



August 2003
Number 452



WMx members looking happy on the June mid-week group ride-out!

Your Editor Speaking...

And summer is here with a vengeance! Perfect weather for driving the Westfield, which is just as well since the Esprit is still poorly...

Actually I've been rather lucky the whole summer, only getting wet once (and only

having to put up the roof a few times). It can't last! Am I pushing my luck using my only car for the autotest training day (tomorrow as I write this...)

Tune in next month for the verdict!

Have fun...

Jeز Boakes, Editor

From the Hot Seat

It's August already and the sunshine seems to have been with us for a nice long time. Even this week's rain has been welcomed as a nice break from the heat-wave which reached 34 degrees Celsius. That hottest day of the year so far was also the date of our trip to the Met Office in Bracknell (an article for which is elsewhere in the Sump).

The motor cycle ride out on the 24th June was very successful, however, AG's route wore out our intrepid riders so much that he was the only one of the contingent to make it as far as the Noggin pub. It is intended to repeat the exercise for the July Noggin & Natter so hopefully a few more riders will be able to meet up with us this time.

Many thanks to the members who turned out to run the WMx control on the National Motorcycle Rally and congratulations to those taking part on your medal successes. At the time of writing the Autotest Training Day will take place tomorrow so more about that next month.

The **August Clubnight** will be back at our regular venue of the Liberal Club in Windsor on the **14th** for a **Weakest Link quiz night** hosted by myself. If you want to see my doing my Ann Robinson impression, do come along. Hope to see you there.

The Secret Hairy Bits

Well another month has passed us by and due to my holiday I didn't manage to get anything into the last issue. The Wright household de-camped en masse to the French Alps and this included the Grandmere and Grandpere and my little sister too. I must say that we had two

Also in August is the csma Airborne Eastbourne weekend and a number of the Group will be attending.

The suggested Group weekend away for the 5-7th September has had to be shelved due to availability of organisers and participants. It is proving to be a very popular weekend. Instead, the committee will meet on the 7th and if you have anything you'd like us to discuss, let me know.

Monday the 8th September sees a number of the Group members descend on the Daytona Karting track at Milton Keynes for a day's competition. Good luck to those taking part.

Three days later is the **September Clubnight** which will be a **navigational Table Top rally** organised by AG. For those of you who are not familiar with Table Tops, it is an evening of navigational exercises to solve similar to those that you would encounter as a rally navigator but without all the inconvenience of having to find a driver to take you round the route!

Other activities of note in the coming weeks are on the calendar. As usual, for more information, feel free to contact any member of the Committee or email the Group.

Nikki Wild, Chairman

weeks of excellent weather which was thoroughly enjoyed by us all.

Since my last report various people have been active in the motoring world, Ian Perry competed on the Welsh Endurance rally and did very well by all accounts, I expect that an article will be forthcoming when he's got the time. I myself went to the NWL scatter evening and even managed to win

an award, and members various were in attendance at the autotest training day at Barton Stacey. Big thanks to Nikki for organising this, it was a shame that the numbers of people attending was low but it did give us all ample time to practice, and learn a few new things. I can't help but mention Jez in the Westfield, he really is a complete Looney and if I can find my card reader then his picture may even appear on the Sump soon. Our Tutor for the day was Duncan Wild and we must express our thanks to him for coming all the way from Cheshire to let us in on some of his secrets. His mini special really is something else, He makes it all look so easy but I promise you it really takes a lot of skill.

Our trip to the Met office in Bracknell was really well supported; in fact it was fully booked as they will only take twenty people round at a time. So those of you that missed out now know that early booking does pay dividends, as well as making it easier for the organisers. We had an interesting presentation and slide show and then visited the forecasting office where they were working on the current weather forecasts.

This was followed by a few drinks in a local pub, a good time was had by all and thanks go to Perry Roe for arranging the trip and to Nikki for co-ordinating the bookings.

There are some events coming up and I thought I would just remind you of what's coming up.

The Grasshopper autotest takes place on Sunday 27th July at Stanbridge, Leighton

Buzzard. This is being run by NEL group, details from Dave Rosher on 01920 830403.

The Holly autotest takes place on Sunday 24th August. This is an excellent event for beginners and experts alike and is run by Mike Biss in conjunction with the Steam Fair and Country show at Enfield. I have regs for this event so please contact me and I will send them to you.

The Haymaker autotest takes place on Sunday 21st September and is run by West Middlesex Group. The venue is Church Farm Bramley as last year.

I am secretary of the meeting so if you would like regs please let me know.

We also need Marshals for this event to make it a success.

The Greenhorn 12 car takes place on Friday eve 26th September. This is an excellent event to get you into the swing of the main 12 car championship which starts in October or an excellent introduction for those that have not competed before. It is being organised by NWL Group. Regs have not been published yet but let me know if you want them and I can forward them on as they become available. Alternatively contact Alan Thurbon for NWL.

