



Woolbridge Motor Club



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March 2021



WOOLBRIDGE MOTOR CLUB MAGAZINE – March 2021

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(Please, no phone calls after 9:00pm)

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Editorial

Welcome to the March issue. Unfortunately, as I write this, we still have no indication as to when we can resume motorsport events and so we have to remain patient and reminisce instead. This month we have some excellent articles from: John Bunting recounting his vehicular owning history; Merv recounting his life in motorsport in the latest "Meet the Committee"; and finally, Colin Rolls details the history of the club's much missed hillclimb at Longleat.

I only competed at Longleat twice. The first time was in my Suzuki Swift GTi and I had the time of my life. The second and final event was in my 106 XSi which had engine problems in practice which forced me to retire before lunch. Shortly after this I sold the car in order to fund my radiography degree course. I haven't competed since, but fingers crossed I can put that right this year.

I am still hopeful that the Hillclimb Masters can still go ahead in Portugal in October. My hotel is booked ready. I'm planning to drive to the event and then drive to Salou in Spain for the WRC Rally Spain the following weekend. You may have heard that Rally Spain is now going to be 100% tarmac rather than one day of gravel followed by 2 days of tarmac. It should be a spectacular event. Sadly, Rally Germany isn't part of the WRC this year but Ypres will be and I would love to visit this event if at all possible, in August. Anyway, it all depends on the pandemic and/or Brexit, so fingers crossed...

Well that's it for this month. If anyone else would like to reminisce about their past motorsport exploits, or anything remotely related to cars, then it will be well received.

This month's cover star is Richard Thorne competing on his first ever trial.

Steve Chaloner

Woolbridge Calendar of Events

For full and up to date details please check the Woolbridge website

**DUE TO THE EVOLVING SITUATION
WITH COVID-19, PLEASE CHECK ON
THE CLUB WEB SITE FOR EVENT
UPDATES**

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT – MARCH 2021

I hope you are all still keeping safe and well. You must all be finding plenty to do during lockdown as we didn't have any club members join us for our Zoom AGM at the end of last month, other than the Committee Members! You should find the Minutes of the AGM and the February Committee Meeting elsewhere in the magazine.

There are a few changes to update you on following the AGM. John Kirby notified us a couple of months ago that he wouldn't seek re-election to Committee and so Gary Morris is now representing the 4X4 discipline on the Committee. Our thanks go to John for his many years of service on Committee and you will be pleased to hear that he will still be involved with the running of the events. Simon Crook is now dealing with entries for these events for which we also thank him. The email address 4x4@woolbridge.co.uk will now reach Gary.

Rory Weaver has also stepped down as the Club's Safeguarding Officer and Vic Fancy will now take on this role. Thanks to Rory for carrying out this role for the last few years. You will find an updated list of Club Officials with their relevant contact details inside the front cover of this magazine.

Last Saturday I joined another Zoom call, this time the annual meeting of the various clubs that promote events at Wiscombe. Wiscombe Ltd have secured a sponsorship deal with REIS Insurance for 2021 offering discounted rates to competitors. There are also plans to Live Stream the action from Wiscombe during most of the weekends on the Wiscombe Facebook page, so even if spectators aren't allowed at our April weekend, then you will be able to keep up with all of the action as it happens. Regs for our April event will be published if and when we are able to obtain a permit from MSUK.

I am writing this in the week preceding the announcement of Boris's Roadmap, so things are still uncertain for the weeks ahead, but in breaking news, we have just been able to obtain some permits for March, so do please keep an eye on our website for up-to-date news on which events we might be able to run.

Sarah Forsyth

Chairman

chairman@woolbridge.co.uk

President's Ponderings

It's hard to know where to start or, indeed, what to say in the middle of a pandemic and consequential endless prohibition in lockdown.

In her 'Chairman's Chatter' Sarah has dealt with the topics of the day and she has been instrumental in setting up and then minuting an excellent couple of Zoom meetings concerning Wiscombe Park.

First, a meeting of the Directors and then another Zoom meeting with the organising clubs where I had 26 little faces on my Chairman's screen! All went extremely well, and my thanks go particularly to our club representatives who are much involved with the running of events at Wiscombe.

These days we are so involved in just trying to lead an acceptable lifestyle, so I must say a big thank-you to all our committee members here at Woolbridge and our very close friends at Wiscombe Ltd. for striving so hard to make things work and be ready for the new "normal" when our sport returns.

So, how have you been occupying your time? If you have any novel revelations, I am sure editor Steve would love to hear from you. As you know I have been finding many interesting things hidden away in my workshop / barn and, gradually, some of them are being turned into useful currency.

Otherwise, it is into the store area behind my study and bringing out files, loads of photographs, programmes, results, and other paraphernalia gathered over more than 50 years of involvement in motorsport and just stacked away on the shelves. Little wonder it takes so long to look through each pile brought out onto my desk as I get distracted very easily by items that come to light.

"My goodness, did I look that young in the days of our Huntsman Autocrosses?"
"Is that a picture of St Audrey's Bay Hillclimb?" - Oh well ...

Have you discovered "Southwest Hillclimbs and Sprints" group on facebook – so many memories, pictures, and names from the past – where are they now?

Don't forget, follow the rules, and stay safe until we can meet again.

Colin Pook



9Geria News

I will share with you, but really, it's all Yoland's fault for suggesting I write for another club magazine about cars I have owned. Now I'm not going back to year dot, that's for another edition, but here in Nigeria where I 1st arrived in 1978, company cars mostly unmemorable and lacking character have ranged from what used to be the standard car for Africa, the Peugeot 504, to Merc 190 and 230 (which I did not like), an Audi 80 or 100 (I can't remember which), Volvo (unmemorable), Fiat 125 (which was fun), Peugeot 505 (which I liked), Toyota 4Runner (not the best 4x4), Skoda Octavia, Toyota Hilux, my current company car is a double cab L200 Mitsubishi pickup, which does most things quite well, is a bit higher off the ground than a car, not FWD and quick enough.

In late 1984 I moved from the south of Nigeria to up north in Kano, almost on the fringe of the Sahara Desert and very dry apart from our short rain season. I very soon learnt there was a Kano Motor Club and one of the requirements to join was being active in supporting the KMC motorsport, either organizing, marshalling or driving. I had already been doing speed events in the UK so thought this is just the weekend activity for me.

