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May 1999

**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

Fortunate co-incidence meant that I was able to attend the BTCC meeting at Donington Park over the Easter Weekend. It was good to see a number of you, although my hearing and Di's nerves have yet to recover.

As a result of an incident on the Monday of the BTCC meeting, you will find a clarification from Jeremy Edwards on the use of White Flags to cover the use of Snatch Vehicles. As it has been explained to me, the rules were changed last year, but no one thought to inform the B.M.R.M.C. As the majority of the Race Circuit marshals in the UK are members of our Club, this was an unfortunate oversight on someone's part, and one that I hope will not be repeated. We exist to perform a service to the competitors and to perform this properly we need to be informed of changes in the rules that affect the duties we perform. It is impractical to expect every marshal to purchase a copy of the Blue Book, and in the past the Club's Newsletters have been used to convey rule changes such as this. I hope that in future any changes in flag signals and other matters directly affecting marshals will be passed to B.M.R.M.C. and on to its members.

A big thank you to those of you that put pen to paper, or key to keyboard. Keep those articles coming.

Stay on the safe side.

DJS

Midland Region Training Officer

Readers may be surprised by this new appointment, I can assure you that my surprise at being asked was much greater.

Steve Allison has done the job very competently indeed for many years and will be a difficult act to follow. After much thought and Steve's assurance that he will still be around to keep an eye on me I have agreed to take on the task.

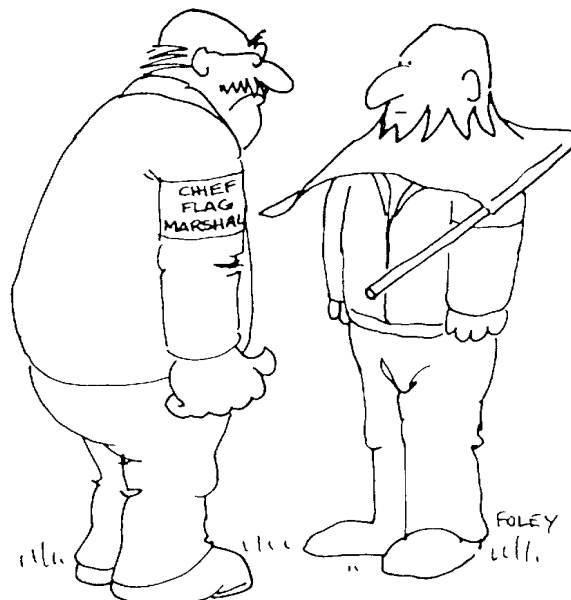
My interpretation of the Training Officer's job is to identify the training requirements and co-ordinate the considerable training expertise we have within the Club together with outside contact to endeavour to meet these requirements.

I have a few ideas of my own, but I ask everyone please to think about training and let me know what you would like to be included. Constructive criticism and suggestions for improvements will be encouraged.

I am very much aware that I am "The New Boy on the Block" and ask for your co-operation and patience during what will be for me a challenging fast learning curve.

After 12 years Steve is stepping down. May I on behalf of the Midland Region thank him very much indeed for all the time and effort he has put in. He set a very high standard which I shall try hard to maintain.

Roger Wheldon.



AND HE SHOULD ALWAYS BE READY WITH
A WORD OF APPRECIATION FOR GOOD
SIGNALLING.

CLUB BOOKKEEPER

For the past few years we have had increasing difficulty in finding and keeping regional treasurers for six regions plus BRMC. This has led to quite serious accounting problems in a couple of regions. Clearly, we cannot continue like this and it was agreed at the last meeting of Council to change the whole system of accounting for Club expenditure.

The proposal is that we should appoint a permanent, part-time central bookkeeper who will deal centrally with **all** financial transactions of the Club. The Central Bookkeeper, liasing closely with the National Treasurer, will deal with all income and expenditure, both regional and national. Transactions will be recorded in a recognised accounting package so that we can regain control of overall Club finances and still provide the regions with timely and accurate regional accounts.

To achieve this change we do, of course, need to find a suitably experienced bookkeeper and it was felt we should first try to find someone from within our own ranks; hence this ad. This will be a paid position – but don't expect to get rich, this is the Marshals' Club after all!!

