



Maidstone and Mid Kent Motor Club

April Newsletter



Editors Mutterings.

Another month has passed, and we are getting nearer the time when the Covid Curfew is to be lifted enough for us to resume some measure of normal motorsport.

Our Chairman and Company Secretary has unfortunately recently lost her mother and with all the work that bereavement brings she has been unable to complete the Clubs accounts intime for the planned AGM on the 4th May. The AGM will therefore be held on 1st June via Zoom, as it was last year. We hope as many Club Members as possible will attend this meeting as it is your opportunity to have your say how the Club is run. We all send our condolences to Liz at this sad time.

With Headcorn still in use as a Covid Test and Vaccination centre our first Autotest will be held at Otham. The dry weather is also causing problems as we have so far been unable to repair the damage done to the field at Otham after our last event there in 2020. As we share our venues at both Headcorn and Otham with sheep we need to be mindful of their needs as well. We are also still subject the same Covid procedures as last year for our events, so please keep an eye on the Club website for entry forms and don't forget that you have to sign on in the same way as well.

Bruce

2021 CLUB FIXTURE LIST

Event	Clerk of Course	Secretary of Meeting or Contact	Date
12 Car Rally	Liz Jordan	POSTPONED	January 2021
Annual General Meeting via Zoom	Lyle Cathcart	Liz Jordan	4 th May
Autotest Taster Day		CANCELLED	9 th May
Evening Autotest	Richard Olsen	Bruce Jenkins/ Toby Groves	19 th May
Evening Autotest	Jim Pullar		2 nd June
Evening Autotest	Lloyd Covey		16 th June
Evening Autotest	Liam Carfrae		30 th June
Mike Jordan Celebration Tour	Liz Jordan		3 rd July
Evening Autotest	Brian Sharpe		14 th July
Lydden Co-pro Sprint	Barry Morris		17 th July
Summer Slalom	Andy Jenner		1 st August
Evening Autotest	Ben Dawson		28 th July
Wings All Day Autotest	Andy Jenner	Bruce Jenkins	22 nd August
Kent Forestry Targa Rally		Toby Groves	18 th September
Tyrwhitt Drake Trial	Andy Jenner	TBA	26 th September
Brian Lewis Trial	TBA	TBA	31 st October

Other Club Events

Tendering & Clacton Rally		CANCELLED	24 th / 25 th April
Hughes Rally	Blackpalfrey MC		24 th August

Up and Down the A20

- Operation Brock has again been removed from J8 to J9 of the M20. How long this time?
- The most common insurance claim in 2020 was drivers hitting parked cars.
- The number of MOT's missed in the last 3 months has trebled.
- DVSA data shows 695 candidates crashed during their driving tests in 2019/20.
- Due to the Covid pandemic there is a four month wait for a practical driving test. Are our autotests the short term answer?
- **Alternative Fuels.** With all the pressure from the Government on the motor industry to do away with petrol and diesel engines by 2030 and change to (EV) battery power, are there other alternatives that will be more motorsport friendly but are being pushed aside? Some

manufacturers are researching the use of hydrogen and have both cars and buses running on this fuel, while others are concentrating their efforts on synthetic fuel. The aviation industry must be particularly interested in synthetic fuels as the other alternatives are not viable particularly for long distance flights. There are lots of questions still to be answered. What is your opinion?

- Do all these alternative fuels require more energy to produce than they provide for the end user? Will it be another battle like the video industry had with Betamax versus VHS?
- Will backyards be full of expired battery vehicles that people no longer consider serviceable leaking toxic chemicals?
- A shortage of chips is hampering the production of motor vehicles worldwide. Who would have thought that the humble potato would have such an effect on car production?
- Enthusiasts have been able to restore old vehicles that have been out of use sometimes for many years', but will this still be the case for battery powered vehicles with plastic bodies and long superseded electronics? It is difficult enough now to get superseded electronic equipment repaired!
- Are MG about to produce a sports car to rival the long standing MX 5 domination with either of these two concepts?



Meet the Club Members

A Profile of : Si Kellow

Current role in Club: Enthusiastic member **First joined:** 2019

When and how did you first get involved in motorsport?

I've always loved motorsports and in 2004 my company put forward the prize money and silverware in BTCC for the Harrier Zeuros Independents Trophy. It wasn't quite so much fun though having to get to the circuit the day before, build the stand, do all the hospitality for clients and drivers on race day and get it broken down afterwards.