Having had several Minis in the UK and still had a load of bits back there, I thought 1st to find myself one. A humble 998 single carb job was soon to be

modified, not the ideal soft sand bush race car, but with the right adaptations it could work. Bits were brought back, the head was fitted bigger 1.3 Marina valves, raised compression, Kent cam, LCB exhaust and a 40DCOE Webber carb fitted along with 5.5x10 ally wheels with Goodyear knobblies. This appeared in anger almost exactly 1 year after my arrival in Kano in January 1986, I even had a picture of its 1st event with the 998 engine with mods and a Webber carb. All the time I was on the lookout for a 1275 block to make a big bore engine and a lot more power. While looking for the 1275 I saw a compound with abandoned cars and trucks and got excited when I saw a Morris1100/1300 hoping that it would be 1300, but no such luck. Next to it was another oddity which I had never seen in the flesh before (but quite a lot of the flesh was no longer there) but being curious contacted the Panhard owners club in the UK to ask about 24CT telling them I had seen this one in a scrap place and was thinking of a challenge to rebuild. Little did I know how much of a challenge, but it was cheap to buy at about £5 back then. To move it I cut down a tree that was growing where the engine should have been. When I opened a door, I was almost knocked back by the strong ammonia smell. Bugs had eaten the carpets, lizards came in and ate the bugs, leaving a deposit for the bugs to eat some more, a whole living ecology inside a Panhard. The engine was missing and I found a replacement in a Paris spares dealer. The bonnet was missing, so set to and made one over a wooden former after taking pictures of bonnets to see how it was constructed and attached. 1 headlight and rear light were missing so had to be found. This took all of my spare time for the next 2 years. During this time I did find a 1275 Mini engine, which was fully lightened, bored to 1399, fitted Omega pistons, Kent 286 cam, 1.5 offset rockers, big "Rimflow" valves, central oil pick in the gearbox, LSD diff and light flywheel and comp clutch. This was a little rocket on a 45DCOE Webber. When the Mini and Panhard were almost finished a Polish/Brit who had found a Fiat 124 Abarth who I had helped to get it up and running, decided to leave Nigeria and asked would I want the Abarth having done so much work for him. By early 1990 I was using the Panhard and the Abarth alternatively as my daily drive cars, as my then company VW Passat was a dog.

Then in 1991 I changed companies and found I was not driving the Panhard or Abarth like before, so sold the Abarth on to a chap who as far I can tell never used it from the time I drove it to his house.

The Abarth was a bit special, imported to Nigeria for the Ungogo International Rally (the only one) along with a few other ex-works rally cars, it was believed to be an ex Olivo Fiat junior team car, had full adjustable suspension, spherical jointed on the back, 7x13 Cromadora mag wheels still fitted with very old (unusable) race wet Pirelli tyres, a shallow but very wide baffled sump,

protected by a Dural sump guard, Columbo cams, the gear case was Fiat but inside it was a straight cut dog box made by Collotti. If you had the individual ratios they would have all been changeable to suit every different condition. GRP bonnet, hard top and boot, aluminium doors and door sills completed what was a desirable and rare car.

Another Brit in Kano MC asked would I help him if he bought a 1330 Mini that needed a rebuild from a man in Kaduna motor club who was leaving. I agreed as long as he did the work as instructed. I had my doubts if he would keep the promise as he spent most nights and weekends drinking. His 1330 needed a complete engine build as it was very tired and burning oil. I had suggested to him why not go out to 1380 and the bits were bought in, but his drinking became so bad his company said enough, as he was not in a fit state the following day to go to work so he went back to the UK and I became the owner of #2 Mini which I did not really want. I still had the original engine out of my 998 car and a 1275 crank that had run its bearings after another KMC club member drove my 1400 engine car and came back after his run with the rev counter tell-tale showing just over 10000 rpm... I had this damaged crank re-machined to accept small block bearings to fit into the 998 along with +60 pistons producing a semi short stroke 1100 which went into the Kaduna Mini and was sold on to a Brit who visited Kano, saw it, and took it back to Lagos where he worked.

Since 1980 when I was working in Nigeria I decided hiring a car on leave in the UK did not make sense and had always wanted a Cox GTM. I still have my 1967 copy of CCC magazine with the original road test. The GTM was my holiday road car and weekend speed event car until sadly it was destroyed in a garage fire in 1989, or I think I would still have it. After the fire I salvaged S brakes and GTM rear suspension and exhaust system that were brought back to Nigeria. The engine gearbox unit was sold on to a chap in Wellingborough who wanted to fit it in a Riley Elf!

So, to the conception of the Twinni Mini: I had 2 big Mini engines, a body shell, and rear suspension and a few other bits off my burnt GTM, 4WD x 2.8Lt, the more developed engine in the rear to promote oversteer along with an LSD in the rear gearbox, 4 wheel disc brakes with dual circuit bias bar adjustment (ex 1.6 Toyota Corolla FWD) adapted to fit Mini hubs, 13" wheels, full cage with the rear part being structural to hold the engine and subframe into position.

The 1st problem would be the gear linkage: no way could it go under the gearbox GTM style in a bush race car, it would be ripped off.

The ex-Kaduna Mini gearbox was separated from the engine to study if it was possible to pass the rod change gear linkage through the front of the casing with a new long selector shaft. It looked possible, so the next problem was how to machine the hole accurately through the casing. As I did not have access to a milling machine big enough, this was solved by making a long drill bush fitting into the selector shaft hole in the back of the casing extending inside almost to the front. The casing was then bolted to a big radial drill after lots of checking of alignment (no replacement or spare cases if I messed up). I drilled through the front, turned the casing around, lined everything up again and machined a spot face on the outside of the casing, made new longer selector shaft and support bush seal housing to fit into the front of the casing cut and shut the 1st/reverse gear selector to pass under the selector shaft. This was then assembled and run in the front of my 1400 bush race Mini to prove everything worked while I was building the number 2 engine to 1380 and a slightly lower spec that would replace the 1400 in the front of the Mini.

As the rear seat and boot floor would be cut away for the rear engine and subframe I made a complete roll cage to replace stiffness in the rear. As the subframe attachments were on the roll cage it became the chassis in the back. Sadly as the Twinni was coming together KMC was unravelling, the last event they did was in 2000 after the Twinni had been out 2 times, so never really had a chance to be developed.

KMC still exists but is no longer a motor club, more like an English pub with club members having little or no interest in motorsport.

