

THE MIDDLESEX MAGAZINE



January / February 2009



**Richard Edwards and Paul Brown on the way to
winning the *Carfax Stages* at Longcross.**

Ford Escort mk 2

23rd November 2008

The Bimonthly news, views and goings on of Middlesex County Automobile Club

MIDDLESEX COUNTY AUTOMOBILE CLUB LTD



THE MIDDLESEX MAGAZINE

www.mcac.co.uk

Number: 285 (Volume: 13; Issue: 16)

January / February 2009

CLUB NIGHT IS EVERY WEDNESDAY

AT

GERRARDS CROSS SPORTS CLUB

7 Dukes Lane, off Dukes Wood Avenue, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire, SL9 7TZ
(off the A40, between the pillar box and pedestrian subway opposite The Apple Tree)

Map Reference: 176/000875½ Telephone: 01753 886610

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

21 st January	Club Night	20.30	VIDEO / DVD NIGHT – ROCKINGHAM STAGES. We have a look back the Mad Video production of last year's event.
28 th January	Club Night	20.30	NATTER AND NOGGIN.
31 st January	Dinner	19.00	ANNUAL DINNER-DANCE AND PRESENTATION OF AWARDS. We return to Stockley Park for our main social event. Full details should be elsewhere in this issue, but Peter Nathan awaits your money quickly.
3 rd February	Partner's Club Night	20.30	PARTNER'S EVENING – RAY & KAREN'S NEW YEAR QUIZ. Ok – I know it is February and the New Year is not quite so new now but Ray was ill last month so it has been carried forward to tonight! As usual, nothing too serious but something to keep you amused for the evening.
10 th February	Club Night	20.30	NATTER AND NOGGIN.
14 th February	Scatter	19.00	VALENTINE SCATTER. Our first competitive event of the year sees a return to Buckinghamshire to find those code boards hidden by Andy and Garry. Andy has promised a clear dry night, so dust off map 175 and head to Pinkneys Green. Regs at Club, on the website or from Andy G.

17 th February	Club Night	20.30	RALLY PREPARATION FOR MIDDLEWICK STAGES. General sort-out of plans for the weekend. What are you doing on Friday? We could do with some help setting-up! Andy G or Peter are looking forward to your offers of assistance!
21 st February	Rally	09.00	MIDDLEWICK STAGES 2009. A new event and a new venue for us to replace Oakington, in association with Wickford AC. Details on the event website soon – www.middlewickstages.co.uk All offers of help to set-up on the Friday (20 th) gratefully accepted – contact Andy G.
24 th February	Club Night	20.30	VIDEO / DVD NIGHT. A chance to catch up with the first rounds of this year's WRC.
3 rd March	Partner's Club Night	20.30	PARTNER'S EVENING – TABLE-TOP RALLY. A little bit of light hearted practice to see how you are coping with the winter weather!

Chairman's Chat

December was a busy month. After getting back from the South of France, it was all go with the final preparation of the paperwork for our event at Rockingham on 13/14th December. I was due to leave for Rockingham on the Friday morning but on the Thursday evening Mike telephoned to say that Helen's father was very ill in hospital and he could not attend the event as Safety Officer, but had nominated Roger Stripe to stand in for him. OK, put a note in the 'Final Finals' and it will be in order.

However, Roger then contacted me on the Friday morning to say he couldn't do it! Panic! A few more telephone calls and it was agreed that Peter Wood would add the job of Safety Officer to his other tasks, so another change the paperwork before finally heading north to Rockingham.

Although we actually received 117 entries, withdrawals and not starters meant that only 95 cars actually started the event. Russell Brookes's entry in the Sunbeam (his first single-venue event!) created a lot of interest and the forum on Saturday evening, with Russell and Martin Rowe, also proved very entertaining under the guiding hand of our commentator – Bob Milloy.

Steve Simpson, with Simon Hunter on the maps, won the event for the fourth year while Dave West fought up to 2nd in the 306 Maxi.

Once again, we offer our congratulations to Paul and Jaz Bareham – having met at the 2006 event, they got engaged at last year's event and were married there this year! Paul spent the first 2 days of his honeymoon guiding Richard Upton to 4th overall, while Jaz looked after the stage arrival as usual! We wish them all the best for the future – what are you doing at this year's event??

The following Wednesday we had a good turnout at Club for the Christmas Buffet, including Tom who was over from Croatia on the way to New Zealand for Christmas!

With a two week break over the Christmas period, we now get down to this year's events – the first being the Annual Dinner-Dance and Awards Presentation at Stockley Park Golf Club on 31st January. This is the major social event of the Club calendar and we hope to see as many of you as possible there to collect your awards. Peter Nathan awaits your ticket orders as soon as possible!

The following weekend, Andy and Garry are running the Valentine Scatter and that is followed by our first new event of the year – The MiddleWick Stages, which we are running in association with Wickford AC. If you can help with the set-up on Friday, Andy would like to hear from you

Happy Motoring

Tony Phillips

W H A T ' S O N ?

