



Maidstone and Mid Kent

Motor Club

Newsletter

June & July 2022



Editors Ramblings.

This the first Newsletter for a couple of months for a number of reasons. First and foremost, there has not been any contributions provided by our members from events they taken part in, which is disappointing. We do have our regular contributors (mainly Emma Olsen) for whom I thank for their continued support. Come on some of you must be literate! The second is that I have been out of the country for a month and have therefore not been chasing people for their input. More recently I have been using the heat as an excuse as sitting in front of a computer during the recent heat wave, has not appealed to me.

I have however to report a first for me as during my stay in a very wet and cold Australia as I attended a hill climb at Mount Cotton. This venue is owned and run by the MG Car Club of Queensland. An incredible fully surfaced venue accessed down a track in the bush. Part way through the practice day as the event is run over two days the Clerk of Course stopped the meeting while the circuit was cleared of Kangaroo's!! As I said a first for me, but are we likely to suffer a similar problem at Lydden following the introduction of wild Bison at West Blean near Canterbury??



It always sad when we have to report the passing of an individual who has contributed so much to the club over their lifetime. This month it is John Liddell who was very much a part of the club in the 1950's, 60's, and 70's. John's Obituary is below, with tributes from some of those who knew him well.

Bruce

Up And Down The A20

- If you came across a learner drive while driving on the M20 would they be breaking the law?
- The Welsh Government intends to introduce a blanket 20mph speed limit in all built-up areas and residential roads. We are well ahead of Wales as you are lucky if in Kent if you can find a road that is either open or has insufficient traffic that you can reach 20 mph!
- Having had our first pure EV at the last autotest, is there any likely hood that they will pose a threat to our traditional autotest cars, unless they get a lot smaller that is? Seeing them running on List 1B tyres at our recent Lydden Sprint is a different matter, however.

Whew – what a scorcher!!

When we entered this event in June, we had no idea that it would be on one of the hottest days of the year – Sunday 17th July! This was the Farnborough and District Motor Club Summer Autosolo at Bordon in Hampshire – and it was challenging in the heat for the cars, the competitors, and organisers.

The venue is a lovely big square parade ground but even though the paddock is mainly in shady trees the driving and marshalling is out in the open. We did come prepared with lots of liquids and a gazebo to put up for shade at one of the marshal points – well Richard's point to be precise. It was much appreciated by the other competitors as well during their marshal stints.



The organisers had some challenges with people dropping out last minute with Covid and heat related health issues, but others stepped up last minute to ensure the event could still run. Thanks to all these volunteers and to Neil

Brown who managed to hold the day together and, after resolving a few issues, ran the electronic timing and results on his own.

There was originally a full entry but again a few last minute dropouts. The 4 course layouts were a bit different to previous events we have done here. A bit tighter and faster steering needed in places – more of a challenge for me than Richard. Still really enjoyed all of them and we both were able to improve through the day, had no wrong tests and got good results at the end.

There was a wide range of cars alongside the usual MX-5s including an original Fiat 500 and a brand new Toyota Yaris GR (with 7 miles on the clock!). We were in our old and completely standard MG ZR this time and there were 12 in our class. Richard finished 4th in class and 11th overall, which was really good considering the other cars and their modifications. Grahame Standen, who had never been to this venue, had a good result with 6th in class and 16th overall. I came in 8th in class and 22nd overall. I was happy with this as my aim is now to finish in the top half of the entry. FTD went to Adam Rock in an MX-5, with Keith Pettit in 2nd overall, despite losing a wheel on his last run of the day!



As this was also Richard's birthday weekend, we headed down to Littlehampton afterwards for lovely fish and chips by the sea, an overnight stay and a relaxing day on the beach on Monday.

The next FDMC autosolo is back at Bordon on 18th September and we definitely plan on being there.

Emma Olsen

Why not try Sprinting or Hill Climbing.