The Twinni was covered with a tarpaulin and neglected and my weekend toys became bikes, the 1st being a tatty Yamaha XT 600 ridden overland by a nutty Brit who decided he had gone far enough and sold the bike for the price of a return ticket to the UK. This was later joined by another bike, a KLX 650 Kawasaki big trail bike and I was looking to sell the Yam on.

In 2003 I was offered a job with a lot more money and leave with an oil services company in the south of Nigeria (wild west country). They rented out tug boats, barges, cranes, bulldozers etc. to the oil majors so they could move equipment in the swampy creeks in the oil producing areas. When I moved house I took the Twinni and Kawasaki with me. The Twinni went into a company warehouse and was stored, the bike came to my new home and was used.

As I could not take it with me, I gave the Panhard to a mechanic working for the company who liked it and I thought/hoped he would be able to take care of it.

I had kept in touch with Gongoni, my former company, while I was in the “wild west” south of Nigeria, mostly because the owner who I always had a good relationship with had been very sick with cancer. At the end of 2005 the service company job was looking very poorly managed, so when Gongoni said would I be interested in coming back to Kano, I did, along with an additional bike, a Honda Xr400 after the Kawasaki had been sold to a Dutch man working for Shell.

All personal bits and bobs, Honda and Twinni Mini came back to Kano.

In the UK I had a 500 Moto Morini which I rode occasionally when on leave, but it was always such a hassle to put it back on the road each year so I brought it to Kano.

My nephew had a Gilera Nordwest, which I had always liked, so when I saw one at an attractive price on Fleabay I bought and imported. This was tidied up and is a great ride. It is the daddy of all the “Super Motards” that other companies made in later years. After having the Nordwest a while, I thought I should own the unicorn of the Gilera world, a Saturno. These were mostly sold to Japan and only made 1500 in production for 2 years up to 1990. Mine is 1989 but not just any Saturno it was rebuilt by an (in)famous motorcycle journalist and well known hooligan and fitted with a modified 600 Nordwest engine in place of its much tamer 350 or 500 externally similar engines, so think of the size and weight of a sporty 125 with a thumping 60bhp big single.

As I had 2 Gileras with similar engines when I saw an advert for a barn find RC600 Gilera trail bike I bought it for spares, but after a quick clean up thought it too good to break, so did a rebuild and it is now my ride anywhere bike of choice.

In the back of my mind I was thinking what to do with the Twinni Mini, a lot of effort and money never to be used, going to waste, so enquired with GTM owners club would anybody be interested if I stripped it and brought the mechanical bits back.

Then it was suggested by them find a GTM coupe and using the rear engine to build a car. I found a chassis (used) and a shell (unused) but rather tatty after being left outside many years in the UK, plus a front subframe, tatty seats and a few other odds and sods.

Everything that I did not have has been found, made, or adapted, all taking time. So, after 7 years work, I’m still at it every Sunday morning, as soon as it’s light I’m outside until the sun’s up and I run back inside the house to cool off. Some weekends it’s more a case of 3 steps back and no progress, solving every

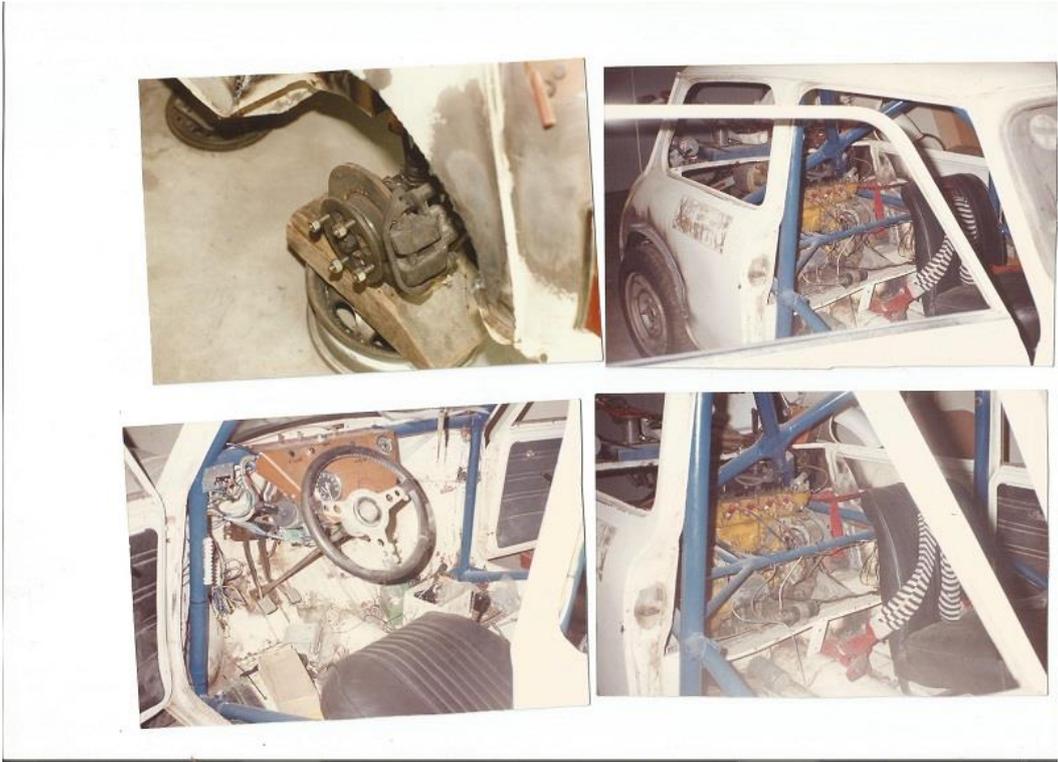
problem and a few others known to man, but we are getting there. So, the only GTM known in Africa is one day going to burst on the scene more than 50 years after 1st being seen in the UK!

That's the story so far

John Bunting







Meet the committee – Merv the Treasurer

I'll try to keep this shorter than Worth's epic last month! My first interest in motorsport came about watching events on a small black & white TV in the 1960s; car racing & cross-country point to points on MoD land were much more interesting than football, etc. A school summer holiday job provided the wherewithal to purchase a 250cc BSA motorcycle that took me everywhere, including a trip to Bradford in the middle of winter for a university interview. The sandwich part of the proposed electronics course fell through when the firm failed. I thus had a career change before I'd even started one, when I successfully applied for a trainee accountant job at the county council.

