

Chelmsford Motor Club

Torque March 1999

Old Oak Snetterton Stages - 28th February 1999

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Club Night:

Thursday,
The Red Lion,
Boreham.

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Items for inclusion
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on
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of the contributor
and not necessarily
those of CMC.*

The two Matts in action at Snetterton

TIME TO PARTY, TIME TO FIESTA

This event marked the return of Matt Burrows to the world of Clubman motor sport after a twelve month lay off re-building his Mk I Fiesta (PMF 777X). It should also have been my return to stage rally navigating but I had deferred my seat to Matt Cousins in order for him to get the last upgrading signature that he required.

For those who do not know. PMF started life as a normal run of the mill XR2. Then it's life changed by an innocuous private car sale. After installing a 1300cc engine Matt B originally ran in club organised twelve car rallies, upon installing a roll cage, competition seats and harness's a joint decision was made: - it would be safer to

compete on the stage rally circuit.

The first event we took part in was the Bomb Along Stages in '97 at Debden Airfield. After a long break for winter, the next event was The Old Oak Stages in '98. Having proven the reliability of the car by finishing two events with no major problems, it was decided that the minor ones like lack of oil cooler should be sorted out. No worries, next event something on tarmac about mid summer maybe? Small repair work became major repair became complete rebuild including forest spec arches, re-spray from Ford metallic blue to Porsche orange, incorporation of inboard fuel tank, re-built 1300 engine with rally cam,

twin 40 Weber carburettors the list goes on. Now armed with 80 BHP at the wheels and looking [from the front] like a mini Mk II, it was time for a shake down event namely the above.

Whilst Matt had been playing car restoration mechanic, I had been out learning about the tarmac rally scene with long time rally stalwarts Gavin Rogers and Carrie Parsons as their service crew. This took me to various events through out the year at Millbrook, Longcross (several times), Goodwood etc. I also kept the navigating in shape by competing alongside Dave Walker (WAC member) on the Kune Tune and the Marsh Tour.

Snetterton for me

started on Saturday 27th by going to Matt's to load the transit and car ready for the next day. An early start was required, get up at 4 am to leave by 5 am. Five o'clock arrived all to soon with the arrival of Matt Cousins and Martyn Dolan. Four into a transit does not go so I left to pick up Richard Turnbull whilst the two Matts and Martyn travelled to Snetterton via M25, M11, A11. Richard and I went via A12, A14 then cross-country at Ixworth. Got to Snetterton at 6:45 am. First, question where is everybody? Gavin and Carrie had spent the night at Snetterton and the only other people about where WAC's, the Candy's, had we got the right weekend? Of course, we had, about twenty minutes later several vans and trailers started appearing through the early morning haze. The Matts and Martyn arrived in this convoy, time for work. The car was unloaded and put in the pit garage we had and left to warm up before noise test. The van was then unloaded and tools/spares sorted out. With PMF warmed up, the Mats headed off to noise test, passing at 98dB. Now for scrutineering no problems just change front indicator bulbs to 21 watt in future [cheers Andy!]. Got back from scrutineering and found Mark 'Mad Ace' wandering around the pits, he'd only come along to be a spectator, bad move the more service crew the merrier.

Other Chelmsford crews out were car 16, Geoff Lobb and Chris Halliday in the Opel Manta, Brian Birkin and Peter Eaton in a Mk2 Escort, car 41 was Peter

Rayner and Richard Bonner also in a Mk2, Peter Morgan and Keith Pitcher swapped seats for this year's event and came for a play in Peter's 2.3 Chevette. Andy Donn and Dave Surrey nearly didn't start in their XR3i, they had left the registration document behind (this is needed if your car is not taxed), and special thanks go to Monica for driving all the way to Snetterton with it.

Stage 1:

SCARY! Matt was quaking in his boots from nerves and service crew sense of humour did not help matters. The Matts were running car 34 and by the time they had started we were surprised to find that, in car 1, Carrie had managed to navigate Gavin back to the first passage check without having to follow anybody! In the mean time PMF and crew came flying into the chicane by the pit wall [sorry not literally] as the car pulled away the engine sounded a little rough, just teething trouble we hoped. PMF completed the first stage, as the Matts pulled into the garage the car-sounded fine but what is this large dent in the drivers' door. PMF had had an altercation with some lorry tyres that formed the chicane down the back straight. 'Never mind' said service crew hiding large hammers behind backs as the Matts went to the van to hide and discuss a strategy for avoiding such obstacles.

Stage 2:

With the door hammered back to some resemblance of it's former self and Matt

less nervous than before PMF and crew joined the queue of eager competitors. From the pit wall we watched a flying DVY, being masterly piloted by Gavin, scream through the chicane. Again, PMF was sounding rough out of the pit straight chicane but this time the lack of performance was noticeable by all along the wall. Taking a stage maximum, the Matts returned looking rather pissed off. Richard 'Asbestos Hands' Turnbull dived under the bonnet as it was removed from PMF. Armed with nothing more than a spark plug spanner and listening for which cylinder was letting the team down as he pulled off HT leads. The culprit was found to be number ONE spark plug that was not pulling its weight. Upon inspection, the spark plug had let go the ceramics had cracked. "Quick" was the cry from Matt Largeous navigator "Time is fleeting". A spare plug was put in and PMF restarted with no noticeable problems.

Stage 3:

Once more PMF and crew were sent on their way to the stage start. Fingers crossed we lined the pit wall in anticipation. The Orange bug came into sight, heading for Russell, but there was no speed present. Again, a stage maximum was taken. Returning early once more to the pits, where is this electrical problem. Mark 'Mad Ace' and Richard both dived under the bonnet searching for the fault. Feeling some what left out of the action Martyn and I contented

ourselves with re-fuelling, checking tyre pressures and wheel nut torque settings. Mark and Richard found a possible fault, the dizzy cap was loose but what is this, the distributor is of some B@!t%\$d type that has only one locator. Martyn and I scurried off around the pits to try to scrounge a suitable replacement. We returned empty handed; PMF was running but how? Ah the wonders of TANK TAPE.

