



Maidstone and Mid Kent Motor Club

June Newsletter



Chairman's Statement for year ended 31 December 2020

2020 proved to be a very difficult year for us all due to the coronavirus pandemic. The first and second lockdowns meant that the club was only able to run events in the period from July to October with the organisation of these events being subject to both government guidelines and guidance issued by Motorsport UK. I would like to say a big thank you for everyone involved in the interpretation of these guidelines and guidance to establish what would be possible. Thank you also to those competitors who showed their support by entering our events.

Membership numbers for 2020 held well finishing the year with 142 compared to 153 at the end of 2019.

During 2020 the directors held three board meetings. General committee meetings were held on the 1st Tuesday of each month, initially at Bruce Jenkins' home and then using Zoom video conferencing. The club members meet socially on the 3rd Tuesday of the month and Zoom enabled this to continue throughout 2020.

The club benefits from membership of three regional associations - ASEMC in the south east, AEMC in the east, and ACSMC in the south. We are also members of Weald Motor Club, a club of twelve clubs in the south east. We have been represented at ASEMC Council Meetings by Bruce Jenkins. I have been Chairman of ASEMC since November 2019. The association is a forum for discussion of technical and operational issues concerning all clubs in the area and an important link between the club and Motorsport UK.

Events

Our first event in 2020 was the Wings All Day Autotest in August. This had 37 entries including 5 juniors. The Brian Lewis Trial in September attracted 19 entries. Both events ran in dry conditions and contributed surpluses towards club funds.

The heavens opened for our third event - the Autumn Autosolo. We had 27 entries including 4 juniors but ground conditions deteriorated throughout the day and the significant differences in test times caused difficulties with our first use of the Sapphire Solutions timing app.

The Club must give a big thank you to all the organisers, officials and marshals without whom our events could not be run.

Social Events

We arranged a meal and awards evening on 1 February 2020 at the Dog & Bear, Lenham which proved to be a great success with 35 attendees.

Website and Social Media

Des and Helen Crocker continue to look after our website and Facebook page and were the ones who guided us through the set-up of Zoom for club meetings.

Newsletters

We have continued to have regular communication with our members by email. Bruce Jenkins has been producing e-newsletters which have been well received by all. A big thank you to the advertisers on our website for their continued support. Thank you also to all contributors of articles with a special thank you to Emma Olsen who instigated the new “ Meet the Club Members” feature.

Club Officials

Special thanks should be given to those who act as club officials:

Lyle Cathcart – President

Bruce Jenkins – General Secretary and Secretary of Events

Andy Jenner – Treasurer

Tom Thompson – Membership Secretary

Des & Helen Crocker – Championship Secretary/ Results/ Website and Social Media

Ray Lane – Equipment Officer

A big thank you for the enormous effort you all put in.

2021 is proving to be another challenging year. The third lockdown prevented events in the first quarter. We now have a reduced programme of events as we gradually emerge from restrictions but still need to work within the guidance to reduce the risk of virus transmission.

Liz Jordan

June 2021

A reminder to all Members from the Chairman

Due to the continuing Covid restrictions and the need to ensure that everyone at an event has the benefit of the Motorsport UK insurance cover, you are reminded that only competitors, officials and marshals are able to attend and everyone attending needs to sign on to ensure we have the necessary contact details. We have been asking everyone to complete the signing on process within 48 hours of the event to enable us to prepare the listings we need to check in everyone as they arrive at the venue. If anyone would like to marshal at future events, please contact Liz Jordan at chairman@mmkmc.co.uk.

Liz

ANNOUNCEMENT - CANCELLED - MIKE JORDAN CLASSIC TOUR

The delay in the lifting of the coronavirus restrictions seems to have led to a reluctance to participate in an event of this type. We have therefore decided to cancel the Mike Jordan Classic Tour planned for Saturday 3 July 2021 and concentrate our efforts on an event in 2022. We would like to thank those who did submit an entry or offer to marshal. We would also like to thank our venues - [The Pepperbox Inn](#) and the [End of the Line Restaurant](#) at Dungeness on the Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway who were willing to accommodate us despite the restrictions they are continuing to work under. The date for the 2022 event will be published in due course.