JAN	2009				
18th	Amman DMC	Red Kite Stages	(B)	ACSMC/HRCRMini	
18th	Darlington DMC	Cartersport Jack Frost Stages, Croft	(B)		
25th	Hants & Berks MC	Pairs Scatter	(C)		
29/1st		Rally Ireland	(I)	WRC1	
29/1st		Rallye Monte Carlo Historic	(I)		
31st	MIDDLESEX COUNTY AC	ANNUAL DINNER-DANCE & AWARDS PRESENTATION			
31/1st	Weston super Mare MC	Brean Stages	(B)	R2009	
FEB					
7th	Southsea MC	South Downs Stages, Goodwood	(B)		
7th	Forest of Dean MC	Wyedean	(B)	Eng	
8th	AEMC	AEMC Training Day, Cambridge	(-)		
12/15th		Rally Norway	(I)	WRC2	
14th		Boucles de Spa Historic Rally, Belgium	(N)		
14/15TH	MIDDLESEX COUNTY AC	VALENTINE SCATTER			
15th	London Irish MC	Emerald Stages, Longcross	(B)	R2009	
21ST	MIDDX CAC/Wickford AC	MIDDLEWICK STAGES, WOODBRIDGE			
22nd		Epynt Stages	(A)	MSA Asphalt/BTRDA	
27/28th	Southern CC	Rallye Sunseeker	(A)	ANCRO/MSAGravel	
MAR					
1st	Borough 19 MC	Sprint (Practice), North Weald / Honington	(B)		
7th		Malcolm Wilson Stages	(B)	Eng	
8th		Hannut Rally, Belgium	(N)		
12/15th		The Cyprus Rally	(I)	WRC3	
12/15th		Rally del Corallo, Sardinia, Italy	(I)	EHRC1	
13/15th	Live Promotions	Race Retro, Stoneleigh Park	(E)		
14/15th	Lindholme MSC	Robin Hood Forest Stages	(A/B)	BHRC/HRCRMini	
14/15th		East Belgium Rally, Stavelot	(N)	Belg	
15th	Borough 19 MC	Sprint, North Weald	(B)		
15th	Bournemouth DMC	Bovington Stages	(B)	R2009	
15th	Sutton & Cheam MC	Tempest Rally Sprint, Bramley	(B)		
21st		Border Counties Rally	(A)	ANCRO?MSAGravel	
22ND	MIDDX CAC / Harrow CC	BRAKEFAST AUTOTESTS/AUTOSOLO			
27/28th		Tour of Cornwall	(B)	BTRDA	
27/28th		Bulldog Rally Cwmru	(A)	BRC/BHRC1	
28/29th	Chelmsford MC	EACS Endurance Road Rally	(B)		
29th		Circuit des Ardennes, Belgium	(N)		
29th		Australian Grand Prix, Albert Park	(I)	WC1	
APR					
2/5th		Vodafone Rally Portugal	(I)	WRC4	
2/5th		24th Sanremo Rally Storico, Italy	(I)	EHRC2	
4th	Tunbridge Wells MC	Sprint, Lydden	(B)	ACSMC	
5th	Sporting CCoN	Malcolm Watson Memorial Stages,	(B)	ACSMC	
5th	Sevenoaks & DMC	Sprint, North Weald	(B)		
5th		Malaysian Grand Prix, Sepang	(I)	WC2	
5th	Sutton & Cheam MC	Mini Tempest Stages, Longcross	(B)	AEMC/R2009	
5th		Brands Hatch	(I)	BTCC	
10/12th	Ulster AC	Circuit of Ireland	(I/A/B)	MSA Asphalt	
16/18th		Historic Vitava Rallye, Czech	(I)	EHRC3	
17/18th		Pirelli International Rally	(I/A)	BRC/BHRC2/ANCRO	
18th		Get it Sideways, Down Amptney	(B)	HRCRMini	
18/19th		LRT Comines Rally, Belgium	(N)		
19th		Chinese Grand Prix, Shanghai	(I)	WC3	
23/26th		Rally Argentina	(I)	WRC5	
24/26th		TAC Rally, Tielt	(N)	Belg	
25th		Somerset Stages	(B)	Eng	
26th	Green Belt MC	TAMs Packaging Sprint, North Weald	(B)		
26th		Bahrain Grand Prix, Sakhir	(I)	WC4	

Pete's Patch
Ramblings from the Editor's Chair

Well here we are again, despite what I said in my article last time; I have decided to carry on at least until the AGM. The first this is to wish all members and their families a Happy New Year and hope that they all had a great Christmas.

The beginning of the year shows a pretty crowded calendar:

Sunday 25th January sees the Hants and Berks Pairs Scatter which will be contested by myself with Tony in one car and John Wilson Chauffeuring Andy Greenland in the other.

