



WINDSCREEN

The Magazine of Swansea Motor Club



June 2011

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The New Chairmans Chat

Well, it's been a hectic time since the last newsletter. We had a good day at the Singleton Park car show with a great turn out of club members. A huge thanks to everyone who brought their cars along and to my other half, Kirstie, for the barbecue and all the food and drinks. We generated a good deal of interest in the club with Neil's hillclimb set up, something all the kids [of all ages] loved.

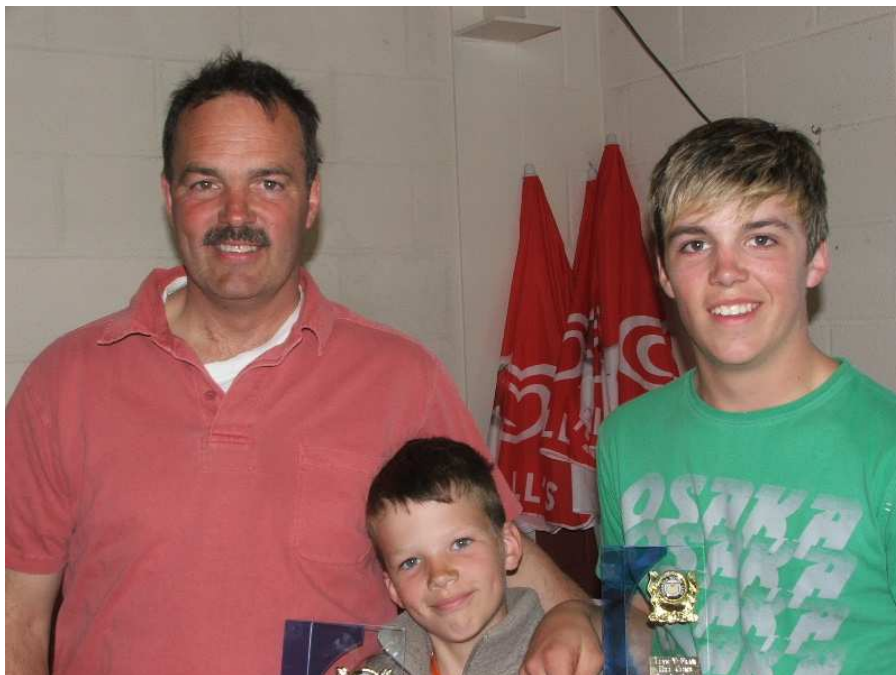
Talking of which, we have had the first of the years hillclimbs at Llys y Fran. With a cracking entry and plenty of marshals the day ran without a hitch, leaving plenty of time for a top ten run off. We even had a late entry from Welsh Rally legend David Llewelin and his son Ben who, having just turned 16, was contesting his first event.

We have had our evening car show at the rugby club which was a good night, though the slightly dull weather meant that some were put off bringing their cars out.

A few of us enjoyed a nice run down to the Cothi Bridge hotel on the first Saturday of the month, thanks to Mike Jones for arranging a route. It was a beautiful day and as a bonus we popped down to Carmarthen and joined in with a car show in the showground. Good company, cracking weather, lovely breakfast beside the river, you couldn't have asked for more. We will be going again on July 2nd and maybe we can get a better turn out.

The Wednesday after (6th July) we will have our annual barbecue and we have been invited to Ken and Mandy's which is very generous and I hope we can get a good turnout, see you all soon

Huw



Dai Llewelin with sons Ben and Tom

Loton Park Hillclimb – 25 April 2011

Andrew Meek and Leighton Hughes have been telling me for a number of years now how good a hillclimb venue Loton Park is, so this was the year I decided I had to find out for myself.

There were two events over the Bank Holiday weekend of 24/25 April; I entered for the Monday event. I decided to travel up the evening before, putting the car on the trailer and driving up through the picturesque Mid-Wales road to Shrewsbury, with my chief mechanic and tyre kicker extraordinaire along for the ride too, Tony Bailey. Andrew Meek had competed on the Sunday, so was installed in the B&B when we arrived, after having a good days competition. We retired to the local hostelry fairly swiftly for some tactical evaluation, planning and general talking rubbish. After a few pints of the landlady's finest, we retired at a sensible time to bed, as I had been told that this event was one to be done with a clear head!

After scrutineering the next day, I managed to incur the Clerk Of The Course's displeasure for not having been able to walk the 1475 yard course so far that morning. Sensibly, I acknowledged my faux-pas and along with a few other competitors who had not competed at Loton before, was whisked in one of the officials 4X4 up the hill, making mental notes as we went. Some interesting names to various parts of the course were described by the official along the way; the 'Cedar Straight' for example, which is anything but straight. Also 'Museum Corner', which is a very challenging part of the end of the course, where you approach a blind crest, which, when you reach it, has a 90 degree right hand turn just over the top; if you leave your braking until you can see what is next, you without doubt, would hit something very hard and bounce off it. Many, many people have done this very thing I was warned by the official, who gave me a knowing look (you know the look, Mk2 Escort, from Wales, first time at the event, bit unhinged, need I go on?)

