

# Chelmsford Motor Club

## Torque Winter 97/98

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**Club Night:**  
Thursday 9:30pm  
The Red Lion Pub,  
Boreham.

*Well, at least this issue has appeared closer to our intended publication date than the Wethersfield regs!*

Items for inclusion in the next edition should be given to:  
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*Opinions in this magazine are those of the contributor and not necessarily those of CMC.*

*Most photographs by M&H Photography.*

### Wethersfield Stage Rally



It was easy for me to volunteer to write a report about Wethersfield because I already had a 400 word article on my PC which Motoring News published on 7th December. However I've decided not to regurgitate it for the club magazine as most of you should already have read it.

4 weeks after the event my head is still reeling with the immense organisational effort which went in to running it. As a club we should feel honoured that West Essex Car Club offered us the opportunity to co-promote with them. Forming a team from two clubs wasn't without its problems and I know I learned a hell of a lot without still having a handle on half the things actually hap-

pened! My particular thanks go to Gary Nicholls, who as Clerk of the Course did know all the things that had to be done, and to Event & Entries Secretary Jill Barnard who kept everything together. On the weekend of the event a number of club members played significant roles including Richard Turnbull as Asst Chief Marshal, Dave Judd as Safety Officer, Alan Emms as Radio Controller, Richard Nel Event Treasurer and Lloyd Shelley well stuck in to his job distributing the cones in Malcolm Forbes Waltham Services Avon Tyre truck. Further thanks should go to the individuals who helped lay out the stage on Saturday but a few brickbats must go to those who

weren't quite as helpful as they might have been. My organisational bleat can end with a plea that when the shout goes out at the end of the year for helpers to A: join the organising team, B: help set up the day before the event or C: marshal, that you are ready to sign up. Your country needs you.

Wethersfield is an utterly fantastic venue for rallying. I don't think any driver can have many complaints about what was on offer. The average "time on stage" was around 16 minutes with the Top 10 finishers penalties exceeding 2 hours at the end of the day. The venue afforded plenty of room to exploit extravagant driving techniques and was devoid of the artificial chicanes

which normally slow down airfield venues. A few barrels will however appear next year to prevent blatant cutting of the "spectacles".

Top club seeds at 8 were Gavin Rogers/Carrie Parsons using the white Mk2 Escort which has brought them quite a bit of success in '97. Some early brake problems & a poor time on stage 3 had Gavin languishing in the late teens around half distance. A better second half in the rain then dark hauled them up to 10th overall & 3rd in Class C with a few stage times nibbling around the fringes of the Top 10. Mike Helm/Nigel Gurton took the earliest club bath retiring on stage 2 with electrical gremlins in their Fiesta.

17th seed Tony Clements was the sensation of the event debuting his long awaited EG6 Civic VTi with Mark Andrews alongside for ballast. Marks road going VTi was potentially useful for spares in the paddock! Tony attacked the first corner of the first stage at Mach 1 to find it was still a bit icy and was lucky to escape with minor damage after leaving the road backwards & destroying a runway lighting

control box. Although this didn't cost too much time a further body bending excursion on ss2 & puncture lost at least 6 minutes to the eventual class winner Richard Walsh Corsa GSi. Tony switched to knobbles from ss3 & set stonking times of 7th, 3rd, 2nd & 2nd overall on the next 4 stages to reach 16th o/a & 5th i/c with two dark & wet ones to go. Outright quickest overall by a sensational cumulative 49 seconds over everyone including the event winner Steve Scott (Escort Cosworth) on the last two hauled TC up to 7th o/a & 3rd i/c. Consistency might have earned him 2nd o/a but his speed certainly gave him some satisfaction in proving he can still cut the mustard.

Mark Rogers/Anne Still seeded at 21 in their Escort had a steady start & held 20th with 2 stages to go. Disappointing times dropped them to 23rd o/a & 7th in Class C. Tony Michael/Paul 'Billy' Barrett had an awful day running at 27 in TC's old Civic. Misting up was the main excuse, but resorting to Mark's road car tyres resulted in numerous punctures, making them almost last; a sad reflection of their performance

on the Kune Tune last summer.

Darren Knights had a steady run over the first 7 stages & was set to just beat his 29 seeding but retired with one to go as Bryan Welch was unwell. Duncan Metcalf & Dave Woodgate lurked at 33 in the post historic Firenza 2.3 & whilst it looked a mighty handful Duncan increased his pace as the event wore on and not only gained 6 overall places from 18th to 12th with 11th & 7th o/a on the last two stages but catapulted from 4th to class D victory. Well done.

Bob Smith/Ian Adams dropped a few places with a maximum on ss7 in their white Astra & were generally eclipsed on stage times by Allan Smith's similar red Astra running a few numbers behind with Graham Coker on the stage maps. Allan might have made the top 10 with some good first half times but fell back in the dark & a last stage max confined him to 25th.

Keith Pitcher/Andy Rollings were credited with a flyer 3rd o/a on ss5 but this only marginally assisted in their 31st place finish in their old 1.6 Mk2. Roger & Paul Ray put in a strong challenge for

the 1300 Class in their Mk1 Escort occasionally beating the class winner on their way to 24th o/a 3rd i/c.

John Parsons with daughter Jo-Anne making her stage debut borrowed Gavin Rogers infamous Fly. A fairly torrid run on the mechanical front ended in a last stage retirement. Janie Eaton accompanied Oliver McCrudden in a noisy Mk2 Cortina to net 30th o/a from a 52 start followed & regularly overtaken by Andy Juniper make a stage rally debut in his road rally Sunbeam. Rob Norrington thoroughly enjoyed co-driving for Andy as they splashed their way to 29th after a few problems.

