



# Maidstone and Mid Kent Motor Club

## August Newsletter



### Editors Mutterings.

Here we are at the end of August and the end of our season of grass autotests. It has been a difficult year with events having to be cancelled due to heavy rain making venues unusable or giving the potential to damage the ground such that it would lead landowners withdrawing their permission for us to use them. So, we move on to the Car Trial season and hope for better but not too dry an autumn.

I have been banging on for some time now about the need for more people to step up and run events. There is a particular need for new people to act as Secretaries of the Meeting. Motorsport UK have recently asked people to register as Secretaries and I was disturbed to see that only 150 people throughout all the clubs in the UK have registered. If this situation does not improve Motorsport events will die. Due to this I have been asked by some what is involved in being an event Secretary, so at the end of this Newsletter I have included what MSUK stipulates the job entails. Please read and see how you can help as it is not that difficult as after all I can do it!!

We have many talented members and this month we have another in our ongoing series of member profiles. This month we put Ken Kimber in the frame, a man of many talents particularly in building anything from model railways to cars.

*Bruce*

P.S. I am still waiting for all those reports from events you have competed in over the summer!!

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### ***Autotests Reports.***

#### **Summer Slalom and Club Visit to Hole Park 1<sup>st</sup> August**

When Andy and I visited Hole Park in June to fix the location of the tests it was as dry as a bone but as you know the weather this year has been anything but predictable. As soon as you fixed a date for an event it was guaranteed to rain. When the Slalom set up team arrived at Hole Park on the Saturday before the event it was not actually raining, but the ground was sodden and there were puddles everywhere, so different from our previous visit. This set the scene for the event the following day as it was pouring with rain when I left home. Although the day was mostly dry it did turn into a bit of a mud bath.

The turnout of non-competing Club Members on the Sunday was however gratifying as 21 members and friends came and enjoyed a look round Hole Park gardens and stayed for lunch. Something we have not been able to do for some considerable time. I hope those that came enjoyed their visit, despite the weather not being up to much.

The day ended as it began with torrential rain starting just as everything had been loaded into the Club Trailer. Driving back thorough Rolvenden I was not even sure whether the trailer we still behind my car as I certainly could not see it, it was raining that hard. The upside was that we had a full entry and all competitors appeared to enjoy the day. Brian Sharpe was victorious in his Nissan Micra taking FTD, something that he has become rather good at this year. With a bit of luck someone will write a report that we can publish in next months Newsletter?



## Wings Autotest 22<sup>nd</sup> August

Our annual Wings all day Autotest was held on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> August. Unfortunately, a low entry of 17 comprising of 6 in Class A (FWD), 4 in Class B (FWD), 1 in Class D (RWD), 5 in Class E (No Roof) and 1 in Class F (Specials)



The weather forecast was cloudy but dry. In reality the ground on arrival was damp on top, but firm underneath with a scattering of sheep poop. Everyone arrived in good time and most had a walk of the tests. 6 tests to be attempted 3 times with the best 2 times to count. Unless the ground didn't hold up, in which case it would be 2 time with the best 1 to count. For the morning there were 3 tests with reversing and 3 all forwards, the ones with reversing requiring a

bit of thought to establish when best to manoeuvre etc. As we started it began to rain. I'm convinced that this year more or less every event I've attended has been wet, regardless of club or location. We carried on anyway, it was spitting rather than thumping it down, and luckily for our marshals relatively short lived. Naturally this made it slippery, which made it challenging. However, it also meant that the ground didn't get cut up and therefore it was declared that we would do all 3 runs. Jamie Upchurch sprang a power steering leak in his KA which created a bit of



smoke and initially some head scratching as the source of smoke wasn't immediately obvious. Other than that, everyone appeared to be doing well and enjoying themselves.