Editors Mutterings.

We have at last managed to run two evening autotests despite the weather conspiring against us. This is nothing new, but it has thrown up a different set of problems at our Otham venue. As usual we have a different Clerk for each event to ensure competitors don't get bored with one set of layouts. I must thank all this year's event organisers for giving up their time to organise and run events. Lloyd Covey is also new to the Clerking and has also taken on keeping our Facebook account up to date with current news.

Lyle has been digging in the archives again and has come up with an interesting report of the Club's first race meeting at Silverstone. I spoke to Silverstone archives a few years ago and they confirmed that MMKMC were the first ever club to organise a race meeting at the circuit in 1947. This report must be of that meeting.

Now we are getting back to somewhere near normal with our calendar, it would be good to have some club members report on events they have taken part in, to supplement my monthly drivel. So, let's hear from you.

Emma Olsen has taken on the role of our Club Sustainability Officer, so we all need to listen to what she has to say and give her the support she needs to make our Club one of the first taking this important subject on board.

Bruce

Evening Grass Autotests.

After a dry spring and then the heavy rain, the grass in the field at our Otham Autotest venue had grown quite long. We are therefore indebted to Tim Mewett for bringing his tractor over and cutting the grass so that it was short enough to be able to see the autotest poles.



Evening Grass Autotest 2nd June.

A good entry of 34 competitors including four Juniors, turned out for our first evening autotest of 2021. After Tim Mewett had mowed the field, Clerk of Course Richard Olsen spread the tests around the two fields that we are able to use, avoiding the damaged areas that were still evident from our 2020 Autumn Slalom. After the long Covid layoff competitors soon got in to the swing again. Lloyd Covey in his newly acquired Mini managed to secure the win in Class A, and Brian Sharpe led Class B from Toby and Dave Cook. Brian and Tom Grant made a rare appearance in Class C with Tom showing his Dad the way home to first place. Class D was a close contest between the Newton brothers with Christopher taking the win from Anthony by 0.03 of a second. The win in Class E, the MX5 class, was taken by Josh Smith from Jamie Woolley. Cameron Ferris led the juniors, who all seemed to be making good progress with their autotesting skills.

Evening Grass Autotest 15th June

Six Maidstone members attended Tunbridge Wells Motor Club Autotest on 15th June, the first of three autotests in a week in Kent. Well done to Brian Sharpe for winning Class B, and to Alan Steadman for securing 2nd in Class C. Our thanks to TWC organisers and marshals

Evening Grass Autotest 16th June

16th June saw our second evening autotest of 2021. Lloyd Covey did a grand job at his first attempt as Clerk of Course. With the threat of thunderstorms in the evening, we luckily managed to finish and pack up just before the rain started.



Well done to Chris Smith, Dave Cook, Anthony Newton, Charlie Lower, Stephen Stringer and Cameron Ferris who each won their class. Congratulations to Toby Cook who fought off tough competition to win FTD by just 0.5 of a second from his Dad! It was good to see Steve Stringer in his Silva Striker but the overly firm suspension must have left him with a few aches and pains at the end of the evening!

Liz Jordan continued her good work of 2020 and brought together a large band of marshals who are now starting to get the hang of the Sapphire Timing system we

started to use in 2020. A big thank you must go to all our wonderful organisers and marshals.



Environmental Sustainability in Motorsport

The following report was presented at the club AGM and was prepared by Emma Olsen – Club Sustainability Officer

Overview

Sports across all sectors and of all sizes can have a huge impact on the world around us with damage to the environment through waste, pollution, and general lack of duty of care and environmental awareness.

It is our responsibility not only to ensure the success and safety of our sport but also to minimise the environmental impact to the natural environment, reduce air pollution and noise, control energy consumption, reduce the use of natural resources and reduce waste and refuse.



MSUK have recognised a need to help motor clubs become more Environmentally Sustainable and wants to work with clubs to raise the profile of how motorsport can have a positive impact and reduce the perception that we are damaging to the environment and do not consider these aspects.

To support this they have put together a Sustainability learning module on the MSUK learning hub to outline the reasons for it, how it fits with MSUK and the wider motorsport commitment in this area – such as with FIA.