Stage 4:

With this being the last stage before lunch it was decided that Martyn and I would shoot off to Norwich, to find a Halfords or similar to purchase spares. Like odd shaped dizzy cap, number seven spark plugs and any thing else that came to mind. PMF was cobbled together to compete in stage 4, presumably another stage maximum was taken, in order to gain as much time to complete effective repairs. This effectively gave Martyn and I one and half-hours to get too and from Norwich no problems time for the Saxo to fly. With Martyn's inside knowledge of Norwich Halfords was found within thirty minutes. We started looking around and found spark plugs and what looked to be the only matching dizzy cap. As we were making a move to leave my mobile phone rang it was 'Big' Matt can we get an inline fuel filter and some eight mill hose clips. The gist of the phone call was that the problem was fuel starvation, some of the foam in the fuel tank had been seen floating in bits and it was thought that this blocking the

pump. Now loaded with fuel filters and clips we left Halfords and Norwich, would we make it before the start of stage five.

Stage 5:

We arrived as the Matts were in the queue for the start. As this was near to the bridge, I pulled up and Martyn got out to have a chat with the boys. It turned out that the problem was possibly an ill-tightened jubilee clip on the fuel tank side of the fuel pump. Now everything seemed to be running all right. We left PMF and crew in the queue and made our way back to the pits. Richard and Mark both seemed a bit dubious as to whether the repairs would be successful. Matts Mum, Dad and little Brother were there and although this was the first time that they had been to a motor sport event, the vibes of depression had effected them as well. With Gavin and Carrie still flying at the front of the field, this at least gave some glimmer of enjoyment amongst the service crew. Then came the Matts: the car was rocketing around Russell and towards the pit chicane were had all this speed come from? As PMF left the chicane, the beaming smiles on both the Matts faces said it all everything was working as it should do AT LAST! PMF came back to the pits after completing a full stage at speed and everybody was ecstatic. Matt B got out "I overtook that KA" he exclaimed, for all he cared everything could go wrong now. PMF was topped up with more fuel and everything checked out. It seems that fuel filter; dodge

dizzy cap and number seven spark plugs were not required. The spluttering performance had been air getting into the fuel mixture. Now for stage six.

Stage 6:

With the stages now being run in reverse, the speed being attained along the pit straight was phenomenal. Several of the faster competitors were missing judging their braking and getting it all crossed up as they approached the chicane. One of the most noticeable was the Candy's in the Fraud RS200 it later turned out that the rear brakes were failing. Thankfully the Matts were not having this trouble and with PMF sounding like a meaty Mk II, as they started down the pit straight many spectators were caught out by the appearance of a flying Fiesta. Stage 6 saw Geoff and Chris set equal 9th fastest time moving them up to 12th overall. The flying Matts returned to the pit this time with same body damage to PMF. The drivers side wing/front valance had been given a hefty bash inward. More work for the service crew. Out came the reels of tank tape, the wing was pulled back out and held in place by the sticky stuff. Now looking nice and smart with band-aid upon one side, PMF and crew set of for stage 7.

Stage 7:

Having set third fastest time (in class) on stage six, Matt was going for a real flyer, with Gavin out in front, he could not let him have all the glory. Again with the tremendous speeds that

the pit straight gave, PMF and crew fly at the chicane, upon exiting the under steer was sufficient that the spectators at that part of the pit wall jumped back fearing the worst. Fortunately, enough traction was found, both car and crew got away from the wall with bare millimetres to spare. We thus awarded Matt with the prize of closest to the wall with out actually hitting it. Others less well off were the Candy's, the Fraud's rear off side brake pipe was leaking fluid all over the hot/warm disc and belching forth copious amounts of white smoke, their day was done. The Matts returned to the pits. Oh surprise this time the navigators side wing/front valance had received meaty belting. At least at leaving for stage 8 PMF had a matching white tank taped front end. It was on this stage that the rain came, how much though, was the question? It stopped just before the start of 8, with everyone debating what tyres to run on, most chose 'wets' - except Gavin, who, having looked at the track, said 'not a lots going to work out there', so he stayed on the slicks. It was a fair decision after all when everyone exchanged times!

Stage 8:

Stage 8 came and went with out any major incident although second fastest time in class was set. Big discussions were at hand though as to when would be the best time to equip PMF with the four huge spotlights that Matt had purchased earlier in the year.

Stage 9:

Things were going to well something must go wrong soon or at least end up with major work for the service crew as boredom was setting in or was it tiredness. Whilst the Matts were out having fun we took the decision that the spot lights would/should be fitted prior the final stage. Upon return to the pits, Matt had had a right stonker! It turn out that PMF had found out that two wheels were as good as four even with this minor moment Matt had managed to set 1st fastest time in class. It was after this stage that Peter and Richard decided to change their water pump but other than this they were running well, setting times within the top twenty. Brian and Peter's steering and front suspension came loose on this stage, the result of which was a slight shunt with a Skoda, they lost a little time but repaired the car for the last stage.

Stage 10:

Stage ten arrived dusk had fallen how would the lights perform? As the Matts left the start with spotlights ablaze, it looked good. Then the spots went out! Everything must be all right as they came round for a second time. As it turned out Matt had decided that it was not dark enough for the spots to be needed. It must have been the addition of the lights that slowed them down although 3rd fastest in class and the gap to first being only two second ain't that bad for a newly rebuilt car. Although some were along the stage Matt had managed to ding the

navigators rear side wing oh well at least PMF now looked even with damage at all four corners.

Synopsis:

A good day was had by all: - Matt's parents now know where their sons money as been going. Gavin and Carrie kept up the tradition of Mk IIs kicking the butts of latter day Escort Cosworths. The service crew went home totally knackered but satisfied that they had kept PMF alive and kicking.