This is followed the following weekend by the annual awards night dinner at Stockley Park (tickets still available from Peter Nathan at very reasonable prices). Malc will not be there to fall down the entrance steps this year so we are looking for a volunteer replacement.

There is then a fortnight break (unless you want to go to an AEMC training day in Cambridge) followed by the Valentine Scatter on 14th/15th February (Andy will probably have the regs ready by 11th and the route book completed by 13th).

The following weekend sees the inaugural running of the Middlewick Stages at Woodbridge in Essex. Peter Nathan is the man to see if you want to marshal.

27/28th February sees our annual trek down to Bournemouth for Rallye Sunseeker. MCAC are manning a start for a change this year and Paul Hopkinson is the man to talk to. I will probably have a bucket of chilli there for anyone who is interested and Paul will be arranging bacon sarnies in the morning.

Following the Sunseeker, there is a lull in proceedings until 22nd March where we will all be meeting at Bovingdon for the Breakfast Autotest and Auto Solo There is a lack of

information about this one but Peter Cox is probably the man to talk to.

That's about it for major MCAC involvement in the near future: other events are to be found in the 'What's on' pages which precede this article.

At a recent council meeting, the forthcoming rise in the cost of postage was mentioned. As you can imagine, postage plays a big part in the accounts of your motor club. With about 275 copies of the magazine printed every other month, the majority of which are posted, it has been mooted that economies must be made.

One suggestion that has been made is to issue the magazine electronically and your thoughts on this would be most appreciated. There is a problem at present in doing this: currently the magazine is sent to the publishers as five different files, the main body of the magazine and four different files to make up the colour cover. I am sure that there is some form of software available that would enable us to produce a complete magazine in one file to send out to members who want to receive their mag in this manner.

The AGM will also soon be upon us and the council is not currently at full strength. If you feel that you would like to put something back into the club, we are asking for one night a month, currently the first Monday. The council meeting house is in Maple Cross where the beer is very cheap!

One last thing: ignore everything that Malc says on the web page about the reason the date for 'Not the Hunters Scatter' being my fault, He suffers from bent finger syndrome and put the wrong date himself!

See you next issue, Pete Farmer

2008 CHAMPIONSHIP POSITIONS

Overall Driver:

Richard Edwards	(8)	189	@
Rob Brook	(13)	141½	
Graham Samuel	(7)	90½	@
Mark Davies	(5)	87	@
Pete Farmer	(5)	75	@
Chris Keys	(6)	70	

Overall Navigator:

Paul Brown	(8)	189	@
Rob Brook	(12)	115	
Tony Phillips	(9)	112½	
John Brook	(9)	93½	
David Axten	(5)	87	@
Peter Cox	(14)	85	

Stage Rally Driver:

Richard Edwards	(8)	189	
Graham Samuel	(7)	90½	
Mark Davies	(5)	87	
Chris Keys	(3)	46	
Rob Brook	(2)	28½	

Stage Rally Co-Driver:

Paul Brown	(8)	189	
Tony Phillips	(7)	90½	
David Axten	(5)	87	**
John Brook	(2)	28½	

Night Trial Driver:

Pete Farmer	(5)	75	
Tony Phillips	(1)	18	
Adrian L'Estrange	(1)	13	
John Wilson	(1)	11	

Night Trial Navigator:

Andy Greenland	(3)	63	
Tony Phillips	(2)	22	
Val Phillips	(1)	18	**
John Brook	(2)	11	

Road Rally Driver:

Rob Brook	(5)	54	&
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Road Rally Navigator:

Rob Brook	(9)	90	&
Peter Cox	(11)	£ 81	
John Brook	(5)	54	

Off-Road Driver:

Peter Cox	(9)	54	
Rob Brook	(4)	53	
Chris Keys	(2)	20	

Clubman – Organizing:

Tony Phillips	(7)	18	
Andy Greenland	(4)	14	
Rob Brook	(2)	8	

Clubman – Marshalling:

Rob Brook	(13)	28	
Darren Pike	(10)	28	
Peter Cox	(8)	22	
John Brook	(6)	16	
Peter Nathan	(3)	12	

Clubman – Servicing:

Val Phillips	(5)	20	@
Michael Edwards	(8)	16	
Kevin Fowler	(4)	12	
Paul Hopkinson	(3)	10	
Martin Lush	(3)	10	

Ladies: \$\$

Val Phillips	(1)	18	
Anne Kolter	(2)	11	
Fiona Keys	(1)	4	

Juniors:

Kirstin Farmer	(3)	3	
Steven Jeeves	(2)	2	

Most Active Club Member:

Rob Brook	&	45	
Peter Cox	&	33	
Tony Phillips	&	17	
John Brook		15	
Darren Pike	&	13	
Andy Greenland	&	12	
Pete Farmer	&	10	

Most Frequent Competitor:

