

THE MIDDLESEX MAGAZINE



**MIDDLESEX
COUNTY
AUTOMOBILE
CLUB LTD**

March / April 2009



Richard Upton / Paul Bareham

Ford Sierra Cosworth

Winners

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



All at *Middlesex County Automobile Club* would like to wish Jenson Button, Rubens Barrichello, Ross Brawn and all to staff at *Brawn GP* heartiest congratulations for a fantastic start to the 2009 FIA Formula 1 World Championship

2 Wins, 2 Poles, 1 Fastest lap



THE MIDDLESEX MAGAZINE

www.mcac.co.uk

Number: 286 (Volume: 13; Issue: 17)

March / April 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

25 th March	Club Night	20.30	NATTER AND NOGGIN.
1 st April	Partner's Club Night	20.30	PARTNER'S EVENING - INDOOR SKITTLES. Hopefully, the large mat is still usable and can be removed from the storage area, so that we can test our skill at missing the centre bar! Courtesy of Pete Farmer. Good practice for next month's outdoor Boule Contest.
8 th April	Club Night	20.30	VIDEO / DVD NIGHT. Catch up with the latest happenings in the WRC and watch our own MiddleWick Stages.
15 th April	Club Night	20.30	NATTER AND NOGGIN.
22 nd April	Club Night	20.30	ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING. Your chance to make your contribution to the running of the Club and, hopefully, volunteer to serve on the Council. If you feel like filling one of the vacant places on the Council, Andy needs to receive any nominations by the 18 th .
29 th April	Club Night	20.30	NATTER AND NOGGIN.
3 rd May	Rally	09.00	HONINGTON STAGES 2009, Nr Bury St Edmunds. Our second new event of the year and another new venue, this time in association with SCON. The Regulations and Entry Form will shortly be available on the event website – www.honingtonstages.co.uk – at Club or from Tony. As always we need lots of marshals and, if possible, help with the set-up on the Saturday. All

offers will be gratefully accepted – contact Andy G.

6 th May	Partner's Club Night	20.30	PARTNER'S EVENING – BOULE COMPETITION. With the lighter evenings, we hope it doesn't rain as we venture outside for a Boule competition.
13 th May	Club Night	20.30	NATTER AND NOGGIN
16 th May	Scatter	19.00	NOT THE HUNTER'S NIGHT TRIAL. Pete, Kirstin and Malc Farmer bring you a re-run of the Hunter's postponed from last year. Details and Regs available nearer the date from Pete, at Club and on the web.
20 th May	Club Night	20.30	VIDEO / DVD NIGHT. What has been happening recently on the rally scene? Your chance to catch up and, hopefully, also see the Mad Video DVD of the Honington Stages.
27 th May	Club Night	20.30	NATTER AND NOGGIN.
3 rd June	Partner's Club Night	20.30	PARTNER'S EVENING – MIDWEEK MEANDER. Hopefully the weather will be kind to us as we again venture outdoors in search of the answers to some questions around the Clubhouse.
10 th June	Club Night	20.30	NATTER AND NOGGIN.
17 th June	Club Night	20.30	VIDEO / DVD NIGHT. Another chance to catch up with the latest occurrences on the rally scene.
20 th June	Challenge	tbc	LONDON to ITALY MILLE-MIGLIA CHALLENGE. MCAC are down to run the start of this long distance event, organised by BEN – the motor industry charity. Full details available from Darren nearer the date.

Vacancy

A number of vacancies currently exist on Council. Should you wish to put something back into the club, apply now by seeing Andy Greenland and letting him know of your desire to stand for Council at the next AGM coming up on 22nd April.

Not least amongst these vacancies is the position of
Magazine Editor.

Chairman's Chat

The Annual Dinner attracted a few more members this year and those that did attend had a very enjoyable evening. Once more the food was excellent and there was plenty of it, while the energetic ones were encouraged onto the dance floor by the disco. There were some very good raffle prizes on offer and I think all the tables won a selection of prizes – some more than others! A couple of awards were not given out on the evening and I have those, so if the recipients let me know when they will be at Club I will bring them along for them. As always, thanks to Peter Nathan for organizing the evening. Next year's dinner will be on Saturday 30th January 2010, so book the date now and don't double book the evening.

