are younger and older people on the course with me, both ladies and gents).

In my case, probably the biggest factor was not taking enough exercise. So its 30 minutes exercise (or 2 x 15 mins) per day for at least 5 days a week, either a power walk or other exercise, and plenty of fresh fruit and veg and plenty of oily fish (fresh is best) like tuna, salmon, herrings, mackerel & sardines for me, for the rest of my natural as well as taking more time to chill out properly. Apparently that's also good advice if you want to try to avoid the traumas I had, but please don't avoid the warning signs. Anytime you are breathless when you shouldn't be, or have indigestion that wont shift or that keeps coming back, or chest pain, even if it goes away after 10 minutes or so, (even if it's a dull ache rather than a sharp pain) don't ignore it, get it checked out. Go to A&E if the doctors are closed. Better to be safe than sorry. If anyone is interested I have been given proper exercise, diet and relaxation plans, and I can let you have a set if you want, but I looking forward to seeing you all at club nights and on the track real soon.

In the meantime I would like to thank all those who sent their wishes and cards, and thanks for Mike & Sally for visiting. For those who may be facing a similar situation and want to have a chat, you are welcome to ring me on Swansea 791686.

Robert Allender

Thanks for that Rob – some good advice for us all there. Also good to see you up and about at the recent club nights.

A Marshals View

Last year Terry Frayne from Amman and District MC came down to marshal on our May hillclimb and, like everyone else, got thoroughly soaked for his trouble. Of course there is always a payback so when he enquired whether I would be helping on the Red Kite Rally I couldn't really refuse. Which explains how I came to be standing up on Epynt last Sunday. Steve Lloyd picked me up at 7.00am, which was quite a civilised start time I suppose, and by 8.30 we were sited just after the finish of stage 3, Crychan, where we were to be a passage control. Shortly after, we were joined by Kenny Owen from Llandoverly, he of the Welsh Endurance Rally Association and organiser of the Lombard rally. Ken explained that the job was to collect times from the crews which he would then ring down to the results team at Rally HQ. The first problem was that the signal on the mobile phone was varying from about half strength to absolutely nothing so we decided to relocate to a better position. Of course this meant moving from a relatively sheltered position in a bit of a dip with some trees for cover to the most open area on as high a hillside as possible.

All went well for a while as we just sat in the car having a chat but then our reveries were ruined by the arrival of rally cars – jolly inconvenient. Of course this was the point at which the rain decided to start so it was on with the wet weather gear and get out there. First we had about five Historic Challenge cars, just doing the first loop of stages, then maybe 15 Historics doing all the stages, and finally some 50 Moderns. Apparently that first run through Crychan had accounted for 12 cars. Meanwhile the wind had become distinctly brisk and the cloud had come down to reduce visibility to about 150 yards.

Happily we had a break of an hour or so before the second run through so there was time for a cup of tea and a sandwich. By the time they got to us for the second time the field had been whittled down to only about 50 cars so the elements had to be endured for a shorter spell this time. It seemed that many of the crews were happy that the end of the event was in sight as there was only one stage more to go and we shared a bit of banter with them. Comments like 'Wow, you chose the plum spot didn't you' and 'Did you bring the Factor 30?' were mixed with copious thanks for doing the job.

Which makes it all worthwhile really.

Neil Samuel

SWANSEA MOTOR CLUB vs SHVR.

The second round of the SMC/SHVR quiz took place at Murton Rovers on Monday the 21st of January. It was our turn to attend their club night for the final round.

We had a very well supported turn out by our members and almost matched SHVR numbers, one for one. The questions were as usual, set by Mike Evans, with a good mix of categories giving everyone a chance for one or two right answers.

Having won the first round in November, we had a bigger lead this time around after the final scores were marked and added up. It was nice to hear that Swansea Motor Club had won for the second year in a row. Well done to all who entered and thanks for the support. The new competition starts in September this year and involves an additional club. The West Wales region of the Jaguar Enthusiasts Club have asked to join in, so we will be visiting their meeting for the first round. Somewhere different for us to try and new people to meet.

JAGUAR MUSEUM & FACTORY TOUR

We have been invited to join in a planned tour of the Jaguar Heritage museum at the old works, then on to the current production facility for a tour of the factory. The trip is by coach, which will call at Swansea to pick up from this area, and will be a good day out.

The date is Thursday the 13th March, and although it will have to be an early start, it will be a chance to see things not normally available to the general public. The factory tours are very limited and would not normally be available to non-Jaguar associated groups. If you are interested and would like to join in, please ring Keith Turner at 01792 363830 to book your place on the coach. Numbers are limited so don't leave it too long.

Diary Dates

2008

February 19th - Darts

March 20th - AGM and Quiz

April 16th - Tabletop Rally

May 21st - Navigational Scatter

June 18th - Pub Run

July 16th - Barbecue

Odds and

Despite our reigning Welsh Sprint and Hillclimb Champion, Neil Watkins, saying that he won't defend his title this year, he will be out on several local events and even a few of the slightly more far flung ones across the border.

Andrew Meek will also be out on Welsh and Midland Championship events with his Subaru and Anthony Bailey is still trying to sell his Renault Clio to fund the rumoured purchase of a Lotus Elise.

Leighton Hughes had his first year in sprints and hillclimbs in 2007 and has now joined SMC for the 2008 season, still using the Vectra V6. (How about an article Leighton – is it as bad as Clarkson claimed?).

Andy Dunbar will have his Westfield out on Welsh and Midland events, the car having undergone some significant changes over the winter. His daughter Debbie will be double driving on many events – we wish her good luck for her first season.

Nick James is having the Evo converted to forest spec and is contemplating the Welsh Gravel Championship – first round for him should be the Wydean in February.

Derek 'Prof' Davies will have another season of co-driving 'for anyone who will have him' and has already been seen out this year on the Red Kite with Wug Utting.

Swansea Historic Vehicle Register are holding their Auto Jumble at the old bus garage at Clarence Street, near Tesco, on February 17th. SMC will have a stall so if you want to sell some bits contact Huw Richards. If you just want to browse or buy it starts at 10.00am.

The club will also have a stand at the SHVR Singleton Show on May 5th so if anyone would like to display their competition car or generally help out please contact me.

Mandy and Ken Bowman rounded off 2007 with a good finish on Wales Rally GB in 78th place. The crew also had a runout on the Pembrey event after Christmas but 'broke it'. They will probably just do selected rallies in the coming year but Ken is threatening to do sprints and hillclimbs in a quicker diesel after getting the bug at Llys y Fran last year.

Breaking news – the Morgan Sports Car Club have just confirmed that the July Llys y Fran event will be a round of their Parc Ferme Speed Championship.

The committee are still hoping to hold a club dinner at a local pub, hotel or golf club on February 29th 2008. More news soon.

..... Ends