Two wheels was still my priority back then (1968) and I would be off to places like Brands Hatch (they had an end of season event run on the short circuit in the opposite direction to normal) or Mallory Park (they ran a big race which all top names rode at, just after the Isle of Man TT races). In those days you could freely wander around the paddock amongst the likes of Mike Hailwood, Giacomo Agostini, Phil Read, Bill Ivy, etc., marvelling at the technology at that time – six-cylinder 250cc Hondas, etc.

Then I read about a long-distance trial in January that would be finishing on the seafront at Weymouth, the Exeter Trial, no less. Spectating at Meerhay I thought, I could do that, no more mileage than some of the runs I do now. I joined the



MCC and entered my first event in January 1970 on the long-suffering road bike.

Exeter Trial 1972

Retirement at Fingle Bridge on Dartmoor was the result, so a trials version of the 250cc BSA was acquired ready for next year. Reliability was never a strong

point, but the occasional trophy was won. I joined the local bike club (which now helps with the bike part of the Hardy and where Margaret Sibley was club secretary), and bought a Bultaco one-day trials bike. These trials were much more difficult, so I went back to the MCC events.

The accountancy training was by way of day release at Southampton, over a period of four years, and a fellow trainee was Ian Morton, who was already a Woolbridge member and had a newish Mini 1275GT. He was entering 12-cars, but needed a navigator (familiar story!) and I thought maybe I could try reading the maps. If I can find my way around MCC events on a bike, it should be OK sitting in a car with a map. That's how I came to join Woolbridge in 1973, we won best novice on our first event, and I'm still navigating nearly 50 years on.

Still into bikes more than cars, the BSA was replaced by a shiny new Honda XL250, the 1000 mile running-in period finished as I rode home from the 1973 Edinburgh Trial. Much improved reliability as one would expect, but not as good handling as the BSA. I did win the bike class with it on the 1974 Exeter, cleaning all the sections & fastest on the tests.

Passing the accountancy exams gave a good pay increase, and I bought an Imp Sport road car, soon pressed into service on WMC trials & autotests. In 1976, we ran our first Wiscombe hillclimb, and again I thought, I could do that ... so I entered my first speed event. Trying to fit in bike and car events became a bit difficult, one year I rode in the Exeter Friday night – Saturday morning, grabbed a



few hours sleep & navigated a night road rally with Ian Saturday night-Sunday morning! I was a lot younger then.

Ian & me in his Mini Cooper, Colonial Rally 1975, run by West Hants & Dorset?

In the late 1970s, the competition car was a 998 Stiletto variant of the Imp

and the road car a Dolomite to trailer it around. The Dolomite was soon traded in for a Cortina Estate as a tow car and the Stiletto swapped for a much modified 998 Imp Special Saloon. I was still entering bike and car events, one Easter I managed to do the Lands' End Trial on the bike and the then traditional Tregrehan & Whitecross events in Cornwall. This was achieved with the help of Harold Sibley, who towed my bike down to Cornwall with his trials Escort, while I towed the Imp down to leave at the B&B. Meeting up in the right places at the right times all done without the help of mobile phones, satnavs, etc.

The Imp served me well and I won the 1982 Sprint Leaders title with it, although it was a close-run thing. The Maguire & other spaceframe Imps were starting to appear, weighing much less than my car. I needed a point or two at the final event which was the straight-line sprint along the seafront at Weston-Super-Mare, but there were enough of these lightweight cars to suggest I would struggle. However, one of them didn't turn up, letting me score the necessary points to take the title.

For 1983, in addition to taking over as club treasurer from Ian Morton, I purchased an ex-circuit Maguire Imp, threw away all the circuit oil-cooling & fire-extinguisher gear, and put in a small radiator and my 998cc engine. The Jack Knight dog-gearbox took some getting used to, but I soon learned to leave mechanical sympathy at home; the more brutal you were, the better the gear-changes. Continuing to fit in multiple events in a weekend, this Easter didn't find me in Cornwall for once because I was at Strathclyde Park near Glasgow on Saturday, Harewood on Sunday and Loton Park on Easter Monday. A drive-shaft broke on the startline on my last run at Loton; lucky it didn't happen on the first run in Scotland, because it was supposed to be an unbreakable VW cv-joint in place of the Imp doughnut, and I didn't have any spares. Thinking that circuit cars didn't do as many standing-starts as a speed event car, I reverted to doughnuts, preferring an easily replaceable weak link in the transmission.

The car had an 850cc engine when I bought it, and for 1984 I had this stretched to 1120cc by Ray Payne at Hartwells in Bournemouth to replace the 998. Unfortunately, I was behind the trend again because cars with BDH engines (1300cc versions of the Ford BDA) were appearing, producing some 40bhp more than the Imps' 130bhp, even when running on methanol. I could still take on these cars on the twistier courses, but at Gurston I tried a bit too hard and rolled the car into the cornfield. Fortunately, it was near the end of the season so I didn't miss too many meetings and spent the winter rebuilding it.

The early events of 1985 were spent sorting the rebuilt car, including for the first time having all the suspension angles and corner weights sorted. That made a huge difference and the car was much better to drive. I was concentrating on sprints this year, and took runner-up spot in the Leaders championship. I was still into bikes though, now running a Honda CX500 V-twin road bike. In 1986, the MCC ran an 85th anniversary event from John O'Groats to Lands' End, and the CX500 was entered in that, completing just over 2000 miles in 5 days. That was pretty much the end of my two-wheel days and progression up the ladder at work meant that time off for long weekends was becoming more difficult.

Entering Doune for example usually meant leaving home Friday afternoon, grabbing some sleep in the car in a layby off the A74, two nights B&B and drive home on Monday.

Moving on to 1990, I had one last go at the hillclimb Leaders championship, but had started navigating in rallies again with Loop Lang in his Lotus Elan. I missed the June Shelsley for a rally but won my class at all the other rounds. Three of us tied on maximum points, and the missed event cost me as I didn't have a count-back score. Still, runner-up was OK for a season when I hadn't really thought about the championship until too late in the season. This was also my last year of serious speed events, because the special saloon class was being deleted and we'd have to run with sports libre. The car was split and sold, the chassis reappearing in Northern Ireland some 20-odd years later. Loop and I were quite successful and several rally trophies from that time are in the cabinet. We had some outright wins, even on a night event like the Ilfracombe Rally when the few historic cars were tagged on to the back of a modern road event.