After 5 out of 10 fastest times, Gavin and Carrie kept it clean and penalty free to claim 1st overall for the second year running. Geoff and Chris continued to set top ten times and finished 11th O/A and 4th in class. Peter and Richard were 20th O/A and 8th in class. Brian and Peter were 22nd O/A, 9th in class. Peter and Keith, despite a visit almost into a ploughed field, finished 29th O/A, 11th in class. Andy and Dave had an excellent day finishing in 34th O/A and 4th in class. Despite three maximums that would have left them 3rd in class, Matt and Matt were 44th O/A and 8th in class.

David Morgan.

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YE LORD DEREK STONE MEMORIAL RALLYE

And so it came to pass that on the evening of Friday 28th January in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety nine, the good and gentle folk of Ye Olde Chelmsforde Carriage Club did gather at the yard of the honourable grocerer, Lord Tesco of Dunmow.

The reason for this gathering was in response to the challenge of the wise Merlin who had said unto them that they would not be able to navigate their way from Dunmow unto Boreham without incurring great penalty.

Those who would compete arrived in their motorised carriages with such names as Peugeot, Citroen, Honda and Renault all made by craftsman from abroad whilst others did use carriages made in England such as Ford and MG. And they did travel from far and wide throughout the County of Essex and beyond, even from the shires of other Lords and some from lands far across the oceans and even some from close to Bradford.

Upon arrival at Lord Tesco's they accepted the challenge of Merlin to travel through narrow thoroughfares in search of the dreaded board of codes and to meet with other travellers who would camp at the sides of the road waiting for lost souls. These were known as "marshals of the rallye".

Before they started on their adventure, the wise Merlin did issue advice to those who considered themselves "Expert". Do not enter

into the village of Stansted Mountfitchet for it was rampant with spots of black and they would all be infected. It was also stated that those who had been advantaged by seeing the clues to this adventure had found error and this was rectified by the Merlin and all did sign to confirm that they understood.

As the hour of 8pm approached Merlin left in his silver carriage named "Owdiaythree" to hide the boards of code so that they may not be found. The first was hidden in a small track that looped south off the old Stone Street and was well placed. This was not seen by Sir David Morgan and Squire Richard Turnbull nor Lord Paul Wright and the Honourable Andy Merchant and they both did incur great penalty yet they had both seen the instruction to avoid the height of spot 87.

From here the Merlin did take them through Canfield End, Bambers Green, Molehill Green and Gaunts End to the hiding place of the Merlin's wise and worldly friend, Peter "the one who paddles in fords". And Peter was hidden at the rear of the place where great birds do roar and fly off into the sky with much noise. Although all did find Peter, Prince Paul Barrett and His Highness Darren Jefford did fail to go the correct way and did miss the board of codes at Bambers Green.

The wise Merlin continued his way avoiding the spots of black at Stansted Mountfitchet and did find much water at Hazel End but he was not concerned as those

that did compete could well do with a wash. But Merlin was surprised when the communication he had arranged with Peter did not work and he did much swearing and blasphemy of the failure of the "Great Orange Voda". As Peter did not receive the message via the "Great Orange Voda" he did say unto those that did compete, "Do not go unto Hazel End as the road is flooded to great depth and your carriages will not be able to pass" But he was wrong, as the young visitors to Essex, Squires Mark Barham and Carl Brown of Suffolk County did not listen and take heed of this advice and did continue and traverse unnecessary the road via Hazel End which took additional time and incurred further penalty.

Onwards went the wise Merlin until he reached the location of the Master Doug Naitby and his son Keith who were located north west of Henham. And to get to here Merlin had hidden the boards of code at south of Stansted Mountfitchet, Pinchpools and Little Henham. But the clues were too easy as they were all found except by Duke Lee Earthy and Baron Richard Bonner. They had not read what the Merlin had said, that they should go the longest route and not the shortest and as a result they did incur to penalties for not seeing the boards of code.

Upon leaving the Master, Merlin did travel to Sucksted Green passing the Armigers house and down towards Duton Hill where the Merlin did find the road under much water as the river had flooded. The Merlin continued with his carriage

Owdiaythree which was awash with water above the lamps, and he became concerned that he would be carried away with the force of the water. But he called upon his magic potions and spells and was able to pass through without having to call for Peter the paddler. As the depth of water was so great the Merlin once more summoned the "Great Orange Voda" who did answer in the name of the Master. The Master was instructed that all those that should seek him out should be told that they must avoid Duton Hill and go onwards via Great Easton approaching from the North and leaving West. However this advice was not heeded by his Highness Phil Wilkins and Lord Popperwell of Billericay who did decide to visit Duton Hill from the East and traversed that latter part of the road that was deep with water. As a result they did travel three miles further than they required in the hope that the Merlin may have deceived the others and they would find boards of code that others had missed. But they were wrong as Merlin had spoke the truth.

Others were not so fortunate. Sir David Morgan and Squire Richard Turnbull in their Citroen carriage and Squires Mark Barham and Carl Brown in their MG Metro did both fail to find the board on the shortest section on route to Monk Street. They did both try to be to devious and go the longer route, and were penalised. Duke Lee Earthy and Baron Richard Bonner did also incur penalty as they did not listen to the

Master and to leave Great Easton to the West and visited places not required by Merlin.

The Merlin did try to continue on the route he had planned via the ford at Great Easton but this was also deep with water and two carriages had become stuck and were being pulled free and this subject of much merriment by the local villagers.

At the location of the next marshal was Lord and Lady Parsons of Braintree who have previously been known to enter such activity but on this day they did pretend to be marshal's and did convince everyone except the Merlin who knows different. The Lord Parsons did examine the carriage of the Merlin and proclaimed much praise and said that it should be used for the "Olde Preston" but Merlin would not hear if it and left with much haste.

From North East of Lindsell the Merlin did take the competitors to Stebbing via Whitehouse Farm and Cowlands Farm to the Stone Street and thence to Felsted and Hartford End to the location of Robert Cordery of Terling who had camped north north west of Little Leighs. All of the competitors did locate the said Robert of Terling but one did not go the correct route and missed the board of codes and did complain later that there were two ways of travelling and that he had taken the shorter route and Merlin was deceived. Later, when he checked his clues Merlin found that he had been correct and vowed to remedy the injustice.

