



September 2011
Number 543



The World International Boules Championships get under-way at the Finish Venue of the West Middlesex Mid-Summer Run and Barbecue

Newsletter of the West Middlesex Group of the **csma**

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Davetorial

"Holiday Season" was to blame. (That's my excuse, and, I'm sticking to it!)

Welcome to the September Sump.

Thanks to everyone who's contributed to September's bumper edition (Sorry there's so much Derrick, not my fault!).

Firstly my apologies for the non-appearance of the August Sump. I know, I know, I know, I should try harder, but, without anything other than a few lines from Derrick and Alan to put into the August Edition, it was rather pointless. I guess the

Until October (Arrrggghhh, it will soon be Christmas!)

Dave Wiles

A Note from your Chairman

Thank you to AG for organising the Golf Day/Night last month – we weren't there (stuck on a train somewhere...) but it was well attended (although it was yet another tournament that Tiger Woods cried off from, too much clubbing I think – his loss) and jolly well appreciated.

Hello everyone,

I knew it was going to be 'one of those months'. I checked my Horoscope and it said "you are going to have trouble with Uranus"!

I hope you've been enjoying the 'long hot summer' (with only a *little bit* of rain) that we were promised – lots of BBQ's and Pimm's, not necessarily in that order, and sunshine, wonderful.

I can only think the planet has an effect on travel (in opposition St Christopher) because we went on some train journeys (in Italy) over the holidays, and it was a right pain in the ar...

Speaking of which, the Midsummer Run and Ride Out and BBQ at Joanna's and Mike's in Windsor Great Park (a wonderful venue) was a good day out, the sun doing its bit for us after a cloudy start. Thank you to AG for the entertainment (and I'm not just referring to his exposed knee-caps!)

How students manage 12 months inter-railing (sorry, on their gap yah) I don't know. They must spend 11 of the 12 months stood around waiting! Age of the train? Age *on* the train more like.

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and a *particular* thank you to **Joanna** and **Mike** for hosting us. Also, thank you all for coming along and enjoying it.

And finally, it's time to start dusting off your bikes for the September Clubnight 'bike night of fun' with AW, Ollie & Owen. Come along, have a go and also see how it should be done by champion cyclists (Oh, *and* AW!). I would advise that you have padded saddles, or you too could have trouble with ur.....

.....I think this is where I came in.

As ever, keep your foot in it.....

Derrick Holden

Secretary's Scribblings

I'm really enjoying this Summer, so much good stuff going on. I'm writing this from my old cricket club's beer festival (Frocester in Gloucestershire). Great to see everyone again after too many years. There are also pictures of the club team when it started in 1961, there were five of my relations in the team. I'll have to find somewhere to retire to locally, with land for the cars and other activities.

The Big Weekend at Thruxton was superb. I must admit that I didn't see much racing on the track, I was more interested in looking at the cars and the pit set ups of the teams. The pit area for the trucks was almost surreal, a mix of Lord of the Rings and Mad Max - everything was just BIG, and after a day of racing there dirty remnants of vehicles
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PS. Advance warning – WMx are hosting the **Hollstar** table top rally in **October** (venue still being sorted) on our normal Club Night date (13th) **so let's have a top turn-out**, bring your best plotting skills and let's wrest that trophy from the other NLC groups.

PPS. Ann and I are helping Marlow Thames Rotary to organise a treasure hunt in October, to raise funds for 'charidy'. Entry fee is £25 per car and everyone will receive a free cream tea at the finish venue, so a car with four people represents excellent value! Give me a bell or drop an E-mail if you'd like to take part in this fun event, thank you.

strewn around. A marked contrast between the clean motorhomes of the Classic Saloons and the truck area.

Thruxton was also a round of the CSMA kart championship. The track has a variety of turns, but only one race line. Some strange grid placements meant that many of the faster drivers had to fight through the pack, subject to getting past other drivers who just (legitimately) held their line and place. This led to long lines of faster driver's stuck behind the legitimate blocker, in turn meaning that following driver's were fighting and defending position. Inevitable contact followed, some giving the places gained by contact back (as they should) others not. Some drivers not being involved in the contact also suffering as they were forced wide and lost places. Oli finished in a lowly 7th place, having been a victim of all of the above, but

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set fastest time in class and is now second in the Championship by one point. Driving standards need to be addressed.

The WMX Golf Championship proved a competitive day. Talking for myself, I was hitting the ball well on the front nine - too well, I seemed to have found another 10 yards and hit everything through the back of the green. I was dropping shots everywhere. The second nine I wasn't striking the ball as well, but scored better, actually playing to the harsh 12 handicap I was granted (I need at least another 4 shots, I really do only play once a year.

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My playing Partner was beating me gross on many holes and deservedly won the overall title and nearest the pin. Ray took the longest drive and Jez the nine hole award. The overall winner

My apologies, but clubnight this month will have to change - I'm running an Analyst event in Manchester on the same day and won't be able to make it back in time. Instead, Dave Wiles will be running a quiz evening, from 8.00pm at Pinewood in place of the advertised "Bike Evening".

Alan Wakeman

Three Go Wild In France

A Ripping Yarn of three lads on the continent, in multimedia !

karting trip to France, they cost a little more than Sea France, but with CSMA discount well worth it.

End of June

We have mountain bike parts spread around the World. All being sent back to manufacturers for fixing and servicing – seat post in Ohio, bearing fitting in Taiwan, brakes in Yorkshire, ... Everything re-appeared just in time, although £240 had to be expended on a new seatpost for the new frame, however this was a very special seatpost (more later) !