In 2017 I got involved with the Pirtek Medway Team. Related to Andrew Jordan's team only in name, it was the guys who ran the local branch of the Pirtek franchise. They'd partnered up with 3 drivers – Ken Hunt in his classic Mini and Steve Dann in his Golf, both in the BARC Super Saloons; and Darren Scott in his Citroen C2 in the British Rallycross Championship. My dad did his apprenticeship at the legendary Downtown Engineering and had passed some hints to me as a lad as to how to squeeze performance out of the A-Series. So, rather than being just a sponsor, I did a fair bit of spannering too!

Although I don't ride 2 wheelers I grew up next to Coventry Speedway Stadium. There is something so evocative about the smell of methanol and Castrol R that makes me smile. In 2014 my lads and I found that Kent Speedway had been recently formed and raced at the greyhound stadium in Sittingbourne on a Monday evening. We have been regulars since 2015 and in 2021 became the title sponsors for the National League team – the Kent Iwade Garage Royals.

In 2019 my son Drew and I rocked up to Headcorn to have a shuftly at what autotesting was about. We own the garage in Iwade and borrowed a Mini Cooper from the sales side to try out (I suspected that my Discovery daily driver might not quite do the job). Bruce and Andy made us very welcome and we decided that we would be back.

Later in the year I got an email from MMKMC about the "Rod Wray" organised by Croydon and District Motor Club. I had a read and asked Andrea (my significant other) if she fancied having a go at 12 car rallying. We entered all the rounds with a "so what if we come last" attitude.

What was your first competition car?

The first car I used was the aforementioned Mini Cooper. It was a 1.6 three door, and I sold it to a very grateful lady in Shepherds Bush. It's possible I glossed over its motorsports escapades! Now I'm not saying that Andrea is competitive but she bought a Micra for the express purpose of autotesting.

How many competition cars do you currently have and what types of events are they used for?

We seem to have been bitten by the bug. We've got the Micra, which has been used for autotests on grass (and mud) and autosolos. My son Drew (who is now 16) was using his gran's Chevrolet Matiz but after the disastrous outing to the autumn event (delayed Summer Slalom!) it was decided that he no longer needs something that would struggle to get the skin off a rice pudding. We're deciding between a Fiesta or something else to replace it.

The pandemic has been very kind to Andrea and I and we acquired our own classic mini last summer. We intended to use it in the 2020/21 Weald 12 Car but time was against us. This summer Carla will be out 😊. We have a slightly unusual competition car too.

For the 2019/20 Weald series, we didn't know what we were doing so Andrea's Volvo XC60 was used – there is something reassuring about barrelling down the backroads in a Volvo.

What types of events have you competed in over the years?

We only really got into competing in the last couple of years. Andrea and I have competed in autotests, autosolos and 12 cars – Andrea is the driver and I'm the navigator. On a whim we're hoping to have a try at sprints in 2021 and trialling too. Our sons Ryan (15) and Drew (16) are both keen drivers too – Ryan won the MMKMC U21 cup for the 2020 season, and Drew was 2nd in 2019. They've only driven in autotests and autosolos. The boys have also been navigators but didn't enjoy it too much – so my chance of driving one is looking slimmer than ever.

What is your most memorable event/events and why?

Without a doubt, the most memorable event for me was the Croydon round of the Weald 12 Car on the 6th December 2019. It was our third ever rally and we had a baptism of fire in the first two. In the Borough 18 round in October we set off with enthusiasm and within 2 miles of the start it had all gone wrong. We missed 11 boards, and dropped 34 minutes, but we finished! 10th out of 12, netting 3 points. November was the Sevenoaks round. I'd put the utter disaster of B18 behind us and we were starting to get better in the cockpit. We improved to 9th and claimed 4 points.

Then December was upon us. For those who haven't taken part in a Croydon event, let's say that the navigation is challenging, and we were beginners. Something was different for us that night, I couldn't tell you what it was, but we just went for it. Andrea hurling the Volvo into corners and only lifting her lead boot when it was needed. Me on the maps with my little light (I haven't graduated to a potty yet 😊) trying to give her a few metres warning of impending 90 lefts or 5 o'clock rights. We got to the end, and I handed in the time card, and I wish that I had taken a photo. By my reckoning we had dropped 3 minutes, but more importantly, I had no gaps for code boards. As we rolled into the final TC I handed over the card and asked (as we had gotten into the habit of doing) "many more to come in?" I was totally shocked by the response "you're about 4th back"!

