



Maidstone and Mid Kent Motor Club Newsletter

October 2021



John Ashwell 1926 - 2021.

Johnny, as he was affectionately known to all those involved in motor sport, joined the MMKMC in 1948 a decision that was no doubt influenced by his employer, Leslie Riley who was the Club President at that time.

Johnny immediately became involved with all the Club events mainly on the from Stuart organising side but he did compete on some short rallies in his "clapped out" Ford Prefect! He was Event Secretary for the Bossom and Brian Lewis [Grab your reader's attention with a great quote from the document or use this space to emphasize a key point. To place this text box anywhere on the page, just drag it.]

Sporting Trials, until the late 1990s, which were included in the BTRDA Annual National

Championship series using several different venues including Boxley Downs, Vinters Park and Stock Wood at Wormshill. In 1983 John negotiated and secured the use of Headcorn Aerodrome for the Club's Evening Grass Autotests on what is considered to be one of the best venues available which is still used by the Club. When not organising John would almost always be at the MMKMC events acting in some helping capacity.

On the racing circuits he was very well known and respected and in 2008 he was presented with a special award from the Aston Martin Owners Club in recognition of his 60 years of service and duty as a race marshal which began in 1948 at the MMKMC events at the Silverstone Circuit and then also at the Brands Hatch, Crystal Palace and Lydden circuits. From being a Flag Marshal John also undertook the roles of the Official Starter, Clerk of the Course, and Club Steward for the race meetings. Being such



John Receiving one of his many awards from Stuart Turner

a long standing member John had a wealth of information of the Club when the past needed to be referred to especially when the history of the Club book was compiled in a few years ago.

John served on the Club General committee from the 1950s and was the Club Chairman from 1962 to 1969 and again in 1992. He was appointed a Club director in 1962 a role he was to hold until his retirement in 2017 which must be regarded as a terrific achievement and outstanding service to the Club.

The Club has acknowledged John's contributions through presentations to him at the Club Annual Awards evenings when being awarded the Don Baker Marshal Trophy, the Kleeber Marshal Trophy, John La Trobe Event Organiser Trophy and the Ford Rosebowl Club Person of the Year receiving all of them multiple times.

John's contributions to the MMKMC for over 70 years are a massive achievement and he will be fondly remembered as a person who just got on with the job with terrific loyalty to the Club.



John Ashwell starting The Players No 6 Autocross in Mote Park

Member's reflections on John.

So sorry to hear that Johnny Ashwell has passed away. When I first joined the motor club (long ago!!) Johnny Ashwell supported me in many ways when I first started Rally driving. He was a lovely man and shall be remembered by so many members.

Enid Watson

From my early days of joining the club John was always there at every event. Later when I became a committee member he was someone you could rely on to provide advice, if needed, from his long experience of organising events and running the Club. As an organiser, I found he was one of those people you could rely on to turn up and marshal whether it was an evening autotest or the two days of the Combined Ops. Dedication does not come any better than that. He will be sorely missed.

Bruce

I was first introduced to John Ashwell in the 1960's by Jane Waugh our President at the time. I was immediately aware of John's infectious enthusiasm both for all forms of motor sport and particularly The Maidstone and Mid Kent Motor Club. Nothing was too much trouble and we enjoyed many

excursions putting up posters advertising autocrosses and other events, and being driven around the Kent Countryside by John in his Hillman Avenger. John never ever tiring of energy and motivation! His experience with all forms of club motor sport was extensive. He was always “on hand” to help with any event. No task was too small to gain John’s exceptional good will, attention, inspiration, advice and help, if required. He always found time for the MMKMC. There were meetings at John and Betty’s home in Chart Sutton. Again, nothing was too much trouble, with very convivial times. I also recollect an extensive library of Autosport magazines.

