

WAYFARER MAGAZINE



50 Glorious years in the making

The Monthly Magazine of the Green Belt Motor Club

WAYFARER

The Magazine of THE GREEN BELT MOTOR CLUB
Incorporating Stort Valley Auto Club
October 2016

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The opinions expressed in **WAYFARER** are purely those of the contributors and should not be construed as the policies of either The Club or its Committee.

The Editor is not responsible for factual errors, or errors of spelling and English usage, in submitted articles.

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Front cover:

Top: Richard Warne/Chris Deal & Bottom: Malcom Wise

Editorial

Well it's all over for another four years. The Rio Olympics are over, excepting the Paralympics, and didn't Team GB do well - second overall in the medals table. Magnificent work from the UK women's hockey team, gymnasts and cycling to name but three. Remarkable result too for Nick Skelton, winning a gold medal for show jumping at the age of 58, the oldest competitor to have won a gold since 1908 and that after having sustained a broken neck in the year 2000.

Following the club AGM back in April when I became aware that Richard Warne had notified the committee that he wished to resign from the post of competition secretary and Chris Deal, the club secretary, said that he would take up some of the duties of the competition secretary I offered to assist Chris with some of the duties of club secretary, hopefully therefore making more time available to Chris to manage the duties of competition secretary. So here I am writing the editorial for Wayfarer this month to assist with production of your magazine. We are striving to issue the magazine on a more regular basis to keep everyone more up-to-date with forthcoming events, details of which can also be found on the club's website, www.greenbeltmc.org.uk

We are sorry that the Targa Rally planned for August 20th at Debden Airfield had to be cancelled at short notice due to the owners, the MOD, claiming that the site was required for military manoeuvres. (Don't they take time to organise?). We apologise to any entrants or officials who were inconvenienced by this short notice cancellation.

Green Belt's summer barbecue and concours d'elegance took place at The Old Owen's Sports and Social Club on August 3rd and although there were only about eight entries for the concours the event passed off well and everyone enjoyed a pleasant evening and barbecue (for which there were about 25 entrants!).

On Sunday October 9th Robert Taylor and Doug Williams will again be presenting their treasure hunt for the joint benefit of Green Belt MC and Enfield & Southgate Conservative Association. This is now the only treasure hunt run for the benefit of Green Belt members during the year so please do enter this enjoyable little event which is good fun. Further details elsewhere in this issue.

Some of you will be aware that in my retirement I have taken up a new hobby of green laning, often mistakenly referred to as off-roading. This, of course, is not strictly speaking, or even remotely, motor sport per se there being no competitive element to it whatsoever. It is purely and simply driving for fun but in four wheel drive vehicles that can take you along roads and to places that conventional, two wheel drive vehicles, cannot along what are nominally public rights of way but most people, dare I say ordinary motorists, would not consider as passable roads often being deeply rutted. This year I have been to the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales, Dorset and East Devon and the Welsh Marches, all of which I have enjoyed greatly (although East Devon was scratchier than I would have liked). Now I am looking forward to a trip to the Exe Valley and Dartmoor, Dorset and East Devon (again) and probably Mid Wales at end of November. Perhaps, in a future issue of Wayfarer, I will write in a little more detail about this pastime even though it isn't strictly speaking a Green Belt type of activity.

David Hughes

GBMC Events 2016

Quiz Night – 5th October 2016 with Boundless and other clubs, Old Owens 19.30

Treasure Hunt – 9th October 2016, see details on page 13

Debden Targa - 19th November 2016 with West Suffolk MC/Wickford AC

Xmas meal – 14th December 2016, Old Owens

Competition Calendar

Date	Events	Club	Venue/Start	Format
1 st Oct	Curborough	BARC	Curborough	Tarmac
2 nd Oct	Debden	HCAAC	Debden	Concrete
2 nd Oct	BTCC Race	MSA	Brands Hatch	Tarmac
14-15 Oct	Jersey Rally	Jersey MC	Jersey	Tarmac
14-16 Oct	Mull Rally	Mull CC	Isle of Mull	Tarmac
23 rd Oct	Dukeries Rally	Dukeries MC	Donington Park	Tarmac
28-30 Oct	Wales Rally GB	MSA	Wales/Deeside	Forest
6 th Nov	Veteran Car Run	MSA	London 2 Brighton	Tarmac
12 th Nov	Wyedean Rally	FDMC	Forest of Dean	Forest
3-4 Dec	Rockingham Stages	MCAC/Thame	Rockingham	Tarmac

Show Calendar

The Classic & Sports Car Show 28th – 30th October 2016, Alexandra Palace

This unique event is brought to you by Classic & Sports Car – the world's biggest and best classic car magazine – and Haymarket Exhibitions, organiser of the globally renowned Autosport International . With more than 300 delectable machines on show, enthusiasts of glorious classics and super cars will be able to admire special exhibits showcasing the rarest and most important racers and road cars.