Saturday 2.7 Champagne and Champagne

Arrive in France at 6am, clocks reset. Get as far down France as we can via Reims. Why Reims ? I want to see the old Grand Prix race circuit. We find it relatively easily. The old stands and pits last used in the 60s are eerie but very photogenic. We push on, getting as far as possible before I need a kip. We always avoid the toll roads – better fuel consumption and save a few € on tolls. We also see parts of France which are normally not seen. Combine this with "France Passion" - €20 a year which gives you access to a variety of places where you can park overnight and you can really explore. First kip is at a (non toll road) aire, where you can legitimately sleep in your vehicle, some even having power and fresh/waste water facilities. The ones on motorways can be dodgy

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Friday 1.7 Ferry

P&O are great. We left late, hit traffic, missed the ferry. We were promptly booked on the next sailing with no trouble. I've had all sorts of problems with Sea France in the past as they seem to squeeze every penny they can out of you. P&O were great on the

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but we've never had problems.

We push on after a midday kip deep in to Champagne country. Almost the first village we hit we encounter Champagne houses. About the third offers guided tours in English. It's a small village but we park on the village green (the motorhome's quite long, and wide). We're touring the family-run Champagne house with an Austrian couple. The tour was great, I wondered where the fizz in champagne came from ! Champagne turning must have been a hell of a job before machinery took over ! We see indications of mountain biking with the Austrians on the tour, and they end up being the Commencal (Andorran bike manufacturer which we'd visited in the past and met head honcho Max Commencal) Distributors for Austria, who sponsor Remy Absolon (more later). The tour is great, and of course we sample some of the fair. We also buy a couple of bottles to celebrate Owen's GCSE results on 25th August.

Tour finished, we head off for a France Passion site. We find one not far away, actually an area behind a retired champagne growers house. He even lays on water and electricity for us. We're having trouble communicating with our



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rabbit French and their lack of English. We watch the end of the Monaco wedding and share a bottle of his own champagne, superb. He then shows us his motorhome in its own detached garage in the vineyard. We slept well.

Sunday 3.7 Beaujolais

A bit of manoeuvring to get out. Our landlords aren't up. The moho takes its fill of water (the habitation area uses water for the air-con), we leave a thank you note, another free night with France Passion.

This is a travelling day, aiming to get down as far as possible towards the Alps, but still enjoying ourselves. We make it as far as Beaujolais country and stay at a France Passion vineyard with its own shop and rooms. Again we have a great site with superb views, and again not costing a penny, no obligation to buy anything. Shame we were too early for the Beaujolais Nouveau (but I'm not much of a fan anyway).

Monday 4.7 Oz

In record time we've made Oz en Oisins for the first event of the week – the Avalanche Cup, or Downhill race. There are posters all over, a round of the French National Championship is a few weeks away – the downhill track is being extended, the 4X (big boys BMX) track rebuilt, and the cross country routes being manicured.

We have the whole "Team" car park to choose from and settle in a corner near the bike wash. We've been to Oz many times before so know the layout, track and restaurants. Oz en Oisins is a

relatively new ski resort and is quite small. A lot of it was closed as well, ski season must be their busy time of year. Being too late to go swimming, we picked up a few cups of free Chartreuse and orange juice from the Tourist Agency then settle down in our favourite restaurant for pizzas and beer. Much later we stagger off to the motorhome for a wonderful night breathing in the clear Alpine air.

Tuesday 5.7 Downhill Practice

The downhill track is great for riders and spectators – jump on the gondola at the bottom, then you can literally ride out of the gondola, down the steel stairs and straight in to the downhill run. The speed of the returning gondola is also similar to that of a rider as the track weaves its way down the mountain, meaning that you can follow a rider for more or less the whole run.

The track starts on rock, takes in a few almost vertical chutes, a little fire road, big berms, then finishes with the jumps on the 4X track. Oli loves it. He knows the track pretty well from previous years so we'll also do some bike testing today.

We took three bikes for the week :

- Orange 224 Downhill bike,
- Trek Remedy 8 (new Megavalanche bike),
- Santa Cruz Nomad (old Megavalanche bike which Oli has almost grown out of).

The aim is to see where each bike excels and create a plan for the week on bike usage. Even though Oli will be

racing the 224 on the downhill, the terrain is similar to the main event we're here for – the Megavalanche, but that goes uphill as well hence the need for different bikes.

Oli sets a base with the 224. He then tries the Nomad and the Trek. He's only ridden the Trek properly for 65km on a cross country ride in the Chilterns from High Wycombe with the local bike club. No problem but again no comparison to the Megavalanche. The initial reports on the Trek is good, the suspension swallowing what's thrown at it (except harsh when bottoming out), but visibly not as fast as the 224 and the seat is too high so Oli can't get off the back and hover over the rear wheel. This is even with the £240 seat post which is designed to be adjustable from the handlebar – high for sitting and pedalling, low for steep downhill/technical. Dilemma, the Nomad is smaller and more flickable, but has the worst (but still good) suspension. The Trek is longer and will be more stable and far better to pedal and climb. We've used the 224 as well in the past, but we know where that fits in the big scheme from experience.

Testing over, Oli heads off via the other ski lifts to ride the bottom of the Qualifier track for the big event later in the week – The Megavalanche itself - and to get to know the Trek better. Owen and I jump on the lifts as well to do a quick recce of where we could park the motorhome in Alpe d'Huez. We normally park under the main DMC lift in the car park. That's been frowned on before by the authorities but accepted. Last time there was a large muddy area being constructed by the

lift car park, this was now an unofficial camp ground with a few spaces left, would have to get there rapidly after the downhill in Oz to claim our space. Dinner in the motorhome with meals from Carrefour, they taste better than their UK equivalent.

Wednesday 6.7 Downhill Race and Alpe D'Huez and No Pizza Race day.

No practice, straight in. 400 riders to be fitted in during the day, reseeded after the first run, the top 50 make it through to the final shoot out.

First run, clean but conservative 59th overall. Reseeded for the second run in front of some very capable riders and with a focus to push. 7 seconds faster, 45th overall at the time. A few riders come in slightly faster pushing Oli back down, will we have to stay for the top 50 shoot out ? No ! 52nd, never mind, at least we can get off early to Alpe d'Huez for the main event.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C4m_Q3YQqEk&feature=mfu_in_order&list=UL

In previous years the GPS has taken us on the equivalent of a goat track between Oz and Alpe d'Huez. Big unguarded drops down to the valley floor, fun in a car but not in a ponderous motorhome. I didn't realise how much adrenaline could flow at such low speeds !