MSUK have also introduced an accreditation scheme where clubs can create an Environmental Management System to formalise and document all the steps required to have a robust action plan implemented to ensure their ongoing positive impact to achieve agreed sustainability goals, supported by a communication plan to promote their approach to a wide range of stakeholders.

Sustainability has three pillars 1. Environment 2. Social 3. Financial.

Main areas of focus from MSUK are:

- Purchase Responsibly
- Reduce Waste
- Save Energy
- Control air pollution
- Protect wildlife, flora and fauna
- Protect land from erosion

Implications for MMKMC

Emma Olsen has attended 2 MSUK webinars to develop a better understanding of the background and the accreditation process. An overview of these has been presented to the Committee for further discussion.

It was agreed by the Committee that this is an area that we already do have quite good consideration of and plans in place to support. However, there is room to develop further improvements in relation to our events and how to communicate our approach and benefits to Club members and wider stakeholders.

Benefits for us as a club include:

- Save resources by driving down energy usage and reducing waste whether on events or through meetings.
- Streamline handling and disposing of waste either on events or in day-to-day activities.
- Verify compliance with the latest environmental legislation

- Boost the reputation of the sport and the club/event
- Contribute to the sustainability of the planet

Next Steps for MMKMC

The Committee members have agreed that this is an area that they support and want to develop further.

- The Committee members have agreed to do the MSUK online module to increase individual understanding in this area to support further actions in relation to running Club events in future. Subsequently, it may also be recommended by the Committee that Clerks of Course also undertake this training to support the running of events and promote ideas to improve.
- The Committee has supported the introduction of a Sustainability Officer role to the Committee to lead in this area and regularly update the Committee. This will be an elected position and Emma Olsen has volunteered to take on this role from the AGM in 2021.
- The Committee has agreed to not go for the full MSUK accreditation this year but with support from the Sustainability Officer to review current club practices and event running to consider environmental and sustainable aspects that can be improved and introduced during 2021 that could inform the completion of the accreditation documents in future.
- The Sustainability Officer will lead on the assessment of current and potential risks that we pose from running the Club and events, with input from the Committee, event organisers and Club members. This could then inform changes to event regulations or Club activities.
- The Committee agreed the need for good communications, including better use of social media, to make Club members aware that this is an important aspect of club event organisation/running, why some things may change and how they can contribute. It is proposed to have targeted messaging to highlight key issues at events, such as cigarette butts, litter, no 360's in tests, etc. The Sustainability Officer will co-ordinate with other Committee members to implement.
- The Club website to be used to inform members, other stakeholders and other clubs of what we are doing, the benefits and to promote changes more widely. The Sustainability Officer will co-ordinate with other Committee members to implement.
- It was proposed to have a Club statement outlining our commitment to this area for inclusion on the website and in event documents to share with Members, which the Sustainability Officer will prepare for approval by the Committee.
- Other clubs have also started work on this area and the Sustainability Officer will link with them to gather and share ideas.
- The Committee agreed that individual actions make a difference and want to encourage competitors/members to have awareness of how they can help. It was suggested that experienced competitors can lead by example at events and initiate discussion. Suggestions shared included ground sheets in paddock areas, drip trays available, spill kits, tyre choices, etc.
- In future the Committee may consider an annual donation to a local environmental charity, such as the Woodland Trust, on behalf of all entrants to recognise our impact and "off-set" some of our carbon emissions.

If anyone has specific knowledge on this subject or just interested in how the Club can progress this and introduce this approach more widely then please get in touch with Emma as it would be great to work with others to maximise our impact.