From Robert of Terling, the Merlin did

travel to the location of Tony and Ivy of Daygenham Village who were much experienced in hiding in hedges and field entrances. But even with their carriage of many horses, they could not pass the river at Great Leighs and did have to hide on the approach road. This did confuse some as the clues of the Merlin had been too hard for some as they were not "expert".

For this the Merlin would later apologise, but the new Peugeot carriage of Prince Richard and Princess Olivia McLachlan of northern counties did well and did only not find the Tony and Ivy of Daygenham. But Duke Lee Earthy and Baron Richard Bonner did not fare so well and missed four of the boards of code and the location of Tony and Ivy of Daygenham Village.

And finally, the Merlin did reach the final location of Sir David Judd near to the memorial of Boreham. Sir Judd was wearing a luminous coat of yellow so that he would be seen which was necessary as Merlin did not have with a board of control.

Within minutes the carriage of Lord Paul Wright and the Honourable Andy Merchant did arrive without any time penalties. And Merlin did ponder on this fact as he was all knowing and understood how fast they must have traversed and considered that they were not really novices and that they had also deceived him and he was pleased that they had not seen the first board of codes.

At the finishing of the journey all did meet at the hostelry known as the Red Lion when the

Merlin did work out the results of the rallye. It was then that Lord Popperwell of Billericay did complain that he had been unfairly penalised by going the shorter route and the Merlin did null this penalty and as result his Highness Phil Wilkins and Lord Popperwell of Billericay were declared the winners on the night.

But the Merlin is too clever and did double check when he returned to his castle and found that he was correct and that the Lord Popperwell had visited a spot of black on the short route to Leez Priory and had indeed incurred penalty and was fifth and not first.

Trophies for those who were successful were presented by Lady Christine Brown of Tiptree who was also the starter and is the widow of Lord Derek Stone in whose memory this rallye is dedicated.

So as the Merlin reflected, he found that those who had not been mentioned had found all the boards of code and had been careful to traverse the correct roads and incurred only time penalties and therefore pronounced the winners to be the King Mark Andrews and Baronet Tony Michael in their carriage called Honda.

But what, do I hear of those that could not find the premises of Lord Tesco?. Sir Jim Ryan of Australasia and Lord Gavin Leech of south of London City. Lord Gavin did contact the Merlin on the "Great Orange Voda" to say that he was en route but then did fail to appear. Is this a sign for the future?

'Lucky to make the start - and still finished!'

Another year - and Bill's newly painted and trimmed 1965 'S' type was again pressed into 'Monte' service.

The run up to the event was, to say the least, fractious - at times incredibly frustrating. The paint job, due to be completed by the end of October '98, took until December - obviously Bill didn't know the right formula - either didn't pay enough (joke!), or must have upset the painter by taking the Anglia TV crew to his workshop. This in turn delayed the car arriving at Alan Collin's workshop at Maldon for some much needed work to the water system - still boiling up - and to generally service the car prior to the event.

The leaking steering box could not be fixed with the repair kit, as hoped, and in the last week prior to the event, a standard rack from a mark 2 had to be fitted, without power assistance. Bill would need his spinach to cope with the manual rack and to be on his guard for the vagaries of the box that had more turns to one lock than the other!! Just what you need when you're about to face hundreds of twisting hairpin bends, probably in the snow!

The shortage of time also meant the fitting of the trip, maplights, rally plates etc., had to be done at the eleventh hour - as did the fitting of the tyres. Now there's another story.

Local tyre bay to fit new Colway M and S

tyres - no problem you think. Well no problem fitting the tyres amid much banter with fitters - whilst we try to make the trip work!

When Bill drives the car away, and hits the brakes, the front nearside wheel rotates on the hub and burrs the splines, making it impossible to either tighten the wheel or remove it. Not tightened up properly by the tyre fitter?

After some time trying to remove the wheel, we trundled back to Alan Collin's workshop to have him cut off the spoked wheel and hub, - Bill's face was a picture as we watched the Oxy-acetylene cutter, burn through the spokes and the air chisel remove the hub!!

With a new hub and wheel fitted we could now fill the boot with tools, spares etc. and make ready for the Saturday morning trip to Brooklands for scrutineering. (Tried to get the blowing exhaust fixed in Maldon - but no time - we had to go with a hole in the pipe over the rear axle.)

We were looking at the event without a trip - despite robbing parts from my Porsche. We were just pleased to be starting the event and hopefully getting to Monte Carlo - a good finish position looking unlikely knowing how accurate you need to be - and us not having a trip.

The scrutineering was the usual jolly affair with nervous first-timers and their friends, through to the nonchalant, almost bored regulars who

with the rally for real.

The overnight stay at a nearby country hotel was most enjoyable, although it is difficult to convey to our families why we need to go and do this event again. As for Bill, the most laid back person I know, he seemed to be apprehensive but expected to go all the way - even if it meant using the promised rescue service hire car if the Jag expired.

1st Leg - Brooklands to Donchery - 482km Sunday/Monday.

We started at 9.32am - first vintageant car having started at 9am. A really huge saw us all off, which for first-timers must have seemed incredible. A rather processional couple of hours saw us passing huge crowds at the controls en-route to Dover, where fortunately for the oft seasick Bill, the channel was calm and we enjoyed a quick crossing.

Already stories of breakdown were being extolled, But we were quite relaxed at this point, looking forward to getting onto foreign soil. We did however have a daunting 1200km. to drive before stopping for the overnight rest at Aix-les-Bains - Monday night!

A fairly speedy trip followed the channel crossing with all competitors 'racing' to get to the dinner halt at Donchery (near Reims). At this point competitors converged from starting points in Holland and Germany - enjoying a buffet meal in a massive

From here we sped through the night on a long haul on minor roads, experiencing the first cafe passage control of the event. It is unbelievable the way the French people assist the event - could you imagine an English publican being asked to stay open until midnight on a Saturday, to stamp the timecards of 200 motoring enthusiasts who would be passing that night. What's more they would probably not sell them any drinks, and neither would they be paid for their services!