The day went (reasonably) well, i.e. I didn't hit anything or go off, which is always a definite bonus. I didn't go as quick up the course as I would have liked, but I will put that down to it being my first time at Loton (which, excuses aside, is a pretty technical course) and early season cowardice (the main reason). Andrew did some good times, as did some other Swansea MC members including Andy and Debbie Dunbar in their very, very quick Westfield SEI. David Kirk, who was there for the first time along with myself, also acquitted himself well.

There were some seriously exotic and expensive cars in the paddock, driven by top competitors, such as Roger & Scott Moran from Ludlow, with their immensely quick Gould GR61X; not forgetting also our home grown talent in the shape of Eynon Price from Llandeilo, in his rapid Force PC. Taking into account that Scott Moran set FTD with a 45.43 with a 3.5 litre Gould, Eynon's best time of the day 46.96 was incredible considering his car is 1585cc! (outright record is Scott Moran 44.42 secs)

There were also some lovely Audi Quattros which caught my eye, a Lola T492, March 772P, Ralt F302, Brabham BT29X, assorted Lotus lovely's, oh.....and a 600BHP Ford Puma in Lime Green driven by Mike Manning from Carmarthen! The phrase squirming and struggling for grip summed up this car without doubt.

One single seater there, in works Renault colours, running this season with a DFV, was reportedly running Fernando Alonso's 'old' Renault F1 engine last year, until an air / hydraulic pump deep in the bowels of the car failed, which resulted in an unfortunate mix of pistons and valves being in the wrong place at the wrong time and quite a loud bang. An expensive episode one would imagine!

Good day was had by all, pleasant journey home and everyone in one piece.

Neil Watkins



Neil and huge-winged Audi Quattro take slightly different lines

Llys y Fran May Hillclimb

There was an excellent entry of 66 for the 1st event of the year at the scenic Llys y Fran track on May 8th, with the weather just holding out to give us a mainly dry day after some overnight and early morning rain with only a brief light shower in the afternoon on an otherwise dry day that was the end of the long hot April sunshine.

For Marion & I, the drive to Llys y Fran is full of joy with the roadside carpeted with bluebells & red campion. Last year the club won an award for Best Event & certainly the general feedback was that this event was to another high standard.

Louts 7s dominated the entry both in numbers and in speed with Simon Rogers winning FTD but Swansea member Kevin Cole ran him close with a scintillating 2nd run.

Simon also won the Top Ten run-off trophy, sponsored (i.e supplied) by Tony Allen, the commentator, although sadly Kevin could not complete his run.

However the big news was the appearance of local rally legend David Llewellyn who was double British Rally Champion in 1989 & 90, and his 16 year old son Ben who came along for the birthday treat of a life time.

With Ben being 16 it gave the Clerk of the Course Chris Jones something to do as his runs needed to be observed and after 2 cautious practice runs, Ben got into the swing of it and was only just over 3 seconds slower than his illustrious dad, who was only 3/10th away from the class record!

Speaking to his Dad later on, he confirmed that Ben had never competed before not even in Karts! "We've got an old jalopy on the farm and he's been driving that around. You learn a lot about car control on grass!" Being the way that Stirling Moss started out, that is, driving a jalopy on grass, looks like Ben could be someone to watch in the future.

Later Dai emailed to say how grateful he was for the assistance of Chris Gibbon and the office support team in sorting out the paperwork:

"Ben hasn't stopped smiling yet. Thanks to you and the club for making it possible to enter & apply for a license and compete all in the same day! We both really enjoyed the day. Thanks again. Dai"

Whilst everyone who helped on the hill needs our thanks, huge thanks are due to Steve Lloyd & Neil Samuel for their work in setting out the basic hill the weekend before the event and to Neil & Nick James and Nicks mate Tim for finishing off the hill on Saturday, leaving only the minor points for Sunday morning. Without Steve & Neil's tireless efforts the hill could not function. Thanks are also due to Nigel from the local farm who again supplied the hay bales that make up the Great Wall

that now stands guard over the tree that seems to have a magnetic pull on cars that get on the grass after the bridge. The last bales sadly did not last the winter, so Nigel went one step further and wrapped a new set for us in black bale wrap before delivering them. That he would do so is testament to the local support there is for our events in the Llys y Fran area. Nigels' family were very keen to know how the event was going.

There were several new class records set:

In the Lotus 7/Caterham classes L7-3 Jeff Smiths' time of 47.33 was a New Record and in L7-4 Chris Howard-Harris time of 47.22 was also a record.

The new 6(c) Classic GT class was a hit with 2 entries (3 if you count 6a-before May we usually had no entries in Class 6) and Eifion Jones time of 56.06 in his Lotus Excel established the class record. Meanwhile in 6a Roger Turner brought out his lovely special bodied Triumph TR3a. Roger has such a lovely collection of classic cars, he could start his own Classic Hire Business.

In 7A Lloyd Bettinson established the class record with 58.28 in his Peugeot 106 Rallye, whilst in 7B local driver Hefin George set a New Record in his Subaru Impreza with 53.88.