Rob Brook		28	
Peter Cox		24	
Tony Phillips		10	
John Brook		9	
Richard Edwards		8	
Graham Samuel		7	
Chris Keys		6	

£ only best 10 scores count

& not eligible: another award

\$\$ Ladies Cup not awarded as no-one competed in 3 events

@ not eligible: only 1 category of event

** not eligible: no mag article &/or marshalling

Event Awards 2008

8/9 th December 2007	ROCKINGHAM STAGES 2007	(12 MCAC)
Best MCAC/3 rd Overall 1 st Class 4 2 nd Class 2 3 rd Class 2	The Woodberry Cup Two Awards Two Awards Two Awards	Dave West / Keith Hounslow Richard Upton / Paul Bareham Brett Griffin / Sam Fordham Chris Keys / Mark Palmer
27 th January 2008	HANTS & BERKS PAIRS SCATTER	(4 MCAC)
Best MCAC	Four Awards	Pete Farmer / Tony Phillips John Wilson / Paul Brown
16/17 th February	VALENTINE SCATTER	(5 MCAC)
Best MCAC/1 st Semi-Exp	Sir Henry Bowles Cup	Pete Farmer / Tony Phillips
6 th April	BRAKEFAST AUTOSOLO (Clubsport)	(13 MCAC)
Best MCAC/Winner 1 st Class C 2 nd Class C 1 st Class B 2 nd Class A 2 nd Class A	The Alfred Alexander Cup An Award An Award An Award An Award An Award	Chris Keys Rob Brook John Roseblade Jon Senior Stuart Osborn Peter Franklin
7 th June	CAR-NIVAL SPRINT	(4 MCAC)
Best MCAC	Middleton Trophy	Dave Watson
8 th June	CAR-NIVAL STAGES – ABINGDON	(4 MCAC)
Best MCAC	Church Trophy	Richard Edwards / Paul Brown
17 th August	FOTO JEN I C FUN RUN & BBQ	(6 MCAC)
Best MCAC/Winners	Autocar Cup	Tony Phillips / Val Phillips
23 rd November	CARFAX STAGES	(5 MCAC)
Best MCAC/Winners	Frazer Nash Cup	Richard Edwards / Paul Brown

Each year MCAC make an award on any event where there are 4 or more club crews competing – but we have to be told, otherwise we will not know!!! We are positive that there are many other events that should qualify, but if you don't tell us, no pot!

If you think you are due an award for last year, please let us know!!

Club Championship - Award Winners 2008

Champion Driver	BELL TROPHY	Rob Brook
Champion Navigator	NAPSPEED TROPHY	Rob Brook
Middlesex Challenge Winner	MIDDLESEX CHALLENGE SHIELD	Tony Phillips
	RUNNERS-UP	Rob Brook
	LADY CHAMPION	Val Phillips
Leading Off Road Driver	STEPHENS TROPHY	Peter Cox
Leading Road Rally Driver	ALEXANDER TROPHY	Not awarded
Leading Stage Rally Driver	KENSINGTON CUP	Richard Edwards
Leading Night Trial Driver	OAKES CUP	Pete Farmer
Leading Road Rally Navigator	GAMAGE CUP	Peter Cox
Leading Stage Rally Co-Driver	SOUTHGATE CUP	Paul Brown
Leading Night Trial Navigator	LAWSON CUP	Andy Greenland
Leading Clubman - Organising	CENTENARY TROPHY	Tony Phillips
Leading Clubman - Marshalling	JUBILEE CUP	Rob Brook & Darren Pike
Leading Clubman - Servicing	FINCHLEY CUP	Michael Edwards
Junior Champion	THE JUNIOR AWARD	Kirstin Farmer
Most Active Club Member	CORONATION CUP	John Brook
Best Lady Competitor	LADIES CUP	Not awarded
Most Frequent Competitor	NORMAN TIPPING MEMORIAL CUP	Rob Brook

Best Newcomer	RIDDELL CUP	?
Poxon Award	MIDDLESEX COUNTY CUP	?
Silliest Accident	BENGT ARMCO AWARD	?
Most Contribution to the Club	PRESIDENTS AWARD	?

A Year of Rallying

Well so far it has been an interesting year but with some very positive results. After we lost the wheel at Longcross in Sept 2006 I decided it was time for a new start and so I sold my old Ford Escort RS shell and bought a new one. The new one was a shell that friend had started to work on and had installed a roll cage but that was about it. For me this was good as it allowed us to shape the car into a design that we wanted without having to make to many alterations.

Mike set about making some light weight bars and suspension mounts as well as a new fuel tank and exhaust and I set about preparing the shell for spraying, I even managed to persuade Paul to come and help as I couldn't see him doing too much damage sanding down the shell. This was to be a slow speed project and after months it was ready for spraying. This was done in three stages with a month in between each one so that by late autumn 2007 a nice gleaming white shell was in the garage ready for the engine etc to be fitted. The question we were left with was when we wanted to have it completed by and which was to be our first rally. It was at this time that the announcement was made that Longcross would be used again in 2008 and that was our deciding factor. We would have it ready for the Mini tempest in April, and it was...Just.