John was a stalwart of the MMKMC. His boundless energy, enthusiasm, integrity and as one of the “King-pins” of the M&MKMC and a member of the team in the early days, gave the club its firm and long-lasting foundation for the future. The club was involved in running events such as driving tests, rallies, autocross, sprints, hill climbs and also, race meetings at Silverstone and Brands Hatch. John was always a key member of the organizing teams including the last of the Formula 5000 meetings at Brands Hatch. He was always on hand to assist with any aspect of these varied events. John’s inspiration, along with others, ensured the future continuity of the Club with experienced officers.

I am sure I speak for many others who knew John in that he will be remembered with much affection for his personality, respect for his ability and recognition of lifetime dedication to the MMKMC for which he was a true ambassador for the Club and club motorsport.

Perhaps the Committee could consider a “John Ashwell” annual award?

Laurence Parsons

Eddie Moon

We have also learnt recently of the passing of Eddie Moon known to many older club members both as a club member and as a director of a local car dealer.

Eddie was a past member and a Vice President of the MMKMC and was a director of the Maidstone based car dealerships Drake & Fletcher Ltd.

Eddie was extremely generous to the MMKMC and its members, in not only supplying cars to them but also supporting them in motor sport when using one of the many makes of cars the dealership sold. He also enabled the MMKMC to start and finish many events from their premises as well as holding motor sport functions in their showrooms.

He was very enthusiastic and extremely helpful with his support of MMKMC members when competing with sponsorship from Drake & Fletcher especially to Tony Whibley, racing a Droop Snoot Firenza , John Jensen on RAC and other rallies. He also supported Lyle Cathcart and Chris Daisy on rallies especially on the International Caravan Road Rallies under the Team Name of Lee Davey Drake & Fletcher Maidstone.

Eddie was great company to be with and will be fondly remembered for his never ending amusing story telling, especially when they involved local people.

Autotests Reports.

Eastbourne Autotest Sunday 10th October 2012



It was the last autotest of the year for the Southern Autotest Championship held by Eastbourne and Ram Motor Club at Horham and it was a slippery one! Although it hadn't rained for a week at the venue the ground was very wet, and the grass soon turned to mud. So, we all slid our way around perhaps slower than we wanted. Good practice for the trial season that is just about to

start though.

There was good representation from MMKMC members, (10 out of 19 entrants) particularly in Class A with Chris and Katie Smith in their Mini, Ryan Gilley sharing Grahame Standen's KA, Alan Scott in another Ignis and Josh Smith double driving with Tommy Wooley as a junior in their C2. Josh did not enjoy the front wheel drive experience much! Lloyd Covey won the Class though in his Mini.



Brian Sharpe only just had one car to compete against in Class B and Emma and Richard Olsen slid around in Class D that was won not surprisingly, by Ian Mepham.

Congratulations go to Steve Stringer who won FTD in his Silva Striker, which was the only car in Class F.



Emma Olsen

Southern Autotest championship report – October 2021

There has been a very good response to the initiative to include an evening series of grass autotests. No less than 22 championship entrants scored points on the 8 events run – the weather meaning a cancellation of the other 3 rounds. Top scorer was a familiar name and car with Brian Sharpe in his Micra winning the ASEMC Trophy. Second overall and winning the Quaife Trophy, was a recent championship name but a very experienced driver in Blackpalfrey's Grahame Standen, whose KA proved very reliable. Lloyd Covey (Mini) and Alan Scott (Suzuki Ignis), both from Maidstone & Mid Kent MC, both took class points off Grahame during the series which made it quite a challenge for him.

The evening events ended on the 12th August and then it was on to the series of full day events which finished on the 10th October. All but two of the evening event registrations competed on the all-day events which is one thing the championship organizers were aiming for. The evening points were carried forward and Brian Sharpe continued his winning habits by finishing on top to win the Doug Worgan trophy for the 7th time. Brian now has the top number of wins since the championship started as the ACSMC championship in 1971. The record is shared by another two Brian's, Brian Bridge in his Mini and Brian Luker in his Mexico and Special.

