



# WINDSCREEN

The Magazine of Swansea Motor Club



May 2014

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## Editors Intro

Well, what a busy spell it has been since our last edition.

As you can see from our front cover we have held our evening with Barrie 'Whizzo' Williams, which turned out to be a great success. Many luminaries from Welsh Motor Sport attended and a fine time was had by all.

We continued our social programme with the pool tournament, where club Chairman Huw Richards triumphed, and our AGM. Club members have also attended two rounds of the Inter Club Quiz competition, settling for 5<sup>th</sup> place at the March event but missing out on the win by just half a point at the latest round.

At the end of March we had a special social when we were offered the opportunity of a talk on tether car racing by David Gyles, an interesting insight into the engineering of these 200mph models.

The car show at Singleton Park on May Day saw vehicles from almost every decade of SMC's existence on display (sadly we couldn't find a 40's car to complete the line-up).

Our first hillclimb of the year has taken place at Llys Y Fran. Despite a low entry, mainly due to the Caterhams having moved to the July event, we were able to put on a great days entertainment, with plenty of enthusiastic driving from the likes of Dai Llewellyn and Graham Hollis. To cap it all we had a home win, with SMC member Jeremy Davies taking the spoils in both the main event and the Top 10 runoff.

As ever I remind you that this is your Magazine so let me have any articles or at least a brief outline of what you have been doing so I can concoct a story round it.

Neil

## Swansea Motor Club salutes Barrie 'Whizzo' Williams

Swansea Motor Club started celebrating its 90th anniversary year in style with a well-supported 'Evening with Barrie 'Whizzo' Williams', held in conjunction with Trainer MINI of Swansea at the Village Hotel in Swansea's maritime quarter on Wednesday 9th April.

Along with SMC members, the audience was made up from many personalities from the Principality's vibrant motor-sporting community past and present with several successful racing or rally drivers attending including Welsh rallying legends Jeff Churchill and former Toyota, Audi and factory RoverSport Metro 6R4 driver Dai Llewelin, winner of the Welsh Rally in 1989/90. International co-drivers were represented by Lyn Jenkins and Derek Tucker, together with Clerk of the Course on that murky 1964 Welsh Rally the redoubtable Denis Cardell, himself co-driver in Norman Harvey's Cooper S two weeks later on the Monte Carlo Rally, which also saw a prestigious win for BMC's Cooper S.

Flying the flag for the racing community was former British GT race winner, FIA sports car driver, Top-Gear & James Bond stunt driver and latterly Historic racer, Neil Cunningham; a Jack Brabham Australian scholarship recipient who made his home in Swansea 15 years ago.

After well over half-a-century as a successful rally and racing driver, Barrie Williams must now be considered as a national motorsport treasure but although he's firmly gripped the helm of international success, Barrie remains well-grounded and essentially a clubman at heart. He first reached prominence on 9<sup>th</sup> January 1964 by scoring an epic victory on the International Welsh rally, a punishing 2-day weekender in Wales characterised by only one hours break and spells of impenetrable fog and lethal black-ice, sometimes both at the same time!

Make no mistake, his Welsh victory in his new red and black 1071cc Mini Cooper S was no fluke and the relatively inexperienced Williams, co-driven on his first international rally by his good friend from Hereford Motor Club John Griffiths, truly earned his spurs by beating a quality field containing such esteemed names as Roy Fidler, Phil Simister, Reg McBride, Eric Jackson and John la Trobe, in fact the results read like a who's who of the front-running rally crews of the era.

To celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of Barrie's success; the first international rally win for BMC's giant-killing Mini Cooper S and the 50<sup>th</sup> birthday of the Welsh Rally first running as an international, the audience of almost 200 motor sport enthusiasts were held enthralled for 3 hours while Barrie nostalgically recalled some of his experiences on race circuits and forest tracks of the world during an entertaining and sometime hilarious account of his distinguished career in international motor sport.

During his talk to the hushed gathering Barrie graphically recalled his epic Welsh victory and remarkably, Barrie has restored his winning car bearing the distinctive Herefordshire registration number 120 MNP and brought it along to park in the sumptuously carpeted reception area of the Village Hotel, thus adding a nice touch of atmosphere the rally themed evening!

In a career that started in 1957, Barrie has competed in over 1500 races and rallies and driven almost every type of car, from thoroughbred sports prototype to humble production saloons. Barry told his audience, "I don't know any other way of life and wouldn't know what to do without racing. I'll race anything on four wheels and although I race to win, it's not the end of the world if I don't. With a bit of luck there's always another race to drive."