This time we ignore the GPS, drop down in to Allemont, past the large reservoirs with the dinghies and windsurfers, all "wow" sights, but the Alps is full of such views.

We head for the camping area in Alpe d'Huez. How to get in ? We find someone on the roped perimeter who speaks English who tells us that the Germans parked across the entrance/exit ! OK, a quick bit of rope removal, at a flattish part (the back end of the motorhome is very susceptible to grounding out due to the overhang). We find a corner next to some Italians, set out our land claim with awning tie-down straps and pegs, we're set. In the morning we find the area immediately behind us has two Czechs installed in tents, along with their inevitable Skoda Favorit.

As we're in Alpe d'Huez we have a far wider range of culinary delights awaiting us. Time is marching on so we head for our favourite pizza joint – a bit expensive, but a proper restaurant where we've never been disappointed. We try to remember the short cuts and soon find our way there. Disaster, it's closed ! How ? It's not just a remodelling going on, it's a complete rebuild, with a sign which indicates it'll be for rent in the future. What happened to our family-run pizza restaurant ? What happened to all the change I'd dropped through the decking on drunken evenings (when we were smuggling in cider to the restaurant before it appeared in France). Gutted. We wander around, dazed, trying to find a replacement. Maybe they moved elsewhere ? No indication, nothing found. However we do find Pinocchio's, a small pizza restaurant, but the afore mentioned

Remy Absolon is sitting in the corner. If it's good enough for Remy ... BTW if the name Absolon seems familiar,

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Remy's brother is a cross country mountain bike World and Olympic Champion. Mountain biking is so accessible, just like rallying – memories of dining in the same places as Colin McRae, Kenneth Eriksson and others on Rally GB in 1995.

We keep our eyes open for Nico Vouilloz – one of the most successful downhill mountain bikers in history, who then moved to rallying with Peugeot Portugal and won the IRC a few years ago. Already we're recognising Brits, but some of the best riders in the World are in Canada for a round of the World Cup Series. Still, not a shabby turnout, and for the first time there were more Brits (58% of entrants) entered than any other nationality (including the French). At times it felt like a British National Championship Round !

Bellies filled, the long uphill trek back to the moho, I must get an electric bike !

Thursday 7.7 Megavalanche Practice

The schedule has been compressed this year, only one day of practice for two courses. This year there were more entrants than ever – 2000 men and 200 women. The main event, The Megavalanche is for the top 350 men, so qualifiers are required. Ten Qualifiers of 200 riders each see the top 35 through to the Megavalanche, the next 36 to 70 through to the Mega Challenger, and the rest split across two Affinity runs – start when you wanted within a certain timeframe, transponders in the numbers pinned to people's backs recorded the time for

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the course. The Megavalanche and the Mega Challenger are the main events – 350 riders starting at the same time at 3300 meters at the top of Pic Blanc on a black ski run. I couldn't stand up there ! It's the mass start which is the experience, the nearest I can associate with what it must have been like going over the top in WW1. One infamous song is played (Alarma! By 666), riders know the start isn't long away. Tensions rise significantly, there's cheering but also apprehension for what's going to happen over the next two minutes. Motocross style boards count down to the start. The music track goes in to its "chirping" phase, then the tape rises as 350 riders fight their way down the snow.



This is it, the start, where months of preparation, or not, are judged. I always get a feeling of emotion, individuals now fighting against the course, their bodies and what's in their heads. I get the same feeling when watching the start of the London Marathon and other such events. On this event I now also know that there's nothing I can do to assist, it's in the hands of Oli and the bike. Have I prepared the bike well enough, will he get a puncture, ... ? In the lap of the

gods now for me.

The start is key, even though the race goes on for over an hour. Get away cleanly and you'll do well. Get tangled up and there are fewer and fewer real overtaking opportunities as you get down the mountain.

Still, I'm leaping ahead. There was the Qualifier course to practice and also the full Megavalanche course itself. We'd identified the Qualifier as key – a good result here sets you up for the main race. The Qualifier course was mainly downhill, very little climbing and we'd learned our lesson here before – Oli's first year (when he was just 15, just over the minimum age by two weeks) he had a great start in his Qualifier, but was T—boned by a big German in the first corner, went down and never recovered. He still qualified for the second tier event and the mass start. Since then we've used the Orange 224 downhill bike – heavier, but far more stable at speed, could plough through rock gardens, and Germans ! We fit a Gravity Dropper seatpost (now low tech, but goes up for pedalling and down when descending and more room is required) plus a wider ratio rear cassette (makes the gearing easier) for a little climbing.

Bike strategy almost decided, we all hit the top of the main Megavalanche route. Oli will ride the top of the Mega route, but then swap to the bottom of the Qualifier track where it crosses. This entails two lifts to the top – the DMC up two stations, then a separate ride to the top using two counterbalanced gondolas. It's clear and we can see all the way to the top, www.csmawmx.com

but we know that quite often we can be in cloud at this level.

Riders are being delivered from the lower lifts faster than the lift to the top can handle so queues are building. I don't know what it is, but other nations don't seem to have the art of queuing perfected as the Brits do. There's some clear queue jumping but nobody says a word. I decide to "have a few words" to those pushing in. At first I questioned what I had done, but the cheers I rapidly received after I apprehended the culprits meant that they soon scuttled off to the back of the queue. Everywhere I went after that I was congratulated on my queue busting !

As we rise we feel the temperature drop significantly. At the top we're cold but it's ok. It's around 2pm so mental notes are taken – at 7am it's going to be cold !

Oli sets off on his first run, but he keeps on catching people so can't have a clear run. There are clearly people who haven't done the Mega before, this is nothing like riding at a mountain bike park in the UK – real size rocks which move, deep snow, sheet ice, ...

