



RESTART

*The Quarterly Bulletin of the
Classic Trials World*

The official newsletter
of the
Association of Classic Trials
Clubs

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Issue 1, March 2021



Cover photographs :

Putwell, 2012 Edinburgh Trial

Putwell, 2012 Edinburgh Trial

Blue Hills 2, 2009 Lands End Trial

(Photos by Dave Cook)

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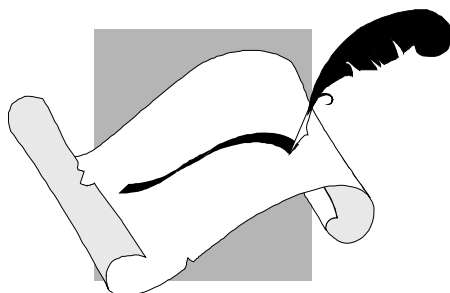
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FOR
NEXT ISSUE :

28th May

EDITORIAL

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I do hope that all is well with you all and your families. Keeping safe and not too bored. As you will know hopefully there is an end in sight and motorsport will be able to return soon.

Again with no current trials to report on—since the Foot and Mouth crisis in 2001—it was back to the archives once more A look at the June and November 2001 issues was interesting to see how we dealt with no trials to report on in those days.

Recently I was surfing the web with my other motorsport hat on and I came across an online archive for Motor Sport magazine. Jonathan wanted me to check the 1930 issues for entries about the MG Trials Teams for his research and so while I did this I had my Restart hat on. Trials don't get mentioned very much, as the magazine tends to concentrate on speed events, but I did find some (hopefully) interesting items. Thought it would make a change from The Light Car. (Although I have plenty of items from this magazine—hopefully not to be needed in the future)

The first Motor Sport one is by a passenger in the winter of 1939 and I think the 'blitz spirit was already on the way.

Also Motor Sport covered something I hadn't previously heard about—WASA. A trial's championship for women only. Just three events in 1938. I thought this would be of interest so I published the reports I could find.. I could only trace 2 short reports of that year's events. This prompted me to include some archive photos of a few of the women who have taken part in more recent trials.

Many thanks to Andrew Brown for his continuing articles on the great work he has been doing on trials hills. This issue includes part 2 and we are promised a final article later in the year.

Also many thanks to David Alderson for allowing me to include one of the Falcon Motor Club's archive articles by Mike Hayward. I was going to publish the one on the Guy Fawke's Trial, but when checking back issues I realised that I had already published half of this a few years ago, so I include the very interesting article on the March Hare instead.

The Light Car and Motor Sport only cover cars (although the Light Car does include 3-wheelers) so I needed a different source for some bike material. I asked Chris Barham and he came up with a very interesting article on the Exeter Trial for 1967.

Finally I had to design a new cover without any champions.....! Looking around Dave Cook's great website I came across a small 'Scenery and Queues' section which was perfect for two of the photos ! The Blue Hills Mine photo on the rear cover was in response to the photo on page 12. I don't think we will ever be able to compete with the crowd numbers in 1930, but hopefully can get back to the crowds of 2009.

(PS apologies for a typo in the January edition—on page 37 it should say 1936 in the title, not 1938)

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

Still in lockdown but hopefully some light at the end of the tunnel. Boris today has given us a glimmer of hope that we might be able to get out the end of March, if that's the case it will be a close run thing getting the Torbay ready.

Torbay Motor Club are pushing ahead with the Trial on April 11th, the permit has been obtained and all we need now is some good news and Keith and I to get out and bang in some stakes and to position some class 8 restarts. When and if the entries go live, rest assured if it does not go ahead a full refund will be given.

On the plus side of this enforced lay off, the trials cars have had a good looking over including a new front suspension on the Golf, a quieter exhaust on the green Scimitar, weight distribution on the white Scimitar and a Dean Partington, Aid Dommett going over on the Deere, so hopefully ready for action !!!!

Looking ahead we have had the first draft from Forestry England on their land usage, which at first looked good, but the devil is in the detail and classic trials were not mentioned and seemed to be lumped in with the Hill Climbs. Keith has written to Ian Davis at MSUK expressing our concerns and we are ready to fight our corner. Keep an eye on the ACTC website.

It does not seem so long ago we had our last council Zoom meeting but on Monday April 12th is our next meet, so if you have any concerns, please contact your club representatives and let him know, otherwise we will assume all is well.

Another on-going project of mine has been the gathering of all the

championship results which I have managed since ACTC has been going and now going back even further starting to cover the David Paul and Chester Motor Club championships in the late 70s early 80s. So I am now looking for results back to the 60s if you can help please let me know.

Whilst going through the mountains of paperwork I came across a phone number for John and Jenny West who I believe to be the only ones still around from the first meeting to actually form the ACTC back on Sunday 24th June 1979.

Some names from the past have put in a lot of hard work to get us where we are today. Early clubs were MCC, Stroud, Falcon, Black Palfrey of Kent, Sporting Owners, Ross, and Bristol. June 1980 was the first mention of a young Simon Woodall who was representing VWOC and has now shaped trials for over 40 years in numerous rolls on the council.

Over the years, ACTC has had 4 Presidents, 5 Treasurers, 10 Chairmen, 12 Secretaries, 8 Championship Secretaries and 13 Vice Chairmen. My plan is to name them in the next issue.

Norton Selwood, who is on an extended sabbatical, has been trawling through the results and has compiled a top 10 of overall winners since the inception of ACTC in 1984, his findings should appear on the website. Norton hopefully with lots of time on your hands, you could produce a top 10 of class wins??

That's all for now, stay safe and hope to catch up on the hills.

All the best Dave...

Dave Haizelden

Sect's Spin

The man from Delmonte – he says yes!

I'm writing this just as we are learning Boris' plan for exiting the Covid Lockdown and a key message is that hopefully outdoor sport can resume from 29th March. We will probably need to wait a few days for updated guidance from Motorsport UK and ACU to be issued but there is clearly optimism that our Sport can resume from April, albeit I suspect following the Covid Guidance that we became familiar with during the autumn of 2020.

While we may have top-level approval to proceed, we need to remain cognisant that some landowners have been nervous about encouraging people from a wide geography into their local areas, a concern that will hopefully decline as the vaccine rollout continues but is very real at present. While the government regulations may allow us to proceed, we need to carefully consider the longer-term PR position and tread carefully and act squeaky clean, whilst planning and participating in these events.

As far as the Torbay Trial is concerned, we still plan to run a reduced event on 11th April which will be across four private venue locations and some classic lanes which are remotely located. The MSUK Permit has been granted and coupled with the government announcement today we have some justification to travel get out and check the sections again following the winter elements and to carry out PR activity.

Another significant threat to Trials in recent months has been with Forestry England carrying out a study on the

future use of their land. There was some relief when the Rural Solutions report signposted a continuation of Motorsport but as the detail of the report was examined more closely it raised some concern as there was to be further negotiations between Forestry England, Motorsport UK and ACU to negotiate a new "Motorsport in Forests" agreement and the wording referred to Rallying and Hill Climbing. Various people contacted me concerned that the focus of such negotiations would be Rallying. Clearly the sport of Trials is significantly different to that of rallying and the footprint we leave behind us is minimal compared to that of the faster commercially supported sport, with much deeper pockets. Without the use of Forestry England land

The ACTC has therefore raised these concerns to Ian Davis (Motorsport UK Regional Rallies and Cross Country Executive) and he has since replied providing his assurance that "...our events are on the radar and will be supported when the negotiations commence".

Finally, a reminder that the next ACTC Committee meeting will be at 7pm on Monday 12th April. An item already raised for discussion is the possibility of a new Single Venue Trials Championship. If you have any particular opinion of this, or other good ideas for our sport then please discuss with your Club and if supported your Club Rep and bring forward to the meeting.

That's about it for this edition, keep safe and hope to see you out on the hills soon.

Keith Sanders

Bike Bits and Stuff

Hi all, well it's getting quite difficult to write a "Bikers bits" as I can't remember the last time I actually rode a bike! Well that's a bit of a lie as I've been riding one with pedals recently, which was hard work so now I've one with pedals and an electric motor. Makes the hills a lot easier and most of the hills around here seem to be up hills!

Is electric the future? Who knows, and it will be debated many times in the next few years no doubt. I have my own opinions as to whether it will be the main form of power for all but I can say, it's been a great help at the moment.

Few weekends back was Valentines Day, in the morning, I thought of my nearest and dearest, sat all lonely in the garage, no not the wife. She was cooking a lovely breakfast, I meant my bike. That day was meant to have been the Exmoor Trial. At least we hadn't done quite so much work towards it this year before it was cancelled as in 2020. A new date is set for 25 April so fingers crossed.

It's going to be a busy month then for me. A week before the trial we have a well known

TV production coming to my place of work to film an episode. I might just be too busy with trials planning to be caught by the cameras. What a shame lol.

So let's hope on the next edition of Restart I can report on some trials and the efforts of some riders remembering how to ride off road or we'll be discussing DIY, I'll be passing on gardening tips and essential hints on how to moth ball your bikes in the garage.

Until then, try on your riding kit, as like many I suspect it's shrunk a little, dust off your bikes and hopefully I'll see you out and about covered in mud.

All the best

Chris.

Chris Barham



(Photo by Duncan Stephens)

ALL I CAN REMEMBER OR NEARLY ALL

A PASSENGER'S EYEVUE OF
THOSE THINGS CALLED TRIALS
by K HUTCHISON

[We have, in the past, referred several times to feminine apathy in matters motoring. Therefore, congratulations are due to Kitty Hutchinson not only for being 100 per cent enthusiast, but to our good selves for discovering one who is an exception to a generalisation and, moreover, one who, apart from her keenness over sports motoring, also reveals a very high literary standard in connection with motoring subjects. Kitty is the wife of K.N. Hutchinson, the well-known trials driver, so we suppose congratulations are due to "K.N.H.," too. Kitty used to compete in the RAC Rally, etc. before her marriage, notably in an Avon Standard, and she has passengered her husband in almost all his trials, since. - Ed.]

Winter 1939, providing Dolfie's Darling Boys don't find SW19 looks like being the most peaceful I've known for a long while. No trials, no tearing round the countryside each weekend. Muddiest moments when gardening. Calloo, Callay! and Peace, perfect Peace - I hope.

No starting on Friday night in the rain and/or fog, to drive 150 miles to the start. Oh yes, we have a hood, but we've left it behind to get more tools in, or we can't see out when it's up, or it flaps on the top of our heads all the time, and there is a poisonous draught round the back of the neck when it's up, anyway. No sleeping in dank hotels which have never dried out since the roof blew off in the great storm of 1880. No sitting miserably at the foot of sections, picking mud and worms off my outer garments, knowing that if I move I

shall get wetter than I am already, despite my shapeless rubber sack, tied round with string (the belt went long ago), the pocket of which sags with stop-watch; sodden route-card (abominably got up, and printed in too small type); copy of the regulations (ten yards in seven seconds or seven yards in ten seconds ?); spanner for shockers; screwdriver for tickover; string (remembered it this time, so we didn't need it); spectacle case; tyre gauge, goggles for driver; rag for windscreen (caked with mud already); a bar of milk chocolate (ditto), slightly melted; in addition to entire finances for week-end; our special headache powders; humbler tube of headache capsules and quinine tablets for self, (these can be swallowed *en route*, with the addition, of course, of a little mud.) No violent aches and pains between the start and the first hill. No panics over missed route (we generally haven't, in the end). No noble suppression of "I knew you would," when we overshoot line B, and have to reverse back, or worse still, are not allowed to do so. No grin of delight when Guy goes through the hedge *again*, but none of those infuriating moments when he climbs something we haven't.

Too, there will not be the final blow at that depressing haven "tea at the finish," of "Why is it you always look such a haybag at the end of these things? I don't get half so untidy, and you've nothing to do but sit there and say 'left' or 'right' as the case may be." And though in more spirited moments I would like to point out that I am really rather a hot house flower, I feel that after such a day, and taking present appearance into consideration, this observation would scarcely ring true. Besides my only thought is to get clean, and loaf in a hot bath with some escapist literature - Jane Austen or Sexton Blake.