Two advantages, compared to car racing, are that you do not need a medical for your licence as you do with a race licence, and you can compete with just about any car. Plus the entries cost a lot less. There are classes for standard road legal cars so Your Aunt's Nissan Micra has as good a chance as any of being a trophy winner. With my MG Midget Racer I have competed at three of the World's oldest established speed events, Prescott, Shelesley Walsh and Brighton Speed Trials, plus I have been let loose on some fabulous circuits. Goodwood, Silverstone and Brands Hatch and of course my old friend Lydden. I have even won my class at these events. Racing is very exciting, obviously, but can be quite hard on the car with wear and tear and expensive slick tyres which don't last very long after 20 laps of Brands. My poor little Racer has also had a few bumps and bruises, not a usually a problem with sprinting.

Once you have persuaded Aunty that she won't need her Micra for a few hours next Saturday you will need a crash helmet and some flame resistant clothing so that you can look like a real racing driver as you stroll around the Paddock. I am afraid these will be quite expensive but if you buy sensibly, they will last for ages. Read the rules and prepare the car to suit.



Once signed on and in the paddock, you will find most other drivers are very friendly and helpful with advice and loan of tools but for goodness' sake make sure you return his tyre gauge. There you will come across some incredible cars and as long as the drivers are not busy they will be happy to talk to you about their 'toys'. At the last Lydden meeting I attended there were 2 Championships competing with lots of lovely Lotus cars playing and a mass of single seaters that are exciting to watch as they are so-so fast. If you are interested in 'Classics' some of the Hill Climb events have classes for some amazing classic race cars. At my last Shelesley meeting I was parked near a magnificent supercharged, pre-war Maserati race car that shook the paddock when it started. A real pleasure to be close to such an historic machine at play.

The great thing about sprints and hillclimbs is that you need total concentration from the second that the green light comes on. When the red light shows make sure you are in first gear and bring the revs up to the best speed for a rapid start and when the green light shows GO. Too much wheelspin and you have lost precious seconds and sliding wide at the corners looks good and is fun but you have lost a few more seconds. Accurate driving at the limit wins prizes. I came second by one hundredth of a second at one event.

Go on try it you might like it.

Paul Bernal-Ryan

Summer Slalom 31st July 2022

Another fantastic running of the Summer Slalom. Thanks to Andy Jenner organising 3 great venues and a range of challenging and interesting tests. 33 entrants started and finished, which was great. Thanks to the marshals too who must have got extremely hot and dusty but were still smiling at the end of the day.

Overall, it was a fun day out with great close competition and a fantastic and friendly time was had by all involved – as you will see from the following Facebook comments made on the Sunday evening, these sum it up brilliantly.



Ian Mepham said:

It was a bit dusty!

For another year, it's done. But what a day.... Only 10 tests but now I'm home my arms feel dead.

So to start, 3 tests at Headcorn. Deceptively slippery. All tests, 2 runs, best run to count. Christopher Newton pulling some time on those 1st three but on 2nd runs I clawed it back.

Shortish road mileage to 2 tarmac tests at Pluckley. Love the venue but a wrong test

on the first run put the pressure on a bit. Clean 2nd run - onto the test next door.

1st clean. 2nd run clipped a tree into a chicane, eased off a little as was sure I had a puncture but nothing just a little battle scar. Chris again pipping me on both tests.

Road journey to the next venue, a farm, one tarmac one grass. 2 clean runs on the tarmac and a grin ear to ear, another venue I love.

Grass test Dusty Fair time. Was all a bit close at the top now. Brian Sharpe driving like a demon was sure to catch Chris and I on the last 3 grass tests back at Headcorn. Imminent danger of rain loomed and so a rush to get three clean grass runs proved our downfall though. Chris suffering a double wrong test (was gutted for him) and me rushing wasn't the best of approaches as the tests were still fairly fresh.

Chris dropped way down the order. I dropped from 2nd overall to 4th overall with a late charge from Chris Smith and Grahame Standen - well done gentlemen. 1st in class was good enough. It's all in the nature of a technical event, where every second counts.

Thank you to Kam Zielinska for the pictures and videos and well done to her after stepping in last minute to double drive with Chris on not an easy event in a car that is not the easiest to drive in tight spaces.



BMW boys waiting to make more dust!

Well done to Brian Sharpe on FTD and to everyone at Maidstone & Mid Kent Motor Club that made the event happen.