Autosport International 12th-15th January 2017, NEC

Europe's largest indoor pre-season motorsport event and will be celebrating its 27th anniversary at the NEC in Birmingham. The show is unique in that it encompasses two trade-only days and also two days for the general public. Featuring the very latest in motorsport, automotive and performance engineering technology, alongside cars and exhibitors from every level of motor racing, the show provides the perfect platform for members of the industry to meet, network and do business as well as enthusiasts to see the fastest cars, biggest stars and most amazing live action

Comp Sec News

Firstly I want to thank Richard for his hard work over the last 30 years not just as Comp Sec but his dedication to all parts of the Club, welcoming members to the club and the social side eg the Annual Dinner etc. I hope I can be half as good as Richard, however, I don't have the same energy as Richard nor the know how with cars, so I will need some help.

Talking about help, we are planning the competition events for 2017 with other clubs, the draft calendar is as follows:-

Sunday 19th February – Snetterton Stages (with AMSC)
Sunday 23rd April – North Weald Sprint (with Harrow CC)
Sunday 7th May – Woodbridge Targa (with Wickford AC)
Sunday 21st May – Middlewick Stages at Woodbridge (with Wickford AC)
Sunday 25th June – Debden Sprint (with Wickford AC)
Sunday 16th July – Woodbridge Sprint (with Wickford AC), plus AutoSolo (with AMSC)
Saturday 2nd September – Debden Targa (with AMSC)
Sunday 10th September – North Weald Sprint (we assist Harrow CC)

The main events which need help from the Club's point of view is the April North Weald Sprint, the Middlewick Stages. If you want be involved get in touch with me.

On the 3rd September GBMC had 3 crews on the BTDR Woodpecker Stages based at Ludlow Racecourse and as the crews left the start the heavens opened, at least it kept the dust away. The event gave Richard a chance to make sure the car was ready for the Wales Rally GB. Martyn Andrews was returning to rallying after an absence of at least 20 years. Next to Martyn was Steve Greenhill reading the notes in the Subaru. Also on the event were Andrew Harris and Paul Watkins having their first forest event and the first event with notes. All three crews made the finish without any dramas. Richard and I finished 88 out of 160, Martyn / Steve 93th Andrew/Paul 112th.

On Sunday 11th September a number of GBMC members were taking part in the Harrow CC TT North Weald Sprint. The Council allowed everyone into the paddock early as one of the neighbours has moved away, hopefully this will give us a chance to go back to a better course. Rob Choules finished 6th in Class in his Saxo. Class B11 was nearly an all GBMC affair with Frank Trueman and Glenn Pickett in their Subaru Impreza WRX, John Ridgen in his tyre smoking BMW 328 as the Autocross had been cancelled. Bradley/Terry Durdin was shaking down their race Mini Cooper S. Also taking part was John Start but not entered as GBMC.

At the Wethersfield Stages on Bank Holiday Monday Niall Moroney went one better than the Middlewick Stages on May when he won the event.

Let me know your tails good and bad.

Chris Deal

The Daysure Wales Rally GB National Event - 28th-30th October 2016

Yes it is official Richard Warne/Chris Deal will be competing on this years event. To make sure we had an entry accepted this year the entries opened on the 31st August at 10.00am. At 10.06 the entry form was completed and paid all done and dusted within 10 minutes. With confirmation that day that our entry was accepted. Last year I had left it to 3pm on the day the entries opened, and that was why we were 22nd reserve. However we did start the event but was only told 9 days before the event that we had a run. The moral of the story is get your entry in early!!!!

We will again be competing in the **Car Spares Cheshunt** Mk 2 Ford Escort RS2000 supported by Comma Oils.