Although now a septuagenarian, Barrie's pace of life shows no sign of slowing down and in addition to a packed diary of racing and driving instruction engagements, he's also proud and active president of the British Motor Sport Marshal's Club, life member and past board director of the British Racing Drivers Club, vice president of Hereford Motor Club, Patron of the Historic Karting Club and honorary member of the International Rally Drivers Club.

After 57 years of continuous competitive driving Barrie must now hold the mantle of the World's Most Experienced Competition Driver as well as that of The Ultimate Clubman?

Due to the generosity of those attending, the evening also raised much needed funds for Racing4MND, a charity set up by Neil Cunningham to support much-needed research into Motor Neurone Disease. [www.Racing4MND.org](http://www.Racing4MND.org)

*Ken Davies*



Whizzo reunited with 1964 International Welsh Rally Clerk of Course Denis Cardell



Club President Ken Davies comperes as Whizzo regales us with tales of his life in motorsport

### **Colin Priddey**

Colin Priddey, who died in October 2013, had a long association with motorsport and Swansea Motor Club that dated back to the early fifties. A prominent businessman and entrepreneur, Priddey opened Wales's first self-service filling station in Neath Road Landore and revolutionised motoring in Swansea by later adding the town's first automatic car-wash which proved so popular that it caused long traffic queues. When Colin sold the Landore site in 1972 it was selling over one million gallons of petrol a year.

His passion for motor racing was ignited by a visit to Silverstone in 1952 where he heard there was to be a motor racing meeting organised by the Welsh Motor Racing Club at Fairwood so he built himself a car based on a lowered and shortened WW11 American Army Ambulance chassis powered by a V8 truck engine salvaged from a scrap yard.

Colin then distinguished himself in front 16,000 spectators at Fairwood by leading the sports car race which was quite an achievement, as he'd only tested the car on the main Clydach road on a Sunday morning – "the roads were a lot quieter then", before practicing it at the airport circuit just before the race.

The race entry also included other drivers from SMC including Noel Husbands, car dealer Alf Wilks and Dick Williams, landlord of the Mermaid Hotel in Mumbles. The local drivers were up against strong opposition which included the works Aston Martin team just back from Le Mans.

Unfortunately Colin's glory lasted only two laps before he lost second gear and the unwieldy machine finally slid sideways into some straw bales and retired with a ruptured fuel tank. He never raced the car again!

In 1953 Colin did well with another SMC member Griff Fender, co-driving his 2.5 litre Riley on the gruelling Monte Carlo Rally. In 1954, Colin discovered the ex-Cyril Kieft Marwyn 500cc F3 car, built on an Austin 7 chassis, languishing in Barny Easton's famous scrap yard on Swansea Strand. He restored the Marwyn and raced it at Fairwood against the hotshots' of the era, including Stirling Moss, Les Leston and Ken Tyrell.

Colin then obtained the ex-Jack Neil, Stirling Moss, Ken Gregory 500cc Kieft; the Monthery record attempt car, which he raced, hill climbed and sprinted. This was followed by a Mk V1 500cc Cooper but in the early sixties, Colin's business partner Ricky Fuchs was tragically killed whilst competing at SMC's Castle Farm Hill climb at Maesteg, when the 500cc racing car mounted the bank and overturned.

The Cooper was replaced by a Lotus 18 which was then traded to a youthful Frank Williams and a later Lotus 35 F3 car acquired. By this time Colin was a regular competitor on the national Formula Libre racing scene at most UK circuits including newly opened Llandow, where he was a local crowd-pleaser.

Around 1966 Colin sold the Lotus 35 to the makers of the iconic movie Grand Prix, directed by John Frankenheimer and starring James Garner, Eva Marie Saint & Yves Montand. The picture contains some unique racing cinematography including real-life racing footage. Sacrilegiously, along with some other F3 cars of the era that Frankenheimer had bought, Colin's Lotus 35 was hacked about and turned into a Ferrari F1 lookalike; but the movie mogul paid well!

In 1972 Colin sold the garage business and site and later moved to the Channel Isles in semi-retirement, later returning to live at his former home in the Mayals. As well as motoring, Colin was a keen pilot and member of Swansea Flying Club. Colin's wife Bobby had predeceased him but Swansea Motor Club extends its sympathy to Colin's children Zoe & Paul and the rest of his family and friends.