I think that's it for now,

You can get me on the usual numbers or email addresses published elsewhere.

So remember to:-

Give it Beans

.....and Rhubarb.

BigJ, Secretary

Goodwood Festival of Speed

A beautiful Friday was spent the other week at the Goodwood Festival of Speed. If you haven't been there, it has to be seen to be believed. Wonderful (some virtually priceless) cars from the very first road cars to the latest formula 1 machines available for all to see in the paddock along with famous past and present names from the various forms of motorsport... I happened across Gwyndaf Evans, Sir Jack Brabham, Ralph Firman and John Surtees this year - Murray Walker, David Coulthard, Sir Stirling Moss amongst others in previous years.

As if this isn't enough, these gorgeous historic cars are thrashed (some more than others!) up the hill at Goodwood house - effectively Lord March's driveway. Peter

Hardman positively spanked the Aston Martin DBR1 (reputedly worth over a million pounds) up the hill - hanging the tail out at every possible opportunity!

All this fantastic machinery causes a certain amount of complacency after a while - I stood in front of five original Ford GT40s and really thought nothing of it until I read the plaques by each one and realised that three of them were **the actual** cars which came first, second and third at Le Mans in 1966...

Bikes are well represented in the line-up, as well as some more "unusual" vehicles - the Dodge Tomahawk motorbike with a Dodge Viper V10 engine (good for around 500bhp) and an 1100bhp 1966 Plymouth Barracuda which pops the most spectacular wheelies you've every seen! Add to that owners club and motor manufacturer stands, the Red Arrows, live music and a beer tent (not for the drivers of course!) and what more could you ask for in a day out!

Thoroughly recommended!

Jez Boakes

Confessions of a Rally Virgin

(Or how I survived the Welsh Enduro...just...)

You want to do what...?

"**H**ey", says Ian, "How do you fancy having a bash at rallying?" "Erm... yeah, ok", says I, "but you've just sold your rally car, so what will we be rallying in?" "Well, OMP make a roll cage for a Fiat Seicento...", came the reply, referring to my main method of transport. "This Welsh Enduro event looks fun...", he added, thrusting the details under my nose. And so it began...

No sooner had I agreed to allow my car to be ripped apart and stripped out, than a flurry of ordering occurred – roll cage, uprated suspension etc. From mid May onwards, almost all Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday evenings were spent in some uncomfortable position in or under the car, welding and bolting and fabricating. Bit by bit, it all started to take shape and the jobs list was slowly but surely ticked off. Correspondence from the rally organisers was flooding in – we were team no. 27. By the Thursday immediately preceding the rally, the only jobs left were to replace the standard headlight bulbs with some wicked PIAA bulbs and go out for some practice bend-calling and some first attempts at handbrake turning.

Red Bull (check), Pro-Plus (check), Valium (dammit)...

The Friday morning of the rally saw us making final checks and stowing the necessary items. By now I was feeling more than a little nervous. Multiple double checking of equipment occurred before we were finally content that we'd remembered everything and so mosied on over to Cardiff, pausing only to pay our £4.50 (!) for the Severn crossing. Once checked into the hotel, we had a wander around the cars that had already arrived, a number of which were using this event as a shakedown for the World Cup Rally in September. The classes for our event were 1000cc, 1101cc to 1300cc and 1301cc to 1400cc - at 1107cc we were the smallest car in our class by quite a margin.

We oohhh'd and ahhhh'd for a while over the other cars before it was time to join the queue for the noise test and scrutineering. My powerful beast registered a whopping 80dB on the Richter scale, so no problems there, with scrutineering proving similarly uneventful. There were 48 starters in total, including a very brave duo in a most marvellous Trabant and a rather nice Suzuki Swift 1.3 Gti, both of which were in our class.

Tick, tock, tick, tock...

As the evening progressed, my nerves got worse at the thought of what was in store. We'd already been given the road book for the event and the copious CARE comments about kerbs and ditches and slippery bits, in foot high letters didn't help to settle me any. The first car was due to leave at 10pm to drive over to Caerwent Training area for the first set of 6 primes. The primes (pronounced 'preems'(!)) were short stages, the mileage of which varied from about 0.5 miles to around 3 miles and were described in the road book generally in the form of 'tulip' diagrams. A minute gap between each car saw us leaving at 2227, en route for my first foray into competitive driving.

Bimble, bimble... Ahhhh, that's more like it...

The primes for this leg consisted of 3 tests, with each test being repeated once – we'd get a breather halfway whilst the cars behind us were completing their attempt. We rolled up the start line and booked in - 30s later we were off... Round cones, 90° bends, taking care through the high kerbs, we finally stopped astride the finish line, time recorded and it was off to the next test. Having managed to get round with no disasters, my confidence in the car and my driving increased over the next two primes.

On our second run round, my confidence had improved markedly, as had my times. I was biting large chunks out of my previous attempts with savings of 18s, 46s, 19s (thanks to a wrong turn). Hyperventilating by now, it was a welcome gentle run back to the hotel and bed.