It was good to be back at Longcross and the Mini Tempest would prove to be a good proving ground, especially as there were so many good crews and cars entered into it. We started at 26 which was a little disappointing although as Paul pointed out we didn't have a very good seeding list as we'd been out of it for a while. As this was our first run out there was a little trepidation

as the car hadn't been fully tested. As we set off from the start of Stage 1 we flew along until the first bus stop at which time there was a little arse wiggle as the brakes weren't correctly set up. A quick adjustment and we were flying along. With the new power steering and better brakes I found the handling much easier and the car performed perfectly. By the end of the day we were fourth overall and first in class. Not bad for a first day out.

Our next event saw us back at Longcross for the Four Counties rally in May. This was to be another good day for us with only one 'minor hick up'. On about stage 6 Paul called a 90 left and I could see the potential to slightly cut the corner through the branches of the trees. What I didn't see was the crowd control barriers that were to impact with the front wing (and come for a very quick trip with us). From where we both sat we couldn't see any major damage and as the car was handling fine we raced on to finish the stage. As we came past the servicing we got the first hint the damage might be worse as everyone started pointing at the car. Crossing the finish line we both surprised to watch as the marshal bent the wing back in to the correct position. It had been bent 90 degrees outwards for half the stage. A quick bit of hammering and a few plastic ties later and it looked almost as good as new. Again we had a good finish coming 5th overall and 1st in class.

Two weeks later and we were out for the Millbrook Stages. This was to be our first time at Millbrook and we weren't sure what to expect although we had heard good things. This was an excellent venue although the same couldn't be said about the weather which was torrential rain for most of the day. Apart from a few spins we were having a good day and getting faster as we weren't learnt the terrain. It was looking like a good finishing result up until stage 8. As we flew around a fast right corner on a 45 degree camber the wheel nuts on the rear left gave out and the wheel flew off into the trees spinning us off the track and onto the grass. Ten minutes later and one of the marshals

emerged from the trees with our missing wheel; apparently it had gone a good fifty metres through the trees before stopping. It was a disappointing end to what was turning out to be a good event.

June saw us back on four wheels and at Abingdon for the Carnival stages. This is always a good weekend motorsport and this weekend was to be no different. Once again the weather was hot and with the crowds there it made for the usual excellent attitude. The comedian the night before was very good and managed to single mike out for some serious ribbing as well as a few others from the club but it was all taken in the good spirit that it was intended. We were now heading up the seedings and set off as car 19. Towards the end of stage 2 I began to feel I was losing control of the car and mentioned it to Paul, His concern was if we could make the end of the stage which I was fairly confident we could, a little later was when I realised that the problem was the accelerator was stuck open so although I was confident I we could finish the stage stopping could be a different issue. As it was we managed to make it to the pits where we discovered a spring in the throttle body had snapped and jammed it on full throttle, also the rear tyres were worn down to the canvas which explained the initial confusion over what was wrong. The spring was easily replaced and a quick wheel change saw us back in the action. Stage 4 was to be the next challenge when we started to lose control of the back end. The tyres had been fine leaving servicing but for some reason that stage was very abrasive and by the time we returned to servicing there was not much rubber left and a few patches of wire showing. Mike being the entrepreneur that he is quickly marked them up as for sale (partly worn) but sadly there were no offers. We had a great result finishing 5th overall and first in Class which was a brilliant way to end such a fantastic weekend.

Next was the Azimghur Stages at Colerne. Our plan was to arrive at Colerne by following a fellow driver, as it turned out he got lost and went the long way round leading us up some very steep hills, so steep we started to think that our service van might not make it. As we got closer Paul was sat navigating and pointed out the Airfield which we proceeded to completely miss and carried on down the

road. By this time there was a convoy of three teams and their service wagons all heading down a narrow road with only one turning area. After some choreographed driving and turning circles we were heading back with us leading and Paul navigating. As we were going along we turned right alongside the airfield and ended up going down a road that got narrower and narrower and became a very steep downhill whilst breaking up into something that resembled a farm track. I helpfully mentioned to Paul that if this was wrong we weren't all going to reverse out easily, looking across my confidence wasn't helped by the sight of him praying and mumbling something about white roads! As it was he had got it right (this time) and after another steep hill climb we all made it. This again was a new venue for us and as we quickly discovered a very fast venue. The stages were an interesting layout with some long straights that left us in sixth gear and top revs still needing more power. This kind of stage isn't my favourite as it's more suited to powerful cars whilst I prefer more challenging stages with fewer straights but still it was a good day and we finished 6th overall and second in class which I was happy with.