I do hope we will see lots of club members out watching this years event and even seeing us at the main Service area at the Toyota Factory at Flint. We may even have some spare passes to get you into the stages.

The event details are :-

The National Rally's three-day itinerary shadows the WRC route with single runs through all 12 of the timed stages, offering 107 miles of top class rally action on some of the world's most challenging and famous forest tracks.

The WRGB National action starts in mid-Wales with the legendary tests of Myherin, Sweet Lamb and Hafren on Friday morning which, as with the International field, will be run in the reverse direction from previous years. After a blast through Dyfnant forest, crews will return to the Rally Village in Deeside via what is certain to be a very popular tea-time stop-off right in the centre of historic Chester.

On Saturday, the Nationals will open the action at the family-friendly RallyFest at Cholmondeley Castle before tackling four classic forest stages in west Wales - Pantperthog, Dyfi, Gartheiniog and Aberhirnant. The crews will return to the Rally Village in the early evening where the Saturday night party will be getting underway.

Sunday's schedule in north Wales will follow the main WRC programme with visits to Clocaenog, Alwen and the spectacular Brenig 'Power Stage' before the Ceremonial Finish in Llandudno.

National competitors will once again be based alongside the WRC teams in the buzzing Deeside Rally Village, adding to the exciting atmosphere that brought 29,000 visitors to the free-of-charge attraction in 2015. They will also be invited share the WRC start ceremony at Parc Eirias stadium on Thursday afternoon

Richard Warne



In action on the Twyford Wood stages in July, Richard and Chris finished 7th Overall and 3rd in class



Andrew Harris and Paul Watkins on the Woodpecker Stages

2016 LONDON BATTERSEA PARK FORMULA E GRAND PRIX

I was invited to join the team of scrutineers for the 2016 London Formula E Grand Prix, to be held in Battersea Park, London, 2nd and 3rd July 2016. I had wanted to do the first Formula E Grand Prix last year but I was busy at another event. So this year I was determined not to miss this year's event as it was to be the second, and possibly the last time any form of motor racing was to be held in the centre of London since the Crystal Palace race circuit had closed in the 1970's.

For those not familiar with what Formula E is about, it's a series of races held on roads in the centre of major cities around the world for single seater race cars that use batteries and electric motors for their propulsion, to help promote how "Eco-friendly" race cars can be without the need to use fossil fuels! The cars are equipped with very heavy rechargeable batteries made by...no not Duracell...but one of the companies owned by Williams Grand Prix Engineering. The cars all use the same Dallara carbon fibre chassis but are allowed to develop their own motor and transmission; the teams having either one or two electric motors and a gearbox of sorts! During the race, when the driver brakes, the drive motors revert to generators and produce electric power to help recharge the batteries during the race. Bizarrely half way through the race, the driver returns to the pits to swap cars to continue racing!

I arrived at Battersea Park Thursday lunchtime and after a quick sandwich, and a chat with some of my colleagues, we made our way into the Park. After signing on, we were given our passes and a tabard announcing our duties as a scrutineer!

We found the FIA Scrutineering Bay in amongst all the temporary buildings and marquees set up in the Park's main car park area, and after greeting our other scrutineering team members, we were introduced to our FIA Technical Delegates, who were to be in charge (sorry, pun not intended) of the scrutineering of all the cars. Using a spare car, they gave us a very comprehensive training course on the cars, for "Elf an' Safety" reasons! The batteries in the cars, if not used correctly, could give a nasty electric shock sufficient to cause serious injury!!! We were also told when a team member recharges the car's batteries, they have to wear large rubber gloves and a full face crash helmet, and another team member, again wearing rubber gloves and crash helmet, stands next to him and has a very large shepherd's crook, to pull his colleague away from the car if a problem occurs and no one is allowed anywhere near the car while the car is being recharged!

After our lecture we made our way to our hotel. We were all staying at the nearby Holiday Inn hotel in Wandsworth. After a quick freshen up, some of the team who had done the event the previous year took us to a superb fish restaurant for a well-earned evening meal...paid for by the MSVR Race Director Dave Scott!

Next morning, after a leisurely breakfast we returned to the Park, ready to start our scrutineering duties. We were divided into two groups of five scrutineers, and each group were given five teams to check the teams' four cars, and we had a very relaxed one hour for each team! All the cars were professionally prepared and were ready at their allocated times for scrutineering, and we had none of the usual excuses..."it was OK at the last race", "it's always been like that", "it's how it came out the factory"!!!