But I've barely been asleep...

All too soon the alarm went off and it was time to get up, have breakfast and see what the reseeded brought. Our performance on the last 3 primes had improved our standing from 44th on first three primes to 37th, so we'd be starting off again at 1107.

The next leg in the event was at the Walters Arena Complex, where the first of the gravel tests would be. First prime was on tar and was a veritable feast of tight manoeuvring tests, slaloming through cones and chicanes. All went well, with no penalties being picked up. Then it was on to my biggest worry, the gravel... Would the car survive...? Would we end up in a ditch...? Did I have the confidence to handbrake turn round these narrow tracks...? As with most things, the anticipation outweighed the actual event and I was relieved to find that my confidence grew with each bend although I stopped short of the handbrake turns...this time. One more prime at Cefn Coed Mining Museum zipping through cone gateways and it was time for a rapid lunch. By now the day was very hot and having to keep windows and sunroof buttoned up during the primes didn't help any, so in every neutral section, the opportunity was taken to air our by now sweaty bodies.

The 2 primes at Walters Arena were then run in reverse direction, before it was time to move over to the Epynt ranges for 6 further tests – a mixture of tar, concrete and gravel primes, including a wooded section. The Fiat pirouetted admirably around the cones and bends, with only one penalty of 10s picked up in a particularly tight slalom of cones, when the rear wheel just clipped one.

Gravel, my @rse...!!

A quick cup of tea later at MC 5, we were a little disappointed to see that we were still in 37th place, (based on the pre-lunch primes), before heading off to the Sweet Lamb motorsport complex, along the picturesque Elan Valley route and past the Devil's Bridge. A brief delay ensued, caused by some drunken tw.....its at the entrance to Sweet Lamb removing the arrow and sending the cars off the wrong direction. However, just as we

were heading up the track, we met the event recovery boys who were heading down to show the drunken louts the error of their ways...

And so onto the first of these 3 gravel primes...

OH MY GOD!!! was one of my more repeatable exclamations when I started along the route. The little Fiat wheelspun its way up an incredibly steep track, with the "gravel" actually being bloody great rocks. The engine was racing as we struggled our way to the crest in first gear – second gear just being too much for steepness of the climb. By the time we got through that first prime, both the car and I were panting heavily.

Having survived that, near disaster struck in the neutral section between primes, when a momentary lapse in concentration (on the driver's part) saw us clipping a left hand hairpin just a little too close. This resulted in the left front and rear wheels dropping down off the banking heavily, much to the navigator's disgust (as it was on his side). Fearing the worst, we stopped prior to the next prime to inspect the damage. Astonishingly, everything seemed fine – no punctures, exhaust still attached, as was the bodywork, with only a bit of clunking coming from the rear suspension bushes. Whew...! More care required by the driver methinks.

The first prime put us in good stead for the remaining two, although we were significantly slower than the fastest of the bunch. This may have been partly due to the driver's initial habit of screeching past the code boards, the content of which the navigator was supposed to record on the time sheet. I claimed it to merely be keenness... However, after a few pointed comments by the navigator, we settled for tidy driving and as a result got around the primes in one piece, whilst picking up no penalties.

Beelzebub's stepladders...

After the ordeal of the Sweet Lamb primes, dinner at Llandrindod Wells was a welcome break whilst we found out what our latest position was and expected restart time. Positions and re-seeding were based on the times up to tea at MC5, and once more we had climbed up the listings by several places – we were now 33rd overall. However, just as we were preparing to leave, the latest interim results had us placed at 29th. Feeling rather pleased with ourselves, it was back to Epynt for 4 further primes, before the first "navigational" (i.e. road rally) section up the Abergwesyn Pass. The primes were not made any easier by the fading daylight – still a little too light for the headlights to make much impact and the sun sitting low in the sky.

The neutral section between the last prime and the first navigational section was not totally uneventful. We realised that we were rather pushed for time to get to the first time control at our expected arrival time, so stepped the pace up a little. Zipping along the country lanes, we were somewhat amazed, as we were <ahem> 'progressing' round a bend, to come across an old couple out sauntering along the narrow road – not something you expect at near midnight!

My heartbeat had just about returned to normal when we arrived at the first time control. I'd been a passenger in a car travelling down the Abergwesyn Pass before, when helping route-check for the Curtis-Bennett rally, but this time I'd be driving and we'd be heading the opposite direction. Fingers tightly crossed that we wouldn't end up careering off the road at the numerous blind crests with huge drops at the side, we set off up the Devil's Staircase (hmmm, he does seem to figure largely in this area...).

At the next time control, we were somewhat pleased to find that we'd actually cleaned the first section. Our pleasure increased as we also cleaned the next. By the end of this leg, we'd cleaned all the sections bar one, where we dropped only one minute.

Are we nearly done yet, dad...?