Experience

We need someone with a good knowledge of computer accounting packages, preferably Sage. Candidates should have some experience of preparing periodic management accounts, have a "good feel" for what the final figures mean and be able to spot anomalies when they arise.

Geographical Location

The system will be set up by our Auditors, who are based in Daventry and Northampton. It would be helpful if we could find someone based in or around this area, to allow close liaison with the auditors and me, especially during the set-up phase.

Timing

If we can find a suitable candidate, I would like to see the new system in by the start of the new financial year on 1st July 1999. Operation of the full accounting package may have to wait until this year's audit is complete and audited opening balances are available but we should be able to start receiving income and making payments centrally before then.

Workload

Once the system is up and running and the new bookkeeper is familiar with it, best estimates are that the job will take up one half-day per week, on average.

Equipment

It may well be that we will find someone who is already providing this sort of part-time accounting help for other clients and has his or her own computer. If not, it is possible that the Club could supply something suitable.

Application

Hopefully, this note will make the May newsletters. If you are interested, please write to George Copeland.

LETTERS

J.S.M. Whitaker Esq.

Dear James

I was extremely touched and very honoured to receive your letter offering me Honorary Life Membership of the BMRMC which of course I am proud to accept.

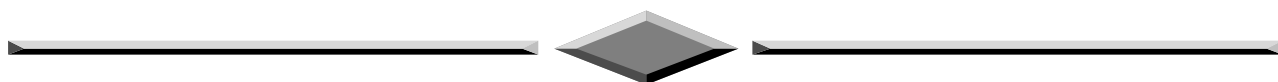
I would like to give you and your committee my very grateful thanks

Whilst writing to you can I say a very hearty thank you to all BMRMC marshals at Donington (Sunday 7th March) for an excellent job of work under terrible weather conditions, especially those at the new assembly area? It was a close run thing which came first - darkness, or the end of the last race

My best regards to you and the BMRMC

Yours very sincerely

Don Truman



Mallory Park Eurocar Meeting 5th April 1999

We would like to thank the marshals for their forbearance during the long delay when the barrier was being repaired on Stebbe Straight after it had been severely demolished by a V8 incident. Particular thanks are due to the marshals who were involved in any way in the rebuilding whether on site or those who helped to load "Recticel" barriers onto Barry Mills' recovery vehicle. Without your help and that of the circuit staff we would not have finished the meeting.

Don Truman

Jeremy Edwards

Clerks of the Course

"Big Andy"

It is with the deepest regret that I have to inform you that Mr. Andrew Young, Divisional Superintendent of St John Ambulance Derby Transport Division passed away peacefully on January 29th.

Andy had not been well for most of the last year. In the early part of last year he was ill but was determined to make last year's Motorcycle Grand Prix, which he did. He was taken ill again at the end of the season and was diagnosed as having lung cancer. On the Monday before he died he was assuring me he was to be fit for this year's Grand Prix and suggesting improvements to the organisation .

Andy has been coming to Donington Park since racing re-started there in May 1977. In those days Andy had a physique and character which earned him the nickname of "Big Andy", a nickname which always stuck. There are many members who attended the early Rock Concerts who found it easier to treat the more "exuberant" patients with Andy stood by their shoulder.

In those early days Andy was an ambulance member who was often heard to declare resolutely that "there is no way I am going to be an officer". However times changed and he progressed through the ranks to reach the rank of Divisional Superintendent. Under his leadership Derby Transport Division prospered, changing from a largely male division into a mixed division and more recently included cadets.

Andy attended every type of event that has taken place at Donington. He fulfilled every role carried out by St. John Ambulance on and around the circuit. These roles ranged from the "glamour" of driving the chase car on opening laps to the more mundane role of helping a drunk to the toilet. In the last few years since he was made redundant, Andy has also carried out many midweek duties at the circuit of exhibition centre.

Away from St. John Ambulance Andy was a proud father and we can only guess at the grief that Ann and his children must be feeling.

Thank you Andy for all your help and work alongside us at Donington for the past 22 years, you will be sorely missed.

Rest in Peace.

