



YORKSHIRE CENTRE

ISSUE NO 29

TIMES



FEBRUARY 1991

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

Dear Member

The season rapidly approaches and no doubt you are frantically beavering away to get your cars ready for the season.

It is now only a few weeks until our practice day at Harewood and marshals training will also take place. We have also taken the opportunity to combine this with the Centre's AGM on the Sunday, after the meeting.

I will keep my note brief this month to allow Pat to fill the pages with more excellent communications about your Yorkshire Centre.

Tim Thomson

BARC YORKSHIRE CENTRE COMMITTEE MEETING 7th JANUARY 1991

TONY HODGETTS

The Annual General Meeting will be held at the conclusion of the Practice Day; the committee hope that this will enable a good number of competitors and marshals to attend.

Simon Clark reported that we have received planning permission for the proposed extension to the track at Harewood and we can now proceed to obtain quotes for the work.

As the RAC MSA has greatly increased the responsibilities of the Clerk of Course for the 1991 season, two trainee Clerks will join the organising team to assist and learn the duties. Graham Wride and John Staveley will undertake the task in 1991.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Will all members please notify their change of address directly to headquarters. Informing me will not necessarily ensure that you continue to receive your magazine as the address labels are despatched from headquarters.

Pat Kenyon

ANNUAL DINNER AND AWARD PRESENTATION

SATURDAY 16th FEBRUARY 1991

PARKWAY HOTEL, OTLEY ROAD, LEEDS

Don't forget, if you haven't yet got your tickets, there may just be time. Contact Tim Thomson on 0756 799911 as soon as possible.

EDITORIAL

Will all members please note that the date and time of this year's AGM deliberately coincides with the Practice Day. The committee hope that this will attract more members to attend this most important meeting, so please don't rush away after the conclusion of the event, but stay to give your views and support to the committee.

As we move into a new competitive season, one can only speculate on the effects of the present economic and war situation the country finds itself in. This could possibly drastically reduce the level of entries at many events although Harewood will possibly ride out the storm with less ill effect than many other clubs.

In an earlier 'Times' I wrote concerning the proliferation of championships and as each season goes by, more and more championships seem to creep into the calendar. London and Home Counties Centre of the BARC, last year, instituted a new Sprint and Hillclimb Championship which was mainly based in the south of the country and used the 'southern classes'. This year they have adopted our Marque and Touring and Formula Ford classes. This should mean that many of our highly competitive drivers can now spread their wings throughout the length and breadth of the country and I hope many of them will take up the opportunity.

The 'Times' is sometimes criticized for being biased solely towards Harewood and its happenings, but then others believe that at times it swings too far away from the Yorkshire Centre happenings. I attempt to keep things within balance but it is difficult without your continuous support to produce a varied and interesting magazine so I urge all members whether they be racing, sprinting, hillclimbing or indulging in any other form of motor sport, to send in a short article if at all possible. To those who have already contributed, my grateful thanks and I look forward to many new contributors throughout the coming season.

Pat Kenyon

ARTICLES FOR THE NEXT EDITION OF THE 'TIMES' BY MONDAY 18th FEBRUARY 1991 PLEASE, TO THE EDITOR:-

MRS PAT KENYON
4 LESLIE ROAD
HILLSBOROUGH
SHEFFIELD
S6 4RB
TEL: 0742 340478

Dear Official

Thank you for your help at Harewood Hillclimb during 1990.

I look forward to seeing you again in 1991 and enclosed is a 1991 Marshals Availability Form.

As we need as many officials as possible for the forthcoming season, especially on Saturdays, please let me know if you wish me to send this form to any of your friends or anybody you feel may be interested in helping.

I look forward to receiving your completed Marshals Form as soon as possible, but please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further assistance. The Marshals Form is double sided so that you may keep a copy for your records.

Kind regards
Yours sincerely

David Dalrymple
Chief Marshal
BARC (Yorkshire Centre)

Clayton West
11.1.91

Dear Pat

A sincere and heartfelt thank you to all the people who sent cards and letters of condolence on the death of my husband.

To Tony's friends who attended the funeral, many thanks. I think he would have been surprised to find so many people there paying their respects to him.

A special thank you to John and Janet Bennett for helping to keep me sane; also to them, Pat and Brian, Michael and Auriol Bird and Graham Sherwood for making the scattering of Tony's ashes at Baitings Dam, during the December hillclimb, a far less harrowing experience than I had anticipated.

I shall still be spectating at the hillclimbs and sprints and although it's going to take two of us to do the job of one man, John Bennett and myself will be joint co-ordinators of the 'Hammond's Bedroom Challenge' (Tony's choice of words, not mine) which supersedes the Sedan sponsorship. As Pat and Brian have said before, 'Tony's Championship' will continue.

