

SCCON Spotlight

The Newsletter of the Sporting Car Club of Norfolk

December 2020



Audi Quattro Group B “Delivering” a Christmas Tree, courtesy of Girardo and Co.



www.instagram.com/SportingCarClubofNorfolk



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Downloads available:

(via www.sccon.co.uk or contact Jon Scoltock for a paper copy)

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**If you have a story you would like to submit for
spotlight, please email Spotlight@SCCoN.co.uk**

Welcome to Spotlight...

Welcome everyone to the final Spotlight of 2020 and I'm sure I won't be alone in thinking that it's about time that this year came to an end. After what felt like good news coming with the start of a process of vaccinating people, it now feels like we have taken quite a few backward steps with new strains and a return to tight restrictions for many of us. It's definitely been a challenging year and one that I won't be sorry to see disappear into history!

The impact on motorsport remains severe, with the calendar continuing to look empty. While clubs all over the UK look to put plans in place for 2021, the spectre of the pandemic looms large, making it difficult to know what will and won't take place, particularly in the early part of next year. The Brands Hatch round of the Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship has unfortunately been cancelled, but we are now looking for marshals to register for the Snetterton round in February. If you are available, please sign up and hopefully we'll be able to enjoy the event as always.

While competitive motorsport remains thin on the ground, there's plenty in this issue to keep you amused over the festive period, so thank you to everyone that has submitted something. Apologies if I haven't included everything that's been sent in but, at over 20 pages, it was full to bursting point, so some will be saved until the January edition.

My own motorsport life is certainly limited at the moment, though getting back into my Renault Sport Clio after a day driving a van does feel like stepping into a BTCC refugee, such is the stiffness of the ride and the low seating position! I did manage to get a test drive in Toyota's new rally-inspired GR Yaris this month though, so I thought I would share a few thoughts about that, which you can find on page 21.

Otherwise though, I will finish by wishing all of you a very happy Christmas and New Year. While it isn't the Christmas that we all hoped for, on behalf of the entire committee, we hope you have the best time possible, and would like to thank you all for your continued support throughout what has been an extremely challenging 2020. We look forward to seeing you all again in 2021, where hopefully we can get back to doing what we all enjoy!

Until next time...

Jon Scoltock – Editor, Spotlight

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If you'd like to read more of my motorsport-based ramblings, you can find me on the below social media channels:



www.Twitter.com/MaximumAttackDT



www.Instagram.com/MaximumAttackRallying

The Month Ahead...

Social Events

Howard – Social Secretary:

Phone Howard on 07917 060052 if you have any ideas or venues for social events

Diary Dates

Snetterton Stage Rally
Saturday 20th February

Marshalling

Marshal Points:

Snetterton Stage Rally
Saturday 20th February

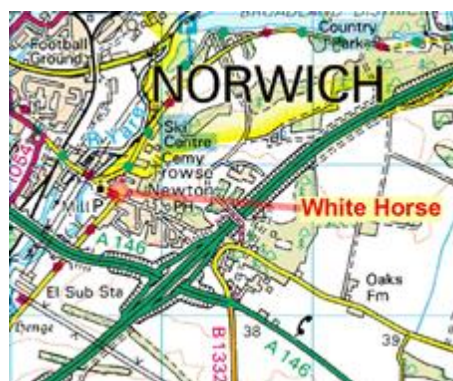
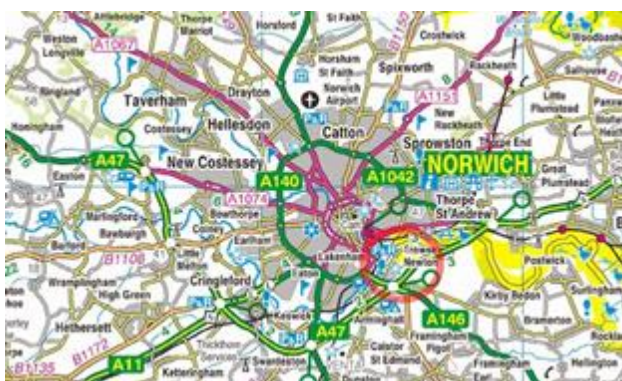
Club Nights

Do not forget that SCCoN club nights are currently held at the White Horse, Trowse, NR14 8ST. Any change in venue will be communicated through Spotlight or the SCCoN website. For directions, please refer to the map at the bottom of the page.

Have you been out marshalling on any club or invited events?? Then you need to claim your Championship points by contacting the Championship Coordinator.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 situation, we have had to cancel our club nights for now. As soon as they are back up and running, we will let you know!

The date for the next club meeting will be announced as soon as possible, so stay tuned!



2021 Dates	Event	Champ.	Contact(s)
PLEASE NOTE THAT, DUE TO THE ONGOING COVID-19 SITUATION, THE DATES BELOW ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE			
Saturday 20 th February	Snetterton Stage Rally	Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship	Anglia Motorsport Club

For the latest information on upcoming club events, visit www.scon.co.uk/index.html



10% OFF AT WILCO MOTOR SPARES

Did you know that Wilco Motor Spares offer SCoN members a 10% discount on presentation of a valid membership card?

Wilco have branches across Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire and have traditionally offered club members a 10% discount in store.

When you are next in-store, don't forget to ask for your discount.

If you have any issues with this promotion, please contact a member of the committee.

SCCoN Window Stickers

A limited number of SCCoN window stickers are available for £3 each including p&p.

These are printed to be stuck on the inside of the window, design is as below:



Self adhesive vinyl window sticker
measuring 195mm x 80mm.

Please email Mike Smith at mikey.j.smith@btopenworld.com if you would like one.

Payment by Paypal, cash or cheque thanks.

Please note that, if there is sufficient demand, more can be printed.



*"When
Reliability
Matters"*

Norfolk Classic and Sports Cars was born from a lifelong passion for motor sports and classic cars and was established with the aim of providing a reliable and complete service for classic and sports cars including on-event servicing for motorsport events as well as general servicing repairs and rally preparation work.

The founder of the company Robert Kitchen has been providing on-event support for the Endurance Classic Rally Association since 2000 and has worked on most of their long-distance endurance events over the last 15 years. Therefore, Robert has travelled many of the routes and first-hand experience of the problems encountered by classic vehicles on this type of event.

The company also carries out restoration work with workmanship undertaken to a meticulous standard. You can see some of our clients' cars in the Galleries section of our website at www.norfolkclassiccars.co.uk. We are always happy to discuss your individual requirements, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

This is a small selection of events for which Robert has provided mechanical support.