At the fuel halt at Erize la Petite - we met utter chaos as all competitors queued for the only 2 pumps - from vintageants taking on 20 plus gallons each, to the rest of us needing 'top up' to get us through the night. Drastic action was required and I was left running up and down the queue with a gallon can paying each competitor who had reached the pump to let me take a gallon whilst they were filling up. Good idea you might think - until you hear that Bill, not wanting to unload the boot to find the funnel, improvised with a plastic drinks can with the end cut out. Thinking the fuel on the ground was due to the poor angle at which Bill was holding the bottle, I continued to run up and down the pumps - only to find after 3 gallons that Bill had been in fact pouring the petrol into the full tank - the other side still being empty! (One of the fuel gauges was not working).

We pulled out of the queue with what we hoped would be enough fuel, so as not to incur

any time penalties for the section, there being no allowance for fuel stops within the overall time schedule. Fortunately, we did have sufficient to get to the next stop. We meet up with the Garmisch, Oslo and Biarritz starters at about 11.30pm at a time control not far from Nancy.

At about 1am on a Col close to Epinal, we met the first snow of the event, as we climbed to around 1900 feet. Very cold up there! At the petrol halt in La Bresse at about 3.30am, whilst queuing for fuel, we noticed the thermometer reading -14 degrees. The vintageants in open top cars really needed the coffee available at this halt more than the rest of us - who were all moaning about our heaters! We still managed to loose water from the radiator regularly. The snowy Cols in this area - often closed at this time of year - started to give us the impression that this year's event would be the most snowy for years.

We started to struggle against the clock in the next sections - and particularly when a fellow competitor got stuck in the snow down a narrow lane - causing the rest of us to, in turn, have to retrace our steps and divert around the obstruction. Several minutes lost here for many of us. We pushed on through the Balon d' Alsace to Belfort which stand on the junction of the Rhine and Rhone, still very snowy. At one point we were led across an open road by a snow plough - more time lost.

We passed the huge Peugeot factory at Sochaux as we used some main roads to traverse the valleys, and to get more fuel.

We were getting pretty tired by now and I was counting every kilometre towards dawn, although we knew we still had a few hours to go before arriving for breakfast in St. Claude - a famous Monte halt of old, (in 1965, during a blizzard, Timo Makinen and Paul Easter's Mini got a cracked windscreen through the weight of snow falling on the roof!)

We decided not to use the control cafe and rather investigate the town in the hour we had to spare. Bill went for bread and cakes, whilst I found a butcher's for sausage rolls etc. - I paid for the purchases in the usual way, but Bill politely thanked the assistant and walked out, confectionery in hand! He realised his error some time later - but it was too late.

After leaving this control we made our way onwards towards Aix-les-Bains, via more amazing scenery, in particular near Cize, where we passed over a double decker railway and road viaduct.

Poncin was fun, trying to find the control in a cafe - on market day - with stalls dotted around the square.

We had the first view of the Alps between Ordonnaz and Contrevoz - and we enjoyed a good run through a snowy/icy regularity section with a larger scale handout map, which I managed to read reasonably accurately to Bill in true 'pace note' style. 'Bloody good' was the general opinion of this section.

We soon had an easy main road run into Aix-les-Bains, and a

Chelmsford Motor Club Annual Awards and Disco - 27th of March

Get your glad rags on and come and let your hair down at the Police Social Club in Chelmsford. A buffet and disco are all included as well as the 1998 CMC awards.

Every one welcome, for more details and tickets please contact Lloyd Shelley either at the club or on Tel No. 01245 467209

much needed overnight halt. A good town centre hotel, quite close to rally HQ, meant we could relax, wash and brush up, before looking for a restaurant for the first complete meal for about 24 hours.

In a fine establishment we enjoyed local steaks, creamy potatoes etc. - together with a few drinks! We had joined another crew for dinner, one of whom Bill thought he could drink under the table. There must be someone somewhere who Bill can embarrass, Dennis wasn't to be the one, and Bill had a sore head again.

At this point we had accumulated some 21 minutes of penalty. The road conditions, a diversion etc. had contributed to leaving us well down the field. We were looking at a poor result, but we were, as usual, enjoying the event.

Tuesday - Aix-les-Bains to Aix-les-Bains - 323km.

Yes you have read this correctly - a 'loop' - to enable baggage etc. to be left in the hotel for the day, and no need for organisers to try to find accommodation for some 500 participants / marshals etc.

A shorter day, but very much more taxing

in the timing and concentration required to keep on time. More regularity sections - a lottery for us although we had decided that we would probably not be able to keep up an average speed of say 50kph with the prevailing road conditions - still snow and ice everywhere.

Our first major mechanical malady occurred in the village of Theys - just after the time control - we were in good time and having a good morning - plumes of oily smoke poured from the exhaust as Bill accelerated through the village. We stopped sharply on the forecourt of a garden machinery dealer and quickly decided to switch off before the whole car exploded! After considering our plight, and with some broken English input from the mechanics from the business, we decided a broken piston ring or stuck valve was the problem - and that our rally was over.

We returned to the control/cafe to consider the rescue service, car hire, lets go skiing for the afternoon scenario (we were not far from Albertville). After an hour or so, we wandered back to the car, to park it more conveniently and to unload some belongings, when Bill decided to try to drive the car off the driveway rather than push it. Low and behold

it started with only a slight puff of smoke, and was running fine. We decided to continue to the lunch halt at Albertville, where we would consider the next move. Bill pushed the car along the motorway to see what would happen - 'shit or bust' was in mind!

At Albertville a general inspection showed no lasting damage, so we decided to proceed - we had lost a lot of time and our overall position was getting worse.

A trouble free afternoon, save the odd bit of boiling up, saw us only struggle with the icy conditions - where we were constantly passed by enthusiastic competitors - who seemed to find more grip than us. However several dropped off the road, fortunately without major disaster, which satisfied Bill, who was beginning to wonder if he was driving too cautiously. We agreed to try and get to the finish in one piece - whatever the position. We just don't have enough practice in these conditions.

in the casino - what a grand place - musically controlled fountains and lights outside the entrance seemed far too grand for this quiet town. Our position here was 26th in class, 127th overall - penalties of 2hr.49m.02s.