As for trials themselves, what do I remember? The cissy car we had, long ago, which stopped on everything, boiling furiously, and the day when, having packed a scrum all around to push it out of the way. Someone loosened the radiator cap; how we all vanished under a loose side-screen, (luxury – a side-screen!) and how long it took us to find the cap. And when we had a horrid little buzz-box, pale blue and chromium, masses of it. This pest had hydraulic brakes that leaked. We got very tired of returning on wet Sunday nights with only a cock-eyed handbrake. Then there was the weekend we hit one tree in Gloucestershire and another the next day in Hampshire, after which the two ends wouldn't meet, so we had to leave it there; but not before we had run over our own front wing, which mysteriously fell off, and had seen a fox crossing the snow-covered downland track in front of us. I remember thinking how cold his paws must have been. Then there was the birthday I spent being rained on in Wales, which was nearly as bad as the one of dreadful memory when I was taken to Madame Tussaud's as a child.

Not that all trials can't be good fun, but I enjoy the non-competitive moments best. In fact, during the last season I have enjoyed three trials thoroughly; the Expert's, the Southsea President's Trophy and the Lawrence Cup, all of which I spectated from the comfort of a saloon. At the first two I was accompanied by my "foolish friend" who knows nothing of trials, patters around on high heels, and insist upon stopping to gather twigs and sprigs, and though terrified of going up, or down, hills (main road), never turns a hair when I take a corner too fast.

On each occasion, too, I was comforted by the thought that the accompanying car contained Martin Soames and some Assorted Allards, who would extricate me from any pickles I found myself in, if

I looked sufficiently helpless. But the real party was the Lawrence Cup – not on the day of the trial, but when getting out the course. It was a jolly good course in the wet. We got the old Ford down into the morass near Tunnel 1, and we had L.G. and Mrs Johnson, R.G. Andrews, Mrs Hardy and me, bouncing in the back, not to mention Paul throwing his weight about in the front before we ungummed it. The next weekend was finer, but our first duty was to extricate a V8 coupe which the Hardy's had abandoned the night before in a swamp. This we moved with the aid of two ex-pine trees and part of the army, before settling down to the serious business of the day, followed by a giant picnic in a sylvan glade near Red Roads (did you know there were any?) and ending with races up Red Roads, and a neat circuit of Section Four and part of Red Roads. This went on until something vital went on the coupe, so we towed it away, and a good time was had by all.

In fact, after due consideration, trials do have their good points. After getting really wet, a little more damp, even if it is snow this time, doesn't matter: and one does get into the most lovely country: - the Black Mountains of Herefordshire, Exmoor, the Downs near Petersfield, and the Kentish Hills ... It was at the end of a Kentish observed section that I asked enthusiastically "Did you see the primroses?" The Highland Two Day Trial is good fun too, but they have few byways, so that unless the country is new to you, it is rather boring between sections. My chief recollections of this trial are that the car fell off the jack when wheel changing, a valve stuck open when letting down the tyres, and how on the Sabbath, a day of rest, with the cars impounded, ten of us took a 120-mile trip to Mallaig in one V8 saloon. The year before, the Sunday was spent at Oban, so we went on a rough day, in an open boat, to Tobermory on Mull, where we ate lots of

eggs and bacon in the middle of the afternoon, before an even colder four hours trip back.

One really good thing about trials is the competitors themselves. Weird and wonderful things may stray in occasionally, but the regulars are a pretty resourceful crowd, with a healthy disrespect for humbug and red tape in any form, together with a positive genius for finding loopholes in regulations. When this present nonsense has been called off, it will be interesting to see what form trials will take. "Nobbles" will

be back again, I hope, and no night sections and very elastic timekeeping, lots of lovely gluey sections with hardly any distance between them, and best of all, may it rain for a week beforehand, but *not* during the trial.

Meanwhile, damnation to warmongers everywhere.

Motor Sport, December 1939

WOMEN DRIVERS IN WALES

FIVE COMPETITORS STILL IN THE RUNNING FOR W.A.S.A. WAKEFIELD TROPY CONTEST

The chief trials award for women drivers during the year is the Wakefield Trophy, presented to the Women's Automobile and Sports Association by Lord Wakefield of Hythe. This is a most difficult competition, for three trials are held annually, and to remain eligible for the Trophy drivers must not lose a single mark throughout the series. If no woman driver completes the three trials with a 100% performance, the Wakefield Trophy is not awarded.

The recent Welsh Trial of the W.A.S.A., to which men drivers were also invited, was the second of this year's series, and as a result the interesting number of five drivers is now left in the running for the Trophy. These are Miss E.V. Watson (Frazer-Nash-B.M.W.), Mrs H Wood (Frazer-Nash-B.M.W.), Miss E. M. Dobson (O.M.), Miss M. Wilby (Frazer-Nash), and Mrs K. Hague (Riley).

Last year at this stage all competitors had already been eliminated, owing to bad weather on one of the events, and Miss Watson thus retained her place in the Welsh trial as No. 1 in the list of competitors, for she was the winner of the Wakefield Trophy in 1936.

The W.A.S.A. event immediately followed the International Six Days Trial, and part of the arduous route in North Wales used by the motor-cyclists was scheduled for the women drivers. The trial started from Llangollen, and on the very first hill, Fron Bache, the International competitors had experienced a lot of trouble on the previous day. Fortunately the weather was better for the W.A.S.A., but it was a creditable showing that, with competition tyres banned – a feature of W.A.S.A. events for years, now endorsed by the R.A.C. manifesto – only two women drivers stopped on the steep, narrow climb.

Then came an acceleration test on Allt-y-Rady, the famous hill close to Llangollen. It is now easier than in past years, for the surface is much improved, but cross gullies and a 1 in 3^{1/2} gradient still present difficulties. The test, in which 20 yards had to be covered in a maximum of 7 secs, was not on the steepest part of the hill, and everyone

fulfilled the required time, though Miss M. V. Milne with her Singer coupe only just managed it, taking 6^{4/5} secs. Best times were those of Mrs H. Wood's T.T. Frazer-Nash-B.M.W. (4^{1/5} secs.), and Miss E.V. Watson's Frazer-Nash-B.M.W. and Mrs K. Hague's Riley (4^{2/5} secs.). P.S. Hollings, however, one of the few men competitors, stopped with clutch slip on his Morris.

After other hills whose principal difficulty lay in the pronunciation of their names, all the competitors stopped at a hill called Fron Heulog, but fortunately for them this debacle occurred on a steep grassy stretch outside the observed section, where standard tyres on a wet surface, were at a disadvantage.

At the top of this hill, competitors had to turn round at the entrance to a farm and retrace their steps for a short distance. One did not turn, and, penetrating into uncharted country, asked the way of a local inhabitant. The only word of English possessed by this worthy appeared to be "Nowhere!" but this alone seemed so discouraging that the errant driver turned back.

A delightful picnic lunch was held in pleasant sunshine at the foot of the next hill, Blaen-y-Cym. A watersplash preceded the grassy slope, and the latter got steadily worse and worse, as water dripped off the cars. Thus, Miss Watson climbed easily, holding the first number, Mrs Hague experience such wheelspin on the Riley that it seemed as thought she must stop. She just managed to keep going, however, and remained in the running for the Trophy.

Miss K. Taylor with her Lancia was not so fortunate, for though she made a good effort, wheelspin defeated her. R.F. Field with his T-series M.G. also stopped, and thus none of the men competitors was left with a clean sheet. Miss Dobson's four-seater O.M. went up well, a fine performance for a big car,

and Miss Wilby's Frazer-Nash, helped by its solid axle, was also successful. Mrs Wood with the T.T. B.M.W. had too much power, but managed to overcome wheelspin.

Miss Milne had experienced serious trouble with her Singer's fuel supply, and only just managed to reach the lunch stop. Many competitors, less plucky, would have abandoned the attempt far earlier. Holling's clutch was still troubling him, and at Blaen-y-Cym the differential also failed, so he had to retire. He was carrying a spare, however, and by some miracle of engineering skill appeared later at the finish. Miss Bean (Morgan) failed at Blaen-y-Cym, and, helping as a travelling marshal, got so late that, with her brakes also rather weak, she decided to retire, rather than delay the event.

After lunch the route was easier, except for Blaen-y-Cym, but at Dol-y-Wern Miss Watson, when travelling well, had the fuel supply of her B.M.W. suddenly cut out, so that she stopped. Fortunately the regulations for the Wakefield Trophy only call for the ascent of five hills and success in the acceleration test, whereas six hills were actually listed in the route card, in case one of them had to be cut out. Miss Watson, therefore, is lucky not to have been knocked out.

The final check was at the top of Ally-y-Gwernant, above Llangollen, with a glorious view over the valley. Following the check came a special test, to decide the destination of various trophies, apart from the Wakefield Trophy contest.

Drivers had to coast downhill, stop astride a line, reverse back, and accelerate over a final line. The gradient was not steep enough to cause overshooting, and some of the drivers carried out the reverse so adroitly that they had evidently practised assiduously.

THOR HAMMER

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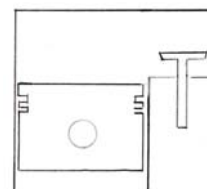
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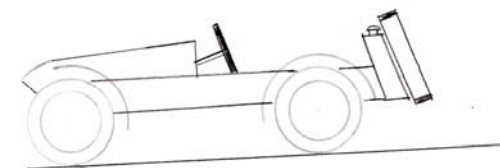


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Mrs Hague was particularly clever, stopping with her Riley's front wheels only just over the middle line, and thus having the minimum distance to reverse. Hers was the best time (17 secs.), which won her the Isabel Sander Trophy and replica, for the best performance of the day. R. F. Field with his M.G. was next best, taking 17^{2/5} secs., and winning the Association Trophy for the best performance by a visitor. Miss Dobson

again showed up well with the O.M., taking 17 secs., but Mrs Wood's time with the fast B.M.W. was spoilt by a gear jumping out. The Countess Howe Team Trophy was not awarded, as no team finished complete.

Motor Sport, August 1938

TIE FOR THE WAKEFIELD TROPHY

FINAL TEST CALLS FOR GOOD JUDGMENT IN W.A.S.A. LONDON-EXETER TRIAL

For the first time in its history the contest for the Wakefield Trophy, championship of women trials drivers, has resulted in a tie. In the final event of the W.A.S.A. 1938 series, the London-Exeter Trial, Mrs P. M. Wood, driving a Frazer-Nash-B.M.W., and Miss M. Wilby, with a Frazer-Nash, both put up exactly the same performance on formula in the special acceleration and braking test, and were thus co-winners of the Trophy.

Although the event was, according to tradition, known as the London-Exeter, actually it started and finished at Minehead! The final test was held on the sea-front at this town. Drivers had to accelerate for 100 yards, and then stop as soon as possible after crossing the final line.

Any stopping distance less than 5 yards counted as 5 yards, in order not to upset the formula, and thus although Mrs Wood stopped in 9^{ft} 11ⁱⁿ, her performance was counted equal to that

of Miss Wilby, who judged matters so exactly that she brought her Frazer-Nash to rest in just the minimum 15ft. On the acceleration part of the test, both drivers took 9 secs. Mrs Wood, with one of the fast T.T. Frazer-Nash-B.M.W.s, got away in terrific style, but braked sooner than was actually necessary. If she had allowed herself the full 5 yards in which to pull up, her acceleration time would certainly have been the better of the two.

As it turned out, the complicated formula justified itself, placing the advantage on judgment, rather than on sheer speed or engine capacity, and a tie was a worthy result.

An excellent course had been chosen for the trial preceding this final test, and it was a pity that the event was marred by drizzling rain. Miss Watson, the last winner of the Trophy, unfortunately had injured her arm, and was unable to start. The first hill was Doverhay, and despite stories that this fearsome gradient was in bad condition – indeed, the surface of the S-bend was very loose and rocky – only one car failed.

After the ascent of Edbrooke, the River Barle at Tarr Steps, the famous beauty spot on Exmoor was found to be in such spate that the water-splash was impassable, and drivers had to take another way round to reach the hill following. Here Miss Milne did very well

to make a fine climb with her Singer coupe, which has seen much service, and only two failures resulted.

A stop-and-restart test was held on Wellshead, the lower corner of which, once marked by an impressive rocky step, has now been built up. Twenty yards had to be covered in a maximum of 7 secs, and all the seven drivers who had qualified for this final trial of the championship series were well within the time. The best was Mrs Hague, who took only 3^{4/5} secs. with her Riley Sprite, and a splendid performance was that of Miss Barbara Marshall's old Anzani-GN., which clocked 4^{2/5} secs.

At Southern Wood a tricky section on wet grass caused some difficulty, and here Miss Milne, after a plucky effort,

had to retire, and Miss Dobson's Rover and Miss Bean's Morgan both failed. Beggar's Roost, on the other hand, caused no failures, and so competitors returned to Minehead for the final test. In this Mrs Hague, who has had so much success in rallies this year, was expected to do well, and put up easily the fastest acceleration time (8 secs) but left the braking so late on the wet surface her car slid on for more than 38^{ft}.