Emma Olsen

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www.mmkmc.co.uk

19th May
2nd June
16th June
30th June
14th July
28th July

motorsport UK

**Evening
Autotest
Series
2021**

MAIDSTONE & MID-KENT
MOTOR CLUB

2021 CLUB FIXTURE LIST

Event	Clerk of Course	Secretary of Meeting or Contact	Date
12 Car Rally	Liz Jordan	POSTPONED	January 2021
Annual Awards Evening via Zoom	Liz Jordan	Lyle Cathcart	16 th March
Annual General Meeting via Zoom	Lyle Cathcart	Liz Jordan	4 th May
Autotest Taster Day		CANCELLED	9 th May
Evening Autotest - Otham		CANCELLED	19 th May
Evening Autotest - Otham	Richard Olsen	Bruce Jenkins	2 nd June
Evening Autotest - Otham	Lloyd Covey	Bruce Jenkins	16 th June
Evening Autotest - Otham	Liam Carfrae	Bruce Jenkins	30 th June
Mike Jordan Celebration Tour	Liz Jordan	CANCELLED	3 rd July
Evening Autotest - Headcorn	Brian Sharpe	Bruce Jenkins	14 th July
Lydden Co-pro Sprint	Barry Morris / Josh Bennett	Simone Cornish	17 th July
Summer Slalom - Hole Park	Andy Jenner	Andy Jenner	1 st August
Evening Autotest - Headcorn	Ben Dawson	Bruce Jenkins	11 th August
Wings All Day Autotest - TBA	Jim Pullar	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's Events

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



Club Visit to Hole Park - 1st August 2021

As we have unfortunately had to cancel the Mike Jordan Classic Tour you have this year, so here is an opportunity to stretch the legs of your classic or any other car that you may have for that matter. MMKMC has sole use of Hole Park on the 1st August for this year's running of the Summer Slalom. If you are not competing in the Summer Slalom, please come along and wander the grounds and enjoy the delights of this private estate. Come along with your car and family and enjoy a light lunch in the Coach House Tea Room which includes a drink for the reasonable price of £10 per head. This includes the entry fee that normally costs £9.00. Afternoon tea is also available if you would like to stay longer, but this not included in the price.



Bookings available on the Club Website at www.mmmkmc.co.uk

HOLE PARK GARDENS TOUR

- 1 **The House**
This is the fourth house on the site of which we have pictorial records, with a facade dating from 1720 reconfigured in 1960's, being a quarter of its former size.
- 2 **The Park**
150 acres of parkland provide a grand setting. Note the Windmill on the hill and the obelisk which commemorates 100 years here of the Barham family.
- 3 **The Yew Hedges**
Planted in 1923 to Col. Arthur Barham's design, they take four weeks to cut once a year, maintaining the mathematical geometric shapes that he first established.
- 4 **The Eagle Slayer**
Specially commissioned for the Great Exhibition in the Crystal Palace of 1851, the Shepherd boy is defending his flock against the eagle.
- 5 **The Egg Pond**
Said to be the source of ice for the nearby ice house, this pond has been reformed in 2019 with a viewing platform featuring an altar rail from a church in Durham.
- 6 **The Vineyard**
Built in the early 1930s and typical of its time this garden features standard wisteria and beds of the famous agapanthus Hole Park Blue.
- 7 **Sundial Garden**
A dash of colour amidst the yew hedges. The mosaic and bench both feature bears which form part of our family coat of arms.
- 8 **The Policy**
Named in the Scottish sky style because of the Rock and Heather garden, the specially are smaller trees bulbs and wildflower meadows.
- 9 **Woodland Garden**
Created from woodland in 1969 this is a spring and autumn garden. Magnificent oak trees provide the canopy.
- 10 **Brick Kiln Wood**
Ancient coppice woodland with a natural display of English bluebells, during April and May, with wild garlic in the moist damp areas.
- 11 **Pine Walk**
A fine collection of interesting trees, notably the Wellingtonia planted in 1926. One Oak has been carved to feature 3 bears climbing to get honey. Fine views down to the Dell Pond, once a clay pit for bricks.
- 12 **The Rockery**
A delightful viewpoint across the meadows.
- 13 **The Walled Gardens**
The Rose, Millennium and Tropical gardens are their best in mid-summer. A fine wrought iron gate commemorates Wilfrid Barham killed in 1915.
- 14 **The Stable Yard**
Mostly dating from 1914, horses occupied the southern range and cars the north, of which we still have an early occupant, a 1926 Rolls Royce which is frequently on view during open days.






Meet the Club Members

Name: Bruce Jenkins

Current role in Club : Director/General Secretary

First joined: About 1961

When and how did you first get involved in motorsport?