There's a telescope bolted to the platform at the top so we watch Oli as far down as possible. We see him and other riders reach what seems to be a lake, what do they do, where do they go ? Taping is quite wide so the route could go anywhere. After a while riding around in circles looking at the options, Oli makes the decision to ride through the edge of the lake. Everybody else

follows. We watch through the telescope as long as we can track Oli, then head back down to Alpe d'Huez.

Back down to the motorhome, we decide to follow the Qualifier track through the town and meet Oli coming back up. The track is great through the middle of the town, weaving between buildings, jumps in to car parks, so many good places to watch. We reach the lower gondolas which bring riders back up from the end of the Qualifier course. The gondolas are connected in a chain of five, but only one bike could be clipped on to a gondola so it took forever to get back up. We don't see Oli and go back up to the motorhome. Oli reappears – he's ridden up the road as the gondola queues were so long (we could nip to the front of the queue as we didn't have bikes).

That night we hit the infamous Smithy's Bar for the first time. It was very agreeable and very homely. Big burgers, pitchers of beer and a devil may care attitude. Members of the Grenoble rugby team were also in there, taking time off from their training camp in the town. A good night was had by all, and the free beers tasted exceptionally good !

A slow crawl back up the hill to the motorhome, I must get an electric bike.

Friday 8.7 Qualifier

Here we go. Oli's start time was late in the running order, in the eighth qualifier, around noon, so the (relative) excesses of last night didn't matter. He was rider 1692 so on the fourth row (25 per row). This made the start even

more important.

Mechanical problems were our main concern, especially punctures – nothing you could do if you had a problem, the time was gone and you were in the Affinity. Those riders "in the know" were set up in "sprint" mode – no Camelbacks, no tubes, no tools, no spares. Shit or bust. Oli was in similar minimal kit with a bottle of water Sellotaped to the down tube to consume before the start (where did the duct tape go ?).

As Oli is allergic to latex, we couldn't run tubeless tyres (they need a latex sealing agent) so we took the middle ground and ran latex-filled inner tubes for the first time – the heaviest solution but (hopefully) the most robust. "Snake bite" punctures were the fear, when a rock is hit hard, pinching the tube between rim and tyre, and leaving two slit holes in the tube where it hit both sides of the rim, just like the bite of a snake.

The aim was to break through the rows in front asap then hold position. No video so I'll have to go on Oli's story – broke through the first three rows and up to about 27th (there was time to count the riders on the wide, easy bit). Catching riders in front rapidly due to using the downhill bike. Came up rapidly on one rider, who then crashed, taking down Oli as well. At least ten riders went past, darn. Fought back and passed a few.

At around the half way point in Alpe d'Huez we counted that Oli was 38th – he'd created a big lead on those behind, but also had a big gap to those in front. He needed to overtake three to make the Megavalanche. He'd be safe

to qualify for the Megavalanche if he hadn't been caught in the crash.

This year's Qualifier course was great as it ran literally through the middle of Alpe d'Huez. We first saw Oli literally the other side of the road to the camp site. The course then went along a concrete drainage culvert, opened up a little (overtaking opportunity, but this was around half way through so riders were tired), dived through a long tunnel under the road (dark, full of dust, zero visibility with a turn in the middle), burst in to the sunlight (with a spectator crossing, riders couldn't see you, you couldn't see them, it was only the noise of air moving or a brake squeal which gave a clue a rider was about to be spat out of the tube), right hander, hip jump, downhill to a pair of doubles, chicken route round the outside or a big jump to a car park, short sprint, vertical drop in to another car park near the finish of the Tour de France stage (the MTB riders had started way higher), sprint over a bridge, hairpin right down the side of a main road with chicanes made from crowd control barriers, then out of the urban environment in to an Alpine field, complete with various wild flowers, a brief respite then in to countless berms to the finish and a packed lunch. From 2800m down to around 1700m in just over 30 minutes, great track.

So where was Oli – 39th. Positions don't change much unless people crash or have mechanicals. In previous years one or two people have nipped in front of Oli on the bottom half as it was relatively pedally and he was on the wrong bike for that, but this year it was mainly single track with few

places to overtake. Frustratingly, Oli caught two more riders on the run to the finish but couldn't get past. Another rider nipped past on an inside line on a berm which Oli hadn't seen. So near, without the crash he'd have been in the Megavalanche proper, however he would be near the front on the Mega Challenger, time to make an impact there, and he'd still beaten at least 1600 riders so not too shabby.

Owen and I catch gondolas to the bottom, but no sign of Oli. Huge queues for the gondolas. We check his result, hang around hoping he'll appear then decide to hit the gondola. Again we're told to go to the front of the queue and squeeze in to the tiny gondolas. Oli's decided to ride up the road as the queues were so long, we beat him back by a long way, but at least he can say that he's ridden part of the Tour de France stage, uphill, on a downhill mountain bike !

To show where riders had qualified, we had to collect line stickers to be placed on the number plates from the Sports Centre at the bottom of Alpe d'Huez. It's interesting to see who ends up where as each letter has its own queue. Passports/picture id is needed, coveted stickers handed over. The majority of riders were at the Affinity queues, it was quiet around the lower letters. Oli is on line N, the second row of the Mega Challenger.