During my fifteen years with AJB, he 'taught' me the Bridgen philosophy of not being one of the sheep, to be independent in my thinking and actions and to be capable of standing on my own two feet. Time to put words into practice.

A last thank you to all the people who have sent donations to us for the Chest, Heart and Stroke Association, the total to date is just over three hundred pounds.

Yours sincerely

Carolyn Bridgen

WANTED URGENTLY

Scoreboard operator for Harewood.

Would anyone who is interested in doing this very worthwhile and valuable job, please contact Tim Smith on 0943-466859 (24hrs).

Dear Brian

I was very interested to see your thoughts on a Classic Class for Harewood, as you may well recall I submitted my own ideas of a basis for such a class at the Classes Forum in 1988.

There is now a large and growing interest in this form of Motor Sport which can provide relatively inexpensive fun for the competitor, and good entertainment for the spectator. With your current thoughts on the subject I think you've just about got it right, but I attach with this letter a complete set of regulations for the BRSCC Historic Saloon Series to which I prepared my Anglia.

If I may also add my own comments to yours;

Engine - Engines must be in the original position, be of original design and of the original manufacturers family. Original engine mounts must be used. This allows competitors to take advantage of reliability improvements in block design provided fundamental operating design principles for the cut-off date remain the same e.g. pre-crossflow head on a 711M block would be acceptable or an A+ block for BL engines. A twin-cam Anglia would be within the regs, a push-rod crossflow version would not.

Wheels - The rim width limitation would negate much of the power advantage of some of the more exotic period hybrids. I would, however, request production tyres as per 'Blue Book'. This stays in line with other Classic/Historic series. The aforementioned twin-cam Anglia on 5½" rims would provide a fair spectacle for the crowd and require similar skill from the driver.

Brakes - I would tend to leave brake systems as free. Let's not hinder safety by insisting on period standards of braking.

Cut off Date - Bring the cut off date to 31st December 1966 to allow in 1275 A series engines.

Above all I would emphasise the spirit of the regs within these simple rules and emphasise the standard of preparation. An image of 'old bangers' does nothing for such a class so perhaps a designated scrutineer might also be an idea to restrain the more 'imaginative' and monitor and guide technical standards.

I am now preparing an Austin A40 to the BRSCC regs so will support any Classic Class at Harewood. Let's hope it gets some support, you certainly have mine.

Regards

Archie Inglis

VIDEO VIEW

TIM BENDELOW

British Movietone News: 'Motoring & Racing'
58 minutes; £9.99

The video is a couple of years old but it's still worth a look at to revel in the nostalgia of the racing scene of days gone by. It covers a variety of subjects - 20's & 30's racing at Brooklands; 50's & 60's racing at Goodwood; various LSR attempts by the Campbells and John Cobb; BRM's racing debut; London - Brighton runs as well as spills; the first Ladies/Mens car race; a look at a 50's Motor Show and a Rolls Royce gathering.

The tape isn't set out in chronological order but this doesn't detract as it's a general view of differing aspects of motorsport and general motoring.

I'll lend you my copy if you can't locate a copy.

LIFE BEGINS AT 40?

MITCH ELLIOTT

As a youngster, 40 seemed 'light years' away. Having reached (and passed) this milestone, I am now in a second 'motor sport' life.

Having had an interest for as long as I can remember, the earliest memories are of accompanying Dad to Cadwell in the mid-fifties to watch the 'mixed' bike and car meetings, the cars being the m/c engined 500cc F3 cars of the period. Two events remain prominent in my memory from teenage years spent spectating, firstly the 1962 'opening' of the Cadwell circuit as it is today. This had an entry which would have graced a Grand Prix, the solos were led by the likes of Mike Hailwood and Jim Redman, the sidecar entry was just as good with the likes of Max Deubel and Florian Camathisa.

The second event from this era was the 1964 250cc British Moto?cross GP held for the one and only time at Cadwell. A good crowd witnessed a superb battle between Dave Bickers on the factory Greeves and Joel Robert on a works CZ. From memory I think Bickers was the overall winner on the day.

My 'active' career began around this time when I started 'spannering' for a friend who rode on the 'grass', this continued through to the early 70's when I took to the saddle myself. Competing for a number of years, winters were spent trials riding. I feel very fortunate to have been involved with grass-tracking through, what I consider, its 'heyday' with 'local' events attracting the likes of Mike Beaumont and Frank Smith down from Yorkshire to compete against the locals such as Brian Maxted and 'Chippy' Moore. The sidecars were equally good with locals such as 'Paddy' Lynch and Colin Banks fending off the 'northern' challenge from the likes of Alan Blewit and Dennis Teasdale. Such was the talent, any East Midland or Yorkshire Centre event was just like a 'National' meeting.

Family pressures (the responsibility of a married man etc) finally won the day and helmet and leathers were 'hung up', the 'bug' was dormant for a few years. Marshalling at bike and then car events brought things back to life.

