



WAYFARER AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2019

WAYFARER

The Magazine of THE GREEN BELT MOTOR CLUB
Incorporating Stort Valley Auto Club
August/September 2019

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The Editor is not responsible for factual errors, or errors of spelling and English usage, in submitted articles.

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Printing: Chris Deal

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**Front cover: Chris Blyth on the TAMS Packaging Summer North Weald Sprint
Photo by Nick Cook**

Editorial/Club Sec News

I'm pleased to report we had a successful Sprint at North Weald on Sunday 28th July, despite the challenges of the weather for the second year. We had 54 entries, although that dropped by the time we started; we had enough marshals but that was by John asking for help from outside the club; we had support from Harrow CC and from TAMS Packaging through Steve Tammadge plus Epping DC who runs North Weald Airfield. There's a report and some photos in this issue.

Whilst on the subject of Sprints the Motorsport UK have issued some proposal most are about making the standard cars class (A1 and A2) cheaper for new entrants by reducing the safety gear needed, cited the heightened safety standards for standards cars and to enhance accessibility to the discipline, the speed committee should be applauded as it not easy to go back with safety. One thing they are proposing an extra clerk of the course/deputy as a Track Controller from 2022, given the problems we have it will be mean hiring someone, unless someone wants to train as a clerk?

I'm starting to receive dates for events in 2020 and many events have meetings set up. To have good events you have to plan it and normally it means setting up things a year ahead, take are Sprint make a note for the date of next year's event, which is on Sunday 26th July 2020, fingers crossed for better weather. Snetterton Stages in on Saturday 15th February 2020.

Turning to the social side we have a visit to Gaydon on Tuesday 10th September, being organised by Ian Davies, see the Club Diary.

In early October Robert and Doug are organising their annual Treasure Hunt around Hertfordshire, see the advert in this issue. I don't think I can take part as I expecting to be driving back from Wales as Richard and myself are taking part in the Wales Rally GB National rally.

We are hoping to run a quiz, a karting event and maybe a Rallyschool before we have our annual Xmas meal. If you want to take part let me know so I can gauge interest.

Over the Summer break I have been able to update the championship points, which are to be found in this issue or on the website. If your results aren't shown let me know.

Until next time, enjoy the rest of the summer, I'm back to some decorating and hopefully by the next issue the Club's printer will have a new home.

Chris Deal

Motor Museums

Bicester Heritage, Bicester, Oxon
Brooklands, Weybridge Surrey
Cotswold Motor Museum, Bourton on the Water, Gloucester
Coventry Transport Museum, Coventry, Warks
David Sutton Rally Car Museum, Daventry, Northants
Heritage Motor Centre, Gaydon, Warks
Haynes International Motor Museum, Sparkford, Somerset
Ipswich Transport Museum, Ipswich, Suffolk
London Motor Museum, Hayes, W London
National Motor Heritage, Beulieu, Hants
Whitewebbs Museum of Transport, Enfield

Club Diary

10 September – visit to Gaydon, the British Motor Museum

Gaydon is near Banbury just off Junction 12 of the M40, about 90 min from Potters Bar. Post code is CV35 0BJ. Admission costs £14-50, concessions £12-50.

If YOU are interested please contact Ian Davies by phone on 020 8882 4889 or text to mobile 07836 517451.

6 October – Treasure Hunt – see advert in this issue

11 December – Xmas meal

Event dates

(ASMC) – events run by Anglia Motor Sports Clubs which can be entered using our GBMC club card and without a licence.

(AEMC) – events run by clubs of the Association Eastern Motor Clubs and GBMC is invited to and normally you need a competition licence.

September

- 1 Belgian GP, Spa
- 1 Debden Targa run by Wickford AC (AMSC)
- 7 Galloway Hills Rally (BRC)
- 7 Brighton Speed Trials
- 7-8 Autocross at Kingsbridge, run by South Hams MC
- 8 Italian GP, Monza
- 8 Stirling Moss North Weald Sprint run by Harrow CC/GBMC (AEMC)**
- 8 Stage Rally at Wethersfield run by ASMC (AEMC)
- 12-15 Rally Turkey (WRC)
- 13-15 Revival Meeting at Goodwood
- 14-15 Knockhill BTCC race
- 14-15 Watergate Bay Speed Hillclimb, on the B3276 between Padstow and Newquay
- 14-15 World RX, Riga, Latvia
- 15 AutoSolo at Wethersfield run by Cambridge CC (ASMC)