Now at that stage, being the newbies, we were seeded 12th. This means we start 12 minutes behind the 1st car out. And, based on our previous two rallies, we lost a hefty chunk of time, so in principle if the no 1 seed was bang on time, the marshals would have a 45 minute wait for us at the last stop. We gathered ourselves in the warmth of the pub. Gradually the other crews strolled in. Some knowing it wasn't to be their night, others just wanting a sarnie and a pint to get over it. After a little while Wug Utting (who



was the man to beat as far as we were concerned – his name has been on the Rod Wray Trophy rather a lot in the last decade) sidled over to us – “I have it on good authority, you two have done well tonight”. All the crews were back and the clerk called us to order “With 0 fails and 3 minutes, Car 12 is the winner” – OMG OMG OMG we are car 12! Third try at a 12 Car and we won an event!

This however was not the memorable moment of the evening. One of the other drivers came up to me and shook my hand “well done Si, well driven”. I had to put him right “sorry, I’m just the Nav, Andrea is the driver”. Andrea put her hand up to take the shake, and he didn’t - he looked and walked away. Now we were quite miffed at that for a second, and then we started to laugh. This poor chap, who was seeded in the top 5 and was rated as an expert, had come near the bottom of the table. He had been beaten. By a Volvo. Estate. Automatic. With a diesel engine. With a blue badge. Driven by a woman. I don’t think his evening could have gotten worse. There is a very pleasing footnote to this before you think “bad sportsmanship”. We are now extremely good friends, and he sees Andrea and me as a threat - “pesky naturals” he calls us.

For the record, the final standings of that first season were that Andrea came 5th in the drivers table, I came 4th in the navigators, and we both came 2nd in the Rod Wray Championship with 114 points. The winner? – Wug Utting with 141 points. Maybe next year (2021/22) we can beat him.



What do you consider your greatest achievement and why?

Just being here taking part in club activities. That sounds quite a broad and simple achievement on the surface, but I shall reason it out. In the last 15 years I’ve tried to gain entry through the Pearly Gates on a couple of occasions. I have hypertrophic obstructive cardiomyopathy, which in simple words means my heart wall is thicker than it should be. I have heart failure and it likes to make things a wee bit hard by blocking the arteries, making it tough to get the blood around my body. I never thought that I would be able to compete, to hold a racing licence (even if it is only an RS Clubman at the moment), and enjoy motorsports from the doing end. That my son, my other half and her son also compete so that we can have family outings, makes it even better.

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

I’ve found it very interesting listening to people talking at events (and on the zoom meets). The thing which is always pleasing is that when we ask for help we mostly get it from other members. So my advice – don’t sit in silence. When you get any group of people it’s amazing the skills and abilities that can be brought to bear.

In my day job I work for a small family firm. We own and run a garage. However, I’ve been Cyber Security Advisor to the Scottish and English Parliaments and Chief Security Officer at several Public

bodies. We have experience in the law (retired police officer and retired conveyancer and matrimonial law). How does that relate to the club? We're all in it together, and as a whole we can help our friends (which is you lot as we're all members together) through the good and bad. It isn't just about horsepower and 4 wheels.

Anyone any good at paint prep on a classic mini? Andrea and I need a hand....

Si Kellow

Obituaries

Richard Parry-Jones

Richard Parry-Jones died in a tractor accident on his farm in Wales. He was the Group Vice President of Global Product Development, Chief Officer and Head of Global R&D Operations at Ford Motor Company before he retired in 2007.



A self-confessed car nut from childhood, R P J, as he was known in the trade, was credited with bringing greatly improved handling to mass-market Fords, leading to a dramatic upswing in the company's fortunes that pressured competitors into making similar improvements in their own models.

He was famous among other things for applying what he called the "50 metre test" (an idea he credited to the racing driver Sir Jackie Stewart) to every car design. This involved Ford engineers driving very slowly for 50 metres, sensing the way it felt to drive: "You can tell how good any car is within 50 metres. It should feel connected and coherent. If you work hard enough, you can do this for ordinary customers at ordinary prices."