Motor Sport, November 1938

(See pages 13 and 21 for some of the women who have continued the tradition of competing in trials. I apologise to all the others I had no space for Ed.)



J E S Jones, 847cc M-Type MG, on Beggars Roost, MCC Land's End Trial 19th April 1930

Mike Dalby sent this photograph to Jonathan, who is researching MG history in classic trials. I couldn't resist publishing it in these difficult times.

Will we ever see crowds like this again.....? (Ed.)

Jill Ollis, 2012
Exeter Trial,
Yamaha Serraw
on Simms



(Photo by Dave
Cook)



Some of the
women taking
part in more
recent trials

Celia Walton & Julia
Browne,
Edinburgh 2010 on
Excelsior

(Photo by Jonathan
Toulmin)

Xanthia Petherick,
2017 Torbay Trial,
Class B1



(Photo by Dave Cook)

SENSATIONAL CLEE HILLS TRIAL, 2003 by Jonathan Toulmin & Andrew Brown

On behalf of MAC, Simon Woodall, aided and abetted by Barbara Selkirk and Paul Fairbanks, has started the 2003 trials championship year by putting down a very serious challenge for the prestigious 'Trial of the Year' award. Insiders will know that the Clee Hills Trial and the Allen Trial (held in the Bristol area at the end of the year) have both won it numerous times and the selectors have had to widen their criteria (remember that this award is discretionary) to include 'most improved' or 'best potential' to prevent it becoming an annual two-horse race.

There are, I think, three main reasons for the incredible quantity of positive comments made both during, and after, this year's MAC Clee trial. Firstly, it was perfect trialling weather with watery winter sun, and just the occasional light shower, after days of rain which had left the hills in prime condition. Secondly, the Clee uses an excellent set of sections based on the 'perfect' formula for an excellent trial – one third easy (should be climbed by all), one third testing (should be climbed by a majority), one third difficult (to get a result). OK, so it didn't quite work out that way on the day, but the intention was there. Thirdly, Simon had tried really hard to achieve what many regard as the perfect result – at least one from each class in the top ten overall. What he actually achieved was seven out of eight classes in the Top 15 and only 10 points separating 1st and 15th places. That, as trialist Dave Haizelden has remarked, is a result! And, by the way, there are really stunning views along the route – it makes a difference.

To achieve this balance between the classes, Simon used more cunning

plans than Baldrick on a good day. Simon refined the tactics used in previous Clee Hills Trials in levelling the playing field – different tyre pressure limits, different start lines, additional restarts, even different sections! Simon also uses at least two sections that favour larger wheeled cars – Round Oak and Hungerford – then he adds tyre pressure restrictions for 7/8, and a restart for 8 only, on Hungerford. The result? Hungerford was cleaned by the Tucker-Peake Peugeot 205 GTi in Class 1, two Austin 7s and the Bennett MG J2 in Class 2, Giles Greenslade (Beetle) in class 4, three big-engined Beetles in class 6, and no one else. Simon certainly has a lot of experience of running the Clee, but it's this attention to detail that gives the best chance of achieving the sort of result that we had this year and leaves a majority of competitors with smiles on their faces.

The event attracted an excellent entry of 76 cars, of which 71 made it to the starter's flag. That it was a tough event is shown by the fairly high scores (it was won with 25 penalties, one competitor finishing with 92 penalties!) and with a dozen competitors retiring during the event, at least two within two miles of the start!). Simon again kindly agreed to lend me his 2-litre VW Buggy for the event.

Simon and I had, for some time, discussed the possibility of running a sort of figure-of-eight route setting competitors off in different directions to reduce delays at sections by running several sections simultaneously. I cannot claim that this is an entirely original idea. It was used on a previous Clee Hill Trial – that run by the Hagley and District Light Car Club in 1947 - and is described in Austen May's wonderful book "More Wheelspin". Last year, there had been long delays at Round Oak, so Simon devised a way to apply the formula to a modern Clee event and retain the wonderful Boyne Arms, on

Lord Boyne's Burwarton Estate, as our start and finish venue. One bad aspect of trailing is the need to get up early on a Sunday morning! To minimise the time taken for signing-on, and scrutineering, it was decided to do the legally required stuff at the start (insurance, MoT, lights), and the eligibility bit part way round the course – and somewhere with almost infinite parking space! This event was going to get talked about!

Simon's plan was to run a double figure of eight course, which meant that, from the start, some competitors went left and others went right! This was repeated further on in the event, and with the 'club sport' event missing out the more difficult sections, there were five different routes on this year's Clee trial! From the start, some competitors headed onto the Estate to do first what were really the last three sections of the trial, so they would make up time at the end of the event by missing them out. This meant that the hard-working marshals on the estate were working from 9.30am until gone 6pm, but they did have a couple of hours off in the middle of the day, and they were only about a mile from the pub!

For most, the first section was Farlow bank – a steep, muddy and very slippery track right in the village, - which is actually the Queen's highway (the tarmac road is not!). Farlow has been used for trailing almost as long as we have used Shelsley! It caught out many, none of class 2 getting more than halfway up, and only two in Class 7 seeing the top of the section. The first timed test was on Catherton Common, only a stone's throw from both Titterstone Clee and Clee Hill itself. We could then relax for several miles to the infamous "Round Oak" – a new section last year, and a real challenge. It needs fine judgement as the mud and ruts stops anything that isn't travelling fast enough, but too much power, and the camber takes you into the ditch. I was

running as car number 21, and when I arrived there was no queue at all, so the scheme seemed to be working. We were lucky to get to the top, as I got a puncture on the one of the rear tyres, so we lost a few minutes changing it. Later, there were long queues at Round Oak, one competitor saying afterwards that he waited almost 90 minutes for his turn, but that it was well worth the wait! Curiously, many of the kit cars and saloons failed but the MG Maestro, a Golf GTi and Adrian Tucker-Peake's 205 GTi all got up. It took ages to extricate some who had failed and required the recovery Land Rover to stay behind the failed car on the track with a winch rope going past the car, round a pulley on a tree ahead and to the left, then back to the car. Competitors were then winched out of the right-hand ditch and back into the ruts before reversing out.

The drive from Church Stretton is glorious - over the Long Mynd, to Ratlinghope, a very easy section in wonderful countryside. Amazingly, there was a long queue, caused, apparently, by the marshal being an hour late. Then the short drive to the scrap yard of Gatten's Gamble. The section was cunningly marked, 6 marks being spread over 400 yards, and the next six over 4 yards! In fact, few failed, and those that did, failed at the very bottom of the section. But it is a joy to drive, with more sensational views at the top looking straight into Wales.

A short drive took us to Adstone, where some thought the descent to the river was almost too challenging. A real traditional section, (it is a public road, but not marked on an OS map) with restart for some, but very few failed it. Whilst some looped round to Round Oak, we went straight to Hungerford. The Buggy was performing well, and we were still penalty-free at this stage. But, as last year, we failed the restart, positioned amongst horrendously deep

ruts. Later competitors at Hungerford were delayed by half an hour or so when someone in a Land Rover, entirely unconnected with the event, decided to exercise his legal right to drive **down** this byway. In attempting this, he rolled the vehicle, blocking the track. Luckily for him, MAC had arranged a recovery Land Rover, which eventually extricated the upturned vehicle. None in class 8 were to get passed the Hungerford restart, so we were still in a class-leading position as we headed for Easthope Woods.

The route runs along an old railway line for a mile or so, deep in the woods and here MAC had arranged a number of activities – a roller check of our differential, a noise test, and a check of tyres. Then there was a tight timed test requiring care more than speed, and then two sections – Major's Leap for class 8 and Ippikin's Rock for the other classes. Ippikin's Rock gained a restart for some classes although this was not shown in the route book, and it stooped half of the trial. Major's Leap I had helped to clear the week before the trial and thought that it was impossible. No one got anywhere near the top last year, and the top part is much steeper than where everyone was failing last year. We got a '6', third best score, but amazingly Peter Fear, Paul Bartleman, and current champion Adrian Marfell made it all the way to the public road at the top.

After that, things went down hill for Pat and I, not helped on The Jenny Wind (old winch cable railway track, and hence extremely steep) when I tackled the hill with the hand brake still on! The Class 8 deviation on Harley Bank stopped everyone, although Adrian Marfell got within a stone's throw of the top. We really went for it on Meadowley, getting an excellent 4 only for the section to be later cancelled. This left only the sections on the Burwarton Estate to be tackled - three sections and

the third special test. All of these were as slippery as ice, and I got scores like telephone numbers. On Hillside, the results show that class 1 (front wheel drive), who had tackled it in the morning, got fewer penalties than all the other classes.

We got back to the Boyne Arms in good time and enjoyed one of Janet's superb meals. It was probably the best trial I have ever done, and my thanks to Simon Woodall, his chief marshal Paul Fairbanks and the dozens of other officials and marshals who enabled us to have a superb day's motor sport. (And thanks for the loan of the car – sorry, but I got it dirty!).

When Roger Warren's computer had done its stuff on the scores, it was congratulations to a delighted Terry Ball (VW Beetle) who won overall with Adrian Tucker-Peake for his Class 1 win and second overall, and to Dave Haizelden for third overall on the same number of points as Adrian but slower on the special tests. Dave Turner's BMW 316i won class 3 (with former Shelsley Special record holder Andy Smith bouncing) and was fourth overall but a special mention must go to Peter Fear who had an absolutely cracking day driving the Dingo, cleaning Hillside when the next best was Paul Bartleman on a 7 and beating Adrian Marfell by one point to take class 8 and fifth overall. Winston & Isabel Teague (Austin 7) won the cup as best MAC Member. Pat and I were pleased with 6th in class (out of 19) beating a couple of the established stars.

If you have read the considerable correspondence on the Classical Gas Web Community, then you will know what a huge success the event was. Now I have to follow that, for next year Simon will be driving his Buggy again, and I will be doing the organising bit.

2016 Clee Hills Trial by Jonathan Toulmin

I wonder whether many competitors in classic trials appreciate the amount of work required to put on these events. The Midland Automobile Club has been promoting this event since 1994, I can scarcely believe that I have been involved, one way or another, for all of those last twenty-three years (or 21 events over that time). There are just five of us to share out all the work, and it seems to be more bureaucratic and more expensive each year. Just recently, Shropshire Council have started charging, impressively, for permission to drive along public rights of way (footpaths and bridleways). Some land-owners now charge proper money for the use of their land – it used to be that a bottle of whisky was sufficient recompense. The MSA fees seem to keep going up as well as the MSA-agreed fees to the Forest Enterprise for the use of their land – irrespective of whether we have one or ten sections on their land. We use three or more sections on National Trust land, so we pay them the same amount as the Forestry people.

In 2015, the Exeter really ran a week later than usual. The club felt that with just one week between the Exeter and the Clee, there would be a very substantial loss of entries. We could not delay the event by a week because that was the Exmoor date, and the calendar is very busy until the end of April, by which time the club is into its sprint and hillclimb events. So there was little option but to take a year's sabbatical for the Clee. This meant that, when we came to inspect many of the sections which had not been used for two years, some were rather overgrown, whilst others had very deep ruts resulting from over use by heavy 4x4s. The heavy rains cannot have helped. One section

had literally disappeared! Within the Priors Holt forest, we have used eight different tracks over the years. One called PH5 to us, was just an easy straight (but not steep) section, but ideal for class 0. Just thirty yards away was PH4, a very different challenge, very steep at one point and very slippery beyond that, and suitable for all other classes. When we came to check them last autumn, PH5 was in good condition and needed no work. What a difference those thirty yards made! Instead of the approach to PH4 there was a massive wall of timber. Forest Enterprise had been doing a bit of tree felling and put their timber in a neat row some fifty feet long and eight feet high of tree trunks, all about fifteen feet long right across the entrance to PH4. Elsewhere in the woods we managed to find a couple of new sections, one actually created by the logging operations. We now no longer want to run sections solely for the benefit of class 0 competitors for the sake of the marshals. Some travel considerable distances to marshal on our events, but they are not happy if they are allocated a class 0 section where they see just a dozen or so competitors drive an easy section – not much to get excited about!