SCCoN Club Clothing

Ali Hodder has very kindly arranged for a new line of club clothing to be produced.

With our nice new club leaflets and recent efforts to increase SCCoN's promotional activities, these are a great addition and perfect for making yourself stand out to other members at events!

These are being produced by EZY-TEES, based in Martham, near Great Yarmouth. They are able to provide a full range of clothing items, including:

T-shirts
Sweatshirts
Hoodies
Zip-up hoodies
Polo shirts

There are a couple of examples below:



Ali is handling any orders for these so, for full price information, drop her a line at Alison.Hodder@yahoo.co.uk

500cc Racing in Britain from 1946 - and how the Cooper F1 team started out

by Peter Riddle

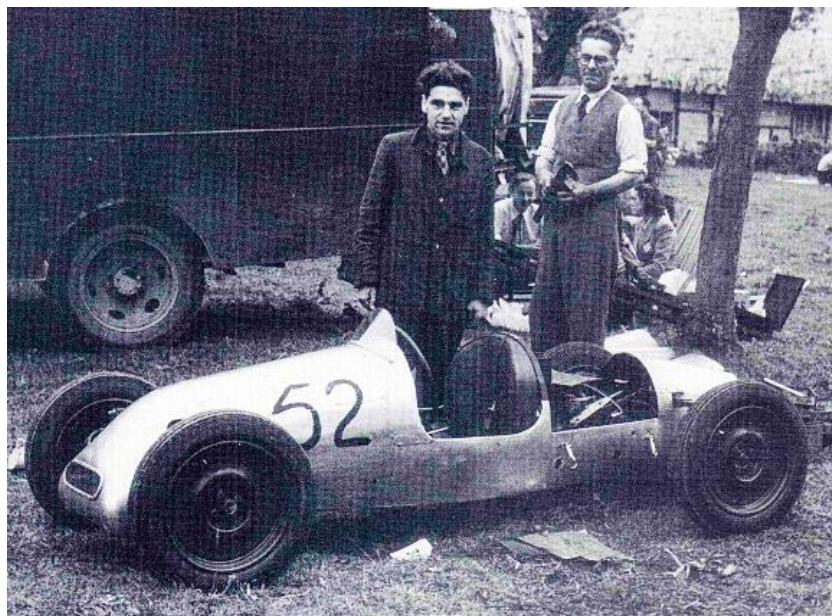
I've been lent a book by another SCCON member about the early days of 500cc single-seater motor racing that developed to become Formula 3 in 1950. It includes some fascinating stuff.

500cc competition started as a series of eleven sprint and hill-climb meetings held during 1946. Five were held at the Prescott Hill-Climb course, owned by the Bugatti Owners' Club, while the final event in October 1946 was at Cofton Hacket on the airfield that formed part of the Austin Motor Company's site at Longbridge. This is where I started my career in the motor industry in 1974. By then the airfield had long gone, but one of the large buildings where Austin-Morris assembled transmissions was still called the 'Flight Shed'.

The Cofton Hacket track was 50 feet wide with four short straights, two S-bends and two right-hand hairpins. It was actually a sprint meeting with the results declared in order of the fastest times for each flying lap of the half-mile circuit, but it was run as a series of races with three cars starting each three-lap 'race'. The exact length of the track is uncertain, but if it was *exactly* half a mile long, the lap speed of the fastest 500 would have been 55.6 mph and the fastest time of the day, set by Bob Gerard in his ERA, would have been 67.7 mph.

Most of the early 500s were self-built cars featuring a motorcycle engine and using a variety of parts obtained from wherever the builders could get them. Scrapped pre-war Austin Sevens, Morris Minors, GN Cyclecars, Fiat Topolinos, BSA and Morgan 3-wheelers and various ex-Second World War aircraft were typical sources of components.

The Cooper Car Company won the Drivers and Constructors F1 championships in 1959 and 1960 with Jack Brabham becoming World Champion both times. But John Cooper and his father had built their first racing car, a 500, in their garage at Surbiton back in 1946 using a JAP Speedway engine, Triumph Speed Twin motorcycle gearbox and two sets of pre-war Fiat 500 front suspension. It was built in just five weeks and was designated T2 because they retrospectively gave the T1 title to an Austin Seven special that John's Dad Charles Cooper had built in 1936.



John Cooper and his father with Cooper 'T2' at Prescott July 1946 (photo - Motor Sport)

T2's first competition was at Prescott in July 1946 and the first time the car ran was on the immediately preceding Friday. They ran it on public roads on trade plates and un-silenced, annoying

the local population and the Police, but they got away with it. Unfortunately the gearbox mountings broke during this test run and they worked into the early hours to make and fit replacement parts.

John and his school-friend Eric Brandon arrived at a very rainy Prescott at 11am on Saturday 27th July and John lined up for his first practice run at 3pm. However, on dropping the clutch, the engine mountings sheared, leaving the engine hanging on just its drive-chain sprockets.

They went back to their hotel thinking their motor sport was finished for that weekend, but then Eric devised a plan whereby they would load the car onto their truck and drive to a friend's garage 60 miles away. They 'obtained' some metal plough handles which they inserted into the steel tubes of the broken mounts and these were then drilled and pinned to hold them in place. They got back to their hotel in Cheltenham at 4-30 am. When they arrived at Prescott a bit bleary eyed on the Sunday morning they were met by John's Dad, who'd also done an all-nighter, and had managed to get some new engine mounting brackets made using 1½" solid steel bar.

They decided to leave the repaired tubular mounts in place and John drove the car for their first practice run up the hill. Unfortunately, he over-revved the engine while changing down and the resultant valve-bounce bent a valve. They stripped the engine and took the damaged valve into Cheltenham (on a Sunday morning) to have it straightened and lightly machined to true it up. And they got the engine re-assembled in time for the start of the competition proper at 2-00pm. Both John and Eric made timed runs up the hill and John was third fastest 500cc car.

For the next meeting, at Prescott the following month, T2 was fitted with the new engine mounts incorporating the solid steel bar stock. But John spun the car through 180 degrees on his first practice run and drove back down the hill to the start. Then both he and Eric made satisfactory practice runs up the hill and John's was the second fastest 500cc time of the day. But on John's first official timed run, the new engine mounts snapped right through the 1½" bars and the gearbox mountings failed again too.

Back to Surbiton and, after much head scratching, they replaced the solid bars with two leaf springs (mounted transversely across the car's chassis) onto which the engine was mounted, only finishing the job the evening before their next outing, the Brighton Speed Trials. At 6-00am in the morning, before leaving for Brighton, they ran the un-silenced car up the (empty!) Kingston By-Pass with Eric's T-type MG following the Cooper. Shortly afterwards, the Police came to see them but they blamed it on Geoff Taylor of the Alta racing car company which, rather conveniently, was also based in Surbiton.