After that was the Wugging Stages in August back at Colerne. There's not much to say as it was very similar to the Azimghur stages. It was however a good days rallying and we once again finished 6th overall and second in class. Worthy of note was the presentation of the spirit of the rally award to the rescue crews. They had done an excellent job of extracting the co-driver of Car 4 after a bump with a large gate post, what was a bit worrying though was the way they dropped their award and broke it.

Our latest outing was the Anniversary stages back at Longcross. There were some

changes to the layout due to the construction of a 'motorway' at the end of the snake which meant we couldn't use the tank ramps but it was still an interesting stage layout. Stage 1 went very fast and found us second overall, this was all to end quickly with stage 2 when, as we entered the snake for the first time the wheels studs on the read offside went this time which saw us taking a little trip across the golf green with a bit of a jolt and quite a bit of damage to the wheel arch and rear chassis. Once again a kind marshal disappeared off into the distance chasing our wheel whilst we were left collecting up the

stones off the green that were thrown up as we passed through the gravel trap.

Next up is the Carfax stages at Longcross followed by Rockingham in December and then as for next year we're looking forward to trying out the new venues the club has found for the Valentine rally and the return of the bomb-a-long.

Finally a big thank you to all the marshals who have done a brilliant job this year.

Richard Edwards

IF MY BODY WERE A CAR.....

If my body were a car, this is the time I would be thinking about trading it in for a newer model. I've got bumps and dents and scratches in my finish and my paint job is getting a little dull But that's not the worst of it.

My headlights are out of focus and it's especially hard to see things up close.

My traction is not as graceful as it once was. I slip and slide and skid and bump into things even in the best of weather.

My whitewalls are stained with varicose veins.

It takes me hours to reach my maximum speed. My fuel rate burns inefficiently.

But here's the worst of it

Almost every time I sneeze, cough or sputter ... either my radiator leaks or my exhaust backfires!

LIFE AFTER THE YELLOW PERIL

Avid followers of this saga may recall that we ended 2007 with a reasonable run on the Roger Albert and a straight yellow Escort Mk 1 and a new white Mk 2 with an engine that went off song on the Tempest.

So 2008 started with the Mk 2 full house bda engine back at John Wilcox to find out why. After a semi rebuild and dyno test no problem could be found and eventually Peter Cook came up with the solution that the rev limiter had re set itself to around 4000 rpm following a jump landing on the Tempest. Solution-disconnect rev limiter and watch rev counter for a change.

After a great deal of research and encouragement from others who had already done it, we decided for 2008 to attack the European Historic Rally Championship. The championship is based on points scored in class, not overall position, and each event is given a coefficient between 1 and 4. Points scored on each event are multiplied by this rating. We therefore decided from a cost point of view to only tackle category 3 and 4 events and also immediately ruled out the Acropolis for distance and time required for the recce.

The next consideration was logistics allied to cost. We had a car and trailer and a lot of wheels, tyres, fuel cans and spares. If we were to acquire a van it would only seat three, not be very quick and could not be used for the recces/pace noting. A motor home would cut out hotel costs but again would be slow, costly in fuel and no good for recces. The answer has proved fantastic. A 3 litre Renault Espace seats five, carries all the spares and tools, tows all day at 90 + (only on autobahns you understand) and when unloaded at the hotel doubles up as a recce car. With the back seats out the floor space is equivalent to a small Transit.

So off we went to Europe with Tony and I usually towing there and back, the girls coming on most events and Grahame Standen preparing the car and flying out and back to keep us going on events.

Early April saw us driving down to San Remo, just over the Italian border near Monte Carlo. The event takes place in the mountains behind the town, is all tarmac and very twisty. The recce went well, the notes were fine and we were raring to go with our full house power unit

and fat racing boots. So on the first hairpin the engine died and we were sidelined for 20 minutes until we found a loose connection to the coil which only disconnected on tight left bends. That fixed we set off last but found our times on the rest of the event were up with the class leader. Towards the end of the first day we nudged a rock, on Tony's side of course, which made the nearside look a bit of a mess and jammed the nearside door. We thought little of it and at the end of the day Tony climbed out of the driver's side and we left parc ferme and went to dinner. During the meal the mobile rang and we were summoned to see the stewards who announced that the car was dangerous and invited us to retire. We refused, which threw them into confusion as this was not the expected response. They sent us out into the corridor like naughty schoolboys while they considered their next course of action. After 15 minutes we were called back and told that we could remove the car from parc ferme and if we could present it next morning with a door that could be opened and closed from both sides we could continue. Looking at the damage they clearly believed this was not possible and I agreed with them. Grahame however doesn't know when to quit and after three hours of hammering and fabricating we had a door that opened and closed with the aid of wire coat hangers on each side.

I wish we could have photographed the look of incredulity on the face of the scrutineer the following morning but we had done as required and they had no option but to let us run.