Come lunch time Chris Smith had gained a 10 second lead in his mini in class A with Lloyd Covey 2 seconds ahead of Grahame Standen for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. Class B was led by Brian Sharpe who already had a 60 second advantage over everyone else in his class, and nearly 30 seconds overall. Class E was being led by Josh Smith almost 40 seconds ahead of Des Crocker who was 5 seconds ahead of Alistair Sutton. Alan Steadman led class D and Stephen Stringer Class F. They would lead their classes all day as they were the only entrants. Stephen however was running 3<sup>rd</sup> overall in his Stryker.



After lunch, during which Tim and Bruce moved various posts around, and Jamie/Josh made temporary repairs to the KA, we began the afternoons tests. Again 6 tests each to be attempted 3 times with the best 2 times to count. This time 4 tests with reverse and 2 all forwards. By now the sun was out and the ground had dried out, so times got quicker and quicker as the afternoon

went on. Everyone seemed to be doing well, I struggled to find reverse gear a few times (must add that to my excuse book) and Jamie was using the lack of power steering excuse from his book.

We finished around 4pm and Toby Groves was given the fun task of fixing the results to account for various small errors that had happened. The Sapphire timing App is a great piece of software, it takes a lot of the administration away from organisers of an event, but it is still susceptible to human error. As we use it more and become more familiar, I'm confident these errors will reduce and we will all see the benefits.



Bruce announced the results and gave out some trophies. Class A had become very close, Lloyd had made up 9 of the 10 seconds needed, but Chris Smith won class A 1 second ahead. Tom Grant won Class B, Alan class D, Stephen Class F and Josh Smith, who at the end of the day was 57 seconds ahead, won class E. Brian Sharpe won FTD 46 seconds ahead of Stephen who had improved his overall standing to 2<sup>nd</sup>, 6 seconds ahead of Chris who was 3<sup>rd</sup> overall. Well done Brian.

Then we all packed up and went home.

Thanks to all the organisers and marshals without whom none of this would have happened. Keep up the good work 👍

*Lloyd Covey*



## Rally Report

The Blackpalfrey Hughes Rally took place again this this year but moved from its usual slot of the beginning of June to 21<sup>st</sup> August. The event started from a newly refurbished the Moat Hotel at Wrotham Heath with lunch and special tests taking place at Hole Park. Maidstone members were again called on to marshal the tests at Hole Park using similar areas to those used for our Summer Slalom. The weather was no kinder to Blackpalfrey than it was to us on the Summer Slalom with some of the grass tests starting to rut up. The only Maidstone members competing, Stanley Grahame and Liz Jordan were forced to retire mid event with clutch failure after a good start in their Triumph Dolomite.

The eventual winners were Steven Owens and Nick Bloxham in their Porsche 911 with Colin Woodhouse and Rhys Williams second in their Rover 25.



# Meet the Club Members

**Name:** Ken Kimber

## Current role

Member since 1988 but regrettably on-going health issues mean I am no longer able to take an active role in club activities.

## First joined the Club

There was a long spell when restoring houses and raising a family meant that I did not belong to any car clubs at all. I think it would have been in 1988 that I called into a petrol station on the way home from work and encountered a certain Trevor Gilks (who I first met in 1972 when our daughters were born in adjacent beds in Fant Lane Maternity Hospital) in his Orange Sunbeam Ti and who was off to do a grass Autotest. He suggested I went along for a look and that is what prompted me to join the MMKMC.

## When and how did you first become involved in Motorsport?

In my early teens I became interested in motorsport and used to cycle to Brands Hatch to most of the race meetings. It was so long ago that the cars used to race in the opposite direction to what they do now and Druids had not been constructed, although it had been hard surfaced - it was originally grass!

However, it was when I went to college in Bath in 1962 that I first became actively involved by joining the newly formed Bath Motor Club. As an impoverished student I only had an Austin A35 so could only afford to compete in a few events and was obviously hopelessly uncompetitive against new-fangled things like Minis!