Epic event, epic day, epic friends that make the event what it is.

Responses:

Mike Thomas – Well said.

Chris Penfold – This event will never get old it's just a day long grin.

Kevin Lower – Brilliant. Everyone involved deserves a medal, well done all.

Chris Smith – A great day event, my first but not my last, well done everyone.

Grahame Standen said:

Well, that's it, another epic M&MKMC Summer Slalom done with and what a day. I didn't look at the results until after the final test. Wow that was close! 3rd overall and 2nd in class and just 0.1 seconds off the class win and only 3 seconds back to third.



Bit slippy through here!

Well done to Brian Sharpe on FTD, much closer to you this year. 2nd in class to Chris Smith and 3rd me. Bad luck Ian Mephram dropping to 4th overall at the end and 5th to Lloyd Covey keeping us all honest.

Well done to Katie Smith, double driving and keeping me company all day - a very creditable 14th on her first attempt at the event. She thoroughly enjoyed it.

Here's to next year then and let some of the battles recommence in 3 weeks' time on the John Ashwell Memorial Autotest on 21st August - looking forward to it.

Responses:

Katie Smith – *Well done on your result. It was a fantastic event and a pleasure to keep you company.*

Chris Smith – *Well done Grahame – how close was that!*

Kevin Lower – *You looked well smooth and in control*

Grahame Standen – *didn't always feel like that inside the car!*

Lloyd Covey said:

Another fantastic MMKMC summer slalom! 3 venues, 3 different surfaces, 10 tests, lots of grinning faces. Thanks to all our wonderful organisers and marshals for another great day of grass roots motorsport.

As well as being fun, it was a very competitive event with people moving up and down the top 5 all day but eventually it was a FWD 123 - Well done to Brian Sharpe winning FTD 4.5 seconds clear of Chris Smith, 2nd overall, who was only 0.1 second ahead of Grahame Standen, 3rd overall. Ian Mepham was fastest RWD winning his class and 4th overall, just 1.6 second behind Grahame. 5th was Lloyd Covey, 1.4 seconds behind Ian.

In addition to the above, not forgetting our other class winners, Steve Groves, Steve Hammond & Chris Spree. The best junior was Mac Robinson who was a very respectable 19th O/A and our best novice Ryan Gilley 12th O/A.

Responses:

Steve Hammond – I had a fantastic day, really enjoyed it. Big thanks to all the marshals that made it possible and well done Brian for FTD.

Brian Sharpe said:

Another fantastic MMKMC Summer Slalom. A multi-venue, multi-surface Autotest. Three venues with a mix of grass, tarmac, concrete and loose surfaces. Really pleased to clinch FTD for the second year running. Last year it chucked it down with rain and some of the test sites were like a swamp. This year, in dry hot conditions and against expectations I won outright again, hopefully meaning I'm no longer just a slippery conditions expert! At least 5 people were holding the top spot through the day showing what a competitive event it is. Thanks to the organisers and marshals.



FTD award

Obituaries

John T Liddell 1927 - 2022

Sadly, we have to report the death of John Liddell at the age of 95. John was one of those unsung heroes who competed in his early years and then used his considerable knowledge and expertise by contributing a great deal to the running of the club over many years. He joined the club in 1954 and was elected to the Club General Committee in January 1958. He became a director of the club in 1960 and was a major organiser and contributor of club events during his time on the board.

From January 1959 to 1962 he edited the Kent Driver with copies of his work still in the club archives.

He presented the Club with the John Liddell & Co Ltd Trophy in 1969 for the 2nd Club Navigator of the Year which is still currently being awarded each year by the club.



John had many other interests as well as motoring having a major interest in steam trains and became a major contributor to the Tenterden Railway. He was also a skilled craftsman building among other things his own boat. The last time I saw John he was busy crafting a sign for the Tenterden Railway.