From his initial assignments in product planning at Ford of Europe, Parr-Jones's first major project was to lead the team that built the 1981 front-drive Ford Escort, but his masterpiece was the 1993 Mondeo, Ford's first front-wheel-drive family car, whose handling characteristics attracted almost universal praise (Jeremy Clarkson claimed it as one of his favourite cars).

Greg Thompson

It is with great sadness that we have to announce that Greg passed away recently after a long and brave fight with illness.

A staunch supporter of the Blackpalfrey Motor Club for many years, Greg will be greatly missed in his Press and Publicity role and by his many Facebook followers.



From the Club Archives

HAROLD SHARP RALLY - 1953 to 1969.

The Club organised these rallies annually with the initial events being complicated navigational events being Closed to Club status which necessitated a very knowledgeable crew to solve the problematic and complicated route instructions. The events soon rose to Restricted status and became a round of the National Motoring News Rally Championship. The events were had up to 160 entries and included some of the top names in rallying at the time including, Mike Butler, Ted Cowell, Brian Culceth, Bob Eaves, Alan Firmin, Doug Harris, John La Trobe, Chris Lovell, Tony Maslem, David Seigle Morris, Graham Warner to name a few.

From the mid-1960s the principle organisers were John La Trobe and Jullian Chitty who were at this time a top international rally crew and undoubtedly attracted top crews to enter the rally which soon had the reputation as a very challenging event which in 1965 was won by David Seigle Morris and John Davenport [Verglas] in a works Ford Lotus Corsair. The rally was mostly run within Kent using the popular roads along the Downs, the Marshes, and Weald Forest areas with Special Stage venues at Dover Cliff Top, Lydd Airport, Lydd Ranges, Lydden Circuit, Manston, and Sheppy Marshes. The route for the round of the Motoring News championship was 347 miles and did not finish till mid-morning on Sunday but most of the other events were about 150 miles long.

Although a very popular and well supported event by the motor sport fraternity this view was not supported by some members of the public who lived along the rally route and did not appreciate their sleep being disturbed by these all night events.

It was not only the attention by the local residents but also the Kent Police who, due to complaints from the public, decided to make their presence felt by setting up checks along the route and stopping competitors and in 1968 matters were so extreme that the Club sought legal advice and the following letter was sent to the Home Secretary, James Callaghan, and questions were raised in the House. Also included is a copy of the Motoring News report for that year these documents highlighting the attitude of the Police.

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HAROLD SHARP RALLY

WHENEVER words have to be chosen to describe a rally, they usually fall into two groups; those which relate to the performances of competitors and those which praise or criticise the slickness of the organisation. But as far as Maidstone and Mid-Kent M.C.'s Harold Sharp Rally is concerned, a third subject completely and insidiously overshadows the other two, and that is the most blatant use of Gestapo tactics that I have ever seen used in this so-called free country.

The Kent Police, already notorious for their bias against the use of motor cars for sporting purposes, mounted a full-scale offensive against the rally and its participants, and were it not for the tenacity of the organisers the whole thing would have fizzled out under the sodden blanket cast over the county by its kill-joy constabulary.

As it happened, the rally reached its conclusion, and I had better begin talking about its pleasanter aspects before I am completely overcome by the lengths to which the police were prepared to go to fill their notebooks at the expense of innocent sportsmen.

Last week it was pointed out that the Ford and B.M.C. domination of home rallying was not continuing in 1968. This was emphasised last Saturday when the Sharp was won by Mike Butler and Geraint Phillips in a perfectly standard Renault Gordini. The expected navigator, Ingrid Källström, had not turned up because we couldn't get her wig to fit!

In second place were David Boichat and Drummond Walker in a Cooper S, whilst third prize went to Peter Reddish and Frances Cobb in a Cortina GT, the latter crew also collecting the miniature double bed for the best mixed crew.

The entry list for the Harold Sharp was probably the smallest in its history, for only fifty cars lined up for the start at Thompson's Motors in Dover, right next to Henly's where the Monte cars have been scrutineered in the past couple of years.

Originally, the Harold Sharp was in the list of M.N. championship qualifiers, but, with

the well-being of the circus in mind, Julian Chitty asked us to take it out. Everyone had an idea that the police would carry out some extra-routine activity to interfere with the rally, and the organisers had the courage to mention this in the foreword to the regulations. Whether this brought about the low entry we cannot say, but it seems very likely.