When we finished our scrutineering duties, we went for a walk around the circuit. Being less than 3km long, we were amazed how tight, twisty and bumpy the circuit was, with 17 corners, six chicanes and the longest straight being less than 500metres long, and in places, the trees covered over the track, which would cause problems, as we were to later find out, if it rained!

We returned back to our hotel, showered and waited in the bar deciding what we were doing for an evening meal. After much deliberating, a group of us went to a nearby small Italian restaurant, again used by some of the team last year, for the best pizza ever!

First non-qualifying practice was due to start 8:15 Saturday morning. We just had enough time to grab a quick coffee and a ham roll for breakfast; we arrived at the Park with it raining heavily!

Some of us were allocated a race team each to look after; I was given an American team, Dragon Racing. Our duties were to keep notes of all the work done on the cars; identical to what happens at any F1 Grand Prix races! The team's two drivers, Loic Duval and Jerome D'Ambrosio, were very friendly, chatting with everyone, but nearer the time for them to go out, they wanted to be on their own so that they could get their minds "into-the-zone", as the team manager was saying!

The drivers climbed into their first chosen car, waiting for the signal to go out for first practice. I know it seems funny now but as the drivers went out of the garage, out of habit I covered my ears, expecting a noisy V8 to start up! The team members were in fits of laughter, as the cars were SO quiet!!! Just transmission and tyre noise, and I was amazed at how the acceleration was instant!

"Custard", as D'Ambrosio was nick-named by the mechanics, had no issues for his first practice run and posted a reasonably competitive time. But Duval, his battery pack had developed a serious problem necessitating a replacement battery pack to be fitted, ready for second practice in just under two hours' time! I was told by the team manager each battery pack was worth 300,000 Euros!!! All the team helped with the work and finished in record time, ready for Duval to go out again for second practice. During the practice sessions, both drivers practiced swapping from one car to another, very amusing sometimes as drivers tripped, or mechanics doing the belts up wrong!

As mentioned earlier, because of the overhanging trees around the circuit, when the rain had stopped, the track was still damp despite the sun being out. The cars must run on Michelin tyres, but despite being of a treaded pattern, cars were sliding off the road causing the track to occasionally be blocked with crashed cars, requiring the BMW i8 (Hybrid) Safety Car to go out so that the hard working marshals could clear the track.

Because of the tightness of the circuit, qualifying for the first race on Saturday was conducted in four groups of five cars. To help things get excited, it rained again during some of the qualifying sessions, meaning some unusual starting positions for the championship leaders for the race starting grid. Di Grassi started behind Duval who lined up ninth on the grid, while Buemi lined up behind "Custard" who was to start in eleventh place.

After qualifying, all cars were to go into "Parc-Ferme". Due to the lack of space in the paddock, the teams were allowed to leave their first cars in their garages, but under parc-ferme conditions, while the second cars were each weighed and then inspected for eligibility checks. We had to remain in the garages, "guarding" the cars!!! Fortunately packed lunches were brought to us, and

refreshments were kindly provided by the teams.

The race was due to start 4pm Saturday afternoon, so the drivers chose their first car to start the race and left the garage to line up on the starting grid, the race was to be broadcast live on TV. Halfway through the race, the cars started to come into the pits for the drivers to swap to their second car. My two drivers executed their swaps perfectly, but sadly Duval's second car developed a gearbox problem, and was forced to retire.

At the end of the race, I did notice that quite a lot of the cars had "love" tap damage on their bodywork due to the cramped circuit, some cars even losing bits of wing and bodywork during the race, ensuring their teams' bodywork technicians were kept busy repairing the bodywork ready for Sunday's race!

The winner of the Saturday race was Alain Prost's son Nicholas, with the late-Ayrton Senna's nephew Bruno Senna second. Another famous ex-F1 driver's son, Nelson Piquet Jnr, and last year's Formula E Champion, come in a very disappointed 12th position. "Custard" had finished the race in a respectable eighth position. As for the Brits, Sam Bird came in seventh, Mike Conway finished ninth and Oliver Turvey was last in 15th position. The championship leaders, Lucas di Grassi finished fourth, and Sebastien Buemi right behind in fifth position, meaning that the championship was now very close with di Grassi just three points ahead of Buemi, and could provide some interesting racing for the next day.