The short answer is through my brother. The long answer is that my brother who is older than I worked for the KCC Roads Department (Now Kent Highways) and he had a number of his work colleagues who were members of MMKMC, such as Rod Hulks Ted Emery and Lyle Cathcart's cousin Keith Ward. My brother started by navigating for Rod on "Natter Noggins" (Scatters today) but as you do, slowly got involved in other aspects of the club such as marshalling. As a teenager, having had an interest in cars from an early age I tagged along with my brother to evening autotests, PCT's



etc. My brother Paul, Keith and I also marshalled at the Club Silverstone race meetings. This was all before I was old enough to drive. I later found out that some good friends of my parents who lived just up the road, had a son who was a long standing club member who went by the name of Ray Aberly. Pretty incestuous this motorsport business!!

What was your first competition car?



My first car and competition car as was the case with everybody in those days, was a three year old 1959 Standard 10 bought by borrowing the money from my mother, much to my father's disgust.

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

I don't know if you can call them competition cars, but I currently have a 1969 MGBGT V8 I built to my own specification starting with a Heritage bodyshell and a Mazda MX 5 Mk1 rescued after three years rotting on someone's drive. The MG was built to be used in sprints but so far has only done a Summer Slalom and a number of Touring Assemblies. The idea of the MX was autosolos, but the Covid curfew put paid to that. As anno Domini is setting in, I probably need to sell them both now.

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

Having passed my test, I joined the club and started off in Driving Tests or Autotests as they are called now. I tried my hand at rallying in my Cortina GT engined Ford Anglia but after one event lacked a navigator! I then discovered Autocross. This became my passion until I was given leave of absence to go to Australia in 1972 to see my brother who had emigrated there in 1967.

When I returned from Australia after pressure from my UK boss, I was promoted to be a Project Manager and worked on the Boughton and Dunkirk Bypass. It was while working on this contract and

following the death of my parents, that I had to buy a house for somewhere to lay my head between the long hours of work. Having bought a house I found that when I came to move in, that someone had beaten me to it. The person that beat me to it subsequently became the current Mrs Jenkins. At this time, I had started building my next autocross car, a Triumph Vitesse, that I had acquired from a friend. The build was stopped abruptly when we acquired a three-acre paddock behind the house, and I found that I was suddenly part owner of a horse. My now wife had always wanted a horse but decided that she was too old to ride so took driving lessons, which meant we soon acquired a trap to go with the horse. Both our sports being expensive meant our limited time and resources could only be applied to one sport. Unfortunately for me Caroline became very good at driving (a horse), so for the next 20 years we competed reasonably successfully in one day carriage driving events, with me acting as groom and sponsor!

Having worked away from home for many years I was lucky to be asked to be part of the Team that eventually won the Medway Tunnel Contact. Some members may remember the site visits I ran for MMKMC during the construction? This meant that I had nearly 10 years living at home. It was through a work college who had a neighbour one Steve Pattinson, that I was invited to a MMKMC Dinner & Dance around 1993. After a couple of years attending these at Sittingbourne, Steve persuaded me to re-join the Club in 1995 and getting me to marshal at Lydden Sprint. This rekindled my interest and the rest as they say, is modern history.



What is your most memorable event/events and why?

Before I went to Australia, I was working on the Carmarthen Bypass in South Wales and again through a work colleagues joined the Pembroke Motor Club to compete in autocross. I remember one event at the end of the year when it was a runoff between myself in my by then Cortina GT engine Ford 100E and a Mini. The track narrowed at the start/finish as the sponsor, a local tyre company had strung a banner above the track. Competitors were running two at a time and it was neck and neck until the last lap. The Mini was just ahead of me but struggling to keep it on the circuit. As it was the last run of the day, he kept going to make sure he won and ended up demolishing the finish banner which ended up rapped around the both of us.

What do you consider your greatest achievement and why?