Andy Donn/Dave Surrey made a quick start in the ubiquitous XR3 but a tiring car & crew slipped a little towards the end to come home 29th from start No. 56. The last seeded CMC crew were new member Robert Cameron with the experienced lightweight Tom Peddle alongside. A splendidly consistent run in the Class C Nova brought them home a tremendous 9th overall, just ahead of Gavin Rogers, for 2nd i/c and 1st novice.

Jim Bowie

## 1997 British Rally Championship Year

1996 was a pretty successful year in my rallying career. Sitting alongside Justin Dale in a Peugeot 306, we won the British Junior Championship and the Peugeot Challenge, in addition to finishing top amateur and 3rd overall in the British Championship.

The Peugeot Challenge victory meant we would finish the year with a fully supported "Prize Drive" on the RAC Rally. This was the first time I had done the RAC - although it is a good event, competing on it had never really been a major ambition. Having done it, I still get more excited on events such as the Manx and Ypres (perhaps because the weather is warmer and you don't get your race boots so dirty on tarmac events).

The RAC was a difficult event for me personally - my father died during the event after a short illness - so I probably wasn't as prepared as I normally am before the start. Luckily, one of the advantages of the "works" team meant that everything - from car preparation to hotel bookings - was taken care of. This came as a strange feeling to Justin and

me as we had been used to doing all this ourselves.

The event itself, as you can probably remember, was dominated by the weather, with most of the forests being covered in thick layers of snow and ice. This made some stages painfully slow and slippery (studded tyres would have helped matters, but the rules of the event forbid their use).

We struggled on, and were just outside the top 20 by the time we got to Wales. Unfortunately, an indiscretion in Hafren saw us slide into a ditch on the inside of a hairpin. With a minimal number of spectators around (it was about 5am), it looked like our rally could be over. Luckily, fellow Peugeot driver, Bernt Kollevald had a 30 minute class-lead, so stopped in the stage and gave us a pull-out. (2 minutes later and we would have been over our maximum lateness). We eventually made it back to the finish in Chester in 32nd place.

Technically, that was the end of prize. However, Peugeot were keen to remain involved in the British Championship and after some negotiation, a deal came about for Peugeot

to run Justin in the 1997 British Championship, with me co-driving.

In some ways, this was not a huge change. Like many up-and-coming drivers Justin had been a full-time rally driver for several years, earning an income from a number of jobs - ranging from rally-driving instructor to barman - which were accommodated around preparing the car and competing on events. I continued to work at Ericsson, fitting the rallying into my holiday entitlement with the help of an understanding boss.

Although the car we would be using - a Group A Peugeot 306 S16 - was more developed than the car we had used to win the Challenge, it was nowhere near the performance of the other manufacturer-entered 2 litre "kit cars" in the 1997 championship, and we knew from the outset we would be underpowered. ("Kit Cars" is the name frequently used for cars built to the "Super Rally" formula - normal 2 litre, 2 wheel drive cars which have further performance modifications using an homologated kit of parts.)

The car would continue to be prepared and run by the

Peugeot Sport team from the factory in Coventry. Basically, there was a core team of mechanics working full time, with additional "mercenaries" being brought in to bolster the number on events - our complete team usually comprised two service vans and two chase cars, leaving about 10 mechanics at our disposal! On most events, we also had some additional personnel to assist with team management, media etc.

I continued to do some of the pre-event work, such as the Service Schedule - both to gain more experience and to give me a better "feel" for the rallies. However, it was useful that most of the laborious tasks, such as booking hotels and ferries, were taken care of.

Not having to prepare the car as well gave Justin more time to prepare for the event - for instance the team had test sessions before each event to enable the car to be set-up properly without the pressure of competition.

The first event of the championship was the Vauxhall Rally of Wales, in March. Justin had tested the car prior to the event and we

were experimenting with a lower-ratio gearbox. However, after the first leg, we decided to revert to the original 'box and set off on a charge. Unfortunately, this was to be short-lived. A broken driveshaft halfway through Myherin slowed us, but it was a steep hill slightly further on which would see our demise - the 1-wheel drive Peugeot was unable to get sufficient traction and a distinct lack of spectators to offer a push meant our rally ended prematurely.

The next event was the Pirelli in April. Based in Carlisle, the event spent two days in the notorious Kielder forest. Despite their reputation, I have always loved these stages. I had mixed feelings about using the organiser's pacenotes, which were being used for the first time instead of 1:25000 maps.

The event, like our driving, was split in two. On the first day, we mysteriously struggled to get anywhere near the pace we should have been going at. After constant adjustments to the car and much discussion overnight about where we were dropping time, we attacked hard on the second day and found ourselves setting much better times - my

trip meter recording a maximum speed of 121mph on the opening Pundershaw test. We eventually finished up 12th overall and the second non-kit car.

The final gravel round of the championship was the Scottish in June. This year the event moved to Dumfries and created a much more compact event than has been the norm for the Scottish. Unlike the previous two rounds, the Scottish allowed you to recce each stage twice before the event, so you could make your own pacenotes and didn't have to rely on the organiser's notes.

Because of the confidence your own pacenotes gives, coupled with extremely dry stages, the Scottish ended up being an extremely fast rally - our 306 seemed to continuously run out of power and we found ourselves "flat in 6th" on too many occasions!

We finished 11th overall and first of the non-kit cars, with Justin satisfied that he couldn't pedal the car any faster.

The championship then moved to Northern Ireland for the Ulster Rally in August. This is a tarmac event on closed public roads which allows you a

free recce over 2 days. In this period, it is possible to practice each stage 3 times - although to do this is hard work - spending 12 hours a day in a car with very few breaks. We ended up covering over 900 miles during the recce, but were happy that this effort before the event should reap dividends.