A return was interrupted by divorce and its trappings, eventually at the age of 39 I 'made it back' with a Formula Vee at the latter end of 1988. I very soon came to the conclusion that my 6' 2", 14 stone frame was not cut out for a single seater, and an alternative was to be found for 1989. This was 'found' at Easter 89, a days spectating at the opening Harewood Hillclimb convinced me that this was the sport to be in. The May 'Novices' event saw my baptism. Since that event I have participated in (with varying success) production car trials, classic trials and navigational road rallies. With the exception of the latter, all the other activities enjoy a similar friendly atmosphere which enhances the pleasure element. I personally find the satisfaction of 'cleaning' a trials section just as rewarding as improving ones personal best time at a hillclimb.

I have enjoyed every second of my 'comeback' and hope to do so for many years to come. To all who are not involved but want to be, I can only say, you are never too old, be it

marshalling, organising or competing. Get out there and enjoy yourself, whatever you ride or drive there is some form of motor sport you can use it in. Richen your life, be a 'sporting' motor(cycle)ist.

Life really can begin at 40 (30, 50 or 60), I look forward to seeing you out there.

'TIMES' BOOK REVIEW

PETER HERBERT

FORMULA ONE

by

BOB JUDD

Writing a motor racing based thriller is tricky. Technical accuracy and plausibility could have the average reader fighting back the yawns by page three. A more fanciful and sensationalist approach may alienate the enthusiast readership. Bob Judd, in his work 'Formula One', makes a brave attempt to satisfy both audiences, but perhaps inevitably has produced a book that fails to work as a motor racing story or a thriller.

The sponsorship chasing, testing and racing are believable enough, although there are no stunning insights; it can all be gleaned on Sunday afternoons from Murray and James. Many of the pit lane characters seem very familiar too, particularly the ever so English team owner who just has to be based on Uncle Ken. However the hot-shoe hero is not only quick behind the wheel, he is pretty fast with his fists and his naughty bits as well and is soon immersed in a web of murder and narcotics smuggling.

Perhaps I was expecting too much, or perhaps real life Formula One contains more than enough drama already, but I found this book disappointing, despite trying ever so hard to like it.

ECURIE ECOSSE

by

DAVID MURRAY

There was a time during the fifties and early sixties when the address of Merchiston Mews was as evocative to motor racing enthusiasts as Maranello, for this was the Edinburgh base of Ecurie Ecosse, Scotland's Le Mans winning sports car team.

Re-reading David Murray's uncomplicated little book, which I was fortunate to obtain as a signed first edition in 1962, serves as a reminder of the amazing success this small amateur team achieved against the might of the factory teams of the day. Murray, an Edinburgh accountant and wine merchant whose racing career ended in a wrecked Maserati at the Nurburgring, brought together the famous blue Jaguars tended by the legendary Wilkie Wilkinson. Such drivers as Ron Flockart, Ninian Sanderson, Ian Stewart, Jimmy Stewart and Desmond Titterington made their names with the team, the highlights of which were Le Mans victories in 1956 and 1957.

Written in a slightly 'Boys Own' style, this book is a worthy record of both a remarkable group of enthusiasts and a past age of motor sport. An age when a Jaguar D Type cost just under £1900, a racing car could be tested on the open road with a reasonable chance of impunity, and a suitably distracted Italian policeman could have a piece snipped off his tie by a squiffy racing driver.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE BRITISH AUTOMOBILE RACING CLUB YORKSHIRE CENTRE WILL BE HELD IN THE CLUBROOM, STOCKTON FARM, HAREWOOD AT 6.00pm ON SUNDAY 10th MARCH 1991

BY ORDER OF THE COMMITTEE

J M ENGLISH
HON. SECRETARY

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

THE CLUBROOM

STOCKTON FARM

HAREWOOD

6.00pm

SUNDAY 10th MARCH 1991

Nominations for the Committee, which must be in writing with the knowledge and consent of the nominee, and must be duly proposed and seconded by two members of the Centre, must be in the hands of the Hon. Secretary, John English, 32, Farfield Avenue, Knaresborough, HG5 8HB by the morning of Saturday 2nd March 1991.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

March 10th	Harewood Practice Day and Marshals Training Day
March 10th	Annual General Meeting in the Clubroom at 6.00pm following the Practice Day
March 30th	BARC/CCC Championship Meeting at Harewood
March 31st	Harewood National Meeting
May 11th	International Porsche 356 Classic Run
May 18th	Harewood Novices Meeting
May 19th	Harewood Members Meeting
June 8th	Jim Thomson Memorial Trophy Meeting
June 9th	Harewood Championship Meeting
July 20th/21st	Harewood RAC National Meeting
Aug 18th	Harewood Members Meeting
Sept 28th/29th	Harewood Finals Meeting

NEW HAREWOOD COURSE

Planning permission has been granted for the extension to the course at Harewood.