In spite of the 20 minute loss on stage 1 and taking the car out of parc ferme we were classified as finishers on the main event and also won a pot and FIA points but neither of us knows why.

June saw us in Ypres for the Belgium round. We had a problem finding full power on the straights on the first day and finally traced this to low fuel pressure. Fixed for day two and we were again on the pace but too much lost on day one.

August saw us on the long road and two boat trips to Lahti in Finland for the only non tarmac round of our year. Finnish forests are more like the M 1 than rough tracks and 100 mph over blind crests is not unusual, if you trust the notes. The first three stages were fantastic and we were on the class leading pace when the alternator bracket snapped and dumped the alternator in the sump guard. Grahame towed

us back to town and we found a main DAF truck agent who lent us his entire workshop including welding and left us to it. Imagine a U.K. garage doing that with all the H and S rules and repercussions. We remade the bracket and started the super rally on the second day. Our times would have put us 11th o/a and a class win but for missing the last three stages on day one. Again for reasons we didn't understand we were listed as finishers on the main event and credited with FIA points. Very strange.

The end of August saw us in Udine in Italy for the Alpi Orientali, a week we would rather forget. The Espace developed an electrical fault on the way down and had to be left with the Renault main agent on arrival. We hired a car for note making and were immediately pulled by the police for reasons only they know. Sadly none of us spoke the others language. On the third stage we clipped a wall and broke a tca. End of event and 8 hours out on a hillside waiting for recovery. Fortunately several spectators took pity on us and we were plied with food and drink all day. Vive l'Italiens !!!

Because of the damage we had to revise our plans to go straight to the next event and started the long tow home. The first puncture on the trailer in the middle of Germany wasn't a problem but the second one was. It was Saturday evening and everything was closed. We pulled off the autobahn into an industrial area and stopped for a pee. Low and behold, in front of us a tyre shop, closed and locked but with a huge skip full of used rubber in the yard. We scaled the fence, climbed into the skip and found three usable covers. With the aid of the Renault front wheel as a bead breaker we replaced both punctures and were on our way again. A thoroughly character building week.

Grahame turned the car round quickly and as we were booked for Helen and Mike's nuptials, John Gibson and his son kindly towed the rig down to the Rally Storica on the Isle of Elba. Tony and I and the girls flew in. I felt like a works driver!!!

The event was held in torrential rain but the wets worked and we flew round. A fantastic event and we managed 3rd in class behind a couple of locals who knew the place better than us.

Early November saw an outing for the Mk 1 on the Tempest. Tony said he was busy doing something else that weekend, he didn't say what, so Bryan Hull was recruited to the second

seat. Our seeding at 2 surprised me but Barry obviously knew more than I did and we ran third all day until a minor slip off on the last stage relegated us to 4th and a class win. A great day out and an undamaged car. Nice to have Pip back with us for the day.

And finally the Rally du Var in Sainte Maxime at the end of November back in the Mk 2. The chaos of the administration and the actual scrum at signing on was unbelievable but once the event was on the road it was fantastic. On the first stage, a 38 km affair round the mountains, we were really on it when the brakes totally failed and we failed to negotiate the next 90 degree turn. We got half way round but still hit the inside rock and again the tca went. So, once again we were marooned on a mountainside for 8 hours but this time outside the only farm on the stage. We were taken in and wined and dined in style and when Grahame finally arrived with the trailer in the middle of the night he too was fed and watered before we were allowed to go. Amazing hospitality. Vive le Francais.

So the end of an interesting year with many lessons learned. The full house all singing Mk2 seems to have an unbreakable engine, box and axle but ancillaries have a lesser robustness and alternators, starters and brakes have all given problems during the season. We have fixed each failure and fitted better replacements and we should by now have a much more reliable car for next year. After two non finishing bumps it seems the same may not be true of the driver. We have the speed to be at the front of the class. We need reliability of both man and machine!!

As always huge thanks to Pip Carrotte for an immaculately turned out Mk1, to Peter Cook for early season fettling of the Mk2 and to Grahame Standen, who has been with us on every round and can fix anything anywhere and keep cars running when others have long ago given up.

And as always to Tony for even more amazing administration this year through the labyrinth of European regulations and travel and for keeping his head down as we hurtle sideways not only between the trees but between rocks with huge drops on one side, usually his. He still clearly has no idea of the risk he is taking.

Graham Samuel

A letter from our roving reporter

Dear Friends

To celebrate the end of 2008 I wanted to thank you for the e-mails you have forwarded over the year.

I must send a big thank you to whoever sent me the one about rat shit in the glue on envelopes, because I now have to use a wet sponge with every envelope that needs sealing.

Also, I now have to wipe the top of every can I open for the same reason.

I no longer have any savings because I gave it all to a sick girl (Penny Brown) who is about to die in the hospital for the 1,387,258th time. But that will change once I receive the £15,000 that Bill Gates/Microsoft are sending me for participating in their special email programs. Or from the senior bank clerk in Nigeria who wants to split seven million pounds with me for pretending to be a long lost relative of a customer who died intestate.