Our passes also gave us access to various facilities around the town. We'd been to the pool before (Speedos only, no swimming shorts, I told Oli but he still didn't take his trunks

CALE

September

- Thurs 8 **WMx Clubnight - "Quiz Evening"** - at the Pinewood Cafe
- Thurs 15 **Motorcycle Cream Tea Run - To Langrishe House** - Plea
- Tues 27 **WMx Ride-Out** - From Pinewood Cafe - Please Contact All
- Tues 27 **WMx Noggin & Natter** - Start 7.30pm at The Jolly Woodma

October

- Thurs 13 **WMx Clubnight - "Holstar Table-Top Rally"** - Venue to be
- Tues 25 **WMx Ride-Out** - The last of the 2011 "Noggin" Rideouts - F
- Tues 25 **WMx Noggin & Natter** - Start 7.30pm at The Jolly Woodma

November

- Thurs 10 **WMx Clubnight** - Please see the October Sump for details
- Tues 22 **WMx Ride-Out** - To The NEC Motorcycle Show, our Annual
- Tues 29 **WMx Noggin & Natter** - Start 7.30pm at The Jolly Woodma

December

- Thurs 8 **WMx Clubnight - "Skittles Evening"** - Venue to be confirm

N D A R

& Bar, Wokingham. RG40 3AQ. (OS Map 175/ 840660)

Please Contact Allan Goddard for further details.

Allan Goddard for details.

Allan, Littleworth Common, Littleworth Road, Bucks. SL1 8PF.

is confirmed - Please see the October Sump for details.

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is a special visit (Please note: NOT Noggin n Natter night !)

Allan, Littleworth Common, Littleworth Road, Bucks. SL1 8PF.

is confirmed - Please see the October Sump for details.

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so we had to smuggle him in to the pool in his boxers). We played table tennis (I am the champion) and large piece chess until we were kicked out at 8pm. We wanted free tobogganing (Owen was banned last time as Oli bet him he'd have to brake before the finish – Owen didn't brake and you could hear the impact from the top of the run !), more swimming and squash after the Challenger race.

The Megavalanche was on the Sunday, the Mega Challenger on the Saturday, so it was an early start the next morning. We hit town a little late and couldn't get food, it was packed. We retired to the motorhome for more Carrefour food.

Saturday 9.7 Mega Challenger

09:00 start at the top of Pic Blanc at 3300m. However we had to get there and to avoid too much queuing everyone was allocated times to be at the main DMC lift – we were due at 06:00 as Oli was on the second row of the Mega Challenger.



Owen and I went up with Oli carrying provisions, tools and clothing. We were wrapped up with fleeces, coats, 14

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hats, gloves, compared to shirts and shorts on previous days – the hour and heading to 3300m made the difference. We went up through one ski lift station, getting off at the next at 2700m, where we'd watched Qualifying the first year we'd attended. This was about 10 minutes in to the Qualifier so again riders were strung out. The next hop was like disappearing in to the bird cage in Jurassic Park as cloud cover was low – a cable disappeared off in to the cloud, nothing could be seen at the other end. This lift comprised of two large gondolas balancing each other, lower down was a continuous loop of gondolas taking around 6 riders and their bikes. This gave rise to long queues being managed by the French, so complete chaos ! We applied some semblance of order again based on row numbers and eventually reached the top in the gondolas which held around 50.

At the top it was fantastic. We were above the clouds and the sun came out. We could look down on the clouds as they rushed by rapidly in the valleys below. A beautiful sight, but darn cold. At first groups huddled together to stay warm. There were three unisex toilets which people found were quite warm, so many were taking shelter in the corridor to the toilets.

The Ladies race was first. First rider was Anne-Caro Chausson, Olympic BMX Champion, beating our own Shanaze Read at the last Olympics. The Ladies grid lined up, each row with 25 bikes. The Challenger started lining up after so Oli was called down on the snow early. He left his bike there so could come back to us where he could
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get some shelter. There was still hours to go until the start. Michael Jackson serenades us at 3300m at the top of a black ski run in July, bizarre.

Time rushes by. The Ladies are on the line. "Alarma!" barks out. The tapes rise, Anne-Caro runs alongside her bike for a good 50m until she's on the steepest part of the snow then leaps on. She's gone, she has a huge lead. Off the snow, on to gravel, on to more snow, off again, she takes a big cut short of the next turn, even more of a lead. We already know the result of the Ladies race except if something goes wrong. I hope Oli was watching what Anne-Caro did.

Oli's on the snow behind the vacant space the Ladies have just left. The rows are asked to move forward and the inevitable elbowing occurs. Animals baying for blood. The organisers pull the riders apart and put them in some semblance of order. Nothing Owen or I can do now, just keep everything crossed. It's now down to Oli, his bike, and the 349 other riders trying to beat him.

At University I was very much in to dirt bikes. I had a huge poster of the start of a Barstow to Vegas desert race – a mass of dust, shrub and riders. I loved that picture, everybody and everything fighting for their survival and to achieve their aims. I get a lump in the throat on these occasions – The London Marathon's a classic example, thousands of people out there doing it after months and years of preparation. It all happens now, all those months of effort and preparation. You against the rest and your demons.

Michael Jackson's come back. The 5 minute board is shown. We're looking down on the start from a platform higher up. Oli starts the keyring video recorder which Rob Reynolds introduced us to at karting – a total of around £15 with memory card but a great picture and small so hopefully won't be ripped off.

One minute, "Alarma!" starts. Cheers go round, not long. Here we go, we know when the tape will rise. The rider in front of Oli is on his bike, he's going to try to ride, no ! Somebody tell him.

Off. Sure enough the rider in front of him had tried to pedal, but then sank instead of going forward. Oli was held back instead of breaking free from the hoards. Wolves at his heels. Then the collisions start. Oli was on the right of the grid and is now pushed to the left, there's more grip on the gravel surface on the right. Oli tries to jump on his bike, but the loss of momentum means that riders start hitting him. He half goes down, he's going sideways with another rider's wheel on his rear wheel. The video shows it all, life in a washing machine.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9IE1_WWsTCQ

Most overtaking is in the first mile, things won't change too much after that. Oli overtakes a few on the snow, gets stuck behind others and others pass him. He reaches the glacier where the day before there was huge grip. However today it's earlier and the glacier surface hasn't started to melt. Oli loses his front wheel and goes down. We're following this as best we

can through binoculars, but it's so hard to differentiate riders, fluorescent pink shirt next year ! At least it's all captured on the headcam.