Their efforts were repaid; John Cooper won the up to 850cc class at Brighton, beating Alec Issigonis's 'Lightweight Special' into second and Eric came fourth in the 1000cc class. At the West Court Sprint in September 1946, the engine developed a problem and wouldn't run properly at high revs. So John and Eric decided to use a maximum of 4000rpm instead of 6000. Even with this limitation, Eric was fastest in the up to 1100cc class with John only 0.3 sec slower.

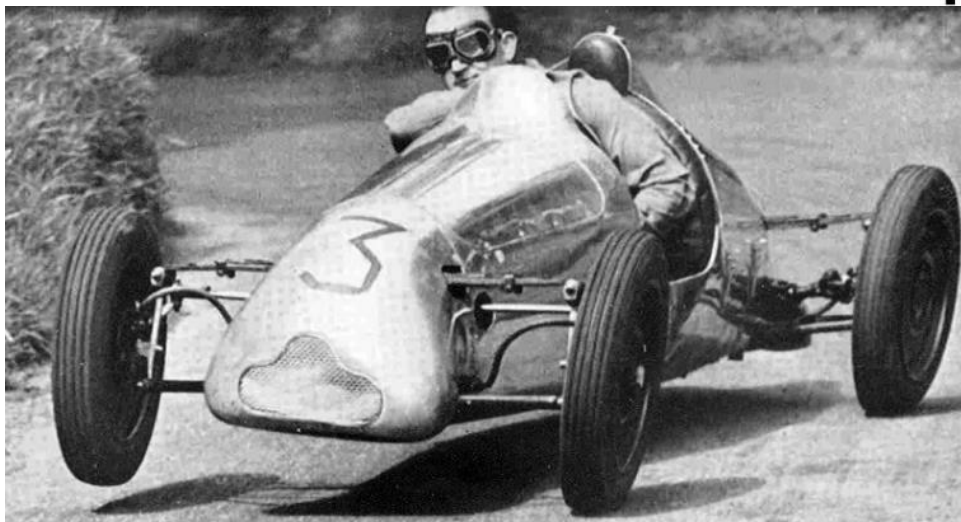
T2 had been a tight fit for Eric because he was taller than John so, for 1947, they built a second slightly larger car (T3) specifically for Eric. And they planned to build twelve more Cooper 500s to be offered for sale. During that year, John and Eric battled for 500cc wins against Colin Strang in his own car fitted with a Vincent H.R.D. engine from an ex-TT racing motorcycle. And on 13th July 1947, Eric won the first post-war motor race in Britain, held at RAF Gransden Lodge west of Cambridge. Their successes created a demand for replicas of the Cooper 500 and when Stirling Moss bought a Cooper-JAP Mk2 in 1948, race wins came pouring in followed by yet more orders for similar cars. Then in 1951, Eric became the first British National Formula 3 Champion in a Cooper Mk5. Their initial determination, despite the setbacks, along with those early good results set the Cooper Car Company on its way to their future success in Formula One. John Cooper said his rear-mid-engine layout, that became the blueprint for all single-seater racing cars, wasn't due to any cleverness, it was devised to get a chain drive from their JAP engine to the gearbox and another from the gearbox to the axle and they couldn't think of any other way to do it.



The first Cooper 500s with Eric Brandon's T3 on the left and John Cooper's T2 on the right

500cc Snippets

- Before becoming a professional racing driver, Stirling Moss studied dentistry, decided it wasn't for him so went into the hotel business. Like his sister Pat, young Stirling was an accomplished equestrian and he paid the deposit for his first Cooper 500 racing car from his winnings at horse-riding events.
- In late 1948, a new Cooper 500cc racing car cost £575. At that time, a new sit-up-and-beg 3-speed Ford Anglia was £310, while a two-door side-valve Morris Minor would have set you back £358. My Dad's salary in 1948 working for Shell in London as a clerk in their automotive lubricants department, was £315 per annum. So even 'low-cost' 500cc racing was much too expensive for the average man in the street. Nevertheless, Coopers made over 300 of their 500cc racers culminating in their Mark XIII model of 1959. Over the years, they installed various types of motorcycle engine including Triumph, Vincent and Manx-Norton.
- Cooper wasn't the only manufacturer to supply ready-built 500cc racing cars. In 1947, Marwyn built six of their 500s in kit form, though it gained a reputation for tricky handling. Iota initially sold bare chassis then, from 1949, sold complete cars fitted with a Triumph engine for £525. And Kieft and JBS cars became available from 1950. By 1953, after Stirling Moss had won several races in his Kieft, you could buy a replica for £782, or get one in kit form (minus-engine) for £445. Cyril Kieft, (a Welshman, no less), estimated that a home-made 500 racing car could be built for about £400 using mostly new parts, but you could assemble one for much less if you were a bit of a scrounger and you were on good terms with your local car breaker.
- John Baldock locked the differential on his self-built 500 by pouring molten lead into it!
- JAP (J.A. Prestwich of Tottenham) whose engines powered the first 500cc Coopers went on to make cylinder heads for the first Lotus Cortinas and early versions of the Lotus Elan.
- Well before the A.C. Cobra, there was a 500cc racing car called the Cobra. It was built in 1950 and the name came from the names of the builders: Fred Corbin and Tom Bryant.
- On 20th August 1949, John Cooper's great friend Eric Brandon beat Stirling Moss by 0.2 seconds at Silverstone, both driving 500cc Coopers, and he beat Stirling again at Charterhall in 1952. He raced Cooper-Bristols in a few F1 races in 1952 and '54 coming 8th at the 1952 Swiss GP. In 1955 Eric built and raced his own sports car the Halseylec, named after his electrical supplies company. Eric Brandon gave up motor racing in 1956 and raced hydroplanes instead.



Eric Brandon trying hard at Shelsey Walsh Hillclimb in his 500cc Cooper Mk2

- A recent advertisement offering some 500cc tools for sale describes one spanner as being "a big Mama for the JAP exhaust or for disciplinary purposes".

- Some racers bored out their 500 engines to about 530cc because the competition was often less fierce in the up to 1000cc class. Whereas for the 1949 races at Goodwood and Zandvoort in Holland, Stirling Moss ran his Cooper both as a 1000cc racer, AND as a 500, by the simple expedient of removing one cylinder head, barrel, piston and con-rod from his 1000cc twin engine.