Sunday morning and looking out of the hotel bedroom window we were presented with sunshine, and no forecast of any rain. Again, after a quick breakfast, we checked out of the hotel, and arrived at the Park in good time for the first practice session, Sunday's timetable was to be a repeat of Saturday.

As there were no issues with any of "my" teams' cars during both free-practice sessions, we had an early lunch, and did a bit of celebrity watching during the pit-walk-about! Sir Richard Branson, local resident Olympian Sir Seb Coe, Lady Sarah Ferguson, and a very knowledgeable Jodie Kidd with her small son, all stopped at our garage to be shown around the cars. Our team being American, we had Mario and Michael Andretti, and Emerson Fittipaldi call in to see us and have a chat with some of the team technicians, and team owner Jay Penske.

Again, like Saturday, qualifying was split into four groups of five cars; my two drivers were in the first group. Duval took provisional pole but he was getting increasingly frustrated. As the later sessions finished, he fell further back down the grid, eventually starting from tenth place and he couldn't do anything to stop sliding down the starting grid! "Custard" remained one place behind Duval in eleventh.

At the front of the grid, Buemi took pole to claim three championship points to equal with di Grassi at the head of the championship points table. Buemi's team mate, and Saturday race winner Nicholas Prost, was to start next to him, first Brit Turvey lined up in third place with di Grassi fourth, to set up a fascinating race.

Like Saturday, the drivers chose their first car to start the race, left the garages, and took their positions on the grid; again the race was to be televised live. The atmosphere was very tense! Our

garage was between Buemi's Prost Renault, and di Grassi's Abt Audi Sport team garages, and you could feel the tension!

Watching on the many TV's around the garage, we could not believe what was unfolding as the race started. Coming into the first corner, di Grassi appeared to not brake, and collided with the rear of Buemi's car, causing considerable damage to both cars! It reminded me of the 1990 F1 Japan GP when Ayrton Senna crashed into Alain Prost, first corner, first lap, to win that years F1 drivers' championship!

I don't know if di Grassi did it on purpose, he claimed not! Although he was equal on points with Buemi at the start of the race, the tie-break would have been decided in di Grassi's favour if both drivers had failed to finish the race. Having more second places than Buemi, it would have given di Grassi the championship!

Somehow, both drivers managed to get their cars back to the pits dragging bits of bodywork and suspension behind them! Both teams had realised that fastest lap was up for grabs, and whoever got the fastest lap was awarded an important single point and therefore would win the drivers championship. There was much posturing from both teams, eventually Buemi left his garage closely followed by di Grassi. They continued to swap fastest laps until Buemi posted a superb time that even di Grassi knew he couldn't match, with all the traffic in the race, and returned back to his garage, to await his fate with the race stewards!

Meanwhile, Buemi's team mate Nicholas Prost was dominating the race, repeating Saturday's result, to win by over 7 seconds, ensuring Team Prost won the teams championship, from Daniel Abt in second place, ironically di Grassi's team mate! Best Brit was Oliver Turvey in tenth with Mike Conway in a lapped 13th place. Sam Bird had retired only six laps into the race with throttle issues.

Then it was our turn for some excitement in our garage! "Custard" had been originally classified in sixth and Duval in a frustrated seventh, but then the three cars between second placed Abt and "Custard's" sixth place had been given time penalties for various offences during the race, thus pushing "Custard" and Duval into third and fourth in the race! The team members were running around the garage hugging each other and applauding the drivers as they returned from the prize giving ceremony. But my work hadn't finished! Because "my" cars had finished in third and fourth in the revised race results, the cars were placed into parc-ferme! The team manager stayed with me, moving people away from the cars in case they infringed the parc-ferme rules. This important race result would push Dragon Racing up to third in the teams' championship, and first private team. "Custard" would finish fifth and Duval eight in the drivers' championship.

It was an exhausting but enjoyable four days, for just two races! But what a finish to the championship! I hope we can get the race back in London again next year, I'm told that a date has been provisionally booked for May/June 2017...but where?

Loyd Gerken

Chief Marshal's Mutters

In the past couple of months there has been bad news and good news.