A short but well earned tea break ensued before we were off to Crychan Forest for yet another prime. By now, there was a drifting mist, which naturally always seemed to drift in at the most inopportune moments. When the mist didn't get you, the ever-present photographers did – standing on the apex of bends at the perfect angle to remove your retinas with the flashgun (I'm sure the photos will be marvellous though).

It was navigational section 2 now. All went well with first sections cleaned and only dropping one minute on each of the two final sections. I concentrated extra hard to make sure I didn't miss any of the designated give way junctions as we didn't want to risk exclusion and certainly not for something so straightforward.

We only had 2 more primes left before the final navigational section. By now I was getting very weary and looking forward to the end. My tiredness started showing in a lack of concentration and twice we lost some time by my mixing my left and right. However, no penalties were incurred, thankfully.

The home (well hotel) straight...

At last it was onto the third navigational section and the final stage of the event. This final section included a short section of the Llywel-Tirabad road that had also featured on the Curtis-Bennett rally, a fact that the navigator was quick to note... several times. Although we cleaned several sections, this was not my best stage, making little errors here and there – the weariness I felt was becoming more evident in my driving and I was mightily relieved when we finally finished at the top of the Epynt dual carriageway.

A quick changeover of driver and navigator for the 50 or so miles back to Cardiff and we were on our way. Upon reaching the hotel around 0400, we patted the car goodnight and were greeted by one of the organisers to receive our finishers' medals. After a quick look at the interim results, bed was an extremely welcome sight.

The final results...(aka Thank goodness that's over...)

Next... sorry I mean 'the same'... morning it was up for the presentation breakfast at 10am. We rushed downstairs to see where our final placing was and were delighted to see that we'd finished 22nd from the 48 starters (of which 37 made it to the finishing line). Given that our main aim at the start was just to get through it in one piece, with the thought of being placed somewhere in the 20's being a nice idea, we did rather better than I expected. The winning car came in with a time of approximately 20 minutes less than our time.

Après lunch, it was time for a gentle bibble back home for an afternoon's lazing and dozing.

The courageous ones...

Congratulations have to go to the Trabant, for not only finishing but not finishing last. Heartfelt sympathy goes to team no.45, the Citroen AX. They patched problem after problem, including losing a wheel at Cefn Coed and having the diff pop out, but by the time they got to Llandrindod Wells, the car had finally had enough and they had to retire. Team 20 also made a valiant effort, finishing successfully without the aid of a clutch, which had expired some time around dinner.

Was it good for you...?

This event certainly lived up to the term 'endurance'. In retrospect, it was perhaps a slightly ambitious event for my first attempt at competitive driving. However, although I found it extremely hard work, it gave me invaluable experience with a very steep learning curve. After this, almost anything else would seem easy...!

The organisation was absolutely first class, with clockwork-like smoothness right through the event. The results service was also spot on, with interim results usually being posted before we'd even got to the next MC. All the marshals (some 300 of them!) did a marvellous job, remaining happy and cheerful, whether it be in the heat of the day or the dead of night.

So, would I do it again...? Oh yes...!

Charlene Gibson



MOTORSPORT CO-ORDINATORS' BULLETIN

AUGUST 2003

| Dates | Event (Status) | Organising Club | Type of Event | Champ |
|--------------|---------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|--------|
| Aug Sun 24 * | Holly Autotest (C) | NEL | Grass Autotest | Centre |
| Sep Sun 21 | Haymaker Autotest (C) | WM | Grass Autotest | Centre |
| Mon 22 | Track Day at Croft (C) | HQ | Take your car on a race track | |
| Fri 26 | Greenhorn 12 Car Rally(C) | NWL | Navigational Rally | |
| 26-28 | Retro Run (C) | HQ | Car Touring | |
| Oct Sun 5 | Autumn Autotest (C) | NWL | Grass Autotest | Centre |
| Fri 17 | 12 Car Rally (C) | WM | Navigational Rally | Centre |
| Nov Fri 14 | 12 Car Rally (C) | NWL | Navigational Rally | Centre |
| Sat 22 | Quadruplex () | WM | Intergroup competition | Centre |

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

Past Events

Grasshopper Autotest This event will be running as I type this, so a report next month maybe.

Future Events

Holly Autotest This event will again take place in conjunction with the Whitewebbs Steam & Country show at the venue in-between Potters Bar and Enfield. As well as the autotest, you have the full range of vintage cars, steam engines, horses and craft stalls to look at. This is a very relaxed and enjoyable event, and provides a bit of a display for the other attendees. It will be a passenger carrying event with a £10 entry fee. Contact me for details.

Greenhorn 12 Car September sees the start of the 12 car rally season and if anyone wants to know about these events, now is the time to start asking. The routes are about 45 miles on a Friday evening and the emphasis is on plotting and following the correct route on an Ordnance Survey Landranger map (1:50,000 scale). The whole event is timed at an average speed of 30mph, and the main aim is for a bit of fun rather than serious sport. That's what the Saturday night events are for.