The committee are pursuing this as quickly as possible and will issue more details in the future, as soon as they are available.

DE LACY INTERNATIONAL RALLY

The BARC have been asked to help the BRMC to marshal on the De Lacy International Rally on Sunday 24th February.

Scrutineering will be undercover, in York, most of Friday. The stage will be set up on Saturday 23rd February in Dalby Forest and the event is on Sunday 24th February. The stage, with chicanes, is 20 miles long and is run twice at 0418 and 0915. It has about 40 junctions - Woodyard, Quarry and all!!

There are vacancies at all times and locations, scrutineering, setting up, arrival, start, in stage and stop line.

Signing on for marshals for the stage is at the Cayley Arms Hotel, Allerston, 3 miles east of Thornton Dale on the A170, from 7pm Saturday until you are thrown out!

Anyone wishing to help please contact Bob Wright, 'Arrivee', Harrogate Road, Rawdon, Leeds, LS19 6NB Tel; (H) 0532-391229 (?) 0860-866935 or (W) 0423-500600 Ex 3226.

SING ALONG WITH RONAN

PETER HERBERT

The redoubtable Mitch Elliott normally keeps us informed as to the latest in motor sporting videos, however I feel sure that he won't mind if I share with members a rather interesting item which I was recently lent.

Virgin Video in conjunction with Shell, offer 120 minutes of highlights of the 1988 British Open Rally Championship. Imaginatively filmed by Barrie Hinchliffe with commentary by Steve Rider, this tape is more than a mere rehash of BBC Grandstand's coverage of the six round series. You do remember the days when the beeb covered rallying properly I hope? From the mud of Yorkshire to the dust of Scotland it's all there with interesting scene-setting historic footage as well. For me, a devoted road rallying fanatic, the tarmac events are the best; and the sight of Patrick Snyers flinging a BMW M3 through the Manx lanes is an electrifying testimony to committed driving. The in-car action is captivating too, the most memorable being a ride with Ari Vatanen in a Manta 400 on an earlier Manx, and Terry Harriman's memorable reaction to his driver losing it on a flat out left hander, only to sort the big Opel out in time to slot it through a gated cattle grid.

The finale is an in-car trip over two Circuit of Ireland stages with Mark Lovell and Ronan Morgan in a Sierra Cosworth, and a pace note book is provided with the tape to enable the intrepid viewer to attempt to keep pace with the crew. A sort of sing along with Ronan. Anyone with more than a passing interest in rallying will love this video.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to Denys and April Townsend on the birth of their second daughter, Sophie, on December 4th 1990. Both mother and daughter are well.

THE INCLUSION OF ANY ARTICLE IN THIS PUBLICATION DOES NOT IMPLY THAT THE CLUB, ITS OFFICERS, ITS EDITORIAL STAFF OR ANY OTHER MEMBER SHARES ANY OPINION EXPRESSED THEREIN.

FOR SALE

Van Diemen RF85 FF1600

Ultra successful car

Harewood record holder 42.83

Scammonden record holder 24.91

Curborough 33.88

Numerous class wins, 3rd in Harewood
Championship, 1st Lancs & Cheshire Championship
Complete, less engine. (Body moulds negotiable)

£3,250

Telephone John Bennett

H:0924 405464

W:0924 405322

FOR SALE

Hewland Mk9 (series 5 large bore gears) 5 speed
gearbox with 6/31 cw & p and LSD. Rebuilt by
PDS in July 1990 with new Brazil case.

£1475

17 spare ratios

£25 each

9/31 cw & p

£150

Contact Leon Bachelier on:-

0535 655321 (W) 0943 830402 (H)

FOR SALE

Ford 1600 push rod, ultimate all steel
Chamberlain, 186 bhp, 131 lb ft, twin plate
clutch, twin 48 carbs, may be heard running.

Ex Midland Championship winning Caterham.

£2995

Contact Leon Bachelier on :-

0535.655321 (W) or 0943 830402 (H)

WANTED URGENTLY

Pair of 7.5 x 21 x 13 Avon A16's
with life left in them.

Similar sized A15's considered.

Please help.

Peter Herbert

Tel: 0325 374656 (H) or 091 386 6111 Ext 330 (W)

BARC/CAR & CAR CONVERSIONS SPRINT & HILLCLIMB CHAMPIONSHIP

As yet regulations are not available for
the above championship but it would appear that
those who have contested the championship last
year are already writing in considerable numbers
for regs. This could mean that unless Yorkshire
members immediately contact Ian Bax or the
London & Home Counties or perhaps even Car & Car
Conversions, they may find themselves out in the
cold.

After the efforts of John English and
Denys Townsend in putting forward the case for
Marque, Touring and Formula Ford classes to be
incorporated within this championship, it would
reflect badly upon all those within those
classes if we did not support the championship.