- The 1949 500cc race at Zandvoort just mentioned had an unfortunate incident at the start. John Habin overshot his place on the front row of the grid next to Stirling Moss on pole position. So his mechanic ran onto the grid to push him back a bit, but the starter was looking at his watch rather than the grid, and he dropped the flag. This caused the mechanic to step back from Habin's car whereupon he was hit by the rear wheel of Stirling's and amazingly the rest of the grid missed him. Moss slowed down but was waved on by the marshals and went on to win the race. Fortunately, the mechanic's injuries were not serious.

The following competed in British 500cc races between 1947 & 1954. ** indicates multiple 500cc race wins.

Peter Ashcroft	Managed Ford's rally team 1986-91, then Director of Motorsport, Ford of Europe.
Laurie Bond **	Founder of the Bond car company 1949-1966.
Ivor Bueb **	F1 driver 1957-1959 and winner of the 1955 and 1957 Le Mans 24 Hour Races.
John Coombs **	Connaught F2 driver 1953-4. 1st F1 race win for Lotus. Built Coombs racing Jaguars.
Bernie Ecclestone **	Owner of Brabham F1 team 1972-88. Formula One supremo 1978-2017.
Peter Collins **	F1 racer in HWM, Vanwall and Ferrari. Third in the 1956 F1 World Championship.
John Cooper **	Founder of the Cooper Car Company. F1 Champions in 1959 and 1960.
Norman Dewis	Legendary Jaguar test driver. Co-drove Stirling Moss in the 1952 Mille Miglia.
Graham Hill	F1 World Champion 1962 & 1968. 1966 Indy 500 winner. Le Mans 24hrs winner 1972.
Peter Jopp **	7th overall & 1100cc class winner 1956 Le Mans 24 Hour Race in a Lotus 11.
Les Leston **	F1 racer in Connaught, Cooper and BRM 1956-57. Founded Les Leston Accessories,
Stuart Lewis-Evans **	F1 racer in Connaught, Vanwall and Cooper 1956-58.
Arthur Mallock	Constructor of Mallock U2 sports racing cars from 1958.
Stirling Moss **	Multiple winner in many race & rally formulae. Best driver never to be F1 Champion?
Don Parker **	British F3 Champion 1952, 53 & 59. Manufactured Don Parker trailers from 1956.
Jim Russell **	British F3 champion 1955, 56 & 57. Founded his Racing School at Snetterton in 1956.
Ninian Sanderson **	Winner of 1956 Le Mans 24 Hour Race for Ecurie Ecosse. 2nd at Le Mans in 1957.
Piero Taruffi	F1 racer for Alfa, Ferrari, Mercedes, Maserati & Vanwall. Won the 1957 Mille Miglia.
Basil Tye	Founder member Jaguar Drivers Club. Managing Director of the RAC MSA 1979-82.
Ken Tyrrell **	Founder of Tyrrell Racing 1958-98. 3 Drivers & 1 Constructors F1 Championships.

Press Release: Road Rallying (part one)

Hi to everyone with an interest in Road Rallying:

I'M ACCUMULATING MATERIAL FOR A FIFTH & FINAL BOOK ABOUT THE BYGONE ERA OF REAL TEAMWORK, OILY HANDS, MUDDY LANES, ROAD RALLYING:

The contrast is striking that, when amassing material for my earlier trilogy of books, it was a case of 'jump in the car, spend a week travelling round the country, meet up with former rally pals and, over numerous cups of tea and slices of homemade Victoria sponge, prise open their memories and scrap books.' I've lost count, but to arrive at the 2,700 photographs that feature in the first four books, I gathered (scanned in, one at a time) at least twice that number, quite probably accruing the largest collection in existence.

Sadly, the onset of Covid, particularly this latest lock down, has laid my well-intentioned plans to waste, for the time being that is. So, for posterity's sake, please dig out those scrap books and get in touch.

Finally, though we might have moved into a new lock down, and Christmas as we know it could be under pressure, you can still treat yourself (or a loved one) to a trip down memory lane by purchasing one of my books, or the whole trilogy with 2,700 full colour photographs. As the author and publisher, please contact me at my email address mick@mickbriant.com or check out my website www.mickbriant.com.

Best wishes from Mick Briant

The above press release was accompanied by the following article by Mick Briant that will be reproduced in Spotlight in two parts.

PART 1 of Mick Briant's Rally Recollections

Allow me to introduce a contributor called Peter, he brilliantly sums up all our mis-spent youth, though it can be argued, that for many this was pretty well normal life, as he writes:

'I'm afraid I didn't discover road rallying until 1973, at the ripe old age of 32. My mis-spent youth, during the '50s & '60s, revolved around cricket and motorbikes. My sole nocturnal fixation in those much-lamented days involved honing skills of a carnal nature, in and around the fleshpots of Greater Manchester. There will never again be a decade like the 1960s. When I contemplate the moribund, PC influenced farce that is modern Britain, I marvel at what we were allowed to get away with in those free for all days. So much so that it now seems like a long-lost, hallucinogenic trip.'

Yes Peter, remarkable though it may appear from a later perspective, you are spot on; I too marvel at what we were allowed to get away with in the 1960s era of British laissez-faire life, in fact the '70s and '80s as well, and that particularly applied to road rallying, the hundreds of road rallies (and corresponding motor clubs) held each weekend across the country, and the way we charged through the lanes. It really was a marvellous time, but equally so, this was fuelled by an expectation of being 'normal'.

Below is the first of my 'early cars', the Austin Healey of David Broadhurst driving and John Smith navigating on a rally in North Wales, a place that really sorted the men from the boys. In those dark and dreary days as the country struggled to escape the financial shackles of the Second World War, every rally attracted hundreds of spectators at junction after junction.



A lady called Angela wrote: 'What about women drivers?' It was a serious question which deserved a serious reply: 'What about women drivers AND navigators?' In fact, what about women who supported their car-mad boyfriends/husbands? Please make contact if you were a lady driver, navigator, or supporter with a story to tell. To those who've yet to make contact, let me say, irrespective of whether you were competing in one of the many Regional Championships – the training ground for many drivers & navigators - or some of the more celebrated and competitive championships such as the BTRDA, Welsh Road Rally, or Motoring News, you have a story to tell. Many classic roads have left their mark on the collective imagination, none more so than smooth tarmac roads such as the Devil's Staircase, or Nant-y-Moch (which skirts a large reservoir in the Cambrian Mountains in Wales), Hardknott and Wrynose mountain passes in the Lake District, but equally the rough Stake Allotments in Yorkshire (a white road that wouldn't have been out of place on the East African Safari), or the notoriously rough Peddars Way in East Anglia. These memories exercise a fascination of bygone days.