David Brown

County Staff Officer (Operations)

BAPTISM OF FIRE

My name is Jon Glover, 17 years old, trainee marshal, no training days under my belt, no form of marshalling experience at all.

Donington, Sunday 4th April very early is my first sign on, where to go? Who to see? what to do? HELP!! My nerves were calmed by the sight of Diane looking in a far worse state than me (which was re-assuring in strange sort of way). "Lets stick him on 9" says the gaffer (whose name I forget), "ha ha" says somebody else.

Ian Berry was to be my mentor for the day, operating on a look and learn basis I began to gain a clearer view of my role, sweeper. This I could cope with, however, marshal humour was something that required a bit more effort. After tuning myself to the same wavelength as those around me things started to get quite lively. A touring car here a touring car there, Formula Fords absolutely everywhere, Formula Renaults in the tyres and Fiesta's (10 out of ten for effort), Every session of the practice day resulted in an incident at post 9, the Old Hairpin. Little did I know that this was the far from the norm, people were telling me that a few incidents a day is what to expect. I have a sneaky suspicion that the drivers knew there was a trainee there and decided to make it a weekend to remember for him, (thanks fellers!).

It certainly wasn't a weekend I was going to forget so easily, little did I know that race day would be even more chaotic.

Things started nicely, a new IO for the day, Bob "The Magnet" Miller, (who lived up to his reputation) and a quiet BTTC warm up. That was where the quiet ended, absolute chaos ensued, cars spinning left right and centre, one Formula Ford driver liked us so much on Sunday he came back on Monday, albeit a lot faster and harder. After he came in 2 others decided to follow suit, sprinting all around the hairpin I began to think that this was too lively for comfort, so did Mike (sorry- forgot the surname) who decided to get asthmatic on me to add to the situation.

1st lap of the feature race and of all the places for an incident, they picked the hairpin, again. Laurent Aiello and Paula Cook, big time multi champion and mid packer from the independents, who happened to be female, let me tell you, Mr. Aiello was not the crowd favourite! Then to cap it all, Matt Neal put our hearts in our mouths and subsequently made the circuit erupt with a drive I am proud to say I witnessed, especially the winning manoeuvre right before my eyes. On his parade lap all the marshals went trackside to congratulate him, something I was later told is rare occurrence and one which Mike Kelly (calm down, calm down!) had witnessed only twice before.

I certainly got more than my fair share of action in my debut weekend, I popped the marshalling cherry in style and would like to thank those who made it such a great weekend, they being Ian, Mike, Mike, Kevin, Richard, Bob, Colin, Alan and several others including little Miss Sarcastic on the flags "enjoy your sweeping" she would say with a wry smile on her face, don't worry, I did.

Thanks people!!

You've got me hooked, ta!

Jon Glover

A View from the Passenger Seat



Brian (aka Donington Doris)

Just how good can your weekend be? Well let's start with not having to sign on until 8:30 instead of 7:45 on both days and an early finish on the first day!!! Of course I'm talking about the Easter BTCC meeting at Donington.

On arriving at Donington I was doubly surprised to find that I'd been allocated to be Crew Man with Donington Doris. Now I all know that you're saying "Lucky B*****", but let's put the record straight, it's not all posing in the pit lane. A lot of work is put on the Jag and its crew during a weekend: from firstly checking all the equipment on the Jag to collecting in all the equipment lists from all the posts and collating any shortages.

Also checking the lists in case the dates are wrong and in case any body has written down a shortage and not told us. The one draw back to being in the Jag in the Pit Lane is that you see very little of the racing. The best part, apart from Brian trying to break the lap record on the Green Flag Lap (only joking Brian) is the attraction the Jag gets from the public, especially from Children and sometimes their Mums when you put the car on show.

For those of you who don't know the Jag has a 4.0 Ltr Supercharged motor. To say it's fast is to state the obvious. The first time I was on a flying lap I thought my head had suddenly gone twice as heavy: the force of the acceleration down the start/finish straight when you're not expecting it comes as a shock; the cornering ability is fantastic, helped by the experience of Brian.

So now I've set the scene, back to basics. We start each race at the rear of the grid alongside one of the Rescue Units. We put on our crash helmets, buckle up and await the count down; at two minutes we move to the rear of the pack. At 30 seconds we put all the lights on, then it's Go!.

