

b
r

**BRITISH
RALLY**

m
c

**MARSHALS
CLUB**



**The Newsletter of the Midland Region of the
British Motor Racing Marshals Club
Internet Edition**

EDITORIAL

***THE OPINIONS EXPRESSED IN THIS NEWSLETTER ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF
THE BMRMC LTD OR THE EDITOR***

A Happy New Year to you all. Work commitments amongst other things have conspired to make this March edition the first of 2000. I suppose I could always try and blame the Millennium Bug but who would believe me?

As is usual at this time of year there are some availability forms included in this issue. Please remember to help the smaller clubs; as a rule the days are shorter and the appreciation shown towards marshals is greater than at some of the larger meetings.

Attendance at the Regional Dinner Dance was lower than ever this year. Those that did attend enjoyed themselves, but the numbers keep on falling. What can we do to encourage more of you to come along. Please have a think about it and write to The Marshalling Post. All ideas and views will be warmly received.

It's only a few weeks now until the season starts in earnest, so empty out last year's sandwiches (or those from the year before in some cases); polish the boots and try to zip up your Probans.

Stay on the safe side.

DJS

Chairman's Chat

A Happy New Year to you all. Welcome to the 2000 motorsport season. As this is written, in mid January, I have to say that my season has well and truly started as I am now attending many training days.

On the subject of Training Days I have to report that the Saturday part of the Midland Region Training Weekend at Donington had to be cancelled through a lack of support. Whilst we realised that with the National event moving to Oulton Park for 2000 and an unavoidable clash with the Cadwell Park event we would receive less support than usual we underestimated this. We hope that the re-arrangement of timetable for Sunday allowed members to get the signatures that they required. We will probably be running a two day event in 2001 as it is once again the National Weekend. The cancellation apart, I must congratulate Roger Wheldon on the organisation of his first major event.

I feel that the year 2000 will bring a number of major changes to circuit racing as we know it. You cannot have helped but notice that the major clubs have put together new and exciting packages. I hope that these can bring the spectators back to many events. It also seems that the TOCA package may be somewhat changed as there are less cars from works teams. We also have the Rockingham Park venture on the horizon and fresh ideas such as the ASCAR series and the Andy Rouse backed saloon series. We cannot yet tell what impact these will have, nor can we foresee what impact the purchase of both the Donington and BHL operations by US organisations will have.

The regular marshalling issues have continued to crop up at Training Days so far. Grading, marshal safety and late finishes were certainly debated at length at the Donington Observer Training session. The amalgamation of all circuit grading operations under the MSA umbrella may take a little time to smooth out as there are some changes that are a little radical and organisation that needs to be fine-tuned to fit the marshals' requirements. If grading confuses you, and at present it probably confuses most people, ask. We will try to give you an answer although some queries can only be sorted out as the system gets running.

You will probably have heard from several sources that Don Truman has been required to retire as Clerk of the Course for BRSCC Midland Centre. Don has unfortunately been found out and the MSA have discovered that he has been in breach of their age limit for Stewards, Clerks, Scrutineers etc. and they have decided to pension him off. I, for one, have learned a great deal from Don, as have many other Clerks and Senior Officials. He has been prepared to pass on the wisdom of some thirty eight years as a Clerk of the Course and to temper our over-exuberance and over-enthusiasm. Don has a reputation for being a fearsome Clerk and his bark isn't always worse than his bite as some recalcitrant drivers have found out to their cost but if you meet the real Don Truman you will realise the sort of person that he is. Thanks very much Don! I hope that you can continue to share your wisdom with us for a long time yet.

End of waffling on! My goodness the grammar checker actually accepted that! Have a good 2000 season, see you around the circuits.

Jeremy Edwards

AUTOSPORTS SHOW 13TH- 16TH JANUARY 2000

We had a very successful Autosports Show at the N.E.C. in Birmingham in the middle of January with lots of people showing lots of interest in what we had on display.