Remember this: we all went down the same muddy (ostensibly tarmac) roads, dealt with every atrocious weather condition this planet has to offer, had to find the same difficult slots, crashed down sometimes smooth but more often impossibly rough whites, up against that unforgiving clock, while avoiding the propensity to hammer the car into the ground. Occasionally – the occupational hazard - we clobbered the bank, dropped the car in a ditch, slammed the rear panel against a gatepost or, God forbid rolled it! We all did that, didn't we?

I'm well aware from my own rally driving experiences that what can go wrong, inevitably did sometimes, and judging from the stories received, that was the case for many others! Take for example, an early event (early 1970s) in Wales, the route took in a fast left-hander, half way round, even though the navigator hadn't called it, the road deceptively appeared to straighten out, but it was a private drive. One front runner went flat-out into this drive; heading straight for the dwelling's front door and car parked outside, he might have got away with it but for loose gravel in his braking zone. In a split-second decision, he whipped on the handbrake, got it sideways, and slammed sideways into the parked car. At least it wasn't the house.

My rallying career spanned three glorious decades: starting in the late 1960s, throughout the 1970s, and well into the 1980s. My trilogy of books is a powerful reminder how cars, speeds, and technology changed during that time. Not only was road rallying my passion, but I valued, above all else, the team relationship with my navigator. I always chuckle when remembering with a clarity that never leaves me, those early rather naïve days tackling a Welsh Motoring News event in my Mk1 Escort Twin Cam. At the front of these events were the biggest stars in the land. You felt intimidated just standing near them! - Even more so looking at their times. 'They beat us by how much?!'

Arriving at the end of the first competitive section, a short 20-miler warm up blast, we came charging in with a sense of relief having made it, permeating the car was that 'baked aroma smell' of oil, brake fluid, tyre & brake pad dust, and mud cooking on the red hot exhaust, front discs glowing in the dark, a brake haze drifting up over the bonnet. It's no exaggeration to say that soaked in sweat, I sat there thinking: 'I'm not sure how the car can stand another 200 miles of this.' The front runners were going much quicker, gave the car one hell of a hammering, but had few problems – how did they do it?

Thrusting his timecard out the window, getting his time, and checking the clock, my navigator said, 'get a move on, it's supposed to be relaxed, but don't count on it'. Pressing on with a sense of urgency, we arrived at the next competitive section start, there was an ominous absence of other cars bar one changing a puncture. Shouting to the marshal, 'where is everyone?', he replied 'they've all gone, you're late, you'd better get a move on'. Pulling up to the control my navigator somewhat optimistically asked for our time, 'we'll take 16 please', the marshal, after checking his clock, laughed, 'in that case you're three minutes late, you can have 19..... and you've got 10 seconds'. Giving myself a verbal ticking off, I pondered 'where the hell did we lose three minutes? We should have

been early, not late' (I would learn the priceless art of serious lanes driving: smooth, keep it tidy, sideways wastes too much time, mechanical sympathy, and learn to make *every single second* count.)

Back to the new book; one aim of my final motorsport publication is to open with some early stories from the 1950s perspective, to record for posterity how road rallying recovered and progressed from the Second World War, that fascinating period when life slowly returned to normal, and the terribly primitive but exciting cars that were considered 'state of the art' at the time. You couldn't thrash those cars, you had to 'nurse them'.

This wonderfully contemporary shot just oozes 1950s rallying: Dr. Peter Pollitt in his Triumph TR3. First made in 1955 by the Standard-Triumph Motor Company. The full story of Dr. Pollitt (courtesy of his son Nick) will be one of many features that illustrate where road rallying started.



Capturing the imagination, two precepts surmount all others: firstly, that prior to the first 'special stage RAC Rally in 1961', all rallying was run on open public roads (and even then, stage rallying took many years to catch on until the MSA forced everyone to go stage rallying by effectively banning competitive road rallying), and that included works teams and such prestigious events as the Monte Carlo Rally. Second, no matter how powerful the car, or flamboyant skill of the driver, the navigator's skill ranked as No.1. That's why, in those early days, privateers could, and often did, beat the works teams. And where did the skilled navigators come from? Some learned their trade in the war (such as bomber navigators), others were naturally gifted. That's why road rallying has such a rich history.

Among others, a chap called Andrew from Cheltenham stepped forward; now in his early seventies, Andrew forwarded a large collection of vintage photos of his Ex-Wartime RAF Pilot dad competing. This first shot (below), offering a fascinating insight into early 1950s rallying, was taken with his dad (Ron Ayres) navigating and George Arthur Lewis driving, somewhere in Wales on the 1951 Daily Express National Rally in an open top HRG sports car (one of just 241 ever made). At first glance you might think this to be a modern-day classic rally, but no, it's the real thing '1951 style'. Notably, in those days, competitive sections were run in daylight with a bit of tricky navigation and the odd test thrown in. Having charged round just about every Welsh rally road during my 14-year long rallying career, I thought I would recognise this section of road... but I don't. (Abergwesyn maybe?) Perhaps it looks different at night!

One idiosyncrasy (or it will seem that way to those who've only ever driven modern cars with slick synchromesh gearboxes) is the crash gearbox (synchromesh did not become a mainstream fitment to budget cars until the late 1950s/early 1960s). Changing gear (going up the box) involved carefully gauging the engine revs, 'double-declutch', then pop it in. Coming down the box was similar in terms of double-declutch but involved a 'extra blip' of the throttle to get the engine revs and gearbox running in unison. Some less than skillful drivers were forced to stop when engaging first gear.



Andrew also forwarded a large collection of vintage photos of his Dad competing on several 1950s Montes. 1953 being the first, in an Austin. And again, many thanks to Andrew for this wonderfully nostalgic shot of his father Ron (below) along with his team-mates in their black Jowett Javelin, MOK 326, at the 1954 Monte Carlo finish in Nice. Like all other competitors, they travelled across Europe

(on narrow windy 1950s roads) from some remote departure point (in this case Glasgow), all converging on one central location.

Only enthusiasts of a certain age will remember the technically advanced Jowett Javelin (the name Jowett came from the brothers who originally formed the company just before WW1): flat-4 boxer engine, aluminum block, two Zenith carbs, 50 bhp at 4000 revs, 0-50 in 13.5 secs, and a top speed of 77mph. And I can tell you, a Jowett was considered quick in those days! In January 1949 a works-entered Javelin won the Monte Carlo Rally 1.5 litre class, and in that same year another Javelin won its class in the Spa 24-hour race.