First the bad:

We have had to postpone or cancel two of our proposed competitive events. The Targa Rally we intended to promote at Debden Airfield on August 20th with West Suffolk MC had to be postponed at the very last minute for reasons outside our control – it was an administrative cock-up by the MoD even though we had the licence from them to be able to run at Debden. However, along with other issues that can occur with the use of Debden for Motorsport in general it has prompted a review between the interested clubs and the camp personnel which will hopefully avoid such problems recurring.

A new date has been set for the **Debden Targa** to run on **Saturday 19th November**. We will, of course, need marshals to help us run this event. Targa's always attract good entries, the abortive August date had in excess of 50 entries.

The second event was the planned two day Autocross at Perry Green on September 10th – 11th which we have been forced to cancel. There were two reasons for this, firstly a shortage of entries for the event and also a severe lack of marshals who had committed to come along. Either of these could have led to a cancellation.

This brings up a severe problem we currently have with marshalling resources. In order to run safe events we must have an adequate number of marshals. As a club we seem very poor at supporting our own events and we rely heavily on trying to recruit people from other clubs to help us out even though we are not very good at reciprocating by providing many people to help on their events.

Then the good which brings me on to another subject.

Most of the local clubs have similar issues to Green Belt in having the resources to run events. This prompted an initiative by a number of the East Anglian Clubs to create the **Anglian Motor Sport Club**. Although called a 'Club' it is really an affiliation of a number of existing clubs where members of those affiliated clubs are automatically also members of the AMSC. This means that the affiliated member clubs still retain their own identity and can run their own events but can draw on the resources of the other clubs to help or, in certain cases, the AMSC could combine resources to run an event under that banner. There is also the advantage that club members from the affiliated clubs also have the opportunity to enter events organised by any of the clubs without having to join that club – this being particularly useful for entry-level events which would normally require competitors to be a member of the organising club.

The AMSC comprised Cambridge Car Club, Chelmsford Motor Club, Eastern Counties Motor Club, Falcon Motor Club, Kings Lynn Motor Club, Sporting Car Club of Norfolk, West Suffolk Motor Club and Wickford Auto Club. And now we, at **Green Belt Motor Club**, have also elected to join this group along with Middlesex County Auto Club.

What this does, in addition to helping with resources to run events, is open up opportunities for members to compete, particularly in 'entry-level' events. By 'entry-level' I mean those events where a standard road car can be used with no special equipment and no competition licence is required. These mostly fall into the classifications of AutoSolos, Targa Rallies and Trials and for each of these disciplines the AMSC runs a Challenge Series which is open to all members of the affiliated clubs, now including **Green Belt MC**. The AMSC website contains details of events and can be found at <http://www.amsc.org.uk/index.html> with the next event being an Autosolo at Wethersfield on September 25th.

Furthering this idea of co-operation, a number of the clubs within the AMSC are combining resources to run a **Stage Rally at Snetterton on February 19th 2017**. This will be the first major event to run with AMSC as the organising club and will form part of the MotorSport News/MSVR Circuit Stage Rally Championship. Rally events at Snetterton have been sporadic over the last few years with different clubs organising once and then dropping out, usually for financial reasons as it can be expensive to put on events at race circuits. However for this event, with the organisers being relatively local unlike the last two rallies there, and a date chosen in the period when the hire cost for the circuit is lower than in high season, it is expected that a sustainable event going forward can be successfully organised.

So, that's another date for your marshalling diary, remembering that as with all Special Stage Rallies from 2017 on, all marshals must be registered with the Motorsport Association and be able to produce their registration card.

John Davie

TREASURE HUNT

DATE - Sunday 9th October

START VENUE - Sow and Pigs on A1170 at Thunderidge near Ware (MR 166/356½168)

START TIME - Assemble from 1.00pm for a 2.00pm start

EVENT LENGTH - Approx 30 miles

FINISH - Tea at a Hertfordshire village (approx 4.30pm - 5.00pm)

MAP – OS map 166

Contact – Robert Taylor 020-8886-6428 roberttaylor893@btinternet.com

ROBERT'S RACING ROUND UP

Since the last RRRU was published Club Chairman Malcolm Wise has competed, in his turbocharged Ford Escort Cosworth, in four Quaife Motorsport News Saloon Car Championship races – all of which were run at Brands Hatch. Despite one retirement and a non-start he did manage to notch up finishes in second and third places, thus showing that he continues to be a regular front runner in this hard fought championship.