Naturally, on the Thursday and Friday, which were ostensibly Trade Days, when there were mainly competitors and engineers visiting, there was tremendous interest in the cars on the stand. We had borrowed a 1980 F1 Lotus /Essex, a 1975 Formula 2 Chevron B29, a 1971 2 litre Daren Mark 3 sports car and a fully race prepared Alfa 75 3 litre. All these created much interest on the public days also, which was when we had considerable interest in the club as well -- as well as lots of visits from existing members, which was great.

It is just possible that some members arrived at the show, consulted the organisers' brochure and headed for our stand as numbered therein. They would find that small area empty except for a notice quoting a different number! Yes, you've guessed -- the organisers telephoned on December 30th and increased our show space by 1,333% !

Although we were very pleased to be out of the proposed rabbit hutch, this did result in some frantic 'phoning around, which happily resulted in the four cars mentioned above.

The F1 Lotus was the one in which Nigel Mansell made his F1 debut in Austria and is now being raced in the Thoroughbred Grand Prix series; it had arrived back from its race in Kyalami, where it had finished 5th, only a week before going on display.

The F2 Chevron was the one raced by Mike Wrigley in the H.S.C.C.'s Derek Bell series; this one, too, looked very attractive and had many admirers, but it was the gleaming silver Daren that actually produced the excitement. Only a certain amount was known about its history but in the course of the four days it was visited by its very first owner, by the man who had helped John Green to build it, by John Green's son, who currently races a later version in the Castle Combe Sports car series, by two other previous owners and by the guy who was responsible for its latest refurbishment!

The Alfa on display has been seen regularly around the circuits with the Alfa Owners Club Championship, battling very successfully against the ex-Italian touring cars, usually finishing third to their one, two -- and it added greatly to the attraction of our stand.

At the P.R.O.'s instigation, all the cars displayed were decorated with our club stickers, which they are threatening to retain as they go into the new season. It is to be hoped that if they should fall into your hands -- or into the gravel near you -- you will give them extra special attention!

On the Saturday and Sunday, when the general public was well in evidence, we handed out 79 of our information packs. These contain, among other information, the club's application and experience forms, along with information about appropriate training days. These were only given to those people we felt were serious in their enquiries -- others just went away with the current basic publicity leaflet. All of those who were spoken to at length and given the pack expressed themselves keen to attend a training session in the near future, so we expect to see the numbers at these events increased as a result and some new members later on.

It is always difficult to quantify the success of a show such as this in terms of a specific number of new members but we can happily say that it is a very good Public Relations exercise -- many drivers come along, chat and express their gratitude for our efforts on their behalf and that can't be bad! It is also good to be able to meet so many existing members and answer any queries they may have. Its other main purpose, of course, is simply to show the world at large that we exist! We certainly did that!

Yes -- once again a successful show -- but on no account must we forget that this is made possible by two people -- by Ian France, Sales Director of Haymarket Exhibitions and Bernard Cotterill, Operations Director and BMRMC member. Whilst masterminding such an enormous and prestigious show, they still manage to keep us in mind and provide us with this opportunity. Thank you, gentlemen; we are truly grateful.

John Watt & Chris Hobson.

Fat Lips hits Town

I have always been asked to go to the Manx Classic by various people over several years, but, due to lack of holiday time and family commitments I have been unable to go. Suddenly, I find myself going and helping to crew with Roger Wheldon on his breakdown.

So after coming off two weeks holiday in Dominica I booked a week away again and arranged a pick-up point and time with Roger. 8:30 on the A52 nearest lay by to Bramcote Baths. Roger arrived and after bags were stowed, off we set for the A50 Stoke and onward to Heysham. All was going well until we came across a lady in a car who had been hit from behind by a truck and shunted up the embankment. Shaking like a leaf and telephoning everyone on her mobile phone. Roger quickly got into the fend off position until Mr Plod arrived on the scene. We set off again only to sit in a traffic jam for three quarters of an hour round Stoke. This did not bode well as we were losing valuable drinking time in the last pub in England before crossing to the Isle of Man.