Swansea members doing well included Neil Watkins won Class 1B, but Nick James in Class 1SP (in Neil & Julie Samuel's Honda), Andrew Meek & Ken James were all second in their respective classes and Dave Thomas also narrowly lost out to Eurig Howells in Class 7c. Michael Williams has Graham Hollis for company - nuff said - but he still did his best to uphold Swansea Motor Club honours.

Thanks also needs to go out to all our marshals but particularly Ernie & Ben Preece who organised almost the whole of the Pembrey marshals team to assist us. The hill has never looked so orange.

Rob Allender



Simon Rogers receives the FTD Award from Club President Ken Davies

Wales Rally GB 11-14 November 2010 - Musings on the 65th running

The official start of the 13th and final round of the 2010 WRC was in the Cardiff Bay area, where works teams had been allocated a fenced off area for their transporters and awnings, however the current lack of manufacturer support made this area seem rather quiet and lacklustre in the blustery autumn conditions.

Paradoxically, whilst Seb, Petter, Jari-Matti and Mikko were hotly disputing the outcome of the main event, 64 clubmen were enjoying a rare opportunity to experience world class rally stages and compare their times with the world's best rally drivers when they contested the two-day national rally, following the same route for the final two days and starting on a sunny and warm Saturday morning in Builth Wells.

Service area for the national rally was perhaps the muddiest corner of the Royal Welsh Show ground, not that I heard any complaints from the hardy and enthusiastic clubmen but considering the size of this excellent complex, there must have been far better places to base the well-supported second division of the WRGB.

As it was the entry seemed to be mainly made up from MkII Escorts and Subaru's. However, there were two Mini Coopers and a Healey 3000 to help break the monotony – and very entertaining they were too!

Adding great dignity at the start of the national rally was the mayor of Builth Wells, resplendent in his ancient chain of office. His worship carefully flagged each car away after entertaining crew interviews carried out by Mike Broad on the way to the start line.

Demonstrably fastest driver competing in the national field was Andy Burton, driving his hybrid Peugeot Cosworth, posting one stage time that was good enough to bag him 7th in the pecking order of WRC cars! Unfortunately, Andy's rally was cut short by engine failure and IRDC member Nigel Griffiths took the national win in his well-driven Subaru.

Practising what he intends to preach as new recruit on the 2011 MSA Rallies Committee, IRDC chairman Shaun Martin, co driven by brother Steve brought his venerable Subaru Impreza safely home in a creditable 23rd position.

An enthusiastic spectator on Eppynt on Friday was Mikko Hirvonen's dad along with a party of his chums from Finland, adding much needed support for his son whose WRC performance seems to have declined inexplicably during 2010.

We know that the Irish are amongst the most fanatical of rally supporters and we met a group of six in the non-spectator Monument Hill stage on Saturday afternoon. Inevitably, our common interest of rallying brought us into conversation and when we asked what stages they were watching 'all of them' they replied!

It transpired that one of the Irish party sold helicopters and after the first 20 WRC cars had passed, our friends from Eire bade their farewells and walked off; ten minutes later two helicopters took off from a nearby clearing and disappeared towards the next stage – that's style!

Sadly, the 2010 WRGB was the end of an era for WRC cars at world championship level, with the new regulation 1.6 turbo cars coming in for 2011.

Ken Davies

Diary Dates 2011

Planned events for the rest of this year are:

July 2nd – Brunch Run
Jul 6th – BarBQ
Aug 3rd – Treasure Hunt
Sept 7th – Pub Run

Oct 5th – Wii night
Nov 2nd – Quiz
Dec 7th – Xmas party

Odds and

Our front cover photo this edition shows Steve Perez' previously immaculate Lancia Stratos after a suspected broken wheel pitched him into a ditch on the Ypres Historic.

Club members will again be heading for the Cothi Bridge Hotel for brunch on July 2nd. Mike Jones will provide a route from Pont Abraham services so meet there from 9.15 – 9.45am on Saturday. You don't have to have a classic car, just turn up in whatever you've got.

The July Social will be the barbecue at Ken and Mandy Bowman's place (Autumn Lodge Farm, Vennaway Lane, Pennard) on Wednesday July 6th. Start will be at 7.00pm to cater for those with young families. Please let Chris Gibbon know as soon as possible if you will be attending so that we can make arrangements. We have plans to get a bouncy castle if there are enough younger attendees to warrant it so it is particularly important that you let Chris know if you will be bringing children. Contact her on 01792 232644 or chrisgibbon@btinternet.com

If you want to drink bring your own booze. Also bring bats, balls, chairs and any other paraphernalia you may require.

WARNING: toilet facilities may be fairly rudimentary.

Cost is £5 per head but free for under 14's.

Our Car Show on 1st June attracted around a dozen cars despite slightly inclement weather. Modern(ish) sports cars were well represented by MG TF, Honda CRX, Mazda MX5 and TVR whilst slightly older sports cars included E type Jag and MGA. We also had Mini, Singer, Riley, Volvo and Saab plus Jag XK150 style Aristocat. Thanks to all who brought their vehicles along.



Very nice MGA and Riley (flanked by E type and MX5)

..... **Ends**