We did however manage to finish 8<sup>th</sup> out of 120 in the 1965 Bath Festival Rally and pick up the award for the best BMC car! This despite having to drive on the ignition key for several miles on a narrow lane, with nowhere to pull off, when the throttle spring detached itself and left the car on full throttle! No mandatory extra springs in those days!

## What was your first competition car?

In more than sixty years of motoring I've owned over eighty vehicles but only five were bought just for competition use.

The first car that I ever bought specifically for competitions was in 1970, a 750 MC Trials Formula Special based on an Austin Seven known as the Pink Panther - it was absolutely hopeless, at least in my hands (even changing its colour didn't help!) and it was soon disposed of.





## How many competition cars do you currently own?

I'm afraid to have to say – none. My energy, such as it is these days, is devoted to restoring and maintaining three Austin Sevens and an Austin Ten!

## What type of events have you competed in?

Apart from circuit racing I think I have had a go at almost every form of Club Motorsport with varying degrees of failure. Apart from a lack of funds another limiting factor has been that I have always hated wearing a helmet, even an open faced one makes me feel claustrophobic. This has meant that I have mostly competed in Road Rallies, Trials and Autotests, although there have been a few Stage Rallies and Autocrosses - only the older members will remember those!



I have, however, been extremely fortunate that on rallies the left hand seat has almost always been occupied by some of the very best Navigator/ Co-Drivers such as the late Dorothy Shelby-Boothroyd, our own Liz Jordan, Andy Gibson, Mick Briggs, Mark Appleton etc. In some ways I almost feel this means that I have cheated my way to the modest successes that I have enjoyed.

I did navigate a little in the Sixties and remember, as a member then of Bexley, doing the Harold Sharp Rally in 1968 when it was a Motoring News Championship event and the entry list of 120 was oversubscribed. As we were on the reserve list we toddled off down to the Romney Marsh start anyway as we could either marshal or spectate. On arrival we were told there was a space for us at, I think, number 8! Great, except that it not only put us amongst the elite quick crews but the route of 350 miles had been available to pre-plot and I only had about half an hour before our start time! I finally finished getting the route on the map at about 7am as we left the Isle of Sheppey to head towards the finish at the Great Danes. From memory I think we ended up about 30<sup>th</sup>. I developed a tendency to be sick so gave up aspirations to be a navigator.

Production Car Trials (PCTs) have always been a challenge that I have enjoyed and had occasional success at. As some members may recall my last competitive activity about twelve years ago was in PCT's with an NSU TT. It was, when the conditions suited the car, able to out-perform almost everything but sometimes it was, as people used to say about NSU's when they were current, 'No Sodding Use'. With its rear engine and longish wheelbase compared to, for example, an Imp it was a nightmare to drive up a diagonal slope, especially on wet grass - but a bad workman always blames his tools!

Hopefully I have also pulled my weight over the years on the organizing side of things with various clubs over the years.

## Most memorable events and why.

Too many to recount all of them but here are a few.

Back in the 1960s I had a very early Hillman Imp (with a pneumatic throttle!) which was a good all round club competition car and I was able to twice win a PCT with a clean sheet!

Liz Jordan will, I am sure, remember sliding down the road on the door handles of a Riley 1.5 when I clipped the bank on the apex of a corner on a Targa Rusticana. We still finished the event after the next crew helped us put the car back on its wheels but no award for Liz on that occasion and as the passenger door didn't close properly, she kept complaining about the rain coming in making her leg and the maps wet!



Finishing a stage in a Welsh forest in the 105E Anglia after the throttle cable broke with Andy Gibson sitting on the wing operating the throttle and calling out the bends as I could see virtually nothing with bonnet wide open. He was a lot braver than me!

On an unbelievably wet Regis Rally the wiper motor failed very early in the event but we were able to use a piece of wire that was connected to each wiper arm and passed through the quarter lights behind the windscreen so that I could give it a pull to operate the wiper arms. The special tests were somewhat challenging as there were too many things for my left arm to do - gear lever, handbrake and wipers! The drive home in the dark on a very wet M25 was a bit dodgy and I was grateful that the boys in blue did not have cause to pull us over, although they might have been impressed with our ingenuity! We still managed 6<sup>th</sup> overall, won the class and were best MG!