The worthy recipient of the **PRESIDENTS AWARD** was **Vic Sitch**, in recognition of his unending support of the Club at our various events and venues over the last eight years. Regrettably, there were no suitable nominations for the **Poxon Award, Riddell Cup** and **Bengt Armco Award**, so these 'secret' awards were not presented this year. There is, however, one correction from the list published in the last magazine – **Kevin Fowler** was the winner of the **Finchley Cup** as Michael Edwards, who services for his dad, is not a member!

There were only 6 entries for the Valentine Scatter and I teamed up again with Pete Farmer – but without the good result that we achieved last year!

Despite a low entry, the first MiddleWick Stages, co-promoted with Wickford AC, ran successfully and would have contributed a small surplus except for one car wiping out the finish timing equipment!

Thanks to all those that attempted the Table Top Rally this month – I am sorry it proved too complicated for the majority. However, congratulations to Rob, who managed to work it all out, closely followed by Kevin.

Graham and I started our competitive year in mid-March with a trip to Sardinia for the Rally del Corallo. We were running well but after the fourth stage the water pump started leaking, so we had to call it a day. Luckily, we were able to borrow another one from a

fellow competitor and Peter fitted it, so that we could restart on the Saturday under the 'Catch-Up' (or Super Rally) rules. Despite missing 2 stages, we still managed to finish 19th overall (9th in Category) and 3rd in Class, picking up some valuable points for the European Historic Championship.

Our next event, in early April, is the Sanremo Rally Storico, so, rather than tow the car all the way back to England and then back down the French motorways, we left the Escort with a friendly garage in Sanremo, the tow car at Nice Airport, flew home and will fly back down to Nice, courtesy of EasyJet!

Later in April it is your chance to have a say in the running of the Club, with the AGM on the 22nd. Unfortunately Peter Nathan and Pete Farmer have tendered their resignations from Council and will not be standing for re-election. We are extremely sorry that they have decided 'enough is enough' and thank them both for their contributions over the last few years. Their input and assistance will be greatly missed.

It does mean, of course, that at least in the short term, we will be without a Competition Secretary and Magazine Editor. Currently, the Council is not up to full strength anyway, so there are several vacancies and a chance for you to do your bit for the Club. Why not consider volunteering your services and giving something back to the Club? In accordance with the Club Rules, Andy needs any nominations by the 18th April. We hope to hear from you!

On the 3rd May (Bank Holiday Sunday) we have our second new stage event of the year – The Honington Stages – at another new venue near Bury St Edmunds. This event is being run in association with the Sporting Car Club of Norfolk and is a qualifying round of the new ASEM Club Stage Rally Championship, as well as the Ward Construction AEMC Stage Rally Championship. If you can help with the marshalling or the set-up on Saturday, Andy would like to hear from you

Safe motoring and I hope to see you at the AGM and Honington.

Tony Phillips

WHAT'S ON ?

APR

2/5th		Vodafone Rally Portugal	(I)	WRC4
2/5th		24th Sanremo Rally Storico, Italy	(I)	EHRC2
5th	Sporting CCoN	Malcolm Watson Memorial Stages	(B)	AEMC
5th		Malayasian Grand Prix, Sepang	(I)	WC2
5th	CSMA	AutoSolo, Hatfield	(C)	
5th	Sutton & Cheam MC	Mini Tempest Stages, Longcross	(B)	ACSMCR2009
5th		Brands Hatch	(I)	BTCC
10/12th	Ulster AC	Circuit of Ireland	(I/A/B)	MSA Asphalt
17/18th		Pirelli International Rally	(I/A)	BRC/BHRC2/ANCRO/MSA
18th		Get it Sideways, Down Amptney	(B)	HRCRMini
19th	Mid-Derbyshire MC	Twyford Stages	(B)	
19th		Chinese Grand Prix, Shanghai	(I)	WC3
23/26th		Rally Argentina	(I)	WRC5
25th		Somerset Stages	(B)	Eng
26th	Green Belt MC	TAMs Packaging Sprint, North Weald	(B)	
26th	Oxford MC/CSMG	AutoSolo	©	
26th		Bahrain Grand Prix, Sakhir	(I)	WC4
27th		Thruxton	(I)	BTCC