The first car to leave the start was the Rover 2000 of Dave Palmby and Peter Valentine running at number 0. They were followed by John Church/John Mace and John Mossop/David Shields in Lotus Cortinas, Lyle Cathcart/John Jensen in a Stiletto, Andy Michaelidis/John Booher in an Imp, David Sutton/Mike Giles in an Escort t/c, Bert Jay/Mike Lay in a Cortina GT, and, at number seven, Butler and Phillips in the Renault. Reddish and Miss Cobb ran at number ten, Paul Appleby and Ian Kennett at number eleven in a Cortina GT, whilst Chris Lovell, last year's winner, was a non-starter at number thirteen.

The rally was timed by the Targa system and the 78 controls were made up of passage points, time controls, and the extremities of low-average quiet zones of which there were thirteen during the night, so arranged as to embrace every speed-restricted road on the route.

The way out of Dover lay along the yellows just north of the main Folkestone road. Only a mile from the start the police had set up the first of many radar speed-meters, the operator of which was more than amazed when Butler made a short detour via the side

streets and surprised him from the rear as he skulked behind a wall.

Skirting Folkestone to the north, the route went round in a clockwise loop, almost exclusively on yellow roads, to return to within a few miles of Dover where a special stage had been planned on the cliff-top. Unfortunately this had to be cancelled and more than one driver expressed relief when it was learned that we were to be spared the sight of moonlit breakers far below us.

Another loop, wider than the first, then followed in an anti-clockwise direction, the only bits of colonialism being along the white roads through 253507 and 240497 on map 173. Pressure was on and off all the time, quite unlike the Marches of the previous week which was run in the healthy atmosphere brought about by co-operation, not opposition, by local police.

Radar meters and police cars were everywhere, and policemen were seen lurking in the bushes on the most obscure roads. There were so many uniformed men about that they must have cancelled all weekend leave for the Bobbies. Real criminals surely had a ball, for it seemed like the entire force was out preying on rally drivers. Wonder how many illegal immigrants landed on Kent's coast that night?

The "on-off" nature of the going might not have been to the liking of crews accustomed to rallying in Wales, the North of England and Scotland, but it has to be so arranged in such a populated area as the South-East, where the Quiet Zone system has emerged almost as standard procedure. There were plenty of "ons" to compensate for the number of "offs" so there were no moans on that score.

Round about midnight, just before the first cars moved down to the network of roads over Romney Marsh, it happened. The police pulled off what they might consider to be their biggest triumph of the night. They set up a

radar meter about 100 yards short of a T, and positioned no less than three patrol car crews near the junction itself.

This was at 173/092354, where the route came southwards along the yellow road from Sellindge. That yellow road has no speed restriction and, at its southern end, is completely devoid of anything which could reasonably be called a bend.

When the first cars arrived, they were stopped and the drivers told that they would be reported for driving at a dangerous speed—on a straight road in a derestricted area, they considered 50 m.p.h. to be dangerous. What speed was safe, we wonder?

This piece of organised below-belt punching was the foulest of them all, and there is no doubt in my mind that the whole thing was a deliberate piece of victimisation. Someone in Kent's administration doesn't like rallying and an entire army of policemen were despatched with the pre-conceived plan of booking as many rally drivers as possible. This sort of premeditated book-filling is contrary to all the principles of policing which I was taught when I was a copper—a part of my past which this incident has made me almost too ashamed to admit.

But let's get back to the rally—which was continuing despite the artificial difficulties. After several enjoyable meanders over Romney Marsh came a halt of one hour at Lydd during which time cars had to take on petrol and attempt a special stage which included four laps of a closed circuit at Lydd Ranges. The authorities there are helpful to the n'th degree, and the stage was a first class mixture of concrete, shale, mud and rough, loosely-packed bricks. Outstanding on this stage was Mike Butler who didn't put a wheel wrong and took the Alan Fraser Trophy for fastest time by a margin of 90 seconds.

SPECIAL STAGE TIMES
Lydd — 16 miles.

- 1. Butler/Phillips 19m. 30s.
- 2. Church/Mace 21m. 00s.
- 3. Cathcart/Jensen 21m. 25s.
- 4. Mossop/Shields 21m. 30s.
- 5. Joy/Lacey 21m. 50s.

Most crews seemed to dally before tackling the stage, drinking tea and talking about

the police, but Mossop/Shields and Butler/Phillips got it over quickly and departed at once for the next time control. This paid off, although an additional allowance of 30 minutes had been provided for the benefit of those who had been delayed through no fault of their own.