WM 12 Car Rally The October 12 Car Rally will now be running a week later on the 17th October.

Quadruplex This inter group event will be hosted by West Middlesex this year and will run on Saturday 22nd November. Please book it in your diaries now. Further details will appear later but it will be suitable for everyone.

Other Items

New Rules for 2004 The MSA have released details of changes to the rules for next year and an abbreviated version of some of them are shown below:

- Autotests:** New type of event created called AutoSOLO. This is a cross between a sprint and an autotest and consists of an all forwards course, on tarmac, with gates and cones. All competing cars must be driven to the site.
- Historic Rallies:** New class for cars with twin cam multi-valve engines, any capacity, in Category 2 (68-74) & Category 3 (75-81).
- Stage Rallies:** A yellow background board will be displayed 100m before a Radio point and a blue background board at the Radio point.
- Road Rallies:** **Engines** - A fuel injection engine may be fitted to a car not manufactured with such an engine (e.g. Mk2 Escort) so long as the standard plenum chamber and throttle body is retained. This is to allow more modern engines (but not 16v ones) to be retro fitted to older road rally cars.
Noise – Checks will be carried out at 2/3rds maximum rpm rather than the 4,500 rpm limit currently used. This change provides more relevant measurement of noise for the wide range of engine types encountered.
- Navigation Rallies:** All cars restricted to four forward facing beams, no advertising, no door numbers and the same noise restrictions as road rallies.
- Endurance Rallies:** A new permit of event where a substantial proportion of the competition takes place on the highway, timed to the minute (30mph average), and which shall also include special tests on private property which may be timed to the second (40mph average). Cars are limited to standard non-turbo 1400cc petrol or 1900cc diesel vehicles.
- PCTs:** Unless specified otherwise in the regs, wheels & tyres from any version of the same make and model of the vehicle can be used, so long as no modifications are required.

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A Slightly Less Than Biblical Tale...

I rose early on the Sunday morning, even before the first sparrow tweet(!) which is very early at this time of year. Scratched myself and went downstairs.

The sun was beaming in through the window and I hummed a little ditty to myself as I munched on my cornflakes and waited for my toast to pop. This was to be an interesting day, I had never been to an autotest before. After my foray into Wales I was looking forward to seeing what it was all about? When I say I had never been to an autotest, what I mean is that I had never been to a tarmac autotest so it was to be another first for me and my trusty steed.

I finished my toast and dripping and headed down to the car, I had thought of going in Terry my trusty Trabant but the urge suddenly took me to get into Diane, my Daf variomatic, a 1966 model "Daffodil" or 32 as they are known. This in fact was the last model to have a name as after 1967 Daf reverted to using numbers only.

She was a real beauty she really was made in heaven with her 2 cylinder boxer/4 stroke air cooled engine. She made 22bhp at 4000rpm but the trick bit was the transmission. A stroke of genius designed by Hub van Doorne. The idea of Hub van Doorne, co-founder of the company was to build a small affordable "luxury" car, which should compete with the Citroën 2CV, the Renault 4CV and the Fiat Topolino. Van Doorne started planning in 1954. He wanted to equip the car with an automatic transmission because he liked his Buick Dynaflo with automatic transmission.

The problem was that such a transmission was too big, too complicated and too expensive to use in a small car. Inspired by the belt-driven machinery in the factory, he came up with the idea to produce a car transmission using belts called variomatic.

I jumped into Diane and fingered the starter, she turned over slowly and suddenly burst into life, the whole of her 22 bhp throbbing away underneath me. I slipped her into gear and pulled away. I suddenly remembered something important: in my haste I had forgotten to get dressed, and rushed indoors to find some clothes.

I admired Diane from my bedroom window as I climbed into my chuddies, I was such a cool dude with my flared Jeans and Fleetwood Mac T shirt. How the girls would be able to resist me when I arrived in my Daf I did not know.

But arrive I did to the sound of hoards of screaming girls, I just could not believe it, an autotest with girls!!! And good looking ones at that!

I cruised around for a short while showing off the raw power of the Daf. The girls were like putty in my hands, I parked up and climbed out of the car, donning my High Vis jacket. I was swamped by the hoards of girls clammering to get a kiss from the cool dude in the Daf. I had pieces of paper with phone numbers pushed into my hands and some girls at the back were even waving their underwear. At least I assume it was their underwear, not that they weren't wearing any of course, well I couldn't see at this distance.

Fortunately the MSA minders were quickly on the scene and whisked me away to the signing on tent. Even the women in the tent had trouble concentrating after I had entered the room. I signed the sheet and sat down in the corner.

Suddenly I heard an alarm bell ringing, I woke sweating and shaking in my own bed, had it all been a dream?

I quickly rose and looked out of the bedroom window, rain was spattering onto the pavement and droplets were running down the window panes like water on a mirror.