Grahame Standen has entered no less than 13 of the events this year and is justly rewarded with the South Bucks Trophy for second overall. It's also good to report that the next trophy on the list, the Harrow Car Club shield for the best North of the Thames competitor, has been awarded this year to Chelmsford MCs' Mike Thomas in his Clio. Mike also finished second in the saloon car Class B to Brian. The corresponding award for best South of the Thames competitor, the Steve Redsell Shield, goes to the sports car class winner Sevenoak's Paul Hebden in his MX5. It is also good to report that there is a Novice award for 2021 which goes to Susan Gibbard in her MX5.

The change in format has worked well this year and thanks go to the support of Toby Groves in the SE region.

Peter Cox

Championship coordinator.

2021 Brian Lewis Car Trial 31st October

And so it has been all year, organise an event and it is a signal for the start of a monsoon. Unfortunately, the weekend we had chosen to run the Brian Lewis was just another example. I recorded 12mm of rain in four hours on my rain gauge at home, and that was just on the day of the event. Of course, the sun came out in the afternoon, but the damage was done by then. We had a disappointingly low entry, but it would have been enough to run the event - just. Thanks to Tom Thompson and Dennis Usmar for turning up in the rain to set out the hills on the Saturday, if all we did was watch it rain!!

We will have to see if there is enough interest to have a go at running it before the end of the year. Early December or Christmas Day maybe to work off all that festive food??

Bruce Jenkins

First Car Trial for 2021 - Falcon

It had been seven months since we last competed on any car trial due to the lock down. The Falcon Motor Club started the ball rolling with their Spring Trial held on the 18th April. The venue was near Whipsnade Zoo on some very exposed downs overlooking Ivinghoe Aston. The entry for the trial opened on the 14th April and by the end of the day it had reached its maximum number of 50, leaving a number of people without an entry and very disappointed. This event attracts a good number of competitors due to it being a championship round for BTRDA Allrounders, AWMCM Car Trials and the ASEMC Trials Championships. With the Covid restrictions in place the registration, signing on, and scrutineering were all completed online. On receiving the final instructions, we noted that our class was to start on hill three. Social distancing and masks were to be worn when mixing with other people. The cars that were double driven had to be sanitised before the second driver took over and no passengers were allowed while competing on the hills.



Hill 5. Dennis Usmar - Saxo



Hill 3. Chris Young MX5

On the day of the trial, we had an early start with very little traffic on route arriving about eight thirty at Ivinghoe. On arrival at the entrance to the field our details were checked by Falcon marshals and we were directed to a well-spaced out paddock area. It seemed strange on arriving, unloading the car from the trailer, to have no signing on sheets, scrutineering or driver's briefing before the event. Eight hills had been laid out the day before, ready for us to start the event, with the weather being in our favour for a change.

All we had to do was drive to our allocated hill three, to start the event. We found the first round very slippery but did manage to score some reasonably low marks. By the second round the hills were starting to dry out so one or two alterations were made to make it more difficult, but despite this we were still able to score low marks. We had a break for lunch giving time for the Clerk of the Course to make alterations to the hills, in an attempt to make them more difficult.

After lunch the cars started in reverse order and with all the changes made to the hills it became an even greater challenge to get zero points. For the last round, the hills remained the same with most of the competitors managing to score low marks.

After we finished the event, the car was loaded onto the trailer ready to depart home. It was a strange day having no results and awards at the end, so we left to make the journey back home along the dreaded M25, which was very busy.

Thanks to the Falcon Motor Club for a well organised motor sports event with plenty of marshals to man the hills.

MMKMC members that competed

Class A - Jay Grossmith, Jim Pullar, Chris Young

Class B – Dennis Usmar, Dave Fleck

Class D – Roger Ashby, Les Rayfield

Dennis Usmar



Charlie Lower wins Caterham Academy 2021

Many members will know Charlie Lower, and the rest of his family, from them competing in many MMKMC events over the years. Although no longer a member Charlie started with the Club as a junior competing in evening autotests.

This year Charlie has been competing in the Caterham Academy which is a national circuit race championship for drivers who have never raced on track before.