However time was made up, and we arrived with 30 minutes to spare. Roger's truck goes on the Ben-My-Chree as normal freight, in a deal with the Manx Tourist Board but the only way to get the trip in to the loading area is through the commercial entrance. Now this causes a bit of a problem because documents are for non-commercial freight and staff at various checking points don't know this. The story of the deal is relayed over and over again until we are in a position to go and get our boarding passes and Roger has to explain the situation over again. Once on board on and a wander round the ferry lunch came to mind and the chicken dish was ordered. Rather large as I recall.

On arrival in Douglas we quickly got to our digs, unpacked and sorted and went downstairs to meet all the other marshals some of which were on set-up and had been there for several days already. One notable character known as Stumpy did most of the talking and everyone did a little more drinking.

Sign on and a welcome party where at the TT grandstand, a double decker bus picked us up and off we set in the pouring rain. Martin Quinn, of "lets throw another sausage on" fame, was there at sign on, and I remarked on the fact that Gnomes did travel very well, *long way from Gnome*.

After receiving the relevant programmes and Marshals warrant card. Did you know that you become the police constable with powers of arrest? No. 53. Pretty good, eh?

After a short briefing off we set to the hospitality marquee for a hot meal and a few more drinks. If I am not mistaken I can see where this is going to end up. Anyway, Roger introduced me to Rosie, a policewoman who he had known for several years and had been invited to her wedding. Along with Rosie came Jake a 6 month old German Shepherd who took me for a walk on several occasions. On one of these jaunts with dog in hand, I was asked if I was driving? - I must have looked the part - by a very tall lady by the name of Alison Smith who was sharing a drive with her husband and I believe likes fast cars, and horses are a passion. Alison from what I could see drove very well indeed and on seeing me managed a wave and when not behind the wheel of their 65 Sunbeam Alpine always took time out for a chat. Nice.

Next morning Robin, one of my room mates who was on set up rose early, and woke both myself and Scott, my other room mate up, and stumbled out of the room. Maybe Robin would appear for breakfast if lucky. Breakfast came in the form of English, cereal, bacon, sausage, beans, tomatoes, egg, toast and tea or coffee, it certainly set you up for the day. After picking up our cobs and crisps off Roger and I set off for the end of the pit lane to get ourselves set up and ready for action – not so.

Fat Lips hits Town

The truck that carries the rather large straw bales that fill in gaps in hedges and driveways, had broken hydraulics and after grabbing a radio we set off to help set up using Rogers truck and an ingenious strop combination to lift these rather heavy bales. You see they were all of rain water that had soaked in like a sponge. We managed to get several on the back and drop them off in the right place ready for road closure; some bales had to be placed over electrical cables and the corner reshaped Cronk-ny-Mona, because the central road island had been removed but the lighting cables had been left in place, good stuff.

Stumpy, known as a do'er was on the set-up crew, I have been told that you can ask him to do a task and he is off until it is done, no-one should be in doubt who he is just listen and watch out for this little fellow with non-stop prattle, enjoyed your derision of us all. Just wish we could have shut you up at times, no chance I hear you say.

George Leitch had a fairly big accident last year and wrecked his Ford Special at Governor's Bridge. He was lucky according to the accounts I have heard. He arrived in the Isle of Man with a rebuilt car and the bottle of 12 year old malt whisky for the marshals. It arrived through Stumpy and was shared out in measures with all marshals present at the time. The driver went on to win his sprint which he did not expect, but for the demise of Hans Peter Richrath driving the Porsche 906 Carrera, so much so he did a lap of honour. The German team that where in the Isle of Man had not only the Porsche 906, a 356A and a Mercedes 300SL roadster, all three looked superb cars, but what of their toolkit? Well it came in the shape of a large Mercedes van lined with tools that most mechanics would die for.