MAY

1/3rd		International Rally of the Lakes, Ireland	(I)	
2/3rd		Monteberg Rallysprint	(I)	
3rd		Welsh Rally, Epynt	(B)	HRCRMini
3rd	Border MC (Lincs)	Torque BAC Stages	(B)	
3RD	MIDDX CAC/SCCON	HONINGTON STAGES 2009	(B)	MIDDX/AEMC/AEMC
6/10th		8th Historic Acropolis Rally, Greece	(I)	EHRC4
8/10th	Isle of Man Rally Ltd	RBS International Manx Rally	(A)	MSAGravel/ANCRO
10th	Herts County AAC	Spring Sprint, Debden	(B)	ACSMC
10th	Craven MC	Ellisport Longcross Stages	(B)	R2009
10th	North Humberside MC	John Overend Memorial Stages	(B)	
10th		Spanish GP, Barcelona	(I)	WC5
17th		Donington Park	(I)	BTCC
17th	South Hams MC	TSH Stages, RAF Portreath	(B)	ACSMC
17th	Borough 19 MC	Sprint, Bentwaters Parks/Honington	(B)	
21/24th		Rally d'Italia-Sardegna	(I)	WRC6
22/23rd		Jim Clark International Rally	(I)	BRC
23rd		Sezoens Rally, Bochalt	(N)	Belg
24th		Monaco Grand Prix	(I)	WC6
28/30th		Lahti Historic Rally, Finland	(I)	EHRC5
30th		Severn Valley National Rally	(A)	BHRC3/ANCRO/MSA
30/31st	Barbados Rally Club	Sol Rally Barbados	(I)	
31st		Oulton Park	(I)	BTCC

JUN

6/7th	Rally Show Ltd	The Rally Show, Chatsworth	(-)	
6/14th		Castle Coombe Classic Car Week	(-)	
7th		Turkish Grand Prix, Istanbul	(I)	WC7
10/14th		Acropolis Rally, Greece	(I)	WRC7
13th	Dukeries MC	Rainsworth Skoda Dukeries Rally	(B)	Eng
13th	Sutton & Cheam MC	CAR-nival Sprint & Autosolo, Abingdon	(B)	ACSMC
14th	Sutton & Cheam MC	CAR-nival Stages, Abingdon	(B)	AEMC/R2009
14th		Croft	(I)	BTCC
19/20th	Motorsport Midlands	Trinity Hyundai Rally of the Midlands	(B)	BTRDA/HRCRMini
19/20th	AC Targa Floria	Westhoek Rally, Ypres, Belgium	(I)	EHRC6/Belg
19/21st		Donegal International Rally, Ireland	(I)	
20th?	Borough 19 MC	Sprint, Lydden	(B)	
20th	Chelmsford MC	East Anglian Classic Road Rally	(B)	
20/21st		Mid Wales Stages	(A)	BHRC4
20/26th		21st Classic Marathon	(I)	

Pete's Patch

Ramblings from the Editor's Chair.

Well it had to happen some time. I have finally sent my letter (email) of resignation to Club Chairman Tony Phillips. I was pleased to hear him ask me to re-consider, but after much deliberation (2 seconds), I decided that enough was enough and I was going.

So there is a vacancy for a new magazine Editor from the next issue. Apply to Tony Phillips if you would like a challenge. The new incumbent will be supplied with a disc of all of the magazines that I have produced, together with all of the magazines produced by my predecessor Chris Keys.

I was driving round the M25 the other day and was amazed at the number of warnings given on the matrix signs. Most of them warned of 'Queue after next junction' or similar and, after driving for about ten miles with these signs showing on every matrix, we were finally given the all clear without having seen any sign of a queue.

Now I don't know if it is just laziness in not turning the signs off when the queue has gone or someone in Traffic Control is under the misapprehension that drivers will slow down when they see the warnings. However, if it is the latter, it presents a potentially dangerous situation. The signs are not always accompanied by a speed limit (in the variable speed limit zone) and some drivers take it upon themselves to slow down. Laudable action except that not everybody slows down, so you have the company rep in his Vectra (or whatever reps drive nowadays) not slowing down at all. It has all of the hallmarks of a serious accident in the making. Have the Traffic Controllers not heard of the boy who cried wolf. If they continue to display these warnings when there is no queue, then drivers will be inclined to ignore them because 'they are always on display and there is never a queue'. One day someone will come flying round a bend to find that there is a queue and I will be held up even longer because of the resulting accident.