The actual event gave us relatively few problems and we finished 13th - once again, first non-kit.

The final event in the championship is the Manx; the longest event in the championship, with over 250 miles on tarmac stages. Like the Ulster, the Manx restricts reconnaissance to just three days and three passes over each stage. The size of the island makes the recce slightly less demanding than for Ulster, but nevertheless you still have to put in 12 hour days to make the most of it.

The rally went pretty much to plan and when some of the kit cars hit troubles, we saw ourselves up to 6th on the leaderboard at the halfway points.

Unfortunately, our hope that the remaining stages would all be cancelled failed to happen and we had to drive hard to ensure

we did not fall too far down the leaderboard. After virtually every stage, the order changed at the bottom of the top 10. We had a huge battle with Stig Blomqvist in the Skoda kit-car, the former World Champion just getting the better of us in the final few stages.

We finished 9th overall - our best ever result and the highest a Peugeot 306 has even been in the British series. And of course, we were first non-kit yet again. This left us 7th in the Championship - considerably lower than last year, but as all the cars in front were A7 kit cars, we realistically couldn't have expected to do any better.

And so ended our season with Peugeot. Currently there seem to be a few changes to the driver line-up for the 1998 season and we are currently working on several options. Ideally, we have to be looking at getting ourselves into a kit car in order to be competitive. It would be nice if Peugeot would let us have a 306 Maxi - probably the most competitive car around - but maybe that is dreaming too much.

Andrew Bargery

## Preston Rally 1997

After a break of six years, Dave Taylor took the helm for the 1997 Preston Rally, CMC's annual mud bath of a road rally. Assisted by Adrian Gladwin in the joint Clerk of the Course role, Tom Peddle as secretary of the meeting and Jim Bowie as chief marshal, he set out for a maximum whites event with the most undemanding navigation ever seen on a Preston.

Good pre-event publicity ensured the best entry, 38 crews, for a long time and more than any other road event in the south east of England this year. The regular LCAMC and AEMC crews were joined by several top Derbyshire entries, notably Steve and Richard Pashley's Nova who were seeded at 2, behind the similar car of Mike Biss / Cath Woodman.

Signing on at Garboldisham garage could have been a bookmakers paradise - which of the top ten crews would win, how many course cars would get round the whole route, would Paul Sharp fix his gear lever and starter motor (both of which failed in the scrutineering queue), who had the

quickest Mark II Escort on the rally?

Virtually all the competitive mileage on the 170 mile route was on the whites - nearly 90 miles in total and the judicious use of regularity sections allowed everything to be timed to the second. The late October rain made all the tracks slippery and kept the average speeds low - so much so that none of the 'selectives' were cleanable; indeed, most were very muddy!

The first section used Knettishall airfield and caused no problems to anyone except Andy Donn / Dave Surrey, who managed to miss two passage checks and the TC at the end of the slippery concrete airfield. Fastest time was set by Paul Sharp / Paul Barrett (MK1

Escort) - establishing a pattern that would last well into the event - three seconds up on the Pashleys who tied with Ian Mephams Golf GTi. A further four seconds back were Richard Maclachlan / Eddie Clough, who pipped fellow MKII Escort combatants Gavin Rogers / Carrie Parsons by two seconds.

The tight times set on Knettishall were quickly put into the shade by the next section - Euston estate. Eight miles of farm tracks made up what is probably the most demanding single section on any road rally in the country. Richard Maclachlan was the first to hit problems; a broken rear brake calliper bolt caused retirement when he arrived at a 90 right with No Brakes (as usual, Andrew Man-

ston was there to catch the ensuing damage to hedge on film).

Further down the field Andy Donn was entertaining another photographer with the highest yump of the night - getting the front of his XR3i more than a metre off the ground. Keith Pitcher / Richard Cave retired their MKII Escort for reasons unknown somewhere in Euston; they may have skidded on the oil put down by Tony Clements when he holed the sump of his company car whilst 'setting out' the arrows the previous day.

Despite spending nearly a minute being pushed out of field by some marshals whose passage check he demolished, Paul Sharp



Sideways IS fastest: Paul Sharp and Paul Barrett fly

again set fastest time, taking over a minute out of Gavin Rogers and two minutes from third placed crew, Derbyshire boys Martin Self / Brain Stott in a Corolla. The only other CMC member to feature in the top ten times in Euston was Paul Wright (MKII Escort) who was three minutes down in 7th place navigated by Kings Lynn member Mark Goodman.

The third selective, Fox Pin, included a never before used loop south of the public track but saw the

the public white through the middle of Ingham with the use of a byway which went across some fields, through a wood and then, most surprisingly, through a gate and into someone's back garden, exiting along their driveway. Paul Sharp / Paul Barrett had a scare on this section when, having caught Dave Quinney & Simon Hunt's Corolla they watched it bounce off the track into a fence and then spin off backwards, missing the MK1 by inches, into a field

across the top of map 155 took the survivors to the bottom of King's Forest - a public white which is smooth to start with but which quickly gets bumpier and is very wet at the top. A short stretch of B road led the selective directly into Deadman's Grave, again a public byway - a mixture of smooth sandy tracks and bumpy, wet, muddy sections. A puncture here cost Ian Mepham three minutes, allowing the Pashleys to record their first top three time, a few seconds adrift of Gavin Rogers but a full minute behind Paul Sharp. Whilst all this was going on, Mike Biss / Cath Woodman were quietly keeping station. Not setting any creditable times, but never far off the pace.