But the team set to work, and put together a challenging event. Adrian Tucker-Peake was in charge and resolved the many problems that always crop up before an event. One idea, to try to attract new blood into the sport, was to offer a 50% reduction on the full entry fee to just £20, and we got five new drivers on their first or second classic trial. We also offered a financial incentive of £5 to enter early – but with only moderate success. Late entries really do make life difficult for the organisers, especially when running a "twin loop" system as we have done on the Clee for many years. The basic idea is that half the entry head off east and do half the sections in the morning, and then go west in the afternoon to do the

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other sections, whilst the other half of the competitors do it the other way round. This means that we can run a 2-minute cycle on the sections, which dramatically reduces delays. It does mean that the marshals are out for longer, and it can mean a long "lunch break" for marshals whilst waiting for the second group to turn up if there are not enough entries. (Alternatively, you could shorten the loops, but this would mean missing out good sections). With just a week to go before entries closed (they had already been open for eight weeks), we had just 50 competitors, so the decision was taken to revert to the more usual single route system. This decision cannot be taken at the last minute as the time for marshals to be on station has to be notified to them in good time, the running order has to be decided and competitors told of their start times. Route books and score cards for the sections have to be written and printed – it all takes time.

Of course, sod's law happened and we got 20 more entries in the last week, which would have been just enough to run the twin loop arrangement, but it was too late to revert back. Even on the single loop method, we needed four different route books as one of the sections which would have been tackled by both classes 7 & 8 was in evil mood, so the Clerk of Course restricted it to class 8 only. So classes 7 and 8 each had their own route books, and there was a special one for class 0, and one for everyone else. MAC tries to put itself in the mindset of the competitor. In previous years we have started the trial quite late – first car away at 9am being rather more sociable than some events which start at 8am. I well remember doing one such trial "down south". Signing-on was at 7am and that was almost half an hour from our B&B, so we needed to leave there at 6.30, so up at 5.30am! The nice B&B lady would not cook us a "full English" at 5.45am on a Sunday morning, but she kindly left us a

sliced loaf of bread, a toaster and some cereal for a "do it yourself" breakfast. That was starting the day on the wrong foot, so MAC starts the Clee later. With a two-loop system, we can still get 80+ competitors to the finish in daylight, even in January. To reduce the inevitable rush on a Sunday morning, we offer Saturday evening signing-on and scrutineering, so competitors can arrive at the start on Sunday morning just five minutes before their start time! This does mean that the scrutineers and signing-in team have to work on both Saturday evening and Sunday morning. MAC is extremely fortunate to have the services of expert scrutineers John & June Blakeley who come a long way to south Shropshire. They were assisted by a couple of MAC stalwarts Phil Nuthall and Brian Sanders.

What goes around comes around, as they say. For some years, the start and finish of the Clee has been at the Craven Arms Hotel, but the car-park there is small, and the hotel was being refurbished again! So C of C Adrian moved the start a couple of miles north to The Affcot Lodge Hotel on the A49. My first Clee Hills Trial was in 1992 and the start was at the same hotel, then known as The Travellers Rest.

The first car was away at 8.30. Class 8 led the way to the sensational Strefford Wood 1 section, climbable in drier weather but not in 2016. The VW Buggies of Ian Davis, Andrew Curtis and Simon Woodall all managed a "1", but even more impressive was Pete Hart's climb in his Marlin to also score "1", beating the twenty other class 7 & 8 cars. We knew that the Strefford sections run slowly, so the lower classes started 20 minutes after the last class 7 car, and they headed straight to Harton Wood – a lovely but easy "warmer-up" section. It has been run for class 0 only in the past, but this year it was for all except classes 7 & 8. The cunningly positioned start line, in a

heavily cambered area with a short steep mound, and the double restart (for some) caught out 14!

Everyone then converged on Flounder's Folly. Already those twenty minutes (and quite a bit more) had been caught up by the leading classes 6 to 0 competitor. Flounder's Folly starts with an extremely slippery bank which stopped quite a few, including your scribe. Dean Partington was the only driver to see the top of "The Folly", but a few class 8s and Dudley Sterry driving the class 7 version of his MG J2 all scored "2" there. The cunning score equalisation system was applied here which really levelled up the scores across the classes. In MCC speak, there is an "A" board for each class, but its position is not determined until after the event!! The best score in each class on the section is deemed to be section ends for all in that class, and so it is scored as a clear, and the same number of penalties is deducted from every competitor in that class. So if the best competitor in (say) class 3 scores a "5", then five points are deducted from the actual score that the other competitors in class 3 achieved. This means that at least one competitor from every class scores a zero on that section. This system was applied to two sections on the trial which all competitors (in classes 1 to 8) tackled, and those sections were identified to competitors in their route books.

After a six-mile run mostly along a winding B road, it was the appropriately-named Hungerford Steps, first used in 1939. There was a bit of a queue there as it is a very long section, and a real joy to drive, except perhaps by the four that failed it. Then another twelve miles of fast B-road to another old section – Meadowley Wood first used in 1947. This is a real challenge of slippery mud through the trees, and what is slowly becoming a little gully in the lower reaches. Despite the lack of any

restarts, four in class 8 and four in class 7 failed Meadowley. Only classes 2 and 3 failed to see the top, but most impressively the front-wheel drive cars of Dave Haizelden, Paul Allaway and James Shallcross all went clear.

The Jenny Wind (a dead straight increasingly steep track of an old winch-cable railway). In a dry year, Dave Haizelden has got his Golf to the top, but this year, no competitor passed the "Section Ends" board, the best being Dean Partington's "2"; the class 8 boys had a difficult start line on the gradient, whereas all others started from the hard track which crosses the foot of the section. Most notable attempts were from Aaron Hazelden (Reliant SS1) with a "4", the "5" scores of Dudley Sterry (in the class 7 version of his MG J2), David Golightly (Model T Ford), Sam Holmes class 4 Beetle and David Haizelden's Golf – how does he do that?

Further along the National Trust's wonderful woods on Wenlock Edge was Easthope 1. More very slippery clay up through the trees at an angle to the main slope, a straight section until the 3 marker where there was a sharp left turn with deep ruts. Class 8 had a difficult hairpin from the old railway line to get onto the section and that caught out five drivers. Of the rest, most got a "3" or a "5", but Dean Partington (DP Wasp) again went clear and Ian Davis (Buggy) stopped a gnat's whisker short of the one marker. Class 7 had a straight run at the hill. Sterry in the old J2, in class 7 spec. nearly made it and several drivers got a "3" where deep ruts and a hole were developing.

The later cars were getting well and truly stuck fast, some taking 15 to 20 minutes to be manhandled back down the track. Time was ticking by, and eventually, the section was cancelled for all except class 8, a necessary action. In line astern, we all trooped off along the railway line (disused!) to the next section – Hill Top for classes 7 & 8. This

Some more
women trials
drivers in more
recent times

Kelly Thomas, 2010
Northern Trial on
Ladyside

*(Photo by Jonathan
Toulmin)*



Emma Flay,
Troll, on the 2004
Exeter

*(Photo by Derek
Hibbert)*

Nicola
Wainwright,
2004 Mechanics
Trial, on Alf's
Delight

*(Photo by Lens 2
Image)*



Clee Hills Trial 2003

Start at the Boyne
Arms



*Photos by Mike
Hayward*

Keith Dobinson &
Richard Farmer,
Class 0 Austin 7 on
Gatten's Gamble



Adrian & Liz
Tucker-Peake,
Class 1 Peugeot
205 GTi on
Gatten's Gamble

Dudley Sterry
& David
Price,
Class 7
MG J2 on
Prior's Holt 1



Stuart Harrold & Chris
Phillips, Troll, on
Widow Hause



Clee Hills Trial 2016

*Photos
by Mike Castle*

David Gollightly &
Carla Smith, Class 5
Morton & Brett Boar on
Flounder's Folly

2006 Northern Trial

*(Photos by Pat
Toulmin)*

Adrian Dommett,
Overall Winner,

Class 2, Wolsley
Hornet on Darling Howe



Dave Haizelden &
Jack Selwood,
Class 1 VW Golf on
Flounder's Folly



Marlins waiting for
Forest Yump

was incredibly, I mean ridiculously, slippery. No one got passed the 11 marked and some didn't get that far – except for a certain Dean Partington who calmly drove out of the top of it onto the main road!

The 'lower' classes tackled "Ippikin's Rock" just a few yards further along the same bottom track. It is all about the very tight hairpin bend. Somehow Norman Lloyd got his massive 1920s Bentley around the hairpin, but it stopped seven others though including a 1933 three-wheeler Morgan, a pre-war Riley, a Ford Ka, two Beetles and a pair of Suzuki X90s – nothing like a bit of diversity in our sport!

Everyone then headed south for just a mile to Longville for the first timed test – a downhill one with line B off up a side track to the right, a reverse, then downhill again on the main track to line C. Eight got it wrong. Comfortably quickest there was Charlie Knifton (VW Scorpion) on 13.3 seconds with Ian Davis' Buggy taking more than twice as long – how can that be?

Again the route divided with class 8 heading back to Strefford for another section in the woods the start of which was again extremely slippery, with a deep gully for the right-side wheels to fall into. That stopped six, but seven got through and got a very long way up the grassy track. Ian Davis made up for his slow Longville test by being the only person to go clear with Stuart Bartlett's Cannon stopping just short of the ends board for a "1". The other five all got "2s. Meanwhile the others were tackling Heywood Common, a lovely old track in a deep gully, first used as a trials section in 1948. Classes 0, 1 & 2 had a bit of a run at it, the rest started on the hill. All but eight got up, but the real test was the dead level exit track, but deeply rutted from prior use by the 4x4 brigade, and if you got it a bit wrong, you either stuck with wheels in the air, or you slid into the ditch. This caused some delays.

Next section for all except class 0, was Castle on the Long Mynd; again a very old trials hill in a very steeply sided valley in trees with mostly a base of rock. A few years ago it was just really a class 0 section, but the winter weather had transformed it to such an extent that, before remedial action was taken, it would have been a class 8 stopper! As it was, despite the rock steps and the severe camber changes, it stopped just two – but I would not have missed it for the world – sensational!

Some competitors then headed for the Ratlinghope (pronounced Ratch-up) observed test. This is another track that has suffered from erosion. The test was through the stream at the bottom, something that I don't like. I can't really work out the point of a timed test through water! But, despite the rain, it was little more than three inches deep (that's 7.5 cm for the younger generation!). Gatten's Gamble was next – a long but easy section which takes you the top of the ridge with spectacular views to Wales. After about three miles of green lanes, including the Jack Mitton Way along the very top of the Long Mynd, it was into Priors Holt for the final two sections.

The new section in the woods, which we called PH7, was not really a success. For the vast majority you either failed the steep bank at the start for an "11" or "12", or got out of the top.

Then it was to the challenging Priors Holt 1 section, steep and stoney, and these days bumpy from considerable use by the bikers. Some had to tackle it in the dark, and reversing down must have been a nightmare. Partington and Davis were the only class 8 drivers to see the top. Sterry and Hart got there in class 7 as did, most remarkably, the **class 4** Beetles of Sam Holmes and John White!

At the end of a long day, it transpired that the old cars and new drivers had done well. Best performance went to young Aaron Haizelden (Reliant SS1), tied on penalties with his father Dave (VW GTi) and Sam Holmes (1300cc VW Beetle), and David Golightly's Model T Ford – all of them on just 5 penalties – pity the Model T didn't win overall – now that would have been something to talk about! James Shallcross' 205 was just one point behind and the high-tec modern stuff was sixth overall on 7 penalties, that being Dean Partington's amazing DP Wasp special which was the only car to climb "Flounders Folly".

History of the Falcon Motor Club's March Hare Trial by Mike Hayward

Unlike the Guy Fawkes the March Hare was a local Trial, using hills in the Herts, Beds and Bucks area rather than in the Cotswolds. The first running of the March Hare was in 1958, but a trial was first held in June 1956 and again in 1957 when it was known as the Midsummer Trial. The trouble with running a Trial in midsummer, is that you can't see the tracks for the brambles growing alongside, which means a lot of hard work clearing the tracks before you can run the event. So, in 1958 the date was moved to March and given the name The March Hare. Tucker was Clerk of the Course and arranged two starts, one in Royston the other in Hatfield. The finish was at the club's headquarters, The Chequers in Woolmer Green. There was one serious incident that was reported on the 1958 March Hare when some competitors' cars blocked the road at Hill House and a local resident was upset when the navigator of one car refused to move it.