The leaders disappear out of sight. There are still loads of riders from the Challenger on their second piece of snow. Affinity riders are joining in as well, their start period having commenced. This gives a long line of riders heading down the course, a line which will last for another two hours. Lap of the Gods for us, knowing that pain will be being experienced out there, in the name of fun of course.

The finish is at Allemont way down in the base of the valley. No way we can get there rapidly. Owen and I take the lifts back to Alpe d'Huez and catch up on some sleep.

Oli returns, 59th overall, not bad, 308 finished of 350, some many hours after Oli finished. Back to the Sports Centre. A quick swim to wash away the snow/dust/sweat (that was just for me !) then to try something a little more active – squash. I choose a slow ball as that's what I normally go for, then the boys tell me they've never played before, what do they teach at schools these days ? Admittedly Oli is affected as he can't touch the ball due to his latex allergy. A quick warm up of the ball shows they don't have a clue. Rules are explained, ideal serves and how to deal with them, positioning, etc., etc. We start having a friendly game to warm up, I push off to reach a drop shot across the court and feel the pop in my right calf. Thoughts of ligaments spring to mind but it's clearly in the middle of muscle, I should have stretched before playing. That's me out.

Everybody's at the Sports Centre for the Ladies and Mega Challenger Awards do. It ends, the heavens open, everybody shelters. There's Nico Vouilloz sheltering under one of the supports of the sports centre, probably the best downhill mountain biker in the World and IRC Champion on his own getting wet like everyone else. We make a slow dash with my gammy leg. Back to our new favourite pizza joint.

Back to Smithy's. It's quiet as those in the Megavalanche on Sunday are taking it easy. Grenoble Rugby are back in but it's still quiet. Time for bed, the climb, and wishing I had an electric bike !

Sunday 10.7 Megavalanche and Sport

We have to watch the main event. A leisurely start to the day, but we have to make the crossroads above the camp site by 10am. Having ridden the course the day before, Oli knows the tough part, and it's not far away. I limp up the hill. It's already getting hot. We arrive just on time. There's a large crowd on the start of climb – riders come in across the Alpine Meadows on a nice downhill where they can build up for what's to come. Across the road then up a short, sharp climb. Remy Absolon already has a good lead. In fourth is Nico Vouilloz, winner of the IRC 3 years ago, he's still got it. Cow bells ring, riders are urged up the hill just like on the Tour de France. Oli said he had the same treatment the day before, it helped a lot, especially as the course grinds on uphill for around another half mile.

A few surprises, riders on heavy downhill bikes are powering past their lighter rivals, respect. Riders are
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wearing all sorts of gear – La Vache is there in his traditional cow suit, complete with udders !

and cider all round. We're first in so claim prime seating. Other Brits gradually appear. We have a great time apart from the Alonso win.

One of Oli's friends goes past, he finished 35th in his Qualifier but I don't recognise him with full face helmet, goggles, etc. Then a rider appears with no helmet and he's milking the crowd. Embarrassingly, we know the rider so we have to cheer him on, even chanting his name "Alvar, Alvar, Alvar". How did he make the main event ? Oli normally beats Alvar by large margins at races. The luck of the draw in the Qualifiers, some are fast, others can be slow.

We end up in the Sports Centre again then to Smithys again for the last time. We expect it to be packed but there's nobody there. It transpires that the Etape is finishing in Alpe d'Huez – the Tour de France for amateur riders (we find out later that we know local riders on the event). They ride the whole route, but as there's no real competition and the event caters for all types of riders, the road down from Alpe d'Huez will be closed for 8 hours ! People have left already as they don't want to be trapped for a day. Neither do we. Shame we found this out by accident in a bar !

Time to enjoy ourselves. Free runs on the toboggans, our pass gives us unlimited rides and there's a proper lift back to the top. I go in the fast lane first, nobody told me there was a jump, too much air for my liking. We head for an Irish Bar to watch the British Grand Prix. Paninis, burgers

To be continued – the route back home.

Alan Wakeman

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The deadline for articles for the

October

Sump is Monday September 19th

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors, and not necessarily those of the csma, csma West Middlesex Group Committee or the editor.

The Sump September 2011

West Middlesex Group's Mid-Summer Run & BBQ: 2011

The Dew Drop Inn is where it all started, a location right in the middle of a forest just to the north-west of Maidenhead Thicket & once a favourite haunt of Dick Turpin! This was the Group's Annual Mid-Summer Run which would end at our BBQ & Boucles Championship in a beautiful part of Windsor Great Park.

Classics, Moderns & 'Bikes assembled just after 9 o'clock (in the morning ...on a Sunday!) to be greeted by Chairman Derrick, Ann, & AG. The 'new' 'pub Landlord, Patrick, proved a very welcoming host and soon had us all devouring bacon rolls & sausage sandwiches washed down with lashings of tea and/or coffee. Signing-On was followed by a quick briefing from Derrick & we then filed out in an orderly fashion, staggered by a minute or two just to keep the traffic flowing.

A route around the Thames Valley had been planned, Roadbooks for the Cars, a AG leading the Motorcycles. Excluding A-roads & motorways, almost every type of road was on offer – high-banked single track, Chiltern by-ways with splendid views, the odd 'thatched-cottage' village street, Thames crossings, and quiet B-roads, all splendid stuff. But it wasn't all 'go'! There was an opportunity to stretch-the-legs just south of Stokenchurch, an idyllic riverside Coffee Stop at Benson, another at the intriguing Toad Hall near Marlow, and then it was on to Chez Joanna & Mike, our BBQ hosts for the afternoon. Chief Chefs (I've always wanted to write that for some strange reason!) were Kirsten & Jontie who slaved over the hot grill for most of the afternoon while Mike & Joanna

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kept the salads & liquid refreshment coming until we all cried " Enough"! What a super spread, what a super garden, and what a super day!