The first practice sessions where quite lively, fastest cars like Camaros and Mustangs were in the 130 to 140 mph bracket followed closely by Jackie Cochrane in the high 120s. Good competitor Jackie as I will tell later. A competitor in a mini had an unfortunate at Post 8 Cronk-ny-Berry. I can't remember his name but I saw him at Donington on October 10, he said that something had broken on the back of the car that caused his accident.

I tell you, by the sound of Ken Shelley's voice, not only did he shake himself up, he 6 shades out of Ken, dented a lamppost, scraped a wall and hit the bank rather hard, poor old Mini rearranged a lot more than first thought. Still no-one injured, which is the main thing. Mini full lift and a trip round the circuit, and back to the pits.

Our next excursion round the Wollaston Circuit was to pick up a Sunbeam Tiger whose driver had lost it on the long uphill section after Wollaston corner, he managed to take a sizeable chunk of earth out of the grass banking before rolling up the road. Looking rather shaken and with a collar on, he was taken away for a check-up. Roger shovelled a well wrecked Sunbeam Tiger into scrutineering with great skill when its driver arrived seemingly OK.

I did help Fay and Alan Crook on the start line to begin with, but soon found that I was mainly only arriving back from picking up cars after the next sprint had started. The other sessions went well and no major incident occurred, at the end of play we put the Jaguar fire car on the back of Roger's truck and set off for the sea front and some food before the start of the promenade sprint.

Someone said that they knew a good pizza place and off five of us set, only to find it wasn't open for two hours. So, following our instincts and the smell of good food, we at last stumbled on a very good Italian cafe and ordered immediate plate full of various pastas which turned out to be very good and plentiful indeed.

Rearing to go again we arrived back in time to use the Hi-Ab on the truck to lift out a couple of metal posts, which were stopping competitors getting in to the assembly area, one post being extremely stubborn but when Rosie added some assistance it soon relented.

Fat Lips hits Town

In an hour or so roads were closed and Prom's twinkly lights switched on, we were almost ready to go when we had a call to remove a car from the circuit. As we arrived so did the owner and everything resolved much to the owner's relief on seeing her car surrounded by 10 men in orange eager to lift her car on to Roger's spec lift. Many spectators had stayed in their offices and sat out on their hotel fore courts to watch this sprint, somewhere in gardens that ran along the sea front and many spectators in roads which had been blocked off. Two practice runs were allowed and two timed runs; the session passed without one single incident, everything was wrapped up at about 9:45 and after loading the Jag back on to the truck we set off to a date for a well earned pint or two. This was where the bottle of malt made an entrance and a quicker exit, thanks George.

Next morning, after a hearty breakfast Roger and myself set off for the Sloc, via the sea front to get filled up with diesel, there lined up in the a straight row were all the German entrants of Hans Peter Richraith and associates, typical, must have taken ages to line everything up.

On the way to Sloc, Roger went into the history of some parts of the island and explained the geography on the way, also details of some of his transportation contracts for people on the island. It was while travelling that I felt a slight swelling on my upper left lip, you see I am allergic to something I don't know what, but, I swell up, - you wish – my lip gradually got bigger as the day progressed.

By end of play, the old top lip hit record proportions, marshals travelling on the return bus thought someone had smacked me in the mouth. At this point the Jag was being loaded on to Roger's truck, by yours truly, when a remarkable sight occurred. Roger standing on the tilted back of his truck, giving directions - left a bit etc. as you do - stood on a patch of oil from the wrecked Sunbeam. He displayed an excellent 5.9 for style as one leg then one arm rose in the air, followed by a quick skip and jump to the recovery position. Jane Torvill would have been proud. It must have been my imagination, but I thought I heard a cheer from those on the bus.

When we arrived back at our digs I made a quick dash to Boots to get some anti-histamine tablets. They were just closing, the assistant manageress wouldn't let me in at first, until I threatened to stick myself to their window, but the pharmacist was more understanding and better looking. She sorted me out. The swelling went down slowly over the next 24 hours.