Meanwhile his ageing Ford Sapphire Cosworth has been somewhat trounced by the fleet of BMW M3s that are dominating this year's SVG Motorsport Pre 93 Touring Car Championship. He has competed in pairs of races, in his Barnet and Southgate College sponsored Ford Sapphire Cosworth, at four circuits – namely Cadwell Park, Donington, Thruxton and Brands Hatch.

His best results in these eight events were not very encouraging. He was placed both fourth and sixth in his class three times, and his best overall finishing position was sixth. In each and every one of these races almost all of the cars that took the chequered flag ahead of him were the all conquering BMW M3s.

The very familiar 1.2 mile long Brands Hatch Indy circuit was the venue for rounds seven and eight of the Quaife Motorsport News Saloon Car Championship.

Driving his white and yellow Escort Cosworth Malcolm clocked a best time of time of 51.1 sec (85.1 mph) on the 16th of the 17 laps that he completed during the practice session for the first of this pair of races. He was pleased to find that this made him second fastest – just 1.2 secs behind the ultra rapid Subaru Impreza of Dale Gent. His other arch rival Rod Birley, who was third fastest, only completed six laps due to problems with the turbocharger of his World Rally Championship specification Ford Escort, and he did not start the race.

From the rolling start to the 15 minute race Malcolm slotted into second place behind Gent's Subaru and well ahead of the rest of the 19 car field. As the race progressed Malcolm found that the rumoured 675 bhp of his rival's Japanese car was just too much to allow him any realistic chance of overtaking it.

During the last of the 18 laps that the competitors in this race completed during the allotted time, Malcolm's Escort slowed dramatically. This happened on the Cooper Straight which is half of the way around the 1.2 mile track. So he dropped from less than a second behind Gent to take the chequered flag 3.8 sec down on him.

However he was in no real danger of losing second spot because his closest pursuer, Tony Skelton in his Renault Clio, was over 15 sec behind him.

Examination of the turbo fitted to his car's Cosworth engine showed that its impeller (which spins at an amazing speed of over 20,000 rpm) was damaged - so the whole turbo would have to be replaced. As Malcolm did not have a spare turbocharger unit (remember is club racing, not F1 where all of the teams probably have a stack of them) he was unable to start the second race.

Prior to the next pair of races, which were rounds nine and ten in this championship, and were again held at Brands Hatch, a new and slightly larger turbocharger was fitted to the car. Thus equipped Malcolm's car was third fastest, with a time of 52.2 sec (83.4 mph), the pre race practice session.

Ahead of him were (unsurprisingly) the Subaru Impreza of Dale Gent and Rod Birley's Ford Escort. The significant difference between this and the practice session at the last meeting at this circuit was that Malcolm was 2.2 sec slower than Dale whereas he had previously been only 1.2 sec behind him.

When I subsequently asked Malcolm why he was a further second adrift of Gent he said "The engine itself was performing reasonably although the power was coming in at a different point and I was also getting used to some new rear tyres. In fact I actually had a spin at Paddock Hill Bend – which was a bit disconcerting. This might have been caused by oil from a breather pipe getting on to the tyres, but I'm not sure about that. The combined effect of these factors was that I was probably driving with a little bit less confidence than usual."

Malcolm made a good start to the race and he maintained his third place, not far behind Gent's Subaru and Birley's Escort Cosworth. However after a few laps he started to hear noises from the back of the car, which he thought might be problems with a drive shaft or the rear differential.

His thinking at this time was that he did not want to have a major rear end failure, which could easily have resulted in the car hurling itself into the concrete pit wall at 150 mph. Consequently he decided that the best thing to do was to pull into the pits and retire from the race, despite the fact that he was in a pretty safe third place.

A detailed examination of the car's rear transmission in the Brands Hatch paddock revealed that the problem had very probably been caused by a drive shaft universal joint. Luckily this was fairly easy to fix.

So Malcolm, who was classified as a non-finisher in the first race, was obliged to start the second one from the back of the 21 car grid.

All that he could then do was to make steady progress up the 21 car field, by regularly overtaking slower competitors. His inexorable rise up the lap chart was aided by five other cars retiring from the race.