21 Rally Day at Castle Combe

- 21 Curborough Sprint, run by BARC (Mids) (AEMC)
- 21-22 British RX at Pembrey
- 22 Singapore GP, Marina Bay
- 22 Cheviot Stages Rally (Motorsport UK Asphalt Rally Championship)
- 27-29 Cyprus Rally (ERC)
- 27-28 Trackrod Rally (MSA British Historic Rally Championship/BTDRA)
- 28 BTRDA RX at Lydden
- 28-29 Silverstone (National) BTCC race
- 28-29 Autocross at Whimble, run by Torbay MC
- 29 Russian GP, Sochi

October

- 3-6 Rally GB (WRC)
- 6 Debden Sprint run by Herts County (AEMC)
- 6 AutoSolo at Stanta run by SCCoN (AMSC)
- 6 Eelmoor Sprint, run by Farnborough & DMC
- 12-13 Brands Hatch (Grand Prix) BTCC race
- 13 Japanese GP, Suzuka
- 13 Dukeries Rally run by Dukeries MC (AEMC)
- 13 Trial at Ivinghoe run by Falcon MC (AMSC)
- 20 Autosolo at Debden, run by West Suffolk MC (AMSC)
- 20 BTRDA RX at Knockhill
- 24-27 Rally Spain (WRC)
- 26-27 British RX at Croft
- 27 Mexican GP, Mexico City

November

- 1-3 Rally Hungary (ERC)
- 2 Rally at Oulton Park (MNCRC)
- 2 Lydden Sprint (am only), run by Sevenoaks & DMC (AEMC)
- 3 United States GP, Austin
- 3 Trial at Kensworth, run by Falcon MC (AMSC)
- 3 Targa at Wethersfield, run by Chelmsford MC (AMSC)
- 7-10 Rally of the Tests, from Torquay to Chester
- 9 Wyedean Rally
- 9-10 World RX, Cape Town, South Africa
- 14-17 Rally Australia (WRC)
- 17 Brazilian GP, Interlagos
- 17 The Challenger Stages, run Bournemouth & DCC (AEMC)
- 17 Trial at Lyng, run by SCCoN (AMSC)
- 17 Rally at Cadwell Park (MNCRC)
- 21-25 R.A.C. Rally (2WD)

December

- 1 Abu Dhabi GP, Yas Marina
- 1 Trial at Belchamp run by West Suffolk MC (AMSC)
- 8 Rally at Knockhill (MNCRC)
- 28 Targa at Stanta, run by SCCoN (AMSC)

Free MOTORSPORT on TV

F1 on C4 (only GB GP live), WRC on Red Bull TV on the web (highlights on Spike on Freeview), BTCC on ITV4 (live with support races), British Rally Championship - BRC on C4 (highlights on Saturday mornings the week after), Goodwood events on ITV4 (highlights), Formula E on the red button. Don't forget there are loads of videos on the internet and some live stuff on youtube.

CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS - 2019

Events

- 19/01/2019 – Brands Hatch Stages
 - 16/02/2019 – Snetterton Stages
 - 13/04/2019 – Rallynuts Stages
 - 14/04/2019 – Sevenoaks North Weald Sprint
 - 28/04/2019 – Clacton Stages
 - 11/05/2019 – Plains Rally
 - 12/05/2019 – Hethel Sprint
 - 19/05/2019 – Dimanche Sprint
 - 08/06/2019 – Abingdon Sprint
 - 09/06/2019 – Abingdon Stages
 - 23/06/2019 – Red Kite Stages
 - 13/07/2019 – Nicky Grist Stages
 - 21/07/2019 – Twyford Stages
 - 28/07/2019 – TAMS Packaging Summer North Weald Sprint
- Malcolm's race dates aren't included at the moment.