But wait, there's more! When all had had their fill, the Boucles appeared and there ensued a cut-throat competition amidst much riballed remarking and jovial comment whilst AG tried to establish just who was to be declared the West Middlesex Group Boucles Champion for 2011. We all had to take part (it was mandatory!)and after a tense(!) hour or so of baying, booing & boule'ing, we had a result. In Bronze Medal position was Hugh & Janet; the Silver went to Derrick & Ann; but the well deserved Winners were our Chefs, Kirsten & Jontie! Much was made about 'home advantage', hours & hours of pre-event practise, the grass was too green, and too many pitch-invasions by Bailey & Narnia (!) but in the end, according to the adjudicator & the gathered crowd, they'd won fair and square, and very well done to them.

The chatter around the garden tables went on into the evening but all too soon we each began to drift off home. A truly excellent way to spend a Sunday, great route, great weather, GREAT food, a wonderful environment and, as always, great company. Many thanks to our hosts Joanna and Mike, and to our Chefs, Kirsten & Jontie and of course Derrick & Ann for producing another great route for our Mid-Summer Run.

Encore do I hear? I should jolly well hope so!

Kam RaShy
Car 11

CSMA Three Shires Run 2011

Based at The New Inn, Heckfield, Hampshire

Saturday / Sunday 24th / 25th September 2011

Following the splendid support received from Members on the 2010 Event, the plan is to design the 12th running of the Three Shires Run to once again celebrate CSMA's Classic motoring history and heritage !

Our Club Captain Allan Goddard has been the Clerk of the Course on all the previous TSR's and, with the unstinting support of the Classic Vehicle Group, that will once again be the arrangement for 2011...

The actual 'Event' is on the Sunday but, as on two previous occasions, there will again be the option of a half-day Saturday Run, at no additional cost, for those staying over at the New Inn or Members who live close by perhaps? On both days the event will Start at the New Inn at Heckfield where we always receive such a warm welcome. This privately owned and comfortably appointed Inn is set amidst the Hampshire countryside and lies just to the North of Basingstoke (M3 junc 5) & just to the South of Reading (M4 junc 11) with easy access from the main A33.

We have been able to negotiate several advantages by starting from the New Inn as, apart from their excellent breakfasts, participating CSMA members will enjoy a substantial discount on accommodation the night before the event and I have reserved all 16 rooms at the Hotel in anticipation. As you might expect, this means we've been offered a very special rate for the Saturday night 24th Sept.- when ringing to book please mention the CSMA Three Shires Run to take advantage of this offer.

**The 'normal' Bed & Breakfast rate at the New Inn is £85 per person per night (!)
Our rate is £60 per room per night. Their number is 01189 326374 - and tell 'em AG sent you !!**

All CSMA classic runs are organised as Touring Car Assemblies and do not involve any competitive driving or timing. This year's Three Shires Run is no exception - all we ask is that you get to the finish within a specified time so that we know you have safely completed the route. No additional insurance for your vehicle should be required (please check with your Insurers to be sure) but do bring along your driving licence and CSMA membership card with you when you 'Sign-On' at the start of the Event.

The Saturday Run will start with Signing On between 11.30 & 12.30hrs with the first car leaving at 13.00hrs. The Sunday Signing On will open at 8.30am (with optional breakfast if you wish) and before you set off for your drive, there will be a short Driver's Briefing so we can update you with any relevant last-minute information. Then, at 10.00am, the run begins, with participants leaving the Start venue at approximately one minute intervals. This method of starting vehicles allows more time and space on the road and causes less inconvenience to other road users by reducing 'bunching'. As a result you should have more chance to enjoy the countryside and the scenery of the Shires we pass through.



Early entries will be appreciated as numbers are limited, and have to be offered on a 'First come, first served' basis. And please be mindful, we are usually full !

The Entry fee for the this years event is £25 for a car with two crew, and Entrants will be provided with a comprehensive Roadbook, a Rally-plate and perhaps one or two little surprises too !

This DOES NOT include any accommodation or meals taken on the day.

Entry Forms & further details are now available from our web site or via CVG Secretary Dave Roshier, or from me on: allan.goddard@csmclub.org

Electrified Wife

I recently tried a new activity that many other CSMA members may be interested in trying.

I electrified my dearly beloved and had the great pleasure of hearing her whooping in wonderment and squealing in delight.

I converted her bike to electric power.

The joy she found at tackling hills with a battery to boost her legs was very rewarding ! This was actually quite easy and, at around £600, a lot less expensive than buyin a whole new electric bike! So now, we laugh at hills and scoff at headwinds, our progress is easy and pleasant, and, we are, at

csma West Middlesex Group

last, able to recapture our lost youth and once again enjoy those pleasant country rides together. We can both travel at a similar speed and arrive at our destination fresh enough to enjoy it and know we can safely return home.

It occurred to me that many of our fellow members may wish to enjoy such an experience, fortunately within the umbrella of the CSMA we can find Special Interest Groups to enjoy activities with like minded members.

So, if anyone wants to join me, in creating the "Electric SIG" then please e-mail me at :-

mail@csmakarting.co.uk, or call **07745735730** [and come and join us!](#)

Drew Goodspeed

July Cream Tea Run

Although there weren't many of us for various reasons, 4 bikes met at Blackbushe Airport and after a good breakfast watching the light aircraft activity we set off for our cream tea special.

AG had as usual, ordered good weather and we had a nice ride through Hampshire and West Sussex arriving at Bosham near Chichester for a welcome lunch. Bosham is where King Canute tried to turn back the tide without success.

During lunch AG phoned our cream tea stop only to be told that they had closed the previous Monday!

Continuing our ride we stopped at

Goodwood airfield for a cup of tea and watched some more small planes while sitting in the sunshine, very pleasant.

Our route home took us via Petworth where there was known to be a cream tea restaurant. On enquiry we discovered it would not be open until next week! Fortunately we then spied a pub with lots of seats outside in the sun and there we had our lovely cream tea before we parted company. Roy and I to our home near Lewes, Sussex, and the rest back to Pinewood Cafe.