Re-crossing the Royal Military Canal near Appledore, the route went northwards, again with quiet zones punctuating the route, to skirt Ashford to the North. At many controls the watches were proving to be considerably wrong, this being particularly noticeable when one would get in something like ten minutes early after a four-or-five mile section.

But this again was influenced to a degree by the police. The course car crew was experiencing such delays in sorting out the hold-ups of others and conferring with police that it was overtaken by the first few competitors who had to cope with marshals handling unchecked watches.

I have the greatest admiration for marshals who are prepared to give up their time and comfort for the pleasures of competitors, but I am compelled to say that marshalling on the Harold Sharp Rally was of a poor standard. There is no need to go into detail on this, but I must mention the fellow who simply refused to get up off his stool. When we overshot by five yards, the walk was beyond him and we had to back up to collect a card. On the other hand, some marshals were really slick and passage point cards could be collected without actually having to stop.

For the benefit of map markers, I must mention the railway bridge at 993452 on both 184 and 172. The bridge has a blind brow and when crossing it to the North one is not confronted by a road going straight on and another to the left as on the map, but

by a very definite and very solid T.

By this time everyone was thoroughly fed up by the childish concealment acts of the police. One crew who had wrong-slotted were stopped and threatened with prosecution for failing to keep to the authorised route. Have you even heard such irresponsible threats?

The final stages of the rally were held along the roads through and around Challock Forest, South-East of Faversham, ending in a run along the densely overgrown mud road from 172/979499 to 979511, crossing a red road on the way.

From here, there was an un-timed run to the Great Danes Hotel near Maidstone where there was a complete absence of all the usual after-rally tales. The one topic was the enormous and costly lengths to which the police had gone in order to catch out as many people as possible.

The various bothers which affected the timing caused a deal of confusion at the finish, and the first calculation showed that Mossop and Shields had collected second place, but they dropped down when it was realised that some people had been penalised for being late at the ends of quiet zones—something for which no penalty had been prescribed in the regulations.

Whether I will be criticised for spending far more time in what is, after all, the report of a rally, on the actions of the police than on those of the competitors, will remain to be seen, but in view of the unprecedented offensive launched by officialdom, I feel I am completely justified.

Under the circumstances, the organisers did well to run the rally through to its conclusion, and despite minor faults we must congratulate them for doing so in the face of completely unjustified opposition.

VERGLAS

GENERAL CLASSIFICATION

- 1. M. Butler/G. Phillips (Renault Gordini) 39m. 47s.
- 2. D. Boichat/D. Walker (Cooper S) 41m. 20s.
- 3. P. Reddish/F. Cobb (Cortina GT) 44m. 00s.
- 4. A. Michaelidis/J. Booter (Hillman Imp) 44m. 17s.
- 5. J. Church/J. Mace (Cortina-Lotus) 44m. 25s.
- 6. J. Mossop/D. Shields (Cortina-Lotus) 47m. 17s.
- 7. D. Sutton/M. Giles (Escort t/c) 48m. 15s.
- 8. L. Cathcart/J. Jensen (Stiletto) 51m. 14s.
- 9. T. Cook/P. Cook (Cortina GT) 52m. 40s.
- 10. P. Edwards/C. Baldry (Chamois) 54m. 01s.

Team Award: Church/Mace and Mossop/Shields.

TELEPHONE & TELEGRAMS }
TONBRIDGE DIST (8 LINES)
I. WARNER, T. D., M.
(NOTARY PUBLIC)
OTTIDGÉ, M. A. (OXON)
N. R. ARMSTÄONO. P. a. C. (LONO)
C. C. SIMPSON. D. A. (OXON)

WARNERS
SOLICITORS
O. G. H. M. A. (OXON) J. K.
(NOTARY REPLY PLEASE
A/MLP

180, High Street,
Tonbridge.
13th August, 1968

AND AT
WARNER. x.C%.0.
QUOTE:

Dear Sir,

Maidstone and Mid—Kent Motor Club Limited

We have been approached by the above named Club to invite to you with regard to a matter which is causing them grave concern. The Club is one of the larger Clubs, having some seven hundred members and associates. It is an extremely responsible body, run on well organised and efficient lines.