Gerry Thurlow Memorial Trophy (formerly the Trent Park Trophy)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Malcolm Wise	170	290	275	251	200	230	170	170	275	275	2306
Rob Choules	125	200	251	290	350						1216
Richard Warne	251	185	269	149	275						1129
Steve Greenhill	236	290	272	326							1124

Gerry Thurlow Memorial Trophy (formerly the Trent Park Trophy) - continued											
Sam Fordham	221	350	50	269	50						940
Martyn Andrews	236	272	326								834
Chris Jones	239	179	350								768
Ashley Davies	269	50	350	50							719
Mark Blackmore	350	329									679
Mat Blackmore	350	329									679
Chris Deal	251	185	149								585
Glenn Pickett	200	137	221								558
Aaron Rix	326	185									511
Rob Cook	326	185									511
Mark Goddard	116	200	179								495
Frank Trueman	164	92	137								393
Preston Ayes	350										350
Andy Wishart	269	50									319
Laszlo Erdos	116	200									316
Kevin Hugill	230										230
Niall Moroney	200										200
Gerry Moroney	164										164
Chris Blyth	110										110
Archie Wishart	50										50
Gavin Pink	50										50
Stuart Parrish	50										50

Chalk Trophy

1st Rob Choules (322), 2nd Chris Jones (206), 3rd Glenn Pickett (136), Ashley Davies (100), Frank Trueman (81), Richard Warne (75), Kevin Hugill (60), Niall Moroney (50), Mark Goddard (43), Gerry Moroney (38) and Chris Blyth (20).

Single Venue Rally – Driver

1st Mark Blackmore (100), 2nd Aaron Rix (92), 3rd Andy Wishart (78), Richard Warne (73), Mark Goddard (72), Ashley Davies (5) and Gavin Pink (5).

Single Venue Rally – Co-Driver

1st Sam Fordham (235), 2nd Matt Blackmore (100), 3rd Rob Cook (92), Ashley Davies (73), Laszlo Erdos (72), Archie Wishart (5), and Stuart Parrish (5).

Multi Venue Rally – Driver

1st Martyn Andrews (228), 2nd Richard Warne (145), 3rd Mark Blackmore (93), Aaron Rix (45) and Ashley Davies (5).

Multi Venue Rally – Co-Driver

1st Steve Greenhill (308), 2nd Chris Deal (145), 3rd Preston Ayres (100), Rob Cook (45) and Sam Fordham (5)

Thatcher Trophy

No results yet

Jackson Trophy

No results yet

Clubmans Trophy

Ashley Davies

Marshals Trophy

1st John Davie (185), 2nd= Peter Thorn (40), 2nd= Chris Deal (40), Neil Munro (20), Brian Wright (20), Malcolm Wise (20), Marcus Foreman (20), Mel Camp (20), John Pilgrim (20), Richard Warne (10) and Graham Frary (10).

The list of events John has been to is too long at the moment. The main ones for others is Snetterton Stages, Clacton Stages and our North Weald Sprint.



TREASURE HUNT

DATE - Sunday 6th October

START VENUE - The Crooked Chimney, Cromer Hyde, on B653 between
Wheathampstead and Welwyn Garden City

(MR 166 / 210123)

START TIME - Assemble from 1.00pm for a 2.00 pm start

EVENT LENGTH – Approx. 30 miles

MAP - OS map 166

FINISH - Tea at a Hertfordshire village (approx. 4.30pm - 5.00pm)

Entry fee - £10 per two person team, plus £5 per additional person

FURTHER INFORMATION - Robert Taylor:

E-mail - <mailto:roberttaylor893@btinternet.com>

Tel 07752 419143

OR Doug Williams: Tel 07734 510159

Nicky Grist Stages

Friday 12th July saw Richard and I heading for Wales for another round of the BTDR Gold Star rally championship, the Nicky Grist Stages based in Builth Wells. Richard had Tudor Davies to help with servicing, normally Tudor is to be found with the Pirelli Tyres or wandering the service parks persuading drivers to change from any other make to Pirelli's (that twice I have mentioned Pirelli's – make that three time, just be worth a discount or a free Pirelli tyre). Richard and Tudor set off from Hertford around 09.30 via the M25 and M4 and I left home at 10.00 expecting to either catch them up or meet them at the service park. Normally I travel with Richard, but I drove myself for two reasons; one it gave us a rescue vehicle with anything went awry (its not easy to get the motorhome into the forests and secondly, I had booked myself a walking trip which started straight after the rally. My journey had plenty of delays; crash outside Chase Farm Hospital – good place to have one! Show traffic on the M25 as normal and no reason, mile over mile of 50 mph roadworks for upgrades to smart motorway, heavy traffic around Bristol when finally, on the road from Abergavenny to Builth Wells there was two sets roadworks where you was conveyed past the works. I arrived around 14.40 expected to find Richard having set up camp, but I found the Rix clan etc. Tudor persuaded Richard to continue down the M4 so he could call in on his sister and to collect a box of homemade Welsh cakes and some pies, finally they arrived an hour later and the field was getting busy. We parked next to the Loomes from Wickford AC, unloaded the car and before noise check and scrutineering we needed to decide what tyres to use and buy some? The only thing the Scutineer highlighted was the mounting of my seat!! When back in the service park Tudor was given the task of fixing it whilst Richard and I went to sign on, where we saw Brian Hemmings, the Motorsport UK Steward with Nicky Grist and other event officials. With the seat fixed Tudor and I took the trailer to the cattle market, whilst Richard prepared Dinner. After that some of Tudor's relatives came by and took him to the pub. With Tudor back from the pub we bedded down for the night.