You see the most amazing ways of warming up cold slicks. In the Vectra race we had the last placed man going so far across the track that he lost control coming out of the Old Hairpin and went onto the Grass!!.

We arrive at the back of the grid and wait for the Red lights to go on, then the Green. We wait until they've gone round Redgate and pull into the Pit Lane and wait after taking off our helmets.

That, basically, is it. The rest you know as you see the jag circulate after every race to take up its position at the rear of the grid again. It's a very rewarding Job and obviously very worthwhile and we all know why we have it and the other fast response vehicles. Let's hope that we never have to use them.

Thank you Brian for two wonderful days and I hope that I'll get to do it again sometime.

Ray Couchman

From Behind the Wheel (or Oh Dear Here We Go Again!!!)

Plans for 1998 were well laid; I was going to compete in the BARC/Cars and Car Conversions Championship with sufficient events to go for a "class win" in the championship. The car was fresh from a rebuild after the 1997 blow-up with just one event under its cylinder head.

The first event that I entered was at North Weald Airfield alongside the M11 in Essex. North Weald is a private airfield with all sorts of aircraft flying in and out all day. The course uses a small section of runway and is basically a kinked oval with a separate start area. One run of the course takes in two and three quarter laps. As I was the only entry in my class I was guaranteed a class win but only a few championship points. In their wisdom the organisers decided to amalgamate my class with the over two litre Modified Production class which contain a fearsome looking Audi Quattro (not quite like Tom Hammond's inimitable machine). The event went well and I came out overall winner in the combined classes giving me a smart trophy and a promising start to the season.

From then on things went rather downhill. My next event was on Easter Sunday at Harewood in the frozen north. Having had the flu during the previous week I was not up to scratch. I was picking up speed during practice and did a fairly reasonable first timed run but I was not going to be fully competitive. As a snow shower (mini blizzard) blew in I decided to give it best and pack up.

A couple of weeks later I went to Gurston Down in Wiltshire for my next championship round. This was a bit of a disaster. I had managed to have a water leak from somewhere in the cooling system during a running up session in the week before and this was causing steam to appear at all sorts of places. On the first practice run the car developed an intermittent misfire. Then it didn't want to restart properly. At this point I decided not to risk it any further and went home. "Nil Points!" as they say on Eurovision.

To be safe I took the car back to Shenpar for a check over on the rolling road. Nothing appeared to be amiss. The engine was not misfiring and there was the expected power reading. The problem was put down to damp in various places that had since dried. Off to Curborough next for the first BARC Midland Centre round of the year. I was hoping to do well. It was not to be; the misfire was back and even worse. Investigation showed that the plug leads were at fault and despite attempted repairs I didn't manage a completely trouble free run (about 200 yards was the best) even stopping completely as I rode over a kerb and the HT lead from the coil fell off! Off to the parts depot for some new leads I went.

With new leads fitted the next event was the mega-sprint at Donington. Things looked promising. I've lost count of the number of laps I have done at Donington on the GP circuit and the course resembled the route taken by the course car (out at the bottom of the pits and in through the GP loop pit entrance). No problem! Oh yes there was. After a pleasing first practice run in a clear third place and within striking distance of the leaders despite backing off because I was catching the car in front I set off for a second practice run that was going to give a guide to the timed runs. On the run past the Exhibition Centre I elected to hold fourth rather than change up to fifth and then down to second for the Esses. Big mistake, oily smell, rattle on leaving the corner; "Oh b&^%\$ I've blown it again". I managed to coast as far as the top gate to the paddock and then needed a tow.

Consensus of opinion was that the bearings had gone again. A faulty oil pump was suspected initially but on strip down not only was a big-end bearing wrecked, the valves were slightly kinky too! This was not going to be a swift return as finance did not run to another rebuild. To compound the misery some evil b&(*&\$£ decided he liked my trailer more than I did and took it away. End of season.

From Behind the Wheel (or Oh Dear Here We Go Again!!!)

Needless to say things are back to normal for the 1999 season. The trailer was insured and the insurers paid up the replacement costs so I chipped in a few bob and bought a bigger trailer with one or two extras thrown in. The engine was rebuilt and is currently being run in. In addition I decided that the car needed better brakes so a set of Wilwood 4 pot callipers and BTCC size discs were fitted to the front of the car.