### **What was your most memorable achievement and why?**



In 1995, with Andy Gibson alongside for most of the events, I managed to win the HRCR Road Rally Championship outright and the class in the Stage Rally Championship in my 1966 998cc Mini Cooper. Although only occasionally the quickest car on what must have been about 120 tests through the season, I was very proud of not having a single wrong test or cone penalty and we finished every event.

### **From your experience what advice would you give to other club members?**

Always be prepared to 'have a go'. Not having a competitive car may prevent you from winning but not from having fun and don't take things too seriously.

Most important of all remember that events do not just happen so be prepared to miss competing in the odd event and lend a hand with the running of it by marshalling or helping with the organization. If members don't put something back into the club it will die!

## Secretary of the Meeting- An Appeal

As a Club we are lucky that we have a number of people who are prepared to act as Clerks of Course for our various events but we are singularly lacking people who are prepared to act as Secretary of the Meeting. Both these roles are pivotal to running events. The position we find ourselves in with myself acting as Secretary to most of the events this year, is not sustainable. Going forward we intend to use "Timing App Live" to manage our events from entry to results, starting in 2022 but as can be seen from the Motorsport UK job description giving below, it still requires someone to manage the process. Although this looks complex the rules are written cover all disciplines, so many of the stated requirements do not apply to events at our grass root level making it less onerous.

Before an event can be run a set of regulations has to be drawn up, agreed with the interested parties of the particular discipline and circulated. An event budget produced to establish the financial viability of the event. Also, a Permit(s) have to be obtaining from Motorsport UK, a simple on line process now. Post event a final account has to be produced and submitted to the Club Directors for inclusion in the annual accounts. To spread the load there can be a separate Entries Secretary and Event Secretary, but it is important for the future of our events that we have more people to act in these roles. I can only echo the sentiments in Ken Kimber's final paragraph above.

There must be a whole generation out there who are far more computer literate than I, so if you would like to have a go or help in any way, please contact me and I can talk you through what has to be done and provide electronic copies of all the necessary files.

*Bruce*

### **Extract for section H of the Motorsport UK "Blue Book".**

3.1. The Secretary of the Meeting is responsible for the organisation of the Meeting in terms of all material and notices required.

3.1.1. This includes all paperwork prior to the event, acceptance of entries, allocation of numbers, Competitors' 'signing-on' sheets and Licence examinations, as well as the submission of items required under D.26.4 to Motorsport UK after the event.

3.1.2. The Secretary must be present throughout practise and the competition itself to assist in the correct running of the meeting and should maintain a list of novice Drivers (5.2). 105-126 G-Officials\_TEMPLATE 27/10/2020 19:07 Page 106  
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3.1.3. Competitors who fail to produce the necessary documents to prove their eligibility for a meeting should be reported by the Secretary to the Stewards of the Meeting as detailed in 5.2. For Clubman and Interclub status Events (other than Race, Stage Rally or Kart\*), a properly completed and signed licence application form (including a passport photograph) together with the appropriate fee can be accepted instead of a Competition Licence.

3.1.4. \*Competitors 17 years of age and under who have just completed their ARKS test may also produce a completed application (including a passport photograph) and payment in lieu of a Competition Licence.

3.1.5. All applications accepted in lieu of a Competition Licence must be forwarded by the Secretary directly to the Motorsport UK Licences Department within 48 hours of receipt, confirming that they have been accepted at the event (H.26.1.2).