Another thing I often see on the motorway is the person out in his (usually flash) car who is travelling at 70mph in the overtaking lane. They do this to force others to also travel at 70mph. I have seen tailgating so close that you could not get a fag paper between the two cars. Another potential accident. Also I have heard that it is an offence to deliberately block another driver even if they would then break the speed limit. Remember, you should be travelling in the left-hand most lane which is clear. There is nothing more annoying than travelling in the 'slow lane' only to have to cross over two lanes to be able to pass some Sunday driver poodling along in the centre lane, totally oblivious to anyone else on the road.

A couple of weeks ago, Andy Greenland and me in one car and John Wilson, Paul Brown and Nick Donaldson in the other car, entered the Hants and Berks Motor Club Pairs Scatter. This is a rare event in which teams of two cars cover the map to solve clues leading to lunchtime marshal points. They give out further clue sheets for the afternoon clues. There are panic envelopes in case you cannot find the marshals but these hold a heavy penalty if opened. We managed to locate one of the lunch marshal points but could not find the second (it turns out that a wrong gate was found which led to an incorrect marshal location). With no other options, we had to open a panic envelope. There was no point in opening a lunch marshal envelope as they had closed by the time we realised we were in the wrong place, so we opened the teatime envelope and went straight to the finish.

We were pretty disconsolate having blown what should have been an easy event. Having not done the afternoon, we were very light on miles travelled and were eventually awarded second place. Very pleasing.

I will not be seeing you next time but will be submitting the odd article.

Pete Farmer (*EX* Editor)

Middlesex County Automobile Club Ltd.
(Company Limited by Guarantee)
Companies Act 1985 and the former Companies Acts

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting ("AGM") of Middlesex County Automobile Club Ltd. ("the Club") will be held on:-

Wednesday 22nd April 2009 at 9pm

at

Gerrards Cross Sports Club, Dukes Lane, Gerrards Cross, Bucks
to conduct the following business:-

- 1 Consideration of:-
 - a) the minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Club held on 23rd April 2008;
 - b) the Annual Report of the Council of Management of the Club;
 - c) the Financial Accounts for the year ending 31st December 2008;
- 2 Election of the Officers of the Club;
- 3 Election of the Council of Management of the Club;
- 4 Consideration of any further business proposed by persons duly qualified to attend and vote at the AGM.

Club members are reminded that, pursuant to clause 49 of the Articles of the Club, any member wishing to be elected to Council must:-

- a) prepare a notice in writing nominating him or herself for Council membership;
- b) arrange for the notice to be signed by a person duly qualified to attend and vote at the AGM;
- c) prepare a further notice in writing stating his or her willingness to be elected to Council and sign this notice him or herself;
- d) forward both notices to the Secretary not more than 28 days nor less than 4 days before the date fixed for the AGM.

This procedure is not necessary for any persons already members of Council who will be seeking re-election after retiring from Council at the AGM pursuant to Clause 46 of the Articles of the Club.

By Order of the Council of Management.
A. P. J. Greenland
Secretary.
2nd March 2009

Registered Address:-
St Josephs, Heronsgate,
Rickmansworth, Herts.
Registration No. 1186777

**Financial Accounts are excluded from
the online edition of The Middlesex Magazine**



Club Treasurer Mike Cawthra pondering the accounts during an arduous day's marshalling on Rallye Sunseeker.

Oh for the quiet life....

Back in 2007, when I moved back to Yorkshire, I vowed to have a quieter life in motorsport. So much for good intentions. Since then I've been involved in over 100 events - here's an account of how it can all get out of hand... For those who don't know, I am involved with 2 clubs. North Humberside MC and MCAC. I also compete on a number of Beverley & District / Oxford / CMSG 12 cars - cheap fun for a Thursday or Friday night. Sometimes events all come at once, here's an account of 4 events in the space of 7 days... (It would have been 5 in 8, but two stage rallies were cancelled!)