Friday night at Stackey's Casino a marshals do was held to raise some money for the rescue unit, drivers were invited and quite a few turned up. One most concerned with my fat lip was Edwin Falkener, who explained that his wife suffered the same and that I should see a doctor. He also took to the floor and thanked us marshals for their assistance, then the fire alarm went off, so he finished his speech from the top of the fire escape.

Now out of the gloom, Budgie appeared, did he set the fire alarm off? No - can't imagine.

As the evening progressed, I realised that we were in fact becoming quite merry, considerably pissed is more like it. On one trip, heading in the straight line towards yonder bar, for a refill, a strange thing happened, a door on my left slowly opened, and a face appeared round it. This blond rather good looking colonial sister said in a lazy drawl, "Gee can we come in and dance?" Before she knew it she was on the dance floor with yours truly then after the few minutes the husbands came in. Ooops. Never did find out what had brought them to the island, but there were a lot of notices about laundering money.

Fat Lips hits Town

Saturday morning arrived, but so did the hangover, still not as bad as might have been expected, and we set off for our position in the pits for a re-run of Thursday's event and spectators cheered from everywhere. Some were armed with cameras and a lot were taking dogs for a walk, all with good sense to keep them on leads. One local dog kept appearing by himself and while we managed to keep him away from the circuit while cars were running he did manage to cross the track between sessions and disappeared into the cemetery never to be seen again. A Mercedes parked in the pit road at lunchtime and nearly became one of our victims, his wife appeared just in time to throw their car keys over the wall, the car was already on jacks and spec lift lowered, nearly.

Several breakdowns occurred during the day with only one serious shunt at Signpost, a rather upset driver who had locked up under braking and hit the banking head on and rearranged his front end somewhat.

After racing finished it was once again trying to get the Jag on the back, with an additional load, Race Control caravan, this came full with desks, paper, photocopier, chairs and all manner of other things. Once this lot was all hooked up Roger's truck must have been 50ft long and about on its weight limit.

First problem being to find a way out of the pits, we walked out and were allowed to leave the truck in the pit lane. That made setting off on Sunday easy. Saturday evening dinner at Jurgens is traditional and off we went only to find our booking had been somewhat overlapped by other unscrupulous marshals - that is all I shall say for now, but I shall keep my eye on you lot for further derision at a future date.

Jurgens, food superb, and we had the last laugh when a bottle of Schnapps appeared on our table for having to wait for others.

Sunday, off we set from the Pit Lane and headed towards Jurby in pouring rain, over Snaefell towards Ramsey and on to Jurby. Rain became heavier as we made our way over the mountain, but arriving at Jurby the rain stopped and soon the track became dry. As usual we had to pitch in to get soggy wet straw bales in the appropriate position and eventually we started on time. I did notice Chris, who was one of the time keepers, looking a little worse for wear, I believe that her early morning stint in the hotel bar may have been responsible. Mind you all of us were probably looking very similar.

Four sprints and four races followed in quick succession, highlight of the day must have been a cracking race between Jackie Cochrane, and Bill Goodall who each other at every occasion and made three points of contact, without taking each other off. Don't tell Di, but Roger manned the fire car for part of the afternoon and let me do straight towa in his truck. If I am not careful I could be snatching, operating the gate, acting I/O and clearing up on the circuit.