The matter which is causing such concern is the attitude of the Kent County Police towards Motor Rallies organised by them. As you will know, organisation of Motor Car Rallies on public roads is perfectly permissible provided that the organisers comply with the Motor Vehicles (Competition and Trials) Regulations. The Club always comply with these Regulations completely and indeed go beyond their requirements to ensure that no inconvenience is caused to the general public. The Club members call on most houses near to the Rally route prior to an event and re—route the course where any objections are encountered. The routes and regulations of their rallies always have the prior approval of the Police. The Club only organise three Motor Rallies per year, so it cannot be said there is any excessive use of public roads by them for this purpose.

For some time, the Kent Police have been employing ever increasing obstructive tactics to utterly disrupt the Rallies and to frighten and discourage members from taking part, presumably with a view to stopping Rallies altogether. Matters have come to a head as a result of the tactics of the Kent Police during the Harold Sharp Rally held on the 27th/28th July last by the Club. This used to be a very important Rally enjoying national championship status and entered by teams from all parts of the Country. Due to the attitude of the Police, the Club voluntarily renounced the championship status of the Rally, as they did not want to subject visiting competitors to the intolerable actions of the Police.

(I)
13th August, 1968

(cont)

During the Rally, the Police were out in force, with many patrol cars and radar speed traps. They frequently stopped competitors and held them up for lengthy periods whilst they checked papers, lights etc. and general cautioning when no offence had been committed. At one particular point competitors were stopped after passing a speed meter and told they would be reported for dangerous driving, although they had been travel ling only up to about 50 mph on a straight road in open cot-213th August, 1968

(Cont)

Although the Police are quite within their duty in making speed and other checks on road vehicles, to carry them out in the fashion they did and to such an excessive extent, can only be an abuse of their powers, designed to achieve a result, which if desired, is the proper prerogative of Parliament and not of some zealous senior Police officer.

By their actions, the Police are succeeding in antagonising a considerable body of the motoring public and the adverse publicity can do nothing harm to their already poor public relations, which we would have

thought you wished to improve. In these days when we have an ever increasing crime rate, with the percentage unsolved unchanged, it must be galling for the public to learn that the Police are thus engaged on a Saturday night, rather than in protecting property and reducing the crime rate.

The Club of course, do not in any way condone motoring offences, and records of motor rallying show a very low accident rate or injury.

We Shall be most grateful if, as a result of our representations on behalf of the Club, you would bring your influence to bear upon the Kent Police with a view to bringing about a similar acceptance of rallying in Kent as that which exists in most other counties.

London S.W. 1. where the only limit was the general 70 mph limit. The number of incidents are best illustrated by the attention the matter received in the national and local press and copies of various cuttings are enclosed for your perusal.

The press reports have come to the notice of the Chief Constable and he has issued a statement. Enclose a copy of this and the accompanying letter which was sent to the club. Although the Police deny any hostility, we would venture to suggest that their attitude is apparent from the tone of their statement. For example they say that if they did not give supervision to an event then scant attention be paid to the regulations, a most unfair and hostile generalisation.

With regard to the time, it appears that the Police had 9.00 p.m. on some papers and 9.30 p.m. on others. Police Inspector telephoned the Clerk of the Course to clarify the matter and it was agreed the start should be at 9.50 p.m. To suggest that the Club could have been dealt with under the regulations for holding an unauthorised event, when it was only due to a typographical error only serves to illustrate further our above comments.

The regulations for the Rally require a prescribed route. There was a prescribed route agreed by the RAC and Police. There is nothing to require individual competitors to keep to it (apart from their desire to be successful in the rally) and no offence is committed by deviating. There may be a number of reasons why a motorist does not follow a prescribed route and this is not a valid ground to stop persons for failure to do so.

(2)

(Cont)

Although the Police are quite within their duty in making speed and other checks on road vehicles, to carry them out in the fashion they did and to such an excessive extent, can only be an abuse of their powers, designed to achieve a result, which if desired, is the proper prerogative of Parliament and not of some zealous senior Police officer.

By their actions, the Police are succeeding in antagonising a considerable body of the motoring public and the adverse publicity can do nothing but harm to their already poor public relations, which we would have thought you wished to improve. In these days when we have an ever-increasing crime rate with the percentage unsolved unchanged, it must be galling for the public to learn that the Police are thus engaged on a Saturday night, rather than in protecting property and reducing the crime rate.

The Club of course, do not in any way condone motoring offences, and records of motor rallying show a very low accident rate or injury.