8th of Feb, and I need to give one of my cars a run. The car is a Peugeot 205Gti that I bought on behalf of Andy Stacey a couple of years ago. After a while, I bought it off him and did a couple of Road Rallies in it, notably

the Pheasant Plucker with Richard Edwards and the Moonraker with Andy. The plan was to give the car a run-out at an autotest organised by North Humberside.

The car has hardly moved in 2 years, since blowing a water hose returning from an MOT. This unfortunately boiled the engine, causing the head Gasket to go... A "Newly" rebuilt engine off e-bay was sourced, but without facilities to work in, has only just been finished. That, together with a new rear beam, exhaust, clutch, steering bearings, etc - the car needed a run before the MOT.

All went fairly well, but it seems the alternator isn't charging correctly - result was a washout on the last test as not enough spark in the spark plugs...

12th of Feb - North Yorkshire is hit by another flurry of Snow. However, we're entered in the 3rd round of a local 12 car championship. Sat at home at 6.00pm and local news is telling us of police trying to rescue 10 cars stuck on a B-road, less than 2 miles from where we are supposed to start!!! We decided to venture out, expecting the event to be cancelled. Expecting it so much, we never put any fuel in the stage rally car we'd opted to use. (Limited Slippy diff, Knobbly tyres meant we had more traction than a lot of 4-wheel drives) Arriving at the start (20 minutes late) and were amazed to find the organisers opted to run the event. There were 2 competitors and 3 marshal crews, the marshals opted to enter instead. To make life more sensible we set about pre-plotting the route in the pub. Then I had to nip off to get some fuel, starting the event at 9.00, an hour late.

What a fantastic event - We still had to collect code-boards, but not knowing how the organisers were going to decide the result, we kept pushing on - at a sensible pace. "Up Norf" they have a rule you can use the same x-roads twice, as long as you turn left each time. The organisers had used this in their route, so they simply timed everyone around the loop to get a result. We were very happy to find we'd only been beaten by a Land-Rover. Result was 2nd overall, and a bag full of points for the championship

I then loaded the rallycar onto the trailer and towed it (Via the office in Birmingham) to a Friday the 13th 12 car near Silverstone. I'd entered this with a navigator that was new to me, Jonathan Sargeant from Oxford motor club. Taking the car off the trailer and disaster - sat on the trailer was the remains of a brakepad. The car wasn't going anywhere that night, so the choice was to use the Towcar, or marshal. We opted to take our time and use the towcar. First section, and we're struggling with the clues. Just made it into the control on time. 2nd section, and we're catching up a little bit of time - but by the 4th section we're right at the end of our minute. We thought we were late into this control, but a bit of sweet-talking, and we got away with it. The next section was more relaxed - giving us back the time we'd lost, Phew!

We were getting more comfortable with the conditions, the torque of the diesel skoda showing the slippery bits before finding them with the brakes. We nearly had one off - handbraking it around a triangle and we ended up nudging the bank. Apparently every single crew did the same! We weren't taking many risks, but 45 profile tyres meant we were suffering with some of the potholes. Then, on the 7th section, disaster - Punctured on one of these potholes. We frantically changed the tyre for the space-saver in the boot - and made it to the control 7 minutes late. A lot of sweet talking and the marshals gave us the time we asked for, we couldn't believe it. Better still - the next section was simple - so we set off at a pace to make up time.

Even better for us - the section was cancelled due to a timing error - result, we were clean and won the event. My first 12 car win in the driving seat!!!

Saturday, and Andy Greenland hosted his excellent Valentine Scatter. Shame there weren't more crews out - Andy does run an excellent event. I was doing this with Tonya Heap, who some of you may know from helping out at Rockingham. Peter Cox was also without a date, so he joined us in the suicide seat in the rear of the Skoda. After a bit of friendly banter with Pete Farmer and Tony Phillips (I can see an editor's comment coming in here...) we setoff to find some of Andy's cryptic clues. A reasonable run - netted us a decent score, but nothing to trouble the previous winners, just how do they do it?

Andy - thanks again for a cracking event.

So that was it, 4 events in the space of a week. Unfortunately the event at Longcross was cancelled, otherwise I'd have been there. Likewise the Riponian Stages which was cancelled by the forestry commission. Still, 4 events - 4 different Navigators/Passengers - 3 different cars. No wonder the events mount up.