Andrew's photo (above) records the 1954 Monte Carlo finish in Nice. Three-man crew consisting: Ron Ayres, principal navigator (L), George Arthur Lewis, first driver (M), Dr. Osborne, support driver (R), and a suspicious looking Inspector Clouseau figure lurking background right! Regrettably, I couldn't get beyond the formal title of Dr. Osborne, though I sincerely hope his family will get in touch; that would be a wonderful corollary to his team-mate's narrative. Evidently, 1950s formality dictated everyone wear a shirt & tie.

However, apart from the odd tweak, Jowetts used by such amateurs were pretty much bog standard, not least that competition parts were pretty well non-existent, and what few special hand-made parts did exist were designed, crafted, and exclusively reserved for the manufacturers teams.

The spec of Andrew's Dad's Jowett will have been: 4-speed gearbox with column change, difficult to steer (too much play in the steering box gears and track rod ends), even more difficult to stop on drum brakes fitted all round (hydraulic powered brakes, still drums, had only just been invented for more luxurious cars, while disc brakes were another luxury waiting some years into the future), round black and ultra-skinny tyres, non-existent heaters, windows freezing on the inside, no roll cage or seat belts, a thing called a dynamo to power the electrical system (lights often little more than candles, particularly when forced to turn off the spotlights to preserve the battery), and the stereotypical 1950s piece of emergency equipment: a starting handle (see the central hole in the front bumper) for use when the battery was drained or the weather too cold to turn over the engine. As they say, 'all the fun of the fair', but that was normal..... teamwork wrung out the best result, at least one member had to have some 'oily hands' mechanical training, and it was teamwork against the elements.

Allow me to describe the characteristics of a dynamo: if, for example, a dynamo created 40 watts of power, you had to calculate the power drain imposed by spotlights. If using 50 watts, the battery was slowly draining, the lights becoming slowly dimmer, to a point where, if you carried on, the electrical current to the coil, points, and spark plugs would fail... and the engine would just stop. In tandem with this, battery technology was more primitive, leaving no option but to extinguish spotlights. And that's not all, lest we forget that the combination of primitive spotlight & battery technology coupled with the abysmal power output of a dynamo meant spotlights akin to candles, even at the best of times. Without first solving this fundamental equation there was no point in developing ever more powerful spotlights. Then some clever soul invented the alternator and - problem solved.

Part two will follow in the January edition of Spotlight.

Tools Explained

DRILL PRESS: A tall upright machine useful for suddenly snatching flat metal bar stock out of your hands so that it smacks you in the chest and flings your beer across the room, denting the freshly-painted project which you had carefully set in the corner where nothing could get to it.

WIRE WHEEL: Cleans paint off bolts and then throws them somewhere under the workbench with the speed of light. Also removes fingerprints and hard-earned calluses from fingers in about the time it takes you to say, 'Oh sh*t'

PLIERS: Used to round off bolt heads. Sometimes used in the creation of blood-blisters.

HACKSAW: One of a family of cutting tools built on the Ouija board principle... It transforms human energy into a crooked, unpredictable motion, and the more you attempt to influence its course, the more dismal your future becomes.

VICE-GRIPS: Generally used after pliers to completely round off bolt heads. If nothing else is available, they can also be used to transfer intense welding heat to the palm of your hand.

OXYACETYLENE TORCH: Used almost entirely for lighting on fire various flammable objects in your workshop. Also handy for igniting the grease inside the wheel hub out of which you want to remove a bearing race.

HYDRAULIC FLOOR JACK: Used for lowering a car to the ground after you have installed your new brake shoes, trapping the jack handle firmly under the bumper.

TWO-TON ENGINE HOIST: A tool for testing the maximum tensile strength of everything you forgot to disconnect.

SCREWDRIVER: A tool for opening paint cans. Sometimes used to convert common slotted screws into non-removable screws and butchering your palms.

PRY BAR: A tool used to crumple the metal surrounding that clip or bracket you needed to remove in order to replace a 50p part.

HAMMER: Originally employed as a weapon of war, the hammer nowadays is used as a kind of divining rod to locate the most expensive parts adjacent the object we are trying to hit.

ADJUSTABLE SPANNER: aka "Another hammer", aka "the Swedish Nut Lathe", aka "Crescent Wrench". Commonly used as a one size fits all spanner, usually results in rounding off nut heads before the use of pliers. Will randomly adjust size between bolts, resulting in busted buckles, curse words, and multiple threats to any inanimate objects within the immediate vicinity.

SON OF A BITCH TOOL: Any handy tool that you grab and throw across the garage while yelling 'Son of a b*tch' at the top of your lungs. It is also, most often, the next tool that you will need.

The 2021 BTRDA Targa Road Rally Championship

BTRDA ran its first Rally Championship in 1953 and has been at the highest level in the UK ever since. BTRDA last ran a Road Rally Championship in 1987. A great deal has happened since then, but as Targas have grown in popularity, it's time to launch the BTRDA Targa Championship.

The BTRDA Targa Road Rally Championship is a new Championship which includes events around the country, giving a chance for almost everyone to be involved. Only four events to count from 10 events, including a Marshalling points score, so you won't have to travel too far.

But there's more – The BTRDA Targa Rally Championship is also part of the BTRDA All-rounders Championship, enabling contenders to take part in a wide range of Motorsport disciplines – BTRDA Championship Autosolos, Autotests, Trials, Rallycross, Stage Rallies plus Speed events.

Free BTRDA Membership is offered for those under 25 on 01/01/2021 in their first year of Membership (Championship Registration also required).

Awards for the highest placed under 25 Driver and Navigator are offered in the Targa Championship. The Duckhams Trophy recognises the best under 25 Contender in the BTRDA All-rounders Championship. Those over 25 are also very welcome!

So a Targa Championship for those who wish to focus on Targas, and/or one discipline in a much wider range of Motorsport disciplines. 2021 looks to be very uncertain, therefore the Championship will be very simple in its first year, looking to grow in many areas in 2022. For the first year the BTRDA Targa Championship will focus on single venue Targas to enabling almost everyone to take part, especially newcomers and younger drivers.

Events will cover a good geography, but not all areas are covered as local events of the first year's profile aren't currently available. We expect geographic coverage to increase going forward. Events are very much provisional at this stage, due to inevitable uncertainty in these times. The calendar deliberately starts in May to hopefully things will have settled down by then.

For early Championship details visit www.btrda.com/championship/targa-road-rallies/ A great deal of information to follow, there's bound to be many questions.