Kentford gravel pits was missed by several crews who were running on OTL and had to cut to petrol, notably Andy Donn / Dave Surrey who were starting to mount a decent challenge in the novice class after their early problems, and John Covill / Phil Wilkins who were on their first road rally, having completed a creditable season in 12 car rallies. A small off into a hedge for Paul Sharp allowed Mar-

tin Self to take fastest time - by four seconds, as Paul Barrett was commissioned to do some pushing. Meanwhile Gavin Rogers hit a large rock, picking up a rear puncture and putting a hole in the rear floor pan of FLY. He carried on to the end of the section, losing two minutes in the process.

At first petrol Paul Sharp had an astonishing seven and half minute lead over second place Gavin and Carrie, who were in turn a mere two seconds up on Ian Mepham and thirty seconds up on the Pashleys. Two and half minutes further back was Mike Biss.

All this would change, however, on the second run round Euston. Sector marshal Tony Clements and his helpers had worked hard to reverse the arrows for the re-run. A broken top mount on Paul Sharp's MK1 took twenty minutes to repair with the aid of some wooden posts 'borrowed' from the estate and put him out of the running and knocking on OTL. With nothing now holding the strut in tension he had to drive slowly for a finish keeping the wheels on the ground at all times - not easy to do on the Preston.



Andy Donn / Dave Surrey jumping highest!

demise of Roger and Paul Ray in the only other MK1 Escort in the event, when their exhaust fell off and could not be satisfactorily repaired. Paul Sharp was again fastest, a full minute up on Gavin Rogers (6th fastest) and Paul Wright (7th).

Probably the most interesting selective of the first half linked Old Berner's Heath and

where it stayed until the course closing car arrived. Despite this they extended their lead over 2nd place crew Ian Mepham / Martin Smith by half a minute and over 3rd placed Gavin Rogers / Carrie Parsons, who were suffering from water in the ignition problems, by one and a half minutes.

A long link

His efforts in the first half earned him the Spirit of the Rally award - an impressive trophy put up by Dave Taylor for the first time.

With Ian Mepham going off in Euston for ten minutes, the Pashleys missing a code board that would ultimately cost them victory and Gavin Rogers struggling with damp ignition, Mike Biss saw his opportunity to step up the pace. He did this with a second fastest in Euston behind Maestro helmsman Jeremy Rodgers and then a brace of fastest times as the rally headed north up the Bridgham white and then due east through Thetford forest via Brandon and on up to Weeting.

Gavin fought back in Methwold Warren to set his only fastest time of the event, fifteen seconds in front of the Pashleys, who retaliated by setting their only quickest card in a very wet and slippery Goodnerstone complex, five seconds in front of a hard charging Ian Mepham.

The rally now headed northwards into territory previously uncharted on the Preston, map 132, via Narborough fields (where Matt Schumann topped the leader board)

and then onto the whites more commonly used on the Phoenix - Soigne wood and Brink Hill to finish at West Lexham. This last section was again dominated by Mike Biss, who took nearly a minute out of Ian Mepham, but more significantly three minutes ahead of Gavin Rogers, who had pipped the Nova by a few seconds on each of the previous few selectives.

Whilst the weary competitors were eating an excellent pub cooked breakfast (far better than your average Little Chef) the results were worked out by Tony Michael's speedy computer service. They showed that Mike Biss / Cath Woodman had won (again) by three and a half minutes from Gavin Rogers / Carrie Parsons, who once again finished a very creditable second for the second year running. This was Cath's third victory in a row.

A further two minutes behind FLY were Ian Mepham / Martin Smith, with a massive ten minute gap to Jeremy Rogers / Mark Fearon who beat Damian Conway / Simon Tebbut by a few seconds. Other CMC finishers were Paul Sharp / Paul Barrett whose

strut just about stayed in place to allow them come in 11th; Paul Wright had a big off in Euston 1 and went OTL but struggled out and onwards to be 18th just in front of Phil Wilkins / John Covill; and Andy Donn / Dave Surrey who were 2nd and 3rd novices respectively.

For the 1998 event, Adrian Gladwin will be in charge and Dave Taylor wants to compete in what will be the best sounding car of the event - a Subaru Legacy. Paul Sharp will have new struts and a new engine and gearbox. Watch [this space.](#)

### 12 Car Roundup

The club 12 Car Rally season closed quietly towards the end of last year with two rather poorly supported events; each only having five entries. John Parsons' October event was won by his daughter Jo-Anne navigating for brother-in-law (to be) Gavin Rogers. Jo continued her bid for the navigator's trophy by finishing third on Brian Jaggs's Mick Bliss Memorial Rally - an event won by Rob Norrington / Tony Michael who were the only crew to find all the boards.

Novice crew John Covill / Phil Wilkins used their

MKII Escort on all the events early in the year, up to and including the Priestley and had a mixture of results. However, arriving OTL at the end of the March event led to their exclusion from the results and the loss of valuable points.

The final championship tables were very close: Jo's late challenge won her the navigator's pot but John Covill did enough to ensure the driver's trophy.

Hopefully this year's events will be better supported - the first is the Derek Stone Memorial Rally, again organised by Brian Jaggs, on Thursday 26th February. Please make an effort to come out, to either compete or marshal, if possible.

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### Nightwatchman Road Rally

Gordon Popperwell and Gavin Rogers went out on the Nightwatchman in Sussex at the end of November as a shake down for their 1998 LCAMC championship bid. This was Gordon's first rally since the 1996 Phoenix and his subsequent road accident. The new Escort MKII held up well and the pair were happy to come home in 4th place.

## Auto Cross Season Review



Because no one filled their own reports in I'll have to tell you about the season's fun and games!