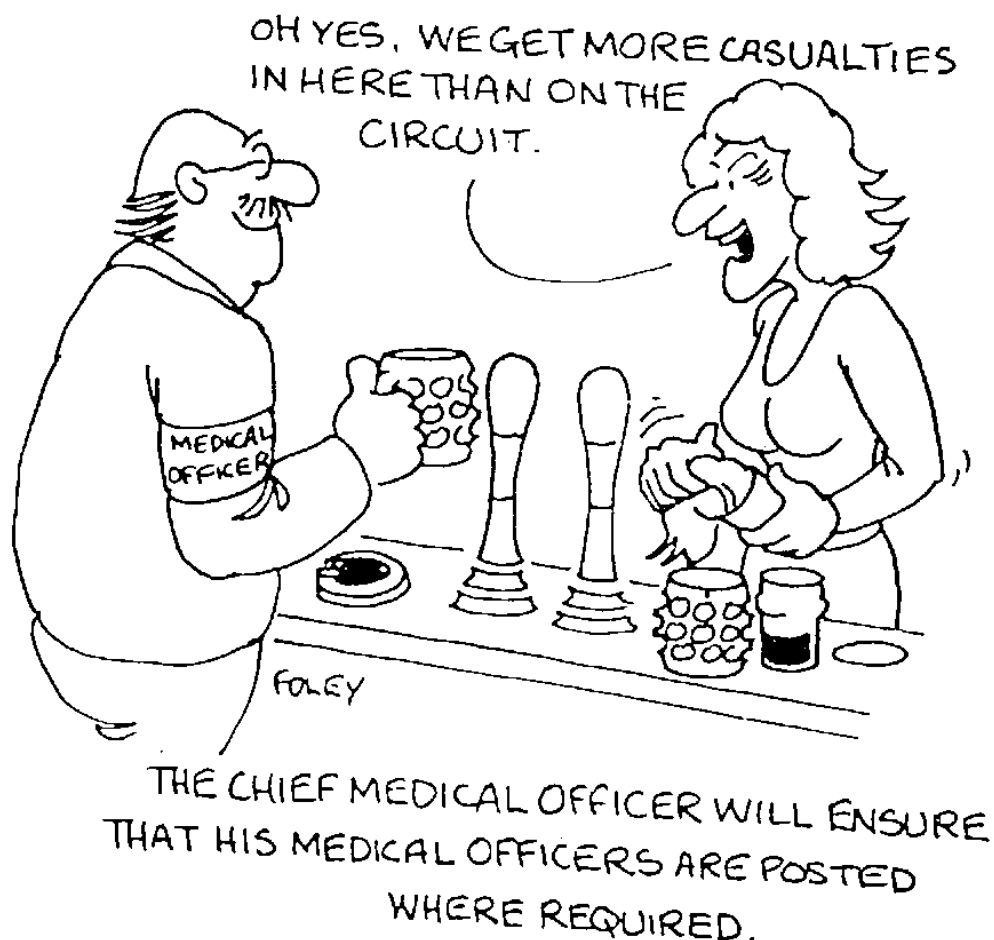
A busy few days, and everything over we had a trip to Consett with a smashed up Sunbeam Tiger, and a TR3 that was to be dropped off on its trailer at Heysham. Outside Heysham we came across Andreas Von Engelbrechten and friend who had run out of fuel. On spec lift to nearest petrol station. He had thought that maybe someone had pinched it perhaps. I think embarrassment at not filling it up in the first place may have been a good reason. However he filled up and the little Riley fired up first time. They had driven from Hull after leaving their trailer in Rotterdam; quite a journey in a modern car alone a 1934 version.

Fat Lips hits Town

Now that we had got out of Heysham and tramped up the M6 everything became more relaxed so much so that we missed our turn off. Out came a map and I navigated the rest of the way to Consett. A few gated roads had to be traversed before ending up heading in the right direction for Consett again. The rest of our journey being a doddle until we had to find the garage where Sunbeams are restored. As it happens it was a tight squeeze and on a very steep incline, but with two trolley jacks under the front, a lot of pushing, some lifting on the HiAb it went in a treat. Job done, off we set begin this time for Nottingham and home.

I did enjoy it all, the drivers were very respectable to all marshals, and the atmosphere was relaxed although a lot of different tasks were performed. Our B and B, The Strathmore was comfortable although Pete couldn't find a bed big enough, breakfasts were super. Thank you to everyone concerned - must make it again next year.