We Shall be most grateful if, as a result of our representations on behalf of the Club, you would bring your influence to bear upon the Kent Police with a view to bringing about a similar acceptance of rallying in Kent as that which exists in most other counties.

Yours faithfully,

The Rt. Hon. James Callaghan P.C., M.P.

Home Secretary,

Home Office, Whitehall,

COMMENT

From the letter and the MN Report it may be seen as though matters came to a head albeit the 1968 event had been withdrawn from the MN championship and had it remained a round things could have been worse. Even so as pointed out the results show the winning crew [Butler/Phillips] losing 39 minutes in trying to keep to the 30mph average speed as required by the regulations! [It was also thought that this crew set up FTD through the police radar trap!] Needless to say the local and national media had plenty to report on this event and did publish the statement from the police following the event.

Whilst the Police continued to monitor following rallies in Kent the tactics used appeared to become less ferocious and perhaps the organisers made the timing a little less competitive. It was quite ironic that while so many Police were involved on the 1968 event it was later alleged that during the night a group of illegal immigrants landed near Dungeness and a major robbery took place in Deal – I rest my case!

Lyle Cathcart

Some amusing acronyms of car makes.

Jaguar--- Jags Always Guarantee Unlimited Astronomical Repairs

MG --- Might Go

Hyundai ---Hope You Understand Nothings Driveable And Inexpensive

VW---Virtually Worthless

Chrysler---Company Highly Recommends You Start Learning Engine Repair

Dodge--- Drips Oil, Deposits Grease Everywhere

Ford---Fix Or Repair Daily

Volvo---Very Odd Looking Vehicular Object

Fiat--- Failed Italian Automotive Trash

Daewoo...Damn Asian Engineering, Works Only Occasionally

Jeep--- Just Empty Every Pocket

Audi--- Another Ugly Deutsche Invention

Mini--- Moron Inside, Notably Insane

Honda--- Horsepower Option Never Did Appear

Lotus--- Lots Of Trouble, Usually Serious

Pontiac--- Plenty Of Noises That Irritate And Clank

GMC---Gotta Mechanic Coming

Chevrolet--- Cheap, Hardly Efficient, Runs On Luck Every Time

Toyota--- The One You Ought To avoid

Mercedes--- Most Expensive Road Car Everyone Drives Except Stig

BMW--- Blinkers Mean What?

Wot'sername

An old acquaintance of mine, Appleyard, was at one time the curator of one of those old upright Austin Sevens of the late vintage period. Caring little for vintage machinery but being of a whimsical turn of mind, and also a good mechanic, he ripped out all its innards, refurbished and replaced the works, and left these parts looking like something out of a workshop manual. But not so the interior. His creative instincts got the better of him, and he took all the trim and upholstery out, fitting in its place grey striped contemporary wallpaper, basket chairs and lace curtains. Externally it was finished in shining black and pale primrose yellow above the waist line, with a white roof and polished radiator and lamps. Along the side of the bonnet he carefully inscribed the name of the vehicle : Lady Chatterly.

Lady Chatterly had a successor, called strangely enough "Lolita". Lolita was an old 1929 Talbot, of the type which was reputed to have been assembled by a tribe of French dwarfs with seven foot long fingers, so inaccessible were some of the parts.

While, allegorically, Lolita and Lady C. would appear to have a common interest in life, these two vehicles were the very antithesis of each other. Lolita did not have a bonnet, rather an engine room, all brass pipework and mysterious clonking noises, built like a destroyer, and you could very nearly get inside and walk around.

There are, it appears three distinct phases in a motor car acquiring a name. My friend Harblow used to call his old Morris "Buttercup", but he never went so far as to paint it on the side. Thus he was a Stage II man. My other friend Appleyard, would be a Stage III man.

It seems that the kind of motor car and the kind of name are irrelevant thus I called my old Ford Fanny, but that was because she was difficult to start in the morning. It is thus totally unlike naming a child.

What do you call your car? And why? Is it because of what it means to you or because of some particular idiosyncrasy?

After all this is only an extension of the idea of having different names for collections of components, according to the collector, and far better than the North American idea of a code letter and numbers.

Modern motor cars may be mass produced but at least they have individualities in their defects.

PAUL JEN*INS

THIS SPACE

is reserved for **YOUR** article

(or the first paragraph, anyway)