### Doug Read

Numero Uno of "Team Westpoint" (allegedly), had a poor start to the season in a very quick MKI tarts' car, sorry, siesta, oops, Fiesta. The only problem was that the engine moved around too much, causing the drive shaft to continually pop out just when he was on a really good run. Several trips to Monsieur French soon rectified the problem. The second trip to Joyce Green (Boghorror 19 autocross), proved too much for the stub axle, which "collapsed under the sheer pressure" that I was putting on him during one of the timed runs. The car

flipped and landed on its side, finishing the car and Doug's season early. From that point onwards Doug was now Team Westpoint's official Mechanic/cheerleader/spectator or Bulls\*\*ter.

### Nick Read

What a stonking season this has been for Nick. The 'scort now in its third full season and Nick in his fourth (I think?), Nick has taken no prisoners! The first event was a little shaky but with various deluges through the season, Nick (the man with the Maxsport Hakkas) drove rings around those who didn't! One example being a wet Green Belt auto cross, where he went out at just the right time and beat the lot of us. With only one event missed 'cos he was somewhere on his

hols, Nick finished second in Class A (or third - I can't find my results). The only major misfortune that affected Nick was a valve deciding that it would disintegrate on the last event, (but he still did well running on 3 pots!).

### Nigel White

Another fast mover this season, though in fits and bursts unlike Nick. The Escort, now in better shape than ever, put in a few very good results, like coming highest RWD car in class A on the Flint Cross (Stort Valley autocross). Nigel had a couple of scary moments (well I think he was getting a bit bored), showing us his stunt driving techniques on two wheels; there is a picture to prove this. The only let down for Nigel was

his lack of tyres towards the end of the season. Nigel was dreading the scrutineering at WECC autocross as his car failed last year, but they did not fail it on anything more than a loose clip.

### Richard Baldock

Now driving for Team Westpoint in the spare car Richard has done rather well, putting the MKI Ashtray, oops Astra, into many top three positions. After a relaxed start to the season, and a few mods and tweaks getting the seat into place, Richard was soon unstoppable with many dices for first with the works Astra of Michael Gedge. A good season with the car - I only wonder if Doug will want it back for next season?

### Roger Ray

Roger Ray came out to play a few times this season in his MKI 1300cc Escort. Although under-powered the 'scort proved to be very competitive in the first wet autocross at Danbury. At the WECC event, Roger and I had an amazing race in the mud with the cars swapping places and mud BUT not paint many times. P.S. Roger can I have my

spare rotor arm back, thanks.

**Andy Donn** (recently seen in the Spice Girls film, or was that Richard E Grant?)

Driving a XR3i, the legendary Ford hot hatch. Fairly quick, begging to be modified and quite good value (even better when stolen). Now detuned and badged as an Si (Dave take note), which is akin to your best mate coming out. Andy proved that tyres do burst and hubs do break when you try to bunny hop the car. Andy had a very good season with not many mechanical failures (apart from the above items and an exhaust). At times he was challenging Team Gedge for honours.

**Michael Juniper**

A good start to the season 7th out of 17 starters (B19) soon ended with a nadgered set of knobblies and a cracked shell (Stort Valley). The car went really well at the second B19 AX, which saw many cars fall by the wayside. The only thing now that needs changing is the nut behind the wheel, with several attempts blown through being too eager on the last lap. The season went from good to worse with the engine

deciding it had had enough at the finals by dropping one of the valves.

**The Season's Events summed up**

1. Borough 19. The usual excellence from the club, proving it can be done and showing how it should be done.

2. Stort valley. The event that nearly did not happen and shouldn't have, especially on that surface.

3. Green Belt Ft. Wickford. Rain Rain Go away. Nice track, shame about the organisation; when it takes over seven minutes to do three laps for the Minis, why not rearrange the schedule?

4. West Suffolk. The club proved that you can run a very good autocross on a piece of land just bigger than the size of a postage stamp.

5. Borough 19. Different track, though still proving that you can run autocross on a small plot of land. Although watch out for those ditches Mr Transit driver.

6. Wickford. New track, old venue. Racing around a dust bowl, they at least had the sense to run one at a time. Good event, shame about the dust.

7&8. West Essex CC. Dust, dust glorious Mud. Come on guys for the last two years you've run one at a time, why the delay to run one at a time this time? Auto-crossing should be good fun and we should not be playing "spot the bonnet" from inside the car. The second day, after everybody prayed for some rain, was a swamp. Everyone was practising their sideways technique whilst going down the straight. Good event though.

9. Central Sussex. A lovely venue and event with some good ol' autocrossing with a wide track on undulating ground, same as before though still a treat to race on.

10. Farnborough.

Unfortunately I didn't go. Mixed reactions to the event.

11. Wickford. The finals: same place, different time, now with lots of turnips on the track (and in the cars?). Still dusty and now a bit bumpy, still good organisation, managing to get one at a time autocrossers and minis in during the day! (How it should be done?)

12 Errr. Chelmsford?

Michael Juniper

**Witterings**

For the Wye-dean *Andrew Bagery* will be co-driving for Geoff Jones on the in a Daihatsu Avanzato... It looks like he'll be in a somewhat faster car for the BRC though - Justin Dale has got the Peugeot 106 Kit car.

*Michael Juniper* came 2nd in class A in the BTRDA Autocross Championship (may it RIP), and won an award for doing the most autocrosses.

Did everone spot 1997 South of England Rally Champion *Mike Helm* in "Jo Brand Burns Rubber"?

*Lloyd Shelly* is now believed to be preparing his Astra for Historic rallying... (the extra 2 years homologation will come in handy though...)