Happy motoring,
Rob Brook

Membership Matters

The recession is having a noticeable effect on Rallying and, of course on Club Memberships. Slightly more hidden is the effect on Council Members. We have several members who have had to step down due to their need to concentrate on home matters rather than Club business, so as we approach the AGM, please give thought to helping out on Council, we need new blood to keep things running in the MCAC tradition.

The MCAC Membership Card gives access to events where entries are invited from members of the London Counties, Eastern, Central Southern and Welsh Associations, and all events thus entered are "point's scorers" in the Club Championships. Only events organised, or co-organised, by MCAC count towards the Middlesex Challenge.

Please note that you may be asked to produce your membership card at the start of any event where the Club is on the invited list.

MCAC CHALLENGE 2009

With the first 2 scoring rounds of this year's Challenge being the Valentine Scatter and the MiddleWick Stages, we have a slightly odd score sheet, with no less than 6 class winners from these events scoring 100 points.

1= James Betchley, Simon Fowler, Richard Upton, Paul Bareham, Richard Edwards and Paul Brown.

7= Stuart Cogger and Mike Dawson on 93.32 points.

9= Rob Brook and Tonya Heap on 81.61 points.

Next round will be the Brakefast Autotest and Autosolo event on March 22nd at Bovingdon.

Changes of Address and E-mail addresses.

Please make sure I have your current addresses etc. I have changed my ISP and also changed to Web-based mail, and some addresses may be incorrect, so if you have not received a Net News from me regarding the Middlewick Stages event, send me a mail to brianc@mcac.co.uk so I can include you in the mailing lists. If you wish me to send to a different address, also please let me know.

Brian Catt brianc@mcac.co.uk

STOP PRESS

Since Brian submitted this article, the Brakefast Autotest and Autosolo have taken place. Rob Rolston and Mark Webster gaining 100 points, Jon Senior 99.66 points, Chris Keys 96.23 points, Rob Brook 95.94

points and Martin Lush 93.73 points. This means that Rob Brook is currently leading the Middlesex Challenge with 177.55 points, followed some way behind by eight members, all on 100 points

**Thame Motorsport Club, Oxford Motor Club, O.U.M.F.,
Middlesex Auto Club & Dolphin Motor Club**

Are invited to enjoy the challenge of

The Chiltern Rally 2009

on Thursday May 7th.

Starting and finishing in the Chinor area.

1st car at 8.15 pm, finishing by 10.30 for supper and results.

50 miles on map165, utilising the challenging Chiltern Hills.

Experts, Novices and Beginners catered for.

If you wish to enter or marshal please contact Brian Cammack:
Email: Lancaster12@ntlworld.com or call 07789 197650

Regs soon to be available on www.mcac.co.uk

Position Wanted

One time club member and regular marshal on MCAC (and other) events says that he has had enough of Norwich and wishes to return to the West London Area.

He is currently seeking employment and will consider anything legal.

In the past, he has dabbled in sales, courier driving and has a fork lift license.

Max can be contacted on 07774 949187

Or by email on maxmaxwelluk@yahoo.co.uk

Who knows, if he gets a local job, he may re-join MCAC so any employer would be doing Max and MCAC a favour.

The Darwin Awards 2009

Yes, it's that magical time of year again when the Darwin Awards are bestowed, honouring the least evolved among us.

Here is the glorious winner:

1. When his 38 calibre revolver failed to fire at his intended victim during a hold-up in Long Beach, California would-be robber James Elliot did something that can only inspire wonder. He peered down the barrel and tried the trigger again. This time it worked.

And now, the honourable mentions:

2. The chef at a hotel in Switzerland lost a finger in a meat cutting machine and after a little shopping around, submitted a claim to his insurance company. The company expecting negligence sent out one of its men to have a look for himself. He tried the machine and he also lost a finger. The chef's claim was approved.

3. A man who shovelled snow for an hour to clear a space for his car during a blizzard in Chicago returned with his vehicle to find a woman had taken the space. Understandably, he shot her.

4. After stopping for drinks at an illegal bar, a Zimbabwean bus driver found that the 20 mental patients he was supposed to be transporting from Harare to Bulawayo had escaped. Not wanting to admit his incompetence, the driver went to a nearby bus stop and offered everyone waiting there a free ride. He then delivered the passengers to the mental hospital, telling the staff that the patients were very excitable and prone to bizarre fantasies. The deception wasn't discovered for 3 days.