Leg 3 - Wednesday - Aix les Bains to Aix en Provence - 485km.

A new day - a fresh challenge - through unknown territory to the new Monte destination of Aix en Provence. We started in seeded order after yesterday's results, which put us well down the field, but we were still running and looking for a finish.

Some more cracking scenery, as we push on through the Vercours towards some well known, classic 1950's Monte roads, such as the Col de Rousset where Triumph Heralds and Sunbeam Rapiers used to fight it out.

Lovely weather saw us keeping up a good pace and no time was lost in the morning, despite the snow all around. we visited a

German gliders are reminders of the last war - Bill managed a quick snack here whilst we wait for are time.

We stopped for lunch in the town of Die, famous for it's sparkling wine - unfortunately the shops still close for lunch and we were unable to sample or purchase the local tippel. Instead we enjoyed croque monsiers (toasted sandwiches) with sparkling water, in the presence of some locals playing the traditional game of Boules - yes they actually play this game, its not just a French tourist board selling point.

We met up here with some old friends - George Melville and James Campbell who's rally in an Alvis Firefly had ended early with a broken small end, and who had gone back to England - returning with a road car to follow the event. Wonderful local roads made the afternoon section really tight and tough, causing us to start to notice the squeaky and failing brakes. Bill decided the deteriorating front brakes would require a change of pads - which it was decided would be carried out after the next time control - CH19 St. May.

We had hoped this relatively simple pad change would take maybe half an hour. In the event the reality was that the retaining pins were well jammed and much whacking, swearing and assistance (verbal) from the locals, meant a stop of over an hour. This meant we had to cut the route into Aix en Provence using both A roads and a motorway - incurring another hour of penalties.

Another well organised evening meal

and reception in the town, together with a comfortable hotel, saw us rested and readied for the last day's adventure.

Leg 4 - Aix en Provence to Monte Carlo - 375km.

What appeared to be a short and easy day was likely to have a real sting in the tail - the Col de Turini etc.

We drove parallel to the mediterranean through some amazing countryside, with again some great weather. Another regularity section saw us pass several competitors, basing our speed on the previous thinking of 'we'll meet poor conditions shortly' and be unable to keep up the average speed required. This time we dropped a clanger - bigger than usual - excellent roads, good conditions and a short section saw us far too fast, and more penalty points!

Apart from the regularity sections, we had a good trouble free run - until we encountered a funeral procession in a remote village. No way we could blast through the gathered throng - and we again lost some time - 20 minutes - as did the other 15 competitors queuing behind us.

Some of the roads we used in the late morning were roads we had traversed in previous years, in the dark. To see these in daylight, with huge drops on each side, will make us much slower in future, should we return to this area in the dark!

We dropped down to the Garage Napoleon, again where we had only previously visited in the dark - to enjoy lunch parked in the sun - Bill enjoyed chips for only the second or third time this year! I did capture this on video - but have

RaySport East Anglian Classic 8th/9th May 1999

Regs are now available for the ever popular East Anglian Classic, run by CMC and sponsored as usual by Roger Ray, this time the Motorsport Division of RN Electronics - RaySport. The event is based once again at the Forte Posthouse Hotel on the outskirts of Norwich. The route covers 285 miles of Regularities, Special Tests at West Raynham, Hethel, the Royal Norfolk Showground and many more and includes a 120 mile night leg with '12-car' style navigation. All standard / Road Rally Spec cars built before 31/12/74 are eligible. For more information please contact:

Paul Barrett on 01245 353909

Back safely to Aix les Bains - where we enjoyed a buffet reception

control adjacent to a cemetery where the remains of a couple of

not yet shown Bill's wife.

More classic roads followed as we closed on Monte Carlo - this year everyone would be given the opportunity to climb the Col de Turini etc. More famous rallying roads around St. Vallier followed - following the route of both current and historic Monte events.

As we climbed the Col de Ferrier and onto Gourdon, we had the first glimpse of the Mediterranean in the distance - more fantastic scenery.

The remaining narrow roads, super motoring, en route to Monte Carlo, saw us again crossing previously visited territory (there are only just so many routes into M.C), in particular through the curving tunnels through the rocks at the Clue d' Aiglan. Some breathtaking cornice roads took us through

Roquesteron, Sigale, St. Antonin etc. and as we passed the village of Gillette, perched high above the River Var, we enjoyed extensive views down the valley to Nice.

The final control of this leg was at the Aire de Beausoleil - a service area on the motorway above Monte Carlo. We had a choice here - either another 200km in the mountains above M.C, in the dark visiting the Col de Turini etc. - (usually reserved for the top 60 finishers) - or slip quietly down to M.C to finish on the harbour front, obviously taking considerable time penalties.

After a short con-flab, we decided that as we had amassed considerable penalties already, and considering the poor condition of the brakes, we would slip into M.C giving the car a much deserved rest. So, along with about a third of the field, we crossed the finish line at the harbour side at around 6pm. A very enjoyable meal was ensued, as we awaited the return of the

main field to cheer home the winning cars, there was more drama. As the event was foreshortened by the local constabulary, apparently questioning the rally permit. A sad end to a cracking event, enjoyed by all and living up to it's title as 'the toughest winter classic rally'.

Overall winners were the Dutch crew of Bert Dolk and Rob Van der Valk in an Alfa Romeo Sprint Veloce, with only 2 seconds penalties!!! Frank Fennel / Kevin Savage in their Volvo PV544 in second place for the third year running!!

We finished a disappointing 25th in the classic car over 1900cc class - that being 121st overall - but given the problems before and during the event we were just pleased to finish. Top Jaguar was Alain Lopes / Joseph Lambert in their Mk11 - 4th overall. Local man John Rondeau was 16th position in his Mk1.

We enjoyed two great evenings of merriment with fellow competitors including a

memorable evening at the Hotel de Paris, in Casino Square, where we were entertained by guest speakers including; Stirling Moss, Tony Fall and Paul Easter.