The plan for 1999 is to compete in the Wadham Kenning Curborough Sprint championship. This championship is supported by BMRMC Midland Region and we are running one of the qualifying rounds. I have entered the BARC series again but only to get entries at some other venues. The first event of the season was at North Weald again. Different story this time as the car engine had not been run in so low revs and careful driving were to be the order of the day. Trying to subdue the competitive instincts to run in the engine and bed in the brakes was difficult. I managed not to come last; in fact at one time I was second. One thing that I did discover was that the brakes were excellent; the first time I pressed the pedal in any way heavily I felt the harness pulling me back in the seat.

The next step is to complete brake bedding in and engine running in then I can start trying a bit harder.

Jeremy Edwards

Flag Signals for Snatching.

A bulletin was issued during 1998, which outlined a number of matters regarding snatch vehicles and their use. These have been incorporated into the Blue Book regulations for 1999. One regulation involves a change to the flag signals in operation during a snatch.

Regulation J4.6.6 (page 119) states "At Race Circuits where the use of specialist "snatch" vehicles is licensed such vehicles should be operated under the protection of yellow flags or by neutralisation of the race in accordance with the relevant guidelines published by the MSA."

This means that the use of white flags to cover snatch vehicles is no longer in the regulations, yellow flags alone should be used. Under certain circumstances it may be permissible to use the white (e.g. snatch vehicle on the edge of circuit) but it is important to check with your Chief at signing on.

Jeremy Edwards
National Training Officer



Are you interested in joining the Donington E.S. Team Rescue Crew?

The Donington Emergency Services Team is looking to recruit new people to train as rescue crew members.

Initially you need to be Incident or I.O. graded and hold a current First Aid Certificate from a recognised body such as St John Ambulance or Red Cross.

Once accepted for training, you will receive a trainee licence from the MSA. Some of the training is done on the unit during race meetings and signatures are given by the crew leader to show what progress in your training has been achieved. These signatures together with 2 from training days will enable you to go forward for upgrading to fully licensed status.

In addition to 'on unit' training, there are monthly training evenings held during the season and a major training weekend held before the start of the season.

If you are interested and feel that you can make the necessary commitment of time please contact Diane Hardy. Alternatively, come and have a chat with anyone on the Donington crew during a meeting.

Snatch Crew Wanted

We are currently looking to get more people trained in the "subtle" art of snatching. If there is anyone who is interested in being trained, please contact Diane Hardy who will be only too pleased to give you further details.

The 75th Annual 'Race To The Clouds'

About 18 months ago, my company opened an office in Colorado Springs, right in the middle of the Rocky Mountains in the mid-west of America. When I met up with some of the people from that office and discovered some of them shared my interest in motorsport, I started hearing about a hillclimb they have in the area – the Pikes Peak International Hillclimb.

Around April last year I started working on a (very nasty) project for an American customer. The only saving grace about this project was that I would be in the US for three weeks and at the end of the trip I would be able to go watch this hillclimb, which takes place every year on July 4th.

Two weeks before I was due to depart, disaster strikes as the project is canned and the trip cancelled. Oh well, some other time.....

However, another two weeks later the next project is up and running and requires a trip to Colorado. The times worked out such that I was able to squeeze in my departure on June 31st, to arrive in Colorado Springs that night and just in time for qualifying at 6am on July 1st. Anyone that knows me will of course express some doubt that I'd be able to gain consciousness at that hour of the morning (in fact the plan was to meet the guys from work at 5am, in time to be on the mountain at 6!!), but my thinking was along the lines that 5am in Colorado is actually noon in Ireland and not having had a chance to adjust to local time I'd be wide awake anyway.

As it happened my travel plans fell apart with a two hour delay in New York causing me to miss a connection in Chicago and I had to overnight it there. Of course I was wide awake at an ungodly (local) hour, staring at the ceiling and cursing air travel and it's associated delays. When I finally got into the office (at about noon) I heard all about what I had missed. One of the guys is a mechanical engineer and has worked on some sexy motor sport projects and has a lot of useful contacts. Whilst he was introducing the guys to Rod Millen (the favourite to win and record holder) Parnelli Jones and Roger Mears strolled up and started chatting. This had the other guys wide eyed and unable to shut up about it, even eight hours later. It was starting to look like fate was against me and any time I looked like getting close to seeing the hillclimb, disaster would strike.