From what I saw of the competition, both
at Harewood and Curborough, we should acquit
ourselves well.

Brian Kenyon

RAC RALLY 1990

MITCH ELLIOTT

For me, this year's event started on the
Wednesday night at the Children in Need RAC
Round Table charity show held at Scunthorpe. A
good crowd witnessed a very entertaining forum,
David Llewellyn and Phil Short being
particularly entertaining. Hannu Mikkola very
nearly succumbed to the heat of the stage
floodlights and an unannounced 'coup' was the
appearance of Louise Aitken-Walker and Tina
Turner. Having as usual succumbed to the charms
of the raffle ticket ladies, the last 'port of
call' was to the Round Table stall. I was
somewhat taken aback when told that I had won an
armchair!! - it turned out to be a very nice
grey velour bedroom chair. I was the recipient
of several 'funny looks' whilst carrying the
chair to the car, then came the next problem,
'how the hell to fit it into the boot', this
achieved, we set off home. The journey was
somewhat slowed by a very heavy frost
accompanied by thick fog.

Thursday morning saw an early start
retracing our steps of the previous evening back
to Scunthorpe, thankfully the fog had eased to
'misty' conditions. Signing on completed we set
off into the stage and set the radio up in
readiness for the two 'recce' passes, the
British Steel site was 'live' indeed, at one
point we had to hold up proceedings to allow a
truck loaded with wood shavings to gain access
to a poultry farm located within the complex.
Lunch was taken at the British Steel Conference
Centre and a pleasant surprise awaited us in the
form of Ari Vatanen, who during his stay,
provided a very witty 'live' commentary to the
oft played extract from the video of his Manta
days showing his approach to a gateway, at high
speed, with a puncture.

The day was completed with two local crews
doing competitive runs through part of the stage
for the benefit of local press, TV and radio.
Friday was slightly more leisurely with a 9.00am
start, Phil and yours truly certainly flexed a
few dormant muscles in the process of driving a
steel spike into bedrock in an effort to provide
some sort of location for the stakes, a long day
saw the sector finally staked. I had a 'day
off' on the Saturday, those who did attend had a
very wet day to tape up.

Sunday saw the alarmclock burst into life
at some ungodly hour, Scunthorpe Steelworks at
06.30am is not an appealing site, dawn broke
into a bright and clear morning, it boded well
for a 'full house'. We were given to understand
that the break even figure was 30,000 with up to
50,000 expected. We were at junction 27 and had
a sparse attendance all day, those parts of the
stage close to the public roads had a good crowd
but the break even figure was, I think, not
achieved. Anyway, back to the event and as if
by magic, as car 000 came through, the fog came
down!

The first half of the field had very murky
conditions, sadly it all went very wrong for
Jimmy McRae. Midway between junction 26 and 27
a very fast 45 degree left hand bend is bordered
on the outside by a big ditch, approach speeds
are well into three figures. For whatever
reason, the distance was misjudged, the result
being a tail over nose flip into the ditch, the
car settled nicely between the banks and

required a recovery vehicle to lift it out at the end of the day. Further excitement ensued when one of the Daihatsus expired in a cloud of smoke having digested part of the valve gear. The rest of the field passed through without incident and by mid-afternoon, Scunthorpe had returned to normal.

Monday again saw the alarm primed for an early start, the destination was Pickering. 07.30 saw us all meet up in the car park as planned, the run to Levisham and down to the station made me wish that it was easier to close public roads than it is, the run up the hill from the station has all the makings of a very good and fast hillclimb. Signing on took place in heavy drizzle, the road underfoot was definitely 'slick'. 'Our' slot for the day (and evening) was junction 5, a fast uphill approach over a K right crest and then downhill through a gateway. We had only just got the 'box' taped when the first two spectators arrived, it took several minutes of conversation to identify the accent, it turned out they were South African and were over especially for the event. A very interesting discussion on both the RAC and events in their homeland. They could not get used to the time and distance to get from stage to stage, they were used to events with little distance between stages even though total event distances were greater than the RAC. They also run non-stop, they did appreciate the 1 minute between cars as back home, 5 minutes was not unusual on some events to allow the dust to settle.

A trouble free first pass allowed us just enough time to put the kettle on and stoke the barbecue up, mid-morning had seen the rain die away so at least things were not too soggy, hot coals and rain produce some interesting flavours.

Bang on time the first car could be heard in the distance, the daylight run had 'sorted the men from the boys' with only the brave not lifting off the power for the gateway. With the onset of darkness it was only the very brave who took it flat, the Lancias were spectacular with a good flame showing from the exhaust on the overrun. Like the first run, no problems arose. News filtered through, courtesy of well equipped spectators of the various happenings. Thankfully the rain held off until everything was stowed away, it then made for an interesting passage through the stage and back to Pickering. That was it for me this year but I must admit to feeling a little envious of those making the trip up to Comb on the Wednesday, particularly as we usually go up to Castle Oer.