My involvement with speed events was now limited to the occasional event when Paul Channon needed a hand with the AC Cobra, either going with him or driving one of his demonstrators with the competition wheels. Incidentally, some research by June Irvine, former club secretary, discovered that the Cobra has changed hands a few times since Paul sold it, one of the owners being Christian Horner, boss of the Red Bull F1 team. It is now repainted blue, but hasn't to anyone's knowledge seen active service in motorsport events, sadly becoming more of an investment tool. Nobody got to drive the Cobra, but I did get a drive in Paul's ex-works MGA Twin-cam when he needed a navigator for the Regis Rally. His navigators usually drove to & from the events and did the special tests.



All was going well and we were running well up the top ten, until we got to the final test on Tangmere airfield. I missed a cone & the wrong test penalty dropped us out of the top ten.

Monte Carlo Historique with Clive Edwards, 2000

I'd been navigating in 12-cars and the then fairly new sport of historic rallies, when Clive Edwards asked me if I'd like to navigate for him in some of the European events in his Lancia Fulvia. The first one was six days around the Pyrenees in 1996, then the Tulip rally in 1997 and the first Monte Carlo Historique in January 1998. We did the Monte again in 1999 and 2000 as well, but those events were really taking off and costs spiralling. I was now navigating for Keith Grant in his Volvo Amazon in our 12-cars and various HRCR events, a partnership still going strong now.

Fast forward to 2010 and retirement came round after 42 years with the county council, progressing from trainee to chief accountant. I thought I'd like to do some speed events again, not seriously this time though, so some of the pension lump sum was used to buy the MX5 I still have now after almost eleven years of ownership. In my time, it has completed 34,000 miles and 100 events, a mix of



sprints, hillclimbs, autosolos and even grass autotests.

Sprinting at Lydden, 2013

My other main hobby, curtailed like motorsport for now by the coronavirus, is travelling. Since retiring I've been to all sorts of places from Alaska &

Australia to the Galapagos Islands, the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone and New Zealand.

I support a few heritage organisations, from preserved steam railways to the Fleet Air Arm Museum at Yeovilton and the BBMF, anything with engines & wheels (or wings) basically. In my spare time, I've been secretary of the meeting or entry taker for numerous club events, and also taken on the role of finance director of Wiscombe Ltd., the company behind the hillclimb and become a WIMP. The old saying from retired people, that they don't know how they ever found the time to go to work, is very, very true!

So, there I am, the wrong side of 71 years old, still participating and still club treasurer after 38 years!

Merv Brake



My “Couch to 5K” project has now been renamed “St-Ursanne or Bust”. This is the only progress on the project since the last report.

Locating a vehicle while locked down is a little difficult unless you’re prepared to buy from a dealer who offers home delivery. This is usually quite pricey and also, I’d quite like to have a look at the car “in the flesh” before buying. I’m old fashioned like that...

If the club is allowed to run the April Wiscombe events then I aim to enter one of the days, preferably the Sunday, but I’m aware that it might be a bit like buying Glastonbury tickets in that once entries open, they may well fill up pretty quickly... Hopefully next month I’ll have something to report.

Steve Chaloner



LONGLEAT REMEMBERED

Incredible as it may seem, it's 13 years ago this year that the Club ran the last hill climb event at the Longleat Estate in Wiltshire.

From 1963 until 1965, B.R.S.C.C. had run a hill climb at Longleat, but then the Marquis of Bath decided to construct and operate a Safari Park and so they would no longer permit the hill climb to continue. Then in 1989, Lord Christopher Thynne, the second son of the Marquis put out feelers to see if any Club would be interested in re-starting the hill climb. I don't know whether B.R.S.C.C were approached, but Club member Nick Plankenhorn, who lived in the area followed this up saying that his Club, Woolbridge, might be interested. The Club committee at the time agreed to enter into negotiations with the Estate, despite the huge financial risk. Fortunately the Club had good financial resources, which had been built up running the Huntsman Autocrosses in the 1970s.

Geoff Pickett, assisted by Nick, agreed to take the lead role as Clerk of the Course and to lead the negotiations with the estate. Most important of all was obtaining a Track Licence from the M.S.A., who would need to carry out an inspection of the course. To this end the late Derek Ongaro, who was a lovely man, came down and gave it the 'O.K'. subject to a safety barrier, preferably ARMCO, being constructed on the left-hand side approach to Dodd's hairpin. Unfortunately the Estate would not permit a permanent structure and so a demountable option had to be used. This was quite a task and required a team to go to the venue on the weekend before and a week after the event to erect and dismantle it. The Estate agreed to allow us to keep the dismantled barrier in their yard, by the sewage plant!

After a year or two it became obvious that to maintain a track licence, it would be necessary to improve the surface from Dodd's Hairpin to the Finish. The Club undertook to do this with assistance from the estate and also a grant from the M.S.A's Club Development Fund. A high quality grit stone was used making this bit of the track's surface far superior to the more slippery limestone material on the main part of the hill, which in fairness was only used by slower moving vehicles as an entrance to the house and grounds.

So it was in September 1990 that we ran the first event on a very wet weekend. Many drivers left the course in the slippery conditions, notable among who was Tony Marsh, who managed to demolish one of his Lordship's small trees!

My involvement for each of the 19 years that the Club ran the event was as Chief Paddock Marshal and as Speed Event Co-ordinator. This meant not only running the paddock for the two days, but laying it out and assisting with all the fencing that was needed to keep spectators in a safe place. Fortunately we had a huge almost flat area for the paddock, so large in fact that each paddock space was 30 ft. x 15ft.

In running the event one of the difficulties was that the start was not visible from the paddock and the finish was not in the sight of the top paddock team; so, it all had to be conducted by paying very careful attention to the radios. I remember Phil Gale, who ran the top paddock for many years saying to me, 'you fire them up to the start and I'll fire them back down the hill at the end of each batch'. This was not as easy as it may sound for the exit road from the top paddock had an uphill gradient and so any car that would not fire up had to be manhandled until the downhill bit was reached!

Although the Estate demanded a higher fee each year for the two days, the Estate workers were most helpful, providing, for example, all the posts and ropes needed to carry out almost half a mile of fencing, all of which the Club had to erect and take down after the event. We usually started this work on the Wednesday, involving several volunteers from the Club including some who stayed on site in their caravans for almost a week! Another problem was the fact that running in late September the days were short and on the Sunday evening there wasn't much daylight left after the event had finished. In fact this lack of daylight was also a problem on the Saturday and Sunday morning when we all started work in the dark. I well remember the late Eric Moxom and his team setting off at about 6.15 a.m. to put the equipment on the Hill, to lock gates and to erect barriers to close off the road in the dark. After Eric's premature death, this job was taken on for many years by Roger Emond, ably assisted by his wife Pat, both sadly no longer with us.