Now for some facts and figures on the hillclimb: the route climbs up the Pikes Peak mountain on a dirt track, it is twelve and a half miles long, climbs 4000 feet (from 10,000 feet up to 14,110 feet) and has 156 corners. Some of the corners near the top have drops of up to 2000 feet over the edge and there are no barriers!! The event has been run since 1916 and generally occurs on July 4th. The Unser family has competed in it since 1926, with various members of the family winning over the years and Al junior having the record as youngest ever competitor (aged 17 in 1979). The record is 10 minutes and 4.06 seconds, achieved by Rod Millen in an unlimited Toyota Celica in 1994.

On the morning of July 4th I struggled out of the bed early (I had started to adjust to local time at this stage and had been out late at a fire works display the night before), grabbed breakfast and proceeded as quickly as my rental heap-of-junk would allow to Pikes Peak mountain. At the altitude I was driving up through the car was beginning to gasp for air and getting even slower and slower as the climb also got steeper. This of course presents problems to the competitors as well, the change in air density and oxygen content over the climb hugely affects aerodynamics and engine efficiency, with wings providing less and less downforce and engines developing less power as they get higher.

The 75th Annual 'Race To The Clouds'

I had to park the car about a half mile from the paddock and walk up to the start. I very quickly noticed the effect of the altitude on my own climbing ability (the air really is much thinner at 10,000 ft) and I had to walk pretty slowly to avoid panting heavily and getting funny looks from the locals.

When I arrived at the paddock the first thing I noticed was the fact that any cars I could see had ridiculously large wings. The second thing I noticed was that a couple of racing trucks were being prepared for the climb!! There was also a motorbike being warmed up. The paddock itself was a little unusual, in that it was in the middle of a forest and looked more like a camp ground than a motor sport venue. One of the vehicles nearest the roadside was the Toyota Tacoma (a pickup truck, allegedly) of Rod Millen. Not for the first time, Rod was out to try and break the 10 minute barrier. His truck was specially built on a space frame, using carbon fibre, all wheel steering and ground effect tunnels. It runs a 2.1 litre, turbo charged, 1000 bhp engine. They also had a nitro injection boost system, but they disabled this because they didn't have enough testing time with it. Not surprisingly the only part common between this vehicle and a regular Tacoma was the badge on the front.

After wandering around the paddock for a while I headed on up the course a little. After the third corner I was breathless again and decided where I would be a just dandy place to spectate. There was a reasonably good crowd around, but not so many that I had any difficulty finding a good vantage point. There were a couple of radios near by tuned to a local radio station which was giving full live coverage to the climb and that was a very useful source of information during the day.

The first few cars through were all yellow Toyota's (the type of which I am unsure of, but I think they were the same as used as pace cars at Cart races) driven by such notables as Parnelli Jones, Bobby Unser and Roger Mears in the champions challenge. As this was a display class they only ventured up the first half of the course. The fastest was Roger Mears by a full 37 seconds - despite the fact that there was very little difference in speed through the speed traps (just goes to show how a tenth here and there through each corner can make a big difference).

Next up were the Legends – exactly the same as those we have seen racing in Mondello, though from the smell of their exhausts they were running on something a little more exotic than regular pump fuel.

Class after class proceeded up the mountain during the day. Some of the cars looked familiar – the 'stock' class had familiar makes such as BMW and Subaru. The pick-up trucks looked a lot like those that visited Mondello with the Eurocars last year. When I saw the racing trucks go by I reckoned I had seen it all – but then the motor bikes (let race 5 at a time) and quad bikes (4 at a time) were still to go. Then I was shocked again – this time as sidecars went by!! The single seaters were quite different to those we're used to as well, looking more like a cross between mud pluggers and dune buggies.