To join BTRDA and Register for the Championship, visit <https://btrda.com/membership/>

The latest BTRDA news can be found at <https://btrda.com/.../08/BTRDA-News-Summer-2020-Website.pdf>

Provisional events:

1. 3rd May, 061 Targa
2. 9th May, Bath MC Kemble Targa
3. 15th May, Mid Derbyshire Twyford Targa
4. 8th August, Ross & District MSL Hatsford Targa
5. 22nd August Forresters Venta Silurum Targa
6. 5th September, North Devon Ilfracombe Targa
7. 5th September, West Suffolk Debden Targa
8. 24th October, Caernarvonshire & Anglesey Trac Mon
9. 31st October, Chelmsford Bonfire Targa
10. February Knutsford and District Targa

Mini Review: Toyota GR Yaris

New car launches seem to come faster than ever these days. In the past, they seemed like a big deal, but we now see so many new models, special editions and range tweaks that it's almost impossible to keep up, while the desire for instant news means that some of the excitement and intrigue surrounding the arrival of a new car has undoubtedly been lost.

I think it's fair to say that Toyota's new GR Yaris has bucked that trend though. The anticipation surrounding the launch of this homologation special has been growing for months, as it represents something that we haven't seen for a very long time – a genuine link between World Rally Championship and production car. Such machines used to be commonplace of course, going back to the likes of the Escort RS1800 and Stratos, through the Quattros and 6R4s that stretched the definition of "production car" to its very limit, and into the Impreza and Lancers that defined a generation of rally-bred performance road cars.



The GR Yaris brings back that formula, with a tenable link to the cars that pound the stages of the WRC today. Well, that is the theory. Much has been made of the "homologation special" part of the GR Yaris, but the link isn't perhaps quite what the mainstream motoring media are making it out to be. Firstly, the WRC car that was to be based on the GR Yaris has been cancelled due to the pandemic, so we won't actually see that car in 2021 as was initially planned (the 2022 cars are going to be based around an FIA spaceframe, so we may see a silhouette loosely based on it, but it won't strictly be a Yaris). Secondly, as you are probably aware, a modern World Rally Car shares basically nothing with its road-going counterpart, so any mechanical changes that make a GR Yaris different from a regular Yaris are pretty irrelevant in terms of the rally car.

The main benefit to using this new car over the existing one as far as the rally car was concerned was the fact that the roofline is some 95mm lower at the rear of the car than it is on the standard Yaris, which would have given some aerodynamic advantage. Otherwise, the link to the WRC car is actually pretty strenuous in reality.

That's not to say that there aren't some interesting rally-related things going on though. While the link to the WRC car is distant, the GR Yaris does bring some benefits in other areas. It's no secret that Toyota are planning a Rally 2 (old R5) car, so they'll benefit from that low roofline there, while the 1.6-litre, three-cylinder turbocharged engine has been designed with this purpose in mind, with the FIA set to allow a three-cylinder Rally 2 engine for the first time with the Yaris. In addition, should Toyota go even further and build a car to meet the new Rally 3 regulations, the wider wheel arches could prove useful against rivals like the Fiesta.

Anyway, enough about rallying, let's get to the road car, as that's what this is supposed to be about. As an engineering exercise, the GR Yaris is certainly significant. That low roofline means the body is

unique, sharing little other than the lights with the standard Yaris. The doors, bonnet and tailgate are aluminium, while the roof is made from recycled carbon fibre (and wrapped with fake carbon fibre so it looks like non-recycled stuff). Under the skin, the front-end is very much like the standard Yaris, albeit wider and firmer, while the rear floor area is actually from the Toyota Corolla in order to accommodate multi-link suspension. With a bespoke body, bespoke suspension and a bespoke engine and transmission, you have to wonder how much profit margin there is in the car, or whether it's been done purely as a showcase of their talents...

Onto the oily bits and, as noted above, there's a 1.6-litre turbocharged triple, which puts out almost 260bhp. This is mated to a six-speed manual gearbox, which sends drive to all four wheels. Specify the Circuit Pack for an extra £3,500 over the £29,995 base price and you get Torsen limited-slip differentials front and rear. Pretty serious stuff and something we haven't really seen since the days of the Subaru Impreza, and have never really seen in a car of this segment.



I was fortunate enough to get a pretty early test drive at the dealer in Norwich and, by virtue of the pandemic (every cloud has a silver lining it seems) was allowed to go out in the car on my own for almost an hour. Given what the motoring media have been saying, I was pretty excited, so thought it only right to share those thoughts, as some of you may have been watching the launch of the car with interest.

First impressions? Well, to look at, the car is certainly aggressive, if perhaps a bit taller than you'd hope. From the rear, the arches do look wide, but the front is dominated by the large, rectangular air intake, which seems slightly at odds with the rest of the car, which is fairly rounded overall. This is apparently deliberate in order to maximise cooling efficiency, but I do wonder if the car may benefit from a slightly larger rear wing in order to balance the "front heavy" styling. A slight drop in ride height would probably help too, but perhaps that's my Max Power side talking.

Inside is where things start to go wrong for me. The seats are unique to the GR model and, while comfortable and supportive, are mounted at least 50-60mm too high. I'm 6'3, so not exactly small, but my head was basically jammed against the roof, while the sun visor was very much in my eye line. Poor seat position is a real pet hate for me when it comes to performance road cars, as it seems that so many manufacturers get it wrong, even though it is a fundamental part of the driving experience. If you're interested in buying one, make sure you sit in it first. I think a lot of the mainstream media outlets are overlooking the issue, but it's a really serious one in my book. There is no way I could wear a helmet in the car, which seems rather against its circuit and rally based aspirations.



Elsewhere inside, it's all as you'd expect and very much reminds me of the Imprezas of old, i.e. most of the materials are cheap and nasty, but the equipment levels are pretty good, and the parts you touch (steering wheel, gear lever, seats) are all good. It's certainly no Audi, but you could argue that that's part of the charm in one way. Personally, I think Toyota probably need to up their game a bit, as the likes of Hyundai have overtaken them on interior quality these days.



Putting all of that aside and getting onto the driving, which is surely what this car is all about, reveals something that is pretty well unique. I think the biggest surprise for me was the engine. While it undoubtedly feels boosty (a tiny three-pot with over 250bhp is always going to do that), the response is impressive to say the least. There is very little turbo lag and it felt really strong. While Toyota claim sub-260bhp, a couple of owners have already had them on the dyno and found that they have a bit more than that. It's a great engine to be honest, really impressive. At low speed, it has the offbeat, "half a 911" sound that so many three-cylinders possess, with a few whooshes and

hisses thrown in but, as you move up the rev range, this is lost behind synthesised sound being pushed through the audio system. It seems to be the norm for performance cars these days, but I don't like it much. If I bought one, I'd be tinkering with the exhaust straight away.