Club Personality article in Kent Driver February 1962

JOHN LIDDELL

John Thorold Liddell is, as most of you will know -the immediate past Editor of the magazine. He is in his early thirties, and is married with two children, Nicholas aged 3 years and Julia aged 5 years. For an occupation John is a professional line shooter, a Sales Manager. He has been a member of the Club for eight years and runs an "aging Morris Minor" [Paul Bernal Ryan still has this car. ED] (if anyone wants to see what an aircraft cockpit looks like, take a peek at the instruments in his car).



John has had quite a few motoring successes, including placings in four Hoppers. He has competed in no Club events of recent years, but now rides shotgun ' in the Pocock / Bailey stagecoach.

John ran a Motor Accessory Shop - John Liddell & Co Ltd. 25 Lower Stone Street, Maidstone. This shop in Maidstone was always a source of Club information. Seldom did one go in there when other members were not also there buying equipment for their competition cars. As MMKMC Chief Marshal, a role he fulfilled on many events, as well as being the race starter at the club's Silverstone race meetings

A few thoughts on John T Liddell and Buzzie Reader:

I met John Liddell via Buzzy Reader in 1962 and we all three remained the best of chums forever. I was hellbent on becoming a rally co-driver and the minute JTL's accessory shop opened, I quit a good job to become a shop-boy down in Lower Stone Street all those years ago. The trick surely worked, and I met every one of any note (mostly through the MMKMC).

John and I became very good friends as well, and I even went with him to Rhodesia (for a long day) to look at some old steam trains!!! We also spent hours and hours sodding about with 16mm cine film of MMKMC Grasshopper rallies (which I organised) and putting sound commentary on an added magnetic strip!!

Through John Liddell I got to know John Pocock & Lee Davey (past MMK chairmen and President) and it was JP continually ragging me about how many RAC rallies he had done (seven) that I kept going until I had eventually done eight!! John Pocock was quite a guy a very successful local businessman, chairman of Kent Cricket, an MCC cricket selector, and a very successful amateur rally driver. He was of course also Buzzie Reader's dad! She has been on the periphery of the MMKMC for over sixty years and attended every Dinner & Dance I ever organised.

It was through JTL that I met so many other folks from way back, Hubert Kingsbury, 'Fingers' Wicken, John La Trobe, David Baily and so many more. I was heavily involved in that crazy and wonderful MMKMC Monte Carlo Rallye entry that John La Trobe and David Baily made.

Without JTL's help and enthusiasm, I would never have managed to 'get-on' with the co driving and I owe so much of it to him. I ended up co-driving all over the world in factory entries by Volvo, Toyota, Ford, and Nissan (it was of course very different in the sixties and seventies) but I had the very best of times.

We were always enthusiastic about the steam trains and when they started doing 'Pullman' carriages with supper we had some of the best & memorable night's out I've ever had.

We've stayed the best of chums right through it all ~ it wasn't but a year or so ago that we were down in Tenterden, and he was showing us how he was still making wooden vintage signs for their railway stations.

He was one of the best and I'll never forget him.

John Jensen

My own memories of John Liddell will be after he left the MMKMC. His fantastic efforts in working with the KESR at Tenterden and all that he achieved for them and the times I went with him in the very early days helping the working parties resurrect the track and then the model railway layouts at Bower Cottage and the railway memorabilia around the garden and then the swimming pool opening party - all great times. Also the time the MMKMC received a "lifetime ban" from the KESR when some of its members and friends disgraced the club with hooligans' behaviour during an evening meal on the train !!

John will always be remembered as a very kind gentleman.

Lyle Cathcart

For any on wishing to attend. John Liddell's funeral is being held at Caring Crematorium at 14.30 on the 16th August.

Patrick Barron Hopkirk 1933 -2022

His first victory was on St Patricks Day 1954 in a VW Beetle. Following his win in the Irish Rally Championship in 1954 and 1955 he joined the Triumph factory team and won the Circuit of Ireland in 1958 in a Triumph TR3A. After being fired by Triumph for driving on a flat tyre in the Italian



Dolomites, he moved to Sunbeam and scored successes in the 1961 Circuit of Ireland and 1962 Monty Carlo Rally when he joined the BMC Team. In 1968 he finished second in the 10,000 mile London – Sydney

Rally loosing first place after stopping to help a fellow competitor who's Citroen had collided with another vehicle on what was supposed to be a closed road. He probably saved Lucien Bianchi life pulling him from his burning vehicle.