The weather during my trip was incredibly predictable – hot and sunny in the morning, cloudy with thunder, lightning and maybe heavy rain in the afternoon. This day was to be no different and about two thirds of the way through the schedule the clouds started rolling in. Not long after thunder could be heard not too far away. Although the Unlimited class was due to run last, the entrants for that class have the right to jump up the order if they want to. They decided not to wait too long and tried to beat the weather. The fastest qualifier also had the choice as to whether the class would run fastest first or fastest last – because of the impending rain Rod Millen decided to lead the class up the mountain.

The 75th Annual 'Race To The Clouds'

I had been taking photos of a couple of entries in each of the other classes, but decided that I'd probably miss all of the action if I tried to catch the unlimited cars. It was a good call as those cars really flashed by at a huge speed, despite the fact that I was only at the third corner. Conditions at the top of the mountain were very slippery and so the record stood as Millen was 'only' able to record a time of 10 minutes 7 seconds. Some of the other class winning times over the day were:

Big Rig Trucks – Mike Ryan 14:30.87

Pickup Truck – Larry Ragland 11:37.97

Showroom Cars – Jeff Zwart (Porsche Twin-turbo) 12:24.60

Legends – Robert Gayton 13:56.37

Motorbikes – Davey Durelle (KTM 600) 13:05.26

Sidecars – Whitney/Whitney 14:34.78

The final bit of motorsport related action on my trip came about as I attempted to fly home. New York was once again a disaster zone, only this time our plane couldn't get into the area. We were left holding in the air for so long that we didn't have enough fuel to complete the journey. We diverted to Indianapolis for a splash and dash (well OK a splash and half hour wait for a flight slot). We flew in over the track used for the 500 (The Brickyard) – I was surprised by the size of the whole complex, once again I was reminded of how TV distorts perspective. The diversion was some consolation for all the hassle experienced getting home.

Derek Harnett.

A SIDEWAYS VIEW

June sees the 40th anniversary of one of the Midlands' top rallies, the Sutton Auto Factors Dukeries Rally, run in the Sherwood Forest Complex and centred around Mansfield.

The rally uses seven forest venues, with four of them being used for two stages, making a total of 11 stages overall - and that means the organisers need around 350 marshals and 60 radio crews if the event is to be run successfully.

The Dukeries traditionally has a full 150 car entry and is a round of no fewer than four separate championships, so you can expect some close competition.

Each stage has a marshals' draw and there are plans to give marshals something to mark the event, in addition to the usual stickers and a year badge.

If you can help out, please get in touch with me and I will contact Anthony on your behalf.

Bob Rae, Midland Region Rally Rep

DONINGTON DOODLINGS



Normally at this time of year I get all my gear out of my kit bag and give it its annual service.

My gloves are given a polish and a good going over with dubbin. The trusty cap give a dust out and a stitch put in here and there. A spare pair of socks, which has at times been in there for a year are taken out and washed. The bag itself tipped upside down in the garden and dusted out. Last of all boots polished and repaired.

But as I mentions in my last correspondence, Ian Berry had rung to inform me that maybe I would be in Race Control, so overalls on, and changes of clothes in the back of old 850, off I

set.

I was indeed in Race Control and after helping with coffee at sign on I parked at the back of Race Control and proceeded to get changed. I took all the change out of my pockets, keys as well and laid them in the boot, (can anyone see what's going to happen?) changed into trousers and shoes, closed the boot and walked to the drivers door to get my pass out of the front only to find it locked. Now I sometime do hit the central locking button by mistake, but only when keys are to hand, or in pocket. I couldn't believe that I didn't have my keys with me. Where were they? You guessed in the boot. I must have set the central locking before going into my boot. Anyway a quick phone call home found me son willing to bring down the spare set of keys, and security willing to let him in. Only problem, motorway closed at junction 24 to erect new bridge; spare keys arrived 3.5 hours later.

Having sorted everything out, I could focus on the task in hand. On the base radio in the afternoon, things seemed to fall into place a bit better, although a stutter was noted by one Bill Butler, at least when he was listening. Weather outside seemed to be at its usual: plenty of wind and rain.

The following week however, could not have been more of a contrast; the sun shone all day, the track dry, but, surrounding grass very wet. Any cars off were instantly turned into a brown colour, not certain if this came from the grass area or from the interior of the cars.