Such is the pace of development that the cars appear to be getting close to the old Gp B cars in terms of spectacle and with pace notes, stage times must be getting surpassed, certainly this year's event 'stirred the blood' better than in the recent past. I have a great affinity with the Yorkshire Forests and now look forward to February and the Cartel?

WHY A WESTFIELD

PETER HERBERT

Possible the happiest moment of my second season of speed eventing took place on a Sunday last April. I had been invited into the hallowed confines of the beer tent to receive my first Harewood award, and it was a proud moment as I stepped forward to accept the tankard, applauded by the rich and famous whom I held so much in awe. Later in the season, when I became

an old hand at this sort of thing, I came to realise that a longer approach from a far corner of the tent resulted in even lengthier applause. A Westfield can do things for you.

Not that the portents were good on my debut in the car the previous day. As a child of the 'hot hatch', I had been struggling in the damp conditions of Saturday's 'Motorola/Codex' round to come to terms with the Westfield's classic front engine - rear wheel drive configuration, power to weight ratio and sensitivity. I also felt bloody vulnerable in the open fibre-glass cockpit as armco sped past at head height. A first practice run, spin at Quarry shattered my fragile confidence and by the end of the meeting abject depression set in as I failed to get close to the best time set the previous season in a standard Peugeot 205 GTi 1.9.

But Sunday was another day. The weather was brighter and I was joined in my class by three inspirational characters who were to play key roles in my pleasant indoctrination into Modified Sports Cars. 'The Maestro', Graham Oates, was to set the pace in the Europa, whilst 'Ecurie Ecosse - Lancs' was to provide the competition in the form of the Archie Inglis - Gordon Wright Midget. Indeed it was the look of delight on Archie's little face following his first ever sub 50 second run that prompted me to shatter my Peugeot time by over 3 seconds, and so gain entry to the award presentation.

I hadn't planned to buy a Westfield, it just turned out that way. After a first season in my standard road car, I was looking around for a purpose built competition car this time last year; one that I could risk on Sundays without having to rely upon it for work on Mondays. However I wanted a car that was road legal, so that it would not spend most of its days lying inside a garage. Comfortable with saloons I considered first a Renault 5 GT Turbo, but hefty depreciation and turbocharger unreliability bothered me. My next idea was to find a bent Nova and have it prepared, but the right car never materialised. Sports car owning friends then suggested a Midget and a 'Marque' example was sought. However such machines were thin on the ground and much cherished by owners, so again I was thwarted. The previous summer I had been allowed to take the wheel of a pal's newly acquired Caterham Seven Super Sprint, and it was a revelation. A Seven would be magic on a track, I decided, but I did not have that kind of money. Then an advertisement in Autosport changed my life.

My first glimpse of Stuart Gray's successful circuit racing Westfield SE was in a cold concrete pit garage at a snow-bound Knockhill, where the former Reynard FF2000 driver is assistant circuit manager and chief racing school instructor. The arctic conditions precluded a test drive, but I bought the yellow two seater anyway. At half the price of a comparable Caterham, how could I go wrong?

As I am to car mechanics what Les Dawson is to the piano, I left the preparation of my latest acquisition to an old pal of mine, Russ Cockburn of Century House Garage, Newsham. A strip down revealed most components to be in place and in full working order, though the expected straight cut box turned out to be a rather knackered standard 1600E unit. A replacement Trans X RS2000 gearbox was squeezed in on the eve of the first event, the alloy bell housing's twin starter motor lugs necessitating

AN INSIGHT TO N A S C A R RACING

BEV FAWKES

some chassis modifications. Unfortunately time ran out before the gear lever could be heated and bent to accept a knob and clear the dash board, so Harewood was tackled with a bare metal lever hidden beneath the fascia. Considering that I was also running on well worn Yokohama road tyres with a motor 30 bhp down on what it should have been, my time of 49.10 was a miracle. Amazingly, despite the later addition of a set of new Avon Turbospeeds, a Tony Law exhaust and a session on a rolling road which produced an extra 28 bhp, it took three more Harewood meetings to improve on that time.

Remarkably, my second season was even more enjoyable than my first. My left leg hardly shakes at all now when I sit on the start line, and I have reduced my number of visits to the loo to three before strapping myself in. Should I ever achieve total relaxation, perhaps I will be quicker, although it is said that a little adrenalin is no bad thing. From ten starts I took four seconds and a fourth, together with a Sedan Challenge class win. I got into the 38's at Curborough, just outside 100 seconds for three laps of Kames and to within three hundredths of the 47's at Harewood. Hardly earth shattering, but steadily improving. I'm an enthusiast first and a driver second, so just being there in something resembling a racing car is enough. Disbelievers still ask me why I do it. Why devote so much time for seconds of competition? The answer is that I enjoy the whole thing. The people, the cars, the places, the atmosphere; and my god, when a quick time comes my way it stays with me for a very long time.