Paddy Hopkirk MBE was one of the people who made the original Mini famous, in the years when London was starting to swing. Right place, right time, right attitude. International rallying was different in the Sixties, and participants were required to arrive from some distant location to join the common route – hence Hopkirk's billeting to Minsk, then part of the Soviet Union, and firmly behind the Iron Curtain during the Cold War era. Along with co-driver Henry Liddon, Hopkirk was one of 30 cars out of the 240-strong entry that arrived in Reims from Minsk for the start of the 33rd Monte Carlo rally. He'd traded some stockings for tins of Beluga caviar

while he'd been there and smuggled them back intending to sell them when he got to France, but instead he and his team had a caviar party.

"Henry and I pushed very hard and in places it was quite snowy, and the snow drifts meant that the roads got narrower. Which was beneficial to the Mini, of course," he recalled. He was a driver who had the nerve and bravado to go with his natural ability, and the bookish, bespectacled Liddon was a whip-smart navigator. By the time they got to the Principality, the occupants of 33 EJB had no idea where they stood, and managed to hang on during the final stage to take the win. The victory became front page news, and the trio ended up as guest stars on the UK's most watched television show, *Sunday Night at the Palladium*. There were telegrams from the then Prime Minister, Sir Alec Douglas-Home, and The Beatles. They also signed a photo and wrote, 'you're one of us now, Paddy!' It's framed and hangs on the wall of a downstairs room of Hopkirk's Buckinghamshire home.

Club Officers

<i>President</i>	Lyle Cathcart
<i>Chairman</i>	Liz Jordan
<i>Treasurer</i>	Andy Jenner
<i>Secretary</i>	Bruce Jenkins
<i>Membership Secretary</i>	Tom Thompson
<i>Chief Marshal</i>	Dennis Usmar
<i>Club Championship Coordinators</i>	Des & Helen Crocker
<i>Website</i>	Des Crocker
<i>Social Media</i>	Lloyd Covey
<i>Sustainability Officer</i>	Emma Olsen
<i>Safeguarding Officer</i>	Janet Barlow
<i>Newsletter Editor</i>	Bruce Jenkins



2022 CLUB FIXTURE LIST

Event	Clerk of Course	Secretary of Meeting or Contact	Date
12 Car Rally	Liz Jordan	Toby Groves	21 st January 2022
Annual Awards Evening	Liz Jordan	Lyle Cathcart	15 th March
Tyrwhitt Drake Trial	Tom Thompson	Bruce Jenkins	27 th March
Autosolo Ashford Market	Ben Dawson	Andy Jenner	19 th March
Annual General Meeting	Lyle Cathcart	Liz Jordan	3 rd May
Autotest Taster Day - Otham	Richard Olsen	Bruce Jenkins	8 th May
Evening Autotest - Headcorn	Brian Sharpe	Andy Jenner	18 th May
Evening Autotest - Otham	James Muir	Andy Jenner	1 st June
Evening Autotest - Headcorn	Jim Pullar	Andy Jenner	15 th June
Evening Autotest - Otham	Lloyd Covey	Andy Jenner	29 th June
Mike Jordan Celebration Tour	Liz Jordan	Liz Jordan	2 nd July
Evening Autotest - Headcorn	Ben Dawson	Andy Jenner	13 th July
Lydden Co-pro Sprint	Steve Castle / Tony Perrett	Josh Bennett	16 th July
Summer Slalom	Andy Jenner	Hilary Jenner	31 st July
Evening Autotest - Otham	Liam Carfrae	Andy Jenner	10 th August
Combined Ops Show	Tim Mewett	N A	13 th & 14 th August
John Ashwell All Day Autotest - Headcorn	Emma Olsen	Bruce Jenkins	21 st August
Kent Forestry Targa Rally	Dave Clark	Toby Groves	10 th September
Brian Lewis Trial	Tom Thompson	Bruce Jenkins	30 th October
Ashford Autosolo	Ben Dawson	Emma Dawson	TBA

B.D. Engineering

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