They race in identical Caterham Academy cars, so it really is a test of driver ability, rather than the amount of horsepower and financial support available. There were 49 entrants divided into two groups so 25 cars on track at a time. Charlie used his Caterham not only for racing but on the road and also did a grass autotest at Tunbridge Wells Club in it as well!



Charlie did have some sponsorship to help cover some of the competing costs from Quad Lock and Caterham Cars as well as lots of support from the rest of the Lower clan including transport to all 7 of the events and service crew.

The coverage of the championship was great, and we watched several of the races live via Facebook/You-Tube and it was really exciting and tight racing all year – had us shouting at the tele supporting Charlie.

Charlie was the youngest competitor in the championship at just 21 but he was really consistent throughout the season so going into the last event at Snetterton it was very close at the top. There is a qualifying session and 2 races at each circuit. Charlie was leading the 1st race but a couple of tiny errors dropped him to 4th with 2 laps to go. He fought back up to first but a missed third gear on the run to the line resulted in second. This meant he was joint first going into the last race, which he ultimately won to seal the championship! Exciting finish to a whole year of racing.



As Charlie said himself on his Facebook page:

“I WON THE CHAMPIONSHIP!!!”

I honestly can't believe it. The support all year has been incredible! Really couldn't have done this without all the support from my family and friends ❤️ every single message pushed me further and further.

I had a fraction of the budget EVERYONE else had but we made it work! Couldn't have done this without the support from QUAD LOCK and CATERHAM CARS LTD ❤️❤️ you guys made my dreams come true.

No Vbox, original factory brake pads, secondhand tyres and minimal testing.

Winning the academy as the youngest driver with the smallest budget goes to show you don't have to spend thousands to compete. Done this full year in my Dad's old oversized race suit and running on second hand tyres. Just makes the victory feel that much sweeter”

Well done Charlie, and looking forward to what comes next for you.



UP and Down the A20

- Thanks to Dave and Toby Cook for filling up the club container with tarmac autotest plastic pipes. As we have the kit, does anyone want to run a tarmac autotest?
- Michelin are developing a new type of airless tyre called the Uptis. The idea is no punctures, no need for manufactures to provide a spare or tyre pressure monitoring systems saving money on new cars. Will you have to have four spares for grass autotest and trials if you want to find some grip?
- We already have “fly by wire” throttles and EPB’s (electronic parking brakes). Now Brembo are developing a brake-by-wire system to do away with hydraulic brakes. Will they still work if you have a flat battery, or will this be another issue like not being able to tow an EV?

Advertise your wares in this
space.

MMKMC

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2022 CLUB DRAFT FIXTURE LIST

Event	Clerk of Course	Secretary of Meeting or Contact	Date
12 Car Rally	Liz Jordan	Toby Groves	21 st January
Annual Awards Evening	Liz Jordan	Lyle Cathcart	15 th March
Tyrwhitt Drake Trial	Andy Jenner		27 th March
<i>Autosolo (Provisional)</i>	<i>Ben Dawson</i>	<i>Andy Jenner</i>	<i>March or April</i>
Annual General Meeting via Zoom	Lyle Cathcart	Liz Jordan	4 th May
Autotest Taster Day - Otham			8 th May
Evening Autotest - Headcorn			18 th May
Evening Autotest - Otham			1 st June
Evening Autotest - Headcorn			15 th June
Evening Autotest - Otham			29 th June
Mike Jordan Celebration Tour	Liz Jordan		2 nd July
Evening Autotest - Headcorn			13 th July
Lydden Co-pro Sprint	Barry Morris / Josh Bennett	Simone Cornish	16/17 th July
Summer Slalom	Andy Jenner	Hilary Jenner	31 st July
Combine Ops Show – Headcorn Parking	Tim Mewett		6 th /7 th August
Evening Autotest - Otham			10 th August
Wings All Day Autotest -Headcorn			21 st August
Kent Forestry Targa Rally	Dave Clark	Toby Groves	10 th September
Brian Lewis Trial	Tom Thompson		30 th October

November 2021



Gymkhana



2010