3.2. The Secretary shall:

3.2.1. Have available a current copy of the Motor Sports Yearbook (with amendments, if any)



- 3.2.2. Post on the Official notice board all bulletins, Permits, authorisations, penalty or other decisions, times and results.
- 3.2.3. Be responsible for sending to the Stewards prior to the meeting all appropriate documents, including a copy of the SRs
- 3.2.4. Be responsible for receiving any Protests or Appeals from Competitors, noting time of receipt, and as quickly as possible pass Protests to the Clerk of the Course and Appeals to the Stewards of the Meeting.
- 3.2.5. Protests or Appeals may also be received by the Assistant Secretary, the Clerk of the Course or his deputy. Protests received by the Assistant Secretary or Deputy Clerk of the Course must be passed to the Clerk of the Course as quickly as possible and Appeals to the Stewards of the meeting.
- 3.2.6. Ensure that publicity for the event is arranged (after D.4.1 has been complied with) to ensure that the general public are aware of the meeting. If an event is cancelled the appropriate media services in addition to Motorsport UK and Motorsport UK Steward(s) must be advised.
- 3.2.7. All documents and programmes issued for an event must contain information as required by D.9, and all results, bulletins, official communications, etc should be marked with the date and time of issue.
- 3.2.8. The Secretary of the Meeting must liaise with the Chief Timekeeper to confirm the proposed timetable for the meeting.
- 3.2.9. If the meeting is scheduled to last more than nine hours from signing on, prior notice must be given to Senior Officials, so that they can make appropriate arrangements for the relief of their teams.



## **UP and Down the A20**

- Now you see it, now you don't. It looks like Operation Brock is here to stay. After it was installed again it was removed again. Now its resting on the hard shoulder!!
- First it was The Highways Agency, then Highways England and now National Highways. Still the same "Potholes" though!
- Next month we are getting E10 petrol at the pumps, so why can we not go the hole hog and run on pure ethanol, it will save a lot of bother?
- The average insurance quote for youngsters aged 17 to 19 is £871.94. It is no wonder that parents are breaking the law and putting the insurance policy in their name and putting their offspring as named driver.
- If you buy a hydrogen powered car will it float skywards like the early airships?
- If you cannot renew you driving licence on line it can take up to six weeks for DVLA to process your paperwork?
- Due to the chip shortage manufacturers are going back to dials with hands on rather than digital displays. The average number of chips in a new car is 1500. No wonder there is a shortage

## *From the Club Archives*

### **Ypres, 24 Hrs Rally 1981**

The Club's involvement in this International Rally, which counts towards the European Rally Championships, has now become a regular feature in our Calendar and this year we were directly involved in running the St. Juliaan / Adria / British Stage, a 9.67 km stage, using sealed surface public "roads, closed for the duration of Part 1 of the rally.

The Club was represented by some 34 members, who actively marshalled the stage on the Friday night, who had begun their journey to Belgium by catching the 7.30 am Townsend Thoresen Ferry from Dover to Calais, which was a great improvement on last year's crossing. Apart from being a little choppy and causing some of the passengers a degree of discomfort, the Spirit of Free Enterprise made a quick crossing, which unfortunately was somewhat in vain due to the very heavy traffic and resulting congestion getting through Calais. The remainder of the journey to Ypres was very wet, which was to become the accepted weather for the duration of our marshalling stint. After checking in at the Kosmos Hotel, some 10 Km to the south west of Ypres, the contingent made their way on block to the rally headquarters in the main square of the town, where the scrutineering and documentation takes place, and then the cars are moved to the parc fermé in the square adjacent to the picturesque cathedral. Whilst this rally takes place the whole of the area in and around Ypres follows its progress and it is a real eye opener to be involved in an event where aggravation from the general public and police is apparently non-existent, and certainly the locals seem to enjoy and support the event, and from a commercial point of view it must certainly benefit the local traders. After a welcome meal at the restaurant in the corner of the square we made our way to our stage at St Julian and were met by the stage Chief Marshal Jose Coopman who has overall control of the stage during the event. All the required junctions were marshalled by members of our team, as were the start controls. Whilst waiting for the first cars to arrive it was obvious that the stage was to be popular as far as the spectators were concerned and could be numbered in thousands as they streamed up the stage to the interesting corners. This year, thankfully, there were no serious incidents to the competitors and the two runs were completed on schedule. Being on the start line which was immediately followed within no more than fifty yards by a 45° left and right, was quite an experience to see the quick cars lifting the inside wheels whilst under full power through the bends. The weather throughout stage was diabolical and everyone was pleased to return to the Kosmos at Loker and retire to bed, albeit those one or two members of the party were still plagued by dampness.