*David Mogan* got stuck in a ditch while marshalling on *John Parsons'* 12 car.

Don't say "gear-box" to any of the club's Sierra 4x4 owners...

Confirmed "Rice Boy" *Mark Andrews* is now considering a 1.8 Civic VTi as a company car. His current car should be coming to a sprint circuit near you real soon now...

## 'Geared up' for the Danum Trophy Road Rally

The last time that I penned an entry for Torque, I had just failed to finish the Auto-Windcreens, in line with a rather shaky start to 1997. I felt sure that my run of bad luck could not possibly continue, but alas was proved wrong on the Drystone. After an almost perfect run, the diff gave way (for the second time in '97) on literally the last five yards of the last white on the last competitive section. I did manage to get a result by rolling/pushing the car for about 2km to the end of the section, but to have a definite top five position on a competitive 'whites' event reduced to 20th was particularly tormenting.

Having all but given up on making an impression on any championships, we decided to pick and choose events just for fun! The first one to fit the bill was the Danum Trophy rally on 4th October which is an Eastern Counties Championship event, but not one usually frequented by Southern Competitors due to its starting location in Barnsley. However, being from the area, I'd already done the event twice before, and found it to be competitive and well organised. A



2nd place finish in '96 helped to seed us as car 3.

As my parents live in Sheffield, I arranged to stop there and have some food. This was fortunate because when I arrived at 4:00pm on the Saturday, the rear of the car was covered in oil. Investigation showed a cracked gearbox extension housing, and no oil in the gearbox. We decided to have a desperate attempt to fix it before the rally. About the last scrap yard in the yellow pages turned out to have a Sierra box in stock, and we arrived five minutes before they closed (5:00 pm). The gearbox looked very dubious, being coated in thick sludge, and having the lever hole full of glass!, but at £25 we had nothing to lose, especially as we had to do something to get the car running so that I could get home the following day.

At our due time at noise check, we were lining up the 'new' gearbox. At our due time at scrutineering, we were

re-attaching all the gearbox ancillaries. 40 minutes before our due start time we turned up at the scrutineering venue still smeared with gearbox oil. After finding the noise tester and getting through scrutineering, we barely had time to do the (fortunately) short pre-event plotting before the off.

The first half of the event was tight, and a mistake on the first section nearly cost us dear. Immediately after catching up with car 2, he pulled over, and I assumed he was letting me past. But nearing the end of the section it became obvious that there was a codeboard missing from our (all codeboards listed) timesheet. We did a large loop back to join the route again near the start of the section. Sure enough, the codeboard was where car 2 had pulled over. The rest of the first half followed in the same vein with tight mostly tarmac sections. We missed another codeboard on a slip road (like

the Poxihen), but again noticed in time to go back for it before the next TC.

At the half way point, we were fail free but with several minutes lateness. Other crews seemed to be doing better. The second half started off competitively but nearer the end became more navigational to compensate for the straighter, more open roads on map 106. The front running crews however were managing to clean the sections easily.

Confident that our second half had been good (penalty free I think), we were optimistic about the result, but extremely pleased to come first by 2 minutes, making the frantic gearbox change all worthwhile. ANCC championship leaders (car 2) thought that they had the event in the bag, knowing that we had missed the first codeboard, but there could be no arguing that we'd picked up far more lateness than anyone else on the first section while rectifying the mistake. Crystal glasses were the reward, which makes a change from the usual plastic trophies that get banished from the house!

Richard McLachlan

## The 1997 Wethersfield Stages - A novice view

By Andy Juniper

Now I know that you all must be thinking something along the lines of "How could AJ possibly count as a novice", but in terms of driving on stage rallies, I am. In fact, for the Wethersfield stages, on the Sunday between Christmas and New Year, I was a stage rally driver "virgin".

The event promised to be good fun, being at an airfield which had never been used before, and nearly 100 stage miles with the last couple of stages in the dark. And it was.

But first the car had to be readied... As ever, it was a last minute affair. Rob Norrington, the fool who volunteered to navigate, came down at the start of December to help with the preparation. We stripped out the interior (which was already fairly minimal, anyway). The high back front seats which came out were deemed too heavy so we commandeered Les Parsons' (no relation) seats. Perspex went in all round, except that the new doors couldn't be readied in time so the doors ended up with Glass in. Mud flaps had to be made - a plastic 25l oil drum came in useful here - and the spotlight brackets had to be beefed up

to take a second pair of lights. The 1001 other little things required to turn a road rally car into a stage rally car meant that the car was eventually ready to log book on the Monday before the event, Monday 23rd December. [The clutch cable broke when I took the car to be log booked, but that's another story...]

It was an early start on the Sunday, although not as early as Les who was coming up from Maidenhead to service at the event near Braintree (I'd stayed with my parents in Essex the night before). Everyone had to be in and scrutineered by 8am, for a scheduled start at 9. Like you'd expect from these wussy tarmac rallyists, they complained about the ice which was covering everything, and the first of 8 stages didn't actually get underway until 9.30.

The stages were good fun, with maximum use of small taxiways and other little loops, and only one use of the main runway per lap (and that was only to cross it). No problems with cone blindness here... and no chicanes either. I don't know what Wethersfield airfield is used for, but

I don't think that the bits the stage rally used have been used for a while, judging from how dirty and slippery they were. The talk in the paddock after the first stage was not of whether you had spun, but how many times.