Saturday dawned bright with the service area a hive of activity, expect one person, Tudor was still sleeping outside of the motorhome in the awning. The smell of cooking of frying bacon soon made him awake up, or was the fire alarm! With the lower powered cars running first we were to the back of the field with a start time of 10.27. One the first was Aaron Rix/Rob Cook plus ex member Dale Glover. There was 4 stages repeated in the afternoon with an hour service back in Builth Wells with a couple emergency services if you have a management car, which we didn't have. The forest stages were just north/north west of the Epynt ranges and with short road sections.

On the run out to the first stage you could see the third stage on the hillside and it looked as bit dusty. We arrived in plenty of time and joined the queue waiting for their due time. Stage one, Crychan, was the longest at 8.72 miles. The dust was clearing within a minute, so don't affecting our, or rather Richard's visibility. However the surface was covered in like marbles and just over one mile into the stage at a hairpin right we and half spin and losing 10 seconds. I was getting hot and it was affecting me by not saying the notes in time. To add to our problems a wasp had got in the car and was distracting Richard until hit. Halfway through the stage there was light rain and a mile from the end we had another half spin with a stall this time. We finished the stage with a time of 11 mins 35 secs, equal 89th overall out of 127.



On Crychan stage © J. Gilbertson

Now we were using the Epynt ranges roads between stages and the road sections were short and there wasn't much time to cool down. I wasn't comfortable, feeling hot and slightly car sick, something which hasn't happened to me before and fortunately I wasn't. The second stage, Halfway, at 3.68 miles was a shorten from normal and reversed from previous years and started on tarmac, but not for long and we were back on the loose. We completed the stage without incident in 4 mins 50 secs, equal 78th. Next was Monument at 5.56 miles, which we completed in 6 mins 47 secs, now up 74th and again without any problems. The final stage of the loop was Llyn Login at 3.32 miles starting on tarmac to the first corner and another short section in the middle. This stage had a few blind crests, on one we had a moment, but recovered and finished in 4 mins 3 secs.

For the finish of this stage it was only 16 minutes back to service or rather the re-group. A few minutes in the re-group and we were into service and time for Tudor to get to work getting over the car. We had an hour to do any work needed and recover.

After the break I felt better and we set off for a repeat of the stages, before that we had refuel. The afternoon loop went without a hitch, apart from not recording the first stage. We made it back to Builth Wells at 16.48 in 73rd overall, one place behind Aaron Rix and Rob Cook by 3 seconds. With the car loaded on the trailer etc. I left Richard and Tudor to make their way home as I was driving north to Dolgellau for a few days walking before heading home.

The next event for Richard and myself it is the Wales Rally GB, National rally on the start of October and we have a confirmed entry. Richard has been replacing things and upgrading other bits.

Chris Deal



Richard at the Sprint (photo by Nick Cook)

TAMS Packaging Summer North Weald Sprint

For the second time we got a 'summer' weekend for a Sprint at North Weald, by summer weekend I meant it was wet and cold compared to the 30 degrees of the weeks before.

As the date got closer things come together, with sufficient entries and just enough helpers after plenty of emails. On the Friday John, Richard and I met at Anthony's farm to make the trailer ready for the weekend – check the tyres, equipment and give it a wash. With that done I took it to North Weald and parked it by their fire station to save time on the Sunday. Whilst there is picked up the licence agreement to be signed.

On the Saturday I had a day off to visit an ex-member John Garrad, which was convenient and he could witness me signing the licence agreement. Also, with me was another ex-member Tony Snell who was visiting the UK as he lives in the States. By the time I got home we had gained another entry and some changes of cars/classes, so time to fire up the printer for another run of the entry list and check we had enough awards.