Significantly, one of these was Dale Gent's Subaru which dropped out from second place on lap six.

With three laps to go Malcolm was up into third position. But the second placed ex-BTCC Ford Sierra RS500 of Danny Cowan was too far ahead for him to catch it and he finished in third spot, 17.8 sec behind it.

It is almost needless to say that the race was won Rod Birley.

Turning to the SVG Motorsport Pre '93 Touring Car Championship, the third and fourth events in this BARC run series were held at Lincolnshire's Cadwell Park Circuit.

In the practice session for first of two combined races for Pre '93 and Pre '05 cars Malcolm's newly liveried Sapphire was ninth fastest overall and sixth in his class.

He did a bit better in the two 15 minute races, around the undulating 2.2 mile long track, by finishing in seventh place overall and fourth in class in both of them.

Malcolm's next pair of races were at Donington Park's 1.97 mile long National Circuit. At this race meeting the Pre '93 saloons were, once again, combined with other categories of cars. These were competitors in the Pre '03 Championship and the Burton Power Blue Oval series. This resulted there being mammoth 36 car fields for these races.

Practice went pretty much as expected for our man with him clocking a best time of 1 min 23.2 sec (85.6mph), which made him the seventh fastest of the 18 Pre '93 competitors.

However things went badly wrong during the first race when his car's gear lever mechanism broke on the third lap. This resulted in Malcolm not only having problems selecting the right gears but also accidentally knocking the isolator switch off – not just once, but twice.

The consequences of these problems were that he finished in 29th place – two laps down on the first 16 finishers, who all completed 12 laps during the course of the 15 minute race.

With the car's gear lever linkage repaired he had a much better run in the second race, which he had to start from the back of the grid. He carved his way through most of the huge field and finished as the eighth best Pre '93 competitor and sixth in his class.

The following two races were held at the ultra fast Thruxton Circuit near Andover in Hampshire.

The 13 cars competing in the Pre '93 Championship at this race meeting were combined with 10 other competitors, who were drawn from the same two categories as at Donington.

In practice Malcolm's Sapphire was the sixth fastest Pre '93 car (and sixth in class) and those were also his finishing positions in the first race.

In this race Malcolm finished just a quarter of a second ahead of another of the Pre '93 competitors - Simon Ward in his Vauxhall Astra GTE. This car, which is very much on a par with Malcolm's Sapphire in terms of performance, had finished just in front of our man's Ford at both Cadwell Park events and the second of the Donington races.

So Malcolm was pleased to have beaten Ward at this event but the tables were turned in the second race when he was sixth and Malcolm was 1.1 sec behind him in seventh of the Pre '93 competitors. However, as in the first race, our man was still sixth in class because Ward's Vauxhall Astra is in a smaller engine capacity class to Malcolm's Ford Sierra.

In these last six races BMW M3s had finished in at least the first five places. However three of the four regularly front running cars did not turn up at for the eighth and ninth rounds of the Pre '93 Championship - which were held on the Brands Hatch Indy circuit. The drivers of these cars were Paul Bellamy (five second places and one third), David Hickton (five third places and one second) and Kevin Wills (four fourth places and two fifths).

On the other hand the winner of the four races that were held at Donington and Thruxton, Ray West, did turn up with his BMW M3. He continued in his winning ways at Brands Hatch by being fastest in practice and winning both races.

Things did not go anything like as well as that for Malcolm. But the fact that there were only three competitive BMW M3s present did mean that his Sapphire Cosworth was the fourth fastest Pre '93 car in the practice session.

In the first race he was running in eighth place overall (and fifth amongst the Pre'93 competitors) when, on lap 11, he was shown the black flag with an orange disc by the race officials.

This meant that he had to pull into the pits to have the car examined by one of the scrutineers because smoke had been seen coming from one of the car's rear wheels.

It was quickly established that this was just being caused by lose bodywork rubbing on a tyre and not by any leaking fluids, which might have been a danger to other competitors. So he was allowed to rejoin the race eventually finished as ninth pre '93 competitor and fourth in class – albeit a lap down on the leaders.

In the second event he was black/orange flagged again for exactly the same reason. Once again he was allowed to rejoin the race but, a few laps later, he was showed this flag again because the car's silencer was loose – at which point he retired the car from the race.

ROBERT TAYLOR

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