VIDEO VIEW

MITCH ELLIOTT

A complete change of viewing from the usual is 'Daytona - Speed City USA' by Duke Marketing, 60 mins, £9.99.

A potted history of the 1990 motor cycle activities at Daytona. Having spent more years involved with 2 wheels as opposed to 4, bikes still hold a special interest for me. The week's activities are charted from the custom shows thru drag racing and moto-cross to all the circuit action leading up to the main event.

Of particular interest was the section on the Harley Davidson owners, a meet of custom and 'chopped' bikes reveals some odd ball owners and even more oddball ladies (some of whom are very revealing). Some interesting Harley drag bikes are shown in action with one multi-engined device exhibiting some superb engineering and attention to detail, this could not be said of the rider and his crew, all of whom displayed a close likeness to 'Grizzly Adams' in both build and hairiness (the rider's main problem was how to tuck his beard away).

Having read all the 'hype' over the years, it came as something of a culture shock when seen on film. I can only describe the Daytona road circuit area as a dump, the likes of Carnaby come over much better on film, they also appear to be better prepared.

A well made tape which also benefits from having a 'British' commentary courtesy of ex Motor Cycle News man and regular TV commentator, Chris Carter.

Up until the end of June my 1990 season was not exactly exciting (no finishes). This was further ruined by my company requiring me to be away from home on business. So less than 24hrs after taking FTD at Aintree I was landing at San Francisco airport. The good news was that two weeks later I would be arriving in Baltimore from Dallas on the same weekend as the AC Spark Plug 500 was taking place nearby (well by American standards anyway, it was only 250 miles away) at the Pocono International Raceway, Pennsylvania.

Until I started watching the excellent ESPN coverage of NASCAR (National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing) regularly on Sky television I thought watching saloons pounding around a large oval was as much fun as waiting for the results to be posted at Aintree!! Once you have mastered the very simple rules (which is more than I have done with American football) it becomes a fascinating spectacle. The main objective of the NASCAR officials is to make the racing as close as possible and therefore as exciting for viewers and spectators as it is for competitors. They will change the rules at any time if one manufacturer is becoming dominant (no McLaren-Honda type domination is tolerated here) or if there are safety problems. All of these changes are accepted by the competitors with little or no complaint.

The NASCAR series consists of 29 rounds taking place mainly in the South, but there are rounds at other venues too. Two of the rounds are on road circuits at Sears Point in northern California and Watkins Glen in upper New York State. The rest are on speedways. These vary from short 0.5 mile ovals with average lap speeds of less than 100mph to 2.5 mile super speedways with the lap speeds topping 200mph. All rounds count towards the championship and all cars that start attract series championship points.

The format of each event is broadly similar. Each round starts up to 40 cars with a rolling, pace controlled start. At Pocono the racing weekend starts on Friday with all drivers chasing the first fifteen grid positions. This consists of a warm-up lap and a timed flying lap. On Saturday the final twenty-five starting positions are allocated using a similar qualification procedure. At some events a round of the ARCA (Auto Racing Club of America) championship is also held. At Pocono on Saturday afternoon the AC Spark Plugs 150 event took place. ARCA cars are very similar to NASCAR but both lighter and less powerful. The competitors in this class of racing are usually the top clubmen hoping to move up to NASCAR.

The cars are based very loosely on production saloons from the major manufacturers such as Chevrolet, Ford, Pontiac and Buick with models like the Lumina, Thunderbird, Grand Prix and Regal. NASCAR check that cars have not deviated too far by using a body centre line template. The car must not weigh less than 3,500 lbs and must be powered by a V8 of 355 - 358 ci (about 5.8 litres). The fuel tank is limited in size to force pit stops. The hubs must use 5 stud wheels and not centre locks, and air jacks are not allowed. The body is a manufacturer supplied steel silhouette clothing a very substantial steel tube spaceframe. The

front suspension is a traditional wishbone layout with massive disc brakes. The main difference here is whether the car is front or rear steer. This means it has either a steering rack in front of the front axle centre line or a steering box behind. The rear suspension consists of solid disc braked axle located on a three link system (two lower training links and a Panhard rod). Most top line teams have the option of two speed rear differentials with 80 different alternate ratios, changes being effected in a similar way to a Hewland. There are also numerous gearbox ratio sets. The engine specification is varied to suit the circuit by using different cam profiles. The carburation is a 4 barrel Holley. This year, to reduce speeds, a restrictor plate has been introduced. This has four 15/16 inch holes and is placed between the carburettor and inlet manifold to restrict air flow. This has dropped power outputs from 700 bhp to about 400 bhp. Although top speeds have reduced, the biggest casualty has been the acceleration. The only standard parts on the cars are the windscreens and the bonnets. The wheel widths, tyre sizes and compounds are strictly controlled by NASCAR but the teams have a choice of overall diameters. Engine swaps during pit stops have now been banned, a few years ago the STP sponsored team of 'King' Richard Petty changed the entire engine in his car in 7.5 minutes!!