Diane was sitting all alone and forlorn in the street outside. I checked my watch, 0630hrs, scratched myself and went downstairs. As I entered the kitchen I noticed a small pile on the side, small scraps of paper, where had these phone numbers come from?

I munched my cornflakes and waited for my toast to pop...

Hey Ho wibble flip de doo

ANON

The deadline for articles for the September Sump is August 20th!

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

National Rally 2003

Ah yes, I remember it well. Strange really as the powers that be decided to alter the map. This year it was much larger reaching from Windemere in the North to Brighton on the South Coast (as opposed to any other Brighton). Aylesbury control was in a strategic position. We were on the border of the southern section. Since the central section did not open till 10pm and we were a corner control it made it ideal to start from us (2pm) or to pass through us into the central section later (~10pm).

This new map also meant that we were open 2 til midnight on the Saturday. :- (But we usually do an all-nighter! Ho-hum. Turns out that this was not so bad. We had 252 bikes through in the 12 hours we were open so that really means we had a higher rate of bikes! Kept us busy, which is great.

This Year was particularly weird on account of the cafe. They shut at 2pm! Epp! what was I going to do for food? The problem is we don't know how many bikes are going to come through, so we cannot tell the proprietor whether or not it is worth him opening. Fortunately for all concerned this year the Lady behind the counter came back at 6pm "on the off chance" and opened up. Just as they all arrived and wanted tea! (check the Graph) We all got our tea and she turned a reasonable profit, making it worth her while opening up. It is a real shame that we can't guarantee such a deluge of bikes next year!

Obviously it's a bike thing, and there were many bikes (252, pay attention). The ones that stick in the memory are the unusual ones. In this case the trikes. They're not bikes! Well they're not cars either, are they, really? But anyway the Pemberton caused me some worry. The guy pulled into Aylesbury control, ripped the bonnet off and stared at the engine. Thinking that I could be of assistance, I grabbed the tool box I'd brought "just in case". There was nothing really wrong. Apparently if he left the bonnet on, the heat remaining in the engine bay evaporated the petrol out of the carbs, making starting an interesting experience. So his solution was to make full use of the air cooling available to his vehicle! Cool (or not, depending on your viewpoint!)

Another trike that was in at the same time was unusual as it was all shiny and metallic. It was hand built. It came in a kit and the chap built it as he saw fit. The radiator was causing him hassle and didn't look right. He decided to use the top domed section of a domestic hot water tank. It looks great! The paneling is cut to near enough the "true" design yet with modifications to please the builder, making it a completely unique machine! Wow.

A more traditional machine of the two wheeled variety, a Douglas as I recall, had a fuel issue. He didn't know where the next petrol station was and had a whisper of petrol left in the tank. We had to tip the bike sideways to get petrol from one side of the tank to the other where the pipe was! There was some emergency fuel in a can, but there was no funnel. Until I Blue Peter-ed one from the top of a Dr. Pepper bottle. It worked fine and my initial fear of the plastic melting in the petrol was unfounded! So off went another happy customer.

The Grennel came through at midnight, just as we were closing. Yet another three wheeler! We'd heard that there was one about, but had given up hope of seeing it. Then, as if in answer to our wishes, ping! there it was at the stroke of midnight! Spooky! Lovely machine, based on a BMW 1100 back end (I don't know the exact model as I was too busy drooling when the guys were explaining !!).

Obviously the WMx group were well represented. As ever they are committed to coming to Aylesbury, which must put an heavy constraint on the route they can take, and they made it about 3pm. this was a surprise as usually their visits are much later, evening

time. The memorable incident was when Alan Goddard managed to leave without signing the check-in sheet. Well! I mean, how many times has he done this event? Fancy putting chatting to your mates above signing-in! Fortunately, after checking with base camp, it should not make much difference, the control card is the document of fact. Control registers are for corroboration.

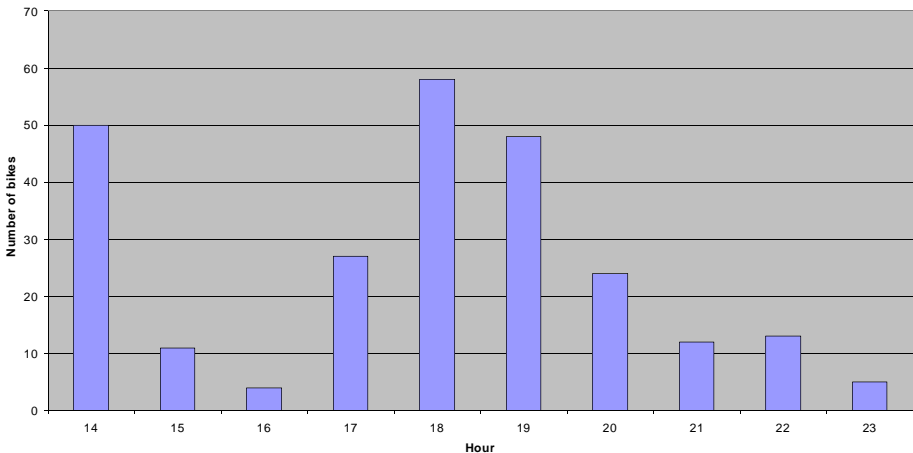
There was a moment of worry when a Police car pulled up. The officer had received an email about a bike event in his area and had come along for a look-see. I always let the Police know about the event so that the local force know about it (you know what communication can be like in large institutions!). I put a friendly invite for the officers to see how we run our Control point. I hardly expected to be taken up on the offer but it is good to know that my messages were noted, and that officers were interested. Obviously I had to ask whether there had been any incidents in the locale, and fortunately there hadn't been. So that was good news.