As with the Guy Fawkes, the March Hare seemed to have changes to the

On Hill Top, no one got passed the 11 marker, except Dean who calmly drove out of the top! Mel Ellis (Beetle) well deserved her class win against much more experienced drivers to finish tenth overall. Bill Bennett (1933 MG J2) won his class as expected, but how about Norman Lloyd's 4.5L Bentley taking 2nd in class 2, gosh – what a motorcar! Chris Webb drove his Austin 7 superbly to win the clubman's class, just in front of Tim Barrington, on his first ever classic trial, and his first event in the reworked ex-David Bache 1600cc Dellow.

event every year. In 1959 Telegraph Hill was introduced to the route. This was, and indeed still is, a very steep hill on the Icknield Way Roman Road between Lilley and Pegsdon. It must have been one of the toughest hills in the trial. Today it is part of a nature reserve. Another hill that must have been used about that time was Jeremiah's Nob, a chalk track in Barton-le-Clay which was quite easy in the dry but quite impossible in the wet. Another hill that was included was a hill Tucker called "Harlington" because it was at Harlington. Today it has a nice slab of concrete halfway up which would make a good place for a restart. Back in 1959 the hill was just a nice muddy climb. According to the Autosport report of March 20th, 1959 the start was in the Stevenage New Town Centre car park so perhaps there was a touring assembly type of thing to a central start in Stevenage.

The report went on "There was what should have been a little simple navigation and time-keeping to keep the bouncers amused between observed sections; it is a curious thing, that this never fails to catch someone! Jeff Bradford was not alone as a victim and I remember that last years the bag was quite impressive. The first bit of this

"simple navigation" led or should have led to Chalk Hill, where there was a timed test of the double-stop-and-go-restart and-flying-finish variety. There should have been an engine-restarting test also but had to be cut out because a carload of marshals failed to find the hill. Next came Telegraph, a straight grass climb which was not in last year's route: two days before the event this was in a most interesting condition but by Sunday there was nothing in it. Hill House at Barton-le-Clay is a very long climb on, not surprisingly, chalky clay. Half an hour before the arrival of the field it was extremely slippery, but it suddenly dried out and was as aforesaid, caused no trouble. Then came Harlington, another hill which was not in last year's menu. This was a beauty up another grassy muddy lane between banks. The first few cars could not manage more than a length or so of progress and then John Bracey arrived with the Anglia and surprised everyone by storming up into sub-section two. Jack Davies followed suit with the VW and this remained the extent of everyone's travel until Norman Tyler rocketed to top at tremendous speed, pursuing an unsuspecting photographer into a thorny resting place in a bank. As we mentioned before the only other cleans here came from Ron Tyler's Cannon, Ron Warren's Dellow and Derek Fleming's Primrose.

The trial then moved down into the area south of Tring and Berkhamsted, where the first item was a timed climb of Hastoe Hill. Derek Fleming made the best time here, with Betty Tucker-Peake and Norman Tyler next up. Jeff Bradford was the fastest sports car and John Tucker-Peake the fastest saloon. At Bellingdon Bottom there was a slightly grassy lane which caused no real trouble, followed by a stop-and-restart test on Hawridge: cars had to clear the line within three seconds from the marshal's signal. two cars only failed on this count but a further seven

were failed for running back across the line. Tunnel Hill had previously been used as a downhill test but this year it was an observed climb which again caused no real trouble.

Back to Matford near Wheathampstead whence there was a Y-shaped driving test to be used only as a tie-decider. Thence to High Heath Farm near Codicote, where the last two sections were laid out on a high bank at one end of a grass field. The first of these, High Heath itself, was a short, narrow, tight S-bend round trees. The only saloon to get a clean was D Taylor's Dauphine. Jack Davis and E.R Haywood, both in VW's got to top but motored round the outside of the marker flags at five. John Bracey (Anglia), Cliff Smith (Minor) and John Tucker-Peake took the conventional route and scored two each. Jeff Bradford and Reg Horsnell climbed clean for the sports cars, but their copybooks were already irretrievably blotted. The specials had a stop-and-restart at the 8 board: they mostly climbed clean despite this, although the hill caught Daphne Freeman, Ian Wilson and R. J. Dudley in an Austin Powered Riley. Sapsed's Stopper was another excellent hill which showed how well the inbuilt handicapping system can work. It was nearly climbed by several saloons and yet with only slight modifications, it stopped the specials unless they were superbly driven.

So, to sign off, clean up and take tea at the Chequers, and a thoroughly good event was over for another year. Congratulations to "Tucker" whose untiring efforts and clever organisation make these all-comers trials the success they so richly deserve to be. The main award, the appropriately named "Mad Hatter", for Best performance went to, N Tyler. Best performance by an open special, Mrs B Tucker-Peake (Tucker MG). Best performance by an open car, P. G. Gough (Morgan). Best performance by

a saloon J. P. Davis (VW). Team Award, The Falconers (R Warren, D Fleming and Mrs B Tucker-Peake).

There must have been a mad panic before the 1960 March Hare as bad weather the week before the event was to take place, meant that several hills in the Tring/Berkhamsted area had to be abandoned and an entirely new route drawn up. The new route included some hills for a second time, more rain kept them in a sticky state. There were only three clean sheets on the day, those of M.J. Lawrence (Lawford), R.E. Warren (Dellow) and E.G. Jones (VW). Mr B.B Jones (Morgan Plus Four) was also clean until the last hill which he failed. Had Mr Jones cleaned the hill there would have been at least one clean sheet from each category.

Starting from Woolmer Green the route led to the first two sections at High Heath Farm where the first section, Sapsed's Stopper, started steadily then climbed sharply up a steep bank. Further along was High Heath, which climbed the bank going between and around a couple of trees. Next came "Constreet Lane" which had a stop-restart which caught out seven competitors. The route continued to a muddy track which led to "Rabbit Run" which was a timed section around a bend in a fair amount of mud. Seven miles further on led the competitors to "Chalk Hill", which was a test for ties. This involved a timed run over three stop and restart lines, the fastest being D. Fleming and R. Warren.

"Agnells Lane" was the next section with another stop and restart which foiled only three competitors as did "Constreet Lane" second time around. "Hill House" was a good long climb necessitating keeping above the ruts, which only two MG's failed to do, a TC and a TF. The competitors then headed for "Telegraph Hill" before returning via "Chalk Hill", Agnells Lane" and the "Rabbit Run" to

the field to finish the event with the two sections with which they had begun it. It was noticeable that several competitors reversed their earlier performances by climbing the one they had failed before and vice versa. The event finished at the Roebuck Hotel near Stevenage where tea was served. Results. Mad Hatter Trophy: M.J Lawrence (Lawford) 0 marks lost. Class winners: B.B Jones (Morgan Plus Four) 5: R.E. Warren (Dellow) 0: E.G Walsh (VW) 0: First class awards: A.C. Hobbs (Volvo) 3: K.W. Hobbs (Dauphine) 3: B.A Wilson (Dauphine) 3: J.P. Davies (VW) 4: J.F. Bracey (Anglia) 5:

The regulations for the March Hare of 1962 stated, "All competitors finishing the course without fault, complying with all requirements and instructions, would receive the same award". Other than the category awards, there were 35 competitors of the 53 that started, who won first class awards. The trial started at 12 noon from Hemel Hempstead and took the competitors to nine hills in different parts of the Chilterns. Six of the hills were straightforward observed climbs. The other three hills had tests laid out on them, one of which was used as a tie decider.

Despite continuous rain the day before, conditions were not too bad and only the Minis' and one or two Sprites' had insufficient ground clearance. A new hill used by the club for the first time was "Boss Hill" which did not fail many competitors. Other more challenging hills included, Tunnel Hill, Hawridge, Hastoe and Bellingdon which were used in both directions. Competitors began arriving back at the finish in Berkhamsted in the late afternoon, where they all sat down to tea. Class winners: B. Hobbs (Sprite), F. Manyweathers (Ford), N. Calvert (VW), P. Le Couteur (Dellow). Team award: A. Hay (Lotus), P. Le Couteur (Dellow), R. Horsnell (A40).

1963 and the 10th anniversary of the March Hare. Despite heavy rain the previous day, which caused one hill to be cancelled, the "Clerk of the Weather" smiled kindly upon the 46 competitors. From the start in Stevenage Town Centre, there was a short run to Nup End, a short section of about 50 yards which was a nice little appetizer to the start of the event. Nearby "High Heath" proved to be the decider of the day with only 17 competitors making a clean climb. Amongst the failures were, four Volkswagens, two Sprites, one Special and several Ford saloons.

The short lane at Nuffin was ideal for a special test which was a timed hill from line A to line B, with the time counted in seconds and fractions plus the distance beyond B in feet to the nearest foot. Ron Warren had the fastest climb and also slid the farthest beyond line B. Agnells Lane was an easy climb up a green lane between high hedges. A run through the lanes took the competitors to Telegraph I, with its chalky surface and snow drift at the top. The passengers were able to regain their breath again on the easier Telegraph II. The trial then headed back along the lanes to Nuffin, Agnells Lane and the last hill, Sapseds Stopper. Tea was taken at the Roebuck Inn and before all the cakes had vanished, the results were ready. In this event the competitors were competing against the club, so a "clean", won a first-class award. Of the 46 entrants only the class winners and 10 others achieved this target, so second-class awards went to 14 competitors who failed to complete all but one of the requirements for a first-class award. Class winners: W. Vincent (Ford), R. Horsnell (Austin), T. Wood (Messerschmitt), D. Frost (Dellow).

In 1964 The March Hare started in Hemel Hempstead and finished in Berkhamsted. Starting in Hemel Hempstead, meant that the route must have used Tunnel Hill in Nettleden and

Hill Farm near Cholesbury. It is possible that the route also included The Crong near Dancers End. In 1965 the 59 competitors in the March Hare Trial started from Zeneth Motors in Stevenage at 12.30 pm, to follow a 40-mile course to finish at the Roebuck Hotel. On the way to Latchford Farm, near Puckeridge, where Seven sections were laid out, competitors faced the first timed test before traveling to Kings Hill, where there was a stop and restart test. Despite the good weather and apparent easiness of the course, only slightly more than a third of the entry were clean. On the way back to the Roebuck the route led through another stop and restart test which caused little trouble and the second test to decide ties. Class winners: D. Woodard (Mini Cooper), R. Cullen (Anglia), H. Mawson (Imp), M. Dockray (Dellow). Team award: Falcons (R. Warren, V. Prior and Miss M. Tucker-Peake).

The March Hare of 1966 had the tea stop dropped to avoid route troubles. What sort of troubles isn't reported. The start was at Zenith Motors, Stevenage with a route 15 miles long and finishing at Latchford Farm near Puckeridge. As you will have noticed from the 1966 March Hare, the trial's road mileage was becoming shorter and the venues less. The trend continued in 1967. The first hill may have been called Bury Lane as it's the continuation of a lane of the same name that runs from north of Datchworth to Watton Road, which links Knebworth to Bragbury End. This is now a Bridleway/Footpath. After Bury Lane the route then included Leatherfield Common followed by Kings Hill. Leatherfield Common is south of Bennington and just north of Blue Hill and is a tree lined mud-covered track between two fields. Kings Hill is a little further west between Haultwick and Levens Green and passes through a Ford before a short climb on a mud-covered stony track. This was followed by a road section to Latchford Farm,

Colliers End, where the remaining sections were held.

By 1968 the trial had become a single venue event, which that year was held at Ringshall Farm near Hemel Hempstead. Despite the fact that only a single venue was used, the trial was still run under Classic rules. Class winners were, P.Marr, B.Walsh, P.Kerridge, F.Jackson, D.Piper, P.LeCoureur. Special Award to C.Morrell, Best Lady: Miss Ann Robbins. Other Falcon award winners were H.Frost, R.Robbins (both 1st), M.Dockray, M.Murray, B.Butler, E Walsh, Mrs. M Knight (all won 2nd class awards) Again in 1969 The March Hare Trial was held at Ringshall Farm. Class Winners that year Class 1:P.G Kerridge, Class 3: C.N Morrell, Class 5: J. Ventur. In 1970, the March Hare was held on the 2nd, November as, the Guy Fawkes was held in March (very confusing). The venue was Tring Park, a picturesque park on the outskirts of Tring, which became very popular with competitors. The 1971 event also took place in Tring Park, but it had returned to a date in March.

It was touch and go as to whether the 1972 March Hare would take place as there was snow on the ground. Tucker took the decision to let the event run. It was a brave decision but in the end the weather got worse and the event had to be abandoned with one and a half inches of snow on the ground. Enough hills were run however to get a result, which was just as well as there would have been 57 very unhappy competitors to deal with. The largest class was Class 3 with 31 entries including, J & A Tucker -Peake sharing the Runner Bean, H.W. & Mrs S Tucker-Peake sharing an Escort, Miss S Tucker-Peake in a Corsair with David Ovey. Also, in Class 3, Mike Furse was driving a Hillman, Geoff Jackson was in a Morris Tourer, John Groves had an Escort GT. The Best Falcon award went to P. Le Couteur (Dellow), The Venus Cup,

M.Furse (Hillman), 1st Class Awards, D.Greenlade (Autocavan VW), C.Morrell (Alexis), W.Hone (Alexis), J.Tucker-Peake, D.Ovey and A.Davies. I only have a copy of the entry list and a few notes from the Committee minutes but as you can see there are at least two First class winners from the same class, so perhaps the results were split into Clubman and Invited which would explain it.