The reason that the equipment had to be taken in each evening and put out again each morning was the existence of a Night Club in a building adjacent to the main house and outbuildings. When it closed in the early hours the clientele wandered around the estate in a very inebriated state and nothing was safe! On one Saturday morning we found a very badly damaged car on the start line. Eventually the Police persuaded the local Magistrate's court to withdraw their licence and the Night Club was closed to everybody's great relief!

Despite the high cost of running the event, way over £20,000 in the latter years, the thing that made it viable was the certainty of having an over-subscribed entry and a long-term sponsor, in Tim Painter's Tipadel Company, based in Frome. Another reason why we were able to attract good entry levels was that the venue was easily accessed from London and the Home counties, whereas Wiscombe, our other main hill climb venue, was not. We eventually took as many as 140 entries each day, competitors loving the venue, where they could enjoy the hill climbing, while their families were able to enjoy the facilities offered by the estate. Although the fee

charged by the estate, over £7,000 per weekend in the latter years may seem excessive, the running of the event caused great disruption to them, having to completely change the traffic flow system for the whole estate; even the pay booths for the Safari Park had to be amended. The Club helped by carrying out the road signing for competitors.

I said already that Geoff Pickett took the lead role and Clerked the first several meetings; he then handed the reins to Mark Briant, who in turn handed on to Eric Moxom, who carried on until 2001. After Eric's untimely passing Nick Plankenhorn took over and carried on until our last year 2008. Among the Assistant and Deputy Clerks were, Andrew Macdonald, Arthur Jones, Peter Chantler and Roger Emond,

Apart from running the Paddock, I undertook to perform a 'meet and greet' role each morning from about 6.30 a.m. indicating to competitors the location of their paddock space. Mind you at that time of the morning some of them found it difficult to comprehend and after some time you could still see some of them driving around the paddock trying to find their place! However, for me, this was the most enjoyable part of the job, giving me a chance to establish some sort of rapport with drivers at the start of the day.

After a very enjoyable 19 years it all came to an end because the estate really no longer wanted us there. It was the time at which the BBC started to run their 'Animal Park' series on BBC2, which gave much free publicity to Longleat and boosted their visitor numbers considerably. The Estate was only prepared to have the hill climb there in the months of November or February: not popular months for hill climbing!

I have mentioned some of the members who were involved in the running of this event, but there are dozens of others, who all played important roles and without whom it would not have been possible to achieve such a major undertaking.

Many amusing anecdotes occurred not all of which can be remembered, but one that sticks in my mind is when, having been approached by Allan Dean Lewis, we agreed to let him organise the annual 'bash' for M.S.A. officials during one of our event weekends. When it was discovered that the then Marquis was unusually at home he was, of course, invited. He was known to be slightly eccentric, with his wifelets etc., but during an after-lunch conversation with all the top brass of the M.S.A. standing with him he suddenly decided to lay on the grass, rendering the assembled company speechless!

Colin Rolls

Letter to the Editor

Hi Steve,

Following the arrival of the February club magazine I thought you might be interested to see the attached limited-edition print of Jochen Rindt, with the Lotus.

The small panel in the bottom right of the picture is his autograph, which I procured in 1964 or 1965, I think, at the Easter Monday F2 meeting at Thruxton circuit near Andover.

I managed to get both his and Graham Hill's autographs at the same time.

In those days security was almost non-existent at Thruxton and you could walk around the pits after the race, walk into the infield and even drive around the track at the end to go out the gate at the far side of the track from the pits.

I was with my father and after the race, as we walked around the pits, he spotted Graham Hill walking across the infield towards his helicopter, so he encouraged me to run after him with my autograph book, which I duly did.

I remember I caught up with him and asked him for his autograph and him replying - "well if you carry my bag lad then I will give you an autograph", so I duly carried his leather holdall to the helicopter while he signed the book.

On the way back to my father I saw Jochen Rindt coming towards me and also asked him for his autograph, so the same happened and I carried his bag back to his helicopter.

Once I met up with my father again, we got in the car and drove round the track to exit by the far gate, as it was the closest way home to Stockbridge where we lived.

I bought the print some 10 years ago at a toy fair with Bob Blackstock, and he kindly mounted it for me a few years ago when he had his framing business at Mangerton Mill near Bridport.

Regards, Dave Hiscock



“AS IT WAS” MARCH 1984

I was President and Editor, and Geoff Pickett Chairman and Comp Sec. Vice Chairman, Publicity Officer and Comp Sec Speed Events was Simon McBeath while Merv Brake looked after the money. Club Sec and Social Sec was Sue Birkill, while Speed Events was looked after by Colin Rolls. Membership cost £5.00 and was dealt with by Nigel Lines. Worth Birkill was Awards Sec and co-ordinated all the Championships. Equipment Officers were Heather Gale and Adrian Hodges, and Dorset Echo Reporter Les Mace was Press Agent, our local publicity was therefore particularly good!

In his “Chairman’s Chatter” Geoff reported on two excellent trials run by Phil and Heather Gale and Mark and Linda Briant with help from Graham Blake. Our ASWMC Championship Trial was to be run at Evershot on 18th March by Worth and Sue Birkill. Membership was on the rise again and the 4X4 group in the club was expanding rapidly.

In my “Editorial” I reported on double dealing at the ASWMC Dates Meeting where we had pointed out that an event to be held at Colerne would clash with our established Wiscombe event to be held on 13th May. At the meeting it had been dealt with in the usual gentlemanly manner by revision of the date and agreement by the Association. However, the date was never changed and was published in the Association’s list for 13th May! I suggested, perhaps, that it was time for the Establishment’s cage to be ‘rattled’ again!

Our Club Calendar for March was very thin with only a Natter ‘n Noggin, a skittles match, a Wiscombe working weekend and a Bristol MC&LCC PCT.

In her “Social Secretary’s Scribblings” Sue thanked Colin Rolls for organising the quiz evening on 8th February when 7 teams took part. The winners were Margaret Sibley’s team. There would be a skittles match against MGCC on 28th April and a marshals meeting for our Wiscombe event on 9th May which would include a film show at the New Inn, West Knighton. On 23rd May she was planning a car boot sale and the Annual Club Dinner and Dance Awards Presentation would be at the Hotel Prince Regent, Weymouth on 7th December.