I no longer worry about my soul because I have 363,214 angels looking out for me.

I have learned that my prayers only get answered if I forward emails to seven friends and make a wish within five minutes.

I no longer drink Coca-Cola because it can remove toilet stains.

I can no longer buy petrol without taking a friend along to watch the car so a serial killer won't crawl in my back seat when I'm filling up.

I no longer go to shopping centres because someone will drug me with a perfume sample and rob me.

I no longer answer the phone because someone will ask me to dial a number and then I'll get a phone bill with calls to Jamaica, Uganda, Singapore and Uzbekistan.

I can't use anyone's toilet but mine because a big brown Australian spider is lurking under the seat to cause me instant death when it bites my bum.

I can't even pick up the \$5.00 I found dropped in the car park because it probably was placed there by a sex molester waiting underneath my car to grab my leg.

If you don't send this email to at least 144,000 people in the next 70 minutes, a large dove with diarrhoea will sit on your head at 5:00pm this afternoon and fleas from 12 camels will infest your back, causing you to grow a hairy hump.

I know this because it actually happened to a friend of my next door neighbour's ex-mother-in-law's second husband's cousin's beautician.

By the way....a South American scientist after a lengthy study has discovered that people with low IQ who don't have enough sex, always read their emails while holding the mouse.

Don't bother taking it off now, it's too late.

Regards,

Your friend

Accommodation for Rally Cyprus

Happy New Year.

Just a quick note with regard to anyone from the club wishing to visit the Rally Cyprus this year.

We have two twin bed rooms available (plus a folding bed if 3 want to share a room). Our house is on top of a hill about 3 minutes from the beach.

The price which includes use of the house and pool and early breakfasts is £30 per night per room. For 3rd person sharing a room, add £15 per night.

We are located about 4km from Rally HQ and the service park.

Obviously we will offer as much help with regard to hire cars and how to get to places as we can. We also have a spare Cyprus Sim card. This will be billed to the user about 6 weeks after the event when the bill arrives, but texts here including to overseas

phones) cost about Euro cents 3....and calls to the UK about 49 Euro cents per minute.

If interested we will require a non refundable deposit of £50 payable to our UK bank account. Full payment for the total nights stayed will be due 1 week before arrival. Again into our UK bank.

If anyone is interested they can contact me by e mail or on my tel number below for further information etc.

Most of the works teams stay in the hotels in my village about 3 minutes drive from the house.

Prospective arrivals will need to be OK with dogs. We have 4 who will lick them to death.

Wishing you all success in 2009.

Howard Skelton
Mobile: 00 357 99 300638

Thank God for church ladies with typewriters.

These sentences appeared in church bulletins or were announced in church services in 2007.

1. The Fasting & Prayer Conference includes meals.
2. The sermon this morning: 'Jesus Walks on the Water.' The sermon tonight: 'Searching for Jesus'.
3. Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.
4. The peacemaking meeting scheduled for today has been cancelled due to a conflict.
5. Remember in prayer the many that are sick of our community. Smile at someone who is hard to love. Say 'Hell' to someone who doesn't care much about you.

Rally in Madeira

Whilst I knew of the international Rally of Madeira, were there any other events on the island?

On holiday in Madeira in early November, we were driving along the south coast from Funchal towards the western tip at Ponta de Pargo. We took lunch at the small town of Calheta overlooking the harbour.

Walking around the harbour, there was a rally start ramp but there was nobody around to ask. What was this all about ?

Later at a restaurant, some people appeared wearing Polo shirts with what looked like rally and sponsors logo's. Enquiring what was occurring the information that the event was a rallysprint like Monteburg in Belgium with the stage starting at Paul do Mar.

Whilst we did not have the time to watch the action, we would pass the area on our way to Ponta de Pargo. On our way west from Calheta, passed a number of Rally cars varying from up to date front wheel drive machinery (like Peugeot 206 and Opel Astra's) to Mk.1 and Mk.2 Escorts.

If you put 'Calheta' and 'rally' into Google, you can get the roadbook for the 2008 IV Rali da Calheta.

Happy rallying.

Regards,

Mike Trim

Two blonde girls were working for the city council public works department. One would dig a hole and the other would follow behind her and fill the hole in. They worked up one side of the street, then down the other, then moved on to the next street, working furiously all day without rest, one girl digging a hole, the other girl filling it in again.

An onlooker was amazed at their hard work, but couldn't understand what they were doing. So he asked the hole digger,

'I'm impressed by the effort you two are putting into your work, but I don't get it _ why do you dig a hole, only to have your partner follow behind and fill it up again?' The hole digger wiped her brow and sighed, 'Well, I suppose it probably looks odd because we're normally a three-person team.'

But today the girl who plants the trees called in sick.'