The following year the conditions were completely different. Very dry. Despite Tucker's best efforts to stop the competitors, there were still seven clean sheets from the entry of sixty- six. The result was decided on a tie deciding test with John Tucker-Peake the eventual winner in his 1600 cc Ford Pop. Laurie Knight took the award for best invited club in his 1500 cc Ford Escort fitted with a down draft SU carburettor. Other class winners were Ian Blackburn, (singer Le Mans), M Clarke, (VW), J Bonnett, (Morris), R Walker, (Mini) and Jack Frost, (Beach Buggy), who beat J Whalley, (Ford Special) and Mike Furse (also in a Ford Special) in the tie deciding test. Cliff Morell was the best Imp on the day dropping 10 marks.

The March Hare of 1974 had 46 entries spread over 6 classes. There were seven hills run four times. Looking at the scores of the competitors you have to assume that conditions were less than favourable or at best deteriorated through the day. The best score of 8 went to Venus cup winner J Bailey, the worst score of 286 went to J Hare. Other notable Falcons not having quite such a good day were Neil Bray with a score of 178, David Maitland with 76, Murray MacDonald 82, Alan Davies had a disaster with a score of 246. But worst score by a Falcon on the day went to Simon Robson who managed to lose 258 points. The awards were presented as follows:- Venus Cup: J Bailey (8). Duckhams Cup: J Poynter (98). Class 4a: D Greenlade (20). Class4b: G

Jackson (46). Class 2: C Morrell (44). Class 6: M Harvey-Murray (76). Class 3: Miss S Halkyard (92). Class 1: M Furse (196). 1st Class award winners were:- W Durling (30), J Frost (44), D MacIver (70), R Walker (152), J Groves (140). 2nd Class winners:- A Booth (70) and L Knight (174). Best team went to Falcon represented by, D MacIver, M MacDonald and J Poynter.

The missing committee minutes are no help again in recording events until 1977, when The March Hare trial took place at Bury Farm, Houghton Conquest. Secretary A Davies. Clerk of the Course, D Maitland, Scrutineer, S Robson, Chief Marshal, C Brown. There were 32 entries, but one was sent home for misbehaviour.

By 1981 The March Hare Trial had been dropped from the calendar due to a lack of venues on which to run the event. With the loss of Tring Park, we had only one good venue at Bury Farm, Houghton Conquest and that was lost due to problems with the landowner and other clubs that used it to run events there. I have found an entry form for the 1980 March Hare to be run under Classic Regulations at Bury Farm. But as I can't find any results or reports, I can only assume the event had to be cancelled. It wasn't until 1995 when the influx of enthusiastic members came along, bringing with them some very nice venues, that Trials were welcomed back into the Falcon calendar and in 1996 the March Hare took place on 3rd March on Edlesborough Hill.

The 1998 event was given the name The March Hare Mini Classic. The event was again held on Edlesborough Hill, only instead of having 8 or more hills laid out, there were only four. These were much longer than the previous year's PCT type sections. The idea was to make them more like Classic Trials sections. The organisers (Mike Pearson & John Parsons) tried to run everything as close to Classic rules as possible.

The morning went brilliantly with 8 challenging hills and 2 special tests for the 26 starters to enjoy. Unfortunately, after lunch rain made all the hills unclimbable and the event had to be abandoned. The special test times were used to decide the winner from the three clean sheets of, Fred Gregory (Dutton Melos), Ian Davis (VW Buggy) and Henry Allen (Racecorp). Ian Davis was the winner with Fred Gregory, Tom Goggin and Murray MacDonald all winning their classes.

After the success of the first Mini Classic, the possibility of running another event in 1999 linking suitable Start/Finish venue should be found. The Big Pub on the old A1 Trunk Road at Jacks Hill had the space but was a long way from the venues we wanted to use. The answer was to find some section between Jacks Hill and the other venues to the west. A new route was planned taking in two sections in Whitwell. Cress Bed Lane & Water Tower Lane. Both lanes were used in the fifties (they were probably named differently). Cress Bed Lane is not very challenging in the dry but is a nice opening to any trial, as is Water Tower Lane which was again used in the March Hare of the Fifties. This hill is a lot longer than Cress Bed Lane and despite being only a few yards further up the hill, is more mud covered than Cress Bed Lane, which has a more stoney covering. The route then headed out to Miletree Farm and Brickhill. After Brickhill there was another new section used as a special test at Ivinghoe before continuing to Edlesborough and Kensworth. After Kensworth, Half Moon Lane at Markyate, was added before the competitors returned to Whitwell to climb Nortonstreet Lane and return to The Big Pub and the finish. Nortonstreet Lane was again used in the March Hare of the fifties but it had a lot more mud on the hill than it does today and as a result was much more of a challenge to the competitors.



2008 March Hare Trial

Brickhill Quarry

(Photos by Dave Cook)

Don Skinner & Stella Pearce, Class 0, Austin 7



Julian & Becki Lack, Class 7, Liege Sport



Simon Groves, Class 3 Ford Escort

2000 suffered from delays in submitting the route to the RAC MSA because the local Route Liaison Officer didn't reply to our request's for approval, the event became a navigational scatter. Not what the organisers (John Parsons, Mike Pearson joint Clarks of the Course, and Verdum Webley, Secretary) or the competitors wanted at all. However, 30 cars started from the Big Pub, with most of the competitors returning some hours later having enjoyed the hills, but not finding their own way to them. 2000 winner was Mathew Sharrett.

Having been caught out the previous year, the organisers of the 2001 Murrays March Hare started to prepare early in October. All was going well with the route submitted and approved and the entry getting close to the maximum permitted (fifty). With a month to go to the big day, Foot and Mouth disease reared its ugly head and the event was cancelled. All that hard work was not wasted as we now had an approved route ready for the 2002 event and with three new sections added in Devils Pit, south of Barton-Le-Clay and a lunch halt at Ivinghoe, everything was set for another March Hare Trial.

However, the 2002 event was not without its problems. The Big Pub decided not to open early for us, which meant that there were no loos or food available at the start. The sections at Devils Pit had all been churned up by the 4-wheel drive people and it was very difficult to find three section to lay out on the Saturday before. The day itself went without a hitch. There was a shortage of marshals though on some hills and we just managed to scrape through. The weather was very kind as well and didn't start to rain until after the last car had reached the finish. 32 entries with 28 starters with Ross Nuten the overall winner cleaning everything in his Dellow.

After the Big Pub let us down the previous year the Committee decided on a new start venue for the 2003 March Hare. The Watling Street Truck stop on the A5 just north of junction 9 of the M1 was the choice, which allowed the route to go a little further south to include two hills in the Berkhamsted area. The other change for this year, David Sheffield stepped in to take over the Secretary's job from Verdun. With a new start came a change in the route with Half Moon Lane the first hill just up the road from the start. More water was left in the bog this year after complaints that too much had been taken out last year. We also ran the hill the other way around. There was a serious delay on this hill after several drivers attacked the water with gusto and came to a halt in the middle of the bog. A lot of time was lost towing them out. After the cars had dried out, they continued to Whitwell to tackle Nortonstreet Lane which was a lot easier this year as the restart had been positioned in a different place. Next followed Whitehill Lane, another new section for this year which started off with a special test and a little further along the lane the section itself. This was never going to cause a problem to anyone as the County Council had regraded the track and it was now more like a motorway. Cress Beds and Water Tower were followed by Offley Rise, another new section which was quite easy in the dry. The Lunch halt was taken at Brickhill. The break here was increased to allow the marshals time to get to their second duties after the morning delays. Keith Pettit – Mk 1 Sprite

The afternoon started with the Ivinghoe special test followed by Edlesborough and Kensworth before the competitors headed south for the two new sections Hawridge Lane and Hill Farm. Everyone cleaned Hill Farm but Hawridge caught out a few unsuspecting drivers. Of the 38 crews that started there were 5 clean sheets with Andy Curtis the victor in his

buggy on special test times. John Rowland (2 CV), Richard Tompkins (Imp), Peter Manning (Midget), Fred Gregory (Rickman) all got stuck in the mud on Half Moon Lane. Geoff Hodge (RDT Special) and Clive Booth (Dellow Replica) both failed the restart. Nortonstreet Lane claimed the clean sheets of Owen Turner and Owen Briggs. Water Tower wasn't friendly to Keith Pettit (Sprite), Richard Tompkins, Ed Nikel, Owen Turner (All in Imps), and Jason Crowley (Fugitive). Brickhill was the downfall of many including Ted Holloway (Sierra), Patrick Osbourne (Skoda) and Colin Sumner (Morgan). Hawridge Lane caught out many including Fred Gregory, Matt Robson (Liege), Peter Morley, Simon Groves

(Escort) and last year's winner Ross Nuten (Dellow). Katy Tucker-Peake (Peugeot 205) won Class 1, John Bell (Escort) won Class 3 ahead of Peter Thompson (Opel). Colin Perryman (Skoda) was the Class 4 victor ahead of Michael Leete (Beetle). Class 5 went to Colin Sumner (Morgan) while John Looker (Beetle) took Class 6 victory. John Bouden (Marlin) had the only clean sheet in Class 7 after John Ludford (Marlin) had problems at Brickhill. Pete Crawford (Marlin) was third in Class 7 and took the Best Falcon award. With Andy Curtis winning overall, Ross Nuten took the Class 8 victory, dropping 12 marks, the same as Clive Booth, Ross taking the Class, based on special test times.

The 2006 Northern Trial - the Toulmin experience..... by Pat Toulmin

Fred Mills asked me to do a write up of the 2006 Northern Trial, as a fellow editor. Something like 'I'll do a Clee report for the ACTC's Restart magazine if you do one on the Northern'. As Tony Branson's report in the last issue of the Fellside magazine covered the event in great detail and included us, as we were running together, I thought you might like read something a bit different, but with a definite Northern flavour.

Some of you may know that Jonathan's father, J Maurice Toulmin, was the team leader of the successful MG works' Cream Cracker trials team from 1935 to 1938, but it is perhaps lesser known that he was a Preston man and that his father married a girl from Penrith (MGs were all about Abingdon in Oxfordshire weren't they??). Family stories have it that Jonathan's grandfather used to cycle from Preston to Penrith and back on a Sunday to woo his future bride (one of the James's of Joseph James

furniture shop) – quite a journey! Maurice gave up serious motorsport in early 1939, when he married Marjorie Callis, from Accrington (although we do have a photo of them on Litton Slack on the 1949 Edinburgh in a borrowed MG). Marjorie must have known what she was letting herself in for... Yes, indeed she did – before they were married, she entered a Lake District Trial in her Austin 7 and Maurice was driving his MG. She broke down on Wrynose and while parked on the roadside was delighted to see Maurice arrive. However, on telling him that she 'had revs but no drive' he told her it was a problem with her clutch and roared off into the distance! She also did the 1938 Land's End in Maurice's MG TA Cream Cracker and they won a Premier Award.

After the war Maurice continued his interest in motorsport through various committees (he was a founder member of the British Trials Drivers Association now the BRTDA, incorporating rallying) and officiating at Silverstone and Donnington. Indeed a few years ago we went to the 50th anniversary of the Silverstone Grand Prix and at the gate were given a copy of the original

programme – who should be one of the officials? – JMT of course. Maurice also organised a classic trial near Preston, but unfortunately we don't have any more details.

Jonathan took part in his first motorsport event when he was six! His parents were competing on a local trial in a Ford Thames van. Part of the trial involved a navigational element and all passengers had to temporarily leave their vehicles. Maurice persuaded the officials that his six-year old son wouldn't be able to read the instructions and so could be allowed to remain in the car. Jonathan was mortified to hear this – of course he could read and write!! At the end of the trial Maurice won an award and pushed Jonathan forward to receive it. Unfortunately, the trophy was later lost at the engravers, so is not part of our archive.