Sunday and the alarm woke me at 05.30, breakfast done, car was loaded and I set off at 06.30 with wet roads. Driving up the M11 it was wet and misty, the weather forecast said it should clear by 09.00 (never trust them!).

Arriving at 07.00 I handed in the signed copies of the licence agreement then hitched up the trailer and took it to the Sprint paddock to be greeted by John, Mark and Richard and soon to be joined by Nick, Peter, Mel/Richard and Malcolm. First job was set up the paddock area, so the early arrival know where they can park without having to be moved. Whilst moving the trailer a small set of step ladder fell out and broke into many pieces, so Richard. Having unloaded the cones in the roughly right place I parked the trailer to come the signing on office etc, leaving Peter and others to set up the course. I soon a long queue and they slowly got wetter due to the steady drizzle.

Suddenly the queue so no more, but there was no time to relax as I had turn my attention to the paperwork for the Motorsport UK Steward, Ray Miles. I had roped in Brian Hemmings to cover as a Club Steward, as I heard he was coming around anyway. I was given a hint that some of the notices wouldn't work if disputed as they weren't signed and dated by the CoC, tut tut, soon corrected.

John did the briefing to the marshals and they got in position and Peter did the briefing for the Drivers. John and Peter took them around on the convey runs. When there was a quick check with Loyd and Mike and Simon, the Scrutineers, to see we had



Chris Jones in his Subaru Impreza (photo by Nick Cook)



Kevin Hugill sharing Chris Blyth's Caterham 7 Supersport (photo by Nick Cook)



Glenn Picket sharing Chris Jones Subaru (photo by Nick Cook)



Mark Goddard in his Ford Sierra (photo by Nick Cook)



Niall Moroney in his BMW 3 series (photo by Nick Cook)

got missed anyone. We had two no shows, which gave us 49 signed on. Practice started at 09.57 and the starting crew of Marcus and Peter were soon in the swing of things with our Timekeeper, Tony. Due to the wet weather the times were quite slower than normal. The only issue was our first and last retirement of the day, the Mini of Anthony Hyatt with clutch problem, if I remember correctly. There were a few drivers getting the route wrong, so as the marshals' radio in the car number Peter would find them and explain where they went wrong, which certainly helped for the later on then it counts. I didn't have much chance to see any action as spent the day posting the times/results and keeping track of the paperwork and keeping it dry!

Each set of runs was taking, roughly an hour. By the time of the first time run the weather had stopped rained and the track was starting the dry. Lunch was taken at 12.50, but over lunch the drizzle returned for the second run. By the end the run it had stopped and the track was drying and times were improving. The third run was dry and the sun came out. The only issue was Tim Cole hit a cone handing the class win to Sarah in Tim's car! The runs ended at 15.20 and the results provisional at 15.35. By the time they were final the track was cleared and all the equipment was stacked outside the trailer. The awards were handed by Steve Tammadge, formerly of TAMS Packaging who has helped us by sponsoring the event over many years with the FTD going to Duncan Cowper in his Dax Rush by 3.72 seconds, see below (taken by Nick Cook).



As I said I didn't see much action, but we did have few club members taking part, here is a summary of where they finished, the full set of results are on the website. Plus, there are some photos in this issue taken by Nick Cook of Harrow CC.

Rob Choules, Citroen Saxo VTS, 1st in class A1

Gerry Moroney, Ford Escort RS2000, 6th in class A4

Niall Moroney, BMW 3 series, 5th in class A5

Chris Blyth, Caterham 7 Supersport, 5th in class A7

Kevin Hugill, Caterham 7 Supersport, 3rd in class A7

Richard Warne, Ford Escort, 1st in class B10 and Best GBMC and 6th overall

Frank Trueman, Porsche 944T, 6th in class B11

Chris Jones, Subaru Impreza, 1st in class B11

Glenn Pickett, Subaru Impreza, 4th in class B11

Mark Goddard, Ford Sierra, 5th in class B11

Once I cleared my laptop, printer etc out the trailer, it was filled with cones etc. and I took it back to Anthony's farm for the next event, Harrow CC's Sprint at North Weald on Sunday 8th September. Back home I emptied the car, sent out the results and thanked everyone before sitting down to watch the German GP highlights.

Many Thanks to everyone for making the day a success.