This year's trip home was via the Motorail - Nice to Calais - overnight, where we were upgraded to a first class cabin kindly donated by another competitor who was sadly too ill to use their ticket home that night. The much awaited party on the train was over by 9.30pm! As it seemed everyone needed to catch up the sleep which had been lost on the two preceding nights.

End of the event thoughts - very much enjoyed again, thanks to Bill and Jethro for entertaining me; pity about the preparation of the car, in particular the service from the 'experts' whom Bill had used this year.

Next event - Classic Marathon - September.

Steve Gipson.

Resolution Road Rally - 23rd/24th January.

The 1999 Road Rally Championship started its year with the Hart MC 'Resolution Rally', usually a highly organised, well run event centred around Basingstoke. Only 2 crews from CMC made up the 35 crews entered.

Paul Wright and the very experienced Green Belt member, Malcolm Barber were seeded at 13 and Phil Wilkins and Gordon Popperwell at 8. This is the first of some 15 rounds in the LCAMC calendar and I hope to compete in all of them will Phil.

Phil Wilkins has had to learn quickly and is growing in experience on every event, learning the art of handbrake turns and getting out of wrong slots. I thought it was time to move seats and experience the other side of the car.

The event started from the posh Ringway Hotel in Basingstoke and the start control was marshalled by none other than Gwyndaf Evans, himself a former Motoring News Road Rally Champion. Off to TC2 and it was time to switch on the brain and hope I could remember how to work out the complex handouts and not drop any time or gain any fails.

After a cautious start from both of us, the first half went without problems! Well a few spins and wrong slots is nothing, no throwing up either!

At petrol, Phil checked over the usual bits and the new engine was not making any unusual noises so off we

went into the second half, down some whites which were more like rivers of mud due to the rain which had fallen for weeks previously. We got through without getting stuck.

Phil started yawning towards the end - this is his way of saying 'I want to go to bed!' Both crews finished with four wheels on their wagons and no damage to speak of. Paul and Malcolm were 12th O/A, only dropping time and no fails. We were to my surprise, 10th O/A with no fails.

An excellent night of entertainment and valuable points too. The next event is the Archie Moss Morning Mist in Lincolnshire on the 21st /22nd of March, so off to do battle with the east midlands crews. Watch this space for the next update will Phil and Gordon!

Need any help preparing your car - or fixing it after the event? - contact Gordon on: 01277 626579 (w) or 01277 656589 (h).

Gordon Popperwell.

Anyone interested in the London Counties Road Rally Championship should contact CMC member Andy Merchant on 01277 225665.

The Poxihen Road Rally organised by the Sporting Car Club of Norfolk on the 6th/7th of March did unfortunately not run due to a lack of entries.

1998 Club Championships Annual Award Winners

After a very competitive year's motorsport, the following annual awards were agreed at the March Committee and will be presented at the disco on the 27th of March at the Police Social Club in Chelmsford. Please ensure you attend and support the club and bring as many friends as you can!

Autotest: Andy Rollings

P.C.T: Lee Earthy

Autocross: Nick Read

Sprint: Gavin Rogers

Road Rally Driver: Paul Wright

Road Rally Navigator: Sue Speller

Stage Rally Driver: Gavin Rogers

Stage Rally Co-driver: Carrie Parsons

12 Car Driver: David Morgan

12 Car Navigator: Jo Parsons

New Member: Darren Jefford

Clubman's Trophy: Gavin Rogers

Other awards will be given out on the night including the Marshal's Trophy, Fender Bender and Chairman's Cup.

Robin Hood Stages - 7th March

Roger and Paul Ray entered the Historic section in their newly acquired ex-Lee Earthy Mk1 Escort. A few problems before the event with an electrical distributor meant that they almost missed the start. A change back to a standard one was the only way they made it.

The stages were very slippery and wet which made running on gravel tyres and not M&S tyres made it hard work. They were having a good run though, lying 2nd in class and 18th

overall after 10 stages. On the 11th though, the clutch plate gave up when they were 400 metres from the finish. Despite this they plan to compete in all the stage rallies in the historic championship, the next is the Astra Stages on the 3rd of April.

On the main rally were Richard McLachlan and Mark Andrews, who's rally came to an abrupt end on stage 4 when they crossed an old railway and hit a gate post that went through the rear quarter panel and there's now not a lot left.

Who's doing What in 1999?

Gordon Popperwell has sold his recently rebuilt Mk2 Escort and is planning to navigate for Phil Wilkins in the London Counties Road Rally Championship.

Andy Donn - after a successful outing at Snetterton already this year, he plans to compete in more stage rallies including Longcross in his XR3i.

Tony Michael is planning an Easter trip to Northern Ireland for the four day Circuit of Ireland Rally.

Geoff Lobb plans to do quite a few stage rallies this year in his Manta having registered for the AEMC and ASEM Championships

Neil Wood is competing in the Daihatsu Challenge again with the first round having taken place at Avon Park in Bournemouth on the 21st of March.

David Morgan purchased a 2 litre, bright yellow Capri which he is currently preparing to compete on some Sprints with, in between co-driving and servicing.

Roger Ray plans to compete in the stage rally side of the historic championship this year, with the exception of the East Anglian Classic of course!

Matt Burrows, now his car is completed, plans to do the AEMC stage championship. After some work with a small hammer, the car should be out on the Mini Tempest Stages at

Longcross in April.

Andy Merchant will be having a busy year as he has taken over from Mike Biss as the LCAMC Road Rally administrator.

Michael Helm is fitting an Astra straight cut gearkit to his Fiesta, complete with RS2000 struts. The aim of the year is the Monteberg Rallysprint in May and then some trips to the Epynt Ranges in Wales.

Tony Clements has sold his Civic and got married, so who knows?

Peter Rayner plans to compete in as many single venue rallies as he can in his quick Mk2 Escort. He has already had a good outing at Snetterton this year.

Brian Birkin is competing on stage rallies in his Mk2 Escort until he has finished building his Mk1 Mexico to take to Belgium to go historic rallying.