*Ken Davies – with thanks to Brian Jenkins for the information he provided*

### **Manx Motor Racing Club Classic Sprint & Hillclimbs 2014**

If you have a list of things you would like to do rather than a list of things someone else wants you to do, you should consider adding this event to the former. On numerous occasions I have competed against Nick Bayldon from Totnes in class A4, with his supercharged Porsche 911. On the 911 he has a Manx Motor Club sticker and this is what initially drew me to enquire about the event. Nick has competed there numerous times and his recollections and enthusiasm for the event are extremely infectious. So, when last year at Curborough, flyers for the 2014 event were handed out to competitors, I remember lightly thinking about it. It was only when I consulted the holiday calendar that I realised that 2014 was a possibility, as on previous occasions it fell during school term time. This was my now or never moment so further research was needed.

Everyone knows about the Isle of Man's derestricted roads and it was on these that the sprint and hillclimbs are contested. In fact, the events are on the TT Course, so an opportunity to experience the thrill of unrestricted roads is worthy of serious consideration. It is mainly a Classic Car event but in recent years they have added additional classes, although these don't match the usual ones we all come across. The Subaru fits into the Post-1981 4WD and Turbo cars, there is a post-2001 class as

well. So, before you decide to go, have a close look at which class you fit into, bearing in mind there is no class for single seaters. The event is usually the last week of April, so weather can be changeable. When I filled in the forms, it crossed my mind to offer the experience to my son Geraint as he is at Liverpool Uni. and could be dropped off on the way back. "Count me in," was the answer. Should you be interested, you need to consider some logistical and financial points. Each event is £150 and you can opt to do all 3. These are a Thursday morning practice at the TT Grandstand before timed runs start early evening, Creg Willey's at Glen Helen on Friday and Lhergy Frissell in Ramsey on Saturday. If you have a trailer you need to travel from Haysham about £250 (or Liverpool - car only) and arrange B&B on the Island. This is an expensive trip but well worth saving up or selling the wife for.



Approaching Douglas Harbour.

We caught the Tuesday 14.15 ferry from Haysham and arrived in light drizzle about 17.45. I confess to thinking maybe this wasn't such a good idea especially with a 19-year-old eagerly waiting to take charge of the Impreza. There is a familiarity about the island yet it is also very different. For example at the hotel I asked "Is there somewhere safe I can leave the car and trailer?", the receptionist looked confused and replied, "Anywhere you want, you aren't on the mainland; we have zero tolerance and it means zero tolerance."

Wednesday found us driving the TT Course. The round circle with a black diagonal means whatever speed you want; if you are stupid and don't adhere to the 30,40 and 50, you are in big trouble. Using a phone carries a fine of £1000 and no argument. The bends on the TT course are lined with black and white painted kerbs and the surface is pot-hole free and fully maintained, no bumps or scrapes to be seen anywhere. Everyone drives sensibly and there is no sense of urgency.

Wednesday evening was scrutineering and a feast of cars worth ££££'s began to appear: Bugatti T13 & T35B, 11 various Fraser Nashs, Ford Mustang, TR4, TVR, Wolseley Hornet Special, MG, Jaguar - basically, if it is considered a classic, it was there. When you stand in the pits and look at the famous Black TT Leader Board, it really is a moment to savour. This area is a normal everyday road and everything was accessible and nowhere was graffiti to be seen, really fantastic.



Bugatti Type 13.



Waiting to go Thursday evening.

Governor's Sprint of 1144 Metres is the Thursday event; we were blessed with a fantastic sunny day and evening. Cars are organised in 2 batches, so plenty of time to take it all in, especially the sound of a 1965 6.0Ltr V8 Mustang with straight through side pipes. I had asked earlier "Where is the sound check?" the scrutineer smiled and said, "Make as much sound as you can, it lets the public know someone is coming." Common sense prevails. Practice is between 14.00 and 16.00, timed runs start at 18.00 with the road opening again at 21.00 for general use. Basically, is a blast past the Grandstand, hairpin right, then a flat out blast up the main road, a chicane slows you down before you zig-zag part of the TT Course to the finish. It took me 53 seconds and Geraint slightly less. Creg Willey's of 2334 Metres, was day 2. Once the road was closed, everyone parked up and waited patiently. The course is very fast, consisting of a series of flowing corners where keeping to the apex is the secret to a good time. It climbs slowly around Glen Helen where speed can be easily carried, then a flat out 5<sup>th</sup> gear "keep your foot in" to the finish. The Chevrolet Camaro managed 137mph over the finish. The Impreza was a second behind with the earlier flowing roads favouring the Subaru but a commendable 120mph over the line with Geraint in control.



Waiting patiently to go.