“Hill-Man” reported on the Lulworth Cove Trophy Trial on 8th January which had some 30 entries. WMC featured well in the results with Andy Webb as Best WMC and 1st Class Awards for Chris Briant (Escort), Alan Hardy (Husky 998), Graham Blake (Ibex), and Gary Makepeace (Landrover).

On page 4 “McBeath’s Mutterings” entertained as always. Having been made redundant by his current employer Simon said that he didn’t find the prospect of trying to persuade the DHSS to increase his benefits to allow him to continue hillclimbing as a good one. In the meantime, a better paid job had come along. Once that was sorted, he and Andy, his brother, had disappeared on a jaunt to Switzerland where prices were high. Ever paid £3 for a plate of chips? But at least tomato sauce was included. Since their return he and Andy had been working flat out on their newly acquired Delta Imp, trying to ready it for the May Wiscombe.

Finally, Simon congratulated members Graham Newby and Steve White for their performance on the Monte Carlo Rally. The pair had come first in Group A up to 1300cc in their Vauxhall Astra.

“Worth’s Witterings” were to be found on page 5. He was throwing aspirations in all directions as was his usual style. This month he mentioned Chairman Geoff who was retiring from the co-driver’s seat of Alan Matthews’ Chevette and had now been seen on trials and autotests using various types of rusty Alfa Romeos and often with various bits missing! However, what else could be sourced in scrapyards for not more than £60! Cheap motorsport at its best, Worth opined.

Twelve black and white photographs provided the centrefold all taken at the Dinner Dance and Presentation of Awards earlier in the year. Our guests that evening were Roger and Pat Willoughby (Roger was a Director of Wiscombe Ltd), and Terry and Sandra Smith who provided all club stationary and printed the club magazine. Our third couple were Ralph and Jill Newman who were landowners at Holywell where many of our trials were held. Members pictured on the centrefold were Phil Gale who received the Victor Ludorum Award and his wife, Heather, who received the Chairman’s Trophy. Sue Birkill had the rally Co-drivers Cup and our Printer Terry Smith, the Carpenter Shield. One of the other photographs pictured Harold Sibley bending Santa’s ear.

Geoff Pickett reported on the Wyedean Stages where he was co-driver to Alan Matthews in the Vauxhall Chevette. Unfortunately, with only 3 stages

remaining the differential had cried “enough”! However, club members Andy Orchard and Steve White finished 26th in their Opel Manta 400.

Club membership stood at 156 and we welcomed 8 new members including Ron Anderson from Lulworth Garage – interested in rallying and June Irvine from Blandford who later became Club Secretary and was much involved in the organisation of speed events.

Phil Gabe entertained with his monthly “Gibberings”, making excuses for all the mishaps he had encountered in recent events and also contact with a concrete pillar in a multi-storey car park! Damage? – yes, but “what can you expect” he said “if you drive a Datsun with a body seemingly made of tinfoil?”

The 19th February had seen our Autotest at the RE Bridging Camp, Wyke Regis’ This was run by the 1982 Sprint Leaders Champion, our own Merv Brake. He obviously felt restrained by having to put flags in the way to keep speeds down. Bob Bennett’s Mini Moke took FTD. John (Mini) Kirby shared the Moke taking it to 2nd in Class. Class C & D was Geoff Pickett’s in the rusty Alfa Romeo that Worth had told us about. He beat Steve Dunlop’s new RS2000! Andy Webb took the Rear Engine Class in his Imp. A total of 12 minutes of motoring for £5! “What a bargain” – reported Simon McBeath.

In ‘Competition News’ we reported the amalgamation of three member clubs of our Bournemouth Association of Clubs. Dudsbury CC, West Hants & DCC and Bournemouth MC would become the new Bournemouth and District Car Club.

The RACMSA’s 1985 PCT Formula was reported. New class structures and tyre regulations were the main changes to suit the more modern vehicles now in production. The MSA’s Club News appeared on pages 11 and 12.

You might think that to be a misprint but, no, the March 1984 Club Mag only ran to 12 pages! It was produced by our printers, Harvey F Smith Ltd, photo-reduced from the equivalent of a 48-page issue. Also included were 7 full page adverts and a total of 26 mini adverts found in-between articles.

Just another way to make the paper magazine pay for itself.

Colin Pook.

			Zoom Meeting 4/2/21
Present	WB	Present	S Forsyth (SF), W Birkill (WB), M Hoppe (MH), C Pook (CP), H Thorne (HT), G Blake (GB), M Brake (MB), V Fancy (VF), G Morris (GM), C Vettese (CV),
Apologies	WB	Apologies	Apologies were received from Tim Gray.
Election of Chairman	WB	Election of Chairman	VF & CP proposed and seconded that SF be voted in as the Chairman for another year. There being no other nominations, she was duly elected.
Election of Committee Officers and other roles	SF	Election of Committee Officers and other roles	The list of officials and other positions was considered. WB proposed and CR seconded that the list be approved subject to the three points below. Positions are as per Club Roles in new sheet below.
		Ass. Comp Sec 4X4	With John Kirby standing down this position is still vacant. However, GM is happy to take on the secretarial side but the 'co-ordinator' role needs filling SF will speak to John about exactly what the 4X4 group need.
		Social Co-ordinator	This position is still vacant but CR is happy to continue organising the skittle matches and GM is happy to help in some instances.
		Club Safeguarding Officer	SF will contact Rory Weaver to ascertain his current position. VF reported that he also is registered with MS UK for this capacity.
		Sub Groups	Sub groups for: Speed, Hardy Classic, Car Trials and Social were discussed and agreed. List as per Club Roles below.
Previous Minutes	SF	Previous Minutes	Minutes agreed as accurate - MH proposed & HT seconded.
Correspondence	SF	Wiscombe Yearly Meeting	VF reported he had received details of a Zoom meeting and SF reported she was setting it up.
		Forestry	VF reported that the MS UK have announced that Forestry England has now approved forests for the use of motorsport again.
Actions from previous meetings	WB	Actions from previous meetings	See actions still outstanding as listed below.
Finance	MB	Finance	Current A/C £1447.98 includes trial & 12 car events carried fwd. paypal £287.91 inc. a few renewals still coming through. Business Reserve £54,748.97 inc. 43p interest for January.
Membership	TG	Membership	417 members comprising 302 full members, 100 family members, 9 honorary and 6 life members.
Membership	CV	Membership/Event Entries	CV reported his findings and had looked at a system that cost £1.60 per member. The advantage is that it could be used to streamline the entries system making it easier for members to enter events. CV/TG/MB have agreed that our current systems are adequate for our current purposes and felt the cost was not warranted at the moment.
Competition Secretary	GB	Events	Nothing to report as no events taken place.