Not surprisingly, we were seeded very close to the back of the field, with about four competitors running behind us. And directly in front of us was a Mk II Lotus Cortina, with which we were to have a love/hate relationship all day. The organisers were using a schedule timing system, which meant that the competitors started the stages in order. So that meant that despite catching and passing the Cortina on stage 1, we had to pass him on stage 2. And 3. And 4, etc. Sometimes we actually passed him twice on a single stage (it would be nice to say that we lapped him twice, but that would be wrong. It would be because we passed him, spun, and caught and passed him again...). But when we were stuck behind him, it was good fun to watch, since almost every time he would spin out of the way rather than just pull over

and let us past...

We went out on well-used Yokohama A008 tyres on the first stage, which was a bad move. So we took the 18 month old Colway Road Plus tyres out for the subsequent stages, and they worked a treat. Until they wore out. The fronts lasted all day, but the rears only lasted until the end of stage 3. We didn't actually realise that they had worn out until the end of stage 4, which was when they were replaced with some second hand cut slicks which made life much better. Especially as it had started raining by then. Unfortunately we punctured one on stage 6, and then another on stage 7, so the tyre bill for the event was a little higher than expected...

Stages 7 and 8 were in the dark and the rain - natural road rally conditions really. So it wasn't surprising to find that they were the most enjoyable stages, really. That and the fact that they went without mishap...

And now for the bit you've been waiting for. Every driver has a list of excuses as to why they didn't win, and I'm no different.

Here's mine:

Stage 1: Countless spins or near spins. At least 4 that we can remember...and the rest (Rob)....

Stage 2: Two 360 degree spins, both at the same place.

Stage 3: Throttle linkage fell apart and had to be fixed mid stage. And we probably had a spin or two as well.

Stage 4: Throttle linkage fell apart again, four times. Also a 720 degree spin at about 80mph, see previous comments about

when the rear tyres should have been replaced.

Stage 5: Can't remember (Rob might be able to) (nope-RN)-probably had a spin or two

Stage 6: Had to stop and change a puncture.

Stage 7: Best so far (it's dark and wet now), 16th fastest time.

Stage 8: Even better. 13th fastest time.

At the end of the day we made the finish, 29th overall and 11th in class. I

was pleased to have finished, let alone without any damage to the car. Rob reckoned that without the throttle linkage problems, we would probably have been inside the top 20, which was even more pleasing.

And now for the credits. Thanks go to: - the organisers of the event, obviously - Rob Norrington, for putting the entry in and thus getting my finger out to get the car sorted - Les Parsons for the loan of the seats - Mick Chinchin at Stanwell Trailers for the

loan of the service van and the supply of the perspex and a few other bits and pieces - Alan Beard for the door numbers and the jerry cans - my brother for the loan of the trailer - my brother, Les, Chris Moore and Mike Bozak for coming out and getting cold and wet servicing

Now all I've got to do is save my pennies so that I can go out and do another one...

AJ

## Beaver Road Rally - 6/7 December 1997

Four CMC members were part of a team representing the AEMC on the 1997 Inter - Association challenge - Beverly and District Motor Club's Beaver Rally. The AEMC was seeking its third victory in three attempts and had Tony Michael / Paul Barrett, Richard Maclachlan / Eddie Clough and Paul Wright / Mark Goodman in the team.

Tony brought his Sierra 4x4 Estate out for its debut road rally and used it to tow Richard's MKII Escort up to the start in Hull. A full entry of fifty one cars (seventeen

teams) lined up for the 150 mile event on maps 106 & 107, with teams from as far afield as Northern Ireland. The event was also a last round of several of the northern road rally championships, so competition promised to be tough.

The event, however, was not as tough as many were expecting; with fairly simple navigation and very fast roads most sections were cleanable for most crews and some of the locals cleaned the entire event. The main method of applying penalties was the use of seven digit codeboards - even a

single incorrectly written down letter or number resulted in a fail, as Tony and Paul found to their cost.

The tie break applied was considered most unsatisfactory, particularly as the road rally permit paid for allowed a section timed to the second which was not used; it was the date of receipt of entries. Needless to say, all the locals had their entries in before the Inter Association crews had even received their regs....

The route was uncharted territory for most 'foreign' crews - onto the marshes east of Hull, northwards up

the coast and then inland onto the Wolds to finish near York but Richard used his local knowledge to the full and actually managed not only to actually finish the event, but come home sixth overall. Paul and Mark were a few minutes behind in fourteenth, but Tony and Paul's fail put the team out of contention for the main trophy; the AEMC were beaten into second place on 1F14 by the Association of Central Southern Motor Clubs who got all the boards correct on 0F43.

Paul Barrett

## Thetford Gravel Sprint 1997

By Michael Juniper

My gravel sprint started two weeks prior to the date of the event. I had an engine with one messed up cylinder and a replacement one that wasn't in too good a state either. The hard graft of removing the engine and preparing the new one, so it might last the event, started. Also the car had to have a tank guard fitted for this year's event.

So after busting my guts getting the car ready, it was off to Thetford forest on a very misty morning. The stage as everybody found it was slippery. As I had not had a chance to have my car rolling roaded, the parade lap was used to tune the car. I decided to stay with my tyre setup 155 (front) and 165 (rear) Dunlop 61R's as I thought this would be even better than last year's setup. After a short delay while the course opening car changed a flat tyre - half way through the stage! - everyone was eagerly awaiting the start.

Off I went for my first practice, it was very slippery. As soon as the car went over 50mph I found myself in the bracken. Too much oversteer. I decided to change back to last years setup. Meanwhile Mr



Andy Donn's versatile XR3 puts in another fine performance.

Donn was contemplating whether or not to use his Dunlop 14" tyres, which he had refrained from using all year, as he found it was a bit slippery.