Wolseley Hornet Special 1.5 Supercharged

Saturday was Lhergy Frissell, 2374 Metres including the famous Ramsey Hairpin, and Waterworks. Once the road was closed, we were allotted places outside residential houses and everyone popped out to take a look. The hairpin is quite a challenge and very steep, and is reverse of what the bikes do. Again it is a mix of fast and flowing corners then you slow down approaching Waterworks before racing onwards and upwards to the finish. Cars are parked Le Mans style at the top and the view over Ramsey is quite breathtaking. Geraint by now was getting into the groove and the gap between up was getting wider at 4 secs, the hill taking him 80.49.



View over Ramsey waiting to return.

On reflection, I found it massively exciting but quite challenging, in that the corners were difficult to remember in such a short time. Don't say it is an age thing! There are quite a lot of locals participating and it is possible to drive the roads at normal speed up until they are closed for the event. We suffered no damage and the Subaru ran faultlessly though there were incidents which slowed things down. An aluminium-bodied TR4 went on fire at the start line on day 2 though no one was injured and was quickly sorted.



Dad, Mark and Geraint at presentation.

It is very well organised and well worth the effort and expense to get there, Mark Higgins was in attendance every day on final car-through duties. He is a brilliant ambassador for the Island as well as Subaru and spurred Geraint on at every event. The dates are out for 2015 so have a look at [www.manxmotorracing.com](http://www.manxmotorracing.com) for further information. See you there.

Andrew Meek.

## **G.G.L (Gerry) Thomas**

Gerry Thomas's passing in March 2012 appears to have slipped past us unnoticed but hopefully, the following appreciation will not only record a brief summary of his life but also help recall an era when Swansea Motor Club was at its peak.

He was a prominent senior member of SMC when I joined as a young impecunious enthusiast in the sixties and he always seemed to own a state-of-the-art competition car that was worthy of drooling over when parked outside the Flying Club during the weekly Wednesday SMC club night!

Gerry joined the club around 1954 and quickly became a keen competitor in rallies, Hill climbs, sprints and races. He was one of a small group of members seeking to broaden the appeal of SMC which, from post WW11, had mainly been an ACU affiliated motor cycle club.

Other members of this group included Arthur Dryden, Austen Clode, Bill Cload, Frank Joint and Ron Rumble Senior; some of whom were also members of the Welsh Motor Racing Club, later to be incorporated into SMC around 1956 when the club adopted the status of Limited Company and affiliated to the RAC.

In September 1954, this group of enthusiasts' organised a trial, run under ACU rules for motor cycles and cars – a navigational rally in all but name! Gerry's cousin, Duncan Atkinson suggested that he enter this event, joining Duncan and Brian Jenkins' who were entered in Brian's A40 Sports. Gerry persuaded a friend of his from Craig-y-Nos prep school to navigate for him. Brian Jenkins is generous to credit Gerry with helping encourage the start of his own competition career around this time.

In 1955 Swansea Motor Club achieved affiliation to the RAC Motor Sport division which led to a full range of competitive events being undertaken by the club; autotests, sprints, rallies, trials and hill climbs.

Around this time Gerry started competing in a variety of different cars including a Fiat Ballila sports car, A35, Riley 1.5 saloon in which he rallied with his first wife June. His most successful car was a highly tuned Downton Engineering Austin Healey 'frogeye' Sprite – registration CY 37, in which he competed in many events including a race at Aintree. Possibly the only SMC member to race at this circuit. He later raced a Downton Mini Cooper and a Triumph TR4 at Llandow.

Gerry was a chartered accountant by profession and a partner in the family firm of Gordon Thomas & Pickard with offices in Oxford Street Swansea. This was also the registered office of SMC when it was a limited company. He was an active committee member and even club treasurer for a while.

His many and varied competition cars were distinctly registered CY 37 and his road cars RCY 1. Gerry was always seen as an amiable and quietly spoken professional gentleman of the old school, with meticulous attention to detail and the standard of preparation of his competition cars. Gerry's wife June predeceased him and Swansea Motor Club extends its sympathy to the remaining members of Gerry's family.

*Ken Davies – with acknowledgment to Brian Jenkins for his recollections*

## **Odds and .....**

Our front cover shows Barrie 'Whizzo' Williams and our Club President Ken Davies posing with the 1964 International Welsh Rally winning 1071cc Cooper 'S' inside the Village Hotel.

Photos from the May Llys y Fran hillclimb can be found at these sites:

<http://www.drewbuckleyphotography.com/photography/hillclimb2014/index.html>

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/98095218@N03/sets/72157644312063037/>

and results are on our website at swanmoco.co.uk

**..... Ends**