Soon after I re-joined the club the committee was looking for new blood to take over from those that had been running the club for many years. The likes of Lyle Cathcart, John Ashwell and Ray Abery had done more than their fair stints. For instance, Ray had been Treasurer since 1958 without a break. Dave and Ann Cook had built up the autotests to be a major part of the clubs' activities, but trials had ceased to be run. The Rally of Kent was about to run its last event. Ray Abery and his parents had been family friends since I was in short trousers, and I did not want to see the club go downhill after all the hard

work of all these people over many years. At Rays instigation I joined the committee and foolishly later agreed to start running trials again. Now after 20 years my greatest achievement has been helping to keep the club going through a lean period and hope that the new blood we now have on board, will build on all the work that has been done over the years and see a vibrant Club mark its centenary in 2035.

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

Take part in which ever of the Club's events you enjoy. Be as competitive as you like but please remember you need to help and contribute by marshalling or helping organise in some way. Don't just turn up and then go, otherwise there will be no events for you to enjoy. Somebody has to prepare the Regs, set it all up and clear up afterwards. Be part of the Club and play your part however small.

From the Club Archives



Autocross held in Mote Park Maidstone

MAIDSTONE & MID-KENT MOTOR CLUB LTD

FREMLINS AUTOCROSS

13th September 1964

1.	Keith Searle	Mini	112.3	secs	5th	4th
2.	Des Chappell	Saab	111.7	secs	4th	3rd
3.	S. Walters	"	114.2	secs	7th	6th
5.	D. J. Webb	"	113.2	secs	6th	5th
11.	Roger Manning	Cooper Mini	108.5	secs	3rd	2nd
12.	Alistair Crawford	Cooper Mini S	104.6	secs	2nd	1st
14.	G. Playford	" " "	102.7	secs		1st Saloom
15.						
19.	P. J. Frost	Capri	116.6	secs		9th
20.	B. W. Judkins	Cortina GT	105.6	secs		1st
21.	D. G. Watkinson	1500 Minx	110.6	secs		6th
22.	27 David Brown	M. Lewis 93 Minx	132.0	secs		12th
23.	David Brown	" Vitesse	108.2	secs		5th
24.	Brian Gray	" Ford	117.2	secs		10th
25.	B. J. Jenkins	Stansted 10	115.6	secs		8th
26.	Lyle Cathcart	1600 Minx	107.4	secs		3rd
27.	Tony Tucker	Cosair GT	111.8	secs		7th
28.	Mike Butler	" "	107.2	secs		2nd
29.	Terry Beard	" "	107.5	secs		4th
30.	Mrs C. E. Butler	" "	119.6	secs		11th
31.	Lyle Cathcart	Imp	111.3	secs		1st
32.	Mrs. D. Cathcart.	"	139.0	secs		2nd
33.						
41.	R. I. Taylor	MG. Midget I	110.7	secs		5th
42.	John Kennedy		104.0	secs		1st
43.	David Baldock	MAZ	104.8	secs		3rd
44.	Rod Hulks	Spitfire	108.6	secs		4th
45.	Ivan Lingley		110.8	secs		6th
46.	David Edmondson	Sprite II	111.2	secs		8th
47.	Mike Day	Turner	102.0	secs		F.T.D.
48.	Mike Allen		104.4	secs		2nd
49.	Miss Ann Amess	Sprite I	117.8	secs		9th 1st lady
50.	Hugh Thompson ...		111.0	secs		7th

CASTROL SPORTS SERVICE

"Straight on at the Crossroads". by Geraint Phillips.

Rallying is at the crossroads. The favourite expression of supposed experts from Lydd to Loch Eck has played its lament from the pages of magazines and from the platforms of eloquence with which every decent bar is equipped.

Alas the advance of pessimism!

Of course rallying is at the crossroads. It has always been at the crossroads, and very likely always will. But of the available roads, it has always picked a goer up to now and, if the rallymans undying tenacity is anything to go by, will continue to do so.

Rallying is an activity which undergoes constant metamorphosis. Today, it is vastly different to the rallying of a decade ago and if this magazine survives to the late '70s (as we trust it will) similar sentiments will be expressed then.

Problems, difficulties, obstacles have all been put in our path, but, as all navigators know, there has always been an alternative route which leads eventually to the next control, and the next, and the next.

Costs have risen, organisational problems have trebled and there has been an upsurge of anti-rally feeling in some quarters. But we still have our sport and, by the Great Dyke of Offa, we shall always have it.