5. An American teenager was in the hospital recovering from serious head wounds received from an oncoming train. When asked how he received the injuries, the lad told police that he was simply trying to see how close he could get his head to a moving train before he was hit.

6. A man walked into a Louisiana Circle-K, put a \$20 bill on the counter, and asked for change. When the clerk opened the cash drawer, the man pulled a gun and asked for all the cash in the register, which the clerk promptly provided. The man took the cash from the clerk and fled, leaving the \$20 bill on the counter. The total amount of cash he got from the drawer... \$15. [If someone points a gun at you and gives you money, is a crime committed?]

7. Seems an Arkansas guy wanted some beer pretty badly. He decided that he'd just throw a cinder block through a liquor store window, grab some booze, and run. So he lifted the cinder block and heaved it over his head at the window. The cinder block bounced back and hit the would-be thief on the head, knocking him unconscious. The liquor store window was made of Plexiglas. The whole event was caught on videotape.

8. As a female shopper exited a New York convenience store, a man grabbed her purse and ran. The clerk called 911 immediately, and the woman was able to give them a detailed description of the snatcher. Within minutes, the police apprehended the snatcher. They put him in the car and drove back to the store. The thief was then taken out of the car and told to stand there for a positive ID. To which he replied, "Yes, officer, that's her. That's the lady I stole the purse from."

9. The Ann Arbor News crime column reported that a man walked into a Burger King in Ypsilanti, Michigan at 5 A.M., flashed a gun, and demanded cash. The clerk turned him down because he said he couldn't open the cash register without a food order. When the man ordered onion rings, the clerk said they weren't available for breakfast. The man, frustrated, walked away. [*A 5-STAR STUPIDITY AWARD WINNER]

10. When a man attempted to siphon gasoline from a motor home parked on a Seattle street, he got much more than he bargained for. Police arrived at the scene to find a very sick man curled up next to a motor home near spilled sewage. A police spokesman said that the man admitted to steal gasoline and plugged his siphon hose into the motor home's sewage tank by mistake. The owner of the vehicle declined to press charges saying, that it was the best laugh he'd ever had.

In the interest of bettering mankind, please share these with friends and family...unless of course one of these individuals by chance is a distant relative or long lost friend. In that case, be glad they are distant and hope they remain lost.

*** Remember... They walk among us!!!

Vacation Chips

According to Thomas Cook in the UK, some holidaymakers are just never satisfied. Here are the top ten most bizarre and genuine customer complaints received by the firm in recent years:

- 1 On my holiday to Goa in India, I was disgusted to find that almost every restaurant served curry. I don't like spicy food at all.
- 2 The beach was too sandy.
- 3 I bought a snorkel and swimming mask for my six-year-old son, but he was too upset to use them as the fish frightened him.
- 4 It rained on my birthday.
- 5 Topless sunbathing on the beach should be banned. The holiday was ruined as my husband spent all day looking at other women.
- 6 I think it should be explained in the brochure that the local store does not sell proper biscuits like custard creams or ginger nuts.
- 7 It's lazy of the local shopkeepers to close in the afternoons. I often needed to buy things during 'siesta' time - this should be banned.
- 8 We bought 'Ray-Ban' sunglasses for five euros (£3.50) from a street trader, only to find out they were fake.
- 9 None of the hotel staff was English, and the tea didn't taste the same as at home.
- 10 I would like to complain about the price of alcohol in the resort. It was too cheap and I woke with a hangover every day.

Historic Car Racer Paul Hopkinson

Will be taking Bertie, his beloved Alfa Romeo which featured on the cover of The Middlesex Magazine a few issues ago to a couple of race meetings in the near future and would love you to come along and support him.

The meetings are:-

The International Trophy meeting at Silverstone on May 9th/10th

And

Autosport Three Hour meeting for GT and sports racing cars at Snetterton on May 30th/31st

Further details at www.hsc.org.uk

Finally a couple of photos from Mark Davis taken at The Middlewick Stages



**Winners Richard Upton and Paul Bareham
Ford Sierra Cosworth**



**2nd Place Richard Edwards and Paul Brown
Ford Escort RS**