Our history of the Northern Trial has also its moments. We entered the first Northern Trial and had a great time. Memorable moments were the 'Bomb Hole', where we thought we had lost all the oil out of the engine due to the steepness of the final slope, and then witnessed Barry Clarke upending his Austin 7 and Sandale. Sandale for the first year was quite amazing. Loads of sludge, etc at the bottom to get through – which we did in fine style, only to get complacent further up on the then grassy slope to crawl to a halt for a 2. Due to circumstances, that will become apparent later, we did not attempt Sandale again until this year. What a change the gloup at the bottom was the same, but we did not recognise the wide-open spaces at the top (4 was our score this year)

Jonathan then took our Marlin off the road for a much needed rebuild – we had trialled it for quite a few years and all sorts of bolts had come loose, suspension needed looking at and bulkheads had suffered from bouncing,

rocks etc. At the same time, he decided to replace the 1800cc MGB engine with an efi 2litre Montego engine. To cut a long story short pressure of work, representing the European motor industry on vehicle emissions issues and involvement with the MAC's centenary celebration organisation (not to mention compiling a book) – to mention just a few reasons, meant that the Marlin project was put on the back burner. However, in December 2003 Jonathan took early retirement and one of his first retirement projects was the Marlin. One abiding memory of the rebuild for me is the wiring harness. It came out of the donor vehicle and was very, very complicated. Jonathan needed to sort out which wire was which and this part of the rebuild coincided with our summer holiday to Orkney. We stay with good friends up there, so Jonathan took the harness with us and sorted it out on the stone wall surrounding John and Maggie's vegetable garden in view of the sea!

Result? The car started almost first time and so was ready for a return to trialling and the 2005 Northern Trial, amongst others. I am still working full time and so drive our main car to work. Jonathan's brother, Michael, had moved to the Lakes since the first Northern Trial and we were due to stay with him on the Friday night. At work on the Thursday afternoon, I was asked to replace a speaker at a conference in York the following Tuesday. Driving home I realised the car needed filling up and so stopped at one of my usual fuel stations. Unfortunately, my mind was still working on my Powerpoint presentation for the conference and I filled our diesel Mondeo to the brim with petrol. I have driven diesels for a long time, so there's no excuse really. Luckily, I did notice what I had done immediately when I replaced the nozzle and I knew that to drive it meant about £3,000's worth of damage to the injection system. So, I was rescued to the Ford dealer in

Coventry and the car would not be ready until late Friday afternoon. Therefore, we had to take Jonathan's stopgap car (luckily it had a tow bar) to the Lakes – normally he didn't let it out of Warwickshire, Worcestershire (Shelsley) or Shropshire (Clee Hills).

We arrived at the start with light snow on the ground and some good sunshine. All went well to begin with. We had never seen the Black Hole before, but I think we didn't show ourselves up too much. Next was Forest Yump where Michael was spectating. We struggled a little bit on the restart, but we cleared it. Then it was Darling How. We cleared the section in good style and stopped at the top to pump up tyres and well we couldn't believe it – we had holed the fuel tank and petrol was pouring out.

(Did we really hole it on Forest Yump? Was this the start of the Michael Toulmin jinx? – see later) We set off as fast as we legally could to Michael's house at Dockray and made it with some fuel to spare, jumped in the old Mondeo and went back to take photos of the event. Who would believe it – for the second time in three days the Jonathan Toulmins had bought petrol they would not use! We joined Tony and Sally Branson, who were marshalling on Widow Hause, and had to explain our fate to many fellow drivers who did not expect to see us there.

Trials Hills (the Where and the When) – Part 2 – by Andrew Brown

Part 1 of this article appeared in the November 2020 issue of Restart and explained the history of my Trials Sections Database, which now holds over 2250 unique records of Section + Club + Trial. You can find more information about the Database on my Wheelspin website (<https://wheelspin.info/>). Part 2 now

So, for 2006 we were hoping for something better! I did fill up my Mondeo on the corresponding Thursday but made trebly sure that it was with the correct fuel. For us the first part of the trial went well – up to par with the best of the class on Black Hole (2), cleared both the 'Cockups', up with the best on Eagles' Dare (2) and then the rot set in, as perhaps the Michael Toulmin jinx started to have effect....

Michael is a sporting trials driver and is also very interested in classic trials, so he and his wife Sandy came to spectate again. He was at Lowrys and told us that we had to keep as far right as we possibly could and go up into the bushes – we did try but had to avoid a photographer crouching low exactly where we needed to be. The photographer? Michael, of course. As it is not good to run over your brother (or anyone else come to think of it)! Jonathan swerved left and ended up in the very wet, deep bog to the left of the track. Eventually were rescued by fellow Marlin driver Don Dalton in his 4x4 (we owe you a pint Don). After that it seemed like it was all downhill, if you'll excuse the pun. We had a bad time on Lords Seat, but the jinx came back when we got to Darling How, where Michael had moved to. Result? We failed the restart – perhaps we should ban Michael from watching next year?

explains some of the tips and tricks that I use when tracking-down the exact location of the Sections.

Obviously, the easiest way to find the location of a Section is to be there, and the GPS system on modern smartphones makes recording the location easy. I use the Memory Map App on an iPhone to record the OS Grid Reference and What 3 Words (<https://what3words.com/>) if I need greater accuracy. So far so very easy.

The next best source is the route card for the event, although I've learnt to double-check when the OS Grid Reference is quoted on the route card as I've seen far too many instances of an incorrect GR on a route card copied-on from year-to-year without checking or correction. Following a route card on an OS map gives hours of pleasure and will generally pinpoint the location of any section on a public highway (road or right-of-way), but sections in private woodland are quite another matter. Some organisers are very thorough, providing GRs for sections deep in large areas of woodland and I do record these where provided. For others, I don't worry too much about the exact location, merely noting where the route leaves and rejoins the public highway.

That's fine if the route card exists, but they have a habit of getting lost. This is easy to explain for the pre-digital era. The regulations, entry forms, and results would normally have been posted to the entrant's home address where they'd stay safe-and-dry for posterity. But the route cards would have been handed-out at the start, kept in the car, and thrown-away muddy and torn after the event. It is quite amazing how many sets of regulations, entry lists, and results still exist when compared with the dearth of route cards; and to be honest, things have not improved that much in the digital era. I've had difficulty in tracking-down route cards for events less than ten years old. The reasons given: the organising teams have changed; digital copies of the route card were on old computers which have now been junked; the route cards were prepared by someone who's no longer a member of the organising club. I've heard it all!

But sometimes even the route card won't be explicit enough to pinpoint the location of a section and my next resort is to Google Street View. This is fine, when following old route cards, if the

telephone box, post box, post office, or pub, mentioned in the route card, is still there, or if the road is wide enough for the Google Street View car. But it can be very frustrating when the Google car decides the road is getting too narrow and switches off its camera. So, in the end, a site visit with the route card may be the only way to answer all the questions.

A perfect example of this was my quest for 'Ashmeads', a Cotswolds section used for the MGCC Abingdon Trials of 1937 and 1938. A facsimile of the 1938 Route Card is included on pages 80 and 81 of Roger Thomas's M.G. Trials Cars book and the route instruction reads "*Keep S O through village [Chalford] for 1 1/2 m. where sharp L up: Ashmeads*". The OS map showed three possible tracks that could be the section, but none of them 'worked' when comparing the route instructions with the map, and the instruction "*In 300 yards keep L at Post Office and immediately L fork*" certainly didn't work if the route had passed the Post Office in Oakridge Lynch. The breakthrough came when it occurred to me to check if France Lynch had had a Post Office in the past, and Google quickly turned-up The Old Post Office (now an AirBnB rental).

So, armed with this knowledge, I walked the track from the valley floor towards France Lynch, followed the route card out of the top of the section, tried to follow it through the village but took a couple of wrong turns (those who know the villages of the Chalford Valley will know that they're a maze of tiny roads), and eventually found The Old Post Office. But the route card still didn't read correctly until I realised that, although I'd approached The Old Post Office from the East, the trial route must have approached from the West. After that 'Eureka Moment', everything fell into place and I was able to plot a route which, although extremely convoluted, matched the route card exactly. So, the

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only question remaining is why the trial followed such a round-about route on some very narrow roads through France Lynch when the maps of the time show a much more direct route? Locals might suggest that the long deviation was to allow the competitors to visit the wonderful Kings Head pub, but it's not even mentioned on the Route Card.

Photographs are another great source for tracking-down the exact location of a section, but only when you can be sure that the captions are correct (far too many are not). Tracking-down the location of 'Juniper', one of the most famous PreWar Cotswold hills, was a good example. There are plenty of photographs to identify the start of the section, and the obvious assumption is that the section followed the line of the current footpath, but this didn't match the photographs published in 'Wheelspin' and elsewhere. But a walk in the woods with Bryan Ditchman and others, armed with Bryan's precious photograph album (originally belonging to Dickie Green of the MG 'Musketeers' team), confirmed that the section veered off the footpath to the right and climbed through the trees parallel to a stone boundary wall. The photographs that we took on that day show incredible similarities with the photographs taken at the same locations seventy years earlier.

The arrival of the internet and social media, particularly the Classic Trials Facebook Group so abled managed by Michael Leete, has certainly widened the net when it comes to getting answers to "Where is it?" questions. I'd posted a photograph of an HRG passing a pair of very distinctive gates on the 1950 Land's End Trial on my Wheelspin website some years ago, but I'd had no response and I certainly couldn't identify it from my knowledge of Land's End sections of the period. But, when I posted the same photo on Facebook more recently, I had an instant response

from Jo Goodman (of the Goodman family who own the wonderful Barbrook Filling Station near Beggar's Roost) saying that it was definitely Lyn Hill (near Barbrook), she walked her dog there most days, and Jo included a photograph of the gates to prove it.

Of course, a professional photograph showing a clear trials number is one thing; a fuzzy amateur snap of an early 1950s 1172cc special in an unidentified field is quite another. I get sent rather too many such photographs of "my father", or "my grandfather", or "Uncle Harry", with a request to identify where the photograph was taken, and I have to reply that this will be near-impossible without a date and an event as the starting point.

In addition to Google Street View and Facebook, another great online resource is the National Street Gazetteer (<https://www.findmystreet.co.uk/>). This will, eventually, pull-together in one place the local authority records for every street and every right of way in England and Wales. Coverage is patchy at the moment with some counties (Gloucestershire is a good example) having already uploaded everything they have, whereas other counties have uploaded only their major roads. The FindMyStreet website is particularly helpful in providing more information about those tracks shown on the OS maps as ORPA (Other Route with Public Access). I've confirmed the location of quite a few sections because the trials name and the 'official' NSG name are one-and-the-same.

Which brings me, finally, to one of my hobby horses – the naming of sections. Now, to make myself clear, I've no problem with clubs naming sections after club members past-and-present, and no problem with "Whatsitwoods 1", "Whatsitwoods 2", etc', even if the sections are numbered differently from

year-to-year. Nor do I have a problem with different clubs using different names for the same section, although who'd have thought that the MCC's Upper Dean and Torbay's Lower Dean would be the same section? No, my particular ire is directed at those clubs who use a misleading name out of sloppiness or ignorance of history and, I'm afraid to say, the MCC is a recent offender.

From 2010 to 2016, the MCC were quite happy to name the two Edinburgh Trial sections in Clough Mine as Clough Mine 1 and 2. So why-oh-why rename them

as 'Clough Wood' and 'Clough Mine' from 2017 onwards when the adjacent unsurfaced public road (now used by the MCC as the downhill access route to the mine complex) has been called 'Clough Wood' by the MCC since 1955. And on the 2019 Land's End Trial, Class 0 competitors tackled a section called 'Treworld', but this was NOT the same 'Treworld' as used by the MCC from 1962 until 2004. I think the MCC should be ashamed of itself for discarding its own history so easily.

Sermon ends!

My choice for the Exeter Trial A "Bracebridge Street" Norton with something of a history

Every year when I cogitate on what bike I should use for the Exeter Trial, to make it more "interesting", I think back to 1951 when I rode a big Vincent solo and managed to get a first-class award ... although one would say it was hardly the ideal bike for the job. Similar thoughts ran through my mind when I considered a certain 1947 International Norton which I have recently acquired. An Inter wouldn't be an easy bike to get up the hills, with its high gearing, low ground clearance and considerable weight – but then this particular one is an International with a difference. It was, in fact, built for the International Six Days Trial in 1947, for Jack Blackwell, but it became perhaps more famous, with sidecar attached, as Bill Stone's works hack. Bill was works manager at Nortons, Bracebridge Street, for many years, and the old outfit, which I don't think has ever been cleaned in its life, became part of the scenery for years, parked outside the works entrance. Not that I am suggesting it wasn't used – far from it. Bill is a big man and he used it in a big

way, driving it hard all the time and using it for long-distance events as well as for everyday use, club runs and officiating at trials. In fact, Bill tells me he could almost write a book about JOK 695, and I must get him to tell me all about it someday.