Matt Cousins has traded his newly acquired Group A 2WD Sierra for an Indonesian Group N Evo 3 Lancer. He plans to compete in his Mk2 Escort this year whilst getting used to the Evo, and then plans the British Rally Championship.

Allan Smith has also traded his Astra GSi for an Impreza in which he hopes to take to Belgium this year.

Richard Turnbull plans to keep navigating on 12 cars and then progress onto road rallies as well as servicing for various crews on stage rallies.

British Rally Championship

For Andrew Barger and driver Justin Dale, preparation for the British Championship started with the Wydean Stages on the 6th of February. They had a good run through the Forest of Dean setting fastest time in class on all 9 stages which saw them finish 3rd Formula 2 car and 1st in class A6.

They then took their Peugeot 106 Maxi to the Vauxhall Rally of Wales on the 13th/14th of March. They had problems with the smell of petrol getting into the car but this didn't deter them from winning the Ferodo Super 1600 Cup Class by a massive 5 minutes and 34 seconds. They finished 10th O/A in Formula 2 - beating many 2 litre cars en-route.

PCT News

Bill and Richard Preston, and Lee and Suzanne Earthy are planning another season of PCTs.

They have already competed on the New Years Day Trial and more recently on the Holbeck PCT in February and have all entered the East Anglian PCT Championship.

On the Holbeck PCT they picked up the Team Award.

Congratulations to Bill Preston who is celebrating his 40th Wedding Anniversary on the 28th March.

NEXT ISSUE

Reports on March Hare 12-car, Morning Mist, Powerush and Swan Road Rallies, East Anglian Classic, Mini Tempest and Millbrook Stage Rallies.

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February and March 1999 Committee Mutterings

Chairman's report:

Lloyd thanked Brian Jaggs for organising the 12 car at the end of January. The club was thanked for its work at the Autosport Show and to all the marshals who attended. The Preston Road Rally awards were again well supported with some winners travelling from Stockport to receive their awards.

Secretary's report:

Brian Jaggs was enjoying his holidays at the time of both meetings so there was no report.

Competition Secretary's report:

Regs were received for the recent PCT's in February organised by West Suffolk MC and Cambridge CC and the Stage Rally at Snetterton. Regs have been received for the forthcoming Mini Tempest Stages at Longcross organised by Sutton and Cheam MC on the 18th of April, also for the Millbrook Stages on the 3rd of May. It was noted that the Poxihen Road Rally had been cancelled. Information has been received regarding regulations about the AEMC Sprint Championship, the BTRDA Championship, a video from the MSA about marshalling and a list of all AEMC event dates. The annual club awards were finalised as shown elsewhere, all trophies need to be returned.

Treasurer's report:

The club made a profit of £300, this was mainly due to the events run at Wethersfield.

Membership report:

8 new members which brings the total to 122 so far this year - subs are still due. A members questionnaire should be ready at the next meeting.

Chief Marshal's report:

Richard Turnbull thanked those who attended the Autosport Show and the Derek Stone Memorial 12 Car. Marshals are needed for the East Anglian Classic on the 8th/9th May. A new Chief Marshal is still needed.

12 Car events:

The Derek Stone ran well with 8 entries although a little wet, thanks to Brian for running it.

Social:

Tickets for the disco are on sale now, contact Lloyd for any information.

Stage Rally:

A debriefing meeting has taken place, details at the next meeting.

Equipment:

There is some fire extinguishers missing along with various other equipment, has anyone got anything from the Preston?

East Anglian Classic Rally:

The night route is complete - which includes using Brandiston airfield again. The day route venues are not yet finalised. Regs are available now.

There was no other business and the next meeting is on the 1st of April.

Spring/Summer 1999 Calendar

March

- 28 **Blyton Stages** (replacement for Twyford Wood Stages) Mid-Derbyshire MC, LCAMC
- 28 **Tarmac Autotest** Bovingdon Airfield Harrow CC, LCAMC
- 28 **North Weald Sprint** B18 MC, LCAMC

April

- 10 **Lydden Sprint** Tunbridge Wells MC, LCAMC, ASEMC, ACSMC, AEMC
- 11 **PCT** Southern CC, ACSMC
- 17 **Somerset Stages** Burnham on Sea MC, ACSMC Forest
- 18 **Tarmac Autotest** Bath MC, ACSMC
- 18 **Mini Tempest Stages** Longcross Sutton and Cheam MC, LCAMC, ASEMC, ACSMC
- 24-25 **Powerush Road Rally** B18 MC, LCAMC, ACSMC
- 25 **Grass Autotest** Blackpalfrey MC, ACSMC
- 25 **PCT** Salisbury MC, ACSMC

May

- 2 **North Weald Sprint** 7 oaks & DMC, LCAMC
- 3 **Millbrook National Stages** West Essex Car Club, Safety Devices, Daihatsu, Peugeot 106, LCAMC, AEMC, ACSMC
- 8-9 **Raysport East Anglian Classic** CMC
- 8-9 **Swan Road Rally** Windsor Car Club, LCAMC, ACSMC
- 9 **Debden Sprint** Herts County AC, LCAMC
- 9 **PCT** Eastbourne and Ramsgate MC
- 16 **North Weald Sprint** Harrow CC, LCAMC
- 16 **Longcross Stages** Craven MC, ACSMC
- 22 **Goodwood Sprint** Southsea MC, LCAMC, ACSMC
- 30 **Tarmac Autotest** Bognor MC, ACSMC
- 31 **Wethersfield Sprint** WECC/CMC, LCAMC, ACSMC

June

- 5 **Lydden Sprint** B19 MC, LCAMC, ASEMC, AEMC, ACSMC
- 5 **Kerridge National** Midland Manor MC, ACSMC Forest
- 5-6 **Wessex Road Rally** Dolphin MC, LCAMC, ACSMC

Join Chelmsford Motor Club

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Dave Judd, 17 Skylark Walk, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 8BA. Tel. **01245 357887.** Please make cheques payable to ' The Motorsport Club of Chelmsford Ltd.'

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The above information will be kept on computer for club purposes only.