Chris Deal



Gerry Moroney in his Ford Escort RS2000 (photo by Nick Cook)

MUTTERINGS

As I write this in August it seems to have been a relatively quiet month apart from going to Fullbeck on the first weekend and the odd event planning meeting. However, that all starts to change in September which starts with the AMSC Targa Rally at Debden Airfield on the 1st.

The weekend of the 7th/8th September seems like a busy motorsport weekend. We have the '*Rix Engineering Wethersfield Stages*' on Sunday the 8th (ED – the sameday as the Harrow CC Sprint at North Weald) which, this year, has been passed from Chelmsford Motor Club to the Anglian Motor Sport Club group to organise, although with much assistance from Chelmsford. At the time of writing there are potentially 75 entries signed up so far. A few have still to pay and there is still time for more to enter so it is looking hopeful that we will have a greater entry than has been seen here for many a year.

On the same weekend there are two closed road stage rallies being run, the Three Shires on Saturday and Cardigan Bay on Sunday, both of which also seem to have considerable entries. There is some overlap with competitors intending to do the Saturday event plus one of the Sunday events too and I guess there will be marshals following a similar pattern as well. I may well have gone to the Three Shires myself, but will be busy at Wethersfield setting up for the Sunday event instead. We are of course looking for marshals for Wethersfield so all help will be willingly received – for details and registration see <http://wethersfieldstages.co.uk/>.

The following weekend it is back to Wethersfield for an Autosolo organised by Cambridge Car Club <https://www.cambridgecarclub.co.uk/event-calendar/coulsons-autosolo/> and then if you're interested in pre-war cars, particularly Bentley's, there's something on the 21st which may fit the bill. It's called the pre-war stubble rally which is organised with assistance from Chelmsford MC and details can be found at their site <https://chelmsfordmc.co.uk/civicrm/event/info?reset=1&id=78>.

Into October there's Wales Rally GB at the beginning of the month 3rd-6th and also a single venue stages at Fullbeck on the 6th, so they'll no doubt be looking for marshalling assistance of you're not going to Wales.

The following weekend 11th-13th sees the return of the Mull Stage Rally, which I'm sure will get a full (150) car entry this year after being off the calendar for a few years due to issues with closed road rally insurance which are now all resolved with the new legislation for such events. Back in the distant past Stort Valley Auto Club always sent a team up to Mull some even going back to its pre-Stage days when it ran as a Road

Rally. Although that team has diminished in numbers, a few of them who are now Green Belt members since GBMC and SVAC merged have returned every year to run stages. I shall be joining them this time for the first time in many a year where again the team led by Graham Frary will be running stages on the Friday night, Saturday afternoon and Saturday night, I can't remember when it was that I last went, think it was in the last century!, so it will be interesting to see if or how it has changed.

On a final note, we're assembling to points for the club's championships so need to know what you've been up to. We'll put in points for events where we know, or can remember, that you've been to but need you to let us know what you've done. If you let either Chris Deal or myself know them, we'll see that they are added to the lists. For the Marshals Championship we just need to know the events that you've marshalled on and for the others we need either a set of results or link to the results to calculate points as they are based on classes etc.

John



Rob Choules lifting the rear inside wheel at the Sprint (photo by Nick Cook)

"If Brian Sewell could like Stock car racing then I can enjoy speedway"

A while back I heard a programme on radio 4 extra in which plummy voiced art critic Brian Sewell talked about his love of stock car and banger racing, something I will endorse as I used to watch it at Hartlepool. Listening I thought that maybe my love of speedway is not something I should hide

Speedway is one of those many things that used to be bigger than it is today and I will bet that many of you reading this used to go but don't now.

Mind, that would be difficult as the closest teams to London in the top two leagues are Eastbourne, Poole and Peterborough. I am fortunate in having Championship team Redcar Bears on my doorstep

Back in the 1970s speedway was on ITV's 'World of Sport' and Barry Briggs and Ivan Mauger were household names but now the sport is struggling to survive. Cricket sold its soul to Sky Sports and is starting to regret it and I wonder if speedway is doing the same.



That I am back this year is due to my new partner, Nadine, who I met in February. Now guys you know that awkward early stage in a serious relationship when you find out what she is interested in you pray that it's not just shopping? Well Nadine has been a constant surprise in visiting the 'Mary Rose' at Portsmouth and a U boat in Liverpool. Now sports wise she isn't keen on football dislikes F1 and cricket is a no no but she does enjoy speedway, neither of us had been for quite a while so we went and now we are starting to become regulars.