To convert to last year's set up I had to blow some tyres up, and because of the earlier delay, time was of the essence. I joined the back of the queue along with Andy for the second practice. Unfortunately a car managed to crash, so whilst the stage was being cleared, we were told to have lunch. We were to have our second practice before the first timed runs. So I went out for the run and accidentally during a controlled slide fell into some bracken; there was a little bit of noise that came from the front off side wheel but after a few seconds that soon cleared, I continued at warp

speed!

Half way through the stage I noticed that the brakes were not all that good; a 90 left was approaching rather quickly and continued to do so after several pushes of the brake pedal - eeeeeeeeeek! I didn't panic until after the corner which, after some amazing driving skill/luck\*, I got round. The brakes continued to be non-functional so for the rest of the stage I took it a little slower. Back in the pits the front brakes were pulled apart to find nothing and the first timed run was going out very soon. After a quick check at the back the problem was spotted - a munched bit of Aeroquip brake line. Mmm - I think the first timed run is a bit of a non-starter. After rushing around and changing it, and getting

brake fluid everywhere, I zoomed out for the second run, just to hear the hooter go for the start of the third timed run. So only one timed run for all that agro - well I suppose it was worth it; I absolutely thrashed that car round the 2 1/2 mile stage, venting a lot of anger / frustration. The only thing now is that the axle needs some attention.

Andy finished a comfortable third in class, 11 seconds behind second. I finished 6th in class (last - look I did have problems all right!) but only 3 seconds behind 5th. Funnily enough times were down on last year's event.

There will be some more of this wonderful stuff this year.

(\*delete as applicable)

## The Racers Diet

We racers are unfairly accused by others of insufficient exercise, based on the wholly unfounded assumption that a day at the races involves very little physical exercise. This is complete nonsense - you try lifting 4 M+S tyres into the back of the service barge, and not forgetting collecting the silverware. However there are some waistlines that could do with losing the odd millimetre or two for the sake of using the sponsors' T shirt for a second year running. Follow this diet to the letter and it will have the same effect as eating at the Little Chef on the way home without the effort of rushing around for silverware, whilst trying to put the car on the trailer.

### Breakfast

- 1/2 grapefruit
- 1 slice dry wholewheat toast

### Lunch

- 8oz skimmed milk
- 4oz lean grilled chicken
- 1 portion of steamed spinach
- 1 cup of herbal tea
- 1 chocolate biscuit

### Mid-afternoon Snack

- The rest of the packet of biscuits
- 2 pints of ice cream
- 1 jar of hot fudge sauce
- nuts, cherries, cream

### Dinner

- 2 loaves garlic bread with cheese
- 1 large sausage, mushroom and cheese pizza
- 4 cans of lager
- 3 Mars bars

### Late Evening Snack

- Entire frozen cheesecake eaten directly from freezer

### Rules for this Diet

1. If you eat something and no-one sees it, it has no calories.
2. If you drink a Diet Pepsi with a Mars bar, the calories in the Mars bar are cancelled out by the diet Pepsi.
3. When you eat with someone else, calories don't count, if you don't eat more than they do.
4. Food taken for medicinal purposes never counts such as hot sweet tea, brandy, toast and Sara Lee Cheesecake.
5. Food purchased at cinemas does not have any calories because it is part of the entire entertainment package, not one's personal fuel eg: Butterkist, Poppets Malteasers and Cornettos.
6. Broken biscuit pieces contain no calories; the process of breaking causes calorie leakage.
7. Things licked off knives and spoons have no calories, if you are in the process of preparing something. Examples are peanut butter (when preparing a sandwich) or ice cream (when preparing a hot fudge sundae).
8. Foods that are the same colour have the same number of calories. Examples are spinach and pistachio ice cream, mushrooms and white chocolate.

Michael Juniper



As recommended by 1997 International Drinking Champion Mark Andrews...

## Events Calendar

### February

- 15 Holbecks PCT - Hadleigh
- 22 Old Oak Stages - Snetterton - Green Belt MC
- 21/22 Kent Road Rally - 7 Oaks
- 26 **12 Car Rally - Brian Jaggs (01245) 468763**

### March

- 7/8 Poxihen Road Rally - SCCON
- 8 Robin Hood Stages - North Notts.
- 12 **CMC AGM - Reb Lion at Boreham from 9:30pm**
- 28 **CMC Awards Night - Chelmsford Police HQ Social Club, Springfield.**

### April

- 9 12 Car.
- 19 Mini Tempest Stages - Longcross - Sutton & Cheam

### May

- 4 Millbrook Stage Rally - West Essex CC
- 9/10 **East Anglian Classic - Norwich - CMC**

This year's event is again based at the Trust House Forte Hotel in Norwich.

**Loads of marshals needed:**

Contact: Richard Turnbull 01376 517148

C o C: Paul Barrett 01245 353909

Secretary: Gavin Leech 01883 742861

### June

- 14 Carnival Stages - Abingdon

### July

- 5 Kune Tune Stage Rally - Wickford AC
- 19 Autocross - CMC

- August 6 Bomb a Long stages - Debden - Middlesex Co.
- September 6 Autotest - Burnham - CMC
- November 1 Mill Hill PCT - CMC
- November 7/8 Preston Road Rally - CMC
- December 27 Wethersfield Stage Rally - CMC & WECC

**Memberships are now due for 1998.**

**Please see Dave Judd in the Pub, or use the form below:**

## Join Chelmsford Motor Club

Chelmsford MC is one of the leading motor clubs in the South East with loads of members competing and marshalling at events all over the country. To join, complete and send this form together with £10 (Family membership £10) to:

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

Name.....

Address.....

..... Phone.....(H).....(W)

My interests are: (delete as applicable)

AUTOCROSS / MARSHALLING / ROAD RALLIES / STAGE RALLIES / TRIALS / OTHER.....