The top teams take it all very seriously. For each driver they will have usually eight complete rolling chassis at \$40,000 each. Each one will be set up differently to suit different circuits e.g. short/medium/long ovals and road circuits. They will have about twenty different engines at \$30,000 each. These will have differing specifications to suit the needs of different venues. The team headcount is not usually less than twenty. On top of all this you can have the transporters, the racing workshops, engine dynamometers, travelling costs etc., etc. To compete at the top level in NASCAR you require a deep pocket. One of the more successful team owners is Rick Hendricks, he owns three teams each of which operates entirely independently.

Spectators are encouraged to be at the venue for the whole three days. It is possible to gain access to all areas of the circuit except the 'hot pits' - this is the area where the teams have their transporters and equipment. All of the teams and support personnel seem very helpful and willing to chat to spectators. While enquiring as to the benefits / drawbacks of a front/rear steer car (the truth is I didn't know what the difference was!!) the team owner insisted on taking me 'over the wall' during the practice session for a detailed examination of the car with himself, the chief mechanic and the driver. What chance Ron Dennis and Ayrton Senna taking the time to explain the finer points of the MP4 during practice for the British Grand Prix!!

Most of the spectators at the event were wearing some form of apparel to indicate their driver preference. On visiting the paddock you find a small town consisting of articulated triple axle trailers liveried in the colours of the driver's sponsors containing team apparel by the ton. For the top drivers like Earnheart, Waltrip, Wallace etc. there were two or three similar trailers.

During the events, to make them more visually exciting, the teams have to make pit

stops. The number of pit crew 'over the wall' is limited, hence the use of brushes on long poles used to clean the windscreens. The crews are limited to air wrenches and trolley jacks to change the wheels. Fuel is replenished using hand held cans. Four tyre and fuel stops are still achieved in about 30 seconds by the top teams. During the race, the team make adjustments to alter the car's handling characteristics to suit changing conditions. The teams can use tyres of differing diameters (or stagger) to help the car to turn in on the oval tracks. The other main adjustment is to alter the rear corner ride heights. This is achieved by the use of a 'T' bar through the rear window onto the upper coil spring platforms. This is referred to as 'adding/removing wedge'. By altering the corner weights in this way the 'pushing' (understeering) or 'loose' (oversteering) effects are dialled out.

The points scoring system is based on all 29 events, so reliability is a key factor. The winner receives 175 points. Second 170 points, and the scale drops 5 points per position through 6th place. The scale continues dropping 4 points per position through 11th place, where it then drops 3 points per position through the 40th and last place. There is an additional 5 points for any driver who leads the event and 5 points for the driver leading the most laps.

The prize funds are very good. Just taking Winston, the series main sponsor, they provide a fund of 4.5 million dollars. \$2.5m is allocated to rewarding the top twenty drivers in the series. First receives \$1m, second \$330,000 down to \$22,000 for 20th place in the championship. A further \$1m is allocated to the 'Winston Million' which is awarded to any driver who can win any three or four nominated events. These are the Daytona 500, the Winston 500 at Talladega, the Coca-Cola 600 at Charlotte and the Heinz Southern 500 at Darlington. If this is not achieved then £100,000 is awarded to any driver winning any two events. The remaining \$1m is allocated to the Winston Million all star event. This is an invitation event open to the most recent 19 winning drivers. The 20th starter is the winner of the Winston Open which is a companion event. The winner receives at least \$200,000.

In addition to the above, there are many other awards. These are not only for the drivers but cover the pit crew and team personnel as well. The most lucrative of these is the Unocal 76 Challenge. At each event, \$7,600 is awarded to the winner of the event if he started from pole position. If it is not won it rolls forward to the next event and a further \$7,600 is added. In 1989 this was not won for many events until the Goodwrench 500 when Kyle Petty received a cool \$228,000 in addition to the event prize fund. Most of these sponsors of 'races within the race' become recognised by NASCAR. For instance, Heinz is the official ketchup of NASCAR!!!

Recently a film starring Tom Cruise and Robert Duvall called 'Days of Thunder' has been produced based on the NASCAR scene. Apparently the film was a pet project of Cruise who was introduced to racing by long time racing fan Paul Newman during the filming of 'Colour of Money'. For anyone who has yet to see a NASCAR event I can recommend it for there is at least 35 minutes of racing action, some of which was filmed during actual races in the 1990 calendar.