Thanks again to AG for a really nice ride in beautiful weather.

Barbara Walter

CSMA West Middlesex Group Motorcycling updates....

Our Group motorcycling events happening between September & November 2011 :

Some ‘improvements’ have been made since last month – read carefully !!!

Mid-Week Ride Outs: I'm sure you all know by now, each month, on every last Tuesday from March until October, there will be a West Middlesex Group Mid-week Ride-Out. The attached list is always fluid but will be confirmed at, or immediately following, the preceding month's Ride out/Noggin n Natter, & also in our monthly newsletter, 'The Sump'.

Our Plans for the next few weeks include :

- Wed 7th – Tues 13th Sept ~ Scottish National Rally (The B I G One !) – Regs now out - more details from AG...
- Thursday Sept 15th ~ Cream Tea Ride Out - Our Annual trip to Langrish House – not to be missed !!!
Meet at the Farm Café, Wokingham RG40 5QY from 9am. Please, please, please, you MUST book with me for this one, the sooner the better as I have to confirm numbers by 5th Sept !!!
- Tuesday Sept 20th ~ Castle Combe CSMA Track Day – Sports & Touring ‘bike sessions available ...
- Tuesday Sept 27th ~ Ride Out from Pinewood Café led by AG And we're going somewhere nice!
- Tuesday Oct 25th ~ Ride Out – the last one on the ‘bikes of 2011
- Tuesday November 22th ~“Ride Out” to NEC M/C Show, our Annual visit (Please note: NOT Noggin n Natter night !)

Advanced notice of your planned attendance is not compulsory but is always appreciated by the Organiser on all our Events, and I hope you can join us somewhere soon !

For more detail on all of the above contact AG on : allan.goddard@csmaclub.org or 07785 903 000

Motor Sport Coordinators' Bulletin

September 2011

Date	Day	Event (Status)	Type of Event	Club	Champ
Sep	Sun 11	* AutoSolo (C)	Cross between autotest/sprint	Farnborough DMC	
	Sun 11	* Autumn Antics Autotest (C)	Grass autotest	Falcon MC	
	Tue 20	* Track Day – Castle Combe (C)	Thrash round a race circuit	CSMA NL	
Oct	Sun 25	* Gravel Autotest (C)	Loose surface autotest	Bedford CC	
	Sun 2	* Autumn Autotest (C)	Grass autotest	CSMA NWL	Centre
	Fri 7	* 12 Car Rally (C)	Navigational rally	CSMA NEL	Centre
	Thu 13	Hollstar ()	Inter-group table top rally	CSMA WMx	Centre
	Sun 23	AutoSolo (C)	Cross between autotest/sprint	Oxford MC	
Nov	Sun 30	Gravel Autotest (C)	Loose surface autotest	Bedford CC	
	Tue 8	Brands Hatch Track Day (C)	Thrash round a race circuit	CSMA MSG	

Licence required: (I/Nat A/Nat B/Cm) = MSA Licence, (C) = Club Card, () = Nothing, * = Regs available

Previous Events

Grasshopper Autotest A lot of entries after the closing date saw 22 competitors taking part, nearly all of them from invited clubs. Yet again we had good weather and everyone made it to the finish this time. Nice open tests which allowed you to make your own mistakes, rather than from the test layouts.

Future Events

Farnborough AutoSolo We have an invite to an AutoSolo organised by Farnborough & DMC which will be held at Bordon, Hants. Signing on will start from around 8.00, tests start at 10.00, latest recommended arrival is 9.00. Cars entered in AutoSolo's must be registered, taxed, insured, MOT tested if applicable, and driven to the event. Entry fee is £35 per car and regs are now available.

Falcon MC Grass Autotest We have also been invited to a grass autotest on Sunday 11th September and run by Falcon MC to be held at Upper Caldecote, near Biggleswade in Beds. You have the option of entering the PCA event (passengers) or the other event (no passengers) and the entry fee is £15.50 or £17 respectively. Regs now available.

CSMA Track Day This is a non-timed event at the Castle Combe race track in Wiltshire on Tuesday 20th September. You'll be able to drive your own car or bike round the circuit throughout the day, at a pace of your own choosing. Each driver/rider should have a minimum of five sessions on-track with the opportunity of some one-to-one tuition with an experienced racing instructor during the day. Helmets are available on loan from the circuit. Front seat passengers are permitted but they must be at least 17years old, be 'signed-on', and attend and fully understand the safety briefings and procedures. The full day of on-track action will finish at 5pm. Entry fee is £110 per person.



Gravel Autotest We have an invite to another gravel autotest run by Bedford Car Club, being held on Sunday 25th September. The venue is at Little Houghton, Northampton and the entry fee is only £10. You have the option of entering the PCA event (passengers) or the other event (no passengers).

Autumn Autotest The last of our grass autotests for the year and will be held at the usual Studd Farm site over near Dunstable. The entry fee is £17 and nice easy all-forward tests are on offer and are suitable for your standard car. Let me know if you require regs.

NEL 12 Car Rally New for this season will see the first NEL event running on the 7th October and will be organised by James Newbould. The start venue is further south than usual, starting at The Chequers PH, 2 miles north of Amptill (Bedfordshire) on the B530, MR 153/030403 and maps 153 and 166 will be required (current editions are C4 and C3 respectively). Food will be available at the start. Please contact James on 07752 033122 for entries and offers to marshal.

Hollstar Intergroup Table Top Rally This year the event will be hosted by WMx Group and will be held at (venue now TBA), on Thursday 13th October. Maps should be provided, so just bring some pencils and a romer (new at £5 from myself), but check adverts nearer the time for more information.

Brands Hatch Track Day The CSMA Motorsports Group is running its second Track Day of the year and this time it will be at the Brands Hatch circuit in Kent. Price is expected to be around the £110 mark and further details will be available later.

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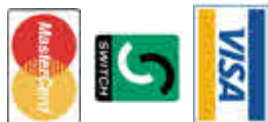
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