International with differences

Briefly, the Norton consists of an International engine and frame of the "garden gate" variety, the old long-type racing Roadholder forks but with Joe Craig's special double-acting damper arrangement, a 21in Manx front wheel with conical hub and 2 Is racing brake, a 19in rear wheel to take a 4in tyre, a narrow bolt-through petrol tank and one or two little special bits such as a crankcase shield and rear-chain oiler.

The hills, rocks and mud which Devon provides for the M.C.C.s annual classic would not, therefore, be strange for this venerable old banger and so I decided to have a go with it although I did not rate my chances of getting a first-class very high, as I had with the Vincent.

When I bought the Norton it had been standing doing nothing for more than two years and as well as the "R" which covered most of the engine like a

cocoon, nearly everything else was corroded or "gummed" up and I had to dismantle both the carburettor and the front brake before I could get them to work at all. However, after cleaning the magneto contact-breaker I soon had the engine running, and it was obvious that whatever the outside appearance of the engine might be there was nothing much wrong with it inside. It ran just as a cammy Norton engine should run, with just the right noises and a nice healthy note when the throttle was opened up.

Apart from normal maintenance jobs, I did not have to do any work on the gearbox, forks or chains, and although a certain amount of re-wiring was necessary on the electrics even the dynamo and regulator were eventually persuaded to work in spite of everything appearing "dead" at first. I had to fit a battery carrier – no doubt Bill carried a battery in the sidecar (I should have explained the sidecar was not attached when I took the Norton) – but as this meant taking off the oil tank it gave me an opportunity to get rid of the old "R" and give the tank a thorough clean before replenishing.

The only other jobs I had to do on the bike to make it presentable were to change a very tatty dualseat for a Dunlop rubber competition saddle and to replace the horrible shape of handlebar for a normal upswept type. As far as using it in the trial was concerned, all that was necessary then was to fit number boards, ball-ended lever blades and my tank-top-tummy-rest-toolbag. As the bike was still on sidecar gears, I left the sprockets as they were. Although bottom gear was still a bit high for trials use, the engine was obviously on a pretty low compression ratio, with a stack of plates under the barrel, and I knew that it would have enough "plonk" to pull itself out of most hazards. I even left the standard rear tyre on instead of changing it for a trials cover – it was an almost new 4in Dunlop and would

probably provide sufficient grip. I did, however, changed the ribbed front for a Trials Universal.

The Team

One reason for riding again in the Exeter this year – I usually give it a miss about one year in three – was that I was asked to make up a local team, the other members to consist of my Vintage racing partner, Mick Broom, riding a 588cc push-rod Norton of about the same age as my Norton, and a work pal of his, John Lee, on a 197cc Villiers-engined "Special" – mainly James. Both these lads were riding in the Exeter for the first time, although Mick came down last year with my wife in the family "transport" to see what it was all about. Unfortunately, the full team did not start. Mick, who has a habit of leaving things to the last minute, found his lights were not working properly – the dynamo refused to charge – and quite rightly, did not fancy riding all night in the conditions likely to be encountered, namely rain or fog, without adequate lighting. However, he did come down a little later, running-in a Triumph Tiger 100 which we have for road test, and which had only a 100 miles or so on the clock when collected from the works.

Our starting point was Kenilworth. When we left at approximately half past nine the weather was not too pleasant. Although for a week previously the nights had been cold but dry and clear, Friday, January 6th, provided a bit of everything. There had been snow during the day. This had stopped, and the temperature had risen slightly, resulting in fog. Then it rained, which cleared the fog – but whichever way it was, visibility was difficult, especially to anyone like me who has to wear glasses for riding. There were also icy patches on the road over the Cotswolds to add to our worries.

At the start I had seen Jack Walton, Mallory Park track manager, who a

week or so before had expressed an interest in riding the Exeter this year but was too late to enter. He had competed some years before (he has, of course, been overall winner of the National Rally on two or three occasions) but, weeing the weather, he was not so sure that he would like to change the comfort of his Ford Cortina Estate for the saddle! However, he did decide to come down to Exeter and have a look at the hills and also to act as our photographer.

Tot of rum

He caught me up at Cirencester and I was glad of the tot of rum and orange he offered me and for the welcome sight of the Ford's tail lights as I followed him all the way to the check point at Yeovilton. Until he caught me up I had hardly seen a soul. John Lees did not expect me to wait for him – the Norton would cruise a little faster than his one-nine-seven – and there were only 15 entrants from Kenilworth, and of those two or three were non-starters.

Things livened up at the all-night café and filling station at Yeovilton where competitors from all staring points converged. I arrived there with an hour to spare, partly due to Jack Walton acting as route finder. In spite of being in a "fug box," and coping with the fog he had done better than I could have managed on my own on the bike. Thanks too, to my old-fashioned riding kit of storm coat and waders over Barbour trousers, pyjamas, pullovers, etc., I was quite warm. The only trouble was that a slight leak in my left wader I hadn't known about resulted in a damp foot. I took off wader and shoe and wrapped my foot in a warm scarf while I dried socks and shoe on a radiator. Then I remembered a spare pair of socks in my haversack, so I put both on my left foot, replaced the shoe and then, before putting my wader back, wrapped the shoe in a cellophane bag which Jack remembered he had in the car. After

that I had no more trouble keeping my feet warm.

The run from Yeovilton to Exeter is easy, the rain and fog had cleared, and I took advantage of the fact that there is no penalty now for arriving at the time control up to half an hour early. The only snag was that the café at the motel where breakfast was laid on wasn't open until half an hour after early competitors had arrived.

Kenilworth competitors were the early numbers this year – my number was 11 – and it was still very dark when we left the motel for the first sections. I must admit I do not like tackling trials hills in the dark, even though in this case I have seen them many times in daylight. I just don't seem to be able to remember what comes next and there's always the thought that your lights may go out at the crucial moment. There was also the worry this year that I had no idea how the Norton was going to handle on mud and rocks. Tillerton was the first section and I decided to tackle it slowly, sitting in the saddle and using the bottom-end torque of the big cammy engine. I had no trouble about getting traction with the standard tyre, but the old girl did slew about a bit, and I suppose I was a coward and put my feet down when really it wasn't necessary. However, I recovered and was within a few yards of the "end" card when I got in a rut, slid sideways and stopped against a bank. There is nothing worse than failing on the first section for lowering morale, and I was really depressed when I tackled Fingle Bridge where it was as black as I have ever seen it. The result was that I footed on about every corner all the way up.

By the time I reached Simms the sun was coming up and with it my spirits rose a little. I also saw a familiar figure while approaching the hill – Cyril Quantrill. We had a word while I was waiting at the bottom for my turn.

"You've got a good old banger there" he remarked, and when I told him whose it was originally, he was highly delighted as he himself had a 596cc cammy Norton and chair in the late 40s and often "did battle" with Bill Stone. With Cyril watching I thought I mustn't make a hash of Simms – I've never had any trouble getting up clean and I felt that if I couldn't do it this time I would give up riding in the Exeter. I decided to try standing on the rests, took a fast wide sweep on the right-hand bend, gave it a big fistful of throttle and just shot up the hill ... life seemed a little rosier after that!

From Simms the course returned to the motel on the Exeter By-pass for one of the special tests. As the timed tests have to be held on private ground, and what with the difficulty of obtaining suitable terrain, one of the tests was carried out in the motel car park and consisted of riding from a standing start at Line A round a drum about 20 yards away, back to Line B and stopping before Line C. Footing round the drum was allowed and I must admit that, in spite of my road-racing upbringing, I did put a clobber down. I also could not remember, as I approached Line C if I had to stop before or astride the line, and actually pulled up with my front wheel just over the line, but whether I was failed I don't know.

Mick Broom on the Triumph had joined me on the way to the motel from Simms and he accompanied me on the rest of the trial, getting permissions to try the hills after me. In spite of the standard tyres, on the whole he did a bit better than I. I cleaned Stretes, slid right round on Waterloo and fell off, cleaned Meerhay and stopped, very definitely, twice on Knowle Lane. I could do nothing to prevent the first stop; 50 yards up the hill there is a 6in step right across the track, and with the Norton's low ground clearance, in spite of approaching the step at a reasonable speed and giving the bike plenty of

"stick", I came to a very sudden halt. I went back a yard or two and tried another approach, but to no avail. "You've got the wrong model, you ought to have a 500T," remarked MCC's Derek Shackles as he helped me over the ledge. Come to think of it, I did ride a 500T one year though I can't remember whether I cleaned Knowle Lane or not.

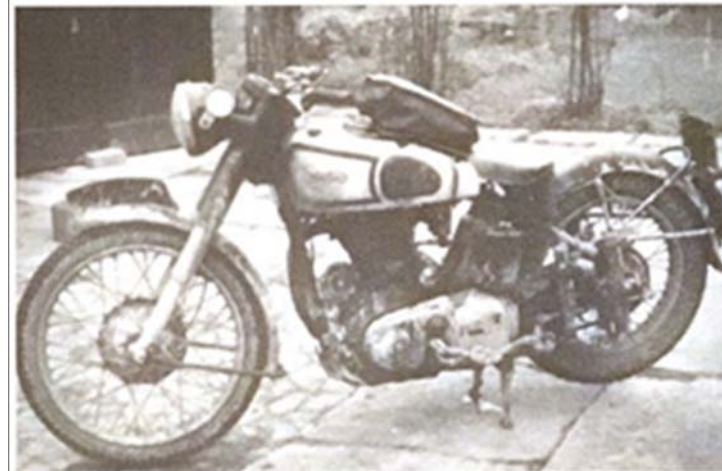
Good fun

The second special test on Bradford Down was rather good fun. Again, it was a case of a standing start to a flying finish over a second line and pulling up before a third, and it was held on about 50 yards of a loose surfaced track in the form of an S-bend ... chance for a bit of scrambling! Thanks to a race-bred engine and excellent brakes I think I put up quite a good time.

A pleasant 12-mile run back to Weymouth brought us to the finish on the promenade at 1 o'clock ... in good time for a noggin or two in the bar of the Gloucester Hotel where you sign off, and a change from the last two occasions when I have only just managed to get a quick one in just before closing time. Here we saw John Lee for the first time since the breakfast stop. Poor lad, he'd had a lot of trouble all along and eventually retired. He had arrived at the motel a few minutes before he was due out again, having had to deal with plug and clutch trouble on route. As he was feeling cold, wet and miserable I don't blame him for having breakfast first and re-starting late. He had more clutch trouble on Tillerton and decided to pack it in but got back to the finish determined to have a go again next year but with more suitable machinery.

As soon as the bar closed, we went to our own hotel and John and I got our heads down as soon as possible. Not for Mick – he is a devil for punishment and decided to put a few more miles on

the Tiger 100 by exploring the coastline around Weymouth. Mind you, although John and I were up again at 6.30 pm and ready for an evening out, at 8 o'clock we discovered Mick fast asleep in his room instead of meeting us in the bar an hour and a half earlier as arranged!



The Norton, home again after dealing with the Exeter's hazards

The weather had turned bitterly cold and next morning, I must admit, I wasn't particularly looking forward to riding the 180 miles back to Leicester. In recent years I have preferred to do it the easy way and arrange for my wife to come along with a car and trailer, but we could not manage it this year. As it turned out, I enjoyed the return trip as much as the trial. For one thing, having someone on a bike of equal performance for company made it interesting – and it is nice to have someone to natter to when you stop to get warm or for refreshments.

The only snag was that the Norton developed a habit of cutting out temporarily if held at over 65 for any time – magneto trouble, possibly – but perhaps this was as well as, otherwise, we might have been tempted to exceed the speed limit a lot, the roads for the

most part being dry and free from heavy traffic. There was the odd patch of ice on the road, but this helped to keep you on the *que vive*.

In the end I decided that to really enjoy the Exeter you want to ride both there and back, but you need a big bike, otherwise it becomes very tedious. And given a bit more ground clearance, a trials tyre on the back and even more confidence on the part of the rider, I am sure the Norton could gain a first-class award.

F. P. H

Motorcycle Sport, March 1967

(With my librarian's hat on I did look into the copyright issues of publishing this article.. I am pretty sure that the magazine is no longer being published and couldn't find out who—if anyone—had taken it over.

But I was lucky when researching the author and I found out who FPH was. He was F P Heath.

Phil Heath was a past president of the VMCC (Vintage Motor Cycle Club) and their Honorary Librarian. He died in 1998. The current librarian doesn't have any contact details for his family..

It was good to find out who he was—Ed.)