Competition Secretary	GB	Events	Nothing to report as no events taken place.
	GB	Wiscombe	GB has signed the contracts for the proposed events this year.
4X4 Trials	SF	4X4 Trials	Nothing to report as no events run. However, next event is planned for 14th March and it was agreed that GB apply for a permit and see what happens. It was agreed that GM be the receiver of the emails to 4X4 on agreement with John kirby. SF to speak to John.
Trials	MH	Trials	Again, no events run. The next scheduled for 7/3 and all agreed far too early. It was thought that a postponement to 21/3 may be feasible and MH to decide and let GB know whether to apply for a permit. MH reported that he has committed to run the national meeting 2/5 but their calendar is very fluid at the present.
Nav Challenge	SF	Nav Challenge	Again, no events run. Next due 24/2 but agreed it won't run. The March event due 24/3 and it will be left in abeyance.
Speed Events	HT/VF/SF	Speed Events	A wide ranging discussion took place and it was agreed that no decisions would be made until the Speed Sub Group met after the yearly Wiscombe meeting 13/2
Social	SF	Awards	See line 289 as below.
Internet/Social Media	CV	Internet/Social Media	CV had nothing further to report that had not already been discussed.
Magazine	SF	Meet the Committee	MB has volunteered to write the article.
	SF	Email from member	SF reported that she has received an email ref. the advert in the last magazine which urges people to change to the electronic version in order to save the club money. This started a wide ranging debate with many of the subjects having been discussed before and some committee members felt this had been dragging on for too long. MB was requested to produce the relevant figures for further discussion at the next meeting. It was agreed that in the very short term, the advert would not go in the next magazine.
AoB	MH	Magazine Cover	MH mentioned that he had noticed the Secretary role still showing 'vacant'. CP said he had been in contact with Steve Chaloner about this and it will be addressed,
			Meeting closed at 20.58 - next meeting 3/3/2021

Post**Elected at Meeting 4/2/2021**

Chairman	Sarah Forsyth
Vice Chairman	Vic Fancy
Competition Secretary	Graham Blake
Asst Comp Sec Autotests	Mark Hoppe
Asst Comp Sec Rallies	Keith Grant
Asst Comp Sec Trials	Mark Hoppe
Asst Comp Sec 4x4	Gary Morris
Asst Comp Sec Speed	Hayley Thorne
Championship Sec Trials	Andy Webb
Championship Sec Speed Events	Sarah Forsyth
Championship Sec Victor Ludorum	Mark Hoppe
Awards Sec	Gary Morris
Club Safeguarding Officer	Vic Fancy
Marshal's Co-ordinator (speed events)	Worth Birkill
Internet Officer	Carlo Vettese
Magazine Editor	Steve Chaloner
Equipment Liaison Officer	Graham Blake
Membership Sec	Tim Gray
Social Co-ordinator	Vacant
Speed Events Co-ordinator	Vic Fancy
P.R.Officer	Geoff Pickett
Hardy Classic	Andy Webb
Scrutineer Club tech. support re MS UK	Tony Freeman

Woolbridge AGM 21st January 2021, Treasurer's report for the 2019-20 year

The 2019-20 financial year started normally, we ran the Hardy Classic and usual winter series of car trials, 4x4 trial and 12-cars. These events generally run around break-even financially – we don't make, or lose, significant sums of money on them. By early March we had a full entry for the April Wiscombe and the June Manor Farm was filling up nicely. Then came the pandemic and lockdown and everything came to a grinding halt.

We expect the speed events to generate enough profit to cover most of the bigger overheads such as bank charges and public liability insurance. Having received the entry fees, we incurred the bank charges on the income, plus the bank charges to refund them all again. At least that kept me busy during the first two weeks of lockdown!

If no events ran before the end of September, we also had nothing to cover the insurance premium. A quick roundup of finances came up with a potential loss of about £4,000 for the year, including the bank charges, insurances and other expenses not covered by the subscription. Fortunately, our reserves could cope with that sort of loss.

The lockdown was eased and, thanks to the efforts of everyone involved with Wiscombe, we were able to run a one-day event there in August and a double header to replace our September Manor Farm which was unavailable. These three days of hillclimbing turned the finances around completely and I was able to report that the £4,000 loss has become a mere £10 loss.

In a normal year, we make donations to charities from the karting event, etc., but that couldn't happen in 2020. These donations are tax-deductible, so for the last several years this deduction has exceeded our profits and we haven't had to pay any tax. Even though we made a small loss, we have to pay tax on interest received, and with no charity deduction, we have a tax bill this year of £14 on the £76 interest received. Every little helps, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer might say....

The bottom line therefore, is a loss of £24 for the year.

Merv Brake, Treasurer



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WILL BE
Friday 26th March 2021

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Woolbridge Motor Club - APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Membership Secretary - 5 Shortlands Road, Upwey,
WeymouthDorset, DT3 5NE

e-mail membership@woolbridge.co.uk

Please complete in BLOCK CAPITALS



I hereby apply for membership of Woolbridge Motor Club Ltd.

Membership runs for 12 months from the date of joining

Title Surname Christian Name

Address

Town

County

Post Code

Other competing or participating family members at the same address, (full names)
(only one copy of the printed club magazine is sent per household):

1

2

3

4

Tel No: (landline):

Tel No: (mobile):

E-mail address

Age if under 23

Some entry fees are cheaper, some annual trophies are for the under 23's

Main motorsport interests:

	No. required	£.p.
Membership Fees – Full membership (over 23)	£ 15.00	
Junior membership (ages 18 – 23)	£ 5.00	
Other family members (each, ages 14 - 17 can drive in some events subject to parental consent and supervision)	£ 2.50	
Club decal (internal) 20cm x 5cm	£ 0.35	
Club decal (external) 20cm x 5cm	£ 0.35	

Total £

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For payment methods ii) or iii), you will be sent the appropriate form or details.

The monthly magazine is normally sent as a pdf by email. Please tick the box if you would like a posted version. A supplementary charge may be introduced for this.

I undertake to comply with the Rules of the club (see website or ask for a copy of club rules). I shall not drive in any part of a competition which takes place on the public highway unless holding a valid Motor Vehicle RTA Licence for cars (other than provisional) and am acquainted with and agree to be bound by the General Regulations of Motorsport UK

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