Ian Dixon



Dinner Dance 2000



*Shadow Trophy Winners
Anne & Phill Chamberlain
with Guest Speaker Willie
Green*

*Liz Stanford receives the
Shadow Trophy from Jim
Whitaker.*



*Guest Auctioneer Robert
"Anorak Officer" Williams
tried to sell the shirt off his
own back, but found no
takers.*

A Sideways View



You're never too young to learn. Fire training on the Isle of Man took place on the airport fire service's training ground with the professionals lending a helping hand.

I always used to start getting twitchy once Christmas and the New Year is over - and the head was starting to clear. When, oh when was the season going to start again, I'd ask myself? For the last two years, however, the weeks of thumb twiddling and rushing to the hall each time the postman came in the hope that there would be a volunteering form has been dramatically shortened by an invitation to enjoy the excellent hospitality of Manx marshals - and fit in a little pre-season training.

There's so much motor sport - and consequently so much marshalling experience - on the island that you feel a bit like you are teaching your grandmother to such eggs - particularly on the rallying side. But, since I invariably end up involved in the rallying sessions, it certainly makes me put my thoughts in order.

Both last year and this, we've looked at different aspects of setting up a special stage and, with the rallying season already underway again, it seems a reasonable proposition to recycle some of the issues we covered.

Information used to set up a stage comes in two forms - diagrams and maps and road books and tulips. Diagrams and maps are generally used for larger venues and should contain all relevant information, including location and junction numbers while road books and tulips show each junction and other stage features together with the distance into the stage and any other relevant extra information.

If you are going to set up a stage then the minimum hardware you are going to need is a large hammer, staple gun, knife, steel spike, saw, a post tool (a tube with handles used to whack posts into the ground). and a torch, whatever the time of year. You are also going to need a range of consumables - stakes - a minimum 5ft x 2in x 1in in size - staples, nails - not for use on trees as they can be extremely hazardous to chain saw operators - and bin bags, which are particularly useful on multi use - single venue - event because they let you put up direction signage for later stages and then hide it.



Hogg Rescue takes a hand as marshals with exhausted extinguishers retreat.



A picture of nonchalance, Midlands chairman Jeremy Edwards in supervisor mode.

Obsessives will also take a measuring wheel or tripmeter, but you can get by with stepping it out. Competitors will tell you they are more concerned about consistency over a stage or, ideally, a whole event, than correct measurement but you can take the precaution of measuring how many paces it takes you to travel ten metres. Walk normally, don't step it out trying to hit a metre per pace. By junction five you won't be leaping as far, but you could be walking as far!

A Sideways View



Hogg get the fire in the car out, along with the ground fires.

You are also going to need a van load of signage - Rally Arrows (a minimum of four per junction, one of them being a spare), No Entry signs (two per junction), Spectator warning signs and Prohibited Area boards (dozens and dozens, Hazard boards and Junction Numbers. Don't forget the Control Boards, either. Arrival Time Control and the Start will need two yellow time boards, Two red time boards, Two end of control boards and One Stage start board.

The Finish, meanwhile, requires, Two yellow flying finish boards, Two red flying finish boards, Three, Two, One countdown boards (two of each), Two stop boards, One end of control board, and Eight prohibited area boards.

If there are Passage Controls you will also need one Passage Control Yellow board, one Passage Control Red board, and one end of Control board. And you can add to that Descriptive Warning Signs, Chevron Boards, Radio Signs, "Cross Here" Notices, Spectator, Parking & Speed Limit Signs and miles of rally tape. In forests, you can hunt out logs and brushwood to create makeshift barriers while bales, oil drums, cones, tyres and pallets need to be arranged for a multi-use (single venue) event.

A word of warning on straw bales. Small bales should be avoided as they easily get under the sump and flip cars. Two ton bales don't move. Large piles of tyres are useful and barrels can be very effective, particularly if you tell crews they are full of water - whether they are or not! Cones are OK in the middle of summer, but they get trampled on and blown away.

So, that's all the equipment, now, where do we start - well, at the finish of course, but more of that in the next Marshals Post.

Bob Rae, Midland Region Rally Rep