The peace of sleep was suddenly broken by, as you may well guess, the entrance of the Jensen entourage who disappeared as quickly as they arrived after making sure everybody has been aroused.

Our first meal at the Kosmos confirmed that the food was to be a great improvement on last years, so much so that we even returned for an evening meal which was excellent in quality and quantity.

About half the party formed a high speed convoy, and visited several stages on Saturday, starting with the race at the Industrial Estate and then to Dikkebus, Loker, which were visited twice, and also to Zillebeke. We then returned to the Kosmos and from the restaurant bar were able to carry on watching the sweeping lights of the competition cars as they raced around the Belgium countryside.

The finale of our visit was the excellent party to which all British participants had been invited at John Jensen's Farm Hotel near Poperinge. The return drive to Calais proved to be incident free (well almost) and an immediate boarding onto the waiting ferry meant we were back home in Maidstone in under 3¾ hours from leaving John's party. All in all a very enjoyable long weekend to which we give our thanks to John Brockwell for putting it together, and we look forward to next year for a repeat performance with perhaps a little sunshine (please). *Lyle Cathcart*

## 2021 CLUB FIXTURE LIST

Event	Clerk of Course	Secretary of Meeting or Contact	Date
12 Car Rally	Liz Jordan	POSTPONED	January 2021
Annual Awards Evening via Zoom	Liz Jordan	Lyle Cathcart	16 <sup>th</sup> March
Annual General Meeting via Zoom	Lyle Cathcart	Liz Jordan	4 <sup>th</sup> May
Autotest Taster Day		CANCELLED	9 <sup>th</sup> May
Evening Autotest - Otham		CANCELLED	19 <sup>th</sup> May
Evening Autotest - Otham	Richard Olsen	Bruce Jenkins	2 <sup>nd</sup> June
Evening Autotest - Otham	Lloyd Covey	Bruce Jenkins	16 <sup>th</sup> June
Evening Autotest - Otham	Liam Carfrae	Bruce Jenkins	30 <sup>th</sup> June
Mike Jordan Celebration Tour	Liz Jordan	CANCELLED	3 <sup>rd</sup> July
Evening Autotest - Headcorn	Brian Sharpe	Bruce Jenkins	14 <sup>th</sup> July
Lydden Co-pro Sprint	Barry Morris / Josh Bennett	Simone Cornish	17 <sup>th</sup> July
Summer Slalom - Hole Park	Andy Jenner	Andy Jenner	1 <sup>st</sup> August
Club Visit to Hole Park	Bruce Jenkins		1 <sup>st</sup> August
Evening Autotest - Headcorn	Ben Dawson	CANCELLED	11 <sup>th</sup> August
Wings All Day Autotest – Headcorn	Tim Mewett	Bruce Jenkins	22 <sup>nd</sup> August
Kent Forestry Targa Rally	Dave Clark	Toby Groves	18 <sup>th</sup> September
Tyrwhitt Drake Trial	Andy Jenner	Bruce Jenkins	26 <sup>th</sup> September
Brian Lewis Trial	Tom Thompson	TBA	31 <sup>st</sup> October

### Other Club's Events

Brands Hatch Stages		CANCELLED	16 <sup>th</sup> January
Tendering & Clacton Rally		CANCELLED	24 <sup>th</sup> / 25 <sup>th</sup> April
Blackpalfrey - Hughes Rally			21 <sup>st</sup> August
Tuinbridge Wells – Wells Run			19 <sup>th</sup> September
Blackpalfrey - Tour of Kent			3 <sup>rd</sup> October

AUGUST 2021