Once again spectators cars were caught out by rather wet grass, including yours truly. I tried to park on the infield near the inside of post 14 only to find that the revs were rising and speed and direction were fading fast. Putting my trusty steed into reverse I managed with a shove from the marshals on post 12 to escape; not before a ton and a half of good old Donington mud had been deposited up under the wheel arches. Took most of Monday to get it off.

Spectacular racing was the name of the game at this 750 Motor Club meeting, plenty of overtaking, big grids, a few spills but nothing serious. The Sports1100 being a very close run thing and very fast as well.

Now, not wishing to stir up any dark force within the Universe, I must come to the conclusion that the Curse of Donington is upon me, for instance the first race meeting I locked the keys in, second meeting I got stuck in the mud and spent hours cleaning it off, the third meeting I ended up with a cracked windscreen. On my way home up the M1 to junction 27 a stone glanced off the screen. It made me jump I can tell you.

After many years of marshalling I have always enjoyed a good mixture of people on post that can be relied upon to make my position as IO an easy and enjoyable one. Sometimes a mixture of personalities on your post can extend well beyond this and make an event of the weekend that will be remembered for a long time.

DONINGTON DOODLINGS

On the horizon I could see that it may be one of those days, I could already see the shape of Bill Butler - the talking snatch man. Tim Gentle was there the t****r from Guernsey. Our Welsh contingent was in the form of Alison who ripped the behind out of her overalls, and the new boy on post, Alan - got to be mad as he comes from Matlock and works on roofs and as keen as mustard.

Now another addition to this motley crew came in the form of Reg Baines, with whom I have had what might be regarded as fun days before. Incidentally Reg became a great granddad on the 6th of April. So may I send him me congratulations.

Characters come in all shapes, forms and nationalities., one of them in the shape of a Belgian whose name I forget - I'll call him Bern.

Bern introduced himself to everyone, shook hands and talked all day long about anything and everything: money, the Euro, jobs, racing, circuits, plum pudding racing, Le Mans etc. etc. all of which was spoken in very good English. Isn't it a pity we can't speak better French, Flemish or Dutch. Can you imagine National Training Day - French & Dutch.

Whilst trying to explain the art of marshalling to our new recruit, Alan, the phantom Formula Vauxhall driver landed at our feet, rather hard as it happens, knocking off one corner and bending the nose cone. I didn't call him the phantom as his number 22 didn't appear in the programme and his name wasn't on the car. His language was blue to say the least and after he calmed down he wanted to borrow a mobile phone to call a taxi and go home in the other direction. Bill Butler has a mobile, but the answer no was given Saved you some money there Bill.... Good joke by the way.

Meanwhile Tim had promised us some Guernsey "Gache" a fruit cake that he had made by his own fair hand. But would you believe it his brother and his children had eaten it. Next time Tim, next time.

It must be said that a lot of people travel a long way and spend a vast amount of cash to get there; take a look at the people on our post. Tim from Guernsey, return flight - not cheap; Alison from South Wales - travelled up with a caravan, three hours to get to Donington plus investment in the caravan. Bern from Belgium - ferry costs plus fuel and accommodation. Great Granddad Reg - travelled down twice from Doncaster area not a short trip and taken twice in a weekend mounts up. Even Bill from the West Bromwich spent some dosh. I however travelled the least amount of miles, I know how much that costs. It would have been an interesting exercise to find out how much the total cost of placing marshals on our post would have been.

Climax of the Monday racing must have been Matt Neal's win in the feature race, especially when it looked like he had lost all in the pit stop. Charging back to first place during the remaining laps sure had the crowds round Coppice cheering and waving their flags.

Formula Fords provided some exciting antics, not so much at Coppice exit but under Dunlop Bridge. First lap seeing a car spinning out of control 100 yards before the bridge to at least as far beyond. According to proud Dad Mark Baines IO on post 21 "It fair made me jump".

On a more sombre note I have been asked to add something of a reminder to you all about training and grading cards. Please can you all be aware that you should only have your card signed for the duty that you have been allocated and are performing. i.e. If you are grading for Incident Officer you can only submit your card if you have been allocated as Incident Officer (or trainee).

Ian Dixon