A little thought, a little consideration, a little determination and a whole boot full of enthusiasm, and we'll go straight on at those crossroads, passing the non-goers without as much as a second glance.

HISTORY - THE FIRST SILVERSTONE.

Just as soon as the last great war was over, all those enthusiasts who had returned from liberating Europe, discovered to their great joy that the circuit starved country they had left behind, was now simply littered with ready-made motor race courses, in the shape of aerodromes and runways built for the R.A.F. and their assistants from over the Atlantic. Everybody had a flat sort of Brooklands on their doorstep and everybody who wanted to race promptly made application to whatever authority they could find. The R.A.C. stepped in and announced that one large flying ground only was to be used for motor sport and soon all club navigators were searching their atlas for a place to the north west of Towcester called Silversides, or Silverton or Silversomething.

At first, a full scale Grand Prix was organised there and some of us walked (I repeat, walked) from Towcester railway station and back to see Italy's war effort beat up our early English vertical E.R.A.'s not all the maseratis finished however and Bob Gerard snatched a place in the fastest of the shed types (as P.A.B. has it). A little later the R.A.C. announced a modified course for Club racing and invited leading clubs to apply for dates. Promptly, greatly daining, the M.M.K.M.C. stepped in and secured the 14th July. I say greatly daining because we were a much smaller club with nothing like the organisation we now possess. A race committee was set up and the writer found himself lumbered with the job of Secretary of the Meeting.

We laboured under great difficulties because the Govt. (same lot) allowed only the most miserable of petrol rations. The Kent Police with no rallies to hunt down or Pakistanis persue, enforced this with full rigour, and those unfortunates caught with the forbidden red (commercial) in their tanks were heavily fined. Few of us had new cars and spares for the old ones were only obtainable from a ring of spivs whose prices made many an old soldier finger his sten. Lastly, few of us had any organising experience.

The course available was not the present Club circuit, but consisted of the long, wide and very bumpy centre runway, where, today, all the G.P. drivers land their aircraft. This ran into a tight right hand Becketts and then followed the G.P. circuit down to a tight Stowe where it rejoined the main runway. The paddock was somewhere near Club Corner and the timekeepers were housed in a bus that took French troops to Paris from the Maginot line. (I think). The fastest section was the slight downhill of Hanger and was much too fast, especially if you had a beam front axle and cast iron springs.

In their wisdom, the R.A.C. had appointed Great Racers, Past and Present, to brood over club meetings. We had hoped for Bob Gerard, but we got Lord Howe, and a right lot of trouble the right honourable earl caused Leslie Riley who, as Club Steward, was directed to perform what is known in soccer circles as a shadow operation.

The entry was not composed of the hardened circle of would-be professionals that now found the Club circus, but consisted mostly of average members driving the car they used for everything. The members handicap attracted some extraordinary racing machinery, but we did hesitate at Bernard Birch's wire-wheeled Morris 8.

Practice was enlivened by the opening boot of the Talbot 105, driven by our then Club secretary Phillip Stanley, who deposited six years of correspondence from Monkery Farm all over Northants. Phillip later moved to Dorset to solve the difficulty. George Wicken drove his first Cooper J.A.P. and Mike Hawthorn, his father's Riley. The real class of the sports car entry were 328 B.M.W. variants, including the 1940 Mille Miglia works car, and the few new ones were TC M.G.'s (known later, I believe, as 'coffins on four harps' in California).

Like most officials, I saw little of the actual racing, being busy with paperwork, but I did see Joe Kemp-Roberts burst through the straw bales like a bangalore torpedo and become an early caller at Brixton for spares for his Allard. Later on, there was a hilarious halt when George Butler, the Starter, refused to proceed as there was an unknown car on the circuit, while Lord Howe, on inspection with his Bugatti angrily enquired for Hanger why all had stopped.

At last it was all over, the big race for the Charing Rose Bowl being won by the ex-Novolair Monoposto Alfa, and the Members Handicap by Peter Wicks in his trials Riley. No one was hurt and the foundation was laid for all the magnificent meetings that followed until Brands became available.

KENT DRIVER MARCH '69

Norman Higgins.

Lyle Cathcart