I am not going to dwell on how the sport works, that it is a team sport though there are individual competitions but hard-core spectators do strongly identify with their riders.

Yes it is rough and ready but so is rugby league even though it is dressed up these days, its accessible, friendly, family oriented, easy to understand and follow.

The main thing though, it is EXCITING. Now though meetings last around 90 minutes they only contain 15 minutes action, fifteen heats which last, at Redcar, around 56 seconds each but that is 56 seconds of intense real wheel to wheel racing and OVERTAKING, which is exciting and entertaining.

I have been at Le Mans 24 hour races where I have seen less than 15 minutes excitement, ditto formula one grand prix and in all the Porsche races I have seen down the years I don't think I have EVER seen anything excitement.

Be honest gents, does modern motorsport excite you? For me the obsession with one make racing has almost killed motor racing as a spectator sport.

And don't get me started on football. My team is Middlesbrough and last season we had Tony Pulis as our manager, the football was at times pitiful. I took Nadine to the last game of the season where we still had an outside chance of making the play offs . At half time we led 2-1 with Reading there for the taking yet we may as well have gone home at half time, so timid was their approach in the second half.

It is undoubtedly a sport in trouble, the geographical spread of teams is peculiar and not nationwide, crowds are down, we probably only get 300/400 for a league match and its media profile is non-existent. The organiser tinker with the structure, at the moment Premier League can ride in the championship as they race on different nights, so our skipper, Charles Wright rides for Peterborough in the Premiership as well as us. This is great as we get to see the top riders but will cause a problem if we do get promoted.

By the way, I met Charles last Friday with a couple of the other riders , really down to earth blokes and incredibly fragile looking, they have to weigh less than their 500cc machines.

So, if you do get the chance do go and see some speedway and be excited

Chris Payne

ROBERT'S RACING ROUND UP

So far in this racing season our Chairman Malcolm Wise has competed in his blue and white Ford Sapphire Cosworth in half a dozen races in the Burton Power Blue Oval Saloon Series (BOSS).

In the two of these events he achieved one class finish each in second and third places and he competed the other four races in fourth place in class.

As all too often happens, Malcom's thirty year old Ford Sapphire Cosworth was not ready for the opening pair of BOSS races. However, he was at Brands Hatch for rounds 3 and 4 of this hard fought series.

These races are all combined events for BOSS cars and Classic Thunder Saloons. The latter category's cars, which are generally much quicker, constituted 16 of the 25 entries for this race at Brands Hatch.

It was therefore no surprise the Malcolm's 550bhp Sapphire Cosworth, which was not handling at all well and suffering from turbocharger lag, was rather out of its depth.

He recorded only the 14th overall fastest practice time but – more significantly – he was the third quickest in the BOSS class. His best practice time for the undulating 1.2 mile long circuit was 56.2sec (77.4mph). This was a rather disappointing 2.1 second slower than the fastest BOSS car – Piers Grange's 2.5 litre Ford Escort MkII.



In the first 15 minute first race Malcolm was overtaken by two of his BOSS rivals (Ralph Higson in his Ford Escort Fiesta RS 2000 and Martin Reynolds in his Ford Escort Mk I) but he benefited from the retirement of another Boss entry (Neil Argrave in his Ford Escort Mk2) who had been running ahead of him.

So, he eventually finished in fourth place in the BOSS section of the race – albeit almost 31 sec behind the BOSS winner, Piers Grange.

Malcolm made the rolling start to the second race from the inside position on the seventh of the 14 rows of the grid.

From there he soon passed Higson's Fiesta and Reynolds's Escort, both of which had finished ahead of him in the first race. He also managed to close on the winner of the BOSS section of the race which was, once again, Piers Grange in his 2.5 litre Ford Escort.

The reason for the improved performance of Malcolm's Ford Sapphire was that his ace engine man, Dave Wilde, was present for this race and he made some significant tweaks to the car's two litre Cosworth engine.

Malcolm's second pair of combined BOSS and Classic Thunder Saloons races were held at Silverstone's 1.6 mile long National Circuit.

In practice he was, once again, over two seconds slower than the BOSS pole position car – which was Piers Grange's 2.5 litre Ford Escort. Another BOSS class car, the Escort RS2000 of Ralph Higson, was also ahead of him on the grid because his lap time was 0.2 sec faster.