This years control, being open for a short length of time, attracted a smaller group of people than in previous years. There were several other people who could have made it, but they had something else on. I then found out that two member of WMx went and booked their engagement party for that evening! I believe congratulations to Stephen and Denise are in order! Well done!

I have to say a big hearty thanks to all of the people who turned up to help Ayslebury control be the success it is. Dave Wiles, who stopped for the duration, also supplied the pavilion, Graham Floyd, who should have been on the event except for a small fire that left his beloved machine in a garage being repaired under warranty; Ian Cook a colleague from my works who wasn't really that much into bikes, but I managed to persuade to turn up (He really enjoyed the whole thing apparently!). A Big Thank You to Richard and David Whitehouse, who arrived with a fully armed generator and lights, and to Ian and John Roberts who turned up with a brand new scooter, so new in fact it was still being run in!! Cheers guys, This thing doesn't work without you! And I will let you all know if / when we get best control!

Oh and I have just had a superb idea for next years event. I'm so looking forward to it! Go on just ask me about the teddy bear!

Numbers of Bikes



Rhys Edwards

West Middlesex group's Summer 2003 motorcycle events

- Sunday 27th July** "Harman Fun Challenge" A motorcycle scatter event organised by csma HQ. A good turnout of WMx bikers promised for this one, and a great day out. ...contact me for details.
- Tuesday 29th July** Following the success of last months offering, I'm planning another mid-week ride out, again finishing at our Group Noggin' an' Natter...details elsewhere in this Sump.
- Sunday 31st August** A Summer Group ride out ...details next month.
- Monday 22nd Sept** Track day at Cadwell Park organised by csma HQ
Motorcycle Committee.
- Sunday 19th Oct** The Autumn Group ride out....details later.
- Monday 20th to
Monday 27th Oct** One of our number has a cunning plan! We're thinking of planning a Group trip to Catalunya to co-inside with the WRC Rallye Catalunya. If you like the idea of riding south to some late summer sunshine on some of the best roads in Europe and taking in the spectacle of the World Rally Championship before returning on the Santandair to Plymouth cruise / ferry, please register your interest with me. If we get enough interest, we'll do it!

I hope you all have a safe summer of motorcycling, if you'd like more details on any of the above events please contact me on one of the numbers listed below.....

Allan Goddard : WMx Group Motorcycling Co-ordinator

H) 01189.345726: M) 07785 903000: e-mail: agoddard@csma-netlink.co.uk

Holly Autotests

Sunday 24th August 2003

As part of the Enfield Steam & Country Show

at

Holly Hill Farm, The Ridgeway, Enfield, Middlesex

For the second running of the Holly Autotests we will again be holding the event in conjunction with the Enfield Steam & Country Show on the August Bank Holiday weekend. We have a nice smooth grass field at our disposal and the competition will be designed so that you can have a look around the other events. Your standard car and a passenger is all that is needed.

I will again be CofC and promise some straightforward tests to test your skill at handling the car (not your memory) so is ideal for the Beginner and the Novice. You will have two goes at each test, with the best time to count. All this for a modest entry fee of £10. All you need is a current csma membership card and a road going car. As the event is running as a Production Car Autotest, the carrying of a passenger is required. If you can't bring one, we can find you one on the day. Contact either myself or your Group secretary for event regulations.

If you cannot enter but would like to act as a marshal, please contact Graham McLean or myself ASAP so we can get the details to you in good time!

Mike Biss – 01525 720299

MOT

No, not the ordeal of wondering whether a garage is going to withhold a certificate because one of the wiper blades squeaks slightly on every third swipe across the screen in light drizzle, but the WMx Met Office Trip.

Rather appropriately the hottest day of the year so far was Tuesday 15th July and coincided with the WMx trip to the Met Office in Bracknell. A group of 20 members and guests were treated to a fascinating insight as to how weather is forecast.

WMx Group member, Perry Roe, and Andy Yeatman both work at the Met Office and after meeting us in the reception, they showed us to a lecture theatre for a presentation and video. We were taken through the history of forecasting from the formation of the Met Office in 1854, by Captain Robert FitzRoy, through to the present day.