The driving experience is generally positive. The low speed ride is firm but not unbearably so (it still feels like a limo compared to my Clio) but, as the speed increases, it starts to flow quite nicely and it feels like it has been designed for the real world, rather than a race track. The gear lever is short, stubby and has a really short throw, which is good, while the rim of the steering wheel is slender by modern standards, making it all feel quite purposeful and well thought out.

The brakes are unusual in that they require a firm shove but, once you adjust to them, they are impressive. With two-piece front discs and four-piston front calipers, they should be in reality. It's quite refreshing that the pedal isn't over-servo'd like so many modern cars are.

The real heart of the car is the 4WD system though. There are three modes – Normal, which gives a 60% bias towards the front axle, Sport, which sends 70% of the drive to the rear, and Track, which gives a 50:50 distribution between front and rear.

I spent most of my time in Sport, as I wanted to see how this made the balance of the car feel. The roads were damp and busy, so there was only so much I could do, but the car did generally feel pretty neutral, with more grip than you could ever really need in the real world. Despite the rear bias and the Torsen diffs, it wasn't too difficult to provoke some understeer under power, and it never



really felt like the rear axle was pushing you out of corners as you might find in something like a Ford Focus RS (which over-rotates the outside rear wheel to give the impression of more rear bias).

There's no doubt that the 4WD system is impressive but, while the performance level was very high, the problem with all modern 4WD cars is that you can never really exploit them in the real world. You always feel like you are operating so far within the abilities of the car that it perhaps doesn't have the edge of something two-wheel drive, where you can overcome the grip at lower speeds.

To combat that, I think you need a car that feels special in other ways, either with a characterful engine, a good interior, or unique details. You could argue that the Yaris possesses those in abundance, with its bespoke body, forged wheels (if you specify the circuit pack), big brakes, smart seats and its unique position in the market.

For me, while I left impressed at much of the car, the seating position was a big enough issue for me to feel a little disappointed overall. Having left the dealership, I stopped at Tesco and happened upon a Fiesta ST Performance Edition in the car park. I couldn't help but think that, while ultimately less capable, the Fiesta might actually be a more enjoyable road car by virtue of its limits being slightly lower.

I'm undoubtedly glad that the Yaris exists and that Akio Toyoda, the big boss at Toyota, is so passionate about cars and motorsport but, for me, I'm not sure the GR Yaris quite matches the hype out of the box. A Fiesta ST is much cheaper and probably just as much fun, while for £33,000, the Yaris finds itself among some very stiff competition in the next segment up, with the likes of the Hyundai i30 N and Renault Megane 300 Trophy.

I think that means that it would be a pass from me. That being said, tuning company Lichfield are already looking at a seat lowering kit and will undoubtedly start messing with the exhaust and suspension in due course. That could make the GR Yaris a much more tempting proposition...



Upcoming Event: Snetterton Stage Rally 2021

February 20, 2021

The event will once again be a round of the Motor Sport News Circuit Championship.

We'd obviously like to see you again on the 20th February, and would ask that if you are planning on coming along to marshal please be kind enough to register through the online process.

This year will be facing the challenge of running a safe and enjoyable event under whatever Covid-19 regulations will be prevailing at the time. This will inevitably result in changes to the way in which we meet, greet and generally liaise with marshals throughout the day, in order to keep you and others as safe as we reasonably can. There will be less congregating in the service area. We will provide more information nearer the time. You will need to sign on in advance of the day. Once registered, if you need to change any of your details before the day of the rally please email me direct at the address below.

To register to marshal this year, visit
<https://snettertonstagerally.co.uk/marshals>

As last year, we will split the stage into sectors with an overall leader for each section, as noted below:

Martin Newson
Keith Pettitt/Dan Pearson
John Davie
Richard Warne
Stuart Kingham
Neil Dodd (Service Area Manager)

If you have any preference with whom you would like to work, make sure you let me know. Likewise, should you have a favourite place you would like to marshal, we will try to accommodate.

Once again there will be a generous amount of funds set aside for the marshal's draw; all signed on marshal's being eligible.

For more information, please contact Martin Newson or email marshals@snettertonstagerally.co.uk

Thanks,

Martin Newson
Cjnewson32@yahoo.co.uk

Web Directory

You can find details of how to follow all of the region's clubs in the table below:

Club	Website	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter
Anglia Motorsport Club	www.amsc.org.uk	www.facebook.com/AngliaMotorSportClub	www.instagram.com/angliamotorsportclub	
Association of Easter Motor Clubs	www.aemc.org.uk	www.facebook.com/TheAEMC		www.twitter.com/TheAEMC
Cambridge Car Club	www.cambridgecarclub.co.uk	www.facebook.com/cambridgecarclub	www.instagram.com/cambridgecarclub	
Chelmsford Motor Club	www.chelmsfordmc.co.uk	www.facebook.com/ChelmsfordMotorClub	www.instagram.com/chelmsfordmc	www.twitter.com/ChelmsfordMC
Eastern Counties Motor Club	www.ecmc.co.uk/site	www.facebook.com/easterncountiesmc		
Falcon Motor Club	www.falconmotorclub.com	www.facebook.com/groups/FalconMotorClub		
Green Belt Motor Club	www.greenbeltmc.org.uk	www.facebook.com/greenbeltmc		
Harrow Car Club	www.harrowcarclub.net	www.facebook.com/groups/125556377629682		www.twitter.com/harrowcarclub
Herts County Auto and Aero Club	www.hertscountyaac.co.uk			
Kings Lynn and District Motor Club	www.kingslynndmc.co.uk	www.facebook.com/kingslynndmc		
Middlesex County Automobile Club	www.mcac.co.uk	www.facebook.com/groups/11164412206		www.twitter.com/m_c_a_c
Motorsport UK	www.motorsportuk.org	www.facebook.com/OurMotorsportUK	www.instagram.com/ourmotorsportuk	www.twitter.com/ourmotorsportuk
Sporting Car Club of Norfolk	www.scon.co.uk	www.facebook.com/groups/8540333831	www.instagram.com/sportingcarclubofnorfolk	www.twitter.com/sconorfolk
West Suffolk Motorsport Club	www.wsmc.co.uk	www.facebook.com/westsuffolkmotorclub	www.instagram.com/westsuffolkmotorclub	www.twitter.com/WestSuffolkMC
Wickford Auto Club	www.wickfordautoclub.co.uk			