For most of the first 15 minute race Malcolm's Sapphire circulated in third place in the BOSS class. This happy state of affairs came to an abrupt end on lap 12 when he spun at Copse Corner.

Three cars passed him before he regained the track. Two of them were Classic Thunder competitors (so that did not really matter) but the third one was Chad Donner in a BOSS car. In fact, it was a similar Ford Sapphire to Malcolm's car, and it demoted him to fourth place in the BOSS class, where he finished the race.

In the second race Malcolm initially ran in third place, not far behind Piers Grange and Ralph Higson, but this only lasted for two laps.

Another spin at Copse Corner (caused by a problem with the Sapphire's brakes) resulted in him being passed by four cars. Two of these, Martin Reynolds (Ford Escort Mk1) and Keith Harding (Ford Capri), were in the BOSS class.

Within a couple more laps of the 15 minute race our man repassed both of them, and he finished back where he had started - in third place in the BOSS class.

Malcolm is an infrequent visitor to Wiltshire's 1.85 mile long Castle Combe circuit, but he turned up there for its Big Race Weekend – which consisted of no less than 25 races spread over two days.

Once again, he was competing in a pair of combined races for BOSS cars and the much faster Classic Thunder Saloons.

In practice for the first of these events his best lap time of 1min 20.9 sec (82.3mph) was 4.8 sec slower than that of the fastest car in his class – which was the Ford Escort Mk 2 of Piers Grange.

The reason for this poor performance was that his Ford Sapphire Cosworth's engine, was inexplicably around 50 bhp down on power – even though it was still producing about 500bhp!

Despite some frantic efforts, in the paddock, to find the cause of his car's engine power loss, it could not be traced. So, Malcolm had to be resigned to circulating in the first race near the back of the 17 car field - and being lapped by six of the seven Classic Thunder competitors - and by the winning BOSS car.

His only consolation was that he was placed fourth in his class, within the BOSS section of the race, and that his best lap time was 1.6 sec quicker than his practice time. The latter effect was due he his increasing familiarity with the race circuit, which he had not visited as a competitor for ten years, rather than any improvement in his car's performance.

It was a similar story in the second race. Malcom managed to chip another 0.5 sec off his best lap time and was, in the early stages of the race ahead of BOSS rival Tom Abbot. The latter's Ford Capri had finished two seconds ahead of our man in the first race but Malcolm's efforts to stay ahead of him in this event eventually failed. This was partly because they were both trying to be careful not to hold up the numerous Classic Thunder cars that were lapping both of them. It was therefore a second finish at the back of the field and in fourth in his BOSS class for Malcom.

Subsequent extensive investigations, back at Dave Wilde's race engine building business in Harlow, revealed that the Sapphire's loss of engine power was due to a serious leak in the induction system. This will definitely be repaired in time for the car's next outing.

ROBERT TAYLOR

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Tailpiece

The Wise Old Man Who Planned Ahead

An older, white haired man walked into a jewellery store one Friday evening with a beautiful young girl at his side. He told the jeweller he wanted a special ring for his girlfriend.

The jeweller looked through his stock and found a £5,000 ring. The old man said, "No, I'd like to see something much more special." The jeweller went to his special stock in the safe and brought another ring back. "This one's £40,000." The young lady's eyes sparkled and her whole body trembled with excitement.

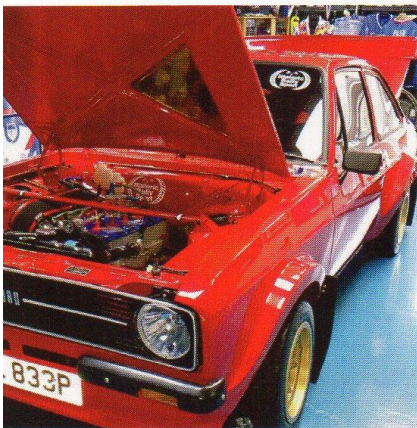
"I'll take it!" Declared the old man. The jeweller asked how payment would be made, and the old man said, "By check, but I know you need to make sure my check is good, so I'll write it now, and you can call the bank on Monday to verify funds. I'll pick up the ring on Monday afternoon."

Monday morning, the jeweller called the old man saying, "Sir, there's NO money in that account!" The old man said, "I know I know, but let me tell you about the weekend I just had!"



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Thanks to contributors who have sent in articles for inclusion in the **WAYFARER**.
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The copy date for the next issue is **4th October 2019**.

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