The method of forecasting seems very simple (in theory): A known start point is taken (i.e. what the weather is doing now) and then all the assumptions known about pressure changes, etc, are plugged into lots of scientific and mathematical equations and a forecast is produced for a given point in time in the future. By varying the start points slightly (even by a few minutes), a series of forecasts for the same timeframe are produced. Most results converge around what the weather is most likely to do which gives the published forecast.

Weather observations are taken constantly from a range of sources and these are used as part of the starting points. Satellites relay photographs of weather patterns, airlines equip their planes with recording equipment which sends readings back, ships send observations and there are weather stations up and down the country where readings

about temperature, pressure, wind speed and rain fall are taken and fed back to the Met Office. There are even individuals around the country measuring rainfall. As well as helping give accurate start points, the readings are compared with what the computers had predicted would happen to verify that they are producing correct forecasts.

We were told about one person whose readings were generally reliable but had a couple of weeks when the readings were not in line with what they should have been. The Met Office asked him about that fortnight and he said he had been on holiday. That made sense. They asked him whether he'd asked somebody less experienced to take the readings for him while he was away (which would explain the discrepancy). He said, no, he'd taken the equipment on holiday with him!

The first forecasts were produced manually with teams of clerks taking one of the equations each to work out the prediction. The trouble with that was that the calculations took so long that by the time they'd produced the forecast the weather had already happened and to make matters worse, they were usually wrong. But the ideas were the basis of the calculations which are performed today and now that they Met Office have two supercomputers that perform 15 thousand billion calculations every second, they can produce forecasts within a few minutes.

The first broadcast weather forecast was on BBC radio in 1922 and the first shown on television was in 1936. It wasn't until 1954 that the first live TV weather forecast was broadcast. The London Weather Centre was opened in 1959. The video showed us the small studios where the weather men and women are forecaster, presenter and crew all in one. They produce their own scripts for the forecast then enter the studio where, at a touch of a button, their personal settings for lighting and sound level are set before they broadcast. The presenters stand in front of a blue screen and the weather graphics are added by computer. So that the presenter knows whereabouts to point, there is also a projection from behind the screen which shows up a feint image for them. They also have monitors with the autocue so that they can see where they are in relation to the graphics.

I think that what surprised me was the degree to which the computer forecasts are still limited in their accuracy. A great deal of the forecasting process is still human input. I had assumed that in this hi-tech computer age, detailed forecasts could be produced very accurately. However there are limitations all through the process. The skill comes in knowing the limitations of the system and being able to apply expert knowledge to fine-tune what the computers come up with. The experience and knowledge that the forecasters hold is applied to what the computers predict to produce a more informed (and, hopefully, more accurate) result. Depending on how you receive your forecast there is a different degree of human input. For example, the five-day forecasts on web sites such as that of the Met Office are entirely computer generated because there it would be impractical for there to be individual human forecasts for every town to be made available all the time. Then there are the television weather forecasts which are around 50/50 computer/human forecast.

Although there are very good, accurate and frequent weather observations from most of the northern hemisphere fed into the Met Office constantly, there are comparatively very few observations for other parts of the globe. This means that the information for a forecast is limited for those areas. The calculations that the computers perform are for the whole world. There is a grid which breaks the globe down into 60Km squares and then another grid within the main model which looks at the UK in 12Km grid squares. They cannot be as specific as to predict a specific town's weather at a specific time. That means that for a forecast of "sunshine and showers" in the south east, if the clouds

travelled insufficiently far, Bracknell could end up with rain all day, Ascot sunny all day. The people in Bracknell and Ascot would complain that it was a bad forecast because it was either all sun or all rain but the forecasters would be congratulating themselves on getting it spot on with sunshine and showers. So if we complain about the accuracy of the forecast, we should consider the scale to which they're working.

Another interesting part of the talk was the list of the vast array of customers that the Met Office supply with weather information. We are obviously familiar with the TV and radio forecasts but they also supply two of the national papers with their forecasts. Some industries receive seasonal information. For example, Supermarkets receive weather trend information for the month ahead to help them predict sales. This year's warm weather leading up to Easter was forecast by the Met Office and helped Safeway adjust their stocks and marketing to increase their profits by £2M. Apparently there is also a seasonal trend in toilet roll purchasing! There is a surge in the winter when people have colds and another in the summer when Hayfever strikes.

The Ministry of Defence is by far their largest customer, followed by the Aviation industry. But another application of what they do is environmental forecasts following events. If there was a chemical leak, the Met Office could produce predictions of how the chemicals might spread given anticipated weather conditions.

It was all fascinating to see what they do. The final part of our tour took us up to the forecasting floor where they were hard at work producing the next forecast information. The obvious question "is it going to rain tomorrow?" was greeted with an overwhelming "yes" – and they were right.

We all retired to a local pub for some refreshment afterwards and everybody agreed that it had been a very interesting evening. I have a new-found appreciation about what has gone on to produce the forecast that I hear on my radio each morning. Many thanks to Perry Roe for organising the visit.

Nikki Wild